

Ava Smith

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Dr. Tilburg

An Arm and a Leg: Sacrifice, Support, and the Projection of the “Idealized” Veteran in Maurice Barrès’ *Pour les mutilés*

The First World War was the site of a brand of a till-then unbeknownst total warfare that would devastate all those it touched. In France especially, which had served as part of the Western Front, citizens faced unimaginable losses; the lives of their family members who had served and the country they defended were forever changed. Seven hundred sixty thousand children were orphaned, 600,000 wives turned widows, and a staggering 1,200,000 service members were disabled. The war represented the most significant influx of disabled people into French society ever seen. It would necessitate a complete reimagining of both their role in civil life and their relationship with their fellow citizens. Moreover, these men had been exposed to an onslaught of new technologies and strategies that resulted in novel injuries, such as facial burns and sensory loss (blindness and deafness) due to mustard gas and trench warfare, in addition to more familiar war wounds like limb amputations and psychiatric trauma.

The two most explored injuries in disability scholarship surrounding WWI are facial (“gueules cassés [broken faces]” or “défigurés [the disfigured]”)¹ disfigurements and limb amputations (“mutilés [the mutilated]”). As historian Sophie Delaporte explains, this is mainly due to amputees being the most numerous and, in the case of the disfigured, the most symbolic of the bodily violence these men faced at war and home.² Still, we can see innumerable specific disability identities arise out of the Great War in the organizations that emerged to support veterans in the

¹ All my translations.

² Sophie Delaporte, “Mutilation and Disfiguration (France),” in *1914-1918 Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, eds. Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson. Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 2017.

inter-war period, including L'Union des blessés de la face ["The Coalition of the Wounded Faces"], L'Amputé ["The Amputee"], Le blessé crânien ["The Injured of the Head"], Le blessé aux yeux ["The Injured Eyes"], and even Blessés et malades du rein victimes de la guerre ["The Sick and Injured Kidneys of Victims of War"]. The experiences of these men were intense and personal, as all disabilities are, and their access needs on return home were ability-dependent. Often, the role of the above organizations was to advocate for whichever needs were not being met for those affected by their specific disabilities, meaning they lobbied the government for policies ranging from increasing pension payments to addressing discrimination against those with facial disfigurements in workplace hiring decisions.³ However, sources for understanding the French disabled WWI veteran's experiences, like these associations, would not be found until a few years after the Treaty of Versailles, usually after 1921. As such, little scholarship has explored this subject before and during the war.

The sixth volume in Maurice Barrès' twelve-volume series, *L'âme française et la guerre* ["The French Soul and War"], entitled *Pour les mutilés* ["For the Mutilated"], illuminates the years between 1914 and 1918. Barrès, *Pour les mutilés* comprises articles from 1915 to 1920 documenting his and others' thoughts on policies the state could implement to support injured veterans returning home. Specifically, it considers the case of service members with limb amputations. Barrès began his political work in 1889 when he was elected to the Third Republic's Chambre des députés as a representative for Nancy, France. He became a member of the Académie française in 1906, the same year he was elected député de Paris (a position he would remain in until his death), which afforded him significant influence.⁴ Finally, he served as president for the

³ Sophie Delaporte, "Les défigurés de la grande guerre." *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains*, no. 175 (1994): 103–21.

⁴ "Maurice BARRÈS (1862-1923)," Archived at the Wayback Machine of Barrès on the Académie Française's website, 7 June 2007.

far-right French nationalist organizations Ligue de la Patrie Française and the Ligue des Patriotes, which he was still the head of when he authored *L'âme française et de Guerre: Pour les mutilés*.

While the total volume includes forty-two articles, only six directly respond to the subject of the volume, *les mutilés*. These chapters mainly focus on remuneration during recovery, professional re-training (in theory and practice), and the acquisition of prosthetics for amputees. Throughout this work, Barrès offers a fascinating insight into the mindset of most Frenchmen in the years before and during the First World War. A self-proclaimed patriot, he treats the endeavors of warfare as the glorious and natural affairs of a male citizen of France. In doing so, he espouses a certain hyper-masculinity that links with a deep sense of nationalism. Michael Sibalís explains that the period between 1871 and 1914 represented a distinct “crisis of [French] male identity.”⁵ Following their defeat in the Franco-Prussian war, French men harbored a deep fear that “foreigners saw them as lacking in honor and warlike virility,” which was “still widely believed to embody masculinity itself.”⁶ This anxiety was compounded leading up to WWI as France faced challenges to its traditions from “dramatic social and political change,” including “industrialization, urbanization, immigration, feminism, socialism, a falling birthrate and a growing military threat from Germany.” Unsurprisingly, Barrès reflects an “everywhere increasing nationalism” and an “increased emphasis on manliness”⁷ in *Pour les mutilés*, which manifests mainly in his valorization of wartime disablement and his connecting it to the intrinsic strength of the male armed forces. Despite this, and likely unbeknownst to him, Barrès’ work on this collection is an invaluable addition to the developing field of French disability history and critical disability studies, primarily pioneered by scholars like Sophie Delaporte.

⁵ Michael Sibalís, “Defining Masculinity in Fin-de-Siècle France: Sexual Anxiety and the Emergence of the Homosexual,” *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History* 25 (1998): 247.

⁶ Sibalís, “Defining Masculinity,” 247.

⁷ Sibalís, 247.

Delaporte has focused her scholarship mainly on the fallout of the First World War and how its French veterans experienced disability in the aftermath. In her works, she has explored the silences that occupy most of the experiences of disabled veterans upon their return home to France, as well as an even-handed analysis of the most common injuries of WWI soldiers. In her early publications, she discussed the physical, psychological, and moral trauma experienced by “les défigurés de la grande guerre [the disfigured of the Great War],” specifically “les blessés de la face [those with wounded faces],” which often included identity crises and social rejection.⁸ She followed this seminal study with another crucial discussion of “le corps et la parole des mutilés de la grande guerre [the body and word of the mutilated of the Great War],” wherein she investigated the seeming “mutisme [mutism]” of injured veterans during the interwar period, especially amputees and their testimonies of pain to doctors and family members.⁹ She pulls on sources like publications from veteran support associations, medical literature, and limited family histories to understand how amputees of WWI described and handled the associated pain in the post-war. This scholarship has proved invaluable to French histories of disability.

Delaporte’s work focusing on WWI is complemented by more generalized inquiries into disability history, like the historian Catherine Kudlick’s “Smallpox, Disability, and Survival in Nineteenth-Century France: Rewriting Paradigms from a New Epidemic Script.” Kudlick, a professor of disability history at San Francisco State University, focuses her research on how disability became integrated into the everyday experience during the height of the 18th and 19th-century Smallpox epidemics. In this text, she not only offers an excellent example of how scholars approach writing histories of disability but also demonstrates how they might combine histories of

⁸ Sophie Delaporte, “Les défigurés de la grande guerre,” *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains*, no. 175 (1994), 103–21.

⁹ Sophie Delaporte, “Le corps et la parole des mutilés de la grande guerre,” *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains* 205, no. 1 (2002), 5-14.

science and medicine with considerations of disability. In encouraging us to look past the simple statistics of a given epidemic—mortality, especially—Kudlick attempts to reunite the parallel histories of disease (the dramatic phases of outbreaks and their consequences) and survival (especially with disabilities).¹⁰ While her focus is on the smallpox epidemic, Kudlick’s framework for understanding how the interconnected experiences of widespread disease and its survivors impacted France in a moment of vast sociocultural transformation applies to other instances of intense societal disablement, including war. It is easy to be overwhelmed by the near-unfathomable WWI statistics (that this essay began with!) and suffer the same fallacies as Kudlick attacked in her text. However, suppose we approach war and all its possible consequences as an epidemic. In that case, we might also be able to resituate the experiences of injured, surviving veterans into the broader sociocultural moment that France found itself in leading up to and well after the 1914 to 1918 timeframe.

The works that Delaporte and Kudlick have produced are founded on decades of scholarship in the fields of the histories of science and medicine, which often interact with critical disability studies discourse. For those interested in these fields, World War I represented a moment of extreme innovation in treatment techniques and medical specialties that was unprecedented at the time. Nobody was safe from the potential for intense, life-changing, and disabling wounds in this crisis—wounds that would have likely killed them before WWI. As Julie Anderson, a historian of medicine and disability at the University of Kent, explains, “new and advanced medical specialties, surgical techniques, and technical innovations” meant that now “soldiers survived wounds that in previous conflicts might have killed them” —“wounds healed, but often bodies were

¹⁰ Catherine Kudlick, “Smallpox, Disability, and Survival in Nineteenth-Century France: Rewriting Paradigms from a New Epidemic Script” in *Disability Histories*, eds. Susan Burch and Michael Rembis (Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 186.

left badly disfigured and mutilated.”¹¹ To ease the suffering of these men, two distinct specialties emerged: orthopedics and plastic surgery.¹² For our purposes, given that this is a survey of amputees, it is essential to note that amputation was the most frequently performed operation by orthopedic specialists during the war. However, the procedure required repair and refinement after the initial surgery due to common errors made under wartime pressures.¹³ Once a proper amputation could be performed, these men would be fitted for prostheses and begin the process of work therapy. As the name implies, work therapy was a regime meant to retrain amputees for professions they might take up post-convalescence, which sometimes included fitting specialized prosthetics for given skills.¹⁴

The state was responsible for the supply of prostheses, placement in a work therapy program, and other assistance projects, such as pension funds. As the social historian David Gerber has demonstrated, the relationship between the Western state and disabled veterans helps us understand, in part, processes of identity and group formation as they pertain to their collective experience. Veterans gain a recognizable social identity through their interactions with the state, negotiating their needs and sharing experiences to influence policy.¹⁵ Still, this perspective only explores these considerations *after* the end of military conflict, without regard to any arbitration that might have pre-dated the Treaty of Versailles in the case of WWI. This has left a significant gap in the scholarship where the actual war years (1914 to 1918) are found and fails to examine the planning and evolution of governmental support systems in the political and social spheres leading up to Armistice Day. We are left with questions as to how the disabled veteran was

¹¹ Julie Anderson, “Mutilation and Disfiguration,” in *1914-1918 Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, eds. Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson. (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 2017), 1.

¹² Anderson, “Mutilation and Disfiguration,” 3.

¹³ Anderson, “Mutilation and Disfiguration,” 4-5.

¹⁴ Anderson, 6-7.

¹⁵ David A. Gerber, “Disabled Veterans, the State, and the Experience of Disability in Western Societies, 1914-1950,” *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 4 (2003), 899.

imagined before the true breadth of potential injuries was understood or integrated into the planning process, what needs the state was prepared to address, and how the disabled veteran's idealized body was projected to fit into the new landscape of France early in the conflict. My research seeks to fill in some of these gaps by examining a source—*Pour les mutilés*—that not only represents the social zeitgeist during the early years of WWI in France but also documents the initial policy recommendations that were popular in government then.

In writing this text, Barrès imagined what the “expected” injured veteran returning home should look like, their needs, and how their bodies—so changed were they—would fit into a new French landscape in the post-war. Through an analysis of the policies he advocates for in *Pour les mutilés* and who they were oriented toward, I intend to describe the “idealized” body of the disabled patriot and how the state planned to remunerate and rehabilitate their bodily losses in the early years of the war.

Barrès communicates a deep sense of duty towards these “mutilés,” whom he implores the reader to refer to as “invalides [invalids]” or “blessés [wounded]” to avoid prescribing “un mot qui pourrait être pour lui dans l’avenir, l’occasion d’une gêne et d’une souffrance [a word that could be for him, in the future, a source of embarrassment and suffering].”¹⁶ He makes it clear that this devotion to them stems from the immense gratitude he (a patriot and nationalist himself) felt for “leur héroïsme qui sauve la France [their heroism that saved France].”¹⁷ Still, he specifies that he only began with the title to ensure we know “de quelle classe de blessés [which class of the wounded]” he’s addressing – that is, amputees. While the volume is called *Pour les mutilés*, subsequent chapters use “les invalides de la guerre [the wounded of the war].” He casts the veterans at the center of this piece in a valorous light, noting: “...à cette heure, quand il s’agit d’un fait de

¹⁶ Maurice Barrès, *L’âme française et la guerre*, vol. 6, *Pour les mutilés*, eds. Émile-Paul, Frères (Paris: 1917), 1.

¹⁷ Barrès, *Pour les mutilés*, 2.

guerre, la mutilation est une gloire [at this time, when it concerns a thing of war, mutilation is a glory].”¹⁸ That said, Barrès is carefully choosing his subject. The first recorded use of mustard gas by the Germans in April 1915, about four months before his initial article “où nous en sommes [where we are]” was released. He had the opportunity to speak about and advocate for the victims of this new warfare tactic, even if he did not have as much information on the potential conditions related to it as he could have. Yet, he did not. Instead, he focused his powerful voice on amputees, whose injuries were long familiar to France and so readily associated with military service and honor that a missing limb could be nothing but “une gloire [a glory].”

This sentiment, alongside Barrès’ insistence that war veterans be given some identifier that their disability had come from warfare “pour éviter qu’ils ne soient demain confondus avec les victimes d’un accident banal [to avoid their confusion with victims of commonplace accidents]”¹⁹ reveals a bias on his part. For one, the fact that amputations might be mistaken for a workplace incident rather than “un fait de guerre [a thing of war]” only adds to their reasonably familiar nature, whereas other frequent trench injuries resist comparison. Moreover, to Barrès, the only people with disabilities “worthy” of this recognition and consideration are those who had been injured in war, defending France. Naturally, this means only young men who had been non-disabled before their service and were likely white. Indeed, “mutilation” is only a source of pride when it’s “un fait de guerre,” and Barrès is disgusted that a veteran’s injury could be mistaken for the more “unremarkable” workplace accidents.

Barrès offers multiple depictions of the veterans he’s addressing. In one such instance, he describes a scene on the Métro where two young soldiers are sitting in the carriage, one missing an arm and the other a leg, when an officer comes upon them. At the sight of these men, the officer

¹⁸ Barrès, 2.

¹⁹ Barrès, *Pour les mutilés*, 2.

performs “un large salut prolongé [a prolonged salute],” to which “les deux héros rougirent de plaisir [the two heroes blushed with pleasure].”²⁰ This scene features humble young men whose missing limbs correspond to the most often amputated in warfare, who are symbolic of those who have sacrificed before them and those who will do so after. Their injury, apparent to passers-by, commands the respect of even his betters, like the officer in this story. Still, they are modest, projecting the air of schoolboys flushed with pride at the praise of their teacher. He maintains this image in his later chapter, “Les Invalides à l’atelier [invalids at the workshop],” wherein he describes a visit to one of the “ateliers de rééducation [reeducation workshops]” at the rue des Épinettes. Throughout this visit, Barrès is in awe of the men before him, who he describes as having “subi un choc terrible [suffered a terrible shock].”²¹ Now, as they “rentrent dans la vie par la porte de la souffrance [return to life through the door of suffering],” they remain “si profondément braves que leur cœur a gardé intactes sa gaieté, sa jeunesse, sa force de sympathie [so profoundly brave in that their hearts have kept intact their gaiety, their youth, their strength of sympathy].”²² He continues listing all the great qualities these men possess, “leur vaillance, leur bonté, leur facile satisfaction ... leur bonne volonté, leur désir d’apprendre [their bravery, their goodness, their easy satisfaction...their goodwill, their desire to learn].”²³ As he does so, he surveys the men learning various trades in this workshop, and each always maintains two distinct features: they are young, and they have either an arm or leg amputation.

Barrès and his readers' duty is to these veterans, the young amputees. Not only that, but they serve those who easily overcome their embodied struggles and display a level of enthusiasm congruent with that which they had before the war, before their disability. To the older veterans,

²⁰ Barrès, 2.

²¹ Barrès, *Pour les mutilés*, 179.

²² Barrès, 179.

²³ Barrès, 180-181.

to those who suffer from injuries that do not fit in the prescribed category or who cannot “perform” happiness for people like Barrès, to them, France owes no thought, no honor. While the gratitude France should feel toward these idealized “invalides” “ne va pas s’épuiser en un jour [will not be exhausted in a day],” readers may begin repaying them by asking “comment les reconnaitrons-nous quand ils seront rentrés dans la vie civile [how can we identify them when they return to civilian life]?”²⁴ Barrès addresses this question in the remainder of his work, laying out how those in government, like himself, were planning to “aider les blessés diminués par la guerre à se refaire une vie et à retrouver du travail [help the wounded who were diminished by the war to remake their life and find work].”²⁵

Barrès and his colleagues make assumptions about the potential needs of this prototypical veteran upon his return home based on a set criterion: he expects that they will, again, be young, have little education or professional training, have one or more limb amputations, and be able and willing to reenter the workforce. Each policy recommendation can be traced directly to one or more traits in this text. In the remainder of this essay, I will examine how Barrès and his contemporaries used their imagined prototypical disabled combatant and his assumed needs in the early years of WWI to base the state’s veteran support framework.

The most prominent feature of Barrès’ returning soldier is his amputation, usually of a major limb like a leg or arm. Consequently, he assumes that each returning veteran would need or want a prosthetic, which we now know was false. Often, the prostheses the state could provide were intended to mask a soldier’s bodily loss, to allow them to “pass” as non-disabled citizens when they returned to civilian life. In 1915, when Barrès was publishing, orthopedic technologies were not much advanced from those available post-Franco-Prussian war. That is, they were

²⁴ Barrès, 2.

²⁵ Barrès, 5.

unwieldy and more aesthetically pleasing than functional. Still, it was assumed that the only way in which an amputee could return to the workforce—the defining element of civil life—was with a prosthetic. In exploring this issue, Barrès treats it as a foregone conclusion that the state owes amputees a prosthetic; it is only a question of which kind remains. This leads to this piece's first proper tension, which arises from the state's decision to “réquisitionner toute la production des membres artificiels [requisition the production of all prosthetic limbs].”²⁶ Barrès cannot believe this decision. While he has multiple concerns, his main issue with this policy is its inability to cater to the individual, specialized needs of veterans who might need a prosthetic customized to their profession (not necessarily to their comfort or need). With that in mind, he approaches the Ministres de la Guerre and de l'Intérieur, as well as with the Service de Santé to renegotiate.

Ultimately, they decided that the Fédération Nationale des Mutilés des Armées de terre et de mer (of which Barrès is a member) would be empowered to “procurer dans le commerce les appareils d'exception et les appareils professionnels dont elle se réservera de pourvoir certains mutilés [commercially procure exceptional and specialized professional prosthetics that they (the Fédération Nationale des Mutilés) reserve to enable certain mutilated individuals],” while the Département de la Guerre would “restera chargé de la fourniture des appareils de nécessité indispensable aux mutilés pour la reprise de leur vie sociale [remain charged with furnishing the mutilated with the necessary (non-specialized) prosthetics that are indispensable for their return to social life].”²⁷ Throughout this section, Barrès reveals how highly he prioritizes prosthetics through his outrage at the potential he might not be able to offer them through his Fédération. He asks the question, rhetorical though it may be, if the government created this monopoly, “Pour nous gêner, pour nous annihiler [to embarrass us, to annihilate us]?”²⁸ In the end, though, as Barrès

²⁶ Barrès, 5.

²⁷ Barrès, 8.

²⁸ Barrès, 7.

notes, “les difficultés sont surmontées [the difficulties were overcome],” and the Fédérations returned to their functions.

Throughout this piece, the only other policy that Barrès holds the state to as ardently as he does the prosthetics manufacturing is the pension, which should provide an acceptable living wage to injured veterans until their convalescence ends and they are hired into a new profession. He insists that a veteran will be offered a combined pension from the state and the Fédération des Mutilés of around 5 fr. 20 c. (3 fr. 50 c. from the latter and one fr. 70 c. from the former)²⁹ if they plan to live at home. This, says Barrès, will “leur permet de subvenir à leurs besoins [allow them to support their needs],” but there remain still “un grand nombre qui n’ont pas de famille autour d’eux et qui se trouvent isolés dans la grande ville [a large number who do not have family around them and find themselves isolated in the big city].”³⁰ For them, the state and Fédération will offer “un établissement où ils seront entièrement hospitalisés [an establishment where they would be entirely hospitalized].”³¹ They would not receive any such allocation from the state. However, Barrès says, the choice of which form of assistance to receive was left to the individual.

The catch, however, is that this pension is not a forever guarantee. Indeed, it is expected to go to those young men who are excited and ready “d’apprendre un métier approprié à leur situation [to learn a profession appropriate to their situation].”³² The state will offer “des moyens d’existence à l’invalidé [...] jusqu’à ce qu’il sache son métier et que nous lui trouverons une place normale [living wages to the invalid [...] until he knows his profession and we can find him a regular placement].”³³ It is not left up to the reader’s imagination who these provisions are intended for;

²⁹ Barrès, 13.

³⁰ Barrès, 13.

³¹ Barrès, 13.

³² Barrès, 12.

³³ Barrès, 13.

Barrès writes a scene in a later chapter that reads almost as a fantasy, wherein he faces the ideal interaction for a man in his position. He describes a day at his office au Champs-Élysées. He's approached by “un soldat amputé d'un bras [a soldier with an amputated arm],” who expresses his regret of not receiving much education before the war, but he is excited to have that chance now. Barrès' excitement jumps off the page to be able to address the needs of *this* gentleman: “quel contentement alors de pouvoir répondre à cette visiteur... [what pleasure to be able to respond to this visitor...].”³⁴ In this scene, we are once again confronted with this prototypical soldier: an amputee of the arm whose youth is implied by his lack of professional training or education before wartime, who is excited to reenter the workforce.

Not only to reenter the workforce, demands Barrès. They are to become artisans, like the good Frenchmen of yore. In a conversation with M. Kula at the rue des Épinettes workshop, they discuss the kind of workman France “needs.” Kula talks about his father, who he describes as “un artisan vrai, possédent toutes les qualités de l'artisan [a real artisan, possessing all the qualities of an artisan].”³⁵ With “un sentiment magnifique de la dignité de l'ouvrier [the magnificent feeling of a worker's dignity],” Kula expresses a deep desire that “tous nos mutilés acquièrent les belles qualités de mon père et deviennent des hommes [all of our mutilated acquire the great qualities of my father and become men].”³⁶ A nice sentiment, but not completely honest. Kula and Barrès agree that “nous [France] étions jadis un peuple d'agriculteurs et d'artisans...La France était vigoureuse [we were formerly a people of farmers and artisans...France was vigorous],” but they have fallen far. Now, they have become “un peuple d'employés, de fonctionnaires, de marchands, de financiers, d'hommes d'affaires, de politiciens [an employed people, of civil servants,

³⁴ Barrès, 178.

³⁵ Barrès, 183.

³⁶ Barrès, 183.

merchants, bankers, businessmen, and politicians].”³⁷ This will not do. However, they are using these men to furnish “le début de la restauration de l’apprentissage en France [the beginning of the restoration of apprenticeship in France],” which they claim can “[résoudra] le problème de l’alcoolisme (car l’artisan ne va pas au cabaret, il aime son travail) [...] et le problème de la dépopulation, car l’homme qui se croit en état de nourrir des enfants devient père de famille [resolve the problem of alcoholism (because the artisan will not go to the cabaret, because he likes his job) ... and the problem of depopulation, because the man who believes in feeding his children becomes the father of the family].”³⁸

It is clear then: the service of these young men is not over. It has only begun. Their bodies remain forever at the disposal of France. This final sentiment offers insight into the prototype Barrès has written into his vision of the post-war nation. The state should support this veteran, not in recognition of his sacrifice, but in anticipation of what more he might offer. He is young so that he may work a lifetime more and with enthusiasm— not like those older, jaded soldiers. He is an amputee, an injury France has known for years, that they know how to manage and honor, unlike facial disfigurement or brain damage. Moreover, it is manageable. The state will give him a prosthetic (it’s almost like he’s no different from anyone else with his sleeve pulled down!)—and keep him moving straight into professional training. He’s uneducated, with no prospects. He *needs* the state to teach him a livelihood so much that he won’t notice that he’s being trafficked into the pilot program for reinstituting apprenticeship as practice in France. He’s just happy to have a job; he won’t even notice how he has been unknowingly reenlisted into the state’s service all over again.

Throughout this text, Maurice Barrès employs his powerful voice to invite his readers to imagine the “ideal” veteran—his disability, his role in the nation—expected to return to French

³⁷ Barrès, 184.

³⁸ Barrès, 185.

society in the early years of WWI. He illustrates the qualities valued by the state and its people, most of which relate to their perceived utility: youth, condition, level of education, and commitment to reentry into the workforce. The support system that Barrès and his colleagues advocate for in this work is tailored to this imagined, “idealized” veteran’s body, needs, abilities, and desires upon returning home. As most of his policy recommendations were implemented, the use of this “prototypical” soldier to frame a welfare system for *all* disabled veterans warrants further research into not only the efficacy of the state’s policies on an individual disability basis but also into the influence of writings such as Barrès’ on the collective French imagination during the 1914-1918 period. In recognition of the strained and regressive relationship modern France maintains with disability, culturally and infrastructurally, Barrès’ early contributions to French disability discourse cement his relevance today.

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