

## **Living with Prostheses: Bodily Routines and Bodily Extensions**

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Bodily routines are a difficult field of research for anthropology. The difference between bodily skills and cognitive expression and the taken-for-granted character of many everyday routines are methodological challenges to a field interested in expressing the actor's point of view: how does one get access to, and write about, practices which are never consciously reflected upon? Situations in which bodily routines break down and consciously have to be re-learned can offer a pathway into this field, even if (like all 'breaching experiments') they rely on extraordinary situation.

This paper is part of the preparatory work for a field study on living with amputated limbs in Africa, but the presentation does not look at African material. It looks at a specific genre of advisory literature: at guidebooks and self-help manuals for European soldiers who lost limbs in the two World Wars. These manuals, which are often based on personal experiences by the authors, offer first-hand material on the difficult process of learning new routines and on the relation between "real" and "artificial" body parts. They are used in the presentation to reflect on methodological and theoretical issues in the anthropology of the damaged body. Can such manuals – often written by people who themselves had to learn to live with amputated limbs – be used as empirical data for an anthropology of the body? How do they convey bodily experiences? What is a person's relation to his or her artificial limbs, and what does this tell us about 'being a body'? How are issues of exclusion and inclusion broached in the manuals? How is a person's identity affected by losing a limb, and how do functional and aesthetic aspects of amputation affect his or her social role in a post-war context?