



# Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature

*Santanu Das*

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## **Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature** Santanu Das

The First World War ravaged the male body on an unprecedented scale, yet fostered moments of physical intimacy and tenderness among the soldiers in the trenches. Touch, the most elusive and private of the senses, became central to war experience. War writing is haunted by experiences of physical contact: from the muddy realities of the front to the emotional intensity of trench life, to the traumatic obsession with the wounded body in nurses' memoirs. Through extensive archival and historical research, analysing previously unknown letters and diaries alongside literary writings by figures such as Owen and Brittain, Santanu Das recovers the sensuous world of the First World War trenches and hospitals. This original and evocative study alters our understanding of the period as well as of the body at war, and illuminates the perilous intimacy between sense experience, emotion and language as we try to make meaning in times of crisis.

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