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***FINE ART, PRINT MAKING***

***THE WAR ART OF WILLIAM ORPEN, PAUL NASH AND PETER HOWSON***

***by JOHN HEARNE***

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Candidacy for the Degree of Bachelor of Fine Art.

1997

STATIONARY BLANKS ONSTANDARD DESIGN

STATE THE PROBLEM

THE PROBLEM IS TO DETERMINE THE EFFECT OF

A. HYPOTHESIS

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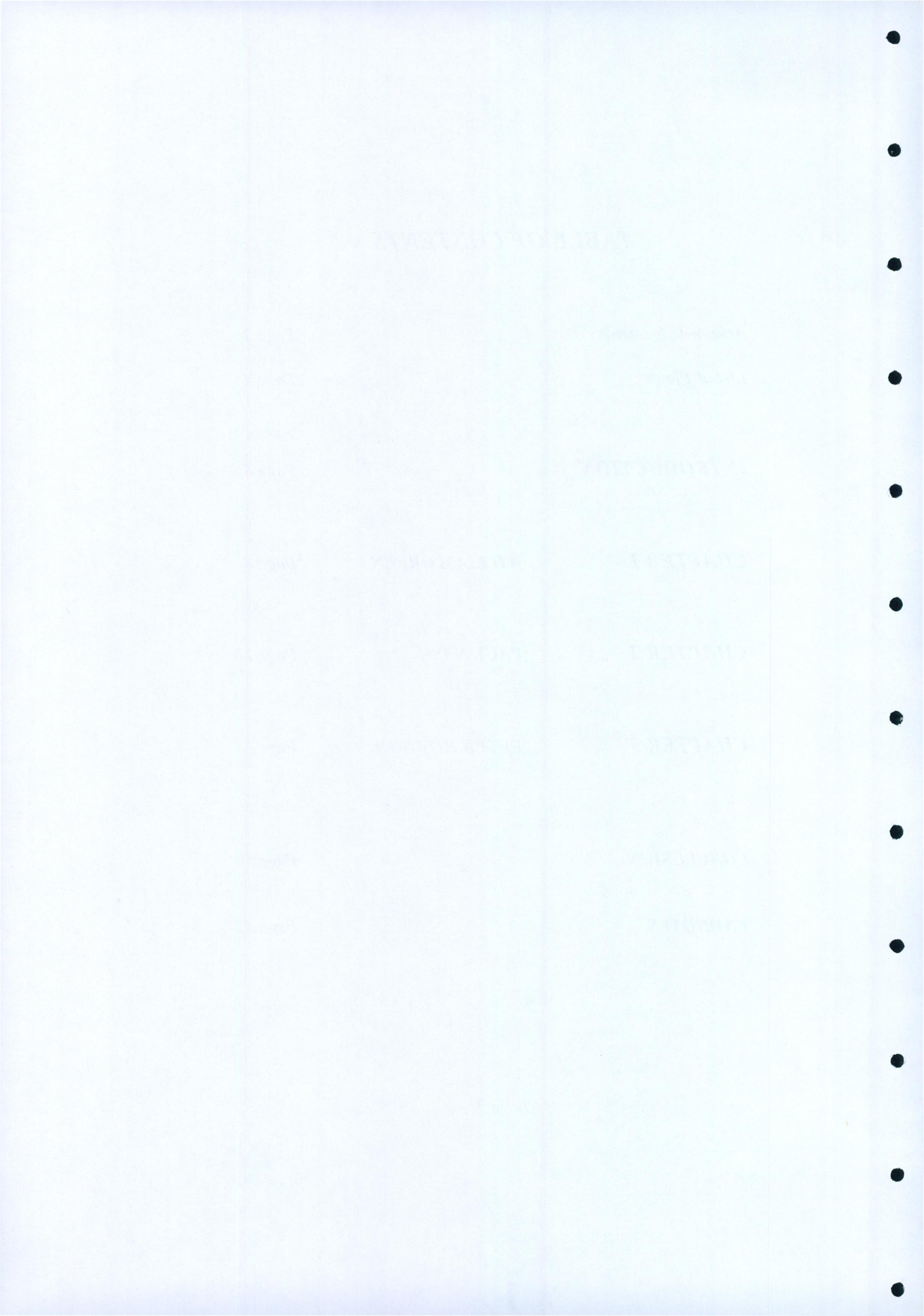
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## INTRODUCTION

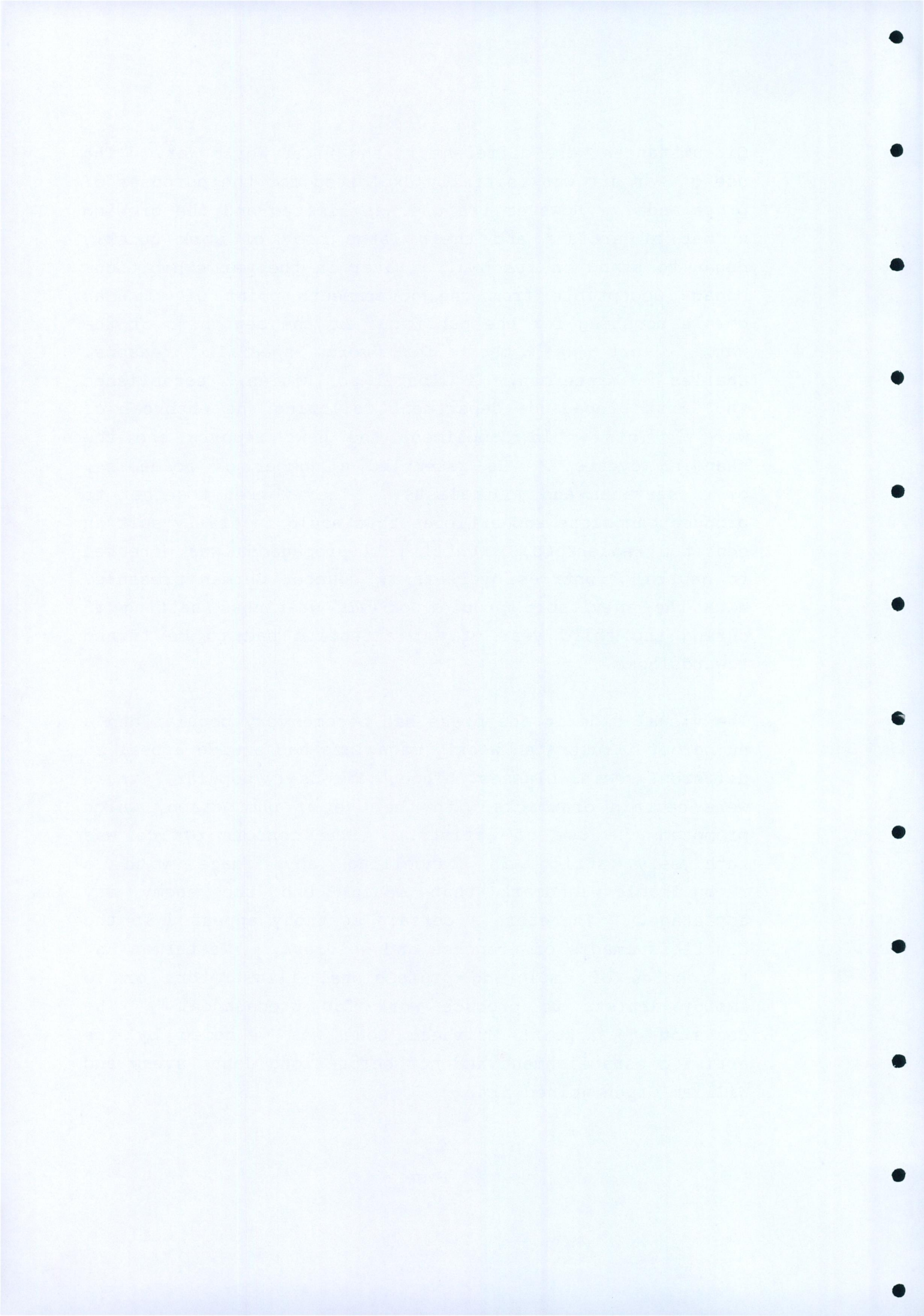
This essay is concentrated on three artists who have documented warfare. William Orpen had committed himself to England and had become an established painter at the time of the outbreak of the first World War. The war fueled his ambitions and became a stepping stone for his fame and success that would arrive in the 1920's. Paul Nash was a young up and coming artist when war broke out in 1914. He served with the Hampshire regiment before being appointed an official war artist. The war was a catalyst that not only matured his style but also affected his sensibility. Peter Howson travelled to the former Yugoslavia twice at the height of the Civil War and has produced a personalised body of work that was commissioned from the Imperial War museum, resurrecting the official war artists scheme that had been dormant since the second World War and developed in the first World War. ✓

Through the similarities and differences created between the work, their experiences and the conditions they worked under it is possible to compare and evaluate the intention of the work and comment upon the level of success it achieved. From the Civil War in Yugoslavia that has lived in our minds through the media recently, Peter Howson conveys a reality that is less abstracted than journalistic reports and television pictures, while at the same time relating to art and personal experience. He is placed as an important contrast between Orpen and Nash. ?

INSTRUCTIONS

Circumstances were different in the first World War. The use of war art was initially exploited for the purposes of propaganda. However its use was limited and the growing number of artists and their large body of work quickly began to stand on its own. Later in the war exhibitions became acceptable from the governments' point of view as morale boosting for the public. At the beginning of the war, art was used for more specific reasons. Charles F. Masterman, a liberal politician, established the first propaganda department following the outbreak of war. This would complement the news reports and the changing events. He assembled a number of academics, civil servants and journalists. They worked together to produce pamphlets and articles that would initially suit an educated readership. Until 1917 propaganda was directed to neutral countries overseas to counter German pressure. With the inevitable problem of war weariness setting in during the third year of war attention had to be turned towards home.

The visual side in the press had become very popular and a number of illustrated weekly magazines had a wide appeal to different social classes. Though immensely popular, there were certain drawbacks with the use of photography which prompted the use of artists. The censors office was ruthlessly strict in cancelling any image with a recognisable landmark that would lend the enemy any advantage. Therefore a certain monotony appeared in the countless images of trenches and soldiers. Masterman had the choice of employing professional illustrators or to employ artists to produce work for propaganda. The decision to appoint Muirhead Bone was welcomed by the artistic establishment and not before long John Lavery and William Orpen joined him.



Lavery's appointment was disastrous but Orpen was the most successful artist from the propagandists point of view, producing twelve important portraits of Generals and Heroes as well as useful drawings and water-colours suitable for publishing as propagandist material. The use of war art changed during 1917 and 1918. As the war drew to a conclusion and victory in England seemed near, the emphasis began to centre around documenting events and the physicality of war. The Hall of Remembrance was an idea that never grew outside the planners drawings. The British War Memorial's committee, B.W.M.C., was established under the directorship of Lord Beaverbrook, to establish a permanent exhibition hall dedicated to the war. Paul Nash's appointment was an acknowledgement to a personal and stylised vision that would stand as a statement for warfare in modern art. His popular exhibition of drawing in the Goupil Gallery in 1917 prompted his employment as an official war artist. He produced some famous works at this time including, *We are making a new world* and *The Menin Road*. In his second trip to France he changed his viewpoint of the war, from the idealist romantic poet/artist to that of a messenger condemning and opposed to the war.



## CHAPTER 1

## WILLIAM ORPEN

Of the nine official artists that served in France for the British government none were treated with such hospitality or accepted into military society than William Orpen. Alongside Muirhead Bone he was the longest serving artist to document the war and also record the signing of the peace in Versailles in 1919. In total he produced over two hundred pieces of work that included landscapes, portraits and other sketches, which were all sold together for one fee to the Imperial War Museum after the war.

Only the latter part of the war was documented by artists in official terms, as it took years before the decision to employ artists which would complement other forms of propaganda was made by the Department of Information in London in 1917. Perhaps suspecting art and its potential might contribute to the war effort, Orpen enlisted in 1916. He had already known the consequences of war when a great loss occurred for him on 14th May 1915, when his friend and patron Hugh Lane was drowned, when the Lusitania was torpedoed by a German submarine off the Irish coast. Previously Orpen's mistress at this time, Evelyn St. George, lost her son Avenal who was killed in only the second week of war in 1914.

Lord Derby introduced a scheme in December 1915 that would make conscription inevitable to a selection of the male population. This included Irish citizens living in England. Sean Keating pleaded with Orpen before sailing home to follow him to Aran. He quoted Orpen as saying,

I am unknown in Ireland. It was the English who gave me appreciation and money. This is their war, and I have enlisted. I won't fight but I'll do what I can.<sup>1</sup>



By admitting that he would not go to war as a combatant his other intentions can only be presumed. Although he was technically a member of the Armed Services (being commissioned in the Service Corps in Kensington Barracks on 30th March 1916), he used the regiment as a base to continue to work with the lucrative commissions he was earning as a portraitist in London's society. Thus for 1916 he managed to work as usual being a potentially valuable resource for the Department of Information.

In December 1916 Lloyd George succeeded Asquith's government. Following complaints from the war office Lloyd George created a new Department of Information replacing the Propaganda Department. A new scheme to send artists to the front was established in conjunction with military intelligence. Lord Beaverbrook, the self made Canadian millionaire was already collecting war art and commissioning war artists to work for the Canadian government. When he approached Orpen there was stiff competition between the Department of Information who did not wish to lose the services of a skilled painter even though his appointment was only in discussion. Orpen himself strongly opposed the idea of war art being commissioned for Canadian collections. This encouraged a contract to move more quickly as there was a great deal of bargaining between the two sides. As the stakes rose so did the conditions of Orpen's contract. He had his fame to thank for the luxury of a car, chauffeur and batman as well as the promise of unlimited time in France whereas other artists were employed for three week periods. ✓



*An onlooker in France*, published in 1921 is a valuable memoir of his experiences. It was written immediately after the war, perhaps unusually, as for some it may have been a period to look back upon in later life, such as Robert Graves autobiography, *Goodbye to all that*. In fact Orpen wrote it to make money as he had financial worries after the signing of peace in Versailles. By this time people just wished to put the war behind them. Publications about the war had been forced upon England to the point of saturation by 1918 and after armistice the market simply fell. The war now lived not only as a confused and bitter memory but also as history and the 1920's were times to look ahead. Orpen need not have worried, using his friends in the literary world he gained some favourable reviews. Anecdotes were extracted and printed in daily newspapers.

He travelled to France in the first week of April 1917, already aware that the honorary rank of Major granted him certain comforts that the ordinary soldier did not have. One of his first confrontations was with the press authorities. For as many friends Orpen made within the military there were enemies as well. Colonel Hutton Wilson and Major W.N. Lee from the beginning became adversaries. They were involved in the intelligence (F) Department that censored material returning to England. As Orpen's superiors they demanded timetables that were impossible to achieve, but with a phonecall to Philip Sasson, Sir Douglas Haig's private secretary meant the Censorship Department was put in its place, which put both the artist and intelligence section at conflict.



The Somme campaign by the Spring of 1917 had been waged for a year and it was those fought over battlefields that affected Orpen so much. He began touring the towns and places that had witnessed fighting, Amiens, Pozieres, Bapume and Peronne. Military police controlled an efficient cordon throughout the front line excluding anyone without the correct passes. This was for security reasons and the safety of visitors. Orpen had no experience as a combatant and the mortality rate at the front was high in certain places. Any footage of battle scenes from the first World War were more than likely training, mock battles before an offensive behind the front line.

Most of his experience with soldiers occurred behind the lines. Even so a great deal of difficulty was encountered, artists are generally more sensitive than hardened soldiers as both Orpen and Peter Howson discovered from his return from the first trip to Bosnia in 1993. During one of the early days Orpen recalled drawing soldiers beside the distracting noise a British gun battery near Peronne when the German guns responded to the British bombardment. "Then they started, and the noise was hell. Whenever there was a big bang I couldn't help giving a jump, the old Tommy I was drawing said, 'Its alright Guv'ner, you'll get used to it soon'."2

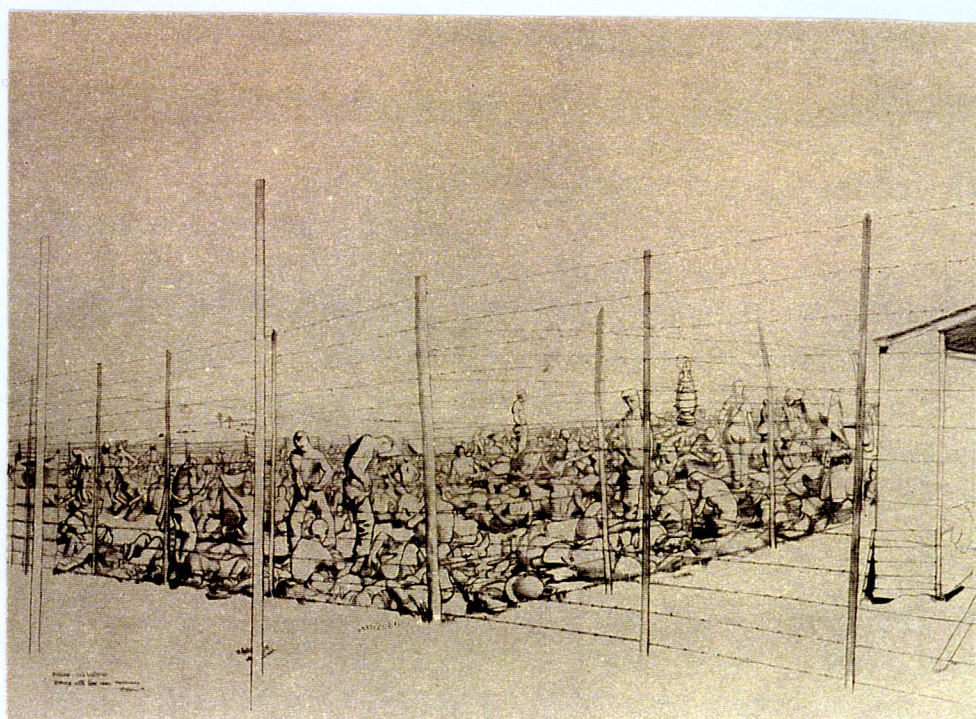
From Amiens and the Somme he moved North to Cassel and the second Army headquarters beside the Ypres salient. He drew German prisoners at Ballieul. 3,500 prisoners who had just recently been captured were infested with lice but confident. "They would cheer everytime a German shell went overhead".3 Drawing isolated small groups of soldiers who stand around redundantly was ideal for propaganda. But how is a defiant enemy soldier to be portrayed?



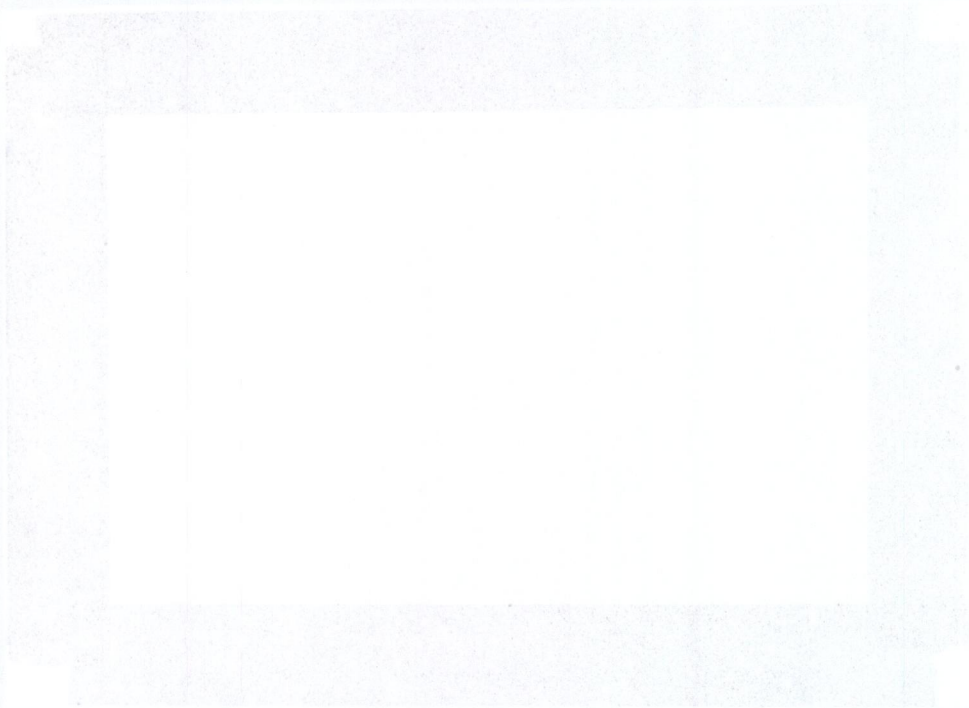


German prisoner with Iron Cross. plate a





German prisoners. plate b



*German prisoner with iron cross*, has the proud yet pensive expression that Orpen observed within the English soldier. However the figure appears too cramped within the page. He undermines any defiance in a mocking way by stressing the stiffness of the German soldier with his right leg bent into right angles connecting the upper body. Nor did he indicate a chair or what he is sitting on. The sharp horizontal line of his right leg conflicts with the void below creating a strange balancing act.

After spending some time away in Diepe and Le Harve he returned to Amiens. It was now August and he was surprised to find the Somme transformed

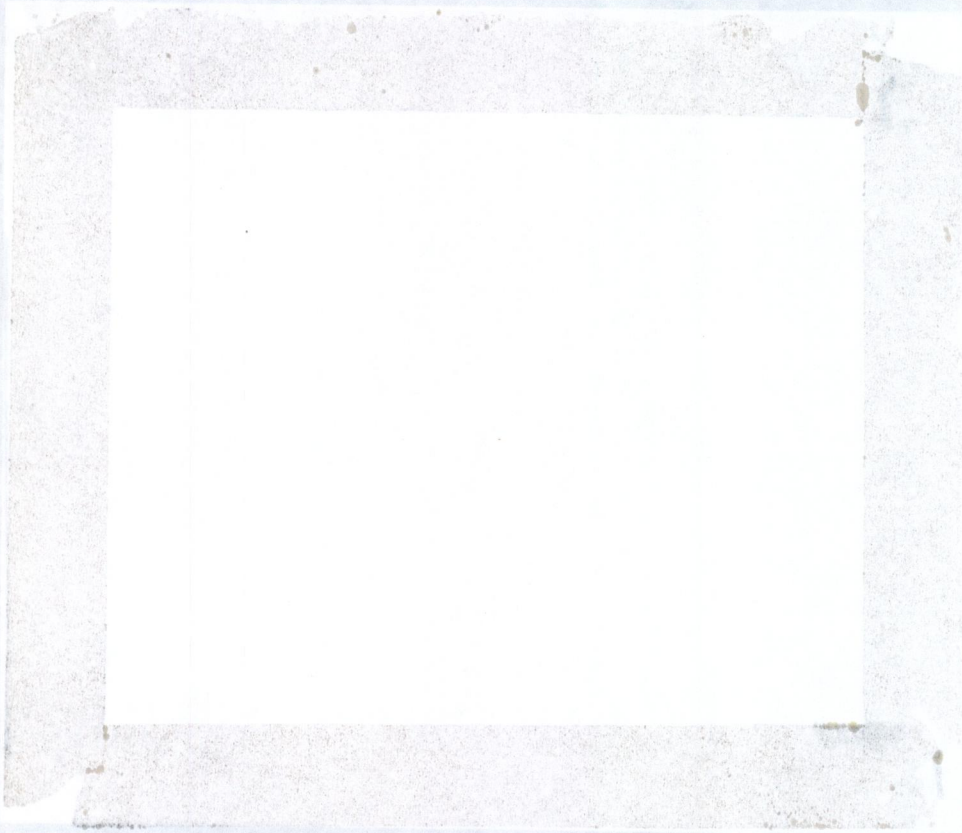
... no words could express the beauty of it. The dreary, dismal mud was baked white and pure - dazzling white ... clothes, guns, all that had been left in the confusion when the war past on, had now been baked by the sun into one wonderful combination of colour - white, pale grey and pale gold.<sup>4</sup>

It was here at this time Orpen painted some of his best work of the war. *The great mine, La Boisselle, German wire Thiepval* and another canvass entitled *Thiepval*. This canvas is painted in the pale colours he described. The shadows alternate in tone and colour between the different forms and objects. Two skulls dominate the foreground beyond which it is difficult to distinguish clothing and other remains, even though care is taken to carefully suggest shapes, gestural expressive marks are rare in Orpens painting. The emphasis appears to be on debris as these were old battlefields that had been fought over months before. These no mans lands were modern deserts, not only the human waste but the clothes, rifles, tin cans and other refuse that was equally important with Paul Nash and other artists which was used to express hopelessness and destruction. What Orpen explored in these redundant battlefields is an attempt of self-discovery.





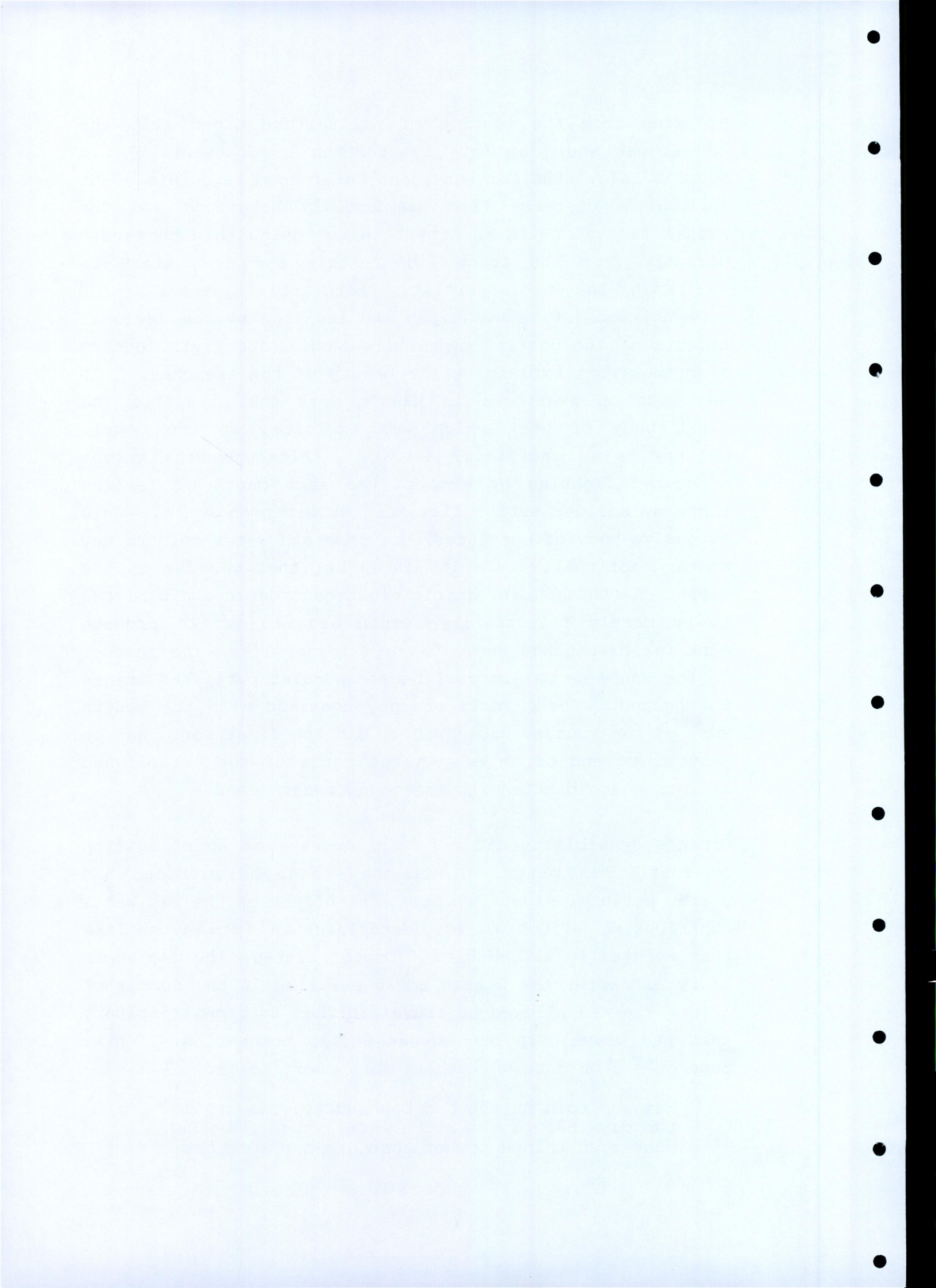
The great Mine, La Bloiselle. plate c



Breaking from the routine of portraiture Orpen felt the actual war would be more interesting to document. Sir Douglas Haig, the Commander and Chief encouraged him.<sup>5</sup> He felt at a distance from his social background and the actual fact of being an artist in not being able to record directly from the front line, this is in contrast to Paul Nash, the soldier artist. Both artists were aware of a beauty amongst this. Orpen was inspired by the seasonal effects of the battlefields while Nash wrote vivid letters from the front exclaiming the beauty of the trenches. It was such an awareness in Nash's work that inspired the first body of work which was exhibited at the Goupil Gallery as an unofficial artist. Although Orpen never witnessed fighting he evolved the same depth of feeling that any soldier artist like Nash or Nevinson would. His extensive body of canvasses, drawings and water-colours may appear emotionally tame in places but that was due to his style. A contemporary critic might consider certain pieces to be merely illustrative, Orpen was obliged to produce work for propaganda use. Certain images like *The Thinker on the Butte de Warlencourt* became popular published images in England. These works sharply contrast with the modern work of the younger Paul Nash. Can the first World War be seen as an end of an era in the terms of the established artists doing battle with the young modern ones ?

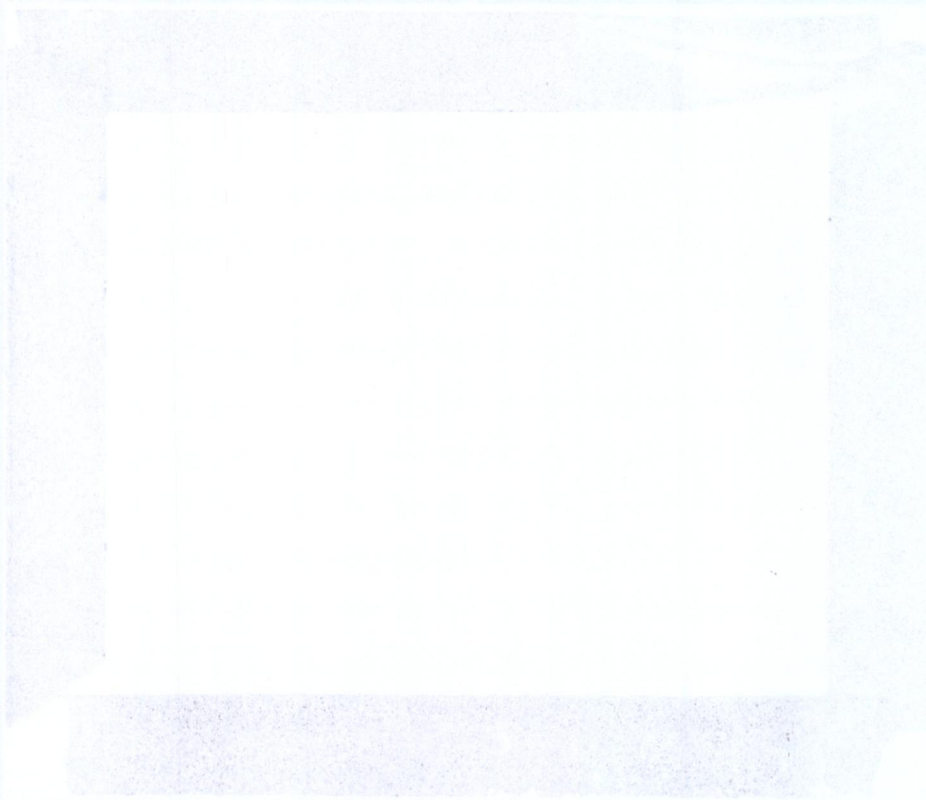
Orpen's sensibility did not only operate on an obligation to fulfil his brief. All the images he produced had strong personal significance. The effect of the war was a contributing effect to his deterioration into alcoholism that eventually killed him. Orpen painted *The mad woman of Douai* after the German advance failed in the Summer of 1918. He was allowed to travel further into new territory that had previously been under German occupation. Like most of his obscure work there is a story to it.

Her son told us she had been quite well until two days before the Boche left, then they had done such things to her that she had lost her





d. German Wire, Thiepval



e. Thiepval



h. Adam and Eve at Peronne



reason. There she sat silent and motionless, except for one thumb that constantly twitched. But if one of us in uniform passed close to her, she would give a convulsive shudder ..... After about six months she became quite normal again and does not remember anything about it. <sup>6</sup>

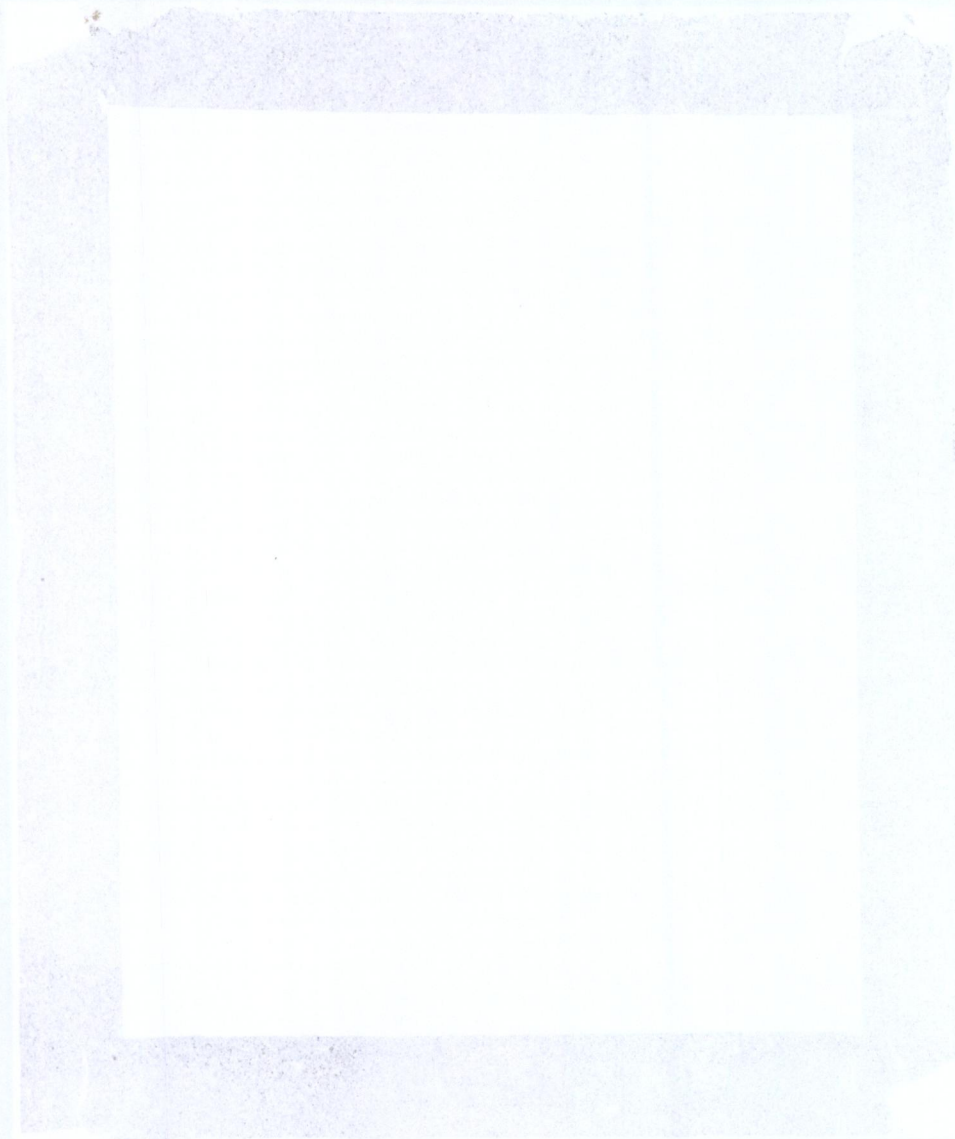
The work is not unlike *The Holy Well* or *The Western Wedding* in format which was to be Orpen's furthest departure in style painted in 1913. The most personally significant motif in Orpen's war art was to be the hand. He had an horrific experience of seeing a severed "hand lying on the duckboards"<sup>7</sup>, during one of his first visits to the front.

In pieces like *A man with a cigarette*, an injured soldier stands with one arm concealed, the other exposed revealing the delicate shape of his left hand and forearm bent at an odd angle holding the cigarette. His casual stance suggests derangement within the surreal setting of the trench. Comparably the same strangeness exists within the figures of *The Holy Well* and *The mad woman of Douai*. A figure, presumably the mad woman is seated in the centre of the painting beside a table. She is surrounded by other men and women, and two resting British soldiers in front of the destruction of the town. A large crucifix stands on a partly demolished wall or building behind them. Does this suggest sanctuary or shelter for these refugees, who possess only a few pieces of furniture in the ruins? Does it signify sanctuary in the Church or religion or does the crucifix stand for the suffering of human kind? He attempts to suggest isolation and hopelessness that Peter Howson found in Bosnia through the lack of shelter, of belonging, that all refugees inherit and the non-existence of help in the destruction of the town, as well as the indifferent soldiers looking on. One is resting on the ground beside a grave that reveals its occupants foot. The other soldier appears to be expressing interest or concern in the civilians until his appearance is a reminder of a different study of Orpen's work.





f. The mad Woman of Doai



*Adam and Eve at Peronne* in which a similar soldier who is more or less identical in stance and appearance whilst consorting with a girl holding an apple, the biblical symbol of temptation reminding us of Orpen's description of the "riff-raff from Paris, the expelled from Rouen, in fact the badly diseased from all parts of France hovered about in the blackness".

It is the personal and intimate way that Orpen maintained these motifs that alerts us to his sensitivity as a person and concern as an artist to document the war in his style. It is poignant to realise how an "onlookers" work, so popular at the time has become forgotten or redundant as a collection that has stood together for so many years and still stands as an unseen testament to an individual's immense talent.

g. A Man with a Cigarette





## CHAPTER 2

## PAUL NASH

Paul Nash was twenty five when he enlisted in the Artists rifles in September 1914 after the outbreak of war. He had become an accepted artist by this time, although his development had not been an easy one which demanded tenacity and self belief. Inspiration in other fields in the arts including poetry and the theatre helped him maintain interest and direction. He enrolled in Chelsea Polytechnic in 1907 after failing an entrance exam to the Navy while he was studying at St. Paul's Preparatory School. His family's plans for him to become a naval officer and failing that banker, failed because of a weakness in mathematics.

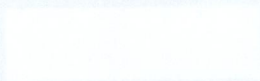
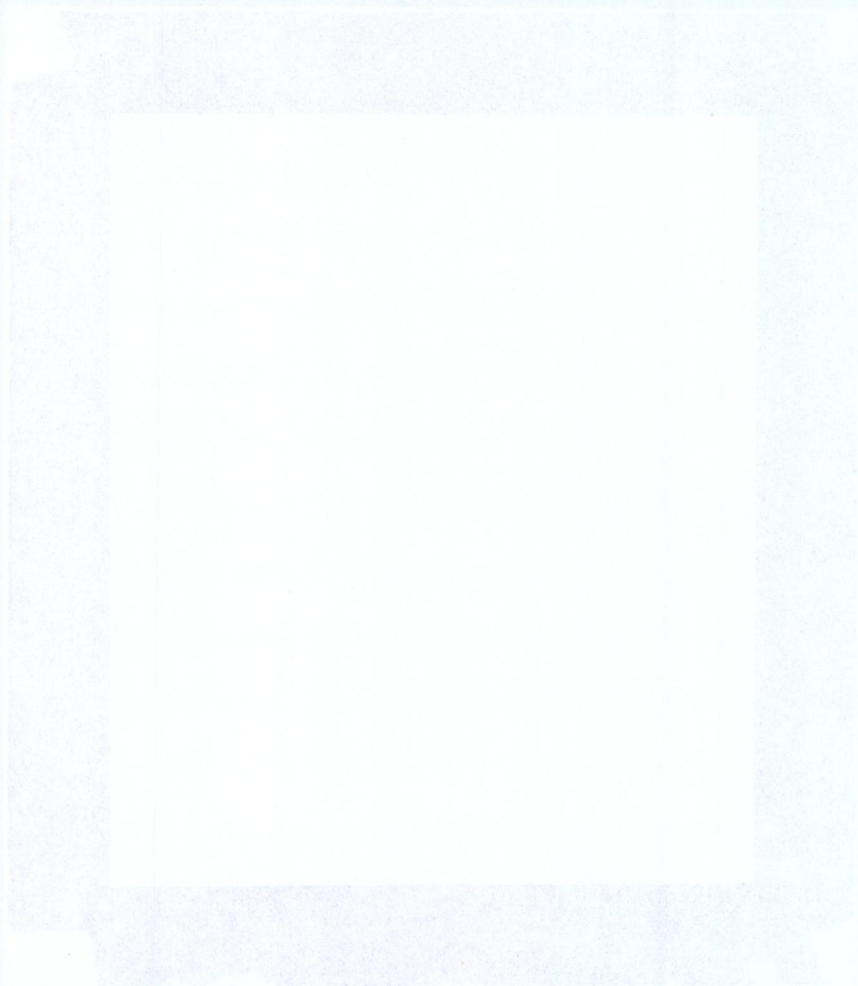
From his early interests in literature and art he studied illustration at Chelsea. Blake and especially Rossetti were Nash's influences and some of his work inspired poetry which mirrored his romantic style of this early work. He also met Gordon Bottomelly, the playwright who would become a lifelong friend and influence.

The death of his mother in 1910 and the awakened presence of his romantic sensibility influenced his first painting, *Vision at evening*. A poem of the same title accompanied the work which included "her mouth was like a rose among the clouds"<sup>1</sup> which mirrors the slightly childish and romantic image of a girls face centred, and floating above a country landscape. From his success as a illustrator which was recorded by the examiner William Rothenstien who recommended that he should transfer to the Slade. However he received a setback, though liked by Tonks he did not thrive in the life room and was forced to abandon his studies after four terms. He simply could not draw the figure satisfactorily. However Nash had found a good





i. Bird Garden



friend in William Rothenstien not only as an influence but also as a contact who would provide valuable meetings with gallery owners and other personalities which would aid his progression as an artist and his appointment as an official war artist in the first World War.

After leaving the Slade, financial pressures which would obstruct his life at times forced him to return to his father who welcomed him perhaps for a need of companionship after the death of his wife. Leaving the disappointments of the city behind him Nash meditated on the present and future by observing the countryside from his family home. Perhaps the ensuing drawings and paintings re-awaken the strong emotional feeling associated with childhood innocence. He recalls the gardens and countryside around his home were

like the territory in Kensington Gardens which I found as a child, it's magic lay within itself, implicated in its own design and relationship to its surroundings.<sup>2</sup>

An early work, *A lane in blue* gently suggests form through delicate areas of shadow. *Bird Garden* is more aggressive with greater areas of light and shade created by chalk, ink and water-colour, though not as yet closely observed as his studies of elm trees. The odd shape of an elm tree fascinated Nash and perhaps the strangeness mirrored Nash's own oddity. He drew a number of these trees growing together yet retaining his romantic style in poetry. "*Oh dreaming trees, sunk in a swoon of sleep. What have ye seen in these mysterious places*".<sup>3</sup> All these works were exhibited in his first exhibition, and it was held at the established Carfax Gallery in November 1912. The following year he met and became engaged with Margaret Odeh. He began working with colour more closely in 1913 and by the Summer of 1914 he was accepted to the New English Art Club (NEAC). *Summer Garden* epitomises his pre-war painting. Almost oriental in feeling and colour



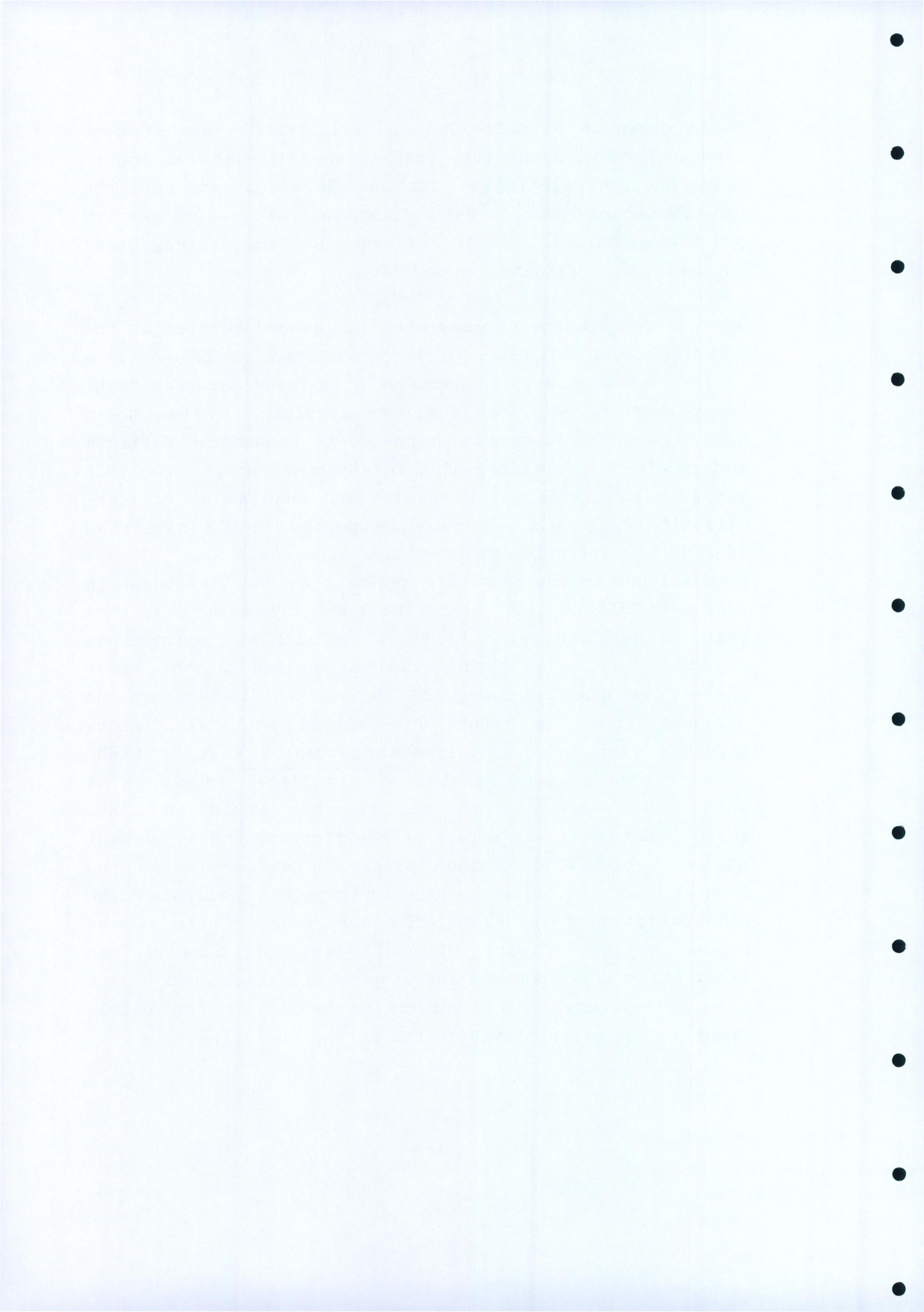


k. Chaos Decortif



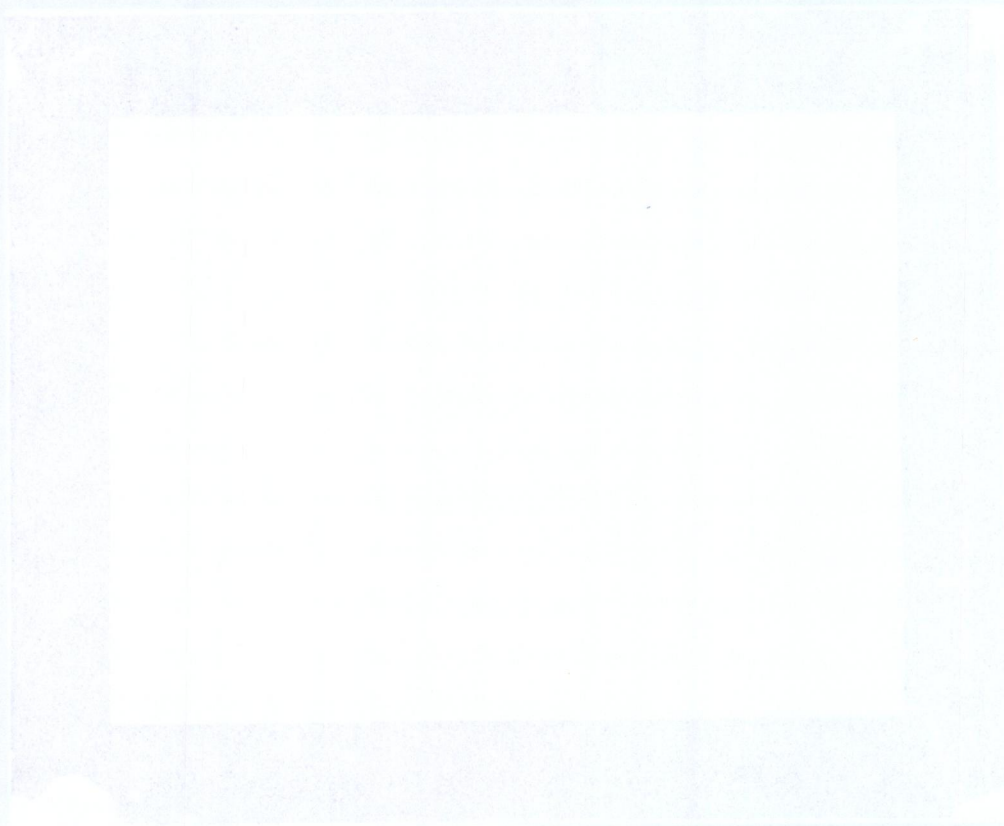
it is drawn in a controlled and illustrative way it went hand in hand with the idea that it was all that was modern about English painting. Through his acceptance into the NEAC he became known to two influential people. Roger Fry and Edward Marsh. Fry's influence was immediately great but had become strained in 1919.<sup>4</sup>

War was declared on Germany when it invaded Belgium at the end of August in 1914. Nash enlisted in the Artists Rifles in September. In December he married Margaret Odeh. He volunteered at first for home service. After their honeymoon in Somerset Nash reported to Roehampton Barracks and received initial training in Richmond Park. For 1915 and 1916 he trained as a soldier and then as an officer. Artistically it was a very slack period in his career as much of his attention was demanded from the Army. He was commissioned to the Hampshire regiment as 2nd Lieutenant in December 1916. 1917 would be one of the most intense years of Nash's life. He travelled with his regiment to Le Harve on 22nd February and was posted to the Ypres Salient at the beginning of March. His letters to Margaret from the front were filled with excitement. Although aware of the potential hardships that he might face through training Paul Nash had little knowledge of what experience life in the trenches would be like. Fortunately there was a lull in the fighting and an element of peace prevailed around Ypres. This contented the soldiers and an unusual aura of happiness mirrored the blossoming countryside. The anxieties in the months before active service as well as the boredom and frustration of life being interrupted and threatened by war were alleviated by the surprising beauty of the battle front in the artists eyes in the Spring of 1917.





j. Summer Garden



Nash tapped into this in his letters home,

I sit now in the reserve line and the place is just joyous, the dandelions are bright gold over the parapet ... a most desolate and ruinous place two months ago, today was a vivid green ... from the depth of the woods bruised heart poured out the throbbing song of a nightingale. Ridiculous incongruity.<sup>5</sup>

This may have been his way of making the best of a bad situation or just re-assuring his wife, however, he admitted "I am happier in the trenches than anywhere out here. It sounds absurd but life has a greater meaning here and a new zest and beauty is more poignant".<sup>6</sup> Nash's descriptions of life in the trenches in his letters to Margaret Odeh are filled with romantic awareness in the colour and form of his surroundings. Is this the typical mentality of the romantic poet or artist intent on assimilating beauty onto the canvas. If it is a huge change was to occur later in his second trip to France as an official artist. In a letter dated 6th April 1917 from a front line trench he exclaims

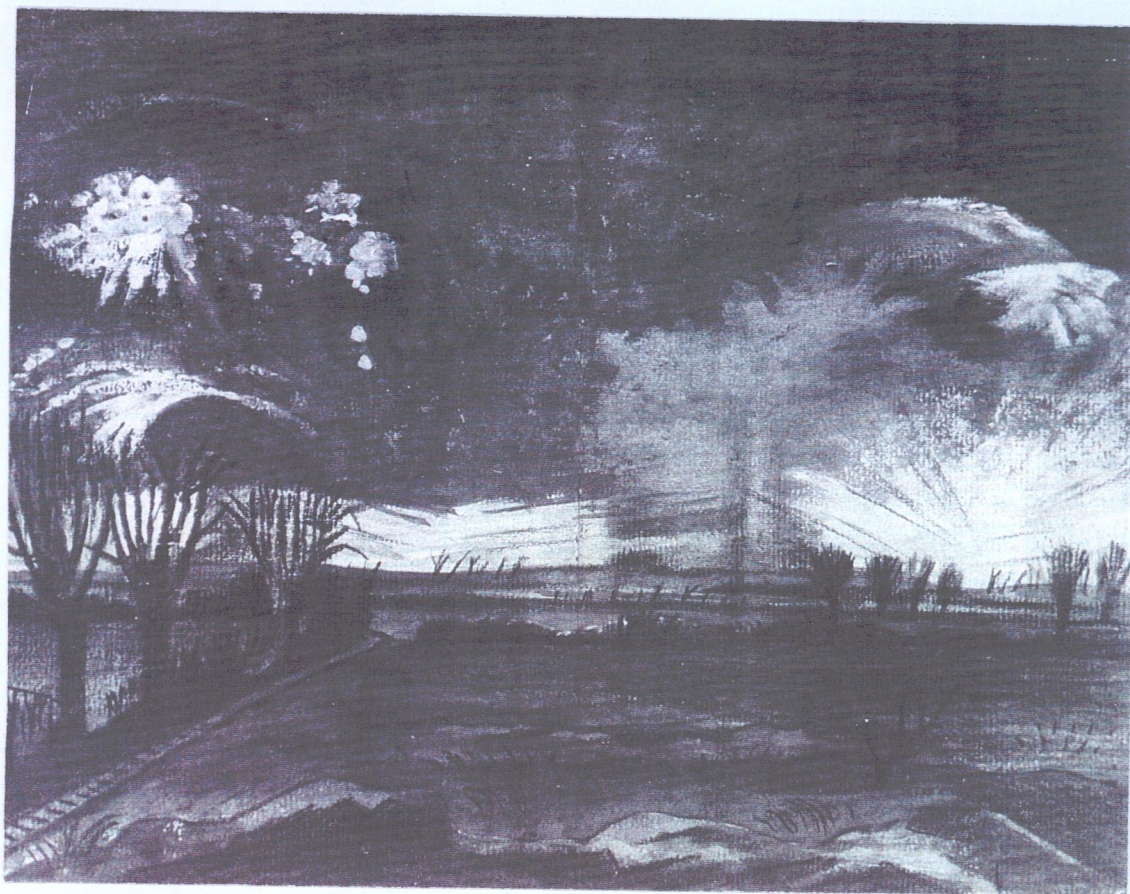
Oh these wonderful trenches at night; at dawn; at sundown ... as the shells fall the bluff huge expanse of black, brown, and orange mould burst into the air amid a volume of white smoke.<sup>7</sup>

In another letter he observed the

men have been thinking, living so near to silence and death, their thoughts have been furious, keen and living has been alive.<sup>8</sup>

However hostility was about to break out once again and Paul Nash was extremely lucky to get out of the war alive. In May whilst admiring a bombardment at night he slipped and fell into a trench and broke a rib. Three days later most of the officers in his unit were killed in a battle for hill 60. Nash was sent home.





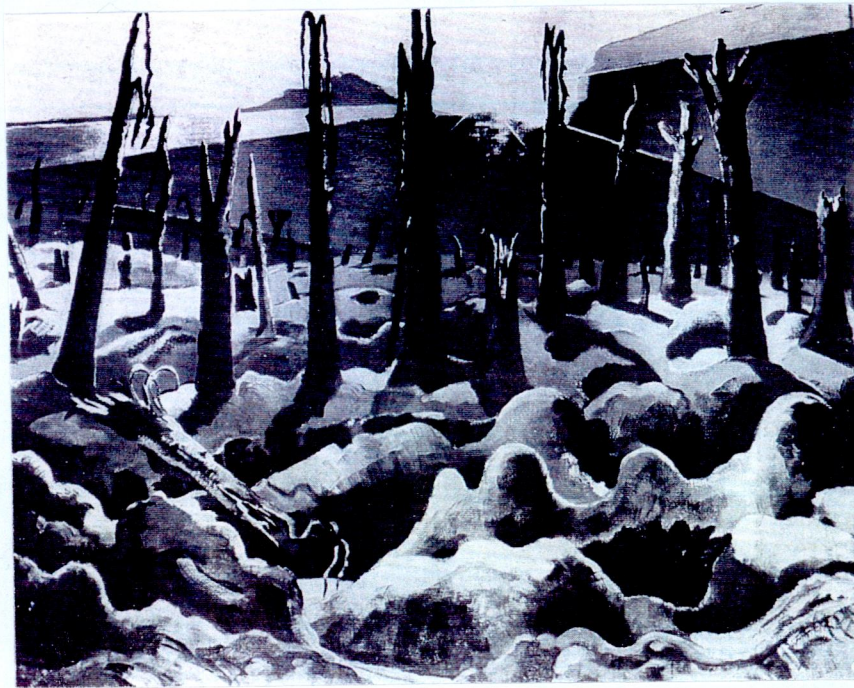
I Raid, Preliminary Bombardment



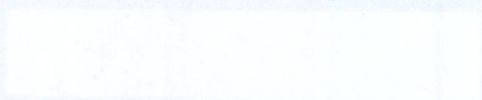
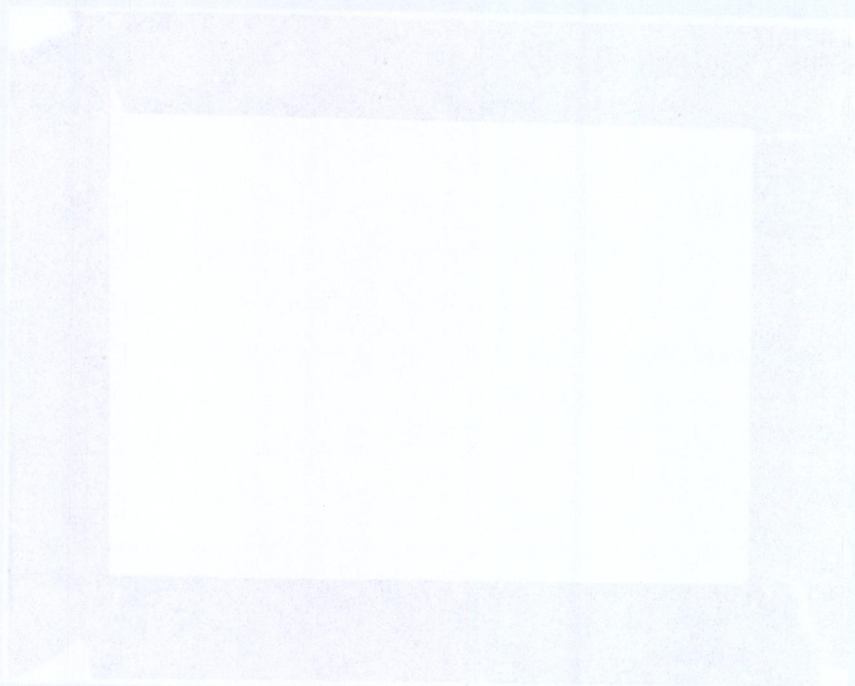
After spending some time convalescing he managed to finish a group of drawings which were initiated at the front and they were exhibited at the Goupil Gallery. Twenty drawings which were brought back from France were well received by the public. Some of these drawings responded to his earlier works, *Chaos Decortif* is essentially a gently woodland scene that includes shattered trees splintered from shell fire. It was a sight far from ordinary in Nash's eyes. *Raid Preliminary Bombardment* conveys a foreboding dark atmosphere similar to later drawings. The difference between these drawings is based upon his mentality. *Chaos Decortif* is drawn from an observers viewpoint similar to Orpen's. *Raid Preliminary Bombardment* has the strength of his later work as an official artist, in his capacity as a "messenger" expressing his abhorrence and defiance to the war.

The success of the exhibition provided an opportunity for him to attain his real wish to become an official war artist. Through his friend and patron, Edward Marsh, Churchills private secretary, he contracted John Buchan, the then director of the DOI. However neither Buchan or Masterman thought he was of much use, though with the pressure applied by his respected friends, Marsh and William Rothenstien, who would also serve as a war artist persuaded the DOI after some delay to employ him. Thus he was saved from active service in the Middle East as he was passed as medically fit and still held his commission in the Army. Nash returned to the front in October and was to witness the third battle of the Ypres or what is known as the battle of Pashcendale. It was the bloodiest battle of 1917. The allies provided a huge barrage which not only destroyed most of the German defences but also the delicate drainage system around Flanders. This low lying territory quickly flooded in a deceptive sea of mud. Many men were lost simply by drowning. When he arrived with the battle underway the peaceful "joyous" landscape he had witnessed in the Spring had changed awfully and dramatically.





m. We are making a new world



I have just returned last night from a visit to Brigade headquarters up the line, and I will not forget it as long as I live. I have seen the most frightful nightmare of a country more conceived by Dante or Poe than by nature unspeakable, utterly indescribable.<sup>9</sup>

Although in this letter to his wife he built a vivid picture through words when he said,

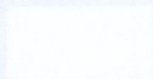
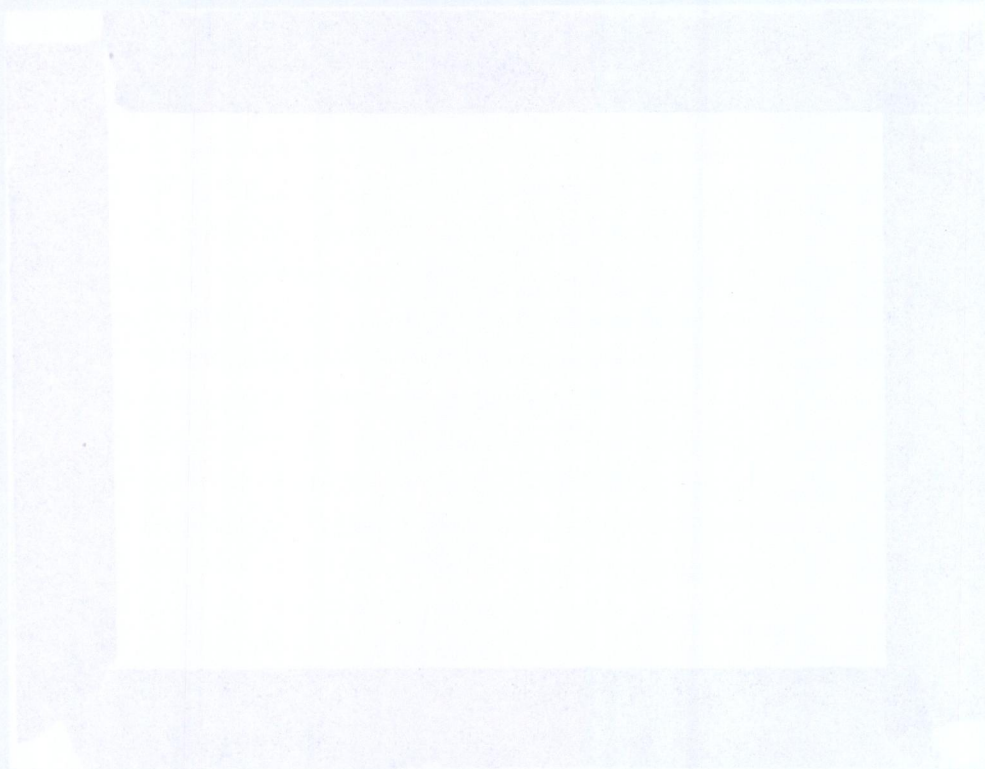
the rain drives on, the stinking mud becomes more evilly yellow, the shell holes fill up with green white water, the roads and tracks are covered with inches of slime, the black dying trees ooze and sweat and the guns never cease.<sup>10</sup>

Orpen in a letter to his wife Grace Knewstub claimed it was like a sudden growing up. Paul Nash certainly changed when he witnessed the aftermath at Pashcendale. This shock was reinforced by the contrast of his first peaceful and relatively comfortable time in France as a soldier. In this role as a messenger Nash's work is stronger than Orpen's. The harshness of the Vortiscist character of his work stands out more strongly than Orpen's. The effect of terrible landscapes and the reality of witnessing scenes that Orpen never did reinforced a strength that was more emotively charged. Nash's method of painting had no comparison to Orpen's. Where Orpen painted his subject matter on the spot, whether it was a town scene or a battlefield, Nash was only able to draw. Not only because of a preference for a way of working but also because of the difficulty in working even with his preferred use of chalks and brown paper in such conditions at the front. There was a rapid succession of work that was begun around 13th November when he recorded that he had made thirteen drawings. Reporting to Masterman on 22nd his output had reached sixty drawings. Though encouraged by his progress in Wellington House Masterman may have been concerned in the lack of finished work and the value of rough preparatory sketches. Nash had demanded an





n. Void

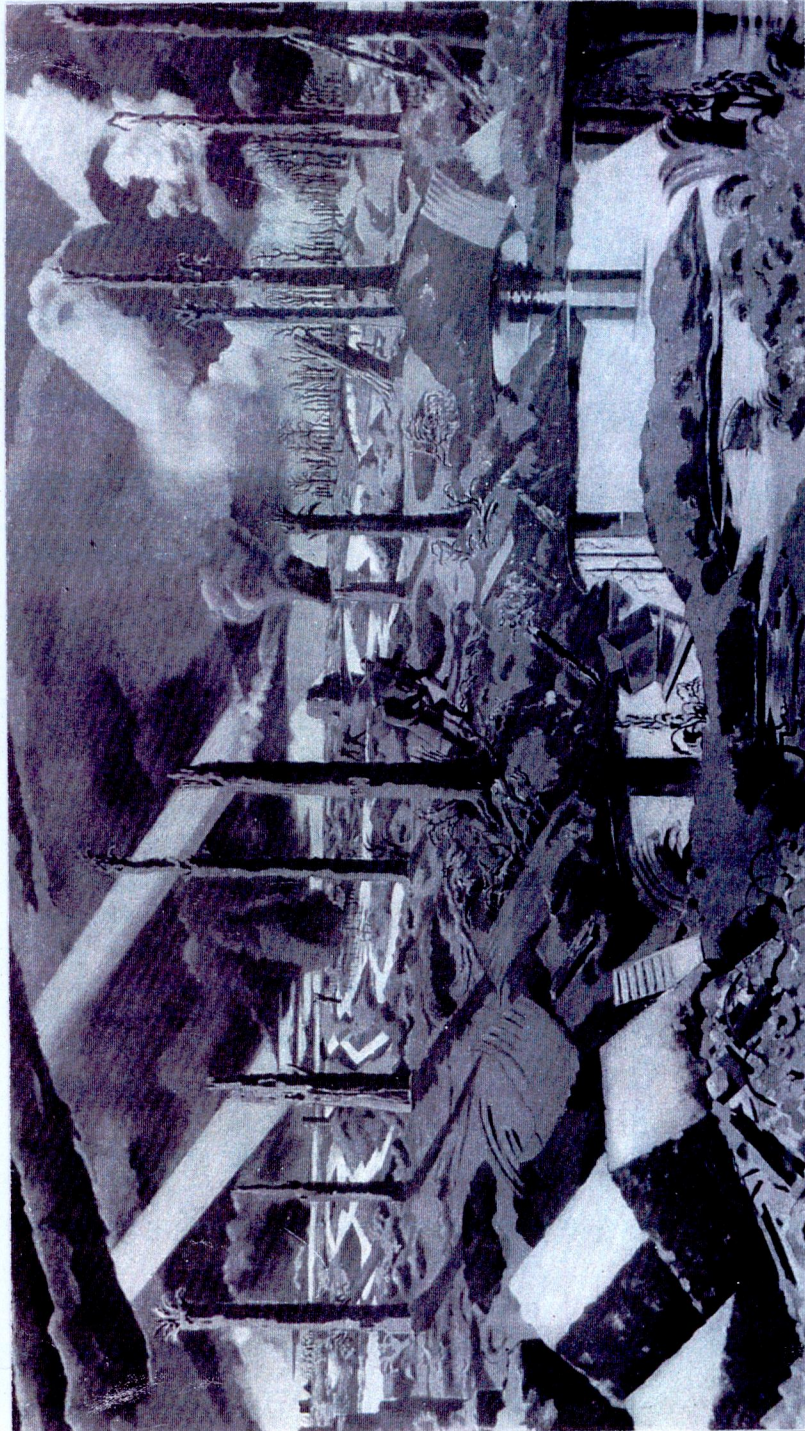


extension of his three week pass until 7th December but was aware that he might be recalled to England prematurely. In any case he was granted this extension and was allowed to finish and transform many of his ideas on to canvas. His contract with DOI was continuously extended and he never saw active service again.

The work from this period at the front was exhibited at the Leicester Galleries in London in May 1918. He entitled the exhibition *The void of war*. One of the best received paintings *We are making a new world* originated from a drawing called *Sunrise, Inverness Copse*. It works both as a drawing and a painting, a simple composition, shattered and featureless trunks of trees stand upright bearing the starkness of the dawn as silhouettes, as their shadows create shapes and an impression of movement across the indented landscape of no-mans land. It is a symbolist painting. To the war weary public in 1918, did it appear as a hopeful sign for the future or simply a sarcastic message that did not dispel any hope or righteousness of the war, but stood simply for destruction and death ?

In any case the public appreciated it as one of the better paintings and it quickly became famed. By the time this piece was exhibited the propaganda role of war art had diminished. Lord Beaverbrook, the head of the Department of Information (DOI), who had succeeded Masterman's position had a very different scheme centring on wireless and picture. Beaverbrooks ministry had become more relevant to the mass public. This gave official war art and official artists a degree of independence, and although censorship still exists, artists had more freedom than before and were not confined to making propagandist material. Nevinson's painting *Paths of Glory* exhibited at the Leicester Gallery in 1918 was only allowed after much debate. Nevinson, frustrated at such difficulties,





o. The Menin Road



placed a sheet of brown paper with the word censored over it. Nevinson's individual sense got him into trouble on a number of occasions. An instruction from Wellington House to change the direction of traffic from the right side to the left in a painting called *Arras to Bapume* was obeyed and changed without argument. Nash's style of painting was slightly more obscure. His paintings were created with only strict notes and were built strongly on his development of style and awareness of nature. As a contemporary journalist noted. "It is not possible to paint truly how the war has swept man, because horror will not permit the truth to be said. It is possible to depict the devastation of nature, partly because we cannot understand the full horror, and partly through it we may come to a deeper realisation of what the catastrophe may mean to man."<sup>11</sup>

In *Void* the success of the diagonal within this composition is evident as it is similar paintings such as the *Mule Track*. *Void* contains almost one vertical form; the use of a splintered tree in the foreground. Trucks, roads and the zigzagging tracks lead towards the horizon where shells are falling and debris is flung beneath a damaged plane, which descends towards the ground. The sky above is cropped above spherical clouds, as a diagonal line extends across the painting in the form of darkness. The lines make a strong, jagged cutting shape along the centre of the painting. Whereas John Nash, Paul's brother was criticised <sup>for</sup> by not accurately representing the clutter or mess of the front line in his work, *Void* is filled with waste, ladders, barbed wire, bones, shells, rifles and an awkward shape of an abandoned truck at the side of the road. The most disturbing shape is that of a flattened soldier, forgotten and depressed of all humanity. Andrew Causey in his book suggests that this is "the nearest thing in Nash's work to a statement of hopelessness".<sup>12</sup>



In April 1918 Paul Nash was commissioned by the BWMC to produce a painting for the Hall of Remembrance. He was employed under the second scheme that had been devised by Robert Ross. This guaranteed Nash £300.00 for the painting which had to be 125" x 72" plus expenses. The painting is one of his most famous works, *The Menin Road*. He began it in May in a studio which was a herb drying shed, yet large enough with good light for Nash to paint. However a series of problems arose and he found himself moving to a small studio in London to finish the painting.

The formidable idea of the Hall of Remembrance along with the sheer size of the work he was commissioned to produce affected his careful decision of composition and handling. Though not as emotive as his earlier work exhibited at the Leicester Gallery, and clearly no first hand sketches from the front followed its initiation with the carefully composed trees spread across the vista. The odd concrete cubes in the bottom left corner balancing the cloud forms in the top right. Two diagonal sunbeams trace across the sky behind the trees which are reflected in the flooded crater. The focus point are two figures in the centre running, positioned at an angle away from the impression of light. The density of the landscape is equalled by the conscious bulk and clumsiness of their position. Like targets in a shooting club they dodge from tree to tree as explosions go on behind them. It is a testimony to man's endurance to hardship and destruction but because Nash includes two figures, not one, he acknowledges that it is not the individuals plight but humanities.



## CHAPTER 3

## PETER HOWSON

In the introduction of the catalogue for Peter Howson's exhibition in the Imperial War Museum of his work in Bosnia, Peter Stothard of The Times, the paper that partly funded his appointment, as war artist said,

his often violent images and his ability to invest ordinary men and women with heroic dignity make him an obvious choice to chronicle the catastrophe in Bosnia.

It is important to understand why he was the obvious choice. From his early influences and experiences as a young man it is possible to understand the developments he made in later life and how this affected this work from the former Yugoslavia. His early life had been dominated by his sensitivity as a person that resulted in a number of powerful experiences, that he was unable to forget and that followed him through adolescence and into his work as an artist. His sensitivity and shyness made him a solitary and introverted child. Much time was spent reading and drawing. A number of images from his upbringing have importance in the work he had produced before Bosnia.

Growing up in Ayrshire on the coast he remembers a group of thugs bullying a friend and tying him upside down on a post before leaving him there. He has represented this image in a lot of paintings, particularly in the *Blind leading the Blind* series. Also he recalls the light upon the cliff. An isolated memory of sharp light and strong shadow, "it's almost as if I'm trying to capture in all my work one split second of light on an Ayrshire coastline".<sup>1</sup> In another incident at a young age he remembered being challenged by another group of bullies, which he admitted "destroyed a type of innocence I had about people".<sup>2</sup>





p. Patriots



Howson enrolled in the Glasgow School of Art in 1975, only to leave after two years. The tutors nor the system suited him. After losing motivation in art he joined the army. He immediately discovered it was a mistake and also found that he was trapped as there was no quick way out. The following year was both formative and terrifying as he felt in constant danger from physical and psychological beatings, combined with the dreariness of barrack life. Once again he witnessed bullies and the fear they impressed among the defenceless or innocent. This theme is one of the most important in Howson's work, and partly explains how suitable he was to observe the war in the former Yugoslavia. Leaving the army he worked in supermarkets and as a bouncer. These experiences associated with street life in Glasgow, a tougher city than most, gave Howson a knowledge of how hard life is in such places and he represented this initially in the faces of the people around him.

Howson marked his return to Art School under Alexander Moffat in 1979 with expressive paintings in a distinctive northern style. Moffat introduced him to Beckman and Goya. In the early eighties, figurative work was making a comeback and Howson worked closely with other students like Ken Currie, Steven Campbell and Adrian Wisziewski. He developed a theme that began in Art School with a depiction of the bully or thug that represented fear and domination in his life. This would develop in the late eighties and nineties into the Patriot. An individual drawn as a caricature of a archetypal yob or British bulldog with a ferocious head and fanatical gaze, contrasting with a huge muscle bound body covered by a small vest. The other is the right hand, which salutes in the style of a fascist. These figures were replicated for use in paintings like *Age of Apathy* and *The Blind leading the Blind* series.



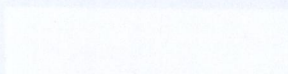
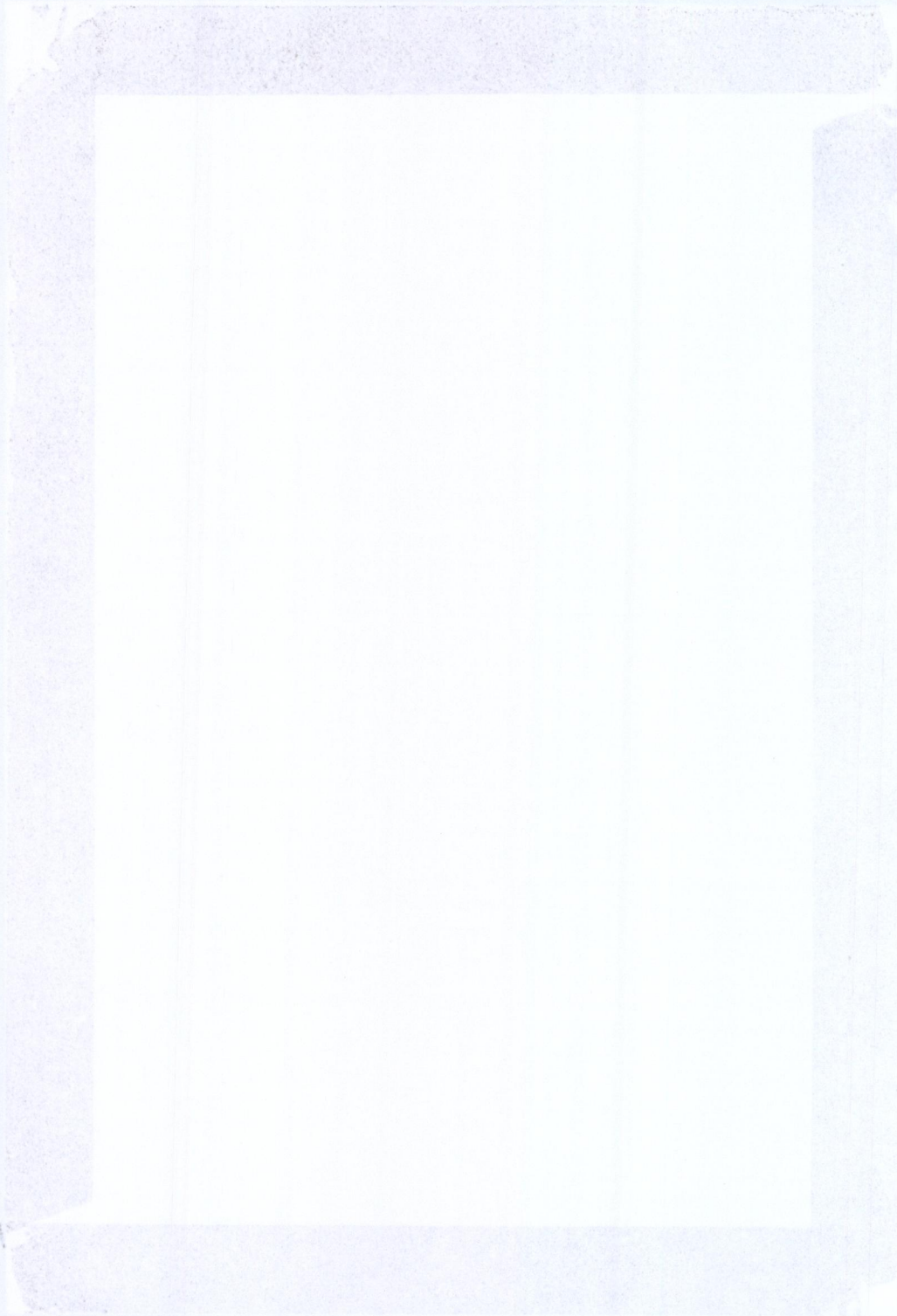
Howson first went to Bosnia in June of 1993. Nothing from the roughness of Glasgow and the harshness of its people that live in his paintings could prepare him for the shock and the fear he would encounter in Bosnia. His first stay there was determined by his struggle to overcome living in constant fear. Although under protection from the British forces serving under the United Nations, Howson was exposed to the hazards of street fighting, sniping and shelling. His brief taste of army life as a young man only served his knowledge of what a soldier is and how the army is structured. However his experience in the Scottish Infantry gave him the respect of the armed forces during his stay. Robert Crampton in his essay about his work commented how he looked like a soldier living in the British Army headquarters in Vitez, he ate and slept with the coldstream guards enjoying officer status <sup>3</sup>, similar to the official war artists of the first World War, even though he remained conscious that he was an honoured civilian.

Certain comparisons of that first trip to Bosnia exist between Howson and Nash. Both favoured making sketches of what they saw. Howson admitted he sketched very badly <sup>4</sup>, Nash noted the difficulty of working near the front, in fear of the constant dangers that existed, in some cases very similarly to Howsons. There was unneeded media attention that followed Howson's sooner than expected return home. Although he was able to create many finished canvasses from initial sketches. Uncharacteristically most of them were modest in scale which maybe indicates a self doubt or uncertainly in direction. However by December he was eager to return to the Country that he admitted had consumed his thoughts for the months since his return, acknowledging it to be like an addiction.<sup>5</sup>





q. Road to Zenica



Peter Howson travelled to Split that December with fellow artist Ian MacColl and Robert Crampton of The Times. They travelled from Split along the only supply route, a logging track that had been improved by the Royal Engineers into central Bosnia to Vitez. Once again Howson was shown the British Army at work. Although he had great admiration for the Army he chose not to portray their role. That was not specified in his brief. In any work the innocence, that term that is so important in his work, will suffer. Civil war is renowned to be the most bloodiest of conflicts, as a landscape is transformed not only with the political objectives of governments but with a deep rooted hatred of different peoples, that had been so evenly dispersed under Marshall Tito's policy. The Civil War that Howson glimpsed was the bloodiest since the Spanish Civil War. The ethnic displacement of so many refugees affected Howson terribly. In his paintings on Scottish life Howson searches to depict the evil suppressing the innocent. The resulting work is an exaggeration of normality, the portrayal of a thug, the patriot. However what he witnessed in Bosnia was beyond his nightmares, the clever depiction of his worst fears had suddenly become reality.

Not only had he to overcome this fear but to also examine how he would portray it. "Sometimes I think I should just do a series of landscapes with not much in them ... another part of me says I should really go for it, do very frank paintings".<sup>6</sup> Acknowledging this fear, he looks for signs of normality in this environment. However even though children still play and wave at passing convoys, Howson was horrified to see them playing undisturbed near dead bodies. He also recalls driving to Prozor, Croatian Army Headquarters on the way to Muslim held territory which is "full of lots of ghastly people taking evil lessons"<sup>7</sup>, and where he remembers children spitting, cursing the U.N. and



throwing hypodermic needles. In the painting *The road to Zenica* a large painting compiled from twenty sketches that he observed when travelling from Vitez to the town of Zenica. Returning with confidence to large scale work after his second visit to the war zone Howson depicts refugees young and old, men, women and children walking towards the viewer. Everyone but one child looks blankly away, feeling the strain of their journey. They are unified in what unseen experience they have witnessed but so alone with the uncertainty that faces them. The one child, her hand splayed in an alien type greeting that also reads as a warning to stop and go no further, looks at us in a direct adult way, her face expressing nothing but a painful numbness, identical to the others. Orpen's description of troops returning from the front is a reminder of how unchanging terror can be, "their eyes were wide open, the pupils very small, and their mouths sagged a bit. They seemed like men in a dream".<sup>8</sup> The woman that takes up the left hand side of the painting struggles to control her child, identical in appearance to her colossal mother. At closer inspection it takes the surreal appearance of a model, frozen by fear of her posture, arm outstretched as her body bends to support whatever it is advancing or pushing <sup>against</sup> her hand, which also like the other child, warns ~~from~~ continuing.

Howson has avoided caricatures in his paintings of Bosnia. He has made a part return to a more expressive style of painting and an attentive observance in a realist vein to figure compositions and portraits. It is hard to determine what any artist wants to achieve and express in their work, and perhaps Howson's first experience in Bosnia did not tell him enough. Whilst in conversation with Robert Crampton in Vitez on a second visit he was questioned what it was that he was trying to get. Howson





r. Cleanser 2, 7th Devision



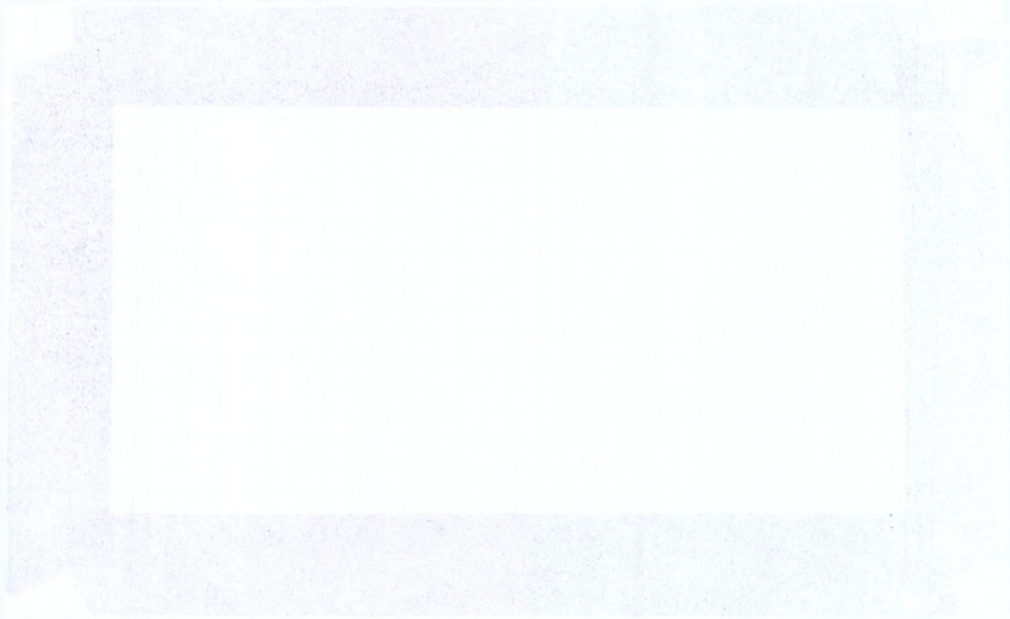
admitted that "it is in their faces, I think I've got it in their faces".<sup>9</sup> Realising that fear was the strongest and greatest emotion in war time that exists not only in a visiting artist but also in the people displaced and maimed by the fighting, the soldiers that carry out atrocities or that defend their homelands and the soldiers whose job it is to defend everyone, Howson acts to depict that emotion that he captures so well in *The Road to Zenica*. Most of his paintings do not reveal such an obvious feeling. In *Cleanser 2, 7th Brigade* Howson remembers being approached by a very dangerous figure.<sup>10</sup> He must have recalled such threatening people from his childhood. Although this figure has been observed as a fresh experience detached from earlier work at home. The threat emerges and is created by the contrast of the large intimidating shape blocking the serenity of the landscape and of the children playing in the sunlight. The pond or stream in the background that is partly obscured from the figure is familiar to Howson. Admiring a lake when travelling with a convoy he was horrified to be told that it had been used as a dumping ground for executed prisoners.<sup>11</sup>

Other paintings are more narrative. *Neighbours* appears to be a pretty genre painting of everyday Bosnian life. With children playing and soldiers at rest it is only noticed after a while what the central of the three houses is burnt out and abandoned. These subtle messages are less severe but more poignant than direct television news reportage of ethnic cleansing. In a large work measuring nearly two metres by two and a half, *Cleansed* is a depiction that Howson painted from memory about six refugees who were evicted from their houses by Croats. They had received





s. Nieghbours





t. Cleansed



help from a Muslim Doctor before he was killed. In the painting they sit stranded outside the U.N. base, like vulnerable giants they dwarf their surroundings. They are burdened by huge hands and feet making them look hopeless and awkward. The figure on the left hand side displays pity while others look on almost in disbelief at their abandonment.

Howson admitted that he wished to cut out the reportage in work.<sup>12</sup> He relies upon images and experiences that are most shocking to him as subject matter. In places it is narrative like *Neighbours* and *Cleansed*, in other parts it is subtly based on his own fears such as *Cleanser 2 7th Brigade*, where the fear of being tormented or bullied is replaced by the greater fear of facing death. Fear is something that is real yet intangible. In a letter to his mother on New Year's Eve of 1917 Wilfred Owen concludes by describing what he has witnessed in the young soldiers faces the year before in the armies largest training camp in France, Etaples.

It was not despair, or terror, it was more terrible than terror, for it was a blindfold look, and without expression, like a dead rabbits. It will never be painted and no actor will ever seize it. And to describe it, I think I must go back and be with them.



## CONCLUSION

Following from Wilfred Owens statement at the end of the last chapter, there is a direct understanding that explains an artists/poets actions to document war. For painters like Orpen, Nash and Howson, it stems wider than an urge to document what is seen. And it is that sense of feeling that dawns not only on those three artists together, but the viewer who experiences and tries to gleam the sense of feeling that inspired the artists to describe it. Although they share the same urge to represent their experiences acutely as possible, all three artists vary considerably.

Orpen saw the war as a stepladder for success and although this occurred he endured a tremendous pain in witnessing the war, which was even more difficult, aware as he was of his comfortable position. Guilt, ill-health and personal problems affected him in later life. His work was well received, popular and successfully pleasing official needs that rewarded him with success and fame later. However by Nash's and Howson's standards they appear emotionally tame when compared against work like *Void* by Nash, or *The Road to Zenica* by Howson.

Nash's training as a soldier aided him emotionally to come to terms with warfare. It was not the sacrifice of the young soldiers that he chose to depict but the landscape. Turning against the war in his official capacity Nash could only suggest the hopelessness and pointlessness of war which was showing signs of nearing the end when his official war art collection was exhibited in the Leicester Galleries in 1918. The world has become a global

## CONCLUSION

The results of the present study indicate that the use of a computerized system for the management of patient information can significantly improve the efficiency and accuracy of data collection and analysis. The system was found to be user-friendly and easy to learn, and it was able to handle a large volume of data without any loss of information. The use of the system was found to be cost-effective, as it reduced the need for paper-based records and the associated storage and retrieval costs. The system was also found to be secure, as it was able to protect patient information from unauthorized access. The results of the study suggest that the use of a computerized system for the management of patient information is a viable and effective solution for healthcare organizations. The system was found to be able to handle a large volume of data without any loss of information, and it was able to protect patient information from unauthorized access. The use of the system was found to be cost-effective, as it reduced the need for paper-based records and the associated storage and retrieval costs. The system was also found to be secure, as it was able to protect patient information from unauthorized access. The results of the study suggest that the use of a computerized system for the management of patient information is a viable and effective solution for healthcare organizations.

community through communications technology. It is changing constantly in this communication age, where the competition to transmit the changing events has never been directed to so many people and which is still growing in the media. The fact however that news only conveys a story is simply not enough to satisfy the society as a whole. There are different emotional and creative needs that need to be expressed. These are explored through the arts. The theatre, literature, poetry, film and the fine arts are mediums in which the individual can express and create their message on a broader scale, on a different level than simply reportage.

Although some commentators claim that painting has become redundant in today's society, it is only until we look at the personal and emotional expression in Peter Howson's war art where we can see that true creative and emotional meaning has been achieved. His work has maintained a figurative tradition from Orpen's and Nash's day where modernism was beginning to find itself in England. The reason Masterman employed artists is exactly the same for the reasons for Howson's appointment. Painting is an expressive medium that transcends supposed normality creating a deeper knowledge of our world.



## END NOTES

### Chapter 1. William Orpen

1. Bruce Arnold From Orpen a Mirror to an Age. pp 301 L20-27
2. William Orpen from An Onlooker in France pp btm 25 & pp26 L1-3
3. Ibid pp33 l6
4. Ibid pp36 L5-6 & l18-21
5. Ibid pp28 L10
6. Ibid pp91 L20-24
7. William Orpen from An Onlooker in France pp 20 L13

### Chapter 2. Paul Nash

1. Andrew Causey from Paul Nash pp14 L15
2. Ibid pp23 L9
3. Ibid pp28 L16
4. Ibid pp49 L3
5. John Rothenstein, Paul Nash as a War Artist from Paul Nash paintings. Drawings and Illustrations. Margaret Eates(Eds) pp15 L36 & L43-5
6. Ibid pp 15 L81
7. Ibid pp 16 L19-32
8. Ibid pp 26 L80-83
9. Ibid pp 18 L44-49
10. Ibid pp 18 L55
11. From Paul Nash, 'A Metaphysical Artist', Listener, 1 April, 1948 in Paul Nash by Andrew Causey. pp 78 l9-16.



Chapter 2 cont'd

12. Andrew Causey from Paul Nash pp77 L5

Chapter 3. Peter Howson

1. Peter Howson from Peter Howson by Robert Heller pp67 L53
2. Ibid pp65 L41
3. Peter Howson from Peter Howson: Bosnia cat. Imperial War Museum pp11 L42
4. Ibid pp9 L29
5. Ibid pp10 L38
6. Ibid pp14 L18
7. Ibid pp11 L18
8. Orpen, William from An Onlooker in France pp26 L17
9. Peter Howson from Peter Howson: Bosnia pp 12 L27
10. Ibid pp38 L27
11. Ibid pp41 L14
12. Ibid pp12 L13



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