



Dressing the Wounded During a Gas Attack Created 1918 by Austin O. Spare

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The Style: This pastel work's background is smudged while the closer focal points are more distinct; however the painting is dull and grainy overall. The blurred background is unclear, similarly connected to the soldiers uncertainty of the war and their lives outcome. Dense smoke rising up resembles an arm striking down at its enemies combatants. Dashes of broken twigs descending from the tree personify fallen soldiers. On the other hand the touches of blue sky represent better days and the possibility of life beyond the battlefield.

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The Mood: Contrasting feelings of agony and optimism are portrayed within the drawing. Both men's faces are shielded by either a gasmask or positioning which disallows viewers to see any facial anguish. Nevertheless, you can perceive the soldier's feeling of defeat through his collapsed frame. The withered tree, gun and shell explosion form an ominous figure of death that hangs above the men. The medic defies presumed despondency when he bandages the wounded soldier despite the chaos of chemical warfare around him.

Recurring Themes: WWI artwork exemplifies the impression of terror and darkness enclosing the soldiers. Colors are often muted and texture is usually rough. Earthy tones are used as a base with deep red or black used to reflect bloodshed and death. While some embody ultimate destruction, others express signs of hope

1912



The following is a list of the books in the collection of the
Library of the University of Toronto, which were
purchased by the University of Toronto in the year
1912. The books are listed in the order in which
they were purchased, and are arranged in
alphabetical order of the author's name.

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after the war. Images of blue skies, families back home, healing soldiers or poppies are common symbols of optimism.

Emotional Response: The depiction made us realize how detrimental war could be to one's mind and soul. You can get a sense of how they felt with all the devastation and fear consuming them and the uncertainty of the unknown. Feelings of helplessness wash over us, if only it could be possible to reach into the drawing to take them out of their toxic world and return them home. Curiosity rattles through our minds of who these men were. Did they have families waiting back home? What dreams and aspirations drove them? Did they ever make it out alive? Art often personalizes events we don't put a face to when lacking a personal connection. Immense statistics of casualties can create an impact but it's the the intriguing stories of individuals who we feel for.

Appreciation: Through this piece the artist conveys WWI combat's reality which helped us to comprehend the atrocious conditions soldiers faced. The symbolism of life and death is shown through the wilting tree and the hardworking medic. By looking through an artistic lens instead of a textual description of war you are able to discover a deeper meaning and connect to the information on an emotional level. We appreciate the pieces of war art and better yet the soldiers that made it home and lest we forget the ones who didn't.

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well said →

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“Gassed” By John Singer Sargent (July, 1918)

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The Style: This painting, “Gassed”, is portrayed with very little personal detail to any of the individual soldiers, instead it shows that the reduction of detail portrays they have become ghouls of themselves which also displays the dehumanizing impacts of war. Representing the gas attack carried out by the Germans, shows the many that lay injured from the inhumane bombardment, many of them indistinguishable from the dead. The art paints them all with blindfolds, blinded from the gas that had burnt their eyes, now destitute of vision, they hold on to each other for support as they are marched into the unknown. Furthermore, with so many dead that lay on the ground, the painter has made them into the mud of the painting. Using dull colours such as khaki and soft indifferent brushstrokes, the soldiers have become mixed with sludge that covers the ground, some to point where the in the far background it becomes impossible to tell if they are bodies or mounds of dirt and mud. In addition, the skies have been to make a bleak impressions onto the situations of the soldiers, using colours of dust that would never tread upon a regular day, even in cloudy Britain. These soldiers felt they were in despair, with the advent of months of bombardment and, toxic gasses, many believed the sun would never shine again over Europe.

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The Mood: The use of only dull colors gives it a sort of tired feeling. The main focus of this painting would have to be the group of soldiers in the center. They stand tired, faces barely detailed. Cloth covers their eyes due to the gas used in this attack, but it can also be perceived as the loss of the soul. Considering “eyes are the windows to the soul” and you can no longer see them, even on the dead, it makes it seem that the living are not that different from the dead. The doctors that are helping them do not have their eyes covered, but their faces are still barely detailed. The artists paints long lines that attach themselves to certain members of the dead and seem to be coming together somewhere outside of the

painting. This could signify a type of unity in death. No longer do uniforms matter. There are no sides anymore. Everyone becomes the same. The sky in the background looks of parchment. It is plain and bland. There is one bright spot, but it seems to be far away, or clouded by what is most likely smoke, signifying that hope is not in reach of these soldiers. The soldiers have their back turned to the light, which could mean they have given up. They don't have hope anymore. The dead fill the bottom of this painting, and it looks as though they morph into flat land in behind the standing soldiers.

Recurring Themes: This work of art, expresses the persistent theme that, these human soldiers that were fighting for "king and country", and for "glory", were turning into empty machines, nothing more than a extension of a country's will for power and control. The painting also uses very little expression-full detail, valuing more in uniformity of all soldiers being turned into clones of each other, rather than showing the discord of people in real life. All of the colors in the painting are all rather bland. Each soldier is dressed in khaki colors, making them blend in with the mud and dirt on the ground. The only really different color is the white of the doctor's dress and the white of the blindfolds. This would make sense considering an injury could mean a monumental turn in a soldier's life. Doctor's keep people alive, but in some ways, so do injuries. Soldier's are sent home when they are no longer suited to fight, and doctors determine that. In a war that nobody wants to fight, people become, in a sense, blinded to what is going on around them. They become numb. They float through their lives with no drive to go forward except the possible chance of going home. The plain paper sky may symbolize the calm after the storm. There is not much going on there, but at the same time it is half of the painting. Or there is a possibility that this would represent the nothingness of war. How pointless it is in the end. It's probable the painter even wanted to show the lack of god or religious figure in the lack of color in the sky. Maybe even the loss of belief that someone up there is on their side. Because how could these things happen if god were real?

Emotional Response: This painting instils a sense of despair and hopelessness. Intriguingly enough though, the way this artist has painted the dead in the same fashion as the living soldiers, faceless and blind, it inspires a strange sense of unity in the painting. Almost as if the living are almost the same as the dead. Their spirits broken. Numb. The soldiers also seem to be walking in the direction of where all of the lines connecting each soldier meet. Which could mean that even though they are living, they may be still rushing towards their death. It feels helpless.

Appreciation: This painting shows the absolute horrors that soldiers had to deal with on the field of war. Already worrying about being shot or blown to pieces, soldiers had to worry about the liquid in their lungs bubbling out, or their eyes burning like a thousand stings to the face. "Gassed", makes me realize that even if you did live after a gas attack, you would have been permanently blinded to some degree. Most textbooks, just briefly go over the gas attacks over the trenches and at the battle of Ypres, describing how it was used, but hardly ever the aftermath. This painting shows the absolute pain soldiers had to deal with after the fact, showing that we the "Victors", were not invincible to the terrors of war, and the destruction it caused to the souls of men.

"Now that they are blind, they will never see the horrors of war again, they are now truly free".

EXEMPLARY WORK - A PLEASURE TO READ

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Greg Manchess

No man's Land

Meghan McCafferty
Julianne Keyes
Liam McLaren
Sept 21st, 2017



History 12

Style- Smudged brush strokes and the murky atmosphere of Greg Manchess' painting, "No man's Land," perfectly illustrates the overall experience of world war one. The lighter background of this piece enhances the explosions of darker colors. Representing bombs, the strokes flare up in an aggressive manor; emphasizing the destruction. In the forefront of the painting, a soldier flees in terror from the explosions in the distance. Fear is shown on the soldiers face as he runs desperately through mud, barbed wire, and bodies. Barbed wire is a significant factor, for it is intricate and fine. Like a soldier, the wire holds strong until the duration of war finally causes it to break. The lifeless soldier lying before him is captured by neutral tones and blends in with the mud. This emphasizes the brutality the soldiers face every day.

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Recurring Themes- "No Man's Land," by Greg Manchess, illustrates the sheer terror that war inflicts upon the soldiers. The colors chosen for the painting are gloomy and morbid, allowing for the observer to sympathize with those in the painting. Recurring in most of the art from this sort of era is the visual appearance of death. At the feet of the running soldier is a deceased man, laying face up with his arms at a ninety degree angle to his body. This may be perceived as a symbol of Jesus on the crucifix. The irony being that if there truly were a 'Superior Being,' he wouldn't let innocent people falls for a cause such as war. On the other hand, the man could also represent the person the soldier once was, before the emotional and physical trauma took over his life.

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B. The Mood: The artist uses a shady background with dusky, darker explosions to capture the intensity of war. The oil paint enhances the mud, the grime, the awful conditions of the trenches, and the panicked facial expressions. There is an unsettling and bothersome feel to the painting, creating a sense of disturbance to viewers. Observing the main soldier's face, helpless in the battlefield, he is desperately running for his life from the blazing bullets being fired in all directions. His uncertainty of if he will survive this explosion adds to the violent, distressing mood. It draws a connection to the immorality of war, a depressing vibe that soldiers are in great danger to serve their country. It allows viewers to be appreciative of everything the courageous soldiers go through each day - gaining compassion and respect that while they all share an unanimous fear of death, it does not stop them from fighting until the end.

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D. Emotional Response: This painting "No man's Land" by Greg Manchess has a powerful and dark impact. The shades and colours in this painting make it have an ominous feeling. It's quite an intense scene, from the bombs exploding behind him to the old barbed wire fence defenselessly flying through the air. The unprotected soldier running so desperately, from something so uncontrollable and deadly, is sorrowful. Alarmed, terrified, hopeless...his face says it all.

Your response!

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E. Appreciation: This piece of art gives me a better appreciation of World War 1 because of the realisticalism. The painting is raw and illustrates a day in the life of a soldier. There is nothing rewarding or satisfying about war, and truthfully nobody wins. The idea of a "victory" is repulsive, as the physical and emotional damage remaining for eternity results in nothing but loss. Looking at this picture, I am reminded of our inspiring heroes. I cannot even begin to imagine how it would feel to be placed in that exact moment. From the fatal explosions sending a deafening pulse through their ears. The painful cries filling the air, to the silent ghostly winds. Witnessing their beloved teammates and their friends dropping to the ground in agony. Most will never wake up again. Will I be next? The thought swirls around in their head, yet it fails to interfere with their determination. The soldiers gave everything they could. They are brave. They are strong. They are remembered.

Wow - THOUGHTFUL & VERY THOROUGH A GENUINELY INTERESTING RESPONSE

19/20



"A Wounded Soldier" Painted in 1924 by Otto Dix (December 1891- July 1969).

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The Style: Otto Dix's 1924 painting "A Wounded Soldier" uses dark tones and its black and white colour scheme in order to portray the macabre horror of war. The frame is dominated by a wounded soldier in the foreground who is drawn with very small yet very scratchy strokes. In the background the lack of colour makes it seem as if the soldier and his blood simply just blends in. The background could be interpreted as many different things such as a wall that has been coated with the soldier's blood, the night sky looking down and contrasting the foreground with the relative peace of space or even as a cosmic force bringing the soldier into some form of afterlife. The painting has a surreal quality to it as the soldier, despite being the point of focus, blends with his surroundings almost making his pain seem normal in this world. As he props himself on what seems to be a rock and screaming for his life, the world around him seems to consume him as he becomes just another corpse in the background. Pain and anguish is centerstage but also slightly muted due to the lack of colour and the blending of the foreground and the background. Otto Dix created a bleak and surreal world of war, suffering, and anguish using all these techniques.

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The Mood: This painting has a very dark mood and theme. The look of horror on the soldier's face stirs up feelings of terror, anguish, and pain. The background is very dark and muddled, which allows us as the viewer to focus on the soldier. There is no light or real vision of hope that can give us happy emotions. It brings with it a sense of doom, that this soldier is in great pain and he may not live much longer. The true agony of war is expressed quite well, with the soldier's wide eyes and mangled body, which almost makes you feel his pain directly. The fact that it's

also black and white with a vague background gives you a feeling of loneliness, a broken soul who is suffering alone.

Recurring Themes: Much like many other contemporary pieces of the time, this painting expresses themes of pain, death and the futility of war and life. With its colour scheme being black and white it shows a certain surreal and disheartening mood with the soldier partially blending with the background. He seems to be screaming during presumably the last painful moments of his life. The brutality of the war is shown as this man clings to his last moments of life while slowly fading away, soon to be another life lost to one of the deadliest wars in human history. This piece shares a lot in its tone, mood, colour scheme and surreal qualities with many other artwork of the time in its portrayal of war.

Emotional Response: The painting gives the viewer a sense of dread and forces our minds to truly think about how the soldier is feeling, as he is suffering, terrified for his life and scared of his enemy, and the war that he is fighting in. As humans we react to many things with pure emotion, and powerful pieces of art such as this stirs up our feelings and make us feel a certain way. When we look at this picture we feel the pain of the wounded soldiers injuries, his fear as he hides from the battle, and his sorrow and hopelessness as the darkness of battle envelopes the last remnants of his existence. We feel the horror of the fight.

Appreciation: In the painting we understand how the soldier's pain and suffering is the focal point. We can learn to appreciate the harsh horrors of war, and what it does to those involved, as we realize the look of anguish on his face, the emptiness of the background behind him and the muddled textures that make it all the more real for the viewer. There is a personal level of pain portrayed in the painting that couldn't be conveyed nearly as effectively through words or speech that pulls the viewer into the desolate world that war had created. Rather than reading or listening the audience sees the anguish and the suffering that far too many soldiers faced and it does so effectively. We are viewing the power of violence. The surreal qualities of the painting face the reality of our own demise and the fact that so much life had been lost for practically nothing and invokes horror in the observer. Otto Dix brings the personal consequences of war and shows it in a visceral and surreal way that shocks and awes us.

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CLEVER, THOUGHTFUL — OBVIOUS A LOT
OF WORK + ANALYSIS HAVE GONE INTO
THIS! A PLEASURE TO READ