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# ‘Prized assets of a ghost economy’: Some notes on *The Unreturning*

**ABSTRACT**

*This article explores aspects of the creative strand of the author’s research into Great War poetry and twenty-first-century legacies of the war itself. Whilst one of the two accompanying poetry collections retains a more discernible resemblance to the prevailing mode of lyric elegy, his prose poem sequence, The Unreturning, consciously seeks to disrupt this tradition by adopting the less common neo-modernist poetics of writers such as Geoffrey Hill. What follows is a brief discussion of work-in-progress towards the creation of more resonant and meaningful contexts for our remembrance of a century-old conflict that continues to enjoy extraordinary levels of cultural and political privilege in the United Kingdom.*

**KEYWORDS**

Great War  
war poetry  
contemporary poetry  
neo-modernism  
David Jones  
Geoffrey Hill  
cultural studies  
English Literature

Prized assets of a ghost economy, we stand-to, awaiting the orders of the day.

*(The Unreturning, ‘2. Centenaries’)*

The complicating factor in a project such as this is the pervasive nature of the Great War’s literary legacy. Already the most poetically memorialized conflict since Troy, its writers provide the urtext to our collective sensibility of much subsequent warfare, while its *historical* stature as global event represents something of a dragon lying across the threshold to our understanding of the modern world. There is much to negotiate in advance, both

critically and creatively. Catherine Reilly's estimation that, in Britain alone, there were 2225 published poets of the Great War (1978) is a formidable enough legacy, further deepened by the remarkably privileged position enjoyed in UK culture by that small body of poets who have since emerged as representatives of its core canon: poets such as Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg, Robert Graves, Rupert Brooke, Laurence Binyon and John McCrae, all of whom are studied widely in schools or habitually appear in Remembrance Day ceremonies. In terms of sociocultural and historical commentary the situation is no less dynamic, particularly in the years leading up to the current centenary of the conflict, and a figure not far short of Reilly's may be a fair estimation of the number of book-length studies of the Great War published during the past 30 years or so. In contemplating the task of producing new poetry that explores the legacy of the Great War, then, one can become overwhelmed by the question: why another book of 'Great War poetry', least of all one written 100 years after the fact? And just how *ethical* is such a project when pursued by a non-combatant writer enjoying the advantages of safe distance and historical hindsight? This question of legitimacy is important since, as Edna Longley points out (1986: 12), poets must 'finely judge their imaginative whereabouts, their ethical bearings'. Beyond the potential dilemmas of writing about the conflict creatively, its privileged and politicized cultural status also make the task of reflecting critically upon its poetry less than straightforward. Since the favourable re-appraisal of the Great War writers, which took place during the 1960s, there has appeared a steady flow of authoritative literary studies alongside a broadening of the canon to include more women writers, non-combatants, Commonwealth soldiers, wider European and dissenting voices and even enemy authors. A formidable critical heritage has developed, which includes the work of John H. Johnston, Bernard Bergonzi, Jon Silkin, Paul Fussell, Modris Eksteins, Vincent Sherry, Jay Winter, Gary Sheffield, Elizabeth Marsland, Kate McLoughlin and Dominic Hibberd.

The critical challenge that accompanies my new poetry is similar, therefore, to the creative one: how to find new and viable ways of discussing Great War poetry in the light of all that has already been written.

What became clear very early on was the need for a bespoke and unifying poetics, something of which I'd not been quite so conscious when writing my two previous books. This realization was set aside, to begin with, in order to allow time and space for my research to suggest its own approaches. In his book, *Great Britain's Great War*, Jeremy Paxman shrewdly observes that 'the present lies as a palimpsest on the events of a century ago' (2013: 7). It is a memorable expression of the sheer weight of prior attention that confronts anyone now tasked with researching the legacies of World War I and reflecting upon them anew. The task becomes even greater than the sum of 'the present' when one considers there has already been a number of moments in British culture that have engaged closely with the Great War, each of which formed their own contemporary palimpsest upon the events of 1914–18. For the purposes of cultural discourse, then, it is possible to identify several notable eras of post-war interest in a chronology running from the first wave of war memoirs published at the end of the 1920s, through the post-Versailles descent into World War II, the 50th anniversary/Vietnam-era recreations of the war in film, drama and commemoration, the scholarship and anthologies of the 1960s, and on to the genre-defining work of Paul Fussell. Fussell, in particular, casts a long shadow: indeed, his 1975 book *The Great War and Modern Memory*

remains the *magnum opus* providing the impetus for much subsequent work in the field; including such key texts as Samuel Hynes' *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (1992), Dominic Hibbard's *The First World War: Context and Commentary* (1990) and, more recently, Elizabeth Vandiver's *Stand in the Trench Achilles* (2010). There is an accepted mythology and narrative structure to this analysis every bit as seductive as the cultural phenomena examined and it is here – as much as in the actual poetry of the Great War – that I began to locate what I believed to be a viable source of information for my own poetics.

A chief concern of mine has been to avoid any cosy memorialization of the manifold legacies of World War I, and to deliberately avoid the trope of the 'sad shires' detectable in some areas of national commemoration, particularly those that avoid the ugliness of war in favour of aestheticized acts of performative sorrow: lone-bugle serenades, Heads of State visits to battlefield monuments, roving tours of beautiful ceramic poppies, for example. Any attempt to create a new poetry from the events and legacies of the Great War might also profit most if one manages to '[t]ell all the truth but tell it slant' (Dickinson 1998, poem no. 1263) and engage with the more nuanced truths of the war as viewed against hitherto under-represented experiences, communities and politics. What I anticipated was the need for the creative half of my research to represent some form of *enactment* of the research path. And, of course, the relationship is two-way: the critical chapters might benefit most from reflecting some of the key concerns of the poetry. This interdependence was viewed to be one of the means by which the dual method might cohere. What this looks like in practice is a Janus-headed approach to research, whereby two sets of notes are constantly produced: one for academic and critical purposes and a second – from the same material – intended to be direct source material for new writing.

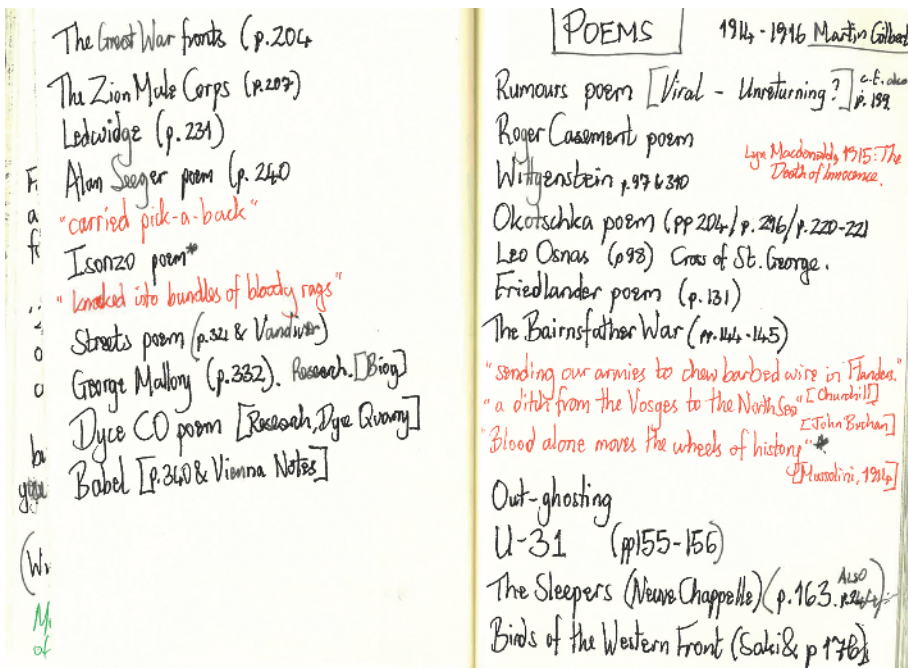


Figure 1:

At its most basic, this involved a process of creative distillation that saw me take a first set of academic notes from a text like Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* ([1975] 2000), then comb through it a second time for interesting or resonant phrases and ideas that went into a working notebook for new poems. The process applied equally to primary material, such as individual author collections or anthologies of Great War poetry, which were scoured for ideas or phrases that could be used to find a voice for the present as it enacts the finding of a voice from the past.

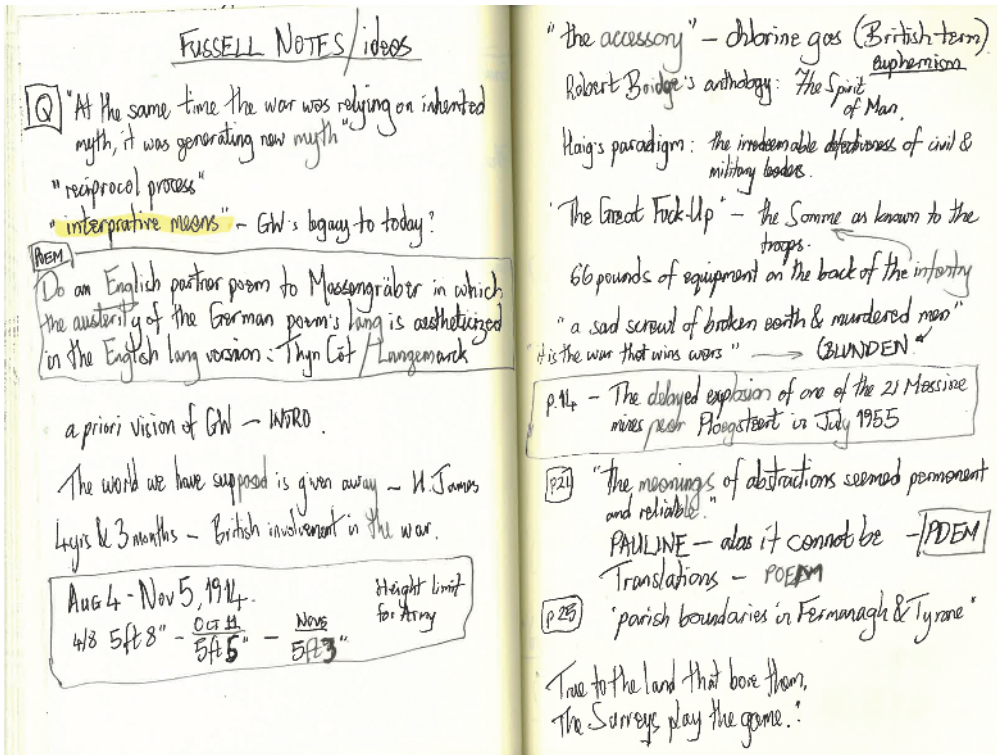


Figure 2:

Examples of this technique can be detected in the prose poems of *The Unreturning*. In each, the language of Great War cultural analysis and resonant echoes of earlier poetic texts are re-calibrated for a contemporary audience in a process of reclamation oddly akin to Edmund Blunden's description of his company recapturing old trench systems they'd occupied years earlier in order to reuse them as present cover in *Undertones of War* ([1928] 2010). A poem like 'School Run', then, quotes a well-known Ivor Gurney line – 'He'll walk no more on Cotswold' (Gurney and Kavanagh 1982) – to clinch a threnody culled from the co-location of an everyday twenty-first-century event with Gurney's Great War Gloucestershire:

10. 'School Run'

If you've a minute, tweet this: the car-struck badger you've driven past these last two weeks, *pikelhaube* snout irate in death, body bloating with

fetid air, hind-legs rigid in surrender. *Kamerad*, emptied of essence, this is the boy from your home village; that snotty kid with a terrier whose Dad liked a drink, the one who pissed himself when Miss Manning caught him with a rat in his desk. Him: always the last to put up his hand, always unlucky in love. His losing streak continued over here and now that’s him rotting away to your left, hung on the brambles of a B-road: a passing stain in no man’s land, fuel for the coming spring. He’ll walk no more on Cotswold.

By such means, I have attempted to echo the sort of ironic patterning identified by Paul Fussell as being a key feature of the Great War’s perceived experience. Clearly, this ‘co-location’ does not stop at the setting of the poem, however, and some care is taken to intermingle contemporaneous registers with those of our own time, so the intercutting of Great War textual material is meant to collide with modern linguistic phenomena like textspeak and Twitter. In moments like these I am attempting to seek out the pressure points of World War I literature in order to release new energies. The contemporary use of a Georgian corollary as an aspirational blueprint for something akin to Eliot’s early modern intertextuality is ironically in keeping with what is, in effect, a twenty-first-century book of Great War poetry: I am looking for his ‘present moment of the past’. Homage is, thus, being paid to the wider culture of the times whilst breaking it up for usable parts.

Another example of the practice described above might be the poem ‘Legacies’, which makes contemporary comment upon a tragic legacy of the Great War – the seismic and apparently irreconcilable problems of the present-day Middle East – in a fashion that yet reminds us of its historical origins.

### 13. ‘Legacies’

Christmas Past is Christmas Present, strolls Mesopotamia mobile in hand, buffering the orange bundle of a man beyond meaning. So at Kut we stick it out with the Poonas, waiting on the RFC’s hand-dropped payload; tight in the hair’s breadth between whizz-bang and telegram. The text-speak of a Field Service Postcard says enough: *we dnt cm in2 yr cts as konkrez or nmes but libr8rs*. Though, if needs be, we’ll be back in black with a South London twang, in biplane or bomb-vest, to stroll into markets or drop in on uncivilized tribes. Repeat then, repeat: *Kill them all. God will know His own*. Each man blessed with just enough afterlife to teach him they were wrong.

Here, the ill-fated Mesopotamia Campaign, which culminated in the siege of Kut al-Amara in 1915–16, is represented *alongside* an oblique meditation upon the last Gulf War and twenty-first-century terrorism: both of which are arguably real and direct legacies of the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire in the Treaty of Versailles, which formally ended the Great War. So the enforced brevity of the Field Service Postcard coexists alongside a contemporary equivalent: the text message. The message itself is an adaptation of the most memorable lines from General Maude’s Proclamation of Baghdad, made on 17 March 1917, which were famously re-invoked on the eve of the Second Gulf War in 2003. This linguistic co-location in time, space and resonant context actually

serves to undermine the very notion of ‘unreturning’; the ghosts and legacies of World War I are *constantly* returning to the present and the book’s title – first encountered on the war memorial in Lutterworth, Leicestershire – is meant to be ironic.

The pervasive sense of ironic patterning – distinctive of much Great War writing – is, indeed, also where my critical chapters begin, though it is from *The Unreturning* that I derive the greater satisfaction, as well as a sense of critical faculties working in dynamic equilibrium with creative instincts. The intended outcome for this approach is to produce something that wears the patina of contemporaneous idiom but which is also carried along by the registers of our own age. In order to do this, I look to both the zeugma-like yoking together of original text with present-day ‘txt’ and to the syntactic repositioning of these elements for maximum ironic effect. At times this might be subtle, a slight resonant disturbance of the natural flow of my own line, such as the use of Isaac Rosenberg’s phrase ‘soul-sack’ in the final line of the poem ‘Hartlepoons’. Fittingly, this is also a feature of Rosenberg’s own writing ascribed to him by Geoffrey Hill:

To possess a ‘sense of mass’ in language would require a sense of contexture, and appreciation of, and an ability to initiate, the changes that single words and phrases undergo when moved from one context to another. As a form of technical experiment this can be traced back at least to Chaucer, but I cannot think of another modern poet writing in English who conducts the experiment more intensively than Rosenberg.

Certainly, the sense of linguistic ‘mass’ and those ‘changes that single words and phrases undergo when moved from one context to another’ are touchstones to the poetics of *The Unreturning*. At other moments in the sequence such fusions may be more blatant and self-referential: ‘Synecdoche’, for example, signposts a constructed rhetorical intent in its title alone and ‘One laptop per child’ openly parodies a twenty-first-century schoolkid’s take on the Great War, by way of the labyrinthine mass of new language created in social media:

## 22. ‘One laptop per child’

All we want is PAX but, man, did they unfriend or what? So here they are lined up in lip sweaters larping like their lives depend on it, flashing the swammies or shouldering a Boom Stick. And TOS was worse than TNG, totally FUBAR. It don’t take no G9 to see that winter is coming to those squads: they were Bantha Fodder from the get-go, SOL. And by 1916 you got served whether you liked it or not and wound up KIA, planking in some field or MIA totally. I’m telling you, no amount of Dead Presidents would tempt me to get into that, MOH or no. It’s just not my idea of a good time, just not my idea of the HOPE.

In many ways, this schoolkid is my ‘imagined reader’ for *The Unreturning*. I taught the War Poets in schools for many years and, in cautionary terms, see a risk that the law of diminishing returns may start to come into play. Newer generations of children, born after the death of the last Tommy, no longer

have a living link with the conflict and, for them, its warning against the pity of war may become exponentially less potent as the years slip by. Failure to engage with what I call the ‘active ingredients’ of Great War legacy – its sheer avoidability, the waste of human life, the ultimate futility of warfare, the need for human solidarity – may lead to a mere cosiness of tradition and more ‘peace-complacent stone’ (Siegfried Sassoon, ‘On Passing the New Menin Gate, l.7) as opposed to a vibrant and living culture that takes real nourishment from its own past. If my project has an ethical basis, then, it is to avoid the complacency of Great War monumentalism, which facilitates a fading glimmer of human recognition in the eyes of twenty-first-century students when confronted by what must seem to them to be mere mythology. The failure to renew meaning in this way can lead to situations such as those depicted in poems like ‘Permadead’ – which heavily references Owen’s ‘SIW’ while dealing with a real-life news story from 2015 – or ‘Aristeia’, which echoes Herbert Read’s ‘The Happy Warrior’ whilst alluding to the murder of Stephen Lawrence and contemporary news coverage of social exclusion, gang culture and street crime:

#### 14. ‘Aristeia’

On CCT, I see him stab and stab again a well-killed kid from the next estate: little warrior, cock of the walk. Subaltern of the seventeen streets and their respawn army; his boys held this patch, his boys hold it still: from the Met, from the blacks from the *who-you-fucking-looking-at?* The trench is well-established as, there beyond the bypass, attrition starts where the sun goes down and the gates begin. His family has been informed and somewhere a comedian is perfecting the voice: *you is, like, dead meat innit, Blood?* Remember, if you missed the show you can catch up online, though we must warn you the following contains scenes you may find disturbing.

A form of literary ‘permission’ for my adoption of such an approach is to be found in pronouncements of the type offered by Seán O’Faoláin in 1940, when he wrote that

All our symbols have to be created afresh, and the only way to create a living symbol is to take a naked thing and clothe it with new life, new association, new meaning, with all the vigour of the life we live in the Here and Now.

(1940, ‘Editorial’)

Similarly, W. B. Yeats’s lines from ‘Byzantium’, ‘Those images that yet / Fresh images beget’ bequeathed me a degree of authority from the times themselves, in much the same way that Glyn Maxwell’s more recent opinion, from *On Poetry* (2012), gave me an early twenty-first-century nod: ‘I just think a century’s gone by and we’re somewhere else in the story’. Intriguingly, I also found imaginative precedent for the ‘tech-speak’ of many of the poems in David Jones’s Preface to *In Parenthesis* (2010), when he says that ‘It would be interesting to know how we shall ennoble our new media as we have already ennobled and made significant our old – candle-light, fire-light, Cups, Wands and Swords, to choose at random’. Sympathy from such illustrious sources, then, fortified my own first instincts.

Prior to *The Unreturning* I had not written a single prose poem, so this was an example of subject, technique and form finding one another almost by osmosis, under the influence of research and through the process of triangulation alluded to above. Once I'd written the first two or three prose pieces, certain concerns and aspirations coalesced into a form of poetics that appeared to announce themselves as being more accentuated than poems from my concurrent work-in-progress, the *Ghosts of the Vortex* collection. A division, therefore, began to open up within the originally planned single volume, giving rise to the possibility of two distinct collections. The short, mainly ten-line prose poem seemed to offer a flexibility of form matched to a satisfying but resonant economy of utterance and, as the sequence progressed beyond its first half-dozen poems, the formal choice in itself grew to represent a more conscious example of my trying to problematize English poetry's abiding relationship with the late-Romantic pastoral mode that characterizes the Great War canon and feeds into much related poetry since. As has been suggested, there is an overall striving towards some serious exploration of the possibilities for re-imagining the Great War's cultural legacies within the resonant multiple contexts of the present day. In doing so I suppose I am merely trying to follow Ezra Pound's injunction to 'make it new', as well as find Eliot's present moments of the past. Broadly speaking, a technique like this has been attempted before in the years around the 50th anniversary, with Geoffrey Hill's Great War-inflected first two collections, *For the Unfallen* (1959) and *King Log* (1968). As I monitor early responses to the publication of individual poems from *The Unreturning* in print and online journals, Hill's name is, of course, the one that crops up most readily. It is interesting, therefore, to reflect upon a somewhat 'retrofitted' awareness of this on my part. After I'd written the first ten or so poems of the sequence, something instinctively took me back to Hill's third collection, *Mercian Hymns* (1971), a good decade since my last reading of it (during which time I'd actually forgotten that it was written in the form of prose poems, though he demurred to describe them thus himself). I found an immediate kinship not only with Hill's chosen 'verset' form but in the self-conscious use of anachronism to create a sense of synchronic voicing between the present and an historically remote moment of the past. Hill part-apologizes for this in his Acknowledgements at the end of the collection. I, on the other hand, saw the opportunity to extend his anachronistic license in order to embolden an articulation of my basic thesis: that, in its explosive breakdown of existing structures and sensibilities, the Great War did unto the early twentieth-century something broadly comparable to the impact of digital technology upon the early twenty-first. The poems themselves exist, therefore, in the gaps left behind by this huge conceit. In terms of my own shadowing of Geoffrey Hill's tone in *Mercian Hymns* (1971), I suppose a poem like 'Kitchener's meme' comes closest:

#### 21. 'Kitchener's meme'

And so it lives on long after your genes have dissolved into the deep beyond Marwick Head: Edwardian adversative, Junker's bane, stern patriarch of the call-to-arms. Shouldering past Omdurman, burying blame for that dearth of shells, your immortal soul is now a Field Marshal's cap, thousand-yard stare and the waxed moustache. Leete's icon points the way to manhood, Thiepval and a field-won name. Answering the want, see how they came, a volunteer army raised on

hoardings, omnibus, tramcars and shame: off whistling for their shilling along the track of your gaze. It is still considered masterful. They have still not returned.

Certainly, a phrase like ‘stern patriarch of the call-to-arms’ is tonally not a million miles away from Hill’s ‘overlord of the M5’ (*Mercian Hymns*, 1971: I, l.2), though such coincidence certainly started off as exactly that and only latterly became more conscious. There is, though, a shared intent to work my clichés in similarly rigorous ways and to, likewise, X-ray a culture still broken by World War I. The main difference here being the doubled temporal perspective of the Great War centenary, compared to the 50th anniversary experienced by Hill in the 1960s.

As I’ve suggested, part of the sequence’s *modus operandi* allows the self-revelatory instincts of Great War trench lyric to become enmeshed in a dialogue in which lines and resonant phrases from Owen, Gurney, Rosenberg and others can become entwined with current idioms and present day contexts such as textspeak, Twitter and mobile communications. At the same time – in poems such as ‘Greetings from Trento’, ‘Duck Face’, ‘Flash Mob’ and ‘Cold Call’ – a critique is being offered, of the vacuity and neuroses of our own times, which have been the legacy of certain aspects of digital culture, turning us now *literally*, into denizens of the unreal city. The depth of historical perspective on all this can vary across the intervening century: a poem like ‘One laptop per child’ operates almost exclusively in the present day, with its skewed perspective upon the past, whereas a poem like ‘Clickbait’ lives very much in the trenches of 1914–18, relying only upon its title for ironic resonance:

### 31. ‘Clickbait’

Each evening the real work starts, not at the front but in front of it: repair the wire, recover his guts, dig that sap, patrol or raid. The detail shivers in its crump-hole, funk'd by a Verey’s glow and the unreality of it all, its goal a cornered *Bosch* to bring back alive with his terror and those photographs of home. The land itself has never been so intimately known, as you snout an earth flayed of its skin. This night gets lost to all whereabouts and a dawn that lifts too quickly at your shoulder. Reduced from subaltern to silhouette, an eye narrows on the cross-hairs, somewhere on high a lark sings and off clicks the safety-catch.

It does, of course, help that the early twentieth century provided a broad cultural template that remains entirely comprehensible to citizens of the twenty-first century; also, that the Great War era reflected technological, social and aesthetic changes similar in scale to those occasioned by the rise of new social media, digitization and the balkanization of global politics. Such similarities give a chillingly *equal* valency to the wider cultural and linguistic registers of both eras and lend, I hope, some degree of moral energy to my own agenda and methods.

Culturally, the effects of the war were so far reaching that, even now, it represents something of a connotative vortex into which one can pull so many subjects for related scrutiny. Confronted by the vast legacy of the conflict, I decided to use the Great War as a ‘tool for thinking with’ in respect of my Ph.D. project. I explore more explicitly the notion of a vortex

in the parallel collection, *Ghosts of the Vortex*, but, even in *The Unreturning*, its imaginative possibilities – that potential to use a form of multi-directional memory and shifting historical perspective – free me up to draw into the sequence anything that interests me and has some viable Great War resonance. An example of this might be the poem ‘Now we rise and we are everywhere’:

9. ‘Now we rise and we are everywhere’

Not that iconic shot of him wrapped in his blanket, outstretched hand feeding petals to the lens, but a black & white taken by the sea, arms hidden inside a trench coat. Younger, he is yet carrying shades of the Mem Hall with its *Sed miles*, still willing to play up and play the game. A face seen so many times on the broad High Street; flushed with plenty, old before its time, dying the thousand deaths of duty. It is noted in tones of some surprise that, towards the end, he thought to join the infantry. But by then the star-shell of his five minutes had caught him out in the open, frozen in the forward sap of the Festival Hall, Rodney and Molly already reaching for the blinds at *Far Leys*.

Anyone, like myself, who is familiar with the work of 1970s songwriter-guitarist Nick Drake will recognize the lyric and biographical references here: the title is a line taken from his song, ‘From the Morning’, which is now carved upon his headstone at Tanworth-in-Arden; he attended Marlborough College, a school that provided the Great War with a number of soldier-poets (Siegfried Sassoon, Charles Hamilton Sorley, Alec de Candole); he was a notoriously nervous live performer; and he had an unlikely flirtation with the idea of joining the army in the years preceding his tragically early death. What I am looking for, then, are touchpoints like these with which to explore Great War resonance: in this case, the tradition of military service common to so many private schools, which sent many of the schools’ old boys to an early death and which appears to endure. There is an oblique lyrical impulse behind this too, quite apart from a love of Nick Drake’s music: Marlborough and the surrounding Wiltshire countryside have, in recent years, become personally totemic to my own sense of Englishness. I lived and worked in and around the town for a number of years and, like Charles Hamilton Sorley, have written much about the wonderful landscape of the surrounding Downs.

I mentioned several times that I am currently working on *two* Great War-related poetry collections. The division that opened up in this strand of my research came about in 2015, following a residential course at the Arvon Foundation’s centre at Lumb Bank, which I attended because of its focus upon longer poems and sequences. Discussing the prose poems with the poet Michael Symmons Roberts, who had been my tutor at Manchester Metropolitan University, we agreed that *The Unreturning* sequence had taken on a life of its own that could no longer be satisfactorily accommodated within the original plan for a single collection. The neo-modernist poetics of these poems had started to jar with those from the more ‘traditional’ end-stopped *Vortex* poems and, perhaps under the influence of my third critical chapter, the language itself had become intimately bound up with what it was conveying in ways not quite so evident in the other poems. Hill’s outlier drag, identified in my Chapter 3, had started to pull *The Unreturning*

material wide of Hughes, Heaney and Larkin, who shared with him the critical scrutiny there. This phenomenon became more consciously observed as the two collections progressed and diverged. It felt a natural decision, therefore, to separate them and create a Great War 'diptych' of distinct poetics and different publication dates, the intention being to publish *The Unreturning* sometime in 2018 to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Armistice, and allow *Ghosts of the Vortex* a longer run-up to publication, possibly with a different publisher.

I should end by reflecting a little upon the in-progress nature of this work and sketch out its intended trajectory. At the time of writing this piece, I've 'finished' 35 of the planned 50 poems for a sequence that will be organized into five ten-poem sections under the sub-headings: '14, '15, '16, '17 and '18. The correspondence here is fairly obvious, though in the light of all I've just claimed on behalf of my poetics, it is important to remain unspecific about *which* century these numbers belong to, the twentieth or the twenty-first. As I've suggested, a good many of *The Unreturning* poems have already been published in journals such as *Blackbox Manifold*, *Under the Radar* and *Agenda*. This is encouraging since sequences that are strongly defined can sometimes fail to make their transfer of energies at the level of single poems. I have also been working with the film-maker Helen Dewberry and Dutch sound artist Marc Neys on a film poem series of pieces from *The Unreturning*. This project is itself a work-in-progress, though early results can be viewed on my Academia.edu profile page or at <https://vimeo.com/170387442>. Another intended outcome for my Ph.D. collections is a projected stage show that also tries to disrupt the elegiac vernacular of Great War commemoration; taking it both forward into the twenty-first century and back to some of the more visceral features of the time. Having worked as a singer-songwriter/guitarist for 25 years before returning to poetry, I am now discussing with past collaborators how we might best proceed with an approach whereby contemporary instruments work with the Vorticist/Modernist/Futurist spirits of the day, rather than the pastoralist default of so much UK musical commemoration.

What I've sincerely sought to render here is a sense of how the twenty-first-century writer *might* tackle so huge a cultural edifice as the Great War and negotiate such a well-trodden poetic path. I hope I have suggested, at least, the possibility that, even a century after-the-fact, one can still take from it something fresh and instructive for our own age: an age that was, after all, formed in the cataclysm of the trenches.

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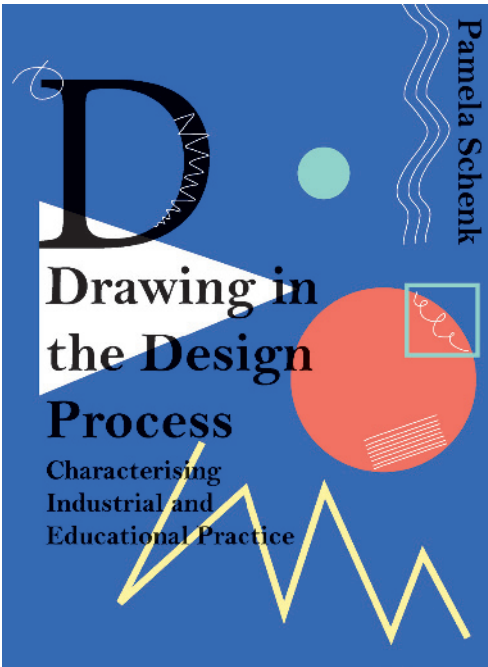
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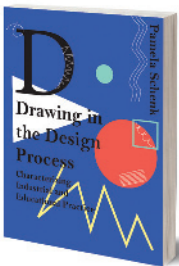
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## Drawing in the Design Process

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In the early days of the digital revolution in graphic design, many designers and teachers of design were convinced that the era of drawing on paper was over – that there would soon no longer be a place for craft-based drawing at any stage of the design process. It soon became apparent, however, that technological progress had not obviated the inherent value of drawing, and that, in fact, it opened up new avenues for convergent and hybrid drawing practices. This book traces the evolution of design-based drawing through analysis of a series of research projects from the 1980s to recent years that have sought to characterize the changing practices of design within various industries. Built on more than 300 interviews with designers, academics and design students, and an exhaustive analysis of thousands of drawings, it aims to generate discussion around historical and contemporary models of the design process.

**Pamela Schenk** is a visiting research professor at the School of Textiles and Design, Heriot-Watt University, Scotland.



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