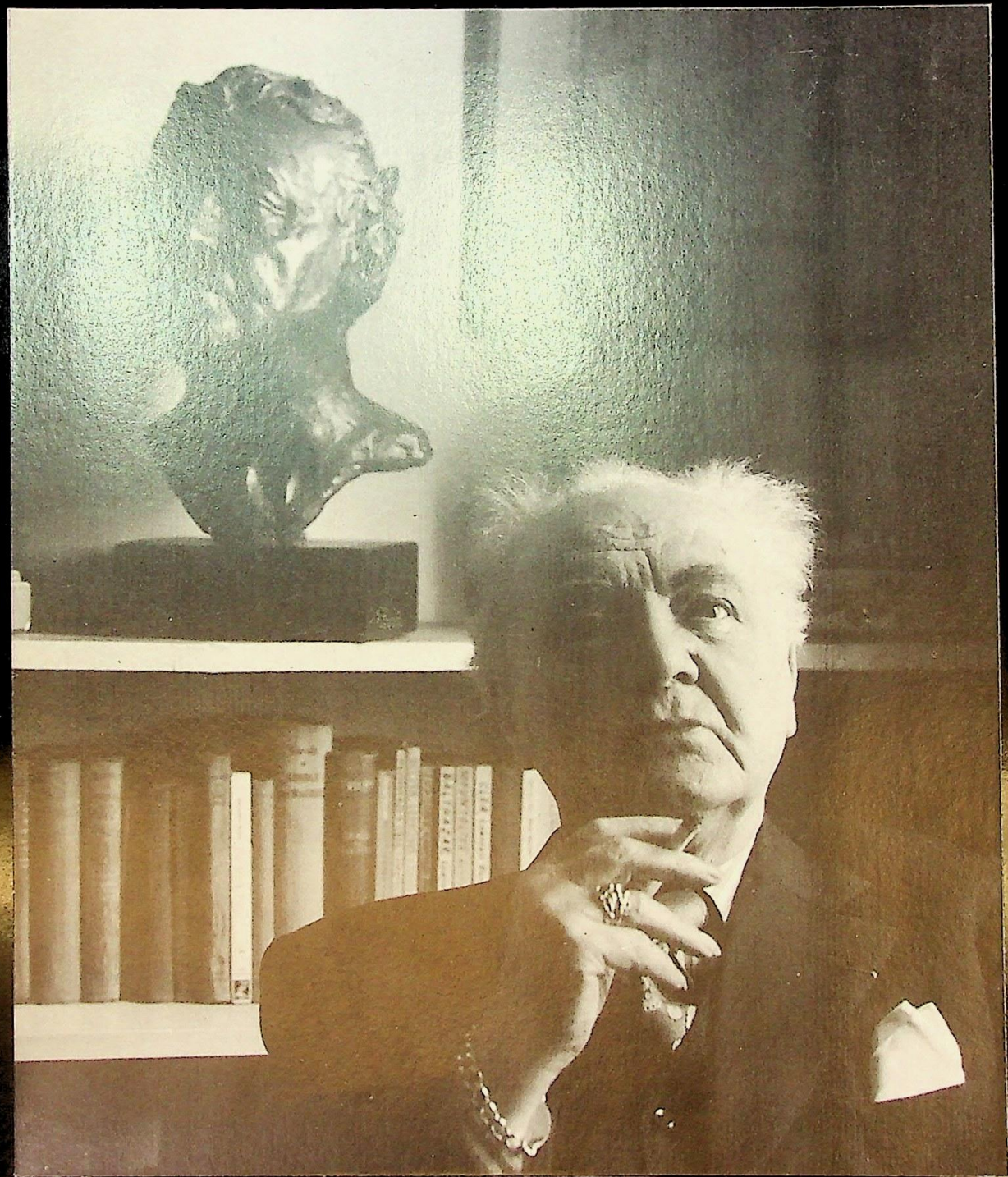


MICHEÁL macLIAMMÓIR





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HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN  
AND COMPLIMENTARY STUDIES

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MICHAEL macLIAMMOIR  
INFLUENCES ON HIS WORK.

'I AM OF IRELAND,  
AND THE HOLY LAND OF IRELAND,  
AND TIME RUNS ON; CRIED SHE'  
'COME OUT OF CHARITY  
COME DANCE WITH ME IN IRELAND'.

W.B. YEATS.



**introduction**



It was an interest in Irish Theatre posters which first introduced me to the work of Michael macLiammoir. When I discovered some of his costume designs in an old catalogue I was overwhelmed by their colour and vitality. macLiammoir is a familiar name in the world of Irish Theatre, however, I had no knowledge of his capacity as a designer. I went in search of further examples of his work, soon discovering that most of the memorabilia belonging to the Gate Theatre had been sold many years ago to the North Western University, Illinois, who now own a substantial Gate Theatre Archive. Fortunately, I was introduced to Richard Pine who kindly allowed me to use his selection of slides. These were taken from the 1978 exhibition which marked the golden jubilee of The Gate Theatre. I then proceeded to the National Library where I managed to compile an almost complete selection of macLiammoir's book illustrations. In this paper I will attempt to show some part of the vast quantity of illustration, stage and costume design which macLiammoir produced during his life. In the first part I will deal mainly with his life and the affects it had on his career, taking a brief look at some of his stage and costume designs. The second section is concerned only with his illustration and the influences wrought upon his work.







Irish Players. I think they're fine. I  
like reading W.B. Yeats".

The Star, 28th June, 1915.  
Alfred Milner, aged 15.  
(Michael macLiammoir) (U).

At this point in his life macLiammoir did not realize the effect Yeats  
was to have on him. But in later years he felt that Yeats's  
nationalist propaganda caused him to return to Ireland. Hilton  
Edwards said of him:

"The supreme influence on his life he insists  
was W.B. Yeats. Thus his true influence  
enveloped both his cousin Maire  
and himself and resulted in their  
coming to Ireland with Yeats's  
mother Mrs. O'Malley to live in Ireland".

The second great influence on macLiammoir was the Russian  
Ballet.

"When we were in London the Russian Ballet

Michael macLiammoir spent most of his life on the stage. It is the  
stage therefore that has been the primary influence on his life and on  
his work. Born in Ireland in 1899 his family moved to England when he  
was four. macLiammoir made his first professional stage appearance  
in 1910. Appearing in 'The Goldfish' under the direction of Sir Hubert  
Beerbohm Tree. He appeared in 'Macbeth' as an 'apparition' and  
'macDuff's son'. In his Majesty's Theatre he played as 'Oliver' in  
'Oliver Twist'. At The Duke of York he starred as 'Peter Pan', & with  
this show he travelled to Dublin.

"When I was in Dublin with Peter Pan  
I used to spend quite a lot of time  
at the Abbey Theatre watching the



Irish Players, I think they're fine. I  
like reading W.B. Yeats".

The Star, 29th June, 1915,  
Alfred Wilmere, aged 15.  
(Michael macLiammoir) (1).

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was to have on him, but in later years he felt that Yeats's  
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mother Mrs. O'Keeffe to live in Ireland".

(2)

The second great influence on macLiammoir was the Russian  
Ballet.

"When we were in London the Russian Ballet  
was at Drury Lane and Covent Garden. I  
used to go night after night.  
Jolly fine show that was".

The Star, 29th June, 1915.  
(1).

Later he commented:

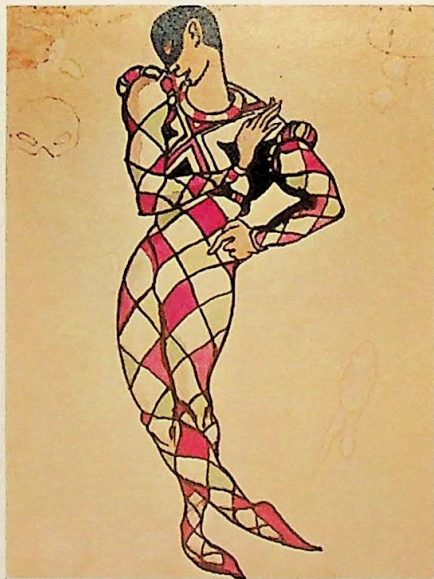
"I was twelve that was a very eventful  
year for me because it was the  
first year I ever saw serious dancing  
which has been my greatest passion  
all through my life, watching it. I'd  
much prefer to go to ballet much more than  
drama."

(1).

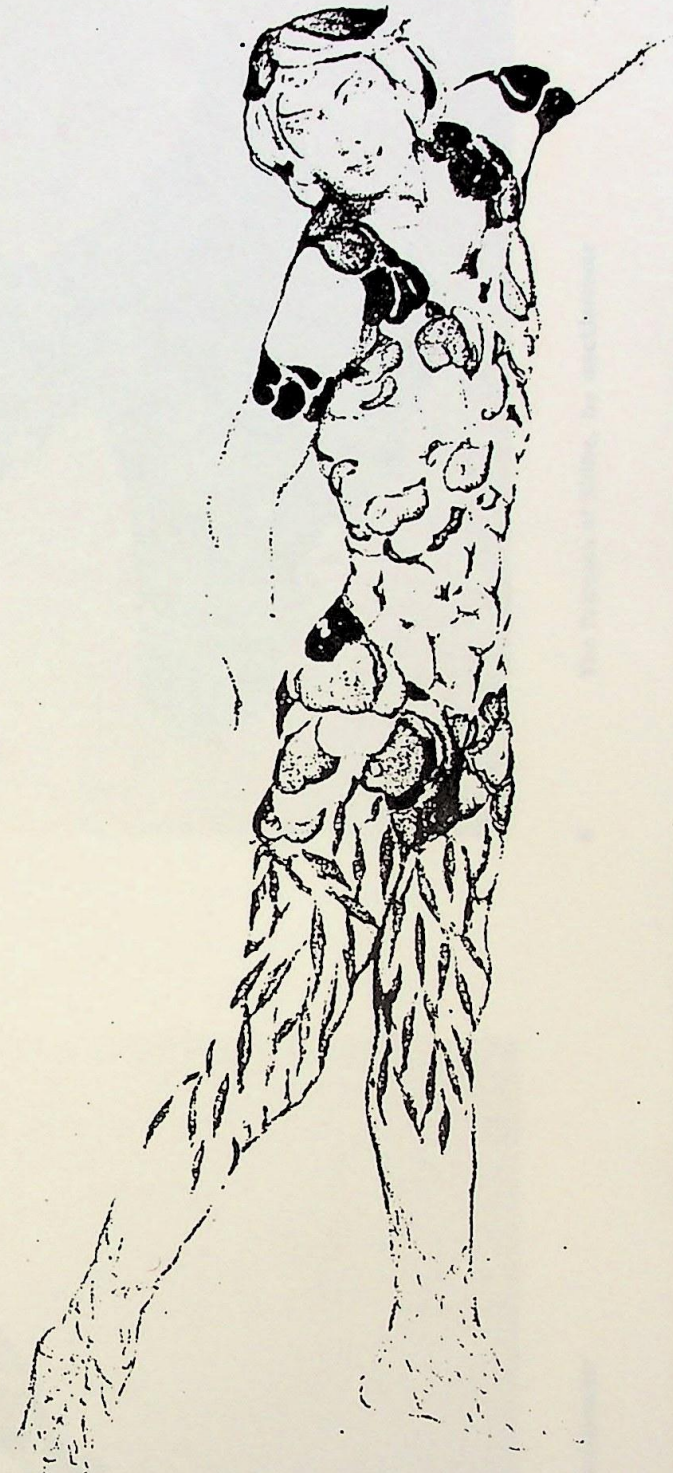




1 Harlequin, by Leon Baskt.



2 Harlequin, by Michael macLiammoir



3 Costume, 'le spectre de la Rose' by Baskt





The Prince of Sidhe, by macLiammolr



The Princess of Sidhe, by macLiammolr



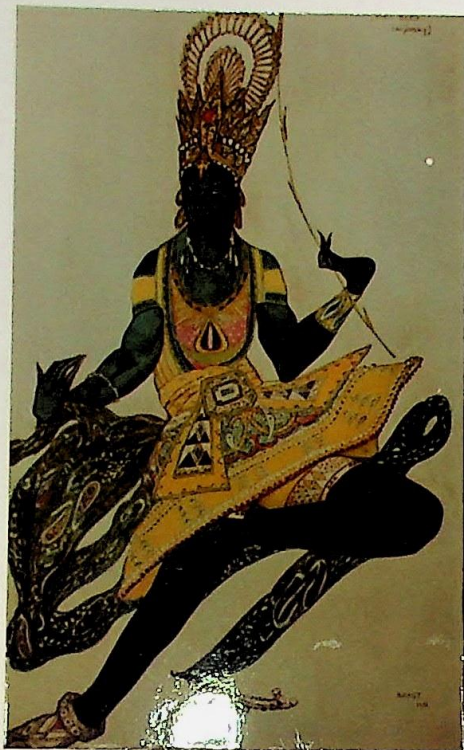
In 1911 he saw the Pavillion d'Armide with Nijinsky as the Harlequin and ballerinas Karsavina and Pavlova. It is here that macLiammoir received his first introduction to the world of Leon Baskt. This was a magnificent wonderland of imaginative stage sets, costume designs and, above all, colour. The strong use of colour made a lifelong impression on macLiammoir. Suietlov wrote :

"The whole audience greeted enthusiastically this revelry of colours, this panoramic change of pictures. Hundreds of costumes which filled the stage were all rivalling each other in originality and picturesqueness, a multiplicity of sights never to be seen until that day". (3).

The scenes which macLiammoir saw left their impression and they often reappear in his own work. Compare the costume design for the Harlequin in *Carneval*, (fig. 1) with the costume design by macLiammoir (fig 2). Although this design was made many years later we cannot ignore the resemblance between the two. In 1912 macLiammoir saw '*Carneval*', '*le spectre de la Rose*', '*Thamar*' '*Narcisse*', '*Swan Lake*' and '*Fire Bird*'. When we look at this costume designed for Nijinsky by Leon Baskt as '*le Spectre de la Rose*', (fig 3) and compare it to macLiammoir's designs for the Prince and Princess of *Sidhe* (fig 4,5) we cannot help but see a similarity, not only in the designs themselves but also in the technique used to draw and to colour them. It almost seems as though macLiammoir used Baskt's drawing as a basis for his ideas, perhaps developing it further by adding his own very Irish or Celtic motif.

It is interesting to see how he uses ideas he got from the Russian Ballet for his own productions. Going back to the drawings for the Prince and Princess of *Sidhe*, the lovely purple, blues and greens in the Princess's dress are a perfect example of macLiammoir's free style of drawing coupled with his wonderful use of colour. When we compare the Prince and Princess of *Sidhe* with the costume for '*The Blue God*' (fig 6) by Baskt, we see how macLiammoir uses these same stylised





6

The Blue God, by Baskt



7

l'Oiseau de Feu, by Baskt



8

Czarvlitch, by Baskt



hands with their pointed fingers and the slanting eyes. There is a likeness between the fantastic head-dresses worn by both 'The Blue God' and the 'Princess of Sidhe' the patterns on the Princess's costume although celtic are influenced by those on the costume of 'The Blue God'. macLiammoir's simple use of pattern adds unity to his design. Celtic patterns are thought to have originated from Persia so it is perhaps for this reason that the motif merges so well with the overall exotic design of the costume.

In 1913 macLiammoir saw 'le Sacre du Printemps', 'Petruska', 'l'apres Midi d'une Faune' and 'Jeux Chaliapi in Sang'. When macLaimmoir was in Monte Carlo he saw 'l'Oiseau de Feu', 'le Spectre de la Rose' and 'Swan Lake'. In 1926 he saw 'Romeo and Juliet' and in 1927 'La Chatte'. We can see how enchanted he was by the ballet if only by the amount of times he visited it. When we look at Baskt's fabulous costumes for 'l'Oiseau de Feu' (fig.7), we can begin to understand why macLiammoir could see no limits to his designs. These costumes are so imaginative and colourful, that even to-day we are surprised by their colour vitality and originality. We realise why, when macLiammoir and Hilton Edwards formed their own theatre, they wanted

"A theatre limited only by the  
limits of the imagination".

(2)

These costumes cannot help but open our eyes to the visually exciting world of colour and movement. While we are looking at them we must remember that macLiammoir saw these costumes dance before him along with other equally colourful costumes on the stage with sets and music.

"What were the reforms headed by  
Diagilev which made the early  
production of the Russian Ballet  
so revolutionary in contrast to both  
European and Russian Ballet?  
The most striking quality was the





9 Stage Design, Romeo and Juliet, by macLiammoir



10 l'Oiseau de Feu, by Baskt



co-ordination of the various components of the spectacle dancing, music, sets and costumes. The notion that the theatrical facets of the ballet production should be planned together and display relationships was an idea foreign to nineteenth century ballet. The choreographer, the composer and the scenic designer did not usually generate their ideas together". (5).

When we look at Baskt's costume for the Czarvitch (fig 8) it seems almost too decorative, using the very traditional Russian folk art as inspiration for the costume. The effect is very dazzling and macLiammoir uses this idea of abstract decoration in his stage set for 'Romeo and Juliet' (fig 9). It must be remembered that the Russian Ballet was the fore-runner of Art Nouveau and Art Deco, with both styles involved in the design of patterns. This meant that when macLiammoir did his designs he had experience of how they worked, and, more importantly, now they failed. The costume designed by Baskt for Karsavina in l'Oiseau de Feu (10) is outlandish with its peacock style headdress. How must these ideas have affected a boy of thirteen who seems to have been so open to them? It is probably here that macLiammoir started to think in terms of his own theatre. Later as he discovered his Irish heritage he probably remembered the good that the Russian Ballet did Russia with a piece of their art receiving worldwide acclaim.

At the age of fourteen or fifteen his stage career as a child actor began to draw to its natural conclusion. He started to attend art school in the mornings. He attended the Willesden School.

"One of the excellent institutions under the Middlesex County Council, specialises in commercial art and most of its students leave to take up good positions as poster artists, book illustrators, catalogue designers etc,"



macLiammoir's father had been a draughtsman but he had no sense of colour though he had an instinctive sense of line which dominated all his pictorial work. His father suggested that he should go to Spain to stay with the family of his aunt at Seville.

"What Spain had done was to create in him a desire to draw, to make pictures of the things he had seen under those limpid skies, things beautiful and hideous".

(4)

After his return from Spain he went to the Slade School of Art although he himself did not believe this had much effect on his work.

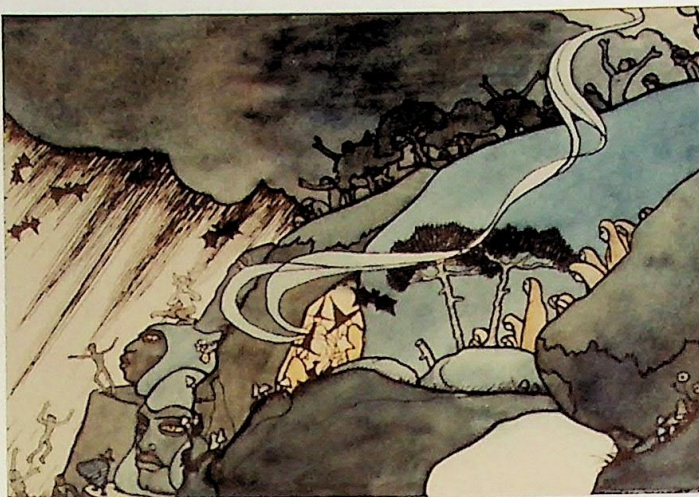
"The only talent I had was for ornament and decoration, I don't mean abstract design like William Morris wallpaper. I mean decorative rather than representational so the Slade was very little use for me in that practical way except that I did learn to draw a man's or a woman's body with reasonable correctness, not with much individual style but there wasn't much scope for that".

(4)

The greatest effect that Art College had on macLiammoir was that it was here he met Maire O'Keeffe. It was through Maire he found his Irish heritage. Together they discovered some remote kinship between her father's family and his mother's.

"We talk of Ireland all day long.....  
.....at last we get to go back to  
Ireland she persuading her mother that

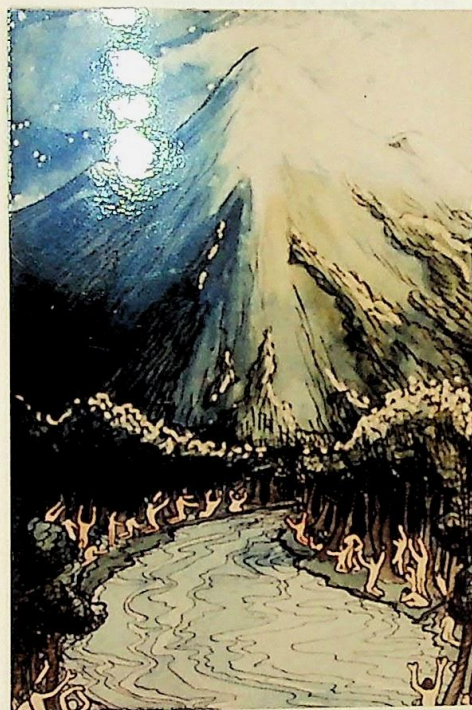




11 Imeall an Domhain, by macLiammoir



12 Centaur by macLiammoir



13 An Chead Cholmhne, by macLiammoir



14 Franncach ag rith Indiadh a bhalreid by macLiammoir



the air of Howth near Dublin is better than that of London and laying particular stress for the benefit of an impressionable middleaged upon the absence of zepplins".

(6)

It was during this year 1917 that macLiammoir produced an interesting group of pictures (fig, 11,13,14,15). They are his earliest known group of paintings on Celtic themes. macLiammoir is at this stage beginning to establish his Irish identity. It is interesting to note the changes in signature. Michael macLiammoir was born Michael Willmore, although on stage as a child actor he was known by his father's name, Alfred Willmore. Around 1917 he changed his name from English to Irish so some of this group of paintings are signed Michael Willmore, whilst others are just signed M macU. This first painting 'Imeall an Domhain' (the edge of the world) (fig 11) takes much of its influence from the rich and mostly anonymous graphic illustration which was a prominent part of the journalism of the period in which he grew up. It has some of the qualities of the type of illustration which was popular in magazines such as Punch. In the paintings strange fairytale figures there are none of the Celtic designs which later dominate much of his work. It is purely imaginative, with the little group of witches in the crevice on the side of the world, the smoke from their caldron weaving its way towards the sky and the only bright light coming from their cavern. macLiammoir has a good feeling for line and this is essentially a line drawing. The colour is an accessory to the design, it adds depth and creates a sense of mystery, basically he has used only two colours, blue and yellow. Observe the primitive faces hewn out of stone, it is in these details that we see a glimpse at the scope of imagination and the potential open to macLiammoir as a designer.

In another painting, 'Centaur's' (fig 12), we see how macLiammoir has



brought his economy of design even further. He has broken up the page almost geometrically into areas. The three trees are equally spaced with their branches having an almost measured distance between them. The people rising and falling complete the pattern. In doing this he has created a strong composition, the vertical off centred trees distracts our attention from the heavy downward curvilinear emphasis of the painting. Unfortunately, his handling of the medium is a little muddy, but this is redeemed by the fact that macLiammoir has sought to create a solemn almost tragic atmosphere.

'An Chead Chuimhne' (The first memory)(fig13) is an interpretation of Edward Carpenters "Towards Democracy" which begins :

"In the first soft winds of spring, while snow yet lay  
on the ground -

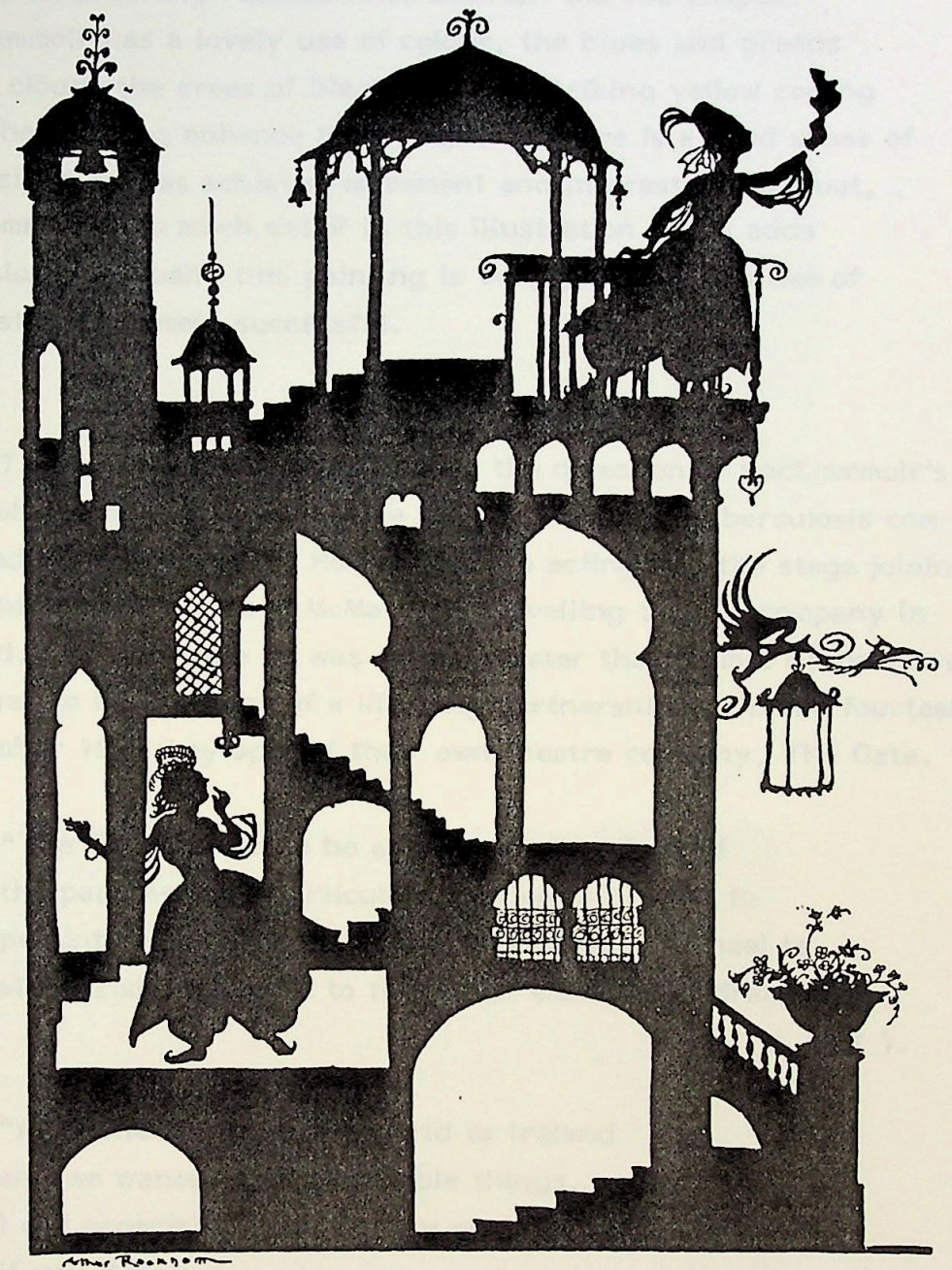
Forth from the city into the great woods wandering.  
Into the great silent woods where they waited  
in their beauty and majesty  
For man their companion to come:  
There, in vision, out of the wreck of cities  
and civilisations

I saw a new life arise.


This is a very pantheistic vision, with these simple figures worshipping the mountain. macLiammoir has reduced mankind by creating this almost awesome view of nature. Each element in the illustration reaches to the top of the mountain, the figures, the trees and the lines forming the sides. The summit of the mountain is the brightest point in the painting enhancing this view. The style used to illustrate this painting is drawn largely from Japanese prints.

This painting for 'Franncach'ag rith i ndiaidh a bhaireid' (Frenchman in pursuit of his hat) (fig 14) is a very entertaining illustration. We see this elongated man standing in France reaching up to the Rackham-like figure who is holding his hat. This clever drawing of the globe with the









man standing on the map of France has to amuse. Observe the Eastern style building partly hidden by the clouds and compare it to this building from Arthur Rackham's Fairy Tales, (fig.15) we can see a strong resemblance between the two shapes. macLiammoir has a lovely use of colour, the blues and greens of the cloud, the areas of black and this striking yellow coming from the building enhance the design. There is a good sense of composition he has achieved movement and interest throughout, macLiammoir uses much detail in this illustration which adds dimension. Visually this painting is very pleasing, his use of contrast is extremely successful.

In 1927 an event which was to change the direction of macLiammoir's life took place. Maire O'Keeffe died in France of tuberculosis complicated by pneumonia. He returned to acting and the stage joining his brother-in-law, Anew McMaster's travelling theatre company in Ireland. It was while he was with McMaster that he met Hilton Edwards. This was to be the start of a life-long partnership. On the fourteenth of October 1928 they opened their own theatre company, The Gate.

"The Theatre was to be experimental. Each of the partners had particular ambitions. Hilton to put into practice new production methods, Michael to alert Irish audiences to the visual elements in drama".

(1 ).

"We wanted to show the world to Ireland and we wanted to show visible things. I did especially, that was my contribution if you like.....  
I wanted to make scenery and dresses and make something beautiful to look at.

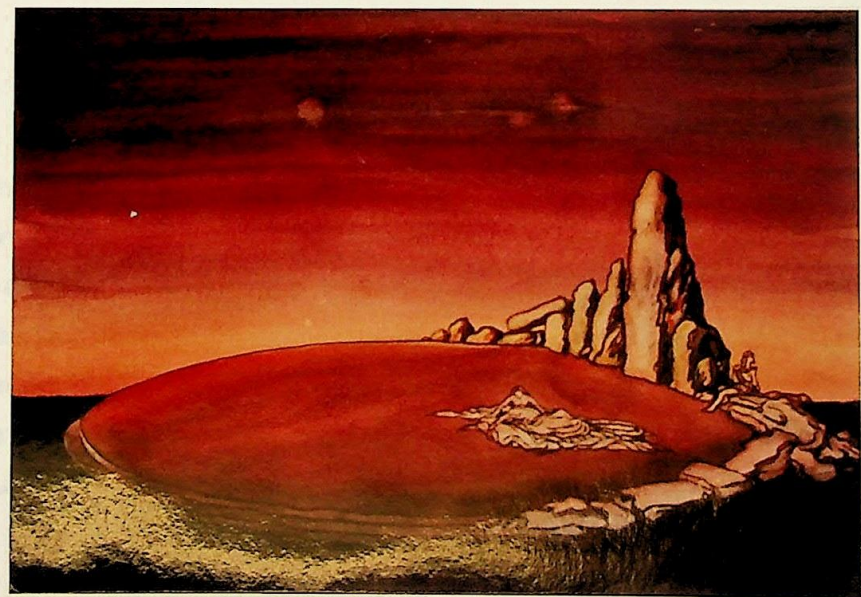
(macLiammoir 4).

From this partnership came a wealth of ideas, set designs, costumes and plays. The stage designs produced by macLiammoir for 'Tristum und Isolde' give us some idea of the quality of their theatre.





16 The Garden, by macLiammoir



17 The Courtyard by mac Liammoir



These designs were submitted to Christopher West, Resident Producer, at the request of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in 1958. They were not accepted because the director, David Webster and the conductor Rafael Kubelik, thought that they had a 'Rackham/Beardsley feel'. macLiammoir wrote in a letter accompanying the sketches :

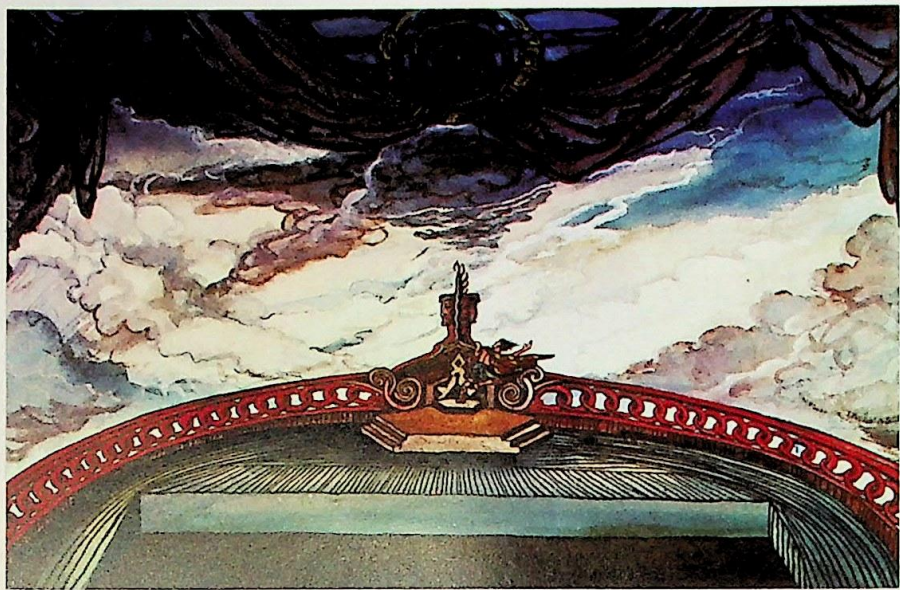
"It seemed to me better to take one's abstraction from Carnac and Stonehenge and Cashel and the Book of Kells than from Grimm's Fairy Tales or the rebuilding of Berlin : I have tried to avoid that Beardsley family but I don't know how far I've got away : anyway they are mainly in treatment and no stage designer can be seriously overwhelmed by Beardsley if he remembers the importance of the switchboard. There's a lot to explain about the changes of colour and the effect of light on the planes of rostrum, cyclorama, and so on. But most of that you know before you look at the drawings and the rest won't matter if they're not right".

The simple treatment of design for these stage sets for 'The Garden ' (fig 16) and 'The Courtyard'(fig 17) is extremely effective. It is perhaps in the very stylised design that Webster and Kubelik saw Beardsley. In my opinion, the two designs show the influence of Salvador Dali in these uncluttered planes. The notion of a three dimensional celtic design as a platform has to be admired for its ingenuity and originality. These neolithic stones in the Courtyard create a powerful image. The two almost bare stages suggest the influence of Hilton Edward's ideas for the theatre.

"No necessity for all this paint and canvas and stuff"

"What about a theatre where you could produce heroic plays on a bare stage against a cyclorama like that" he would say pointing to a group of milky clouds that lay motionless over the cornfields against the dazzling night sky"





18

The Deck, by macLiammoir



19

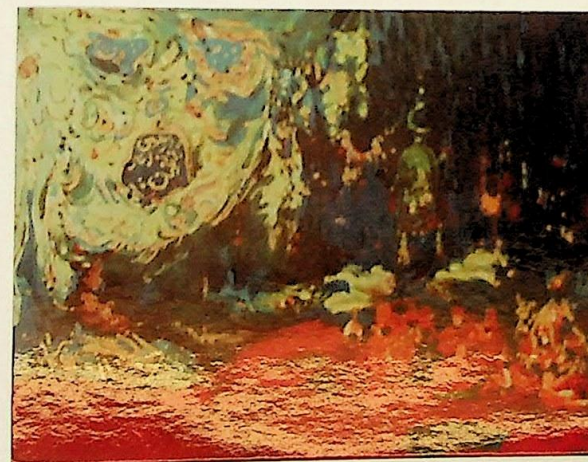
The Cabin, by macLiammoir





20

The figure head, by macLiammoir



21

Stage Design, by Baskt



The influence of William Blake is apparent in these two designs 'The deck', (fig 18) and 'The Cabin' (fig 19) it is particularly evident in the treatment of the sky for the 'Deck'. The figure head (fig 20) shows some traits of Beardstey's style although emulates an Eastern influence.

In this design for the cabin macLiammoir uses strong celtic patterns on the curtains at the back of the stage. These drape from a spiral ring which is very reminiscent of the Tara Brooch. The depth he achieves through the shadows caused by the curtains gives the stage great atmosphere and strength. This use of drapes is to be seen in Leon Baskts work...Baskt also used this idea of strong patterns on the curtaining (fig 10). Although there elements of Beardsley and Rackham in these designs, as there is in much of macLiammoir's work. I do not feel that this influence is to any extent overpowering.



The influence of William Blake is apparent in these two  
poems. 'The Lamb' and 'The Tyger' are both  
written in the form of a dialogue. The speaker  
addresses an unseen listener, who is identified  
as the Lamb in the first poem and the Tyger in the  
second. The poems are both written in a simple,  
direct style, which is characteristic of Blake's  
poetry. The poems are both written in a simple,  
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poetry.



Throughout his career Michael macLiammoir illustrated a number of books and these illustrations demonstrate the diversity of influences which affected his work. His style appears to change frequently. This could be due to the fact that macLiammoir did not devote his life to illustration. In his early years he intended to be an artist. However, after Maire O'Keeffe's untimely death he reverted to acting, and made his life on the stage, yet he was to say in later years :

"I never wanted to be a representational artist, nor did I want to be an abstract artist, as an abstract artist is understood to-day, but I was fascinated by the visual, and I think that this was part of the thing that made Hilton and I make a theatre and I would do it in Dublin partly due to Yeats Nationalist propaganda and partly because I knew that Ireland had never experienced the joy of the visible as say Italy has.....  
.....I rapidly discovered  
- I don't think this is modesty - that I was not a painter. God didn't mean for me to be one.....I was much more fascinated by line, by design, filled in with colour, if you will, but the idea of vague masses of flowers, or women's faces or rain falling over grey and silver roofs, has never meant to me what perhaps it should". (4).

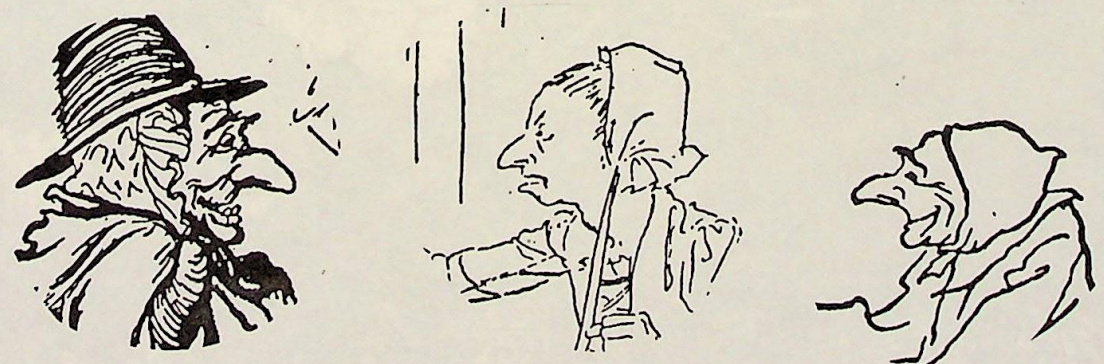
The influence of the stage on macLiammoir's designs can be clearly seen when one looks at what he was attempting to do with his illustrations. macLiammoir saw illustration as a medium through





22

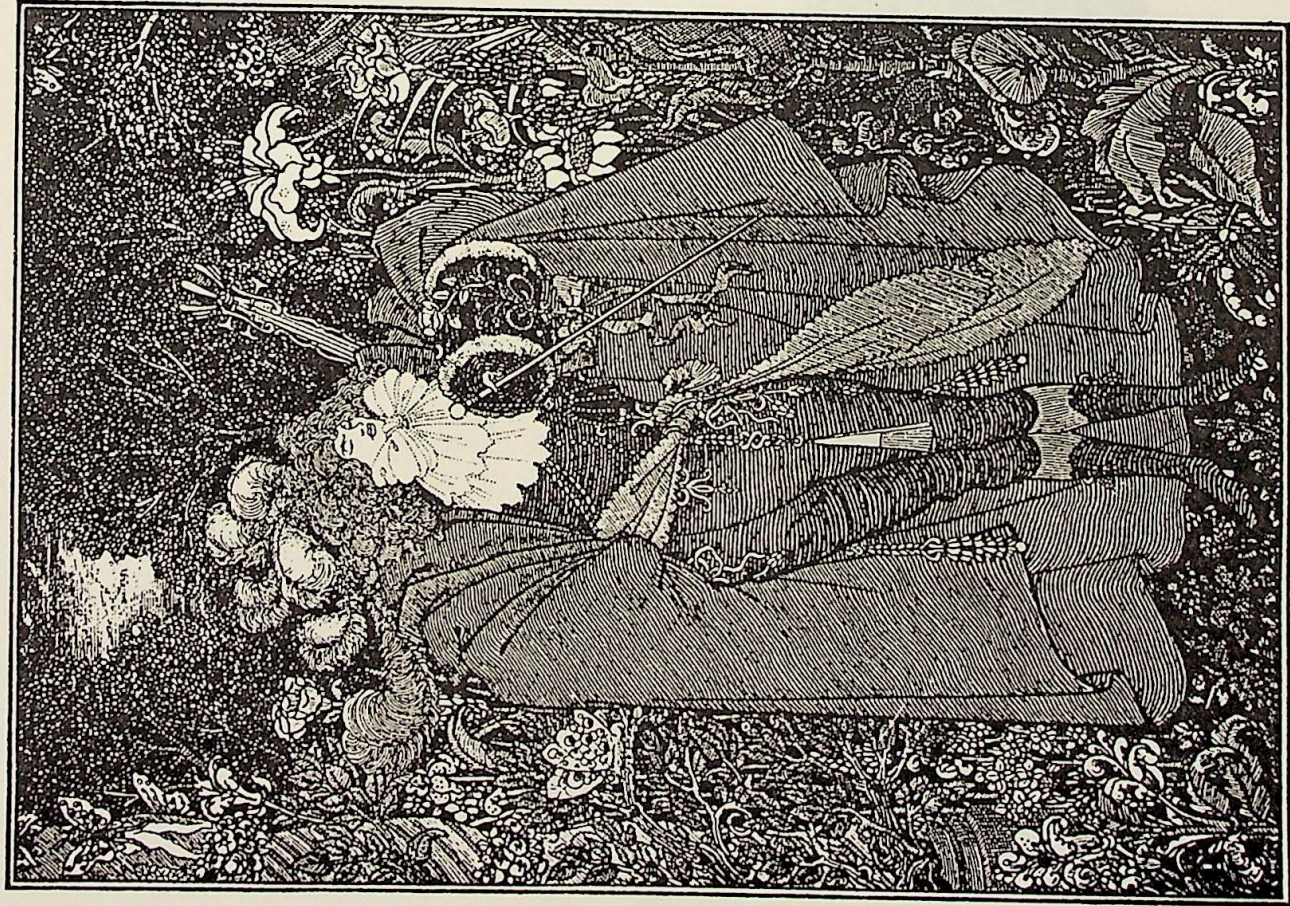
Finn Varra Maa, by macLaimmoir



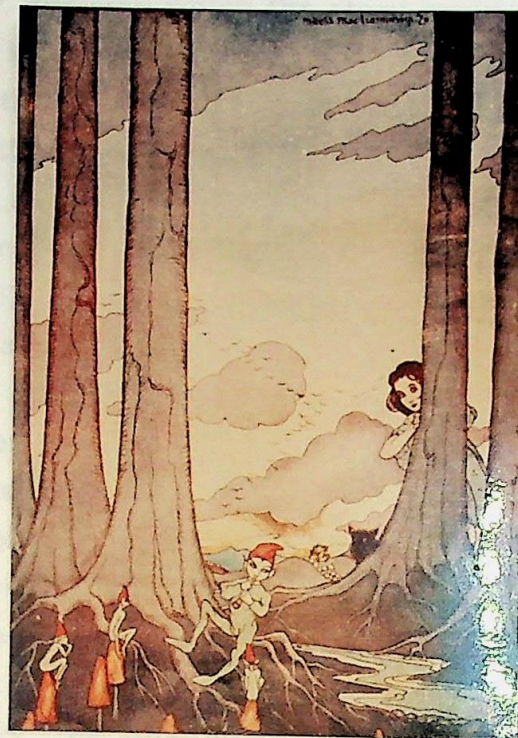
23

Faces, by Rackham



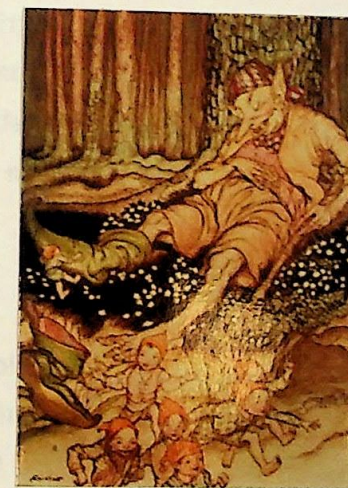






26

The Frontispiece for Fairy Nights, by macLiammoir



27

Hop o'my Thumb, by Rackham



which he could gain the attention of his audience and, in my opinion, through which the story could be developed.

In this illustration for the dust jacket of *Finn Varra Maa* (fig 22) (1917) the most apparent influence are those of Aubrey Beardsley and Arthur Rackham. The face of the woman is similar to those seen in many of Rackham's illustrations. Rackham uses a similar exaggerated shape for the nose as can be seen in these illustrations (fig. 23). The fairy-like creatures and mushrooms in macLiammoir's design all bring Rackham's work to mind. It is in the use of line that we can particularly see Beardsley's influence. The lines forming the trees, the clouds and the cliff face utilise a technique similar to that often used by Beardsley in his illustrations. In the illustration 'The Abbe from under the Hill' by Beardsley notice that although the cloak and the treatment of the clothes are more intricate than macLiammoir's, we can see the same use of line in both. The idea of the black shape for the woman by macLiammoir must have been derived originally from this illustration (fig 25) by Beardsley. Certainly, we cannot disregard the resemblance. macLiammoir's illustration shows a strong sense of composition and appears to be carefully planned and designed. His clever use of line direction achieves a feeling of movement within the illustration which also helps to create an aura of mystery. It is interesting to note the device he uses to sign his name. This type of scroll was used by many illustrators at the time, including Rackham.

The next set of illustrations is from a book of short stories called *Fairy Nights* written by macLiammoir. In the frontispiece (fig 26) we can see the influence of Rackham once again, particularly in the way colour is applied. The pale washes seen here are also used in Rackham's colour illustrations, compare it to this one executed by Rackham for his book of *Fairy Tales* (fig. 27). In macLiammoir's illustration the straight trees and the manner in which they are treated are not unlike those in Rackham's drawing. The elf like creatures in *Fairy Nights* are a combination of the ogre and the elves in Rackham's drawing. Although macLiammoir uses a simpler less detailed style than that used by Arthur Rackham, he has chosen to use a very similar composition.



—Ba maic liom—ó ba dheas liom beic in ann dul amac agus an dorpéad ar ann! Tá cuile riob ag féachaint co . . . co naipéac rin caob amuis. Ó! ós mbéim dula eirge ar an tsean-leabairí reo, agus—agus amac ar a' d'fhuinneois!

—Cuisge nac nuanann tú e, maí? rin? arfa Suipe go mí-cúnamac.



Seic Máire do'n dara huair an oiríce rin.

—Ó . . .! ar rife. Tá uirlabha agat! Cís leat—cís leat camic déanadh!

—Cáinnic, an ead? arfa Suipe. Go deimhin tá mé 'n ann labairt. Cís liom mírdán riobal eile déanamh púirín, ar fúiréan go hualat. Ácc ná bac le rin. Ní mian liom an iomáicea iongancair éur oirí—i ucorac, tá 'r agat.

"I wish—oh, I do wish I could go out when it was dark! Everything looks so exciting outside. Oh! if I were only able to get out of this old bed and—and out of the window!"

"Why don't you do it so?" said Soot carelessly.



Máire started for the second time that night.

"Oh . . .!" said she, "you can speak! You—you know how to talk."

"Talk?" said Soot. "Indeed I can talk. I can do several other things too," he went on modestly. "But never mind that. I don't wish to surprise you too much—at first, you know."



Tuo, tuo, tuo. Ag fíor-  
ghrúim leó dí na púcaí peit.  
Dheanadh Máire oiríce agus i  
leat-maí le neapic fganmha. Bí  
an bócair fágca 'na n'óla' aca  
faoi'n am reo agus iad ag  
gluaiseacht leó eir na cloca ir  
eair an d'púac i ucorac na  
leandac.

Táir ag bun a' chnuicín. Tuo,  
tuo, tuo. Táir in aice leó anoir,  
na riobal uirba uacóiraca reo.  
Táir gan agair, gan fúite, gan  
beal, gan rírdn, agus, d'arírdn, ir  
meap faoi feacc an corúlacc  
cuiréann ré rin oiríce. Ir ar  
eigim nac d'fúitir ag cuangmáit le  
na páirce faoi reo . . . ácc, de  
seic mírdn púeadann rímaomead  
nua irceac in intinn mírdne.  
Deiréann rí ar lánm ar éirírdn.

—Rit! ar rife co nárv ir dí  
mte, agus riob eun feaca leir an  
mbeiric páirce agus na púcaí  
peit ina n'óla.

D'uaicéarac an corúlacc f.  
Díobair ag iuc ir ag iuc ir ag  
fíor-juc. Don uairí aillín uo.  
cuirí Máire eair cloic mírdn  
glair agus eun ar an catam agus  
u'obair dí a nate eap. Uairí eile

Thud, thud, thud. The  
Toadstools were drawing nearer.  
Máire looked at them, half-dead  
with terror. They had left the  
road by this time, and were  
moving over the stones and the  
heather in the direction of the  
children.

They're at the foot of the  
little hill. Thud, thud, thud.  
They are quite near them now,  
these terrible black things. They  
have no faces, no eyes, no mouth,  
no nose, and, of course, that  
makes them look seven times  
worse. They are nearly on to  
the children now . . . but,  
suddenly, a new idea springs  
into Máire's brain. She catches  
hold of Cláirín's hand.

"Run!" says she at the top  
of her voice, and the children  
are off at top speed, with the  
Toadstools after them.

It was a terrible chase.  
They ran, and ran, and ran.  
Once Máire stumbled over a  
big grey stone and fell, and  
she almost turned her ankle.  
Another time Cláirín tore his  
nightshirt on a twisted thorn







29

May Day Eve by macLiammoir



30

Hansel and Gretel, by Rackham





31 May Day Eve, by macLiammoir



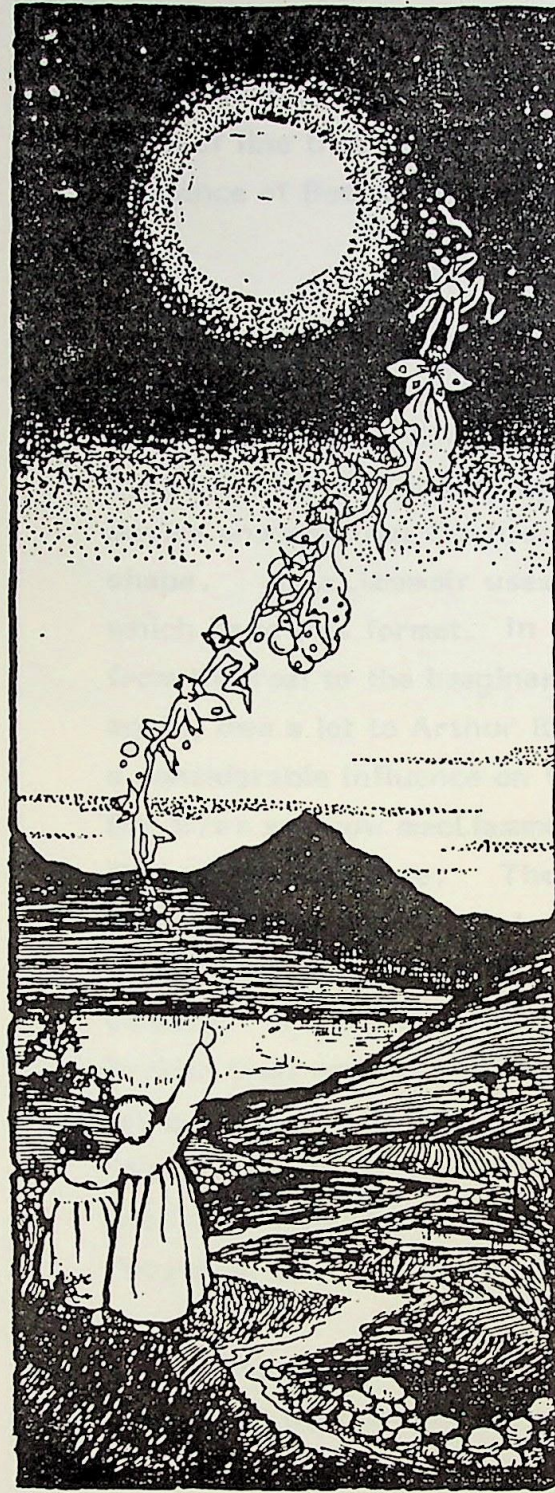
32 Malre O'Keeffe, by macLiammoir



Fairy Nights (fig 28) shows the versatility of macLiammoir as a designer. It is wholly and, in my opinion, successfully designed by him. Yet book design is in an area in which he has relatively no experience. He utilises an interesting solution to a bilingual problem, Irish on one side of the page and English on the other. By repeating the illustration on both sides of the page he forms a pattern. This works particularly well on those pages where the illustration is elongated. This was especially useful because many people who read the book at the time it was printed would have been interested in learning Irish, and it is, of course, easier to follow the translation when it is written in this way. The year in which the book was printed was 1922, the year Ireland became a free state and a time of great Nationalist feeling and pride. This new spirit of Young Ireland and W.B. Yeats had enticed macLiammoir to Ireland.

This illustration for 'May Day Eve' (fig 29) shows two children in bed. There is an emphasis on the comfortable room with the patchwork quilt on the bed and the child snuggled up with it's doll asleep. The patterns of the quilt and curtains seem to enhance the innocence of the children's faces. Outside the window we see the ominous blackness, the silhoutte of the mountains, the clouds and the cat. Such contrast, between inside and outside helps us to imagine the world which the children are being called to enter, the world of magic. It can be compared to Rackham's drawing of Hansel and Gretel (fig 30) although there is nothing particularly noteworthy about the style. The use of silhouttes is often employed in Rackham's work. However, he usually uses the silhoutte alone while macLiammoir combined both silhoutte and line. 'May Day Eve' (fig 31) depicts the children being flown away over the city on the cat's back. It appears a little awkward. However, I feel this is because of the difficulty within ourselves imagine a cat flying. It is difficult to imagine a cat looking as though he should fly. macLiammoir has tried to achieve this sense of flight by the use of the white space between the building and the sky. If you look at the face of Maire in the illustration and compare it to the sketch (fig 32) of Maire O'Keeffe which he did in 1921, you can see a strong likeness between the two. This frequently occurs between images of women drawn by macLiammoir and the features of Maire O'Keeffe, and it can often be seen in his costume designs as well as





33

May Day Eve, by macLiammoir



35


May Day Eve, by macLiammoir



34

Faïres, by Rackham






his illustrations. The lines forming the cloud are done in that style of line that we saw earlier in 'Finn Vara Maa', where the influence of Beardsley was apparent.

In the next illustration (Fig 33) we can see macLiammoir's capacity for design. Look at the line of movement which starts at the bottom of the illustration, and moves up the path, being followed through by the fairies and ending up in the circular shape of the moon. This device ensures that the illustration does not stagnate because of its shape. macLiammoir uses this technique in many of his illustrations which have this format. In this case it also helps to bring our eyes from the real to the imaginary. The fairies drawn in this illustration, again, owe a lot to Arthur Rackham (fig 34). Charles Robinson also had a considerable influence on this group of illustrations. In the next one (fig 35) we see how macLiammoir has followed this pattern through, making it much more intense. The swirling shapes remind one of the stars in Van Gogh's 'Starry Nights'. macLiammoir has tried to achieve the same effect in pen and ink that Van Gogh created with all his swirling colours. macLiammoir is quite successful in his attempt and by using broken lines and dots he has managed to create a pattern that is much more ominous. In these swirling patterns (formed we suppose, by the fairies), we suspect some sort of magic at work. macLiammoir recognised the importance of Van Gogh's discovery of the particular quality of the Provencal sun. He said of Van Gogh's painting :

'The rythmic effects in his pictures are so intense that they are almost musical and dramatic - the sense of dramatic movement almost overpowering .....since the beginning of this century most forms of modern art, music, literature and the dance are preoccupied with this search for rythmic expression'.

macLiammoir was an adept draughtsman and this is evident in these illustrations. This one for 'St. John's eve (fig. 36) although somewhat in the style of those seen previously it is more influenced by Jack

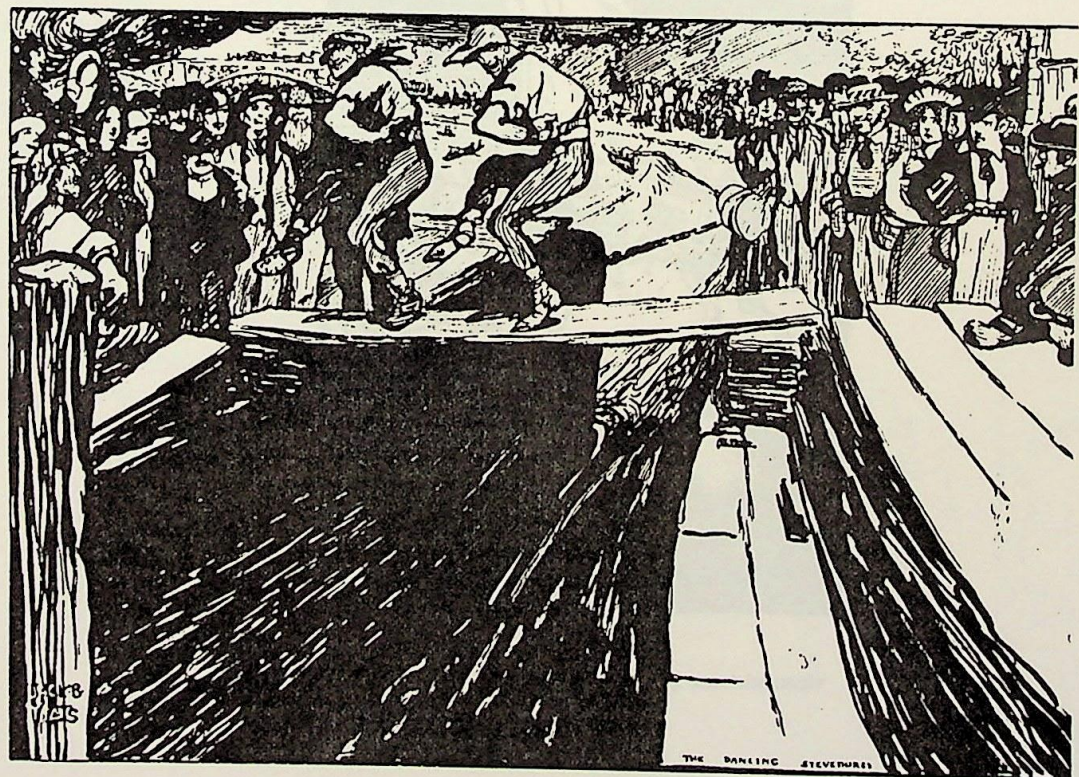






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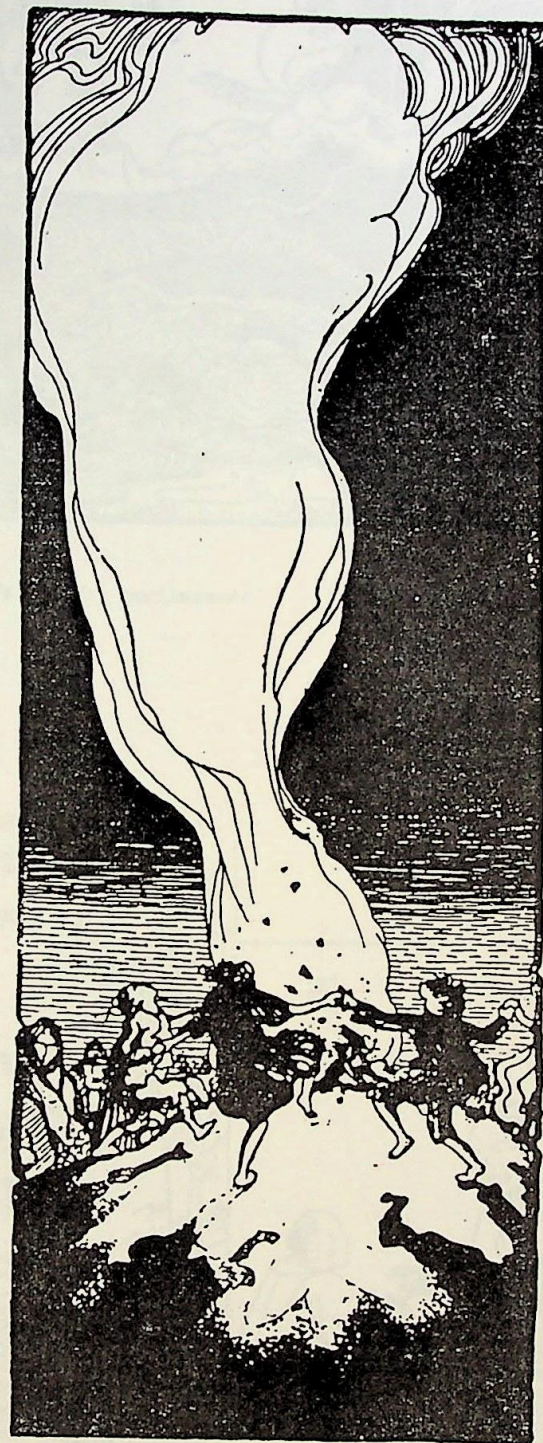
St John's Eve, by macLiammoir



37

Two Bargees Dancing, by J.B. Yeats



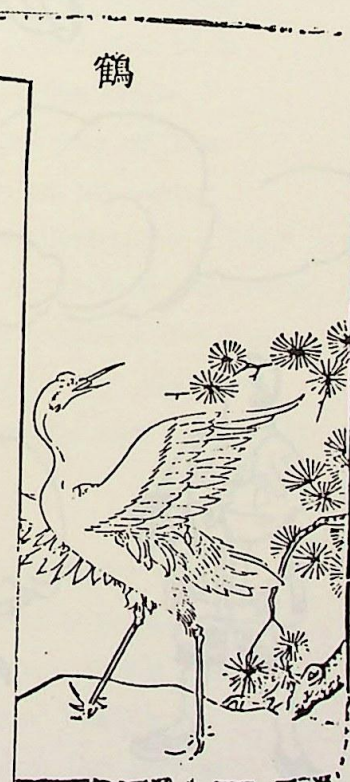






39

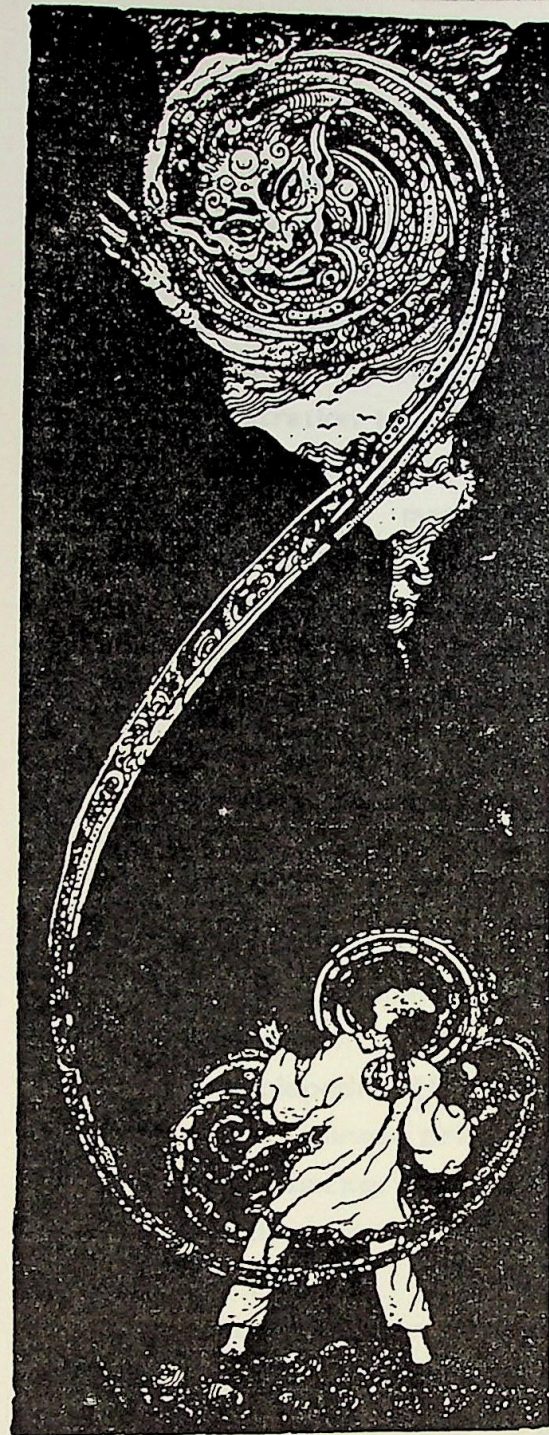
November's Eve, by macLiammoir



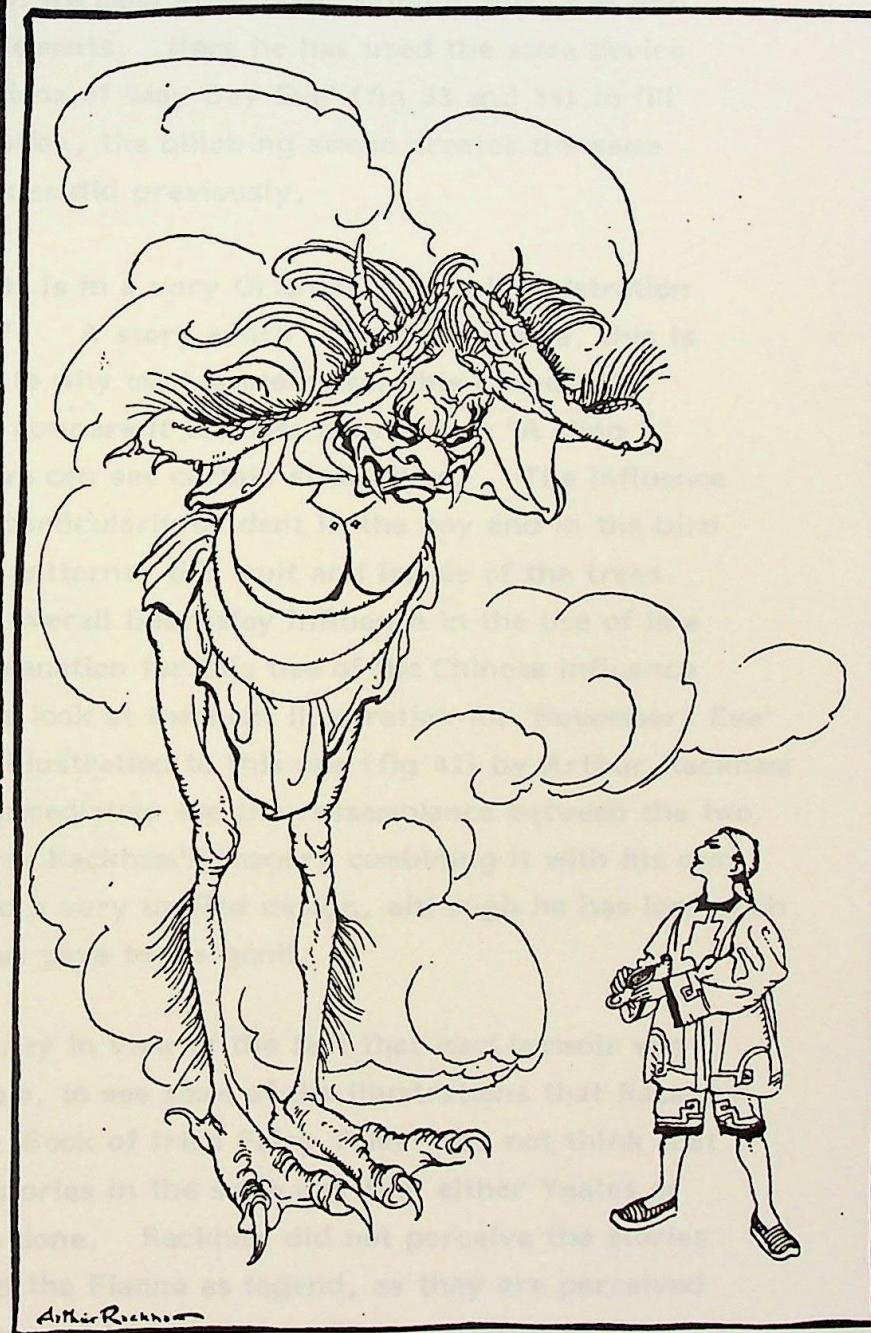
40

Prints from a Ming Encyclopedia



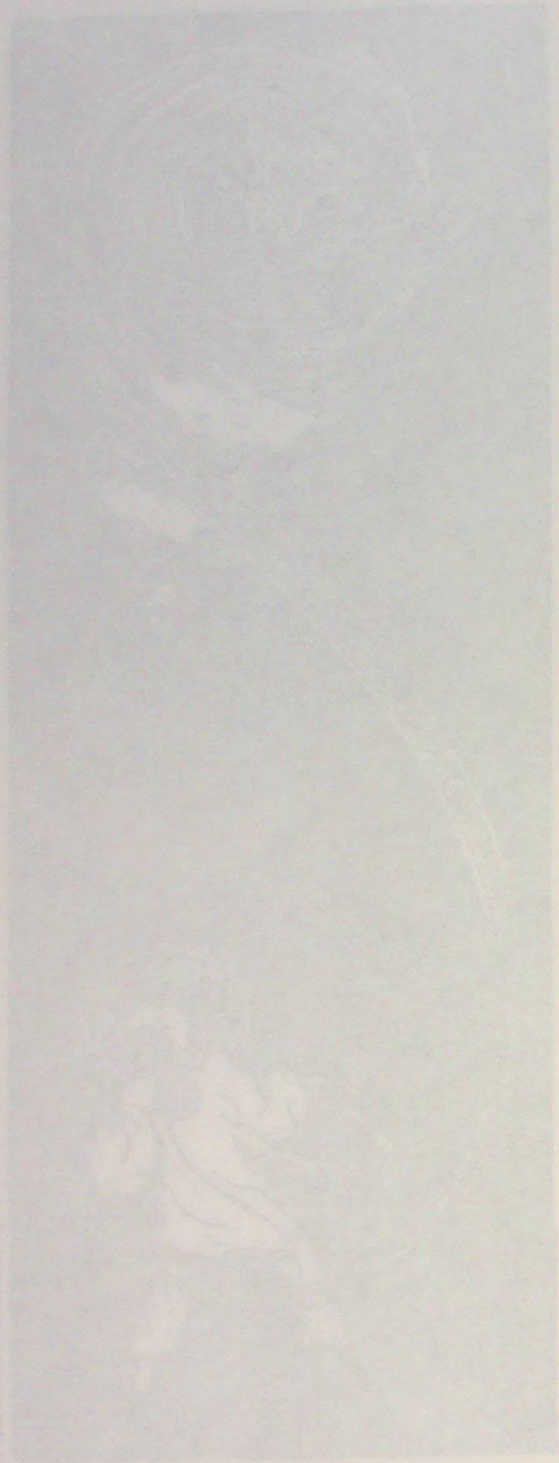


41 Aladdin and The Genli, by macLiammoir



42 Aladdin and The Genni, by Rackham



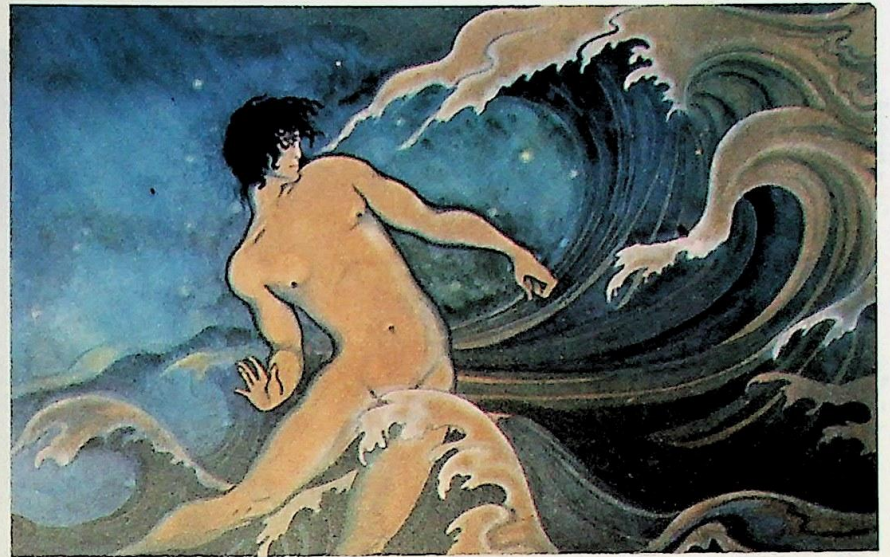


B. Yeats. When we compare 'Two Bargees dancing' (fig 37) by Yeats with 'St John's eve' we can see similarities, particularly in their style of dress. There are some parallels to be seen in the treatment macLiammoir employs, compare his use of line to the bold outline seen in Yeats drawing, although macLiammoir has kept his illustration to a much simpler design. In another illustration for 'St John's Eve' (fig 38) we see a great bonfire with figures dancing around it. macLiammoir has captured a great sense of movement. The dancers are caught in motion and their shadows echo this. He has used the light of the bonfire most effectively highlighting faces and emphasising different elements. Here he has used the same device seen earlier in two versions of 'May Day Eve' (fig 33 and 35) to fill the shape of the illustration, the billowing smoke creates the same effect as the swirling skies did previously.

'Novembers Eve' (fig 39) is in a very Oriental style this illustration depicts 'Aladdin's Lamp'. A story which is based in China, this is a partial explanation as to why macLiammoir uses this method of illustration. When we compare it to these prints from "A Ming Encyclopedia" (fig 40) we can see certain similarities. The influence of the Chinese print is particularly evident in the boy and in the bird in the background, the patterns, the fruit and leaves of the trees. Nonetheless there is an overall Beardsley influence in the use of line and pattern. The explanation for this use of the Chinese influence becomes clearer when we look at the next illustration for 'Novembers Eve' (fig 41) comparing this illustration to this one (fig 42) by Arthur Rackham for Aladdin's Lamp we immediately see the resemblance between the two. macLiammoir directly uses Rackham's imagery combining it with his own design. He has created a very unified design, although he has lost much of the strength Rackham gave to his genii.

It is interesting, especially in view of the fact that macLiammoir was so influenced by Rackham, to see some of the illustrations that Rackham did for James Stephen's 'Book of Irish Fairy Tales' I do not think that Rackham treated these stories in the same way that either Yeates or macLiammoir would have done. Rackham did not perceive the stories about Fionn MacUaill and the Fianna as legend, as they are perceived in Ireland, but as childrens fairy stories. When we compare the painting of 'Cuchulainn fighting the waves', (43) by macLiammoir to





43

Cuchulainn Fighting the Waves, by macLiammoir



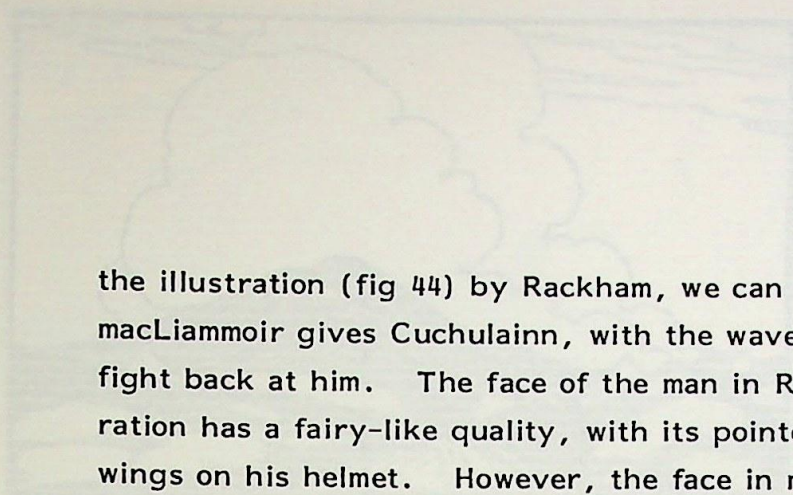
44

And the Waves of the World Washed Over Them  
by Rackham









the illustration (fig 44) by Rackham, we can see the strength macLiammoir gives Cuchulainn, with the waves reaching out to fight back at him. The face of the man in Rackham's illustration has a fairy-like quality, with its pointed nose and the wings on his helmet. However, the face in macLiammoir's painting has more strength - we can almost see Cuchulainn's teeth gritted against the sea. macLiammoir was inspired by W.B. Yeats poem 'Cuchulainn's fight with the sea'

"Cuhulainn stirred,  
stared on the horses of the sea, and heard  
the cars of battle and his own name cried;  
and fought with the invulnerable tide".

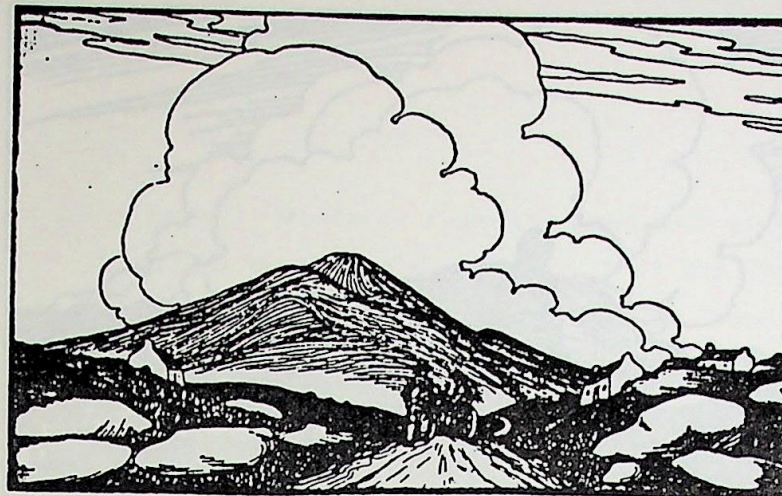
This painting shows the influence of William Blake and in Blake's drawing 'Brutus and Ceasar's Ghost' (fig 45) we see a similar loose style. The body of 'Cuchulainn' appears to have the same flowing movement that Blake achieved in his work. Comparing Brutus and Ceasar's Ghost' to macLiammoir's painting, the figures seem to have the same vigour in their actions. Blake also often used poetry and Biblical themes as inspiration for his work. In his book, "macLiammoir 1899 - 1978", Richard Pine suggests in macLiammoir

"a rollicking compromise between  
William Blake and Aubrey Beardsley".

The next set of illustrations is for a book called "Field and Fair". I have grouped these illustrations into three different styles, those treated realistically, the wood cut group and those on imaginary themes. The first set contains those treated realistically. 'We'll jog along together' (fig 46), 'My little Black Ass' (fig 47), 'Summer' (fig 48), 'A Forest Feast' (fig 49), 'Fifty Years a Widow' (fig 50) and 'Winter at Hand' (fig 51).

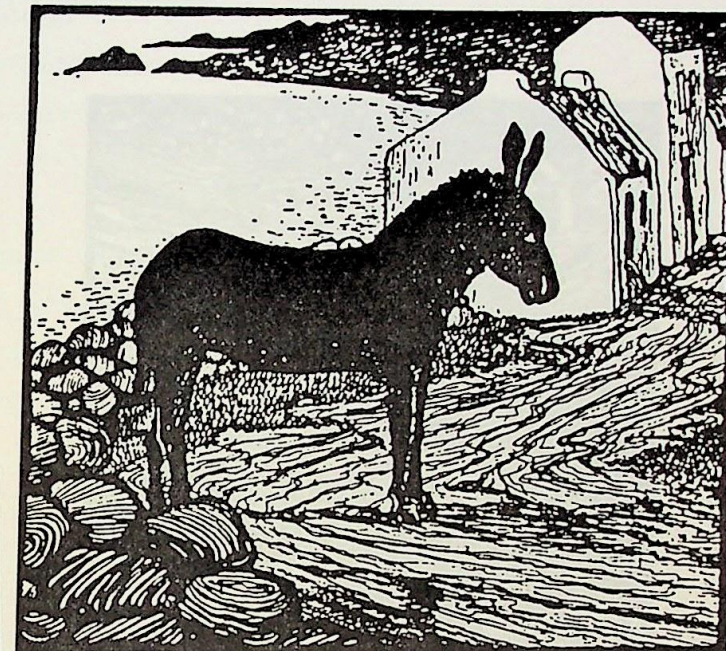
These are all of familiar scenes, country roads, thatched cottages, and stone walls. In these illustrations we again see the influence





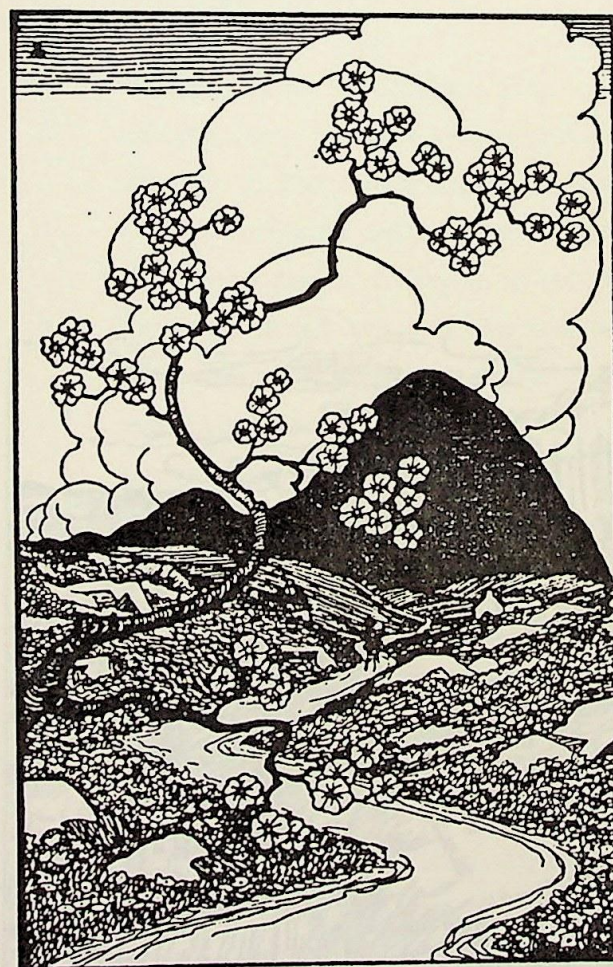
46

We'll Jog Along Together, by macLiammoir



47

My Little Black Ass, by macLiammoir



48

Summer, by macLiammoir



49

A Forest Feast, by macLiammoir





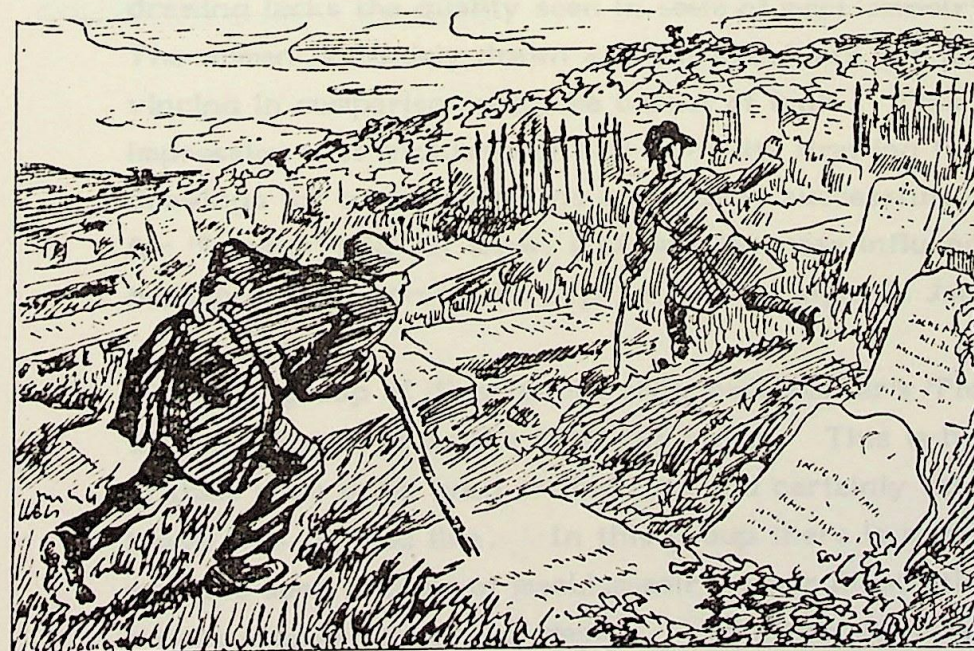
50

Fifty Years a Widow, by macLiammoir



51

Winter at Hand by macLiammoir



52

The Weavers Shed, by Yeats



of Jack B. Yeats. Compare them with an illustration by Yeats from the 'Weavers Shed' (52). It is the life and robustness that Yeats gave to his subjects that makes them so appealing. I think macLiammoir has managed to capture some of this same liveliness in his drawings. Joseph Holloway said of macLiammoir

"he has a fondness for J.B.Yeats work and produces some very clever imitations of his style in colour, but with a more refined line that emphasises the crudeness of the method he mimics". (4).

In my opinion by attempting to improve on Yeats' style of drawing macLiammoir has lost some of the freeness that Yeats seemingly careless strokes create. The clouds macLiammoir uses as a back-drop to some of these illustrations are a device he also used for his stage designs.

In my 'Little Black Ass' (fig 47) the ass appears to be very clumsy, particularly in relation to the carefully drawn scenery - the detailed stones in the foreground and the bay going out behind. Perhaps, this is because macLiammoir wanted the ass to appear stationery as in the story he is difficult to move. In a 'forest feast' (fig 49) the drawing lacks the quality seen in some of macLiammoir's illustrations. The woman is crudely drawn and her shoulders and arms are unconvincing in comparison with the basket of fruit. This gives us the impression that macLiammoir had difficulty drawing from life, yet his drawings for costume designs are usually successful. The illustration for 'Summer' (fig 48) shows a strong Japanese influence with the branch cutting across the page, a familiar sight in Japanese prints.

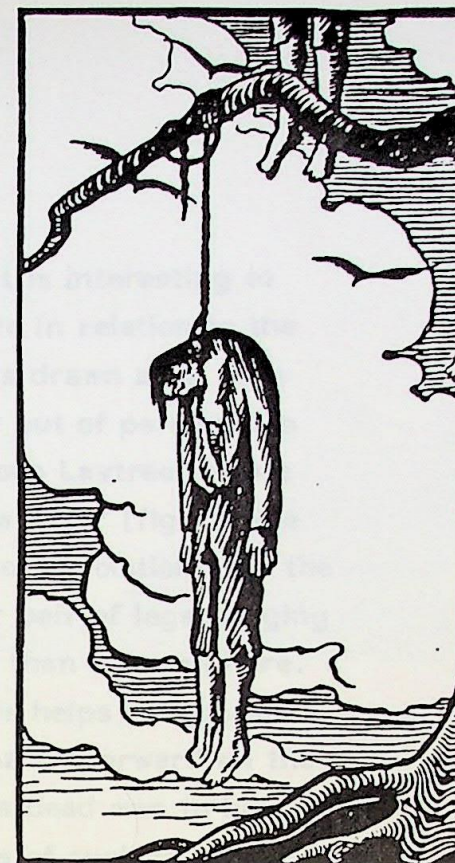
A second group of illustrations from macLiammoir's 'Field & Fair' will be referred to as the wood cut group. This is because many of them seem to be wood or lino cuts and certainly they all use this heavy well defined line. In this group there is much less detail than we have seen in some of macLiammoir's other illustrations. They have a more economical style of design. Into this set I have put 'I lit my pipe' (fig 53), 'The Quarry' (fig 54), 'The Gallow Tree' (fig 55) and





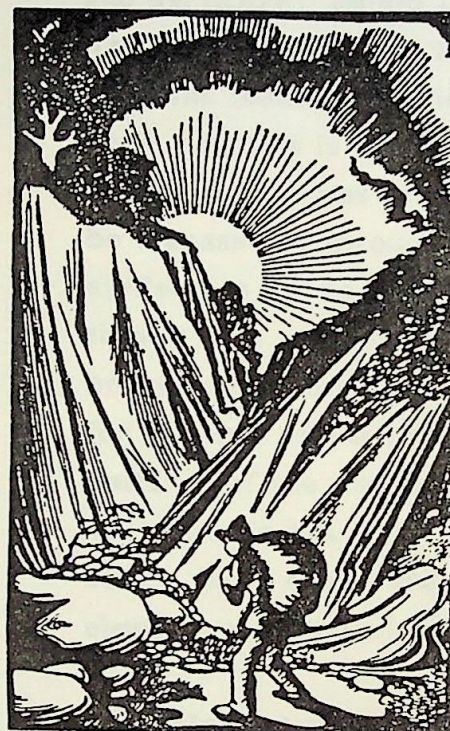
53

I Lit My Pipe, by macLiammoir



55

The Gallow Tree, by macLiammoir



54

The Quarry, by macLiammoir



56

The Trout, by macLiammoir



57

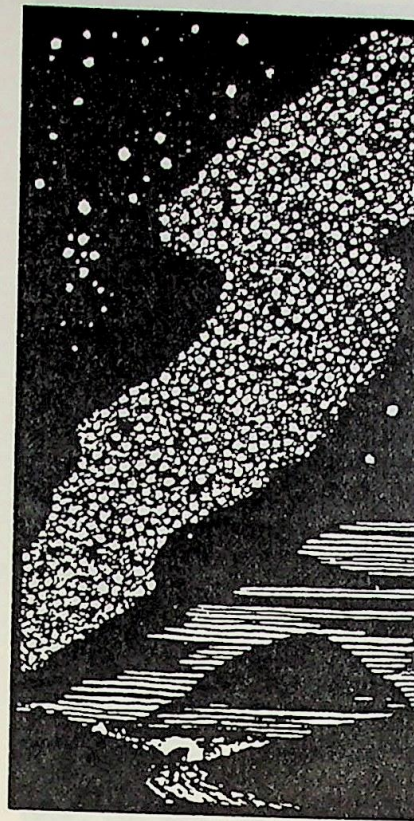
Becuma of the White Skin by Rackham



'The Trout' (fig 56). In 'I lit my pipe', it is interesting to note the angle at which the cup and table are in relation to the bed. It reminds us of the angle the table is drawn at in 'The Glass of Absinthe' by Degas. This slightly out of perspective view influenced many artists including Toulouse-Lautrec, whose work MacLiammoir admired. In 'The Gallow Tree' (fig 55) the use of white space created a striking sense of desolation with the dejected figure of the dead man and another pair of legs hanging into the picture, telling us that there is more than one man here. The contrast between the sky and the clouds helps exaggerate this feeling of eeriness. The head hangs forward on the rope, yet this is not how we would imagine a dead man to hang. However, this was drawn before experiences of such things could be transmitted through the media. 'The Trout' (fig 56) has been stylised as far as possible, it could be used for any number of things (e.g. repeat patterns, logo). Here again we see a likeness between MacLiammoir's illustration and one (57) done by Rackham for 'Becuma and the White skin'. The similarity lies in the swirling patterns of the waves, and the idea of seeing the fish underwater. MacLiammoir has put much more detail into his illustration. Rackham's seems, more casual than MacLiammoir's which, in my opinion, is almost too contrived.

The third set of illustrations from 'Field & Fair' are those on imaginary themes, which are treated as patterns or designs rather than illustrations. Contained in this group are 'The White Cow's Road' (fig 58), 'The King of Day' (fig 59) and 'The great mighty world heaves a sigh' (fig 60). In 'The White Cows Road', this abstract pattern of stars suggests the hosts of angels. The road has been diminished and is hidden at the bottom of the page by the stars. MacLiammoir has achieved an effective result through this use of very strong black. 'The Great Mighty World Heaves a Sigh' (fig 60) is created with a pattern of small strokes, which achieves a great sense of confusion. The result it accomplishes is not unlike that achieved by William Blake in a 'Whirlwind of Lovers' (fig 61). 'The King of Day' (fig 59) follows 'The old Quarry' and as we see it is the view taken from the top of the quarry. Observe how the extended arms of the man have been exaggerated for greater effect.





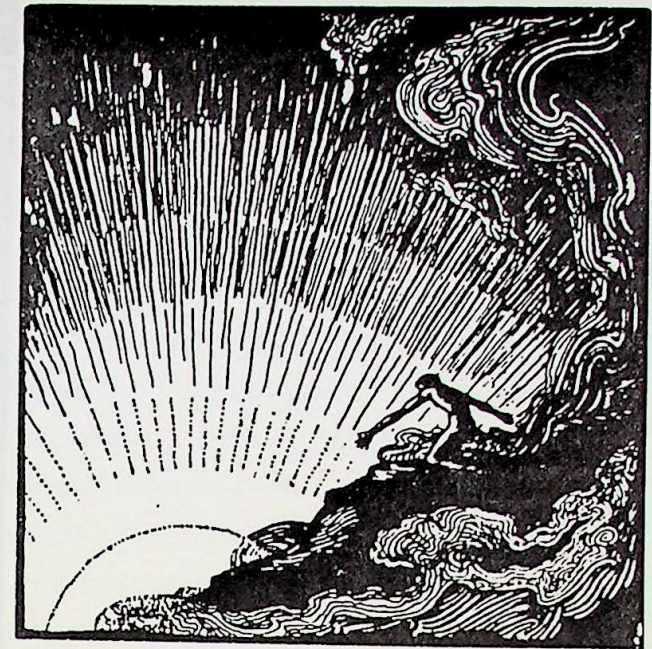
58

The White Cows Road, by macLiammoir



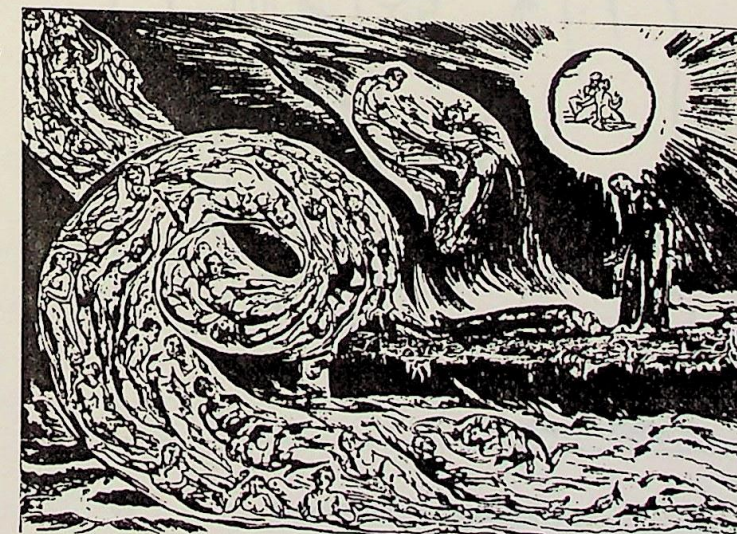
60

The Great Mighty World Heaves a Sigh,  
by macLiammoir



59

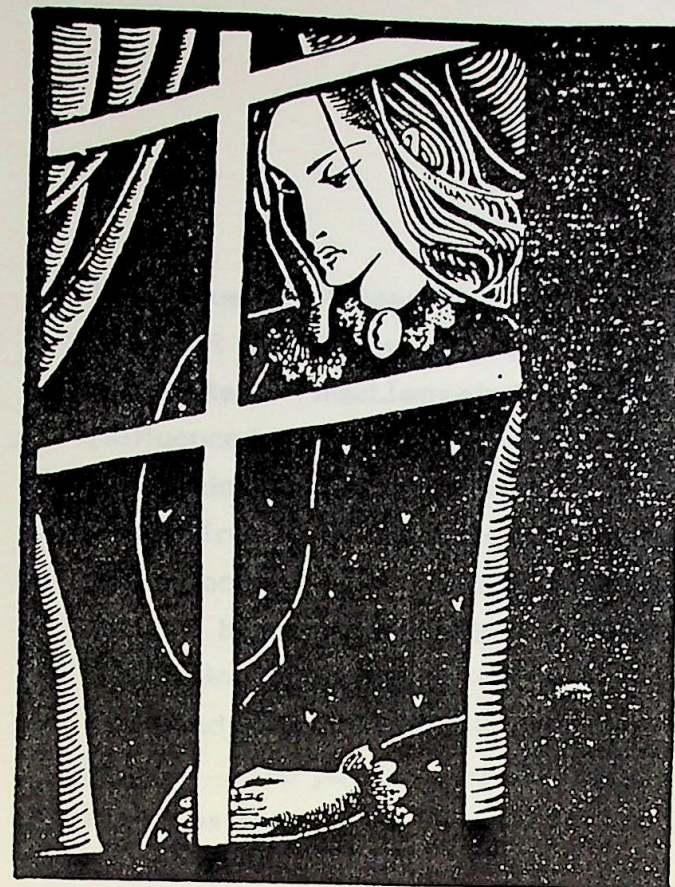
The King of Day by macLiammoir



61

A Whirlwind of Lovers, by William Blake





62

The Woman at the Window by macLiammoir



63

Starr Wood, by Beardsley



The influence of Beardsley can once again be seen in 'The Woman at the Window' (fig 62) (1932) in its stark use of black and white. macLiammoir has again used this unusual angle, (influenced by Degas) to view the subject. It appears that he is below the window, looking up at the woman, with the light coming from outside. We see Beardsley's influence in the simplification of design with macLiammoir again using his liono-cut or wood block style. The woman's arm appears very clumsy; the outline picked up by the light is neither graceful nor realistic. Her hands have the semblance of being etched and are awkward and heavy. The pattern, on her dress is un-necessary and it seems almost as though macLiammoir was afraid to leave the drawing too simple and so added these details.

Beardsley often detailed one part of a drawing as in 'Starr Wood' (63) in which we see a simple line drawing, with details such as the pattern on the curtains, the bodice on the woman's dress and the angel on the wall. These details are much more delicately drawn and so merge better with the design than those of macLiammoir. macLiammoir himself said :

"I've been ruined by Beardsley, but not as deeply as Harry Clarke. Clarke was completely confined by Beardsley.....  
...his illustrations for Poe, not one of them could have been drawn without the fact of Aubrey Beardsley living his fantastic life before him. Aubrey Beardsley was a genius of a very evil type, I'm sorry to say, I think he was essentially evil minded, an evil person with a great strain, which so often goes with it, of saintliness. and he died at the age of twenty-five, which I think is very strange indeed, very extraordinary. The only equivalent in the History of Art I think in a way is that of Nijinsky



because they are both alike in this way: they were both doomed to early disappearance. Beardsley through death, Nijinsky through madness, they were both men of genius, and were both worshipped in their own day by a vast public who understood nothing about their art at all. I think what attracted me so fatally to Aubrey Beardsley was that definition, that frightening definition of line" (4).

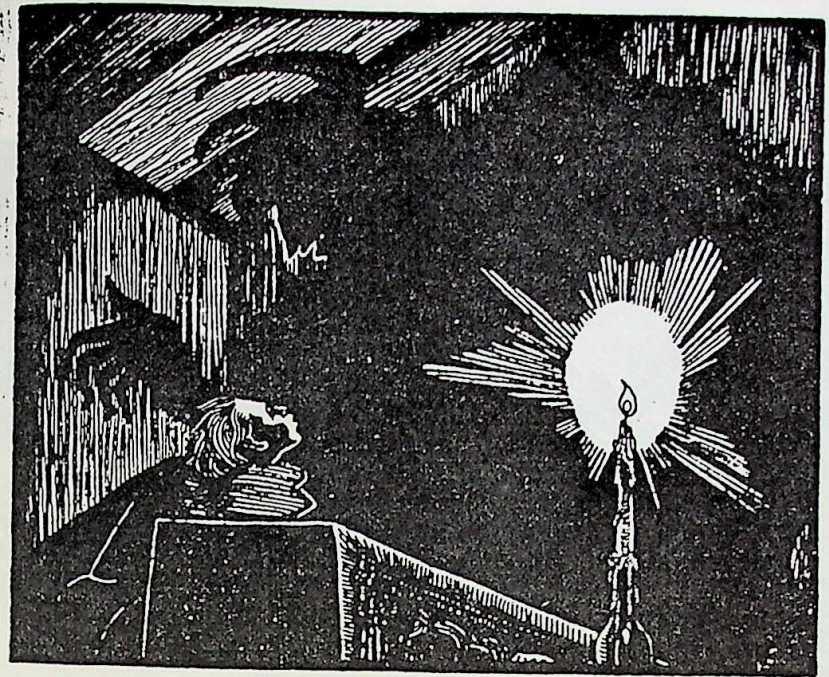
Richard Pine (10) suggests "his relationship with it (The Beardsley influence) was a flirtation rather than a marriage or an illegitimacy". macLiammoir recognised the huge influence Beardsley had on his work and by recognising it he endeavoured to use it to his advantage. In some of his later illustrations we will see how he has managed to remove himself from it completely going towards a more cubist style.

"Baskt, I believe, liberated macLiammoir from what would have otherwise been a fatal enslavement to Beardsley" (4).

This I believe to be true. I think by opening his eyes to Baskt and his extraordinary use of colour macLiammoir opened his eyes to a whole world of new ideas and influences. He looked to other artists and designers and learnt from them. Nevertheless, we cannot deny his eclectic tendencies.

This set of illustrations are much more stylised than some of the previous ones. macLiammoir depends more on the use of black, his drawing seems much bolder and shows the influence in some cases of Rockwell Kent. In 'The Devil and O' Flaherty' (fig 64) he has cleverly used the shadows caused by the candle light to give us this outline of the Devil overpowering the man whose face is highlighted by the light. This is a very effective use of shadow to give us an awesome view of the Devil. Throughout this set of illustrations we can see the strength which





64

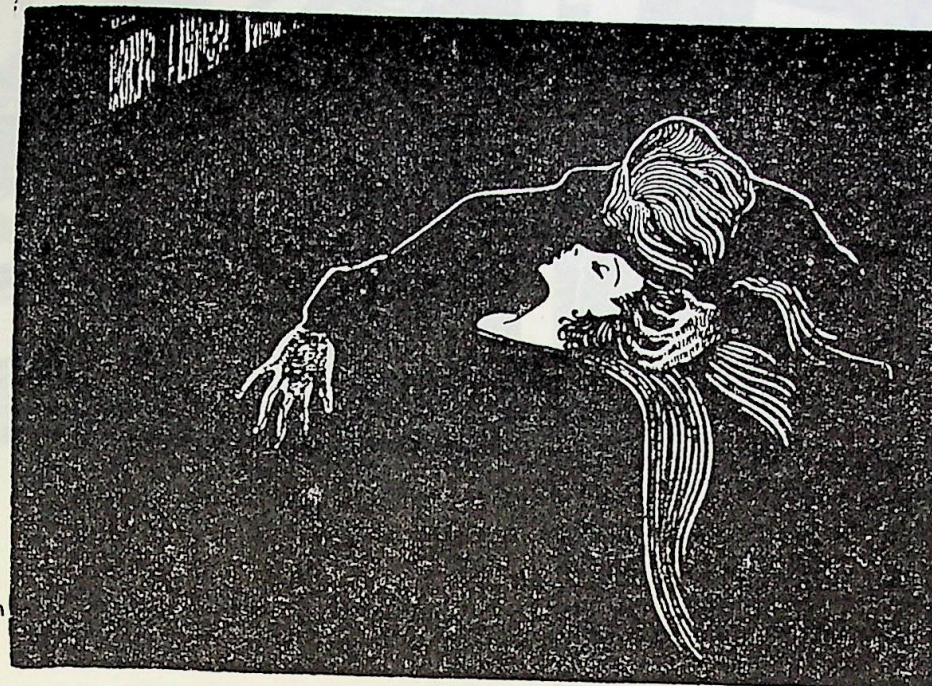
The Devil and O'Flaherty by macLiammoir



65

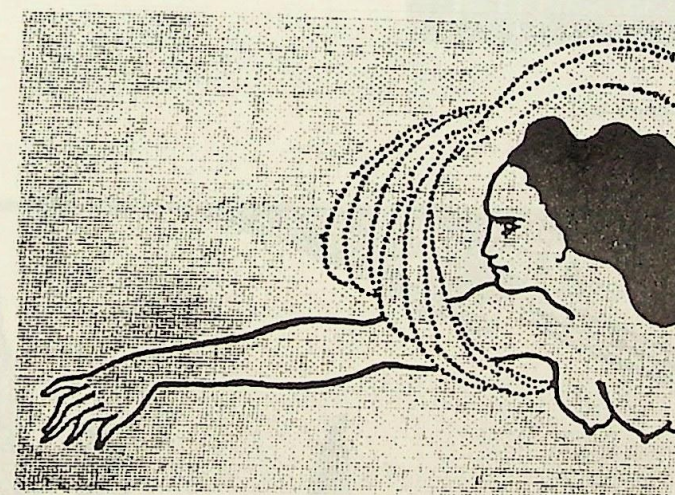
Put to the Rack by macLiammoir





66

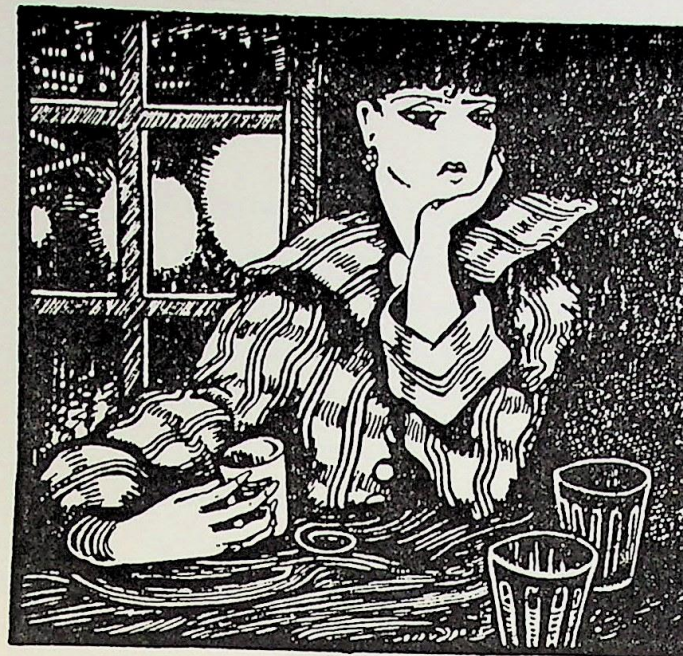
As I Lay in Bed, by macLiammoir



67

Drawing, by Beardsley





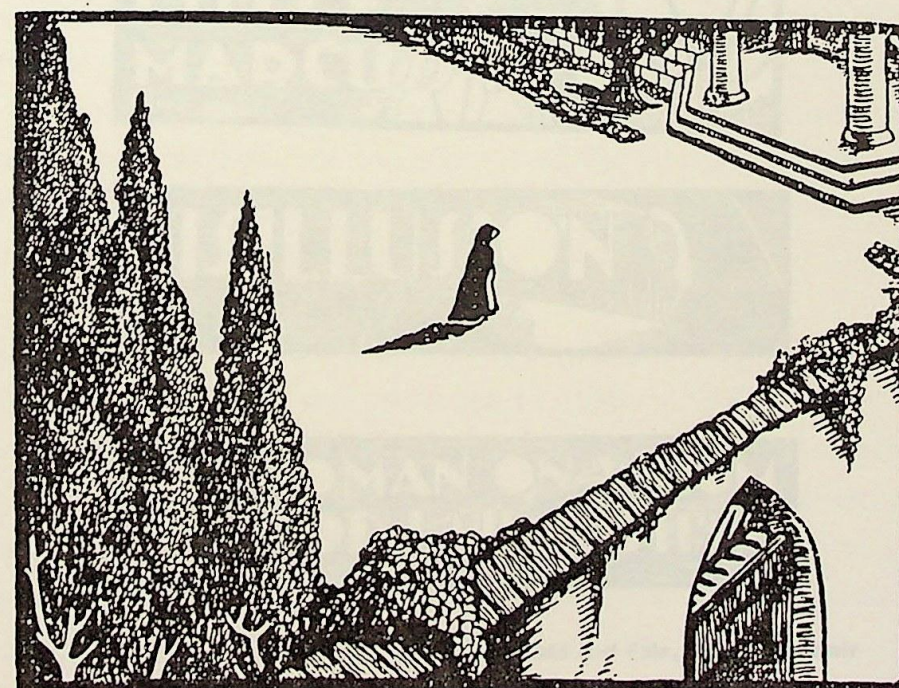
68

Little Marcus Nora, by macLiammoir



70

The woman on Whom God Laid His Hand,  
by macLiammoir



69

Disillusioned, by macLiammoir



THE DEVIL  
and FLAHERTY

PUT TO THE RACK

AS I LAY IN BED

LITTLE  
MAD CUS N'DAY

DISILLUSION

THE WOMAN ON WHOM  
GOD LAID HIS HAND



Beardsley's influence has given to macLiammoir's interpretation of the subject. In 'Put to the Rack' (65) he has again used the effect of light and shadow to create a striking view of these grave-stones with these very stormy clouds above. The illustration for (As I Lay in Bed' (65) is again very closely related to the drawing done by Beardsley (67) and by comparing the two we can see the similarities between them. Observing particularly the man's hand in macLiammoir's drawing and the woman's hand in Beardsley's drawing we cannot easily disregard the resemblance. The next illustration, 'Little Marcus Nora' (fig 68), is much more modern and realistic in its theme. In its execution macLiammoir again uses a dark background to achieve a contrast between the bright lights outside and this solitary woman. These loose curvilinear strokes again remind us of Van Gogh's work. In 'Disillusioned' (fig 69) macLiammoir has created a sense of isolation through his use of negative space. The nun is dwarfed by the surrounding walls of the convent and we can almost feel her despair. In this very abstract illustration for "The Woman on whom God Laid his hand" (fig 70) macLiammoir uses a large cross to dwarf the subject. This is a device used by William Blake in a number of his paintings. We can feel the woman's anguish in her bent figure, while again there is an effective use of line to create movement.

The manner in which macLiammoir treats the title of each story in this set of short stories is interesting (71). The typeface is hand drawn in the Art Deco style which was fashionable at the time. He also incorporates elements of the story into the design. In the first one for example 'The Devil and O Flaherty' we see a night sky, some playing cards and dancing shoes.

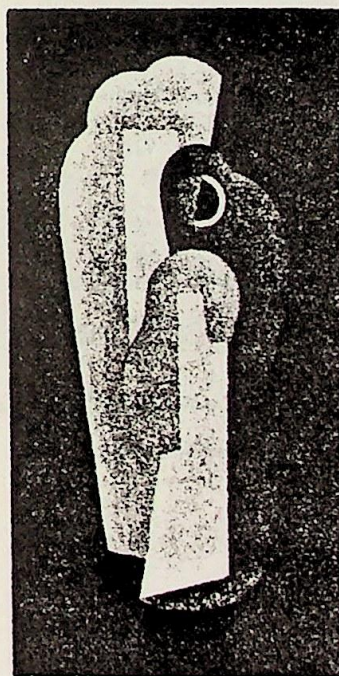
macLiammoir's illustration for "All for Hecuba" (fig 72) an autobiography of the Gate Theatre" was executed in 1946. It shows the influence of George Brague's collage Cubism and Albert Gleize's theories on translation and rotation'. In fact, it is a drawing of a collage, a design containing images which relate to the Gate Theatre. Incorporated in the drawing we see Hibernia and the shape of a harp, both symbolic of Ireland. The pattern from 'The Harlequin', the celtic pattern along





72

All For Hecuba, by macLiammoir



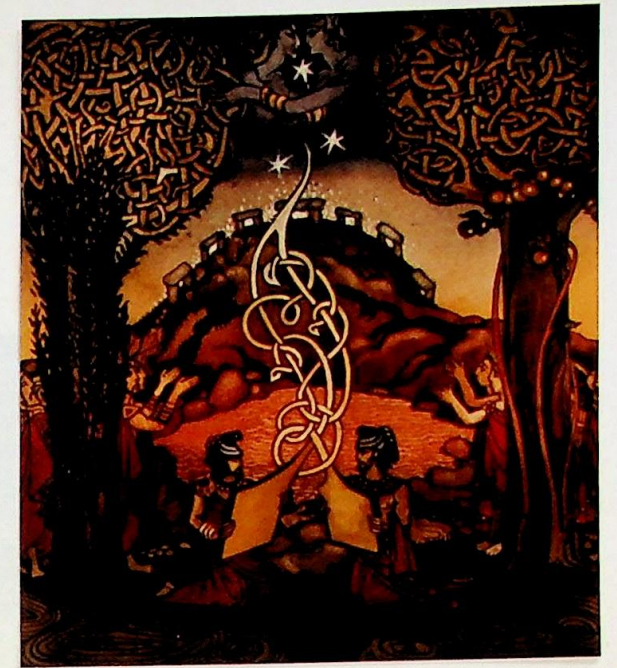
73 Abstract by Mainie Jellet



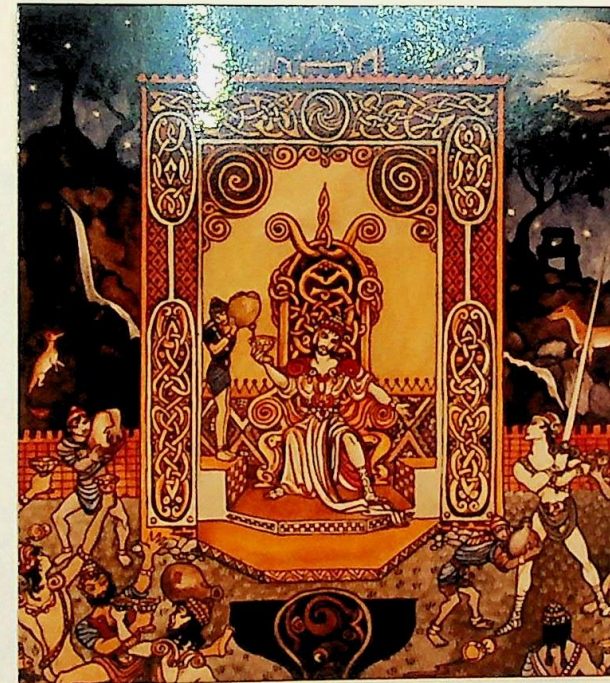


74

Will You Go With Me To The Land Of Wonders,  
The Land Of Music, by macLiammoir



The Two Tablets Were Joined, by macLiammoir



76

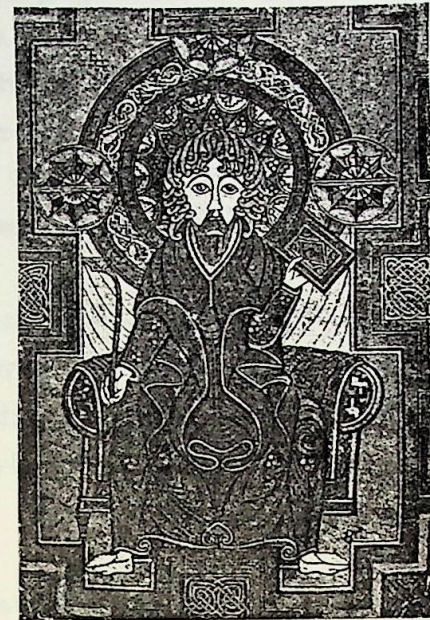
Socht Was Brought To Him At The Hour Of  
The Drinking Feast, by macLiammoir



77

the wife of Ronan sent the maiden to  
Maol Forthartaigh.





78

Page From The Book Of Kells



79a

Everytime he looked back the music seemed to play behind his head.



79

Great War And Fierce Strife Arose Between Eoghan And The Clans Of Neill, by macLiammoir



mhoill chuig Maol Fothartaigh" (The wife of Ronan sent the maiden to Maol Fothartaigh) (fig 77) we see the influence of the Book of Kells. If we compare the throne in both of these illustrations to this page from the Book of Kells (fig 78) we see strong similarities in the design and in the ornamentation. In "socht was brought to him at the hour of the drinking feast we see again this Pre-Renaissance perspective particularly in the roof at the top of the throne. This group of illustrations relate very closely to Eastern art, macLiammoir called them :

"An endeavour to combine a style borrowed from the Persian miniatures with Irish objects clothes and inventions, a celtic baroque style of furniture". (1).

The following illustration for "Gach uair a bhreathnaíodh se siar, ba ar achul a bhíodh an ceol....." (everytime he looked back the music seemed to play behind his head) (fig 79) is still in the celtic style but it is less decorative than the previous four. Here macLiammoir has produced a landscape, it is a view that is often seen in the West of Ireland, his purples, browns and ochres show a true knowledge of the countryside. The patterns seen on the stones surrounding the cave are typical of those found in old burial places such as New Graves. The figure of the man is similar to the costume designs seen earlier for 'Tristum und Isolde'. This strange depiction of music owes something to Rackham yet it seems to have developed more from macLiammoir himself. The last illustration in this group "Tharla coinflíocht mor agus cogadh fíochmar idir Eoghan agus Clanna Neill" (Great war and fierce strife arose between Eoghan and the Clans of Neill) (fig 79) is very strongly Eastern in its influence. There is a certain clumsiness in the warriors, particularly in the one astride the white horse. Although the figures are somewhat awkward macLiammoir has managed to portray a great deal of activity. The turbulent landscape adds to the action making it more urgent and violent.





80

Blath Agus Taibhse, by macLiammoir



81

Rain Falling Over Paris, by macLiammoir



82

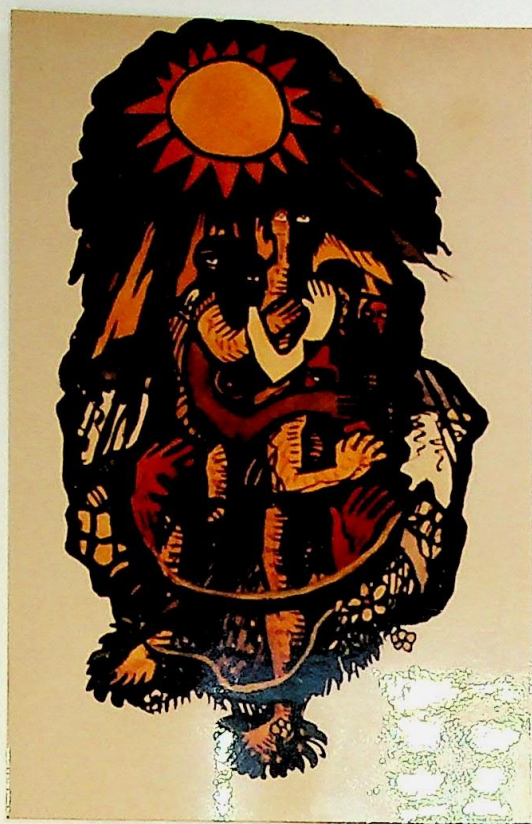
Goya's Women, by macLiammoir



83

Woman, by Goya





84

Full Moon, by macLiammoir



85

Illustration, by macLiammoir



86

Horns On The Moon, by macLiammoir.



Blath agus Taibhse was illustrated by macLiammoir in 1964. The cover design (fig 80) shows the influence of Beardsley in the use of black and white. We see more of Pablo Picasso in the strange crude form of the woman. The long elongated fingers seen earlier in macLiammoir's costume designs have become abstract and more emphasised. There is something of Art Nouveau in the choice of typeface and also in the flower at the bottom of the illustration. This group of illustrations are directly derived from cubism, here we see the ideas of Picasso and Bragré. We see their concepts in "Rain falling over Paris" (fig 81) particularly in the strange shapes making up the woman and child. macLiammoir has treated each of these designs as an oval unit or cartouche. The following illustration 'Goya's women' (fig 82) is derived directly from paintings by Goya. Comparing the top left hand woman to a painting by Goya (fig 83) this becomes clear, macLiammoir has portrayed the women. Tumbling out from the pages of a book the lower parts of the illustration are very abstract, moving up to a much more realistic treatment in the faces of the women. The illustration for "Full moon" (fig 84) although in the cubist style owes a lot to Gauguin's paintings, particularly those executed in Tahiti. It is quite primitive in the heavy lines and these seemingly badly formed hands. The bright sun reminds us once again of Van Gogh. The next illustration (fig 85) is much looser and more realistic in its treatment with this more casual format. This illustration is quite like some of George Braque's work but there is perhaps something of Cezanne in the mood it creates. The last illustration in this book is called "The horns on the moon" (fig 86). It is very abstract, in this combination of arms and faces there is something of the design seen earlier for "All for Hecuba". The bulging eye is not unlike some work done by Odilon Redon. Redon also drew much inspiration from the fantastic visions of Goya. There is a sculptural quality in the illustration and again it seems quite reminiscent of Egypt.



Black again T-shirt was illustrated by McLennan in 1951  
cover design (fig 20) shows the influence of Gestalt in the  
of black and white. We see more of Pabst's design in the  
circle form of the woman. The long elegant figure is  
in McLennan's costume design have become abstract and  
emphasized. There is something of Art Nouveau in the  
of typographic and also in the form of the bottom of the  
This group of illustrations are directly derived from cubism  
we see the ideas of Picasso and Braque. We see that the  
their falling overboard (fig 21) particularly in the stark  
making up the woman and child. McLennan's job is to  
these designs as an end in themselves. The following  
Coy's woman (fig 22) is derived directly from paintings  
Comparing the top left hand woman to a painting by Coy  
this becomes clear. McLennan has borrowed the woman  
not from the pages of a book the lower parts of the figure  
very abstract, moving up to a more more realistic figure  
form of the woman. The illustration for "The woman" (fig 23)  
in the cubist style was a lot to McLennan's influence, but  
these described in detail. It is quite obvious in the  
and these seemingly badly formed forms. The right side  
once again of Van Gogh. The next illustration (fig 24) is  
and more realistic in its treatment with this more conventional  
illustration is quite like some of George Braque's work but  
perhaps something of Cézanne in the mood it creates. The  
illustration in this book is called "The woman on the stairs"  
it is very abstract. In this combination of lines and forms  
something of the design seen earlier for "All for nothing".  
eye is not unlike some work done by Odilon Redon. But  
much inspiration from the fantastic visions of Goya. The  
surrealist quality in the illustration and again it seems to  
of Egypt.



## CONCLUSION

In his life, Michael macLiammoir wrote a number of plays, books and short stories. He was a skillful stage and costume designer. He pursued a highly successful fulltime career as an actor involving rehearsals as well as nightly performances. In view of this the fact that he never developed his own style of illustration becomes increasingly understandable. We have seen macLiammoir's strong appreciation of composition and his sensitive use of line and colour. In attempting to show the diverse influences on his work it has become clear that he borrowed freely from various artists. In his designs he often relied on the work of others, most notably Leon Baskt, Aubrey Beardsley and Arthur Rackham. In his illustration we glimpse his talent and imagination yet, in my opinion, he never fully developed in this area. Originality was not necessarily his aim. macLiammoir saw as his goal the encouragement of the visual in this country. The bequest that Michael macLiammoir left to Irish Theatre can never be measured. Through their enthusiasm and self-motivation Hilton Edwards and macLiammoir gave to Ireland, a country with virtually no tradition of the visual, the highly colourful and diverse spectacle of the Gate Theatre. To their credit the theatre lives on and continues to be appreciated.



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