ncad

Coláiste Naisiúnta Éalaíne is Deartha

POLITICAL PROCLAMATIONS

And Their Derivitives

in

❖ IRELAND ❖
1898 — 1948

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and Complementary Studies, in candidacy for the **Degree** in Bachelor of Design, Faculty of Design, Department of Visual Communications, in March, *1988*.

Eamonn Walsh.

100 Thomas St., Dublin.   Candidate.

C O N T E N T S

PAGE NO.S.

TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

POLITICAL PROCLAMATIONS, AND THEIR DERIVITIVES IN IRELAND 1898-1948

INTRODUCTION

In 1898 the celebration of the centenary of Robert
Emmet's ill-fated rebellion added considerable impetus to the
revival of nationalism and republicanism in Ireland. Exactly
fifty years later the government of the Irish Free State
declared Ireland a republic - the cause for which Emmet had
died. That half-century was the country's most intense period
of political turmoil and consequently it was also an era of
intense political propaganda with numerous politically motivated
organisations attempting to win general public acceptance
for their various causes, either by praise of their cause
itself, or by vilification of its alternatives. Neither of
these two fundamental propaganda techniques were necessarily
respectful of truth, reason, or the human intellect. During
the period which will be covered in this thesis propaganda
from the different interest groups spread through the various
forms of printed media, through the spoken word, and in latter
years through radio. The effectiveness of the propaganda
of particular newspapers and books has been studied by
historians, but other forms of the print media have been
largely forgotten. In terms of their value as part of
Ireland's visual heritage the printed ephemera of past
political struggles has been ignored by historians of Irish
art and design. This thesis examines a popular genre of Irish
printed political propaganda which evolved considerably during
the fifty years following Emmet's centenary, ie, the
proclamations, and the many styles of posters and handbills
which derived from them. Produced at a time when Irish
nationalists were striving to establish a new united independent
nation, they reflect not just the concern of the many parties
involved, but a long and lively tradition of skilled printing
in Ireland.

The printed proclamation is the earliest form of mass-produced political propaganda. From it evolved less formal posters and handbills which essentially remain a form of proclamation because their function is to publicly proclaim their message. They are a visual by-product of history and as such are an important part of a nation's visual heritage.

Only four archives in Ireland have collections of proclamations, all of which are rather meagre, poorly catalogued, often in poor condition, and badly preserved. Trade unions and political parties also have collections of posters etc, which they published, but these tend to be extremely modest and incomplete.

The aims of this thesis are:

(1) To define the tradition from which these printed items evolved.

(2) To define the context and evaluate the efficacy of these items, within the period covered.

(3) To trace the evolution of format and style from the original proclamations to its derivitives.

(4) To assess their value as part of our visual heritage.

(5) To shed some light on this largely forgotten genre of Irish design.

The objectives of this thesis are:

(1) To trace the history of proclamations, with specific emphasis on Ireland, and demonstrate their use as a political device up to 1898.

(2) To identify the interest groups that used proclamations (and their derivitives) between 1898 and 1948, and examine how they used them and their reasons for so doing.

(3) To examine factors that influenced design and
production, ie:

    i)   technology - the print workshops, how they
were organised, and the printing processes
they used,

    ii)   tradition - design formats and styles of text
that were slow to change, and the political
slogan,

    iii)   innovations - large wooden poster types, colour
printing, illustrated posters, photography,
and foreign design influences,

and to show how new design formats became popular,
and how traditional formats continued nonetheless.

(4) To highlight characteristics which are peculiar to
Irish proclamations and their derivitives, to show
how they have reflected Irish culture and history,
and to identify the most successful solutions.

CHAPTER 1
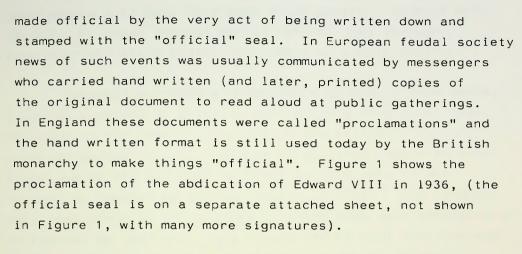
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PRINTING OF PROCLAMATIONS IN IRELAND UP TO 1898

PART ONE : THE ORIGINS OF THE PROCLAMATION

Aristotle defined "politics" as the art of controlling and reconciling diverse interests within a state. Since then few definitions which have attempted to encapsulate the concept have neglected the relevance of "interest-groups" which reflect interests and divisions in the community and express the aspirations and demands of their members. Interest-groups make claims and defend privileges against the claims of others. Their function is essentially to promote their own aims and conserve their own interests. To do this effectively they must have a good system of communication channels through which they can communicate not only with their own members but also with those whom they wish to influence.

Since 13 October 1517 the publicly displayed proclamation has become one of the most popular forms of political communication. On that date Martin Luther, Professor of Biblical Literature of Wittenberg University nailed his 95 points of dissent from the teachings of the Church to the door of Wittenberg Castle church. Although a single handwritten notice, its significance here lies in the fact that it is the earliest recorded publicly displayed propaganda announcement. Luther charged that the money received from the sale of indulgences was going to Rome for the building of a new basilica for St. Peter's.

From the time that writing was first developed as an instrument of communication, it was used by those in power as a symbol of their authority. Important events such as the making of laws or declarations of war, were

made official by the very act of being written down and
stamped with the "official" seal. In European feudal society
news of such events was usually communicated by messengers
who carried hand written (and later, printed) copies of
the original document to read aloud at public gatherings.
In England these documents were called "proclamations" and
the hand written format is still used today by the British
monarchy to make things "official". Figure 1 shows the
proclamation of the abdication of Edward VIII in 1936, (the
official seal is on a separate attached sheet, not shown
in Figure 1, with many more signatures).

Whether or not Luther's document began this genre
of publicly displayed propaganda is unclear, but throughout
the following century the posting of proclamations, became
more and more common in Europe, as the medium gladly married
into the revolutionary technology that would ensure its
survival for centuries - ie, printing with moeveable type.
From their debut both the proclamation and the printing
press were immediately associated with those who held
positions of power. Indeed the skill of literacy was in
itself an indication of high office during the sixteenth
century. The art of writing was the private skill of a
powerful minority of religious leaders and lay aristocracy.
It was logical for the ordinary people to equate the skill
with the power that went with it. To the common people
the printed proclamation was a kind of visible extension
of the ruler, to the ruler it was a means of mass producing
his authority. In Luther's time the Catholic Church was
the strongest political interest group in all of Europe.
Its laws were enforced in every state and, much to Luther's
disgust, its methods of taxation were equally pervasive.
It was mainly through the Church that literacy had survived
the turmoil of the Dark Ages, and in the Middle Ages literacy
was very much associated with religion. The profound effect
of the printed word has survived to the present day as is
well illustrated by the common phrase, "I saw it in black
and white". To the illiterate in the days of the early printed

proclamations it must have been quite magical, perhaps even divine. To rebel against public demands made through proclamations was a useful instrument of public control.

Johannes Guttenberg (1398-1468) a goldsmith from Mainz, invented a method of printing with movable type circa 1440. Considering the pace of progress in the fifteenth century, printing spread rapidly. It had established itself in nine countries on the European mainland by 1476 when it was brought to England by William Caxton (b.1422). The inherent political power of the printed word had been well demonstrated in England by 1550 when King Edward the VI sent one Humphrey Powell to establish a printing press in Dublin to serve his representatives there. Powell had worked as a printer in London from 1548-49 and McClintock Dix states that in the 3rd volume of the Acts of the Privy Council of England a warrant is issued "unto Powell the printer given him by the King's Majestie towardes his setting up in Irelande", dated 18th July, 1550. This was more than a century since Guttenberg's invention.

The written word had thrived in Ireland since the coming of christianity, and as elsewhere it had been inextricably linked to the Church, as virtually all writing was related to religious affairs. Although early printers were very much aware of the common esteem for the written word, and took great pains to make type that would resemble the letters of a skilled scribe, the letter forms used by Powell would have been alien to the Gaelic Irish of that time. Powell's "black letter" or "gothic" typefaces were of Northern-European origin (Dutch or German), while the letterforms of the Irish scribes had evolved into a local style from the Roman manuscript style. Nevertheless, in 1550 the English language was established in most Irish towns, and while the Gaelic language was dominant over most of the country many native Irish aristocrats were literate in English. It is quite significant that Powell's first

assignment was not to print a proclamation, but a "Book of Common Prayer" (1551). That the first use of the printing press in Ireland was aimed at establishing an alternative religion, demonstrates that the crucial political implications of religion were well known to the aristocracy of the sixteenth century.

The earliest record of a printed proclamation in Ireland is some eleven years after Powell's arrival. On the 8th June 1561, (under the reign of Queen Mary), the Earl of Sussex, Lord Lieutenant General of Ireland, had Powell print "A PROCLAMACYON" against Shane O'Neill, one of the most colourful leaders of the Gaelic-Irish, (Fig. 2). It shows Powell to have been an excellent exponent of his craft, setting high standards for those who would continue after him.

The standard of the design and printing of a proclamation was most important because the appearance of the work greatly affected its air of authority. In Figure 2 the authority of the Queen is clearly symbolised by her seal of office and reinforced by adding the names of twenty-six of her representatives. Even Powell's own name adds to the officiousness. Another factor is the use of rather laboured and always stern language, the purpose of which was to command respect. In outlawing Shane O'Neill the Lord Lieutenant describes him as a "presumtuous, arrogant felonious, rebellious, and traitorous" person.

Only two other proclamations were known to have been printed in Ireland in the sixteenth century. The first of these is dated 16th August 1564, and was issued by the Lord Justice of Ireland against the rebellious O'Connors, and the second from 1595 was issued by Queen Elizabeth herself "against the Earl of Tyrone and his adherents in Ulster". It is most unlikely that these were the only proclamations published in Ireland in the sixteenth century,

but as few records have survived from that period it is
impossible to say how frequently the device was used.
A few more proclamations of a similar vein were printed
during the early decades of the seventeenth century. Two
of these were printed in Kilkenny, where the second printing
press was established in Ireland. From 1649 onwards
however, proclamations were definitely quite common. On
the 23rd August of that year Oliver Cromwell issued a
proclamation calling on the mayor of Dublin and other civic
officials to enforce laws "against offences to God's will".
This was the first of a steady stream of governmental
proclamations aimed at the implementation of a variety
of Puritan Statutes historically referred to as the Penal
Laws. Due to the hardship and discrimination suffred under
these laws, consciousness of social class and traditional
rivalries reduced considerably amongst Catholics, and by
the end of the eighteenth century events in France and
America had sewn the seeds of nationalism and republicanism
in Ireland. Unsuccessful rebellions in 1798, 1848 and
1967 were followed with proclamations offering rewards
for information which would lead to the arrest of rebel
leaders. 1929 is seen as the date that marks the end of
the Penal Laws with Daniel O'Connell becoming the first
catholic to secure entry to parliament at Westminster.
With many catholics seeking election from that date onwards,
the competition they posed to the protestant ascendancy
who had held power in Ireland since Cromwell, resulted
in keenly fought elections with both factions issuing
proclamations and elections posters (which up to the late
1800's remained close in style to the old proclamation
format). By 1885 it was clear that the vast majority of
catholics and some Irish protestants also, were not in
favour of being governed from England. In that year the
Irish Parliamentary Party, which sought Home Rule, (ie
an Irish government based in Dublin) held 80% of all Irish
seats at Westminster. Another Irish group which issued
a great number of proclamations towards the end of the
nineteenth century was the Land League, a small-farmer's

organisation founded in 1879, whose aim is summed up in
the slogan - "the land of Ireland for the people of Ireland",
which commonly appeared on their proclamations. It is
also from Land League proclamations which espoused the
tactic of non-cooperation with farmers who leased land
from which another farmer had been evicted, that the word
Boycott was added to the English language. Throughout
the 1870's and 1880's the British authorities in Ireland
issued proclamations announcing emergency laws and offering
rewards in an effort to subdue the wave of violence which
resulted from a growing militancy amongst the Irish
peasantry. Though neither the Land League nor the Parlia-
mentary Party favoured any use of violence to achieve their
aims, many Irish people believed that the ideas which they
had so successfully popularized in Ireland, (ie, self-
government and land ownership for farmers), could only
be achieved through physical force. This view had led
to the formation of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in
1856, a secret oath-bound society dedicated to armed
revolution. Much rural violence and many unsigned
proclamations threatening violence, were due to IRB infil-
tration in the Land League. Understandably the Irish
protestant population feared the prospect of being governed
by a catholic majority Dublin parliament. Many proclamations
issued by protestant groups carried the slogan "Home Rule
is Rome Rule", during the 1880's and 1890's, and into the
twentieth century. In 1886 the Conservative Party began
their policy of "killing Home Rule with kindness". The
economic prosperity that resulted from the many reforms
and social improvements brought about by that policy,
coupled with the collapse of the Parliamentary Party (caused
by a scandal over a divorce case involving the party leader,
C.S. Parnell, in 1890), created a climate of general
political stability in Ireland during the last decade of
the nineteenth century. Thus during this period, the
printing of political propaganda (other than in the form
of occasional books and newspaper and magazine articles,
which are outside the scope of this study), tended mainly

to occur at election times in the form of posters and handbills.

Political proclamations, from the very first, were used in Ireland as a means of communicating messages which were essentially political. Their use as a means of public control is most obvious in proclamations issued through the British government, (especially during the Penal Laws), as public control is a major aspect of maintaining power. The representatives of the crown in Ireland continued to used proclamation for this purpose throughout the nineteenth century. When opposition to British rule made itself heard through the medium of the parliamentary system with the lifting of the Penal Laws, it gave rise to a constant flow of proclamations, posters and handbills, from various groups dissatisfied with their lot under British government. These proclamations were likewise aimed at public control for they demanded acceptance of the message they carried and often threatened repercussions on anyone who did not act in accordance with them. So too did the proclamations issued by interest groups worried by the prospect of catholic government equally hoped to succeed as instruments of public control.

Obviously with proclamations being commonly used by a variety of political interest groups by the 1890's, the use of the printing press had become quite widespread throughout Ireland. In fact by this time there was a printer in almost every town in Ireland. The drastic reduction of the population in Ireland after the famine in 1845-46, coupled with the general prosperity of the British Empire and the policy of "killing Home Rule with kindness" had led to considerable prosperity in many parts of Ireland by the 1890's. A noticeable result of this prosperity according to historian Eamonn MacTomais was that there were more comics and papers written and printed in Dublin at that time, than in London. He refers to the

Thomas Directory (a catalogue of British periodicals)
published in 1917, which lists more than 127 Dublin papers
and pamphlets covering "every aspect of life and religion"
during the 1880's and 90's. The main stay of a printer's
income, especially in small towns, wasearned from printing
a weekly technological progress since Powell.* This income
was supplemented by order for posters, handbills, tickets
for social events and such like. Obviously with so much
printing taking place the level of literacy was generally
high and with the popularity of newspapers and other period-
icals it is obvious that the printed word had a considerable
 social significance. With the lifting of the Penal Laws,
publishers suffered relatively few restrictions under
British law, and many newspapers representing various
political interest groups in Ireland tended to cover
political issues in great detail. Through the printing
of proclamations, newspapers and other related media, the
printing press (since its introduction in 1550) had become
a political device of major importance in Ireland by the
end of the nineteenth century. These were good conditions
for which printed propaganda could flourish.

*   The technological progress in printing relvant to this
    study are discussed in later chapters.
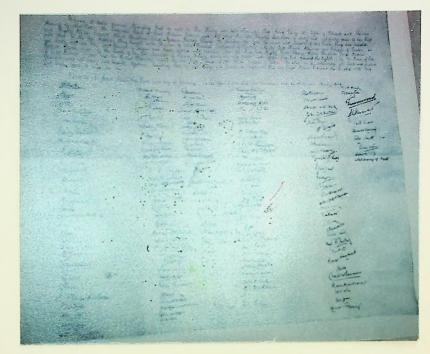
Fig. 1

A PROCLAMACYON

Set fourth by the Ryght Honorable Erle of Sussex Lord Leutenant Generall of the Quenes Maiesties Realme of Jerland, with thassent, and consent, of the Nobelytie, and Counsell, of the same Realme.

HE Quenes most excelent maiestie, calling to remebrance the presumpteuos, arrgant, fellonious, rebellios, z trapteros, deads of Shan Onell, since the first coming into this Realme of Therle of Sussex her highnes lord Leutenāt general of this Realme, and how smal effect, her gentil fauorable and mercyful dealyng with hym hath wroughtin his cankerd z trapteros stomake, hath therfore thought good to open to her good and louing subiects, the some alwell of her gratius z merciful proceding with hym to reduce hym to the acknowleging of the true obedience z dutie of a faythfull subiect, as also of his arrogāt false z trapterous deuises, cōspiracis, enterprises, z facts to the subuerting of the vniuersal quiet of this Realme, the disturbance of all her maiesties good and faithfull subiects, and the great parrell and daūger of her maiesties Royall estate, Dignitie, z Crowne, of this Realm, contrary to his dutie to almightie god and his allegance to his soueraine Lady the Quene.

Fyrst vpon an Hostyng called and a Jorney made by her maiesties said Leutenāt, Anno 1556 agaynst James mac Connell and his Brethern, forren enemys then reputet: Shane dyd not only refuse to repayre to her maiesties said Leutenāt, but also falsly z trapterously dyd with all his force z power of men of warre repayer to James mac Connell conspiring z combryning with hym agaynst our late souerain Lady Quene mary, and therin persisted so sore as he most vnnaturally z traiterusly Joyned in battell with the said Jaims (then an opē enemy) agaynst her maiesties said Luttenānt z the Nobylyte of this Realm then assembled with hym, and the same fight out til god geuing the victory he was forced to flight, at the retorn of her maiestis said Luttenānt z humble sute made by Shanne for his pardon with his promise z othe openly taken to be a true and faithfull

abuse and wrast hyr clemencie so ofte shewed to hym in respecte of the quiet of hir good subiettes to sarue to his dyuelishe pourpose in getting of tyme, the rather to plage and distroye them, hir highnes as forced therto and as the last remedye hath thought it nessessary to vse the sharp scorge of hir sworde and iustice to ponyshe his faulse and trapterous desertes whos wicked dysease will not be cured with any, gentell medesin: And therfore hir highnes doth by this hir proclamation publish, pronounce and proclaime Shane Onele to be a rpotus and fellomous disturber of the vnpuersall quiet of this Realme z the subiects in the same, and a faulse periured sedisious and parnitious conspirer, rebell, and traitor agaynst hir Maiestie, and hir Royall Crowne of this Realme, and doth also publyshe all others to be trayrois in like sort that after knowldge of the proclayminge herof shall adhere vnto him or by any meanis, aide mayntayn, succor or support hun or any of those that shal adhere to hym, and so doth aduise all hir good and faythfull subiects that by hys tyranye hath benne forcebly orawne to hym, to refuse and forsake hym as afalse, arrogant, and detestable traytor and to adhere to hir Maiestye and truly and faythfully to sarue hir as they tender hir Maiestys grace and fauour, and will ouoyde the ponishment that in contrarye doynge dothe by the lawes of thys Realme to suche offendors belonge and apparteyne.

GOD SAVE THE QUENE.

H. D. Cancell.	T. Ormod. z Ossery.	Gerrald, Desmond.	Jeme. Vic. Gormanston
Rowland. Baltiglas.	Richard. Montgaret.	James. Slane.	Christofer. Donsany.
P. B. of Trymletheston.	James. Kyltne.	Christofer. Houthe	John. Curraughmore.
W. Fitz. Wyllams.	Henry. Radclif.	George. Stanley.	Jaques. Wyngfyld.
John. Plonket.	Robart. Dillon	Jaims. Bath.	John. Parker.
Thomas. Cusake.	John. Trauers.	Frauntes. Harbart.	Fraunces. Agard.
Humfrey. Warne.	John. Challoner.		

Imprynted in Dublyn, by Humfrey. Powell.

Fig. 2.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL INTREST-GROUPS THAT USED PROCLAMATIONS
AND THEIR DERIVITIVES IN IRELAND, 1898-1948.

It would be incorrect to attempt an overall assessment
of any print genre either in terms of design and production
merits and demerits or in terms of its value as part of
a national heritage, without examining its products in the
context of (i) the purposes for which they were produced,
and (ii) the social and historical conditions surrounding
their production. Both contexts are inter-related and in
the case of this study they form the fabric of the most
complex and unstable period of Irish history. Thus an
insight into the motives for the publishing of the propa-
ganda which will be examined here can only be obtained
through knowledge of the aims and objectives of the interest-
groups that published them, and an awareness of the histor-
ical background from which the interest-groups emerged.

From a broad perspective of political thought
prevalent in Ireland from 1898 to 1948, one sees three basic
political outlooks:

(i)   Unionism,   Unionists supported British rule in
                        Ireland, and held the view that
                        prosperity in Ireland would always
                        be dependant upon the union with Britain.

(ii)   Nationalism.   Nationalists sought self-determination
                        through parliamentary means.

(iii)   Republicanism. Republicans advocated complete
                        independence from Britain to be achieved
                        through physical force if necessary.

Essentially each of these outlook espouses democracy (ie.
literally, government by the people as a whole rather than
by any section, class, or interest-group within it), as

the ideal form of government. In Ireland the theory of
democracy has proved immensely complicated, partly because
of difficulties in understanding who "the people" are and
which acts of government are truly theirs.

Unionists believed that democratic freedom could
only exist for them so long as "the people" meant the
inhabitants of the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Ireland". Over most of Ireland Unionists were landlords,
merchants, and members of the middle class and were a tiny
minority. Most of them were protestant. The "Kullucan
and Kinnegad Parish Almanack, 1916" (Fig. 3) though one
of the last examples of overt unionist propaganda in the
south of Ireland, demonstrates the strong link, between
protestantism and the merchant class, with unionism.
Included with an address from the local Church of Ireland
clergyman and advertisements from local businesses are most
prominently displayed two photographs of leaders of the
British military campaigns during the Great War. Unionists
were strongest in Ulster, where they included farmers,
labourers and factory workers, and made up about half the
population. Ulster unionists not only feared "Rome Rule",
but feared also for their linen and shipbuilding industries
which depended upon British patronage. In 1912 Ulster
unionists, alarmed at the strong possibility that a Dublin
government would be established by 1914, signed "Ulster's
Solemn League and Covenant" (Fig. 4). Through it each
signatory publicly proclaimed to use "all means which may
be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set
up a Home Rule parliament in Ireland". The format of this
is strikingly close the 1561 proclamation against Shane
O'Neill (on whose lands many of their ancestors had settled).
Perhaps this proclamation, more than any other, demonstrates
the social and political power which can be generated through
this genre of propaganda. Over 400,000 unionists signed
it, many in their own blood. Through the "Orange Order"
in Ulster and the "Irish Unionist Alliance" in the rest

of Ireland, unionists were well organised into many local and regional clubs. Thus they did not need to communicate their political views to each other through posters or handbills to the same extent as other Irish political factions. After the 1895 election when unionists won just one seat outside of Ulster (ie. Dublin University) they decided not to waste their considerable funds for propaganda on convincing catholics of the virtues of the Union, but as F.S.C. Lyons puts it, on "propaganda designed to persuade British voters and British politicians that the Union must be preserved". Meanwhile southern unionists sought election in British constituencies. Thus posters issued by Irish unionists represent a mere fraction of those used in Ireland during the period covered here. Nevertheless proclamations issued by the representatives of the British government in Ireland up to 1922 (when the Free State was established in the twenty six counties) can be viewed as unionist propaganda, for they were in themselves symbols of British rule in Ireland and could not exist without the Union.

The contexts of proclamations, posters, and handbills published in the name of parliamentary nationalism were often complex and changeable. They appear first in the period of this study in 1900 when John Redmond forms the Home Rule Party, the rebuilt ruins of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Redmond's party was supported by virtually everybody in Ireland, (other than unionists), up until 1918. The term "nationalism" in the context of Irish history is generally associated with the parliamentary tradition and the belief that physical force is not an acceptable method of solving Ireland's political problems. In 1915 however, the Home Rule Party feared that if Irishmen did not help Britain win the Great War, the promised Home Rule delayed by that war, might be endangered. Figure 5 shows a poster that helped recuit over 200,000 Irishmen. As the number of fatalities rose to over 60,000 before the end of the war, Irish popular opinion turned strongly against the introduction of conscription. The campaign against conscription was led by Sinn Fein, a political party founded by Arthur Griffith, (himself a printer by trade), in 1905.

His party advocated non-cooperation with Britain by simply
setting up an Irish Stat without war. Figure 6 shows a
poster of which over 5,000 appeared one morning, pasted
to walls and telegraph poles, all over Dublin, soon after
war was declared against Germany in 1914. This poster which
launched Sinn Fein's "anti-conscription pledge" that was
to unite all sections of opposition to the Union, is accord-
ing to Rickards* probably the earliest anti-draft propaganda
compaign of its kind. Although Griffith was himself a
republican at heart, he conceded that most Irish people
were not, and thus Sinn Fein's policy was to continue to
recognise the British monarchy after setting up an Irish
government. Therefore the nationalist tradition is
represented by Sinn Fein up to 1922 when there was a split
in the party. The split resulted from dissatisfaction with
the partition of Ireland into north and south and other
conditions of a Treaty reached with Britain after the Anglo-
Irish war of 1919-21. This war was sparked off by the
republican factions within Sinn Fein which though in the
minority, were in practice the more influential sector from
1919, when Sinn Fein set up a government in Dublin, to the
end of the Anglo-Irish war. The row over the treaty clearly
divided the nationalists and repblicans into "Pro-Treaty"
and "Anti-Treaty" factions respectively. This was an
extremely bitter split which resulted in civil war from
April 1922 to May 1924. During the Anglo-Irish war the
British authorities issued many proclamations against Sinn
Fein and the rebels, who in turn used the same propaganda
tool against the British. During the civil war both sides
also used proclamations. In 1923 the "Pro-Treaty" faction
began a new political party to continue the nationalist
tradition. This party called Cumann na nGaedheal and its
first leader was W.T. Costgrave, (Fig. 7). It issued many
very interesting political posters etc, up to 1933 when
it joined with the "Farmers Party" and the "Blueshirts"
(a short-lived fascist group) to become Fine Gael. To the

* See Bibliography.

20

present day Fine Gael continues to represent a sizeable section of Irish nationalism.

Though never representative of the manority of Irish opinion, the republican tradition has been represented by more factions than either nationalism or unionism, and certainly has a longer history. Due to much overlapping of ideals, and involvement of political interest groups, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish republicans from nationalists. The most obvious characteristic differences have been that republicans have traditionally a strong tendancy towards militancy and (like unionists) an aversion to political compromise. In 1898 the Emmet centenary revived intrest in the history of Irish republicanism. It had been at a very low ebb since the ceassation of the land agitation of the 1880's and by 1898 only one organisation existed which advocated complete independence from Britain. This was the Irish Republican Brotherhood (also known as the Fenians). The IRB was a secret oath-bound society which had dwindled since the failure of its 1967 rebellion. By 1898 it was no more than "a few old men meeting in the back rooms of pubs", according to T.W. Moody. Evidence of the new lease of life afforded Irish republicanism through the Emmet centenary is visible in publications of the time. In a newspaper called the "New Ireland Review" D.P. Moran (whose writings had a highly influential effect on republican politics during the years covered here), wrote a series of articles for the centenary arguing that Ireland should not only have its own government, but that it should renounce every English influence. In that year also Arthur Griffith founded a newspaper, the "United Irishman" named after an organisation called the "United Irishmen" from which the IRB had evolved. Centenary posters were printed and sold on a commercial basis, (Fig. 8). A number of inspired young men began to filter into the IRB and reorganise it. By 1916 the ranks had grown to such an extent that the new young leadership were confidently planning a rebellion.

present day Fine Gael continues to represent a sizeable
section of Irish nationalism.

Though never representative of the manority of Irish
opinion, the republican tradition has been represented by
more factions than either nationalism or unionism, and
certainly has a longer history. Due to much overlapping
of ideals, and involvement of political interest groups,
it is sometimes difficult to distinguish republicans from
nationalists. The most obvious characteristic differences
have been that republicans have traditionally a strong
tendancy towards militancy and (like unionists) an aversion
to political compromise. In 1898 the Emmet centenary revived
intrest in the history of Irish republicanism. It had been
at a very low ebb since the ceassation of the land agitation
of the 1880's and by 1898 only one organisation existed
which advocated complete independence from Britain. This
was the Irish Republican Brotherhood (also known as the
Fenians). The IRB was a secret oath-bound society which
had dwindled since the failure of its 1967 rebellion.
By 1898 it was no more than "a few old men meeting in the
back rooms of pubs", according to T.W. Moody. Evidence
of the new lease of life afforded Irish republicanism through
the Emmet centenary is visible in publications of the time.
In a newspaper called the "New Ireland Review" D.P. Moran
(whose writings had a highly influential effect on republican
politics during the years covered here), wrote a series
of articles for the centenary arguing that Ireland should
not only have its own government, but that it should renounce
every English influence. In that year also Arthur Griffith
founded a newspaper, the "United Irishman" named after an
organisation called the "United Irishmen" from which the
IRB had evolved. Centenary posters were printed and sold
on a commercial basis, (Fig. 8). A number of inspired young
men began to filter into the IRB and reorganise it. By
1916 the ranks had grown to such an extent that the new
young leadership were confidently planning a rebellion.

Though the IRB do not seem to have issued posters during
this period, two other armies with which they were later
to unite, did. The Irish Citizen Army was founded by trade
unionists to protect Dublin workers during a six month
"lock-out" when employers tried to destroy trade unions
in 1913. The Irish Volunteers was also founded in 1913.
It was set up to counter the possibility of the British
revoking their promise of Home Rule, thus the majority of
its men were nationalists at heart and followed Redmond's
request to fight Germany in the Great War. Nevertheless
it was the IRB infiltration into both these armies that
led to the Easter Rising of 1916, and subsequently to the
formation of the Irish Republican Army (which in one form
or another has represented extreme Irish republicanism ever
since).   The I.R.A. published many interesting and important
proclamations and posters. Arguably the most extreme face
of republicanism between 1898 and 1948 was Cumann na mBan
(the women's army), who were unanimously opposed to the
Treaty after the Anglo-Irish war. They too issued proclam-
ations and posters. Following the Treaty split, the
republican faction formed a new Sinn Fein party which in
turn split in 1926 when Eamonn de Valera (the senior survivor
of the 1916 rising, and president of the 1919 Sinn Fein
government) convinced a sizeable section of it that a thirty-
two county, unpartitioned republic could only be achieved
through the Irish parliament (or Dail), as it existed after
the Treaty. De Valera formed the Fianna Fail party which
to the present day claim to represent the republican
tradition. They grew to be the largest political party
in Ireland and formed a government in 1932 (Fig. 9) which
held power continuously up to 1948.

Other political interest groups which used this form
of propaganda were (i) the "Labour Party" founded 1912,
which represented the trade unions and did not wish to become
embroiled in the republican versus nationalist conflicts,
and (ii) "Clann na Poblachta" founded 1948, which was made

up of republicans who despaired of ending partition by force
and also others who hoped to improve social conditions,
(Fig. 10). The founding of Clann na Poblachta made it
possible for a coalition to form a government and break
Fianna Fail's monopoly on power. It was due to pressure
from Clann na Poblachta within that coalition that led to
the declaration of an Irish Republic in 1948.

The visual imagery which was used in nationalist
and republican propaganda was highly influenced by symbolism
which became popularized through the publications of cultural
organisations that where theoretically apolitical. The
Gaelic League founded in 1893 to preserve and spread the
Irish language was immensely successful and gave rise to
countless publications in Irish and to the revival of decor-
ative "Celtic" design. The majority of those who fought
in the Easter Rising were members of the Gaelic League.
Another important movement was the Gaelic Athletic Association,
founded in 1884 to encourage native sports. It fostered
a considerable amount of anti-English racism, a trait which
is sometimes evident in Irish political proclamations.
The GAA was an important recruiting ground for the IRB.
A substantial amount of visual imagery was also generated
through the Anglo-Irish literary revival, which developed
Irish literature in the English language. Figure 11 shows
a poster that was directly inspired by Sean O'Casey's play
"The Shadow of a Gunman", and in Figure 12, Ireland is
symbolically personified as a woman as it was in Yeat's
play Cathleen Ni Houlihan. The Anglo Irish literary revival,
the Gaelic League and G.A.A. were the products of a cultural
revolution in Ireland which evolved from the political
endeavour to establish the right of the Irish people to
self-determination, which in turn posed the question: what
is "the Irish people?". The cultural revolution was an
attempt to find the answer.

Finally, this chapter would have failed to properly
set the context for the subject matter of this thesis without

some allusion to the Catholic Church. That the Church has
been continuously a powerful political interest group is
evidenced by the fact that until the passing of the 1985
"Family Planning Act" no legislation opposed by the hierarchy
had succeeded in becoming law. Its power, according to
Inglish, lies in its ability to "limit what its members,
and others, do and say to what falls within the rules and
regulations of the Church". Inglis also says: "The vast
majority of Irish politicians and civil servants have been
formed and educated by the Catholic Church and, consequently,
have limited legislation in matters that fall within the
general ethos of the Church's teachings". Nevertheless
the Church has always exercised caution in openly showing
support for, or opposition to, any of the interest groups
discussed in this chapter. Whether under British rule or
during the years of the "Free State", the Church has remained
the supreme diplomat of Irish politics. Dr. Noel Browne
maintains that by 1950 "the hierarchy had become the factual
instrument of government on all important social and economic
policies in the Republic". If one looks at Figure 13 which
demonstrates the success of Sinn Fein's anti-conscription
pledge, it is easy to believe Dr. Browne's assertion. It
shows the political leaders of republicanism, nationalism
and trade unionism, all placed below two princes of the
Church and the seminary of Maynooth. Very rarely does the
Church issue any form of printed proclamation, - the pulpit
has proved a more efficient political device, but it has
often voiced its opinion through the political proclamations
of other interest groups.

    The political interest groups discussed in this
chapter form the substance of Irish history from 1898 to
1948, and the proclamations, posters and handbills, etc,
which they issued were part of the weaponary they used in
attempting to promote their aims and conserve their interests.

Fig. 3.

Fig 4.

Fig 5.

ANTI-CONSCRIPTION PLEDGE.
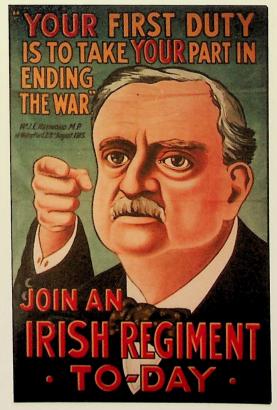
The following is a copy of the Pledge:—

" Denying the right of the British Government to enforce Compulsory Service in this Country *we pledge ourselves solemnly to one another to resist Conscription* by the most effective means at our disposal."

Fig. 6.

COSGRAVE is winning this time
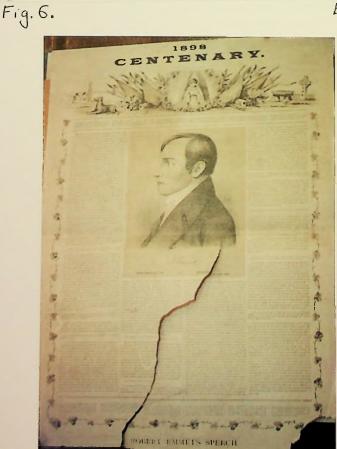
BACK THE WINNER

Vote Cumann na nGaedheal

Fig. 7

1898
CENTENARY.

ROBERT EMMET'S SPEECH.

Fig. 8.

President DeValera and his Cabinet

Fig. 9.

CLANN NA POBLACHTA

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY

Foundations . . .

1. Elimination of Jobbery, Political preferment and **Corruption** from public life.

2. A Social and economic **system** based on Christian principles.

3. **A Comprehensive Social Insurance** scheme on the basis of the Plan drawn up by Most Rev. Dr. Dignan, Bishop of Clonfert.

4. **Full Employment** for full production by the equation of Currency and Credit to the nation's needs.

5. Nationally-financed Non-profit-making Building programme for the provision of decent houses for all citizens, and the **abolition of slums.**

6. **Immediate reduction in cost of living** achieved by subsidising the production of essential foodstuffs.

7. **Provision of Sanatoria** and facilities for post-sanatoria care for those afflicted by **tuberculosis.**

8. **Free** primary, secondary and University **Education** for all the children of the Nation fitted to avail of it. The raising of the school-leaving age to 16.

9. **Freedom** and Independence for all Ireland as a Democratic Republic.

THE CLANN NA POBLACHTA CANDIDATES IN YOUR AREA ARE :—

BARRON
JOSEPH (National Teacher)

BRADY
JACK (Brewery Employee)

LEHANE
CON (Solicitor)
Vice-Chairman. Nat. Executive
Clann na Poblachta

VOTE FOR THEM IN THE ORDER OF YOUR CHOICE

Fig. 10.

Fig. 11.

Fig. 12.

Fig. 13.

28

CHAPTER 3

THE TRADITIONAL PROCLAMATION

Even in Humphrey Powell's proclamations some of the conventions which became standard practice throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are apparent. Most obvious of these characteristics are:

(i)   The word "PROCLAMATION" as heading.

(ii)   The royal seal.

(iii)   The large initial of the first paragraph.

(iv)   1The use of paragraphs.

(v)   The slogan "God save the Queen/King".

(vi)   The use of signature.

(vii)   The printer's imprint, (though a standard element of most proclamations, it was often neglected and certainly declined in significance as printers became more common)

The proclamation issued by Lord Ivor Churchill Baron Wimborne declaring martial law throughout Ireland in 1916 (Fig. 14) is a direct descendant of that issued by the Earl of Sussex in 1561, (Fig. 2). A comparison of the two clearly demonstrates the strong tradition of this print genre in Ireland. Both were issued by men who hold the same political office, that of Lord Lieutenant, an authority which like the style of language used, had changed little in more than three and a half centuries. The changes which evolved to form the standard format are relatively slight:

(i)   The royal seal was placed 'above' the heading.

(ii)   The headings were usually one of three:

(a)   "PROCLAMATION"; this was a general declaration, and usually signified power from the throne.

(b)   "ORDER"; this usually meant an emergency law, through military authority.

(c)   "NOTICE"; was used for less important general public information.

(iii)   Generally the first paragraph began with the word "WHEREAS", the "W" as a large initial and the rest of the word in capitals, or alternatively it began with "By virtue of the powers vested in me", or "In exercise of the powers conferred upon me".

(iv)   Divisions such as paragraphs, sections and sub-sections, had become more obvious (as in Figure 15.)

(v)   Just one signature became the norm.

(vi)   "God save the Queen/King" was printed 'after' the signature.

Although the format had only slightly changed since the sixteenth century, the typography had become more legible. This was arguably achieved at the expense of beauty, but any aesthetic values in th traditional proclamation were coincidental to their function which was to give weight to the authority of those in power. The man floating down a river on the back of a swan in the beautiful large initial in Figure 1, does not lend the same strength of power as the bold angularity of the type in General Maxwell's 1916 "ORDER", (Fig. 15.

Royal proclamations always took the format shown in Figure 4, however those issued through other agencies of British rule varied slightly in style. Printers took pains to create a style appropriate to the issuer, and this was achieved through quite subtle typographic treatment. The elongated capitals and the generous spacing of the text set in a simple dignified Roman typeface, give the Wimborne proclamation a noble appearance suit to its regal origins. Likewise the bold officious, and somewhat intimidating typographic treatment of the Maxwell "Order" is quite approp-riately militaristic. In both cases the style of design

is rather classical, a feature which adds to their power of authority. Political proclamations issued to deal with less prestigeous problems of public control were appropriately less pretentious in both style of language and typographic treatment, though the basic traditional format was almost always adhered to. In Figure 16 the royal seal is replaced with the name of the governmental agency responsible for the particular problem - in this case the planting of potatoes to avert a possible food shortage. As a heading the word "NOTICE" has none of the pomposity inherent in "PROCLAMATION", and likewise the text is appreciably less consequential. The notice in Figure 17 was circulated just a week after that in Figure 16 demonstrating that this was a standard and frequent means of governmental communication and control.

It was not only official government bodies that used the traditional proclamations format, it also had its exponents among interest groups opposed to British rule in Ireland. The very issuing of one such proclamation had greater consequences on the course of modrern Irish history than any other political act in this century, (Fig. 18). The conflicts which resulted with the printing of that proc- lamation have given rise to the production of most of images discussed in this study. Its visual printed form has become so strong a symbol of Irish independence that it is referred to in Ireland simply as "the proclamation". It was printed hurriedly the day before the 1916 Easter Rising broke out in Dublin. Despite its subsequent fame it was to, (according to F.S.L. Lyons) "a sparse and almost completely uncompre- hending audience", that P.H. Pearse proclaimed the "Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State". The following day an attempt to explain what was taking place was made through the publishing of the "Irish War News" (excerpt in Figure 19), which was itself in format a hybrid of the proclamation handbill and the newspaper, as it was issued as a single folded sheet and was sold, priced one penny.

Judging from the type used in its front page heading it
probably originated from the same printshop as "the
proclamation". It firmly acknowledges the contribution
of political proclamations to Irish history when it states:
"The Irish Republic was proclaimed by a poster, which was
prominently displayed in Dublin".

From a design point of view the 1916 Easter week
proclamation successfully uses "Poblacht na hEireann" to
boldy replace the traditional royal seal, and the heading
visually serves to replace the word "proclamation" which,
because of its "royal" connotations, would have been inapprop-
riate. The typographic treatment of the heading and the
use of multipal signatures is ironically reminiscent of
Humphrey Powell's format.

During Easter week 1916 a second proclamation was
pulled from the same printing press (Fig. 20). In harmony
with the general confusion of that week the format is slightly
different from the first proclamation. "Poblacht na hEireann"
is not used at all and the arrangement of type in the heading
is less clear than in the first proclamation. This time
there is only one signature. Understandably, this
proclamation shows signs of having been produced under
pressure. Maurice Rickards points out that in typographic
posters "the heat of the moment is often most poignantly
apparent. In the Irish proclamations, perhaps above all
others, it comes through unmistakably."

The language used in the text of these proclamations
is also noteworthy as having a style of its own, attributable
mainly to Pearse, but also probably to MacDonagh and Connolly
in the case of the first one. "From whichever side of the
political or military fence the Pearse manifestoes are viewed"
writes Rickard, "their central core of courage and conviction
is inescapable".

Dissatisfaction with the treaty which restored self-determination, but in so doing partitioned Ireland, resulted in civil war. With both sides claiming the legal right to govern, there was a national identity crisis. Simultaneously the redundancy of the symbolism and visual trappings of British rule brought with it the responsibility of establishing a corporate identity for all the new State. Due to the traditionally sorry state of the visual arts in Ireland and the general lack of interest and awareness of what little there was to draw from our visual heritage, this difficulty was made well nigh impossible by the acute scarcity of skilled artists and designers, and moreover by the general ignorance of the importance of visual aspects of national identity. As regards the proclamations, broadsheets and pictorial posters issued by the nationalists and republicans we shall see there were no serious attempts to achieve recognisably individual styles, though new symbolism did emerge.

Rather than achieving anything close to an Irish style or format for proclamations, the most the printers could achieve was making them not look British. The thick border and the so called "Egyptian" type of Commander O'Maolchatha's "OFFER OF AMNESTY" (Fig. 21) at first glance seems like a product of the American wild-west. Dan Breen's Appeal (Fig. 22) has likewise no design format or element of symbolism to differentiate it from opposition propaganda. Differentiation could only be made through the content of the text.

The only noticeable progress toward a national style for official proclamations had been the use of gaelic in headings such as "Poblacht na hEireann" (Fig. 18), and more significantly the use of words like "FOGRA" (Fig. 23) which could be used as a standard feature of Irish proclamations. Despite this slight innovation, the roots of all official Free State government proclamations continued to lie in

the traditional format imported from London so long ago.
That the old format had aged so well is proof of its effect-
iveness. Notwithstanding its seeming staid rigidity it
proved a most flexible political device. Its continued
popularity in the Free State, at a time when the reproduction
of imagery was within the technical capability of most
printers, surely establishes its stature as a major element
of Ireland's visual communications heritage.

This point is well demonstrated in one of Fianna Fail's
first election posters (Fig. 24). At first glance it is
quite amazing that the name of De Valera's new party is
given no prominence whatsoever, yet the choice of format
and style of text reveals a keen understanding of the nature
of propaganda in Irish politics. Considering the political
tensions prevalent in 1927, the modest gentle typography
exploits the format to perfectly set the tone of the text.
The inclusion of any symbolism or imagery would most probably
adversely affect the credibility of the textual earnestness.

No synopsis of the use of the traditional proclamation
format in Irish propaganda would be complete without
reference to the use of "counter proclamations", a direct
offshoot of that tradition. This form of propaganda was
an excellent vehicle for polemics and rhetoric, and was
often the most articulate voice of opposition to British
rule. During the Great War this tactic was in large measure
responsible for turning public opinion against conscription
in Ireland. The colourful language in Figure 25 lends itself
well to the traditional format which is meticulously executed
to the extent of using a fictitious printer's imprint.
The style of the proclamation issued by the Minister for
Justice in 1931 (Fig. 26) shows how closely the new Free
State administration embraced the traditions of the former
administration, a point which is reiterated cheekily in
Figure 27.

In proclamation and, (albeit in jest) counter-proclamations alike, the phraseology always aspires to "legalize" the content of the test. They exude a fulsome sense of their own justification, establishing their status, qualifications and antecedends as a means of justification for the declaration itself. The origins of the proclamation are, as Rickards points out, "close to the origins of law, order, government and the hierarchy of power". In Ireland they have certainly been visual expression of strong social and historical forces.

ORDER

I, GENERAL THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR J. G. MAXWELL, K.C.B.; K.C.M.G.; C.V.O.; D.S.O., Commanding-In-Chief the Forces in Ireland, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me as Competent Military Authority by Regulation 30 of the Defence of the Realm (Consolidation) Regulations hereby prohibit the manufacture, sale, transfer or disposal of fire-arms, part of fire-arms, Military arms, parts of Military arms, ammunition (including sporting ammunition for use in shot guns) or explosive substances or any class thereof, within the Area of IRELAND, except subject to the following conditions, viz :—

(1) That my consent in writing or the consent in writing of an Officer authorised by me for the purpose has been obtained for the proposed manufacture, sale, transfer or disposal of the said articles or any of them, after a full and true disclosure of the particulars of the proposed manufacture, sale, transfer or disposal of the said articles or any of them outside the Dublin Metropolitan Police District to the District Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary for the District, and inside the Dublin Metropolitan Police District to a Superintendent of the Dublin Metropolitan Police.

The Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, and County and District Inspectors of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and Superintendents of the Dublin Metropolitan Police are Officers authorised by me for the said purpose, and
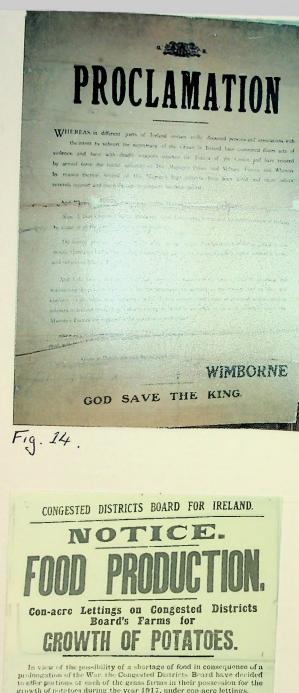
(2) That any person selling the said articles or any of them shall provide and keep a Register showing the full particulars, description, and amount of all such articles purchased or sold by the said person, or which he or she has in his or her possession for sale, giving the names and full addresses of the persons from whom the said articles were purchased or to whom the said articles were sold and the dates of each transaction, which entries must be made within twenty-four hours after the sale or purchase; and the said Register shall be open for inspection at all times by the District Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary in each District, or by some member of the Royal Irish Constabulary authorised by him, or, in the Dublin Metropolitan Police Area, by any Superintendent or Inspector of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, or any member of the said Force authorised by such Superintendent; and any person so selling or keeping for sale or having in possession for sale any such articles as aforesaid, shall at all times, when so required by the aforesaid Police Authorities, show to the said Authorities all stock on hand of any such articles; and in case the purchaser is not known to the Vendor, the Vendor shall require the purchaser to furnish satisfactory particulars of identification which shall be entered in the Register of sales, and to sign his name and address in the Register of sales.

The ORDERS of the Competent Military Authority for IRELAND made under Regulation 30 of the Defence of the Realm Regulations and dated 9th December, 1915; 25th February, 1916; and the 30th March, 1916, are hereby CANCELLED.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND THIS 30th day of SEPTEMBER, 1916.

J. G. MAXWELL, General Competent Military Authority.

Fig. 15.

36

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS in different parts of Ireland certain evilly disposed persons and associations with the intent to subvert the supremacy of the crown in Ireland have committed divers acts of violence, and have with deadly weapons attacked the Forces of the Crown, and have resisted by armed force the lawful authority of His Majesty's Police and Military Forces: And Whereas by reason thereof several of His Majesty's liege subjects have been killed and many others severely injured, and their lives and property further placed...

...

WIMBORNE

GOD SAVE THE KING.

Fig. 14.

CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD FOR IRELAND.

NOTICE.

FOOD PRODUCTION.

Con-acre Lettings on Congested Districts Board Farms.

...

J. R. O'BRIEN,
Secretary.

Fig. 17.

CONGESTED DISTRICTS BOARD FOR IRELAND.

NOTICE.

FOOD PRODUCTION.

Con-acre Lettings on Congested Districts Board's Farms for

GROWTH OF POTATOES.

In view of the possibility of a shortage of food in consequence of a prolongation of the War, the Congested Districts Board have decided to offer portions of each of the grass farms in their possession for the growth of potatoes during the year 1917, under con-acre lettings.

Land which the Board expect to distribute before the 31st March, 1917, will not be let for con-acre.

Occupiers of holdings exceeding £7 Poor Law Valuation or members of their families residing with them on the holding or elsewhere, who have not arranged to have at least one-fifth of the arable portion of their own holdings under cultivation, will not be eligible for con-acre on any of the Board's farms.

On and after Monday, the 8th instant, eligible applicants for land should attend on any of the Board's farms on which they desire to rent con-acre, and make agreements with the Board's herd as to the land to be cropped by them on the terms stated in the agreement which has been supplied to the herds.

J. R. O'BRIEN,
Secretary.

RUTLAND SQUARE, DUBLIN.

Fig. 16.

POBLACHT NA H EIREANN.

The Provisional Government of the
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,
THOMAS J. CLARKE,
SEAN Mac DIARMADA,   THOMAS MacDONAGH,
P. H. PEARSE,   EAMONN CEANNT,
JAMES CONNOLLY.   JOSEPH PLUNKETT,

Fig. 18

IRISH WAR NEWS.

STOP PRESS!

THE IRISH REPUBLIC.

(Irish) "War News" is published to-day because a momentous thing has happened. The Irish Republic has been declared in Dublin, and a Provisional Government has been appointed to administer its affairs. The following have been named as the Provisional Government :—

Thomas J. Clarke.

Sean Mac Diarmada

P. H. Pearse.

James Connolly.

Thomas MacDonagh.

Eamonn Ceannt.

Joseph Plunkett.

The Irish Republic was proclaimed by a poster, which was prominently displayed in Dublin.

At 9.30 a.m. this morning the following statement was made by Commandent-General, P. H. Pearse :—

The Irish Republic was proclaimed in Dublin on Easter Monday, 24th April, at 12 noon. Simultaneously with the issue of the proclamation of the Provisional Government the Dublin Division of the Army of the Republic, including the Irish Volunteers, Citizen Army, Hibernian Rifles, and other bodies, occupied dominating points in the city. The G.P.O. was seized at 12 noon, the Castle was attacked at the same moment, and shortly afterwards the Four Courts were occupied. The Irish troops hold the City Hall and dominate the Castle. Attacks were immediately commenced by the British forces and were everywhere repulsed. At the moment of writing this report, (9.30 a.m., Tuesday) the Republican forces hold all their positions and the British forces have nowhere broken through. There has been heavy and continuous fighting for nearly 24 hours, the casualties of the enemy being much more numerous than those on the Republican side. The Republican forces everywhere are fighting with splendid gallantry. The populace of Dublin are plainly with the Republic, and the officers and men are everywhere cheered as they march through the streets. The whole centre of the city is in the hands of the Republic, whose flag flies from the G.P.O.

Commandant General P. H. Pearse is commanding in chief of the Army of the Republic and is President of the Provisional Government Commandent General James Connolly is commanding the Dublin districts. Communication with the country is largely cut, but reports to hand show that the country is rising, and bodies of men from Kildare and Fingall have already reported in Dublin.

——✠✠——

IRISH WAR NEWS

THE IRISH REPUBLIC.

Vol. I. No. 1   DUBLIN, TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 1916.   ONE PENNY

Fig. 19.

The Provisional Government

... TO THE ...

CITIZENS OF DUBLIN

The Provisional Government of the Irish Republic salutes the CITIZENS OF DUBLIN on the momentous occasion of the proclamation of a

Sovereign Independent Irish State

now in course of being established by Irishmen in Arms.

The Republican forces hold the lines taken up at Twelve noon on Easter Monday, and nowhere, despite fierce and almost continuous attacks of the British troops, have the lines been broken through. The country is rising in answer to Dublin's call, and the final achievement of Ireland's freedom is now, with God's help, only a matter of days. The valour, self sacrifice, and discipline of Irish men and women are about to win for our country a glorious place among the nations.

Ireland's honour has already been redeemed: it remains to vindicate her wisdom and her self-control.

All citizens of Dublin who believe in the right of their Country to be free will give their allegiance and their loyal help to the Irish Republic. There is work for everyone: for the men in the fighting line, and for the women in the provision of food and first aid. Every Irishman and Irishwoman worthy of the name will come forward to help their common country in this her supreme hour.

Able-bodied Citizens can help by building barricades in the streets to oppose the advance of the British troops. The British troops have been firing on our women and on our Red Cross. On the other hand, Irish Regiments in the British Army have refused to act against their fellow countrymen.

The Provisional Government hopes that its supporters—which means the vast bulk of the people of Dublin—will preserve order and self-restraint. Such looting as has already occurred has been done by hangers-on of the British Army. Ireland must keep her new honour unsmirched.

We have lived to see an Irish Republic proclaimed. May we live to establish it firmly, and may our children and our children's children enjoy the happiness and prosperity which freedom will bring.

Signed on behalf of the Provisional Government,

P. H. PEARSE,

Commanding in Chief the Forces of the Irish Republic,
and President of the Provisional Government.

Fig. 20.

PROCLAMATION
OFFER OF AMNESTY

(1) Bearing in mind the acceptance by Liam Deasy of an immediate and unconditional surrender of all arms and men, and recognising that the reasons dictating to him that acceptance must weigh also with many leaders, and many of the rank and file, who have found themselves led step by step into a destruction that they never intended, but which has been the result of the line of policy adopted by those to whom they looked for leadership.

(2) NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that with a view to facilitating such a surrender the Government are prepared to offer amnesty to all persons now in arms against the Government who, on or before Sunday 18th February, 1923, surrender with arms to any Officer of the National Forces or through any intermediary.

Risteard Ó Maolchatha, General,
Commander-in-Chief.

Dublin.
8th February, 1923.

Fig 21.

DAN BREEN'S APPEAL

D. BREEN'S APPEAL TO HIS OLD COMRADES NOW IN THE FREE STATE ARMY.

Comrades,

ARE YOU AWARE that you are fighting against the Republic that you fought to establish in 1916, and that was maintained and is going to be maintained?

ARE YOU AWARE that England tried to disestablish the Republic through a reign of Black and Tan terror?

ARE YOU AWARE that she is now using the so-called Provisional Government to try where she failed?

ARE YOU AWARE that YOU are the Black and Tans of to-day, the only difference is the uniform?

ARE YOU AWARE that the death of CATHAL BRUGHA is a damnable and eternal stain on the uniform?

ARE YOU AWARE that CATHAL BRUGHA died as my comrade, SEAN TREACY, died?-- no surrender to enemies of the Republic was their cry.

ARE YOU AWARE that there are hundreds of MEN who will die as Brugha and Treacy died in defence of the Republic?

ARE YOU AWARE that I did my best to maintain the army for the Republic, but I failed because your section took orders from our only enemy--England?

Comrades, I thought my term of soldiering was over, but duty again called me to defend the Republic, which I will do or die in the attempt. Will you again stand with me as my comrades in arms, or will you continue to fight with England against me?

Dan Breen.

Fig. 22.

FOGRA

Óglaigh na h-Éireann
IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY

General Headquarters Dublin.
28th November 1922.

SPIES

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Notice is hereby given that the death penalty will be inflicted upon any person or persons found guilty of conveying or circulating or aiding and abetting in the conveyance or circulation of information to the Free State forces or to any member or official of its usurping Government, where such information may lead to:

(a) THE DEATH
(b) THE WOUNDING
(c) CAPTURE OF ANY MEMBER OF THE REPUBLICAN FORCES, THEIR GOVERNMENT OR LOYAL ADHERENTS.

Drastic penalties will also be inflicted upon any person or persons found guilty of conveying or circulating or aiding and abetting in the conveyance or circulation of information which may lead to the raiding for, or capture of, any arms, munitions or documents, the property of the Republican forces or their Government.

This Notice includes members of Free State Defence Committees, Touts, "National" Reserves, and all other persons aiding or abetting the enemy as aforesaid.

BY ORDER

ARMY COUNCIL

Fig. 23.

TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

By its recent action in entering the Free State Dáil, Fianna Fáil has already given earnest, that in the pursuit of its ideals it is prepared to face and accept existing realities.

If returned in a majority at the coming election and entrusted with power, it hopes to prove that hard-headed common-sense is not incompatible with true national idealism.

The slightest design of aiming at bringing about a sudden revolutionary upheaval with which our opponents choose to credit us is altogether foreign to our purpose and programme. We do not believe in attempting to practise sleight-of-hand on the electorate. We shall proceed as a responsible constitutional Government acknowledging without reserve that all authority comes through the sovereign people and that before any important step likely to involve their safety is taken the people are entitled to be taken into the fullest consultation.

The stubborn political and economic facts are of necessity the base from which any successful advance must be made. To ignore them would be to court defeat. A nation cannot march on an empty stomach. Our first and most strenuous effort must accordingly be devoted to repairing the present economic ruin. Some effort and successful achievement are necessary to restore the old confidence. Unity in the national ranks will quickly follow and with it will come back the old spirit of national courage and self-reliance.

These are our convictions. Fianna Fáil was founded in the belief that the national instincts of the people would ultimately assert themselves. If the people give us a majority we will be the faithful guardians of their interests.

Ennis, September 11th, 1927.

Fig. 24.

G. &c R.

A PROCLAMATION!

BY GEORGE V., King of England

To Our Faithful Irish Subjects,

We are at present engaged in war With Our first cousin, the Emperor of Germany. We hate the Germans, because Our father, Our grandfather, Our grandmother, and all our ancestors were Germans, and every sensible man now-a-days hates his ancestors!

YOU, ALSO, OUR BRAVE IRISH, HAD ANCESTORS Blood-thirsty rebels, who wanted to own Ireland for themselves, and be separated from Our Glorious Empire; but our predecessors on the Throne of England (who were all Germans by birth o rby descent) got rid of these narrow-minded savage ancestors of yours. They flogged, hanged, and burned them in '98. They starved them in '48, and brought the food across to feed our Free-born Britons (for Ireland was England's larder then as now). They shipped a few millions o survived the Famine out in Coffin-ships across the Atlantic, and most of them were thrown overboard, and their bones lie whitening at the bottom of the ocean. A few weeks ago, in Dublin, We managed, with the aid of Our Own Scottish Borderers, to let all who had any recollection of ancestors left, know that We were prepared to clear them out root and branch, and to spare neither women nor children in the clearance.

NOW, OUR BRAVE IRISH, We know you don't want to be reminded that these men were your ancestors, anymore than Our Royal Self do that We are German by blood.

WE WANT MEN TO FIGHT THESE GERMANS, and We know from history that the Irish are a Fighting Race. A large number of your Countrymen have been sent to the Front to fight the Germans. THE MOST OF THEM HAVE BEEN KILLED, BUT THEY DIED NOBLY FIGHTING FOR US AND OUR EMPIRE. We want more to fill their places, and ONLY IRISHMEN WILL GET THE POST OF HONOR. Come and volunteer for the Army at once and We will arrange that you will be sent to the Front and Killed; if you are not killed, when you are no longer of any use for fighting, Remember the British Laws—the Poor Laws—have provided for your upkeep in the Workhouses of Ireland.

Remember the Empire comes first and the Poorhouse after, if you survive the War.   GEORGE R.I.

GOD SAVE THE KING

GALE & POLDEN. ALDERSHOT.   1906   5,000,000   8 | 14

Fig. 25.

41

SAORSTAT EIREANN

PROCLAMATION

I, JAMES FITZGERALD-KENNEY, Minister for Justice, in exercise of the powers conferred on me by sub-section (2) of Section 24 of Article 2a of the Constitution do hereby prohibit the holding at any time on Tuesday, the 10th day of November, 1931, or on any other day within three days thereafter, at any place in the City of Dublin, of the public meeting proposed to be held in College Green by the Anti-Imperialist League at or about 8 o'clock in the evening on Tuesday, the 10th day of November, 1931.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS,
DUBLIN.
9th November, 1931.

JAMES FITZGERALD KENNEY.

Fig. 26.

PROCLAMATION

I, JAMES FITZGERALD-KENNEY, Minister for Justice in exercise of the powers conferred on me by sub-section 2 section 98 of Article 2a of the Constitution (Amendment No. 17) Act do hereby order all loyal citizens of the Irish Free State to take active part in the Procession and Commemoration organised by by the British Legion, on Wednesday, he 11th day of November, 1931, in thanksgiving for the favours received by our country from England all through the centuries and particularly for the blessings of peace and prosperity at present enjoyed by this faithful Dominion of the great British Empire.

All loyal citizens w ll rally to the call of the Empire which is being severely threatened by foreign and domestic foes.

JAMES FITZ-GERALD KENNEY.

Government Buildings, Dublin,
10th November, 1931.

GOD SAVE THE KING!

Fig. 27.

42

CHAPTER 4

LETTERPRESS BROADSHEETS

INTRODUCTION

Countless books have been published about posters
which used illustration, but the history of purely typo-
graphic posters, in particular that of the letterpress
broadsheet, has been largely ignored by historians of art
and design. The letterpress broadsheets evolved from the
early proclamations and are unquestionably part of the same
tradition. This chapter deals with the influences that
brought about changes of format from the proclamation style
and within the broadsheet style, and also examines the
technological and design background of the letterpress
process.

LENGTHY TEXT FORMATS DIMINISH AS SLOGANS PROLIFERATE

During the evolutionary period when printing was
still getting into its stride, the tendency was to impress
the rank and file with wordiness, but as the traditional
proclamation branched into numerous styles to suit the needs
of the ever growing variety of interest groups, there was
a compromise between wordiness and impact which resulted
in brevity. Adherence to the old conventions of format
became less and less rigid and as the use of the word
"proclamation" became the exception rather than the rule,
the term "broadsheet" was applied to most printed posters.

In the broadsheet the emphasis moved away from text
more and more as the slogan increased in importance. Modern
political slogans such as the common "VOTE FOR" are the
ancesters of the original "God Save the King/Queen". In
competitive situations such as elections, the brevity
afforded by the use of slogans has the advantage of getting

the message across quickly without risking the loss of the
readers attention. In Irish political posters the move
towards the short slogan was apparent in the nineteenth
century and was well established in Britain and the United
States by the turn of the century. Figures 28 and 29 from
1917 and 1922 respectively, proclaim their message without
the use of either paragraph or section. The format of Fig.30
which begins with the name of the party and constituency,
follows with the slogan and then lists the numerous
candidates, is typical of election posters of the larger
political parties since the foundation of the State. However,
with so many candidates mentioned the emphasis is on the
size and strength of the party in the particular constituency,
and as a result the impact of the slogan is weakened.
Slogans in election posters which seek support for just
one candidate benefit greatly from the visual simplicity
of so few words as can be plainly seen in Figures 31, 32,
33 and 34. Where an election poster seeks general support
for a political party as opposed to any particular candidate,
the slogan can become the main feature, as in Figures 35,
36, and 37, which look visually very far removed from the
tradition of the old proclamations.

      Some slogans, because of their proliferation on
printed propaganda, became popular catchphrases. The more
abbreviated the message in the slogan, the greater its chance
of becoming a kind of political 'battle-cry' and a part
of the living folklore.* By the late 1920's in Ireland,
"God save the King" was on some posters replaced by the
five characters of "Up Dev". (Modern slogans like "Brits
Out" and "Up the I.R.A" are proof of the continued popularity
of this device – albeit more common as grafitti than as
posters). Short slogans encapsulate the maximum of meaning
into the minimum of words and have the advantage of fast

* Perhaps the most famous example of this in the English
  speaking world is the word "Boycott" used as a slogan on
  Irish posters in the nineteenth century.

and cheap execution for the printer. The impact of short
slogans is always more emotional than intellectual, and
in complete contrast to the traditional proclamation, are
usually in ordinary forms of familiar speech. Nevertheless
the vast majority of political slogans did not enjoy lasting
popularity and when viewed out of context with the passing
of time they often become vague as in Figure 28 and 29,
and sometimes even completely meaningless.

Despite the development of the slogan, many of those
who sought election continued to combine the use of slogans
with quite lengthy text, as in Figures 38 and 39. The
purpose of such lengthy text was the same as in the early
proclamations, to establish status and justification for
the issuer. Sometimes this was carried to ridiculous extremes
as in th 1932 Cumann na nGaedheal poster (Figure 40) which
is so cluttered that it is doubtful if anyone would have
the patience or inclination to read it all.

Finally one other format which was used both by Cumann
na nGaedheal and Fianna Fail demonstrates that both parties
considered the broadsheet to be an important progaganda
device. Figure 41 is an example of this format which is
a form of counter-proclamation. Within a broadsheet, another,
from the opposition party, is reproduced in order to discredit
it with counter accusations.

PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY OF THE LETTERPRESS BROADSHEET

The fundamental technological principles of the
"letterpress" printing process were established by Guttenberg
in the fifteenth century. That process had changed little
until the nineteenth century when many improvements were
made, both in the manufacture and design of types and
printing presses.

Until the invention of the punchcutting-machine by
the American Linn Boyd Benton in 1884, all types were cast
by hand, letter by letter, in hand held moulds. The shape
of the letter was obtained by cutting its shape, in relief
(and in reverse) on the end of a bar of steel, called a
punch, which was then struck into a soft bar of copper,
thus creating the matrix into which the molten type metal
would be poured. In 1886 the first mechanical process for
the casting and composition of type was invented.* However
this process only accounts for some of the very small type
on posters and handbills, such as long paragraphs of type
and printers' imprints, because it was a system chiefly
designed for the production of books, magazines, and news-
papers.

As most of the type used on posters was larger than
ordinary book types, it continued to be manufactured by
hand until the introduction of film-setting in the 1960's.
Most metal type used in Ireland was imported from a variety
of English manufacturers, and the main suppliers in Ireland
were Miller Printing Suppliers Ltd, and Walter Nash & Co.
both of Dublin and still operating today.

With rare exception all type over an inch in body
height, and many a lot smaller, were made of wood, not metal.
(Wooden type is discussed in detail in the next section
of this chapter). Figure 42 shows a selection of mainly
wood types of various faces and sizes, (with some metal
type to be seen in the bottom right hand corner). Each
face and size of type was stored in a separate case in the
"composing room" of the print workshop. The "compositor"
(who "composed" or designed the layout of the type), knowing
the limitations of the available stock, chose the typefaces
that he knew to be available in sufficient quantities to

* The "Linotype" system on which the "copy" (or text) was
  typed on a keyboard and cast mechanically by the machine
  was invented by Ottmar Mergenthaler who was an American.

fit the text, and would also be appropriate for the
particular headings and text. He took each letter of every
word from the different cases of type and arranged them
line by line on a metal tray until the text was complete,
(as in Figure 43). The finished composition was then lifted
carefully by hand from the tray into the "bed" of the
printing press, (as in Figure 44) and "locked" into place
with pieces of metal known as "furniture" and "keys". Ink
is then spread across the rollers with a spatula and applied
t o the surface of the type as the rollers pass over. Behind
the rollers is a "cylinder" (Figure 45) onto which the paper
ios fed by hand one sheet at a time, and held in place by
"grippers". The cylinder moves over the type after the
rollers have inked the type and thus an impression is made
jon the paper. To apply another colour to the design the
rollers have to be wiped clean with methylated spirits
(because the inks are oil based), and because this is quite
a lot of work most posters were simply printed in black.
If thre was a likelihood that more copies of a particular
poster would be required at some later date, especially
if it was very wordy, the type would have been locked into
an iron frame called a "chase" and stored. When the printer
had finished printing, it was the compositor's responsibility
to return each letter of type to its proper case.

White newsprint paper was usually used for printing
broadsheets, though coloured paper, especially blue, green,
yellow and purple, were quite commonly used. Smaller posters
were often pasted onto card and tied to telegraph poles
and railings. Large posters were pasted onto prescribed
bill board sites, but these were commercially operated and
were seldom used for the posting of political progaganda
posters. In Ireland political posters have been pasted
to almost every imaginable surface; walls, windows, horse-
drawn carts, cars, road signs, bridges, dust bins, trees,
etc. As newsprint was the most common paper used it dictated
the sizes of paper on which broadsheets were printed. The
largest size was twice the standard newspaper sheet size.
It is naturally on this size that the largest types were

used. By far the most common size is half the standard
newsprint sheet size.

Other sizes were dictated by format. In 1943 and
1948 general elections, and in the presidential election
of 1945 the brochure format was widely used (Fig. 47).
The most common proportions for this was one quarter of
the regular newsprint sheet size, (which was then folded
in half). This format was a hybrid between the tradition
of the proclamation and the magazine format. Small handbills
came in a wide varity of dimensions. They were often printed
on irregular sizes, known in th trade as "bastard" sizes,
which were usually the surplus of other irregular size jobs
when trimmed. Other handbills were printed on stationery
sizes which were part of the "Imperial" system of measurement.
Figure 47 shows a handbills which is one third of the Imperial
"Foolscap" size. This handbill is of interest also as it
was one of many issued by the "Dublin Typographical Provident
Society" (the predecessor of the modern Irish Print Union)
during the lock out of workers by employers in 1913. (The
origins of this society predates the Emmet rebellion, when
iot served as a cover up organisation for Emmet's army,
the "United Irishmen". The notable involvement of Irish
printers in political activities is one of the ironies of
this study, though when one considers the amount of political
material which they produced, it is perhaps not so surprising
at all).

Finally, apart from the typographical technology
of the letterpress process, it should be noted that it was
also used to print black and white line illustrations, and
photographs. Line illustrations were simply etched onto
metal to give a relief surface from which an impression
could be made. To print photographs the image had firstly
to be "screened" (ie: photographically broken into a mass
of tiny dots) and then etched into metal from which it too
could be printed. Printers did not carry out the etching
process themselves, but had the metal relief plates made

by specialists. In Dublin the main firm which offered this service to printers during the period covered here, called Irish Photo Ltd, still serves the print industry today.

WOODEN TYPES

It is clear from illustrations already shown in this study that the political poster in Ireland evolved from lengthy texts set in small types to the proliferation of short slogans set in large types. The first large types started out as initials and later were used for headings and only became popular as poster types in the nineteenth century. It was in advertisements that large types first appeared for use in the main body of text. This happened in 1803 when an English typefounder, Robert Thorne designed his "Fat Face" type especially for the broadsheet. The types designed by Thorne and his successor William Thorowgood had a remarkable and immediate impact. Their designs were not just elegant and full of character, but most importantly these types were designed to be seen from a distance and were far more legible than any types which preceded them. Virtually all types being designed up until then had been intended for use in books. Of the many poster types that were inspired by Thorne's designs the slab faces known as "Egyptians" became particularly popular (as in "WHY YOU SHOULD..." Figure 38). Finally, in 1816 another Englishman, William Caslon, introduced the first sans-serif face which he called "Gothic", thus not only furthered legibility of poster types but also revolution- ised all areas of typographic design.

At first the large poster types were made of lead which was awkwardly heavy and rather expensive. In 1827 Darius Wells, an American, developed an engraving machine which made it financially viable to manufacture wooden poster types on an industrial basis. The process was further improved by a pantograph (an instrument for the mechanical copying of designs), designed by George Lavenworth in England in

49

1934. Using the pantograph, semi-skilled workers could cut
faces from 3-line pica (12 mm) to 25 inch capitals (60 mm).
Usually the wood used was maple from Canada or French hornbeam.
Occasionally sycamore, boxwood and lignum were also used.
When the timber was cut into boards it was planed to the
desired height of the type, then polished with polyurethane
polish and cut into strips the width of the individual type
letters. Individual letters are then cut one by one on the
engraving machine. Patterns for the cutting of different
sizes of type are called "templates" and are made from plywood
or metal. As the milling heads of the engraving machine
can only cut round corners, the counters have to be recut,
(eg. the five inside corners of a capital "A" or the acute
angle of a "V"). Thus the price of a typeface not only
depends on its size but also on its shape. The main suppliers
of poster types used in Ireland were Robert De Little of
York and Stephenson Blake & Co. of Sheffield. De Little's,
who still manufacture wooden types, have five price castegories
based on the shape of typeface available in a wide range
of sizes, as well as rules, borders, brackets, stars, arrows
and other ornamentation.

        The convenience and simplicity of wooden types made
the job of printing large headings both cheap and fast.
With the increased legibility and boldness of the new typefaces,
these innovations must have influenced the movement away
from the traditional proclamation format towards the rise
of the short slogan on political broadsheets.

THE COMPOSITOR AS EDITOR AND DESIGNER

        Compositors were often expected to act as editors
and it was common practice for customers to present themselves
at the printers workshop without the benefit of a prepared
text, verbally outlining the main points to be made and leaving
the rest to the compositor's discretion. Because of the
nature of political propaganda however, the copy for the

50

text or slogan was usually well thought out in advance, of
the visit to the workshop. Nevertheless, the technical
limitations of the printing press often forced the compositor
to edit the text to make it fit the shape of the paper or
to achieve a balanced visual effect. Occasionally the choice
of wording for any particular job had to accommodate shortages
of certain letters in the stock of typefaces. A line might
be set in a larger size than it merited, only because a
smaller size was not available, or to fill it out to the
full width of the poster. Such limitations which were part
and parcel of all small printshops, must often have dictated
not just the technical layout of the design, but to some
extent the emphasis and wording of the text.

     "Limited by the size of the chase - the metal frame
in which he sets his type, and the availability jof types
and sizes", writes Rickards, "the logical jobbing printer
became familiar with the range of effects he could produce
from a given stock of materials." These limitations resulted
in the mixing of various typefaces on the same poster,
occasionally even in the same word. Fourteen typefaces,
(all of different sizes used in both upper and lower case),
were used in Count Plunkett's election poster in 1915 (Fig.48).[*]
Despite the multiplicity of types the finished result has
an immediate recognizable order in its design. Irish printers
followed a few simple rules for composition of text. In
almost every letterpress broadsheet the composition was
centered. Although asymmetrical designs did not become
popular in Ireland until photo-mechanical printing presses
began to replace the letterpress printing process, a visual
asymmetry often accidentally occurred on centred broadsheet
designs because of the effect created by the mixing of type-
faces. Generally the text was clearly arranged into specific
sections of information such as what?, when? and where?,
in the case of public meeting announcements such as the Cumann

[*] Fleishmann shows that the 1915 Plunkett poster was printed
with the same type still used by Thomas Morahan of the Strokes-
town Democrat, up to his death in 1976 on a hand operated
Wharfedale Press.

na mBan poster of 1914/15, (Fig.49). Experienced compositors
did not usually plan out their design on paper before placing
the type in the chase, but rather relied on their own style
of composition which they had developed from the limitations
of their stock. Different printers tended to produce quite
different results while at the same time all printers followed
as a guideline the principles of centered composition.

     One fairly common device used by compositors was to
make first and last letters of titles and names bolder than
the other letters, thus endowing the word with greater visual
impact. As the large wooden typefaces have no small capitals*,
compositors used bolder letters of the same size as in the
"W" and "S" of "WORKS" in the 1931 Cuman na nGaedheal poster
in Figure 36.

     At first glance many typographic broadsheet posters
give the impression that the printer chose simply at random
the most convenient typefaces and sizes at hand, and hastily
filled up the poster. On closer examination it becomes
obvious that most are well structured designs determined
by the limited possibilities of the small stock of typefaces
in the average print shop, combined with the compositors
personal style. Far from being products of a design genre
of rigid rules the printed broadsheets despite their technical
limitations had a lot of scope for creativity. Though most
compositors saw the job as little more than working with
the type until they achieved something "that looked right",
many of these typographic posters show a great sensitivity
for balance, rhythm, and form, and in comparison to most
of their modern counterparts, they are most aesthetic objects.
Indeed, the ageing process itself often greatly enhances
the aesthetic qualities of the letterpress broadsheets.

     Because of the nature of the information it relayed
the letterpress political posters developed styles of format
that differed from posters printed for commercial purposes

* Most book typefaces have a second font of capitals of body
   height equal to that of the lower case letters.

such as for bands or carnivals, etc. This is especially
true of election posters which are virtually unmistakable,
but generally speaking the difference between political
and commercial broadsheets is immediately recognizable
because of differences in format. A notable exception
to this however was a 1932 Cumann na nGaedheal poster (Fig.50)
which as a parody on a contemporary circus poster is a fine
example of a typical commercial poster format, strikingly
different from that of political posters. The propaganda
tactic of this poster is linked to the tradition of the
counter proclamation.

In many of the illustrations of this chapter there
are examples of ornamentation in the form of decorative
rules and borders these like the large type, were printed
from engraved pieces of wood. Some compositors obviously
preferred not to bother with unnecessary trimmings and only
used rules as a means of separating text, but many posters
had some degree of ornamentation. Figure 51 which was
printed in Ennis, Co. Clare, in 1927 is unusual in its extent
of decoration, yet its design structure remains very simple
and the overall result is full of character. It is likely
that compositors were reluctant to use much ornamentation
simply because it was too much work. Another plausible
reason is that ornamentation tends to look a little fussy,
and in many ways the directness of a purely typographic
solution is more appropriate for political posters.

Although many political posters in this period were
a combination of typography with illustration or photography,
the vast majority were typographic solutions, printed by
the letterpress technique. No single reason can account
for this, but of the many factors involved, tradition must
have had the overriding influence. Since printing was
introduced to Ireland, both design and production methods
have by and large followed pace with the British tradition.

Until recently British political parties declined to establish any sort of visual corporate identity for publicity purposes, likewise political parties in Ireland have demonstrated similar reserve. The continuing association of political symbolism with fascism has prolonged that traditional reserve. It is extremely rare for election candidates to use any form of illustration other than photography, and even photography, with few exceptions, was reserved as the special privilege of the party leader. Candidates presumably feel safer with purely typographic campaign posters because they are less likely to be accused of extravagance or vanity. An illustrated poster might also run the risk of attracting counter productive graffiti or other defacement.

Ever since newspapers became popular the majority of posters printed for political propaganda in Ireland have been election posters, and the responsibility for designing them usually fell on compositors who had little reason or incentive, or indeed opportunity to change their production methods or to improve their design skills. Thus it is no wonder that the letterpress poster survived so long in Ireland.

THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS
HAVE DEMANDED
AND
HAVE SECURED
INDEPENDENCE

CANNOT YOU BE AS TRUE TO IRELAND
AS THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS ARE
TO CZECHO-SLOVAKIA?

YOU CAN ASK FOR INDEPENDENCE BY
VOTING FOR SINN FEIN

Fig. 28.

IRELAND FREE

Prove it by VOTING for an

No Partition,
no Flogging, no Jobbery,
no Executions.

Fig. 29.

CUMANN na nGAEDHEAL
DUBLIN CITY, NORTH

WORKERS!
GET RID OF THE UNCERTAINTY
BY MAKING COSGRAVE A CERTAINT

Vote in the order of your choice 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for

BELTON, PATRICK, T.C.
BYRNE, JOHN JOSEPH
COLLINS O'DRISCOLL, M
MULCAHY, RICHARD
RICE, VINCENT, K.C.

THE CUMANN NA nGAEDHEAL CANDIDATES

Fig. 30.

DUBLIN SOUTH CITY DIVISION
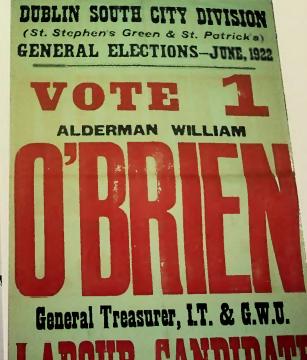(St. Stephen's Green & St. Patrick's)
GENERAL ELECTIONS—JUNE, 1922

VOTE 1
ALDERMAN WILLIAM
O'BRIEN

General Treasurer, I.T. & G.W.U.

LABOUR CANDIDATE

Printed by DOLLARD, Printinghouse Dublin, Ltd., and Published by the Candidate

Fig. 31

HARBOUR DIVISION.

VOTE FOR PHILIP SHANAHAN

[SINN FEIN CANDIDATE]

AND STRIKE A BLOW FOR

COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE

Fig. 32.

VOTE FOR McGUINNESS THE MAN IN JAIL FOR IRELAND!

Fig. 33.

VOTE FOR COSGRAVE

PEACE AND PLENTY

Fig. 34.

Fig. 35.

Fig. 36.

Fig. 37.

Fig. 38.

Fig. 39

Fig. 40.

58.

Fig. 41.

Fig. 42.

59

Fig. 43.

Fig. 44.

Fig. 45.

Fig. 46.

Dublin Typographical
Provident Society
(A LITTLE BIT OF IRELAND)

From June 7th we worked for

70/-

Now the D.M.P.A. want to
compel us to work for

60/-!

SILVER BULLETS:

30/-

LOCK-OUT BENEFIT.

Will YOU help us to WIN?

Trade Union labour | |Irish Materials.

Fig. 47.

Fig. 48.

CUMANN NA mBAN
IRISHWOMEN'S COUNCIL

A PUBLIC MEETING

TOWN HALL ATHENRY

Thursday Aug. 26

For the purpose of establishing a Branch of above

The Meeting will be addressed by

MISS E. BLOXHAM
Organiser DUBLIN

Women of Athenry come and join the
Irishwomen's Council
And take your place in the fight for Ireland's Liberty

Chair will be taken at EIGHT o'clock, sharp

A Dhia Saor Eire

Fig. 49.

DEVVY'S CIRCUS
ABSOLUTELY THE GREATEST ROAD SHOW IN IRELAND TO-DAY!
57—Star Performers—57
Will Visit this Town any time between now and the GENERAL ELECTION!

SENOR

DE VALERA

GEOGHEGAN | F. AIKEN

JOHNNY MAGINTEE

HUGO | O'KELLY

STUPENDOUS ATTRACTION!

LEMASS

PERFORMING FROGS
CHAMPION CROAKERS!
MARVELLOUS TRAINED SHEEP!

LUCKY DIP

Fig. 50.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT
FROM THE
NATIONAL LEAGUE

Ennis,
September 7th. 1927.

We, the members of the National
League Committee, who voted for
the National League Candidate three
months ago, are now supporting the
Government Candidates in the present
campaign, because we believe we
could not offer a better service to our
Country.

(SIGNED).
THOMAS SHERIDAN.
MARTIN LYNCH.
THOMAS MALONE.
ALF. GUY.
MARTIN HEHIR.
J. F. McHUGH.
JOHN MORONEY.
GEORGE O'BRIEN.

Fig. 51.

CHAPTER 5

THE EMERGENCE OF PICTORIAL POLITICAL POSTERS IN IRELAND

Although various techniques for the printing of
Illustrations and photography had been developed prior to
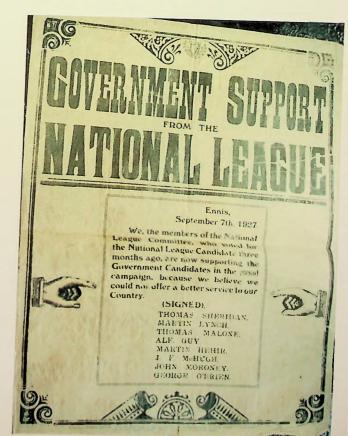the twentieth century their appearance in Irish political
posters was extremely rare. Even in British and American
political posters, it was still very much the exception
rather than the rule to use anything other than the purely
typographic solutions. Illustrations were first used in
large numbers on political poster propaganda during the
World War I recruitment drive in Britain, France, America
and Germany, where the pictorial poster had superseded the
newspaper and the broadsheet as a medium of commercial
advertising. The most dynamic use of illustration and colour
in political posters was in Societ Russia from 1917 onwards
and in Cuba during the 1950's and '60's, when both these
campaigns were aimed at spreading propaganda to largely
illiterate populations. Religious orders of the Irish
Catholic Church had eradicated the problem of illiteracy
in Ireland by the late nineteenth century, and influences
on Irish vidual communication design came almost exclusively
from Britain and the United States. Thus the Irish political
posters which used illustration, photography and colour
are of more interest in how they reflect the politics of
the time than in terms of the development of a uniquely
Irish design genre.

Of the few pictorial posters with political content
which were printed in Ireland prior to 1914, most seem to
have been produced commercially for sale as souvenirs,
(eg. the 1898 Emmet Centenary poster, Figure 8). One of
the rare exceptions to this is the delightful depiction
of a stalwart unionist schoolboy defending Belfast from
Home Rule in 1912. (Fig. 52). The little boy stands boldy,
feet apart, fists clenched, ready for a fight. The slogan
reads "WHO SAID WE'LL HAVE HOME RULE? COME TO BELFAST AND
WE'LL SHEW 'EM". Visually this poster is remarkably

different from any of the proclamations or broadsheets which
were the norm at the time. Both the style of design and
the process by which it was printed were in the tradition
of contemporary commercial advertising. It was produced
by chromo-lithography, a process that had been invented
in 1827 and involved drawing or engraving on stone slabs
or metal plates. This process had been quite primitive
until the 1890's when technical advances and improved inks
helped designers achieve a greater range of tonal qualities.
The unionist poster of the schoolboy is almost certainly
the first full colour pictorial poster issued by any political
interest group in Ireland. Its charm and appeal masks a
sinister propaganda aimed not solely at adults but also
at the very young. It marks not only a new era of political
poster designs in Ireland, but also the beginning of the
chain of political events that led to the 1916 rising in
Dublin. It was published simultaneously with the Ulster
Covenant (Fig. 4, Chapter 2), arguably the best planned
combined use of the medium for political propaganda in
Ireland.

As unionist propaganda was centered on the British
mainland after the posting of the 1914 Home Rule bill, its
only significant influence on nationalist and republican
poster propaganda after that was in the "Anti-Conscription
Pledge" (Fig. 6, Chapter 2) which in 1918 was issued in
a form modelled on the "Ulster Covenant". The main influence
on nationalists and republicans to produce pictorial prop-
aganda posters was to come from the British Army recruiting
posters from 1914 onwards.

The famous World War One recruiting poster which
depicts the British Army's recruiting-general, Lord Kitchener,
(pointing at the viewer) accompanied by the slogan "Your
Country Needs You" was so successful in Britain that it
was compiled with "Uncle Sam Needs You" in the U.S.A.
Impressed with the effectiveness of these illustrated posters
the recruiting agencies of many countries became the first
patrons of pictorial poster design for political purposes.
In Ireland, British opposition to Sinn Fein's "Anti-Conscrip-
tion Pledge" resulted in a series of full colour lithographic
posters specially designed to make Irishmen feel guilty

and cowardly for refusing to defend the Empire. The design
and production of these posters was of exceptional sophis-
tication for that period, matching the best of commercial
advertising standards. As few Irish people would have seen
anything quite like them before, their visual appeal must
have been considerable. Because of the seriousness of war,
the lightweight element associated with household grocery
posters was felt to be out of place. As an alternative,
the designers (who were most likely English, though no
artist's signature or printer's imprint were printed on
these posters) chose styles of narrative painting associated
with fine art, hence this poster. Genre is generally known
as the "art-poster". One of these posters used by the British
in Ireland in 1915 depicts an Irishwoman with a rifle in
one hand and with her other hand pointing over the sea towards
Belgium which can be seen buring in the distance. She
reproaches an Irishman (whose Irishness is symbolized by
a shillelagh under his arm) with the slogan "Will you go
or must I?"   Above the illustration is the heading "FOR
THE GLORY OF IRELAND", (Fig. 53). This kind of propaganda
is highly provocative. Apart from iots primary function
as a recruitment poster it served also to widen the gap
between nationalists and republicans by implying that the
opposition to conscription was mere cowardice, and so
diminish the credibility of Sinn Fein, the organisation
under which both traditions had begun to unite. As a colonial
power the British had become skilled exponents of this
propaganda tactic based on the old maxim "divide and conquer".
The strong insult to Irish people inherent in the "Will
you go or must I go?" poster, would have caused some to
make amends for Sinn Fein's implied cowardice, and others
to renounce Sinn Fein's passivist approach towards
independence and to retaliate against the insulting propa-
ganda through armed rebellion. Ironically such posters
may have helped to recruit people into the Irish Republican
Brotherhood as well as the British Army. Another remarkable
poster of the same vein, also issued in 1915, was more subtle

in approach but the illustration was strikingly dramatic, (Fig.55). Under the slogan "IRISHMEN, AVENGE THE LUSITANIA", is an image of the great passenger ship sunk by a German U-boat off the coast of Co. Cork in that year. At first glance the viewer is struck by th dramatic vision of the flames and smoke billowing from the tilting ship, but then the eyes are drawn downwards towards the lifeboats in the water and towards men, women and children clinging to floating wreckage. In the foreground is a man trying to stay afloat while holding a baby girl to his back. this poster does not overtly accuse Irishmen of cowardice but in the light of the "Anti-Conscription Pledge" the accusation is nonethe- less implicit. This poster was designed to elicit feelings of guilt from the viewer, to make him feel that he is committing a dishonour to the victims on the Lusitania if he does not "join an Irish regiment today".

The typography of the chromo-lithographic posters is also notably different from that of the letterpress broad- sheets. These letters were drawn by hand from stencils jonto the stone. Only a very limited number of typefaces were used, usually they were elongated and condensed in form. Interestingly no serif faces ever appeared on these posters, a feature which in 1915 would have been very visually striking in comparison to the common broadsheets, and which adds greatly to the sophistication of the full colour image.

Political interest groups within the nationalist and republican traditions did not have the financial resources for large full colour poster campaigns for many years after the recruitment drive launched by the British Army in Ireland from 1914 to 1918.* Even the recruitment poster that depicts John Redmond (Fig. 5, Chapter 2) was issued as part of the Army's recruitment campaign, (not by the Home Rule Party).

---

* Some two and three colour litographic posters were printed in America to raise funds for the Republican cause after the 1916 rising. These are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Good conditions for the printing of illustrated posters
did not exist during the turmoil of the Anglo-Irish war
and the civil war, though in 1922 a simple but visually
effective poster design was used for various pro-Treaty
candidates still in British jails for their part in the
Anglo-Irish war. An illustration of a man in prison uniform
and the slogan "PUT IN IN TO GET HIM OUT" (Fig. 55)
accompanied the usual "VOTE FOR" and the candidate's name.
This design is one of the boldest combinations of illust-
ration and typography to be found on political posters in
Ireland despite the almost primitive simplicity of the
illustration. (During the Paris rising in May 1968, students
produced hundreds of very effective posters by deliberately
producing primitive illustrations, which were effective
because of their boldness and contrast to commercial
advertising design, and the same principle though to a lesser
degree accounts for the visual strength of this poster).
It achieves a direct impact of word and image, a fundamental
principle of good poster design.

The first pictorial poster campaign launched by the
anti-treaty republican faction was during the 1927 election.
Figure 56 is one of a series of at least four illustrated
posters depicting the Free State Government as an instrument
of oppression. All four images are particularly gorey scenes
of the horrors of the civil war. The tyupography and the
illustrative drawing style are of no great merit and if
anything only serve to lessen the credibility of the intended
propaganda, which, as in the Lusitania poster, is intended
to elicit guilt from the viewer. These posters are however,
most significant to our visual heritage as visual traces
of the bitterness that resulted from the civil war.

The formation of Fianna Fail in 1926 represented
the first major parliamentary challenge to the Cumann na
nGaedheal Free State government. De Valera, the leader

of Fianna Fail had since his presidency of the 1919 Sinn
Fein Dail established himself as the effective leader of
Irish Republicanism. With the defeat of the republican
faction in the civil war many people believed that De Valera
and Fianna Fail offered the most promising route towards
a thirty-two county republic. Amongst republicans De Valera
was affectionately referred to as "the uncrowned King of
Ireland". Thus most of the propaganda put out by Cumann
na nGaedheal to this challenge was aimed more at discrediting
De Valera than Fianna Fail. One of the earliest posters
of this kind was designed especially to reidicule the notion
of De Valer as King of Ireland. Issued in 1930 it caricatures
his head (on which is placed a laurel wreath) on a gold
sovereign and asks if it is "worth its face value?". The
caricature is quite well drawn and is obviously the work
of a trained commercial artist. (Fig. 54).

Fianna Fail provided a lively opposition, and Cumann
na nGaedheal knew that they would need a strong propaganda
campaign if they were to win the 1932 general election.
They produced a series of many cartoon illustrated posters
the main theme being De Valera's links with the I.R.A. and
his responsibility for the civil war. Most of the posters
in this series, were rather stylistic line drawings, such
as in Figure 58, which depicts an I.R.A. man holding a gun
to De Valera's back, and others (not shown) which amongst
other things depicted him as a crooked card player cheating
the honest citizens of the Free State by slipping an I.R.A.
man cards under the table, and also as a supplier of arms
to the I.R.A. These were printed by the Temple Press, who
would have commissioned the commercial artist to dod the
drawings, (they are not signed). The posters which
concentrated on portraying De Valera as the real cause of
the civil war were of exactly the same format, ie: simple
line illustrations with slogans printed in the large wood
type, (Fig. 59). Though these drawings are not so stylistic
and are in fact the work of another illustrator, they are

very much the same kind of illustration, using the same illustrative devices most notably the use of labels to identify the characters and message portrayed. This device is still quite common in modern political cartoons and is a means of adding to the speed of comprehension of the illustration, but often, as in the case of the 1932 election posters, it betrays a lack of imagination and inventiveness. It is also significant that the posters linking De Valera to the civil war were printed by McConnell's Advertising Service. Still operating today, McConnells is one of the longest established advertising agencies in Ireland. Fianna Fail also used professional design consultants to organise their poster campaign in the 1932 election. They chose the Fodhla Printing Co. which had a distinguished record as a publisher of books in Gaelic, however, the poster designs they produced were in exactly the same view as the Cumann na nGaedheal caricature posters. Only one illustrator was commissioned by Fodhla and he signs himself "Feargananim" ("Man-without-a-name") which appropriately echoes the almost childish simplicity of his illustrative style, (Fig.. 60). However the tone of the propaganda message of the Fianna Fail posters was markedly different. Theydo not refer to the civil war in any direct manner, but rather concentrate on the common perception of Cumann na nGaedheal as being too submissive to Britain, and perhaps more importantly they offer a better future, which is essentially what every electorate wants. The Fianna Fail posters promised to improve the national standard of living and to create a more equal society. After the "Wall Street Crash" in 1929 thse issues were more important to many people than the rights and wrongs of the civil war, and the view that Cumann na nGaedheal was controlled by a wealthy elite was widely accepted. Cumann na nGaedheal's reaction to this was to accuse Fianna Fail of adopting socialist principles to mislead the poor and to win the support of people who would normally vote for the Labour Party. In so doing Cumann na nGaedheal hoped to win the support of the Catholic hierarchy, most of whom would make no distinction between socialism and communism, associating all leftish politics with godlessness and sinfulness.

One of their posters began with the slogan "WE WANT NO
REDS HERE!" (Fig. 61). This poster and "THE SHADOW OF
A GUNMAN" poster (Fig. 11, Chapter 2) are also of interest
as the first colour lithographic political posters issued
in Ireland since the British Army World War One recruitment
posters. They were printed in Dublin by Hely's Limited
who have since closed down. They are the first full colour
posters designed by professional designers (as opposed
to printers or compositors) to have been issued by a political
interest group within the Free State parliamentary system.
In comparison to the British Army recruitment posters they
are not quite so elaborate in either design or production,
but because of their boldness and greater refinement of
the most important visual elements they are slightly more
effective at relaying the message while nonetheless are
equally attractive visually.

The desire for new styles of political posters is
also evident in another unusual Cumann na nGaedheal poster
of the 1932 election. Entitled "A HOT RECORD" (Fig. 62),
it has many of the hallmarks of commercial advertising
design of the period. The style of rendering, the use
of arrows, and the typography of the words "songs for the.."
is in stark contrast to the looseness of the cartoon
illustrations. The boldness of the illustration itself
is quite effective and unusual for black and white letter-
press posters but there is too much text to make it an
effective election poster because the simpler solutions
competing with it communicate to the viewer in a faster
way.

After the 1932 election the use of illustration on
Irish political posters declined almost completely and
from then on pictorial posters generally had photographic
images. Photographs had been widely printed in books by
the letterpress method towards the end of the nineteenth

century, but only became common in newspapers in the early twentieth century when certain papers specialised in conveying news through the new medium. One such paper called the "Daily Sketch", was printed in London and was popular throughout the British Isles. It was common practice for most newspapers to issue front pages as posters for display outside points of sale. Figure 63, is a Daily Sketch front page display poster showing the Viceroy's state departure from Dublin in 1915. Historically this is of interest as it visually reflects the substantial public support for an Irish connection with Britain before 1916. These kind of posters would have encouraged the use of photography in political posters issued by the political interest groups in Ireland. The 1927 election seems to have been the first in which candidates had their photographs on their election posters. The first party to use the device was the Labour Party whose candidates Morrissey and O'Brien* issued a joint poster which had photographic portraits of them framed in oval shapes (Fig. 64) - previously the traditional way of framing miniature portrait paintings. The device which had been popular in the U.S.A. many years previously, caught on fast in Ireland and in the 1932 election the leaders of all the political parties contesting seats in the Dail used portrait photographs on their campaign posters, (eg. Fig. 7, Chapter 2). This still remains the only form of pictorial imagery that individual candidates have used on their posters at election times and even this had tended to be the almost exclusive privilege of party leaders up to the 1970's. Photographic images on political posters in Ireland always appear as regular shapes. The practice of printing cut-out shapes from photographs, or more complex photo-montage techniques, or of printing text over the photographic image area do not occur on Irish political posters during the period covered here, except in a rather

* Willie O'Brien was for some time the president of the Irish Trade Union Congress and was himself a collector of the printed ephemera of the Labour movement in Ireland.

timid way on the borchure format from time to time. This is mainly because they were produced by the letterpress method. To print text over a photographic image would have involved two print runs, and would only have been possible where the image had large areas of white. Generally speaking it was against the custom and practice of the letterpress method to print text on the image area of a photographic or illustration. The plates from which photographs were printed were set by the compositor with the rest of the type and the poster was produced in one printing. The design practices of letterpress compositors changed very little in Ireland during the period covered here. Likewise Irish printers were slow to change their production methods or to purchase more advanced machinery. While many advances had taken place in the United States and Europe with regard to design and production, Ireland was plagued with economic difficulties since the civil war, and under the De Valera regime had become culturally very insular. The influences of art movements such as Dada and De Stijl had revolutionised poster design in many European countries but hardly had any effect on Irish advertising design, and had none whatsoever on the design of political posters. Thus, the use of photography on posters continued to be very simplistic throughout the period covered here. Until an Irish television station was established in 1962 photographs were the most visually realistic way of communicating current events in Ireland. (The cinema occasionally offered news from abroad, but cinematic coverage of Irish current affairs was exception-ally rare. In 1948 Clann na Poblachta were the first Irish political praty to use the medium when they had a short promotional film made). Photographs in themselves were used in Ireland as symbols of modern progress when in other countries they had lost all novelty value. A Cumann na nGaedheal poster in 1931 used ten different photographs to show what a good job they had been doing in redressing

the economic ills that resulted from the violence of the early 1920's (Fig. 65). One photograph depicts "the finest road in the world - Carrigrohane, Co. Cork", and the others are boastful of social and economic improvement. The novelty value of so many photographs on one poster may have made this effective to the Irish people in 1931, (if it caused people to stop, look, and read it was an effective poster) but in design terms it is sadly unimaginative, and with the passing of time looks very dated.

The 1932 general election was arguably the most important in modern Irish history. It was certainly the most hard fought and bitter Irish election, with no party winning an absolute majority and Fianna Fail forming a government only with the support of the Labour Party who were swayed by Fianna Fail's attitude to social policy. The emotive nature of the 1932 election is well reflected by the posters which were a major element of the resultant propaganda battle. Exactly to what extent the posters played a part in deciding the final result is impossible to say because political science was as yet in its infancy and no studies or pre-election polls were made during the period. However, the scathing attack launched by Cumann na nGaedheal against De Valera in person (albeit through a mass of derogatory cartoon illustrations on posters), resulted in De Valera getting more publicity throughout the country than T.W. Cosgrave of Cumann na nGaedheal. Many nationalists saw Fianna Fail as a progressive parliamentary force and many republicans believed that De Valera was being unfairly victimised by Cumann na nGaedheal propaganda. The old maxim "no publicity is bad publicity" held true once again and during the following sixteen years of Fianna Fail government De Valera was held in higher esteem by republicans and nationalists alike, (and simultaneously with greater contempt by many Free State civil war veterans) than any Irish politician since Parnell.

Of all the political interest groups that issued
political posters in Ireland from 1898 to 1946, those issued
by the agencies of British rule, and later those of Cumann
na nGaedheal, were the most elaborate and sophisticated
in terms of design and production. Generally speaking
this is as true of the typographic letterpress proclamations
and broadsheets they issued, as it is of their pictorial
posters. The explanation for this is simply that both
these groups had good financial resources and could afford
to spend more than other interest groups on propaganda
campaigns. When De Valera came into power in 1932 he used
Radio Eireann, the Free State national radio service to
great effect as a propaganda device and consequently Fianna
Fail had no great need of elaborate poster campaigns by
the 1948 coalition. Following the disbandment of Cumann
na nGaedheal in 1933, the consequent formation of the Fine
Gael party does not seem to have resulted in any interesting
or innovative approaches to the use of posters as a propa-
ganda device. Neither the Fine Gael party nor the National
Library of Ireland have any Fine Gael posters up to 1948
in their possession, and no examples are to be found
reproduced in illustrated Irish history books. As collectors
of printed ephemera usually choose to preserve posters
with illustrations, or with interesting slogans, the lack
of Fine Gael posters in the archives would suggest that
what they did print were mainly typographic broadsheets
with unexceptional slogans.

It is obvious from the pictorial posters discussed
in this chapter, that while specific interest groups had
poster campaigns in which they issued a series of a
particular style, there is no evidence in any series that
any interest group evolved its own style of visual expression.
All the pictorial political posters have borrowed their
style of illustration (or use of photography) from previously
established styles in other media. It has been a common
feature of rebellions and revolutions in may countries

that new forms of popular visual expression emerge from
the posters issued by the rebels. It has happened in
countries as diverse as France, China, Cuba, Germany, and
Russia. However in all these cases the new styles of poster
design were based on a connection with an older traditional
folk art with which the people were able to identify.
These countries had strong traditions of visual art forms,
a necessary condition that was not prevalent in Ireland.
Ireland's poor tradition in the visual arts is partly due
to geographical isolation, but more the the deliberate
policy of eradicating the Gaelic culture by the British.
It is also a feature of revolutions that gave rise to new
poster styles that the political leaders encouraged the
arts. For example, in 925 Lenin said: "Art belongs to
the people. Its roots should penetrated deeply into the
very thick masses of the people. It should be comprehensive
to these masses and loved by them". Enthusiasm for the
visual arts amongst leading Irish politicians has amounted
to little more than lip service. Also the 1916 rising
and the Anglo-Irish war were far more politically motivated
than cultural. They do not represent a cultural revolution,
and consequently in terms of art and design there is little
that can be considered revolutionary in Irish pictorial
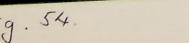political posters.

Fig. 53.

Fig. 52.

Fig. 54.

Fig. 55.

Fig. 56.

Fig. 57.

Fig. 58.

Fig. 59.

78

Fig. 60.

Fig. 61.

Fig. 62.

Fig. 63.

GENERAL ELECTION

JUNE, 1927.

- COUNTY TIPPERARY. -

VOTE FOR MORRISSEY and O'BRIEN

Labour Candidates

Fig. 64.

Ireland Remade

By President Cosgrave's Government
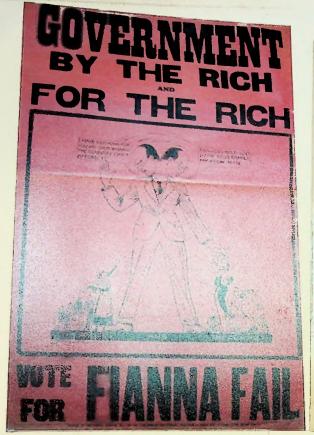
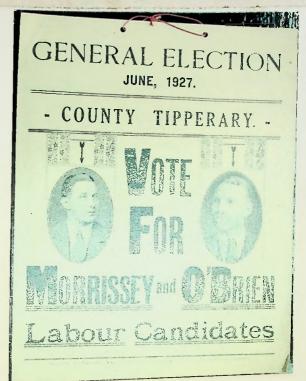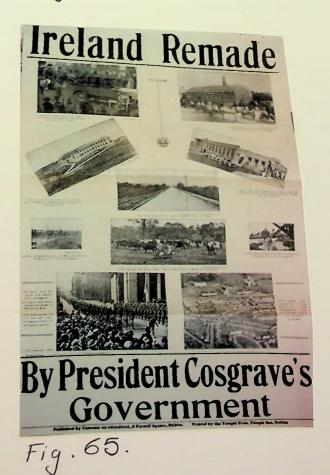Fig. 65.

CHAPTER 6

Symbolism in Political Proclamations and their derivitives in Ireland 1898 - 1948.

It has already been shown in Chapter Three that proclamations in themselves were symbols of the power of the interest-groups that issued them. It has also been shown that interest-groups often took great pains to establish their credentials, and that this was done not only through legalistic wording but also through symbols. A symbol as used in a political proclamation means any visual element that stands for, represents, or recalls something else, not by exact resemblance but by suggestion or association in thought, especially if it represents an abstract political philosophy.

In Ireland the first symbol to be used on a political proclamation was the English royal seal. Proclamations issued by native Irish political interest groups up to the last decades of the nineteenth centry usually had no symbolic elements because to most Irish people their gaelic culture had come to symbolise poverty. Thus occasionally some proclamations which advocated resistance to British rule in Ireland actually used the English royal seal to lent weight to it's authority, to make it look "official".

However in the early 1880's there began a strong revival of interest in Ireland's celtic past, and as earlier mentioned, this gave rise to many cultural organisations, which in turn produced visual imagery that often provided symbolism for nationalist and republican propaganda. The 1898's Emmet centenary poster (fig.8) has a great deal of the symbolism spawned by the celtic revival, i.e, shamrock, a round tower, an Irish wolfhound, pikes, a dolmen, and a celtic cross. Though these symbols are still used to represent things Irish they have been most estensively used for commercial ventures such as the promotion of tourism and Irish industry, they have been largely rejected by political parties. Even the harp, the official symbol of the Irish Government is very rarely found on political posters, (fig.51, chapter 4, is one such rare example). Though republicans and nationalists embraced the celtic revival with equal fervour it is clear from the posters they issued that they wanted any symbolism they used to reflect a new sense of national awareness more than simply a past heritage. The most common symbolic device used to link the modern political movements with the gaelic tradition was to write celtic ornamentation with photographic images. It was a very common format for "in memoriam" posters which were sold commercially as celebratory souvenirs of dead heros such as Sean MacDiarmada (fig.66), a signatory of the 1916 Easter week proclamation.

More than any other Irish interest-group, it has been the overtly militaristic republican faction that has developed the use of symbolism on political posters. Virtually all of this strain of symbolism stems from the 1798 and 1916 rebellions, and is more correctly representative of Irish repbulicanism than of Ireland as a whole. It's most elaborate manifestations on posters were not designed or produced in Ireland, but in the United States. Printed in New York in 1918 a poster entitled "WHO FEARS TO SPEAK OF EASTER WEEK" was one of many produced to raise funds for the republican cause, (fig.67). It has no text of the usual kind that proclaims, announces, orders or informs, but is entirely composed of symbols. A song sheet with the words of the unofficial national anthem "A Nation Once Again" is the center piece. The two Easter week proclamations issued by the Republicans are also displayed as prominent symbols of Ireland's right to self determination. Irish manhood is symbolised by some fifteen minuet photographic portraits of the leaders, and Irish womanhood is symbolised by a picture of Countess Markievicz in classical pose. The buildings in which the 1916 battles took place are also used symbolically, (the General Post Office and the Four Courts have in particular become symbols of Republicanism). There is also a large shamrock, the traditional symbol of Irish Christianity, and a man with a pike, a symbol of the 1798 rebellion. Visual elements in another American poster published during the Anglo-

Irish war, symbolised that war as simply as a struggle for liberty, and as can be seen from the smouldering ruins of a Church in the background, as a fight for Christianity, (fig.68).   In 1918 a Cumann na mBan poster encouraged the wearing of an "Easter Lily" to symbolise the desire for an independent Ireland, (fig.69). The most dramatic use of symbolism was undoubtedly the illustrated posters which often greatly exagerated or romanticized reality. The most outstanding example of this is a 1927 republican poster in which Ireland is symbolised as a young woman, and England is symbolised by a pair of bloody hands about to molest her, (fig.70). It also symbolises Irish history as a series of hanged men, an English firing squad, a graveyard and once again, a burning church (in the right bottom corner of illustration).*

Of the few symbols commonly used by Irish people to symbolise their nationality, the Irish flag is the most common. This too is originally a republican symbol, it's inspiration is closely linked to the French revolution. Many modern political posters simply use areas of green and orange, and this is common to parliamentary parties and militant factions alike. The I.R.A. have always used the Irish tri-colour to symbolise freedom, and the British "Union Jack" to symbolise oppression, as in a 1933 I.R.A. recruitment poster, (fig.71).

*Figure 6D is also of interest for it's production process. The red for the blood was coloured in by hand after printing. This practice was fairly common for short print runs.

The use of the gaelic lettering lettering in "Oglaigh na h-Eireann" in the 1933 I.R.A. recruitment poster is also symbolic in nature. Indeed the development of a specifically Irish typeface for use in print was the most scientific attempt of all to develop a symbol of modern Ireland that was essentially Irish. The first font of gaelic type was ironically commissioned by Queen Elizabeth in 1571, to publish a Protestant catechism, and was in no way intended to promote Irish culture. This provoked Irish Monks in exile in Belgium to make another Irish type, which greatly improved on the first design and became the accepted model for future designs. To counteract the publications coming from Catholic sources, the Church of England in 1680 commissioned a farther improved design, used for the printing of more Protestant catechisms. "The contest for the souls of the Irish people", writes E.W. Lynam, "has at least produced one result for which we may be entirely grateful". The reason for the subsequent decline of the gaelic type from the 1750's onwards is also ironic. When the Irish Catholic Church were legally permitted to print in Ireland, they began to use Roman type. By 1897 however the Gaelic League revived Irish literature so much that there were demands for new fonts of Irish type. A London firm, Messers Figgins, produced a type designed by a professor O'Brien, which became the standard Irish type since 1900. Messers Figgins, later called R.H. Stevens & Co., manufactured all the modern Irish book faces, but Lynam makes no mention of the large wood type that was used on many posters, including the 1933 I.R.A.

recruitment poster. The "Leinster Leader" of Naas used the same wood type on many of their posters, but unfortunately no longer possess any of their old letterpress stock. The manufacturer's name is almost always stamped on the side of the wood letters. However, one small piece of celtic wood type ornamentation from the National College of Art and Design's print workshop has the initials of the "Irish Print & Engraving Company" stamped on it. Once based in college Green, Dublin, that company no longer operates, but it may have manufactured gaelic type as well as ornamentation. But Owen Curren, Research Officer with the Irish Print Union says that as far as he has been able to assertain no wood type was ever manufactured in Ireland and that De Little's definately manufactured some gaelic wood type.

In 1913 the I.R.B.'s director of arms known as "The O'Rahilly" changed the design of the letters "R" and "s" in the traditional gaelic type, and made other slight reforms that greatly eased legibility. It was used in the Republican newspaper "An Cliadheamh Soluis" and manufactured by the "Lanston Monotype Co." in London. He also designed a gaelic display face, which would necessarily have been manufactured in wood, so it is possible that this too was manufactured in wood, so it is possible that this too was manufactured by the Lanston Monotype Co. The O'Rahilly was killed in the fighting during the 1916 insurrection, and his colleague Joseph Plunkett, one of the 1916 proclamation signatories, and also a designer of gaelic type, was later executed. By 1940 (at least) there was

a wide range of Irish type designs, as can be seen in a Connradh na Gaedhilge* poster from that year, (fig.72). However after a great deal of time and effort by Irish Governments to revive gaelic as the working language of the country, it was finally decided in the 1960's to discontinue the use of gaelic type in the hope that Irish people would find it easier to read gaelic in the Roman types and so take more interest in it. That policy had no noticeable effect other than the extinction of the gaelic type, which was the most sophisticated and genuinely Irish product of our visual communications heritage.

The agencies of British rule in Ireland have also made a contribution to the establishment of Irish symbolism. Apart from ensuring for posterity the survival of the gaelic letter forms by producing it's first type, it was also the British who first used the harp as a symbol of Ireland when they introduced it to Anglo Irish coinage in 1509. The First World War British Army recruitment posters in Ireland sometimes used Irish symbolism. One of these entitled "THE REAL IRISH SPIRIT" depicts a young Irish country gentleman in horseriding attire, telling his friend who is wearing a British Army uniform, "I'll go too". In the foreground is a cluster of shamrocks and in the background is a round tower and church, (fig.73).

*Connradh na Gaedhilge evolved from the Gaelic League and continues to promote the Irish language. It is also worth noting that typewriters with gaelic type were also manufactured.

The symbolism that has been used on political proclamations and their derivitives in Ireland has come from a variety of sources. Celtic ornamentation, wolfhounds, and dolmens are essentially symbols of Ireland's celtic and earlier heritage. The shamrock, round towers, churchs, celtic crosses and gaelit type are derived from early Irish Christianity. The harp as a symbol, was introduced by the British pikes, the tri-colour, the 1916 proclamation, the General Post Office, the Four Courts, the Easter Lily and the faces of the leaders of the 1916 rebellion, especially that of Pearse, are all derived from the Republican tradition. Ireland symbolised as a woman (usually wearing a tiara inscribed with the work Eire) was developed through the Anglo-Irish literacy revival.

Ironically the tradition of parliamentary nationalism can make no claim to have contributed anything to Irish national symbolism, except indirectly through it's occasional use of celtic ornamentation and other symbolism which it borrowed from celtic revivalism, and also from British sources. It can however be argued that his is much to the credit of the parliamentary tradition as it si philosophically difficult to justify the use of symbolism in propaganda aimed at achieving the acceptance of democratic principles amongst various interest groups. The reality of the stress and strain of life that occurs in any community with many interest gropus occurs in always highly romanticized and dangerously simplified when reduced to symbolism. Throughout history the emotive usages of symbolism in propaganda have resulted in extreme self-

rightousness and superiority complexes amongst political interest groups. Consequently symbolism posses a serious threat to democracy when used in propaganda towards political ends, especially by groups that espouse violence as a solution to political problems.

Nevertheless the use of symbols is the most basic and fundamental form of human communication upon which speech, literacy and numeracy are based. Every culture is constantly creating new symbols that typify aspects of it's form of civilization, without which it could have no cultural or national identity. Some symbols however are essentially artificial especially those which are the premeditated representation of an abstract idea. For example the Irish tricolour symbolises a national and political unity of Ireland's gaelic culture and Ulster Protestantism despite the fact that Ireland is only slightly gaelic and Ulster Protestants have no desire for such a unity. This kin of symbolism is morally suspect because through it ideas become so abstracted that they enter the realm of romantic fantasy while simultaneously they are presented as emperic reality.

The cautious use of symbolism in political posters issued by Irish parliamentary parties (with the exception of the propaganda that resulted from the Civil War during the maturing years of Dail Eireann), reflects the fundamental philosophical difficulty of the concept of a united Ireland; that is, to define who the Irish people are. There are so many interest-groups divided by class, culture, religion, and politics, that

the use of symbolism on political posters usually emphasises
these divisions. Political parties usually want at least to
appear to be open to all sectors of society. For political
parties intent on the promotion of democracy and political
unity on the island of Ireland the appropriate use of symbolism
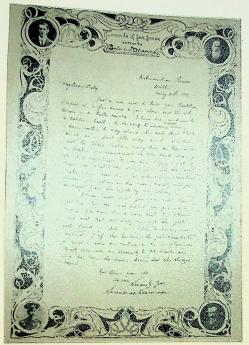is a permanent dilemma.

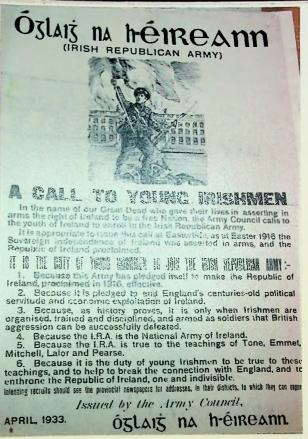Fig. 66.

Fig. 67.

Fig. 68.

Fig. 69.

91

Fig. 71

Fig. 70.

Fig. 72.

"I'll go too!"

THE REAL IRISH SPIRIT

Fig. 73.

CONCLUSIONS

Proclamations, and the broadsheets, handbills and pictorial posters that derived from them have been used in many ways and by many interest-groups in Ireland between 1898 and 1948. Amongst other things they have been used to establish authority, to promote law and order, to recruit soldiers, to oppose conscription , to publicise injustice, to raise funds, to call meetings, to threaten and to subdue, to insight violence and rebellion and to appeal for peace. The most politically significent use of a proclamation in Ireland was the declaration of a Republic by the leaders of the 1916 rebellion. By far the most common use has been to seek votes at election times. This must rank as the second most politically significent use because the choosing between interest groups (in itself a political act) involves almost the entire adult population and more than any other factor decides the political structure of the country.

The tactics employed for all the various uses of this medium, as mentioned in the introduction, are (i) self promotion (ii repudiation of opposition. Initially these tactics were practised through intimidating legalistic language, but this gave way to the use of emotive slogans and symbolism. This change took place in Ireland during the period covered in this study. At 1898 long texts predominated but judging from the collection in the National Library of Ireland (which is the largest of it's kind) it would seem that the use of the

proclamation format for political propaganda ceased sometime during the 1930's*. By the 1920's long texts were already less common than short slogans which to the present day are still the most popular format. Following the 1916 rising the use of symbolism flourished on political posters especially those of a republican nature. The caustic sarcasm and blatant irreverence displayed by republicans and nationalists towards one another during the decade following the civil war, gave rise to the most intense use of symbolism through illustrations ever seen in any period of Irish political posters. In comparison to the vague messages so prevailent in political posters of the 1980's, these seem quite incredible and can only be appreciated and understood in the context of the bitterness so prevailent in Ireland in the wake of the Civil War.

*Neither the Government Publications Office, the library in Dail Eireann, nor the Department of Communications, keep records of proclamations issued by the Government. They have no record of any form of proclamation issued to celebrate or announce the foundation of the Irish Republic in 1948. It is highly improbable that any was issued, not just because the practice of issuing proclamations seems to have ceased in the 1930's, but also because any such proclamation might have been viewed as a dishonour to the "original" foundation of a republic through the 1916 proclamation. The proclamation format is occasionally still found on public notices warning people against entering army rnages, or hunting in wild life sanctuaries, but most of these tend to have survived because they are in the form of enamel signs.

The 1932 election marks the peak of the illustrated political poster in Ireland. The 1937, '43 and '48 elections were fought mainly with typographic psoters. Of the pictorial posters that did occur, most were large photographic images of DeValera and Cosgrave. Subsequently elections have been portrayed through political posters and other media, to have become for the voter more an option between party leaders than between political philosphies. Today the only form of illustration to be found on the political posters, of the main parties is colour photographs of the politicians themselves.

Thus in terms of design formats there are three basic categories. Firstly there was the proclamation from which evolved the second category, the broadsheet, and thirdly there was the illustrated poster. All are unquestionably part of the same tradition. The products of that tradition are of significant value as part of Ireland's visual heritage. Ireland's contribution to the arts is commonly perceived to have been strongest in the written and spoken word, thus the very colourful language so often found on Irish political posters (especially up the the 1932 general election) is reason enough to argue the importance of preserving these items. It is more important however to recognise that they are the visual by-products of Irish history and that prior to the development of mass media in Ireland they functioned as the broad disseminator of the ideas and images that have not only reflected but have also played a part in forming Irish history. It is not known how great or small an impact this genre of

propaganda has had on Irish politics and history except in specific ases such as the 1916 proclamation, the anti-consctiption pledge, and the Ulser covenant. However as this kind of propaganda still exists it is obvious that politions at least believe it does affect popular opinion. As political posters were never intened to be precious or unique they have been regarded as novelties that simply become rubbish once their purpose become redundant with the passing of an election or the ending of a war, etc. How may interesting posters have vanished without trace is merely open to conjecture. Luckily, enough survive to represent all the major periods and most of the important events. They are the remenents of design practices and production technology that is now obsolete due to the emergence of photo-typesetting and other high-technology printing processes, and of specialist design practices. Many of the old political posters have very pleasing aesthtic qualities and some have a remarkably strong visual impact. In other words their visual force often trancends their function. This is especially true when the message they carry has been reduced to a short slogan or an uncomplicated image, for this usally afforded the designer the opportunity to use bold type and images. The traditional proclamation however, is an exception to this because it's format was specifically suited to long texts.

Ironically it is the characteristics that are peculiar to Irish political posters that most people today would find least attractive. Gaelic type and republican symbolism are still occasionally used, but they are so synonymous with the Irish language and with republicanism, both of which are associated with controversial minorities, that most Irish people have mixed feelings about them. The reasons for this are quite complex but the main influences are the continuing confusion of attitudes towards the 1916 rising, the civil war, the revival of the I.R.A. in the 1960's and also the somewhat oppressive manner in which (until very recently) the Irish language has be taught in schools.

Since 1848 the tradition of Irish political posters has been affected by new forms of media. The main political partis nwo onlu issue posters at election times, and use newspapers, magazines, radio and television for the bulk of their propaganda. However as milatent republicanism and milatent unionism is banned from the popular media, these factions continue to produce other forms of visual propaganda. Graffiti, especially in Northern Ireland, has flourished and is often very elaborate. Black flags are synonymous with the mourning of a member of the I.R.A. The I.R.A. still occasionally issue posters (though it is an offence for a printer to print for them), and new emotive symbols and slogans have evolved. The most well known is the symbolic use of the face of the famous hunger-striker Bobby Sands, and the slogan "Tiocfidh ar La!" (i.e, "Our day will come").

The political events that occured between 1898 and 1948, combined with the advances in the production and design of political proclamations and their derivatives, gave rise to many new propaganda styles within the medium. Though the tactics will always remain the same, i.e, praise of a cause or vilification of it's alternatives, new styles and formats will continue to be visual reflection of Irish history at least for as long as political interest-groups fail to find a mutual agreement on the issues of nationalism, republicanism and unionism. However, it may happen that printing as we know it today, through books, newspapers, and posters etc, will have been replaced by other forms of communications technology before any such agreement is arrived at.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Ades, D.: "The Twentieth Century Poster",
            Abberville Press, New York, 1984.

Banes Reed, T.: "The History of British Type Founders",
            Oxford Press, 1961.

Barnicoat, J.: "Posters, a concise history",
            Thames and Hudson, London, 1972.

Browne, J. M.: "The Press in Ireland",
            Browne and Nolan, Dublin, 1937.

Browne, N.: "Against the tide",
            Gill and Macmillan Ltd., Dublin, 1986.

Chubb, B.: "Political Communication and the Mass Media",
            a chapter in "The Government and Politics of Ireland",
            Oxford University Press, 1979.

Dublin Typographical Provident Society: "National Print Exhibition,
            5th - 10th Oct., 1959", an exhibition catalogue issued by
            the D.T.P.S. with historical notes and references.

Fleischmann, G.: "Irish Country Posters",
            Auflage, Essen, 1982.

"Graphic Directory 1965: A comprehensive guide to printing, publishing,
            and advertising in Ireland",
            compiled and published by Graphic Publications, Dublin, 1965.

Hardie, M. and Sabin, A.K.: "War Posters: issued by belligerent and
            neutral nations, 1914-1919",
            A. & C. Black, London, 1920.

Inglis, T.: "Moral Monopoly", the history of the relationship between
            the Catholic Church and the State in Ireland,
            Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1987.

Kelly, R. R.: "American Wood Type, 1828-1900",
            Da Capo, New York, 1977.

Lewis, J.: "Printed Ephemera",
            Cowell Ltd., London, 1962.

Lynam, E. W.: "The Irish Character in Print, 1571-1973",
            Oxford University Press, 1924.

Lyons, F. S. L.: "Ireland Since the Famine",
            Fontana, Suffolk, 1973.

MacCurtain, T.: "The Birth of Modern Ireland",
            Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1969.

MacThomais, E.: "Me Jewel an' Darlin' Dublin",
            E. & T. O'Brien, Dublin, 1974.

McClintock Dix, E.R.: "Printing in Ireland prior to 1601".
            Printed and published for the author by
            Colm O'Lochlainn at the sign of the
            Three Candles, Fleet Street, Dublin, 1930.

Moody, T. W.: "The Course of Irish History",
            Fallons, Cork, 1967.

Philippe, R.: "Political Graphics, Art as a Weapon",
            Phaidon Press Ltd., Oxford, 1980.

"Progress in Irish Printing".
            Compiled, printed, and published by
            Alex, Thompson & Co., Dublin, 1936.

Rickards, M.: "Posters of Protest and Revolution",
            Adams & Dent, London, 1970.

Rickards, M.: "The Rise and Fall of the Poster",
            David & Charles, London, 1971.

Rickards, M.: "The Public Notice, An Illustrated History",
            Newton Abbot, London, 1973.

Scruton, R.: "A Dictionary of Political Thought".
            The Macmillan Press, London, 1982.

Tierney, M.: "Modern Ireland Since 1850",
            Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1978.

Robert Gibbings

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

ROBERT GIBBINGS
(1889 - 1958)

A thesis submitted to:
The Faculty of History of Art and Design & C.S.
in candidacy for the Degree

Faculty of Design
Department of Visual Communication

by
ELIZABETH CARTON

MARCH 1988

CONTENTS:

ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century has witnessed the internationalisation of art.
No longer are we the isolated Irish or British school. A major artist
is an international figure, and major movements are international
movements. This has been the century of schools and 'isms' and such a
profusion of styles that in the eyes of art historians only the
biggest and most important movements will be constantly recorded and
recalled.In the international context of Picasso and the German
expressionists it is inevitable that more local artists and the
smaller movements should be overshadowed. But to the British or Irish
historian it is important that the native schools are not forgotten,
however small or insignificant they may be in an international
context. Their influence on native artistic activities is always
worth documenting and they are important for the art they produced as
well as an expression of the social and cultural climate of the time.

The British wood-engraving revival in the first thirty or forty years
of the twentieth century is a good example of a movement which was
not of tremendous international significance but should be remembered
as an important period in the history of our own vernacular art.It
emerged at the time when Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism were
establishing a reputation. From 1913 to 1920, Edward Wadsworth, one
of Lewis's group, worked on a series of wood-engravings based on
industry and engineering (Fig. 1). His work is an early example of
the use of wood-engraving as a creative process, but Wadsworth was
not essentially concerned with wood-engraving as an art in itself,
but only as a tool to serve his purpose for a while. The English

wood-engraving revival emerged very independently of Vorticism or any
other international movement. It was genuinely local school and grew
from a group of Central School graduates.

Robert Gibbings does not rank in the international classifications.
His name is not immediatdy familiar. Yet his work as a graphic artist
throughout the first fifty years of this century is of unquestionable
local significance. His achievements as a wood-engraver and book

(fig 1) Edward Wadsworth: In Dry Dock, 1918

designer introduced a whole new audience to good quality art and design, educating their aesthetic sensibilities. His work as an art-director with the Golden Cockeral Press and later, Penguin books, heightened the awareness and appreciation of good design amongst both publishers and their public alike. I wish in this monograph to highlight his achievements as an engraver, designer and art-director, and remember him as one of the finest British graphic artists of this century.

Gibbings, born in Cork in 1889, was a multi-talented man whose skills ranged from book design and decoration to wood-engraving and to writing. Because of the scope of his talent to categorise him is both difficult and confusing. I want primarily to examine his work in the context of graphics — of visual communication and design. I do not see Gibbings as a fine artist. His wood-engravings were fundamentally illustrations or decorations and as such differ from some of the work of his contemporaries. Eric Gill and the Nash brothers were much more interested in wood-engraving as a means of self-expression. Books and literary communication were inextricably linked with the engravings of Gibbings,and the constraints of the letterpress were one of the greatest directional influences on his work. Gibbings' art was of significance as an aesthetically satisfactory solution to all these

related problems and constraints. His art cannot be fully appreciated except within the context of book production. It is much to the detriment of the books by Patience Empson and Thomas Balston that they virtually ignore the typography and book design of Robert Gibbings and concentrate almost exclusively on his wood-engraving, looking on them as an end in themselves. Once his involvement in book production began Gibbings very rarely produced independent wood-engravings. One of the great difficulties in researching his work has been finding reproductions of his engravings within their intended typographical context. It is impossible to analyse the sucess of an illustration or decoration when it can be seen only in isolation. It is not what Gibbings would himself have intended.

Patience Empson and Thomas Balston give satisfactory biographical outlines of the life of Gibbings. Their quite limited texts complementing the collections of wood-engravings give a general introduction to the work of Gibbings the engraver. Albert Garrett places him in the context of the Wood-engraving School. It is on his

engraving as an element of book-production that I wish to elaborate.
I will draw a picture of Gibbings the graphic artist and designer.

It is because Gibbings has been regarded purely as a wood-engraver
that his reputation has waned. His wood-engraving is of outstanding
quality, but of a quality which grows from the constraints of book-
production. It must be seen as such to be fully appreciated. As an
engraver alone he falls foul of art historians who dismiss him as a
mere illustrator. To book critics he is an author and his engraving
is of peripheral interest. It is up to the historians of graphic
design and visual communication to knock the dust off the reputation
of Robert Gibbings. And it is the responsibility of Irish historians

in particular to begin this work since Gibbings was an Irishman and
one of whom we can justly be proud.

Between his birth in Cork in 1889 and his death in England in 1958,
the full and varied life of Robert Gibbings can be broadly divided
into three phases. The first, which lasted until 1924, sees Gibbings
set foot upon the wood-engraving path, along which he became a
founder member of the Society of Wood Engravers in 1919. In 1924 his
life took a fresh turn and his engraving became permanently linked
with book production. Gibbings purchased the Golden Cockeral Press
and became an art-director in the best modern sense as he co-ordinated
the production of superb books for the following nine years. And in
1933, on the sale of the Press, he began his third and final career
as an independant designer, illustrator and writer. During this final
period, which lasted until his death in 1958, he reconciled all the
conflicting elements of book production and enjoyed his greatest
achievments. He died a successful and highly-regarded artist whose
place in the history of British graphic art must be guaranteed.

CHAPTER ONE

Robert Gibbings was born on March 23rd 1889, a son of the Reverend
Edward Gibbings, Canon of Cork Cathedral. He was educated locally at
day and boarding schools and his first attempt at a career brought
him to Cork University where, after passing his first year Arts
examinations he subsequently failed his first Medical examination
three times in the next two years. Obviously not cut out for an
academic career, Gibbings eventually decided to follow his natural
inclinations and became a late recruit to the artistic profession,
much against his father's better judgement who feared both a pauper
existence and the immorality of drawing nude women. Nevertheless the
Reverend Gibbings did nothing to stand in his son's way, but the
financial aid which he could afford could buy only lessons from a
local landscape painter, Harry Scully RHA. Not until Gibbings was 22
did he eventually get the money together to go to London and study at
the Slade. Henceforth his career was in England but the importance of
Cork and the Irish env ironment on his subsequent work cannot be
over-estimated.Gibbings was always an intensely spiritual character,
or, as he put it himself, 'a close to nature fellow'(*1). His temperament
was fostered unimpeeded during those first 22 years of his life when
Gibbings had time to ramble and observe and develop a life-long
interest in the detail and richness of ordinary everyday life and his
env ironment. Like so many of his fellow Irishmen— Kavanagh, Joyce
and Jack Yeats— he never lacked inspiration since he had learned to
tap the most infinite of all artistic resources.

Resourcefulness was always one of Gibbings' strongest qualities and

in order to get together the money for study in London he sold a
heifer and reared some pointer pups. Off he went, armed with a three
guinea commission to design a book-plate for a local lady. Arriving
in London he attended classes at the Slade and without delay designed
the book-plate. But there was something obviously lacking and all
Gibbings could do was hope that his line might be reinforced by the
platemaking. Instead, the platemaking served to underline the
weaknesses. The design looked worse. Displaying a degree of self-
criticism and a desire for perfection which were to become a hallmark
of his work, Gibbings decided against posting the designs.
Discounting the financial loss he took the plate along to the Slade

(fig 2) Noel Rooke; Zinal Rothhorn

and asked for advice. It proved one of the best investments of his life. There he was ruthlessly told that his line was 'weak and virile'(*2), an extraordinary comment in the light of his subsequent outstanding draughtsmanship. But, one of the most important jobs for an artist is to find a suitable medium, without which all the talent in the world can be wasted. Gibbings was recommended to go to etching classes in the Central School of Art. There he resurrected the bookplate fiasco but, more importantly he recognised the quality of the medium and its potential for lending strength to his drawing. Although his financial resources fell far short of his unlimited energy and enthusiasm, Gibbings calculated that on top of his life-drawing at the Slade and his etching at the Central he could still just afford the fee for 2 half-days in the Central's design class. There he was instructed by Noel Rooke and his career took a new direction which was to lead him to all his future sucess.

Noel Rooke was the father figure under whose eye most of the eventual exponents of the wood engraving revival were to flourish. Noel Rooke, together with Eric Gill, had been a student in the new calligraphy

class at the Central School in 1899. The teacher was Edward Johnston who made the simple and fundamental discovery that the nature and form of a letter is dictated by the form of the tool used to make it. This discovery led to the foundation of modern calligraphy. For Rooke and Gill it was to alter forever their concept of type. Rooke applied the same principle to another form of expression - wood-engraving. Rooke, at the time when so many artists were dissatisfied with the status to which wood-engraving had been reduced by the Victorian technicians, redefined wood-engraving. By his own reckoning an engraving could only be an original work of art if it was designed and executed by one man, burin in hand, with the tool and the wood working together to dictate the eventual manifestation of the idea. Rooke had invented a burin-designed technique which depended upon white line as opposed to the black-line facsimile reproduction techniques of the nineteenth century victorian engravers.His own work is an example of the freedom and simplicity, the strength and boldness offered by this form of engraving. Zinal Rothhorn (Fig 2) is merely a massing of black shadows which strikingly denotes the snowbound mountain landscape in all its expanse.
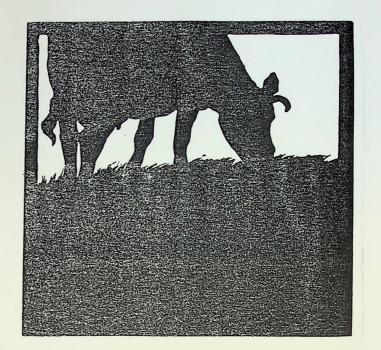
In 1905 Noel Rooke became a teacher of book illustration at the Central School and in 1912 was permitted to teach wood-engraving.

Henceforth he instructed his pupils in accordance with his own concept of engraving and from their ranks sprang the new twentieth century wood-engraving revivalists.

Robert Gibbings was one of the fortunate artists who found a medium with which he could reconcile his skills and his style to perfectly interpret his subject. Gibbings was the archetypal twentieth century engraver who utilised the innate qualities of both wood and graver to
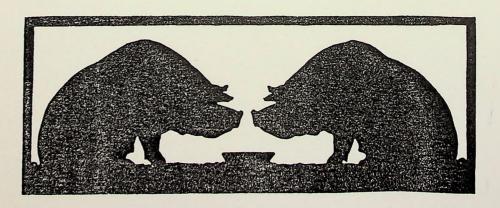
capitalise upon his own skills of draughtsmanship. The Victorians had forced wood into subservience while they produced fine line drawings, instead of acknowledging the potential for fluidity and naturally harmonious line within wood. Gibbings worked together with his medium and used its qualities to determine the ultimate form of his expression. This is a fundamentally modern characteristic and the one to which much of the freedom and creativity of modern art can be attributed. In the early nineteen hundreds it was still a very new idea. But wood-engraving is a difficult craft and one which demands much skill and practice. It demands quite different, and possibly less rapidly acquired skills to painting and sketching. Robert Gibbings begins his Recollections*(3) with the phrase 'festina lente'- make haste slowly. Despite his eternal enthusiasm and energy, it was his belief in this philosophy which made him such a suitable student of wood-engraving. He was the first to acknowledge his own technical limitations and hence worked within the limits of his abilities at all times, gradually increasing his experience and developing his repertoire of subject matter acordingly. Just as a photographer must learn to see with the eye of a camera, and a painter always with a paintbrush in mind, so must a wood-engraver learn to spot subjects sympathetic to the wood and graver. Gibbings had an engraver's eye. From the outset he could pick out subject matter suitable to his level of expertise.
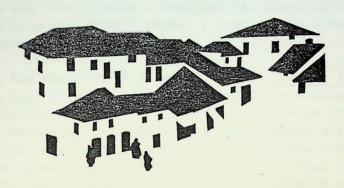
In 1913 Gibbings was back in Cork for his holidays and was free to indulge his interest in nature. He began to see his environment in a new light. The fields of cows and pigs were now material for the engraver. In his brief recollections he tells a captivating childhood anecdote about practically asphxiating his science class as he burnt the trimmings from their cow 'Spot's' horn. But Spot was also the

(fig 4) The Crest of a Hill, 1913

(fig 3) The Two Pigs, 1913

12.

(fig 5) *A Street in Macedonia, 1920*
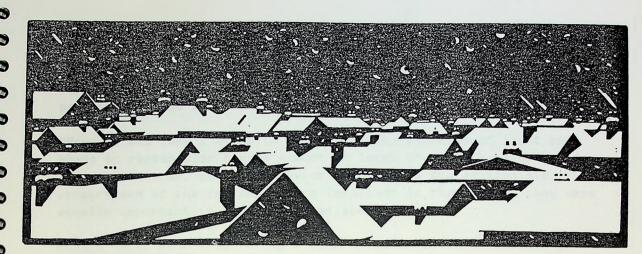
subject of one of his first engravings.

"It was one day while looking out of a rectory window that I noticed her on the grass chewing the cud, and, liking the pattern of her markings, I made a drawing of them in simple black and white, no attempt at lighting. That evening, looking at my drawing, I thought "that makes sense with wood-engraving". I hurriedly wrote to London for a block and when it came I engraved it. Then, using an old letterpress from my father's study, I took proofs. That was really my first wood-engraving".

Also amongst his earliest wood-engravings are The Two Pigs and The Crest of the Hill (Fig.s 3 & 4) both essentially silhouettes,thus rendered to overcome the difficulties with shadow as the animals persisted in moving about. These simple silhouettes are the most elementary form of wood-engraving but, nevertheless are essentially free from any lines drawn initially on the block.They are unquestionably burin-designed and therefore very much a product of the new school of thought. Here we have the simple massing previously seen in the landscape of Noel Rooke, and before that in the pioneering work of the Beggarstaffs. It was probably the Beggarstaffs who first brought to the commercial art world this new love of wood, of its inherent tactile and personal quality.Gibbings had, in common with Rooke and the Beggarstaffs, a capacity to see subject matter in terms of black and white masses, in terms of light and shade, positive and negative shapes.

Gibbings returned after the holidays to London for another session at the art colleges before war broke out and he was to sign up with the Royal Munster Fusiliers. He got himself a commision and was a well liked and competent officer. In 1918 he was invalided out of the war

and again turned his attentions to wood-engraving. His days in the army had been constructively spent and his note books were full of material which he could now put to use. His visits to Malta and the whole Mediterranean area had filled his mind with images of light, shade and pattern. Once he allowed the pattern to take priority over the subject matter,Gibbings began to develop as a genuinely innovative engraver.Working with black and white masses he avoids the technical difficulties of handling the light with which the burin infuses the wood and yet builds up strong patterns of light and shade suggested by the fall of light on rectangular Mediterranean houses. A Street in Macedonia (Fig 5) is completely free from any detail

(fig 6) Dublin under Snow, 1918

15.

and it is only the skillful handling of black mass that creates the striking impression of houses. In lending importance to shapes and pattern Gibbings reinforces the expression of the subject.

"Here it was that I began to see the strong patterns of light and shade on rectangular houses almost in terms of music — major chords and minor chords, small windows or archways as the accidentals. The proportions of the rectangle were important in themselves: they were equally important in relation to adjacent shapes".

Dublin under Snow (Fig. 6) is a fine example of his discarding of all irrelevant detail and his progressive move towards abstraction and design. Here we see the first evidence of the vanishing line a technique whose invention is attributed to Gibbings. Wherever one plane is partly in front of another he discards the boundary line of the front plane and leaves it to the spectator to imagine the completed shape and seperate planes.

"Where one white surface, such as of snow, is seen against another,
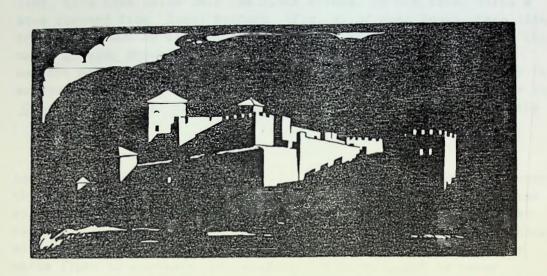
the line of demarcation is often so faint that it is all to the good if it can be omitted and the variety in plane or perspective expressed by other means. An accidental shadow, or a window or doorway, may give all that is needed of definition".(*4)

While now we are so familiar with work in black and white, Gibbings' work was original at a time when such massings of blacks and whites was not common. At the time of Dublin under Snow Gibbings, quite remarkably, had never encountered any Cubist work. Thomas Balston notes:
"In it he had succeeded in imposing an almost cubistic design upon a fundamentally impressionistic conception without sacrificing atmosphere or texture."(*5)

Cubism is one of the rare exceptions where a parallel may be drawn between the wood-engraving revival and the major international movements. Wood-engraving is an essentially linear dicipline and many of the foundation principles beneath the new movements were not workable in wood, a medium so totally different to paint.

The concept of pattern, black and white, is the keystone of City

16.

(fig 7) *The City Walls, Salonica, 1918*

Walls Solonica (Fig. 7) where Gibbings again employs the vanishing
line, this time using only the black planes. He has taken quite a
step forward from Zinal Rothern (Fig. 2) of Noel Rooke where lines
are still drawn to delineate the outlines of the slopes against the
sky. Evening Sunshine (Fig. 8) by Gibbings deals with similar
subject matter and Gibbings allows himself use only solid shadow to
express the form of the mountain. There is no outline. Similarly in
 Clear Water (Fig. 9) the form of the girl's arms are left to the

spectator's imagination, with solid black mass guiding the eye towards
the direct conclusion. Light is of fundamental importance in these
engravings. Gibbings is preoccupied with the relationship between
space and solids, with light as a physical manifestation. Beginning
with an empty woodblock, he engraves with the burin, allowing the
white light to permeate and redefine the form. Light is never
negative. In Evening Sunshine virtually luminous light is equally
positive and important in defining the form as is the black shadow.
This concept of physical light was the keystone of the wood-engraving
revival.

Thanks to the teaching of Rooke and to the working example of artists
like the Beggarstaffs, Edward Johnston, Lucian Pisarro and Gordon
Craig, all of whose engravings display the burin-designed technique,
the upcoming generation including Gibbings employed the expressive
white line technique. At this time the Society of Painter-Etchers
existed but Gibbings, realising the need for a wood-engraving society,
soon took the initiative and organised a meeting between himself,
Lucien Pisarro, E. Dickey, Noel Rooke, Sidney Lee and Philip Hagreen.
It was as a result of this meeting that the Society of Wood Engravers
was formed in 1919. It was agreed that the members should meet in
each other's studios and this practice was maintained into the
nineteen seventies. Eric Gill, John Nash, Gwendolen Raverat, Sturge-
Moore and Gorden Craig — all modern engravers — were invited to
foundership and accepted. Thus was the establishment of a group of
artists who sought to revive wood-engraving and develop it as a
proper artform. At a time when art had broken its traditional
boundaries, the wood-engravers sought the use of the technical
limitations of wood-engraving to produce a personal, sincere style.
They sought limitations and boundaries as a means of forcing more

(fig 9)   Clear Waters, 1920

intense expression. Their approach was diametrically opposed to that of Expressionism, one of the great international twentieth century movements, but their objective was similar. The society's policy was laid down in a resolution expressed by Gill:

" The purpose of the Society is to hold exhibitions devoted solely to wood-cutting and engraving by the European method. Membership of the Society is confined to those who use the European method of wood-engraving. This method, distinguished from the Japanese or Eastern method by the fact that prints are obtained by means of a printing press, is suitable to the tradition and temperment of European artists, and is of greater utility in connection with book production and decoration".(*6)

This latter statement was particularly relevant as the majority of members would eventually engrave for book illustration. Gibbings in particular pursued this subject and virtually subordinated his wood-engraving to the overall design of the book. His endeavours as an art director kept him closely in contact with the more fine art orientated engravers and helped co-ordinate the relationship between the publishing and printing houses and the illustrators and designers.In the more immediate future his association with the Society of Wood Engravers and his contributions to their exhibitions helped disseminate the modern engraving concept amongst the general public and won approval which marked a change of aesthetic opinions from the Victorian days.

The exhibitions of the Society of Wood Engravers were to become an important part of the British arts calendar.Gibbings,as first Honarary Secretary did much to promote the activities of the Soceity and was actively involved in organising tours and visits to regional

galleries so that the engraving would be seen by a wide audience. The first exhibition in the Chenil Gallery in Chelsea was a resounding popular and critical success. Gibbings was one of the biggest contributors. In the first exhibition in 1920 he contributed his war-travel inspired prints. His work was noted for its energy even within the confines of small format. The Prints exploited the effects of engraving, not the effects of drawing. In an article in The Architect of 1920 Eric Gill wrote:

"The modern world has been led to attach an absurd value to mere representation and to judge all works from a mere imitation of natural form. There is however, at the present time, by the mercy of
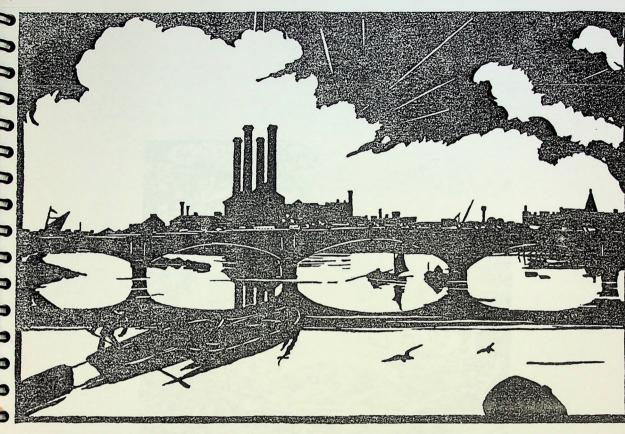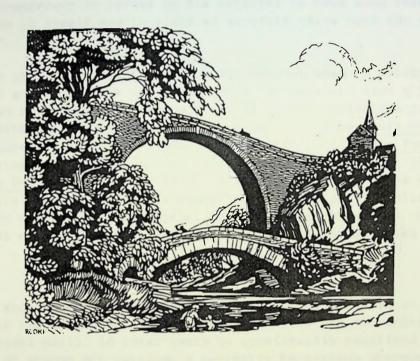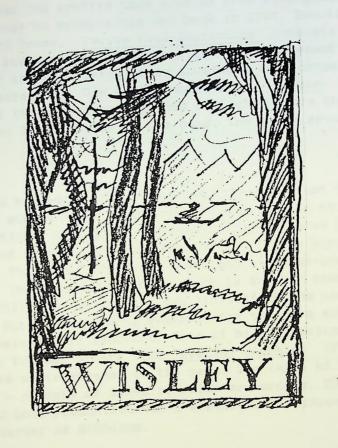
fig 10   London Bridges,

22.

(*fig 11*) Noel Rooke: The Two Bridges, 1914

God, a tendancy to realise again the intrinsic value of a work of art as opposed to its extrinsic or sentimental value, and, in this matter, wood-engraving is especially valuable, for the exact imitation of nature, which in painting or etching is comparatively easy and natural, is in wood-engraving both difficult and unnatural. The wood-engraver is forced by his material to have some respect for the thing in itself and to place an absolute value upon the art of drawing".

Gibbings ability to use the medium was evident when he exhibited in the 1920 show. His work was a commercial success and didn't pass unnoticed by the world of industry. Profitable commissions came the way of Gibbings. He worked on illustration for Enos Fruit Salts , and executed a series on London Bridges for Findlater's Port. It is interesting to compare Gibbings' 1920 London Bridges (Fig. 10) with the The Two Bridges (Fig.11) of 1914 by Noel Rooke. Rooke displays a technical competence in his rendering of light on the foliage, stonework and water of the scene. But his approach is more realistic than that of Gibbings who is at this stage still preoccupied with the

massing and abstraction of shadow. Here Gibbings displays an energetic and unrefined strength which balances his comparative lack of technical skill. In later years he consistently redefined his massing of shadow but retained a perfectly harmonious engraver's line while treating his subjects with more detail and realism. The London Bridges series are less geometric and regular than the earlier war engravings but are still essentially of the silhouette style.

With his commercial work there is a problem finding reproductions. One poster is included in the collection of the Victoria and Alberts Department of Prints and Drawings (Fig. 12). Printed from colour woodblocks, it measures 29 1\2" x 19 1\2" and displays a capacity to use the poster format effectively. Gibbings frames a simple blue and green lake scene within strong black silhouetted tree shapes and uses a bold, bright yellow to set off the entire picture. The only type is a large, simple "WISLEY" printed at the base of the picture. It is a simple and effective, if not a revolutionery poster for the Underground Electric Railways Co. of London. Had Gibbings been born twenty years earlier he would have probably have jumped quite effectively on the poster bandwagon which rolled freely through the artistic circle at the turn of the century, recruiting such artists as Cheret and Lautrec in France, the Beggarstaffs and Hardy in

(fig 12) Poster fof the Underground Electric Railways Co. of London. (sketch)
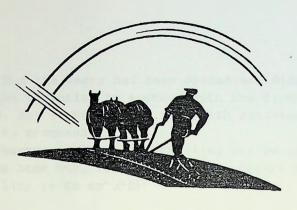
25.

England. It was the profits that accrued from such commissions that enabled Gibbings to produce his own book in 1921. Beautifully printed by the Baynard Press, Twelve Wood-Engravings consists of small works in the style of the 1920 exhibits. They represent the perfection of the silhouette style developed as a concession to technical limitations. One of the engravings, Scraps (Fig. 13) is an example of the competent handling of light within this simple style. A women feeds scraps to the hens. The black areas are very

minimal - the half-door, the fencepost, the hut - and the technique gives such a strong light that this might well be a snowscene. The black outline contains the elements and completes a very striking scene rendered with the utmost simplicity. Twelve Wood-Engravings has no text. The pages are rough edged and stitched-bound in a grey/brown cover. The simplicity of the book is another example of Gibbings' ability to accept his own limitations. He knew little about book design but had a natural sympathy for the form and chose not to interfere where he was ignorant. Some of his engravings are composed within rough frames; others like Evening Sunshine (Fig. 8) stand freely in the white expanse of the page. The table of contents is appropriate - no dots or lines or rules or borders. This first endeavour in book production was a significant signpost towards the subsequent career of Gibbings.

However, commercial success was, through no fault of Gibbings, very short-lived. Recession in 1921 saw a widespread tightening of belts and Gibbings soon ran out of commissions. Before long he was looking for bookwork. In 1922 he illustrated Erewhon (Fig. 14) for Jonathan Cape. For the first time, Gibbings expands upon his technique of simple silhouette and introduces an element of white line into his solid blacks. He discovers the white line method of achieving texture and depth. But in Erewhon the result is not at all conclusive and in fact the illustrations drown in the gapbetween two styles. Gibbings has departed from the sound, silhouette style. But where he was in silhouette an accomplished master, he is with white-line engraving, a complete novice. The Erewhon vignettes lack the boldness of the earlier work. They are not completely suggestive but try instead to present detail of texture and form. They fail to achieve this and seem much more "ordinary" in the light of the accomplished silhouette

(fig 13) Scraps

(fig 14) Erewhon, 1923

28.

work. But the doors had been opened and Gibbings had found himself with the potential to engrave with the firmness and cleaness which he sought. But it would take time, with patience and perseverance. He was eager to progress:

"But eagerness when not controlled may be more of a curb than a spur. Looking back now, it seems that the desire to do well put a brake on my ability to do so".(*8)

The early twenties were a time of creativity and experiment. As technique improved Gibbings extended his repertoire of subject matter and style. On the Slip (1923) (Fig. 15) displays futher development and in it Gibbings moulds white figures out of black shading. The result is interesting but again falls between two poles. Having departed his silhouette phase it is as if Gibbings sees clearly what he wants to achieve but is as yet unable to achieve it. The figures in On the Slip have a rudeness which even the most basic of the earlier silhouettes could avoid. Gibbings is experimenting very healthily with technique and does not suffer by what might seem a temporary regression in his work. Any progressive artist will consistently juggle the constituents of his art to seek an improvement.

His illustrations for La Vie de la Dames Galantes in 1924 are more attractive examples of this moulding technique. The hatching lines are finer and less rude. But still the overall effect is not convincing. In Fig. 16(b) the shadow on both the naked body and the back of the onlooking figure seem completely detatched from the rest of the body. The three dimensional effect intended is lost. Fig. 16 (a) is more successful but here Gibbings is resorting to an outline while still retaining heavy black shadow. The mixture is not entirely

happy and there is an absence of the harmony which was later to become such a feature of Gibbings' work

Gibbings worked at his book under difficult circumstances. His income depleted, he and his wife were living with his inlaws. Gibbings' puritanical father-in-law would have found the subject matter of the engravings preposterous. It was extremely distressing when Mrs.

(Fig 15) On The Slip, 1923

(a)

(b)

(Fig 16) La Vie de la Dames Galantes, 192

31.

Harold Midgely Taylor of the Golden Cockeral Press contacted Gibbings
to cancel the commission on account of her husband's illness. The
press was being closed. Gibbings recalls the incident where Herbert
Pike, an old friend from Ireland, appeared on the scene and asked:
"Why don't you buy the press? It's just what you want".
"Haven't got the money", Gibbings replied.
"I'll lend it to you," he said. "Go down on Monday and, if you like
it, buy it".(*9)

Gibbings visited the Press and bought it. With his remarkable energy
and enthusiasm he jumped into the thick of things and found the
perfect vehicle for his interest in book production. This enterprise
was to prove rich in personal satisfaction and achievement but poor
in financial reward. It was above all an experience. Gibbings had
embarked upon a new career.

CHAPTER 2
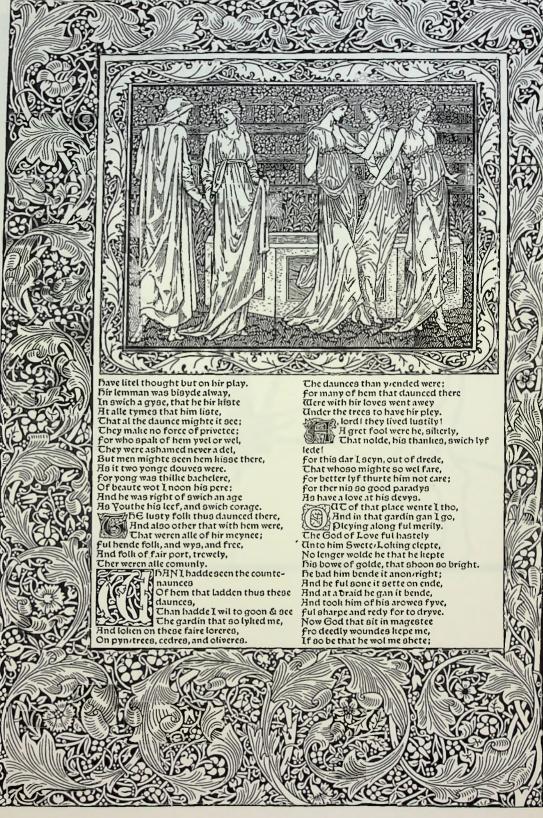
The relationship between wood-engraving and book production was always a close one during the twentieth century revival. Noel Rooke learned his most important lessons in conjunction with type and then applied them to engravings. There was a whole new printing movement as publishers sought to escape from the monotonous and unimaginative technical illustrations of the Victorians. William Morris was the outstanding figure in the late nineteenth century private press movement, while Ricketts was the major force in the commercial press, the predecessor of the Golden Cockeral. While Morris's Chaucer was acclaimed as the principle of the Arts and Crafts movements' achievments, the engravings in this Kelmscott edition were exactly the type of reproductive illustration which brought down the name of wood-engraving. Chaucer (Fig. 17) was a uniform grey and succeeded in initiating a uniformity in the printed book but did not help the artist to produce the kind of books which were to feature in the twentieth century revival. But Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement stimulated a lot of interest in well designed books amongst both private and commercial publishers. It was Durer's concept of the artist designed and produced book which was to be adopted by Gibbings and his contemporaries. It was probably the Beggarstaffs in the first decade of the century who made the first steps in this direction with books designed entirely by themselves, using hand-cut illustrations and type printed from wood onto coarse, tactile paper, (Fig 18).
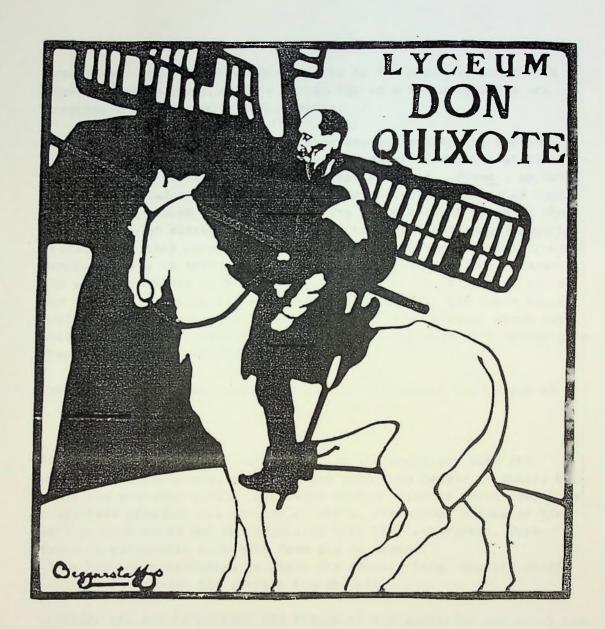
The Golden Cockeral Press had been established in 1920 by Harold Midgely Taylor at Waltham St. Lawrence. Taylors intention was to get

young authors who he thought would work as a team to set up the type for their own books, do the printing and the binding, and so minimise the costs. This idealistic enterprise was not financially successful and soon Taylor employed tradesmen to do the printing. It was in this form that Gibbings bought the Press in 1924.

Gibbings now had the opportunity to pursue his interest in the printed book as a whole. For the next nine years he was in control of the design and manufacture of seventy two books. Forty eight were decorated, nineteen by himself, nine by Gill and the remainder by thirteen others. He worked constantly as an engraver, book-designer,

(fig 17) *The Kelmscott Chaucer, 1896*

34.

(*fig 18*) *Beggarstaffs: Don Quixote, 19*

typographer and publisher. His ability to successfully commission
engravings from other artists marked him as a distuinguished art
director in a thoroughly modern sense.

Gibbings' own activity as an engraver was now subject to varying
constraints. The Press was a commercial venture and money at times
determined the quality of the engravings produced. Poems , by Swift
(Fig. 19) includes engravings which lack the craftsmanship of which
Gibbings had proved he was capable. The illustrations are weak when
examined out of context but it is easy to accept Patience Empson's
opinion that they succeed within the book,where their crude, broadly
humorous style is appropriate. What a pity Empson fails to present
the wood-engravings of Robert Gibbings in context. Virtually all of
his work was intended for examination within text. His whole style
evolved around the printed page and while his engravings stand out
well even as independent prints, their merit is much more appreciable
when seen within their intended environment.

Type was the most important self-imposed constraint now placed on
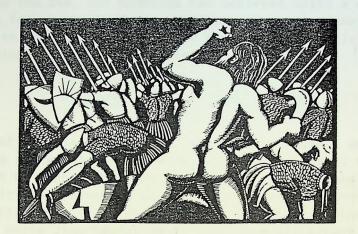
Gibbings' technique. The integration of his engraving with the
printed page was a challange. Working with type helped to modify his
style and provided another parameter within which he moved towards a
completely personal and convincing style. The strong blacks of his
earlier work could not be reconciled with the letterpress. Type
demanded calculated restraint from the decorator.
"Type has taken centuries to reach its present form, and its chief
fault is its almost too perfect finish".(*10)

Gibbings had now to perfect the finish of his engraving and adapt his
style to accomodate the printed page. There was no hard and fast
rule. Each book demanded its own layout and design which in turn
dictated the finish of the illustration. Shortly after the
acquisition of the Golden Cockeral Press in 1924 Gibbings commenced
work on Samson and Delilah (Fig. 20). His interest was in the
problem of echoing with his engraving style the underlying theme of
the story i.e. the strength and weakness of human nature. In the
consequent engravings the black and white masses are relieved by
greyer areas. The result is a significant improvement upon the
Erewhon vignettes (Fig. 14). The composition of Fig. 20(a) has a
strength which seems to evolve out of the same concepts as those
behind a renaissance artist like Uccello. In Fig. 20(b) the two

(fig 19) Swifts Poems, 1928

characters have an almost sculptural strength with only a few areas
(Delilah's hair being one) relieved by white line. There is little
evidence of any frailty in these illustrations. Human strength
rather wins the day, but Gibbings has achieved quite a successful
decoration for the text. It is still overpowering, lacking in
harmony with the form of type. This would be immediatly obvious if
the engravings were shown in context.

The range of material handled by the Press demanded a great
versatility of technique from Gibbings and as a result he acquired a
scope which he might otherwise have missed. After Samson and
Delilah Gibbings turned to cutting fairly sensous blocks for
 Redwise 1926 (Fig. 21). These display a further refinement of his
style. The white line technique is used to great effect in building
patterns and rhythms on materials, in hair and in backgrounds. The
engravings are full of atmosphere and feeling. Gibbings' line has a
strength, confidence and fluidity which had not previously been
accomplished. Long lines in engraving are a significant feature of
the twentieth century revival.
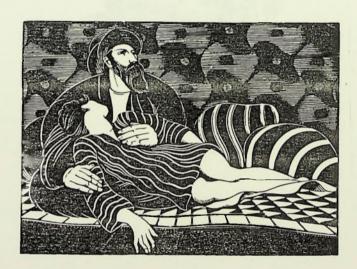
The book illustrated in 1927 for Hodder and Staughton introduced
Gibbings to subject matter which demanded further experiment and
development of his technical skill. The Charm of Birds and the
 Falloden Papers , both by Lord Grey, introduced Gibbings to the
subject of birds. He realised the suitability of wood-engraving for
achieving their clearly defined textures. The illustrations are
largely successful.
Fig. 22(c)is particularly worth noting for its balance
and harmony and clarity. Fig.s 22(a) and (b) seem a little less
natural but have a conviction which was lacking in earlier work.
Gibbings commented on them himself:
"...in most of them my proportions lacked accuracy and my textures
variety. Those strong blacks and whites of earlier days still had
their hold on me".(*11)
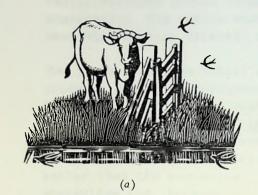
As a result of the American edition of the Charm of Birds Gibbings
was commisioned in 1929 by its publishers to travel to Tahiti in
order to collaborate with James Norman Hall on a new book. This

(fig 21) Redwise, 1926

(a)

(b)

(c)

(fig 22) The Charm of Birds, 1927

excursion came as a welcome diversion to the over-worked Gibbings. In Tahiti,Gibbings worked directly from nature, engraving firsthand from observation. His mature work would prove that he was always at his best when working directly from source material.

Two years after the Tahiti expedition James Norman Hall had still not produced a text to accompany the engravings done by Gibbings. Eventually the American publishers asked Gibbings if he might contribute text as well. Iorana was the result ,published in 1930. Gibbings in retrospect hoped that the book would never be reprinted. His view was probably based on the text – largely imaginative – rather than the engravings. It would be interisting to see the engravings for Iorana in context. Presumably if the publishers were American then Gibbings could not have designed the edition. A comparitive analysis with a Golden Cockeral book would be worthwhile if possible. But Gibbings would almost certainly have included layout sketches with the engravings and text going to the States. He was consistently thorough.

Earlier, in 1929, Gibbings produced a little volume called The Seventh Man based on his trip to Tahiti. It contains 189 words and fifteen engravings. In these engravings the black masses are again reduced and there is more linework (Fig. 23). Although they are small these are very interesting illustrations. The compositions have great rhythm. The line is easy and accomplished. Several devices lend depth to the illustrations. In Fig. 23(a), the cut off feet juxtaposed around the solid black central figure,whose back is turned,create space. Jungle,trees and foliage are used equally effectively in the others.

A noteworthy aspect of Gibbings work is its freedom from the

influence of other engravers. He was one of the earliest modern engravers and thus was spared the distraction of other styles and techniques. In terms of reputation his greatest rival is Eric Gill and it is Gill's influence which is detectable in one or two of Gibbings' books. THe two were in fact great friends and collaborated closely on much of the Golden Cockeral's best works. In essence their work was very different. Their inspiration was not shared. Eric Gill was a great religous artist. In his History of British Wood-Engraving , Albert Garrett has this to say:
"There is a certain coldness in the perfection of Eric Gill's craftmanship and there is a flawlessness in his skill which gives his

(fig 23) The Seventh Man, 1930

work a certain God-like character which some people cannot recognise. In his art and writing Gill expressed a way of life in which art and religion were inseperable".(*12)

Gill was essentially a fine artist in that his work was an end in itself, an expression of his self; a medium through which he sought self-realisation. His exploits as a designer were secondary to his ultimate objective. Gibbings was, on the contrary, the most straightforward of artists. His philosophy was never complex. He had an appetite for life and was a "doing" person more than a philosopher. His engraving was not an end in itself. It was illustration, visual communication; it was just one element in the production of a book; it was another component to be considered in the "unit of texture" of the printed page. Gibbings engravings are accessable to everybody. Gill's are more personal and subjective and introspective. As such they find favour with modern critics whereas Gibbings seems of less consequence because he is accessable. Gibbings, by modern standards, is a mere graphic artist, a visual communicator.

There is a similarity between the rhythm and pattern in Gill's illustration for Song for Songs 1925 (Fig. 24) and Gibbings' illustrations for Redwise of 1926 (Fig. 21). In Lamia of 1928 (Fig. 25) the sensuous black line of Gill's work is detectable.
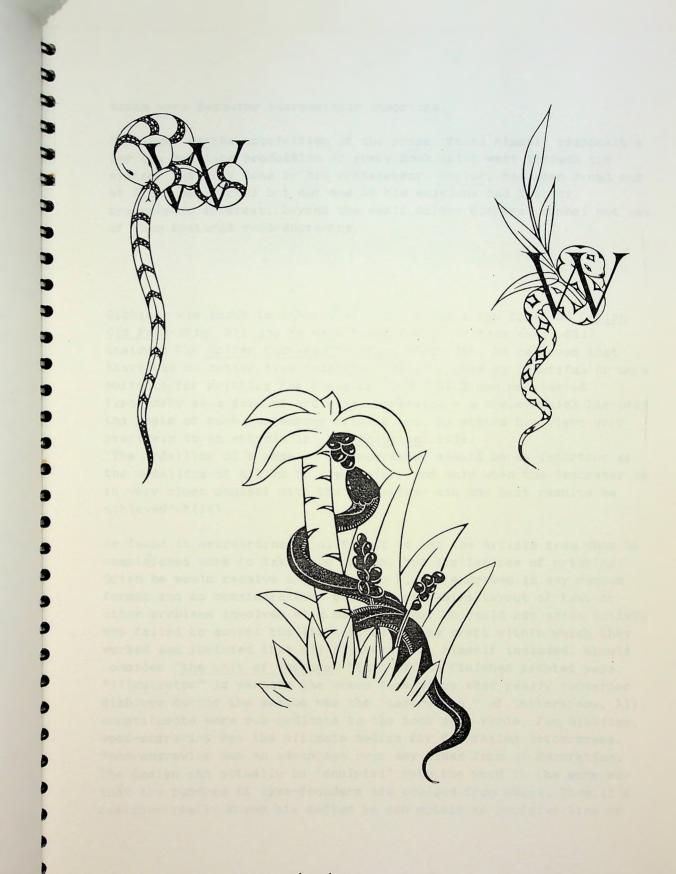
Eric Gill illustrated nine of the Golden Cockeral books produced during Gibbings' directorship. There was intense collaboration between 1927 and 1931. THe greatest achievement was The Four Gospels of 1931 (Fig. 26). It stands as a monument to Gibbings as a producer of books and co-ordinator of artist, text and print. While Patience Empson and Thomas Balston virtually ignore the book-production work of Gibbings' Golden Cockeral years, this writer firmly belives that the example he set as an art director and book designer has been of immense significance. Awareness of typography as a creative, aesthetic phenomenon was scarcely alive in the commercial presses of the twenties and thirties. Letterpress was a very different proposition to today's computer type-setting where spacing and layout and size can so easily be controlled. Albert Garrett makes virtually no other referance to any other press of the same period. The Golden Cockeral under Gibbings' direction, was an outstanding example during a time when commercial presses and reasonably priced

(fig 24) Eric Gill: The Song of Songs, 1925

HYPERION
A Fragment

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
    Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
    Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
    Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.

(a) (fig 25) *Lamia*

(b) (fig 25) Lamia

books were becoming increasingly important.

Gibbings, on the acquisition of the press, found himself responsible for the complete production of every book which went through the system. The work done by his predecessor, Taylor, had been sound and at first successful but not one of his editions had been of typographic interest. Beyond the small Golden Cockeral symbol not one of them featured wood-engraving.

Gibbings was lucky to inherit with the press a few fonts of Caslon Old Face (Fig. 27) and he never used any other face until Gill designed the Golden Cockeral typeface (Fig. 26). He believed that there was no better type face than Caslon - none so beautiful or more suitable for printing the classics *(13). GIbbings considered typography as a form of artistic expression - a theory which has been the basis of much contemporary graphic art. He states his views very precisely in an article in The Colophon 1931:
"The modelling of a page to a typographer should be as important as the modelling of a limb to a sculptor, and only when the decorator is in very close contact with the compositor can the best results be achieved" *(14).

He found it extraordinarly difficult to get the artists from whom he commisioned work to take into account the limitations of printing. Often he would receive a dozen or so blocks engraved in any random format and no considerations given to page-size, layout of text or other problems involved with making books. He could not abide artists who failed to accept the limitations of the craft within which they worked and insisted that all illustrators, himself included, should consider "the unit of texture" *(15) of the finished printed page. "Illustrator" is perhaps the wrong term since what really concerned Gibbings during the period was the "decoration " of letterpress. All constituents were sub-ordinate to the book as a whole. For Gibbings, wood-engraving was the ultimate medium for decorating letterpress. Wood-engraving has an advantage over any other form of decoration. The design can actually be "sculpted" onto the wood in the same way that the punches of type-founders are sculped from metal. Thus, if a designer really knows his medium he can obtain an incisive line of

IT CAME TO PASS IN

(fig 26) The Four Gospels, 1931

49.

14 Point

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZÆŒ
QU& 1234567890£$ ..:-!?([
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzæœfffiflffiffl&Qu

Old fashioned Ligatures as below
are also available

Uniform figures are also
obtainable if desired

ſſb ſh ſi ſk ſl ffi ffl   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

SMALL CAPS available in all sizes 36 to 6 pt. inclusive

12 Point

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZÆŒ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzæœfffiflffiffl&
And his half-sisters SARAH THOMPSON and MARY READ.
By payments amounting to nearly £11,000, all other
claimants to the estate were paid off within seven years,
while the freehold land on which the workshops stood
was acquired by the foundry on 29th April, 1845 in the
name of JOHN STEPHENSON. The two remaining heirs,

10 Point

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZÆŒ&
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzæœfffiflffiffl& 1234567890£$

Joined with JOHN STEPHENSON in 1841 to form the new partnership of
Stephenson, Blake & Co. Eventually a fourth partner was admitted to
the firm in the person of HENRY BANNISTER SMITH, the representative
resident in London. The principal partner and the fourth partner were
to receive a salary for their services. H. B. SMITH, who in the 1850's lived
at 149, Aldersgate Street, only a few yards from the spot which the
firm ultimately selected as its London address, was an energetic traveller
who greatly increased the hold of the firm over the metropolitan market.

8 Point

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXY
Z ÆŒ& 1234567890£$
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzæœfffiflffiffl&

On reaching his majority HENRY STEPHENSON
joined the partnership in 1848 with a sum
of money transferred to him from his father's
account, and a new agreement, similar in its
general provisions to the previous one, *if voided*
the profit in ratio. A renewal of this agree-
ment, five years later, raised his share of the
profits. Further changes were made in 1858
and 1863 regarding the distribution of profits.

6 Point

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZÆŒ
QUQU& 1234567890£$
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzæœfffiflffiffl&

Throughout these years the basic provisions re-
mained unchanged, and HENRY STEPHENSON
who took over the practical management as
his father grew older, also drew his salary as
working partner, and undertook, like him, not
to have any outside commercial interests. The
early years of JOHN STEPHENSON's manage-
ment *had been years of uninterrupted progress*,
while the capital of the firm increased greatly
1850 and 1847, and the value of the stock of
punches and matrices rose between the years
1847 and 1851, also during the same period the
value of outstanding debts rose considerably.

50.

18

14 Point

AABBCCDDEEFGGHIJYKKLMNNO
PPQRRSTTUVVWXYYZÆŒQU&
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzæœfffiflffiffl&Qu
1234567890£$ ...:-!?'}

Old fashioned Ligatures as below
are available up to 36 pt.

Uniform figures are also
obtainable if desired

ſſb ſh ſi ſk ſl ffi ffl   *1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0*

12 Point

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZÆŒQU&
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzæœfffiflffiffl&Qu 1234567890
This expansion was continued in the following decades, and
was shown in the further spectacular growth of the stock of
punches and matrices, and the conversion of the foundry to
machine operation, but the growth of nominal capital after
1847 was hidden by a more conservative accounting policy
and a very rigid writing down of values. This policy may

10 Point

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZÆŒQU&
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzæœfffiflffiffl&Qu 1234567890£$

Have been a reflection of Henry Stephenson's impatience with anything less
than perfection, even in book-keeping; it was adopted at the same time as the
old habit of ploughing back dividends was terminated, and was perhaps a
reform induced by Mr. Gladstone's new income tax, but its merit was that it
ensured that each book entry was adequately covered by full saleable value
of stock. The firm's capital, which had risen to £23,000 in 1848, stayed at
that level for 18 years. The new policy appears clearly in the valuation of the
stock and of punches and matrices. The latter had been valued year by year

8 Point

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWX
YZÆŒQU& 1234567890£$
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzæœfffiflffiffl&Qu

Until the year 1851, when they had grown
to £7,221, a book value which was kept on
in the returns for the next six years. In 1858
a complete list of all punches and matrices in
the possession of the firm which is still in ex-
istence, was drawn up, and at the instigation
of Henry Stephenson book values were dras-
tically reduced to very safe levels, so that,
after an interval of seven years, they were

6 Point

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
ÆŒQU& 1234567890£$
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzæœfffiflffiffl&Qu

Actually written down to £5,572. Similarly, the
stock of type in process of production was re-valued,
perhaps, in this case, with an eye on the cheaper
productive methods then being introduced. "Good
stocking of type makes up the right principle
of valuation," wrote Henry Stephenson, "it (1)
that good stock should be (valued) at the rate it
would cost to replace it (2) that that only it is good
which in use it were destroyed it would be desir-
able to replace (3) that all other than good stock
is worth little more than its metal." The reason
of Henry Stephenson's new-born were marks
on the surface only. For the industry at ... while

19

(a) (fig 27) Caslon Old Face

cleaness and quality identical to that of type. With the movement of
the burin he can automatically echo the natural relationship of thick
and thin of the letters in his line. So if the skill of the artist
was sufficient, the harmony and "unity of texture" which Gibbings
sought could certainly be achieved. He could not abide bad
workmanship. Wood-engravers must display mastery over, as well as
sympathy with their wood:
"To suggest that rough cutting retains the quality of the wood is
like demanding from an etching the smell of nitrous fumes so that the
quality of the acid can be retained".*(16)

To the critics who suggest that the Expressionists achieved a great
quality from their wood, it can be pointed out that the
Expressionists were primarily wood-cutters, not wood-engravers. It is
a different art form dependant upon knives and gouges, not the burin.
And the Expressionists recognised the importance between type and
illustration. They cut their type from wood also. Their wood-cuts
could never have been used in conjunction with letterpress. or
standard commercial printing.

With Gibbings setting such high standards for his work it is not
surprising that the letterpress books of the Golden Cockeral were
outstanding for their time. Gibbings had modern concepts. Lamia
(Fig. 25 a/b), despite the resemblence of its engravings to those of
Gill, is an excellent example of decorated letterpress. The
distribution of black and white is confidently handled. Hyperion
(Fig. 25a) from Lamia shows accomplished integration of
illustration with weights and forms of type. It echos Gibbings'
belief that the line in the engraving should harmonise with the
weight and variety of the line within the type. The decorated

capitals demonstrate simple but strikingly effective decoration,
excellently balanced (Fig. 25b).

Gibbings, during his years at the Golden Cockeral Press, never
published a book which had not been completely set-up and printed in
his own workshop —with one exception— Lucian's True Histoire of
1927. This was because the text was printed twice, simultaneously in
English and in Greek (Fig. 28). Gibbings used the decorative borders
to fill the pages so that the Greek and English versions corresponded
on every page. Gibbings was able to use every device to produce the
harmonious printed page which he sought. The decorative quality of

EVEN AS CHAMPIONS, AND WRASTLERS, AND SUCH AS PRACTISE THE STRENGTH AND AGILITIE OF BODY, ARE NOT ONELY CAREFULL TO RETAINE A SOUND CONSTITUTION OF HEALTH, AND TO HOLD ON THEIR ORDINARIE COURSE of exercife, but fometimes alfo to recreate themfelves with feafonable intermiffion, and efteeme it as a maine point of their practice: fo I thinke it neceffarie for Schollers, & fuch as addict themfelves to the ftudie of learning, after they have travelled long in the perufall of ferious authors, to relaxe a little the intention of their thoughts, that they may be more apt and able to indure a continued courfe of ftudy: And this kinde of repofe vvill bee the more conformable, and fit their purpofe better, if it be imployed in the reading of fuch workes, as fhall not onely yeeld a bare content by the pleafing and comely compofure of them, but fhall alfo give occafion of fome learned fpeculation to the minde, which I fuppofe I have effected in thefe bookes of mine: wherein not only the noveltie of the fubject, nor the pleafingnes of the project, may tickle the Reader with delight, nor to heare fo many notorious lies delivered perfwafively and in the way of truth, but becaufe every thing here by mee fet down, doth in a Comicall fafhion glance at fome or other of the old Poets, Hiftoriographers, & Philofophers, which in their writings have recorded many monftrous and intolerable untruthes, whofe names I would have quoted downe, but that I knew the reading would bewray them to you. *Ctefias*, the fonne of *Ctefiochus*, the *Cnidian*, wrote of the Region of the *Indians*, and the ftate of thofe Countries, matters, which he neither faw himfelfe, nor ever heard come from

the mouth of any man. *Jambulus* also wrote many ftrange miracle great fea, which all men knew to be lies and fictions, yet fo compo they want not their delight: and many others have made choife of argument, of which fome have publifhed their owne travells, an grinations, wherein they have defcribed the greatneffe of beafts, th condition of men, with their ftrange and uncouth manner of life: firft father and founder of all this foolerie, was *Homers Vlyffes*, wh long tale to *Alcinous*, of the fervitude of the windes, and of wild m one eye in their foreheads that fed upon raw flefh: of beafts with heads, and the transformation of his friends by inchanted potions, all hee made the filly *Phæakes* beleeve for great footh. This comming perufall, I could not condemne ordinarie men for lying, when I fa requeft amongft them that would be counted Philofophicall perfo could not but wonder at them, that writing fo manifeft lies, they not thinke to bee taken with the manner; and this made mee alfo tious to leave fome monument of my felfe behinde mee, that I mig be the onely man exempted from this libertie of lying: and becauf no matter of veritie to imploy my penne in, (for nothing hath befall worth the writing) I turned my ftile to publifh untruthes, but w honefter minde than others have done: for this one thing I confi pronounce for a truth, that I lie: and this I hope, may be an excufe the reft, when I confeffe what I am faultie in: for I write of matters I neither faw nor fuffered, nor heard by report from others, which no beeing, nor poffible ever to have a beginning: let no man there any cafe give any credit to them.

ΩΣΠΕΡ ΤΟΙΣ ΑΘΛΗΤΙΚΟΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΝ ΤΩΝ ΣΩΜΑΤΩΝ ΕΠΙΜΕΛΕΙΑΝ ΗΣΚΗΜΕΝΟΙΣ ΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΕΥΕΞΙΑΣ ΜΟΝΟΝ ΟΥΔΕ ΤΩΝ ΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΩΝ ΦΡΟΝΤΙΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ, ΑΛΛΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΚΑΤΑ ΚΑΙΡΟΝ ΓΙΝΟΜΕΝΗΣ ΑΝΕΣΕΩΣ — ΜΕΡΟΣ ΓΟΥΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΣΚΗΣΕΩΣ ΤΟ ΜΕΓΙΣΤΟΝ ΑΥΤΗΝ ΥΠΟΛΑΜΒΑΝΟΥΣΙΝ — ΟΥΤΩ ΔΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΙΣ περὶ τοὺς λόγους ἐσπουδακόσιν ἡγοῦμαι προσήκειν μετὰ τὴν πολλὴν τῶν σπουδαιοτέρων ἀνάγνωσιν ἀνιέναι τε τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἔπειτα κάματον ἀκμαιοτέραν παρασκευάζειν. γένοιτο δ᾽ ἂν ἐμμελὴς ἡ ἀνάπαυσις αὐτοῖς, εἰ τοῖς τοιούτοις τῶν ἀναγνωσμάτων ὁμιλοῖεν, ἃ μὴ μόνον ἐκ τοῦ ἀστείου τε καὶ χαρίεντος ψιλὴν παρέξει τὴν ψυχαγωγίαν, ἀλλά τινα καὶ θεωρίαν οὐκ ἄμουσον ἐπιδείξεται, οἷόν τι καὶ περὶ τῶνδε τῶν συγγραμμάτων φρονήσειν ὑπολαμβάνω· οὐ γὰρ μόνον τὸ ξένον τῆς ὑποθέσεως οὐδὲ τὸ χαρίεν τῆς προαιρέσεως ἐπαγωγὸν ἔσται αὐτοῖς οὐδ᾽ ὅτι ψεύσματα ποικίλα πιθανῶς τε καὶ

ἐναλήθως ἐξενηνόχαμεν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι καὶ τῶν ἱστορουμένων ἕκαστον οὐκ ἀκωμῳδήτως πρός τινας ᾔνικται τῶν παλαιῶν ποιητῶν τε καὶ συγγραφέων καὶ φιλοσόφων πολλὰ τεράστια καὶ μυθώδη συγγεγραφότων, οὓς καὶ ὀνομαστὶ ἂν ἔγραφον, εἰ μὴ καὶ αὐτῷ σοι ἐκ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως φανεῖσθαι ἔμελλον. Κτησίας ὁ Κτησιόχου ὁ Κνίδιος συνέγραψε περὶ τῆς Ἰνδῶν χώρας καὶ τῶν παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἃ μήτε αὐτὸς εἶδε μήτε ἄλλου εἰπόντος ἤκουσεν. ἔγραψε δὲ καὶ Ἰαμβοῦλος περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ μεγάλῃ θαλάττῃ πολλὰ παράδοξα, γνώριμον μὲν ἅπασι τὸ ψεῦδος πλασάμενος, οὐκ ἀτερπῆ δὲ ὅμως συνθεὶς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν. πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι τὰ αὐτὰ τούτοις προελόμενοι συνέγραψαν ὡς δή τινας ἑαυτῶν πλάνας τε καὶ ἀποδημίας, θηρίων τε μεγέθη ἱστοροῦντες καὶ ἀνθρώπων ὠμότητας καὶ βίων καινότητας· ἀρχηγὸς δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ διδάσκαλος τῆς τοιαύτης βωμολοχίας ὁ τοῦ Ὁμήρου Ὀδυσσεύς, τοῖς περὶ τὸν Ἀλκίνουν διηγούμενος ἀνέμων τε δουλείαν καὶ μονοφθάλμους καὶ ὠμοφάγους καὶ ἀγρίους τινὰς ἀνθρώπους, ἔτι

δὲ πολυκέφαλα ζῷα καὶ τὰς ὑπὸ φαρμάκων τῶν ἑταίρων μεταβολάς, οἷα πολλὰ ἐκεῖνος ὡς πρὸς ἰδιώτας ἀνθρώπους ἐτερατεύσατο τοὺς Φαίακας. τούτοις οὖν ἐντυχὼν ἅπασι τοῦ ψεύσασθαι μὲν οὐ σφόδρα τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐμεμψάμην ὁρῶν ἤδη σύνηθες ὂν τοῦτο καὶ τοῖς φιλοσοφεῖν ὑπισχνουμένοις· ἐκεῖνο δὲ αὐτῶν ἐθαύμαζον, εἰ ἐνόμισαν λήσειν οὐκ ἀληθῆ συγγράφοντες. διόπερ καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπὸ κενοδοξίας ἀπολιπεῖν τι σπουδάσας τοῖς μεθ᾽ ἡμᾶς, ἵνα μὴ μόνος ἄμοιρος ὦ τῆς ἐν τῷ μυθολογεῖν ἐλευθερίας, ἐπεὶ μηδὲν ἀληθὲς ἱστορεῖν εἶχον — οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐπεπόνθειν ἀξιόλογον — ἐπὶ τὸ ψεῦδος ἐτραπόμην πολὺ τῶν ἄλλων εὐγνωμονέστερον· κἂν ἓν γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο ἀληθεύσω λέγων, ὅτι ψεύσομαι. οὕτω δ᾽ ἄν μοι δοκῶ καὶ τὴν παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων κατηγορίαν ἐκφυγεῖν αὐτὸς ὁμολογῶν μηδὲν ἀληθὲς λέγειν. γράφω τοίνυν περὶ ὧν μήτε εἶδον μήτε ἔπαθον μήτε παρ᾽ ἄλλων ἐπυθόμην, ἔτι δὲ μήτε ὅλως ὄντων μήτε τὴν ἀρχὴν γενέσθαι δυναμένων. διὸ δεῖ τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας μηδαμῶς πιστεύειν αὐτοῖς.

(fig 28) *True Histoire, 1927*

52.

type is immediatly evident when the Roman and Greek alphabets are seen side by side. The engravings are quite simple without much white line being worked into the black mass. The composition is good and the layout of the pages is aesthetically pleasing. Perhaps there is just a bit too much text on each spread. Had Gibbings designed this volume in later years he might have been a bit more generous with space.

With Gill there followed Troilus and Criseyde , 'Sonnets and Verses' by Enid Clay and The Song of Songs . Then Gibbings published The Passion , printed in Latin. The article in the Colophon explains the design which capitalised upon the predominance of round letter forms like m,n,u,with very few ascenders and descenders. Gibbings found the composition of the type pleasing and stimulating. It encouraged him to dispense with justification on the right hand side of the text -"entirely a convention"*(17)- and set the text closely to capitalise on the interplay between words and letters.

In 1930 Gibbings produced and illustrated Milton's Paradise Lost

(Fig. 29) and once again the integration of both text and illustration is consummately handled. It bears a resemblance to Lamia with its vegetation and langourous bodies. The snake is beautifully used to join decoration and type.

Meanwhile Gibbings worked with several other artists as well, notably Noel Rooke (The Nativity), John and David Nash, David Jones and other contemporary wood-engravers. The ultimate achievement of the Golden Cockeral Press was executed in conjunction with Eric Gill. In The Four Gospels of 1931 (Fig. 26) artist and typographer unite. Type and engraving blend to perfection. Gibbings considered the engravings Gill executed for The Four Gospels to be his finest exercise in that medium. The book can be ranked alongside the Kelmscott Chaucer and the Dove's Bible .

The volume is printed in the Golden Cockeral typeface designed by Gill and is decorated by forty-one of his engravings. Gill was one of a number of typographers and stone-cutters who had been inspired by the lettering on Trajans Column. The Golden Cockeral typeface is one of classical beauty but its individual character comes from its elongated serifs and elegant extended capitals (Fig. 26). When Gill had determined broadly the mass of his decoration Gibbings then set
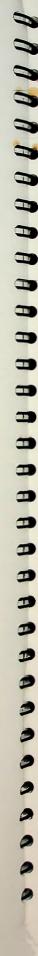
OF MANS First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal Tast
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,
In the Beginning, how the Heav'ns and Earth
Rose out of chaos: or if Sion Hill

(fig 29) Paradise Lost, 1930

54.

the type before Gill completed the page with the finished engravings.
Again Gibbibgs dispenses with the convention and opts for
aesthetically attractive close spacing in preferance to justified
type. Gill embellishes the angularities of large capitals or single
words with appropriatly composed and conc ved scenes and figures.
Like the arrival of the shepherds, the Deposition takes place above
the word "And", as does the Burial of Christ. The crucfixion occurs
over the word "Then'. The entire book is an integrated whole and

displays every quality which Gibbings demanded of the letterpress.
Every expression of human life and emotion is exposed within the
parameters of good design. Empson and Balston ignore the volume.

Things were not going well at the Press. Despite several years of
prosperity and growth, of full order books and ambitious projects,
the depression was taking its toll. Gibbings worked on relentlessly.
In 1932 he organised a journey, this time to the West Indies in
return for work executed during the expedition. The subsequent XIV
Engravings on Wood represent the level of expertise which Gibbings
had achieved as an engraver during his years at the Press. These are
independant engravings like those in his own Twelve Wood Engravings
(Fig. 13) of 1921. He has retained the power and strength of those
enthusiastic early prints but has so much more in addition.
Long, fluid lines and infinitely varied textures indicate that his
technical proficiency was now reaching an outstanding level.
 Mediterranean Calm (Fig. 30) demonstrates restrained but dynamic
composition and the distribution of black and white has a classical
balance which perfectly suggests 'calm'. The fish in Mid Coral
Caves, Bermuda (Fig. 31) are rendered with a technical expertise
which captures life and movement and texture, while the picture works
simultaneously as pure pattern and design. Gibbings could now capture
life aswell as just texture and bulk.

In 1933 Gibbings had finally to succomb to the depression. He sold
the Golden Cockeral Press for whatever it would fetch. He was
virtually penniless. For nine years he had devoted every moment of
time and energy to the Press and while eventually it lost him a
fortune financially, it owed him nothing. From his time with the
press Gibbings had discovered his own talents as a book designer,

(fig 30) *Mediterranean Calm, 1932*

(fig 31) Mid Coral Caves, Bermuda, 1932

typographer and art director. His wood-engraving, channelled along a
very specific route, had been improved and refined and he was now a
highly skilled engraver. His competence in both technique and
expression was outstanding.

The years at the Golden Cockeral had been intensive and wearing. It
broke Gibbings' heart to sell the Press but as a person remarkable
for his clarity of vision and grasp of life, he was able to see
himself that the enforced sale was not an entirely negative step.
Gibbings was hungry for time. He was objective enough to recognise
that:
"now I was free, and as I stood up 'naked before the Lord'my work
improved".*(18)

CHAPTER THREE

His Press, house and belongings sold Gibbings now retired to
Cornwall, penniless and in poor spirits. However he was relishing the
increased freedom and spare time of life without the Golden Cockeral.
He continued working on two books which were published in 1934 by the
Golden Cockeral Press — Glory of Life (Fig. 32) and Beasts and
Saints (Fig. 33). Gibbings had evidently profitted from his
increased leiure time. He was free to wander and observe, to engrave
with the time and pleasure which had eluded him in his years at the
Press. The subject matter of these books appealed to him and as he
worked on the pictures of birds, fish and other animals he must have
been reminded of his plesent childhood in Cork. The quality of
engraving in these two books is outstanding. In Fig.s 32 and 33 there
are beautifully balanced concentrations of blacks and whites.
Movement and life breath from the trees and snakes, and the seagull
alights with majesty. The engravings are essays in control. Gibbings
is also making good use of different marks obtained with the burin —
the pocking on the peculiarly rooted tree is a good example. The
foliage is substantial and lively. These compositions are filled with
character and humour. They reflect the delight which Gibbings now
experienced as he went about his work. Glory of Life was a hymn of
praise by Gibbings' friend, the poet Llewelyn Powys. Beasts and
Saints was a collection of stories telling of the mutual charities
between men and animals. Both were subjects which appealed
specifically to Gibbings, and of his illustrations he could say:
"The engravings in these two books were the best that I had so far
accomplished, and gradually the sadness that I had felt at losing my

press was dissipated".(*19)

The Golden Cockeral Press was taken over by Christopher Sandford and
Owen Rutter. As a partnership they maintained the high standards
which Gibbings had established. Gibbings did a considerable amount of
work for the press under its new directors and still kept in close
contact with the design of his books. In 1934 came The Voyage of the
Bounty's Launch and in 1935, The Wreck of the Whaleship Essex . The
quality of the engravings is excellent. The Journal of James
Morrison (Fig. 34) is of particular interest because it evolved out
of Gibbings'personal literary research. He was fascinated by the
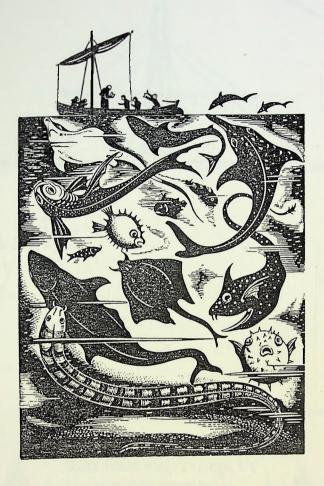
(a) (fig 32) Glory of Life, 1934
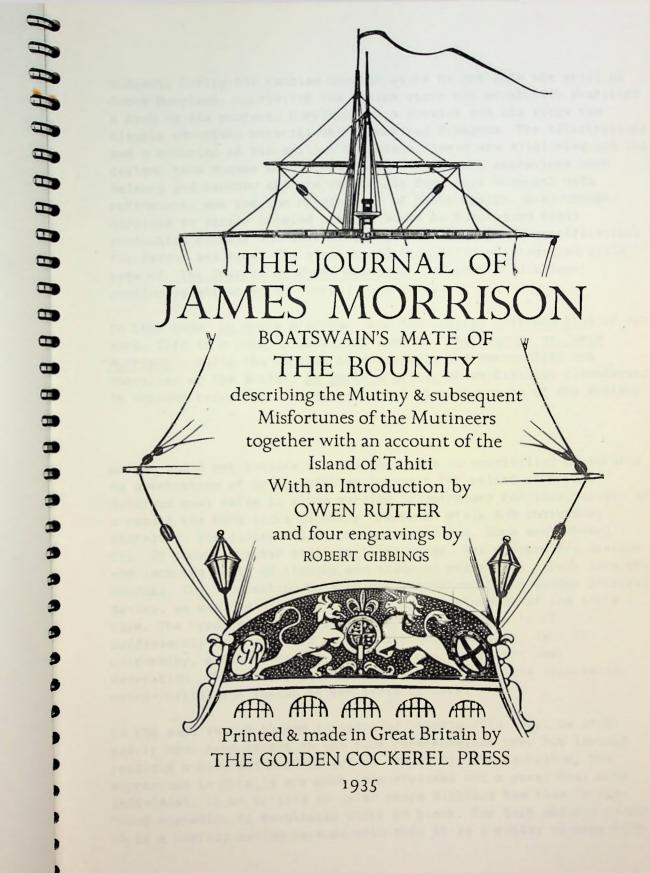
(b) (fig 32) Glory of Life, 1934

(fig 33) Beasts and Saints, 1934

THE JOURNAL OF
JAMES MORRISON
BOATSWAIN'S MATE OF
THE BOUNTY
describing the Mutiny & subsequent
Misfortunes of the Mutineers
together with an account of the
Island of Tahiti
With an Introduction by
OWEN RUTTER
and four engravings by
ROBERT GIBBINGS

Printed & made in Great Britain by
THE GOLDEN COCKEREL PRESS
1935

(fig 34) The Journal of James Morrison, 1935

63.

subject. During his rambles through books he got onto the trail of
James Morrison, unravelled the entire story and eventually completed
a book on the subject. Morrison was a convict and his story was
classic adventure material which inspired Gibbings. The illustrations
saw a muturing of his skills. The black masses are eliminated and the
designs have become more linear and complex. The engravings have
balance and harmony and are remarkable for their strength with
refinement, and for the originality of their design. Even though
Gibbings no longer printed his own books he supervised their
production closely and still undertook the layout and specifications
for layout and type. The elegant and thoughtfully integrated title
page of The Journal of James Morrison is proof of Gibbings'
continuing attention to overall book design.

In 1936 came Le Morte d'Arthur for the Limited Editions Club of New
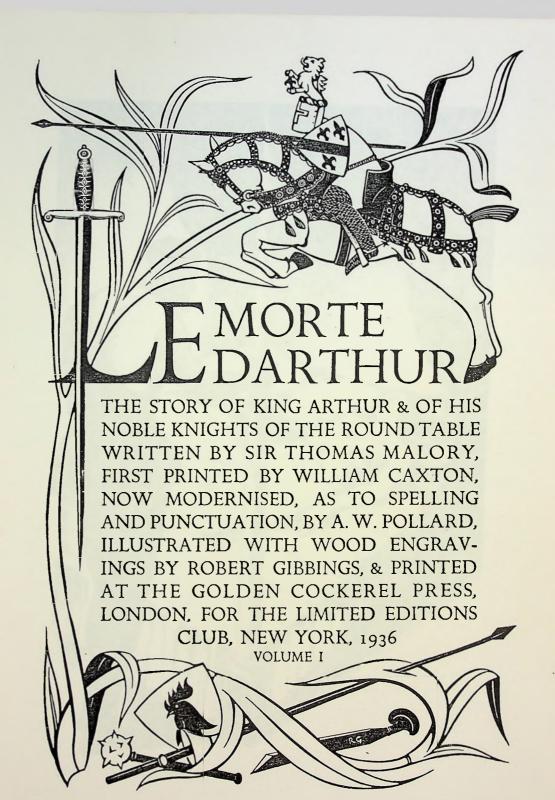York. This is a totally different book to The Journal of James
Morrison . While the Journal is steeped in the personality and
character of the artist, Le Morte d'Arthur shows Gibbings floundering
in unknown territory. The historic and distant nature of the subject

matter could not inspire him and there was no possibility of turning
to observation of the natural environment for relief. Instead,
Gibbings must refer to other earlier illustrators for inspiration. As
a result the work lacks Gibbings' personal stamp and individual
character. The illustrations are quite stilted. Some are awkward.
Fig. 35 shows a rather stiff,stylised horse. The designs are shallow
and lack the depth of thought and planning which went a book like the
Journal. Its interesting to note the inclusion of the Golden Cockeral
device, as well as Gibbings' own emblem, at the foot of the title
page. The typography is good and the general layout is of
sufficiently high standard to pull the book together, lend it
uniformity, and thus divert attention from the rather weak
decoration. The title page is a good example, with its interesting
sword-initial and layout of the title in total.

In the same year Gibbings illustrated Othello (Fig. 36). He might
easily have been caught in the same referenceless trap but instead
produced a book which stood out as one of his own favorites. The
engravings in Othello are much less stylised and a great deal more
individual. In an article in later years Gibbings has this to say:
"Wood engraving is esentially white on black. For dark skinned people
it is a perfect medium because with them it is a matter of engraving

LE MORTE DARTHUR

THE STORY OF KING ARTHUR & OF HIS NOBLE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE WRITTEN BY SIR THOMAS MALORY, FIRST PRINTED BY WILLIAM CAXTON, NOW MODERNISED, AS TO SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION, BY A. W. POLLARD, ILLUSTRATED WITH WOOD ENGRAVINGS BY ROBERT GIBBINGS, & PRINTED AT THE GOLDEN COCKEREL PRESS, LONDON. FOR THE LIMITED EDITIONS CLUB, NEW YORK, 1936
VOLUME I

(fig 35) Le Morte d'Arthur, 1936

(fig 36) Othello, 1940

lights on darks. But for light skinned people one needs dark accents on white, and you cannot engrave dark accents; you can only engrave round them, and I have always disliked the black line".*(20)
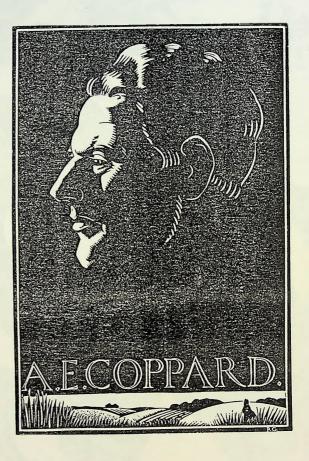
Therein lies the reason why Othello inspired Gibbings. He had a facination with dark-skinned people and he had plenty of first hand observational practice at rendering them during his visits to Tahiti and other foreign islands. Unlike Gill, Gibbings avoided the human

form in most of his work. There are almost no examples of portraiture among his engravings but the one of A.E. Coppard (Fig. 39) from 1928 which demonstrates his ability to negotiate the difficulty with black line. Here he casts the whole face into dense black shadow and sculpts the profile in white most effectively.
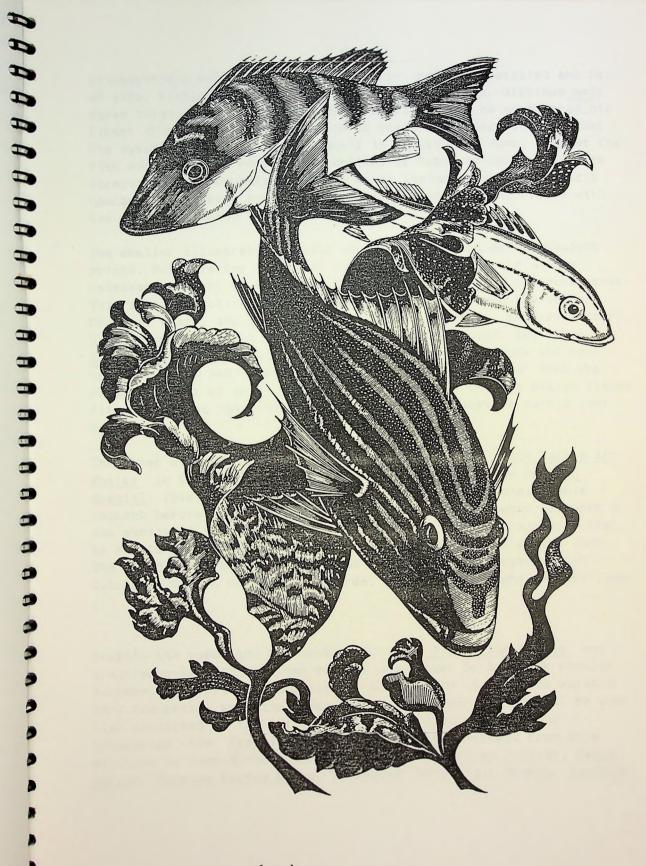
The years from 1936 to 1940 saw financial problems stabilise for Gibbings. He was offered a lectureship at Reading University. He accepted this and taught book production at least three days a week on condition that he could always "keep one eye cocked on typography" *(21). The lecturing hours allowed Gibbings time to think even during term time, and, as a bonus, he had long summer holidays which he could now afford to spend indulging his love of travel. His lecturer's salary was supplemented by commissions from publishers. Just as at the Golden Cockeral Press, there was an inconsistency about some of his commercial work. Much of it was hurried. Money buys time, and many of the publishing houses wanted Gibbings' work, but could not afford to buy his time. Not all the books illustrated during this period reflect the impeccable standards of which Gibbings was capable.

During the summer of 1937 Gibbings travelled to Bermuda where he pursued his love of observation yet further, descending twenty feet below the surface of the sea. He stayed at the Marine Biological Station where he borrowed diving apparatus to enable to draw from life the fantastic marine activity of the warm seas. He engraved later from the drawings he made with pencil onto xylonite as he explored the coral reefs. The engravings became, in 1938, the illustrations for his first significant literary work, Blue Angels and Whales . The book is notable for a number of reasons. The

(fig 37) A.E.Coppard, 1928

(fig 38) Bermudian Fish, 1938

illustrations were of the finest quality, refined, detailed and full
of life. Although not actually included in the book, Gibbings made
three large, independent engravings of fish which he considered amongst his
finest (Fig. 38). The composition of these engravings is such that
the spectator feels that he himself is twenty feet down, amongst the
fish and the coral reefs. The handling of light is impeccable. The
observation is accurate enough to merit inclusion in a scientific
handbook, yet these are very definitly Gibbings' fish, filled with
the character which he saw within them.

The smaller illustrations might equally well stand as independent
prints. But here for the first time, the engravings are a very
necessary element of the book. This is not decoration of letterpress.
This is illustration in the truest sense. All through his Golden
Cockeral years, and even after leaving it, Gibbings' primary concern
was the embellishment of letterpress with decoration. But Blue
Angels and Whales demanded serious illustration to make the text
entirely lucid and comprehensible. Thereafter, Gibbings' work was
primarily that of an illustrator. He was always to be a design biased
illustrator but this new slant gave continuing impetus to his long
career.

The other significant point to be remembered about Blue Angels and
Whales is that it was published as the first sixpenny Penguin
Special. This was a venture to which Gibbings gave considerable
thought before getting involved. He refused to surrender his work to
the perils of a commercial printing house without guaranteeing that
he should have control over the layout and production of the book.
The standard of book production at this level could never match
Gibbings' Golden Cockeral standards, yet the typography was very good

despite the paper and the machining. Blue Angels and Whales was a
great success. Gibbings was greatly encouraged by both the popular
success of the Penguin and also by the quality of the work which a
very commercial printing house could when properly directed. He was
also appointed to the art-directorship of this new sixpenny
enterprise —the Penguin Illustrated Classics series. From this
position he commisgioned such engravers as Gwendolen Raverat, Helen
Binyon, Douglas Percey Bliss, Ethelbert White, Iain Macnab, Gertrude

Hermes and others to illustrate these immensely popular books. Gibbings was transferring his skills from private press days to the commercial press of the future. Penguin has been the most influential publishing house of the last fifty years, introducing good literature to a vast new book-buying public. Gibbings' art-director role was highly significant.

Recognising the potential of this new book-buying public, Gibbings became interested in the idea of writing and illustrating another book of his own for production under similar circumstances. Simultaneously, despite thoroughly enjoying his work as a teacher, traveller, engraver, Gibbings felt a great need for yet more peace and freedom:
"In the early days of 1939 there arose in me a great desire to find peace beside a river. I wanted more than ever to get that same closeness to nature to which I had referred..."*(22).

From 1939 until his death in 1958 Robert Gibbings pursued his instinctive desire to get close to nature. His travels took him from England to Ireland, from France to Tonga. The product of these years were his eight finest books. His literary efforts provided the perfect vehicle for his wood engravings. Now he became an illustrator

in the fullest sense as he engraved descriptive pictures to enhance and elucidate the captivating stories of all that he met, saw and experienced on his travels. The quality of his engravings reached a level of perfection which was unsurpassed by any of his contempories and unequalled, except perhaps by Gill. Gibbings' long standing friendship and association is reflected in his work. Gone is the direct influence evident in Lamia . In its stead is a certain similarity in perception and interpertation. The austerity and taught line of Gill's engravings and sculpture manifests itself as a clear, precise, incisive definition in Gibbings' work.

In August 1939 Gibbings embarked on an exploration of the Thames in a small flat-bottomed boat:
"I planned to float down-stream at the river's own pace, and to look for nothing but what I might see as I moved along, consigning all guide-books to the devil, and offering the same hospitality to insistent and obtrusive advisors".*(23)

like the ditch side of a fence,' said Mr Fred Cook, the local gamekeeper, to whom I mentioned it. Then he took me to a clearing in a wood and showed me where every year a pair of partridges nest, and where every year their brood gets drowned in a dike which separates the woodland from the open country. He said that as soon as the clutch is hatched the parents make for the fields, calling to their young to follow them. But, though the water is no obstacle to the old birds, it is too big a jump for the fledgelings. And thus the annual disaster takes place.

156

(fig 39) *Sweet Thames Run Softly, 1940*   72.

Of another pair he tells how they both dived and brought to the surface beakfuls of dark ribbony weed, after which, having swum towards each other, they lifted themselves so high out of the water that only the tips of their tail ends remained below the surface.   In this position they rocked gently from side to side 'as if swaying to the music of a dance.'
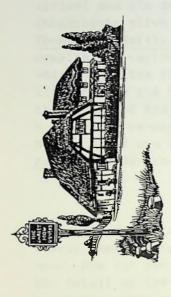
Finally Professor Huxley describes the actual act of mating.   'Sitting on the bank one day, looking out over a broad belt of low flags and rushes, I saw a grebe come swimming steadily along parallel to the bank, bending its head forward a little with each stroke, as is the bird's way in all but very leisurely swimming. I happened to look further on in the direction in which it was going, and there, twenty or thirty yards ahead of it, I saw what I took to be a dead grebe floating on the water.   The body was rather humped up; the neck

166

(fig 40) Sweet Thames Run Softly, 1940   73.

hedgerow the parasol mushroom shows its ruffled cap, and dead twigs are bejewelled with 'coral spot.'

Each season of the year, as it comes round, is the best. Each day, each hour that we are alive is the richest. For what is yesterday but a memory, and what is to-morrow—which may never come?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN
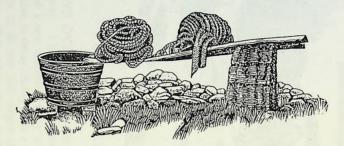
IT WAS TOWARDS the end of the year when I went to renew my acquaintance with the 'Barley Mow' at Clifton Hampden. This house dates from between the years 1320 and 1350, and is a fine example of 'cruck' or 'crutch' building, a form of architecture which can be traced back over two thousand years, and is referred to by both Ovid and Vitruvius. In principle it consists of pairs of crooked trees set up to form arches which are connected at their summits by a ridge-pole. Around this skeleton the house is built. In the earliest times there were no vertical side walls to buildings of this kind, the construction following the bend of the timber; but at a later date horizontal tie-beams were added to the arches, and these projecting on either side were fitted into upright walls built to receive them. As the engraving shows, this feature is clearly seen in the gable end of the inn.

Jerome K. Jerome wrote that this house is 'the

(fig 41) *Sweet Thames Run Softly, 1940*

His compelling account of all that he encountered and observed
revealed an author of genius in his genre. His language was easy and
lyrical and his descriptions brought the country-side and its
inhabitants alive for all his readers, urban and rural alike. Sweet
Thames Run Softly published in 1940, was a massive success and
despite the wartime paper restrictions it went through ten large
editions in the following seven years. The engravings liberally
illustrating the text are of superb quality. So great is his skill at
this stage of his career that to pick out particular examples becomes
a matter of personal choice. Landscapes, riverscapes, houses, birds,
beasts and flora are all beautifully rendered. The nest amongst the
reeds (Fig 39) shows the long, fluid, curving line of the skilled

engraver. Such a simple little picture is brought to life by the very
energy expended by the artist as he pushes the burin against the
wood. One can sense how he holds his breath as works carefully over
the detail of the nest, and then the zest with which he renders the
sweeping leaves of the reeds. Similarly, he imbues his Grebe (Fig.40)
with character and life as he rests upon his nest. Simple,
beautifully executed vignettes, e.g. the mushrooms (Fig. 41) are
dropped in at intervals, and the layout and balance of book matches
anything available from a private press. Through his relationship
with J.M. Dent and Sons and the Aldine Press, Gibbings ensured the
continued quality of the production of his books and set a very high
standared from which the other commercial printing houses could only
benefit by following.

A series of books followed in which Gibbings gave accounts of
journeys down various rivers, each superbly illustrated with
sensitive engravings remarkable for their clarity. It seemed natural
for Gibbings to return to Ireland where he spent fifteen months in
his native Cork and subsequently produced Lovely is the Lee (1945).
The book reads like a tribute to the country and people which were so
important to him. It is a book which must be read to appreciate the
depth of Gibbings' empathy with his environment. Lovely is the Lee
is a captivating collection of descriptions, scenery, anecdotes,
conversations, folk-lore, history and accounts of all types of flora,
fauna and human life. It is a book full of his own virtually
pantheistic spirituality. The engravings with which it is illustrated
are of a harmonious perfection which springs from years of technical
practice combined with a perfect range of subject matter. Compare the
illustration (Fig. 42) of ropes and fishing nets piled upon a

Curraghs, like stranded whales, lay at the head of small beaches, beaches jewelled with shells. A net and a coil of rope, recently tanned, and now resting on a sheet of corrugated iron, drained their superfluous liquid back into the tan tub.

Along this coast it is considered most unlucky to save a man from drowning. 'The sea must have its due.' If you save a man, you or one of your family will most certainly be taken instead. The same belief is held in the Orkney and Shetland islands, and there are many people, on the east coast of Scotland, who will not even lift a dead body from the sea into a boat. 'It belongs to the sea.' Among some of the tribes of central and south-east Africa there is a similar reluctance to help a drowning man. To do so will bring misfortune on the rescuer. Closely connected with this idea was the custom among the vikings of Scandinavia, as it was also among many primitive people, to fasten one or more human beings to the rollers over which a ship, or war canoe, was launched. They were offerings to the sea. It was, no doubt, a survival of a similar belief that, till recently, caused two or more of the ship's apprentices to be ducked in the bow wave of the Peterhead whalers as they were launched from the shipyards at Aberdeen. Orkney boys fishing with the line throw back the first fish caught. It will bring luck, this offering of first fruits to the sea-god. And there are parallels to be found all over the world. In Morocco if the water in certain wells is scarce it will

(fig 42) *Lovely is the Lee, 1945*   76.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AT FIVE O'CLOCK in the afternoon of the 16th May I sat in glory. I had pitched my tent on an island in Lough Carra, and I was surrounded by an aureole of last year's reeds, golden in decay, rising from a turquoise lake. To the west a line of distant hills might have been islands in the Aegean Sea. Pale green lights in the water suggested the shelving sands of coral lagoons. Behind me, to the south, a thick, almost impenetrable wood. To the east, beyond a haze of tall tasselled reeds, the home of my host Robert Rutledge. He had given me the island, he had given me a boat. When I wanted food there was a chair at his table.

60

So I sat there, outside my tent, listening to the lapping of the water, to the cries of the gulls, to the love song of a sand-piper, 'Sissis-*see*-si sissis-*see*-si,' to the heavy beat of a pigeon's wings, to the sweetest of all music, the song of the willow wren. Overhead, there was a sky such as one glimpses through a door or window in an early Italian painting. Close by my feet a brimstone butterfly fluttered over the yellow flowers of the trefoil which broke through the grasses among the juniper and sapling birch-trees. While I watched, a mallard with her brood of youngsters swam close to the shore. Through my glasses I could see a redshank feeding on the shore of another island. It had sensed a worm in the mud. Time and again it probed, getting more and more excited each time. But the worm eluded it and the bird continued its peregrinations. Then, in the field beyond, a grey donkey brayed. From half a mile away a small black jackass answered. The two ran towards each other and, meeting, rubbed nose to nose, affectionately.

As the evening wore on I wandered into the wood. It was to me a miniature primeval world. Deep in this small jungle, creepers struggled for supremacy over a carpet of ferns, dead leaves, and nightshade. Ivy and clematis festooned fallen trees, smothering branches already fleeced with moss and lichen. Everywhere a network of interlacing timbers. Deep shadows under thick holly-trees, glints of sunlight on sprays of brier.
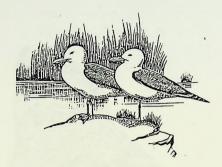
In a glade I closed my eyes to the sudden glare of the sun. When I opened them, dazzled, the thicket seemed ablaze with stars. White flowers of strawberry, white flowers of spindle-wood, cool blue of speedwell, yellow of cinquefoil. Flowers of the blackthorn, catkins of alder. Wild thyme and sweetbrier scenting the air.

At the far side of the wood I looked through a curtain of sunlit leaves to a lake whose calm water seemed on fire. The western sky was radiant, but darkness was growing in the stones at my feet. The wind rustled in the trees, a black-bird sang, a moorhen clucked, a heron croaked. Trees grew

77.

(b) (fig 43) Lovely is the Lee, 1945

(fig 44) Thomas Bewick: The Eagle Owl, 1797

makeshift bench with the earliest Erewhon vignettes (Fig. 14). The

former has a clarity and definitiveness borne of outstanding
craftsmanship, close observation and unlimited fascination with the
subject. Basketry, rope, net and wood are all rendered skillfully. It
is easy to catagorise these illustrations as "traditional". They are
traditional —but they represent the highest achievement in a
tradition which is of undeniable significance within British
vernacular art. Lough Carra (Fig. 43) is a beautifully composed
landscape. His seagulls and insects (Fig. 43b) are in the very best
Bewick tradition. It was a preoccupation with the details of
structure and texture which led Bewick to exploit the white—line
technique in his engraving (Fig. 44). Gibbings uses it to the same
effect, for expressing materials, textures and light. He uses white
line as illumination upon a surface that reveals the detail. Despite
the similarity of technique and aspiration in the work of Bewick and
then Gibbings, so much later, both these artists produced highly
individual engravings. The prospect of two engravers producing
identical work is simply impossible within the burin designed
technique. The fact that an engraver must grasp a burin and make a
line in wood defies copying since no two bodies will achieve an
identical line. The movement of the hand against the block is not a
mechanical operation and the curve is always changing with the rhythm
of the engraver.
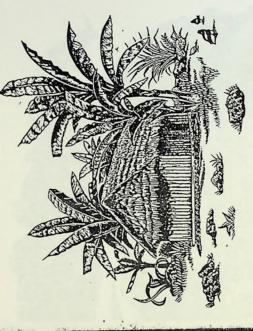
If a pinnacle can be identified in the skill of Robert Gibbings then
surely it is in the book Over the Reefs , published in 1949.
Gibbings could afford to spend three years travelling, researching,
and, most importantly, observing before writing this book. It was his
triumph as a writer, as an engraver, and as a book designer. It is
remarkable for its well balanced pages, whatever the format or layout
of the text and illustration (Fig.s 45 and 46). Chapter headings,

tail—pieces and all other illustrations are superbly integrated
(Fig.s 47,48 and 49). Gibbings has supervised everything. Over the
Reefs represents perfect harmony between engraving and letterpress
in the field of commercial publishing. The engravings have become
lighter, more refined and more detailed. Wood—engraving is the
language of light. The concept of light is as fundamental to wood—
engravers as it is to the French Impressionists. But the form of

there was none of that devastating annihilation of white marble.

'What would you like for yourself?' said my host, a cheerful trader. 'I'll have it put in hand for you.'
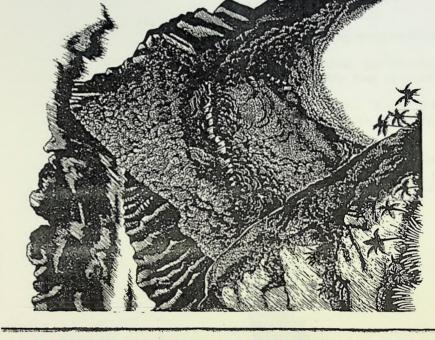
'Well,' I said, 'what about a cherub in a green shirt, with a pencil behind one ear and a graver behind the other and he busy with a piece of indiarubber wiping out the smudges on a sheet of white paper?'

'Wouldn't you like any flowers?' he asked.

'Put a little shamrock at my feet,' I said.

81.

(fig 45) *Over the Reefs*

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

SURE ENOUGH, there was a welcome for me on Mangaia, though not quite as Andy had predicted. The missionary at Rarotonga knew of the books that Eric Gill had illustrated for me when I owned the Golden Cockerel Press. He knew, too, that Eric had been a relative of the Rev. Wyatt Gill, one of the early missionaries, who had spent the greater part of his ministry on Mangaia. So a message had been sent to the native pastor on Mangaia that a friend of the 'Gilli' family was coming to the island. A few days after my arrival I received the following letter:

'Sir, The Pastor, Dickons and all the Members of the London Missionary Society of Oneroa are inviting you to attend to the Morning Service next Sunday at 9 a.m. and also to be at the Mission House for Meal at 12 noon. We shall be too please if you accept our kind invitation without fail. Please reply before your decision.'

O.R.—6*

cut in the belt of luxuriant vegetation that follows the shore-line of the island. No sooner had I alighted than I was aware of incongruity. I was still more aware of it when I reached the town. Every man was wearing shirt and trousers, every woman a European frock—there wasn't a *lavalava* to be seen. And instead of the gentle 'Talofa!' with which I had been greeted everywhere in Samoa, it was now a crisp 'Good morning' or even a curt 'Hallo!'

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE EIGHT-HUNDRED-MILE FLIGHT from Samoa had been uneventful save for a few moments when the vast dunes of snow-white vapour over which we passed had parted and, far below, we could see Palmerston Atoll, its lagoon a pale translucent green as we approached, an intense electric blue as we looked back, amid the deep ultramarine of the sea. The plane circled the high volcanic peaks of Rarotonga, and came to earth on the long strip

82.

(fig 46) Over the Reefs, 1949

'In England.'
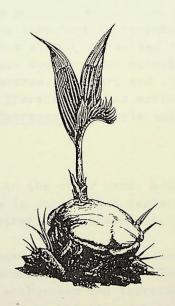
'England far away,' she said, with a long-drawn emphasis on the 'far.'

'But I can't see the need of abstraction,' said Harding, recalling my thoughts more appositely than he knew. 'Isn't nature good enough?'

'It certainly is pretty wonderful at times,' I said, 'but I'm not sure at this precise moment whether it is always wise to follow it.'

'I think you're tired,' said Harding.

We climbed out of our long cane chairs, and I said good night to the two girls. Sina seemed a little surprised, a little puzzled; but when I saw her next day she smiled at me as she went by. Bless her little heart.

114

(fig 47) Over the Reefs, 1949   83.

light is very different. The Impressionists were concerned with the defraction of the beam. Albert Garrett*(24) explains that the engraver, on the other hand, deals with three different types of light. The untouched woodblock is an area of black space in which all light is absorbed. Through the burin light is admitted. It may enter at a minimum level through the pointed beam; or it may sculpt form through a series of parallel beams. Alternatively, the form can be revealed by flooding it with a full light source, developing an environment around the object. Most engravers will become particularly accomplished in one technique especially. Gibbings uses all three techniques extensively and to perfection. His control of light is what marks him as an outstanding engraver. Draughtsmanship is an essential skill and Gibbings excelled when drawing on the woodblock. Any of the engravings in Over the Reefs will stand up to the closest technical scrutiny. The variety of the illustrations is outstanding. Combined with harmonious type, the whole book becomes an example of what can be achieved within the limitations imposed by the commercial press. It is important to remember that the British publishing tradition has always emphasised the importance of literature as a priority over art. On mainland Europe, in France and Germany, it was the reverse, with art and illustration always given preference over text. Therefore it was easier to include illustrations in the Expressionist style and allow them dominate the

production. Gibbings, on the other hand, acknowledges the British tradition yet succeeds in achieving a perfect balance and harmony between text and illustration, between literature and art.

Robert Gibbings continued to travel, write and engrave until his death in 1958. He returned to Ireland in 1958 and wrote Sweet Cork of Thee . His energy, enthusiasm and thoroughness never declined. In Sweet Thames Run Softly he had "found himself". He had found a medium in which Gibbings the author, the observer, the craftsman, the decorator and the illustrator were all united. They remained united in all his subsequent work until his long and accomplished career ended in 1958 with Till I End my Song . It was a suitable book on which to close —its title came from the verse which had also marked the first step upon the final stage of his distinguished association with the pen, the burin and the woodblock:
"Sweet Thames run softly, till I end my song".*(25)

That morning the work had been to interview a man whose pig he had shot. Though it is against the law in Samoa for pigs to be kept near the houses, there are few villages in which a pig may not be seen roaming. Occasionally the edict is sent forth that any of these animals seen in a village are to be shot by the local constable. 'Last week I shoot pig,' said Joane. 'Kovana (governor) say shoot all pig in village. I shoot pig. To-day man belong pig come along, he say he velly solly. He say him no fault, he say me no fault; he say just pig he make mistake.'
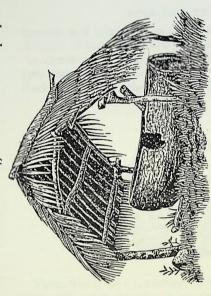
All the time music. From the early hours of dawn the notes of a guitar or ukulele coming from a *fale*, or from youth or maid who, passing, touches lightly on the strings. Even a mother while suckling her baby will play softly on her guitar; even a child picking his steps towards the 'little house' that stands in the lagoon will tinkle as he goes, will tinkle also while he sits.

Most of these instruments are home-made; the half-shell of a coco-nut gives pleasant tone as a sound-box, an empty pilchard tin gives a more metallic note. It is not generally known that the word ukulele was originally a nickname for a sprightly young Englishman who, about the year 1879, was chamberlain to the jovial King Kalakaua of Hawaii. In contrast to the king, who was heavy and stately, this young man was extremely agile in his movements, so much so that he became known, affectionately, as 'jumping flea'—in Hawaiian *uku lele*. Because he was

rarely seen without one of the small guitars that at that time were being introduced from Portugal, those instruments acquired the same name.

There is great peace at Fangamalo. Save for the music, an occasional murmur of human voices, and the far rustle of the reef, there is no sound. Only at rare intervals does one hear the drums, the big *lali* to summon the people to church, the smaller hand drums to call the children to school. And everywhere a glow of colour, colour that is alive and changing. At one moment the hibiscus flowers are a vivid crimson, at the next a scarlet, bright as flame. The swathes of lilies on the lawns are the colours of hydrangeas, blue or pink according to the light. Day after day the lagoon shimmers, a moonstone blue.

At almost any hour of the day there are fishermen in the lagoon. It may be a solitary youth with a throw-net in the shallow water; or it may be men, far out on the reef, hurling their spears into the on-coming waves. Sometimes in the early morning there is a procession of canoes: singly or by twos or threes they pass. At a given point they will deploy, closing in again, later, to form a circle. Inside that circle are heaped up coral rocks. The plan is

85.

(fig 48) Over the Reefs, 1949

bananas and taro on a pole across his shoulders, for a distance of four miles. He said it was an average load. An eleven-year-old boy carried half that weight with as little thought. There may not be much working to the clock in Samoa, but there is plenty of work.

There was always something to watch in the village, if it was only a man weaving an eye-shade from a fragment of palm frond, or another making fire with two sticks, or a couple of youths preparing the daily oven, or women grating arrowroot, or, among the nobler callings, men building a house.

A box of matches is a rarity in Sa'anapu. Instead of being dependent for them on a store several miles away, it is so much easier to rub two sticks against each other. One is held flat on the ground with the foot, the other is held in the hands and rubbed backwards and forwards, at an angle, along the piece that lies on the ground. As this is done, a groove is formed in the lower unit and small particles of displaced wood accumulate there. Provided the wood is dry and the friction steadily increased, those particles soon begin to smoulder, and with the addition of a little tinder can be quickly blown into a flame. It is only necessary for the effort to be made once each day in the village. Torches carried from house to house supply the needs of all.

70

(fig 49) Over the Reefs, 1949   8b.

like, the houses clung to their stony platforms. Except for small openings on the sheltered side, all the blinds were let down and made fast. Men climbed on to the roofs and fastened coco-nut fronds over weak places in the thatch, or hung banana stalks or baulks of wood across the ridge. Palms with their yielding fronds were like umbrellas blown inside out; wind-whipped bushes like cattle with their backs to the storm. When for a moment sunlight broke through the clouds, children emerged from the *fales* like hermit crabs from their shells, scurrying here and there, naked, splashing in the pools. Women went by, laughing and jesting, their clothes drenched and torn. The booming of the surf on the reef was like the distant rumble of wagons in convoy.

By midday the wind had dropped, but the rain continued to fall, straight as a plumb-line, a heavy thunderous downpour. For me it was the chance of a fresh-water bath. By the time I reached the shore I was wet enough to wash. After a good lather, a swim in the lagoon removed the soap, and then two minutes in the rain removed the salt water. When I re-entered the *fale*, Tupe, one of my attendant maidens, was there, preparing the table for lunch. It didn't matter to her that I wanted to dry myself and dress; those are things that any Samoan can do in public with perfect propriety. Anyway, her thoughts were far away. For long periods she would stand gazing abstractedly out of the *fale*. Then she would rearrange the knife, fork, and plate on the table, then she would rearrange her hair; then she would move the flowers on the table, taking one of them and putting it in her hair, then she would relax again and rest after her efforts. Her first job every morning, even before she brought my breakfast, was to sit on the

53

(fig 50) Over the Reefs, 1949 87.

CONCLUSION

"Sixty-one books are credited to Gibbings, many of them written and illustrated, designed and printed by him —given the opportunity he might well have considered making the paper too. His is an unrepeatable and tremendous output for any one life-time".*(26)

The career of Robert Gibbings came to an end in 1958. Those sixty-one books are a monument to the achievements of Gibbings in the field of book-production and wood-engraving. The books coming off the presses of modern commercial publishing houses stand also as part of his extensive legacy. His insistence on high standards of typography, and his concept of "unity of texture" throughout a book has had a significant influence on commercial printing. His position as an art-director with the Golden Cockeral Press and, later, the Penguin Classics series has helped establish the importance and potential of such a post.

The progression of Gibbings' work is immediatly evident. Those early independent engravings mark the begining of a career which became consistently more specialised, yet one which was remarkable for the sheer diversity and variety of its output. Gibbings chose to divert his energies to book production and his style and technique were adapted appropriately, and with great individuality. He accomplished much in both phases of his career. Evening Sunshine (Fig. 8) is, for this writer, the most striking and memorable of his independent engravings. In it his use of the vanishing-line is progressive and

innovative. The expression of light is outstanding. The illustration and design in his river books and Over the Reefs mark the ultimate achievement of his career in book production. The Four Gospels (Fig. 26) is the greatest example of his competence as an art-director. As an illustrator and designer his skills improved and progressed consistently throughout his long career. Beyond the restrained influence of Gill, his work remained personal, sincere and individual.

Gibbings was a graphic artist who respected tradition and through working within its parameters he helped extend and develop the

concept of book production and modern publishing. He strengthened the established foundations and built upon them. He was a graphic designer whose origins and traditions were of immense importance. There can be no doubt that he was a British designer. His concepts were quite different to those of contemporary mainland Europe. The importance he placed on the book was peculiarly British.

As an engraver his skill cannot be faulted. His competence with wood and burin grew out of a respect for materials. Wood-engraving became the interpretive medium for his exceptional interest in, and knowledge of, nature and the environment. His work is a physical manifestation of the delight he had in life, of his warm personality, and of his consistent demand for the sincere interpretation of his world. His engravings have a clarity and definition which is the product of thinking, planning and observing before engraving begins. When burin is eventually put to woodblock the control of the light is total.

Commercial publishing does not enjoy a particularly flamboyant

position in contemporary graphic design. Book covers are increasing in interest but typography and general design get little publicity. Possibly this is because standards are in fact quite high, a feature which may be traced to the influence of Robert Gibbings, for one. Good book design is virtually taken for granted. Perhaps if some more attention were given to the history of design for mass publishing then Gibbings' name might enjoy a renaissance. A special place in the history of British graphics in the twentieth century is no more than his due. His achievements as a wood-engraver, illustrator, typographer and book designer must surely guarantee the survival of his name.

REFERENCES

Chapter One

1. _Recollections_ by Robert Gibbings, included in _The Wood Engravings of Robert Gibbings_ by Patience Empson, 1959.

2. ibid.

3. _The Wood Engravings of Robert Gibbings_ by Patience Empson, 1959.

4. _Recollections_

5. _The Wood Engravings of Robert Gibbings_ by Thomas Balston, 1949.

6. Quoted in _A History of British Wood Engraving_ by Albert Garrett, 1978.

7. ibid.

8. _Recollections_

9. ibid.

Chapter Two

10. _The Colophon,_ September 1931.

11. _Recollections_

12. _A History of British Wood Engraving_ by Albert Garrett, 1978.

13. _The Colophon,_ September 1931.

14. ibid.

15. ibid.

16. ibid.

17. ibid.

18. Recollections

Chapter Three

19. Recollections

20. ibid.

21. ibid.

22. ibid.

23. ibid.

24. A History of British Wood Engraving
    by Albert Garret, 1978.

25. Recollections

26. A History of British Wood Engraving
    by Albert Garret, 1978.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

BALSTON, Thomas
The Wood Engravings of Robert Gibbings
Art & Technics, London, 1949.

EMPSON, Patience
The Wood Engravings of Robert Gibbings
J.M.Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, 1959.

FURST, Henry
The Modern Woodcut
The Bodley Head Ltd., London, 1924.

GARRETT, Albert
A History of British Wood Engraving
Midas Books, 1978.

GIBBINGS, Robert
Sweet Thames Run Softly
Breslich and Foss, London, 1983.

Lovely is the Lee
J.M.Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1945.

Over the Reefs
Readers Union with J.M.Dent, London, 1949.

GILL, Eric
Autobiography
Jonathon Cape, London, 1940.

Letters of Eric Gill, edited by Walter Shewring

Jonathon Cape, London, 1947.

KIRKUS,A.Mary
Robert Gibbings,a Bibliography
J.M.Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1947

GRAY,Nicolete
A History of Lettering
Phaidon, Oxford, 1986.

TOMKINSON,G.S.
A Select Bibliography of the Principal Modern Presses
First Edition Club, London, 1928.

YORK,Malcolm
Eric Gill: Man of Flesh and Spirit
Constable, London, 1981.

PERIODICALS

THE COLOPHON
New York, Part 7, no.6, September 1931.

THE STUDIO
Volumes: xcvii, February 1929
         lxxvi, 1919
            cx, October 1935
       cxxvii, 1950
         cxxv, April\May 1943
                January 1919

COUNTRY LIFE
Volume cxxvii, no.3283, February 4 1960

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

THE GRAPHICS OF THE GERMAN EXPRESSIONISTS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO:

THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN

&

COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

AND

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE

FACULTY OF FINE ART

DEPARTMENT OF PRINTMAKING

BY   Mary Fitzgerald
      March 1988

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I L L U S T R A T I O N S

1. THE KISS   Edward Munch, 1902, Woodcut

2. WOMAN   Edward Munch, 1895, Drypoint

3. GIRLS BATHING 1   Max Pechstein, 1911, Woodcut

4. RECLINING FEMALE NUDE   Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1905, Woodcut

5. LAZINESS   Felix Vallotton, 1896, Woodcut

6. WOMAN   Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, 1914, Lithograph

7. WOMAN, MAN, SERVANT   Emile Nolde, 1918, Etching

8. PASSAGE TO EMMANUS   Schmidt-Rottluff, 1918, Woodcut

9. BROTHER AND SISTER   Erich Heckel, Woodcut

10. FIVE WOMEN ON THE STREET   Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1913,
                                 Oil on Canas

11. FUNF KOKETTEN (detail)   Kirchner, 1914, Woodcut

12. CONFLICT   Kirchner, 1915, Woodcut

13. PORTRAIT OF SCHAMES   Kirchner, 1917, Woodcut

14. BUDEZESE UNTER UBERHANGENDEN (detail)   Kirchner, 1914

15. GROBE GEBIRQSLANDSHAFT   Kirchner, 1924, Woodcut

16. MOUNTAIN WITH THUNDER   Kirchner, Woodcut

17. COMPOSITION   Kandinsky, 1911, Woodcut

18. ANNUNCIATION   Marc, 1912, Woodcut

19. HAS NOT CHRIST APPEARED TO YOU   Schmidt-Rottluff, 1918,
                                       Woodcut

This study looks at a particular period (1905 - 1913) when
Germany Expressionism was first developed in a modern sense.
It focuses on printmaking as a major vehicle of expression.
The term "expressionism" has a precise definition in this
context. It must be seen in relationship to late nineteenth
century historical factors in Germany and as a manifestation
of certain political social and ideological beliefs.

The members of the Die Brucke group applied particular innov-
ations in printmaking which reinforced their usage, making
it enigmatic, forceful and compelling. A leading artist
who epitemised many of its strengths was Ernst Ludwig Kirchner
and these can be appreciated and understood through a detailed
look at some of his work.

The dictionary definition of expressionism states

"theory or practice in art of seeking to depict, not objective
reality but the subjective emotions and responses that objects
and events arouse in the artist."[1]

Under this definition the term could be applied

"to the work of all modern artists from Cezanne and Rousseau
to Picasso, Dali and the social realist, M. Siporin."[2]

Under Webster's definition, we could find a vast volume
of work which could be termed Expressionist. Beginning
with the callipygian Venus of ancient times, to the painters
like Bosch and his apocalyptic visions, Goyas' black paintings
from the Quinta del Sordo and Van Gogh's wranglings with
the human condition.

Therefore, in its broadest aesthetic sense, Expressionism
encompasses any pictorial, literary or other works of art
that put "emotion" above all else. So Expressionism as
a term is misleading as it does not designate a "style"
in the traditional sense like other "isms", i.e. Cubism
or Fauvism. It is more appropriate to consider it as a
"manner" with its basic characteristic of an over-
intensification of experience and an emphasis on distortion.

The concerns of this thesis are with "Expressionism" in
its narrower historical sense. It refers to the development
in modern art during the period 1900 - 1920 which includes
the formation of Die Brucke.

FOOTNOTES

(1) From Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary
Springfield, Mass. G & C Merriam Company 1963. Pg. 294.

(2) From On the origin of the work 'Expressionism'
Donald E. Gordon Volume 29. 1966. Pg. 381.

"The Eve of the Apocalypse"

The German Historical Situation 1880 - 1905

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the peoples of
Europe were existing in a state of anxiety and anticipation.
The dramatic growth of industrialization led to the birth
of the urban working class who soon began to question social
order and the values of the ruling class. Coupled with
this, Europe was introduced to the revolutionary discoveries
of Einstein and Freud which shattered man's view of himself
within nature. The whole order of society was being
questioned, man's role in the world, urbanization and decay.
The mood of discontent sprung from the questioning and works
of such men as Zola, Jung, Malarme and Shaw, and influenced
a generation of artists.

In the novel The Man Without Qualities , Robert Musil
describes the mood thus:
"Nobody knew exactly what was on the way, nobody was able
to say whether it was to be a new art, a new man, a new
morality or perhaps a re-shaping of society.... But people
were standing up on all sides to fight against the old way
of life.... The Superman was adored and the Subman was adored;
one dreamed of ancient castles and shady avenues, man and
woman in the primeval garden, and the destruction of society."[1]

By the 1890's, Germany itself was in a crisis of intellect
and spirit which sprung from a general dissatisfaction with
Germany's political position. So while the mood of antici-
pation existed throughout Europe,

"Nowhere was the reaction more intense than in Germany,
where anxiety about the future developed into extremes of
utter despair and wild expection", Victor Miesel.[2]

Germany's pre-occupation with national unity characterized
much of her political history during the nineteenth century.
After the collapse of the Medieval Empire in 1268, 'Germany'
was composed of isolated rival states. Indeed, by the end
of the eighteenth century when most of the countries of
Western Europe were in the process of nationalization, Germany
was divided into no less than 1,800 separate entities.
After the defeat of Napolean, the idea of political union
was strongly put forward at the Congress of Vienna and
defeated. The Germany empire was finally proclaimed in
1871.

From this point onward, German industrialization grew at
an unprecendented rate. Between 1871 and 1914, iron and
steel production exceeded France three times over. "The
great leap forward"   begun in 1895, the Kiel Canal was
completed, the first Zepplins were built, in short, Berlin
became the economic and political centre of power.

Expansion led to the rise of the working class, urbanization
and a concentration of population in cities and towns, often
in slums. There, a feeling of comradeship grew and the
socialist movement gained momentum.

"....The holy things were statute labour, coercion, encumb-
rance, necessity - things that were not voluntary and that
keep man from finding himself. Work itself, the system
which pulled people into its mills with iron arms. The
desire for money, profit, power ambition and satisfaction,
these were lies, slavery, exploitation of egotistic instincts,
a lack of love among all men".[3]   Cotto Flake.

The reaction to this growth, i.e. concerns with materialism,
was seen by many as un-German. There were those who believed
the essence of German life was being dismantled by an
increasingly bourgeois-dominated society. As the main critic
of the time states,

"... All spiritual forces should be set free, all sham stamped
out, every organization of idealistic intent allowed and
encouraged, if this were done, it would be a joy to be alive.
Instead, it is a punishment today to have to witness the
withering away of our nation".[4]

Art in Germany at the turn of the century, reflected the
political situation prior to the formation of the Empire
with isolated states producing separate artistic ideas and
practices. Compared to the situation in France where the

majority of artists who combined to shape Impressionism, were gathered in the Capital, Germany lacked a consistent national movement in Art.

At the turn of the century, these separate styles were eventually amalgamated under Anton von Werner, leading artist and aide to the Kaiser. Painting became the glorification of the reigning dynasty; historical representations became an official genre. It was opposition to this established art that the various Secessions rose during the 1890's.

In 1892, the "Gegenverein Zur Kunstlergenoss Enschaft" (Society against the Association of Artists) was founded under Fritz von Uhde, its aims were to encourage the exchange of artistic ideas between nations, particularly French Impressionism. Indeed the paintings of Fritz von Uhde have a definite affinity with his contemporary French artists.

1889 saw the founding of "Vereinigung der Elj" (The Alliance of Eleven) under the leadership of Max Liebermann. The same year, in response to an invitation by the "Verein Bildender" (Society of Fine Artists) Edward Munch hung more than fifty of his paintings in Berlin. Anton von Werner ordered the exhibition closed and in protest, the "Alliance of Eleven" was enlarged and the Berlin Secession came into existence. During the following three years, they exhibited works by Munch, Cezanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin. Further Secessions followed in Munich, Dresden and Vienna.

Another artistic phenomenon of the 1890's was the publication
of specific radical journals, the most influential being
"Pan" in Berlin and "Jugend" in Munich. (From these came
"Jugendstil", a Germany version of Art Nouveau). Both journals
carried original prints, poems and initial analysis of topics
of European interest. It is interesting that both Emile
Nolde and Ernst Barlach achieved their first recognition
in them.

It is important to note that the Berlin exhibitions of French
Impressionism appeared simultaneously with exhibitions of
post-impressionist works by Seurat, Van Gogh and Lautrec.
It was Van Gogh who was to have a profound effect on the
younger German artists.

GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM

German Expressionism arose from a feeling of crisis and
a loss of identity.
"... Never was any period so shaken by such horror, by such
dread. Never had the world been so deathly silent. Never
had man felt so small. Never had he been so afraid. His
misery cries out to heaven; man cries for his soul, the
whole period becomes one long cry for help. Art cries out
too, cries in the depths of darkness, cries out for help,
cries out for the spirit: That is Expressionism."[5]
Herman Bahr.

Expressionism was a protest against the Bourgeoisie and
Impressionism. A materialistic society was no place for
a sensitive soul. Artists and intellectuals shared a growing
feeling of nostalgia for the myths and legends of ancient
times. They searched every quarter for a new direction
for their work; medieval woodcuts, the primitive arts,
contemporary works.

Expressionism:

"... is a revelation of the profoundly problematic condition
of Europe at the turn of the centure."[6]   George Schmidt.

Early twentieth century France and Germany were both subject
to industrial expansion and the same threat of war. The
rational and logical artistic tradition of the Franch was
enhanced by mechanisation and used it as the basis of Cubism.
Germany on the other hand, whose artistic tradition is based
on mysticism and religious feeling, revolted against moder-
nization. The French analysed form while the Germans applied
emotion to form and colour.

The religious idiom already mentioned had played a major
role in German art as a mystical escape from rationality.

This non-earthly yearning for spirituality is traced back
to the religious wars of the seventeenth century and the
Neo-Christian movement at the end of the eighteenth century.

In the early twentieth century, it was a means of symbolizing

the sufferings of humanity and many Expressionists used

the face of Christ or religious symbols in their work, Barlach

for example.

German authoritarianism was also an influencing factor.

The rigid hierarchial relationships in German society were

based on the ideals of duty, respect and order, the intel-

lectual reaction to such strictures is often explosive

rebelliousness, none so much as in the reaction of the founding

members of Die Brucke.

The emotive character of the expressionist artist stems

from these two points and was nurtured on world crisis and

spiritual tensions. The Expressionist wished to loose them-

selves to some force greater than themselves.

"Art is concerned with the profoundest of things, that its

renovation must not be confined to form, but must be a rebirth

of thinking."[7]

FOOTNOTES

(1) Translated by Eitne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser
     New York: Capricorn 1965. Pg. 59.
(2) From Voices of German Expressionism . Pg. 6.
(3) Otto Flake, from his novel Die Stadt des Hirns (The
     City of the Brain).
(4) From, The Polotic's of Cultural Despair. Pg. 57,
     Paul de Lagarde.
(5) Hermann Bahr, as quoted by Paul Uoght in his book,
        Expressionism: German painting between 1905 and 1920 , Pg. 6.
(6) George Schmidt, from "Klee" Basel, Holbein Co., 1946, Pg. 3.
(7) Franz Marc, as quoted by Kristian Sotiffer in his book,
     Expressionism and Fauvism.

CHAPTER TWO

<u>"The forerunners of Expressionism, the formation of Die
Brucke, studio practices, the printing techniques of the
group and individual works</u>."

"The German Expressionists created much of the most powerful
graphic art of our century. Their prints clearly bespeak
the artist intense sympathy with their subjects, their explo-
sive freedom in both delineation and technique, and their
personel involvement through all stages of the printmaking
process." J. Carter Brown. [1]

In terms of comtemporary influence, three figures stand
out as the forerunners of Expressionism, Vincent Van Gogh,
Paul Gauguin and Edward Munch. Expressionist characteristics
can be found in the works of these three men, in terms of
theme, response and technique.

In the work of Van Gogh, the young German artist's aligned
themselves with the artist's affinity with man. His uncom-
promising sympathy for the labourer and peasant was not
a new phenomenon, for social realism had been witnessed
hitherto in Courbets work but, up to this point, a subject
never 'attacked' with such emotive drama.

Of the "Potatoe Eaters" Van Gogh said

".... One must paint the peasants as being one of them,
as feeling, as thinking as they do ... I have wanted to
make it clear how these people ... have dug the earth with
those very hands they put in the dish ...[2]

Van Gogh's use of pure colour as an expression of inner
turmoil greatly strengthened the expressionist argument.
Of "Night Cafe" he states

"... For instead of trying to render exactly what I have
before my eyes, I use colour more arbitrarily in order to
express myself powerfully."

It was this attitude of Van Gogh's that helped shape the
movement even giving it its name when he states that he

"... tried to express the terrible passions of humanity
by means of red and green."[3]

Van Gogh's whiplash application of paint meant that even
renderings of still-life were in agitated motion, expressing
great tensions echoed in his portraits. Also the decorative
mark influenced by Japanese woodblocks was to have a pre-
dominant effect on the Jugenstil movement, and much later,
upon the artists of the Blue Rider group.

Of greatest importance with regard to Die Brucke was Van
Gogh's mystical view of the visual arts.

-13-

Of his cornfields at St. Remy, he states

"... For I see in this mower - a vague figure fighting like
a devil in the midst of the heat to get to the end of his
task - I see the image of death, in the sense that humanity
might be the corn he is reaping - it is an image of death,
as the great book of nature speaks of it."[4]

Publication of his letters in Germany and an exhibition
of his paintings in 1901 were important events, as Max Pechstein
said

"... Van Gogh was a father to us all."[5]

Gauguin's relationship with German art lies in his ability
to combine   colour and the fluid line, and his reversion
to primitivism. The Tahitian paintings represent mans union
with nature, where he has gone back to an unspoilt environment.
Gauguin's search for the naive was in line with the Expres-
sionist anti-materialism and search for truth. Apparently,
Gauguin's travels inspired both Emile Nolde and Max Pechstein
to make pilgrimages to the South Seas.

It was Edward Munch who was the only one of the three to
have direct contact with German artists. Munch's tortureous
art was the product of an unhappy life but also reflected
the conflict of modern times.

-14-

Norway had undergone a similar industrial boom, as Germany,
in the closing years of the nineteenth century. The literary
output of that time reflected the climate of crisis with
the social dramas of Ibsen and the mysticism of August
Strindberg, Munch's literary counterpart. In Norway's
Christiania, Munch was influenced by the socialist movement
and allied himself with the anti-bourgeois group, 'Christiania
Bohemia".

Munch's personal expression begins with his "Freize of Life"
series, begun in 1891 and carried on throughout his life
time. The individual is the central theme. Man under the
sway of the forces of nature, death, love and sex. Many
aspects of the male/female relationship were explored with
an emphasis on male vunerability before the forces of woman.
The female more oftenly depicted as a blood-sucking vampire.
Munch stated

"... I paint not what I see, but what I saw.."[6]

Munch's attitude of mind influenced the Expressionists.
In his work, they found their conception of art, i.e. a
crystalization of deep spiritual urges.   Munch's
subjectivity, sense of drama and violent use of colour,
inspired a generation.

On the technical side, Munch's later woodblock prints were
to provide Die Brucke with their means of dramatic expression.

Munch used plain pine boards from packaging as his blocks,
composing freely in large masses of colour avoiding semi-
tints. He was the first to use natural patterning of woodgrain
for aesthetic effect.

*See Illustration   1 & 2

He evolved a method of colour printing by sawing a block
into separate areas. Each piece was then coloured individually
in the varying hues and put together again and printed in
one run through the press. In all, Munch made about eight
hundred prints in all mediums.
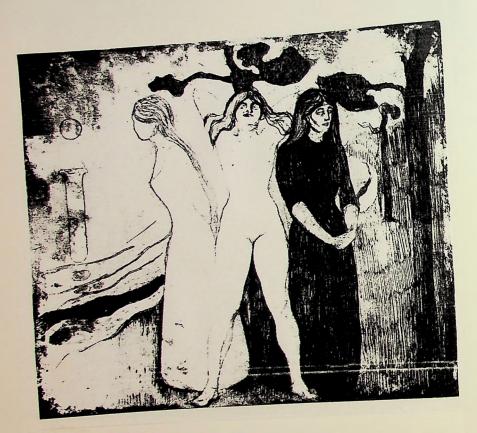
FORMATION OF DIE BRUCKE (THE BRIDGE)

The Berliner Secession of 1902 contained all the divergents
of style, the collectivisation of all influences on the
new art; the last German romantics, social realists, German
naturalists and impressionists, but more importantly, it
featured Munch's "Freize of Life".

The history of German expressionism is said to begin in
the summer of 1905 in Dresden, when four students of archi-
tecture joined together under the name "Die Brucke". The
students were Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Fritz Bleyl, both
twenty-five. Erich Heckel, twenty-two and Karl Schnudt-
Rottluff, twenty-one.

1. **THE KISS**   Edward Munch, 1902, Woodcut

2. **WOMAN** Edward Munch, 1895, Drypoint

Kirchner, born in 1880, was the animating member of the
group. Son of a Professor of Chemistry, he grew up in Chemnitz,
Saxony and moved to Dresden in 1901 where he attended the
Technische Hochschule, finishing in 1905. In 1901, he met
Fritz Bleyl at the school and the two began to paint together.
The other half of the group met in a literary circle in
Chemnitz in 1901. Erich Heckel and Schmidt-Rottluff shared
a common love of painting and writing. Heckel moved to
Dresden in 1904, to study architecture and through his elder
brother, met Kirchner and Bleyl. Schmidt-Rottluff joined
the trio in 1905 when he also moved to Dresden to study
architecture.

"It was a lucky chance that brought together a group of
individuals whose personalities and talents led them naturally
to the vocation of artists. Their way of life, though strange
to the ordinary man, was not meant to shock, it was a pure
and simple compulsion to intergrate art and life.."[7] Ernst
Ludwig Kirchner.

The emergence of Die Brucke coincides with Fauvism in France.
The name was probably taken from the writer Nietzsche whom
they all admired:

"... What is great in man is that he is a bridge not a
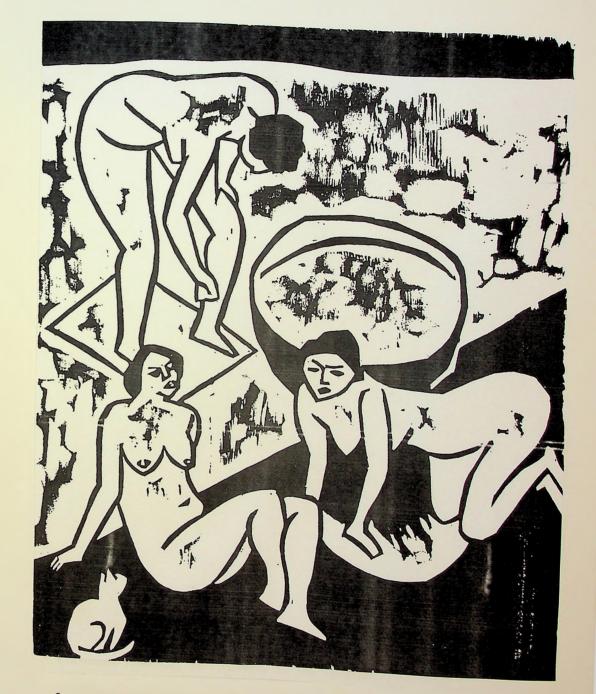goal..."[8]

-17-

De Brucke artists saw themselves as a bridge from the academic
traditions of the past to a radical 'new art', calling upon
all young artists to collaborate
"...with faith in the growth of a new generation of creators
and art lovers, we call upon all youth to join together
and as youths ourselves, bearing the future within us, we
wish to create our own freedom of life and movement in the
face of the long established older forces. Whoever renders
directly and sincerely what impels him to create, belongs
with us..."[9] Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.

Other members were added shortly after 1905. In a letter
of invitation to Emile Nolde, Schmidt-Rottluff states boldly
"One of the aims of the Brucke is to attract all revolutionary
and effervescent elements; that is what the name implies..."[10]

Nolde did join for a year, and Max Pechstein joined after
1906. Another important artist, Otto Muller in 1910. Other
artists associated with the group include Luno Amiet, Axel
Gallen-Kallela and Kess Van Dongen but these were simply
transitory members. The founding members remained the nucleus
of the movement.

The four students formed an artistic community were empty
lots served as studios where they lived, worked and ate
together. Studio furniture was carved and utensils personally
decorated by the artists until eventually their studios
became total contained environments. This idea of a creative

3. __GIRLS BATHING 1__   Max Pechstein, 1911, Woodcut

co-operative sprang from their desire for authenticity in
their work, they were blending their lives with their art
to produce spontaneous and more truthful work. Those initial
years were spent not in the expression of angst (not yet
at least) but in the freedom of expression - their source
being the nude.

Initially, they celebrated movement, light and energy, the
models living for long periods in the studios, moving freely
about. Summers were spent in the countryside where the
artists placed their models in the landscape and worked
directly from them. Erich Heckel described this early approach
thus:
"... We are interested in simple, obvious happenings, and
we have always drawn human beings, unposed and without
tracings ... the essential for us, was free of pathos..."[11]

*See Illustration   3

Die Brucke's emphasis on printmaking initially sprang from
the power of print as a reproductive medium which would
reach a wider audience and from the fact that printmaking
had always essentially been part of Germanic art. Print-
making was democratic and manual and thus it appealed for
its directness. Finally the simplicity and boldness of
statement inherent, particularly in the woodblock, appealed
to the group's sense of the dramatic.

Nineteenth century Europe saw the art of original printmaking
at a low ebb. In Germany, none, (with a few exceptions)
of the central figures in printmaking made their own prints.
Drawings were submitted to specialist craftsmen and prints
produced. The emergence of Max Klinger, toward the end
of the nineteenth century was of major influence in that
he was the first artist for decades to produce his own prints.
In a letter to his patron, Julius Albers in 1885, Klinger
put forward the theory that drawing or graphic renderings
were the true vehicle for fantasy in art and that painting
by presenting too much definition, left nothing to the imagin-
ation. His theory had a liberating effect on the Brucke
group in that it defended the self sufficiency of graphic
art.

Twentieth century audiences were already awakened to the
potentials of print, through three major channels. Firstly,
the revival of the colour woodcut influenced by Japan, then
the establishment of illustrated magazines in Germany, "Pan"
1895 - 1900 is a major example and lastly, the craze for
posters instigated by Art Nouveau.

Die Brucke, inspired by Munch, saw printmaking as endlessly
creative. They experimented with every aspect of the print-
making process, i.e. how the image could be made with varying
marks, the possibilities of different inkings, wiping and
pressure as well as the variety of surfaces on which to
print.

One general characteristic stands out, all accidentals are assimilated for aesthetic gain and none of the rough edges or abrasions have been refinded. As Nolde states
"... I want my work to grow from the material just as in nature, the soil from which it grows determines the character of the plant..."[12]

Dirchner describes the importance of graphic art thus:
"... The will driving the artist to do graphic work is perhaps in part an effort to stamp the unique loose form of the drawing solidly and definitively. On the other hand, the technical manipulations release energy in the artist, forces that do not come into play with the much easier handling of drawing and painting. The mechanical process of printing unites the various work phases, the task creating form can be safely extended as long as one likes. There is something very attractive about re-working over and over again....
There is no greater joy than watching the roller the first time it moves across the woodblock."[13] Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.

PRINTING TECHNIQUES OF DIE BRUCKE

Most of the artists of Die Brucke produced their most success-ful and dynamic prints while still members. In eight years, they produced the most varied and memorable examples of woodblock; etching and lithography, which as a group, have yet to be surpassed. Although the hectic creativity of

4. **RECLINING FEMALE NUDE**   Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1905, Woodcut

5. **LAZINESS** Felix Vallotton, 1896, Woodcut

the group concentrated itself upon all three mediums, it
was undoubtedly the woodblock which crystalized the mood
of Expressionism.

See Illustration   4 & 5

The earliest woodcuts were made independently by Kirchner
and Heckel in 1903. Early woodcuts generally follow the
methods developed by Felix Valloton and William Nicholson
in the 1890's. This was the definition of form by contrasting
areas of black-and-white. The line was curved and decorative
and half-tones were absent. This was widely practiced by
Jugenstil artists.

By 1906, Die Brucke were experimenting with breaking up
these large masses and replacing them with textured areas
by which means they were arriving at a more lively and less
mechanical result. Decorative line was no longer an issue.
Felix Volloton had achieved his serpentine line by using
a clean edged knife. In Die Brucke prints, the knife was
replaced with the "gouge", an instrument which will vary
the width and depth of a line according to hand pressure.
This tool allowed the knots and grain inherent in wood to
become part of the overall image.

The experimentation with colour was fresh and exciting and
applied in painterly fashion, the artists used pure colours
on hand made and coloured papers with astonishing variety.

Classic 'Die Brucke' style in woodblock began in 1908, when
the last traces of Jugenstils traditional black-and-white,
was abandoned. Heckel had already been experimenting with
the receptivity of various wood types and by 1908 the group
were defining form by using variations in light and shade.
The Brucke half-tone relied upon irregular cuttings in the
lighted area, with variations in the depth of such marks,
the shallowest custs would not take a full charge of ink
and therefore, would appear lightest. The effect was enhanced
by varying the pressure during printing.

After 1908, it was stylistic development that surpassed
technical innovation. From 1910, the influence of primitive
art relects the themes of their work. After the move to
the capital in 1911, their forms became more angular and
sharp as a consequence of the Cubist movement. By 1911,
technical interest was re-injected as the group experimented
with colour printing. Heckel had adopted Munch's practice
of sawing up the block and colouring separately. By 1912,
he had so sophisticated his technique that he could colour
one block in as many varying colours as was desired. Kirchner
for the most part, stuck to the traditional method of 'one
block, one colour', but his constant re-arranging of the
order in which they were printed meant that no two prints
were exactly the same and were given a drama and excitement
synonymous with Die Brucke woodcuts.

In lithography, Die Brucke artists turned every convention
upside down. Previously, artists merely made the initial
drawing on the stone, which was then left in the hands of
skilled printers to carry out the rest, i.e. the graining
of the stone, etching of the image, and subsequent printing.
Die Brucke did not employ such services but carried out
all the functions themselves.

The simple reproduction of a drawing was not the aim of
Die Brucke, the initial drawing was the mere starting point
of the image; then through a series of etchings and inkings
they would push and pull their drawing to completion.

Die Brucke washed down their stones with a solution of water
and turpentine (a method which is most dangerous as the
turpentine dissolves the protective gum layer). The results
are best described by Kirchner's cataloguer, Scheifler:
"... Through this (process) both the drawn line and the
wetter surface undergo a change of substance: the particles
of pigment of the crayon are loosened and refined according
to the structure of the stone, the line loses its sharp
edges, the gaps between thickly laid areas of line are more
or less filled up, while on the other hand the darker areas
are reduced to a lighter tone. Since moreover small particles
of the drawing material are driven over the areas of the
stone untouched in the drawing - a process which is assisted

in details by the artist himself - he can achieve a complete
scale of tone from light to dark, but in quite a different
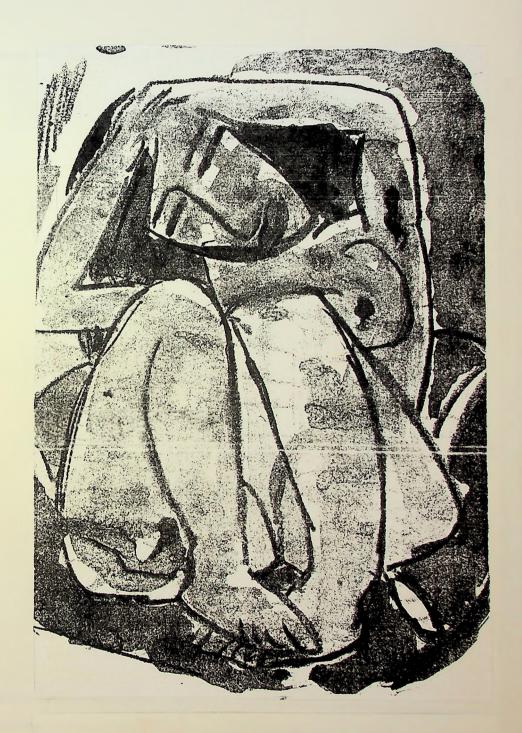way from cross-hatching with the crayon."[14]

HECKEL ON BRUCKE LITHOGRAPHY

The following translation was made from an edited version
of a tape-recording of a conversation held between Erich
Heckel and Ronan Norbert Ketterer on 24th October 1958:
*It has been re-edited by myself to include only what is
relevant to this thesis.

"In 1907, we were given a single lithographic stone by a
lithographic printing firm. On this stone E.L. Kirchner
and I made in turn the most varied experiments; from these
emerged potentialities which were not to be met in normal
practice in making lithographs. We were not searching for
new techniques, but our methods of working the litho stone
gave rise to new possibilities.

All other artists usually use transfer paper on which they
draw with lithographic crayon; they then hand the paper
over to a lithographic firm... In the case of Kirchner and
myself, we ourselves applied the gum arabic to the single
stone that we had and pulled impressions with our own hands.
In the course of working on the stone, new technical
possibilities emerged which a conventional litho-printer
would never adopt. Kirchner and I found out how to make
certain parts of the stone come out grey by reducing the

6. **WOMAN**   Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, 1914, Lithograph

7. **WOMAN, MAN, SERVANT** Emile Nolde, 1918, Etching

black crayon with the help of acid to a grey stone. No
lithographic printer in the world would allow such a thing.

The stone was always wetted before we printed from it, since
the stone remains wet in those areas that it has been etched
and repels the printing ink. But in those parts where it
is greasy, it repels the water and attracts the printing
ink. We could wash the whole stone each time with coloured
water, either yellow, grey or blue. This coloured water
is printed at the same time, so that the design appears
on the paper in black printing ink and also with watercolour.
So we have a coloured lithograph."[15]

*See Illustration   6.

The same unconventional attitude was applied to intaglio.
Heckel and Kirchner began etching in 1906 and their first
prints were mainly uncertain exercises as they were largely
self-taught. From the beginning (as in their woodcuts),
they made it evident that a metal plate had been used, often
using tarnished plates or the backs of other images, scratches
would then appear at random rendering their works with a
spontaneity never previously witnessed.

Schmidt-Rottluff and Emile Nolde used iron plates, an unusual
choice as iron by its nature leaves no surface tone and
would have to have had a film of ink left on them during
wiping if the full tonal effect was to be achieved. The
group manipulated this variance in wiping to such an extent

9. BROTHER AND SISTER Erich Heckel, Woodcut

that the image, made on the plate through the various processes, was simply the basis of rigorous experimentation in inking and wiping, until their prints became monotypes as such.

With regard to conventional aquatint, whereby a regular covering of resin is applied, immersed in acid by which the areas around each individual grain are bitten to a lower level, a tone is achieved. As opposed to this, the Brucke applied random coverings of resin and brushed on acid, the result was a smattering of irregular tones. They also immersed their plates without any protective grounds (a method known today as "open-bite") combined with their aquatints, this resulted in exciting combinations of light and dark, which could be refined with a 'burnished' for the desired effect.

Nolde is considered the finest intaglio printmaker of Die Brucke. As Kirchner proclaimed in the "Chronik Der Brucke":

"... he (Nolde) enriched our exhibitions with the interesting techniques of his etchings..."[16]

*See Illustration 7.

With regard to individual members, it was Schmidt-Rottluff who promoted the interest in lithography within the group. But his woodcuts, to which he turned in 1909, achieved for him his greatest success. His prints are imbued with a sculptural quality reflecting the influence of African

sculpture. In his series on the themes of the New Testament
(1918 - 1919) bodies, faces and hands are simplified to
emphasise the rigidity of gestures. Of all the members,
Rottluff used religious images to the greatest extent, and
with the greatest emotive power.

*See Illustration   8.

To Erich Hekel, line was of paramount importance. Like
his colleagues, he worked in all three print mediums. It
was after the groups move to Berlin that he achieved his
greatest graphic success. In an essay of Heckels drawings,
the critic, Karlheinz Gabler, writes:

"That in just half a decade the autodidacts (Kirchner and
Schmidt-Rottluff) succeeded in becoming trail-blazers and
bridge-builders of a new and by now universal art, was not
least due to the drive and inventive spirit of the restless
and irrepressible Heckel."$^1_7$

Heckel was director and promoter of the group from its begin-
ning. His early woodcuts were primarily concerned with
black-and-white renderings of pattern and surface texture
using his environment or the nude as his source. His develop-
ment shows all nuances of the Die Brucke woodcut. Heckel
deliberately varies the thickness and direction of his line
to avoid flowing decoration. His late portraits therefore,
are hard and angular and filled with agitated motion due
to the variance of descriptive line.

It is for these later portraits that Hekel is best remembered.
Personally, they show all the fear, uncertainty and prevading
doom of the era and are comparable to Van Gogh's portraits
for their psychological insight. Heckel's output is second
only to Kirchner, in all he produced over a thousand prints,
three-quarters of which were produced between the years 1905
and 1923.

*See Illustration 9

From 1906 onwards, the group produced annual portfolios of
their original prints to subscribing "passive members".
Six such portfolios appeared, but the seventh was the victim
of internal dissention. General recognition of the Brucke's
achievement was finally confirmed at the Sonderbund exhibition
in Cologne in 1912. Individuals began to work out their
own personal styles and the need for severance became apparent.
The Chronik der Kunstlergruppe Brucke , a written account
of their years together, was meant to draw the group back
together. With a text written by Kirchner and published
in 1913, Heckel said of it:
"His text was not in accordance with the facts, either in
Schmidt-Rottluffs view, or in mine, nor did it correspond
to our rejections of programmes in general..."[18]
The "Chronik" led to the dissolution of the group.

The Fauve artists were interested primarily in landscape,
still life studies and the nude. While the Brucke artists
were more humanistic in approach, their art is filled with
cafe, street singers, portraits, religious and literary themes
but unlike the Impressionists treatment of such, the themes
take on a symbolic nature. The people usually did not differentiate
from each other, in similar expressions as to pronounce a
more universal type of expression. The means of this task
was the distortion of form, local colours, and space, a deliberate
clumsiness of gesture and a general brutalization of facial
features as opposed to naturalistic treatment. The Expres-
sionist was responding in his own way to the dislocation
of his society and the closeness of war. The protest of
a creature and a society in anguish.

This representation of the dramas in the world, the age of
machines, cities and poverty was dependant on a suitable
media. The idiom of Expressionism is the reduction of such
confusion to planes and lines, so that its message is grasped
readily, not detail by detail. Certain successes are made
in Expressionist paintings where a broad treatment is used.
However, the effect was achieved more powerfully and strikingly
in prints.

An entire generation of German artists were affected by the
distortions of Die Brucke. Artists who attribute influence
directly, include Cesar Klein, Max Kaus, Felixmuller and

Segall. Shortly after the Brucke movement, French, Dutch
and Belgian expressionists responded to the stimulus, and
in the United States, during the 1930's, the social realists
utilized Brucke methods to portray the depression. Indeed,
the greatest testament of all is that, even in Germany today,
after Hitlerian academicism, many graphic artists still follow
Brucke examples.

FOOTNOTES

(1) J. Carter Brown, director National Gallery of Art,
    Washington. As quoted in German Expressionist Prints .
    The collection of Ruth and Jacob Kainen, Pg. 7.

(2) As quoted in The German Expressionist: A Generation
    in Revolt , B.S. Myers.

(3) From "Letters de Vincent Van Gogh a Son Frere Theo",
    Paris Ed., Grasset, n,d: (1937)

(4) From "Letters de Vincent Van Gogh a Son Frere Theo",
    Paris Ed., Grasset, n,d: (1937)

(5) From a verbal statement communicated to B.S. Myers by
    Dr. Karl Lilienfield of New York, personal friend of
    Max Pechstein.

(6) As quoted in The Expressionists: A Survey of their
    Graphic Art , Car Zigrosser.

(7) As quoted in German Expressionism Die Brucke and Der
    Blaue Reiter , Barry Herber, Jupiter Books (1983), Pg. 9

(8) Friedrich Nietzsche from Sprach Zarathustra 1883 - 92.

(9) As quoted in German Expressionism Die Brucke and Der
    Blaue Reiter , Barry Herber, Jupiter Books (1983), Pg. 9

(10) As quoted in W.D. Dube's Expressionism & Expressionists
     1983, Skira S.A., Geneva, Pg. 12.

(11) As quoted, <u>Expressionism and Fauvism</u> , Karl Sotriffer,
Pg. 50.

(12) As quoted, <u>Emile Nolde</u> , Peter Selz, N.Y. (1963) Pg. 51.

(13) As quoted <u>Expressionism: A German Tradition</u> 1905 - 1920.
San Francisco Museum Modern Art.

(14) Scheifler, Die Graphik E.L. Kirchner, Berlin (1931), Pg. 33.

(15) As quoted <u>The Print in Germany</u> , Francis Carey,
Pg. 37 - 35.

(16) As quoted <u>The Print in Germany</u> , Francis Carey, Pg. 36

(17) As quoted <u>Graphic's of German Expressionists</u> ,
Serge Sabrasky, Pg. 93.

(18) As quoted in W.D. Dube's <u>Expressionism & Expressionists</u>
1983, Skira S.A., Geneva, Pg. 34.

"ERNST LUDWIG KIRCHNER : PRINTMAKER AND EXPRESSIONIST"

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner was the most original, dynamic and prolific of the Brucke group. His graphic work includes over twenty-four hundred prints, which are still being cata- logued. In addition, he executed paintings, watercolours, tapestries and drawings.

Of the group, he was most aware of the potentials of print. He likewise exploited stone, plate and woodblock to a much greater extent than the others. He noted all developments in his prints by liaison with his cataloguer, Scheifler. One such being the "Catalogue Raisonne" published in a limited edition of two volumes containing many original woodblocks and typographic ornamentation. Several articles appeared about him in the publication _Genius_ and elsewhere by L. de Marsalle, who was, in fact, Kirchner himself.

Largely self-taught, he moved beyond Jugenstil. His influences encompassing old German art, the primitive art of the South Seas and Africa, Max Klinger and medieval woodcuts.

Like the Impressionists, he sketched on the streets and soon equipped himself with a rapid form of notation. By 1911 he had established his own style and from this point, until the outbreak of war, he produced an uncanny volume of work. The next outburst of work occurred from 1917-24.

At the outbreak of war, he was assigned to artillery training
at Halle, which led to a complete physical breakdown, (Kirchner
suffered from a weakness of the lungs). He moved to Davos,
Switzerland where he regained some degree of health. Fear
of recall into the army forced him to starve himself until
doctors rendered him incureable. After the war, he recovered
rapidly, and settled in Switzerland until the triumph of
the Nazis and the confiscation of his art in Germany caused
him to commit suicide in 1938.

"... My goal was always to express emotion and experience
with large forms and simple colours, and it is my goal today...
I wanted to express the richness and joy of living, to paint
humanity at work and play in its reactions and interreactions,
and to express love as well as hatred..."[1] Ernst Ludwig
Kirchner, 1937.

Kirchner was enthusiastic, passionate and impulsive. Expres-
sionism was vital to his nature, and his hypersensitivity
never allowed him rest.

He made the woodblocks for the Brucke posters and catalogues.
He produced illustrations for Georg Heym's Umbra Vitae
including woodcuts for the cover and an etched portrait of
the poet.

In Munich, Kirchner saw many exhibitions and was most strongly
aroused by the Post Impressionists including Signac, Toulouse-

Lautrec, Vallotton and Van Gogh. Of this time in Munich,
he states:

"... it came to me at an exhibition of the Munich Secession,
where the pictures made the deepest impression on me because
of the significance of their content and execution and because
of the total lack of public interest... why wouldn't the
worthy gentlement of the Secession paint this life with blood
in its veins..."[2]

By 1920, Kirchner had developed his own very personal use
of line, to which he gave the name of 'hieroglyphs'.
"...Hieroglyphs in the sense that they represent natural
forms in simplified, two dimensional forms and suggest their
meaning to the onlooker. Feeling constantly forms new hier-
oglyphs, which emerge from what is at first sight a confused
mass of lines, and become almost geometrical symbols."[3]
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.

The formative Dresden period saw Kirchner working in a style
still reliant on Jugenstil practices, the works from a Summer
spent on the Moritzburger lakes were more post-impressionist
than expressionist. Works from Dresden show the greater
humanistic sympathies of Kirchner, his powerful feeling for
nature, and the blending of Fauvist Primitive and Munch-
type painting. His early works are largely concerned with
the nude, and echoes of Munch prevail, with his various
arrangements of male/female nudes.

10. **FIVE WOMEN ON THE STREET** Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1913,
Oil on Canas

11. FUNF KOKETTEN (detail) Kirchner, 1914, Woodcut

In 1912, he participated in the second (graphics) exhibition
of the Blue Rider at Munich. Die Brucke was well established
and drawing to its close. After this point, his art turned
increasingly to the psychological. Influenced by the city,
he combined its tensions, excitements and frivality into
his work.

He began a long series of paintings of Berlin street scenes,
concentrating on aimless figures who roam the brightly lit
streets, particularly prostitutes. One of the most successful
of these paintings is "Five Women in the Street (1913)"
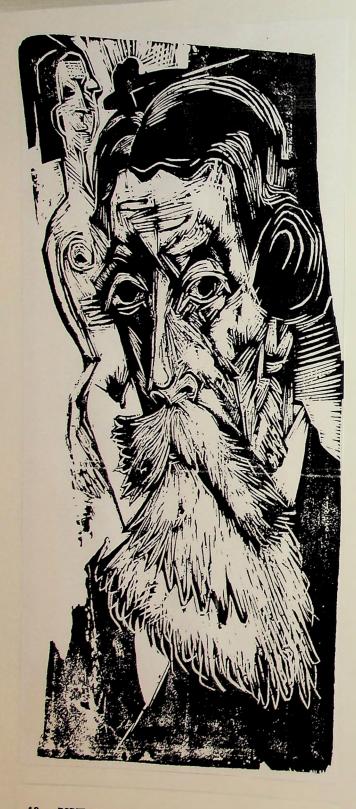
*See Illustration   10

The bright green of the surface background serves to emphasise
the isolation of the figures. Yet they are all bound in
a circular motion by similarity in their gestures, expressions,
and movements. We can plainly see the influence the woodblock
had on Kirchner's paintings, by the angular marking reminicent
of the gouge mark. One could say that such works exemplify
the Expressionist idiom in subject, execution, and mood.
Kirchner was forever seeking new forms and methods, forever
using the picture plane as a battlefield between form and
what he wished to express.

*See Illustration 11

After the war, Kirchner settled in the remote area of Davos,
here in 1918, he made two series of woodcuts based on male/
female relationships. Kirchner had been through severe mental
and physical illness, and the effect of this and the aftermath
of war, began to appear forcibly in his work. His pieces

12. **CONFLICT**   Kirchner, 1915, Woodcut

13. **PORTRAIT OF SCHAMES** Kirchner, 1917, Woodcut

became tragic and full of pathos, many steps away from his
celebrations of the nude in Dresden. The conflict between
fear, hate and hope is reflected in the series of woodcuts
for "Peter Schlemihls Wundersame Geschichte" by Adelbert
von Chamisso, the strange story of a man who sold his shadow
and thereby was reprimanded by his soul, as he sought in
vain to recover his shadow.

*See Illustration 12

Kirchner's interest in the primitive, is still clearly evident,
for in these prints he has adapted the planear divisions
and bold use of colour so often found in tribal masks, the
deeply subjective portrait of art dealer Ludwig Schames shows
how Kirchner has refined this technique with much more subtlety
by increased facial detail.

*See Illustration 13

Kirchner has managed to use primitive material in a highly
personalised manner, he absorbed its influence as a simple
and yet powerful form of expression.

It is generally accepted that the woodcut formed an essential
element in Kirchner's art during the first few decades of
this century. The woodcut as Kirchner handled it, became
a major stylistic influence, his woodcuts often being ahead
of his painting (or at least containing more dynamism).
In contrast to the conventional view that graphics merely
reproduces what the painter has invented, Kirchner's woodcuts

14. **BUDEZESE UNTER UBERHANGENDEN** (detail) Kirchner, 1914, Woodcut.

15. GROBE GEBIRQSLANDSHAFT Kirchner, 1924, Woodcut

are richer in motif and idea and more varied than hitherto German woodcuts.

The whole of Expressionist history can be traced through the woodcuts of Kirchner. Freed from the decorative style of Jugenstil, he began with the gouge to free the nude from conventional shackles.

*See Illustration 14

In this print, the nude moves freely within the landscape totally harmonious with his surroundings, trees, scrubs, animals are rentered with marks echoed in the human forms, shifts in perspective renders the viewer with no converging point with which to read the image. The viewer must take in all at one glance, this is the shock element inherent in woodblock. There are no semi-tints form in flattened angular, and agressive, compare this study with Kirchners early nudes, *See Illustration 4, or even Pechstein's prints on the same theme, *See Illustration 3, and it is easy to see just how far Kirchner had taken the woodblock print.

The love of cities was shared by all members of Die Brucke, cities were Janus-faced. On one hand, they were the center of industrialization and all that it created, i.e. over-population, ill health, poverty and slums, all that Die Brucke were reacting against, yet the city was the nucleus of artistic anarchy. Poets, painters, writers gathered with a common aim of changing society. Kirchner's studies of city life reflect its many facets, from poverty to bohemia, mostly

16. <u>MOUNTAIN WITH THUNDER</u>   Kirchner, Woodcut

17. **COMPOSITION** Kandinsky, 1911, Woodcut

aimless, his characters are fickle like his studies of
prostitutes, *See Illustration 11, or just engaged in their
day to day routines, in cafes, street corners and theatres.
Kirchner holds up a mirror of Berlin in the 1910-1920 era,
with all its faults and glories.

Reverence for nature was a part of Expressionist philosophy.
Kirchner made many prints of the landscape from his Summers
spent in Moritzburg with his colleagues and from Switzerland,
the jutting points of the Alps, perfect for rendering with
his tools.

*See Illustration 15.

Expression of that which was within is the character of Die
Brucke, particularly Kirchner, his dynamic landscape, made
in 1917, *See Illustration 16, is far from calm, it is threatening,
it suggests a monstrous power outside of mans reach, nature
shows its violent face, the thundercloud could express doom,
or fear or the carnage of war, whatever, that, I feel is
Expressionism, familiar forms torn apart, analysed, distorted
and exaggerated in a simple landscape, one can sense the anxiety
with which it was carved.

Many historians have said that the idiom and most powerful
force of expression was found in Die Brucke portraits. That
the human face is the ultimate facade, behind which all thoughts,
fears, fantasies, loves and hates lie. One has but to look
through Heckel's many portraits, *See Illustration 9, to

find a catalogue of human emotion. Kirchner also found a
key to the inner-mind, the people in his woodcuts are constantly
in motion, the tranverse marks and contrasts between black-
and-white combine to make up dynamic studies of facial gesture.
For me, Kirchner reached the highest point in both the technical
and conceptual when he carved "Conflict", *See Illustration 12.

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner continued to make prints until his
death in 1938. His importance to the modern movement extends
far beyond his leadership of Die Brucke, Kirchner with the
exception of Nolde, was the only member to remain consistently
Expressionist. Although he exercised some considerable
influence on young painters, in Switzerland he remained true
to his earlier ideals in that he worked without the influences
from trends in art which were to affect the rest. Had he
remained in Germany, it is possible that his work could have
been affected by the anti-Expressionist trend of the middle
twenties, one can only speculate. The year before he died,
he wrote:

"For these last ten years I could really sing a song of
illness and my struggles against it. Before the war so healty
and since then nothing but sickness. But in spite of it
Creativeness."[4]

FOOTNOTES

(1) As quoted "The Expressionist", Carl Zigrosser, Pg. 15.

(2) 1937, from a letter to Curt Valentin, as quoted
    Expressionism & Expressionists , Pg. 38.

(3) 1937, from a letter to Curt Valentin, as quoted
    Expressionism & Expressionist , Pg. 40.

(4) As quoted "The German Expressionists", B.S. Myers, Pg. 12.

CHAPTER FOUR

"The Blue Rider and Post-War Years"

"One starting point in the belief that the artist is constantly
engaged in collecting experiences in an inner world, in addition
to the impressions he receives from the external world, from
nature. The search for artistic forms in which to express
the mutual interpenetration of these two kinds of experience,
for forms which must be free of every kind of irrelevancy
in order to express nothing but the essentials - in short,
the pursuit of artistic synthesis - this seems to us to be
a watchword which is uniting more and more artists at this
present time."[1]

The second organised group of Expressionists in Germany developed
in Munich around 1909. In January of that year, a group
of artists founded the Neue Kunstlervereingigung, Munchen
('New Artists' Alliance, Munich) with the common aim of
"organising art exhibitions in Germany and abroad, and of
reinforcing their effect by lectures, publications and similar
means."[2]

Led by Wassily Kandinsky, it included Alexej von Tawlensky
and Gabriele Munter. Their second in September 1910 included
works by Braque, Picasso, Roualt, Derain, Vlaminick and
Hatler among others. Clearly the movement was attracting
international attention. By 1911, August Macke and Franz
Marc had joined its ranks.

Inner disputes within the group in September of that year
forced Kandinsky, Macke and Marc to leave (the group itself
disbanded in 1912), who upon leaving put together an exhibition
to be shown at the Thannhauser Gallery in Munich, the show
marked the formation of "The Blue Rider" group. It was titled
'Ist Ausstellung der Redaktion des Blauen Reiter' (first
exhibition of the Editors of The Blue Rider). The name is
said to have originated from the title of one of Kandinsky's
paintings.

A second, more co-ordinated exhibition, was held in April
1912 and included graphic works from Die Brucke members.

The Blue Rider Almanac also appeared in that year. Its aim
"that the publication will unite in one place the efforts
which are making themselves noticed so forcibly in every
sphere of the arts and whose fundamental purpose is to push
back the existing limits of artistic expression"[3]
All the divergents of styles that interested the group; art
from the Far East, Egypt, Bavarian Folk Art, as well as works
by Rousseau, Matisse, and Cezanne and for the first time
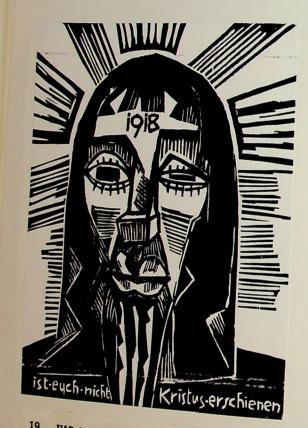it placed children's art on the same level as contemporary
works.

However, the 'Almanac' marked the end of this association
just as the 'Chronik' would end the Brucke group, for no
other exhibition was held under 'The Blue Rider' name.

Both "De Brucke" and "The Blue Rider" groups believed firmly
in the creation of a 'new art'. They both shared a common
distaste for materialism, and a common rejection of Impressionism.
They were both influenced by the primitive, the former being
attracted to the demonic in African and Oceanian art, the
latter in the naivety of Bavarian folk art. The result is
obvious if one compares the gentle naturalism of Klee with
the brutality of Heckel and Kirchner. Through the intellect
of Kandinsky and the religious ethos of Franz Marc, the Blue
Rider gained a heightened spiritual quality. Die Brucke
members worked vigorously and manually, members of the Blue
Rider began with the intellect, both analysing and philosophising.
They were just as much interested in social, religious and
literary developments as with the creation of art. Their
joy in the communication of man and nature was more easily
identifyable in their paintings and continual use of colour.
Unlike De Brucke, they worked in individual studios and printing
(particularly the woodblock) was of lesser importance as
by its nature and its use in Die Brucke, it appeared angular
and geometrical. The fluidity of paint on canvas was more
cohesive with their aims. Indeed, it is 'colour' that one
immediately associates this group with.

Printmaking was not totally disregarded. In the prints of
The Blue Rider, the original Brucke Expressionism was modified
to near abstraction and a greater emphasis placed on mystical
experiences. Kandinsky was already developing his concept
of abstraction in paint in which all representation of natural

-44-

18. **ANNUNCIATION**   Marc, 1912, Woodcut

19. HAS NOT CHRIST APPEARED TO YOU   Schmidt-Rottluff, 1918,
Woodcut

objects was rejected, and line, colour and planes in themselves
produced the response WITHOUT a recognisable 'image'. The
few prints that he made show the beginnings of this concept
although some representations of natural forms are made.
The woodcuts imposed a degree of simplification, which played
a vital role in the development of this style, serving as
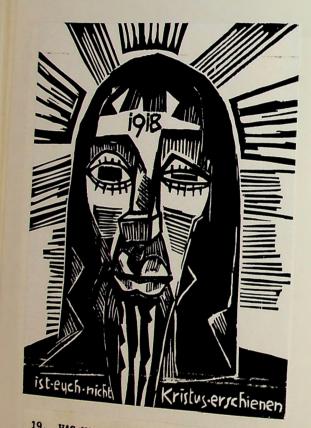a link between ornament and abstraction.

*See Illustration 17

Franz Marc was more responsive to the possibilities of print-
making.   During his lifetime, he made seventeen lithographs,
and during the war years, twenty-one woodcuts. Marc is said
to have been one of the most warm and engaging characters
of the expressionist movement. His response to life was
a mystical identification with nature and in his woodcuts,
he makes use of the line and flat-mass areas to project a
simplification of such subjects as animals, landscape and
religious themes.

*Illustration 18 addresses us to the inner exaltation of
Mary, the radiating lines and image of both sun and moon
add a cosmic dimension. The simple use of line and contrast
is somewhat similar to Jugenstil.

In retrospective, most of the Blue Rider prints used the
Jugenstil method of Felix Vallotton, discussed earlier.
The differences in artistic concerns explains their reversion
to the decorative and lyrical.

19. **HAS NOT CHRIST APPEARED TO YOU** Schmidt-Rottluff, 1918, Woodcut

objects was rejected, and line, colour and planes in themselves produced the response WITHOUT a recognisable 'image'. The few prints that he made show the beginnings of this concept although some representations of natural forms are made. The woodcuts imposed a degree of simplification, which played a vital role in the development of this style, serving as a link between ornament and abstraction.

*See Illustration 17

Franz Marc was more responsive to the possibilities of print-making. During his lifetime, he made seventeen lithographs, and during the war years, twenty-one woodcuts. Marc is said to have been one of the most warm and engaging characters of the expressionist movement. His response to life was a mystical identification with nature and in his woodcuts, he makes use of the line and flat-mass areas to project a simplification of such subjects as animals, landscape and religious themes.

*Illustration 18 addresses us to the inner exaltation of Mary, the radiating lines and image of both sun and moon add a cosmic dimension. The simple use of line and contrast is somewhat similar to Jugenstil.

In retrospective, most of the Blue Rider prints used the Jugenstil method of Felix Vallotton, discussed earlier. The differences in artistic concerns explains their reversion to the decorative and lyrical.

More often than not, "Die Brucke" artists were humanitarians in that their work often carried a socialist message, the Blue Rider on the other hand, saw painting as a more romantic self-identification with nature, the synthesis of mans inner world with external powers. Die Brucke reaction to nature was to destroy it analitically to see what lay underneath. The Blue Rider, however, projected themselves into the mysteries of his landscape, without brutality but with the naiveity of a child. Through this Die Brucke made their violent retreat into themselves. The Blue Rider uses more imaginative and lyrical devices to make their escape, i.e. the serpentine swirl of Jugenstil.

"Is there a more mysterious idea for the artist than the conception of how nature is really reflected in the eyes of an animal? How wretched, how soulless our habit of placing animals in a landscape which mirrors our own vision instead of sinking ourselves in the soul of the animal to imagine its perceptions..."[4]   Marc.

"The artist expresses only what he has within himself, not what he sees with his eyes."[5] Jawlenskey.

"The vitality of a painted surface derives from the simultaneous sound of red and blue, of lines, curves, etc..."[6] August Macke.

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

In August 1914, the long-dreaded 'great war' began. The great majority of Germans, workers and artists alike welcomed it, after the mood of suspense and crisis prevading the years

from 1880-1900, it came almost as a relief,

"... How could the artist, the soldier in the artist, help thanking God for the collapse of a peace-time wold of which he was sick, thoroughly sick? War! We felt its coming as a purification, a liberation, an immense hope. This is what the poets spoke of, only of this."[7]   Thomas Mann 1914.

Among the artists involved in the first world war were, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, (drafted), August Macke, Franz Marc, Otto Dix and George Groz. The prevailing mood was that the war would create a new society, that Utopia (the artists dream) would rise as the Pheonix from the ashes. By 1918, after three years of war, such a dream was shattered. There would be no 'new world', on the contrary, men had been turned into cattle, and war had released in them their basest instincts, stupidity, cruelty and violence emerged as mans true nature. For many, the war became a crime against humanity. The artists struggled to find a means to express their response. Some found solice in producing religious images, the most famous perhaps, Schmidt-Rottluff's Christ.

*See Illustration 19.

The war and its aftermath, were a great shock. However, it was a time of feverish excitement of self-analysis, guilt and revulsion, hunger and poverty. The end of the war saw the collapse of the old order, old habits and old stabilities were crumbling.

-47-

What is important is the fact that before the war, Die Brucke
and Blaue Reiter were minor national groups like Fauvism
or Orphism. The war had given them purposeful depth and
Expressionism emerged as a worldwide school.

FOOTNOTES

(1) From the catalogue of the Neue Kunstlervereinigung
     exhibition, Munich, 1909. As quoted in The Expressionists ,
     W.D. Dube   Pg. 95.
(2) From the catalogue of the Neue Kunstlervereinigung
     exhibition, Munich, 1909. As quoted in The Expressionists ,
     W.D. Dube   Pg. 95.
(3) From the catalogue of the Neue Kunstlervereinigung
     exhibition, Munich, 1909. As quoted in The Expressionists ,
     W.D. Dube   Pg. 105.
(4) From the catalogue of the Neue Kunstlervereinigung
     exhibition, Munich, 1909. As quoted in The Expressionists ,
     W.D. Dube   Pg. 177.
(5) Note by Jawlenskey, from Das Kunstwerk II (1948),
     Pg. 52.
(6) Undated note by Macke. Quoted in The Blue Rider ,
     Hans K. Roethel, Pg. 95.
(7) As quoted Expressionism and Expressionists , W.D. Dube,
     Pg. 85.

CONCLUSION

German Expressionism was a cultural movement, a product of
society, therefore, it cannot be separated from the political
and social world of its time. It envisaged the arts as a
teaching tool of and for society. The Expressionists were
a protest-generation. The basic animus behind it being the
social conflict, the struggle of the young against an older
established order, who seemed bent on preventing change.
They were seen as didactic and anti-humanist. Consequently,
the Expressionists' goals, among others, were compassion
and love of their fellow-man, reverence for nature, as true
religion free of hypocrisy, freedom of expression, honesty
concerning sexual matters and (for a time) peace on earth.
In short a better world. In retrospect, this Utopian attitude
and indeed, some quoted ramblings can be viewed as emotive
and extreme and therefore, open to criticism. Yet it must
be said that behind it all, there was a truism, a search
for oneself, they explored the realm of man's inner-self
and expressed it. In this, their most impressive achievement
is the participation of all the art forms, undoubtedly begin-
ning with the visual arts, they attracted the poets, writers,
dramatists, actors, composers and film-makers. Never before
in modern history had the romantic dream of the "Gesamtkunstuierk"
(the total work of art encompassing all art) been so close
to realisation as between 1905 - 1925.

With regard to printmaking in general, after Die Brucke,
its continuance relied upon individuals inspired by its potentials
i.e. Kokoschka, Kollwitz, Beckmann, Grosz, Picasso, Roualt
and Chagall.

The woodcut was forsaken by some artists after the 1920's
as it was the most characteristic element of Expressionist
media. Nolde and Schmidt-Ruttluff abandoned it to develop
their work in other directions. Some carried on, Kirchner
of course and Heckel. A large number who had used the woodblock
during the frenzied years, also stopped using the medium,
i.e. Barlach.

Constructivist and abstract artists continued to use the
woodcut, even throughout the National Socialist regime.
After the collapse of 1945, the old generation were gone
forever, those who had survived the war were free to work
i.e. Arp, Heckel, Marck and Matare. The new generation took
up the woodcut, Kliemann in Berlin, Janssen in Hamburg, Beuys
in Dusseldorf.

Todays interest in woodcut is simultaneous with the decline
of the perfection of seriography. It is a general artistic
phenomenon, everywhere artists are reverting to the natural
and rejecting the artificial. But there has been no group
that has yet surpassed the Dresden born community of print-
makers in quantity, quality and impact.

Erich Heckel:
Die Brucke association had become, for Heckel, more of a
hindrance than an aid to artistic development after 1912.
In 1914, Heckel volunteered for military duty and served
as a medic on the front. In 1918, he returned to Berlin
and began a series of trips to western European countries.

In 1937, the National Socialists proclaimed his work as
degenerate art and removed it from German museums. After
the destruction of his studio in 1944, by the allied forces,
he moved to Hemmenhofen, where he continued to work in solitude.

Erich Heckel died in Germany on January 27, 1970.

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff:
After the disbantion of Die Brucke, Schmidt-Ruttluff was
drafted and spent three years on the Eastern Front. After
the war, he enjoyed mounting success and like Heckel, travelled
around Europe, finally settling in Jershoft, a small fishing
village by the Baltic Sea.

His nomination to the Prussian Academy of Arts in 1931 was
withdrawn after Nazi defamations, and he was forbidden to
paint in 1937. Fifty-one of his works were shown in the
"Exhibition of Degenerate Art" in Munich that same year.

A vast amount of his work was destroyed during the bombing
of his studio in 1943.

In 1947, Schmidt-Rottluff was offered a professorship at
the College of Visual Arts in Berlin 1967, saw the founding
of the Brucke Museum in Berlin which he initiated.

He died in Berlin in 1976, at the age of ninety-one.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Georges Boudaille,
   Expressionists,
   New York,
   1977.

2. Frances Carey / Anthony Griffiths,
   The Print in Germany 1880-1933: The Age of Expressionism,
   Prints from the Department of Prints and Drawings,
                        British Museum,
                        1976.

3. Riva Castleman,
   Prints of the Twentieth Century: A History,
   Thames & Hudson,
   1976.

4. Wolf Dieter Dube,
   Expressionists and Expressionism,
   Skira,
   Geneva,
   1983.

5. Wolf Dieter Dube,
   The Expressionists,
   Thames & Hudson,
   London,
   1983.

6. Donald E. Gordon,
   Ernst Ludwig Kirchner,
   Cambridge Massachusetts,
   Harvard University Press,
   1968.

7. Barry Herbert,
    German Expressionism: Die Brucke and Der Blaue Reiter,
    Jupiter Books,
    London,
    1983.

8. Catalogue,
    Expressionism: A German Intuition
    The Solonion R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York,
    1980.

9. Ruth & Jacob Kainen,
    German Expressionist Prints
    National Gallery of Art,
    Washington.

10. Fredrick S. Ievine,
    The Apocalyptic Vision

11. Kristian Sotriffer,
    Expressionism & Fauvism,
    McGraw-Hill Book Company,
    1972.

12. Serge Sabrasky,
    Graphic's of the German Expressionists,
    Lund Humphries Publishers, London,
    1986.

13. Wolf Stubbe,
    History of Modern Graphic Art,
    Thames & Hudson,
    London,
    1962.

14. Marit Werenshoid,
    The Concept of Expressionism: Origin & Metamorphoses
    Universitetsforlaget,
    1984.

15. Carl Zigrosser,
    The Expressionists,
    George Braziller Inc.,
    New York,
    1957.