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EDVARD MUNCH AND JACK B. YEATS

ARTISTS ON THE PERIPHERAL OF EUROPE

By

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with the lives and works of Irish Artist Jack B. Yeats who painted scenes of Irish people at fairs and everyday scenes, and Norwegian Artist Edvard Munch, who painted scenes of Norway of his time, showing man as a helpless isolated being, tormented by emotions. In many ways their work has come to hold a special interest for me as a painter.

During Summer 1985, I had the chance to study Art History at the University of Oslo, Norway. There I saw the work of Munch in the National Gallery and in the Munch Museum. I had only encountered the works of Munch previously in photographs and through slides. In November 1985, while visiting Munch's exhibition of The Workers at the National Gallery, Dublin, I encountered the Yeats roo. Both artists have many similarities, both living at the same time and with similar artistic influences. These reasons have directed me to research their works more and thus, I decided to base my thesis on what made them paint in the way they did.

Both Munch and Yeats lived and worked during the same period, producing the bulk of their work during the early years of this century. They both lived in countries on the peripheral of Europe away from the major art centres of Europe. Even though their surroundings and environment gave them a direct source for their works, I believe they were influenced by what was happening with their contemporaries in other parts of Europe. In my final year on the Fine Art course in ~~██████████~~^{NATIONAL} College of Art, I have been drawn to everyday environment and due to this I can be more sympathetic with the two artists' works.

Yeats painted everyday typical Irish scenes of people at fairs and markets and his great love for being Irish shines through in his work. Munch was also interested in his surroundings, but on a much more personal level, that of his obsession with death and memories of his childhood.

Munch and Yeats' manners and styles of painting were different and exciting for thier time, their exile and thier love of thier homeland engendered with them a sense of patrimony and individuality that was completely unique to them and their time. They were their countries' first artistic rebels and staged a dramatic influence on their countries' art worlds.

I believe Yeats and Munch both have made a substantial stand for thier countries and also a substantial move from the viking era, but have brought with them into their art influences of their cultures, such features as highly stylised work, rather than solely figurative, a shared feeling for linear quality, like that of the many Irish motifs found in the 10th century.

These aspects and what it was that attracted these artists to paint in the way they did, and who their influences were, and what I wish to record in this thesis. In order to answer the questions, I believe it necessary to research their lives and what was happening in the art world during their period. by looking at these points I hope to be able to understand their works and the way their lives related to it better. This is what I will discuss in chapter 1.

Chapter 2 will deal with their influences and reasons for their own work. Chapter 3 deals with their subject matter and ideas on art and Chapter 4 will be more personal, after viewing their works and researching their lives, I will write my views on their lives, it's changes through the different periods and if they reached the goal they were aiming for.

Through this thesis, I hope to bring myself into closer understanding of the works and lives of Yeats and Munch and aid myself with my own painting and understanding of my art.

EDVARD MUNCH

CHRONOLOGY

1863

Born the 12th of December at Loten, Hedmark County, Norway, son of Army Medical Corps doctor Christian Munch and his wife Laura Catherine, nee Bjolstad.

1864

His parents move to Christiania (now Oslo)

1868

The artist's mother dies of tuberculosis, and her sister, Miss Bjolstad, takes over the running of the household.

1877

His sister Sophie dies of tuberculosis at the age of 15.

1879

Enters the Technical College with a view towards training as an architect.

1880

November, leaves the Technical College and decides to become a painter.

1881

Enters the School of Design in August, attending first the freehand and later the modelling class.

1882

Rents a studio in Stottingsplass together with six fellow artists. Their work is supervised by the painter Christian Krohg

1883

Exhibits for the first time. Visit Fritz Thaulow's "open air studio" at Modum.

1884

Comes into contact with the Bohemian set, the avant-garde of contemporary naturalistic painters and authors in Norway. In September at Modum.

1885

In May, travels via Antwerp (The World exhibition) to Paris, commences THE SICK CHILD, which is completed the subsequent year.

1886

Four paintings included in the Autumn exhibition in Oslo. THE SICK CHILD rouses a storm of indignation.

1889

First one-man show. Rents a house in Aasgaardstrand during the Summer. Granted a State scholarship. In October to Paris, where he enters Bonnat's art school. In November his father dies.

1890

In May returns home. spends the Summer in Aasgaardstrand and Christiania. In September he is granted a second State scholarship. In November to France.

1891

Granted State scholarship for the third time. Summer spent in Norway. In the Autumn travels via Copenhagen to Paris. Is commissioned to design a vignette for the collection of poems Alruner by Emanuel Goldstein.

1892

Nice. Returns home at the end of March. Exhibition in Christiania. Meets Willumsen who currently exhibits in Christiania. Recieves an invitation to exhibit in the Verein Berliner Kunstler. The exhibition is closed after one week following a debate and vote in the Association.

1893

Berlin. Frequents inter alia Richard Dehmel. August Strindberg, Holger Drachmann, Dagney Juel and Stanislaw Przybszewski, and the circle of critics, etc., associated with the periodical Pan. May in Dresden (exhibition), June in Munich (exhibition) September in Christiania. November to Copenhagen and back to Berlin. THE FRIEZE OF LIFE begins to take shape.

1894

Berlin. Produces his first etchings and lithographs. July, the book Das Werk des Edvard Munch is published. September in Stockholm (exhibition).

1895

Winter in Berlin. June in Paris. Meier-Graefe publishes a Munch folio with eight etchings. September in Paris. The artist's brother Andreas dies.

1896

In February to Paris. Exhibits at the Salon des Independants. Works on illustrations for Baudelaire's Les Fleurs du Mal. His circle of friends include Frederick Delius, Vilhelm Krag, William Molard, Meier-Graefe, Strindberg, Obstfelder, Mallarme, Thadee Natansson, Y. Rambosson, Otto Hettner and Julien Leclerq. Prints color lithographs and his first woodcuts at Clot's

1897

Paris. Exhibits at Salon des Independants. To Aasgaardstrand in July where he buys his own house. In September exhibition in Christiania

1898

In March to Paris. Exhibits at the Salon des Independants. Illustrations to the Munch-Strindberg issue of the periodical Quickborn. Meets Tulla Larsen for the first time.

1899

To Berlin. Paris. Nice. Florence and Rome. In the Autumn and Winter convalescing at Kornhaug. Faaberg, Gudbrandsdalen.

1902

Winter and Spring in Berlin. Exhibits THE FRIEZE OF LIFE at the Berlin Secession. Introduced to Dr. Max Linde, who writes a book on Munch and later in the year commissions him to produce fourteen etchings and two lithographs for the Linde Folio. Summer at Aasgaardstrand. In attempting to terminate the liaison with Tulla Larsen, he shoots himself in the left hand. Is introduced to Gustav Schiefler who starts working on a catalogue of all Munch's prints.

1903

Berlin and Paris. Joins the Societe des Artistes Independants. Meets Eva Mudocci. September in Lubeck, paints Dr. Lindes four sons, then home. In Autumn to Berlin.

1904

Berlin. Contact with Bruno Cassirer in Berlin for sale rights of prints in Germany and a contract with Commeter in Hamburg for sale rights of paintings. Exhibits at the Vienna Secession (20 paintings). March and April in Weimar. Paints on commission a frieze, ultimately rejected, for the nursery in Dr. Linde's house.

1905

Berlin. Exhibition in Prague, which proves a major success. In November to Bad Elgersburg. Thuringen, trying to overcome his nervousness and alcoholic problems. Herman Esswein writes a book on Munch.

1906

Bad Kosen, Bad Illmenau and Weimar, where he is introduced to the Court. Meets Henry van de Velde. Makes decor designs for Ibsen's Ghosts and Hedda Gabler for Max Reinhardt's theatre Kammerspiele, Deutscher Theater.

1907

Winter in Berlin. Decorations for a new foyer in Max Reinhardt's Kammerspielhaus. In April to Stockholm. Summer and Autumn in Warnemunde.

1908

Winter in Berlin. In Summer to Warnemunde. In the autumn to Copenhagen where he suffers a nervous breakdown and is admitted to Dr. Daniel Jacobson's clinic. Honoured as a knight in the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav.

1909

Winter and Spring in Copenhagen at Dr. Jacobson's clinic, where he among other things produces the lithographic series Alpha and Omega. Returns to Norway in May. Settles in Kragero. Starts work for the competition for the decoration of the Oslo University Festival Hall (Aula).

1910

Buys the Ramme estate at Hvitsten on the Oslo Fjord. Works on the University decorations.

1912

Is accorded a "place of honour" at the Sonderbund exhibition in Cologne.
Gets acquainted with Curt Glaser.

1913

Needing more room to work, rents Grimsrod Manor. Receives many tributes
on his fiftieth birthday.

1914

In the Winter to Paris and Berlin. The Summer in Kragero, at Hvitsten and
at Jeloya. On 29th of May the University accepts Munch's Aula decorations
after years of discussions and conflicts.

1916

Buys the Ekely property at Skoyen, near Christiania, where he spends most
of his time up to his death. The Oslo University Aula decorations are
unveiled on the 19th of September.

1917

Curt Glaser's book on Munch is published.

1918

Publishes the pamphlet The Frieze of Life in connection with the Blomqvist
Exhibition in Christiania.

1920 - 21

Visits to Berlin, Paris, Wiesbaden and Frankfurt.

1922

Decorations for the worker's dining room in the Freia Chocolate Factory.
In April to Berlin. In May to Zurich.

1923

Becomes a member of the German Academy

1925

Elected an honorary member of the Bavarian "Akademie der bildenden Kunste"

1926

In the spring to Lubeck, Berlin, Venice, Munich and Wiesbaden. Summer in Norway. In October to Copenhagen, Berlin and Paris.

1927

To Berlin, Munich, Rome, Florence and Dresden. Summer in Norway. Big retrospective exhibitions in Berlin and Oslo.

1928

Works at designs for murals for Oslo City Hall.

1930-31

Suffers from eye trouble

1933

Receives numerous tributes on his 70th birthday. Made a Knight Grand Cross of the order of St. Olav. Jens Thjis and Pola Gauguin publish Munch's first biographies in Norway.

1936

Exhibits for the first time in England.

1937

Eighty-two works by Munch, in various German museums, are considered "entrartete kunsst" and sold by the Nazis.

1940

Norway is occupied by German invaders, with whom Munch refuses any contact.

1943

Receives numerous tributes on his 80th Birthday.

1944

Dies peacefully in his house at Ekely on the afternoon of the 23rd of January. In his will he bequeaths to the city of Oslo all of his remaining work: approximately 1,000 paintings, 15,400 prints, 4,500 watercolours and drawings, as well as six sculptures and numerous letters and manuscripts.

MUNCH - HIS BACKGROUND AND ENVIRONMENT

Edvard Munch (1863 - 1944) was born in Loten, a small town outside Oslo. Munch moved to Oslo when he was one year old. At this time Norway had no Opera, no Ballet and no Academy of Art. The middle class were the ruling class, conservative in politics and protestant in religion. The Munch family were plagued by ill-health and death. In 1868 Munch's mother died of tuberculosis and in 1877 the same disease resulted in the death of his sister Sophie. Throughout his life Munch was to be in constant ill-health coming near death on many occasions. His childhood association with death was to result in an isolated morbid person, alone for the duration of his life.

"Disease, insanity and death were the angels which attended my cradle and since then have followed me through my life. I learned early about the misery and dangers of life and about the after life. About the eternal punishment which awaited the children of sin and hell." (1)

In 1879 Munch entered a technical college in Oslo to study engineering, but soon gave this up for painting, entering the Oslo School of Design in 1881. Soon after taking up a career as a painter, Munch became friends with Han Jaeger, who had formed a group called the Boheme. These people urged followers to overthrow the Bourgeoisie and moral codes and replace it with a de-centralised structure upon the human capacity for love and feeling. These meetings were to bring Munch into contact with many ideas and opinions that were to become an intriguing part of his work.

During the Summer of 1885, while holidaying in Eskstrand, Munch met and fell in love with a married woman, whom he refers to as Mrs Heildberg. This affair was not to last long, but affected Munch and his attitude towards women for the rest of his life. His only other relationship with a woman was in 1898, with an Oslo painter Tulla Larsen. This affair ended tragically in 1902 after an argument in which Munch lost a finger. Resulting from this Munch never married and lived a life constantly tormented with his emotions of jealousy and sadness.

In 1885, Munch travelled to Paris for the first time, viewing works of Manet, Rembrandt, Velasquez and the Impressionists. Four years later, hurt and angered by the Norwegian critics and Oslo public, he was to return to Paris. Munch entered many works in exhibitions, all of which were heavily criticised. In late 1892, Munch was invited to exhibit at the Vereun Berliner Kunstler, this exhibition was closed down after only six days, described as rude, pornographic and disgusting. This was to be the first of a conflict with critics but the beginning of a wide-spread popularity soon after he exhibited in Dresden, Munich and Copenhagen.

Settling in Berlin in 1894 until the end of the century, Munch continued to work and work. The Frieze of Life was to be the theme that ran through his work for more than forty years. Suffering two nervous breakdowns in 1889 and 1909, Munch continued endless travelling until 1916 when he bought a house in Skoyen, near Oslo, and was to remain there until his death. His lonely and isolated life played the main theme in Munch's work during which he worked constantly until his death during World War II in 1944.

REFERENCES

1. J.P. Hopkins Edvard Munch, pg.3

MUNCH'S INFLUENCES AND REASONS FOR HIS

TYPE OF WORK

Edvard Munch (1863-1944), after his death seemed too local, too narrowly 'Northern', a painter for his work to be set against the historical art values that centered on Paris, where as virtually all his major works had remained in his native city of Oslo. But today, Munch seems as universal a figure as Ibsen or Strindberg, because he was the first modern painter to make a continuous study of the idea that personality is created by conflict. Long as Munch's working life was, most of his best work was done within the last ten years of the 19th century.

In 1879, Munch befriended writer and anarchist Hans Jaeger, who argued his followers to overthrow Bourgeoisie and replace it with a structure of freedom and feeling. Munch became a member of this group called the Boheme discussing such roles as free love and the role of art and the purpose of existence. Within this group he was to come in contact with many ideas and opinions that were to influence his work. In 1881 after leaving Oslo Engineering College, Munch with a group of other Norwegian artists set up the Royal School of Art and Design in Norway. Having visited Paris ten years previously, Krogh had encountered Impressionism and immediately became an enthusiastic advocator, celebrating works of Manet, Monet and Degas.



ill.No.1

The Flueter

Krogh was one of Munch's main forerunners, concentrating on life as lived and experienced by the individual being. For Krogh and his followers Manet was to be their main influence, with such paintings as the The Flueter (ill.no.1). In 1883 Krogh described Manet as an anarchist who rejected all academic rules, who declared the old masters invalid. This was to be the start of the Norwegian impressionistic revolution - Manet being Munch's first French artist to influence him.

Krogh on Munch:

"First of a new generation of Norwegian artists, the greatness of Munch's art with which we have to come to terms, is that, he paints solely what he feels". (1)

In May 1885, Munch visited Paris for the first time, coming in contact with such masters as Velasquez, Manet and Rembrandt. Returning to Oslo he was to be introduced to the work of Paul Gauguin, an artist that was to greatly influence his early work. The freedom of modernist colour the way emotion can be worked on by purely optical means, was one of his legacies. That was to be a central point in the work of Munch.

During Munch's years in paris, he observed Impressionism and 'painting' in the field were incapable of creating monumental painting. Munch believed the ability of art to be:

"Ability of art to capture the essential and in particular the individual with his inner life, his soul. This he saw as the task of art" (2)

Munch was uninfluenced by 'isms' such as symbolism and impressionism. He advocated an 'Art of memory', whose images will appear to the inner eye, dim and mysterious images. This theory was similar to the ideas of C.D. Friedrich who advised others:



Ill.No.2

The Sick Child

"The Painter should depict not only what he sees before him but also what he sees inside himself.....close you physical eyes, so that you see your picture with spiritual eyes then bring forth what you saw inside you, so that it works on other forms from the exterior to the spirit". (3)

Early 1885, Munch started to paint The Sick Child (ill.no. 2), a painting he was able to refer to again and again over the next twenty years. Without sketches, Munch used his aunt and a girl called Betzy Nelson to depict a scene from his past - that of his sister Sophie's traumatic death. Adding layer upon layer of texture, with brush and palett knife, he slowly scraped out, replaced and scraped out again. Working on this painting for over a year, Munch strove to de-emphasise all unimportant detail, changing everything except for the two figures. Finally at the last stages, he eliminated distracting detail of curtains, window, flower pots.

"Truth - not in detail but in expressive whole" (4)

Like Gauguin and Van Gogh's work, exterior reality is the major concern of most artists of this time but the major difference with this painting was The Sick Child has transcended all exterior reality and became the first expressionistic painting of feeling in the Western World.

Munch on Sick Child

"I broke new trails for myself, it was a break-through in my own art". (5)
Like Krogh's painting Sick Child inspired by memory, these paintings present no detail of sickrooms, doctors or nurses, but focus on a sick child within a collapsed space.



Ill.NO.3

Spring Day on Karl Johan
Gata



Ill.No.4

Harbour at Gravelines



Ill.No.5

Evening on Karl Johan Gata



Ill.No.6

The Lonely Ones

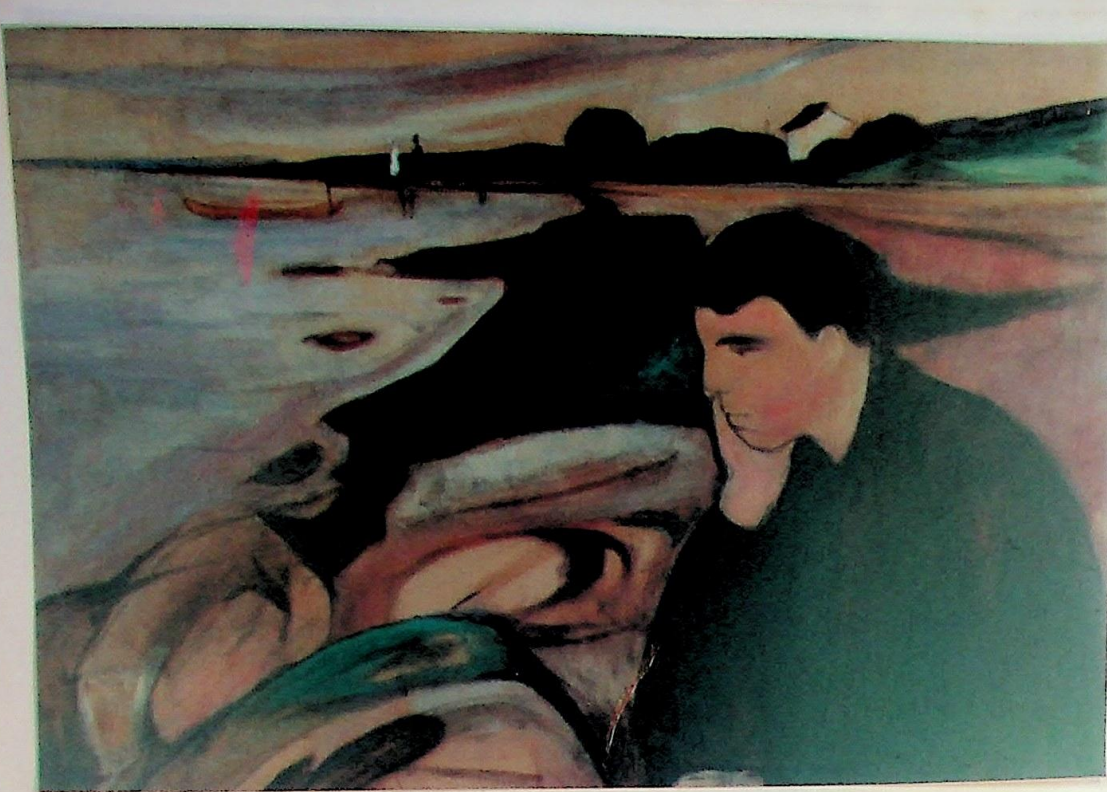
Krogh's manipulated space was intended to concentrate the viewers attention, Munch flattened not only space but also all forms within the painting to possess 3D effect.

Autumn 1886 - Munch's SICK CHILD came under strong attack from the Oslo critics who regarded it as an unfinished sketch making everyone stand and laugh. This painting became a liberation from Krogh's influence and from Norway.

From 1889 to 1892 Munch lived in Paris. He would have come in contact with such artists as Seurat, Van Gogh, Rodin, Degas and Renoir, who would all have played an influence on his early style.

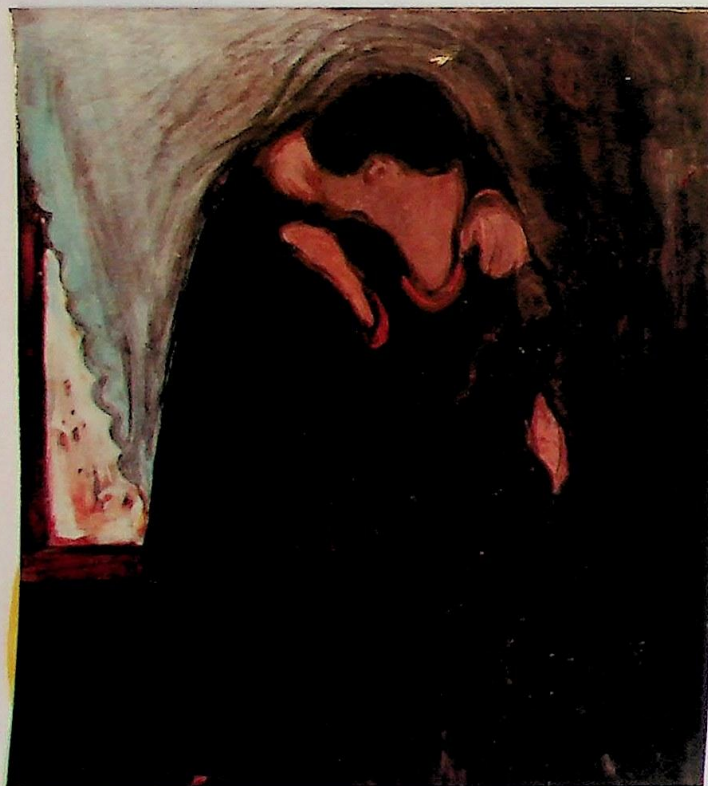
SPRING DAY ON KARL JOHANN GATA (ill.no.3) painted in 1890 shows great influence of the pointillist style with a similar execution to that of Seurat's HARBOR AT GRAVELINES (ill.no.4) painted in 1890. The whole painting has a strong sense of softness, contrasting this with a later one of Munch's works EVENING ON KARL JOHANN GATA 1893 (ill.no.) shows a much more expressionistic style, figures with gaping eyes, sharp perspective and a great change in colour. The paint is very loosely applied showing a crowd moving towards the viewer paralleled with a man standing in the centre of the street. This is Munch himself, this is the start of his isolation of characters within the pictures.

THE LONELY ONES 1892 (ill.no.6) in composition is closely mirrored to C.D. Friedrichs view of the Baltic Sea. WANDERER LOOKING OVER A SEA OF FOG 181 (ill.no.7), Munch's figures do not identify with the seascape nor do they join together. Man and woman seek separate thoughts as indicated by their distinct attitudes.



Ill.No.7

Wanderer looking over Sea



Ill.No.8

The Kiss



Ill.No.9

The Kiss

THE KISS 1892 (ill.no.8), worked on in sketch form, after seeing Rodins KISS (ill.no.9) in Paris. Remembrance of his love for Mrs Heildberg, Munch is to formulate Rodins philosophy, to understand and express the purpose of mans existence, the purpose for thier pain, love, despair and death. These ideas were to introduce Munch to his lifes work of the FRIEZE OF LIFE showing the relationships between man and woman and their identification to love and death.

From his early days of work in Paris to the colourful work of Tahiti, Munch observed the work of Paul Gauguin, such work as THE YELLOW CHRIST 1889 shows the unrealistic use of colour to express feelings about the subject, creating even a decorative pattern and even painting THE VISION AFTER THE SERMON 1888 (ill.no.10) show the same distortions, the red could be the blooded sky of Munch's THE SCREAM. Gauguins greatest influence on Munch was his woodcuts such as WOMEN AT RIVER 1891 (il.no.11) and gave Munch the medium needed to fill the formal demands on his motifs of THE SCREAM (no.12), THE KISS and THE LONELY ONES

THE SCREAM, the most climatic piece of THE FRIEZE has close ties with works of Van Gogh, Eile Bernard and T.T. Heine.

In Van Goghs BRIDGE AT TRINQUETAILLE (ill.no.13) the structure of both paintings can not be denied. Munch wrote to his brother about his painting:

"He wishes to achieve something extremely distressful and heart-breaking, in its subjective effect on the viewer". (6)



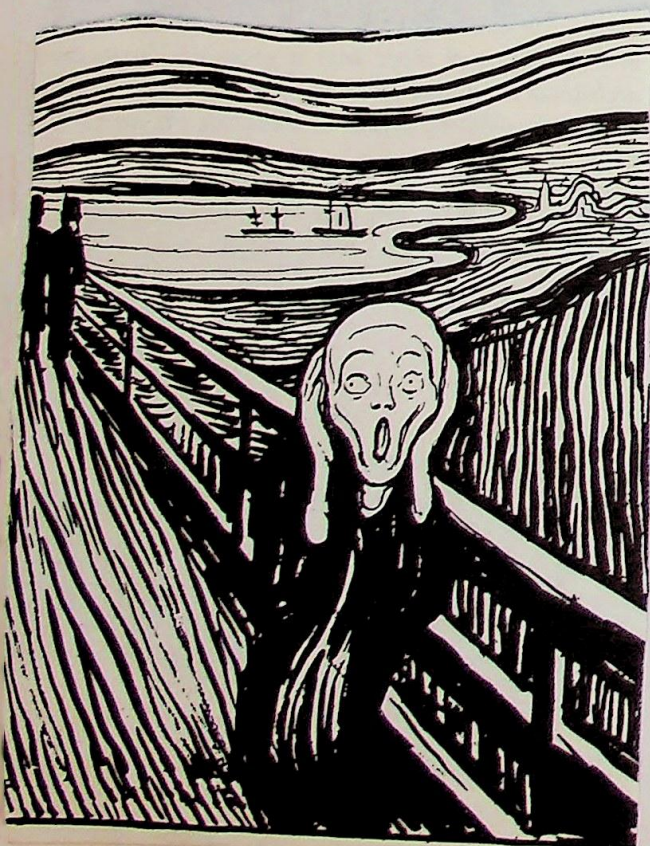
Ill.No.11

Women at River



Ill.No.13

Bridge at Trintevetoille



Ill.No.12

The Scream

Ill.No.16

Vampire

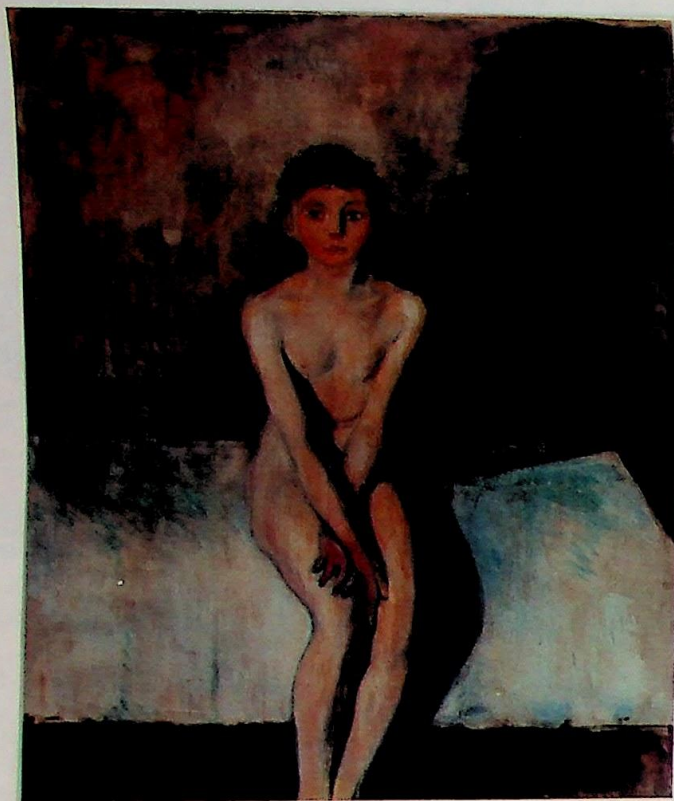


Following Emile Bernards SEINE AT ASNIERES (ill.no.14), displays the same type of verticals and same perspective jutting into the space, and T.T. Heines BEFORE SUNSET 1887 (ill.no.1) both in composition and content are parallel to Munch's SCREAM, with deep red sky spatial effect closely approximates that of the SCREAM.

By 1890, stylistic distortions of Van Gogh has become a common European property and their characteristics appear in countries outside France. Munch would also have seen the work of Toulouse Lautrec, and such works as AT THE MOULIN ROUGE, would have added the drama that ended Munch's paintings at this time.

Munch from his early days in Paris was to live forty years into the 20th century, painting constantly through this time. Paris and Berlin would have been his main areas for influence. Isolated for the most part of the last thirty years of his life. Munch was to be known as the father of expressionism, a movement which came to full flower during his lifetime.

During the early 1890s with the popularity of graphic art, Munch tried his first prints. Starting in 1894 with a dry point engraving, Munch returns to the practice of Naturalism, carrying a copper plate with him he began sketching in Cars and Beer Halls and after mastering the technique produced the piece DEATH EMBRACES THE NAKED WOMAN, at the same time returning to the motifs of the THE FRIEZE such as VAMPIRE (ill.no.16) and SICK CHILD. In 1896 he progressed to colour etchings and lithographs - PUBERTY (ill.no.17).



Ill.No.17

Puberty

Ill.No.18

Melancholy



But in 1896, Munch was introduced to the final printing process of woodcuts, in this field Munch surpassed all his other works, inventing a method of cutting out wood, shaped to various contours in the picture inking different colours and then fitting them back together like a jigsaw. Working on the stark and simple outlines such as KISS and MELANCHOLY (ill.no.18) these motifs were reduced to essential forces for which Munch had been searching for the past ten years.

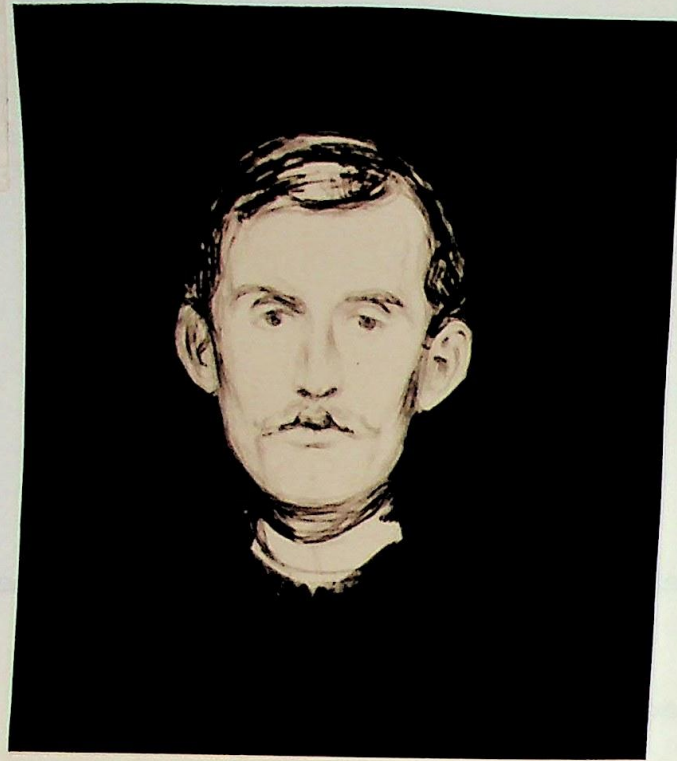
Printing is to continue in Munch's work both as finished piece and also a studies technique allowing him to continue on with THE FRIEZE OF LIFE. Munch's art, although characterised as expressionistic, has never used inorganic distortions as did German expressionists, Munch chose beautiful people to express the suffering, sorrow and torments of mankind.

REFERENCES

1. Reinhold Heller, Munch, the Scream pg.26
2. Revold Lengaard, Munch pg.
3. Reinhold Heller, Munch, the Scream pg.23
4. Revold Lengaard, Munch pg.5
5. Reinhold Heller, Munch, His life and works, pg.32
6. Ibid pg.73

Ill.NO.19

Self Portrait



Ill.No.20

Death in the Sickroom

CHAPTER 3

SUBJECT MATTER

Munch's earliest works consist of portraits of his family and views around his home such as SELF PORTRAIT 1882 (ill.no.19) and FLOWERY MEADOW IN VEIERLAND 1887. Munch's early works were influenced by the Naturalists but changed to Impressionistic while in Paris. Looking for a way to express himself through his work, he built on the images of memory, concentrating and condensing them, first in painting and later in graphic work, until they acquired symbolic and universal character. Found in a diary in St. Claude in 1889:

"We should stop painting interiors with people reading and women knitting, we should create living people who breathe and feel and suffer and love".
(1)

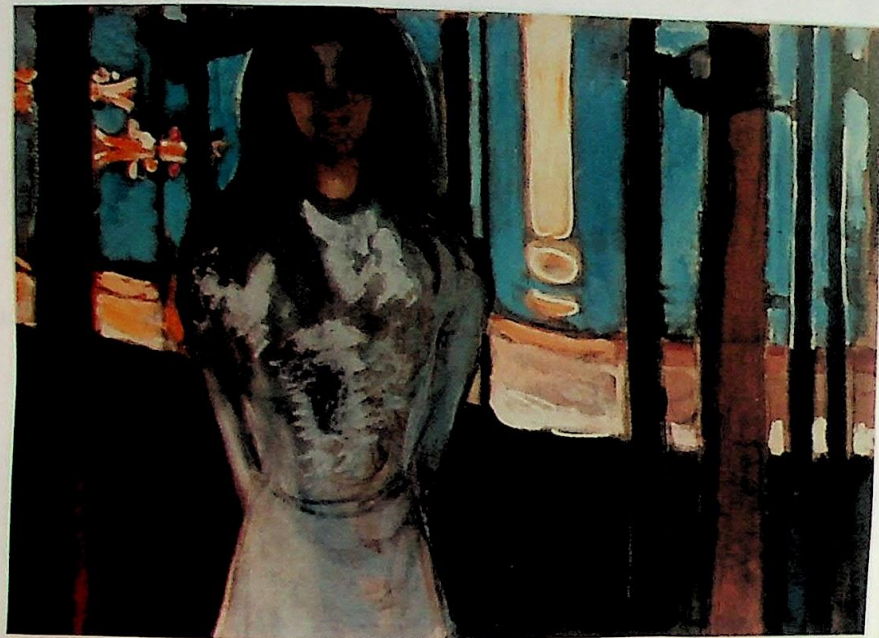
Emerging from these ideas was THE FRIEZE OF LIFE, a series of paintings that would depict the concepts and complications of life, THE FRIEZE would show the perfect solidarity between man and woman manifested in love and death.

The decision to paint THE FRIEZE came after seeing his work in a one-man exhibition in 1892 exhibiting THE KISS, THE DEATH IN THE SICKROOM (ill.no.20) and MELANCHOLY (ill.no.21⁸) assembling a series of autobiographical paintings was to sustain Munch for the next thirty years and until he died.

Munch's work, in terms of subject matter is auto-biographical, having close ties with his life, the illness of childhood, his first love and the disastrous relationships, leaving him bitter, jealous and almost insane.

ill.No.22

The Voice



G.W. DIGBY

"Painting was for Munch an obsession which discharged the tensions and problems of his life" (2)

FRIEZE OF LIFE

Dividing THE FRIEZE up into love and death makes it easier to study, almost set to a series of a modern soap-opera. Reinheld Heller condenses the story:

"Love begins during the mid summer night with dreams of coming love, which are followed by the first kiss. The course of love continues, pleasure mingled with pain, attaining its highest intensity in Madonna's face of the loving woman. Finally love is disrupted by thoughts of jealousy and dies in the moment of despair" (3).

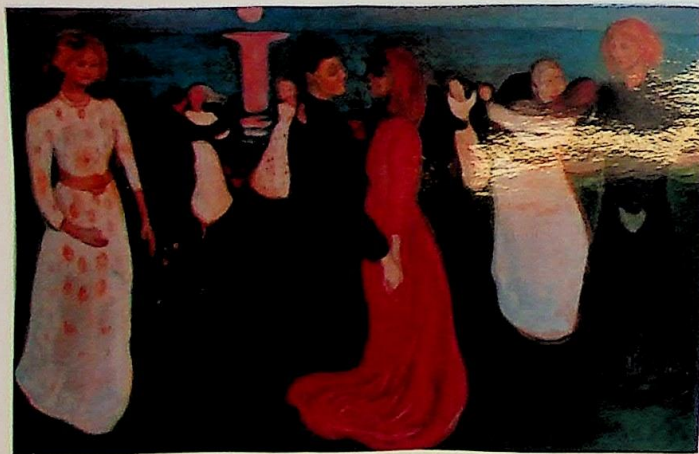
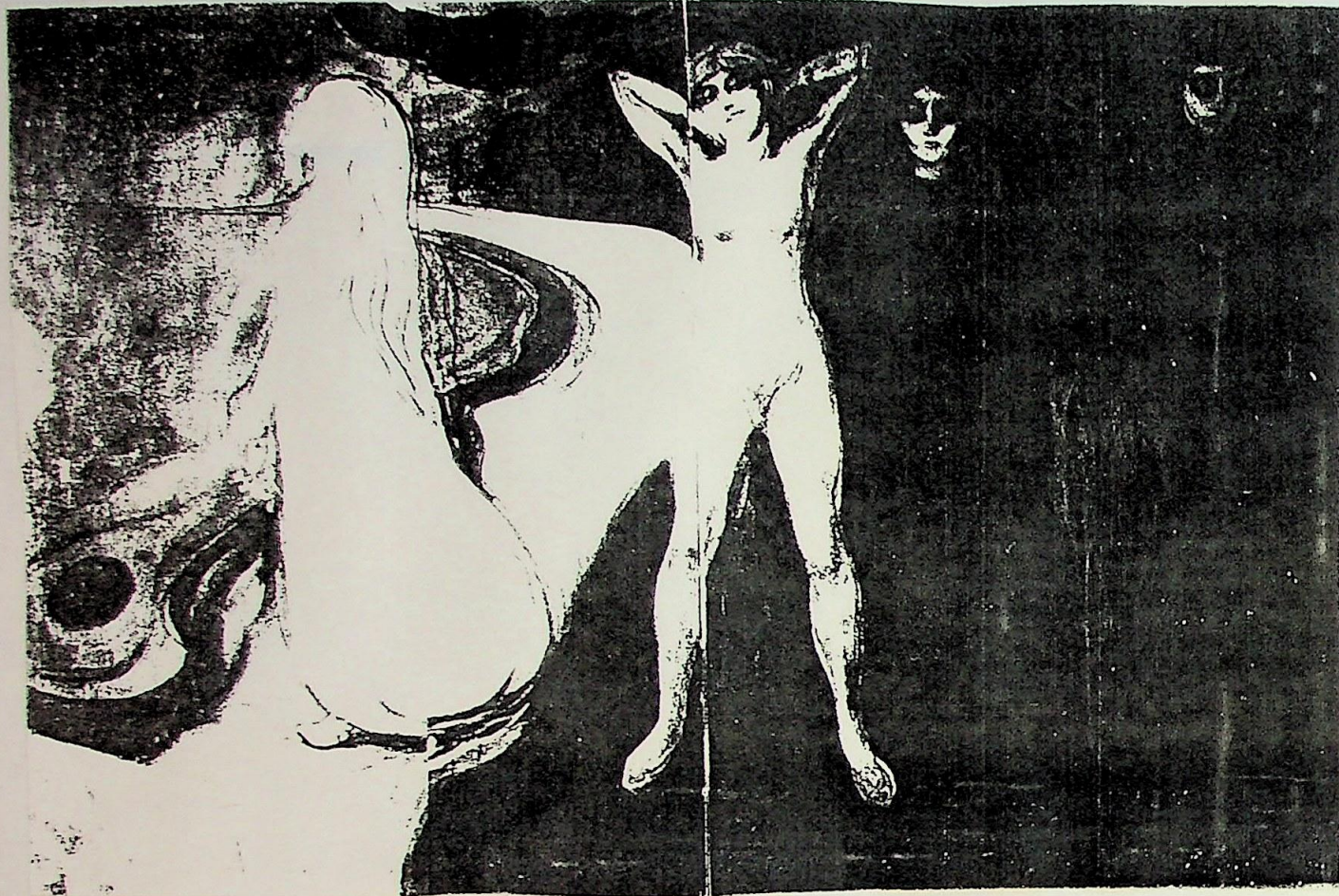
LOVE

THE VOICE 1893 (ill.no.22) also named DREAM OF A SUMMERS NIGHT. The scene consists of a girl in white alone in a forest staring out at the viewer, seeking possible victim, that of her first love and kiss. PUBERTY (ill.no.23) is her change over from childhood.

KISS 1891. First sketches reveal the environment of a room, but now all unimportant detail is omitted and the two figures fuse together for the first sexual encounter. Munch develops this theme of the kiss in VAMPIRE 1893, showing the womans power over the man, biting into his neck, draining him of everything, but in reality all this is a kiss bathed in dark light and shadows.

One might expect such a mans views and relationships with women to be neurotic and they were. Munch was all but unable to think of women as social beings.

THE THREE STAGES OF WOMEN (ill no 24.)



Ill.No.25

Dance of Life

He believed sex was in all senses, but that of procreation as inherently destructive. A notion borne out by the fate of his two surviving sisters, one of whom went mad and the other permanently frigid as the result of an unhappy love affair in early 1890.

During the 1890s great tension to tighten the knot to unify THE FRIEZE now a theme emerged, the triple aspect of Munch's feeling for woman all seen in THE THREE STAGES OF WOMEN 1893-9 (ill.no.24). Seen from left to right:

- A) The dreaming woman/virgin dressed white, gazing dreamily out into life. For her - Munch had respect.
- B) The temptress devourer, hungry for life seen naked. For her - Munch had a longing.
- C) The saintly woman, the mother, the sacrificer hidden in the trees. For her - Munch had compassion.

In 1900 he painted THE DANCE OF LIFE (ill.no.2), showing the isolation of the dancers, lives continuing changes-white, red, black, symbolising innocence, sensuality and bravery. The women are probably Mrs. Heildberg, standing to the right, and Munch himself is dancing with Tulla Larsen, and to the left the virgin, the woman he respects, observing the dane.

Munch's temptress or devouress is seen in MADONNA 1895, this is a subjective view of a woman as seen by her partner in sexual intercourse. The figure wears a halo - as if sacred. Around the figure is a border decorated with sperm motifs and an embryo in the bottom left-hand corner.

All through his work the initial idea to Munch is important. In THE SICK CHILD the preliminary marks can be seen giving the painting a drawing quality. In this painting Munch uses egg white to give rougher qualities to the oil and also to flatten and condense the image. This picture tied love to death, woman the giver of life, but to Munch - also the taker.

DEATH

Munch sees death with its horrors and anxieties and sorrows, showing the sadness of life through MELANCHOLY 1891, LONELINESS 1892 and JEALOUSY 1892. All these emotions combined with physical and sexual tension which are at a peak, nervous almost at breaking point, he tries desperately to express himself, the feelings of isolations from his family, rejection of his work in his home land and watching his mistress leave for another, combined with heavy drinking, bring about Munch's most acclaimed work THE SCREAM 1893.

THE SCREAM, one of Munch's major works had forced him to paint out of fear, to gain through his painting a renewed actualization of his ego which could not withstand the pressures of sensual stimuli. THE SCREAM more than any other painting was the symbol of his struggle. THE SCREAM served as the final tableau in the series studying the effects of life.

Munch's paintings were impression that the eye took in at moments of emotion, on hearing the scream in nature - Munch painted the scream.

Munch's diary entry, dated 22nd January 1892:

"I was walking along the road with two friends - the sun set. I felt a tinge of melancholy. Suddenly the sky became a bloody red. I stood still, dead tired. Over the blue-black fjord and city hung blood and tongues of fire. My friends walked on. I stayed behind, trembling with fright. I felt the great scream in nature". (4).

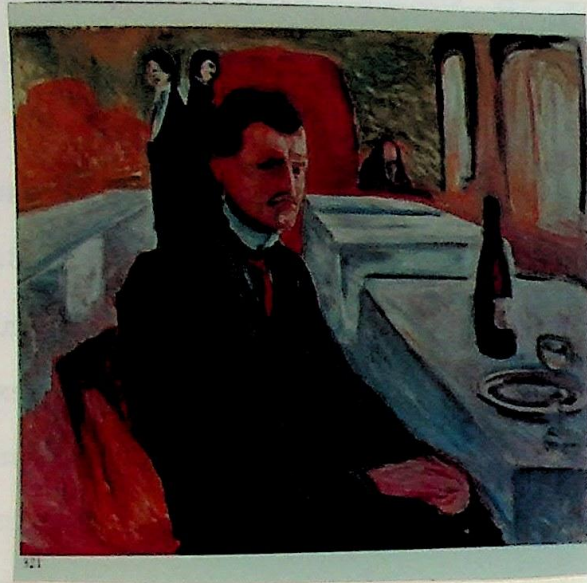
Painted on cardboard in a mixture of oil, pastel and crayon DESPAIR imitates the composition, created earlier in 1893. This shows a man in profile, sky painted in harsh red, the two figures walking away echo blackish / blue of the landscape colours - dull except for the red sky. But THE SCREAM shows an S shaped figure, no gender, with its hands held against its head, as in pain, crying out, echoed with the landscape. The bending figure takes on a shrivelling quality adding emphasis to the two types of lines of the sky and promenade.

Screaming, wrote Lessing, is the natural expression of bodily pain.

Sigbjorn Obstfelders poem has similar views with that of THE SCREAM.

JEG SER (I see)

I see the white heavens
I see the clouds of grey-blue
I see the blood red sun - so this is the world
So this is that planets home - A Raindrop,
I see the tall houses
I see a thousand windows
I see the distant church towers - so this is Earth
- so this is mans home
The grey-blue clouds thicken, the sun vanishes
I see well dress men
I see smiling women I see running horses
- How dark the grey-blue clouds are getting
I see, I see, Now I've come to the wrong planet
Here, it is so strange ()



Munch believed art was not complete until it communicated to an audience and the audience recognised the intentions of the artist. Munch's works represented his own personality, but *THE SCREAM* fulfills the anxiety he was feeling, showing the anxiety and dread and projecting them from the interior to the exterior, giving the audience an inside to his feelings and state of mind.

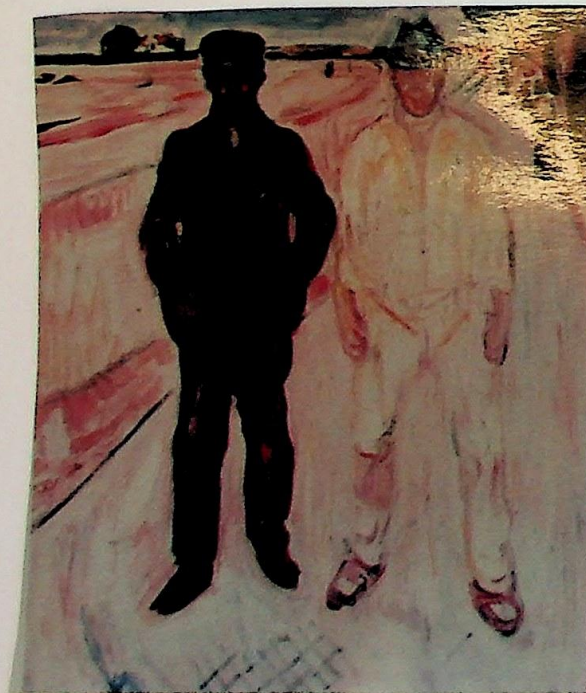
In 1906 Munch paints a SELF PORTRAIT WITH BOTTLE (ill.no.26), this painting echoes the composition of *THE SCREAM*, the tables and interior creating the atmosphere and the two isolated figures in both show lack of communication with the main character. Soon after both these paintings, Munch suffered from nervous breakdowns, causing him to be hospitalised in 1896 and 1908.

REFERENCES

1. J.P. Hopkins, Edvard Munch pg.138
2. Ibid pg.98
3. Reinhold Heller, Munch, the Scream pg.28
4. Ibid pg.108
5. Ibid pg.69



Ill.No.27
Starry Night



Ill.No.28
Mason and Mechanic

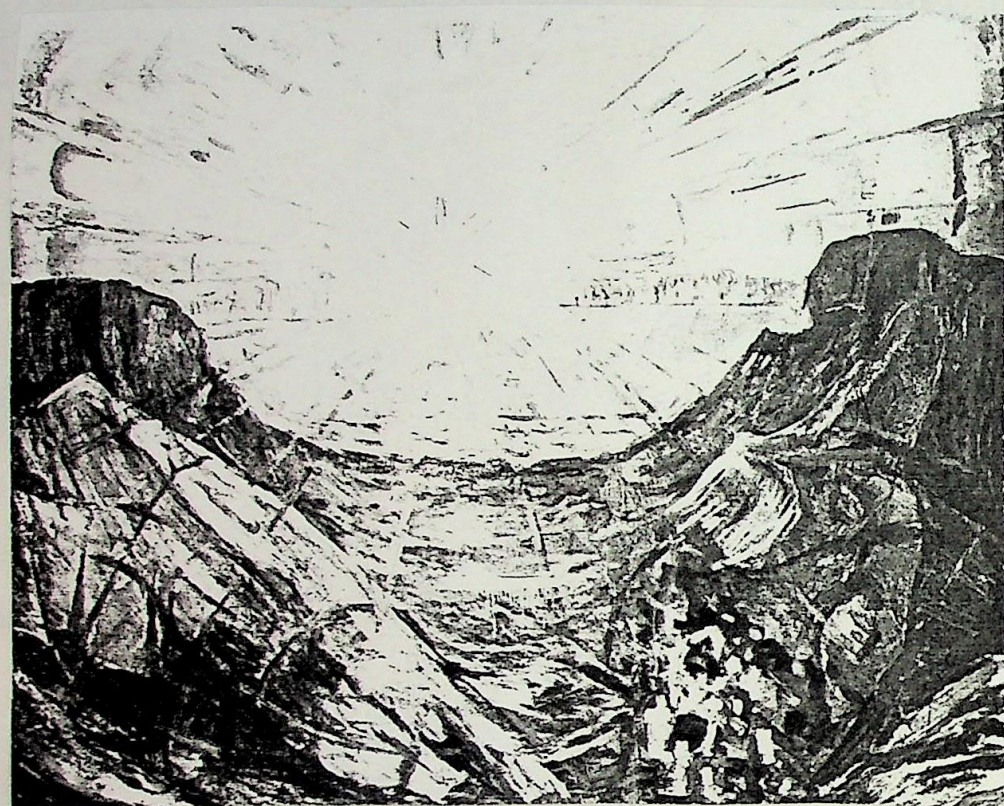
CHAPTER 4

MUNCH'S LATER WORK

In 1902 after an argument which lost Munch a finger, he fought to retain his sanity. He made deliberate attempts to turn to nature for his motif, painted landscapes instead of seascapes, ATHLETIC MALE NUDES instead of vampire-madonna women.

Munch's early escapism was in such paintings as STARRY NIGHT (ill.no.27) and BLUE WINTER NIGHT, both related to Van Gogh's STARRY NIGHT in composition and mood his paintings were unimpaired after break-down, but colour was a major difference - bright reds, yellow and greens - from the dominant tones that appear intensified by the black indications of shadows.

Over the remainder of his life, Munch was obsessed with making larger and larger work. During 1916 he returned to Norway for good, buying a house in Skoyen near Oslo and remaining there in isolation. There he started on new larger versions of KISS, DANCE OF LIFE and THREE STAGES OF WOMEN. He started work on drawings and paintings of workers, keeping everything, he regarded these as studies for a workers frieze he wished to work on. MASON AND MECHANIC AT WARNE MUNDE 1908 (ill.no.28), he considered this the first painting for the frieze. He divided his subject matter into areas of work, forestry, factory workers and fishermen.



SUNRISE (THE DAWN OF LIFE)
AULA HALL OF OSLO UNIVERSITY.
(ill no. 29).

In 1909 he was commissioned to decorate the AULA HALL OF OSLO UNIVERSITY (ill.no.29), the main canvas was of SUNRISE, 455 x 780 cm, showing the dawn of life - for Munch it was. On the two side was where large paintings (455 x 1160 cm) of adult and children in landscape. The main difference between this work and earlier work is the scale of the figures in comparison to landscape. In 1921 Munch did a mural for FREIA CHOCOLATE FACTORY (~~ill.no.30~~) with motifs of the world of work. These too, were large canvas showing the worker leaving work and the worker during his leisure time. This was to be Munch's last commission that he was to work on. During the 1930s Oslo planned a new City Hall. Munch was to design murals for it, but in 1936, due to eye complaints, he had to resign. Throughout the remainder of his life he strove to find housing for the FRIEZE OF LIFE, so that it could be seen in its completeness. He was angered when Oslo decided to honour Gustav Viegeland, a sculptor with similar interest in the relationship of the sexes with that of Munch, with a sculpture park in central Oslo. Frustrated plans, insufficient strength and inability to free himself from the past, mark Munch's last two decades of life. He failed to perceive political, social and artistic development of the time and died alone and isolated in Ekely in 1944 leaving all the works that are still his property - 1,000 paintings, 15,400 prints, 5,500 watercolours and drawings, 6 sculptures.

JACK B. YEATS

CHRONOLOGY

Books written and illustrated by Jack B. Yeats are shown in CAPITALS below. The Collected Plays of Jack B. Yeats edited by Robin Skelton are published by Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd., London.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1871 | Born: 23 Fitzroy Street, London |
| 1879-87 | Lived with his maternal grandparents in Sligo |
| 1887 | Attended art school in London: (1) South Kensington, (2) Chiswick Art School, (3) Westminster School |
| 1888 | First black and white illustrations accepted for publication |
| 1892-3 | Worked in Manchester as a poster artist |
| 1894 | Married Mary Cottenham White |
| 1895 | Watercolour exhibit in RHA, Dublin, (subsequently exhibited in over 160 group shows in his lifetime) |
| 1897 | Settled in Devonsire |
| 1897 | First one-man show in Clifford Gallery, London (subsequently exhibited in over 60 one-man shows in various counties in his lifetime)* |
| 1898 | Visit to Italy |
| 1898 | Attends 1798 Centenary Celebrations in Carrignagat |
| 1899 | Stays with Lady Gergory at Coole |
| 1901 | JAMES FLAUNTY OR THE TERROR OF THE WESTERN SEAS |
| 1902 | THE SCOURGE OF THE GULPH |
| 1903 | THE TREASURE OF THE GARDEN |
| 1904 | Visit to New York on occasion of Exhibition in the Clausen Gallery |

1904	THE BOSUN AND THE BOB-TAILED COMET
1905	Tour of the West of Ireland with J.M. Synge for publication in Manchester Guardian
1905	A LITTLE FLEET
1910	Settled permanently in Ireland and lived in Greystones
1912	Exhibited at Salon des Independants, Paris.
1912	LIFE IN THE WEST OF IRELAND
1913	Five oil paintings included in Armory Exhibition in New York
1930	MODERN ASPECT OF IRISH ART
1930	SLIGO
1933	APPARATIONS
1933	SAILING, SAILING, SWIFTLY
1936	THE AMARANTHERS
1938	THE CHARMED LIFE
1942	Joint exhibition with William Nicholson in the National Gallery, London
1942	AH WELL
1943	LA LA NOO
1944	AND TO YOU ALSO
1945	National Loan Exhibition in Dublin
1947	THE CARELESS FLOWER
1948	Retrospective Exhibition at Temple Newsam, Leeds. Taken over by Arts Council for Tate Gallery, London, Aberdeen and Edinburgh
1951-2	Institute of Contemporary Art Retrospective Exhibition in Boston, Washington, San Francisco, Colorado, Toronto, Detroit, New York.
1957	Died 28 March, Dublin
1964	IN SAND (published posthumously)

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CHAPTER 1

YEATS - HIS BACKGROUND AND ENVIRONMENT

Jack B. Yeats (1871-1957) was born in London on August 29th 1871, eight years after Norwegian artist Edvard Munch. Like Munch, Yeats' father was a painter who only started to paint when Jack was a child and thus instilled in him an interest in painting. Being from a strong artistic family he took part in many areas of the arts, such as song and drama, but returned to painting as his first love. He believed painting to be the most direct form of communication.

Although Yeats was born in London, his parents were very patriotic of Ireland. His mother impressed her intense love of Sligo on her children. Mrs. John B. Yeats stayed at 'Melville' in Sligo when Jack was a baby and in 1879, due to a financial situation, Yeats' parents returned to London while Jack remained with his grandparents. He lived with them from 1879 until 1887. He received his formal education in a private school in Sligo. Jack was not too clever in school and preferred to wander the country-side observing and making sketches. There were weekly markets in Sligo and quarterly fairs to which Yeats returned for many years after. Also there were race meetings, circuses, fairs, tinkers and many other happenings all of which Yeats used as sources for his paintings.

In 1887 on returning to England, Yeats attended the South Kensington Art College - known as the Royal College of Art. In college he was described as quiet and distant, both as a painter and in character. Little is known of his time in college, though he is said to have studied academically, learning little. But returning to Ireland he found a dignity in Irish characters. In the same year as starting art college, Yeats moved to 3 Bleinhei Road, Bedford Park, and with some friends this soon became known as a colony of artists. During this time he often returned to Sligo where he took notes and sketches for paintings.

In 1892 he got his first so-called art job, as a poster artist in Manchester and soon after got a job as an illustrator with a Manchester newspaper called 'The Vegetarian'. In 1893 Yeats, with his brother William Butler set up the Gaelic Revival Movement and Yeats became an artist with a cause, studying the Irish language also, tying himself tighter to Ireland. In late 1894 Yeats married Mary Cottenham White and supported his wife and himself by illustrating for such magazines as 'Punch'.

During the twenty-two years of his residence in Southern England (1887-1910) these scenes of Ireland and the sketches of the fairs, circuses and race meetings were the raw material of his work and reinforced his constant longing to return permanently to Ireland. In 1897 he opened a one-man show of watercolours at the Clifford Gallery in Haymarket. The exhibition was entitled 'Sketches of Life in Western Ireland'. This exhibition was well received. The following year this exhibition moved to London.

During his time in England Yeats travelled to Italy, Paris, Germany and Switzerland, where he came in contact with his contemporaries.

After settling in Ireland in 1910 on a permanent basis, Yeats continued to exhibit in London and in New York in 1904 and 1952, with the help of an American patron John Quinn. In 1912 he exhibited in the Salon Des Independants in Paris, and in 1942 he exhibited with William Nicholas in the National Gallery in London. This exhibition was a huge success and Yeats became an overnight celebrity. Yeats continued to exhibit in England and Ireland until his death in 1957.

CHAPTER 2

INFLUENCES

Jack B. Yeats was inlove with Ireland and her people. This love and obsession became the central point for all his paintings.

"Sligo was my School, and the sky above it" (1)

Yeats was born in the late 19th century, entering the art world of the pre-Raphaelism, Impressionism, Expressionism and Cubism. I believe he was greatly influenced by what was happening in the art world of the time. He portrayed Ireland as a country axed from Europe, with people, customs and traditions unique to Ireland - art images which he had been fascinated by since childhood.

"He was a romantic who had always walked out into the darkness so that when he meets his travellers, there is no need to portray them in fancy dress, for they already wear all that he has imagined and perceived through his openness in his own previous dark solitary journey". (2)

It is difficult to say who Yeats' early influences were. I believe Audrey Beardsley (1872 - 1898) and Edgar Degas (1834 - 1917), but mostly the anonymous graphic illustrators who were such an essential part of journalism. They played the role of visual and social commentators, and thus illustrating provided Yeats with his first job.

Edgar Degas would have been well known and exhibiting early in Yeats' career, Degas' love of the theatre, with colourful scenes of ballerinas.

SHROVE HALFPENNY 1898



To introduce the viewer and involve him more into the painting, Degas cut of the figures on the edge of the canvas, so as to appear there was something happening outside the canvas as in DANCERS IN BUTTERFLY COSTUMES 1880 (ill. no. 31). Yeats' earlier work consisted mainly of a graphic style, SHROVE HALFPENNY 1898^(ill. no. 31). He would have come in contact with the work of Beardsley. Yeats mentioned Beardsley as one of the greatest illustrators of Yeats' time. Beardsley was primarily a pen and ink artist, he lived in England where he had no formal training, but earned his living by his formal strength and original style, which led to his later work which was grotesque and erotic.

Yeats' lived in England until 1910, when on returning to Ireland he was completely surrounded by the theme of his paintings. Irish art of the early 1900's was much influenced by such Evie Hone, Manie Jellet, Walter Osborne and Roderic O'Connor, who was studying full time in France.

The strong French influence on Irish art, already noticed at the end of the 19th century, continued into the 20th century. Most painters went to Paris to complete their training and those who didn't studied in London under masters who were themselves French trained. French influence ranged from the painterly realism of Manet, which is found in Orpen to the distintegration of cubism, brought back from Paris by Mainie Jellet. Although some of Jellet's work is abstract, Irish Painting on the whole remained resolutely figurative.

Jack B. Yeats' filled a need that had become immediate in Ireland the need of the people to feel that their own life was being expressed in art.



Ill.No.33
A Full Tram

Ill.No.34
In Memory

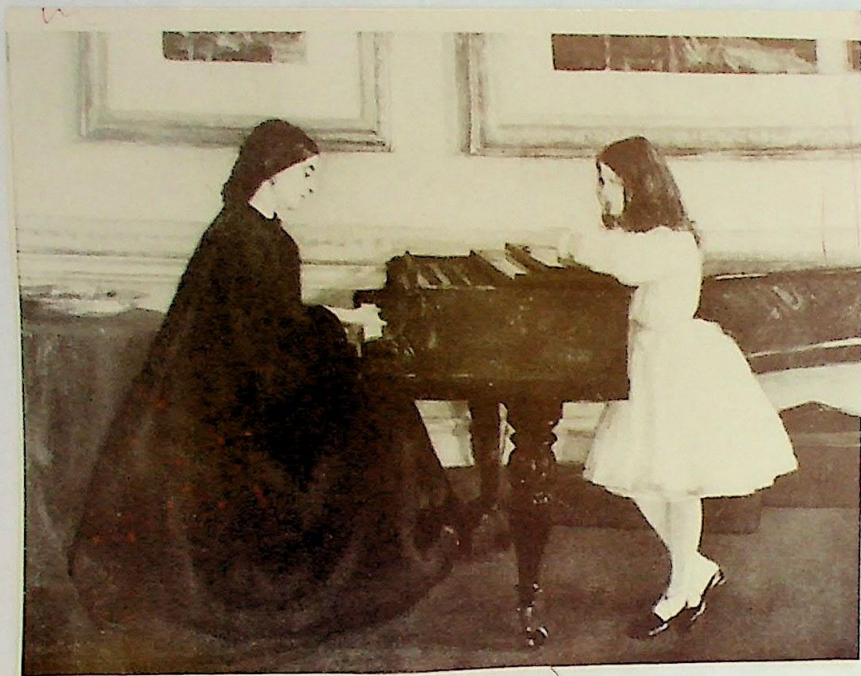


Along with these influences from France, I believe Jack himself was very much influenced by his contemporaries, having lived in England and visited Paris, Germany, Italy and America. It is important to remember that during, artists such as Degas, Cezanne, Monet, Renoir, Gauguin, Matisse and Bonnard, were alive and working as practising artists.

Yeats' work falls into three phases. In the earliest works he worked mainly as a black and white illustrator doing a great many illustrations of sporting life such as SHROVE HALFPENNY 1898. Around 1905 he began painting in oil and recorded the times in which he lived, life in native Sligo or the political events of the time - in works characterised by clear composition, a fluid and sensuous handling of paint and broad areas of colour juxtaposed as in A FULL TRAM 1924 (ill.no.33). His later work is more expressionistic, using thick impasto and flickering brushstrokes to suggest images and moods as in MUSIC OF MORNING 191, this had a more mystical quality than his earlier paintings.

To look closer at the direct influences on Yeats' work, by such artists as Whistler, Van Gogh, Picasso and early expressionists, I have chosen the followings paintings by Yeats' to make direct comparisons.

IN MEMORY (ill.no.34) depicts a street scene with a woman knocking on a door. She carries a basket as if begging or selling goods. In this painting Yeats' uses a limited colour range, it is basically a harmony in silver and grey, the touches of pinks and blues give a somber air to the painting. The painting is almost divided in two with the vertical line of the building on the right and the wet pavement. At this time Yeats', I believe, had close ties with James Whistler (1834-1903).



Ill.No.35
At the Piano

Ill.No.36
The Breaker Out



THE LIFFEY
Swim (ill no 37)

IN MEMORY and Whistler's AT THE PIANO 1859 (ill.no.35) are similar - the real theme of both paintings being harmony of colour and composition along with the simplicity. Whistler's paintings were a celebration of harmony letting each individual part of the painting sing out by itself. Whistler was not interested in performing tricks with perspective nor in painting likeness of familiar objects or places. He was solely concerned with colour, harmony, the play of light and shade and the patterns made by the shapes on the pictorial plane. He was reaching towards the type of art we now call abstract, these also were attributes found in Yeats' paintings of the time.

Around this time Yeats turned to oil paint and relinquished his role as illustrator and began to experiment with plane surfaces. Where previously his line appeared to follow his subject in their activities - now the subjects take on symbolic qualities and he fashioned them broad and expressive as in THE BREAKER OUT 1925(ill.no.36). IN MEMORY works as a final transition from watercolour to oil, but still remains a unity of both styles.

After returning to Ireland in 1910 on a permanent basis, the political situation grew tense and revolution was followed by civil war and uneasy peace. During his time in London, August 1924, Yeats exhibited THE LIFFEY SWIM 1923 (ill.no.37) and also A FULL TRAM 1923. In January of the same year a huge exhibition of Van Gogh's was held in London and it is clear from Yeat's 1923 painting that Van Gogh influenced him at this time.

THE ISLAND FUNERAL (ill no 38)



In THE LIFFEY SWIM and A FULL TRAM Yeats' style changed greatly from his subtle harmony to piling on exaggerated colour, like Van Gogh's PAVEMENT CAFE AT NIGHT 1888 both artists start to draw with paint and discovered the importance of mark-making. Take for example the expressionistic way Yeats painted the Liffey with stripes of blue and red paint dragged along with the flow of water, comparing this to his 1914 painting A LIFE ON THE LONG CAR, here the river and background take on an equal value. Everything about THE LIFFEY SWIM is alive - from the jerking heads of the spectators to the little suggested swimmers, to the people travelling along on the bus. Van Gogh believed in the exaggeration of colour and often mixed his paints straight from the tube. Both artists used great variety of tones as seen in the mens jackets in THE LIFFEY SWIM suggesting a new style for Yeats, that of a free, more expressionistic style using intense light and shade and painting in oil for the first time - not watercolour - to model and mould the characters he painted, breaking away from the detail he used in earlier graphic work.

For a time in the early 1920s, Yeats' returned to colour harmony as in A WESTERLY WIND 1921 but not in the same intense level as around 1915. In 1922 Yeats' exhibited a series of paintings at the Lester Gallery in London. Just prior to this was an exhibition of Pablo Picasso (1881 - 1973). At this time Yeats was just starting to develop his own individual style of painting and after seeing Picasso, I believe, he used tones in a much more free way but still with restrictions to make the scene dramatic as in THE ISLAND FUNERAL 1923 (ill.no.38).



LOVERS (ill no 39)

The figures are drawn with the paint allowing the paint to change tone and colour while being dragged along with the brush. Yeats' two cloaked women in the boat resemble work from Picasso's SEATED WOMAN 1902, both are painted and dressed in similar manner. Picasso's figure seems almost stone-like, even the curls seem chiselled out.

Other aspects that Yeats would have picked up on were the expressionistic movement that was happening in Germany. In his 1922 painting of ON THE OLD RACECOURSE the far horizontal landscape is painted with dots of purples and yellows reminiscent of such painters as Oskar Kokoscha (1886-), LOVERS 1902 (ill.no.39). Yeats later works exaggerated colour from what he saw and what he felt.

Within Irish life, Yeats found a dignity in the character and in the whole structure of being Irish, his early connections with graphic work developed a drawing style that was clear and more definitely defined. From his home in Sligo, he travelled around the countryside observing everything he saw. Yeats believed to paint something it had to be observed by the artist, whether in memory or situation and believed affection to be the greatest tribute an artist could give his subject. To Yeats each painting was an event.

"Creative work happens". (3)

Yeats had always been influenced and interested in the concept of memory.

In a letter to Joseph Hone he wrote:

"No one creates.....the artist assembles memories" ()

Memories had an emotional root for him. After 1920 he kept many note books of half-memory and dreams. This new method of work allowed the memory to develop and change after it first gripped the mind and distorted the original memory.

This period of work by Yeats is similar to that of the Romantic definition of poetry. Keats says:

"Poetry should surprise by a fine excess and not by singularity, it should strike the reader as a worlding of his own highest thoughts and appear almost a remembrance". (5)

Wordsworth, too believed art must strike the viewers emotions:

"Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. It takes its origin from emotion - recalled in tranquility" (6)

Yeats' later work shows this, a spontaneous overflow of his most powerful feelings - almost recollection of half-memory, believing all the arts worked in a similar fashion.

Throughout his life he continued to exhibit images of Ireland in London, New York and Dublin. In 1892, he, along with his brother William Butler Yeats, joined the Gaelic Revival Movement and became an artist with a cause - that of being Irish. Jack now translated the essence of this and the traditions he had found into his paintings.

REFERENCES

1. Sharpe, History and Appreciation of Art
pg.203
2. H. Pyle, J.B. Yeats, A Biography pg.57
3. Ibid pg.105
4. Ibid pg.103
5. Ibid pg.129
6. Ibid pg.129



THE ROGUE

CHAPTER 3

SUBJECT MATTER

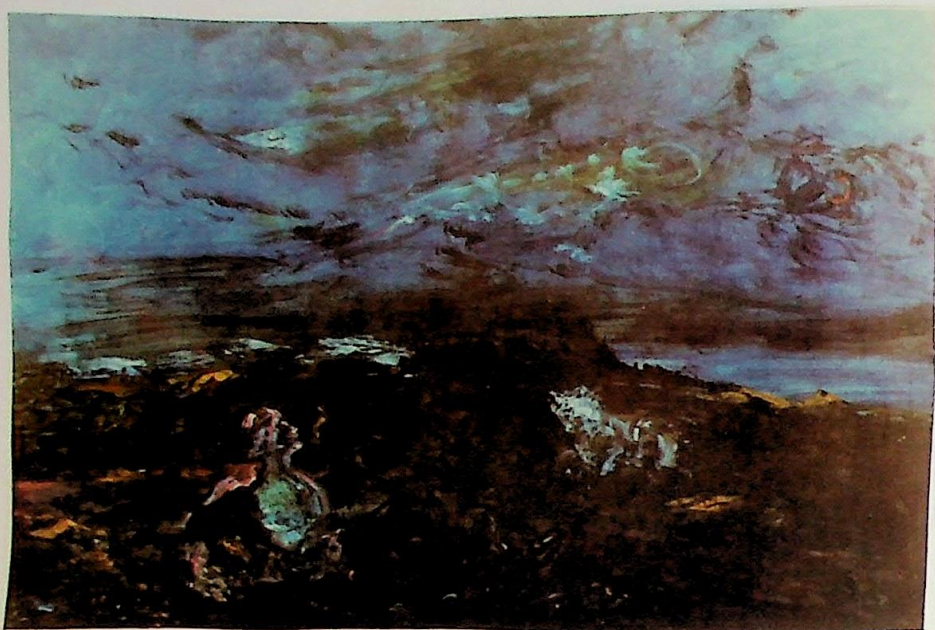
Throughout his life Yeats' love of Ireland is expressed in his paintings. His style of painting changed with his confidence and openness to new surroundings. Yeats said:

"The painter always begins by expressing himself with line, once so necessary is the fact hemming him in, and as soon as he feels strong enough he breaks out of his confines. The artist has become confident. He had liberated himself as he relaxed into a thoroughly equable medium."
(1)

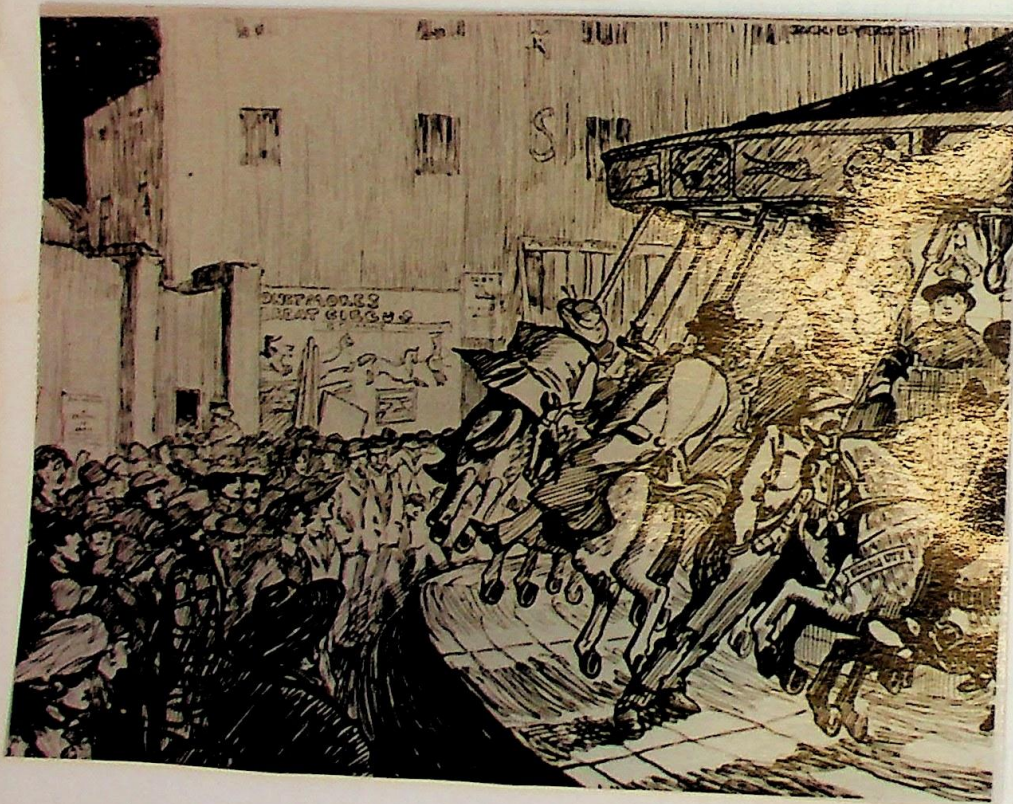
From his early days of graphic illustration, line plays an important role in Yeats' work. After 1915 his approach to painting changed, he became looser with the application of paint and also more spontaneous. He looked to his immediate surroundings of Ireland for his subject matter. His loose style of painting aided him when painting landscape of the West Coast of Ireland, the land and skies changed, ever-changing characters caused Yeats to move his paint with these scenes. His freedom of paint also allowed him free his ideas quicker, of incidents witnessed by the artist.

Berger said:

Yeats seems too mobile, over spontaneous until one has watched the West Coast of Ireland, watch is the word, for the landscape is a fast series of events not a view, but an unchanging structure." (2)



ill.No.46
There is no night



THE WHIRLY HORSES
(ill no. 40).

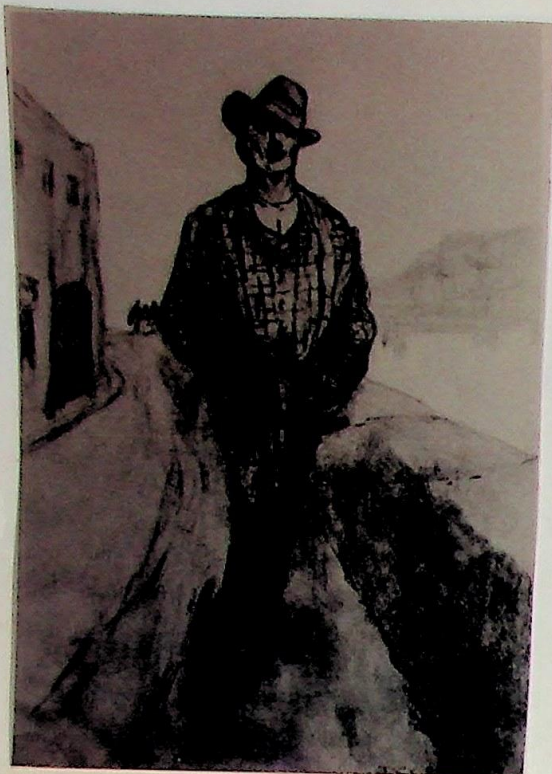
The latter half of the 19th century was the heyday of small circuses, travelling melodrama plays, boxes, races and fairs. All these events played an important role in Yeats' youth, making many sketches and paintings. These attractions continued through his life, creating such work as THE WHIRLY HORSES 1903 (ill.no.40), THE CLOWN 1932, ABOVE THE FAIR 1946 (ill.no.41) and THEY COME, THEY COME 1936. Yeats rarely went outside Ireland and her people for subject matter and believed Ireland to be the life of his paintings.

"Yeats disliked the term 'ART'. He said he was concerned with reality. 'The word 'ART' I don't care for much because it does not mean anything much to me.....I believe that all fine paintings and fine literature too, to be fine must have the living ginger of life in them.'" (3)

During his years as a graphic artist Yeats began to develop a more personal style drawing clearly and generously with a light definite line and a well shaped figure and always a lively touch as in WHIRLY HORSES 1903. He absorbed much of what black and white artists were doing such as Beardsley. THE RAKE 1901 (ill.no.42) discarding detail and darkness, Yeats became more concerned about the pictorial effort, he now gave weight to line and introduced the contrast of tones. Strong black lines which he had never used before and cross-hatching where he needed emphasis.

Basically, his early oils and watercolours are painted by an artist deeply interested in individual personality and character, in local incident and customs and with a deep appreciation for natural surroundings. He continued to develop his storytelling attribute. During this time with the simplicity of line and composition, it is important to note in all his paintings, he depicts an event.

"Something is happening"



THE RAKE 1901 (ill no 42).

Ill.NO.43
The Showground Revisited

ABOVE THE FAIR ill no 41



no. 43.

After returning to Ireland in 1910, he relinquished his days as an illustrator and began to experiment with plastic surfaces. Where previously his line appeared to follow his subject in their activities, now the subject takes on a symbolic quality and he fashions them broad and expressive as in IN MEMORY - transition from watercolour to oil, but still unity of styles.

After returning to Ireland the political situation grew tense and revolution was followed by civil war and then uneasy peace. These situations gave rise to such paintings as COMMUNICATING WITH PRISONERS and THE FUNERAL OF HARRY BOLAND.

From 1915 all his oils contained the possibilities of many illustrations and he would tell his friends that he was thinking of certain people when painting a particular scene. After 1920 his figures enter a subjective world in which they are related to the aloneness of the individual soul. He always had a strong sense of man in relation to the impersonality of the Irish scene, isolated figures now dominate the landscape. As in SHOWGROUND REVISITED 1950 (ill.no.43), Yeats' paintings now take on an air of nostalgia - now group scenes are no more.

In most of Yeats' paintings, even his more abstract and later works, he had a figure or group of figures in action in a setting, like a setting for a play or an illustration of part of a story. His painting, in a sense, gives you a tale and the motion and from that the view makes up the story. He would talk about his paintings providing a story as a background, generally turning to his listeners and saying:

"Now you tell me what the story is about". (4)

An example of this is IN GLORY 1954

Yeats' main gift was that of being a story teller. His narrative qualities increased with the years and eventually persuaded the viewer to enter into the imaginative process of storytelling. But in his early paintings everything - title, background, presentation - are contributed by the artist, illustrating the central theme, in which are pictures with a definite literary slant.

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1. H. Pyle J.B. Yeats, A Biography pg.127
2. Berger Life & works of the Artist pg.145
3. H. Pyle J.B. Yeats, a Biography pg.43
4. Ibid pg.133

CHAPTER 4

HIS LATER WORK

Through out his life Yeats' work changed greatly. In his early work everything, title background and presentation were all contributed by the artist, illustrating the central theme in what are pictures with a definite literary slant. Yeats' narrative qualities increased with the years and he could eventually persuade the viewer to enter into the imaginative process of storytelling. His later work saw the fusing of the isolated figure with the landscape giving an atmosphere and mystique quality due mainly to the way he employed composition, colour and space.

In his later life, I believe Yeats' inspiration for work came from his early sketches and drawings. One example of this is BANQUET HALL DESERTED 1942 and an earlier graphic work WONDERLAND 1903, painted almost forty years previous, showing the same structured scene, but THE BANQUET HALL DESERTED showing a more mature piece of work, giving a nostalgic view of times gone-by.

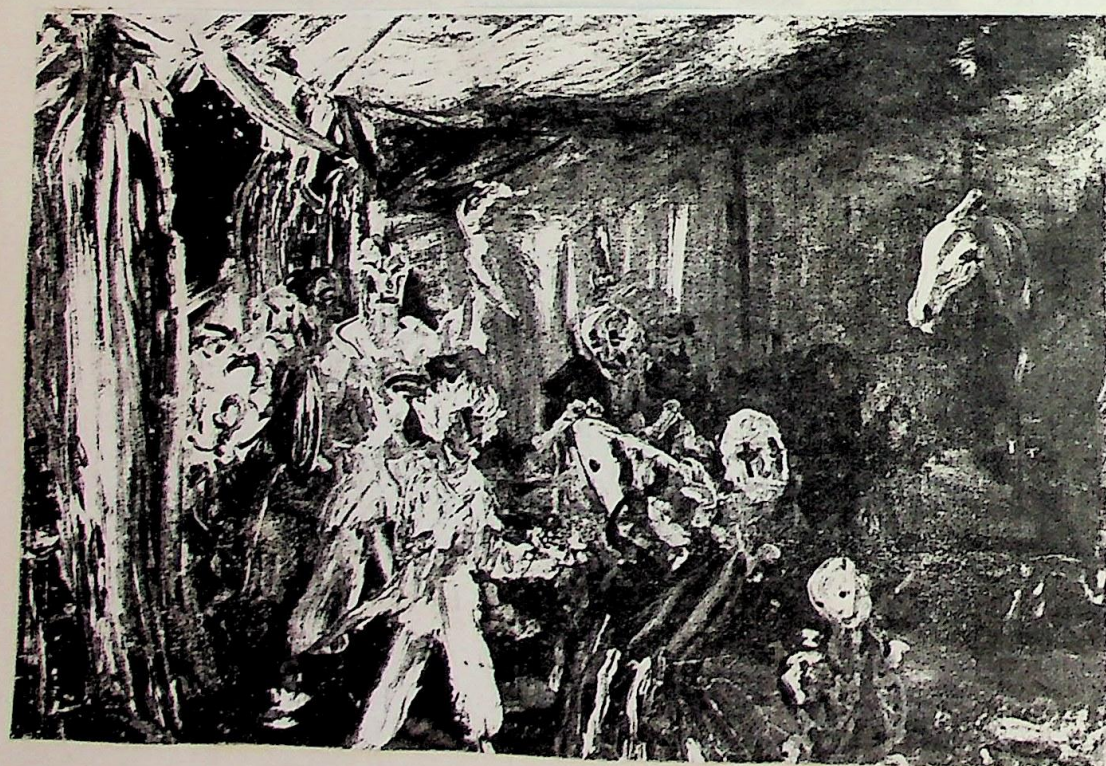
From 1915 on, all Yeats' oil paintings contain possibilities of illusions and he would tell friends that he was thinking of certain people when painting a particular piece such as PORTRAIT OF A LADY 1926 is that of his wife. He never allowed anyone to see him work because of the desperate fear that he might not be able to rediscover his own secrets to capture the essence of his subject. With regards to his SELF PORTRAIT 1920 (i..no.19)



Ill.No.45
Self Portrait



BREAKOUT 1925 (ill no 36)



THEY CAME, THEY CAME
(ill no.)

Yeats used himself as a model and kept this from his audience. Such comparisons as with the male figure in BREAKOUT 1925, THE BUS BY THE RIVER 1927 and GRAND MAN 192, all have similarities. The other figure in BUS BY THE RIVER occurs in several of Yeats' later works such as A FULL TRAM 1923 (ill.no.33). The last two decades of Yeats' work consisted of figures entered in a subjective world, related to the reminiscence of the individual soul. Using his paintings to create qualities of joy and glory in nature making him return once again to those primary sources for new substance.

In dealing with the concors I will deal with some of Yeats' paintings after 1915.

BREAKOUT 1925

This shows a figure on board a boat. His great confidence with paint is shown in his freedom of applying paint - the flowing and gestural qualities.

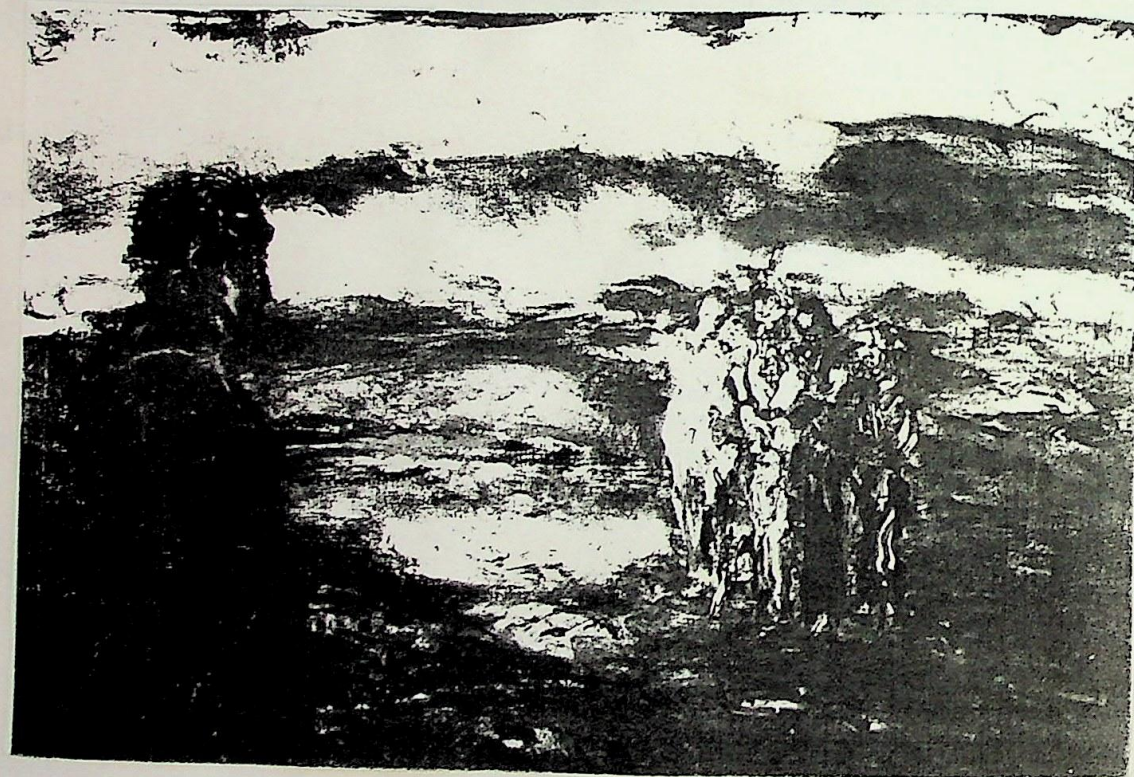
THEY CAME, THEY CAME 1936

Also called ENTER THE CLOWNS, creates a sense of excitement. This painting is more free than the last showing spontaneity working from tight descriptive painting expressing a mood of gaiety, he makes the paint carry a lively composition, moulding the paint on the surface and letting the paints bleed into one another, showing introduction of texture.

THERE IS NO NIGHT 1947

This carries a mystique about it. A dark landscape in which dawn is breaking in the distance. Running towards the artist (the model) is a white horse.

Ill.No.47
Expected



He painted almost the same scene after his wife died in 1947, a reading at her funeral read:

"And there shall be not night" (Revelations 22 v 5)

and

"Behold a white horse". (Revelations 19 v II)

He may not be illustrating but this time it was customary for him to adapt literary ideas and quotations. This painting could also be a pun on 'there is not knight', where the artist shows the knight thrown from his horse.

Finally in GLORY 1954 and EXPECTED 1948 relate very much together. In both, the artist stands with his back to the viewer engaged in looking at a group of people standing in the landscape. These paintings seem moody, but I believe the titles are off-putting, showing only the artist looking at a group of circus folk. In EXPECTED, the central figure is very clearly wearing a circus costume, surrounded by clowns, a dwarf and a woman. Yeats' felt a commitment to record life that meant everything to him:

"Pictures, Yeats believed, came from life itself and were part of life and the way to enjoy pictures and life is the same. The true painter must be a part of the land and the life he paints. He draws a distinction between the true artist and the false artist, whose work attempted to display the tricks of the trade. The roots of true art are in the affections, not true artist stands aloof. Beauty is truth and a just balance, but not a compromise. When the artist compromises, he refuses to paint what he himself has seen, but paints what someone else would like him to have seen". (1)

Yeats' last painting before death in 1957 projects a sense of mood, emotion and nostalgia, and also of questioning. He - giving so much - wants the viewer to view the work and question or imply his own opinions, ideas and even story. Yeats was concerned with the importance of the work of art. In the end the painting was what mattered. It would have to stand up for itself and communicate to the viewer.

"In most of Yeats' paintings, even his more abstract and later works, he has a figure or group of figures in action in a setting like a setting for a play or an illustration of a part of a story. 'His painting', in a sense, gives you the tale and the emotion and from that the viewer makes up the story. Yeats insists on the participation of the viewer. He would talk about his paintings providing a story as a background, generally turning to his listener and saying 'Now you tell me what the story is about'". (2)

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1. Pyle J.B. Yeats, A Biography Pg.104
2. Ibid Pg. 133

CONCLUSION

I realise, having written this thesis, that much has been written on Munch and Yeats. My aim was not to discover something new, but to strengthen my knowledge about both artists.

Living on the peripheral of Europe, both artists discovered the centres for art in Europe - namely that of Paris and Berlin - and took from these, new ideas and concepts for their own work. The influences of France for both, came through in the works on Manet, Degas, Gauguin and Toulouse Lautrec. Munch and Yeats learned colour, texture, composition and pattern to be only a means to an end and it is the end that gives life to the painting. They enlarged their formal values and it is this that gives life to the works. Yeats described it as

'The living ginger' (1)

They painted not only for the sake of painting but only when they had something to say. It was because they were saying something - whether an inner felling in Munch's case, or views of Yeats' Ireland, that was the presence that gives their work a real and truthful feel to it.

Munch and Yeats did not just represent the world around them, but rather actively involved painting, for each the medium was important as an individual means of expression. Both were open to the art world they found themselves in. They left themselves open to interpretation of others and of themselves.

It is their differences that make both important artists of their own Country, in their time and today. Yeats painted from nature and life, Munch painted from himself believing himself to be nature. Yeats deliberately planned his total visual experience of the paintings whereas Munch absorbed and interpreted it, working from the inside out. The act of painting for both was as important as the painting itself, letting the viewer become part of the process.

Maurice Denis in 1900 said:

"A picture before becoming a war horse, a nude woman or an anecdote, is essentially a flat surface covered over with colour assembled in a certain way". (2)

Up until Munch's and Yeats' time, art almost exclusively had been a visual experience. Munch and Yeats were among the first to paint for their own means, drawing on what was important to them and so moulded Ireland's and Norway's art history into contemporary art, the direct development of which we experience today.

FOOTNOTES

1. H. Pyle

Jack B. Yeats, A Biography, pg.44

2. Maurice Denis, L'influences de Cejanne,
L'Amour de L'Art, pg.7

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3. Catalogue of City Gallery, Bergen, Norway
4. Lectures in University of Oslo, summer 1985
5. Steinar Dalaker, Lecturer of Art History, University of Oslo
6. Dympna Halpin, National College of Art, Dublin.

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