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TREES AND THE ENVIRONMENT



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COMMISSION

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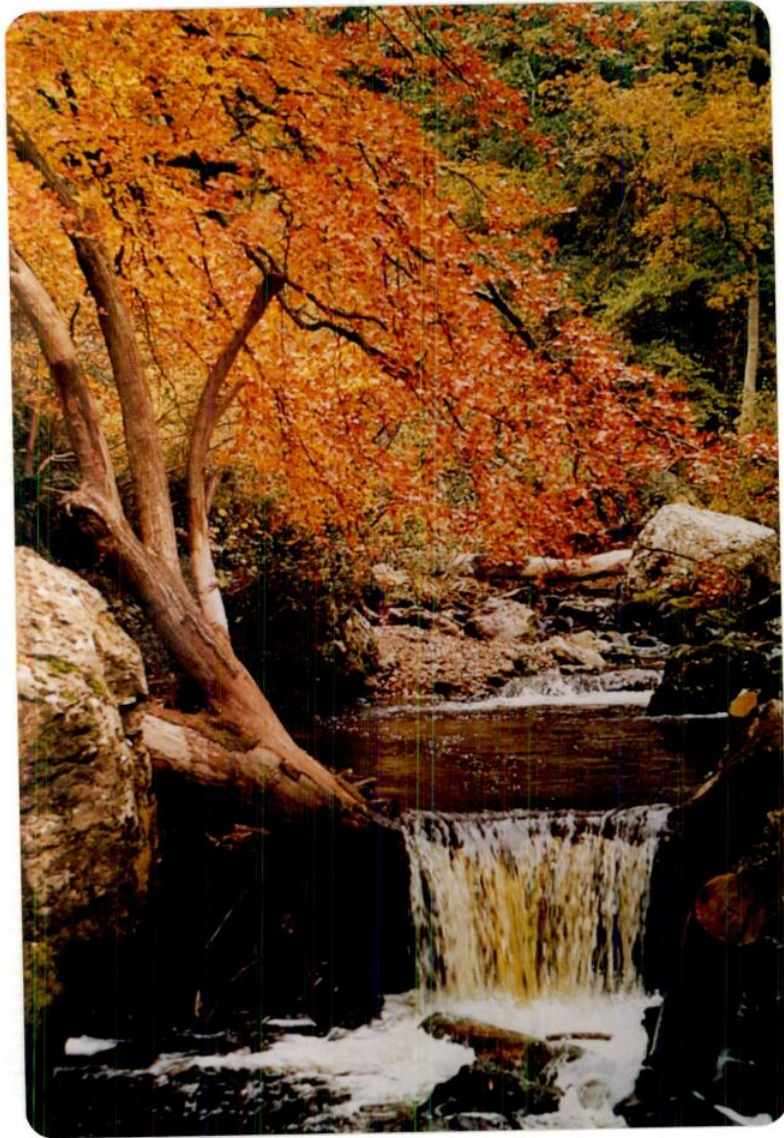
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1. Vase - black amphorc 520 B.C. (Greek).
2. The Baptism of Christ 1440 - Piero della Francesca.
3. "Luminous Green" 1840 - John Constable.
4. The Kitchen with Trees in Flowe in Pontoise 1877 - Camille Pissarro.
5. Detail of the kitchen garden with trees in flower 1877.
6. The last leaves of Autumn 1884 - Alfred Sisley.
7. Apple Gathering in Quiniperte 1884 Walter Osbourne.
8. Lezavier, Finistere - Roderic d' Connor 1980.
9. The Poplar series Epte - Claude Monet, 1890.
10. "Populars" (Autumn) - 1890 - Claude Monet.
11. Drawing of Tree - 1914, Piet Mondrian
12. The Grey Tree - Piet Mondrian 1914.
13. 'Trees in Hollywood' - 1990. Sean McSweeney.
14. 'Bogland Trees' - 1990. Sean McSweeney.

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Fig (A) - View of Trees in Autumn





INTRODUCTION

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Art is a fundamental human process. Every society from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, has expressed itself through art. But more important, every person has put thoughts and emotions into an art form. Art is a personal and satisfying activity at any age for although the arts are responsible for a greater awareness of the external world, it is also the arts that give expression to the emotions, the joys and fears of life. Young children use art as a means of learning, through the development of concepts which take visible form through the making of symbols which capture and are an abstraction of the environment, and through the organisation and positioning of these symbols together in one configuration.

Art is a dynamic and unifying activity, with great potential for the education of children. The process of drawing, painting or constructing is a complex one in which the child brings together diverse elements of his experience to make a new and meaningful whole. In the process of selecting, interpreting and reforming these elements, he has given us more than a picture or a sculpture, he has given us a part of himself; how he thinks, how he feels and how he sees.

Formal education is tremendously important when we realize that children from the age of five until the age of sixteen or eighteen or beyond spend these years behind school doors. That is a severe

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sentence just for being born a child. "Yet the serving of this sentence is supposed to qualify a youngster to take his place as a contributing and well adjusted member of society"¹ From some points of view education has done its task, looking around us today, we can see great material gains. But serious questions can be raised about how much we have been able to educate beyond the making and consuming of objects. Have we in our educational system really put emphasis upon human values? Or have we been so blinded by material rewards that we have failed to recognize that the real values of a democracy lie in its most precious asset, the individual, the child.



Footnotes for Introduction

1. Elliot Eisner: Educating Artistic Vision, Chapter One, 'Why Teach Art'

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CHAPTER 1

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Fig (B) - Vies of Boston and USA and Kildare, Eire





My interest in my personal project began in the summer of 1988. This was the time I emigrated to the United States to live in the city of Boston, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on the East Coast of the United State of America. Besides the big upheaval of moving from home, an important factor for me was the fact that I was now living in a large city. And what a city (Fig B).

My first home was to be in the suburb of Allston, which was located beside Cambridge, home of Harvard University. How very nice you may say, without knowing that where I was living the "Massachusetts Turnpike" ran right outside my door. This is an interstate highway that connects Boston with New York and the rest of the country.

As you can imagine the traffic was unbelievable, and from me who had just left a very quiet small town in Ireland, I found this all very bewildering. To look out of my apartment window all I could see were buildings and roads and I began to miss my home-town of Kildare, home of St Brigid, where the Curragh plains and racecourse ran outside my front door and the Bog of Allen at my back door.

A couple of months proceeded by and I became friends with a girl who lived five miles from my home in Ireland. We often had discussions about home and how we had both come over to Boston with the notion the "the grass is always greener on the otherside"



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- but for us to take this statement literally meant "where was the green grass?" We both came upon a decision to move to a new apartment and having reviewed the local newspaper we happened upon an advertisement for a house not five miles from where we already were staying. Although it was only five miles from where we presently resided its description really caught our eye "beautiful apartment, three bedrooms, etc....., set in cul-de-sac, very quiet". At last we thought home away from home. That evening, we decided to visit it, although we had no appointment, but to our amazement upon arriving we found a lovely old wooden house, set in a culde-sac surrounded by oak trees. It was the beginning of Autumn and I have always had a great affinity and love of Autumn and upon seeing this house, I felt at home. We paid our deposit and the res is history, life at no.7, Upcrest Road, Oak Square, Brighton, Massachusetts had begun.

To sit on the veranda on those early Autumn evenings, looking out at the beautiful, strong, trees, changing into the colours of Fall we often caught sight of the grey squirrels who ran down the tree to gather their hand and watch them scurry back upwards again.

Upon that veranda the philosophies of life and home were spun and to my own realization of how much I valued the peace and tranquility of the countryside around Kildare, my hometown in Ireland.

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Kildare, known in Irish as 'Cilldara' - 'cill' being the Irish for church and 'dara' the Irish for oak. The name originated from the first church St. Brigid founded, which was built beside an oak-tree and on the site of monastery founded by St Brigid in 480B.C.1 Indeed many of our towns in Ireland were named after trees - the oak tree, Derry, Kildare and Adare, the elder tree, Trim, the yew tree, Mayo, Newry and Youghal and finally the alder tree, Ferns, Co Wexford, birthplace of my father.

So for me my personal project had begun upon realization that it had taken root in Kildare, grown to a height in Oak Square and then blossomed upon returning to Kildare in the winter of 1989. My affinity to trees and nature has spurred me upon a trail of discovery this year in which I have tried to capture or emulate in drawings, paintings, lino painting and finally fabric designing my solutions of my countryside. Also being influenced by the paintings of Claude Monet in his series entitled "Populars on the Banks of Epte" (Fig 4) and the simplistic shapes of nature, captured in the prints of Henri Riviere (Fig 6), and the writings of Viktor Lowenfeld who believed that most of our inspirations of art come from nature."²

My major craft this year is printed textiles and my work was mainly based upon trees and different fruits produced by trees in Autumn, acorns, chestnuts, etc. My first print (Fig 1) was based upon

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

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Fig (1) - First Fabric Design Print - Paper Stencil, Oct '90

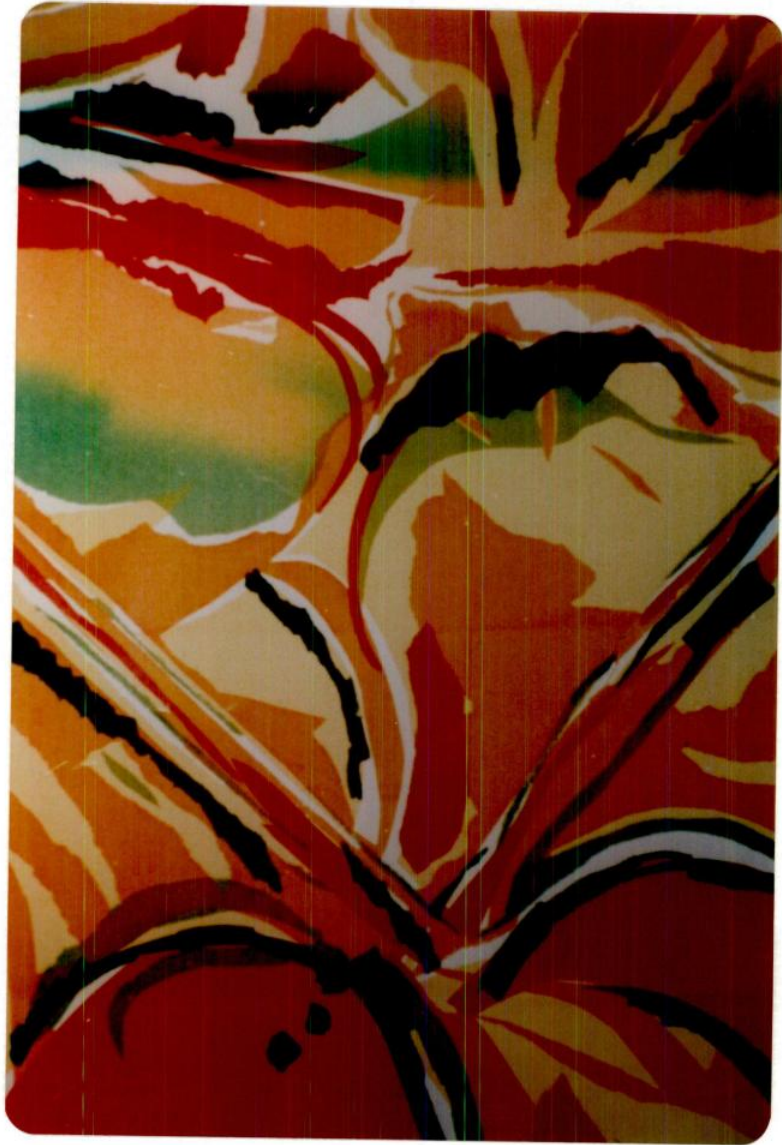




Fig (2) - Second Fabric Design Print - Paper Stencil,
Photographic and Transfer Processes

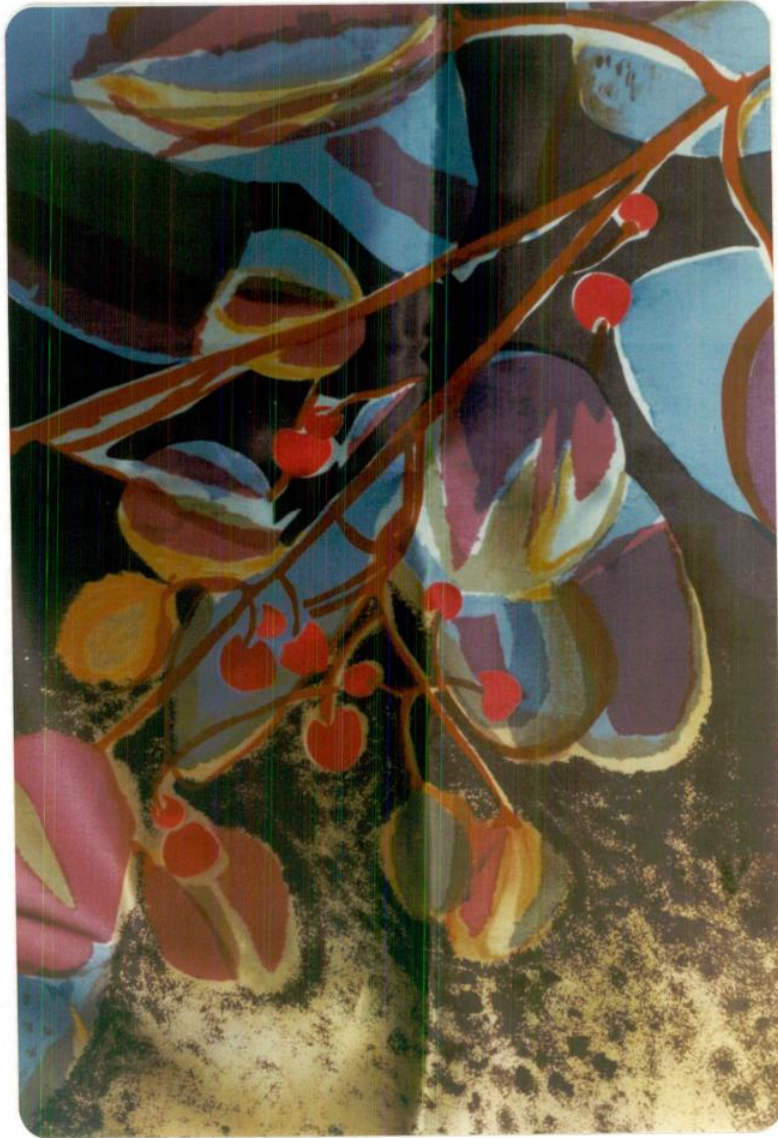




Fig (3) - Third and Final Fabric Design Print - May '91





Fig (4) - *Poplars, on the Banks of the Epte* 1891 - Claude Monet.





Fig (5) - Detail of Fig (4)



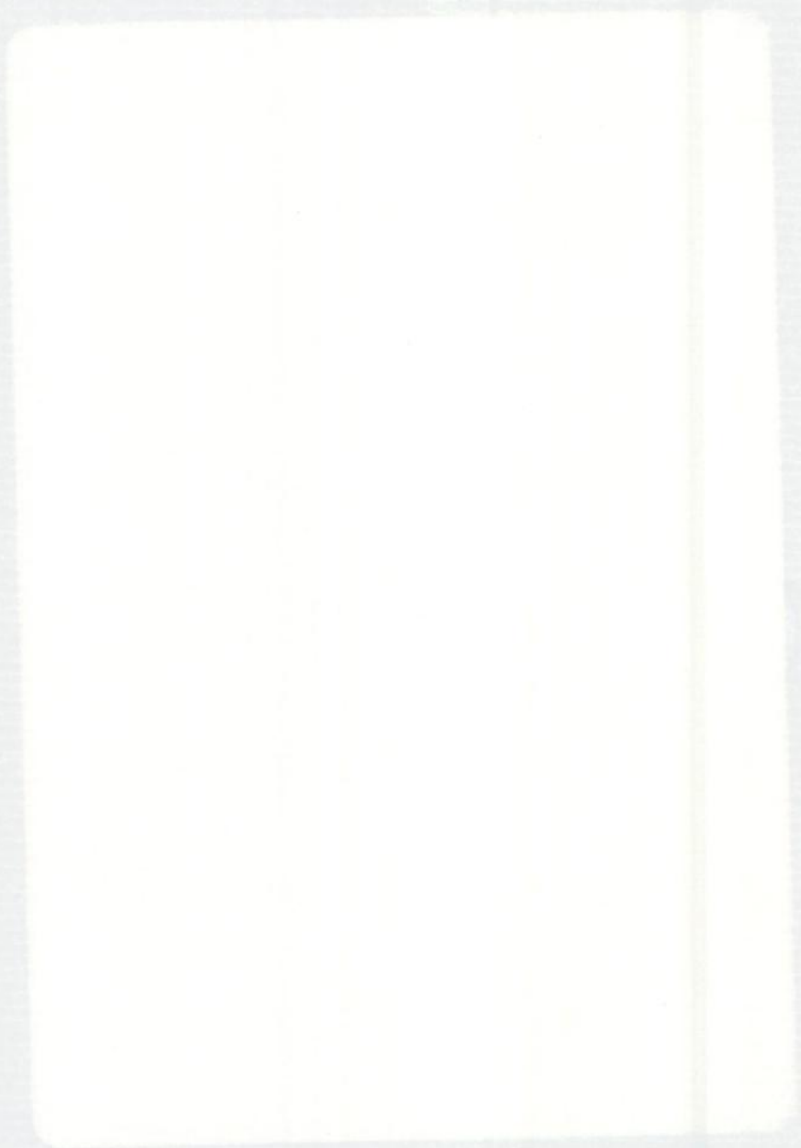
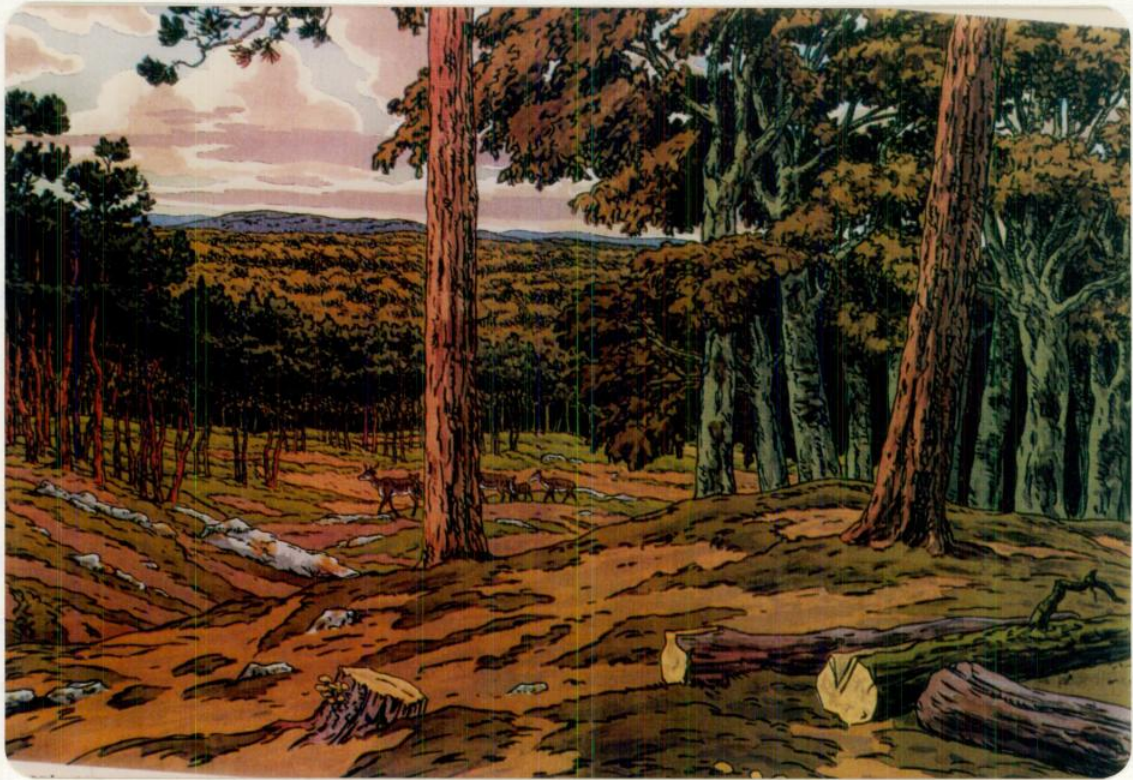


Fig (6) - "Le Foret", Lithograph, 12 Colours, from Les Aspects de la Nature, No.13, 1899 - Henri Riviere



actual color studies done in early part of year one, which were
influenced by Claude Monet's "Poplar" series (Fig 4). The print
was executed by a method known as the paper screen process. My
second print (Fig 5) was based upon drawings of natural forms
and influenced again by Monet's "Poplar" series (Fig 4), and print
work of Henri Rivet (Fig 6), and was executed with a number
of printing processes, paper screens, photographic screens,
transfer printing and applique.

My final solution to my personal project has taken the shape of
a fabric - printed panel (Fig 7), supported by a cartoon of the
piece and executed in the colors of green, green, vermilion red
and white. It is influenced by the verticals and horizontals of
Claude Monet's "Poplar" series and the verticals of Henri
Rivet and my own solution of color; and of the verticals of
Rivett and the fifth year panel of Claude Monet, Bellevue,
to Paris Park, Richmond on the 15th March 1901.

Footnotes for Chapter One

1. Booklet 'A Historical view of Kildare'
Published by Anco Tallaght Trainig Centre and Kildare V.E.C.
2. Viktor Lowenfeld - Lowenfeld Lectures 26.

MEMORANDUM

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CHAPTER 2

COMPTON

As I embarked upon my Leaving Certificate Art Course in 1982, the first series of paintings I was ever introduced to, were those of the French Impressionists.

The French Impressionists were influenced by a realistic movement in painting that took place during the mid 1800's and by the specific study of light and colour and the way they splashed colour and light over their canvases with an enthusiasm never before seen in painting. The Impressionists favoured compositions that seemed informal and spontaneous. They painted rapidly rather than developing their compositions from studies and sketches. They preferred to work out of doors in the natural light. Sometimes Impressionists painted the same subject several times in different atmospheric situations Claude Monet's "Rouen Cathedral" 1893 (Fig C) to show how colours and surface effects change at various times of the day.

Two artists that have a particular relevance to my work and that of my pupils in Colaiste Eanna is Claude Monet (1840-1926) and Henri Riviere (1864-1951). The project undertaken with the 5th year pupils in Colaiste Eanna is a fabric printed banner based on different aspects of Marlay Park, Rathfarnham which we visited on the 11th March 1991. The series of paintings we studied by Claude Monet was his "Poplars on the Banks of the Epte" done in the year 1871, and the lithographic prints of Henri Riviere, of

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Fig (C) - The Roven Chathedral 1893 - Claude Monet





which Alexander Benois, painter for the Russian Ballet and curator for the Hermitage in St Petersburg said "Riviere has taught us how to see nature simplified..... I love his greedy eyes."¹

Claude Monet was the central figure in the Impressionist movement, and one whose subject matter was directly taken from life, painting out-of-doors. He rejected the smooth brushwork favoured by the Academicians of the day, handling his paint in a varied and inventive way so that the textures found in nature are emulated by the marks of his brush. His life as an artist was an increasing struggle to record the fleeting effects of nature by means of a small palette of pure, bright colours and he often painted several versions of the same view under different lights, working on four or five paintings in the course of one day.

Claude Monet's paintings carry a peculiar magic. They are ordinary enough in subject matter consisting almost exclusively of basically direct treatments of landscape - figures rarely appear, and after 1890 not at all. His affinity with nature began in Le Havre, Northern France in which he spent his childhood.

In 1862 he moved to Paris to study painting at the Charles Gleyre's academy but used to make many trips to the countryside around Paris. When in 1864 the Gleyre academy closed, he chose to move to the countryside to begin painting with fellow students Renoir, Sisley

COMMERCIAL BANK

and Brazille, and so began the open air paintings of Monet and the launch of one of the most important artists of the Impressionist period.

Monet's series of paintings done in 1891 of the "Poplars on the Banks of the Epte" are the period considered in Monet's career as the liner period. They were painted while Monet lived in Givenchy and after his "Grain Stacks" series, with their bulky, solid forms. They were a row of poplar trees by the side of a small river. The delicate tracery of foliage around the sharp vertical lines of trunks and the strong horizontal emphasis of the river bank there seems to be more air and sky than solid form. Monet found the poplars marked for felling and paid their owner to leave them standing. He started in July 1891 and worked on the paintings until October, choosing mainly afternoon and evening effects, with the light falling from the right.

As with his other series he worked on a number of canvases during the same painting session moving from one to the other as the light changed. The compositions are generally of two types. The first is a vertical pattern of bars - created by the trunks - opposed to the single horizontal of the river bank, usually placed low on the canvas with the reflections carrying the line of the trunks right down through the horizontal (Fig 7,8,9,10). The second, takes the form of a single sweeping zig-zags of foliage set against

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Fig (7) - Poplars, 1891 - Claude Monet





Fig (8) - Poplars (Summer) 1891 - Claude Monet





Fig (9) - Poplars (Autumn) 1891 - Claude Monet

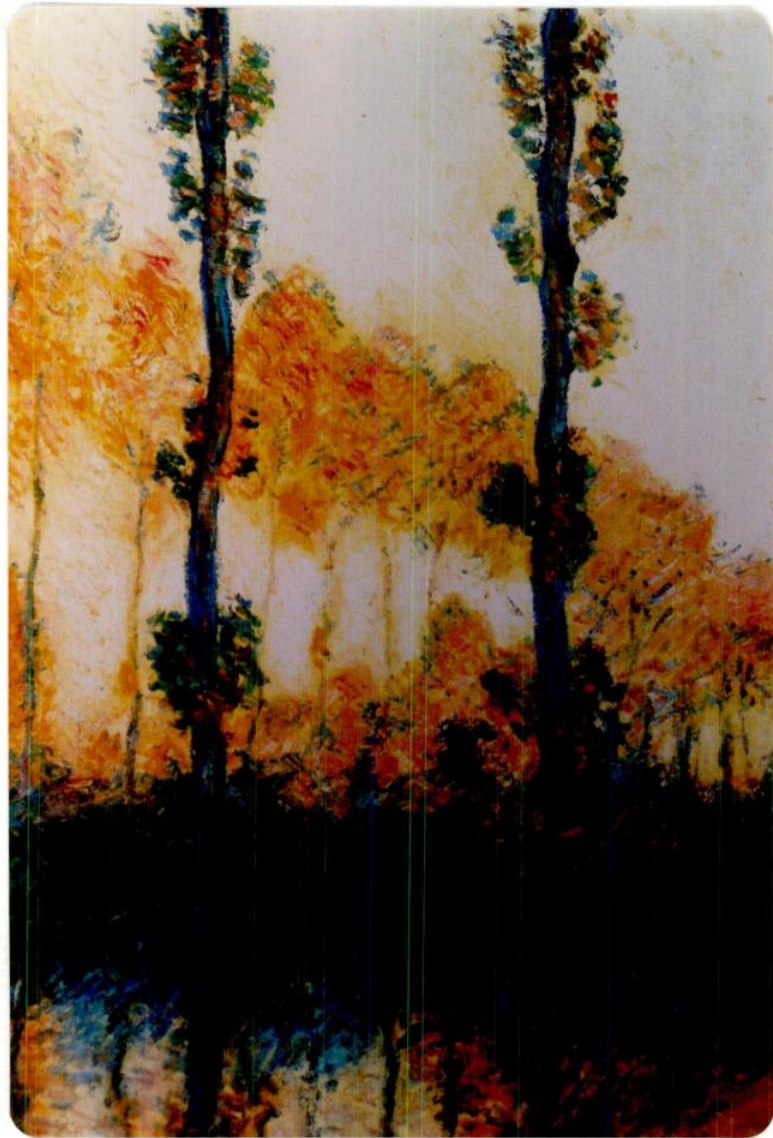
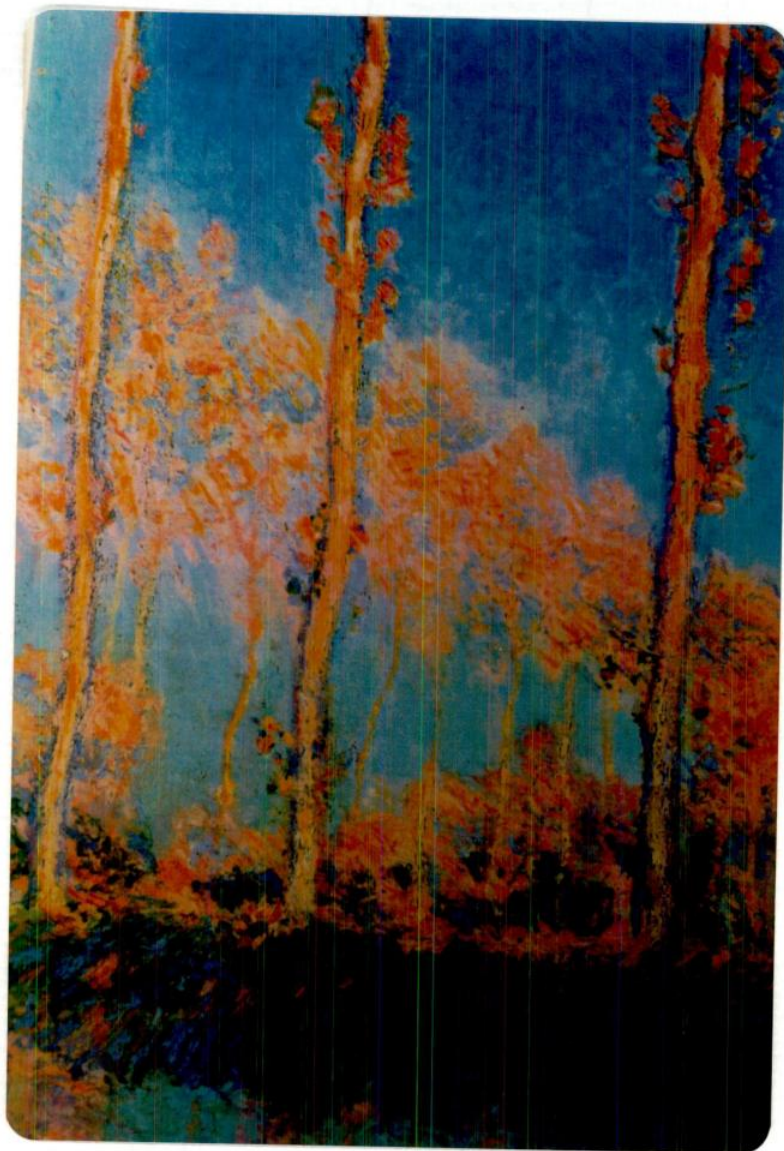
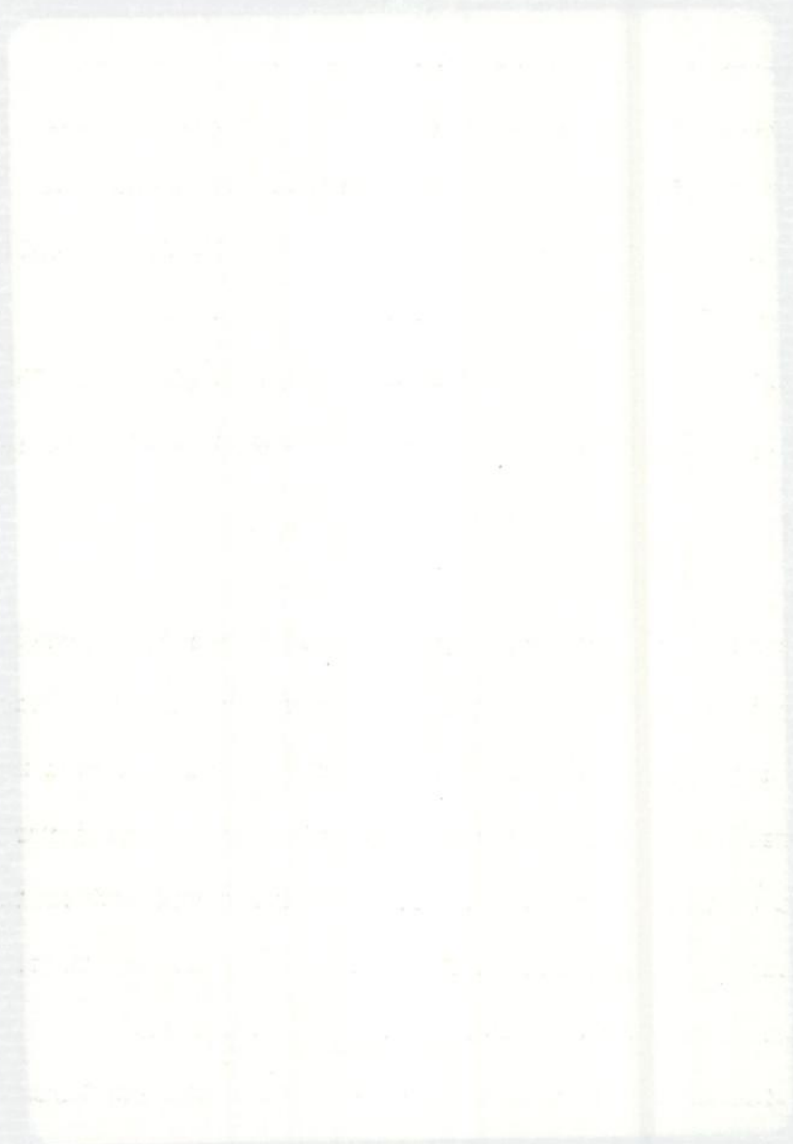




Fig (10)

- Polars (Autumn 1891 - Claude Monet)





the sometimes broken verticals of the tree trunks. Here again the river bank provides a firm horizontal, and both foliage and tree trunks are continued in the reflection. (fig 11,12,13).

The pictorial effect, very unusual and often very dramatic, emphasizes a characteristic which was to become a significant element in Monet's influence in later painting. It demands a positive effort of visual interpretation to turn the dramatically effective pattern of a painted surface into an acceptable three-dimensional representation of a particular landscape. The Popular series is much concerned with space, and this element is very evident.

"Poplars on the Banks of the Epte" (Fig 4) was probably painted in flat evening light, the time when the direct sun has left the scene but dusk has not not begun to remove the colour. Monet must have been interested in the criss-crossing of lines as they receded along the banks to provide a pattern of receding tones and tints with a consequent loss of detail and a narrowing range of tone. All these elements are to be discerned in this work, and particularly evident in the change of tone where the near bank meets the distant foliage. On the lower right the deep Prussian blue and viridian in the bank are thrust forward by the warm area, enlivened by touches of vermilion. This is the darkest and most intense area of the painting, and the foliage appears almost to



Fig (11) - Poplars 1891 - Claude Monet





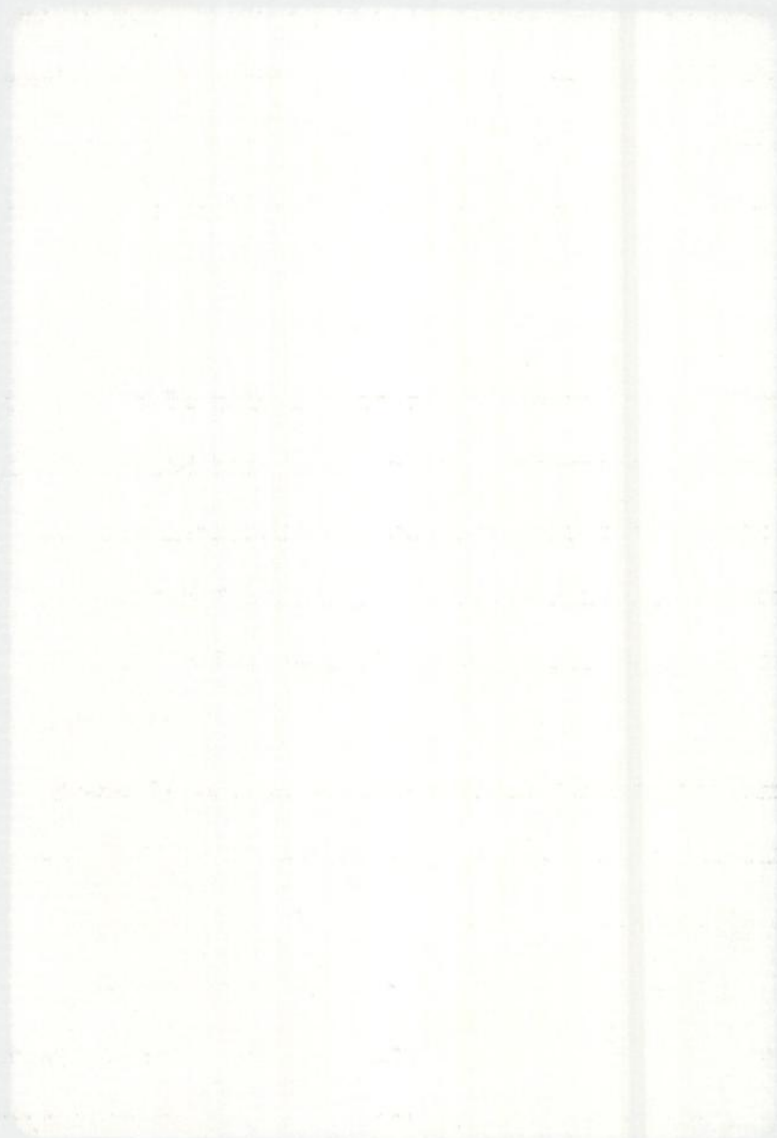
Fig (12) - Poplars, (Wind Effect) 1891 - Claude Monet





Fig (13) - Poplars, (Banks of the Epte; Twilight)
1891 - Claude Monet.





float away from it.

The whole series of Poplar paintings were exhibited at Dur and Ruel's gallery in February 1892, the only one of Monet's exhibitions which was devoted to a single series. The painting "Poplar on the Banks of Epte (Fig 4) was included and brought to what Monet considered "exhibition standard" by later work in his Giverny studio, in spite of his often stated belief capturing the immediate moment.

Although the compositions of Monet for this series of paintings was simplistic, mainly concerned with vertical and horizontal lines of nature, his application of paint was very textural with no emphasis on flat colour, in complete contrast to Monet we have the works of the artist/printer Henri Riviere (1864-1951).

Henri Riviere entered the art world during a period of great transition. "Art for arts sake" became the motto of the times, superseding and eliminating the idea of art for the sake of religious upliftment, educational improvement or patriotic fervour. These new views about art naturally coincided with parallel political, social, and scientific movements, all of which toppled the old order and made way for the new theories of Marx, Darwin and Freud. While there were no major political conflicts in Europe between 1872 and 1914, artistic and intellectual battles were waged

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which generated the new era of modernism in which art began to explore the subtleties of individual perception and ultimately, explored itself.

From his earliest years Riviere had the desire to become an artist, and although faced with parental discouragement, little money, and very brief training, he nevertheless pursued his goal with determination and enthusiasm, qualities which would characterize him throughout his life. The majority of Riviere's work and nearly all of his graphic oeuvre was done in the 1890's and early 1900's, yet he continued to paint everyday, alone until his death in 1951. Riviere was an active participant in the Parisian art world and enjoyed popular and critical success, and was very much a part of the avant-garde printmaking.

In his school days, he excelled in two subjects, reading and painting. He read voraciously, especially Hugo and Verne, and he zealously awaited the weekly installments and their stories in the illustrated journals of the day.

In 1875 he was given his own set of paint, and he spent a great deal of time painting, mostly copying pictures by Dore and Vierge from the pages of the weekly magazines. In 1879 there appeared a weekly magazine which was unlike any other of the time: La Vie Moderne. What was so extraordinary were its illustrations, which

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were not black and which wood engravings like the other journals, but were colour "Gillotyped", colour photoengravings. Charles Gillot had invented the process to faithfully reproduce drawings and sketches. It involved colour separations for each colour to be printed.

In La Vie Moderne the texts of Daudet, Flaubert, de Goncourt, Zola and many others were illustrated by leading artists of the day. For Riviere the magazine was a feast, and it confirmed his desire to paint and draw. He saw in its pages for the first time the works of Claude Monet, Renoir, Manet, Sisley and Pissarro, all reproduced in colour. That the colour on the pages of La Vie Moderne so impressed Riviere is an early indication of just how important colour would later be in his own work. But in the 1870's and early 1880's, colour in prints was limited to the pages of magazines and advertisements, it had not found a place in original print making, but that was all to change with Henri Riviere's work.

Upon returning to Paris, Riviere was introduced to etching by Grasset and Caran d'Ache whom were frequent visitors to a cabaret club near where Riviere lived. Subsequently Riviere made four etchings from his summer sketches in Brittany and printed them in blue in very small editions of five to ten.

Between 1881 and 1885 Riviere completed ten etchings and

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consequently abandoned the medium and did not use it again until 1906. At this time a steady interest in Japanese wood-cuttings, and making woodblock prints was to absorb his energies for the next five years, he made his own tools, learned to cut blocks by trial and error, mixed all of his own and did all his own printing. Riviere undertook a woodblock project, a series of Breton landscapes (Fig 14,15,16), and he had to travel back to Brittany to make the study drawings. His woodcuts show an ability to blend the Brittany landscape - a Western artists view of nature - with the Japanese style of perspective, high horizons and flat colour (Fig 17). He did his finest woodcuts in this period and managed to produce near mathematical perfection, an image of delicacy, correctness, and accuracy of tone achieved through a simple almost primitive means. Thus the image remains fresh and colours radiant even today.

It was also around this time 1892 that Riviere was introduced to lithography, once he is quoted as saying "it is a drawing that you make by a process other than pencil or pen".² Riviere found lithography to his liking, and he carried his wood-block printing experiences into lithography. In his first lithographs, we see use of layered prespective, the high horizon lines, large objects in the foreground, flat colour and partial images cut off by the picture's edge - again the Japanese influence in his work. Riviere also began to experiment with the use of colour in lithography, and was able to work large numbers of colours into a print

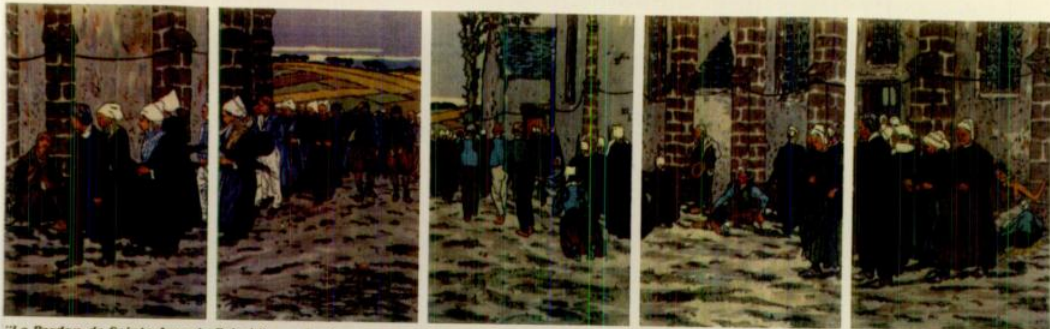
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Fig (14) - "Femme de la Garde - Guerin (St Briac)
Woodcut, 8 colours, from Paysages Bretons,
1890 - Henri Riviere.





Fig (15) - "Le Pardon de Sainte - Anne - La - Palud",
Woodcut, 5 Sheets, 50 Colours, from Paysages Bretons,
1892 - Henri Riviere



"Le Pardon de Sainte-Anne-la-Palud," woodcut,
5 sheets, 50 colors, from Paysages Bretons, no.
38, 1892, 34x114 cm.



Fig (16) - "Baie de la Fresnayne (Saint - Caast)", Woodcut,
8 colours, from Paysages Bretons 1891 - Henri Riviere





Fig (17) - "Basilique d'Assise en Hiver", Woodcut, 1914
(Riviere's last woodcut) - Henri Riviere





(Fig 15) and he was to become known as the "father of colour lithography."³

As Riviere career progressed his subject matter became more pronounced and an underlying theme in all his work is the naturalistic landscapes of Brittany, and began to spend all his summers there. His lithographs were used in many forms, from magazines and journals to advertising and calendars, and in 1899 he took on a series of lithographs entitled "Aspects of Nature" (Fig 19).

The example "Le Forett" from Les Aspect de la Nature, No.13, 1899 (Fig 19) is one of the finest examples from his series, the use of the strong verticals of the trees breaking up with the equally strong horizontals of high foreground make this print a very powerful image. His use and breakdown of colour are also treated sympathetically with the view and produce some very strong shapes of flat colour. This print reminds me of Claude Monet's paintings of the Poplar series (Fig 7), although his choice and technique of colour is quite different from that of Monet but there is almost similar treatment of the foliage. This style was to progress and expand until 1917 when Riviere did his last lithograph (Fig 27).

"Le Bois de Hetres a Kerzarden" lithograph (Fig 20) with the colours is an example of the excellent technique processes of the artist's

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Fig (18) - "Le Trie "A Kermaire", - Lithograph, 14 colours,
1912 - Henri Riviere

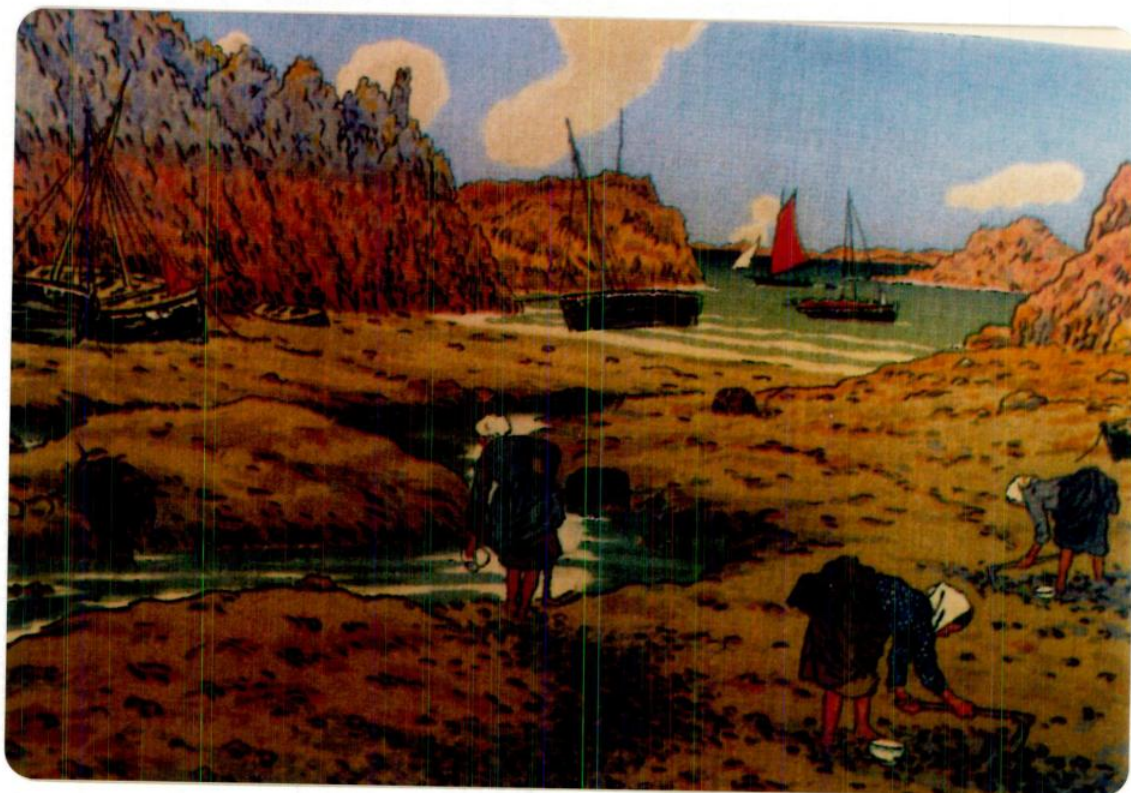




Fig (19) - "La Falaise", Lithograph, 12 Colours, from Les
Aspects de la Nature, 1897 - Henri Riviere





Fig (20) - "Le Bois de Hetres A Kerzarden", - Lithograph,
14 Colours, from Le Beau Pays de Bretagne 1917
- Henri Riviere - (Rivieres las lithograph)





work with colour and use of colour. The lithograph is very vibrant and the series blocks of colours blend very easily together and with the eye. The placing of the green with blue sky works very well together, as does the green with the orange, and as quoted before by Alexandre Benois, painter for the Russian Ballet and curator for the Hermitage in St Peterburg "Riviere taught us to see nature simplified..... I love his greedy eyes."¹

These two artists are very revelant to my own personal work, being a fabric-printed panel, and also that of the pupil's work, fabric printed banne for entrance to Marlay Park. Monets use of verticals, and horizontals and colours, and Riviere's use of basic shapes with flat colour make these two artists ideal for my own solution to my personal project the design of a fabric printed panel based on trees and plants and the pupil's solution, a fabric printed banner, in which every pupil's print is part of and based upon information gathered in Marlay Park, Rathfarnham.

COMMISSION

Footnotes for Chapter Two

1. Armond Fields "Henri Riviere" preface.
2. Armond Fields "Henri Riviere" preface.
3. Armond Fields "Henri Riviere" pg.20.
4. Patrica Seligman "The History and techniques of the Great Masters - Pissarro", pg.34.
5. Brian Fallon "Retrospective of Sean McSweeney 1991", pg.7.
6. David Nash "Symbolism and the Tree", pg.34.

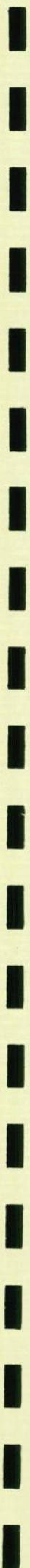
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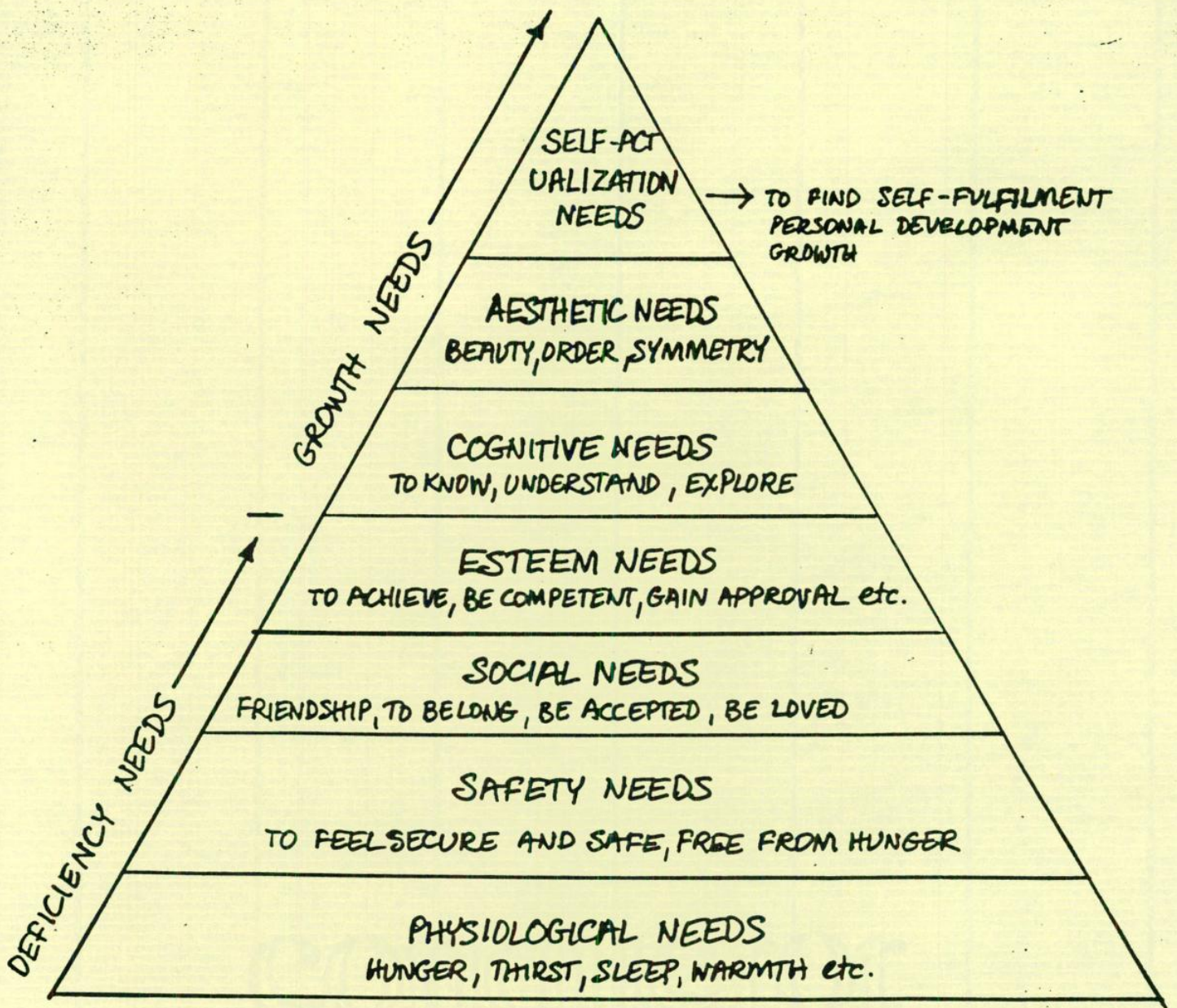
CHAPTER 3

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In our present educational system most emphasis has been put upon the learning of factual information. To a great extent the passing or failing of an examination depends upon the mastery or memorization of certain bits of information that are already known to the teacher. The function of the school system, then, would seem to be that of producing people who can file away bits of information and can then repeat these at a given signal. What is most disturbing is that the skill of repeating bits of information may have very little relationship to the "contributing, well-adjusted member of society"¹. - we thought we were producing.

More and more people are recognising that the ability to learn differs from age to age and from individual to individual and that this ability to learn, or indeed motivate to learn, involves not only intellectual capacity but also social, emotional, perceptual, physical and psychological factors. These factors may be termed as "needs" or motives as defined by A.H. Maslow (1908 - 1970) in his humanistic approach to human motivation. Maslow proposes a model based on a hierarchy of human needs or motives (FIG: E). These consist of deficiency needs and growth needs. The hierarchy of needs ascend from the basic biological needs present at birth to the more complex psychological motives that become important only after the more basic needs have been satisfied. The needs at one level must be at least partially satisfied before those at the next level become important and determine action. It is





A MODEL OF HUMAN MOTIVATION BASED ON A
HIERARCHY OF HUMAN NEEDS

ABRAHAM H. MASLOW.

Fig (E) - Maslows 'Definiceny Needs' Pyramid

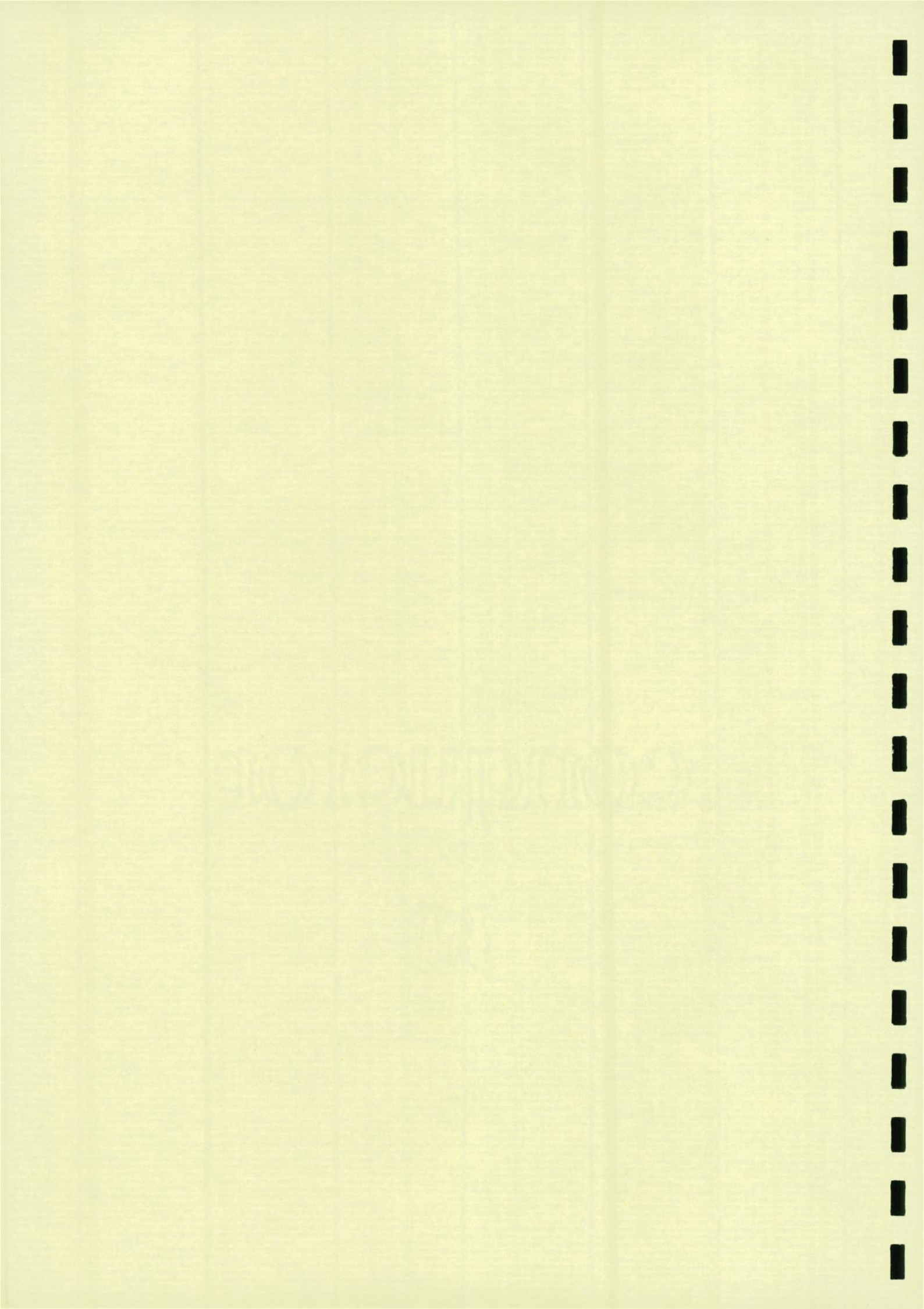
COMMUNICATIONS

1974

[Redacted]

only when the satisfaction of basic needs is relatively easy that the individual will have time and energy for intellectual interests. Artistic and scientific interest rarely flourish in societies where people struggle for food, shelter and safety.

The two sources of human motivation according to A.H. Maslow and Jerome Bruner (cognitive theorist) are intrinsic (what is existing naturally in a person or inherent) source and the extrinsic (inherent caused by external circumstances) source. The intrinsic source comes from within the individual as part of the child's natural "curiosity drive" and is influenced by the response of others to this drive. Another key factor is the degree of interest the child derives from the learning experience. The extrinsic source in the education system depends on marks, grades, school reports, teacher approval, success or failure and achievement motivation. Motivation suffers if the child has to wait too long for feedback about their work; and the degree of success achieved in subjects influences extrinsic sources. If the pressures of extrinsic motivation are too strong then negative effects may follow (copping out of class etc.). Therefore central to intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation is the role of the teacher. The art teacher must provide motivation to stimulate the child to work to their utmost so that they may benefit from the kinds of contributions from human experience and reach an understanding that only art can provide.



Therefore the process of learning is very complex and there may be no single best way or methodology. It may be that one of the basic attributes that should be encouraged in school, in my opinion, is for the child to develop the ability to discover and to search for answers instead of passively waiting for answers and directions from the teacher. The experiences central to an art activity require self-direction.

We learn through our senses and from observing others. Social learning theory according to Albert Bandura sees our behaviour as learned through interaction with and observation of the environment. The emphasis is on a process of interaction. Social learning theory stresses the importance of observational learning and focuses on patterns of behaviour the individual learns in coping with the environment. Considerable emphasis is placed on the reciprocal interaction that takes place between behaviour and environment.

The ability to see, to feel, hear, smell, and taste provides the contact between us and our environment. This may sound like an obvious statement, however, its implication seems to be lost in our educational system. The development of perceptual sensitivity, then, should become a most important part of the educative process. Yet in most areas other than the arts, the senses are apt to be ignored. Although a number of activities are included at the

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primary school level that involve manipulation and movement, most of these activities are taught as ends in themselves. The purpose seems to be to develop particular skills so that these can be checked off as having been taught, rather than utilizing them as a means of expression. Therefore the greater the opportunity to develop an increased sensitivity and the greater the awareness of all the senses, the greater will be the opportunity for learning.

One of the basic ingredients of a creative art experience is the relationship between the artist and his environment. Painting, drawing or constructing is a constant process of assimilation and projection, talking in through the senses a vast amount of information, mixing it up with the psychological self, and putting into a new form the elements that seem to suit the aesthetic needs of the artist at the time.

Our forefathers were in daily contact with their environment. Not only did they build their own homes and grow their own food but they also made their own music and art. Even in the last twenty/thirty years there have been dramatic changes. The local grocery no longer has the friendly owner serving you and giving you all your groceries over the little counter, nor is he selling you all your household wares and farm-wares, but this has all been changed to the big unfriendly convenience stores, like Dunnes Stores etc. where individual attention is actually mass marketing.

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Therefore it is encouraging to observe an increased awareness of nature, particularly among our young people of recent years. Our national parks are attracting increasing numbers of visitors. Possibly the greater interest in our environment is also being encouraged with talk of the earth's ozone layer being damaged and the environmental damage caused by "the years of productive progress"² that have passed and the damage that has now come to light from the excess chemicals etc. used in the past twenty/thirty years.

Therefore the touching, seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting which involves the active participation of the individual should be very welcome as the new awakening or recognition of environmental issues are being addressed. There is evidence that even the young child needs to be encouraged to see, touch or become involved in his environment. In a case of sensory deprivation, a youngster may be isolated from external stimulation. It is not just a question of the presence of sounds, or of having things available to touch and see, it is the stimulation of the interaction between the youngster and the environment through the senses that makes the difference between the child who is eager to explore and investigate that environment and one who retreats from it. Obviously deprived youngsters can come from what might be called affluent surroundings. Even if a child's basic physical needs are, he may nevertheless be seriously deprived in other areas of development.

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One observational study of young deprived children reported that those youngsters were not aware of, or even responsive to, the teacher's spoken directions or to a display of coloured paper, scissors and paste set out for them. Although the children were constantly scanning the environment, these objects failed to attract their attention (Malone 1967). It is obvious that for young children the senses are extremely important, but in later years too the development of refined sensory experiences should be a continuing process. Art education is the only subject area that truly concentrates on developing the sensory experience. Art is filled with richness of textures, the excitement of shapes and forms, the wealth of colour, and the youngster should be able to receive pleasure and joy from these experiences.

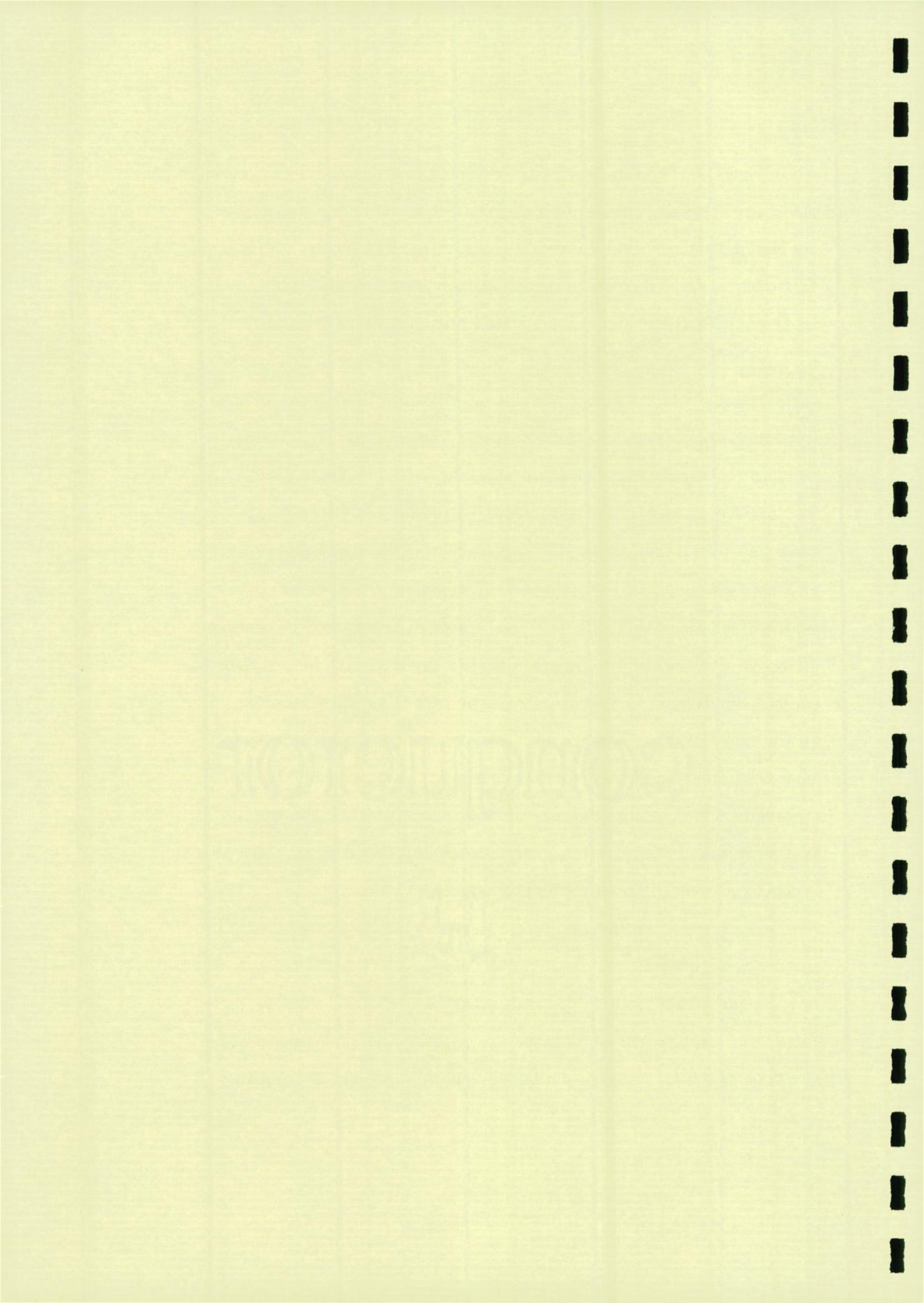
Auditory sensitivity means detailed listening, not just hearing, visual sensitivity means an awareness of differences and details, not just recognition, the same is true for touching, and for all sensory experiences. We are living in a time of mass production, mass education, and mass viewing relationships of the individual. Art education has the special mission of developing with the individual those creative sensitivities that made life satisfying and meaningful.

Art is not the same for a child as it is for an adult. Although it may be difficult to say just what art means for any particular



adult usually the term "art" has very definite connotations. Among these are museums, painters, a cultural elite etc. but art for the child is something quite different. For a child art is primarily a means for expression. No two children are alike, and in fact, each child differs even from his earlier self as he constantly grows, perceives, understands and interprets his environment. "If it were possible for children to develop without and interference from the outside world, no special stimulation for their creative work would be necessary. Every child would use his deeply rooted creative impulses without inhibition, confident in his own means of expression".³ The loss of self-confidence in one's own means of expression may be an indication of a withdrawal into one's self. Every child, regardless of level of artistic development, should first of all be considered as an individual. Expression grows out of and is a reflection of the total child. A child expresses thoughts, feelings and interests in drawing and painting and shows knowledge of the environment in his creative expression. In art education the aesthetic quality of the final product is subordinated to the creative process. It is the child's process - his thinking, his feelings, his perceiving, in fact his reactions to the environment - that is important.

We must be able to use our senses freely and creatively and develop positive attitudes towards ourselves and our neighbours for this



learning to become effective. Children rarely have the opportunity to share ideas and develop attitudes about themselves and others and our educational system has done little to change the increasing loss of identity with oneself. Little is done to stimulate the child to find the rewards from within the learning process; to find satisfaction in solving his own problems, to take pleasure in developing greater knowledge and understanding for its own sake or to measure success or failure in areas of importance to the self. No art expression is possible without self identification with the experience expressed as well as with the art material by which it is expressed. The term self-expression is giving vent in constructive forms to feelings, emotions and thoughts at one's own level of development. There is great satisfaction in expression one's own feelings and emotions in art. The self-confidence that can develop from this type of expression provides the basis for more advanced levels of art. This area of discussion is closely related to the development of self-esteem. For each individual's own expression is of prime importance, and in art probably more so than any other. It has been recognized that young children indeed to see themselves as being worthy to deal with the complex environment in which they find themselves.

In a longitudinal study of sixth graders in Australia (Williams, Poole, and Lett⁴ reported that those children who were in the top five percent on a creativity test were higher in self esteem than

RECEIVED

less creative children. This is also true of older children, although the self-concept of ability and attitudes towards achievement are much harder to change as the child grows older. One study attempted to change the self-concept of a group of ninth grade low achievers. Their parents were involved in helping to change that image; as the self-concept of the ninth graders improved, their academic achievement improved (Brookover, 1967)⁵. The relationship between creativity and ego development in college populations has been studied by Phillips (1973)⁶ and by Workman and Stillion (1977); both studies found a significant correlation between creativity and a positive self perception.

Art is often considered the highest form of human expression and art can play a meaningful role in the development of children. The focus of teaching is developing, changing a dynamic child who becomes increasingly aware of himself and his environment.

But as in all areas of life, sport, business, education, etc., teamwork can achieve the best results by pooling personal resources and personalities, therefore the project method seeks to educate the child through purposive activity in a social setting. Objectives can be achieved with maximum efficiency while creating an atmosphere of enthusiasm and active participation. Art education is not a matter of filling in shapes but rather the development of an awareness

RECEIVED

within the pupil of his relationship with his environment with himself. From the educational point of view a project has the advantage of providing a variety of tasks suitable for all sorts and conditions of children. As Rousseau stated in his book Emile, "the problem of education is the relationship of man to his physical and social environment".⁸ An interaction with his fellow pupils can reinforce his learning further by developing a working rapport and the satisfaction of team or group achievement.

Group activity is not a guaranteed way achieving success in mammoth are tasks. Statements like "Lets paint a mural, twenty pupils to a wall", do not guarantee success.⁹ Rather group activity involves thought and preparation where the teacher initiates and motivates, then, hopefully, stands back while the pupil becomes the judge and assessor of standards.

The are class is one of the main subjects within the school curriculum where an obvious skill is thought to be require. The hackneyed phrase "I can't draw a straight line" may be utter gloomily by several pupils in neat rows of desks. Meanwhile, the revered "brilliant" artist in the corner is happily painting "brilliant" pictures and wisely using a ruler where appropriate, for the straight lines. Group, activity, alternates the feeling of ineffectualness which may stem from this activity, by diluting talents and abilities

NON CONFIDERE

and banning the notion that the art class is for the talented only.

According to Piaget, "Without interchange of thought and co-operation with others the individual would never come to group his operations into a coherent thought"¹⁰. The significance of Piaget's theory seems to have considerable relevance as far as the art class is concerned. In the art class there is a strong emphasis on the importance of interaction with people. Piaget continues in his book 'Intelligence' to argue "For development to occur there must be individual action upon a human group and a response by the groups to the individuals action".¹¹

This implies that a pupils passive presence with an other in a group will not necessarily assist in the pupil's development anymore than watching a still-life would assist developing and understanding of the relationship of the objects to the pupils.

Group activity in its most developmental sense implies a group in which each individual contributes to the working of the group as a whole and is individually involved in the shifts and changes of balance that occurs within it. In respect to lesson-planning this view places great emphasis upon the value of group activity and "emphasizes co-operation rather than competition as a basic educational factor".¹²

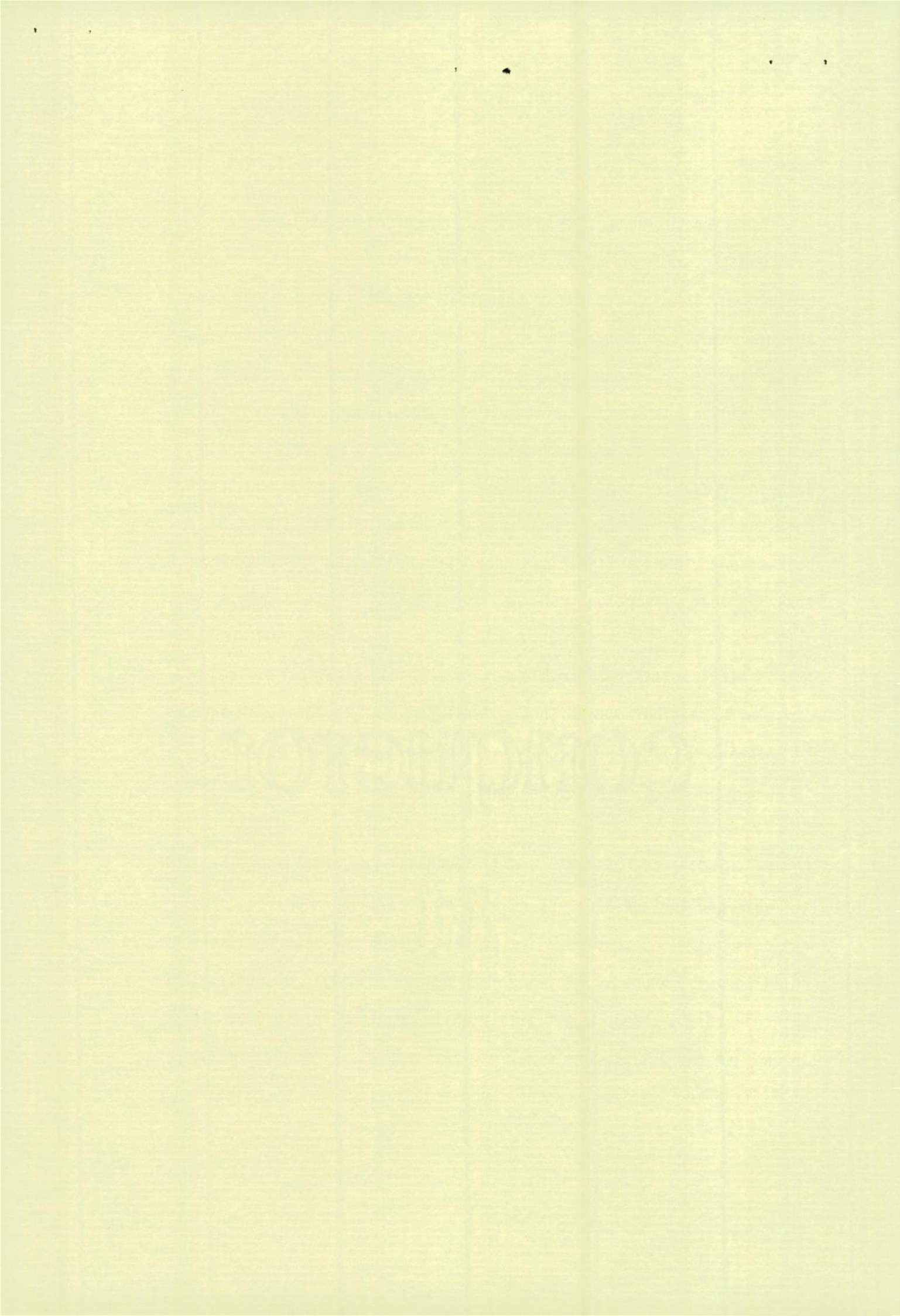


COMMUNICATIONS

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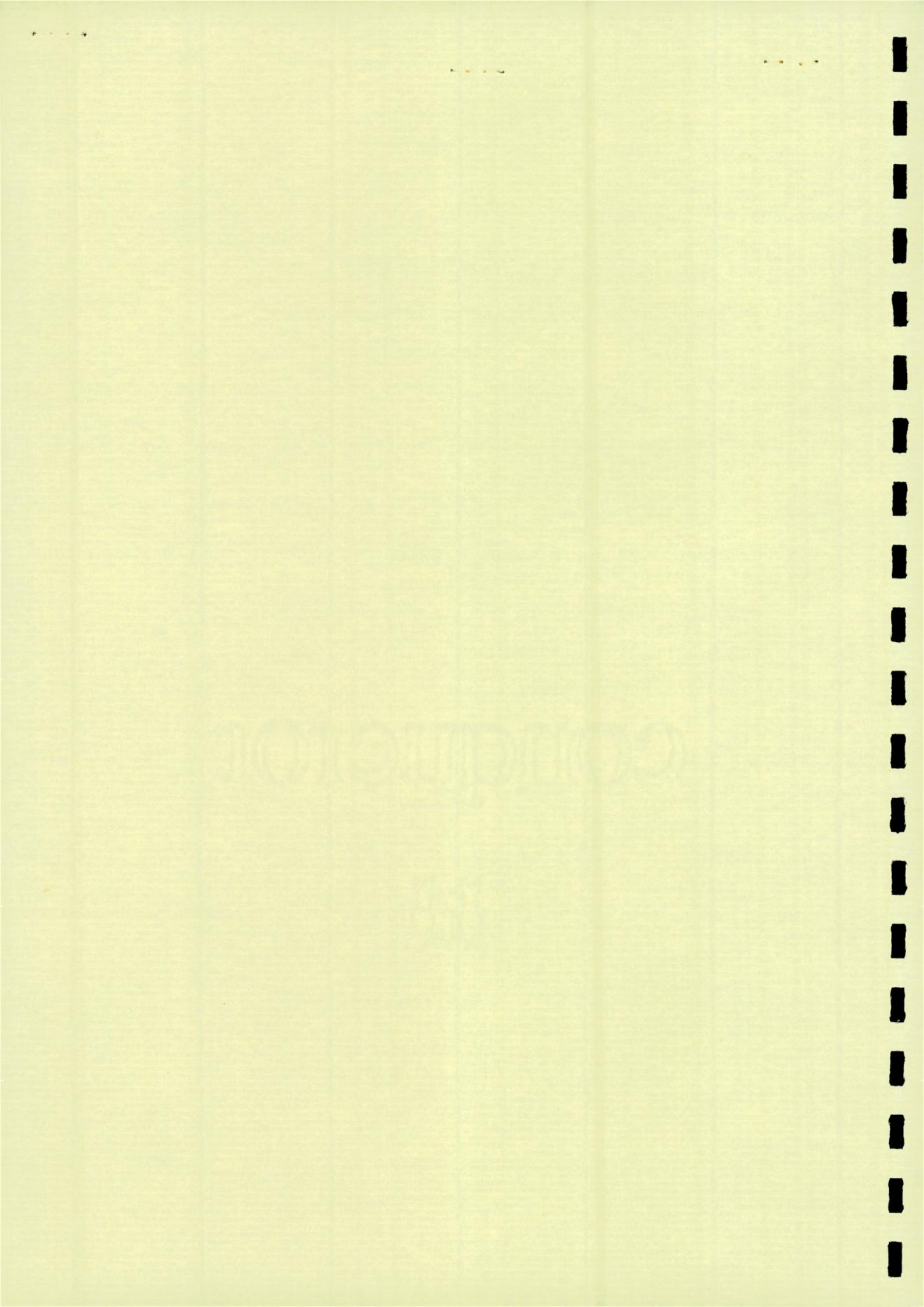
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Footnotes for Chapter Three

1. Elliot Eisner: Educating Artistic Vision Chapter ONE, 'Why Teach Art'?
2. Elliot Eisner, Educating Artistic Vision, preface.
3. Viktor Lowenfeld - Lowenfeld Lectures, no26.
4. Viktor Lowenfeld and W Lambert Brittian 'Creative and Mental Growth', Chapter five.
5. Viktor Lowenfeld and W Lambert Brittian 'Creative and Mental Growth'. Chapter five.
6. Viktor Lowenfeld and W Lambert Brittian 'Creative and Mental Growth'. Chapter five.
7. Viktor Lowenfeld and W Lambert Brittian 'Creative and Mental Growth'. Chapter five.
8. Ivor Morrish: 'Disciples in Education', chapter 3 on Rosseau.
9. Charles Gaiskell: 'Children and their Art', chapter 12.
10. Routleuge and Keegan 'Intelligence - Jean Piaget', pg.185.
11. Routleuge and Keegan 'Intelligence - Jean Piaget', pg.185.
12. Charles Gaiskell 'Children and their Art', chapter 12.



CHAPTER 4

COMPTON

1957

The pupil's project was done with a fifth year group from Colaiste Eanna, Christian Brother School, Ballyroan Road, Dublin 16. It consisted of a large fabric printed banner for the entrance of Marlay Par Craft Centre, Rathfarnham, and it portrays various aspect of the beauty of the park.

Marlay Park is set one mile from Colaiste Eanna, Ballyroan Road and about six miles South of Dublin City in the foothills of the Dublin Mountains. The history of the estate can be traced back to Tudor Times when Henry VIII confiscated the lands then owned by St. Mary's Abbey during the suppression of the monasteries.

Marlay Park is now a 214 acre Regional Park comprised of Woodland, Parkland and a variety of ponds and water features fed by the Little Dargle River. Throughout the park, you will find items of sculpture done by the independent artists of Marlay. There are over 300 species of trees and shrubs in the park.

It also houses a Craft Centre in the Courtyard of Marlay House, and it occupies ten craft industries from Stained Glass to Antiquarian Book Binding to Harpmaker to Metal Art Designer. It is presently owned and maintained by the park's department, Dublin County Council.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY

Fig (21) - View in Marlay Park - Rathfarnham.

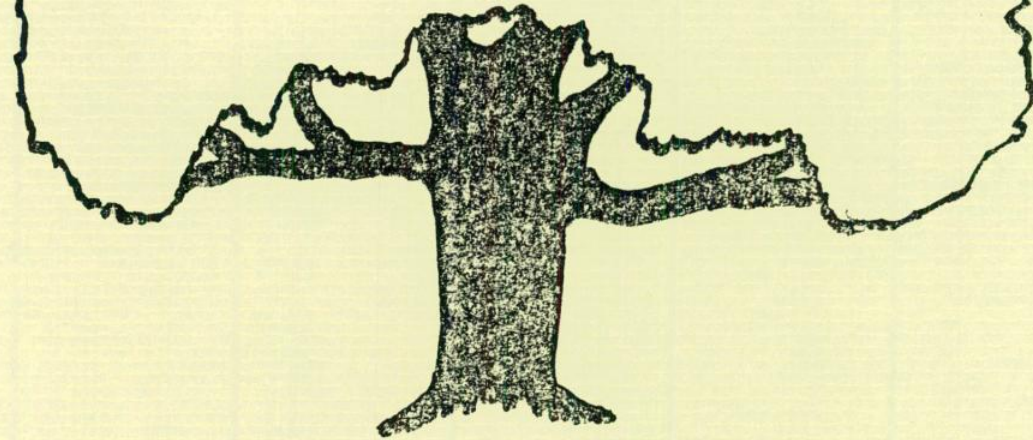




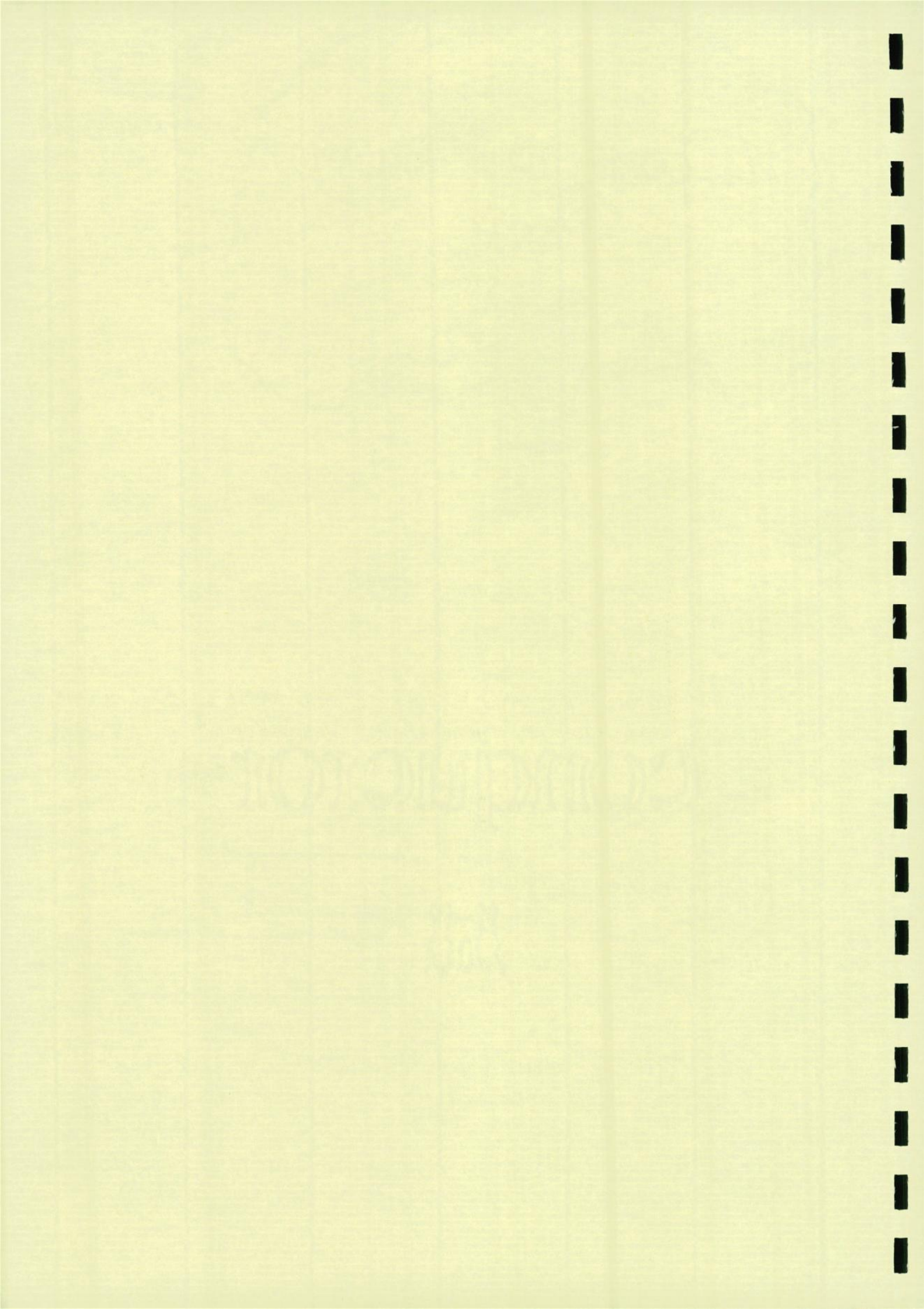
Ms. Bolger.

17th March '91

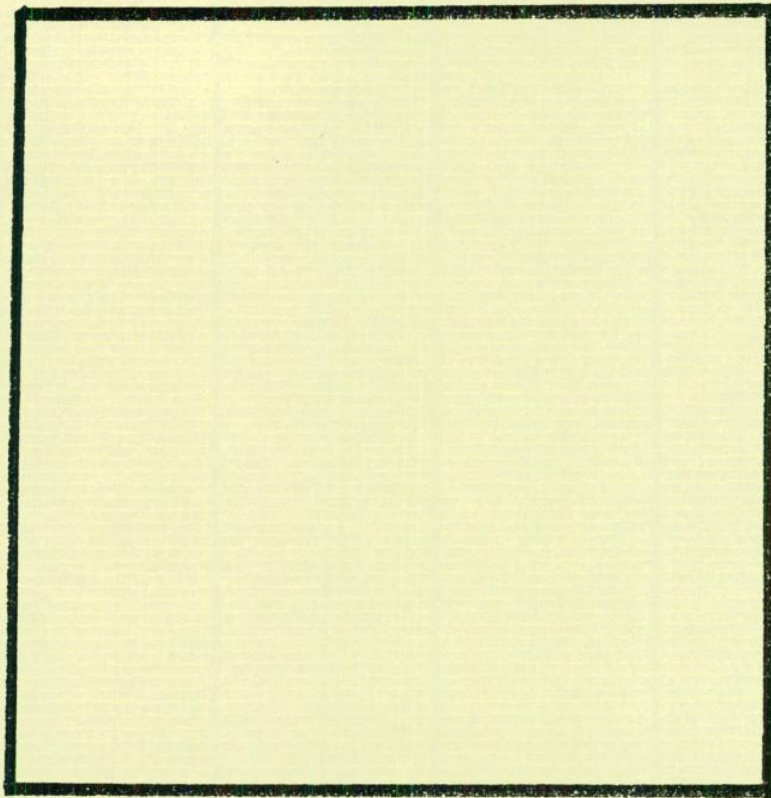
WELCOME TO MARLAY
PARK.



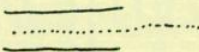

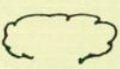
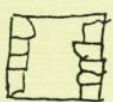
- Today you are looking **FOR** things and you are looking **AT** things.
- After completing this work-sheet you should have enough information both visually and written to work towards constructing a "3D" project based upon findings here in Marlay Park.
- your name is:
- your year and class:
- You have "8" pages with which you are required to record information in the form of:
 - Writing
 - Drawingand a plastic bag to collect at least 6 objects/items from around the park, (i.e. leaves, twigs etc.)



Now fill in the box below with a map of how you have reached our chosen section of the park beginning with the gate you entered as a starting point - (please use pencil or pen.)

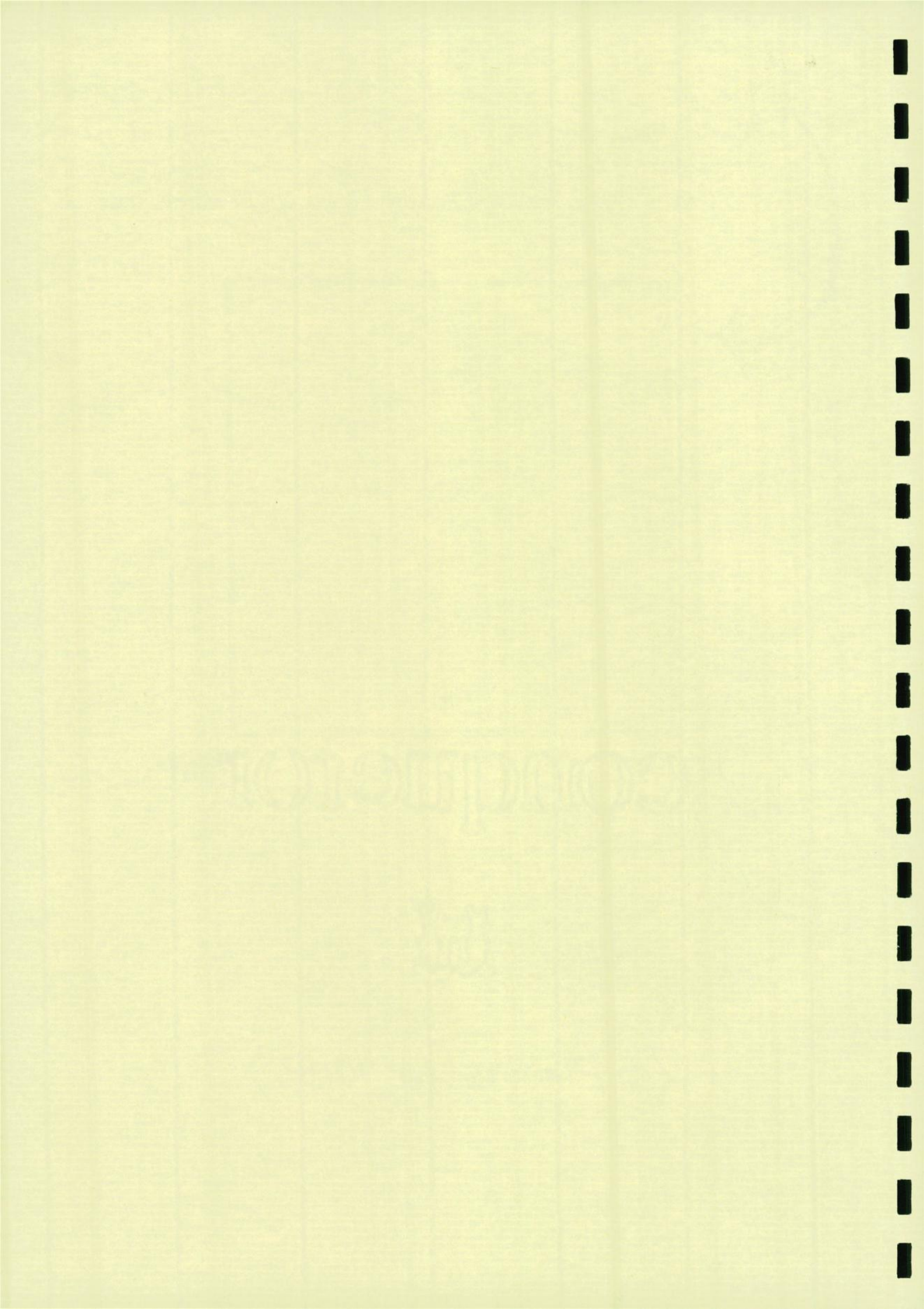


Key to MAP:

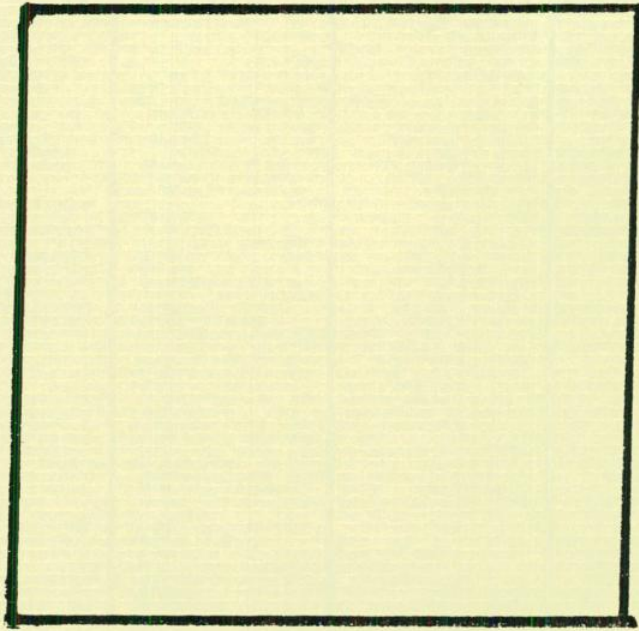
- Show-pathways 
- trees 
- hedges 
- points of interest (i.e. buildings etc.) 

MAP:

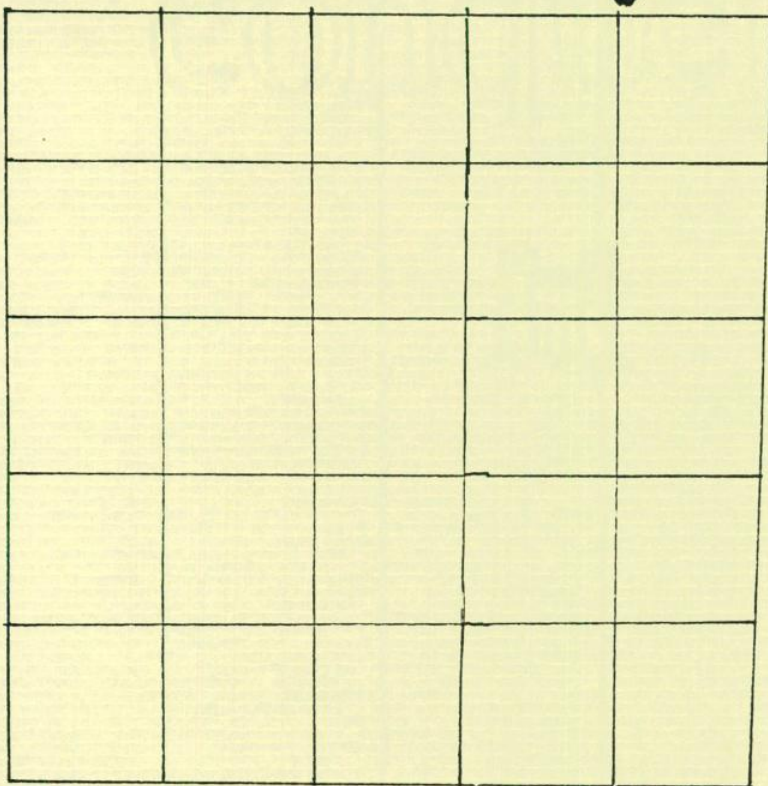
< 5/7 mins for MAP. >

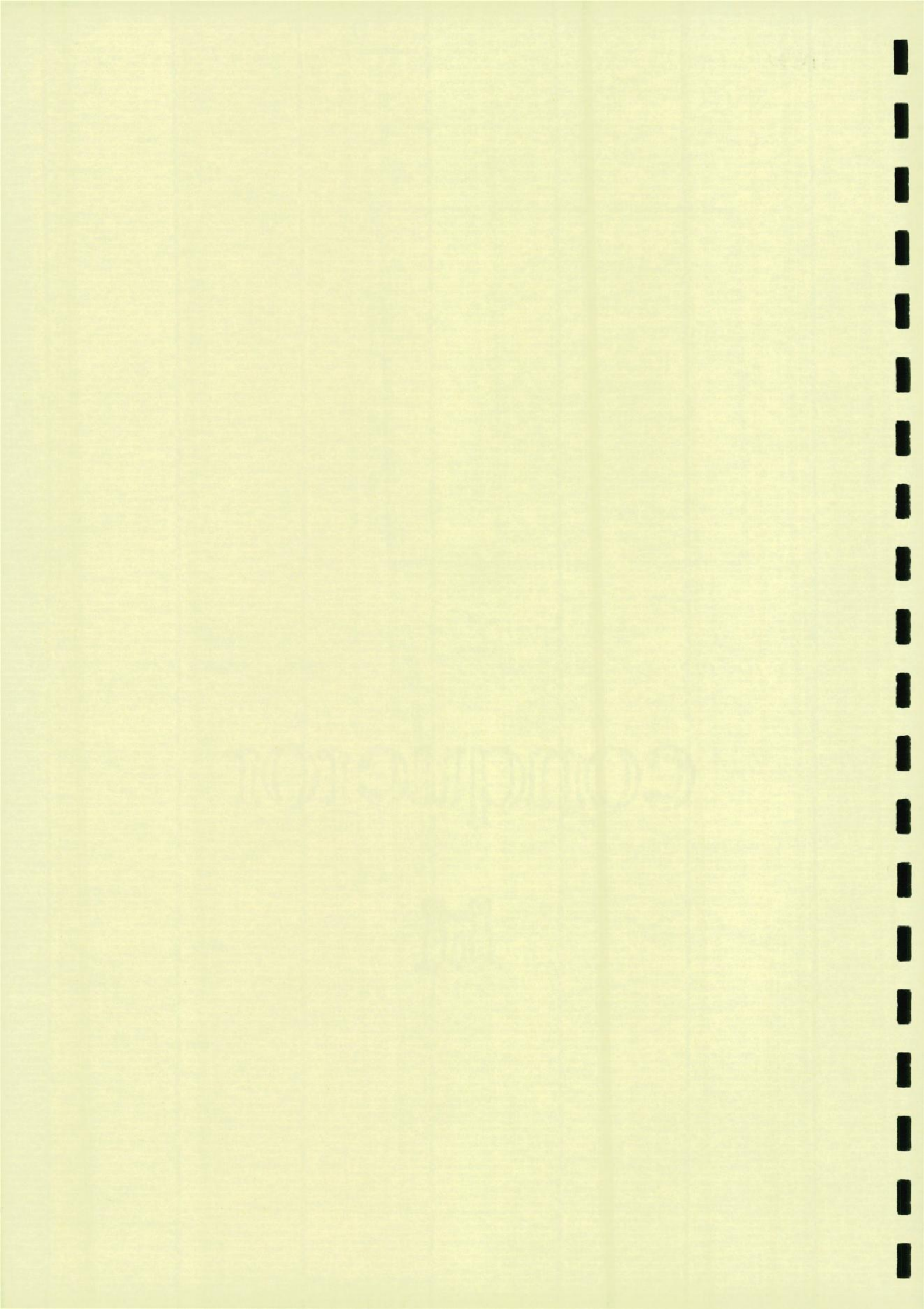


- Please do a quick '**SKETCH**' of our chosen section of the park, only taking about 5 minutes to complete:

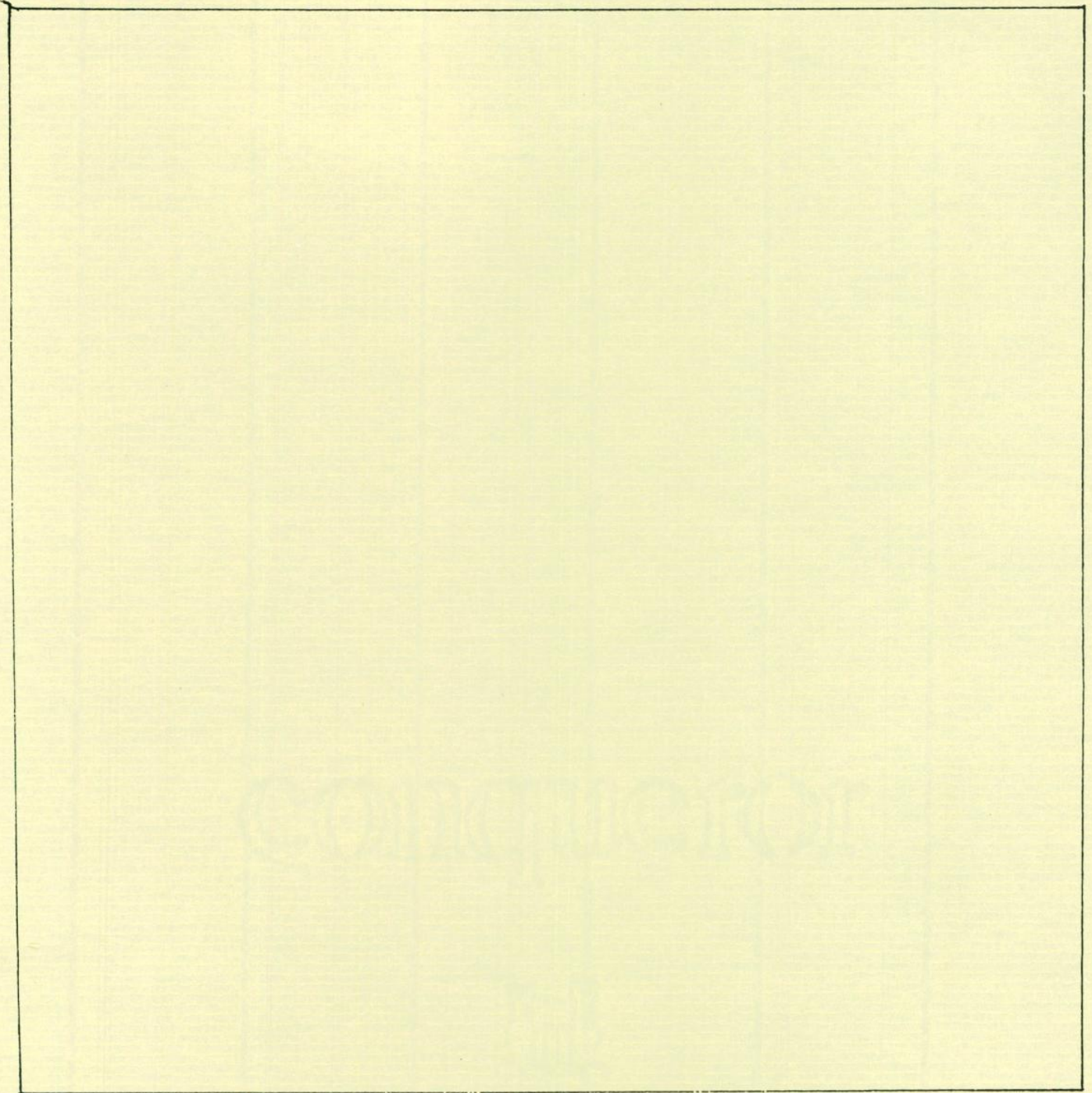


- Now using the '**GRID**' below - please do a drawing of our chosen section of park - to proportionally scale our view: (5/10 mins)

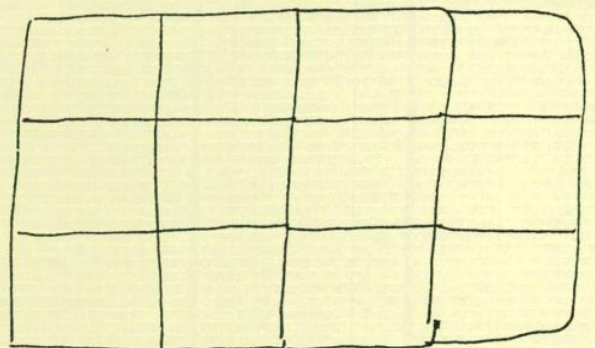


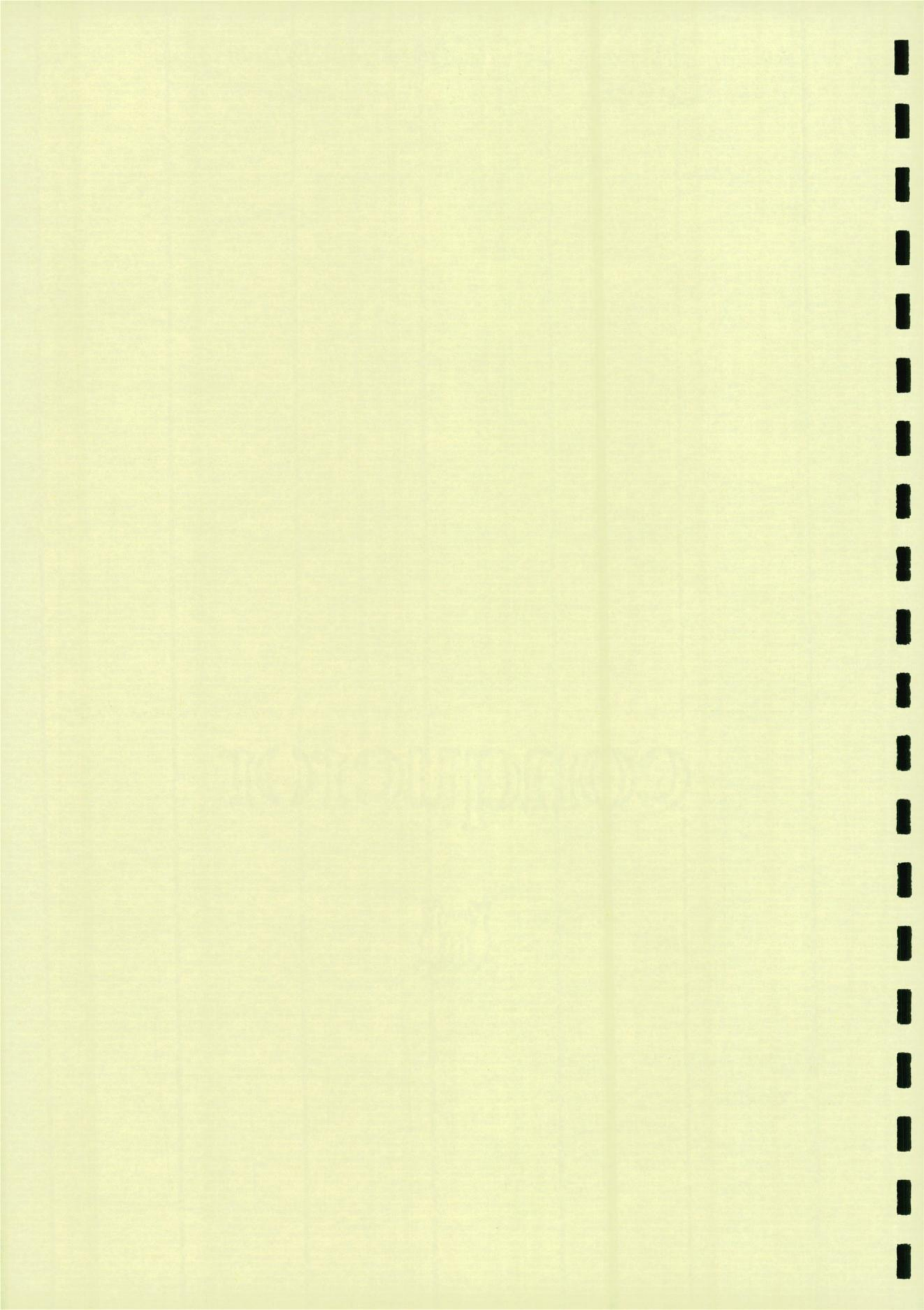


- Now fill this page with a **'Detailed Drawing'** of our chosen section that we are studying today:

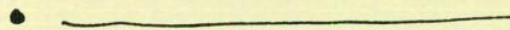
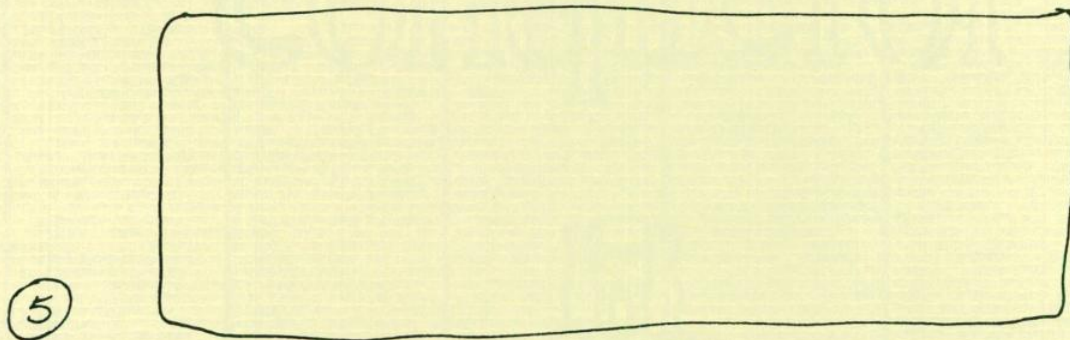
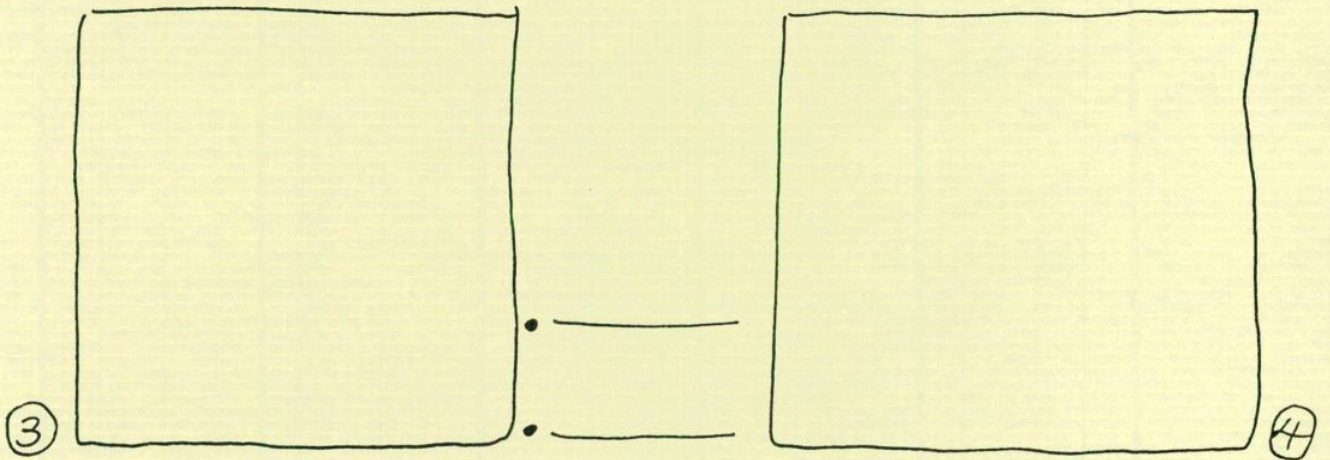
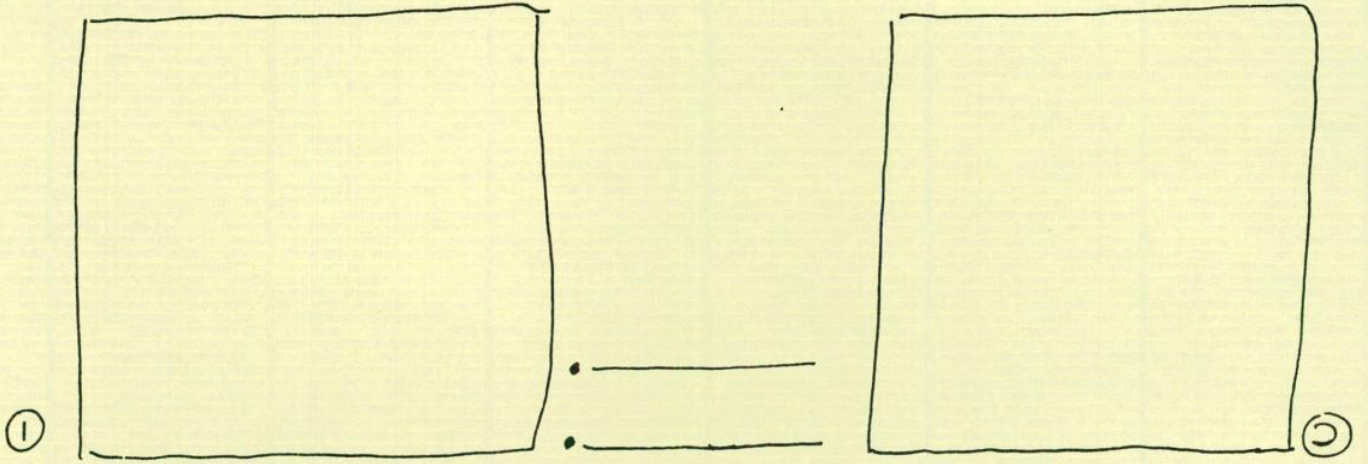


- Now fill in this box with the **Colour code** for our area of interest →
(using either words or colouring pencils)





- Now Take a wax crayon and make some 'RUBBINGS' of the area & name them :





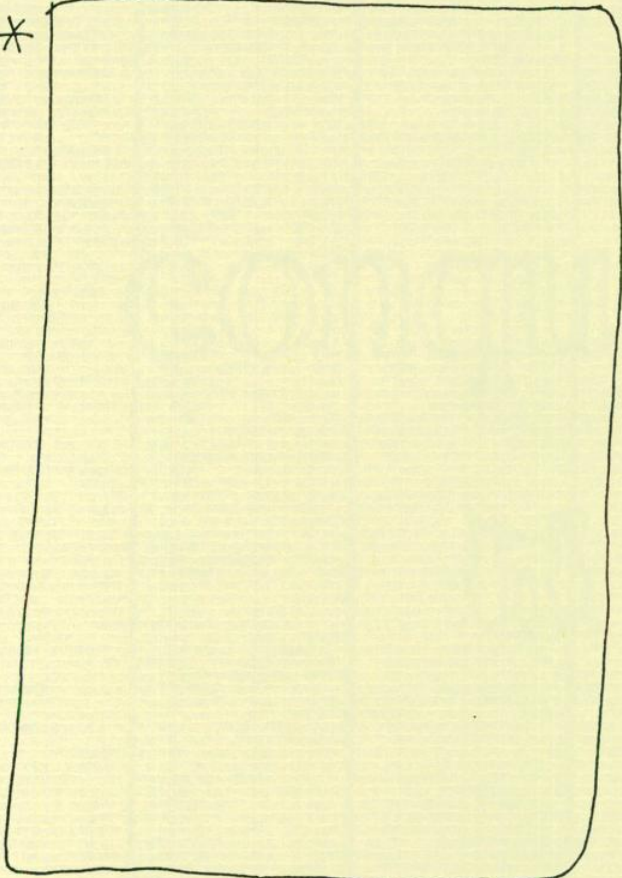
• How many people have you seen in the Park this morning?

• What were they doing?

①	_____
②	_____

• Fill in the box below with a figure that you are looking at, at the moment and do a quick *gestural sketch of the figure
*(i.e. gesture sketch = this is where you try to capture the overall movement of the figure you are studying - (not the details of it))

*



2/3 min sketch: ↘

* Details can be written down:

(colour)
hair : _____

expression : _____

position : _____

(colour)
clothes : _____

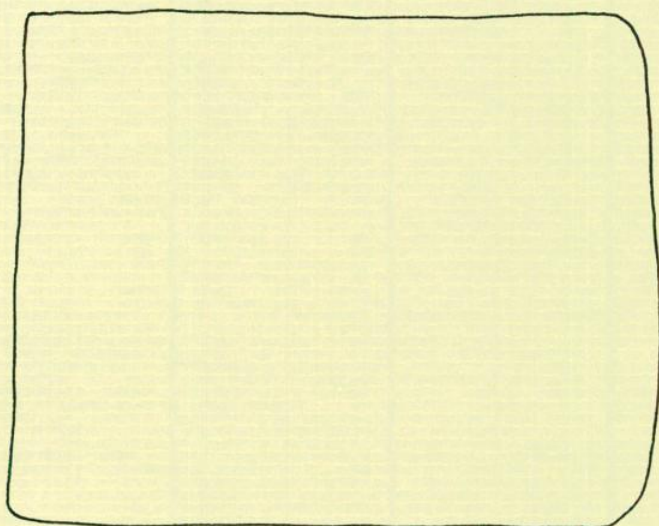
type) _____
shoes : _____

COMMISSION

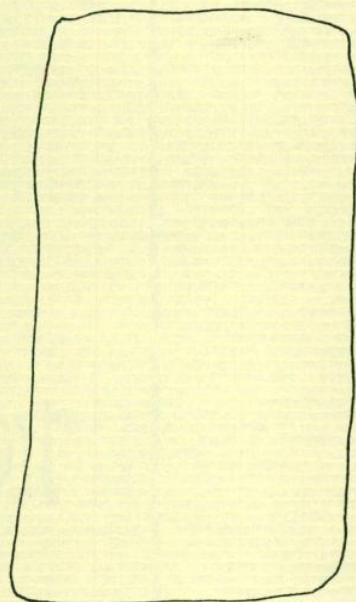
- This week beginning today March 4th 1991 is

'NATIONAL TREE WEEK'

Therefore I would like you to select one tree of interest to you and "zoom into" a section and make a detailed drawing of that section:



- Take a wax crayon and make a rubbing of the tree's bark:



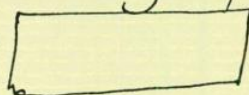
• Do you know the name of the tree?

• _____

• Is it an evergreen or deciduous tree?

• _____

• With your piece of string - please measure the tree's diameter.



• How high do you estimate the tree to be?

• How old do you think the tree is?





- N.B. It is important that you support some of your drawings with some written information - so please read back over the work-sheet quickly to make sure you haven't forgotten anything !!! and please check that you have collected at least 6 items in your bags.

REMEMBER:

you are the one's who will or will not make this project enjoyable and exciting.

I hope you all enjoyed Marley Park today.

MEMORANDUM



The group's ability, personality and behavioural keys are as follows:

Ability Key: Good: ○
 Average: ●
 Bad: ◐

Personality Key: Well Adjusted: □
 Loner: ■
 Leader: ▣

Behaviour Key: Diligent: △
 Disruptive: ▲

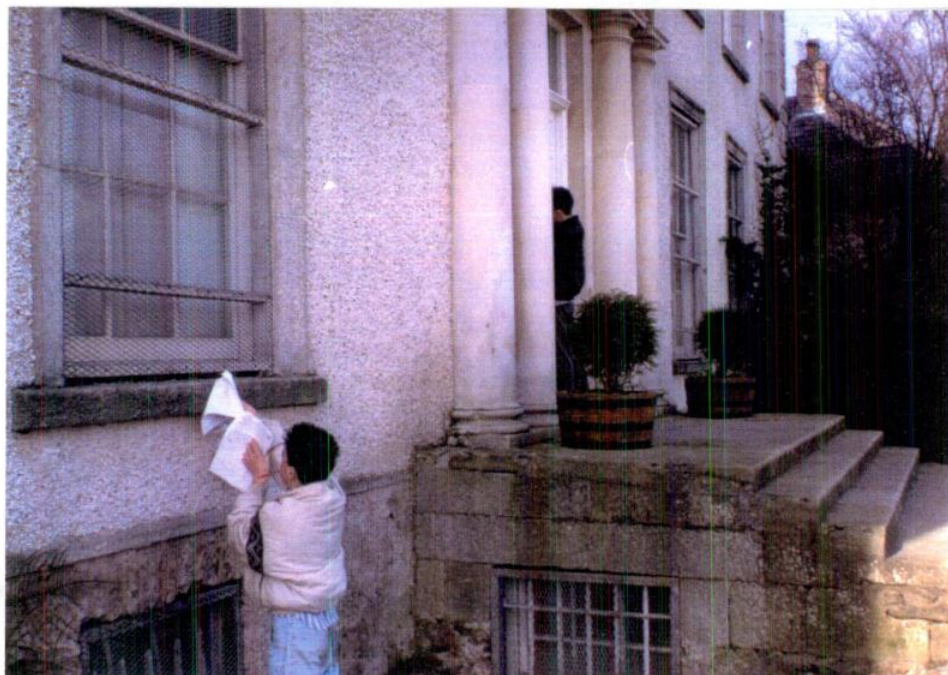
Names:

Keys:

Derek	-	● ◐ △
Declan	-	○ □ ▲
Leonard	-	○ □ △
David	-	○ ■ ▲
Chris	-	◐ ▣ ▲
Jonathon	-	● □ ▲
Barry K	-	◐ ■ △
Karl	-	● ■ △
Gary	-	● ◐ ▲
Frank	-	○ □ △
Enda	-	○ □ △
Gerard	-	● ■ △
Barry P	-	◐ □ △

CONFIDENTIAL

Fig (22/23) - Pupils working in Marlay Park, Rathfarnham on 11th March 1991



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THE BRIEF

The Brief set out in the worksheet for the trip to Marlay Park, on the 11th March 1991, placed emphasis on the various shapes and colours found in the park. There was also an emphasis placed on the verticals and horizontal created by the trees and shrubs. These aspects related historically to both Claude Monet's Poplar Series of 1891 and Henri Riviere's simplified shapes in lithography.

The series of lessons based upon the information taken from the Marlay Park worksheets was to simplify the shapes in a composition and the limitation for fabric (for maximum effect) the number of colours per print (ie. four colours).

AIMS OF SCHOOL PROJECT

1. to develop a deeper understanding of their surroundings through observation, discussion and critical analysis.
2. to work as a group and encourage interaction of ideas.
3. to create an awareness of the function of the part in the community, how important it is, and how it must be preserved for others.



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4. to promote environmental awareness in the pupils of local environment.
5. to give pupils a historical background of environment represented in art and how that can be promoted to an even further extent nowadays, and also to give a brief history of the materials they are working with.
6. to develop a system of working which will enable pupils to develop a finished piece from source drawings, also to explore related problems throughout this development. Through experience pupils will develop the ability to evaluate their own work.

The lessons have evolved over seven weeks like so:

Week One

Process

The pupils made and used a view-finder on one of the sketches from their Marlay Park worksheet. The pupils paid particular attention to composition and concentrated on line.

Learning Objective

To re-enforce and expand on the pupils understanding of composition.

- To develop the pupils sensitivity to line.

COMPTON

- To re-enforce the use of a view-finder as a tool to isolate and enlarge a section of drawing.
- To introduce pupils to the work of the artist, Henri Riviere.

Week Two

Process: Stage One

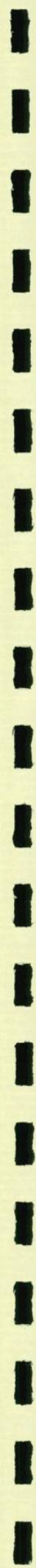
Simply source drawing in order to create workable designs for screen print, which involved teaching main shapes excluding detail from source drawing onto separate sheet. This sheet serves as a background for collage (stage two). Teachings were colour coded using information recorded on Marlay Park worksheets.

Stage Two

Collage making from simplified teachings, colours for collage were chosen by referral to colour codes on Marlay Park Worksheets.

Learning Objectives: Stage One

- To increase pupils sensitivity to shape.
- To encourage working from a source and how this source can be adapted for use in the craft of fabric printing.
- To introduce pupils to the design technique of fabric printing.
- To encourage the use of pupils evaluative skills in discerning the shapes and colours used in their designs.



- To introduce pupils to the work of the artist, Claude Monet.

State Two

- To develop the skill of collage making from a source.
- To use a scissors and/or paper tearing as a drawing tool to render shapes previously drawn.
- To increase pupils awareness of the value of collage to see colour combinates clearly as a first step in fabric print design process.
- To introduce pupils to the collage work of the artist, Henri Matisse.

Week Three

Proved to be a continuation of stage two of week two and the objectives were the same, as the pupils did not finish off their collage work from the previous week.

Week Four

Process

The pupils dealt with the preparation of the paper stencils for design. They also dealt with registration and over-printing using their collage from the previous weeks as a source.

Learning Objectives

EXPERIMENTAL

1913

- To increase the pupils sensitivity to shape.
- To encourage working from a source and to adapt this source for the use in the craft of fabric printing.
- To introduce pupils to the second stage of design technique of fabric printing.
- To introduce the pupils to the work of artist, Piet Mondrian.

Week Five

Process

Pupils began the process of preparation and application of pigment colours for fabric, particular attention was paid to registration and overprinting.

Learning Objectives

- To introduce pupils to the third stage of development in fabric printing (preparation and application of colour).
- To increase pupils awareness of the value of collage (week two) to see colour combinations clearly as they begin the third stage in fabric design process.

Week Six

Prove to be the final assemblage of the banner.

COMPTON

1911

Learning Objectives

- To encourage the use of pupils evaluate skills in discerning where each pupils fabric design should be on the banner.

COMMUNICATIONS

1961

Fig (24) - View of Pupils Fabri Design Banner based on Marlay Park, Rathfarnham



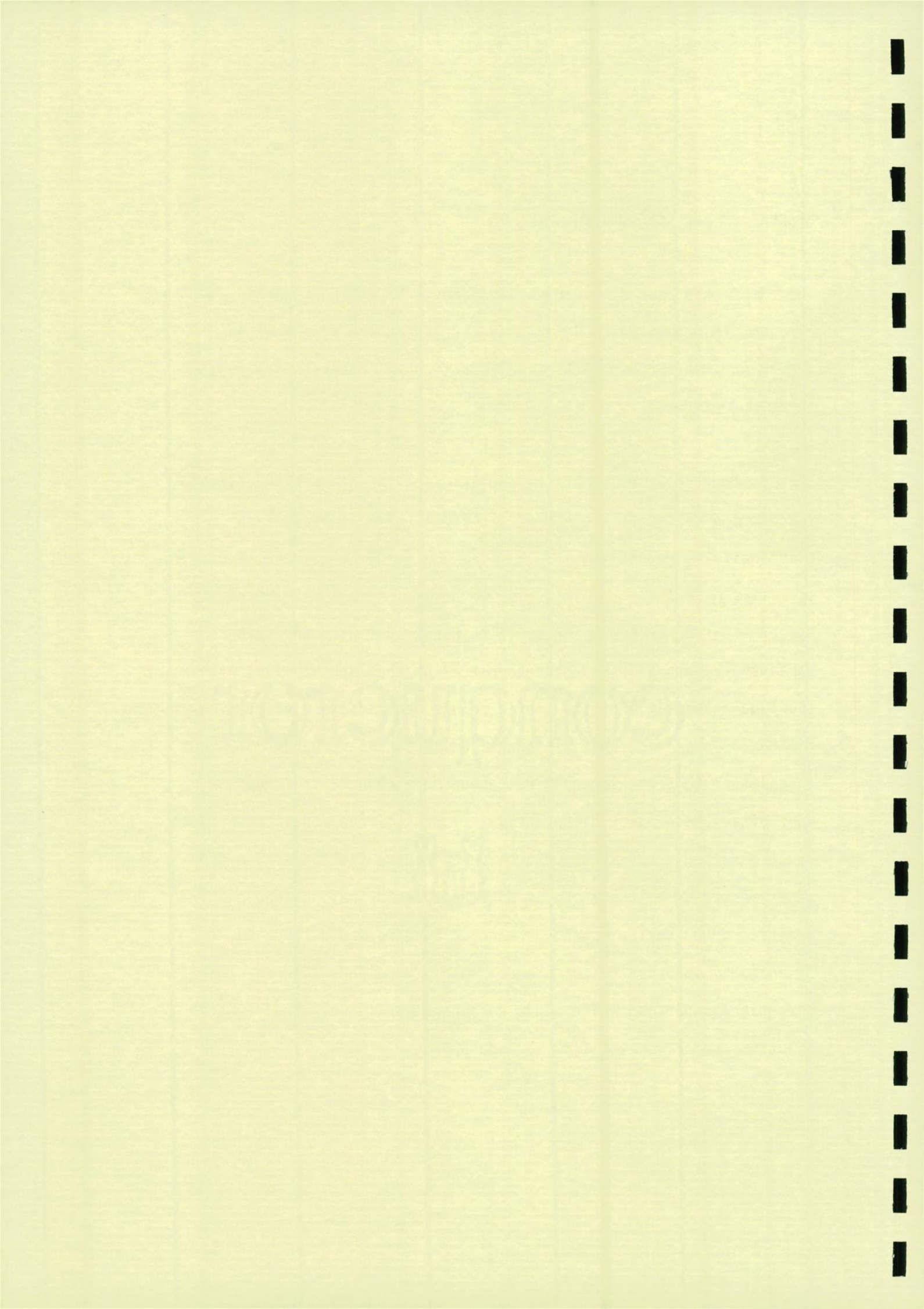


EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The circle has been completed. Teaching to me is about opening circles. Simplicially, I, as a teacher, open the circle at the beginning of the class with my introduction to lesson (which relates to my objectives).

This is then followed on by the pupils execution of work and finally I close the circle at the end of the lesson with an evaluation relating to my objectives.

My large circle opened up on the 11th March 1991 with the trip to Marlay Park, and has just been completed on the 13th May 1991 with the final assemblage of the fabric printed banner executed by my fifth year pupils of Colaiste Eanna, Ballyroan Road, Dublin 16. But I feel that this circle could have been more rounded if I had approached the project differently. Firstly, I feel that the project could have begun sooner therefore it would have left more time for experimentation by the group if different techniques in fabric printing processes. Secondly, we could have formed a three dimensional solution to the project so as to compare with the two dimensional solution which would encourage pupils to set alternate solutions while working from the one source.



But overall, even though there were hic-cups, I feel the paper stencil project worked well. It gave a foundation to be expanded upon next year in the are of fabric printing using a different approach or indeed three dimensionally through the processes of day relief panels, large three dimensional instillation or an art metalwork solution.

Art is a dynamic and unifying activity, with great potential for the education of children. The process of drawing, painting or constructing is a complex one in which the pupil brings together diverse elements of his experience to make a new and meaningful whole. In the process of selecting, interrupting and reforming these elements, he has given us more than a picture or a sculpture, he has given us a part of himself, how he thinks, how he feels and how he sees, and we as educators in the field of art must provide art experiences that are intellectually sound, personally rewarding and most of all relevant to their lives.

COMMISSION

1911

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MEMORANDUM

1954

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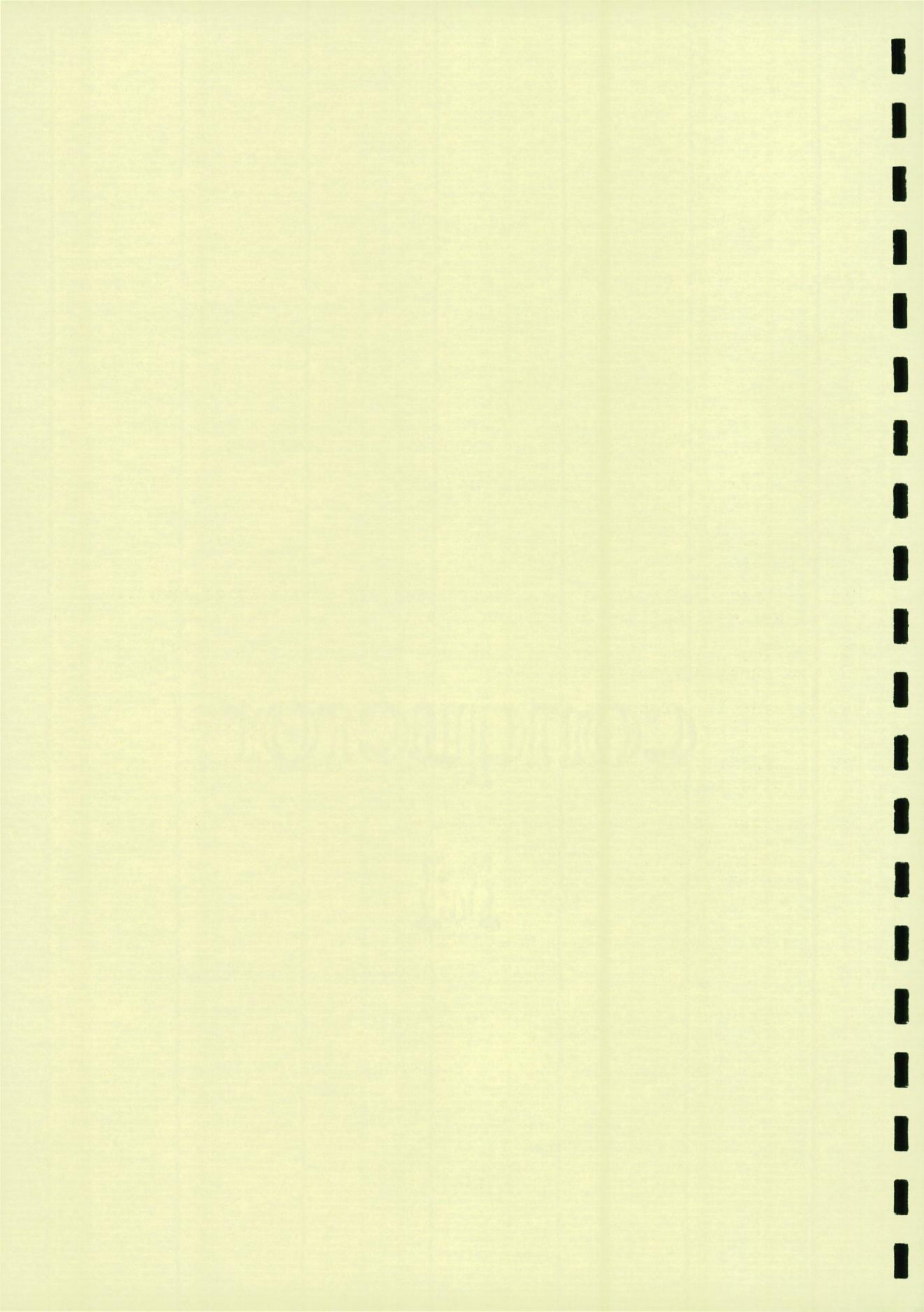
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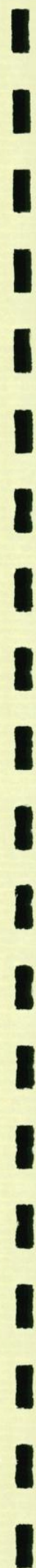
Fig (D) - Thematic Slide Presentation

I would also like to include here the audio-visual presentation I have done for my art history section of the Dip., A.D.T. this year. I have used several of these artists and their work on trees this term with my fifth year pupils and I have also dealt with the symbolic meanings of the tree in some of these different works (Fig D).



COMMISSIONER

1912



INTRODUCTION

Much of the symbolism of the cross is shared with the tree, the one often standing for the other. Both are universal symbols represented the axis of the world. The tree is not only a world axis but a world image, it personifies the whole of the manifest world. Its roots are the whole of the earth, in contact with the underworld and the waters and so can draw upon the powers of both. The trunk grows into the light and into the world of line and records time by adding a ring to its growth each year. From the trunk the branches spread out and the oneness of the trunk becomes the many, the multiplicity and differentiation of the world of form. At the same time the branches spread upwards and heavenwards and give access to the solar powers to the realm of the Sky Gods making it symbolically possible for man to climb up to and communicate with the heavens. Climbing is always symbolic of the aspiration to reach higher realms either to conquer some power to bring it back to earth, or to gain some magical knowledge or to attain wisdom.

1. Vase - black amphorc 520 B.C. (Greek).

This is one of the earliest depictions of the tree is on this Greek vase made in Athens in 520B.C.

COMPTON

1912

It is black figured amphora showing an alive harvest. Two bearded men beat the tree with long poles, while a youth crouches to gather the fallen fruit into a basket. A second youth has climbed the tree to beat the top most branches with a short stick.

Greek potters, constantly refined the shape of their famous vases and pitchers. These vessels had to be not only beautifully proportioned to please the eye but comfortable to handle. The decoration had to be arranged to suit the shape.

These painted vessels are generally called vases, although they were intended more often to hold wine or oil than flowers. The painting of these vessels developed into an important industry in Athens, and the humble carftsman employed in these workshops.

The trees are dealt with very simplicity on this vessel with the main emphasis of composition mainly on the figures and the geometric and almost foral elements on the bottom. Although the branches on top seem to be lead upwards and curve around towards the top.

2. The Baptism of Christ 1440 - Piero della Francesca.

The same maybe said of tree in the Baptism of Christ done by Piero della Francesca two thousand years later in 1440. Here the tree also

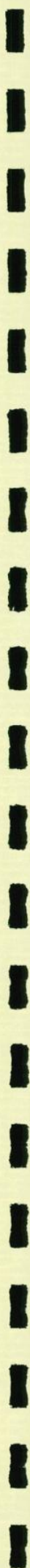
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is an olive tree but it take almost precedence over the figures in the foreground. The tree here seems to be protraited in symbolic terms as the Tree of Life - which signifies regeneration and a return to the state of primordial perfection. It is the tree of unity and transcends both good and evil which would also reflect on the composition of the Baptism of Christ. Christ is being baptized by John the Baptist, thus by being baptized, he is regenerated in god and its a return to the state of primordial perfection.

3. "Luminous Green" 1840 - John Constable.

Thus if we move forward onto early 19th century 400 hundred years later and to the age of Romanticism, we see the tree depicted in John Constables painting "Luminous Green" as the central focal point. So far during the centuries landscape painting had been looked upon as a minor branch of art, but during the 19th Century this was to all change, great artist saw it as their purpose in life to raise this type of painting to a new dignity.

Constable was a man who loved nature and who loved painting nature. He spent a great deal of his life out of doors observing nature and doing sketches. Constable had a rather scientific approach to applying colour to a painting. He had discovered a secret which certain painters of the past, the Venetians, El Greco, Goya had also



COMMUNICATION

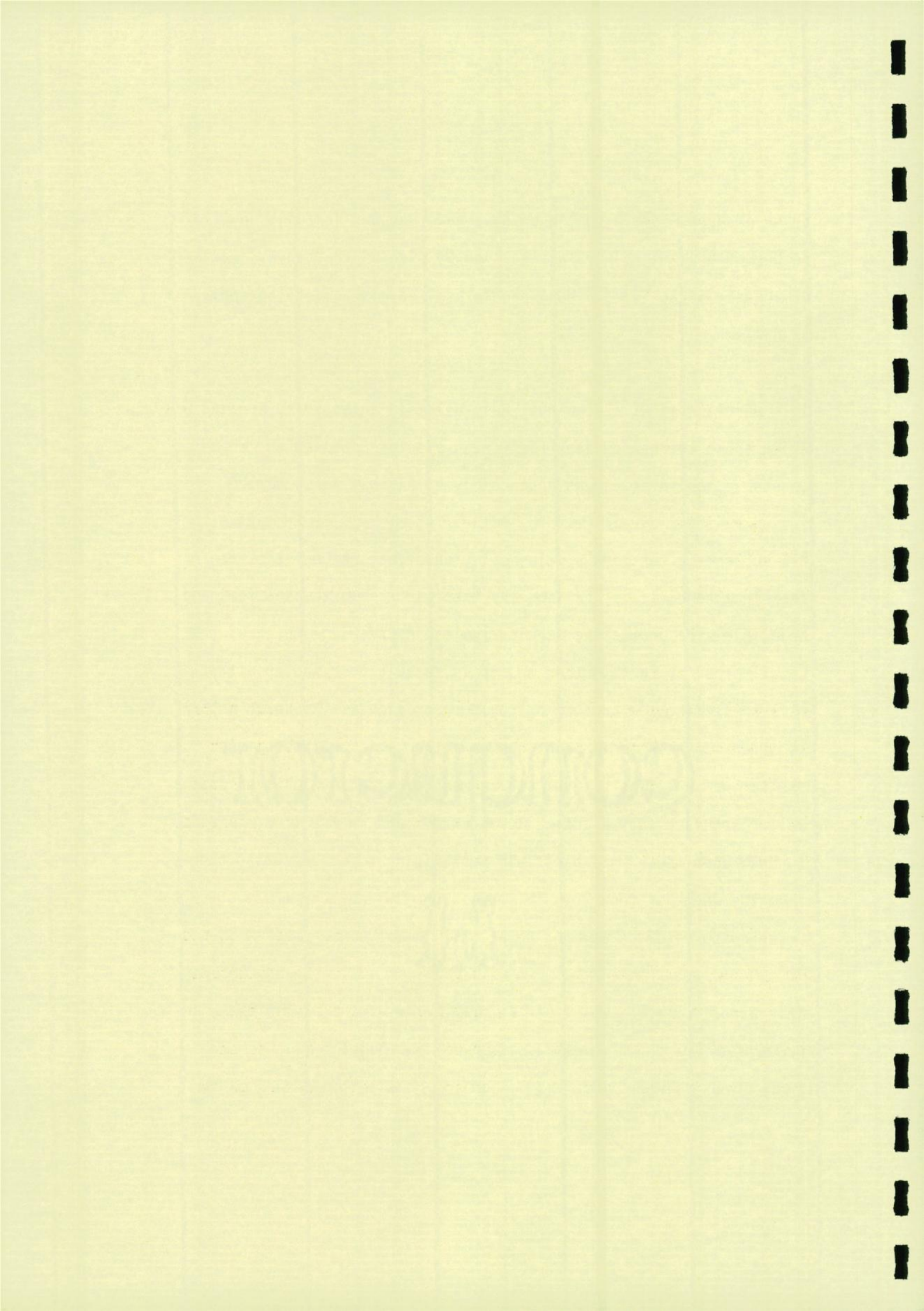
1971

stumbled upon, namely that when an area of colour is built up of a number of unmixed colours placed side by side on the canvas, maximum luminosity is achieved. Many people admired his ability to apply colour so well.

This painting is of a view near East Berghold in Suffolk, England which shows the narrow lane (left hand side of composition) which Constable took everyday as a schoolboy on his way to Dedham.

His subject matter is a simple depiction of nature, but the tree on the right hand side symbolizes the tree, in the world as a feminine principle, the protecting, sheltering and nourishing aspect of the Great Mother or Earth Mother and it is largely from the tree that this sheltering and protection could be provided. The Earth Mother is often represented in paintings as a tree - it depicts not only the sheltering qualities but the nourishment provided by its fruits as well. She is always a controller of water and in the tree, is able to draw upon those in exhaustible fertilizing force and bring them up from the depth of the earth to nourish growth and bear fruit so assuring survival of man and beast.

This aspect of trees was to be expanded upon some 50 years later by a group painters known as the Impressionists. The French Impressionists were influenced by a realistic movement in painting



which took place during 19th Century and by the specific study of light and colour and the way they splashed colour and light over their canvases with an enthusiasm never before seen in painting. The Impressionists favoured compositions that seemed informal and spontaneous. they work rapidly and preferred to work out of doors in the natural light. The main figure to instigate these objectives was Camille Pissarro.

4. The Kitchen with Trees in Flower in Pontoise 1877 - Camille Pissarro.

He said of nature "One must always have only one master-nature" and "she is the one always to be consulted."

In his kitchen garden with trees in flower Pontoise painted in 1877 it demonstrates the early stages of an approach to painting with which he was to wrestle with for his remaining years. The structure for the composition of his painting is one developed and explored by Pissarro mainly at the end of the 1870's.

Through a screen of trees which makes an interesting pattern in the foreground, the shapes of houses can be glimpsed in the background and other members of the Impressionist group were drawn to the abstract pattern made on the surface of the painting by a screen of trees, drawing the eye of the viewer into its depths and on to the



COMPTON

1952

scene beyond.

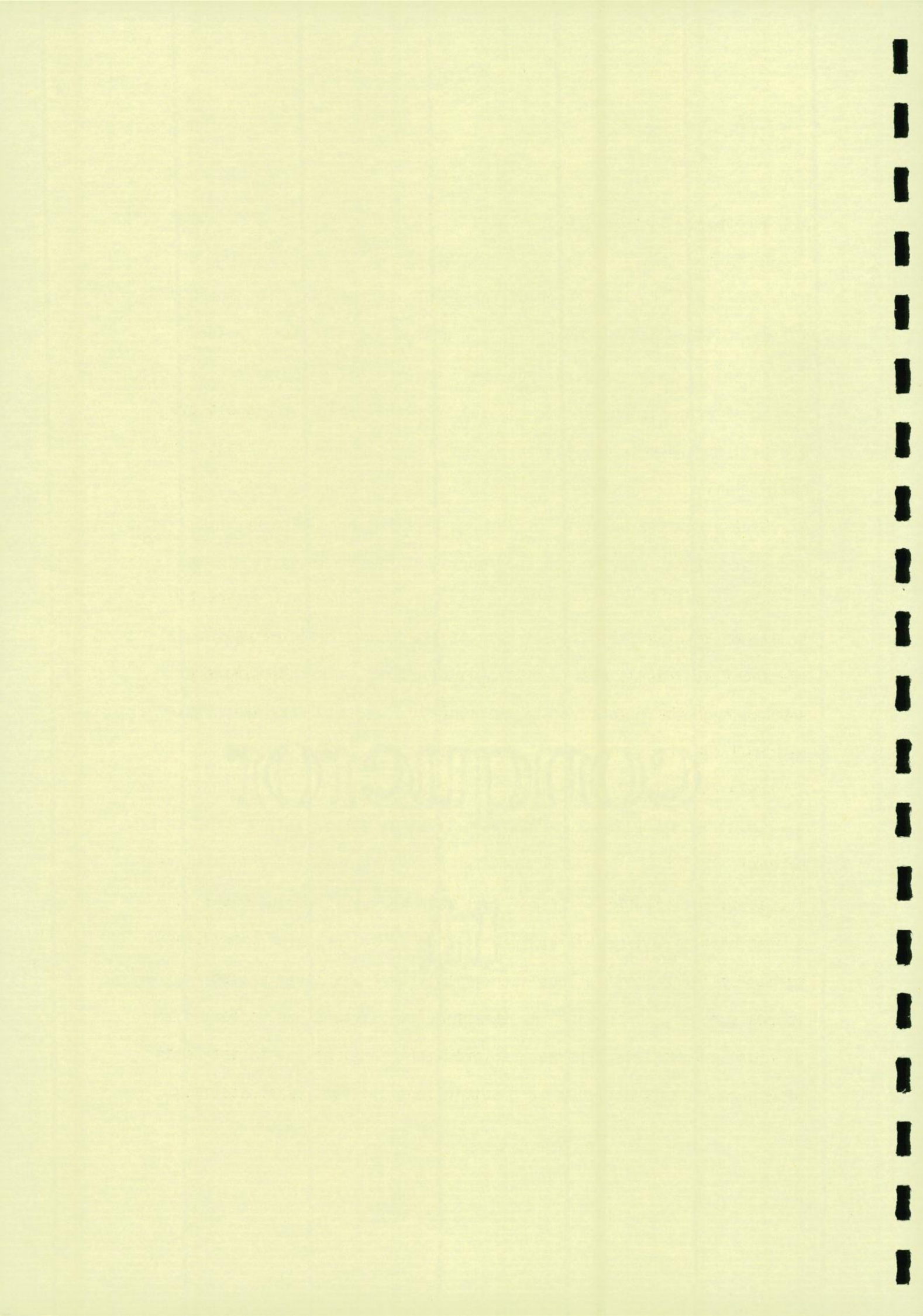
Pissarro's palette at the end of the 1870's narrows down perceptibly all the colours become purer. Yellow ochre is particularly evident in the paintings of this period. Here he emphasizes the historical swathe of ochre colour in the blossom, the shelters of the house over the hill and also in the sky in places quite strongly.

Focusing in on the build up of the brushstrokes that make up the flowering fruit tree, we can only marvel at the build up of colour.

In the background the buildings are skilfully contrived with a small brush with carefully observed strokes of colour. The paint however is smoothed out in contrast to the flurry of impasto dabs which make up the trees.

5. Detail of the kitchen garden with trees in flower 1877.

Focusing in on the brushstrokes that make up the flowering fruit trees, we can only marvel at the build up of colour. Individual strokes of colour, sometimes surprisingly pure are superimposed mainly wet in wet. Notice how this time the strokes are applied from all directions. Pissarro has captured the beauty of the blossom with what appears to be pure white. But in fact the dabs of white are



rarely left pure as they are applied wet in wet so that the paint merges to some extent with the colour beneath.

6. The last leaves of Autumn 1884 - Alfred Sisley.

Another artist painting around this time in France is Alfred Sisley, although of English nationality, born in Paris of English parents, he would always be known as the Englishman who has become one of us by his fellow Impressionists.

In this composition entitled "The last leaves of Autumn", we see the trees on the right hand side portrayed as Earth Mother yet again. In the short strokes of juxtaposed colour under an almost flaming sky, seen through the rust colours leaves of the trees, Sisley has captured the charm and poetry of France.

7. Apple Gathering in Quiniperte 1884 Walter Osbourne.

Up until this time in Ireland the mid 19th Century many Irish artists looked to England for their training or their livelihood. But in the second half of the 19th Century and early 20th Century an increasing number of Irish artists came to France to study with the French Impressionists. One of the first was Walter Osbourne and this painting executed in 1883 was painted while Osbourne was in the North of France. It is called Apple Gathering Quiniperte, Osbourne's much

© 1950

1950

loved Breton rural scene shows two girls in traditional costume gathering apples in the orchard with the roof tops of Quiniperte behind. The tree positioned in the foreground with outstretched arm leaning out of canvas seems almost to bend under the heaviness of the fruit. But towards the other work going on during this time Osbourne does not seem to have been influenced by the new style of painting - "impressionism" unlike Pissarro whom we have just looked at and Sisley, he seems to have an almost classic realist approach to painting and unaware of the new movement that was in Vogue.

8. Lezavier, Finistere - Roderic d' Connor 1980.

But the work of Roderic d' Connor on the other hand, executed around ten years after Osbourne seems to indicate an awareness of many of the exciting new discoveries being made by the French painters of this period. This painting is called Lezaerier, Finistere and his paint is applied in broad stokes reminiscent of the Impressionists, and his colours, bright pinks, reds, purples, contrasting with blues and greens suggest the painting of someone like Van Gogh or Monet.

If one looks at these trees from a distance one perceives the colours as basic browns and greens but upon closer inspection one can ascertain the many different colours attributing to the composition. The barks of the trunks of the trees for instance are executed in

REPRODUCED FROM THE
ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

1954

mauves, and pinks and are cleverly laid side by side so as to give the impression of almost brown tone.

Through the trees we glimpse the sunlight farmhouse and glowing sky. But there is also a sense of pattern, in the uprights of trees and horizontal layers of flowers and field, acres of light and shadow and in the overall surface texture of brushstrokes. The important elements in the composition of d'Connors are the trees again referral back to the symbolism of trees to man, the tree can take messages skywards and symbol of regeneration and resurrection. This is the dying to live principle which the evergreen trees in composition may also signify immortality and ever lasting life.

9. The Poplar series Epte - Claude Monet, 1890.

Now in complete contrast to d'Connors work on trees we look at the tree series executed by Claude Monet also in the 1890's.

Claude Monet was the central figure in the Impressionist movement, and one whose subject matter was directly taken from life, painting out of doors. His painting carry a peculiar magic, and this tree series of 1890's is seen as Monet's linear period in painting. The compositions are generally two types.

COMPTON

The first is a vertical pattern of bans created by the trunks opposed to the single horizontal of the riverbank usually placed low on the canvas with the reflections carrying the line of trunks right down through the horizontal, here the tree is almost represented symbolically by a poster notched pole and is a world axis which joins heaven and earth and yet hold them apart.

10. "Populars" (Autumn) - 1890 - Claude Monet.

The second takes the form of a single sweeping zig-zags of foliage set against the sometimes broken verticals of the tree trunks. Here again the river bank provides a firm horizontal and both foliage and tree trunks are continued in reflection. Here the symbolism of the tree seems to be that of communication at two levels interaction between Earth Mother and that of tree of life.

11. Drawing of Tree - 1914, Piet Mondrian

Some twenty years later in early 20th Century the tree again began to take on a different form for the painter Piet Mondrain. His observational work on trees was transcended in cubinistic form on canvas.

72. The Grey Tree - Piet Mondrian 1914.

Mondrian's 'Grey Tree' the paint is treated in a expressive fashion and it also displays a powerful urge towards simplification of the contours in order to achieve greater expression of the tremors with the actual linear pattern. Mondrian energetically painting, wiping lines away, or half away emphasizing others, the result being almost two structural layers, hardly any distance apart. The structure of a tree to Mondrian is hierarchial, subordinating, the structure of the branches cannot be seen in pictorial terms as separate from the rest of the tree. In other words, the originically developed structure of a tree still basically defines the structure of the surface.

These two views of Mondrian's work for me seem to show a move towards the later abstraction movement of early 20th century and a basic understanding of how an artist used the tree to transcend from literal interruption to more simplistic method of painting.

13. 'Trees in Hollywood' - 1990. Sean McSweeney.

14. 'Bogland Trees' - 1990. Sean McSweeney.

The final works we will look at are those of Sean McSweeney, an Irish painter from Sligo painting trees in the present day. The two slides chosen are of works executed in 1990 by the artist.

GEORGETOWN

18

When McSweeney was forming his style Abstract Expressionism was the dominant movement and while he is not an abstract painter, it is obvious that his brushwork and pictorial rhythms approach it. He is a great painter of trees, as seen by this work, "Trees in Hollywood" and says of trees "that they offer a range of colours, shapes and lines whether at rest or in movement singly or in the mass great possibilities. They can be the measuring rod of a landscape, or they can dissolve into a tonal symphony of the most generalized kind".

As a colourist he is in fact B. Yeats tradition, and often builds his contrasts and/or harmonies around combinations of yellow, green and blue and he is not afraid of effects which other painters would consider too obvious or too sweet. He can also blend tones skilfully or obtain flecked, Impressionist effects but mostly he uses colours pure, which heightens the emotional directness. He also has a subtle feeling for light.

And so to end with just one quotation of trees:

And so from a single see, has grown the great tree with its deep roots, the massive trunk, its branches and innumerable leaves, flowers and fruits. It is thus symbolically an image of the universe, the many growing out of the one diversity, out of unity and the return to unity in the seed followed by the re-enactment of the whole cycle of birth-death and re-birth.

