

**THE LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY  
TWENTIETH CENTURY ARTISTS:  
“MANIPULATOR OR MANIPULATED?”**

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	PAGE
<u>CHAPTER 1</u>	
1.1 Outline of Study.	p 1
<u>CHAPTER 2</u>	
2. Introduction.	p 2
2.1 What is meant by manipulation.	
2.2 The artists role in a manipulated world.	
2.3 Brief historical and political background of periods dealt with.	
<u>CHAPTER 3</u>	
3. Vincent van Gogh: "Manipulated by the norms of society".	p 16-
3.1 Background with special reference to religious norms and pressures.	
3.2 Social breakdown and rejection.	
<u>CHAPTER 4</u>	
4. Edvard Munch: "Makes use of his personal tragedy to manipulate his viewer".	p 34-
4.1 Background.	
4.2 Religious breakdown.	
4.3 Social rejection.	
<u>CHAPTER 5</u>	
5. Käthe Kollwitz: "Manipulated by social poverty".	p 47-
5.1 Background.	
5.2 Social involvment.	
<u>CHAPTER 6</u>	
6. Egon Schiele: "Political stress manipulating his work".	p 58-7
6.1 Background.	
6.2 Political background.	
6.3 Personal interpretation of breakdown in society.	
<u>CHAPTER 7</u>	
7. George Grosz: "Manipulator of political and war art".	p 72-
7.1 Background.	
7.2 Political involvment.	

7.3 Art as a platform to speak.

CHAPTER 8

Discussion of candidates practical work with reference to the theoretical influence on the candidates work of the artists discussed. p 80-108

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion. p 109

CHAPTER 10

Bibliography. p 110-113

CHAPTER 11

Photo Index. p 114-122

## NOTES ON OUTLINE OF STUDY

1. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century artists, "Manipulator or Manipulated?"

2. Method of research.

### 2.1 Reference System

The candidate makes use of the shortened Harvard system.

In the bibliography the sources are arranged alphabetically according to the author, and numbered. In the text the candidate refers to the number of the source with the page number next to it. Example: (6:9) refers to source number and page 9 of that specific source. Footnotes are therefore eliminated.

### 3. Visual Material

All photographs are numbered and are referred to in the text. For example (vide 8) refers to photo number 8.

The candidate has made use of various sources to obtain the required information.

### 4. Sources

A. Visual aids: Videos, exhibitions, and photographic portfolios.

B. Available literature on subject.

C. Reference literature which was made available.

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

### 1.2.1 What is meant by manipulation?

"We are like meat, hung up, sold, bought, manipulated in every way possible.(22.22)

Manipulation of mankind can be compared to a marionette theatre where the human becomes controlled by fellow humans, situations and everyday circumstances.

"Man has employed controlling devices to maintain a position of superiority over his fellow man." (31.294) For centuries man has often tried to reshape people's thinking into a line of thought in politics, religion, economics and morals in order to gain maximum benefit for himself. The irony of this manipulation is that even the man at the top is often controlled. This can be seen in the case of Benito Mussolini (1883 - 1945). A journalist and ex-army corporal who took over the Italian Government in October 1922, he set up a fascist Grand Council with himself as President and ruled as dictator calling himself Il Duce (the leader). He ruthlessly crushed his opponents using imprisonments, torture and banishment as weapons to bolster his power. Relentless as his measures were, he instilled national pride, created confidence and increased prosperity. Mussolini dreamed of a revived Roman Empire after the conquest of Ethiopia in 1936 and the use of Spain as the proving ground for his land and air forces. He allied his own country with Germany and Japan which both had their own dictators. Adolf Hitler in Germany dominated Mussolini and made full use of his participation during the war. Mussolini adhered to Hitler's every beck and call. After war was declared on the United States, Italy was brought to the brink of ruin and Mussolini was forced to resign. This did not move Hitler. The collapse of Germany and Hitler at the end of the war saw the execution of Mussolini by the Italian Partisans. "The Manipulator being Manipulated".

No matter what a man's job is, from doctor to bus driver, every moment of his life will be spent as a cog in a huge and sometimes pitiless system. This can

be seen in Third World countries like the Communist-controlled African States. Here economic growth ceases to exist and starvation becomes a major drawback. Ethiopia is an example of this system which can exploit the human race to its dying nation.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918) Soviet author and 1970 Nobel Prize winner in Literature had his two major novels, "Cancer Ward" and "The First Ward" banned because of their anti-soviet society ideals. He wrote in his book "Cancer Ward": "As every man goes through life he fills in a number of forms for the record, each containing a number of questions. There are thus hundreds of little threads radiating from every man, millions of threads in all. Each man permanently aware of his own invisible threads naturally develops a respect for the people who manipulate the threads" (31.483).

Over the centuries man has portrayed an elaborate web controlled by outside stimuli. Most peoples' identities are in large part wrapped up in what they use, own, control and consume. "Keeping up with the Joneses", that favourite advertising theme, works because people really believe that to own more is to be more. Individual humans are so irresponsible, aggressive, ego-driven and conceited that they need an absolute monarch to control their lives. One has only to look back at the turn of the century and see what the appointed heads of countries managed to produce. Europe boasts the playground for the manipulators of two world wars and the destruction of numerous countries. This has not put an end to the ideals of war. The cold war of the post-war years still hangs like a bleak cloud over the world in the eighties, with its participating "Super Powers" forever planning their next move. The political situation has also seen its toll of great "controllers" playing with their countries' future. Marxism and Fascism have a dominant role in European Politics. The artist being part of the mass changes of politics must have found that this affected his work and life.

### 1.2.2. THE ARTIST'S PART IN THE WORLD OF MANIPULATION

The rules, theories, ideologies and philosophies of society have caused the artist to represent and react against man's manipulation, becoming "manipulator, or manipulated" himself.

Artists form part of the norms and rules of society no matter how hard they try to remove themselves from it. Therefore a certain amount of society's norms must surely influence their work. The fear of being rejected by society is considerable. Manet fell prey to this when the Salon Des Refusés declined his painting "Le Dejeuner Sur L'Herbe". A hostile critic of the painting said, "This is a young man's practical joke, a shameful open sore" (32.760). Manet suffered through his career the hostility of the critics as surrogates of the public. He never understood their animosity, and often sought their approval. By painting works like "Boating" 1874 a more acceptable painting and one of Manet's boldest open-air-scenes.

The viewpoints of major schools of Psychology and Philosophy all have certain links. The artist has been strongly made aware of the role society plays in his personal life and that there are negative as well as positive aspects in human nature. Some of the negative viewpoints which the Psychologists and Philosophers have made are:

1. Freud: Man is evil by nature, driven by biologically rooted instincts, particularly sex and aggression, which are merely by the conventions of society. (29.450)
2. Ethologists (Lorenz); man is innately evil in the sense that he is born with a need to aggress against others of his own species. (29.450)
3. Orthomolecular psychiatrists (Newbold) man would like to control and manipulate his fellow human. (29.450)

While the academics argued as to who thought man was good or bad, the artists used their own ideas on the subject and stated their viewpoints either literally or visibly in works of art. The Romanticist Henri Rousseau felt that man

possesses a natural goodness from birth and any evil acts that are committed by men are caused by detrimental social conditions rather than anything inherent in man.

Freud also felt that the artist, like his fellow man, is controlled by instinctive, biological drives (sex, hunger, elimination, and the like). All human behaviour is merely a product of compromises between these instinctual needs and the conflicting demands of society. Instinctual drives often operate at the subconscious level so that man is not only controlled but is often unaware of his control. This Freud directs particularly at the artist who was sometimes unaware that he was being manipulated, and who would portray this in his work through his subconscious. The expressionist artists were targets of this subconscious manipulation. Their personal feelings towards something or their opinions were often portrayed on canvas expressing more than the reality. Edvard Munch and Käthe Kollwitz showed beyond the reality of death that their work portrayed an inner pain which could be brought out in their art.

The feeling to create is so deep-rooted that artists will continue as long as human society exists. The only way to destroy art is to destroy society itself. This is one reason why avant-garde artists often seem to campaign not only against the existing social order, but also against the continuing existence of social organisms.

The artist found, after the romantic period, that a work of art was no longer a reproduction of definition of the (palatable) world but a new exploration of visible and experienced reality. The artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were unlike the renaissance painters who worked for a set purpose, i.e. either for the church or patrons of the arts. The modern painters in turn painted more for their own emotional purposes, despite the rejection and criticism. Paul Gauguin (1843 - 1903), who painted during the Post Impressionist period, gave up his Western life style to experience and paint the

primitive island life of Martinique and Tahiti. His work was not popular, with the result he and his family were reduced to poverty. Nonetheless, he did not abandon his painting, for Gauguin felt that, in spite of ridicule and neglect, he was called to be a great artist.

A work of art belongs to its time, and each age has its own kind of art. It was created under certain circumstances in a particular cultural context, serving a definite purpose. Too often art has been treated as existing in a detached realm. This is seen in the work of Vincent van Gogh (1857 - 1890), a contemporary of Gauguin, who managed to sell only one painting during his life because his work was too advanced for the public to understand. Although he used everyday themes, his techniques did not appeal to the buyers of his time. The misjudgement of formalist criticism, however, has clearly revealed that art cannot be separated from the thoughts and ideas of its time, from political and social concerns during the period in which the artist lived and executed his art. "Yet in spite of this, it is society which teaches us to interpret art. This is at least as true as the contrary proposition, which is that art teaches us to interpret and understand society". (4:56)

Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939) the German psychoanalyst of the nineteenth and early twentieth century states, "The artist can relate to the way in which a child thinks and plays, the artist can become part of the fantasy dream world of a child and therefore can see the same interior life structure of his fellow man. The artist becomes the manipulator as well as the manipulated" (11.21). The expressionist artists of the late nineteenth century were fond of applying this statement by showing their emotions in their work. By doing this they controlled the emotions of the viewer. Edvard Munch (1863 - 1944) as expressionist painter, used the tragedy of his family's death, which haunted him throughout his life, and his bitterness against war and suffering to elicit a certain sympathy from the viewer. Examples of this are to be seen in "Inheritance" (1899) and "The Deathbed" (1893). Both works portray the suffering of death. The

mourning atmosphere dominates the paintings, causing the viewer to be part of this melancholic mood.

Historians, psychologists and anthropologists amongst others, try to prove how art and society interact. They have shown how culture affects the individual, manipulating and controlling him. The most intimate detail of experience is how it has affected the artists work, especially over a period of endless change in society. Artists don't always reproduce an actual event, rather they add their own emotional responses, which are sometimes brutal and vulgar, reflecting humanity in its rawness. This is found in the work of Egon Schiele (1890-1918), his distorted nude study, "Nude black-haired girl", and his horrific painting of "Eduard Kosmack" 1910 (Vide 1).

Even exaggeration becomes reality once exposed on canvas and in this way the artist creates a world for himself. This world that does not always exist, about the impossibilities defying the laws of gravity and science try to stun the viewer. Yet beyond all this, the seed of the real world is painted and remains the starting point. Salvador Dali (1904) makes use of fantasy and reality in his surrealist painting, "The Face of Mae West" (1934) and "Shirley Temple, the youngest sacred monster of the cinema," (1939) (Vide 3). Both these paintings are a mixture of reality and the fantasy dream world in which Dali lives and works.

The candidate's object in this dissertation will be to show to what extent specific artists have been manipulated by incidents and activities which have affected their personal lives, as well as how they have, by means of their creations, manipulated society, thus becoming manipulators.

### 1.3 BRIEF HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF PERIODS DEALT WITH: (1848-1945)

The nineteenth century was a complex period, and contemporary events are always reflected in changes of thought and aesthetic feeling. The 1848 revolution marked the end of a regime and the end of a way of life, whose knell had already

been sounded sixty years earlier in the French Revolution of 1789. This time, the whole civilisation of Western Europe was involved in the catastrophe. Socialism became the adopted policy of many Europeans. The Socialists held power for a few months, during which universal adult suffrage became established. This was known as the July monarchy.(1848)

During the previous twenty years the economic structure of life had been changing. Numerous machines had been invented and were to become the whole basis of industry, among these being the first passenger train of 1830. The Atlantic shipping line was opened at the same time that steamships began to replace the sail. Other inventions also took place between 1835 and 1855. They were the telephone, telegram and the postage stamp. As industry became revolutionised so it caused repercussions in the national economy and everyday life. Within a short time a new civilization was born, but not without upheavals.

In this period many scientific as well as philosophic ideas developed. Auguste Comte (1798 - 1857) was a French philosopher who developed theories on "Positivism" which he set out in his book "Cours De Philosophie positive," had an enormous influence on French and European thought. He was followed by Paul Littré (1801 - 1881) French author and philosopher also concerned with positivist theories. His finest work "Dictionnaire De Langue Francaïse" only gained recognition after the fall of Napoleon III. Joseph Renan (1823 - 1892) French historian and philosopher during this period did research for his "L' Avenir De La Science". From then on the theory of progress took shape. The new society was marked by constant transformations as invention followed invention, all of which were based on scientific observation of fact. Man now controlled his own destiny and could reshape, rearrange or turn his new tools to his own purposes. He no longer sought refuge from an unchanging world of ideas and dreams. Instead he faced reality and, in making use of it, developed ambitions and hopes. This was probably the wish of all, "The unmanipulated man" (21.146).

At first the conservative elements refused to recognise the change of the new order of things, and they stiffened their attitude both in politics and in art. Art classicism led to an official academic style. This "ideal" manipulation was based on the old order of strict set rules, but this did not last as the industrial civilisation took over. The "ideal" of classicism could only be approached by a certain self denial and by means of great effort.

Napoleon's expansion (1810) had brought comparable aesthetic desires in its wake. France found its morale had become elated by victories and conquests, but now it found itself in "straight jackets of bourgeois practical interests with their cramped outlook and their quest of money" (21:146). The aesthetic and intellectual spirit could find no outlet under the materialism of the Restoration and the July monarchy. The artists felt that the manipulation of political power was restricting their creativity. Theophile Gautier (1811-1876) was a French poet and journalist who explored the macabre side of life, in his "Histoire Du Romantisme" containing a personal recollection, Gautier wrote that what the artist longed for was the nostalgia of the past, "They were the day, of which we are the evening and perhaps the Night!"(21:146). The creative spirit showed the anguish of being thrown into the middle of this manipulative society where the idea of God had been eclipsed and where the most abject sensualism replaced everything spiritual. The whole of Europe was in this plight. The aristocracy and the belief in ideal values had disappeared. The people, whose fury in the past had risen to the accomplishment of the revolution, were now dulled and enslaved. They thought that there would be a fulfilment of ambitions (which never developed) and they were suddenly thrown back into a narrower channel than ever. Their only outlet was their dreams and free play of imagination. This was their most effective means of flight from present reality. Artists turned, for subjects, to the world of fiction and chose themes out of the past or from far off lands or they let their fantasy take over. This, however, did not last, just as the everyday life in the past could be artificially

extended.

The artist finally had to accept the manipulation pressure of the times, and in the nineteenth century this led in the opposite direction, back to the "real" which imposed itself and its rule. There was no other possible future for the new phase upon which humanity had embarked. The artist had to learn to communicate with the "real". The Barbizon school in France (1850) adapted their controlled art into the aesthetic mood of the period.

Louis Napoleon re-established the empire after the short period of the Second Republic (1848 - 1852). Napoleon III tried to regain international prestige for France. His reign was a fortunate one for France. Domestic affairs, industry, commerce and banking flourished. The Railways and naval systems were improved. Europe's major enterprise was the Suez Canal built by Ferdinand de Lesseps in 1869.

Trade expanded as a result of sound commercial treaties being made with England and other countries. Towns soon increased in size and population. Europe was at peace and during 1867 the international exhibition was held as a tribute to this peace and prosperity.

In 1870, Otto von Bismarck (1815 - 1898) was the key man in Prussian politics and in Germany. Bismarck's aim was to complete the unification of Germany. This was achieved in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian war which resulted in the defeat of the French. Wilhelm I was crowned emperor. Germany became economically strong as well as the strongest power in Europe during 1870 - 1914. This made the rest of Europe uneasy.

Socialism in Art started to dominate and artists were more aware of the political and everyday lives of people. A freedom of experimentation gave birth to numerous new ideas and schools of art. The impressionists started their experiments with light and colour as seen in "Mont Gare De Nord" (1900)

European power had reached its peak at the beginning of the twentieth century. Technical and intellectual discoveries stunned the world every day, examples being the discovery of X-rays, and Freud, who developed his theories on the psychological explanation of neurosis. The economic prosperity was made possible by greater and faster means of transport. Colonial domination helped establish the permanent hegemony of Europe. The financial stability remained unshaken by social disturbances such as strikes in England, France and Italy at the beginning of 1900.

The first World War (1914 - 1918) soon rocked the stability of Europe, not only politically, but socially, economically, morally and intellectually. The faith that science had projected in the nineteenth century was destroyed. Europe became a victim of social revolution due to the hardships of war and the Russian Revolution (1917).

America and Japan became economically stronger while Europe struggled through war-torn years. The Soviet Union also rose up as a world power. But neither Marxism, with its belief in material progress, nor Mussolini's Fascism which supported national socialism could develop as Nazi fanaticism under Hitler, took control of Europe between the first and second World War. Man expressed his loss of faith in fellow human values which had been accepted for two centuries. Man had used the art to portray this bewilderment as a release of emotion.

Hitler's Germany invaded Poland in 1939 and shocked the world, but this was only the start of a bitter onslaught involving Britain and France. Italy and Japan joined forces with Germany. America was dragged into war when the Japanese invaded Pearl Harbour in 1941.

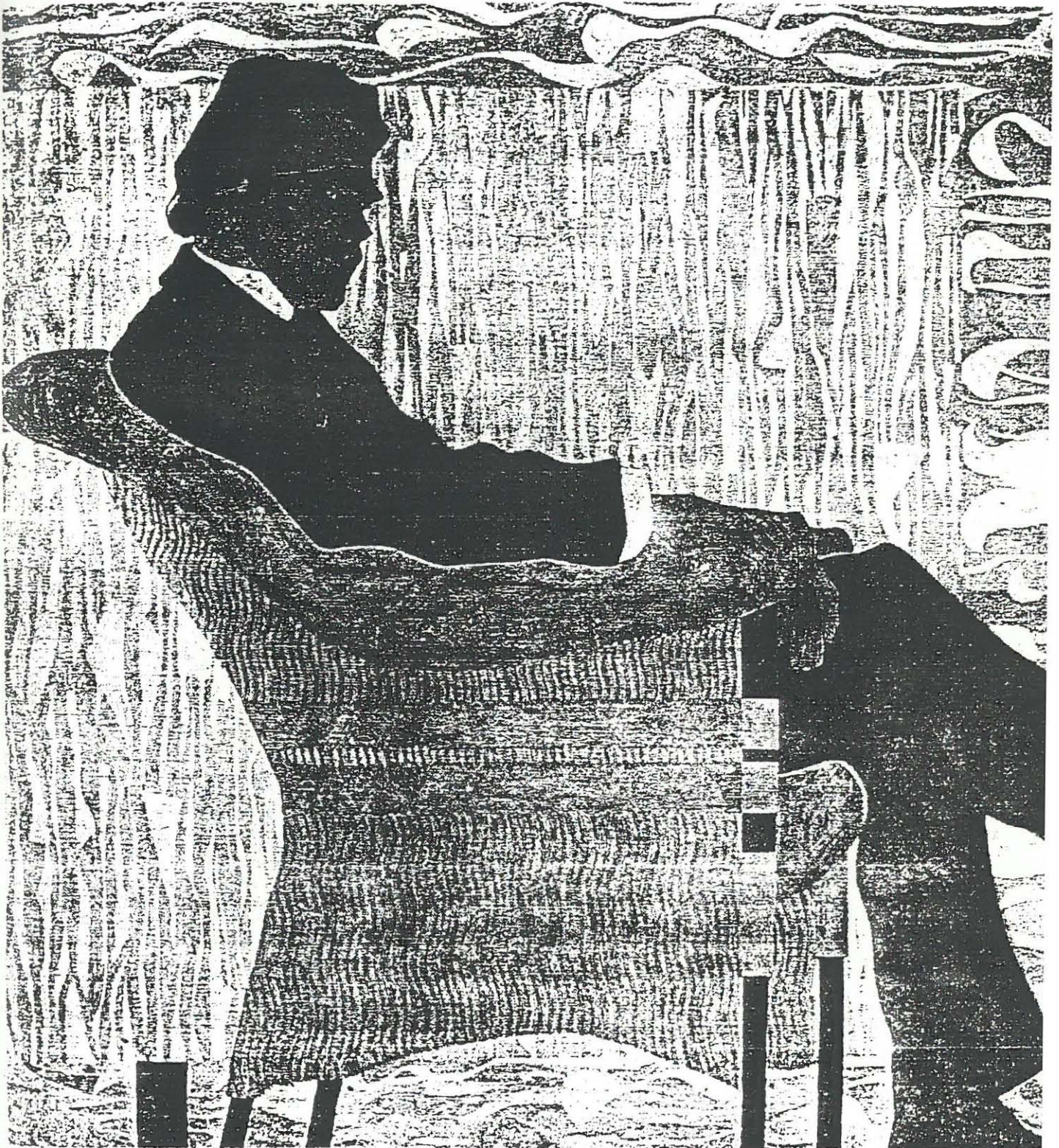
The Germans, who always kept at least two thirds of their military strength on the Russian front, had begun the invasion of Russia in June of 1941. The siege of Russia claimed more than half a million inhabitants. But after the defeat at

Stalingrad the Wehrmacht was in constant retreat from the Soviet forces, while in the Pacific the United States was victorious in a series of actions from the Aleutain Island to New Guinea. In July 1943 the Americans also landed troops in Sicily, followed by the invasion of Italy itself and a long, difficult struggle against the German forces. But finally, on June 4, 1944, Rome was liberated, and two days later General Eisenhower landed a massive Allied force of men and material on the beaches of Normandy. Certain cities were now bombed day and night, and resistance against the Nazi rulers increased throughout occupied Europe, while inside Germany millions (mostly Jews and Russian war prisoners) were tortured and killed in death camps.

In August 1944 Paris was liberated, and after the battle of the Bulge, in Belgium, which proved to be the last gasp of German resistance, the Western Allies marched rapidly into Germany, while the Red Army swept in from the east. After the brief but devastating battle of Berlin, Hitler shot himself in his bunker as the Russians took over the city. Germany surrendered unconditionally on 7 May 1945 and on 14 August 1945 World War Two was officially concluded.

By the end of the War the Soviet Union had annexed a large part of Eastern Europe and dominated the rest. The United States was the dominant force in Western Europe. The continent was divided into two spheres of influence, and Winston Churchill announced that an "iron curtain" had descended across Europe. Western Europe began to recover with considerable speed, partly due to American financial aid under the Marshall Plan.

Throughout generations art has always played an important role in historical and political backgrounds with artists becoming manipulated or manipulators. "Art, always one of the first fields to assume a revolutionary aspect, has become a more or less vulgarised form of the major needs of modern man" (1.307).



Vide 1 Portrait of Eduard Kosmack  
Egon Schiele



Vide 2 The face of Mae West (Usable as a Surrealist Apartment)

Salvador Dalí



Vide 3 Shirley Temple, the Youngest Sacred Monster  
Salvador Dali

### CHAPTER 3

#### VINCENT VAN GOGH: (1853-1890) "MANIPULATED BY THE NORMS OF SOCIETY"

##### 3.1 BACKGROUND WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RELIGIOUS NORMS AND PRESSURE

Vincent William van Gogh (1853 -90) was born at Groot Zundert in northern Brabant, the oldest son of a protestant pastor.

Vincent Van Gogh was born into a family of protestants, a line of pastors in Holland. Theodorus Van Gogh was a clergyman in Zundert. He always wished to be the important "dominie" in Amsterdam or the Hague, just like his brother-in-law Reverend Stricker. Theodorus Van Gogh was indefatigable in the service of God, yet for twenty-five years he was almost forgotten in the little village of Zundert. He had not achieved national importance like his other five brothers, who, not only in the ministry but also in art dealing, became well known.

Vincent Van Gogh was brought up very strictly, dominated by the spirit of Calvin and his reformation. In his book on Calvin James Gothwyn wrote that John Calvin (1509 - 1564) was the founder of the system of Theology known as Calvinism. Calvin became dissatisfied with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. After studying law he decided to be part of the reformed faith. He published his great work "The Institutes of the Christian Religion". He travelled extensively, spreading the doctrines of the Protestants. He faced numerous serious controversies, while acting as dictator and administrator in Geneva in Switzerland. Here he accomplished the Protestant faith which was forced on the people. The political, social as well as individual lives of the people were controlled by him. The whole of Europe was introduced to the Protestant faith. Countries such as Italy, Spain and Portugal rejected it, while benelux countries such as Belgium accepted the changes. Calvin taught that every man is predestined to be saved or to be lost, that the saved are God's elect, and that man is regenerated through the influence of God's spirit. Out of Calvinism rose the doctrine of infant damnation, and it has been associated generally with a

severe and rigid concept of Christianity. Vincent van Gogh even felt this, "are we born to suffer for our father's sins"(9:32).?

Vincent had disappointed his father by not following in his footsteps as a pastor. When Van Gogh's love for Ursula Loyer was disastrous, Theodorus pushed the idea of religion as a career for his son. Vincent did not deny this choice and soon found comfort for his inner crisis in Humanitarian writings. The works of humanitarian writers Michelet 1788-1874, Beecher Stowe 1811-1896, Victor Hugo 1802-1885 and Charles Dickens 1812-1870 were among the few that had a lasting impression on Vincent.

The Bible became very important to him and he began to feel that he could achieve in the religious field. Van Gogh returned to England to fulfill his aim. He first worked at a school as a teacher. Here he lived in poverty as he was not "paid" a salary. He left the school and became an assistant to a Methodist Minister at Isleworth. Here Vincent became acquainted with the slums and destitution of Whitechapel in London. Soon he was given the opportunity to preach. He wrote to Theo "I feel drawn to religion. I want to bring solace to the poor" (9.24). His preaching did not last and soon he failed at his attempt to settle in London. Van Gogh moved back to Holland and studied Latin and Greek while working in a bookshop in Dordrecht. This was to obtain a place in the Theology Faculty of the University of Amsterdam, but he failed the entrance exam. Van Gogh did not give up. He joined an evangelical training college in Brussels in order to become a preacher. He attempted, in accordance with the teaching of the Gospel, to do something by means of active help and advice within the poverty-stricken community, and without finishing, he left for Borinage. In the Borinage district van Gogh found the people believed they had made a bad bargain with life and they needed the Word of God to comfort them. These heartaches were a reflection of the slums of London; the sordid poverty made him feel the need to help. "The thing I wanted to do all along was God's practical work ..... I never wanted a big church and to preach sermons. I belong with the humble and

suffering now"

Vincent described the poor as people with the deep-set melancholy eyes of the oppressed who cannot fight back. He saw himself preaching the virtues of poverty to the miners but he himself lived in comfort. Because he felt that he was telling lies, Vincent became as poor as those he consoled. He felt that this was the only way he could bring them the word of God. Vincent felt that it was God's ultimate test. If he failed, all the work he had done among the poor would be futile. He worked like a slave to help the poor. Despite this he was rejected by the religious world as he was not given a permanent post.

During his stay in Borinage Van Gogh declared that it was his mission to bring Christ into the poverty-stricken region. He alarmed his religious superiors by the unorthodox way he went about his work. He brought himself to the miners' level of destitution. His self-sacrifice caused astonishment. He was mocked by the people he cared for. Vincent Van Gogh dedicated his life to serving others and yet he did not live up to the set norms of the religious society of that time. He was dismissed for "irregular behavior" in 1876. Men of the church did not have to practice what they preached and this was a disgrace to the church.

Van Gogh felt that this pressure was not fair and that God did not exist. There was only misery, suffering cruelty, blindness and endless chaos. He felt like "A dead man walking in a deserted world wondering why he was still there" (15:42).

Throughout the rest of his life Van Gogh did not completely accept God as he had in the past, though he never denied religion. He felt some days that God still felt something for him even though he failed over and over again.

### 3.2 SOCIAL BREAKDOWN AND REJECTION

Vincent Van Gogh's earliest known rejection was his love for Ursula Loyer, but early studies of his child-art done by Professor Dr J.G. Van Gelder (16:51)

showed that he had felt parental rejection from an early age, maybe due to the fact that he was the second child with the name Vincent Willem, the first being a still-born baby. This could have formed seed which repressed his own development as a child, always living in his dead brother's place.

The church and religious life also rejected Van Gogh. His attempts to help the poverty-stricken and ill, failed. Even his brother Theo was rejected due to this failure. Van Gogh wrote to him "To a certain extent you have become a stanger" (9:59). Theo had not often contacted Van Gogh during this period (1879).

Social norms did not allow Van Gogh to do what he wanted. He was prey to continual conflicts and even the peasants mocked him. Art took the place of the religious life and the rural domestic life dominated by women seem to be evident in most of his earlier works. It could be that he felt closer to his mother than to his father, and also the Brabant women played an important part in Belgium life. The motherly figure gives a feeling of security and homeliness, "The Potato Eaters" (Vide 4) shows a triangle of women who dominate the painting while the men form part of the "soapy-green" environment. This work was possibly a symbol of his longing for family life.

Van Gogh always returned home when he fell prey to rejection, even though his father could not understand his son's motives. He insisted that he was violating all decent social conventions by leading the life of an artist. He also felt that Vincent should work to support himself and become a useful member of society and contribute his share to the world's work. Vincent realised that even his sisters found him an embarrassment and rejected his presence.

Kee Vos helped destroy even more of Vincent's disturbed life by rejecting his offer in marriage. He was insulted and denied love and he brought shame to his family. Theodorus Van Gogh saw life in terms of strict obedience and strict behaviour, he knew nothing of the vicissitudes of human temperament. "If his

son could not fit himself in a mould, then it was his son who was wrong, not the mould". (32:158).

Vincent had violated the norms of the Brabant society by his appearance, attitude to life and work. His decision to express what he had seen and experienced in Brabant and Etten had not impressed the masters of the Hague. His scenes of distorted coal miners with heavy torsos and character features were far from the anatomical correctness of Mauve, (1838 - 1888); Israëls, (1824 - 1911); Weissenbruch, (1811 - 1890) Members of the Antwerpen Academy. Van Gogh's peasants seemed very earthy and to be growing out of the soil they stood on e.g. "Peasant Woman Bending" (Vide 9). "Peasant Reaping" displays Vincent's feeling for the working class people, both figures are heavy and clumsy but show off their role in life as workers. The large hands and feet of Vincent's peasants portray their strength and that they are working class people. Van Gogh's use of line is that of a person who can relate to his subject matter. Van Gogh knew his subject as he grew up in these surroundings, in the Brabant area. Vincent captures a moment in the everyday life of the peasant hard at work, unspoilt by the luxuries of the rich.

Soon Vincent van Gogh tried unsuccessfully to display his link with the Hague School of Art. He attempted drawings of surroundings such as "The Lange Vijverberg in the Hague!" Portrayed a typical scene with people rushing by next to a canal, a total contrast to his portrayed peasant life. This work is far more refined and possibly would have been more acceptable.

Van Gogh could not accept the set rules of the artists of the Hague and once again poverty took first place in his life. Christene Hornik a pregnant prostitute who he loved, was scorned and rejected by his fellow artists and she only added to his hardship. His painting of Christine expressed his innermost suffering, "Sorrow" (Vide 10). This shows a woman from whom all the juice of life has been squeezed. Her seated naked body shows lines of hardship: her

gnarled overworked hands on her knees; the face is buried in the scraggy arms; thin hair covers her spine; while the bulbous breasts droop to meet her lean shanks, her flat feet are insecurely placed on the ground. Rejection could not be shown more bluntly than this by someone who was experiencing it throughout his own life. Vincent soon found that even "Sien" (Christine) rejected his way of life and that art was more important than earning enough to keep his adopted family.

Vincent again sought sympathy and moved home. The possibility was that his mother cared so much for him that this overshadowed his father's negative feelings towards him. Van Gogh painted rural life which he knew so well. His attitude to animals was as important as that towards his peasants and if he could be identified with an animal it would be a stray dog that was continually chased away. Van Gogh thrust aside the bourgeois style of beauty and instead accentuated the ugly, hard and angular lines of genuine pain and suffering. The literature of Emile Zola (1840 - 1902) French novelist and writer of humanitarian stories and plays, among these being "La Terre" (1886) which portrays the crudities of peasant life, influenced him tremendously. In Etton, Van Gogh was introduced to Eugène Delacroix (1798 - 1863), work the French romantic painter's colour approach made him experiment more freely.

The sudden death of Vincent's father and the disgrace he caused with Margot Begeman, the woman who attempted suicide because she could not marry Vincent made his stay in Nuenen impossible. "I do not ever wish to suppress suffering, because often it is that which makes the artists express themselves more cogently" (32:265).

Vincent Van Gogh found no reason to remain in Nuenen. He had painted everything there was to paint, learned everything about peasant life and felt he could not continue living in the recrudescence of village hatred. Van Gogh had portrayed a bit of every phase of peasant life in the Brabant. Studies inclu-

ded weavers at the loom, peasants in the field, the heath, hedges, fields and even the village church. Vincent had felt failure with all the works he had done because it was not "The Angelus" of Millet (1814 - 1875) which he so fondly admired and dreamed of recreating. Millet's painting of gleaners, workers and peasants had an influence on Van Gogh.

Van Gogh left for Paris to find a world of non-rejection among his contemporary artists, these being Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), Georges Seurat (1859-1891) and numerous followers of the art world. Vincent soon found he was imitating the impressionists, much to his brother Theo's horror. Vincent also realized that he was denying his own creative ability and delved back to his past experience of peasant life. Although he had worked on numerous paintings he was not satisfied. Among these works were "The portrait of Père Tanguy", a friend of his. Here his strong impressionistic influence and his love for Japanese prints is evident. Arles in the south of France interested him far greater than the theories and stories of the Parisian artists.

Van Gogh once again strove to be happy in a society that would accept him for what he was. He soon experienced rejection from the villagers. Gauguin, who had moved to Arles to work with van Gogh, found him impossible to live with. Their moods clashed and Van Gogh went so far as to cut off his ear which he sent to a prostitute. Van Gogh was slowly killing himself, mentally he was suffering from rejection. Gauguin felt forced to leave Van Gogh, another failure in friendship. He now painted more distortedly and more dramatically. His "Self-Portrait with mutilated ear", (Vide 5) "The Chair and the Pipe" (Vide 11) show how overwhelmed he was at Gauguin's departure and he portrayed his emotions in the symbolism of chairs, (Van Gogh had a yellow chair and Gauguin a red and green chair). In this way he used these objects to compare human feelings. The two chairs were the symbols of the different personalities of Van Gogh and Gauguin and links which Vincent had hoped would unite them. The painting of "Gauguin's chair" 1888 (Vide 12), was a study of an armchair in sombre browns green's and

blue. The place of Gauguin who did not have patience to pose for Van Gogh is replaced by a candle and some books. This painting is done in broken tones with dabs of paint filling the floor, strong linear use is found on the legs and arms of the chair and the depressive green wall in the background is broken by the placing of the candle. The work shows the emotional strain Van Gogh felt and projects Gauguin's aggressive and critical attitude. "Vincent's chair with pipe".

(Vide 11 ) (1888 - 1889) shows a more peaceful setting with an austere quality and clarity of colour. Vincent used yellow, blue and red brown, his work is more controlled with the floor and background giving more of a spatial element to the composition. The pipe and the tobacco pouch add a note of poignancy to the painting. This work shows less stress than "Gauguin's chair". He seemed calmer yet still in a depressive mood with the absence of his friend.

His "Self-Portrait with mutilated ear" (Vide 5) is duller in mood and rather calm, although it shows a disturbing quality. He set his portrait in an interior with his love for Japanese prints being portrayed behind his head, this possibly reflecting his only positive feeling for anything. The emptiness of his life is clearly reflected on his face!

The people of Arles created such a commotion about his presence that Van Gogh took refuge in a mental home in St-Rémy, an old monastery of Saint-Paul-De-Mausole. From this time on he began to reject his own existence and mental breakdowns dominated his life. His work became more turbulent and flashes from his past life appear in his work. Spiralling movements of disturbance dominate his compositions as seen in "Starry Night" (Vide 6) 1889, an explosion of the moon and stars rushing over a sleepy town set in a moving landscape. The cypress trees reach up to the sea of stars and moon. This could have been the outer explosion of Vincent Van Gogh's inner rejection and the failure he suffered throughout his life.

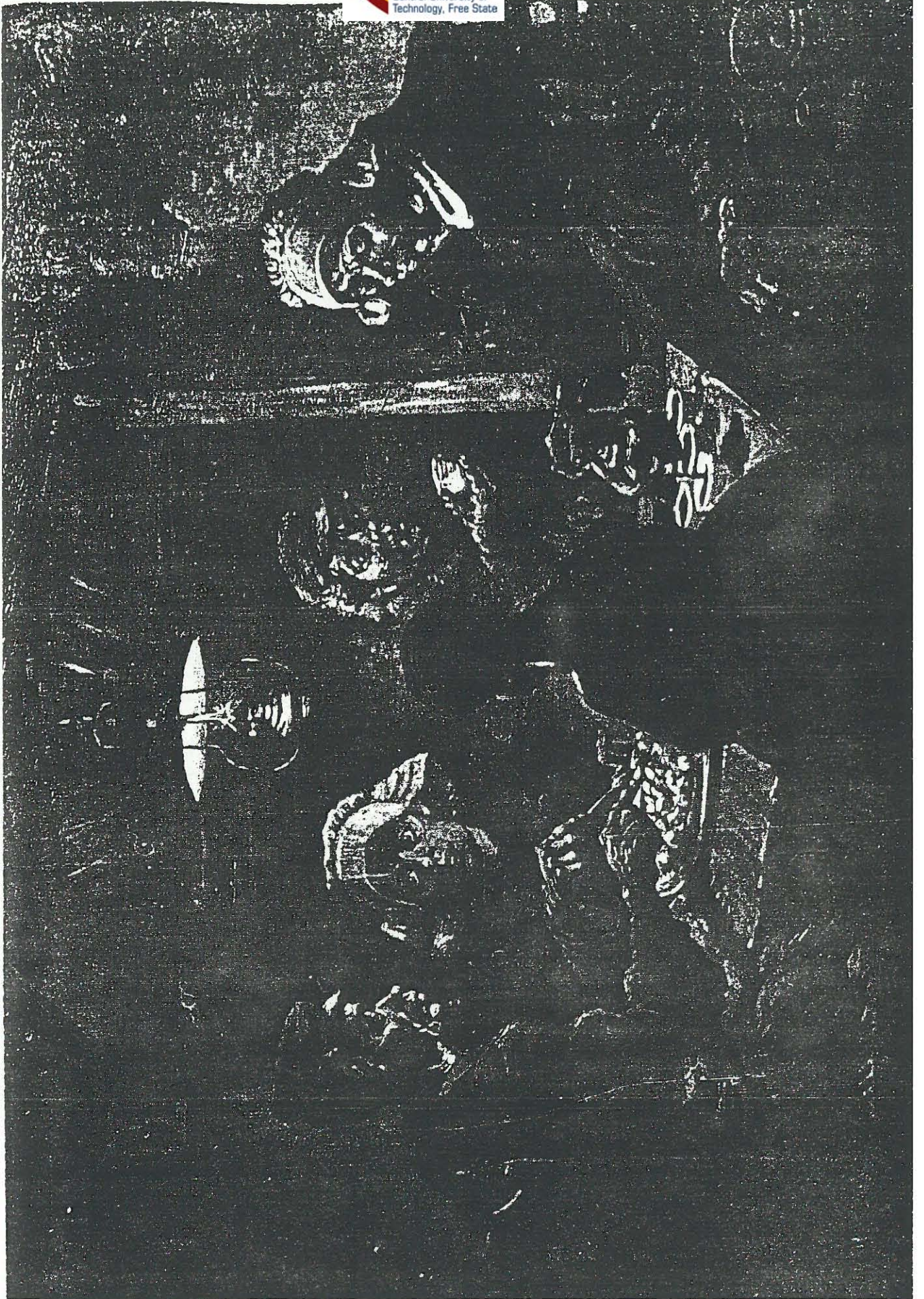
His own failure could only end by suicide even which was not successful as

he took two days to die. One of his last paintings was "Wheatfield with Crows" (1890). This painting with its sombre intensity and feeling of tragedy is painted in violent brushstrokes. The strong symbolic characteristics of the black crows flying over the turbulent wheatfield show Vincent's awareness of loneliness and depression with death not far off.

The strong division between the sky and wheatfield is connected by the crows flying down in a diagonal leading the viewers eye from the centre of the painting across the wheatfield and up to sky. The green and brown of the road has a similar effect except Van Gogh has made use of a "S" curve which adds to the rapid movement of the painting. The focal point is the end of the road which also has symbolic significance when dealing with loneliness and death.

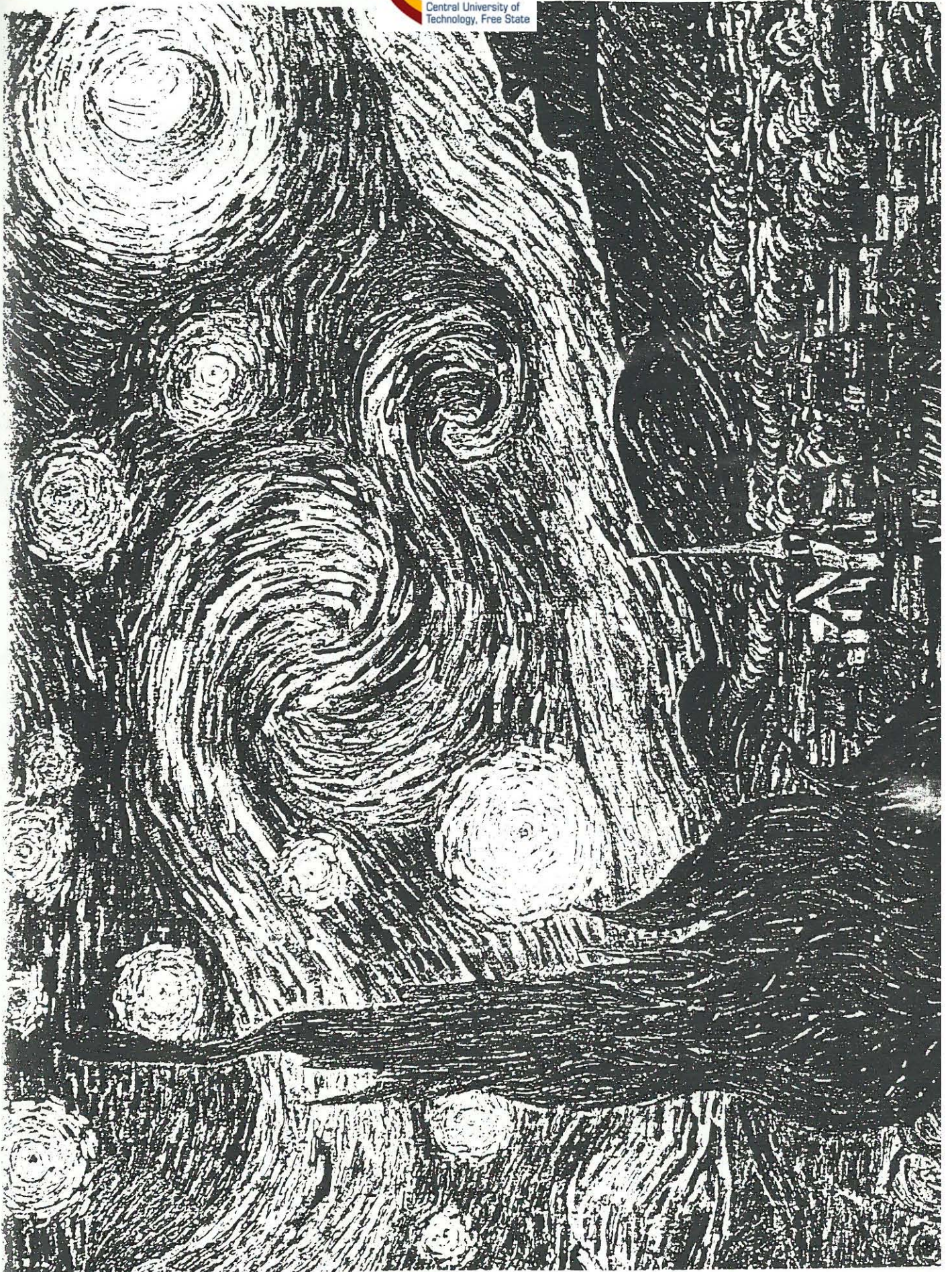
It is said that he described to Theo, "My life is threatened at the very root, and my steps are wavering ..... They are vast paintings of corn under troubled skies, and I did not need to go out of my way to try to express sadness and extreme loneliness" (81:62).

Had society accepted Vincent Van Gogh and had he not been pressurised by social norms and standards of behaviour he might never have been the great artist he turned out to be. It would seem Van Gogh was manipulated by the norms of society to the benefit of later generations.



Vide 4 Potato Eaters





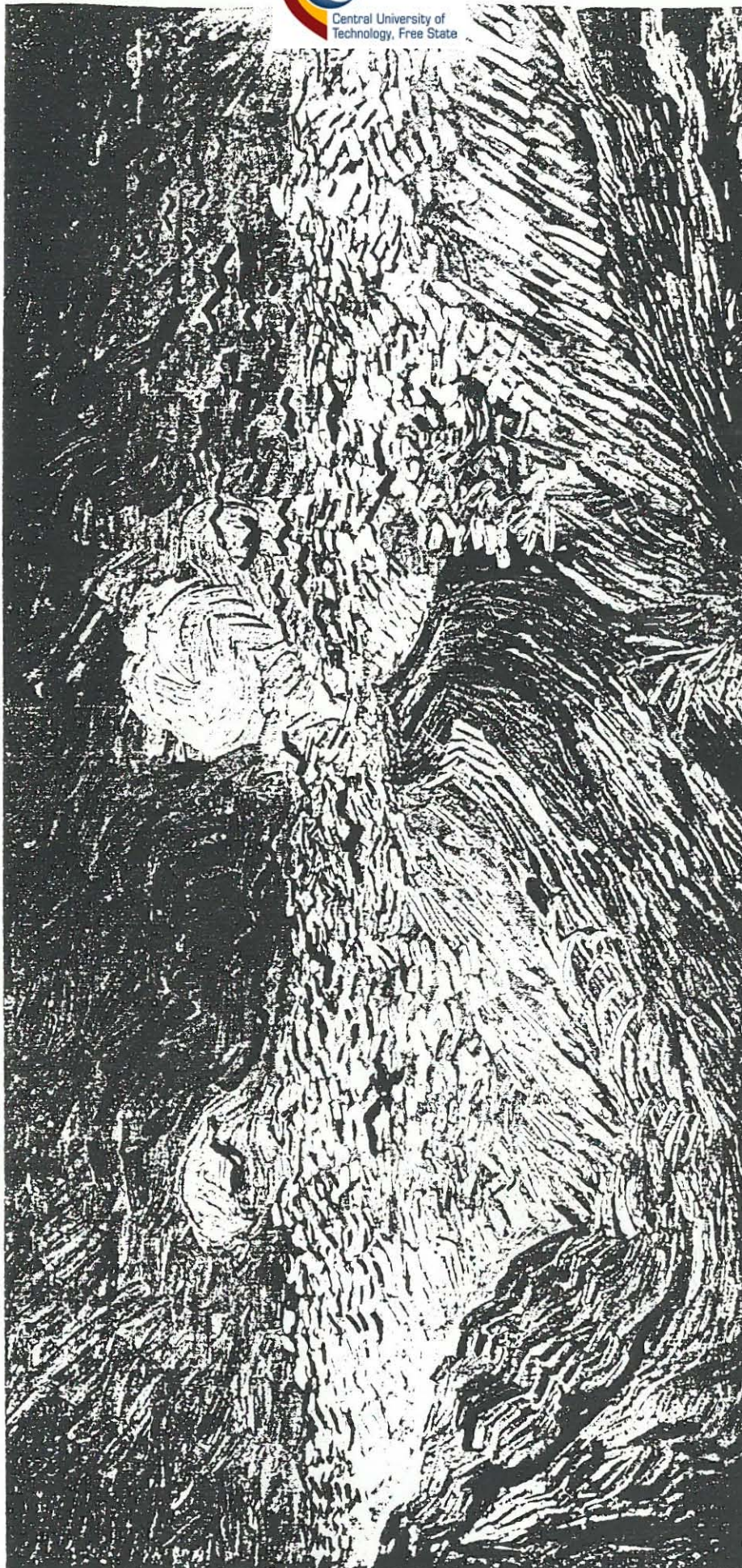
Vide 6 Starry Night



Video 7 Wheatfield with Cypresses



Central University of  
Technology, Free State



Vide 8 Wheatfield with crows

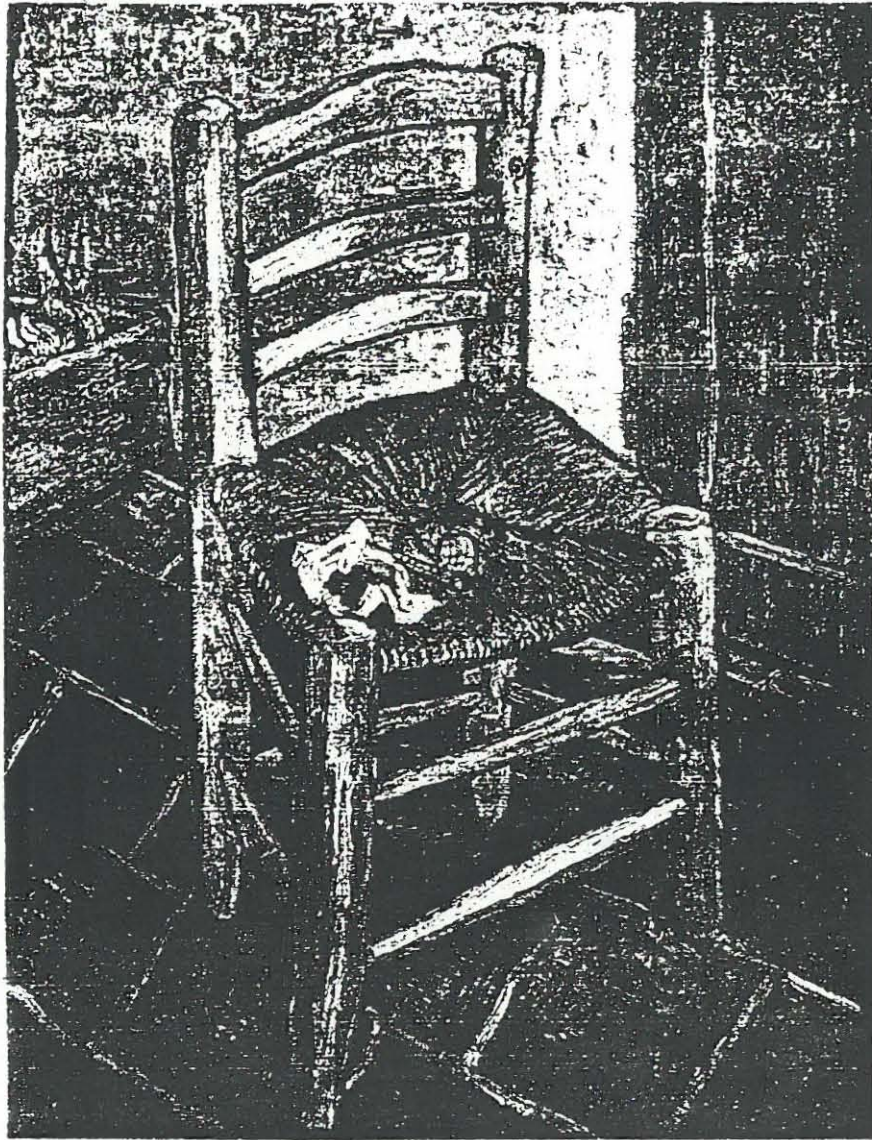


Video 9 Peasant Bending



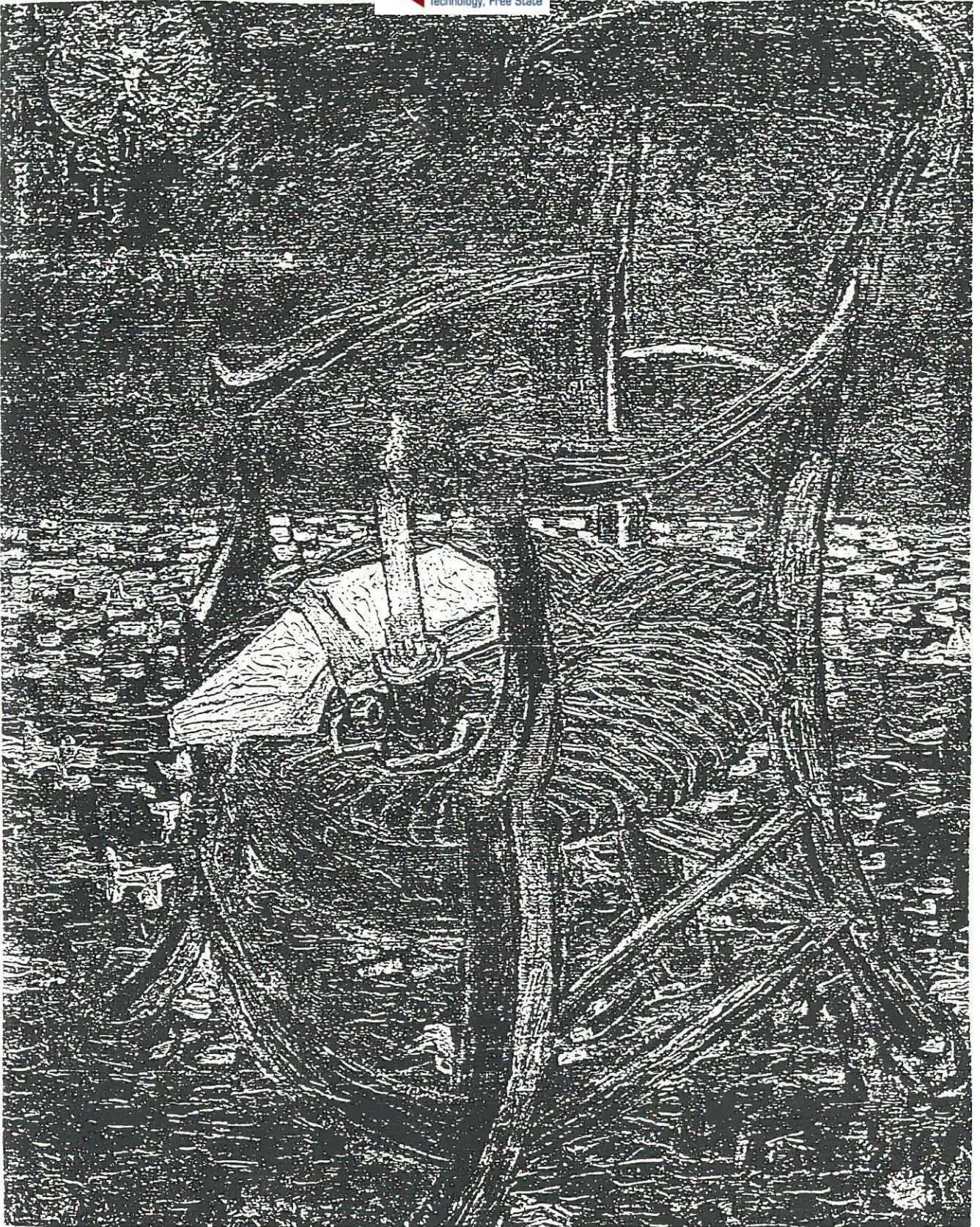
Vide 10 Sorrow

Vincent Van Gogh



Vide 11 Vincent's Chair and Pipe

Vincent Van Gogh



Vide 12 Gauguin's Chair

Vincent Van Gogh

EDVARD MUNCH: (1863-1944) "MAKES USE OF HIS PERSONAL  
TRAGEDY TO MANIPULATE HIS VIEWER"

4.1 BACKGROUND

Edvard Munch was born on 12 December, 1863, the eldest son of Laura Catherine Bojlstad and Dr Christian Munch, at the Engelhaug Estate in Loten, Hedmark, Norway. He had four brothers and sisters. Edvard Munch's father was a military physician, however, not all the Munch family were in military careers, some became clergymen, poets and artists. Family pride was a characteristic of the Norwegians and Edvard Munch had ample reason to glory in the work of his ancestors. In his house their portraits hung alongside his own works.

Dr Munch "fully played the role of loving father but also strict, pious patriarch, ruling his offspring with kindness and force, fusing a sense of military duty and obedience with an overpowering religious faith" (13:14).

Edvard's mother died of tuberculosis when he was five years old leaving the children in his father's care. These days were the foundation to Edvard's relationship with life and death.

The death of his mother altered Edvard's image of his father (18:17). "No longer was he the affectionate and compassionate parent who played games and told delightful stories, he became a moody, melancholic, religious fanatic given to near violent outbursts of temper, someone who remained forever a reserved stranger towards his son in a world suddenly deprived of all parental love (18:17).

"The Munch family were cared for by their Aunt Karen Bojlstad, Lauras' younger sister. Edvard then turned to his six year old sister Sophia for love and attention.

The Munch family were relatively well-off and none of the children or their aunt were forced to work while Dr Christian Munch was alive. Even the demonstrations and unemployment of 1870 did not affect the Munch's bourgeois home. During 1877, when Edvard was reaching adolescence, his sister Sophia like their mother

died of tuberculosis. This event affected him even more than his mother's death. The death of his sister changed Edvard. He bore an inner hatred and rejection of his father and God and turned to art as the only outlet for his own inner suffering. He attempted the painting of "The Sick Child" (1885) (Vide 13). This painting was influenced by his home life experience of the illness and death of his sister. Munch took long to plan this painting reliving the past each time. He worked on the painting for over a year painting directly onto the canvas, using models. He reconstructed his past by using the models. Munch scratched out the painting several times over. This caused the work to be more gouged than actually painted. The painting became badly scarred although the work became a stepping stone for later versions of the same painting. "The Sick Child" (1885), of which he painted five more versions later in his life was the remembrance of Sophia before she died. This painting was not recognised by the Norwegian public, as their artistic tastes were limited to imported works from Germany, England and Denmark. Folk art still dominated most of Norway. There was only one institution to train artists, Kristiania's Royal School of Art, founded by Edvard's Uncle Jacob Munch. Edvard later attended this school.

The composition is made up of two figures, that of a young chronically ill child with a frail appearance and at her side, her heartbroken mother. Both figures are clad in depressive colours. The focal point is the bedridden child who almost has a heavenly quality about her. The line of the hands and arms lead the viewer from one figure to the next. Both torsos are slightly turned to the viewer to form two strong diagonal lines that lead the viewer's eyes into the painting.

Munch found himself influenced by other struggling artists, Christian Krohg, (1857-1948) Erik Werenskiold (1835-1901) and Fritz Thaulow (1860-1918). Soon he realised that his own ideas overpowered those of others and he developed an antagonistic attitude towards all art except his own. Unlike Van Gogh, Munch sold two paintings at an early stage of his career. This almost convinced his

father that art was not a bad choice of a career. Munch was soon introduced to the Impressionists of Paris, this making him more aware of colour and light.

Munch chose to pioneer the future by combining all he had learned in his painting, "Young Servant Girl kindling a stove" (1883). This was a breakthrough from the traditional Norwegian browns, a much lighter emotional work. He painted numerous scenes of family life during 1880.

Munch was influenced by Hans Jaeger, Norwegian writer, who wrote numerous novels on atheism and free love. Munch had an illicit affair with his cousin's wife, Emily Ihien Thaulow, so that he could be part of the liberal life of the artists he worked with. "The Sick Child" (1885 - 1886) (Vide 13) was eventually carried out because of his relationship with Emily, an introduction to love and suffering. This work drew harsh criticism and made Munch despondent towards his work.

Between 1886 and 1889 Munch went through numerous changes, not only in his work but his life. He was obsessed with "Milly" Thaulow and found jealousy shadowed his relationship with her. These moods appeared in his work, e.g. "Hulda" (1888) which may have been a homage to her.

In 1889 Munch received the Norwegian Fellowship award for the first time. This was to enable him to go to Paris. Munch first went to Aasgaardstrand, a seaside resort, that for a period of twenty years was to be the site of innumerable paintings. He eventually went to Paris to study drawing under Leon Bonnat. Emily Thaulow had left him. This was almost as bad as his parting with his father whom he never saw again.

Edvard Munch disliked living in Paris, even though he had made numerous friends among the artists and writers. One of them was a Danish poet Emanuel Goldstein, a naturalist dissatisfied with naturalism. Munch was not satisfied with Bonnat's classes and rejected them. Munch received the news of his father's death rather badly and this "inaugurated a severe psychological crisis", (18:55)

He experienced this death as a "total annihilation of his father's existence", (18:55). Art no longer seemed sufficient in Edvard's life and he soon withdrew from Bonnat's academy. Goldstein comforted him through this period. Although the death of his father had initiated a period of grief, "guilt and melancholic lethargy" (18:63) it was also the single event granting Munch, "freedom from his biological, intellectual, religious and artistic past". (18:63) His feelings about this event were noted and became known as the "Saint-Cloud Manifesto". He questioned philosophical and religious theories in these notes, his neverending reasoning of what God is and what he has done. It also included his own denial of God. These ideas on paper were the basis for a new approach to his paintings, and they were the start of new beliefs for Munch.

In 1890 Munch returned home to Norway with numerous academic drawings as well as his "Saint-Cloud Manifesto" on which he continued to work with a new inspiration. His stay was not very long and once more he received the Norwegian Fellowship, and had to go to France. He was unfortunately ill and was unable to paint. However, when he recuperated, he returned to his semi-fictional memoirs of life and death.

Edvard moved to Nice because he could not bear the cold of Paris. Money worries became a major problem and soon Munch spent a lot of time gambling, which did not help much. Fortunately the Fellowship committee decided on extra support for his experimental art in France. The mediterranean shore-line had influenced his work tremendously. The carving seashore of the mediterranean appeared in numerous paintings always bringing about a feeling of loneliness and inner disturbance. The shoreline snakes along the background giving movement to a peaceful atmosphere. In his painting "The Scream" (1893), (Vide 14) the curvilinear shoreline is repeated in the echo of the cry in the skyline. His return to Norway had inspired him to paint new and exciting paintings. Melancholy took over and Munch began to drink himself into "a state of virtual emotional collapse" (18:104).

He now experienced loneliness and despair, which he combined with his view of the Nice shoreline. He became obsessed with the desperation of depression, his painting "Despair" (1892) is a prime example of Munch himself leaning on a railing overlooking the shore, a solitary figure removed from its surroundings with a turmoil building up in the sky. "The sea shore was a metaphor, the human condition of life and death (18:112)."

Munch constantly worked between France and Norway, always producing more melancholy work than before. By 1892, he was well known in Europe and was asked to exhibit in Berlin, Germany. Due to a dispute about his work he received plenty of publicity. This publicity introduced him to numerous artists and art-dealers in Berlin who made him stay in Germany, working and exhibiting there and in France until 1899. He only returned to Norway on personal visits. His relationship with Tulla Larsen became a psychological turmoil, with an attempted suicide. He eventually ended up in the sanatorium of Kornhaug, where he was isolated from outside human contact and could continue his art, which had become ever more depressing than before.

Munch's reclusive isolation and nervous breakdown did not affect his reputation, critical success or his financial prosperity in 1900. Even though Munch feared for his own sanity and life he continued to work. His paintings were exhibited all over Europe. Munch soon felt threatened by the Civil War between Sweden and Norway in 1900's, and isolated himself from the outside world in a wooden hut in Aasgaardstrand. Soon he found that this was impossible because his popularity caused numerous people to visit him. He turned to alcohol for comfort.

The following years he spent in and out of clinics and sanatoriums, always continuing to produce work. In 1916 he settled in Ekely in Skoyen, Norway. Here he worked on endless commissions, always going back to his themes of "Life and Death". During the First World War, Norway was neutral and Munch observed the process as millions died in trenches and the mechanics of destruction heralded a

new age. These experiences in Munch's art knew no adequate representation. Trees were rooted in corpses and landscapes had water the colour of blood. Munch sought refuge in his art, and in his old wooden house he recalled memories of his life. He worked repeatedly on themes of the erotic world, life and death.

Munch lived alone in his house in Ekely surrounded by six decades of his art. Here the Second World War outlasted him and he died on the 23 January 1944.

### 3.2 RELIGIOUS BREAKDOWN

Edvard Munch came from a religious home and his father was very strict in that his children were brought up correctly in keeping with Norwegian society during this time. After the death of Edvard's mother, his father became fanatical about religion. Edvard could not understand why his mother had to die and "go to Jesus" (18:17). The Munch children had not seen their mother die, but they were not strangers to death as tuberculosis was a common sickness among the Norwegians.

When Sophia Munch contracted tuberculosis, Edvard watched her die, his helplessness and his father's inability to aid his child, even though he had medical training, left a scar in Edvard's life. Not even the prayers they said helped Sophia. The idea that God imparted fatal sickness as punishment for sin was later imprinted on Edvard's mind.

Edvard took Sophia's death as an act of vengeance, selfishness and incomprehensible of God. The Norwegians of this time believed that God proclaimed love, but revealed Himself in life largely through anger, punishment and threats of eternal damnation. This is a common accusation when death or hardship enters a family. Very few people can accept death without passing the blame onto God. Edvard Munch was no exception. He even went as far as comparing his father to God in the sense that both had failed him. His father did not cure Sophia and God let her die.

Lutheranism continued to be practised in the Munch family even though Sophia had died after endless prayers. Edvard continued to follow the faith, regularly going to Church, listening attentively to sermons and even being confirmed when he was sixteen. By 1885 Edvard's religious doubts, engendered by Sophia's death, were converted to a professed denial of God. The fact that God was silent when his father's prayers rang out made Edvard question religion. Edvard built his own world around him and felt that only he himself could provide eternal life and salvation. He developed his own immortality and companionship through his art.

Edvard Munch became very involved with Hans Jaeger who preached atheism and freely advocated anarchism, with sex and free love being the main line of interest. This took the place of religion for the rest of Edvard's life.

### 3.3 SOCIAL REJECTION

Edvard Munch felt rejected from an early age, when his mother died and left the family alone with just a father. His sister's death was the ultimate rejection throughout his life. This continuously haunted him and even gave him the feeling that other people rejected him and were following him to steal his notes and work. Edvard felt that his father and God had rejected his trust and faith in them and he could not relate to them any longer. His "Sick Child" was the symbol of his own guilt and failure and this painting of his dying sister Sophia, haunted him throughout his life as he constantly reworked it, never being satisfied. The critics saw Munch as "A dangerous propagator of the excesses of anarchistic impressionism" (20:36). They totally rejected "The Sick Child"(1885) with the view that it was a "Study" by an "optimistic arrogant artist". (20:36).

Munch sought independence through this painting but was rejected by family, critics and even other artists. This rejection made the artist temporarily withdraw from art. Eventually, when he returned to painting in 1886, the critics totally ignored him.

In later years when he was accepted and received the Norwegian Fellowship, he still found social rejections, not only in art but in his love-life and his personal rejection of dealing with normal sexual conflicts which were encouraged by Hans Jaeger, Norwegian novelist and writer of many doctrines on atheism, anarchism and free love (18:32). Munch was trapped between rejection and the realities of death, which haunted him throughout his life. Munch showed in his work that life had rejected him and he longed for his own even though he had been confronted by death on many previous occasions. Munch almost wished this fate on himself. Karl Scheffler wrote about Munch: "He ... belongs among those who pit themselves against their gruesome, incomprehensible fate with hate and intense disdain", (18:178).

Munch was confronted by critical rejection all over Europe in his beginning years, but by 1914 he became more acceptable in art circles and private commissions poured in. He wrote about his success "First I starve and have to struggle like mad for twenty-five years to sell anything at all in Norway. Then finally I manage to sell quite a bit, and even my friends start complaining". (22:76).

Munch's popularity did not allow him to overcome the feeling of failure and loneliness, with his painting of the "Sick Child" (1885) always reappearing at his most depressive stages. Munch felt this painting was an emotional compensation for her death, which invited the viewer to share the experience of his own failure. In this way Munch manipulated his viewer throughout his art, sharing his own self-pity with the viewer. Munch's concern with his inner world, with sexuality and death and with the irrational forces, was his cry for his fellow-man to understand the pain he suffered from the failure of fellow humans and God.

Critics said "He is a criminal" and of his work "It is a disgrace to our nation, the work and the man should be annihilated" (23:4). Possibly Munch had hoped

for his annihilation as his mere survival was painstaking. Even when he died his rejection from society was proven as he died alone. Munch claimed he was "Born dying" (18:226) and that death is the birth of life (25:226). For a non-believer this was a strange remark as he seemed to be wanting a new life for his own rejected life on earth.

Munch's own life of rejection could be portrayed in one of his most famous paintings "The Scream" (1893) (Vide 14). This painting is the ultimate cry of human isolation. The foreground of this work contains a figure with its hands raised to the head with the mouth and eyes open wide in a gesture of extreme shock. The strong diagonal of the railing and street is pushed to the right so that it helps exaggerate the depth of the composition. In the background the two figures display a formal, stiff posture in contrast to the figure in the foreground. Munch made use of blue-green with streaks of brown which are distributed in quick carving strokes. The sky appears to be an echo chamber of distorted sound waves in red and yellows, with blue in the centre. The curving lines of the sky are repeated in the land and the figure, thus it is difficult to distinguish the difference between the land, sky and figure. All are fused in the symbolic flatness of the painting this only being broken by the railing and two figures. Two very contrasting elements, the curve and the strong diagonal. The colours do not harmonize and there is no resolution of the space surface tension. A vibration of sound in the painting.

His loneliness, rejection, association with life and death are all portrayed in this painting. Munch described this actual experience: "I was walking along the road with two friends. The sun set. The sun became a bloody red and I felt a touch of melancholy. I stood still, leaned on the railing, dead tired. Over the blue-black fjord and city hung blood and tongues of fire. My friends walked on and I stayed behind, trembling with fright, and I felt a great unending scream passing through nature" (18:105).

Edvard tried to manipulate his viewer and has succeeded as his art is known for its tragedy of life and death. Munch's rejection and confrontation with death could show his own manipulation, which he protests against by manipulating the viewer. "Death in the Sickroom" (1893 - 4) (Vide 15) is an example of Munch, using the subject to manipulate his viewer. The setting of the different groups of figures could have been that of a pause during a stage production. The figure facing the viewer almost invites the viewer to be part of the tragedy. The single figure leaning against the wall on the left of the painting balances the strong circular movement of the back of the chair. This forms a halo around the dead person's head. The viewer is directed to the dead person by the pale figure in the foreground who faces the chair, while the two standing figures stand almost helplessly looking on while one clasps his hands either in desperation or prayer. A definite line can be followed through the seated figure in the foreground, the standing figures over the empty bed, down the blankets and around the group placed next to the dead figure. The spacious room adds to the atmosphere of death while the empty bed which is almost central creates the feeling that something is missing. The viewer becomes part of this emotional scene and could feel pity for the artist. This is perhaps what Munch wanted.

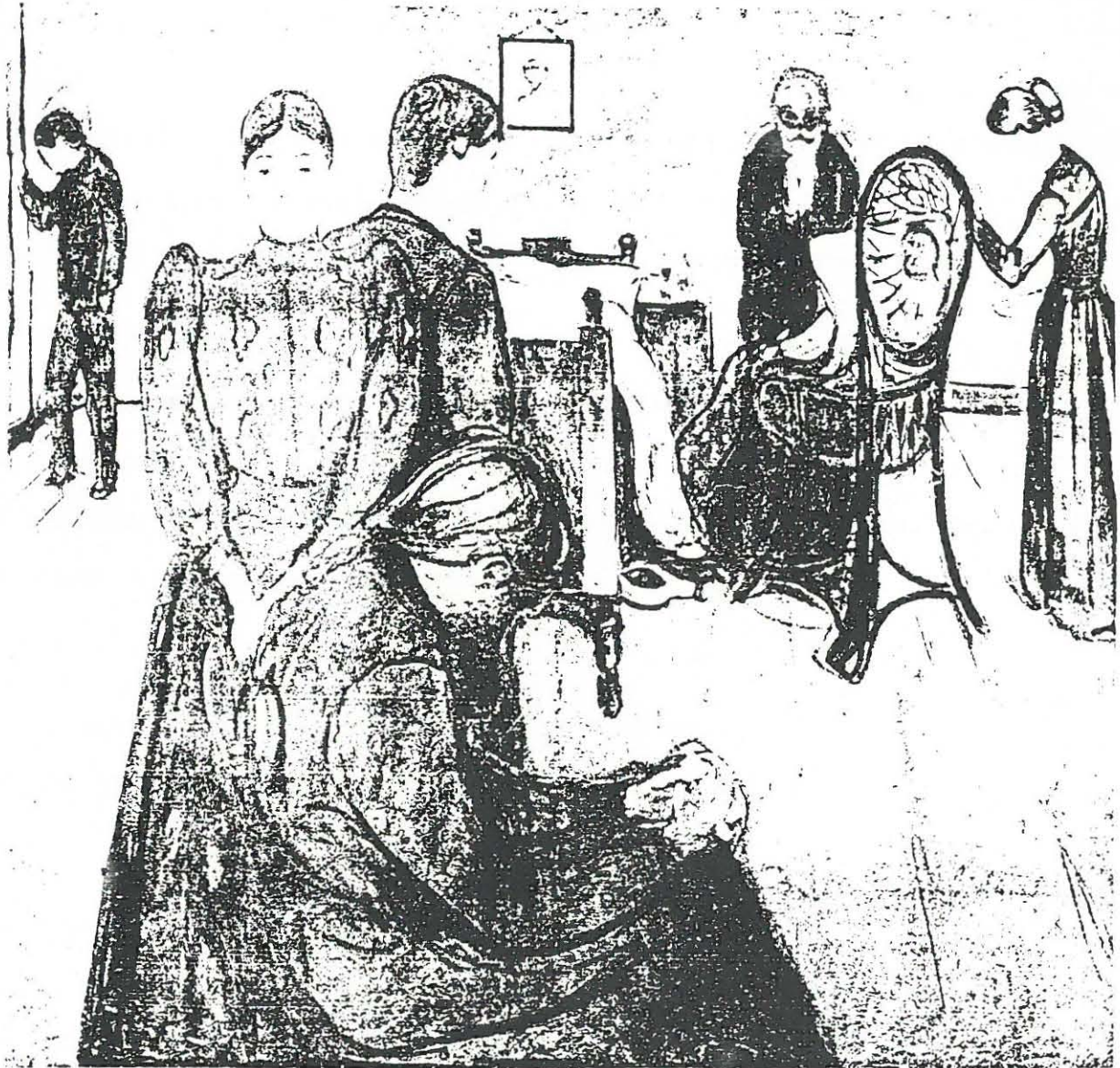


Vide 13 The Sick Child

Edvard Munch



Vide 14 The Scream  
Edvard Munch



Vide 15 Death in the sickroom

Edvard Munch

## CHAPTER 5

### KÄTHE KOLLWITZ: (1867 - 1945) "MANIPULATED BY SOCIAL POVERTY AND INJUSTICE"

#### 5.1 BACKGROUND

Käthe Kollwitz was born in 1867 in Königsberg in Germany. Her maiden name was Schmidt. She lived in a middle class surrounding. At an early age Käthe discovered the world of the labourer in the harbour of her town. Compared with her middle class life it seemed unexciting and superficial according to Käthe who studied drawing under Rudolf Mauer at the age of thirteen. She later studied under Emile Nolde (1867-1959) a German expressionist and Stauffer-Bern.

In 1888 - 89 she went to Munich which was at this time a cultural and intellectual centre in Germany. Here she studied under Ludwig Herterich, a painter, whose emphasis on colour was not to her taste. Käthe was made aware of Emile Zola's powerful novel "Germinal" about the strike of coal miners. Her awareness of humanitarian rights was soon aroused much in the same way as Vincent Van Gogh's earlier years.

Käthe learnt the different graphic printing processes in Munich (1890) and soon gave up painting to follow a creative career in etching and later sculpture.

In 1891 she married Karl Kollwitz and they moved to Berlin. Here her husband practised medicine in a poor suburb for workers. This was her first real introduction to the reality of the poorer class. Although she never intended to draw and paint the poor class she soon discovered she could turn to art as a "safety-value that offered the possibility to make life bearable" (22:5). Käthe felt that the bourgeois' life was pedantic while the proletariat had a certain grandness of manner. In 1895 Käthe made a series of six woodcuts, etching and lithographs based on Hauptmans play "Die Weber" (The Weaver). Käthe had worked on numerous drawings and technical experiments concerned with "The Weavers" (1897). She had planned six sheets for the cycle. The first two "Suffering" (Vide 16) and "Death" (Vide 17) in which a weaver's child dies from hunger. The third

scene is "Conspiracy", the fourth etching depicts "The Weavers' March" (Vide 18) to the factory owner's house. "Attack" (Vide 19) shows the storming of the owner's house. The last scene is "The End". This represents the weaver's sorrow at the loss of life. This scene is the most dramatic of the series of etchings. "Weavers Rebellion" depicts the plight of indigent Silesian weavers. She received an award for this work in The Dresden German Art Exhibition and later a prize in London.

The second cycle known as "Peasants War" (1902 - 1908) shows her dealing with revolt among the oppressed which was a growing threat as discussed in the historical background of this period. Käthe Kollwitz was awarded a prize, the Villa Romana prize, which entailed a year's residence in Florence.

The outbreak of the First World War did not only give her subject material to work on but also took the life of her younger son (Conrad) in the trenches. The war and her own maturity finally affected a significant shift in her psychological and political perspective. She sculptured a memorial of fallen volunteers in 1915 but this was destroyed. In 1925 she made a second version of this. She portrayed her husband and herself as grieving parents, for the soldiers cemetery at Essen-Roggeveld.

In 1919 Käthe became the first woman to be elected a professor at the Berlin Academy of Art. This was soon taken away from her when the Nazi Regime took to power in 1933.

Käthe portrayed the horrors of war in seven woodcuts (1922 - 23). Showing the reactions of a wife or mother, she depicts the suffering, starvation and death that war brings about.

"Suffering" (1897) (Vide 16) Käthe Kollwitz used a dark room for the setting of this work. The mother figure holds her head in helplessness as she sits next to her sick child. A window is placed at the back of the room only allowing enough

light to outline two faces on the right side and the yarn of the loom. The crouching figure and sick child are both in a pool of light, this is a very dramatic setting. The contrasting lines of the pillow and blankets give a feeling of disturbance while the figures are calm and peaceful. The yarn of the loom helps to strengthen the composition by leading to the focal point being the child's head. The tragic atmosphere involves the viewer and projects the feeling that the artist had knowledge of similar pain and tragedy as Edvard Munch had with his painting "Sick Child" (1885 - 86).

In 1927 she visited Russia, but was disappointed with Soviet Communism. It was not true to the manifestos which Lenin and Marx had written. Kollwitz felt communism was only the excuse for another dictatorship in Russia. The working class still suffered even though communism ruled.

During 1934 - 1935 Käthe made her most moving series of lithographs, "Death". This was the ultimate penalty of suffering according to her. Her expulsion as professor and being branded as a decadent artist by the Nazi Regime led to the recognition of the greatness of her works being delayed until after the collapse of Fascism and after her own death in 1945.

## 5.2 SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

Käthe Kollwitz realised the needs and hardships of the poor from an early age, as she noticed their difference in lifestyle to her own, which was Bourgeois class. Unlike Vincent Van Gogh, Käthe did not sacrifice everything to share the suffering of the poor and ill. Käthe used her art as the mouthpiece for the proletariat society with the hope that it would draw attention to the needs of these people, which were economic, housing and medical help.

Käthe Kollwitz has frequently been labelled a "socialist artist". This could come from the public reaction to the naturalism which characterised her work and which could have seemed revolutionary to a society which still admired the glory of heroic war paintings and the genre paintings of Spitzweg (1808-85) and

Richter. Naturalism in art was known as sick and filthy by certain social democrats of this period (1890). Kollwitz felt that her work pointed to the preoccupation with universal rather than with specific human situations.

Käthe felt not only the need to depict the suffering, but also to give expression to the eternal forces of life and death. Käthe Kollwitz was deeply moved by the fate of the Silesian weavers of 1844 who had been portrayed in Gerhart Hauptman's play. This showed the injustice that the working class was subjected to. The weavers revolted in 1844 because of their low wages and wretched living conditions. Kollwitz immediately decided on capturing the fate of these people and others in the same situation. Her "Weavers Revolt" depicts the struggle for the weaver to live with poverty, illness and hunger. Women and children are brought up in appalling conditions. Death hangs a cloud of melancholy over all her work. This is similar to Edvard Munch's paintings. He too found that "Death had the final say to life" (22:25). "Death"(1887) (Vide 17) the symbolic figure of "Death" appears from the dark. The room is small and confined causing the skull to be pressed close to the wooden beamed ceiling, accentuating the oppressive mood of the scene. The diagonal draws attention to the haggard, heartbroken women at the table. The candle creates a circle of light highlights on the table surface, the face of the child and the woman. Death holds tightly onto the child with only the arms and face visible. The child looks frightened and the woman turns away.

Käthe Kollwitz chose the labourers above the bourgeois life because she felt not only for their suffering but for their beauty, their earthy and dignified bodily forms, and their unpretentious way of life. Vincent Van Gogh felt the same about the coal miners of Borinage and the farm labourers of the Brabant district.

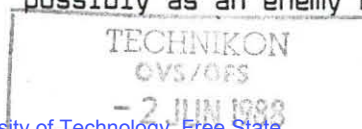
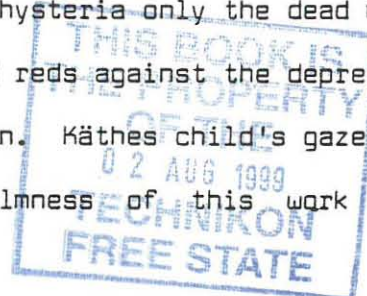
Käthe's husband worked with the lower class in Berlin. Here she became even more aware of the tragedies underlying proletarian life. "When I met women who

came to my husband for help and so, incidentally, came to me, I was gripped by the full force of the proletarian's fate. Unsolved problems such as prostitution and unemployment grieved and tormented me" (22:30). Through her images of life, unadorned and real, Kollwitz attempted to create an awareness of the existing superficial, self-satisfied complacency.

Käthe faced rejection from some of the upper and high class society with her work. The Emperor Wilhelm II opposed the award for which she was nominated for "The Weavers Revolt". Eventually Käthe received the medal from the King of Saxony who was far more liberal-minded.

Käthe Kollwitz never depicts the oppressors in her work, nor does she explicitly condemn anyone. Even her cycle of etchings "Death" (1897) becomes an inner force of far greater impact. Käthe Kollwitz uses a portrait of her son looking into a candle "Hans Kollwitz with Candle" 1897 (Vide 20) to portray death. Her son is seen here with large sad eyes resting on a table with a strong shadow behind his head. The feel of death haunts the room. The irony of this work is that later Käthe's son died while still young. Edvard Munch who suffered a similar tragedy with the death of his sister and mother, portrays death at its worst "Dead Mother and Child" (1893) (Vide 21) as being horrific with grief stricken people in the background each involved with in own emotion. The child in the Munch painting is unlike Käthe's child, the eyes are wide open with shock, while the hands are flung up in total hysteria only the dead mother is calm. Munch's shocking colours of orange and reds against the depressive grey green background help show the emotional tension. Käthes child's gaze is almost mesmerized by the burnt out candle, the calmness of this work contrasts dramatically to Munch's painting.

The artist conducted a life-long dialogue with death in her work. To her, it was not to be condemned, but a fundamental experience of human existence. In earlier works "Death" comes over possibly as an enemy but in later works

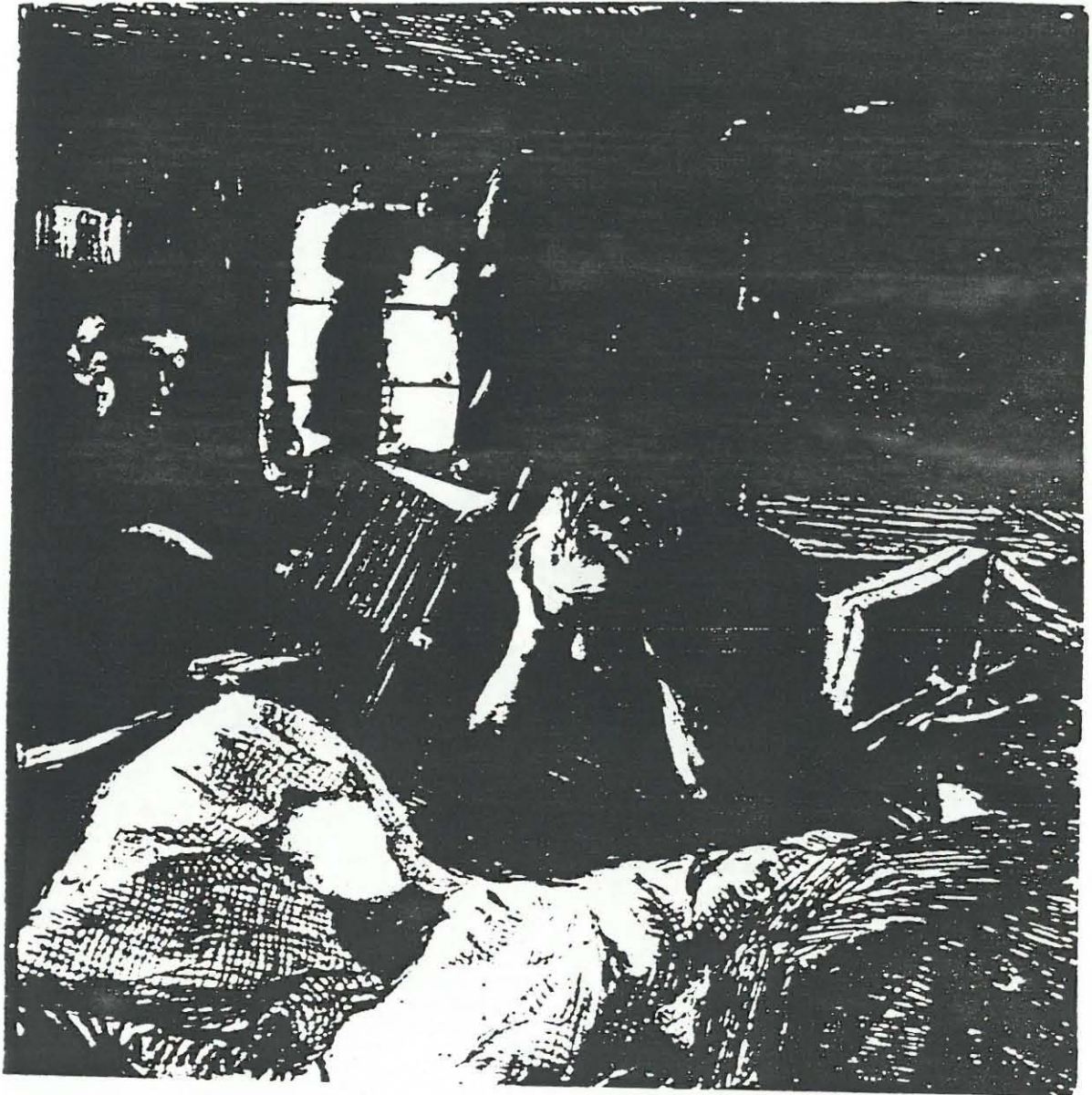


"Death" is a friend: "He mercifully liberates man from suffering and indignity" (22:21) whereas Edvard Munch portrays "Death" as a fearful and just enemy.

Kollwitz never intended to engender the hatred of the social classes towards their oppressors. Her work was an appeal for human justice rather than satirical attack aimed at exposing social injustice.

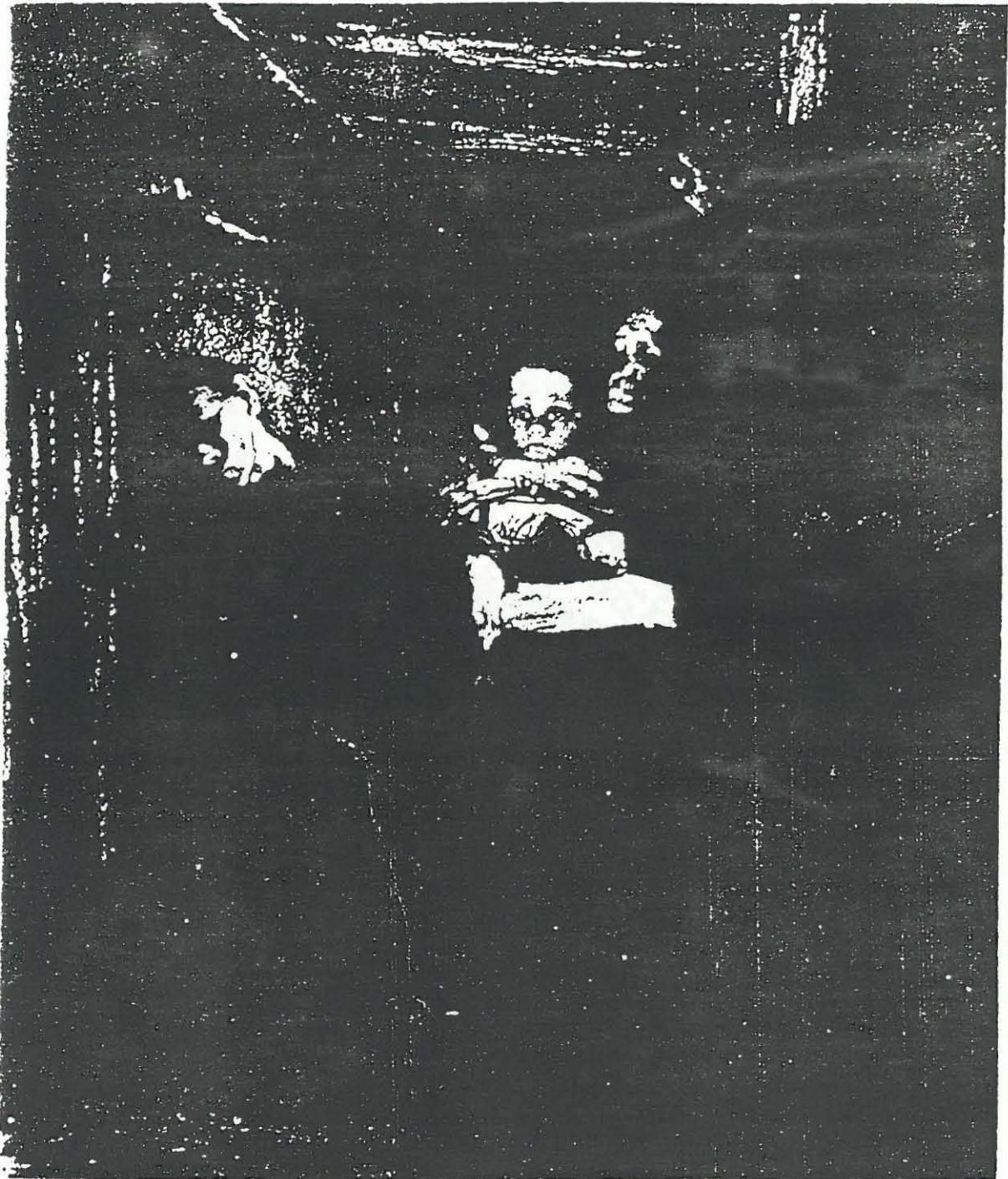
Käthe Kollwitz: "Manipulated by social poverty and injustice" Käthe was influenced so greatly by the poor society that she dedicated most of her work as a contribution to their social outcry for justice. "The Downtrodden" (1898) almost sums up her appeal to society. The work contains a symbolical figure of life which is bending over a Christ-like dead figure, representing the Nation, touching his wounds. The central panel is flanked by two nudes: tortured, realistic female bodies. Above the middle panel is written "Aus vielen Wunden Blutest du, o Volk".

Only after her own death and the collapse of the Nazi regime in 1945 did society recognise the greatness and dimension of her work.



Vide 16 Suffering first sheet for the "Weavers"

Käthe Kollwitz

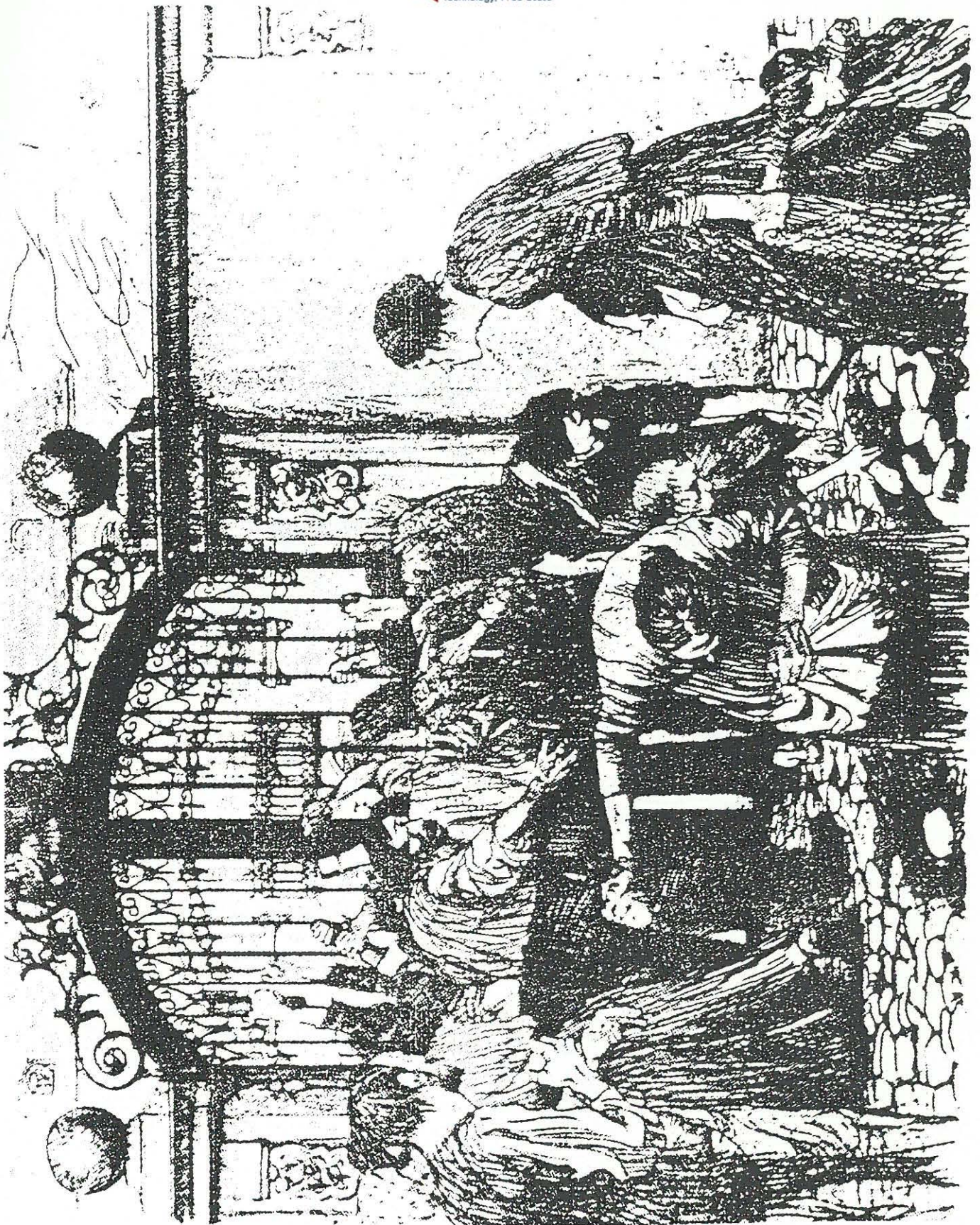


Vide 17 Death second sheet for the "Weavers"  
Käthe Kollwitz



Vide 16 The Weavers March Fourth sheet for the "Weavers"

Käthe Kollwitz



Vide 19 Attack

Käthe Kollwitz



Vide 20 Hans Kollwitz with candle Sketch for "Death"

Käthe Kollwitz

## CHAPTER 6

### EGON SCHIELE (1890-1918): "POLITICAL STRESS MANIPULATING HIS WORK AND LIFE"

#### 6.1 BACKGROUND

Egon Leo Adolf Schiele was born on 12 June 1890 at Tullin, lower Austria, the son of a railway official. He was educated at a local school, a Grammar school and at the Landes Real-und Obergymnasium at Klosterneuberg. He resented formal education as it was an intrusion upon his freedom.

In 1905 Schiele's father died and his Uncle became his guardian. Leopold Czhiaczek had intended his nephew to study at Vienna's Technische Hochschule in a trade, but Egon followed an artistic career instead, at the Academy of Fine Art, Vienna. Here he found it difficult to get on with his teachers. His work could already be associated with the Viennese Avant-Garde members being Oskar Kokoschka (1886) and Lyonel Feininger (1871 - 1956). In 1907 he met Gustave Klimt who was already a recognised Avant-Garde artist.

In 1908 Egon Schiele had already caught the imagination of the critics with his linear oil studies. In 1909 his debut before the Viennese public came when he exhibited portraits which had a certain affinity with the work of Edvard Munch, as shown in the grim-like texture and decorative border on Schiele's painting of fellow student Hans Massmann (Vide 21).

Gustav Klimt 's (1862 - 1918) influence was recognisable in most of Schiele's early work as seen in Schiele's "Watersprites" (1907) (Vide 23). The use of decorative technique is influenced by Klimt's painting "Zug der Toten". Klimt's influence on Schiele's work soon receded although Schiele never stopped admiring Klimt's work.

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) was a member of the Association of Austrian Painters and had a definite influence on Schiele's work. Klimt was essentially a decorator who was influenced by Japanese art. Klimt used his decorative style

to support the symbolic tones that enrich his work. He contrasts his work with pattern, colour, texture and form. Klimt's work has a feeling of mystery about it, with erotic symbolism being a major characteristic. Klimt made use of the richest colourful patterns in his work. Schiele used patterns in his "Water-sprites" (1907) (Vide 23) and introduced Klimt's love for gold into his work. The strong symbolic feeling is also found in Schiele's work. Another influential work being "The Kiss" (Vide 22).

Schiele had financial problems and took to teaching drawing to children and painting private commissions, as he did for August Lederer an Austrian industrialist and art patron. Schiele painted his fifteen year old son Erich ("Portrait of Erich Lederer"). In 1909 Klimt had organised a society of Avant-Garde artists, known as "Neukunstgruppe". This brought the young artists into contact with each other. Egon Schiele managed to broaden his acquaintances by exhibiting with this group. He was soon introduced to art collectors and publishers.

The exhibition of the "Neukunstgruppe" was slated in Vienna and Schiele was branded as offending public morals with his approach to his work. This triggered off Schiele's involvement with erotic art which at times was almost gruesome. Schiele's morality was soon questioned as he even employed children as models, although the artist was defended by the fact that he reasoned that his work was about the innocence of children.

In 1911 Egon Schiele and his mistress Wally Neuzil moved to Bohmisch Krumau. Here he found serene happiness. He painted many topographical, accurate paintings, which laid a foundation for his later work. Schiele showed a strong relationship to Munch's work especially in his choice of subject. In Schiele's "Dead Mother and Child" (1910) (Vide 25) the circular formation of the composition is similar to the circular chair in Munch's "Death in a Sickroom" (1893). Both artists used the circular entrapment almost to contain the dead person also giving a halo effect. The bitter tragedy of death is apparent in both works

with Schiele having placed more emphasis on the mother and child while Munch uses the whole room to show his emotion. Schiele's whirlpool movement around the figures has a dynamic contrast to the figure's themselves. Kollwitz also dealt with the death sequence and this could also have influenced him.

Schiele's Bohemian style of living and his relationship with Wally was not accepted by Krumau society. The artist moved to Neulengbach in 1911, but soon found that his financial situation was, as usual, precarious. The bourgeois not the aristocracy, were interested in buying Schiele's work. The artist's emotions received more of a humiliation when he was arrested for seducing a minor. Although the charges were dropped he was sentenced on a lesser charge, disseminating indecent drawings. One of his nude studies had been pinned up on the wall with his arrest. His stay of twenty-four days in prison at Neulengbach and at St. Poten left an indelible scar on his conscience.

All the hardship and suffering soon took an upward turn in events, Schiele's work received recognition abroad and two exhibitions followed, Munich Secession and at the great Sonderbund in Cologne.

Later in 1913 - 1914 he had numerous exhibitions and was elected a member of the Bund Oesterreichischer Kunstler, to exhibit with them in Budapest. By 1914 his personal affairs became more settled. He rented a studio in Vienna's Hietzinger Hauptstrasse and married Edith Harms, the daughter of a locksmith. His settled lifestyle was disrupted by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

Egon Schiele was eventually draughted into the army. Here he managed to continue doing art work and was even given the opportunity to draw all the facets of camp life with a view to publication. Schiele captured numerous outstanding portraits during 1916 - 1918. The end of the war scattered many of the artists and Egon Schiele felt he could aid in bringing them together again for an exhibition. Unfortunately the war had the after effects of disease and starvation, which claimed the lives of many artists, including Egon Schiele, who died of

Spanish influenza in Vienna (1918).

## 6.2 POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The Habsburg Dynasty under Emperor Franz Joseph saw the rise and fall of Vienna within a remarkably short space of time. Little change had taken place in the capital of the Dual Monarchy in 1848. However, by the late, nineteenth century, great changes had taken place and industrial investments had developed. The self-styled Bourgeois had failed to usurp the aristocracy but had economical power. Vienna became the centre of a cosmopolitan lifestyle with countless Czechs, Bohemians, Magyars and Slovenes, who found themselves united under the crown of Habsburg. The population increased rapidly only to aggravate the already acute housing shortage.

Life had become easier with the achievements of technology, advancement in medicine and natural sciences. The peace and security of the Habsburgs was reflected in the Imperial jubilee celebrations of 1898. This marked the fiftieth anniversary of Franz Joseph's accession to the throne. The rights that were granted to its citizens were enshrined in Acts of Parliament, every duty of the freely elected representatives was exactly defined. Everyone was aware of every aspect of norms and values of the Habsburg society. Every detail no matter how small was taken care of, for example who would replace a man once he retired.

The Habsburg concept was linked with the ideals of stability and the preservation of the existing order but this cultivation of the "status quo" soon brought a feeling of intellectual and moral stagnation which presented a contrast to the technological and scientific advances of that time. Franz Joseph had created a most elaborate bureaucracy throughout the entire Europe. He controlled everything involved in the running of this empire.

Modern society became degenerated and antagonised by the old society. The lifestyles became restless and unstable. The income in the suicide rate and the

sudden growth of esoteric cults, such as opposing movements of Zionism and German nationalism added to the growth of violence particularly assassinations. Franz Joseph's wife, Empress Elizabeth and Joseph's cousin Ludwig of Bavaria were assassinated in 1898. Franz Joseph's talented but unstable son, Crown Prince Rudolf (1858 - 1889), thwarted personally and politically by the unbending Kaiser, committed suicide. The sister-in-law of Franz Joseph was burned to death in 1897 in the famous charity bazaar at Paris. These events underlined the fact that the stability which appeared to be the most important feature of the Empire and its institutions was in essence illusory.

Society suffered forces of disruption with anarchistic undertones. The bureaucratic establishment had given birth to an unstable society which was hypercritical of other nations. Society saw that the education system never touched on sexual education and this lack of knowledge was the downfall of many respectable young males who would find their inevitable object in prostitutes. The young women of respectable homes were placed in the sterilised atmosphere of convent schools with every outing chaperoned and every move noted. It is agreed that this was the right period and place for Freud to have invented psycho-analysis.

The politicians such as the Mayor of Vienna. Karl Lueger, and Georg von Schronerer, leader of the German Nationalist party, knew how to exploit the widespread feeling of antagonism against the intellectual and economic prominence of the Jewish bourgeois within the Viennese society. The Viennese people had reached a stage in their social life where nothing relieved the monotony of everyday life better than a demonstration, a fight, or some form of mass uproar.

Egon Schiele was part of this "decadent society" (6:18) and produced art suited for this time, much to the critic's disgust.

### 6.3 PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF BREAKDOWN IN SOCIETY

Egon Schiele was the first artist in the Habsburg empire to be "imprisoned" because of his art. During a period where censorship was so strict, it was obvious that artists such as Schiele would be branded as perverse.

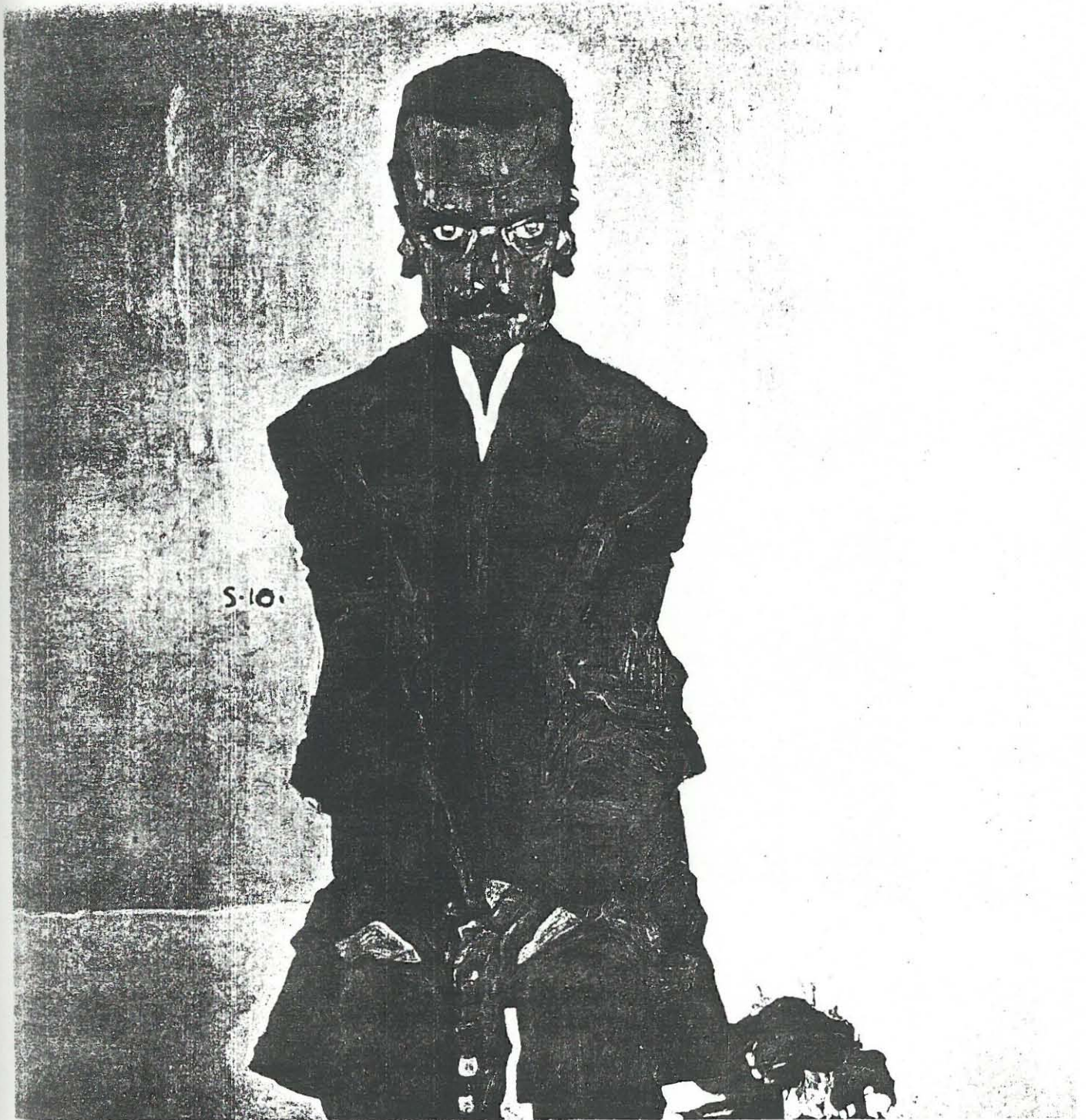
As discussed in the political background, it is clear that as a cover for the failure of the great Habsburg system, the more liberal artists of that period would come under attack. The prison incident gave the artist an identity problem which caused him to portray himself in a variety of anti-social, self-pitying guises. Continuously playing the outcast, he portrayed himself in roles of the monk or martyred saint. "Self Portrait with Saint" (1913) (Vide 26) is a painting where the artists and the saint are almost one except for the two pairs of legs. His anxiety soon made him create a companion for himself, the artist's own mirror. Self portrayal became an obsession which soon dominated the artist's collection of paintings.

Death and sexuality played an important part in Egon Schiele's life, much in the same way as it did in Edvard Munch's life. Schiele's father died of syphilis when Egon was only fourteen. This could have had tremendous pressure on Egon in the social surroundings of 1904. Schiele's obsession with sex and his own experiences, which are close to perversity, could be the pressure of the social stigma he was given by his father's insanity and death. "Nude Black-Haired Girl" portrays more than the innocence of youth which he claims of this young girl, who is posed almost seductively with a body of a young woman who has experienced life. Schiele has made use of a slight twist in the girls body to make her look more seductive. Her hands and arms are old and over emphasized, with pouting lips and inviting eyes which almost call out to the viewer. The mass solid of black hair is contrasted by the sensitive flowing lines of her body. The sharp angular line of her hips and leg direct the viewer to the focal point, being the face. This work can be compared to Munch's "Puberty" (Vide 24). Munch made use of a young girl who almost portrays a sense of fear

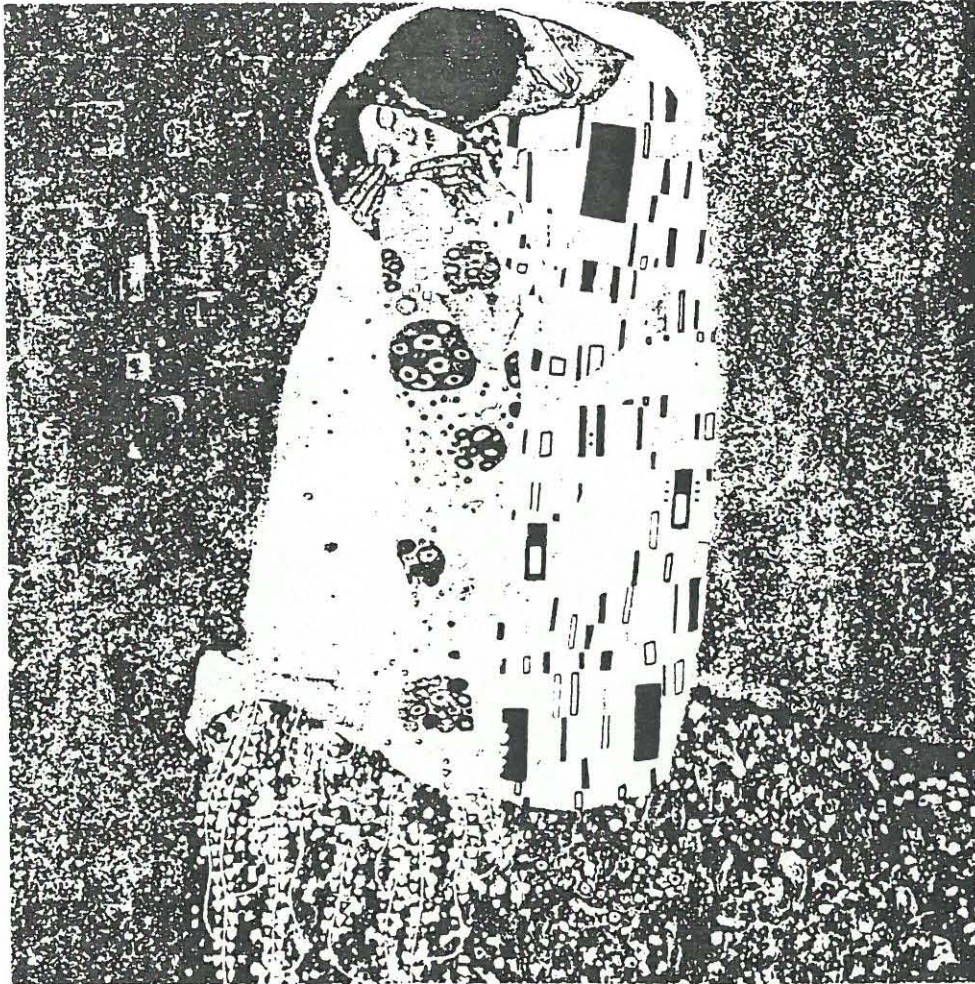
as she sits on her bed. Her nude frail body is closed and almost protected by her arms unlike Schiele's girl. The feeling of innocence surrounds the painting, her body is that of a young girl in her puberty stage. "Recumbent Woman" (1917) portrays a naked woman lying in a seductive position with the harshness of sexual frustration etched on her face.

Egon Schiele's own happiness to settle down in society and have a family has a muted sense of erotica. His painting "The Family" (1918) (Vide 27) show Schiele portraying himself, his wife and unconceived child. The bodies are not the tortured, emaciated nudes of previous works. Schiele is seen here embracing his wife and this was a change to the self-image paintings of his past. This change in his painting did not last as Schiele died from Spanish influenza not long after it was completed.

Egon Schiele might have been spared the sexual intimidation which nineteenth century society gave him, had he been in a politically different situation, where there was less stress and fewer pressures from the "Moralists" who could not live up to their own standards. The pressure of the dictatorship only helped aggravate the personal and emotional problems of Egon Schiele. Therefore he could only release his emotional frustration by producing visual interpretations of his feelings. His emotions had possibly been manipulated by the political and social surroundings of his period.

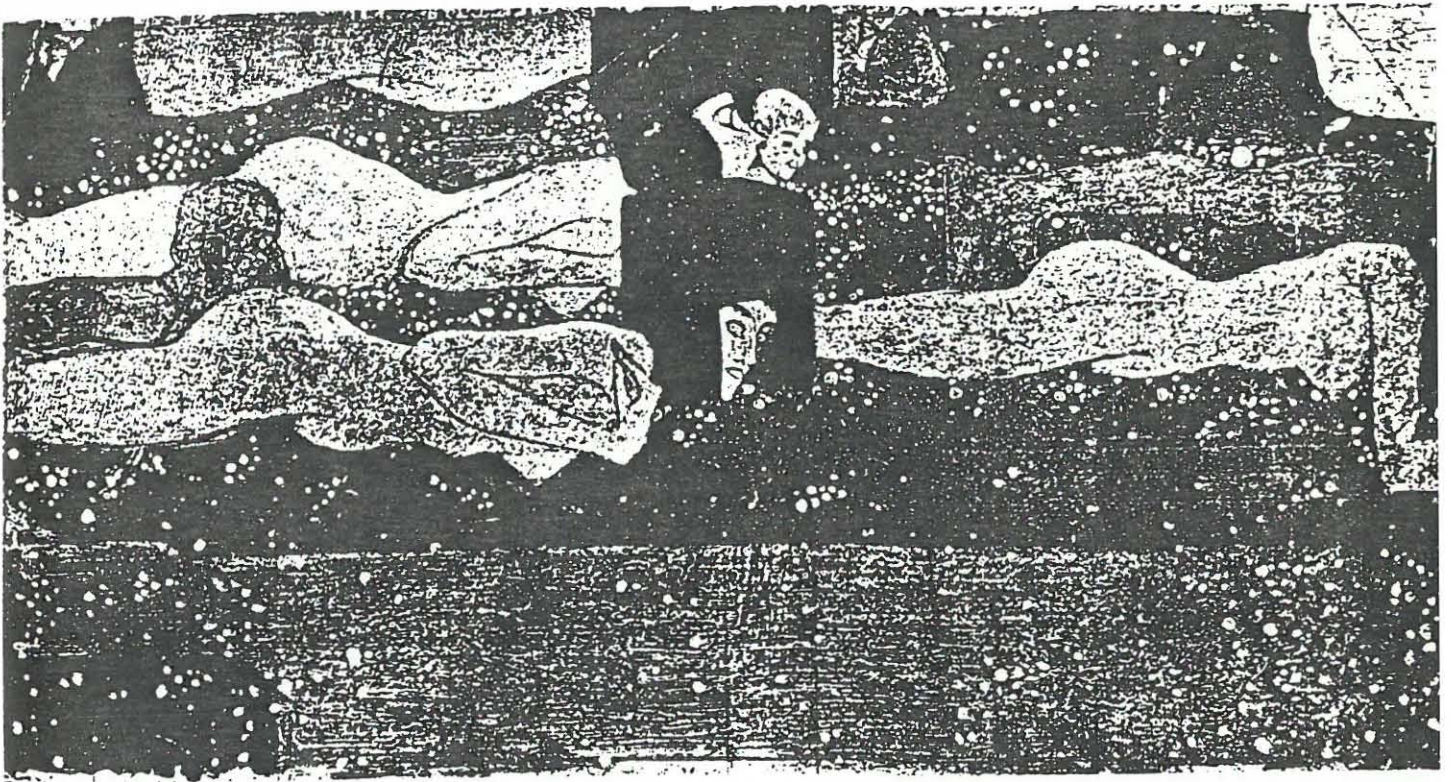


Vide 21 Portrait of Hans Massaman  
Egon Schiele



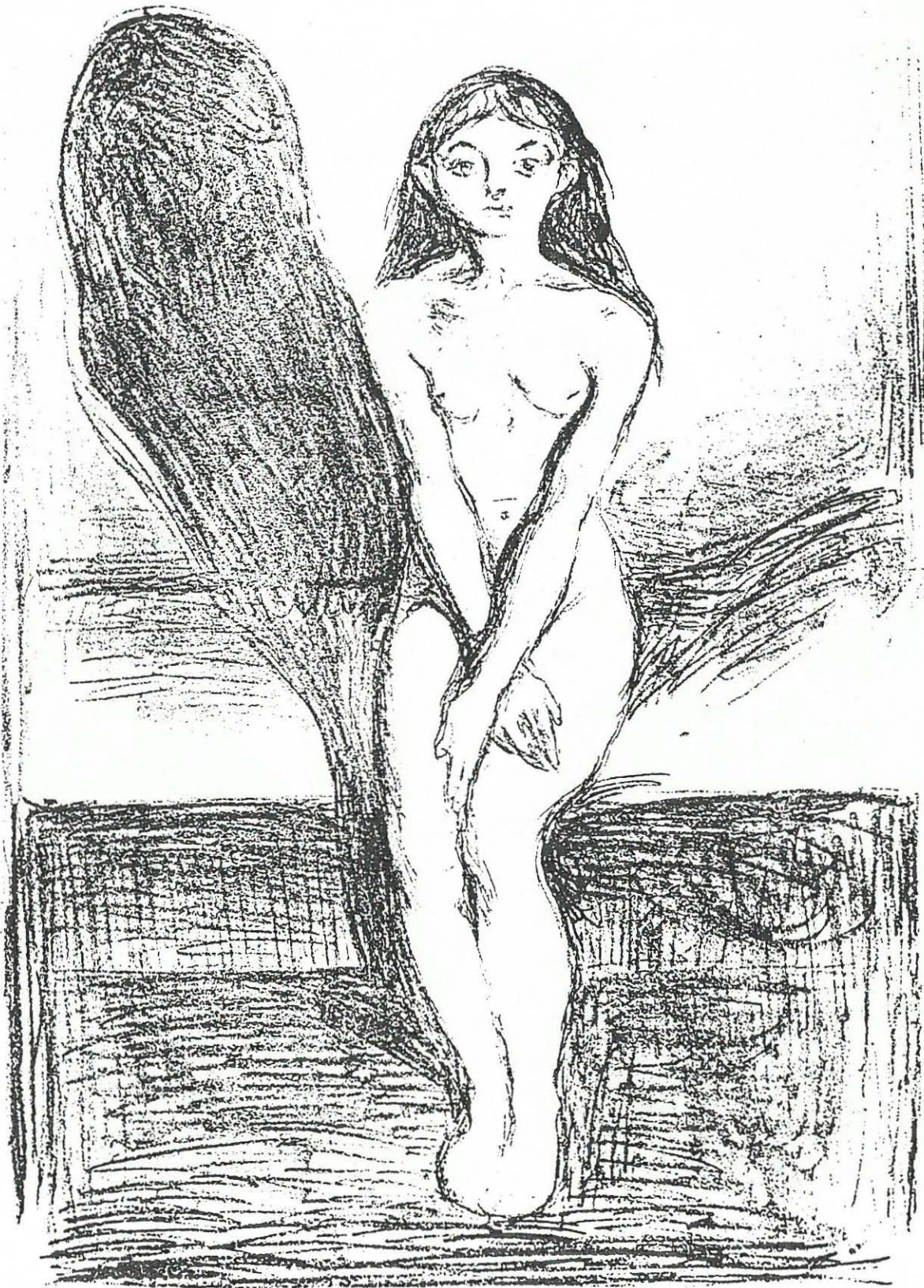
Vide 22 The Kiss

Gustav Klimt



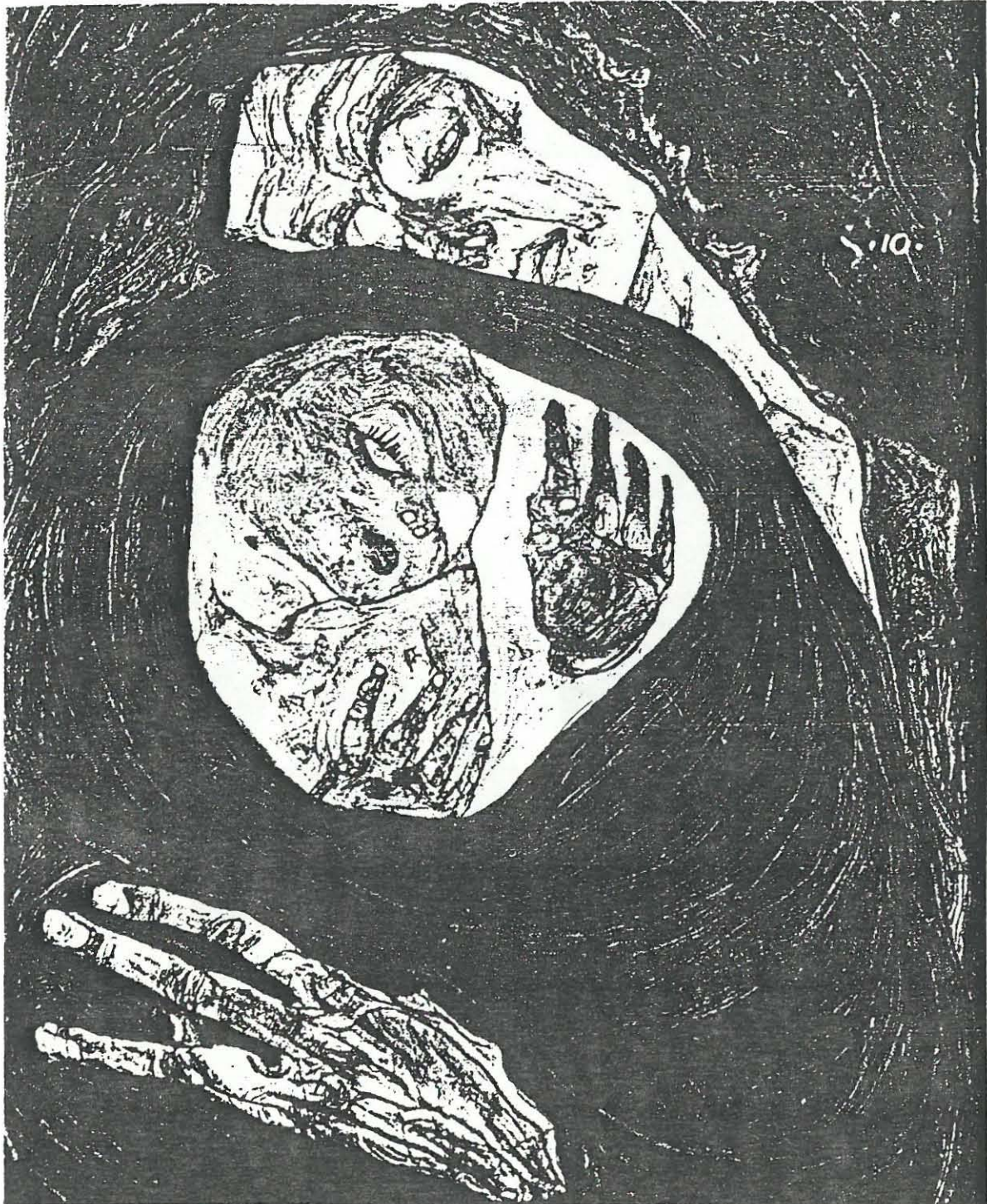
Vide 23 Watersprites

Egon Schiele



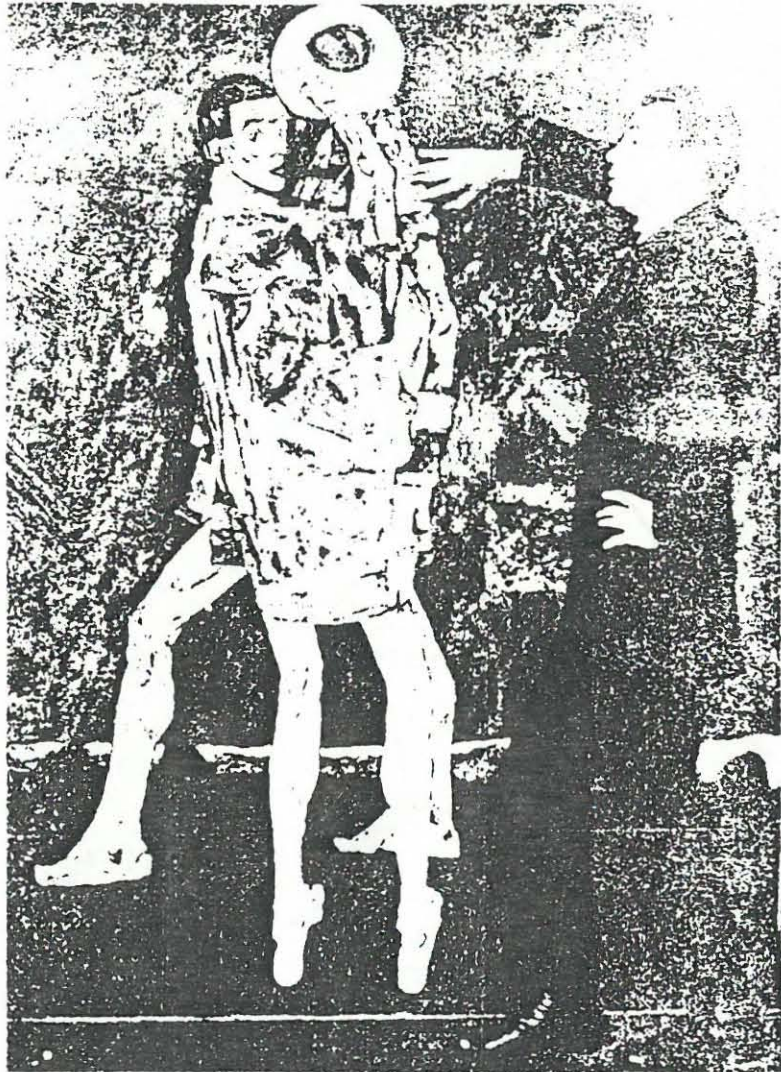
Vide 24 Puberty

Edvard Munch



Vide 25 Dead Mother and Child

Egon Schiele



Vide 26 Self-Portrait with Saint  
Egon Schiele



Vide 27 The Family

Egon Schiele

GEORGE GROSZ: "MANIPULATOR OF POLITICAL  
AND WAR ART"

7.1 BACKGROUND

George Grosz was born in 1893 in Berlin. Between 1912 and 1914 Grosz studied at the Royal Arts and Crafts School in Berlin. Grosz used his sale of work of "Berlin Night Life" to pay for his studies. These drawings prepared him for later works he did in disgust of post-war Germany and mankind in general.

In 1913 his visit to Paris introduced him to the work of the Cubists and their off-shoots and he was impressed particularly by Delaunay and the Italian Futurists (1909) which was one of the important modern movements. Filippo Marinetti (1876 - 1944) an Italian poet named the "Futurists" in an article "Le Figaro". His manifesto on the glorification of war above the beauty of past masterpieces, "Winged Victory of Samothrace" was followed by a manifesto on futurist painting. This was signed by Umberto Boccioni (1882 - 1916), Carlo Carra (1881 - 1966), Russolo, Giacomo Balla (1871 - 1958) and Gino Severini (1883 - 1966) all painters.

Grosz was called to do duty in the army during the First World War (1914). After two years he was taken ill and was sent to recuperate in Berlin. During this period he began to do caricatures of the corruption and horror of the First World War. In 1917 Grosz was recalled to do duty and ended his military career in an asylum. Here he made observations and drawings on how the personnel and administration behaved.

After the war Grosz joined the Berlin Dada and its left wing, Bias. He undertook numerous commissions, in stage designs and worked with periodicals, as well as his own satirically political and social caricatures. When the reality of the human race became intolerable Grosz would turn to fantasy, as in "The Dedication to Oskar Panizza" 1917 - 1918. This work was inspired by Carlo Carra's (1881 - 1966) "Funeral of the Anarchist Galli". Blood dominates the painting, with build-



dings standing at all angles. Munch's work is a prominent subject. Here "Death" sits on a coffin surrounded by a crazy mob of people. The people are wearing horrible masks "Humanity is swept into a hell of its own making" (1:317).

Grosz became very involved with the November Group in 1919. The group members were expressionists. This enabled the artists to obtain support and commissions and recognition at art schools in Germany. Other members were Walter Gropius the architect and Erich Mendelsohn the poet and musician. Many aims of the November group were used in the program of the Weimar Bauhaus. The Bauhaus was a school of architecture, design and craftsmanship of modern culture, the Bauhaus had tremendous influence on art schools. It was founded in 1919 at Weimar, in Germany, by Walter Gropius (1883 - 1969) the architect. The Bauhaus moved to Dessau in 1925 and later to Berlin, where, in 1933 the Nazi's closed it down. Among the teachers were Paul Klee (1879 - 1940), Wassily Kandinsky (1866 - 1944) and Lyonel Feininger (1871 - 1956). The Bauhaus attempted to deal with such problems as machine production.

Grosz started drawing themes of sex and violence on personal and social levels. These works showed his hatred of the bureaucracy. Grosz used mainly line drawings with fluid water-colour to express his art. This was an easy and quick method to capture the situation.

When the Nazi Regime dominated Germany, Grosz found that he was always in trouble with the authorities and threats were made against his life. In 1930 Grosz moved to the United States. Here he did not take such a harsh stand against society, however with the outbreak of World War II, Grosz painted the bitter hatred and at times deep personal disillusionment. Until his death in 1959 Grosz always held a feeling of disgust for human beings.

## 7.2 POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

George Grosz was a Communist in much the same way that Käthe Kollwitz felt for

the humanitarian rights of the working class. Grosz found living in the centre of the European wars, with dictators manipulating every aspect of the German lifestyle, an outrageous shock to the outside world. The German Nazism under Hitler had control over nearly every aspect of the German life. He used manipulative tactics and false promises of a better nation to obtain the position of manipulator. Hitler's brutal tactics against the people who did not follow his regime and against the Jews caused uproar in many countries. The freedom of normal living, as found in other countries, had become dominated by strict military discipline with humanrights being totally annihilated.

George Grosz was among the left wing artists of 1918. Their hope was that out of the struggle and chaos of World War I would come an equal society with peace and freedom for all. Grosz became a member of the November Group which united and became the Workers' Council for art in 1919. They drew up many manifestos which contained socialist idealism and revivalist religion. Many artists joined similar groups, all with the same aim as the November group. Their aims were:

State support for artists and art;

Far more commissions from industry; and

A new organisation of the old art schools.

Unfortunately the social idealism did not last long because the workers were apprehensive to aid the artists whose art work did not appeal to them, and financially the capitalist-bourgeois were more able to support the artists. The strong Nazi right wing element in Germany in 1924 caused the artists, like George Grosz, to become disillusioned and cynical. The Bauhaus was formed to provide artists a place to project a new relationship between artist and society. The pressure of the Nazis soon led to the Bauhaus move from Berlin to Dessau, and by 1925 the socialist ideals were exchanged for a training centre for artists, craftsmen and designers for an industrial-capitalist society. George Grosz was disgusted with the political and social structure of Germany. This he portrayed in his work, and he had no option but to leave Germany when

the strength of the Nazi power put pressure on him.

In the United States he was not directly involved in the politics of Europe but was able to voice his opinion on the brutality of the German dictatorship during World War II.

### 7.3 ART AS A PLATFORM TO SPEAK

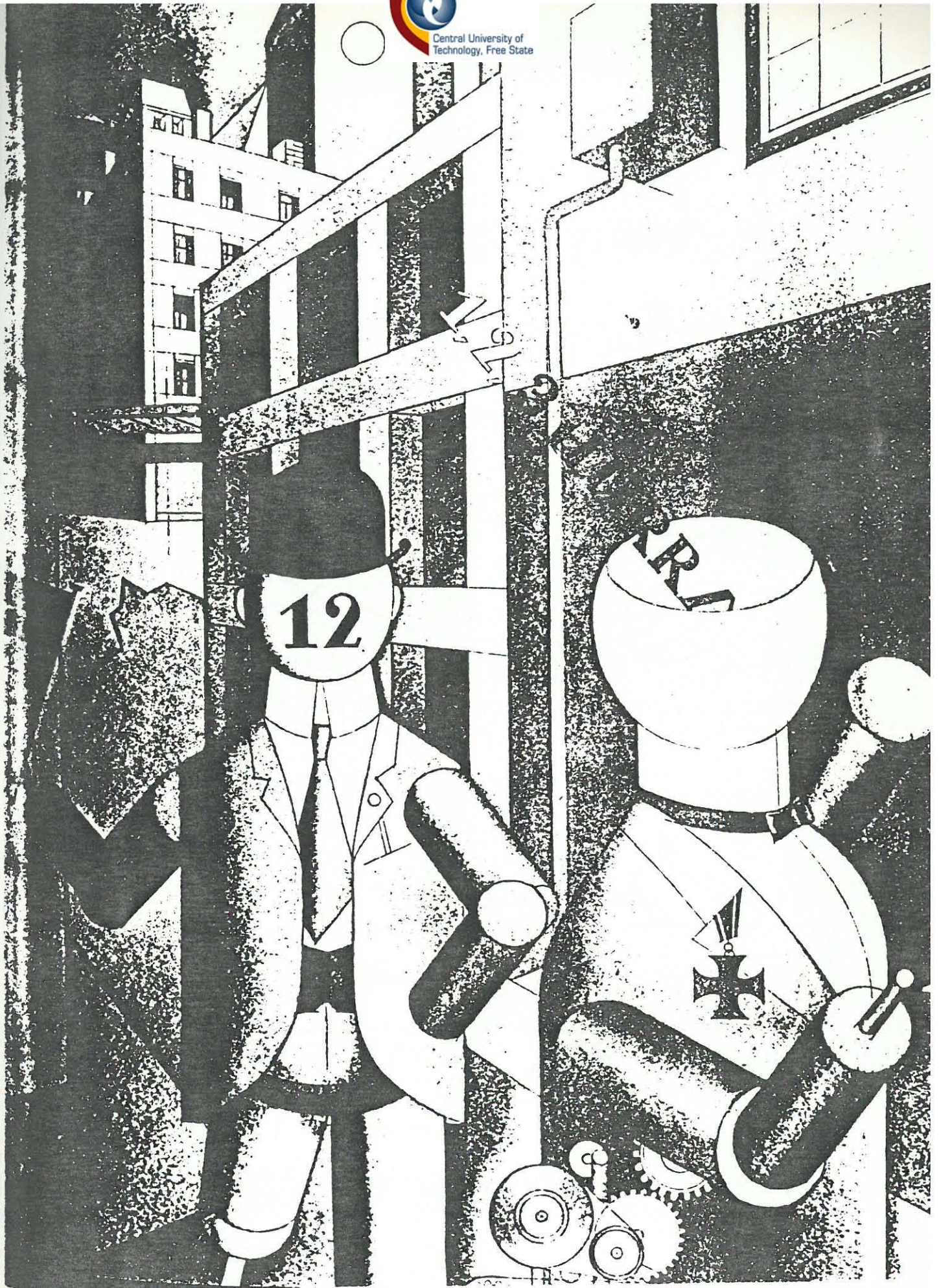
George Grosz used his paintings and drawings to depict the horrors of post-war Berlin, with its streets littered with war cripples and beggars, and its bars crowded with perverts and prostitutes. To Grosz the world is owned by four breeds of pigs; the capitalists; the officer; the priest; and the hooker, "whose other form is the socialite wife" (20:52). One of George Grosz's friends called him "A Bolshevick in painting, nauseated by painting" (20:52) but Grosz declared that it was not painting but mankind that made him sick.

He objected mostly to art which glorified the racketeers, the wealthy entrepreneur and all those monocled and mustachioed Germans who had grown fat off war profits and who were about to increase their wealth with the inflation and collapse of the economic system.

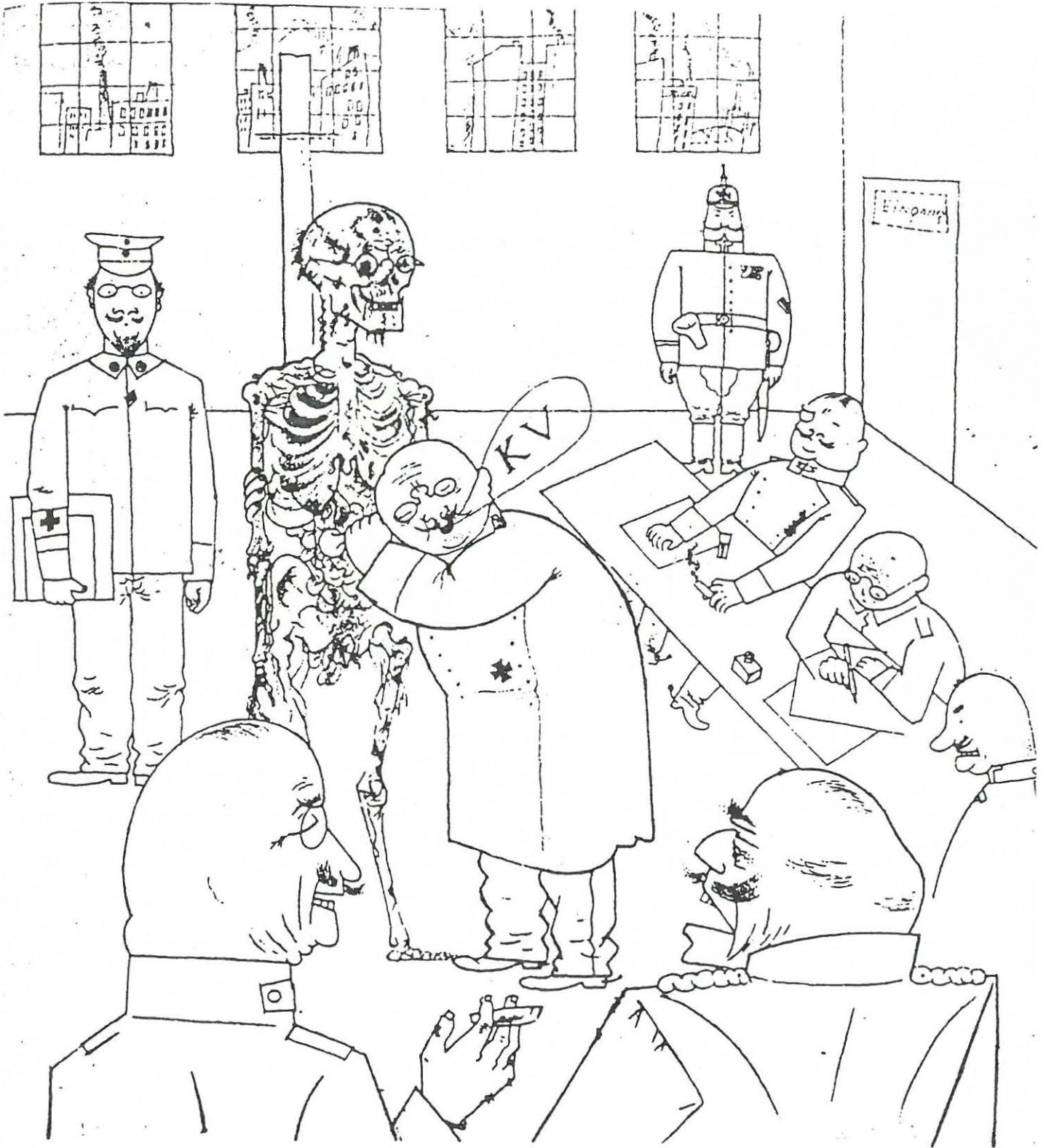
"Republican Automatons" 1920 (Vide 28). Grosz's propagandist drawings show his people as becoming symbols of class distinction. The bowler hat, duelling scar, spats and a gold chain would be those of a rich capitalist, while an ex-soldier with torn medal ribbons leaning on crutches shows the poorer class. In George Grosz's "The Workers" (1921) the difference in class is shown by the clothes and in the way the working class have carried shovels and wood. Grosz also shows the workers' factory in the background with a bourgeoisie house next to the factories. The man in charge of the workers carries nothing and walks erect. His clothing is not torn or patched. Grosz's "The little Murderer" (1918) portrays the artist's disapproval of sexual indecency and social violence. Grosz also shows the vices of alcohol in society.

"Fit for Service" (1918) shows his hatred of the doctors and Prussian officers who enlisted unfit soldiers for duty in the First World War, and the artist's disgust with the bureaucracy of that time. In this work Grosz's use of satirical drawing pokes fun at the military regime. This linear approach was a convenient means to capture an emotional feeling expressing a situation which he felt very strongly about. Grosz simplified his figures and distorted certain features to capture the arrogance of the military officers. The growth of Nazism caused Grosz to express even more horror and brutality at his fellow man. "A Piece of My World II" (1938) shows a group of old tattered soldiers marching through the ruins. Once more he has portrayed hatred for war.

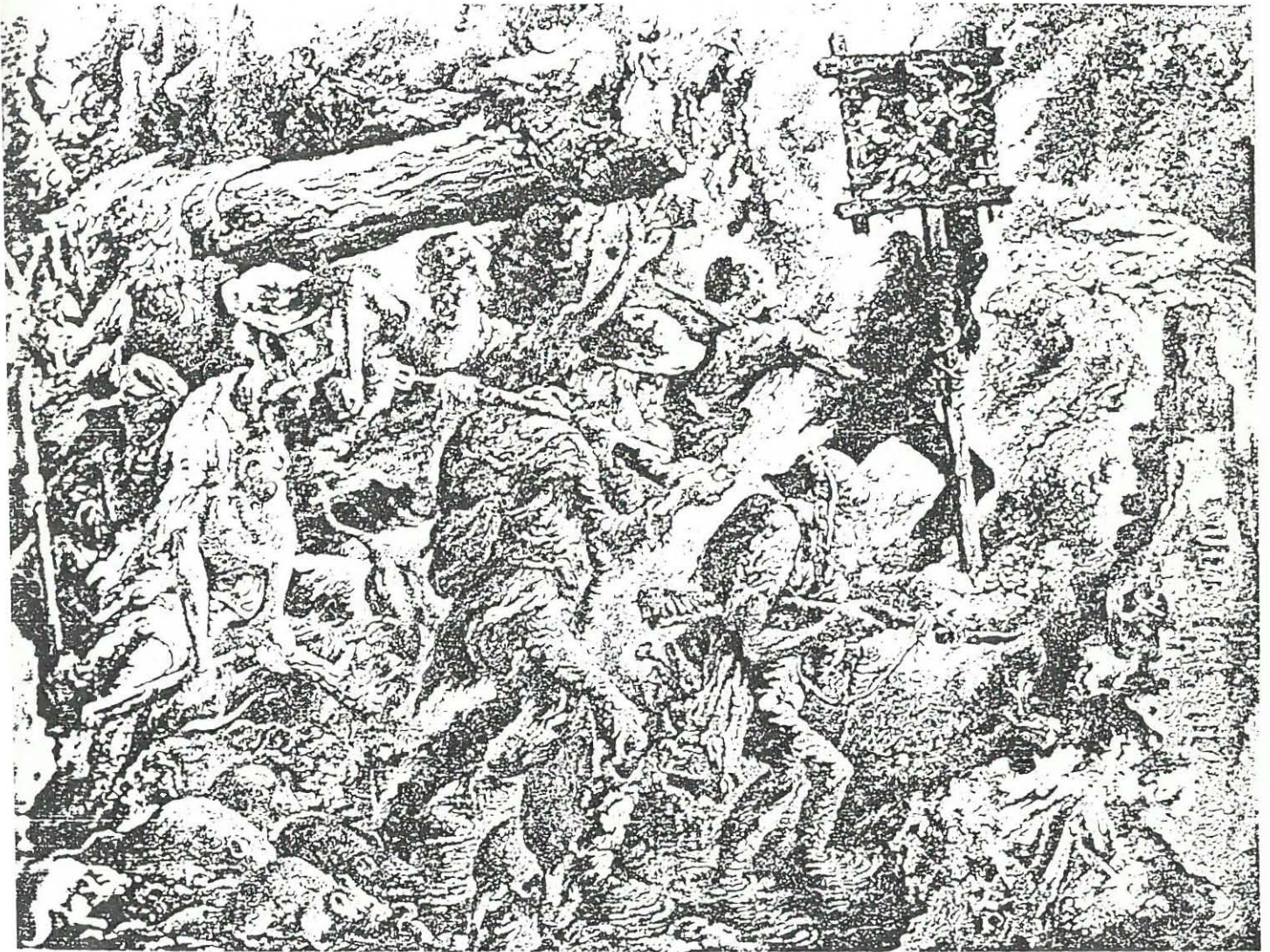
George Grosz was much like Vincent Van Gogh, Edvard Munch, Egon Schiele and Käthe Kollwitz, all humanitarians in their own way, each aware of how humans suffered and their own suffering being projected in their work. Grosz manipulated his viewer through the actuality of war and the unfairness of politics. His aim was to show the truth about the "Ideal" government and the great German dictatorship. Grosz must have antagonised the authorities, for they threatened him. This, possibly, was his aim in his art. Grosz portrayed the reality of the human behavior to one another, many of his scenes were horrific and shocking. It was his intention to make his viewer aware of the ugliness of mankind. Grosz tried to stimulate an awareness of what is happening to fellow humans and a hatred of unjust control. Ironically his work becomes the controlling force of the viewer as it stimulates manipulative ideas into the viewers thoughts, such thoughts being anti-bureaucracy.



Vide 28 Republican Automatons



Vide 29 Fit for Service



Vide 30 A Piece of my World II

George Grosz

## CHAPTER 8

Discussion of candidate's practical work with reference to the theoretical influence on the candidate's work of the artists discussed.

*"Are we seeking the truth about man that sets all men free? Or are truths we discover only making some men more free and powerful, while others become more vulnerable to manipulation".*

**-Sidney Jourard, Humanistic psychologist (31:356)**

The candidate feels strongly about how our lives and environments seem to be losing control to manipulators. No matter how hard one tries to avoid manipulation, there will always be manipulation in some form or other. The candidate is aware that fighting the norms of society would be a losing battle and has therefore felt the need to portray how society is manipulated in different ways.

The candidate chooses to investigate in the theoretical component the artists who probably could relate to social, political, military and religious manipulation. Their work does not always portray the horror but the undertones of suffering or rejection comes through, as seen in Vincent Van Gogh's work, "Sorrow" (Vide 10).

The candidate finds it difficult to understand the cruelty of reality and the inhuman torment humans inflict on each other, always trying to get the upper hand. This escapism of reality and fantasy could be because the candidate was born into a theatrical family and was brought up in the environment of the theatre. From early childhood the candidate was introduced to the escapism of the unrealistic world of the theatre, but even here after the curtain would drop and the horror of the over-demanding director would appear, the candidate never knew if it was for real or merely an act. In this instance the candidate can

relate to Munch's obsession with death "is it real?" Munch often asked repeatedly. The candidate uses art as an escapism from the realities of the inhuman society in which unnatural death by war and murder is almost an everyday experience.

The candidate approached the practical component with a repertoire of images that matured as the course continued. The candidate became manipulated in a number of ways amongst others in financial affairs where every cent had to be accounted for, and in certain thoughts and ideas which became controlled by proven theories. The candidate was also made more aware of everyday manipulation in such fields as for example advertising.

The candidate's earlier works are more personal and tend to be a release of an inborn awareness of being manipulated "Metamorphoses of a Ragdoll in a Shopping trolley" (Vide 33 ). The subject matter covers a number of themes such as:

1. Birth
2. Education
3. Economy
4. Politics
5. War
6. Death

The blindfolds and masks which appear throughout the paintings are used by the candidate to symbolize controlled humans. The rag dolls portray the manipulated.

#### "Control From Birth" (Vide 31)

This painting reflects the baby being controlled from the womb to the incubator then into the cot with the educational counting beads and letter blocks to complete the composition.

The candidate depicts the womb as a transparent bag containing the baby. The transparent bag is symbolic of a container which confines the human e.g. office. The transparent concept is carried through to the incubator. The baby in the womb is attached to an umbilical cord, this according to the candidate being the first form of human manipulation. The baby in the incubator is

controlled by pipes which lead the viewer from the womb to the incubator. The third baby is in a cot, the candidate sees this as a confined space, in the same way as the child will discover in later years that each person is confined to his own space e.g. the home. The letter blocks and beads refer to the child's education.

The candidate made use of warm colours of the cot contrasting against the cold colours of the incubator and a dark background. The dark background being the unknown world which the child will enter into in later years while the warm colours of the cot shows the world in which the baby is accustomed, The painting is divided into two sections; the womb and the incubator at the top, and the cot and blocks at the bottom. This leads the viewer from the progression of pre-birth to the learning process.

"Show some Enthusiasm" (Vide 32)

Here a very personal approach has been used. This painting shows how the teacher controls and moulds the (clockwork) children even though the teacher him/herself is controlled. The candidate has been in the teaching profession and is aware of the moulding of stereotype clockwork children. The children who do not fit into the system find themselves in another box, smashed by hammers attached to the teachers desk.

Compositionally the candidate made use of a strong triangle, the teacher's head being the top of the triangle with the boxes being the base, so as to lead the viewer's eye to the teacher who is the controller, and therefore the focal point. The hammers add to the movement of the painting, their dramatic blows crush the dolls on the desk, showing how easy it is to eliminate unwanted elements (dolls).

The dark blues in the painting have been contrasted by reds and yellows. Blood is used to accentuate that dolls have a certain human quality about them. The candidate uses a strong side light causing cast shadows, which adds to the drama of the painting.

"Metamorphosis of a Ragdoll in a Shopping Trolley" (Vide 33).

This is the candidates' interpretation of the opening quotation by Francis Bacon, "We are all like meat hung up, sold, bought manipulated in every way possible" (22:22).

This painting invites the viewer to manipulate one of the ragdolls, by means of strings attached to the ragdoll on the left which can be controlled by the viewer. The candidate made use of mixed media to strengthen the composition, for e.g. real tiles on the floor, real shopping trolley, ragdolls, rope and metal hooks. These also being elements to which the viewer can relate. The every-day street scene in the background is calm by comparison to the macabre foreground.

The warm colours of the foreground contrast against the static greys and blues of the background. The rope is used to visually connect all the ragdolls to each other, creating a circular movement.

"Destruction of a Trolley" Series I (Vide 34)

Here the candidate used pencil to portray the process of destruction. Photographs have been added to help show the method of destroying the trolley with the ragdoll inside. The first drawing is the ragdoll with a gas mask, Series II (Vide 35) The next two drawings show the dumped trolley undergoing mutilation. The candidate sees this work as symbolic of the destruction of man who is used to his utmost and then dumped and destroyed.

The candidate used a contrast of refined lines and hard rapid lines to portray the destruction. The three drawings portray the systematic stage that the ragdoll and trolley underwent to be destroyed. The photographs accentuate this dramatic happening.

"The Final Stage" (Vide 36).

The ragdoll is totally squeezed into the trolley, a process undertaken by a steamroller. The candidate sees this as the way man reacts when undertaking to destroy other lives.

The contrast of the soft ragdoll against the hard metal trolley is symbolic of the twentieth century e.g. love against hate. This trolley is attached by means of a rope to the trolley on the painting "Metamorphosis of a Ragdoll in a Shopping Trolley" (Vide 33), the link between mutilation and the final destruction.

"No Difference between Man and Beast" (Vide 37).

The candidate again makes use of the ragdolls. These rag dolls are strung up next to the animals with a child's distorted face peering through the window. This painting exposes man's brutality with fellow humans and animals even the lamb which could have been out of a fairytale is part of this macabre scene. The child is distorted to show an almost wicked instinct, which some children conceal while still young but project later in their adulthood. Schiele's portrait of a young girl, "Nude Black-haired Girl" has this quality (The not so innocent).

The strong use of red reflects the violence of mankind. The ragdolls frame the child's face, while the rope forms a strong diagonal linking the dolls together. The shallow foreground progresses to a street in the background.

"Man or Monster?" (Vide 38).

Here the candidate has entered a new sub-section namely the world of scientific manipulation. The candidate's investigation led to an interest into the question of how scientific experiments on humans and on the birth of babies can be controlled. The growth and malfunctions of babies cultivated in laboratories astounded the candidate. This painting depicts distorted embryos with the scientist examining his creations.

The eyes and nose of the scientist have been distorted not just to give the viewer the feeling of seeing the face through glass but also to strengthen the symbolic implications of distortion. The light comes from the viewer's right side, highlighting certain parts of the scientist and his experiments. In the foreground the candidate used a box projecting into the painting. This breaks the dark foreground. The experiments have been arranged in a diagonal

formation, to prevent dividing the painting into two parts.

"Man or Robot" (Vide 39)

This is an extension of the sub-section scientific experiments in the laboratory. The "robot-man" is closely examined by the scientist who is busy with wires in his head. Another scientist monitors the happenings on a screen. The robot's almost human appearance is betrayed by the hole in his head and a missing arm. The cold colours of the floor are contrasted by the warm flesh and brown colours of the figures and equipment. The linear elements of the machine on the left lead to the focal point, the robot's head.

"The Masked Controllers" (Vide 40)

Here the candidate looks at political manipulation. The two figures are wearing wigs and masks of famous politicians. The viewer is left to his own conclusion. The female figure is manipulating a marionette while the back figure helps by pulling one string. The use of meat is introduced into the painting, as a symbol of deterioration.

The candidate makes use of a triangle by means of the arms of the female figure which are stretched outwards, this leads the viewer to the focal point being the head of the figure in the foreground.

The figure in the foreground represents the deterioration of politics, by the use of a carcass forming the female's body while the masks show that politicians also put on an act for the public. The marionette represents the public. The politicians are playing with the lives of their nations. The figures are placed near the foreground with a very shallow background, so as to compliment the busy foreground. The candidate can relate to George Grosz in this painting. His interpretation of the mockery of the political figures in "The Dedication of Oskar Panizza" (1917) made the candidate feel that the modern politicians are no better than those of the past.

"Political Unrest" (Vide 41).

This painting is a political protest showing violence of a clash between con-

trolled police and protestors. The candidate made use of the "Wanted" poster to reflect on the sometimes unfair questions that would arise out of a situation like this.

The policeman dominates the composition, his legs form a strong triangle which frames the protestors. The candidate placed the figures in this position so as to show the power of the law. The fallen female figure reaches out in fear of being hit. The background is much calmer while the foreground shows a lot of movement. The candidate placed the fallen figure on the right to balance the open area on the left.

"The Innocent" (Vide 42).

This is a new sub-heading, the candidate deals with war manipulation and death shadowing the victims of war. Although the candidate has not been directly exposed to conventional war. The candidate has always had a sympathy with the victims of war. This painting shows an aged man carrying his wounded child. Two uniformed skeleton guards escort him to his dying place. The composition is filled with these four figures with hardly any background. This was done so as not to distract from the horror of the victims of war, the old man and child. The child is turned to the viewer with a questioning expression as if to ask "what is happening?" to show that children are not always aware of the realities of war.

The focal point moves from the child's face to the old man who has been wounded. The old man is blindfolded, to symbolize man's blindness in war. The two skeletons flank the old man and child on either side forming a guard of honour. Sombre colours have been used to portray this morbid scene.

"The Cold War" (Vide 43).

This painting portrays a soldier set in a barren landscape. He has been shot between the eyes and the blood from his head forms a red flag, this splits into two flags, those of Russia and America. These run into a drain (metal) and reflects the candidates feeling that the major powers will eventually destroy

themselves.

The flag forms a triangle which leads up to the soldier's head. His dome-like head breaks the horizontal background. The drain is the candidate's representation of waste of total destruction. The soldier's strong figure shows the power of human war. The work extends beyond the format of the canvas in order to involve the viewer.

"God Created, Man Destroys" (Vide 44).

The candidate feels that war is slowly destroying the world and that an atomic war will be the final destruction. This painting is the follow up to "The Cold War" (Vide 43). In this painting the candidate places the soldier in a confined area therefore the pressure of the hand squeezing the blood out of the world is more powerful. The reflective glass in the mask of the soldier was placed there for the viewer to view himself. The candidate makes use of military colours to portray the uniform of the soldier. This is contrasted by the blue of the world-globe and violent red blood which runs out of the globe.

"Let the children play" (Vide 45).

The candidate uses the scarecrow as a symbol of past wars while the children dancing round the scarecrow are symbols of hope for the future. This painting seemingly contradicts the negative view expressed in the other paintings. The children could not make a worse job of controlling the world than the so called manipulators of our time are doing. Unlike Munch, Van Gogh and Grosz, the candidate has a strong conviction that Christianity can still survive, save and inspire no matter what happens. Therefore the church is placed in the painting. The crow, the symbol of evil, casts a disturbing eye on the children.

"The Master of the Game" (Vide 46).

This painting shows a young controller who plays a game of chess with mannequins. The visual appearance is that of a blind person looking into space. The candidate makes use of an empty room for the setting to show the loneliness and emptiness of many controllers.

The focal point is the controller is placed in the foreground with the chess-board in front of him. The controller seems unaware of the fact that he is squashing the mannequin. The candidate sees this as an example that many manipulators do not care what they do to their subjects and are unaware of the harm they do. The controller's arms enclose the chess-board while behind him is a spacious room. The candidate did this to contain the focal point within the dominating figure.

#### "Suspended Birth" (Vide 47)

The candidate uses perspex for the transparent effect. The figure is that of a static mechanical object suspended in mid-air. The perspex box in the front portrays the womb in which the embryo is situated, a statement of new life is portrayed. The perspex figure has been transformed into a shooting target, symbolizing man as a prime target of society.

The perspex box which contains plastic pipes is the focal point which links the womb up with the box. The figure has a textured surface, which portrays marks of torture. The pain the figure is experiencing is shown on her face while the background is transformed into a target range wall. The candidate used more flowing brush strokes and approached this work with a more dynamic concept. The candidate can relate this work to the agony of Edvard Munch's, "The Scream"(Vide 14).

#### "The Conclusion" (Vide 48).

The candidate concludes the series of practical work with a three-dimensional work which consists of a ragdoll on a stake. This is placed on a tri-angular painting which portrays a painted ragdoll behind a glass sheet. Here the candidate sees the entrapped person who is trying to get out, only that once he is out, there is a worse situation outside. The background of the painting has a pattern of a grid painted on it. This strengthens the feeling of entrapment. The ragdoll on the stake is badly mutilated. This shows the harm that is inflicted upon each other. The wood and leather on the stake are contrasted with the

wire and glass (The warmth against the cold clinical elements). The repetition of the triangular form of the stake and painting are used to symbolise the confinement which mankind builds for himself.

The candidate feels that everyone is manipulated somehow. The candidate came to the conclusion that she can not escape the reality of manipulation, therefore the paintings were an escapism from the manipulated world.



Vide 31 Control from Birth

C. Emmenis

Oil on Canvas

97 x 110 cm



Vide 32 Show some Enthusiasm

C. Emmenis

200 x 100 cm

Oil on Canvas



Vide 33 **Metamorphosis of a Ragdoll in a shopping trolley**

**C. Emmenis**

**200 x 300 cm**

**Mixed Media**

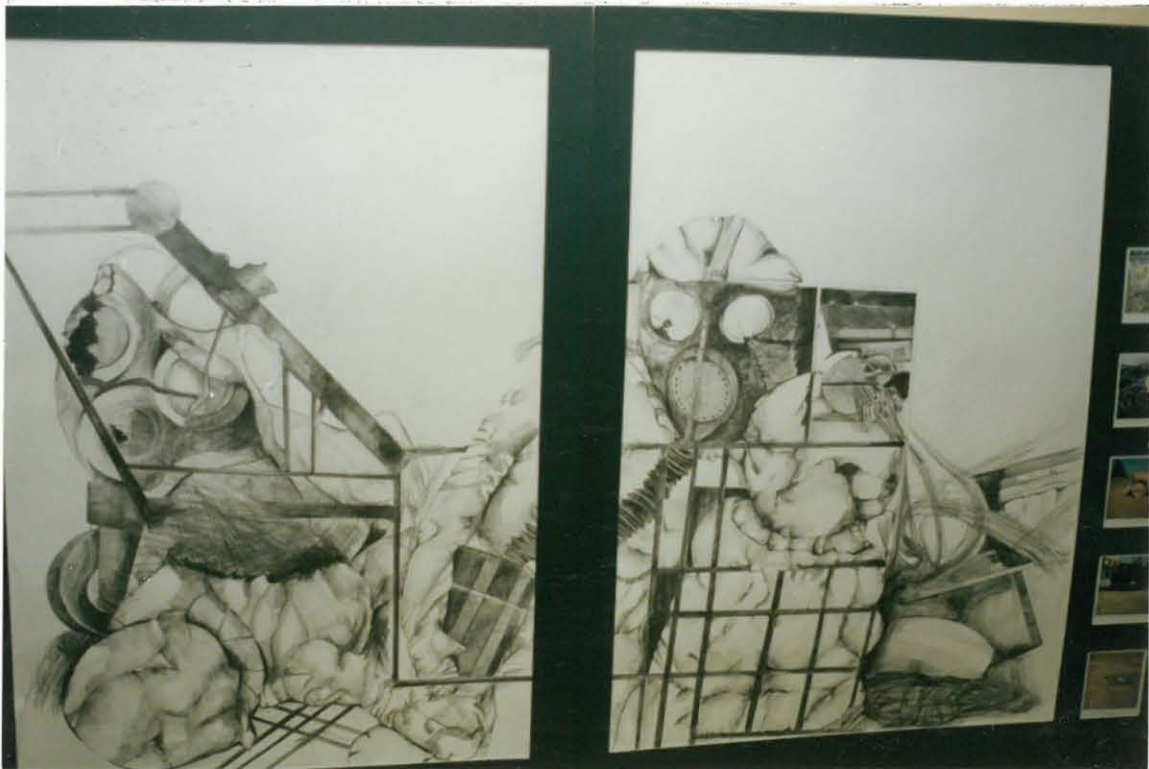


Vide 34 Destruction of a trolley Series I

C. Emmenis

60 x 100 cm

Pencil and Photographs



Vide 35 Series II

C. Emmenis

40 x 60 cm

Pencil

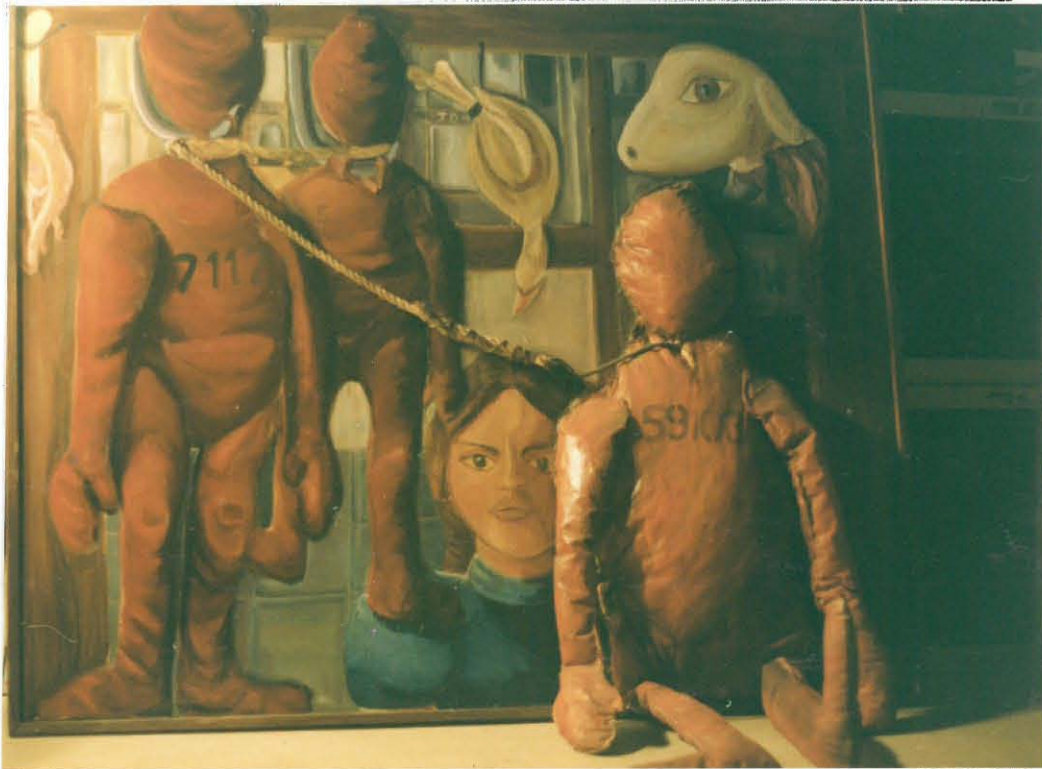


Vide 36 The Final Stage

C. Emmenis

Mixed Media

85 x 120 cm



Vide 37 No difference between Man and Beast

C. Emmenis

Mixed Media

103 x 115 cm



Vide 38 **Man or Monster**

**C. Emmenis**

**Oil on Canvas**

**60 x 85 cm**



Vide 39 Man or Robot II

C. Emmenis

Oil on Canvas

75 x 120 cm



Vide 40 The Masked Controllers

Mixed Media

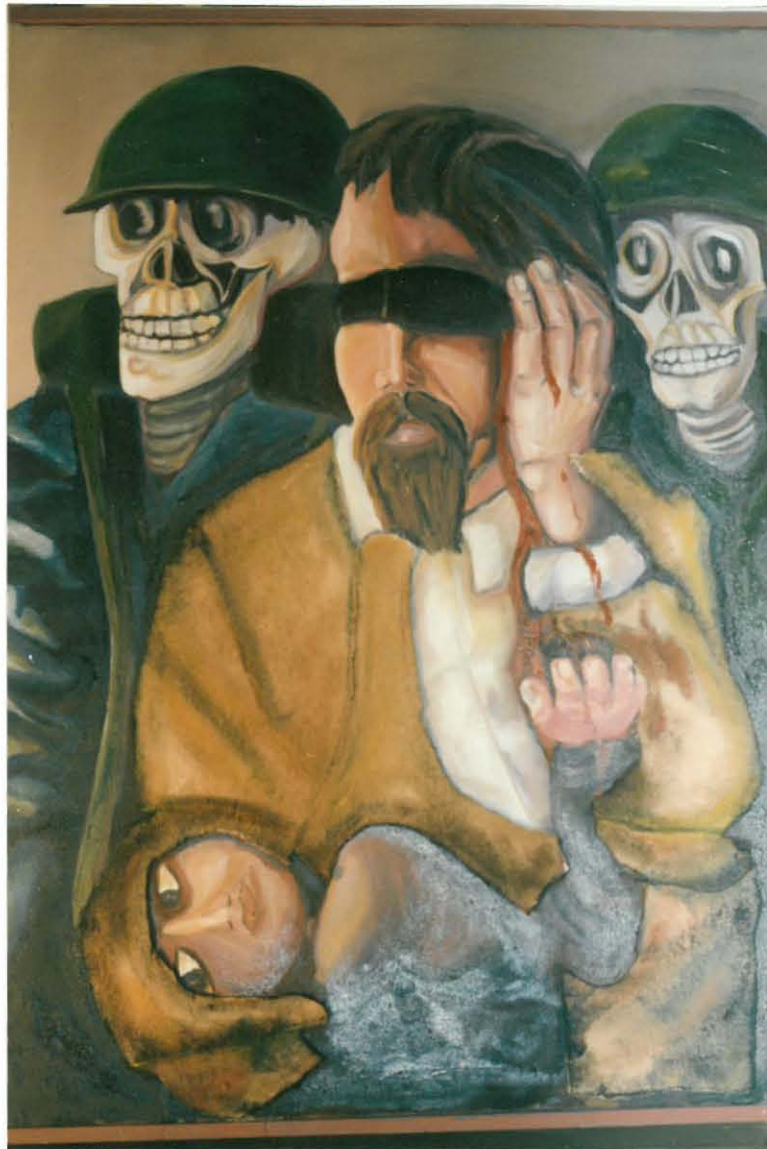
75 x 100 cm



Vide 41 Political Unrest

Oil on Canvas

95 x 110 cm



Vide 42 The Innocent

Oil on Canvas

90 x100 cm



Vide 43 The Cold War

Mixed Media

100 x 120 cm



Vide 44 God Created, Man Destroys

Oil on Canvas

55 x 82 cm



Vide 45 Let the children play

60 x 170 cm

Oil on Canvas



Vide 46 The Master of the Game

Oil on Canvas

75 x 120 cm



Vide 47 **Suspended Birth**

**Mixed Media**

100 x 200 cm



Vide 48 Conclusion

Mixed Media

100 x 100 x 100 x 250 cm



Detail of "Conclusion"

CHAPTER 9  
CONCLUSION

The aim of the candidate's research was to discover whether the artists of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century were manipulators or manipulated. The facts that the candidate discovered about the chosen artists led to definite answers in the investigation.

Vincent Van Gogh, Käthe Kollwitz and Egon Schiele were discussed as manipulated while Edvard Munch and George Grosz were examined as the manipulators. The candidate feels that the chosen artists represent numerous other artists who could also have been classified in terms of manipulated or manipulators. The candidate feels that the society in which these artists lived and worked could be present in a present-day situation and can relate to some of the factors which influenced the selected artists.

Vincent Van Gogh, Käthe Kollwitz and Edvard Munch's approach to humanistic subjects and their own troubled lives in living according to the norms of set societies could only encourage the struggle of rejected artists who find themselves manipulated by set rules and norms. Schiele and Grosz cannot be excluded from their own suffering and awareness of the horrors of life.

All the discussed artists suffered severe rejection, yet managed to stand for what they believed in. The forces of the manipulators only encouraged better work and more powerful statements being made and left behind by later generations. A call for viewer awareness comes across in most of the selected artist's works. This the candidate tries to project in the practical component of the Higher National Diploma.

The tragedies which the selected artists suffered cannot be believed by the messages left behind. However, under the circumstances of their time they manipulate the viewers to understand how they were prey to the manipulation of society. The candidate is a sympathiser with all those who are unaware that they are manipulated and denied the truth.

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CHAPTER 11

<u>11. PHOTO INDEX</u>		<u>PAGES</u>
Vide 1	Portrait of Eduard Kosmack Egon Schiele 1910 Oil on canvas 100 x 100 cm Vienna, Oesterreiche Gallerie	13
Vide 2	The face of Mae West (Usable as a Surrealist Apartment) Salvador Dali 1934 - 5 Gouache on Newspaper 100 x 150 cm Private Collection Chicago	14
Vide 3	Shirley Temple, the Youngest Sacred Monster Salvador Dali 1939 Gouache, pastel and collage on board 75 x 100 cm Museum Boymans - van Beuningen, Rotterdam	15
Vide 4	Potato Eaters Vincent Van Gogh 1885 32 x 44 cm Collection V.W. Van Gogh Larem	25
Vide 5	Self Portrait with Mutilated Ear Vincent Van Gogh 1888 35 x 40 cm Rijksmuseum	26

Vide 6	Starry Night	27
	Vincent Van Gogh	
	1889	
	Oil on Canvas	
	73 x 92 cm	
	New York: Museum of Modern Art	
Vide 7	Wheatfield with Cypresses	28
	Vincent Van Gogh	
	1889	
	Oil on Canvas	
	73 x 92 cm	
	London National Gallery	
Vide 8	Wheatfield with Crows	29
	Vincent Van Gogh	
	1890	
	Oil on Canvas	
	50.5 x 100.5 cm	
	Amsterdam Rijksmuseum	
Vide 9	Peasant Bending	30
	Vincent Van Gogh	
	1885	
	Pencil	
	25 x 20 cm	
	Rijksmuseum	
Vide 10	Sorrow	31
	Vincent Van Gogh	
	Black Chalck	
	Walsall Museum	
Vide 11	Vincent's Chair and Pipe	32
	Vincent Van Gogh	

	1888 - 1889	
	Oil on Canvas	
	93 x 73.5 cm	
	London Tate Gallery	
Vide 12	Gauguin's Chair	33
	Vincent Van Gogh	
	1888	
	Oil on Canvas	
	90 x 72 cm	
	Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum	
Vide 13	The Sick Child	44
	Edvard Munch	
	1885 - 6	
	Oil on Canvas	
	119,5 x 118,5 cm	
	Oslo, Nasjonal Galleriet	
Vide 14	The Scream	45
	Edvard Munch	
	1893	
	Oil and gouache on board	
	91 x 74 cm	
	Oslo Nasjonal Galleriet	
Vide 15	Death in the Sickroom	46
	Edvard Munch	
	1893 - 4	
	Casein on Canvas	
	150 x 167	
	Oslo Nasjonal Galleriet	
Vide 16	Suffering first sheet for the "Weavers"	53
	Käthe Kollwitz	

- 1897  
35 x 20 cm  
Lithograph
- Vide 17 Death second sheet for the "Weavers" 54  
Käthe Kollwitz  
1897  
30 x 25 cm  
Lithograph
- Vide 18 The Weavers March Fourth sheet for the "Weavers" 55  
Käthe Kollwitz  
1897  
35 x 40 cm  
Etching
- Vide 19 Attack 56  
Käthe Kollwitz  
1897  
35 x 40 cm  
Etching
- Vide 20 Hans Kollwitz with candle Sketch for "Death" 57  
Käthe Kollwitz  
1895  
Pen and ink  
19 x 17 cm
- Vide 21 Portrait of Hans Massaman 65  
Egon Schiele  
1909  
Oil on Canvas  
120 x 110 cm  
Private collection

Vide 22	The Kiss	66
	Gustav Klimt	
	1908	
	Oil on Canvas	
	180 x 180 cm	
	Vienna, Osterreichische Galerie	
Vide 23	Watersprites	67
	Egon Schiele	
	1907	
	Mixed Media	
	150 x 200 cm	
	Private collection	
Vide 24	Puberty	68
	Edvard Munch	
	1894	
	Oil on Canvas	
	59 x 43 cm	
	Oslo, National Galleriet	
Vide 25	Dead Mother and Child	69
	Egon Schiele	
	1910	
	Oil on Wood	
	32 x 25,7 cm	
	Private collection	
Vide 26	Self-Portrait with Saint	70
	Egon Schiele	
	1913	
	Lost	
Vide 27	The Family	71
	Egon Schiele	

	1918	
	Oil on Canvas	
	60 x 64 cm	
	Vienna Osterreichische Galerie	
Vide 28	Republican Automatons	77
	George Grosz	
	1920	
	Water colour	
	23 x 18 cm	
	The Museum of Art New York	
Vide 29	Fit for Service	78
	George Grosz	
	1918	
	Pen and Ink	
	14 x 13 cm	
	The Museum of Modern Art New York	
Vide 30	A Piece of my World II	79
	George Grosz	
	1938	
	39 cm x 55 cm	
	Estate of George Grosz	
	Princeton New Jersey	
Vide 31	Control from Birth	90
	C. Emmenis	
	1985 - 1986	
	Oil on Canvas	
	97 cm x 110 cm	
Vide 32	Show some Enthusiasm	91
	C. Emmenis	
	200 cm x 100 cm	

	1985-1986	
	Oil on Canvas	
Vide 33	Metamorphosis of a Ragdoll in a Shopping Trolley	92
	C. Emmenis	
	200 cm x 300 cm	
	1985-1986	
	Mixed Media	
Vide 34	Destruction of a trolley Series I	93
	C. Emmenis	
	60 cm x 100 cm	
	1985-1986	
	Pencil and Photographs	
Vide 35	Series II	94
	C. Emmenis	
	40 x 60 cm	
	1985-1986	
	Pencil	
Vide 36	The Final Stage	95
	C. Emmenis	
	85 x 120 cm	
	Mixed Media	
	1985-1986	
Vide 37	No difference between Man and Beast	96
	C. Emmenis	
	103 x 115 cm	
	Mixed Media	
	1985-1986	
Vide 38	Man or Monster?	97
	C. Emmenis	
	Oil on Canvas	

	60 x 85 cm	
	1985-1986	
Vide 39	Man or Robot II	98
	C. Emmenis	
	Oil on Canvas	
	75 x 120 cm	
	1985-1986	
Vide 40	The Masked Controllers	99
	Mixed Media	
	75 x 100 cm	
	1985-1986	
Vide 41	Political Unrest	100
	Oil on Canvas	
	95 x 110 cm	
	1985-1986	
Vide 42	The Innocents	101
	Oil on Canvas	
	90 x 100 cm	
	1985-1986	
Vide 43	The Cold War	102
	Mixed Media	
	100 x 120 cm	
	1985-1986	
Vide 44	God Created, Man Destroys	103
	Oil on Canvas	
	55 x 82 cm	
	1985-1986	
Vide 45	Let the children play	104
	60 x 170 cm	
	Oil on Canvas	

	1985-1986		105
Vide 46	The Master of the Game		
	Oil on Canvas		
	75 x 120 cm		
	1985-1986		
Vide 47	Suspended Birth		106
	Mixed Media		
	100 x 200 cm		
	1985-1986		
Vide 48	Conclusion		107
	Mixed Media		
	100 x 100 x 100 x 250 cm		
	1985-1986		