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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

We hope, first and foremost, that this letter finds you in good health. Much of the world has ground to a halt for the time being, but the Fordham Undergraduate Research Journal has carried on with its work. These letters generally give us an opportunity to thank the people who make this journal possible—the authors, the staff members, the editors, the Dean's office—but given the exceptional circumstances in which we all find ourselves, there are simply no words strong enough to express our gratitude for their continued support and dedication. To all who made this journal possible, from the bottom of our hearts: thank you.

This edition of FURJ is close to our hearts. It is our tenth volume, and we strove to make it special for you, the reader. Our hope was to deliver you a beautiful printed edition, but these exceptional times have precluded that possibility (for the time being). Instead, we are offering this digital edition in the hopes that you will find it just as compelling and informative, if less tangible. It is hard to overstate the amount of thought and effort that went into this journal, and we hope that you will enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed making it.

Sincerely,

Jack Franke & Onjona Hossain,
Editors in Chief

a successful economy depends on features within the city that make it an enjoyable and entertaining place to live. These things include density, walkable urban cores, and a high concentration of "creatives.'" The "creatives" are a particularly strategic aspect due to their tendency to cluster (Cooke, 2008, pp. 121-136). Creative industries cluster, among other reasons, due to their often-collaborative nature (Cooke, 2008, p. 156). Clustering, which involves a high concentration of professional activity in one sector is exactly the type of "pull" activity that Indianapolis would like to exhibit.

The city has therefore invested in its cultural attractiveness in a unique and ambitious way. The city developed a network of "cultural districts" in and around the downtown core. These districts are historically popular neighborhoods for nightlife, shopping, and exciting food options and possess uniquely dense and walkable centers. With formal designation by the city, these neighborhoods were able to capitalize on a newfound reputation for "cool" and developers had something tangible to claim uniqueness for their residential properties and retail spaces. A study cited by WishTV found that Indianapolis is the fastest-growing vacation rental city for the websites Airbnb and Vrbo, partly due to these districts (Hignite, 2019). The economist Philip Cooke refers to Indianapolis' cultural districts as an example of a project that gives the creatives Indianapolis is trying to attract, a place where "they can flourish" (Cooke, 2008, p. 82). Creative industries have high spillover effects and are defined by their ability to continuously create "innovations" as this is the currency of the industry (Cooke, 2008, p. 162). However, while this is important to the city economy, Indianapolis' motivations most likely stem from its potential to localize talent. As an industry that employs a large number of freelancers and generates many projects between firms, it can suffer from high transaction costs and poor communication. Maintaining a close geographic proximity to these individuals can significantly cut down costs, a phenomenon exemplified by the Thirty Mile Zone in Los Angeles (Cooke, 2008, p. 169). While the cultural districts contribute to the cultural life of the city, they are also integral to the spike-like behavior that Indianapolis exhibits today. As hubs of creative industries they attract talent in a sector known to cluster in relatively few places drawing talent from the surrounding region.

A Growth Model

While the pressures of the global urban hierarchy of cities precipitated the identity overhaul the city underwent, its effort to differentiate itself and compete against its neighbors shaped the strategy that the city of Indianapolis ultimately adopted. The major projects undertaken in this strategy were all explicitly designed to grow the economy by attracting resources to the exclusion of its regional competitors. Understanding the city's perception of the economic landscape as an inherently competitive zero-sum game frames the decisions it made to invest in such an aggressive fashion. This poses the question as to how other similar cities may see their own investment choices going forward. The actions taken by cities like Indianapolis will likely necessitate the incorporation of a competitive perspective into city government decision making going forward. While the largest spikes, the world's great urban centers, are unlikely to be dethroned and the smallest cities are unlikely rivals, most of the world's cities find themselves somewhere in the middle. Among the middle players, Indianapolis shows that there is still room for maneuvering, but it may come at high prices and resemble the competitive tactics more commonly seen in the private sector.

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Creation, Desire, and Destruction: Exploring Edvard Munch's Depictions of Gender

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Abstract: Edvard Munch's haunting paintings, particularly the works he produced between 1893 and 1910, are characterized by figural personifications of anguish, suffering, and ambivalence. Those are some of the more widely-recognized themes in his art, clearly noticeable in various iterations of his well-known artwork: The Scream. The focal figure of that work, however, is arguably ungendered. Some of Munch's most striking works feature gendered images of women understood almost exclusively in unidimensional, essentialist terms: virginal, sexual, post-sexual, and, on occasion, maternal. In this essay, I maintain that Munch's depictions of women emanate from a deeply ingrained misogyny and a troubled mental state (his breakdown and hospitalization came in 1908), as well as from pervasive sexist ideologies that contemporaries, such as Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Charles Darwin, also embraced. Munch's imagery during this period reinforces essentialist and destructive messages about the value and status of women that viewers may be tempted to internalize.

> " *No longer shall I paint interiors with men reading and women knitting. I will paint living people who breathe and feel and suffer and love.*
> — Edvard Munch, 1889

The Norwegian symbolist Edvard Munch (1863-1944), a major influencer of Expressionism, left an artistic oeuvre characterized by an exploration of the psyche, but also of women, both real and imagined. The biographical facts of his relatively long life (he died six weeks after turning 80) suggest mental instability and reflect his understanding of the self and its relation to others and nature. More specifically, Munch's depictions of women and gender continue to be the subject of critical debate due to their subtle but intricate ambiguity. Although it is unclear whether Munch's depictions of women stem from his own version of misogyny or reflect some of the more widespread sexist ideologies common during his lifetime, there is little doubt that the artist's portrayals of women, especially those from between 1893 and 1910, offer highly problematic—even violent—understandings of women's value, status, and purpose in society.

When thinking about women and their roles, Munch relied on circumscribed categories. In critic Kristie Jayne's formulation, to which I will return, Munch primarily represented women in three ways: virginal, sexual, and post-sexual. As we will see, a fourth category, maternal, also exists as maternalism and depictions of motherhood manifest in Munch's gender depictions, owing something perhaps to the influence of Symbolist painters.

One vividly-worded passage from Munch's private journals reveals an undeniable sense of bitterness about women. Throughout his private writing, Munch occasionally characterized himself as unassertive and subject to the whims of women around him, ever susceptible to heartache. His accusatory tone in the passage makes it clear that he feels wronged:

> She was affected—lied—the other one—a whore.... And yet was it because she stole my first kiss that she stole the perfume of life from me—Was it that she lied—deceived— that she one day suddenly the scales from my eye so I saw the Medusa head—saw life as a great riddle—That everything that before had a rosy hue—now looked empty and gray...

Munch was often strongly affected by women and painted many of them, but his perceptions could be strikingly negative: they were whores, liars, thieves, and gorgons. His visual imagery was often equally unrelenting. In Self Portrait under the Mask of a Woman (1893; fig. 1), for example, Munch implies that he feels stifled and that a woman is to blame. His own face appears aloof while a clown-like representation of a woman's head looms menacingly above him. His disillusion translates into female vilification.

Munch's use of particular stylistic elements further illustrates his perception of women. The atmospheres he creates with lyrical brushwork and expressive color contribute to his view of womanhood. Art historian Kristie Jayne observes how Munch roots his women within their environments, looking specifically at The Dance of Life (1899-1900; fig. 2) and The Voice (1893; fig. 3). Jayne notes:

> In both works, the horizon lines are so high that the women's silhouetted bodies appear almost imbedded in the green earth and the sea. Moreover, in both compositions, sinuous, curvilinear lines weave the figures and natural elements together in a connective, rhythmical harmony.

These details suggest that the cycle of womanhood is as innate as the natural world in the work, reinforcing the commonly-held stereotype that associates men with the cultural, public sphere and women with the natural, private sphere. Such binaries underscore a woman's "natural" role as sexual partner and site of fertility. For Munch, just as the seasons change and life renews, women exist solely, or perhaps primarily, as procreators.
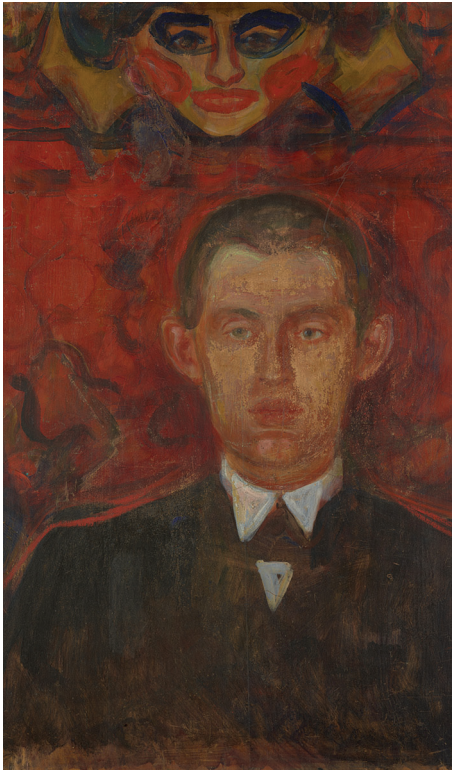
Figure 1 *Self Portrait under the Mask of a Woman*, 1893. Oil on canvas.

Clockwise from top left: **Figure 2** *The Dance of Life*, 1899-1900. **Figure 6** *Art*, 1893-1895. **Figure 5** *Flower of Pain*, 1897. **Figure 3** *The Voice*, 1893. **Figure 4** *Metabolism*, 1898-1899.

The painting Metabolism (1898-1899; fig. 4) exhibits an interconnection of the natural world with human beings. A nude couple resembling Adam and Eve flank a slender tree trunk. The audience is given an underground perspective that exposes the tree's roots along with skulls, one of which is clearly human. Munch repeats this motif of life emerging from death and destruction in other works, including The Flower of Pain (1897; fig. 5) and Art (1893-1895; fig. 6). In each of these instances, he portrays death as a virtuous and restorative affair, much like the wholesome nature of virginal women that Munch illustrates in several other works of the period. Munch's gendered images intertwine death and brutality, designating women as dangerous beings.

The interplay between Munch's existential concerns and gender depictions is complex. He wrote, for example, that "things decompose in nature in order to take shape later." This sentiment suggests a cyclical understanding of life that manifests in some of Munch's paintings, such as his depiction of a progression of womanhood through biological stages discussed later in this essay. For Munch, death is not the end, but merely a transitory state. As we shall see, however, the theme manifests differently when Munch applies it to men rather than women.

A Shifting Scholarly Perspective

Over the past few decades, scholarship on Munch and his art has shifted in emphasis.
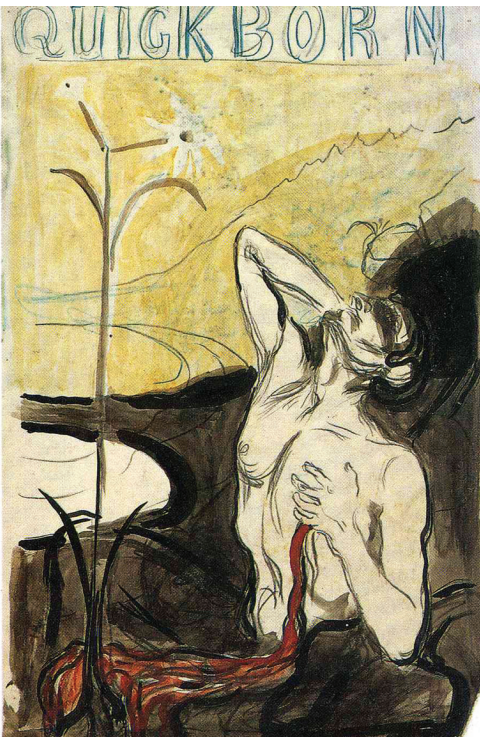
Scholars once considered the artist's images as products of his mental illness and psychological trauma, establishing him as a sort of self-ostracized outsider. Critics closely examined Munch's personal relationships with women, including his love interests and those with his mother and sister, both of whom died of tuberculosis, to explain his misogyny. Departing from this approach, more recent research has sought to study the sociohistorical context of Munch's life to gauge how prevailing ideologies and social institutions were influential in shaping the artist's views. Such an approach seeks to change the way modern viewers conceive of Munch, preferring to situate him within society as a whole rather than seeing him as the "haunted, alienated figure of art-historical

mythology." Art historian and Munch scholar Patricia Berman exposes the incomplete nature of interpreting Munch's art solely in terms of the artist's mental instability:

> By laying claim to his "insanity" as the locus of meaning for his art, we are devaluing the control and intellect that Munch exerted both over his work and its critical positioning. In fact, we do not credit Munch with any deliberation, and we argue that his works were generated impulsively. With this notion in place, it is understandable that previous generations of scholars should have rejected more critical readings of the artist's activities.

It's an important point. If we define Munch exclusively in terms of mental illness, we risk writing off his harmful depictions of women as a symptom of deranged thinking rather than a reflection of societal views. Not all of Munch's images conform to the general identifiers outlined in this essay. However, along with critics like Berman and Jayne, I posit that the majority of female portrayals in his art surrender to stereotypes, gender binaries, and predetermined constructs that can be damaging to our perceptions of one another.

In what follows, I suggest that both internal and external influences may have played a role in Munch's depictions of gender. Despite whether Munch's understandings of gender, femininity, and masculinity derived more from his unique psychology (and misogyny) or represent widespread belief systems prevalent at the turn of the last century, they convey unquestionably powerful messages about women's and men's respective purposes and capabilities that remain pervasive even among critics today. In consuming Munch's art, viewers may find it difficult to refrain from internalizing his reductive messages.

Munch and Human Nature: The Influence of Freud, Nietzsche, and Darwin

Munch's depictions of gender operate within an essentialist framework. That is, he seems to have believed that men and women possessed different dispositions based on their biological sex. Unlike some theorists in our postmodern (or post-postmodern) age, Munch saw gender as more contingent on the sex assigned at one's birth than on the societal institutions that construct and perpetuate it. Yet essentialism is not the only ideology that influenced his art or determined his artistic themes. During

Munch's life, numerous theories permeated contemporary societal thought. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy, and Charles Darwin's naturalism significantly shaped Munch's understandings of human nature.

It is difficult, given the immense scope of Freud's work, to pinpoint a specific idea that profoundly impacted Munch. Nevertheless, Freud's notions about femininity and its relation to masculinity received much public attention and were undoubtedly reflected in Munch's portrayal of gendered men and women. A driving force of femininity and female sexuality, Freud claimed, was the concept of the masculinity complex and its supplementary penis envy, "founded on the

defiant and obstinate refusal to believe that [woman] does not possess a penis." Unable to adopt a dominant sexual persona, the woman begrudges the man's penis and the power that accompanies it. According to Freud, the jealousy may manifest itself as madness. He asserts that "the natural sexual passivity of women explains their being more inclined to hysteria."

Munch repeats this complicated dynamic between man and woman in his Love and Pain, whose title later became Vampire (1893; fig. 7), along with his painting Ashes (1894; fig. 8). The title change is significant, representing a shift from the depiction of a couple holding one another (suggestive of emotional attachment) to one that implies a sadomasochistic

Left: Figure 8 *Ashes*, 1894. Oil on canvas.

Below: Figure 7 *Vampire*, 1893. Oil on canvas.

struggle of savagery over solace. This change alone illustrates the influence of Freudian thought on understanding male and female relationships—not just for Munch but for a wider audience. It also reveals how "meaning is constructed not through the agency of the artist but through the constituting gaze of the audience." Whereas Munch channeled such understandings into his art, others deciphered his meaning through the same lens. In one sense, the understanding of Munch's depictions of gender is a joint collaboration between artist and audience.

German philosopher and cultural critic Friedrich Nietzsche also influenced Munch. Parallels between the Nietzschean emphasis on intuition over reason and Munch's visceral approach to art are obvious. In rejecting empiricism, Nietzsche advocated for the

projection of one's most inward consciousness. Personal beliefs are favored over factual truth. Along these lines, Munch had no interest in representing any sort of objective reality. Instead, he forged his own exaggerated reality with heightened emotional intensity to match his own sentiments, but with an air of patronizing superiority. Munch and other thinkers at the time were "critical of what [they] saw as the humdrum monotony and hypocrisy of bourgeois existence." Munch's skepticism of the conventional prompted his mystification of women, whom he perceived as less capable of profundity. Claude Cernuschi remarks on how Nietzsche's ideology validated Munch's convictions:

> *Nietzsche's exultation of genius (artistic as well as philosophical) and his*

Figure 9 *The Scream*, 1893. Oil on canvas.

unceremonious disdain of those he called "incurably mediocre" and "the mob," thus encouraged artists to cultivate their individual personalities at the expense of what connected them to a broader social fabric…. Echoing Nietzsche's famous dictum that one "should write with blood," Munch proclaimed that "All art, literature and music must be born in your hearts blood."

The result is a caricature. Munch's subjects become personifications of feeling, but he privileges certain feelings—and genders. There is no space for frivolity within Munch's work; like Nietzsche, he scorns anything or anyone he believes distracts from deep and profound philosophical thought.

If life and death are integral themes in Munch's art, it comes as no surprise that he was influenced by the naturalist viewpoints of Charles Darwin, whose theories on sexual difference were in vogue. In fact, Darwin's ideas conveniently played into sociocultural perceptions of the inferiority of women. According to Jayne, Darwin held that:

> *[through] the interaction of natural and sexual selection, man had become superior to woman in courage, energy, and intellect…. Women do possess certain faculties found lacking in man—maternal feeling, intuition, perception, imitation, altruism, and tenderness—characteristics [Darwin] ascribed to lower races.*

Darwin's rudimentary understanding of sexual difference worked to justify Munch's portrayals on the basis of evolution and biological dispositions. Such scientific theories were widely accepted; however, their popularity during Darwin's and Munch's time does not excuse them or suggest they stemmed from empiricism and science as opposed to deep cultural bias.

Depictions of Gender in Selected Works (1893-1910)

Gender essentialism remained an important aspect of Munch's thinking and art during the 1890s. In fact, one of his most renowned works presents a strong correlation between lack of gender identity and panic, implying that Munch saw gender as a guiding force in navigating life. The Scream (1893; fig. 9), revolving around a seemingly genderless figure, perfectly captures the tortured psyche and does so, ironically, without gender as a focal point. The painting focuses on a hairless

being dressed in a black cloak, grabbing its face as if in a moment of paralyzing realization. The landscape of lucid colors swarming around the body and the plunging perspective of the bridge lend to the heightened sensation. The painting, writes Cernuschi, "distills terror, helplessness and protest in an image that is universal because it merges male and female, living figure and dead mummified body, figure and ground…." A neutral body can be disorienting in the context of Munch's complete works. Excerpts from Munch's journal and preliminary sketches of The Scream reveal the figure is a self-portrait. By displacing his own identity onto this depersonalized figure, Munch sheds all imposing assumptions surrounding gender, many of which he perpetuated elsewhere in his art. His body is a blank slate lacking gender expectations or stereotypes; therefore, his mind is free to express itself unconstrained.

Throughout Munch's art, women are represented one-dimensionally, reduced to their biology. Such representations imply that women lack rational agency and should be defined and motivated by bodily desire. Moreover, these depictions serve as points of progression through which Munch believes women experience life. To reinforce his understanding, Munch makes each developmental phase evident in a singular composition, Woman in Three Stages (1893-1895; fig. 10), then introduces the same developmental evolution later in The Dance of Life.

In Woman in Three Stages, the chronology of womanhood begins with a virginal figure in a flowing, white dress. Seen in profile, she faces the sea, her hair cascading down her back. Munch dismisses any distinguishing features, thereby stripping the woman of her identity while perhaps maintaining her purity in the artist's eyes. Centered in the painting, a nude woman confidently displays herself with legs

spread and arms behind her head in a sensuous pose anticipating the one in Madonna (1894; fig. 11). She wears a suggestive smile, conveying her willingness to be seen and treated as a sexual being. The third woman is shrouded in darkness, situated immediately behind the more sexualized woman. Her face is skeletal, with sunken cheekbones and immense black eyes, suggesting the death of her sexuality. To the far right, Munch illustrates a man, physically separated from the women by a tree. Munch's inclusion of a single male figure juxtaposed against images of the divided women seems to assert the man's wholeness. Likewise, The Dance of Life charts the same sexual cycle but centralizes a couple in embrace, thereby locating a man within the progression at the site of sexual encounter.

Painted at roughly the same time as Woman in Three Stages, Munch's Madonna, reproduced in variations, is an aesthetically stunning work that embodies Munch's fascination with women and human nature. A lustful, bare-chested woman poses with her head tilted backward, eyes closed, her

hair spilling down her shoulders. Rippling colors surround her, bleed into one another, and echo the curves of her body. She exudes a feeling of ecstasy, as if she were a divine (albeit sexual) entity. She is crowned with a red halo, which recalls passion and blood.

Contemporary ideas influenced Munch as did the works of other artists. In 1907, he painted his own version of neoclassical master Jacques-Louis David's The Death of Marat (1793; fig. 12), though Munch's work of the same title (fig. 13) incorporates a new element into the scene: a woman. The famous murder seems equally evident in both works. In fact, Munch positions the dead man nearly identically to that of David's figure, with his bloodied arm hanging limply over the edge of the bathtub, just as David's man hung his arm over the edge of a bed. The woman in Munch's version has a menacing element lacking in David's painting. She stands nude and rigid, facing the viewer. Munch's short and hurried brushstrokes convey a feeling of violence and the woman expresses no emotion. Since the man and the woman are naked, Munch
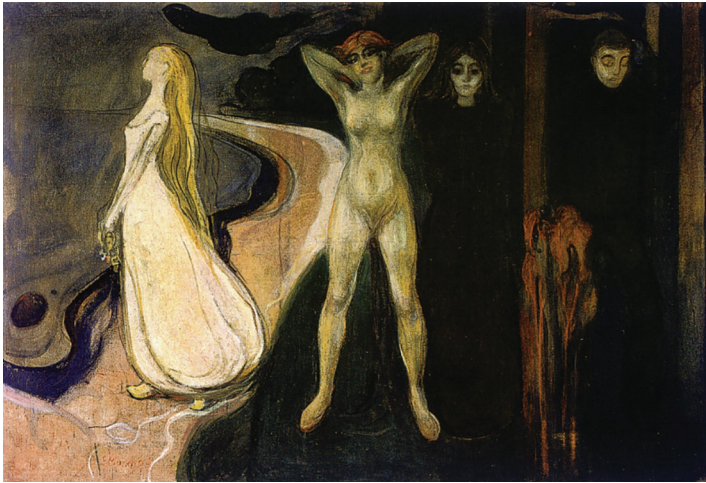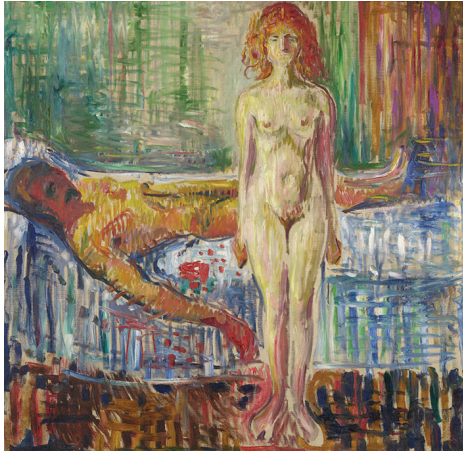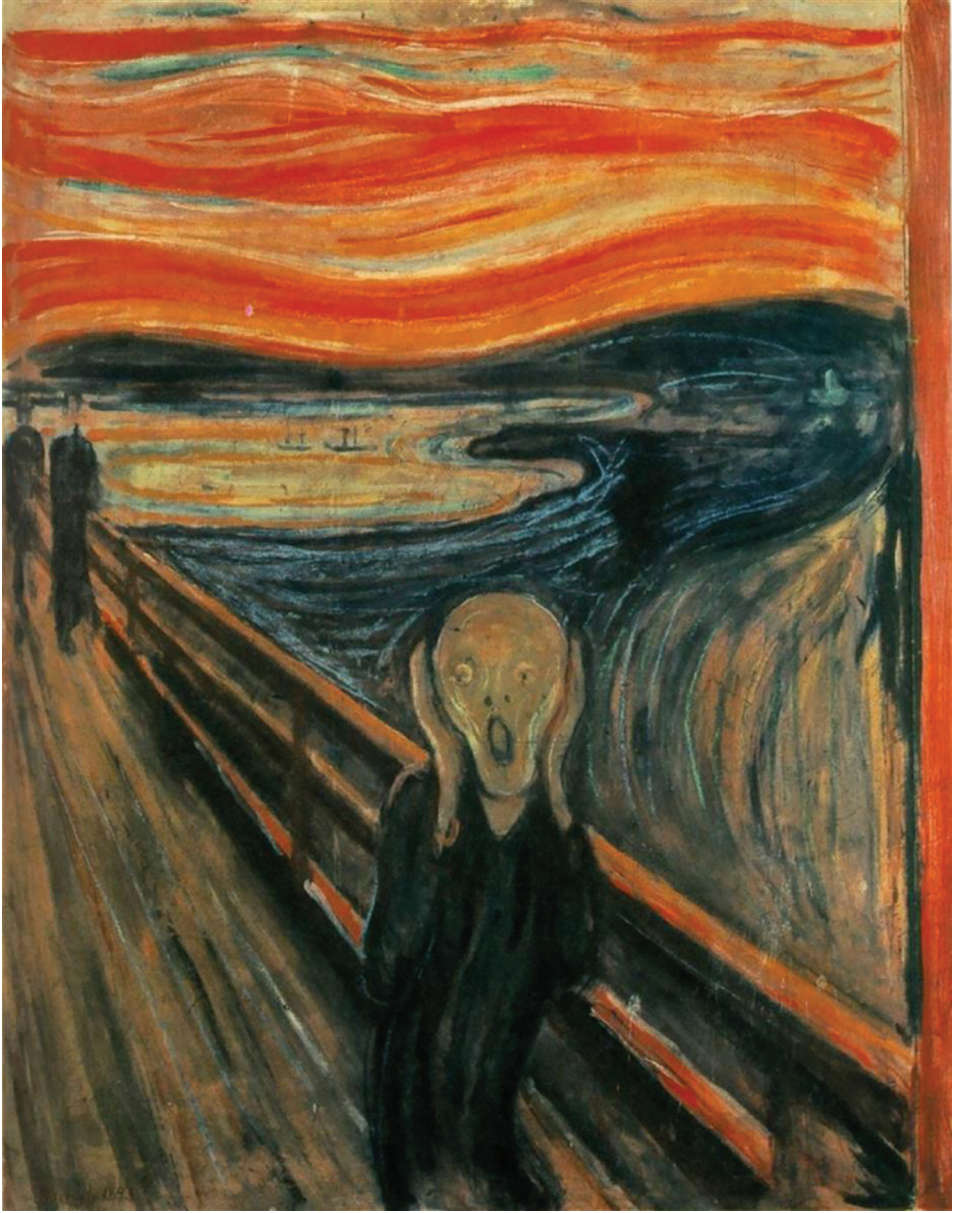
Clockwise from top:
Figure 12 Jacques-Louise David, *The Death of Marat,* 1793. Oil on canvas.
Figure 13 *The Death of Marat,* 1907. Oil on canvas.
Figure 11 *Madonna,* 1894. Oil on canvas.
Figure 10 *Woman in Three Stages,* 1893-1895. Oil on canvas.

suggests they had engaged in (or intended to engage in) sexual activity before the murder. She is therefore the quintessential femme fatale, but it is her stoicism that evokes fear in the viewer. The artist's understanding of women as sexually-motivated beings reaches a new level, combined in this work with Munch's implied belief in irrational female aggression.

In addition to the life-and-death binary evident in several of Munch's compositions, his works depicting gender also juxtapose the sacred with the profane, in whose intersection religious significance comes into question. Consider, for example, Madonna (1895; fig. 14), whose name explicitly evokes the Virgin Mary and Christian belief. Scholars have drawn similarities between the Madonna's blissful manner and that of Saint Teresa in Gian Lorenzo Bernini's The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa (1647-1652; fig. 15), sculpted during the Catholic Reformation in Italy. Munch

elevates this woman to divinity, but variants of the painting complicate any notion of pure holiness. A lithograph version of Madonna includes a prominent frame with large sperm and a haunting embryonic figure. Historian Stephen Schloesser, S.J., interprets the work as an example of "spiritual naturalism." The connection of the alluring, almost saintly woman with explicit reproductive imagery unites "the limits of human finitude as well as the natural possibilities for a kind of self-transcendence." Her corporeal body exists within the material universe; however, her ability to create life allegedly enhances her value.

Sexual themes recur in Munch's art. In particular, and in alignment with the sociocultural interests of his contemporary Symbolist painters, Munch had a keen interest in maternity. Wendy Slatkin categorizes Symbolist depictions of motherhood into two groups: those who painted "archetypal

mothers as symbols of fertility," including Paul Gauguin and Maurice Denis, and those who "[combined] symbols of maternity with symbols of death ... [seeking] to express the cyclic nature of life and death," whose practitioners were Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, and Edvard Munch himself. The circular path of life and death runs parallel to the progression of womanhood. In Munch's work, women seem inextricably bound up with the inevitable changes of nature owing to their ability to create life.

Themes of death, motherhood, and dread converge in Munch's etching The Dead Mother and Her Child (1901; fig. 16). This subject would have been tragically familiar and personal to Munch: he lost his mother to tuberculosis when he was a child. In the etching, a young girl stands at the bedside of her deceased mother. The child bears a horrific expression of panic, uncertain of her fate now that her role model is gone forever. This work

Clockwise from top left:
Figure 15 Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*, 1647-1652. White marble. **Figure 14** *Madonna*, 1895. Lithograph. **Figure 17** *Dead Mother with Spring Landscape*, 1893. Oil on canvas. **Figure 16** *The Dead Mother and Her Child*, 1901. Etching with black ink.

functions on numerous levels by showing the disruption of the child's progression during her emergence into womanhood and by exhibiting the mother, who acts as procreator, in death.

Another piece, Death and Spring or Dead Mother with Spring Landscape (1893; fig. 17), also deals with the relationships among women, death, and nature. Jayne's description of the painting deserves to be quoted at some length:

A woman's corpse rests in a crypt painted in deep tones of blue, a color often used to denote death. Above her is a large window through which are seen lush green grass and birch trees illuminated by bright sunlight. What appears to be a fern above her head seems to grow from her body. The artist's message seems clear: when the body decomposes, its substances return to nature and yield new life. At root, we are material beings; nonspiritual transformations are responsible for change, growth, new life, and death.

Along with several other works Munch completed during this period, this painting demonstrates the intersection of key themes: life, death, nature, suffering, and gender. As mentioned earlier, while gender is among these universal themes, it takes on a different meaning when Munch applies it to women rather than men. For example, a dead man, like the one in The Death of Marat, represents suffering and cruel fatality; a dead woman, on the other hand, is a natural extension of life's unavoidable cycle of birth and death. Immersed in nature, a man nature engages in isolated contemplation; a woman relates to nature only as a creator: as a source of sexuality, fertility, and maternity. Munch's depiction of motherhood reconciles with his inability to create in the way a woman can. Through his art, Munch adopts a form of creation, giving life to his subjects, yet he is "forced to acknowledge the need for the nourishing maternal creative powers personified by the Muses." Perhaps the genderless figure in The Scream was some attempt to express that.

Vampire depicts a woman enveloping a man with her body and encompassing strands of hair. The hellish colors imply the woman's malicious intentions to take advantage of his vulnerable position below her. This reversal of the norm that places a woman in power reads as sinister. The man, in other words, is a victim; he cannot help that he was born with a penis while she was not. Confirming this feeling of male helplessness, Munch writes: "A

lady has permission to intrigue—bagatelle—seduce a man—ruin a man with lies and decoys with every means within human power to destroy a man—a man must bite his tongue hold his peace." Note the contrasting rhetoric: seduction and ruination from women, peace from men.

Similar to Vampire, Munch's Ashes displays the destructive aftermath of some sort of encounter. Once again, the woman is invasive. She stands with her hands behind her head, but unlike the central figure we saw in Madonna, who strikes a similar pose but does so in an enticing manner, this woman appears guilty and remorseful. Her disheveled clothing and tousled hair, as well as the fact that she is still clinging to her male counterpart, strongly suggests that the two have sexually engaged with one another. Unlike the woman, the man conceals his face in shame. He evokes pity from the viewer, whereas the woman is subject to reproach. Both Vampire and Ashes posit women as culpable, conveying the idea that a woman who engages sexually with conscious volition does so at the expense of a man's well-being.

Conclusion

Like other artists of his day, Edvard Munch was deeply influenced by contemporary notions of gender and sexuality and invested in a one-dimensional, essentialist understanding of the role of women in society. Beyond these cultural beliefs, his artistic depictions of women and gender during the years 1893 to 1910 manifest, in sometimes haunting and even violent ways, Munch's unresolved feelings of aggression and frustration. Interwoven themes of creation, desire, and destruction are critical for grasping Munch's aesthetic and for understanding his portrayal of gender roles. For Munch, women played a central yet necessarily constrained role in society and were valuable primarily for their sexual function or potential to bear offspring. A careful examination of gender depictions in the works that Munch completed in the years before and after the turn of the twentieth century reveal a complex interplay of influences ranging from psychoanalysis, philosophy, and naturalism to Munch's own encounters with women—some real, some imagined, and some passed away or otherwise unavailable to him. Such a critical engagement reinforces the wisdom of modern scholars who refuse to define this artist's gender depictions exclusively as manifestations of his mental instability.

Notes

[1] Kristie Jayne, "The Cultural Roots of Munch's Images of Women," *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1989): 28- 34, jstor.org/stable/1358127.

[2] Many of Munch's journal entries are written in stanza format; however, for the sake of fluidity, line breaks were overlooked in this essay. Edvard Munch, *The Private Journals of Edvard Munch: We Are Flames Which Pour out of the Earth*, ed. and trans. J. Gill Holland (2005): 80.

[3] Jayne, "The Cultural Roots of Munch's Images of Women," 28- 29.

[4] Ibid

[5] Jeffrey Howe, ed. Edvard Munch: *Psyche, Symbol and Expression*, Boston College McMullen Museum of Art: University of Chicago Press (2001): 66.

[6] Jeffrey Howe, ed. *Edvard Munch: Psyche, Symbol and Expression*, Boston College McMullen Museum of Art: University of Chicago Press (2001): 66.

[7] Patricia G. Berman, "(Re-) reading Edvard Munch: trends in the current literature," *Scandinavian Studies* 66, no. 1 (1994): 45- 67, https://www.jstor.org/stable/40919620.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Lisa Appignanesi and John Forrester, *Freud's Women*, (HarperCollins, 1992): 185.

[11] Ibid, 399.

[12] Berman, "(Re-) reading Edvard Munch: trends in the current literature," 53.

[13] Claude Cernuschi, "Sex and Psyche, Nature and Nurture, The Personal and the Political: Edvard Munch and German Expressionism," *Edvard Munch: Psyche, Symbol and Expression*, ed. Jeffrey Howe, 139.

[14] Ibid, 140.

[15] Jayne, "The Cultural Roots of Munch's Images of Women," 32.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Cernuschi, "Sex and Psyche, Nature and Nurture, The Personal and the Political: Edvard Munch and German Expressionism," 146.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Stephen Schloesser, "From Spiritual Naturalism to Physical Naturalism: Catholic Decadence, Lutheran Munch, Madone Mystérique," *Edvard Munch: Psyche, Symbol and Expression*, ed. Jeffrey Howe, 75

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Wendy Slatkin, "Maternity and Sexuality in the 1890s," *Woman's Art Journal*, vol. 1, no.1 (1980), 13, www.jstor.org/stable/1358012.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid, 17.

[25] Munch, *The Private Journals of Edvard Munch: We Are Flames Which Pour out of the Earth*, ed. and trans. Holland, 69.

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