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# The Cultural Roots of Edvard Munch's Images of Women

KRISTIE JAYNE

Art historical examinations of Edvard Munch's (1863-1944) images of women have generally focused on aspects of the artist's biography—particularly his relationships with women—to explain the preponderance of sexuality and fertility themes. While it is correct to consider such biographical information, in Munch's case it has been overemphasized at the expense of social and cultural factors. Indeed, the increasingly restrictive social and economic climate of late-19th-century Europe, along with scientific theories such as Monism and Darwinism, which sought naturalistic, materialistic explanations for woman's "procreative duties," may have exerted an important influence on Munch's art as well.

Aside from the portraits, most of Munch's depictions of women represent some aspect of female sexuality.<sup>1</sup> In one of his most famous paintings, *Puberty* (1894; National Gallery, Oslo), a naked adolescent girl sits on the edge of a bed staring nervously and fixedly at the viewer. Her arms are crossed in front of her genital area, as if to protect and block it from view, but in reality she is calling attention to the image's central theme: emerging female sexuality. The bed, and especially the large, insistently phallic shadow she casts on the wall to her left reinforce the painting's primary message. In *The Voice* (1893; Fig. 1), a young woman poses in front of a stand of trees through which a large body of water is visible. Like many of Munch's images of women, the static pose, the generalized treatment of the face and hair, and the lack of detail elsewhere suggest woman as a symbol. With her white dress, innocent expression, and eager yet vulnerable stance, she becomes a woman on the brink of sexual awareness, a message that seems confirmed by the pronounced phallic shape of the moon's reflection on the water in the center of the painting and by the couple boating in the right distance. Her rigid, frontal pose, paralleling as it does the tall, straight trees and the elongated reflection of the moon, imbed her in the natural setting and thus emphasize her "natural" role: that of fertile sexual partner.

*Madonna* (1894-95), an oil on canvas at the National Gallery, Oslo, depicts a woman seductively posed, or perhaps actually engaged in the sexual act: her arms are upraised, her hips shift to one side, and her eyes are closed in expressive reverie. Her frontal position forces the participation of the viewer: the voyeur becomes sexual partner.<sup>2</sup> Munch wrote of this image:

The pause as all the world stops in its path. Moonlight glides over your face filled with all the earth's beauty and pain. Your lips are like two ruby-red serpents, and are filled with blood, like your crimson red fruit. They glide from one

another as if in pain. The smile of a corpse. Thus now life reaches out its hand to death. The chain is forged that binds the thousands of generations that have died to the thousands of generations to come.<sup>3</sup>

Sexuality, fertility, and death are linked together in a constellation through which female identity is constructed. Munch's belief that woman's procreative powers are a fundamental aspect of her sexuality is made clear by the presence of the spermatozoa and fetuses in the now-lost frame of the painting and in the border of the lithograph (1895; Fig. 2) of the same image and the related drypoint (1894).<sup>4</sup>

In both *The Three Stages of Woman* (1893-95; Fig. 3) and *The Dance of Life* (1899-1900; Fig. 4), woman's sexual cycle is charted similarly. Figures in white on the left denote the first stage, virginity, followed by sexually-active women in the center. In *The Three Stages of Woman*, the central figure is nude, with arms raised and drawn behind her head and back arched. Echoing the posture of the woman in *Madonna*, she invites sexual interaction. In *The Dance of Life*, the temptress is the red-clad figure dancing closely with a man—a metaphor for lovemaking. The sensuous flow of Munch's line intimately connects the couple. Several other couples are similarly intertwined. The sad-faced black-clad women at near right in *Three Stages* and far right in *Dance* represent the final stage of the female sexual cycle, in which woman is divested of sexual allure.

In both paintings women are seen in relationship to men. In *The Dance of Life*, the two unattached women, conspicuously single, focus on the central couple. The older woman is tight and tense with sad regret; the younger moves with smiling anticipation. The lone man in *The Three Stages of Woman* is almost hidden in the darkness of the forest on the far right. Separated from the women by a tree trunk, he also looks away from them. He is whole, indivisible, a complete sexual being.

The specific references to procreation found in the several versions of *Madonna* are absent from *The Three Stages of Woman* and *The Dance of Life*. However, like other Symbolist artists who were preoccupied with images of female sexuality and fertility, Munch incorporated images of nature's (and women's) fecundity in both paintings—lush, verdant grass, thick, dark forests, and the sea, universal symbol of nature's ceaseless repetition and predictability, representing the unchanging cyclical process of procreation. In *The Dance of Life* he repeats the moon's elongated reflection in the water as seen earlier in *The Voice*. Certain stylistic devices also underscore the organic basis of female life. In both works, the horizon lines are so high that the women's silhouetted bodies appear almost imbedded in the



**Fig. 1. Edvard Munch, *The Voice* (1893), oil on canvas, 34½" x 42½". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.**

green earth and the sea. Moreover, in both compositions, sinuous, curvilinear lines weave the figures and natural elements together in a connective, rhythmical harmony.

From Munch's biography, it is easy to understand why so many art historians believe his obsessions with sexuality and fertility were the result of his problematic relationships with women. His mother and sister died during his childhood. One of his earliest romantic involvements was with an older married woman. In the early 1890s he was deeply attracted to a Norwegian music student, Dagny Juell, the only—and much admired—female member of his Berlin Bohemian circle, *Schwarze Ferkel* (Black Pig). Between 1898 and 1902 he had a tumultuous liaison, which ended in violence, with Tulla Larsen, the daughter of a prosperous Norwegian wine merchant. Peter Schjeldahl claims that Munch's madonnas demonstrate "the seemingly miraculous transformation, through art, of private obsession into universal meaning."<sup>5</sup> And Munch scholar Reinhold Heller agrees that for Munch art was a means of presenting his own emotions and psychological experiences. In fact, Heller suggests that *The Three Stages of Woman* represented a "synthesis of Munch's personal experience of woman, an experience he abstracted and transformed into a universal statement."<sup>6</sup>

Wendy Slatkin's 1980 article on the Symbolists' interest in themes of sexuality and maternity was an important step in the direction of establishing a socially and culturally based understanding of the Symbolists' conception of women.<sup>7</sup> Slatkin divided Symbolist images of women into two groups: those that extol the virtues of motherhood as found in the oeuvres of Paul Gauguin, Eugene Carrière, Maurice Denis, and Paula Modersohn-Becker, and those that place motherhood in the broader context of the life cycle by combining symbols of maternity with those of death. It was in the latter group, alongside Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, that Slatkin situated Munch.

Unfortunately, however, the only connection Slatkin establishes between the artistic emphasis on female sexuality and maternity and contemporary social developments appears as a negative one. The Symbolists' notorious avoidance of references to contemporary society was linked to the (male) artists' refusal to acknowledge the recent changes in the position and status of women initiated by



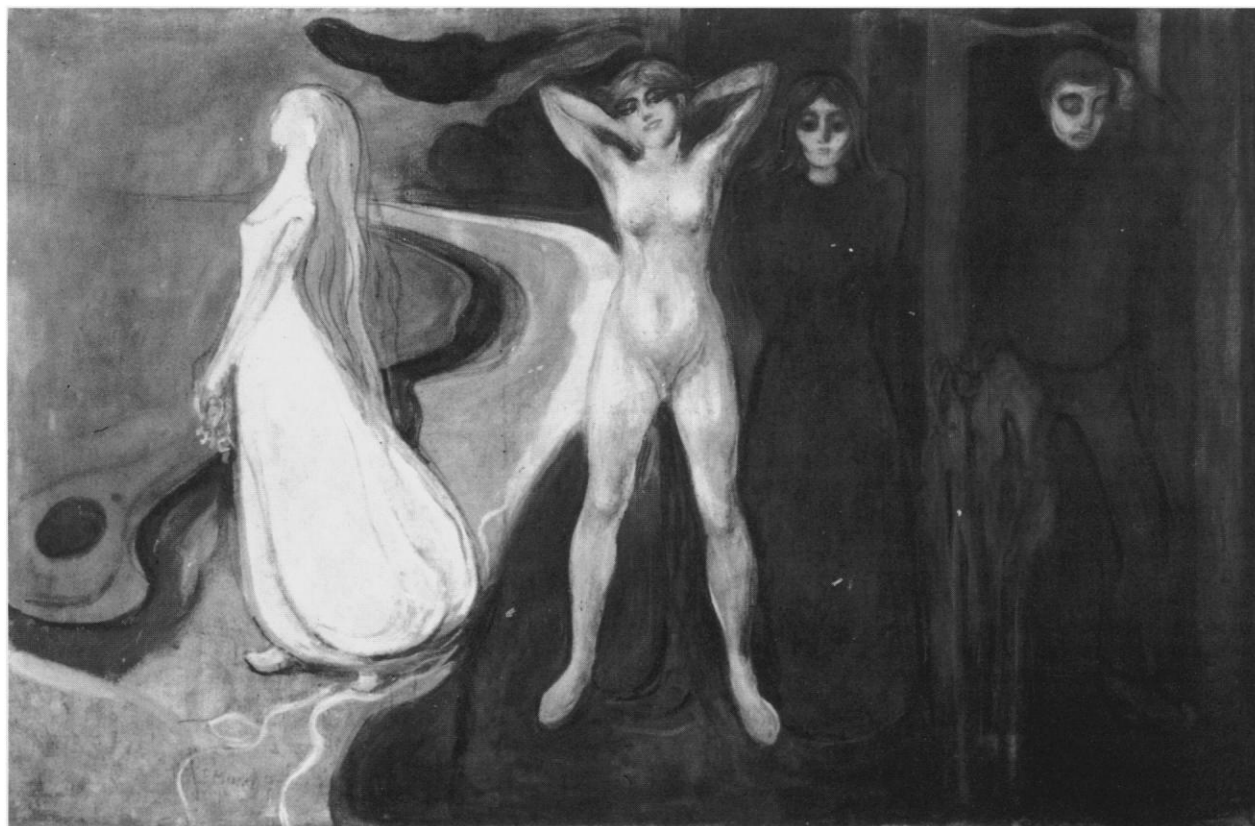
**Fig. 2. Edvard Munch, *Madonna* (1895), hand-colored lithograph, 23¾" x 17¼". Art Institute of Chicago.**

early feminists. She suggests that artists of the late 19th century celebrated female procreative power as the timeless essence of womanhood in the face of, and perhaps as a bulwark against, emerging feminism. The traditional restrictive definition of woman affirmed by the images of Munch and other Symbolists was viewed as a challenge to, or retreat from, feminism's demands for political and social rights for women. Even though this interpretation is not inaccurate, it overemphasizes the power of feminism in the social, political, and artistic landscape of late-19th-century Europe. The artistic preoccupation with female sexuality and fertility is viewed as a response to a single sociopolitical development rather than as fully situated and sharing in what was in fact an increasingly restrictive economic, social, and intellectual climate for women.

Scholars of women's history have in the past dozen years analyzed the social and economic effects of industrialization on women's lives and recognized that capitalist industrialization during the late 18th and 19th centuries (despite its contemporaneity with feminism in the late 19th century) did almost nothing to improve the economic and social position of women. In fact, industrialization confined women more than ever to the home, restricted their economic and social opportunities, and emphasized their roles of wife and mother.

The dominant forms of pre-industrial economic activity—agriculture and domestic manufacturing—had generally permitted a physical integration of workplace and home, allowing many women to assume productive roles within the family's economic unit. The specialization and concentration of work processes that characterized industrialization, however, led to a gradual separation of workplace and household, making it more difficult for women,





**Fig. 3. Edvard Munch, *The Three Stages of Woman* (1893-95), oil, charcoal, and casein on canvas, 64½" x 98½". Rasmus Meyers Samlinger, Bergen.**

particularly those married and with children, to work outside the home. Industrialization did not open up new kinds of employment opportunities for women. Rather, the emphasis changed toward heavy industries, which provided jobs in areas such as mining, metallurgy, machines, railways, and construction that favored male workers.<sup>8</sup> The surplus of labor in large urban areas also tended to marginalize women's participation in the work force.<sup>9</sup> Despite this surplus, the living standards of the working and middle classes increased, resulting in fewer economic incentives for wives to work outside the home, a condition that may have factored in the most significant change in women's work effected by industrialization: the notion that women should stop working once they married.<sup>10</sup>

The gradual exclusion of women from the workplace was accompanied by and certainly contributed to the development of the notion of "separate spheres of action" for the sexes. The public sphere of the workplace, dominated by men, was firmly separated from the private sphere of the home and family, which was managed by women. The educated bourgeoisie readily absorbed and codified these new social "specifications" into a set of class values. The family came to be regarded as a "procreative unit," the primary function of which was to safeguard and enhance the cultural and social welfare of present and future generations. Fundamental to the family was the woman in her roles of wife and mother. She was increasingly regarded as the essential link between the present bourgeois generation and the next, and her natural profession as bearer and nurturer was repeatedly stressed by late-19th-century social theorists.<sup>11</sup>

Munch's (and other Symbolist's) preoccupation with sexuality and fertility thus can be situated in the historical context of a society and economy that placed a renewed and concerted emphasis on the female roles of wife and mother. This climate helped shape and was in turn influenced by certain scientific developments, in particular a

number of biological theories of sexual difference spawned by Darwin's theory of evolution, which stressed women's procreative capabilities and duties. Munch's art bears the impress of some of these notions of sexual difference: in style and subject matter his art depicts women as slaves to the dictates of their reproductive physiologies. A plausible case for the influence of these theories on Munch can be made by examining the artist's fundamentally materialistic and physiologically based view of human life as expressed in his art and writings.

Many of Munch's works, whether or not they depict women, express a profoundly materialistic conception of human life. In his lithographic *Self-Portrait* (1895; British Museum), for example, the centered image of the artist's face is surrounded by darkened space, except for the lower border in which a skeletal forearm and hand appears. The latter function as *memento mori*—reminders of the physical matter upon which the life above them is based and to which it will return in death. The saturated blackness of the background admits no alternative view. Life is materially based; no spiritual processes come into play.

The interdependence of life and death is even more clearly stated in *Dead Mother with Spring Landscape* (1893; Fig. 5). 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.

In several of the preparatory drawings for *The Three Stages of Woman*, the conception of a materially and physiologically based interdependence of life and death is clearly stated. In the drawing *Art* (1893-95; Fig. 6), the



Fig. 4. Edvard Munch, *The Dance of Life* (1899-1900), oil on canvas, 49½" x 75". National Gallery, Oslo.

bodies of a man and a woman are tightly enclosed in an oval seedlike pouch out of which sprouts a plant. The surrounding space focuses attention to the essential organic unity of plant and human that the central motif declares. These bodies are dead or dying and in the process are giving birth to new life. The composition of the pen-and-ink drawing *Metabolism* (c. 1894; Munch Museum, Oslo) is similar to that of *Art*: a plant extends vertically from a horizontally disposed decomposing body. Munch also included birds and, in the far distance on the left, several barely perceptible human figures. The artist is informing us that human bodies are only material, and when they die their matter and energy are not lost but are transformed into new forms of life.

An entry in Munch's diary from the 1890s seems to confirm the above interpretation:

It would be a pleasurable experience to sink into, to unite with . . . that everlasting, everstirring earth . . . I would become one with it, and plants and trees would grow up out of my rotting corpse . . . I would be "in" them, I would live on—that is eternity.<sup>12</sup>

Munch elaborated on his desire to live on after death when he wrote in 1892:

We must all believe in immortality, and also, for that matter, that . . . the spirit of life lives on after the body is dead . . . What becomes of the spirit of life, the power that holds a body together, the power that fosters the growth of physical matter? Nothing. . . A body that dies does not vanish—its substance is transformed, converted. . . Nobody can say where [the spirit] goes to—to try and assert its non-existence after the body has died is as ridiculous as insisting on trying to demonstrate how or where that spirit will continue to exist.<sup>13</sup>

Heller suggests that Munch's preoccupation with the interdependence of life and death and his decidedly naturalist and non-Christian concept of immortality were inspired by the philosophical Monism of Ernst Haeckel,

prominent professor of zoology at Jena and Darwin's chief popularizer in late-19th-century Germany.<sup>14</sup> The principles of Haeckel's brand of Monism were clearly based on Darwinian thought. Munch was most likely familiar with Haeckel's text, *The Confession of Faith of a Man of Science*, which formed the basis of an address Haeckel gave in Altenburg in late 1892, at the time when Munch first arrived in Berlin and just shortly before he began the preparatory drawings for *The Three Stages of Woman*. *The Confession* was excerpted in many German newspapers and periodicals, including the November 1892 issue of Berlin's *Freie Buhne* (a journal that only two years later published an article on Munch).<sup>15</sup>

In *The Confession* Haeckel proposed an essential unity among all living and nonliving things. All natural phenomena were only materialistic entities and products of the same kind of primitive matter—an idea he codified as the "law of substance." He recognized no distinction between animal and vegetable kingdoms, organic and inorganic matter, matter and energy, body and soul, nor God and nature. He conceived the human soul in strictly materialistic terms, as "the sum of physiological functions performed by elementary organs which themselves are simply microscopic ganglion cells of [the] brain,"<sup>16</sup> and thus he rejected the notion of personal immortality. However, because he believed that all matter and energy are conserved, he claimed that the cosmos as a whole was immortal:

It is just as inconceivable that any of the atoms of our brain or of the energies of our spirit should vanish out of the world, as that any other particle of matter or energy could do so. At our death there disappears only the individual form in which the nerve-substance was fashioned, and the personal "soul" which represented the work performed by this. The nervous mass pass over into other combinations by decomposition, and the kinetic energy produced by it is transformed into other forms of motion.<sup>17</sup>

The parallels between Munch's conception of natural and human life and Haeckel's Monist system become obvious





Fig. 5. Edvard Munch, *Dead Mother with Spring Landscape* (1893), oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 37 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Munch Museum, Oslo.

and provide crucial information about Munch's perceptions as he prepared *The Three Stages* and the related painting *The Dance of Life*.

In *Symbolic Study* (1893; Fig. 7), a gouache preparatory drawing for *The Three Stages of Woman*, the theme of a life-death interdependence is present, although expressed in somewhat less graphic terms than in *Art* and *Metabolism*. The decomposing corpse in the lower border is retained and now forms part of a circular representation of the stages of female life: at the left border is the virgin with her hands crossed in front of her genitalia; the sexual temptress with curvilinear forms and horns sprouting from her head is writhing in the upper border; and at the right border is a woman with a halo and her hands folded in prayer. This last figure represents the "post-sexual" woman, or widow perhaps, on the verge of death, which is depicted in the lower border. In this feminine life cycle, death is as inextricably a part as are the three stages through which the live body progresses. However, the corpse in the lower border also stresses the material and physiological basis of human life, and hence, by extension, the purely physiological basis of each stage of feminine life illustrated in the image. The trio of female heads in the center of the image has replaced the central plants in the two earlier preparatory drawings as the connecting link between life and death. Just as death was conceived both by Munch and Haeckel to be a strictly biological, nonspiritual process, so the functions and actions of each stage of female life were viewed as dictated by biological rather than intellectual forces.

In *The Three Stages of Woman* and *The Dance of Life*, death as a part of the life process is implied: the corpses seen in the drawings are absent, but the plants that grow from them are retained. In *The Dance of Life* a thin, spindly flower grows from the otherwise barren earth between the white-clad woman on the left and the central couple. The woman in white points to it, directing attention to its presence. In *The Three Stages of Woman*, the plant takes the form of a tree that separates the three women from the man at the far right. The flower and the tree serve to remind the viewer that life flows from and is directed by natural, material processes beyond our control.

Both Munch and Haeckel were influenced by Darwin—their concentration on the material, physical bases of

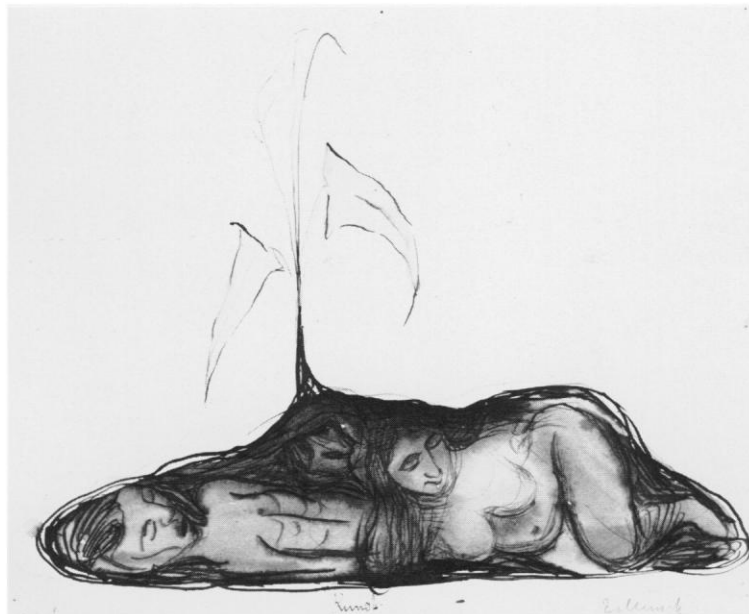


Fig. 6. Edvard Munch, *Art* (1893-95), India ink, pencil, and brown watercolor on paper, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 12". Munch Museum, Oslo.

human life was firmly rooted in the Darwinian revolution in the biological sciences. Haeckel was convinced that the innumerable varieties of plants and animals were all branches of a single genealogical tree, a notion that formed the foundation of Monism.<sup>18</sup> And aspects of Munch's art reflect an awareness of Darwinian concepts of sexual difference—as well as a number of other "scientifically based" theories of sexual differences spawned in part by Darwinism—which stressed the female's procreative capabilities, inclinations, and obligations.<sup>19</sup>

In her recent article, "Darwin and the Descent of Women," Evelleen Richards carefully scrutinized Darwin's major works, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* and *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*.<sup>20</sup> Analyzing the complementary roles of men and women in his theories of natural and sexual selection, Richards shows how Darwin came to declare that there were differences between the mental powers of the two sexes, that they were biologically based, and that women were innately domestic and naturally inferior to men. According to Darwin, nature provides an unlimited supply of unsolicited, fortuitous hereditary novelties. The sheer fecundity of nature leads to a constant struggle for existence in which those individuals fortunate enough to be endowed with favorable novelties will survive in greater numbers, while their less fortunate peers will be more likely to perish. Sexual selection refers to the struggle between the males of a species for possession of the females, whereby the successful males will be the strongest, most competitive, and most aggressive and will thus leave the most progeny. Darwin claimed that, through the interaction of natural and sexual selection, man had become superior to woman in courage, energy, and intellect and that these greater physical and mental traits were more readily transmitted to the male than to the female offspring.

The process of genetic mutation and transfer was not yet understood; the production of favorable hereditary variations was regarded as requiring intelligence and courage, both of which were male, not female, traits. Males were therefore the innovators in the course of evolution, while females were merely the passive transmitters of hereditary material. Darwin argues that women do possess certain faculties found lacking in man—maternal feeling, intuition, perception, imitation, altruism, and tenderness—characteristics he

ascribed to lower races. He viewed females as primitive, non-varying, and undifferentiated in their function, which was to reproduce. The evolutionary development of women had been arrested, as it were, resulting in the intellectually and physically inferior female "race."<sup>21</sup>

Richards points out how little evidence Darwin marshaled in support of his contentions that women were naturally inferior and argues that his conclusions were shaped by a social climate in which women were perceived as innately inferior to men. Darwinism was "fed by Victorian assumptions of the inevitability and rightness of the sexual division of labour; of woman's role as domestic moral preceptor and nurturer and man's role as free-ranging aggressive provider and jealous patriarch."<sup>22</sup> She stresses that Darwin's work must also be viewed in the context of the scientific climate of the 19th century, in which strictly materialistic explanations for human behavior were sought.

During the 19th century the disciplines of biology, sociology, anthropology, medicine, and psychiatry were dominated by purely biological and physiological explanations of sexual difference and were themselves, of course, influenced by the same social and political ideologies that shaped Darwin's thinking. Herbert Spencer, the best-known social theorist (or social Darwinist) of the late 19th century claimed that the arrest in evolutionary development of women came about because the large quantity of female energy required by the reproductive process left nothing for her intellectual maturation. The male reproductive role was limited to that of fertilization, which presumably involved the expenditure of much less energy: thus more energy remained for male intellectual, moral, and psychic development. Spencer referred to the physical and mental "tax" that reproduction necessitated, asserting that the preservation of the species obligated women to "pay this tax and to submit to this sacrifice."<sup>23</sup>

British biologists Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson carried Spencer's notions even further with their theory of sexual differences based on cell metabolism. They claimed that male cells were "katabolic," or active and energetic, which explained man's greater intellectual power, aggressiveness, and competitiveness. Female cells, on the other hand, were "anabolic," or passive, nurturing, and energy-retaining, and this explained woman's greater placidity, tenderness, and conservatism. Female energy was believed to be bound up in reproduction. With nothing remaining for active participation in society, woman's contribution to social progress was confined to her "reproductive sacrifice."<sup>24</sup>

Profoundly influenced by Darwin and Spencer, late-19th-century physicians viewed women's minds and souls as subject to the physiological dictates of their reproductive organs. Certain British and American doctors regarded the uterus and, variously, the ovaries, as the controlling organs of the female body. Women's personalities were directed by one of these organs, and any mental or physical disturbance was likely due to an ovarian or uterine problem. Women were encouraged to "throw their weight" behind the uterus or ovaries and to resist the temptations of the brain.<sup>25</sup> It was, moreover, the female reproductive organs that engendered the maternal qualities necessary for child-rearing. Because the brain was believed to respond to the operation of the reproductive organs, women were deemed mentally constituted to take care of children as well as physically constituted to conceive and give birth.<sup>26</sup>

Darwinism—or perhaps more correctly, the general tendency of 19th-century theorists to seek scientific/naturalistic explanations of human behavior—spawned an array of theories that cast humans, particularly women, as slaves to the dictates of their physiological mechanisms. Munch's art, by means of subject matter and style, casts humans



**Fig. 7. Edvard Munch, *Symbolic Study* (1893), gouache on cardboard, 22" x 27 1/4". Munch Museum, Oslo.**

as components of larger, all-encompassing natural processes beyond their conscious control. In *The Dance of Life* and *The Three Stages of Woman*, Munch portrayed the inevitable, biological process and progress of female sexual life, with procreation as the second stage. The figures' stark frontal and profile poses and generalized features immobilize them as universal emblems of the three stages of woman's life. The sea as a universal symbol of nature's unending repetition underscores the artist's belief in the natural, inevitable process of female life. The horizon line is high in both paintings, affirming human life as an earth-bound complex of biological and natural facts immune to deistic, divine forces. The curving, winding contours weave the figures and natural elements together into a unified, harmonious whole.

In the artist's *Madonna* prints the "biological substances" of the fetuses and sperm that appear in the borders assert that her primary function is the physiological process of reproduction. This interpretation seems confirmed by Munch's famous comment on the painting: "Now life reaches out its hand to death. The chain is forged that binds the thousands of generations that have died to the thousands of generations yet to come."<sup>27</sup> Appearing to float in her own fluid-filled, amniotic-like sac, the madonna is denied any measure of contact with the world beyond by the sperm and the bulky, oversized fetuses swimming around her. The instruments of her own physiological destiny imprison her.

Munch's women are disclosed as helpless pawns of biological and sexual forces and processes buried below the level of consciousness. In the works discussed above, there is no suggestion of an intellectual or professional sphere in which woman might operate. She is cast only in the roles of sexual partner and procreator, which, in the scientific, social, and economic climate of Munch's era, translated into wife and mother. ●

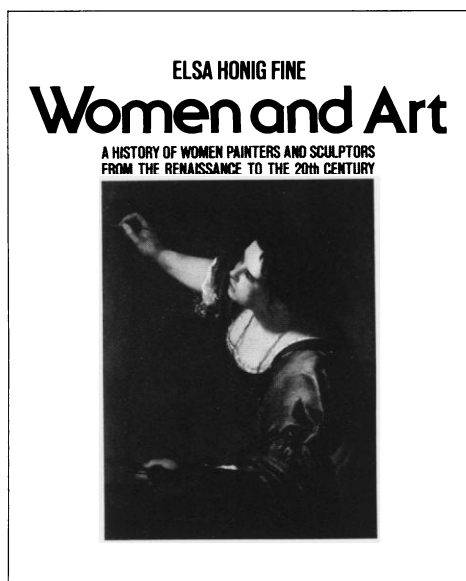
The research for this article was conducted under the guidance and support of professors Jack Flam and Linda Nochlin of the Department of Art History at the City University of New York. I thank them for their insights and encouragement.

1. Munch's oeuvre is dominated by images of women. Those that are not portraits deal either with issues of sexuality and fertility or the relationship between women and death. For the latter see, for example, *The Sick Child* (1885-86; National Gallery, Oslo);



- Death in the Sick Room* (1893-94; National Gallery, Oslo); *Dead Mother and Child* (1893; Kunsthalle, Bremen); *Inheritance* (1897-99; Munch Museum, Oslo); and *Melancholy* (1898; Munch Museum, Oslo). Interestingly, in his studies of female family members and friends, such as those of his sister Inger (1892; National Gallery, Oslo) and his former love Dagny Juell (1893; Munch Museum, Oslo), who married Stanislaw Przybyszewska, the Polish writer and leader of the Berlin Bohemian Circle *Schwarze Ferkel* (Black Pig), the women are portrayed as independent and assertive.
2. So observes Reinhold Heller in his catalogue essay, "Love as a Series of Paintings," in *Edvard Munch: Symbols and Images* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1978), 105.
  3. In Reinhold Heller, *Munch: His Life and Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984), 129, citing manuscript T 2547 in the Munch Museum Archives, Oslo.
  4. The lost frame is mentioned by Ragna Stang, *Edvard Munch: The Man and His Art*, Geoffrey Culverwell, trans. (New York: Abbeville, 1977), 110, citing Jens Thiis, *Edvard Munch og hans samtid. Slekten, livet og kunsten, geniet* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1933) 218: "a symbolic frame with human sperm and embryos which were also repeated later in the first color lithograph. This offensive frame was afterwards removed."
  5. Peter Schjeldahl, "Munch: The Missing Master," *Art in America* (May-June 1979), 88.
  6. Reinhold Heller, "The Iconography of Edvard Munch's *Sphinx*," *Artforum* (October 1970), 72, 80.
  7. Wendy Slatkin, "Maternity and Sexuality in the 1890s," *WAJ* (S/S 1980), 13-19.
  8. Robyn Dasey, "Women's Work and the Family: Women Garment Workers in Berlin and Hamburg Before the First World War," in Richard J. Evans and W. R. Lee, eds., *The German Family: Essays on the Social History of the Family in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Germany* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble, 1981), 221; Theresa M. McBride, "The Long Road Home: Women's Work and Industrialization," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 283.
  9. Dasey, "Women Garment Workers," 223.
  10. McBride, "Women's Work and Industrialization," 284; Louise A. Tilly, Joan W. Scott, and Miriam Cohen, "Woman's Work and European Fertility Patterns," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Winter 1976), 474.
  11. Dasey, "Women Garment Workers," 221; Karin Hausen, "Family and Role-Division: The Polarization of Sexual Stereotypes in the Nineteenth Century—An Aspect of the Dissociation of Work and Family life," in *The German Family*, 63-64. These ideas were stressed by artists of the period as well. See Stewart Buettner, "Images of Modern Motherhood in the Art of Morisot, Cassatt, Modersohn-Becker, Kollwitz," *WAJ* (F'86/W'87), 14-21, and Elaine Shefer, "Woman's Mission," *WAJ* (S/S 1986), 8-12.
  12. Stang, *Munch*, 119, citing Munch's diary in the Oslo Kommunes Kunstsamlinger, entry number OKK T 2347.
  13. Stang, *Munch*, 120, citing Munch's diary, *Violet Book*, in the Oslo Kommunes Kunstsamlinger, OKK 2760, January 8, 1892.
  14. Heller, *Munch: His Life and Work*, 63. Haeckel's most famous books were *The History of Creation* (1868) and *Riddle of the Universe* (1899).
  15. Haeckel's address was published as a book in 1892. I examined an English translation: Ernst Haeckel, *The Confession of Faith of a Man of Science*, J. Gilchrist, trans. (London: A.C. and C. Black, 1903).
  16. Haeckel, *Confession*, 46.
  17. *Ibid.*, 50.
  18. Haeckel transformed and in the process misinterpreted Darwinism. His Monism was nothing less than an antiteleological philosophy of life that, as it developed, took on increasingly vitalistic and religious overtones that Darwin did not intend. See Alfred Kelly, *The Descent of Darwin: The Popularization of Darwinism in Germany, 1860-1914* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina, 1981), 22-28.
  19. In a later painting, *Bathing Boys* (c. 1904; Munch Museum, Oslo), Munch represents the evolution of man from lower animals. This painting is illustrated and discussed by Robert Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 113-14.
  20. Evelleen Richards, "Darwin and the Descent of Women," in David Oldroyd and Ian Langham, eds., *The Wider Domain of Evolutionary Thought* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1983), 62-76. For more about the sexual biases of Darwinism, see Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1978), 106-107, and Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1985).
  21. Richards, "Darwin and the Descent of Women," 62-76.
  22. *Ibid.*, 75.
  23. Lorna Duffin, "Prisoners of Progress: Women and Evolution," in Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin, eds., *The Nineteenth-Century Woman; Her Cultural and Physical World* (London: Croom Helm; 1978), 62, citing Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Ethics*, I (London: Williams & Norgate, 1892-93), 533.
  24. Showalter, *The Female Malady*, 122, citing Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thompson, *The Evolution of Sex* (London, 1889), 269.
  25. Ehrenreich and English, *For Her Own Good*, 108-14.
  26. Showalter, *The Female Malady*, 123.
  27. Heller, *Munch: His Life and Work*, 129, citing manuscript T 2547 in the Munch Museum Archives, Oslo.

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