

# Example of edvard munch term paper

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Wonderful Norwegian artist Edvard Munch did not left behind any disciples, his art is too personal, subjective for a school to arise. It is difficult to determine the stylistic evolution of the artist. It is difficult to attribute him to any particular art direction. With equal force in his work there appeared features of symbolism, expressionism and realism. It seems that it makes no sense to look for exact definitions, signs of a particular style. All the phenomena of life, the artist transmitted through himself, perceiving them very individually. These phenomena, existing in images and ideas in his imagination, found their very precise embodiment.

Edvard Munch was formed as an artist by the end of the 1880s. All of this unique, individual, and everything we call art of Munch, was first demonstrated at this time – 1880-1890-ies. Within this time, Munch created his most famous paintings: " The Sick Child", " Death in the Sickroom", " The Scream", " The Dance of Life". All of them are based on personal experiences (Pitman, 2011). Changing almost nothing in these stories, Munch painted them many times throughout his life. He tried very hard to achieve some very precise feeling in the picture, meticulously and ruthlessly rejecting several options. But once finding successful embodiment of the ideal image that exists in it, Munch repeated it many times, without fear of accusations of monotony. There are several variants of " The Sick Child" from 1886 to 1930ies. Like this one, most of the works of this period are a response to the experience of childhood that were so strong that for the whole life of Munch they were for him a source of inspiration and a kind of obsession (Temkin, 2012).

Munch was born in a family of a doctor, he had many sisters and a brother,

but all of them except Inger sister died in childhood. As a child, he survived the death of his mother, and then elder sister Sophie. The theme of death, disease, extinction is one of the most important in his art. Munch grew up in a very religious family. Thoughts of death, fear of life, manifestations of sensuality and perceiving it as sin, evil, fight against religious taboos – all of this intricately intertwined in his soul. Desire for inner freedom pushed the young artist to the medium of Oslo bohemian intellectuals. For quite a long time, it attracted Munch. He was a typical representative of the bohemia of the end of the century in terms of opposition to the bourgeois lifestyle, shocking bourgeois conventions and bourgeois morality. However, there was nothing in him from the "artist", no narcissism. In the bohemian environment, where it was considered necessary to attract attention by any means, Munch stood alone (Gedo, 2013). He hated his appearance as a manifestation of his physical shell. Although he often wrote self-portraits, he considered and studied himself with curiosity of outsider, not recognizing. Munch painted himself completely honestly, without any pose, affectation. To a greater extent self-portrait were landscapes and portraits of others. What he drew was not supposed to be like nature, but had to conform to the image, idea established in his mind. Therefore, these landscapes and portraits are more spiritual portraits of Edvard Munch, than portraits of his contemporaries and landscapes of Norway.

In 1885, after receiving a scholarship, Munch went to Paris, where he first saw the French art. It was a discovery for him, as before the trip to France, he was familiar only with the German realistic art of the middle of the XIX century with the help of his Norwegian followers. As response to new

experiences there were created paintings " The Sick Child", " The Next Day", " Puberty" (known in many repetitions). In 1889, Munch moved to Paris again, and this time he stayed abroad for nearly twenty years (Smith, 2010). However, although he mostly lived in France and Germany, he never lost his connection with the homeland. Most of the works of this time were written by him during his visits to Norway. Norway gave his art those impulses on which it was growing.

In the autumn of 1892, Munch was invited with an exhibition to Berlin. He brought pictures himself, hung them, giving this event a big significance. The exhibition caused a scandal, and it had to be closed. But the name of Munch from that moment became known among intellectuals, artists, and the artist remained in Germany, where he lived until 1909. In Germany, Munch became friends with a circle of progressive intellectuals, mainly consisting of such as himself, foreigners. Among them, there were August Strindberg, Stanislaw Przybyszewski. It was in Berlin, in this environment, when Munch's idea of " Frieze of Life" was born. For more than thirty years, the artist had been working over this symphony (according to his own expression). On the quantity and the exact composition of the Frieze scholars of Munch still argue. But surely, this work included " Starry Night", " The Voice", " Vampire", " Madonna", " The Scream", " Anxiety", " Death in the Sickroom", " Ashes", " Jealousy" and some others (Singer et al., 2010). These paintings were mostly written in the 1890s, during periods of summer trips to Norway. In the " Frieze of Life" Munch included pictures painted before he had an idea of " Frieze". This is " The Kiss", " Melancholy". The composition of the cycle was not permanent. The name was not also born immediately. Only at the

exhibition in 1918, the title " Frieze of Life" was first presented. In this series Munch synthesizes, collects all the essential elements of human life, turning them into mysteries. Love, hate, birth, death, youth, old age, fighting the forces of nature appear in their primitive sense, cleared of complications, which civilization brought. Woman in the pictures of " Frieze" is the first woman on the Earth – Eve. She attracts and scares at the same time, her love is tempting and dangerous, she is the focus of evil, dark beginning, the embodiment of sin, the flesh. Low forehead, thick flowing hair, voluptuous covered heavy-lidded eyes – the woman appears before us in the paintings " Madonna", " Vampire", " Ashes" (McKiernan, 2013).

Landscape painting in " Frieze of Life" is a particular place, the universe, the image of the world as it is imagined by Munch. His sea is always the same recognizable seascape, this is the image of the Sea; his forest is the primeval forest, the one that was first seen and how children see and remember it. Thus, the phenomena of life and nature in the works of Edvard Munch exempt from accretions back to the very beginning, becoming a mystery of cosmic proportions.

Human is doomed to failure, suffering in an unequal struggle with the forces of Nature. The image of human is a naked nerve devoid of containment, responding with pain to the slightest touch. In the painting " The Scream" figure of a man is frozen in a silent scream, with white eyes full of horror, surrounded on all sides by the incomprehensible, the invisible, hostile " something". The presence of the horror is felt only by him (in the background artist paints figures of two people conversing quietly and peacefully with each other). Comparing, pushing man and nature, which is almost always

hostile or strange to him, Munch reveals to us the inner world of a man deeply hidden in the subconscious instincts. Traditional methods could not help the artist to express these feelings and images. Munch mercilessly rejects these methods, boldly using color, deforming the shape. So he writes green man's face in the painting " Jealousy", distorts the human figure in the painting " The Scream", which is considered the first expressionist painting in the European art. Interestingly, the landscape background in this picture and in the picture " Anxiety" in 1894 is exactly the same (Miranda, Miranda & Molina, 2013). Those boats frozen in viscous as oil lead water; firmly pressed against the low sky red to dark purple ground, without missing a breath of air. The texture and color, lines emphasize the sensation of air absence. Obviously, in the Munch's memory there was this image, where he experienced something similar.

" European" period in the works of Munch ended in 1909, when he settled permanently in Norway. In a secluded location in the small town of Kragero, he bought a house for his paintings and for themselves. Here he lived for about seven years (1909-1916), in 1916 he bought a house in Eckel (Chang, 2010). Artist was removing from people further, hiding in his home, staying alone with his paintings. Only selected few were allowed there. This was in the time when his role as a leading artist in Norway, one of the greatest artists of all Europe was recognized. He could become a leader of artistic direction, around him there could gather like-minded people, but he was not interested in this. Art for him was not only a form of expression, but also the only possible form of existence; it was the only thing that reconciled him with the need to live. In the work and personality of Edward Munch in a

remarkably bright way the period features were embodied – the time of transition, boundary, when in the depths of the old art there was conceived and strengthened the new art, the art of XX century.

All the creative life of the artist is a mixture of tragic despair, frustration, fear and the pauses of harmony and peace. Early death of his mother and then his sister's death left a deep mark on the soul of the artist, which later resulted in his steadfast attention to the themes of death and disease. The young artist was greatly influenced by Hans Ibsen, the author of banned novel " Christiania - bohemia" and gnostic " Anarchist Bible". At the same time, A. Strindberg wrote the novel " The Red Room", in which cruelty is presented as the highest cult. World around the artist becomes terrible, full of pain, nightmares and evil. All this had very serious impact on the painful sensitivities of Munch's human suffering. La Bohème became his second family. His works changed dramatically (Gruener, 2014). There appeared grotesque, anguish, fear of the unknowable world and human, painful erotic. In all of this, there was also a protest of the young Scandinavian intellectual against measured, prosperous bourgeois, middle-class life.

Munch was not only an artist of easel, but also muralist. In 1910-1916 he completed a large painting in the hall of the University of Oslo. Topics of paintings were prompted to him by philosophical works of Nietzsche. Munch worked in the technique of wood engraving, etching, black and color lithographs. Many of his works were transferred by him in etching and lithography, which he mastered to perfection. One of the most important types of his work was engraving. While working in etchings, dry point, aquatint, lithography, woodcut, the artist was not looking for any new topics

or new compositions, and only varied motives of his paintings. In this case, his paintings can be seen as a preliminary stage of the work, and the graphic print - as a final.

Picture and engraving were separated at least by a year, and sometimes – ten to fifteen years. This gave the artist the opportunity to take a detached view of the work, and then, throwing unnecessary and private away, to focus on the expression of the main idea. Etching "The Voice" was created in 1895, two years after the eponymous painting (Sloan, 2013). From a female figure pictured here in the background of the moonlit landscape breathes tranquility. All around is full of mysterious expectations of listening.

Superfine silver tone of aquatint only emphasizes graceful fragility of coastline, female figures, tree branches. Moonlight that illuminates the surface of the water, reflected on the woman's face, becomes the carrier of supernatural forces.

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