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LAWREN HARRIS:
A THEOSOPHIST WHO PAINTED

by
Dawn Ambler

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Marie-Françoise Guédon

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of the University of Ottawa as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies.

Department of Classics and Religious Studies
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Canada
May 2002

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ABSTRACT

Lawren Harris, the well-known Canadian painter, was also a prominent member of the International Theosophical Society. Usually his theosophical ties are considered secondary to his occupation as a painter. Most art critics and art historians who have written about him have focused on the role he played with the Group of Seven and the paintings he produced during that period, taking his abstract work as a consequence of his aesthetic evolution and linking it symbolically with his earlier landscapes. Other art historians have acknowledged that Theosophy might have influenced Lawren Harris's painting, and they attempt to read theosophical representations in the images he produced. Looking at Lawren Harris from the perspective of Religious Studies, this thesis first examines the nature of Harris's involvement with Theosophy and the tenets of Theosophy in his time. Then, on the basis of his writings (which constitute a large part of his legacy, since he left behind articles, lectures, letters, a book, exhibit reviews and an unfinished manuscript) as well as his paintings, this thesis proposes that Lawren Harris was a deeply religious man who used painting as a tool in his own quest for the sacred. This quest, informed by theosophical principles as interpreted by Lawren Harris, led him to perceive his paintings not as illustrations, not as symbols, not even as theosophical representations, but as a disciplined experience of the Divine, a spiritual practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people for their efforts to ensure that "ihaveaphd".

To the professors at the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa: Dr. Marie Françoise Guédon, who saved my life, more than once; since 1992 you've been my teacher, my mentor, and more importantly my best friend. You've taught me a lifetime of lessons in such a short while and without you there would be no dissertation. Words cannot express my gratitude.

Dr. Georges Tissot, mentor and friend, thank you for those intellectual lunches to stimulate my mind. Dr. Norman Pagé, thanks for your help to clarify the art world. Thanks to Dr. Peter Beyer for financial backing and Diane Fournier for administrative support during my academic sojourn. Thanks to the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island: Dr. David Morrison, Dr. Philip Davis and Dr. Edward Chung – you started me on the long road, then sent me packing to the Master's.

Thank you to Catherine and Michael McCracken for bringing me back to finish what I started. I could not have returned to study without your financial help and friendship.

To Dr. Ellen Driscoll, fellow traveler, our family kept us determined, our friendship kept us going. You always seemed to appear when life seemed so black. Words cannot express my gratitude.

Lucie and Michael - thanks for the support, both technical and mental. Thanks, too, Lucie for your encouraging bear hugs when needed! Thanks Shelley, for the groceries and your ongoing support. To my friends at the 'house', thank you for the space and the friendship throughout my ordeal. To Patrick and his printer, many thanks.

I owe a debt of thanks to the National Archives of Canada and the National Library of Canada for an open door to a wealth of information when accessing the papers of Lawren Harris and others. I also thank the librarians and archivists for their answers to my many questions.

To my fellow doctoral studies colleagues – thanks for the pat on the back, the jokes when needed, and the rap on the knuckles when I

needed that too. Thanks also go to the collegiate spirit of fellow students who volunteered their time and talents to bring this task to completion.

And to my children and grandchildren – fourteen long years has this quest taken, through good times and bad. I've taken your childhood and then some but you've stood tall, made me proud, and now I hope I've made you proud too. Thank You.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGO	Art Gallery of Ontario
AGT	Art Gallery of Toronto
CGP	Canadian Group of Painters
Club	Arts and Letters Club
GD	Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn
Group	Group of Seven
HPB	Madame Helena P. Blavatsky
Isis	*Isis Unveiled*
NAC	National Archives of Canada
NFB	National Film Board of Canada
NGA	National Gallery of Canada
NLC	National Library of Canada
OCA	Ontario College of Art
OSA	Ontario Society of Artists
OTO	*Ordo Templis Orientis*
TG	*The Theosophical Glossary*
TGP	Transcendentalist Group of Painters
TS	Theosophical Society
VAG	Vancouver Art Gallery
Voice	*Voice of the Silence*

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INTRODUCTION

> You cannot sever the philosophy of the artist from his work as if to say, "I will take the sweet it is so beautiful that I know he cannot have meant the bitter." Nor must you belittle the man in his work by accepting his skill, his sensitivity in patterning, in building forms, his finesse in accenting, his suavity in technique, and rejecting his philosophy, his background. People do this through fear or incapacity to accept life. Without the philosophy or in other words the man in the work of Whitman, Balzac, Beethoven, Michelangelo or any great artist you have nothing. If you are not of sufficient size, to accept all phases of a man's art you can be certain that the whole is incomplete not so much in the artist as in yourself. You cannot cramp art into the little thing beauty means to you and expect to understand. - Lawren Harris

Lawren Harris is famous as a Canadian painter. However, this fame is more directly linked to the early part of his artistic career and is based on his work with the Group of Seven. This work, and that of his colleagues in the Group, brought that which could be called 'Canadian' into the Canadian art sphere. As a member of the established intellectual elite, he was fortunate in having the means, and using the opportunity to create, in a rapidly changing environment, a milieu where artists could endeavour to try something new. This process corresponded to one of Harris's

most explicit goals. According to him, the Euro-American artists had so far always followed tradition, the tradition of the European masters; it was now time for Canadian artists and their public to follow a new path, a path that recognized the 'Canadian spirit'.

This 'new art', however, was first received by the public with reticence. The landscape paintings of the Group were, at first, considered 'wild', 'chaotic' and 'undisciplined'. Yet their art found a following and eventually with the backing of the media and the National Gallery of Canada, the seven were soon dubbed a group promoting Canadian 'nationalism' (Larisey 1974, 1982; Murray 1984; Newlands 1995). With flags waving, Canada took to the idea of having an art 'of its own', and exhibitions of the Group's work were held throughout the decade of their formal existence. Lawren Harris was considered the Group's financial and spiritual leader and it was partly due to his efforts that the Group took to sketching around the country (although mainly in northern Ontario).

However, Harris was not just a 'Group' painter, he was a lifetime artist and some of his more interesting and innovative work was produced after the Group dissolved. He continued to produce paintings after the Canadian Group of Painters replaced the

Group and even after he had moved from Canada to the United States. However, he was more than a painter; he wrote poetry, published articles, lectured, and instructed others in the art of painting. He also left behind a vast array of unpublished writings and a wealth of correspondence.

When Harris spoke of the "Canadian spirit", he referred to a context, which was not strictly geographical or political, but more spiritual, defined by aesthetic and philosophical principles, rather than nationalistic concerns. His spiritual leadership was linked, among other things, to his formal membership in the Theosophical Society. His theosophical commitment also extended far beyond the Group of Seven. Among other publications, Harris wrote for The Canadian Theosophist, the periodical of the Toronto Theosophical Society. His 'spiritual' commitment is also shown in his lectures to artists and to the public, for even in his CBC Radio lectures he managed to slip in theosophical references.

Authors such as Ann Davis (1992), Christopher Jackson (1991), and Dennis Reid (1985) have theorized that such a commitment to Theosophical philosophy was more than a passing influence in Lawren Harris's life and that Theosophy had found its way into his art. However, those who have studied the 'spiritual' aspects of

Harris and other modern artists began their research from the painters and their artworks, exploring how to link features of their art to aspects of their religious environment. Their primary interest was the influence of Theosophy on the artist's production.

My interest, however, is directed toward another object; that is, using Lawren Harris's own words, toward "the artist as a man of faith". My first hypothesis is that Lawren Harris managed not only to conciliate his work as a theosophist with his work as an artist but I hope to show that his religious quest permeated all his activities from his paintings to his writings and his lectures - and that he merged the two levels of commitment to Theosophy and to art into a single process. Such a perspective, supported by the discipline of Religious Studies, should yield, if not answers, at least new questions. To formulate valid questions is the purpose of this thesis.

For instance, the first art historians and critics who wrote about Harris spoke predominantly about his role in the Group of Seven. What happened after the Group of Seven period, and how significant was the artwork Harris produced in the subsequent periods? Most scholars conclude that Harris went through distinct periods of painting: his pre-Group (of Seven) period, his Group of

Seven (including his blue and white) period, and his later abstraction period. If one looks at Harris from the point of view of a theosophist, does his intellectual evolution follow a similar path? If his commitment to Theosophy is continuous, then my hypothesis entails that this continuity is reflected in his art.

Historical Period

Harris was not alone in presenting himself as a spiritual or visionary artist; many artists of his time have been described (and have described themselves) in similar terms. Harris's body of work was produced at the same time as Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, and Piet Mondrian, for example,who were painting in Europe and Paul Klee who was producing in the United States; all shared 'spiritual' (their term) preoccupations of comparable nature.

The last part of the nineteenth century was a period of turmoil and change.[1] A scientific revolution was taking place and discoveries were rapidly changing long held beliefs. New Religious Movements were created all over North America and people were questioning the established Christian religious teachings in the Western world. Into this environment stepped Madame Blavatsky with her mishmash of Eastern and Western Occult ideas. With her arrival in the United States, the Theosophical Society was born

and it quickly grew into an international organization. Intellectuals from Europe and North America, especially those in the art world,and even in India, soon caught theosophical fever.

The theme of 'spirituality in art' found an anchor in the artistic communities and groups involved with Theosophy and the other esoteric societies directly or indirectly linked with Blavatsky and her disciples.[2] There were calls for a spiritual revolution and the birthing of a new age. The aesthetic environment, including the artists previously mentioned, moved into the twentieth century on a wave of progressive interiorization. Kandinsky proposed such an artistic revolution in his writings:

> When religion, science, and morality are shaken ... and when the outer supports threaten to fall, man turns his gaze from externals in unto himself. Literature, music, and art are the first and most sensitive spheres in which this spiritual revolution makes itself felt (Kandinsky in Viladesau 2000: 93).

Spirituality was so explicitly part of the artistic scene that it could not be ignored for long, in spite of the reticence of some art historians. Yet it is only a few authors such as Mofffat (1987), Bohan (1987), Sixten Ringbom (1966, 1970), and Dennis Reid (1985), that have contributed precise analyses of the works of specific abstract painters while recognizing a spiritual component to their art.

Dealing with the crossroads between contemporary art and esoteric spirituality, most, if not all, researchers attempt to identify, trace back and interpret, in artistic terms, some religious, esoteric, or even theosophical images or symbols that might be found in the artists' production. This approach most often results in a symbolic reading of the painting. Such a reading may indeed yield interesting data with some artists – Kandinsky is an example in mind, but it offers a truncated perception of the work, the person, and most artists and, often, this is misleading. Even when one identifies symbols or images in a given painting, such components may compose only a fraction of the meaning of the whole work. Moreover, and most importantly, one should ask first, whether this approach fits with what the artists themselves have said about their work.

Mondrian and Kandinsky, for instance, have stated themselves at various times, that their art is not one of symbolic notations but rather one of spiritual experience. Is this tension between the critic's search for correspondences on the one hand and the artists' emphasis on experience on the other, worthy of investigation and does it apply to Harris? This question leads to my second hypothesis: that an analysis of Harris's personal theories on art and spirituality, which explicitly refer to the artist's experience, may shed light on the content of his paintings, and

verify the statements made about the theosophical content of his works and especially of his abstract work.

In her doctoral dissertation, for instance, Ann Davis discusses the 'philosophy' of the Group of Seven. However, as she develops her theory she pays more attention to nationalism than to Theosophy. In her later published work, The Logic of Ecstasy, she examines five artists, including Harris, and presents their work as visionary art, however she primarily looks at Lawren Harris the artist, rather than at Lawren Harris, the theosophist; she notes that "in his representational he ... exposed and conveyed his theosophical beliefs" (Davis 1992:115). Like her contemporaries Davis tends to look at the visionary from a general perspective and she treats spirituality as a quasi-homogeneous universal. However, in my opinion, 'spirituality' should not be assumed to have the same meaning everywhere. By paying attention to Harris the man, by reading his writing and looking at his lifetime production of images, one gains a different perspective of both the man, the painter and the specificity of what he calls spirituality. One could then ask what effect did his painting have on his Theosophy? This question brings the researcher outside of the study of fine art based on the study of the object, into the religious relationship of the artist with his soul and with the world.

Methodology

The methodology of this research moves through five stages taking us from Art History to Religious Studies. This shift moves the attention of the researcher from the paintings to the painter, from the artist as a producer of works of art, to the artist as subject, from works of art as ends to works of art as means. Whether as an iconographical means of an expression of ideas, or ritual means within a symbolic context, or means of self-expression, or means towards other functions, depends on the context and the traditions in which the artist is living.

The first stage (Part A) is to contextualize the research and to anchor the artist and his work in his time and his society, the second (Part B) is to define the religious environment in general - and Theosophy in particular – from which Harris derived his own spirituality, the third one (Part C) retraces the artistic community's involvement with esoteric images and principles; the fourth stage (Part D) examines Harris's own perspective on spirituality and art based on his writings, and the last stage (Part E) is to look at Harris's visual art production.

The first three chapters in Part A use a historical framework. Archival documents, published books, and other written material, are used to document the main events in Harris's biography[3] in

Chapter One[4]; Chapter Two examines the Group of Seven and their role in the development of a 'Canadian art'. Chapter Three focuses on the international milieu, through a short survey of the artists and thinkers of the time.

In Part B, the two chapters are based on a thematic reading of the literature pertaining to the Theosophical movement and its theories, starting from Mme Blavatsky, the main founder of the movement. First Chapter Four offers a summary of the history[5] of the Theosophical Society.[6] A summary of the theosophical doctrine is presented in Chapter Five.

In Part C, Chapter Six highlights the theosophical writings on images and symbols, which were most likely to be used by artists. Chapter Seven ventures outside of Theosophy, in the strict sense of the term, through a reading of the writings of abstract artists, and a gathering of evidence on how the artists themselves understood and used Theosophy.

The research in Part D concentrates on Harris's writings, both public and private. Chapter Eight examines his philosophical positions, including his writing on Theosophy, and his published poetry. In Chapter Nine, Harris's theories on art are presented.

Both chapters are based almost entirely on archival research. This entailed a thorough reading of all the files retained by the National Archives so as to identify the main and most important themes in Harris's own writings. The themes were selected on an informal assessment of how often statements were repeated from one document to another. This method evolved from my own observations, which led me to two conclusions: 1) Harris recycled, sometimes over long periods of time (as much as 20 years) the same ideas, sentences, quotes, or even paragraphs; 2) there is a remarkable congruence between the different genres.

A formal content analysis would have been appropriate to treat this material but it would require a formidable research apparatus, which would shift the intent of the thesis. For the purpose of this research, which is to search for valid questions, the best approach seems to be to gather together the various facets of the artist's life rather than focus entirely on a detailed analysis of his writings. Such an analysis could be the focus of later research.

In Part E, Chapter Ten presents a sample of what was written about Harris by other authors, such as art critics or art historians. It points out that various authors have written about Harris from historical accounts of the Group of Seven to an analysis of his

abstract work. Chapter Eleven, by contrast to Ten, brings a different perspective, fed by the field of Religious Studies. It explores Harris's artwork in the context of Harris's own writings, as part of his life experience.

The primary source material consists, therefore, of both writings and images.

* Writings - I have included both his published and unpublished writings including his correspondence to his colleagues and his published book of poetry.[7] I have also accessed the literary works Harris used as reference points.[8]

* Images – I have created a catalogue, as complete as possible, of Harris's artistic works.[9] I have also constructed a sample of illustrations coming from theosophical and esoteric sources and I have also brought together samples of his colleagues' art. [10]

In order to complete the catalogues in question I would require a trip to Toronto, Kleinberg and Vancouver (perhaps even to Santa Fe) in order to visit their archives and galleries for more material. However, I believe that I have created an extensive listing of both art and written work by Harris, listings which are not to be found in any other work thus far published or made available to the public.

Definitions

What is art? Plato noted "art is a form of play" (Plato in Bell 1999:14), referring to 'high play', that is play with high stakes, the highest stake being the fate of one's soul. In this sense, art is also a serious occupation, one consisting of contemplation and decision-making towards the production of an event or object. A work of art is an intentional aesthetic object. One could also say a work of art is also "an artifact (or human product) with an aesthetic function" (Genette 1997). One must go further, however, and recognize that art transmits feelings and experiences among persons of the same culture; in fact, art is the means by which people of similar cognition reach out to others in order to transmit an aesthetic experience. In this, Theosophy and related esoteric doctrines attempt to introduce the idea that 'true' art can transcend cultural differences and historical particularities.

Responding to Gombrich's review of art in the West, Norman Bryson, in Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze, proposes that painting in particular is "an art of signs not Gombrich's record of perceptions" (Bryson 1983:xii). For the artists that are at the center of this thesis, especially in the case of abstract art of the early twentieth century, I would argue that art is neither just signs nor perceptions, but rather, a record of experience. This opinion, often stated by Harris, is the source of most incomprehension

among his critics.

What happens when that experience refers to the religious? Religious art is recognized by its iconography, so states Sister Wendy Beckett (1992:10); and as Emile Mâle pointed out, when art faithfully obeys strict and religious rules - such as those laid down by a given symbolic language –

> it may well be questioned whether the theologian who dictates the program, the artist who executes it, and the devotee who subscribes to its lessons, all understand and interpret form in quite the same way. For in the life of the mind, there is a region in which forms that are defined with the utmost exactitude nevertheless speak to us in very different languages (Mâle in Focillon 1996:36).

W. T. Mitchell goes further and states -

> We should discriminate and call art only those works of art which are the handiwork of the artist purely as artist ... All the rest, all that show an evident religious tendency, are unworthy to be called works of art. In them art was not working for her own sake, but was simply the tool of Religion, having symbolic representations forced upon her with more regard to their significance than their beauty (1986:63-74).

This kind of critique was endorsed by some of the abstract artists. Still it calls for discussion; there may be various ways for religion and art to cohabit. One should also note that religious art may or may not be spiritual art. The term "spirituality" is taken here to

refer to the process by which individuals negotiate and construct their own path between their personal life experiences and the religious systems offered by their sociocultural contexts (Guédon 2002). Spiritual art always entails the formal contribution of the artist or the personal participation of the viewer. For that reason, spiritual art affects the emotions of the beholder, staying with them long after leaving the artwork behind. To anticipate Harris's perspective one can posit that: "art that enables us to know, not by faith, but by felt experience is spiritual" (Beckett 1992:10).

Previous work in this area

Frederick Housser (1926), Charles Hill (1995), Thoreau MacDonald (1944), Peter Mellen (1970), Anne Newlands (1995), Joyce Putnam (1991), Margaret Davidson (1969), Joan Murray (1984), and Harry Hunkin (1971) all wrote books focusing on the Group of Seven. Harris, of course, is mentioned in all of these, but only from the perspective of his role as a member of the Group and with a focus on his landscape painting which was produced in the 1920s. Jeremy Adamson (1978), Andrew Bell (1948), and the National Gallery of Canada (1963, 1948) examine Lawren Harris's work as a painter, with a special emphasis on the exhibitions of his paintings during the period 1906-1948.

It is with Dennis Reid (1985) and Ann Davis (1992) that the focus

changes to Harris's abstractions of the later period of his life; and they both note his connection to Theosophy. In each case, however, they ultimately go back to a symbolic reading, and a search for meaning in his paintings. Christopher Jackson, in his work, Lawren Harris: North by West: The Arctic and Rocky Mountain Paintings of Lawren Harris 1924-1931, recently provided an example of the symbolic interpretation of Lawren Harris's art, especially as far as his landscape painting is concerned.

Linda Street (1979), Ann Davis (1973), Peter Larisey (1993) and Maureen Wong (1974) each focus on Harris, the landscape painter. Street goes further in her thesis to discuss Harris's influence on other artists, in particular Emily Carr, through his correspondence with her in which they discussed theosophical principles at length. Andrew Hunter (2000), in a recent exhibition, wrote on Harris's progression in his painting from the early works to his abstract art.

Scholarly Contribution of this Thesis

These scholars who have examined Lawren Harris's work, while acknowledging his ties with Theosophy, have left us with many omissions regarding the significance of his writings and lectures, and his spiritual concerns. No one has so far attempted to bring together all aspects of Harris's life. No previous work has

attempted to document his entire art production or all of his writings, including those, which were never published. By providing such a synthesis I hope to construct a foundation for more meaningful discussions; those discussions would take Harris himself into consideration as the subject. This thesis attempts to consider the total of a man's life's work in order to understand the man himself.

Lawren Harris is a monumental subject. This thesis tries to address the life and work of a man who was, by all accounts, complex and multidimensional. By bringing together his writing, his paintings and his poetry in the context of an entire lifetime of artwork and spiritual quest, this thesis makes the point that the nature of the connections between Harris's art and his spirituality is important: it informs more than his art. It informs his writings and even his private life. To examine even a few of the themes addressed by Lawren Harris's theosophical work brings to light new facets of his art. This is where it is useful to turn to the discipline of Religious Studies. If one wants to achieve a well-rounded idea of a man, one must look at the whole picture.

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[1] See Appendix B – Social and Artistic Timeline.
[2] Groups such as the Golden Dawn, the OTO and the Rosicrucians. See Appendix C for a chronological timeline showing their connections to Theosophy.

[3] All biographical data has been gleaned from sources such as: Davis (1992), Larisey (1993), Hill (1995), and Murray and Fulford (1982).
[4] A biographical timeline is presented as Appendix A for reference.
[5] All historical data has been gleaned from sources such as: Campbell (1980) and various official theosophical Websites as listed in the Bibliography under websites.
[6] A chronological timeline showing the integration of the Theosophical Society with the various esoteric movements of the time is presented in Appendix C.
[7] See Appendix E
[8] See Bibliography
[9] See Appendix D
[10] See Appendix F

CHAPTER ONE

Biography of the Man

Lawren Stewart Harris (self-portrait, figure 1) was born in Brantford, Ontario, on October 23, 1885 to Thomas Morgan Harris and Anna Stewart Harris. Lawren's only sibling, a brother, Howard, was born January 14, 1887. Harris was brought up with a strong Christian background; his uncle, Elmore Harris, became minister of the Walmer Road Baptist Church in Toronto in the neighbourhood where Harris lived as a young boy. Also very important to his development was his mother's father, the Scottish born Reverend William Boyd Stewart, a clergyman in the Presbyterian Church.[1]

Lawren's mother, Anna, is remembered as a strong influence in his life. She was a devout Christian Scientist and later, while living in Toronto, was an active member of the First Church of Christ, Scientist. His background, therefore, emphasized the primacy of the Bible and the necessity of undercutting the dogma and tradition of the medieval church to return to a faith based solely on the Bible

and the practices of the early church. Harris accepted Christianity as part of his system of belief (Davis 1992:21), but it was not a central component to his religious life.

His father was secretary of The A. Harris, Sons & Co. Ltd. In 1891, the manufacturer amalgamated with Massey to form the Massey-Harris Company with Hart Massey as president. This firm became one of the wealthiest and most successful firms specializing in farm machinery in Canada, allowing Lawren Harris access to wealth and privilege.

In 1894, after Lawren's father had died, his maternal grandfather took Lawren, Howard, and their mother on a trip to Europe. Then, later, Mrs. Harris and her two sons moved to Toronto where Harris entered Grade 4 at Huron Street Public School, which he attended until he completed Grade 7. A heart problem necessitated tutoring at home for the following two years.

Even as a child, Lawren had an interest in drawing and painting houses, and he used to paint pictures of all the houses in the area (Davis 1992:6). In September 1899, he entered Grade 8 at St. Andrew's College, a private Presbyterian school in Toronto's wealthy Rosedale district. Fellow pupils included Vincent Massey

(1887-1967) and Frederick B. Housser (1889-1936), who became his close friend and ally and whose wife Bess (1891-1969) later became Harris'ss second wife. Fred Housser was a committed theosophist and their friendship continued until Housser's death in 1936.

In 1903, having completed Grade 10, Harris left St. Andrew's and in September he was accepted as a freshman in the Arts Faculty of University College at the University of Toronto, where he remained only half a year.

> In the course of a conventional education we find Harris at Toronto University filling his notebook with pencil sketches of his fellow freshmen and various members of the faculty instead of listening to professorial lectures. One of these illustrated notebooks was left by accident in the classroom where a professor intelligent enough to see that this student was wasting his time at college picked it up. He called at the family residence and stated his opinion, and the incident ended by Harris being sent to study painting in Germany (Housser 1926:34-35).

Harris arrived in Berlin at the age of nineteen to study art, with violin as a secondary activity. He took private studio classes with three teachers (figure 2): Franz Skarbina, Fritz von Wille and Adolf Schlabitz and his studies continued here until 1907. While in Germany he discovered theosophical, esoteric, transcendentalist, and eastern philosophies. During his stay in Berlin he likely saw the tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth art exhibitions of the Berlin

Secession where he initially saw Wassily Kandinsky's work. In 1906 he probably went to 'Ausstellung Deutscher Kunst aus der Zeit 1775-1875', a mammoth review of nineteenth century German art, which included a large selection of works by the visionary landscape painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840).

An avid reader, Harris encountered Plato, the Upanishads, W.B.Yeats, George Russell, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James, P.D. Ouspensky, Oswald Spengler, R.M. Bucke, Bertrand Russell; and, of course, theosophists, like Madame Helena Blavatsky, Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, W.Q. Judge, Rudolf Steiner and Claude Bragdon, all of whose writings were very much in vogue in Toronto's cultural circles. In his notebook (dated 1910-14) he makes reference to having read Walt Whitman as well.

After his first trip to Berlin and later in 1934, during his four years as artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Lawren lived with his uncle, William Kilbourne Stewart. Some summers, he returned from Europe to Canada. In the summer of 1907 he accompanied Schlabitz on a walking tour in the Tyrol Mountains and met the poet, philosopher, and German landscape painter Paul Thiem (1858-1922) whose unconventional ideas impressed him. He also visited France, Italy and England. In late

November of that same year Harris went to Damascus, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, with the writer Norman Duncan (1871-1916), who was on assignment for Harper's Magazine, to do illustrations for Duncan's book Going Down from Jerusalem (1908-9), the account of a camel caravan from Jerusalem to Damascus (figure 3).

In late February of 1908 he returned home to Canada. His first Canadian subjects for his painting included houses 'in the ward' (figure 4), which was then the poor section of Toronto. Harris continued to paint house portraits until the late 1920s. Later that year he went on a sketching trip to the Laurentians and became a charter member of the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto[2]. In early 1909 Harris spent two weeks - again with Norman Duncan - on assignment for Harper's in a northern Minnesota lumber camp to create illustrations for Duncan's article "A Man's Christian" (figure 5).

According to Bess Harris, his first sketching trip into Canada's north in 1908 was with a fellow member of the Arts and Letters Club, Fergus Kyle (1876-1941). In the spring, Harris went on a sketching trip with another member of the Club, J.W. Beatty (1869-1941), to Haliburton, Ontario, and in the fall they visited Memphremagog, Quebec.

Lawren Harris's artistic career steadily progressed. That same year he painted *Houses, Wellington Street, Winter* (figure 6), and he had his first studio over the Giles Grocery Store at the corner of Yonge and Cumberland Streets in Toronto. The following year he exhibited a painting in an Ontario Society of Artists (OSA) exhibition. For a few years, after 1910, he painted houses and corner stores and in the Ontario towns of Hamilton, Unionville, Barrie, Grimsby, and Toronto. In these street scenes, he often included sleighs and people (figure 7). Later, the art historians will remark that Harris was the only member of the future Group of Seven to have painted urban scenes. Even at that time, however, he did not limit himself to the urban landscape. He painted the Ontario landscape in Algonquin Park (figure 8), at Lake Simcoe in Haliburton and around Mattawa on the Ottawa River.

In 1908 he met Roy Mitchell (1884-1944), a theosophist, founder of the Blavatsky Institute of Canada, and an extremely influential and progressive member of the theatre and arts community. Together with Harris, they set up the Arts and Letters Club in Torono. Under Mitchell's direction, after-dinner theatricals became a regular and much supported activity at the Club, with members such as Harris pressed into service as actors and designers. Beyond the Club,

Mitchell convinced Harris, MacDonald, Lismer, and Jackson to create set designs for him at Hart House Theatre.

Established by the Massey family heirs in recognition of Hart Massey, the theatre is now part of the University of Toronto.

> It was devoted to amateur theatre, but Mitchell had larger plans for it. Hart House's technical facilities were among the best in North America, and Mitchell was determined to make it the foundation of an innovative Canadian theatre. He endorsed a theatre that concentrated not on speech and narrative but on movement, shape, and form. His new theatre was based on Theosophical principles of the intuitive unity, the inter-connection of all facets of experience. He claimed for theatre a higher plane, a realm of higher existence (Jackson 1991:58-59).

It was Mitchell who slowly brought Harris to the Toronto Theosophical Society, Many of Harris's friends were already theosophists and eventually all the members of the Group of Seven were introduced to the basic concepts of Theosophy.

On January 20, 1910, Harris married Beatrice Patricia (Trixie) Phillips at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer in Toronto, less than two years after his return from Europe. Although the Harrisses were of Presbyterian and Baptist background, their wealth and connections with the Massey family helped make them acceptable to Toronto's elite. They eventually had three children: Lawren

Phillips, Margaret (Peggie), and Howard. Harris's mother also remarried that year.

The Beginnings of the 'Group'

Harris's rapport with the artistic community had progressively developed. In 1911 he met Arthur Lismer (1885-1969) who was to become a member of the Group of Seven (figure 9). He also met Tom Thomson that year. A gifted artist (figure 10) Thomson became a close friend (Larisey, 1982:101-102, 109, 115, 133-4). In November, he saw the works of J.E.H. MacDonald (1873-1932) at an exhibition of sketches (figure 11) held at the Arts and Letters Club; it so impressed him that he sought out the artist. The immediate result was to bring Harris into convergence with a group of people and ideas that were fast approaching their moment.

As a consequence of his reaction to MacDonald's work, Harris, together with Dr. James MacCallum (1860-1943), a Toronto eye doctor and friend of Harris, talked MacDonald into leaving his commercial work and becoming a professional painter. Harris and MacDonald began sketching together almost immediately and their first large exhibition canvases appeared in the 1912 OSA exhibition. Harris had previously exhibited *Houses, Wellington Street, Winter* (figure 6) at the 1911 OSA, it was his first exhibited

work.. At that time, the National Gallery of Canada bought a wilderness landscape by Harris titled *The Drive* (figure 12).

Around this period he did such drawings as *High Park, Toronto*, which became the sketch for a larger canvas called *Winter Landscape with Pink House*. Harris's first published written work, a review of an exhibition of work by Arthur Heming, appeared in The Lamps, the Arts and Letters Club periodical.

In the spring of that year Harris went with MacDonald on a sketching trip to Mattawa and Temiskaming, and in the summer he visited the cottage of MacCallum on Georgian Bay. It was MacCallum who, with Harris, financed the Studio Building at 25 Severn Street, Toronto which they opened in 1914. This studio was occupied by Harris and Thomson and offered to other artists at a reasonable rate. In that same year, the National Gallery bought paintings by Lismer, MacDonald, and Thomson. A.Y. Jackson (1882-1974), whom Harris had not yet met, had also been recognized at the same time by the National Gallery (figure 13).

In January 1913, MacDonald and Harris traveled to Buffalo, New York to see an 'Exhibition of Contemporary Scandinavian Art' where Harris recognized kindred spirits. By 1914, war had broken

out in Europe and in 1915 Harris's brother joined the army. In the meantime Harris and MacDonald went on a sketching trip to Minden, Ontario, and Thomson moved into a shack beside the Studio Building. In the spring of 1916 Thomson, Harris and MacCallum went on a trip to Algonquin Park. Harris himself later enlisted in the army, and, in June 1916, was appointed Lieutenant with the 10th Royal Grenadiers Regiment. He taught musketry at Camp Borden, Ontario and served until 1918.

However, in 1917, Tom Thomson drowned in Canoe Lake in Algonquin Park under mysterious circumstances.[3] Then Harris's brother, who had been awarded the Military Cross for heroism, was killed in February 1918 in Europe. The combination of these two events acutely disturbed Harris who, in any case, had hated everything about military life at Camp Borden. He suffered a nervous breakdown and on May 1, was given a medical discharge from the army.

To recuperate, he left with MacCallum on a sketching trip, going for the first time to the Algoma region of northern Ontario (figure 14). Harris had persuaded the Algoma Central Railway to lend him a 'boxcar' that he had outfitted as a studio. Harris had invited his friends MacDonald and Frank Johnston (1888-1949), all expenses

paid, to accompany him and MacCallum on this first 'boxcar-sketching trip'.

> The trip - overnight on C.P.R. to the Soo [Sault Ste. Marie]. Next day at the Soo we enter a caboose which will be our home while in the North. Said caboose is hitched on to some train or other, hauled to a siding in the Agawa Canyon 120 miles north of the Soo and left there for two or three days while we proceed to get a strangle hold on the surroundings. From mile 120 we are picked up by a down-going train and left on another siding for a few days and again picked up and left on still another siding and so on until we land in the Soo with a mass of sketches and C.P.R. ourselves home again... I may be assuming that you are fearfully ignorant regarding railroad rolling stock but just in case you are - a caboose is a most comfortable box. Pleasant bunks, stove, tables, chairs and all the solid, essential comforts of home save that all out doors acts as the plumbing. We will have a cook prepare our fodder and do the odd scrubbing (Harris in Larisey 1993:44).

The National Gallery also organized an exhibition to tour the United States that year including two works by Harris. Some of those sketches, along with paintings developed from them, were shown the next year at the Art Gallery of Toronto (AGT). In mid September Harris left on his second boxcar trip to Algoma.

By 1919 the friends were together again for the first time since the War. One night at Harris's home they formally organized themselves and chose the name 'Group of Seven' just because

there were seven of them. Lismer remembered this period with great fondness in a CBC radio broadcast in 1950 when he described the Group in the following terms:

> The Group existed as a Group from 1919 to 1933. The members were A.Y. Jackson, Franklin Carmichael, Frederick H. Varley, Lawren Harris, J.E.H. MacDonald, myself and Francis [sic] H. Johnston. The last named dropped out in 1922, and Alfred J. Casson became the seventh member. We never had a president, a secretary - nor a founder. We never issued a manifesto or a creed until the kinship was dissolved in 1933 and the Group enlarged to become a chartered society - The Canadian Group of Painters. Each was different in technique, temperament and achievement. The accusation that we took time off to work on each other's canvasses and that we painted alike is, to say the least, an extravagant overstatement. We owed a little to our former training, although I suppose it counted a little, but we owed a great deal to each other and to the warm contacts of friendship and a common theme - to paint Canada as we saw it, as we felt it, and according to our limited stature, as well as we could (Lismer 1950).

The first official Group of Seven exhibition was held at the AGT from May 7 to 27, 1920. *Study of Houses, Toronto* is one of Harris's works which was on display. This particular drawing was worked into an oil sketch called *White Houses* now in the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO); eventually this was turned into an even larger oil on canvas called *A House in the Slums*. That year Harris went on two trips to Algoma and painted the first of eight portraits, *Dr. (Rev.) Salem Bland* (figure 15). Harris'ss last portrait was of Thoreau MacDonald, painted c.1927.

In the late winter of 1921 Harris went on a sketching trip to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The Glace Bay drawings (figure 16) from this trip resulted in such paintings as *Miner's Houses, Glace Bay* (figure 17) and *Elevator Court, Halifax* (figure 18). In the spring, and again in the fall Harris, with Lismer and Jackson, went off to Algoma for the last time. Meanwhile, from May 7 to 29 of 1921, the second Group of Seven exhibition was held at the AGT. About the same time drawings by Harris were published in The Canadian Forum and he went with Jackson on his first visit to the north shore of Lake Superior. The north country impressed Harris so much that from 1921-26 it became his main sketching ground. His well-known nationalistic concerns may have to do with his determination to paint the wilderness and northern nature.

In 1922 Harris, Mitchell, and Lismer were named to the Decoration Committee of the Toronto Theosophical Society. Frederick Housser, whom Harris had known since Grade 8, and his wife Bess were already members of the Theosophical Society. Housser, a journalist with a major Toronto paper became closely associated with the Group of Seven's activities and later became their official historian. He was also a passionate theosophist and played a

leading role in the philosophical discussions, which were such an important component of Harris's artistic community.

That same year the third Group of Seven exhibition was held at the AGT from May 5 to 29. In the fall Harris and Jackson again went to the north shore. They camped at Coldwell Bay for one week (figure 19 is a sketch Harris did of their campsite) and canvases such as *The Ice House* and *Ice House, Coldwell, Lake Superior* (figure 20) was one result of the drawings he did of the little port on Lake Superior. Drawings such as *Lake Superior Sketch No.63* also date from this period. That same year, McClelland and Stewart of Toronto published Harris's book of poetry, Contrasts, a Book of Verse (figures 21, 22).

In March 1923, Harris cemented his relationship with the theosophical movement by formally joining the Toronto Theosophical Society.[4] In the spring he went with A.Y. Jackson to the Rocky Mountains for the first time, sketching in and around Jasper Park. They hiked and climbed, visited Maligne Lake (figure 23), the Athabasca Valley (figure 24) and Tonquin Valley, camping near or above the timberline. He then spent the next five summers in the Rockies, and from 1924 to1929, Harris concentrated on painting the Rockies. Later, the artists returned to the north shore of

Lake Superior. It should be noted that by 1924 Harris had decided to no longer date nor sign his works.

> The reason I do not use titles for abstract paintings is that it is impossible to get their meaning into words. A title therefore, is likely to interfere with the onlooker's response (Harris quoted in Murray and Fulford 1982:164).

The fourth Group of Seven exhibition was held at the AGT from January 9 to February 2, 1925 and a fifth exhibition was held from May 8 to 31 in 1926. In July, Harris published a major article, "Revelation of Art in Canada" in The Canadian Theosophist.

In 1926 Frederick Broughton Housser published A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the Group of Seven, the first historical record and interpretation of the work of the Group of Seven. Harris, meanwhile, traveled to New York and examined the "International Exhibition of Modem Art" held at the Brooklyn Museum. Katherine Dreier, founder and president of the Societé Anonyme[5], had organized the exhibition. Harris had been asked, and granted Dreier two of his paintings for this exhibit, *Mountain Forms* and *Miner's Houses, Glace Bay* (figure 17). Harris was impressed with the exhibit.

> I believe it to be the most representative, most stimulating, and the best exhibition of advanced

> modern art so far shown on this continent (Harris quoted in Hill 1995: 204).

'The International Exhibition of Modern Art' was brought to Toronto in 1927, largely through the efforts of Harris. He believed wholeheartedly in the need for the arts to flourish in Canada, as well as in the rest of the world and he spent much of his life encouraging the arts by petitioning governments, speaking to young artists and keeping art in the public eye. Harris and Frank Johnston reviewed the exhibition in The Canadian Forum.

In the late summer of 1927 Harris vacationed at Temagami and in the fall went once again to the north shore. In Toronto on November 17, Harris met Canadian artist Emily Carr (1871-1945) for the first time. Emily Carr credits him with trying to influence her to join the Theosophical Society[6]; however, after much thought and discussion with Harris(through copious correspondence over time) she declined. She did value though the friendship and encouragement for her art that Harris provided and their friendship and their correspondence continued until her death.

The summer of 1928 was spent in the Rockies; that fall Harris went on the last group-sketching trip to the north shore of Lake Superior. The next year, with Jackson, Harris went by car along the south shore of the St. Lawrence River as far as Rimouski where Harris

did drawings for *Lighthouse, Father Point* (figures 25, 26). The Toronto Star presented his portrait of *Dr. Salem Bland* (figure 15) to the AGT.

In 1930 the seventh exhibition of the Group of Seven was held at the AGT. Harris and his wife visited France and Germany that year where he met the artist Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968). On August 1, 1930, he left Nova Scotia with Jackson on the ship S.S. Beothic for Greenland (figure 27), the Canadian Arctic, and Labrador (figure 28) as a guest of the Canadian Government.

> A few years after Jackson's and Banting's trip to the Arctic, Jackson and I joined the Government Arctic expedition. We were most fortunate on this occasion as this particular expedition made the most extensive trip ever taken in the Arctic region in one season. The ship went directly north to Godhaven on the Greenland coast, and then up the coast to Etah where Commander Peary used to winter, and then into Kane Basin. From this point we went south along the coast of Ellesmere Island into Lancaster Sound where we were held up by ice for days. For four hours on our way out the ship was in danger of being crushed by the immense weight of the huge moving ice-floes. We then went around the top of Baffin's [sic] Island, down the east coast to Hudson's Straits, through the straits and across the northern waters of Hudson Bay to Chesterfield Inlet. Later we returned through the straits and proceeded southward along the Labrador coast to Nova Scotia (Harris in Larisey 1986:394).

Numerous major paintings resulted from this trip for Harris, including *Bylot Island, Icebergs, Davis Strait*, and the canvas, *North Shore, Baffin Island* (figure29), which was given to the National

Gallery by the artist in 1960. Some of the drawings had been vistas seen only through a porthole.

In 1931 Harris moved into a house at 2 Ava Crescent in Toronto, designed in the Art Deco style by him and the Russian immigrant architect, Alexandra Biriukova (1893-1967). He also sketched at Pointe au Baril, Ontario. That year, the Group of Seven announced their intention to disband[7] and held their eighth and final exhibition.

Harris himself was experiencing difficulties; by 1932 he had virtually stopped painting.

> I am not painting. I am at a crossroads where the entire problems of a lifetime meet. I do see the way. Oh it is difficult because the life problems of others are involved - and yet I do see the way even though I encounter the commonplace and its power of disintegration.[8]

Later, after his divorce, remarriage and subsequent move to the United States he acknowledged "a new life stirring within me - something pristine and clear-eyed."

Harris's career expanded as he continued to develop as an artist and to explore new ideas. In 1933 he was elected as the first President of the Canadian Group of Painters and resigned from the Ontario Society of Artists. It is at this time that he gave a lecture, entitled 'Theosophy and Art' in Niagara, Ontario, to the First North

American International Inter-Theosophical Convention. This seminal essay, joining artistic and theosophical concerns, provided Harris with the opportunity to define the role of the artist in a theosophical perspective on mankind. (see Chapter Eight of this thesis for a further discussion on Harris's writings).

> Nor did theosophists value him [Harris] only as an artist. They obviously took him seriously as a writing and teaching member of the theosophical community for, on at least two occasions, The Canadian Theosophist published Harris'ss homiletic reflections on religious topics. These were "Strength", published in 1927, and "Science and the Soul", published in 1931... His lecture [on Theosophy and Art] dealt, from theosophical points of view, not just with art but with aesthetics, ethics and the irrelevance of moral codes for advanced individuals (Larisey 1993:46).

Speculation is that when Harris painted his portrait of *Bess Housser* in 1920, they had fallen in love. However, it is known that one of the people who had supported Harris after his breakdown in 1918 was Bess Housser and their relationship had developed over the following fourteen years. Bess, an artist herself (figure 30) and a member of the Christian Scientist Church, "seemed to embody its traditions of optimism and energy, traditions Harris knew quite well..." (Larisey 1993:118). In 1934, Bess was invited to move into Harris's studio in the Studio Building thus provoking the final crisis in Harris's marriage. This move also prompted an ethical outcry in Toronto.

> In response, Bess called on many of her friends and acquaintances to explain that her relationship with Lawren was not sexual, but intellectual and platonic. Though they were deeply in love theirs was a relationship meant to foster their continuing spiritual development. Apparently they were not at first planning to marry, since they did not intend to live together as man and wife... This celibate relationship expressed the deep commitment Lawren and Bess had in their spiritual beliefs. They did not intend to marry because their relationship was not sexual and because what they were doing had the highest spiritual motive (Larisey 1993: 118).

In September 1934, while in Nevada, Harris got a divorce from Beatrice, leaving his three children with her.[9] Since the American divorce was considered by many not to be valid in Canada, there was indignant outrage by Beatrice, her friends and family.Bess and Lawren got married. Harris's mother persuaded them that appearing to be so close was causing a lot of gossip and that it would be difficult for them to move about and be accepted socially.

> They accepted her reasoning, and thus Lawren's special relationship with Bess became a special marriage. It was to be - and, as far as anyone knows, remained - a celibate marriage. Harris himself claimed that the marriage was not going to be a sexual union (Larisey 1993:118).

The couple moved from Toronto to New Hampshire to free themselves from the scandal of his failed marriage. It coincidentally also liberated him from his role in what had become a nationwide crusade for 'Canadian' art. This crusade had been dear to him and

had echoed his understanding of theosophical teaching on art and society. It had become a burden, but he remained dedicated to the cause of Canadian art to the end of his days. In 1935, he would write to Yvonne McKague (1898-1996) and Fred Housser, "I think there is no doubt that the impress of the time, place and people gets into a work just as does the individuality of the particular painter.[10]

A New Beginning

With his new bride, Harris lived, until late in 1937, as an unpaid artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College, University of New Hampshire and he renewed his commitment to explore abstract art. He had already expressed his interest in exploring this new development in art when he wrote in The Canadian Forum an article on "Modern Art and Aesthetic Reactions" reviewing a Modern Art exhibition being held in the Toronto Art Gallery in April 1926:

> Most of the pictures were abstract. These could be divided as coming from two sources. One half of them from naturalistic sources where in the more abstract and lasting qualities of design, movement, rhythm, equilibrium, spatial relationship, light, and order were extricated from the fleeting aspects of scenes to suggest its informing, persisting life. The other half, and in the main the most convincing pictures, were directly created from an inner scene and conveyed a sense of order in a purged, pervading vitality that was positively spiritual...they were achieved by a precision and concentration of feeling so fine that on the

> emotional gamut they parallel the calculations of higher mathematics. But, they remain emotional, living works, and were therefore capable of inspiring lofty experiences; one almost saw spiritual ideas, crystal clear, powerful, and poised...Exacting indeed is the way, demanding an austerity few laymen and none of the looser variety of artists are aware of (Harris 1926:240).

In sketches like *Mountain, New Hampshire*, Harris was clearly feeling his way toward abstraction. There he also painted such transitional works as *The Bridge* (figure 31) and *Winter Comes from the Arctic to the Temperate Zone* (figure 32). He also did small paintings of the *White Mountains* (figure 33) and of the houses in Hanover. Harris's study titled *Door, New Hampshire* (figure 34) shows him progressing to non-objective art, a move completed by the time he painted *Abstraction (Door), New Hampshire* (figure 35) and *Door Knot Sketch, New Hampshire* (figure 36).

In 1936, at the Canadian Group of Painters exhibition in Toronto, he exhibited his first abstraction, *Riven Earth I* (figure 37). That same year, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa held a "Group of Seven Retrospective". It was during the years in New Hampshire that Harris first thought of writing a book. He began to collect material, notes were made and chapters were begun. However this book was never completed.[11]

In October 1938 he moved with Bess to Santa Fe, New Mexico. "The altitude there is 7,000 feet - the air is clear, the colours high in key," wrote Bess Harris.[12] His drawings showed a progressive change in style to simple geometric forms, sometimes with transparent planes. He had read about Dynamic Symmetry[13] and while living in Santa Fe, Harris came into contact with Dr. Emil Bisttram (1895-1976) (figure 38) and Raymond Jonson (1891-1982) (figure 39).

Bisttram and Jonson, along with Harris, were the founders of the Transcendental Group of Painters in 1939. The TGP painters shared an interest in the theories promoted by Kandinsky and Mondrian and in the tenets of Theosophy, Zen Buddhism, and other philosophical and occult concepts. However, the artists of the TGP made a great effort to clarify that they did not paint images to illustrate any philosophy.

Apparently Bisttram, who owned the Taos School of Art, introduced Bess to the principles of Dynamic Symmetry. Bess would have explained it to Harris who then studied how to create root rectangles with some care, even making an explanatory sheet for himself. In 1939 Yvonne McKague Housser visited the Harrisses in

New Mexico and also became acquainted with the Bisttrams while taking the same class with Bess and Lawren.

Harris proposed the formation of the American Foundation for Transcendental Painting[14] and became its first president. It was not long before the group chose to exhibit their works en masse. Harris arranged one such exhibition at the 'Golden Gate International Exhibition', held in San Francisco in 1939, where Harris was in the company of international artists such as Kandinsky. It is in its catalogue that he is listed as coming from Santa Fe, New Mexico and his *Composition* is No.169 of the list entitled "The US". Another such TGP exhibit was held at the Museum of Non-Objective Painting located in the Guggenheim Museum in New York. However, the largest exhibit by the TGP in which Harris participated was the New York World's Fair in 1939 where, here again, he is listed as an American artist in the catalogue.[15] However, World War II was soon upon them and the artists dispersed in many directions to fulfil various wartime commitments. By 1945 the TGP had officially disbanded.

A Return to Canada

In April of 1940 Muriel Miller's series profiling artists (Famous Canadian Artists) featured Harris.[16] In the fall of 1940 Harris and

Bess moved to Vancouver where he lived until his death in 1970. He continued his research in the abstract and the non-objective. *Composition No. 1* (figure 40) was the first work painted in his new studio and his largest abstraction to date. His summers were now spent hiking in the Rockies. *Mount Robson* (figure 41) came from his renewal of contact with the Robson country.

However, the abstractions of Harris were subjected to much criticism.

> The staunch supporters of the Group felt that he had sold himself out to the modern movement, and they refused to take his later work seriously even though Harris felt that it was more important than anything he had done while he had been a member of the Group (Mellen 1970:190).

An indication of this unfavourable public reaction is shown by the fact that no public gallery in Canada purchased any of Harris's abstracts until 1969.

The man himself though remained well known and influential as a teacher of art, a promoter of the arts and an outspoken critic of the governments' treatment of the arts in Canada. In 1941 he was elected to the Council of the Vancouver Art Gallery, thus bringing him into contact with virtually everyone in the city that had an interest in art. Beginning March 31, 1943 he gave a series of six talks on CBC Radio on the general theme of 'Art and Life'. Harris

also attended the first Annual Meeting of the Federation of Canadian Artists held in Toronto in May 1942; he was also elected Regional Convener for British Columbia. Later in 1944, Harris was elected National President of the Federation of Canadian Artists.

On May 16, 1946, he received an honorary degree from the University of British Columbia. In 1949, he published his Disquisition on Abstract Painting.[17] In this essay he clearly formulated his own theories on the subject of abstract art (see Chapter Nine of this thesis for a further discussion of Harris's theories on art). In 1951, Harris received an honorary degree from the University of Toronto and in 1953 he received another from the University of Manitoba. In October 1948, the AGT gave him a major one-man retrospective exhibition, the first time a living artist was so honoured by the Gallery. In 1950, he became the first practicing artist to be appointed to the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Canada; he remained on the Board until 1961. Harris wrote the essay "The Story of the Group of Seven" which accompanies Robert Hubbard's "The National Movement in Canadian Painting" in the 1954 catalogue for the Group of Seven exhibition held in the Vancouver Art Gallery.

On September 28, 1969, his wife Bess died suddenly of an aortic aneurysm. She had just completed editing, with R.G.P. Colgrove, a book of quotations and illustrations of Harris's notable work for the publishers Macmillan of Canada. The book includes an introduction by Northrop Frye. Just four months later, on Thursday, January 29, 1970, Harris died at the age of 84. He had been honoured with retrospective exhibitions, honorary doctorates and the Order of Canada.

Two sons, Lawren and Howard, one daughter, Mrs. Peggie Knox, as well as five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren survive him. The bulk of his work is held at the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario and in the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario. Harris and his wife are buried in the cemetery located on the grounds of the McMichael Canadian Art collection in Kleinburg, Ontario.

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[1] His other grandfather, Reverend John Harris, or Elder John, as he was nicknamed, came to Canada shortly after the War of 1812.
[2] See Chapter Two for detailed explanation of the role this club played with Harris and the Group of Seven.
[3] His drowning was a crushing blow to the Studio Building group. Harris always believed that Thomson had been murdered.
[4] Harris was also a member at large of the International Theosophical Society.
[5] The drive of the Societé Anonyme (which was officially formed the same year as the Group of Seven) was to stimulate the American public to a more complete understanding of the social, spiritual, cultural, and artistic benefits inherent in the modern movement. The most complete statement of the philosophy with which Dreier guided the society is contained in her book Western Art and the New Era [see Bibliography for complete reference].
[6] Lawren Harris (Toronto) letter to Emily Carr (Victoria), (1932) Emily Carr papers, National Archives of Canada.

[7] In actual fact the Group expanded into the Canadian Group of Painters.
[8] Lawren Harris (Toronto) letter to Emily Carr (Victoria) (1932), Papers of Emily Carr, National Archives of Canada.
[9] Bess, too, had divorced Fred in Nevada around the same time. Housser had begun a relationship with Yvonne McKague some say, in response to the 'closeness' of Bess and Lawren and eventually they married. Yvonne notes in her diaries that theirs was a celibate union in keeping with theosophical principles. The marriage was short-lived however, as Fred died of an unexpected heart attack a year after they were married (Yvonne McKague Housser Papers, National Archives of Canada).
[10] Lawren Harris (New Hampshire) letter to Yvonne McKague Housser (Toronto), (nd), Papers of Yvonne McKague Housser, National Archives of Canada.
[11] His notes for this unpublished manuscript can be found in his papers in the National Archives of Canada.
[12] Bess Harris (New Hampshire) letter to Yvonne McKague Housser (Toronto), undated, Yvonne McKague Housser papers, National Archives of Canada.
[13] Dynamic Symmetry, developed by Jay Hanbridge, was the thesis that design and great art can be created by application of easily followed mathematics.
[14] A foundation established for the purpose of funding the TGP.
[15] Although Harris exhibited as a Canadian in both exhibitions; he was in the Canadian Group of Painters Section.
[16] "Lawren Harris: Landscapist and Figure Painter in oils, and Street Scene Artist".
[17] Refer to Appendix E for the Catalogue of Harris's Writings.

CHAPTER TWO

The Group of Seven and the Canadian Scene

The Group of Seven (figure 42) constitutes an important and distinct part of Lawren Harris's life and artistic career, so much so that as far as the Canadian public is concerned, and according to most critics and art historians (Murray and Fulford 1982), Harris is defined by his work in and for the Group of Seven. Considered the leader of the Group (both spiritually and financially), Harris, as a founding member, certainly poured a great deal of money, energy, and care into the establishment and development of this uniquely Canadian community of artists.

By the end of the nineteenth century in Canada some Canadian artists were quite willing to follow European trends that led them away from the lethargic status into which Canadian art had fallen. In his treatise on painting in Canada, Harper states that the Canadian public was "undiscerning and spiritless" (Harper 1988:225) and that the art critics "omitted any attempt at a

judgment in terms of aesthetic feeling ... and merely reflected public sentiment" (225).

One of the first revolutionary influences on Canadian art was the 'art for art's sake' theoretical perspective, out of which came the notion of an art dictated by the artist's own personal sensibilities - a twentieth century notion. A second major influence was the combined impact of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist schools. Canadian painters such as James Wilson Morrice (1865-1924) (figure 43) and Maurice Cullen (1866-1934) (figure 44) had created a climate receptive to radical change and opened the door for artists such as the Group of Seven and their new style of 'painting Canada' based on Impressionism and the 19th century European landscapists.

After 1910, Harris's life as an artist in Canada was very much framed by the activities of this group of artists. The seven male artists officially became a 'Group' in 1920, though several of its members had been friends since 1911. A.Y. Jackson described the Group's organization as a "loose one, no officers, no bylaws, and no fees." The artists shared certain ideals about a new approach to Canadian painting; however, there was no single theme that united their work other than the Canadian landscape. Over the decade of their existence as a group, they participated in over 40 exhibitions

in Canada, the United States and Britain. Though they often worked side by side, they kept their individual artistic independence. For every exhibit all members of the group participated in the choice of the individual works to be shown.

The original members of the Group included Lawren Harris, Alexander Young Jackson, Arthur Lismer, James Edward Hervey MacDonald, Frank (later Franz) H. Johnston (1888-1949) (figure 45), Frederick Horsman Varley (1881-1969) (figure 46), and Franklin Carmichael (1890-1945) (figure 47).[1] On the fringe of this community and often working with them, were women artists such as Emily Carr, Isabel McLaughlin (b.1903), Yvonne McKague, and Alexandra Luke (1901-1967) .

Tom Thomson had been friends with Harris for a number of years but his early death pre-empted his inclusion in the Group. Nonetheless, Harris noted in his The Story of the Group of Seven,

> Accordingly, I have, in my story of the Group, included Tom Thomson as a working member, although the name of the Group did not originate until after his death. Tom Thomson was, nevertheless, as vital to the movement, as much a part of its formation and development, as any other member (Harris 1964:1).

With the exception of Harris, who was independently wealthy, the others in the Group earned their living supporting themselves at one time or another as commercial or graphic artists. Besides

painting, MacDonald and Harris wrote poetry; Harris also wrote a great deal of critical prose, as this dissertation will show; Jackson produced a most entertaining autobiography; and Lismer was an educator and lecturer.

Strategically located in Toronto, Harris, aided by Jackson, knew the right people to contact. As a result, acceptance for the painters was not long in coming. By 1936, following a retrospective exhibition held at the National Gallery of Canada, the Group had become part of the canon of Canadian art. "Shows pushed individual members towards sainthood. Some (one thinks of Thomson and Harris) achieved near godlike status" (Murray 1984:12). At the same time, their achievement became institutionalized; many members of the group taught generations of students and all of them served on innumerable committees of national art institutions.

The Group developed their own styles of painting based on the idea that Canadian art could find sufficient sustenance and inspiration in Canada alone. They hoped their works would make a significant contribution to the evolution of a truly Canadian art tradition. "Our aim is to paint the Canadian scene in its own terms," wrote Lawren Harris (Harris and Colgrove 1969:48). Startlingly different from other artists on the Canadian scene, their art was based in large

part on the landscape of Algonquin Park and the Georgian Bay areas (figure 48-54 – in text).



Figure 48

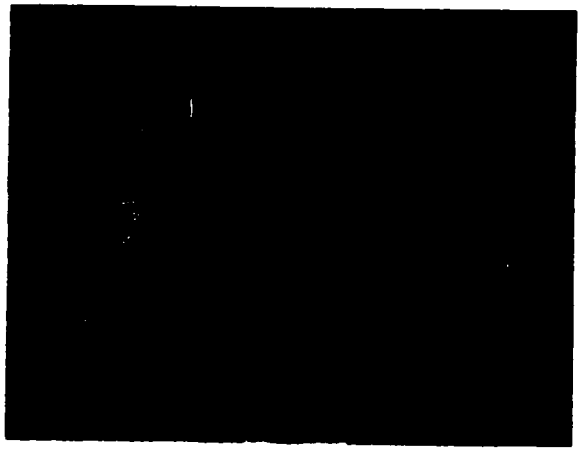


Figure 49



Figure 50



Figure 51

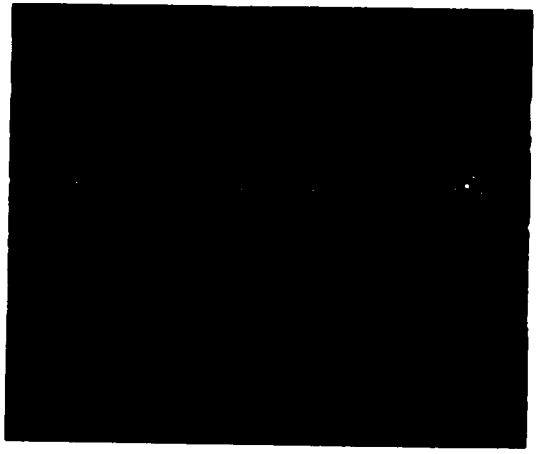


Figure 52

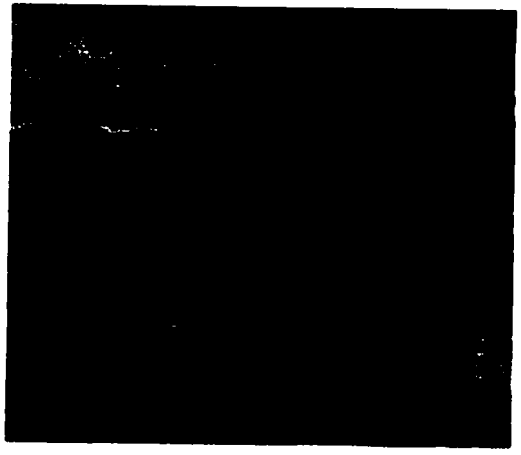


Figure 53

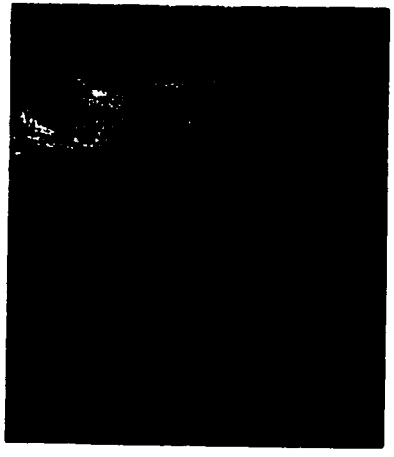


Figure 54



Figure 55

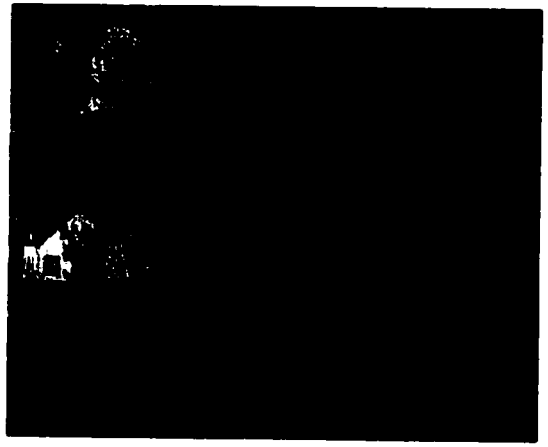


Figure 56

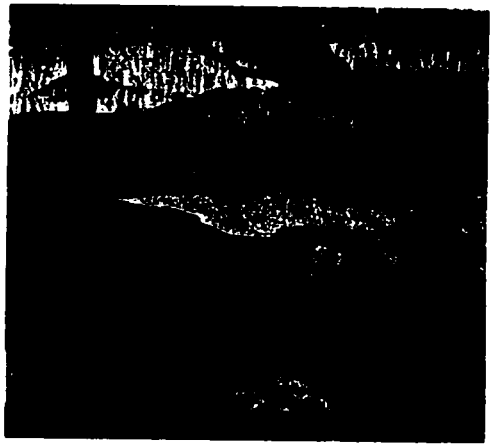


Figure 57

However, a search for something particularly 'Canadian' in painting was not new. Such a quest had actually been the objective of several Toronto painters since the 1890s. W.A. Sherwood had published an article titled "A National Spirit in Art" in 1894, and J.E.H. MacDonald declared, in 1925, that the real origin of the new movement could be traced back to a much earlier period:

> Men like Reid, Jefferys, Fred Brigden, Arthur Goode, Conacher, Plaskett and others had their places as pioneers and encouragers. The Art league and its annual publications, the Graphic Arts Club, with its Canadian evenings ..., the visiting evenings we used to have at different artist's studios, to make half-hour compositions on Canadian subjects, with one chosen as critic for the evening. There was a real stirring of Canadian ideals (MacDonald in Harper 1988:264).

According to Harper one can describe the Group of Seven movement as passing through three phases: in the beginning, the future members were individually training themselves to be artists in far-ranging places. Gradually they assembled in Toronto, each bringing their individual creative strengths. In 1914 they moved into the Studio Building initiating the second phase in which they were able to spend long hours supporting each other in creative painting. Sometime in the 1920s the individual artists within the group began to concentrate on more personal work, there was less a 'club' spirit and by the time the Group held their last exhibition in 1931, a third stage was well underway, when each artist pursued the works of

his maturity. By then, it was recognized that the Group had imprinted its mark on Canadian art and Canadian identity.

Harper states that the Canadian people were searching for distinctive symbols of Canada and that they found it with the first exhibition of the Group. The artists of the group themselves felt that they had discovered an art style that was for them truly Canadian. The show's principal theme was the Algonquin landscape. Written by Harris, the foreword to the catalogue sounded a new nationalistic note, discussing art traditions in relation to the people of the country, and noting that a country's greatness depends on the words, deeds and art of its people. Since art is an essential quality of human existence, intelligent individuals should welcome any form of Art expression that sincerely interprets the spirit of a nation's growth. Tom Thomson had awakened their interest in painting the rugged Ontario landscape and the group felt that, although he died unexpectedly in 1917, the first traces of their subject matter had occurred in Thomson's work. For Lismer and Harris, the north country was a landscape crucial to the ethos of the new group and Thomson's way of painting had provided its *modus operandi*.

The Group's approach was so revolutionary that art critics seemed to take personal affront. The press was not understanding and long after World War I had come to an end, the daily media denounced the "decadent ideas" which were spreading in their paintings and which "most columnists felt were an affront to common decency" (Harper 1988:264). The boldness of colour was deliberately daring. Critics were alarmed, preferring the muted harmonies of times past. They vehemently attacked the artists. In spite of the critics' efforts, this new form of art eventually was accepted and then began to dominate the visual art of English-speaking Canada.

Meanwhile the paintings were compared to "Hungarian goulash", "a drunkard's stomach" and "a head cheese". None of the caustic comments managed to dampen the painters' spirits. As demonstrated by his archival collection of newspaper articles and editorials, Harris was both obsessed and delighted with the critics' reaction, remarking with satisfaction that such a display of "anger, outrage, and cheap wit had never occurred in Canada before."

The adverse publicity and controversy built up the prestige of the Group of Seven and related artists like Tom Thomson. Public discussion reached such a height that many Canadians began to assume that the new movement's paintings were the country's first

and only real artistic achievement. The massive criticism forced the seven artists to close ranks in self-defence and generated an extraordinary amount of personal loyalty among them.

Harris believed that the outbreak of the movement really began in 1912 when he discovered, through an exhibit, the affinity of his work with MacDonald. Through him, Harris met the painters at MacDonald's office - the commercial art firm of Grip Ltd., one of Toronto's leading design firms.[2] Harris had many contacts in the art world but had never been active in the commercial field. With the possible exception of MacDonald, Harris was the earliest Group member to paint large 'finished' canvasses in Toronto and these were landscapes of the Ward. This group of 'portraits', dating from 1910 to 1925, consists of small rundown houses set among chestnut trees and board fences (figure 58).

The artists met regularly for lunch at the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto (which Harris had helped found in 1908). Located behind Toronto's No.1 Police Station, the Club was a meeting place for those interested in the arts. Men gathered for meals and discussed cultural activities, exhibitions and musical and theatrical events. At one such meeting, Harris arranged an introduction of his artist friends to another friend of his, an eccentric Toronto eye doctor

named James MacCallum, an avid and accomplished outdoorsman, eager to support artists that shared his enthusiasm for the Canadian wilderness. MacCallum regularly invited the artists to his cottage on Lake Huron's Georgian Bay and he often accompanied them on sketching trips (Newlands 1995). In 1914, MacCallum and Harris financed the first Group studio in Toronto where artists could rent space at an affordable rate.

When Harris and MacDonald travelled to Buffalo, New York in 1913 to see an exhibition of contemporary Scandinavian art, they found a confirmation of the value of their quest. In 1948, Harris wrote of this exhibition:

> Here was a large number of paintings which corroborated our ideas. Here were the paintings of northern lands created in the spirit of those lands and through the hearts and minds of those who knew and loved them. Here was an art, bold, vigorous and uncompromising, embodying direct, first-hand experience of the great North. As a result of that experience our enthusiasm increased and our conviction was reinforced (Harris 1964:31).

When World War I began in Europe most of the Group enlisted but by 1918 Harris, newly discharged from the Army, had acquired a boxcar. He outfitted it as a studio on wheels with bunks, tables, chairs, a stove, shelves, a three-wheel jigger for short trips up and down the tracks, and a canoe for trips on the river or lakes. The

boxcar would be hauled up the line by a freight train to their chosen destination and then shunted onto a sideline.

> The nights were frosty, but in the boxcar, with the fire in the stove, we were snug and warm. Discussions and arguments would last until late in the night, ranging from Plato to Picasso, to Madame Blavatsky and Mary Baker Eddy. Harris, a Baptist who later became a theosophist, and MacDonald, a Presbyterian who was interested in Christian Science, inspired many of the arguments (Jackson 1976:56).

By 1919 the unofficial group was together again and shunting off into the rugged landscape in order to capture Canada's 'moods'. Their concern was not to realistically paint the rocks, lakes and pine trees, but rather to use them as inspiration that could represent the beauty and greatness of the country.

They were motivated by strong nationalist feelings ever since they first came together in Toronto, and, once the War was over, their desire to set out on the great artistic adventure was stronger than ever. Canada itself as a country had emerged from the War with a new awareness of its independence and a determination to have a distinct identity.

> For the Group - nationalism meant several different things. First, it represented a search for a common feeling about Canada that they could interpret in their painting. Second, it involved the creation of an art that would provide Canada with a distinct image. Above all, it meant that Canada had to have its own art if it

were to be a great country (Mellen 1970:110).

These artists struggled to free themselves from the artistic traditions of Europe, as did the writers and poets of their time. They also reacted against the materialism of expanding cities and turned to nature in an attempt to find spiritual values. Members of the Group regarded themselves as rebels and they were so regarded by the public of the day. "They were a rebellious crew; rebellious toward all that was considered 'the thing'" (Housser 1926:41).

As Lismer will state, in 1950, during his CBC Radio address:

> There was nothing technical in the revolt - indeed we were never consciously rebellious, we attacked nothing but the landscape. We had no submissive philosophy of sitting cross-legged on a mountain watching the mists rising in the valley, and in Oriental fashion, repeating the manner and the brush strokes of one's ancestors. No - the Group of Seven fought it out on the spot - they fought back at the pine trees and the rocks, and the colour and the design, and slogged out the problems of interpretation in all seasons and weather. The social scene, or what Mexico, France, or Constructivism in Germany were doing - interested us little and as far as I can remember, we didn't think much of Freud or Einstein, and had no surrealistic entanglements or psychological introspections. There was more of a touch of mysticism - something of Emerson or Thoreau and a lot of Whitman in our discussions. Plato, John Dewey and Croce - Ouspensky and Spengler held our attention and curiosity. We hunted either as lone sketchers or in groups of two or three pushing into all kinds of new territory and we camped in all sorts of country - in tents, shacks, box cars [sic] and house-boats. And we painted - the sketch on the

> trail became the unit of large, - and they were large – canvasses (Lismer 1950).

Their aesthetic derived from the European *fin de siecle* symbolists and Post-Impressionists; they rebelled against the constraints of nineteenth century naturalism and tried to establish a more equitable and independent relationship between art and nature. The emphasis in their painting shifted from the imitation of concrete effects to an expression of inner feeling for the subjects. They felt themselves part of a movement towards the direct imaginative confrontation with the North American landscape which, for them, began in literature with Thoreau and Whitman. Nature was a path of escape, for several, it also became the passage through which God spoke to man (Murray 1984).

As a group their painting was less an intellectual approach than an illustration of how nature was a way of entering into the external reality that was Canada. Behind their desire to paint the Canadian landscape lay a genuine conviction that it was the northern landscape that represented and expressed the country's unique character.

They felt that exhibiting as a group created a more powerful statement, as they believed there would be considerable resistance to their art. Collectors were seen to be supporters of foreign

importations, and the Canadian artists who did please collectors were seen as 'apes' of European art (Reid 1985). Despite early criticism in the press before the Group was officially formed, their first exhibition at the AGT in May 1920 was positively received.

> The Group of Seven, of which Harris and Varley were members, provides 'a striking demonstration of how wide the gap between intentions and results can be,' that although they ardently professed a pro-nature stance, many contemporaries saw their paintings as harsh and disturbing at best, and at worst as nightmarish, necessitating retreat to the garrison (Gaile McGregor quoted in Davis 1992:166).

On the whole their art was accepted, though with restraint rather than enthusiasm. The artistic community was happy with this turn of events and the National Gallery of Canada stood by them and began buying their works before the Group was even formally established. The National Gallery, in fact, made sure the Group was well represented, especially in Canadian art shows.

Not exclusively landscape painters, they found themselves, after their first exhibition, identified as a landscape school. Harris wanted to express what he felt about Canada and he felt that the art produced must be "on a grander scale than anything hitherto attempted, heroic enough to stir the national pulse when the stimulus of struggle[3] had been withdrawn" (Housser 1926:136). Romantic, with mystical leanings, the group and their spokesperson, Frederick Housser, zealously and sometimes

contentiously presented themselves as Canada's national school of painters. It must be said that there is more to this nationalism than mere borders. It had a spiritual dimension as well.

> Canada is an entity with a spiritual form drawn from the significant character of her environment...To become aware of her nature is to take some part of it into one's being and surely by its expression add something toward the realization of her fulfillment. This is what art does to create a national consciousness (Housser 1925, n.p.).

Housser said the Group of Seven movement was about "the only activity in Canada providing encouragement to those who desire to see our people liberated from the hypnotic trance of a purely industrial and commercial ideal" (Housser 1926:156).

Indeed, the artists were initially drawn together by a common sense of frustration with the conservative as well as the imitative quality of most Canadian art. Since they often painted together, in the bush and in the studio, their paintings developed along similar lines. Harris states, "We continually derived inspiration and encouragement from each other" (Harris 1964:18). For instance, early canvasses show a heavy emphasis on bright colours boldly summarized with attention drawn to surface patterning. In 1922 MacDonald started using thinner paint and Harris, Carmichael and Varley soon followed.

Although he denied his leadership, Harris became the Group's "moving spirit and genius" (Robson 1932:152). Says Jackson, "He provided the stimulus. It was he who encouraged us always to take the bolder course, to find new trails" (Jackson 1932:115). Harris was a skilled organizer who possessed both a vision and determination and he was often called the aristocrat and intellectual of the Group. "To Lawren Harris," recalled Jackson, "art was almost a mission. He believed that a country which ignored the arts left no record of itself worth preserving" (Newlands 1995:14).

In nature they might paint an oil sketch or two and then back at the studio combine it with a study in pencil to produce a final canvas. All were well-trained artists and thus were exquisite draftsmen and their technique was quite conservative. What was new in their style were the sites that they depicted. The Group was explicit in suggesting that what was Canadian lay in the landscape of northern Ontario and in considering art "a matter of taking to the road" and "risking all the glory of a great adventure".[4]

The desire for simplicity accounted for different stages in the Group's work. "For the group, simplicity was more than a virtue: it was the key to success" (Murray 1984:17). Walt Whitman's words on simplicity, in his preface to Leaves of Grass, were used as evidence to validate their attitude. They believed, like Whitman, that

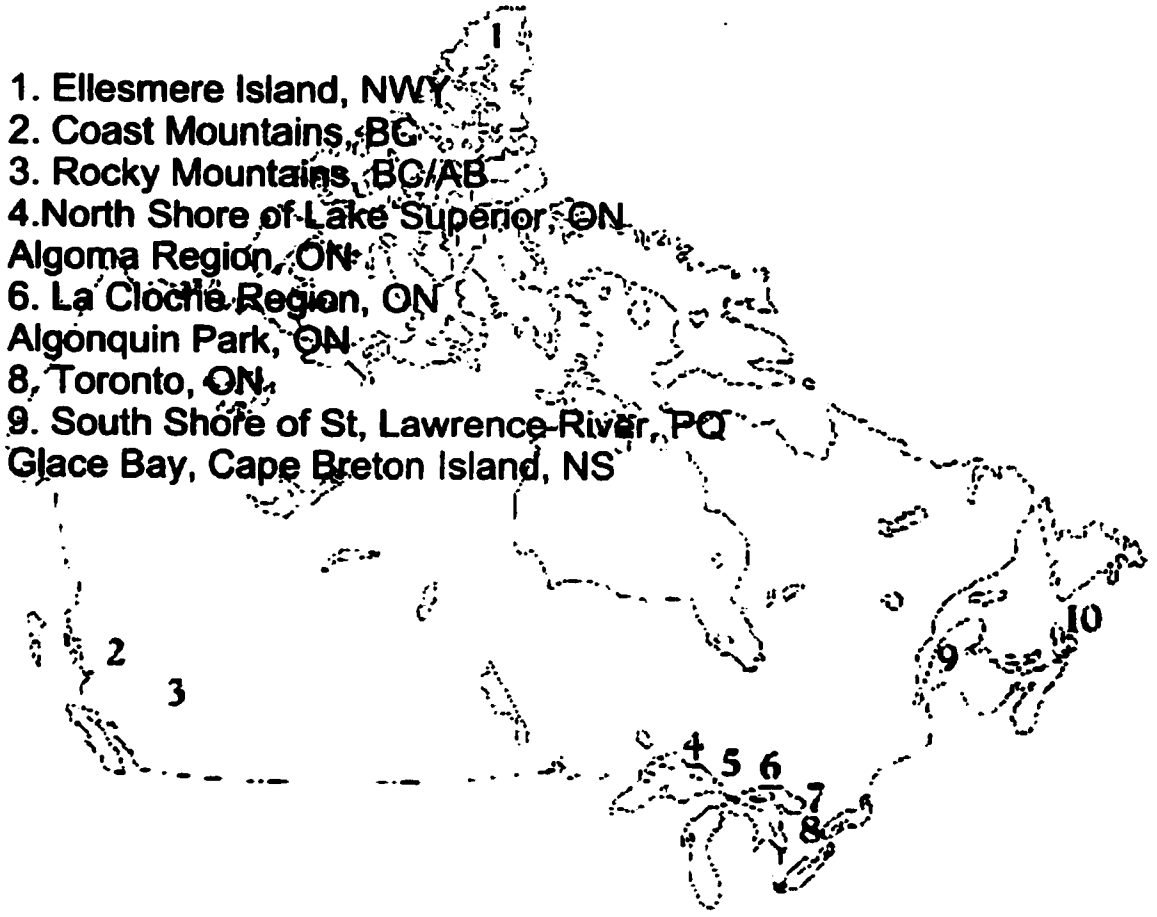
"The art of art, the glory of expression is simplicity" (Housser 1926:148). Harris himself understood that simplicity was key to an easily grasped, complex composition:

> This aspect of painting - with its directness: stressing large, bold forms and movements; and simply recorded effects of light and colour - was an essential attribute of the Group of Seven's high style. It helped the public grasp sublime, visionary, and essentially innovative content (Murray 1984:17).

Their attachment to painting the real world came partly from the Group's predecessors, the Impressionists, but Harris introduced into this a new spiritualism based on Transcendentalism and Theosophy. By the time they travelled to Lake Superior in the early 1920s, "light as a spiritual quality [was] introduced" (Housser 1926:187). By 1924 their style had solidified, going to Lake Superior had been a turning point. By 1926 the Group of Seven were the acknowledged centre of serious art activity in Toronto and even the broad public became aware of them as the 'national' school of art. By 1931, their supremacy was acknowledged across the country. The Group may have begun as rebels but by the end of the decade they symbolized the art establishment.

Their voyage of discovery had led them away from Toronto to Muskoka, Georgian Bay, and Algonquin Park, then further north to Algoma and Lake Superior, and finally to the Rockies. The Group's

claim to be 'painting Canada' was in many ways a mythical one (see Map 1 – in text next page). The Group was indisputably a Toronto based movement; since nearly all the artists lived in Toronto. Without realizing it they remained regionalists favouring Ontario and Quebec and in fact the great majority of their work was done in Ontario. All their exhibitions opened in Toronto and only a few circulated in Canada.


1. Ellesmere Island, NWT
2. Coast Mountains, BC
3. Rocky Mountains, BC/AB
4.North Shore of Lake Superior, ON
Algoma Region, ON
6. La Cloche Region, ON
Algonquin Park, ON
8, Toronto, ON.
9. South Shore of St, Lawrence River, PQ
Glace Bay, Cape Breton Island, NS
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Map 1

The Group of Seven exemplified the kind of community that the Canadian intellectual elite was capable of building. Their relationship was multi-varied, took many forms and reached many levels, and at the same time, was extraordinarily intimate although they were very proper, conservative men. An extraordinary fraternity had emerged where they shared their thoughts. In 1931, the Group announced their intention to disband but instead chose to expand into the Canadian Group of Painters with Harris as the first elected President. The Group now consisted of 26 painters from across Canada, both male and female.

Contemporaries of the Group

Emily Carr, Canada's best-known woman painter (Figure 59), painted in the rugged Pacific forests. A solitary painter, she painted the landscape, including the aboriginal people's homes and heraldic masts, and using brilliant colours. She, too, traveled into the wilderness to capture the essence of the cedars and at night she read Walt Whitman. Her art was ridiculed locally and schools where she had taught refused to rehire her. It was during this struggle, on a trip to Toronto, that she met Harris. Their extended correspondence over the years was filled with musings on art and Theosophy. Harris answered her many questions and encouraged

her to continue to paint. Carr eventually became the first Canadian female artist to receive national recognition.

Yvonne McKague Housser, mentioned previously in Chapter One, was a young Toronto painter who married Frederick Housser. The friendship between the Harrisses and the Houssers lasted long after the death of Fred and the correspondence between Lawren and Yvonne spoke of Theosophy and her quest to find a spiritual peace. Yvonne painted and taught in Ontario but by no means in isolation like that of Emily Carr. She traveled extensively to the Caribbean, Mexico and New Mexico. It was in Taos that she took classes with the Harrisses and Emil Bisttram and in Provincetown with Hans Hofmann (1880-1966) (figure 60). Yvonne also traveled with the Group on the boxcar at times, an unknown adventure for a single young woman of the early twentieth century. Yvonne's subject matter was varied, ranging from the cobalt mines of northern Ontario to the faces of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean and Mexico and Yvonne is considered the first female artist to have painted the 'machinery' of Canada.

Isabel McLaughlin, Yvonne's close friend, and her realtion, Alexandra Luke (a member of Painters Eleven), were both young painters when the Group came into being. Isabel studied under and

later worked as an assistant to Arthur Lismer. Joining the Canadian Group of Painters upon its formation she became its first woman president in 1939. She was also appointed a member of the Order of Canada.

Conclusion

Harris was not alone in his quest; the Group of Seven provided a tight community, within the larger artistic community. They were an informal and diverse community but an interpersonal one of the highest degree. Through person-to-person conversations on trips into the backcountry or at the Club and in the greater sphere through their writings, they shared their concerns, their questions, and their dreams for the future of art.

Wherever Harris went he had others for support, to discuss and refine his thoughts on art and on Theosophy. All were involved in visionary activities. All thought themselves an originator; giving each other and Harris all the support they needed for their spiritual quest. The Group had sought to capture the spirit of Canada in their paintings and, in this way, tried to express a Canadian identity.

By the time the Group disbanded in 1931, with the foundation of the larger, but less intimate, Canadian Group of Painters established,

Harris had accomplished what amounted to a full career, both as an artist and as a promoter of the arts. All his energies had been directed toward the Group and the associated community of visual artists, musicians, thinkers, and other intellectuals, which composed their surroundings; the results were indeed remarkable, for Harris as well as his companions.

For the rest of the Group, each painter followed an individual path after the demise of the Group. MacDonald had held various teaching and administrative positions at the Ontario School of Art (now the Ontario College of Art and Design) throughout his career and he died in 1932. That same year, Carmichael left his employment as a commercial designer to accept a position as Head of the Graphic Design Department at the Ontario College of Art. Varley had moved to Vancouver in 1926 and had accepted a teaching position at the Vancouver School of Art. In 1936 he returned east, painting in Ottawa for three years and even travelling to the Arctic in 1938. He returned to Toronto in 1945 and continued to paint until his death in 1969.

Jackson, who had taught at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto in 1925, continued in the same vein as he had with the Group, continuing to paint Canada, including the Canadian Arctic. He lived

in the Studio Building until 1955 and continued his active lifestyle until his eighties. Johnston's membership in the Group was short-lived; he left Toronto in 1921 to become the principal of the Winnipeg School of Art.

Lismer taught in various art schools and continued to paint throughout his lifetime. He became well known as an art educator establishing one of the most successful children's art programs in North America in Montreal. He also spent a year in South Africa setting up school programs. Lismer was always an active promoter of the Group and wrote many articles on Canadian art.

By the end of his career, Harris had produced more than 1500 sketches and paintings, of which several now famous pieces have been sold to leading art galleries and museums in North America. He had participated in the creation of a new and distinctive style of painting which, though spurned by the early critics had become an essential component of the official art scene in Canada.

He had publicized both the need for and value of a truly Canadian art, and at the same time he had spoken about the plight of Canadian artists. He also actively promoted Canadian art and Canadian artists. He had led the process of establishing a network

of artists, both in Canada and abroad, and laid the groundwork for collaboration between Canadian artists and museums, and between artists and the Canadian public. He had helped in the public recognition of the validity of modern and abstract art styles, and while teaching the value of the European art style, was announcing the possibility for Canadian artists to develop their own styles in similarly daring venues.

While several members of the Group of Seven remained defined throughout their career by their experience as an artist during that period, Harris seemed to veer in another direction. This may be because the Group of Seven was not just about painting or about painting Canadian, it was also about the meaning of art, the role of art in society, and the expression of higher ideals and aspirations. The activities of the Group fed philosophically, aesthetically and spiritually on an entire intellectual culture, which included Transcendentalism and Theosophy.

This had given Harris the opportunity to share ideas, to discover grounds of reflection and to apply his own principles to his art and to his life. Conversations and correspondence with the Houssers and Emily Carr gave him the opportunity to discuss and test his

ideas and convictions and are testimonies to the vigour and enthusiasm of the intellectual life of the Group.

The entire Group of Seven had been exposed at that time to Theosophy, Transcendentalism, and related spiritual traditions and nature religions. His friendship and work with the Group provided a safe intellectual venue. As will be seen, it is also during this period of his life that Harris solidified and articulated the schemes of an immense synthesis in which Theosophy came to occupy the central position, and in which art became the main expression.

For Lawren Harris, however, these were not new discoveries. As shown in his early writings, he was always cognisant of most of this literature. He and the Houssers, among others, were actively involved in the activities of the Theosophical Society, and were personally putting into practice the teachings, meditational practices and behaviours required from the discipline of Blavatsky.

In any case, while the other artists went on pursuing the artistic paths laid and defined during the Group of Seven period, Harris's evolution appears to have been directed as much by his philosophical and religious principles as by his aesthetic experience. Artistically, he was already moving toward the rigour

and discipline of abstract art. Philosophically, he worked at the integration of art within the theosophical worldview. Theosophy provided the language, the context and the motivation for both his art and his philosophy. But to explore this aspect of Harris's career, the theosophical context of the time needs to be described.

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[1] At one time or another three other artists were considered as part of the Group: A.J. Casson (1892-1977), Carmichael's assistant at the commercial art firm of Rous and Mann (figure 61); Edwin Holgate (1898-1992), gifted designer and craftsman who contributed to the movement its only paintings of nudes (figure 62); and Lionel LeMoine Fitzgerald (1890-1956), a member in the early 1930s (figure 63).

[2] Thomson, Lismer, Varley, Carmichael, and Johnston were MacDonald's colleagues at the firm.

[3] Harris here is referring to World War I.

[4] Foreward, Group of Seven Paintings, 1922, n.p.

CHAPTER THREE

The International Context

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, religion and spirituality were discussed everywhere by everyone. Such historians as Regier, Ringbom, Lipsey, and others concur: the death of God, the new scientific hubris, Romanticism, the legacies of Wordsworth and Goethe, all led to a religion of art – where man's kinship with nature, his perception of beauty, and his notion of the ideal would be addressed. Barzun stated "... the religion of art promised the individual not only the peace of harmonized feeling and understanding but also the bliss of spiritual ecstasies" (1974:27).

It is also at the end of the nineteenth century that expression became the chief motive behind the rising artistic movements and groups. Gustave Moreau (1826-1898) a European Symbolist painter (figure 64), proclaimed that the great mission of art and the true task of the artist was to express oneself. Henri Matisse (1869-

1954) (figure 65) likewise saw the artist's role as one of expression (Jaroszynski 1998:n.p.).

At the same time, art itself became more than an aesthetic experience; it could explicitly be presented as an instrument of change. In the climate of the period, art could destroy the old system of individualistic values and provide a universal, mystically inspired language in its place (Moszynska 1990:62). World War I marked the divide between the old perspective and the new vision, and the abstract artist could now acquire a much broader social function.

As the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, extra-artistic causes such as socialism, the cults of Nietzsche and Tolstoy, the appeal of science, the appeal to the 'primitive', 'traditional', or 'occult' wisdom began to occupy the artistic scene. All these causes shared the hope of transforming the century to come. "In this context, art was the spearhead of the new age, delivering the products of the human spirit" (Bell 1999:183), delivering vision. As stated earlier, Lawren Harris had the privilege to have access to a community of people and a host of ideas that abounded during the early twentieth century. When Lawren Harris visited Germany in

1905, he found a society in full artistic effervescence, something which continued until World War II.

One could postulate that there existed then two orientations in European and Euro-American art: the representational, and the abstract or non-representational. Born in the year just prior to World War I, and sustained in the 1920s and 1930s at the Bauhaus in Germany, in the Russian artistic community, and elsewhere, abstract art gradually became the dominant visual art form. As summarized by Moszynska:

> The evolution towards this kind of abstract art did not occur in isolation but was only one aspect of the social, intellectual and technological upheaval that took place at the turn of the century. From the discovery of X-rays to the development of the motor car, science helped to create very different perceptions of the world (1990:7-8).

Within the art world itself the invention of photography confirmed a critical turning point for artists as they struggled with their inadequacy to depict reality. Without the need to recreate the external, many artists turned to the depiction of the subjective, interior realities, emotions and experiences. Artists were seeking alternate ways of responding to the world around them. This search for innovative strategies led to a new conceptual attitude towards art; artists experimenting in abstraction had in common the "desire

to question representation as the be all and end all of art" (Moszynska 1990:11).

The Abstract Movement

The evolution to abstraction did not therefore occur in a vacuum but was only one aspect of the upheaval that was taking place in the intellectual and social world of the early twentieth century. The beginnings of abstract art involved a thorough analysis of the basic principles of painting – form and colour and a re-conceptualization of their function. Around 1910 several artists began to experiment with abstraction drawing inspiration from various sources. Picasso began pushing Cubist forms in his compositions and Cézanne had earlier investigated the structural properties in nature and adapted them to the two-dimensional surface of the canvas. Abstract art became unequivocally related to progress and change (Moszynska 1990:71).

Abstract art was born as a spiritual or metaphysical art, and only later seemed to be built on material objects when its spiritual aspiration was ignored and misunderstood.

> It was first, and has secretly remained, a means of exploring several interwoven realities: the psyche with its movements of joy and suffering, clarity and confusion; Nature and its laws; and beyond these, their common origin in a greater reality. Mondrian

> calls this greater reality 'the universal'; Klee calls it the *Urgrund* or ground of being (Lipsey 1988:21).

One of the most important aspects of abstract art was its quest for the essential. 'Abstraction' is taken directly from the Latin *abstractio.* It originally meant 'taking away' or 'disconnecting' as opposed to adding or connecting. It could be used in the literal sense of taking something away and in a metaphorical sense as a reference to what is left when the material components are removed. This last perspective, through Aristotle and Plato, became a technical meaning attached to certain modes of thought. For the artists, it meant an art devoid of all non-essential aspects, including representations or realistic figures.

> ...abstract painting apparently refers only to invisible, inner states... some abstract art is 'abstracted' from nature; its starting point is the 'real' world. The artist selects a form and then simplifies it until the image bears only stylized similarities to the original, or is changed almost entirely beyond recognition (Moszynska 1990:7).

This quest for the essential, ideal or abstract was directly linked to a similar quest in the esoteric movements. At the turn of the twentieth century, esoteric movements were blossoming in Europe and America. The idea of Perennial Philosophy[1] was being explored and the teachings of the Theosophical Society and related movements were becoming widespread and influential. Artistic

circles were beginning to reinstate spiritual enlightenment as a valid function of art.

The abstract artists of the time were especially preoccupied with the spiritual. They thought and often wrote of it in their own terms and worked towards introducing it into their creations as a central reality. Art, they said, lets us transform reality. Many of these artists understood their art to be an avenue of search for deep meaning and penetrating vision. Art, in its highest reaches, embodies or partially embodies the experience of the search for enduring values.

The overarching metaphor for both the life of the spirit and the life of art was 'the quest'. There are similar stages of insight, preparation, discipline, and unity in both spiritual quest and artistic activity. Each artist's search was largely individual and solitary, but his or her aesthetic and spiritual ideas were shared with friends, occasionally found in institutional settings, and certainly passed from one generation to the next. Communities of artists flourished in Europe. They were steeped in the intellectual life of the time. Goethe, Ouspensky, Blavatsky and her theosophical circles, Crowley, and later Steiner and Kandinsky, to name but a few, were among the sources of ideas commonly discussed.

The International Contemporaries

Lawren Harris's first direct contact with abstract artists probably occurred with his visit to an exhibition on Modern Art in Buffalo, New York in 1926 where paintings by Kandinsky and Cézanne were on display. Through his education, his travels (especially in Berlin between 1904 and 1907), and certainly his participation in intellectual circles such as the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto, Harris was steeped in a milieu where the practice of art was concomitant with philosophical, epistemological, and religious concerns. This was the field of action of an elite international society.

After the First World War abstract artists began to seek international collaboration in an artistic enterprise that had become "unequivocally related to progress and change" (Moszynska 1990:71). In Paris, with such literature as *L'Esprit nouveau(1920-1925)* and such artists as Amédée Ozenfant (1886-1966) and the Swiss architect Le Corbusier (1887-1965), in Russia with "Constructivism,[2]" in Holland with the De Stijl group, and later, in Germany with the Bauhaus (which was going to attract artists, musicians, and architects from all over Europe), networks of intellectuals were elaborating new artistic vocabularies.

For Harris and his contemporaries in Canada, Europe proved to be a source of new ideas. Among the artists who contributed to the development of the abstract artists' community, were such figures as Kandinsky, Mondrian, Klee, and Malevich. They formed a truly international network. Furthermore, for Harris and his colleagues, they provided new models and new ideas, while their lives and accomplishments demonstrated the extent of their involvement with spiritual pursuits. For Harris, as for his contemporaries, these models and ideas were not limited to the visual art realms. They were rooted in a wide intellectual horizon that included philosophers, historians, and proponents of religious movements.

As far as Harris and the other abstract artists were concerned, Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) was one of the first European artists to model the new ideal. The artistic life of this French painter was, in Lipsey's words: "one of uncompromising struggle to see and to penetrate the essence of Nature" (1988:30). As the 'father of Modern Art', Cézanne believed in the fundamental dignity of human life and the fundamental order that gives meaning to life, which Cézanne believed could best be expressed by geometrical forms of great solidity and simplicity arranged in an organized space (figure 66). Cézanne's knowledge and skill as an artist was described as

having the power to motivate an entire generation of artists determined to be the originators of a new artistic culture.

> Are not all people artists, striving to represent various sensations in images? Is not a spiritual patriarch a robed artist, expressing his spiritual sensation, are not the general, the soldier, the bookkeeper, the bureaucrat, the office clerk, the fighter with the hammer, all roles in various plays which they enact, because they become ecstatic, as though such plays exist in the world in reality? Yet in this eternal world theater we never see the true face of man, for whoever you ask who he is, he will answer: I am an artist, acting in a particular theater of perceptions, I am a businessman, an accountant, an officer...' We are a mystery, hiding the human image from ourselves '...(Cézanne quoted in Lipsey 1988:144-45).

"Sensation", explains Cézanne, "is a middle ground between the outward object and the mind that forms concepts of it" (Cézanne quoted in Lipsey 1988:144). To him, the term sensation refers to the perception of external reality. That perception challenged his art over decades as Cézanne based his working discipline on the clarification of sensation: "To paint," he said, "is to record colored sensations..." (Cézanne quoted in Lipsey 1988:137). Kandinsky, also an abstract painter, saw in Cézanne the 'prophet' of the art to come (Kandinsky 1977:52) and described him as "a great seeker after a new sense of form ... endowed with the gift of divining the inner life in everything" (Kandinsky 1977:17).

Among the artists who left their mark on that period, Kandinsky, Mondrian, Klee, Malevich, Marc, and Itten, among others, all exemplified the richness of the artistic circle. A Russian Orthodox Christian anthropologist, painter, theorist, teacher, writer, and considered like Cézanne the 'father of abstraction"[3], Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) developed a visual language for the twentieth century both in his writings and his art. Kandinsky, along with others, proposed that colour and form could constitute a language of affects. His colour scheme was, of course, influenced by earlier colour schemes, particularly that of Goethe.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), a German thinker, writer and art theorist, had written his treatise Farbenlehre (Theory of Color) in 1810. This treatise was now used by artists and indirectly by theosophists, especially Rudolf Steiner, both for its stance in determining the physical properties of colour, as well as their origination through the polar interaction of light and darkness, but also for Goethe's belief in the 'moral effects' of colour (its metaphysical or allusive potential). Goethe's work is still the most comprehensive study of colour from every point of view including the historical. His theory is routinely included in scientific and philosophical discussions on colour.

It was Kandinsky who wrote the first influential book on twentieth century abstract art - The Blaue Reiter Almanac (Munich, 1912). Illustrations included in this text were taken from ancient tribal and folk arts from which he drew inspiration. Kandinsky (figures 67, 68) was promoting and painting in a climate in which the 'spiritual' had taken on a new centrality. As a lifetime seeker of truth, he seems to have, at least partly, derived his philosophy from the theosophical worldview. During the early 1920s, Kandinsky himself referred to the theosophical impressions that he had received. Unfortunately, most of the documents written about various facets of his life exhibit little or faint interest in the artist's documented preoccupations with the esoteric, or his attitude toward Theosophy and the teachings of Steiner. However, in The Sounding Cosmos (1970), Sixten Ringbom demonstrated the many ways in which Kandinsky's language of forms is indebted to Theosophical thought and especially through Rudolf Steiner, Charles Leadbeater and Annie Besant.

More recently, Peg Weiss (1995) has shown that Kandinsky also had a long-lasting interest and involvement in shamanic studies and the ethnography of Siberian, Northern European and Native American peoples and cultures (figure 69).

Kandinsky's outlook was shaped, in part, by his studies of shamanism. He was a trained ethnographer with an abiding interest in the folklore of Old Russia. In 1889 Kandinsky won a contest that had been sponsored by the Ethnographic section of the Russian Imperial Society of Friends of Natural History, Anthropology and Ethnography. The Society sponsored his expedition to Vologda in northeastern European Russia to study the Zyrians, a Finno-Ugric people. Peg Weiss calls the field trip "a shattering experience that coloured his entire life...a fundamentally formative experience" (Weiss 1995:xvi).

Kandinsky's influential book, Über das Geistige in der Kunst (Concerning the Spiritual in Art, 1912) presents the consolidation of his observations of how one is personally affected by colour. According to Ringbom, Kandinsky's book is considered "the first theoretical treatise on abstract art" (Ringbom 1970:349) and Kandinsky was the first abstract artist to publish a theoretical justification of abstraction in art. Kandinsky was also the first major artist to remove, deliberately, all figures (representation) from his pictures. His work possesses a subject or theme, but it is not a representation of a real event.

> The theme is a particular construction made with points and lines and deliberately chosen colours, yet without any figure. The elimination of figure is not accidental. The negation of all figures is intended to exclude all reference to the external world, while

> colour is intended to open access to the spiritual world (Jaroszynski 1998 Part III, chapter III:9).

Though he expands on spirituality and religions, Kandinsky reveals in his writings an aversion to organized religion and conventional sacred imagery. This was also true of most twentieth century artists who cared for the spiritual. In his writings, Kandinsky conveyed many of the ideas that inevitably govern and nourish the spiritual in art - ideas about human consciousness and the inner life, about the obvious and subtle in Nature, about the artist's discipline as seer and technician.

> In order to reach the spiritual world, we must first be freed from the external world. In abstract art it is not a question of artistic effects or new paths, but of contact with the spiritual world... In the case of Kandinsky, the basic motive was not the introduction of new and original forms of painting for their own sake, but through new forms of painting to make possible a contact with the spiritual... (Jaroszynski 1998 Part III, chapter III:12).

By 1931, Kandinsky was proclaiming that he and Paul Klee were painters of 'spiritual' essence.

Mondrian's work was included in the Dreier exhibit for which Harris wrote a critique. A contemporary of Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) was a Dutch painter and founder of Neoplasticism,[4] as well as the founder and editor of the magazine De Stijl[5]. This periodical was of great importance in disseminating abstraction ideas throughout Europe from 1917-1932. It was Mondrian's formal

vocabulary and his theoretical philosophy that underpinned the grammar of De Stijl.

Mondrian is considered 'one of the artist-metaphysicians of the twentieth century' and, as with Kandinsky, his works are considered basic spiritual documents. Each painting, according to Dixon (1993/94:15), was a precise statement of a fundamental mode of experiencing the embodied world. Mondrian grew up in a strict Calvinist household and Christian ideals found their way into his writings, unidentified as such, but essential to his worldview.

He officially joined the Theosophical Society in 1909, and it was through his awareness of this 'philosophy' that he developed his abstractions. He was convinced that art could "provide a transition to the ... spiritual realm". In his paintings, he reduced everything to the greatest simplicity. The religious element tended to predominate his artwork as he set out to achieve an art "ordered by universal law".

> ...life is becoming more and more abstract ... we see life's interest fixed more and more on the inward... it takes the form of the autonomous life of the human spirit becoming conscious ... Art ... as the product of a new duality in man, is increasingly expressed as the product of cultivated outwardness, and of a deeper, more conscious inwardness ... The truly modern artist consciously recognizes aesthetic emotion as a cosmic, universal ... The new art is the determinate

> plastic expression of aesthetic relationships (Mondrian quoted in Lipsey 1988:69).

Mondrian and Kandinsky represent a first attempt to fit perennial spiritual ideas into the context of twentieth century art - a first attempt to devise a visible form for these ideas, accompanied by explanatory texts which tried to tell the public what was taking place (Lipsey 1988:67). To Mondrian, art should be a universal expression. He often said that his art represented the abstract of the new society, "it pointed the way, foreshadowed, and inspired a new and compassionate social order - at least for those who understood his art" (Lipsey 1988:77). He believed that the new art presaged a new social order: "if the new art teaches society what to be and what order to establish, then the new art will gradually cease to be distinct from the new society that evolves under its influence" (Lipsey 1988:77).

> The 'abstract' in art... is established by the most profound interiorization of the outward and by the purest (most determinate) exteriorization of the inward... (Mondrian quoted in Lipsey 1988:70).

Piet Mondrian's method evolved toward a systematic boiling down of the experience of vision to arrive at its essential terms of space, line and colour (figure 70); elements to be balanced in painting that would, in unity and equilibrium, serve as models for a new approach to experience as a whole. He first worked with elaborate,

diagrammatic studies of trees, church architecture (the centres of magnetism for the theosophists), and seascapes enclosed in ovals (reminiscent of the theosophical aural diagrams) (Ringbom 1966:414).

Mondrian eventually limited himself to pure abstract work using only vertical and horizontal lines. He tempered his insistence on precision and objectivity in several ways. He never presumed to have achieved full understanding of the 'universal' and always regarded himself as a seeker. To him, "the task of art ... is pure expression of that incomprehensible force that is universally active, and that we can therefore call *the universal*" (Mondrian quoted in Lipsey 1988: 71).

While not directly involved with Paul Klee, Harris knew about his work, and Harris had probably read his writings. Paul Klee (1879-1940), a Swiss born painter and graphic artist, grew up in a musical family and was himself a violinist. After much hesitation, he chose to study visual art and he attended the Munich Academy in 1900. Klee's early works (figure 71) are mainly etchings and pen and ink drawings. After his marriage in 1906 he settled in Munich, then an important centre for avant-garde art. His friendship with the painters Kandinsky and August Macke (1887-1914) prompted him to join, in 1911, Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider)[6], an expressionist group.

By 1920, he had begun teaching at the Bauhaus (where Kandinsky and Steiner also taught) and he stayed until 1931. Along with Kandinsky, Klee taught compulsory classes in colour and form and his work focussed on colour and tone.

Klee also developed his ideas in writing. His Bauhaus book, Exact Experiments in the Realm of Art (1927), was important as a methodical study of abstract compositional method. In this work, he discusses the nature of line in theoretical terms, analyzing its various attributes. His next work, *Polyphonic Setting for White* (1930) demonstrates, with overlapping schematic rectangles, the nature of line and surface. His 'polyphonic' paintings were, "according to the artist, to parallel the multiple levels of polyphonic music by creating a 'harmony of several colour voices' which could penetrate 'deep into the cosmic sphere'" (Moszynska 1990:102). He further helped form the Blaue Vier group with Kandinsky and Lyonel Feininger[7] (1871-1956) (figure 72; also see figure 73 A & B for comparison with one of Harris's works).

Klee took a "... reasoned view of experiences... into the domains of feeling and sensation, nonverbal domains that [the twentieth century] has chosen to call the 'subconscious'" (Lipsey 1988:175). He sought a balance between experience, in his case "impassioned perception", and transmission. When he makes references to order,

process and growth, he seeks laws common to orderly change in all life as well as in art. For Klee, knowledge was not only a mental construct; it was based on perception, perception that could take all kinds of form.

Lipsey describes Klee as a man fascinated with the hidden and the fantastic, a natural esotericist as well as an interpreter of art (although we do not find in his writings any indications of a direct dependence on theosophical writings). Through study and absorption, he transformed what he gathered "at the roots" into something new (Lipsey 1988:176-178). With Klee, as with other artists of the 1930s, the search for origins represents a search for the self, in particular, the inner self. For Klee, the various formal means of visual art, defined as measure, weight, and quality, manifest themselves through line, colour, and the play of light and shadow. A turning point in his career was his visit to Tunisia. He was so overwhelmed by the intense light that he found there, that he wrote:

> Colour has taken possession of me; no longer do I have to chase after it, I know that it has hold of me forever. That is the significance of this blessed moment. Color and I are one. I am a painter.[8]

In Lipsey's words, Klee grounded metaphysics in an earthly discipline of mind, eye, and hand (Lipsey 1988:177). To be a channel was not only the beginning, it was essential for inspiration

to pass freely through the artist. He often incorporated letters and numerals in his paintings, part of his language of symbols and signs; they were drawn from the unconscious and used to obtain a poetic amalgam of abstraction and reality. For Klee, "Art does not produce the visible, it makes visible". [9]

Another artist who wrote about his painting, and art in general, was the Russian painter Kazimir Malevich (1878-1935). Malevich, who revered Cézanne, had read Ouspensky, and was involved in spiritual circles as well as the Bauhaus movement, endeavoured to join art and spirituality. Malevich (figure 74) taught in various Russian cultural institutions, such as the Academy of Moscow, and his work included touching recreations of old Russian religious motifs. According to Lipsey, Malevich's "strongest paintings, however, explore with simplicity and visual elegance a new language of geometry, movement, colour, and space that recasts the world as a dynamic, spiritualized, and joyful realm" (Lipsey 1988:131). This new artistic vision, inspired by Claude Bragdon's writing (especially A Primer of Higher Space, 1913) and Ouspensky's Tertium Organum, Malevich called Suprematism.[10] For him, to forge a new vision, and a new reality, involved destroying old ways of seeing and being. Thus, Malevich contributed to the creation of a visual language which became established enough to recur in American art after World War II.

When Malevich said, in 1912, "I have destroyed the subject", he was after a spiritual as well as an artistic revolution. Like Kandinsky's quest for "absolute painting", this new reality would see humanity purged of outmoded ways of seeing; in Bell's terms, they were ushering in a new, greater, and more intense reality (Bell 1999:184). Both Malevich and Mondrian believed that painting was a more powerful means of transformation, an opening to a higher realm of consciousness. Art had to reach into purer forms, and only abstract means seemed appropriate (Moszynska 1990:62). "Non objective form ...had an advantage of bearing absolutely no resemblance to the world of nature..." (Mosynska 1990:62). For Malevich, the artist was a seer.

Franz Marc (1880-1916), a German painter, was an artist strongly influenced by both Kandinsky and by Theosophy. He endeavoured, by his own definition, to create "symbols for the altar of a new spiritual religion" (Marc quoted in Moffitt 1987:103-104). These 'symbols' evolved toward lines and colours.

> I saw Kandinsky's latest things in his studio, and I must confess that I have scarcely ever gotten such a deep and awestruck impression from pictures, Kandinsky penetrates deeper than all of them (Marc quoted in Moffitt 1987:109).

By 1911, Marc (figure 75) had been formally accepted into the Blaue Reiter group and eventually became co-author and editor of The Blaue Reiter Almanac.

Simplification and geometricized forms were the characteristic of other artists such as Frantisek Kupka (1871-1957). A Czech painter (figure 76), Kupka became interested in Theosophy in the 1890s and was one of the first artists to venture into pure colour abstraction using it to suggest dynamic movement. In manuscript notes, dated 1910-11, he wrote about the pictorial possibilities of curved and straight lines, and of vertical planes (Moszynska 1990:15). His development to abstraction was a result of introducing theosophical imagery and theory into his art. Kupka investigated the power of colour suggesting dynamic movement when free of representational function. His motivation was metaphysical; Kupka was also a practicing medium at spiritual séances.

Johannes Itten (1888-1967), a Swiss painter (figure 77) and colleague of Kandinsky and Klee, constructed intuitive colour theories. These theories were based on Goethe and had been adapted for Itten's teachings on the principles of colour, in his compulsory introductory course at the Bauhaus. Originally, Itten had been head of his own art school in Vienna; he later moved to

the Bauhaus. Itten was the first teacher to arrive with a fully developed theory and it was based on the notion that "form and colour are one" and further, that "geometric forms and the colours of the spectrum are the simplest, most sensitive forms and colours and therefore the most precise means of expression in a work of art" (Itten quoted in Moszynska 1990:91).

At the Bauhaus, he let students explore form, colour, rhythm and contrast, believing that "geometric forms and the colours of the spectrum are the simplest, most sensitive forms and colours and therefore the most precise means of expression in a work of art" (Itten quoted in Moszynska 1990:91). His principles are said to have had a tremendous influence not only on local art education, but also on Kandinsky and Klee.

The community of abstract artists extended to other disciplines as well: architects, musicians, and writers, were also drawn to the same circle of ideas. Architect Walter Gropius opened the Bauhaus School of Applied Art and Architecture in Weimar, Germany in 1919. It was an attempt to elevate the status of crafts to the level of fine art through training. Several abstract painters such as Itten, Klee, and Kandinsky were employed to teach students the elements of design theory and soon the Bauhaus became an important international centre for the investigation of compositional

principles based on an abstract treatment of form. The Bauhaus further saw the publication of the Bauhaus Books, which included the latest theories in art, design, and architecture, written by the staff and international artists such as Le Corbusier, Malevich, and Mondrian. It was through this vehicle that Kandinsky published his Point and Line to Plane.

Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy

Another influential catalyst for artists of this time period was the aforementioned Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). During the late 1800s, Steiner had served as the leading figure and author within the German branch of the Theosophical Society. Steiner was the author of more than 350 volumes of philosophy, science and the arts including Philosophy of Freedom (1894). Kandinsky and Mondrian, among others, are known to have read Steiner and probably attended his lectures. Steiner was also the originator of an esoteric spiritual school called Anthroposophy, derived from Theosophy, and founded in 1913. It systematized and further developed theosophical principles. According to various notes in the Harris's papers in the archives, he read Steiner extensively, quoted him frequently, and respected his teachings, both as a theosophist and an artist.

Rudolf Steiner was born in Hungary, educated in Austria then lived in Germany. He reportedly explored spiritual realities from an early age, and was interested in experience as much as in theories. At age twenty-two, Steiner was invited to edit the natural scientific writings of Goethe, which were later published in five volumes. In 1904, Steiner wrote, and had published, Wie erlangt man Erkenntnisse der höheren Welten (Knowledge of Higher Worlds and Its Attainment) and Theosophie (Theosophy), and in 1909, his Die Geheimwissenschaft im Umriss (Occult Science: An Outline) was published. Collectively, these three works present Steiner's fourfold theory of human nature (physical, etheric, astral, and ego), his account of the evolution of consciousness (from spiritual to physical), and his description of the workings of karma and rebirth.

Over his lifetime, Steiner delivered more than 6000 lectures on widely disparate topics from science, the arts, and education, to religion. In the art world, Steiner contributed theories concerning colour theory, the nature of art, its origin and its place in the cosmic and spiritual structure, and the perception of forms. He also spoke on music, painting, sculpture, and architecture. Steiner created numerous works in the visual arts, though architecture was his primary concern. He directed the design of the First Goetheanum located in Dornach, Switzerland (1913-22). Included in his work are

two-dimensional artworks, such as paintings and sketches, sculpture such as *The Three Kabiri* (1917), a cast plaster for a performance of Goethe's Faust, and graphic art such as invitation cards to Theosophical Society events in Munich.

Steiner articulated and demonstrated the transformative capacity of art when practiced as a spiritual experience. He believed that access to the spiritual world enabled the artist to work with colour, shape, sounds, and words in ways that rendered their spiritual qualities both visible and tangible. The primary purpose of Steiner's lectures on the arts was to show various ways by which to transform art from a profane to a spiritual activity (Howard 1998:ix).

Among the influential intellectuals read and discussed in artistic circles of that period also one finds such names as Freidrich Nietzsche (Thus Spoke Zarathustra, 1883-84), Oswald Spengler (The Decline of the West, 1918)[11], James Fraser (The Golden Bough, 1890), Carl Jung (The Psychology of the Unconscious, 1912), Sigmund Freud (Interpretation of Dreams, 1900), William James (Principles of Psychology, 1890, The Will to Believe, 1897, and The Varieties of Religious Experience, 1902). In Religious Studies, we find "Suzuki's Outline of Mahayana Buddhism (1907) introducing Buddhism to the West" (Tarnas 1991:462). In Science, Einstein proposes his Theory of Relativity in 1916 and further

developed in 1927; Heisenberg discovered the principles of uncertainty. In Music, Schoenberg's first atonal piece was presented in 1909, followed by Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1913). In literature, Yeats authors The Second Coming (1920) and A Vision (1925); T.S.Eliot writes The Wasteland (1922) and Rilke produces Duino Elegies in 1923. These authors were among those mentioned by Harris; some appear more frequently in his writing than others.

The North American scene was not isolated from the European one. North American artists had access and travelled to European artistic and intellectual communities. Yet, in North America itself, a similar evolution was taking place. The intellectual scene was dominated by writers for whom the term spirituality was a primary concern, with a strong emphasis on nature as a source of spiritual well being.

Beyond the immediate circle of abstract artists, a host of musicians, writers, philosophers and poets gravitated around the artistic community. American writers such as Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), Walt Whitman (1819-1892), and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) were seen as prophetic figures and they had been leading figures in the New England Transcendentalists[12] and by the turn of the century their writings were still influential. "Emerson saw

art's highest value as history, and believed that art was simply a different mode of expressing historical, poetical, or philosophical ideas" (Davis 1992:66). As an American essayist, poet, and lecturer, Emerson took Kant's transcendental ego, and made it an object of experience. That the experience of this transcendental ego is akin to the mystical experience is apparent in this page taken from Emerson.

> Crossing, a bare common, in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration. I am glad to the brink of fear ... Standing on the bare ground, -- my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, -- all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God. [13]

Though there is certain passivity in this experience, the experience proceeds upward and outward, clearly centred in the perceiver. Considered a prophet to this age, Emerson advanced his views forthrightly and unapologetically.

Walt Whitman and Transcendentalism

According to Larisey, Walt Whitman the writer, combined a raw, pioneering technique, similar to that popularized in Canada by the Group of Seven, with mystical themes accessible in one convenient book, Leaves of Grass (1892), made tantalizing by being not

available on the open shelves (Davis 1992:44). It is said that Emerson had had a considerable influence on this literary work.

Whitman taught that each individual had the potential for transcendence; in fact, according to Whitman, everyone had the potential to attain unity (Davis 1992:52). Whitman believed that nature is formed and informed by the spirit and every tree or mountain is a symbol of a greater spiritual reality. For him and his readers, God not only created nature but is in nature as well. This idea will do much to promote the contemplation of wilderness, and the related notion of nature as the experience of the divine. "Visible nature", to Whitman, "is but a distorted reflection of a more perfect world and the creative individual viewing her is inspired to perceive within and behind her many garments that which is timeless and entirely beautiful" (Davis 1992:62). Further, Whitman emphasized nature's infinite flexibility and called into question its ultimate dependability, its spiritual constancy. By giving prominence to subjective elements in perception, he virtually eliminates objective reality.

Though Whitman was not part of the Transcendental Club or of the theosophists, all theosophists were active Whitman exponents and many influential Canadians participated in the Whitman Club in Bon Echo in Ontario (Davis 1992:43). Three Canadians in the artistic

community also wrote extensively about Whitman: Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke (1837-1902), was the London, Ontario author of Cosmic Consciousness (1901) and Whitman's literary executor, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Frederick Housser. Bucke was impressed by Whitman's mystical experience and his frank description of it (Davis 1992:44).

Through Housser's writings, Canadians, and particularly theosophists, had access to an analysis of Whitman. Housser wrote that the essence of Whitman's Leaves of Grass was religious, corresponding to the search for one's integrity, and expressing the state of being entire or complete. Of particular importance were Whitman's notions of the divinity of the individual and of nature, of the centrality of the here and now, and of the importance of the artist. Joining religion and creativity, Housser stated:

> ... the creative attitude is eventually religious. One who possesses it sees life as forever liquid and changing and is perpetually endeavouring to perceive meaning in it in terms of an expansion of consciousness and a quickening of the inner life (Housser in Davis 1992:51).

We know that Harris, Bertram Brooker (1888-1955) (figure78) and Emily Carr also read Whitman (Davis 1992:51). In the 1920s, Harris discussed Whitman's methods; he was especially interested in how Whitman mediated the boundaries between self and non-self and

how he conceived of the progression to unity. For Whitman, the concept of individualism is based on a person being "more than a mere fraction sum known only to God; rather the specific person is a way of attaining, or moving towards, the divine unity" (Davis 1992:51).

> Here is a man who receives images of spiritual and material things from without and transmits them again without the least thought of what will the world say of this idea and how will the world like this form of expression, or into what form did such a great poet cast his thought (Davis 1992:44).

Closer in time to Harris, Claude Bragdon, an American architect and art theoretician, was known not only because he had translated Ouspensky, but also and especially because he had developed a grandiose synthesis of the esoteric principles pertaining to art, and especially architecture. Harris read Bragdon; several pages of quotes from Bragdon's writings were found in various volumes of Harris's archival papers. Bragdon's ideas will be especially useful to Harris's exploration of abstract work.

Conclusion

In The Passion of the Western Mind, Tarnas summarizes the intellectual scene of the past century in the following terms:

> Looked at as a whole, the extreme fluidity and multiplicity of the contemporary intellectual scene can scarcely be exaggerated...Hence any generalizations about the postmodern mind have to be qualified by a recognition of the continuing presence or recent

> resurgence of most of its major predecessors... Even elements of the Western cultural tradition going back to the Hellenistic era and classical Greece – Platonic and Presocratic philosophy, Hermeticism, mythology, the mystery religions – have been reemerging to play new roles in the current intellectual scene. Moreover, these in turn have been joined, and affected, by a multitude of cultural perspectives from outside the West, such as the Buddhist and Hindu mystical traditions; by underground cultural streams from within the West itself, such as Gnosticism and the major esoteric traditions; and by indigenous and archaic perspectives antedating Western civilization altogether, such as Neolithic European and Native American spiritual traditions – all gathering now on the intellectual stage as if for some kind of climatic synthesis (Tarnas 1991:402-403).

Such a scene was moreover even more powerful for the artist because artists were not specialized in their work, or in their readings. Each of them, as individuals, was exposed to, and sought access to, the whole scene. The artistic currents of the early twentieth century were many. The most influential among them were the abstract artists who formed an international network held by common themes and a shared vision to guide their quest. Also participating in this community were a number of authors who contributed information and ideas. A number of religious movements evolved on the fringe of, or together with, this community. The Theosophical Society was one of them.

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[1] From HP Blavatsky to Aldous Huxley there was an array of religio-philosophical thought that spoke of all religions being after the same God, aiming for the same thing - that of the reclamation of man's divine nature.

[2] Constructivism was a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in.
[3] Kandinsky is universally recognized as the creator of the first clearly abstract work, a watercolour in 1910.
[4] Another name for the De Stijl Art Movement.
[5] The periodical De Stijl first appeared in 1917 and ran until 1932. It was of great importance in disseminating the idea of abstraction throughout Europe. The periodical "hoped to make a contribution to the development of a new awareness of beauty. It wishes to make modern man receptive to what is new in the visual arts" (from the introduction to the first issue).
[6] Der Blaue Reiter was an art movement started in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. The artists who took part were considered to be pioneers of abstract art. Coming from a number of European countries, the painters, poets, writers, and composers who joined the group dedicated themselves to the search for a common spiritual basis in an international culture.
[7] A founder and teacher at the Bauhaus and a major part of the Cubist movement.
[8] Paul Klee (n.d.) quoted at www.switzerland.isyours.com/e/guide/bern/paulklee.html seen on 06/04/02.
[9] Paul Klee (n.d.) quoted at www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/klee as seen 31/12/98.
[10] An expression of supremacy of pure sensibility in figurative art.
[11] In The Decline of the West, Spengler proposed a grandiose vision of the history of mankind, within an equally ambitious philosophical all encompassing synthesis; he hypothesized that cultures and civilizations could be considered living organisms, each with "its own distinctive soul, which expresses itself in artistic, scientific, political, economic and religious forms" (McNaughton n.d: 1 seen at meltingpot.fortunecity.com/melwood/368/oswaldspengler.html seen on 17/04/02.).
[12] Transcendentalism began in America in 1836 (out of Boston). A religious, philosophic, and literary movement, it rejected forms, creeds, rites, and explanations, seeking to reach the depth of things by a direct immediate encounter with reality. Its objective was an original relation with the universe. Largely a literary and religious movement with virtually no pictorial form, its influence was of a philosophic character.
[13] Quoted from Second Series, Nature: Addresses and Lectures, chapter 1: Nature found in Lawrence Buell (ed), Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Collection of Critical Essays, Prentice Hall, 1992 as seen at www.emersoncentral.com/nature1.htm seen on 24/01/02.

CHAPTER FOUR

The History of the Theosophical Society

The Theosophical Society was born at the conjunction of various ideological currents, some with deep historical roots, others proceeding from current events. Many traditions, movements and schools of thought contributed to the development of Theosophy. The complex "genealogy" of theosophical doctrine is reflected in the chronology of occult, esoteric[1] and religious movements leading to and encompassing that period (see Chronology of Occult and Esoteric Movements, Appendix C). The late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century could be described as a period of great upheaval which exerted its influence on art. According to Regier, this period brought reaction against what were thought to be the limitations of a rationalist and materialist worldview; "this reaction pervaded the realms of art, literature and philosophy, and also religion, especially as manifested in the several occult societies that were then founded and have continued to flourish" (Regier 1987:11).

By the beginning of the twentieth century a number of generally accepted Christian beliefs had undergone attack from a variety of sources. Charles Darwin had claimed a natural rather than a divine origin of species; Friedrich Nietzsche had rejected Christian morality in favour of a doctrine of the will; and Karl Marx had declared that religion was an opiate for the people. Einstein destroyed the belief that the basic quantities of measurement (energy, mass and the speed of light) were absolute and unvarying by demonstrating, in his Special Theory of Relativity (1905), that they depended on the relative position of the viewer overturning conventions established since the seventeenth century, while the splitting of the atom by Ernest Rutherford in 1909 was equally disturbing.

On a social level, rapid industrialization and the growth of capitalism served to highlight the discrepancies between the wealthy and the poor. In Russia, the rift was extreme leading to a 1905 uprising followed by the 1917 Revolution of the proletariat. As the 'external supports' began to collapse, and Europe became divided against itself in the Great War of 1914-18, artists as disparate as Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrain, and Kasimir Malevich turned towards an abstraction that relied less on the forms of the uncertain changing world, and more on values seen as

universal, based on philosophical or mystical doctrines; the ground was fertile for the development of Blavatsky's movement.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, or HPB as she liked to be called, was born Helena von Hahn in 1831 in the Ukraine, the daughter of a novelist and a colonel. She purported to having been a world traveler, visiting Turkey, Egypt, Greece, France, India, Java, Tibet and South America before coming to the United States in 1873. Soon after arriving in New York she met Colonel Henry Steele Olcott[2] (1832-1907) and William Quan Judge[3] (1851-1896).

The Theosophical Society was so named by its main founder, Helena Blavatsky who intended to present her teachings as a heir to and realization of the wisdom taught by ancient religious traditions. It was born in 1875 in New York city in a small group led by Madame Blavatsky and Henry Steele Olcott. It was only one of several related schools of thought permeating the intellectual society of the early 20th century. However it was the most ambitious and the most prominent one and it took hold of the imaginations of the intellectual and artistic communities both in the United States and Europe.

First involved in spiritualist séances, Blavatsky and Olcott veered away from spiritualism under the influence attributed to a

"Committee of Adepts" belonging to the "Egyptian group of the Brotherhood" through a series of letters received by both Blavatsky and Olcott. This was the first manifestation of the so-called Adepts.

It was not long before the twice-divorced Blavatsky had convinced Olcott and Judge that telepathic Mahatmas[4] in Tibet and Northern India had instructed her about secrets long forgotten to the human race and that she had brought the 'Wisdom of the East' to the starving West. Judge persuaded her to write down her 'teachings'; these were actually a synthesis of religions, science, and philosophy gleaned from Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, ancient Egyptian traditions and the occult to name but a few. Thus began the Theosophical Society.

> What I do believe in is 1) the unbroken oral teachings revealed by living divine men during the infancy of mankind to the elect among men; 2) that it has reached us unaltered; and 3) that the Masters are thoroughly versed in the science based on such uninterrupted teaching (Blavatsky 1889:n.p.)[5].

By 1875 the Theosophical Society was officially established in New York with a constitution and list of objectives. As stated in its constitution, the Society aimed:

- to diffuse among men a knowledge of the laws inherent in the universe;

- to promulgate the knowledge of the essential unity of all that is and to demonstrate that this unity is fundamental in nature;
- to form an active brotherhood among men;
- to study ancient and modern religion, science, and philosophy;
- to investigate the powers innate in man.[6]

First composed of those primarily interested in Spiritualism[7], the Society's early spiritualistic thrust was gradually modified as a result of Blavatsky's attacks on Spiritualism between 1875 and 1879. The Theosophical Society came to consist of groups seeking to approach the problem of the spirit by way of inner knowledge.

> "Theosophy," stated Blavatsky, "contained a perennial tradition of esoteric teachings propounded by a centuries-long progression of masters and saints who have attempted to educate humanity in the ways of God" (Blavatsky 1973,2:102).
>
> She held that the very root idea of the Theosophical Society is free and fearless investigation. Theosophy hoped to speak "to all men[8] ...who aim at fostering peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard for one another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race..." (Blavatsky in Davis 1992:97).

The primary purpose of the Theosophical Society was to encourage altruism and compassion. The mission of the Society was therefore to free humankind from the pervasive materialism of the age, to direct all thought and action towards the realization of the essential

unity of all being that is pure truth. This 'truth' Madame Blavatsky describes as a ray of white light that had, over time, been refracted into the different colours of the spectrum, just as the truth of the ancients had been subdivided into the world's various religions and philosophies.

It was the task of the theosophists to reunite the separated strand, each claiming to be the one true light, into the original white light of truth. This synthesis, which was to be accomplished in the twentieth century, would allow mankind to regain its former clairvoyance. With the return of man's former state, peace and harmony would reign in the world and there would be a greater brotherhood among men (Blavatsky 1888/1964:306).

According to Lipsey's convincing analysis of this period, Emerson, Thoreau and their circle of Transcendentalists of mid-nineteenth century America had earlier explored the newly translated sacred books of India and China with great sensitivity and recreated their vision in a well-bred gentle version of American literature. "HPB wasn't gentle and, although originally well bred, had "successfully resisted [gentrification]" (Lipsey 1988:33).

> She drew together everything she had heard or read in this field, with overwhelming conviction and little art. Her thousands of pages on cosmology, philosophy, comparative religion, science, history, magic, occult studies, and spiritualism were all punctuated with

> defiant growls against the stuffy nineteenth century... (Lipsey 1988:32).

To this grandiose intellectual program, Blavatsky brought her own pragmatic curiosity. She wanted to experience directly the reality of spirit: she was willing "to investigate the practical meditation disciplines of the East, and [added] an urge 'to experiment' in a practical fashion 'in the occult powers of Nature'" (Lipsey 1988:33). She added her own versions of Egyptian and Middle Eastern classical religions as well as her own synthesis of Gnostic traditions, the Kaballah and readings from alchemy, Rosicrucian, and other esoteric writings. So this amalgam of ancient and oriental philosophies was partly directed against Christianity and Science, at least in their official versions.

The first objective of the Theosophical Society was to demonstrate that the oneness of all life is a fact in nature, and to form a nucleus for a universal brotherhood. According to Blavatsky,

> (a) All men have spiritually and physically the same origin, which is the fundamental teaching of Theosophy. (b) As mankind is essentially of one and the same essence, and that essence is one -- infinite, uncreated, and eternal, whether we call it God or Nature - nothing, therefore, can affect one nation or one man without affecting all other nations and all other men. This is as certain and as obvious as that a stone thrown into a pond will, sooner or later, set in motion every single drop of water therein (Blavatsky 1888/1964:41).

To promote better understanding among all people and recognition of the essential unity of life, the next objective was to encourage everyone to study ancient and modern religions, sciences, and philosophies:

> ...it is only by studying the various great religions and philosophies of humanity, by comparing them dispassionately and with an unbiassed mind, that men can hope to arrive at the truth. It is especially by finding out and noting their various points of agreement that we may achieve this result. For no sooner do we arrive--either by study, or by being taught by someone who knows--at their inner meaning, then we find, almost in every case, that it expresses some great truth in Nature (Blavatsky 1888/1964:59).

Further objectives encouraged investigation and sharing of these truths - the spiritual, psychological, and material laws and powers found in the cosmos and in the human being. Blavatsky believed that each person, being a portion of the whole, contains, latent or expressed, all the qualities and attributes of the cosmos and to know oneself fully is to understand the universe and everything in it. The Society, however, cautioned against deliberately seeking psychic powers; these were considered by-products of evolution, and, in time, were supposed to arise naturally. Cultivating such powers would distract from the deeper goals of human growth and could lead to imbalances in development and consciousness.

The Theosophical Society itself introduced many sacred books of the East to western intellectuals and artists during the early years of the twentieth century and by the beginning of the twentieth century the Society had a membership of more than 100,000 worldwide. Theosophy, that is, the doctrine of Blavatsky, Judge, Olcott and later, Leadbeater and Besant, was one of the components in the elaboration by the artists of their new vision, and for some a main component, noted in their own writings as the century moved on. Poets like W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), painters such as Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, and Frantisek Kupka, architects like Claude Bragdon, composers such as Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) and Arnold Schoenberg (1879-1951), were members of the Theosophical Society.

The Published Writings

In 1877 HPB published Isis Unveiled, a two volume, 1300 page compilation of mysticism, tall stories and archaeology, which hinted at a lost knowledge that had been familiar to the initiates of antiquity. This ancient wisdom, she believed, was a universal and ageless occult knowledge in which there was unity between science and religion. This was HPB's first major literary effort, a critical response to the growing materialism in both scientific and religious institutions, and a vindication of the ageless esoteric quest. Blavatsky noted in the preface of Volume 1:

> Isis is the fruit of a somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their science ... They showed us that by combining science with religion, the existence of God and immortality of man's spirit may be demonstrated (1877/1976:n.p.).

By June of 1878 the British Theosophical Society, later called the London Lodge, was established. Later that same year HPB became an American citizen. In 1879 she began publication of the magazine The Theosophist.

Olcott, through an Indian friend, had heard of a Hindu revivalist movement known as the Arya Samaj. It seemed to him to be a type of Indian Theosophical Society so an affiliation between the two groups was sought and granted and the Theosophical Society added the phrase 'of the Arya Samaj' to its title for a time. On December 17th, 1878, HPB and Olcott left New York for India where they worked for the recognition of the value of oriental religions and philosophies, especially among the educated classes. They also sought to expose religious superstition and dogmatism. At the same time Blavatsky encouraged the study of Western mystical traditions such as Gnosticism, Kabbalah, Freemasonry, and Rosicrucianism. By 1880 a new constitution was adopted in Bombay and by 1882 the headquarters were transferred from Bombay to Madras (Adyar).

Olcott and HPB soon turned their interest to Buddhism and in 1880 became Buddhists on a visit to Ceylon while continuing to maintain their involvement in Theosophy. Among Indians, the Theosophical Society gathered converts and acquired a considerable reputation as one of the first bodies of Western opinion to accept Eastern doctrines on their own merits. To elements of Eastern doctrine, Theosophy added features that were derived from Blavatsky's imagination. The Theosophical Society was more and more presented as having been chosen to bring a new message to the new age of the Western world.

Unfortunately, while Blavatsky and Olcott were away from India on a trip, a Madame Coulomb, whom Blavatsky had known in Cairo, showed some letters to the editor of a Madras Christian magazine. They purported to show that Blavatsky had hired this woman and her husband to fake psychic phenomena. An investigation was undertaken by the Society for Psychical Research (London) and the results were disastrous: the man sent to investigate found conjuror's apparatus and he cast doubt on most of the 'phenomena' reported by the Theosophical Society. Furthermore, he accused Blavatsky of hiring people to impersonate the Masters. The resulting report, with all of Blavatsky's confessions and retracted

confessions, however, did little to stop the growth of the Society. But, the 'days of phenomena' were over.

In that same year the American Branch of the parent Society was started in Rochester, N.Y. and in 1884 an American Board of Control was established. In 1885 HPB left India for good and spent the following two years writing in various countries. In 1887 she settled in London where the Blavatsky Lodge was established. While Blavatsky developed her doctrine in writing, Olcott, still in India, and Judge in the United States rapidly developed the organization as a formal society. Judge eventually became Secretary of the American Section.

In 1888 The Secret Doctrine was published. Continuously in print for the past 100 years, it remains, even today one of the most exhaustive exposition of an esoteric tradition. Blavatsky wrote:

> The aim of this work may be thus stated: to show that Nature is not a 'fortuitous concurrence of atoms,' and to assign to man his rightful place in the scheme of the Universe; to rescue from degradation the archaic truths which are the basis of all religions; and to uncover, to some extent, the fundamental unity from which they all spring; finally to show that the occult side of Nature has never been approached by the Science of modern civilization (Blavatsky 1888/1964: viii).

Consisting of two volumes, entitled Cosmogenesis (the creation of the universe) and Anthropogenesis (the history of the earth and evolution of humanity), she presents a text based on a mysterious ancient religious text called the Stanzas of Dyzan[9]. This comprehensive view of cosmic and human evolution brings together mythic, religious, and scientific material from many cultures to illustrate the universality of Theosophy's basic concepts.

Blavatsky's texts speak of many faiths evolved from one source, every religion based on one truth, the Secret Doctrine. This is founded on three fundamental principles: one absolute reality, the periodicity of the universe, and a fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul entailing the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul through the cycle of Incarnation. In time, all sectarian religions, she wrote, would disappear and be replaced by "a grand religion of the past".

> The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, and its cosmogony alone is the most stupendous and elaborate system...(Blavatsky 1888/1964, 1:272-273).

These two volumes were soon translated into several languages as Theosophy spread throughout Europe and North America.

The Voice of the Silence and The Key to Theosophy were both published in 1889. In The Voice of The Silence, Blavatsky describes the process of individual spiritual development. The Voice is a translation by her of old mystical verses in which she uses metaphor, paradox, and poetry. She develops the notion that in each person, there is something eternal and divine; and she further guides the disciple toward the 'inner God' or 'higher self'. Union with this divine quasi-celestial self brings wisdom. Personality and individuality must be stamped out. In the book, Blavatsky gives practical advice on how to harmonize one's individual religious life, and one's life in the world. The rules and ethics presented in this text contrast the two paths of spiritual attainment: the one pursued by those seeking knowledge for their own enlightenment; the other chosen by those whose aspirations are prompted by compassion for all, an alternative reminiscent of Buddhist orientations. The Voice has been quoted in William James' Varieties of Religious Experience.

Written in the form of questions and answers, Blavatsky's Key to Theosophy presents the key principles of Theosophy in a relatively simple manner, which contrasts with the previous works. The religious tone of those teachings is very obvious. Theosophy is compared to a white ray of light, which in itself incorporates the seven prismatic colours standing for the various religions of

mankind. The theosophists teach that the Light, or, in other words, Theosophy, is identical to eternal truth; a truth which at times had been obscured by the frailty of human endeavour, but which remains present in all religions, philosophies, and above all in the doctrines of the initiates. This work incorporates a 60-page glossary of philosophical terms drawn from Sanskrit, Hebrew, and classical literature.

In 1890 the European headquarters was established at 19 Avenue Road, London, with HPB as its head. One year later, HPB was dead. By this time, the teachings of the Theosophical Society had become well known throughout religious, literary and artistic circles (Regier 1987). Within its first decade, the Theosophical Society had firmly established itself on intercontinental ground. In 1893, The Theosophical Congress went to the first World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago.

Two years later the Society split into two branches: The first branch was the Theosophical Society in America, established at a Boston Convention where Judge was elected President for Life. The Foreign National Sections and Lodges were combined under him and a headquarters was established in New York City which later was moved to Pasadena, California. On Judge's death, Katherine Tingley (1847-1929)[10] was recognized as his successor. She

traveled worldwide, established schools in several countries, emphasized practical humanitarianism, education, prison reform, and world peace. In 1900, she moved the international headquarters to Point Loma, California, where she established the Raja-Yoga School and College, a Theosophical University, and the School for the Revival of the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity. In 1909, a group spearheaded by Robert Crosbie, formed another major theosophical association, the United Lodge of Theosophists, based in Los Angeles, California. Later these two groups were reunited under one wing.

Upon Katherine Tingley's death in 1929, Gottfried de Purucker (1874-1942)[11] became leader of the Society. He lectured widely and taught several groups of private students, while working to put the Society on a sound financial basis during the Depression. Shortly before his death he moved the international headquarters to Covina, California, near Los Angeles. For three years after his death the Cabinet of the Theosophical Society administered the Society. In 1945 Colonel Arthur Conger (1872-1951) was recognized as leader of the society after serving as President of the American Section for 4 years. He concentrated on expanding the publishing program, was editor of the Society's magazine, The Theosophical Forum, and restarted the work in Europe after World

War II. He closed the Esoteric Section of the Society and moved the international headquarters back to Pasadena, California.

When Conger died in 1951, James Long (1898-1971) became leader. He emphasized the importance of making Theosophy a living force in daily life, and of seeking to read the natural karma of each moment. He founded the magazine Sunrise to be a bridge between the deeper teachings of Theosophy and the general public. On his death in 1971, Grace Knoche took office. She has since emphasized publication activities, edited the Sunrise: Theosophic Perspectives, and encourages mutual respect and cooperation among all theosophical organizations. Under her tutelage, the daily practices of altruism and compassion were advised as opposed to pseudo-occultism and self-centred spiritual search. She still heads the Society today and is active as an editor at the Theosophical University Press.

Meanwhile, at the international headquarters in Adyar, Olcott had continued as President of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) until his death in 1907. Annie Besant (1847-1933) followed in his footsteps as the next President. Besant had become a convert to Theosophy after having read The Secret Doctrine. She was already a celebrity through her peaceful activism for social reform and birth control in England. It was largely owing to her energy and enthusiasm that

Theosophy entered the area of 'progressive' thought. Aided now by Besant, Theosophy became the dominant alternative culture especially in artistic circles. It was the 'school' to which artists and other seekers could look for a radical description of the world and man.

Another convert, a controversial one at that, was to become Besant's right hand running the Society. Charles Webster Leadbeater (1847-1932) was a Church of England clergyman who had been won over by Madame Blavatsky.[12] His reputation in Theosophical circles was as a clairvoyant. He and Mrs. Besant undertook clairvoyant investigations of thought-forms - shapes assumed by emotions and thoughts and occult chemistry, which was an examination of the nature of matter carried out clairvoyantly (see Chapter Six for a further discussion on thought-forms).

To these activities Leadbeater added homosexual tastes, and as early as 1906, charges of misconduct with boys at the Theosophical Headquarters forced his resignation. After two years, which Leadbeater spent investigating occult chemistry in self-imposed exile on the Continent, Besant managed to lure him back into the Society and once she was released from all higher authority by Olcott's death, Leadbeater and Besant became, in effect, the joint directors of the Society's activities.

In Canada the first Canadian lodge was established in 1891 in Toronto. By 1920 there were eighteen lodges and The Canadian Theosophist had begun publication. By 1922, there were three lodges in Toronto and 962 adherents in Canada. Canadians interested in Theosophy were usually also attracted to Transcendentalism and a liberal Christianity open to mysticism (Davis 1992). People like Dr. Frederick Banting (1891-1941), architect Frank Lloyd Wright, author George Bernard Shaw and inventor Thomas Edison, and Albert E. Smythe, who later became the President of The Canadian Theosophical Society, frequented the Toronto Lodges. The Lodge's activities were available to and welcomed intellectuals and artists, at the time Lawren Harris, Arthur Lismer and their colleagues were developing their association.

The Society's idealistic and anti-materialistic stance attracted the attention of many artists and intellectuals in the world. Theosophy experienced wide popularity in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century because of its probing inner orientation and its optimistic worldview. As HPB herself stated:

> It must be remembered that the Society was not founded as a nursery for forcing a supply of occultists - as a factory for the manufacture of Adepts. It was intended to stem the current of materialism, and also that of spiritualistic phenomenalism and the worship of the Dead. It had to guide the spiritual awakening that has now begun, and not to pander psychic

> cravings which are another form of materialism ...(1879, Letter 1 (1888)[13]

Several offshoots of the Theosophical Society must be mentioned, such as Alice Bailey's Arcane School, and Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy. Alice Bailey broke away from the Theosophical Society in 1920.

> Beginning in 1919 Alice claimed to be in contact with a Master she called the Tibetan. She agreed to be his amanuensis, and between 1919 and her death in 1949 wrote two dozen books on occult philosophy, most of which claimed to be his teachings. (The others were published as her own works.) The Theosophist published the first few chapters of her first work, Initiation, Human and Solar, but then stopped for reasons Bailey called 'theosophical jealousy and reactionary attitude' (Campbell 1980:151).

Steiner and the Anthroposophical Society were important for the European artistic community of those days since Steiner developed a general theory of art, which found expression, among other places, in the Bauhaus in Weimar, Germany. In 1912, when Besant and the theosophical leadership decided to declare that a young boy from India named Jiddu Krishnamurti was the reincarnation of Christ, Steiner, who at the time led the German section of the Theosophical Society, found the suggestion abhorrent. He determined that the time had come to break with the Society taking most of the German section with him.

The theosophical movement as well as the theoretical principles of Theosophy were eventually to continue spreading. The international dimensions of the movement contributed to its strength. The strength of the Theosophical Society always lay in the broadness of its appeal. The quarrels which took place were usually the result of specific claims on the part of individual proponents. It can be stressed that the Theosophical Society was the most active agent in the diffusion of the various elements that made up the late nineteenth century occult revival. Because no particular doctrine was binding on its members, other than a common humanitarianism and transcendentalism, the most varied theories were adopted, passed on, or transformed in the Society. Perhaps one of the greatest services performed by this influential group of people was to direct the attention of Western seekers to Eastern traditions.

Several authors and religious or occult leaders, such as Ouspensky, found themselves associated to the worldview promoted by theosophists. Organizations such as the I Am Movement, Rosicrucianism, Christian Science, and the Liberal Catholic Church have direct links with earlier theosophists. More recently such diverse institutions as the Waldorf alternative schools, the London School of Economics and the Findhorn Garden in

Scotland grew directly on the basis of theosophical teachings. Even the Encyclopaedia Britannica recognizes the historical importance of Theosophy:

> The influence of the Theosophical society has been rather significant...The movement has been a catalytic force in the twentieth century Asian revival of Buddhism and Hinduism.[14]

Today the Theosophical Society is relatively quiet although there are still active lodges in North America and Europe as well as an active publishing house and a multitude of Internet websites. Further, its doctrines have found their way into many corners of the most recent "New Age" phenomenon such as Assagioli's Psychosynthesis and more recently, James Redfield's Celestine Prophecy series.

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[1] Occult has to do with the practice and esoteric has to do with doctrine.
[2] Henry Steele Olcott was an American with a background in agricultural science and journalism. He served during the Civil War as a military investigator. He followed this with a career in law, combined with journalism, reporting on Spiritualistic phenomena. Olcott is especially noted for his work among the Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Burma, and Japan. www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/o/olcott_henry_steele.html as seen 02/01/00
[3] William Quan Judge was born in Dublin, Ireland and moved to New York in 1864. He became a lawyer and was interested in religion, magic and Rosicrucianism. With his interest in spiritualism he read Olcott's book People from the Other World in 1874. He then wrote asking for the address of a medium. Olcott's reply was that he did not know one but he had a friend, Mme Blavatsky, whom he could contact.
[4] These Masters as they were sometimes called, were considered to be living men who had undergone training necessary to develop unseen and hidden powers. They were thought to members of a Great White Brotherhood or White Lodge, who watch over humanity and who

"preserve the truths of the ageless wisdom". Examples of these Masters were Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Buddha, and Confucius.

[5] "Source of Theosophy" (n.d.) as seen 12/012/97 at http://www.blavatsky.net/theosophy/theosophy-source.htm.

[6] as seen 12/12/97 at www.theosociety.org/pasadena/ts/tsobject.htm.

[7] Spiritualism is a movement predicated on the twin beliefs that the human personality survives bodily death in some form and that it is possible to communicate with the surviving personality usually through a medium.

[8] HPB used 'man', 'men', 'mankind' to mean all humans, as was the general practice of her time. I have continued this usage throughout this thesis even though this would not constitute current accepted practice.

[9] The existence of this text has neither been proven nor disproved.

[10] Born in Massachusetts and tutored for a time in a Montreal convent, Tingley formed the Ladies Society of Mercy to visit hospitals and prisons. After marrying for a third time, she then launched many philanthropic endeavours one of which was a mission to provide hot soup and bread for the destitute. One day she noticed a gentleman watching her; thinking him in need she went to approach him but he had disappeared. Two days later he presented himself at her home. He was Wm. Q. Judge.

[11] De Purucker was the son of an Anglican minister and was born in New York. A chaplain in the American church in Geneva he specialized in Hebrew, Latin, Greek and the writings of the early church fathers. His greatest contribution to the theosophical movement was the elucidation of the writings of HPB.

[12] Although he claimed to have first come into contact with Theosophy at the School of Pythagoras on Samos in 540BC.

[13] Second annual convention April 22-23, 1888, Letter 1, as seen at www.theosociety.org/pasadena/hpb-am/hpb-am1.htm on 01/01/00

[14] "Theosophy", Encyclopedia Britannica, as seen 31/10/99 at http://www.britannica.com/search?query-theosophy&ct=&fuzzy=N.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Theosophical Doctrine

Theosophy as taught by the Theosophical Society had only an indirect relationship with "Theosophy" as an esoteric religious school of thought that emerged in the 15th century. The Encyclopaedia of Religion notes that the term "Theosophy" or "wisdom of God" used to mean

> ... an understanding of the inner mysteries of the divinity itself (theosophy in the narrow sense), or at an understanding of these mysteries as they are related to the created universe (theosophy in the broad sense...) (Faivre 1987:466).

As stated in Blavatsky's Theosophical Glossary:

> Theosophy [from the Greek *theosophia* from *theos* god, divinity + Sophia wisdom] [is] Divine wisdom, the knowledge of things divine; often described as attainable by direct experience, by becoming conscious of the essential, divine part of our nature, self-identification with the inner god, leading to communion with other similar divine beings. Theosophy actually is the substratum and basis of all the world-religions and philosophies, taught and practised by a few elect ever since man became a thinking being. Also called by such names as the secret doctrine and the esoteric tradition, its teachings have been preserved, checked and rechecked with

> every new generation of its guardians and adepts (Blavatsky 1890/1974).

Theosophia "... is not "Wisdom of God," as translated by some, but *Divine Wisdom* such as that possessed by the gods" (Blavatsky 1889/1972:1).

The doctrine of modern Theosophy was prolifically and progressively set down in Blavatsky's writings, and although many authors such as Judge, Olcott, Leadbeater, Besant, de Purucker, and others have added to the corpus, hers was and still is considered the basis of theoscphical thought. It was a monumental work, which attempted to bring together all that which she considered valid in all religious traditions, in a manner reminiscent of the old Gnostic traditions, using the language and symbols of esoteric traditions in Asia as well as in Europe. She borrowed from everybody and anything and shamelessly plagiarized all useful sources.

> Her critics accused her of copying...William Emmette Coleman, ...a member of the American Oriental Society ... claimed to find in Isis about two thousand plagiarized passages...Just as Madame Blavatsky's acknowledged writings have not escaped the charge of plagiarism, too, the Mahatma letters contain some evidence of unattributed borrowing (Campbell 1980:33, 58-60).

According to Western esoteric tradition, esoteric schools are normally hidden from the eyes of ordinary humanity though open to the elite. The influence of esoteric schools, driven by the high status of their members, persisted uninterrupted throughout history. In the words of Ouspensky, a leader of one of these new esoteric circles, these schools had as their aim of helping "races"[1] which "have lapsed into a barbarous state of one kind or another to emerge from that state and to enter upon a new civilization, or a new life" (1934/1958:31). Blavatsky and her associates made a sharp distinction between the members of the Thesophical Society, or fellows, and theosophists.

> The members of the Theosophical Society at large are free to profess whatever religion or philosophy they like, or none if they so prefer, provided they are in sympathy with, and ready to carry out one or more of the three objects of the Association. The Society is a philanthropic and scientific body for the propagation of the idea of brotherhood on *practical* instead of *theoretical* lines. The Fellows may be Christians or Musselmen, Jews or Parsees, Buddhists or Brahmins, Spiritualists or Materialists, it does not matter; but every member must be either a philanthropist, or a scholar, a searcher into Aryan and other old literature, or a psychic student. In short, he has to help, if he can, in the carrying out of at least one of the objects of the programme. Otherwise he has no reason for becoming a "Fellow." Such are the majority of the exoteric Society, composed of "attached" and "unattached" members (Blavatsky 1889/1972:19). [Italics are Blavatsky's]

As a body of philosophical belief, Theosophy presented itself as tracing its roots back to the ancients of all continents; but its most influential roots came from the modern world and especially the ideas of general evolution and progress. Many scientists and thinkers working in the context of "progress" believed in a process that would lead to an emergence in mankind of an ever-higher type of consciousness and awareness, an expanding interiorization and spiritualization. This project required the participation of all, and especially the elite.

> [The Aims of Theosophy] are several; but the most important of all are those which are likely to lead to the relief of human suffering under any or every form, moral as well as physical (Blavatsky 1889/1972:24).

Blavatsky's 'theosophy' was therefore presented as part of a broader religious phenomenon, which continued the long history of the concept of spiritual evolution. Blavatsky and Judge used the term, theosophy, to designate what they considered a grand synthesis between "theology and science".

> Our work, then, is a plea for the recognition of the Hermetic philosophy, the anciently-universal Wisdom-Religion, as the only possible key to the Absolute in science and theology (Blavatsky 1877/1976, 1:vii).

For Blavatsky, Theosophy was an active aspect of a universality pervading everything, and born by everything that exists:

> ...Theosophy is not a Religion, we say, but RELIGION itself, the one bond of unity, which is so universal and all-embracing that no man, as no speck - from gods and mortal down to animals, the blade of grass and atom - can be outside of its light. Therefore, any organization or body of that name must necessarily be a UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD. The genesis of that WISDOM-RELIGION in which all theosophists believe, dates from [the earlier races]. So-called 'Occultism' or rather Esoteric Science has to be traced in its origin to those Beings who, led by Karma, have incarnated in our humanity, and thus struck the key-note of that secret Science which countless generations of subsequent adepts have expanded since then in every age, while they checked its doctrines by personal observation and experience... (Blavatsky 1979, 10:163, 166-7, 171-3) [emphasis is Blavatsky's].

As to the idea of Theosophy as a religion, when asked in The Key to Theosophy, whether Theosophy was a religion, Blavatsky refused to put Theosophy at the same level as the other religious systems.

> Most assuredly, it [Theosophy] is not [a religion] since it is the essence of all religions of absolute truth, a drop of which only underlies every creed (Blavatsky 1889/1972:58).

Theosophy could not be put on a part with other systems, since it was the system.

Judge went further into the all-encompassing universality of Theosophy thus lending more credence to those pretending that Theosophy is really a philosophical melting pot. For Judge, as for

Blavatsky, it was not a mix, but an overall synthesis, a "religious science".

> Theosophy is that ocean of knowledge which spreads from shore to shore of the evolution of sentient beings; unfathomable in its deepest parts, it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope, yet, shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child... Embracing both the scientific and the religious, Theosophy is a scientific reiigion and a religious science. It is not a belief or dogma formulated or invented by man, but is a knowledge of the laws which govern the evolution of the physical, astral, psychical, and intellectual constitutients of nature and man (Judge 1964:1).

Theosophical writers insist on the systematic nature of Theosophy, and the notion that it gives access to one organized synthesis of all knowledge available to man. According to de Purucker, Blavatskian Theosophy

> ... is that single system or systematic formulation of the facts of visible and invisible Nature, which, as expressed through the illuminated human mind, takes the apparently separate forms of science and philosophy and of religion (de Purucker 1996:176-7).

Though theosophists also insist on the unity of the doctrine, it was presented in different levels: "Members of the Theosophical Society are free to profess whatever religion or philosophy they like or none if they prefer ..." (Blavatsky 1888/1964:19), because they are still at a lower level of understanding and need all the support provided by

their religious community. Therefore in practice, adherents to the Theosophical Society could be drawn from any religious affiliation, preserve or modify their affiliation as they wished, provided they experience their involvement in the Theosophical Society in some concrete manner, and contribute action, knowledge or psychic talents to the society. The theosophists, that are those individuals who have pledged to practice Theosophy, have access to a more defined doctrinal body, and more demanding principles.

> What is meant by the Society having no tenets or doctrines of its own is, that no special doctrines or beliefs are *obligatory* on its members; but, of course, this applies only to the body as a whole. The Society, ... is divided into an outer and an inner body. Those who belong to the latter have, of course, a philosophy, or – if you so prefer it – a religious system of their own (Blavatsky 1889/1972:60).

Blavatsky acknowledges that such a system is not a secret:

> We make no secret of it. It was outlined a few years ago in the *Theosophist* and "Esoteric Buddhism," and may be found still more elaborated in the "Secret Doctrine" It is based on the oldest philosophy in the world, called the Wisdom-Religion or the Archaic Doctrine (Blavatsky 1889/1972:60).

Modern Theosophy, as the study of the divine and of the divine's relations with man, was stimulated by nineteenth century interest in the religions and philosophies of the East, especially of India. Touting itself as a synthesis of all religions, and a path toward an

inner, esoteric meaning, and implicitly, to evolution and reincarnation, the only morality it demanded was an adhesion to the brotherhood of man. Thus the theosophical belief of universal brotherhood was based upon the mystical concept of "The One Life".

> Union is strength. It is by gathering many theosophists of the same way of thinking into one or more groups, and making them closely united by some magnetic bond of fraternal unity and sympathy that the objects of mutual development and progress in Theosophical thought may best be achieved ... (Barker, Letter no.7 1925/1973:160-1).

This union is seen as both a philosophical principle and a tool for the active betterment of humankind. In The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett[2], Blavatsky states:

> The Chiefs want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity', a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds (Barker, Letter No 6, 1925/1973:24).

Distinguishing features of the cosmology of Theosophy include a divine plan in which the individual slowly returns to God and a spiritual higher reality (Atma-Buddhi-Manas), a pantheistic form of evolution, a hierarchy of masters working to fulfill the plan, the recognition of clairvoyance and other faculties as signs of spiritual evolution, and the well-known Eastern doctrines of reincarnation

and karma[3]. Also akin to Theosophy was a belief in the Fourth Dimension later developed by Ouspensky, among others.

The Return to the Divine

Central to the teachings of Theosophy was a conception of "God". Blavatsky wrote: "We reject the idea of a personal, or an extra-cosmic and anthropomorphic God, who is but the gigantic shadow of *man*, and not of man at his best, either (Blavatsky 1889/1972:61). "We believe in a Universal Divine Principle, the root of ALL, from which all proceeds, and within which all shall be absorbed at the end of the great cycle of Being" (Blavatsky 1889/1972:63).

> "...we neither take into consideration this objective and material nature, which we call an evanescent illusion, nor do we mean by [Greek term] Nature, in the sense of its accepted derivation from the Latin *Natura* (becoming, from *nasci*, to be born). When we speak of the Deity and make it identical, hence coeval, with Nature, the eternal and uncreate nature is meant, and not your aggregate of flitting shadows and finite realities. We leave it to the hymn-makers to call the visible sky or heaven, God's Throne, and our earth of mud His footstool. Our DEITY is neither in a paradise, nor in a particular tree, building, or mountain: it is everywhere, in every atom of the visible as of the invisible Cosmos in, over, and around every invisible atom and divisible molecule; for IT is the mysterious power of evolution and involution, the omnipresent, omnipotent, and even omniscient creative potentiality (Blavatsky 1889/1972:64).

The god of the theosophist is mobile and transcendence is not equated to a separateness; in Blavatsky's words:

> In short, our Deity is the eternal, incessantly *evolving*, not *creating*, builder of the universe; that *universe itself unfolding* out of its own essence, not being *made*. It is a sphere, without circumference, in its symbolism, which has but one ever-acting attribute embracing all other existing or thinkable attributes – ITSELF. It is the one law, giving the impulse to manifested, eternal, and immutable laws, within that never-manifesting, *because* absolute LAW, which in its manifesting periods is *The ever-Becoming* (Blavatsky 1889/1972:65) [italics are Blavatsky's].

The theosophists did not pray so much as "will", and are advised to replace petition by "meritorious and good-producing actions" (Blavatsky 1889/1972:70).

> Let no Theosophist, if he would hold to divine, not human truth, say that this "God in secret" listens to, or is distinct from, either finite man or the infinite essence – for all are one. Nor, as just remarked, that a prayer is a petition. It is a mystery rather; an occult process by which finite and conditioned thoughts and desires, unable to be assimilated by the absolute spirit which is unconditioned, are translated into spiritual wills and the will; such process being called "spiritual transmutation." The intensity of our ardent aspirations changes prayer into the "the philosopher's stone," or that which transmutes lead into pure gold. The only homogeneous essence, our "will-prayer" becomes the active or creative force, producing effects according to our desire (Blavatsky 1889/1972:68).

This kind of prayer-full acquiescence to the divine will may lead to mystical experiences:

> I repeat, that we believe in "communion" and simultaneous action in unison with our "Father in secret"; and in rare moments of ecstatic bliss, in the mingling of our higher soul with the universal

> essence, attracted as it is towards its origin and centre, a state, called during life *Samadhi* and after death, *Nirvana* (Blavatsky 1889/1972:70).

The belief that at the beginning of time, man was in command of life's most important possession, the one eternal truth entails the notion that man is more than he believes to be by conventional wisdom. Access to this truth could make him clairvoyant, wise, endowed with psychic gifts and compassionate to all, as demonstrated by Masters and Adepts, in keeping with man's spiritual essence. Theosophy, according to Blavatsky, was synonymous with the quest for that primordial eternal truth. One may recognize in this a strong Gnostic overtone. That tone was also to be picked up by such influential authors as Carl Jung and Mircea Eliade. It is expressed in explicit terms when Blavatsky's books posit an "emanationist" view of the world. This is a hermetic theory of evolution - a circular movement out of the source then a return to that source. First there was involution: the descent of a 'divine spark' into matter; then that spark slowly climbs back to be reunited with its source. Thus there is a "personal spiritual entity within the personal physical man" (Blavatsky 1888/1964, 2:593) and "the human race must be finally physically spiritualized" (Blavatsky 1888/1964, 1:296).

This emphasis on the spirit was a key element of the theosophical doctrine. Blavatsky and other theosophists believed that the

physical was merely an illusion; all that mattered is spirit. The spirit of 'life-essence' interpenetrates all things, bringing together all aspects of reality into one cosmic whole.

> ...each spirit is a manifestation of the One Spirit, and thus a part of all. It passes through a series of experiences in incarnation, and is destined to ultimate re-union with the Divine (Judge 1922:205-06).

The latent spiritual power of man, realized in great spiritual leaders, is considered almost boundless. The soul, rather than the mind, is the principal conduit through which one acquired spiritual knowledge.

Theosophists looked beyond the intellect as a source of knowledge about the spirit, believing instead that spiritual knowledge was transmitted through intuition, feelings, and even the senses. The sense of sight played a particularly important role in theosophical literature; "the spiritual vision was an inner vision, which made possible man's advance to higher spiritual states" (Regier 1987:58). The Soul was endowed with the gift of immortality, a direct expression of its greatest dimension.

A Pantheistic Form of Evolution

Pseudoscientific in nature, Theosophy emphasized the existence of a deeper spiritual reality behind the material world of nature. It taught that man could attain psychic states through intuition and

meditation and that with knowledge of these higher states would come an international brotherhood of man. Man, though tied physically to the material, had the potential to transcend his physical condition by using his soul and working through his intuition rather than strictly through rational understanding.

> Hence man as we know him is held to be a conscious spirit, the flower of evolution,.... He is a religious being because he is a spirit encased in matter, which is in turn itself spiritual in essence. Being a spirit he requires vehicles with which to come in touch with all the planes of nature included in evolution, ... He is in miniature the universe, for he is as spirit, manifesting himself to himself by means of seven differentiations. Therefore is he known in Theosophy as a sevenfold being.[4]

God is no longer the creator of the universe or a person, sitting in judgment; it flows through man and through nature. To Theosophy we, potentially, are all gods.

The theosophical cosmology is complex, with several supersensory levels from lowly physical realms to the higher cosmic self. Human beings are presented as existing on seven different levels (figure 79).

> We find, first of all, two distinct beings in man; the spiritual and the physical, the man who thinks, and the man who records as much of these thoughts as he is able to assimilate. Therefore we divide him into two distinct natures; the upper or the spiritual being, composed of three "principles" or *aspects*; and the lower, or the physical quaternary, composed of *four* – in all *seven* (Blavatsky 1889/1972:90).

Human action was to be graded according to these levels, ranging from gross physical life to the complete perfection of the cosmic Self. A person's elevation to the next higher level was dependent on his acquisition of spiritual knowledge. The more fully he comprehended the spirit, the higher the level he attained. Certain advanced human beings can reach into some of these levels through inner vision, others by good works. This allowed man to progress toward higher levels and a better perception of archetypal realities. These levels Theosophy referred to as the Atma-Buddhi-Manas. The seeker is guided in his quest by those who can see further, who can perceive beyond the veil of materiality, since the seven planes of being each correspond to levels of consciousness.

> Our philosophy teaches us that, as there are seven fundamental forces in nature, and seven planes of being, so there are seven states of consciousness in which man can live, think, remember and have his being. To enumerate these here is impossible, and for this one has to turn to the study of Eastern metaphysics (Blavatsky 1889/1972:89).

Clairvoyance and Psychic Powers

Access to certain of levels of consciousness correspond to an actualization of potentialities or capacities in man:

> Theosophy also teaches the existence of a universal diffused and highly ethereal medium, which has been called the 'Astral Light'. It is the repository of all past,

> present and future events, and in it are recorded the effects of spiritual causes, and of all acts and thoughts from the direction of either spirit or matter. It may be called the Book of the Recording Angel...this astral light is material and not spirit... Each thought as well as word and act makes an image therein the astral light are all the differentiated sounds as well... Hence, any seer can see in it all that anyone has done or said, as well as that which has happened to anyone with whom he or she is connected.[5]

To the question what are the objects of the Theosophical Society, Blavatsky answered:

> They are three, and have been so from the beginning. (1) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, colour, or creed. (2) To promote the study of Aryan and other Scriptures, of the World's religion and sciences, and to vindicate the importance of old Asiatic literature, namely, of the Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian philosophies. (3) To investigate the hidden mysteries of Nature under every aspect possible, and the psychic and spiritual powers latent in man especially (Blavatsky 1889/1972:39).

As already stated, the third object is to achieve by study, lectures, and personal teachings when possible. The development of psychic power is supposed to be concomitant with the "practical realisation of the Brotherhood of all men" to which the Theosophical Society is committed. Together with the breakdown of "racial and national antipathies" and the progression of peace and goodwill,

> ...the development of the psychic powers and faculties, the premonitory symptoms of which are

> already visible in America, will proceed healthily and normally ... Man's mental and psychic growth will proceed in harmony with his moral improvement ... (Blavatsky 1889/1972:306).

Such powers are presently to be found also in those who have learned to access or master them through the practice of what Blavatsky calls 'Occultism'.

> A man may be a very good Theosophist indeed, whether *in* or *outside* of the Society, without being in any way an Occultist. But no one can be a true Occultist without being a real Theosophist; otherwise he is simply a black magician, whether conscious or unconscious (Blavatsky 1889/1972:25).

Not all theosophists are called to become Occultists and to use psychic powers.

> There are very good and pure Theosophists who may believe in the supernatural, divine *miracles* included, but no Occultist will do so. For an Occultist practises [sic] *scientific* Theosophy, based on accurate knowledge of Nature's secret workings; but a Theosophist, practising the powers called abnormal, *minus* the light of Occultism, will simply tend toward a dangerous form of mediumship, because, although holding to Theosophy and its highest conceivable code of ethics, he practises it in the dark, on sincere but *blind* faith. Anyone, Theosophist, or Spiritualist, who attempts to cultivate one of the branches of Occult science – e.g., Hypnotism, Mesmerism, or even the secrets of producing physical phenomena, etc. – without the knowledge of the philosophic *rationale* of those powers, is like a rudderless boat launched on a stormy ocean (Blavatsky 1889/1972:27) [Italics are Blavatsky's].

The origin of those psychic powers is in man himself since man is coexistent with spirit.

> We assert that the divine spark in man being one and identical in its essence with the Universal Spirit, our 'spiritual Self' is practically omniscient, but that it cannot manifest its knowledge owing to the impediments of matter. Now the more these impediments are removed, in other words, the more the physical body is paralysed, as to its own independent activity and consciousness, as in deep sleep or deep trance, or, again, in illness, the more fully can the inner Self manifest on this plane. This is our explanation of those truly wonderful phenomena of a higher order, in which undeniable intelligence and knowledge are exhibited (Blavatsky 1889/1972:29).

It should be noted that the exercise of psychic power is not equated with mystical experience or ecstasy. "Ancient Theosophists claimed," Blavatsky writes,

> ... and so do the modern, that the infinite cannot be known by the finite – i.e., sensed by the finite Self – but that the divine essence could be communicated to the higher Spiritual Self in a state of ecstasy. This condition can hardly be attained, like *hypnotism*, by "physical and chemical means."... Real ecstasy was defined by Plotinus as "the liberation of the mind from its finite consciousness, becoming one and identified with the infinite." This is the highest condition says Prof. Wilder, but not one of permanent duration, and it is reached only by the very *very* few. It is indeed, identical with that state which is known in India as *Samadhi* (Blavatsky 1889/1972:10).

Reincarnation

However, progression through all levels is too difficult to accomplish in one lifetime, hence the belief in reincarnation. *The Path* (Figure

80) to the final goal of Nirvana[6] or enlightenment and emancipation from materiality is indeed believed to extend over several lives of the individual. Theosophists were prompt to recognize the enormous struggle necessary to attain the Path; suffering, pain and sorrow were to be endured as the price to pay for getting nearer to the truth. As to the process of spiritual development, Theosophy teaches:

> First. That the essence of the process lies in the securing of supremacy, to the highest, the spiritual, element of man's nature.
>
> Second. That this is attained along four lines, among others –
>
> a) The entire eradication of selfishness in all forms, and the cultivation of broad, generous sympathy in, and effort for the good of others.
>
> b) The absolute cultivation of the inner, spiritual man by meditation, by reaching to and communion with the Divine, and by exercise of the kind described by Patankali, i.e. incessant striving to the end.
>
> The control of fleshly appetites and desires, all lower, material interests being deliberately subordinated to the behests of the spirit.
>
> The careful performance of every duty belonging to one's station in life, without desire foreward, leaving results for Divine law.
>
> Third. That while the above is incumbent on and practicable by all religiously disposed men, a yet higher plane of spiritual attainment is conditioned

> upon a specific course of training, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, by which the internal faculties are first aroused and then developed.
>
> Fourth. That an extension of this process is reached in Adeptship, Mahâtmâship, or the states of Rishis, Sages, DhyânChohans, which are all exalted stages, attained by laborious self-discipline and hardship, protracted through possibly many incarnations, and with many degrees of initiation and preferment, beyond which are yet other stages ever approaching the Divine.[7]

In her last book, The Voice of the Silence, Blavatsky spoke of the progress of the soul symbolized as a passage through three halls (Blavatsky 1889/1972:5-11). The first hall is that of ignorance, the soul's state before it recognizes that it must seek contact with its deeper self. The second hall is that of learning. Here the individual is aware of other dimensions but may be distracted by psychic powers. The third hall is that of wisdom, or union with the self, beyond which is the Vale of Bliss. In this last stage the pupil is becoming merged into the one, the Brahma or Atman (Davis 1992:99).

The Atma-Buddhi-Manas is the ultimate core of the person and only uses the lower four elements or levels as vehicles through which to work.

> ...the lower man is a composite being, but in his real nature is a unity, or immortal being, comprising a

> trinity of spirit, Discernment and Mind which requires four lower mortal instruments or vehicles through which to work in matter and obtain experience from Nature. This trinity is that called Atma-Buddhi-Manas in Sanskrit, difficult terms to render in English. Atma is Spirit, Buddhi is the highest power of intellection, that which discerns and judges, and Manas is Mind. This threefold collection is the real man...[8]

Re-embodiment (or reincarnation) on earth occurs until the individual is able to overcome all the forces that tie a person to the earth. Atma[9], the "Spiritual Ego", or the "Higher Self",[10] is formed from the indissoluble union of the Buddhi[11] and the Spiritual efflorescence of Manas.[12]

> As already stated, we reject the idea of a new soul created for every newly-born babe. We believe that every human being is the bearer, or *Vehicle*, of an *Ego* coeval with every other Ego; because all *Egos* are *of the same essence* and belong to the primeval emanation from one universal infinite *Ego* (Blavatsky 1889/1972:110). [Italics are Blavatsky's]

> All these elements were validated by Blavatsky's legendary encounters with high Masters and initiates with whom she was said to be in direct contact, or from whom she received letters. This notion of high masters and initiates was not limited to Theosophy. It was widely used by other esoteric schools. Blavatsky positioned herself as a privileged link with the higher levels of beings. By asserting she had personal links with such Masters she gave her teachings credence, however, she also thereby allowed others to the possibility to make the same claims.The personal presence of such masters is not required. Suffice it if they give instructions to some of those who have studied under their guidance for years, and devoted

> their whole lives to their service. Then, in turn, these can give out the knowledge so imparted to others, who had no such opportunity (Blavatsky 1889/1972:22-23).

There was a millennium tone to those teachings. The return or manifestation of the Masters was supposed to herald and direct an evolutionary change in mankind.

> I must tell you that during the last quarter of every hundred years an attempt is made by those "Masters"... to help on the spiritual progress of Humanity in a marked and definite way. Towards the close of each century you will invariably find that an outpouring or upheaval of spirituality – or call it mysticism if you prefer – has taken place. Some one or more persons have appeared in the world as their agents, and a greater or less amount of occult knowledge and teaching has been given out (Blavatsky 1889/1972:306).

Karma

The spiritual evolution of mankind was also predicated on an individual evolution, which took place from life to life in the reincarnation cycle. Blavatsky stated that Theosophy believed in a Law of Retribution or Karma.

> Our philosophy has a doctrine of punishment as stern as that of the most rigid Calvinist, only far more philosophical and consistent with absolute justice. No deed, not even a sinful thought, will go unpunished; the latter more severely even than the former, as a thought is far more potential in creating evil results than a deed. We believe in an unerring law of Retribution, called KARMA, which asserts itself in a natural concatenation of causes and their unavoidable results (Blavatsky 1889/1972:140).

After spending a few centuries in a state of paradisial bliss, the soul must come back.

> After allowing the Soul, escaped from the pangs of personal life, a sufficient, aye, a hundredfold compensation, Karma, with its army of Skandhas, waits at the threshold of Devachan, whence the *Ego* re-emerges to assume a new incarnation. It is at this moment that the future destiny of the now-rested Ego trembles in the scales of just Retribution, as *it* now falls once again under the sway of active Karmic law. It is in this rebirth which is ready for *it*, a rebirth selected and prepared by this mysterious, inexorable, but in the equity ad wisdom of its decrees infallible LAW, that the sins of the previous life of the Ego are punished (Blavatsky 1889/1972:141).

Hell is indeed on this earth. As one sinned before, so shall one live again, meeting all those who have suffered through the past personality.

But what is Karma?

> As I have said, we consider it as the *Ultimate Law* of the Universe, the source, origin and fount of all other laws which exist throughout Nature. Karma is the unerring law which adjusts effect to cause, on the physical, mental and spiritual planes of being. As no cause remains without its due effect from greatest to least, from a cosmic disturbance down to the movement of your hand, and as like produces like, *Karma* is that unseen and unknown law *which adjusts wisely, intelligently and equitably* each effect to its cause, tracing the latter back to its producer (Blavatsky 1889/1972:201).

The Practice

As mentioned previously, the members of the Theosophical Society were asked to "carry out one or more of the 3 objects "...either a philanthropist or a scholar in Aryan and other old literature, or a psychic student" (Blavatsky 1889/1972:19). The theosophists or members of the inner section of the society were advised to "practice" theosophy, practice which translated into specific orientations and ascetic disciplines.

> [The] real Theosophists...have entered the inner group and *pledged* themselves to carry out, as strictly as they can, the rules of the occult body. This is a difficult undertaking, as the foremost rule of all is the entire renunciation of one's personality – i.e., a pledged member has to become a thorough altruist, never to think of himself, and to forget his own vanity and pride in the thought of the good of his fellow-creatures, besides that of his fellow-brothers in the esoteric circle. He has to live, if the esoteric instructions shall profit him, a life of abstinence in everything, of self-denial and strict morality, doing his duty by all men (Blavatsky 1889/1972:20).

"...The first thing which the members learn there is a true conception of the relation of the body..." (Blavatsky 1889/1972:259). Food for instance is regarded as an important aspect and vegetarianism is advised.

> ...when the flesh of animals is assimilated by man's food, it imparts to him, physiologically, some of the characteristics of the animal it came from...as the matter stands, he must eat to live, and so we advise really earnest students to eat such food as will least

> clog and weight their brains and bodies, and will have the smallest effect in hampering and retarding the development of their intuition, their inner faculties and powers (Blavatsky 1889/1972:260-261).

As far as marriage or sexuality is concerned, celibacy[13] is not recommended to everyone:

> It depends on the kind of man you mean. If you refer to one who intends to live in the world, one who, even though a good, earnest Theosophist, and an ardent worker for our cause, still has ties and wishes which bind him to the world, who, in short, does not feel that he has done for ever with what men call life, and that he desires one thing and one thing only – to know the truth, and to be able to help others – then for such a one I say there is no reason why he should not marry, if he likes to take the risks of that lottery where there are so many more blanks than prizes (Blavatsky 1889/1972:262).

But for those who desire to "tread that path of discipleship which leads to the highest goal" (Blavatsky 1889/1972:263) celibacy becomes an important tool. Such people become servants of mankind and devote themselves fully to their calling. Some of these may develop psychic powers, which Blavatsky regards as "natural" powers.

> The powers which they exercise are simply the development of potencies lying latent in every man and woman, and the existence of which even official science begins to recognize...The time is not far distant when the World of Science will be forced to acknowledge that there exists as much interaction between one mind and another, no matter at what

> distance, as between one body and another in closest contact. When two minds are sympathetically related, and the instruments through which they function are tuned to respond magnetically and electrically to one another, there is nothing which will prevent the transmission of thoughts from one to the other, at will; for since the mind is not of a tangible nature, that distance can divide it from the subject of its contemplation, it follows that the only difference that can exist between two minds is a difference of STATE (Blavatsky 1889/1972:290-291).

The same people may have access to the teachings of masters. Blavatsky herself claimed such access; her book, The Secret Doctrine, said to have been written under their guidance if not dictation.

Conclusion

The doctrine of Theosophy evolved each time HPB wrote a book or gave a lecture. Furthermore, each new writer brought his or her own contribution.[14] By the 1920s, it had become difficult to hold to a single line of thought and members of the Theosophical Society were trying to reconcile the different points elaborated by Blavatsky and her successors. It must be noted that this effort toward a personal synthesis was encouraged. From this it becomes clear that for Theosophy, the question is more important than the answer, and the attitude is more important than the doctrine.

The early history of Theosophy does not refer to any specific role for the artists. The idea of thoughts as elementals will have to be developed by people such as Leadbeater and Besant before being further elaborated by Rudolf Steiner and by the artistic milieu. Theosophists were to incarnate the new spirit of research "in the realms of spirituality, cosmology, and the redefinition of human nature - research from which artists could draw nourishment even if they hesitated to become 'believers'" (Lipsey 1988:38).

Theosophists believed that aspects of the universe now hidden or only faintly glimpsed could become visible to an elite. Those in whom interiorization and spirituality had been most highly developed - the adepts, seers, and mystics (to which group were later added artists, poets, and musicians) - would lead to this opening (Davis 1992:xiv). The knowledge of theosophists "culled from books and temples and audacious dreaming was powerful enough to point artists toward a new inwardness and the possibility of translating that inwardness into visible form" (Lipsey 1988:37).

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[1] 'Race' here has no genetic meaning but rather is used as an equivalent to 'civilization'.
[2] A.P. Sinnett was the editor of The Pioneer, an influential English language newspaper. Sinnett branched out from journalism, writing serious books and two novels dealing with theosophical themes. The most important of his works are The Occult World and Esoteric Buddhism, which included selections from his correspondence with two of HPB's teachers as well as HPB herself. The original letters, now preserved in the British Library, were published in book form by A. Trevor Barker as The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett and the Letters of H.P. Blavatsky to A.P. Sinnett.
[3] Karma – (Sanskrit) physically, action. Metaphysically, the law of retribution, law of cause and effect (Blavatsky 1890/1974).

[4] William Q. Judge, "Theosophy Generally Stated" from Judge (1893) as seen 21/03/99 at http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/theos/th-wiq.htm.
[5] William Q. Judge, "An Epitome of Theosophy", as seen 04/05/98 at www2.whidbey.com/theosophicalliterature/jepitomecon.htm.
[6] Nirvana (from *nir* out, away + *vana* blown from the verbal root *va* to blow) blown out, blown away; the monad's freeing itself of the chains of all its inferior parts, so it can enter into relatively perfect wisdom and peace. It thus is, for the time, living in its own spiritual essence...attained at intervals by highly spiritual and very mystically-inclined people... (Blavatsky 1890/1974).
[7] William Q. Judge, "Theosophy Generally Stated" from Judge (1893) as seen 21/03/99 at http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/theos/th-wiq.htm.
[8] William Q. Judge, "Septenary Constitution of Man", as seen 09/08/98 at http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/human/hu-wqi.htm.
[9] Atma – The Universal Spirit; the seventh principle ...in the exoteric septenary classification of man; the Supreme Soul (Blavatsky 1890/1974).
[10] Higher Self – that part of every human being that is supposed to exist independently of conscious ego. The divine or eternal aspect of the mortal person often held to be endowed with spiritual powers derived from the Oriental concept of Atma (Blavatsky 1890/1974).
[11] Buddhi – (Sanskrit) Universal Soul or Mind; the spiritual soul in man, the sixth principle exoterically, the vehicle of Atma (Blavatsky 1890/1974).
[12] Manas – (Sanskrit) literally, the Mind; the mental faculty that makes of a man an intelligent and moral being, and distinguishes him from the mere animal. Esoterically, the Higher Ego, when qualified by theosophists it is called Buddhi – Manas, the spiritual soul (Blavatsky 1890/1974).
[13] It was well known that both Lawren and Bess Harris and Yvonne and Fred Housser had celibate marriages.
[14] See Leadbeater, Besant and Bailey for examples of published contributions.

CHAPTER SIX

Theosophical Images, Symbolic System, and Visionary Experiences

The search for ultimate divine unity pervaded a great deal of the science of the times, looking for the ultimate block of matter or the ultimate equation. It had also been part of the artistic community for a while.

> In his provocative and influential study on the spiritual roots of modern art, as specifically developed in the northern Romantic experience, Robert Rosenblum has observed how the qualities of "primal, mystical simplicity," and the constant search for "a universal symbol [revealing] the intrusion of a divine, shaping force [leading] to the presentation of transcendental experience through immaterial things [conveying] some kind of universal religious experience without subscribing to a specific faith," are distinctive traits which modern art has absorbed from a tradition established by Germanic artists as long ago as the Romantic era (Regier 1987:103).

With the theosophists, Blavatsky adds a dynamic perspective to this enterprise linking all these abstract and geomantic symbols into a grandiose hierarchical and evolutionary scheme built on sacred mathematics and geometry. The cosmos built septenary hierarchies juxtaposing the tertiary and quaternary orders applying to all aspects of the cosmos of life, and of consciousness and it

followed universal laws linking the abstract and ideal dimensions of reality with the concreteness of nature and human life.

> As early as 1845 H.S. Olcott had connected the geometrical configurations observed by clairvoyants with Plato's aphorism "God geometrizes", and posed the question whether these geometrical manifestations, in an aura is pure as that of the Universal principle, whose pulsations beget all forms in objective Nature, show us how to understand the mysterious occurrence of identical geometrical arrangements of matter in the mineral, vegetable, and animal world? (Ringbom 1966:414)

Such a perspective was echoed by many esoteric and scientific voices.

Theosophical symbols

Madame Blavatsky was eager to explore the possibility of constructing a grand synthesis based on the neo-platonic and Gnostic models, of all religious and sacred traditions. This synthesis, discussed in Chapter Four, was partly expressed by the gathering and juxtaposition of religious symbols from different traditions. To these symbols, Blavatsky added her own metaphorical representations, allegories, and syncretic images.

In The Secret Doctrine, she expounds on the evolution of symbolism (Book 1, Part 2, vol.1) stating that symbols are universal ideographs noting examples such as the egg or mundane egg (1888/1988, 354-362, 1:1, 57, 65, 81, 89, 91, 365, 443), (1877/1976, 1:157; II:214-215, 226, 267, 268), the winged globe (1888/1988:30, 126, 552; 1877/1976, 1:514; II:419), the moon

(1888/1988:386-403; 1877/1976, 1:157; II:214-215, 226, 267-268), the tree (1877/1976, I:514, II:264, 267, 269, 293-94), and the serpent (1888/1988, 403-408; 1877/1976, I:137, 297, 382, 556, 553, 570; II:165, 223, 225, 398, 449, 484, 489-490, 510), and the lotus (1888/1988, 379-386). She further expounds on symbols in Isis Unveiled again speak of the egg, the moon, the winged globe, etc. and further mentioning the cross (1877/1976, I:508), animals (1877/1976 I:146-147, II:447), such as the snake (1877/1976, I:157, 146-147, 149), and apes (1877/1976, I:564).

Numerals and Geometric Figures

The reintroduction of occult traditions along with the search for an all-encompassing systematic representation of the world, through different disciplines ranging from geomancy to astrology (1877/1976, II :452-453, 456-457, 460) meant special attention was granted to numbers (1888/1988, I:66, 86-88, 94, 98-99, 164, 464, 639; II:36, 39, 41, 560, 574-576; 1877/1976, I:xv-xvi, xxi, 7, 9, 407, 572) and geometrical forms (1888/1988, II:443). In both The Secret Doctrine and Isis Unveiled, the geometric figures of the circle (1888/1988, I:1, 4-5, 11, 19, 33, 91, 98-99, 113, 315-316, 359, 398, 433, 613-614; II:30, 36, 106, 464, 544-545, 551-555), the triangle (1888/1988, I:19, 97, 113fn, 118, 216, 315-316, 321, 351, 614-617; II:36, 57, 582, 591-592, 596, 626), and the square (1888/1988, I:99, 125-126, 556-557, 594, 596; II:24, 36) are discussed. The classic

Mediterranean and Middle Eastern esoteric systems, magical traditions and theologies, paid a great deal of attention to the symbolic means attributed to numbers, especially the numbers 1, 2, 3 (1888/1988, I:36), 4 (1888/1988, I:321; II:564), 7 (1877/1976, II:407) and 12, on which astrology and geomancy, among other divinatory systems, are based. Numbers, forms and letters or sounds are supposed to reveal the divine intellect at work. The ultimate spirit resides in the One, the Absolute, the essential abstraction. This was not very different from schemes proposed by Blavatsky's predecessors.

> Thomas Norton, who died in 1477, invented a hermetic scheme of the universe ... . The lower rectangle is Satan's kingdom, this is surmounted by a triangle representing the created world, a triangle that in turn, is divided into four smaller triangles representing earth, water, air, and heaven. In the centre is man, halfway into heaven, since his soul and spirit partake of the divine. The apex of the triangle reaches into God's heaven, with God, infinite good, at the centre. Finite good is the lower heaven that encircles the fourfold triangle. This lower heaven is made up of the angelic, the elementary, and the ethereal (Davis 1992:140,142).

In what she calls the "proem" to The Secret Doctrine (vol.2) HPB quotes a similar neoplatonic notion on the evolution of the universe illustrated in simple geometric forms starting with a plain circle and ending with the five pointed star (inverted pentagram) (1888/1988, II :4-5).

Regier nicely summarizes the multiple sources contributing to the meaning(s) attributed to such symbols, in this case the cross:

> In reference to the Greek cross, which she calls the Egyptian cross and places at the very center of her hexagram and inscribes within a circle, this too embodies the same unitarian, dual, tripartite, and quadripartite concepts elsewhere associated with the triangle. As well as speaking of the "celestial perpendicular and the terrestrial horizontal base line", she observes that "the vertical line being the male principle, and the horizontal being the female, out of the union of the two at the intersection is formed the cross." Far transcending in significance its historical occurrence within any particular religion, the cross, like other geometric figures expresses a single mystical concept of life and immortality (Regier 1987:179).

Blavatsky summarizes the same symbol in more obscure terms:

> The philosophical cross, the two lines running in opposite directions, the horizontal and the perpendicular, the height and the breadth, which the geometrizing Deity divides at the intersecting point, and which forms the magical as well as the scientific quaternary, when it is inscribed within the perfect square, is the basis of the occultist. Within its mystical precinct lies the master-key which opens the door of every science, physical as well as spiritual. It symbolizes our human existence, for the circle of life circumscribes the four points of the cross, which represent in succession birth, life, death, and IMMORTALITY. Everything in this world is a trinity completed by the quaternary, and every element is divisible on this same principle (Blavatsky 1877/1976, I:508) [Emphasis is Blavatsky's].

The same geometrical schemes are going to be recognized by the theosophists in nature as well as in psychics' reports. Among all the

symbols mentioned or used in theosophical texts and practices, whether dealing with direct theosophical/occult symbols, numbers and geometric figures, colours, or abstract forms, the search for a universal visual language could be recognized.

In all these texts, art is practically never mentioned, not even as a vehicle for the transmission of sacred knowledge. However the fact that these symbols are discussed could provide artists with possibilities.

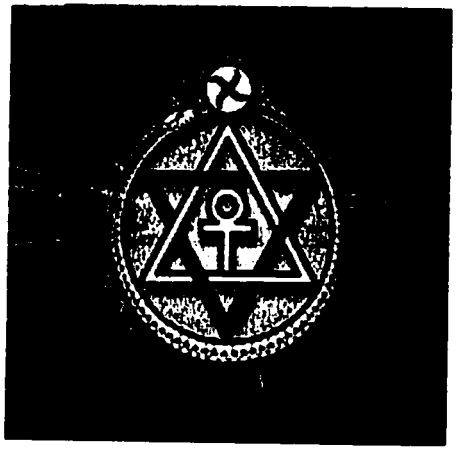
Ann Davis summarizes from The Secret Doctrine the most crucial elements as pertaining to abstract art as follows:

> ...eighteen consecutive pages are devoted to the esoteric meanings of the cross and the circle; squares and triangles are treated elsewhere with equally detailed attention. The triangle played a prominent part in the religious symbolism of every great nation; for everywhere it represented the three great principles - spirit, force and matter; of the active (male), passive (female), and the dual or correlative principle which partakes of both and binds the two together (Davis 1992:101).

The Seal

The Theosophical Society seal (figure 81 A – in text below) is a good example of the ways in which symbols were used in the Theosophical Society. It corresponds to the attempt to express in geometric, colour and symbolic forms the overall nature of the

wisdom sought by the theosophists. One can recognize in them the combination of various ancient or classic, religious symbols, already mentioned: the ankh, the two triangles representing the male and female principles as well as the star, encircled by the serpent biting its tail. One can profitably compare this seal to the Seal of Solomon (81B – in text below) or the logo of the Inner Order of the Golden Dawn; the kinship between them is obvious.



A



B

Figure 81

It must be noted that the seal was "adapted from Blavatsky's personal seal by her before the Society was founded"[1] The present-day theosophists still interpret these symbols through an eclectic set of references to various traditions.

> The Serpent swallowing its tail: A very ancient symbol depicting eternity and the continuity of cyclic time. Like the biblical serpent of Paradise lost understood mystically, it represents wisdom and, because of its ability to shed its skin, regeneration and rebirth. As a circular symbol it signifies to the Hindus the outbreathing and inbreathing of Brahma ("expander"), the cosmic creator...The descending arc of the serpent's body signifies worlds descending into matter; the ascending arc, their evolution toward spirit...The circle itself represents perfection and the restoration of universal harmony...The symbol is found also in ancient Egypt, Greece, and West Africa, and among Budhhist and Jains, Gnostics and alchemists.[2]

The Swatiska found on the seal at the top and head of the serpent correspond to

> ...the perennial symbol of good fortune found in the cradle of ancient cultures of India, China, Japan, and the Americas, as well as Greece and Rome...Scandinavia...Symbol of evolution and perpetual motion, the swastika denotes the ever-churning "mill of the gods", in whose center is the soul...[3]

The interlaced triangles, that is, in the West as King Solomon's Seal, and "in India the seal of Vishnu" symbolize

> Spirit and matter, or male and female. The apex of the white triangle represents the divine monad; the apex of the dark triangle, the manifested worlds. The

> upward triangle suggests spirit, consciousness and concealed wisdom, which are mirrored in the downward-pointing triangle, representing matter, receptive space, manifestation, or wisdom revealed...The central cross is the inner person, touching all things from the six sides through the six triangles. The six points of the star reach outward toward the serpent of eternity, growing and evolving through time.[4]

As for the Ansated Cross or Ankh, it is here taken to signify life and regeneration as well as the

> Descent of the spirit from inner realms into the worlds of substance...the circle representing the cosmic or spiritual germ or egg hovering over the cross of matter which has issued from it; or limitless, uncreated space.[5]

Yet it also represents "the initiate who holds the key to the mysteries when united with his own spiritual intelligence."[6] Through this symbolic exercise, the initiate enters a world where symbols do matter, as the expression of the Divine Truth.

Thought-Forms

All the theosophical symbols share an abstract and symbolic quality. They are quite different from actual visionary experiences which are much more naturalistic and personal from thought-forms and other clairvoyant perceptions. Nevertheless, a number of authors did go from one to the others without differentiating between symbols and clairvoyant experience. This was facilitated by the fact that visionary experiences, from a theosophical

perspective lend themselves to be analyzed in symbolic terms. The fullest development of a symbolic reading of clairvoyant perceptions came with the notions of thought-forms proposed by C.W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant.

The notion of thought-forms took several years to construct. Originally, Blavatsky asserted the possibility of perceiving events and beings in a clairvoyant fashion using colours and sounds. For her, symbols had an existence of their own superior to a physical reality. "Everyone of these symbols is an embodied idea – combining the conception of the Divine Invisible with the earthly and visible" (Blavatsky 1877/1976 I:22).

> Lacking the true key of interpretation they [scholars] see the symbols only in a physical aspect. They have no password to cause the gates of mystery to swing open; and ancient spiritual philosophy is to them a closed book (Blavatsky 1877/1976 II:120).

Paranormal perception was an indication of the perceiver's spiritual evolution. It was also a confirmation of a "higher" state of being.

Later, following charts and symbolic systems presented by Blavatsky, the expression of clairvoyant perception in sound and colours became more formalized. Various traditions proposed elaborate systems of reference, from, for instance, the Hindu Tattvas (figure 82), and chakra systems (figure 83) to the newly elaborated occultist charts of the Renaissance to freemason ritual

instructions; these systems linked astrological signs, stones, geomantic figures, geometric shapes, colours, notes, parts of the body, as well as many other aspects. Such systems could be brought into the process of interpreting any experience, especially psychic experience, which would, in turn, validate the notion of spiritual levels, or planes of existence, or degrees of consciousness.

The Theosophists were directly involved in strengthening such schemes. Levels upon levels of correspondences link the realities of the spirit to the concrete aspects of nature and human life.

> .... As the astral shadow starts the series of principles in man, on the terrestrial plane, up to the lower, animal *manas* [levels of understanding], so the violet ray starts the series of prismatic colors, from its end up to green, both being, the one as a principle and the other as a color, the most refrangible of all the principles and colors. Besides which there is the same great occult mystery attached to all these correspondences, both celestial and terrestrial bodies, colors and sounds. In clearer words, there exists the same law of relation between the moon and the earth, the astral and the living body of man, as between the violet end of the prismatic spectrum and the indigo and the blue ... (Blavatsky quoted in Moffit 1987:125)

In Blavatsky's words, clairvoyant perception confirms the correspondences between the various serious levels of perception, from numbers to sound and colours.

> Each prismatic color is called in Occultism the "Father of the Sound" [itself "Logos"]... Sensitives

> [clairvoyants] connect every color with a definite sound... The creative force, at work in its incessant task of transformation, produces color, sound and numbers in the shape or rates of vibrations, which compound and dissociate the atoms and molecules ... The "Great Tone"...is, even by scientific confession, the actual tonic of Nature, held by musicians to be the middle *fa* on the keyboard of a piano. We hear it distinctly in the voice of Nature ... in everything in Nature which has a voice or which produces sound (Blavatsky quoted in Moffit 1987:124).

It was, according to her, the duty of the disciples to study these correspondences, which were to be the main tools of both practice of occult powers and pursuit of esoteric knowledge.

> Every student, whether he is striving for practical Occult powers or only for the purely psychic and spiritual gifts of clairvoyance and metaphysical knowledge, [must] master thoroughly the right correspondences between the human, or nature principles, and those of the Cosmos (Blavatsky quoted in Moffitt 1987:125).

These grandiose schemes, however, remained mostly theoretical. Most authors recognize that it is Leadbeater and Besant who expanded on these first schemes and gave the trend the authority of a full-blown systematic presentation and description of "actual" thought-form, when they brought in the added value of personal experience. Leadbeater was offering first-hand accounts of visionary and clairvoyant experiences which then, with Besant's help, were analysed according to a relatively simple chart. It must

be noted that Leadbeater is also careful not to assign too narrow a correspondence between colour and principle.

> In our literature certain tints have usually been employed to represent each of the lower planes, following a table of colours given by Madame Blavatsky in her monumental work, The Secret Doctrine; but it should be clearly understood that these are employed simply as distinctive marks – that they are merely symbolical, and are not in any way intended to imply a preponderance of a particular hue in the plane to which it is applied. All known colours, and many which are at present unknown to us, exist upon each of these higher planes of nature: but as we rise from one stage to another, we find they might be described as higher octaves of color...As man learns to function in these higher types of matter, he finds that the limitations of the lower life are transcended, and fall away one by one. He finds himself in a world of many dimensions, instead of one of three only; and that fact alone opens up a whole series of entirely new possibilities in various directions (Leadbeater 1902/1959:18-19)

The principles underlying the Leadbeater/Besant scheme were:

- from all living things emanates an aura;
- this aura can be perceived visually by the clairvoyant;
- this aura can be perceived as colour and form;
- this aura is shaped and coloured according to the state and processes of the soul.

These schemes could therefore be expanded to apply not only to the living entity but also the emotion or thought experienced by that entity.

> Every thought gives rise to a set of correlated vibrations in the matter of this body, accompanied

> with a marvellous play of color...The body under this impulse throws off a vibrating portion of itself, shaped by the nature of the vibrations...and this gathers from the surrounding atmosphere matter like itself in fineness from the elemental essence of the mental world. We have then a thought-form pure and simple, and it is a living entity of intense activity animated by the one idea that generated it (Besant and Leadbeater 1925/1969:8).

Thought-forms are not limited to human auras. They can also be produced by, or perceived about, other living things, plants, and even mineral elements such as metals or mountains. As mentioned, every thought may also produce a thought-form. Thought-forms, when equated with the forms of psychic auras, often presented to Leadbeater as coloured clouds or ovoid shells (figure 84 shows some of the thought form illustrations Besant and Leadbeater created) around living bodies, with the proviso that thoughts can have an aura of their own, independent of their originator and can then take many forms besides the ovoid and many colours, and can form complete images.

> The mental body is an object of great beauty, the delicacy and rapid motion of its particles giving it an aspect of living irridescent light, and this beauty becomes an extraordinarily radiant and entrancing loveliness as the intellect becomes more highly evolved and is employed chiefly on pure and sublime topics. Every thought gives rise to a set of correlated vibrations in the matter of this body, accompanied with a marvellous [sic] play of color, like that in the spray of a waterfall as the sunlight strikes it, raised to the n^{th} degree of color and vivid delicacy. The body under this impulse throws off a vibrating portion of itself, shaped by the nature of the vibrations - as figures are made by sand on a disk vibrating to a

> musical note - and this gathers from the surrounding atmosphere matter like itself in fineness from the elemental essence of the mental world. We have then a thought-form pure and simple, and it is a living entity of intense activity animated by the one idea that generated it. If made of the finer kinds of matter, it will be of great power and energy, and may be used as a most potent agent when directed by a strong and steady will (Besant and Leadbeater 1925/1969:8).

Whether as auras around living things or as psychic perceptions of thoughts, events and emotions, thought-forms are constituted of both form and colour.

> Each definite thought produces a double effect - a radiating vibration and a floating form. The thought itself appears first to clairvoyant sight as a vibration in the mental body, and this may be either simple or complex. If the thought itself is absolutely simple, there is only the one rate of vibration, and only one type of mental matter will be strongly affected. (Besant and Leadbeater 1969/1925:11)

As in all theosophical thinking, all those aspects are organized in a hierarchical fashion, the higher, the purer, the simpler. In Besant and Leadbeater's theoretical scheme, three general principles allow for the validation and the understanding of thought-forms:

- Quality of thought determines colour.
- Nature of thought determines form.
- Definiteness of thought determines clearness of outline

(Besant and Leadbeater 1925/1969:21).

Let us note here that thoughts are taken as having a reality of their own.

> Let us turn now to the second effect of thought, the creation of a definite form. Students of the occult are acquainted with the idea of the elemental essence, that strange half-intelligent life which surrounds us in all directions, vivifying the matter of the mental and astral planes. This matter thus animated responds very readily to the influence of human thought, and every impulse sent out, either from the mental body or from the astral body of man, immediately clothes itself in a temporary vehicle of this vitalised matter. Such a thought or impulse becomes for the time a kind of living creature, the thought-force being the soul, and the vivified matter the body ... There may be infinite variety in the colour and shape of such elementals or thought-forms, for each thought draws round it the matter which is appropriate for its expression, and sets that matter into vibration in harmony with its own... (Besant and Leadbeater 1925/1969:15)

Besant and Leadbeater also categorized thought-forms according to their object:

- That which takes the image of the thinker... [equivalent to apparitions];
- That which takes the image of the material object...;
- That which takes a form entirely its own, expressing its inherent qualities in the matter which it draws round it (Besant and Leadbeater 1925/1969: 26-28).

This means that thoughts, in their original form as well as when they are reproduced, are thought to be able to display a great potency, a point the artists will not miss.

Since thought forms were presented as a compound of colours and shapes or forms corresponding to distinct meanings, colours

emerged as the main expressions of meanings, especially emotions but also as levels of spiritual development. Gopi Krishna (1971), as well as Leadbeater, validated this last proposition, where each chakra on the human body corresponds to a different colour and a different geometrical shape.

> The table of colors given in the frontispiece [Figure85] has been thoroughly described in the book Man Visible and Invisible, and the meaning to be attached to them is just the same in the thought-form as in the body out of which it is evolved ... black means hatred and malice. Red, of all shades from lurid brick-red to brilliant scarlet, indicates anger; ... Clear brown (almost burnt sienna) shows avarice; ... deep heavy grey signifies depression, ... Green seems always to denote adaptability; ... Affection expresses itself in all shades of crimson and rose; ... With a touch of the blue of devotion in it, this may express a strong realization of the universal brotherhood of humanity. Deep orange imports pride or ambition, and the various shades of yellow denote intellect or intellectual gratification, ... The different shades of blue all indicate religious feeling, ... and the beautiful pale azure of that highest form which implies self-renunciation and union with the divine; ... A mixture of affection and devotion is manifested by a tint of violet, ... The brilliancy and depth of the colors are usually a measure of the strength and the activity of the feeling (Besant and Leadbeater 1925/1969:22-24).

This system will be adopted, at least in part, by many theosophists and several artists. Yet one must remember that according to the theosophist, thought-forms are born from the clairvoyant's experience and cannot be so easily classified. Furthermore, neither Leadbeater nor Besant will make explicit any intention to provide a

potential guide for the artist working in a colour medium. Their work was not for artists but for adepts.

Rudolf Steiner saw the potential of the notion of thought form, not only as a sign of spiritual development, but also as a tool. Quoting Goethe, to strengthen his argument for the use of thought-forms, Steiner selected the following paragraphs:

> In reality, any attempt to express the inner nature of a thing is fruitless. What we perceive are effects, and a complete record of these effects ought to encompass this inner nature. We labor in vain to describe a person's character but when we draw together his actions, his deeds, a picture of his character will emerge.
>
> Colors are the deeds of light, what it does and what it endures ... Although it is true that colors and light are intimately related to one another we must consider both as belonging to all narure [sic]. Through them nature in its entirety seeks to manifest itself, in this case to the sense of sight, to the eye.
>
> Similarly, the whole of nature reveals itself to yet another sense ...[It] speaks *to other senses* which lie even deeper, to known, *misunderstood, and unknown senses*. Thus it converses with itself and with us through a thousand phemomena [sic], *No one who is observant will ever find nature dead or silent* (Goethe quoted in Steiner, 1904/1994:95) [Italics are Steiner's]

For Steiner this seminal passage both confirmed the unity of the Cosmos, even though this unity is manifested differently at different levels, and provided the foundation for a new understanding of the senses, including vision.

Goethe's statement should not be interpreted as denying the possibility of understanding the essential nature of things. He does not mean that we perceive only the effects of things while their true nature remains concealed behind these effects; rather, he means that we should not talk about a "concealed nature" at all. The being is not behind its manifestation, but comes into view through its manifestation. However, this being may be so rich that it can disclose itself in other forms when appearing to other senses. What is disclosed does belong to the being in question, but because of the limitations of our senses, it is not the whole being. Goethe's view of this is the same as the spiritual scientific one presented here (Steiner 1904/1994:96).

Echoing Leadbeater's teachings, Steiner emphasized the need to develop the "inner senses".

> The soul and spirit worlds are just as real as the sense perceptible world; in fact, they are real in a much higher sense. No physical eye can see feelings and concepts, but they are real nonetheless. We encounter the phenomena of the physical world through our outer senses; similarly, feelings, impulses, instincts, thoughts, and so on become perceptions for our spiritual organs. How these soul and spiritual phenomena become perceptions by means of our inner senses is analogous to how certain processes in space are perceived as colors. Of course, the full meaning of this statement can be understood only by those who have developed their inner senses ... To such people, the soul phenomena of the soul environment and the spiritual phenomena of the spiritual region become supersensibly visible.

> They experience another being's feelings as raying out towards them like rays of light; when they turn their attention to others' thoughts, these thoughts radiate through spiritual space. For them, one person's thought about another person is not invisible, it is a perceptible process. The actual content of a thought exists only in the mind of the thinker, but it produces effects on the spiritual world and it is this process that is perceptible to the spiritual eye. The thought is an actual reality streaming out from one person toward the other, and how it affects the other person is experienced as a perceptible process in the spiritual world. For someone with opened spiritual senses, then, the physically perceptible person is only one part of the whole human being. The physical person is the centre of soul and spiritual streams (Steiner 1904/1994:159-160).

Steiner confirms and expands on Leadbeater's colour scheme when he concludes: "In this way, a person's soul and spirit nature appear as the supersensible portion of a total human being" (Steiner 1904/1994:115).

Conclusion

The definition by Theosophy of adepts and spiritual "torch bearers" was an open invitation for members of the intellectual circles, including artists. The adepts were those "who had reached the stage of initiation and had become a master in the Science of Esoteric Philosophy" (Blavatsky 1889/1972:310). One who is an adept is one who has passed through several lifetimes, learning the "mysteries of being, of life, death, and re-birth" (1889/1972: 217) and then has continued to teach others for the purpose of relieving

the suffering of humanity. To Blavatsky, this is the "highest ideal of a man's duty" (1889/1972: 218).

One's duty as a theosophical member was to

> ...awaken brotherly feeling among nations we have to assist in the international exchange of useful arts and products, by advice, information, and cooperation with all worthy individuals and associations...(Blavatsky 1889/1972:44)

Further,

> ...his duty will be in the direction of forming public opinion. And this can be attained only by inculcating those higher and nobler conceptions of public and private duties which be at the root of all spiritual and material improvement. In every conceivable case he himself must be a centre of spiritual action, and from him and his own daily individual life must radiate those higher spiritual forces which alone can regenerate his fellow-men (Blavatsky 1889/1972: 236).

In this new world, as described by Blavatsky, the artist as such is not mentioned, but other theosophists, chief among them Steiner, will bring art into the picture.

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[1] home.pacbell.net/amsec/theoseal.html p.1 as seen 26/04/02.
[2] Home.pacbell.net/amsec/theoseal.html p. 1 as seen 26/04/02.
[3] Home.pacbell.net/amsec/theosseal.html p.2 as seen 26/04/02
[4] home.pacbell.net/amsec/theoseal.html p.2 as seen 26/04/02.
[5] Home.pacbell.net/amsec/theoseal.html p.3 as seen 26/04/02.
[6] Home.pacbell.net/amsec/theoseal.html p.3 as seen 26/04/02.

Chapter Seven

A New Spiritual Artistic Vision

The European and North American artists working on new theories of art and new styles at the turn of the century were definitely involved in esoteric movements, some directly, some indirectly. Most of the time, they belonged to different groups at the same time, or drifted from group to group; they were, of course, reading books and discussing activities pertaining to esoteric matters and occultism. Interest in Theosophy was widespread, echoed by Kandinsky:

> This was the starting point of one of the greatest spiritual movements, which today unites a large number of people ... This (Theosophical Society) consists of brotherhoods of those who attempt to approach more closely the problems of the spirit by the path of the inner consciousness. Their methods... are the complete opposite of those of the positivists... Even if some observers skeptical of the theosophist's tendency to theorize... nonetheless the great, yea, spiritual, movement remains. It is a powerful agent in the spiritual climate, striking, even in this form, a note of salvation that reaches the desperate hearts of many who are enveloped in the darkness... (Kandinsky in Lindsay and Vergo 1982:143-145).

However, the role the artists played in the development of a link between Theosophy and art is not well developed in the literature.

Robert Welsh, who studied the influence of esoteric circles and Theosophy on abstract art, and in particular on the first abstract painters, is one of the few authors who recognizes the role of the artists themselves in the development of a dialogue between art and Theosophy:

> ... it may be asserted that the influence of the various occult societies which were founded during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was not directed to artistic production. There is little evidence of a concerted attempt on the part of the Theosophical Society to promulgate its doctrines via artistic expression. Instead it is reasonable to presume that artists were themselves persuaded of the validity of the world-view as expostulated in Theosophic texts (Welsh 1987:6).

As Blavatsky's teachings and literature do not contain much about art per se, the influence exerted by Theosophy on the artistic community is the more remarkable. From an artistic perspective, Theosophy was put to use in two very different but interlaced paths; the first one, exemplified by Leadbeater and Besant (1905), George Russell (A.E.) and by Kupka in his early period, among others, purports to represent the symbolic or visionary aspects of Theosophy; the second one, exemplified by Mondrian, Kandinsky and Harris, for instance, moves away from symbolic representations into a practice of the principles taught by Theosophy and related schools of thought. The two paths, while distinct in their production, did, however, intermingle as their

proponents belonged to the same intellectual circles, and moved from one to the other.

Most specialists, from Ringbom to Regier, agree that Theosophy and the related esoteric traditions contributed several elements to the visual components of painting. Art historians often allude to the use by artists of geometric figures such as circles, triangles, or crosses as an indication of the artist's sympathy for theosophical teaching. Several art historians have even tried to link Blavatsky's lists and descriptions of symbols, especially the geometric figures, with abstract artists. For instance, Anna Moszynska has interpreted Mondrian's work as the use of the theosophical sacred geometry of Blavatsky's Isis Unveiled (Moszynska 1986:50).

Contrary to the historians' expectations (see Chapter Ten), the use of theosophical visual symbols as described and discussed by Blavatsky did not elicit much response from the artistic community. To interpret abstract painting of this period in a symbolic way is therefore more problematic because it assumes that a) these artists are actually using geometrical figures as symbols, b) that these symbols, as well as the theosophical images, are directly connected to theosophical teachings, and c) that these artists are involved in representing elements that can and should be interpreted. In contrast to these simple assumptions, one must note

first that geometric figures are widely used in all kinds of religious traditions, and many decorative schools, and they are too ubiquitous to have a precise meaning unless spewed forth by the artists, and the artists themselves rarely confirm such a relationship; most of them approach the idea of representation, that is representation of an object or symbol, with great caution.

Even though some artists do acknowledge a certain debt vis-à-vis these theosophical symbols, their interpretation is quite different from a purely symbolic or cosmological representation; abstract artists often explicitly refuse to have a symbolic meaning ascribed to their work. Furthermore, the stress placed by these same artists on 'composition' weakens the imposition of a correspondence between a specific theosophical meaning and a specific isolated component of a painting. Kandinsky is a good example of the difficulties faced by art 'interpreters'.

> You mention the circle ... It is a link with the cosmic. But I use it above all formally ... Why does the circle fascinate me? It is 1) the most modest form, asserts itself unconditionally, 2) a precise but inexhaustible variable, 3) simultaneously stable and unstable, 4) simultaneously loud and soft, 5) a single tension that carries countless tensions within it. The circle is the synthesis of the greatest oppositions. It combines the concentric and excentric in a single form, and in equilibrium ... It points most clearly to the fourth dimension (Kandinsky quoted in Lipsey 1988:211).

There was, however, much interest in the artistic community for representations of visionary experiences, and especially for what theosophists call 'thought-forms'. One notices that critics and art historians often use the terms 'symbols' and 'thought-forms' in an undifferentiated manner in popular literature on art, so that the presence of a triangle in a painting becomes sufficient to access a symbol's intent. Thought-forms are not equivalent to geometrical figures. The notion was developed in theosophical circles to denote a specific aspect of visionary experience, which could be translated in a visual mode. This gave rise to certain symbolic representational styles best exemplified by Steiner.

The visual representation of visionary experience got a powerful boost from Besant and Leadbeater and their account on thought-forms. The artists of the early twentieth century certainly recognized that Besant and Leadbeater exerted a strong influence on their work and often quoted their books. However, as noted by Sixten Ringbom, the illustrations given in these texts were intended to just give the reader a glimpse of what the authors wanted to convey, and were not typical artistic images.

> Apart from being interesting documents for the history of expression, these [Theosophical] color illustrations can be regarded as the first non-objective representations, executed about a decade before Kandinsky's famous watercolour of 1910. They are

> not ornaments, nor are they works of art in the normal sense of the word (Ringbom 1966:404).

Leadbeater, as well as Besant, completely ignored the artistic potential of the illustrators that had created the images, which accompanied their written descriptions of thought-forms. It was Steiner, Kandinsky, and their colleagues who seized upon the potential inherent in these images. As Ringbom remarks, these "'illustrations' ... do comply with Kandinsky's basic requirement that the artist should disregard the physical appearance of matter in favour of the psychic reality of the spiritual" (1966:404). Steiner's contribution was strengthened because of his leading role in the Bauhaus movement as a shaper of ideas; he was involved not only in theoretical synthesis but also even more importantly in action.

It was Rudolf Steiner who enlarged the idea of thought-forms and established it firmly in the arts. To Steiner, painting has to do with vision, with light and colour, and therefore with a spiritual reality:

> When I come to speak about painting, we will see the significance of the connection between color and the inner soul element in the universe. There would be no sense in painting with colors if the color were not something more than what physics imagines it to be. It will be the task of a later presentation to explain the statement that color is the language of the soul of nature, of the soul of the universe (Steiner quoted in Howard 1998:171).

Indeed, Rudolph Steiner, in one of his most influential books, Theosophie (first published in German in 1904), presented the notion of inner or spiritual vision and proposed that someone less advanced on the enlightenment path could profit from what was perceived by another more advanced person. This was accomplished through a "thought picture of the higher world" (Steiner 1904/1994:123). Stepping from this perspective, to a definition of the artist defined as a spiritually "more advanced person," was only a question of degree. Indeed, according to Ringbom, Steiner "went so far as to designate artistic sensitivity the best prerequisite for the development of the spiritual abilities" (Ringom 1966:406). The artist has now become a seer.

Among the artists who contributed to the diffusion of such styles, one finds George Russell (A.E.). According to James Wasserman, W. B. Yeats, who was a close friend and schoolmate of George Russell, "reports (in his Dramatis Personae) that 'it was known that he [A.E.] sees visions continually.'" Wasserman gives the example of the *Winged Horse* (figure 86), a watercolour by Russell, and writes, "his finest works, such as the Winged Horse, have the tumbling evanescence of a vision just glimpsed, but they are not subjected to the deepest scrutiny." But he adds, "Beautifully suggestive yet ephemeral, his painting pales in comparison with

Blake's visionary transcriptions..." (Wasserman 1993:123). A. E. was attempting to paint and represent the content of his visions. Other artists, such as Kupka, tried to access the reality behind the visionary experience.

Correspondence between various sensory modes

The term thought-forms is a bit of a misnomer since it had to do as much with colours as forms. The use of colours, by symbolic as well as abstract artists, was developed in many ways, often highly formal ones. Theosophical teachings did indeed offer its own models, but similar models were presented in many religious and occult circles as well, including Kundalini yoga and Crowley's Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. These were not limited to colours.

Systems of relationship between sounds, colours, numbers, and so on, are present in many of the traditions supporting occult practices, and especially those founded on a theory of correspondence. 'Synesthesia', or a crossing of the senses, as understood in this light, had already been articulated as a system by the hermetic philosopher, mystic, occultist and English Rosicrucian, Dr. Robert Fludd (1574-1638), and reformulated by the German philosopher Jacob Böhme (1574-1624) and Emanuel

Swedenborg (1688-1772), scientist and philosopher. Steiner drew the following synthesis:

> To those with functioning spiritual ears, this music of the spheres is no symbol or allegory but a familiar spiritual reality. To acquire an idea of this spiritual music, we must dispense with all our sensory concepts of music as we perceive it by means of our material ears. Spiritual perception is involved here, perception of a sort that remains silent for the physical ear. .... We must imagine... that everything described as an image, as "shining" or "radiant," is also "sounding". Every color, every sensation of light, corresponds to a spiritual tone; every interaction among colors corresponds to a harmony or a melody, and so on. We must keep in mind that spiritual seeing does not cease where spiritual sound prevails; the sounding simply augments the radiance. And where archetypes or archetypal images are mentioned, we need to imagine primal tones as well. Other modes of perception that could be called "spiritual tasting," and so on, are also involved, but we will not go into these processes now since the point is simply to alert us to a conception of the spiritual world, taking certain modes of perception as examples (Steiner 1904/1994:126).

This also meant, among other things, that thought-forms can appear in many sensory modes from forms and colours to sounds, and even tastes. For many, such a perspective led to or validated a deep interest in music, and the use of musical terms to express visual concepts. For instance, such is the case for Claude Bragdon (1866-1946), architect and theosophist.

> Bragdon's emphasis on geometry as a metaphor of universal order led to an emphasis on music in his earliest writings on architectural aesthetics (music

> being the harmony inherent in certain numerical relations). In his proportioning of facades and plans Bragdon employed ratios expressive of musical intervals, making extensive use of the equilateal triangle. It was a regulating figure which received much favour among the Dutch proportionists in the late nineteenth century and which underlies the discipline of the plan and façade of Berlage's Stock Exchange of 1903.[1]

By the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century, synesthesia led to numerous experiments in artistic circles, especially as far as music and visual impressions were concerned. Some artists were said to paint according to the impressions they received from listening to concert pieces.

Figure 87

One such artist was Pamela Colman Smith (1878-1951), best known as the illustrator of the Rider-Waite Tarot deck. Her 'paintings to music' (figure 87 A-C – in text), exhibited in Europe as well as in North America, were conceived during concerts, and confirmed her reputation for the public as a clairvoyant as well as her ability to transform music into visual images or scenes.

She belonged to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (an esoteric group which attracted Rosicrucians as well as Theosophists) and was a personal friend of Charles Debussy, W. B. Yeats, and A.E.. Around 1903, she began to paint visions that came to her while listening to the music of Beethoven, Bach, Chopin, and Debussy. Melinda B. Parsons, who studied Smith's life and work, describes the almost automatic process of Smith's artistic creation in the following terms:

> Smith gave utterance to the visual "speech" in her mind's eye through drawing and painting. Her method took shape in the concert hall, where as the music began, she would take brush and ink in hand, often creating as many as twenty or thirty drawings during one concert. As she later told an interviewer, she saw her visions in color and would have preferred to reproduce them that way, but since the visions were so fugitive, lasting only as long as the mood of the music, she contented herself with quick ink sketches, later working up those that were most interesting or appealing into finished pictures (Parsons 1987:82).

The visionary process took various forms, as shown by Parson's quote of an eyewitness account:

> Sometimes the picture appears and grows in colour and form upon the paper as she draws, and she seems to just trace over it with her brush. At other times it is a living and moving picture that she sees before her in a frame ... She does not seek to analyse these impressions at the time, as this would interfere with the subconscious action; she is absolutely sincere and sets down only what she sees, holding her imagination well in check (Forbes-Semphill quoted in Parsons 1987:83).

The process, which was quite public, raised questions of authenticity.

> In fact, Smith said that if she made any change whatsoever from the interior manifestation, the whole image broke up and disappeared. This was one of the factors that convinced Smith's contemporaries that hers were *true* visions, "givens" rather than imaginings. Another factor was that the visions were unbidden, indeed uncontrollable. Smith often seemed unaware of what she was drawing until after she was finished. As one fascinated writer remarked, "She feels quite detached from these drawings and is immensely interested in them, viewing them as an outsider who has never seen them before" (Parsons 1987:83).

Most of Smith's work was symbolically rich with many references to classical mythology and the kind of images with which the theosophists were acquainted; yet they were clearly naturalistic.

> What I wish to make plain is that these are not pictures of the music theme – pictures of the flying notes – not conscious illustrations of the name given to a piece of music. But just what I see when I hear music. Thoughts loosened and set free by the spell of

the sound. I put them down with haste. Sometimes they are so strange that they almost shock me as they come. Subconscious energy lives in them all. (Sand makes patterns by vibration on a drum)...For a long time, the land I saw when hearing Beethoven was empty – hills, plains, ruined towers, churches by the sea; then sometimes I saw far off a little company of spearmen ride away across the plain. But now the clanging sea is strong with the salt of the lashing spray, and full of elemental life...Often when hearing Bach, I hear bells ringing in the sky, and pulled by whirling cords, held in the hands of maidens dressed in brown. A rare freshness fills the air, like morning on a mountaintop, with opal-coloured mists that chase each other fast across the scene...Chopin brings the night – gardens, mystery and dread hide under every bush, but joy and passion throb within the air. The moon bewitches all the scene (Smith quoted in Parsons 1987:83-84).



A



B



C

Figure 90

These processes and impressions were considered as thought-forms, though they were very complex, and closer to the human realm than to cosmic consciousness. One can compare them directly to illustrations *M* (figure 88), *G* (figure 89), and *W* in Besant and Leadbeater's book on thought-forms, also produced under the impression of music (Mendelssohn, Gounod and Wagner respectively) at the same period. Similar images illustrate Steiner's lecture, originally given in Dornach in 1909, on the spiritual being of art; they are by Assia Turgenieff (1890-1966) and follow similar themes (figure 90 – in text). These similarities illustrate the cohesion of the intellectual circles where such phenomena were discussed and produced, and with the widespread influence of Leadbeater and Besant's books.

Another interesting abstract experiment in thought-forms, translated into a medium other than visual images, is that of the Bauhaus Ballet in 1923. In the Triad Ballet (figure 91), for instance, the dancers explored moving as geometric figures. Kandinsky did the decoration of the space and Steiner was involved in the choreography with Oskar Shlemmer as the main choreographer. The movements followed anthroposophical principles, Anthroposophy being the offshoot movement of Theosophy led by Steiner.

The means by which thought-forms can be reproduced resulted in a great deal of controversy in the artistic community. Few artists of this period favoured the unconscious gesture exemplified by Smith. This could be called expression, but as art, it lacked the consciousness and intent required by both theosophical practice and artistic intent. In Kandinsky's terms, "art as art" corresponds to a different source of inspiration that is "composition", which he defines in opposition to "impression" and "improvisation".

> They represent three different sources of inspiration:
> 1. A direct impression of outward nature, expressed in purely artistic form. This I call an "Impression".
> 2. A largely unconscious, spontaneous expression of inner character, the non-material nature. This I call an "Improvisation".
> 3. An expression of a slowly formed inner feeling, which comes to utterance only after long maturing. This I call a "Composition". In this, reason, consciousness, purpose, play an overwhelming part. But of the calculation nothing appears, only the feeling. Which kind of construction, whether conscious or unconscious, really underlies my work, the patient reader will readily understand (Kandinsky 1912/1977:57).

Even when dealing with clairvoyant processes, if it meant that the artist simply reproduced his vision, the process was considered informational rather than artistic: it was still representation, albeit of a higher order.

Among the visual artists, committed to the path of modern and abstract art, representation was seen as a form of art no longer quite suitable for the time. Instead these same artists began to work out systems where colours and forms compose a kind of vocabulary the artists will use to directly convey an immediate experience. With such artists as Kandinsky and Marc, they strove towards a completely deliberate use of forms and colours, evolving into techniques the purpose of which was to evoke and shape an experience both in the painter and in the viewer, but this experience was not conceived as something to be interpreted or translated. The experience was located in the painting.

In 1926 Kandinsky published his seminal text on abstraction, From Point and Line to Plane, which complemented his views on colour and continued his systematic visual grammar defining his views on composition. He wrote about lines and angles in terms of 'temperature': vertical is warm, horizontal is cold, while the diagonal tends to one or the other depending on its position. By disposing elements in relative positions to the plane, Kandinsky believed that different effects could be achieved. By combining colour theory with form, he aimed to demonstrate that particular forms corresponded to particular colours. For instance, the circle, triangle, and square

were paired with the three primary colours, blue, yellow, and red, respectively.[2]

Through his investigations, he hoped to demonstrate the still-debated principle that universal laws apply to art, and his ultimate aim was to create visual harmony with the most elemental means. Thus he hoped to prove that abstract art was as capable of affecting the viewer as representational art (Moszynska 1990).

Kandinsky expresses this most explicitly even while recognizing that a universal system of correspondence is not possible. His grammar of colour showed colour could embody properties formerly denoted by objects, yet his attitude was governed by spiritual beliefs akin to Steiner's teachings. "Colour is a power which directly influences the soul". He further notes that colour has a physical and psychic effect upon the beholder.

> Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul (Kandinsky 1912/1977:25).

Kandinsky was not alone in constructing such a system. Each artist created their own; but each system, from Kandinsky to Mondrian to Marc, rested ultimately on a spiritual perception of art. The artists of

the modern art and abstract school expanded on and systematized the aspects of colours, forms, and even sound, on which their art rested with the intent to access and affect the souls of their audience. They borrowed from Theosophy, as well as Transcendentalism and esoteric literature, toward a grandiose synthesis where both the modalities of the artists' work and the role of the artists in society, including their spiritual function, were defined. Several of these artists produced an explicit formulation of the system they constructed; each formulation bears the mark of its author and conveys a slightly different orientation. Some artists appear to accept a closer sympathy for symbolic representations of theosophical or spiritual notions while others veer away completely from symbolic representation. That Lawren Harris was among the latter is the thesis developed in the following chapters.

Harris had predecessors and mentors, all much preoccupied by the spiritual role of the artist.Kandinsky's system, as presented in his book, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, was strongly in agreement with theosophical principles. In the book, he describes Blavatsky as one main artisan of the spiritual revolution in which he sees himself, and artists like him, engaged.

> The new torchbearer of truth will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove

> the merely mechanical, material obstacles and difficulties from his path (Blavatsky quoted in Kandinsky 1912/1977:13-14).

Wassily Kandinsky believed the artist to be this "new torchbearer."

Kandinsky shared Steiner's "feeling that the world was headed for disaster, that science had failed and that there was a need for a spiritual rebirth" (Steiner quoted in Ringbom 1966:386). He read and annotated a number of Steiner's books and he was aware of Steiner's belief that a final spiritual world could, and would, emerge after a great catastrophe. Annie Besant and Leadbeater's works on thought-forms confirmed Kandinsky's ideas that a wider spiritual reality could be perceived and expressed by artists.

Ringbom noted that Kandinsky's basic outlook was affected more by occult traditions than any other influence. In particular:

> ... the place of art in the spiritual development and the contribution of art to the future synthesis, the vibration theory, the correspondences between art, feeling and the cosmic laws, the notion of emancipated colours and forms as specific for the spiritual reality behind matter, and even some elements of Kandinsky's pictorial idiom, all these basic features are derived from theosophy or its confrontation with Gothean speculation in Steiner's teachings (Ringbom 1966:408).

Kandinsky presents painting in the following terms:

> Painting has two weapons at her disposal:
> 1. Colour.

2. Form.
Form can stand alone as representing the object (either real or otherwise) or as a purely abstract limit to a space or a surface. Colour cannot stand alone; it cannot dispense with boundaries of some kind...Form alone, even though totally abstract and geometrical, has a power of inner suggestion...Form, in the narrow sense, is nothing but the separating line between surfaces of colour. That is its outer meaning. But it has also an inner meaning, of varying intensity, and, properly speaking, form is the outward expression of this inner meaning ... So it is evident that form-harmony must rest only on a corresponding vibration of the human soul ...The impossibility, and, in art, the uselessness of attempting to copy an object exactly, the desire to give the object full expression, are the impulses which drive the artist away from "literal" colouring to purely artistic aims. And that brings us to the question of composition. Pure artistic composition has two elements:
1. The composition of the whole picture.
2. The creation of the various forms which, by standing in different relationships to each other, decide the composition of the whole ...

Such a grammar of painting can only be temporarily guessed at, and should it ever be achieved, it will be not so much according to physical rules ... as according to the rules of the inner need, which are of the soul (Kandinsky 1912/1977:28-30, 35).

Kandinsky concludes

Finally, I would remark that, in my opinion, we are fast approaching the time of reasoned and conscious composition, when the painter will be proud to declare his work constructive. This will be in contrast to the claim of the Impressionists that they could explain nothing, that their art came upon them by inspiration. We have before us the age of conscious creation, and this new spirit in painting is going hand in hand with the spirit of thought towards an epoch of great spiritual leadership (Kandinsky 1912/1977:57).

Piet Mondrian's contribution to abstract art was equally associated to spiritual concerns. He arrived at a form of geometrized abstract art from which all traces of concrete life were removed, and in his vision of the world there is an equilibrium that underlies all natural and human expression. Every painting is an object, and Mondrian's aim in each painting was to find its particular balance of elements. This was a process that was contemplative and painstaking, sometimes involving coloured squares that the artist could move around, and often requiring painting over the grid, until he achieved the "correct" final result. Mondrian's rules were simple; they restricted him to straight lines and the colours of red, blue, black, white and yellow.

Mondrian had a "firm belief in the spirit's rising development" and he considered this belief a necessity if one wished to "see life and art purely " (Mondrian quoted in Lipsey 1988:73). Perhaps in reaction to his native Calvinism, he turned to Theosophy in 1899. Moszynska analyzed his paintings and concluded that the influence of theosophical concepts is noticeable in his first abstractions beginning around 1913.

> Mondrian's geometric abstract painting is thus a direct pictorial equivalent of mystical beliefs prevalent at the time, which were themselves rooted in the Idealist metaphysics of the nineteenth century. The artist's unswerving goal, as expressed both in his writings and in the uncompromising nature of his art, was to

> pay tribute to the universal principles, which he believed (in common with the Theosophists...) to exist at a deep level within human consciousness. He wished, like Kandinsky, to produce a harmonious chord that would strike also in others (Moszynska 1990:54).

Mondrian's diary notes show that he, like Kandinsky, believed the principles and beliefs of Theosophy would eventually be proven by modern science. In the 1920s and 1930s, painting carried forward the new cause of freedom through a certain equation: "freedom to propose a new world entailed freedom from representing the given world" (Bell 1999:192). Mondrian regarded art as a path to higher knowledge: "what the theosophers are aspiring to by their methods, the artist visualizes by the means at his disposal" (Roskill 1992:414-415). Theosophy represented for Mondrian a rebirth of spirituality. By 1909, he had formally joined the Theosophical Society and had begun emphasizing drawing over colour. A principal debt is owed to Blavatsky and Steiner whose writings appear to have influenced Mondrian's painting most directly during his 'coloristic' period of 1908-11 (Welsh in Regier 1987).

By 1917 Mondrian, along with other members of the De Stijl[3] group, had arrived at a form of geometrizing art that was radically new. He became very much involved in Theosophical circles and wrote an article on the subject, 'Art and Theosophy', for Theosophia, the leading organ of the Dutch Theosophist movement. In his

sketchbooks (c.1912-14) he specifically alludes to the theosophical doctrine of evolution as a determining factor in the history of art. His six-foot high triptych, *Evolution* (figure 92), painted in 1910-11, can and has been interpreted as a theosophical vision of the human progression from earthly body through astral body to divine insight. Each flower, triangle, and circle can be seen to have an occult meaning; for instance, the stars found in the far right panel formed by joined triangles, correspond to similar symbols found at the centre of the Theosophical Society's official emblem. Later Mondrian abandoned all symbolic representation to concentrate on pure abstraction and the Fourth Dimension (figure 93).

Franz Marc, a German artist, was a colleague and close friend of Kandinsky. Marc's colour theory clearly evolved out of theosophist writings. Among the published writings of Marc are explicit references suggesting an active interest in Theosophy and with the passage of time Marc became more skilled in his employment of the theosophical colour vocabulary. For him, colour had a clear-cut emotional-iconographic significance. In fact, his theories and techniques of pure colour-symbolism would eventually bring him to relinquish all hints of representational subject matter in his art, finally permitting him to arrive at non-objective painting (Moffitt 1987:117). In particular Marc notes:

> All lines ... determine the series of the colours ... The colour complex is guided by the lines(melodies), being the questions to put to the answer of the counter-complex .... Blue is the male principle, severe and spiritual. Yellow is the female principle, gentle, cheerful and sensual. Red is matter, brutal and heavy, the color that has always to struggle with, and then to succumb to, the other two! For instance if you mix blue – so serious, so spiritual – with red, you then intensify the red to the point of unbearable sadness, and the comfort of yellow (the color-complementary of violet) becomes indispensable: woman as comfort-giver, not a lover! ... But what you say about melodic movements through light and dark, this I find quite good. Surely, line and melody grow from similar artistic perceptions of the same primeval source, but there are still two roots, two offspring, which are distantly linked by technique. As I am not of so musical a frame of mind, in regards to this it remains certain that I can't test by means of a musical score, the technique and composition of a given piece of music and, especially as I am so woefully uneducated in musical technique, I would scarcely dare to argue the point (Marc quoted in Moffit 1987:106,108).

All these processes can be said to have something to do with thought-forms, in so far as it is recognized that a) what is presented on the canvas is not a thing, but an impression - mental and emotional - which can be transmitted to the spectator, and b) the artist has the duty to present a higher reality belonging to the suprasensible or spiritual realm. Harris, Kandinsky and others will use the forms of the thought-forms not as symbols referring to specific meanings or intended to convey an affiliation with theosophical teaching but rather as the result of a process leading back to geometric forms. In many cases, those forms are selected

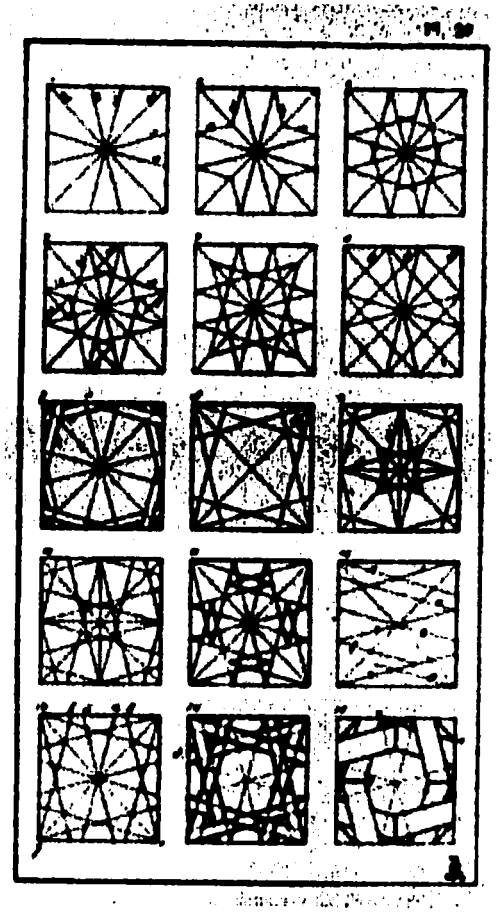
as end points because they are perceived as more abstract and therefore closer to the divine, as, for instance, in some of Kandinsky's paintings a drum becomes a circle (figure 69).

The Fourth Dimension

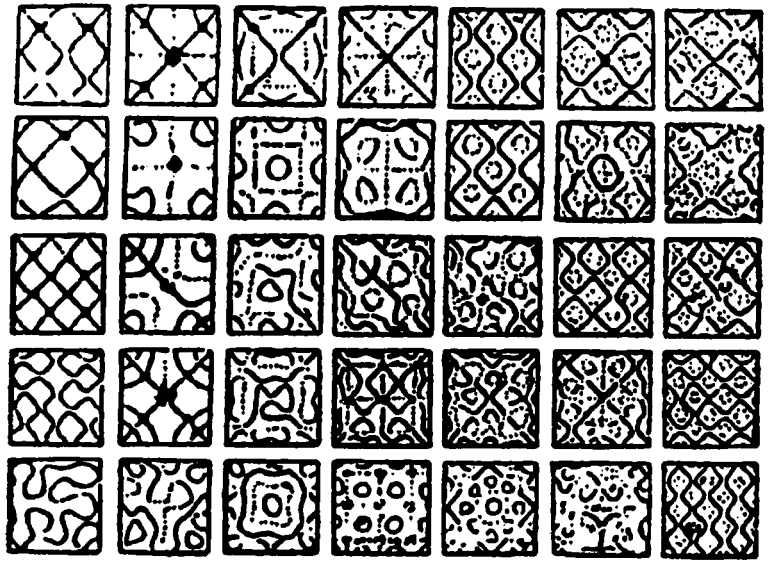
Even in Blavatsky's early writing, geometry, as a sacred knowledge, was not equated with a series of forms. Rather, it was about the processes, or "laws" by which those forms are produced, whether in nature or in the abstract structures of the universe and cosmic order. The architects who participated in the De Stijl movement or the Bauhaus activities found a fertile ground for the development of principles applying to three-dimensional objects as well as two-dimensional artwork.

In this context, one must notice the continuity between Claude Bragdon's drawings and the abstract artists in both Europe and America. One element of that continuity is the notion of a fourth dimension. Mentioned in Blavatsky, this notion is also found in such authors as J.H. de Groot (1896) (figure 94A – in text) compare with Besant and Leadbeater's vibrations of sound from Thought Forms, (figure 94B – in text) and M.J.H. Shoenmaekers[4]. It also became an integral part of Bragdon's theories.[5]

> Bragdon's eclectic aesthetic theories have their roots in sources ranging from eastern mysticism and



A



B

Figure 94

> theosophical texts to P.D. Ouspensky, Arthur Schopenhauer, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emanuel Swedenborg and an array of mathematicians and hyperspace philosophers. Central to his theories, and influenced by the theosophical view of world unity, was the notion of a cosmic order, mathematical in nature, which permeates all existence...Acknowledging the need for architecture and ornament to reflect the spirit of the age, Bragdon sought to develop a universal and generic system of architectural ornament from its philosophical interpretation of the Fourth Dimension, a notion he contended represented the changing psychological mood of the movement...Permeated by his deep theosophical beliefs, it was the theosophical and mystical implications of a geometry of *n* dimensions that Bragdon expounded and popularized in his numerous books and articles on the Fourth Dimension from 1909 onwards.[6]

Claude Bragdon explicitly and consistently linked his presentation of architectural principles with the sacred geometry advocated by Theosophy. But he developed these principles much further than Blavatsky, as processes and patterns of energies, as experiences of a fourth dimension. Though he is not widely remembered in architectural circles today, Bragdon was, however, an important figure in the American theosophical scene.

> Bragdon's failure to gain widespread acceptance by both Mumford and by the contemporary historian Thomas A. P. van Leeuwen to his theosophical belief...Bragdon himself admitted to being an "aggressive and indefatigable missionary" for the theosophical cause...and he distributed Theosophical literature which he described as "propaganda naked and unabashed...".[7]

Bragdon had, originally without Ouspensky's knowledge or permission[8], translated Ouspensky's work that did use the idea of the fourth dimension.

Sîan Loftus concludes her presentation of Bragdon's views in the following terms:

> Bragdon's deep Theosophical belief led him to draw a parallel between the speculation in higher space theory that "the figures of solid geometry are projections on a space of three dimensions, of corresponding four dimensional forms" and the occult notion that "the personal self is a projection on a plane of materiality of a metaphysical self, or soul, to which the personal self is related as is the shadow of an object itself.[9]

The abstract artists, many of whom would have, furthermore, read Bragdon's prolific literature, shared such perfection.

Piotr Demianovich Ouspensky (1878-1947) developed the idea of a Fourth Dimension to extremes. The notion had been a topic of conversation and study in Russia before World War I. Ouspensky had written The Fourth Dimension in 1909, drawing on others' theories and further on his own philosophy in Tertium Organum (1911). To Ouspensky, the fourth dimension provided an escape from death into the real world of the spirit. The idea was that the three-dimensional world was only a fact of man's limited capabilities to perceive and man would be able to observe and participate in the fourth dimensional reality if he could get in touch with his

'cosmic consciousness'. Ouspensky went further to state that this new consciousness would first reveal itself in art.

Ouspensky visualized this Fourth Dimension as a plane surface with objects falling through it from space. The abstract artists used the notion as a general basis for their search for the Truth in its visual mathematical and geometric aspects. Among the artists, such reflections were discussed and tested visually. For instance, Malevich's paintings reflect this movement of geometric forms through space (figure 95); his writings also demonstrated an affinity with the notion of the Fourth Dimension.

> In his Suprematist works, different coloured, flat geometric shapes interacting on a canvas are all you see. The shapes and colours do not give away what the subject is. This is because the subject is irrelevant, it is the feeling you are supposed to capture. Using elements of nature would only cloud your sensation. Malevich was not trying to show a pretty picture of a boy walking, but rather he wanted to show the dynamism of the walk. Thus, he did not paint a boy, but rather reduced this boy to a square and painted it a certain colour. In his works, the colour of the shapes had specific meaning also, as did the background these forms floated over. Different colours referred to different feelings and were used to incite different emotions and the white background was the equivalent of an infinite space.[10]

Like Kandinsky and Mondrian, Malevich explored the meaning of his experience as a painter. He was willing to make a "psychic sacrifice of objects and the familiar world so long as it served art"

(Lipsey 1988:138). In exchange he felt that he would gain "a new and comprehensive vision that was pure, abstract, non-objective, contacted by intuition, and expressed through the 'weight, speed, and direction of movement' of simple geometric forms in space" (Lipsey 1988:138). Like the theosophists and most western esoteric schools of thought, Malevich adopted the concept of a higher dimension, a fourth dimension, both real and immaterial, a notion proposed especially by Ouspensky. Malevich would have been familiar with Ouspensky's writings and he went so far as to include references to this Fourth Dimension in the titles of his early Suprematism paintings (Lipsey 1988).

This is far from what Aleister Crowley had proposed in his charts of geometrical and coloured Tattvas he called "thought forms" (figure 82). What emerges instead is a series of systematic visual languages proposed by different artists such as Kandinsky, Malevich, Mondrian and the like. These languages could be better understood if considered metaphysically as dialects since they were shared and understood from one artist to another. These systems, while different, evolved from the same general principles; they were conceived as the concrete or visual expression of a spiritual dimension in motion or evolution.

> In each manifestation is the seed of a striving towards the abstract, the non-material. Consciously or unconsciously they [artists] are studying and proving their material, setting in the balance the spiritual value of those elements, with which it is their several privilege to work (Kandinsky 1912/1977:20).

While working out the visual components of this general quest for the abstract, in convergent ways, the artists found a common ground in their perception of art as a spiritual enterprise and of the artist as a leading spiritual figure for the sake of society and mankind in general. In this, they found inspiration in Theosophy and even more explicitly in its offshoot, Anthroposophy.

It had been left to the artists and to such theorists as Steiner and Kandinsky, among others, to explore the possible artistic consequences of the theosophical and related worldviews of Leadbeater's experiences and of Blavatsky's early omission (which gave them a vast intellectual territory to explore). In response, they formulated solutions to the question of the morality of art making, as well as art watching, or in this case, witnessing. Art, they decided, was not simply a pleasurable activity; it was a crucial component in the encounter with Truth: especially Truth in a Theosophical perspective. They will arrive at that consensus by a) positioning beauty as an attribute of the higher cosmic levels, and b) by replacing the opposition between profane art and religious art,

the latter being tied to religious institutions, by an opposition between vulgar art and spiritual art.

Beauty is an essential aspect of the divine:

> An earthly being takes on beauty in the original meaning of the word - through the forces working inward upon it from the periphery. Beauty is the imprint of the cosmos, with the help of the etheric body, on a physical, earthly being.
>
> When we study a physical, earthly being according to pure, dry truth, we derive what it is in terms of ordinary physical space. But if we allow a being's beauty to affect us, if we attempt to heighten its beauty through the art of sculpture, then we must be aware that the stamp of beauty upon it stems from the cosmos. It is the disclosure of how the entire cosmos works in an individual being (Steiner quoted in Howard 1998:257).

The recognition by the artists of the potential spiritual aspect of their work did not imply endorsement of the mainstream religious institutions. Their notion of spiritual or sacredness was derived from a search for, and an exposition to, a spirituality that was not limited to a doctrinal definition; their spirituality was universal, imaginative, experiential, and in agreement with the idea of the evolutionary dimension of mankind. All concerned artists explicitly differentiated between normal or vulgar art and sacred or spiritual art. Kandinsky was particularly colourful in the following diatribe describing the usual art exhibit, filled with art and art watchers of the first kind:

> Imagine a building divided into many rooms. The building may be large or small. Every wall of every room is covered with pictures of various sizes; perhaps they number many thousands. They represent in colour bits of nature - animals in sunlight or shadow, drinking, standing in water, lying on the grass; near to, a Crucifixion by a painter who does not believe in Christ; flowers; human figures sitting, standing, walking; often they are naked; many naked women, seen foreshortened from behind; apples and silver dishes; portrait of Councillor [sic] So and So; sunset; lady in red; flying duck; portrait of Lady X; flying geese; lady in white; calves in shadow flecked with brilliant yellow sunlight; portrait of Prince Y; lady in green. All this is carefully printed in a book - name of artist - name of picture. People with these books in their hands go from wall to wall, turning over pages, reading the names. Then they go away, neither richer nor poorer than when they came, and are absorbed at once in their business, which has nothing to do with art. Why did they come? In each picture is a whole lifetime imprisoned, a whole lifetime of fears, doubts, hopes, and joys (Kandinsky 1912/1977:3).

What then is the role of the artist?

> The other art, that which is capable of educating further, springs equally from contemporary feeling, but is at the same time not only echo and mirror of it, but also has a deep and powerful prophetic strength.
>
> The spiritual life, to which art belongs and of which she is one of the mightiest elements, is a complicated but definite and easily definable movement forwards and upwards. This movement is the movement of experience. It may take different forms, but it holds at bottom to the same inner thought and purpose (Kandinsky 1912/1977:4).

In one of his Berlin lectures October 1909, which were given in a style very similar to guided imagery, Rudolf Steiner led his

audience into an imaginary encounter with an angelic figure who came to teach a woman who had demonstrated her willingness to see beauty in a frozen landscape. This figure, named Intuition, spoke on various arts, including painting:

> The spiritual seraphic figure named Intuition spoke: "Because you have done this, you can now equip human beings with the capacity for imagination in painting. You have become the prototype of painting, and this will enable you to enkindle this ability in human beings. Now that you yourself possess a painter's imagination, you will be able to bestow talent on their sense of sight. This sense, which is not touched by human selfhood but contains the synthesizing thinking of the outer world, will then be capable of recognizing the soul-being shining through the surface of things that otherwise appear lifeless and devoid of soul. This capacity of yours will enable people to ensoul everything that otherwise appears to them on the surface of things as color and as form. They will use it to make the soul speak through the form; through the color they conjure up on canvas, not only the outer sense-perceptible color will speak, but also its inner aspect, which moves outward from inner depths, like everything that comes from me. You will be able to give human beings an ability that allows them...to transform movement into repose, to hold fast what is changeable in the outer physical world. You will teach them to hold fast the fleeting color that is briefly lit by the glancing rays of the rising sun, the colors that are present in lifeless nature (Steiner quoted in Howard 1998:146).

Key theosophical concepts are used here to give the artist a sacramental role; the true artist is now someone who can recognize "the soul-being shining through the surface of things", can "ensoul everything that otherwise appears to them... as color and as form", and can "hold fast what is changeable in the outer physical world"

(Steiner quoted in Howard 1998:146). This view was not limited to the theosophical sources. Being shared with others reinforced it. Even Georges Gurdjieff (1866-1949), Ouspensky's teacher and mentor, continued to distinguish between "sensual art", "sentimental art" and "intellectual [or] inverted art", which, above aesthetic emotions, is linked with artistic creation, and the upper centres or levels of man (Riordan quoted in Tart 1975:298-301).

In agreement with these views, but in a more explicit and systematic fashion Rudolf Steiner placed art centrally in the elaborate cosmology he constructed for the artists, as well as in the education system, which was part of his proposed "anthroposophy". In one of his systematizing presentations, he classified the different arts, by reference to their mode of apprehension, within a scheme of spiritual evolution, taking into account Leadbeater, Besant and Blavatsky, as well as his own research.

Steiner shows how the different art forms, and the impulses behind them, are related to the sevenfold structure of the human being, as summarized in Table 1:

Table 1

Art form	Human Component	Character
Architecture	Physical body	Space body; serves external impulses
Sculpture	Etheric body	Harmonious; closely involved with external structure, but rhythmic and involving forces of fluidity.
Painting	Astral body	Sensual expression; more fluid, while yet giving expression to space
Music	Ego	Expressive of ourselves when pressed down into the astral body, but as if in the subconscious there, not yet encompassing the higher inner, members in conscious expression; moves from space to time.
Poetry	Spirit Self	Higher expression of Ego, involving some fidelity to time, but not so much as in music.
Eurythmy	Life Spirit	Still higher expression of Ego, but both more fluid and spatial than poetry.

(Summarized from Steiner 1996:37-41).

The artist's ability to perceive the essence, the 'imprint' of the cosmos, or the 'inner life' of what is placed in front of him offers the artist both a task and a dilemma. The task is to uncover and convey

his glimpse of the divine; the dilemma is to express his experience in adequate terms.

This applies to all artists, but especially to the painter; Cézanne and Matisse were taken as examples.

> Cézanne made a living thing out of a teacup, or rather in a teacup he realized the existence of something alive. He raised still life to such a point that it ceased to be inanimate. He painted these things as he painted human beings, because he was endowed with the gift of divining the inner life in everything. His colour and form are alike suitable to the spiritual harmony. A man, a tree, an apple, all were used by Cézanne in the creation of something that is called a "picture", and which is a piece of true inward and artistic harmony. The same intention actuates the work of one of the greatest of the young Frenchmen, Henri Matisse. He paints "pictures" [figure 65], and in these "pictures" endeavours to reproduce the divine. To attain this end he requires as a starting point nothing but the object to be painted (human being or whatever it may be), and then the methods that belong to painting alone, colour and form (Kandinsky 1912/1977:18).

Let us note that for all of these artists, the spiritual component is not in an outside object to be represented, nor is it in the absolute quality of the painting. It is in the expression of a spiritual experience, hence the reference to music; musicians, according to Kandinsky and his contemporaries, have an easier time than visual artists, in emphasizing the process of expression rather than working toward simple reproduction of an object or event. (It will be

recalled here that Steiner placed music on a higher sphere than usual art).

> And the natural result of this striving is that the various arts are drawing together. They are finding in Music the best teacher. With few exceptions music has been for some centuries the art which has devoted itself not to the reproduction of natural phenomena, but rather to the expression of the artist's soul, in musical sound.
>
> A painter, who finds no satisfaction in mere representation, however artistic, in his longing to express his inner life, cannot but envy the ease with which music, the most non-material of the arts today, achieves this end. He naturally seeks to apply the method of music to his own art. And from this results that modern desire for rhythm in painting, for mathematical, abstract construction, for repeated notes of colour, for setting colour in motion (Kandinsky 1912/1977:20).

This superiority of music is established through the longer distance between the sounds and a physical reality, while the painter is held by the expectation of 'something' being represented, that something having a physical existence. Claude Bragdon emphasized this idea. Kandinsky sought its application.

> Kandinsky went further than the theosophists in formulating the specifics of a spiritual art. Such an art, he asserted, would seek to surpass both the simple act of recording objects in the material world and the superficial dictates of the world of art; it derived its subject and its validity instead from the "non-material strivings of the soul." To communicate its findings, it required an abstract language derived from the expressive power of music, "the most non-material of the arts today." By following the dictates of his own

> inner being and probing the hidden pulse of the world around him, the artist was capable of achieving an art of universal significance (Kandinsky quoted by Bohan 1987:63).

The link with the abstract is therefore direct: the higher the spirit, the more essential, the simpler, the purer, the more abstract. All arts are asked to strive toward the essential. It is in this context that one must understand the identification between truth and beauty proposed by the early abstract artists.

In his assessment, Lipsey recognizes the importance of these perspectives; he summarizes the corresponding historical process in sweeping terms:

> While we can and should assume that what the early twentieth-century artists had to say is best said in their work, their writings, at the very origin of the abstract tradition, can help us understand why this art evolved at all. The early evidence is overwhelmingly clear. Abstract art was born a religious and metaphysical art, and only later came to seem a bodily thing when its spiritual aspiration was ignored or misunderstood... In Mondrian's notebooks of 1912-14, there is a terse entry: "*Stof minder, kracht meer*," less matter, more force. Provided that we understand the full burden of meaning carried by his words, this statement can be taken as the theme of all art that follows in the philosophical, speculative tradition of abstraction that he and others founded (Lipsey 1988:21).

If one adheres to this new vision of art, the artist acquires a vitally important position in the life of society. Katherine Dreier, who was the founder of the Societé Anonyme (a group created to give the

American public an understanding of the social, spiritual, cultural, and artistic benefits of the modern art movement) and who played a leading role in the art scene in New York, was herself a student of Theosophy.[11] According to Ruth Bohan,

> Dreier agreed that the artist was a prophet and that his art had the power to spiritualize society. By obtaining the spiritual advance of one member of society, the new spiritual art would ultimately affect the advance of society as a whole. For Dreier, as for Kandinsky, it was this factor which made the artist of the twentieth century, the one who would remain true to his inner urgings, such a vitally important member of society. Without his inspired leadership, the people of the twentieth century would be deprived of a valuable guide in their quest for spiritual knowledge (Bohan 1987:64).

Art then, becomes an essential aspect of civilization. A society needs art in order to be fully human. Commenting on Dreier's written work and on William Morris, Bohan says,

> In Western Art and the New Era, Dreier asserted that art, as a conduit of spiritual knowledge, was also a "stimulus for [man's] finer qualities." Dreier's statement was clearly an adaptation of the theosophical argument that knowledge of the spiritual world leads to a better and more moral earthly existence, culminating in what Blavatsky termed the "Universal Brotherhood of Man". Elaborations on this belief reveal Dreier's blending of theosophical doctrines with William Morris's views on art. Echoing Morris, she described art as fundamental to civilization. It was an "innate necessity of life" rather than "a luxury easily to be dispensed with." Correspondingly, she expressed the belief that art had a strong "refining influence on man, [such that] man cannot under the influence and stimulus of art

> act with the same brutality as he can without it" (Bohan 1987:66-67).

From Dreier, Steiner, Kandinsky, and like-minded thinkers, emerges a consistent vision of art and artists being essential contributions to the evolution of mankind:

> Steiner and other theosophical thinkers regarded art, science and religion as valid avenues to the spirit, principally because all were thought capable of probing the innermost reaches of the material world and of discovering its most hidden secrets. In Theosophy, Steiner wrote that when the artist "penetrated to [the] spiritual basis [of color and form] with thought and feeling," then art was capable of exerting a "tremendous" influence on "all human evolution." Several years later he declared: "All genuine art seeks the spirit." Sixten Ringbom has shown that Steiner "went as far as to designate artistic sensitivity the best prerequisite for the development of the spiritual abilities " (Bohan 1987:61).

This grandiose concept fitted in and completed Blavatsky's earlier vision. The artist had a spiritual function in society, and a role in the cosmic scheme. One question arising from the superior position attributed to the ideal or to abstraction in art, as purer and closer to the archetypal ideals, concerns the consideration granted to the art of the past. One cannot dismiss Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo. The view generally developed and accepted by the theosophists is that every period in the past, every place, every nation is to be considered as endowed with its own spirit. The artists applied this principle with gusto to art history. This corresponded to the

emphasis placed on the notion of evolution by Blavatsky and her direct followers. It will also pave the way for such artists as Lawren Harris, who will strive to open the way for an artistic tradition fitted to North American times and places.

Conclusion

Thanks to the writings of Ringbom, Welsh, and others, it is easier to recognize that within this general agreement, one must acknowledge the specificity of each artist's contribution to the overall mystical vision of the community of artists revolving around Theosophy and the esoteric movements of the time. Each artist sought in his social and intellectual environment, the elements of his own synthesis.

> As Kandinsky the Theosophist repeatedly stressed, artistic creation is "synonymous with eternal truth," being a kind of "spiritual revelation," and the specifically "modern" artist's "...inner need is built up from three mystical elements: (1) Every artist - as a creator - has something in him which calls for expression (this is the element of personality). (2) Every artist - as a child of this age - is impelled to express the spirit of his age (this is the element of style)... (3) Every artist - as a servant of art - has to help the cause of art (this is the element of pure artistry) ... The elements of style and personality make up what is called the periodic characteristics of any work of art [but] these forms can be spoken of as one side of art: *the subjective*. Every artist chooses from the forms which reflects his times - those which are most sympathetic to him (Moffitt 1987:112).

Welsh, who studied Abstract artists and their writings, confirms the resulting diversity --

> Within this context, it is only reasonable to assume that artists of the rank of Mondrian, Kandinsky, Kupka and Malevich felt themselves free to interpret and thus integrate their own experiences of the occult with established occult dogma. Clearly these interpretations were posited on an individual basis, which explains the considerable diversity of style within so-called Abstract Art (Welsh 1987:6-7).

These artists shared a common language wherein colour and form were the accepted tools for accessing spiritual realities. They regarded composition as a way towards spiritual harmony. They turned their regard inward, toward their own experience of the object or feeling from which their painting sprung. They also recognized the supremacy of the individual experience over any imposed doctrine; including any they would develop themselves.

As the artists associated directly or indirectly with Theosophy, constructed each in their own way and their own voice, a synthesis of what Theosophy and the related philosophical and religious systems of that time could offer them, they met. They met at aesthetic levels through their interest for and experimenting with non-realistic style and abstract compositions; they met at intellectual levels in a vision of society in progress towards a new

era. They also met at what they call spiritual levels through a quest for the spiritual essence of both mankind and the world.

From the point of view of these artists, art has become an essential part of the spiritual evolution of the world; the artist now had a fundamental and active role to play. The quality of his art moves the audience and reveals the hidden sacredness of reality. Lawren Harris was to provide a good example of the demanding involvement of the artist in this new role.

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1 Sian Loftus, (1999) "Claude Bragdon in Context", as seen 16/04/02 at http://www.caad.ed.ac.uk/publications/ear/sian.html

2 Wassily Kandinsky (1977) Concerning the Spiritual in Art, n.p. (see below).

FIGURE I

First Pair of antitheses.
A and B.

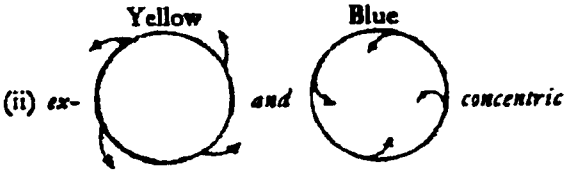
(inner appeal acting on the spirit)

Warm Yellow	Cold Blue	= First antithesis

Two movements:

(i) *horizontal*

wards the spectator ⟵ ⟶ Away from the spectator
(bodily) (spiritual)



Light White	Dark Black	= Second antithesis

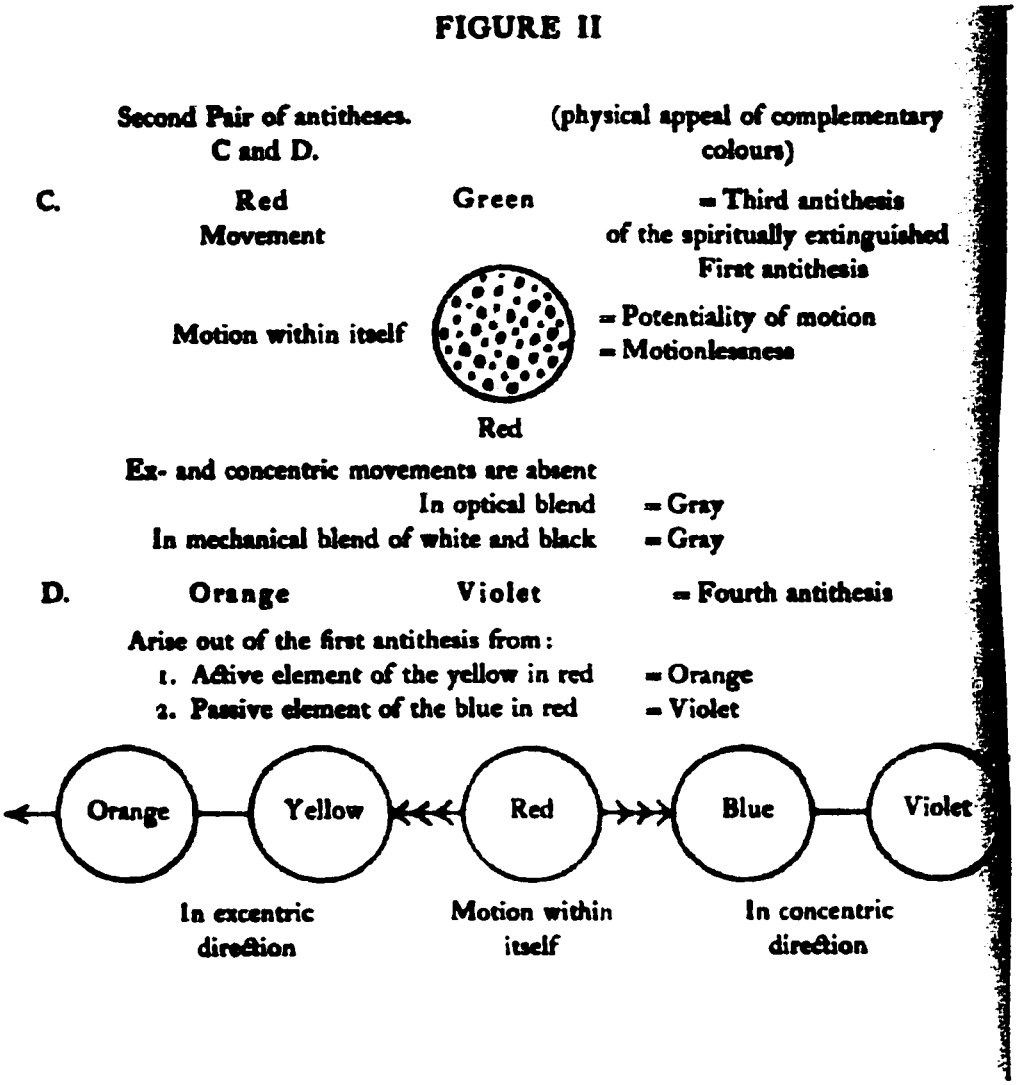
Two movements:

(i) *discordant*

ernal discord, but with possibilities for the future (birth) — White — Black — Absolute discord, devoid of possibilities for the future (death)

(ii) *ex- and concentric, as in case of yellow and blue, but more rigid.*

FIGURE II



3 De Stijl was a Dutch non-figurative art movement organized in 1917; it was also called Neoplasticism. The leaders of the movement were Theo van Doesburg and Piet Mondrian. They advocated a purification of art by eliminating subject matter in favour of vertical and horizontal elements, and the use of primary colour or non-colours. Their austerity of expression influenced architects and lasted until 1931.

4 A philosopher who was a forerunner of Mondrian and De Stijl theories (See M.J.H. Schoemaekers 1915).

5 Sian Loftus, (1999) "Claude Bragdon in Context", as seen 16/04/02 at http://www.caad.ed.ac.uk/publications/ear/sian.html

6 Sian Loftus, (1999) "Claude Bragdon in Context", as seen 16/04/02 at http://www.caad.ed.ac.uk/publications/ear/sian.html

7 Sian Loftus, (1999) "Claude Bragdon in Context", as seen 16/04/02 at http://www.caad.ed.ac.uk/publications/ear/sian.html

8 Although Ouspensky noted later that he would only have changed one word in the translation it had been so well done.

9 Sian Loftus, (1999) "Claude Bragdon in Context", as seen 16/04/02 at http://www.caad.ed.ac.uk/publications/ear/sian.html

10 Adam Mak at http://www.duke.edu/~acm6/academic/art/four-dim.htm as seen 30/04/02
11 For more information see Western Art and the New Era, 1923.

CHAPTER EIGHT
The Philosophical Concerns of Harris

> The whole Theosophical paraphernalia is so immense and intricate and various that all we can do is to take what at the time suits us just as we do in subjects to paint or write about. It is or should be creative - that is, from the mass of information, lore and ideas we fashion over our philosophy and way of life - and remain above all genuinely individual. Here again each of us is to judge for himself.[1]

Harris wrote prolifically and for varied audiences. Harris wrote for periodicals as diverse as The Canadian Historical Association (1948), the Canadian Comment on Current Events (1933) and the Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (1949). Among the published material, one finds articles, such as "Theosophy and Art"(1933) and the "War in Europe" (1933) for The Canadian Theosophist. Harris also wrote on such subjects as philosophy for the Canadian Bookman (1924), modern art for the Canadian Forum (1927), and the function of art for the Vancouver Art Gallery's periodical, Art Gallery Bulletins (1943). In 1950 Harris wrote and gave a series of six lectures for CBC Radio on the general subject of "Art in Canada". Over the course of time he wrote several book reviews as well.

Harris also wrote a book of poems called Contrasts: a Book of Verse, which was published in 1922, and two books: The Story of the Group of Seven, which had a special limited print of 775 books in 1964, and A Disquisition on Abstract Painting, published in 1954.

In archival holdings at the National Archives of Canada are his private writings including lengthy correspondence with Emily Carr and Yvonne McKague Housser among others. Also found are manuscripts in his own handwriting, some of which became published articles, many notebooks and additional loose notes. Some of those are organized into chapters; he was obviously intending at some point to write a book. He kept a file of jokes cut from magazines and newspapers or hand copied. He also kept a record of quotations from people as diverse as Kandinsky, Steiner, Whitman, Aldous Huxley, A.E., Blavatsky, Bragdon and even French author Peguy. The explicit subject matter ranges from philosophy in general to Theosophy, to art, a topic, which occupies most of his attention. He wrote very little about himself.

A thorough survey and analysis of these documents would yield a much more precise and less incomplete picture of a very complex author, artist and public figure. But such is not the purpose of this chapter. Instead, I am going to concentrate my comments on three aspects of the published and unpublished writings, in keeping with the goal of this dissertation. I will, therefore, concentrate on the material pertaining to Harris's understanding and presentation of theosophical and other spiritual teachings.

A. First, I will document Harris's official or public position on Theosophy and related movements as described in the archival holdings and Harris's articles and lectures according to a few and important themes. The topic of art permeates a great deal of his material, but this topic will be dealt with in the next chapter.

B. Second, Harris's book of poems will be examined as a separate document, providing a different window on the man and the philosopher.

C. Third, the private correspondence will provide clues on Harris's personal handling of Theosophy.

A. Harris's philosophical and religious principles

For all of its richness the material available in the archives is characterized by definite tendencies. Rather than going through different phases, a Christian one, then a theosophical, then a transcendentalist, then a mystical period, these writings demonstrate a general involvement with all kinds of ideas and schools of thought, with Theosophy and theosophical sources sounding the dominant note. All the philosophical writings are serious, detached, abstract, dealing with principles and theories.

Most of these writings are coloured by or are in agreement with theosophical principles. Though he impressed his own style and concern over these, he also gives the impression of being very faithful to the very principles set down by Blavatsky. He veers not away but further from "classical Theosophy" only when developing his perspective on art, in which one can recognize formulations closer to Transcendentalism. As far as his involvement with Theosophy is concerned, Harris was already quoting Blavatsky well before he became a member of the Theosophical Society; he had adopted the theosophical perspective and a good deal of Anthroposophy through A.E.

and Steiner for instance. His religious beliefs were never shaken, at least judging by his manuscripts and letters. His involvement with Theosophy was intense ranging from financial gifts to writing for the society's journals and giving lectures, to advocating and counseling his friends on the difficulties and rewards of the spiritual path.

From what was presented by Blavatsky and her colleagues, and like any good theosophist, Harris took certain precepts to heart, adopted certain points of view for himself and let go of some others. Throughout his writings, it is evident that he was well versed in theosophical literature and that he has adopted the core of the theosophical doctrine for himself as a central guideline for the conduct of his life.

Indeed, his quest is not limited to the theosophist horizon; one can recognize a general quest toward a synthesis, bringing North American thinkers especially transcendentalists side by side with theosophical literature. His position on Theosophy can be found in his writing on Theosophy itself. But the same ideas and themes are also presented in his views on art, his presentation of philosophical and moral ideas do not stand apart from his

discussion of art. Indeed his writings show a remarkable continuity from one genre to another. The same quotes are repeated from the early writings, to those intended for the theosophical literary journal, to those that have to do with his artistic practice and his private life.

Harris demonstrates a remarkable humility *vis-à-vis* the official leaders of Theosophy, as well as a steadfast faith in the Theosophical principles. Yet his faith was not a blind faith, and he was quite capable of a critical attitude, but always with reference to the long-term goal of enlightenment. In a letter to Yvonne McKague Housser, dated December 1, 1937, Harris describes his position *vis-à-vis* the scandals shaking the Theosophical Society:

> The whole history of the T.S. [Theosophical Society] is outwardly a mess and certainly can be depressing to think about or push me off into a kind of detached pain in the neck. But from the start when the philosophy was unfamiliar and many individuals fancied it was a short cut to ineffable bliss and security it has been a proving ground - a test of capacity, devotion, steadfastness - and its history is the story of moths who fancied they could play in the bright flame and get away with whatever form of selfishness or self aggrandizement they had in hiding. H.P.B. and Judge knew this from the start, warned against it and fought it. [2]

He does not consider Blavatsky as a perfect master, he sees her as a human being, with the same frailties as others, including himself.

> Then too, Theosophy is no soporific like an ordinary religion - it excites all sorts of things, unknown and untoward things, in the individual and one thus finds that one has a merry combat to recapture ones [sic] balance - ones [sic] fastness to the universe - ones [sic] inner relation to all that is. I know that I myself could have gone haywire on occasion and did so once and I know further that if I were to be placed in certain circumstances with forces playing on only partially known phases of myself I would probably shoot myself into hell for a time. Its [sic] dead easy and no one to blame for it but oneself. Then its [sic] a lesson- all the history of the T.S. is one big lesson - a lesson to start and clean ones [sic] own house - and that's what we are here for - and its [sic] a creative task, involving all of us, the entire microcosm, our whole inner haphazard universe. Then again the present day history of the T.S. is only a moment in the greater life of all who participated in it.[3]

Harris had a rather orthodox view of Theosophy's fundamental teaching. For instance, the idea of reincarnation is one he never disputed as witnessed by this lively quote from the same letter to Yvonne:

> They [all those who participated in the T.S. movement] will all reincarnate again and again with the added benefit in many cases of having learned a lesson - for by gosh, things have to bite into us terribly deep before we really learn - unless we devise and initiate our own lessons - and how many of us do that? Yet that is the creative way. Really the unconquerable in us, seems to succumb time and time again, get balled up, get into a mess, go haywire, play bob - and yet remain unconquerable. Well, all the

> incarnations are made up of lessons, made up of getting immersed in different hells - and of extricating ourselves therefrom - until we learn completely the technique - the living way - of the universal Heart.[4]

He was obviously well versed in theosophical vocabulary and conceptualization, but managed to transform Blavatsky complex, if not obtuse statements into clearer terms for his audience, and for himself.

> While science continually changes her concepts, as new discoveries and researches prove the old ones wrong, - theosophy, on the other hand has three fundamentals, on which its whole system of thought is founded, which have never changed and which are all inclusive.
>
> The first fundamental is, the One absolute Reality, The unknowable infinite cause, on which all speculation is impossible. It has two aspects absolute space, and absolute motion.
>
> The second fundamental is, the periodical activity, which makes space the "playground of numberless universes, incessantly manifesting and disappearing [sic]." This second fundamental affirms the absolute law of flux (action) and reflux (reaction), which science has noted and recorded in all departments of nature, and which theosophy terms the law of karma.
>
> The third fundamental is, the identity and basic unity of all individual souls with the universal soul. This makes the history of the individual soul of each one of us, of necessity, a copy in minature [sic] of the larger life of the universe. And as individual souls we are, each one of us, experiencing a pilgrimage through the worlds of matter and sense, by the method of reincarnation, and under the law of absolute justice.
>
> So far, these three fundamentals have not been disproved, but on the contrary have been (are being)

> progressively proved by science itself (Appendix E, m.265, Collection 23).

Because of Harris's faith in Blavatsky's teaching, and in spite of claims of fraud in the public news about the leaders of the theosophical movement, he was not prepared to challenge, as others did, the reality of her contact with the Masters. To Yvonne he wrote:

> H.P.B. had a different task in a different age and with a different race - than the Buddha. She did all she did, wrote what she wrote under guidance. So far as we know only she (or he) and Judge were in constant and direct contact with the Great Ones and only their works are truly dependable. Their life was in one sense their own - Their work, the work of the Lodge. The West needed first an all comprehensive philosophy - a synthesis of Religion, science and philosophy - the East had always had it[5].

The notion of evolution is used by all classic theosophists to refer to a cosmic-scaled process. This process is one in which Lawren Harris felt personally engaged and to which he referred when talking about history, past works of art or utopian dreams:

> We believe the ultimate, the everlasting divine atma - buddhi- higher manas in us is beyond both good and evil - within the realm of good and evil destruction must be as easy as enlightenment. But – yes - there is an evolutionary direction "that pulls mankind on". Hence every spiritual, compassionate aspiration has far more forever interiorily [sic] than our evil tendencies. We are now in the ascending spiral - evolutionary or unfolding ascent toward over time, full

> and immortal heritage and great Nature is enormously, astonishingly elsatic [sic]; accommodating to our innumerable mistakes, follies and general all around cussedness.[6]

In accordance with the central theosophical teachings, Lawren Harris sees the evolution of mankind unfolding back toward the divine and a unity, which binds all human beings.

> What then is this power at work in man that through the process of trial and error eventually discriminates, chooses and keeps the best alive? And what causes the never ending process of new expressions, new creative movements in art, growing out of the old and continually adding to our heritage of great and illuminating experiences? What is the source of this periodic creative regeneration?
>
> There are two statements which may give us a clue to the answer of these questions. The first statement was written by the early Greek philosopher Heraclitus. It is this "Man is a portion of cosmic fire, imprisoned in a body of earth and water"... The second statement is that "mankind is a spiritual solidarity" (Appendix E, m124).

These two statements were so important for Harris that he repeated them in a number of lectures and articles over a twenty-year period.

Harris was also prone to restate the theosophical teachings in his own terms, and to emphasize certain themes. One of these themes was the notion of power re-interpreted to integrate art and beauty rather than limited to psychic and intellectual apprehension. Echoing Steiner's idea that the

notion of perfection corresponds to a cosmic reality that we know is part of the human soul because we do experience it, Harris explains,

> Some of you may remember an article by Roy Mitchell on modern art, wherein he states that there is an idea that was old in the days of Confucius, that was central to the philosophy of Plato and that is peculiarly the working faith of every true artist and that is ever present in every great flowering of creative activity.
>
> It is the idea that in man, wherever he got it, is a whole range of powers that he never could have acquired on this earth.
>
> These powers all have to do with creative activity and are the basis of the aesthetic attitude (Appendix E, p.22, p.163).

The following argument is one that will be used by Harris in a number of lectures:

> We have never known or seen two equal things, in spite of which our consciousness sets up its own criterion every time it assumes to say two objects are unequal.
>
> We have never known or seen on this earth a perfect circle or sphere, and yet we judge all circles, spheres, squares and cubes because we have within us an idea of perfect ones.
>
> We arrogate to ourselves the right to judge all mathematical shapes, all causation, perfect justice, perfect right, perfect truth, perfect goodness and perfect beauty.
>
> By virtue of what insight do we dare set ourselves up as judges of the imperfections of this world, unless we

> have known and know a superior realm of being?(Appendix E, p.22, p.163).

The duty of the theosophist is to learn to recognize and feed this awareness so as to be able to live according to his divine essence.

> This insight, this awareness is the sixth sense, awake and functioning in the aesthetic attitude.
>
> And until this sixth sense is awakened in us and commences to function we cannot begin to live creatively but must have recourse to man made laws and our moralities and codes and creeds for our regimentation and security and guidance (Appendix E, p.22, p.163).

When Harris calls this awareness the "aesthetic" attitude, he may have been guided by his familiarity with transcendentalism. He will use this notion of "aesthetic level" or aesthetic attitude to link the artist to the unfolding of the evolutionary goal of mankind back to its divine source and end.

> Now all these abstract ideas that we could not have acquired on this earth, perfect justice, equality, proportion, order, truth, goodness and beauty, together constitute an inner standard which is the heart of the aesthetic attitude(Appendix E, p.22, p.163).

One of Harris's gifts is synthesizing and systematizing complex theories for his audience. He used these gifts to summarize his ideas on past history, present social issues, and the role of the theosophical elite by distinguishing four main categories of ideas for the conduct of mankind: laws, moral code, ethics, and aesthetics. I have compiled Table 2 to summarize Harris's article "Theosophy and Art" (Appendix E, p.22, p.161-165):

Table 2

Laws	No god	Mankind	Physical Existence	External	Courts, judges, police	Code	Rigid
Moral Code	Extra-cosmic god	Lower Man	Desire	Extrinsic	Authoritative region	Creed (self-interest)	Arbitrary
Ethics	*N/A	Person	Mind	Internal	Scholarship	Theory (logical)	Theoretical
Aesthetics	Inner Divinity	Soul	Spiritual Intelligence; Intuition	Intrinsic	Direct experience	Attitude	A way of life

*not mentioned by Harris in his notes.

The aesthetic attitude is, of course, that which theosophists seek. But when theosophists of the early days would speak of Truth, Harris linked truth to beauty and correct behaviour to aesthetics distinctly above ethics, and compliant morality. All great mystics, thinkers and artists are for him part of the same elite group.

> Morals presuppose an extra-cosmic god, a law giver outside of or beyond his universe.
>
> The aesthetic attitude implies a divine being within each one of us and to be disclosed over the ages by

> self-devised, creative effort and experience. The moral attitude is sterile, uncreative, un-adventurous, is led and does not lead.
>
> Whereas the aesthetic attitude is creative and fertile and implies adventure at the very forefront of one's being. Morality is imitative and institutionalized life, the goose-step of expediency; imitative of what goes on on earth, of what is laid down by man according to the desires of his lower nature(Appendix E, p.22, p.163).

The aesthetic attitude is a vibrant, exciting, passionate involvement in the great cosmic evolutionary process, and corresponds for him to an equally essential function for both the adept and for the artist as movers of their society. On the one hand, the "aesthetic attitude" reveals the "changeless harmony" within. On the other hand,

> While the aesthetic attitude, as attitude is constant, yet its workings in life, its results in conduct and thought and ideas are as varied as life itself and because these result from an inner, constant attitude and not from outer codes or creeds or formulas, they are likely to be at variance with the moral code, the established procedure, of any day or place.
>
> For the expression of the aesthetic attitude is fluid, never fixed. It changes, alters, develops and grows with every increase of vision, every new and vital experience. Such expression is free from the established, the accepted in any day and place, because the vision, the attitude behind the expression, is of a different order than imitative life(Appendix E, p.22, p.163-64).

Among all its characteristics, the millenarian tone of Theosophy and the theme of a world in transition – which will

be taken again later in the century as the New Age theme - was a popular one. It is one theme Harris took for granted. This new age, according to his interpretation, will see the renewal of both spirituality and art.

> The present wholesale revaluation and reinterpretation of all things the recent past has left us is a sure sign that we emerge into a new dispensation and in the transition we may seem at sea, as undoubtedly we are. All of the old moorings are gone. Indeed there is nothing outwardly infallible left us. We are being purged of the contaminations of recent centuries which should be a sign of returning health, because it affords us the first real freedom in centuries to recreate our world in terms of spiritual understanding and good will (Appendix E, m.88, p.4).

Essential to the coming of this New Age is what Harris calls the "creative individual", the architect and channel for a new order. Social upheavals such as World War I and the advent of Communism announce changes, but spirit cannot move without the work of the "creative individual":

> It appears from all turbulent signs that we move now into a new order, perhaps into the rule of the workers of the world and whatever system they, in the process of taking over power, devise. That is good. For the extrication of society from the fabric of the intellectually indefensible system of private capitalism into something more equitable and with less emphasis on mere shrewdness and money-grubbing and exploitation can mean a thousand benefits. But that surely will depend not so much upon its conditions as upon the spirit in which it is conducted. For it is obvious that system is of less consequence than enlightenment, good will and the spirit of mutual accommodation (Appendix E, m.216, p.1).

This cosmic vision corresponds to that presented by the original theosophical teachings of Mme Blavatsky, and remains to this day a central part of theosophical principles.

Theosophy, as a discipline, introduces the notion of awareness as an expression of and a tool to reach the Divine consciousness. One may recall Blavatsky's advice for daily life written in her book, Practical Occultism:

> Spiritual culture is attained through concentration. It must be continued daily and every moment to be of use. Meditation has been defined as "the cessation of active external thought". Concentration is the entire life tendency to a given end. For example, a devoted mother is one who consults the interests of her children and all branches of their interests in and before all things; not one who sits down to think fixedly about one branch of their interests all the day. Thought has a self-reproductive power, and when the mind is held steadily to one idea it becomes coloured by it, and as we may say, all the correlates of that thought arise within the mind (Blavatsky 1948: 95).

Harris takes the disciplined meditations asked from practicing theosophists seriously. The need for self-awareness becomes a responsibility when one takes into consideration the notion of thoughts according to Theosophy.

Harris made Steiner's theories on thought-forms, which had been developed from Leadbeater and Besant's writings, his

own. All these authors share a basic principle: "Thoughts are things"; with the corollary that thoughts matter because they have a life of their own; they become operative in themselves, and have consequences.

> So that, what we think today, and how we act, determines our future exactly -- as it affects both the present and future lives of our fellows, - For thoughts are things, and much more powerful and far reaching in results, than acts.
>
> If you change the thought currents of a people, you change everything, and you can only do so by first changing your own.
>
> The struggle in the realm of thought, and feeling, and impulses, is primary. Thought which has the deepest inner life, the greatest enduring intensity, will conquer those thoughts that are less alive, and lacking in enduring quality. All events and actions are but the results of these, the physical, objective and last manifestation of thoughts and feelings.
>
> So that the theosophist maintains that to be truly practical, when changing and elevating our habits of thought, give them more and more life, more power, - and be ready to change them again and again as we see and learn more (Appendix E, m.265, collection 23 p.1).

Another perspective on contemplation is provided by Harris's distinction between brain and mind:

> The function of mind is to order, to date, to co-ordinate, organizes. Mind gives to life continuity, progression. Mind seeks through the multiplicity of effects to the cause and is itself the cause. Mind takes emotions, perceptions, impression conception, ideas, moods, dreams, fancies, joy ... & relates these, giving to all happenings & experiences their relative value...

> so that a unity results, ... Mind alone remains stable and watches the chaos of phenomena... And mind knows that there is a plastic unity of existence. Mind knows, itself as stable and all else as a moving or dynamic multiplicity in unity ...(Appendix E, m.266, p.1).

It is from the position of stability, from the perception of the changeless within oneself, and within one's perceptions of the outer world that art becomes possible. The function of art furthers the function of mind – in the theosophical scheme – as it brings together and balances all components of one's life, and gives continuity and meaning to life.

Like all his fellow theosophists, Harris insists on the primacy of experience, individual experience, in the constitution of his faith and religious outlook. He extends this aspect to Theosophy as a whole, which he saw as a practical guide to living. The reference to actual personal experience and to scientific knowledge, by opposition to a revelation, anchors Theosophy in the concrete issues of the day. The more so as Harris insists on the notion that all religions, all people have access to the Truth. For him, one must go even further, not only allow but encourage cultural and religious diversity.

> We want differences, must foster differences
> lest become merely another sect.
> There is no chosen people of God, or any chosen
> sect or, group - all, everyone is chosen of God.

> either all is sacred or nothing is sacred (Appendix E, m.250).

B. The Poetry

Lawren Harris probably wrote the poems for Contrasts, a Book of Poetry between 1918 and 1922. The poems testify to his love of words and visual expression, a love also obvious in his other writings. The book is divided into five sections, entitled respectively, Descriptive, Emotional, People, Definitions, Spiritual. As the title suggests, it is indeed composed of poems which contrast oppositions or duality to form the main theme.

The archival material contains little on Harris himself: he did not write much about himself, and rarely in the first person. He evidently took seriously the theosophical admonition to transcend Ego and personality – he certainly repeats the advice often. In his poetry, however, one can discern a touch of his own personal involvement with the world around him according to Larisey who is the only author to have studied Harris's poetry. Some of the poems express links with Harris's personal life. In poems of the second section of the book, "Emotional," Harris treats frequently of sadness and personal pain. One of them, *After War*, echoes Harris's own

experience of the war and the length of time it took him to recuperate (Larisey 1982).

The poems are extremely visual in style, with strong definitions; as in the first poem – *A Note of Colour* – where the description of a most bleary decrepit house ends with a most colourful touch of hope. The theme of contrast is played in many modes. In the second poem, for instance, the "pale flat-breasted girl" who gazes up to the sky with a "wistful longing smile" is framed by "the saucy knowing smile" of another girl who looks down at the street ... and at the men. Throughout the texts, one is confronted with depictions of noise, chaos, sickness and despair, made the more unsupportable by the indifference or unconsciousness of the people stuck in their misery. In most cases, however, a voice, a smile, a sign, calls to the people to give them the opportunity to "wake up," or to indicate the underlying presence of hope.

Larisey concurred with this interpretation. According to him, it presents a view that sees reality as divided into two levels. The first of these levels describes the materialistic life of those who live unconscious of, or actively suppressing, the

life of the Spirit. The second is the spiritual or transcendental level, which consoles individuals and encourages spiritual vision and growth. In section two, Harris describes the lower level of existence with a rhetoric that recalls the moralistic concerns of the preachers in his background (Larisey 1982).

In *Little Houses*, the wake up call is explicit but heard only from afar.

> Dreamers ever leave you, little houses
> While you doze the long days away
> In snug little villages and on easy hillsides
> ...
> Behind low, white fences or bushy green hedges
> ...
> Plump, well fed, clean little houses
> ...
> Homes for contented folks,
> Easy-going, fruit-preserving, cookie-making folks
> The dreamers ever leave you
> ...
> They hear a vague, far cry,
> Perhaps the call of some vacant, high place,
> So often only the wailing of a beckoning pain,
> But the dreamers ever leave you (Harris 1922:19).

The section entitled 'Emotional' is a collection of reflections on mankind described as seething "sprawling", "enslaved", "enfogged [sic]" and blind; the expression "seething humanity" is also found in Harris's other writing when discussing the cosmic process by which mankind is

redeemed and rediscovers its essential nature. So we know that Harris is speaking at least partly metaphorically. But the keywords like sorrow ("slow sorrow"), pain ("pools of pain", "drops of pain", "unhealing wounds [sic]"), associated with the idea of faked happiness "miserable glitter", fake brotherhood, evoke the fate of a humanity living in pain and shame. The pain is, however, a source of redemption (another theme in Harris's theosophical writings), as announced in *Who are You?*

> Who are you
> With such beautiful pools of pain behind your eyes,
> Such gentle smiles?
> You look out on men
> From the depths of your pain
> And so often see only what hurts,
> And so you return again to your silent pools
> Ever with gifts (Harris 1922:34).

Earth, the "great heroic little world ... with its mad seething cargo", is not completely doomed, because, again, there is a small ray of hope hidden in the recognition of pain, the first hint of consciousness, as in the "soul's great sadness" in *The Age*.

> This is the age of the soul's degradation,
> Of tossing into the sun's light
> The dross and slime of life,
> And glorying in the miserable glitter.
> Hell's tinsel, and allurements and stupefying glare
> Shot over the soul's great sadness
> With cries and sneers and hard hosannahs (Harris 1922:36)

There is little hope left, though when the pretence of brotherliness or happiness takes over all awareness. Drunkenness is a hard fact of city life, a metaphor for the unenlightened state. In *Good Fellows*, it leads to a compassionate estimate of mankind's usual state of being.

> There is a fake brotherliness
> Drummed up by booze
> ...
> Good fellows...
> Stuttering, spluttering,
> Lolling on each other,
> Differences drowned
> ...
> Pickled to the gills,
> Parboiled, plastered,
> Good Fellows
> Drooling slime words
> From loose lips (Harris 1922:39).

From time to time, toward the end, the tone of the poems lightens up as in *This Fog*.

> If this fog would lift but for a moment,
> This fog we live in and are lost in, close-hugging us in pain,
> This seething fog, weighted with prejudices, dense with the close-packed particles of selfishness, crowding vision into blindness,
> We would see some strange sights, some wonderful sights – so many welcoming smiles,
> ...
> Endless reunions attained with but simplicity of vision,
> Multitudinous meetings in less than the wink of an eye,
> And great home-comings [sic] without the least journeying (Harris 1922:45-46).

In the third section people become pilgrims.

> I know when, and where, they will stumble and fall
> And I know what it is that will make them rise again,
> And with tears streaming down their cheeks move on once more.
> I have lived them through this many times
> So that the way will not be strange nor too hard
> (Harris 1922:52)

Sometimes the pilgrims are asleep, but at least they are real in their "ghostly" sleep.

> ...
> Gawky, awkward, ugly.
> In silly postures, in all postures,
> Rid of their trappings.
> Honest in the dark, behind drawn blinds
> People sleep (Harris 1922:53)

Sometimes they are busy, too busy to look up and say "let us smile" (Harris 1922:56), as in *A Question*, or to ask: "are you sad?"

> Are you like that?
> Are you sad walking down streets,
> Streets hard as steel; cold, repellant, cruel?
> Are you sad seeing people there,
> Outcast from beauty,
> Even afraid of beauty,
> Not knowing?
> ...
> (Harris 1922:56)

Those who are in the dark drag down "the aspiring," those who have been found strong and great, and crucify them (Harris 1922:60-63). In the following lines from *Earth Life*,

though, Karma appears as the principle that is both reward and punishment.

> People,
> Drugged by lusts
> And plunged into a billion little hells
> By self-isolations
> Scurry around
> Seeking satisfactions
> ...
> With voracious earth gaze
> They dig the gutters for treasures,
> Search gaudiness for pleasures,
> Pursue forgetfulness through vices
> And fling
> Inflictions, revilings [sic], stabs, bouquets,
> Loves, hates and fears
> On long, short and medium curved
> Returning arcs,
> That sweep
> Through the souls of men
> Gathering consequences
> And inevitably returning
> Home in time
> For the harvesting (Harris 1922:64-65)

Some of the poems are almost unbearable in their description of hopelessness. In the end, when people "seek safety in defilement" it is themselves they crucify -

> ...
> People know that all feared things must be met, and dealt with and conquered,
> So they seek to see themselves on all sides, in all conditions, undergoing all experience.
> They contemplate their own wounds in the wounded.
> They live their own sorrows in the sorrowful.
> They see their own fears in the terrified.
> They behold their own deaths in the dying.
> Everywhere they see themselves, suffering, and sorrowing and crucified.

> Deep within themselves they know they must down all the dregs of misery.
> Somehow they know they cannot flee from pain –
> That if they do, it will track them down and relentlessly seek fulfillment [sic].
> So people anticipate their pain,
> Live out and discount their pain before it comes,
> Ever seeking some secret transmutation (Harris 1922:69).

Again and again the recognition of one's own pain is the first step toward awareness. Mankind progresses toward its divine fate. Some will be able to hear

> Something within them knows that in utmost suffering is born immortal joy.
> That martyrs find a great glory.
> That heroism is a divine distillation.
> Something within people is undaunted (Harris 1922:70).

Others will simply go on.

> Men run 'round
> Making little fears,
> Making little havens,
> Making little heavens.
> A breath of wind
> And away these go.
> But men go on forever (Harris 1922:75).

These expressions will make their way into Harris's lectures on Theosophy, so there is more than a touch of metaphor in there. Yet there is little contempt and much compassion throughout this section.

With the section called 'Definitions', Harris brings in a different tone. The theosophical teaching becomes more explicit, the voice is that of a preacher or a prophet, but the words are addressed to both self and the crowd, in a series of short vignettes attached to specific terms such as joy, death, time and so on. These vignettes are very close to theosophical teachings.

Blasphemy
It is blasphemy
To be merely mortal,
To wilt under the weight of the ages,
To succumb to second hand living,
To mumble old dead catch phrases,
To praise far off ways and things and sneer at your neighbour's clumsiness,
To say nay, nay and smile at aspirations, dreams and visions (Harris 1922:80)

Beliefs
Beliefs are belittlements
Held before the soul
Like baubles –
Jingling,
Tingling,
Glitter and tinsel
Dazzling the attention
To agitations
That blind vision
To denials
Of the soul's
All-conquering greatness (Harris 1922:81).

One may recognize in passing the agony of the soul who has lost contact with its source, and the resulting hell "where the soul sucks up gall to fill its aching emptiness" (Harris

1922:83), and by contrast, the joy of the cosmic rhythm of life and death when

> Worlds are born in space,
> Circle their orbit,
> Spin with ecstasy,
> Run down, die, disintegrate –Rise and fall,
> Ebb and flow,
> Day and night,
> Pain and joy
> And the zenith (Harris 1922:89).

Time is equated with the double possibility of a dragging down into dust, doubt "and slow broken bits," or a joyful ride "on wings swifter than light." In the end though, the irrepressible in man "wears to nothingness all the institutions of men".

> ....
> It plunges into all the hells
> And burns them out
> And fades out every heaven,
> And creates ceaselessly
> Through the head,
> The hands, the heart, the voice
> Of the millions of men,
> Fresh molds for its future widening –
> ...
> Inexorable,
> All powerful –
> A flame that licks along all channels,
> Burning everything
> Into its own white heat
> On its ecstatic return
> To freedom (Harris 1922:104)

In the last section, entitled 'Spiritual,' there is again a shift this time into a kind of integration of contrasts and

oppositions. This is announced in the first poem of the section, a paraphrase of a series of many quotes collected by Harris, about the Divine dwelling in the human soul, and the soul identifying with God.

> **Breath**
> The soul shrinks in sorrow
> And expands in joy
> Breathing itself
> To a God-like capacity (Harris 1922:107).

This Buddhist-like detachment allows the soul to remain untouched by The Beast.

> Shame spreads thin
> Over a crowd
> And gets lost.
> ...
> In numbers,
> The beast finds its might
> ...
> It takes lightness
> To rise above the mass,
> A loss of all coarseness,
> A smoothness of soul,
> So that the beast
> Has nothing to cling to (Harris 1922:112-113).

In the same order of ideas, the poem *No Music* alludes to the fact that rancour or "belief" prevents love, freedom ...and music.

> ...
> No music
> Quickening into gold-singing flame
> All heart homesickness
> 'Till darkness burns out,
> Leaving the soul

Transparent,
Full-receptive
To all radiance (Harris 1922:119).

In order to perceive the light, one should raise one's eyes, an advice lost on the millions who do not or cannot do so.

...
Now and then
Some lover of light,
With living vision,
Pierces a way
Through the smudgy, weaving womb
...
Loosening,
Letting down
Long shafts of golden ecstasy
On millions of mire-bowed heads
...
But few raise their heads (Harris 1922:117).

The last poem, *Great Song,* repeats the same message: on a cosmic scale.

Down through the ages
Goes great song
Quickening the dead (Harris 1922:125).

These poems as a set evoke themes often found in Harris's teaching, in particular that of the creative spirit moving through opposition. Later for instance, Harris will write

Creative life is ever an interplay of opposites –
The temporal and the enduring
Subjective and objective
The fixed and the free
Sensibility and knowledge
And so on

> Collectively creative life is an interplay among others between - the land and the people and city and countryside.
> As well as being an interplay it is a bridge between these opposites ... eventually no doubt we all have to achieve this – harmonize within ourselves these opposites, contradictions, into a spiritual simplicity that alone can remain undissuaged [sic] and is unconquerable (Harris 36:3-4).

According to Larisey, several sources, including Theosophy can be identified. I see more of a balance between Theosophy and other sources in those texts, but I also place Harris's first introduction to Theosophy earlier in his life. In any case, the published poems are clearly about spiritual matters.

The poems are dark and prophetic in tone, as befits spiritual readings. It is therefore quite surprising to find other poems in Harris's personal papers, which may date from the years following the publications of this book, and which are much brighter in content. This second series of poems was never published, they are often unfinished and several of them seem to allude directly to paintings or scenes in the mountains, or at least nature. They are not sometimes about people, but more often about nature, animals, night, wind and light. It is to be noted that in these poems, people become definite individuals. Something may have happened

to convince Harris that mankind was not doomed without hope, or he may have healed his own sorrow over the events of the First World War or he found in nature a different perspective.

An example is the poem *Streams and Wind*, written in 1925:

> And streams sing their own self-contained song
> Have so much joyous to say
> About their seaward thrilled travelling
> They have no concern with the night or half light
> Or any listener
> For they run with their own love
> Take so much delight in their own life
> Their hearts sing murmuring their full length –
> Voices of streams
> Soft running tireless melodies
> To the sea (Appendix E, m.29).

In any case these unpublished poems are stamped by the notion of ecstasy, a term, which comes back frequently, and the glimmer of hope, which inhabits the world of men, is there transformed into a joyful travel between opposites. Instead of confirming the inevitability of pain, these new visions take the witness into a dance where night and day, stillness and swiftness, death and life are all involved, and shine with their own light. Harris seems then, to have solved, at least for himself, the dilemma of the creative spirit moving between or bridging the opposites.

C. Spiritual practice in Harris's personal letters

Harris was not only writing about spirituality, he was very much involved in his own quest. This is obvious in his correspondence. Harris's personal letters are much more lively than his public writings. Still, they contained a surprising amount of admonitions – for which he sometimes apologizes – and religious discussions; the bulk of it concerns Theosophy or theosophists, and, of course, art. His correspondence with Emily Carr is better known, thanks to the research of art historian Doris Shadbolt and Carr's biographer, Maria Tippett.

The rest of his correspondence, though, exhibits much of the same content: advise on personal problems or health problems (with reference to Blavatsky's dealing with the relationship between mind and body) are given side by side with theological questions, and spiritual practices.

Harris often alludes to the quest for peace of mind. It becomes poignant when he writes to Yvonne McKague Housser just after the death of her husband, and attempts to place Fred Housser's death within their shared faith, which maintains, "that the Law and the Soul do not err and the

heart of all things is right..."[7]. Then, Harris reminds Yvonne that "The Soul is pure, bodiless and bright" and to be free of one of its sheaths – the most cumbersome and inhibiting one – must be a grand experience and it must take place at the moment when it serves the Soul best. It may seem otherwise to us when we are in the midst of difficult experience but it cannot really be so.[8]

Musing on what he would do if his wife Bess was to "ship out of her body" before him Harris struggles with the conjunction of a "devastating thing to contemplate" with the promise of his religious convictions.[9]

> So should I be the one left in my present outward body I have determined to try and convert my feelings – those deep reactions that sough from within the heart – into a more shining love than I have known, free from any subtlety of self seeking and direct them to her heart
>
> ....
>
> If I could rejoice in the freedom, actually participate in it with all my heart and soul it would be a blessing. It is the creative way. All is quiet to the Creative Soul, meant for ultimate productivity, which is to say ultimate Love.[10]

Furthermore, we know from other sources his love for his wife was shaped and guided by theosophical principles; so was his friendship with Fred Housser and for Yvonne. He

concludes with the following advice, which applies equally to him.

> Try not to look toward Fred with any least sadness but with whatever joy in his well being you can summon. Then direct your thought your power to him in quiet. So far as I know anything about life that is positive, constructive, creative – and one, all four of us, are creative souls.[11]

In a 1939 letter to Yvonne, written in Santa Fe, he reminds himself, that mysticism without action is dead.

> But let's "talk" about Theosophy first – I liked your observations about Theosophists – that it is the same old story of the professor, the scholar and the academician diving into knowledge – and losing the creative and child-like urge to make something – even though that something be himself – Of course it is the academician versus the creative – but dash it we are all in more or less degree alike – it is so difficult, so ceaseless – the task of creating a shining thing out of the dimmed light that we seem to be – that we prop ourselves up and try to look bright, - and hope we are just a little -...[12]

The necessity to bring every effort, every aspect of one's being toward one's enlightenment is repeated in his writing, and reveals his own ruthlessness in pursing this goal for himself. "But in actuality it is the one thing we should put our mind to – everything else should cater and be subservient to that urge ..."[13]

The solutions are concrete, no longer the grandiose synthesis of his public writing, but nevertheless form and precise, and even rooted in his faith, as exemplified by this answer to Yvonne complaining of health problems.

> ... but there is some simple instruction for day by day work that is perfect and priceless – I cannot remember it as acutely as I wish that I might – but I think she says, - to start the day by projecting oneself mentally over it – its concerns – happenings and possible happenings – and thereby learning to handle it – objectively or as though it were some one else's ... (Harris's emphasis][14]

Conclusion

Even a short survey of Harris's writing reveals a man deeply involved in religious matters, deeply concerned by the need to articulate and disseminate the tenets of a valid vision of Reality. This interest extended to all kinds of enterprises and social responsibilities; it fed on many different sources, of which Theosophy was the dominant one.

It also demonstrates that this man was very much concerned by his, and his friends' spiritual quests, a quest also shaped by theosophical teachings. That Harris would remain faithful to his private commitment to theosophical principles to the end of his life may seem surprising in view of a life exposed to many changes and many different venues. But this long-

lasting commitment may have been strengthened by the possibility of Harris having been introduced into the inner circle of theosophists. Certainly his behaviour, his authority and his commitment to teaching indicate much more than a superficial or "intellectual" curiosity. Theosophy was clearly a faith, and a faith to be practiced.

How did art fit within Harris's Theosophy? Whether Harris found in Theosophy a ready made framework for his art or whether he brought his own formulation on art to bear on his theosophical faith, he managed to unite the two in a synthesis which has now to be probed.

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[1] Appendix E, c.2, Letter from Lawren Harris to Emily Carr about 1935.
[2] Appendix E, m.24, Letter to Yvonne, Dec. 1, 1937.
[3] Ibid
[4] Ibid
[5] Appendix E, m.24, Letter to Yvonne, Dec.1, 1937.
[6] Ibid
[7] Appendix E, c.4, Letter to Yvonne Dec 31, 1936.
[8] Ibid
[9] Coincidentally, Bess did die in 1969, preceding Harris by four months.
[10] Appendix E, c.4, Letter to Yvonne, Dec 31, 1936.
[11] Ibid
[12] Ibid
[13] Ibid
[14] Ibid

CHAPTER NINE

Art and Spirituality According to Harris

This chapter is built on extensive quotations taken from Lawren Harris's writings, quotations that are longer and more numerous than usual, for two reasons: First, Harris's philosophy has never been the subject of research or even a publication, outside of what he himself published. A large part of his later writing (including notes for lectures he gave) remained unpublished since the book he had planned was never completed; this is where the bulk of most of his texts pertaining to art are located. Secondly, it seems appropriate to let Harris himself, or rather his own words, transmit his opinions, so as to introduce as little distortion as possible into the process of summarizing his thoughts.

Art and Beauty

As theosophical themes permeate all of Harris's writing on art, so do artistic themes permeate most of Harris's writing on Theosophy. It should therefore not be a surprise to find one of Harris's most

systematic presentations of art in The Canadian Theosophist. There he anchors art and its practice in the notion of Beauty.

> There is a phase of truth that does not receive the attention it deserves in our day. A phase that is essential to the inner balance to the vision and understanding of man. A phase of truth that should permeate all action, all thought, all feeling and aspiration. That phase of truth is beauty...But beauty is an indispensable part of all that we consider high, worthy and divine. And it comes to focus on earth for man, in the arts (Harris 1933:129).

Quoting Thomas Carlyle who said "in all true works of art wilt thou discern eternity looking through time, the godlike rendered visible" (Carlyle quoted in Harris 1933:129), Harris introduces the arts as that which came to "...epitomize, intensify and clarify the experience of beauty for us, as nothing else can" (Harris 1933:129). Continuing his argument, he presents beauty as a difficult test for the soul. Like all contact with the divine, the experience of beauty measures the soul's capacity.

> And we may gradually come to recognize, that the power of beauty at work in the crucible of the soul, throughout the incarnations, is one of the severest ordeals that any individual can undergo (Harris 1933:131).

Beauty, he says, is "power at work", and "power at work in all of our lives". So doing, he can compare it to occultism, the practice – by opposition to the knowledge – of Truth in the theosophical sense of the term. Like "occultism", it is a "devastating power"

> And the creative individual in the arts, also knows, that beauty at work in the soul, is likewise an immense power, a power that will ultimately stir the entire man into life and disclose tendencies and temptations he was unaware of, and that this needs a readjustment of his whole make up if he is to achieve a new and wider balance of vision (Harris 1933:131-132).

That is because beauty is not mere emotion or judgement; it partakes of the divine:

> Beauty is a persuasive power in art and in life, it is the very spirit of the plane of being, we theosophists call buddhi, that is, that eternal plane of being wherein abides the immortal part of man and the universe, and which is beyond sensuality and the intellect and desires, and is the source of all high inspiration and devotion (Harris 1933:130).

Because the experience of beauty is a glimpse of the divine, it brings us closer to our ultimate destiny, and it reveals by contrast that which in us prevents that destiny:

> And it seems to work in two ways. It is primarily, an elevating, transforming and unifying power, perhaps the greatest there is. And secondly, it is a searching light, that ultimately penetrates all the secret places in the soul; that leaves no dark corner, no twist of hypocrisy, no petty motive, to its own devices, but shows us the stark truth of our pretences, and our personal perversions, for exactly what they are (Harris 1933:131).

Art is of course multiple and varied. On the topic of the nature of art, Harris advanced formulation after formulation, definition after definition. In a 1933 paper he reminds his reader that technique,

execution and elements such as colour and forms are not the "primary purpose" of art, but rather its "consequences" (Appendix E, m.256, p.2).

The essence of a work of art like the "creative element" –has nothing to do with personal originality – on the contrary; it has to do with "the life that courses from being in touch with the divine." Among the functions of art, "the arts can embody anything we have experienced" (Appendix E, m.129).

Furthermore in keeping with the notion of beauty as an active power, the arts play a major role in propelling man into new ways of being.

> ...It is very important to know that the [arts] also constitute a search at the forefront of man's nature into new experiences, new creative expressions, ideas and forms – toward new and unrevealed horizons(Appendix E, m.129).
>
> .

In this cosmic evolutionary scheme depicted by Theosophy, Truth leads the way. Harris links Truth to Beauty; beauty acts as a catalyst and a revelatory, the latter being the more powerful as it is at work throughout all mankind.

The idea of art as a universal language was often expressed in Harris's times and circles but Harris framed it within a theosophical

perspective by rooting its universality in the unity of man at the spiritual level, and even beyond that in the unity of life.

> It would seem that life or consciousness is universal – that the universe is all alive with one life manifesting itself in an infinite variety of ways and forms. And it would also seem that man is inherently a spiritual solidarity within that one life – and is immersed in the incalculably long process of discovering that fact and exemplifying it in his life. Of all the manifestations of man, art seems to exhibit the inner unity of man, his inner identity. Thus we may not know the language of ancient Egypt, of Chaldea, of China, of Freece [sic] or of the peoples of any age or place and yet we can experience their works of art and thus participate in their creative life, in their visions and inclinations, outlook and character as an immediate first hand experience, outside of time ...(Appendix E, m.220, p.62).

These manifestations are not just the product of the creative spirit, they are also its agent, propelling man, "a power at work" most active.

> ...we see that art at its highest is not only a creative adventure into a realm beyond that of our every day concerns and points toward a greater and more inclusive reality but that it is also a power at work in mankind, a power making for greater understanding of universal values, of the hidden meaning of life and thus it directs man nearer to a sensible and just solution of his problems. But if art is a power at work in mankind then it is essential that each age and each people rediscover in terms of first hand, direct experience its entrance into the greater and enduring life that overshadows our mundane existence – and puts us en [sic] rapport with the timeless expressions of the summit of the spirit of man in all ages and places. This is done by creative adventure in the arts – and is in a sense a process of turning ourselves inside out. That is, the impingement of our total environment evokes in us the need to discover and

> disclose living values that increase the depth of our awareness and leads us both to find ourselves in our environment and to give that environment new and more far reaching meaning (Appendix E, m.220, p.63-4).

Harris uses the twin theosophical precepts of the human soul being "a portion of cosmic fire" evolving back toward the divine, and of mankind's solidarity in that long process, in an introduction to several lectures on art. In practice art acts as a bridge between the concrete and mundane world and the divine. Harris repeats this idea in many different but convergent forms:

> - Art is a realm of life – between our mundane world. The world of the spirit between the infinite diversity of manifested life and the unity or harmony of spirit [sic]. or – between the Temporal world and the realm of enduring and incorruptible ideation (Appendix E, m.220, p.56).

It follows that all men's highest ideals are "... reflections of the enduring Laws of the realm of the spirit" (Appendix E, m.220, p.56) and reflected by art.

> - what we need to note here is that this realm of experience that exists between our mundane life and the life of spirit – the realm of the creative search of art – contains experiences that cannot be possessed, dominated or exclusively owned nor can they be fashioned into dogmas – for once we crystallize them in dogmas we have squeezed out their essential life. – They can only be shared (Appendix E, m.220, p.57).

This is why the arts cannot teach by statements, they can only demonstrate by experience, by being shared with others. Neither are they descriptive; all true art is creation at work.

> It can readily be appreciated then that the imitation of anything in visible nature which many suppose to be the function of an artist is, in so far as it is merely imitation, nothing less than a prostitution of great powers. And that art really begins where imitation ends. Thus when an artist imitates anything and does not create is the most blind. It is obvious also that to the extent of his vision will things as they appear seem distorted and paltry and inadequate. It is the task of the artist once he has found mere cleverness and display paltry to penetrate to the world of pure beauty, of virgin timeless forms, of undefiled ideas and give these expression in this one (Appendix E, m.210, p.40).

The great principles Harris emphasized in his theosophical writings are expressed in different modes but always in reference to the great principles emanating from the divine. As we have seen earlier, these ideals of justice, truth, goodness, and, of course, beauty, among others, show us the Divine Creative power at work in the artist:

> Art exhibits order, embodies law, expresses justice. In speaking of art though we refer to these essentials as rightness, proportion, appropriateness, a just relationship of parts, a diversity in unity. – In the novel, the drama these factors assume an inevitability – given certain characters and situations we say such and such an outcome is inevitable. Why? Because a combination of events and characters work out within Laws of repulsion and attraction, tendencies are evoked by certain suitable situations and their outcome is subject to the law in the situation – a man and opportunity meet and if we knew the man we

> could predict the result of the meeting. – In music Law manifests itself as structure, architectonico (sic), rhythm, and melodic line. – In the art of painting Law again predominates, if expression is to be ordered, that is if it is to have unity of impact (Appendix E, m.220, p.59).

These standards apply to all arts. In a critique of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Harris praises both the "unity" of the work and the fact that it's "an authentic product of to-day." What Harris calls *T.S. Elliot's "Tone Poem"* gives, he writes, a "profoundly moving vision of the emotional and spiritual anemia of these days".

> Here also is the modern search for symphonic style, many melodies, dissonances and bits of severe or melancholy music moving together to form onr [sic] great unified whole. But, and I believe this to be essential to an understanding of the poem, the relationship, the unity. Is interior and not to be found by gazing on its incidents and changing style. All parts of the poem are held together by a swift, clear, inner seeing that is beyond time and the usual idea of distance (Appendix E, m.115, p.1-2).

Order, law and justice are the various and parallel terms of similar quests, including the artist's quest for the perfect, that is the inevitable composition. The resulting unity in an artistic composition paraphrases the solidarity of mankind, and the coherence of reality.

The notion of unity is expressed in the composition of a painting and results in harmony. The notion of composition is a leitmotiv in Harris's writing on art. It echoes Kandinsky's insistence. Dynamic

Symmetry, a concept to which Harris was exposed in Santa Fe, is one of the expressions of unity at work. In Harris's own terms:

> Art is concerned primarily with relationships. The harmony, the order of art, its organization as a living power that can work within us, depends on its inner relationships. It is an epitome of the cosmic order in one sense – of many parts, factors, phases, and meanings functioning together as one living whole (Harris 1976:14).

These principles send the artist (and the viewer) back to the insight of a "superior realm of being" from which emanates the idea of perfection. This insight, which Harris links to "the aesthetic attitude", that is "the inner divinity", leads us at the same time toward the one fixed constant reference in our spiritual life, and to the pure awareness untouched by the usual chaos of human lives. One of the most important aspects of the principles of harmony and order as "powers at work" is finally their intimation of quiet consciousness.

> Mind alone remains stable, and watches the chaos of phenomena, and knows that there is a plastic unity of existence – a changeless harmony – behind the everchanging ...(Harris in Christensen 2000:73).

The Creative Power at Work

The creative powers available to the artists stem from inner standards, which correspond to the great principles associated with

the divine. Principles such as justice and unity have their expression in art:

> Precisely as the power in the universe maintains its equilibrium. All of these powers which are inherent in us, the idea of equality, perfect justice, perfect order, proportion, wisdom and beauty constitute together the inner standard by which the artist works.
> This standard is his basis.
> The very core and centre of his creative work.
> The creative individual whatever his art seeks to convey this inner sense of order, proportion and rightness, and the universal rhythmic flow and balance in what he composes, writes or paints no matter what his subject may be.
> This is why no great work of art is ever literal or an imitation of nature only.
> It is always a product of the creative urge working with this inner creative standard (Appendix E, m.123, p.15).

In developing the idea of the creative principle, Harris echoes Emerson's writings on art, and especially his use of the notion of creative impulse.

> What is that abridgement and selection we observe in all spiritual activity, but itself the creative impulse? For it is the inlet of that higher illumination which teaches to convey a larger sense by simpler symbols. What is a man but nature's finer success in self-explication? What is a man but a finer and compacter landscape than the horizon figures, -- nature's eclecticism? And what is his speech, his love of painting, love of nature, but a still finer success? All the weary miles and tons of space and bulk left out, and the spirit or moral of it contracted into a musical word, or the most cunning stroke of the pencil (Emerson 1926, essay XII)?

For the artist, Harris has a promise and a warning that summarize his perspective on art:

> Art is not an amusement, nor a distraction nor is it, as many men maintain, an escape from life. On the contrary, it is a high training of the soul, essential to the soul's growth [illegible] its unfoldment [illegible] (Harris, 1933:130).

In keeping with Kandinsky, Mondrian and others, Harris presents the artist as directly involved in the cosmic spiritual evolutionary process. The works – and life – of the true artist are informed by the creative process, which all artists, in turn, make manifest.

> An English writer once wrote – "The universe expresses itself <u>through</u> individual minds and souls. It may have nobler forms of expression but they are not known to us." In so far as the artist is creative he serves something greater than his personal self. Furthermore, given knowledge and skill in his art – then the greater his concentration, and his service to the inner creative power – the more luminous will be the universal quality in his work (Appendix E, m.123, p.17). [Harris's emphasis]

Artists cannot assume their role without being part of and aware of their times, places, and social roots. They have to assume their social responsibilities – as artists, but also as members of their "race" (in the sense of a larger living community) and "nation" (in the sense of an organized political body). Only so can they reflect, express, respond to and move forward the specific gifts of their period.

There is a millenarian tone to Harris's presentation, reflecting Blavatsky's preaching, of the intellectual and artistic responsibility. In a society, in a world, characterized by "re-evaluation and re-interpretation of all things" (Appendix E, m.110, p.4) an urgent call goes out to the artists.

> In this the arts should play a leading part for they constitute almost the only possible communion left us between life on earth and the realm of the spirit. If they fail in this, civilization may indeed be doomed(Appendix E, m.110.p.4).

The artist is always rooted in a given time and place where he lives out his incarnation. In turn, the society to which he belongs provides him with language and style. Each society, each nation, each continent is a particular expression of spirit. It is the artist's responsibility to serve that expression.

This idea was repeated in a 1945 Letter to the Editor of the Ottawa Journal.

> There has been no great architect – witness Sir Christopher Wren – artist, composer or poet who was not of his time, place and people and expressed it in his art. This has nothing to do with isolationism. It is a creative fact and universally true. It is the only way in which a people can become creatively virile and thus come to understand the creations of all times and peoples. So if a leader does not employ the best creative talents of his own people for great National projects he betrays their creative spirit.[1]

Then, too, Harris finds himself in close company with Emerson whose text Harris seems almost to quote.

> But the artist must employ the symbols in use in his day and nation, to convey his enlarged sense to his fellow-men. Thus the new in art is always formed out of the old. The Genius of the Hour sets his ineffaceable seal on the work, and gives it an inexpressible charm for the imagination. As far as the spiritual character of the period overpowers the artist, and finds expression in his work, so far it will retain a certain grandeur, and will represent to future beholders the Unknown, the Inevitable, the Divine (Appendix E, m.110.p.4).

This idea is one of the frequent themes in Harris's writings; it sustained his involvement in the nationalist aspect of the Group of Seven. It is found in his publications as well as his private papers, as for instance in 1935 in a letter to Yvonne MacKague Housser and Fred Housser.

> About art. I think there is no doubt that the impress of the time place and people gets into a work just as does the individuality of the particular painter. We work from a certain racial and climatic and place on earth background that lies deeper than one short life – it is in our incarnational direction and thus extends over a number of incarnations – so that whether we do landscape or figures or abstractions they will all embody our background. If done consciously as a specific Canadian or American work this will be definable. If done unconsciously this will be more likely indefinable. (...)
>
> About Canadian art. I think it needs and will get a fresh stimulus. The group was a stimulus. But when it was enlarged and the old members could get by with three or four works every year or so instead of producing three times that number, a certain dynamic momentum was lost or slackened down. Now the new

> members and some of the younger painters should afford the necessary boost. It will come. I think it will come in figure work too. The old group coherency wont (sic) revive. It needs something new and different (Appendix E, c.3).

Certain periods and societies will tend toward representational art, others toward less realistic styles. Neither is better than the other. Yet Harris thought his own society was ready for an art of its own. This modern art was to be non-symbolic and non-representational.

> Every age seeks its own expression in the arts, and given the whole series of progressive changes in art over the centuries and the greatly accelerated changes in our own time, it became inevitable that modern painting would seek to free itself from identifying the visual factors of art with objects and scenes in nature. The evolution of painting has headed in that direction, in the direction of clarifying the individual language until it becomes self-contained and self-expressive (Appendix E, m.49, p.12).

Harris felt very strongly about the role of symbols in the art world, a theme he touched on frequently. In one of his lectures on the topic, he immediately made his position very clear by changing the title from "Symbolism in Art" to "Symbolism and Art". He then expanded:

> Because at their separate poles – Symbolism and art are two different manifestations of the spirit in Man
>
> This is true to such an extent to the artist and to those individuals who understand art and its function in mankind (sic) that they actually resent the intrusion of symbolism into the field of Art today or at least they find that such intrusion weakens the power of the work ...

> The purpose of Symbolism is primarily to instruct, to point the way or a way ... (Appendix E, m.190, p.1-2).

While recognizing that certain forms or phases of Art, in other times and places, accept a relationship with symbolism, he contends that symbolism and Art have different functions. Taking among other examples the symbolism of Theosophy, he points out that the purpose of symbolism is primarily to instruct or point toward a signification or meaning.

> In Theosophy, the Theosophical Symbols contain the whole of the Philosophy – there is the quaternary which is a spare and the triangle with the apex pointing upwards – the quaternay (sic), the lower man and the four lower principles and the triangle the upper triad of divine principles, both symbolizing; referring us to the actuality, the sevenfold man – the microcosm, & the sevenfold cosmos – the macrocosm. – Now all symbols are symbols of something, they always refer us to something ...
> The main point I wish to make here is that Symbols always refer to something – point to some quality or idea in man or the universe or in nature that is not actually in the symbol –
> Now the contrary is true of a work of art (Appendix E, m.120, p.2).

This is because a work of art, contrary to symbolic statements, does not refer to something outside of itself.

> Generally speaking then we can say that the symbol or symbolism represents something, some quality or idea – refers to something outside itself for instructional purposes, for moral or spiritual guidance. We do not actually experience the idea or quality but are referred to it by the symbol – and we accept the symbol intellectually as a reference. On the contrary a work of art can only be understood if we do

> experience it, if we participate in its life. If we become one with it, and it follows from that that any symbol introduced into the work of art if that symbol refers to something outside of the word (sic) tends to destroy or vitiate the unique experience a work of art embodies. Hence artists feel more or less ill at ease when they see symbolism in art.
>
> They feel that the work should embody the very life the symbol points to and thus have no need of the assistance of symbols indeed that the symbol introduced into a work of art detracts from its life as I said (Appendix E, m.120, p.4).

To further his arguments, Lawren Harris contrasts the use of the halo as a symbol of sainthood in the medieval times, with the contemporary period:

> Today the modern artist seeking to express saintliness would not use symbols such as the halo but would endeavour to embody the very experience of saintliness into his work – so that we, the onlookers would not see a halo and say as we might, if we did see a halo – "that is a saint", nor would we say as we might if we saw a medieval work of art with saints and halos "how beautifully those halos fill the composition and what a lovely rhytmn (sic) in the whole the (sic) make." We would be made rather to experience within ourselves a touch of saintliness. This is best illustrated in music which cannot use symbols but only sounds and an infinity of relationships of sounds (Appendix E, m.120, p.5).

The best instances of arts that have remained free from symbolic intrusions, says Harris, are in architecture and music, when there is no symbolic system at work:

> The Beetoven (sic) Eroica (sic) symphony is a noble and grand work. It does not describe nobility and

> grandeur. It does not refer us to nobility and grandeur. It is noble and grand within itself – in its very substance, the flow of its sound.
>
> The Richard Strauss' piece, The Dance of the Seven Veils from the Opera Salome gives us the experience of calculating cruelty and sensuality. It does not describe such a condition nor refer to it – it is it plus an art, an order and a progression and appropriateness that makes it almost an epitome of cruelty and seductiveness. ... The same is true of all great works in the art of painting (Appendix E, m.120, p.5-6).

This distrust of symbolic forms is accompanied by an equally strong refusal to paint something "out there". The members of the Group of Seven doing representational art – landscape art – were not quite representing an external landscape. Instead, they were supposed to represent the inner experience of what they were seeing.

Even during his early period, with the Group of Seven, Harris was already advocating that what was painted on the canvas was not figurative, that the purpose was not to represent an object or a landscape out there, but an experience within. Fred Housser concurs:

> A representative painting of a mountain is simply a copy of what is reflected on the eye's retina. A true painting of a mountain is a more or less imperfect record of what transpires in the soul of the person behind the retina(Housser 1926).

As the artists developed their technique and their style, the emphasis shifted away from the object toward the experience of that object and what that object could reveal about their felt reality. Harris insisted on the fact that one did not need a recognizable image to transmit one's experience to the audience. Again architecture, poetry and music are taken as examples and models of such a process.

> I said that the arts embody the highest expressions and creations of the human spirit. They do this or – can do this without imitating anything in nature. Architecture and music are pure creations of the human spirit – conveying a great variety of elevated experiences – yet they do not imitate anything in nature –
>
> True – in music we have a few compositions such as - The Flying Dutchman overture by Wagner – "La Mer" by Debussy and the "Fountains of Rome" by Raspegi (?!) (sic) but these are not imitations – they are emotional and rhythmic equivalents in musical terms of things and the play of forces in nature. They are new creations and therefore works of art in their own right.
>
> Poetry – is never an imitation – even nature poetry – it is an evocation of moods, ideas, rhythmic nuances and fine and subtle meanings and perceptions and it has a music all its own – the music of the soul (Appendix E, m.129, p.4).

In both examples and the notion of pure art, Harris is following Claude Bragdon's theories. For Bragdon and Kandinsky and his colleagues, as for Harris

> ...the real art of painting in all ages "begins where imitation ends" (Appendix E, m.129, p.5).

Harris has left several manuscripts defending the practice of abstract paintings. The same theme continues from his days as a writer for The Theosophist all the way to his last years:

> Today painting is by way of becoming an art entirely in its own right – without dependence on imitation or even representation – that is representation of things seen in nature.
> An art as pure as music and with the same possibilities of infinite and moving expression and creation – and with a similar depth and power and subtlety of meaning.
> And this new kind of painting introduces us into an immense realm or world of new experiences (Appendix E, m.129, p.5).

Several times he reformulated his classification in first two, then in three, and finally four categories of abstract painting. In 1945 he wrote:

> There are three kinds of abstract painting.
> The first kind is painting which is abstracted from nature. That kind of painting has been going on in part for a long time. Most of the great artists of the past looked beyond appearances and abstracted – that is, they extricated from the surface plenitude of nature its essential forms in order to give their works a basic aesthetic underpinning, and thus a greater coherence and unifed (sic) force of expression. At the same time, however, they were dedicated to a recognizable representation of the world we see. Modern abstract artists, however, take a motive from nature and covert it into an expressive organization which may be for a removed from the actual scene ... in order to create a more suggestive and evocative art in its own right.

> The second kind of abstract painting is non-objective in that it has no relation to anything seen in nature. It does, however, contain an idea, a meaning, a message. This meaning, idea or message dictates the form, the colours, the aesthetic structure and all the relationships in the painting, the purpose being to embody the idea as a living experience in a vital, plastic creation.
>
> The third kind of abstract painting is simply a fine organization of lines, colours, forms and spaces, independent of anything seen in nature and independent of any specific idea or message. In the Best painting of the late Dutch artist Mondrian, for instance, there are severe, exact and beautiful propositions carried to the last degree of simplicity and perfection (Appendix E, m.49, p.3).

The last kind will be defined as Harris enters a freer phase. He will call it abstract expressionism.

> The fourth and most recent kind of abstract painting is called abstract expressionism and today engages the creative attention of many modern artists. It has increased the range of possible subjects in art beyond anything known before. This came about by a process of creative evolution such has occurred in every development of the arts. First Cezanne in his paintings and the cubists gave glimpses of the way into the realm of abstract art. Then followed the semi-geometrical and non objective painters whose work achieved a much wider vision of the new possibilities. Today the vision of the creative artists has expanded into the inexhaustible experiences of the new visual realm.[2]

Abstract painting, therefore stems from two distinct needs. The first one is the return to the divine, the changeless, the guiding light, in time of stress the second is for the artist to search new ways of

seeing and painting in response to the spirit of the time. Harris warns however that abstract art is one of the most demanding disciplines for the artist.

> Being rather conservative in outlook, I am not sure that it is a good thing for young artists at the beginning of their careers to move into abstract painting. I have a notion that it were better in most cases for them to come to grips with the painting of human beings. Towns, cities and nature first, have their emotions stirred by these, the deeper the stirring the better, and thus store up a fund of direct experience to draw on later, not to mention the discipline involved in painting direct from nature.
>
> Abstract painting demands a different kind of discipline which is much more dependent on inner resources, and until these have been acquired or developed by a devotion to natural forms, animate and inanimate, abstract painting cannot be effective. It requires a degree of maturity before it becomes effective...
>
> In one sense there is no progress in art. There is change in ways of seeing, in styles that express this change, but no great works of art ever supplant other and equally great works; they simply add to the great creative heritage of mankind's spiritual expressions (Appendix E, m.49, p.6-7).

Let us note also that whether a painting is figurative or not, makes no difference to the construction of the underlying structure or geometry of the sample. The same principles are at work in a representational painting, in an abstract painting and in nature.

> Moreover, he (the layman) does not identify sounds in music with sounds in nature, and it should become, indeed for many is becoming, just as easy and natural not to identify lines, shapes and colours and their infinite variety and combination with visible nature, but

> to see and experience them as factors with meaning in themselves because they can and do evoke an inexhaustible variety of responses.
>
> Indeed in themselves every line, straight or curved, and all their various modifications and accentuations evoke different responses in the onlooker. Every variation of colour and combinations of different colours evoke different responses. Every interplay and relationship of line, colour, shape, volume and mass evoke different responses in the onlooker. All gradations, emphasis, sharpnesses, blurrings, concentrations and diffusions of tone and colour, every hard or soft density, evoke different responses. All these possibilities of response are inherent in every normal person and their potentialities can be developed to a keen perception and understanding.
>
> All of these together constitute the universal language of the abstract artist (Appendix E, m.49, p.7-8).

Harris's refusal to have his work interpreted as symbolic is explicit.

> A recent writer stated that in the Lake Superior, mountain and Arctic paintings I imposed forms on nature. I can understand the statement but I am sure it is not true. I was so far as I know moved by the shapes and forms themselves to eliminate all irrelevant details in an endeavour to make essential forms (Harris in Jackson 1991:31).

Technique and Composition

Technical expertise, though important as a means is not what art is all about

> We often limit the beauty of a painting – and often the painter limits it – to the material substance out of which it is built up, but art is <u>not</u> in the picture insofar as it depicts seeming realities – all of that must be credited to the technique of his medium of expression

> – the art is in the emotion which carries forms into harmonious balances; in the play of rhythm and purpose (Appendix E, m.256, p.8).

The notion of unity is transposed in artwork in terms of composition and harmony. Reading some of the authors, one would get the idea that Harris composed some of his paintings as if they were mosaics. This does not fit at all with Harris's comments. Dynamic Symmetry[3], a concept to which Harris was exposed in Santa Fe, is one of the expressions of unity at work. In Harris's own terms:

> Art is concerned primarily with relationships. The harmony, the order of art, its organization as a living power that can work within us, depends on its inner relationships. It is an epitome of the cosmic order in one sense - of many parts, factors, phases, and meanings functioning together as one living whole (Harris 1976:14).

Larisey has attempted to reconstruct the principles on which Harris's compositions were organized:

> An early Hanover painting in which Harris made use of dynamic symmetry is Abstraction 1936 I. ... Harris drew all the diagonals and rectangles on the underpainting of Abstraction 1936. However as though he wanted to give a deliberate clue to his use of the system, he drew one of the vertical lines, in pencil I believe, on the surface of the painting after finishing it. The line makes the process of understanding the painting something like solving a puzzle. However uncovering Harris's use of dynamic symmetry by no means 'solves' the painting... Some of the forms, for example those at the bottom right, are like icebergs reflected in calm water and recall his Arctic and other stylized landscape works. The irregular battering-ram form, in pale blue sky colours, is probably a naive representation of the imperious

> spirit intruding itself on nature, represented by earthier colours of the forms on the lower left. These darker forms are 'natural' not only because of their colour but also because they are derived from nature through dynamic symmetry (Larisey 1993:130-31).

Synesthesia could be considered one aspect of unity; there is a kind of principle at work in the joining of several senses or modes of perception. The hypothesis of Harris using synesthesia to inspire his compositions, and more particularly to construct a link between music and painting has been proposed especially by Larisey.

> These illustrations from Thought Forms are supposedly pictures of music, which was generally understood as the most abstract of the arts ... That the Thought Forms illustrations are images of music suggests that Harris's paintings are as well. Rather than having a loose, continuing structure like a melody, his aerial abstractions of the 1930's are more like firm, definite chords (Larisey 1993:133).

> It is well known that Harris liked classical music, that he liked it played very loud and that his guests to his home were treated with lavish musical entertainment. However the idea of treating a visual image as music to the notion that Harris was trying to convey musical impressions is a gap which even Larisey does not bridge. In his painting in Santa Fe, Harris continued developing some themes from his Hanover period. Composition (Abstraction 99) is a later use of a sphere motif in a painting; it was done, I think around 1938, perhaps in Santa Fe. I interpret it like a piece of music in two movements. In the painting, there is a progression from the dark colours near the bottom left along an ascending diagonal toward the realms of light in the upper right. The colours of the lower sections are earthbound: black, wood-grain brown, a dark and than a lighter green. The green and white sphere nearest the centre are each related to the shapes under them as head to shoulders, so are suggestions of human forms. I believe that painting is

> Harris's contemplation of a human being's movement toward higher realms of clarity and light (Larisey 1993:140).

Harris himself often included in his lectures, musical - classical music - examples and references to explain the principles of art as he understood them, and sometimes 'explained' the composition of painting in musical terms.

> The Beethoven Sonatas are visions of the tide of life of man, full rounded, all inclusive, living things - not to be listened to, but to be experienced. So it is with all great art, it must be lived to be understood. If you seek sensuous pleasures, well and good you'll find that in abundance in sensuous things but don't fool yourself into thinking that art consists in tickleing [sic] the senses, soothing delicate hurts, satisfying the hunger for dainty, exotic tid-bits. You'll find what you seek, surely, and you'll seek what you are at the moment - you'll judge yourself, very instant find your size, at every move in the presence of art with no possibility of hiding your face from the lord (Appendix E, m.113, p.3-4).

But he also explicitly refused the validity of synesthesia as a technique, saying one cannot transfer the experience from one medium to another. Harris often mentioned the impossible task of translating the meaning of painting into words (Harris 1969:104). Paintings embody experiences that are spiritual. These experiences or processes were said by him - and by Rudolf Steiner - to be beyond words, even if narrowly associated to the sensory modality of their perception. Talking about music or dance is equally problematic, not because they evoke transcendence, but because words, unless they become an art, are too defined in their

function: "Art is not knowledge", he wrote "though knowledge certainly enters into its motion at nearly every turn? Knowledge is necessary, as is science. Art is equally necessary, but different. It has to do with heightened sensibility which is also why 'Art cannot be taught; it can only be elicited'" (Harris 1969:74).

The artist is not someone with extraordinary visionary powers. The experience leading to a work of art must be elicited.

> (Art) is inherent in each one of us. Indeed nothing of abiding value can be taught; everything eternal must be elicited (Harris 1969:74).

This process is a slow one. It is both deliberate and conscious. It is clear that Harris wished to establish that the artist is clearly responsible for all his choices mediated by the rational soul, traditionally regarded as the highest essence in man's nature. Harris associates rationality and conscience, controlled awareness. This is why he carefully selected his approaches to art. Duval is very assertive in his evaluation of Harris's evaluation of the creation process.

> Although he accepted the operation of the dialectic, Harris specifically ruled out psychic automation, since it is a kind of dictation of thinking, in the absence of all control of reason and outside all common aesthetic or moral preoccupations. Harris said, "Abstract painting is a creative interplay between the conscious, with the conscious mind making all the final decisions and in control throughout".

> Thus Harris's definition of abstract painting eliminates from its scope the tradition of psychic automatism from Andre Masson to Jackson Pollack. It also might disqualify Kandinsky's "Improvisations", which the artist said were largely unconscious, spontaneous expressions of inner character, of non-material nature. Kandinsky's "Compositions", however, meet Harris's conditions, since the painter reported that each of them was the expression of a slowly formed inner feeling, tested and worked over repeatedly with reason, consciousness and purpose sharing an overwhelming part. Kandinsky added that nothing of calculation appears in the final work: there is only feeling (Duval 1948:30).

In the beginning of his career, Harris considered that the artist's relationship with his painting was not a gratuitous one. The artist must be able to access the divine within in order to perceive it outside of himself.

> Visible nature is but a distorted reflection of a perfect world and the creative individual viewing her is inspired to perceive within and behind her many garments that which is timeless and entirely beautiful. Thus to see, the individual must have within himself some spark that is also timeless. Suppose then that each of us here as personality is but a reflection of a greater self that abides eternally in a greater world and ever seeks to inform us here in so far as we permit it. Then by transcending the personal at its highest and acutest we attain to a greater self (heighth [sic] of intensification) which alone can give us vision into the whole ...(Appendix E, m.210, p.39).

Inspiration does not come from nowhere. It has its source in the highest realm.

> All ideas, dreams and visions must come to us from some realm eternally existent. We do not make them up. We do of course besmirch, blur, confuse, and dissipate them, for no one of us is clean or cosmic.

> We are each of us but channels, and the more we permit the full tide of thoughts and ideas to flow through us the surer we are to learn to discriminate between the temporal and the eternal, and between what we befoul and what comes to us wholly pure (Appendix E, m.210, p.41).

But this process cannot take place in everybody, at any time. It is the reward of those who have prepared themselves spiritually.

> To do this well we must assume the impersonal, high attitude of the eternal watcher of life, and never permit any contamination to cling to us and clog life's free flow. Our capacity to discriminate, to order, to organize, to make harmonious, our desire for purity of expression, for utter simplicity and beauty of representation, for joy and light and peace is the high impersonal great Soul of Man functioning in our personalities – to attain a complete saturation and sublimation of our personalities until we become pure creators (Appendix E, m.210, p.41).

Thus the artist must submit himself to a moral and mental discipline, learn to keep his mind open, and strive to achieve clarity of vision.

> The more vaguely we are aware of any idea, any ideal the less purposeful will our life be and the more impure our reflection and creation, and conversely, the clearer our vision the greater the chance that the expression of it will be clear. Only so is a living technique created. And the further the remove from our hidden divinity and from the poise of the world of peace and virgin glory, the more superficial and cruel and meaningless life becomes ... (Appendix E, m.210, p.5).

In practice, this discipline becomes contemplation. At this stage, Harris begins to speak of joy ... love ... and devotion. In this context creation demands what Steiner calls devotion, a term Harris will use in his writing, and in his letters to Emily Carr, among others, to describe the relationship that is established by the artist between him and what triggers an experience which will become a painting.

The practice of devotion is one of entering into contemplation with a quieter and quieter mind and total detachment.

> But here a curious thing may happen. If one stands in the presence of beauty without arrogance, without the funny, little preconceived notions of what this limitless thing beauty should be. Then one grows, expands – the hearts [sic] warms, life comes in, love gives understanding and there comes in a moment of ecstasy the realization that one can include, can love all things – there comes a faint experience of divinity, of the mastery of all things through an all inclusive love. All this is the love of creative spirits. Here is the inexhaustible fount of all created life, of all beauty, and majesty and power and dominion (Appendix E, m.113, p.5).

Theosophy is now perceived by Harris as an instrument, rather than a faith to be followed. So is art.

> ... Art is man's ecstasy. The test of a great work of art is not its brilliance of technique, but whether or not it would "move us towards ecstasy". Such art should "convince us that there is eternal clarity". To accomplish this, "even for a moment", art "must cause the wildly active surface of life to be forgotten and at the same time still the little agitations of the soul for long enough to let us glimpse the simple and noble serenity of all eternal ways." Ecstasy, Harris wrote, brings us the conviction that "we can and must

> become gods ... In us can glow the transmuting flame of eternal life ... [and] when we create we are aware of this" (Harris in Larisey 1993:56).

This glimpse is not only for the sake of the artist's soul. The spiritual process extends from oneself to others and from the inner self to one's own life.

Early in his life, Harris had copied a quote from Elie Faure, a quote which he kept in his papers and "recycled" in his lectures:

> Every being, even the lowest, contains within himself, at least once in his earthly adventure – when he loves – all the poetry of the world. And he whom we call the artist is the one among living beings who, in the presence of universal life, maintains the state of love in his heart – Elie Faure (Appendix E, m.28, p.4).

Conclusion

The link between art and spirituality is an essential one in Harris'ss philosophy. It is obvious, from his writings, that he considered Theosophy as a solid foundation for the formulation of the principles on which such a link is established. Harris's brand of Theosophy was completed by a strong dose of transcendentalism and strengthened by the contributions of such artist philosophers as Steiner, Kandinsky and Bragdon.

Harris's theory of art was not meant as an intellectual exercise. It was meant to guide a practice. This practice was the production of art, considered in both its spiritual and technical aspects.

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[1] Appendix E, m.65, Letter to the Editor of the Ottawa Journal, 1945.
[2] Harris is here quoted by Duval although Duval does not reference the quote in his text (Duval 1972)
[3] The principles of Dynamic Symmetry, a radically different canon of proportion based on a study of Greek art, were discovered or invented by Jay Hambidge, a Canadian who influenced Emil Bisttram and C.W. Jefferys before himself taking Harris and his wife as students in Santa Fe. See Reid (1988:188) and Davis (1992:123). His exploration into Dynamic Symmetry is confirmed by a title of a sketch Figure 148.

CHAPTER TEN

The Critics

Harris's Painting 'Periods'

As mentioned previously, Harris was a prolific and successful visual artist with 1,617 sketches, paintings, caricatures, pen and ink drawings, illustrations, and portraits to his credit over the length of his career. To the Canadian public at large and to those who have written on the artistic period of the early twentieth century, Lawren Harris had distinctive periods of painting styles. His beginning venture in painting started with the urban landscape of Toronto and surrounding towns. From 1910 to 1920, Harris painted the poorer neighbourhood of 'The Ward' in Toronto and few of the paintings had a figurative element. *Houses, Wellington Street* (figure 6) and *Houses, Richmond Street* (figure 96) of examples of just such paintings. His figures, when present have no faces, no distinguishing features. They do not interact with each other nor evoke emotion or empathy. It is also during this period that Harris painted the industrial side of urban life; paintings such as *The Eaton Manufacturing Building* (figure 97), *The Gas Works* (figure

98, and West Coast Mill (figure 99), painted for the pulp and paper industry, show dark, detail less architecture.

After his trip to Buffalo, New York to see the Scandinavian exhibition, he added snowy scenes of woods which include works such as *Winter, Algonquin Park* (figure 100) and *Snow* (figure 101). By 1918 Harris was painting in the Algoma region of Ontario and paintings like *Tamarack Swamp, Algoma* (figure 14) appear. He extends his reach into the North Shore of Lake Superior by 1921 and until 1925 his focus and love is for this country. This has often been called his 'Blue and White' period. Soon he hiked in the Rockies and he sketched the mountains from all directions (figures 23, 24, 102-105). Many paintings and sketches (figures 106, 107, 108) were done in such a short time. It is now obvious that Harris has removed all evidence of people or civilization.

> The isolation and simplicity of Harris's work had by now become a trademark; in 1927 a Toronto journalist wrote that "If Harris could see a polar bear swimming in ice floes he would paint – the ice" (Murray and Fulford 1982:32).

Everything that he paints for the rest of his career contains no people, no roads, no houses. He has moved on in his quest for the spiritual. It was also throughout this Group of Seven period that Harris painted a few portraits including *Dr. (Rev.) Salem Bland* (figure 15) and his future wife to be, Bess Housser.

In 1924 he had found the Rockies, which became the love of his life. He spent many years hiking and sketching his beloved mountains; each mountain seen from different directions, different perspectives. Many times Harris painted the same mountain more than once but never in the same way, i.e., *Mount Lefroy* (figure 109). Until 1930 Harris concentrated on painting the mountains as he experienced them. On August 1, 1930 Harris left for his trip to the Arctic, from this adventure resulted many paintings and sketches of icebergs and frozen landscapes (figures 110-113).

> Harris's interest in the Arctic as subject matter had unquestionably been stimulated by his association with the American artist, Rockwell Kent, who had been painting in Alaska and Greenland since before 1917. (Some of Kent's canvases of 1917-1920 era can easily be mistaken for Harris [sic] paintings of the post-1930 period.) The American was a frequent guest of Lawren Harris during the 1920's and often visited the Studio Building, where many of the Group of seven had their quarters. During this period, Kent delivered a number of lectures in Toronto at the local Eaton Auditorium, under the auspices of the Art Gallery of Toronto. One of these lectures, "Cold Feet and Warm Hearts in Greenland", was advertised by the Art Gallery as "one of the outstanding events of the season" (Duval 1972:23)

However, in 1932 Harris, by his own admission, had virtually stopped painting. It was also in 1932 that MacDonald died and the Group of Seven disbanded and regrouped to form the Canadian Group of Painters. In 1934 Harris divorced and remarried and also moved to the United States. Here he found a new source of

inspiration in the *White Mountains* (figure 33) of New Hampshire. By 1934 had begun his period of semi-abstract paintings (figures 114, 123). In a letter written to Emily Carr in 1936, Harris noted

> Feeling can be as deep, as human, or spiritual or resonant in an abstraction as in representational work...As for me, there is for the present no other way. I had, as you know, come to a complete full stop, the end, both in painting and in life. The new opportunity means new life and a new way of life and a new outlook and new adventure...[I am] more and more convinced that non-representational painting contains the possibility of expressing everything. It takes the expression away from the specific, the incidental, and can lift it to another place ... (Harris quoted in Hunter 2001:39).

Harris was not alone in his quest. A number of his American colleagues were also pursuing the same trend.

> Harris's inclination toward abstraction was also fed by a close friendship with Bertram Brooker, who had been experimenting with pure abstraction since the mid-1920's. The two men shared a common intellectual approach to design, combined with a deeply metaphysical preoccupation with the expression of subconscious and spiritual concepts. (Harris had already reached out into the international mainstream of painting as a member of the Société Anonyme in the late 1920's. Founded by famed collector-patron Katherine Dreier, the Société's membership included such notable figures of modern art as Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, Alexander Archipenko and Max Weber) (Duval 1972:25-26).

In 1938 Harris and his wife moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico and it was here that he met, studied and painted with Emil Bisttram and Raymond Jonson. He was now totally committed to abstraction

through his work with the Transcendental Painting Group (figure 115, 116). World War II intervened, however, and no longer able to acquire funds from Canada, Harris and his wife were forced to abandon America, the TGP and move to Vancouver, where they settled permanently. Harris's style of painting however did not remain the same, by 1945 he had abandoned the distinct form for cloudlike emanations or flowing forms lacking definite line and colours that they themselves became 'formless' (figures 117, 118, 119).

Survey of the Literature on Harris

For the sake of convenience, scholarly authors quoted below have been divided into several categories: 1) those who have written on the Group of Seven as a unit; 2) those who have written about Harris from a profane perspective; and 3) those who have written about Harris accounting for his religious or spiritual affiliation. Most of the latter are quite recent.

In the first group I would place such authors as Davis (1973), Duval (1972), Hill (1995), Housser (1926a), Hunkin (1971, 1976), MacDonald (1944), Mellen (1970), Murray (1984, 1994a), Newlands (1974, 1995, 2000), Putnam (1991) and Reid (1970). These authors approach the Group of Seven from a historical stance. They emphasize the Group's contribution to the

establishment of a truly 'Canadian Art'. The nationalistic element is often presented as the main motivation. Davis' unpublished thesis focuses on the 'philosophy' of the Group of Seven, in particular their nationalist philosophy. The rest of these authors have written historical accounts of the Group. For instance, Newlands writes about a 'people's art' and her focus was on the Group of Seven in the Canadian art tapestry, and Putnam wrote about her relationship with the Group of Seven over a ten-year period. Duval (1972) took the Canadian Group of Painters as his main focus and is the only one to take a critical attitude vis-à-vis the Group of Seven's hold on Canadian art. He adopts a wider perspective than most historians and occupies a particularly informed place in the literature.

Larisey (1974a, 1974b) focuses on Harris and his landscape painting. Larisey writes about Harris's nationalist concerns. Plaff (1978) reminds us that Harris had painted a few portraits for a brief period, a significant one being that of Rev. Salem Bland.

The second group consists of such people as Adamson (1978), Christensen (2000) and Wong (1974). Their focus is on Harris, the landscape artist. No attention is paid to the abstract art of Harris. Adamson talks about the urban paintings and the landscape scenery between 1906 and 1930. Christensen speaks of Harris's

love of the Rockies and the paintings, which resulted. Her book is more a tourist guide for the hiker. Wong's unpublished manuscript strictly deals with Harris's landscape works.

Jackson (1991) and Nasgaard (1984) were the only authors to solely focus on Harris and the Canadian North. Both of these authors created a spiritual interpretation of this period of Harris's work.

Authors in the third group, such as Larisey (1982, 1993), Davis (1992), Reid (1985), Hart (1963), Murray (1994b), and Hunter (2001), all acknowledge the importance of Theosophy in Harris's life and then further attempt to link the theosophical symbolism with Harris's paintings. Larisey wrote about the spiritual in Harris's work.

In her book, The Logic of Ecstasy (1973), Ann Davis goes further than all other scholars in the exploration of a connection between the art and mysticism in the context of the early 20th century period. She does analyze with great precision the religious motivation behind the works of such artists as Harris and Emily Carr. She does bring out connections between theosophical, transcendentalists and Whitmanite teachings and the philosophy developed by the artists in question.

Dennis Reid is well known for his Concise History of Canadian Painting, originally published in 1973; in 1985, he wrote the catalogue for an exhibition entitled Atma Buddhi Manas, the Later Works of Lawren Harris; clearly recognizing the spiritual aspect of Harris's work his involvement with Theosophy, and what he calls Harris's "spiritual idealism." Reid analyzed the later part of Harris's art production, the abstracts, and consistently spoke of theosophical symbolism. Hart attempted to reconstruct Harris's theory on abstract art using the published work of Harris and taking them literally. Murray acknowledges the contribution of Harris to modern art and abstraction in Canada. Her work with Fulford (1982) is the only work which brings Harris's sketches and pencil drawings to the public; it presents Harris in as precise a light as possible but there is no analysis.

Worts' unpublished Master's thesis (1982) was inaccessible by the completion of my thesis. Email contact with the author shows his work to focus on eleven of Harris's abstraction years of from 1934-45. Street's unpublished thesis (1979) is limited to describing Harris's influence on Emily Carr both theosophically and artistically.

These authors, however, do not address the international context beyond mentioning Kandinsky's book and Mondrian's paintings.

When they are interested in Theosophy they do not place it at the heart of the international artistic community.

The Critics' Views

What is the content of Harris's paintings? In the case of the representational work, this first question has been answered by art historians – and by the public at large – by an endorsement of the evocative power of the landscape paintings. Each viewer seems to have an interpretation to offer. No critic remains indifferent. Dennis Reid reacts to the north shore in the following terms:

> The great stump in *North Shore, Lake Superior* [figure 120] , bathed in the rays of the sun, seems to be absorbing this "spirit flow" and to be partaking of the "rhythm of light", the "swift ecstasy" and the "blessed severity, that leaves behind the heavy drag of alien possessions and this attains moments of release from transitory earthly bonds." The rhythm of the branches in Lake Superior, in its greater sublimity, is perhaps, of this period, one of his strongest statements in close to pure plastic terms of the transcendent quality of nature and of the evocative power of the symbolism of light (Reid 1968:16).

It is also relatively easy to assign a storyline or a mythical reference to the images. Nasgaard offers us a strong example of such a symbolic interpretation.

> *Lake and Mountains*, 1927-28, ... [figure 121] is even more a landscape of the mind and a dwelling place for ascetic gods. This hauntingly barren scene was no doubt based on a motif in nature, but it has been so transformed that there is little here that can be explained by the action of natural forces alone. The hardened sculptural forms and the cold supernatural light, whatever explanations may be offered for them

> from Harris's Theosophical reading and speculation, also stand in direct line of descent from turn-of-the century northern Symbolism, as indeed does the kind of mystical insight that frozen places inspired ... Stylistically Harris's paintings from this period are the culmination of a sequence of symbolist mountainscapes ... all rooted in visionary experiences...(Nasgaard 1984:191)

Harris painted in order to "embody" (his term) strong and noble emotions.

In that, he was eminently successful. Whether or not Harris would have endorsed the kind of interpretation offered in the arts exhibit catalogue and historical studies is open to question. Would he, for instance, agree with the following comments?

> Thus *Abstraction 1936* I becomes an image of the destruction of the world that has to take place if one is to advance in the spiritual realm. Harris has placed the same earth-coloured forms in another painting of the same period, *Abstraction 1936 II* ... In both works, Harris, I believe has attempted to embody a universal image of the principle of human growth, of matter - of physical man, as Harris might have put it - being confronted by the spirit. But they also embody the destruction of his earlier, more restricted world in Toronto and the larger horizons now unfolding before him. (Larisey 1993:130-31).

By the end of the twentieth century, scholars and critics aware of the potentially religious nature of contemporary art were looking for signs of an interaction between the artists' production and their spiritual views. This took first the form of a search for religious or symbolic representation in the work of artists like Harris. Such

studies were not usually welcomed in artistic circles. W.J.T. Mitchell, in his book Iconology: Image, Text and Ideology (1986), notes that:

> ... 'religious painting' is ... a violation of the artist's political liberty, and of the natural law of the medium, which confines the visual arts to corporeal, spatial beauty and reserves spiritual significance to the temporal medium of poetry. ...
>
> Religion fetters painting by removing it from its proper vocation, the representation of beautiful bodies in space, and enslaves it to a foreign concern, the expression of significance 'through 'symbolic representations', concerns that are proper to temporal forms like discourse or narrative (1986:106).

This critique is especially difficult to avoid doing when dealing with painters explicitly involved with religious ideas or spiritual processes. It must be remembered that the early abstract artists were just as vocal against the idea of their art being read iconographically. It is even more difficult to read theosophical symbols. This preoccupation is alive in Christopher Jackson's study (1991) of Harris:

> Although Harris included symbols and analogies, metaphors, and intuitive comparisons in his work, the wide sweep of Theosophical thinking which incorporated elements common to many religions and philosophies, allowed his work to be open-ended and amenable to a variety of interpretations. His Theosophical beliefs and earlier religious background ... encouraged comparative interpretations. The search for some ultimate goal, whether heaven, paradise or nirvana, is common to many religions. Many faiths also see life in the natural world as being of a lower order than a hoped for spiritual existence to be attained some time in the future, generally following death. Such parallel ideas allow Harris's

> viewers several avenues of interpretation (Jackson 1991:30).

Yet even though Jackson considers Harris's use of the symbolic and metaphoric as part of a larger concern, he still bases his interpretation on the direct correspondence between elements of the paintings and symbolic connotations. He does so, for instance, in this analysis of Harris's 'iceberg paintings':

> In Harris's art, the iceberg [for example, figure 113] became a sublime and serene symbol of spiritual power. It represented an environment and pattern that has remained unchanged for millennia, and, as such, is an attractive symbol for the existence of a higher force. Even the fact that four-fifths of its mass is hidden from view bestows the iceberg with potential as a metaphor for wider, hidden truths that are not immediately revealed to the senses.
>
> Despite its mass and presence, unlike a mountain, an iceberg is perishable. This fact, too, had symbolic potential for Harris, given his belief in evolution and reincarnation. The cycle of spiritual birth, development, death, and reincarnation is mirrored in the life cycle of the iceberg. It breaks free of an Arctic glacier (equivalent to the cosmic or universal soul), drifts away during its brief individual lifespan, then dissolves into the warmer oceans of the south, only to be returned to its starting point as rain or snow. The iceberg, like the human soul, is powerless to escape this cosmic cycle. It is carried toward its ultimate fate by currents it cannot defy and to an end that is a beginning (Jackson 1991:36).

Jackson similarly approaches the theme of ice and snow in a seemingly most convincing, but thoroughly symbolic fashion.

> It does not require a great leap to accept the various states of water as different forms of spiritual existence or the process of change from one state to another as

> a metaphor for life and reincarnation. Ice, water, and cloud are all the same in their essence but different in outward form. This tripartite nature echoes the tripartite scheme of matter, soul, and force common to many religious systems...
>
> The notion of ice as a symbol for frozen spirit with the potential for liberation - in fact, the proposal of inevitable liberation and reunion - can be usefully applied to an understanding of some of the intuitive structures in Harris's Arctic works. In *Ellesmere Island*, for example, a metaphorical landscape opens before the viewer. In the foreground closest to the viewer lies the snow-covered ice of material existence. The ice is not continuous but is broken into floes: metaphorically speaking, matter or materialism is already dissolving in the light and warmth of truth and spirit. The source of this transformation is beyond the edge of the panel, symbolized by the light that radiates across the water and ice in the foreground (Jackson 1991:38)

Discussing *Ellesmere Island*, Jackson calls upon Steiner and explicit theosophical themes to explain the content of Harris's painting.

> The truncated formed triangle creates an upward movement suggestive of the rise of the soul to the hidden source of light. Conversely, the light radiating downward is a symbol for cosmic truth being shed on the material world. The observer is presented with a sort of Theosophical Jacob's Ladder, in which light rather than staircase joins the natural and the supernatural world.
>
> This truncated triangle is echoed in the mountain below with its top hidden by clouds. Harris has juxtaposed the material world of ice and mountain with the immaterial world of cloud and light, thereby suggesting material existence as a shadow of spiritual existence. The clouds mirror the ice floes and the rays of light the mountain. These two realms recall Steiner's notion that the physical world is an external

> manifestation of the inner reality, a sort of negative imprint of the spiritual world (Jackson 1991:39).

Unfortunately for Jackson, Reid, and even Davis, there is little trace of the notion of metaphor in Harris's writing concerning either his art or that of the Group of Seven. Instead, Lawren Harris clearly states that his art is the expression of an experience to be shared, not an analogy or metaphor to be explained; He is most adamant about the direct apprehension of the image in his paintings:

> Really the pertinent question is not 'What does it mean?' but 'What experience does it contain?' for a real work of art exists to engender a certain kind of life within us (Harris quoted in Harris & Colgrove 1969:18).

Jackson, reflecting on the use of colours in Harris's work, rightly recognizes colour as an essential dimension of his work - but he cannot resist the temptation to give it a symbolic value. He recognizes that Harris, at least during his landscape period was still using descriptive colours. But then Jackson goes back to the idea that Harris would choose to emphasize colours expressing a 'visionary sense of meaning' by carrying a direct symbolic interpretation:

> Harris used colour for intellectual associations, but he did not abandon descriptive colour completely as the French Fauves did, nor did he seek wildly colourful subjects for their own sake as many Post-Impressionists did. He maintained a link between natural objects and their colour while trying to emphasize colours which expressed a mystical, visionary sense of meaning. The colours which carry

> the most direct symbolism in Harris's painting are blue (faith), yellow (intellectual gratification), and, above all, white, which Theosophists believed was symbolic of original truth that had been scattered amongst mankind. (Jackson 1991:66).

He is not alone in his reaction. The following sample of quotes is a good indication of a general trend. Anne Newlands shows the same style of interpretation. Newlands notes that

> For Harris, in pursuit of a landscape that would foster enlightenment and spiritual growth, the images of the poor Maritimes areas symbolized the darkness of the human spirit (1995:52). [reference here is to *Miner's Houses, Glace Bay*, figure 17]

The tendency to attribute specific meanings to colour in Harris's case was reinforced by another member of the Group of Seven, Frederick Varley, who used colours in a definitely symbolic fashion.

> His abstract use of colour continued to be heightened from painting to painting. Varley often spoke of the colours on his palette as "spiritual equivalents", and would hold forth for long periods about the "mystery and majesty" of cobalt violet, the "purity" of emerald green and the "romance" of aureolin yellow (Duval 1972:22).

The mention of Theosophy is no longer rare in the works of critics, historians and writers, but, with a few exceptions like Ringbom, Reid and Davis, Theosophy is presented in terms too simple to be useful. As we have seen, for instance, colours do not really "carry specific symbolic meanings for theosophists" and "standard

theosophical application" is not so standard. Furthermore, as Jeremy Adamson has pointed out:

> ... Harris'ss use of some of these evocative hues is inconsistent with standard Theosophical application, and better reflects the interpretation expounded by Vasily Kandinsky in his Concerning the Spiritual in Art, another book with which Harris was familiar (Adamson paraphrased in Reid 1985:17).

The task of uncovering meaning in images is of course unmerciful when dealing with abstract figures, even more when these figures are coming from an artist who even refuses to date and title his pieces. Critics and art historians had to find ways to describe and explain Harris's works, beyond quoting other authors. Few authors dared to follow Harris's own advise. Paul Duval is one of these few. He bluntly writes:

> A good deal of careless dating has been done, and much nonsense written about Harris's approach to his own abstracts and his adoption of colour theories of the Russian pioneer, Wassily Kandinsky. Harris himself denied this, as "reading into my pictures after the fact." He was, indeed, a highly intuitive colourist and his main concern was simply to bring about a "right relation", as he phrased it, between the hues in a given composition. Nor did Harris usually have a preconceived idea behind his abstractions. At times, as in *In Memoriam to a Canadian Artist* (1950) [figure 122], this occurred, but generally the artist claimed that his abstract compositions, certainly the later ones, were the result of intuition and executive control – and nothing more (Duval 1972:27).

For all his expertise, Dennis Reid remains squarely established in the symbolic style of interpretation.

Throughout his catalogue of Harris's abstract works, Dennis Reid plays freely with symbolic connotations, as exemplified in the following comments:

> A canvas, *Winter Comes from the Arctic to the Temperate Zone* [figure 32], must also date from this first winter in Hanover. Here, Harris's interest in snowy boughs is given an explicit symbolic meaning, as we see that behind a foreground pyramid of creamy, snow-covered trees lies a deep blue Arctic island, and behind that an ethereal blue, soaring mountain form of the sharp-peaked rocky Mountain variety. The hushed stillness of New Hampshire's snow-laden landscape thus partakes of the spirituality of the regenerative Arctic, and ultimately of those great mountains - Himalayas or Rockies - that represent to Theosophists the traditional source of spiritual knowledge ... *Winter comes from the Arctic* ... is tied entirely to a specific landscape experience (Reid 1985:23).

His approach is enriched by the fact he is able to establish connections with previous work, previous experiences, previous landscapes, or previous styles.

> ... [I]n September-October, [Harris] was represented by a work entitled *1943* in the Gallery's twelfth annual B.C. Artists' Exhibition. Exhibited with CGP in Toronto the following April as *War Painting* [figure 124], it is known today simply as *Abstract*. Entirely geometric, it is reminiscent of Santa Fe as well in its use of intersecting transparent planes. On the other hand it diverges from the later Santa Fe work in its darkly dramatic mood (suitable to its subject), and in its deep space and full modeling. Some of its forms remind us of the vocabulary Harris employed in his Hanover paintings, and if viewed on its side it is particularly evocative of the *Riven Earth* [figure 37] pictures of 1936. Recalling Harris's remark to Raymond Jonson following his return to the Rocky Mountains the summer of 1941, however, we also can see in this *War Painting* of 1943 some evidence of his renewed interest in landscape, even if it is, as was often the

> case in Hanover, landscape that echoes the dreamspace of the surrealists (Reid 1985:45).

Yet he goes back again and again to religious connotations that could be attributed to Theosophy and for instance to the notions, still popular, of energy and thought-forms, especially when dealing with abstract works.

> We don't know which are the paintings in which Harris first abandoned all naturalistic representation, nor when they were made. It is likely during 1935 that he began to experiment with images that ... seem to express the conjunction of surging streams of pure energy ... [*Abstract Sketch* 1935, figure 129] ... while clearly recalling the distinct, flowing forms of Bertram Brooker's paintings [figure 78] of the late twenties. Painted on the sort of boards he used for landscape sketching, the forms of these pictures suggest landscape shapes, but there is no landscape space, and in some cases there is no apparent correct orientation ... Other early abstract sketches are more evidently linked to the nature of mountains, while still describing force lines of pure energy ...[figure 126] These brilliant arcs of light also suggest strongly the imagery of "thought forms", as promulgated by Besant and Leadbeater ... while the dark threatening forms in the foreground (one of which seems to be melting at its tip) and the ambiguous, shifting space of the picture suggest as strongly the dream-like imagery of the surrealists (Reid 1985:24)

It was even more tempting to use references to Theosophy in Harris's abstract paintings:

> Harris seems also during 1936-37 to have been developing a personal vocabulary of evocative forms, precise, machine-like, yet at the same time appearing as though they might have resulted from natural processes like erosion or crystallization. The interaction of such forms within ambiguous spatial constructions is at times very complex ... although more often than not a coherent spatial ambience is

> maintained to evoke some sort of fantastic dream landscape ... That these pictures are meant to describe an apocalyptic event is suggested by the title of *Riven Earth II*, a title, however, that [was] likely given years after it was painted. Its imagery includes dark, sphere-like shape sheared clean through by a thin plane, an arcane floating form, ablaze with light that resembles a piece from an elaborate, three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle, and in the upper right corner long icicles. A key to such imagery could likely be found in Theosophical concepts... (Reid 1985:26). [Italics are Reid's]

Another example of a reference to thought-forms is provided in these comments:

> *Abstract Painting of A Mountain Experience* I [figure 127] is known today simply as *Mountain Experience I* ..., a large canvas that combines the characteristic peak of *Mt. Ann-Alice* with a painterly aura and superimposed abstract forms reminiscent of the "thought forms" of Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater. Although we have noted of Harris'ss use of symbolic colour in a fashion consistent with the theories of the Theosophists Besant and Leadbeater as early in his landscapes of the twenties, this is the first instance of his use of the forms in conjunction with landscape elements, other than in the Hanover canvas, *Mountain Experience* ..., which, as mentioned earlier, seems to have been reworked, perhaps as late as the mid-forties. Another canvas that combines such Theosophical imagery with landscape forms dates from the same time, and is a good candidate to be *Abstract Painting of a Mountain Experience II*. A Harris unlike any other, it is a narrative record of the ascent of a mountain, with stages compartmentalized by symbolic forms doubling as interior frames (Reid 1985:51).

This reliance on symbolic interpretation may, in my opinion be due to a perception, that seems common in all those authors, that mysticism comes in one universal package. In Religious Studies,

one would be more aware of the religious and cultural specificities, and of personal idiosyncrasies shaping religious convictions and experiences. In art critiques this recourse to 'universal' symbolic references is extremely frequent. Quoting Sydney Smith from the national art magazine, Maritime Art, an art reviewer also looking for universal symbols, Reid justifies this move repeating that, "since the pictures have neither titles nor numbers, reference to them must of necessity by more general that specific" Accordingly, Reid notes that Smith is

> ...nonetheless ... able to give us a sense of the range of the work shown (which encompassed both Santa Fe and Hanover productions), while isolating some of Harris's specific accomplishments. The most important of these is the way in which 'in placing his emphasis primarily on basic form, the artist has achieved the ... effect of convincing the spectator that within the chosen color scheme there is a methodical train of thought and that underlying the basic forms themselves there is an idea that is logically consistent with their use as 'pure' symbols - symbols that are practically universal in their formal associations and are a fundamental part of our common heritage'... (Smith quoted in Reid 1985:37).

Accompanying the review was Harris's *Composition No.1* (figure 40). Harris himself intimates that there is indeed behind each of his – and his colleagues – paintings, a "methodological train of thoughts" – but the nature of those thoughts remain inaccessible to these critics.

References to thought-forms, in the theosophical sense of the term, are, of course, very common among art historians cognisant of a connection between abstract art and Theosophy. They are rarely appropriate, even though the idea of thought-forms was and still is present and accessible. Leadbeater and Besant's book was, and still is, regularly reprinted. But read outside of the theosophical body of literature and without the knowledge of the contribution made by the abstract artists themselves, the notion of thought-forms can be extremely misleading.

Most naive readers of Leadbeater assume that thought-forms are simple abstract forms. The perception they could have of Lawren Harris would be shaped by that assumption. Even art critics with some understanding of a theosophical influence on art still often assumed that thought-forms were like a catalogue or table of correspondences. More sophisticated writers, such as Reid, though accessing the complexity of what Harris is trying to accomplish still assumed thought-forms were symbols that could be combined with each other.

Since Harris never considered painting 'psychic' production – none of what he did qualified as thought-forms in Leadbeater's sense of the term. There is only one example of a possible thought-form-like

production in Harris's abstract works. It did not have much to do with geometrical forms however.

> *In Memoriam to a Canadian Artist* [figure 122]... is based on a late Santa Fe sketch that has been altered dramatically by the addition of a loosely painted orange, red and yellow form that seems to have grown over the clean geometric shapes like some exotic fungus .... An homage to Tom Thomson, the canvas displays no trace of this geometry, but instead a large, dark, looming, mountain-like shape that supports a similar accretion of brilliant hot colours, an accretion that in this context is clearly more closely related to Theosophy's "thought forms" than to New York gestural painting (Reid 1985:54).

A reading of Harris's painting using a theosophist colour chart, or even a system that could have been developed by the artist himself would not be valid. As discussed in Chapter Seven, Kandinsky created a grammar of colour and form and Marc created his own theory of colour. Harris, however, did not leave us such a grammar. He was not interested in such a systematic, scientific enterprise. For Harris the experience and its authenticity mattered more than any system. Accordingly, Harris refused to formally assign values to colour beyond the most general agreement. He refused in the same motion to assign values to forms. Steiner himself, who had contributed so much to the systematization of colour theory within the theosophical ranks, and whom Harris had carefully read, stated:

> If you begin to work out what these forms "mean", my dear friends, you're on the wrong track. This would not accomplish anything. You would be standing on the same ground, more or less, as those who interpret ancient myths and legends symbolically and

> allegorically and think that they are practicing theosophy. People who want to interpret myths and legends and even our forms in this way may be very clever and ingenious, but it's as if they were trying to look under people's chins in order to interpret the symbolism of the human larynx. No, we do not understand the language of the gods by trying to interpret our artistic forms - or myths and legends either, for that matter - symbolically or allegorically by applying all kinds of tricks of human rationality. We will only understand the language of the gods when we try to understand it with our hearts. Then sitting here and hearing the spirits of the world speak to us will be a living experience for us. If in this way we understand how to enliven this sense of what the soul must do to find its way to the source of the language of the spirits, we will then turn our gaze to where walls are pierced by the windows. Where the walls have been broken through, we will see what lives in human beings when they set out on the path from the physical to the spiritual, wither consciously or unconsciously (Steiner 1998 (1914):173).

Symbolic theosophical connections might have been more amenable to analysis in the work of other artists who have chosen to remain within a symbolic path and one can, with benefit, look for theosophical figures in the early Malevich paintings, for instance. Harris, on the other hand, had explicitly refused this kind of interpretation. This refusal was paradoxically rooted in anthroposophical views.

Rudolf Steiner, for instance, talking about Dornach, echoes Harris's refusal to just illustrate theosophical - or other - teaching. In his views, one should not produce allegory or symbol that is a

connection with outside principles or objects, but rather one should express the inner life.

> When the Dornach building with its double cupola was being built, the issue was to create, in architecture, sculpture, and painting, a shell for the work of the anthroposophical worldview that would be carried out inside it. Just as it is possible to stand at the podium in Dornach and use the language of thoughts to speak about what can be seen in supersensible worlds, it must also be possible to allow the architecture, sculpture and painting that frame this anthroposophical worldview to proceed from the same spirit.
>
> There is a great danger involved in this, namely the danger of having ideas about things and then expressing these ideas outwardly in a form that is simply symbolic and even crudely allegorical, as is frequently the case when worldviews attempt to make the step into outer representation (Steiner 1922/1998:251-2).

Steiner denies these expressions have anything to do with art, as defined by theosophists, even more so for anthroposophists:

> The symbols or allegories that then come about are not artistic at all; on the contrary, they make a mockery of truly artistic sensibilities. Above all else, it must be stated that the anthroposophical worldview wants nothing to do with this symbolical or allegorical non-art or anti-art. This worldview intends to take as its source an inner cultural life so rich that it can find fulfillment in authentic artistic creations rather than in allegory or symbolism. There is not one single symbol or allegory to be seen in Domach. All the artistic representations are derived from the artistic process of seeing, from the process of molding forms, from creating out of the element of color in painting. This all came about because of a fully artistic view that had nothing to do with what is usually expressed by people coming and asking, "What does this mean? What does that mean?" There is not one single form in Dornach that is intended to "mean" something in

> this sense. Each single form is supposed to be something in a real artistic sense: it is intended to express itself, to mean itself (Steiner 1922/1998:251-2).

Ann Davis, who has done more than all the researchers to document Harris and his contemporaries' ties with Theosophy is an interesting case. In the end, even she could not shake the impulse to refer to symbolic meanings. She intersperses, after a brilliant analysis of the transcendentalists, the theosophists and Whitman's influence on the life and works of Harris, among other artists, with personal interpretations of Harris's paintings that send the reader right back to symbolism.

Regarding *Isolation Peak* (Figure 125), she comments:

> In his final canvas, however, the roughness and crudeness that he mentions as the properties of a forming country has been smoothed into compelling rhythms. He moulds and manipulates his volumes, building up his striated hills to climax in the forebidding mountain. Now the whole work is redolent of the ideal. The forms and colours of nature are only used as a point of departure in the ascent to a level of higher awareness (Davis 1992:68).

Without providing any solid foundation for her reading, she brings in the notion of thought-forms:

> Theosophy gave Harris plenty of examples of the use of geometrical symbols for emotive and intellectual motifs. The triangle was a favoured one. As well, in Thought-Forms, Besant and Leadbeater contended that the "sharpness of outline shows the clarity of its

> creator's conception. It is noteworthy that Harris favoured sharpness of outline in much of his work, with the notable exception of his last canvases. This combination of grand emotion and clear thought is one that Lawren Harris certainly sought. He may also have followed the example of Wassily Kandinsky in his preponderant use of the triangle/ Greatly influenced by theosophy himself, Kandinsky wrote in Concerning the Spiritual in Art that "the life of the spirit may be graphically represented as a large acute-angled triangle, divided horizontally into unequal parts, with the narrowest segment uppermost...The whole triangle moves slowly, almost forward and upward" (Davis 1992:119).

She interprets the light, so prominent in Harris's paintings, as a symbol (in the Whitmanic sense of the term) of a mystical reality.

> In *From the North Shore, Lake Superior* [figure 107] Harris worked both fact and symbol. The title refers to a specific spot. The headland and island are carefully delineated. The texture of the water is precisely rendered, suggesting specific weather conditions. Concrete facts abound. Yet the ideal is also clearly present. The viewer is placed above and well away from the foreground hills, so that distance is created between viewer and scene, access is difficult, and penetration impossible. Unnatural clouds and unexpected light make the section more exalted, more beautiful. Perhaps, as Roger Mesley suggests, these cloud-like forms are flower petals unfolding beneath a mystical light (Davis 1992:62).

Even when dealing with the Dynamic Symmetry, a domain singularly devoid of symbolic connection, she treats the geometric shapes as theosophical symbols.

> Perhaps Dynamic Symmetry as taught by Emil Bisttram also encouraged Harris to expand his use of circles and curved shapes. Not that Harris had totally ignored circles hitherto. They were, after all, of

> considerable importance to theosophists and interested Kandinsky too. But, until painting *Abstract No. 7* [figure 116], Harris had usually employed them singly and volumetrically. Now multiple circles appear in his canvases. In *Abstraction* [figure 130] three circles hold down the central image in a manner reminiscent of the hermetic scheme of the universe. These circles are further divided internally, as done by Blavatsky and Hambridge in his book Dynamic Symmetry (Davis 1992:124).

Harris's early paintings, and his landscapes to northern Ontario, the Arctic and the Rocky Mountains may seem easier to read than the later abstracts. The transition to abstract art is read differently by art historians.

A first question has to do with the connection between landscape and abstract works. Is there an abrupt shift? Or a progression? The question of the relationship between landscape and abstraction has long preoccupied the critics. Most authors would agree with the presence in Harris's abstract work of references to natural elements. Ann Davis describes an early abstract as follows:

> In *Mountain Experience* ... [figure 126] Harris was working a format very similar in its basic construction to Resolution. Both canvases are dominated by a central triangle, which is approached by a pointed shaft, a light-like curving energy ... In one sketch, the forms at the base of the mountain triangle are clearly rocks or hills; in the final canvas these forms have become abstracted organic shapes, relating geometrically and aesthetically to the central triangle ... This same focusing is evident in *Abstract No. 7* [figure 116], painted in about 1939. Again a sketch suggests an inspiration from nature, from mountains.

> Once more, in the final canvas, these natural elements have vanished and the image has been pared down to float in the frame rather than relate to framing edge. The cloud-like emanations apparent in the sketch have been brought in to encircle the major triangular shapes, perhaps depicting a theosophical upward rush of devotion. The concentric circular planes can be read similarly (Davis 1992:121).

In Murray and Fulford, the connection with landscape is even more forcefully maintained:

> In his late period Harris was conscious of his isolation ... but determined nevertheless to follow his own course. The style of his mind was illustrated by the titles of paintings in an exhibition of his abstractions at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1959 - *Eclipse of the Spirit* and *Forming toward Beneficience* and *Configuration in Space* [figure 131]. The painter and teacher B.C. Binning, in an introduction to that show, remarked: "At a time when most men are simply summing their past work (Harris was sixty three), Lawren Harris continues to broaden and deepen the dimensions of his expression." The ways in which he did this are fascinating: endless elaborations on shapes and spatial relationship, worked out in drawing after drawing. The appearance of these abstractions cast an interesting light backward, onto his earlier work. They made it clear that in his most eloquent art much of the strength had come from the landscape itself, and from the iconographic power that landscape exerted - however much Harris stylized it as he set it down on paper or canvas. Among landscape painters in Canada, Harris was the most abstract; but he was still a landscape artist. (Murray and Fulford 1982:35)

In other words, it is assumed that Harris was still abstracting from landscapes, when painting abstractions.

Dealing with the abstract painting, especially with the later abstract work of Harris, the only meaning that the critics can ascribe to Harris's work are that of logic, proportion, symmetry, and rhythm, etc., all aspects Harris would agree with, but which have more to do with relations than content. Dennis Reid, in the same process, starts with the organic logic then goes back to symbolic meaning.

> ... *Abstraction (Involvement 2)* [figure 130], ... we can see in the proportions and relationships of its forms, and in its graceful, arcing lines (fragments of logarithmic curves), clear evidence of his use of dynamic symmetry. Yet, if we did not know the drawings, we would still sense a certain organic logic to the painting in the way that the forms seem to revolve around the strong central axis in elegant rhythms, suggesting a fantastic plant growing from the earthly apparatus in the painting's lower range. For Harris, this limitless expanding image springing from well-prepared ground would have caught something of the potential of the human spirit to partake of the complex order of the cosmos (Reid 1985:32-33).

Even from a theosophical perspective such an interpretation would be problematic since as Steiner notes "each single form is supposed to *be* something in a real artistic sense ... it is intended to express itself to mean itself" (Steiner 1922/1998:252).

Once Harris took up abstraction, his work never again found favour with his countrymen.

> In part, however, it must also be that his abstract work casts a light back upon his Group of Seven canvases that reveals them as a progression, from the initial paring down in his Lake Superior subjects of the early

> 1920s, to the stylized austerity of his arctic scenes from turn of the decade, to the constructed images of symbolic mountains he painted in the early 1930s. Harris had inched closer and closer to a non-objective manner during the heyday of the Group, and the jump from metaphoric landscapes such as *Isolation Peak* Figure 125) or *Untitled (Mountains near Jasper)* to nature-based abstractions such as *Mountain Experience* [figure 126] or *Pyramid* (Figure 128) constitutes a minimal expenditure of imaginative capital (Wolin in Hunter 2001:8).

Of all the witnesses, critics and historians, most of them either refused or ignored the abstract phase of Harris's art. For them, the abstract work corresponded to a different phase, the result of an abrupt shift in Harris's career. Three authors stand out against these views.

For Paul Duval, there was no real break because one could read the abstract orientation a long time before Harris moved into the discipline of abstraction:

> Harris's transition to abstraction seemed inevitable throughout his career. As I wrote of his Arctic canvases in an essay for the catalogue of the National Gallery's 1963 Harris Retrospective Exhibition: "He had moved from the tender intimacy of tiny, peopled dwellings to an empty world where he was almost the sole witness. He had withdrawn away from the world of habitations and more and more into his own spiritual resources. His entry into the field of abstraction now seemed a foregone conclusion"-- (Duval 1972:27).

Ann Davis brings different insight rooted in a problem faced by Harris and in contemporary art, that is the disjunction between man and nature.

> If Harris could find a way to remake nature in spiritual terms to satisfy his optimistic prognostications – even if in his remake few read optimism – he still had to find a way to cope with the linking of art and nature. Along with Carr and many other painters of his generation, Harris had to deal with the problem of the dialectic between art and nature, especially a nature that seemed rough and rude. In Europe, Kandinsky, Picasso, and Klee all had to confront the problem, in the United States, dove, O'Keefe, and Hartley were equally concerned. Three solutions appeared: obviate the tension between art and nature,a s the Symbolists did, by making them separate and autonomous; emphasize the tension, as the Cubists did, by visual puns and spatial ambiguities; or reconcile the tension, as did the five Canadians examined here, by perceiving art and nature as based on the same laws (Davis 1992:64-65).

She links this position with Harris's perception of the north.

For Harris in the mid-1920s, art based on the same laws as nature must respond to and be directed by what was characteristic of local nature, the North. Time and again Harris referred to Canada simply as the North, often employing a capital letter. He saw the North as having specific mystical and pictorial characteristics.

She could have gone a step further, and related Harris's position to his definition of Dynamic Symmetry as a glimpse of the Divine Laws

at work, or his perspective on the artist's means, that is forms, figures and colours relating to each other according to the same Laws. Art and Nature are indeed working on the same principles. The road to the abstract is then wide open and obvious. There is logic to ecstasy, and one could find ecstasy in the logic, Kandinsky would say in the composition, of a work of art.

Working from the assumption that Harris was a mystic, and from the corollary that Harris's painting had to represent or mark the steps and concerns of the artist's spiritual journey, Dennis Reid took for granted the continuity such journey would entail.

However, Reid also has the immense advantage on other specialists, through his expertise as a museum curator, a precise and detailed knowledge of most of the Harris's paintings, including and especially his abstract works up to Harris's last months, and of Harris's biography. This gives his analysis a definite authority. Even though he frequently allows himself to read all sorts of symbolic correspondences in Harris's images, he also produced a penetrating analysis of the progression of Harris's works.

Reid could then perceive throughout Harris's abstract periods (he recognizes several stages) not a straightforward progression but rather a development marked here by a gathering of experience,

there by a recycling of older motifs, here a return to figurative or representational drawing, even a few landscapes, there a discovery of a new stylistic aspect. It is in this that one can perceive the overall unity of a work when, finally all styles overlay sooner or later.

Taken together, these authors make a convincing argument for a progression lasting from the early stages to the last works of Harris's career. This progression is not marked by distinct separate phases, but rather by different emphasis overlapping then dominating the artist's work for a period of time, and often "quoted" later in subsequent periods.

Throughout his career, responding to different influences, encounters, and environments, Harris modifies his approaches, and systematically explores the possibilities of ideas, schemes and styles. In the end, though, he escapes all the systems.

At that point, he is no longer attempting to control his reaching the experience he wants to convey. By now the experience is dictating the painting and Harris acknowledges that he no longer knows the outcome of a painting when he begins working on it. This is a far cry from the systematic laying down and paring down of his earlier

landscapes. Yet this is the completion of a long process, not another decisive step.

Conclusion

The studies taking Harris's theosophical and other philosophical aspirations into consideration are marked by a strong tendency toward symbolic interpretation. To interpret Harris's painting as composed of elements with symbolic connotations including theosophical images does not however, correspond to Harris's own view. The idea that the paintings can evoke particular landscapes or ideas is also inadequate for the same reason. Even the interpretative comments of authors such as Jackson, Nasgaard and Davis reflect the difficulty of approaching these paintings with a question such as "what experience does it contain?" One also has to remember that any analysis which forces a bias even for the viewer does not fit with the fact that Harris was quite specific about the notion that the public should find their own experiences or "state of mind" in his paintings. Recognizing that, in Harris's words, the artist attempts to have the painting "embody" an experience, the paramount question becomes: What kind of experience?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

A Religious Studies' Perspective

Approaching Harris's painting not from the perspective of Art History, but from the discipline of Religious Studies, requires a shift in the angle of perception. Instead of taking his sketches and paintings as Harris's *raison d'être*, and centering a scholarly analysis on his contribution to the art world by his techniques, his life experience, his knowledge, and his beliefs, it is proposed here to consider the painting as only one of the components of the artist's life and to study in them the lived process which gave them existence, and gave Harris his motivation.

Prolific as he was about art in general, Harris was short about comments about himself and his own work, even in his private writings. The task of reconstructing Harris's own intent is therefore impossible to achieve. Fortunately, he broke, from time to time, his own rules. He was, also very specific in his advice to the viewer; and, of course, he left us drawings and paintings. Looking at his drawings, paintings, and sketches, one can access the progress that Harris himself acknowledged in describing both his and his

colleague's journey toward a True Art. One may notice that knowingly or unknowingly, Harris had already anticipated such a progression when he drew the illustrations to his book of poems in 1922. There he starts with a street scene, then a group of people, to a hill rising from a lake, then to an iceberg-like form on the water with the sun close to the horizon, and finally to a tranquil abstract mountainous landscape for the last section entitled 'Spiritual' (figure 132, A-E, in the text).



A

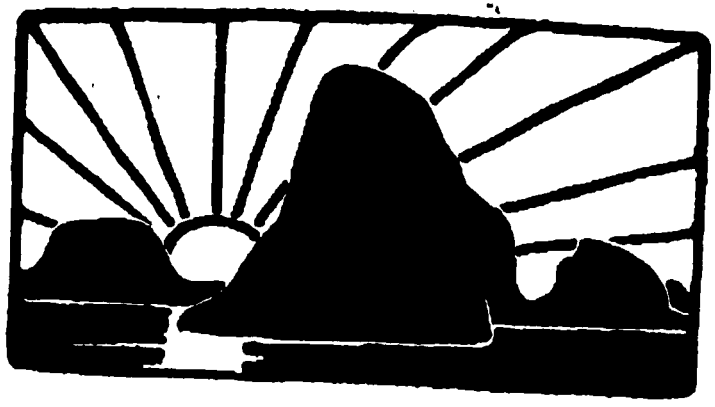


B



C

Figure 132



D



E

Figure 132

A similar progression can be read in the phases of Harris's work. In Figure 133 A-S (in the text), we have a selection of Harris's paintings, which show a definite progression throughout his career. Remembering the overlap of stages discussed in Chapter Ten, A (*Streets of Berlin,* 1907), and B (*Houses, Wellington Street, Winter,* 1910), show multiple houses, urban life. In C (*Return from Church,* 1919), Harris has included people and houses, although, as mentioned before, no one has a detailed face, no one interacts.

Moving to D and E we see Harris has moved to painting just a single house, first we see a lack of nature in D (*House in the Ward,* 1917), and then Harris moves away from the 'subject', the house, to put the nature back into the picture in E (*Red House in Winter,* 1926). In F (*Red Maples,* 1920), Harris is out in the country, into nature; the people and the signs of civilization have disappeared. In G (*Afternoon Sun, Lake Superior,* 1924), Harris has moved his location to Lake Superior where he allows the viewer to see the shoreline but at the same time look out onto the lake, out to the horizon.

B

C

A

Figure 133

Figure 133



H



I

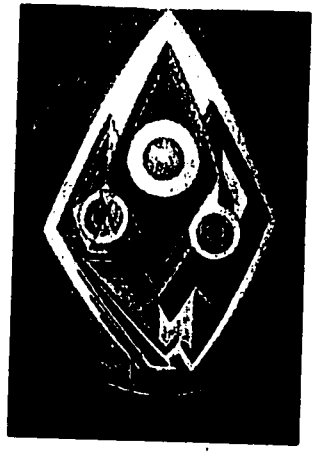


J



K

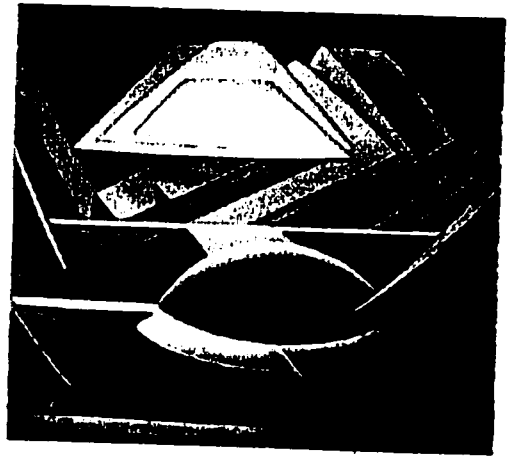
Figure 133



L



M

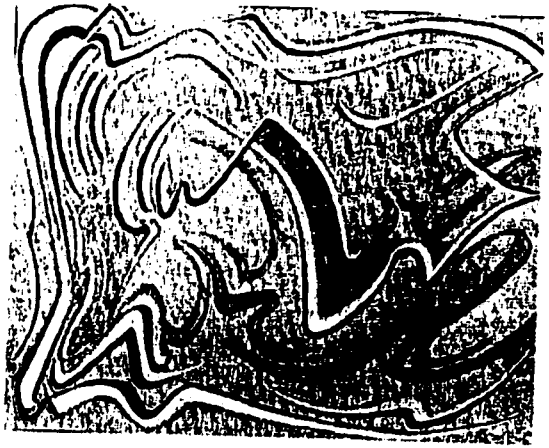


N

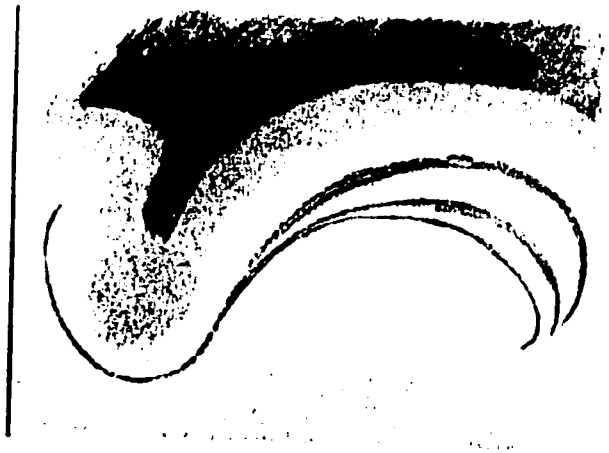


O

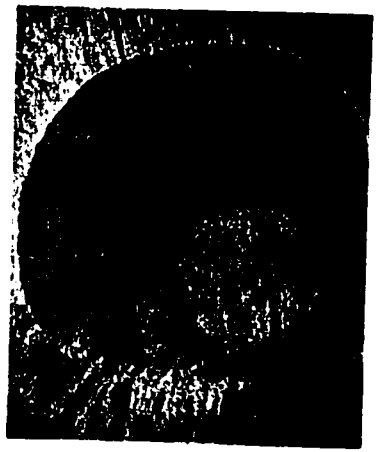
Figure 133



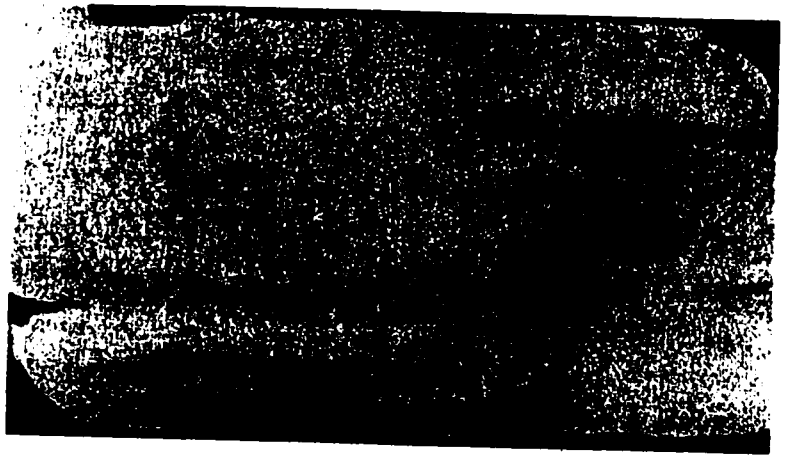
P



Q



R



S

Figure 133

In H (*From the North Shore, Lake Superior*, 1923), Harris has virtually left the shoreline behind, to focus on the water, the horizon and the sky. When one looks at I (*Mount Robson*, 1929), the landscape is much simplified with strong planes emphasizing the height, masses and directions upwards to the sky, the monumentality of the mountains. In J (*Kane Basin*, n.d.) (however we know Harris went to the Arctic in 1930), Harris is on the S.S. Boethic travelling through the Arctic and the vast horizon again takes precedence; nature's ice and water are all that Harris allows the viewer to identify. In K (*Icebergs and Mountains, Greenland*, 1931), the landscape is reduced again to ice, rocks and sky.

In L (*Painting No.4*, 1938-40), and M (*Abstraction 1937)*, Harris is now firmly planted in the abstract. He has moved to the United States and we have the influence of Dynamic Symmetry on his paintings. In N (*Riven Earth I,* 1936), we see the influence of the fourth dimension on Harris with overlapping and floating planes. In O (*Atma Buddhi Manas [*not his title*]*, 1962), the geometric forms have been abandoned but he is still using line and definite form. In P (*Calligraph Forming,* 1958), the definite form begins to dissipate to lines in Q (*Untitled Abstraction V*, 1965), and vague shapes in R (*Untitled Abstraction S, c.1960)*. By the time we view S (*Untitled*

1958), we have no line, no form, only cloud-like paint upon the canvas.

This progression can be read in different ways: A first aspect to be considered is the relationship between the artist and that, which becomes the object of his work. Some art critics have suggested that Harris in his landscape period was painting a superficial decorative world, for instance, Hunter recently commented.

> While Harris reveals some interest in Art nouveau in these works, more striking is his willingness to make a fundamentally dull scene the main subject matter. Only through brilliance of colour and the careful use of decorative pattern does a picture such as *Winter Sunrise* satisfy aesthetically. These snow scenes are blatantly artificial; they represent more an idea of landscape than images of actual nature (Hunter 2001:14).

Harris's comments, on the contrary, reveal much more complex an approach rooted in the need to be aware of what one is painting. I would argue that for Harris, the idea of a specific place is more real than the actual scene. This does not mean that the idea is vague or general. The notion of 'painting the particular' to reach the universal is a recurrent theme in Harris's writing. It emerges early but will remain part of Harris's personal process throughout his life. As far as his paintings are concerned, the process is a very thorough one. He states:

> Creatively one can only move from and through the particular to the universal, and to achieve universal expression one must give oneself fully to the particular. This is obvious in the process of creating in any art. Thus, if I paint a house, say, in a back street in Hamilton, I assume the shape of that particular house, experience its form, its meaning, its relationship to the soil it rises from, the skies that bathe it in reflection of their colours and mood, the neighbouring houses, the mood of the particular house, its age, its inner life; and the more direct my experience of that is the more I permit that house to dictate to me how I shall paint it; and the more certain I am to arrive at pure experience in my art and to create an intense equivalent in terms of my art of my first hand experience. If my experience is clear and deep enough the life I get into my picture of that house and the formal relations it dictates for its own expression will become universal. The picture of the house, its life expressed by the particular relationship of forms, colours, lines rhythm, is then bound to bring to life in the spectator, myself firstly, the experience of all life in decrepit houses. But if I think of achieving a universal expression in my picture, I will get a relatively shallow expression, because I must feel and think and identify myself with that particular and then the process once started will move me quite naturally and unconsciously toward a universal expression if my capacity is great enough (Appendix Em.270, p.4).

The experience, in this case the decrepit house, is one that is embodied in the painting for both the artist and the viewer. It calls to mind not only that particular house but also "the experience of all life in decrepit houses" (Appendix E, m.270)." One may recall the first poem in Harris's published poetry called *A Note of Colour*:

> In a part of the city that is ever shrouded in sooty smoke, and amid huge, hard buildings, hides a gloomy house of broken grey rough-cast, like a sickly sin in a callous soul...

> The windows are bleary with grime, and bulging, filthy rags plug the broken panes...
> But the street door smiles, and even laughs, when the hazy sunlight falls on it –
> Someone had painted it a bright gay red (Harris 1922:11) [See Figures 134 and 135 for a visual equivalent].

When Harris begins his Algoma and Lake Superior paintings, he brings a deepening of the familiarization process by which the artist comes to apprehend his subject matter.

> Our artists were first led by the attraction of the North. There was a long devotion to her outward aspect until a thorough acquaintance with her facts of form and growth was achieved, an understanding of her streams, rivers, lakes and many various places and an assimilation of her many moods and a growing awareness of her presence through the endless diversity of her expression. This living in and wandering the north and more or less literally copying a great variety of her motives inevitably developed in the artist a sense of design, of selection and arrangement in conformity to her aspect and moods, ... a knowledge of her rhythms, an understanding of her ways. This led to a decorative treatment of her great wealth of material into designs and colour patterns conveying her moods of seasons and places with suggestions of her pervading spirit. It seems the only way to embody the charm of so many of her motives and the intricacies of her extraordinarily rich patterns. The artists saw decorative designs everywhere in the North, and material for every possible form of embellishment for our daily life and all of it waiting to be used (Appendix E, m.270, II, p.2).

In this phase there is a need to place oneself within the experience; there are no longer any witnesses to the experience which is becoming interiorised. Harris describes, for instance, how Tom

Thomson would become one with the storm he is painting, how the artist merges with the hills and the winds.

Night, Wind and the Lake

Winds and night
Black and grey winds riding the Northern Nights
Over the hard wood crested hills
Down river valleys and long descending spruce slopes
To the wide lake
The great lake
Spread level under the night
Its breast
Pressed smooth into the earth
In a liquid firm stillness (Appendix E, m.271).

The object still dictates how it is to be painted but the nature of the north is such that it is going to impose its own patterns on the artists themselves. The spiritual life of the land dictates a process of purification or abstraction.

> After the decorative phase, a phase that touches the whole glorious surface display of nature and creates patterns in the flat, the artists moved into another phase that sought to simplify and intensify the moods and spirit of the north giving forms deeper meanings and their pictures a more convincing sense of living presence. From the relative prodigality of the decorative phase they became more vigorously selective and sought to have no element, no line or colour in the picture that did not contribute to a unified expression. This led to a utilization of the elements of the north in three dimensions, an organization in depth, a still deeper significance to every form and to the relationship of all the forms in the picture (Appendix E, m.270, II, p.2).

During that phase Harris discovers the power of selection and simplification. The landscape is now a pathway to a deeper reality.

> In decorative pictures we live over the surface. In pictures designed in depth in space, we should be able to live and breathe and experience fully. In this later phase then our artists emerge into purer creative work, wherein they change the outward aspect of nature, alter colours, intensify forms, purge rhythms of pettiness, and seek to enable the soul to live in the grand way of certain wondrous moments in the north – when the outward aspect of nature becomes for a while full luminous to her informing spirit, and man, nature and spirit are one (Appendix E, m.270, p.2).

Harris's refusal to have his work interpreted as symbolic is explicit:

> A recent writer stated that in the Lake Superior, mountain and Arctic paintings I imposed forms on nature. I can understand the statement but I am sure it is not true. I was so far as I know moved by the shapes and forms themselves to eliminate all irrelevant details in an endeavour to make essential forms (Harris in Jackson 1991:31).

In order to experience that reality the artist has to look inside himself to access both his own reaction to the world and the object of the painting which is less and less an object and more a means to reach what Harris calls "its informing spirit".

> Visible nature is but a distorted reflection of a perfect world and the creative individual viewing her is inspired to perceive within and behind her many garments that which is timeless and entirely beautiful. Thus to see, the individual must have within himself some spark that is also timeless. Suppose then that

> each of us here as personality is but a reflection of a greater self that abides eternally in a greater world and ever seeks to inform is here in so far as we permit it. Then by transcending the personal at its highest and acutest we attain to a greater self (heighth [sic] of intensification) which alone can give us vision into the whole, and can eventually clarify our seeing until we attain great and abiding assurance (Appendix E, m.210, p.30-40).

If the artistic creation process of that period is built on a systematic paring down of all details that are not essential, it corresponds simultaneously to an intensification of the inner experience reached by a similar detachment from everything that may hamper the conscious encounter with Reality defined as one, changeless, defined, and harmonious Awareness.

Harris mentions several principles in connection with this effort. All resources are pulled together, and called to bear on the capacity to perceive this reality. Knowledge, in terms of life experience and including physical experience, memories, intellectual work, esoteric sciences, physical and mental discipline, teachings from peers and masters, is a necessary foundation for any work be it written or visual or any religion such as Theosophy, salvation for the theosophists being a twin matter of knowledge and discipline.

This emphasis on knowledge can be translated in practice in the re-use and re-working of previous drawings and motifs (figure 136 A-D in the text), a practice which, though reinforced by Harris's steady

work on themes both ancient and new - is found throughout the works of artists since early days. We know that from Rembrandt to Monet, painters used and reused not only other artist's ideas and forms but also their own previous works. Harris's *North Shore, Lake Superior* (figure 120), which inspired many art gallery directors and art commentators, was itself a kind of composite.

Figure 136

The many transformations that are obvious in the numerous sketches used to prepare a final work are more than simplifications, they also attest to a process of accretion. This disciplined effort to find the "inevitably" of the manner in which the different components of a painting meet leads to an appreciation of the compositional aspect in the work of art.

Even in his earliest paintings, Harris was already on a quest looking for the intimation of the suprasensible. This intimation does not appear to be in an ideal mountain, shaped as a triangle and corresponding to a theosophical truth, a connection far too simplistic and symbolic for Harris. Instead, it would be searched for and found in the curve of a hill or the rhythm of the clouds. Such elements are also linked with the expressions of the artist's mind. When they are fully accessed, that is, in their perfection, they are linked with and are expressions of the Divine in the artist's soul.

This work of paring down, of simplifying the image on the one hand and of accessing one's own awareness of the experience is therefore going to lead Harris to abstract expression. For some authors the transition to abstraction is supposed to have been provided by Harris's decision to simplify his images into geometric

forms. This is not what Harris describes. For him awareness of one's inner processes is the essential motivation.

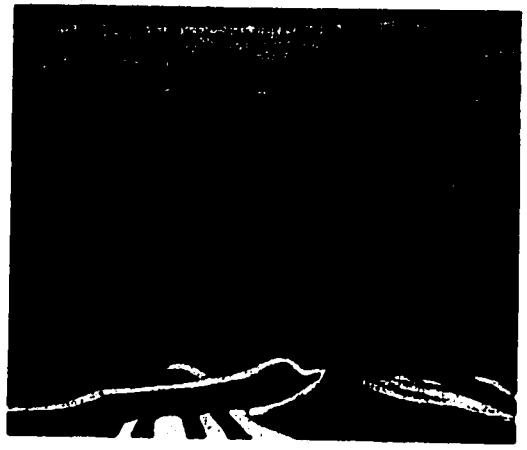
> Through such phases as these I learned some mastery of outward facts, became in some degree a master of moods, and sought to achieve ever purer means of expression. Thus I was led to the abstract expression which gives a work a suggestion of eternal meaning, makes of it a universal experience. But for me the whole evolution from outward aspect to the one indwelling spirit has been a steady, slow and natural unfolding through much work, much inner eliciting and contemplation, and much experience ...
>
> My purpose in attempting to paint abstractions is that there is at once more imaginative scope and a more exacting discipline in non-objective painting. I have had ideas insistently forming which could not be expressed in representational terms (Appendix E, m.270, p.6).

In one of Harris's scrapbooks he mentions "the fallacy that beautiful scenes and moments in nature will make a good painting" (Appendix E, m.140). The quality of the painting is not in the beauty of the scene it is in the truth of the experience. One of the lessons of the north according to Harris is that it is a sin to 'prettify' nature. The following words of Harris are often quoted though out of context; especially the last line is dropped. It has to do with respecting the spirit within.

> Before I first went to the mountains, I had seen folders with pretty water colour reproductions and glamorous talk and I had pictured the mountains as an unworldly paradise, as had many others. When I first travelled

> through the mountains I was discouraged. Nowhere did they measure up to the advertising folders – or to the conception these had formed in my mind's eye. But after I became better acquainted with the mountains, camped and tramped and lived among them, I found a power and majesty and a wealth of experience at nature's summit which no folder ever expressed. And I came to know that the whole business of prettifying nature, the elemental power of mountain regions, was false (Appendix E, m.270, p.5).

Harris's approach to light exemplifies a similar attitude. What you learn from the mountains you can learn from the light – it speaks for itself and shapes the viewer not as a symbol of the Divine, but as the divine itself speaking through one's experience of this particular light in its tones, in its shapes, in this motion, in its play with darkness and so on. Figure 137 A-D (in the text) represents not a progression by a variation on a theme. A (*Above Lake Superior*, 1921), shows the viewer the light coming from the ground, or 'within', to illuminate the trees. In B (*Clouds, Lake Superior*, 1923), Harris has centered the light in the middle of the Lake with a hint that it is traveling upward. We then move along to C (*North Shore, Baffin Island*, 1930), and the light shines on the painting, from above but in a manner to suggest illumination of the painting as a whole. Finally, in the last painting, D (*White Mountains*, 1934), we have light distinctly from above, the light from 'without'.



A



B



C



D

Figure 137

In one of Harris's poems from his book, Contrasts, he gives us his views on light, but in a different medium, and reflecting another kind of experience.

> **Darkness and Light**
> In the mass darkness is insistent, overpowering.
> It presses in so heavily, so smotheringly close.
> But taken as a pinch of salt
> Between the finger and thumb,
> It crumbles;
> It can be rubbed away
> Losing its coarseness,
> Its pressing terror,
> Until the thinness
> Can no longer hide the dawn-radiance.
>
> Now light
> Is just the other way.
> It cannot be fingered,
> It is so fine.
> It must be taken as the flood
> When it smooths through the soul
> In a glittering, loved exaltation,
> Leaving reflections of beauty,
> Leaving warm memories of ecstasy,
> Stirring to love-longing the great freedom
> ...
> And light has no weight,
> Yet one is lifted on its flood,
> Swept high,
> Running up white-golden light-shafts,
> As if one were as weightless as light itself
> All gold and white and light.
> (Harris, 1922:90)

Harris seems to have been able to remember early works (or experiences) and bring them back to chisel at them further. This is a characteristic of his entire career, as Dennis Reid had found.

> ... is not a painting of a particular place but a synthesis of the qualities of a mountain experience...

> that such a mountain experience was essentially spiritual was evident (Reid 1985).

Coming back again and again to the same components or shapes reminds us of the fact was Harris was known for composing a picture from various parts of sketches done around the same period to create a new painting and also for coming back to completed paintings and reinterpreting them visually. He also reworked old canvases as paintings have been found on top of old paintings. If we look at his writings we see the same tendency to recycle his words and phrases and those of other authors.

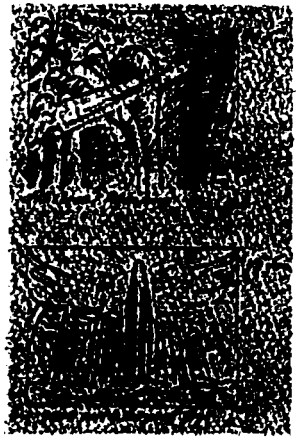
The nature of the process by which the essential aspects of a landscape or of an idea are being exposed is best accessed through looking at the images themselves and especially at the progression through time from sketch to sketch and painting to painting as Harris takes on the same topics in an increasingly austere manner.

In such developments, as shown by series of sketches or paintings, an important aspect of Harris's journey is revealed, and that is that the process of arriving at a given image, at a given experience, is a very long and complex process. The deletion and progression of shapes in a painting could extend over many years.

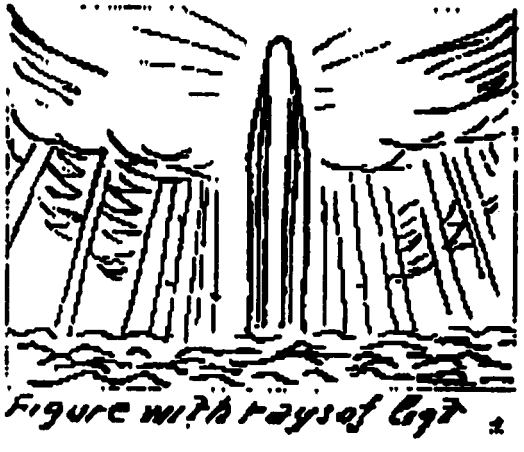
Figure 138 A-F (in the text) is an assemblage of paintings and sketches illustrating a constant redevelopment of a theme, it is important to note that this development took more than twelve years. A, a popular Catholic holy image or prayer card[1], shows a standing Virgin Mary, arms down to her side with palms forward. There are rays of light flowing from her palms towards the ground. Flanking her at the level of her calves are the front and back of an Immaculate Conception medal. A halo of stars is around her head and she is standing barefoot on a globe crushing the head of a snake with her heel. The same plastic qualities of this image are repeated all through this series.

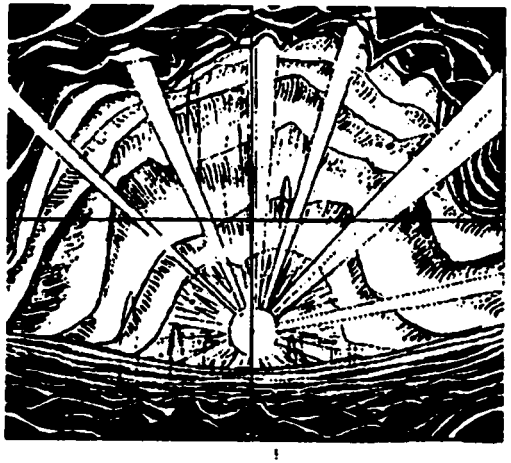






A, B, C





D, E, F



Figure 138

B (*Arctic Grouping III*, 1931), is oil on canvas painted in 1926. It shows a nebulous central cylindrical shape reproducing the same silhouette as the Virgin. Behind it is a low-lying cloud formation out of which radiate down numerous beams of light.

C [untitled] was found in his writings in the archives and D is an enlargement of the lower sketch in C. It is titled *"Figure with rays of light"* and is so similar to B as to most likely having been its preliminary sketch. In the finished picture (B), the radiating lines at the level of the "head" of the cylinder have been eliminated and only the descending rays from the cloud formation have been kept. Everything else is the same.

E (*Sun Over Mountains*, 1935-38), appears to be a rising sun with radiating rays, which seems to have been placed in front of a concentric series of cloud formations. Below the sun in the foreground of the sketch are a series of what could be considered mountaintops. At the upper limit of the sketch are a series of wavy lines reproducing both in shape, and in shade, the lower mountaintops of the foreground. This gives the impression of an 'eye' opening to revealing its radiating iris. Floating both at the horizon and in a ascending diagonal in the cloud formation are the same cylindrical shapes as in B and D.

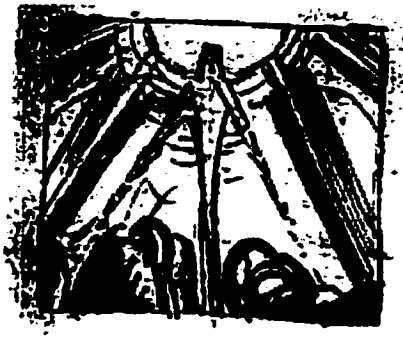
Finally in F (*North Shore, Lake Superior)*, in spite of the fact its date of production (1926) does not follow the last two figures, it, nevertheless, acts as a resolution to the exercise of discovery that the series illustrates. The cylindrical figure, again in the centre, here appears to a weather-beaten tree stump, branchless. It rises from a gently sloping hill; behind it appears to be a flat expanse of water surmounted by a cloudbank rising diagonally towards the upper right. From the upper left, descend radiating bands of light. According to Jackson once Harris returned to the Studio he kept from his sketchbooks only the central figure of the stump.

> I was with him when he found the stump. It was almost lost in the bush and you could not see Lake Superior at all. He isolated it and created a nobler background for it (Jackson quoted in Murray and Fulford 1982:25).

It is also interesting to find in Harris's files a page of handwritten notes (figure 139, in the text) illustrated by a sketch in the upper left hand corner. He writes beside the sketch, these words:

> The true artist, the real creative individual never was nor can be an academic type of mind – his is a heart a flame with a creative urge. Everything academic, established, set; all dogma, criteria, authority seems to him opposed to creative activity (Appendix E, m.264).

The page has been lined from side to side under this text so as to separate it from further text.



[illegible] an academic type of mind — his is a heart aflame with a natural urge. Every thing academic, set, established, set; all dogma, criticism, authority, [illegible] seems to him opposed to creative activity.

[illegible] and if [illegible] some one should say in his heart, it is not foolishness, it can't be true, I would ask him how any people or any age ever created any great thing? and he can only answer me that faith, conviction in their creative powers, [illegible] conviction that they could achieve whatever they set out to do alone did it, and that second hand-living, the borrowing the culture stories of other times, other peoples, and the feeling that we cannot hope to equal or surpass the works of other times, other nations — will produce anything but sterility. I remember hearing — most known business men say to me once, if [illegible] we must take our [illegible]

Figure 139

When one looks at the sketch, we are immediately struck by its resemblance to the holy image of the Immaculate Conception. A central elongated human-like shape seems to strive upwards so as to reach what looks to be a radiating sun in the background. The strongly emphasized descending rays from this "sun" are echoed in what could be understood as the open, downward striving "arms" of the central figure. They, too, seem to be radiating down towards the dark hill-like ground.

If one combines these images with Harris's own notes and sketches, we are provided with sufficient support for the argument that Harris was using from nature only those forms and experiences which furthered his own quest.

Harris's personal transition to the abstract was for him not only a logical outcome but also a result of this quest for as pure an experience as possible. This was encouraged by his acquaintance with the Canadian landscape, which demanded the development of a new perception of art and of self. Yet Harris went to the North precisely because it had the qualities for which he was searching.

> My work was founded on a long and growing love and understanding of the north, of being permeated with its spirit. I felt the strange brooding lonely presence of nature fostering a new race, a new age, and as part of it, a new expression of art.

> It was an unfolding of the heart itself through the effect of environment, of people, place and time. No man is profound enough to explain fully the nature of his own inspiration – he generally attributes it to a thousand and one extraneous things. To the artist, his art is adventure, in which he seeks to regain unity with nature and the knowledge of his own immortal being (Appendix E, m.270, p.3).

Harris describes the shift between representational and abstract in simple terms in the following much repeated statement:

> Where the older representational artists would paint a number of sketches and paintings of subjects seen on a trip in the mountains, an artist today painting in the abstract expressionist manner would in the painting endeavour to achieve a combination of moods, rhythms, character and spirit that would be an expressive synthesis of many mountains experiences. The result, if successful, would be an extension of experience beyond the range of realistic painting (Appendix E, m.49, p.1).

The painting therefore is a synthesis of many experiences or of one experience extending into and borrowing from many events and encounters. By that phase Harris often mentions the notion of love to describe the connection between the artists and the object, the latter, which has now become not an object in itself but a trigger for the artist's experience.

The relationship between that trigger and the artist is a most careful and precise one, it takes effort to unfold, more like a quest. This is

demonstrated by the next series of sketches (Figure 140, A-J, in the text) starting with a wooden door in A (*Door, New Hampshire*, c.1935-38). In contrast to the preceding series, which seems to be a quest towards an idea and an expression of an understanding, this series appears to be a journey inward to the most inner experience triggered by the natural lines on a wooden plank. We start with the recognizable unpainted wood door (A) where every growth line, knot, and fissure of the wood combine with the design structure imposed on this wood. Subsequent sketches (B, D-F) explore increasing microscopic structures in the wood. He emphasizes discontinuities in light and dark (B) produced both by growth rings and the cellular structure of the wood grain. Each phase of the experience is layered like the slices in the tunnel-like effect of the resulting abstract forms (G-J), so that the viewer is drawn inwards through the experience of more and more definite forms but not any like the representation of the original door in A.



A



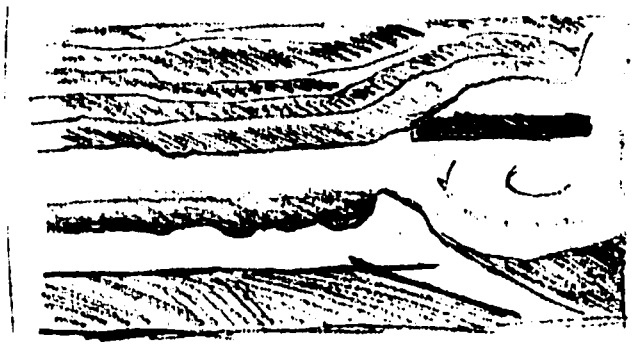


B

C

Figure 13.12

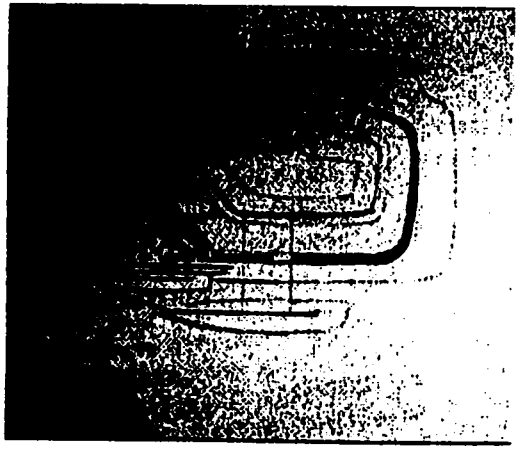
Figure 140



D



E



F

Figure 140

Figure 140

It is interesting to note that these first sketches were never done in oil or in any medium other than pencil. Harris notes elsewhere that he likes the very impermanence of lead, the ephemeral nature of lead on paper, and the feel of the pencil gliding on the paper in accordance to the rhythms and ease of the thinking process. No longer striving for universals but rather seeking out and identifying what constitutes the essential form is now Harris's endeavour. Every growth ring, every "flaw" in the wood, every knot and bole, once marked on paper celebrates the awareness of the wood then form and curves, in the artist's mind.

Even when the object has completely disappeared, the evolution continues. The juxtaposition of several later works obviously visually related to this first exercise with the door demonstrates that the process of deletion is at the same time a process of revelation. This applies to the landscape painting as well as to the abstract images. Outer objects like landscapes or doors as well as inner objects such as an emotion, or a particular sense of balance are systematically explored by Harris, not so that the image could be better identified but rather for a fit between the inner experience and the experience provided by the image leading to revelation of the reality unchangeable and universal offered by the awareness of the experience.

The following series exemplifies another of Harris's preoccupations with the creative process and composition. Figure 141, A-E (in the text) can be linked by their organic yet abstract elements. We begin with A and B where clouds envelop the mountain-like triangles. Both of these were done when Harris and his wife Bess were in New Hampshire where he was artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College c.1936. The clouds are interspersed with geometric figures.

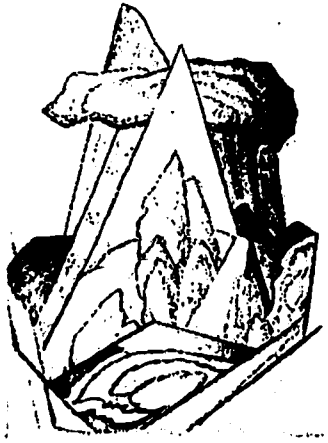
Light radiates from the core central area of the pictures. C and D, at first look, seemed disparate subject matter, however on closer examination one finds the same 'mountains' continually becoming more abstract as the landscape elements have been stylized. Geometric shapes in D begin to appear. In E, the three layers have moulded into what seems to be one triangle and the clouds have essentially disappeared leaving behind geometric shapes that seem to replace the clouds. The image of the triangle now floats in the frame rather than being anchored as mountains to a plain and the definitive horizon has been eliminated.

Ann Davis suggests that what is happening in E "perhaps [depicts] a theosophical upward rush of devotion (Davis 1973:45)." One could propose that instead Harris found 'landscape' in abstract thought and emotions. He was too conscious of space as a

concept, as a medium, not to place spatial configuration near the center of his preoccupations with composition.



A

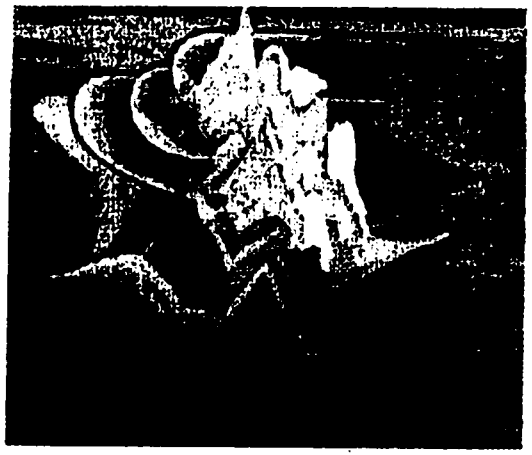


B

Figure 141



C



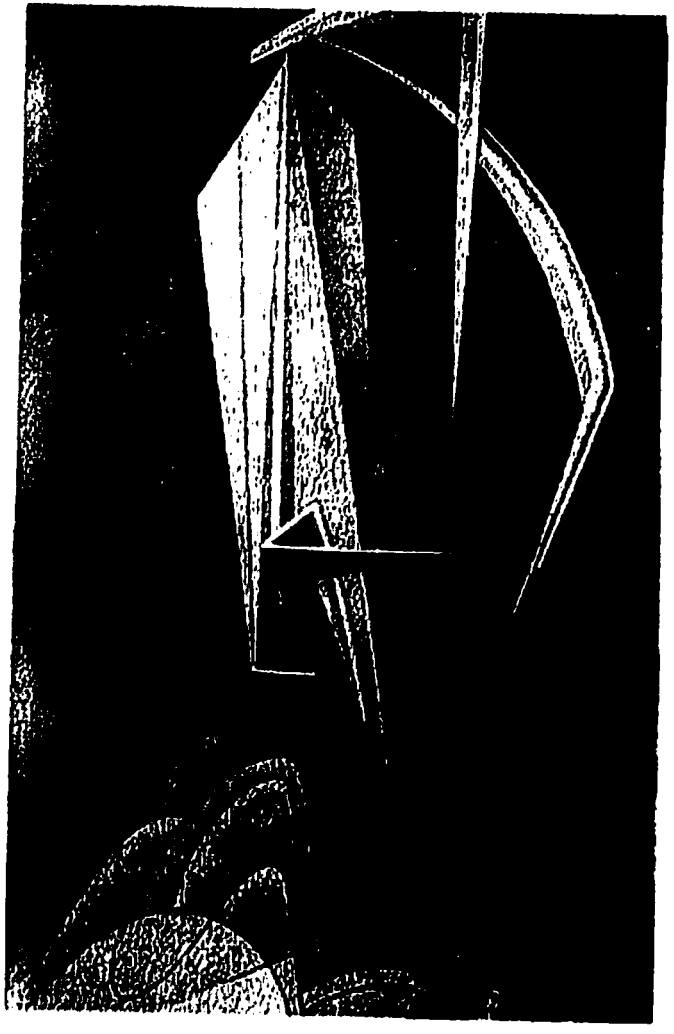
D



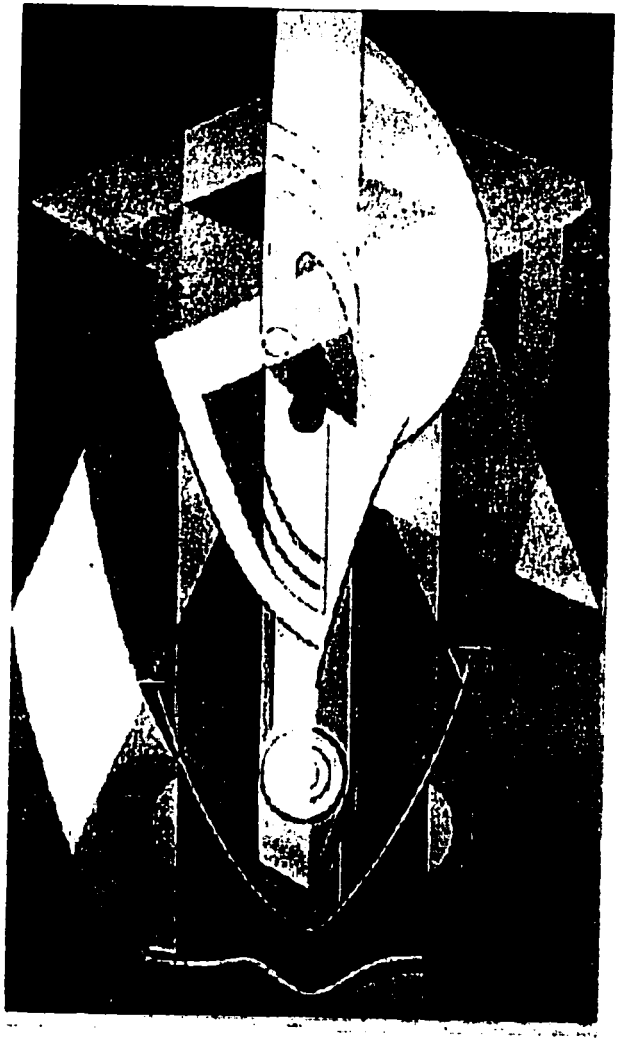
E

Figure 141

Figure 142 A-C (in the text), *Mountain Experience*, has space and composition as the central focus. Again the mountains appear but Harris has now the use of forms in conjunction with landscape elements. Inscribed on its stretcher "*Resolution* [referring possibly to an earlier painting of that name], interlocking forms - symbol of steadfastness, courage," Davis notes the dominant triangle, "approached by a pointed shaft, a light-like curving energy". This figure when taken in conjunction with B, *Abstraction (Involvement 2),* shows similar forms with an upward movement to a shaft of light. The three circles anchor the central image although all three circles are divided. In both figures A and B again we have layer upon layer. Further investigation revealed Harris had made preparatory drawings (C) where there is a progression from two circles to three. As we focus back on B we can see Harris has played with the various forms to come to a final paintng.



A



B

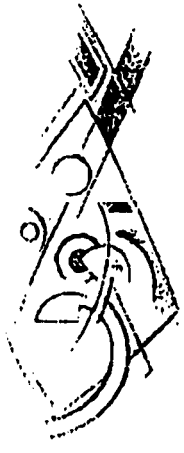
Figure 142



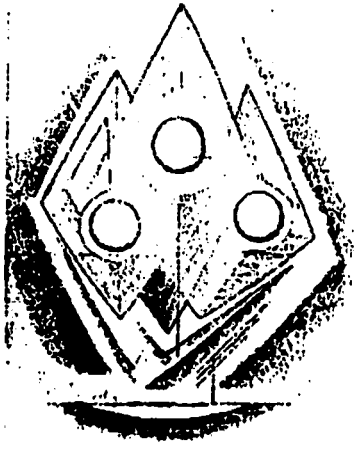
C

Figure 142

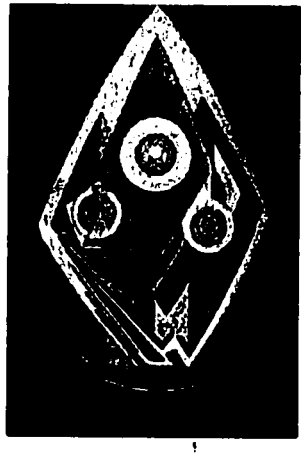
This same exploration can be found in his abstract paintings of the late period. For instance, Figure 143 A-C (in the text) is similar in subject matter as we have diamond geometric forms as well as circles. These figures were painted c.1938-1940 and show an assortment of forms in A and B that slowly arrive at well-placed forms in a confining finished shape which holds the forms within it.



A



B



C

Figure 143

There are three circles confined within the diamonds in all three figures, however, in the finished painting, C (*Painting No.4,* 1939) one circle has a number of concentric circles within, one has a circle of 'light' within, and the last circle is divided or cut by triangles so as to no longer be complete as a circle. In the completed oil on canvas the diamonds are now contained within a larger diamond, which seems to be illuminated from behind. The diamonds are layered onto each other as if multi-dimensional. Harris has used blue and yellow predominantly in the picture with the blue moving from deep royal to a light blue upwards through the painting (Figure 145). It now also has a half circle as a foundation as if cupping the diamonds.

> Abstract painting at its best parallels the pure art of music as we find it in the concerto, the quartette [sic] and the symphony. It also has a precision which is allied to the exactness of modern science. And it relates to the new experiences of flight, in the sense that the forms in many of the pictures float in space as if another dimension were added to the life of man. In these ways it is modern, but in terms of design, of organization, and of spirit it is as old as man (Appendix E, m.49, p.2).

When Harris moved to Santa Fe he discovered new possibilities and painting ideas in the mathematical and geometric models provided by Dynamic Symmetry (Figure 144, in the text) and the idea of the Fourth Dimension as proposed in the writings of

Bragdon (Figure 147, in the text). He attempted to use this in his painting.

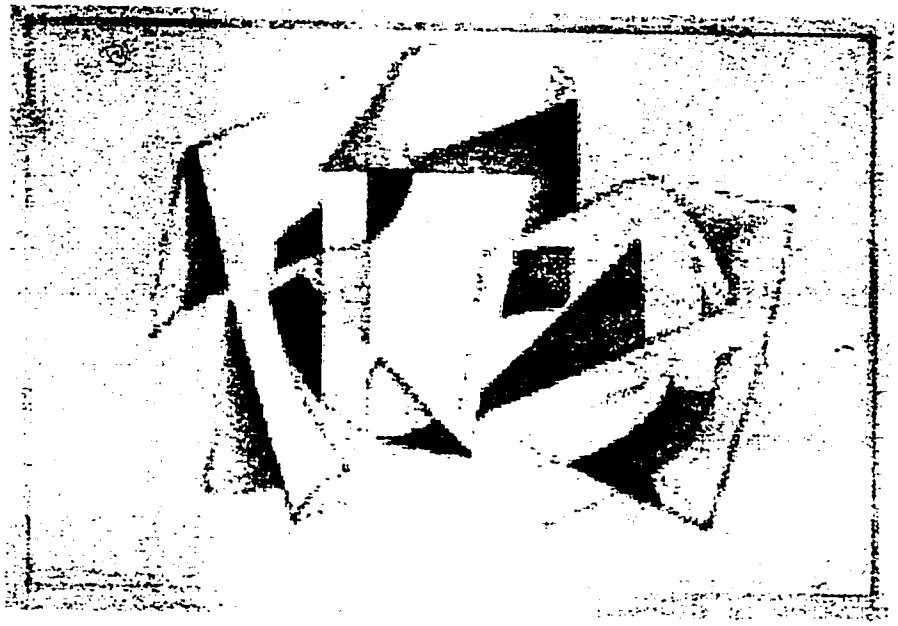


Figure 144

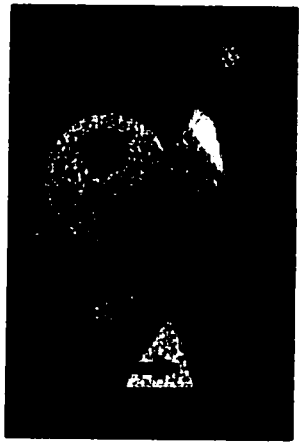
Figure 146 A-C (in the text) shows his paintings in relation to those of Jonson (A) and Bisttram (B) who were using the same methods as Harris (C). He soon came to the realization that the confining boundaries of this method could be widened and opened to better serve that for which he was searching. Around 1945, he wrote:

> For myself every abstraction I paint has its source in an idea. This idea, whatever it may be, cannot be put into words and at the beginning of the painting is rarely clear. It becomes clarified and objective throughout the process or evolution of the painting (Appendix E, m.49).

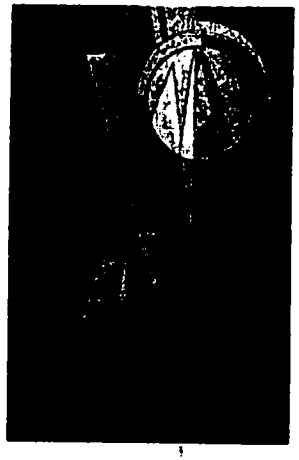
Figure 146



A



B



C

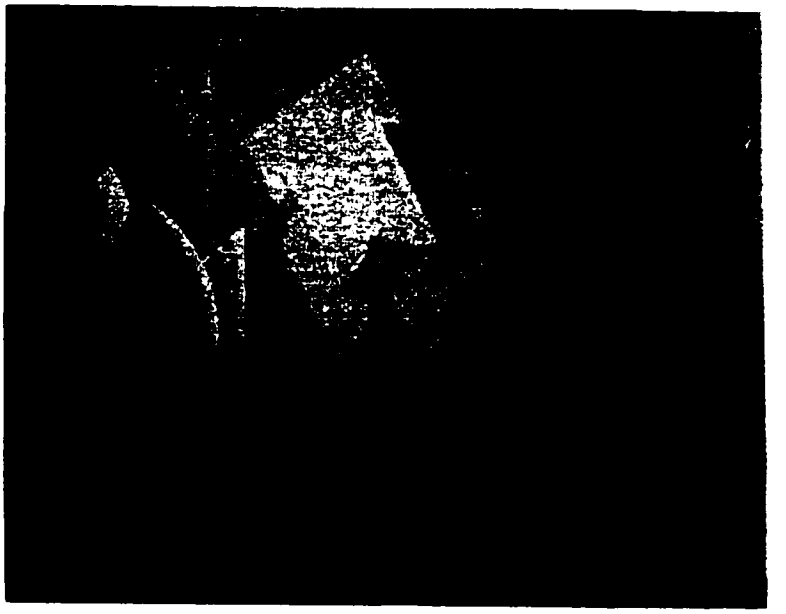


Figure 147

However, after his return to Canada he more and more often let go of the mathematical approach in his paintings; and progressively freed himself from the previously rigorous discipline by which he previously had consciously accessed the expression of his experience. In the end he would start a painting and let the experience paint itself. This period he called his abstract expressionist period.

> Each painting of this kind demands its own way of expression which in every case is a creative act. Hence the great variety of such paintings which requires that the onlooker view each work as a new experience (Appendix E, m.272).

What he called the creative process in art was now accessed without any preconceived idea, in agreement with principles he had established several decades earlier:

> The creative individual serves the soul and is only creative in the degree that he or she responds to its intimations. Inevitably also, the degree in which the individual serves the soul is the degree of his or her possible opposition or indifference to the established order in whatever form (Appendix E, m.213, p.4).

In The Beautiful Necessity, Claude Bragdon, one of the authors read by Harris, and from whom Harris copied extensive notes, the best arts are those who are "purely creative" that is those in which "is presented, not a likeness of some known idea, but a thing-in-

itself brought to a distinct and complete expression of its nature" (Bragdon quoted in Loftus 1999).

Harris is clear about this notion that a work of art should constitute a whole by itself. He was supported in that by other artists such as Kandinsky, and by Steiner. This is why abstract works were considered closer to the "Creative Spirit" of the theosophists and the transcendentalists. Harris's use of the notion of experience in conjunction with the notion of composition leads him to speak about composition, creating or eliciting specific responses in the viewer; similar processes being at work in music and architecture.

This does not preclude the possibility for the composition to have been suggested by an outer object, an inner experience, or even an idea. It leaves open the question of inspiration that is the origin of the components for and the purpose of the composition.

Harris did not leave much indication in his personal writings about the kind of experience that could lead him to "embody" or "elicit" specific experiences.. We can still therefore ask the question 'what was he painting?' In a recent IDEAS program called Voices and Visions, on CBC Radio the 25th April, 2001, Ann Davis remarked:

> Lawren Harris and somebody like Kandinsky did say, were saying, that what they were painting was actually things that they were seeing, not seeing with

> their eye outward, but seeing with their eye inward, seeing with their soul (CBC, 200, p.8)

Don Hill, the host of Tapestry, then suggested that Lawren Harris painted visionary experiences.

> What if Ann Davis has it only half-right? What if Lawren Harris actually painted what he saw? Not with the mind's eye? But what actually manifested itself in his visual field (CBC, 200, p. 8).

According to Don Hill, Harris's paintings have "all the markings of a theosophical 'thought-form" (CBC, 200, p. 8) (i.e., an actual psychic or mystical experience) implying that Harris, at least in his later period, was painting in trance. He then used remarks by Arthur Erickson, architect and good friend of Harris, to bolster his hypothesis. According to Arthur Erickson, who was present at the conversation, Harris's abstractions could be termed representational works of art since they issued from actual experiences.

> Yes, I think they were consciously that [actual experiences]. I know Lawren, whenever he did a new painting and saw something and might be admiring it, either Lawren or Bess would say, "This is the result of a spiritual experience in the mountains mostly." There was always a lot of conversation about the experiences they had in the mountains, which were the exhilaration of extraordinary space and the presence of the spirit. You felt it was something that they were involved with. It was terribly important.

They felt it was the most revelatory information possible" (CBC, 200, p. 9).

What did Harris mean by a "spiritual experience"? Any answer to that question, in the absence of Harris, requires a careful reading of Harris's complex life. Did the notion of "spiritual experience" according to Harris, fit with Don Hill's meaning? Was Harris a visionary artist who painted his visions? The question is validated by the fact that there are indications that Harris had a mystical experience at one moment in his life (CBC, 2001, p. 9). It must be noted that Harris never mentioned it to anyone but his most intimate friends and certainly never in connection with his art.

On the other hand he was quite explicit about the experiences leading to painting in general. As seen in the previous chapter there seems to have been a development in his perception of the artist's experience which parallels the progression in his paintings but he always maintained from the beginning to the end that human experience can be brought in contact with the divine in certain circumstances, that the purer or most remote or most powerful the context, the easier it is to touch the truth, and that art in general intervenes to purify and magnify the normal human experience so as to render it meaningful.

> In one sense art is an organizing principle which confers meaning, shape and sometimes immortality on the perishable materials of human experience and character. In another sense it is experience through heightened sensibility (Appendix E, m.212, p.1).

It is through the process of painting that Harris develops that experience more fully. That is true for both the representational and the abstract. Contrary to what Don Hill implies, Harris is not painting a vision, he is painting in order to clarify the vision he is seeking:

> His [preliminary pencil] drawings are a key which open the door to what he was thinking and painting. He'd start with an idea and develop it, usually with some sort of theosophical or philosophical relation to what he was doing. The drawings were important as an introduction to clarify his mind before he started the painting (McKague quoted in Murray and Fulford 1982:26).

Experience then corresponds to the experience of "a spiritual presence" or a divine quality in the object or the inspiration leading to a painting. Harris mentions several levels of awareness.

1) In the work of art itself, a certain discipline emerges; an "impersonal overtone" having its life beyond oppositions, beyond specific forms and substance and certainly beyond the artist's personality and personal desires or problems. Spirituality in art

> ... is achieved by suppressing and transcending ... the personal elements because only [in] so [doing]

> can we disclose an idea in its austere, pure and more far reaching form wherein it will have a deeper meaning for others as well as for ourselves (Appendix E, m.88, p.4./m.110, p.4).

2) The work of art will express a feeling of unity – or justice as "balance", "symmetry", or "inevitability" which sends the viewer back to an awareness of the Divine principles at work.

> In other words the work will embody a communication that transcends the world of insistent facts and personal reactions, though it use these for its tangible expression. It is, perhaps more accurately, a recreative process, in that it penetrates through facts and personal fancies and gratifications to a realm of synthesis and unity and then recreates the outward discrepancies and contradictions in terms of the inner unity (Appendix E, m.88, p.5).

3) There will also be the felt presence or intimation of soul in the artist at work, as well as in the attentive viewer; in other words, it will evoke a different awareness, based on ideal standards. The unity in the work brings out a communion on a larger scale, which reflects and evokes the quality of the soul participating in the process of creativity (or creatively viewing) the painting.

> It seeks to become something in its inner life of all the parts of the work. This communion should pervade the entire work and transform all its factors into one spiritual presence. Though it is quite unanalizable, yet it gives a distinct quality and character to the work that amounts almost to a form that has its life in another realm of understanding that of tangible formal

> relations or plastic relations in depth (Appendix E, m.110).

4) From the concrete and human world characterized by change, and chaos, emerges the "quiet power of that which in us is highest". The soul is revealed as silence. This silent witness is that which, in the artist, as in the viewer, remains unchanged.

> Now this communion in unity of spirit of the life of the parts of a work as distinct from the parts themselves will transform any appropriate subject matter whatsoever into spiritual reality, imbue ut with a life over and above its subject matter and distinct from it. It gives to the whole a prophetic beauty, an enduring presence and requires for its understanding a different awareness than that employed in the recognition of formal relationships. Only the awareness of the soul as distinct from the person or the intellect can participate in it. This awareness we call intuition (Appendix E, m.110, p.9).

5) In the recognition of that witness, as one becomes aware of the unity of the colours and of forms, one is also enabled to become aware of one's solidarity with mankind, recognizing in all human beings the capacity to move toward enlightenment.

> Furthermore, at the summit of our souls and in the possible prescense [sic] of uncontaminated beauty and good will, we recover another idea that remains as yet almost unmanifested on earth. That is that mankind is a spiritual solidarity, that above the possessive and disintegrative forces resident in the person is the identity of all souls with the over-soul, the unity of consciousness and its implication that separateness from the life of the spirit is the great

> heresy. And that therefore no one of us can completely recover the lost divine state until mankind as a whole has recovered it. That indeed is inherent in the fullness of the idea beauty and its inseparable companion divine justice. It is also the fundamental reason for the arts and all high communion as without it the perception of loveliness and majesty in nature as well as the deep sadness and glory in man would have no meaning (Appendix E, m.88, p.11).

The artist does not monopolize the creative spirit. It is part of every human being's heritage. One may recognize here an essential teaching of Theosophy. Harris often repeats a quote which validates his position both as artist and as theosophist:

> The first one [statement] written by the early Greek philosopher Heraclitas [sic]. It is this – "Man is a portion of cosmic fire imprisoned in a body of earth and water." That is that the real man is a creative being, who by vision, thought and sensibility creates his whole life and future. The second statement is that mankind is a spiritual solidarity – that is harmoniously akin despite differences in limitations, in temperament and [illegible].
>
> But only harmoniously akin in the spirit while both transcends his mental processes, his sense perceptions and his emotional vagaries but yet can reform, relate and use these to the highest ends. This is the creative art of the spirit in man which every true artist is both a participant and agent (Appendix E, m.89, p.5).

Further, he states,

> If every man is in some degree an artist then he has definite spiritual needs which only the expression of art can satisfy (Appendix E, m.210, p.12).

Consequently, an artwork should be presented as is. Not with a symbolic reference, not with an explanation, not even with a title.

> There is no possibility of understanding the first thing of art unless an art work is experienced – lived. When you describe a thing you do not live it. When you imitate you do not create. In representation is no life – just a description of what life is like (Appendix E, m.210, p.8).

Conclusion

Harris, by his own account, was not attempting to serve a theology or disseminate a faith through his paintings, even though he was to all effect and purposes still teaching about theosophical approaches at the end of his life. Because of the ways in which Harris interpreted and constructed art within the theosophical frame of reference, art was, he felt, well above any attempt to use it to illustrate, represent, or symbolize any statement coming from anyone, including the highest masters.

Neither was Harris willing to let art be reduced to a ritual function, magic being too mechanistic and lacking in consciousness. He made it explicitly clear that art as self-expression was akin to prostitution, and an oxymoron in the theosophical stance since one of the requirements for spiritual development was the abandonment of the ego and of the pursuit of self-satisfaction.

Yet art was definitely a means, for Harris. Art was the road to spiritual fulfillment as a disciplined perception of the divine in the human reality. Difficult to glimpse in human beings or in manmade objects, the divine shines in nature. It illuminates landscape; it constructs the concrete world. It directs harmony and unity in images and architecture. In all cases it is always located not in an outside object but in the human mind willing to perceive it. This perception is not spontaneous and gratuitous. A slow process elicits it. It does not emerge from an unconscious or subconscious process. It is reached through concentration and mediation by a mind trained to go to the essential.

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[1] I was unable to get permission to photocopy the prayer card found in Harris's files at the archives. Consequently, I purchased an identical one at a religious supplies store. It is of the type known as "Immaculate Conception".

CONCLUSION

Lawren Harris is well known as a painter, a Canadian artist and the leader of the Group of Seven. He is much less known as an abstract artist and as a member of the Transcendental Painting Group in the United States. As an artist, well known and well respected in both the United States and in Canada, he was a charismatic figure and all lauded his landscape paintings. As a man, he remained popular to the end of his life, yet his artistic production as an abstract artist was relatively ignored, if not regarded with silence, at least in Canada. This is the result of two tendencies; the first one is to focus on Harris as a Canadian artist who painted Canadian landscapes and was indeed instrumental in the development of a Canadian style of painting. The second is to present his later works as a religiously inspired series of illustrations. It is now indeed acknowledged by specialists that Lawren Harris was also involved in religion, a full-fledged theosophist who knew the theosophist literature and practiced theosophical teachings. But anyone who is acquainted with Harris and his theosophical teachings would know that his abstract work

could not be illustrations and that Harris's art cannot be dismissed as mere pious images.

Content with Harris's earlier productions, the art historians did not have to contend with Harris's motivation in what was seen as just another career change. The Canadian art establishment, such as museum and art exhibit directors, did not take his abstract work seriously until after 1969. Even then, it was a slow start and recently, in 1982, John Murray and Robert Fulford could still conclude:

> In the first decades of his prominence, Harris painted dozens of works which lodged themselves in the imagination of many who saw them ...But when he surrendered his subject matter (or abstracted it so much that it might as well have disappeared) he lost his ability to sway us. The abstract paintings and drawings demonstrate finally the fact that Lawren Harris'ss talent and the Canadian landscape are locked forever in each other's embrace (Murray and Fulford1982:35).

This view is coupled with the idea that Harris went through a series of abrupt changes in his artistic career. The most important and sudden change would have occurred when Harris left Ontario for New Hampshire. At that time, the public scandal surrounding his marital life led to residency in the United States for a decade, thus effectively severing his ties with the official Canadian art scene. Because Harris had been such a central figure of the Group of Seven and its most successful promoter as well as a primary mover

in the establishment of the Canadian Group of Painters, his departure from the group and his subsequent explorations of the "Modern Movement" in art were perceived as a 'desertion'. Upon his return, he was deeply involved in abstraction, which added, for the Canadian audience, to the marginalization of his career.

Yet, a closer look at Harris reveals a deep complexity during all phases of his artistic production, with an underlying progression toward the abstraction; the same complexity is noticeable in his writings and lectures on art, philosophy, his teaching, and his involvement in art promotion at all levels. The same continuity marks his very active production in the religious domains, especially in his writings and his lectures, dominated by Theosophy.

Theosophy as a religious culture or subculture permeated the intelligentsia of Western Europe and North America at the turn of the 20th century up to the Second World War. It was very influential with the social and intellectual elite in Toronto and New York and even today remains a viable entity. Even a minimal exposure to theosophical teachings allows us to recognize in Harris's writings (both public and private), a series of themes directly, and often explicitly, connected with Theosophy. These themes are not just an influence on Harris's production; according to his own statements

they shaped his life and his perception of his life's purpose, his definition of the artist and of his own art. Several authors are of the opinion that Harris only dabbled in Theosophy. For instance, Andrew Hunter wrote that

> "Regarding Theosophy I believe that Harris saw it as a valuable parallel to his own work and was drawn to it because, being fond of groups, he saw a supportive environment for his own thinking much as he would find briefly with the Transcendental Painting Group in New Mexico. But I do not see him being fully and truly a Theosophist.

Contrary to these views, the previous chapters have described a man who was thoroughly immersed in Theosophy. His involvement was neither superficial, nor purely intellectual.

Lawren Harris was an active and decisive proponent and teacher of theosophical principles and an influential member of the International and Toronto Theosophical Societies, so much so, that it could be said that he contributed a great deal to the theosophical community and especially Canadian Theosophy. Theosophy is not generally recognized as a religion, even less as the important component of Canadian religious and cultural history that it used to be, Harris's role in the theosophical community of his time remains ignored by the public. Yet, Harris's commitment to the theosophical quest is confirmed by the several indications that he considered chastity an important component of his personal discipline in

keeping with theosophical teachings, that he considered meditation on the one hand and service to the community, in his case as a promoter of art, to be equally important.

The exact nature of his role as a leader of the Group of Seven is consequently also misrepresented. He was as much, if not more, a spiritual model and source of ideas than an advisor on aesthetic matters. Because his aesthetic and spiritual/religious principles stemmed from the same source and were oriented toward the same goal, it is not appropriate in Harris's case to separate the artist from the theosophist. Certainly within his group of co-artists and friends, he was not alone. The members of the Group of Seven were all aware of Theosophy and the Theosophical Society was at its height in Ontario during the entire Group of Seven period. His letters and his reports of their conversations are proof enough of this.

This was also the case for Lawren Harris's role model, Wassily Kandinsky, and for many artists of his time. Many developed systematic theories of the visual arts informed by esoteric principles. In Harris's case, it resulted in his taking on a unique teaching role that extended into ethics and philosophy, well beyond the production of paintings. Harris never produced a systematic theory of colour or forms. He was content with what Steiner and

Kandinsky had produced without feeling bound by their instructions. Besides, he had never liked systems. He was more interested in the philosophical principles announced by Theosophy and the related spiritual schools of his times such as Transcendentalism. Such principles were embedded in Harris's vision of the artist's social as well as cosmic role in a theosophical perspective. It is by developing a new model of the relationship between art and Theosophy that Lawren Harris made his most explicit contribution to Theosophy. It must be said that his stand as a theosophist also fed his involvement with society. He wrote about war and about education. He defended art as an essential component of any sane society.

One example of this involvement is provided by what is recognized as the nationalistic trend in the Group of Seven's production. The Group of Seven, with Harris as a leader, set out to develop a Canadian art. For Harris this was partly in response to or at least in agreement with the theosophical injunction to let each nation and each period develop according to its own spirit.

Lawren Harris belonged to a section of society with the means to travel, to meet and receive people from all continents, to approach people in power and to organize groups and events. He had access

to not one but several "intelligentsia" and communities of artists, thinkers, and mystics, including European and American artists who, for the most part, belonged to or were considered to belong to the elite of their societies. Beyond his artistic talent and personal charisma, he had the financial and intellectual means to disseminate ideas and values, and used those means throughout his life.

Like other American and European intellectuals and artists, and besides Theosophy and Anthroposophy, Harris was also drawing from various other sources. All these intellectuals and artists were associated not because they belonged to the same movement, but because they communicated with each other, belonged to groups that overlapped, read the same books in an intellectual, social climate which allowed them to develop their own ideas and share with others. One may remember for, instance, that Kandinsky was seriously engaged in ethnographic work on shamanic studies and anthropological studies of Siberian native people. Mondrian had ties with various occult groups. Kupka was a practicing medium.

As was done for Kandinsky, Mondrian and the others, once it was recognized that Harris was involved in esoteric teachings and practices, and that Theosophy was one of the most influential schools of thought, the temptation arose for the critics to identify

theosophical images in the works of the artists. According to Bart Testa, in his 1995-1996 review of the books by Peter Larisey, Light for a Cold Land, and by Ann Davis, The Logic of Ecstasy, this leads to a problem:

> ...the methodological ambivalence of Light for a Cold Land consists of two critical genres, the accomplished, well-documented, but unaggressive biography, and the tidy formalist art analysis. These two genres hinge, however, on Larisey's quotations and paraphrases of Harris's numerous theosophical pronouncements. The critic takes them as serious statements of Harris's thinking and interprets the paintings in terms of theosophical doctrine and iconography...The first comes up repeatedly: Larisey's mix of formal analysis with his reading of the doctrine. Compositional tactics that Harris derived from the German landscape tradition in which he was originally trained, or that he later developed himself, do not also seem to carry doctrinal import and the critic treats Harris's successive styles only as vehicles for symbols. The interrelations between composition and signification are matters Larisey leaves unthought ...how does one properly interpret Harris's theosophical commitments in terms of his art that is beyond providing moral arguments and a handbook of symbols? Kandinsky's abstraction is a consciously transcendental art, indeed the paradigm of the type. So, Larisey seems to believe, is Harris's... The core issue of interpretation of Canadian painters touched by Theosophy is one Ann Davis sought to work through in her suggestive but unresolved study, The Logic of Ecstasy: Canadian Mystical Painting ... Davis's book directly opens up this difficult interpretative terrain, but she finally opts for too straightforward a iconographical solution...[1]

For these two authors, Larisey as well as Davis, the difficulty is to resist reading religion from an iconographical standpoint. The

development of the notion of thought-forms provides a strong, though often misunderstood incentive to identify examples of theosophical intrusion into modern art. One must recognize that the artists themselves did much to shape this notion,though each of them in his own way.

From an outsider's point of view, the notion of thought forms seems to translate into a symbolic correspondence between specific forms and specific meanings. Taking Mme. Blavatsky's exposition of symbols in a literal fashion encourages such an interpretation; yet, this kind of explanation does violence to theosophical teachings, when thought-forms are linked not only to specific meanings but more directly to personal experiences.

Harris echoed Rudolf Steiner and Kandinsky, in explicitly refusing a symbolic interpretation of the forms emerging from his paintings. Theosophists assumed that thought had forms, colours and reality, in that they had many different levels from bad to good, from low to sublime. These elements are not symbols; they are expressions of emotional tone and the results of the intervention of cosmic consciousness into human experience. It is only in this sense that the representation of thought-forms could be said to compose a language, a language through which the artist expresses his or her own experience even when one cannot systematize these mental

images. In Harris's case, an alternative path is proposed. He sought to train himself to reach beyond the immediate normal perception of the world and uncover a more fundamental reality not as thought-forms but as a direct apprehension of the essential. Some artists chose to access the ultimate reality through a recourse to geometric forms or colours. Harris sought instead the essential Reality behind the "pure" event, object as it is, and ultimately the naked "experience".

While thought-forms are spontaneous psychic or mental events, the perception or experience sought by Lawren Harris corresponded to a long and conscious process. This process leads to the same Reality only hinted at by the thought-form; this Reality sustains the essence of a landscape or thought, or rather the experience of encountering the landscape or a thought, in all its precision, harmony and presence. It was reached by paring down and away any extraneous element.

The twin notions of the fourth dimension and of sacred geometry provided Harris with another echo of the same reality. Lawren Harris worked with these notions, especially during his Santa Fe period. They contributed to his abstract works. In the end, as far as his own painting was concerned, he returned from time to time to

the idea of a fourth dimension and the precise geometric and mathematical demands of the fourth dimension theorists. He felt free to let the experience itself guide his hand.

The search for a trans-cultural, universal truth does not start with the theosophist. It is a goal shared with countless religious traditions of the past, most evidently with the neo-Platonists and the Gnostics. But it was explicit for the theosophists, starting with Mme. Blavatsky herself. For many of the theosophical artists, this quest led to the Abstract.

Lawren Harris took this goal particularly to heart. He developed it in his writings, and exemplified it in his paintings. Like other theosophists, and like similarly minded artists, Harris pursued the idea that Truth resides in the simpler and most abstract formula. Mathematics, music and, for the painter, colours and forms, are models of this abstracting process. Abstraction, simplicity, nobility, and purity are all aspects of the divine unicity, while the material world is stuck in the incoherence, complexity and chaotic noise of separateness. The universal can be recognized only when the personal as well as the circumstantial aspects of the experience are removed. One must therefore, in each object, in each event, in each thought process, strive toward the underlying unity by removing anything that is not essential, until the object of

perceptive action or thought is reduced to its simplest expression. Then the absolute shines through.

Yet, it would be a serious mistake to assume that all these artists were going through the same psychological methods or the same kind of visionary process, and shared the same cosmology. Each of them produced their own synthesis and their own methods. Each of them articulated his own philosophy, his own mysticism. So too, did Lawren Harris as he followed his own path toward his own enlightenment. A problem faced by the art critics and art historians in their assessment of Harris's religiousness or spirituality is the habitual contention that all mystical experiences are more or less similar, that all spiritualities form a single field of reference.

Harris's painting, from the perspective of Religious Studies, and placed within the theosophist tradition, assumes a very specific position - in as much as one can recover enough of his original intent. Lawren Harris himself wrote:

> Creatively, one can only move from and through the particular to the universal, and to achieve universal expression one must give oneself fully to the particular (Harris and Colgrove, 1976:24)

What he states about art is also valid for spirituality. Was Harris an artist painting from a spiritual perspective – yes. But this is not the key question. The key question in considering Harris is rather: What

kind of spirituality was his reference? Or, in concrete terms: What did Harris mean by spiritual experience?

If his involvement with spirituality in general and with theosophical philosophy in particular was so intense, why did Harris, in a letter written by his wife on his behalf, and quoted by many art historians and critics, refrain from or denied linking his art to Theosophy?

a) When Harris stopped titling his works early in his career, or even signing them, (the galleries had to assign names to them in order to recognize them in their catalogues) this was partly, as he himself said, because he did not want the beholder's experience to be filtered through a bias engendered by a title or a signature. But I think there is more to the gesture. He did not treat his abstract paintings as "works of art" in the museological sense of the term. The process of producing as well as the process of viewing a work of art was as important as the work created.

b) A similar idea is alluded to in the fact that he painted for a long time on jute, knowing that jute would deteriorate quickly; this confirms the idea that by not signing or entitling his works, he was not making a statement only about his conception of art, but also about himself. His wife confirmed that Lawren Harris was not thinking about preserving his art for posterity. In my opinion, his

approach evokes that of "transient art" (Korp 1997)) in which the artistic act lies in the process rather than in the production of a finished piece.

Why not paint for posterity? To answer, or only to understand the question, one must go back to theosophist teachings, as interpreted by the artists who contributed their vision of art to theosophical literature, and validated by Harris's own presentation of these teachings. One will then perceive as a central theme, in the definition of the act of painting, a theme shared by all the artists; whether or not they painted with theosophist themes, symbols or colours, whether or not they considered Theosophy as central to their art, they all consistently refused to consider their paintings as objects which could be interpreted. In Harris's writings, the individual artist of a higher reality roots this refusal in the respect of the creative act leading to a work of art. To present any work, in any medium, as a servant to a dogma or human interest of any kind would destroy both the art and what it attempts to convey.

c) Lawren Harris began very early in his painting career to evolve the painting process into a discipline. To describe this discipline he borrowed Kandinsky's typology. It is worth repeating here that in the conclusion of his book Concerning the Spiritual in Art, Kandinsky categorizes his illustrations in the following terms:

They represent three different sources of inspiration:

- A direct impression of outer nature expressed in purely artistic forms; this I call an impression,
- A largely unconscious spontaneous expression of inner character, of nonmaterial nature; this I call improvisation,
- An experience of a slowly formed inner feeling which comes to utterance only after long maturing; this I call composition,

In this reason, consciousness, purpose, play an overwhelming part. But of the calculation nothing appears, only the feeling. Which kind of constructions whether conscious or unconscious really underlies my work, the patient reader will readily understand (Kandinsky 1912/1977:57).

Kandinsky considered that only the third source was fitting for his time and the new age to come. Harris made it clear that he agreed with this choice. He also taught and wrote about the long maturing process, the role of reason, the necessity of consciousness and the sense of purpose in contemporary work of art, including his own, as well as in life itself. What Kandinsky - as well as Harris - called "composition" is the result of what Harris called "experience".

This slow process, expressed in the continuity of the series of sketches or paintings of both landscape and abstract works is an arduous uncovering, sketch after sketch, of the most essential aspects of what is being translated on the canvas: not the object itself, mountain or inner mental state, not the triangle to which a

mountain or an inner state could be reduced, but in his terms, an experience

Other Abstract artists will make similar statements of faith. These statements do not necessarily point to the same experience. One must be careful to allow for a wide diversity of personal experiences, and perspectives on what is being painted. This diversity is also allowed for, if not nurtured by Theosophy. Yet the quality of experience is what mattered for all these artists.

The previous statements do not preclude the possibility that Harris could have been affected by mystical experiences. At least one source[2] mentions at least one such event, which would have taken place before 1936 on a mountaintop. But Harris himself did not modify his discipline as an artist and kept the same advice. As an artist he was not after a single vision but after the realization of art as he defined it. This is a much more ambitious task.

d) Harris himself labelled his last period "abstract expressionism". He said enough to allow us to accept that the illuminating awareness he sought and obviously found in the mountains was not a simple "psychic" experience. Neither was it a play on visual effect, or a sudden mystical realization for him. It was a habitual quest of the ultimate, the divine hidden in or revealed by the

simplest and most expressive, therefore the most abstract components - in Harris's case, the visual components - of one's experience. A colour tone, a curve in the snow line, or the shape of the wood grain in a door, can offer the same rewards as a sunset on the Alpine meadows. The quality of the experience, as promised in theosophical literature depends on a physical, mental (spiritual) and artistic discipline that eventually allows the artist to recognize when he is touched by the divine. This is, I think Harris's contribution, his specific understanding and practice, to the multiplicity of religious and artistic experiences which are so often – and wrongly – lumped together.

All these clues indicate that the act of painting was more important for the artist than the paintings themselves. The theosophical influence would be born by the process of painting rather than the images. In Harris's case, and especially during his "abstract" years, painting was not directed toward the production of an expression of the sacred, the act of painting had itself become an act "efficacious for salvation", an act giving "access to the intimate union with the divine" (Hellwig 1987,12:504), that is, a sacrament.

Like Steiner, Harris defines art as an act similar to the religious act; the artist, like the priest, having a duty to exemplify the possibility of

encountering sacredness, and to manifest the presence of the divine in the human world. This is a sacramental process. When the artist works on an object, whether landscape or pure form, he enters into a sacramental space.

For scholars in Religious Studies, Harris's artistic work demonstrates that art can be much more than a representation of the world, profane or sacred, more than an expression of beauty, even if divine beauty. Lawren Harris's paintings are not iconographies of the sacred - they are participation into the divine. The gardens tended by Zen meditators, or the mandalas fashioned by Tibetan Buddhist monks belong to the same categories of gestures. These are not what scholars expect in a Canadian art setting. If one sees in Harris's work the traces of religious experiences, it is because Harris considered the very act of painting a religious act, not necessarily the expression of a religious experience, but rather a religious experience in the making, that is a religious practice.

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[1] As seen at www.uptjournals.com/product/utq/651/land82.html on 27/04/02.
[2] Don Hill, Voices and Visions, CBC Radio, p. 7.

APPENDIX A

Biographical Timeline

1885
Lawren Stewart Harris was born in Brantford, Ontario, on October 23.

1891
A. Harris, Sons & Co. (where Harris's father worked) amalgamated with Massey to form the Massey-Harris Company with Hart Massey as president.

1894
Lawren's father died. His maternal grandfather took Lawren and his mother on a trip to Europe. Mrs. Harris and her two sons later moved to Toronto.

1894-98
Harris entered Grade 4 at Huron Street Public School, which he attended until he completed Grade 7.

1898
A heart problem necessitated his being tutored at home for the next two years.

1899
In September he entered Grade 8 at St. Andrew's College, a Presbyterian private school in Toronto's wealthy area of Rosedale.

1903
Harris completed Grade 10. In September, he was accepted as a freshman student in the Arts faculty at University College, University of Toronto.

1904
Harris studied in Berlin until 1907. Over the next few years he also traveled to France, Italy, Palestine, the Orient and Minnesota.

1906
Harris probably goes to the 'Ausstellung Deutscher Kunst aus der Zeit 1775-1875 (An Exhibition of German Art 1775-1875)', a review of nineteenth century German art.

1907
Harris did a walking tour in the Tyrol and met the poet, philosopher and German landscape painter Paul Thiem (1858-1922). In late

November, he went to Damascus with the writer Norman Duncan on assignment for Harper's magazine.

1908
Harris returns to Canada. Harris went on his first Canadian sketching trip to Laurentians in Quebec (accompanied by Fergus Kyle) in the autumn. Later that year he helped found the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto with Roy Mitchell. It was Mitchell who began to introduce Harris to theosophical literature.

1909
Harris spent two weeks on assignment for Harper's in a northern Minnesota lumber. In the spring he went on a sketching trip with J.W. Beatty to Halliburton, Ontario, and in the fall to Memphremagog, Quebec.

1910
January 20 he married Beatrice Patricia (Trixie) Phillips at the Anglican Church of the Redeemer in Toronto.

1911
He exhibited *Houses, Wellington Street* with the Ontario Society of Artists (OSA); his first exhibition of Canadian pictures. Harris's first published work, a review of an exhibition of work by Arthur Heming, appeared in The Lamps, the Arts and Letters Club periodical. Met J.E.H. MacDonald, Frank Johnston, Tom Thomson, Franklin Carmichael and Arthur Lismer at the Arts and Letters Club.

1912
Met Frederick Varley. National Gallery of Canada bought one of his wilderness landscapes, *The Drive*. Sketching trip to Mattawa and Temiskaming as well as Burks Falls and Magnetawan, and in the summer, Georgian Bay. Until 1914 Harris had a studio on Yonge and Bloor Streets in Toronto. NGC purchases *The Drive*.

1913
January - Traveled to Buffalo with MacDonald to see the 'Exhibition of Contemporary Scandinavian Art' at the Albright Gallery. Construction begins on the Studio Building in Toronto. Met A.Y. Jackson and helped bring him from Montreal to Toronto. Met Tom Thomson. The 'Armory Show (An International Exhibition of Modern and Contemporary Art)' opened in New York, Chicago and Boston. It included works by Cézanne and Kandinsky, which Harris viewed.

APPENDIX A

1914
August and September - Painted in the Gatineau with MacDonald. Studio Building opens with low cost studios for Jackson, Harris, MacDonald, Heming, J.W. Beatty and Curtis Williamson. Harris used this studio until 1934. First sketching trip to Algonquin Park (the artists sketching there were briefly called "The Canadian Algonquin School".

1915
War broke out in Europe. Lawren Harris's brother joined the army. Harris and MacDonald went on a sketching trip to Minden, Ontario. Tom Thomson moved into a shack beside the Studio Building.

1916
In the spring, Thomson, Harris Harris's cousin Chester sketched in Algonquin Park. Harris enlisted in the army.

1917
Tom Thomson drowned in Algonquin Park.

1918
Harris's only brother killed in action. He was awarded the Military Cross for heroism posthumously. Harris suffered a nervous breakdown and on May 1, he received a medical discharge. He spent time at his summer home, Woodend, on Lake Simcoe. To recuperate he left with Dr. MacCallum on a sketching trip, going for the first time to the Algoma region of Northern Ontario. The National Gallery of Canada organized an exhibition to tour the United States that included two works by Harris.

1919
The unofficial group was together again for the first time since World War I. The Group of Seven was formally organized. Harris had a showing at the Art Gallery of Toronto (AGT), now the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO).

1920
The first Group of Seven exhibition was held at the AGT from May 7 to 27. First of eight portraits by Harris was painted.

1921
Sketching trip to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in the spring and again in the fall; this included a trip to the Halifax slums in Nova Scotia and a trip to Newfoundland. Harris, with Lismer and Jackson, went to Algoma. In the fall, Harris and Jackson go further

west and north to the shores of Lake Superior. Meanwhile, from May 7 to 29 the second Group of Seven Exhibition was held at the AGT.

1922
Harris named to the Decoration Committee of the Toronto Theosophical Society. Third Group of Seven Exhibition was held at the AGT from May 5 to 29. In the fall Harris again went to the North Shore and to the Rockies. Harris's book of poetry, Contrasts, a Book of Verse, was published.

1923
March - Harris formally became a member of the Toronto Theosophical Society. In the spring he went for the first time to the Rocky Mountains. Housser and Harris arranged a Group of Seven centered exhibition of paintings by contemporary Canadian artists at the Roerich Museum in New York.

1924
Sketched in the Rockies in the summer and at Lake Superior in the fall. Harris began experimentation in abstract in the studio.

1925
Fourth Group of Seven Exhibition was held at the AGT from January 9 to February 2 and the fifth Exhibition was held from May 8 to 31 at the AGT. In July Harris published "Revelation of Art in Canada" in The Canadian Theosophist.

1926
Traveled to New York to the 'International Exhibition of Modern Art' at the Brooklyn Museum. Painted in Yoho National Park. Also painted in Banff National Park.

1927
Vacationed at Temagami and in the fall went again to the North Shore. In Toronto on November 17 he met Emily Carr.

1928
Summer spent in the Rockies and in the fall was the last group-sketching trip to the North Shore of Lake Superior. The Toronto Star presented his *Portrait of Dr. Salem Bland* (1926) to the AGT. Sixth Group Exhibition was held at the AGT.

APPENDIX A

1927
Went by car along the south shore of the St. Lawrence River as far as Rimouski where Harris did drawings for *Lighthouse, Father Point.*

1930
Seventh Exhibition of the Group of Seven held at the AGT. Harris and his wife visited France and Germany. August 1 he left Nova Scotia with Jackson for Baffin Island, Greenland, the Canadian Arctic and Labrador on the S.S. Beothic.

1931
Sketched at Pointe au Baril, Ontario. Group of Seven held their eighth and final Exhibition and announced their intention to disband. Canadian Group of Painters formed.

1933
Elected first President of the Canadian Group of Painters (CGP) and resigned from the Ontario Society of Artists (OSA). Deepened and extended his commitment to Toronto Theosophical Society by lecturing in Niagara Falls at their convention. Exhibited with the Canadian Group of Painters at the Heinz Art Salon in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Also conducted Young People's Classes at the Toronto Theosophical Society. Organized a series of radio talks for the Toronto Theosophical Society on the theme "The One Immutable Law, Re-Incarnation and Karma."

1934
Separated from wife and filed for divorce in Reno, Nevada and then married Bess Housser. Harrisses moved to Hanover, New Hampshire and he began a stint as an unpaid artist-in-residence at Dartmouth College. He begins to draw and paint again. He stayed there until 1938. Conducted another series of classes for the Toronto Theosophical Society.

1935
Obtained visas for permanent residence in the United States. Sketched in Maine. Started writing a book on art.

1936
Canadian Group of Painters held an exhibition where he showed his first abstraction. National Gallery of Canada held a Group of Seven Retrospective Exhibition, which he attended.

APPENDIX A

1937
Exhibited his abstracts in Canada for the first time at the third exhibition of the CGP in Toronto.

1938
In March he took a motor holiday with Bess and arrives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In October he moved with Bess to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Helped found the Transcendental Group of Painters in June; suggested and helped organize the American Foundation of Transcendental Painting. Harris studied with Dr. Emil Bisttram and met William Lumpkins. By October he and his wife have decided to settle in New Mexico; they stay until 1940. Harris meets Raymond Jonson.

1939
Harris became president of the American Foundation for Transcendental Painting. TGP exhibit at the Golden Gate International Exhibition held in San Francisco. Harris had arranged this exhibition.

1940
Due to changes in Canada's monetary policies, Harris was no longer able to have Canadian funds directed to the United States so in the fall Harris and Bess return to Canada, first to British Columbia to visit his mother, then to Toronto. After visits with friends and family, they return to British Columbia to settle in Vancouver. Harris meets Jock MacDonald. Exhibited with the TGP at the Museum of Non-Objective Painting (Guggenheim Museum). Harris began exhibiting with the Canadian Group of Painters.

1941
Elected to the Council of the Vancouver Art Gallery (VAG); he held this position until 1957. Organized a Group of Seven show at the VAG. Sketched and climbed in his beloved Rockies. Holds a one-person show at the VAG. Visits the Rockies with Jock MacDonald. Reviews friendship with Emily Carr.

1942
Began 14-year tenure as Chairman of Exhibitions Committee of VAG. In Toronto in May, attended the first Annual Meeting of the Federation of Canadian Artists at the Studio Building where he was elected Regional Convener for British Columbia. Met Lionel Lemoine Fitzgerald. Harris, with Ira Dilworth, who was regional director (B.C.) of the CBC, became the founding trustee of the Emily Carr Trust, a position he retained until 1962. TGP dissolved.

APPENDIX A

1943
Beginning March 31st, he gave a series of six talks on CBC Radio on the general theme of "Art and Life". Helped in the formation of the Western Canada Art Circuit.

1944
Elected National President of the Federation of Canadian Artists, a post he held until 1947. Lectured in Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg. Harris marched with other artists on Parliament Hill demanding government support for the arts in Canada. This display of unity led to the formation of the Canadian Conference of the Arts.

1945
Emily Carr died. Harris named one of the trustees of her estate. In the mid 1940s Harris probably meets British artist and psychiatrist Grace Pailethorpe in Vancouver.

1946
May 16th - received a honourary degree (L.LD) from the University of British Columbia. Exhibition of abstract paintings by Harris held in Victoria, B.C.

1948
October - AGT gave Harris a major one-man retrospective exhibition, the first time a living artist was so honoured by the Gallery.

1950
He was the first practicing artist to be appointed to the Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Canada. He remained on the Board until 1961.

1951
Harris received a honourary degree (L.LD) from the University of Toronto.

1953
Harris received a honourary degree (L.LD) from the University of Manitoba.

1954
Wrote 'The Story of the Group of Seven' which accompanies Robert Hubbard's 'The National Movement in Canadian Painting' in the catalogue for the Group of Seven Exhibition held in the VAG. He also wrote "A Disquisition on Abstract Painting". He experimented with automatic drawing.

APPENDIX A

1956
Traveled with Bess by ship to Europe visiting Florence.

1957
Harris resigns as chair of VAG Exhibition Committee.

1958
Harris had a heart operation from which he never fully recovered. Appointed Honorary Vice President of the VAG. Attended the first exhibition of CGP to be held west of Toronto, which was held at the VAG.

1959
Dined with Queen Elizabeth in Ottawa (hosted by Governor General Vincent Massey, his friend since childhood). Sailed to England via the Panama Canal and traveled in Europe.

1962
Awarded Canada Council Medal; it was accepted by Bess on Lawren's behalf in Ottawa.

1963
Traveled to Ottawa to view his retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada. VAG also held a retrospective exhibition that year.

1964
Published The Story of the Group of Seven.

1966
Hospitalized for a month.

1967
Last trip – journeys by train across Canada to see the landscape one last time.

1969
September 28 - wife Bess suddenly died. He was hospitalized again for a period of time.

1970
January 29 - died at the age of 84. Two sons, Lawren and Howard, one daughter, Mrs. Peggie Knox, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren survived him. The bulk of his work in public hands is with the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario. His

ashes were buried with those of Bess on the grounds of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection at Kleinburg, Ontario. The Companion o f the Order of Canada was awarded posthumously.

Social and Artistic Context Timeline

1749-1832	Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
1803-1862	Ralph Waldo Emerson
1817-1862	Henry David Thoreau
1819-1892	Walt Whitman
1819	Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*
1832	Goethe's Faust II
1836	Emerson's *Nature* initiates Transcendentalism
1837-1902	Richard Maurice Bucke: medical and spiritual revolutionist and Walt Whitman's literary executor.
1839-1906	Paul Cezanne
1844-1900	Friedrich Nietzsche
1850	Tube paints invented Darwin's *Theory of Evolution*.
1855	Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.
1856-1939	Sigmund Freud
1859	Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*.
1861-1865	American Civil War.
1861-1925	Rudolf Steiner
1865-1939	William Butler Yeats.
1866-1944	Wassily Kandinsky
1867	A short-lived society of Canadian Artists is formed in Montreal.
1869-1948	Mohandas Karamchand (Mahatma) Gandhi
1870-1924	Vladimir Lenin
1871-1945	Emily Carr
1871-1956	Lyonel Feininger
1871-1957	Frantisek Kupka
1872-1944	Piet Mondrian.
1872	Montréal's Society of Canadian Artists holds its last exhibition. Ontario Society of Artists (OSA) formed.
1873	First exhibition of the OSA, Toronto.
1873-1932	J.E.H. MacDonald
1873-1943	Sergei Vassilievich Rachmaninoff
1874	Art moved called Impressionism begins Telephone, automobile, and light bulb invented.
1875-76	The OSA offers sporadic courses of instruction to both men and women. These eventually coalesce into the Ontario College of Art in 1911.
1874	Thomas Edison invents the phonograph. Blavatsky founds The Theosophical Society

1877-1917	Tom Thomson
1878-1935	Kazimir Malevich
1879-1940	Paul Klee
1879-1955	Albert Einstein
1879-1953	Joseph Stalin
1880	Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in Ottawa created (this is the beginning of The National Gallery of Canada).
1880-1905	Art movement called Post-Impressionism begins
1880-1916	Franz Marc
1881-1974	Pablo Ruiz Y Picasso.
1881-1955	Alexander Fleming
1882	William Wadsworth Longfellow dies.
1882-1971	Igor Fydorovich Stravinsky
1882-1974	A.Y. Jackson
1883	Karl Marx dies.
1883-84	Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*
1883-1924	Franz Kafka
	Toronto Art Students' League formed, a school and a meeting place for working artists.
1885-1969	Arthur Lismer
1887	Women's Art Club opens in Toronto.
1887-1968	Marcel Duchamp
1888	William Van Home becomes president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, distributing free passes to artists in exchange for promotional pictures of scenery visible from the trains.
1888-1955	Bertram Brooker
1888-1967	Johannes Itten
1890	William James' *Principles of Psychology*
1890	Sir George Frazer's The Golden Bough.
	Women's Art Club of Toronto developed into the Women's Art Association.
	Women's Art Society opened in Montréal.
1891	Marmaduke Matthews, a watercolourist and photographic retoucher, turns a small farm on the edge of Toronto into an early artists' co-op called Wychwood Park.
1891-1898	Gustave Moreau
1892	Members of the Toronto Art Students' League begin publication of annual calendars with original Canadian drawings.
1894	Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom*

	Laura Muntz Lyall participated in the exhibition of the Société des artistes français in France.
	Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You*
1894-1963	Aldous Huxley
1895	Auguste Marie Louis Nicolas and Louis Jean Lumiere perfect the
1897	William James' *The Will to Believe*
1898-1996	Yvonne McKague Housser
1899-1902	Boer War in South Africa.
1900	Fauvist movement in painting began, led by Henri Matisse.
	Art Museum of Toronto incorporated.
	Nietzsche dies.
	Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*
1901	First Noble Prizes awarded.
	First Trans-Atlantic radio signal.
	Queen Victoria dies.
	U.S. President McKinley assassinated.
	Italian physicist Guglielmo Marconi demonstrates his wireless telegraph.
	Bucke published *Cosmic Consciousness.*
1902	William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*
1903	Wright Brothers fly first power-controlled plane at Kitty Hawk.
	First silent movie, "The Great Train Robbery".
1903-1970	Mark Rothko
1903-1950	George Orwell (aka Eric Arthur Blair)
1904	Steiner's *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* and *Theosophie.*
	D Rutherford and Soddy's general theory of radioactivity
1904-1905	Russo-Japanese War
1904-1939	Art Movement called Cubism
1905	Albert Einstein proposed his *Special Theory of Relativity.*
1906	Roald Amundsen, Norwegian explorer, fixes the magnetic North Pole.
	San Francisco earthquake and three-day fire.
	The first art book published in Canada is a study of Dutch landscape painting by Montréal collector E.B. Greenshields.
1906-1989	Samuel Beckett
1907	Edmund Morris and some of the more influential artists of his generation-Homer Watson, Horatio Walker, etc form the Canadian Art Club in Toronto.

	The National Gallery of Canada moves to its permanent headquarters.
	Suzuki's *Outline of Mahayana Buddhism* introduces Buddhism to the West
1908	The Arts and Letters Club founded in Toronto.
	Art Gallery of Toronto (AGT) officially opened.
1908-1986	Simone de Beauvoir
1909	Laura Muntz Lyall is the first woman asked to exhibit with the Canadian Art Club.
	North Pole reached by Peary and Henson.
	Art movement called Futurism began.
	Steiner's *Occult Science: An Outline.*
	Schoenberg's first atonal work
1910	The Arts and Letters Club published their period cal, *The Lamps* sporadically until 1933
	Beginning of Abstraction in art.
1910-13	Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica*
1911	Chinese Revolution.
	Ontario College of Art formed in premises near the AGT.
	Ernest Rutherford discovers the structure of the atom.
	Roald Amundsen reaches the South Pole.
	1,513 people die when the H.M.S Titanic sinks.
1912	Emily Carr showed canvasses inspired by French Expressionism (Fauvism).
	Montréal Museum of Fine Arts found its permanent headquarters.
	Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art.*
	Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*
1912-1956	Jackson Pollock
1913	Steiner founds Anthroposophy
	Stravinsky's Rite of Spring
1913-1960	Albert Camus
1914-1918	World War 1
1914-1995	Jonas Salk
1915	Malevich's Suprematist manifesto.
	Abstract Surrealism begins with artists such as Salvadore Dali.
1916	Art Gallery of Toronto moves to its permanent headquarters.
	Art movement Dadaism began.
	Einstein's *General Theory of Relativity*
1917-1932	Periodical *De Stijl*
	Art movement called De Stijl begins.
1917-1919	Bolshevik Revolution in Russia; end of the Czars.
1918	Spengler's *The Decline of the West*

1919	League of Nations founded.
	English Egyptologist Howard Carter discovers the intact tomb of the Pharaoh Tutankhamen.
1920	First public radio broadcast
	First exhibition of the Group of Seven at the Art Gallery of Toronto.
1922	T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*
1923	Irish poet William Butler Yeats won the Nobel Prize in Literature.
1926	Kandinsky's *Point and Line to Plane.*
1927	Lindbergh flew solo across the Atlantic.
	Emily Carr becomes first Canadian female artist to achieve national recognition when her work is included with an exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art at the National Gallery of Canada.
	Klee's *Exact Experiments in the Realm of Art.*
	Heisenberg formulates the principle of uncertainty
1928	Alexander Fleming discovered Penicillin.
1929	Collapse of the American Stock Market.
1930-1950	Dr. Emil Bisttram
1930-1940	The Great Depression
1931	Last official exhibition of the Group of Seven took place at the AGT.
	Cassirer's Philosophy of Symbolic Forms
1932	Aldous Huxley published *Brave New World.* Scientists split the atom.
1933-1939	Spanish Civil War
1933	Canadian Group of Painters formed.
1939-1945	World War II
1941	Emily Carr's *Klee Wych* is published and wins the Governor General's Award for Literature.
1944	Emily Carr's first solo show in commercial establishment, the Dominion Gallery in Montreal.
1945	United Nations founded
	Formation of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
1949	Simone de Beauvoir's key feminist text, *The Second Sex*
1950-1953	Korean War
1950s-1960s	American Abstract Expressionism art movement
1952	Alexandra Luke organized a touring exhibition of Canadian Abstract Art
1953	Birth of the American Civil Rights Movement
1954	Jonas Salk discovered the polio vaccine
1957	Soviets launch Sputnik I, the first satellite to orbit the planet.

	Canada Council for the Arts, Humanities and Social sciences formed.
1960s	Art movement called Pop Art begins
1960	Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin declared first man in space

Chronology of Occult and Esoteric Traditions

1873 Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB) [1] (1831-1891) arrived in New York after ostensibly traveling throughout the world.

1874 HPB met Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) and William Quan Judge (1851-1896). They founded the "Miracle Club" which later became the Theosophical Society (TS).

1875 Theosophical Society established in New York.
Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) born.

1877 HPB's *Isis Unveiled* (2 vols.) published.

1878 British Theosophical Society established (later called the London Lodge).
HPB became an American citizen.
HPB and Olcott left for India.

1879 October, first issue of *The Theosophist* published.
In India, HPB co-operated with Arya Somaj movement for 2-3 years.

1880 Bombay: New constitution of Theosophical Society (TS) adopted.
HPB and Olcott became Buddhists.

1882 Headquarters of TS transferred from Bombay to Madras (Adyar).
First American branch of TS started in Rochester, NY.

1884 American Board of Control established.

1885 HPB left India for good and returned to Europe.

1885 - 1890
William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was a member of the TS in England.

1886 W.Q. Judge became secretary of American Section of TS.

1887 HPB settled in London. Blavatsky Lodge established.

1888 HPB's *The Secret Doctrine* published.

The Esoteric School (a section of TS) founded.

1888 Golden Dawn (GD) founded in England by William Wynn Westcott[2] (1848-1925), Dr. William Robert Woodman (1828-1891), and Samuel Liddell

Mac Gregor Mathers[3] (1854-1918).
Westcott was an associate of Blavatsky and Anna Bonus Kingsford (1846-1888).
Yeats[4] was leader of Golden Dawn for several months while also a member of the Theosophical Society.

1889 HPB's *The Voice of the Silence* and *The Key to Theosophy* published.
Annie Besant (1847-1933) joined the Theosophical Society.

1890 European headquarters of Theosophical Society established in London.

1890 Yeats left the Theosophical Society; remained head of the Golden Dawn in London until 190?.[5]

1890 Mathers left England and founded his own Rosicrucian Temple in Paris.

1891 HPB died.
Annie Besant took leadership as Secretary of Theosophical Society in Adyar.

1891 Sir Arthur Edward Waite (1857-1942) joined the Golden Dawn.
He published *The Occult Sciences* (Chapter 20 is devoted to Theosophy).

1891 Dr. Woodman (GD) died.

1891 First Canadian Lodge of TS established in Toronto.

1893 Theosophical Congress at the first World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago.

1894 Mathers founded the Ahathoor Temple in Paris.

1895 The Theosophical Society of America established at Boston Convention. Judge elected President for Life. Foreign National Sections and Lodges were combined under him.

H.S. Olcott continued as President of Theosophical Society in Adyar.

1896 Death of W.Q. Judge. Replaced by Katherine Tingley.

1898 Crowley initiated into the Golden Dawn.

1900 Crowley left Golden Dawn.
Mathers expelled from Golden Dawn.

1900 Theosophical Society of America headquarters moved to Point Loma, California.

1901 Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) founded in Germany by Carl Kellner (1850-1905) but directed by Theodor Reuss (1855-1923).

1902 Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) became Secretary General of the German Chapter of the Theosophical Society.

1903 Waite founded Isis-Urania Temple of Golden Dawn.
Stella Matutina founded (branch of Golden Dawn).

1904 Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) published *Theosophie*.
OTO headed by Kellner mentioned in print for the first time.
In Cairo, Crowley wrote *The Book of the Law*, which had been dictated to him by the spirit Aiwass.

1905 Steiner left the Theosophical Society.
Kellner (OTO) died and Reuss assumed leadership.
Steiner joined OTO and became director of its German branch until 1914.

1907 Death of Olcott.
Besant became President of Theosophical Society in Adyar.
Charles Webster Leadbeater became co-leader with Besant.

1909 Crowley started publication of his magazine *The Equinox*.
United Lodge of Theosophists established in Los Angeles.

1910 Crowley founded Astrum Argentum (AA)

1912 Crowley joined OTO by invitation of Reuss and became Chief of British subsidiary order, the Mysteria Mystica Maxima.

Astrum Argentum became part of OTO.

1913 Steiner left Theosophy.

1914 Steiner left OTO. Steiner founded Anthroposophy.
Crowley left for America.

1919 Alpha Omega lodge of Stella Matutina founded as an offshoot of the Golden Dawn.
Dion Fortune (Violet Mary Firth 1891-1946) was a member.

1920 *The Canadian Theosophist* began publication.

1922 Crowley became head of OTO.

1923 Dion Fortune left Alpha Omega lodge of the Stella Matutina to join Theosophical Society where she assumed leadership.

1923 Waite's *Occult Sciences* re-issued.

1924 Dion Fortune founded the Fraternity of the Inner Light as part of the Theosophical Society.

1928 Dion Fortune left the Theosophical Society and transformed the Fraternity of the Inner Light into the Society of Inner Light.

1929 Katherine Tingley dies. G. de Purucker assumes leadership of TS.

1930 Dion Fortune's Psychic Self Defense published.

1931 Joint celebration of HPB Centennial in London.

1932 Sybil Leek (1923-1983) met Crowley for the first time[6]. She later wrote about reincarnation and claimed that the spirit of Blavatsky who spoke through her guided her[7]. She also became an associate of Israel Regardie, Crowley's pupil, when she lived in Los Angeles during the 1960s.

1933 Besant died.

Mid 1930's Dion Fortune entered into correspondence with Crowley re: ritual construction and performance.

1945 Arthur Conger recognized as leader of TS.

1951 James Long becomes leader of TS.

1971 Grace Knoche becomes leader of TS.

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1. The only known official record of Blavatsky's parentage and marriage is a certificate issued to her during her time in India. The following text first appeared in the preface of the second edition of A.P. Sinnett's *The Occult World* and reproduced in Sax Rohmer's *The Romance of Sorcery*.

> I certify by the present that Madame H.P. Blavatsky, now residing at Simla (British India), is from her father's side the daughter of Colonel Peter Hahn, and grand-daughter of Lieutenant-General Alexis Hahn von Rottenstern-Hahn (a noble family of Mecklenburg, Germany, settled in Russia). And that she is from her mother's side the daughter of Helene Fadeef, and grand-daughter of Privy Councilor Andrew Fadeff and of the Princess Helene Dolgorouki; that she is the widow of the Councillor of State, Nicephore Blavatsky, late Vice-Governor of the Province of Erivan, Caucasus.

(Signed) Major General Rostislav Fadeef (of H.I. Majesty's Staff, Joint Secretary of the State at the Ministry of the Interior) St. Petersburg, 29, Little Moskaya. September 18, 1881. (1914/1973:236-7)

2. Westcott was a friend of the Russian occultist Madame Blavatsky, and advocate of the mystical Christianity of Anna Kingsford ... and an enthusiastic reader of alchemical tracts, cabalistic treatises, and the writings of Éliphas Lévi. Westcott was also a dedicated freemason and it is probable that he first met S.L. Mac Gregor Mathers at either some Masonic function or at a meeting of Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society: both men had enjoyed an intellectual flirtation with the pseudo-oriental occultism of that organization (King and Sutherland 1982:87).

3. Mathers had probably completed his translation, later to be published under the title *The Kabbala Unveiled*, by the time he left Bournemouth for London. In any case, he had done so when he met Madame Blavatsky, in 1886 for he lent her a copy of his unpublished manuscript and she quoted from it in her *Secret Doctrine*, the book that become the Bible of devout Theosophists (King and Sutherland 1982:90).

4. W.B. Yeats ... had been introduced to the (Golden Dawn) by Mathers, who had first met him either in the reading room of the British Museum (as Yeats himself claimed) or, more probably, at Madame Bavatsky's home in Holland Park. He was initiated into the Neophyte grade as early as March 1890...(King and Sutherland 1982:110).

5. No agreement for this date could be found in the sources consulted.

6. See Leek (1975:25) and Guiley (1989:197) for a discussion of her friendship with Crowley.

7. See Guiley (1989:198) for an exposition of Leek's views on reincarnation and their links to Blavatsky.

APPENDIX D

Catalogue of Lawren Harris' Artworks

Disclaimer regarding the following Catalogue of Artworks:

1. This is not a definitive list.
2. If there is nothing in the column labeled 'Medium'", then it is assumed to be oil.
3. Images have been taken from various sources, i.e. books now listed in my Bibliography, the National Archives of Canada, the National Gallery archives, slides from the National Gallery of Canada, slides from the Art Gallery of Ontario, and Internet websites of auction houses and galleries.
4. As noted in the thesis, galleries assigned many of the titles for the purposes of displaying them in an exhibition; therefore some on my list may be duplicates of the same painting although if I have listed numerous ones by the same title it is because they were found listed as such by various authors..
5. Spellings given in the list are as found.
6. 'pre 1936' is according to when Doris Mills did her inventory of the existing paintings and sketches at the time. This inventory list is located in the National Gallery of Canada archives.
7. n.d. means no date could be found.
8. Numbers '3' vs 'III' or 'Mt.' vs 'Mount' – these paintings may be duplicates. There is no way to tell if it was meant to mean the same.
9. Each painting has been listed once and if I found other titles for the same painting I have noted this in the Notes column.
10. when "listed as" in notes - refers to where 'listed as' in other reference materials used.

Appendix D
Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
2	no title	n.d.	sketches	6 separate sketches were found in his archival writings each without titles; none were the same as any that were done in his notebooks with his writings
3	no title	n.d.	drawing	sketch found in archival writings of Harris; separated from the sketches in #2 in this list for the purpose of using as an illustration in this thesis
4	#70 LSH (Howie)	n.d.		
5	1943	1943		later exhibited as "War Painting", now called "Abstract"; also dated 1941
6	2 a.m. Buchanan Bay, Ellesmere Island	pre 1936	sketch	Mills' inventory
7	A Back Street, Toronto	pre 1936	sketch	Mills' inventory
8	A Christian Symbol marvellously out of place	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
9	A City Street	n.d.	sketch	
10	A Cottage, Metis Beach	n.d.	sketch	
11	A Fantasy	c.1928		
12	A House in the Slums	1920		Also listed with 'Ontario' in title
13	A House in Barrie	c.1921		also dated c.1919; also listed with "Ontario" in the title
14	A Load of Fence Posts	1911		
15	A Migratory Flight	1957-58		also dated 1954-56, 1954, 1950; also listed without the "A"; also titled "LSH 158"

Appendix D
Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
16	A Mountain	pre 1936	sketch	Mills' inventory, Rocky Mountians list
17	A Mountain Stream	pre 1936	sketch	Mills' inventory
18	A Northern Lake	n.d.	sketch	
19	A Ragged Bedouin filling his girbie	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
20	A Side Street	1919	drawing	
21	A Side Street	1919-20		
22	A Street in Barrie	1920		also listed with "Ontario" in title
23	Above a Beaver Dam	c.1920		also called "Above a Beaver Dam, Algoma"
24	Above a Beaver Dam I	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
25	Above a Beaver Dam II	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
26	Above Lake Superior	n.d.	sketch	
27	Above Lake Superior	n.d.		painting of #26 in this list
28	Above Lake Superior 1921	1921		
29	Above Lake Superior	c.1922		also dated 1924
30	Above Moraine Lake	1926	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountians list; also listed with
31	Above Paradise Valley	pre 1936		Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
32	Abstract	1935	graphite drawing	found in Harris' archival writings with notes on science and art
33	Abstract	1937	drawing	
34	Abstract	c. 1939		also called "LSH 71"
35	Abstract	c.1939		

Appendix D
Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
36	Abstract	c. 1941	graphite drawing	
37	Abstract	1943		formerly called "1943"
38	Abstract	c. 1945	graphite drawing	
39	Abstract	1948		
40	Abstract Composition	1958		
41	Abstract Composition	n.d.		
42	Abstract Drawing No.525	c.1930	pencil	
43	Abstract Drawing No. 505	c.1935	pencil	
44	Abstract Drawing No. 508	c.1935	pencil	
45	Abstract I.D. 544	n.d.	Drawing	
46	Abstract I.D. 556	c.1938-42	pencil	
47	Abstract I.D. 583	c.1938-40	Drawing	
48	Abstract I.D. 587	c.1938-42	Drawing	
49	Abstract I.D. 589	c.1938-40	Drawing	
50	Abstract I.D. 591	c.1938-42	Drawing	
51	Abstract I.D. 604	1940	Drawing	
52	Abstract I.D. 606	c.1938-42	Drawing	

Appendix D
Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
53	Abstract Landscape	c. 1947		also called "LSH H"
54	Abstract No.7	c.1939	graphite drawing	
55	Abstract No.7	n.d.	oil	
56	Abstract No.19	c.1945-48		
57	Abstract No.35	1935	drawing	
58	Abstract #74	n.d.		
59	Abstract No.85	1958		Also found dated 1938-41
60	Abstract No.561	1938	drawing	
61	Abstract No.559	1938	drawing	
62	Abstract No.591	1938	drawing	
63	Abstract No. 603	1938	drawing	
64	Abstract LSH 84	n.d.		
65	Abstract Painting	pre 1936		Mills inventory; it is noted by Mills that this comes from two drawings related to "Figure with Rays of Light'
66	Abstract Painting	1940-45		
67	Abstract Painting	1950		
68	Abstract Painting 12	c.1940-45		
69	Abstract Painting 21	c.1940-45		also listed as "unlisted" and dated 1942
70	Abstract Painting 28	c.1940-45		also listed as "unlisted" and dated 1943

Appendix D
Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
71	Abstract Painting #48	1938-41		
72	Abstract Painting #74	n.d.		
73	Abstract Painting 90	1940-45		
74	Abstract Painting 95	c.1937		
75	Abstract Painting #201	n.d.		
76	Abstract Painting LSH #84	n.d.		
77	Abstract Painting No.20	c. 1945		
78	Abstract Painting of a Mountain Experience	c.1946		now called "Mountain Experience I"; also listed as "Abstract of a Mountain Experience, Number 19"; also listed as "Composition No.2"
79	Abstract Painting of a Mountain	n.d.		
80	Abstract Sketch	c.1935	sketch	
81	Abstract Sketch	c. 1936	sketch	also dated 1937
82	Abstract Vertical	1939		not same as #83
83	Abstract Vertical, Memorial to an Airman	c.1940		
84	Abstract (War Painting)	1943		refer to "1943"
85	Abstract with notes on science and art	1935	drawing	
86	Abstraction	1937		
87	Abstraction	1935-37	Drawing	
88	Abstraction	1938		
89	Abstraction	1939		done while part of Transcendental Painting Group

Appendix D
Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
90	Abstraction	1939-40		
91	Abstraction	1945		
92	Abstraction	1946		
93	Abstraction	1950		
94	Abstraction	1951		
95	Abstraction	1950-54		
96	Abstraction	1950-54		not the same as # 95
97	Abstraction	1954		
98	Abstraction	1950-55		
99	Abstraction	1955-57		
100	Abstraction	1956		from an earlier sketch' (noted by author in book where I found this)
101	Abstraction	1957		also called "LSH 167"
102	Abstraction	1957		also called "LSH 2"
103	Abstraction	1957-58		
104	Abstraction	1957-59		
105	Abstraction	1958		also called "LSH 97"
106	Abstraction	1958		also called "Atma Buddhi Manas" and dated 1962
107	Abstraction	1958-62		
108	Abstraction	1962		
109	Abstraction	1960		
110	Abstraction	1961		also called "LSH 174"
111	Abstraction	1961-62		
112	Abstraction I	1963		

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
113	Abstraction	c.1967		also called "LSH N"
114	Abstraction	1967		not the same as #113
115	Abstraction	(n.d)		Paintings#115 to #127 are not the same
116	Abstraction	(n.d)		
117	Abstraction	(n.d)		
118	Abstraction	(n.d)		
119	Abstraction	(n.d)		
120	Abstraction	(n.d)		
121	Abstraction	(n.d)		
122	Abstraction	(n.d)		
123	Abstraction	(n.d)		
124	Abstraction	(n.d)		
125	Abstraction	(n.d)		
126	Abstraction	(n.d)		
127	Abstraction	(n.d)		
128	Abstraction 13	c.1937		
129	Abstraction 92 (Painting No.2)	c.1939		
130	Abstraction 98	c.1936		
131	Abstraction 101	c.1962		
132	Abstraction 103	c.1964		
133	Abstraction 106	1958		
134	Abstraction 108	c.1958		
135	Abstraction 119	c.1945		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
136	Abstraction 140 (Subjective Painting)	c.1957		
137	Abstraction 148	c.1965		
138	Abstraction 181	c.1950		also listed with "(Chief)" in title
139	Abstraction 195	c.1940		
140	Abstraction 196	1941		
141	Abstraction "A"	c.1968		
142	Abstraction "B"	c.1968		
143	Abstraction "C"	c.1967		
144	Abstraction "D"	c.1968		
145	Abstraction "E"	c.1967		
146	Abstraction "F"	c.1966		
147	Abstraction "J"	c.1964		
148	Abstraction "K"	c.1964		
149	Abstraction "P"	c.1968		
150	Abstraction "R"	c.1967		
151	Abstraction "S"	c.1968		
152	Abstraction "T"	c.1967		
153	Abstraction "V"	c.1965		
154	Abstraction No. 3	c.1937		also dated 1936 and c.1934-37
155	Abstraction (Day and Night)	1962		also called "LSH 113"
156	Abstraction (Door), New Hampshire	c. 1935-36	Drawing	also dated c.1934
157	Abstraction (F11)	c.1950		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
158	Abstraction (Involvement 2)	c.1939		
159	Abstraction LSH#97	c1958		titled on verso
160	Abstraction (Nature Rhythm)	n.d.		probably the same as "Nature Rhythms" dated 1950
161	Abstraction (Panel No.63)	c.1937		
162	Abstraction (Portrait of Bess)	n.d.	drawing	
163	Abstraction (Portrait of Bess)	c.1938		also dated 1937
164	Abstraction (Ritual Dance in Spring)	c.1955		also called "Frolic (Abstraction 102)"; as well as "Abstraction" 1957; also called "LSH 154".
165	Abstraction (The White Triangle)	c.1939		
166	Abstraction LSH#97	c1958		title on verso
167	Abstraction of Mt. Alice Experience	1950-52		
168	Acute Angles	n.d.	pen and ink over	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
169	Adelaide Street near Simcoe	1908-12	sketch	also dated c. 1909-10; also called "Adelaide near Simcoe"
170	After Rain, Northern Lake	c.1922		
171	Afternoon	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
172	Afternoon Hudsons Straits	n.d.		
173	Afternoon Sun, Lake Superior	1924		also called "Afternoon Sun, North Shore, Lake Superior
174	Agawa Canyon, Algoma	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
175	Agawa Falls	1918		
176	Agawa River, Algoma	1919	sketch	
177	Agawa River, Algoma	1919		

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
178	Agawa River, Algoma	after 1934		related to sketch done in 1919
179	Agawa Waterfall	1919		
180	Ahmed Ased-Ullah, the writer of scrolls	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
181	Albert Harbour, North Baffin Island	1930		
182	Alberta and Sunwapta	c.1923-30	Drawing	
183	Algoma	1919		also dated 1920
184	Algoma Canyon	1923		
185	Algoma Country	n.d.	sketch	
186	Algoma Country	1920-21		
187	Algoma Country II	1923		
188	Algoma Country No1	n.d.		No.1 and No2 may be same as #186 and #187
189	Algoma Country No2	n.d.		
190	Algoma Hill	1920		
191	Algoma Interior II	1918		
192	Algoma Lake	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
193	Algoma Lake	c.1920		
194	Algoma Landscape	1922		also dated 1923
195	Algoma Panorama	1921		
196	Algoma Reflections	n.d.		
197	Algoma River	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
198	Algoma River	1918		
199	Algoma Sketch	1918		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
200	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	#200-306 different sketches listed in Mills inventory
201	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
202	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
203	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
204	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
205	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
206	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
207	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
208	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
209	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
210	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
211	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
212	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
213	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
214	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
215	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
216	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
217	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
218	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
219	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
220	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
221	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
222	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
223	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
224	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
225	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
226	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
227	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
228	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
229	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
230	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
231	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
232	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
233	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
234	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
235	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
236	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
237	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
238	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
239	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
240	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
241	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
242	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
243	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
244	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
245	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
246	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
247	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
248	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
249	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
250	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
251	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
252	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
253	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
254	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
255	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
256	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
257	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
258	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
259	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
260	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
261	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
262	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
263	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
264	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
265	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
266	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
267	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
268	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
269	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
270	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
271	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
272	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
273	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
274	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
275	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
276	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
277	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
278	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
279	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
280	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
281	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
282	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
283	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
284	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
285	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
286	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
287	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
288	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
289	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
290	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
291	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
292	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
293	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
294	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
295	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
296	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
297	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
298	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
299	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
300	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
301	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
302	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
303	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
304	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
305	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
306	Algoma Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
307	Algoma Sketch I (summer)	n.d.	sketch	
308	Algoma Sketch II (after fire)	n.d.	sketch	
309	Algoma sketch XII			
310	Algoma Sketch XVI	1919		
311	Algoma Sketch XXXVIII			

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
312	Algoma Sketch CIX	1919	sketch	
313	Algoma Sketch CXIX	1919	sketch	
314	Algoma Sketch CXXII	n.d.		also listed as "The Canyon"; also listed as "Waterfall into Algoma Canyon"
315	Algoma Sketch LII-Sand Lake	1919		
316	Algoma Sketch LXVIII	1921	sketch	perhaps the sketches with Roman numerals are same as those without numbers listed previously, i.e. #200-306
317	Algoma Stream	1919	sketch	
318	Algoma Swamp	n.d.		
319	Algoma Tree Line	1928		
320	Algoma Waterfall	1919	sketch	
321	Algoma Waterfall	1925		also dated 1916
322	Algoma Woodland	1919		
323	Algoma Woods I	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
324	Algoma Woods I	1918		
325	Algonquin	1912	sketch	
326	Algonquin Park	c1913	Drawing	
327	Algonquin Park	1916		also dated 1917
328	Algonquin Park	1919-20		
329	Algonquin Park Cottage	1914	sketch	
330	Algonquin Park Sunburst	c. 1912		
331	Algonquin Sketch	n.d.	sketch	
332	algonquin under Snow	1919		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
333	Annunciation	1954		also dated 1958-63
334	Arctic	n.d		
335	Arctic Drawing No.197	1930	drawing	
336	Arctic Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
337	Arctic Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
338	Arctic Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
339	Arctic Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	#336 to #339 are different sketches listed in Mills inventory
340	Arctic Sketch XIII	c.1930	sketch	
341	Arctic Sketch XIII	1930		
342	Arctic Sketch I.D. 197	n.d.	Drawing	
343	Arctic Sketch I.D. 746	c.1930	Drawing	
344	Arctic Sunset (unfinished)	pre 1936	sketch	there is a note on the Mills inventory list that it was destroyed; this is not the same sketch as #345
345	Arctic Sunset (unfinished)	pre 1936	sketch	used to hang in the Studio Building; also called 'Arctic Painting No.8' according to Mills inventory
346	At Batchewanna, II	1919	sketch	Mills inventory; also called "At Batchewana, Algoma II,
347	At Canyon, Algoma	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
348	Athabasca Valley, Jasper Park	1924		
349	Atma Buddhi Manas	1962		Also called "LSH 180"; has also been called "Three Planes of Being"; has also been called "Abstraction"; not the same as #1597
350	Atman etc	n.d.		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
351	Atman etc #2	n.d.		
352	Aura Lee Lake, Algonquin Park	1916		
353	Autumn, Algoma	1920		
354	Autumn, Batchawana Lake	n.d.		
355	Autumn Decoration	pre 1936		on Landscape list in Mills inventory
356	Autumn, Lake Superior	1921		
357	Autumn Lakes	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
358	Autumn Leaves and Hurdy-gurdy	pre 1936		Mills inventory; City Paintings list; not the same as 'Hurdy Gurdy'
359	Autumn Morning	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
360	Autumn Rhythm	1957		
361	Autumn Trees	c.1908		also dated 1912
362	Autumn Woods, Algoma	1918		
363	Avenue Road	n.d.		
364	Baffin Island Sketch	1930	sketch	
365	Baffin Island	c.1930		sold for $2.2million at auction
366	Barns, Spring	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
367	Barrie, Ontario	1916-17		
368	Batchawana	n.d.		
369	Batchewanna III	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
370	Batchewanna, Algoma I	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
371	Batchewana Lake, Algoma	1918	sketch	

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
372	Batchewana Mitchell Lake, Algoma	pre 1936	sketch	
373	Bay, Lake Superior	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
374	Beaver Country	c.1920		
375	Beaver Dam	1920		also dated 1919; also listed with "Algoma" in title
376	Beaver Drowned Lake, Algoma	pre 1936		
377	Beaver Lake	pre 1936		
378	Beaver Lake, Algoma	1919	sketch	
379	Beaver Lake, Algoma	n.d.		
380	Beaver Made Lake, Algoma	n.d.	sketch	
381	Beaver Made Lake, Algoma	c.1923		
382	Beaver Pond	1921		
383	Beaver Swamp	1920		Also listed with "Algoma" in the title
384	Bend of the River	c.1918		
385	Berg Lake	1925		
386	Billboard	1921		also dated 1922
387	Birch Bushes	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
388	Birch Tree	c.1916		
389	Birches	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
390	Birches	1912		
391	Birches I	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
392	Birches II	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
393	Birches III	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
394	Birches IV	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
395	Birches V	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
396	Birches by the Lake	n.d.		
397	Black Birch & Maple, Algoma	1919		maybe same as one listed in Mills inventory without 'Algoma' in title
398	Black Court, Halifax	1921		listed as"Halifax Paintings I" in Mills Inventory
399	Blowing Tree	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
400	Blue and white	n.d.		
401	Blue Spruces and Yellow Sky	pre 1936		Mills inventory
402	Brazeau Snowfield, Jasper	1924		also called "Mountain Painting XII"; in Harris' own handwriting this is listed as "Brazean"; also listed as "Brazeau Snowfield, Rocky Mountains"; also listed with "Park" in title
403	Buchanan Bay	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
404	Buchanan Bay, Ellesmere Island	n.d.		
405	Building	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
406	Building the Ice House, Hamilton	1912	sketch	
407	Building the Ice House, Hamilton	1912		also dated 1916; also listed without "Hamilton" in the title
408	Building – Dock and Wharf, Port Coldwell, Lake Superior	c.1922-23	Drawing	
409	Buildings, Algonquin Park	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
410	Buildings in the North	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
411	Buildings on the River Spree, Berlin	1907	water-colour	
412	Bylot Island	c. 1930		also dated 1931; this painting was used on a postage stamp in 1967
413	Bylot Island I	c. 1930		also called "Bylot Island No.1"
414	Bylot Island No2	n.d.		perhaps the same as 'Bylot Island II' listed in Mills inventory therefore done pre 1936
415	Bylot Island, South Shore	c.1930		
416	Bylot Island, South Shore from Eclipse Sound	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
417	Bylot Island Shore	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
418	Byng Inlet	n.d.		
419	Cactus	1938	drawing	Harris did a number of drawings of cacti
420	Caligraph Forming	c.1958		also called "Untitled (LSH 175)"; also listed without "Forming" in the title
421	Cally Leighton's Lake, Algoma	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
422	Cally Leighton's Lake II, Algoma	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
423	Camp in the North	n.d.	sketch	Also called "Log Cabin"
424	Camp of the Timberline, Rocky Mountains	c.1923-30	Drawing	
425	Canvas with Figures	n.d.		
426	Campsite, Rocky Mountains	c.1923-30	Drawing	
427	Canyon I	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
428	Canyon II	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
429	Canyon III	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
430	Canyon IV	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
431	Canyon V	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
432	Canyon VI	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
433	Canyon Algoma VII	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
434	Canyon Algoma VIII	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
435	Canyon Algoma IX	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
436	Caricature, Dr. Porter	n.d.	drawing	
437	Carved Icebergs	n.d		
438	Chaincook Mountain, N.B.	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
439	Christmas	1927		
440	Church in the Rockies	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
441	Church Windows	c.1931	serigraph proof	Hallmark card by Harris
442	City House	1919		Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
443	Clouds, Lake Superior	1923		
444	Clyde River, Baffin Island	1930	drawing	
445	Col's Grocery	c.1908-12	sketch	also dated 1909-10; also listed with" Spadina Avenue, south of Queen" in title
446	Coldwell, Lake Superior	c.1925	sketch	also listed with "Sketches CXXXIX" in title; also dated c.1923

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
447	Coldwell Bay, Lake Superior	1925		
448	Coldwell Bay, north of Lake Superior	1923		
449	Coldwell Hills, Lake Superior	1923		also called "Coldwell Hills, North Shore"
450	Colin Range, Rocky Mountains,	1924-30	sketch	also with "Sketch CXII" in title
451	Coming from Church	1919		
452	Composition	c. 1938		also called "LSH 99"
453	Composition (Abstraction No.99)	1938		
454	Composition No.1	1941		also dated 1940; also called "LSH 141"
455	Composition 2	c.1935-36		now called "Resolution No.9"
456	Composition 4 (Poise)	c.1936		
457	Composition No.6	1948		also called "Abstract Painting" and "Abstract No.10"
458	Composition No.8	c.1937		now called "Riven Earth I" (see # 1396)
459	Composition No.10	c.1937		reproduced as "Mountain Form No.6"
460	Configuration in Space (Formative)	c.1950		also listed without "Configuration in Space" in title
461	Configuration in Space	1957		also called "LSH 177"; not the same as # 460
462	Consolation Lake	c.1927		
463	Coronet Glacier Near Maligne Lake	n.d.	sketch	
464	Cosmic #133	n.d.		
465	Cosmic Dance	1958		
466	Cosmic Dance	1960		
467	Cosmic Dance	1950-55		also called 'Cosmic Dance Butterfly'; possibly the same as "Ritual Dance in Spring" (see # 1395)

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
468	Cottage, Metis Beach	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
469	Country North of Lake Superior	c.1925		also dated 1921 and 1927
470	Curving Lines	n.d.	pen and ink over pencil over charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
471	Day and Night	c.1960		also dated 1958
472	Dear Emily	1935	pencil	quotation marks were included in title
473	Decorative Landscape, Algoma	n.d.		
474	Decorative Landscape, Landscape I	1914		not the same as #473; also listed as "Yellow Sky and Blue Spruce"
475	Decorative Landscape	1917		also listed with "Algoma" in title
476	Deep Winter	pre 1936		Mills inventory
477	Definitions	1922	ink drawing	illustration from Contrasts
478	Derailment	1962		
479	Descriptive	1922	ink drawing	illustration from Contrasts
480	Deserted Farm	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
481	Design for a Chapel	c.1928		
482	Design for a Christmas card	1931	serigraph	
483	Design for a Panel: Autumn	c. 1945		related work titled "Autumn"

Appendix D
Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
484	Design for Plaque No.2	1940	graphite	
485	Distant View over Lake Superior	n.d.		
486	Door, New Hampshire	c.1935	Drawing	
487	(Door, New Hampshire) Drawing 81	c.1934	drawing	
488	Door Knot Sketch, New Hampshire I.D. 690	c. 1935-38	Drawing	
489	Down the Road	c.1929-30	Drawing	
490	Dr. John D. Robins	n.d		also spelled "Robbins"
491	Dr. MacDonald	n.d.		portrait of principal of St. Andrew's School
492	Dr. Salem Bland	1926		also dated 1925; also called "Rev. Salem Bland" and "The Rev. Salem Bland"
493	Drawing One	c.1944	pencil and charcoal	Drawings One to Twenty-three were illustrations done by Harris for "The ABC of Abstract Painting" article
494	Drawing Two	c.1944		
495	Drawing Three	c.1944		
496	Drawing Eight	c.1944		
497	Drawing Nine	c.1944		
498	Drawing Twelve	c.1944		
499	Drawing Fourteen	c.1944		
500	Drawing Fifteen	c.1944		
501	Drawing Seventeen	c.1944		
502	Drawing Nineteen	c.1944		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
503	Drawing Twenty-one	c.1944		
504	Drawing Twenty-three	c.1944		
505	dynamic Symmetry	1936	drawing	
506	Earlscourt, Toronto	1921		
507	Early Houses	1913		
508	Early Houses with Gatepost	1921		
509	Early Houses with People	1921		
510	Early Light	n.d.		
511	Early Morning Mists, Lake Louise, Mountain Sketch LXIX	1928	sketch	
512	Early Summer Afternoon, Barrie	c.1922		
513	Eclipse of the Spirit	1957		also dated 1954 and 1955; also called "LSH 153"
514	Eclipse Sound and Bylot Island	pre 1936	sketch	
515	Eclipse Sound and Bylot Island	1930	oil	
516	Eden Smith	n.d.		portrait of a Toronto architect
517	Edge of Lake, Autumn	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
518	Eight Red Houses	c.1926		
519	El Arish, the Half-way city of the Caravan Route	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
520	Elevator Court, Halifax	1921		listed as "Halifax Paintings II"
521	Ellesmere Island	1930		
522	Ellesmere Island Coast	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
523	Emerald Lake	1924		also listed with "Yoho Park" in title

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
524	Emerald Lake	n.d.		not the same as #523
525	Emotional	1922	ink drawing	illustration for Contrasts
526	Empty Composition	n.d.		work is blank; it was used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
527	End of a Little Lake	c.1921-22		
528	End of Beaver Pond	n.d.		
529	Entrance to Coldwell Harbour, Lake	1923		also called "Coldwell Bay, Lake Superior"
530	Entrance to Quidi Vidi, Newfoundland	n.d.	sketch	
531	Equations in Space	c.1936		
532	Equilibrium	c.1959		
533	Eskimo Tents, Pangnirtung, Baffin Island	1930	sketch	also listed as with "Tent" in the singular
534	Eskimo Tent, Pangnirtung, Baffin Island II	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
535	Evening, Algoma	c.1921		
536	Evening, Kempenfelt Bay, Lake Simcoe	c.1922		
537	Evening, Nipigon Country	c.1922		
538	Evening, Northern Lake	1921		
539	Evening Solitude	1919		
540	Eventide	c.1931	serigraph	Hallmark card by Harris

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
541	Excorsizing, Excorsizing, Excersizing, Oh come on You Little Devil	n.d.		cartoon depicting Lawren Harris walking hand in hand with small demons. To his left stands a lama and a man wearing glasses purported to be John Robins and the lama represents the Arts and Letters Club.
542	Exfoliating	1962		
543	Faces, Glace Bay, Halifax	c.1921-22	Drawing	
544	Falling Leaves	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
545	Falling Snow	c.1920		
546	Falls, Agawa River	1918		
547	Falls, Algoma	pre 1936		Mills inventory; may be same as 'Algoma Falls'
548	Falls, Montreal River, Algoma	n.d.		
549	Farm Buildings, New Hampshire	c.1935	Drawing	
550	Farm House, Halliburton	1916-17		
551	Farm Houses	1913		
552	Father Point	n.d.		
553	Father Point Light (Quebec Paintings I)	pre 1936		Mills inventory; part of his lighthouse series
554	Field of Flowers and Barn	c.1913-18		
555	Figure with Rays of Light (Arctic Grouping III)	1931	pen and ink	also called "Figure with Rays of Light", 1935

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
556	"Figure with Rays of Light"	1935	pencil and ink drawing	these two drawings were found together in Harris' archival writings; title (with quotation marks) accompanied drawings
557	Figures in Light (unfinished)	pre 1936		Mills inventory; City Paintings list
558	Figures in Light (unfinished)	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
559	First Snow, North Shore of Lake Superior	1923		
560	Fishhouse, Coldwell	c.1936	sketch	
561	Fishhouse, Coldwell	c.1936		also listed as "Fish House, Coldwell"
562	Fish Stage, Quidi Vidi, Newfoundland	1921		
563	Flame Forms (Abstraction 70)	1950-55		
564	Fog and Ice, Kane Basin	1930		
565	Fog and Ice, Smith Sound	1930		
566	Formative	c.1959		
567	Formative I	n.d.		see "Configuration in Space (Formative I)"
568	Formative II	n.d.		
569	Frances Street near King	1908-12		also dated c.1909-10
570	Frolic (Abstraction 130)	c.1955		
571	Frolic (Abstraction 102)	c.1955		
572	From Berg Lake, Morning	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
573	From Berg Lake, Evening	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
574	From Opabin Pass, Rocky Mountains	1924		also dated 1923
575	From the Harbour to the Open Sea	1941-52		also dated 1952
576	From the North West	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
577	From the North Shore, Lake Superior	1923		also dated 1927
578	From the South East	pre 1936	sketch	listed in Rocky Mountain sketches of Mills inventory
579	From the West	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
580	Geometrical Abstraction no.25	n.d.		
581	Geometrical Abstraction (Transatlantic)	c. 1939		
582	Georgian Bay	1911		also dated 1912
583	Georgian Bay	c.1927	Drawing	
584	Georgian Bay Island	n.d.		
585	Glace Bay	1925	ink drawing	also dated 1921
586	Glace Bay, Halifax	c.1921-22	Drawing	
587	Glacier, Mount Robson District	n.d.	sketch	also called "Glacier, Mt. Robson Area"
588	Glaciers, Rocky Mountains	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
589	Glaciers, Rocky Mountains	1930		
590	Goodsir Peaks, Rocky Mountains	1924-30		
591	Graham Spry	n.d.	pen and ink	portrait
592	Grain Fields	1938		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
593	Great White Triangle	1945		
594	Greenland Mountains	n.d.	zinc lithograph	also called "Greenland"
595	Greenland Mountains	c.1930		
596	Greens I, II, III, Rocky Mountains	c.1923-30	Drawing	
597	Grey Day in Town	1924		also dated 1923 and 1926; also called "A Grey Day in Town"
598	Grey Day, Lake Superior	n.d.		
599	Grey Day, North Shore, Lake Superior (Lake Superior Painting XI)	1923		also titled without "Lake Superior Painting XI' in the title; also dated 1922; also called "Grey Day, North Shore"
600	Grey Day, North Shore, Lake Superior	1921	Sketch	
601	Grounded Icebergs	1930		also dated 1931; also with "Disco Bay" in title
602	H. O. McCurry	1957		portrait
603	Head of an Old Lady	1906	charcoal	
604	Herg Lake	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
605	High Country, Lake Superior	1925		
606	High Park, Toronto	c.1910-11	Drawing	
607	High Water, Joe Lake, Algonquin Park	n.d.		
608	Hill, Lake Superior	1922	sketch	
609	Hill, Lake Superior	1922		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
610	Hill, North Shore, Lake Superior	n.d.		
611	Hills	c.1907		
612	Hills, North Shore	n.d.		
613	Hills and Clouds	pre 1936		Mills inventory
614	Hills on Lake Superior	n.d.		
615	Homes	c.1921		
616	Horsechestnut and Old House	pre 1936		Mills inventory
617	House	n.d.	pencil drawing	
618	House, Laurentians	c.1935	Drawing	
619	House, Thistletown	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
620	House, Toronto	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
621	House, Toronto, Group No XIV	1923		
622	House and Barn, New Hampshire	c.1935	Drawing	
623	House in the Slums	1917		
624	House in Snow	c.1931	serigraph	Hallmark card
625	House in Toronto	n.d.	sketch	
626	House in Snow	n.d.		
627	House in the Ward, Toronto	1917	sketch	
628	House in the Ward	1917		maybe same as "House in the Slums"
629	House in the Ward II (autumn)	n.d.		
630	House in the Ward, Winter	pre 1936		Mills inventory; also listed with "City Painting No.1" in
631	Houses	1913		
632	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	#632-654 are different sketches listed in Mills list

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
633	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
634	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
635	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
636	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
637	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
638	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
639	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
640	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
641	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
642	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
643	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
644	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
645	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
646	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
647	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
648	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
649	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
650	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
651	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
652	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
653	Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
654	Houses	pre 1936	Sketch	Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
655	Houses (Group No.19)	c.1910		also listed as XIX
656	Houses, Autumn	n.d.	sketch	
657	Houses, Chestnut Street, Toronto	1919		also listed without "Toronto" in title
658	Houses, Gerrard Street, Toronto	1912		
659	Houses, Peter Street	n.d.	Drawing	
660	Houses, Richmond Street	1911		
661	Houses, Roxborough and Yonge Streets	n.d.	Drawing	
662	Houses, St. Patrick Street	1923	sketch	
663	Houses, St. Patrick Street	1923		
664	Houses, Sketch XIX	n.d.		
665	Houses, Spring, Outskirrts of Toronto	n.d.		
666	Houses, Wellington Street, Winter	1910		also listed without "Winter" in title; also listed as "Houses, Wellington Street, Toronto"; also listed as "Houses, Wellington St.W."
667	Houses, Winter	c.1920		also called "Houses in Winter"
668	Houses and Women	c1920		
669	Houses in the Outskirts, Spring	n.d.	sketch	
670	Houses in winter I	n.d.		
671	Houses in Winter II	n.d.		
672	Houses under Construction	c.1916		
673	Hubert, Above Montreal Falls	n.d.		
674	Hurdy Gurdy	c.1918		also dated 1913; also listed as "Hurdy-gurdy"

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
675	Ice House, Coldwell (Sketch XXIV)	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
676	Ice House, Coldwell (Sketch XXIV)	c.1923		
677	Ice Houses, Coldwell, Lake Superior	1928		also dated 1923; also called "Ice Houses, Coldwell Bay"; also called "Ice House, Coldwell Bay, Lake Superior"; also listed as "Ice House, Coldwell, Lake Superior"
678	Iceberg, Baffin Bay North	1930		
679	Iceberg off Cape York, Greenland	n.d.		
680	Icebergs	pre 1936		hung in the Studio Building in 1936 according to Mills inventory
681	Icebergs II	pre 1936		Mills Inventory
682	Icebergs and Mountains	1939		also dated 1930
683	Icebergs and Mountains, Greenland	1932		also dated 1930
684	Icebergs from Smith Sound	n.d.	sketch	
685	Icebergs from Smith Sound	1930		also called"Icebergs, Smith Sound"
686	Icebergs, Davis Strait	1930		also listed as "Harris Icebergs, Davis Strait"
687	Icebergs, Disco Island	pre 1936		also called "Icebergs, Disco Bay"
688	Icebergs, Smith Sound`	1930	sketch	
689	Icebergs, Smith Sound II	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
690	Icebergs off Dundas, Devon Island	1930	sketch	also listed without "Island" in title
691	Icebergs off Ellesmere Island	1928		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
692	In Buchanan Bay, Ellesmere Island	1930	sketch	
693	In a Slow Aged Muse Under the Shadow of the Lemon Tree	1908		
694	In Algoma	n.d.		
695	In Jasper National Park	c.1923-30	Drawing	
696	In Memoriam to a Canadian Artist	1950		
697	In the Agawa Canyon	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
698	In the Algoma Valley	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
699	In the Coffee-house Rachid had sat with Three Youths	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
700	In the Market-Place	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
701	In the Rocky Mountains	pre 1936		Mills inventory
702	In the Ward	c.1912-20	Drawing	
703	In the Ward	1913		also dated 1920 and 1922; could be more than one painting
704	In the Ward	1916		not the same as #703 or # 705
705	In the Ward	1917		
706	In the Ward I	pre 1936		Mills inventory
707	In the Ward VI	c.1922		
708	In the Ward, city Paintings	1918		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
709	In the Ward - Grocery Store	1920		
710	In the Wind	1920		
711	Industrial Plant	pre 1936		Mills inventory
712	Inuit Tent, Pangnirtung	1930	drawing	
713	Inverted Red Triangle	1937		
714	Involvement 2 Santa Fe (Drawing 96)	n.d.	drawing	
715	Involvement 2 Santa Fe (Drawing 97)	n.d.	drawing	
716	Interior with a Clothes Closet	1906	watercolou	also called "Interior of a Clothes Closet"
717	Intimations	c.1955		
718	Island	pre 1936		Mills inventory; not same as 1961 painting
719	Island	1961		from sketch done in 1921
720	Island, Georgian Bay	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Georgian Bay Paintings I
721	Island, MacCallum Lake	1921	oil	on burlap
722	Island and Cloud	pre 1936		Lake Superior painting in Mills inventory
723	Island off Greenland	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
724	Island in Algoma	1960-61		related to a sketch done in 1921-22
725	Island in Lake, Algonquin Park	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
726	Islands, Lake Superior	1922		
727	Islands, North of Greenland	1930		
728	Isolated Peak	1929	drawing	
729	Isolation Peak	1929		also dated c.1930, 1931

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
730	Isolation Peak	c.1929	sketch	
731	Isolation Peak	c.1930	drawing	
732	Isolation Peak colour key study	n.d.	sketch	
733	Isolation Peak above Clouds	pre 1936	sketch	
734	Isolation Peak, Rocky Mountains	1930		also dated 1931; also listed without "Rocky Mountains" in title
735	Italian Store in the Ward	1922		
736	Jagged Lines	n.d.	pen and ink over pencil over charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
737	January Thaw, Edge of Town	1921		also dated 1923; also listed without "Edge of Town" in
738	Jasper	c.1923-30	Drawing	
739	Jasper Park	c.1939		
740	Jazz	c.1921		
741	Kane Basin	n.d.		
742	Kempenfelt Bay	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
743	Kempenfeldt Bay	1917-18		also listed with "Lake Simcoe" in the title; spelling as
744	Kempenfelt Bay, Lake Simcoe	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
745	Kicking Horse River	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountians list
746	Kinetic Lines	n.d.	pen and ink	4 jagged lines, used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
747	Kinney's Lake, Mt. Robson	c.1925		
748	Knot in Wood I.D. 522	n.d.	Drawing	
749	Labrador	1957-58		from sketch done in 1930
750	Lake, Algonquin Park	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
751	Lake, Algonquin Park	c.1919-20		later renamed "Sand Lake, Algoma"
752	Lake and Mountains	1928		also dated 1927
753	Lake and Mountains	1923-27		
754	Lake and Mountains	1923-27		not the same as #694
755	Lake and Mountains	pre 1936		Mills inventory, Rocky Mountain Painting list; not same as #753 or 754
756	Lake and Mountains II	pre 1936		Mills inventory
757	Lake and Mountains, Rocky Mountains	c.1927	Drawing	
758	Lake Edith, Jasper	1924		
759	Lake Harbour, Morning	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
760	Lake Harbour, Smith Shore, Baffin Island, Morning	1930	oil	
761	Lake Harbour, South Shore, Baffin Island	1930	sketch	also listed as "Lake Harbour, Baffin Island South"; also listed with "Morning" in title
762	Lake in Algoma	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
763	Lake in Temagami	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
764	Lake in the North	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
765	Lake Louise	n.d.		

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
766	Lake MacArthur, British Columbia	c.1924-28		also listed as "Lake McArthur, Rocky Mountians"; also listed without "Rocky Mountains" in title
767	Lake McArthur	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountians list
768	Lake North of Lake Superior	pre 1936		
769	Lake, North Labrador	n.d.		
770	Lake Oesa, Rocky Mountains	1925		
771	Lake O'Hara	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
772	Lake Reflections	n.d.		
773	Lake Simcoe	1916		
774	Lake Simcoe Summer	c.1918		
775	Lake, Spruce and Mist	1920		
776	Lake Superior	1923		
777	Lake Superior	c.1924		
778	Lake Superior	pre 1936		not the same as #776 or 777
779	Lake Superior, afternoon	pre 1936		Mills inventory
780	Lake Superior, Painting IX	1923		
781	Lake Superior I	n.d.		
782	Lake Superior II	n.d.		
783	Lake Superior III	c.1928		sold at auction in 1999 for $1,056,000
784	Lake Superior VI	n.d.		
785	Lake Superior IX	1923		maybe the same as "Lake Superior, Painting IX"
786	Lake Superior LXXIX	c.1923		
787	Lake Superior Bay	n.d.	sketch	

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
788	Lake Superior Cliffs	1921		
789	Lake Superior Country	pre 1936	sketch	
790	Lake Superior Country	1922		
791	Lake Superior Hill	1925		
792	Lake Superior Hill XV	1925		
793	Lake Superior I.D. 463	c.1925	Drawing	
794	Lake Superior I.D. 469	c.1925	Drawing	
795	Lake Superior Island	1923		
796	Lake Superior No.3	1923		also listed with "III" in title instead of "No.3"
797	Lake Superior North Superior	pre 1936		Mills inventory
798	Lake Superior Painting	pre 1936		Mills inventory
799	Lake Superior Painting	pre 1936		Mills inventory
800	Lake Superior Painting	pre 1936		#797 to #800 are different sketches according to Mills inventory
801	Lake Superior Reflections	n.d.		
802	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	#802 to #919 are different sketches according to Mills inventory
803	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
804	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
805	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
806	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
807	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
808	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
809	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
810	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
811	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
812	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
813	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
814	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
815	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
816	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
817	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
818	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
819	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
820	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
821	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
822	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
823	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
824	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
825	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
826	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
827	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
828	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
829	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
830	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
831	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
832	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
833	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
834	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
835	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
836	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
837	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
838	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
839	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
840	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
841	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
842	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
843	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
844	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
845	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
846	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
847	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
848	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
849	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
850	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
851	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
852	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
853	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
854	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
855	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
856	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
857	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
858	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
859	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
860	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
861	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
862	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
863	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
864	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
865	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
866	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
867	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
868	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
869	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
870	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
871	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
872	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
873	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
874	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
875	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
876	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
877	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
878	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
879	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
880	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
881	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
882	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
883	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	Sketch	Mills inventory

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
884	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
885	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
886	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
887	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
888	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
889	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
890	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
891	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
892	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
893	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
894	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
895	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
896	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
897	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
898	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
899	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
900	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
901	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
902	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
903	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
904	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
905	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
906	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
907	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
908	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
909	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
910	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
911	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
912	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
913	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
914	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
915	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
916	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
917	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
918	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
919	Lake Superior Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
920	Lake Superior, Sketch II	c.1924	sketch	
921	Lake Superior Sketch IV	c.1924	sketch	also listed as "Lake Superior No.IV"
922	Lake Superior Sketch XXXVII	c.1921	sketch	
923	Lake Superior Sketch XXXIX	c.1927	sketch	
924	Lake Superior Sketch LI	c.1923	sketch	
925	Lake Superior Sketch LXII	n.d.	sketch	
926	Lake Superior Sketch LXXIII	c.1923	sketch	
927	Lake Superior Sketch LXXIX	n.d.		
928	Lake Superior Sketch CVI	n.d.	sketch	
929	Lake Superior Sketch No.63	c.1923		
930	Lake Superior Sunrise	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
931	Landscape	n.d.		
932	Landscape, Algonquin Park	n.d.	ballpoint	

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
933	Landscape, Algonquin Park	1916		
934	Landscape, distant view of Lake	n.d.		
935	Landscape with Buildings	n.d.		
936	Landscape with Rail Fence	1918		
937	Last Gleam, North Shore	1921		
938	Late Sun, Lake Superior Sketch LXXIII	c.1923	sketch	Mills inventory
939	Laurentian Farm	1913		
940	Laurentian House, New Hampshire	c.1934-38	Drawing	
941	Laurentian Hills	1913		
942	Laurentian Landscape	1913-14		
943	Laurentian Landscape with Barn	1908		
944	Laurentian Monadnock	1913		
945	Laurentian Village	1908		
946	Laurentians	1912		
947	Laurentians near St. Jovite	1908		
948	Laurie Lake, Algonquin Park	1916		
949	Let us remember...	1940?	etching	listed with "?" in date
950	Lighthouse (Rimouski Trip)	n.d.		
951	Lighthouse, Father Point	1928		also dated 1929, 1930
952	Lighthouse, Father Point	1930		not the same as #951
953	Lighthouse, Father Point	1932		
954	Lighthouse, Father Point	c.1929	sketch	also called 'Father Point Lighthouse' in Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
955	Lighthouse, Father Point	1932	sketch	
956	Lighthouse, Father Point	1932	sketch	not a duplicate of #955
957	Light House, Father Point	1929	Drawing	
958	Light House, Father Point	1929	Drawing	not a duplicate of #957
959	Lighthouse, Father Point, sketch of	c.1929	sketch	
960	Lismer Lake	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
961	Lismer Lake, Algoma	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory; not the same as #960
962	Little House	c.1909		also dated 1910 and 1911
963	Load of Fence Posts	n.d.		
964	Looking North	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
965	Log House	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list; may be same as 'Log Shack'
966	Log Shack, Algonquin Park	1916		
967	Logging	pre 1936		Mills inventory
968	LSH 6	n.d.		
969	LSH12	c.1940-45	sketch	
970	LSH18	n.d.		
971	LSH52	c.1940-45		
972	LSH90	c.1940-45		
973	LSH 93	n.d.		
974	LSH 101	n.d.		
975	LSH 102	n.d.		
976	LSH 106	n.d.		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
977	LSH 148	n.d.		
978	LSH176	1958-59		dated and titled on reverse "Northern Lake, 1958-59"
979	LSH 182	n.d.		
980	LSH 183	n.d.		
981	Lynx Mountain	c.1929		
982	Lyric Theme	c.1955		
983	Lyric Theme II (Abstraction No.125)	c.1956		also called "Lyric Theme II (LSH 125)"
984	Mac_____'s Lane, Toronto	c.1909-10	Drawing	listed in Murray's book as such
985	Maligne Lake	1924	Drawing	also listed as "Maligne Lake, Jasper Park"
986	Maligne Lake	1924		
987	Maligne Lake, Jasper Park, Alberta	1924-25		also listed without "Alberta" in title
988	Map to Ganie's Camp	August 1927	pencil	map sketched by Harris and AY Jackson
989	March Hills	1913		
990	Matrix	c.1959		
991	Memorial to an Airman	c.1940)		now called "Abstract Vertical, Memorial to an Airman"
992	Mid winter Morning	c.1922		
993	Migratory Flight	1954-56		also listed as "Migratory"
994	Miner's Houses, Glace Bay, Halifax	c.1921-22	Drawing	
995	Miner's Houses, Glace Bay	c.1925		also dated 1922 and 1921

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
996	Mitchell Lake, Baatchewana	1919	sketch	also with "Algoma Sketches" in title and sometimes with "I"; also listed with alternate spelling of "Batchawana"
997	Mitchell Lake, Batchewanna II	pre 1936	sketch	spelling according to Mills inventory
998	Mitchell Lake, Batchewanna III	pre 1936	sketch	spelling according to Mills inventory
999	Mongoose Lake, Algoma II, Algoma	c1920		also listed with "Algoma Sketches XI" in title
1000	Mongoose Lake I	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1001	Mongoose Lake II	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1002	Monster Forms	1953		
1003	Montreal Falls	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1004	Montreal Lake	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1005	Montreal River	c.1920		
1006	Montreal River, Algoma	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1007	Morin Island, Eclipse Sound	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1008	Morning	c.1921		
1009	Morning, Lake Superior	c.1916-28		
1010	Morning, Robertson Bay,	1930		
1011	Morning Light, Lake Superior	1927		
1012	Morning Sun, Jasper Park, Tonquin Valley	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1013	Morning Sun, Mitchell Lake	c.1922		
1014	Morning Sun, Winter	1914		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1015	Morning Sun over Hill	pre 1936	sketch	
1016	Mount Lefroy	1927	sketch	
1017	Mount Lefroy	1927		also called "Mount Lefroy, Rocky Mountains"; also listed as "Mount LeFroy"; maybe same as those listed with "Mt" instead of "Mount"
1018	Mount Lefroy	1929		
1019	Mount Lefroy	1930	sketch	
1020	Mount Lefroy	1930		
1021	Mt Robson	1929		
1022	Mount Robson	1928	Drawing	
1023	Mount Robson	1940		
1024	Mount Robson from Berg Lake	c.1927		
1025	Mount Samson, Jasper Park	n.d.	sketch	also listed without "Jasper Park" in title
1026	Mount Temple	n.d.	sketch	
1027	Mount Temple	1925		also dated 1924; also called "Mount Temple, Rocky Mountains"; also listed as "Mt. Temple, Rocky Mountains"
1028	Mount Thule, Bylot Island	1930	sketch	
1029	Mount Thule, Bylot Island	n.d.	oil	
1030	Mount Washington	c.1934		
1031	Mountain and Lake	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
1032	Mountain Experience	c.1936		also called "Abstract Painting"
1033	Mountain Experience	c.1946		
1034	Mountain Experience	1950-52		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1035	Mountain Experience I	1946		also called "Mountain Experience" and dated 1954; also called "LSH 172"; also see "Abstract Painting of a Mountian Experience"
1036	Mountain Form	1928		listed in Rocky Mountain Painting list of Mills inventory; also listed with "(Calgary I)" in title
1037	Mountain Form	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1038	Mountain Form	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory; not same as #1037
1039	Mountain Form	1943		also listed as 1936
1040	Mountain Form IV	c.1946		
1041	Mountain Form VI	n.d.		
1042	Mountain Form No.6	c.1937		
1043	Mountain Forms	1926		also dated 1928
1044	Mountain Forms I	pre 1936		Mills Inventory, Rock Mountain Paintings list
1045	Mountain Forms II	pre 1936		Mills Inventory, Rock Mountain Paintings list
1046	Mountain Forms III	pre 1936		Mills Inventory, Rock Mountain Paintings list
1047	Mountain Forms IV	pre 1936		Mills Inventory, Rock Mountain Paintings list
1048	Mountain Forms V	pre 1936		Mills Inventory, Rock Mountain Paintings list
1049	Mountain, New Hampshire	c.1935-38	Drawing	also dated 1934-35
1050	Mountain, New Hampshire, Drawing No 79	1934-35	drawing	
1051	Mountain Glacier	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1052	Mountain Lake	1929		

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1053	Mountain Peak	1924	drawing	
1054	Mountain Rhythm - The Cascades	c.1955		
1055	Mountain Sketch	1925		actually an oil painting
1056	Mountain Sketch	1924	sketch	
1057	Mountain Sketch	1928	oil	
1058	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	#1058 to #1164 are different sketches according to Mills inventory
1059	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1060	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1061	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1062	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1063	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1064	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1065	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1066	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1067	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1068	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1069	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1070	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1071	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1072	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1073	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1074	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1075	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1076	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1077	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1078	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1079	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1080	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1081	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1082	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1083	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1084	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1085	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1086	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1087	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1088	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1089	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1090	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1091	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1092	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1093	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1094	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1095	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1096	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1097	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1098	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1099	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1100	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1101	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1102	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1103	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1104	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1105	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1106	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1107	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1108	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1109	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1110	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1111	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1112	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1113	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1114	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1115	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	Sketch	Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1116	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1117	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1118	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1119	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1120	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1121	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1122	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1123	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1124	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1125	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1126	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1127	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1128	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1129	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1130	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1131	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1132	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1133	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1134	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1135	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1136	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1137	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1138	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1139	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1140	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1141	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1142	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1143	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1144	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1145	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1146	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1147	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1148	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1149	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1150	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1151	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1152	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1153	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1154	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1155	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1156	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1157	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1158	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1159	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1160	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1161	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1162	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1163	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1164	Mountain Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1165	Mountain Sketch XXXII	n.d.	oil	
1166	Mountain Sketch LX	1928	oil	
1167	Mountain Sketch LXV	c.1929	sketch	
1168	Mountain Sketch LXXXV	n.d.		
1169	Mountain Sketch LXXXVII	pre 1936		
1170	Mountain Sketch, Jasper	n.d.	sketch	
1171	Mountain Spirit	1945		also dated 1950
1172	Mountains	1945		
1173	Mountains, Baffin Island	1930		maybe same as "Mountains Baffin Bay"
1174	Mountains, Emerald Lake	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountians list
1175	Mountains, Jasper	n.d.		
1176	Mountains, Massive Range, Rocky Mountains	pre 1936		Mills inventory

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1177	Mountains, Moraine Lake (Rocky Mountain Sketch 129)	c.1924-28	sketch	Mills inventory
1178	Mountains, Moraine Lake (Rocky Mountain Sketch 129)	c.1924-28		
1179	Mountains, Moraine Range, Rocky	n.d.		
1180	Mountains after Rain, Jasper	1924		
1181	Mountains and Glacier	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Rocky Mountain Paintings list
1182	Mountains and Lake	1929		
1183	Mountains in Snow	1930		also dated c.1929; listed in Rocky Mountain list of Mills inventory
1184	Mountains near Jasper	1926		
1185	Mrs. Arthur Holder	pre 1936		Mills inventory; portrait
1186	Mrs. Leslie Wilson	n.d.		portrait
1187	Mrs. Oscar Taylor	1920		Mills inventory; portrait
1188	Mt. Ann-Alice	c.1954		could be "Mountain Form", also dated 1941; also called "LSH 143" in inventory of paintings; also listed as Mountain Experience, 1943; also called Anne-Alice" by Harris
1189	Mt. Edith Cavell, Jasper Park	c.1923-30	Drawing	
1190	Mt. Resplendent	1929	sketch	
1191	Mt. Lefroy	1930		also see "Mount Lefroy"

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1192	Musa Hamid, the Blind Musician	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem; in actual book his last name is "Halim"
1193	Nature Rhythm	c.1950		
1194	Nature Rhythms	c.1938-40	Drawing	also plural "Rhythms"
1195	Near Lake Harbour, Baffin Island South	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory; probably 1930
1196	Near Mount Robson	pre 1936	sketch	
1197	Near Passport, Lake Superior, North Shore	n.d.		
1198	Near Rossport, North Shore	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
1199	Near Sand Lake, Algoma	1921		
1200	Near St. Jovite	1908		Quebec
1201	Near Wenchenna Pass	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountains list
1202	Negative Space	n.d.	charcoal	black horizontal band covers 2/3 of paper; work used to illustrate lectures on abstract art
1203	New Discovery	n.d.		
1204	New Mexico Sketchbook	1938		10 graphite and charcoal drawings on 12 leaves of wove paper
1205	Newfoundland Coast	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1206	Newfoundland Coast	1921		
1207	Newfoundland Sketch	1921	sketch	
1208	Night Garden	1966		

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1209	Noon from Slate Island, Lake Superior	1925		
1210	North country Church and Cemetery	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1211	North Greenland	pre 1936	sketch	
1212	North Greeenland	1930		
1213	North of Lake Superior	1924		
1214	North Labrador	1930	sketch	
1215	North Labrador	1957-58		related to sketch done in 1930
1216	North east corner of Lake Superior	1921		
1217	North east Lake Superior	1921		
1218	North from Mt. Munn, Mt. Robson Park	c.1928		
1219	North Greenland Coast	pre 1936	sketch	Mills invenotory
1220	North Shore, Baffin Island	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory; painting was done in 1930 therefore sketch probably done pre 1930
1221	North Shore, Baffin Island	1930		also with "I" in title
1222	North Shore, Baffin Island II	c.1931		
1223	North Shore, Baffin Island III	pre 1936		Mills inventory; perhaps same as 'Mountains, Baffin Island'
1224	North Shore Lake Superior	c.1925	Drawing	
1225	North Shore Lake Superior	1926		
1226	North Shore Lake Superior	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1227	North Shore, Lake Superior	1922		

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1228	North Shore, Lake Superior	1926		
1229	North Shore Lake Superior I	c.1926		
1230	North Shore Lake Superior II	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1231	North Shore Lake Superior III	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1232	North Shore Lake Superior IV	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1233	North Shore Lake Superior V	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1234	North shore, lake Superior, Lake Superior Sketch LXVIII	n.d.		on verso titled
1235	North Shore, Lake Superior Painting VI	n.d.		
1236	North shore, Lake superior, Lake Superior sketch LXVIII	n.d.		on verso titled
1237	North Shore, Lake Superior Sketch II	n.d.	sketch	
1238	North Shore, Lake Superior at Coldwell Harbour	n.d.	sketch	
1239	North Shore, Lake Superior, Pic Island	n.d.	Sketch	
1240	North Shore, Lake Superior, Pic Island	1922		
1241	Northern Autumn	1922		
1242	Northern Image	1950		also dated 1952 and 1953-54
1243	Northern Island	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
1244	Northern Island II	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1245	Northern Labrador	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1246	Northern Lake	c.1920-21		
1247	Northern Lake	1923	sketch	
1248	Northern Lake	1926		
1249	Northern Lake	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory; not same as # 1250
1250	Northern Lake	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1251	Northern Lake	1958-59		related to sketch done in 1921-22; also called LSH176
1252	Northern Lake II	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1253	Northern Lake II	1926		also dated 1928
1254	Northern Lake III	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
1255	Northern Lake, Autumn	1921		
1256	Northern Lake (Esther Williams)	n.d.		
1257	Northern Lake (Abstract)	n.d.		
1258	Northern Landscape	c.1914		
1259	Northern Landscape	1920		
1260	Northern River, Autumn	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
1261	Northern Rocks	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
1262	Northern Rhythm	n.d.		illustration for Harris' "Disquistion on Abstract Art"
1263	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	#1263 - 1287 are different sketches according to Mills
1264	Northern Sketch	pre 1936		Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1265	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1266	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1267	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1268	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1269	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1270	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1271	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1272	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1273	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1274	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1275	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1276	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1277	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1278	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1279	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1280	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1281	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1282	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1283	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1284	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1285	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	Sketch	Mills inventory

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1286	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1287	Northern Sketch	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1288	Northern Sketch	1919		actual an oil painting
1289	Notes I.D. 423	c.1935-38	Drawing	
1290	November, Lake Superior Country	n.d.	sketch	
1291	Obtuse Angles	n.d.	pen and ink over pencil over charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1292	October Afternoon, Algoma	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list; exhibited 1921
1293	Old Houses	1910		
1294	Old Houses, Wellington Street	1910		also called "Houses, Wellington St, Winter"; may also be painting called "Old Houses"
1295	Old Houses, Toronto, Winter	1919		
1296	Old Mill	c.1911		
1297	Old Toronto Houses	1912		
1298	Old Stump	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1299	On the Agawa River, Algoma	1919		
1300	On the North shore	n.d.	sketch	
1301	Ontario Hill Town	1926		
1302	Ontario Pines	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1303	Opeongo Falls	n.d.		

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	A	B	C	D
1	Title	Date	Medium	Notes
1304	Origin	c.1959		
1305	Outskirts of the City	1918		
1306	Outskirts of Haliburton	1912		
1307	Outskirts of Toronto	1918		
1308	Over the Old Route into Egypt	1909		
1309	Painting	1940-43		
1310	Painting	c.1948		
1311	Painting	1958-62		also called "LSH 173"
1312	Painting	1962		also called "LSH 101" (see # 974)
1313	Painting I	c.1939		now called "White Triangle"
1314	Painting II	c.1939		also dated 1935
1315	Painting (Annunciation)	c.1952		also called "LSH 151"
1316	Painting No. 2	1939-41		also called "LSH 92"
1317	Painting No.4	c.1939		also called "Painting No.4, Abstraction 94"; also called "LSH 94"; on the stretcher "A preparatory drawing, was Abstract ID 583"
1318	Painting No.15	n.d.		
1319	Painting No.48	c.1938-41		Transcendental Painting Group; also listed with "#48" in title
1320	Painting #51	c.1938-41		Transcendental Painting Group
1321	Painting No.53	c.1935-38		Transcendental Painting Group; also dated c.1938-41 and listed with "#53" in title
1322	Painting #60	c.1936		Transcendental Painting Group

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1323	Painting XIII (Abstraction)	1957-58		also called "LSH 181"
1324	Pangnirtung, Baffin Island	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1325	Parallel Lines	n.d.	pen and ink over pencil over charcoal	2 parallel lines used to illustrate lectures on abstract art
1326	Parallel Lines	n.d.	pen and ink over pencil over charcoal	2 parallel lines used to illustrate lectures on abstract art; not the same as #1325
1327	Path of Light	pre 1936		Lake Superior painting in Mills inventory
1328	People	1922)	ink drawing	illustration for Contrasts
1329	Peter Street below King	1908-12	sketch	also dated c.1909-10
1330	Phoenix	c.1959		
1331	Pic Island	n.d.		listed in Mills inventory in Lake Superior Painting list
1332	Pic Island	c.1922		
1333	Pic Island	c.1923		
1334	Pic Island	c.1923		
1335	Pic Island	1924		also dated 1921
1336	Pic Island	1925		
1337	Pic Island	1958		from a sketch done in 1922-24

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1338	Pic Island, Lake Superior	1924		also dated 1928; also called "Pic Island, North Shore"
1339	Pic Island, Lake Superior	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1340	Pine and Snake Fence	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1341	Pine Plains, Ontario	c. 1915		
1342	Pine Trees and Red House	1924		also called "Pine Tree and Red House, Winter"; also listed with singular "Pine Tree" and without "Winter" in the title
1343	Pine Trees, Early Summer	1920		
1344	Pine Trees, Kempenfelt Bay	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1345	Pine Woods and Cleared Land	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory; also listedd with "Wood" singular
1346	Pines, Kempenfelt Bay	1925		also dated 1923-25 and 1924
1347	Pines, Lake Simcoe	1917		
1348	Pines and Clouds, Algoma	n.d.		
1349	Pines and Evening Sky	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1350	Pines and Sumach, Evening	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1351	Pines and Three Houses	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1352	Pines by a Lake	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1353	Pines by the Lake	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory; not the same as 'Pines by the Lake'
1354	Poise	1934-36		also titled "Abstract, Painted 1937-47"
1355	"Poise" Composition 4	1936		
1356	Pool, Algoma	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1357	Port Coldwell, Lake Superior	c.1925	drawing	also listed without "Lake Superior" in title

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1358	Portrait of a Gentleman	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1359	Portrait of a Girl	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1360	Portrait of a Lady in Brown	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1361	Portrait of Bess Housser	1920		this painting was nicknamed by Harris as "The Christian Scientist"
1362	Portrait of Louise Julia Holden	1921		
1363	Portrait of Mrs. Oscar Tyler	1920		
1364	Positive Space	n.d.	charcoal	black horizontal band covering 1/3 of paper; work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1365	Poster, Ford Factory	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1366	Preliminary sketch for "North Shore,	1924	drawing	
1367	Preparatory Drawing for Mt. Lefroy	1930	drawing	
1368	Pyramid	c.1937		also dated c.1939; inscribed on back "To Yvonne with Love from Lawren"
1369	Quidi Vidi Gut, Newfoundland	c.1921		also listed without "Gut" in title
1370	Quiet Lake	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
1371	Radiation Energy	1967		
1372	Rear of Adelaide and Simcoe Streets	1908-12	sketch	also dated c.1909-10
1373	Rear of Roxborough and Yonge Streets	1908-12	sketch	also dated c.1909-10
1374	Red House	c.1931	serigraph	Hallmark card
1375	Red House	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1376	Red House and Yellow Sleigh	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1377	Red House and Yellow Sleigh	1919		"City Painting XXII" sometimes included in title this may be due to the fact that it is no.22 on Mills inventory; now known as "City House, Winter"; also dated 1920; also called "City Painting XXII"
1378	Red House in Winter	1926		also called "Red House, Winter"; also dated 1925; also
1379	Red Maple, Sumac and Rock	1913		
1380	Red Maples	1920		
1381	Red Sleigh and House, Winter	n.d.		also listed as "Red Sleigh, House - Winter"
1382	Red Sumachs, Haliburton	c.1915		
1383	Red-Eyed Piper of Hanover	1937?	pencil	caricature of Lawren Harris leading rats which are identified by initials on their backs (Jackson, Carmichael, Varley, Casson and Lismer); "?" in archival documents
1384	Resolute	c.1959		
1385	Resolution	1936		also dated 1937
1386	Resolution (Composition No.2)	c.1936		
1387	Resolution No.9	c.1935-36		
1388	Return from Church	1919		this is probably the same as "Coming from Church"; also listed as "Sunday Morning"
1389	Return from Town	1911		
1390	Rhapsody	c.1959		
1391	Rhythmic Organization, Rhythmic Organization	c.1943		
1392	Rice Strait, Ellesmere Island	1930	sketch	

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1393	Rice Strait, Ellesmere Island	1930		
1394	Richmond Street and augusta Avenue	1915	drawing	
1395	Ritual Dance in Spring	c.1955		not the same as #147; also dated c.1953; also listed as "LSH 102" (stamped on back of painting)(see #975)
1396	Riven Earth I	1936		also dated 1937 and also as 1938; also called "Abstraction" 1936 (this is sometimes listed with "I" in the title);formerly titled "Composition No.8"; also listed with "(Composition 8)" in title; see #458
1397	Rock , Algoma	c.1922		
1398	Rock, Spruce and Hill, Lake	n.d.		
1399	Rock and Spruce	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1400	Rocks and Dead Birches	pre 1936		Mills inventory, Northern Paintings list
1401	Rocks and Hill	1921		
1402	Rockies, Labrador			listed as such in an exhibition catalogue
1403	Rocky Brook	1910		
1404	Rocky Cliff, Algoma	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
1405	Rocky Cliffs, Algoma	1922		
1406	Rocky Mountain Icefields	1929		
1407	Rocky Mountain Peak	c.1923-30	Drawing	

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1408	Rocky Mountain Sketch	1924-29	sketch	
1409	Rocky Mountain Sketch	1927-28	oil	
1410	Rocky Mountain Sketch, Mt. Lefroy	c.1930	sketch	Mills inventory; also dated 1928
1411	Rocky Mountains	1924-30	sketch	
1412	Rocky Mountains #2	1923-30		
1413	Rocky Mountians #733	1923-30		
1414	Rocky Mountains No.136	1940	drawing	
1415	Rocky Mountains No.163	1924	drawing	
1416	Rocky Mountains No.192	1930	drawing	
1417	Rocky Mountains No.193	1924	drawing	
1418	Rocky Mountains Sketch XXVII (view East from Whistler)	1928-29		
1419	Rocky Mountains I.D. 166	c.1923-30	Drawing	
1420	Rocky Mountains I.D. 172	c.1923-30	Drawing	
1421	Rocky Mountains I.D. 178	n.d.	Drawing	
1422	Rocky Mountains I.D. 179	c.1923-30	Drawing	
1423	Rocky Mountains I.D. 186	c.1923-30	Drawing	
1424	Rocky Mountains I.D. 193	c.1923-30	Drawing	
1425	Rocky Mountains I.D. 194	c.1923-30	Drawing	
1426	Rocky Mountains I.D. 196	c.1923-30	Drawing	

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1427	Rossport, Lake Superior	n.d.		
1428	Row of Six Houses, Backview, City Painting III	n.d.		also called "Row of Six Houses, Back View, Winter"; could be "City Painting III as it is no.3 on Mills inventory of City Paintings.
1429	Sand Lake, Algoma	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1430	Sand Lake, Algoma	c. 1921-22		also dated c.1920, 1918, and 1923; previously titled "Lake, Algonquin Park"
1431	Saturday Morning	1920		
1432	Scene near Lake Harbor, Baffin Island	n.d.		
1433	Sea Signals	1955		
1434	Self Portrait	c.1931-32		only self-portrait of Harris known to be painted by him
1435	Sentinel	c.1936		
1436	Shacks	1919		
1437	Shacks, Algonquin Park	c.1922		
1438	Shacks, Earlscourt	c1922		
1439	Sheet of Studies	c.1934	graphite drawing	
1440	Sheet of Studies	c.1938		
1441	Shimmering Water, Algonquin Park	1922		greeting card, bookmark
1442	Shore Rocks	1924	sketch	
1443	Shore of Sand Lake, Algoma	n.d.		
1444	Side Street	c.1920		also listed with "Winter" in title

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	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1445	Silent Land	1920		
1446	Sketch (Abandoned House)	c.1912	sketch	
1447	Sketch, (Houses and Hills)	1907	sketch	
1448	Sketch, Lake Superior	c.1922-24	Drawing	also called "Sketch for Lake Superior" and dated 1922
1449	Sketch, Northland II	n.d.	sketch	
1450	Sketch, Spring 1918	1918	sketch	Mills inventory
1451	Sketch for "Lake Superior III"	n.d.	sketch	actual title
1452	Sketch for Lake Harbour, South Shore, Baffin Island, Morning	1930	graphite on woven paper	
1453	Sketch for North Shore, Baffin	c.1930	Drawing	
1454	Sketch from Sentinel Pass	n.d.	sketch	
1455	Sketch of Early House	1911	sketch	
1456	Sketch painted in Hanover, New Hampshire	n.d.		
1457	Sleigh, House – Winter	1919		
1458	Slums and Shadows	n.d.	sketch	
1459	Smoke Lake, Algonquin Park	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
1460	Snake Fence	n.d.		
1461	Snow	1915		also dated 1917
1462	Snow I	1914-17		
1463	Snow II	c.1916		
1464	Snow III	1914-17		

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1465	Snow IV	1914-17		
1466	Snow V	1914-17		
1467	Snow VI	1914-17		
1468	Snow VII	1914-17		
1469	Snow, Algonquin Park	pre 1926	sketch	Mills inventory
1470	Snow, Rocky Mountains	1925		
1471	Snow Capped Mountains	n.d.		
1472	Snow covered Fir Tree	1916	drawing	
1473	Snow Clouds	1938		
1474	Snow in the Mountains	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Rocky Mountain paintings list
1475	Snow in the Woods, Algonquin Park I	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1476	Snow in the Woods, Algonquin Park II	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1477	Snow in the Woods, Algonquin Park III	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1478	Snow in the Woods, Algonquin Park IV	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1479	Snow of Hills (unfinished)	pre 1936		hangs in Studio Building according to Mills inventory
1480	Snow Patterned Trees	n.d.		
1481	Snow Squalls, Pic Island	n.d.		
1482	Snow Thaw	1917		
1483	Snowfall	1920		also dated 1921

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1484	Solitude	c.1931	serigraph proof	Hallmark card by Harris
1485	South End of Maligne Lake	c.1924		also dated 1925
1486	South Shore, Baffin Island	c.1930	sketch	
1487	South Shore, Baffin Island	c.1930		
1488	South Shore, Bylot Island	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1489	South Shore, Bylot Island II	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1490	South Shore, Devon Island	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1491	Speciman of writing of the Persian School	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
1492	Spirit of Remote Hills	1959-60		also dated 1957-62
1493	Spirited Image	c.1959		
1494	Spiritual	1922	ink drawing	illustration for Contrasts
1495	Spring	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1496	Spring, Grimsby Park	n.d.		
1497	Spring Garden	1965		
1498	Spring Hillside	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1499	Spring in the Outskirts	1922		also listed with "of Toronto" in title
1500	Spring on the Oxtongue River	1924		
1501	Spring Woods Scene	c.1914		also listed as "Sprucewoods Scene"
1502	Spruce	c.1921		
1503	Spruce and Hill, Algoma	n.d.		

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1504	Spruce and Lake	1960		based on an Algoma painting
1505	Spruce and Snow, Northern Ontario	1916		
1506	Spruces in Winter	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1507	Static Lines	n.d.	pen and ink	work depicts 4 lines which were used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art.
1508	Still Water, Algoma	1919		
1509	Store in the Ward	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1510	Stormy Sky, Rocky Mountains	c.1923-30	Drawing	
1511	Stream	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1512	Street, Winter	n.d.		
1513	Street, Winter, Afternoon	c.1921		
1514	Street in Berlin	1907	Drawing	also called "Urban Scenes"
1515	Street in Ontario Town	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1516	Street in Toronto	c.1912	Drawing	
1517	Street with Billboard	pre 1936		Mills inventory; not the same as 'Billboard'
1518	Street Scene	n.d.		
1519	Studies of Women in the Ward	pre 1936	sketch	
1520	Study (Drawing)	c.1940-45	drawing	
1521	Study (Wood Grain and Geometric Forms)	n.d.	drawing	also listed without "Study" in title

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1522	Study for Canvas in National Gallery of Canada, New Hampshire	c.1935-38	Drawing	#1522-1524 may be one and the same sketch
1523	Study for Canvas	c.1945		
1524	Study for Large Canvas	c.1938-40	Drawing	
1525	Study for Lighthouse, Father Point,	c.1929	Drawing	
1526	Study for "Lighthouse, Father Point"	1929		
1527	Study in Contrast	1958		
1528	Study of Houses, Toronto	c.1920	Drawing	
1529	Study of Space	c.1936	graphite drawing	
1530	Study of Space, Autumn, New Hampshire, Drawing No.85	c.1936	Drawing	
1531	Study of Space, Autumn, New Hampshire	1935-38	Drawing	
1532	Study of Space, New Hampshire, I.D. 609	c.1935-38	Drawing	
1533	Subjective Painting, Mountain Experience	c.1947		
1534	Sumachs, Haliburton	c.1912		
1535	Summer Afternoon	pre 1936		Mills inventory, City Paintings list
1536	Summer, Algoma	n.d.		

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1537	Summer Houses, Grimsby Park, Ontario	c.1929		also dated 1926; also listed without "Ontario" in title
1538	Summer landscape	pre 1936		Mills iventory
1539	Sun and Earth	c.1945		could have been previously called "Rhythmic Organization"; also called "LSH 170"
1540	Sun breaking through Clouds, Rocky Mountains	c.1923-30	Drawing	
1541	Sun Energy	n.d.		
1542	Sun, Fog, and Ice, Smith Sound	pre 1936		Arctic Painting, Mills inventory
1543	Sun over Mountains, New Hampshire	c.1935-38	Drawing	
1544	Sun over Mountains, New Hampshire	c.1935-38		
1545	Sunday Morning	n.d.		
1546	Sunburst, Algonquin Park, Winter	1912		also dated c.1914
1547	Sunlit Houses in Winter	1917		
1548	Sunrise through Rime	1913		
1549	Sunset, Kempenfelt Bay	1921		
1550	Superior Country	n.d.		
1551	Taking 'Em Unawares	n.d.	charcoal	cartoon of Lawren Harris approaching a painting on his hands and knees.
1552	Tamarack, Spruce and Mist	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1553	Tamaracks and Blue Hill	n.d.		
1554	Tamarack Swamp, II	pre 1936		Mills inventory

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1555	Tamarack Swamp, Algoma	1921-22		also listed without "Algoma" in title; also dated c. 1922
1556	Temagami	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1557	Temagami	c.1927		
1558	Tent in the North country	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1559	The Barber Shop	n.d.	sketch	
1560	The Barber Shop	n.d.		
1561	The Birch Grove	n.d.		
1562	The Bridge	1937		also listed as "The Brooklyn Bridge" and dated 1927
1563	The Camel-Trader leaned again into the Candlelight	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
1564	The Child...	1967		this is the title as listed
1565	The Corner Store	1912		
1566	The Creative Attitude	n.d.		sketch found in vol.5, file 11 in archive papers of Harris
1567	The Drive	1912		
1568	The Eaton Manufacturing Building, Toronto	1911		also listed with "in the ward" in the title; also ljsted without "Toronto" in the title; also listed as "The Eaton Manufacturing Bldg."
1569	The Fringe of the City	c.1921		
1570	The Gas Works	1911-12		
1571	The Grand Trunk	c.1925		
1572	The Grave Bedouin departed	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
1573	The Ice House	1923		

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1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1574	The Independent One (Drawing Ten)	c.1944		
1575	The Indignant One	n.d.	pen and ink over pencil over charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1576	The Loggers	n.d.		
1577	The Old Stump	1926	sketch	also called "The Old Tree Stump, Lake Superior Sketch CXLIV"
1578	The Old Tree Stump, Lake Superior	1926		may be same as #1577
1579	The Pine Tree	1917-18		
1580	The Pool	1918		
1581	The Proud One (Drawing Eleven)	c.1944		This could be the same work as one used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art.
1582	The Ramparts, Iroquois Valley, Rocky Mountains	n.d.		
1583	The Red doors	n.d.		
1584	The Red House	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1585	The Return from Town	1911		
1586	The Rising Sun	c.1967		also called "LSH D"
1587	The Season's Greetings	c.1940	linocut	Hallmark card
1588	The Shop of a Trader	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1589	The Shop of the Fez-presser	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
1590	The Spirit of Remote Hills	1957-60		also called "LSH 161"
1591	The Spirit Settling into the Heaven World State	c.1960		
1592	The Way	c.1960		
1593	The Wharf	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1594	Third Liberty Loan	n.d.		WWI poster; features soldier saying goodbye to his father
1595	Thoreau MacDonald	1927		portrait of the son of JEH MacDonald; also called "LSH 155"
1596	Three Houses, Winter	n.d.		
1597	Three Planes of Being	c.1956		also dated 1962-63 and 1953; also called "Atma Buddhi Manas"; also dated 1958
1598	Three Studies (Involvement 2)	c.1939	graphite drawing	
1599	Tonal Study No.1	n.d.	pencil and charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1600	Tonal Study No.2	n.d.	pencil and charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1601	Tonal Study No.3	n.d.	pencil and charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1602	Tonal Study No.4	n.d.	pencil and Charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1603	Tonal Study No.5	n.d.	pencil and charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1604	Tonal Study No.6	n.d.	pencil and charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1605	Tonal Study No.7	n.d.	pencil and charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1606	Tonal Study No.8	n.d.	pencil and charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1607	Tonal Study No.9	n.d.	pencil and charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1608	Tonal Study No.10	n.d.	pencil and charcoal	work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1609	Tonquin Valley in Snow	n.d.		
1610	Top of the Hill, Spadina Avenue	1909-11		also listed without "Avenue" in the title
1611	Toronto Houses	1921	sketch	
1612	Toronto Houses	c.1919		also dated 1920
1613	Toronto Houses, Autumn	1915		
1614	Toronto Park scene	1940		
1615	Toronto Outskirts	c.1912-20	Drawing	
1616	Toronto Outskirts, Houses Group No. VI	1918-20		
1617	Toronto Street, Winter Morning	1920		

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1618	Toward Abstraction, New Hampshire	c.1935-38	Drawing	
1619	Towards Lake Superior	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1620	Tramping it in a Blizzard	1909		
1621	Tramping the Logging Roads from Camp to Camp	1909		
1622	Transfer drawing for abstract No.20	1945	drawing	
1623	Trapper's Cabin	n.d.	Drawing	
1624	Tree Stumps and Far Shore, Rocky Mountains	c.1923-30	Drawing	
1625	Trees	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1626	Trees and Pool	1938	sketch	
1627	Trees and Snow, Painting XXIII	c.1923		
1628	Trees by a Lake	n.d.		
1629	Trees in Landscape	n.d.		
1630	Trees in the North	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
1631	Trees with Snow	pre 1936		Lake Superior painting in Mills inventory
1632	Triangle and Circles (Instrument I), Santa Fe	c.1938-40	Drawing	Also called "Triangle and Circles (Involvement I) Santa Fe"
1633	Tumbling Glacier, Berg Lake	1928-29		
1634	Tumbling Waters, Algoma	pre 1936		Mills inventory; Northern Paintings list
1635	Two Hemispheres	1968		
1636	Two Pines	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1637	Two Pines, above Aurora, Ontario	n.d.		
1638	Two Trees	pre 1936		
1639	Undulating Lines	n.d.	pen and ink over pencil over charcoal	4 curving lines; work used to illustrate Harris' lectures on abstract art
1640	Untitled	c.1936		
1641	Untitled (Mountain Sketch)	n.d.	sketch	
1642	Untitled	c.1937		
1643	Untitled	c.1938-41		Transcendental Painting Group
1644	Untitled	c.1938-41		Transcendental Painting Group
1645	Untitled	c.1939		also called "LSH 194" and in Lawren Harris inventory of his paintings in National Gallery Central Registry and it is called "No.34"and dated 1943
1646	Untitled	c.1939		also called "LSH 40"
1647	Untitled	c.1939-49		see similarity to "In Memoriam to an Artist"
1648	Untitled	1942		also called "LSH 21"
1649	Untitled	1943		also called "LSH 82"
1650	Untitled	1943		

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1651	Untitled	c.1945		also called "LSH 1"
1652	Untitled (Unfinished)	c.1945	sketch	also called "LSH 56"; unfinished sketch of north shore of Lake Superior
1653	Untitled	1952		also called "LSH 133"
1654	Untitled	1952		
1655	Untitled	c.1955		also called "LSH 69"
1656	Untitled	c.1956		also called "LSH 78"
1657	Untitled	c.1957		
1658	Untitled	c.1958		also called "Abstraction 106"; also called "LSH 87"
1659	Untitled	1958		also called "LSH 106" (see # 976)
1660	Untitled	c.1964		also called "LSH U"
1661	Untitled	c.1968		
1662	Untitled	c.1968		
1663	Untitled	c.1968		also called "Abstraction P"; also called "LSH E"
1664	Untitled	c.1968		also called "Abstraction S"; also called "LSH S"
1665	Untitled	1968		also called "Abstraction A"; also called "LSH P"
1666	Untitled (Clouds, Lake Superior)	1923		
1667	Untitled LSH #23	n.d.		
1668	Untitled (LSH 26)	c.1934		
1669	Untitled LSH #30	n.d.		
1670	Untitled LSH #37	n.d.		on verso numbered
1671	Untitled LSH #52	n.d.		
1672	Untitled LSH #58	n.d.		
1673	Untitled LSH #88	n.d.		

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1674	Untitled (LSH 89A)	c.1936		
1675	Untitled LSH #146	n.d.		on verso numbered
1676	Untitled (LSH 152) [Formative III (Forming Toward Beneficence)]	1950		may be same as "Formative III (Forming Toward Beneficence"
1677	Untitled (LSH 165)	c.1950		
1678	Untitled (LSH 175) [Calligraph Forming]	c.1958		maybe same as "Caligraph Forming"; also see #420
1679	Untitled (Mountains near Jasper)	c.1934-40		also dated 1930
1680	Untitled (Symbolic)	c.1931	serigraph proof	Hallmark card
1681	Untitled (Unfinished)	1943		
1682	Untitled Abstraction	1951		
1683	Untitled Abstraction	1958		
1684	Untitled Abstraction	1958		not the same as #1683
1685	Untitled Abstraction "K"	c.1964		
1686	Untitled Abstraction "P"	c.1968		
1687	Untitled Abstraction "S"	1960s		
1688	Untitled Abstraction "V"	c.1965		
1689	Untitled Landscape	c.1963		
1690	Vacant House in the Ward	1920		
1691	Vacant Lot	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1692	Valley	pre 1936	sketch	
1693	Veiled Women Slip along the Walls	1908		

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1694	Verso of Autumn Trees	1908		
1695	Village	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1696	Wareham Island, Cumberland (Sound?)Gulf, Baffin Island	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory; Mills may have interjected (Sound?) into title
1697	Wareham Island, Cumberland Gulf, Baffin Island	1930		
1698	Water Tower	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1699	Waterfall, Agawa Canyon, Algoma	1919	sketch	also listed as "Waterfall into Agawa Canyon"
1700	Waterfall, Algoma	1918		also called "Waterfall, Algoma Canyon" and dated
1701	Waterfall, Algoma	1920		
1702	We had come by a devious way to the home of the poet	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
1703	We made our camp by the well	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
1704	We sat down in the sand around the fire	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
1705	We were presently gone from that peacefull encampment	1907-08		illustration for Duncan's Going Down from Jerusalem
1706	Wenchmna Lake, Rocky Mountains, Moutain sketch XCV	n.d.		
1707	West Coast Mill	n.d.		Painted for the pulp and paper industry
1708	Wet Day	c.1920		
1709	What'll You Have it Without	n.d.	charcoal	cartoon depicting Lawren Harris sitting on a stool, legs drawn up and right arm pointing towards a figure behind a counter.

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1710	White Houses	n.d.	sketch	
1711	White Houses	1920		also listed in the singular
1712	White Mountains	1934		one of his first paintings done after moving to the US; also with "The" in the title
1713	White Triangle	c.1939		formerly called "Painting I"; Transcendental Painting Group
1714	Winter, Algonquin Park	n.d.		
1715	Winter Algohquin Park VI	n.d.		on verso titled
1716	Winter Afternoon	1918		
1717	Winter Afternoon, City Street	1918		also called "Winter Afternoon City Street, Toronto (Sunday Morning)"
1718	Winter Comes from the Arctic to the Temperate Zone (Semi-Abstract No.3)	c.1935		also dated 1937
1719	Winter Day on a City Street	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1720	Winter Hillside	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1721	Winter in the City	c.1925	sketch	
1722	Winter in the Northern Woods	c.1918		
1723	Winter in the Northern Woods	1917-18		may be the same as #1722
1724	Winter Landscape	c.1916-17		
1725	Winter Landscape with Pink House	1918		

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris's Artwork

	A	B	C	D
1	**Title**	**Date**	**Medium**	**Notes**
1726	Winter Landscape with Red House	n.d.		
1727	Winter Morning	1914		
1728	Winter Morning on a Back Street	n.d.		
1729	Winter Spruces	pre 1936		Mills inventory
1730	Winter Sunrise	c.1915		also dated 1913, 1918, and 1916-18
1731	Winter Twilight	1911		also dated c.1915
1732	Winter Wonderland	c.1915		
1733	Winter Woodland	1915		
1734	Winter Woods	1915		
1735	Wood Interior	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory
1736	Wood Interior, Algoma, No.1	1918		also dated 1912 and listed without "No.1" in the title
1737	Wood Interior, Algoma No.1, Algoma Sketch LXII	n.d.		
1738	Wood Interior, Algoma, No.2	1919		
1739	Woodland Snow, Family Outing	c.1918		
1740	Yoho Valley, B.C.	pre 1936	sketch	Mills inventory, Rocky Mountians

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Catalogue of Lawren Harris' Writings

NOTE: all of the following documents are located in the National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

Correspondence

c.1

Correspondence of Lawren Stewart Harris to Doris Shadbolt, R3787-0-0-E (formerly MG30D208), vol. 8, collection 22, B-22:47-50, n.d.

c.2

Correspondence of Lawren Stewart Harris to Emily Carr, R1969-0-7-E (formerly MG30D215), vol. 2, n.d.

c.3

Correspondence of Lawren Stewart Harris to Yvonne McKague Housser and Frederick Housser, R2413-0-7-E (formerly MG30D305), vol. 1,1935-37. Also see m.24.

c.4

Correspondence of Lawren Stewart Harris to Yvonne McKague Housser located in the correspondence files of Bess Harris R2413-0-7-E (formerly MG30D305), vol.1, 1936-56.

NOTE: The following have been found in the archival papers of Lawren Stewart Harris R3787-0-0-E (formerly MG30D208), vols. 1-14. If no title existed then the first few words of the first sentence were used for identification. If no date was found I use 'n.d.' and have numbered the pages. The numbering system, for instance {B4-1-7}, belongs to the Archives. Because pages were not numbered on the originals, in most cases, I have listed the number of pages referring to each topic that were found together. If pages were numbered on the documents I use the original numbers. Some of the pages in the files are handwritten and some have been typed. If the notes were on small pieces of papers, too numerous to count, then I have called them 'Miscellaneous notes' and tallied them together. The rational behind the creation of this catalogue is to show how prolific a writer Harris was even though many of his writings were never published. These papers have also been listed here as they were used as a resource for this thesis.

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Manuscripts

m.1 "C.B. [Claude Bragdon(?)]-L.H.," n.d., 2 pages.

m.2 "Architecture and Democracy (Claude Bragdon)," n.d., 2 pages.

m.3 "Art," n.d., 2 pages.

m.4 "Art," n.d.,1 page.

m.5 "The Education of an artist – Lewis Hind," n.d., 2 pages.

m.6 Outline ("Conceptions of Life – of Universe"), n.d., 1 page.

m.7 "Reflections on Art," n.d.

m.8 "spirit of art," n.d., 4 pages.

m.9 "All the literally correct works...," n.d., 2 pages.

m.10 "choice?" n.d., _ page.

m. 11 "folks arrogate to themselves virtues ...," n.d., 3 pages.

m.12 "In any materialistic, mechanistic age...," n.d., 2 pages.

m.13 "it has been said that the only solution to the present problem of depression is another war...," n.d., 2 pages.

m.14 "It is those who pooh-pooh all creative work...," n.d., 1 page.

m.15 "It seems to me that we have a choice...," n.d., 2 pages.

m.16 "man is in existence for the sake of all life...," n.d., 2 pages.

m.17 "Not alone must there be a loss of the shell...," n.d., (pages 4-9).

m.18 "simply a necessary haven...," n.d., 1 page.

m.19 "The puritans, the proselytizers ...," n.d., 2 pages

m.20 "The task of theosophy ...," n.d., 1 page.

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m.21 "when we realize that every experience comes to us...," n.d., 1 page.

m.22 Bess Harris correspondence, vol.1, 1936-56.

m.23 Transcripts - "Abstract Painting," vol. 1, collection 7, n.d., 20 pages.

m.24. Letter to Yvonne McKague Housser, vol.1, Dec.1, 1937, 7 pages.

m.25 "A.N. Whitehead cont. – art as experience," (notebook) vol. 2, collection 22, p.106-108.

m.26 "Lawren asked me to type this for him ...," [Bess Harris, vol.1], vol. 2, file 2.

m.27 "interviews," .vol. 2, file 3, 14 pages.

m.28 Miscellaneous notes (notebook) vol. 2, file 6, 1910-14.

m.29 Poetry and notes (notebook) vol. 2, file 7, 1922-25.

m.30 "Europe and America," (notebook) vol. 2, file 8, 1920s, 24 pages.

m.31 Miscellaneous notes on art (notebook) vol. 2, file 9, 1920's, 28 pages.

m.32 Miscellaneous notes – "aesthetic experience" (notebook) vol. 2, file 10, 1930s, 17 pages.

m.33 Miscellaneous notes (notebook) vol. 2, file 11, early 1940s, 41 pages.

m.34 "Artists Point of View, Group of Seven and Canadian Art," Talk given to Vancouver Art Gallery (notebook) vol. 2, file 12, early 1940s, 21.5 pages.

m.35 "science and art," "religion and art," "Group of Seven," "Canadian Art," [various titles] vol. 2, file 13, 5 pages and 1 drawing (untitled).

m.36 "Talk to Normal School, Toronto," [about the Group of Seven] (notebook) vol. 3, file 1, early 1940s 13 pages

m.37 "Federation of Canadian Artists" (notebook) vol. 3, file 2, early 1940s, 15 pages.

m.38 "Talk to Art School students" (notebook) vol. 3, file 3, 1945, 17 pages.

m.39 Notes (notebook) vol. 3, file 4, 1945,17 pages.

m.40 "notes for talk in Alberni, Vancouver Island, B.C." (notebook) vol. 3, file 5, 1945, 9 pages.

m.41 "democracy and the arts," (notebook) vol. 3, file 6, 1945, 36 pages.

m.42 Miscellaneous notes (notebook) vol. 3, file 7, 1945, 19 pages.

m.43 "democracy and art," and "democracy" (notebook) vol. 3, file 8, 1947, 30 pages.

m.44 "abstract art," (notebook) vol. 3, file 9, 1947, 14 pages.

m.45 Miscellaneous notes on abstract art and commercial art (notebook) vol. 3, file 11, 1950, 26 pages.

m.44 "There have been 2 main kinds of art in Canada since 1933 ...," (notebook) vol. 3, file 12, 1950, 27 pages.

m.45 "Art and Life – Science and Art," vol. 4, file 5, 14 pages.

m.46 "abstract painting," vol. 4, file 4, 58 pages.

m 47 "the academic and the creative," vol.4, file 5, 1 page.

m.48 "my purpose (incentive) in attempting to paint abstractions ...," vol. 4, file 4, 9 pages.

m.49 "art and exploitation," vol. 4, file 6, 1 page.

m.50 "art and history," vol. 4, file 7, 7 pages.

m.51 "art and life – science and art," vol. 4, file 8, 15 pages.

m.52 "art and propaganda," vol. 4, file 9, 12 pages.

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m.53 "Art as an Expression of the Values of its Day," vol. 4, file 10, 23 pages.

m.54 "art gallery directors," vol. 4, file 11, 10 pages.

m.55 "The Artist and his Day," vol. 4, file 15, 14 pages.

m.56 "Artist and public – notes," vol. 4, file 16, 4 pages.

m.57 "artists role in wartime," vol. 4, file19, 16 pages.

m.58 "basis of art," vol. 4, file 21, 1 page.

m.59 "Art in Canada," vol. 4, file 12, 13 pages.

m.60 "Artist and Audience," A first draft for "Artist and Audience" published later in *Canadian Bookman*, Vol. VIII, no. 2:197-98, December, 1925, vol. 4, file 14, 5 pages.

m.61 "Art is the Distillate of Life," (draft) vol. 4, file 17, 25 pages.

m.62 "The Arts and Divine Discontent," vol. 4, file 20, 1 page.

m.63 Letter to the Editor, *Daily Colonist*, Victoria, BC and a letter to the Editor, *The Ottawa Journal*, n.d. vol. 5, file 1.

m.64 "The Creative Attitude," vol. 5, file 11, 30 pages.

m.65 "Canada and the Arts," vol. 5, file 2, 18 pages.

m.66 "Canadian Art," vol. 5, file 3,10 pages.

m.67 "Canadian Art National," vol. 5, file 3, 26 pages.

m.68 "Canadian Art and Internationalism," vol.5, file 4, 16 pages.

m.69 "Capital and Labour," vol. 5, file 5, January, 1905, 5 pages.

m.70 "changing ideologies," vol. 5, file 6, 4 pages.

m.71 "Community Centres for the Arts," vol. 5, file 8, 16 pages.

m.72 "Conditioning in Art," vol. 5, file 9, 7 pages.

m.73 "The Creative," vol. 5, file 10, 5 pages.

m.74 "The Creative Individual and a New Order," vol. 5, file 12, 13 pages.

m.75 "Creative Life ... an interplay of opposites," vol. 5, file 13, 1943, 24 pages.

m.76 "imitation and creation," vol. 5, file 13, 1 page.

m.77 "criticism," vol. 5, file 14, 1953-54, 27 pages.

m.78 "Democracy and the Arts," vol. 5, file 15, 39 pages.

m.79 "Emily Carr notes," vol. 5, file 17, 5 pages.

m.80 "Europe and America" – titled "Canada and War," vol. 5, file 18,19 pages.

m.81 "Experience," vol. 5, file 19, 4 pages.

m.82 "Experience and Theory," vol. 5, file 20,3 pages.

m.83 "Fallacies about Art," first draft for "Fallacies about Art" published later in *Canadian Literature* 113/114:128-43, Summer/Fall, 1987, vol. 5, file 21, 85 pages.

m.84 "Culture," "Critics," vol. 5, file 21, 2 pages.

m.85 "Federation of Canadian Artists," vol. 5, file 21, 69 pages.

m.86 "Spirituality and Art" [different from vol.6, file 27] vol. 6, 15 pages.

m.87 "The Function of Art," vol. 6, file 1, 26 pages.

m.88 "Goodwill," vol. 6, file 2, 7 pages.

m.89 "Grants for artists," vol. 6, file 1, 3 pages.

m.90 Various notes and press editorials on the Group of Seven, vol. 6, file 4, 1932, 38 pages.

m.91 "internationalism in art," vol. 6, file 6, 1.5 pages.

m.92 "Interplay Life and Form," vol. 6, file 7, 4 pages.

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m.93 "introduction to book," vol. 6, file 8, 3 pages.

m.94 "ivory tower in art," vol. 6, file 10, 2 pages.

m.95 "limitation and universal life," vol. 6, file 12, 4 pages.

m.96 "love and art," vol. 6, file 13, 14 pages.

m.97 Miscellaneous notes on Art, including quotes and letters, vol. 6, file 14, 55 pages.

m.98 "National Council of the Arts," vol. 6, file 15, 2 pages.

m.99 "past and future," vol. 6, file 16, 4 pages.

m.100 "pattern," vol. 6, file 17, 1 page.

m.101 "Philosophy and Art," vol. 6, file 19, 15 pages.

m.102 "a piece of being," vol. 6, file 20, 2 pages.

m.103 "reason and perception," vol. 6, file 22, 2 pages.

m.104 Six poems (3 untitled), i.e., "Almond Blossom", "The Fire", "Pain", vol. 6, file 21, 1923, total of 9 pages.

m.105 "reincarnation," vol. 6, file 23, 1 page.

m.106 "science and art," vol. 6, file 24, 14 pages.

m.107 "sectarianism in art," vol. 6, file 25, 3 pages.

m.108 "Spirituality and Art," vol. 6, file 27, 17 pages.

m.109 "Structure and reality," vol. 6, file 30, 1 page.

m.110 "The joy of living...," vol. 6, file 33, 2 pages.

m.111 "Theosophy and Art," vol. 6, file 33, 73 pages.

m.112 "Conscience is the sum of...", vol. 6, file 32, 8 pages.

m.113 "unconventional artists," vol. 6, file 35, 1 page.

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m.114 T.S. Eliot's *Tone Poem*, vol. 6, file 34. 3 pages.

m.115 "Women's Art Association," vol. 7, 1 page.

m.116 Letter to Bess Housser, vol. 7, August 22, 1922, 3 pages.

m.117 "works of art," vol. 7, 24 pages.

m.118 "Symbolism and Art," vol. 7, file 12, collection 4, {B4-1-7, 7} 7 pages.

m.119 "ABC of Abstract Painting," vol. 7, file 13, collection 7, 6 pages.

m.120 "Abstract Art," vol. 7, file 13 , collection 7, 13 pages.

m.121 "and the creative spirit...," vol. 7, collection 8, 4 pages.

m.122 "art as an expression of the Value of its Day," vol. 7, file 11, collection 1, 23 pages.

m.123 "The Creative Attitude #1, #2, #3," vol.7, file 11, collection 1 {C:6-9, B25-38}.

m.124 "Momentum," vol. 7, file 11, collection 1 {C1:15-16}.

m.125 "International Attitude," vol. 7, file 11, collection 1 {B:1-47}.

m.126 "Art and Life," vol. 7, file 11, collection 1, {B1:48-49}.

m.127 "The result would yield...," vol. 7, file 13, collection 7, Transcripts, p.6-20.

m.128 "Canadian Art," vol. 7, file 14 {B8:1-8} [probably a talk given during World War II in Vancouver].

m.129 "Philosophy and Art," vol. 7, file 14, collection 8, 7 pages.

m.130 "Group of Seven Canadian Art," vol. 7, file 14, 6 pages.

m.131 "status of Canadian painting and sculpture," [talk] vol. 7, file 14, 14 pages.

m.132 "Creativity and Evolution," vol. 7, file 14 {B8:11-17}.

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m.133 "Symbolism and Art," vol. 7, file 15, 14 pages.

m.134 [scrapbook] vol. 7, file 15, 1 page.

m.135 "Scientific Materialism - futility of materialism" [notebook] vol. 7, file 15, collection 10, 1 page.

m.136 "Fallacy - re: art" [notes] vol. 7, file 15, collection 10, 2 pages.

m.137 "The purpose of art" [notebook] vol. 7, file 15, collection 10. 2.5 pages.

m.138 "Fallacies re art," vol. 7, file 15, collection 10, 12 pages.

m.139 "Criticism – critics," vol. 7, file 15, collection 10, 6 pages.

m.140 "Democracy and art," vol.7, file 15, collection 10. 1 page.

m.141 Various notes [scrapbook] vol. 7, file 15, collection 10, 25 pages.

m.142 "The Fallacy that art is separate from life," vol. 7, file 15, collection 10., 6 pages.

m.143 "culture," vol. 7, file 15, collection10, 2 pages.

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Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

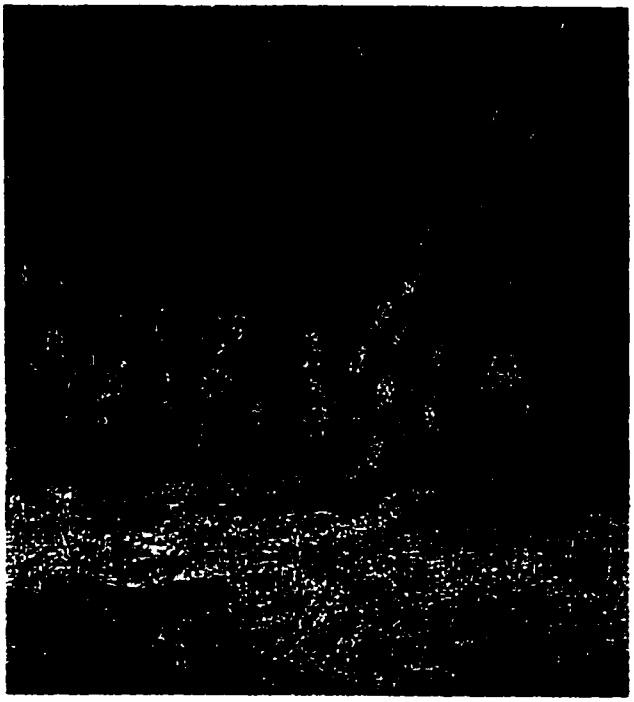


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Figure 10



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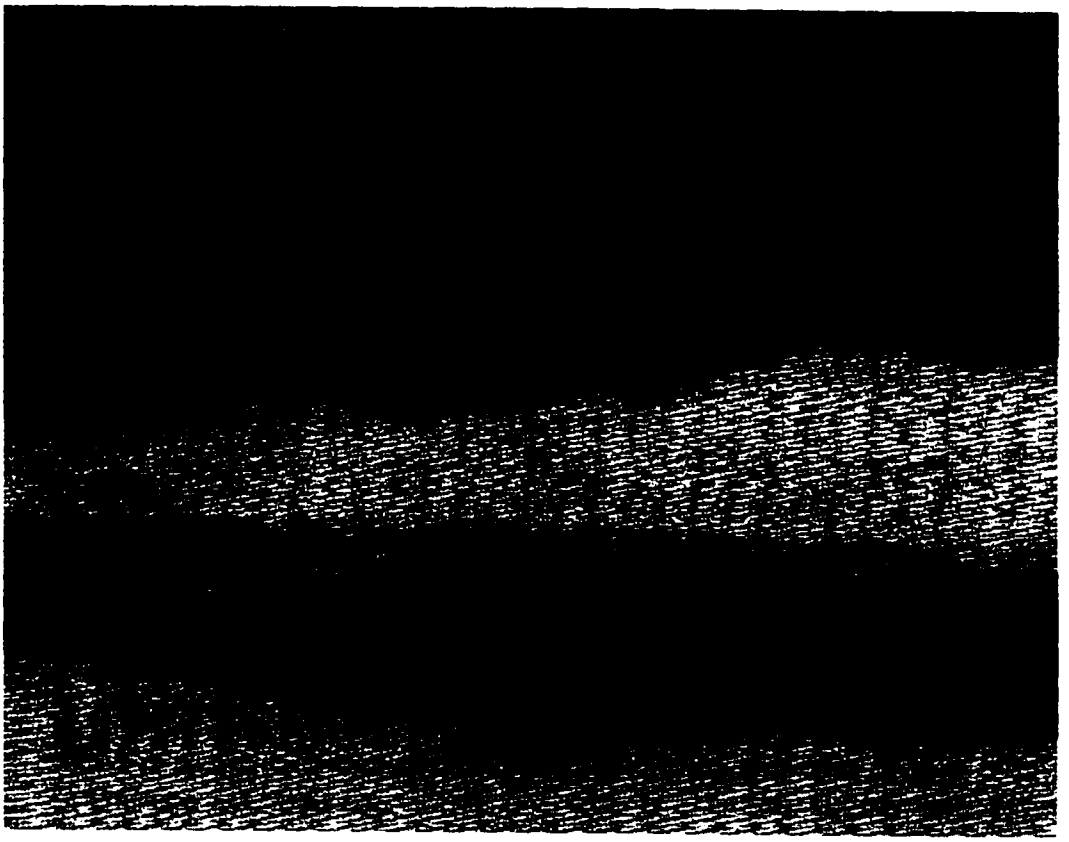


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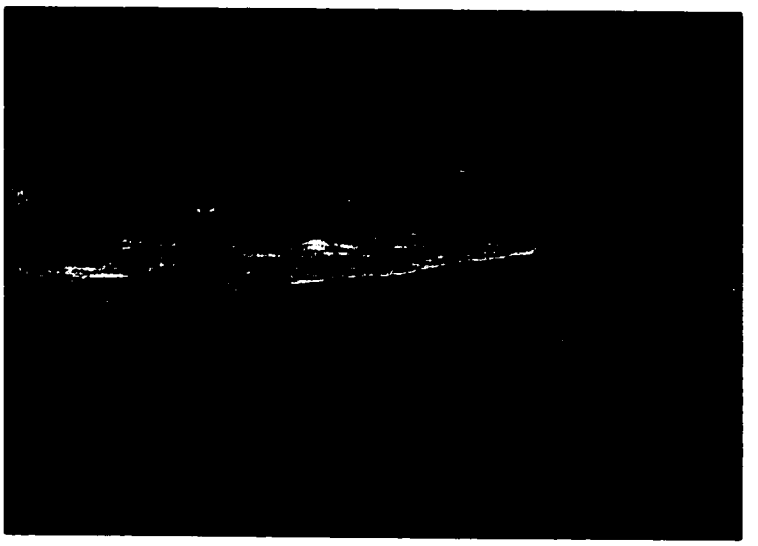


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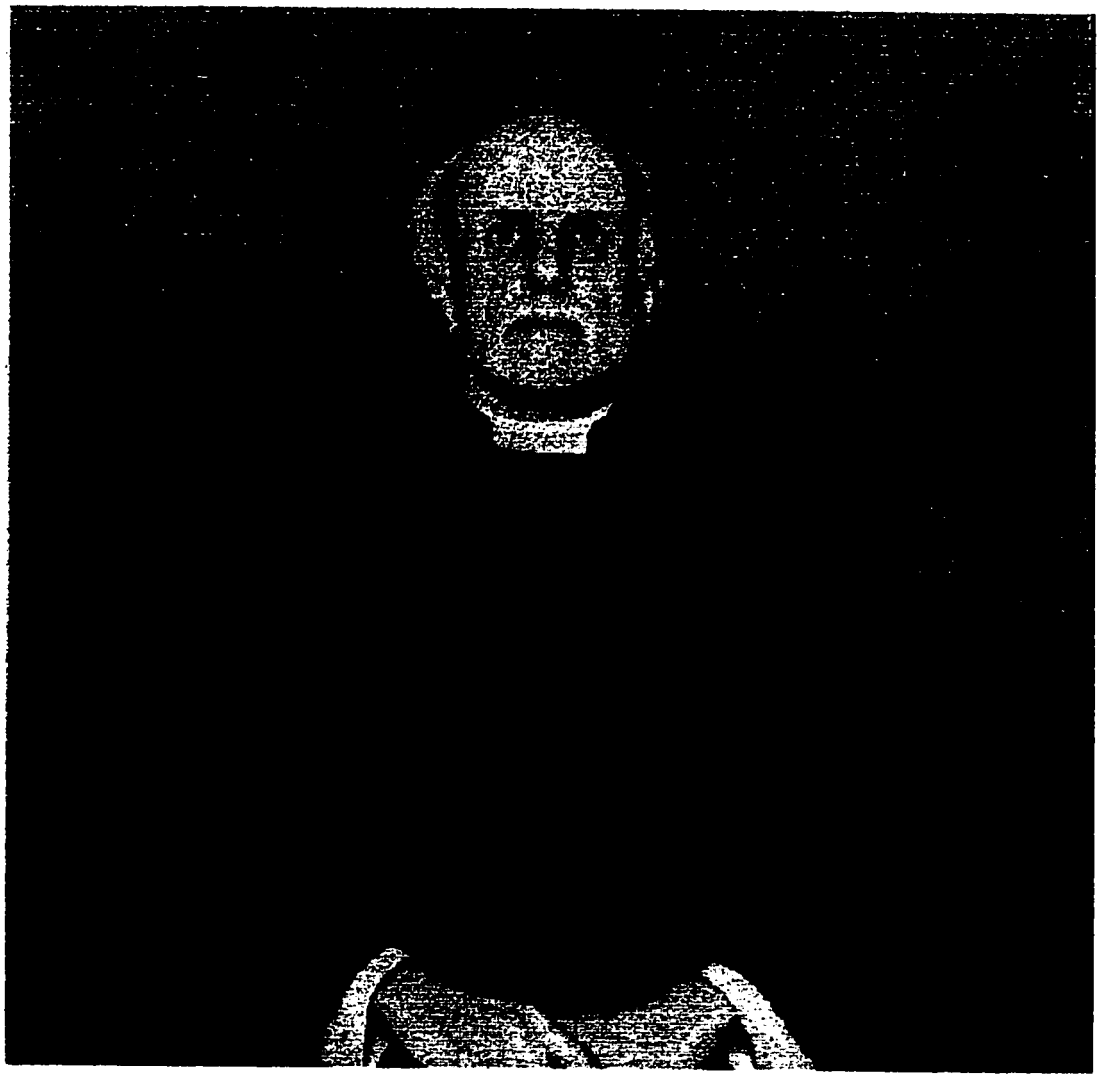


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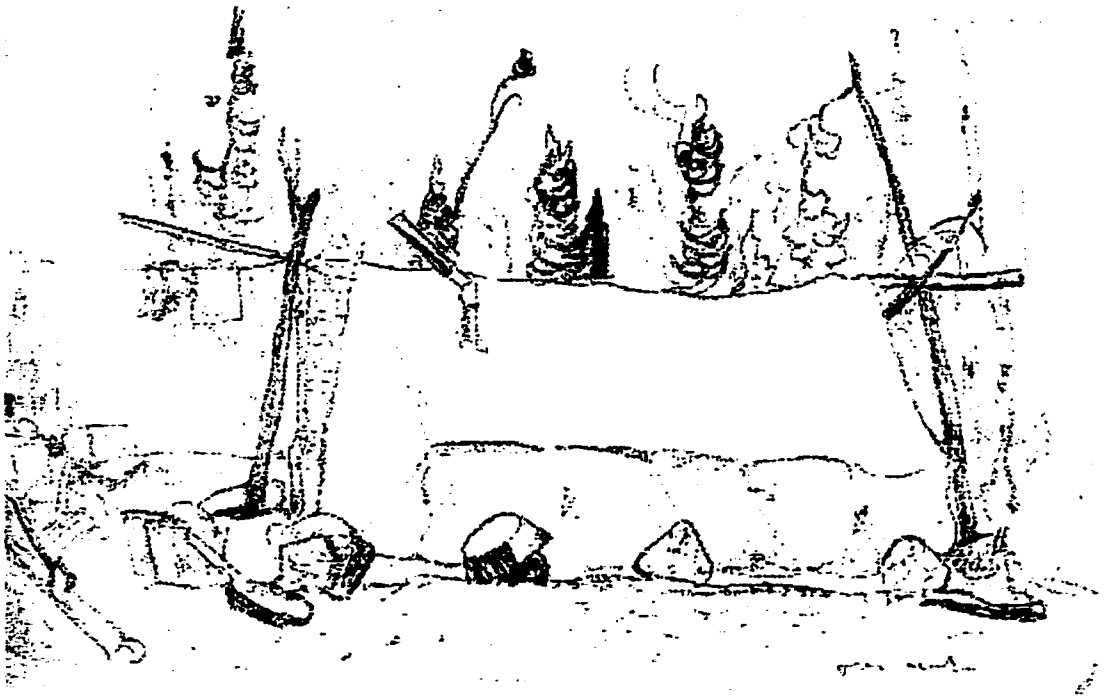


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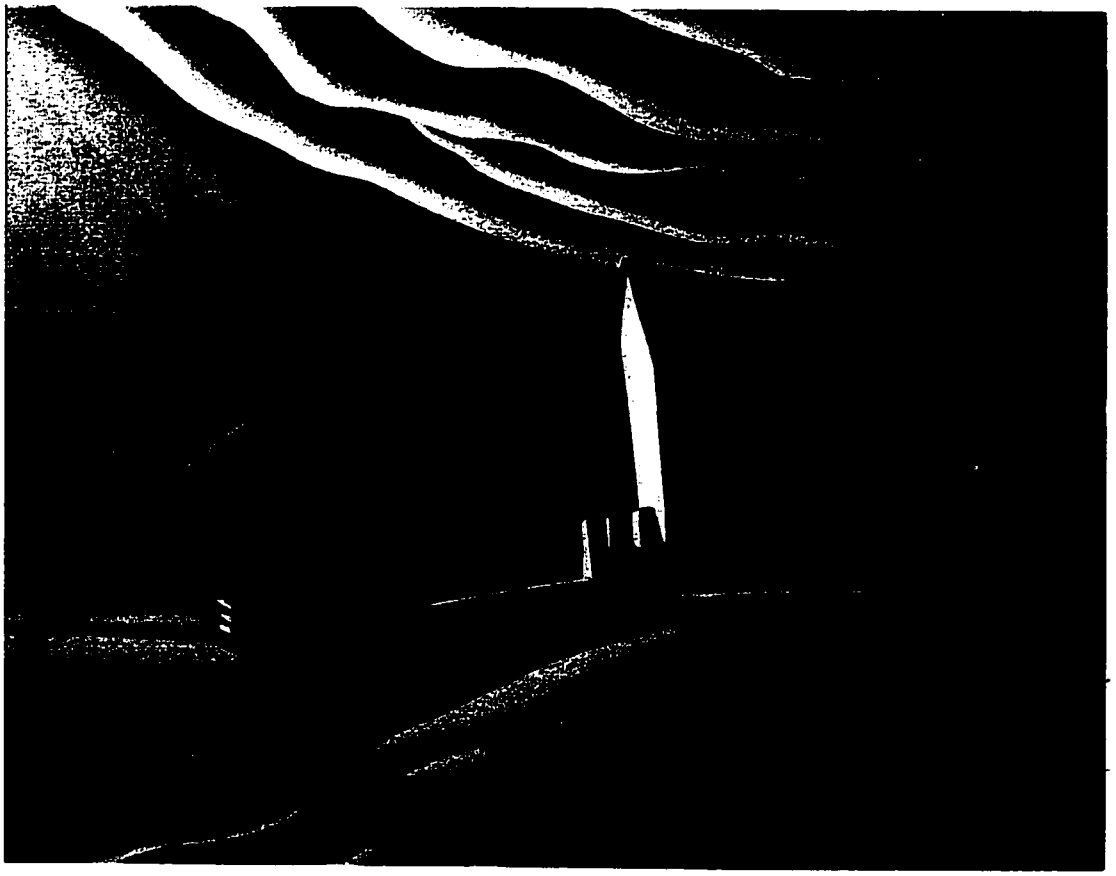


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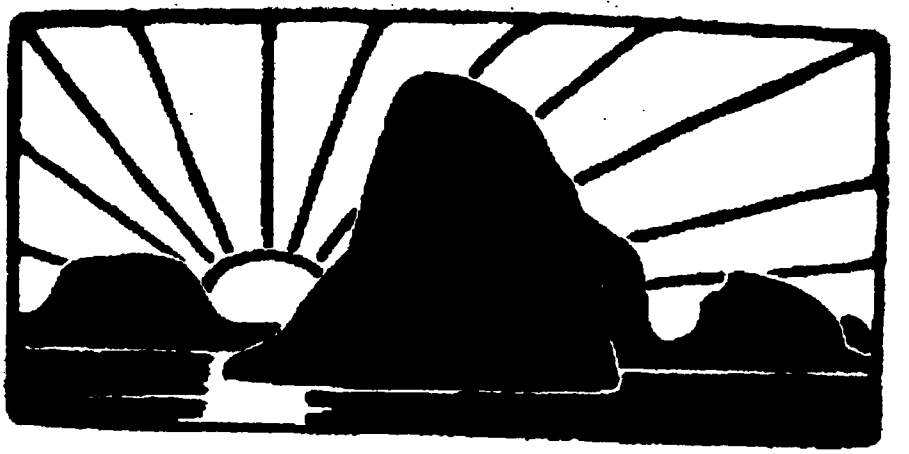


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Figure 23



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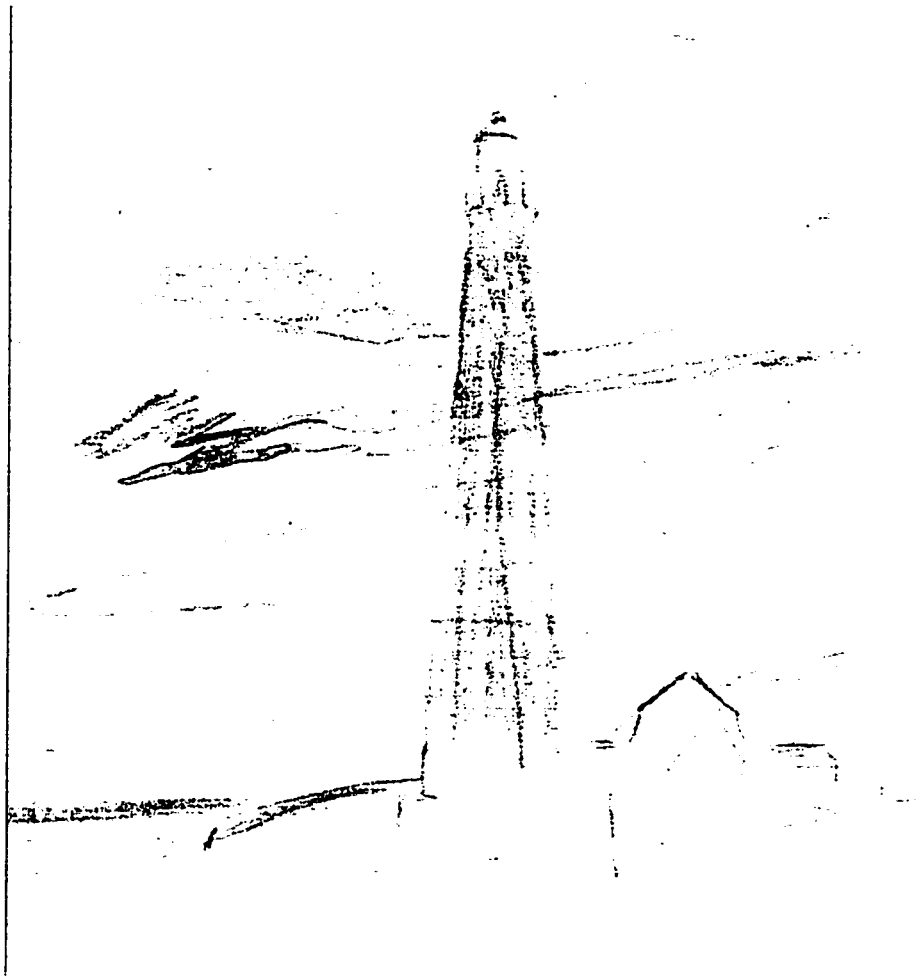


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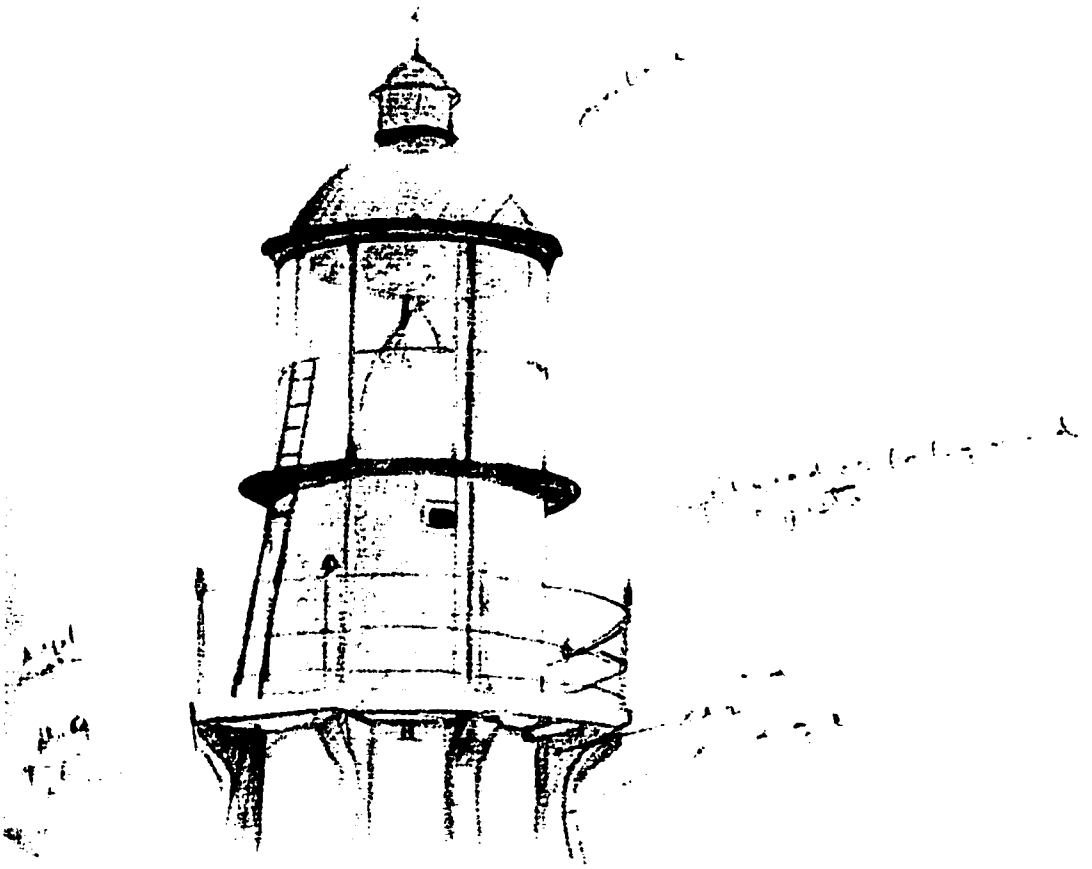


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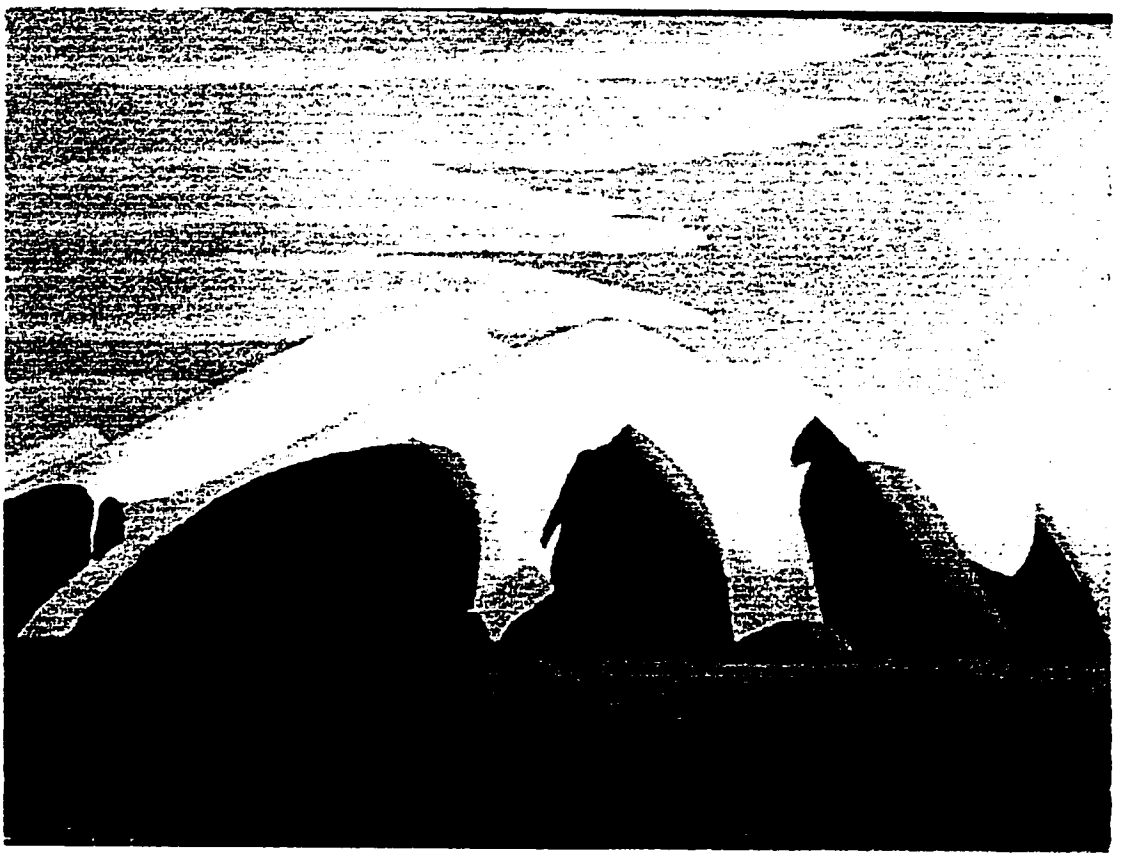


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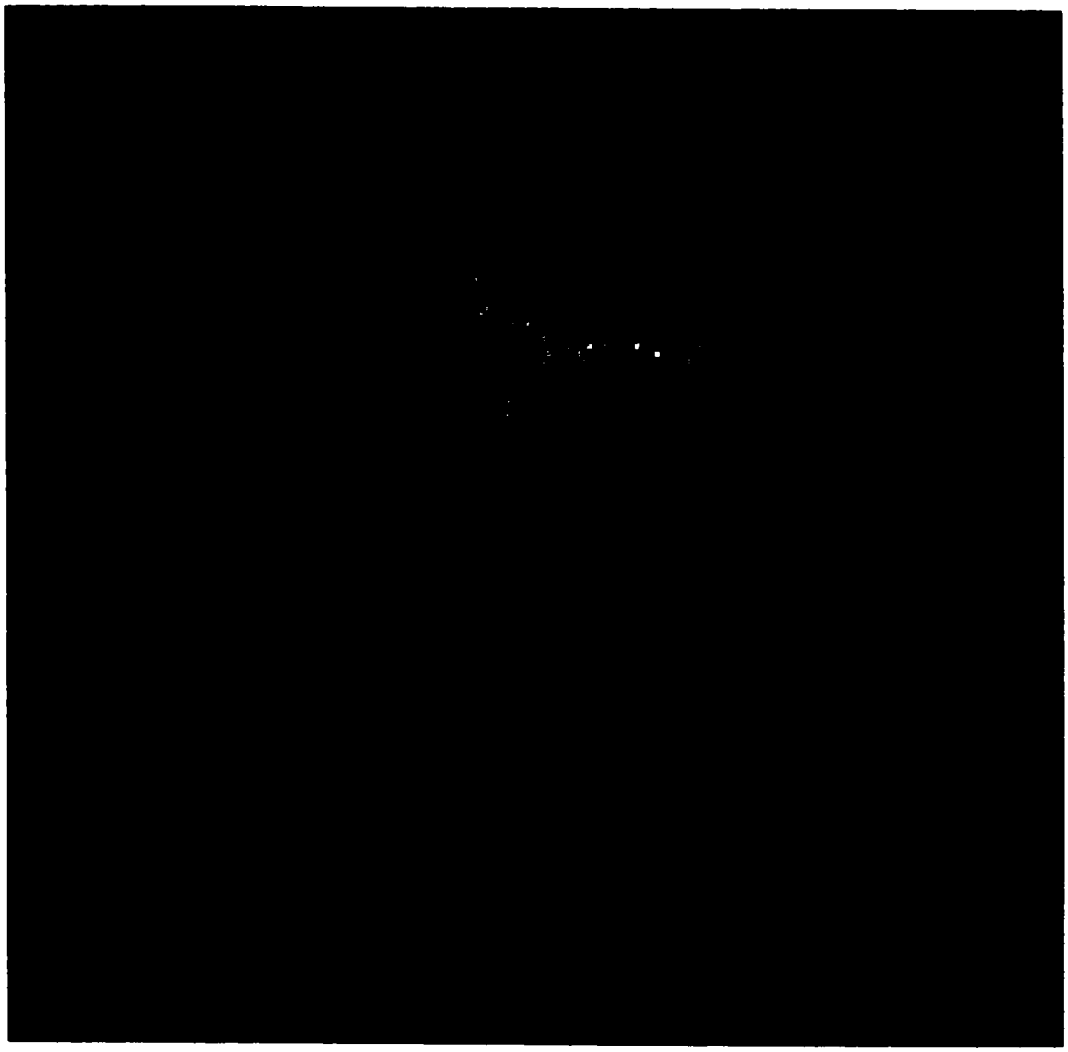


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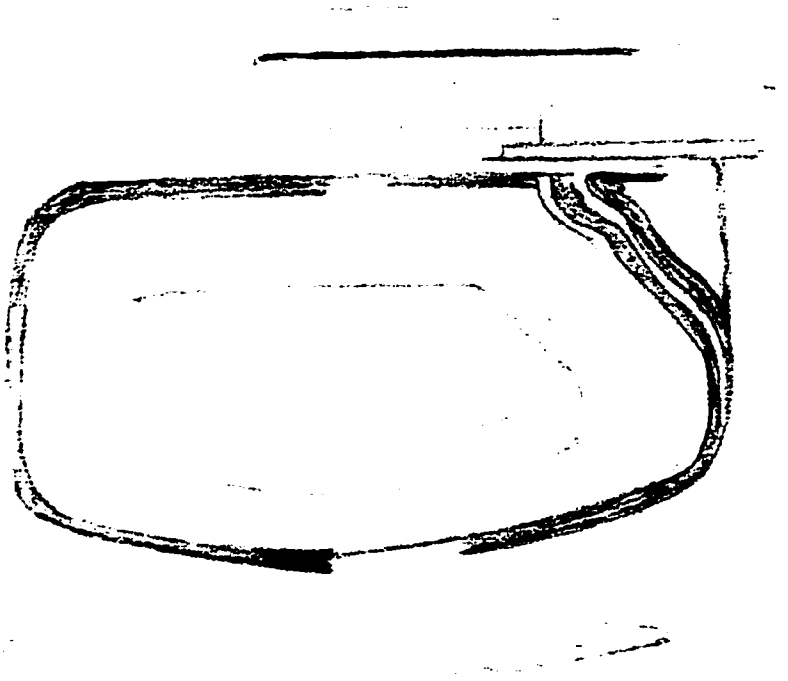


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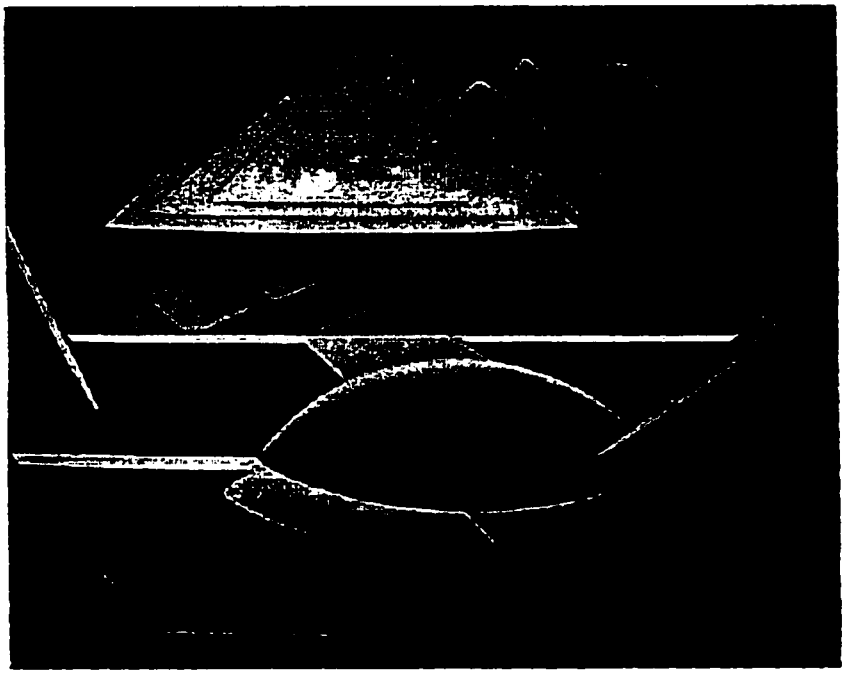


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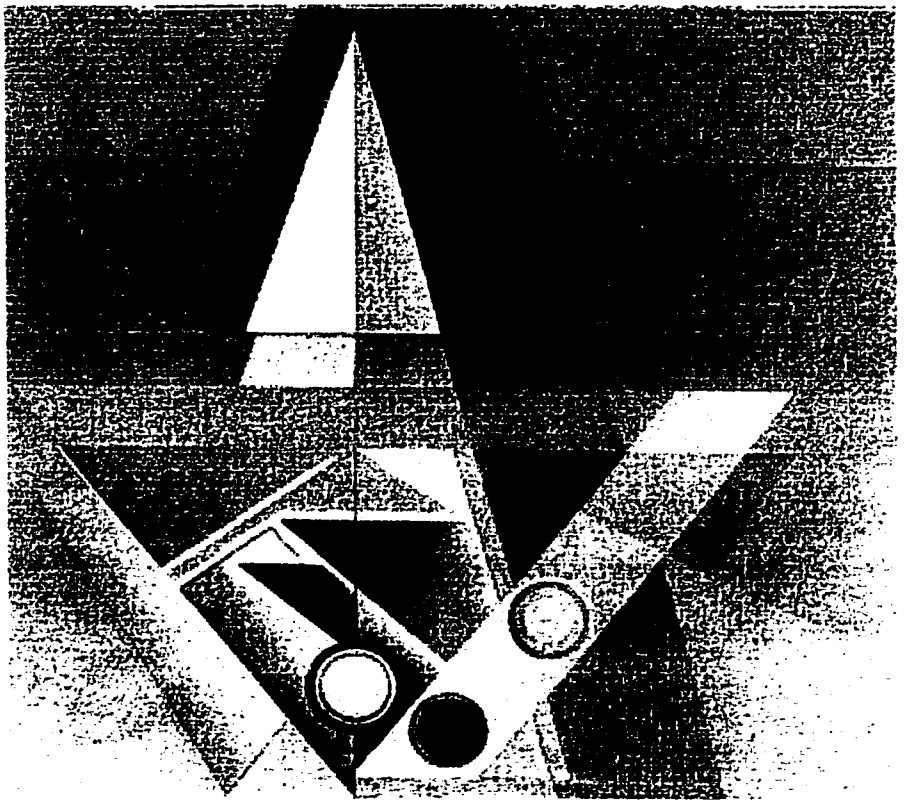


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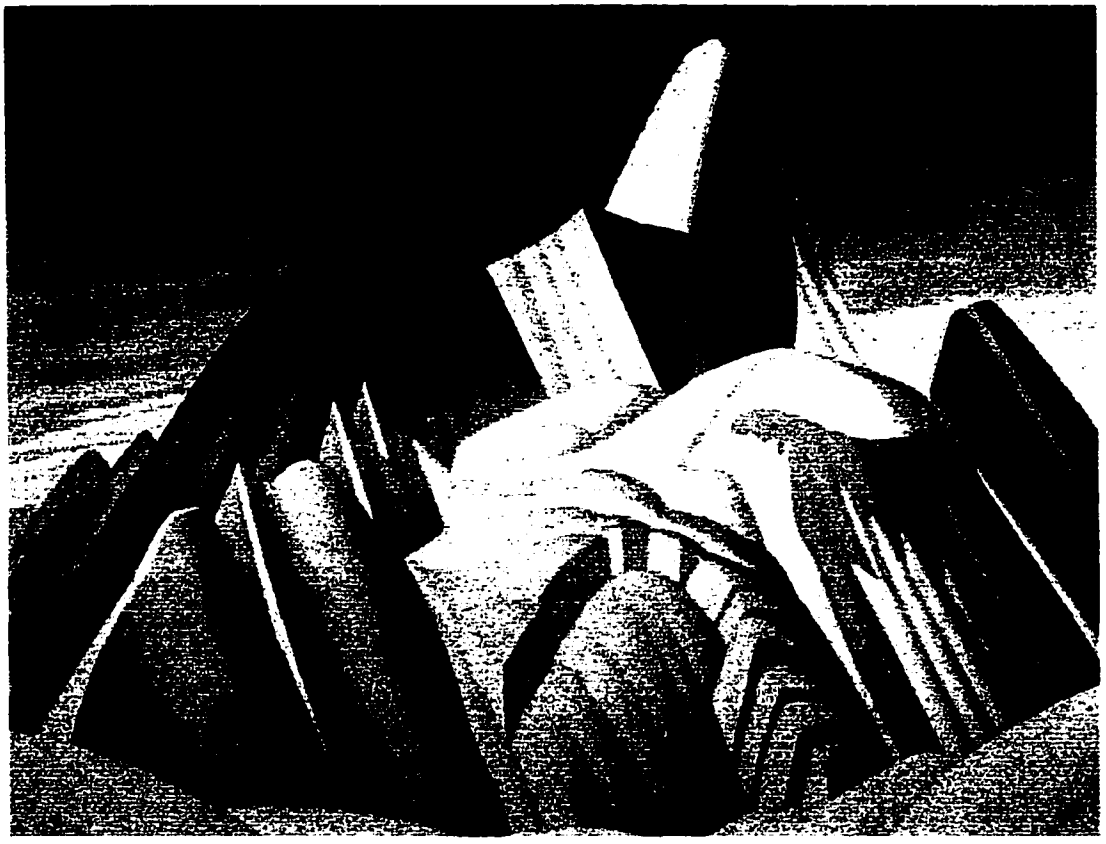


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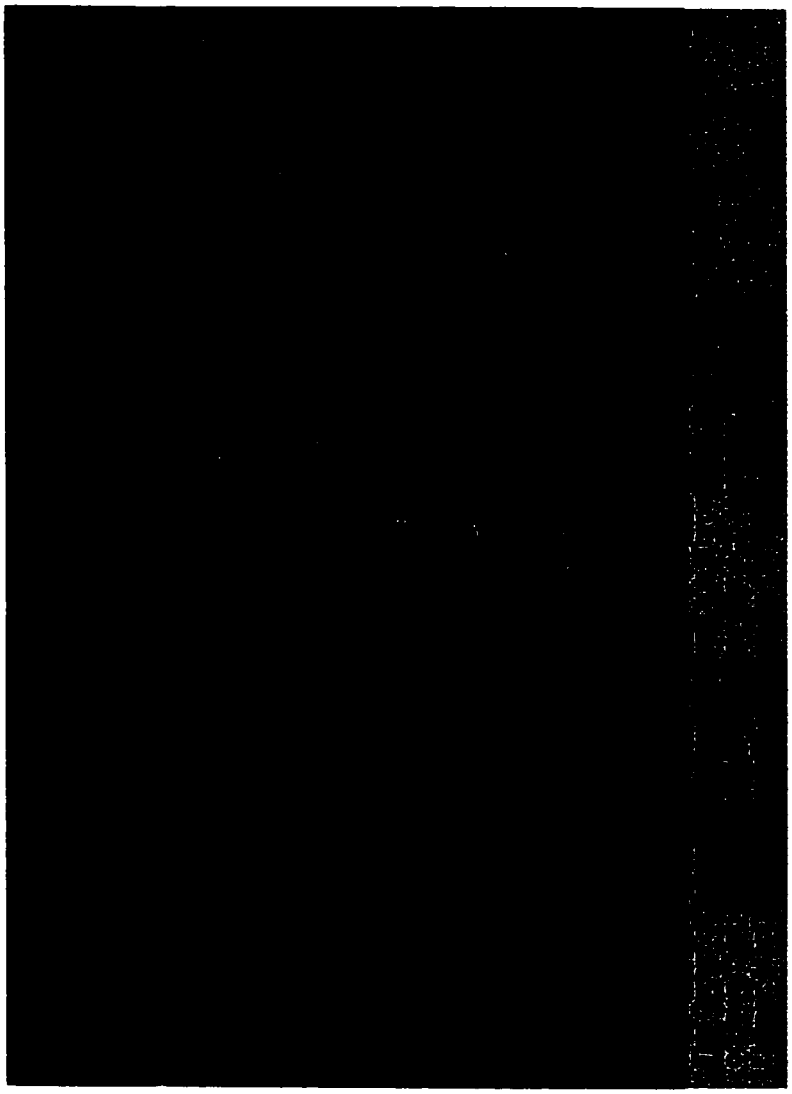


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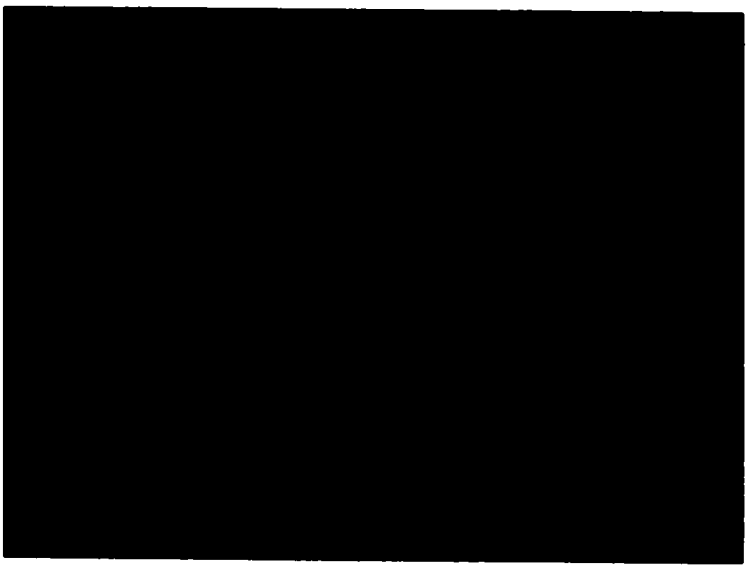


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Figure 47

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Figure 50

Figure 51

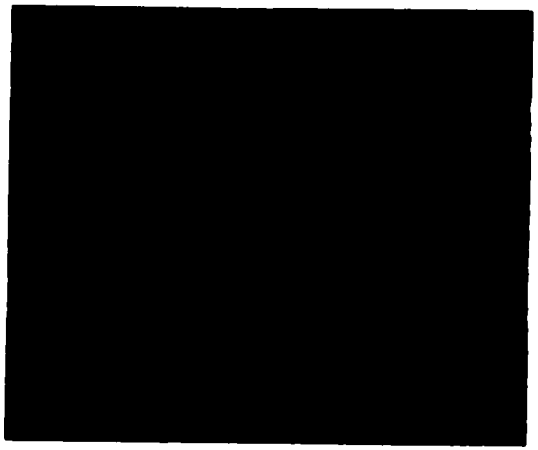


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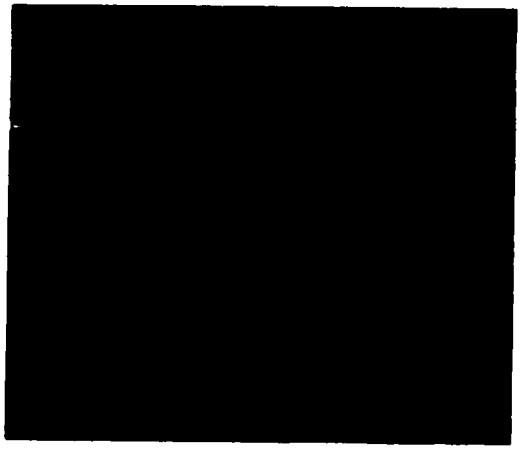


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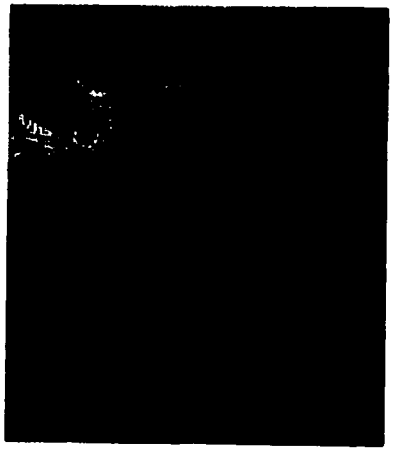


Figure 54



Figure 55

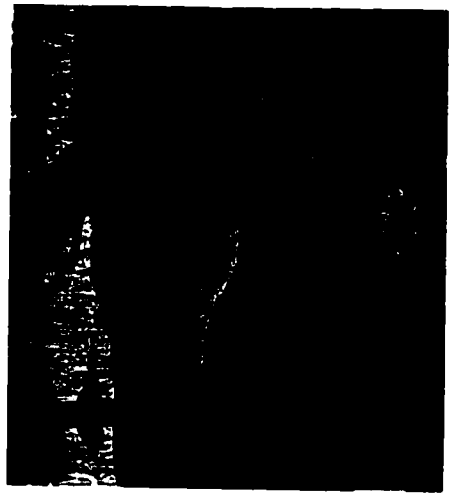


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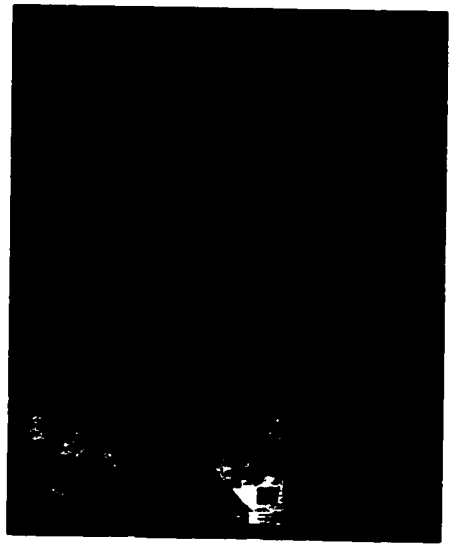


Figure 56



Figure 58

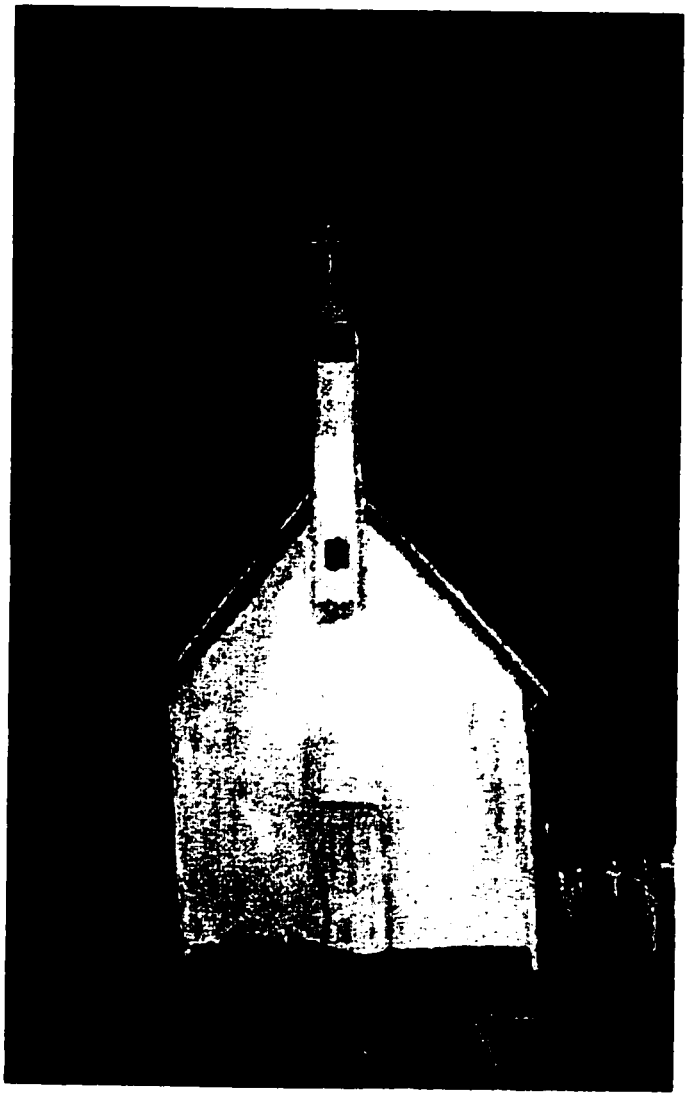


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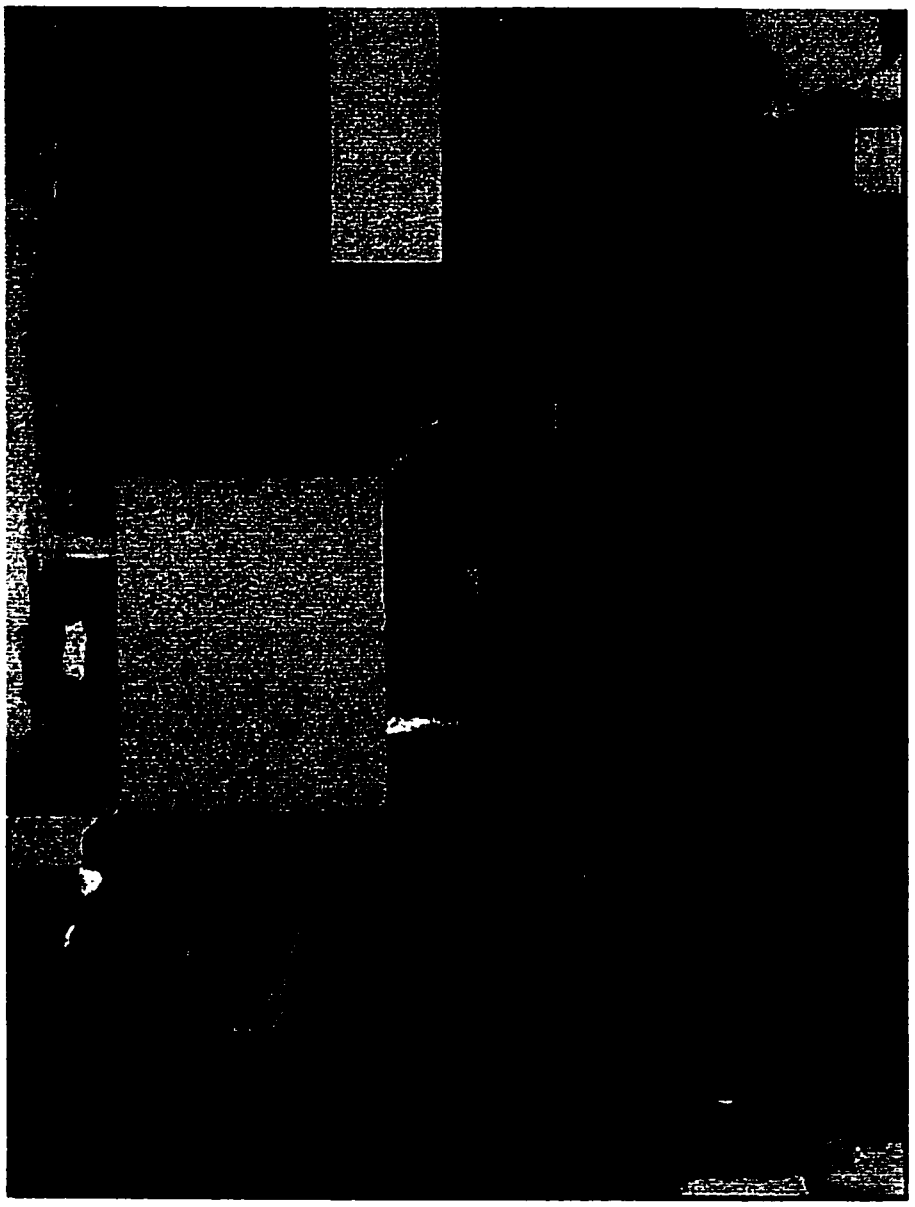


Figure 60



Figure 61

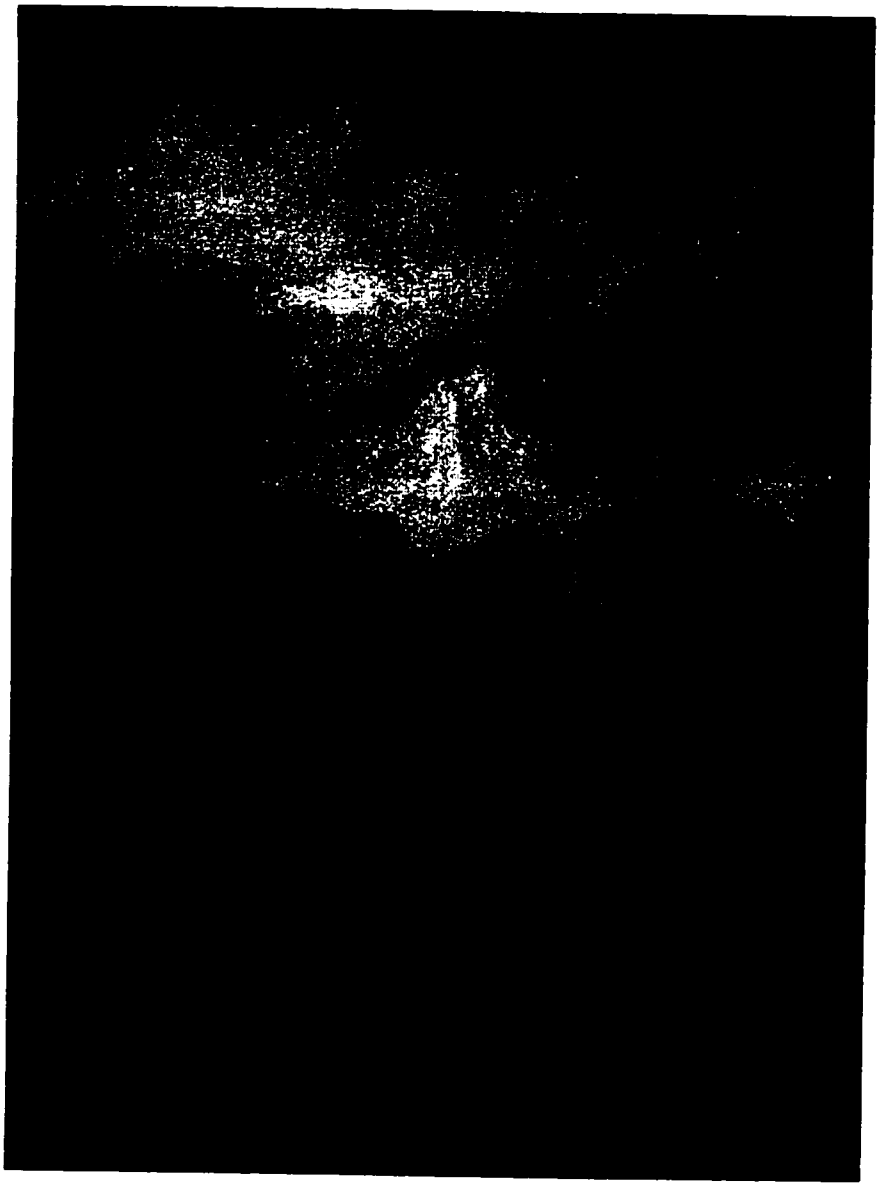


Figure 62



Figure 63



Figure 64

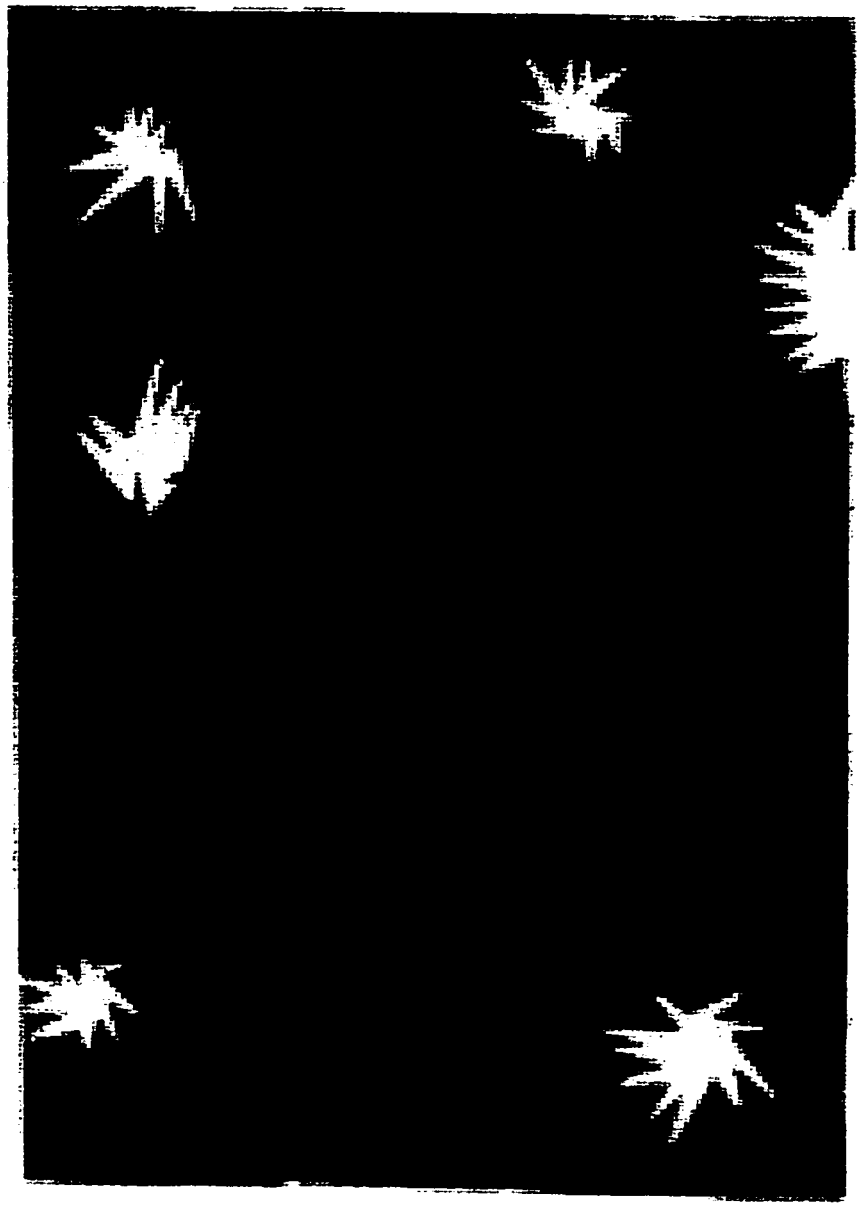


Figure 65



Figure 66

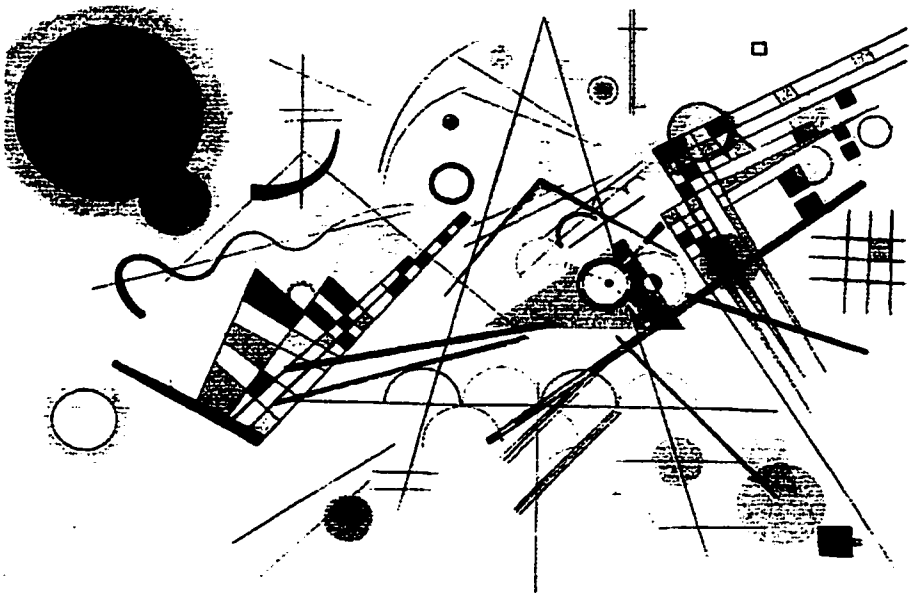


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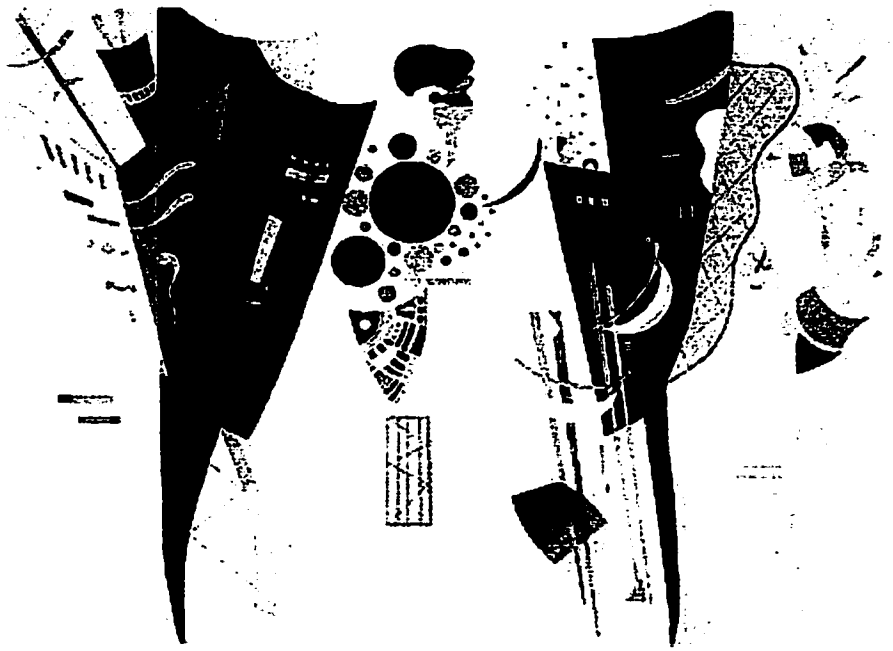


Figure 68



Figure 69

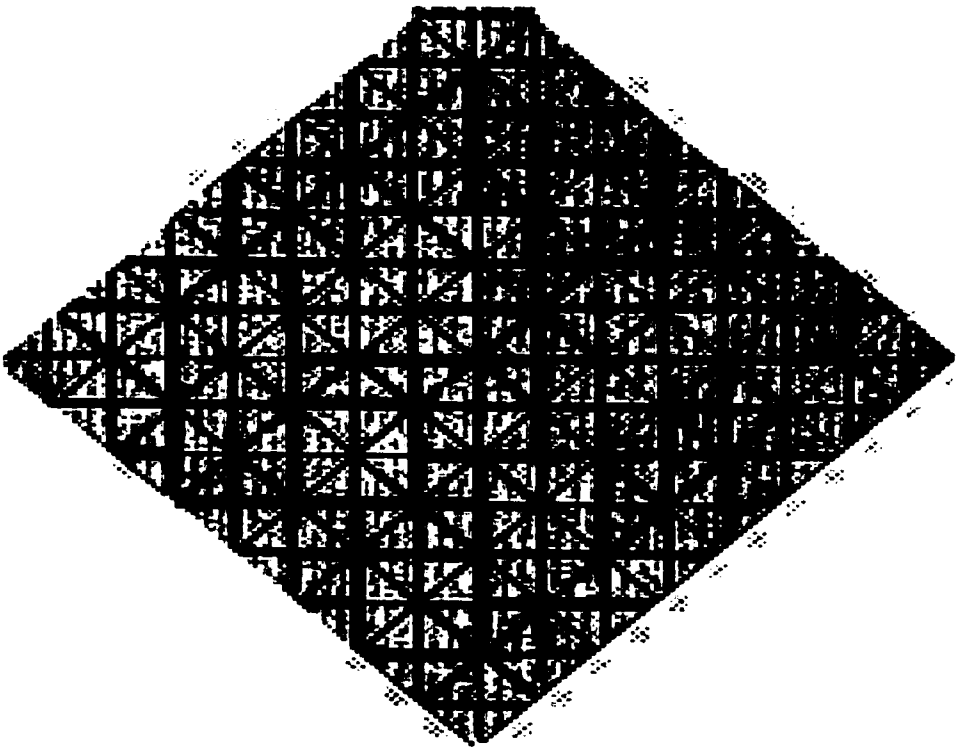


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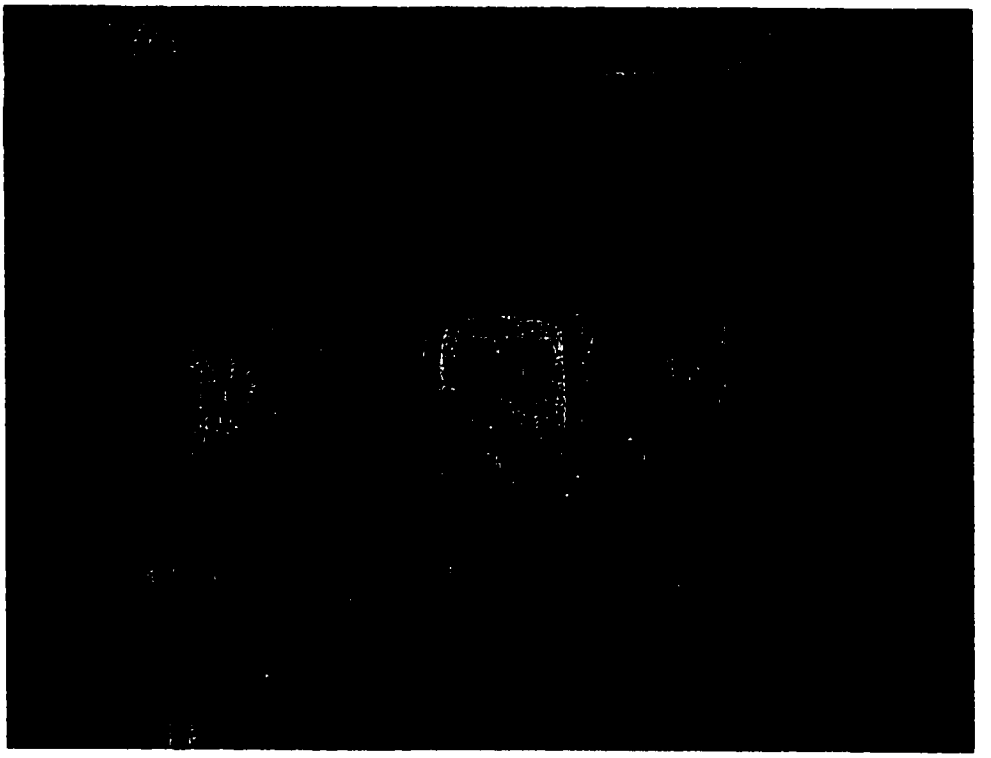


Figure 71



Figure 72

B

A

Figure 73

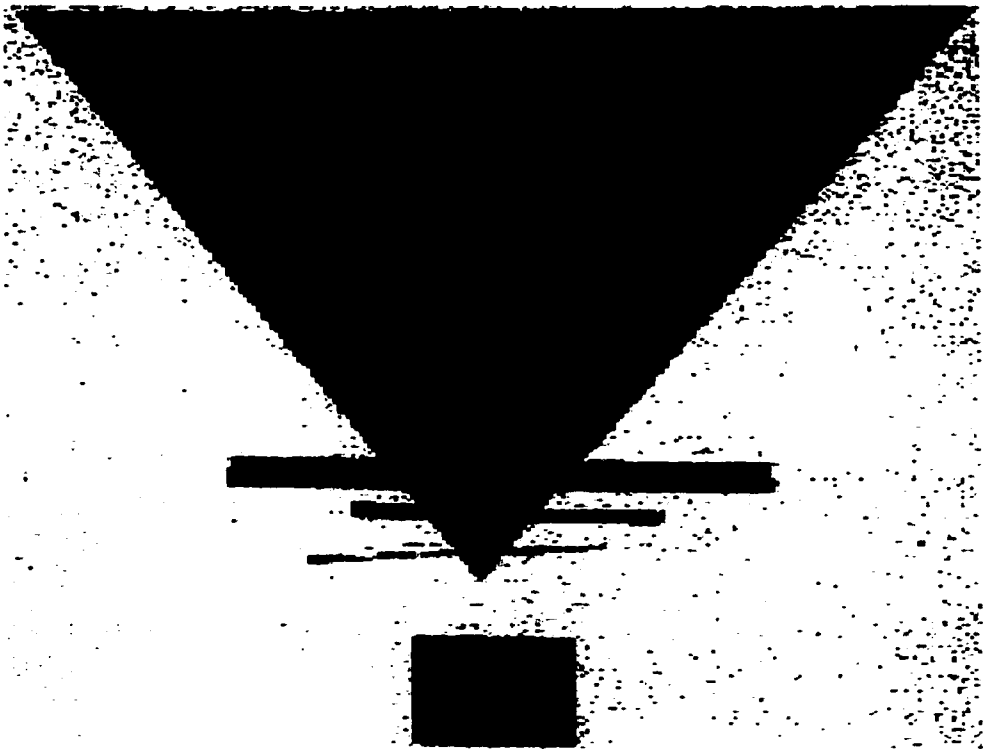


Figure 74



Figure 75



Figure 76

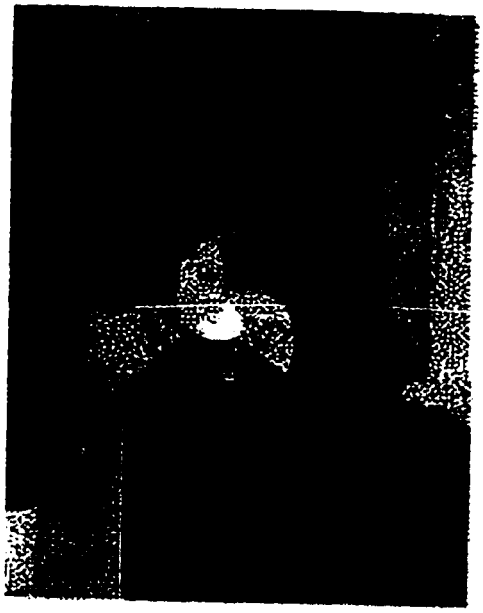


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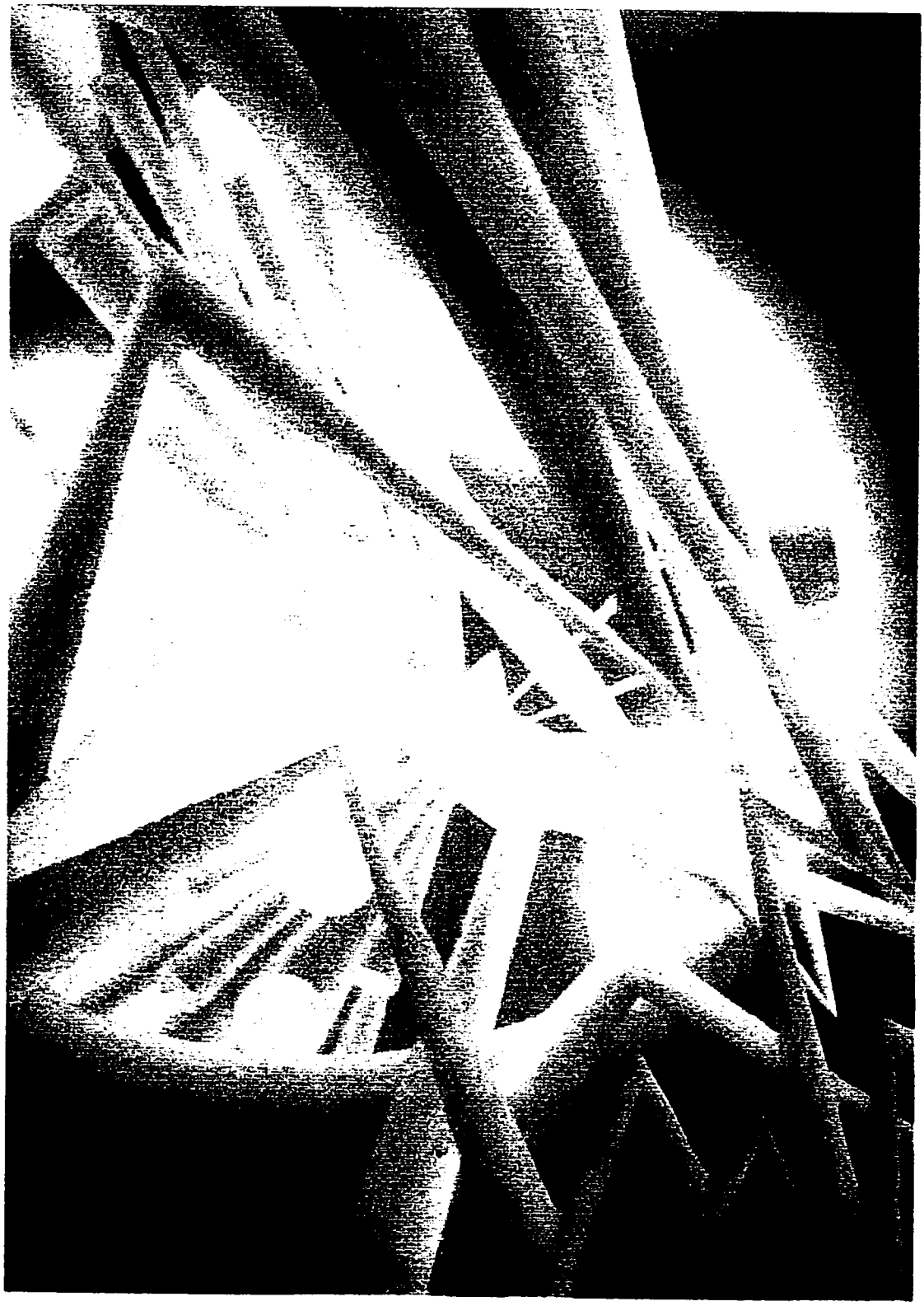


Figure 78

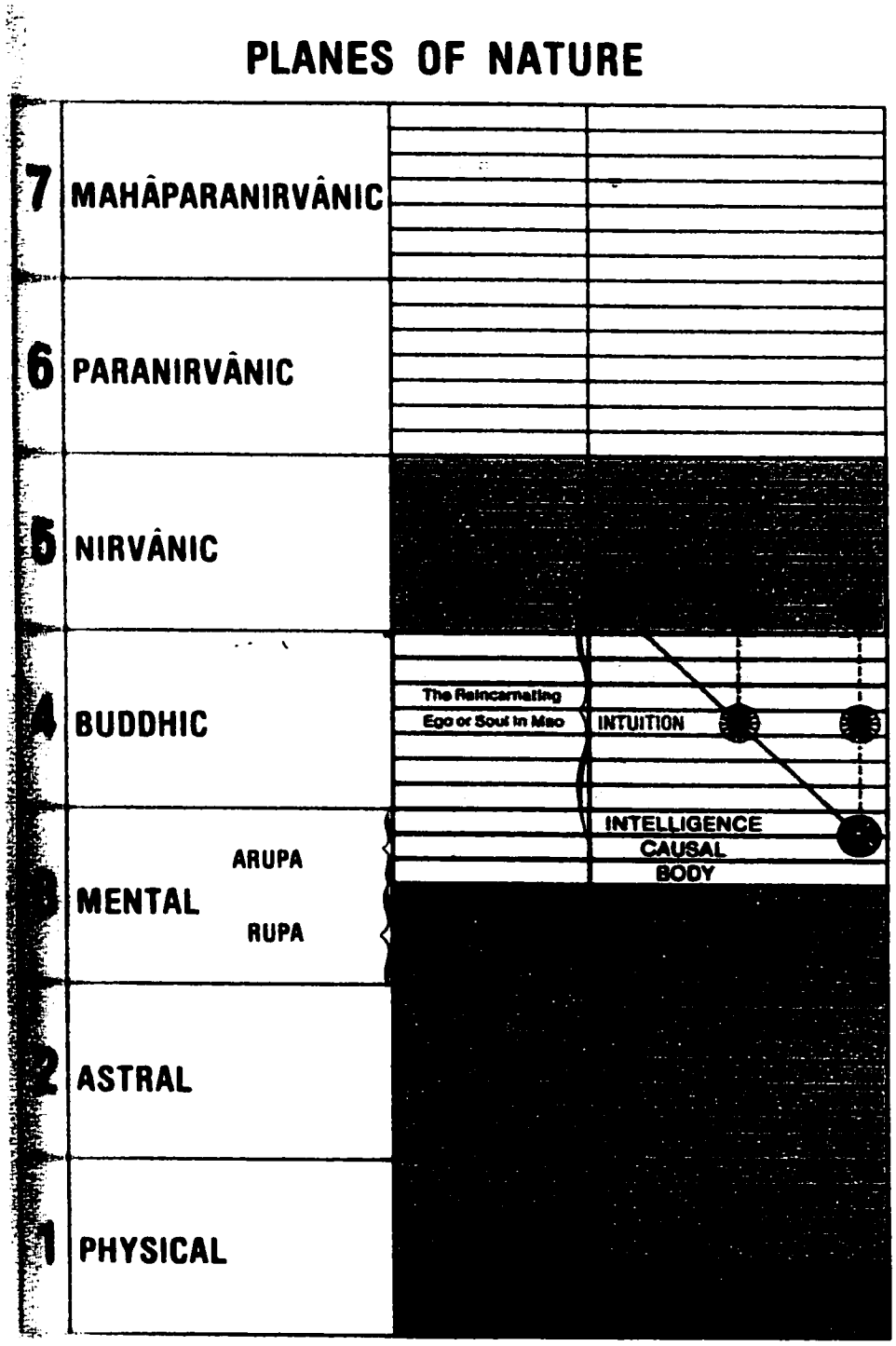

PLANES OF NATURE
7
MAHÂPARANIRVÂNIC
6
PARANIRVÂNIC
5
NIRVÂNIC
4
BUDDHIC
3
MENTAL
ARUPA
RUPA
2
ASTRAL
1
PHYSICAL
The Reincarnating
Ego or Soul in Mso
INTUITION
INTELLIGENCE
CAUSAL
BODY

Figure 79

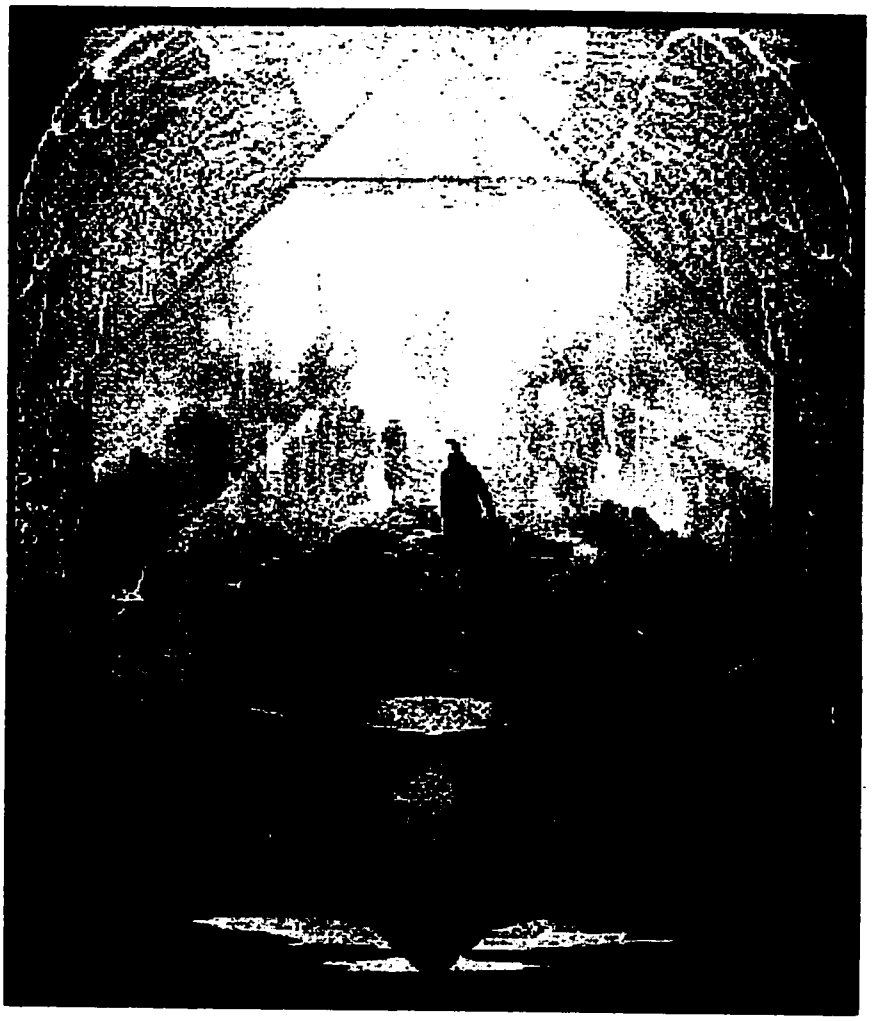
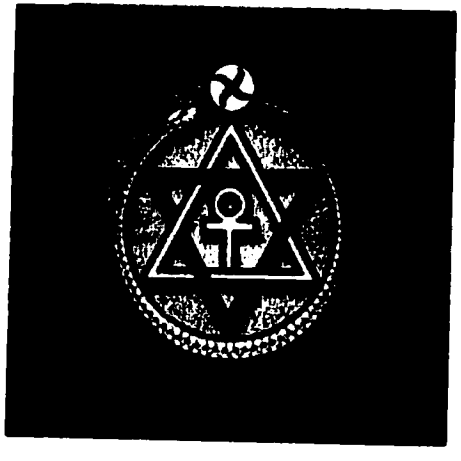
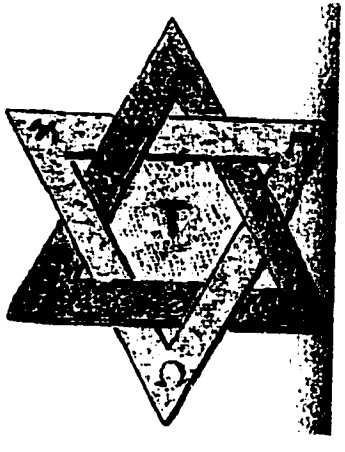


Figure 80



A



B

Figure 81

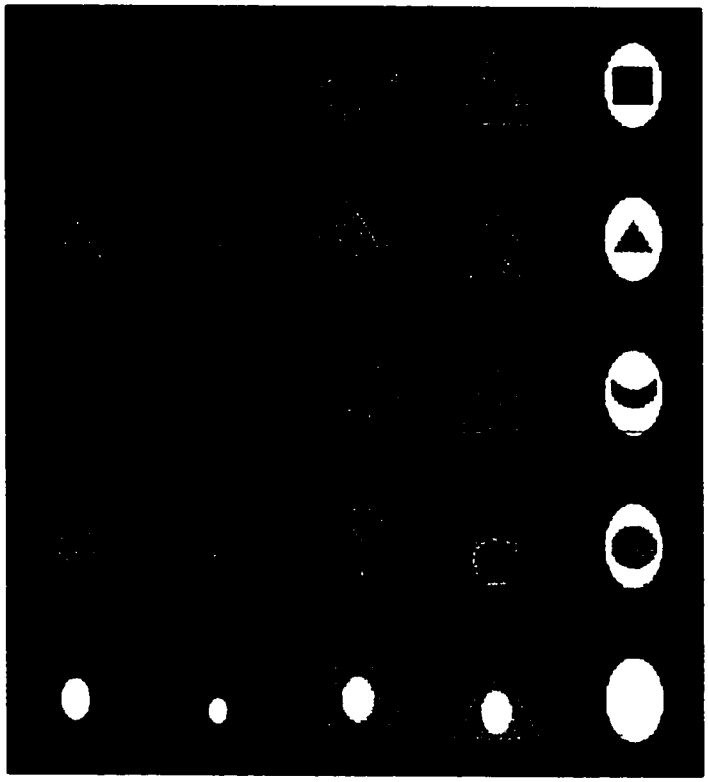


Figure 82



Figure 83

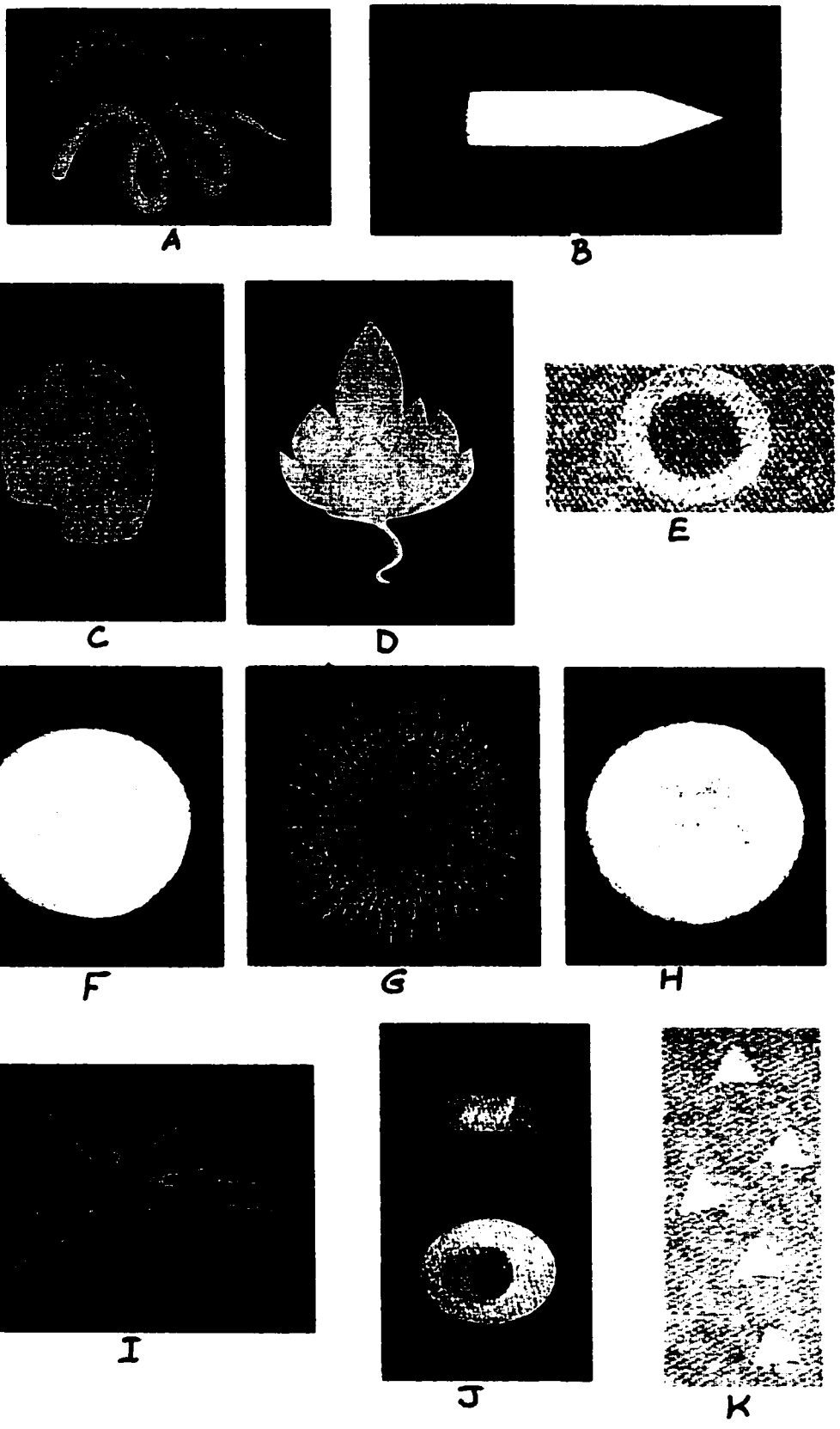
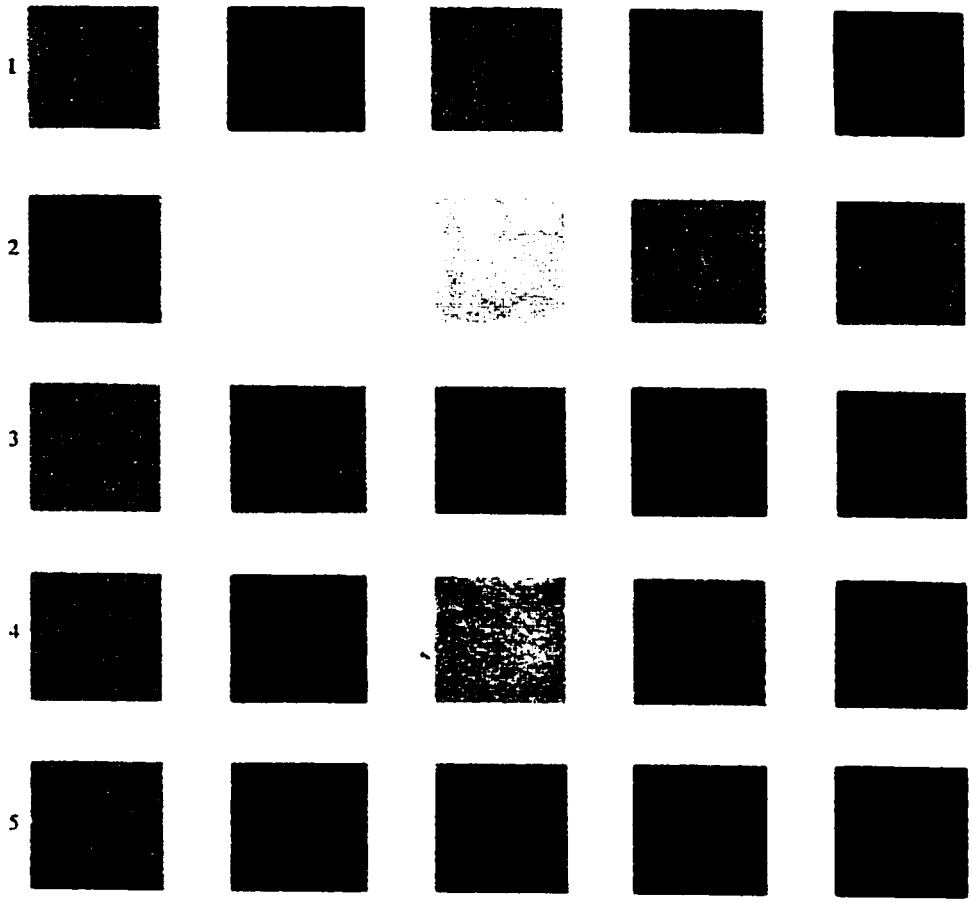


Figure 84



1. High Spirituality.	1. Devotion mixed with Affection.	1. Devotion to a Noble Ideal.	1. Pure Religious Feeling.	1. Selfish Religious Feeling.
2. Religious Feeling, tinged with Fear.	2. Highest Intellect.	2. Strong Intellect.	2. Low type of Intellect.	2. Pride.
3. Sympathy.	3. Love for Humanity.	3. Unselfish Affection.	3. Selfish Affection.	3. Pure Affection.
4. Adaptability.	4. Jealousy.	4. Deceit.	4. Fear.	4. Depression.
5. Selfishness.	5. Avarice.	5. Anger.	5. Sensuality.	5. Malice.

KEY TO THE MEANINGS OF COLOURS

Figure 85

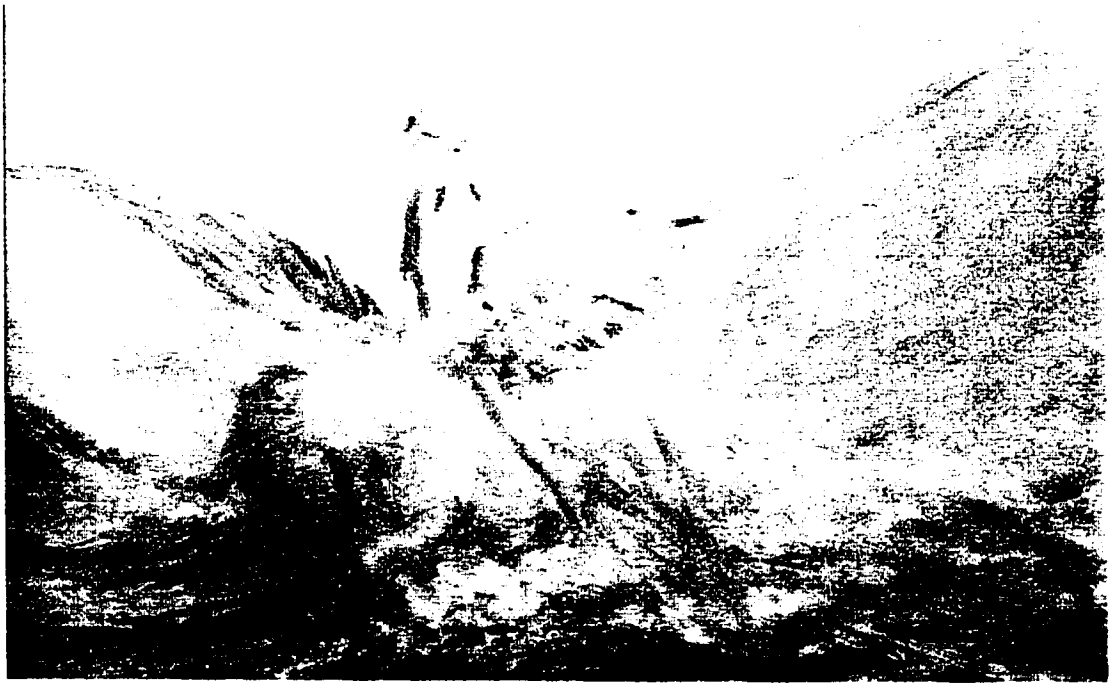


Figure 86



A



B

C



Figure 87



Figure 88



Figure 89

625-26-27

Figure 90

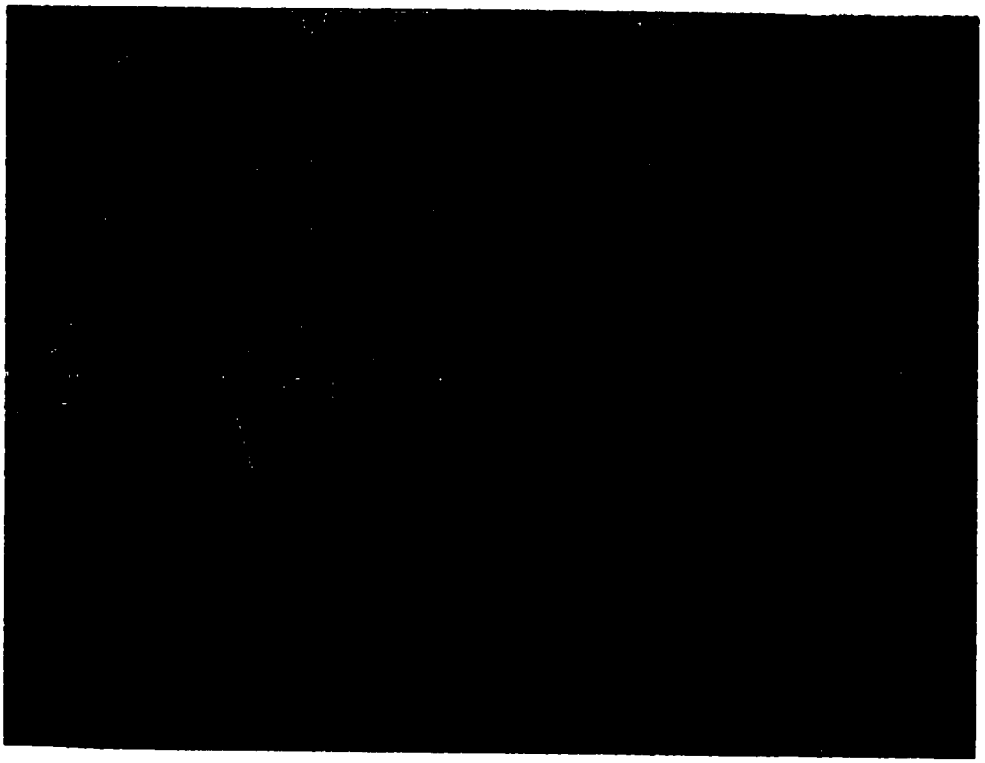


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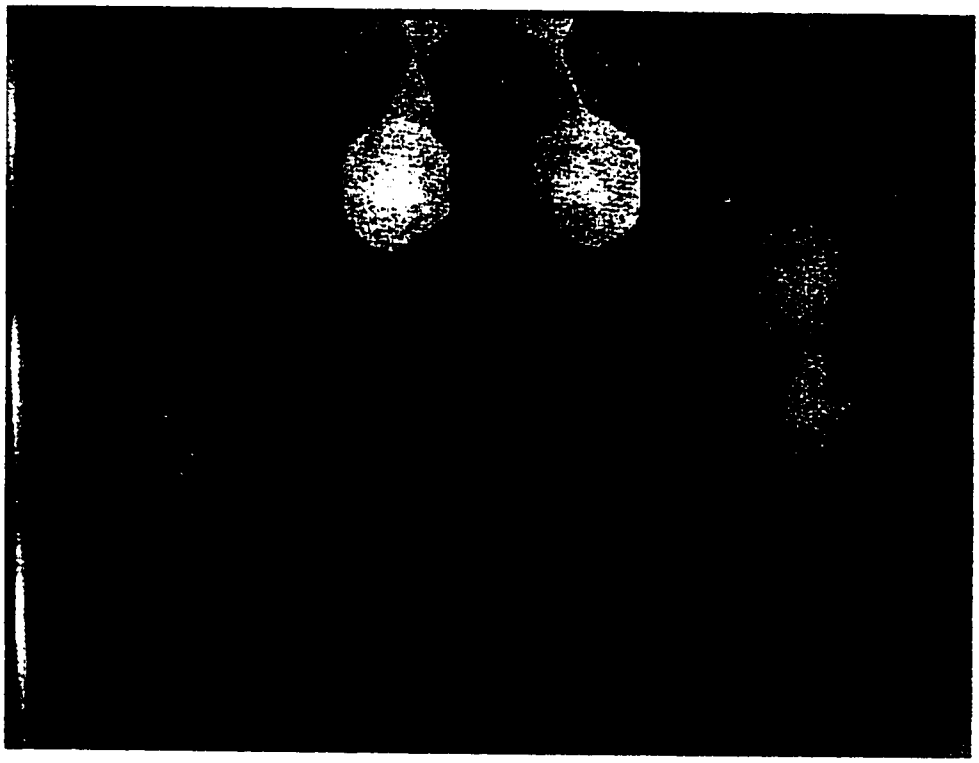


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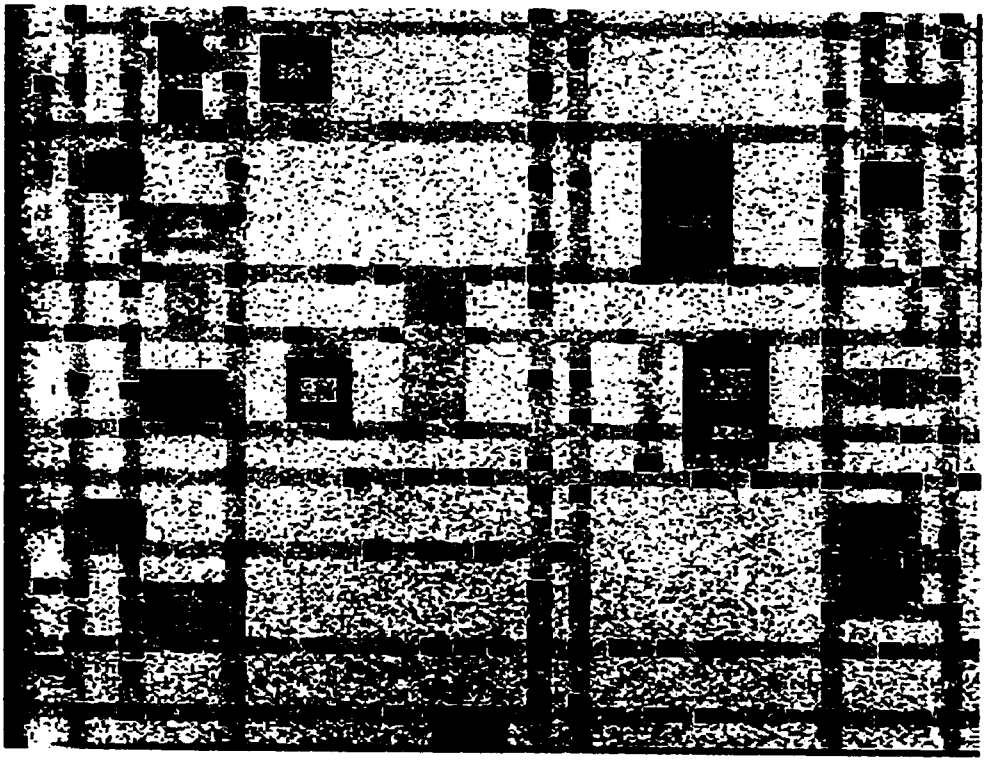
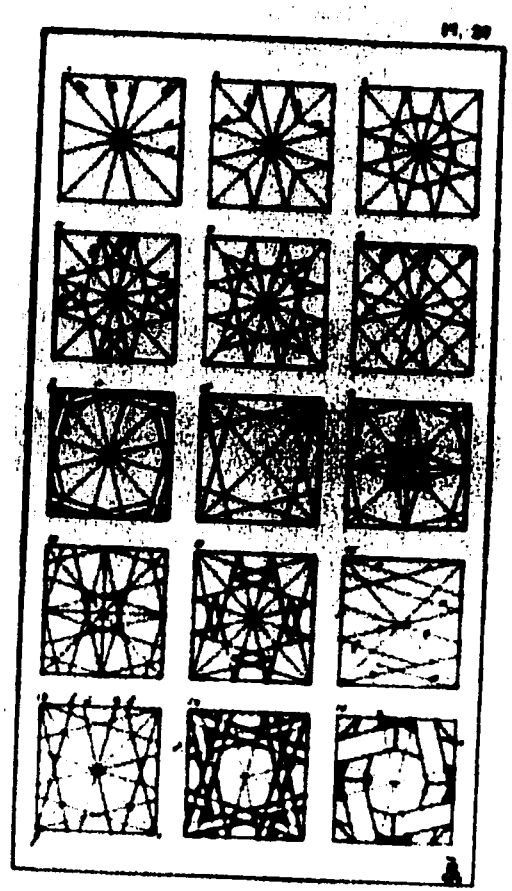
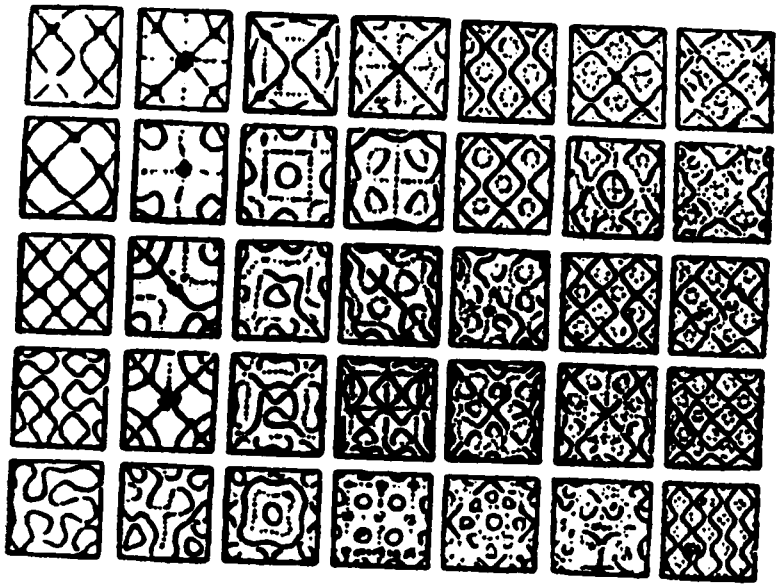


Figure 93



A



B

Figure 94

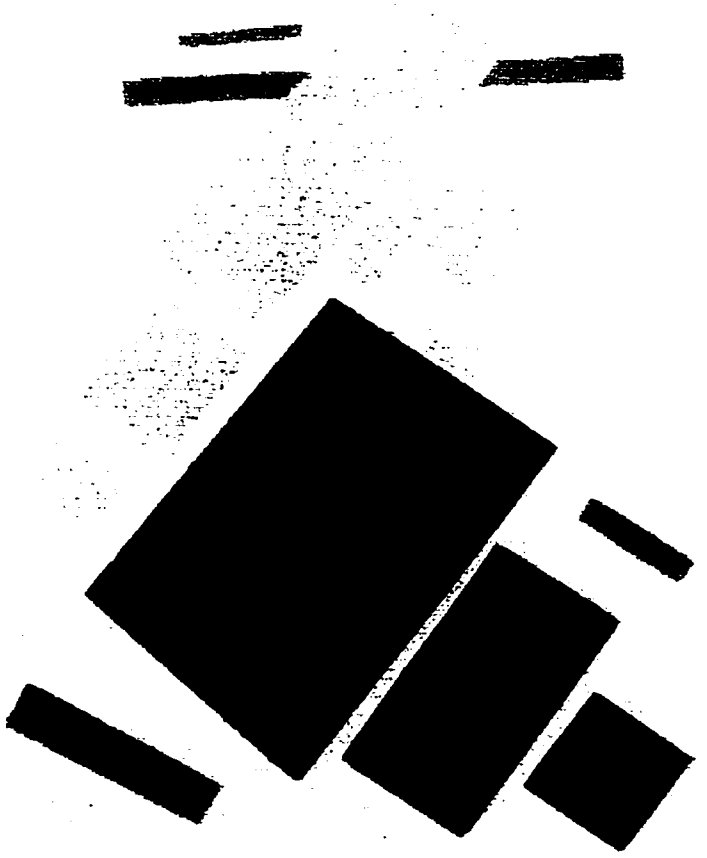


Figure 95



Figure 96



Figure 97

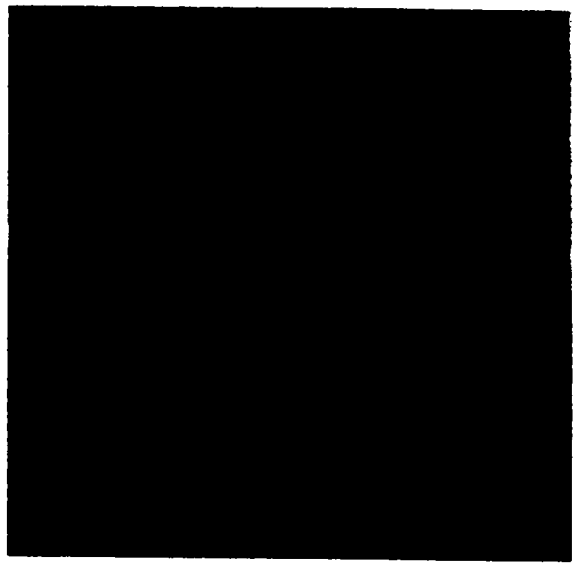


Figure 98



Figure 99

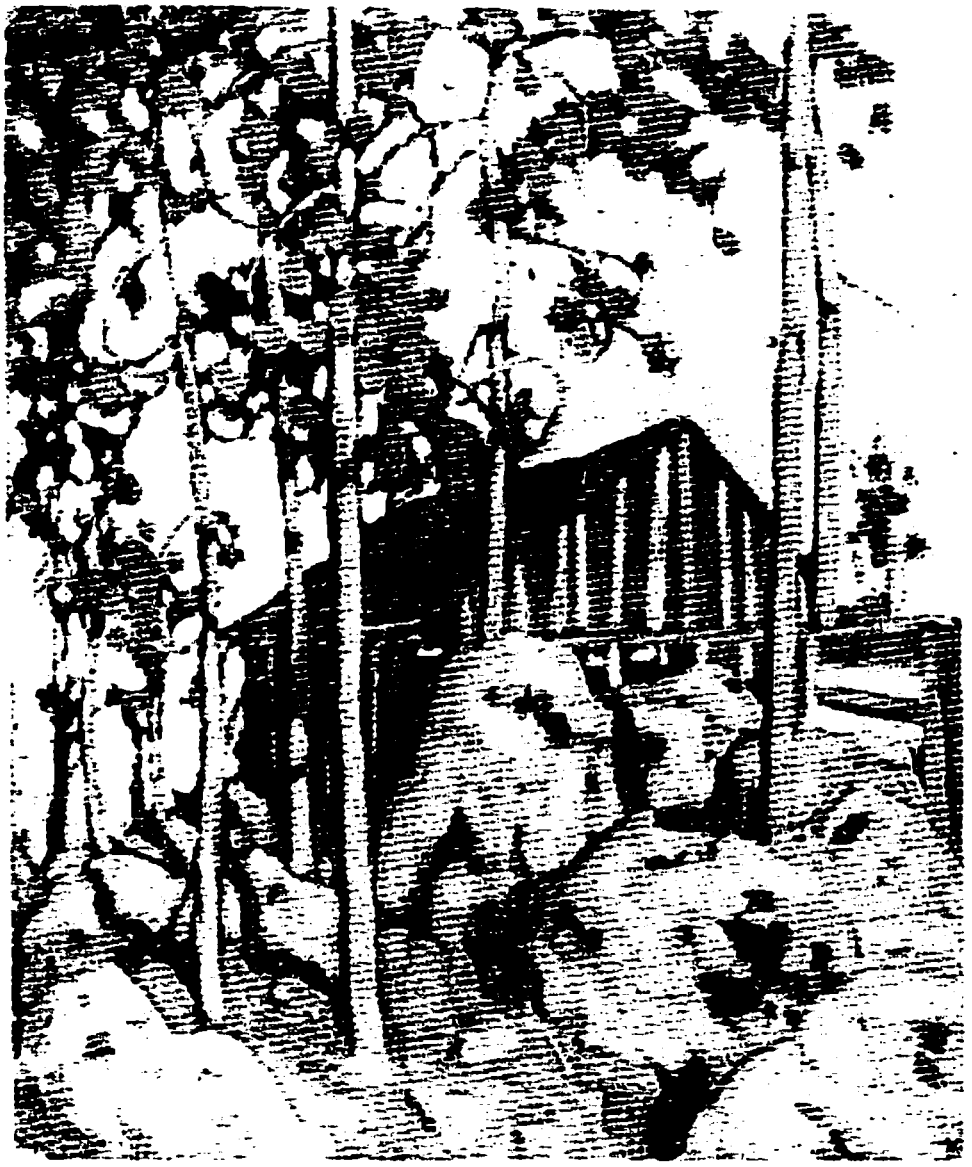


Figure 100



Figure 101



Figure 102

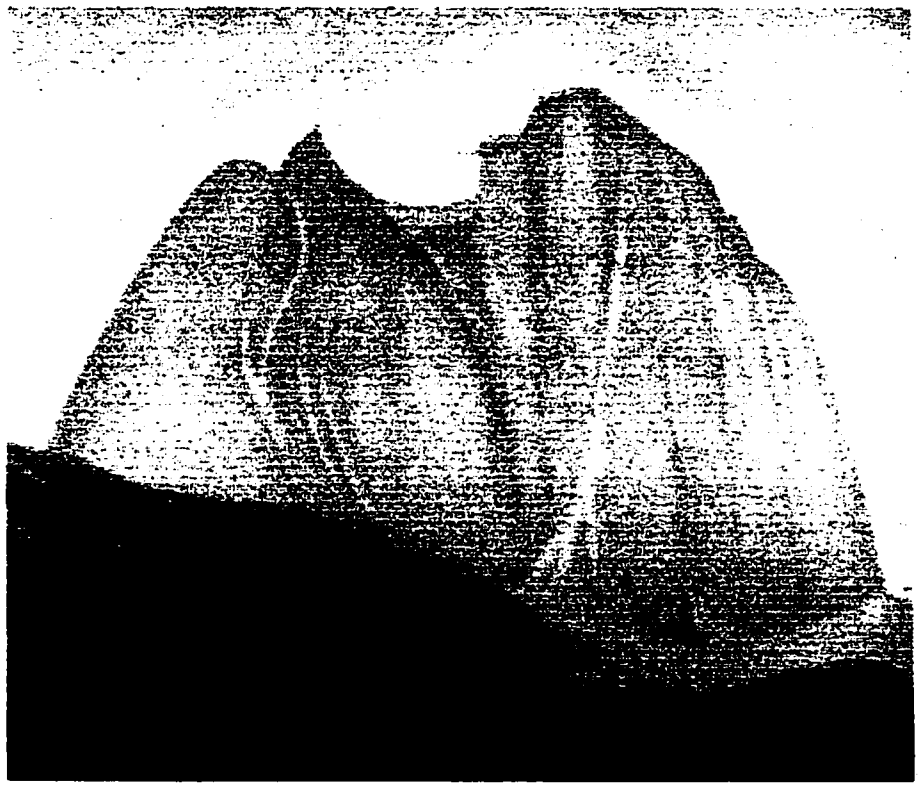


Figure 103



Figure 104



Figure 105

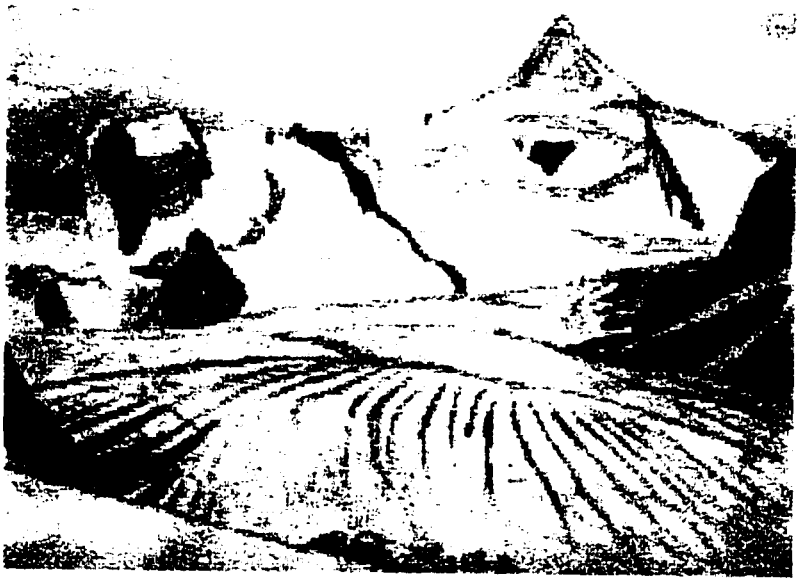


Figure 106



Figure 107



Figure 108



Figure 109

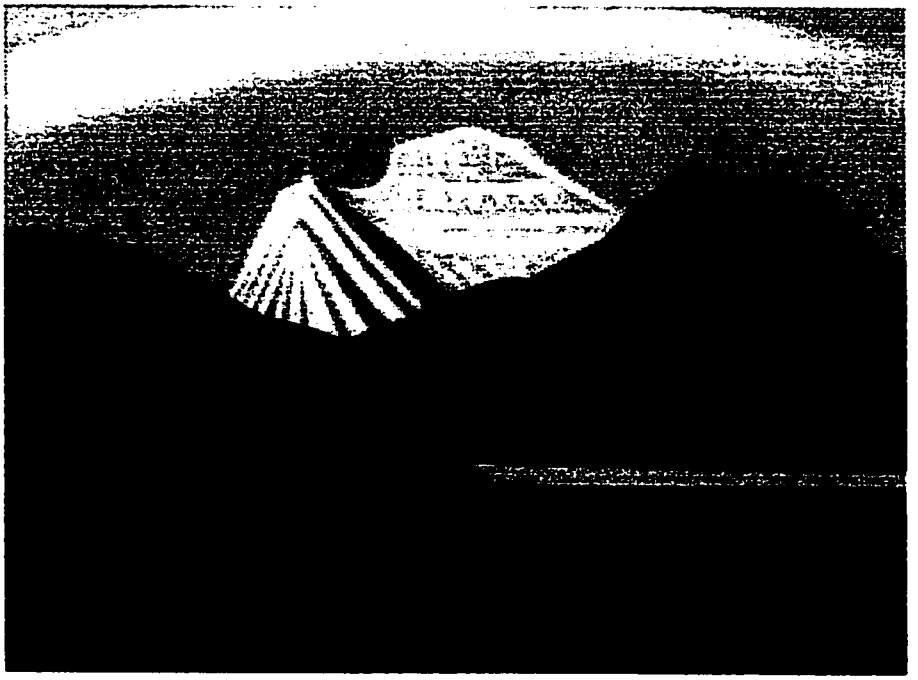


Figure 110



Figure 111



Figure 112



Figure 113



Figure 114

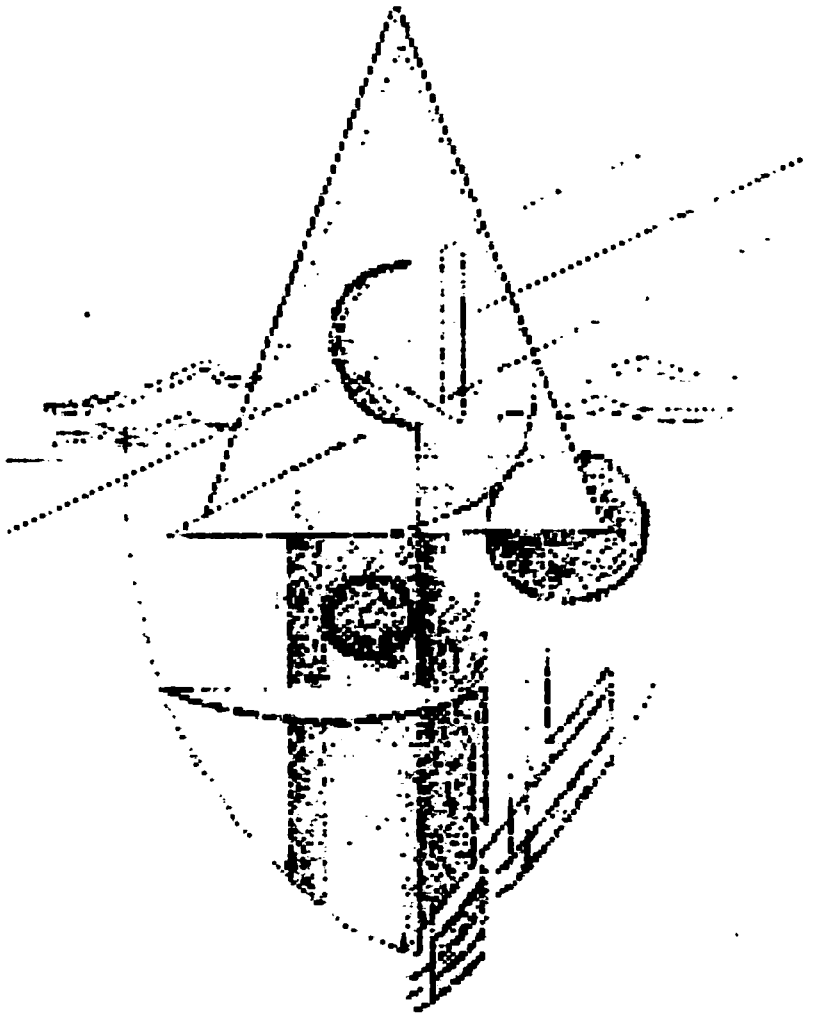


Figure 115



Figure 116



Figure 117

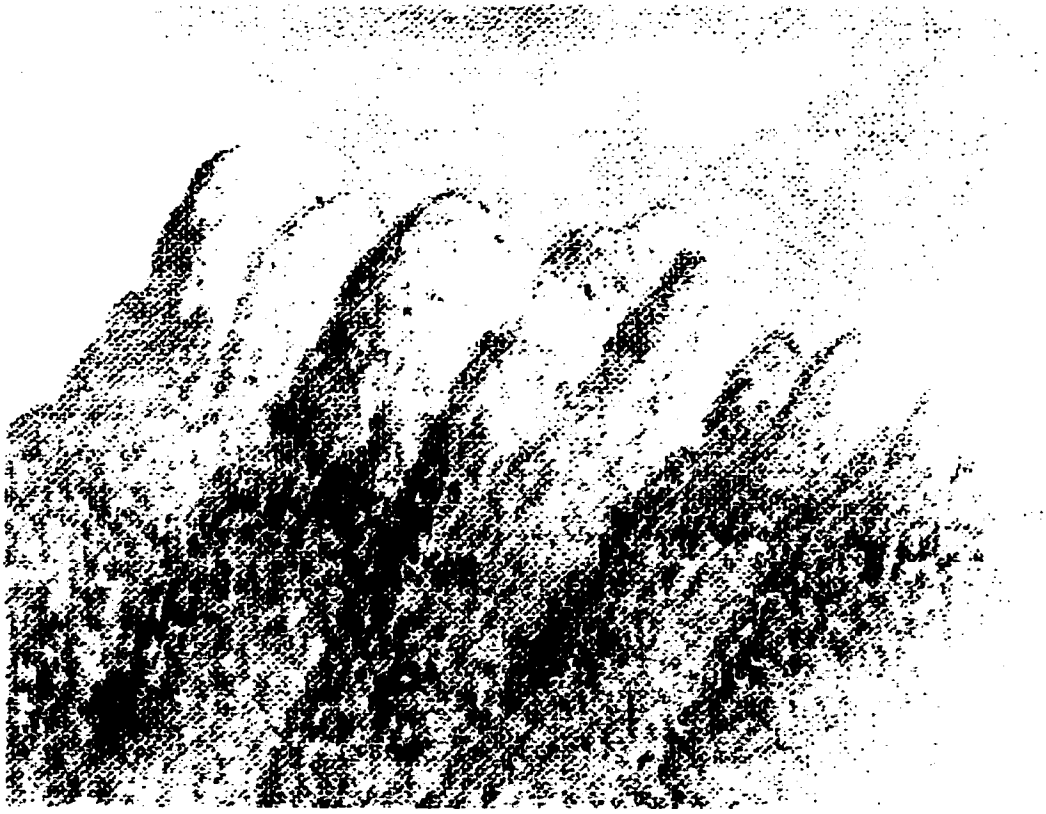


Figure 118

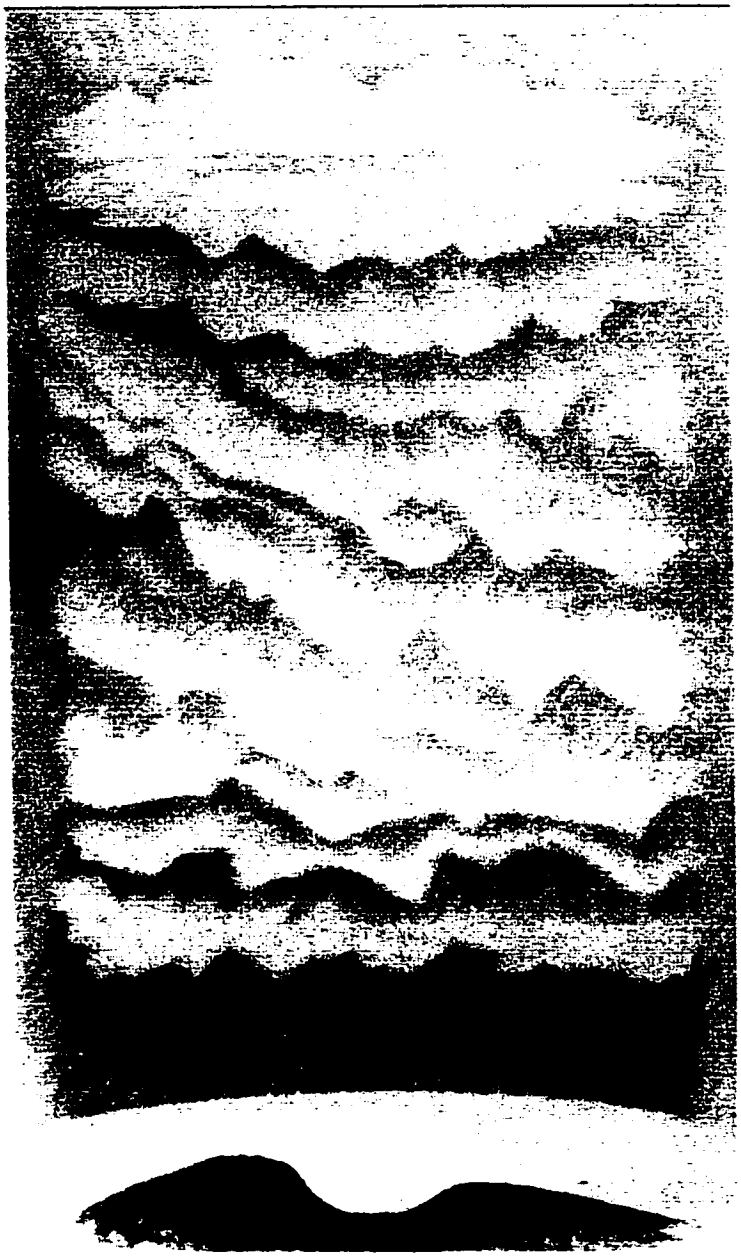


Figure 119

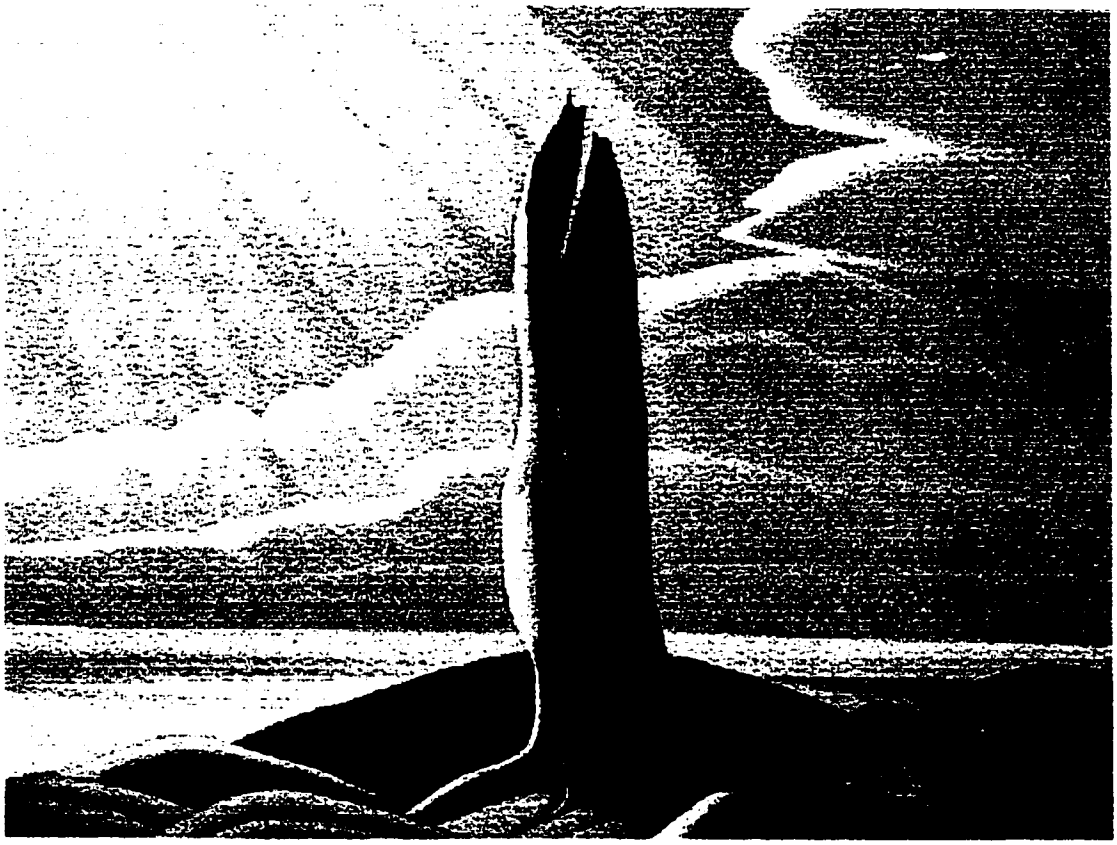


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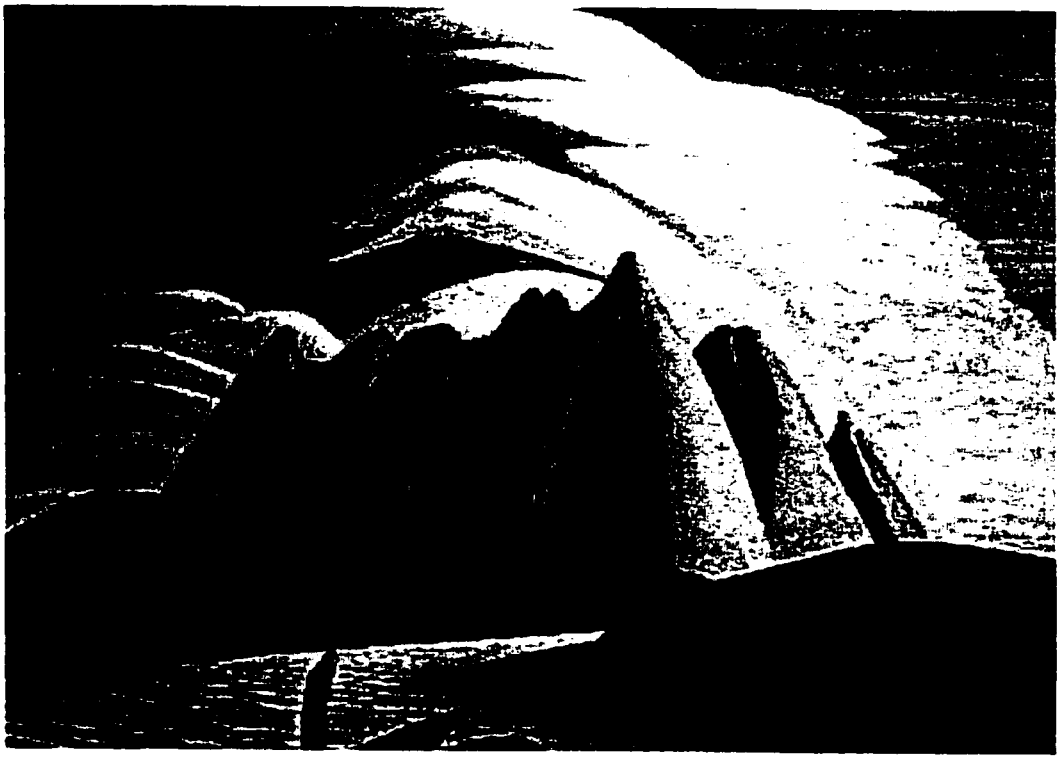


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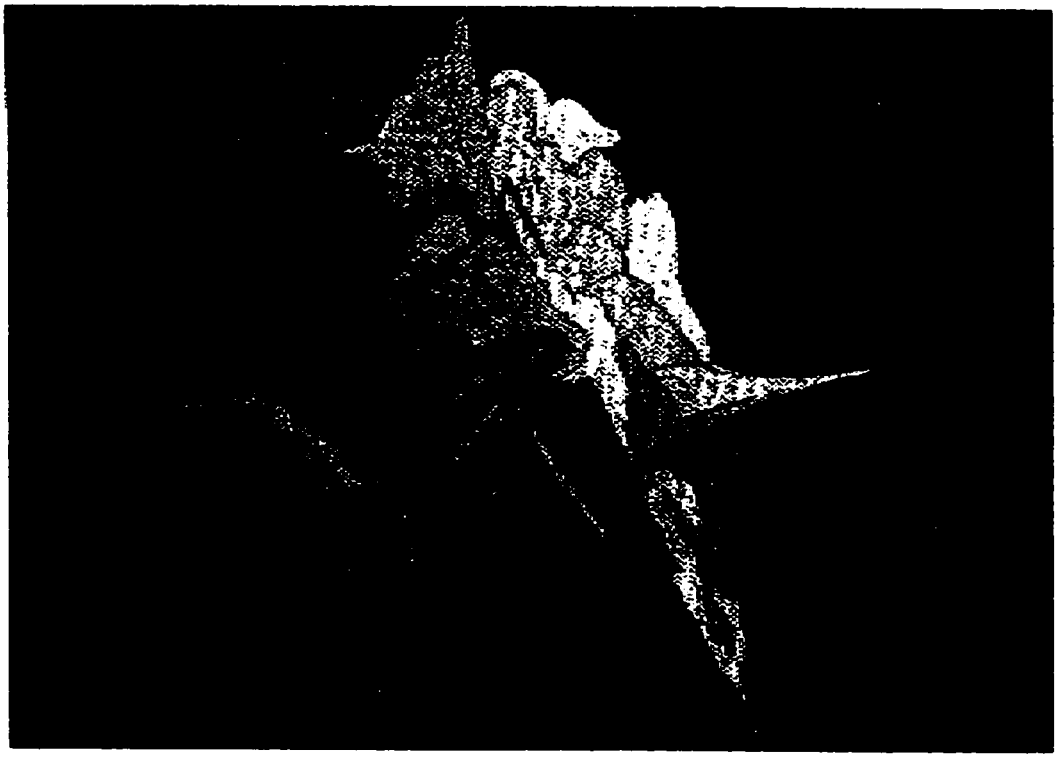


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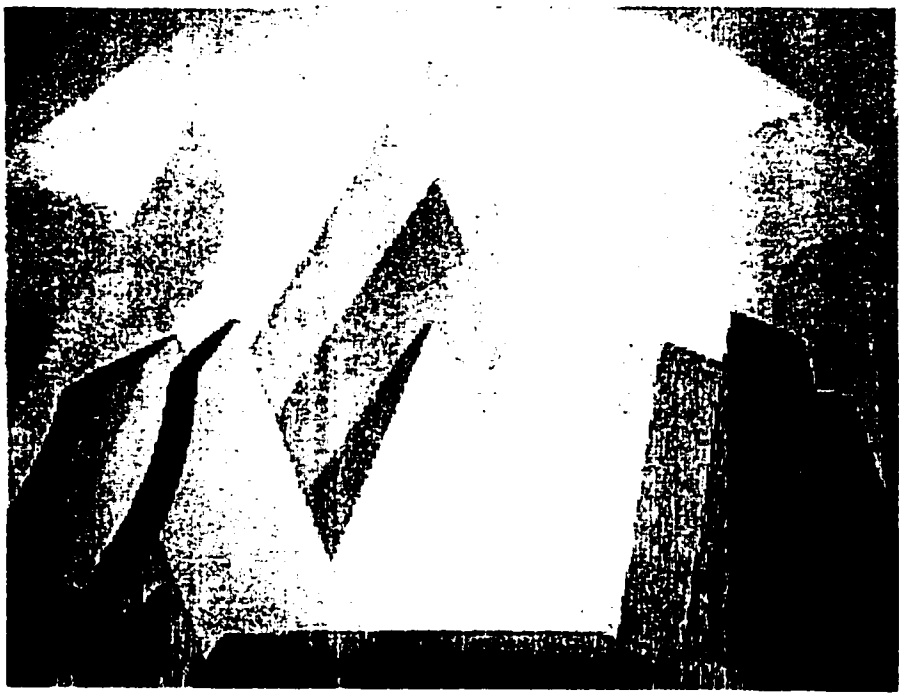


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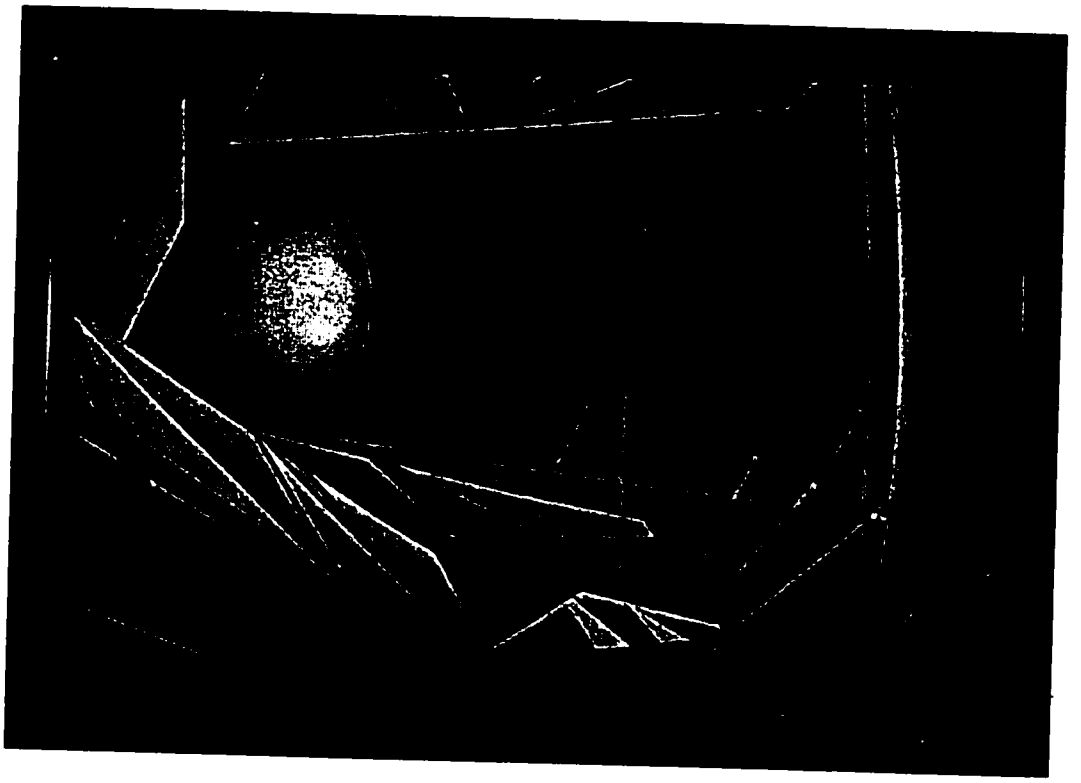


Figure 124

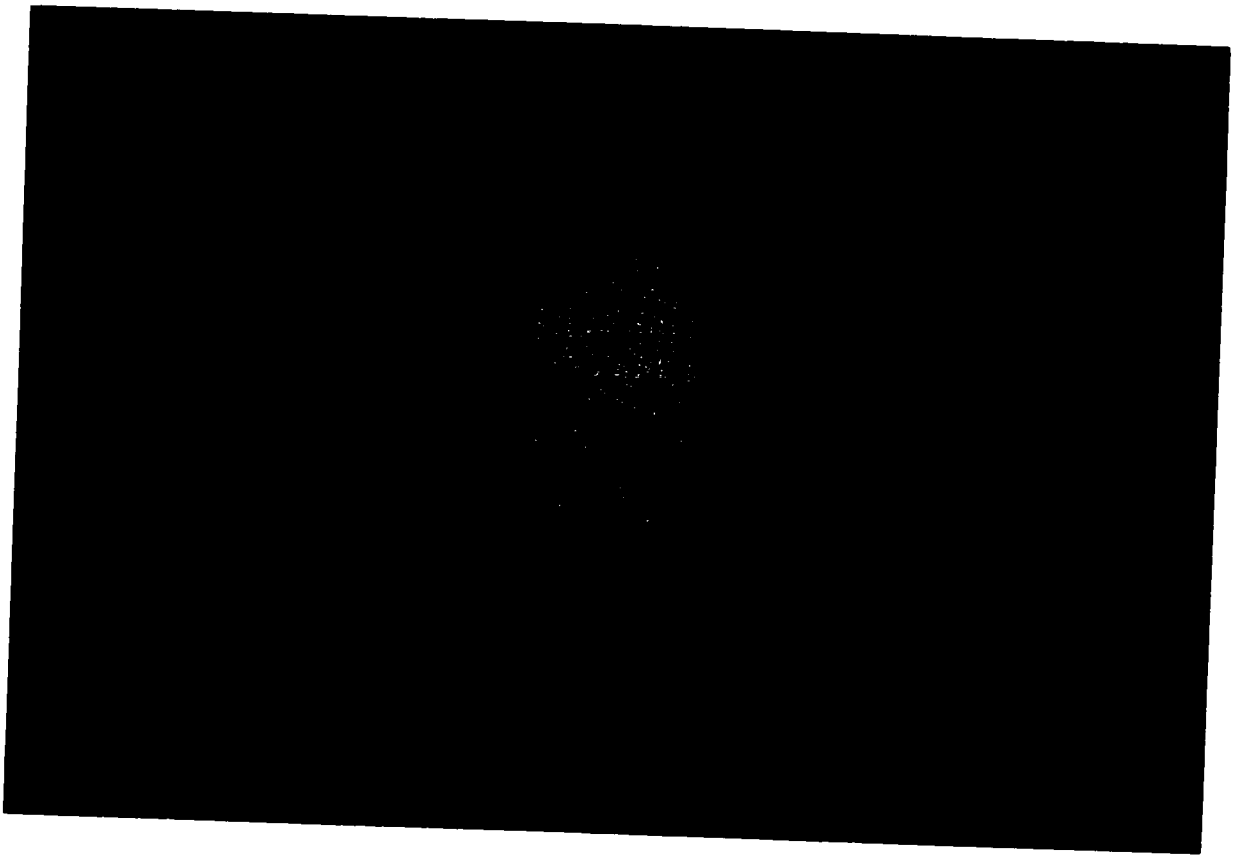


Figure 125

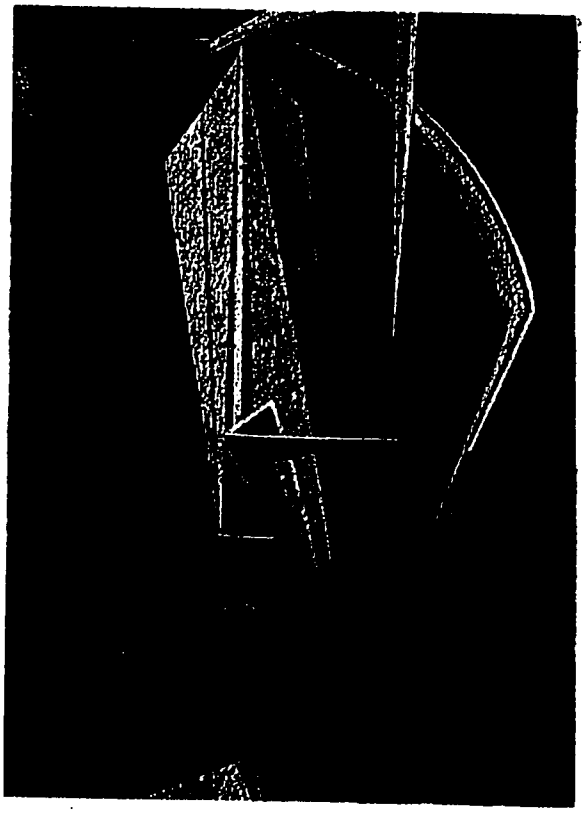


Figure 126

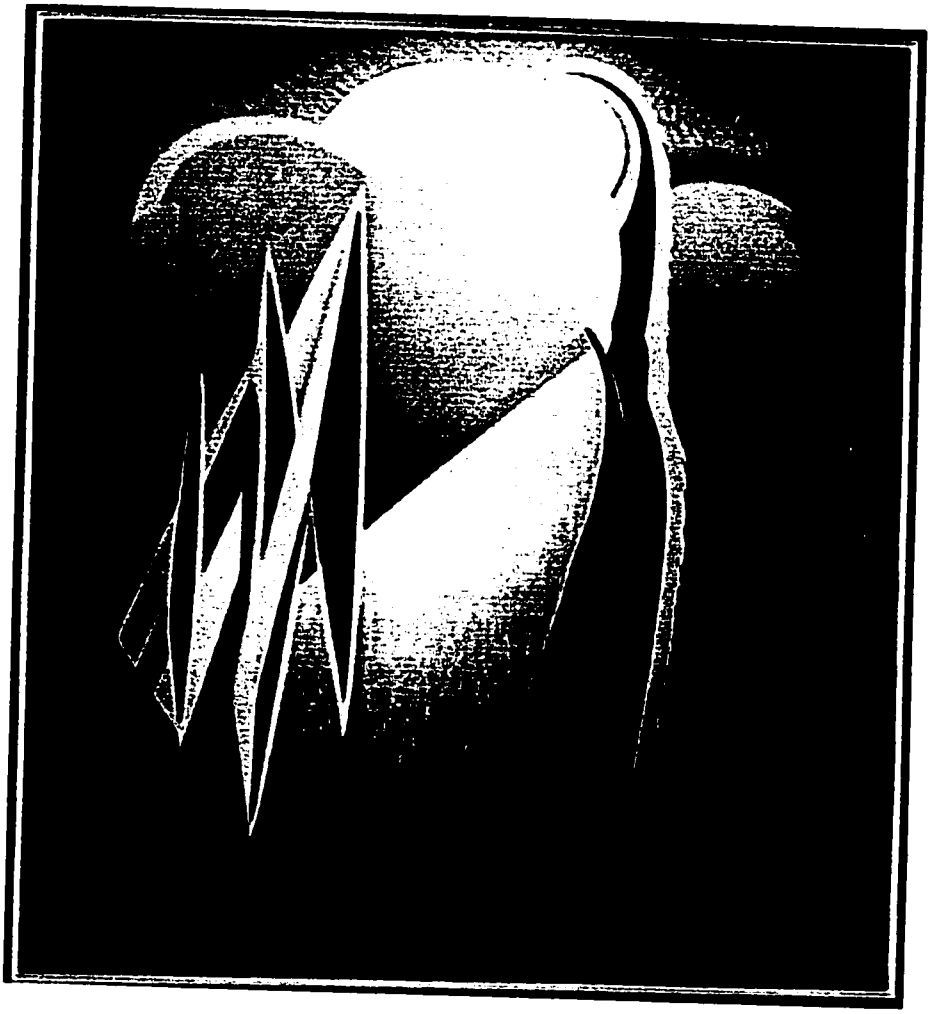


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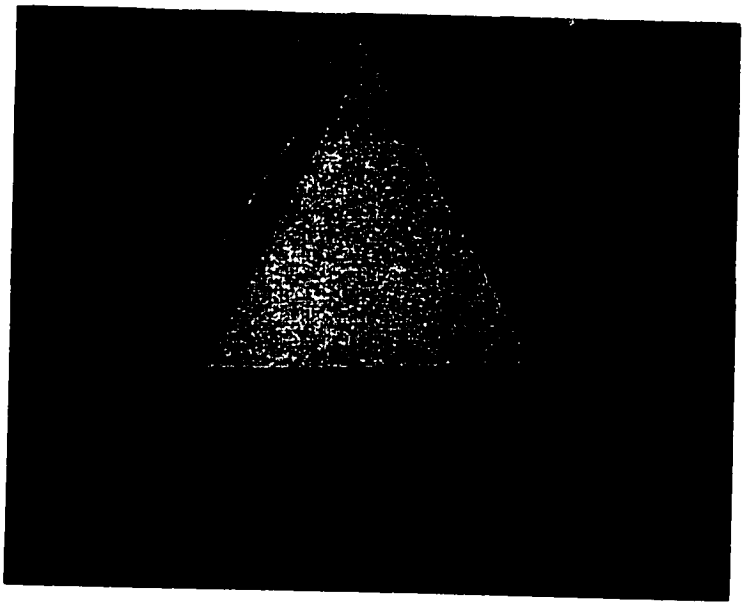


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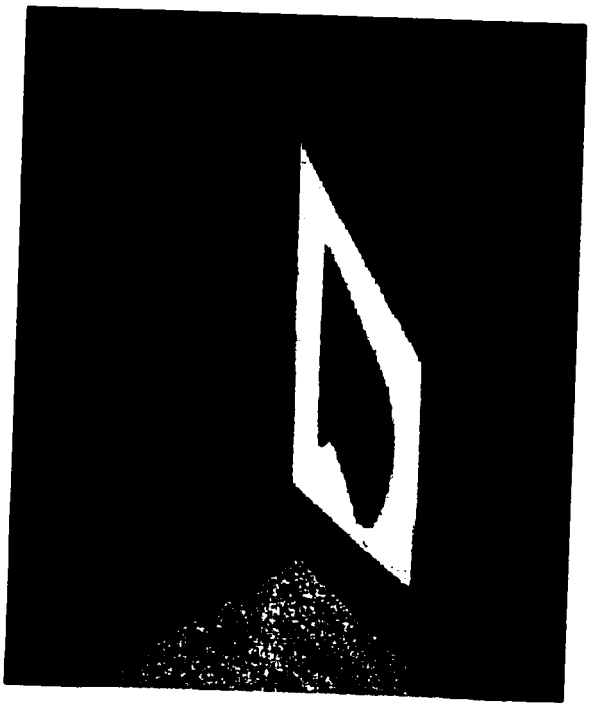


Figure 129

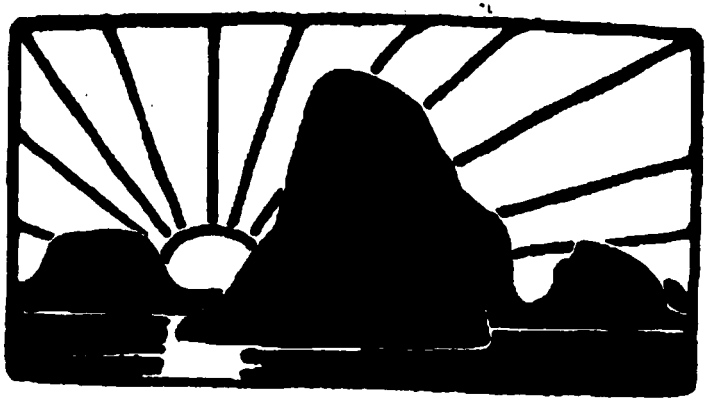


Figure 130

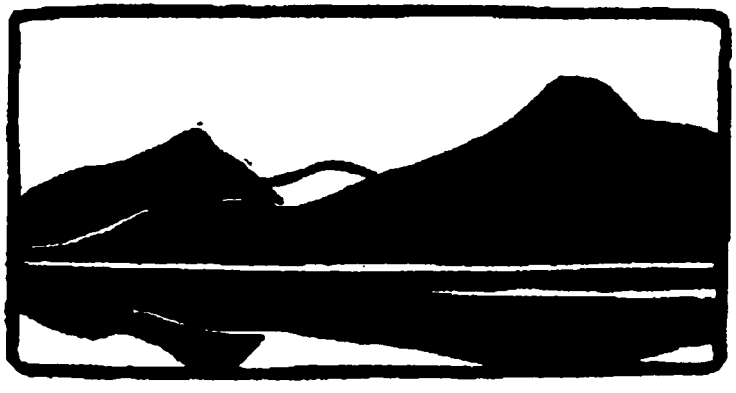


Figure 131

Figure 132



D



E

Figure 132

Figure 133

Figure 133

Figure 133

Figure 133

Figure 133

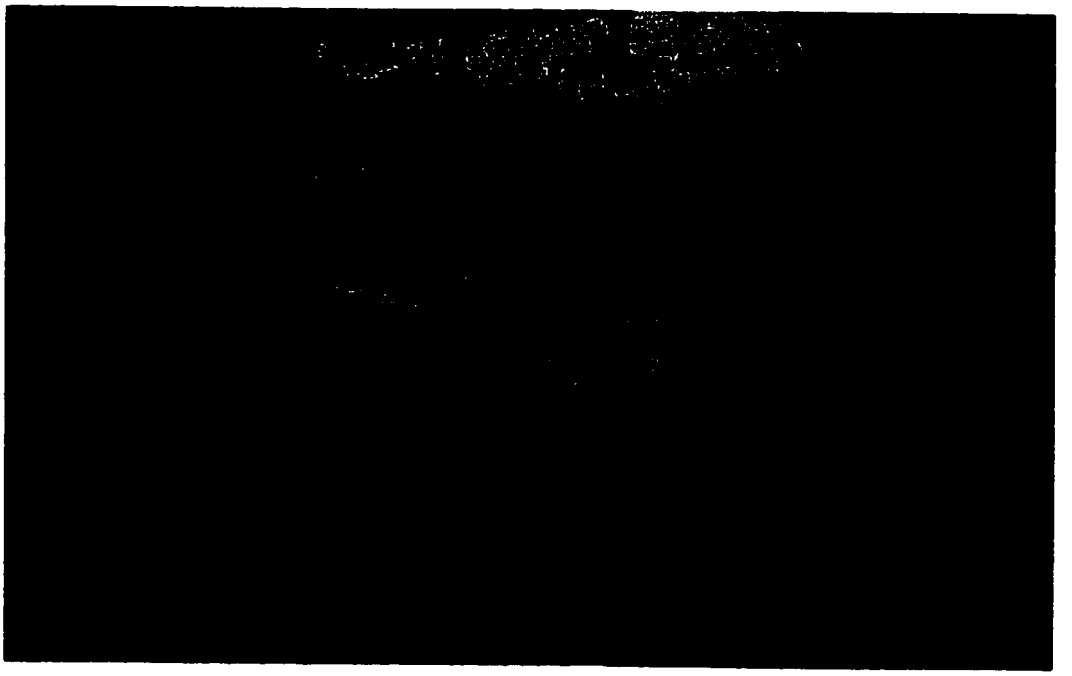


Figure 134



Figure 135

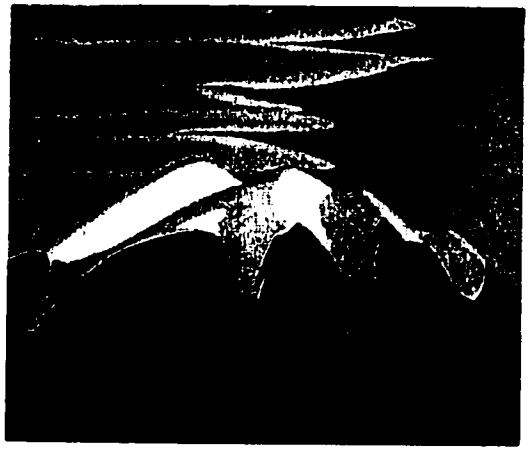
Figure 136



A



B



C



D

Figure 137



A, B, C

D, E, F

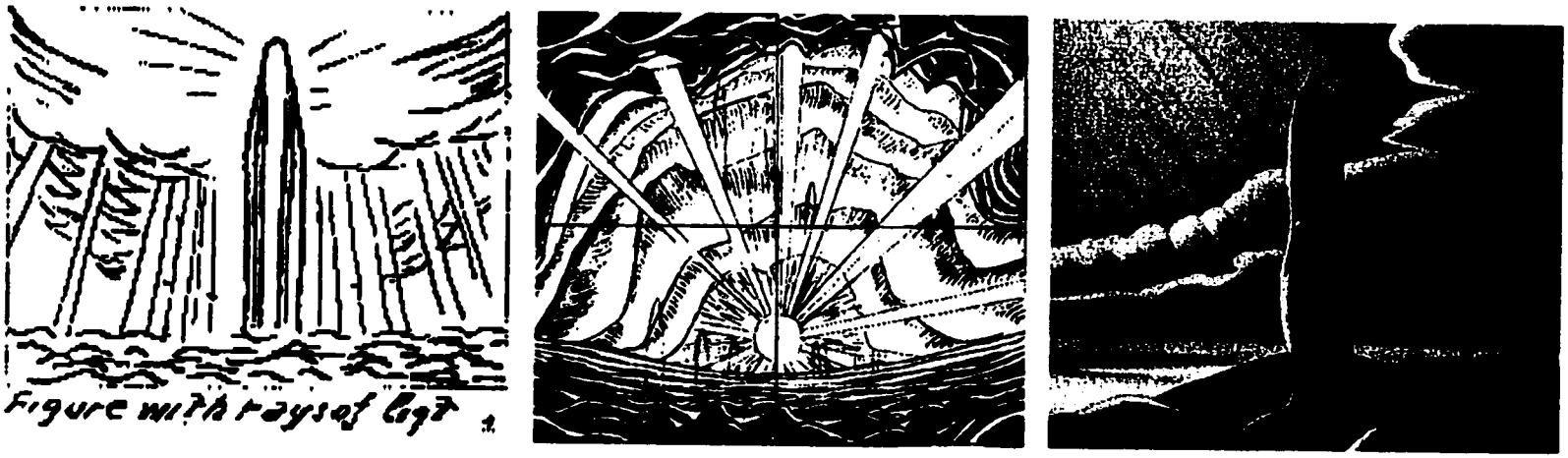


Figure 138

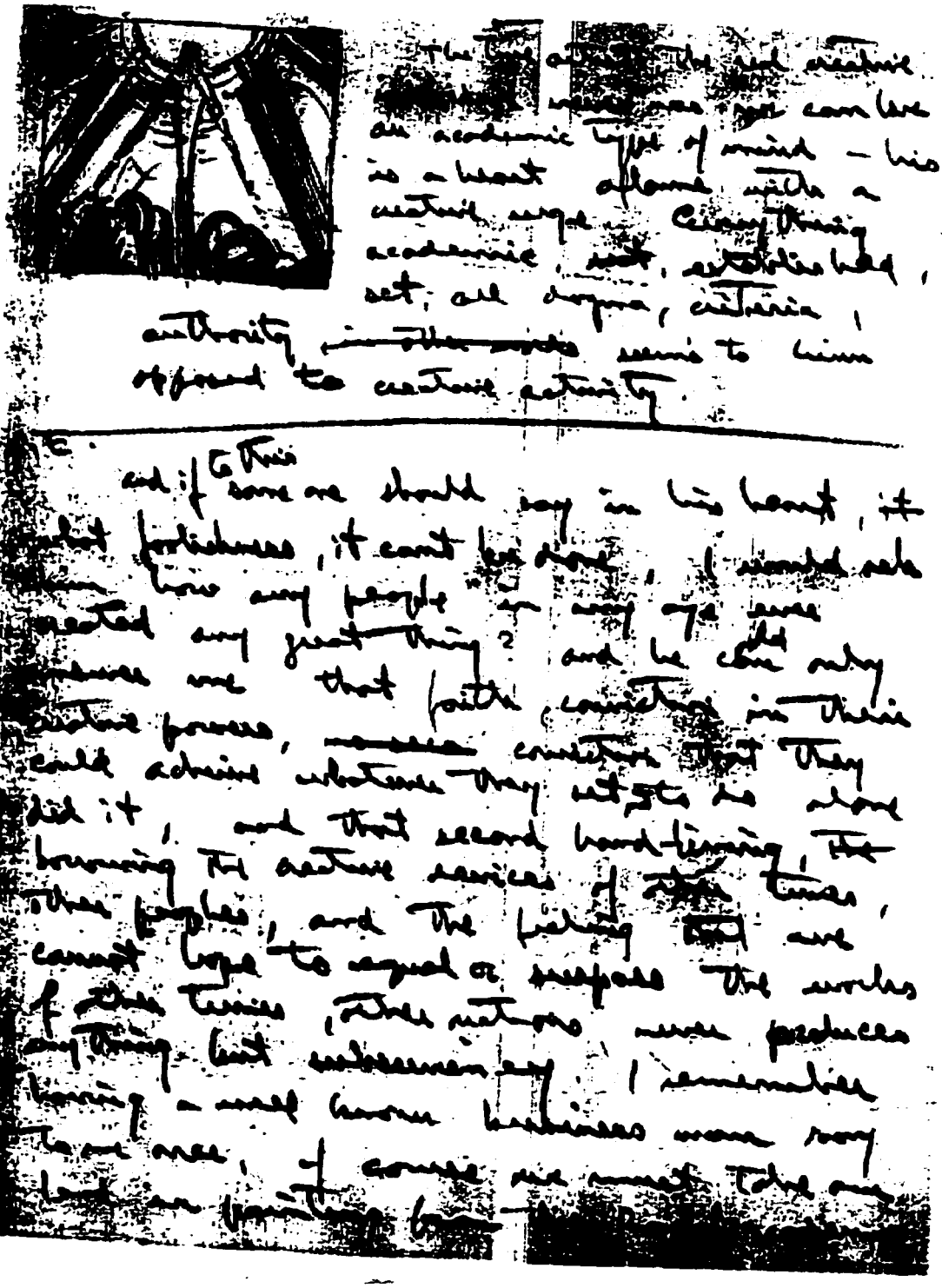


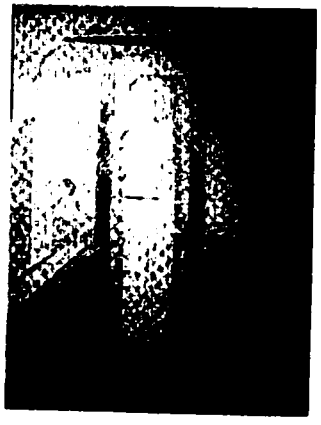
Figure 139



A



B



C

Figure 13.12

Figure 140

D

E

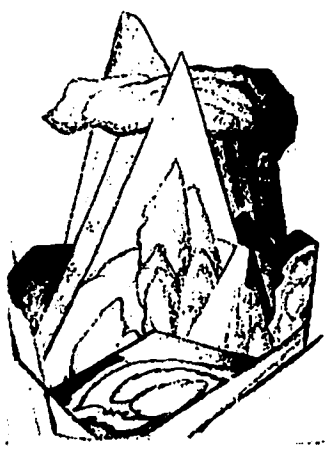
F

Figure 140

Figure 140



A



B

Figure 141

C

D

E

Figure 141

B

A

Figure 142



C

Figure 142

B

C

A

Figure 143

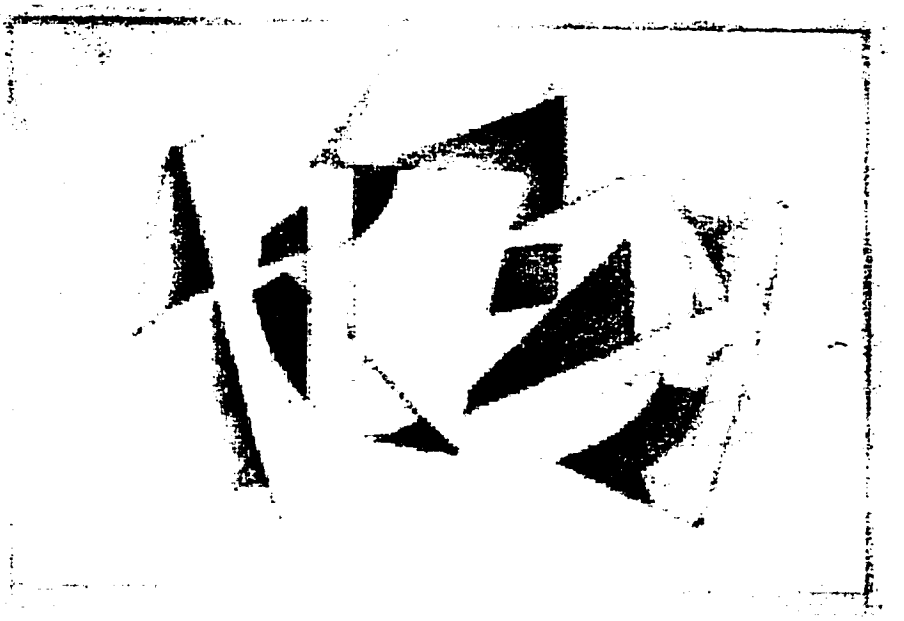


Figure 144

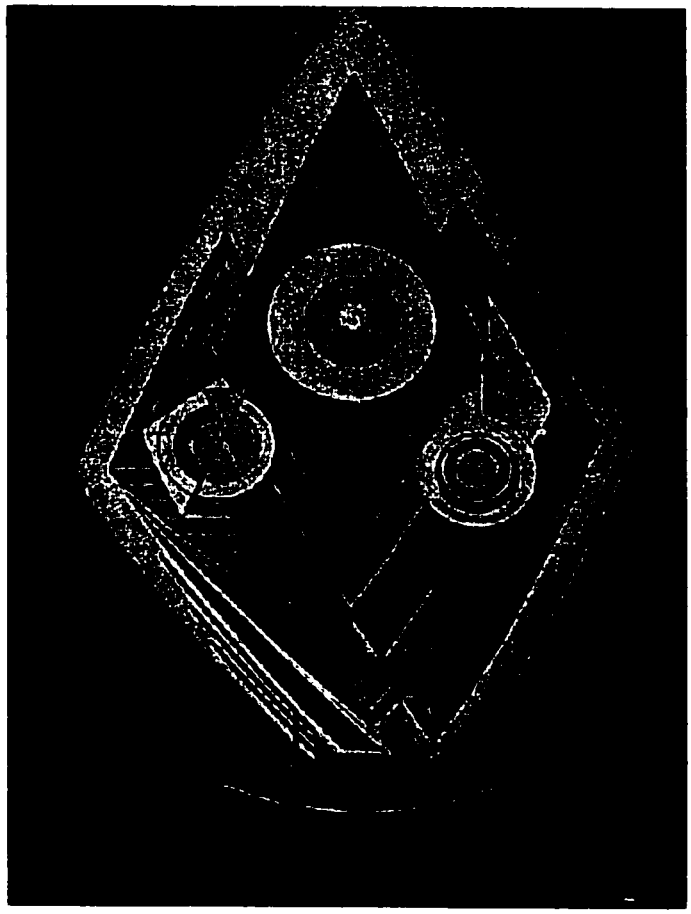
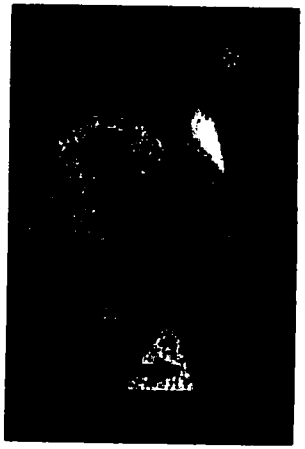


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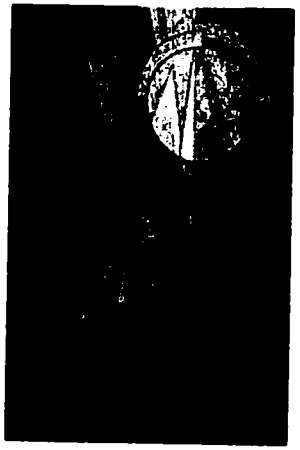
Figure 146



A



B



C

Figure 146

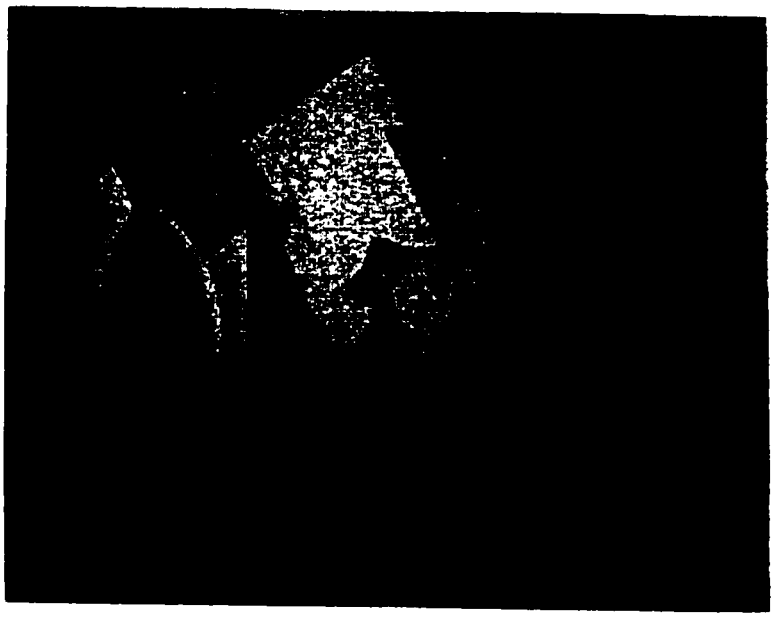


Figure 147

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