

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORK OF
LIONEL LEMOINE FITZGERALD 1890-1956

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ABSTRACT

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This work is a detailed study of the development of spirituality as the content of FitzGerald's art. Following an analysis of the critical literature on FitzGerald with particular regard to authors' comments on his spirituality, his work is discussed chronologically. In this way it can be seen that his style changed as his ideas and beliefs grew more intense and complex. Ultimately, this resulted in his turn to abstraction in the 1950's, in order to convey his ideas about the "oneness" of life.

A Selected Chronology is included as an Appendix, with details as to FitzGerald's life and exhibition career.

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INTRODUCTION

Usually associated in the context of Canadian art history with small scale modest still lifes and Winnipeg backyard views, LeMoine FitzGerald would not commonly be considered a spiritual artist. However, spirituality¹ as considered revealed in an awareness of a power higher than humanity, an awareness of an order and structure to nature and the universe, of life or a life force in all objects and substances, and of the essential oneness of space, energy, matter and all life, does form the content of his work, as well as the basis to his aesthetic. Although some previous authors have remarked upon a spiritual quality in FitzGerald's art, none have attempted a detailed study of this aspect of his work. At this point, then, it is the development of FitzGerald's spirituality as revealed in his work which will be examined. As will be seen, the artist's style and technique were always subordinate to, and indeed, chosen to help articulate his beliefs.

¹The word "spirituality" is being used here and throughout this text particularly in its meaning #3a in the Oxford English Dictionary: The quality or condition of being spiritual; attachment to or regard to things of the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interests. "Spiritual" will be used most in its meanings #4 and 7 in the O.E.D.: Of, or pertaining to, consisting of spirit, regarded in either a religious or intellectual aspect; of the nature of a spirit of incorporeal, supernatural essence, immaterial; Characterized by or exhibiting a high degree of refinement of thought or feeling.

Of course, the spiritual awareness and ideas mentioned above have been visually conveyed by other artists as well as FitzGerald. Although such artists abound in both Western and non-Western art history, most recently in the West artists like Lyonel Feininger, Piet Mondrian, Wassily Kandinsky, several of the American Abstract Expressionists, and the American independent, Charles Burchfield can be cited as having had these spiritual concepts predominant at the base of their work.

Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956) has been described as having sought "a vision of totality" in his work, and was attracted by "an aura emanating from the configurations of objects."² His abstracted boat and cathedral forms metamorphosing into planar segments of sky certainly reflect these ideas.

Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) worked to express the fundamental relations between all things in life and strove for personal enlightenment. "Contemplation of the universal, and hence, penetration into the core of reality is the meaning that Mondrian gives his art."³

The various doctrines of Theosophy formed the basis of meaning in the work of Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944),⁴ who felt that "...the emphasis was on seeing... material substance as

² June L. Ness, ed., Lyonel Feininger (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 249 and 250.

³ Hans L.C. Jaffe, Piet Mondrian (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970), p. 54. It is crucial to note that Mondrian was a Theosophist, joining the Dutch Theosophy Society in 1909.

⁴ Sixten Ringbom, The Sounding Cosmos (Abo Akademi, 1970) The entire book is about Kandinsky's Theosophical content.

just a 'solid' manifestation of astral (or spiritual) substance, which, therefore, has an 'inner life' -- the 'inner necessity' that gives vitality to the external form."⁵ Kandinsky's contemporary and fellow member of the Blaue Reiter group, August Macke (1887-1914) wrote in 1912:

Incomprehensible ideas express themselves in comprehensible forms. . . Form is a mystery to us for it is the expression of mysterious powers. Only through it do we sense the secret powers, the 'invisible God'. The senses are our bridge between the incomprehensible and the comprehensible.⁶

Although he developed his own particular spiritual content, FitzGerald would have been in agreement with such an expression. He wrote himself of the "endlessness of the living force which seems to pervade and flow through all natural forms, even though these [sic] seem on the surface to be so ephemeral."⁷ Kandinsky wrote of this same concept and explained that it is sometimes difficult to apprehend this force: "The veiling of the spirit in matter is often so thick, that, generally, only a few people can see through it to the spirit."⁸

⁵ Alwynne Mackie, "Kandinsky and the Problems of Abstraction", Artforum, vol. XVII, no. 3, Nov., 1978, p. 58.

⁶ August Macke, "Masks," The Blaue Reiter Almanac, ed. Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, Documents of Twentieth Century Art series, ed. Klaus Lankheit (New York: Viking Press, 1974), p. 85.

⁷ FitzGerald as quoted in Patricia Bovey, "Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: Some European Influence on His Work," Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development of an Artist, Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 84.

⁸ Wassily Kandinsky, "On the Question of Form," The Blaue Reiter Almanac, p. 147.

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As to spirituality in the work of the Abstract Expressionists, many authors⁹ have commented on the spiritual and transcendental quality of the paintings by artists like Ad Reinhardt, Adolph Gottlieb, Barnett Newman,¹⁰ Clyfford Still and Mark Rothko. In some ways, their spirituality was arrived at through a desire to create mythic forms but was also inspired by Mondrian's ideas:

Mondrian's geometric abstractions affected figures as diverse as deKooning and Rothko, Newman and Reinhardt. These younger artists were attracted to both the formal and metaphysical aspects of Mondrian's pure abstraction.¹¹

Art for all of them becomes an act of revelation, of exaltation, an embodiment of universal truth.¹²

Charles Burchfield (1893-1967) is similar to FitzGerald in that he is often classified as an independent artist, that is, not a member of a particular school or movement, and has been granted only a small place in art history (perhaps as a result). Also, neither could be termed a modernist, either in their painting styles, which veered away from mainstream developments in art of their time, or their ideas. Style was subservient to

⁹ See, for example, Irving Sandler, The Triumph of American Painting (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1970) and Barbara Rose, American Painting Since 1900 (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1967) as two well known texts.

¹⁰ See Thomas B. Hess, Barnett Newman (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1971) for a detailed and intensive discussion of Newman's work with specific regard to the artist's involvement with Kabalic numerology and spiritual meaning in his paintings.

¹¹ Diane Waldman, Mark Rothko 1903-1970 (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1978), p. 53.

¹² Diane Waldman, p. 54.

spiritual message in their work.¹³ Burchfield read Hindu and Buddhist mythology and studied Oriental art.¹⁴ One author wrote of his philosophy, present in his paintings:

As in the concept of the Tao, which informs much Chinese painting, Burchfield felt a unified power permeating the entire universe, so that spirit and matter existed as one.¹⁵

Despite all these basic underlying similarities in the apprehension of a spiritual reality to life on earth by such artists, no one "spiritual style" has ever evolved. Kandinsky's abstract, colourful compositions, Mondrian's austere verticals, horizontals and flat primary colours, Rothko's floating bars of saturated colour/light and Burchfield's energized, pulsating landscapes are very different in appearance, and reflect varying orientations toward the world and its meaning. FitzGerald, as well, developed his own approach and style and kept to a personal way in evolving means of embodying and portraying spiritual feelings and concepts in his work. Helped by contact with others, seeing art and reading, FitzGerald developed his innate inner spiritual self and enunciated his ideas with increasing clarity and intensity as his work developed toward his late abstractions. On an intuitive level, generally, rather than a highly intellec-

¹³ Thus FitzGerald's often quoted maxim: "Consider technique as a means by which you say what you have to say, and not as an end in itself. What you have to say is of the first importance, how you say it is always secondary." FitzGerald quoted in Ferdinand Eckhardt, "Introduction," FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1958), n. pag.

¹⁴ Matthew Bagnell, Charles Burchfield (New York: Watson-Guption Publishers, 1976), p. 51.

¹⁵ Matthew Bagnell, p. 55.

tual one, and in a modest scale and scope, FitzGerald's beliefs in the oneness of all living things, in the "great forces behind the organization of nature"¹⁶ and a given object's "structure and relation to all of life"¹⁷ were translated into visual form through various stylistic devices which shall be discussed. Less programmatic and didactic in approach than were his friends Lawren Harris and Bertram Brooker in the conveying of spiritual conceptions of life in art, nevertheless, FitzGerald intended his works to be objects of personal meditation and contemplation,¹⁸ seeing them as living things,¹⁹ not as clearly conceived intellectual placards. To achieve these aims, FitzGerald developed his painstaking, time-consuming working method, usually consisting of concise contour lines, small daubs of paint applied side by side, or cross-hatches of line to evoke form.

After an examination of the extant critical literature on FitzGerald, with particular regard to writers' sensitivity to FitzGerald's spiritual content, his career will be documented and described, and the chronological development of his own ideas regarding spirituality will be made clear.

¹⁶FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Irene Heywood Hemsworth, 23 May, 1942, in her private collection.

¹⁷Ayre papers, loose notes, Queens University Archives.

¹⁸Former student of FitzGerald's and artist Robert Bruce is quoted in Helen Coy, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1977) p. 5: "... he wasn't interested in quick effects. He was painting for the person who would sit there three hours and contemplate the work."

¹⁹Diary (1930), FSC (08183) entry for June 29.

CHAPTER I

ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL LITERATURE ON FITZGERALD

In chronological order of publication date, the major works and important pieces of writing on FitzGerald will now be analyzed as to the writers' particular contribution to the literature on the artist, as well as their awareness of the spirituality expressed in his art.

The artist Lawren Harris (1885-1970), a friend of FitzGerald, wrote a short article on the works on paper which FitzGerald completed in British Columbia during the years 1942, 1943, and 1944. This was rather severely edited and then published by Canadian Art in November of 1945. Although it is a short piece, Harris' article is important because it contains, for the first time in published form, comments on FitzGerald's spirituality. Harris had written in a personal notebook once:

You cannot sever the philosophy of the artist from his work. You belittle the man in his work when you accept his skill, his sensitivity in patterning, in building forms, his finesse in accenting, his suaving in technique, but reject his philosophy, his background.¹

In trying to discuss spirituality in FitzGerald's work then, Harris likely felt he was elucidating FitzGerald's "philosophy."

¹Lawren Harris quoted in Bess Harris and R.G.P. Colgrove, Lawren Harris (Toronto: MacMillan Co., 1969), p. 10.

He wrote:

Each successive summer showed a deepening and enrichment of content in his work, until, in the series of watercolours, we have what seems the consummation of a long period of contemplation. There is a grace and ease of technical accomplishment in these paintings which in its mastery could only have been achieved by an utter simplicity of mood and dignity of spirit.²

Harris, himself, tried to express his own spirituality in painting, especially his Theosophical beliefs. In his North Shore, Lake Superior from 1936, (fig. 1) for example, the rather overt symbolism of the tree trunk as praying hands, set in Canada's northland, which Harris held to be full of positive cosmic influences³ is easily read. FitzGerald's work, in contrast, was never so openly symbolic and didactic.

In contrast, Robert Ayre, a Montreal art critic and also a friend of FitzGerald, denied any spiritual content in FitzGerald's works in his several articles and unpublished monograph (written in the 1950's). "Don't approach LeMoine FitzGerald on your knees"⁴ he cautioned the public, and maintained that FitzGerald's art had no esoteric "message" but that the artist simply loved nature and was very down to earth.⁵ Emphasizing FitzGerald's humility, seriousness and intelligence in his unpublished

²Lawren Harris, "LeMoine FitzGerald: Western Artist," Canadian Art, vol. III, no. 1, November 1945, p. 13.

³This idea is repeated throughout Bess Harris and R.G.P. Colgrove, Lawren Harris.

⁴Robert Ayre, "Don't Approach LeMoine FitzGerald on Your Knees," Montreal Star, May 3, 1958.

⁵Robert Ayre, "Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald 1890-1956," Canadian Art, vol. XIV, no. 1, Autumn, 1956, pp. 14-16.

short monograph on the artist, Ayre described him as "the man who looks out of the window," referring to FitzGerald's remaining in Winnipeg and his concentration upon still lifes and backyard views, often done in winter. Ayre did record many biographical details concerning FitzGerald, most of which he received from the artist in a letter dated August 29, 1948 in reply to a request for information to use in the monograph. This unpublished monograph forms the only written source for such information, especially facts of FitzGerald's early life, such as his reading of Ruskin (whose teaching FitzGerald never repudiated during his career). Such vital information otherwise would have been lost. Ayre admired FitzGerald's work and held the artist in high esteem. Yet, he was careful as to what he wrote about ideas or meanings in his friend's art. Although in 1958 Ayre did mention "the thing inside that was struggling for expression"⁶ he did not make any attempt to identify or define this "thing" within FitzGerald. In his monograph he takes pains to point out that FitzGerald was "never pretending to any esoteric mysticism."⁷ Perhaps Ayre's friendship with FitzGerald the man blinded him somewhat to the deeper, or more esoteric qualities in his art. Marcel Proust wrote in Swann's Way (a work FitzGerald noted in his personal notebook):⁸

⁶ Robert Ayre, "Painter of the Prairies," Weekend Magazine vol. VIII, no. 12, March 22, 1958, p. 26.

⁷ Robert Ayre, untitled monograph on FitzGerald, TS p. 22, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

⁸ FSC, University of Manitoba, 1-0041.

And indeed it happens, often enough, to a greater man than Swann ever was, to a scientist or artist, when he is not wholly misunderstood by the people among whom he lives, that the feeling in them which proves that they have been convinced of the superiority of his intellect, is created not by any admiration for his ideas, for those are totally beyond them -- but by their respect for what they term his good qualities.⁹

Perhaps because Ayre would seem not to have had a highly developed spiritual nature himself, and because he felt close to FitzGerald, he assumed that FitzGerald was not spiritual either. At any rate, despite the fact he did not recognize spiritual content in FitzGerald's art, Ayre's invaluable documentary information forms a vital contribution to the study of FitzGerald.

Ferdinand Eckhardt, a former director of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, has been the most forthright of any writer on FitzGerald in describing the spiritual response he has experienced upon viewing FitzGerald's work. Eckhardt's introductory essay to the National Gallery of Canada's 1958 FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition catalogue¹⁰ has largely been ignored by later scholars¹¹

⁹ Marcel Proust, Swann's Way (New York: Random House, 1928), p. 313.

¹⁰ The text of this piece is virtually the same as that in Eckhardt's "The Technique of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald," Canadian Art, vol. XV, no. 2, Spring, 1958, pp. 114-118, except for shifting of paragraphs and some slight additions.

¹¹ For example, neither Charles Hill in his Canadian Painting in the Thirties (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975) or Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, in their Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978) mention or refer to Eckhardt's ideas regarding FitzGerald.

perhaps due to Eckhardt's style which needed considerable editing to be comprehensible.¹² Eckhardt gives no biographical information in his essay, but simply describes FitzGerald's works, noting their spiritual qualities and effect on him, and pointing out how FitzGerald's style developed with particular aim to expressing his spiritual beliefs in the oneness of life. He also makes the conjecture that FitzGerald's isolation on the prairies for his entire life helped to intensify his vision:

His character was intensive, rather than extensive. In fact, his way of life was completely opposed to the quick tempo of our times; he was a prophet, crying in the wilderness who valued quietness, balance and solidity and who wanted to bring people back to the habit of reflection.¹³

In His examination of the work of Seurat, Cezanne and Van Gogh as influences on FitzGerald's art, Eckhardt is weak and inaccurate¹⁴ and is at his best when he relates his own personal impressions and reflections.

J. Russell Harper, in both his 1966 and 1977 editions of Painting in Canada: a history, discusses FitzGerald in an almost secondary context by way of relating him to Bertram Brooker,

¹² Eckhardt's introductory essay is still extant in MS form in the FitzGerald clipping file at the NGC and was heavily edited by Kathleen Fenwick and H.O. McCurry in order to be printable.

¹³ Ferdinand Eckhardt, "Introduction," FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1958), non. pag.

¹⁴ For example, he refers to Cezanne's "solid way of building up form," when in fact Cezanne's paintings have little three dimensional solidity to them, with overlapping planes, flecks and segments of colour and table edges which do not meet.

and, a few pages later, to Fritz Brandtner in their explorations into what he terms "non-objective" art. Perhaps trying to find antecedents for FitzGerald's 1952-56 abstract works, Harper dwells on outlining the geometric tendencies he saw as central to FitzGerald's art, even as early as the 1930's.¹⁵ He writes:

[FitzGerald's] work was changing for now he was developing more formalized arrangements in treating plant life and other subjects unknown in his early years. He began to emphasize the sphere as found in the apple, the plane of a cube as found in a garage, the prism as expressed in the local prison cupola which he could see through his studio window and the cylinder in tree trunks.¹⁶

Likely because FitzGerald eventually did become an abstract artist, Harper tended to see him as concerned primarily with formal problems, which he never was; painting as pure painting, with formal considerations placed first was of no central interest to FitzGerald. When Harper writes: "Obviously, FitzGerald wanted to pass quickly by the figurative element and concentrate on the formal qualities in painting,"¹⁷ it is as though he is describing the work of another artist. Harper's most important contribution to FitzGerald study is his detailed linking of the artist with Brooker and Brandtner. In describing these relationships and influences he establishes that FitzGerald was not

¹⁵This in itself is an anachronism, since the prison cupola was visible from the studio FitzGerald had in the Old Law Courts after 1939, and Harper is discussing his work at the time of Brandtner's stay in Winnipeg, which was 1928-34.

¹⁶J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada: a history (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 325.

¹⁷J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada: a history (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 325.

totally isolated by staying in Winnipeg, but did maintain vital contacts with other artists.

Dennis Reid, in his 1973 A Concise History of Canadian Painting, includes a discussion of FitzGerald in his eleventh chapter entitled: Emily Carr, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald and David Milne (1912-1950). He sees FitzGerald's development primarily as "logical" and based on "systematic experimentation".¹⁸ His chronological outlining of FitzGerald's work and life is sound, if rather drily written, but his assumption that FitzGerald's 1952-56 abstracts were inspired by or were in response to those of Bertram Brooker from twenty-five years earlier is rather far-fetched. In fact, FitzGerald had the stronger influence on Brooker, convincing the Toronto painter of his own approach to the extent that Brooker abandoned abstraction in favor of representational painting for almost twenty years after he and FitzGerald met in 1929. As will be seen, FitzGerald's abstracts evolved from internal concerns in his works, and, if inspired by any other artist, it could have been Lawren Harris who could have been a source, a subject which will be discussed later.

In describing FitzGerald's Williamson's Garage of 1927, Reid refers to the work's "reverent and still"¹⁹ quality, intuitively sensing, it would seem, its latent spiritual content. Reid seems aware of and responds to FitzGerald's spirituality

¹⁸Dennis Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 160 and 163.

¹⁹Dennis Reid, p. 161.

but perhaps has shied away from any bald or specific description of it, not wanting to risk sounding too philosophical.

One author often not considered seriously by Canadian art historians perhaps because his left-wing political point of view permeates his looking at art, is Barry Lord. His politics prevent him from discussing aesthetics in their own right. His 1974 The History of Painting in Canada: Toward a People's Art contains almost no biographical information on FitzGerald. Lord is repelled by the "still, silent, arrested" qualities in FitzGerald's 1934 Doc Snider's House, and by what he terms FitzGerald's "repressed self-expression" and "dry" style.²⁰ From all information available, FitzGerald seems to have been essentially a non-political person. His art reflects no class consciousness or overt awareness of the class struggle. Thus, Lord cannot find his work of value or interest. He rejects other artists' work on these grounds as well. Of the works of the Canadian white-on-white abstract painter, Ronald Bloore, he writes:

They constitute, in fact, a 'pure' art of total restraint, the most extreme form of the colonial tradition of repressed expression that we have already encountered in the paintings of Harris and L.L. Fitzgerald [sic].²¹

Lord's opinion of FitzGerald's work is interesting to note, as any art, if taken on terms other than its own, (and

²⁰ Barry Lord, The History of Painting in Canada: Toward a People's Art (Toronto: NC Press, 1974), pp. 172 and 211.

²¹ Barry Lord, p. 211.

in FitzGerald's case the terms would be as spiritual expressions) loses its vitality and validity. Lord is simply more extreme than was Russell Harper in considering FitzGerald's art in other terms than the actual basis of its aims and qualities.

Charles Hill's 1975 Canadian Painting in the Thirties deals with FitzGerald in a scholarly way, in some depth and with sensitivity. He stresses formal qualities in FitzGerald's work: the relationships of shapes, his drawing and painting methods, but doesn't venture into his content, thus, maintaining a distance from the work. He notes FitzGerald's predominant interest in drawing (FitzGerald was certainly not a painterly painter) and does convey through his descriptions some of the feeling in FitzGerald's work. Hill notices FitzGerald's "complexity," "richness" and "subtlety,"²² and one senses as with Dennis Reid's writing, that Hill does respond to FitzGerald's spirituality, but perhaps only on an intuitive level. Maybe he is of the mind that to mention this would be an academic risk. His several quotations from FitzGerald's letters and 1930 diary, which at the time of his publication were still in private collections,²³ made some of this primary material available to the public and helped in the interpretation of the works.

The final work to be considered in this chapter is Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis' 1978 Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Develop-

²² Charles Hill, Canadian Painting in the Thirties (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), pp. 71-73.

²³ This material was donated to the FSC when it was begun in 1976.

ment of an Artist, published by the Winnipeg Art Gallery as a catalogue to accompany a circulating retrospective exhibition of FitzGerald's work. Not only is this the most recently published work on FitzGerald, but it is the most concentrated and lengthy to date. The catalogue is divided into three essays: Patricia Bovey's "The Man," Ann Davis' "A North American Artist" and Patricia Bovey's "Some European Influences on His Work." This division splits the catalogue as a unit and fragments a reader's view of FitzGerald. Not only has his life been severed from his art, but in an overriding emphasis on the part of the authors upon stylistic influences on FitzGerald, any North American sources are divided from European ones -- a rather arbitrary split having little to do with FitzGerald's own perceptions.

Patricia Bovey's essay, "The Man," is, for the most part, sound in the data presented. Despite her idealization of the artist's character, quotations from his writings (many appearing for the first time in published form) give accurate insights into FitzGerald's nature. Ann Davis' divisions of the artist's career into periods make a useful tool for study, but tend to become unviable when they veer away from any connection with FitzGerald's life and work. She lists: Early Art Experience, School in New York 1921-22, New Directions 1922-31, The Relentless Search 1931-47 and Around Abstraction 1947-56. A cut-off point at 1930, rather than 1931, keeping in mind FitzGerald's 1930 summer trip to the U.S.A. and Eastern Canada which had an effect on his work, would seem more logical. Instead of the large time span between 1931 and 1947, a decade approach might be more suitable, as

FitzGerald's 1940's work differs greatly from that done in the 1930's. Davis has chosen 1947 as her beginning date for "Around Abstraction" likely because 1947 was the year in which FitzGerald began a two year leave of absence resulting in retirement, from his eighteen year term as Principal of the Winnipeg School of Art. However, FitzGerald did not begin doing abstract works until 1952. Thus, a last chapter could concentrate on the period 1952-56 to focus on the abstract work.

Davis stresses FitzGerald's stylistic development and avoids discussion of his content or ideas. Bovey, in her essay, "Some European Influences on his Work," shows little acquaintance with the work of the artists and movements she mentions. As well, she discusses style only, not imagery or meaning. In many ways, Bovey and Davis' stylistic analyses prove to be little more than exercises for their own sake. The authors do not succeed in placing FitzGerald in either a critical or historical context, and hold back from discussing his work in any depth, and never mention his spirituality as the content in his work.

With an analysis on the important critical literature on FitzGerald complete, a documentation of his life and development of the spirituality in his work will now be undertaken.

CHAPTER II

YOUTH AND EARLY WORK 1890-1920

FitzGerald was born into an environment which was generally indifferent to art, particularly to art of ambition or of an abstract nature. Despite some early artistic activity in Winnipeg,¹ the city remained apathetic with regard to any modern developments in art and FitzGerald was never to be publicly lauded in his native city during his lifetime.

At the year of his birth, 1890, the fledgling city was officially only sixteen years old. Twenty years earlier the city's population, not including the military personnel stationed at Upper Fort Garry, was two hundred and fifteen.² Through much effort on the part of enterprising city businessmen, immigration to Winnipeg began to increase yearly. A building boom began in 1881, the same year in which FitzGerald's father, drawn by stories of money to be made, no doubt, arrived from Quebec to settle in Winnipeg. The building boom lasted until about 1885 and has never been equalled since in

¹ Ferdinand Eckhardt, One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1970), pp. 11-13. A discussion here of various early art classes for ladies and early painters active in the area.

² Winnipeg Board of Trade Annual Report for 1885, n. pag.

the city's history.³ On July 1, 1886, the first trans-continental train stopped in Winnipeg,⁴ a feat for the city's Board of Trade, which had lobbied furiously to have the line pass through Winnipeg instead of any other Manitoba town.⁵ The Board of Trade reports in Winnipeg's early years reveal the peoples' concerns with new businesses, profits, the laying of sidewalks and other essentials unrelated to art.⁶ It was in this environment, however, that FitzGerald was able to decide to become an artist and began his training.

As a child in school, FitzGerald showed an early interest and talent in drawing. His art exercise books are still in existence⁷ and their neatness and precision reflect the efforts of a conscientious young boy.⁸ FitzGerald did not come from a rich family. His father had run a grocery store⁹ and later was working as a bank messenger for the Dominion Bank on Main St. In 1902 FitzGerald quit school to work and help the family.¹⁰

³ A.F.T. Artibise, "Mayor Alexander Logan of Winnipeg," The Beaver, Spring, 1974, pp. 4-12.

⁴ Artibise, p. 6.

⁵ Winnipeg Board of Trade Annual Reports, 1884- 1886.

⁶ Winnipeg Board of Trade Annual Reports, 1885-1904.

⁷ FSC, Box 2-B. They were published by Gage for Canadian schools.

⁸ Elizabeth Henderson, "Young Mr. FitzGerald," The Manitoba Pageant, Sept., 1958, pp. 7-8. The author was a student in Grade 7 with the artist and remembers that he drew better than the other pupils.

⁹ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

¹⁰ He held various jobs until he was hired full time by the

In 1904, when the Winnipeg Public Library opened on William Ave. FitzGerald began reading there in his spare time. He wrote to Robert Ayre much later in his life that what he most remembered reading was John Ruskin, particularly his Elements of Drawing. In this work, which is actually a course in drawing for a beginner in three long letters, Ruskin outlined a program to develop drawing skills. In his preface he wrote:

Now I believe that (irrespective of differences in individual temper and character) the excellence of an artist, as such, depends wholly on refinement of perception, and that it is this, mainly, which a master or school can teach.¹¹

Ruskin became FitzGerald's early "master" and his ideas of the refinement of perception, especially as regards nature, his lectures against sham effects, carefulness and painstaking accuracy and precision of technique in drawing never seem to have left FitzGerald, as they predominate even in his adult work. FitzGerald wrote to Ayre that, for him, Ruskin had been "pretty weighty stuff . . . but through a lot of wading and looking at the illustrations, a lot of avenues opened up just a little."¹² Ruskin's passion for the work of J.M.W. Turner would seem to have infected FitzGerald at this point, and although no direct influence from Turner can be detected in Fitz-

Winnipeg School of Art in 1924; as an office boy, "in a printing company, and as a decorator. See Appendix, Selected Chronology.

¹¹ John Ruskin, The Elements of Drawing (London: George Allan, 1857), reprint of the 1893 edition by Scholarly Press, U.S.A., preface, p. xxv.

¹² Quoted in Robert Ayre, untitled monograph, TS, p.6, Queen's University Archives.

Gerald's art,¹³ Turner was to remain an artist FitzGerald would always admire.¹⁴ Perhaps the sublime grandeur and other-worldly quality as well as the intense evocation of nature Turner was able to achieve in his painting appealed to FitzGerald, as these were qualities he often aimed for himself in his art, though in a more modest way. FitzGerald also read Holman Hunt's Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a two-volume work which would have familiarized FitzGerald with some of the theories of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Certainly FitzGerald's later involvement in set designing for the Winnipeg Little Theatre and his constructions and design work around his home reflect the philosophy of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and that of the Aesthetic Movement in general, of integration of the arts and of art with everyday life.

By 1906, after working through Ruskin, FitzGerald began to draw and paint in earnest on his own.¹⁵ In 1908 he enrolled

¹³ Patricia Bovey, "Some European Influences on his Work," Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 92. Bovey writes: ". . . no concrete arguments can be advanced for a direct influence from Turner to FitzGerald."

¹⁴ When FitzGerald was painting in B.C. in the 1940's, he wrote to Ayre that he was reminded of Turner by the clouds and waves. Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives, letter dated July 25, 1949. Also, in an interview with Pearl McCarthy in Toronto in 1953, FitzGerald referred to Turner. (Pearl McCarthy "Mr. FitzGerald Rare Visitor But his Horizon is National," Toronto Globe and Mail, Aug. 8, 1953).

¹⁵ Irene Heywood Hemsworth owns a small 1906 watercolour on paper which FitzGerald gave her, telling her it was among his very first efforts. (Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979).

in evening art classes under A.S. Keszthelyi, a little known Ukrainian artist then living in Winnipeg.¹⁶ FitzGerald's 1909 Seated Man (fig. 2), a charcoal drawing, was done while studying under Keszthelyi. Though static and posed looking, the figure is of a good student level in its execution and reflects Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's ideas of attention to detail and the creation of a mood. Early works such as the Seated Man would seem to have been acceptable to the Winnipeg public as in 1911 FitzGerald exhibited three works at the Winnipeg Public Library (titles and dates, unknown) and in 1912 had one work, Landscape (date and medium unknown) accepted into the inaugural exhibition of the Winnipeg Museum of Fine Arts (later to become the Winnipeg Art Gallery). The first curator of the museum was a Scottish watercolourist, Donald MacQuarrie, who was an admirer of Corot.¹⁷ In 1913, he and FitzGerald rented a studio together and held a joint exhibition (titles, dates and sales not known) there the following year, prior to MacQuarrie's return to Scotland.

FitzGerald's work during these early years has no more specific spiritual content than a bursting, joyful feeling to

¹⁶ Ferdinand Eckhardt, One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba, p. 13 and 87. Keszthelyi was born in 1875 in Sambor, Galicia, studied in Munich and Vienna and taught at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and as a senior student at the Art Students League in New York before coming to Winnipeg. His advertisements in the Winnipeg Free Press for his classes ran from 1908-1912.

¹⁷ Kevin Forrest, The Prints of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald, (unpublished Master's thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1979), p. 21.

to the nature he portrays in his landscapes. His undated Landscape: Farmyard with Fence (fig. 3), an oil on canvas, and his 1920 Summer: East Kildonan (fig. 4), also an oil, demonstrate the artist's concern with the simple portrayal of light and shade. This central idea was perhaps inspired by reproductions of French Impressionist paintings in art periodicals,¹⁸ but as well, could have been influenced by the Impressionist inspired works by various members of the Royal Canadian Academy such as M.A. Suzor-Coté, whose works were seen by FitzGerald in the R.C.A. annual exhibitions at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. The fact that FitzGerald's palette often lacked the high chroma colour found in true French Impressionism and was actually more akin to the earlier Barbizons in hue and tone, as were those of the Impressionistic R.C.A. painters, would indicate their influence. In any case, FitzGerald's early work cannot be said to be truly Impressionistic. He adopted the style's divided brush stroke and dappled light and shade effect, but his work reflects no awareness of the more scientific aims of the movement. Although there is present a strong feeling for nature in these works, a kind of joyous mood conveyed, there is no sense as yet of any strongly defined underlying order or structure to the scenes, something FitzGerald would later use to express his apprehension of the underlying order and plan he felt in nature.

¹⁸ Among his personal papers, FitzGerald saved clipped articles and reproductions from such art journals as The International Studio, Art News, The Arts, and The Architectural Record. It is likely, therefore, that he was familiar with European styles of painting through these magazines.

and the world.

In 1920 FitzGerald came into contact with an artist who likely made him aware of his own provincialism and the limitations of his training and environment, and perhaps stimulated his latently spiritual nature. Augustus Vincent Tack (1870-1949) came to Winnipeg from the United States, where he had established a career in portraiture and mural painting. In June of 1920 he arrived to paint and install a set of murals in the Manitoba Legislative Building, then just newly constructed.¹⁹ These murals were to be on the ceiling and walls of the Legislative Chambers and depicted an allegory on the history of law.²⁰ (fig's. 5,6,7 and 8). FitzGerald was employed helping Tack to install the works.²¹ He was thirty that summer and Tack was fifty. Perhaps the older artist took an interest in a young artist struggling in a small city, far flung from any centre of art activity. Tack had been a student at the Art Students' League of New York in the 1890's and taught there from 1906-10.²² Most probably it was he who suggested to FitzGerald

¹⁹ Ferdinand Eckhardt, One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1970) p. 15 notes that construction on the building was started in 1914 but delayed due to World War I. See also: "Manitoba Parliament Building: Frank W. Simon, F.R.I.B.A. Arch.," The Architectural Review, vol. LVI, no. 302; Jan., 1922, pp. 1-11.

²⁰ "Manitoba Parliament Building," p. 9.

²¹ "Art School has New Director," Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 22, 1924.

²² Lawrence Campbell, archivist at the Art Students' League, New York, to the author, 15 Sept., 1979.

to attend the Art Students' League.²³ Bearing in mind that FitzGerald's teacher Keszthelyi had also been connected with the League, FitzGerald took the advice to heart.

Tack was a Roman Catholic, but had studied Eastern religions and likely Theosophy as well.²⁴ He also had a strong interest in Oriental art and tried to infuse his own works with religious feeling, or the "God in all life."²⁵ Tack's rather undistinguished murals for the Legislative Chambers had to meet the terms of his commission and were somewhat atypical of his abstract paintings (fig's. 9 and 10) for which he is most known now, in which simplified, patch-like flat shapes of colour play across the surfaces of his paintings. Although FitzGerald likely did not see Tack's paintings (unless the artist had brought some examples along to Winnipeg) until his trip to the United States in 1930, he was very likely influenced by the older artist's ideas simply as they came up in conversation in 1920.²⁶

²³ Karen Sens, A Discussion of the Stylistic Development in the Dated Oil Paintings of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald 1890-1956, (unpublished Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1978), p. 29; footnote #17 to Chapter 2, credits Helen Coy, Director of the FitzGerald Study Centre, with suggesting that Tack recommended the A.S.L. to FitzGerald. The only other suggestion of a source for the idea has been made by Peter Mellen, The Group of Seven (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 182, that Franz Johnston gave the advice. Johnston had no first hand contact with the A.S.L. and had not had much intimate contact with FitzGerald during his stay in Winnipeg, 1921-24.

²⁴ Robert Rosenblum, Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975), p. 197.

²⁵ Eleanor Green, "Augustus Vincent Tack," Artforum, vol. XI, no. 2, Oct., 1972, p. 61.

²⁶ Tack was a vocal promoter of abstract art, feeling

Later that summer, when Tack had completed the work with the murals, for the first time in several years FitzGerald returned alone to the farm where he had spent his childhood summers. Perhaps this was in order to rethink his direction and re-evaluate himself and his art. His maternal grandparents, the John Hicks, had owned a farm near Snowflake, Manitoba, a tiny community south west of Winnipeg in a bluffy, rolling area of the prairie. FitzGerald wrote in 1954, remembering his boyhood summers spent on the farm with his grandparents:

Among my early recollections are walks over the prairie and the dirt roads, and the sloughs with their fringes of willow, and the bluffs of poplar with the light trunks and shimmering leaves, the grasses and wild flowers that grew along the trails, and always, the sky. Summers spent at my grandmother's farm in Southern Manitoba were wonderful times for roaming through the woods and over the fields, and the vivid impression of those holidays inspired many drawings and paintings of a later date.²⁷

By 1920, FitzGerald's grandmother was no longer at the farm, as it had been rented to a stranger. He boarded at a neighbour's for the summer, leaving his wife and two young children in Winnipeg.²⁸ A summer of reflection perhaps aided in helping Fitz-

it to be a more subjective approach to painting than a representational one. See: A.V. Tack and T. Oakley, "Two Definitions of Art," American Magazine of Art, vol. XXII, Oct., 1930, pp. 576-77.

²⁷A portion of FitzGerald's 1954 C.B.C. radio broadcast. MS in collection of Dr. E.J. (Ted) Thomas, Winnipeg. This section quoted in "FitzGerald on Art," Canadian Art, vol. XV, no. 2, Spring, 1958, pp. 118-119.

²⁸This information from telephone interview with Mrs. Lily White, Winnipeg, 10 May 1979. She was a former neighbour of the Hicks at Snowflake.

Gerald realize that he was merely painting, in the words of Robert Ayre, "quickly and easily in a breezy Impressionism,"²⁹ but these thoughts did not materialize into any action until a year later. In the fall of 1921, after having his first one-artist exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery (works not known) in September, he moved his family to Montreal where he found employment for his wife in a tea room.³⁰ He went on alone to New York and enrolled at the Art Students' League.

²⁹ Robert Ayre, "Painter of the Prairies," Weekend Magazine, vol. VIII, no. 12, March 22, 1958, p. 26.

³⁰ The tearoom was in Montreal, and not Toronto as Patricia Bovey mentions in "The Man," Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 14. Helen Coy, Winnipeg, to the author, 10 March 1981, with reference to FitzGerald's account book, FSC.

CHAPTER III

NEW YORK AND THE 1920's WORK

While studying at the Art Student's League, FitzGerald did some design work in New York¹ to help defray his living expenses and fees. From December, 1921, until March of 1922 he took four courses under Boardman Robinson (1876-1952).² These were likely in basic drawing, from casts and then the figure.³ Robinson was an admirer of the Italian Primitives, particularly Giotto⁴ and was well known at the time for his interest in mural painting.⁵ Perhaps Tack's mural installations in Winnipeg had stimulated FitzGerald to learn more

¹Robert Ayre, loose notes, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives, no details can be found about this design work.

²Lawrence Campbell, archivist, Art Students' League, New York, to the author, 4 June, 1979.

³A comment about the League a few years later than FitzGerald was there appears in R. Downes, ed., Fairfield Porter: Art in its Own Terms (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1979), p. 26: "In 1928 . . . Porter went to the Art Students' League, where he studied with Boardman Robinson and Thomas Hart Benton. The classes were in figure drawing but not painting: "I don't think anybody in America knew how to paint in oils then." (Porter)

⁴William Goodridge Roberts 1904-1974 (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1976), p. 20. Roberts was also a student of Boardman Robinson at the A.S.L.

⁵Robinson later did a series of murals on the history of commerce for the Kaufmann Department Store in Pittsburgh in 1927, which FitzGerald went to see in 1930.

about mural work, but it is not known if he actually studied this under Robinson. When he returned to Winnipeg, however, he undertook at least a few mural commissions there.⁶ Robinson was of leftist political persuasion, at least at this point in time, and was doing cartoons and illustrations for such publications as The Masses, which ran from 1911-16, and The Liberator.⁷ Presumably, the general climate of pro-Communism and left-wing political involvements at the Art Students' League of this period had little, if any, impact upon FitzGerald. Any such concerns were never expressed in his writings or reflected in his art. It would seem that he had already made a commitment to a search for an expression removed from the fray of life. His questions and ideas for his work were more deeply rooted within existence than within any of what must have seemed to him to be its surface commotion. Perhaps largely at Tack's inspiration, he had chosen to try to look within and to commune more closely with nature and his subjects in order to cultivate a spiritual meaning for his work, although these concerns did not manifest themselves in an overt visual way until FitzGerald's 1930's work.

From March until May of 1922, FitzGerald took two courses

⁶By November, 1924, he had done murals at Barconi's (later the Plaza Cafe) and the Mitchell Copp Jewelry Store on Portage Ave. (both murals no longer extant) ("Art School has New Director," Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 22, 1924.) By 1929 he had done murals at the St. Charles Hotel in Winnipeg. (building since destroyed, and murals thus no longer extant) (Fred Housser "The Amateur Movement in Canadian Art," Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, Bertram Brooker, ed. (Toronto: MacMillan Co., 1929), p.89.

⁷Milton W. Brown, American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 187.

under Kenneth Hayes Miller (1878-1952), again, likely in drawing. Miller was a highly influential teacher at the League, ". . . regarded by his students with a respect that bordered on veneration."⁸ In the early 1920's, Miller was working through the influence of Renoir in paintings of women such as his The River, of 1919 (fig. 11). He was also just beginning his distinctive Women Shopper series with which he was to become closely associated and well known. The insistently three-dimensional The Hat Window (fig. 12) from 1930 with its round bulbous forms is an example. Miller's main influence on Fitzgerald seems to have been in increasing his concern for the portrayal of the three dimensions in his work. Miller's attitude was once described:

To him, the foundation of enduring art was three-dimensional design. He aimed at the greatest substance; forms must be in the round, solid and weighty.⁹

Of Kenneth Hayes Miller, Henry Geldzahler wrote:

He followed [Robert] Henri both in his insistence on familiarity with the great art of the past (Reginald Marsh remembered his saying, "Go the the Metropolitan -- I go each week.") and his insistence on a thorough knowledge of craft.¹⁰

⁸ Helen Goodman, "Kenneth Hayes Miller 1878-1952," Arts Magazine, vol. LIII, no. 7, March, 1979, p. 8. A review of an exhibition of Miller's work at Associated American Artists Gallery, New York.

⁹ John I.H. Baur and Lloyd Goodrich, American Art of Our Century (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art and Praeger Ltd., 1961), p. 74.

¹⁰ Henry Geldzahler, American Painting in the Twentieth Century (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1965), p. 101.

As will be noted, FitzGerald's work did become more three-dimensional in feeling after his experience under Miller. Boardman Robinson seems to have had less of an effect. For example, his rather stylized 1926 Sermon on the Mount (fig. 13), a typical example of his work, when compared to FitzGerald's post-New York pieces, appears to have no particular affinity.

Although FitzGerald must have been exposed to avant-garde European art developments while in New York by means of exhibitions and permanent museum collections, the emphasis at the Art Students' League seems to have been a more backward looking academic one. Henry Geldzahler wrote:

In the period between the two World Wars some experiments in modernism continued in America, but the major energy went toward the consolidation of technique . . . The emphasis was on craft, on painting well . . . the [Robert] Henri and the academic tradition were carried into greater formal clarity.¹¹

FitzGerald profited from this rather schizophrenic experience of the exposure to both new ideas and solid, very traditional training. He later wrote of his arrival at the Art Students' League: "I met mature people. For the first time in my life I saw painting that was neither English or Scottish. I got a sudden jolt into everything."¹²

After meeting his family in Montreal in June of 1922, FitzGerald took them travelling in Eastern Canada before returning

¹¹Geldzahler, p. 76.

¹²FitzGerald quoted in Robert Ayre's untitled monograph, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives, TS, p. 8.

home to Winnipeg. In his painting Rivière des Prairies, Quebec (fig. 14), an oil on canvas done on this trip, the artist's new concern for depicting solid forms in a three-dimensional space, with their interrelations carefully considered is immediately apparent.¹³ As well as this evidence of Miller's influence, is the glimmering of what would become a central concern for Fitzgerald; the conveying in pictorial form of the rootedness of the tree, its life, along with its expansiveness and forceful upward growth through the atmosphere. He contrasted this effectively with the flat planes of the house behind. This feeling of growth and life in a work, such that the picture itself became almost a living thing was a goal for which the artist continued to aim. A drawing done in the fall of 1923 in Winnipeg entitled Tree (fig. 15) exhibits the same qualities of a palpable growth and energy in the tree. Branches are hurtling out from the trunk, twisting and spreading out toward the picture plane.

As evidenced in a 1926 watercolour on paper entitled Landscape (fig. 16), Fitzgerald seems to have discovered the art and theories of Kandinsky after his return to Winnipeg, and perhaps due to new contacts met through his appointment as full time teacher at the Winnipeg School of Art. The bright, prismatic colours in this small work and upward-moving, force-

¹³ Ann Davis, "A North American Artist," Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine Fitzgerald: the Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 32. This point of an emphasis on three-dimensions is made, but not linked with Kenneth Hayes Miller.

fully triangular composition (stressed by the mountain in the background and tree formation in foreground) are peculiar to Kandinsky's work of the 1920's and foreign to FitzGerald's. This very atypical work, then, is a strong indication that FitzGerald was experimenting with some of Kandinsky's ideas, perhaps those in his Concerning the Spiritual in Art, which had first been published in English in 1914, under the title: The Art of Spiritual Harmony. FitzGerald was an avid reader of books on art (as well as fiction and poetry)¹⁴ so it is not at all unlikely that he made a point of reading Kandinsky's work after it appeared in English.¹⁵ Certainly, some of Kandinsky's ideas on spirituality in art could have helped him more clearly formulate his own. Kandinsky wrote, for example:

A work of art exists and has power to create spiritual atmosphere; and from this inner standpoint one judges whether it is a good work of art or a bad one. If its "form" is bad, it means that the form is too feeble in meaning to call forth corresponding vibrations of the soul. Therefore, a picture is not necessarily "well painted" if it possesses the "values" of which the French so constantly speak. It is only well painted if its spiritual value is complete and satisfying . . . The artist must have something to say, for the mastery over form is not his goal, but rather the adapting of form to its inner meaning.¹⁶

¹⁴ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

¹⁵ Dennis Reid speculates that Brooker read this book at this time as well, in response to Lawren Harris' article "Revelation of Art in Canada," The Canadian Theosophist, (Toronto), vol. VII, no. 5, July 15, 1926, pp. 85-88. (Dennis Reid, Bertram Brooker (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1973), p. 12.

¹⁶ Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art trans. M.T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1977) pp. 53-54.

Kandinsky wrote also about Theosophy in Concerning the Spiritual in Art, especially with regard to its relation to art and its superiority to modern science in explaining the complex and para-normal phenomena of the world.¹⁷ Theosophy had been founded in New York in 1875 by Madame Blavatsky. The word comes from the Greek theos (God) and sophia (wisdom), thus meaning divine wisdom. The basic aim of the movement was to amalgamate the mystical teachings of all the world's religions, and create thereby, one new, true religion through which man could know God directly. God was seen as manifest in all things and a belief in angels and occurrences such as telepathy and astral projection was included.¹⁸ If FitzGerald did read Kandinsky's book, he would have been able to share in discussions about it with two friends he made later in the 1920's, Fritz Brandtner and Bertram Brooker, both of whom were familiar with Kandinsky's ideas by the time FitzGerald met them.

As something of a loner in the less ambitious artistic milieu¹⁹ in Winnipeg, FitzGerald learned about art through reading books and magazines so that he could remain familiar

¹⁷ Kandinsky, pp. 13-14.

¹⁸ Annie Besant, Theosophy (London: T.C. and E. Jack, n.d.), ideas throughout the book.

¹⁹ Other artists in Winnipeg at the time included Alexander Musgrove (1890-1952) who came to Winnipeg from Britain in 1913 as the curator of the Winnipeg Art Gallery succeeding MacQuarrie. He was also Director of the Gallery 1934-1952. He founded the Winnipeg Sketch Club in 1914. Eric Bergman (1893-1958) was another contemporary of FitzGerald. He came from Germany in 1913 to work at Brigden's of Winnipeg. Walter J. Phillips (1884-1963) wrote for the Winnipeg Tribune on art. He moved to Calgary in 1941. Each of these men were professional artists of some ability but none achieved the reputation or quality of FitzGerald.

with developments in contemporary art, as well as art history. When Fritz Brandtner (1896-1969) arrived in Winnipeg from Danzig in 1928, he was appalled at the parochialism among most artists in the city. Russell Harper wrote:

He was shocked to find that the local art world had heard of no European artist of more recent date than Van Gogh, Gauguin or Cezanne, and what they knew of these men was indeed vague. Some knew, of course, the Americans, Homer, Eakins, Ryder, Whistler and Sargent but that was very advanced knowledge.²⁰

But Brandtner heard of FitzGerald, sought him out, and the two became friends, discovering they were something of kindred spirits and could have stimulating discussions about art. They spent many hours in conversation and went on outdoor sketching trips together on the prairie and in wooded areas near FitzGerald's house.²¹ Brandtner wrote:

Although LeMoine was a very quiet person and did not speak much, he had a wonderful personality, a great understanding and a keen interest in advanced ideas. Since I had very few understanding friends I could talk to about art, being a stranger in town, I used my free time to go to LeMoine's place, joining him in long walks in the close by prairies, and spent many enjoyable evenings with his family in the garden or around the fireplace.²²

²⁰ Fritz Brandtner quoted in J. Russell Harper, Fritz Brandtner 1896-1969 (Montreal: Sir George Williams Art Galleries, 1971), p. 13.

²¹ Areas such as Silver Heights and Stevenson's Field which were wilderness in FitzGerald's time, when his house was on the outskirts of the city, are now suburbs of Winnipeg. Possibly one of the reasons FitzGerald chose to live in outer St. James was to be close to these places for sketching and meditation.

²² Harper, p. 14.

After six years in Winnipeg during which he worked as a house painter, doing displays for Eaton's and as a commercial artist for Brigden's, Brandtner decided (at FitzGerald's advice) to move to Montreal. FitzGerald speculated that Montreal would be more receptive to Brandtner's experimental and modern ideas in art than Winnipeg had been.²³ Perhaps FitzGerald had gained this impression from his correspondence with Robert Ayre, who had moved to Montreal from Winnipeg in 1927. FitzGerald sent Ayre a letter of introduction to Brandtner, requesting that he introduce the painter to other artists in Montreal.²⁴ He wrote of Brandtner. "We have been intimate friends for a number of years and have many ideas in common on the subject of art."²⁵ Despite their friendship, FitzGerald and Brandtner did not seem to influence each other's art styles. Nevertheless, FitzGerald must have missed Brandtner's company when he moved to Montreal.²⁶

In the fall of 1923, FitzGerald began teaching evening classes at the Winnipeg School of Art (likely in drawing) under the principal, Franz Johnston (1888-1949). In the following

²³ FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Robert Ayre, Montreal, 8 March, 1934, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

²⁴ Same letter. Ayre had met FitzGerald as early as the late 1910's through the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Ayre wrote reviews of the Winnipeg Little Theatre productions for the Winnipeg Free Press, and also knew FitzGerald through this as FitzGerald did set designing for the Theatre. (Interview with Robert Ayre, Montreal, 25 May, 1979. also: Provincial Archives of Manitoba, MG 10 G16, Winnipeg Little Theatre File.)

²⁵ FitzGerald, Winnipeg to Robert Ayre, Montreal, 8 March, 1934, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

²⁶ Brandtner and FitzGerald did carry on a correspondence, unfortunately, their letters were burned by Brandtner shortly before his death. Telephone interview with Mr. Paul Kastel, executor of the Brandtner estate, Montreal, 13 Sept., 1979.

year he was hired as a full time teacher. This comprised a full five day week of teaching, with two evening classes as well, and a Saturday morning class. In 1924, when Johnston left for Toronto, a new principal was appointed -- Keith Gebhardt (b. 1899). Gebhardt's style of this period seems to have been influenced by the American Precisionist school.²⁷ In comparing Gebhardt's work with that of FitzGerald from the same period, it is evident how much FitzGerald was exploring the expression of his own ideas of the underlying relations between forms, and the life force in all things in his work, although displaying some basic Precisionist tendencies. Gebhardt, in contrast, has very little content in his work and was aping the style more openly. Gebhardt's 1928 Sutherland St., Winnipeg (fig. 17), a drawing on paper, if compared to FitzGerald's 1927 drawing and 1928 dry-point, both entitled Backyards, Water St.²⁸ (figs. 18, 19 and 20) is flatter and a more decorative work, with flat, stacked planes of space. It shows none of the concerns for three-dimensional volume, purity of form and clarity of line as found in FitzGerald's works. Backyards, Water St. is more focussed and concentrated in composition, more dense and with a more in-

²⁷ Ann Davis, "A North American Artist," Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis; Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist. (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978) p. 45.

²⁸ In their catalogue section, entry #68, Ann Davis and Patricia Bovey (Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist) give the print the title Backyard and place it in the 1940's. Kevin Forrest points out the incorrect title and date in his The Prints of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald, (unpublished Master's thesis, Carleton University, 1979), catalogue section, entry for Backyards, Water St.

tense feeling of life, for example, in the tightly drawn branches of the tree. Artists such as Charles Sheeler and Charles Demuth were working with tight, linear depictions of everyday subject matter at this time and perhaps FitzGerald knew of their work through reproductions. If so, he may have responded to it as work being produced by artists of similar sensibilities to his own, but, when contrasted to the Precisionists' ideas of the machine, of showing no process in art and concentrating on the formal aspects of a picture, FitzGerald's concerns have little relation or affinity. Although Paul Duval has written that FitzGerald was painting under a Precisionist influence²⁹ what is more apparent and important in terms of his own development in his late 1920's works, such as Williamson's Garage, an oil from 1927 (fig. 21), Pritchard's Fence, an oil from c. 1928 (fig. 22) and his 1928 drawing called Chicken Coop (fig. 23) is the sense of a bubbling or budding of ideas and feelings, still very much in a nascent stage. The care given in the calm building up of forms and the serene mood which results are very much apparent in each of these works. FitzGerald was working out the possibilities of expressing his spirituality with careful delineation of contour and the special attention given to the harmonious and echoing interrelations between forms. Thus, for the first time, in the calm, arrested, almost reverent stillness of these pictures, as well as in the sense of close, emotional and spiritual proximity between artist and subject con-

²⁹ Paul Duval, High Realism in Canada (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke and Irwin Co. Ltd., 1974), p. 36.

veyed through the slow building up of forms, FitzGerald's ideas about the divine quality and essential oneness to all life were beginning to come through. It is as though FitzGerald felt a need to recreate line by line, or stroke by stroke, his heightened vision of the world around him. In a diary she wrote after his death, FitzGerald's wife described her husband during these years, explaining that she had been an outgoing person, while he was "inward." She wrote:

LeMoine was quietly preparing his life, which was his art and this was always deep within him and he didn't talk about it but seemed to be pre-occupied even then and of course this was increased as he developed and what he wanted to express became more difficult.³⁰

In 1928, FitzGerald was given an exhibition of drawings at the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto (works unknown). J.E.H. MacDonald (1873-1932) was the Chairman of the Picture Committee of the Club in 1927 and was the President from 1928 to 1930³¹ so it was he who wrote to FitzGerald to arrange the details. Lawren Harris (1885-1970) saw the exhibition and admired the work so much that he purchased a drawing³² (work unknown) and wrote to FitzGerald: "I particularly like the way you extricate a suggestion of celestial structure and spirit from objec-

³⁰Diary of Valley FitzGerald, entry for 30 June, 1958, FSC (1 0201).

³¹H. Bishop, Arts and Letters Club, Toronto, to the author, 9 March, 1980.

³²This mentioned in a letter from FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to J.E.H. MacDonald, undated, Public Archives of Canada, M630 D111, Toronto.

tive nature in your drawings.³³ This is the first written record of a viewer responding to the spiritual content in FitzGerald's work. The following year, FitzGerald was given an exhibition at Dent's Publishing House in Toronto (works unknown). Lawren Harris brought along Bertram Brooker (1888-1955) to see the show, and Brooker brought a work (unknown). MacDonald wrote FitzGerald on Brooker's behalf, requesting to come and see FitzGerald that summer in Winnipeg.³⁴ FitzGerald replied:

. . . nothing would delight me more than to discuss matters earthly and otherwise with him. I get very little of that sort of thing now and it is good for one occasionally mixed with the every day utilitarian routine. I am afraid that we in Winnipeg are overly inclined to keep such thoughts to oneself, particularly when they don't seem to fit the average outlook.³⁵

Brooker came to Winnipeg in the summer of 1929, as planned, and visited FitzGerald for the first time, seeing more of his work. Afterwards, they began to correspond. Although he was not FitzGerald's only correspondent,³⁶ Brooker was the only one

³³ Lawren Harris to FitzGerald, undated, FSC.

³⁴ This letter does not seem to be extant, but the existence of its request is implied by FitzGerald's answer.

³⁵ FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to J.E.H. MacDonald, Toronto, undated, Public Archives of Canada, M630.D11.

³⁶ FitzGerald also maintained regular correspondence with Lawren Harris, Irene Heywood Hemsworth (a pupil of FitzGerald's in 1929 with whom he became intimate) Robert Ayre, Fritz Brandtner and less regularly with Caven Atkins, another former pupil, A.Y. Jackson and Arthur Lismer. He did not write often -- sometimes only one or twice a year, and his letters always contained thoughtful insights and ideas about art, as well as descriptions of his life in Winnipeg.

among them who made periodic trips to Winnipeg³⁷ and invited FitzGerald to Toronto, giving FitzGerald the personal and physical contact he needed with artists of "advanced ideas" which he otherwise would have lacked in Winnipeg.

FitzGerald's reference in his letter to MacDonald of "matters earthly and otherwise" suggests that Brooker had told MacDonald he hoped to discuss the content of FitzGerald's art with him. Likely as well, he wanted to broach the topic of Theosophy. Brooker had been introduced to Theosophy by Harris and Fred Housser, a friend of the Group of Seven, as these men were active members in the Toronto Theosophical Society.³⁸ It seems likely he would have been interested in FitzGerald's ideas about Theosophy after having talked about it with Harris. Harris wrote regularly in the late 1920's and early 1930's in their publication, The Canadian Theosophist, mainly on the relation between Theosophy and art.³⁹

Brooker had begun to portray spiritual themes, which could be interpreted as relating to Theosophical ideas in his paintings of the mid-1920's in response to this new outlook. His

³⁷Reconstructing from their letters, the following visits, at least, can be established: 1929, Brooker to Winnipeg; 1930, FitzGerald to Toronto; 1933, Brooker to Winnipeg; 1936, Brooker to Winnipeg; 1938, FitzGerald to Toronto; 1945, Brooker to Winnipeg; 1953, FitzGerald to Toronto.

³⁸Dennis Reid, Bertram Brooker, p. 10.

³⁹His articles included: "Revelation of Art in Canada," The Canadian Theosophist, (Toronto), vol. VII, no. 5, July 15, 1926, pp. 85-88; "Theosophy and Art," The Canadian Theosophist, (Hamilton), vol. XIV, no. 5, July 15, 1933, pp. 129-132; "Theosophy and Art," The Canadian Theosophist, (Hamilton), vol. XIV, no. 6, Aug. 15, 1933, pp. 161-166.

1928 Sounds Assembling (fig. 24) is an example of these works, with its metaphor to music and spiritual harmonies in title and shapes. Judging from FitzGerald's writing (in which he never once mentions Theosophy) and art (which never employs overt Theosophical symbols), it would seem likely that he and Brooker were not in agreement about their metaphysics and exactly how art should convey spirituality. As with Emily Carr's gradual rejection of Theosophy in the 1930's as too programmatic and dictatorial a point of view for her own painting and life⁴⁰ and Arthur Lismer's moving away from the philosophy as well,⁴¹ FitzGerald never chose Theosophy as a belief system and likely did not want to produce didactic art promoting it. Rather than training people to see the oneness of life that he felt, he wanted to communicate the joys of nature, the macrocosm in the microcosm, in a natural and personal manner. Although the concept of oneness is central to Theosophy, FitzGerald would seem to have reached an understanding of it on his own, previous to knowing Brooker, perhaps even helped by A.V. Tack. It would seem to have been the aspects of Theosophy which FitzGerald must have considered its dogma which he rejected.⁴² Despite

⁴⁰ Hundreds and Thousands: the Journals of Emily Carr (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke Irwin and Co. Ltd., 1966), p. 19; p.42; p. 123 and p. 149. Also see: Doris Shadbolt, The Art of Emily Carr (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke Irwin and Co. Ltd., and Douglas McIntyre, 1979), p. 58.

⁴¹ John A.B. McLeish, September Gale: A study of Arthur Lismer of the Group of Seven (Toronto and Vancouver: J.M. Dent Ltd., 1955), pp. 9-10.

⁴² Stephen Andrews, a former student of FitzGerald, Malaga, Spain, 5 June, 1979 to the author: Andrews writes:

their arguments,⁴³ Brooker and FitzGerald remained fast friends. Far from being influenced by Brooker's painting, FitzGerald was the one who swayed Brooker, as the Toronto artist began doing representational work, highly influenced by FitzGerald's precise, linear style after 1930, returning only intermittently to abstraction afterwards. His Fawn Bay of 1936 (fig. 25) is an example of these works in which the precision and attention to detail, not heretofore present in Brooker's work can be detected. Brooker's radical changing of styles under FitzGerald's influence indicates that he saw spiritual content in FitzGerald's art: This is what he, himself wished to have his work convey, and decided to use FitzGerald's representational means instead of his own abstract ones to achieve his ends, obviously feeling the former to be more effective. Later in 1929, Brooker wrote to FitzGerald of their visit:

Your attitude toward your work and your companionship on the few days I had with you have had a very considerable effect on me. It has changed not only my approach to things, but also my appreciation of other people and work. If I tried to put my finger on it I should say that it has made me more honest and studious and less impatient for quick results. So far its effect has been that I have become perhaps too realistic -- in a small way,

"Mr. Fitz. [sic] once spent an evening attempting to talk me out of Mary Baker Eddy and her Christian Scientist Church. "Do you want to be an artist or a practitioner?" This would seem to imply that FitzGerald held art apart from any kind of religious, especially, fanatically religious, practice.

⁴³One argument is referred to by Brooker in a letter to FitzGerald, 27 July 1945, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ontario.

I mean -- but I hope to grow out of that to a bigger appreciation of form -- particularly. To boil it down to one word -- form is the thing that obsesses me. Colour is no longer a thing that interests me for its own sake, as it did.⁴⁴

That Brooker was so strongly affected by FitzGerald's presence and work indicates something of the forcefulness of his ideas to those open to receive them. In FitzGerald's late 1920's work, the spiritual concepts and beliefs he will later be able to articulate so clearly in paint can most easily be seen in his selection of subjects and in the organization and direction he was choosing for his life. His subjects: still lifes, backyard views and some prairie scenes from the summer, enabled FitzGerald to strive for a feeling of communication with the subject in his work more easily than if he were doing street scenes or anything more potentially frenetic. A calm mood such as that achieved in Pritchard's Fence (fig. 22) for example, and the sense of communion with the buildings and sagging fence felt at an intuitive level upon viewing the work are coupled with a sense of quietly unfolding wonder at the organization and beauty in the world, revealed in FitzGerald's careful strokes.

A life of moderation would appear to have been the artist's goal as he developed what amounted to a program of spiritual discipline in his art, daily life and teaching. His rejection of such things as a busy social life, opportunities for more

⁴⁴Bertram Brooker, Toronto; to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 28 December, 1929, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ontario.

numerous sales and exhibitions, money and extravagant material possessions was intentional, not accidental. Irene Heywood Hemsworth remembers that FitzGerald drank liquor only on the odd occasion, that he smoked very little and ate simple food.⁴⁵ Perhaps these practices seemed to the artist as a means of keeping him pure for his work. FitzGerald's restraint and moderation in his life and his discipline with regard to his art call to mind the Buddhist eightfold path, to choose one spiritual discipline from the various religions of the world, which is practised as a means toward righteousness and enlightenment. According to the eightfold path, right views, right intentions, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration, when practised together, form a path to a more receptive state for divine enlightenment.⁴⁶ Of course, FitzGerald was not likely aware of such a doctrine, and could have been leading a moderate life inspired by Christianity. But he never mentions Christianity in his writings, nor attended a church. It seems likely, therefore, that he simply decided on his own, through meditation and inner searching, that a moderate life was the best path for him.

It seems appropriate, in terms of FitzGerald's restraint in life, that his favorite time of the year was also the most austere and bleak: the late fall, before any snow had fallen

⁴⁵ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

⁴⁶ Peter C. Swann, Art of China, Korea and Japan (New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1963), p. 62.

to soften the bare landscape. He said of the scene which inspired his 1929 painting Poplar Woods:

Even though all the autumn colour had gone from the trees, there was definite colour. True, it was of a delicate nature and required more concentration to see than the richer tones of early fall. But the very delicacy gave it a charm and a sense of vastness that more obvious colour would never have achieved.

If I have any preference in the seasons, perhaps this time of year comes closest to it. The greyness and delicacy of land and sky have a particular appeal for me and a greater emotional impact than any other period.⁴⁷

FitzGerald was likely aware himself that such preferences were connected to his deeply spiritual nature, but this was something he would not have discussed aloud. As he had written to J.E.H. MacDonald, people in Winnipeg were not accustomed to discussing such matters. But, it would seem probable that, through his contacts with Tack and Brooker, he had some idea of spirituality as a concept and discipline, and that his ideas and outlook were not generally in keeping with that of his Winnipeg environment. Former students of FitzGerald, in hindsight, now realize his spiritual depth. Stephen Andrews (b. 1922), who studied under FitzGerald in the early 1940's writes: "Of course Mr. Fitz [sic] was a mystic . . . he hit in so many ways upon things commonly thought of as Eastern in his very own way back in Winnipeg."⁴⁸ Caven Atkins (b. 1907),

⁴⁷ FitzGerald in his C.B.C. radio broadcast of 1954. MS in collection of Dr. E.J. Thomas, Winnipeg. This portion quoted in "FitzGerald on Art," Canadian Art, vol. XV, no. 2, Spring, 1958, p. 119.

⁴⁸ Stephen Andrews, Malaga, Spain, to the author, 5 June, 1979.

another artist who was a pupil of FitzGerald, he in the late 1920's, writes of FitzGerald: "He would have made a very good Zen monk."⁴⁹

In 1929, Keith Gebhardt left Winnipeg⁵⁰ and a new principal for the Winnipeg School of Art was required. Those in charge had begun a search for a person from outside the city, preferably an American,⁵¹ but several students circulated a petition insisting that FitzGerald was capable of the job and should be named principal. The petition was successful; FitzGerald received the appointment, and was to remain principal until 1949.

⁴⁹ Caven Atkins, Birmingham, Michigan, to the author, 7 October, 1979.

⁵⁰ Gebhardt writes that he "fled" Winnipeg, considering the city such an artistic backwater. Keith Gebhardt, Milwaukee, to the author, 31 August, 1979.

⁵¹ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July 1979. Hemsworth was attending the school at the time and was one of those who signed the petition, which is still extant, FSC, loose papers.

CHAPTER IV

1930 TRIP AND 1930'S WORK

In the summer of 1930, FitzGerald made a trip to some of the major art schools in the United States to gather ideas for the program at the Winnipeg School of Art. In June, he began his train voyage, alone, recording his impressions, particularly of works of art, in a diary¹ in a rather free-form style. These thoughts form a fascinating insight into FitzGerald's character and taste and shed light on the paintings and drawings which followed the trip. In assessing other's work, FitzGerald faced, one again, as in the summer of 1920 after meeting Tack, a reassessment of his own direction. As had been his 1920 summer at Snowflake, this trip proved to be something of a time for stock-taking for the artist, during which he measured his own aims and ideas against those expressed in the work of major European and American artists.

On June 4, FitzGerald wrote in an entry about a room of student work contrasted with a room of modern European artists such as Picasso, Vlaminck and Hodler at the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis:

By walking between the two rooms one could

¹ Still extant, FSC (1 0183). For a complete itinerary of the trip, see Appendix, Selected Chronology.

readily appreciate the difference. The greatest difference was that the artists were one, absolutely unified and the students' work very much the feeling of individual things placed together, sometimes well, but still the feeling of the separate thing. And I think that is the great thing we are all striving for, consciously, or otherwise.²

In such an impression of the artists being "one," Fitzgerald is not only referring to a simple compositional or colouristic unity, but a cohesion and coherence of thought and expression throughout the works. His feeling was of a shared sense of conviction and ideals among the artists whose work was displayed, a feeling which the students had not yet developed. He must have hoped this feeling was present in his own work, indeed, seeing the work of important artists on this trip must have made Fitzgerald realize all the more keenly how much he wanted his own art to be of a comparable quality and stature, and to communicate as deep a message as he saw in the master paintings. Artists he mentioned with praise in his diary were: Cézanne, Courbet, El Greco, Matisse, Monet, Seurat, Turner and Velasquez, each for different reasons, and generally only just in passing, to mention a pleasing work, Cézanne receiving the most attention. At the Metropolitan Museum in New York, he was particularly drawn to the five Cézanne paintings from the H.O. Havemeyer bequest which were on display that summer.³ As well,

²Diary (1930), FSC (1 0183), entry for June 4.

³The Havemeyer bequest was in 1929, so Fitzgerald had not seen these works while at the A.S.L. in 1921-22. The five

in Chicago at the Chicago Art Institute, he commented on a Cézanne there saying: "I hardly like to admit it, I feel again a sense of something not quite complete, but how beautiful in some parts."⁴ FitzGerald noted that Cézanne's handling of his edges in his works in New York was "careful," and wrote that the Mt-Sainte-Victoire painting was beautiful and "satisfying in every way."⁵ Although it seems doubtful Cézanne's work had a strong or direct stylistic influence on FitzGerald's (one could argue, however, in the case of FitzGerald's 1942-43 small nude drawings, for Cézanne as a source for imagery, and to a small extent, style in the layering of strokes to build up form) something of a similar intense feeling to that of Cézanne is present in certain of FitzGerald's works. Perhaps the desperate seriousness and painstaking search for a means to render his vision of the master of Aix touched a responsive chord in FitzGerald. Something of this was to become the tone of his own work in 1930's.

In Chicago after a day of looking at art, FitzGerald

paintings are: Rocks in the Forest, 1896-1900 (later re-dated and titled 1893-94, Rocks at Fountainbleau in W. Rubin, ed. Cézanne: The Late Work (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977), cat. #8; A Man in a Straw Hat - Portrait of Boyer, 1870-71; Still Life, 1873-77; The Gulf of Marseilles seen from L'Estaque, 1883-85; and Mt-Sainte-Victoire, 1885-87, (C. Sterling and M. Salinger, French Paintings: a catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, vol. III (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1967), p. 108. All were on display in 1930.

⁴Diary (1930), FSC (1 0183), entry for June 4. The work mentioned must be Cézanne's The Basket of Apples, 1890-94, which was acquired by the Chicago Art Institute in 1926. All their other Cézannes were later acquisitions. (John Maxon, The Art Institute of Chicago (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970).

⁵Diary (1930), FSC (1 0183), undated entry.

wrote:

The technique is so much a part of all the bigger things that one only sees it by thinking of it from a painter's angle. It is not on the surface of the better things and is really only the means whereby the greater things are achieved. Each of us has something to say in paint about our contact with life, no matter how small it may be and the conclusion arrived at seems always the same, that is to work first and foremost and to be as little concerned of the way we are saying it as possible. To be so wrapped up in the thing to be said that the means are very much in the background . . .

And there is indeed a lot of froth in every gallery of pictures, because so many of us do love the froth of life, in fact, seem to prefer it to the real substance, possibly not knowing that it is the froth.⁶

This articulation of FitzGerald's belief that good art should say something about the artist's contact with life, that technique should remain only a means, and that the "froth" of life was to be avoided is valuable in explaining his own development in style and subject upon his return to Winnipeg. Another concept he stressed in his 1930 diary was that of "oneness." On June 18, he wrote: "The big men all have the essential oneness to their thing, and no doubt to a great extent to this thing is due their bigness."⁷ On June 29, he continued:

An eternal contact with humanity and nature and a greater sense of unity. This has been very strongly impressed on me during this trip, the sense of unifying all the elements in a picture to the making of a creation. The picture a living thing, one great thought made up of many details, but all subordinated.

⁶Diary (1930), FSC (0 0183), entry for June 7.

⁷Diary (1930), FSC (0 0183), entry for June 18.

to the whole.⁸

This concept of the picture as a living thing itself was something FitzGerald was to try to achieve in his 1930's work as well. Along with having accomplished his goal to tour art schools for ideas for the Winnipeg School of Art, FitzGerald returned to Winnipeg with a new resolve and ambition for his art. In August of 1930, after his arrival home, he did a small line drawing in pencil (untitled, fig. 26) of a centrally-positioned but tiny human figure in a huge, swelling cosmic landscape. Although delicately executed, the rhythms in the work are powerful and sweeping. The minuscule figure could be seen as FitzGerald himself, almost camouflaged as the lines of his body extend to those of the clumps of foliage, on the banks of the Assiniboine River. He is totally integrated and at one with the nature around him, reflecting his belief in the oneness of all life, and of a picture. Perhaps, even in a more symbolic way, the drawing represents FitzGerald in relation to the world of great art which he had just experienced. While realizing he was but a small figure, he nevertheless ambitiously yearned to be included, just as the figure is an integral part of the landscape. It was perhaps this ambition to be counted that allowed FitzGerald to take the risk of including esoteric spiritual content in his work, which, he must have realized, would not appeal to his Winnipeg peers.

Before he had left on his trip, FitzGerald had begun work

⁸Diary (1930), FSC (0_0183), entry for June 29.

on a painting which he eventually titled Doc Snider's House.⁹ In a letter to Brooker from January of 1930,¹⁰ FitzGerald wrote that he had started a painting of the trees in his front yard and the neighbour's house behind.¹¹ A rough sketch for Doc Snider's House still exists (fig. 27), but reveals only the roughest of plans for the composition of the work. He worked steadily on the painting, using his weekends and school vacations for another full year until finally on June 13, 1931, the picture was completed.¹² (fig. 28 and 29) FitzGerald's painstaking and time-consuming working method, very much in evidence in the carefully controlled flecked strokes in Doc Snider's House is a reflection of the respect and reverence he had for nature and all of life. To physically, stroke by stroke, recreate the meaning to what he felt and saw, to work slowly and cautiously were FitzGerald's means of preventing "the froth of life" entering his work, and of achieving a "oneness."

⁹ Although Bovey and Davis catalogue the work with a new spelling, Doc Snyder's House (catalogue section, #26, p. 109) citing Henderson's Winnipeg Directory as having the correct spelling of Snyder, nevertheless, FitzGerald himself titled the painting Doc Snider's House, so I retain his spelling, wrong though it may be.

¹⁰ FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Bertram Brooker, Toronto, FSC, Correspondence files. Dated Jan. 11, 1929, but FitzGerald must have written 1929 in error instead of 1930 as he refers to Brooker's visit from the summer of 1929 in the text.

¹¹ The house portrayed as Doc Snyder's house is not next door to FitzGerald's home as he mentions to Brooker, but diagonally behind his, as can be see by studying the architecture of the buildings in fig. 29, a photograph of the site taken by the author in 1979.

¹² FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Bertram Brooker, Toronto, 13 June, 1931, FSC, Correspondence files.

As a result of this effort, even such details as the feeling of sap in the veins and branches of the stiff trees is somehow conveyed. FitzGerald once wrote how important he felt was an " . . . appreciation for the endlessness of the living force which seems to pervade and flow through all natural forms, even though these [sic] seem on the surface to be so ephemeral."¹³ An awareness of this living force is revealed in Doc Snider's House. The painting signalled FitzGerald's maturity as an artist. It was purchased by the National Gallery of Canada in 1932 after FitzGerald had sent it to their annual exhibition of Canadian art, and has been circulated in more group exhibitions than any other of his pictures. The harmony achieved in the visual rhythms between the tree trunks in FitzGerald's yard, the graceful, swirling patterns in the snow and the solid feeling of the house against the clear blue prairie sky give the work an overall sense of detachment from a daily reality. Negative spaces are given a life of their own, revealing the artist's intuition that space and matter are aspects of the same unified creation. As FitzGerald wrote of a Renoir he saw, in Washington, D.C., he created "a great reality out of a commonplace subject,"¹⁴ and one might add, "a living thing," for which the artist was striving.

FitzGerald recognized that he was beginning to achieve

¹³FitzGerald quoted in Patricia Bovey, "Some European Influences on his Work," Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 84. undated.

¹⁴Diary (1930), FSC (0 0183), entry in Washington, D.C. undated.

what he so wanted in Doc Snider's House, but questioned the value of spending such a long period of time on one work.¹⁵ Increasingly, in the 1930's, after the completion of Doc Snider's House, he turned to watercolours and drawing as a way to work through his ideas more quickly. By avoiding oils to a large degree, he hoped to move more quickly toward a more intense spiritual expression he must have seen first bloom in Doc Snider's House. He wrote to Robert Ayre of these watercolours that he had misgivings about their quality, but that:

. . . the main thing is that I am enthusiastic and feel a new road opened before me. Somehow or other I have a feeling that I don't care what they may look like when they are finished, so long as I have a strong urge within.¹⁶

One of the few oil paintings FitzGerald did do in the 1930's was The Pool from 1934 (fig. 30). This was purchased from FitzGerald by Harry Adaskin, a violinist friend of the Group of Seven, and a Theosophist.¹⁷ He had met FitzGerald in 1932 when he came to visit him in Winnipeg shortly after FitzGerald had been asked to join the Group of Seven.¹⁸ That Adaskin, a Theosophist himself, purchased The Pool would most

¹⁵ Robert Ayre, untitled monograph, TS, pp. 13-14, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

¹⁶ FitzGerald quoted in Ayre's untitled monograph, TS p. 14, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

¹⁷ Catalogue information in Bovey and Davis, entry #34. The Pool was acquired by the National Gallery of Canada in 1973.

¹⁸ Visit recorded in Vally FitzGerald's diary, FSC, (1 0195), undated entry/notation.

certainly indicate that he, as a spiritually aware person, responded to the feelings about the divine in nature that FitzGerald was trying to express in the work. Various writers have noticed that in The Pool FitzGerald focussed on the surface of the water in the pool as the subject for the painting and did not include the foliage around it in any detail.¹⁹ Neither has the space around it, as a point of reference, been indicated. Yet, no one has speculated as to why the artist chose to cut off the pool from its surrounds. It would seem that the artist realized that in any such act of focussing intently upon a subject, the sense of communion which he felt with the pool; perhaps even a feeling of self-identification with it as another object of divine creation, could be more successfully communicated. In a normal scanning vision view of the pool, such a feeling would be diffused. By cutting off the setting of the pool and by concentrating on the relations between the reeds, water and sky, all rendered in tiny, flecked strokes, FitzGerald has a viewer see the pool in a new and intense way. The stippled paint technique acts as a link between the various natural elements of the work: sky, water and vegetation, underlining FitzGerald's belief that they are actually different aspects of the same pictorial, and by analogy, divine creation and spiritual substance.

FitzGerald continued in the practice of focussing on one subject and making it large in relation to the picture size

¹⁹ For example Ann Davis, "A North American Artist," Bovey and Davis, p. 52.

throughout the 1930's and into the 1940's. He did this convincingly and with startling results in his apple and other still life works in the 1940's, such as the small oil painting Still Life (fig. 31) from 1941 and Plant (fig. 32), a drawing in coloured chalk from c. 1940. Robert Rosenblum has noticed that the emotion of the romantic sublime, an intensely spiritual feeling, can be evoked by the same means that FitzGerald employed in these works.²⁰ FitzGerald, however, was not aiming for a sublime feeling, and because of his small scale and more modest methods, instead evokes a response on a less grand and awe-inspiring level.

In Still Life, for example, the thin, flat, translucent geranium leaves seem to almost float free from the woody, spindly stalk, while the robust, glistening apple sits heavily on the windowsill. Such subtly evoked contrasts make one see the elements portrayed as microcosms of aspects of life and activity, or as metaphors for people and their habits. In choosing such simple, everyday subjects to convey his feelings and beliefs, FitzGerald achieved a sort of a revelation in his art, not of a huge explosion of insight, but more in the vein of those of the author Virginia Woolf, one of FitzGerald's favorite authors.²¹ A critic wrote of Woolf's novels:

Mrs. Woolf, one feels, is trying to get

²⁰ Robert Rosenblum, Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: from Friedrich to Rothko (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 27.

²¹ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

at a spiritual truth . . . what is the meaning of life? . . . The great revelation had never come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark.²²

Indeed, FitzGerald's vision, as such, is quite in keeping with such daily "revelations," with a sort of Proustian attention to detail, in order to evoke a larger whole.

Plant is rendered in small dots and daubs of chalk which serve, as did the flecks of paint in The Pool, in uniting the table, faceted glass jar and leaning plant with one another and with the space glimpsed beyond. Aided by the plant's proximity to the picture plane, the pervading mood of the work is one of quiet contemplation and communion with the subject.

Aldous Huxley, the well-known British novelist, found such close-up, focussed views in art more spiritually transporting than general middle-distance ones and noted that the former have been used more in Japanese and Chinese painting than in Western Art. He wrote of such works:

Each life is represented as the centre of its own universe, the purpose, in its own estimation, for which this world and all that is in it were created; each issues its own specific and individual declaration of independence from human imperialism; each by ironic implication derides our absurd pretensions to lay down merely human rules for the conduct of the cosmic game; each mutely repeats the divine tautology; I am that I am.²³

²²Winnifred Holtby, Virginia Woolf (London: Wishart and Co., 1932), p. 149. Holtby, according to Irene Heywood Hems-worth (interview, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979) was another of the artists' favorite writers.

²³Aldous Huxley, The Doors of Perception and Heaven and

Certainly, the subjects painted in FitzGerald's close-up view still lifes do carry some of this feeling of existing beyond the human purview. Perhaps FitzGerald had noticed this effect in Chinese and Japanese work himself and decided as a result to experiment in working with the close-up view. In his file of clipped magazine articles and reproductions which he had collected and saved over the course of his lifetime,²⁴ the majority are Chinese watercolours and Japanese watercolours and prints, either single clipped reproductions or articles on various artists and schools. Other factors which point to an interest in Oriental art on the part of FitzGerald include a letter he wrote, enclosed with a Christmas card, to his former student, Caven Atkins, in 1951.²⁵ Atkins had evidently sent FitzGerald a reproduction of a Chinese painting the previous year, as FitzGerald began by thanking him for one. He went on to refer to Chinese students who had attended the Winnipeg School of Art: "All of these Chinese kids brought something very nice to the school and you and I will remember it with something more than pleasure."²⁶ The fact that FitzGerald would associate Chinese art with his Chinese students indicates that his warm-hearted attitude to them could have sprung from

Hell (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), from Appendix V, n. pag.

²⁴ Extant, FSC, FitzGerald personal clipping file, Box. #9.

²⁵ Letter and card now in collection of the Art Gallery of Windsor, Ontario.

²⁶ FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Caven Atkins, 3 January, 1951, in the collection of the Art Gallery of Windsor.

his admiration for their country's artistic heritage.

Gebhardt remembers that a George Wilson, a trustee of the Winnipeg School of Art, had an extensive collection of Chinese art which FitzGerald saw at his house: "FitzGerald appreciated the fine points of these excellent prints, [sic] but made few comments."²⁷ Another Winnipegger, James McDiarmid, who had been instrumental in the founding of the Winnipeg School of Art, and with whom FitzGerald was acquainted²⁸ was a collector of Japanese prints.²⁹ It is likely that FitzGerald saw this collection as well. When speaking to Pearl McCarthy in Toronto in 1953, FitzGerald made reference to Chinese and Japanese artists, indicating high esteem for their work.³⁰

Although it is not certain that FitzGerald relied on Oriental art for inspiration in any way, there certainly exists an affinity between the philosophical and aesthetic aims involved in Chinese and Japanese works and with what he was struggling to express. Certainly the quiet feeling and mood, the softness and delicacy in much of his work have some affinity with some eras and styles of Japanese and Chinese painting.

²⁷ Keith Gebhardt, Milwaukee, to the author, 27 September, 1979.

²⁸ FitzGerald was commissioned to do an Ex Libris for McDiarmid. Kevin Forrest, catalogue section.

²⁹ Ferdinand Eckhardt, One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba, biography section, p. 88.

³⁰ Pearl McCarthy, "Mr. FitzGerald: Rare Visitor But his Horizon is National," Toronto Globe and Mail, August 8, 1953.

In particular, the mystical quality often present in Sung and Ming dynasty Chinese painting bears a fairly strong relationship to the mood in FitzGerald's work. But, FitzGerald's approach to art and nature was basically Western and not Eastern. He always portrayed a specific site, and from one point of view. Oriental artists, in contrast, gave their work a sense of timelessness by using multiple view points and a idealized, distilled knowledge of nature, not a momentary, crystalized instant of vision. It would appear that FitzGerald reached his method of the close-up view and his still, quiet feeling in his work very much on his own, with some indirect influences, but certainly not any overriding one from any particular source. As well, it seems most logical to assume that most of his spiritual ideas and beliefs stemmed from within, from his own thinking and meditation, with perhaps some help from conversations with Tack and Brooker.

Various spiritual concepts are conveyed in FitzGerald's late 1930's works. In a still life of apples such as Still Life: Two Apples (fig. 33) from c. 1940, an oil on canvas, the two fruits loom so large in relation to the size of the picture that they seem to swell outwards in space taking on connotations of cosmic spheres.³¹ This occurrence is similar to the spiritual phenomenon occurring with some Indian Hindu sculpture, referred to as "prana," or expanding form.³²

³¹This has been noted by Eckhardt. One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba, p. 19.

³²Heinrich Zimmer, ed. by Joseph Campbell, Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946. reprint 1962), pp. 130-136.

"Prana" means vital life force, and FitzGerald has certainly communicated his sensation of a life force in the two apples.

Alan Jarvis once remarked upon the spirituality in FitzGerald's apple works³³ and Ferdinand Eckhardt wrote that the artist's attitude for nature in general was " . . . perhaps a kind of philosophical or religious belief that God was in everything."³⁴

The tree in FitzGerald's Tree Trunk and Bridge drawing from 1936 (fig. 34 and photograph of the site, 1979, fig. 35), as in so many other of the artist's drawings of trees, has definite humanoid characteristics. Previous writers have noticed this as well³⁵ and FitzGerald wrote revealingly to Brooker in 1937:

The seeing of a tree, a cloud, an earth form always gives me a greater feeling of life than the human body. I really sense the life in the former, and only occasionally in the latter. I rarely feel so free in social intercourse with humans as I always feel with trees.³⁶

As if to express this feeling of communion with and a sense of life within trees in his art, FitzGerald played with the forms in the tree trunks and branches causing hip joints,

³³ "Winnipeg's Art Gallery a Fire Hazard - Jarvis," Winnipeg Free Press, Feb. 24, 1958.

³⁴ Ferdinand Eckhardt, "Introduction," FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition, n. pag.

³⁵ For example, Ann Davis, "A North American Artist," Bovey and Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist, p. 36, and Bovey, "Some European Influences in his Work," as above, p. 86.

³⁶ FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Bertram Brooker, Toronto, 19 February, 1937, FSC, FitzGerald Correspondence Files.

breasts and reaching arms to partly emerge. By giving his trees quasi-human form, he was almost granting them human life, something akin to what he admitted feeling in trees. Once again, this can be seen as an expression of his belief in the oneness of nature: the basic sameness of humans and trees in that they inhabit the same universe and are made of the same substances. Perhaps FitzGerald even had a feeling of self-identification with the trees, feeling his own self to be at one with the aspect of the cosmic Self manifested in the trees. A passage from the Hindu Upanishads reads:

He who is aware of how that the Self gradually unfolds within him obtains for himself a greater development. Herbs and trees and animals he sees and he knows that in them too the Self is gradually revealed.³⁷

The most revealing and profound written passage of FitzGerald's which supports a spiritual interpretation of his art is in a letter he wrote in 1942 to his close friend and former pupil, Irene Heywood Hemsworth, whom he had met in 1929. Part of that letter reads:

³⁷ Quoted in Swami Prabhavananda, The Spiritual Heritage of India (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1963), p. 48. The Hindu concept of Maya, or cosmic illusion, which FitzGerald could have learned of from Tack, or the Chinese concept of the Tao, or unifying force in nature, could have had some role in the artist's thinking in such works. Whether or not he was familiar with any Eastern literature on such subjects is not known, but his own term "oneness" certainly finds expression in his idea to combine tree and human forms. (On Maya see Heinrich Zimmer, p. 54, and the Tao, Peter Swann, p. 144.)

We can only develop an understanding of the great forces behind the organization of nature by endless searching the outer manifestations. And we can only know ourselves better and still better by this search. There is an undefinable solidity that penetrates the work and a fine humility comes through the enlarged vision of the eternal wonders that surround us. I pray that never shall I feel no longer the inspiration that comes from the constant communication with the living forms. That I shall feel always in her presence a new message awaiting me. That I shall always remain young in thought and be receptive and inquisitive. I want to leave regretting that I was not allowed just a little more time to reach the ultimate which I know is an impossibility. I want to go on like the flower that contains the germ of a new life within the tangled, withered fragments left behind. I want to walk in the light that is never ending with open heart and open mind. When slipping into the great unknown I want to move always upward, ever seeking. I want to join those who always attempted and may still desire.³⁸

FitzGerald's words "searching," "humility," and "move . . . upward" are certainly very spiritual in implication and his "enlarged vision" of the "great forces behind the organization of nature" was revealed even more clearly in his 1940's work as will be discussed.

In an untitled pencil drawing from c. 1940 (fig. 36) and his Landscape with Trees (fig. 37), another drawing, from 1934, space around the objects depicted is treated as a thing in itself. In the untitled drawing of the jug, FitzGerald used flecked lines, which form wave-like vibrations rippling and

³⁸FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Irene Heywood Hemsworth, 23 May, 1942, in her private collection.

spreading outward from the jug. These connect the jug with its surrounding space and make the air seem alive with energy. Treating empty space as a positive, rather than a void perhaps reflects the artist's "enlarged vision" of the world -- his understanding that space is no more empty than is what we normally think of as matter. In Landscape with Trees the spaces between the receding trunks have been no less carefully considered than the trunks themselves. The trees seem to float above the cloud-like mounds of earth, causing the negative spaces between the trees to seem as corporeal as the trunks. FitzGerald once wrote to Robert Ayre:

It is necessary to get inside the object and push it out rather than merely building it up from the outer aspect. To appreciate its structure and living quality rather than the surface only. Through this way of looking at a thing illumination takes place and only the essential things appear . . . its relation to the totality of life . . . its place in the universe.³⁹

This passage sheds light on FitzGerald's treatment of negative space, and also his careful attention to detail on the surfaces of his apples, or the direction and thrust of a tree branch. His works certainly do have an other-worldly quality, springing from his own "illumination." An object's relation to the universe, and to its negative space, therefore, giving the picture a oneness, when conveyed, causes FitzGerald's works to be totally interrelated sums of their parts: unities

³⁹ FitzGerald quoted by Ayre, loose papers. Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

"living things," as he wrote in 1930, and thus metaphors for his concept of creation and humanity as one.

As previously mentioned, FitzGerald's spirituality was expressed in the program he designed for his life, not only through his work. Visual evidence in the form of a group of photographs FitzGerald took to send to Irene Heywood Hemsworth of his office/studio at the Winnipeg School of Art reveals his preference in his surroundings.⁴⁰ The photographs are small black and white prints showing the stark, bare walls of his room, with a strong light pouring in through an uncurtained window. A neat stack of The International Studio periodicals is on FitzGerald's desk and a plaster cast of the horse's head from the east pediment of the Parthenon is on the floor. An austere environment indeed, reminiscent of Mondrian's studio in Paris as seen in photographs,⁴¹ and as removed from the daily noise and activity of Winnipeg as FitzGerald's paintings. Certainly aware, then, of how art and life could merge, FitzGerald let his art spill over into his life in other ways as well. His family made puppets together and put on plays with them.⁴² He was fond of lettering, calligraphy and wood-carving,

⁴⁰ These photographs date from 1939-1947, as those were the years during which the W.S.A. was located in the Old Law Courts, from which the prison cupola was viewed, and can be seen from the prints. FitzGerald did not teach after 1947. The photographs are in the collection of Irene Heywood Hemsworth.

⁴¹ see Nancy Joslin Troy, "Piet Mondrian's Atelier," Artsmagazine, vol. Llll, no. 4, Dec., 1978, pp. 82-83.

⁴² Stephen Andrews, Malaga, Spain, to the author, 5 June, 1979.

doing ex-libris, and creating sculptures as well as utilitarian objects such as boxes and chests.⁴³ He created a complex garden complete with an inlaid path and pool at the side of his house, and made the gate to the yard as well.⁴⁴ This sort of activity could have been inspired by the idea of integrating art with life, as espoused by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Arts and Crafts movement, as mentioned, as the Arts and Crafts movement was linked with the development of the Little Theatre movement in North America, and FitzGerald had been involved with the Winnipeg Little Theatre as a set designer.⁴⁵ When FitzGerald did turn to his painting and drawing, however, he strove for it to soar above any utilitarian level, even choosing not to be didactic in his content and style. The devotional attitude he had toward his art, and the idea that his works were to be living things and objects of meditation,⁴⁶ revealed in his painstaking working method, can be seen as almost religious. A Taoist believes that to be in accord with the Tao, or life force, is to be complete. To achieve this completeness one follows Taoist ethics: production without possession, action without self-assertion and development without domination.⁴⁷ With his

⁴³ Irene Heywood Hemsworth owns some of these items.

⁴⁴ Patricia Bovey, "The Man," Bovey and Davis, p. 20.

⁴⁵ For more information, see Appendix, Selected Chronology.

⁴⁶ See footnote 18 to Introduction.

⁴⁷ K.S. Murty, Far Eastern Philosophies (Prasaranga: University of Mysore, 1976), p. 104; p. 110.

program of moderation in life's physical pleasures and the restraint⁴⁸ he placed upon his art as well as the sacrifice of so much time and energy to teaching, FitzGerald was following a similar ethic, and perhaps believed this helped him to be "complete" in some way.

FitzGerald's selection of a more linear style rather than a painterly style in art may have simply been in response to his innate sensibilities. The reading of Ruskin helped to reinforce this, doubtless, and in a work such as Campbell's House (fig. 38) (undated) FitzGerald's predominantly dry, architectural drawing technique is very apparent in the daub/dot application of the watercolour -- perhaps the potentially most fluid of media.

There was one area in his life in which FitzGerald seemed to show no restraint whatsoever and this was his reading. It is impossible to reconstruct a list of the artist's favorite writers, or his library, but from what is known, a pattern of deep and challenging reading, with some emphasis on books or writers with a spiritual awareness emerges: In his small personal notebook FitzGerald noted Proust's Swann's Way, John O'Hara, Thomas Wolfe, Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain and Sanayana's [sic] Last Puritan.⁴⁹ In a letter to Brooker, FitzGerald wrote that he was reading The Brothers Karamazov

⁴⁸ Referring here to his self-denial in not being painterly or doing large format works, for example. The physical and sensuous aspects of painting seem to have been kept to a minimum.

⁴⁹ extant, FSC (1 0041), n. pag.

for the second time and that he and his wife were reading aloud Victor Hugo's Les Miserables in the evenings.⁵⁰ Brooker once noted that FitzGerald had been reading The Divine Comedy⁵¹ and Stephen Andrews mentioned that FitzGerald recommended Edward Carpenter's writing to him while he was a student.⁵²

Ayre wrote that the artist read Tennyson⁵³ and FitzGerald saved a great number of clipped poems from the newspaper and magazines in his files, particularly poems by Keats and Yeats.⁵⁴ From these various examples it can be concluded that the artist had an intelligent and discerning mind. He chose literature of intensity and depth, revealing that his lack of a higher education had not hampered him in his search for awareness⁵⁵ and contact with profound ideas. Stephen Andrews writes:

Fitz [sic] was very much a man alone,
and therefore his own guru. You could
say that he dispelled his own darkness
. . . he was not a primitive, but a
highly sophisticated learner . . .
Winnipeg, in the days of his activity,
was an artistic backwater -- a desert,
and he was its oasis!⁵⁶

⁵⁰FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Bertram Brooker, Toronto, 17th June, 1935, FSC, FitzGerald Correspondence files.

⁵¹Bertram Brooker, Toronto, to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 17 October, 1930, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ontario.

⁵²Stephen Andrews, Malaga, Spain, to the author, 5 June 1979.

⁵³Robert Ayre, loose notes. Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

⁵⁴FSC, personal clipping file.

⁵⁵FitzGerald's desire for complete awareness mentioned by Caven Atkins, in letter to the author, 7 October, 1979.

⁵⁶Stephen Andrews, Malaga, Spain, to the author, 5 June, 1979.

CHAPTER V

1940's WORK

In the 1940's FitzGerald achieved deeper and more complex expressions of spirituality as he continued to develop artistically. In his works in watercolour, which were more quickly executed than his works in oil, he persisted in searching for ways to better express his ideas and metaphysical beliefs. In a letter to H.O. McCurry, then the Director of the National Gallery (his term was 1939-55) FitzGerald explained that he had no oil paintings to submit for exhibition as he had been doing only works on paper -- watercolours and drawings. He explained that he had been working toward something he did not think he could achieve in oil, and continued:

Again, there are well-defined phases in the development of an artist. Periods of distinctive growth and those of questioning and experiment, when during the latter, everything done is a struggling towards a larger outlook, yet has the appearance on the surface of "marking time." Thank goodness I have been face to face with a few of these and have managed to scramble over the top each time. As a matter of fact, I am glad of having had to face them no matter how difficult, rather than to have gone on blindly repeating myself.¹

¹FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to H.O. McCurry, Ottawa, 18 March, 1939, National Gallery of Canada, FitzGerald correspondence files. (7 .1F)

By 1940, at the age of fifty, the artist realized that he both needed and wanted more time to himself for his art than his rigorous teaching schedule allowed. He applied for a Guggenheim fellowship in hope of putting the award toward a year's absence from the Winnipeg School of Art. He wrote to McCurry about his application:

As you know, all my creative work has been carried out in spare time and I feel that a year at present would be very helpful in giving me a decided lift forward. During this past year or so I have been working in a little different direction through some smaller paintings and larger drawings, and through these, new ideas have taken form that could be matured more rapidly with continuous, concentrated effort.²

Much to FitzGerald's disappointment, he did not win the fellowship. He did not lose his momentum, however, and in 1942 wrote to McCurry that "the continued enthusiasm in the search intrigues me and this grows rather than diminishes . . . I am rather thankful for all this at this time."³ Earlier in the same year, underlining the fact that he was going through a transition in his work, FitzGerald wrote to Ayre:

I am going right on to a greater complete-

²FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to H.O. McCurry, Ottawa, 25 October 1940, National Gallery of Canada, FitzGerald correspondence, (7.1F). McCurry encouraged Canadian artists to write him regularly about their work. He was helpful to artists in many ways -- for example, in 1941 he helped André Biéler to organize the Kingston Artist' Conference (Charles Hill, p. 17) and in 1932 he lent his summer home to Goodridge Roberts as a painting place. (Dennis Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting, p. 201).

³FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to H.O. McCurry, Ottawa, 31 March, 1942, National Gallery of Canada, FitzGerald correspondence files, (7.1F).

ness and it is very hard to find . . .
 I want to work experimenting with each
 thought that comes to me and am more
 absorbed in the next painting than in
 those that have already been finished
 . . . perhaps they contain more emo-
 tional content.⁴

The ideas of a "greater completeness" and "more emotional content" in the works to which FitzGerald referred in the above passage are seen in the two compelling groups of images with which he was involved in the early 1940's, generally dated c. 1942-43. The first of these is a series of fairly large format watercolour self portraits in which the artist is portrayed looking out with an intense and penetrating gaze. Interestingly, the pose of the head in these works is like that in one of Gauguin's self portraits (fig. 39) and one by Caspar David Friedrich as well (fig. 40). Apart from the intensity of the stare, reinforced by the tilt of the head and twist of the neck, behind FitzGerald's head in these works, undulating female nudes are vaguely indicated in soft strokes of pigment. Self Portrait (three nudes) (fig. 41) from c. 1943, Self Portrait (fig. 42) from c. 1942, and Green Self Portrait (two nudes) (fig. 43) from c. 1943 are three works from this series. Part of the intensity of these works along with the disturbing, unsettling feeling in FitzGerald's self portraits, is caused by the intimacy and penetrating quality of the pose and gaze. Somehow, FitzGerald's personality is both revealed and concealed in his tautened facial muscles

⁴FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Robert Ayre, Montreal, 3 February, 1942, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

and cords of his neck, and intense stare outwards from the page. A definite sexual content is present in FitzGerald's nude torso and the naked women twisting about behind him. Its precise nature, however, is difficult to fathom and remains ambiguous.⁵ His facial features are contorted and seem to shift and change in the light, due, in part, to the patch-overlay technique of the watercolour application. This adds to the mood of intense scrutiny in the works -- but we sense the scrutiny is not of the viewer, but of the artist himself.

The second group of works the artist completed in the early 1940's was a series of small pencil drawings of nudes, most in a square format. These appear to have been inspired by the graphic work of William Blake. Four Nudes in a Landscape (fig. 44), from c. 1942-43, Couple (fig. 45) from c. 1943 and Figures (fig. 46) from c. 1943 are three works from the group. In 1942 FitzGerald and his friend Arnold Bridgen, manager of Bridgen's of Winnipeg, a commercial art and printing firm which employed many Winnipeg artists, decided to mount an exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery of the prints by William Blake in Bridgen's private collection.⁶ Likely, the

⁵ It would seem a little simplistic to suppose that the female nudes represent Irene Heywood Hemsworth and that FitzGerald was working through his feelings of conflict, and perhaps, guilt, about their adulterous relationship in these works. But, perhaps this was the case. It was after World War II had begun that Irene moved with her parents from Manitoba to eastern Canada, (interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Québec, 14 July, 1979). Perhaps FitzGerald was upset at this move as he was to see Irene again only a few times before his death.

⁶ Patricia Bovey, The Bridgen Collection (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1974).

close contact with these works had an inspiring effect on FitzGerald, as the drawings he did are very reminiscent of Blake's work. The swirling, twisted nudes, often worked together with landscape elements or tunnels of amorphous fluid, as in Couple, all in a soft, but linear style have striking similarities to such works by Blake as his Adam and Eve Sleeping (fig. 47), The Last Judgement (fig. 48) and The Circle of the Lustful (fig. 49).

These drawings are unlike any others FitzGerald ever did. Irene Heywood Hemsworth contends that they were done by combining sketches taken from the live models at the Winnipeg School of Art and memories of clothed women seen on the street in Winnipeg.⁷ Each work was thus a composite of several figures seen. As in Blake's work, a peculiar spiritual quality is stirred up by the upward-surgings and ethereal floating quality of the nudes. The bodies seem more astral, or spiritual, than corporeal, as their contours are so sketchily defined. The bodies seem to symbolize the soul, as with Blake, and FitzGerald seems to have been trying to portray the inner beings of the people, perhaps even after death. FitzGerald's admiration for Blake appears to have been no secret from his friends, even though it has not been mentioned by previous writers. Irene Heywood Hemsworth knew of this interest⁸ and in a letter

⁷ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

⁸ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979. Bovey and Davis link this series with Kenneth Hayes Miller (p. 31) and Renoir and Cézanne's Bathers

to FitzGerald in 1945, Brooker mentioned that he was enclosing a copy of Blake's "Songs of Innocence," adding, "which I feel sure you will enjoy."⁹

In the summer of 1942, FitzGerald and his wife visited their daughter in Vancouver. There, for the first time, although they had been correspondents since at least 1927, FitzGerald finally met Lawren Harris.¹⁰ Harris had moved to Vancouver two years earlier from the U.S.A. Most probably the two artists discussed art and related subjects, including various sorts of spirituality. Perhaps Harris raised the topic of Theosophy, especially since his own abstractions of the period embodied Theosophical ideas. It would seem that Harris either did not try or was not able to convince FitzGerald to become a Theosophist, but the two likely found they shared many ideas about art and spirituality in any case.¹¹

In 1927, when Harris had met Emily Carr in Toronto, he had recommended four books to her to help her with her art. Two of the four are unknown, as in her diary she noted only

(p. 86), both of which are far fetched, as FitzGerald had been in contact with Miller twenty years before this series and is not similar in style to either Renoir or Cézanne -- only in the subject of a grouping of nudes.

⁹ Bertram Brooker, Toronto, to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 27 July, 1945, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ontario.

¹⁰ FitzGerald mentions this being their first meeting in a letter to Arthur Lismer, 16 February, 1943, McMichael Collection.

¹¹ Gordon Smith, a former student of FitzGerald and well known Canadian painter writes: "I feel he shared many of Lawren's ideas on reincarnation etc."; Gordon Smith, Vancouver, to the author, 28 October, 1980.

the two she was able to find in a bookstore: Clive Bell's Art and P.D Ouspensky's Tertium Organum.¹² Possibly Harris mentioned these books to FitzGerald as well, either in letters prior to the 1942 visit, or in Vancouver in 1942. If FitzGerald read them, he must have discovered thoughts very similar to his own -- those he was trying to express in his art. In explaining his concept of "significant form," for example, Clive Bell wrote that it was "form behind which we catch a sense of ultimate reality" and that spiritual feelings could result from its contemplation:

The contemplation of pure form leads to a state of extraordinary exaltation and complete detachment from the concerns of life . . . instead of recognizing an object's accidental and conditional importance, we become aware of its essential reality, of the God in everything, of the universal in the particular, of the all-pervading rhythm.¹³

FitzGerald had already succeeded in expressing these thoughts in his work. He did contemplate form in nature to achieve an illumination in his art,¹⁴ but now his ideas could be confirmed by an author and a fellow artist, Lawren Harris. The second work recommended by Harris to Carr, Tertium Organum,

¹² Hundreds and Thousands, p. 11. Arthur Lismer also read Tertium Organum but it is not known whether this was at Harris' recommendation. McLeish, September Gale, p. 195.

¹³ Clive Bell, Art (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), p. 54. First published 1913.

¹⁴ Brooker once wrote to FitzGerald: ". . . there is evidence of a long contemplation . . . in your work," Bertram Brooker, Toronto, to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 10 January, 1932, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ont.

had been reviewed by Harris along with R.M. Bucke's Cosmic Consciousness in the Canadian Bookman in 1924.¹⁵ The notion of time as the fourth spatial dimension put forward by Ouspensky in Tertium Organum is one which FitzGerald would use in his 1952-56 abstracts. Bucke's book was one of Harris' favorites (and likely one of the others he recommended to Carr) as well as Brooker's.¹⁶ Bucke had been a Canadian physician and private doctor to Walt Whitman. His book is a set of essays about writers and thinkers from the past whom Bucke thought to have attained "cosmic consciousness." In his introduction, he defined this phenomena, explaining that those who have attained cosmic consciousness experience an awareness of an "order to the universe," are in a state of "moral exaltation," and have a feeling of "elevation, elation."¹⁷ He wrote that after one had reached cosmic consciousness, apart from experiencing an illuminating light at its onset, the person involved would gain a sense of their own immortality and a loss of the fear of death.¹⁸ Perhaps Harris and Brooker thought they themselves had attained cosmic consciousness as artists. If so, they likely would have tried to convince FitzGerald that he had as well, due to their awareness of and response to the spirituality

¹⁵Lawren Harris, The Greatest Book by a Canadian and Another, The Canadian Bookman, vol. VI, no. 2, Feb., 1924, p. 38.

¹⁶Birk Sproxtton, address on Brooker, 1977, Red Deer College, Red Deer, Alberta, TS in FSC.

¹⁷Dr. Richard M. Bucke, Cosmic Consciousness: a study in the evolution of the human mind (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1901), p. 2.

¹⁸Bucke, p. 66.

in his art. If one is to give any credence to such a notion as cosmic consciousness, it would seem that, though his statements about "the great forces behind the organization of nature," wanting "to go on like the flower that contains the germ of a new life within," and an "enlarged vision of the eternal wonders that surround us," FitzGerald did demonstrate the qualities it was supposed to engender.


Although Harris responded enthusiastically to FitzGerald's art, he did not write about it in terms of Theosophical content, reflecting, perhaps, an understanding that FitzGerald did not think as he did along similar lines.¹⁹ In 1944 Harris submitted his four and one half page article to Canadian Art on the work done by FitzGerald during his three summer visits to B.C.: 1942, 1943 and 1944. The piece was edited to about one-third of its original length²⁰ but Harris' essential thoughts on his work were left intact:

Each successive summer showed a deepening and enrichment of content in his work until, in the series of watercolours, we have what seems the consummation of a long period of contemplation. There is a grace and ease of technical accomplishment in these paintings, which, in its mastery, could only have been achieved by an utter simplicity of mood and dignity of spirit.²¹

¹⁹ For example, one of Harris' key beliefs was that Canada's northland gave off spiritual emanations with cosmic power to the south of Canada (Colgrove and Harris, p. 11). Such a notion was never mentioned by FitzGerald.

²⁰ The original MS is in the FitzGerald clipping file, NGC.

²¹ Lawren Harris, "Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: Western Artist," Canadian Art, vol. 111, no. 1, Nov., 1945, p. 13.



In the B.C. works Harris described, for example, an untitled drawing from 1943 (fig. 50), and West Coast Rocks, a watercolour from 1944 (fig. 51), FitzGerald tended to concentrate on focussed, close-up views of rocks and wreckage on the beach. It would seem that he was striving in this way to evoke the larger elements of the B.C. landscape -- the mountains. Irene Heywood Hemsworth wrote of FitzGerald that " . . . he believed that universality was to found in microcosm. He was not interested in macrocosm."²² FitzGerald's reading of Blake could have been a source for this idea, or else affirmed the ideas FitzGerald had already formed. A critic of Blake explains:

According to Blake, man achieves his greatest imaginative vision when he finally apprehends unity by seeing that all things are analogies of all other things -- that all the world is a grain of sand, for instance.²³

In "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" Blake wrote:

If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.²⁴

This "infinite" vision of the world "in a grain of sand" was what FitzGerald was expressing in these softly rendered, patiently

²² Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, to the author, 14 January, 1980.

²³ Hazard Adams, Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision (New York: Russell and Russell, 1955), p. 5.

²⁴ William Blake, The Complete Poems ed. Alicia Ostriker (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 188.

evoked B.C. works. He also succeeded in capturing the filtered light of the region as opposed to the harsh, strong light of Winnipeg, at the same time causing the viewer to see the analogies and intricate relations between the rocks and mountains, the mountains and the universe.

In the 1940's, then, FitzGerald continued to express through his intriguing two series, self portraits and square-format nudes, and his B.C. work, his ever-developing spiritual metaphysic, of the interrelatedness and ultimate oneness of all forms of life.

CHAPTER VI

LATE WINNIPEG WORKS AND ABSTRACTION 1950-56

In the late 1940's and early 1950's, FitzGerald continued to work with landscape and still life subjects, but also felt a gnawing urge to take his work even further. He wrote Ayre in about 1945 saying:

Time lies past at a rapid rate and I get nervous about whether I will ever find the energy and leisure to work out at least some fraction of this problem that haunts me.¹

Perhaps this "problem" was the challenge of abstraction as an avenue for greater spiritual expression. Slowly, beginning with a painstaking drawing technique, FitzGerald worked his way toward non-objective works. Apples in a Bowl (fig. 52), an ink drawing from 1947, and Trees in the Park (fig. 53), a chalk drawing from 1949 are two works done in a dot technique, in which the forms of the objects are dissolved into specks. During the late 1940's and 1950's, FitzGerald used this pointillist method almost to the exclusion of his previous continuous-line contour drawing method. Eckhardt wrote that objects represented in this way tended to be momentarily destroyed, "to lose

¹FitzGerald quoted in Ayre's untitled monograph, TS p. 17, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

their real shapes, only to gain a more spiritual and supernatural life."² Apples in a Bowl does have something of this feeling to it, the fruits seeming to breathe in and out, due to the lack of a contour line to confine them. They become mysterious presences, beyond the realm of simple apples.

Part of the reason FitzGerald devised his pointillist drawing method may have stemmed from his sketching outdoors in the strong prairie sun. When compared to a photograph (fig. 54) of trees on the bank of the Assiniboine River in Winnipeg, taken with the light raking in from behind the foliage, the technique of short strokes of charcoal used by FitzGerald in Trees in the Park becomes understandable in terms of being true to what the artist actually saw. Seen in context of the strong Winnipeg light in which all contours really are seemingly destroyed by the sunshine, FitzGerald's portrayal of only the dappled shadows is very realistic. In these works, the role given the viewer, of having to mentally reconstruct the world portrayed through the artist's short strokes or dots, parallels FitzGerald's own role in recreating the world in his work by building up and evoking forms in this manner. One gains thereby, a heightened awareness of FitzGerald's belief of the "great forces behind the organization of nature" in analysing and contemplating these works.

After his two years of absence and finally his retirement in 1949 from the Winnipeg School of Art, FitzGerald had more

²Ferdinand Eckhardt, "Introduction," FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition, n. pag.

time to devote to thinking about his art. About 1952 he began to grapple with the problem of abstraction in a more head-on way. He had discussed abstraction with others at various times in his life, but had been unwilling to lose the link with nature in his work.³ A letter from A.Y. Jackson to FitzGerald in 1942 reveals what may have been another factor preventing FitzGerald from trying abstraction earlier:

If you throw out the abstractionists you will find the reactionaries are chumming up with you and you won't feel happy in their company either. I see no solution to it, to go modern with no conviction behind it as many artists do is easy enough but it is a cheap kind of noteriety. Sometimes I feel that I am just repeating myself and try to break loose, but old habits prevent me from getting very far off the path I have chosen. I guess we feel the same way about it.⁴

But even if he shared Jackson's misgivings about "going modern," as Jackson obviously thought he did, FitzGerald was not one to shy away from a challenge in art. In 1948 he had written to an acquaintance in Montreal: "I never have any desire to reach a point where there seems nothing more to learn as only in study is there any interest."⁵ Although not a

³Diary (1930), entry for June 29, FSC, (0 0183).

⁴A.Y. Jackson to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 18 April, 1942, FSC, FitzGerald correspondence files.

⁵FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Mrs. G.V. Ferguson, Montreal, 11 January, 1948, National Gallery of Canada, FitzGerald correspondence files. The Fergusons had sent FitzGerald funds from Mr. W.H. McConnell of Montreal to finance his year of absence.

modernist, FitzGerald may have just finally decided that he would be further liberated to express his spiritual ideas in non-objective paintings. Perhaps inspired by Harris' talks and work since meeting with him since 1942⁶ he began his forays into abstraction.

Actually, it seems that his abstracts (1952-1956) grew quite naturally and logically from his "searching the outer manifestations" of forms, and became more rarified extensions of this search. They fall into two basic types.⁷ The first are those which seem to have been inspired in part by nature, often tree and landscape forms, and tend to be curvilinear in composition. FitzGerald's Christmas card to Caven Atkins from 1951 (fig. 55) is one such work, in which tree and landscape subject matter are being taken towards abstraction. Later, this method becomes more full blown and natural forms are no longer recognizable. His c. 1952 Abstract (fig. 56) and his 1952 untitled pencil drawing (fig. 57) are two of these works: based originally upon nature, but fully abstract. The curvaceous lines and flowing shapes no longer have any direct link

⁶Harris' influence on FitzGerald's abstraction is suggested by Robert Ayre in Malcolm Ross, ed. The Arts in Canada: A Stocktaking at Mid-Century (Toronto: MacMillan Co., 1958), p. 17. Other authors usually suggest FitzGerald was thinking of Brooker's abstracts of the 1920's, which because of the tremendous time lag, seems out of the question. Example, Bovey and Davis, p. 94.

⁷This is contrary to Davis' (Bovey and Davis, pp. 60-63) three categories: landscape/still life abstracts, curvilinear ones and geometric ones, the first two of which the present author feels to be identical, as the so-called curvilinear abstracts developed from the nature/still life inspired ones.

with any specific forms in nature.

The second genre of abstracts were more geometric and usually brighter in colour. Abstract (fig. 58) from 1952, with its bold pattern of rectangular forms is an example of these. Irene Heywood Hemsworth states that this type of abstract was actually a sort of mental map drawn by the artist, sometimes of a place imagined, or else of a route FitzGerald took on a sketching walk. She recalls him sitting with her and showing her some of these geometric-abstracts, explaining where he had walked from his house in Winnipeg over the prairie. The denser points of concentrated energy in the drawing were his home and the points at which he had stopped to draw or think.⁸

Both types of FitzGerald's abstracts feature these nexes of energy, where shapes and lines come together in his works, and branch out again. A clue to their meaning in the softer, more curvaceous abstracts, in which they were not geographical points in space, as in the geometric ones, is given by Irene

⁸ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979. A short and feeble argument is put forward by Bovey in "Some European Influences on his Work," Bovey and Davis, pp. 94-96 for FitzGerald's abstracts being influenced by Russian abstractionists from the early Twentieth Century, such as Malevitch and Rodchenko. Not only does she not include any reproductions of their work as a visual comparison, but her only evidence is that there is extant a group of notes in FitzGerald's hand on Russian art, written in 1912. Irene Heywood Hemsworth contends that FitzGerald did not give a lecture using these notes, which Bovey cites, with no source given.

Although FitzGerald was likely acquainted with the work of Malevitch and Rodchenko through reproduction, there is certainly no indication such artists influenced his move to abstraction in 1952.

Heywood Hemsworth: In 1951 FitzGerald went to Mexico with his wife to visit their son who was then living in Mexico City. They travelled down by bus from Winnipeg, but finding the trip tiring, decided to fly home. This was the artist's first time in an airplane, and the trip seemed to have a very profound effect upon him. Hemsworth maintains that FitzGerald explained to her that the nexes of energy in his curvilinear abstracts represented him, in space and time, within the airplane.⁹ In 1953 when FitzGerald flew again, this time to Toronto, to judge the Canadian National Exhibition Art Show in August, he met with Irene in Toronto and showed her small sketches he had done on the plane, with this same subject matter.¹⁰

This idea could have come from Ouspensky's Tertium Organum, had FitzGerald read that book at Harris' recommendation. Ouspensky's postulate of time as the fourth dimension in a new kind of spatial structure which our minds cannot imagine or fathom, could have inspired the artist in the creation of these space/time abstracts. But they could just as well have sprung from FitzGerald himself, due to the new experience of flying.

In a letter to Ayre of 1954, FitzGerald wrote of such works:

I am enjoying experimenting in this direction of drawing from the stored up memories and more freely playing with

⁹ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

¹⁰ Ibid.

forms and colours. I seem to require this freedom for the present, from the thing seen and its restrictions.¹¹

Rather in the tradition of such individualist abstractionists in the history of art such as Georgia O'Keefe, Arthur Dove, or even Kandinsky in his expression of spiritual ideas in abstract work, while not being actually modernist, than in a post-Cubist mainstream, as was, for example, David Milne, in Canada, FitzGerald worked with personal, esoteric meanings during his last years. Some of his abstracts are rather weak formally, perhaps because they were done without intimate knowledge of first rate European and American developments in modernist abstraction. Seen in a critical context, FitzGerald's tonally modelled, soft abstracts are perhaps the weakest works in his career. But, as spiritual expression of his beliefs, they are eloquent and moving.

Due, perhaps, in part, to his rather limited contact with the major movements in twentieth century art, FitzGerald ultimately developed his own, unique approach, and found his own meaning for abstraction. FitzGerald took the same art school themes of the nude, the landscape and the still life and re-worked them for years until he began to venture beyond them, and beyond representational form in these late abstract works.

The ultimate work in beauty and spirituality in the artist's abstract group is his sublime 1954 Abstract: Green and Gold (fig. 59). In this meditative oil painting the two

¹¹ FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Robert Ayre, Montreal, 27 August, 1954, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

tendencies of geometric map abstracts and curvilinear space/time ones are brought together in the thin unfolding planes of delicate, luminous colour, which curve into and away from one another in graceful arabesques. The planes seem to be spinning out from a dense area of energy slightly below centre in the work, which would be FitzGerald himself, in time and space, according to the meaning he gave these late works.

His oil painting, Still Life with Hat (fig. 60) from 1955 (along with its preparatory sketch, (fig. 61), is as much a self portrait as is Abstract: Green and Gold. The hat, apple and book were all objects with which FitzGerald was associated by those who knew him well.¹² The mood is intimate and closed, somehow, while in Abstract: Green and Gold, it is more joyous and expansive. Both works reveal FitzGerald's spirituality at its full development.

In 1956 FitzGerald concentrated on a series of abstracts and soft, blurred landscapes in black ink on blue paper. The Pool #4 Midnight (fig. 62) and Flooded Landscape (fig. 63) are two from the series. When compared to a recent photograph of a flooded section of the Assiniboine River in spring, (fig. 64) the forms in Flooded Landscape appear logical and realistic, but the shapes in The Pool #4 Midnight remain vague and mys-

¹² Irene Heywood Hemsworth explains that FitzGerald was very self-conscious about his baldness, so always wore the hat portrayed in this painting. He was also fond of apples, as can be deduced by the large number of apple still lifes he produced, and, as previously mentioned, he was an avid reader. (Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.)

terious. It is perhaps only a coincidence that these last delicate works were done on blue paper, but blue, according to Theosophy, is the most spiritual of all colours.¹³

With his various 1952-56 abstracts, FitzGerald reached the pinnacle of his spiritual and metaphysical expression. As with the Indian Hindu artist of the past, he no longer felt the need to study nature, but could conceive of a thought for a painting or drawing and bring it to fruition by a process of self-identification with his forms. He, himself, formed the nexes of energy from which the shapes in his abstracts seemed to generate. No longer was FitzGerald portraying a Western moment in time, but, as he had begun in Doc Snider's House, he was conveying eternal relations and timeless conditions.¹⁴

¹³ Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, Thought Forms (London: 1901) Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1967, reprint ed. Frontispiece, colour chart.

¹⁴ Ananada Coomaraswamy, The Transformation of Nature in Art (New York: Dover, 1934), reprint, ed. no date) p. 6.

CONCLUSION

On August fifth, 1956, FitzGerald died at home in Winnipeg at the age of sixty-six. Lawren Harris wrote his widow a few days later:

Really he was (is) a nearly saintly person, the most so of any Canadian artist; a lovely soul and a poet in painting, drawing and life. It has been a great privilege to have been his friend. He was certainly one of the finest spirits we have ever known.¹

Perhaps in part due to the isolation he felt in Winnipeg² FitzGerald had cultivated deep relationships with those friends who were his correspondents: Harris, Brooker, Brandtner, Ayre and Irene Heywood Hemsworth. Each felt they knew the essential FitzGerald and held the artist in high esteem. In his teaching career, FitzGerald's dedication has won him many tributes from former students (many of whom are practising artists today) who were grateful for his warmth, encouragement and inspirational presence.³

¹Lawren Harris, Vancouver, to Vally FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 7 August, 1956, FSC.

²FitzGerald does not appear to have been friendly with Eric Bergman, Walter Phillips and other Winnipeg artists. He and Phillips, in particular, were not in agreement about art. (Joan Murray, Oshawa, to the author, 7 July, 1980, from an interview by her with Caven Atkins, 27 June, 1980).

³Gordon Smith writes: "It was his very presence that was

His work was a distillation of his impressions, thoughts and beliefs. A rigorous, self-disciplined and prolific activity (though relatively few canvases, there are extant well over 1500 works on paper in private and public collections) his art was intended to reach out to others with his feelings about life, his metaphysic. He rose, in reputation, above his provincial beginnings, perhaps initially indebted to A.V. Tack, but afterwards, through only a rather lonely and difficult struggle of "endless searching" of his own.

His spirituality developed from an initial love of nature through an intuitive awareness of the oneness of all life, to a visually articulated expression of the unity of time, space, energy and matter. From his love of late fall, due to nature's structure being most perfectly revealed at that time, and a belief that the thing to be said, not the technique or formal qualities of a work being important came a body of work which cannot be termed modernist, or at times, even exceptionally good art, but always was an expression of a deeply developed soul and human consciousness.

FitzGerald wrote to Ayre in 1942: "Perhaps we are not separated so much as we think by time and space, but carry on a mutual communing apart from the spoken word."⁴ And in the same year, Brooker wrote to FitzGerald: ". . . if there is such a thing as emanation in this letter [which FitzGerald

important and his example. He had a fantastic quality of life." (Interview with Joan Murray, TS, p. 2. Robert McLaughlin Art Gallery.)

⁴FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Robert Ayre, Montreal, 3 February, 1942, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

had written to Brooker] that I have never before received from a human being."⁵

FitzGerald touched those he knew deeply and through his work still communicates his spiritual ideas to an audience receptive to his message. Certainly he achieved the "humility" and "enlarged vision" about which he wrote and "the great forces behind the organization of nature" are mirrored in the organization of his pictures, in microcosmic form.

What has been attempted in this study is a correction of the severing -- in the words of Lawren Harris -- of FitzGerald's art from his philosophy, present in most writers' work on FitzGerald. Certainly it is now clear that his pursuit of unity of form was done in order to eventually reflect that divine unity he felt pervading all of life. His art and life were outward manifestations of that belief.

⁵ Bertram Brooker, Toronto, to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 25 June, 1942; Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ontario.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Within the following entries,
height precedes width,
works assigned dates by the author
have the date within square brackets.

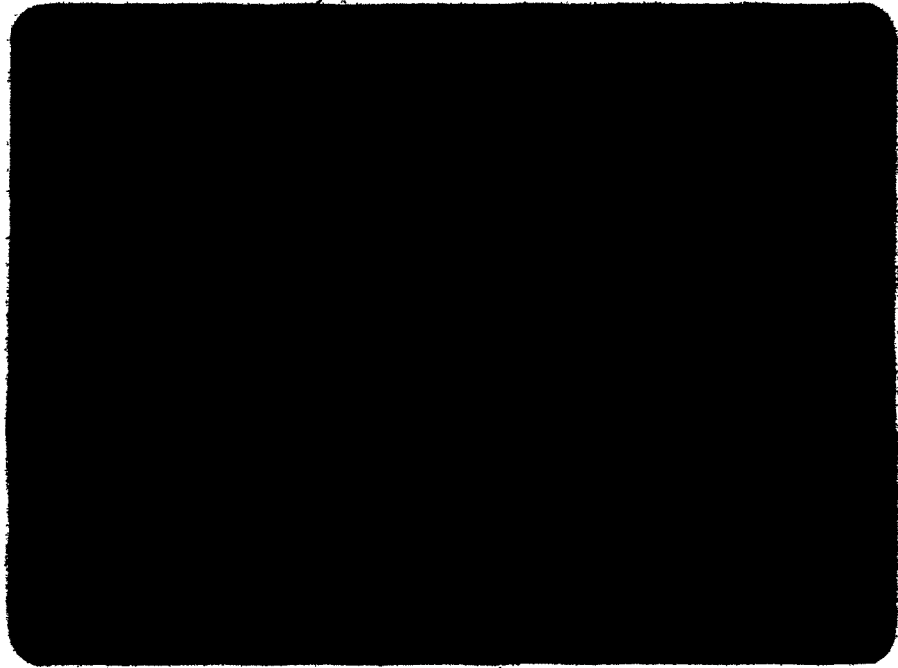
All works are by FitzGerald unless otherwise noted.



1. Lawren S. Harris, North Shore, Lake Superior, 1926, oil,
40 x 50 in; 112 x 127.5 cm. (NGC)



2. Seated Man, 1909, charcoal on paper,
24 x 16-3/4 in; 61.2 x 42.5 cm. (WAG, G7095)

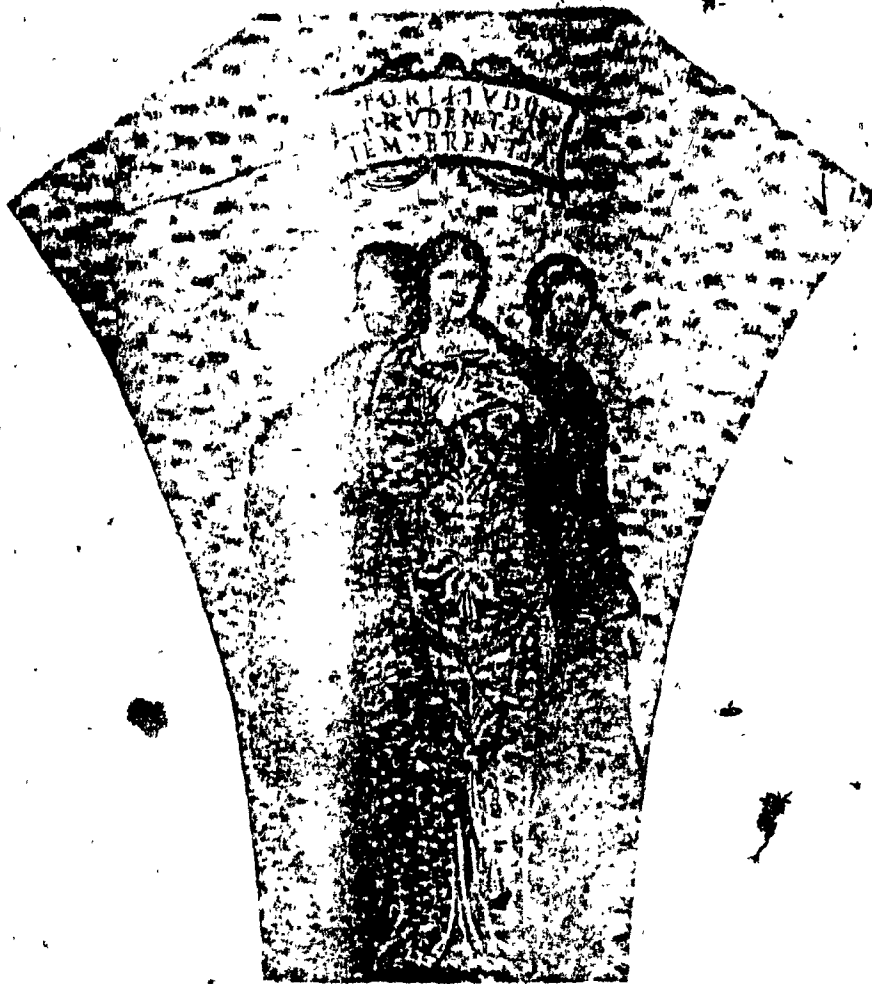


3. Landscape: Farmyard with Fence, n.d. [1920], oil on canvas, 17-3/8 x 20-5/8 in; 44.3 x 52.2 cm. (WAG 67049)



4. Summer: East Kildonan, 1920, oil on canvas,
49-3/4 x 41-7/8 in; 127 x 106.7 cm. (private collection)

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5. Augustus Vincent Tack, Murals in the Legislative Chamber,
Manitoba Parliament Building, 1920.

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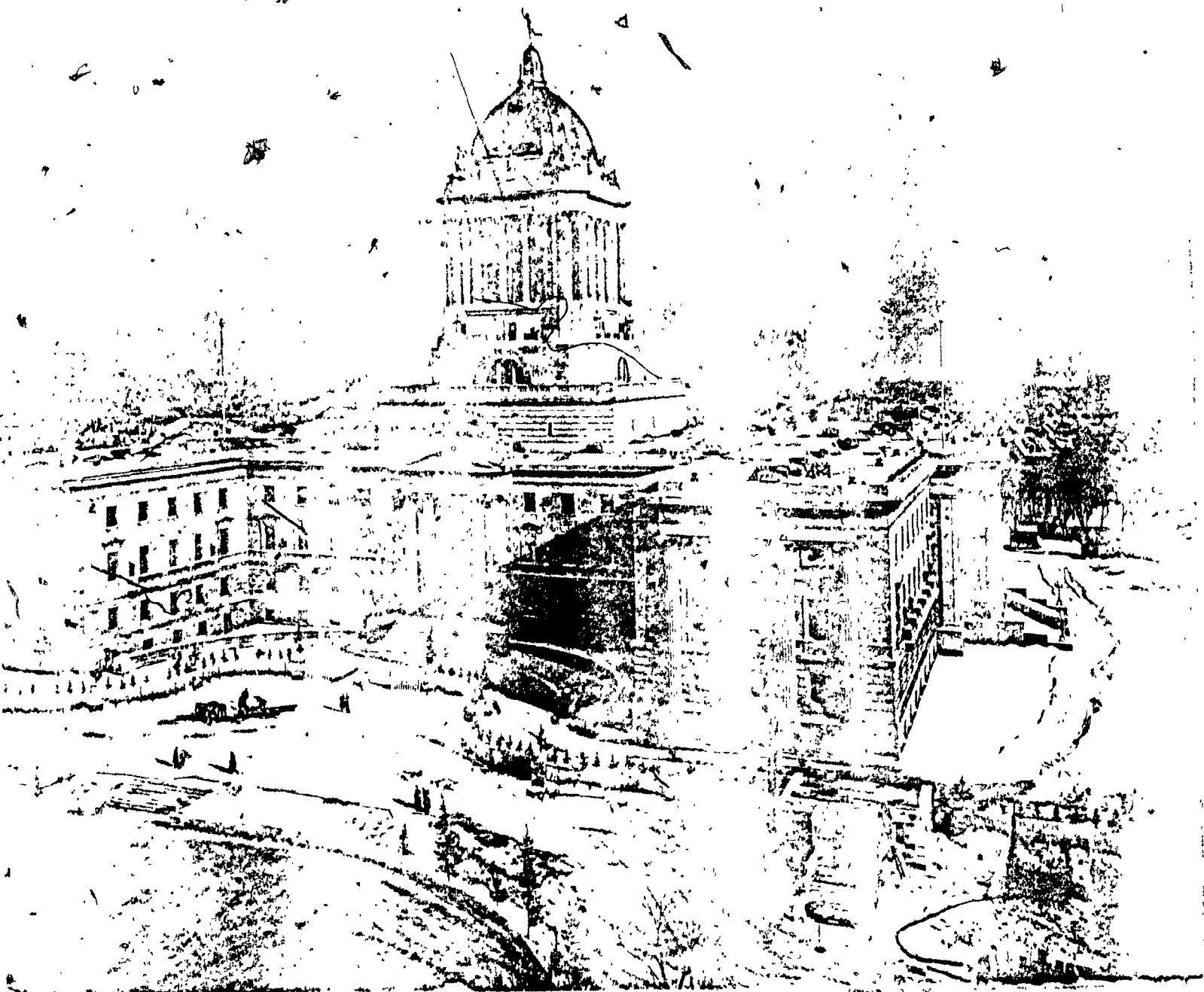


ack, Murals in the Legislative Chamber,
Building, 1920.



6. Exterior view of the Manitoba Parliament Building shortly after its construction, c. 1920:

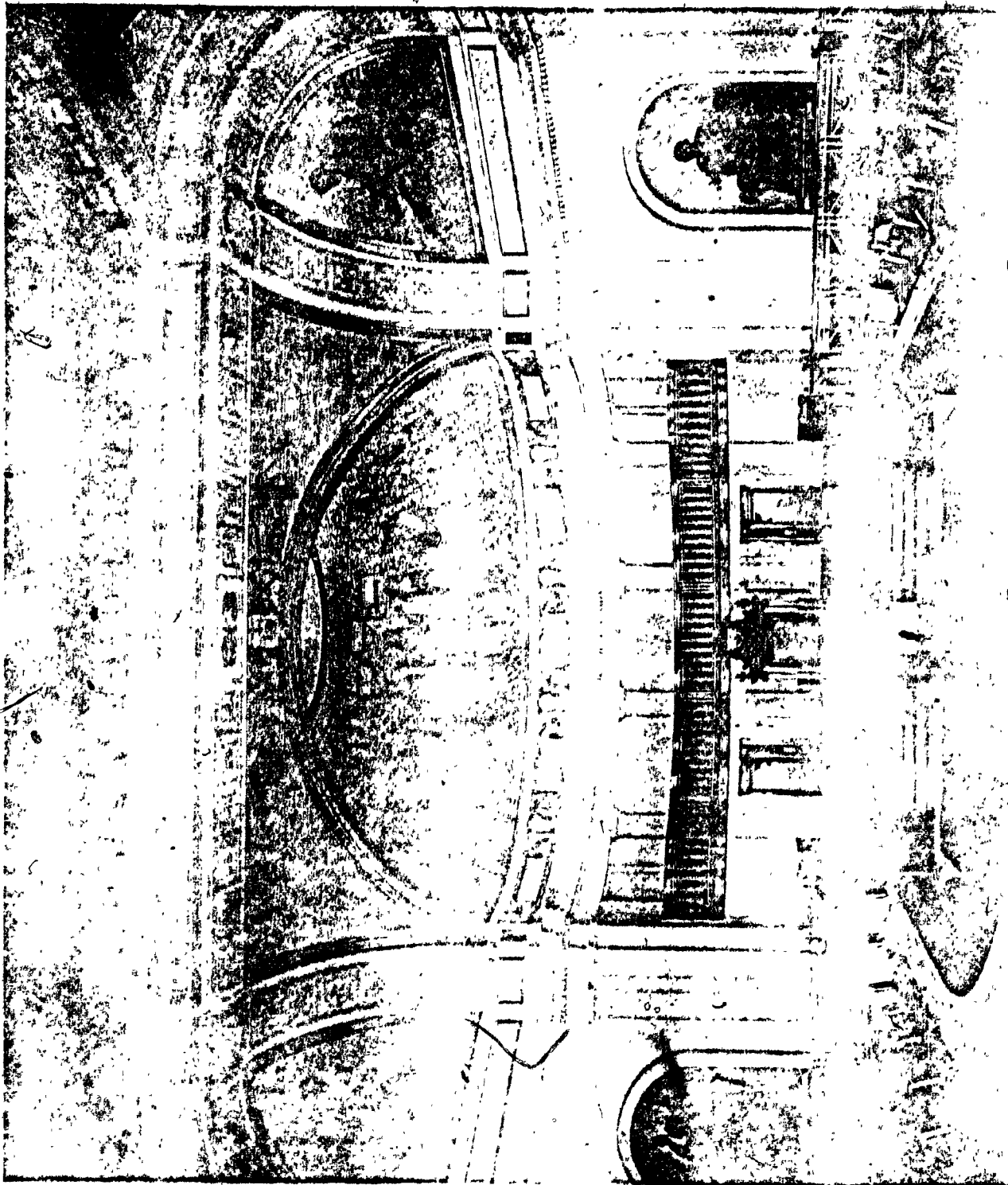
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rior view of the Manitoba Parliament Building shortly
its construction, c. 1920.

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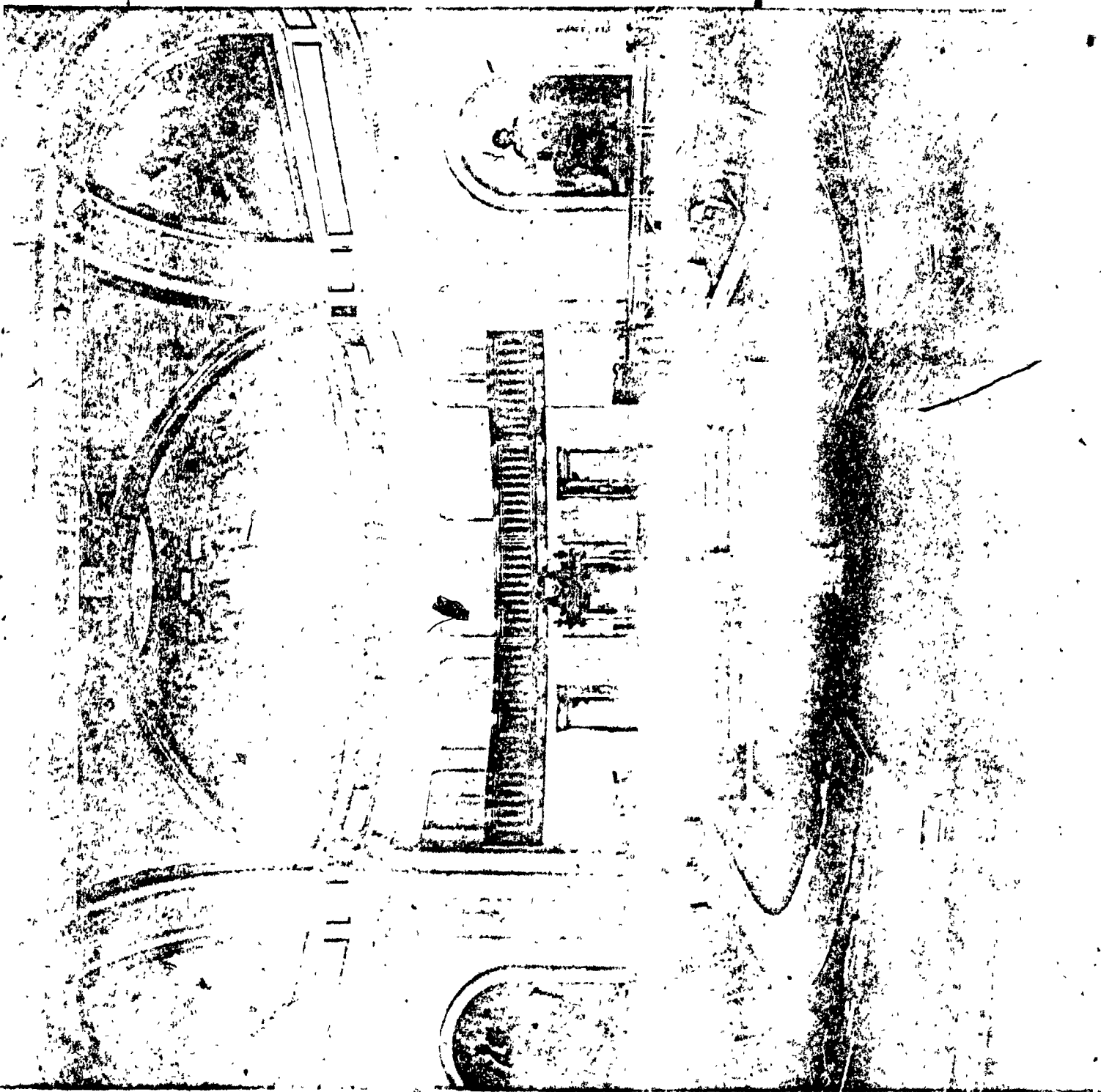
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7. Installation view of Tack's murals in the Legislative Chamber.

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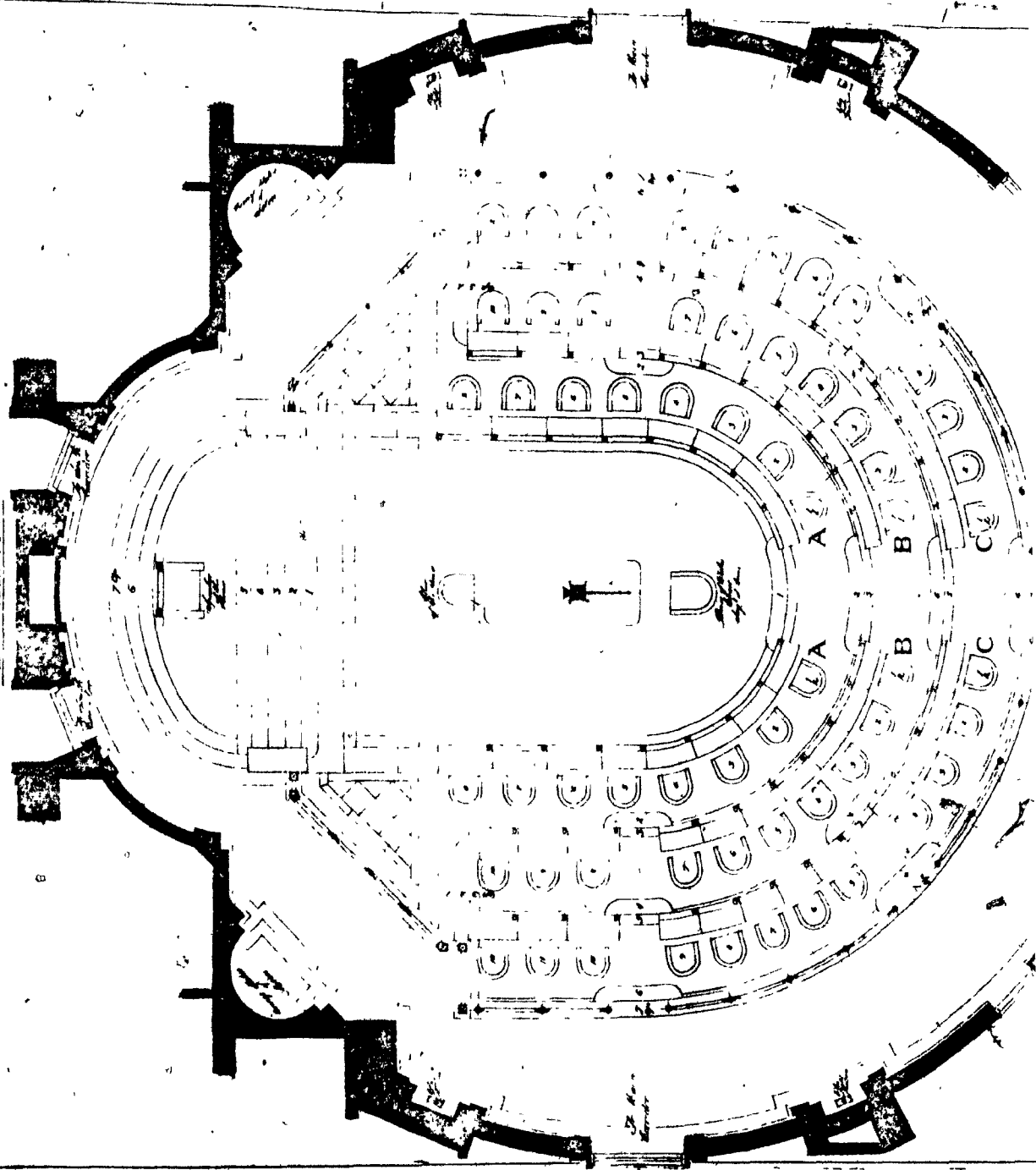


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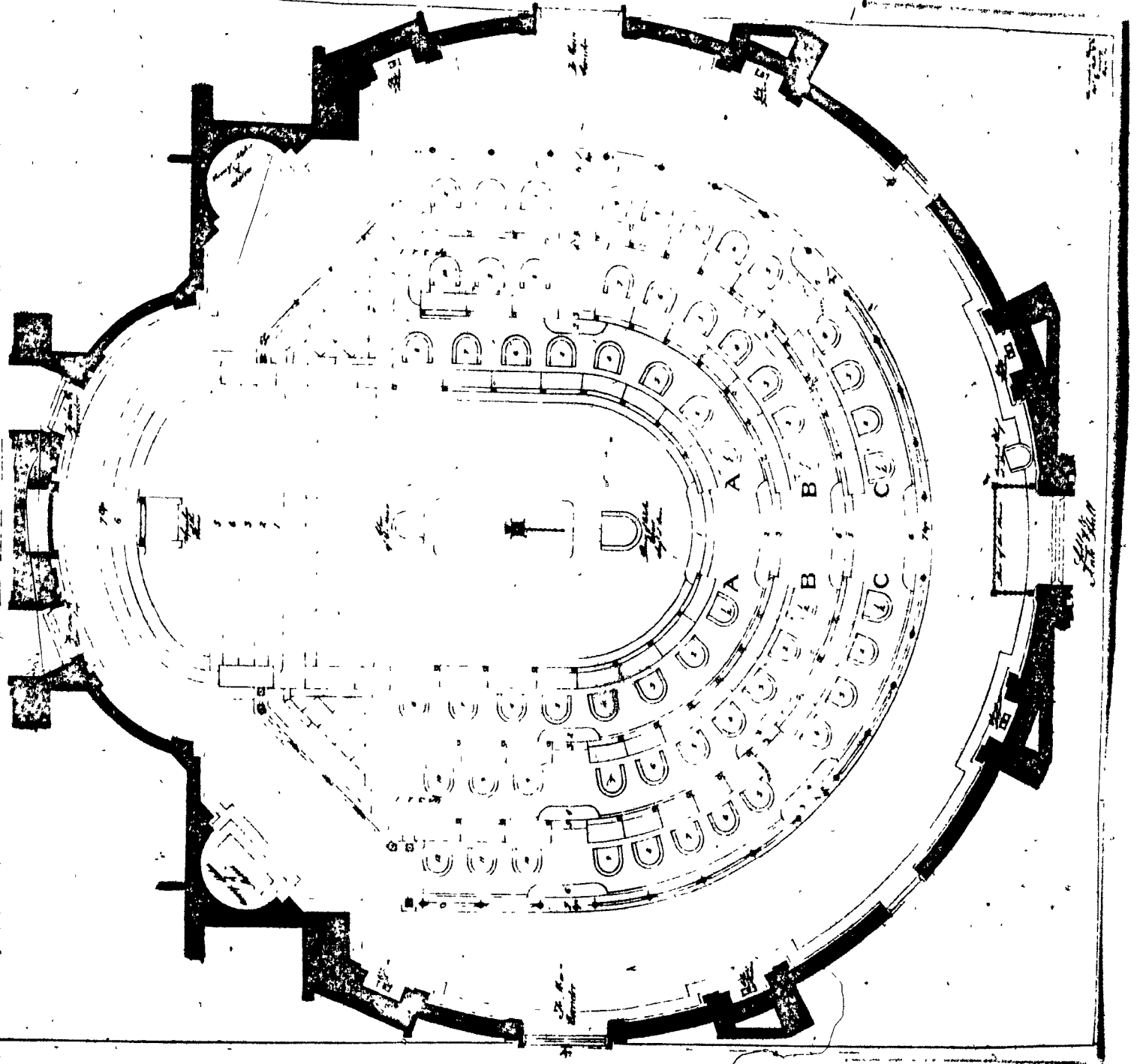
— LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER —
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS · WINNIPEG · MANITOBA



8. Plan of the Legislative Chamber.

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of the Legislative Chamber.

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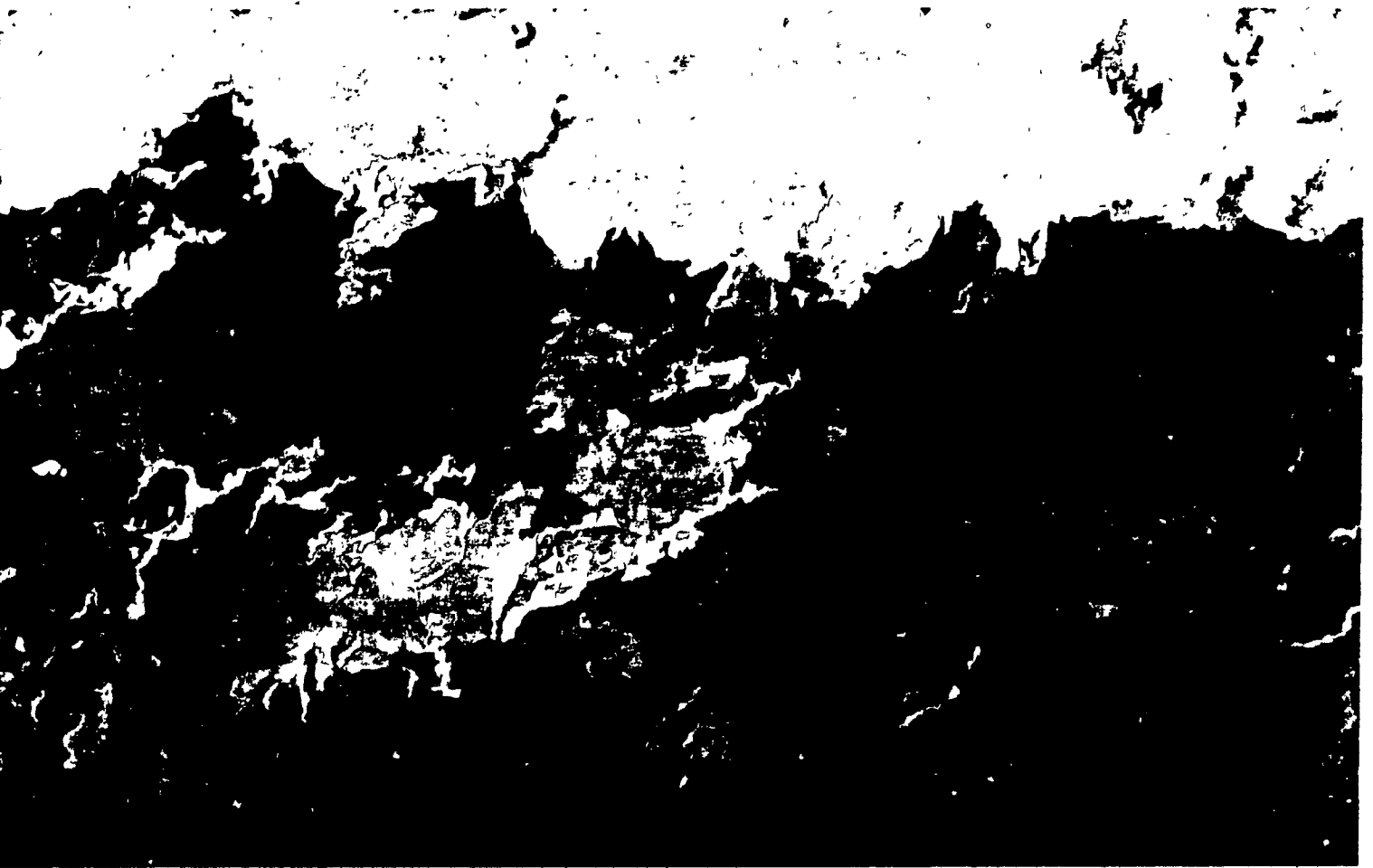
9. Augustus Vincent Tack, Night, Amargosa Desert, 1937,
oil on canvas, 7-1/2 x. 35 in. (Phillips Collection,
Washington, D.C.)



10. Augustus Vincent Tack, Aspiration, c. 1931, oil on canvas, 76-1/2 x 135-1/2 in. (Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.)

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Vincent Tack, Aspiration, c. 1931, oil on
76-1/2 x 135-1/2 in. (Phillips Collection,
Washington, D.C.)

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11. Kenneth Hayes Miller, The River, 1919, oil.

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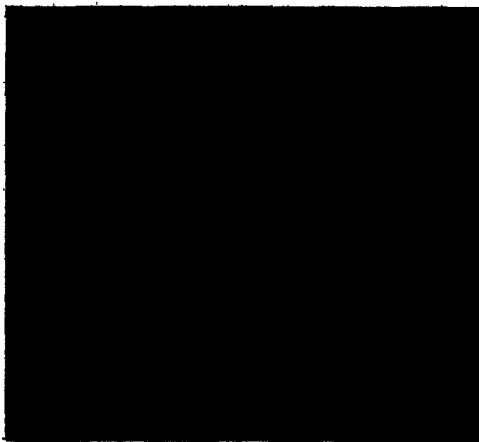


12. Kenneth Kayes Miller, The Hat Window, 1930, oil.

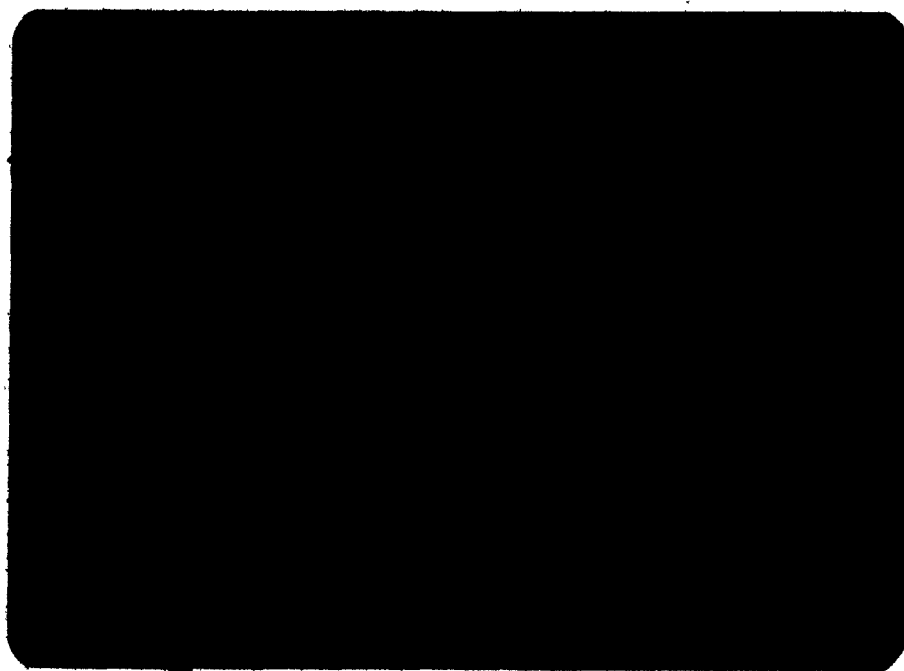
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13. Boardman Robinson, Sermon on the Mount, 1926,
60' x 96 in. (Schoen Collection, New York)

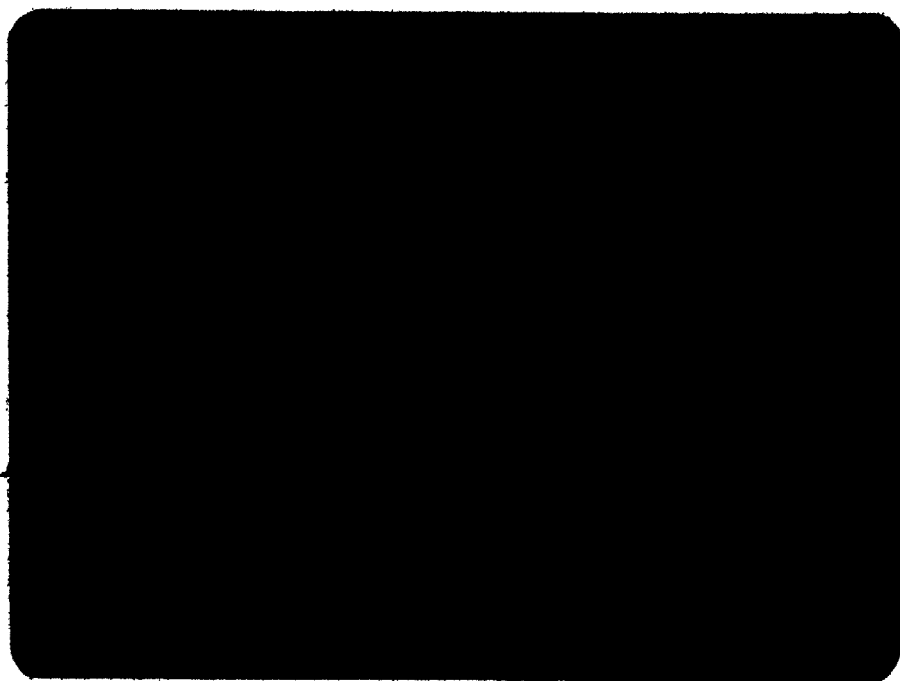


14. Rivière des Prairies, Québec, 1922, oil on canvas,
18 x 20 in; 45.7 x 50.8 cm. (NGC, 16532)



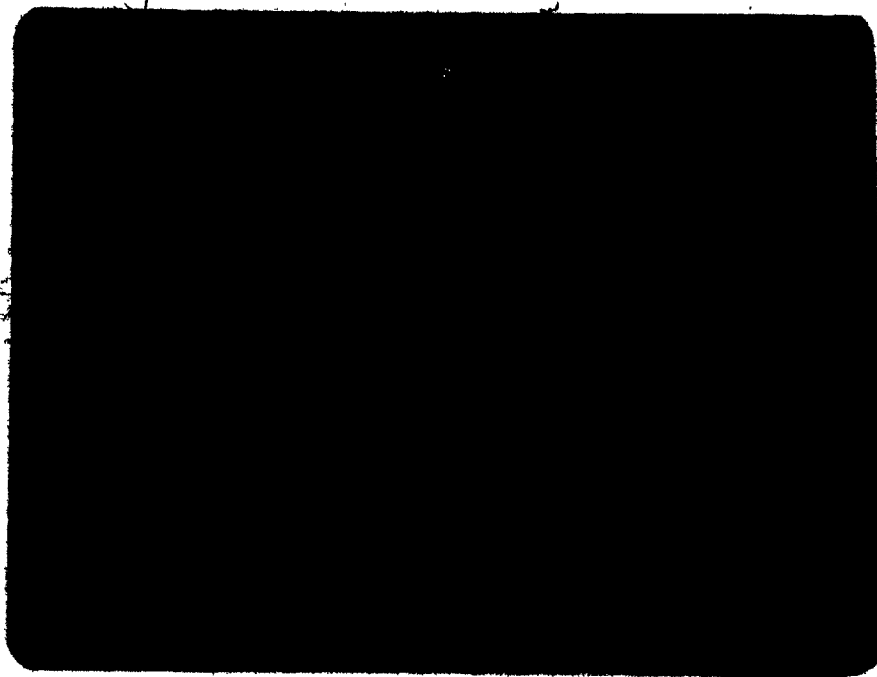
15. Tree, 1923, crayon on yellow paper, 8-1/8 x 11 in;
21.5 x 28 cm. (WAG, G70375)

COLOURED PICTURE



16. Landscape, 1926, watercolour on paper. (WAG, G70284)

COLOURED PICTURE



17. C. Keith Gebhardt, Sutherland St., Winnipeg, 1928.
coloured pencils on paper. (WAG, G73108)

COLOURED PICTURE



18. Backyards, Water St., c. 1928, graphite on paper,
squared off. (NGC 16769)

COLOURED PICTURE



19. Backyards, Water St., 1928, drypoint engraving,
13-1/8 x 11-7/8 in; 34.2 x 30.2 cm. (WAG, G68858)

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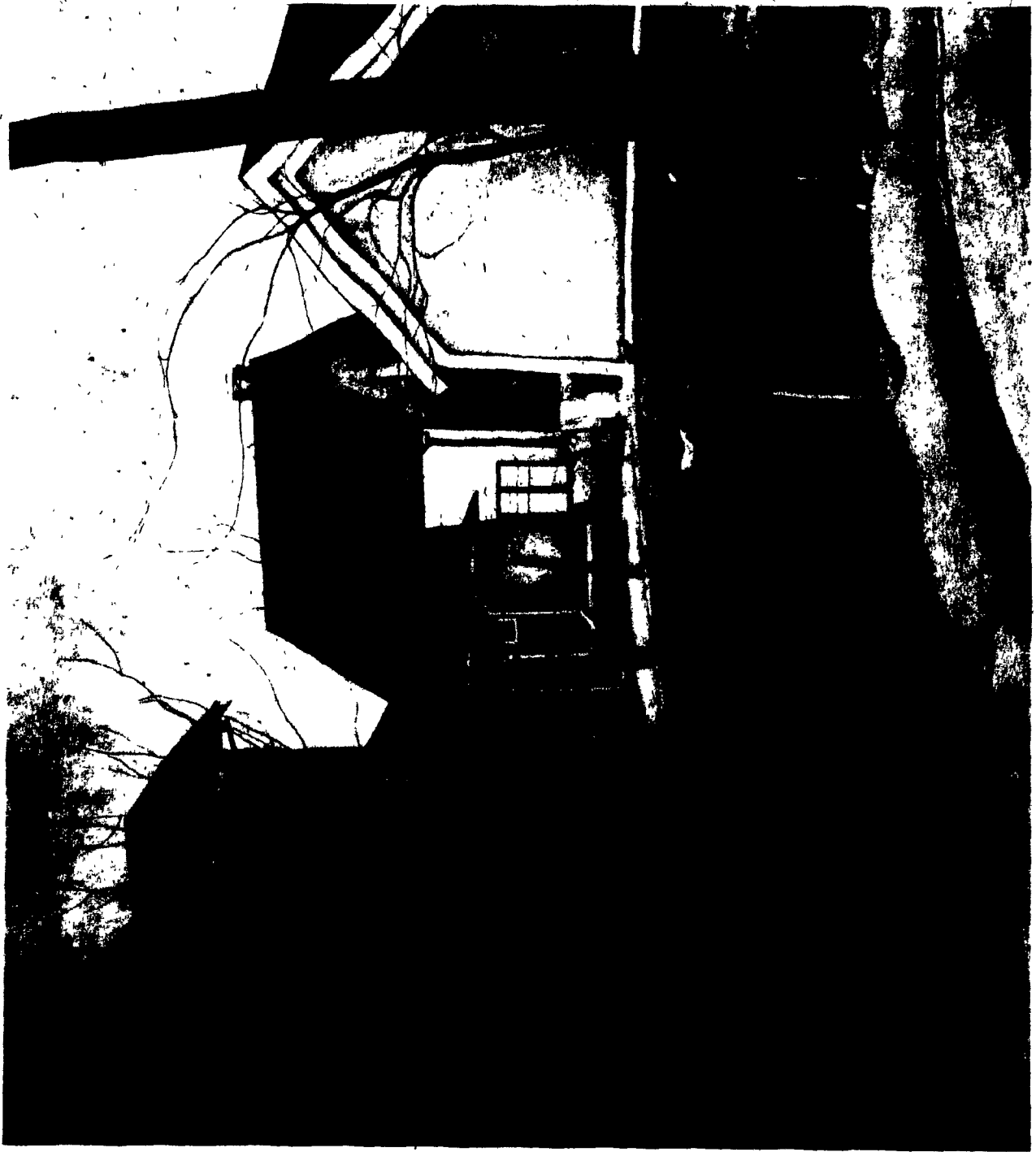


20. Photograph of site of Backyards, Water St., Winnipeg, 1979.

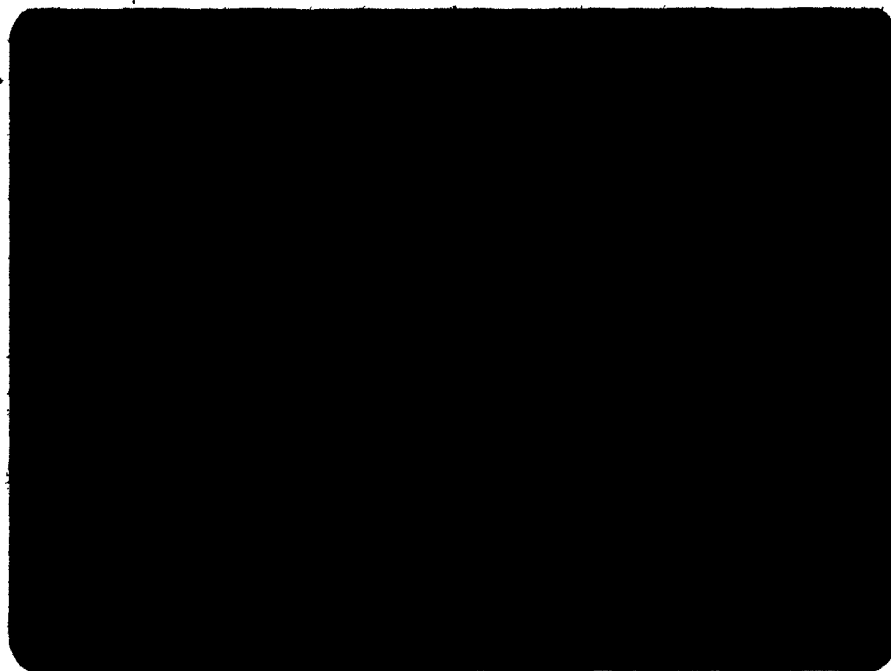
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21. Williamson's Garage, 1927, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 in.;
55.9 x 45.7 cm. (NGC 3682)



22. Pritchard's Fence, c. 1928, oil on canvas, 28 x 30 in;
71.6 x 76.5 cm. (AGO 5119)



23. Chicken Coop, 1928, graphite on paper. (NGC 16330)

COLOURED PICTURE



24. Bertram Brooker, Sound's Assembling, 1928, oil on canvas, 44-1/2 x 36 in; 114 x 91.4 cm. (WAG)



25. Bertram Brooker, Fawn Bay, 1936, oil on canvas,
24 x 30 in; 61.2 x 76.5 cm. (Mr. and Mrs. Dean Hughes,
Unionville, Ont.)



26. untitled, 1930, graphite on paper (NGC 16324)

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27. Sketch for Doc Snider's House, c. 1930, graphite on paper. (NGC, 16770)

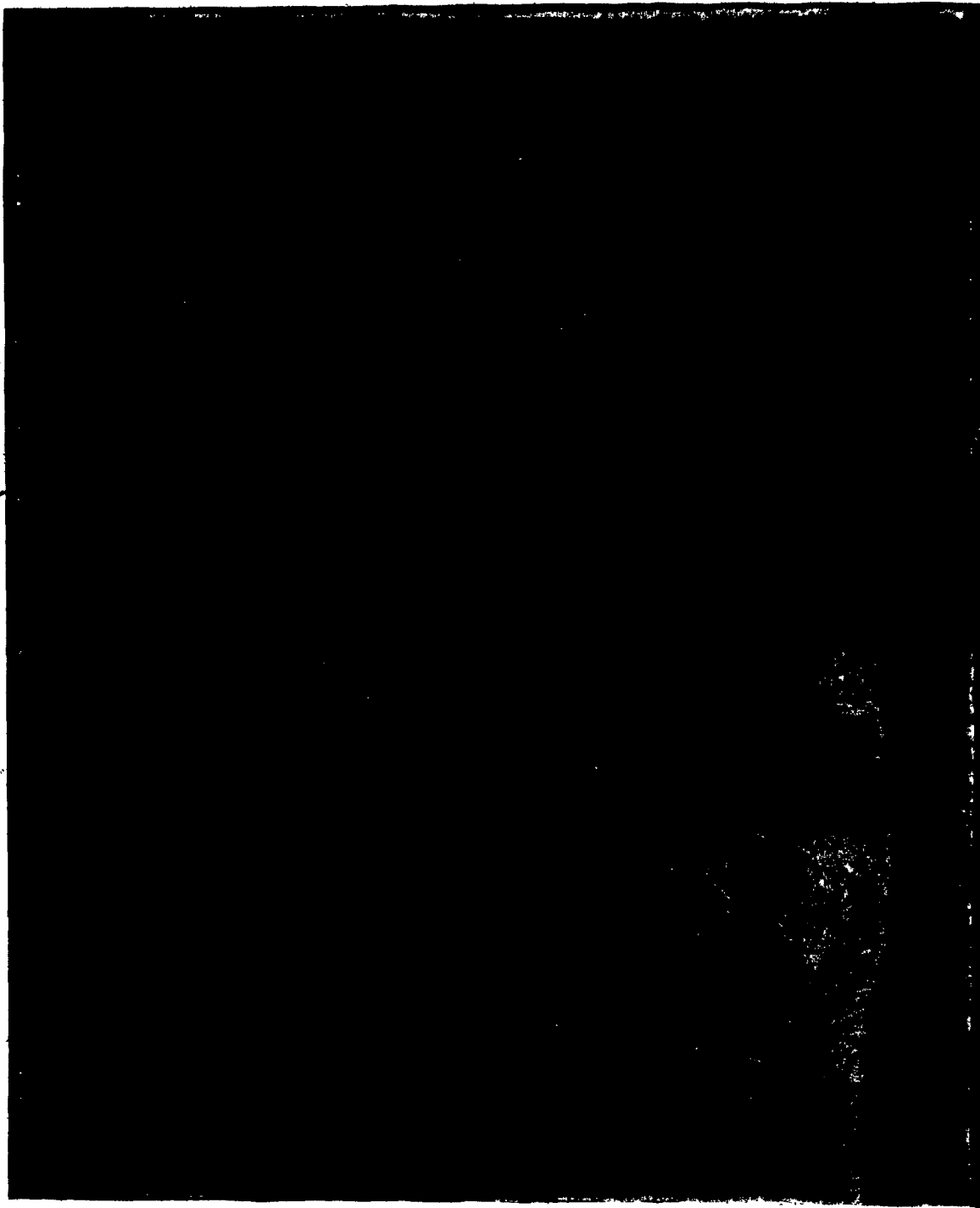


28. Doc Snider's House, 1931, oil on canvas,
29-1/4 x 33-3/8 in; 74.9 x 85.1 cm. (NGC, 3993)



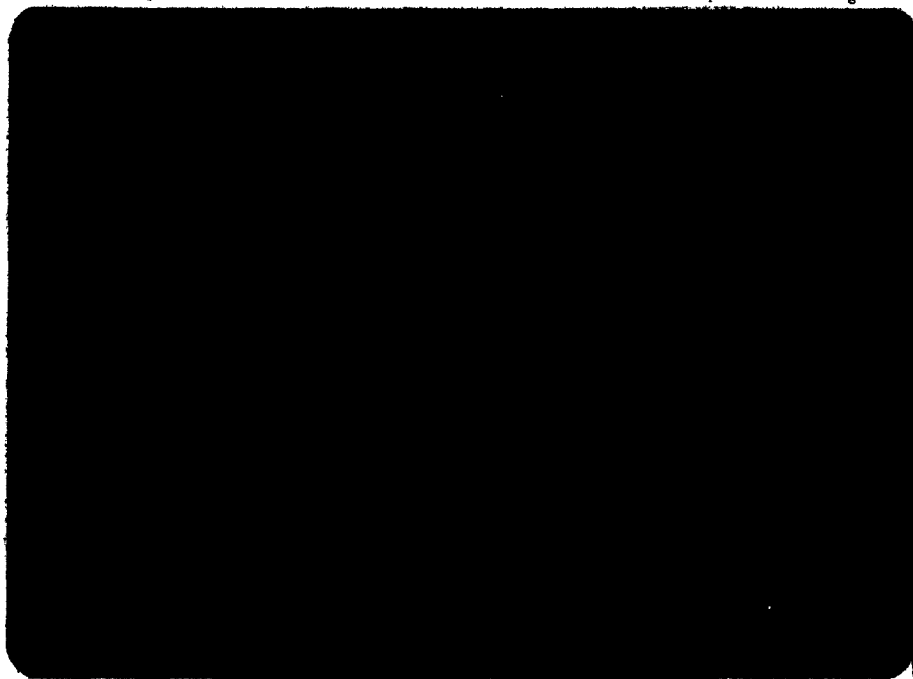
29. Photograph of site of Doc Snider's House. The porch at the right on FitzGerald's house was re-done sometime after his death. The white house behind the trees was Doc Snider's.

COLOURED PICTURE



30. The Pool, 1934, oil on board, 14-1/4 x 17-1/4 in;
36.2 x 43.7 cm. (NGC, 17612)

COLOURED PICTURE



31. Still Life, 1941, oil on board, 16-1/8 x 14-3/8 in;
40.9 x 36.5 cm. (NGC, 17611)

COLOURED PICTURE



32. Plant, c. 1940, coloured chalk on paper, (private collection)



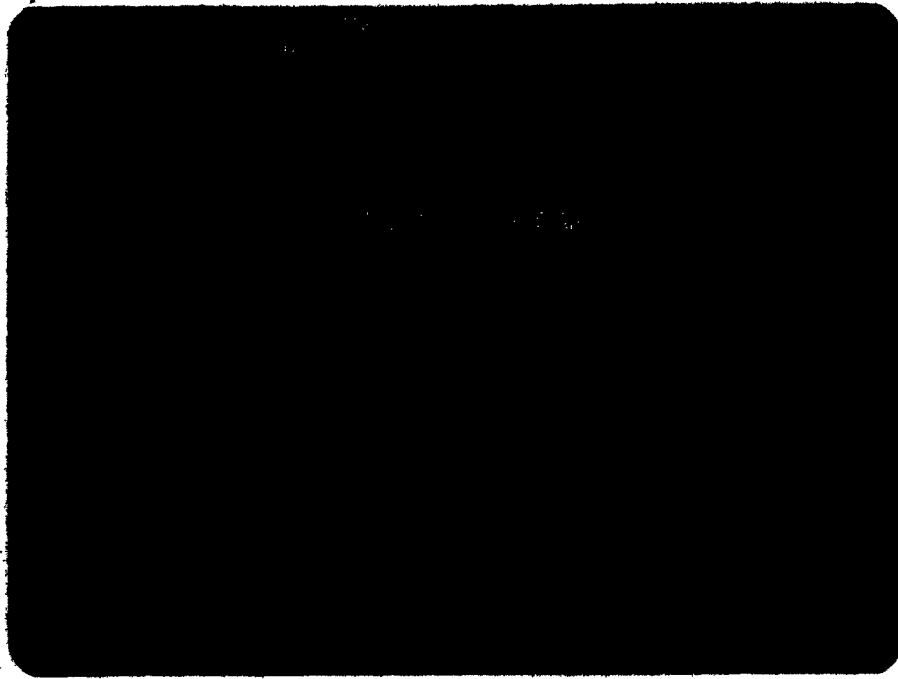
33. Still Life: two Apples, c. 1940, oil on canvas,
16-1/4 x 14-1/4 in; 41.1 x 36.3 cm. (WAG G5628)

COLOURED PICTURE



34. Tree Trunk and Bridge, 1936, graphite on paper.
(NGC 16304)

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35. Photograph of the bridge in Tree Trunk and Bridge,
Assiniboine Park, Winnipeg, 1980.

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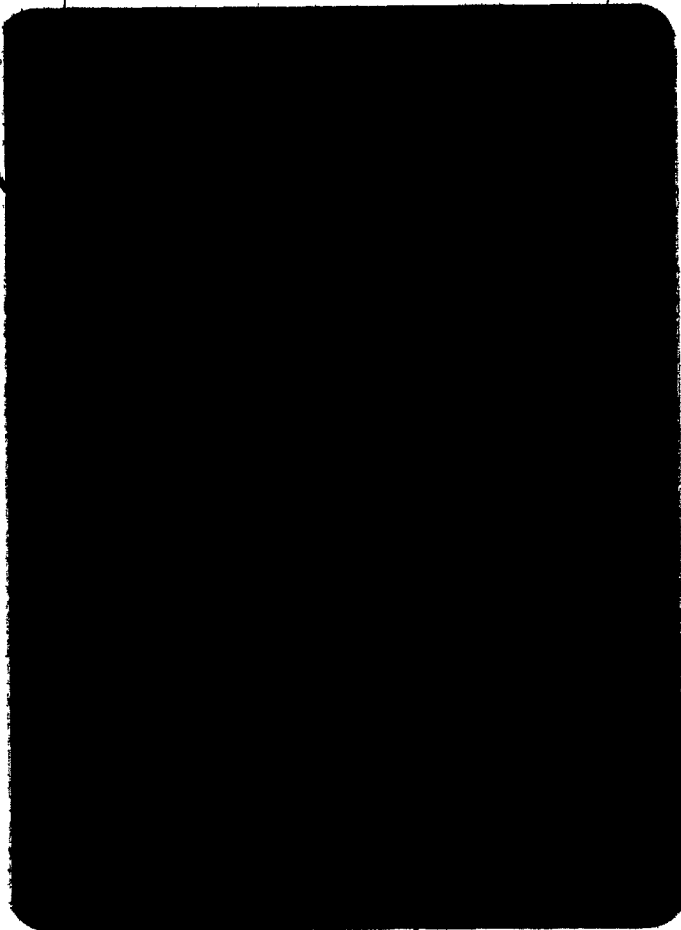
36. untitled, [jug], c. 1940, graphite on paper. (NGC 16321)

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37. Landscape with Trees, 1934, charcoal on paper. (NGC)

COLOURED PICTURE



38. Campbell's House, n.d. [c.1940], watercolour on paper.
(NGC, 6721)

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39. Paul Gauguin, Portrait de l'artiste, Les Miserables, 1888, oil on canvas, 71.5 x 90.5 cm. (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam)

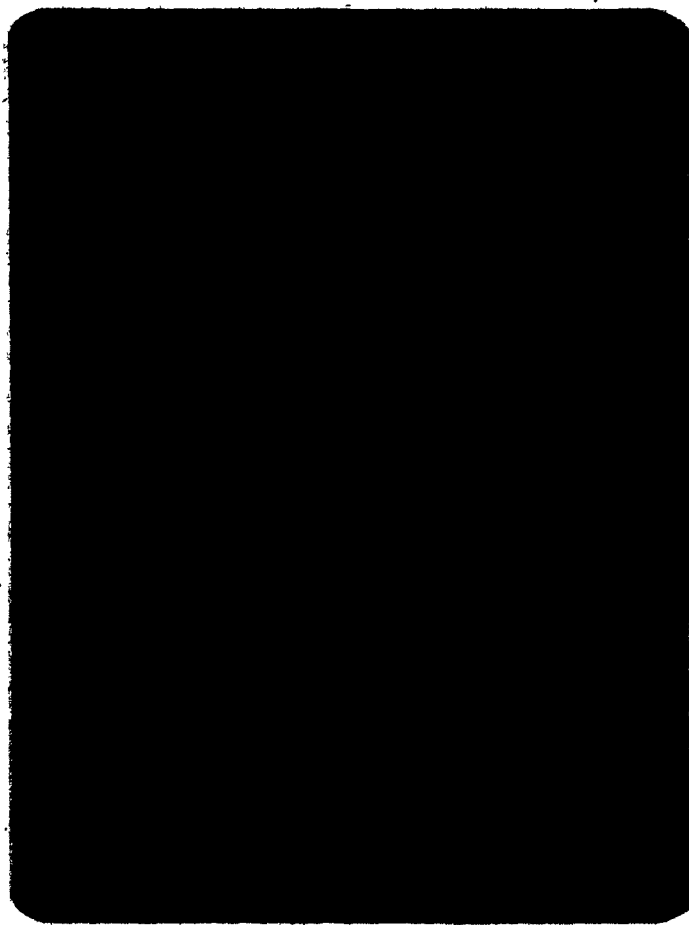


40. Caspar David Friedrich, Self Portrait, c. 1835.



41. Self Portrait (three nudes), c. 1943, watercolour on paper, 18 x 24 in; 45.7 x 60.8^o cm. (WAG, G6326)

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42. Self Portrait, c. 1942, watercolour on paper,
23-7/8" x 18" in; 61 x 45.8 cm. (WAG G6325)

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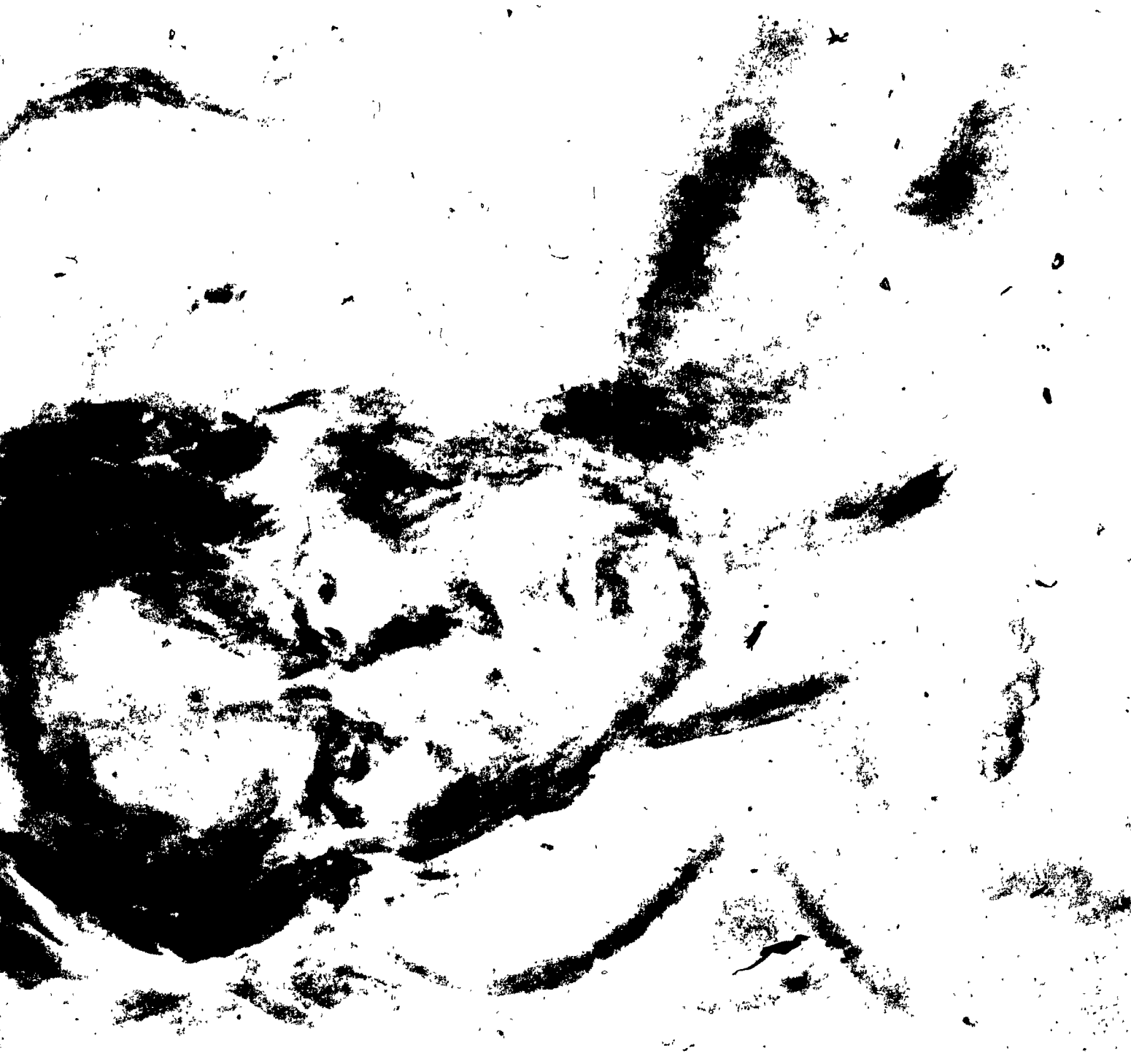
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43. Green Self Portrait (two nudes), c. 1942, watercolour on paper, 24 x 18 in; 60.9 x 45.9 cm. (WAG, G6319)

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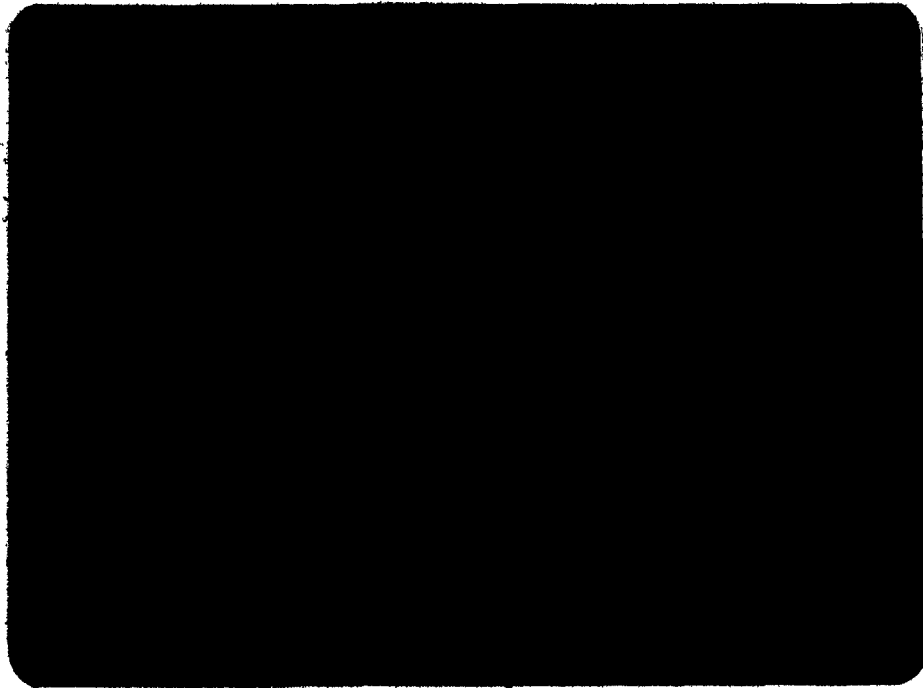


Portrait (two nudes), c. 1942, watercolour
24 x 18 in; 60.9 x 45.9 cm. (WAG, G6319)

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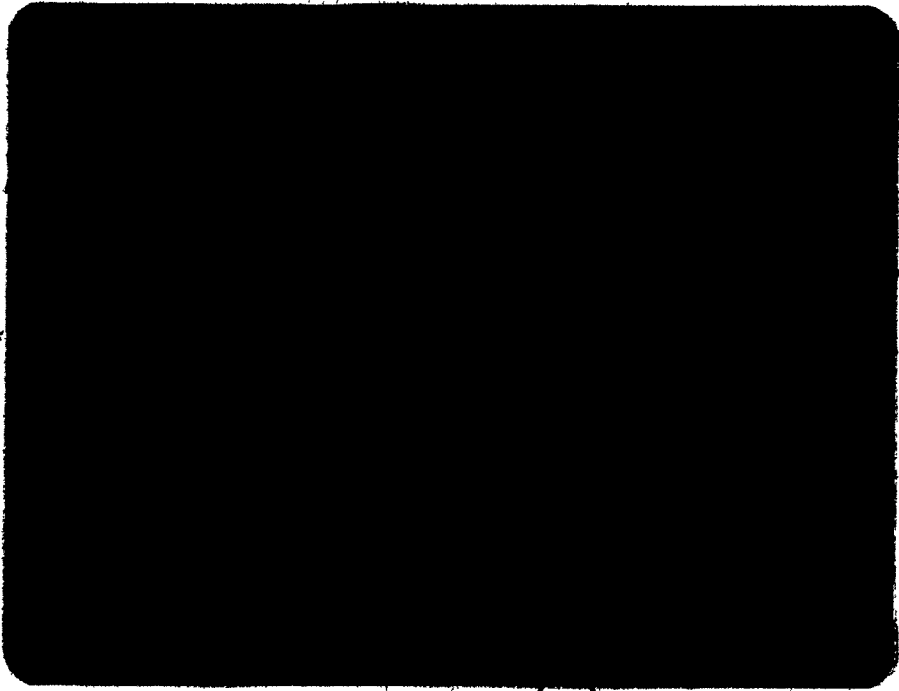
44. Four Nudes in a Landscape, c. 1942-43, graphite on paper, 7-7/8 x 8-1/8 in; 20 x 20.5 cm. (WAG G6392)

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450 Couple, c. 1943, graphite on paper, 7-7/8 x 8-1/8 in;
20 x 20.6 cm. (WAG G70353)



46. Figures, c. 1943, graphite on paper, 8 x 8 in;
20.2 x 20.2 cm. (WAG G70356)

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47. William Blake, Adam and Eve Sleeping, 1808, watercolour
51.8 x 39.3 cm. (Boston Museum of Fine Arts)

19



William Blake, Adam and Eve Sleeping, 1808, watercolour
39.3 cm. (Boston Museum of Fine Arts)

2 of 2



48. William Blake, *The Last Judgement*, 1808, tempera,
47.5 x 38 cm. (Sussex, Petworth House)

19



William Blake, *The Last Judgement*, 1808, tempera,
x 38 cm. (Sussex, Petworth House)

2072



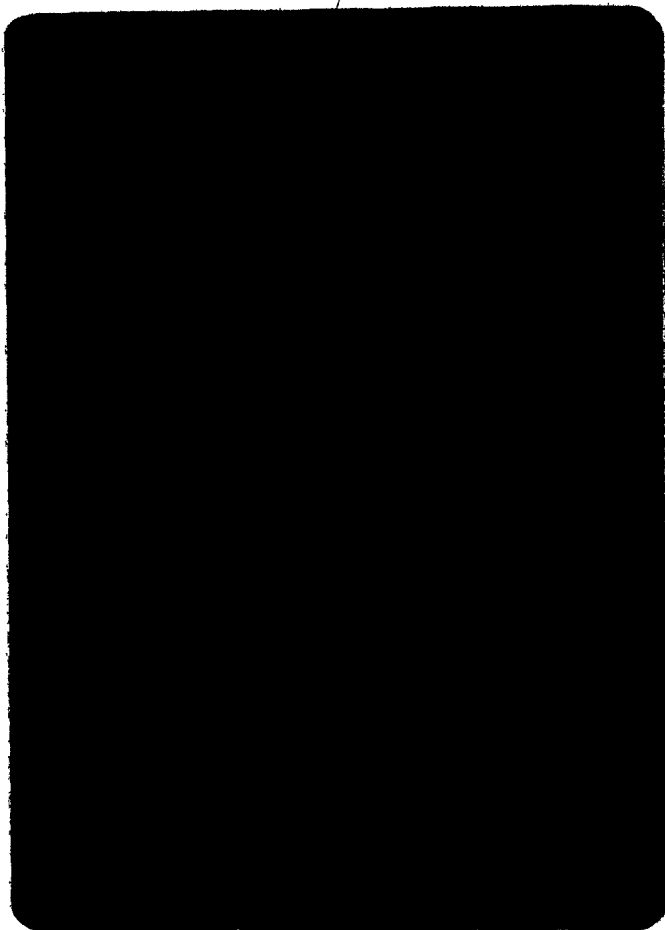
49. William Blake, The Circle of the Lustful, c. 1824-27, watercolour, 37 x 52 cm. (Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery.

107



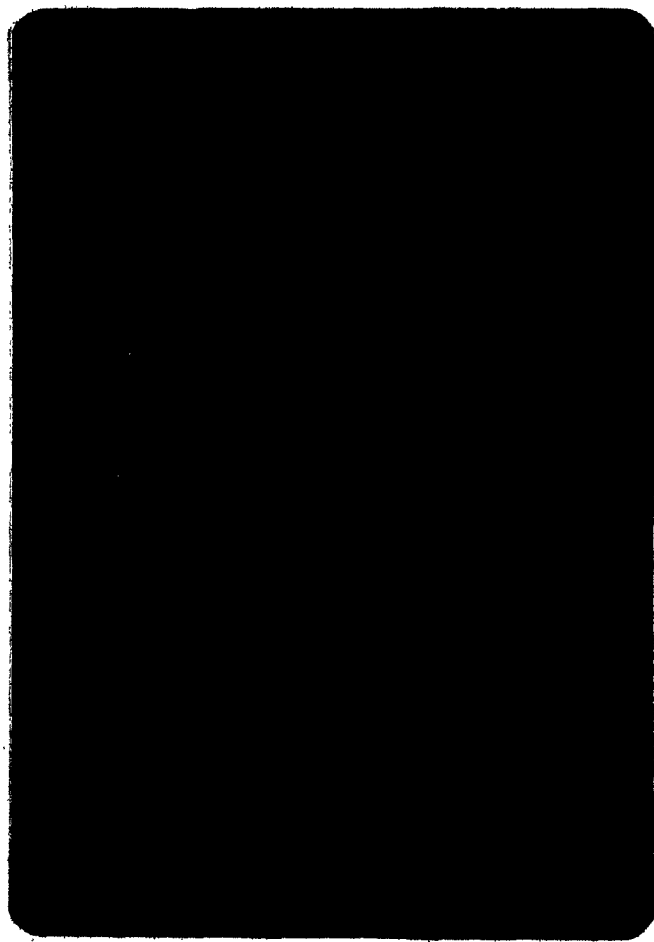
e, The Circle of the Lustful, c. 1824-27,
37 x 52 cm. (Birmingham City Museum and

12 of 2



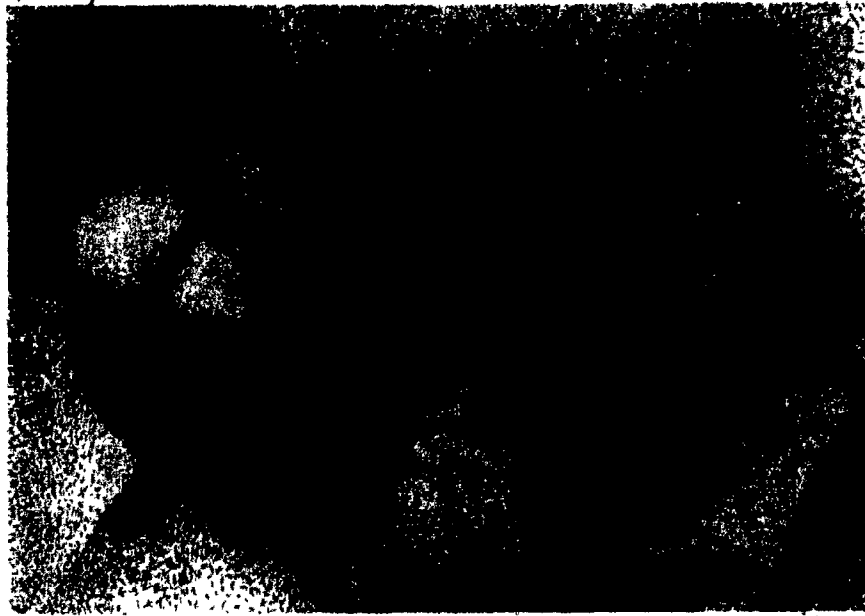
50. untitled, 1943, coloured chalks on paper. (NGC 16347)

COLOURED PICTURE



51. West Coast Rocks, 1944, watercolour on paper,
23-1/2 x 17-3/8 in; 59.7 x 40.4 cm. (WAG G73339)

COLOURED PICTURE



52. Apples in a Bowl, 1947, ink on paper, 11-3/8 x 16-1/2 in;
29.1 x 42 cm. (WAG G57152)



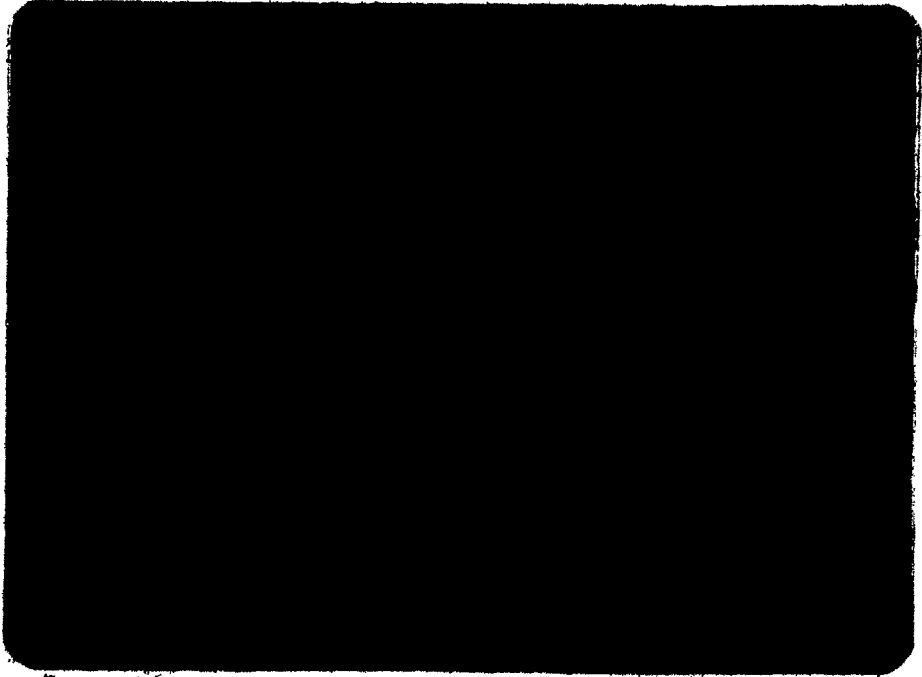
53. Trees in the Park, 1949, chalk on paper. (WAG)

17



in the Park, 1949, chalk on paper. (WAG)

20/2

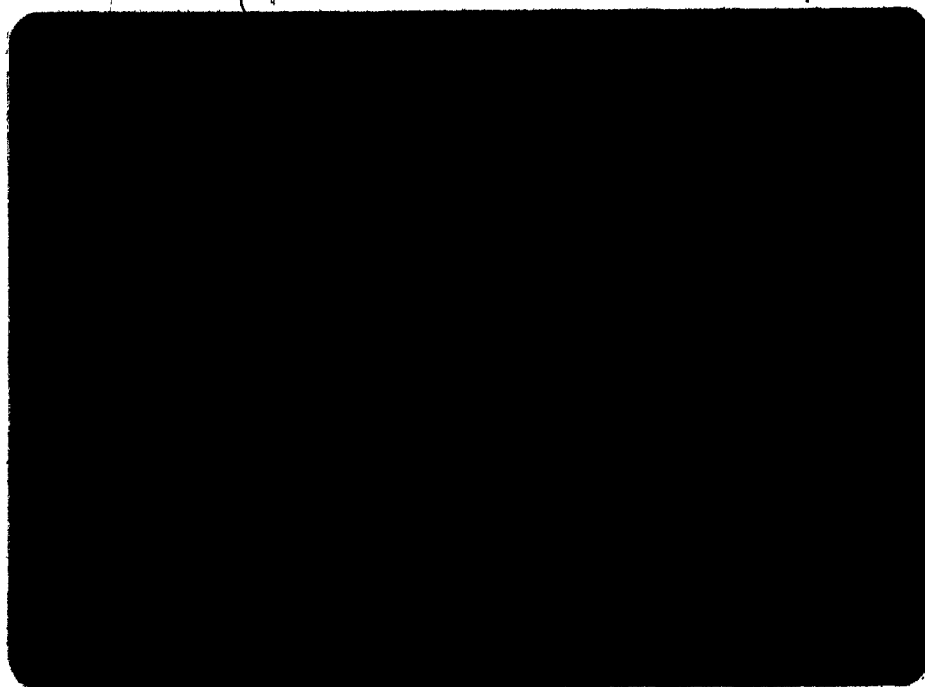


54. Photograph of trees on the bank of the Assiniboine River, downtown Winnipeg, 1979.

COLOURED PICTURE



55. Christmas card to Caven Atkins, 1951, ink on paper,
5-3/4 x 4-3/8 in; 14.5 x 11 cm. (Art Gallery of Windsor)



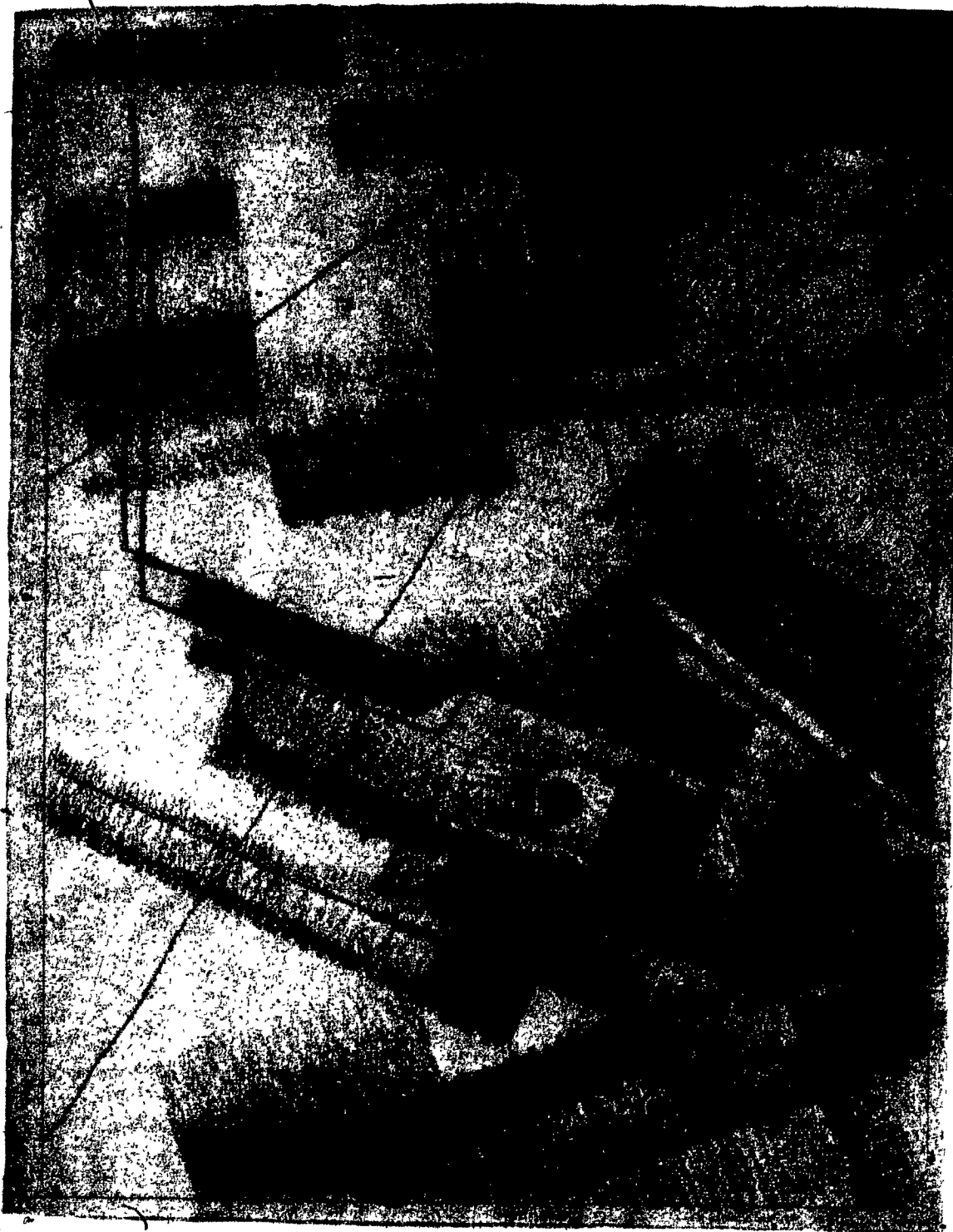
56. Abstract, c. 1952; graphite on paper, 5 x 4 in;
12.8 x 10.3 cm. (WAG, G70454)

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57. untitled, 1952, coloured pencils on paper, 9 x 12 in;
23 x 31 cm. (WAG G70419)

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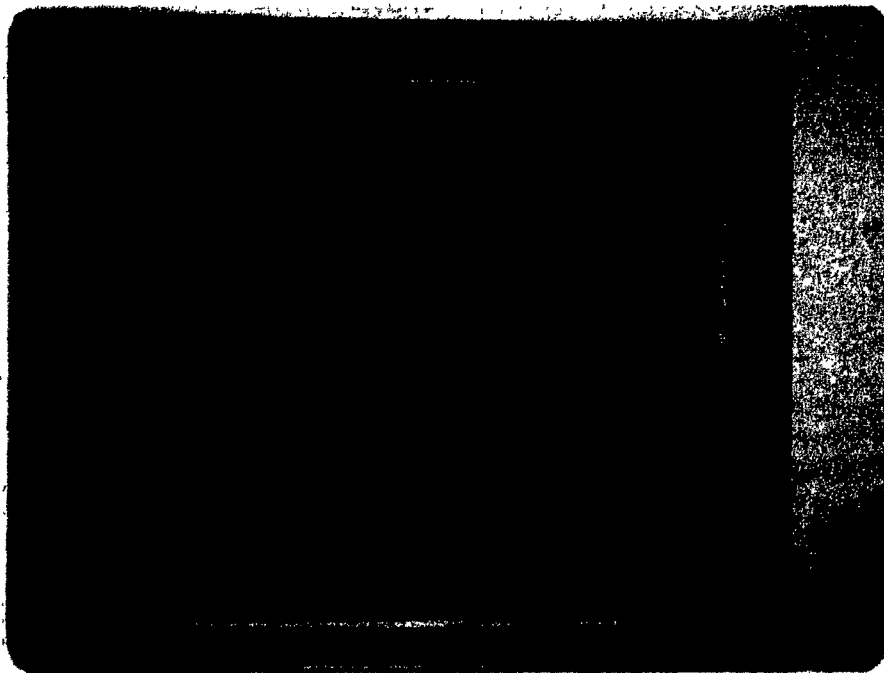
58. Abstract, 1952, coloured crayon on paper, 24.4 x 31.9 cm.
(WAG G70261)

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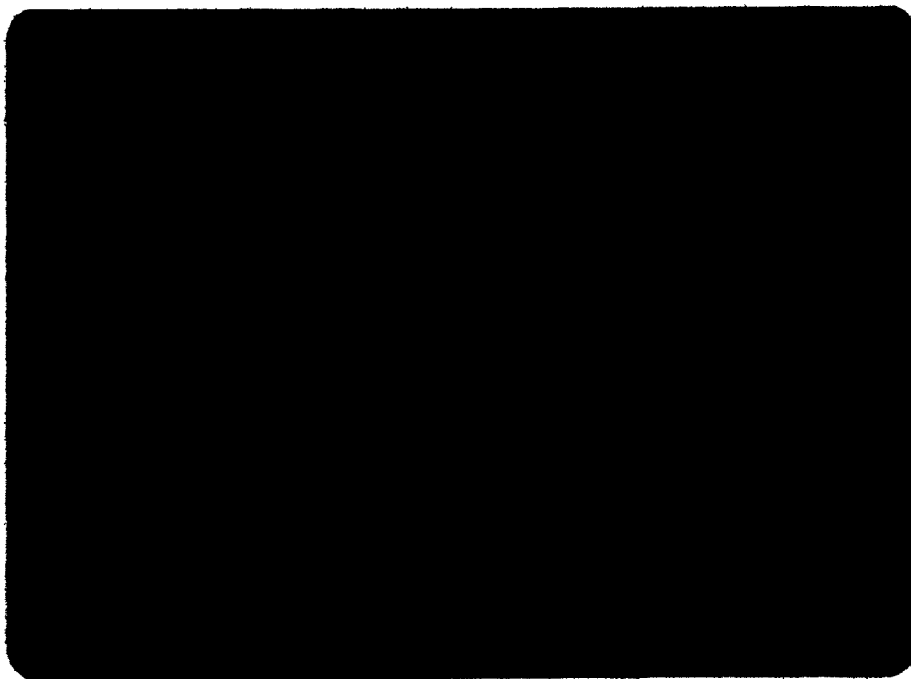
59. Abstract: Green and Gold, 1954, oil on canvas,
27-7/8 x 35-7/8 in; 71.2 x 91.5 cm. (WAG G63287)

COLOURED PICTURE



60. Still Life with Hat, c. 1955, oil on board,
24 x 29-3/4" in; 61 x 76 cm. (private collection)

COLOURED PICTURE



61. Sketch for Still Life with Hat, c. 1955, ink on paper,
(NGC 16339)

COLOURED PICTURE



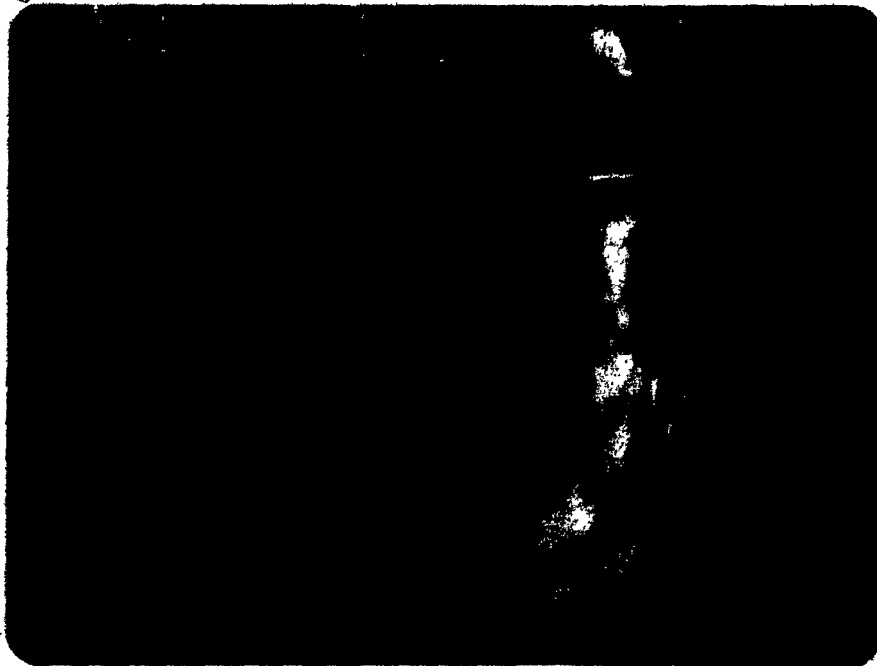
62. The Pool #4 Midnight, 1956, ink on blue paper,
(NGC 16335)

COLOURED PICTURE



63. Flooded Landscape, 1956, ink on blue paper,
12-3/4 x 14-7/8 in; 32.7 x 37.8 cm. (AGO)

COLOURED PICTURE



64. Photograph of the flooded Assiniboine River, Winnipeg, 1979.

COLOURED PICTURE

APPENDIX

SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

- 1890 - FitzGerald born March 17 to Lionel H. FitzGerald and Belle Hicks in an apartment over their grocery store on Main St. in Winnipeg. (Information about the store from interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.)
- Within the next few years, the family (FitzGerald had a sister, Geraldine, and a brother, Jack) move to Elgin St., King St. and finally to 672 Sherbrook St. where they continue to live for many years.
- As a child, spends his summer vacations at his maternal grandparents' (the John Hicks) farm near Snowflake, Manitoba. His grandfather dies when FitzGerald is about six. (Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives, TS, p. 4.) His grandmother continues to run the farm alone for several years.
- 1902-03 - At the age of twelve or thirteen, quits school to work. (He had attended Isbister and then Victoria Schools.)
- (Patricia Bovey in "The Man," in Bovey, Patricia and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development of An Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 105, gives 1904 as the date at which FitzGerald leaves school, with no source cited. But Irene Heywood Hemsworth states that the artist was working for Martin, Bole and Wynne, a wholesale drug company, as an office boy in 1902. This was according to her conversations with FitzGerald. (Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.) Ayre also refers to this company in his unpublished monograph (Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives, TS, p. 5).)
- Later works for Osler, Hammond and Nanton, a brokerage firm then located at Portage and Main Streets in Winnipeg. He leaves for a few months to try a job with The Stovel Company, which did designing, electrotyping and engraving, but returns to Osler, Hammond and Nanton.
- 1904 - The Winnipeg Public Library opens on William Ave. FitzGerald begins to read there in his spare time. He later remembered reading Ruskin's Elements of Drawing and Holman Hunt's two-volume work, Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

- 1906 - Begins to draw and paint in his spare time, following Ruskin's program in the Elements of Drawing.
- 1908 - Begins evening art classes under an A.S. Keszthelyi, a Ukrainian artist then living in Winnipeg. Keszthelyi had previously taught at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and at the Art Student's League in New York. He gave classes in Winnipeg from 1908-1912. (Ferdinand Eckhardt, One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1970, p. 87).
- 1909-12 - F.S. Challenor paints a series of murals at the Royal Alexandra Hotel in Winnipeg.
- 1911 - FitzGerald had met his fiancée, Felicia ("Vally") Wright, a singer from Ottawa, by this year. During 1911 she lives in Ottawa with her family and they correspond until her return in 1912.
- Exhibits three works (dates and titles unknown) at the Winnipeg Public Library.
- 1912 - November 22, marries "Vally" (named, it would seem, from a poem by Gibbs Mason, 1906, clipped and saved by FitzGerald and extant in his personal papers at the FSC entitled "Vally", about a pretty girl). They marry in secret at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at Elgin and Ellen Streets in Winnipeg, then move together to Vally's apartment at 462 St. Mary Ave.
- Rents a studio together with Donald MacQuarrie, a Scottish watercolourist and the first curator of the Winnipeg Museum of Fine Arts. The studio was at 416 Chamber of Commerce Building. During this year FitzGerald works as a commercial artist (name of firm unknown).
- The Winnipeg Museum of Fine Arts (later to become the Winnipeg Art Gallery) opens at Main and Water Streets in Winnipeg. FitzGerald exhibits one work, Landscape (#246, no date or medium known) in the inaugural exhibition.
- 1913 - MacQuarrie is replaced as curator by Alexander Musgrove (1882-1952) but continued to remain in Winnipeg for another year.

- The Winnipeg School of Art opens next door to the Museum. Musgrove becomes the first principal, while retaining his curatorial position.

- Walter J. Phillips (1884-1963) arrives from England in Winnipeg. He writes articles on art for The Winnipeg Tribune and is a professional artist as well. He moves from Winnipeg to Calgary in 1941.

- Brigden's of Winnipeg is established by Fred Brigden of Toronto. They hire many city artists to work on layout and design, photo-retouching and drawing.

- FitzGerald and Vally live in a tent together over the summer at the foot of Linden Ave. on the banks of the Red River in East Kildonan, a suburb of Winnipeg. In the fall, they return to St. Mary's Ave.

- Exhibits The Dying Embers of Autumn (now destroyed) in the Royal Canadian Academy of Art Exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and in Montreal.

1914 - Arnold Brigden, nephew to Fred, comes to Winnipeg from England to manage Brigden's of Winnipeg. He and FitzGerald become friends. Brigden is an amateur painter and photographer, and collects art.

- The Winnipeg Sketch Club is formed by Alexander Musgrove for amateur artists.

- An exhibition of Scottish Watercolours is held at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in September-November.

- FitzGerald does a series of monoprints throughout the year inspired by the clichés-verre method of Corot which he learned through MacQuarrie. MacQuarrie was an admirer of Corot (Kevin Forrest, The Prints of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald, unpublished master's thesis, Carleton University, 1979).

- Exhibits two works, Morning in the City and Afternoon (dates and media unknown) in the Royal Canadian Academy of Art exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery from January until March. Also included in the exhibition is Fin du Jour by Ozias Leduc. Ann Davis has noted (in "A North American Artist", Bovey, Patricia and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 36) that FitzGerald's work was similar to Leduc's in its mystical quality, but that FitzGerald did not know Leduc's work. It is highly likely, however, that FitzGerald did see this one work by Leduc, at least.

- Has a two-artist exhibition with MacQuarrie at their studio, May 8-15, before MacQuarrie returns to Scotland. (Titles, dates, prices or sales are not known.)
 - Exhibits eight works in the Winnipeg Artists Exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery from June until August. They were: #22 The Edge of the Wood, #23 The Shack, # 25 A Woodland Road, #26 St. Boniface, #47 The Warehouses, #61 The Assiniboine, #67 The Poplars, #75 The Mill (dates and media not known).
- 1915 - Moves with his wife to 18 Evanson St., Winnipeg.
- January: the Royal Canadian Academy Patriotic Fund Exhibition is held at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Fitz-Gerald contributes six works: #4 On the Assiniboine, #7 St. Boniface, #13 The Freight Station, #51 Summer Landscape, #63 The Avenue (all paintings) and #64 The Assiniboine (a drawing). Dates unknown. (Ozias Leduc exhibited his Effet Gris: Neige.)
- 1916 - Son, Lionel Edward, born March 30.
- Exhibits with the Royal Canadian Academy in Montreal and in a Western Artists Exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery (works not known).
- 1918 - The National Gallery of Canada purchases FitzGerald's oil painting Late Fall, Manitoba of 1917 which had been exhibited there in a group exhibition that year (NGC Acc. no. 1483).
- 1919 - Daughter, Patricia LeMoine, born March 25.
- The Winnipeg General Strike is declared. It begins May 15 and its peak, Bloody Saturday, is June 21. From 1914 to 1919 the cost of living in Winnipeg had risen 75-80% while the wage increase had been 18% (Beatrice Madger, The Winnipeg General Strike (Toronto: MacLean and Hunter, 1969, p. 8).
 - Exhibits with the Royal Canadian Academy at the Art Gallery of Toronto (work not known).
- 1920 - Assists the American artist, Augustus Vincent Tack (1870-1949), during the month of June in installing

Tack's murals at the new Manitoba Legislative Building (constructed 1914-20). (See fig's 5, 6, 7 and 8.)

- Later that summer, returns alone to Snowflake where he rents a room in a farmhouse neighbouring his grandmother's. Her farm was then rented out to a stranger. (Telephone interview with Mrs. Lily White, neighbour at Snowflake, Winnipeg, 11 May, 1979.)

1921

- The Winnipeg Little Theatre is founded. It runs for sixteen years, finally merging with other groups to form the Manitoba Drama League. FitzGerald intermittently works designing sets and allows students at the Winnipeg School of Art to assist him. Charles Comfort (1900-) also did some of this work while he was living in Winnipeg and working at Brigden's. (It would appear that FitzGerald knew Comfort as he had his Toronto address noted in his small personal notebook (FSC 1-0041). Comfort moved to Toronto to live in 1925. Edith Sinclair (whose husband, Claude, collected art) was the directress of the group. Florence Brigden, wife of Arnold, was an actress. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba, MG 10 G22 (Edith Sinclair file) and MG 10 G16 (Winnipeg Little Theatre File).)

- Franz Johnston (1888-1949) of the Group of Seven resigns from the Group to come to Winnipeg as the principal of the Winnipeg School of Art. He remains until 1924, then moves to Toronto to teach at the Ontario College of Art.

- Exhibits Summer: East Kildonan (1920) with the Ontario Society of Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto. The same work is also exhibited at the Canadian Art of Today exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

- First one-artist exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in September (works not known).

- In October FitzGerald leaves Winnipeg with his family for Montreal. His wife finds employment in a tearoom there, and in late November FitzGerald travels on alone to New York. He finds work as a decorator or designer (likely this was freelance and not for a firm, but details are not known) and enrolls at the Art Student's League. He takes four courses under Boardman Robinson (1876-1952) from December until March 1922.

- 1922 - From March until May takes two courses under Kenneth Hayes Miller (1876-1952).
- Returns to Canada and travels with his family in Quebec and Ontario before returning to Winnipeg on July 19.
- Works doing design work and displays for Eaton's and decorating work for a J.E. Dolen at 310 Assiniboine Ave., Winnipeg.
- Sometime after his return from New York, builds the family home at 160 Lyle St. (now 30 Deer Lodge Place in St. James, a suburb of Winnipeg), where he lives until his death.
- 1923 - Takes up printmaking again, turning to drypoint, and continues working in this medium until 1927, doing only a few thereafter until 1933 when he stopped, doing only his personal Christmas cards each year in lino-cut until 1946 (Kevin Forrest, The Prints of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald, unpublished master's thesis, Carleton University, 1979).
- Begins teaching evening classes at the Winnipeg School of Art.
- 1924 - In September, begins teaching full-time at the Winnipeg School of Art under the new principal, G. Keith Gebhardt (1899-).
- By November of 1924, since his return from New York, FitzGerald had completed a set of murals at Barconi's (later the Plaza Cafe) and the Mitchell Copp Jewelry Store on Portage Ave. in Winnipeg; (both no longer extant). ("Art School Has New Director," Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 22, 1924.)
- FitzGerald's untitled work of a man snowshoeing is reproduced on the cover of The Beaver, at that time the company magazine for the Hudson's Bay Co. (vol. V, no. 1, Dec. 1924).
- Exhibits Old House (#83, a drypoint) with the Canadian Society of Graphic Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto.
- 1925 - Designs sets in a medieval style for the Winnipeg Little Theatre's production, "The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife".

- June: the Winnipeg Art Gallery hosts a touring exhibition of Contemporary English Painting.

- Summer: FitzGerald takes a trip west as indicated by several sketches in the Winnipeg Art Gallery collection which are signed and dated and have place names noted of western cities (ex. W.A.G. Acc. no.'s: G70 480, G63 366, G6349, G6347 and an entire sketchbook, G63 189). Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis (Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development of An Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978, p. 105) suggest that FitzGerald spent the summer of 1924 at Banff and give no source. The Banff School of Fine Arts has no record of FitzGerald being there that summer (letter from J.C.K. Madsen, Assistant Director, Banff Centre, to the author, 21 November, 1979). It seems likely, therefore, that FitzGerald was west in 1925 only and not in 1924.

± Exhibits with the Group of Seven in the Canadian Section of Fine Arts of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, England (works not known), and exhibits Still Life (# 50, a painting) with the Ontario Society of Artists exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

1926

- Manitoba Society of Artists formed for professional artists by Walter J. Phillips.

- Exhibits his oil painting Summer Sunshine (date unknown) at the National Gallery of Canada in their annual exhibition of Canadian Art, then also at the Winnipeg Art Gallery; also exhibits The Fallen Tree (#84) and At Lockport (#85) with the Canadian Society of Graphic Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

1927

- Robert Ayre moves to Montreal via Jasper, Alberta. He and FitzGerald had met through the Winnipeg Little Theatre as Ayre wrote reviews of the plays for The Winnipeg Free Press. Ayre also used to attend the exhibitions at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and met FitzGerald there (interview with Robert Ayre, Montreal, 25 May, 1979). Ayre and FitzGerald begin their correspondence.

- Exhibits Williamson's Garage (#33, 1927, oil on canvas, now in NGC. acq. #3682) with the Ontario Society of Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

- Exhibits his Après midi d'été in an exhibition of Canadian Art at the Musée de Jeu de Paulme in Paris.

- Also exhibits A Corner of the Stable (#362), Hayloft (#363), Backyard (#364) and Maple Tree (#365) with the Canadian Society of Graphic Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

- Exhibits, as well, at the Art Institute of Chicago Seventh International Watercolour Exhibition, and at the Annual Fine Arts Exhibition of the Minnesota State Fair (works not known).

1928

- The Manitoba Society of Artists opens a gallery which periodically received touring exhibitions from the National Gallery of Canada as well as their own exhibitions of local artists' work. It was located at 330½ Main St. above Richardson's Art Store (both no longer extant).

- FitzGerald designs sets and some costumes for the Winnipeg Little Theatre's production of Pirandello's Henry IV.

- Takes a trip with Gebhardt to Minneapolis during the summer.

- Fritz Brandtner (1896-1969) moves to Winnipeg from Danzig, Poland. He lives on Sherbrook St. and works for Eaton's, Bridgen's and as a house painter. In December, 1928, he has a one-artist exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. He seeks out FitzGerald and they become good friends. Unfortunately, their correspondence (from after Brandtner moved to Montreal in 1934) was destroyed (telephone interview with Mr. Paul Kastel, Montreal, executor of the Brandtner estate, 13 September, 1979).

- FitzGerald is given a one-artist exhibition of his drawings at the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto, organized by J.E.H. MacDonald, early in the year. Lawren Harris purchases one work (work and price paid not known).

- Exhibits Backyards, Water Street (1927, drypoint #343) with the Canadian Society of Graphic Artists at their annual exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

1929

- FitzGerald meets Irene Heywood (later to marry Mr. Wade Hemsworth) who was a new student that year at the Winnipeg School of Art. She was eighteen that year and FitzGerald was thirty-nine. She remained at the school until 1932 when her family moved to Brandon, Manitoba. She and FitzGerald began to correspond and continued

to do so after she had moved to Eastern Canada with her family several years later. (Some of his letters are still extant in her personal collection.)

- FitzGerald sponsors Fritz Brandtner to bring over his fiancée, Mieke (Mitzi), from Poland to Canada (Charles Hill, Canadian Painting in the Thirties (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), p. 128).

- FitzGerald is appointed the new principal of the Winnipeg School of Art when Gebhardt returns to the United States.

- By 1929 FitzGerald had completed a set of murals in the St. Charles Hotel in Winnipeg (Fred Housser, "The Amateur Movement in Canadian Painting," Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, Bertram Brooker, ed. (Toronto: MacMillan, 1929, p. 89)). (The building is no longer extant.)

- Early in the year, FitzGerald is given a show of his drawings at Dent's Publishing House in Toronto. Lawren Harris brings Bertram Brooker to see the exhibition (Lawren Harris to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, December 29, 1929, FSC correspondence files). Brooker buys a work and contacts FitzGerald through J.E.H. MacDonald in order to come to visit that summer, which he does (FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to J.E.H. MacDonald, undated letter, PAC, M630 D111).

- Exhibits in the National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Exhibition (works not known).

1930

- In June, takes a train trip to various art centres in the U.S.A. and Canada in order to broaden his knowledge of art education for his new position as principal of the Winnipeg School of Art. His itinerary was as follows:

- Minneapolis: The Walker Art Centre and its art school;
- Chicago: The Chicago Art Institute and its art school, and the Field Museum;
- Pittsburgh: Boardman Robinson's ten murals from 1927 on the history of commerce done at the Kaufmann Department Store;
- Washington, D.C.: The Phillips Gallery, where he meets with A.V. Tack once again;
- Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of Art, The Industrial Arts Academy and the Rodin Museum;
- New York City: Grand Central Galleries, Museum of Natural History, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Modern Art.

The places listed are all described in FitzGerald's diary of his trip (FSC 1-0183). Afterwards he also visited Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, but these are not described. In Toronto he stays with Bertram Brooker and meets some members of the Group of Seven through him.

- Exhibits Oakdale Place (#42) and Snow Laden Branches (#43) (media and dates not known) with the Group of Seven at the Art Gallery of Toronto, and Backyards, Water Street (1927, drypoint) in the National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Exhibition at the Canadian National Exhibition Art Show in Toronto, and in a show of Canadian work at Grand Central Galleries, New York, in June (works not known).

1931 - June 13: FitzGerald completes Doc Snider's House, the oil painting he had started in January of 1930.

- Over the winter he develops pneumonia and does not recover until the fall of 1932 (FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Arthur Lismer, 21 June, 1932 and 29 September, 1932, McMichael Canadian Collection).

- The Winnipeg Art Gallery hosts two travelling exhibitions sent from the National Gallery of Canada: Contemporary Polish Prints in May and Contemporary French Prints in June and July.

- Exhibits Poplars (#43, painting) with the Ontario Society of Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto, and exhibits at the National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Exhibition and in Buenos Aires in the British Empire Trade Exhibition (works not known).

1932 - Early in the year J.E.H. MacDonald dies after an illness and FitzGerald is asked to take his place in the Group of Seven (Arthur Lismer to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 24 May, 1932, FSC correspondence files).

- In March Vincent and Alice Massey come through Winnipeg and visit FitzGerald. They see some of his art and purchase two works (specific works not known). Also in March Arthur Lismer came for dinner while on a cross-country lecture tour, and Harry Adaskin, a violinist, Theosophist and friend of the Group of Seven, Bertram Brooker and other Toronto artists, comes for tea.

- Winnipeg School of Art hosts an exhibition of Contemporary British Painting circulated by the National Gallery of Canada in June.

- The National Gallery of Canada purchases Doc Snider's House and sends it for exhibition to a show of Canadian art at the Roerich Gallery in New York. He is also included in the National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Exhibition (works not known).

1933

- Early in the year the Canadian Group of Painters is formed in Toronto, signalling the dissolution of the Group of Seven. FitzGerald is named a founding member.

- Hart House, University of Toronto, purchases FitzGerald's Summer of 1931.

- The Winnipeg Art Gallery in April hosts a Contemporary American Watercolours exhibition and the J.E.H. MacDonald Memorial Exhibition.

- During the summer, Brooker visits FitzGerald in Winnipeg.

- Exhibits with the Canadian Group of Painters in Atlantic City, showing three works: Still Life (#17), At Silver Heights (#18) and Dead Tree (#19).

- Also exhibits at the National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Exhibition (works not known).

1934

- Winnipeg Art Gallery hosts an exhibition of the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour in January, a Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour exhibition in February and in June and July the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Associates Private Collections exhibition. In this show some works by Frank Brangwyn, John Constable and J.M.W. Turner were included.

- Over the Christmas vacation the Winnipeg School of Art moves from Main and Water to the N.W. corner of Portage and Sherbrook, now the site of the Lion's Manor.

- Fritz Brandtner has a one-artist exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and moves to Montreal afterwards.

- Exhibits with the Canadian Group of Painters in Montreal and in the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Western Artists Exhibition (works not known).

1935

- FitzGerald included in a three-artist exhibition with Bertram Brooker and Kathleen Munn at Malloney's Gallery in Toronto in May (works were all drawings; prices and sales not known). Exhibition was reviewed

by Graham McInnes, "The World of Art," Saturday Night, May 25, 1935.

- In the fall, FitzGerald and Vally drive to New York to take their son Edward to school there (Vally's diary, FSC 1-0200).

- 1936 - Doc Snider's House is included in a travelling exhibition of Contemporary Canadian Painting organized by the National Gallery of Canada for the Southern Dominions of the British Empire. He is also included in the National Gallery of Canada's Group of Seven 1919-1933 exhibition with five paintings and fifteen drawings (works not known) and in a Canadian Group of Painters exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto (works not known).
- 1937 - Is included in the Royal British Colonial Society of Artists, London, Artists of the British Empire Overseas Exhibition in London, England with Prairie #1 (#57) (date and medium not known).
- He also exhibits with the Canadian Group of Painters at the Art Gallery of Toronto (works not known).
- 1938 - FitzGerald travels to Toronto and Ottawa to hire a new assistant for the Winnipeg School of Art. In Toronto he stays with Bertram Brooker and meets with Arthur Lismer and A.Y. Jackson.
- In October, A.Y. Jackson stops in Winnipeg to see FitzGerald and show him sketches.
- Is included in A Century of Canadian Art at the Tate Gallery, London (works not known).
- 1939 - The Winnipeg School of Art moves to the Old Law Courts on Kennedy St. in downtown Winnipeg, adjacent to a jail. The cupola of the jail was visible from the room which FitzGerald used as his studio and is featured in some of his drawings and prints from this time.
- During the winter, Walter J. Phillips is invited by the Winnipeg School of Art to give a series of lectures on the appreciation of art.
- Exhibits with the Canadian Group of Painters at the New York World's Fair, May 1 - June 15, showing Jar (#18)

(medium and date not known). He also shows with the Canadian Group of Painters at the Art Gallery of Toronto (works not known).

- 1940 - FitzGerald's mother dies.
- Applies for a Guggenheim Fellowship but is unsuccessful.
- 1941 - Kingston Artists' Conference, from which the Federation of Canadian Artists is formed, is held. FitzGerald was not in attendance.
- Walter Phillips moves to Calgary.
- 1942 - FitzGerald and Arnold Brigden mount an exhibition of works by William Blake in Brigden's collection at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.
- FitzGerald and his wife spend the summer at Bowen Island near Vancouver, B.C. He meets Lawren Harris for the first time there (Harris had moved to Vancouver in 1940).
- 1943 - FitzGerald's father dies.
- Spends the summer again at Bowen Island, B.C.
- Has an exhibition of drawings done in B.C. at the Vancouver Art Gallery in February (works not known).
- 1944 - FitzGerald is ill over the winter and does not accomplish much painting.
- Spends the summer again at Bowen Island, B.C.
- Doc Snider's House is exhibited in the Canadian Art 1760-1943 exhibition at Yale University.
- Exhibits work in a show of Canadian painting organized by the National Gallery of Canada for the American Federation of Artists (works not known).
- 1945 - FitzGerald arranges for the Winnipeg Art Gallery to purchase Bertram Brooker's 1928 painting Sounds Assembling.

- Brooker visits FitzGerald in Winnipeg during the summer.
 - Lawren Harris writes an article on FitzGerald's work done in B.C. for Canadian Art (vol. III, no. 1, Nov. 1945, pp. 10-13).
 - Doc Snider's House is included in The Development of Painting in Canada 1665-1945 exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto.
- 1946
- Doc Snider's House is included in the Painting in Canada: A Selective Historical Survey exhibition in Albany, New York.
 - Also exhibits in a Group of Seven show in London, Ontario (works unknown).
- 1947
- In September FitzGerald begins a one-year leave of absence from the Winnipeg School of Art financed by Mr. W.H. McConnell of Montreal through Mr. and Mrs. G.V. Ferguson of Montreal. Mr. Ferguson had been editor of the Winnipeg Tribune and had moved to Montreal to work for the Montreal Star, with which McConnell was then associated as well.
 - Spends winter with his wife on Bowen Island, B.C.
 - Exhibits work in the Canadian Group of Painters exhibitions in Toronto and Montreal (works unknown).
- 1948
- FitzGerald extends his leave of absence for one more year and again winters in B.C., this year in West Vancouver.
- 1949
- FitzGerald officially retires and is replaced for one year by Joe Plaskett. The following year the Winnipeg School of Art is taken over by the University of Manitoba.
 - Is included in the Canadian Painting 1668-1948 exhibition in Richmond, Virginia and in Fifty Years of Painting in Canada at the Art Gallery of Toronto.
- 1950
- FitzGerald meets Winnipeg physician Edward J. ("Ted") Thomas when Thomas buys a work of FitzGerald's. They become friends and Thomas helps with his estate after FitzGerald dies.

- Spring: the Winnipeg flood. Thousands are forced to evacuate their homes in the worst flood in the city's history. FitzGerald, however, living on a high point in the area, suffers no damage (FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to H.O. McCurry, Ottawa, 10 June, 1950, National Gallery of Canada, FitzGerald correspondence files, 2.12 F).

- Doc Snider's House is included in an exhibition of Canadian painting arranged by the National Gallery of Canada in Washington, D.C.

- Exhibits two prints, Hedge (#325) and Three Garages (#326) in an Exhibition of Contemporary Canadian Arts, Art Gallery of Toronto, March and April.

1951

- FitzGerald travels with his wife to Mexico City to visit their son who is then living there. They travel down by bus, but having found the trip tiring, decide to fly home.

- Is included in the First Bienal do Sao Paulo, Brazil, has a one-artist exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and is included in a Western Artists show at the Dominion Gallery in Montreal.

1952

- Is awarded an L.L.D. from the University of Manitoba.

- Exhibits with the Canadian Group of Painters at the Art Gallery of Toronto (works not known).

1953

- Late July: FitzGerald flies to Toronto to judge the Canadian National Exhibition Art Show. Irene Heywood Hemsworth joins him there. He also visits with Brooker and meets Frances Loring and Florence Wyle at their country place.

- Is included in the inaugural exhibition of the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario, in the National Gallery of Canada annual Canadian Painting exhibition and in the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Canadian Art from Private Collections show; exhibits Backyard in Snow, c. 1951 and Hyacinth in a Window, c. 1951 (media not known) in the Charles Band collection exhibition.

1954

- Exhibits three works: Doc Snider's House, Pritchard's Fence and Still Life in a Group of Seven exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery and is included in a Modern Art in Winnipeg Homes exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery (works not known).

- 1955 - Submits his 1955 oil painting Still Life with Hat to the Canadian Group of Painters show at the Art Gallery of Toronto, but it is rejected.
- March 21: Brooker dies.
- Exhibits his 1954 abstract Blue and Gold in the National Gallery of Canada First Biennial Exhibition and is included in the Winnipeg Art Gallery Winnipeg Show (works not known).
- 1956 - Exhibits work in the Winnipeg Art Gallery Summer Show (works not known).
- August 5: FitzGerald dies at home. Funeral held in Minneapolis with a Memorial service in Winnipeg. His ashes are spread over his grandmother's former farm at Snowflake.
- 1957 - FitzGerald Memorial Room opened at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.
- 1958 - FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada tours Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Winnipeg.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In footnotes, illustration captions and the Selected Chronology, the following abbreviations have been used:

- AGO, Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto)
- ASL, Art Students League (New York)
- FSC, FitzGerald Study Centre (University of Manitoba, Winnipeg)
- NGC, National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa)
- WAG, Winnipeg Art Gallery
- WSA, Winnipeg School of Art

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORK OF
LIONEL LEMOINE FITZGERALD 1890-1956

Elizabeth Wylie

A Thesis
in
The Faculty
of
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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORK OF
LIONEL LEMOINE FITZGERALD 1890-1956

Elizabeth Wylie

This work is a detailed study of the development of spirituality as the content of FitzGerald's art. Following an analysis of the critical literature on FitzGerald with particular regard to authors' comments on his spirituality, his work is discussed chronologically. In this way it can be seen that his style changed as his ideas and beliefs grew more intense and complex. Ultimately, this resulted in his turn to abstraction in the 1950's, in order to convey his ideas about the "oneness" of life.

A Selected Chronology is included as an Appendix, with details as to FitzGerald's life and exhibition career.

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INTRODUCTION

Usually associated in the context of Canadian art history with small scale modest still lifes and Winnipeg backyard views, LeMoine FitzGerald would not commonly be considered a spiritual artist. However, spirituality¹ as considered revealed in an awareness of a power higher than humanity, an awareness of an order and structure to nature and the universe, of life or a life force in all objects and substances, and of the essential oneness of space, energy, matter and all life, does form the content of his work, as well as the basis to his aesthetic. Although some previous authors have remarked upon a spiritual quality in FitzGerald's art, none have attempted a detailed study of this aspect of his work. At this point, then, it is the development of FitzGerald's spirituality as revealed in his work which will be examined. As will be seen, the artist's style and technique were always subordinate to, and indeed, chosen to help articulate his beliefs.

¹The word "spirituality" is being used here and throughout this text particularly in its meaning #3a in the Oxford English Dictionary: The quality or condition of being spiritual; attachment to or regard to things of the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interests. "Spiritual" will be used most in its meanings #4 and 7 in the O.E.D.: Of, or pertaining to, consisting of spirit, regarded in either a religious or intellectual aspect; of the nature of a spirit or incorporeal, supernatural essence, immaterial; Characterized by or exhibiting a high degree of refinement of thought or feeling.

Of course, the spiritual awareness and ideas mentioned above have been visually conveyed by other artists as well as FitzGerald. Although such artists abound in both Western and non-Western art history, most recently in the West artists, like Lyonel Feininger, Piet Mondrian, Wassily Kandinsky, several of the American Abstract Expressionists, and the American independent, Charles Burchfield can be cited as having had these spiritual concepts predominant at the base of their work.

Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956) has been described as having sought "a vision of totality" in his work, and was attracted by "an aura emanating from the configurations of objects."² His abstracted boat and cathedral forms metamorphosing into planar segments of sky certainly reflect these ideas.

Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) worked to express the fundamental relations between all things in life and strove for personal enlightenment. "Contemplation of the universal, and hence, penetration into the core of reality is the meaning that Mondrian gives his art."³

The various doctrines of Theosophy formed the basis of meaning in the work of Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944),⁴ who felt that "...the emphasis was on seeing ...material substance as

²June L. Ness, ed., Lyonel Feininger (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 249 and 250.

³Hans L.C. Jaffe, Piet Mondrian (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970), p. 54. It is crucial to note that Mondrian was a Theosophist, joining the Dutch Theosophy Society in 1909.

⁴Sixten Ringbom, The Sounding Cosmos (Abo Akademi, 1970) The entire book is about Kandinsky's Theosophical content.

just a 'solid' manifestation of astral (or spiritual) substance, which, therefore, has an 'inner life' -- the 'inner necessity' that gives vitality to the external form."⁵ Kandinsky's contemporary and fellow member of the Blaue Reiter group, August Macke (1887-1914) wrote in 1912:

Incomprehensible ideas express themselves in comprehensible forms... Form is a mystery to us for it is the expression of mysterious powers. Only through it do we sense the secret powers, the 'invisible God'. The senses are our bridge between the incomprehensible and the comprehensible.⁶

Although he developed his own particular spiritual content, FitzGerald would have been in agreement with such an expression. He wrote himself of the "endlessness of the living force which seems to pervade and flow through all natural forms, even though these [sic] seem on the surface to be so ephemeral."⁷ Kandinsky wrote of this same concept and explained that it is sometimes difficult to apprehend this force: "The veiling of the spirit in matter is often so thick, that, generally, only a few people can see through it to the spirit."⁸

⁵ Alwynne Mackie, "Kandinsky and the Problems of Abstraction", Artforum, vol. XVII, no. 3, Nov., 1978, p. 58.

⁶ August Macke, "Masks," The Blaue Reiter Almanac, ed. Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, Documents of Twentieth Century Art series, ed. Klaus Lankheit (New York: Vicking Press, 1974), p. 85.

⁷ FitzGerald as quoted in Patricia Bovey, "Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: Some European Influence on His Work," Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development of an Artist, Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 84.

⁸ Wassily Kandinsky, "On the Question of Form," The Blaue Reiter Almanac, p. 147.

As to spirituality in the work of the Abstract Expressionists, many authors⁹ have commented on the spiritual and transcendental quality of the paintings by artists like Ad Reinhardt, Adolph Gottlieb, Barnett Newman,¹⁰ Clyfford Still and Mark Rothko. In some ways, their spirituality was arrived at through a desire to create mythic forms but was also inspired by Mondrian's ideas:

Mondrian's geometric abstractions affected figures as diverse as deKooning and Rothko, Newman and Reinhardt. These younger artists were attracted to both the formal and metaphysical aspects of Mondrian's pure abstraction.¹¹

Art for all of them becomes an act of revelation, of exaltation, an embodiment of universal truth.¹²

Charles Burchfield (1893-1967) is similar to FitzGerald in that he is often classified as an independent artist, that is, not a member of a particular school or movement, and has been granted only a small place in art history (perhaps as a result). Also, neither could be termed a modernist, either in their painting styles, which veered away from mainstream developments in art of their time, or their ideas. Style was subservient to

⁹ See, for example, Irving Sandler, The Triumph of American Painting (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1970) and Barbara Rose, American Painting Since 1900 (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1967) as two well known texts.

¹⁰ See Thomas B. Hess, Barnett Newman (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1971) for a detailed and intensive discussion of Newman's work with specific regard to the artist's involvement with Kabalic numerology and spiritual meaning in his paintings.

¹¹ Diane Waldman, Mark Rothko 1903-1970 (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1978), p. 53.

¹² Diane Waldman, p. 54.

spiritual message in their work.¹³ Burchfield read Hindu and Buddhist mythology and studied Oriental art.¹⁴ One author wrote of his philosophy, present in his paintings:

As in the concept of the Tao, which informs much Chinese painting, Burchfield felt a unified power permeating the entire universe, so that spirit and matter existed as one.¹⁵

Despite all these basic underlying similarities, in the apprehension of a spiritual reality to life on earth by such artists, no one "spiritual style" has ever evolved. Kandinsky's abstract, colourful compositions, Mondrian's austere verticals, horizontals and flat primary colours, Rothko's floating bars of saturated colour/light and Burchfield's energized, pulsating landscapes are very different in appearance, and reflect varying orientations toward the world and its meaning. FitzGerald, as well, developed his own approach and style and kept to a personal way in evolving means of embodying and portraying spiritual feelings and concepts in his work. Helped by contact with others, seeing art and reading, FitzGerald developed his innate inner spiritual self and enunciated his ideas with increasing clarity and intensity as his work developed toward his late abstractions. On an intuitive level, generally, rather than a highly intellec-

¹³ Thus FitzGerald's often quoted maxim: "Consider technique as a means by which you say what you have to say, and not as an end in itself. What you have to say is of the first importance, how you say it is always secondary." FitzGerald quoted in Ferdinand Eckhardt, "Introduction," FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1958), n. pag.

¹⁴ Matthew Baignell, Charles Burchfield (New York: Watson-Guptill Publishers, 1976), p. 51.

¹⁵ Matthew Baignell, p. 55.

tual one, and in a modest scale and scope, FitzGerald's beliefs in the oneness of all living things, in the "great forces behind the organization of nature"¹⁶ and a given object's "structure and relation to all of life"¹⁷ were translated into visual form through various stylistic devices, which shall be discussed. Less programmatic and didactic in approach than were his friends Lawren Harris and Bertram Brooker in the conveying of spiritual conceptions of life in art, nevertheless, FitzGerald intended his works to be objects of personal meditation and contemplation,¹⁸ seeing them as living things,¹⁹ not as clearly conceived intellectual placards. To achieve these aims, FitzGerald developed his painstaking, time-consuming working method, usually consisting of concise contour lines, small daubs of paint applied side by side, or cross-hatches of line to evoke form.

After an examination of the extant critical literature on FitzGerald, with particular regard to writers' sensitivity to FitzGerald's spiritual content, his career will be documented and described, and the chronological development of his own ideas regarding spirituality will be made clear.

¹⁶FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Irene Heywood Hemsworth, 23 May, 1942, in her private collection.

¹⁷Ayre papers, loose notes, Queens University Archives.

¹⁸Former student of FitzGerald's and artist Robert Bruce is quoted in Helen Coy, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1977) p. 5: "... he wasn't interested in quick effects. He was painting for the person who would sit there three hours and contemplate the work."

¹⁹Diary (1930), FSC (08183) entry for June 29.

CHAPTER I

ANALYSIS OF CRITICAL LITERATURE ON FITZGERALD

In chronological order of publication date, the major works and important pieces of writing on FitzGerald will now be analyzed as to the writers' particular contribution to the literature on the artist, as well as their awareness of the spirituality expressed in his art.

The artist Lawren Harris (1885-1970), a friend of FitzGerald, wrote a short article on the works on paper which FitzGerald completed in British Columbia during the years 1942, 1943, and 1944. This was rather severely edited and then published by Canadian Art in November of 1945. Although it is a short piece, Harris' article is important because it contains, for the first time in published form, comments on FitzGerald's spirituality. Harris had written in a personal notebook once:

You cannot sever the philosophy of the artist from his work. You belittle the man in his work when you accept his skill, his sensitivity in patterning, in building forms, his finesse in accenting, his suaving in technique, but reject his philosophy, his background.¹

In trying to discuss spirituality in FitzGerald's work then, Harris likely felt he was elucidating FitzGerald's "philosophy."

¹Lawren Harris quoted in Bess Harris and R.G.P. Colgrove, Lawren Harris (Toronto: MacMillan Co., 1969), p. 10.

He wrote:

Each successive summer showed a deepening and enrichment of content in his work, until, in the series of watercolours, we have what seems the consummation of a long period of contemplation. There is a grace and ease of technical accomplishment in these paintings which in its mastery could only have been achieved by an utter simplicity of mood and dignity of spirit.²

Harris, himself, tried to express his own spirituality in painting, especially his Theosophical beliefs. In his North Shore, Lake Superior from 1936, (fig. 1) for example, the rather overt symbolism of the tree trunk as praying hands, set in Canada's northland, which Harris held to be full of positive cosmic influences³ is easily read. FitzGerald's work, in contrast, was never so openly symbolic and didactic.

In contrast, Robert Ayre, a Montreal art critic and also a friend of FitzGerald, denied any spiritual content in FitzGerald's works in his several articles and unpublished monograph (written in the 1950's). "Don't approach LeMoine FitzGerald on your knees"⁴ he cautioned the public, and maintained that FitzGerald's art had no esoteric "message" but that the artist simply loved nature and was very down to earth.⁵ Emphasizing FitzGerald's humility, seriousness and intelligence in his unpublished

²Lawren Harris, "LeMoine FitzGerald: Western Artist," Canadian Art, vol. III, no. 1, November 1945, p. 13.

³This idea is repeated throughout Bess Harris and R.G.P. Colgrove, Lawren Harris.

⁴Robert Ayre, "Don't Approach LeMoine FitzGerald on Your Knees," Montreal Star, May 3, 1958.

⁵Robert Ayre, "Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald 1890-1956," Canadian Art, vol. XIV, no. 1, Autumn, 1956, pp. 14-16.

short monograph on the artist, Ayre described him as "the man who looks out of the window," referring to FitzGerald's remaining in Winnipeg and his concentration upon still lifes and backyard views, often done in winter. Ayre did record many biographical details concerning FitzGerald, most of which he received from the artist in a letter dated August 29, 1948 in reply to a request for information to use in the monograph. This unpublished monograph forms the only written source for such information, especially facts of FitzGerald's early life, such as his reading of Ruskin (whose teaching FitzGerald never repudiated during his career). Such vital information otherwise would have been lost. Ayre admired FitzGerald's work and held the artist in high esteem. Yet, he was careful as to what he wrote about ideas or meanings in his friend's art. Although in 1958 Ayre did mention "the thing inside that was struggling for expression"⁶ he did not make any attempt to identify or define this "thing" within FitzGerald. In his monograph he takes pains to point out that FitzGerald was "never pretending to any esoteric mysticism."⁷ Perhaps Ayre's friendship with FitzGerald the man blinded him somewhat to the deeper, or more esoteric qualities in his art. Marcel Proust wrote in Swann's Way (a work FitzGerald noted in his personal notebook):⁸

⁶Robert Ayre, "Painter of the Prairies," Weekend Magazine vol. VIII, no. 12, March 22, 1958, p. 26.

⁷Robert Ayre, untitled monograph on FitzGerald, TS p. 22, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

⁸FSC, University of Manitoba, 1-0041.

And indeed it happens, often enough, to a greater man than Swann ever was, to a scientist or artist, when he is not wholly misunderstood by the people among whom he lives, that the feeling in them which proves that they have been convinced of the superiority of his intellect, is created not by any admiration for his ideas, for those are totally beyond them -- but by their respect for what they term his good qualities.⁹

Perhaps because Ayre would seem not to have had a highly developed spiritual nature himself, and because he felt close to FitzGerald, he assumed that FitzGerald was not spiritual either. At any rate, despite the fact he did not recognize spiritual content in FitzGerald's art, Ayre's invaluable documentary information forms a vital contribution to the study of FitzGerald.

Ferdinand Eckhardt, a former director of the Winnipeg Art Gallery, has been the most forthright of any writer on FitzGerald in describing the spiritual response he has experienced upon viewing FitzGerald's work. Eckhardt's introductory essay to the National Gallery of Canada's 1958 FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition catalogue¹⁰ has largely been ignored by later scholars¹¹

⁹ Marcel Proust, Swann's Way (New York: Random House, 1928), p. 313.

¹⁰ The text of this piece is virtually the same as that in Eckhardt's "The Technique of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald," Canadian Art, vol. XV, no. 2, Spring, 1958, pp. 114-118, except for shifting of paragraphs and some slight additions.

¹¹ For example, neither Charles Hill in his Canadian Painting in the Thirties (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975) or Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, in their Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978) mention or refer to Eckhardt's ideas regarding FitzGerald.

perhaps due to Eckhardt's style which needed considerable editing to be comprehensible.¹² Eckhardt gives no biographical information in his essay, but simply describes FitzGerald's works, noting their spiritual qualities and effect on him, and pointing out how FitzGerald's style developed with particular aim to expressing his spiritual beliefs in the oneness of life. He also makes the conjecture that FitzGerald's isolation on the prairies for his entire life helped to intensify his vision:

His character was intensive, rather than extensive. In fact, his way of life was completely opposed to the quick tempo of our times; he was a prophet crying in the wilderness who valued quietness, balance and solidity and who wanted to bring people back to the habit of reflection.¹³

In his examination of the work of Seurat, Cezanne and Van Gogh as influences on FitzGerald's art, Eckhardt is weak and inaccurate¹⁴ and is at his best when he relates his own personal impressions and reflections.

J. Russell Harper, in both his 1966 and 1977 editions of Painting in Canada: a history, discusses FitzGerald in an almost secondary context by way of relating him to Bertram Brooker,

¹² Eckhardt's introductory essay is still extant in MS form in the FitzGerald clipping file at the NGC and was heavily edited by Kathleen Fenwick and H.O. McCufry in order to be printable.

¹³ Ferdinand Eckhardt, "Introduction," FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1958), non. pag.

¹⁴ For example, he refers to Cezanne's "solid way of building up form," when in fact Cezanne's paintings have little three dimensional solidity to them, with overlapping planes, flecks and segments of colour and table edges which do not meet.

and, a few pages later, to Fritz Brandtner in their explorations into what he terms "non-objective" art. Perhaps trying to find antecedents for FitzGerald's 1952-56 abstract works, Harper dwells on outlining the geometric tendencies he saw as central to FitzGerald's art, even as early as the 1930's.¹⁵ He writes:

[FitzGerald's] work was changing for now he was developing more formalized arrangements in treating plant life and other subjects unknown in his early years. He began to emphasize the sphere as found in the apple, the plane of a cube as found in a garage, the prism as expressed in the local prison cupola which he could see through is studio window and the cylinder in tree trunks.¹⁶

Likely because FitzGerald eventually did become an abstract artist, Harper tended to see him as concerned primarily with formal problems, which he never was; painting as pure painting, with formal considerations placed first was of no central interest to FitzGerald. When Harper writes: "Obviously, FitzGerald wanted to pass quickly by the figurative element and concentrate on the formal qualities in painting,"¹⁷ it is as though he is describing the work of another artist. Harper's most important contribution to FitzGerald study is his detailed linking of the artist with Brooker and Brandtner. In describing these relationships and influences he establishes that FitzGerald was not

¹⁵This in itself is an anachronism, since the prison cupola was visible from the studio FitzGerald had in the Old Law Courts after 1939, and Harper is discussing his work at the time of Brandtner's stay in Winnipeg, which was 1928-34.

¹⁶J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada: a history (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 325.

¹⁷J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada: a history (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 325.

totally isolated by staying in Winnipeg, but did maintain vital contacts with other artists.

Dennis Reid, in his 1973 A Concise History of Canadian Painting, includes a discussion of FitzGerald in his eleventh chapter entitled: Emily Carr, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald and David Milne (1912-1950). He sees FitzGerald's development primarily as "logical" and based on "systematic experimentation".¹⁸ His chronological outlining of FitzGerald's work and life is sound, if rather drily written, but his assumption that FitzGerald's 1952-56 abstracts were inspired by or were in response to those of Bertram Brooker from twenty-five years earlier is rather far-fetched. In fact, FitzGerald had the stronger influence on Brooker, convincing the Toronto painter of his own approach to the extent that Brooker abandoned abstraction in favor of representational painting for almost twenty years after he and FitzGerald met in 1929. As will be seen, FitzGerald's abstracts evolved from internal concerns in his works, and, if inspired by any other artist, it could have been Lawren Harris who could have been a source, a subject which will be discussed later.

In describing FitzGerald's Williamson's Garage of 1927, Reid refers to the work's "reverent and still"¹⁹ quality, intuitively sensing, it would seem, its latent spiritual content. Reid seems aware of and responds to FitzGerald's spirituality

¹⁸Dennis Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 160 and 163.

¹⁹Dennis Reid, p. 161.

but perhaps has shied away from any bald or specific description of it, not wanting to risk sounding too philosophical.

One author often not considered seriously by Canadian art historians perhaps because his left-wing political point of view permeates his looking at art, is Barry Lord. His politics prevent him from discussing aesthetics in their own right. His 1974 The History of Painting in Canada: Toward a People's Art contains almost no biographical information on FitzGerald. Lord is repelled by the "still, silent, arrested" qualities in FitzGerald's 1934 Doc Snider's House, and by what he terms FitzGerald's "repressed self-expression" and "dry" style.²⁰ From all information available, FitzGerald seems to have been essentially a non-political person. His art reflects no class consciousness or overt awareness of the class struggle. Thus, Lord cannot find his work of value or interest. He rejects other artists' work on these grounds as well. Of the works of the Canadian white-on-white abstract painter, Ronald Bloore, he writes:

They constitute, in fact, a 'pure' art of total restraint, the most extreme form of the colonial tradition of repressed expression that we have already encountered in the paintings of Harris and L.L. Fitzgerald [sic].²¹

Lord's opinion of FitzGerald's work is interesting to note, as any art, if taken on terms other than its own, (and

²⁰ Barry Lord, The History of Painting in Canada: Toward a People's Art (Toronto: NC Press, 1974), pp. 172 and 211.

²¹ Barry Lord, p. 211.

in FitzGerald's case the terms would be as spiritual expressions) loses its vitality and validity. Lord is simply more extreme than was Russell Harper in considering FitzGerald's art in other terms than the actual basis of its aims and qualities.

Charles Hill's 1975 Canadian Painting in the Thirties deals with FitzGerald in a scholarly way, in some depth and with sensitivity. He stresses formal qualities in FitzGerald's work: the relationships of shapes, his drawing and painting methods, but doesn't venture into his content, thus, maintaining a distance from the work. He notes FitzGerald's predominant interest in drawing (FitzGerald was certainly not a painterly painter) and does convey through his descriptions some of the feeling in FitzGerald's work. Hill notices FitzGerald's "complexity," "richness" and "subtlety,"²² and one senses as with Dennis Reid's writing, that Hill does respond to FitzGerald's spirituality, but perhaps only on an intuitive level. Maybe he is of the mind that to mention this would be an academic risk. His several quotations from FitzGerald's letters and 1930 diary, which at the time of his publication were still in private collections,²³ made some of this primary material available to the public and helped in the interpretation of the works.

The final work to be considered in this chapter is Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis' 1978 Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Develop-

²² Charles Hill, Canadian Painting in the Thirties (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), pp. 71-73.

²³ This material was donated to the FSC when it was begun in 1976.

ment of an Artist, published by the Winnipeg Art Gallery as a catalogue to accompany a circulating retrospective exhibition of FitzGerald's work. Not only is this the most recently published work on FitzGerald, but it is the most concentrated and lengthy to date. The catalogue is divided into three essays: Patricia Bovey's "The Man," Ann Davis' "A North American Artist" and Patricia Bovey's "Some European Influences on His Work." This division splits the catalogue as a unit and fragments a reader's view of FitzGerald. Not only has his life been severed from his art, but in an overriding emphasis on the part of the authors upon stylistic influences on FitzGerald, any North American sources are divided from European ones -- a rather arbitrary split having little to do with FitzGerald's own perceptions.

Patricia Bovey's essay, "The Man," is, for the most part, sound in the data presented. Despite her idealization of the artist's character, quotations from his writings (many appearing for the first time in published form) give accurate insights into FitzGerald's nature. Ann Davis' divisions of the artist's career into periods make a useful tool for study, but tend to become unviable when they veer away from any connection with FitzGerald's life and work. She lists: Early Art Experience, School in New York 1921-22, New Directions 1922-31, The Relentless Search 1931-47 and Around Abstraction 1947-56. A cut-off point at 1930, rather than 1931, keeping in mind FitzGerald's 1930 summer trip to the U.S.A. and Eastern Canada which had an effect on his work, would seem more logical. Instead of the large time span between 1931 and 1947, a decade approach might be more suitable, as

FitzGerald's 1940's work differs greatly from that done in the 1930's. Davis has chosen 1947 as her beginning date for "Around Abstraction" likely because 1947 was the year in which FitzGerald began a two year leave of absence resulting in retirement, from his eighteen year term as Principal of the Winnipeg School of Art. However, FitzGerald did not begin doing abstract works until 1952. Thus, a last chapter could concentrate on the period 1952-56 to focus on the abstract work.

Davis stresses FitzGerald's stylistic development and avoids discussion of his content or ideas. Bovey, in her essay, "Some European Influences on his Work," shows little acquaintance with the work of the artists and movements she mentions. As well, she discusses style only, not imagery or meaning. In many ways, Bovey and Davis' stylistic analyses prove to be little more than exercises for their own sake. The authors do not succeed in placing FitzGerald in either a critical or historical context, and hold back from discussing his work in any depth, and never mention his spirituality as the content in his work.

With an analysis on the important critical literature on FitzGerald complete, a documentation of his life and development of the spirituality in his work will now be undertaken.

CHAPTER II

YOUTH AND EARLY WORK 1890-1920

FitzGerald was born into an environment which was generally indifferent to art, particularly to art of ambition or of an abstract nature. Despite some early artistic activity in Winnipeg,¹ the city remained apathetic with regard to any modern developments in art and FitzGerald was never to be publicly lauded in his native city during his lifetime.

At the year of his birth, 1890,² the fledgling city was officially only sixteen years old. Twenty years earlier the city's population, not including the military personnel stationed at Upper Fort Garry, was two hundred and fifteen.² Through much effort on the part of enterprising city businessmen, immigration to Winnipeg began to increase yearly. A building boom began in 1881, the same year in which FitzGerald's father, drawn by stories of money to be made, no doubt, arrived from Quebec to settle in Winnipeg. The building boom lasted until about 1885 and has never been equalled since in

¹Ferdinand Eckhardt, One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1970), pp. 11-13. A discussion here of various early art classes for ladies and early painters active in the area.

²Winnipeg Board of Trade Annual Report for 1885, n. pag.

the city's history.³ On July 1, 1886, the first trans-continental train stopped in Winnipeg,⁴ a feat for the city's Board of Trade, which had lobbied furiously to have the line pass through Winnipeg instead of any other Manitoba town.⁵ The Board of Trade reports in Winnipeg's early years reveal the peoples' concerns with new businesses, profits, the laying of sidewalks and other essentials unrelated to art.⁶ It was in this environment, however, that FitzGerald was able to decide to become an artist and began his training.

As a child in school, FitzGerald showed an early interest and talent in drawing. His art exercise books are still in existence⁷ and their neatness and precision reflect the efforts of a conscientious young boy.⁸ FitzGerald did not come from a rich family. His father had run a grocery store⁹ and later was working as a bank messenger for the Dominion Bank on Main St. In 1902 FitzGerald quit school to work and help the family.¹⁰

³ A.F.T. Artibise, "Mayor Alexander Logan of Winnipeg," The Beaver, Spring, 1974, pp. 4-12.

⁴ Artibise, p. 6.

⁵ Winnipeg Board of Trade Annual Reports, 1884- 1886.

⁶ Winnipeg Board of Trade Annual Reports, 1885-1904.

⁷ FSC, Box 2-B. They were published by Gage for Canadian schools.

⁸ Elizabeth Henderson, "Young Mr. FitzGerald," The Manitoba Pageant, Sept., 1958, pp. 7-8. The author was a student in Grade 7 with the artist and remembers that he drew better than the other pupils.

⁹ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

¹⁰ He held various jobs until he was hired full time by the

In 1904, when the Winnipeg Public Library opened on William Ave. FitzGerald began reading there in his spare time. He wrote to Robert Ayre much later in his life that what he most remembered reading was John Ruskin, particularly his Elements of Drawing. In this work, which is actually a course in drawing for a beginner in three long letters, Ruskin outlined a program to develop drawing skills. In his preface he wrote:

Now I believe that (irrespective of differences in individual temper and character) the excellence of an artist, as such, depends wholly on refinement of perception, and that it is this, mainly, which a master or school can teach.¹¹

Ruskin became FitzGerald's early "master" and his ideas of the refinement of perception, especially as regards nature, his lectures against sham effects, carefulness and painstaking accuracy and precision of technique in drawing never seem to have left FitzGerald, as they predominate even in his adult work. FitzGerald wrote to Ayre that, for him, Ruskin had been "pretty weighty stuff . . . but through a lot of wading and looking at the illustrations, a lot of avenues opened up just a little."¹² Ruskin's passion for the work of J.M.W. Turner would seem to have infected FitzGerald at this point, and although no direct influence from Turner can be detected in Fitz-

Winnipeg School of Art in 1924; as an office boy, in a printing company, and as a decorator. See Appendix, Selected Chronology.

¹¹ John Ruskin, The Elements of Drawing (London: George Allan, 1857), reprint of the 1893 edition by Scholarly Press, U.S.A.; preface, p. xxv.

¹² Quoted in Robert Ayre, untitled monograph, TS, p. 6, Queen's University Archives.

Gerald's art,¹³ Turner was to remain an artist FitzGerald would always admire.¹⁴ Perhaps the sublime grandeur and other-worldly quality as well as the intense evocation of nature Turner was able to achieve in his painting appealed to FitzGerald, as these were qualities he often aimed for himself in his art, though in a more modest way. FitzGerald also read Holman Hunt's Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a two-volume work which would have familiarized FitzGerald with some of the theories of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Certainly FitzGerald's later involvement in set designing for the Winnipeg Little Theatre and his constructions and design work around his home reflect the philosophy of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and that of the Aesthetic Movement in general, of integration of the arts and of art with everyday life.

By 1906, after working through Ruskin, FitzGerald began to draw and paint in earnest on his own.¹⁵ In 1908 he enrolled

¹³Patricia Bovey, "Some European Influences on his Work," Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 92. Bovey writes: ". . . no concrete arguments can be advanced for a direct influence from Turner to FitzGerald."

¹⁴When FitzGerald was painting in B.C. in the 1940's, he wrote to Ayre that he was reminded of Turner by the clouds and waves. Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives, letter dated July 25, 1949. Also, in an interview with Pearl McCarthy in Toronto in 1953, FitzGerald referred to Turner. (Pearl McCarthy "Mr. FitzGerald Rare Visitor But his Horizon is National," Toronto Globe and Mail, Aug. 8, 1953).

¹⁵Irene Heywood Hemsworth owns a small 1906 watercolour on paper which FitzGerald gave her, telling her it was among his very first efforts. (Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979).

in evening art classes under A.S. Keszthelyi, a little known Ukrainian artist then living in Winnipeg.¹⁶ FitzGerald's 1909 Seated Man (fig. 2), a charcoal drawing, was done while studying under Keszthelyi. Though static and posed looking, the figure is of a good student level in its execution and reflects Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's ideas of attention to detail and the creation of a mood. Early works such as the Seated Man would seem to have been acceptable to the Winnipeg public as in 1911 FitzGerald exhibited three works at the Winnipeg Public Library (titles and dates unknown) and in 1912 had one work, Landscape (date and medium unknown) accepted into the inaugural exhibition of the Winnipeg Museum of Fine Arts (later to become the Winnipeg Art Gallery). The first curator of the museum was a Scottish watercolourist, Donald MacQuarrie, who was an admirer of Corot.¹⁷ In 1913, he and FitzGerald rented a studio together and held a joint exhibition (titles, dates and sales not known) there the following year, prior to MacQuarrie's return to Scotland.

FitzGerald's work during these early years has no more specific spiritual content than a bursting, joyful feeling to

¹⁶ Ferdinand Eckhardt, One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba, p. 13 and 87. Keszthelyi was born in 1875 in Sambor, Galicia, studied in Munich and Vienna and taught at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and as a senior student at the Art Students League in New York before coming to Winnipeg. His advertisements in the Winnipeg Free Press for his classes ran from 1908-1912.

¹⁷ Kevin Forrest, The Prints of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald, (unpublished Master's thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1979), p. 21.

to the nature he portrays in his landscapes. His undated Landscape: Farmyard with Fence (fig. 3), an oil on canvas, and his 1920 Summer: East Kildonan (fig. 4), also an oil, demonstrate the artist's concern with the simple portrayal of light and shade. This central idea was perhaps inspired by reproductions of French Impressionist paintings in art periodicals,¹⁸ but as well, could have been influenced by the Impressionist inspired works by various members of the Royal Canadian Academy such as M.A. Suzor-Coté, whose works were seen by FitzGerald in the R.C.A. annual exhibitions at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. The fact that FitzGerald's palette often lacked the high chroma colour found in true French Impressionism and was actually more akin to the earlier Barbizons in hue and tone, as were those of the Impressionistic R.C.A. painters, would indicate their influence. In any case, FitzGerald's early work cannot be said to be truly Impressionistic. He adopted the style's divided brush stroke and dappled light and shade effect, but his work reflects no awareness of the more scientific aims of the movement. Although there is present a strong feeling for nature in these works, a kind of joyous mood conveyed, there is no sense as yet of any strongly defined underlying order or structure to the scenes, something FitzGerald would later use to express his apprehension of the underlying order and plan he felt in nature

¹⁸ Among his personal papers, FitzGerald saved clipped articles and reproductions from such art journals as The International Studio, Art News, The Arts, and The Architectural Record. It is likely, therefore, that he was familiar with European styles of painting through these magazines.

and the world.

In 1920 FitzGerald came into contact with an artist who likely made him aware of his own provincialism and the limitations of his training and environment, and perhaps stimulated his latently spiritual nature. Augustus Vincent Tack (1870-1949) came to Winnipeg from the United States, where he had established a career in portraiture and mural painting. In June of 1920 he arrived to paint and install a set of murals in the Manitoba Legislative Building, then just newly constructed.¹⁹ These murals were to be on the ceiling and walls of the Legislative Chambers and depicted an allegory on the history of law.²⁰ (fig's. 5,6,7 and 8). FitzGerald was employed helping Tack to install the works.²¹ He was thirty that summer and Tack was fifty. Perhaps the older artist took an interest in a young artist struggling in a small city, far flung from any centre of art activity. Tack had been a student at the Art Students' League of New York in the 1890's and taught there from 1906-10.²² Most probably it was he who suggested to FitzGerald

¹⁹ Ferdinand Eckhardt, One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1970) p. 15 notes that construction on the building was started in 1914 but delayed due to World War I. See also: "Manitoba Parliament Building: Frank W. Simon, F.R.I.B.A. Arch.," The Architectural Review, vol. LV1, no. 302, Jan., 1922, pp. 1-11.

²⁰ "Manitoba Parliament Building," p. 9.

²¹ "Art School has New Director," Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 22, 1924.

²² Lawrence Campbell, archivist at the Art Students' League, New York, to the author, 15 Sept., 1979.

to attend the Art Students' League.²³ Bearing in mind that FitzGerald's teacher Keszthelyi had also been connected with the League, FitzGerald took the advice to heart.

Tack was a Roman Catholic, but had studied Eastern religions and likely Theosophy as well.²⁴ He also had a strong interest in Oriental art and tried to infuse his own works with religious feeling, or the "God in all life."²⁵ Tack's rather undistinguished murals for the Legislative Chambers had to meet the terms of his commission and were somewhat atypical of his abstract paintings (fig's. 9 and 10) for which he is most known now, in which simplified, patch-like flat shapes of colour play across the surfaces of his paintings. Although FitzGerald likely did not see Tack's paintings (unless the artist had brought some examples along to Winnipeg) until his trip to the United States in 1930, he was very likely influenced by the older artist's ideas simply as they came up in conversation in 1920.²⁶

²³ Karen Sens, A Discussion of the Stylistic Development in the Dated Oil Paintings of Lionel Lemoine FitzGerald 1890-1956, (unpublished Master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 1978), p. 29, footnote #17 to Chapter 2, credits Helen Coy, Director of the FitzGerald Study Centre, with suggesting that Tack recommended the A.S.L. to FitzGerald. The only other suggestion of a source for the idea has been made by Peter Mellen, The Group of Seven (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 182, that Franz Johnston gave the advice. Johnston had no first hand contact with the A.S.L. and had not had much intimate contact with FitzGerald during his stay in Winnipeg, 1921-24.

²⁴ Robert Rosenblum, Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1975), p. 197.

²⁵ Eleanor Green, "Augustus Vincent Tack," Artforum, vol. XI, no. 2, Oct., 1972, p. 61.

²⁶ Tack was a vocal promoter of abstract art, feeling

Later that summer, when Tack had completed the work with the murals, for the first time in several years FitzGerald returned alone to the farm where he had spent his childhood summers. Perhaps this was in order to rethink his direction and re-evaluate himself and his art. His maternal grandparents, the John Hicks, had owned a farm near Snowflake, Manitoba, a tiny community south west of Winnipeg in a bluffy, rolling area of the prairie. FitzGerald wrote in 1954, remembering his boyhood summers spent on the farm with his grandparents:

Among my early recollections are walks over the prairie and the dirt roads, and the sloughs with their fringes of willow, and the bluffs of poplar with the light trunks and shimmering leaves, the grasses and wild flowers that grew along the trails, and always, the sky. Summers spent at my grandmother's farm in Southern Manitoba were wonderful times for roaming through the woods and over the fields, and the vivid impression of those holidays inspired many drawings and paintings of a later date.²⁷

By 1920, FitzGerald's grandmother was no longer at the farm, as it had been rented to a stranger. He boarded at a neighbour's for the summer, leaving his wife and two young children in Winnipeg.²⁸ A summer of reflection perhaps aided in helping Fitz-

it to be a more subjective approach to painting than a representational one. See: A.V. Tack and T. Oakley, "Two Definitions of Art," American Magazine of Art, vol. XXII, Oct., 1930, pp. 576-77.

²⁷A portion of FitzGerald's 1954 C.B.C. radio broadcast. MS in collection of Dr. E.J. (Ted) Thomas, Winnipeg. This section quoted in "FitzGerald on Art," Canadian Art, vol. XV, no. 2, Spring, 1958, pp. 118-119.

²⁸This information from telephone interview with Mrs. Lily White, Winnipeg, 10 May 1979. She was a former neighbour of the Hicks at Snowflake.

Gerald realize that he was merely painting, in the words of Robert Ayre, "quickly and easily in a breezy Impressionism,"²⁹ but these thoughts did not materialize into any action until a year later. In the fall of 1921, after having his first one-artist exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery (works not known) in September, he moved his family to Montreal where he found employment for his wife in a tea room.³⁰ He went on alone to New York and enrolled at the Art Students' League.

²⁹ Robert Ayre, "Painter of the Prairies," Weekend Magazine, vol. VIII, no. 12, March 22, 1958, p. 26.

³⁰ The tearoom was in Montreal, and not Toronto as Patricia Bovey mentions, in "The Man," Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 14. Helen Coy, Winnipeg, to the author, 10 March 1981, with reference to FitzGerald's account book, FSC.

CHAPTER III

NEW YORK AND THE 1920's WORK

While studying at the Art Student's League, FitzGerald did some design work in New York¹ to help defray his living expenses and fees. From December, 1921, until March of 1922 he took four courses under Boardman Robinson (1876-1952).² These were likely in basic drawing, from casts and then the figure.³ Robinson was an admirer of the Italian Primitives, particularly Giotto⁴ and was well known at the time for his interest in mural painting.⁵ Perhaps Tack's mural installations in Winnipeg had stimulated FitzGerald to learn more

¹Robert Ayre, loose notes, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives, no details can be found about this design work.

²Lawrence Campbell, archivist, Art Students' League, New York, to the author, 4 June, 1979.

³A comment about the League a few years later than FitzGerald was there appears in R. Downes, ed., Fairfield Porter: Art in its Own Terms (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1979); p. 26: "In 1928 . . . Porter went to the Art Students' League, where he studied with Boardman Robinson and Thomas Hart Benton. The classes were in figure drawing but not painting: "I don't think anybody in America knew how to paint in oils then." (Porter)

⁴William Goodridge Roberts 1904-1974 (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1976), p. 20. Roberts was also a student of Boardman Robinson at the A.S.L.

⁵Robinson later did a series of murals on the history of commerce for the Kaufmann Department Store in Pittsburgh in 1927, which FitzGerald went to see in 1930.

about mural work, but it is not known if he actually studied this under Robinson. When he returned to Winnipeg, however, he undertook at least a few mural commissions there.⁶ Robinson was of leftist political persuasion, at least at this point in time, and was doing cartoons and illustrations for such publications as The Masses, which ran from 1911-16, and The Liberator.⁷ Presumably, the general climate of pro-Communism and left-wing political involvements at the Art Students' League of this period had little, if any, impact upon FitzGerald. Any such concerns were never expressed in his writings or reflected in his art. It would seem that he had already made a commitment to a search for an expression removed from the fray of life. His questions and ideas for his work were more deeply rooted within existence than within any of what must have seemed to him to be its surface commotion. Perhaps largely at Tack's inspiration, he had chosen to try to look within and to commune more closely with nature and his subjects in order to cultivate a spiritual meaning for his work, although these concerns did not manifest themselves in an overt visual way until FitzGerald's 1930's work.

From March until May of 1922, FitzGerald took two courses

⁶By November, 1924, he had done murals at Barconi's (later the Plaza Cafe) and the Mitchell Copp Jewelry Store on Portage Ave. (both murals no longer extant) ("Art School has New Director," Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 22, 1924.) By 1929 he had done murals at the St. Charles Hotel in Winnipeg. (building since destroyed, and murals thus no longer extant) (Fred Houser "The Amateur Movement in Canadian Art," Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, Bertram Brooker, ed. (Toronto: MacMillan Co., 1929), p.89.

⁷Milton W. Brown, American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 187.

under Kenneth Hayes Miller (1878-1952), again, likely in drawing. Miller was a highly influential teacher at the League, ". . . regarded by his students with a respect that bordered on veneration."⁸ In the early 1920's, Miller was working through the influence of Renoir in paintings of women such as his The River, of 1919 (fig. 11). He was also just beginning his distinctive Women Shopper series with which he was to become closely associated and well known. The insistently three-dimensional The Hat Window (fig. 12) from 1930 with its round bulbous forms is an example. Miller's main influence on Fitzgerald seems to have been in increasing his concern for the portrayal of the three dimensions in his work. Miller's attitude was once described:

To him, the foundation of enduring art was three-dimensional design. He aimed at the greatest substance; forms must be in the round, solid and weighty.⁹

Of Kenneth Hayes Miller, Henry Geldzahler wrote:

He followed [Robert] Henri both in his insistence on familiarity with the great art of the past (Reginald Marsh remembered his saying, "Go the the Metropolitan -- I go each week.") and his insistence on a thorough knowledge of craft.¹⁰

⁸ Helen Goodman, "Kenneth Hayes Miller 1878-1952," Arts Magazine, vol. LIII, no. 7, March, 1979, p. 8. A review of an exhibition of Miller's work at Associated American Artists Gallery, New York.

⁹ John I.H. Baur and Lloyd Goodrich, American Art of Our Century (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art and Praeger Ltd., 1961), p. 74.

¹⁰ Henry Geldzahler, American Painting in the Twentieth Century (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1965), p. 101.

As will be noted, FitzGerald's work did become more three-dimensional in feeling after his experience under Miller. Boardman Robinson seems to have had less of an effect. For example, his rather stylized 1926 Sermon on the Mount (fig. 13), a typical example of his work, when compared to FitzGerald's post-New York pieces, appears to have no particular affinity.

Although FitzGerald must have been exposed to avant-garde European art developments while in New York by means of exhibitions and permanent museum collections, the emphasis at the Art Students' League seems to have been a more backward looking academic one. Henry Geldzahler wrote:

- In the period between the two World Wars some experiments in modernism continued in America, but the major energy went toward the consolidation of technique . . . The emphasis was on craft, on painting well . . . the [Robert] Henri and the academic tradition were carried into greater formal clarity.¹¹

FitzGerald profited from this rather schizophrenic experience of the exposure to both new ideas and solid, very traditional training. He later wrote of his arrival at the Art Students' League: "I met mature people. For the first time in my life I saw painting that was neither English or Scottish. I got a sudden jolt into everything."¹²

After meeting his family in Montreal in June of 1922, FitzGerald took them travelling in Eastern Canada before returning

¹¹Geldzahler, p. 76.

¹²FitzGerald quoted in Robert Ayre's untitled monograph, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives, TS, p. 8

home to Winnipeg. In his painting Rivière des Prairies, Quebec (fig. 14), an oil on canvas done on this trip, the artist's new concern for depicting solid forms in a three-dimensional space, with their interrelations carefully considered is immediately apparent.¹³ As well as this evidence of Miller's influence, is the glimmering of what would become a central concern for Fitzgerald; the conveying in pictorial form of the rootedness of the tree, its life, along with its expansiveness and forceful upward growth through the atmosphere. He contrasted this effectively with the flat planes of the house behind. This feeling of growth and life in a work, such that the picture itself became almost a living thing was a goal for which the artist continued to aim. A drawing done in the fall of 1923 in Winnipeg entitled Tree (fig. 15) exhibits the same qualities of a palpable growth and energy in the tree. Branches are hurtling out from the trunk, twisting and spreading out toward the picture plane.

As evidenced in a 1926 watercolour on paper entitled Landscape (fig. 16), Fitzgerald seems to have discovered the art and theories of Kandinsky after his return to Winnipeg, and perhaps due to new contacts met through his appointment as full time teacher at the Winnipeg School of Art. The bright, prismatic colours in this small work and upward-moving, force-

¹³ Ann Davis, "A North American Artist," Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine Fitzgerald: the Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 32. This point of an emphasis on three-dimensions is made, but not linked with Kenneth Hayes Miller.

fully triangular composition (stressed by the mountain in the background and tree formation in foreground) are peculiar to Kandinsky's work of the 1920's and foreign to FitzGerald's. This very atypical work, then, is a strong indication that FitzGerald was experimenting with some of Kandinsky's ideas, perhaps those in his Concerning the Spiritual in Art, which had first been published in English in 1914, under the title: The Art of Spiritual Harmony. FitzGerald was an avid reader of books on art (as well as fiction and poetry)¹⁴ so it is not at all unlikely that he made a point of reading Kandinsky's work after it appeared in English.¹⁵ Certainly, some of Kandinsky's ideas on spirituality in art could have helped him more clearly formulate his own. Kandinsky wrote, for example:

A work of art exists and has power to create spiritual atmosphere; and from this inner standpoint one judges whether it is a good work of art or a bad one. If its "form" is bad, it means that the form is too feeble, in meaning to call forth corresponding vibrations of the soul. Therefore, a picture is not necessarily "well painted" if it possesses the "values" of which the French so constantly speak. It is only well painted if its spiritual value is complete and satisfying . . . The artist must have something to say, for the mastery over form is not his goal, but rather the adapting of form to its inner meaning.¹⁶

¹⁴ Interview with Irene Heywood Hensworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

¹⁵ Dennis Reid speculates that Brooker read this book at this time as well, in response to Lawren Harris' article "Revelation of Art in Canada," The Canadian Theosophist, (Toronto), vol. VII, no. 5, July 15, 1926, pp. 85-88, (Dennis Reid, Bertram Brooker (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1973), p. 12.

¹⁶ Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art trans. M.T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1977) pp. 53-54.

Kandinsky wrote also about Theosophy in Concerning the Spiritual in Art, especially with regard to its relation to art and its superiority to modern science in explaining the complex and para-normal phenomena of the world.¹⁷ Theosophy had been founded in New York in 1875 by Madame Blavatsky. The word comes from the Greek theos (God) and sophia (wisdom), thus meaning divine wisdom. The basic aim of the movement was to amalgamate the mystical teachings of all the world's religions, and create thereby, one new, true religion through which man could know God directly. God was seen as manifest in all things and a belief in angels and occurrences such as telepathy and astral projection was included.¹⁸ If FitzGerald did read Kandinsky's book, he would have been able to share in discussions about it with two friends he made later in the 1920's, Fritz Brandtner and Bertram Brooker, both of whom were familiar with Kandinsky's ideas by the time FitzGerald met them.

As something of a loner in the less ambitious artistic milieu¹⁹ in Winnipeg, FitzGerald learned about art through reading books and magazines so that he could remain familiar

¹⁷ Kandinsky, pp. 13-14.

¹⁸ Annie Besant, Theosophy (London: T.C. and E. Jack, n.d.), ideas throughout the book.

¹⁹ Other artists in Winnipeg at the time included Alexander Musgrove (1890-1952) who came to Winnipeg from Britain in 1913 as the curator of the Winnipeg Art Gallery succeeding MacQuarrie. He was also Director of the Gallery 1934-1952. He founded the Winnipeg Sketch Club in 1914. Eric Bergman (1893-1958) was another contemporary of FitzGerald. He came from Germany in 1913 to work at Brigden's of Winnipeg. Walter J. Phillips (1884-1963) wrote for the Winnipeg Tribune on art. He moved to Calgary in 1941. Each of these men were professional artists of some ability but none achieved the reputation or quality of FitzGerald.

with developments in contemporary art, as well as art history. When Fritz Brandtner (1896-1969) arrived in Winnipeg from Danzig in 1928 he was appalled at the parochialism among most artists in the city. Russell Harper wrote:

He was shocked to find that the local art world had heard of no European artist of more recent date than Van Gogh, Gauguin or Cezanne, and what they knew of these men was indeed vague. Some knew, of course, the Americans, Homer, Eakins, Ryder, Whistler and Sargent but that was very advanced knowledge.²⁰

But Brandtner heard of FitzGerald, sought him out, and the two became friends, discovering they were something of kindred spirits and could have stimulating discussions about art. They spent many hours in conversation and went on outdoor sketching trips together on the prairie and in wooded areas near FitzGerald's house.²¹ Brandtner wrote:

Although LeMoine was a very quiet person and did not speak much, he had a wonderful personality, a great understanding and a keen interest in advanced ideas. Since I had very few understanding friends I could talk to about art, being a stranger in town, I used my free time to go to LeMoine's place, joining him in long walks in the close by prairies, and spent many enjoyable evenings with his family in the garden or around the fireplace.²²

²⁰Fritz Brandtner quoted in J. Russell Harper, Fritz Brandtner 1896-1969 (Montreal: Sir George Williams Art Galleries, 1971), p. 13.

²¹Areas such as Silver Heights and Stevenson's Field which were wilderness in FitzGerald's time, when his house was on the outskirts of the city, are now suburbs of Winnipeg. Possibly one of the reasons FitzGerald chose to live in outer St. James was to be close to these places for sketching and meditation.

²²Harper, p. 14.

After six years in Winnipeg during which he worked as a house painter, doing displays for Eaton's and as a commercial artist for Brigden's, Brandtner decided (at FitzGerald's advice) to move to Montreal. FitzGerald speculated that Montreal would be more receptive to Brandtner's experimental and modern ideas in art than Winnipeg had been.²³ Perhaps FitzGerald had gained this impression from his correspondence with Robert Ayre, who had moved to Montreal from Winnipeg in 1927. FitzGerald sent Ayre a letter of introduction to Brandtner, requesting that he introduce the painter to other artists in Montreal.²⁴ He wrote of Brandtner: "We have been intimate friends for a number of years and have many ideas in common on the subject of art."²⁵ Despite their friendship, FitzGerald and Brandtner did not seem to influence each other's art styles. Nevertheless, FitzGerald must have missed Brandtner's company when he moved to Montreal.²⁶

In the fall of 1923, FitzGerald began teaching evening classes at the Winnipeg School of Art (likely in drawing) under the principal, Franz Johnston (1888-1949). In the following

²³FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Robert Ayre, Montreal, 8 March, 1934, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

²⁴Same letter. Ayre had met FitzGerald as early as the late 1910's through the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Ayre wrote reviews of the Winnipeg Little Theatre productions for the Winnipeg Free Press, and also knew FitzGerald through this as FitzGerald did set designing for the Theatre. (Interview with Robert Ayre, Montreal, 25 May, 1979. also: Provincial Archives of Manitoba, MG 10 G16, Winnipeg Little Theatre File.)

²⁵FitzGerald, Winnipeg to Robert Ayre, Montreal, 8 March, 1934, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

²⁶Brandtner and FitzGerald did carry on a correspondence, unfortunately, their letters were burned by Brandtner shortly before his death. Telephone interview with Mr. Paul Kastel, executor of the Brandtner estate, Montreal, 13 Sept., 1979.

year he was hired as a full time teacher. This comprised a full five day week of teaching, with two evening classes as well, and a Saturday morning class. In 1924, when Johnston left for Toronto, a new principal was appointed -- Keith Gebhardt (b. 1899). Gebhardt's style of this period seems to have been influenced by the American Precisionist school.²⁷ In comparing Gebhardt's work with that of FitzGerald from the same period, it is evident how much FitzGerald was exploring the expression of his own ideas of the underlying relations between forms, and the life force in all things in his work, although displaying some basic Precisionist tendencies. Gebhardt, in contrast, has very little content in his work and was aping the style more openly. Gebhardt's 1928 Sutherland St., Winnipeg (fig. 17), a drawing on paper, if compared to FitzGerald's 1927 drawing and 1928 dry-point, both entitled Backyards, Water St.²⁸ (figs. 18, 19 and 20) is flatter and a more decorative work, with flat, stacked planes of space. It shows none of the concerns for three-dimensional volume, purity of form and clarity of line as found in FitzGerald's works. Backyards, Water St. is more focussed and concentrated in composition, more dense and with a more in-

²⁷ Ann Davis, "A North American Artist," Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist. (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978) p. 45.

²⁸ In their catalogue section, entry #68, Ann Davis and Patricia Bovey (Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist) give the print the title Backyard and place it in the 1940's. Kevin Forrest points out the incorrect title and date in his The Prints of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald, (unpublished Master's thesis, Carleton University, 1979), catalogue section, entry for Backyards, Water St.

tense feeling of life, for example, in the tightly drawn branches of the tree. Artists such as Charles Sheeler and Charles Demuth were working with tight, linear depictions of everyday subject matter at this time and perhaps FitzGerald knew of their work through reproductions. If so, he may have responded to it as work being produced by artists of similar sensibilities to his own, but, when contrasted to the Precisionists' ideas of the machine, of showing no process in art and concentrating on the formal aspects of a picture, FitzGerald's concerns have little relation or affinity. Although Paul Duval has written that FitzGerald was painting under a Precisionist influence²⁹ what is more apparent and important in terms of his own development in his late 1920's works, such as Williamson's Garage, an oil from 1927 (fig. 21), Pritchard's Fence, an oil from c. 1928 (fig. 22) and his 1928 drawing called Chicken Coop (fig. 23) is the sense of a bubbling or budding of ideas and feelings, still very much in a nascent stage. The care given in the calm building up of forms and the serene mood which results are very much apparent in each of these works. FitzGerald was working out the possibilities of expressing his spirituality with careful delineation of contour and the special attention given to the harmonious and echoing interrelations between forms. Thus, for the first time, in the calm, arrested, almost reverent stillness of these pictures, as well as in the sense of close, emotional and spiritual proximity between artist and subject con-

²⁹ Paul Duval, High Realism in Canada (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke and Irwin Co. Ltd., 1974), p. 36.

veyed through the slow building up of forms, FitzGerald's ideas about the divine quality and essential oneness to all life were beginning to come through. It is as though FitzGerald felt a need to recreate line by line, or stroke by stroke, his heightened vision of the world around him. In a diary she wrote after his death, FitzGerald's wife described her husband during these years, explaining that she had been an outgoing person, while he was "inward." She wrote:

LeMoine was quietly preparing his life, which was his art and this was always deep within him and he didn't talk about it but seemed to be pre-occupied even then, and of course this was increased as he developed and what he wanted to express became more difficult.³⁰

In 1928, FitzGerald was given an exhibition of drawings at the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto (works unknown). J.E.H. MacDonald (1873-1932) was the Chairman of the Picture Committee of the Club in 1927 and was the President from 1928 to 1930³¹ so it was he who wrote to FitzGerald to arrange the details. Lawren Harris (1885-1970) saw the exhibition and admired the work so much that he purchased a drawing³² (work unknown) and wrote to FitzGerald: "I particularly like the way you extricate a suggestion of celestial structure and spirit from objec-

³⁰ Diary of Valley FitzGerald, entry for 30 June, 1958, FSC (1 0201).

³¹ H. Bishop, Arts and Letters Club, Toronto, to the author, 9 March, 1980.

³² This mentioned in a letter from FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to J.E.H. MacDonald, undated, Public Archives of Canada, M630 D111, Toronto.

tive nature in your drawings."³³ This is the first written record of a viewer responding to the spiritual content in FitzGerald's work. The following year, FitzGerald was given an exhibition at Dent's Publishing House in Toronto (works unknown). Lawren Harris brought along Bertram Brooker (1888-1955) to see the show, and Brooker brought a work (unknown). MacDonald wrote FitzGerald on Brooker's behalf, requesting to come and see FitzGerald that summer in Winnipeg.³⁴ FitzGerald replied:

. . . nothing would delight me more than to discuss matters earthly and otherwise with him. I get very little of that sort of thing now and it is good for one occasionally mixed with the every day utilitarian routine. I am afraid that we in Winnipeg are overly inclined to keep such thoughts to oneself, particularly when they don't seem to fit the average outlook.³⁵

Brooker came to Winnipeg in the summer of 1929, as planned, and visited FitzGerald for the first time, seeing more of his work. Afterwards, they began to correspond. Although he was not FitzGerald's only correspondent,³⁶ Brooker was the only one

³³ Lawren Harris to FitzGerald, undated, FSC.

³⁴ This letter does not seem to be extant, but the existence of its request is implied by FitzGerald's answer.

³⁵ FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to J.E.H. MacDonald, Toronto, undated, Public Archives of Canada, M630.D11.

³⁶ FitzGerald also maintained regular correspondence with Lawren Harris, Irene Heywood Hemsworth (a pupil of FitzGerald's in 1929 with whom he became intimate) Robert Ayre, Fritz Brandtner and less regularly with Caven Atkins, another former pupil, A.Y. Jackson and Arthur Lismer. He did not write often -- sometimes only one or twice a year, and his letters always contained thoughtful insights and ideas about art, as well as descriptions of his life in Winnipeg.

among them who made periodic trips to Winnipeg³⁷ and invited FitzGerald to Toronto, giving FitzGerald the personal and physical contact he needed with artists of "advanced ideas" which he otherwise would have lacked in Winnipeg.

FitzGerald's reference in his letter to MacDonald of "matters earthly and otherwise" suggests that Brooker had told MacDonald he hoped to discuss the content of FitzGerald's art with him. Likely as well, he wanted to broach the topic of Theosophy. Brooker had been introduced to Theosophy by Harris and Fred Housser, a friend of the Group of Seven, as these men were active members in the Toronto Theosophical Society.³⁸ It seems likely he would have been interested in FitzGerald's ideas about Theosophy after having talked about it with Harris. Harris wrote regularly in the late 1920's and early 1930's in their publication, The Canadian Theosophist, mainly on the relation between Theosophy and art.³⁹

Brooker had begun to portray spiritual themes, which could be interpreted as relating to Theosophical ideas in his paintings of the mid-1920's in response to this new outlook. His

³⁷Reconstructing from their letters, the following visits, at least, can be established: 1929, Brooker to Winnipeg; 1930, FitzGerald to Toronto; 1933, Brooker to Winnipeg; 1936, Brooker to Winnipeg; 1938, FitzGerald to Toronto; 1945, Brooker to Winnipeg; 1953, FitzGerald to Toronto.

³⁸Dennis Reid, Bertram Brooker, p. 10.

³⁹His articles included: "Revelation of Art in Canada," The Canadian Theosophist, (Toronto), vol. VII, no. 5, July 15, 1926, pp. 85-88; "Theosophy and Art," The Canadian Theosophist, (Hamilton), vol. XIV, no. 5, July 15, 1933, pp. 129-132; "Theosophy and Art," The Canadian Theosophist, (Hamilton), vol. XIV, no. 6, Aug. 15, 1933, pp. 161-166.

1928 Sounds Assembling (fig. 24) is an example of these works, with its metaphor to music and spiritual harmonies in title and shapes. Judging from FitzGerald's writing (in which he never once mentions Theosophy) and art (which never employs overt Theosophical symbols), it would seem likely that he and Brooker were not in agreement about their metaphysics and exactly how art should convey spirituality. As with Emily Carr's gradual rejection of Theosophy in the 1930's as too programmatic and dictatorial a point of view for her own painting and life⁴⁰ and Arthur Lismer's moving away from the philosophy as well,⁴¹ FitzGerald never chose Theosophy as a belief system and likely did not want to produce didactic art promoting it. Rather than training people to see the oneness of life that he felt, he wanted to communicate the joys of nature, the macrocosm in the microcosm, in a natural and personal manner. Although the concept of oneness⁴² is central to Theosophy, FitzGerald would seem to have reached an understanding of it on his own, previous to knowing Brooker, perhaps even helped by A.V. Tack. It would seem to have been the aspects of Theosophy which FitzGerald must have considered its dogma which he rejected.⁴² Despite

⁴⁰ Hundreds and Thousands: the Journals of Emily Carr (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke Irwin and Co. Ltd., 1966), p. 19; p.42; p. 123 and p. 149. Also see: Doris Shadbolt, The Art of Emily Carr (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke Irwin and Co. Ltd., and Douglas McIntyre, 1979), p. 58.

⁴¹ John A.B. McLeish, September Gale: A study of Arthur Lismer of the Group of Seven (Toronto and Vancouver: J.M. Dent Ltd., 1955), pp. 9-10.

⁴² Stephen Andrews, a former student of FitzGerald, Malaga, Spain, 5 June, 1979 to the author: Andrews writes:

their arguments,⁴³ Brooker and FitzGerald remained fast friends. Far from being influenced by Brooker's painting, FitzGerald was the one who swayed Brooker, as the Toronto artist began doing representational work, highly influenced by FitzGerald's precise, linear style after 1930, returning only intermittently to abstraction afterwards. His Fawn Bay of 1936 (fig. 25) is an example of these works in which the precision and attention to detail, not heretofore present in Brooker's work, can be detected. Brooker's radical changing of styles under FitzGerald's influence indicates that he saw spiritual content in FitzGerald's art: This is what he, himself wished to have his work convey, and decided to use FitzGerald's representational means instead of his own abstract ones to achieve his ends, obviously feeling the former to be more effective. Later in 1929, Brooker wrote to FitzGerald of their visit:

Your attitude toward your work and your companionship on the few days I had with you have had a very considerable effect on me. It has changed not only my approach to things, but also my appreciation of other people and work. If I tried to put my finger on it I should say that it has made me more honest and studious and less impatient for quick results. So far its effect has been that I have become perhaps too realistic -- in a small way,

"Mr. Fitz. [sic] once spent an evening attempting to talk me out of Mary Baker Eddy and her Christian Scientist Church. "Do you want to be an artist or a practitioner?" This would seem to imply that FitzGerald held art apart from any kind of religious, especially, fanatically religious, practice.

⁴³ One argument is referred to by Brooker in a letter to FitzGerald, 27 July 1945, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ontario.

I mean -- but I hope to grow out of that to a bigger appreciation of form -- particularly. To boil it down to one word -- form is the thing that obsesses me. Colour is no longer a thing that interests me for its own sake, as it did.⁴⁴

That Brooker was so strongly affected by FitzGerald's presence and work indicates something of the forcefulness of his ideas to those open to receive them. In FitzGerald's late 1920's work, the spiritual concepts and beliefs he will later be able to articulate so clearly in paint can most easily be seen in his selection of subjects and in the organization and direction he was choosing for his life. His subjects: still lifes, backyard views and some prairie scenes from the summer, enabled FitzGerald to strive for a feeling of communication with the subject in his work more easily than if he were doing street scenes or anything more potentially frenetic. A calm mood such as that achieved in Pritchard's Fence (fig. 22) for example, and the sense of communion with the buildings and sagging fence felt at an intuitive level upon viewing the work are coupled with a sense of quietly unfolding wonder at the organization and beauty in the world, revealed in FitzGerald's careful strokes.

A life of moderation would appear to have been the artist's goal as he developed what amounted to a program of spiritual discipline in his art, daily life and teaching. His rejection of such things as a busy social life, opportunities for more

⁴⁴ Bertram Brooker, Toronto, to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 28 December, 1929, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ontario.

numerous sales and exhibitions, money and extravagant material possessions was intentional, not accidental. Irene Heywood Hemsworth remembers that FitzGerald drank liquor only on the odd occasion, that he smoked very little and ate simple food.⁴⁵ Perhaps these practices seemed to the artist as a means of keeping him pure for his work. FitzGerald's restraint and moderation in his life and his discipline with regard to his art call to mind the Buddhist eightfold path, to choose one spiritual discipline from the various religions of the world, which is practised as a means toward righteousness and enlightenment. According to the eightfold path, right views, right intentions, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration, when practised together, form a path to a more receptive state for divine enlightenment.⁴⁶ Of course, FitzGerald was not likely aware of such a doctrine, and could have been leading a moderate life inspired by Christianity. But he never mentions Christianity in his writings, nor attended a church. It seems likely, therefore, that he simply decided on his own, through meditation and inner searching, that a moderate life was the best path for him.

It seems appropriate, in terms of FitzGerald's restraint in life, that his favorite time of the year was also the most austere and bleak: the late fall, before any snow had fallen

⁴⁵ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

⁴⁶ Peter C. Swann, Art of China, Korea and Japan (New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1963), p. 62.

to soften the bare landscape. He said of the scene which inspired his 1929 painting Poplar Woods:

Even though all the autumn colour had gone from the trees, there was definite colour. True, it was of a delicate nature and required more concentration to see than the richer tones of early fall. But the very delicacy gave it a charm and a sense of vastness that more obvious colour would never have achieved.

If I have any preference in the seasons, perhaps this time of year comes closest to it. The greyness and delicacy of land and sky have a particular appeal for me and a greater emotional impact than any other period.⁴⁷

FitzGerald was likely aware himself that such preferences were connected to his deeply spiritual nature, but this was something he would not have discussed aloud. As he had written to J.E.H. Macdonald, people in Winnipeg were not accustomed to discussing such matters. But, it would seem probable that, through his contacts with Tack and Brooker, he had some idea of spirituality as a concept and discipline and that his ideas and outlook were not generally in keeping with that of his Winnipeg environment. Former students of FitzGerald, in hindsight, now realize his spiritual depth. Stephen Andrews (b. 1922), who studied under FitzGerald in the early 1940's writes: "Of course Mr. Fitz [sic] was a mystic . . . he hit in so many ways upon things commonly thought of as Eastern in his very own way back in Winnipeg."⁴⁸ Caven Atkins (b. 1907),

⁴⁷ FitzGerald in his C.B.C. radio broadcast of 1954. MS in collection of Dr. E.J. Thomas, Winnipeg. This portion quoted in "FitzGerald on Art," Canadian Art, vol. XV, no. 2, Spring, 1958, p. 119.

⁴⁸ Stephen Andrews, Malaga, Spain, to the author, 5 June, 1979.

another artist who was a pupil of FitzGerald, he in the late 1920's, writes of FitzGerald: "He would have made a very good Zen monk."⁴⁹

In 1929, Keith Gebhardt left Winnipeg⁵⁰ and a new principal for the Winnipeg School of Art was required. Those in charge had begun a search for a person from outside the city, preferably an American,⁵¹ but several students circulated a petition insisting that FitzGerald was capable of the job and should be named principal. The petition was successful; FitzGerald received the appointment, and was to remain principal until 1949.

⁴⁹ Caven Atkins, Birmingham, Michigan, to the author, 7 October, 1979.

⁵⁰ Gebhardt writes that he "fled" Winnipeg, considering the city such an artistic backwater. Keith Gebhardt, Milwaukee, to the author, 31 August, 1979.

⁵¹ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July 1979. Hemsworth was attending the school at the time and was one of those who signed the petition, which is still extant, FSC, loose papers.

CHAPTER IV

1930. TRIP AND 1930's WORK

In the summer of 1930, FitzGerald made a trip to some of the major art schools in the United States to gather ideas for the program at the Winnipeg School of Art. In June, he began his train voyage, alone, recording his impressions, particularly of works of art, in a diary¹ in a rather free-form style. These thoughts form a fascinating insight into FitzGerald's character and taste and shed light on the paintings and drawings which followed the trip. In assessing other's work, FitzGerald faced, one again, as in the summer of 1920 after meeting Tack, a reassessment of his own direction. As had been his 1920 summer at Snowflake, this trip proved to be something of a time for stock-taking for the artist, during which he measured his own aims and ideas against those expressed in the work of major European and American artists.

On June 4, FitzGerald wrote in an entry about a room of student work contrasted with a room of modern European artists such as Picasso, Vlaminck and Hodler at the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis:

By walking between the two rooms one could

¹ Still extant, FSC (1 0183). For a complete itinerary of the trip, see Appendix, Selected Chronology.

readily appreciate the difference. The greatest difference was that the artists were one, absolutely unified and the students' work very much the feeling of individual things placed together, sometimes well, but still the feeling of the separate thing. And I think that is the great thing we are all striving for, consciously, or otherwise.²

In such an impression of the artists being "one," Fitzgerald is not only referring to a simple compositional or colouristic unity, but a cohesion and coherence of thought and expression throughout the works. His feeling was of a shared sense of conviction and ideals among the artists whose work was displayed, a feeling which the students had not yet developed. He must have hoped this feeling was present in his own work, indeed, seeing the work of important artists on this trip must have made Fitzgerald realize all the more keenly how much he wanted his own art to be of a comparable quality and stature, and to communicate as deep a message as he saw in the master paintings. Artists he mentioned with praise in his diary were: Cézanne, Courbet, El Greco, Matisse, Monet, Seurat, Turner and Velasquez, each for different reasons, and generally only just in passing, to mention a pleasing work, Cézanne receiving the most attention. At the Metropolitan Museum in New York, he was particularly drawn to the five Cézanne paintings from the H.O. Havemeyer bequest which were on display that summer.³ As well,

²Diary (1930), FSC (1 0183), entry for June 4.

³The Havemeyer bequest was in 1929, so Fitzgerald had not seen these works while at the A.S.L. in 1921-22. The five

in Chicago at the Chicago Art Institute, he commented on a Cézanne there saying: "I hardly like to admit it, I feel again a sense of something not quite complete, but how beautiful in some parts."⁴ FitzGerald noted that Cézanne's handling of his edges in his works in New York was "careful," and wrote that the Mt-Sainte-Victoire painting was beautiful and "satisfying in every way."⁵ Although it seems doubtful Cézanne's work had a strong or direct stylistic influence on FitzGerald's (one could argue, however, in the case of FitzGerald's 1942-43 small nude drawings, for Cézanne as a source for imagery, and to a small extent, style in the layering of strokes to build up form) something of a similar intense feeling to that of Cézanne is present is certain of FitzGerald's works. Perhaps the desperate seriousness and painstaking search for a means to render his vision of the master of Aix touched a responsive chord in FitzGerald. Something of this was to become the tone of his own work in 1930's.

In Chicago after a day of looking at art, FitzGerald

paintings are: Rocks in the Forest, 1896-1900 (later re-dated and titled 1893-94, Rocks at Fontainebleau in W. Rubin, ed. Cézanne: The Late Work (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977), cat. #8; A Man in a Straw Hat - Portrait of Boyer, 1870-71; Still Life, 1873-77; The Gulf of Marseilles seen from L'Estaque, 1883-85; and Mt-Sainte-Victoire, 1885-87, (C. Sterling and M. Salinger, French Paintings: a catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, vol. III (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1967), p. 108. All were on display in 1930.

⁴Diary (1930), FSC (1 0183), entry for June 4. The work mentioned must be Cézanne's The Basket of Apples, 1890-94, which was acquired by the Chicago Art Institute in 1926. All their other Cézannes were later acquisitions. (John Maxon, The Art Institute of Chicago (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970).

⁵Diary (1930), FSC (1 0183), undated entry.

wrote:

The technique is so much a part of all the bigger things that one only sees it by thinking of it from a painter's angle. It is not on the surface of the better things and is really only the means whereby the greater things are achieved. Each of us has something to say in paint about our contact with life, no matter how small it may be and the conclusion arrived at seems always the same, that is to work first and foremost and to be as little concerned of the way we are saying it as possible. To be so wrapped up in the thing to be said that the means are very much in the background . . .

And there is indeed a lot of froth in every gallery of pictures, because so many of us do love the froth of life, in fact, seem to prefer it to the real substance, possibly not knowing that it is the froth.⁶

This articulation of FitzGerald's belief that good art should say something about the artist's contact with life, that technique should remain only a means, and that the "froth" of life was to be avoided is valuable in explaining his own development in style and subject upon his return to Winnipeg. Another concept he stressed in his 1930 diary was that of "oneness." On June 18, he wrote: "The big men all have the essential oneness to their thing, and no doubt to a great extent to this thing is due their bigness."⁷ On June 29, he continued:

An eternal contact with humanity and nature and a greater sense of unity. This has been very strongly impressed on me during this trip, the sense of unifying all the elements in a picture to the making of a creation. The picture a living thing, one great thought made up of many details, but all subordinated

⁶Diary (1930), FSC (0 0183), entry for June 7.

⁷Diary (1930), FSC (0 0183), entry for June 18.

to the whole.⁸

This concept of the picture as a living thing itself was something FitzGerald was to try to achieve in his 1930's work as well. Along with having accomplished his goal to tour art schools for ideas for the Winnipeg School of Art, FitzGerald returned to Winnipeg with a new resolve and ambition for his art. In August of 1930, after his arrival home, he did a small line drawing in pencil (untitled, fig. 26) of a centrally-positioned but tiny human figure in a huge, swelling cosmic landscape. Although delicately executed, the rhythms in the work are powerful and sweeping. The minuscule figure could be seen as FitzGerald himself, almost camouflaged as the lines of his body extend to those of the clumps of foliage, on the banks of the Assiniboine River. He is totally integrated and at one with the nature around him, reflecting his belief in the oneness of all life, and of a picture. Perhaps, even in a more symbolic way, the drawing represents FitzGerald in relation to the world of great art which he had just experienced. While realizing he was but a small figure, he nevertheless ambitiously yearned to be included, just as the figure is an integral part of the landscape. It was perhaps this ambition to be counted that allowed FitzGerald to take the risk of including esoteric spiritual content in his work, which, he must have realized, would not appeal to his Winnipeg peers.

Before he had left on his trip, FitzGerald had begun work

⁸Diary (1930), FSC (0 0183), entry for June 29.

on a painting which he eventually titled Doc Snider's House.⁹ In a letter to Brooker from January of 1930,¹⁰ FitzGerald wrote that he had started a painting of the trees in his front yard and the neighbour's house behind.¹¹ A rough sketch for Doc Snider's House still exists (fig. 27), but reveals only the roughest of plans for the composition of the work. He worked steadily on the painting, using his weekends and school vacations for another full year until finally on June 13, 1931, the picture was completed.¹² (fig. 28 and 29) FitzGerald's painstaking and time-consuming working method, very much in evidence in the carefully controlled flecked strokes in Doc Snider's House is a reflection of the respect and reverence he had for nature and all of life. To physically, stroke by stroke, recreate the meaning to what he felt and saw, to work slowly and cautiously were FitzGerald's means of preventing "the froth of life" entering his work, and of achieving a "oneness."

⁹ Although Bovey and Davis catalogue the work with a new spelling, Doc Snyder's House (catalogue section, #26, p. 109) citing Henderson's Winnipeg Directory as having the correct spelling of Snyder, nevertheless, FitzGerald himself titled the painting Doc Snider's House, so I retain his spelling, wrong though it may be.

¹⁰ FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Bertram Brooker, Toronto, FSC, Correspondence files. Dated Jan. 11, 1929, but FitzGerald must have written 1929 in error instead of 1930 as he refers to Brooker's visit from the summer of 1929 in the text.

¹¹ The house portrayed as Doc Snyder's house is not next door to FitzGerald's home as he mentions to Brooker, but diagonally behind his, as can be see by studying the architecture of the buildings in fig. 29, a photograph of the site taken by the author in 1979.

¹² FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Bertram Brooker, Toronto, 13 June, 1931, FSC, Correspondence files.

As a result of this effort, even such details as the feeling of sap in the veins and branches of the stiff trees is somehow conveyed. FitzGerald once wrote how important he felt was an " . . . appreciation for the endlessness of the living force which seems to pervade and flow through all natural forms, even though these [sic] seem on the surface to be so ephemeral."¹³

An awareness of this living force is revealed in Doc Snider's House. The painting signalled FitzGerald's maturity as an artist. It was purchased by the National Gallery of Canada in 1932 after FitzGerald had sent it to their annual exhibition of Canadian art, and has been circulated in more group exhibitions than any other of his pictures. The harmony achieved in the visual rhythms between the tree trunks in FitzGerald's yard, the graceful, swirling patterns in the snow and the solid feeling of the house against the clear blue prairie sky give the work an overall sense of detachment from a daily reality. Negative spaces are given a life of their own, revealing the artist's intuition that space and matter are aspects of the same unified creation. As FitzGerald wrote of a Renoir he saw in Washington, D.C., he created "a great reality out of a commonplace subject,"¹⁴ and one might add, "a living thing," for which the artist was striving. |

FitzGerald recognized that he was beginning to achieve

¹³FitzGerald quoted in Patricia Bovey, "Some European Influences on his Work," Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 84. undated.

¹⁴Diary (1930), FSC (0 0183), entry in Washington, D.C. undated.

what he so wanted in Doc Snider's House, but questioned the value of spending such a long period of time on one work.¹⁵ Increasingly, in the 1930's, after the completion of Doc Snider's House, he turned to watercolours and drawing as a way to work through his ideas more quickly. By avoiding oils to a large degree, he hoped to move more quickly toward a more intense spiritual expression he must have seen first bloom in Doc Snider's House. He wrote to Robert Ayre of these watercolours that he had misgivings about their quality, but that:

. . . the main thing is that I am enthusiastic and feel a new road opened before me. Somehow or other I have a feeling that I don't care what they may look like when they are finished, so long as I have a strong urge within.¹⁶

One of the few oil paintings FitzGerald did do in the 1930's was The Pool from 1934 (fig. 30). This was purchased from FitzGerald by Harry Adaskin, a violinist friend of the Group of Seven, and a Theosophist.¹⁷ He had met FitzGerald in 1932 when he came to visit him in Winnipeg shortly after FitzGerald had been asked to join the Group of Seven.¹⁸ That Adaskin, a Theosophist himself, purchased The Pool would most

¹⁵ Robert Ayre, untitled monograph, TS, pp. 13-14, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

¹⁶ FitzGerald quoted in Ayre's untitled monograph, TS p. 14, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

¹⁷ Catalogue information in Bovey and Davis, entry #34. The Pool was acquired by the National Gallery of Canada in 1973.

¹⁸ Visit recorded in Vally FitzGerald's diary, FSC, (1 0195), undated entry/notation.

certainly indicate that he, as a spiritually aware person, responded to the feelings about the divine in nature that FitzGerald was trying to express in the work. Various writers have noticed that in The Pool FitzGerald focussed on the surface of the water in the pool as the subject for the painting and did not include the foliage around it in any detail.¹⁹ Neither has the space around it, as a point of reference, been indicated. Yet, no one has speculated as to why the artist chose to cut off the pool from its surrounds. It would seem that the artist realized that in any such act of focussing intently upon a subject, the sense of communion which he felt with the pool, perhaps even a feeling of self-identification with it as another object of divine creation, could be more successfully communicated. In a normal scanning vision view of the pool, such a feeling would be diffused. By cutting off the setting of the pool and by concentrating on the relations between the reeds, water and sky, all rendered in tiny, flecked strokes, FitzGerald has a viewer see the pool in a new and intense way. The stippled paint technique acts as a link between the various natural elements of the work: sky, water and vegetation, underlining FitzGerald's belief that they are actually different aspects of the same pictorial, and by analogy, divine creation and spiritual substance.

FitzGerald continued in the practice of focussing on one subject and making it large in relation to the picture size

¹⁹ For example Ann Davis, "A North American Artist," Bovey and Davis, p. 52.

throughout the 1930's and into the 1940's. He did this convincingly and with startling results in his apple and other still life works in the 1940's, such as the small oil painting Still Life (fig. 31) from 1941 and Plant (fig. 32), a drawing in coloured chalk from c. 1940. Robert Rosenblum has noticed that the emotion of the romantic sublime, an intensely spiritual feeling, can be evoked by the same means that FitzGerald employed in these works.²⁰ FitzGerald, however, was not aiming for a sublime feeling, and because of his small scale and more modest methods, instead evokes a response on a less grand and awe-inspiring level.

In Still Life, for example, the thin, flat, translucent geranium leaves seem to almost float free from the woody, spindly stalk, while the robust, glistening apple sits heavily on the windowsill. Such subtly evoked contrasts make one see the elements portrayed as microcosms of aspects of life and activity, or as metaphors for people and their habits. In choosing such simple, everyday subjects to convey his feelings and beliefs, FitzGerald achieved a sort of a revelation in his art, not of a huge explosion of insight, but more in the vein of those of the author Virginia Woolf, one of FitzGerald's favorite authors.²¹ A critic wrote of Woolf's novels:

Mrs. Woolf, one feels, is trying to get

²⁰ Robert Rosenblum, Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: from Friedrich to Rothko (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 27.

²¹ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

at a spiritual truth . . . what is the meaning of life? . . . The great revelation had never come. Instead there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark.²²

Indeed, FitzGerald's vision, as such, is quite in keeping with such daily "revelations," with a sort of Proustian attention to detail, in order to evoke a larger whole.

Plant is rendered in small dots and daubs of chalk which serve, as did the flecks of paint in The Pool, in uniting the table, faceted glass jar and leaning plant with one another and with the space glimpsed beyond. Aided by the plant's proximity to the picture plane, the pervading mood of the work is one of quiet contemplation and communion with the subject.

Aldous Huxley, the well-known British novelist, found such close-up, focussed views in art more spiritually transporting than general middle-distance ones and noted that the former have been used more in Japanese and Chinese painting than in Western Art. He wrote of such works:

Each life is represented as the centre of its own universe, the purpose, in its own estimation, for which this world and all that is in it were created; each issues its own specific and individual declaration of independence from human imperialism; each by ironic implication derides our absurd pretensions to lay down merely human rules for the conduct of the cosmic game; each mutely repeats the divine tautology; I am that I am.²³

²²Winnifred Holtby, Virginia Woolf (London: Wishart and Co., 1932), p. 149. Holtby, according to Irene Heywood Hems-worth (interview, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979) was another of the artists' favorite writers.

²³Aldous Huxley, The Doors of Perception and Heaven and

Certainly, the subjects painted in FitzGerald's close-up view still lifes do carry some of this feeling of existing beyond the human purview. Perhaps FitzGerald had noticed this effect in Chinese and Japanese work himself and decided as a result to experiment in working with the close-up view. In his file of clipped magazine articles and reproductions which he had collected and saved over the course of his lifetime,²⁴ the majority are Chinese watercolours and Japanese watercolours, and prints, either single clipped reproductions or articles on various artists and schools. Other factors which point to an interest in Oriental art on the part of FitzGerald include a letter he wrote, enclosed with a Christmas card, to his former student, Caven Atkins, in 1951.²⁵ Atkins had evidently sent FitzGerald a reproduction of a Chinese painting the previous year, as FitzGerald began by thanking him for one. He went on to refer to Chinese students who had attended the Winnipeg School of Art: "All of these Chinese kids brought something very nice to the school and you and I will remember it with something more than pleasure."²⁶ The fact that FitzGerald would associate Chinese art with his Chinese students indicates that his warm-hearted attitude to them could have sprung from

Hell (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), from Appendix V, n. pag.

²⁴ Extant, FSC, FitzGerald personal clipping file, Box. #9.

²⁵ Letter and card now in collection of the Art Gallery of Windsor, Ontario.

²⁶ FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Caven Atkins, 3 January, 1951 in the collection of the Art Gallery of Windsor.

his admiration for their country's artistic heritage.

Gebhardt remembers that a George Wilson, a trustee of the Winnipeg School of Art, had an extensive collection of Chinese art which FitzGerald saw at his house: "FitzGerald appreciated the fine points of these excellent prints, [sic] but made few comments."²⁷ Another Winnipegger, James McDiarmid, who had been instrumental in the founding of the Winnipeg School of Art, and with whom FitzGerald was acquainted²⁸ was a collector of Japanese prints.²⁹ It is likely that FitzGerald saw this collection as well. When speaking to Pearl McCarthy in Toronto in 1953, FitzGerald made reference to Chinese and Japanese artists, indicating high esteem for their work.³⁰

Although it is not certain that FitzGerald relied on Oriental art for inspiration in any way, there certainly exists an affinity between the philosophical and aesthetic aims involved in Chinese and Japanese works and with what he was struggling to express. Certainly the quiet feeling and mood, the softness and delicacy in much of his work have some affinity with some eras and styles of Japanese and Chinese painting.

²⁷ Keith Gebhardt, Milwaukee, to the author, 27 September, 1979.

²⁸ FitzGerald was commissioned to do an Ex Libris for McDiarmid. Kevin Forrest, catalogue section.

²⁹ Ferdinand Eckhardt, One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba, biography section, p. 88.

³⁰ Pearl McCarthy, "Mr. FitzGerald: Rare Visitor But his Horizon is National," Toronto Globe and Mail, August 8, 1953.

In particular, the mystical quality often present in Sung and Ming dynasty Chinese painting bears a fairly strong relationship to the mood in FitzGerald's work. But, FitzGerald's approach to art and nature was basically Western and not Eastern. He always portrayed a specific site, and from one point of view. Oriental artists, in contrast, gave their work a sense of timelessness by using multiple view points and a idealized, distilled knowledge of nature, not a momentary, crystalized instant of vision. It would appear that FitzGerald reached his method of the close-up view and his still, quiet feeling in his work very much on his own, with some indirect influences, but certianly not any overriding one from any particular source. As well, it seems most logical to assume that most of his spiritual ideas and beliefs stemmed from within, from his own thinking and meditation, with perhaps some help from conversations with Tack and Brooker.

Various spiritual concepts are conveyed in FitzGerald's late 1930's works. In a still life of apples such as Still Life: Two Apples (fig. 33) from c. 1940, an oil on canvas, the two fruits loom so large in relation to the size of the picture that they seem to swell outwards in space taking on connotations of cosmic spheres.³¹ This occurrence is similar to the spiritual phenomenon occurring with some Indian Hindu sculpture, referred to as "prana," or expanding form.³²

³¹This has been noted by Eckhardt. One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba, p. 19.

³²Heinrich Zimmer, ed. by Joseph Campbell, Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946. reprint 1962), pp. 130-136.

"Prana" means vital life force, and FitzGerald has certainly communicated his sensation of a life force in the two apples. Alan Jarvis once remarked upon the spirituality in FitzGerald's apple works³³ and Ferdinand Eckhardt wrote that the artist's attitude for nature in general was " . . . perhaps a kind of philosophical or religious belief that God was in everything."³⁴

The tree in FitzGerald's Tree Trunk and Bridge drawing from 1936 (fig. 34 and photograph of the site, 1979, fig. 35), as in so many other of the artist's drawings of trees, has definite humanoid characteristics. Previous writers have noticed this as well,³⁵ and FitzGerald wrote revealingly to Brooker in 1937:

The seeing of a tree, a cloud, an earth form always gives me a greater feeling of life than the human body. I really sense the life in the former, and only occasionally in the latter. I rarely feel so free in social intercourse with humans as I always feel with trees.³⁶

As if to express this feeling of communion with and a sense of life within trees in his art, FitzGerald played with the forms in the tree trunks and branches causing hip joints,

³³"Winnipeg's Art Gallery a Fire Hazard - Jarvis," Winnipeg Free Press, Feb. 24, 1958.

³⁴Ferdinand Eckhardt, "Introduction," FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition, n. pag.

³⁵For example, Ann Davis, "A North American Artist," Bovey and Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: the Development of an Artist, p. 36, and Bovey, "Some European Influences in his Work," as above, p. 86.

³⁶FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Bertram Brooker, Toronto, 19 February, 1937, FSC, FitzGerald Correspondence Files.

breasts and reaching arms to partly emerge. By giving his trees quasi-human form, he was almost granting them human life, something akin to what he admitted feeling in trees. Once again, this can be seen as an expression of his belief in the oneness of nature: the basic sameness of humans and trees in that they inhabit the same universe and are made of the same substances. Perhaps FitzGerald even had a feeling of self-identification with the trees, feeling his own self to be at one with the aspect of the cosmic Self manifested in the trees. A passage from the Hindu Upanishads reads:

He who is aware of how that the Self gradually unfolds within him obtains for himself a greater development. Herbs and trees and animals he sees and he knows that in them too the Self is gradually revealed.³⁷

The most revealing and profound written passage of FitzGerald's which supports a spiritual interpretation of his art is in a letter he wrote in 1942 to his close friend and former pupil, Irene Heywood Hensworth, whom he had met in 1929. Part of that letter reads:

³⁷Quoted in Swami Prabhavananda, The Spiritual Heritage of India (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1963), p. 48. The Hindu concept of Maya, or cosmic illusion, which FitzGerald could have learned of from Tack, or the Chinese concept of the Tao, or unifying force in nature, could have had some role in the artist's thinking in such works. Whether or not he was familiar with any Eastern literature on such subjects is not known, but his own term "oneness" certainly finds expression in his idea to combine tree and human forms. (On Maya see Heinrich Zimmer, p. 54, and the Tao, Peter Swann, p. 144.)

We can only develop an understanding of the great forces behind the organization of nature by endless searching the outer manifestations. And we can only know ourselves better and still better by this search. There is an undefinable solidity that penetrates the work and a fine humility comes through the enlarged vision of the eternal wonders that surround us. I pray that never shall I feel no longer the inspiration that comes from the constant communication with the living forms. That I shall feel always in her presence a new message awaiting me. That I shall always remain young in thought and be receptive and inquisitive. I want to leave regretting that I was not allowed just a little more time to reach the ultimate which I know is an impossibility. I want to go on like the flower that contains the germ of a new life within the tangled, withered fragments left behind. I want to walk in the light that is never ending with open heart and open mind. When slipping into the great unknown I want to move always upward, ever seeking. I want to join those who always attempted and may still desire.³⁸

FitzGerald's words "searching," "humility," and "move . . . upward" are certainly very spiritual in implication and his "enlarged vision" of the "great forces behind the organization of nature" was revealed even more clearly in his 1940's work as will be discussed.

In an untitled pencil drawing from c. 1940 (fig. 36) and his Landscape with Trees (fig. 37), another drawing, from 1934, space around the objects depicted is treated as a thing in itself. In the untitled drawing of the jug, FitzGerald used flecked lines which form wave-like vibrations rippling and

³⁸FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Irene Heywood Hemsworth, 23 May, 1942, in her private collection.

spreading outward from the jug. These connect the jug with its surrounding space and make the air seem alive with energy. Treating empty space as a positive, rather than a void perhaps reflects the artist's "enlarged vision" of the world -- his understanding that space is no more empty than is what we normally think of as matter. In Landscape with Trees the spaces between the receding trunks have been no less carefully considered than the trunks themselves. The trees seem to float above the cloud-like mounds of earth, causing the negative spaces between the trees to seem as corporeal as the trunks. FitzGerald once wrote to Robert Ayre:

It is necessary to get inside the object and push it out rather than merely building it up from the outer aspect. To appreciate its structure and living quality rather than the surface only. Through this way of looking at a thing illumination takes place and only the essential things appear . . . its relation to the totality of life . . . its place in the universe.³⁹

This passage sheds light on FitzGerald's treatment of negative space, and also his careful attention to detail on the surfaces of his apples, or the direction and thrust of a tree branch. His works certainly do have an other-worldly quality, springing from his own "illumination." An object's relation to the universe, and to its negative space, therefore, giving the picture a oneness, when conveyed, causes FitzGerald's works to be totally interrelated sums of their parts: unities

³⁹FitzGerald quoted by Ayre, loose papers. Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

"living things," as he wrote in 1930, and thus metaphors for his concept of creation and humanity as one.

As previously mentioned, FitzGerald's spirituality was expressed in the program he designed for his life, not only through his work. Visual evidence in the form of a group of photographs FitzGerald took to send to Irene Heywood Hemsworth of his office/studio at the Winnipeg School of Art reveals his preference in his surroundings.⁴⁰ The photographs are small black and white prints showing the stark, bare walls of his room, with a strong light pouring in through an uncurtained window. A neat stack of The International Studio periodicals is on FitzGerald's desk and a plaster cast of the horse's head from the east pediment of the Parthenon is on the floor. An austere environment indeed, reminiscent of Mondrian's studio in Paris as seen in photographs,⁴¹ and as removed from the daily noise and activity of Winnipeg as FitzGerald's paintings. Certainly aware, then, of how art and life could merge, FitzGerald let his art spill over into his life in other ways as well. His family made puppets together and put on plays with them.⁴² He was fond of lettering, calligraphy and wood-carving,

⁴⁰ These photographs date from 1939-1947, as those were the years during which the W.S.A. was located in the Old Law Courts, from which the prison cupola was viewed, and can be seen from the prints. FitzGerald did not teach after 1947. The photographs are in the collection of Irene Heywood Hemsworth.

⁴¹ See Nancy Joslin Troy, "Piet Mondrian's Atelier," Artsmagazine, vol. LIII, no. 4, Dec., 1978, pp. 82-83.

⁴² Stephen Andrews, Malaga, Spain, to the author, 5 June, 1979.

doing ex-libris, and creating sculptures as well as utilitarian objects such as boxes and chests.⁴³ He created a complex garden complete with an inlaid path and pool at the side of his house, and made the gate to the yard as well.⁴⁴ This sort of activity could have been inspired by the idea of integrating art with life, as espoused by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Arts and Crafts movement, as mentioned, as the Arts and Crafts movement was linked with the development of the Little Theatre movement in North America, and FitzGerald had been involved with the Winnipeg Little Theatre as a set designer.⁴⁵ When FitzGerald did turn to his painting and drawing, however, he strove for it to soar above any utilitarian level, even choosing not to be didactic in his content and style. The devotional attitude he had toward his art, and the idea that his works were to be living things and objects of meditation,⁴⁶ revealed in his painstaking working method, can be seen as almost religious. A Taoist believes that to be in accord with the Tao, or life force, is to be complete. To achieve this completeness one follows Taoist ethics: production without possession, action without self-assertion and development without domination.⁴⁷ With his

⁴³Irene Heywood Hemsworth owns some of these items.

⁴⁴Patricia Bovey, "The Man," Bovey and Davis, p. 20.

⁴⁵For more information, see Appendix, Selected Chronology.

⁴⁶See footnote 18 to Introduction.

⁴⁷K.S. Murty, Far Eastern Philosophies (Prasaranga: University of Mysore, 1976), p. 104; p. 110.

program of moderation in life's physical pleasures and the restraint⁴⁸ he placed upon his art as well as the sacrifice of so much time and energy to teaching, FitzGerald was following a similar ethic, and perhaps believed this helped him to be "complete" in some way.

FitzGerald's selection of a more linear style rather than a painterly style in art may have simply been in response to his innate sensibilities. The reading of Ruskin helped to reinforce this, doubtless, and in a work such as Campbell's House (fig. 38) (undated) FitzGerald's predominantly dry, architectural drawing technique is very apparent in the daub/dot application of the watercolour -- perhaps the potentially most fluid of media.

There was one area in his life in which FitzGerald seemed to show no restraint whatsoever and this was his reading. It is impossible to reconstruct a list of the artist's favorite writers, or his library, but from what is known, a pattern of deep and challenging reading, with some emphasis on books or writers with a spiritual awareness emerges: In his small personal notebook FitzGerald noted Proust's Swann's Way, John O'Hara, Thomas Wolfe, Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain and Sanayana's [sic] Last Puritan.⁴⁹ In a letter to Brooker, FitzGerald wrote that he was reading The Brothers Karamazov

⁴⁸ Referring here to his self-denial in not being painterly or doing large format works, for example. The physical and sensuous aspects of painting seem to have been kept to a minimum.

⁴⁹ extant, FSC (1 0041), n. pag.

for the second time and that he and his wife were reading aloud Victor Hugo's Les Miserables in the evenings.⁵⁰ Brooker once noted that FitzGerald had been reading The Divine Comedy⁵¹ and Stephen Andrews mentioned that FitzGerald recommended Edward Carpenter's writing to him while he was a student.⁵²

Ayre wrote that the artist read Tennyson⁵³ and FitzGerald saved a great number of clipped poems from the newspaper and magazines in his files, particularly poems by Keats and Yeats.⁵⁴ From these various examples it can be concluded that the artist had an intelligent and discerning mind. He chose literature of intensity and depth, revealing that his lack of a higher education had not hampered him in his search for awareness⁵⁵ and contact with profound ideas. Stephen Andrews writes:

Fitz [sic] was very much a man alone,
and therefore his own guru. You could
say that he dispelled his own darkness
. . . he was not a primitive, but a
highly sophisticated learner . . .
Winnipeg, in the days of his activity,
was an artistic backwater -- a desert,
and he was its oasis!⁵⁶

⁵⁰FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Bertram Brooker, Toronto, 17 June, 1935, FSC, FitzGerald Correspondence files.

⁵¹Bertram Brooker, Toronto, to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 17 October, 1930, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ontario.

⁵²Stephen Andrews, Malaga, Spain, to the author, 5 June 1979.

⁵³Robert Ayre, loose notes. Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

⁵⁴FSC, personal clipping file.

⁵⁵FitzGerald's desire for complete awareness mentioned by Caven Atkins, in letter to the author, 7 October, 1979.

⁵⁶Stephen Andrews, Malaga, Spain, to the author, 5 June, 1979.

CHAPTER V

1940's WORK

In the 1940's FitzGerald achieved deeper and more complex expressions of spirituality as he continued to develop artistically. In his works in watercolour, which were more quickly executed than his works in oil, he persisted in searching for ways to better express his ideas and metaphysical beliefs. In a letter to H.O. McCurry, then the Director of the National Gallery (his term was 1939-55) FitzGerald explained that he had no oil paintings to submit for exhibition as he had been doing only works on paper -- watercolours and drawings. He explained that he had been working toward something he did not think he could achieve in oil, and continued:

Again, there are well-defined phases in the development of an artist. Periods of distinctive growth and those of questioning and experiment, when during the latter, everything done is a struggling towards a larger outlook, yet has the appearance on the surface of "marking time." Thank goodness I have been face to face with a few of these and have managed to scramble over the top each time. As a matter of fact, I am glad of having had to face them no matter how difficult, rather than to have gone on blindly repeating myself.¹

¹FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to H.O. McCurry, Ottawa, 18 March, 1939, National Gallery of Canada, FitzGerald correspondence files. (7 .1F)

By 1940, at the age of fifty, the artist realized that he both needed and wanted more time to himself for his art than his rigorous teaching schedule allowed. He applied for a Guggenheim fellowship in hope of putting the award toward a year's absence from the Winnipeg School of Art. He wrote to McCurry about his application:

As you know, all my creative work has been carried out in spare time and I feel that a year at present would be very helpful in giving me a decided lift forward. During this past year or so I have been working in a little different direction through some smaller paintings and larger drawings, and through these, new ideas have taken form that could be matured more rapidly with continuous, concentrated effort.²

Much to FitzGerald's disappointment, he did not win the fellowship. He did not lose his momentum, however, and in 1942 wrote to McCurry that "the continued enthusiasm in the search intrigues me and this grows rather than diminishes . . . I am rather thankful for all this at this time."³ Earlier in the same year, underlining the fact that he was going through a transition in his work, FitzGerald wrote to Ayre:

I am going right on to a greater complete-

²FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to H.O. McCurry, Ottawa, 25 October 1940, National Gallery of Canada, FitzGerald correspondence, (7.1F). McCurry encouraged Canadian artists to write him regularly about their work. He was helpful to artists in many ways-- for example, in 1941 he helped André Biéler to organize the Kingston Artist' Conference (Charles Hill, p. 17) and in 1932 he lent his summer home to Goodridge Roberts as a painting place. (Dennis Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting, p. 201).

³FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to H.O. McCurry, Ottawa, 31 March, 1942, National Gallery of Canada, FitzGerald correspondence files, (7.1F).

ness and it is very hard to find . . .
 I want to work experimenting with each
 thought that comes to me and am more
 absorbed in the next painting than in
 those that have already been finished
 . . . perhaps they contain more emo-
 tional content.⁴

The ideas of a "greater completeness" and "more emotional content" in the works to which FitzGerald referred in the above passage are seen in the two compelling groups of images with which he was involved in the early 1940's, generally dated c. 1942-43. The first of these is a series of fairly large format watercolour self portraits in which the artist is portrayed looking out with an intense and penetrating gaze. Interestingly, the pose of the head in these works is like that in one of Gauguin's self portraits (fig. 39) and one by Caspar David Friedrich as well (fig. 40). Apart from the intensity of the stare, reinforced by the tilt of the head and twist of the neck, behind FitzGerald's head in these works, undulating female nudes are vaguely indicated in soft strokes of pigment. Self Portrait (three nudes) (fig. 41) from c. 1943, Self Portrait (fig. 42) from c. 1942, and Green Self Portrait (two nudes) (fig. 43) from c. 1943 are three works from this series. Part of the intensity of these works along with the disturbing, unsettling feeling in FitzGerald's self portraits, is caused by the intimacy and penetrating quality of the pose and gaze. Somehow, FitzGerald's personality is both revealed and concealed in his tautened facial muscles

⁴FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Robert Ayre, Montreal, 3 February, 1942, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

and cords² of his neck, and intense stare outwards from the page. A definite sexual content is present in FitzGerald's nude torso and the naked women twisting about behind him. Its precise nature, however, is difficult to fathom and remains ambiguous.⁵ His facial features are contorted and seem to shift and change in the light, due, in part, to the patch-overlay technique of the watercolour application. This adds to the mood of intense scrutiny in the works -- but we sense the scrutiny is not of the viewer, but of the artist himself.

The second group of works the artist completed in the early 1940's was a series of small pencil drawings of nudes, most in a square format. These appear to have been inspired by the graphic work of William Blake. Four Nudes in a Landscape (fig. 44), from c. 1942-43, Couple (fig. 45) from c. 1943 and Figures (fig. 46) from c. 1943 are three works from the group. In 1942 FitzGerald and his friend Arnold Brigden, manager of Brigden's of Winnipeg, a commercial art and printing firm which employed many Winnipeg artists, decided to mount an exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery of the prints by William Blake in Bridgen's private collection.⁶ Likely, the

⁵ It would seem a little simplistic to suppose that the female nudes represent Irene Heywood Hemsworth and that FitzGerald was working through his feelings of conflict, and perhaps, guilt, about their adulterous relationship in these works. But, perhaps this was the case. It was after World War II had begun that Irene moved with her parents from Manitoba to eastern Canada, (interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979). Perhaps FitzGerald was upset at this move as he was to see Irene again only a few times before his death.

⁶ Patricia Bovey, The Brigden Collection (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1974).

close contact with these works had an inspiring effect on FitzGerald, as the drawings he did are very reminiscent of Blake's work. The swirling, twisted nudes, often worked together with landscape elements or tunnels of amorphous fluid, as in Couple, all in a soft, but linear style have striking similarities to such works by Blake as his Adam and Eve Sleeping (fig. 47), The Last Judgement (fig. 48) and The Circle of the Lustful (fig. 49).

These drawings are unlike any others FitzGerald ever did. Irene Heywood Hemsworth contends that they were done by combining sketches taken from the live models at the Winnipeg School of Art and memories of clothed women seen on the street in Winnipeg.⁷ Each work was thus a composite of several figures seen. As in Blake's work, a peculiar spiritual quality is stirred up by the upward-surgings poses and ethereal floating quality of the nudes. The bodies seem more astral, or spiritual, than corporeal, as their contours are so sketchily defined. The bodies seem to symbolize the soul, as with Blake, and FitzGerald seems to have been trying to portray the inner beings of the people, perhaps even after death. FitzGerald's admiration for Blake appears to have been no secret from his friends, even though it has not been mentioned by previous writers. Irene Heywood Hemsworth knew of this interest⁸ and in a letter

⁷ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

⁸ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979. Bovey and Davis link this series with Kenneth Hayes Miller (p. 31) and Renoir and Cézanne's Bathers

to FitzGerald in 1945, Brooker mentioned that he was enclosing a copy of Blake's "Songs of Innocence," adding, "which I feel sure you will enjoy."⁹

In the summer of 1942, FitzGerald and his wife visited their daughter in Vancouver. There, for the first time, although they had been correspondents since at least 1927, FitzGerald finally met Lawren Harris.¹⁰ Harris had moved to Vancouver two years earlier from the U.S.A. Most probably the two artists discussed art and related subjects, including various sorts of spirituality. Perhaps Harris raised the topic of Theosophy, especially since his own abstractions of the period embodied Theosophical ideas. It would seem that Harris either did not try or was not able to convince FitzGerald to become a Theosophist, but the two likely found they shared many ideas about art and spirituality in any case.¹¹

In 1927, when Harris had met Emily Carr in Toronto, he had recommended four books to her to help her with her art. Two of the four are unknown, as in her diary she noted only

(p. 86), both of which are far fetched, as FitzGerald had been in contact with Miller twenty years before this series and is not similar in style to either Renoir or Cézanne -- only in the subject of a grouping of nudes.

⁹Bertram Brooker, Toronto, to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 27 July, 1945, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ontario.

¹⁰FitzGerald mentions this being their first meeting in a letter to Arthur Lismer, 16 February, 1943, McMichael Collection.

¹¹Gordon Smith, a former student of FitzGerald and well known Canadian painter writes: "I feel he shared many of Lawren's ideas on reincarnation etc.", Gordon Smith, Vancouver, to the author, 28 October, 1980.

the two she was able to find in a bookstore: Clive Bell's Art and P.D Ouspensky's Tertium Organum.¹² Possibly Harris mentioned these books to FitzGerald as well, either in letters prior to the 1942 visit, or in Vancouver in 1942. If FitzGerald read them, he must have discovered thoughts very similar to his own -- those he was trying to express in his art. In explaining his concept of "significant form," for example, Clive Bell wrote that it was "form behind which we catch a sense of ultimate reality" and that spiritual feelings could result from its contemplation:

The contemplation of pure form leads to a state of extraordinary exaltation and complete detachment from the concerns of life . . . instead of recognizing an object's accidental and conditional importance, we become aware of its essential reality, of the God in everything, of the universal in the particular, of the all-pervading rhythm.¹³

FitzGerald had already succeeded in expressing these thoughts in his work. He did contemplate form in nature to achieve an illumination in his art,¹⁴ but now his ideas could be confirmed by an author and a fellow artist, Lawren Harris. The second work recommended by Harris to Carr, Tertium Organum,

¹²Hundreds and Thousands, p. 11. Arthur Lismer also read Tertium Organum but it is not known whether this was at Harris' recommendation. McLeish, September Gale, p. 195.

¹³Clive Bell, Art (New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), p. 54. First published 1913.

¹⁴Brooker once wrote to FitzGerald: ". . . there is evidence of a long contemplation . . ." in your work," Bertram Brooker, Toronto, to FitzGerald; Winnipeg, 10 January, 1932, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ont.

had been reviewed by Harris along with R.M. Bucke's Cosmic Consciousness in the Canadian Bookman in 1924.¹⁵ The notion of time as the fourth spatial dimension put forward by Ouspensky in Tertium Organum is one which FitzGerald would use in his 1952-56 abstracts. Bucke's book was one of Harris' favorites (and likely one of the others he recommended to Carr) as well as Brooker's.¹⁶ Bucke had been a Canadian physician and private doctor to Walt Whitman. His book is a set of essays about writers and thinkers from the past whom Bucke thought to have attained "cosmic consciousness." In his introduction, he defined this phenomena, explaining that those who have attained cosmic consciousness experience an awareness of an "order to the universe," are in a state of "moral exaltation," and have a feeling of "elevation, elation."¹⁷ He wrote that after one had reached cosmic consciousness, apart from experiencing an illuminating light at its onset, the person involved would gain a sense of their own immortality and a loss of the fear of death.¹⁸ Perhaps Harris and Brooker thought they themselves had attained cosmic consciousness as artists. If so, they likely would have tried to convince FitzGerald that he had as well, due to their awareness of and response to the spirituality

¹⁵Lawren Harris, The Greatest Book by a Canadian and Another, The Canadian Bookman, vol. VI, no. 2, Feb., 1924, p. 38.

¹⁶Birk Sproxtton, address on Brooker, 1977, Red Deer College, Red Deer, Alberta, TS in FSC.

¹⁷Dr. Richard M. Bucke, Cosmic Consciousness: a study in the evolution of the human mind (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1901), p. 2.

¹⁸Bucke, p. 66.

in his art. If one is to give any credence to such a notion as cosmic consciousness, it would seem that, though his statements about "the great forces behind the organization of nature," wanting "to go on like the flower that contains the germ of a new life within," and an "enlarged vision of the eternal wonders that surround us," FitzGerald did demonstrate the qualities it was supposed to engender.


Although Harris responded enthusiastically to FitzGerald's art, he did not write about it in terms of Theosophical content, reflecting, perhaps, an understanding that FitzGerald did not think as he did along similar lines.¹⁹ In 1944 Harris submitted his four and one half page articles to Canadian Art on the work done by FitzGerald during his three summer visits to B.C.: 1942, 1943 and 1944. The piece was edited to about one-third of its original length²⁰ but Harris' essential thoughts on his work were left intact:

Each successive summer showed a deepening and enrichment of content in his work until, in the series of watercolours, we have what seems the consummation of a long period of contemplation. There is a grace and ease of technical accomplishment in these paintings, which, in its mastery, could only have been achieved by an utter simplicity of mood and dignity of spirit.²¹

¹⁹For example, one of Harris' key beliefs was that Canada's northland gave off spiritual emanations with cosmic power to the south of Canada (Colgrove and Harris, p. 11). Such a notion was never mentioned by FitzGerald.

²⁰The original MS is in the FitzGerald clipping file, NGC.

²¹Lawren Harris, "Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: Western Artist," Canadian Art, vol. 111, no. 1, Nov., 1945, p. 13.



In the B.C. works Harris described, for example, an untitled drawing from 1943 (fig. 50), and West Coast Rocks, a watercolour from 1944 (fig. 51), FitzGerald tended to concentrate on focussed, close-up views of rocks and wreckage on the beach. It would seem that he was striving in this way to evoke the larger elements of the B.C. landscape -- the mountains. Irene Heywood Hemsworth wrote of FitzGerald that ". . . he believed that universality was to found in microcosm. He was not interested in macrocosm."²² FitzGerald's reading of Blake could have been a source for this idea, or else affirmed the ideas FitzGerald had already formed. A critic of Blake explains:

According to Blake, man achieves his greatest imaginative vision when he finally apprehends unity by seeing that all things are analogies of all other things -- that all the world is a grain of sand, for instance.²³

In "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" Blake wrote:

If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.²⁴

This "infinite" vision of the world in a grain of sand was what FitzGerald was expressing in these softly rendered, patiently

²² Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, to the author, 14 January, 1980.

²³ Hazard Adams, Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision (New York: Russell and Russell, 1955), p. 5.

²⁴ William Blake, The Complete Poems ed. Alicia Ostriker (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 188.

evoked B.C. works. He also succeeded in capturing the filtered light of the region as opposed to the harsh, strong light of Winnipeg, at the same time causing the viewer to see the analogies and intricate relations between the rocks and mountains, the mountains and the universe.

In the 1940's, then, FitzGerald continued to express through his intriguing two series, self portraits and square-format nudes, and his B.C. work, his ever-developing spiritual metaphysic, of the interrelatedness and ultimate oneness of all forms of life.

CHAPTER VI

LATE WINNIPEG WORKS AND ABSTRACTION 1950-56

In the late 1940's and early 1950's, FitzGerald continued to work with landscape and still life subjects, but also felt a gnawing urge to take his work even further. He wrote Ayre in about 1945 saying:

Time lies past at a rapid rate and I get nervous about whether I will ever find the energy and leisure to work out at least some fraction of this problem that haunts me.¹

Perhaps this "problem" was the challenge of abstraction as an avenue for greater spiritual expression. Slowly, beginning with a painstaking drawing technique, FitzGerald worked his way toward non-objective works. Apples in a Bowl (fig. 52), an ink drawing from 1947, and Trees in the Park (fig. 53), a chalk drawing from 1949 are two works done in a dot technique, in which the forms of the objects are dissolved into specks. During the late 1940's and 1950's, FitzGerald used this pointillist method almost to the exclusion of his previous continuous-line contour drawing method. Eckhardt wrote that objects represented in this way tended to be momentarily destroyed, "to lose

¹FitzGerald quoted in Ayre's untitled monograph, TS p. 17, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

their real shapes, only to gain a more spiritual and supernatural life."² Apples in a Bowl does have something of this feeling to it, the fruits seeming to breathe in and out, due to the lack of a contour line to confine them. They become mysterious presences, beyond the realm of simple apples.

Part of the reason FitzGerald devised his pointillist drawing method may have stemmed from his sketching outdoors in the strong prairie sun. When compared to a photograph (fig. 54) of trees on the bank of the Assiniboine River in Winnipeg, taken with the light raking in from behind the foliage, the technique of short strokes of charcoal used by FitzGerald in Trees in the Park becomes understandable in terms of being true to what the artist actually saw. Seen in context of the strong Winnipeg light in which all contours really are seemingly destroyed by the sunshine, FitzGerald's portrayal of only the dappled shadows is very realistic. In these works, the role given the viewer, of having to mentally reconstruct the world portrayed through the artist's short strokes or dots, parallels FitzGerald's own role in recreating the world in his work by building up and evoking forms in this manner. One gains thereby, a heightened awareness of FitzGerald's belief of the "great forces behind the organization of nature" in analysing and contemplating these works.

After his two years of absence and finally his retirement in 1949 from the Winnipeg School of Art, FitzGerald had more

²Ferdinand Eckhardt, "Introduction," FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition, n. pag.

time to devote to thinking about his art. About 1952 he began to grapple with the problem of abstraction in a more head-on way. He had discussed abstraction with others at various times in his life, but had been unwilling to lose the link with nature in his work.³ A letter from A.Y. Jackson to FitzGerald in 1942 reveals what may have been another factor preventing FitzGerald from trying abstraction earlier:

If you throw out the abstractionists you will find the reactionaries are chumming up with you and you won't feel happy in their company either. I see no solution to it, to go modern with no conviction behind it as many artists do is easy enough but it is a cheap kind of noteriety. Sometimes I feel that I am just repeating myself and try to break loose, but old habits prevent me from getting very far off the path I have chosen. I guess we feel the same way about it.⁴

But even if he shared Jackson's misgivings about "going modern," as Jackson obviously thought he did, FitzGerald was not one to shy away from a challenge in art. In 1948 he had written to an acquaintance in Montreal: "I never have any desire to reach a point where there seems nothing more to learn as only in study is there any interest."⁵ Although not a

³Diary (1930), entry for June 29, FSC, (0 0183).

⁴A.Y. Jackson to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 18 April, 1942, FSC, FitzGerald correspondence files.

⁵FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Mrs. G.V. Ferguson, Montreal, 11 January, 1948, National Gallery of Canada, FitzGerald correspondence files. The Fergusons had sent FitzGerald funds from Mr. W.H. McConnell of Montreal to finance his year of absence.

modernist, FitzGerald may have just finally decided that he would be further liberated to express his spiritual ideas in non-objective paintings. Perhaps inspired by Harris' talks and work since meeting with him since 1942⁶ he began his forays into abstraction.

Actually, it seems that his abstracts (1952-1956) grew quite naturally and logically from his "searching the outer manifestations" of forms, and became more rarified extensions of this search. They fall into two basic types.⁷ The first are those which seem to have been inspired in part by nature, often tree and landscape forms, and tend to be curvilinear in composition. FitzGerald's Christmas card to Caven Atkins from 1951 (fig. 55) is one such work, in which tree and landscape subject matter are being taken towards abstraction. Later, this method becomes more full blown and natural forms are no longer recognizable. His c. 1952 Abstract (fig. 56) and his 1952 untitled pencil drawing (fig. 57) are two of these works: based originally upon nature, but fully abstract. The curvaceous lines and flowing shapes no longer have any direct link

⁶Harris' influence on FitzGerald's abstraction is suggested by Robert Ayre in Malcolm Ross, ed. The Arts in Canada: A Stocktaking at Mid-Century (Toronto: MacMillan Co., 1958), p. 17. Other authors usually suggest FitzGerald was thinking of Brooker's abstracts of the 1920's, which because of the tremendous time lag, seems out of the question. Example, Bovey and Davis, p. 94.

⁷This is contrary to Davis' (Bovey and Davis, pp. 60-63) three categories: landscape/still life abstracts, curvilinear ones and geometric ones, the first two of which the present author feels to be identical, as the so-called curvilinear abstracts developed from the nature/still life inspired ones.

with any specific forms in nature.

The second genre of abstracts were more geometric and usually brighter in colour. Abstract (fig. 58) from 1952, with its bold pattern of rectangular forms is an example of these. Irene Heywood Hemsworth states that this type of abstract was actually a sort of mental map drawn by the artist, sometimes of a place imagined, or else of a route FitzGerald took on a sketching walk. She recalls him sitting with her and showing her some of these geometric-abstracts, explaining where he had walked from his house in Winnipeg over the prairie. The denser points of concentrated energy in the drawing were his home and the points at which he had stopped to draw or think.⁸

Both types of FitzGerald's abstracts feature these nexes of energy, where shapes and lines come together in his works, and branch out again. A clue to their meaning in the softer, more curvaceous abstracts, in which they were not geographical points in space, as in the geometric ones, is given by Irene

⁸ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979. A short and feeble argument is put forward by Bovey in "Some European Influences on his Work," Bovey and Davis, pp. 94-96 for FitzGerald's abstracts being influenced by Russian abstractionists from the early Twentieth Century, such as Malevitch and Rodchenko. Not only does she not include any reproductions of their work as a visual comparison, but her only evidence is that there is extant a group of notes in FitzGerald's hand on Russian art, written in 1912. Irene Heywood Hemsworth contends that FitzGerald did not give a lecture using these notes, which Bovey cites, with no source given.

Although FitzGerald was likely acquainted with the work of Malevitch and Rodchenko through reproduction, there is certainly no indication such artists influenced his move to abstraction in 1952.

Heywood Hemsworth: In 1951 FitzGerald went to Mexico with his wife to visit their son who was then living in Mexico City. They travelled down by bus from Winnipeg, but finding the trip tiring, decided to fly home. This was the artist's first time in an airplane, and the trip seemed to have a very profound effect upon him. Hemsworth maintains that FitzGerald explained to her that the nexes of energy in his curvilinear abstracts represented him, in space and time, within the airplane.⁹ In 1953 when FitzGerald flew again, this time to Toronto, to judge the Canadian National Exhibition Art Show in August, he met with Irene in Toronto and showed her small sketches he had done on the plane, with this same subject matter.¹⁰

This idea could have come from Ouspensky's Tertium Organum, had FitzGerald read that book at Harrts' recommendation. Ouspensky's postulate of time as the fourth dimension in a new find of spatial structure which our minds cannot imagine or fathom, could have inspired the artist in the creation of these space/time abstracts. But they could just as well have sprung from FitzGerald himself, due to the new experience of flying.

In a letter to Ayre of 1954, FitzGerald wrote of such works:

I am enjoying experimenting in this direction of drawing from the stored up memories and more freely playing with

⁹ Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.

¹⁰ Ibid.

forms and colours. I seem to require this freedom for the present, from the thing seen and its restrictions.¹¹

Rather in the tradition of such individualist abstractionists in the history of art such as Georgia O'Keefe, Arthur Dove, or even Kandinsky in his expression of spiritual ideas in abstract work, while not being actually modernist, than in a post-Cubist mainstream, as was, for example, David Milne, in Canada, FitzGerald worked with personal, esoteric meanings during his last years. Some of his abstracts are rather weak formally, perhaps because they were done without intimate knowledge of first rate European and American developments in modernist abstraction. Seen in a critical context, FitzGerald's tonally modelled, soft abstracts are perhaps the weakest works in his career. But, as spiritual expression of his beliefs, they are eloquent and moving.

Due, perhaps, in part, to his rather limited contact with the major movements in twentieth century art, FitzGerald ultimately developed his own, unique approach, and found his own meaning for abstraction. FitzGerald took the same art school themes of the nude, the landscape and the still life and re-worked them for years until he began to venture beyond them, and beyond representational form in these late abstract works.

The ultimate work in beauty and spirituality in the artist's abstract group is his sublime 1954 Abstract: Green and Gold (fig. 59). In this meditative oil painting the two

¹¹FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Robert Ayre, Montreal, 27 August, 1954, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

tendencies of geometric map abstracts and curvilinear space/time ones are brought together in the thin-unfolding planes of delicate, luminous colour, which curve into and away from one another in graceful arabesques. The planes seem to be spinning out from a dense area of energy slightly below centre in the work, which would be FitzGerald himself, in time and space, according to the meaning he gave these late works.

His oil painting, Still Life with Hat (fig. 60) from 1955 (along with its preparatory sketch, (fig. 61), is as much a self portrait as is Abstract: Green and Gold. The hat, apple and book were all objects with which FitzGerald was associated by those who knew him well.¹² The mood is intimate and closed, somehow, while in Abstract: Green and Gold, it is more joyous and expansive. Both works reveal FitzGerald's spirituality at its full development.

In 1956 FitzGerald concentrated on a series of abstracts and soft, blurred landscapes in black ink on blue paper. The Pool #4 Midnight (fig. 62) and Flooded Landscape (fig. 63) are two from the series. When compared to a recent photograph of a flooded section of the Assiniboine River in spring, (fig. 64) the forms in Flooded Landscape appear logical and realistic, but the shapes in The Pool #4 Midnight remain vague and mys-

¹² Irene Heywood Hemsworth explains that FitzGerald was very self-conscious about his baldness, so always wore the hat portrayed in this painting. He was also fond of apples, as can be deduced by the large number of apple still lifes he produced, and, as previously mentioned, he was an avid reader. (Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.)



terious. It is perhaps only a coincidence that these last delicate works were done on blue paper, but blue, according to Theosophy, is the most spiritual of all colours.¹³

With his various 1952-56 abstracts, FitzGerald reached the pinnacle of his spiritual and metaphysical expression. As with the Indian Hindu artist of the past, he no longer felt the need to study nature, but could conceive of a thought for a painting or drawing and bring it to fruition by a process of self-identification with his forms. He, himself, formed the nexes of energy from which the shapes in his abstracts seemed to generate. No longer was FitzGerald portraying a Western moment in time, but, as he had begun in Doc Snider's House, he was conveying eternal relations and timeless conditions.¹⁴

¹³ Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, Thought Forms (London: 1901) Adyar; Theosophical Publishing House, 1967, reprint ed. Frontispiece, colour chart.

¹⁴ Ananada Coomaraswamy, The Transformation of Nature in Art (New York: Dover, 1934), reprint, ed. no date) p. 6.

CONCLUSION

On August fifth, 1956, FitzGerald died at home in Winnipeg at the age of sixty-six. Lawren Harris wrote his widow a few days later:

Really he was (is) a nearly saintly person, the most so of any Canadian artist; a lovely soul and a poet in painting, drawing and life. It has been a great privilege to have been his friend. He was certainly one of the finest spirits we have ever known.¹

Perhaps in part due to the isolation he felt in Winnipeg², FitzGerald had cultivated deep relationships with those friends who were his correspondents: Harris, Brooker, Brandtner, Ayre and Irene Heywood Hemsworth. Each felt they knew the essential FitzGerald and held the artist in high esteem. In his teaching career, FitzGerald's dedication has won him many tributes from former students (many of whom are practising artists today) who were grateful for his warmth, encouragement and inspirational presence.³

¹Lawren Harris, Vancouver, to Vally FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 7 August, 1956, FSC.

²FitzGerald does not appear to have been friendly with Eric Bergman, Walter Phillips and other Winnipeg artists. He and Phillips, in particular, were not in agreement about art. (Joan Murray, Oshawa, to the author, 7 July, 1980, from an interview by her with Caven Atkins, 27 June, 1980).

³Gordon Smith writes: "It was his very presence that was

His work was a distillation of his impressions, thoughts and beliefs. A rigorous, self-disciplined and prolific activity (though relatively few canvases, there are extant well over 1500 works on paper in private and public collections) his art was intended to reach out to others with his feelings about life, his metaphysic. He rose, in reputation, above his provincial beginnings, perhaps initially indebted to A.V. Tack, but afterwards, through only a rather lonely and difficult struggle of "endless searching" of his own.

His spirituality developed from an initial love of nature through an intuitive awareness of the oneness of all life, to a visually articulated expression of the unity of time, space, energy and matter. From his love of late fall, due to nature's structure being most perfectly revealed at that time, and a belief that the thing to be said, not the technique or formal qualities of a work being important came a body of work which cannot be termed modernist, or at times, even exceptionally good art, but always was an expression of a deeply developed soul and human consciousness.

FitzGerald wrote to Ayre in 1942: "Perhaps we are not separated so much as we think by time and space, but carry on a mutual communing apart from the spoken word."⁴ And in the same year, Brooker wrote to FitzGerald: ". . . if there is such a thing as emanation in this letter [which FitzGerald

important and his example. He had a fantastic quality of life." (Interview with Joan Murray, TS, p. 2. Robert McLaughlin Art Gallery.)

⁴FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Robert Ayre, Montreal, 3 February, 1942, Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives.

had written to Brooker] that I have never before received from a human being."⁵

FitzGerald touched those he knew deeply and through his work still communicates his spiritual ideas to an audience receptive to his message. Certainly he achieved the "humility" and "enlarged vision" about which he wrote and "the great forces behind the organization of nature" are mirrored in the organization of his pictures, in microcosmic form.

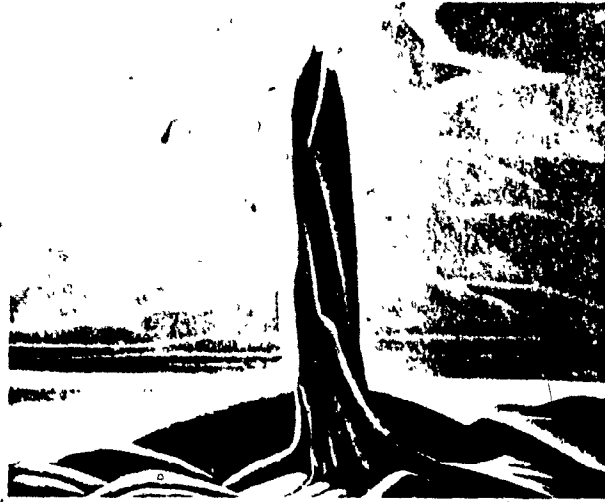
What has been attempted in this study is a correction of the severing -- in the words of Lawren Harris -- of FitzGerald's art from his philosophy, present in most writers' work on FitzGerald. Certainly it is now clear that his pursuit of unity of form was done in order to eventually reflect that divine unity he felt pervading all of life. His art and life were outward manifestations of that belief.

⁵ Bertram Brooker, Toronto, to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 25 June, 1942, Brooker papers, collection of Mrs. Phyllis Smith, Midhurst, Ontario.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Within the following entries,
height precedes width,
works assigned dates by the author
have the date within square brackets.

All works are by FitzGerald unless otherwise noted.



1. Lawren S. Harris, North Shore, Lake Superior, 1926, oil,
40 x 50 in; 112 x 127.5 cm. (NGC)



2. Seated Man, 1909, charcoal on paper,
24 x 16-3/4 in; 61.2 x 42.5 cm. (WAG, G7095)



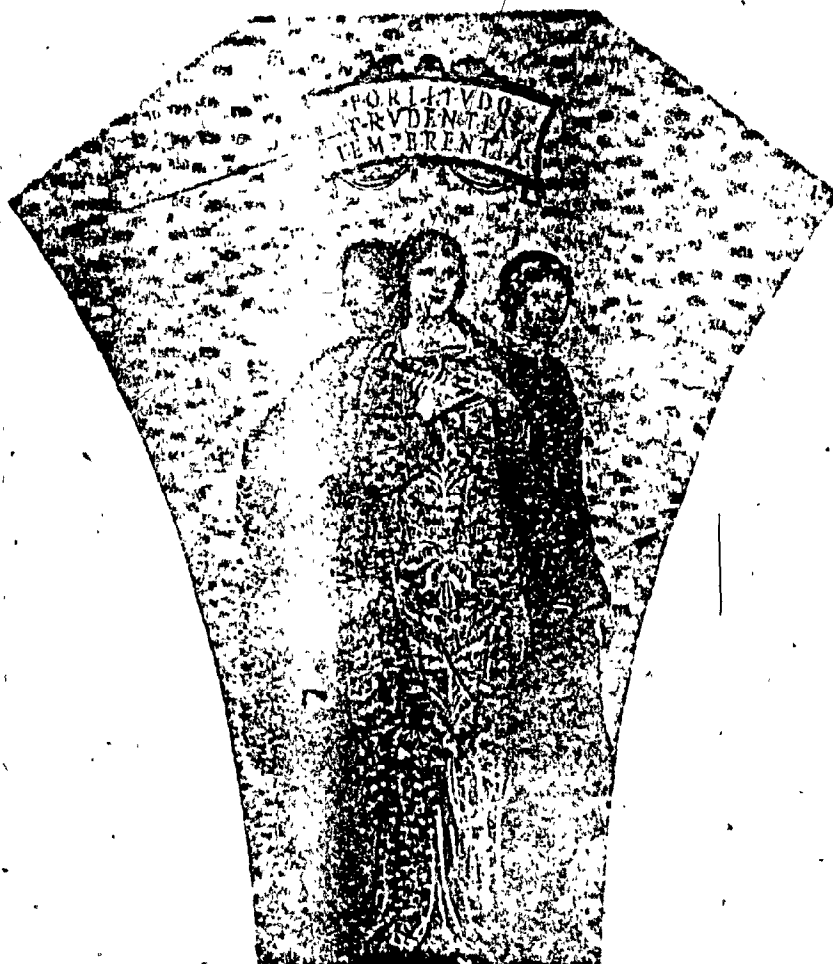
3. Landscape: Farmyard with Fence, n.d. [1920], oil on canvas, 17-3/8 x 20-5/8 in; 44.3 x 52.2 cm. (WAG G7049)

COLOURED PICTURE



4. Summer: East Kildonan, 1920, oil on canvas,
49-3/4 x 41-7/8 in; 127 x 106.7 cm. (private collection)

COLOURED PICTURE



5. Augustus Vincent Tack, Murals in the Legislative Chamber,
Manitoba Parliament Building, 1920.

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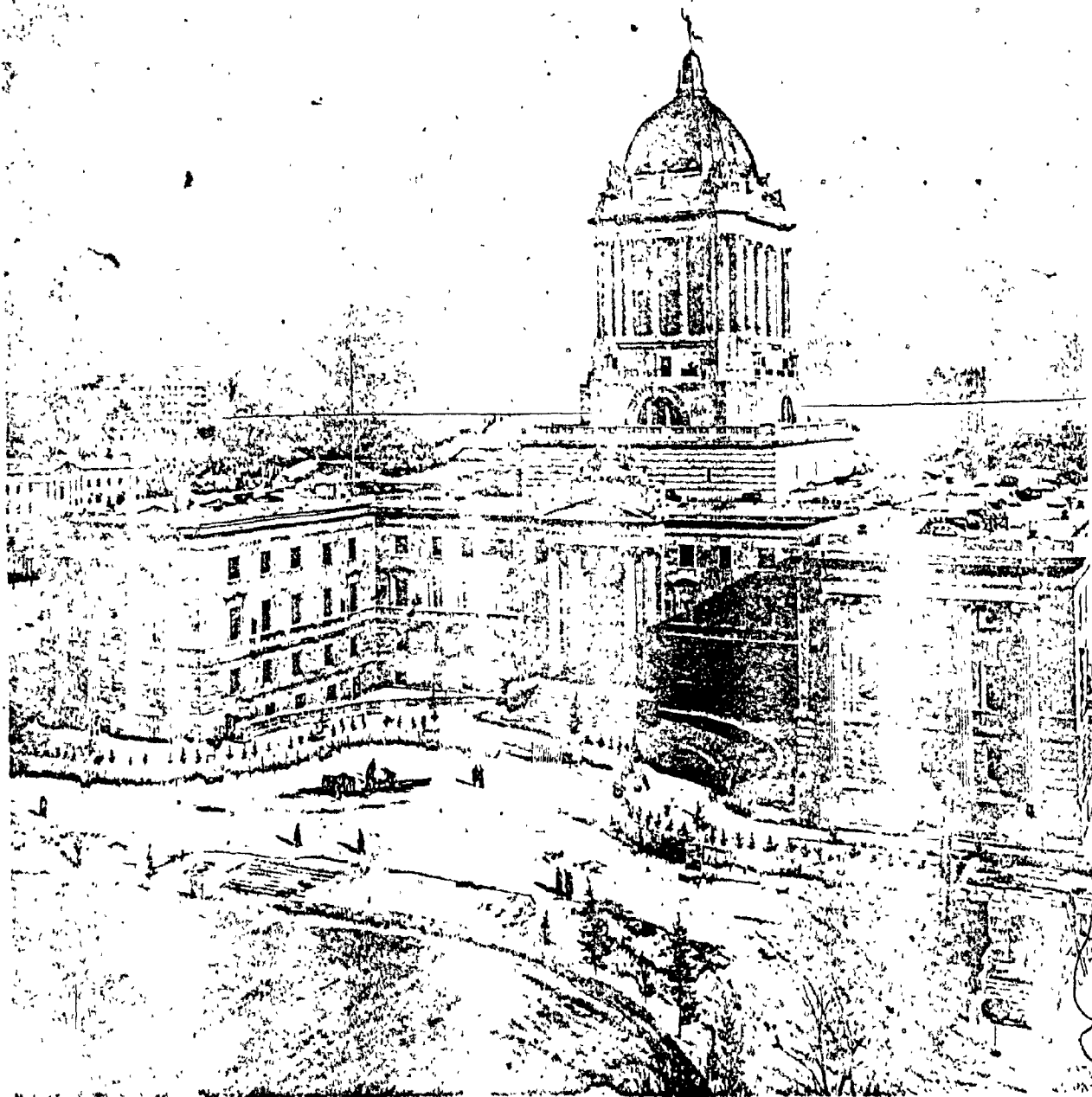
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Tack, Murals in the Legislative Chamber,
ent Building, 1920.

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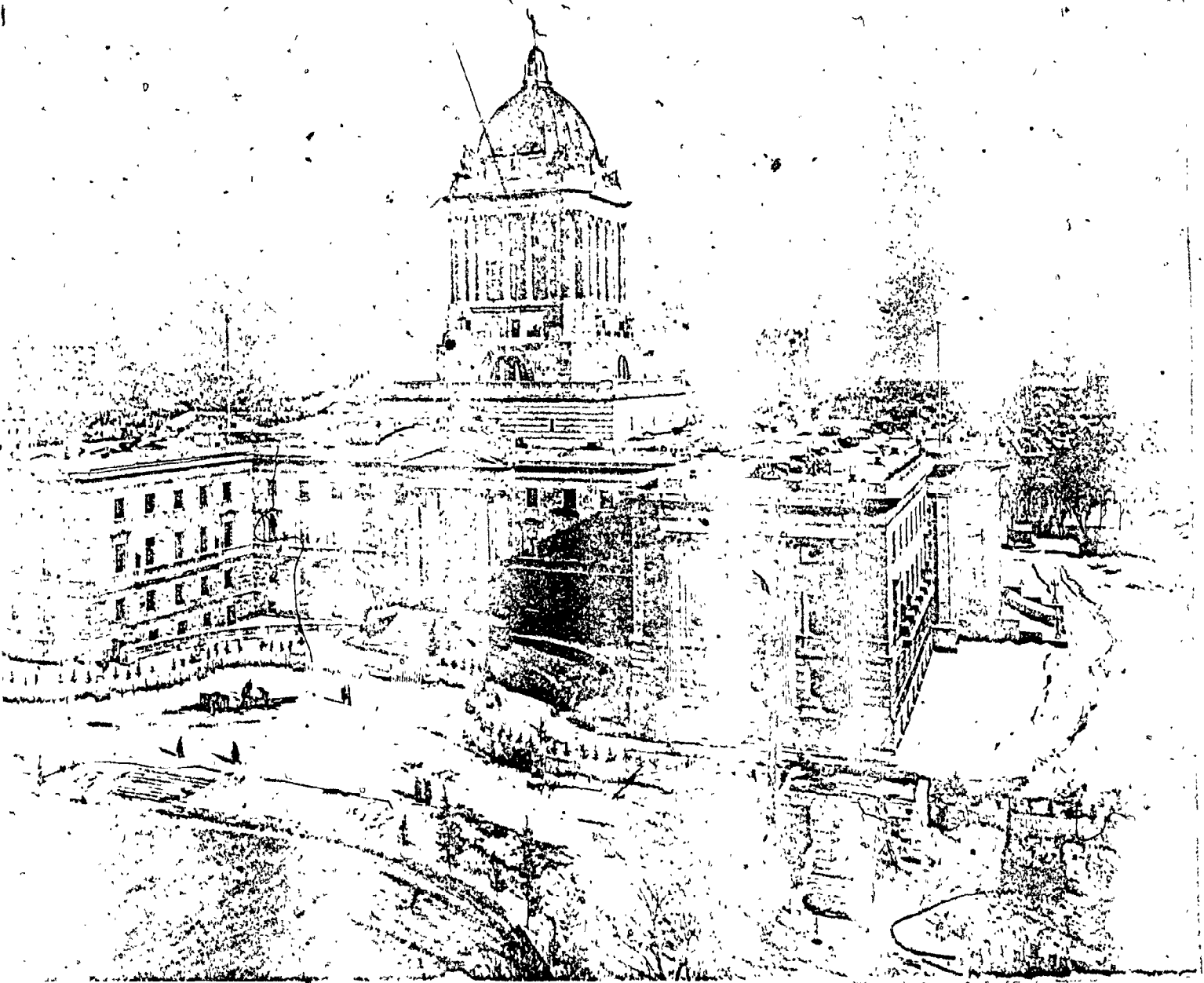
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6. Exterior view of the Manitoba Parliament Building shortly after its construction, c. 1920.

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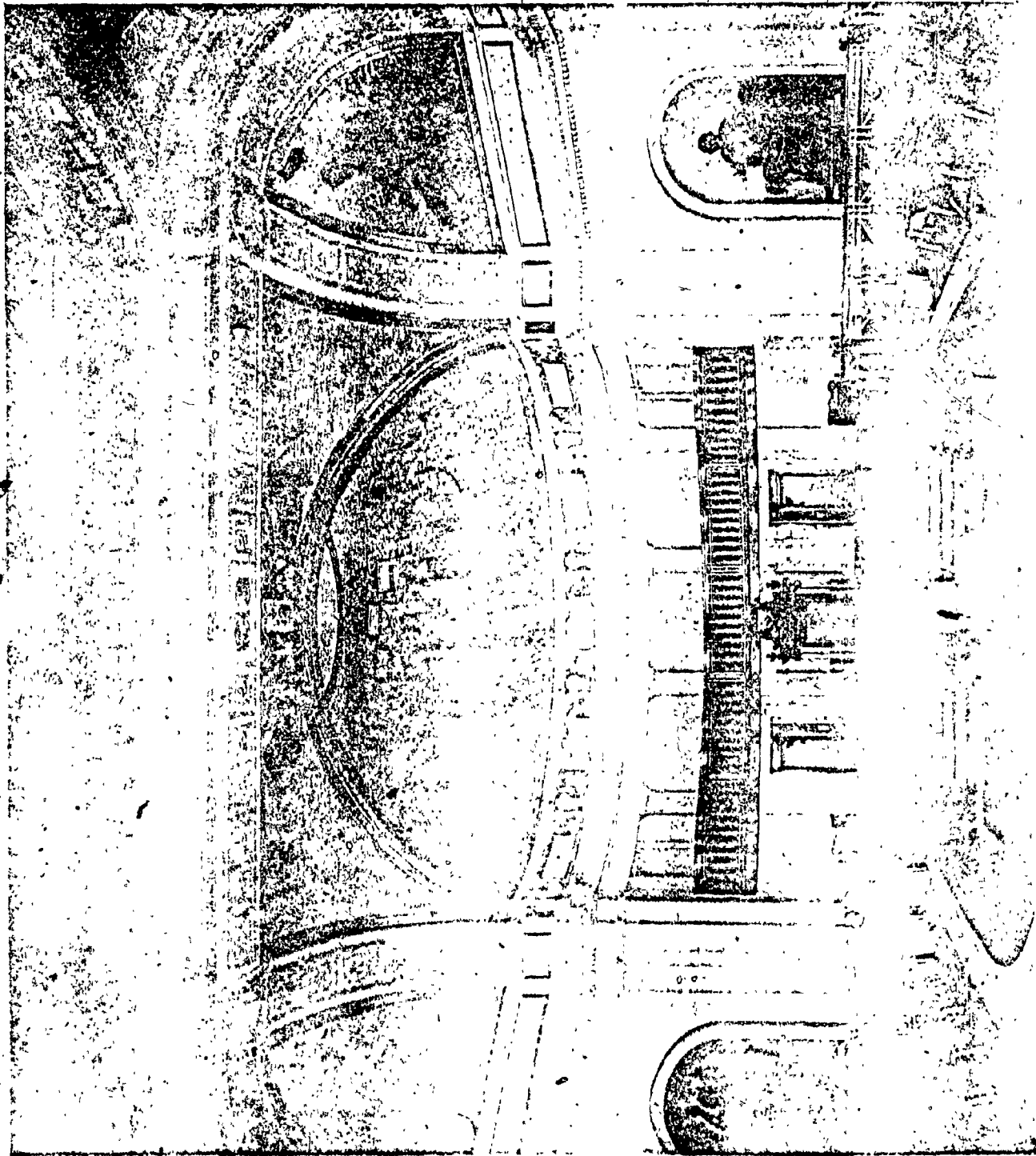
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rior view of the Manitoba Parliament Building shortly
its construction, c. 1920.

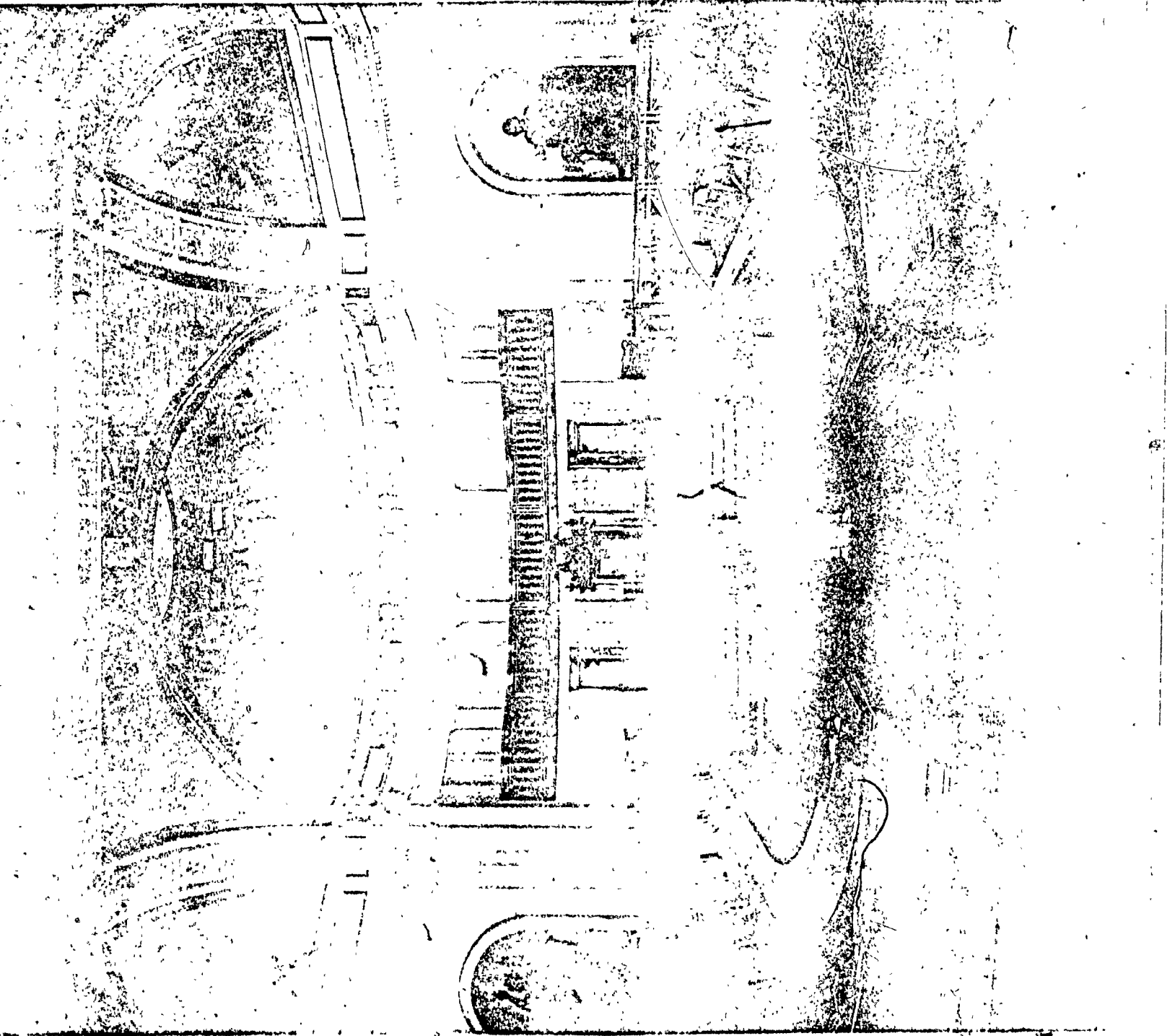
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7. Installation view of Tack's murals in the Legislative Chamber.

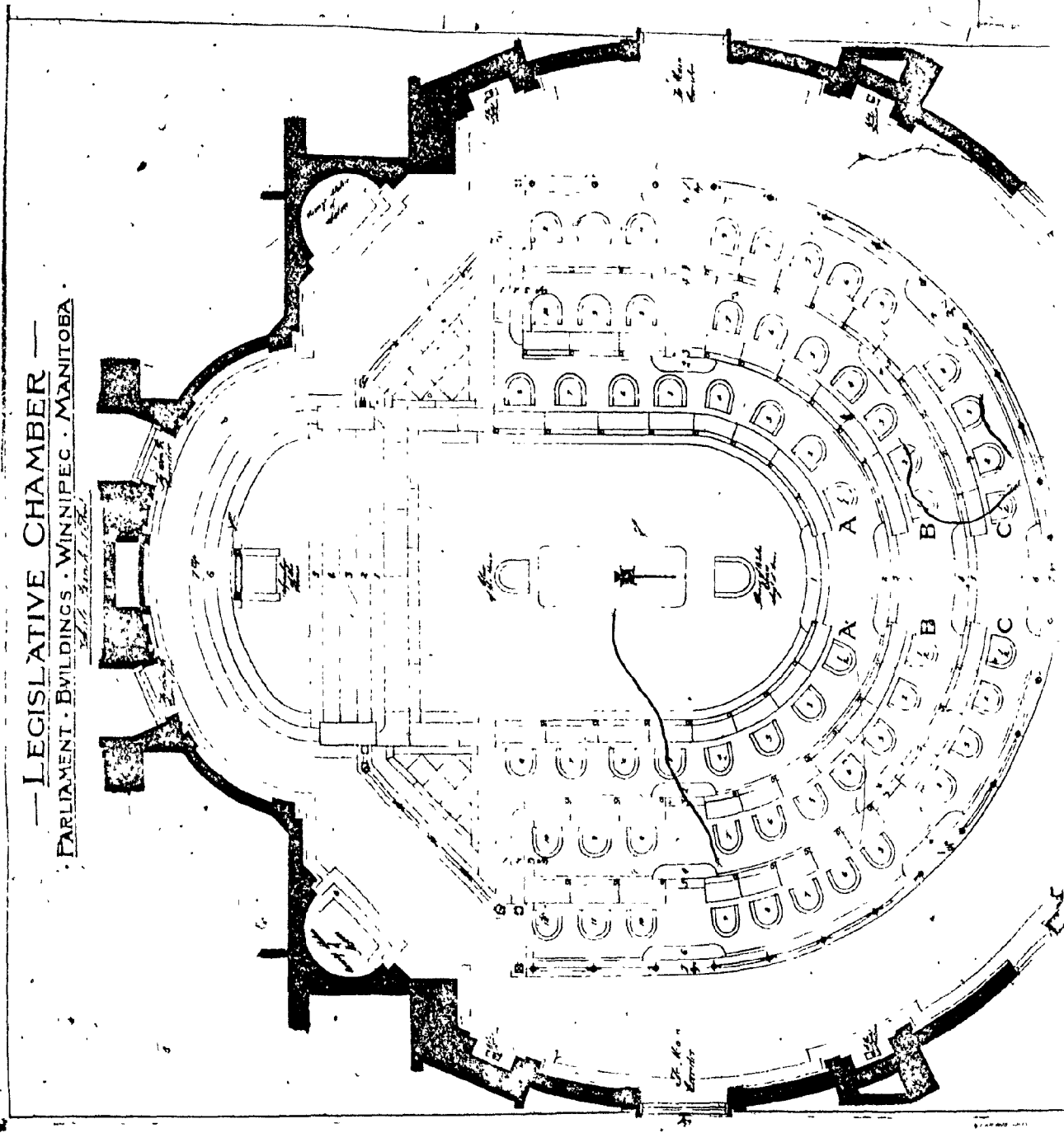
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ation view of Tack's murals in the Legislative

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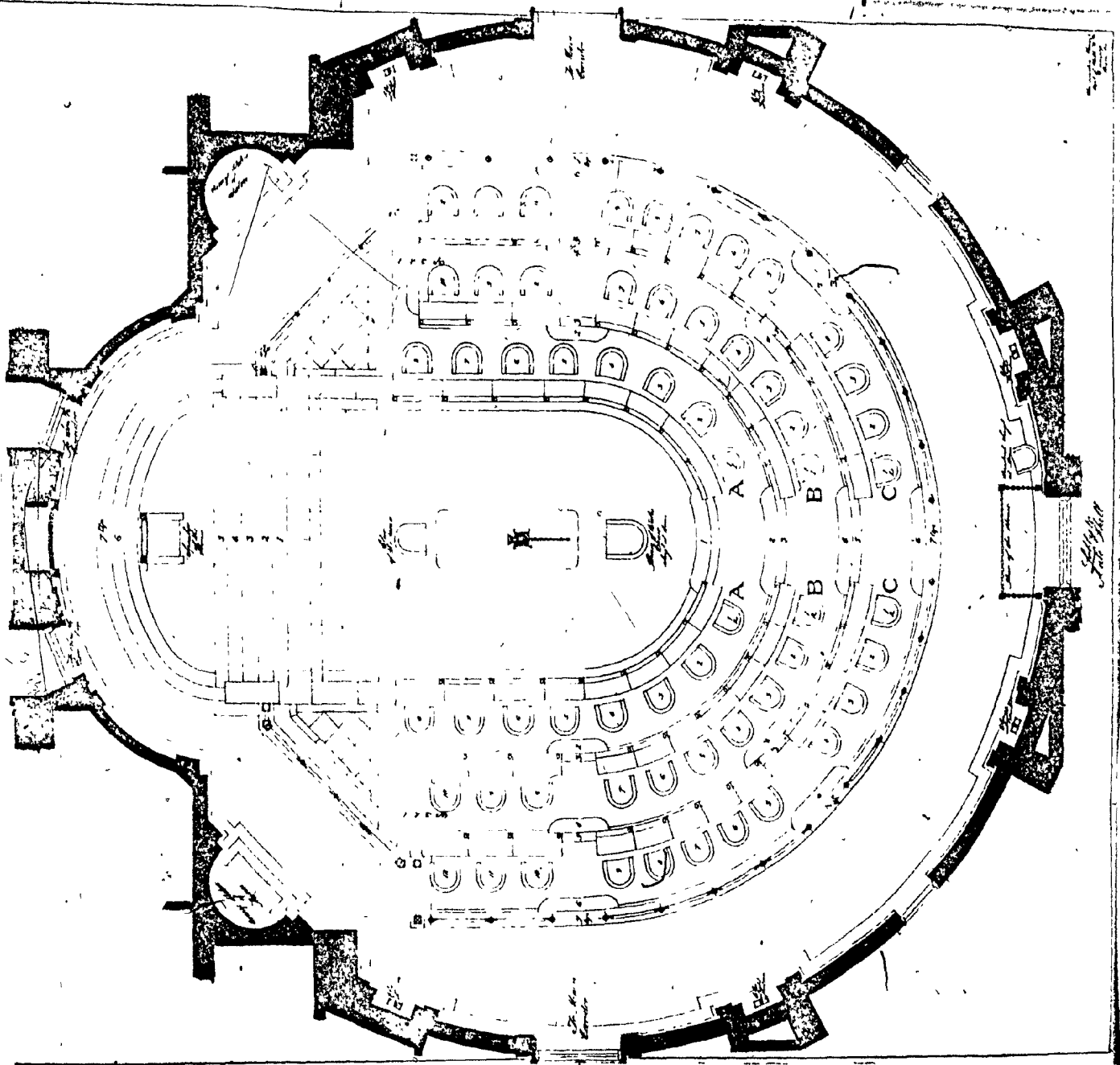
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8. Plan of the Legislative Chamber.

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of the Legislative Chamber.

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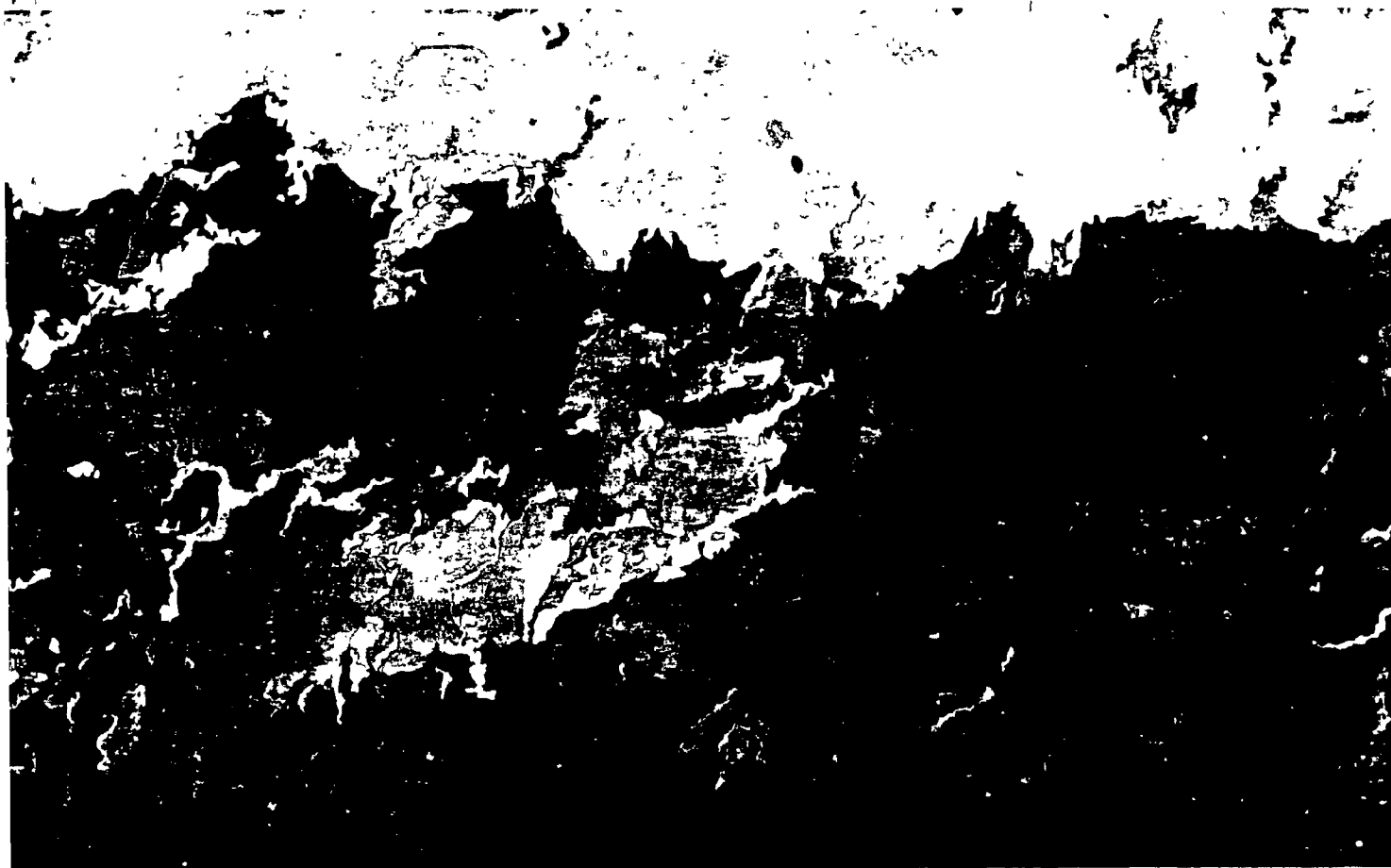
9. Augustus Vincent Tack, Night, Amaragosa Desert, 1937, oil on canvas, 7-1/2 x 35 in. (Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.)



10. Augustus Vincent Tack, Aspiration, c. 1931, oil on canvas, 76-1/2 x 135-1/2 in. (Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.)

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us Vincent Tack, Aspiration, c. 1931, oil on
, 76-1/2 x 135-1/2 in. (Phillips Collection,
ynton, D.C.)

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11. Kenneth Hayes Miller, The River, 1919, oil.

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12. Kenneth Kayes Miller, The Hat Window, 1930, oil.

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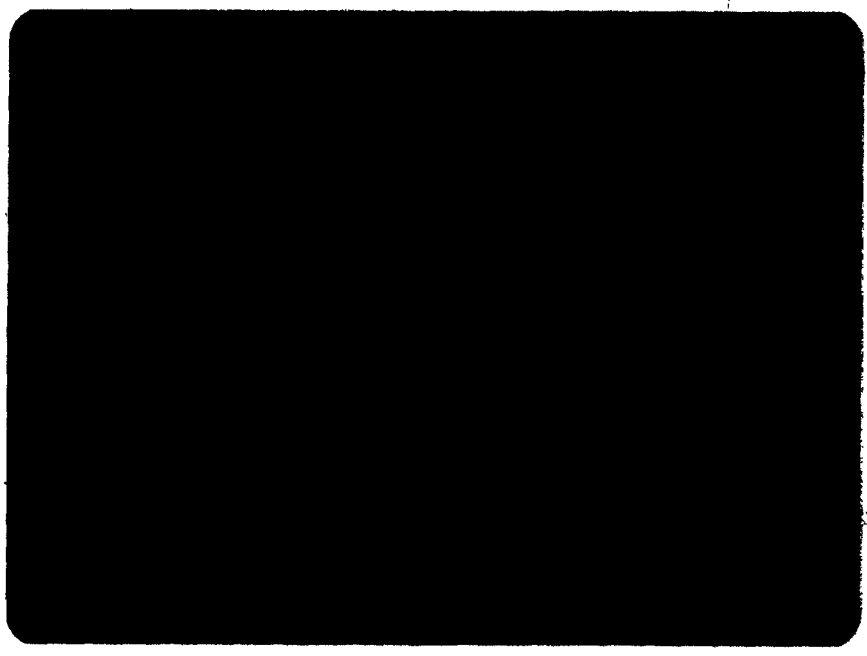


13. Boardman Robinson, Sermon on the Mount 1926,
60 x 96 in. (Schoen Collection, New York)

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14. Rivière des Prairies, Quebec, 1922, oil on canvas,
18 x 20 in; 45.7 x 50.8 cm. (NGC, 16532)



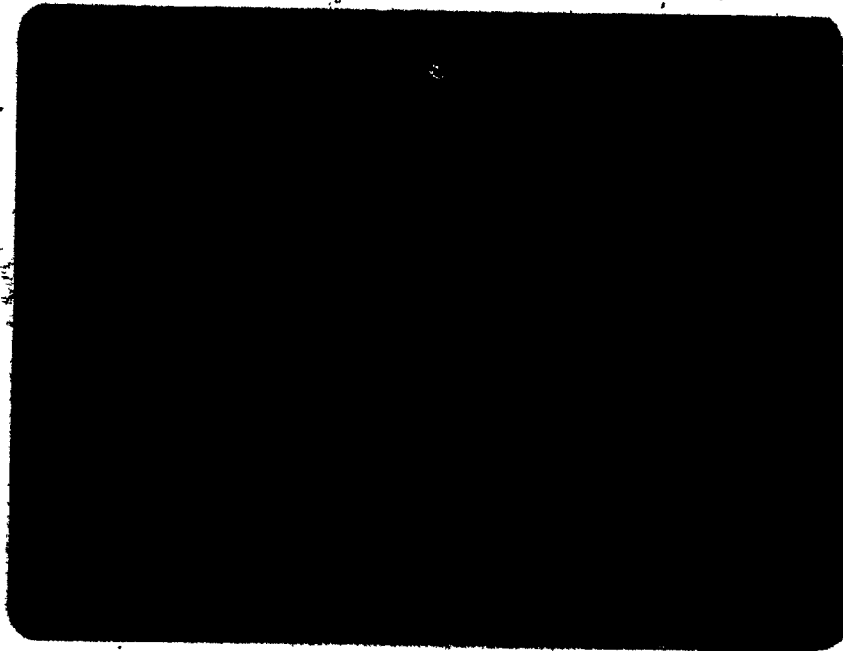
15. Tree, 1923, crayon on yellow paper, 8-1/8 x 11 in;
21.5 x 28 cm. (WAG, G70375)

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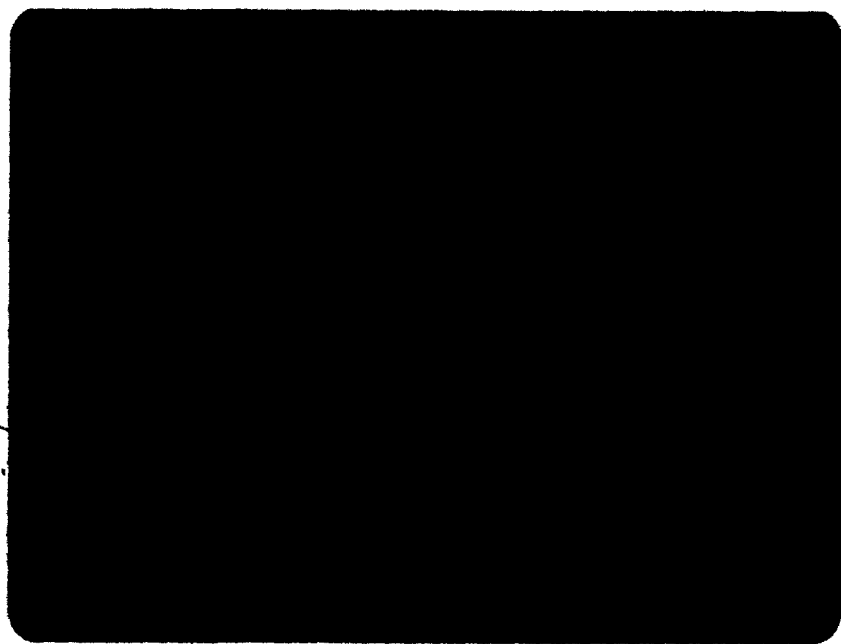
16. Landscape, 1926, watercolour on paper. (WAG, G70284)

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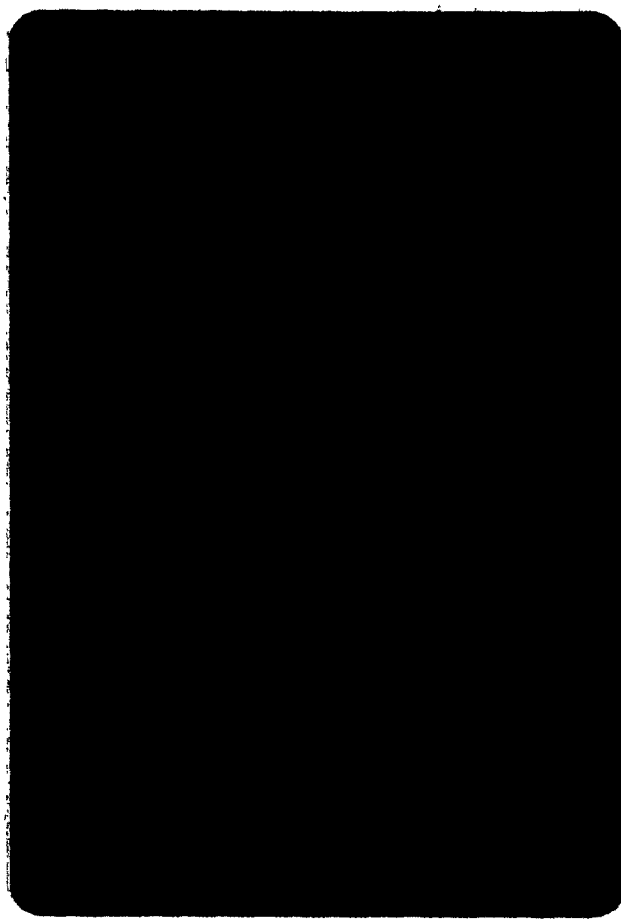
17. C. Keith Gebhardt, Sutherland St., Winnipeg, 1928.
coloured pencils on paper. (WAG, G73108)

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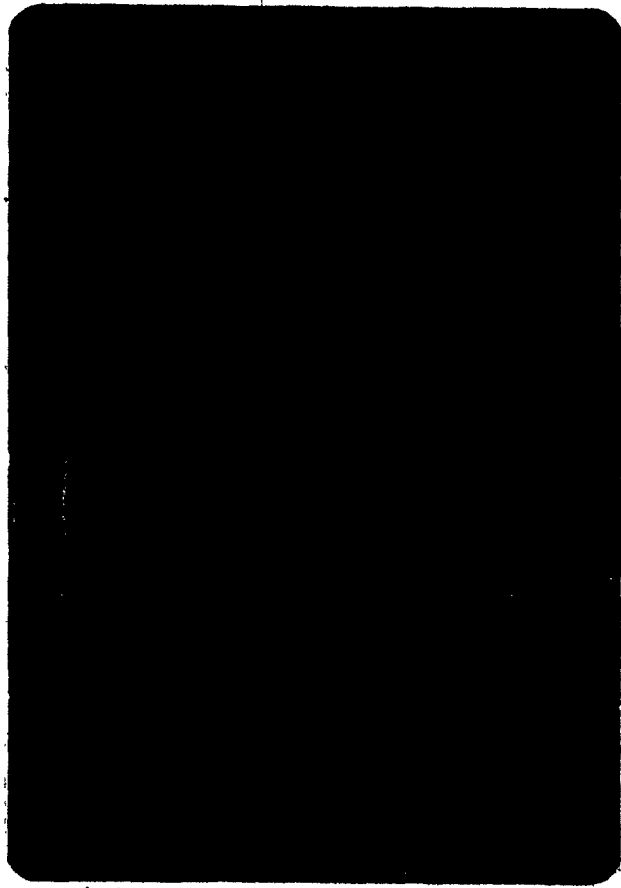
18. Backyards, Water St., c. 1928, graphite on paper, squared off. (NGC 16769)

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19. Backyards, Water St., 1928, drypoint engraving,
13-1/8 x 11-7/8 in; 34.2 x 30.2 cm. (WAG, G68858)

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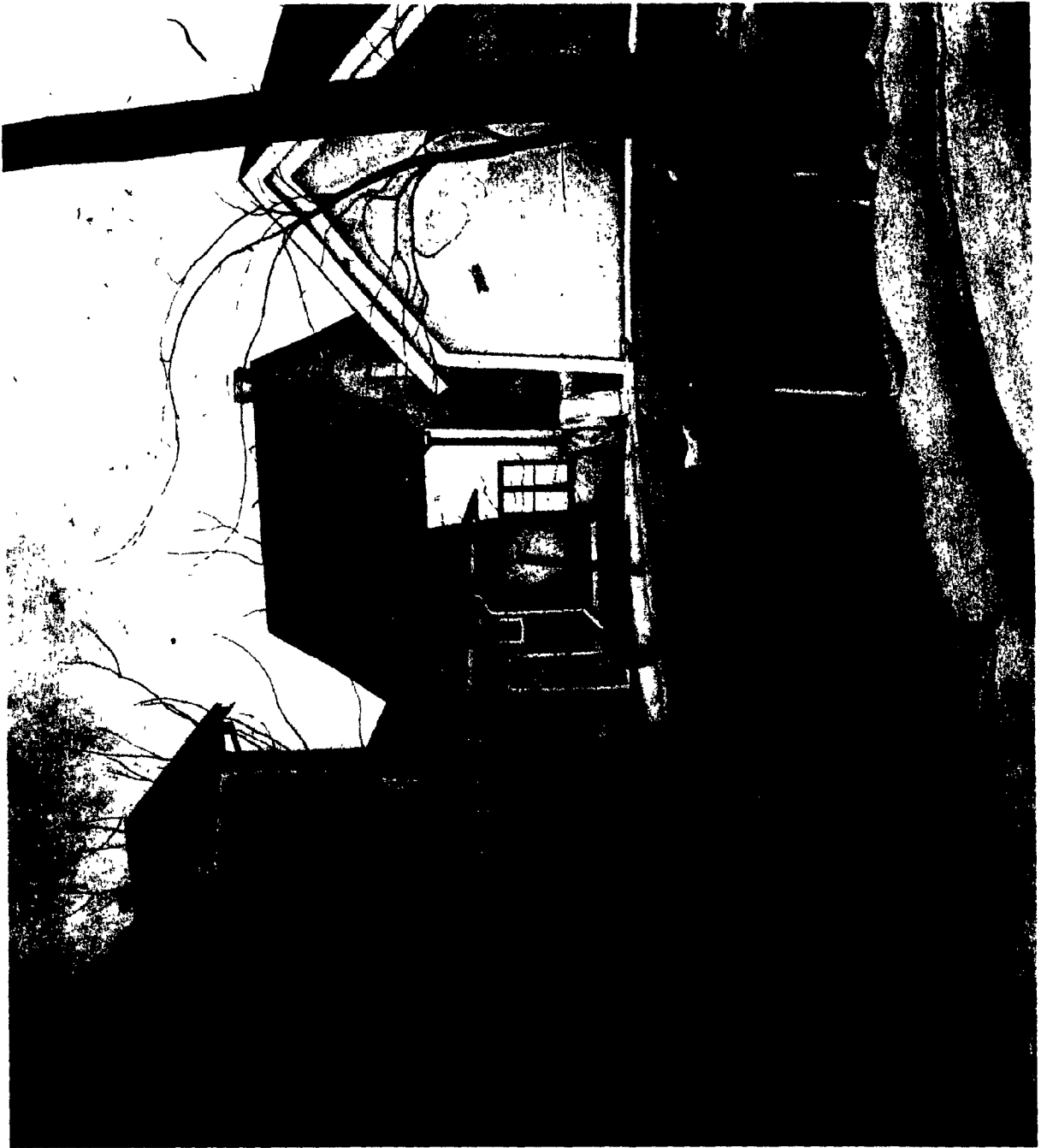


20. Photograph of site of Backyards, Water St., Winnipeg, 1979.

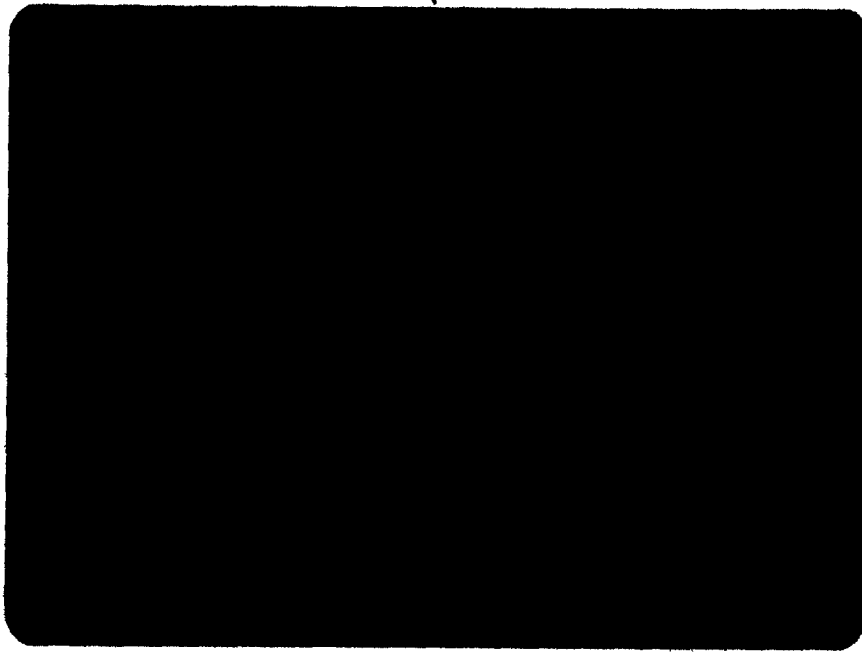
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21. Williamson's Garage, 1927, oil on canvas, 22 x 18 in;
55.9 x 45.7 cm. (NGC 3682)



22. Pritchard's Fence, c. 1928, oil on canvas, 28 x 30 in;
71.6 x 76.5 cm. (AGO 5119)



23. Chicken Coop, 1928, graphite on paper. (NGC 16330)

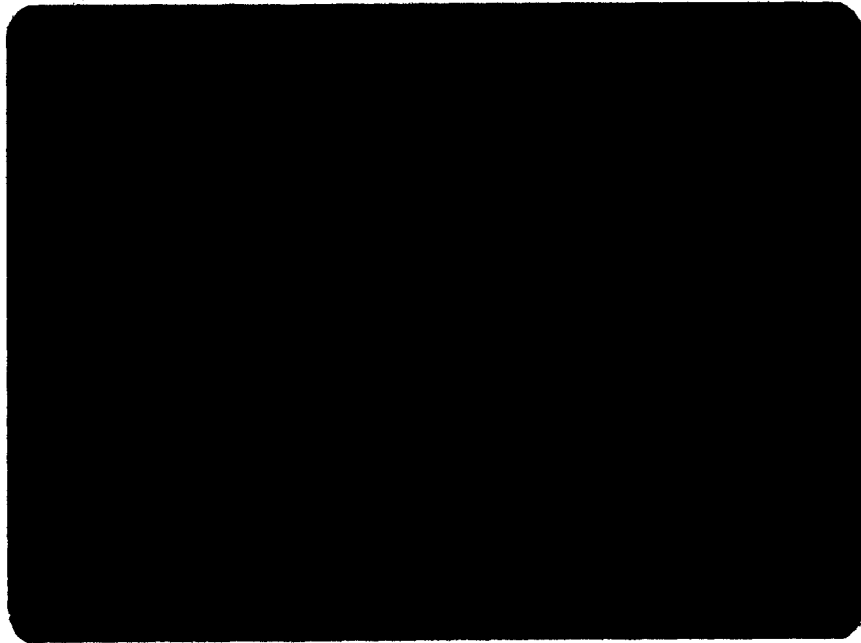
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24. Bertram Brooker, Sounds Assembling, 1928, oil on canvas, 44-1/2 x 36 in; 114 x 91.4 cm. (WAG)



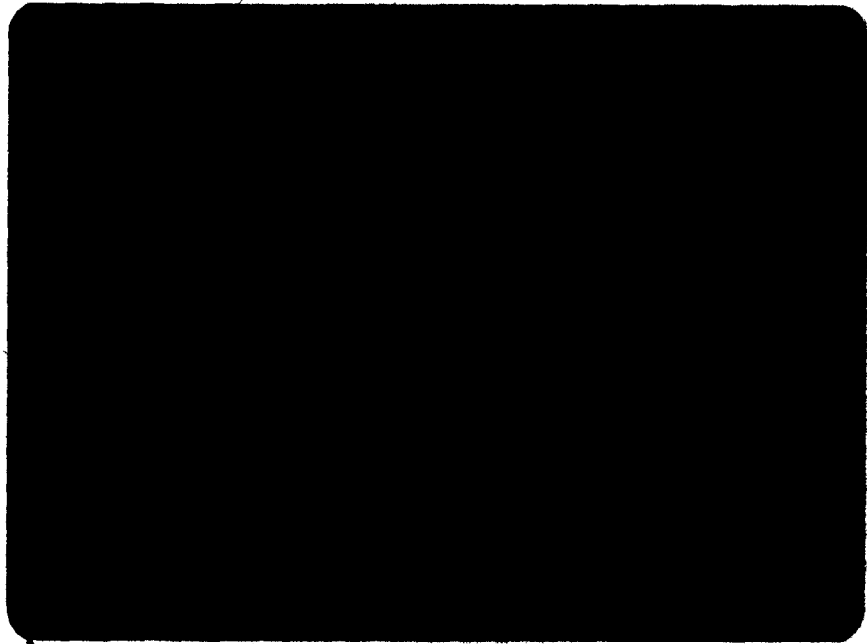
25. Bertram Brooker, Fawn Bay, 1936, oil on canvas,
24 x 30 in; 61.2 x 76.5 cm. (Mr. and Mrs. Dean Hughes,
Unionville, Ont.)



26. untitled, 1930, graphite on paper. (NGC 16324)

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27. Sketch for Doc Snider's House, c. 1930, graphite on paper. (NGC, 16770)

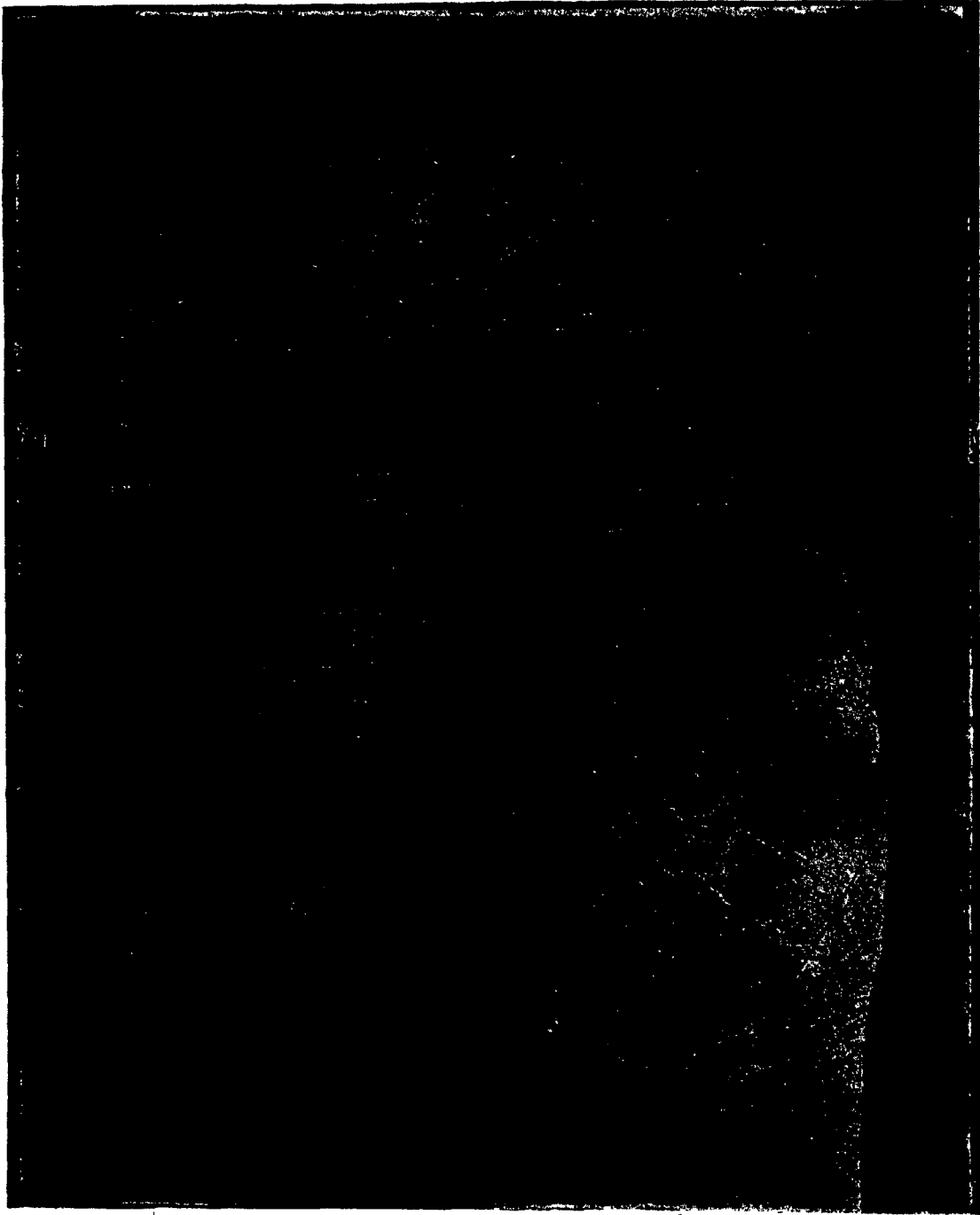


28. Doc Snider's House, 1931, oil on canvas,
29-1/4 x 33-3/8 in; 74.9 x 85.1 cm. (NGC, 3993)



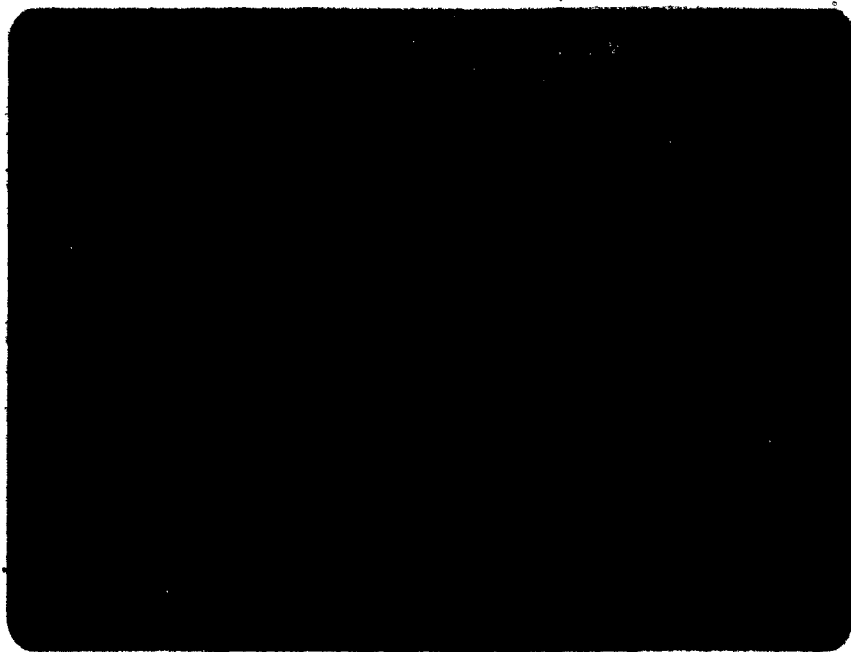
29. Photograph of site of Doc Snider's House. The porch at the right on FitzGerald's house was re-done sometime after his death. The white house behind the trees was Doc Snider's.

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30. The Pool, 1934, oil on board, 14-1/4 x 17-1/4 in;
36.2 x 43.7 cm. (NGC, 17612)

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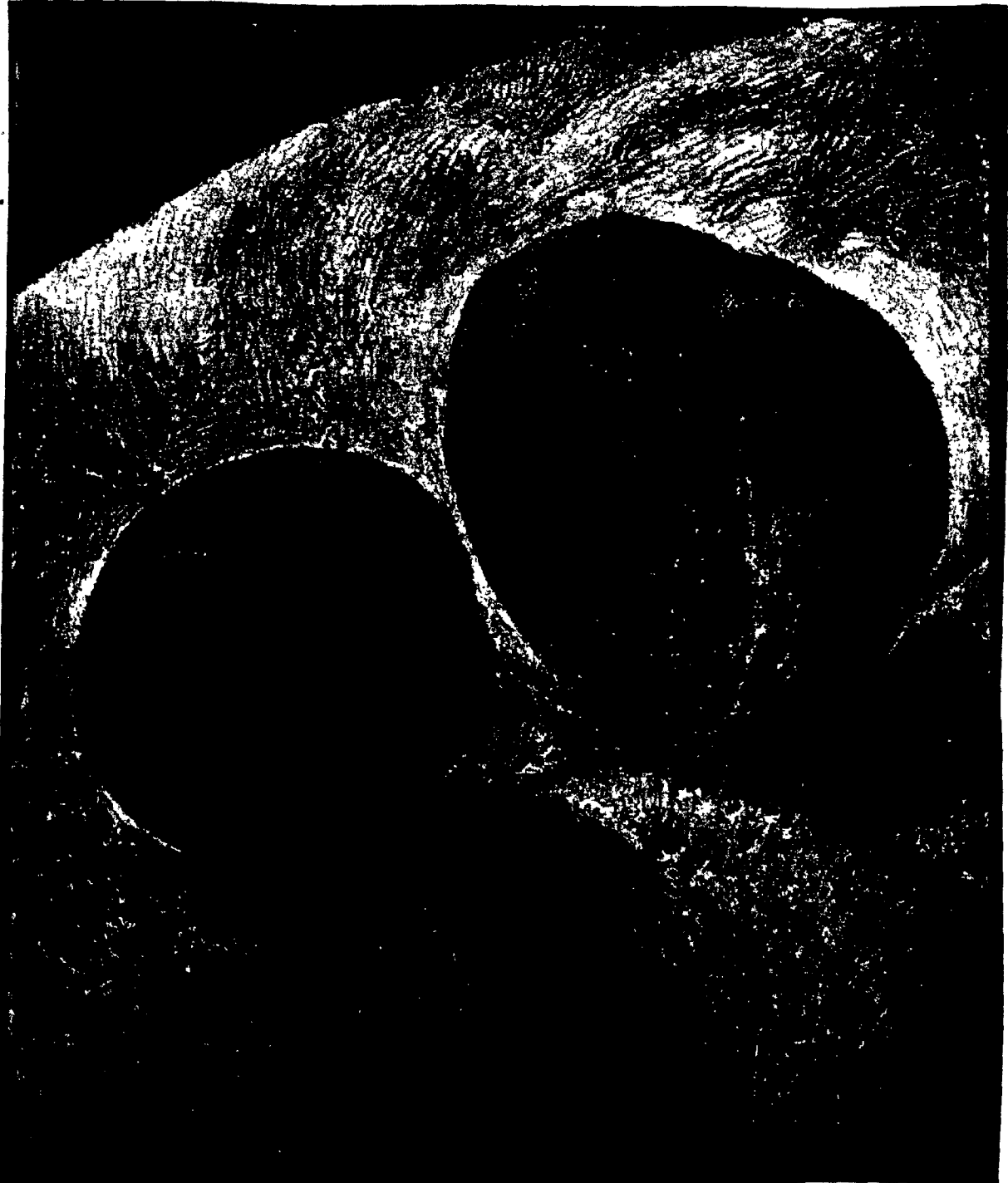


31. Still Life, 1941, oil on board, 16-1/8 x 14-3/8 in;
40.9 x 36.5 cm. (NGC, 17611).

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32. Plant, c. 1940, coloured chalk on paper, (private collection)



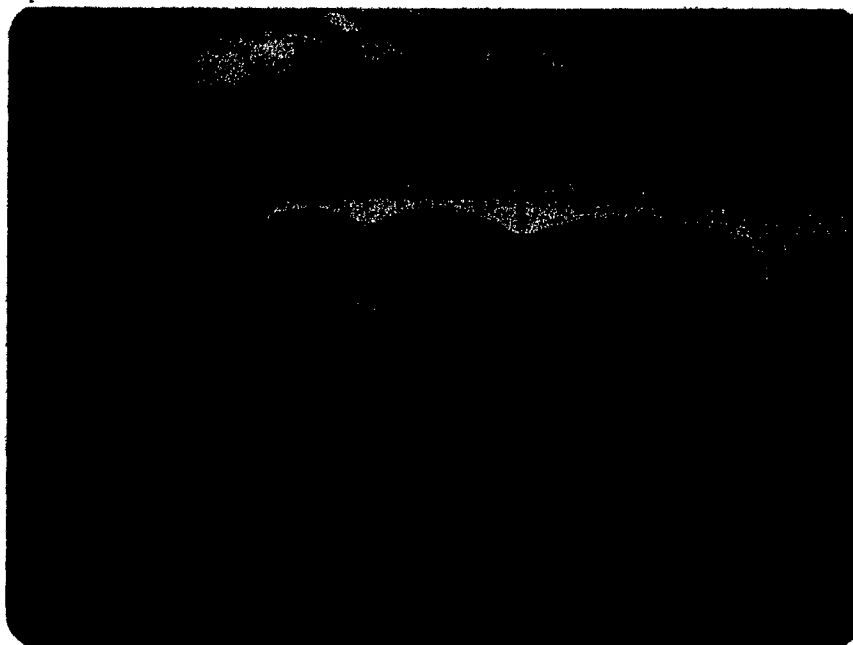
33. Still Life: two Apples, c. 1940, oil on canvas,
16-1/4 x 14-1/4 in; 41.1 x 36.3 cm. (WAG G5628)

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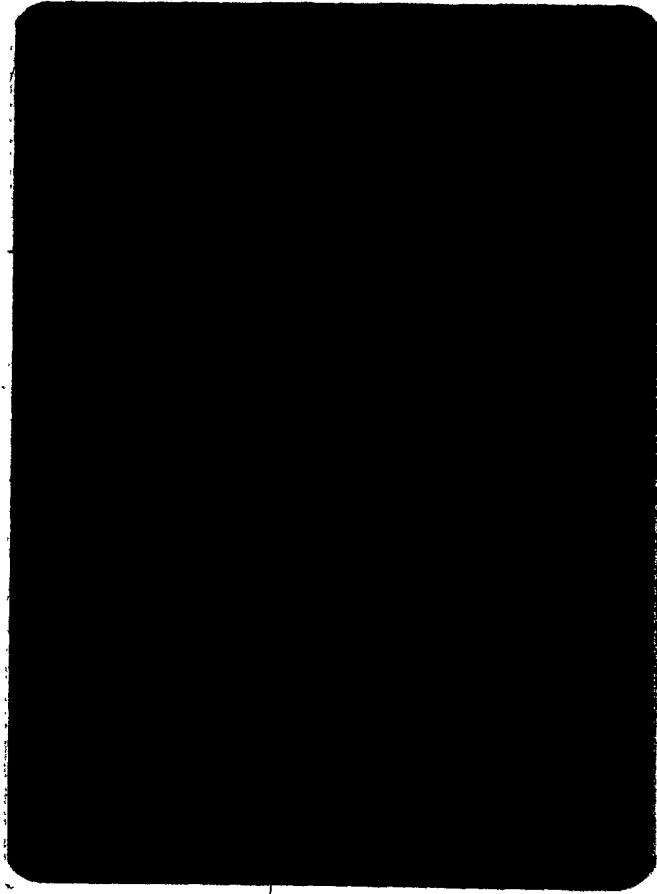
34. Tree Trunk and Bridge, 1936, graphite on paper.
(NGC 16304)

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35. Photograph of the bridge in Tree Trunk and Bridge,
Assiniboine Park, Winnipeg, 1980.

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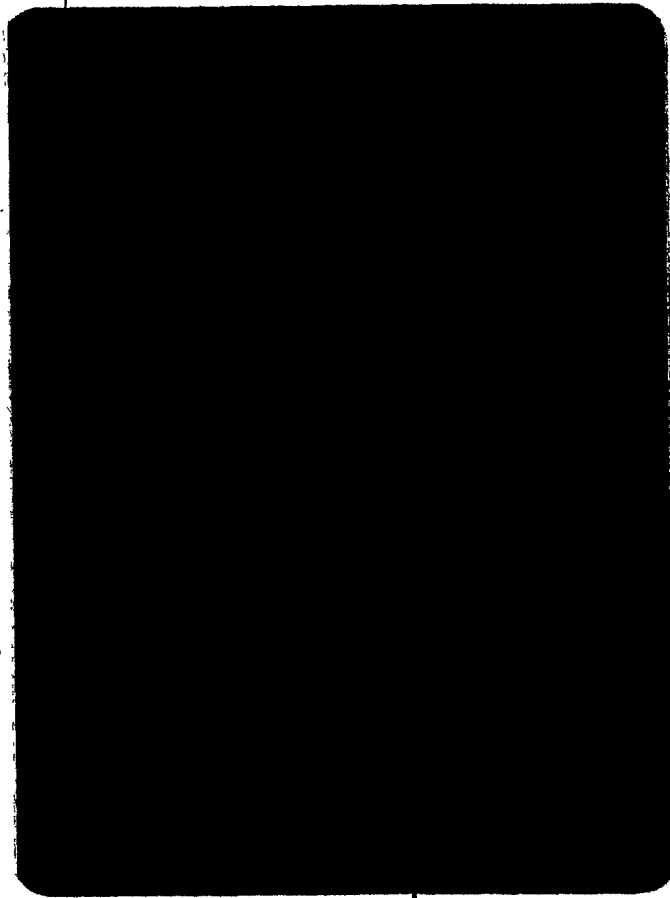
36. untitled, [jug], c. 1940, graphite on paper. (NGC 16321)

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37. Landscape with Trees, 1934, charcoal on paper.. (NGC)

COLOURED PICTURE



38. Campbell's House, n.d. [c.1940]; watercolour on paper.
(NGC, 6721)

COLOURED PICTURE



39. Paul Gauguin, Portrait de l'artiste, Les Miserables, 1888, oil on canvas, 71.5 x 90.5 cm. (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam)

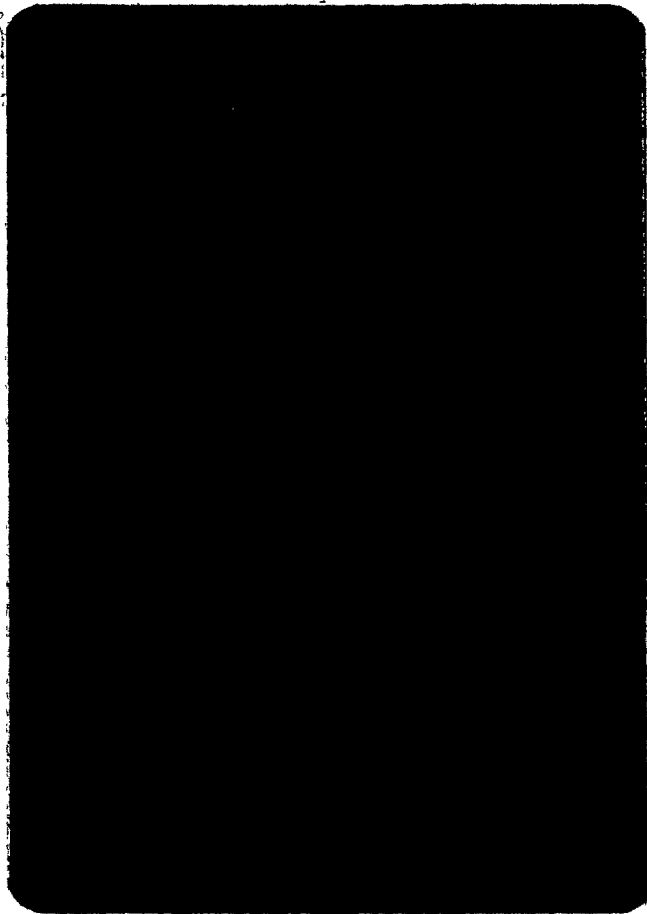


40. Caspar David Friedrich, Self Portrait, c. 1835.



41. Self Portrait (three nudes), c. 1943, watercolour on paper, 18 x 24 in; 45.7 x 60.8 cm. (WAG, G6326)

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42. Self Portrait, c. 1942, watercolour on paper,
23-7/8 x 18 in; 61 x 45.8 cm. (WAG G6325)

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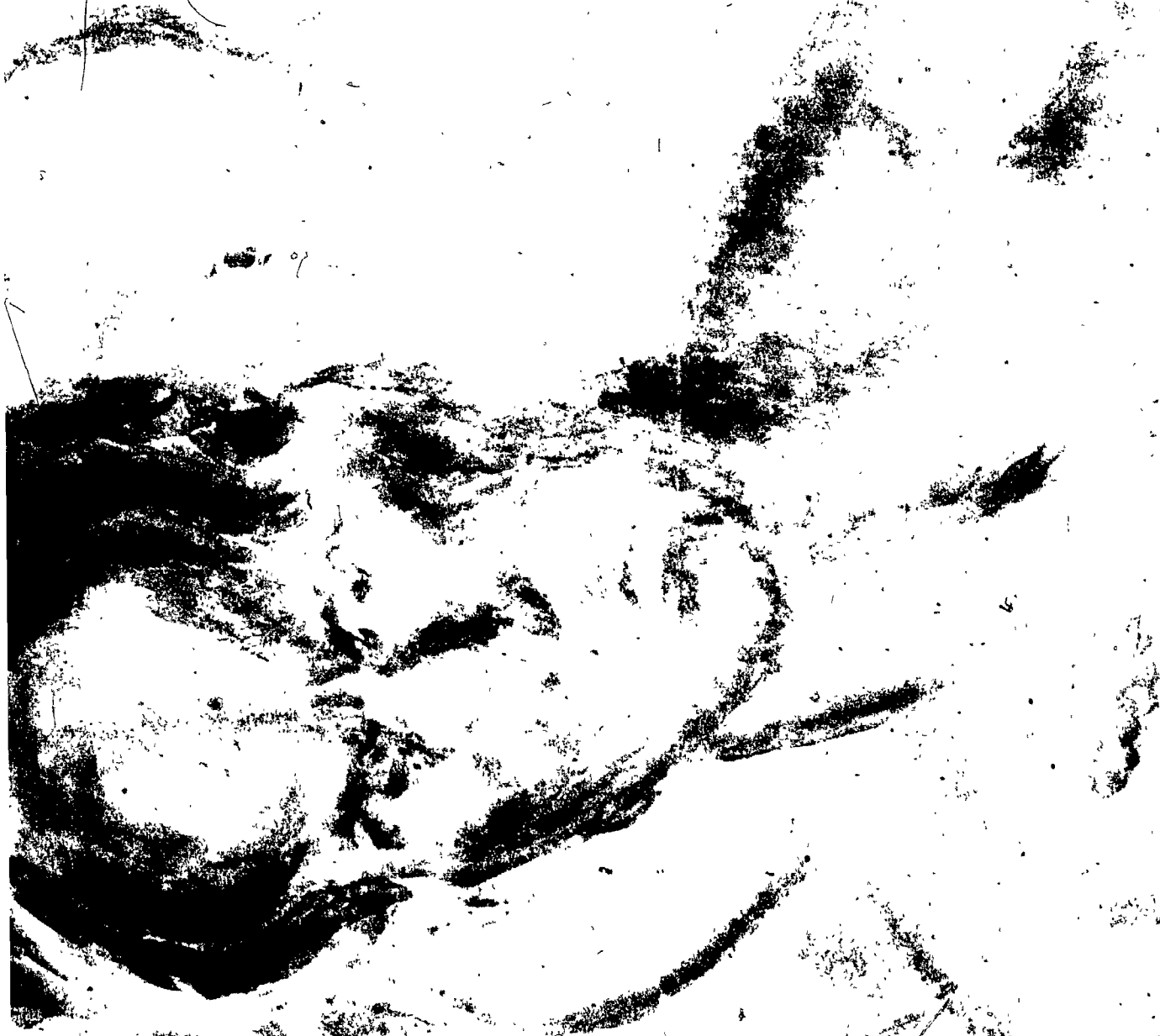


43. Green Self Portrait (two nudes), c. 1942, watercolour
on paper, 24 x 18 in; 60.9 x 45.9 cm. (WAG, G6319)

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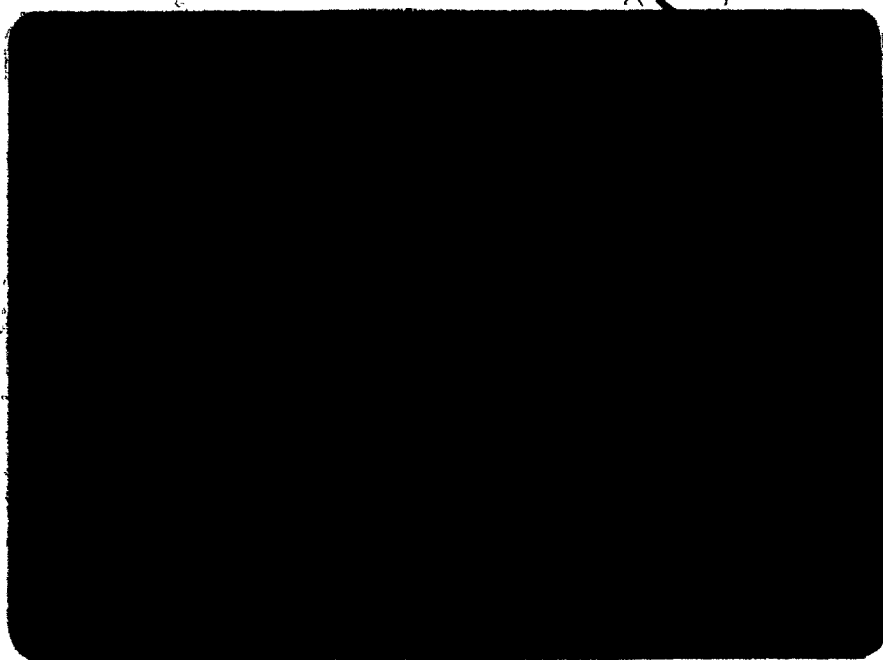


Portrait (two nudes), c. 1942, watercolour
1 x 18 in; 60.9 x 45.9 cm. (WAG, G6319)

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44. Four Nudes in a Landscape, c. 1942-43, graphite on paper, 7-7/8 x 8-1/8 in; 20 x 20.5 cm. (WAG G6392)

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45. Couple, c. 1943, graphite on paper, 7-7/8 x 8-1/8 in;
20 x 20.6 cm. (WAG G70353)



16. Figures, c. 1943, graphite on paper, 8 x 8 in;
20.2 x 20.2 cm. (WAG G70356)

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47. William Blake, Adam and Eve Sleeping, 1808, watercolour
51.8 x 39.3 cm. (Boston Museum of Fine Arts)

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Blake, Adam and Eve Sleeping, 1808, watercolour
9.3 cm. (Boston Museum of Fine Arts)

2 of 2



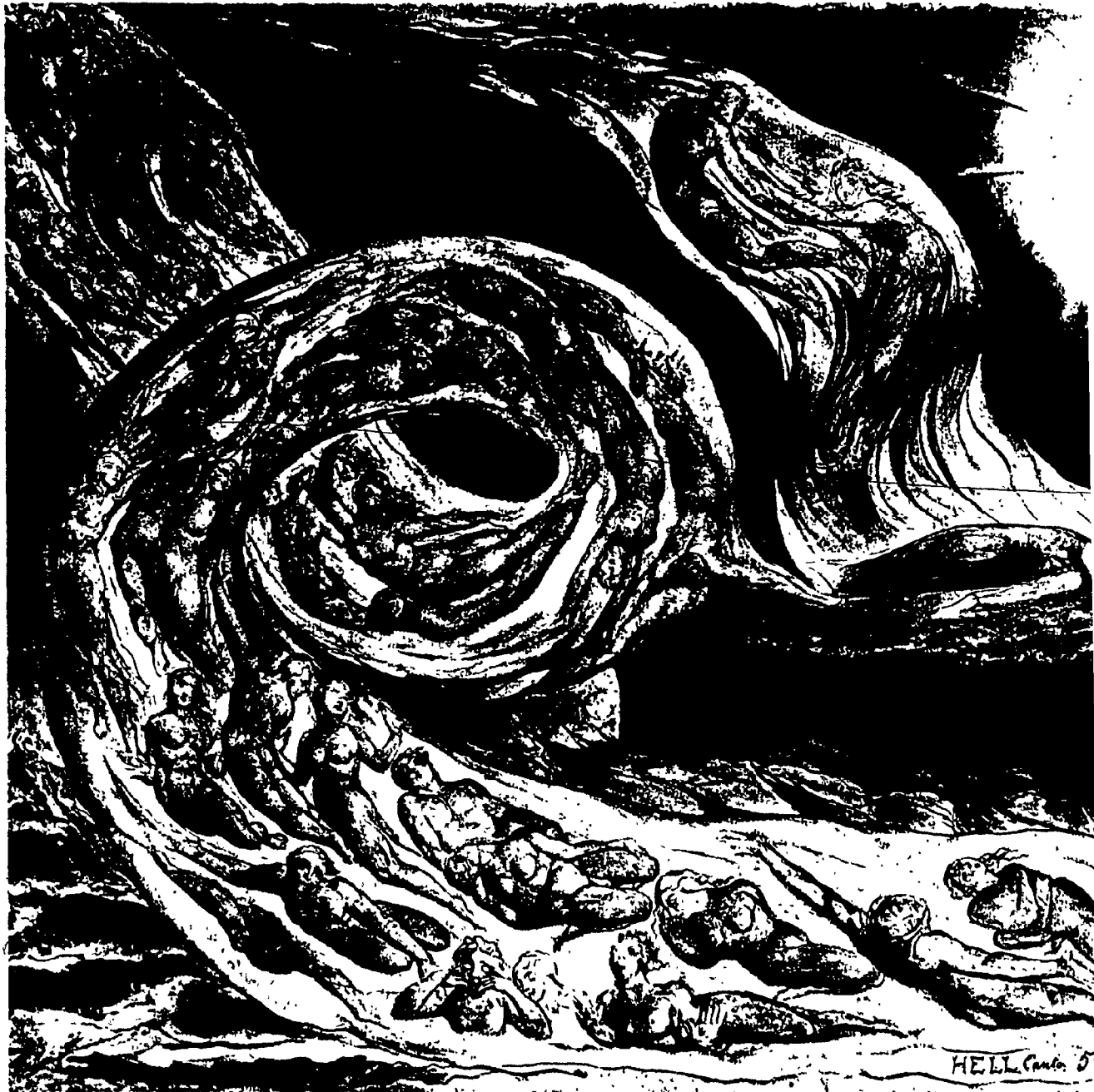
48. William Blake, The Last Judgement, 1808, tempera,
47.5 x 38 cm. (Sussex, Petworth House)

10%



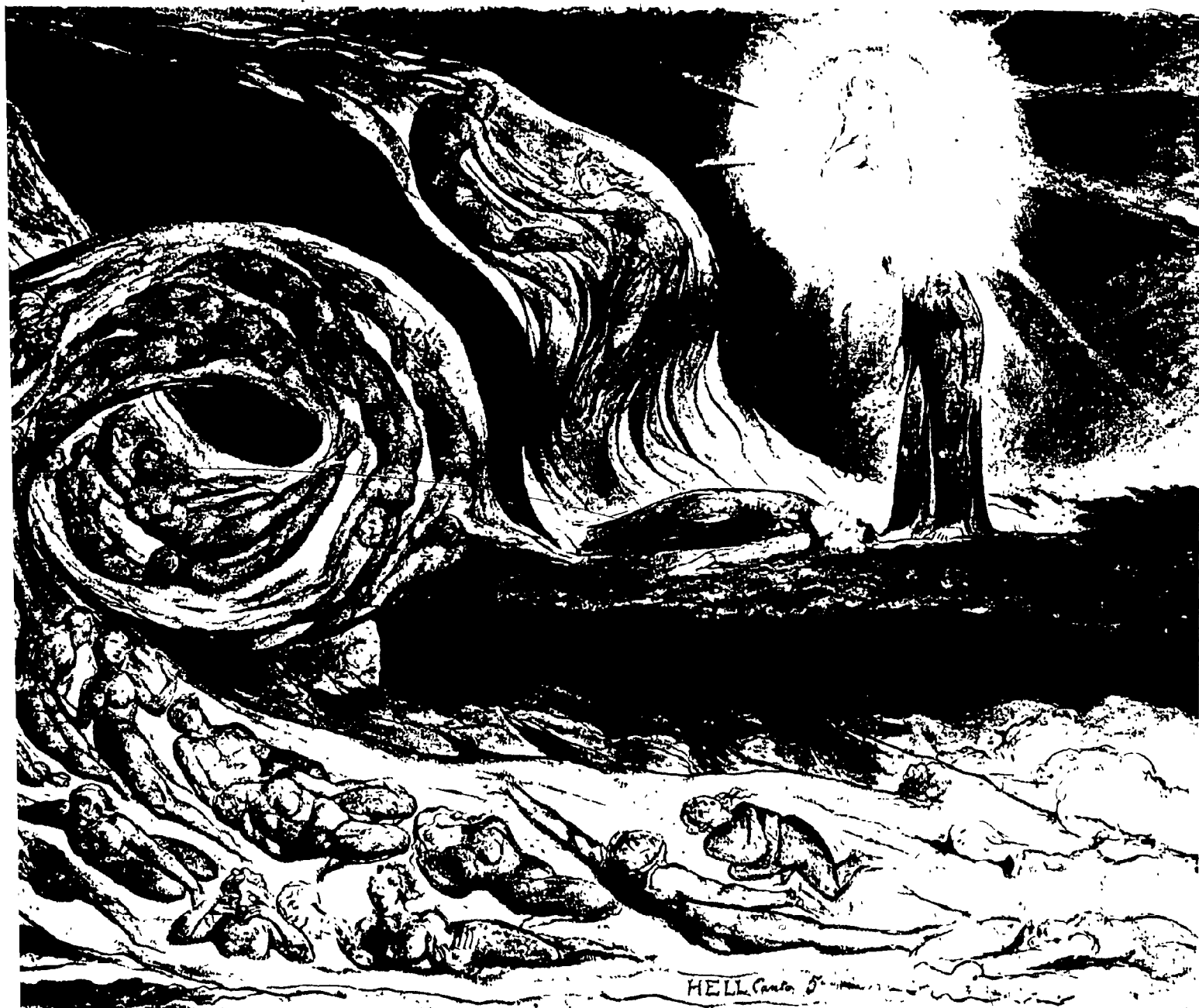
William Blake, The Last Judgement, 1808, tempera,
5 x 38 cm. (Sussex, Petworth House)

2 of 2



49. William Blake, The Circle of the Lustful, c. 1824-27, watercolour, 37 x 52 cm. (Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery.

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Blake, *The Circle of the Lustful*, c. 1824-27,
37 x 52 cm. (Birmingham City Museum and

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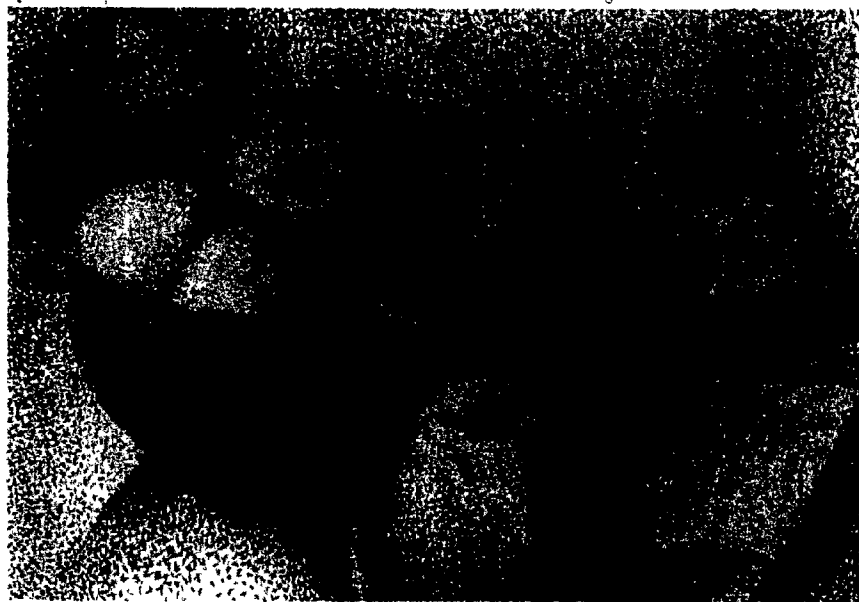
50. untitled, 1943, coloured chalks on paper. (NGC 16347)

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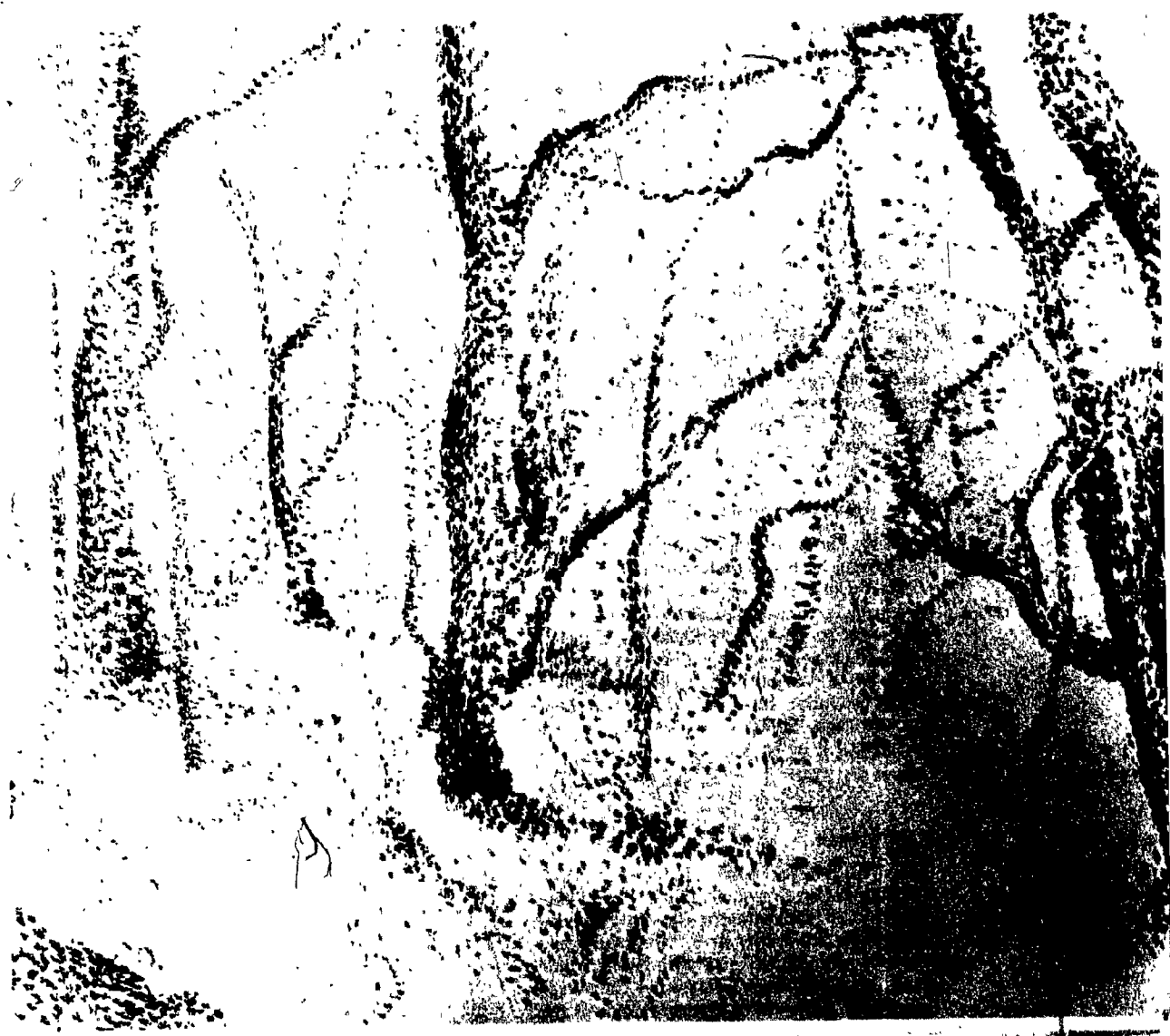


51. West Coast Rocks, 1944, watercolour on paper,
23-1/2 x 17-3/8 in; 59.7 x 40.4 cm. (WAG G73339)

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52. Apples in a Bowl, 1947, ink on paper, 11-3/8 x 16-1/2 in;
29.1 x 42 cm. (WAG G57152)



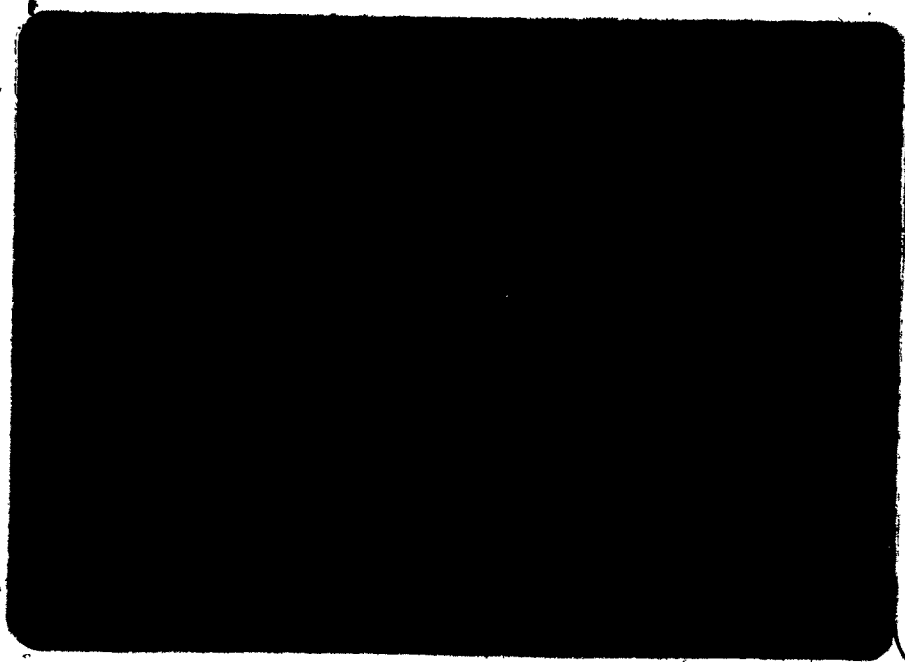
53. Trees in the Park, 1949, chalk on paper. (WAG)

19



s in the Park, 1949, chalk on paper. (WAG)

20/2

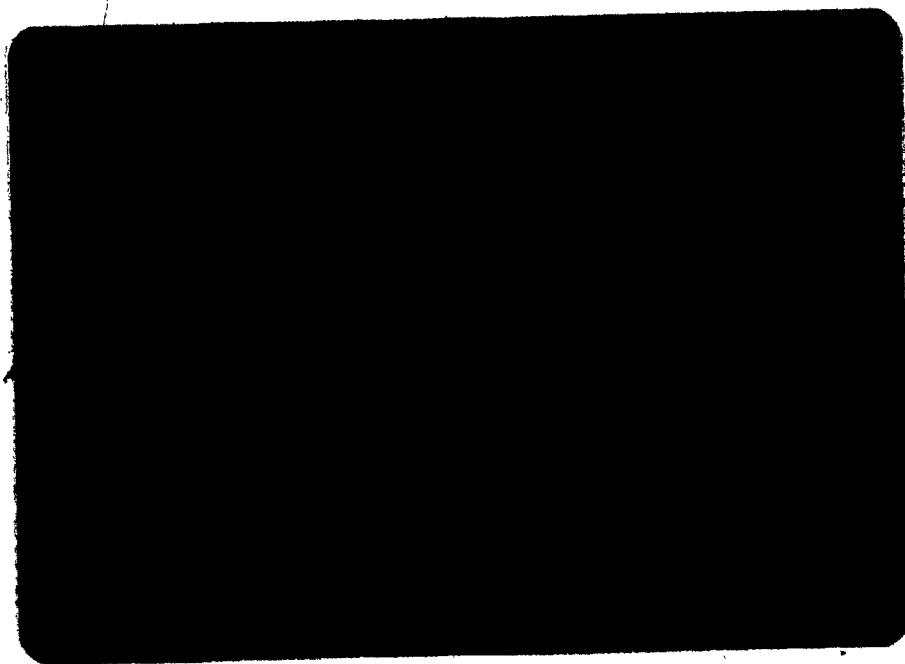


54. Photograph of trees on the bank of the Assiniboine River, downtown Winnipeg, 1979.

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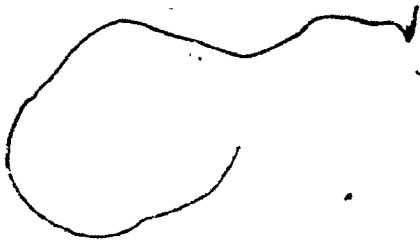


55. Christmas card to Caven Atkins, 1951, ink on paper,
5-3/4 x 4-3/8 in; 14.5 x 11 cm. (Art Gallery of Windsor)



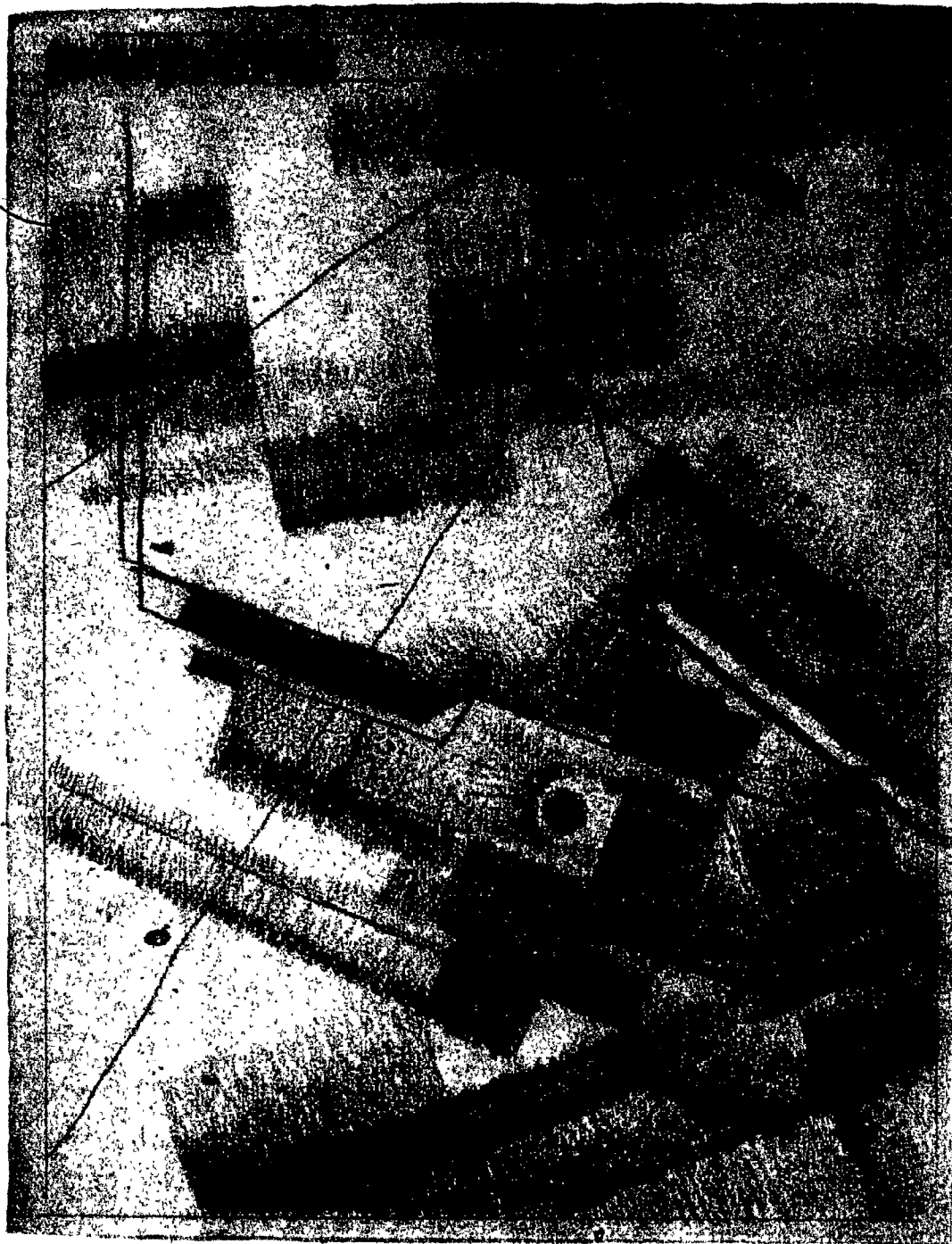
56. Abstract, c. 1952, graphite on paper, 5 x 4 in;
12.8 x 10.3 cm. (WAG, G7.0454)

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57. untitled, 1952, coloured pencils on paper, 9 x 12 in;
23 x 31 cm. (WAG G70419)

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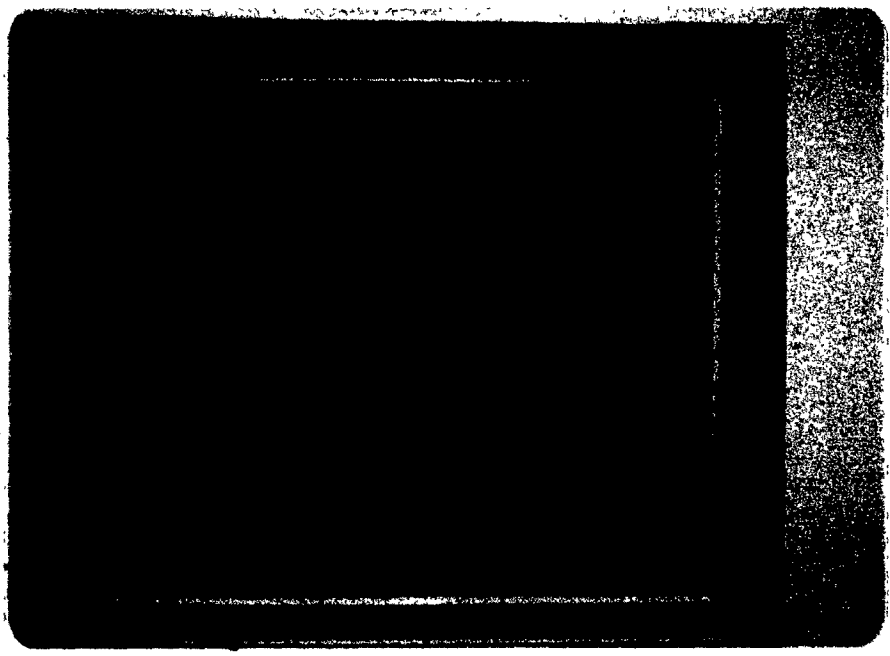
58. Abstract, 1952, coloured crayon on paper, 24.4 x 31.9 cm.
(WAG G70261)

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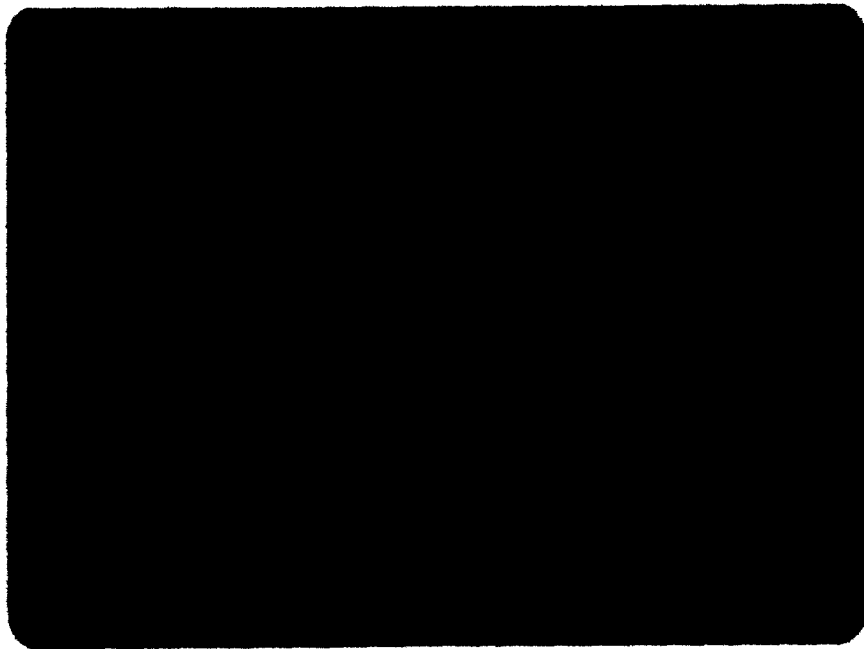
59. Abstract: Green and Gold, 1954, oil on canvas,
27-7/8 x 35-7/8 in; 71.2 x 91.5 cm. (WAG G63287)

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60. Still Life with Hat, c. 1955, oil on board,
24 x 29-3/4 in; 61 x 76 cm. (private collection)

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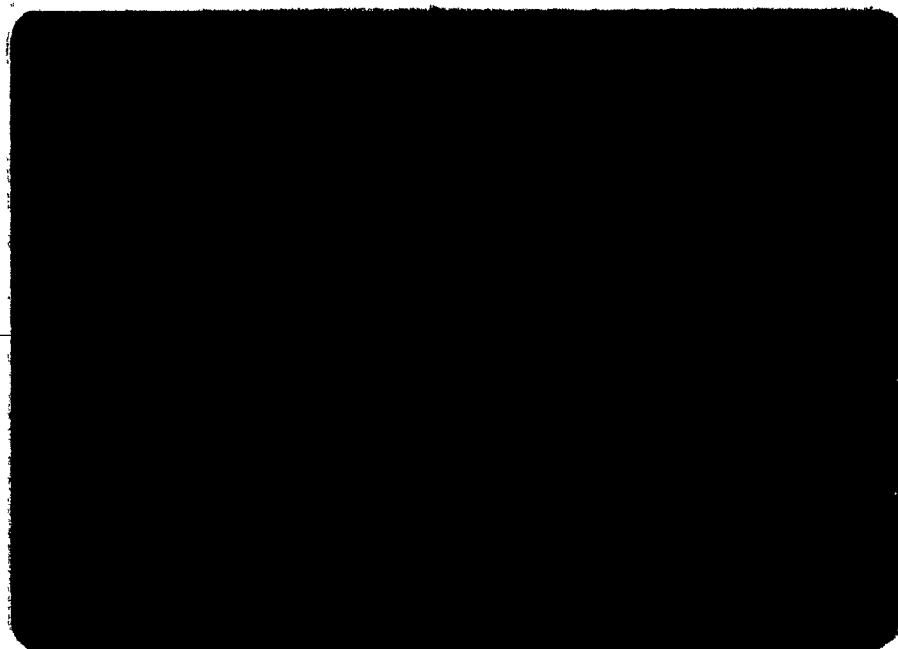
61. Sketch for Still Life with Hat, c. 1955, ink on paper,
(NGC 16339)

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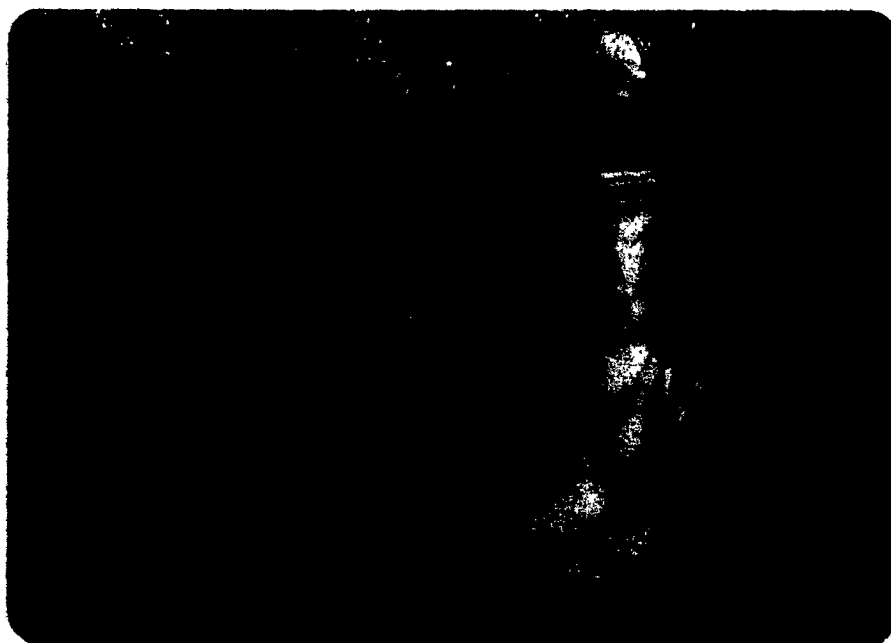
62. The Pool #4 Midnight, 1956, ink on blue paper,
(NGC 16335)

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63. Flooded Landscape, 1956, ink on blue paper,
12-3/4 x 14-7/8 in; 32.7 x 37.8 cm. (AGO)

COLOURED PICTURE



64. Photograph of the flooded Assiniboine River, Winnipeg, 1979.

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APPENDIX

SELECTED CHRONOLOGY

- 1890 - FitzGerald born March 17 to Lionel H. FitzGerald and Belle Hicks in an apartment over their grocery store on Main St. in Winnipeg. (Information about the store from interview with Irene Heywood Hems-
worth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.)
- Within the next few years, the family (FitzGerald had a sister, Geraldine, and a brother, Jack) move to Elgin St., King St. and finally to 672 Sherbrook St. where they continue to live for many years.
- As a child, spends his summer vacations at his maternal grandparents' (the John Hicks) farm near Snowflake, Manitoba. His grandfather dies when FitzGerald is about six. (Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives, TS, p. 4.) His grandmother continues to run the farm alone for several years.
- 1902-03 - At the age of twelve or thirteen, quits school to work. (He had attended Isbister and then Victoria Schools.)
(Patricia Bovey in "The Man," in Bovey, Patricia and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development of An Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 105, gives 1904 as the date at which FitzGerald leaves school, with no source cited. But Irene Heywood Hemsworth states that the artist was working for Martin, Bole and Wynne, a wholesale drug company, as an office boy in 1902. This was according to her conversations with FitzGerald. (Interview with Irene Heywood Hemsworth, Morin Heights, Quebec, 14 July, 1979.) Ayre also refers to this company in his unpublished monograph (Ayre papers, Queen's University Archives, TS, p. 5).)
- Later works for Osler, Hammond and Nanton, a brokerage firm then located at Portage and Main Streets in Winnipeg. He leaves for a few months to try a job with The Stovel Company, which did designing, electrotyping and engraving, but returns to Osler, Hammond and Nanton.
- 1904 - The Winnipeg Public Library opens on William Ave. FitzGerald begins to read there in his spare time. He later remembered reading Ruskin's Elements of Drawing and Holman Hunt's two-volume work, Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

- 1906 - Begins to draw and paint in his spare time, following Ruskin's program in the Elements of Drawing.
- 1908 - Begins evening art classes under an A.S. Keszthelyi, a Ukrainian artist then living in Winnipeg. Keszthelyi had previously taught at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and at the Art Student's League in New York. He gave classes in Winnipeg from 1908-1912. (Ferdinand Eckhardt, One Hundred and Fifty Years of Art in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1970, p. 87)).
- 1909-12 - F.S. Chalmers paints a series of murals at the Royal Alexandra Hotel in Winnipeg.
- 1911 - FitzGerald had met his fiancée, Felicia ("Vally") Wright, a singer from Ottawa, by this year. During 1911 she lives in Ottawa with her family and they correspond until her return in 1912.
- Exhibits three works (dates and titles unknown) at the Winnipeg Public Library.
- 1912 - November 22, marries "Vally" (named, it would seem, from a poem by Gibbs Mason, 1906, clipped and saved by FitzGerald and extant in his personal papers at the FSC entitled "Vally", about a pretty girl). They marry in secret at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church at Elgin and Ellen Streets in Winnipeg, then move together to Vally's apartment at 462 St. Mary Ave.
- Rents a studio together with Donald MacQuarrie, a Scottish watercolourist and the first curator of the Winnipeg Museum of Fine Arts. The studio was at 416 Chamber of Commerce Building. During this year FitzGerald works as a commercial artist (name of firm unknown).
- The Winnipeg Museum of Fine Arts (later to become the Winnipeg Art Gallery) opens at Main and Water Streets in Winnipeg. FitzGerald exhibits one work, Landscape (#246, no date or medium known) in the inaugural exhibition.
- 1913 - MacQuarrie is replaced as curator by Alexander Musgrove (1882-1952) but continued to remain in Winnipeg for another year.

- The Winnipeg School of Art opens next door to the Museum. Musgrove becomes the first principal, while retaining his curatorial position.

- Walter J. Phillips (1884-1963) arrives from England in Winnipeg. He writes articles on art for The Winnipeg Tribune and is a professional artist as well. He moves from Winnipeg to Calgary in 1941.

- Brigden's of Winnipeg is established by Fred Brigden of Toronto. They hire many city artists to work on layout and design, photo-retouching and drawing.

- FitzGerald and Vally live in a tent together over the summer at the foot of Linden Ave. on the banks of the Red River in East Kildonan, a suburb of Winnipeg. In the fall, they return to St. Mary's Ave.

- Exhibits The Dying Embers of Autumn (now destroyed) in the Royal Canadian Academy of Art Exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and in Montreal.

1914

- Arnold Brigden, nephew to Fred, comes to Winnipeg from England to manage Brigden's of Winnipeg. He and FitzGerald become friends. Brigden is an amateur painter and photographer, and collects art.

- The Winnipeg Sketch Club is formed by Alexander Musgrove for amateur artists.

- An exhibition of Scottish Watercolours is held at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in September-November.

- FitzGerald does a series of monoprints throughout the year inspired by the clichés-verre method of Corot, which he learned through MacQuarrie. MacQuarrie was an admirer of Corot (Kevin Forrest, The Prints of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald, unpublished master's thesis, Carleton University, 1979).

- Exhibits two works, Morning in the City and Afternoon (dates and media unknown) in the Royal Canadian Academy of Art exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery from January until March. Also included in the exhibition is Fin du Jour by Ozias Leduc. Ann Davis has noted (in "A North American Artist", Bovey, Patricia and Ann Davis, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development of an Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1978), p. 36) that FitzGerald's work was similar to Leduc's in its mystical quality, but that FitzGerald did not know Leduc's work. It is highly likely, however, that FitzGerald did see this one work by Leduc, at least.

- Has a two-artist exhibition with MacQuarrie at their studio, May 8-15, before MacQuarrie returns to Scotland. (Titles, dates, prices or sales are not known.)
 - Exhibits eight works in the Winnipeg Artists Exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery from June until August. They were: #22 The Edge of the Wood, #23 The Shack, # 25 A Woodland Road, #26 St. Boniface, #47 The Warehouses, #61 The Assiniboine, #67 The Poplars, #75 The Mill (dates and media not known).
- 1915
- Moves with his wife to 18 Evanson St., Winnipeg.
 - January: the Royal Canadian Academy Patriotic Fund Exhibition is held at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. FitzGerald contributes six works: #4 On the Assiniboine, #7 St. Boniface, #13 The Freight Station, #51 Summer Landscape, #63 The Avenue (all paintings) and #64 The Assiniboine (a drawing). Dates unknown. (Ozias Leduc exhibited his Effet Gris: Neige.)
- 1916
- Son, Lionel Edward, born March 30.
 - Exhibits with the Royal Canadian Academy in Montreal and in a Western Artists Exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery (works not known).
- 1918
- The National Gallery of Canada purchases FitzGerald's oil painting Late Fall, Manitoba of 1917 which had been exhibited there in a group exhibition that year (NGC Acc. no. 1483).
- 1919
- Daughter, Patricia LeMoine, born March 25.
 - The Winnipeg General Strike is declared. It begins May 15 and its peak, Bloody Saturday, is June 21. From 1914 to 1919 the cost of living in Winnipeg had risen 75-80% while the wage increase had been 18% (Beatrice Madger, The Winnipeg General Strike (Toronto: MacLean and Hunter, 1969, p. 8).
 - Exhibits with the Royal Canadian Academy at the Art Gallery of Toronto (work not known).
- 1920
- Assists the American artist, Augustus Vincent Tack (1870-1949), during the month of June in installing

Tack's murals at the new Manitoba Legislative Building (constructed 1914-20). (See fig's 5, 6, 7 and 8.)

- Later that summer, returns alone to Snowflake where he rents a room in a farmhouse neighbouring his grandmother's. Her farm was then rented out to a stranger. (Telephone interview with Mrs. Lily White, neighbour at Snowflake, Winnipeg, 11 May, 1979.)

1921

- The Winnipeg Little Theatre is founded. It runs for sixteen years, finally merging with other groups to form the Manitoba Drama League. FitzGerald intermittently works designing sets and allows students at the Winnipeg School of Art to assist him. Charles Comfort (1900-) also did some of this work while he was living in Winnipeg and working at Brigden's. (It would appear that FitzGerald knew Comfort as he had his Toronto address noted in his small personal notebook (FSC 1-0041). Comfort moved to Toronto to live in 1925. Edith Sinclair (whose husband, Claude, collected art) was the directress of the group. Florence Brigden, wife of Arnold, was an actress. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba, MG 10 G22 (Edith Sinclair file) and MG 10 G16 (Winnipeg Little Theatre File).)

- Franz Johnston (1888-1949) of the Group of Seven resigns from the Group to come to Winnipeg as the principal of the Winnipeg School of Art. He remains until 1924, then moves to Toronto to teach at the Ontario College of Art.

- Exhibits Summer: East Kildonan (1920) with the Ontario Society of Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto. The same work is also exhibited at the Canadian Art of Today exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

- First one-artist exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in September (works not known).

- In October FitzGerald leaves Winnipeg with his family for Montreal. His wife finds employment in a tearoom there, and in late November FitzGerald travels on alone to New York. He finds work as a decorator or designer (likely this was freelance and not for a firm, but details are not known) and enrolls at the Art Student's League. He takes four courses under Boardman Robinson (1876-1952) from December until March 1922.

- 1922 - From March until May takes two courses under Kenneth Hayes Miller (1876-1952).
- Returns to Canada and travels with his family in Quebec and Ontario before returning to Winnipeg on July 19.
- Works doing design work and displays for Eaton's and decorating work for a J.E. Dolen at 310 Assiniboine Ave., Winnipeg.
- Sometime after his return from New York, builds the family home at 160 Lyle St. (now 30 Deer Lodge Place in St. James, a suburb of Winnipeg), where he lives until his death.
- 1923 - Takes up printmaking again, turning to drypoint, and continues working in this medium until 1927, doing only a few thereafter until 1933 when he stopped, doing only his personal Christmas cards each year in lino-cut until 1946 (Kevin Forrest, The Prints of Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald, unpublished master's thesis, Carleton University, 1979).
- Begins teaching evening classes at the Winnipeg School of Art.
- 1924 - In September, begins teaching full-time at the Winnipeg School of Art under the new principal, G. Keith Gebhardt (1899-).
- By November of 1924, since his return from New York, FitzGerald had completed a set of murals at Barconi's (later the Plaza Cafe) and the Mitchell Copp Jewelry Store on Portage Ave. in Winnipeg (both no longer extant). ("Art School Has New Director," Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 22, 1924.)
- FitzGerald's untitled work of a man snowshoeing is reproduced on the cover of The Beaver, at that time the company magazine for the Hudson's Bay Co. (vol. V, no. 1, Dec. 1924).
- Exhibits Old House (#83, a drypoint) with the Canadian Society of Graphic Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto.
- 1925 - Designs sets in a medieval style for the Winnipeg Little Theatre's production, "The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife".

- June: the Winnipeg Art Gallery hosts a touring exhibition of Contemporary English Painting.

- Summer: FitzGerald takes a trip west as indicated by several sketches in the Winnipeg Art Gallery collection which are signed and dated and have place names noted of western cities (ex. W.A.G. Acc. no.'s: G70 480, G63 366, G6349, G6347 and an entire sketchbook, G63 189). Patricia Bovey and Ann Davis (Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald: The Development of An Artist (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery; 1978, p. 105) suggest that FitzGerald spent the summer of 1924 at Banff and give no source. The Banff School of Fine Arts has no record of FitzGerald being there that summer (letter from J.C.K. Madsen, Assistant Director, Banff Centre, to the author, 21 November, 1979). It seems likely, therefore, that FitzGerald was west in 1925 only and not in 1924.

- Exhibits with the Group of Seven in the Canadian Section of Fine Arts of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, England (works not known), and exhibits Still Life (# 50, a painting) with the Ontario Society of Artists exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

1926

- Manitoba Society of Artists formed for professional artists by Walter J. Phillips.

- Exhibits his oil painting Summer Sunshine (date unknown) at the National Gallery of Canada in their annual exhibition of Canadian Art, then also at the Winnipeg Art Gallery; also exhibits The Fallen Tree (#84) and At Lockport (#85) with the Canadian Society of Graphic Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

1927

- Robert Ayre moves to Montreal via Jasper, Alberta. He and FitzGerald had met through the Winnipeg Little Theatre as Ayre wrote reviews of the plays for The Winnipeg Free Press. Ayre also used to attend the exhibitions at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and met FitzGerald there (interview with Robert Ayre, Montreal, 25 May, 1979). Ayre and FitzGerald begin their correspondence.

- Exhibits Williamson's Garage (#33, 1927, oil on canvas, now in NCC. acq. #3682) with the Ontario Society of Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

- Exhibits his Après midi d'été in an exhibition of Canadian art at the Musée de Jeu de Paulme in Paris.

- Also exhibits A Corner of the Stable (#362), Hayloft (#363), Backyard (#364) and Maple Tree (#365) with the Canadian Society of Graphic Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

- Exhibits, as well, at the Art Institute of Chicago Seventh International Watercolour Exhibition, and at the Annual Fine Arts Exhibition of the Minnesota State Fair (works not known).

1928 - The Manitoba Society of Artists opens a gallery which periodically received touring exhibitions from the National Gallery of Canada as well as their own exhibitions of local artists' work. It was located at 330½ Main St. above Richardson's Art Store (both no longer extant).

- FitzGerald designs sets and some costumes for the Winnipeg Little Theatre's production of Pirandello's Henry IV.

- Takes a trip with Gebhardt to Minneapolis during the summer.

- Fritz Brandtner (1896-1969) moves to Winnipeg from Danzig, Poland. He lives on Sherbrook St. and works for Eaton's, Brigden's and as a house painter. In December, 1928, he has a one-artist exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. He seeks out FitzGerald and they become good friends. Unfortunately, their correspondence (from after Brandtner moved to Montreal in 1934) was destroyed (telephone interview with Mr. Paul Kastel, Montreal, executor of the Brandtner estate, 13 September, 1979).

- FitzGerald is given a one-artist exhibition of his drawings at the Arts and Letters Club in Toronto, organized by J.E.H. MacDonald, early in the year. Lawren Harris purchases one work (work and price paid not known).

- Exhibits Backyards, Water Street (1927, drypoint, #343) with the Canadian Society of Graphic Artists at their annual exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto.

1929 - FitzGerald meets Irene Heywood (later to marry Mr. Wade Hemsworth) who was a new student that year at the Winnipeg School of Art. She was eighteen that year and FitzGerald was thirty-nine. She remained at the school until 1932 when her family moved to Brandon, Manitoba. She and FitzGerald began to correspond and continued

to do so after she had moved to Eastern Canada with her family several years later. (Some of his letters are still extant in her personal collection.)

- FitzGerald sponsors Fritz Brandtner to bring over his fiancée, Mieke (Mitzi), from Poland to Canada (Charles Hill, Canadian Painting in the Thirties (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), p. 128).

- FitzGerald is appointed the new principal of the Winnipeg School of Art when Gebhardt returns to the United States.

- By 1929 FitzGerald had completed a set of murals in the St. Charles Hotel in Winnipeg (Fred Houser, "The Amateur Movement in Canadian Painting," Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, Bertram Brooker, ed. (Toronto: MacMillan, 1929, p. 89)). (The building is no longer extant.)

- Early in the year, FitzGerald is given a show of his drawings at Dent's Publishing House in Toronto. Lawren Harris brings Bertram Brooker to see the exhibition (Lawren Harris to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, December 29, 1929, FSC correspondence files). Brooker buys a work and contacts FitzGerald through J.E.H. MacDonald in order to come to visit that summer, which he does (FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to J.E.H. MacDonald, undated letter, PAC, M630 D111).

- Exhibits in the National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Exhibition (works not known).

1930

- In June, takes a train trip to various art centres in the U.S.A. and Canada in order to broaden his knowledge of art education for his new position as principal of the Winnipeg School of Art. His itinerary was as follows:

- Minneapolis: The Walker Art Centre and its art school;
- Chicago: The Chicago Art Institute and its art school, and the Field Museum;
- Pittsburgh: Boardman Robinson's ten murals from 1927 on the history of commerce done at the Kaufmann Department Store;
- Washington, D.C.: The Phillips Gallery, where he meets with A.V. Tack once again;
- Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of Art, The Industrial Arts Academy and the Rodin Museum;
- New York City: Grand Central Galleries, Museum of Natural History, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Modern Art.

The places listed are all described in FitzGerald's diary of his trip (FSC 1-0183). Afterwards he also visited Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, but these are not described. In Toronto he stays with Bertram Brooker and meets some members of the Group of Seven through him.

- Exhibits Oakdale Place (#42) and Snow Laden Branches (#43) (media and dates not known) with the Group of Seven at the Art Gallery of Toronto, and Backyards, Water Street (1927, drypoint) in the National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Exhibition at the Canadian National Exhibition Art Show in Toronto, and in a show of Canadian work at Grand Central Galleries, New York, in June (works not known).

1931

- June 13: FitzGerald completes Doc Snider's House, the oil painting he had started in January of 1930.

- Over the winter he develops pneumonia and does not recover until the fall of 1932 (FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to Arthur Lismer, 21 June, 1932 and 29 September, 1932, McMichael Canadian Collection).

- The Winnipeg Art Gallery hosts two travelling exhibitions sent from the National Gallery of Canada: Contemporary Polish Prints in May and Contemporary French Prints in June and July..

- Exhibits Poplars (#43, painting) with the Ontario Society of Artists at the Art Gallery of Toronto, and exhibits at the National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Exhibition and in Buenos Aires in the British Empire Trade Exhibition (works not known).

1932

- Early in the year J.E.H. MacDonald dies after an illness and FitzGerald is asked to take his place in the Group of Seven (Arthur Lismer to FitzGerald, Winnipeg, 24 May, 1932, FSC correspondence files).

- In March Vincent and Alice Massey come through Winnipeg and visit FitzGerald. They see some of his art and purchase two works (specific works not known). Also in March Arthur Lismer came for dinner while on a cross-country lecture tour, and Harry Adaskin, a violinist, Theosophist and friend of the Group of Seven, Bertram Brooker and other Toronto artists, comes for tea.

- Winnipeg School of Art hosts an exhibition of Contemporary British Painting circulated by the National Gallery of Canada in June.

- The National Gallery of Canada purchases Doc Snider's House and sends it for exhibition to a show of Canadian art at the Roerich Gallery in New York. He is also included in the National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Exhibition (works not known).

1933

- Early in the year the Canadian Group of Painters is formed in Toronto, signalling the dissolution of the Group of Seven. FitzGerald is named a founding member.

- Hart House, University of Toronto, purchases FitzGerald's Summer of 1931.

- The Winnipeg Art Gallery in April hosts a Contemporary American Watercolours exhibition and the J.E.H. MacDonald Memorial Exhibition.

- During the summer, Brooker visits FitzGerald in Winnipeg.

- Exhibits with the Canadian Group of Painters in Atlantic City, showing three works: Still Life (#17), At Silver Heights (#18) and Dead Tree (#19).

- Also exhibits at the National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Exhibition (works not known).

1934

- Winnipeg Art Gallery hosts an exhibition of the Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolour in January, a Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour exhibition in February and in June and July the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Associates Private Collections exhibition. In this show some works by Frank Brangwyn, John Constable and J.M.W. Turner were included.

- Over the Christmas vacation the Winnipeg School of Art moves from Main and Water to the N.W. corner of Portage and Sherbrock, now the site of the Lion's Manor.

- Fritz Brandtner has a one-artist exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and moves to Montreal afterwards.

- Exhibits with the Canadian Group of Painters in Montreal and in the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Western Artists Exhibition (works not known).

1935

- FitzGerald included in a three-artist exhibition with Bertram Brooker and Kathleen Munn at Malloney's Gallery in Toronto in May (works were all drawings; prices and sales not known). Exhibition was reviewed

by Graham McInnes, "The World of Art," Saturday Night, May 25, 1935.

- In the fall, FitzGerald and Vally drive to New York to take their son Edward to school there (Vally's diary, FSC 1-0200).

1936 - Doc Snider's House is included in a travelling exhibition of Contemporary Canadian Painting organized by the National Gallery of Canada for the Southern Dominions of the British Empire. He is also included in the National Gallery of Canada's Group of Seven 1919-1933 exhibition with five paintings and fifteen drawings (works not known) and in a Canadian Group of Painters exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto (works not known).

1937 - Is included in the Royal British Colonial Society of Artists, London, Artists of the British Empire Overseas Exhibition in London, England with Prairie #1 (#57) (date and medium not known).

- He also exhibits with the Canadian Group of Painters at the Art Gallery of Toronto (works not known).

1938 - FitzGerald travels to Toronto and Ottawa to hire a new assistant for the Winnipeg School of Art. In Toronto he stays with Bertram Brooker and meets with Arthur Lismer and A.Y. Jackson.

- In October, A.Y. Jackson stops in Winnipeg to see FitzGerald and show him sketches.

- Is included in A Century of Canadian Art at the Tate Gallery, London (works not known).

1939 - The Winnipeg School of Art moves to the Old Law Courts on Kennedy St. in downtown Winnipeg, adjacent to a jail. The cupola of the jail was visible from the room which FitzGerald used as his studio and is featured in some of his drawings and prints from this time.

- During the winter, Walter J. Phillips is invited by the Winnipeg School of Art to give a series of lectures on the appreciation of art.

- Exhibits with the Canadian Group of Painters at the New York World's Fair, May 1 - June 15, showing Jar (#18)

(medium and date not known). He also shows with the Canadian Group of Painters at the Art Gallery of Toronto (works not known).

- 1940 - FitzGerald's mother dies.
- Applies for a Guggenheim Fellowship but is unsuccessful.
- 1941 - Kingston Artists' Conference, from which the Federation of Canadian Artists is formed, is held. FitzGerald was not in attendance.
- Walter Phillips moves to Calgary.
- 1942 - FitzGerald and Arnold Brigden mount an exhibition of works by William Blake in Brigden's collection at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.
- FitzGerald and his wife spend the summer at Bowen Island near Vancouver, B.C. He meets Lawren Harris for the first time there (Harris had moved to Vancouver in 1940).
- 1943 - FitzGerald's father dies.
- Spends the summer again at Bowen Island, B.C.
- Has an exhibition of drawings done in B.C. at the Vancouver Art Gallery in February (works not known).
- 1944 - FitzGerald is ill over the winter and does not accomplish much painting.
- Spends the summer again at Bowen Island, B.C.
- Doc Snider's House is exhibited in the Canadian Art 1760-1943 exhibition at Yale University.
- Exhibits work in a show of Canadian painting organized by the National Gallery of Canada for the American Federation of Artists (works not known).
- 1945 - FitzGerald arranges for the Winnipeg Art Gallery to purchase Bertram Brooker's 1928 painting Sounds Assembling.

- Brooker visits FitzGerald in Winnipeg during the summer.
 - Lawren Harris writes an article on FitzGerald's work done in B.C. for Canadian Art (vol. III, no. 1, Nov. 1945, pp. 10-13).
 - Doc Snider's House is included in The Development of Painting in Canada 1665-1945 exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto.
- 1946
- Doc Snider's House is included in the Painting in Canada: A Selective Historical Survey exhibition in Albany, New York.
 - Also exhibits in a Group of Seven show in London, Ontario (works unknown).
- 1947
- In September FitzGerald begins a one-year leave of absence from the Winnipeg School of Art financed by Mr. W.H. McConnell of Montreal through Mr. and Mrs. G.V. Ferguson of Montreal. Mr. Ferguson had been editor of the Winnipeg Tribune and had moved to Montreal to work for the Montreal Star, with which McConnell was then associated as well.
 - Spends winter with his wife on Bowen Island, B.C.
 - Exhibits work in the Canadian Group of Painters exhibitions in Toronto and Montreal (works unknown).
- 1948
- FitzGerald extends his leave of absence for one more year and again winters in B.C., this year in West Vancouver.
- 1949
- FitzGerald officially retires and is replaced for one year by Joe Plaskett. The following year the Winnipeg School of Art is taken over by the University of Manitoba.
 - Is included in the Canadian Painting 1668-1948 exhibition in Richmond, Virginia and in Fifty Years of Painting in Canada at the Art Gallery of Toronto.
- 1950
- FitzGerald meets Winnipeg physician Edward J. ("Ted") Thomas when Thomas buys a work of FitzGerald's. They become friends and Thomas helps with his estate after FitzGerald dies.

- Spring: the Winnipeg flood. Thousands are forced to evacuate their homes in the worst flood in the city's history. FitzGerald, however, living on a high point in the area, suffers no damage (FitzGerald, Winnipeg, to H.O. McCurry, Ottawa, 10 June, 1950, National Gallery of Canada, FitzGerald correspondence files, 2.12 F).

- Doc Snider's House is included in an exhibition of Canadian painting arranged by the National Gallery of Canada in Washington, D.C.

- Exhibits two prints, Hedge (#325) and Three Garages (#326) in an Exhibition of Contemporary Canadian Arts, Art Gallery of Toronto, March and April.

1951 - FitzGerald travels with his wife to Mexico City to visit their son who is then living there. They travel down by bus, but having found the trip tiring, decide to fly home.

- Is included in the First Bienal do Sao Paulo, Brazil, has a one-artist exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and is included in a Western Artists show at the Dominion Gallery in Montreal.

1952 - Is awarded an L.L.D. from the University of Manitoba.

- Exhibits with the Canadian Group of Painters at the Art Gallery of Toronto (works not known).

1953 - Late July: FitzGerald flies to Toronto to judge the Canadian National Exhibition Art Show. Irene Heywood Hensworth joins him there. He also visits with Brooker and meets Frances Loring and Florence Wyle at their country place.

- Is included in the inaugural exhibition of the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario, in the National Gallery of Canada annual Canadian Painting exhibition and in the Winnipeg Art Gallery's Canadian Art from Private Collections show; exhibits Backyard in Snow, c. 1951 and Hyacinth in a Window, c. 1951 (media not known) in the Charles Band collection exhibition.

1954 - Exhibits three works: Doc Snider's House, Pritchard's Fence and Still Life in a Group of Seven exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery and is included in a Modern Art in Winnipeg Homes exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery (works not known).

- 1955 - Submits his 1955 oil painting Still Life with Hat to the Canadian Group of Painters show at the Art Gallery of Toronto, but it is rejected.
- March 21: Brooker dies.
- Exhibits his 1954 abstract Blue and Gold in the National Gallery of Canada First Biennial Exhibition and is included in the Winnipeg Art Gallery Winnipeg Show (works not known).
- 1956 - Exhibits work in the Winnipeg Art Gallery Summer Show (works not known).
- August 5: FitzGerald dies at home. Funeral held in Minneapolis with a Memorial service in Winnipeg. His ashes are spread over his grandmother's former farm at Snowflake.
- 1957 - FitzGerald Memorial Room opened at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.
- 1958 - FitzGerald Memorial Exhibition organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada tours Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Winnipeg.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

In footnotes, Illustration captions and the Selected Chronology, the following abbreviations have been used:

AGO, Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto)

ASL, Art Students League (New York)

FSC, FitzGerald Study Centre (University of Manitoba, Winnipeg)

NGC, National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa)

WAG, Winnipeg Art Gallery

WSA, Winnipeg School of Art