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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following  
committee of the Faculty of the **PEOPLE AND PATTERNS** School at the  
Woman's College of the University of North Carolina,  
Greensboro, North Carolina.

by

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(333)

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Oral Examination  
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## INTRODUCTION

In our society there is more talk of and less freedom. We live in a confining world of people and patterns. It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate the people from the patterns. People create patterns in their desire to conform or to be non-conformist. The law-abiding and the lawless create traceable forms.

Our world exists around birth, education (formal and informal), work and death. In these larger patterns exist numbers of smaller and more detailed patterns.

Birth serves a dual role as first it gives life and makes one capable of individual statements, but it also tears us from all security and leaves us naked in a world of clothed people.

Formal education of numbers of people, an enormous undertaking within itself, tries, in idea and ideal, to serve its needs by mass producing individuality. The informal education results in the mores, standards, the red and green lights, local customs and the everyday people and life patterns punishable by law.

Work consists of labor patterns as well as patterns of personal relationships.

Death is not always pictured by smooth, even patterns; often it becomes the art or handicraft of madness.

## PEOPLE AND PATTERNS

Without the unity of small patterns, there would be no large patterns. Perhaps the greatest unity of the patterns of people lies in the value of self. Earth revolves around the individual self. All one knows or understands is limited to the actual or imagined relationship to self. Love of self takes many forms. Even hate is a form of love, although it denotes disapproval. Self, being supreme, is given the coveted position whether it be typified by open and unashamed pride or total selflessness. It is the sometimes need of a pattern, not the always force of a pattern that makes a man a capable leader or a supreme follower, an organizer or a worker. To realize the value of self is to give importance to all other selves.

Beauty, for me, is not a proper thing nor is it sweet and soft. It is the instant of discovery and a moment of understanding. It is the brown face of the black-eyed woman which is really red and green. It is the feeling that sadness belongs not to death, but to me. Beauty is the absence of fear and the top root of the tallest tree. Beauty is body and not the face.

I live in a crowded world of people and patterns. I live in a world of blue flowered swaperies and a patterned couch. I live in a skin too small. I feel the tiny tight body of the ant. I know only the area I bite. I am patterned by people. I look in the face of reflection, and wonder why I am not free.

## PAINTINGS

It is difficult for me to talk about paintings — especially my own. If I have to tell you, I had really rather you not know. Yet in this world of people and patterns, the pattern is explanation. The public wants to be told, look around you, this is home. See, there, that nice black line is the train route to Hoboken. It is not easy to say that when you have never been to Hoboken — especially by train. Being honest is not the easiest thing to do, even with yourself. At best, my paintings are a gross exaggeration. My paintings are the searching for rather than the absolute beings of truth. They are like the butterfly momentarily caught by hands, then freed to search for life's one day.

Beauty, for me, is not a pretty thing nor is it sweet and soft. It is the instant of discovery and a moment of understanding. It is the brown face of the black-eyed Susan which is really red and green. It is the feeling that sadness belongs not to death, but to me. Beauty is the absence of fear and the tap root of the tallest tree. Beauty is body and not the face.

I live in a crowded world of people and patterns. I live in a world of blue flowered draperies and a patterned couch. I live in a skin too small. I feel the tiny tight body of the ant. I know only the area I bite. I am patterned by people. I look in the face of reflection, and wonder why I am not free.

Nude With Glass Flowers

Four tubes of oil paint, a large plastic container of glue on sale at Sears, the broken remains of a palette, a little cornmeal, and the dare to paint a nude, made my first painting with patterns. The absence of clothes was not the challenge, but to create a meaningful form. It went both fast and slow, for the growth of a painting is a place of no time. My light was the cover of darkness. For the first time, I could see and not translate; I could feel and not understand. The kitchen became a new space. I found an image of self.

The Woman With the Afghan

I was visiting a friend and she was lying down on a red couch with a red housecoat and I said to myself I see a painting. I had to say I can paint a body. I don't need to make a body with corn meal and glue. So I started painting this woman in the image of my sister. We used to have these hideous blue draperies and they were put up in the attic because it was a sin to waste them. I decided to use them in the painting. My sister's husband had a pillow on his couch that his cleaning woman liked to sleep on after drinking beer. The reason this pillow was so important was that when anyone else put his head on it, my brother-in-law would say, "My cleaning woman slept there." And the afghan was the one I never had, but belonged to my friend up the street and had been made by her grandmother. The couch in the painting



is over-bearing because the couch in our house is too large for the room. The couch had been bought for the playroom we never built. This, then, is a have-not painting. It now seems to me a humorous painting.

#### The Church Woman

This is the one painting which has ever been forced into a name or title. The woman in this painting was not intended to be but will always have to be the church woman because she was born as the church woman. When I began this painting, my excitement about it was interrupted because I had to go to school. When I came back, it was a struggle to go on with it. I would take the painting out and put it away, but this was the first real understanding that I had that I could work into a painting, as well as that I could rework the parts of a painting. The woman went through a number of dresses, if that is important. The background retained the same basic pattern with which I began, but the colors changed and I added the black and smaller patterns to the larger ones. Although the outline was unchanged, the attitude of the painting changed with the change of the colors and patterns. The woman wears four wigs, light yellow, black, red and again a light yellow or almost an orange. The glass in this painting is broken into smaller pieces than that in "The Nude with Glass Flowers" and also fills a larger area. This was a mere concentrated experiment with the effects of the transparent and reflecting quality of the glass. The paint on the glass is on the

underside and had been weathered for over a year. I experimented, too, with orange shellac on the canvas but I ended by covering it up. I had wanted a high gloss but it didn't produce the effect in the painting that I had wanted. So then I covered it with white paint, not to conceal totally, but just to pull the most out of the painting that I could. A curious thing about this is the fact that if I ever chose to rework an old painting, this would be it — not because I am dissatisfied with it but because it has allowed me so many liberties. It lends itself to any number of possibilities. It is like a good rubber band that stretches rather than breaks. The woman herself has a pure but full, unnamed, unfeatured face reflecting all the faces I have seen on Fourth Street. In this painting I am really painting people who are not strangers: I have seen them, but I have just never spoken to them. I speak for them because there is no real person in the mass. When one talks about mass movements, one is talking about an orderly group of individuals. It is for this reason that the background of the painting suggests the stained glass of cathedral windows. This is my plaque on the Sunday School door saying "In Memory of."

#### October Fields

This is a painting that for me never went wanting. This is the one I choose to live with. It satisfied my imagination to the point that I can walk in it. After I had it framed and looked at it with the raw frame, it hurt me because before this it had

no ending. Even a tobacco stick could limit this painting. With the use of gold on the frame to tone it down, the painting was once more without ending. I was saying fields with no fences in this picture and I built my own fence with the frame.

#### After Dark

This painting is a dream which I carried in my mind. I had the dream my last year in college. I had gone to bed early and although my roommate was still up, there was no comfort in telling the dream to her when I was wakened by it. I thought right then that if I could draw it that would free me from it. From all my years of drawing and painting I had no forms, no shapes to say it with. The dream became in a sense a reality and even after that I could not say it. Three or four years later, suddenly, I knew that I could paint it. Probably after I had forms and shapes to say it with, I wouldn't let myself say it. The painting is a study concerning the changes in the relationships in a family. The first pattern in the painting is in the grouping of the women and the absence of one person. The second pattern is burning oak leaves descending from my wild cherry tree. The person absent from the painting would or could not come to put out the fire. The third pattern is reminiscent of a family ritual, the cutting of a persimmon seed to see if it contained a spage or a fork which could tell us whether it was going to be a hard winter or how much sleigh riding we would have.

"I See"

This is the painting of a critic, a person who has been interested in my work. Once when we were talking, I said, "I see you!" and began immediately sketching the subject. But I did not use the drawings because I had seen the person so clearly in that instant that they were not necessary. The painting of the body and the head came very quickly. The contrast between a mature body and the young head was a symbolization of a person's experience and pure mind in combination. The detail of the patterns was tedious to do but necessary. The patterns suggest the movements of a symphony because the subject always relates painting to music. Though the form is without clothing I left her dressed because I gave her glasses. She is a person who sees me anyway. The ear rings also are her wearing apparel. She dresses continentally (European) but I always look first to see if she has her ear rings which are her hearing aids. She almost hears me, too.

#### Two Children

The top one is Ashley, my niece when she was three weeks old. She is surrounded first by her great aunt Margaret's comforter and she is asleep. The other patterns surrounding her are the first viewers saying "Let us see the new baby." She is in a fall-out shelter so that she will be twenty-two in 1984.

The bottom child is Davis, my nephew who says at three, "See how pretty." He's a peacock in a space ship and is surrounded, not by people, but by wheels.

According to the laws of design, the division of the canvas as if it were two paintings should not be pleasing. The purpose of the division is for the portrayal of the children's separate worlds which are of equal importance and can be heard together.

#### The Stick Horse

This started as a drawing of a family. It started to take on different qualities in that I considered doing the woman completely in patterns and the children completely without patterns. I modified this by making just facial patterns for the woman to say that the adult is marked -- the prejudice and the judgment come with age. I kept the baby unpatterned because babies in our society are never considered diseased and they know no social barriers or evil. The boy is already growing to the age where he is just beginning to remember seeing; he is beginning to be marked. The light area patterned behind his head is gentle because he is still secure and protected. The bold patterns suggest the strength of love and delight. The horse is my symbol of the realness and purity of a child's imagination because the boy uses the horse for a broom.

## CONCLUSION

My mind is a keeper of people. I covet the images of  
selves. My brush is the tracer of patterns. I live in the  
shadows of earth.

I wish for the absence of patterns. I search for doors  
that are sealed. I look to see earths and heavens. I want for  
time and space.