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The start-date of Canadian modernism has never been firmly established. Lora Senechal Carney, who knows a great deal about the history of modern painting in Canada, describes a historiographical construction that defies temporal fixity and national boundaries, while manifesting specific – dare one say? – Canadian incidents and traits. "There were many forms of modernism in Canada as elsewhere," she writes: "Each form tended to construct its own history; that is an aspect of its specificity."[1] These situated narratives are also, as readers of this issue will discover, starting-points for counter-narrative, historians coming out to meet both fact and legend with tough cross-examination and unsettling supplementary questions. The counter-narratives cast in this issue shed new light on the 1920s and 1930s – sometimes called the interwar period. They deal with painting, but also poetry and pageantry; they crack the lustre of foundational myths; they find seedpods of modernist thinking in unexpected places. In this issue, three distinguished historians of art and architecture – Marylin J. McKay, Douglas Ord, and Harold Kalman – lead us to reconsider some of the stories we tell about the origins of modernism in Canadian visual culture. They do so by digging deeply into the actualities of the moment, revealing episodes of individual and collective action that ask for recalibration in the collective imaginary. This is revolution from within.

Could this rethinking of Canadian modernism be conducted without reference to the Group of Seven? Marylin J. McKay's "The Group of Seven and Walt Whitman: Rejecting the Conventional Narrative" painstakingly dismantles one of the key correlations that has guided thinking about these painters of "the wilderness" – that between the chauvinistic spiritualism of American poet Walt Whitman and the artists' location of pride and purity on Canadian terrain just beyond "civilisation's" last stop. The pleasures of debunking can be shared through this article, replacing the old stories with a richer understanding of philosophical trends and their penetration of our artists' minds, practices, and sociability.

Some of the same elements bubble up in Douglas Ord's "Milne Duncan Jarvis: An Introduction," his title suggesting that three characters in Canadian culture who might be said to "need no introduction" in fact do – that we do not know David Milne, Douglas Duncan, and Alan Jarvis well enough. To make his introduction, Ord plunges two of his characters – Duncan and Jarvis – into the European pageants of violent destruction that were leading up to the Second World War, then suggests how these experiences might have formed the selves – the mentalities – that were visited on Milne's "inferior" works, those chosen for immolation when Duncan and Jarvis came to visit Milne at Six Mile Lake. The event itself has never been held a secret – on the contrary, it was boasted about as a decisive act of artistic judgment. It is a photograph that overturns Ord's understanding of that event, sending him on

La date de début du modernisme au Canada n'a jamais été solidement établie. Lora Senechal Carney, qui en sait beaucoup sur l'histoire de la peinture moderne au Canada, décrit une construction historiographique mettant en cause la fixité et les frontières nationales, tout en présentant – osons-nous le dire – des incidents et des traits spécifiquement canadiens. « Il y eut plusieurs formes de modernisme au Canada comme partout ailleurs, écrit-elle. Chaque forme a eu tendance à construire sa propre histoire ; c'est l'un des aspects de sa spécificité[1]. » Ces récits contextualisés sont également, comme le découvriront les personnes qui liront ce numéro, les points de départ de contre-récits, historienne et historiens se positionnant à la fois devant des faits et des légendes en procédant à de robustes contre-interrogatoires et en posant des questions déstabilisantes. Les contre-récits présentés dans le présent numéro jettent un nouvel éclairage sur les années 1920 et 1930, appelées parfois l'entre-deux-guerres. On y parle de peinture, mais aussi de poésie et de théâtre de guerre ; on décape le vernis de mythes fondateurs ; on découvre les semences de la pensée moderniste dans des sols inattendus. Dans ce numéro, trois spécialistes de l'histoire de l'art et de l'architecture, soit Marylin J. McKay, Douglas Ord et Harold Kalman, nous incitent à revoir certains des récits racontés sur les origines du modernisme dans la culture visuelle canadienne. Ils y arrivent en puisant profondément dans les actualités d'alors, en dévoilant des épisodes d'actions individuelles et collectives qui demandent à être réévalués dans l'imaginaire collectif. C'est une révolution menée de l'intérieur.

Est-il pensable que cette réévaluation du modernisme canadien se fasse sans un retour sur le Groupe des Sept ? Dans « The Group of Seven and Walt Whitman: Rejecting the Conventional Narrative » [Le Groupe des sept et Walt Whitman : le rejet du récit conventionnel], Marylin J. McKay défait méticuleusement l'une des corrélations clés ayant guidé la réflexion à propos de ces peintres de la « nature sauvage » – celle entre le spiritualisme chauvin du poète américain Walt Whitman et le site de fierté et de pureté des artistes en sol canadien, tout juste au-delà du dernier rempart de la « civilisation ». Les plaisirs du déboulonnage peuvent être partagés dans cet article, où les récits anciens sont remplacés par une compréhension plus riche de certains courants philosophiques et leur infiltration des esprits, des pratiques et de la sociabilité des artistes.

Certains de ces éléments apparaissent dans l'article de Douglas Ord dont le titre « Milne Duncan Jarvis: An Introduction » [À propos de Milne, Duncan et Jarvis] suggère que trois figures de la culture canadienne qui ne devraient pas avoir besoin de présentation sont en fait méconnues : on en sait trop peu sur David Milne, Douglas Duncan et Alan Jarvis. En guise de présentation, Ord projette deux de ses personnages, soit Duncan et Jarvis, dans les théâtres européens de destruction violente ayant mené à la Seconde Guerre mondiale, puis il suggère de quelle manière ces expériences ont pu former les moi – les

an investigation of the personal entanglements and motive forces that could have instilled such astonishing confidence in what they were doing, relegating painting after painting to the "funeral pyre."

Harold Kalman's "Two Clients, Their Architect, and the Birth of Canadian Modernism" likewise deals with Canadian cultural actors of the period, developing the characters of "strong-willed clients" who were inspired, or sufficiently restless, to seek new models for their building needs: Charlotte Erichsen-Brown of Toronto and Stanley McLean of Edmonton. A private home in the Toronto suburb of North York and a slaughterhouse in northeast Edmonton, both built in 1936, have more than completion dates in common: they share the commissioning of architect Eric Ross Arthur as a means to modernism. Kalman provides cultural biographies for Arthur's visionary clients, both adepts of the International Style, who can now be understood as partners in creative collaborations that laid the groundwork for Canadian modernist architecture. Kalman's research is even more important given that neither building still stands.

A review by Jessica Veever of a 2018 monograph, simply titled *Molinari*, completes this issue. Edited by Gilles Daigneault and Margarida Mafra for the Guido Molinari Foundation, and with essays by Bernard Teyssèdre, François-Marc Gagnon, Roald Nasgaard, and Marc Séguin, the volume comes to praise the Montreal painter, theorist, and teacher Guido Molinari. Veever has no quarrel with this judgement, her review nevertheless posing questions about Molinari's place in current thinking about space and active perception – whether these ideas are still relevant. Her own engagement is evidence that they are.

Relations tie this mixed issue together: stories about common enterprise, its positive and negative manifestations, as they can now be told.

NOTE

1 Lora Senechal Carney, *Canadian Painters in a Modern World, 1925–1955: Writings and Reconsiderations* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), xxviii.

mentalités – qui furent évoqués dans les œuvres « inférieures » de Milne, celles choisies pour l'immolation quand Duncan et Jarvis sont venus lui rendre visite à Six Mile Lake. L'événement en soi n'a jamais été un secret ; au contraire, on a dit fièrement qu'il s'agissait d'un acte de jugement artistique. C'est une photographie qui a renversé la compréhension qu'avait Ord de cet événement, le propulsant dans une enquête des enchevêtrements et des forces motrices qui ont pu insuffler une confiance déroutante dans ce qu'ils étaient en train de faire, condamnant tableau après tableau au « bûcher funéraire ».

Dans son article « Two Clients, Their Architect, and the Birth of Canadian Modernism » [Deux clients, leur architecte et la naissance du modernisme canadien], Harold Kalman aborde à son tour les acteurs culturels canadien de la période, élaborant sur cette « clientèle résolue » qui désirait trouver de nouveaux modèles, ou était suffisamment téméraires pour les chercher, afin de répondre à ses besoins en matière de construction : Charlotte Erichsen-Brown de Toronto et Stanley McLean d'Edmonton. Une résidence privée dans la banlieue torontoise de North York et un abattoir dans le nord-est d'Edmonton, tous deux construits en 1936, ont davantage en commun qu'une date d'achèvement : les deux projets ont fait appel à l'architecte Eric Ross Arthur pour rejoindre le modernisme. Kalman propose des biographies culturelles des clients visionnaires d'Arthur, l'une comme l'autre adeptes du style international, qu'on peut aujourd'hui considérer comme des partenaires dans des collaborations créatives qui, elles, ont ouvert la voie à l'architecture moderniste au Canada. La recherche de Kalman est d'autant plus importante que ni l'un ni l'autre des deux édifices n'ont subsisté.

Le compte rendu de Jessica Veever sur une monographie parue en 2018, intitulée simplement *Molinari*, boucle ce numéro. Publié sous la direction de Gilles Daigneault et de Margarida Mafra pour la Fondation Guido Molinari, et réunissant des essais de Bernard Teyssèdre, François-Marc Gagnon, Roald Nasgaard et Marc Séguin, l'ouvrage rend hommage à Guido Molinari, peintre, théoricien et professeur montréalais. Si Veever n'a rien à redire de son jugement, elle pose néanmoins des questions sur la place de Molinari dans la réflexion actuelle sur l'espace et la perception active, à savoir si ses idées sont toujours pertinentes. Son propre engagement prouve qu'elles le sont encore.

Ce numéro varié s'articule autour de la notion de relation : il propose des récits sur l'entreprise commune, ses manifestations positives et négatives, et sur la manière dont on peut maintenant les raconter.

NOTE

1 Lora Senechal Carney, *Canadian Painters in a Modern World, 1925-1955: Writings and Reconsiderations*, Montréal et Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017, p. xxviii. [Notre traduction.]

ARTICLE

The Group of Seven and Walt Whitman: Rejecting the Conventional Narrative

MARYLIN J. MCKAY

Whitman "wrote scarcely a poem that would apply to Canada."
—Lionel Stevenson, 1925

Introduction

English Canadian art historians have long posited a strong connection between the poetry of Walt Whitman (1819–1892), first published as *Leaves of Grass* in 1855, and the landscape art of seven Toronto-based artists who worked together in a loose association from ca. 1912 and in a more formal one as the Group of Seven from 1920 to 1931: Franklin Carmichael (1890–1945), Lawren S. Harris (1885–1970), A.Y. Jackson (1882–1974), Franz Johnston (1888–1949), Arthur Lismer (1885–1969), J.E.H. MacDonald (1873–1932), and Frederick Varley (1881–1969).[1] According to this conventional narrative, members of the Group of Seven were gripped by contemporary Western culture's strong belief in the importance of nationalistic sentiment. If a nation were to succeed economically and in every other way, its citizens had to take pride in it. Recognizing the unique features of one's nation would help to instill such feelings. Members of the Group of Seven responded to this call by urging Canadians to appreciate the distinctive nature of Canada's northern regions. Not only were these regions vast, bold and beautiful, but they also contained wealth in the form of untapped natural resources. To bring the north to the attention of Canadians, members of the Group of Seven temporarily left the comfort of their urban lives for the north's rougher terrain, which they painted in expressive, modernist colours and styles.[2] They also represented the north as pristine and unpopulated and so justified calling it "wilderness."3 Group members then happily contrasted their work with earlier representations of the Canadian wilderness which they described derogatorily as "European." At the same time, working within the parameters of the last phase of Romanticism, Group members saw artists, including themselves, as mystics who could detect the presence of the divine in the material world on behalf of their audiences. This presence, the Group of Seven believed, manifested itself most clearly in wilderness landscapes because this type of

terrain looked just as it had when God first made it. The Group of Seven did then devote themselves to representing the divine in the wilderness for the benefit of their nation.[4]

In addition, as this narrative explains, members of the Group of Seven found parallels to their way of thinking in the work of Walt Whitman. The American poet had similarly proclaimed that North American culture was superior to the worn-out culture of Europe and so rejected the traditional rhyme and metre of European poetry in favour of expressive, modernist, free verse. As a poet whose work also belonged to the Romantic Movement, Whitman declared – much as Group of Seven members did – that poets, including himself, could recognize the divine within the material world and reveal it for their audiences. Thus, he was a mystic too. Moreover, Whitman led a life as "one of the roughs," as he famously put it, and so appreciated the wilderness as the Group of Seven did. Consequently, members of the Group of Seven regularly acknowledged the debt their wilderness landscapes owed to Whitman and were part of the Whitman Club of Bon Echo which was formed in 1916 by ardent Toronto Whitmanite Flora Denison (1867–1921) and held meetings in her rustic lodge in the wilderness northeast of Toronto. As Michèle Lacombe has said, Denison and Whitman were involved in a cult of wilderness.[5]

Other information now brings this entrenched segment of Canadian art history into question. There is no evidence that any member of the Group of Seven went to Bon Echo when the Denison's Whitman Club was active there, while three of the members never went at all. Nor did any Group member join Denison's Walt Whitman Fellowship of Toronto, also formed in 1916.[6] Only one member of the Group of Seven, J.E.H. MacDonald, discussed Whitman at length, at least in any public format. Even then, MacDonald appears to have done this only once. Most importantly, no Group member ever claimed that Whitman saw wilderness terrain as the best site in which to seek out the presence of the divine. Nor could any Group member have made this assertion since, even if they had read only a small amount of Whitman's poetry, they would have understood that he believed the divine had to be sought in human beings. Logically, then, as Whitman insisted, the search had to be carried out in places where people congregated, that is, in urban and pastoral sites, not in the wilderness. As Whitman scholars have regularly stated, he was the first poet to extol the city. In this light, Canadian art historians' representation of Whitman as a driving force for the Group of Seven weakens and asks to be reconsidered.

I begin this process by looking at the art historical texts that have created this correlation. I then demonstrate the limited nature of the Group of Seven's interest in Whitman. I follow with details of Whitman's plan for

bringing about an ideal society through a search for the divine in human beings within urban and pastoral sites so that Whitman's thinking represents a sharp contrast to that of the Group of Seven. I then speculate that members of the Group of Seven may have avoided the Whitman Club of Bon Echo not only because they knew the American poet was not interested in the wilderness but also because they viewed the Club's adulation of Whitman as inappropriately radical. I conclude by arguing that the conventional narrative was set in motion in the 1920s by enthusiastic Canadian nationalists who wanted to enhance the Group of Seven's profile by attaching it to an internationally renowned cultural figure. They chose Whitman not only because they greatly admired his work, but also, to be fair, because there were some similarities between his thinking and that of the Group of Seven. Still, in their eagerness they took liberties by linking Whitman to wilderness terrain in a manner that neither his poetry nor his prose supports. Without questioning this early link, later historians repeated it.

The Group of Seven and Walt Whitman: The Conventional Narrative

In 1926, Fred Housser published *A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the Group of Seven*.[7] In this first major study of the Group, Housser zealously linked the Canadian artists and the wilderness to two lines from two of Whitman's poems. First, Housser said that "I stand in my own place with my own day here," from "Starting from Paumanok," expressed Whitman's belief in America's superiority to Europe.[8] Members of the Group of Seven were doing the same for Canada, Housser argued: "For Canada to have a true racial expression of herself through art, a complete break with European tradition was necessary . . . We needed men who at heart would concur with Whitman." Housser then stated that Whitman's claim in "Salut au Monde!" to have looked at the "shaded part on one side . . . and . . . the sunlit part on the other side" meant that Whitman was a mystic who could see beyond the material world into the spiritual.[9] In Housser's view, Lawren Harris was doing exactly the same as he observed the wilderness. By implication, Whitman was looking at wilderness too.

In 1930, Toronto playwright Herman Voaden (1903–1991) illustrated his *Six Canadian Plays* of 1930 with wilderness landscapes by Group of Seven members and other contemporary Toronto artists. He dedicated this volume to "this land our painters turned to twenty years ago" when they made "Walt Whitman's discovery" and "were drawn out in a new expression." In Voaden's view, "the prophetic testimony of Walt Whitman . . . has been the most definite inspiration of Canadianism up to this time. He breathes the confidence of a new land." Members of the Group of Seven were "making

the journey that Whitman made, discovering the essential unity of East and West, thrilling to the opulence of the country, its immensity, its sweeping variety of natural forms." Moreover, it was wilderness rather than pastoral land that was key in this equation. As Voaden said, "We are realizing that the farming sections . . . the pastoral lands . . . in reality form only a small part of our total area and potential wealth; that in the great stretches of prairie, in the wilderness . . . in the mountains and the barren lands of the North, lie the real extent and large wealth of Canada."[10] In 1932, in keeping with Housser's and Voaden's thinking, Toronto artist and historian Albert H. Robinson (1881–1956) said that J.E.H. MacDonald expressed a "love" of Whitman" and "lyric verse."[11]

Discussions of connections between Whitman and the Group of Seven then abated. Four decades later they returned replete with Housser's and Voaden's enthusiasm. In 1970 Peter Mellen said that Group members read Whitman because he "confirmed their idea that the northern landscape mirrored the national character." Mellen also placed four lines about "merging" with "unbounded space" from Whitman's "A Song of Joys" beside a reproduction of J.E.H. MacDonald's wilderness painting, *Solemn Land* of 1921 (National Gallery of Canada).[12] In 1992 Ann Davis stated that the influence of Whitman on Harris and MacDonald was "considerable." MacDonald wrote "extensively" about Whitman while Group members "found Whitman's literary expression . . . congenial, for it combined a raw, pioneering technique, similar to [their own]."[13] In 1995 Charles Hill claimed that many studies had "traced the sources of [the Group of Seven's] ideas to the writings of . . . Walt Whitman."[14] In 1998 Robert Stacey and Stanley McMullin argued that Arthur Lismer was "a lover of Whitman's poetry."[15] In 2011 Ross King wrote of a "passion" that Harris, Lismer, and MacDonald had "for the American poet."[16] In 2017 Roald Nasgaard said that the Group of Seven "venerated" Whitman.[17] However, the statements members of the Group of Seven made about Whitman do not support these assertions, as I will now demonstrate.

The Group of Seven and Walt Whitman: Selective Interest

Franklin Carmichael seems to have had nothing to say about Whitman, at least not publicly, while his library, in the formation in which it was left to the Library of the National Gallery, does not include any copies of Whitman's texts. It is also difficult to connect A.Y. Jackson's wilderness landscapes to Whitman. In 1912, when Jackson first saw Georgian Bay, he said that "*Le Bon Dieu*" had made "this land . . . on a holiday, out of sheer joy.[18] Thus Jackson expressed a belief in the spiritual within the material world and located the spiritual in the wilderness. Still, Jackson rarely made

this type of comment and never in relation to Whitman, at least not in any publication. In 1948, in an introduction to an exhibition catalogue of Lawren Harris's work, Jackson stated that during a painting trip to Algoma (in 1919 or 1920) he and other Group members discussed various artists, writers, and philosophers. One of them was Whitman, but Jackson did not say that he himself was interested in Whitman or explain why other Group members were. In 1958, when Jackson published his biography and spoke again of these Algoma discussions, he omitted Whitman altogether.[19] Perhaps he did so because, as Lismer said, Jackson had no patience with "humbug or superficial mysticism."[20] Nor did Frederick Varley link his wilderness landscapes to Whitman, even though, like Whitman, Varley expressed strong interest in the presence of the spiritual in the material world.[21] In fact, Varley did not mention Whitman at all, at least not in any public format.

Lismer too said very little about Whitman. In his 1955 biography of Lismer, John MacLeish said that Lismer had read Whitman before immigrating to Canada in 1911.[22] MacLeish also pointed out that in 1921 Lismer had hired J.E.H. MacDonald "to teach lettering . . . to quote Whitman and the Bible, and Eastern Philosophy, and paint round his studio the five colours of the world" at the Ontario College of Art.[23] This statement tells us nothing about any particular interest Lismer might have had in Whitman. It also sounds flippant. In 1926, Lismer wrote "Canadian Art" for *The Canadian Theosophist.*[24] Theosophists' main goal, at least at this time, was to create an ideal world. To do so, the material and spiritual realms had to become one as they supposedly had been long ago. Success depended on the creation of universal brotherhood, the study of ancient Asian religions, and the understanding of the hidden mysteries of nature and the spiritual powers latent in human beings. Whitman's objectives seemed to Theosophists to be much like their own as he was working to create a utopia, recognized the spiritual in the material, and took an interest in ancient Asian religions. Consequently, Theosophists identified Whitman as a mentor as soon as Theosophy was officially organized in 1875.[25] Given Lismer's belief in the abilities of artists to see the spiritual in nature, an audience of Theosophists, and art as his topic, he might well have referred to Whitman in this 1926 article, especially if, as Canadian art historians would have it, he "revered" Whitman. But he did not. Whitman is also noticeably absent in Lismer's "Art Appreciation" which he wrote for the *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, 1929.* Here he again asserted the role of the artist as a mystical one: "The artist's business is to . . . widen the horizons of our unexpressed thoughts and hope . . . to push aside veils from our unseeing eyes." Still, Lismer did not mention Whitman.[26] In her 2002 biography of Lismer, Angela Nairne Grigor quoted the text of a radio talk that Lismer gave in 1950 for the CBC. In it he simply said, "There was . . . a lot of

Whitman in [the Group of Seven's] discussions."[27] Certainly he did not make specific connections between Whitman and wilderness landscape.

Lawren Harris read some of Whitman's poetry at an early point in his career but what he thought of Whitman at this time is not known.[28] Around 1919 Harris became a Theosophist and so, if he had not already concluded that Whitman was a mystic, he would have adopted Theosophy's point of view in this regard. As a self-identified mystic, Harris would then have felt particularly connected to Whitman; however, there is no sense in Harris's few brief references to Whitman that he regarded him as a particularly important figure. In a letter of 1919 to J.E.H. MacDonald, Harris spoke of Whitman as just one of many writers who were interested in mysticism. Whitman was simply one of "a whole flock of old Eastern Johnnies."[29] In 1924, Harris reviewed a new edition of *Cosmic Consciousness,* first published in 1901 by Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke (1837–1902). Bucke was a London, Ontario, psychiatrist who had been a close friend of, and medical advisor to, Whitman.[30] He was also Whitman's biographer.[31] *Cosmic Consciousness* is devoted to a study of the mystical abilities of great thinkers. After considering many of the most famous ones such as Buddha and Jesus Christ, Bucke concluded that Whitman's mystical abilities far exceeded anyone else's. Harris called Bucke's book "the greatest book by a Canadian." Yet he spoke only once of Whitman in this review, simply stating that Whitman and Bucke were both "fine soul[s]."[32] In 1926, Harris published his "Revelation of Art in Canada" in *The Canadian Theosophist.* In keeping with Theosophy's belief that the breakdown of the barrier between the material and spiritual worlds would take place first in North America, he made his famous statement about the future role of Canada's wilderness: "From the north will come a spiritual flow that will ever shed clarity into the growing race of America, and we Canadians being closest to this source seem destined to produce an art somewhat different from our Southern fellows – an art more spacious of a greater living quiet, perhaps of a more certain conviction of eternal values."[33] Harris did not mention Whitman in this article even though he logically might have if he did in fact connect Whitman to a presence of the divine in wilderness terrain. When Harris repeated parts of this article for the *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, 1929,* he did include Whitman, but only briefly when he claimed that Theosophy's new spiritual race currently forming in North America would provide a new direction as "Whitman knew."[34] It would seem, then, that while Harris regarded himself and Whitman as mystics who were capable of discerning the spiritual in the material, he did not attempt to connect Whitman and wilderness, presumably, I would argue, because he understood it would be unreasonable to do so, that Whitman searched for the divine only in human beings.

Franz Johnston and J.E.H. MacDonald are the only two members of the Group of Seven who can be connected to particular lines from Whitman's poetry. According to Johnston's biographer, Roger Burford Mason, Johnston always thought of his wilderness landscapes in relation to two lines from Whitman's poem "Song of Myself": "Urge and urge and urge, / Always the procreant life of the world."[35] In isolation these lines may easily be taken as a reference to an immanent spiritual force that created the world and continues to do so. As such they work well as support for a landscape artist like Johnston who aimed to represent the presence of the divine in the wilderness. However, by using these lines in isolation, Johnston avoided the focus of "Song of Myself." This poem is not concerned with wilderness at all or with the presence of the divine in nature. Rather, it is devoted to Whitman's search for the divine in human beings. The "urge of the world" which Whitman experienced is, in fact, one that implores him to see everyone as a comrade. Since this theme dominates Whitman's thinking in relation to the divine, it is not surprising that Johnston did not express further interest in Whitman. He simply selected the two lines and then left Whitman alone.

J.E.H. MacDonald gave a lecture on Whitman in 1926. According to his notes, MacDonald appreciated the American poet as a mystic but not as one who sought the divine in the wilderness. Referring to Whitman's *Specimen Days* (prose), MacDonald said it was "a book that any landscape painter might well carry with him as . . . an inspiration . . . a true handbook for the Spirit of Art." Whitman was "air and sunlight . . . a liberator of the soul." Otherwise, MacDonald noted aspects of Whitman's thinking that were different from his own. MacDonald recognized that, while Whitman was nationalistic, his universalism eclipsed his nationalism: he was for MacDonald "outside of politics . . . he was the poetic leader of all who have and would develop a faith in the central goodness of the world & who believe in the destiny and power of mankind to explore that goodness." MacDonald recognized that Whitman intended his poetry to bring about an ideal world through a search for the divine in human beings and that his search had to take place in urban and pastoral sites, not in the wilderness. Indeed, MacDonald noted the joy that Whitman took in the city: the poet was "in love with the passing of spectacle, the streaming river, the car window landscape, Broadway, the migration of birds, the past Expositions, a Presidential Party, army marches." Therefore, from MacDonald's point of view, *Leaves of Grass* should be regarded as "a League of Nations, a World's Fair, a hobo-camp, or a jamboree of rowdy happy hooligans," with Whitman "lead[ing] the world in a naked Doukhabor [sic] parade back to Adam and Eve." Ultimately, as MacDonald recorded in his notes, "So we climb, my guide & I, & then the city calls and we discard the mountains."[36] Given their limited use of Whitman, it is reasonable

to think that other members of the Group of Seven shared MacDonald's understanding of Whitman's program. A more detailed discussion of this program supports this assumption.

Whitman's Wilderness: A Poor Cousin to the Urban and the Pastoral

As the eminent Whitman scholar Ed Folsom has asserted, "Democracy is the organizing concept that unites Whitman's poetics, politics and metaphysics."[37] As Whitman came to write *Leaves of Grass,* he concluded that there were no perfect democracies in the world. It would, however, be relatively easy to develop one in the United States of America since it was a new country unfettered by traditional European ways of thinking. Poets had to take the lead in this struggle. Then, all social ills would be resolved by "a native expression of spirit . . . of original authors and poets."[38] Literature "would become the only general means of morally influencing the world."[39] As the first of these poets, he would become the leader of a new religion which would bring about this desired state. As a "divine literatus," the poet would replace the priest; *Leaves of Grass* would be the new Bible.[40] According to *this* Bible, God had given every human being a spark of the divine, and so had "place[d] all human beings on a common level." To bring about an ideal world, everyone had to acknowledge the divine in everyone else.[41] As they did, everyone would become "comrades." Eventually, universal "comradeship" would develop and act as the basis of a perfect democracy. No laws would be needed. As Whitman put it, a time would come "when there will be seen, running like a half-hid warp through all the myriad audible and visible worldly interests of America, threads of . . . friendship, fond and loving, pure and sweet, strong and life-long, carried to degrees hitherto unknown – not only giving tone to individual character . . . but having the deepest relation to politics."[42] For Whitman, "Intense and loving comradeship, the personal and passionate attachment of man to man . . . seems to promise, when thoroughly cultivated and recognized in manners and literature, the most substantial hope and safety of the future of these States."[43] Once America's democracy had reached a state of perfection, it would act as a model for other countries.

Whitman drew these ideas largely from writings that belonged to or may be associated with the Romantic Movement. He was particularly interested in the writings of the Idealist German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831), the English social critic Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), and the American Transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862).[44] Whitman's reading of Hegel along with Emerson's and Thoreau's understanding of Hegelian philosophy helped Whitman to conclude that everyone was endowed with a spiritual component

or conscience that was part of a universal soul or divine element. Each individual, Whitman believed, was responsible for developing this innate divinity so that they came to recognize justice, beauty, and morality; behaved in an ethical manner; and acted as a model for those whose consciences had not yet matured.[45] Whitman's reading of Carlyle, strengthened by Emerson's and Thoreau's views on him, led Whitman to give intellectuals and artists important roles in his essentially political project. Emerson and Thoreau also added to the nationalistic component of Whitman's thinking. Both were eager to see what they regarded as the United States's millennial promise take place within a strong democracy.[46] Both aimed to produce a new national literature that would guide Americans toward this state. According to Emerson, "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds . . . A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which inspires all men."[47] "Build therefore your own world," Emerson said.[48] Whitman planned to do just that.

Nevertheless, in one crucial way Whitman distinguished his methods from Emerson's and Thoreau's and so from the Group of Seven's. The Transcendentalists believed the divine had a particular strong and detectable presence in the natural world. Emerson said that "Nature is the symbol of spirit" and so it is "[i]n the woods we return to reason and faith."[49] For Thoreau cities, towns, and villages were to be shunned as much as possible. After visiting New York, Thoreau wrote, "Who can see these cities and say that there is any life in them. I walked through New York yesterday – and met no real and living person . . . The pigs in the street are the most respectable part of the population."[50] Whitman rejected this aspect of Transcendentalism as he sought the divine in human beings and so in urban and pastoral settings. According to Whitman, "It is not consistent with the reality of the soul to admit that there is anything in the universe more divine than men and women."[51] As J.M. Tyree summarized Whitman's position in regard to Transcendentalism, he "departed . . . decisively . . . from the standard American opposition of 'Nature versus civilization.'"[52] Furthermore, as Roger Asselineau has explained, "The greatest originality of *Leaves of Grass* and Whitman's most important departure from Transcendentalism was the place he gave to the body."[53]

Many scholars have noted that Whitman repeatedly enthused about urban sites in his poetry and prose, describing them as joyously alive with noises, colours, odours, energy, and activity. As Whitman explained, *Leaves of Grass* "arose out of my life in Brooklyn and New York from 1838 to 1853, absorbing a million people for fifteen years, with an intimacy, an eagerness, an abandon, probably never equalled."[54] He also aggressively declared, "New York loves crowds – and so do I. I can no more get along without houses,

civilization, aggregations of humanity, meetings, hotels, theatres, than I can get along without food."[55] Whitman does of course express delight in non-urban environments but, in keeping with his belief in inhabited sites as the best sources of the divine, his favourite non-urban site was farmland, not wilderness. He often describes the delights of both the urban and the pastoral in a single poem. For example, the first half of "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun," is devoted to farmland as Whitman asks for "aside from the noise of the world, a rural domestic life," which will offer "juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard . . . a field where the unmow'd grass grows . . . the trellis'd grape . . . fresh corn and wheat . . . [and] . . . serene-moving animals teaching content." For Whitman, as he clarifies in other texts, the pastoral restores the city dweller's health. It is "an invisible physician" and "a silent delicious medicine." It is a landscape in which he walks naked (through the farm's woodlot) giving his body a "sun-bath" and his feet a "mud-bath," and pulling on tree branches to strengthen his arms. Without clothes, he experiences nature with his "whole corporeal body" not just his eyes.[56] However, in the second half of "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun," the delights of an urban site (in this case, New York) appear even greater than the pastoral and so he shouts, "Keep your splendid silent sun" as well as the woods, the quiet places, and the fields of clover, corn, and buckwheat. Instead, "Give me faces and streets . . . interminable eyes . . . comrades . . . the streets of Manhattan . . . Broadway with soldiers marching . . . the life of the theatre, bar-room, huge hotel . . . People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions, pageants."[57] Whitman made the same claim throughout his writing. For example, in *Democratic Vistas*,

> Always and more and more, as I cross the East and North rivers [of New York] . . . or pass an hour in Wall street, or the gold exchange, I realize . . . that not Nature alone is great in her fields of freedom and the open air, in her storms, the shows of night and day, the mountains, forests, seas – but in the artificial, the work of man too is equally great – in this profusion of teeming humanity – in these ingenuities, streets, goods, houses, ships – these hurrying, feverish, electric crowds of men.[58]

Clearly the wilderness could not offer Whitman a "teeming humanity." In fact, the disappearance of the wilderness was key to his program of comradeship. As he said, "It may be argued that our republic is . . . enacting today the grandest arts, poems . . . by beating up the wilderness into fertile farms . . . railroads, ships [and] machinery."[59] In keeping with this thought, he also said that he held "the typography of a country . . . to one final test –

the capability of producing . . . and maintaining a fine crop of children, a magnificent race of men and women."[60] Wilderness could not pass this test. Not surprisingly then, Whitman travelled only once into terrain that he described as wilderness. In 1879 he visited the Rocky Mountains, which he thought had a "savage beauty." Yet he immediately mitigated "the savage" by describing the mountains as "titanic necklaces" and comparing them to the figural work of the Swedish neoclassical sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen and the ancient Greek temples of Phidias. Moreover, Whitman's strongest memory of this trip is the speed of the train as it rushed along toward the mountains "passing the homes of men, the farms, barns, cattle – the silent village," while he decided that the pastoral land of Missouri – not the wilderness – was "America's characteristic landscape." [61] Even if members of the Group of Seven had read only a small portion of Whitman's poetry and prose, they would necessarily have understood this stance and realized that it did not match their own, even though they may have appreciated Whitman's general belief in the presence of the divine in the material world.[62] Consequently, they did not take Whitman on as an important mentor. Members of the Group of Seven may well have declined the opportunity to join Flora Denison's Whitman Club of Bon Echo for this reason too.[63] However, they may also have found that the way in which she and her Bon Echo guests made use of Whitman was unacceptably radical.

The Group of Seven: A Noticeable Absence at Bon Echo

In 1910 Flora Denison and her husband, Howard Denison (1858–1941), purchased several thousand acres of forested land around Lake Bon Echo, approximately 280 kilometres northeast of Toronto. While often described as wilderness by Denison herself and by historians who have written about Denison in connection with this property, Bon Echo was, in fact, part of Ontario's "summer cottage movement" that began in the late nineteenth century and offered temporary respite from the negative features of urban life. The site included a rustic hotel that had been functioning for years as a commercial venue before the Denisons acquired it. Moreover, logging companies had been at work in the region for many decades while Indigenous populations had occupied the region for thousands of years. Denison grew up 100 kilometres south in the towns of Belleville and Picton and taught school for several years 100 kilometres to the north in French Settlement. She and her husband purchased Bon Echo primarily as a family holiday home. At the same time, they rented parts of the hotel to tourists. In 1914 Denison separated from her husband but continued to run Bon Echo as a hotel. Two years later she established her Whitman Club and quickly became the most prominent Canadian Whitmanite.

There is no doubt that Denison enjoyed Bon Echo's outdoor features as she and her guests canoed on the lake and picked berries to make pies. She also often said that Whitman would have appreciated the peace and tranquility of Bon Echo's setting. No doubt he would have. Nevertheless, Denison regularly enthused about the city and saw the country or wilderness as a place for a temporary break, just as Whitman did. Indeed, she never allowed Bon Echo to become too rustic. While she provided her guests with activities suited to the locale, she offered piano music, dancing, tennis, and meals served on white tablecloths in addition. To get to Bon Echo, Denison and her guests took the train as far as the town of Kaladar, 30 kilometres south of Bon Echo. Guests then travelled the rest of the way in a horse-drawn wagon, but Denison did this leg of the trip in her Cadillac. Most importantly, Denison used the Whitman Club of Bon Echo to offer lectures and seminars that focused on how to bring about a better world through the application of Whitman's program of comradeship. Club members believed that various types of social and political reform activism provided the best means of accomplishing this goal. As such they were part of an enormous number of activists throughout the English-speaking world who, from the time *Leaves of Grass* was first published in 1855, interpreted Whitman's program of comradeship as support for their own causes which included socialism, communism, anarchy, human rights, labour unions, universal brotherhood, vegetarianism, women's suffrage, gentler forms of child-rearing, and the rejection of the hierarchical and patriarchal features of Christianity. Whitman, on the other hand, said he did not believe that social and political activism would help to bring about the perfect democracy. Indeed, he called "modern radicalism" a "foetid gas-bag."[64] Comradeship, he insisted, was the only answer. Whitmanites simply ignored this protest.

At the same time, many reform activists, including Denison and her Whitman Club members, were modern Spiritualists, that is, they held or attended seances that made use of crystal balls and Ouija boards to communicate with the dead. In the process, the deceased would use the wisdom they had acquired in the afterlife to assist reform work. Furthermore, Modern Spiritualists looked to Whitman as a guide because he said he could recognize the spiritual in the material. He was a mystic, then, much like themselves. Whitman insisted that he was not a mystic, at least not in a larger sense in which he could communicate with a spiritual world, but modern Spiritualists overlooked this claim too.[65] Decades before Denison founded her Whitman Club of Bon Echo, many Americans who were both reform activists and modern Spiritualists met in the summer in non-urban sites to work on the development of a perfect world. Denison modelled Bon Echo after them.[66] As Lacombe has put it, Whitman's "appeal" for Denison "was in a unitary worldview and path to perfectibility."[67] John Campbell concurs,

stating that Denison "was particularly taken with the democratic ideals of . . . Whitman."[68] Since members of the Group of Seven were not involved in social and political activism, at least not through any formal organizations, nor in modern Spiritualism, Denison's Whitman Club of Bon Echo would not have appealed to them.

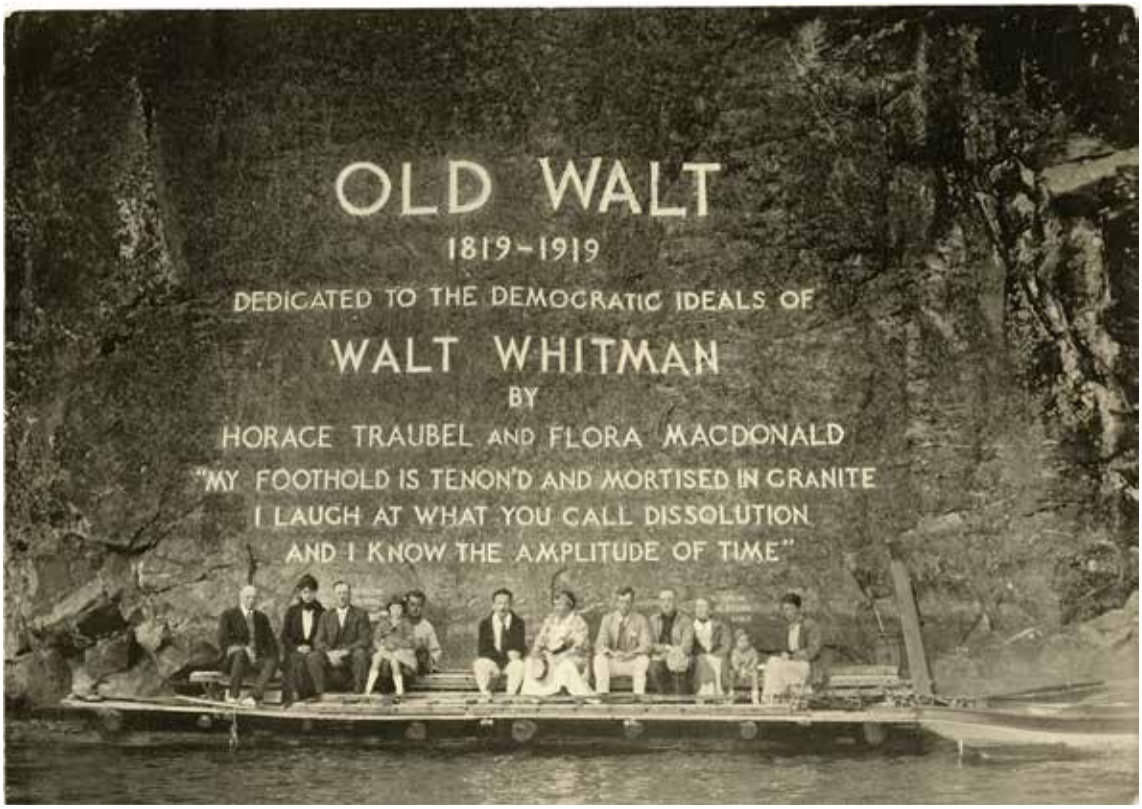
As the guest book indicates, only four members of the Group of Seven went to Bon Echo, while only one of these four *may* have gone when the Whitman Club was active there.[69] Flora Denison's son, Merrill Denison (1893–1973), was friends with all members of the Group of Seven through Toronto's Arts and Letters Club. In 1916 he hired Franz Johnston to design brochures and stationery for the Whitman Club and for the cover of Denison's Whitmanite zine, *The Sunset of Bon Echo*.[70] Johnston first came to Bon Echo in the late winter or early spring of this year, that is, before the Club was active. He returned in the summer of 1918 but there is some evidence that the Club was not operative at this time.[71] Johnston's biographer says that he met Flora Denison and that she encouraged him to read Whitman; however, Mason provides no evidence for this statement. Since Merrill Denison was also a Whitmanite and a close friend of Johnston, it is more likely that he introduced Johnston to Whitman's poetry. Johnston went to Bon Echo again in the summers of 1921 and 1927 and did more design work for the hotel, but Flora Denison died in May of 1921 at which time the Whitman Club of Bon Echo ceased to function. Merrill Denison then ran Bon Echo simply as a summer hotel and encouraged members of the Group of Seven and their families to take holidays there.

Arthur Lismer came to Bon Echo in the summers of 1921 and 1922, A.Y. Jackson in 1924, and Jackson and Franklin Carmichael in 1928. Jackson and Carmichael did sketches as the basis of advertising material for Bon Echo.[72] Amongst other things, Lismer did preliminary work for *Bon Echo* (Fig. 1), an image of the large rock in Lake Massanoga situated a short distance from the shore on which Denison's hotel sat. In 1919, the hundredth anniversary of Whitman's birth, Denison and her approximately two hundred and seventy Canadian and American Whitmanian guests – named in the Bon Echo guest book – had dedicated this rock to Walt Whitman. One of these visitors was Whitman's close friend and disciple Horace Traubel (1858–1919), who, by the summer of 1919, had been revered by Whitmanites around the world for over three decades not only for his devotion to Whitman but also for his efforts to bring about social and political reform and for his belief in the mystical abilities of particularly sensitive people. The dedication of the rock was therefore of some significance. Indeed, the event, along with Traubel's death at Bon Echo a few days after the dedication, was reported in Canadian and American newspapers.[73] In 1920 Denison hired stonemasons to carve the rock



1 | Arthur Lismer, *The Big Rock, Bon Echo*, 1922, oil on canvas, 91.6 × 101.7 cm, purchased 1922, National Gallery of Canada, accession no. 2004. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)

with two lines from Whitman's "Song of Myself" in large, bold capital letters enhanced with white paint: "My foothold is tenon'd and mortised in granite / I laugh at what you call dissolution / And I know the amplitude of time" (Fig. 2). The site thus became a shrine that proclaimed Whitman's belief in the on-going life of the spirit after the death of the body.[74] Remarkably, Lismer painted out this feature of the rock. Nor did he indicate that, as he sat only a few yards from the hotel to paint the rock, the water between his easel and the rock would have been filled with boaters and swimmers. Rather, Lismer simply represented the site as a pristine wilderness. Bon Echo's associations



2 | Rock dedicated to Walt Whitman in Lake Massanoga, Bon Echo, Ontario. This photograph shows a group of Whitman admirers seated on a makeshift dock, ca. 1920. (Photo: Queen's University Archives)

with Whitman and Whitman's association with wilderness were clearly of little import.

While members of the Group of Seven may have been disinclined to take part in the Whitman Club of Bon Echo simply on the basis of the Club's focus on reform activism, it is interesting to speculate that Group members may also have been perturbed by the way in which Denison and Club members approached the development of comradeship and reform and how they interpreted Whitman. By the time Denison formed the Whitman Club of Bon Echo, she was well-known as a Whitmanian radical, at least in the eyes of Toronto's largely conservative, English Canadian population. She used her weekly column in Toronto's *World,* other publications, and public lectures to condemn Christianity's right to establish legal marriages; to promote non-traditional family structures; to advise women on the joys of sexual activity; to encourage women to work; to promote wages for women who stayed home to care for small children; to urge married women not to act as

"door-mats" for their husbands; to warn young women about men who would use them for sex; to promote laws that would grant divorces more easily and establish prostitution as a socio-economic issue rather than a moral one; to reject social contempt for unwed mothers and their "illegitimate" children; and to ban laws that restricted activities on Sunday/the Lord's Day. Moreover, as a member of the executive of the Canadian Suffrage Association, Denison made front-page news by bringing England's well-known radical suffragette, Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928) to speak in Toronto.[75] In 1915 Denison was even forced to resign as President of the Canadian Suffrage Association largely on account of her support for the militant activities of Pankhurst and her followers. Toronto newspapers publicized every detail of this fall from grace. Furthermore, Denison was outspoken about her ability as a modern Spiritualist to speak with the dead, including Whitman. In 1900 she had written a book about her sister Mary's communications with the spiritual world.[76] This book was published by Benjamin Fish Austin (1850–1933), a Methodist minister who had been expelled in 1899 for his views on modern Spiritualism, an event that was also well reported in Toronto newspapers. In 1901, Denison contributed to Austin's book on modern Spiritualism.[77] Granted, modern Spiritualism had many adherents throughout the English-speaking world in the early twentieth century; however, there were many conservative Torontonians who thought it was ridiculous.

Other Whitmanites who came to Bon Echo were just as radical. For example, Albert Durrant Watson (1859–1926), a Toronto medical doctor and close friend of Denison, wrote for *The Sunset of Bon Echo* and used a crystal ball and Ouija board to contact Whitman and others from beyond the grave.[78] Watson also re-wrote the words of the English version of the Canadian national anthem so that its focus on the "true north strong and free" – which was an essential part of the Group of Seven's thinking – took a back seat to social and political reform. In Watson's version Canadians pray for a nation "That no oppression blights . . . Where justice rules . . . [and] Love alone for wrong atone[s]."[79] Frank Bain (1875–1959), a banker, and his wife Mildred (1876–1962) were two other members of the Whitman Club of Bon Echo whose views may have rankled members of the Group of Seven. The Bains were strongly involved in Canadian activist groups and had established close relationships with foreign Whitmanites such as England's Edward Carpenter (1844–1929), who worked arduously to support socialism and the decriminalization of homosexuality. In 1913, when the American birth control advocate Margaret Sanger (1879–1966) was fleeing the FBI, the Bains harboured her and provided her with a false passport with which she escaped to England. At various periods between 1909 and 1919, the Bains conducted a *ménage à trois* with Traubel. In the summer of 1919, Traubel, his wife Anne,

Frank and Mildred Bain, and the two Bain children – who had likely been fathered by Traubel – holidayed together at Bon Echo along with Frank Bain's Aunt Mary Priest, a professional modern Spiritualist who had come along to help with the children and to participate in the cult of Whitman. Before his liaison with the Bains, Traubel had had others with men and women and had fathered at least one other child "out-of-wedlock."[80] Traubel, the Bains, and so many other Whitmanites used Whitman's views on sexuality to sanction these relationships. For Whitman, since the body was the receptable of the divine soul, all bodily activities, including sexual ones, were honourable. "Sexual passion" was "the base and start of the whole divine scheme of humanity." Sexuality had to be asserted . . . openly, joyously, proudly, without shame . . . indeed, with reverence." It had to be removed from "the tongues and pens of blackguards" and put into "the demesne of poetry and sanity – as something not in itself gross or impure, but entirely consistent with highest manhood and womanhood, and indispensable to both."[81]

It is of course impossible to know if members of the Group of Seven kept their distance from Denison's Whitman Club of Bon Echo in part because they disapproved of the radical views and behaviour of many of its members. It is also true that some members of the Group of Seven behaved in ways that were scandalous by English Canadian standards of the early twentieth century but that would have been sanctioned by the Bon Echo Whitmanites. Varley left his wife and developed relationships with young students. Housser fell in love with another woman while his wife, Bess, was starting a relationship with Lawren Harris who was married to someone else at the time. Housser and Harris divorced their wives and Harris married Bess. However, Varley did not adopt a less conservative lifestyle until after 1926, and the Houssers and Harris not until 1934, that is, well after the Whitman Club of Bon Echo had disintegrated. Before this time members of the Group of Seven seem to have led conservative lives with memberships in Christian churches and legal marriages to women who had children and did not work outside the home. Johnston's use of just the two lines from Whitman's "Song of Myself" – "Urge and urge and urge, / Always the procreant life of the world" – may be particularly telling in this regard. Johnston used these lines as a reference to the spiritual force in the material world, but, as I said above, this is not the focus of this poem. Rather, "Song of Myself" is concerned, as so much of Whitman's poetry is, with his program of comradeship. In Whitman's attempt to be clear in this poem that comradeship includes everyone, he lists different types of people such as tram drivers, boatmen, roofers, farmers, blacksmiths, butchers, machinists, women, mothers, and factory girls, but he also embraces prostitutes, prisoners, drunkards, opium eaters, and the "venerealee" (those who have venereal diseases). Whitman

then uses "Song of Myself" to assert the divinity of all parts of the human body and all human activity including the sexual. He admires himself in the nude, proclaiming, "Not an inch nor a particle of an inch [of the body] is vile . . . the scent of my arm-pits is an aroma finer than prayer . . . Copulation is no more rank to me than death is . . . I believe in the flesh and the appetites . . . I am [t]urbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking and breeding." Whitman then describes a pleasurable encounter with another "figure": "I mind how once we lay such a transparent summer morning, / How you settled your head athwart my hips and gently turn'd over upon me, / And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue to my bare-stript heart, / And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my feet." Today, this "other figure" is seen by some critics simply as Whitman's soul. However, by the time Johnston first read "Song of Myself," this erotic section of the poem had long been taken by Whitman supporters (and detractors) as evidence of the poet's support for homosexuality. Given Johnston's involvement with Christian Science, which teaches that sex is sacred and is to be reserved for heterosexual marriage, it is not surprising that the Canadian painter isolated two lines from "Song of Myself" that simply express a general belief in the presence of the spiritual within the material world. Still, we are left to wonder why Canadian art historians returned in the 1970s to the unsound narrative that Housser set in place over four decades earlier and why they continue to accept it today.

Accounting for the Conventional Narrative

To explain this phenomenon, it is necessary to return to Fred Housser's, *A Canadian Art Movement* of 1926. In this study, he connected the Group of Seven's wilderness landscape painting to two lines from two of Whitman's poems, "Starting from Paumanok" and "Salut au Monde!" But neither of these poems is concerned with wilderness. "Starting from Paumanok" documents Whitman's search for "camerados," which began when he was born in Paumanok (Long Island, New York), and expresses his desire to share "Love and Democracy" with them. As Whitman travels throughout America on this search – partly in his imagination – he says the United States includes forests, rivers, mountains, and prairies, but he does not describe them in any detail or suggest that he might find camerados within this type of terrain. Rather, Whitman focuses on the rural and the urban, on America's "ploughmen ploughing farms" and on "cities, solid, vast, inland, with paved streets, / with iron and stone edifices, ceaseless vehicles, and commerce." As he thinks about the country he imagines the "many-cylinder'd steam printing press . . . [and] the electric / telegraph stretching across the continent." Within

"Starting from Paumanok," Whitman also explains that he is a "Dweller of Mannahatta" (New York City) and "a lover of populous pavements" and so emphasizes his belief in the eventual appearance of a perfect society through the build-up of "comradeship" especially in urban sites. Housser ignored this focus of the poem. He did the same for "Salut au Monde!" In this poem Whitman says that he can see "the shaded part on the one side" and "the sunlit part of the other side." Housser interpreted these "sides" as the material world and the spiritual world and said that Harris could see both sides too. Both Harris and Whitman were like-minded mystics. At the same time, Housser said that Lawren Harris found the "sunlit" side in the wilderness and so implied that Whitman was referring to wilderness too. But these "sides" in Whitman's poem mean something quite different. They unequivocally refer to positive, sunlit, societal conditions and to shaded, negative, societal conditions. Whitman says that no matter which "side" anyone occupies – a mansion or a prison – everyone is his comrade because each of them contains a divine spark. He uses "Salut au Monde!" to greet *everyone* and to send them his wishes for their health.

Clearly, Housser used Whitman's poetry to create a tighter connection between him and the Group of Seven than was warranted. A rather convoluted combination of Theosophical beliefs, nationalistic sentiment and wishful thinking gave him rein to do so. As a Theosophist, Housser believed that practicing universal brotherhood would help return the world to its former glorious state in which the material and the spiritual were one. Theosophy also taught him that a "spiritual flow" that would create this new world would appear first in North Americ. According to Helena Blavatsky, Theosophy's founder, this flow would appear initially in the United States; however, as a Canadian nationalist Housser ignored this part of her theory and focused on Canada's wilderness as the source since he saw this landscape as replete with a sense of the divine. Combining Theosophy and nationalism, Housser then mistakenly assumed that, since members of the Group of Seven were representing the divine in the wilderness for the benefit of their audiences, they were doing so as a means of establishing Theosophy's universal brotherhood and concomitant utopia. As Housser said, the wilderness landscapes of the Group of Seven could "[accomplish] the first object of the Theosophical Society, the forming of a nucleus of a brother of Man without the distinction of race, sex, caste, colour or creed." "Canada's geography and geological history" would become a part of every Canadian. Wilderness views imparted "a distinctive character to speech, manners, creations of art and other activities," so that "[h]is outlook on life, his way of judging things, his reactions to Nature and to people are tinctured by his nationality."[82] However, only one member of the Group of Seven, Harris,

was a Theosophist, while only one other member, Lismer, expressed an open interest in Theosophy. It was then unreasonable of Housser to link the Group as whole with Theosophical intent. It was also perverse to conclude that Whitman had the same goals as the Group of Seven. Housser understood that Whitman was seeking the divine in the material world through his program of comradeship as a means of developing a utopia, and that he thought that the United States was the ideal place for it to arise. Comparing the Group to Whitman, an international literary star, would surely heighten the profile of the Group of Seven. However, Housser ignored the core of Whitman's thinking, that is, his quest for the divine in human beings and, therefore, in urban and pastoral sites. Consequently, Housser's thesis falls apart. It may seem ironic that Housser the nationalist was relying on a foreign poet in this way; however, Housser was also a continentalist, that is, he believed that one day Canada and the United States would become a single strong country. Whitman did too; so, using Whitman as he did was not contradictory for Housser. In 1930, likely following Housser's 1926 narrative, Herman Voaden, another Theosophist and nationalist, also linked the Group of Seven closely to Whitman. His account is equally unreliable for the same reasons.[83] Still, Housser's and Voaden's exuberance provided a seemingly reliable narrative for historians who were part of the strong wave of Canadian nationalism that appeared in English Canada after 1967 so long as they did not delve too deeply into Whitman's oeuvre.

In 1967, Canada celebrated the centennial of Confederation. The increased sense of nationalistic pride that surrounded this event, especially in English-speaking central Canada, contributed to a greater interest in Canadian art history on the part of the general public and academia. To tell the Group of Seven's story, whose work by this time had been popular for decades, art historians naturally turned to Housser and not unreasonably since he knew members of the Group of Seven well. They would also have noted that the few statements the Group of Seven made about Whitman did not openly contradict Housser. Therefore, they were comfortable presenting Housser's point of view. However, these art historians did not take note of the fact that members of the Group of Seven had little to say about Whitman, indeed, that some of them had nothing to say, while none of them were as zealous about Whitman in the way that Housser was. Nor did they attempt to explain this discrepancy by looking at what Whitman actually said about wilderness. Had they done so, they would have seen that the core of his thinking cannot be aligned with that of members of the Group of Seven. Indeed, they would have understood why J.E.H. MacDonald named his son Thoreau, not Walter, and why Thoreau MacDonald said his father's favourite poet was Henry David Thoreau, not Walt Whitman. They would also have

appreciated why, in 1925, the Canadian literary critic Lionel Stevenson said that Whitman "wrote scarcely a poem that would apply to Canada without modification, so pervasive is the distinctive quality of Americanism . . . This feature . . . resides in [Whitman's] preoccupation with cities and factories and immigrating swarms."[84]

NOTES

1 While the Group of Seven officially existed from 1920 to 1931, Johnston resigned from the Group in 1924 and Varley ended strong ties with the Group in 1926 when he moved to Vancouver. Between 1926 and 1931 three other artists joined the Group.

2 As many Canadian art historians have pointed out, while members of the Group of Seven often described their styles as original, they made use of modernist styles developed in Europe, especially Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Expressionism.

3 At this time Canada's northern regions were populated by Indigenous people as well as white settlers involved in timber, mining, hydro-electric operations, and summer camps and cottages. For discussions of this topic, see, for example, Paul Walton, "The Group of Seven and Northern Development," *racar* 17 (1990): 171–79; and Jonathon Brood, "Jack Pine – Wilderness Sublime or the Erasure of the Aboriginal Presence from the Landscape," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27 (Winter 1992–93): 98–108. See also relevant sections in J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Native-Newcomer Relations in Canada,* 4th edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018); Sherrill Grace, *Canada and the Idea of North* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture,* 2nd edition (Vancouver: Arsenal Press, 2011); and Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian* (Toronto: Doubleday, 2012).

4 By the time the Group of Seven formed, their work was reasonably well known in Toronto and had received many negative and positive reviews. From this time enthusiasm for their work increased. Many reviews appeared in places where they could be read by the general public. See, for example, Salem Bland, "The Group of Seven and the Canadian Soul," *Toronto Daily Star* (31 Jan. 1925). Bland was a Methodist minister in Toronto and a friend of members of the Group of Seven. He believed their wilderness landscapes were unveiling the divine and evoking valuable forms of nationalistic sentiment.

5 Michèle Lacombe, "Songs of the Open Road: Bon Echo, Urban Utopians and the Cult of Nature," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33 (Summer 1998): 152.

6 There are no records for the Whitman Fellowship of Toronto. Invitations and various publications that discuss its meetings do not mention any member of the Group of Seven. See the Merrill Denison Papers in Queen's University Archives and the Flora MacDonald Denison Papers in the Thomas Fisher Library at the University of Toronto.

7 Frederick B. Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the Group of Seven* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1926).

8 Ibid., 17. For the full text of "Starting from Paumanok," see Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: Comprehensive Reader's Edition,* ed. Harold W. Blodgett and Sculley Bradley (New York: New York University Press, 1965), 15–28.

9 Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement,* 65. For the full text of "Salut au Monde!" see Whitman, *Leaves of Grass,* 139–48.

10 Herman Voaden, *Six Canadian Plays* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1930), "Introduction."

11 A.H. Robson, Canadian *Landscape Painters* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1932), 137.

12 Peter Mellen, *The Group of Seven* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart), 51, 110, 140.

13 Ann Davis, *The Logic of Ecstasy: Canadian Mystical Painting 1920–1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 42–44.

14 Charles Hill, *The Group of Seven: Art for a Nation* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1995), 16.

15 Robert Stacey and Stan McMullin, *Massanoga: The Art of Bon Echo* (Ottawa: The Penumbra Press of the Archives of Canadian Art), 58.

16 Ross King, *Defiant Spirits: The Modernist Revolution of the Group of Seven* (Kleinburg, on: McMichael Art Collection, 2011), 371.

17 Roald Nasgaard, "Harris's Modernity: The Engineering Draughtsman's Instruments," in *Higher States: Lawren Harris and His American Contemporaries*, ed. Roald Nasgaard and Gwendolyn Owens (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, and Kleinburg, on: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 2017), 46.

18 Quoted in Housser, *A Canadian Art Movement,* 54.

19 A.Y. Jackson, "Lawren Harris, a Biographical Sketch" in *Lawren Harris Paintings 1910–1948: Catalogue of an Exhibition* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Toronto, 1948), np; Jackson, *A Painter's Country: The Autobiography of A.Y. Jackson* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1958), 46.

20 Quoted in Angela Nairne Grigor, *Arthur Lismer: Visionary Art Educator* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 56.

21 Maria Tippett, for example, does not mention Whitman in her *Stormy Weather: F.H. Varley, a Biography* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1998).

22 John A.B. McLeish, *September Gale: A Study of Arthur Lismer of the Group of Seven* (Toronto: Dent, 1955), 7.

23 Ibid., 100.

24 Arthur Lismer, "Canadian Art," *The Canadian Theosophist* 5 (15 Feb. 1925): 177–79.

25 Theosophy was founded in 1875 in New York by Helena Petrina Blavatsky (1831–1891), Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907), and William Q. Judge (1851–1896). Its tenets are laid out in Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* of which there are a number of editions as well as abridged versions. It is likely that Blavatsky, forming her society two decades after *Leaves of Grass* appeared, took some of her ideas from Whitman. Certainly she knew Whitman's work.

26 Lismer, "Art Appreciation," *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, 1929,* ed. Bertram Brooker (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1929): 60.

27 Nairne Grigor, *Arthur Lismer,* 14–16, 55, 249.

28 Harris was reading at least some Whitman by 1908. See Lawren Harris Fonds, mg 30, d208, volume 2, notebook, National Archives of Canada.

29 Letter from Lawren Harris to J.E.H. MacDonald, 7 Aug. 1919, MacDonald Fonds, 1, 3, National Archives of Canada.

30 "Psychiatrist" is a modern term. During Bucke's career this type of doctor was known as an "alienist."

31 Richard Maurice Bucke, *Walt Whitman* (Pennsylvania: David McKay, 1883).

32 Lawren Harris, "The Greatest Book by a Canadian and Another," *Canadian Bookman* 6 (February 1924): 38.

33 Harris, "Revelation of Art in Canada," *The Canadian Theosophist* 7 (15 July 1926): 85–86.

34 Harris, "Creative Art and Canada," *Yearbook of the Arts in Canada, 1929,* ed. Bertram Brooker (Toronto: Macmillan, 1929), 181. Peter Larisey suggests that Harris's poetry, published as *Contrasts* in 1922, emulates the poetry of Walt Whitman. However, Harris's poems contain none of the joy of Whitman's. See *Light for a Cold Land: Lawren Harris's Work and Life – An Interpretation* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), 52.

35 Roger Burford Mason, *A Grand Eye for Glory: A Life of Franz Johnston* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1998), 24. Mason provides no source for his information on Johnston's interest in "Song of Myself." For the full text of "Song of Myself," see Whitman, *Leaves of Grass,* 28–89.

36 MacDonald's lecture on Whitman was given at the Toronto Public Library for an audience of English teachers. The quotations are from the unpaginated notes for the lecture in J.E.H. MacDonald, Fonds, MG 30, D III, 3, National Archives of Canada. One of them ("So we climb, my guide & I, & then the city calls and we discard the mountains") does not appear in Whitman's poetry or prose, although MacDonald suggests that it is a quote from Whitman. Perhaps MacDonald made this statement, or another writer. In any case, MacDonald used it to support his understanding of Whitman's general interest in the natural world, and his focus on populated sites.

37 Ed Folsom, "Democracy," in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia,* ed. J.R. Lemaster and Donald D. Kummings (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998): 171. Whitman explains his goal for his poetry in "Preface," Whitman, *Leaves of Grass,* 709–29; and throughout *Democratic Vistas, Collect II* in *Prose Works* (Philadelphia: David McKay, Publisher, 1892), 61–246. There is a large body of literature that discusses Whitman's views on democracy, e.g., Stephan John Mack, *The Pragmatic Whitman: Reinventing American Democracy* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004).

38 Whitman, "Cosmopolitanism," *Specimen Days* in *Prose Works 1892,* ed. Floyd Stovall (New York: New York University Press, 1963), Appendix A, 354.

39 Whitman, *Democratic Vistas,* 148–49.

40 For a discussion of Whitman's definition of his program as a religion, see David Kuebrich, *Minor Prophecy: Walt Whitman's New American Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

41 Whitman, *Democratic Vistas,* 559–60.

42 Ibid., note 135 to line 1647.

43 Ibid., 1642–47.

44 Before Whitman published *Leaves of Grass,* he was familiar with the writings of Carlyle, Emerson, and Thoreau and had read some of Hegel's writing in translation in Frederic Hedge's *German Prose Writers* of 1847 and Joseph Gostwick's *German Literature* of 1854. For brief discussions of Whitman's relationship to their work, see the following in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*: Matthew C. Altman, "Carlyle," 104–105; Jerome Loving, "Emerson," 204–206; Mark Bauerlein, "Hegel," 271–72;

Susan L. Robertson, "Thoreau," 717; and Sam Worley, "Influences," 313–15. Whitman discusses Carlyle and Hegel at various points in *Specimen Days* in *Prose Works 1892* and *Democratic Vistas* in *Prose Works*. For lengthier scholarly discussions, see relevant sections in Philip F. Gura, *American Transcendentalism: A History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007); J.M. Tyree, "Thoreau, Whitman and the Matter of New York," *New England Review* 27 (2006): 61–75; Brian Brodhead Glaser, "Reassessing Whitman's Hegelian Affinities," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 29 (2011): 19–32; and Scott Henkel, "Leaves of Grass Politics: Whitman, Carlyle, and the Imagination of Democratic Vistas," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 27 (2010): 101–26.

45 Whitman, *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose mss*, ed. Edward H. Grier (New York: New York University Press, 1984) 6: 2011.

46 For Ralph Waldo Emerson on these topics, see his essays, "Nature," "The American Scholar," and "The Poet," in *Selected Essays,* ed. Larzer Ziff (New York: Penguin, 1982). Henry David Thoreau's writings of 1840–1862, including his famous *Walden; or, Life in the Woods,* published in 1854, occupy 20 volumes in *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906). For scholarly discussions of Thoreau's ideas, see, for example, Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1995); and Robert Kuhn McGregor, *A Wider View of the Universe: Henry Thoreau's Study of Nature* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

47 Emerson, "American Scholar," 104–105.

48 Emerson, "Nature," 81.

49 Emerson, "American Scholar," 104–105.

50 Letter from Henry David Thoreau to Ralph Waldo Emerson, 8 June 1843, quoted in Frank M. Meola, "City Gardens: Thoreau in New York," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 49 (Summer 2010). Accessed 29 Mar. 2021, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.act2080.0049.317.

51 Emerson, "Nature," 81.

52 Tyree, "Thoreau, Whitman and the Matter of New York," 71.

53 Roger Asselineau, "Transcendentalism," in *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia,* 738.

54 Whitman, "Preface," *Leaves of Grass,* 719.

55 Quoted in Bucke, *Walt Whitman*, 67.

56 See various sections of Whitman's *Specimen Days* in *Prose Works 1892.*

57 Whitman, "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun," *Leaves of Grass,* 312–14.

58 Whitman, *Democratic Vistas,* 371.

59 Ibid., 369.

60 Whitman, "Autobiographical Notes," *Daybooks and Notebooks,* ed. William White (New York: New York University), 3: 661.

61 Whitman, *Specimen Days,* 206, 220–21.

62 Members of the Group of Seven did, of course, have important connections to urban life. Like Whitman, they lived and worked in a city, while MacDonald and Harris depicted urban scenes before the First World War. Harris continued to do so into the 1920s. Some of Harris's work represents houses of the poor, e.g., *In the Ward,* 1922 (McMichael Canadian Art Collection), but these houses do not suggest that their (invisible) occupants are filled with divine sparks. Harris's paintings of miners' houses in Nova Scotia are surrounded by glowing lights and so could be read as the representation of the divine in places people inhabited, e.g., *Miners' Houses,*

Glace Bay, 1925 (Art Gallery of Ontario). Similarly, the bodies of some of the sitters in Harris's portraits of the 1920s are surrounded by a glowing light that may be intended to exude the spiritual, e.g., *Portrait of Louise Julia Holden,* 1921 (McMichael Canadian Art Collection), and the portrait of the Methodist clergyman *Salem Bland,* 1925 (Art Gallery of Ontario). But even if this were true, Harris was far more interested in representing the divine in the wilderness at this time.

63 Connections between the Group of Seven and Bon Echo are especially strong in Mary Savigny, *Bon Echo: The Denison Years* (Toronto: Natural Heritage, 1997): and in Stacey and McMullin, *Massanoga*.

64 Whitman, "Death of Thomas Carlyle," *Specimen Days,* 17.

65 There is a large body of literature on this subject. See, for example, Michael Robertson, *Worshipping Walt: The Walt Whitman Disciples* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

66 Denison was familiar with summer meeting camps in Chautauqua, Roycroft, and Lily Dale in New York State, the Universal Brotherhood of Man in Indiana, Rose Valley in Pennsylvania, and quite likely the Greensboro community in Vermont. Flora speaks of her familiarity with Lily Dale and Roycroft in "Short Stories," *Sunset of Bon Echo* 1 (March 1916): 16, 18; and in "At the Roycroft Shops," *Sunset of Bon Echo,* 3 (Summer 1916): 20–21. For histories of these organizations, see Jeffrey Simpson, *Chautauqua: An American Utopia* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999); Christine Wicker, *Lily Dale: The Town that Talks to the Dead* (San Francisco: Harper, 2003); Marie Via and Marjorie Searl, *Head, Heart and Hand: Elbert Hubbard and the Roycrofters* (Rochester, ny: University of Rochester Press, 1994). Whitman's acolyte, Horace Traubel, whom Flora came to know in 1916, was a founding member of Rose Valley. The Universal Brotherhood of Man was organized by Bruce Calvert (1866–1940) with a journal, whose title, *The Open Road,* was taken from Whitman's "Song of the Open Road." Flora Denison had a 1909 copy of it, now in the Merrill Denison Archives at Queen's University. The reform community at Greensboro Vermont was founded by Whitman scholar Bliss Perry (1860–1954). Perry published a biography of Whitman in 1906. For an interesting discussion on the connections between spiritualism and social and political activism, see Mark A. Lause, *Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism and Radicalism in the Civil War Era* (Urbana, il: University of Illinois, 2016).

67 Lacombe, "Songs of the Open Road," 152.

68 John Campbell, *The Mazinaw Experience and Beyond* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2000), 91.

69 The Bon Echo guest book is in the Merrill Denison papers in Queen's University Archives.

70 Mason, *A Grand Eye for Glory,* 23. See also Stacey and McMullin, *Massanoga,* 10, 42–43.

71 Denison issued three numbers of *The Sunset of Bon Echo* in 1916, one in 1919, and one 1920. There are none for 1917 since she was working for the New York State Suffrage Association and did not open Bon Echo. There are also none for 1918.

72 For Jackson's and Carmichael's Bon Echo design work, see Stacey and McMullin, *Massanoga*, frontispiece, 8, 66, 70–71, and 97–98.

73 For a description of the 1919 events, see various authors' articles in *The Sunset of Bon Echo* 6 (April–May 1920).

74 For Whitman's views of life after death, see "Carlyle from American Points of View" in *Specimen Days,* 1808–11.

75 There is a large bibliography on Flora Denison as a reformist. For publications that provide much of it, see, for example, Deborah Gorham, "Flora MacDonald Denison: Canadian Feminist," in *A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880–1920s,* ed. Linda Kealey (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), 47–69; sections on Denison in Janice Fiamengo, *The Woman's Page: Journalism and Rhetoric in Early Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); sections on Denison in Joan Sangster, *One Hundred Years of Struggle: The History of Women and the Vote in Canada* (Vancouver, Toronto: ubc Press, 2018); and sections on Denison in Tarah Brookfield, *Our Voices Must be Heard: Women and the Vote in Ontario* (Vancouver, Toronto: ubc Press, 2018).

76 Flora MacDonald, *Mary Melville: The Psychic* (Toronto: Austin Publishing Company, 1900).

77 Benjamin Fish Austin, *What Converted Me to Spiritualism: One Hundred Testimonies* (Toronto: Austin Publishing Company, 1901).

78 Lorne Pierce, *Albert Durrant Watson: An Appraisal* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1923).

79 Albert Watson, "Hymn to Canada," *The Poetical Works of Albert Watson* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1924), 155. This poem was written in 1913 and meant to be sung to the tune of "O Canada."

80 Marylin McKay, "Walt Whitman in Canada: The Sexual Trinity of Horace Traubel and Frank and Mildred Bain," *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* 30 (Summer 2012): 1–3.

81 Whitman, "A Memorandum at a Venture," *Collect II* in *Prose Works,* 88–102.

82 Quoted in Alicia Boutilier, *An Intimate Circle: The F.B. Housser Memorial Collection* (London, on: Museum London, 2005), 8.

83 For Housser's influence on Voaden, see Anton Wagner, "Herman Voaden's New Religion," *Theatre Research in Canada* 6 (Fall 1985). Accessed 29 Mar. 2021, https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/tric/article/view/7418/8477.

84 E.R. Hunter, *J.E.H. MacDonald* (Ryerson Press, 1940), xii; and Lionel Stevenson, "Manifesto for a Canadian Literature," *Canadian Bookman* 6 (February 1924): 36.

RÉSUMÉ

Le Groupe des sept et Walt Whitman : le rejet du récit conventionnel

MARYLIN J. MCKAY

Les historiens de l'art du Canada anglais ont longtemps établi un lien étroit entre la poésie de Walt Whitman (1819–1892), publiée initialement sous le titre Leaves of Grass en 1855, et les paysages sauvages du Groupe des sept. Selon ce récit conventionnel, les artistes canadiens et le poète américain ont concentré leurs efforts sur la recherche de la présence du divin dans le monde matériel. Les lieux urbains étant bondés, sales et bruyants, le meilleur endroit pour rechercher le divin était la nature sauvage. Cependant, une enquête sur les remarques des membres du groupe à propos de Whitman, et sur ce que Whitman avait à dire sur la nature sauvage, ne confirme pas ce récit. En fait, aucun d'entre eux n'a affirmé que Whitman considérait la nature sauvage comme le lieu où le divin se manifestait le plus clairement. De même, les membres du groupe n'auraient pas pu faire une telle affirmation, sachant que, si Whitman reconnaissait la présence du divin dans le monde matériel, il voyait d'un tout autre œil comment et où le rechercher. Whitman croyait que le divin se manifestait le plus visiblement chez les humains; il exhortait donc ses lecteurs à chercher le divin dans les endroits où les gens se regroupent, à savoir les lieux urbains et pastoraux. En outre, Whitman invitait ses lecteurs à respecter tous les comportements humains, en particulier l'activité sexuelle, car elle est la plus humaine de toutes. Lorsqu'une personne reconnaît le divin dans une autre, elles deviennent alors « camarades ». Ainsi se développeraient une camaraderie universelle et, dans sa foulée, un monde idéal. Comme l'a souligné un spécialiste de Whitman, J.M. Tyree, Whitman « s'est éloigné . . . de manière décisive . . . de l'idée américaine classique d'opposer la nature et la civilisation. » Par ailleurs, Roger Asselineau, spécialiste de Whitman, estimait que « la plus grande originalité de *Leaves of Grass*. . . était la place que [Whitman] accordait au corps. » La nature sauvage n'était donc d'aucune utilité pour Whitman, si ce n'est en tant que terrain à transformer en fermes, villes et villages, comme il l'a clairement affirmé.

En raison de l'importance que Whitman accorde à chaque personne, les militants sociaux et politiques ont considéré le poète américain comme un mentor dès la première publication de Leaves of Grass. La plus éminente de ces activistes « whitmaniens » au Canada au début du vingtième siècle

était Flora MacDonald (1867–1919). MacDonald a fondé le Whitman Club de Bon Echo en 1916 en mettant l'accent sur la camaraderie de Whitman et les divers types de réformes qui, selon les activistes sociaux et politiques, étaient associés à cette même camaraderie. En se basant sur un lien présumé entre Whitman, la nature sauvage et le Groupe des sept, et sur le fait que le Whitman Club de Bon Echo se trouvait à en pleine nature à 280 km au nord-est de Toronto, le récit conventionnel a soutenu que les membres du Groupe des sept faisaient partie du club de MacDonald, mais ce n'était pas le cas. Quatre d'entre eux sont allés à Bon Echo, mais seulement lorsque le Whitman Club n'y était pas actif. Les membres du Groupe des sept ont probablement évité ce club pour la même raison qu'ils n'avaient pas grand-chose à dire sur Whitman : le Whitman Club n'était pas axé sur le divin dans la nature.

Mais alors, comment le récit conventionnel s'est-il imposé? Je pense qu'il a commencé dans les années 1920, dans une tentative de la part des critiques culturels, à une époque de nationalisme exacerbé, d'améliorer le profil du Groupe des sept en l'associant à une personnalité culturelle de renommée internationale. Il faut reconnaître que ces critiques étaient amis avec les membres du Groupe des sept et savaient que ces derniers voyaient en Whitman quelqu'un qui, comme eux, croyait en la présence du divin dans le monde matériel. Cependant, dans leur empressement à faire valoir leurs arguments, ces critiques ont pris quelques libertés en transposant la croyance générale de Whitman en la présence du divin dans le monde matériel en un intérêt plus spécifique pour le divin dans la nature sauvage. La ferveur de ces critiques est réapparue vers 1970, c'est-à-dire pendant une autre période de croissance spectaculaire du sentiment nationaliste, en l'occurrence à la suite du centenaire de la Confédération en 1967. Dans le cadre de ce phénomène, le grand public et les universitaires ont développé un nouvel intérêt pour l'histoire de l'art canadien. Les historiens de l'art canadiens ont fini par accepter le lien entre Whitman, la nature sauvage et le Groupe des sept, tel qu'il avait été « établi » plusieurs décennies auparavant. Ils auraient peut-être pensé différemment s'ils s'étaient demandé pourquoi le critique littéraire canadien Lionel Stevenson soutenait, en 1925, que « Whitman n'a pratiquement pas écrit de poème qui pourrait s'appliquer au Canada sans modification, tant la qualité distinctive de l'américanisme est omniprésente . . . Cette caractéristique . . . réside dans la préoccupation de Whitman pour les villes, les usines et les nuées d'immigrants ».

ARTICLE

Milne Duncan Jarvis: An Introduction

DOUGLAS ORD

1. "A relationship which was to become the most remarkable in the history of Canadian art"

In 1970, Alan Hepburn Jarvis (1915–1972), who had served as the third director of the National Gallery of Canada from 1955 to 1959, wrote the following description of his and Douglas Moerdyke Duncan's (1902–1968) first visit to the isolated South Muskoka cabin of the painter David Milne (1882–1953), after seeing his work in Toronto:

> We were sufficiently captivated by the Milne painting that we resolved to see the mythical character in the flesh, and so we made our way, by car and canoe, to Six Mile Lake in the summer of 1935. When we had hauled the canoe ashore on a bare point of rock on which stood a small tar-paper shack, Milne emerged and walked shyly down toward us. With mock solemnity and a courtly bow, DMD [Jarvis's acronym for Duncan] said: "We have just come to burn a little incense." That was the beginning of a relationship which was to become the most remarkable in the history of Canadian art.[1]

It is not quite clear, with this account, whether Jarvis was including himself in the "relationship" he deemed "the most remarkable," in that named references are most immediately to Milne and Duncan. In this ambiguity Jarvis was being, perhaps, unnecessarily self-effacing, if suitable to context. The occasion for this 1970 recollection was initially a catalogue essay for a memorial exhibition of works collected by the then-recently late Duncan; the essay then carried over to an eighty-page book, *Douglas Duncan: A Memorial Portrait*, edited by Jarvis and published by University of Toronto Press in 1974. For the book, Jarvis added a short foreword and placed, between it and the essay, a testimonial by former Prime Minister Lester Pearson that lauds "the unique qualities and the creative work of Douglas Duncan."[2] The essay is followed in the book by testimonials by literary critic Northrop Frye, artists Paraskeva Clark (1898–1986) and Michael Hayden (b. 1943), and comedian Johnny Wayne, among others: nine in all. Milne had by 1970 been dead for

seventeen years and Jarvis himself would die in December 1972, age fifty-seven, two years before publication of the memorial portrait, and especially sadly: in a walk-up flat near the southern end of Spadina Avenue in Toronto, of chronic alcohol abuse. Jarvis, who had been called by Sir Kenneth Clark in his autobiography, "the handsomest man I have ever seen," but with his name misspelled "Alan Jarves," need not have been so ambiguous about his role in the "relationship" involving Duncan and Milne.[3] For there can be little doubt that, as it developed and played out, every bit as dramatic and vexing a role fell to him as to the other two.

This study had its start in an exclusive focus on David Milne, a painter whose creative genius has been widely acknowledged and advocated for by contemporary art historians: even Lester Pearson, in the testimonial to Duncan, could refer to Milne, by 1974, as "this strange but authentic genius."[4] Yet, apart from a few admirers, Milne was publicly ignored and lived in poverty, sometimes dire, throughout his adult life. An attempt at comment on these matters was ventured initially out of deep respect for Milne's painterly record and fascinated awe at the tribulations he experienced in producing it. A goal was to offer, perhaps, some insights as to style and to discern, if possible, shape in the overall trajectory of his œuvre, such as had not been considered previously. What happened was that, in the course of research, engagement with Milne's œuvre in sequence was first interrupted, and then as much as overthrown, by close examination of a photograph that turned up by chance in the photo files of the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa. This discovery took place in the course of a 1996–97 Research Fellowship in Contemporary Canadian art, held at the NGC, that provided work space amid these files; research at the time was toward the photo-narrative that would come to supplement the text in *The National Gallery of Canada: Ideas, Art, Architecture* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003). In 2004, a Canada Council grant toward further research on Milne and his circle of relationships in the 1930s made for a closer look at this photograph, and for the chain of surprises introduced here.

The photograph as found, most probably in late 1996, was in black and white, on glossy paper, and measured 17.5 cm (or seven inches) on each side. The paper itself measured 25.4 cm wide by 19.3 cm high (10 × 7.6 inches) and the photograph appeared slightly off centre. On the back of the print was handprinted in blue ink, in a tight hand along the top, "Alan Jarvis Six Mile Lake 1936–39 Photo: Douglas Duncan" (Fig. 1). The original paper size, though not the image itself, had clearly been cropped along the bottom, which showed the upper remains of an earlier handwritten inscription in black ink, that – though neatly written – had clearly sloped up to the right. Two words only were legible. They were, as at lower right in the image, "Photo: Douglas."

Alan Jarda Six Mile Lake 1936-39 Photo: Douglas Duncan

Photo: Douglas



The photograph itself, as printed on the opposite side of the blankness between these inscriptions, is shown as Figure 2, with paper edges shaded for definition. It is reproduced out of its importance to what became a dawning awareness of extreme complexity. The trajectory of this awareness, including what it had to incorporate, became the more disturbing the more associated archives were looked into. This article ventures to introduce an association between archives, in some of its more intensely visual terms; to provide some context for this association; to illuminate a sequence of events referenced by it; and to pose questions that deserve further study.[5]

2. Photographs

The photograph itself, cropped to its own boundaries, merits description (Fig. 3). It shows a young Alan Jarvis (then age twenty-four), immaculately groomed and dressed in shades that suggest black or – in the trousers – dark grey. A scarf is flipped around his neck and he sports a beret. He is standing on a curvature of exposed rock, in profile, with leafless trees in the background. In his right hand he holds, at an angle and turned toward the camera, a painted canvas stripped of its wooden stretchers. He would appear to be about to add this canvas to a pile of other canvases already lying on the rock face in front of him and hosting on their surfaces clusters of flames.

It can be simply stated, for this is not in doubt, that the painting displayed by Jarvis in this way was by David Milne, as were the paintings lying on or propped along the rock face.

Painting Place: The Life and Work of David B. Milne, the 1996 biography by David Silcox also published by University of Toronto Press, describes the circumstances of this recorded episode briefly in a fifteen-line paragraph. This merits quotation, as it has for two decades provided the accessible public account of the event recorded in this photograph:

> Duncan soon got an opportunity to winnow the chaff out of Milne's work. Before Milne left Six Milne Lake, he, Duncan, and Jarvis

1 (*opposite, above*) | Back of Figure 2, handprinted in blue ink, "Alan Jarvis Six Mile Lake 1936–39 Photo: Douglas Duncan," photo files, National Gallery of Canada. (Photo: Visual Collections Repository, Concordia University)

2 (*opposite, below*) | Photograph found by author in 1996 at National Gallery of Canada. Black and white photograph of Alan Jarvis by Douglas Duncan, ca. 1939, 25.4 × 19.3 cm (paper), 17.5 × 17.5 cm (photo), photo files, National Gallery of Canada. (Photo: Visual Collections Repository, Concordia University)



3 | Figure 2 cropped to photo boundaries, National Gallery of Canada.

reviewed and assessed all the paintings Milne had on hand. The purpose was to make certain that indifferent work was not allowed to exist – a point Duncan was always emphatic about – since it would dilute the value of the rest: only the best work should be kept, the remainder burned. Milne described the funeral pyre as "thousands of dollars worth of oils, a million of watercolours and some chicken feed of etching, . . . Douglas is having a grand time sorting and resorting and tearing up and wishing he hadn't torn up – pictures."[35] Jarvis related later that two votes could either grant a picture a reprieve or

send it to oblivion.[36] As photographs show all too sadly, it was indeed a pyre, with Jarvis in his beret committing Milne canvases back to the elements. Given how important even scraps of works can be, it makes one wince to think of whole canvases, and promising ones at that, being destroyed.[6]

Silcox in the body of his account provides no date for this event: not even the year it took place. Nor does he write any further on it: his next paragraph, directly after this quoted passage, begins, "The war years were rather stultifying for art activities."[7] The footnote pertaining to Jarvis, numbered 36, simply reads, on page 399: "This was Jarvis's memory of the event as he recounted it to me." No date is given for the interview. The footnote to Milne's quoted description, however, number 35, yields this specificity: "Milne to Kathleen Pavey, 30 October [1939] MFP."[8] This provides a link to wider context, whose detail Silcox provides elsewhere, and that can be summarized. Kathleen Pavey was Milne's second wife, though somewhat ambiguously, who, at half his age, had been blown by a storm into his cove on Six Mile Lake in August 1938 while alone in a canoe. Milne was by October 1939 cohabiting with her in Toronto, having left the hand-built cabin in which he had lived alone since 1933. Douglas Duncan had become Milne's business manager and agent in 1938, after Milne's near disastrous entry into an arrangement, proposed by himself in 1934, to sell paintings in bulk, for roughly five dollars each, to Canada's leading patrons of the visual arts, Vincent and Alice Massey. Silcox alludes to Milne's hope that if he disposed of finished work in this way, series – paintings that resembled one another and were often contiguous in time and place of production – would be kept together. They were not, as the Masseys began very quickly to give some paintings away and to sell others.[9]

But this specificity of date, 30 October 1939, appears many pages away from Silcox's textual description, in the footnotes. More strikingly, in relation to the paragraph itself, Silcox also provides, on page 295 opposite it, a photograph, in the wide margin to the left of his text. Being literally marginalized in this way, the reproduction is very small, just 5.5 cm (or 2⅛ inches) square, in black and white. It is reproduced here (Fig. 4) in the size given to it in *Painting Place*, and, again, in the interest of critical analysis and study. This image likewise shows Alan Jarvis, dressed as in the larger

4 | A similar black and white photograph of Alan Jarvis by Douglas Duncan, reproduced (and shown here) at 5.5 × 5.5 cm in Silcox, *Painting Place: The Life and Work of David B. Milne* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), National Gallery of Canada. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)





5 | Figure 2/3 reduced for comparison with Figure 4, National Gallery of Canada.

photograph, displaying a different painting by David Milne, again sideways though in reverse alignment from the previous, with beside him a more vigorously burning pile of other paintings. Location is the same as in the other photograph and framing almost identical.

Technology enables presentation of these photographs on the same scale and juxtaposed, one made smaller, the other larger, in a temporal sequence suggested by the larger flames in the photograph on the right, that appears in miniature in *Painting Place* (Figs. 5, above, and 6, opposite).

Silcox, in his text, explicitly alludes to the existence of more than one image: "As photographs show all too sadly, it was indeed a pyre, with Jarvis in his beret committing Milne canvases back to the elements." He also makes clear his own response: "Given how important even scraps of works can be, it makes one wince to think of whole canvases, and promising ones at that, being destroyed." But he goes no further in considering this scenario;



6 | Figure 4 shown larger than its reproduction in Silcox, *Painting Places*, National Gallery of Canada.

nor does he elaborate on the fact that he has himself introduced a plural: photographs. He shares with his reader one of these (Fig. 6) but does so on a scale so small that detail is difficult to discern (Fig. 4). This is more, however, than is done by Jarvis's more recent biographer, Andrew Horrall, in *Bringing Art to Life: A Biography of Alan Jarvis*, published in 2009 by McGill-Queen's University Press. His account of the event dated by Milne's letter to Kathleen Pavey as late October 1939 is even shorter than Silcox's fifteen lines, and reads:

> Commerce underpinned the trip to Muskoka, where Jarvis and Duncan intended to identify and destroy sub-standard works, so as to limit the number, but increase the quality and monetary value of Milne's surviving paintings. That Jarvis was a full partner in the enterprise that consigned works to a small fire near the cabin was a measure of how fully the other two men trusted his artistic judgment.

> Two out of three votes determined the fate of what Milne described somewhat exaggeratedly as "thousands of dollars worth of oils, a million of watercolours and some chicken feed of etchings." Whatever the works' commercial value, Milne's biographer [Silcox], to whom Jarvis related the details of the episode many years later, shuddered at the loss of so many canvases. This was almost certainly the last time Jarvis and Milne saw one another.[10]

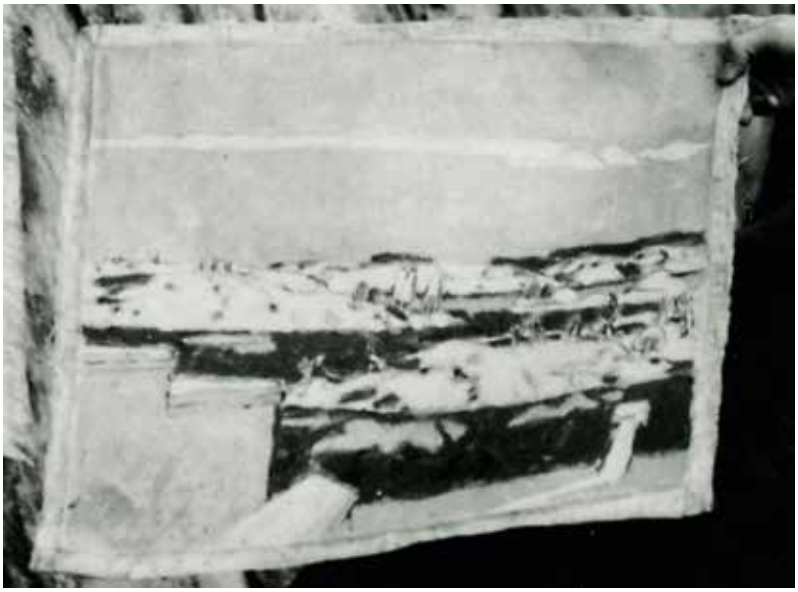
Horrall in this paragraph does not mention the existence of a photograph or photographs, never mind provide a reproduction. As with Silcox, however, more detail is in a distant footnote. Of Silcox's book, Horrall there writes:

> The account includes a photograph of Jarvis, clad in black and wearing his customary beret, placing canvases on the fire. Jarvis had related this story, hoping, disingenuously, that Silcox would not publish it (David Silcox interviewed by Horrall, 30 June 2003).[11]

In fact, the photograph reproduced by Silcox shows Jarvis about to place not "canvases on the fire," but a canvas. Horrall's imprecision extends, in an account that as much as re-states parts of Silcox's paragraph, to rephrasing Silcox in a way that obscures Jarvis's visually recorded role as meticulously well-dressed actual immolator: "the enterprise that consigned." He also does not mention the possibility of other photographs.

New phrasings do stand out, however: "Jarvis and Duncan intended to identify and destroy sub-standard works" at the beginning of the quoted passage and "This was almost certainly the last time Jarvis and Milne saw one another" at its end. Neither of these statements is footnoted and it is not clear on what basis Horrall both introduces such extremity of language and ascribes joint intent – "Jarvis and Duncan intended to identify and destroy sub-standard works" – without an explicit declaration to this effect by a participant. Silcox ascribes motive only to Duncan: "Duncan soon got an opportunity to winnow the chaff out of Milne's work" and "The purpose was to make certain that indifferent work was not allowed to exist – a point Duncan was always emphatic about. . . ." This is reiterated in the catalogue raisonné of Milne's œuvre, prepared by Silcox and David Milne Jr., Milne's son with Kathleen Pavey:

> In the fall of 1939, in the process of closing the cabin for the winter (in fact he never returned) Milne sorted through his Six Mile Lake work with Alan Jarvis and Douglas Duncan, and burned a lot of pictures. Duncan was adamant about not having mediocre work on the market, and he also insisted on keeping the number of variants of a subject



7 | Detail of Figure 2 showing the painting in Alan Jarvis's hand, National Gallery of Canada.

> down to those that were sufficiently different from one another so that collectors would not be offended by having a work that was similar to someone else's.[12]

In considering this passage, which lays claim to particular authority through appearance in the catalogue raisonné, it bears note that the painting held by Jarvis in the earlier photograph, with the smaller fire, was almost certainly not part of Milne's "Six Mile Lake work," which was produced amid the semi-wilderness where he lived in a hand-built cabin from 1933 to 1939. Rather, as extracted from the photograph, enlarged, and tilted sixty degrees (Fig. 7), the painting about to be burned suggests a vantage point from the flat roof of a building, with the vertical wall of another building, in two levels, in the frame's lower left. Beyond it, in the mid-ground, appears to be not the expanse of Six Mile Lake, such as Milne sometimes depicted, but – it would appear – a river or much longer lake, as Milne saw it, with, occupying much of its expanse, an elongated island. In the background is a landscape perhaps left white, a represented sky and, stretching the width of the canvas, an extended thin cloud shape that twists toward the right margin, assuming the shape, as it approaches this margin, of a precisely tipped paintbrush. This image is peculiarly elegant and is in visual relation both to mid-ground (island / river or lake / far shoreline) and foreground (rectilinear but asymmetrical walls and rooftops). This is – or was – also a stunningly complex painting, whose scant photographic record suggests, just possibly, a bridge transition in Milne's development as a painter: a movement of ambiguity in resemblance. The painting is landscape, though with vision interrupted, and also allegory:

entry into which is via a trompe l'œil in which cloud becomes paintbrush becomes cloud, and with this possibility also inviting that the surface itself be considered as harbouring similar possibility.

This painting, shown on the verge of immolation by Alan Jarvis in the fall of 1939, was not, it can be strongly argued, some repetitive dross within the record of Milne's œuvre prior to that time, but an especially complex visual field that invites close study. Except that it does not exist, apart from in this slightly blurry black and white photographic record, framed by Duncan, of a last instant of its existence, as a work of art held by Jarvis (clad in black, though perhaps with dark grey trousers), before its addition to the flames. Enough is clear, though, in the painting's depiction of a long lake or river from an angled rooftop, to establish that it was not painted at Six Mile Lake, where there were no such rooftops. Instead, it suggests the village of Temagami, in northeastern Ontario, where Milne stayed in 1929, four years before he moved to Six Mile Lake. What this would seem to imply also, then, is that Milne had kept it with him, by 1939, for ten years. Why, exactly, was it being burned? And why was it being displayed being burned? Clearly, what was "sorted through" in late October 1939, by Milne himself "with Alan Jarvis and Douglas Duncan," was more than Milne's "Six Mile Lake work." Moreover, the photographs, plural, render somewhat ridiculous the statement in the catalogue raisonné that "Milne sorted through his Six Mile Lake work with Alan Jarvis and Douglas Duncan, and burned a lot of pictures." In fact, both available photographs show not Milne himself burning "pictures," but Alan Jarvis.

How many pictures were burned cannot be known. But the distinctiveness of this painting alone implies both a greater variety in the paintings destroyed than is allowed for in the catalogue raisonné account of the event and, just possibly, a more complex narrative – or more complex narratives – within the event as it occurred. Yet it is also clear, paradoxically, that no comprehensive narrative, based on evidence, can be established. David Milne Jr., in an interview conducted by telephone in May 2004, acknowledged that, while he and Silcox, in preparing the catalogue raisonné, had initially assumed that paintings shown in the photographs would be near repetitions of other works, this was not the case. He also confirmed the existence of at least three such photographs and said it was very probable that other images had been destroyed after Duncan's death in 1968 by his executors, who threw out – along with much else – an envelope of photographic negatives labelled "1939."[13]

What was on these negatives likewise cannot be known. But what can be pointed out, in consideration of possible relevance, is that there is a contextual association on a much bigger scale for this very year, in that 1 September

1939 marked the beginning of the Second World War in Europe, when the armed forces of Nazi Germany invaded Poland. The date of 30 October 1939 is given in Silcox's footnote for Milne`s letter to Kathleen Pavey describing how "Douglas" was "having a grand time sorting and resorting and tearing up and wishing he hadn't torn up – pictures." Considered in terms of this larger scale, 30 October 1939 was also sixty days into the European conflagration and fifty days after Canada's own declaration of war on Nazi Germany on 10 September, which followed those of Britain and France by a week. And to be even more precise in terms of contiguity of time, October 1939 was a month of particular triumph for Nazi Germany and a month that contained two especially dramatic and richly symbolic displays of German martial muscularity.

The first of these was a massive military victory parade through a conquered and devastated Warsaw on 5 October, for which Adolf Hitler was present, that followed formal annexation of much of Poland the day before. The second was the spectacular sinking, on 14 October, of the British battleship *HMS Royal Oak* at its anchorage in Scapa Flow – long thought impregnable – by the German submarine U-47, with the loss of over eight hundred British men and boy trainees. The captain of U-47, Günther Prien, became a national hero in Germany and on 16 October was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross by Hitler personally. But if these were the prominent events of October 1939 that made the month an especially dismal one in the fight against fascism, it also bears note that the fall of Poland made for an especially ominous, if less publicized, development. For, as described by Timothy Snyder in his *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, "now that the Wehrmacht had defeated a foreign army, the methods of the SS could be tried against an alien population."[14] Accordingly:

> In early October 1939, Hitler conferred a new responsibility upon Heinrich Himmler. Already the leader of the SS and the chief of German police forces, Himmler now became the "Reich Commissar for the Strengthening of Germanism," a kind of minister of racial affairs. In the regions that Germany annexed from Poland, Himmler was to remove the native population and replace it with Germans.[15]

Such was the character of war – of that phase of war – that directly preceded the event in South Muskoka, Canada, whose earliest dating is of Duncan sorting through and tearing up Milne's "pictures" on 30 October, and whose record came to include the photographs of Jarvis displaying and about to burn two of Milne's paintings in oil on canvas. It is a peculiar co-temporality that cannot but introduce an added edge to Horrall's choice

of phrasing to begin his own account of "the enterprise that consigned works to a small fire near the cabin": "Jarvis and Duncan intended to identify and destroy sub-standard works. . . ." A program of aesthetic eugenics could hardly ask for a more succinct description. And though it does bear emphasis that these words come, in this form, not from Milne or Duncan or Jarvis, but from Jarvis's biographer Horrall, they echo an assessment provided by Duncan himself in a letter of 22 April 1939 to the National Gallery, after an earlier abortive effort by him and Milne alone to burn some paintings. Duncan urged that the Gallery itself "take on the intimidating responsibility of selection" in regard to a donation of Milne's work and described "the pictures of 1912–16" as "very different from the work of 1917 on and mostly inferior to it: so we [that is, he and Milne] felt they should be, so to speak, sterilized, and stored somewhere only for reference and curiosity."[16] These sentences alone contain three words – "selection," "inferior," and "sterilized" – that had already, in their eugenic association, been applied in Nazi Germany to "life unworthy of life" (*Lebensunwertes Leben*) in both sterilization and euthanasia programs, and that were about to be applied, on a much wider and more brutal scale, in Poland.

How Horrall could claim to know with such precision what both "Jarvis and Duncan intended" – for intentionality can be difficult to establish – ought not, perhaps, to be the main point here. It is that the phrase "intended to identify and destroy sub-standard works" is provided at all – and almost in passing – in this account of an event in which Alan Jarvis, as the subject of Horrall's biography, was involved in late October 1939, along with Milne and Duncan, and that made not only for the burning of Milne's paintings, but for the photographic record of display as it exists. For the phrase is not neutral and, perhaps, especially not so in the context of October 1939 when, in German-occupied former Poland, SS and SD Einsatzgruppen were spreading out precisely to identify and destroy what Nazi ideology considered "sub-standard": not paintings but both Jews and Slavs, including the socio-economic elite and intelligentsia of the former Poland.[17]

What sense might be made of such overlaps of vocabulary and of such a pattern, within a narrow time frame, of gestural resemblance in regard to the "inferior"? A reply will be assisted by 1) the suggestion of a way of reading, as provided by Gilles Deleuze, and 2) a further set of archival discoveries.

3. Resonance and Series Form

That there exist two photographs, almost identically framed and with Alan Jarvis identically dressed, but displaying different paintings as the flames rise, establishes the existence also, in a different modality of the term, of *a series*.

Whether or not other photographs exist of Jarvis burning paintings by David Milne at Six Mile Lake in late October–early November 1939 is, for now, a moot point. Obviously, access to any such material would be helpful. Yet, it is not indispensable in that the two photographs alone establish terms of a series that is relational. The photographs resemble one another and their making was clearly contiguous in time and place: these being two of the "principles of association of ideas" established by David Hume in his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), the third being cause and effect.[18] Experimental science makes extensive use of cause and effect, as Hume anticipated. But an aspect of Deleuze's contribution in philosophy was to recognize in Hume's other "principles of association" – resemblance and contiguity, which Hume considered somewhat renegade – a basis for resonance, in "an imagination subject to the principles [plural] of association": which is to say, resemblance and contiguity also, as well as cause and effect.[19] Series can be established via such association and "the serial form," as Deleuze would write in *Logique du sens* in 1969, "puts images into play."[20] They resonate. And, as a first phase, the resonating effect that these two photographs had, along with their apparent dating, on a presumptive overview of Milne's œuvre, was quite simply to explode both the method and the confidence previously developed with something of the impact described by Deleuze in these two short passages:

> "There is in the world something that forces thinking. This something is the object of a fundamental *encounter*, and not of a recognition."[21]

And:

> "Thought is nothing without something that forces thinking, that does violence to thought."[22]

Encounter with these photographs in particular, as well as with their dating, was indeed such as to "force thinking." They did "violence to thought" and in more ways than one, for they displayed physical violence and outright destruction being done to visually precipitated thought: that of David Milne.

To say that a manuscript presuming to overview on Milne's œuvre was at this point overthrown would be an understatement, even as an *event* – whose detail, paradoxically, could not be known – pressed irresistibly forward. Present to this event had been not only Milne – an extraordinary artist – but Jarvis and, behind the camera, Duncan, who was also, to go on Milne's note of 30 October, active in more direct ways. They had evidently all come together, in late October 1939, at Milne's isolated cabin on Six Mile Lake, where he had lived since 1933. But to do . . . what? And why . . . then?

These questions can be approached via what Deleuze does with the concept of "resonance" in *Logique du sens*. There he integrates it into a model of sense production through paradox and of series cut across by a "paradoxical element" that sets them resonating. A key passage reads:

> the surface is the zone (le lieu) of sense: signs remain deprived of sense insofar as they do not enter into the organization of surface that assures the resonance between two series (two image-signs, two photos, two trails, etc.)[23]

Deleuze's concept of series is both flexible and associational: series can be "determined as signifying" (for example, "two photographs") and "determined as signified" (that is, the associative networks that, as virtual, constellate around such photographs, as actual). Signs and series also reference incorporeal events as singularities and Deleuze asks:

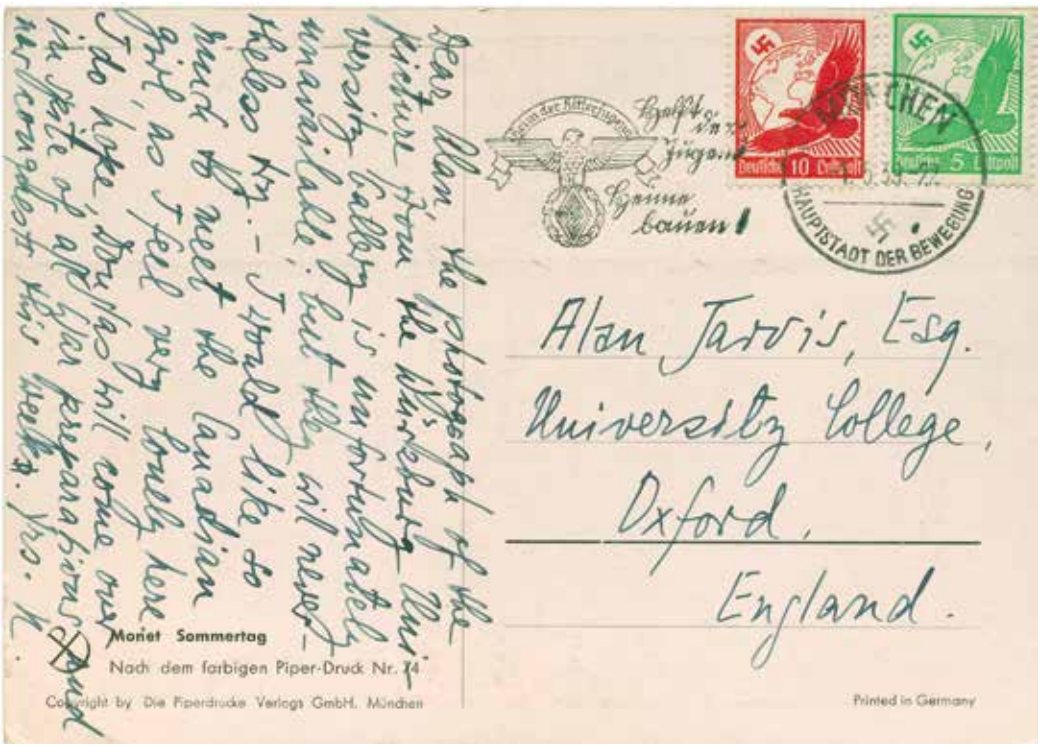
> What are these expressive relations of events among themselves? . . . They are not relations of cause and effect, but an ensemble of non-causal correspondences, forming a system of echoes, of reprises, and of resonances, a system of signs, in short, an expressive quasi-causality, and not at all a necessitating causality.[24]

This is again an important distinction: no relation of causality or of strict inference between these series is suggested. A relation of resonance, however, is a different matter, toward opening a field of questions. And a further discovery would introduce a new paired series, that was indeed "cut across" and set resonating, in relation to the series comprised of the photographs, by "a paradoxical element": namely, in this case, the figure of Alan Jarvis.

4. Postcards

The questions posed by the existence of the photographs acquired added dimension with research into Jarvis's papers from the period, held at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. Such is the esteem accorded there to Douglas Duncan that a bronze bust of him is displayed in the lobby of this library, to which was bequeathed much of his collection of rare books. Jarvis's correspondence of 1938 and 1939 bears consideration and two items deserve to introduce this, in the context of the photographs just presented. They, too, are visual, with recto and verso, and came in a pair. And, as the photographs were surprises at different times, these items were a surprise when found together in the "Correspondence In"





8 (*above*) and 9 (*below*) | Front and back of postcard, Claude Monet, *Sommertag*, Alan Jarvis Papers, MS Coll 171, box 1, folder 3. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto. (Photo: Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library)



10 | Detail of stamps and franking on back of postcard, University of Toronto.

file for 1939 (Box 1). They were postcards, with one more visually striking, including in modernist aesthetic terms, than the other on its picture side and so shown first here (Fig. 8). But, if eye-catching, it also appeared at first glance innocuous: a colour reproduction of a painting by the French Impressionist Claude Monet, captioned in German, "*Sommertag*" (Summer Day).

Turning this card over, however, introduced a different aesthetic world entirely (Fig. 9).

The card had evidently been retained by Alan Jarvis for over thirty years, from 1939 to his death in 1972. It was dated 1 May 1939 and addressed to "Alan Jarvis Esq., University College, Oxford, England." This placed its sending during the Spring term of the single year Jarvis was at Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship. The card, as per the franking, was sent from Munich, Bavaria, then in Nazi Germany. Its message is signed "Yrs. K." But its stamps and franking are both sufficiently colourful, in the former case, and sufficiently strange, in both cases, as to draw the eye more than the written detail (Fig. 10). For there are, between stamps and franking, no fewer than four swastikas, in the alignment favoured by Nazi Germany, and a declaration of Munich itself as "*Hauptstadt der Bewegung*": "Capital City of the Movement." The banner above the franked eagle on the left reads "*Heim der Hitlerjugend*": "Home of the Hitler Youth."

The second postcard, less striking visually, was from the same period – spring 1939 – but earlier: 27 March 1939 rather than 1 May (Fig. 11). Its picture side shows, in monochromatic sepia, the battle fleet of Schleswig-Holstein



11 (*above*) and 12 (*below*) | Front and back of postcard, the battle fleet of Schleswig-Holstein, 1849, MS Coll 171, box 1, folder 3. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto. (Photo: Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library)

in 1849. The single blue 15 Reichspfennigs stamp on the reverse side, too, is less visually intense and differentiated than the pair of bright green and red stamps, from the same Deutsches Reich Luftpost series, that appear on the other postcard, also adding up to 15 Reichspfennigs. This earlier card displays, in a different script, a forwarding address for Jarvis to "Chez Barwick, 81 Avenue Niel, Paris XVII" (Fig. 12).[25] The message, in the same script as on the other postcard, is in this case signed not "K" but "Kurt."

Examination of what remain of Duncan's papers as well as Jarvis's would show that the sender of both these cards was Kurt Wagenseil (1904–1988), Duncan's long-term companion of the 1920s, who lived in Munich, who was in 1935 briefly incarcerated in the concentration camp at Dachau, and who would, according to his obituary, translate into German works by George Orwell, Virginia Woolf, Henry Miller, Jean Cocteau, André Maurois, and Kurt Vonnegut, among others.[26] Horrall, misspelling his name as "Wagensiel," describes him as, in 1938, "a thirty-four-year-old writer, translator, and art dealer who had been Duncan's Paris lover a decade earlier."[27] The existence of these cards is nowhere mentioned by Horrall or, for that matter, by Silcox. Horrall does, however, mention, in a few sentences, that Duncan and Jarvis visited "Wagensiel" [sic] in the summer of 1938: of which more shortly. For here, further summary detail is called for. "Chez Barwick," as per the addition on the earlier card, was the Paris address, in the Right Bank XVIIth arrondissement, of Duncan's sister, Frances Barwick, and her accountant husband, Jack. Bearing mention here also is that Douglas and Frances Duncan's father was president of Provincial Paper Mills from 1929 to 1946, having worked his way up in the industry. Duncan himself was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1902. By the 1930s, the family lived in Forest Hill, Toronto, and Duncan himself, at age thirty-six still resident in the large house when he was in Canada, received an allowance and was not obliged to work for a living. He and Jarvis had met in 1934 when Jarvis, at nineteen, was a freshman at the University of Toronto from which Duncan had graduated ten years earlier. When they met, Duncan was thirty-two and had recently returned to Canada from Paris, his home since 1925. He maintained his own flat in Montparnasse that he and Jarvis, in the spring of 1939, were using as a base over Easter break at Oxford.[28]

The Jarvis-Duncan relationship, which was especially intense between 1934 and 1939, was itself of stunning complexity and is worthy of much closer study than it has hitherto received or can receive here. It is brought into play, in this abbreviated context, through a peculiar visual drama of paired pairs of signs, to use the language of semiology, or of paired series, to use the language of Deleuze: two photographs, two postcards. Jarvis knew Wagenseil through Duncan (making for the paired postcards); Jarvis was photographed

burning Milne paintings by Duncan (making for the paired photographs). Each pair constitutes a series, linked by elements not of causality but of resemblance and contiguity of time and place. Both cards were sent to Alan Jarvis, from Munich, in the spring of 1939, and both photographs were made along the same slope of rock in South Muskoka, Ontario, Canada, in the fall of 1939. What happens when these are put together?

5. Series paired

This is what the two series look like in the order of their encounter over the course of research, showing the distinctive verso of the two postcards with their stamps, frankings, and named addressee (Fig. 13):

Series 1, in order of discovery





Series 2, in order of discovery





13 | The black and white photographs of Alan Jarvis, National Gallery of Canada, and the back of the postcards, University of Toronto.

But this is what they look like in the order of their production in relation to events (Fig. 14):

Series 1, 27 March and 1 May 1939

Series 2, both circa 30 October 1939









14 | The back of the postcards, University of Toronto, and the black and white photographs of Alan Jarvis, National Gallery of Canada.

In fact, the second photograph appears also in Duncan's personal photograph album, which is in the archives of the National Gallery, with the caption "AJ burning paintings Six-Mile Lake Nov. 1939"[29] (Fig. 15). So it is plausible, given Milne's dating of Duncan's "tearing up" of watercolours to 30 October in the note to Kathleen Pavey, that the "selection" of paintings to be destroyed lasted several days. But, even without precise dating for the photographs, these are highly charged iconographic fields. They become more



15 | Black and white enlarged photograph, originally 5.5 cm square, of Alan Jarvis from Douglas Duncan's personal photograph album, with the caption, "AJ burning paintings Six-Mile Lake Nov. 1939," National Gallery of Canada. (Photo: National Gallery of Canada)

so when the sequence of frankings on the postcards is considered in closer view (Fig. 16):

Series 1, 27 March and 1 May 1939

Series 2, both circa 30 October 1939



16 | Detail of stamps and frankings on the back of the postcards, University of Toronto, and the black and white photographs of Alan Jarvis, National Gallery of Canada.

With respect to the series on the left, it bears noting that, besides the franking on both postcards designating Munich as "Capital City of the Movement," the city was chosen by Adolf Hitler as the site for perhaps the most aestheticized of Nazi architectural achievements, the Haus der Deutschen Kunst (House of German Art), designed by Paul Ludwig Troost and Albert Speer and opened in 1937. At the laying of its cornerstone on 15 October 1933, Hitler declared:



17 | Stamps from the series Deutsches Reich Luftpost, 1934. (Photo: the author)

We are heeding not only the voice of our hearts, but also the precept of fairness which dictates that we choose this very city to be the centre of a new artistic productivity and a new artistic life for all time to come . . . Since Berlin is the capital of the Reich; Hamburg and Bremen are the German shipping capitals; Leipzig and Cologne the capitals of German trade; and Essen and Chemnitz the capitals of German industry, so should Munich once more become the capital of German art. It will thus find its way back to its own greatness . . . May this city recall to mind its real mission of being a shrine of the sublime and the beautiful, that it may once again be proven true that one has to have seen this city to know Germany.[30]

The actual stamps on the two postcards, behind the frankings, also bear mention in that they are themselves from a series: in this case, the Deutsches Reich Luftpost issue of 1934 (Fig. 17). This invites description as among the most aestheticized, elegant, and visually sophisticated renderings of National Socialist global goals ever produced. The two stamps at upper right show likenesses of Otto Lilienthal and Graf Ferdinand von Zeppelin, who designed the earliest gliders and airships, respectively, in the 1890s. But dominating the issue is the series of nine repetitions, with chromatic differences from stamp to stamp. The motif itself is in three parts, with dynamic relation between bright (the depicted planet) and chromatically darkened (the circling eagle), and with a sun disc bearing a swastika. This smaller circle appears to radiate, on each of the nine stamps, in three bands and to shine most directly, oddly enough, over Canada on the depicted globe. Franked copies of three of these stamps – those at lower left – appear on the cards sent to Jarvis.

These visual moves in regard to an iconographic record are not unfair. They only concentrate and sequence visual fields that are both physically extant and highly charged, and that are joined by the fact that the person named in the series on the left in Figure 14 (the postcards) is the person meticulously photographed burning David Milne's paintings later in the same year in the series on the right: this element cuts across the two series. It is also highly paradoxical, in that the name and figure of Alan Hepburn Jarvis are more usually associated, in art historical comment, with his 1955–59 tenure as the third director of the National Gallery of Canada, known especially for his small-l liberal cosmopolitanism.[31] But what these fields and series provide is a suggestion of something else entirely. And here we can elaborate on our earlier question to ask: what sense might reside in this particular "system of echoes, of reprises, and of resonances," such as Deleuze in 1969 identified with the term "quasi-cause," and making also for a concept of quasi-causal system? Toward this we might make a beginning through closer examination of what archival material exists regarding a visit to Munich by Alan Jarvis and Douglas Duncan in the summer of 1938.

6. Nagold to Munich, July–August 1938

No mention of a visit to Nazi Germany, never mind to Munich, by Jarvis and Duncan appears in David Silcox's biography of Milne when he alludes to this period of relations among the three men. Instead, he gives the following to describe a period when Duncan was in process of becoming Milne's agent and assisting in extricating Milne from the disadvantageous arrangement he had made with the Masseys for bulk sales of his paintings. "Duncan," Silcox

tells a reader, "was gallivanting around France with Alan Jarvis in the summer of 1938."[32] This leaves out a lot. Horrall, understandably, given that his subject is Jarvis, is a bit more frank and expansive, describing over several pages a pre-Oxford trip to Europe that Duncan paid for and for which he chose the route in his family's convertible touring car as "an advanced course in the history of European art and architecture that passed through Chartres, the Rhone Valley, the Riviera, Munich, Assisi, and Siena."[33] Regarding the visit to Munich and Nazi Germany, Horrall provides a paragraph that again merits quotation as the only hitherto publicly available account:

> Idyllic notions about Europe and its history did not survive a short stop in Germany. In Munich the pair stayed with Kurt Wagensiel [sic], a thirty-four-year-old writer, translator, and art dealer who had been Duncan's Paris lover a decade earlier. Duncan and Wagensiel shared a passion for opera, and together with Frances [Barwick] they had travelled and attended music festivals. There is no evidence that Jarvis was aware of these earlier trips or felt threatened by Wagensiel and Duncan's past, but confidence in a lasting peace was dissipated by the seas of Nazi uniforms, saluting, and anti-Semitic slogans that pervaded Hitler's Bavarian power base. The feelings were reinforced by Wagensiel's desire to emigrate with his small collection of canvases by Picasso and Matisse and books by Jean Cocteau and Marie Laurencin, which he feared the Nazis would seize for being degenerate. While Wagensiel lacked the permits needed to leave the country, he and Duncan decided that the items would be safer in Paris, where they could be reclaimed when the situation stabilized. So Jarvis and Duncan smuggled several of Wagensiel's pieces out of Germany in the first week of August. The threat that a technology-obsessed Nazi regime posed to art, literature, and sexual freedom contrasted starkly with the pre-modern marriage of science and art about which Lewis Mumford wrote.[34]

Then just turned twenty-three, Jarvis had, Horrall tells a reader, brought with him copies of Mumford's *Technics and Civilization* and *The City in History*. This is a somewhat odd assertion in that, while the former book appeared in 1934, the latter was not published until 1961. A fact that also bears note in passing is that the epistolary record, when examined, proves not as friendly to Duncan as this account suggests, in that letters from Wagenseil to Jarvis over the following year contain the complaint that Duncan had never written: "he is very naughty."[35] An exchange of letters between Duncan's

sister Frances, who was his executor, and Kurt Wagenseil in 1968–69 after Duncan's death, in which Wagenseil as much as begged for return at least of a Picasso etching, reveals that the several "pieces" were never returned to him. Nor was the etching, with Barwick sending him a cheque for $750 instead.[36] But this paragraph is all Horrall has to say about the 1938 visit to Germany. His next sentence, beginning a new paragraph, is reminiscent of Silcox's change of subject after briefly describing the event recorded in the photographs: "After leaving Munich, Jarvis and Duncan drove through the Alps to Venice where they intended to take in the film festival."[37] Horrall's haste to get past this episode is suggested in his repeated misspelling, throughout the paragraph, of Kurt Wagenseil's name as "Wagensiel."

Jarvis's letters of the time to his mother and stepfather back in Toronto, however, are more expansive and deserve closer consideration in their recording of, and comment on, a sequence of events. They also bear considering in view of two quotations by Jarvis of David Milne, thirty-five years apart. In an article on Milne, written by Jarvis when he was still an undergraduate at the University of Toronto and published in the student journal *The Undergraduate* in 1936, shortly after his first exposure to Milne's work, Jarvis quoted the painter as saying: "One could see an exhibition through the crack of a doorway for ten seconds and have the whole future of one's art changed."[38] Much later, at age fifty-five, in the 1970 essay published in the memorial portrait of Duncan, Jarvis was at once less formal and more insistent, writing that Milne had "remarked" to him, "Why, you could see a painting through the crack of a door . . . and be influenced for life."[39]

The questions beg to be asked: What did Jarvis and Duncan see in Nazi Germany and Munich? And how did it "influence" them?

A letter from Jarvis to his mother and stepfather, dated 25 July 1939, cites a first anniversary: "A year ago today D and I had just entered Germany and about now were beginning to drive through the 'Schwarzwald'. And what a year it has been since then."[40] An experience that leaves such an impression, down to the moment of its beginning, perhaps should not be ignored. Nor, perhaps, should the fact that 25 July 1938, as the date the year before when the two entered Germany, was also the day before, in 1938, Jarvis's twenty-third birthday, on 26 July. The two crossed the Rhine River at Strasbourg in the touring car that had been shipped from Canada. "The whole idea of entering Germany was exciting," Jarvis would write, again retrospectively, from Ravenna, Italy, on 12 August, "after all that one has heard and read, and not a little terrifying."[41] In crossing the border, they entered the world of Nazi Germany, which emphatically included an aesthetic dimension: the category itself had, after all, been most developed, including in its division into the

beautiful and the sublime, by a German philosopher, Immanuel Kant. Their route, as throughout chosen by Duncan, took them through the Black Forest, or Schwarzwald, a semi-mountainous expanse in southwestern Germany treed mostly by conifers and widely associated with the fairytales of the Brothers Grimm. "Mountain driving," Jarvis wrote in a letter of 28 July 1938 to his mother and stepfather, "is certainly the thrill of this trip."[42]

But Jarvis's record of the trip by car across southern Germany would also yield a curious detail, for it strongly suggests that they stayed, precisely on the night that became Jarvis's twenty-third birthday, in the ancient Black Forest town of Nagold, some ninety-five kilometres east of Strasbourg by road. Which is to say: if they crossed into Germany on 25 July 1938, as Jarvis's letter of a year later indicates they did, ninety-five kilometres through semi-mountainous terrain would seem a reasonable first day's drive. And in Nagold, Jarvis recorded also in the first letter he sent from Munich on 28 July, he and Duncan were (somewhat remarkably) present for Wehrmacht manoeuvres and a mock battle. This letter is headed "München, Deutsches Reich" and deserves quotation: "Nagold was very exciting, because it was the centre of some army manoeuvres, which went on all night, so it was rather like being in a battle zone."[43] The phrase "very exciting" stands out even as the question arises: how did they come to make their way to "the centre of some army manoeuvres, which went on all night"? Was this coincidence? It seems unlikely. For. given both the significance of the date – with the same "all night" making almost certainly for the advent of Jarvis's twenty-third birthday – and given also that it was Duncan who, out of previous travels in western Europe on his "allowance," chose the route throughout, the further question presses as to whether this "very exciting" experience was in some way a birthday present to his young lover, offering the sublime *frisson* of an exposure "rather like being in a battle zone." For it bears noting also that this was a period when, a year before the outbreak of war and in the midst of tension with Britain and France over the Czech Sudetenland, Nazi Germany was still specializing in – to recall Walter Benjamin's well-known essay of two years earlier – rendering politics aesthetic.[44] Certainly, it does seem exceedingly odd coincidence – if it was coincidence – that the two men entered Nazi Germany the day before Jarvis's twenty-third birthday, drove the ninety-five kilometres to Nagold in Duncan's family's touring car, and arrived there just in time to usher in Jarvis's birthday at "the centre" of Wehrmacht "army manoeuvres, which went on all night."

This record differs profoundly in both its substance and enthusiasms from the bland précis given in the Horrall biography, which mentions only "the seas of Nazi uniforms, saluting, and anti-Semitic slogans"[45] and ignores

both the fact that Duncan, as Jarvis's guide, had been to Germany and Munich many times and the seductive sophistication of fascist aesthetics, especially in the city that Hitler had called "the capital of German art." Again, more expansive treatment is merited. But what is to be made of the fact, too, that Jarvis, in the same letter, describes their reaching Munich with the declaration "One feels that one has 'arrived'"? There can be no doubt that, by the end of the passage through Germany and Austria, Jarvis was indeed repulsed by "the background of hate and cruelty and militarism that is holding the state together," as he wrote in the letter of 12 August 1938 sent from Ravenna in Italy.[46] But Alan Jarvis was a complex young man and there was much about himself and his experience in the world that he did not share with his mother and stepfather, including the fact that he and Duncan were involved sexually and, by then, had been for several years.

While in Munich, Jarvis also, in a letter of 1 August 1938, recorded a visit of earlier the same day to what he called "an enormous exhibition of German art" precisely at the Haus der Deutschen Kunst, a museum that had been opened by Hitler a year earlier.[47] This was the Second Great Exhibition of German Art (*Die Zweite Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung*) that had itself been opened by Hitler just three weeks earlier on 10 July 1938 with also, from 8 to 10 July, the parade floats and spectacle of the Day of German Art (Tag der Deutschen Kunst). Young Jarvis himself had both an aptitude for, and interest in, realistic portrait sculpture, having studied in Toronto with Elizabeth Wyn Wood (1903–1966), about whom he wrote alongside Milne in his *Undergraduate* article of 1936, calling her "the only Canadian artist to have created work of any distinction in that type of sculpture which may be called 'post-Rodin.'"[48] The Second Great Exhibition of German Art contained many examples of such portrait sculpture: heads by Karl Tüttelmann (*Jüngling*), Ernst Holthäuser (*Maurer*), Eugenie Berner-Lange (*Frau Charlotte K.*), and Philipp Flettner (*Geheimrat Prof. Max Planck*), to name just four.[49] This was literally a preferred form in Nazi Germany. There was also a preponderance of male nude figurative sculpture, including the dramatically exaggerated, oversized *Prometheus* by the official sculptor of the Third Reich, Arno Breker.

Jarvis did not, in his letter to his mother and stepfather, describe what it was like for him to be inside this exhibition, held in what was then among the most spectacular and modern art-display contexts in the world. But it was Jarvis who had also quoted Milne on the potential influence of an "exhibition" seen "through the crack of a doorway." A hint of the terms of such influence also comes through in perhaps the most surprising of his accounts in his letters, suggesting both the seduction of the Nazi approach to aesthetics, shared also by the stamps on the postcards, and Jarvis's

susceptibility to it. Among Hitler's initiatives in Munich was conversion, into a club for politically acceptable German artists, of the villa that had belonged to the nineteenth-century painter Franz von Lenbach, who could count among his achievements over a hundred painted portraits of Otto von Bismarck, founder of the Second German Empire in 1870. One of these hung above the mantelpiece in Hitler's office in the Reich Chancellery in Berlin, also designed by Albert Speer. With Duncan, Jarvis made the acquaintance of this club, writing to his mother and stepfather late on 1 August 1938 about how the two of them

> went to dinner with his [Duncan's] German friend – not Kurt – to the 'Artists' House. It is an immense old house owned formerly by Lenbach, a German artist, which has been restored and made into a club for members of the German artists' union by Herr Hitler himself. We dined on an open terrace in front which overlooks the Botanical Gardens, and looks onto the sunsets. It was really lovely. The house itself has been very beautifully decorated and turned into restaurants, bar, library, concert halls, and so on, and all paid for by Hitler. All the German artists who are approved of may use it at very little cost. D's friend got us in because his father painted the murals in one of the rooms.[50]

There is no explanation as to how Duncan acquired a "German friend" whose father got on so well with the Nazi Party in Munich that he was given such a commission. Of this "friend," Jarvis says only that it was "not Kurt," a distinction perhaps understandable in that Wagenseil's obituary indicates that he spent time in the concentration camp at Dachau, northwest of Munich, in 1935. Nor is there description of the murals themselves. But such was the role of the "Künstlerhaus" for the Nazi hierarchy that Hitler held a reception there on 9 July 1938, before the formal opening of the Second Great Exhibition of German Art at the Haus der Deutschen Kunst the next day and after a gala performance of Richard Wagner's opera *Lohengrin* at the National Theatre.[51] What this evidently implies is that. in visiting the Künstlerhaus as they did, Duncan and Jarvis were, just over three weeks later, treading in the Führer's footsteps.

None of this is to suggest that Jarvis was not ambivalent about what he encountered in Nazi Germany. But there was obviously more to this encounter than what is allowed for in Horrall's paragraph. Yet, in not probing too deeply, Horrall – never mind Silcox, who has Duncan and Jarvis "gallivanting around France" and only France in the summer of 1938 –

would seem only to be echoing the preference of his chosen subject. Jarvis's own last comment on this trip, and Duncan's role in it, appears in the 1970 memorial essay, written when he was slipping into terminal alcoholism. It is stunningly lacking in any sense of wider context or, for that matter, thoughtful retrospection. Of the 1938 trip with Duncan, he wrote – and this is all he wrote – "I travelled seven thousand miles with him through France, Bavaria, and northern Italy during the summer of 1938, and to the best of my recollection, he lived entirely on *chocolat liègeois*."[52] *Chocolat liègeois* is a nutritionally empty concoction of rich whipped cream and chocolate. Perhaps Jarvis was making a joke. This sad and even tragic man would die two years later in December 1972 and Horrall does document well his decline.[53] But the sheer embarrassment and even horror of this decline continues also to pose a question. Was it only – as has been widely believed – the humiliation of his forced resignation as director of the National Gallery in 1959 that sent Alan Jarvis into a downward spiral that would come to an end when he was just fifty-seven? For this was, oddly enough, the same age David Milne was in October 1939 when Douglas Duncan photographed, with care and precision, a much younger Jarvis holding Milne's paintings and displaying them, in the last moments of their existence, to the camera's lens, before their addition to a rising pyre.

7. Further Symmetries

What Alan Jarvis and Douglas Duncan saw and did in Nazi Germany, as July turned to August in the summer of 1938 and tensions over the Sudetenland built toward the Munich Conference in September, deserves such further investigation as might be possible. This would be not least toward a clearer understanding of how such experience might have fed toward a staged immolation of David Milne's paintings starting in late October of the next year, at an especially dismal moment in Allied fortunes in war against Germany. But a few further observations can be made, with the first of these suggesting that there is to be found, in the photographic record of this immolation, an almost uncanny pattern of mimesis, in relation not only to the eugenic vocabulary of the Third Reich, but to its own version of aesthetic eugenics. According to Jonathan Petropoulos, in *Art as Politics in the Third Reich*, the Nazi SS, in the spring of 1939, themselves immolated visual artworks deemed "degenerate" but did so secretly. The works had been confiscated from German museums, stored in the care of Joseph Goebbels's Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, and also deemed unsaleable to foreign markets for hard currency. Based on research by Paul

Ortwin Rave in 1949, Petropoulos writes that "1004 paintings and 3285 drawings were classified as worthless and made eligible for destruction. This was done on 20 March 1939 in a secret bonfire – quite unlike the public book burnings of 1933 – in the courtyard of Berlin's main firehouse."[54]

To convey, again, a sense of the temporal contiguities in play here: 20 March 1939 was seven days before the first of the two postcards, with its triumphalist blue aestheticization of Nazi goals, was sent to Jarvis at Oxford by Wagenseil in Munich on 27 March 1939. It was also just over seven months before Duncan, in the isolation of Six Mile Lake, Ontario, Canada, so meticulously photographed Jarvis, dressed as he was, displaying Milne's paintings just before they were burned. We can here recall how Milne himself, in his letter to Kathleen Pavey of 30 October 1939, described the immolation of his own work then going on outside his cabin, involving two men who, the year before, we now see, had themselves been in "the capital of German art": "thousands of dollars worth of oils, a million of watercolours and some chicken feed of etching. . . ." The resonance of this note with Petropoulos's description – "1004 paintings and 3285 drawings were classified as worthless and made eligible for destruction" – is itself uncanny.

In this context, it deserves last mention also that the time frame of July 1938, which directly preceded the Duncan-Jarvis visit to Nagold and Munich, was no more an insignificant moment in the European lead-up to the Second World War than was the time frame of October 1939, which directly preceded the burning of Milne's paintings and included the war's first great convulsions in the fall of Poland and the sinking of the *HMS Royal Oak*, both of which tilted toward Nazi Germany. Moreover, the earlier, month-long time frame of July 1938, like that of October 1939, likewise contained not one but two especially prominent displays of Nazi achievement. Mentioned already was Hitler's opening on 10 July of the Second Great Exhibition of German Art at the Haus der Deutschen Kunst, accompanied by the parade and spectacle of the Day of German Art. Jarvis certainly visited this exhibition and Duncan likely did so. But, as the German victory parade in Warsaw on 5 October 1939 would be followed shortly by a spectacular sinking – that of the *HMS Royal Oak* on 14 October – so, too, were the spectacle and parade of the Day of German Art and the opening of the Exhibition on 10 July 1938 quickly followed by a different kind of sinking.

As noted by both Silcox and Horrall, Duncan and Jarvis were indeed travelling in France in July 1938, during which period, from 6 to 15 July, the Évian Conference was being held at Évian-les-Bains in eastern France on the Swiss border. Called by President Franklin Roosevelt in the wake of the Nazi Anschluss of Austria in March the same year, which was accompanied by acts

of brutality against Jews, the Évian Conference was intended "to promote the emigration of Austrian and German Jewish refugees and create an international organization whose purpose would be to deal with the general refugee problem."[55] The conference ended in ignominy when, of the thirty-two invited countries including Canada, only the Dominican Republic agreed voluntarily to admit more Jewish refugees. This in turn provided an immense propaganda coup for Hitler, who could then boast that, notwithstanding their sanctimonious rhetoric, the Western democracies did not want Jews either. Golda Meir, future Israeli Prime Minister and an observer at the conference, described her reaction as "a mixture of sorrow, rage, frustration, and horror" at the outcome, anticipating accurately that it would only license the Nazis to acts of greater violence against Jews who, after the conference, were trapped within their domain.[56]

This was not a good moment, either, in the lead-up to war with fascism. Instead, it was on 10 July 1938, in the midst of the Évian Conference and in the wake also of the triumph of the Austrian Anschluss in March, that Hitler himself travelled to Munich to open the Second Great Exhibition of German Art at the Haus der Deutschen Kunst. Five days later, on 15 July, the Conference failed, sinking the hopes of persecuted Jews within the Third Reich and handing Nazi Germany its victory of propaganda.[57] Here is how Horrall describes the beginning of Jarvis's and Duncan's midsummer trip in the touring car:

> Though the Barwicks worried about the ever-worsening European situation, they did not try to prevent Jarvis and Duncan from touring the Continent. Just after Bastille Day, the two men loaded their car with fruit and water, and left Paris for Bavaria and Italy.[58]

Horrall forgets the *chocolat liègeois*. But it is fact that France celebrates Bastille Day on 14 July. What this implies is that Jarvis and Duncan "left Paris for Bavaria and Italy" – the two most prominent Fascist states in Europe – directly in the wake of both the opening of the Second Great Exhibition of German Art at the Haus der Deutschen Kunst on the 10th (preceded by the parade of the Day of German Art) and the failure of the Évian Conference on the 15th, when Nazi Germany had much to celebrate and was doing so in Munich. Thus is produced another set of paired series, in this case of events, dating from late July to early August 1938, when Duncan and Jarvis visited southern Germany and Munich, and late October to early November 1939, when Duncan and Jarvis travelled with Milne to his cabin on Six Mile Lake and set about their work of "selection" and photodocumented destruction.

The sequences can be shown in tabular form this way:

July 1938	Events in sequence	October 1939	Events in sequence
10 July	Parade for the Day of German Art and opening of the Second Great Exhibition of German Art by Adolf Hitler	5 October	Military victory parade of the German army in conquered and devastated Warsaw, attended by Adolf Hitler
15 July	Failure of the Évian Conference and major propaganda victory for Nazi Germany	14 October	Sinking of *HMS Royal Oak* by U-47 and major propaganda victory for Nazi Germany
25 July	Duncan and Jarvis cross into Germany, are present at Nagold for all-night Wehrmacht manoeuvres, and travel on to Munich where Jarvis, certainly, and Duncan, probably, visit the Second Great Exhibition of German Art and both dine at the German "Artists' House"	30 October	Date established by David Milne's note to Kathleen Pavey for Duncan's and Jarvis's presence at his cabin and destruction of "inferior" artworks

In this case, to recall Deleuze, "the paradoxical element" that cuts across both series and makes them resonate in relation to one another is provided by both Jarvis and Duncan, whose presence was common to both sequences, but whose postwar records – Jarvis as champion in Ottawa of small-l liberal cosmopolitanism in art and Duncan as champion in Toronto of artistic modernism – would not suggest they belonged in either: hence the paradox. Yet the documentary evidence that they were present to both is incontrovertible.

Perhaps so precise a symmetry in the two sequences of events – the first involving Duncan's and Jarvis's actual physical immersion in Nazi Germany in multiple ways and the second involving a performative and stylized destruction of David Milne's artwork in a way distinctly mimetic of Nazi practices – was just coincidence. But it exists. And out of this "ensemble of non-causal correspondences," this "system of echoes, of reprises, and of

resonances," this "expressive quasi-causality," as established now by all four series – photographs, postcards, sequence of events in July 1938, sequence of events in October 1939 – spin a host of questions, as is not only appropriate but called for, what with, to be kind, the hitherto deflective treatment of this material. How, it has to be asked, did Alan Jarvis come to be standing on that curvature of South Muskoka rock in late October or early November 1939, dressed as he was, to be photographed for posterity performatively displaying paintings (plural) by David Milne just before they were burned? Again, the concept of mimesis bears mention. For, do the attributes of this record not suggest – and the thought is somewhat chilling – a sublimated and even anticipatory mimesis of the SS practice, repeated innumerable times during the Second World War and leaving its own record, of meticulously photographing "sub-standard" prisoners before their subsequent obliteration in the fires of crematoria?

As for the photographed paintings themselves, which continue to exist only in black-and-white extracted miniature, what does the record of just two of these suggest about what criteria might have been employed, by those present at the "selection" – as Duncan explicitly used the word – to decide which works would be deemed unworthy of continued existence?[59] What qualities do they display that establish elements of difference? There can be little doubt that what Pearson called Milne's "strange but authentic genius" was what might be called "autoproductive" as this term appears in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.[60] Milne produced, and did so with awesome indifference to creature comfort and convention. He wrote down theories about this production that were influenced, in his emphasis on "aesthetic emotion," by the aestheticism prominent in England in the early twentieth century.[61] But these theories exist alongside, and independently of, physical objects that are a record of seeing, and of seeing, in each case, from a perspective. And a further question deserves to be this: how credible, as comprehensive, is any overview of themes and developments in Milne's œuvre in the absence of the immolated works, especially when just one of them can be described in the complex terms presented earlier?

Jarvis's claim stands recognized: there is a case to be made that the moment of *encounter*, in de facto terms involving three men, outside Milne's cabin on Six Mile Lake in the summer of 1935 marked "the beginning of a relationship which was to become the most remarkable in the history of Canadian art." But how? For it now seems plausible that the "relationship" went on to provide, and to photodocument, an *event* that must be among "the most remarkable" not simply in "the history of Canadian art," but in the history of modern art, and perhaps even of any art, anywhere. For it

visibly involved, within a highly-charged time frame of modern history, performative and stylized immolation of multiple works by a Canadian painter considered by many art historians, as well as a former prime minister, in terms of genius. The photographed immolator was the future director of the country's national gallery, who came to a sad end. The hidden eye behind the lens was that of the painter's manager and the immolator's older, and by then likely former, lover who, with the immolator in tow, had guided a visit to Nazi Germany the year before that included presence at "the centre" of all-night Wehrmacht manoeuvres and thence to Munich, Hitler's "capital city of German art," at an especially triumphal juncture of National Socialist doctrine and aesthetics. Which triumphal juncture would also be echoed, via new events, in October 1939, just prior to the photographed burnings.

The suggestion deserves to be made, in concluding, that the more detail can be excavated, and the more analysis provided, in regard to this complex of events now open to view, quite possibly the better.

NOTES

Photographs by Douglas Duncan are courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada, with particular thanks to Chief Librarian Cyndie Campbell. Postcard images are courtesy of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto. The Deutsches Reich Luftpost image is in the public domain. Research toward this article was assisted by a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts

1 Alan Jarvis, ed., *Douglas Duncan: A Memorial Portrait* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 11. See also Andrew Horrall, *Bringing Art to Life: A Biography of Alan Jarvis* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 343.
2 Jarvis, *Douglas Duncan*, 3.
3 Kenneth Clark, *The Other Half: A Self-Portrait* (London: John Murray, 1977), 32.
4 Jarvis, *Douglas Duncan*, 5.
5 The generous assistance of Cyndie Campbell, Chief of Library, Archives and Research Fellowships at the National Gallery of Canada is here gratefully acknowledged.
6 David Silcox, *Painting Place: The Life and Work of David B. Milne* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 294. Internal footnotes and ellipsis as in the text.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid, 399. Parentheses in the text. The acronym refers to "Milne Family Papers."
9 Ibid, 310, 276, 273.
10 Horrall, *Bringing Art to Life,* 90.
11 Ibid, 370.
12 David Milne Jr. and David Silcox, *David B. Milne: A Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 11: 652.
13 David Milne Jr., telephone interview, May 2004.

14 Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 126.
15 Ibid, 131.
16 Jarvis, *Douglas Duncan*, 11.
17 Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 127–28.
18 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects* (London: Penguin, 1969), 58.
19 Gilles Deleuze, *Empirisme et subjectivité: Essai sur la nature humaine selon Hume* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953), 39. Translations from French are my own.
20 Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969), 264; "met en jeu des images."
21 Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 182; emphasis in the text.
22 Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 116.
23 Deleuze, *Logique du sens*, 127.
24 Ibid, 198–99.
25 A curious contiguity of place concerning application of Deleuze's terms to these particular series is that 81, Avenue Niel, as the added address on the earlier postcard sent to Jarvis from Munich in 1939, is almost directly across the road from 84, Avenue Niel, as the address in the 17th arrondissement where Gilles Deleuze lived in his later years and from whose upper storey window he plunged to his death on 4 November 1995 while suffering from debilitating lung disease. The entranceways to the two buildings are architecturally almost identical. This can only be noted here.
26 *Spiegel Online*. "Gestorben: Kurt Wagenseil," *Der Spiegel* 52/1988, 26 Dec. 1988. Accessed 5 Feb. 2019, www.angelfire.com/wa2/wagenseil/kurt.htm.
27 Horrall, *Bringing Art to Life,* 59.
28 Jarvis, *Douglas Duncan*, 16–39; Silcox, *Painting Place*, 274.
29 Douglas Duncan, *Photograph Album*. Douglas Duncan / Frances Barwick Fonds. National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives. No date.
30 Max Domarus, *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932–1945*, Volume One 1932–1934, trans. Mary Fran Gilbert (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990), 378.
31 Douglas Ord, *The National Gallery of Canada: Ideas, Art, Architecture* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 130–70.
32 Silcox, *Painting Place*, 261.
33 Horrall, *Bringing Art to Life,* 59.
34 Ibid, 60.
35 Kurt Wagenseil to Alan Jarvis, 1 Mar. and 29 Mar. 1939. Alan Jarvis Papers, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, Box 1.
36 Kurt Wagenseil to Frances Barwick, 28 Jan. 1969; Frances Barwick to Kurt Wagenseil, 6 July 1970; Frances Barwick Fonds. National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives.
37 Horrall, *Bringing Art to Life,* 60.
38 Alan Jarvis, "Notes on Two Canadian Artists," *The Undergraduate* 6:1 (1936): 35.
39 Jarvis, *Douglas Duncan*, 10; ellipsis in the text.
40 Alan Jarvis, Papers, Box 17.
41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 241.
45 Horrall, *Bringing Art to Life,* 60.
46 Alan Jarvis, Papers, Box 17.
47 Ibid. For the opening of the Haus der Deutschen Kunst, see also Domarus, *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932–1945*, Volume Two 1935–1938 (Wauconda, Illinois: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1992), 909–15.
48 Jarvis, "Notes on Two Canadian Artists," 36.
49 Haus der Deutschen Kunst, *Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung 1938 im Haus der Deutschen Kunst zu München, 10. Juli – 16. Oktober 1938*, Exhibition catalogue (Munich: Verlag F. Bruckmann, 1938). See also GDK Research, *Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung* 1937–1944 (Research platform for images of the Great German Art Exhibitions 1937–1944 in Munich). Accessed 27 Nov. 2017, http://www.gdk-research.de/db/apsisa.dll/ete. The 1938 album page can be accessed from there.
50 Alan Jarvis, Papers, Box 17.
51 Domarus, *Hitler,* Volume Two 1935–1938, 1125.
52 Jarvis, *Douglas Duncan*, 8.
53 Horrall, *Bringing Art to Life,* 337–48.
54 Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 82.
55 Shoah Resource Centre, "Évian Conference." Yad Vashem. Accessed 1 Nov. 2017, https://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206305.pdf.
56 Golda Meir, *My Life* (New York: Putnam's, 1975), 158.
57 The date happened also to be the forty-sixth birthday of Walter Benjamin, who would commit suicide less than two years later attempting to flee the Nazi conquest of France.
58 Horrall, *Bringing Art to Life,* 59.
59 Jarvis, *Douglas Duncan*, 11.
60 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie 1: L'Anti-Œdipe* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1972), 57 and 337.
61 See Silcox, *Painting Place*, 16.

RÉSUMÉ

À propos de Milne, Duncan et Jarvis

DOUGLAS ORD

Cet article explore deux séries d'artefacts, la première composée de deux photographies et la seconde de deux cartes postales, datant toutes de 1939.

Les photos monochromes aux compositions quasi identiques montrent Alan Hepburn Jarvis (1915–1972), futur troisième directeur du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada de 1955 à 1959, qui présente à l'objectif de la caméra deux peintures de David Brown Milne (1882–1953) et qui s'apprête de toute évidence à les ajouter aux œuvres brûlant déjà sur un bûcher contre une paroi rocheuse. Ces photos remontent à la fin d'octobre et au début de novembre 1939, soit deux mois après l'invasion de la Pologne par l'Allemagne le 1er septembre 1939, événement déclencheur de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale en Europe et de l'entrée en guerre du Canada. Les archives indiquent que l'auteur des deux clichés était Douglas Moerdyke Duncan (1902–1968) : l'amant de Jarvis de 1934 à 1939 environ et l'agent de Milne à partir de 1938.

Les deux cartes postales ont été retrouvées dans les archives d'Alan Jarvis hébergées à la Bibliothèque de livres rares Thomas Fisher de l'Université de Toronto. Toutes deux ont été envoyées à Jarvis de Munich, en Allemagne, au printemps 1939, pendant son année d'études comme boursier Rhodes à l'Université d'Oxford, en Angleterre. L'expéditeur a été identifié comme étant Kurt Wagenseil (1904–1988), amant et compagnon de Duncan à Paris à la fin des années 1920, ainsi que le traducteur allemand des œuvres de Henry Miller, de Virginia Woolf, de George Orwell, de Jean Cocteau et de Kurt Vonnegut, entre autres. Au verso des cartes postales figurent les timbres-poste et affranchissements de l'Allemagne nazie, y compris le slogan de Munich : Hauptstadt der Bewegung, la « capitale du mouvement ».

L'article commence par une présentation et une description de ces artefacts découverts dans le cadre d'une tentative de revue thématique de l'œuvre de David Milne, leur existence énigmatique ayant jeté des doutes sur la possibilité de mener une revue exhaustive. Ensuite, une méthode d'analyse des deux séries (les deux photos et deux cartes postales) est proposée à partir de la lecture que fait Gilles Deleuze des « principes d'association entre les

idées » de David Hume : ressemblance, contiguïté du temps et de l'espace et causalité. Dans ses premiers écrits sur Hume (1953), Deleuze aborde ces deux premiers « principes » dont Hume se méfiait, car ce dernier se fondait sur la méthode expérimentale pour établir la relation de cause à effet. Pour sa part, Deleuze élabore le concept de « résonance », qu'il reprend dans *Logique du sens* (1969) pour analyser des séries associatives, plurielles, qu'un « élément paradoxal parcourt et fait résonner » afin de produire du sens : ce que Deleuze appelle la « quasi-causalité expressive ».

Cette méthode s'applique aux deux séries. La présence de deux artefacts liés par de multiples attributs de ressemblance et de contiguïté dans le temps et dans l'espace constitue une série : ouverte, dans le cas des photos, car des preuves indiquent que le photographe ne s'est pas arrêté à deux clichés. La série des cartes postales est probablement fermée, car rien ne nous permet de croire qu'il y en aurait d'autres. Cependant, elles aussi sont restées dans les archives de Jarvis de 1939 jusqu'à sa mort à l'âge de 57 ans en 1972, des suites d'un alcoolisme chronique. Contrairement aux photos, elles se sont retrouvées à la bibliothèque des livres rares.

Comment doit-on comprendre ces deux séries d'artefacts que « parcourt et fait résonner » la figure paradoxale et trouble d'Alan Jarvis, immortalisée à 24 ans dans les deux photos de Duncan où il brûle les peintures de Milne à l'automne 1939 et le destinataire des deux cartes postales envoyées de Munich au printemps 1939? Les cartes comportent toutes deux des répétitions qui les différencient au sein d'une troisième série, celle des 11 timbres de poste aérienne du Deutsches Reich de 1934, une représentation visuelle particulièrement condensée et esthétisée de la vision nazie en général.

Que signifient ces cartes postales? Pourquoi ont-elles été envoyées? L'article présente ensuite la recherche qui a émergé de ces questions et de ces deux séries (photos et cartes postales), une recherche inédite ou, du moins, qui porte sur des aspects jamais abordés dans les études existantes sur Milne, Jarvis ou Duncan. Milne a fait l'objet de très nombreuses études. Il existe quelques travaux sur Jarvis. Duncan est très peu étudié. Cependant, presque aucune étude ne traite de l'événement étrange documenté dans les photos. Et dans ses rares mentions, la question est éludée, comme on le ferait avec un vieil oncle qui se comporte mal quand on lui porte attention.

À rebours de cette attitude méprisante, l'article suggère plutôt que cet événement mérite un examen des plus minutieux, contexte compris, en sa qualité d'épisode de l'histoire de l'art moderne des plus étranges qui soit survenu dans le monde. Milne a souvent été qualifié de « génie ». Pourtant, il existe une archive visuelle d'un jeune homme, futur directeur du Musée des beaux-arts du Canada, photographié avec panache, de manière méthodique et théâtrale, par celui qui était probablement déjà son ancien amant et l'agent

de Milne, en train de brûler des peintures de Milne et sur le point d'en ajouter au bûcher. Ces photos présentent les œuvres à l'instant qui précède leur destruction. Au fil de cette recherche, on découvre que le jeune homme et l'agent plus âgé avaient visité l'Allemagne nazie l'été précédent (1938), plus précisément la Forêt-Noire et Munich, qui se proclamait alors la « capitale du mouvement ». Lors de ce voyage, ils ont entre autres dîné à la même maison des artistes allemands qui avait accueilli Adolf Hitler en tant que führer à peine trois semaines plus tôt pour qu'il inaugure la deuxième grande exposition de l'art allemand à la Maison de l'art allemand. La Künstler Haus avait, selon la description donnée par Jarvis dans une lettre à sa mère et à son beau-père, été « restaurée et transformée en club pour les membres de l'union des artistes allemands par Herr Hitler lui-même. » Dans la suite de la lettre, il confie que « l'ami de D. a pu nous y faire entrer parce que son père a peint des murales dans une des chambres. »

Sur quels univers jusqu'alors cachés cette porte s'ouvrira-t-elle?

Two Clients, their Architect, and the Birth of Canadian Modernism

HAROLD KALMAN

The unsettled decades between the two world wars motivated Canadian architects and their clients to seek new directions. For many, modernism was the only route to follow. A house near Toronto and a slaughterhouse in Edmonton, both built in 1936, stood at the forefront of Canada's shift to a new architecture. The two structures, both of which have been demolished, were built for strong-willed clients who knew what they wanted. Both were designed by Toronto architect Eric Ross Arthur. This essay focuses on the two buildings and their clients. It also discusses ideas of the time about the modern movement, as expressed by Arthur and other architects.[1]

Client 1: Charlotte Erichsen-Brown

In September 1929 the 22-year-old Charlotte Dinnick (1907–2002) (Fig. 1) was left spellbound by "The Canadian House of Today," a model home displayed at the Eaton's department store in downtown Toronto (Fig. 2). The T. Eaton Company positioned itself as an authority on taste. The retailer promoted progressive new design in the architecture of its stores, its advertisements, and its merchandise, and it staged competitions for the design of small houses.[2] The ultimate examples of Eaton's design achievements were the elegant top-floor restaurants in the Toronto and Montreal stores, early landmarks of the Art Deco style, designed in 1930 by French architect Jacques Carlu (1890–1976).[3]

Consistent with the French theme, Eaton's promoted the Canadian House of Today as the latest Parisian architectural fashion. Designed by French artist René Cera (1885–1992), the House of Today was small and square, with grey-white stucco walls whose crisp, undecorated openings contained scarlet-framed windows and doors. It was capped by three horizontal fins, sporting rounded, streamlined corners and a flat roof. Charlotte Dinnick was captivated by its "elegant clean lines of modernity." The model house so impressed her that she determined there and then to build a home just like it.[4]

Two years later, Charlotte married lawyer John Price Erichsen-Brown (1906–1997). Both recent graduates from the University of Toronto, they set



1 | Charlotte Erichsen-Brown in her Dufferin Street home, ca. 1943. (Photo: Courtesy of D.P. Brown)

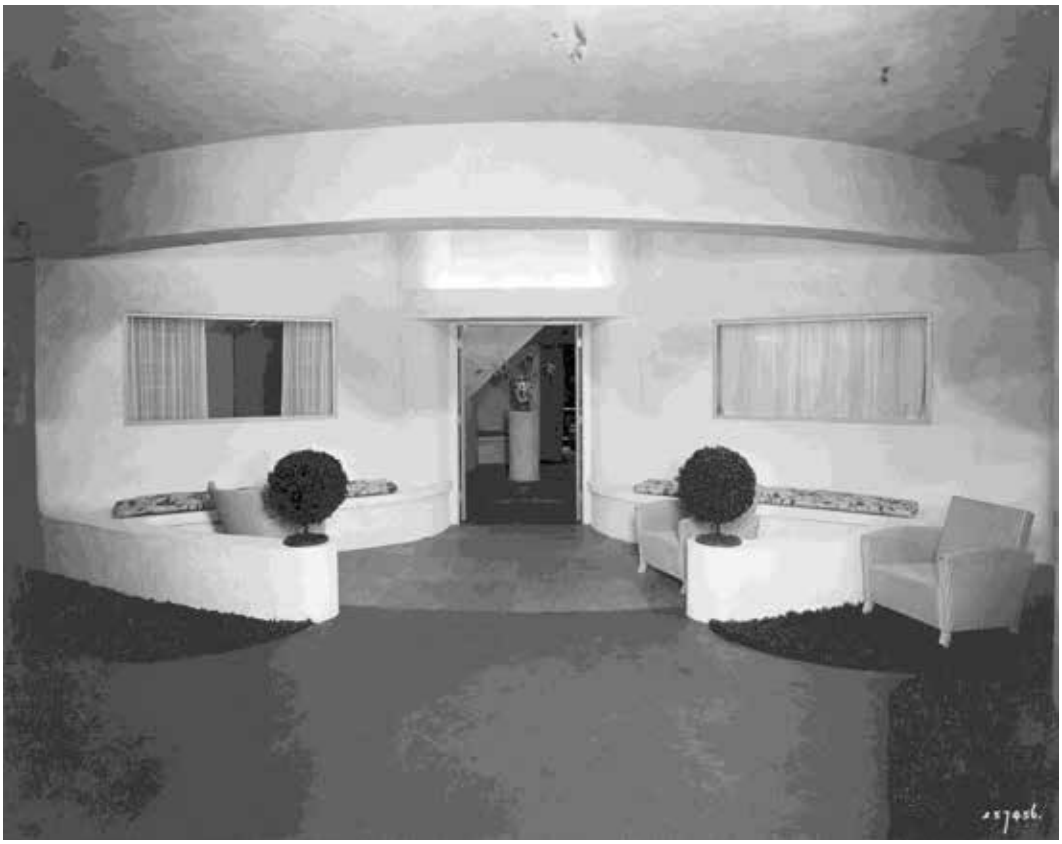
2 (*opposite*) | René Cera, The Canadian House of Today, 1929.

out to build their marital home. They needed an architect, so they went to see the professor who taught design at the university's School of Architecture. He was Eric Ross Arthur (1898–1982), a New Zealander who had studied in England before settling in Toronto. Charlotte knew exactly what she wanted and Price happily went along with his wife's taste. So, too, did Arthur, even though he had never produced anything quite like Cera's house. The residences that Arthur had designed before then consistently displayed a taste for traditional Georgian architecture, with which he had become enamoured on his many field trips around southern Ontario.[5]

The Erichsen-Brown house was built in 1936 (Fig. 3). The model and the final product share many features, even if they don't quite look the same. The house was located on a large, forested lot on Dufferin Street in the Toronto suburb of North York. It sat deep in the property, invisible from the road.[6] The house was very much at home in its landscaped setting.

Arthur scaled back the plan of the Canadian House of Today and simplified its details to accommodate his young clients' modest budget. White exterior walls, stucco over concrete block, rose above an irregular footprint. The roof was uncompromisingly flat. The house had no basement. Next to the understated entrance, a prominent curved wall was fabricated from







glass blocks, then considered a fashionable new material (Fig. 4). The curved contours look ahead to the Art Deco (or Moderne) style, which was just emerging at the time. The severe interiors featured black linoleum floors and off-white walls, with no trim around the doors or windows. An up-to-date, two-car garage was soon converted to bedrooms, in order to accommodate a growing family.

The Erichsen-Brown house turned its back on Toronto's Georgian tradition, as well as to the street. It adopted instead the language of the European modern movement. Its relationship to the modernist architecture of the Bauhaus in Germany and the New Objectivity movement in the Netherlands is discussed below, with the Canada Packers plant.

The furniture that Charlotte selected for her home included bent tubular chrome-and-leather chairs (Fig. 5) of the kind introduced at the Bauhaus in 1925 by the German-American architect and designer Marcel Breuer (1902–1981), a protégé of Gropius. Charlotte and Price's son, artist Daniel Price Erichsen Brown (D.P. Brown, b. 1939), who grew up in the Toronto house, recalls that his mother "was influenced by the latest contemporary German school of design and Frank Lloyd Wright. Simple lines with no frills; the very opposite to the late Victorian period."

Charlotte was delighted by her new home. Late in life she told Toronto architect Alec Keefer that her vision had been realized. Her house was described in her obituary as "one of the first contemporary houses in the Toronto region."[7] Her and Eric Arthur's joint creation was arguably the first modern house in Ontario and one of the first of its kind in North America.[8]

Charlotte would have considered herself a modern woman. She was "a person of great intelligence, with a proud, pioneering nature" and a published

3 (*opposite*) | Eric Arthur, Erichsen-Brown House façade, North York, Ontario, 1936. (Photo: Courtesy of D.P. Brown)

4 (*above*) | Eric Arthur, Erichsen-Brown House, North York, Ontario, 1936. View of the entrance hall. (Photo: Courtesy of D.P. Brown)

5 (*below*) | Eric Arthur, Erichsen-Brown House, North York, Ontario, 1936. Views of the Bauhaus chrome-and-leather chairs. (Photo: Courtesy of D.P. Brown)







6 | From left, Price Erichsen-Brown, Soviet spy Emma Woikin, and Emma's brother, who posted the bond, leave court in Ottawa in 1946. (Alex Gray, Toronto Star Archives)

authority on herbs and medicinal plants. She opened the University of Toronto's campus coffee shop, a popular hangout for students and faculty. Later in life, in Ottawa, she co-founded the city's first classical concerts for children. Her husband, Price, rose to fame for defending Emma Woikin, convicted as a Russian spy in a trial linked to the infamous Igor Gouzenko case (Fig. 6). The Erichsen-Browns were active members of the socialist C.C.F. party. D.P. Brown describes his mother as authoritarian and confirms that the house would have been her, and not his father's, project.

The Erichsen-Brown family left their remarkable Toronto home in 1945, after less than a decade. They moved to Ottawa, where Charlotte lectured in English at Carleton and Price took a job with the federal Department of External Affairs. Their little white house was later demolished without ever having attracted attention.

Charlotte's progressive values conflicted with those of her mother-in-law, Isobel MacCurdy Erichsen Brown (who did not hyphenate her name). The two women did, however, share liberal tastes in art. Isobel had a close



7 (*above*) | A.Y. Jackson, *Islands, Go Home Bay*, ca. 1930, oil on board, 26.7 × 34.3 cm, private collection. Also inscribed by the artist the "Little Picture Show" and "Not for Sale." (Photo: the owner)



8 (*below*) | A.Y. Jackson, *Tom Thomson's Shack*, ca. 1942, graphite on paper, 22.1 × 29.7 cm, Gift of the Founders, Robert and Signe McMichael, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1966.16.103. (Photo: Art Gallery of Ontario, McMichael Canadian Art Collection)

connection with what is now the Art Gallery of Ontario. She was related to the Group of Seven painter, A.Y. Jackson (1882–1974). Jackson and other artists in the Group used to visit Isobel and her husband, lawyer and artist Frank, at their cottage, called "Treasure Island," at Go Home Bay, in Georgian Bay. In anticipation of one of his trips, Jackson wrote in a letter, "the first of August I will be going to my cousins the Erichsen Browns at Go Home Bay . . . and will probably get out my little paints and make 'a pine tree on a rock'"[9] (Fig. 7). Another seasonal resident of Go Home Bay was art collector

Dr. James MacCallum (1860–1943), an early supporter of Tom Thomson (1877–1917) and the Group of Seven. Several artists in their circle, including Will Ogilvie (1901–1989), Arthur Lismer (1885–1969), Frederick Varley (1881–1969), and Charles Comfort (1900–1994), were regular visitors to the Erichsen Brown and MacCallum cottages and often showed their paintings there.[10]

Charlotte also spent time in Toronto with her artist friends. She attended great parties at Tom Thomson's shack, the small wood building in the Rosedale ravine that was the artist's home and studio (Fig. 8). The shack is now exhibited, together with a superb collection of paintings by the Group of Seven, at the McMichael Gallery, north of Toronto. A.Y. Jackson would bring his sketches from Georgian Bay to Toronto and display them at the Forest Hill home of Isobel and Frank Erichsen Brown. Jackson's small painted sketches sold for as much as $75, well beyond the means of Charlotte and Price.[11]

Client 2: J. Stanley McLean

One collector who regularly attended Isobel's exhibits was J.S. McLean (1876–1954), the president of Canada Packers (Fig. 9). McLean described his devotion to contemporary art in an essay he wrote for *Canadian Art* in the early 1950s, called "On the Pleasures of Collecting Paintings":

> From the beginning I have had the privilege of [A.Y. Jackson's] friendship and the benefit of his advice . . . Each Spring and Fall he goes off on a sketching tour, and the chief social events of the art year in Toronto are the parties given by Mrs. Erichsen Brown to have a look at what "Alex" has brought home.[12]

Stanley McLean was a self-made man, not born into privilege like Charlotte. Raised on a farm in Durham County, Ontario, he graduated in math and physics from the University of Toronto's Class of 1896. After brief stints teaching school in small-town Ontario and selling insurance in Rossland, BC, McLean landed a clerical position with the Harris Abattoir Company of Toronto. He had found his calling. When the meat-packing industry crashed after the First World War, McLean's tireless work and hardnosed cost-cutting kept the company afloat and ultimately made it prosper. In 1927, with abattoir owner James Harris ill and two years from death, McLean engineered a series of brilliant acquisitions and mergers to form Canada Packers Limited, installing himself as president. We read that McLean "set out to streamline" Canada Packers. To McLean, streamlining a business meant modernizing its every aspect: not only processes, equipment, and marketing, but also architecture. McLean led the company to national dominance and became a



9 | Wyndham Lewis, *J.S. McLean*, 1941, oil on canvas, Private collection, © Wyndham Lewis and the Estate of Mrs. G.A. Wyndham Lewis by kind permission of the Wyndham Lewis Memorial Trust. (Photo: Wyndham Lewis Memorial Trust)

wealthy man. The construction of his Toronto mansion on Bayview Avenue in 1928, designed by Eric Arthur, marked his success.[13]

It is tempting, but not wholly satisfying, to consider J.S. McLean in the context of architectural historian Leonard K. Eaton's classic study of the Chicago clients of the innovative Frank Lloyd Wright and the conservative Howard Van Doren Shaw. Eaton notes Wright's suggestion that his most sympathetic clients were "businessmen with unspoiled instincts and untainted ideas." Many were manufacturers, or otherwise involved in industrial processes. McLean fits this profile, although many of Wright's clients lacked McLean's formal post-secondary education. Shaw's clients

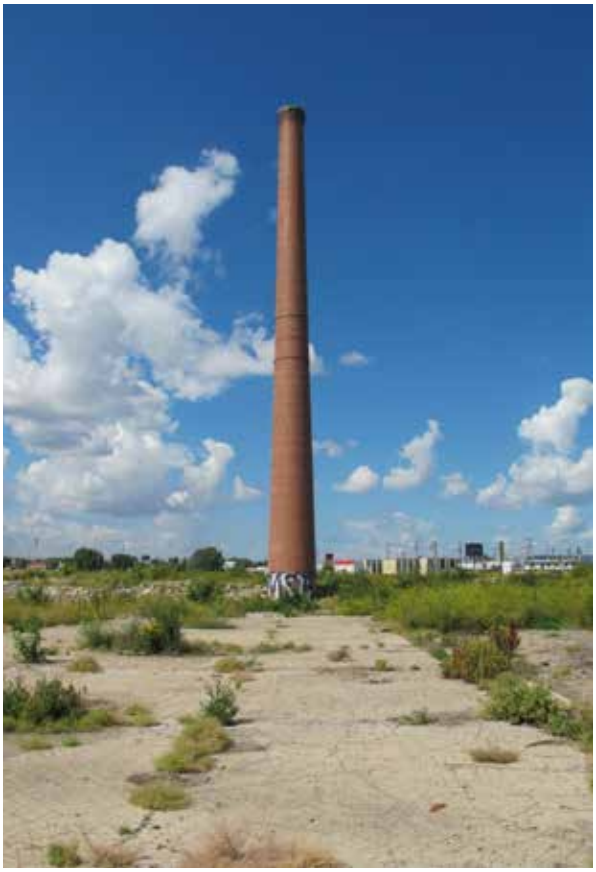


10 | Eric Arthur, Canada Packers plant, Edmonton, AB, 1936, *JRAIC* 14:7 (1937): 158. (Photo: the author)

tended to be better educated than Wright's. They included ambitious, self-made men with "sheer ability," another of McLean's attributes. Most, however, came from the second generation of "the merchant aristocracy," which McLean did not.[14]

In 1936 McLean built a large new slaughterhouse and meat-packing plant on Fort Road in "Packingtown," northeast Edmonton (Fig. 10). He chose Arthur as his architect. Three railway spurs brought the cattle to Canada Packers' livestock pens. Hogs, cattle, calves, and sheep were herded up a concrete ramp to their slaughter on the third floor, the "killing floor." The carcasses were dropped to the second floor for cutting, and the meat and by-products to the ground floor and basement for curing, packing, and shipping. Some 300 workers were initially employed here, expanding to more than 1,000 over the following decades.[15]

McLean's abattoir was starkly modern. Arthur trumpeted this in the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* (*JRAIC*), of which he had just become editor:



11 | The smokestack from the Canada Packers plant, Edmonton, all that remained after the plant's demolition in 1995. (Photo: David Murray)

> Modern architecture has marked the end of the Saracenic carpet factory and the Collegiate Gothic abattoir, for which owners, architects and little pigs should be profoundly grateful.[16]

Plain brick walls concealed a reinforced concrete structural frame. A series of discrete blocks responded to the various functions. On top of the building, concrete letters some two metres high spelled out the words "Canada Packers." Despite large additions to the plant in the 1950s, it and Packingtown would soon succumb to the pressures of industrial and economic change. Canada Packers converted the building to a distribution centre in 1984 and demolished it a decade later. They left only the tall smokestack, nearly 40 metres high, now a protected historic site (Fig. 11). Canada Packers continues today as part of Maple Leaf Foods.

The Edmonton plant was the first non-residential building by a Canadian architect to adopt the modernist International Style. Canada Packers fits comfortably within that style's moderate strain. The manner first appeared



12 | Willem Dudok, School at Hilversum, Holland, ca. 1928–30, Sheldon Cheney, *The New World Architecture*, 1930, p. 29. (Photo: the author)

in the 1920s in the work of Walter Gropius (1883–1969), Erich Mendelsohn (1887–1953), and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969) in Germany, and Le Corbusier (1887–1965) in France. Arthur's model, however, was more the work of the founders' less renowned followers, particularly the Dutch architects Willem Dudok (1884–1974) and Mart Stam (1899–1986). Buildings by Dudok and Stam combined the formal simplicity of the Bauhaus with the abstract geometry of *De Stijl*, while ignoring the revolutionary ideology of the modern movement. Dudok's schools (ca. 1928–30) and town hall (1924–31) in Hilversum, Holland (Fig. 12), where he was municipal architect, were widely published and admired.

American critic Sheldon Cheney illustrated a school by Dudok in his widely read book, *The New World Architecture*. Cheney wrote: "Here in Holland more than anywhere else Modernism has full official sanction, so that the schools we see are direct and simple agglomerations of [rooms and spaces] . . . (without reference to Renaissance palaces)." These words were published in 1930, only about a year after the Hilversum school had been built. The rectilinear, block-like composition and austere treatment of Dudok's work evidently appealed to Arthur. The Canadian would later pay homage to Dudok by reprinting an article by him in the *JRAIC*.[17]

Despite McLean's reputation as a ruthless manager, he earned his employees' loyalty by instituting a cost-sharing program and other benefits. Staff responded with an affectionate song, "The President," which they sang at the annual sales conference at Toronto in 1937. Its lyrics went, in part:

> While we have the President
> He'll divvy up the dough . . .



13 | Eric Arthur, Canada Packers Plant, Vancouver, BC, 1936–37. (Photo: Harold Kalman)

He built a plant at Edmonton
The best in all the land
They gave it two Gold Medals
Because it was so grand . . .

We now go to Vancouver
We serve from Coast to Coast.[18]

The reference to Vancouver was to a Canada Packers plant in that city, designed by Arthur only a few months after the Edmonton facility (Fig. 13). It was the first modernist non-residential building in the young, western metropolis. The building still stands on Industrial Avenue, next to the CNR tracks, and is used today for packing of a different kind – it sells packing supplies and provides self-storage.[19]

At the very time that McLean was building the Edmonton and Vancouver plants, he made his name as a collector of contemporary art. He began by focusing on paintings and sketches by A.Y. Jackson, whom he met at Isobel Erichsen Brown's parties. He soon expanded his scope, showing particular

interest in the work of Carl Schaefer (1903–1995), Paraskeva Clark (1898–1986), and David Milne (1882–1953). Many of McLean's purchases hung in Canada Packers offices and plants across Canada. Most of the collection was later donated to the Art Gallery of Toronto, now the Art Gallery of Ontario.[20] McLean's taste for modernism was highly unusual within Toronto's socially conservative business establishment. Perhaps his birth in rural Ontario, his early work in the West, and his having worked his way up from the trenches gave him license to search for new directions.

Stanley McLean and Charlotte Erichsen-Brown were both "modernists," he as a collector of contemporary art and she as a friend and champion of contemporary artists. Both were clients for leading-edge buildings. McLean's Edmonton plant was Canada's first modernist industrial building and Erichsen-Brown's Toronto home was one of Canada's first modernist houses. Both were begun in 1936. The link between McLean and Erichsen-Brown certainly did not lie in their politics or professions, one a right-leaning industrialist and the other a left-leaning enthusiast of the arts. The connection is found instead in their architect.

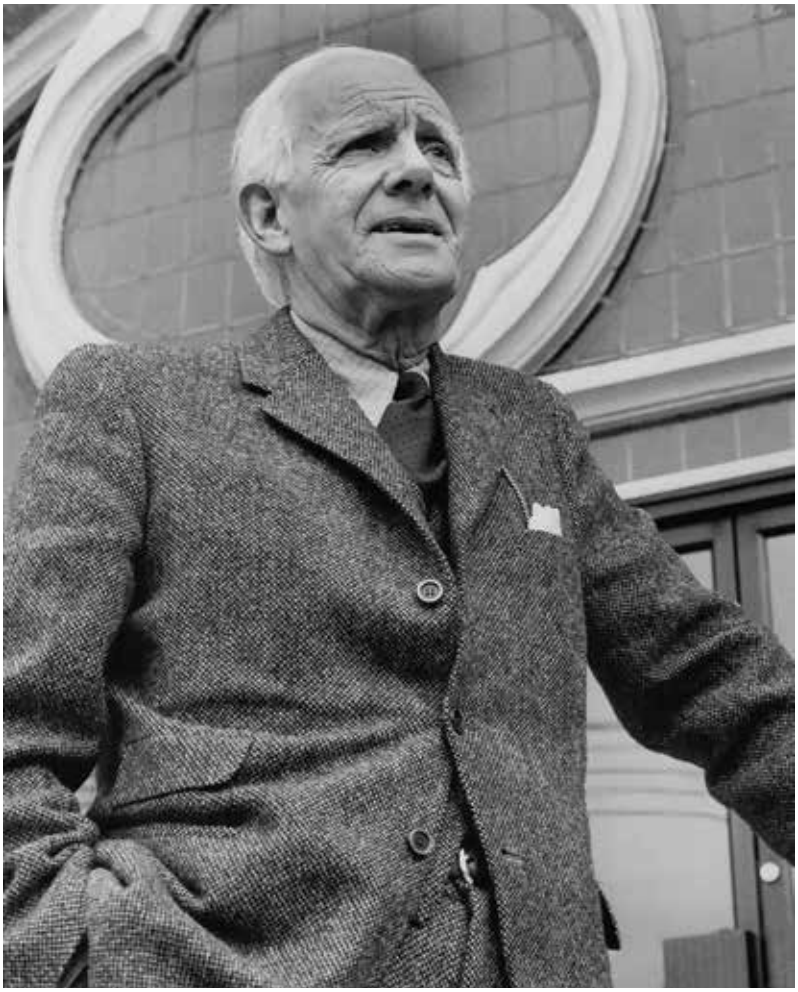
The Architect: Eric R. Arthur

Eric Arthur (1898–1982) (Fig. 14) studied Beaux-Arts architecture at the University of Liverpool, worked in the prestigious London office of the acclaimed Sir Edwin Lutyens, and then was recruited by the University of Toronto, where he became renowned as a teacher. His lessons changed from a focus on the established Beaux-Arts style to the new modernism in 1936, the year in which he designed the Erichsen-Brown house and the Canada Packers plant. That same year witnessed the broad acceptance of modernism in Europe and America. As an example, Frank Lloyd Wright's famous Fallingwater, in Pennsylvania, was completed in that year. Walter Gropius began to teach at Harvard a year later. By then Arthur was already using Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture* as a textbook in his own classes.[21]

Arthur explained his objectives in a later interview

> It was my job . . . to wean the school away from the École des Beaux-Arts . . . I would introduce them to . . . Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, and those people who were leading the way in the modern movement while the other schools were probably still dragging their feet in the Beaux Arts . . . It wasn't a new emphasis; it was just a healthier emphasis on design.[22]

Arthur's turn to modernism was bolstered by his hiring William E. Fleury (1910–1983), his former student, to join the practice. Fleury had a



14 | Eric Arthur, 1969, Toronto Public Library. (Photo: the author)

flair for contemporary design, a strength that Arthur would have found complementary. The two collaborated on the Canada Packers plant while Fleury was still in school.[23] Arthur and Fleury would go on to work as partners for more than 30 years, from 1940 until 1975.

The term "modernism" is usually defined stylistically as the abandonment of the academic tradition and the manifestation of the modern movement. This is how Arthur saw modernism, and it is how it is used in the present article. Alternative narratives define modernism in terms of architects' social, political, or ethical expressions, or by the discourse that led to choices of design.[24]

Arthur exploited his well-honed promotional skills to spread the new style among Canadian architects. He was an inspiring educator who taught modernism to two generations of students. He was the persuasive editor and critic of the *JRAIC*, making the magazine a voice for modernism. He served as a vocal adviser to several high-profile architectural competitions. Arthur



15 | Viljo Revell with John B. Parkin Associates and Eric Arthur, professional adviser, Toronto City Hall, Toronto, Ontario 1961–65. (Photo: Wikimedia Commons)

preached modernism at every opportunity. In 1936, in a talk to a national audience over the CBC radio network, Arthur promoted an architecture with "an instrisic beauty that needs no embellishment."[25] This was, in effect, a mantra for modernism. He later repeated the theme in a submission to the Massey Commission, whose influential report was published in 1951.[26] His impact across all media was immense.

Despite his commitment to modernism, Eric Arthur never lost sight of history. He pioneered the study of Ontario's early buildings. He was a leader in preservation advocacy who helped organize the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. Arthur came to be known to a more popular audience by means of the popular books that he wrote later in life, including *Toronto: No Mean City, From Front Street to Queen's Park*, and *The Barn*, as well as for his key role in saving Toronto's St. Lawrence Hall and its Old City Hall. The latter makes a

vivid contrast with the adjacent modern City Hall (Fig. 15), whose architect, the gifted Finn Viljo Revell, was selected in a controversial competition that was masterminded by none other than Eric Arthur.[27]

Arthur's achievements were well recognized by his peers. Vancouver architect C.E. ("Ned") Pratt (1911–1996), a student of Arthur's in the 1930s and a leader in introducing modernism to British Columbia in the 1940s and 1950s, offered a heartfelt tribute as he presented Arthur with the coveted Gold Medal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada in 1970:

> During the Depression of the '30s . . . Eric Arthur was a lone rebel . . . His was the most courageous voice in Canada in our profession . . . His most noteworthy Canadian architectural effort . . . was a series of very utilitarian packing plants. These were the first industrial buildings in Canada and the United States which stood on their own, and proudly proclaimed industrial architecture could have its own identity and integrity.[28]

Arthur is little remembered today as a practising architect. His reputation is based on his more influential work as a teacher and a writer. Few people have heard of either the Erichsen-Brown house or the Canada Packers plant in Edmonton, neither of which still stands. Yet they led the way to Canada's acceptance of the new architectural modernism. Charlotte Erichsen-Brown and J.S. McLean deserve to be celebrated as the clients who opened the doors to modern architecture in Canada, and Eric Arthur as the architect who transformed their innovative ideas into bricks, concrete block, and stucco. Collectively the three helped introduce Canadians to modern culture and launch the nation's rich legacy of modernism.

NOTES

1 The author is pleased to acknowledge the kind assistance of D.P. Brown, Elizabeth Cavaliere, Ted Mills, and the late Stephen A. Otto.

2 Susan Haight, "Machines in Suburban Gardens: The 1936 T. Eaton Company Architectural Competition For House Designs," *Material History Review* 44 (1996): 23–44; Susan Haight, "Home Economies: The T. Eaton Company's Thrift House, 1926–1950," in *Architectures of Display: Department Stores and Modern Retail*, ed. Anca I. Lasc, et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), chapter 3. The parallel efforts of American department stores to disseminate progressive design among consumers are discussed in Richard Longstreth, *The American Department Store Transformed, 1920–1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

3 Both restaurants were decorated with murals by Natacha Carlu, the wife of Jacques Carlu; Harold Kalman, *A History of Canadian Architecture*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Oxford

University Press, 1994), 767–70; David Eckler, "The Sources For and Influence of Jacques Carlu's Eaton Auditorium, Toronto, 1930," *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* 4 (1988): 9–16.

4 Charlotte Erichsen-Brown related the story to architect Alec Keefer, who retold if in Alec Keefer, ed., "Eric Arthur's Career: An Overview," in *Eric Ross Arthur: Conservation in Context* (Toronto: Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy, 2001), 69–70. The flat roof was considered for some time to be the epitome of modernism. In its early years, the Central (now Canada) Mortgage and Housing Corporation (cmhc) would not lend money for buildings with flat roofs. This was related to the author by his architect-father, Maxwell M. Kalman (1906–2009), to whom cmhc denied mortgages for flat-roofed projects.

5 Arthur, who never learned to drive, took frequent day-trips, driven by his friends and students. He published his observations in a series of articles in the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* (*JRAIC*) in 1927 and 1928 and in *Small Houses of the Late 18th and the Early 19th Centuries in Ontario* (Toronto, Department of Architecture, University of Toronto, ca. 1929) and *The Early Buildings of Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1938).

6 Houses of the day increasingly turned away from the street. The jury for the Small House Design competition of 1936, sponsored under the provisions of the Dominion Housing Act, noted that "many of the competitors placed the important rooms facing the garden." It stated that "this orientation is the most advantageous as it gives privacy and takes advantage of the southern exposure." "Awards in Architectural Competition for an Ideal Ontario Home," *JRAIC* 7:4 (1930): 138.

7 Keefer, "Eric Arthur's Career," 70. Obituary of Charlotte Louise Erichsen-Brown, *Globe and Mail*, 24 Oct. 2002.

8 A handful of modernist houses were built in Quebec at around the same time. Two are the Bourdon house in Sillery, near Quebec City, designed by the Swiss-born Robert Blatter (1899–1998) and built in 1934; and the Laroque (or Bourdon) house in Outremont, near Montreal, designed by Marcel Parizeau (1898–1945) and built in 1936–37; see Kalman, *Canadian Architecture*, 783–84; Robert Hill, *Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada 1800–1950*. Accessed 9 Sept. 2020, http://www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/.

9 16 July [1931?], Naomi Jackson Groves, *A.Y.'s Canada* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1968), 108.

10 D.P. Brown correspondence; Dennis Reid, *A Concise History of Canadian Painting*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), 141ff. Eric Arthur also spent many summers on Georgian Bay at Pointe au Baril, about 50 kilometres north of Go Home Bay; Mike Lavoie, "Eric Arthur: Splashing in Waves of Controversy," *Toronto Daily Star*, 7 Apr. 1966.

11 J.S. McLean, "On the Pleasures of Collecting Paintings," *Canadian Art* 10:1 (1952): 3. D.P. Brown confirms that the paintings shown at the Erichsen Brown cottage sold for "as much as $75"; letter to the author, 24 Mar. 2017.

12 McLean, "On the Pleasures of Collecting Paintings," 3.

13 J.S. Willis, *This Packing Business: The History and Development of the Use of Meat to Feed Mankind, from the Dawn of History to the Present* (Toronto: Canada Packers Limited, n.d.), 33–41 and passim.

14 Leonard K. Eaton, *Two Chicago Architects and Their Clients: Frank Lloyd Wright and Howard Van Doren Shaw* (Cambridge, ma: mit Press, 1969).

15 "Canada Packers Plant at Edmonton. Eric R. Arthur, Architect," *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* 14:8 (1937): 158–60. See also Harold Kalman, "Eric Arthur and the Introduction of Modernism to Canada," *JRAIC* 42:2 (2017): 50–52; Kalman, *Canadian Architecture* 2: 783; Rhodri Windsor Liscombe and Michelangelo Sabatino, *Canada: Modern Architectures in History*, ed. Vivian Constantinopoulos (London: Reaktion Books, 2016), 104–105; Keefer, "Eric Arthur's Career," 66–67; "Canada Packers Million Dollar Plant Officially Opened," *The Chronicle* (Carbon, AB), 26 Nov. 1936, a piece that was carried in several Alberta community papers.

16 Eric Arthur, "Editorial Notes," *JRAIC* 14:7 (1937): 142.

17 Sheldon Cheney, *The New World Architecture* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930). Dukdok's work was illustrated on pages 28–29. Willem Dudok, "Town Planning and Architecture," *JRAIC* 26:5 (1949): 161–62.

18 Willis, *This Packing Business*. The two gold medals for the Edmonton plant were awarded to Arthur by the OAA (1937) and the RAIC (1970). Arthur also received a Gold Medal from the University of Alberta, in 1956.

19 Kalman, "Arthur and Modernism," 55–56.

20 Amy Marshall, Art Gallery of Ontario, "Description & Finding Aid: J.S. McLean Fonds CA OTAG SC048," Toronto, 2003. Marshall wrote that McLean started collecting in 1934, whereas McLean implied that he began in the late 1920s: McLean, "On the Pleasures of Collecting Paintings," 4.

21 University of Toronto Academic Divisions Calendar, 1936–1937, Course no. 33: E.R. Arthur, Architectural Composition, University of Toronto Archives.

22 Transcript of unpublished interview with Eric Arthur by Elizabeth Hunt, 2 Oct. 1973, University of Toronto Archives, Fisher Rare Book Room, 15, 52.

23 Arthur asserted that he and Fleury produced the design together; Eric Arthur, "Arthur, Eric Ross," in *Oral History Program, University of Toronto*, ed. Elizabeth Wilson (Toronto: University of Toronto Archives, 1973), 34.

24 Sarah Williams Goldhagen, "Something to Talk About: Modernism, Discourse, Style," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64:2 (2005): 145, 163.

25 Eric R. Arthur, "How to Appreciate Architecture," synopsis of the radio broadcast, *JRAIC* 13:2 (1936): 32–33. A search for the full recording or transcript in the CBC Archives at Library and Archives Canada turned up empty; letter from reference archivist Alexandra McEwen to the author, 26 Oct. 2016. This was one of eight in a series of talks by Canadian architects, called "Architecture to the Fore," in January and February 1936.

26 Eric Arthur, "Architecture," *Royal Commission Studies: A Selection of Essays Prepared for the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951), 419–30.

27 Christopher Armstrong, *Civic Symbol: Creating Toronto's New City Hall, 1952–1966* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); George Thomas Kapelos, *Competing Modernisms: Toronto's New City Hall and Square* (Halifax: Dalhousie Architectural Press, 2015).

28 C.E. Pratt, Tribute to Eric Arthur, Annual Meeting of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Winnipeg, 1970, 4, deposited at University of Toronto Archives.

RÉSUMÉ

Deux clients, leur architecte et la naissance du modernisme canadien

HAROLD KALMAN

Une petite maison située près de Toronto et un abattoir d'Edmonton, tous deux construits en 1936, ont été à l'avant-garde de l'architecture moderniste canadienne. Ces deux bâtiments ont été commandés par des clients progressistes et résolus qui savaient ce qu'ils voulaient. La maison a été construite pour Charlotte Erichsen-Brown, touche-à-tout accomplie, promotrice d'arts et amie du Groupe des sept. Elle se serait elle-même considérée comme une femme moderne. Sa minuscule maison blanche, simple et sans ornements, a été construite dans une région reculée et boisée au nord de Toronto. Elle souhaitait recréer une maison modèle qu'elle avait vue à Eaton : la maison canadienne d'aujourd'hui, conçue par l'artiste français René Cera. Mme Erichsen-Brown a meublé sa maison de mobilier au style allemand avant-gardiste rappelant les conceptions de Ludwig Mies van der Rohe et de Marcel Breuer.

L'abattoir a été commandé par J.S. McLean, un industriel prospère collectionneur d'art contemporain. Lui aussi vivait à Toronto. Le grand bâtiment en briques était composé de plusieurs blocs individuels sans fenêtres, combinés en une même unité. L'usine transformait de la viande pour Canadian Packers, l'entreprise qui, sous la direction de M. McLean, est devenue un chef de file national dans son domaine.

La maison et l'abattoir ont tous deux été construits par l'architecte torontois Eric R. Arthur (1898-1982). Originaire de Nouvelle-Zélande, il a étudié l'architecture à l'Université de Liverpool, un établissement anglais de premier plan. Au début de sa carrière, M. Arthur puisait son inspiration dans les styles anciens, représentatifs de sa formation traditionnelle dans le système des beaux-arts, le plus répandu à l'époque.

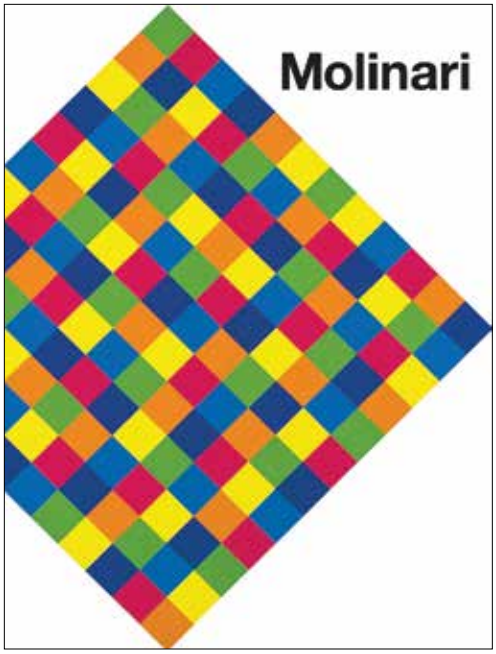
En 1936, M. Arthur s'est soudainement tourné vers le modernisme. Cette année charnière a été marquée par l'acceptation générale du nouvel esprit moderniste en Europe et en Amérique, ainsi que par les signes inquiétants d'une guerre imminente. La principale source d'inspiration de M. Arthur n'était pas les œuvres de Walter Gropius et d'autres pionniers du mouvement, mais plutôt les bâtiments de leurs adeptes, notamment ceux des architectes néerlandais Willem Dudok et Mart Stam. Avec d'autres Européens, ils ont

modifié l'expression du modernisme en combinant la simplicité formelle du Bauhaus avec la géométrie abstraite du mouvement *De Stijl*.

M. Arthur a adapté ces influences européennes afin de créer des bâtiments novateurs pour Charlotte Erichsen-Brown et J.S. McLean. La maison de Mme Erichsen-Brown est passée largement inaperçue, mais l'usine Canada Packers a été admirée et a fait apparu dans de nombreuses publications. Les deux bâtiments ont été démolis.

Ne reculant jamais devant un coup de publicité, Eric Arthur a saisi toutes les occasions de promouvoir et de diffuser le nouveau modernisme, que ce soit dans les médias imprimés, à la radio et dans l'enseignement. L'une de ces initiatives était un message adressé à l'auditoire de la radio nationale CBC en 1936, dans lequel il a fait l'éloge d'une architecture en ces termes : « une beauté intrinsèque qui n'a besoin d'aucun ornement ». Il s'agissait essentiellement d'un mantra pour le modernisme.

M. Arthur a exploité ses rôles de directeur d'un cabinet d'architectes, de professeur populaire à l'Université de Toronto et de rédacteur du *Journal de l'Institut royal d'architecture du Canada* pour faire connaître l'architecture moderniste à ses collègues et aux jeunes Canadiens.



Molinari

EDITED BY GILLES DAIGNEAULT AND MARGARIDA MAFRA

Montreal: Fondation Guido Molinari, 2018
325 p.

Jessica Veevers

The new comprehensive monograph dedicated to the life and work of Guido Molinari (1933–2004) is composed of four elegant texts and numerous pages bursting with the colour-filled canvases of the artist's life's work. The quality of reproduction attained in this monograph is assuredly the next best thing to viewing his work in person – to which, of course, nothing compares. Lovingly introduced by Gilles Daigneault, the director of the Molinari Foundation (who revealingly concludes, "Essentially, Molinari never did much of anything like anyone else"), the monograph includes three art historical texts and the memoir of a student, all of whom were friends and close colleagues of the artist. Their perspectives are intimate and didactic: the text of Marc Séguin, Molinari's student from Concordia and a talented painter, conveys the spirit of the man and is incredibly moving. It is clear from this meticulously appointed compilation of art and words that Molinari was a force to be reckoned with. He became a pre-eminent Hard-Edge painter in Montreal in the 1950s and remained on the cusp of creation until his death in 2004. He was the self-declared, and deservedly so, theoretician of Molinarism, and he was a generous and charismatic teacher at Concordia University for nearly thirty years. There is doubtless more to know about the artist, one monograph cannot encompass the entirety of a fifty-year career, but this text achieves something that many monographs of this scale do not accomplish: giving a sense of the artist and the man, his sensitivity, his determination, and his keen intelligence. It is these qualities that he poured into his art creation and why his legacy is integral not only to the Montreal milieu, but to the international abstract art movement as well.

French philosopher of aesthetics Bernard Teyssèdre's essay opens the collection. He lays out the nuances of the formal and conceptual expression of abstract painting in the twentieth century, beginning with its pioneers Piet

Mondrian (1872–1944), Kazimir Malevich (1879–1935), and Robert Delaunay (1885–1941), and how it relates to Molinari's project. The conceptualization and articulation of a new understanding of space was no small feat and Molinari's painting, beginning in 1955, was intending to continue and advance the complex dialogue begun by these earlier innovators. In a matter of five years, he had overcome adherence to the orthogonal grid and Gestalt principles while advancing his own theory of serialization. About Molinari's vertical band paintings of equal width beginning in 1963, Teyssèdre writes,

> This perceptual, all-encompassing reorganization involves the emergence of increasingly complex systems composed of interacting micro-systems, so that the element itself becomes a system of a series of events. The duration of perception and retention is an integral part of the work, which has no subject other than colour as a system in perpetual transformation.[1]

From 1963 to 1969 Molinari developed the vertical band paintings into the signature formal style with which he is most closely associated to this day. His postulations of colour vibration, modular sequential units, and duration inform the entirety of the artist's œuvre from the band paintings forward. They distinguish his articulations from his American contemporaries Barnett Newman (1905–1970), Gene Davis (1920–1985), Frank Stella (b. 1936), and Kenneth Noland (1924–2010), who did not achieve (likely because they did not intend to) the quality of perceptual duration that Molinari did. With Molinari's Hard-Edge abstractions, we are compelled to live in a new perceptual space and thus come to comprehend a new conceptualization of space.

Quebec art historian François-Marc Gagnon's essay discusses Molinari's fertile black and white period in the mid-1950s, when the artist rigorously tested his formal chops through taking on new media and methodology to advance painting beyond the oil-based shackles of traditional representational modeling. During this period, Molinari discovered a formal organizing principal that materialized through his experimentations and became constant: "a more static left side . . . vertical movement at the left, then towards the top right corner, with a counterbalance mass towards the bottom right."[2] Gagnon observes that this organization of space describes Molinari's *Angle noir* (1956–1957) with great precision. While parallels can be drawn with other abstract artists working in black and white during the same period, such as Franz Kline (1910–1962) and Paul-Émile Borduas (1905–1960), it would be inaccurate to assume any influence here. Furthermore, the parallel ends abruptly with palette. The gestural and brushy expression of Kline's *Wanamaker Block* (1955) and the viscous and texturally rich surface of Borduas's *3+4+1* (1956), both of these executed in oil paint, have very little in common with the

smooth Hard-Edge surfaces achieved by Molinari in synthetic media.

A prolific chronicler of Canadian abstract painting, Roald Nasgaard takes us through the development of Molinari's formal and theoretical relationship with the art world by focusing on his entry into the New York exhibition scene in the early 1960s. He describes the artist's unflappable creative clarity: Molinari knew what his vision was and had the linguistic lucidity and confidence to assert it. Nasgaard intimates that Molinari's own words are often reiterated in newspaper reviews: "We can be sure that Molinari closely followed the New York journals and their reviews. He was an eager talker who during his shows no doubt also worked hard with the press. And do we not sometimes hear his voice echoed even in these journal notices?"[3]

Recounting the Hard-Edge critic Sidney Tillim as the worthy New York counterpart to Molinari's own critical system, Nasgaard defines the unique contribution of Canadian Hard-Edge between the New York polarities of "Perceptual Abstraction" and "The Colour Image" – to which neither camp Molinari could reasonably belong. These two streams of abstract art defined by Tillim lumped Molinari's stripe painting in with the Perceptual Abstraction of Gene Davis and Ellsworth Kelly (1923–2015). But Molinari's painting was not concerned with visual effects that would essentially create a third space with the viewer: his painting was sequential, inter-related, and firmly pictorial. Nor did Molinari neatly belong with the American Colour Field, because their use of colour was dualistic. Molinari's sequential system with variable blocks of colour overcame dualistic and bi-polarity colour systems that the artist considered problematic in the underdeveloped colour systems of artists such as Josef Albers (1888–1976), Auguste Herbin (1882–1960), Gene Davis, and Morris Louis (1912–1962). Stain paintings and modulated surfaces draw attention to the "tactility of the raw canvas as a material fact" and "leave traces that subvert the flat integrity of the canvas plane."[4] This is why the razor-edge surfaces of Molinari's paintings were a necessity: they were "a condition essential for colour interaction and the release of colour as pure energy."[5]

Furthermore, Molinari was not concerned with paring down formal elements or excluding representation for purposes of purity. If the artist did entertain a notion of purity – an impulse that dominated a good majority of late modernist writing with the exception of Molinari – it was, Nasgaard claims, pictorial purity: "If Molinari saw himself belonging to this line of descendants [Abstract Expressionists], he would press his position more specifically in terms of his quest for an even more purely pictorial space than that of the Americans, a space that structurally required the hard edge."[6]

The perceptual psychologist Rudolph Arnheim expressed concern that Hard-Edge abstraction was coldly outside the realm of the subject. Nasgaard summarizes his position: "Now neither construction nor impulse comes from

the artists themselves: construction is a product of geometry, impulse of physiology."[7] Claude Gauvreau, equally critical, "charge[d] that the Plasticiens only represented Platonic ideas."[8] However, it would be a mistake to conflate hard edges with an abdication of empathy. What Nasgaard impresses clearly, and what is incredibly important to understand without doubt, is that Molinari was situating himself and his painting in the world in which he lived: his project was at its core a humanist one. Similar to Malevich, Molinari understood and intended his art to be deeply engaged with the "human organism." Molinari was expressing a new comprehension of space. It was both intuitive and carefully constructed – it had to be Hard-Edge in order that his viewers would perceive and participate in the new space he was communicating. If they were not pushed back from traditional Euclidean space via the razor-edge and sequential colour-form relationships, perception would fall back on the comfort of familiar and traditional viewing precepts and the artist's understanding of space would not have been communicated.

What this monograph unquestionably impresses upon its reader is the importance and unique contribution of Molinari's painting and theory on the Canadian and International domain of abstract art. His sophisticated visual eloquence communicated an advanced program of modern space that remained at the forefront of abstract art expression throughout his career. What is not communicated here is whether Molinari's conception of space is still germane, and whether the lessons learned through active perception of his paintings are applicable now. The answer is yes: his painting and theory has remained exceedingly relevant within current art theory in surprising ways – perhaps this could be elaborated in a future companion text.

NOTES

1 Bernard Teyssèdre, "Guido Molinari: The Outer Limit of Colour Field Painting," in *Molinari*, eds. Gilles Daigneault and Margarida Mafra (Montreal: The Molinari Foundation, 2018), 60–61.
2 Francois-Marc Gagnon, "The Black and White Paintings," in ibid., 83.
3 Roald Nasgaard, "Le théoricien du molinarisme," in ibid., 93.
4 Ibid, 107.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid, 103.
7 Ibid, 109.
8 Ibid.

HAROLD KALMAN is an architectural historian and heritage planner living in Victoria, BC. Born in Montreal, he studied at Princeton University and began his career teaching the history of art and architecture at the University of British Columbia. He holds a PhD from Princeton University and an LLD from the University of Victoria, where he is Adjunct Associate Professor of Art History and Visual Studies. He also has an appointment as Honourary Professor of Architecture at the University of Hong Kong. Kalman operated an international consultancy in heritage conservation for thirty-five years, working on hundreds of projects around the world. His books include *A History of Canadian Architecture, Heritage Planning: Principles and Process* (2 editions), *Exploring Vancouver* (5 editions), *Exploring Ottawa*, and *Eric R. Arthur: Architect and Educator* (in progress). He has contributed articles to many academic and popular journals. Kalman sits on the board of the Hallmark Heritage Society (Victoria), served for eleven years on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, and is a past governor of the National Trust for Canada. He served on municipal heritage advisory committees in Ottawa, Vancouver, and Victoria, was the founding president of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (CAHP), and is a Member of the Order of Canada.

MARYLIN J. MCKAY is a Professor in the Department of Art History and Contemporary Culture at NSCAD University in Halifax. She received her PhD in Art History from the University of Toronto. Her earlier research was in the area of Canadian mural painting and Canadian landscape art (*A National Soul: Canadian Mural Painting, 1860s to 1930s* [2002] and *Picturing the Land: Narrating Territories in Canadian Landscape Art, 1550 to 1950* [2011], both published by McGill-Queen's University Press). She has also published book chapters on relationships between Canadian and America art with American publishers and several articles with the *Journal of Canadian Art History*. More recently, as a result of explorations in the history of the Group of Seven, she has focused on the reception of Walt Whitman in English Canada starting with "Walt Whitman in Canada: The Sexual Trinity of Horace Traubel and Frank and Mildred Bain," in the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review* (2012). The article in this issue of the *Journal of Canadian Art History* expands the results of this research, as does her upcoming monograph on the early twentieth-century, English Canadian suffragist and Whitmanite, Flora MacDonald Merrill Denison (expected date of completion: Summer 2022).

DOUGLAS ORD is author of *The National Gallery of Canada: Ideas, Art, Architecture* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), as the first independent critical history of the institution and its various housings, up to the tenure

of Pierre Théberge as director. The book's prompt was a Canadian Centre for the Visual Arts research fellowship in 1996–97 that provided an office in the National Gallery archives and open access to the photograph files. Hence arose both the possibility of a visual narrative that could complement the text, and the chance discovery of an especially startling image, that provides the frontispiece to this article.

JESSICA VEEVERS is a writer, curator, art historian, painting conservator and sessional professor with Mount Royal University. Her writing and curatorial projects are engaged with promoting contemporary art and artists within local communities and broader global audiences. As a former gallery director and curator representing more than 65 artists internationally, she curated a number of solo and group exhibitions including, *Negotiating Diaspora: From the Personal to the Universal*, *Deep Pop: The Evolution of a Movement, Minimalism Transformed*, and *Milly Ristvedt: The Highway Paintings, 1969*. A recipient of the Fonds de Recherche Société et Culture du Quebec (FRQSC), Veevers completed a PhD in Art History at Concordia University, where she concurrently taught courses on the theory of art conservation and the development of Canadian abstract art. Her dissertation research was awarded the Michel de la Chenelière Art and Culture Award through the Musée des beaux-arts de Montreal (MBAM). She examined the materiality and methodology of art making and its relationship with reception, historiography, and collection practices in Canada. Connecting themes from her doctoral dissertation, her current research examines the role of the plastics industry on art making practices in the twentieth century.

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