

November 1938 to early 1940, part 6

FACTS

Date:

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Diary location: Danish National Gallery

Creator/key person: Ernest Mancoba

General comments:
Rules of transcription:
Spelling errors kept, followed by
correction as [sic: corrected spelling]
Necessary insertion of missing
punctuation marks added as [,]
Necessary paragraph breakage as
[/P]
Illegible words indicated with
[illegible]
Scratched out letters and words not
transcribed

SUMMARY

This Mancoba diary covers Mancoba's first months in Paris. He is enrolled at L'École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Rue d'Ulm. He has befriended the Danish ceramicist Christian Poulsen whom he abbreviates as "Xtian" and various other students whom he variously identifies as "Pultzer/Pulzer/Bulzer", "the Algerian", "Chargo/Chago/Chayo" and "Roser" (amongst others). He has a visit with

"Chargo/Chago/Chayo" and "Roser" (amongst others). He has a visit with a South African identified as "Mall". The diary likely ends at the end of December 1938 or January 1939.

TRANSCRIPTION

[continuing from previous page, Mancoba is with Christian Poulsen] I ask him if they use strong words in Denmark [illegible] – He says no - & he tells me he was surprised to hear me swear so much – I tell him I think nothing of it – obscenity is such when people like a piss – I refer the nude photographs I say [sic: saw] last night & how they sold in the Paris [referring to Paris newspaper] for foolish strangers who came to Paris & wiped their mucked-up selves – There is no harm in nudity [,] a pose is either beautiful or foolish – a trick upon which the crooks trade – He says in Europe people make a fuss of woman especially in society [.] I wonder why [,] I think man is doing it so that he should keep woman oppressed [,] tools for man's passions –

We draw a man very beautiful fellow – I tell Xtian [sic: Christian Poulsen] I did not like the negro – He says perhaps I felt a part of myself is exposed – I say no [,] I would not mind if I posed – He looks too self complacent today [.] He goes before end of séance [French: session] I stay on and leave at 7 –

At the hotel during food Chargo arrives and waits for me – We take coffee & rum afterwards - & Chargo talkative – He talks of the goings-on behind the scenes in the theatre etc etc. We fix up to go to Bal Negre [a Parisian nightclub] on Saturday and he tells me to be more talkative if I want to get a woman [.] The Swedish lady not beautiful but young he says – We go back to my room and he speaks of the various positions to get the greatest satisfaction from copulation and tells me how once an old fellow got him to go to copulate with a woman so that he should watch the sex act (from Boule Blanche) –

He sees the drawings of the young man & is attracted by the extended testicles – He tells me he too had extended testicles and had to undergo an operation at Marseilles [.] That is the reason now he is not interested in



sex act.

He tells of the Negroes & Montmartre [.] How they appear at night & stand at str [sic: street] corners to get money – He does not like Montmartre – He goes –

The following day at school M. Valette is pleased with the head of fat man [.] I go to Xtian [sic: Christian Poulsen] & he says we must have Saturday night for some fun – I am game but I fear one has to dance and make a fool of oneself – I have never liked to dance but then I reason it out. One must pay for sex – one way or another [.]

We go to draw – walk through the Luxembourg Jardin – Its very beautiful sunny bright – merry go round & laughter [.] We draw a fat woman – Algerian arrives – we depart together – I loose [sic: lose] his razor blade and makes no fuss [.] We leave together – Speak of art – He does not like the school – I ask him if he is Xtian [sic: Christian] he says he's a free thinker – I say he will burn in hell [.] He says he does good [,] not sure if he is serious thinker – We drink some wine at cafe – He says he likes woman & wine [.] We part – Supper & bed –

[insert in margin:] We see a marriage and it looks quaint something of fairyland

School and the fat man gets in well - Egyptian seems to be flabbergasted - Pierre talks sex as usual [.] The Egyptian who knows some English asks him to say to me: I want to fuck you - I appear horrified at such vulgarity and they join in the fun – They ask if I do not know that sometimes men sleep with other men - I open my eyes in surprise - Paul points at the Algerian as one such - He sleeps with dogs, cats, cows etc - they laugh [.] Then Pierre asks me to meet him at his hotel so that we can go somewhere and get drunk it being Saturday - I tell him I have to go, to listen to Beethoven at Chatelet - He insists I side track him - We go out & at the door a young lady meets the Algerian - I walk out with Xtian [,] Paul joins us & asks why I like Saturdays: because (I tell him) on Saturdays I go to the Brothel [.] He reminds me of disease possible but I tell him I am pulling his leg - We see a marriage at the Police office before [illegible] -It's queer & looks so out of place - out of a fairy book - what it stands for disgusts me and I say seeing marriages will make used to the sight & one day find oneself involved in such folly - Xtian [sic: Christian Poulsen] laughingly says we shd [sic: should] hereafter choose another street [.] He reminds of the supper with the Swedish young ladies and thereafter look



for some fun – I am unhappy & miserable [.] I can sing for them but to dance is too much for me –

I return to the Hotel and after dinner I go down the street to buy a book on dancing [.] It's raining and I am miserable – I buy Confessions of Rousseau [reference: Jean-Jacques Rousseau "Confessions" first published 1773] and a small book on dancing [.] I get back and practice a few steps but I find it incomprehensible & unhappy read few pages of Rousseau [.] Get myself ready and go to meet Xtian – There is a Swedish girl in [illegible] rooms – we wait for 7 and nothing happens – Xtian dressed up spick and span [English phrase for dressed up] – I look at my shining shoes and feel miserable – He tells me very likely the young ladies will not come – The elder very queer & sensitive & difficult – I am tremendously happy – Putzer shows me his work – I like it – The nun and the down – They talk nonsense –

[in side margin:] Vendredi [French: Friday]

[/P] We go to the Russian Restaurant [possibly the Russian Tea Room] and eat Russian soup, saute de veau [French: veal steak], yoauort & vodka - There is music and many dancing - The walls have strange drawings - a good atmosphere but horrible people confused [.] Three women come & sit by us [,] they order food & consume tons [,] they are well dressed & tall & graceful - They have strange hats which I detest as I cannot understand their reasoning [.] Thro [sic: Through] the little opening I see a couple kissing & the woman looks at the three strange creatures & makes a queer face as if disapproving - I order vodka and Xtian also [.] Putzer strangely standoffish won't drink but wine - Xtian dances with the Swedish woman - afterwards a man asks her to dance - & Putzer explains that is the etiquette more so he ought to have asked her - I pay 1 franc tip & all aghast - I shd [sic: should] have given 2 fr [sic: francs] they all say -[illegible] & Putzer goes off on a big lecture & I am miserable not that I care - but I do not wish to spoil their evening - I am [illegible] thankful the other woman did not come - we go out to Le Dôme - too many people & go to Select - I am horribly miserable [,] Putzer goes out sermoning all the time -

[/P] At Select we sit & drink & Putzer tells sexy stories [,] we laugh – I am interested for the first time as I believe after all this type of story will explode the taboo – tells of a man who initiated – English [illegible] because of his shady stories – Long arrives & fucks a time with Putzer evidently he does not like him – they go & I remain - Swedish fellow shows



a newspaper cutting of [illegible] a woman he once loved [,] married to another [illegible] America [.] Woman wants to go home with Long – I leave Select at 4am & get to my room feeling miserable & unhappy –

I sleep all day [,] Chargo arrives late in the day & we go to Montmartre [.] Chargo at Greek restaurant to see the fellow negro carry a car & white girl wife [.] Chargo has many friends here "hallo Chargo" everywhere – Many Senegalese soldiers here – many dancing clubs & many male prostitutes – I ask Chargo why he does not like Montmartre [.] because [,] he says [,] many coloured men lounging round & no work [,] wait for [illegible] to pick them up for sex purposes – We meet many negroes on way back [.] we see at a Metro station a negro looking through the glass in perplexity – extremely sad face tells a story of hunger & unhappiness [.] we give him a franc & Chargo says [illegible] before or false nevertheless – He has grown very angry [,] help [,] & no one will look at him now – At Metro sits there is terribly ragged old man (white) sleeps – In Metro many negro soldiers – Chargo very childish [,] he runs up the steps – I sleep at 10 –

Next morning I meet Christian & speak about Saturday – He says he was threatened by Algerian – We go to Chatelet with Roser [,] listen to Beethoven, [illegible], Robson – Roser a decent chap – 2 afternoon. We speak of sanitorium

¹ W. Sze: Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778, Switzerland/France), philosopher & writer



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