

November 1938 to early 1940, part 3

FACTS

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November 1938 to early 1940, part 3

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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" 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

She asks the boy if he knows that the boy scouts¹ have to do two good turns now instead of one everyday – The boy says always [.] he ready to do good – Lady floored [.] But boy says cubs have to do one [.] lady recovers & adds "and the scouts two [" – To save her face

[/P] Germany [.] travel & next war – Man says "ladies will have to fight in next war [.] Russia, etc [.] China [" – I add and babies will have to be perfection [.] breathing gas masks exercises also that [illegible] that – He speaks of ladies again & Imagine them mucked up in their nothing flesh & shit and the stupid dead finds they wear for hats and the nauseating scent to make the [illegible] more horrible – [illegible] stick all paraphernalia –

[/P] She speaks of SA [South Africa] (I unhappy) She says it's ideal country, Smuts [Jan Smuts² orator – [illegible] Table Mountain [in Cape Town] –

After dinner – Sing song – I sing Deep River – They sing foolish songs out of books – boring – Nobody says anything to me except the French man [.] he says the English are reserved but I feel strange – I go away afterwards feeling miserable [.] not one goodnight – except French man [.] It is too late [.] I look up Chayo 11 oclock [sic: o'clock] – I go to sleep & read Paris Soir – The Normandic has not sailed – the backwash of the strike –

// I get up & go the St Georges [.] I am sick of it – I serve with the American & during the whole service I feel disgusted & I fear I might run amok and throw the foolish candle away – I meet the American afterwards [.] we go to Les Ambassadeurs & have cocktails – He is a head of Church School [illegible] there in America & speaks of objective approach to Xtianity [sic: Christianity] & I wonder what he is speaking about most of the time – Xtianity [sic: Christianity] a spent force – but he feels it can give one direction and a feeling of security in one's character and standpoint [.]

I don't believe him but I am polite –

[note in margin:] a sermon on the three judgments others – oneself – God
– neat arrangement but unconvincing

I go back to Hotel select [,]for and find Mme Henri had phoned – I go to Xtian [Christian Poulsen] and Putzer at 4 and we had tea [,] Putzer has been at the Dome [Le Dôme] till 4am – with a Danish drinking party – We talk of Scandinavian and the North Pole [,] Amundsen [Roald Amundsen]³ etc. Pulzer thinks the Russian overpolar flight a magnificent achievement and that Russia is the power of tomorrow – Severe writers of Denmark & Sweden – Icebreakers etc-

[note in margin:] cycling over the sea

A knock at Pulzers door and a woman and a man's voices – Xtian [Christian Poulsen] does not care for the man [,] Pulzer goes out but man comes in & settled down (a huge Dane with turned up nose) – afterwards Xtian tells me – man at Copenhagen behaved rudely to his sister – and I see why aversion – I remember a similar case to my sister in South Africa [,] It is [illegible] to have a sister –

[note in margin:] Telephone Mme Henry from Select [,] make appointment for Wednesday 9

[/P] we go out [,] down Bd St Michel [Boulevard St Michel] – many street vendor on the “trottoir” [French: pavement] and Xtian [Christian Poulsen] gets quite excited – He looks & pts [sic: points] at Shop-windows [,] He buys some nuts which I like very much – the Shops are specially dressed for Xmas [sic: Christmas] season – the [illegible] is beautiful [,] He talks of the war which everybody believes will soon be upon us – Xtian says he is ready to commit suicide if forced to fight – He approves of the Normandie strike – He sympathises with the workman – He asks me [if] heard “the [illegible] of 1914” –

[note in margin:] buy a copy of Candide from book vendors on Seine 4fr [sic: 4 French francs] and the river boat very beautiful with boatman like toys!

I invite him to eat at my hotel and he looks quite voracious – He embarrass me – He talks too much and points at me too often – He looks about absentmindedly – He wants to know what the people opposite are eating

from the waiters & I get uneasy – It is a turkey (dinde [French: turkey]) – we talk about Table manners and I tell him of dinner last night – How stupid I think it all is [.] He says I shall get used to it and he likes to be a host [illegible] – He wonders if Mme Florence Henry knows I am black for she may be expecting a white man – He also thinks I should take a bouquet of flowers to her my first visit – I am puzzled – I have never been seen in the street with flowers! I repose to take him seriously – Chago arrives and the waitress shows him in – They attack me for my shyness – Say a few unkind things perhaps it's the wine – Xtian [sic: Christian] departs and Chago & I ascend to my room – I am unhappy & restless – I tell Chago exaggerated stories of Africa and he is afraid of the sex parts, hows & savage beasts – I say I should return to Africa & chuck away my trousers [.] He is scared and says I must cover the body etc. He tells me of his experiences with a depraved white woman who sucked at his penis and expected him also to such at her sexual organ – He shudders but he confessed he did at last at last after much searchings of heart – He looks at it philosophically & shrugs his shoulders and says “C'est la vie” [French: that's life] [.]

[/P] He tells of two trips to Africa & the discomfort there which he could never stand – “bad beds”. He says & bad food – He stayed on board afterwards & never landed in Africa – I recall a young white student at Fort Hare who spoke of Native food & Natives as if wretchedness was the time living for the blacks – I am sleepy [.] We go downstairs take coffee & part –

School at 9 – I take chocolate on my way – work at something new – A head of a fat man – Paul very interesting [.] I teach him a few Zulu words and he likes it [.] he thinks my work not bad [.] In the afternoon I go to Rue de la Seine to see the art exhibition – all seem so cold and not much activity in the Galleries – I go in the Pierre Rooms [probable reference to Galerie Pierre] and see some modern paintings and drawings [.] there is a warmth about them but I do not understand them – based on the child conception of drawing – But I cannot dismiss them from my mind –

[/P] It is raining hard today – As I walk down Rue St Germain I see for the first time a black workman in the characteristic overall of the Parisian workman – I am excited – It is good [.] the French seem to have counted the cost of colonialism and to make an attempt to be logical – I feel again I have nothing to apologise for in Paris for being black –

I walk on to Notre Dame [Cathedral] – I think of the church back of Notre Dame [.] a magnificent work and the open square before Notre Dame must have been the market place from which Quasimodo saved the Gipsy Girl [reference to Victor Hugo's “Hunchback of Notre Dame” (1831)[WF4]

)]⁴ – I walk in Notre

¹ W. Sze: The Boy Scouts is an association of male youths; the Boy Scout Cubs are for younger members

² W. Sze: Jan Christian Smuts was Prime Minister of South Africa from 1919 to 1924 (and again in 1939 to 1948).

³ W. Sze: Roald Amundsen, Norwegian, who explored the polar regions

⁴ W. Sze: Victor Hugo (1802-1885), French novelist

Sketches the boy if he knows that the
boy scouts have to do two good turns
now instead of one every day - The boy says
always already the good-lady floored
but boy says cuts have to do one
lady receives + adds "and the school
two - to save the face - Germany
travel + next war - Man says "ladies
will have to fight in next war
Russia, etc China - Dadd and
bath's will have the perfect in
breathing gas mask exercises
also that master that - He
speaks of love + I imagine them
mucked up in their sooty flesh
+ shit and the stuffed dead birds
they wear for hats and the
nauseating scent to make the
effuvia more horrible - faps stick
and all paraphanelia -
He speaks of S.A. (I n'tuff) He
says it's ideal (with) Sants
order - dirty Fable Mountain
after hours - Sag say - King Keep
Rise - They sing foolish songs out of
books - boy - No boy says anything

From except the French or perhaps the
English are reserved but I feel strange
In my afternoon July 1st
not one good night - Except French
day - It is too late to look up
Chicago 11 o'clock - I go to
sleep + read Paris Soir - The
Normandie has not sailed - the
back part of the strike -
I get up + go to St George
I am sick of it - I serve with
the American + during the bible
service I feel disgusted + fear I
might run away and throw the
forth candle away - I meet the
American afterwards - we go to
Les Ambassadeurs + ~~there~~ have
cock tails - He is a head of a
Church School for blue + orange
+ speaks of objective approach to
God - Charity + I wonder what he is
saying about most of the time -
Malomraig - Charity a spent force - but he feels
it can give one direction and a feeling of
security + one's character and standpoint I
don't believe him but I am polite -

a sermon
in the
church -
judgment
others -
oneself -
God -
next
arrangement
with
Malomraig

KILDER TIL
DANSK
KUNSTHISTORIE

NY CARLSBERGFONDET

Buy a copy of Andersen
and take the train on 4th

I go back to Hotel Select and find Mme
Herr had phoned - I go to Khan and
Putzer at 4 and we had tea. Putzer has
been at the home till 4 a.m. with a Danish
drinking party - he talks of Scandinavian
and the North pole Amundsen etc. Putzer
thinks the Russian over polar flight a magni-
ficent achievement and that Russia is
the power of tomorrow - severe notes of
Hansen to Sveder - Ice breakers etc.

A knock at Putzer door and a noise
and a man's voice - Khan does not care
for the noise Putzer goes out but no one
is settled down (a pig done with turned
up nose) afterwards Khan tells me - had
at Copenhagen behaved badly to his
sister - and I see his aversion - I remember
a similar case to my sister South Africa
it's rather than a sister - we go out
down Bd St picked - many street vendors
on the "travellers" and Khan gets quite
excited - He hops and pts at shop-vendors
He buys some nuts which I like very
much - The shops are specially dressed
for the season - The Sannabani is kept
He talks of the bar which everybody believes

Cycling
over the
sea

Telephone
Mme Herr
from Select
before
9

KILDER TIL
DANSK
KUNSTHISTORIE

NY CARLSBERGFONDET

my a copy of Caselli
and find Mimi
go to Whian and
ad the Peter for
am with a Spanish
of Scandinavian
ner etc. Puller
dir flight a regime
that Russia is
dense notes of
seker etc.
mor and above
is due where
but we are
have not turned
the tell me - how
ranch this
region - I mean
South Africa
- We go out
my street vendor
how get quite
to at ship-traders
I like very
inally dressed
as being is kept
every body believe

the river.
beautiful
with boat
very like
to go

bill soon be open on - stem says he is
ready to commit suicide if forced to fight -
He approves of the Montanari strike - He
is very sympathetic with the boat man - He asks
me to read "the Sun of 1914"
I made him read at my hotel
and he looks quite voracious - He
enthralls me - He talks too much
and points at me too often - He looks
about about unwell - He wants to
know what the people opposite are eating
for the kitchen & get meaty - It is
a turkey (dinde) - he talks about
fable banners and tells him of dinner
last night - How stupid I think it all to
he says I shall get used to it and he
likes to be a host, particularly - He
says that the ladies of the table usually
knows I am black for she has to
expect a white man - He also thinks
I shall take a bouquet of flowers to her
my first visit - I am puzzled - I have
never seen sea in the street with flowers!
I hope to take him seriously - Ojega arrives
and the ambass asks him in - He attacks
me for my hypocrisy - Say a few unkind things

perhaps into the river - When departs and
Chago + I ascend to my room - I am
unhappy + restless - I tell Chago exaggerated
stories of Africa and he is afraid of the
serpents, lions + parrots - That I shall
return to Africa + chuck away my trousers
He is scared and says I must cover the body
etc. He tells me of his experiences with
a depraved white woman who sucked
at his penis and expected him also to
suck at her sexual organs - He shudders
but he confesses he did at least after much
pleading of meat - He looks at it philosophically
+ shrugs his shoulders and says "Est la vie"
He tells of his trip to Africa + the discomfort
there which he could never stand - "bad
beds" he says + bad food - He stayed on
board afterwards + never landed in Africa - I
recall a young white student at Holt. Hall who
spoke of Native food + Native as if spotted
bress for the time being for the blacks -
In sleep he goes down stairs to take after +
part

School at 9 I take chocolate on my
pay - Work at Sonnetty news - A head
of a fat hen - Paul very interesting

Heard him a few English words and he
likes it he thinks my work not bad
In the afternoon I go to Rue de la
Seine to see the art exhibition - all
seem so cold and not much activity
in the Galleries - I go in the Pierre Rodin
and see some modern paintings and
drawings there is a remark about them
but I do not understand them - based on
the child conception of drawing - But I
cannot dismiss them from my mind - It is
raining hard today - As I walk down
Rue St Germain I see for the first time
a black workman in the characteristic
blue overall of the Parisian workman - I am
excited - It is good the French seem to
have counted the cost of colonialism and to
make an attempt to be logical - I feel
again I have nothing to apologise for - Paris
for being black -

I walk on to Notre Dame - I think
of the church back of Notre Dame a magnificent
book work and the few square square
before Notre Dame must have been the
market place from which Grassano
saved the Gipsy girl - I walk in Notre