

Fiction, Faction, Autobiography: Norman Levine at McGill University, 1946-1949

by Robert H. Michel

ABSTRACT

This article examines Norman Levine's start as a writer while he studied at McGill University from 1946 to 1949 and traces how Levine used his McGill memories afterwards in his writing. We look at Levine's early poetry and prose; his use of his wartime RCAF flying experience in Britain (foreshadowing his autobiographical fiction); his editorship of the literary magazine Forge and McGill Daily Literary Supplement; his mentor Professor Harold Files; and his M.A. thesis on Ezra Pound. We follow him as he drafts his first novel, The Angled Road and sketches another one; searches for his own literary voice; happily leaves Canada for England; and abandons academe after a frustrating year (1949-50) at the University of London. The article also explores how he used McGill friends and professors as starting points for characters in his stories and thinly disguised them in his nonfictional Canada Made Me. Nostalgic and critical, he said he had enjoyed McGill but could not take it seriously, and blamed the University for giving his writing a false start and seducing him into forgetting his Jewish, working-class roots.

RESUMÉ

L'écriture de Norman Levine remonte aux années 1946 à 1949, l'époque à laquelle il étudiait à l'Université McGill. Cet article examine le début de sa carrière d'auteur et trace l'influence que ses souvenirs de McGill ont eu plus tard sur ses œuvres. Nous étudions ses premiers travaux en prose et en poésie; son utilisation de son expérience à titre d'aviateur dans le Corps d'aviation royal canadien (qui anticipe sa fiction autobiographique); ses activités d'éditeur des magazines littéraires Forge et McGill Daily Literary Supplement; son guide, le professeur Harold Files; et sa thèse de maîtrise sur Ezra Pound. Nous le suivons alors qu'il rédige une ébauche de son premier roman, The Angled Road, et trace l'esquisse d'un second; qu'il recherche sa propre voix littéraire; qu'il quitte le Canada avec plaisir pour l'Angleterre; et qu'il abandonne le monde universitaire après une année frustrante (1949-1950) à l'Université de Londres. L'article explore aussi la façon dont il a utilisé ses amis et professeurs à McGill comme point de départ pour les personnages dans ses histoires, et les a légèrement déguisé dans son œuvre non romanesque Canada Made Me. Nostalgique et critique, il a déclaré qu'il a aimé McGill mais qu'il ne pouvait pas la prendre au sérieux, et que c'est à cause de l'Université que son écriture s'est dirigée sur une fausse piste et qu'il a oublié ses racines juives de classe ouvrière.

“I had quite a good time at McGill.”¹

Norman Levine's stories stay with you after you close the book.² In 1980, interviewer Wayne Grady suggested that Levine's stories were like line drawings rather than whole canvasses, with “a touch here

and there to suggest the whole picture.” Levine replied, “You don't have to eat the whole cow to know what steak tastes like.... I like to remove all the other lines and just leave the right one.”³ His style is deceptively simple; his stories are often ironic and complex. John Metcalf observes, “Levine refuses to explain or interpret his scenes

for us, requiring us, in a sense, to *compose* the story for ourselves.”⁴

An expatriate Canadian living in England, Levine reworked the people and memories in his life as stories. He told Alan Twigg that Chekhov taught him that “plot wasn’t that important, providing you could tell enough about a character. And since I don’t use plot I have to use other ways of stitching it together. Often I sense a connection between different human situations – in different places, in different times.”⁵ Levine’s start as a writer while studying at McGill University from 1946 to 1949 has never been examined. Likewise, little attention has been given to his use of McGill and his McGill friends in his later writing. Drawing on sources in McGill’s University Archives and its Library’s Rare Books and Special Collections Division, Part I of this article traces Levine’s writing at McGill while Part II looks at “factual” and “fictional” texts from his stories, nonfiction and interviews to examine his nostalgic, critical memories of student life and to suggest how autobiographically he worked.⁶ Not meant to be a whole canvas, this article is a line drawing of Levine from a McGill angle.

Levine (1923-2005) grew up in Ottawa in an orthodox Jewish home, the son of a fruit seller, Moses Levine, and Annie Levine. He left school at age 16, clerked in a government office, enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in 1942 and was stationed in England in 1944 and 1945. On his return, he attended McGill, earning his B.A. in 1948 and his M.A. in 1949. Later he said McGill had been fun but too easy and that he had betrayed his working class, Jewish roots there. In 1969, he belittled his student writing: “At McGill, I had some flying war-poems, full of bad alliteration, published in the *McGill Daily*. And for a year I edited *Forge*, the university’s literary magazine.”⁷ He told David McDonald in 1975: “While I was at McGill I was beginning to be interested in writing verse and I did some poems that were published in a chapbook by the Ryerson Press. Terrible lot of poems!”⁸ In

addition to writing poetry and editing *Forge*,⁹ he drafted a novel, *The Angled Road* (published in 1952), wrote a master’s thesis on Ezra Pound, and won a fellowship in 1949 which returned him to England, his heart’s desire.

Writers’ early efforts do not diminish their mature work. Interesting in their own right, they reveal influences and foretell later development: in Levine’s case, his signature fusion of autobiography and fiction. Levine’s writing at McGill was autobiographical from the start, inspired by his wartime flying. For the next fifty years, most of his stories would be told in the first person with narrators or protagonists who were Canadian-born, had flown for the RCAF, attended McGill, moved to England and were writers. The narrators resemble Levine so closely; the stories seem so uninvented and personal, that readers wonder if they are reading fiction or autobiography. In 1983, he explained: “Altogether the stories form a kind of autobiography. But.... it is autobiography written as fiction.”¹⁰ In what follows, the distinction between Levine himself and the narrators of his stories will be observed as strictly as possible. That said, Levine and his narrators were remarkably consistent where McGill is concerned.

PART I: MCGILL STUDENT, 1946-1949

Returned veteran

Levine went overseas in April 1944 and flew on bombing raids in the Lancasters of No. 429 Squadron RCAF over Germany in March and April 1945.¹¹ “I was the bomb-aimer and second pilot. I dropped the bombs. And sometimes took over the controls on the way back.”¹² Days after arriving at McGill, in January 1946, Levine published a poem in the student *McGill Daily* about a day raid over Leipzig on April 16, 1945. It began: “Destructive demons driving down.... Bottled bastards burning.”¹³ Mildly, he said in 1975: “But towards the end of the War, I got very

disillusioned with the whole business. I more than particularly didn't like Hitler, but I didn't think there was any point in dropping bombs."¹⁴ The RCAF gentrified its flyers. In his nonfictional travelogue *Canada Made Me* (1958) Levine recalled, "We were instructed how to use our knives and forks; how to make a toast; how to eat and drink properly."¹⁵ His story "In Quebec City" repeated how the flyers "were instructed how to use knives and forks.... How to eat and drink properly. It was like going to finishing school."¹⁶ He enjoyed his time in England; once back in Canada he longed to return. As he recalled in an article in 1960:

In England I found myself being attended to by a series of batmen, all old enough to be my father. We ate in a fine mess. A string quartet played for us while we had our Sunday dinner. And on the wall above us was the *Rokeby Venus*. We lived well. We had lots of money to spend. The uniform gave us admission to all sorts of places.¹⁷

One of the most striking things about Levine's writing is how similar his fictional and his nonfictional voices are and how he repeated things in nearly the same words in fiction, articles and interviews, especially when they were not too many years apart. He describes the same RCAF experience in a story, "The English Girl" (1964):

I was attended by a series of batmen, all old enough to be my father. We ate in a fine mess. A string quartet played for us while we had our Sunday dinner. We lived well. We had lots of money to spend. The uniform gave us admission to all sorts of places.¹⁸

For the story, he dropped the *Rokeby Venus*; otherwise the fiction and nonfiction texts are virtually the same.¹⁹ Phrases once used stuck in his mind. He repeated himself as few writers dared. He saw no reason to rewrite the same memory just because one was presented as nonfiction and the other as fiction.

At war's end Levine went on a short course to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he discovered psychology, economics, and political science, and became left wing.²⁰ "There a lecturer gave me a thin wartime production of Pound's *Selected Poems*. It was the first modern verse I had read."²¹ Here are the germs of his free verse, his master's thesis on Pound, and his longing for a Cambridge degree. Back in Ottawa by fall 1945, he took courses at Carleton College and then drifted to university, paid for under the Veterans Act. He recalled: "I decided to go to university – mainly to postpone the decision of what to do."²² The narrator of "The English Girl" said: "Going to university was just a means of filling in a few years until one could, somehow, return to England."²³ The protagonist of *The Angled Road* tells his uncle:

Going to university is not going to provide me with a better job. I am going to university because I think I should like my old self to die, completely. I know that going to university is not only to get me away from home, but it will help me in placing the many things that I have done and thought and read in the past years in the right perspective.²⁴

In *The Angled Road*, begun in 1946-1947, Levine's narrator seemed happy to cut his roots and discover himself at university, not suspecting it would be the waste of time and the self-betrayal his author would lament later. Why choose McGill? Levine wrote in *Canada Made Me* (1958): "There is (as Scott Fitzgerald has said about a New England education) in Canada that respect for 'a McGill education' which is the ruin of all provincial places, which drains them yearly of all their most promising young men and women."²⁵ In "Why I am an Expatriate" (1960), he remembered "as a child fruit-peddling with my father, crossing over the small bridge by Lansdowne Park and seeing – when the wagon came up to the rise – the Redmen playing rugby in the stadium. It was only a glimpse, but long enough to decide me on McGill."²⁶ Applying to

McGill in 1945, Levine played up his previous education creatively, filling in whatever grades came into his head, abetted by a kindly Registrar's office which did not check up. "Since then I have always nourished a soft spot for the academic when it deals with human nature," he noted gratefully in 1960 but added that it meant he could not take McGill and the honours he won seriously. In 1966, he repeated to an interviewer how gullible the University had been, noting "after that he could never take McGill very seriously." In 1970, the protagonist of *From a Seaside Town* relates the same deception: "After that it was hard to take McGill seriously."²⁷

Post-war funding opened Canadian, American and British universities to war veterans. Levine arrived at McGill in January 1946 with hundreds of other veterans. Aged 22, his looks changed little with age. Cary Fagan met him around 1980: "I was struck by what a handsome man Norman Levine was; short but debonair, and with a more European than Canadian air about him."²⁸ The vets enjoyed prestige, admired by co-eds and by professors too old to have fought. At a class reunion, Levine's character Gordon Rideau says he had a good time at McGill. "And I was just old enough to know it.... I think what made us different from the other years was because we were all returning veterans. And it was difficult to pretend we were college kids straight from high school...."²⁹ Students fresh from high school felt the same difference. Leonard Ashley, who arrived at age 16, about the same time as Levine, and wrote humour for the *McGill Daily*, recalls: "Though I was a teenager as an undergraduate, many of my class of '49 were much older, back from World War II and more grown up than usual for their age as well, more serious. These were the people who forced the college to give up frosh beanies and be more serious."³⁰

Writing at McGill, 1946-1949: *McGill Daily*, *Forge*, "Angled Road"

Levine sketched later-1940s student life in *Canada Made Me*: "One had to make a name for oneself. There was the playing field, the political clubs, the student council, the literary magazine, the *Daily*." Levine chose the literary magazine (*Forge*) and the *McGill Daily* and made a name for himself. He found life easy: "It was a gay, irresponsible time with few real worries. The going was good. One soon got the hang of the examinations. There were the weekends in the Laurentians; the parties; the dances; the binges; the crap games." Different sets played differently. Intellectuals wrote; many students just had fun; apparently Levine did both. "We went to drink at the 'Shrine' [the Café Andre] or the 'Berkeley' [Berkeley Hotel, more elegant]. The 'Shrine' was round the corner from the Union. You could only drink beer, and if hungry have a steak. It used to be full of students who didn't belong; who took Modern Poetry courses; who worked on the *Daily*." The Berkeley attracted "the fraternity and the sorority crowd, the young alumni, debs, ex-debs, rakes and college boys on the make."³¹ The social round was football at Molson Stadium, night life at the Samovar and Rockhead's Paradise, fraternity parties, proms, formals, Red and White Revues, culminating in spring with a week of parties, dancing, drinking, stags, and the Convocation Ball.

Levine majored in English; his courses ranged from Anglo-Saxon to modern poetry.³² Most important for him, creative writing bloomed at McGill in the late 1940s. McGill's English Department gave writing courses, and the literary magazine *Forge* (1938-1967) and the *McGill Daily* (1911-present) published student verse, stories and essays. Levine's mentor was Professor Harold Files (1895-1982), who came to McGill in 1923 fresh from three Harvard degrees, chaired English from 1947 to 1952, and retired in 1964 (Fig. 1). In addition to 17th- and 18th-century English literature and the English

novel, Files had taught creative writing since the mid-1920s. He tutored student writers, helped them publish, and advised *Forge*.³³ By 1948, just after he became chairman and at his initiative, the English Department began to offer the option of writing a novel (or story or poem collection) instead of a thesis for the master's degree.³⁴ A few students had already written novels but not for credit as M.A. theses. The star was Files's former student Constance Beresford-Howe. She won the Dodd, Mead Intercollegiate Literary Fellowship Prize in 1945 for *The Unreasoning Heart* (published 1946), and published two more novels by 1949. By 1948 she was teaching composition at McGill.³⁵ She recalled Files in 1991 as a mild New Englander who "was not a flamboyant lecturer, but he illustrated with every quiet word, every modestly proffered line of speculation, what a first-rate humanist scholar is."³⁶ Files coached Levine's start as a writer, as Levine's letters and dedication to him of *The Angled Road* attest. Be brief, even mysterious, and avoid ideology, Files told his budding writers. The novel must not be hijacked for didactic or socio-political ends; it must serve art not education or social therapy. Files would have despised most of today's big, significant novels about gender or ethnicity issues, family trauma, and other worthy topics. His teaching notes rail against "the humanitarian novel of social significance:"

Nowadays we have every conceivable kind of axe being ground - race problems, high finance, religion, psycho-analysis etc. and the result is that fiction divides sharply into the kind with a Message and the kind for escape, like *Forever Amber*. All too few write ...an artistically integrated and polished piece of work.... Suggestiveness is a virtue which cannot be overestimated. Nothing delights and intrigues the reader more than to feel that there is more to a character or situation or to a line of dialogue than he is being told.... Leave them speculating.... Shun sentimentalism like the plague....



Figure 1. Harold Files, Professor of English. *McGill News*, Autumn, 1949, 9.

Contrariwise; don't adopt the popular pose of grim realism. The garbage school... is a reaction from the syrupy sweetness-and-light group.... Realism in fiction is any recognizable part of human experience, without any one feature of it exaggerated out of proportion and at the expense of other features.... To achieve this realism is the aim of every writer who is not a satirist or a breast-beater in some cause.³⁷

Levine's stories would fulfil all File's criteria. They achieved a balanced realism, did not breast-beat, teach or preach, and were suggestive, leaving readers feeling that there was more than they were being told.

Levine started out as a poet. McGill-based poets who had modernized Canadian poetry since the 1920s included Frank Scott, A.J. M. Smith and Leo Kennedy and by the 1940s Patrick Anderson, A.M. Klein, Louis Dudek, and Irving Layton.³⁸ In a modest way, Levine belongs to this modernist tradition. Within days of arriving at McGill, he began to publish free verse in the *Daily*, some possibly written before he came to McGill. Most of his poems drew on his war experience. His first was "Ode to a flier," a vortex of the flying experience without narrative details. His next, "Fraternization," portrays a parched earth with dirty cities flooded with rain; "Sheffield" a bombed city; "Leipzig, April 16, 1945" a bombing raid. The poems observed flying and destruction in the modernist way without invoking heroism or patriotism. In *Canada Made Me*, Levine thought back to his bombing missions and the feeling of distance "that released us from being involved with the violence below when we dropped the bombs. All we worried about over the target was first ourselves, then getting a good picture, an aiming point. One was taught indifference as a game."³⁹ He also wrote a few whimsical poems such as "The Grey Cat" and "Saturday Night." His poems in the *McGill Daily*, with first lines, dates and signatures are listed in the Appendix, as are his other works written at McGill. Poetry probably sharpened his prose. Lawrence Mathews suggests that "Levine's preoccupation with style may be in part explained by the fact that he began as a poet" and that while his poetry was imitative, Levine also learned "that poetry can be discovered in precise observation of the ordinary."⁴⁰ Levine's narrators do that. In "By a Frozen River," the narrator, holed up in northern Ontario, went for walks after breakfast and then wrote down "whatever things

I happened to notice," such as "the way trees creak in the cold."⁴¹

In February 1946, Levine wrote short articles for the *Daily* on music and existentialism. Jascha Heifetz was in Montreal and talked to Levine about classical music in popular culture, declaring: "The long haired musician is on his way out." Musicians now must be in touch with the masses. The war had benefited music – he had made the troops he had played for discover Schubert and Rimsky-Korsakov. He also had played popular music and had sugar-coated the classics by adding swing. He predicted the new medium of television would never replace concert halls. Levine provoked Heifetz to say he enjoyed poetry – Byronic poetry.⁴² Writing about Sartre's influence, Levine described existentialism as "a movement that is at present appealing to French University Students, youthful eccentric Bohemians, intellectuals and long-haired caricatures." He speculated that "perhaps it is the tonic so necessary for youth in war-torn frustrated Europe, helping them to find a rational vindication for individual life and creative effort."⁴³

In the fall of 1946 Levine became poetry editor of *Forge*. The editors-in-chief for 1944, 1945 and 1946 had been women but men, veterans, took over *Forge's* post-war boards and as contributors. Not until 1950 would a woman regain the editorship. *Forge* usually came out once in spring; however, the editor for 1947, Alan Heuser, a veteran, brought out two issues. Promoting the Winter 1947 issue in the *Daily*, Levine declared *Forge* was "not a vehicle for the popularization of the theory that Art is for Art's Sake – rather it is a reflection of creative writing by McGill students." He enthused that many of the 200 submissions had been by veterans: "The majority of servicemen have been recently exposed to vivid, emotional experiences; but they see them, some for the first time, as writers, and it is not the experience that is important but what they have done with their experiences."⁴⁴ His emphasis on how experience

was used, rather than the experience itself, foreshadowed his own approach to fiction.⁴⁵ Proudly he noted that “poetry is well and ably represented.” Levine signed two contributions. “Prologue” was a poetic prose meditation on an unnamed city which “lived in the rain.” The poem “It was a Dull Day” evoked London’s war damage: “I walked through Whitechapel in silence / Houses I once remembered were gone.” The issue had two poems, “Circles” and “Myssium” signed “W.A. Neville.” This was an anagram for A.N. Levine.⁴⁶ Later Levine submitted “Myssium” for McGill’s 1947 Chester Macnaghten Prize for Creative Writing and published it in a chapbook in 1948 under his own name. As poetry editor, Levine may have feared four contributions by himself might look excessive.⁴⁷

Daily reviewer Karine Collin agreed that the war stories and poems were strong: “They are cold, hard, entirely factual accounts, written by returned servicemen, and are by far the best writing done at McGill in the last four years.” She singled out “Myssium” by “Neville” and Levine’s “It Was a Dull Day”: “These selections show a tremendous contrast to the soft, despondent prose and poetry that students were writing a few years ago.” She assessed Levine’s “Prologue” less kindly: “When a poet writes prose, there is a tendency to making it too lush and too ornamental.” But “Myssium” was “a beautiful haunting piece, a poem about death that is not morbid, not sad, not hopeless.... It has a catching rhythm that is in the lines and in the construction of the poem. At first one notices only the allegory, then the hardness appears, the inevitable coldness that comes with utter truth.”⁴⁸ “Myssium” blended modernist narrative, vaguely classical and anthropological allusions, images of bleached bones and clay rattles, and the inevitable airman. It began:

A picker of stones am I,
Smith by name; and watch empty eyes
Come to me bearing glass beads from
Egypt,
Wood carvings from New Guinea.⁴⁹

In April 1947 the Spring issue of *Forge* carried what was probably Levine’s first published story, “Our Life Is To Be Envied.”⁵⁰ Drawn from his novel in progress, “The Angled Road”, its hazy impressionistic style was far from his mature terseness. It starts: “I was flying indifferently past finger-printed clouds when I noticed a pall of suspended smoke and dirt rise to form a thick canopy of artificial grey.” He liked this line enough to keep it in the published *Angled Road* but it typifies what he later deplored in his McGill writing.⁵¹ The flyer is on a bombing mission. The moment of bombing gets lost in a description of a rainstorm around the plane as Levine made a point about airmen’s detachment and distraction from their deadly tasks – the bombing was one detail among many, including getting back alive. The flyer muses on recent memories including italicized love-making in terms of rolling sea and a new person created out of a double unity [less lushly described in the published *Angled Road*]. He thinks too about a recent course at King’s College, Cambridge, dining at high table, and hearing madrigals sung from punts on the Cam [in real life, Levine’s course came after his flying ended].

After his strong contributions of 1947, Levine became editor-in-chief of the single issue of *Forge* 1948 (Fig. 2).⁵² Veterans dominated this issue even more than they had the 1947 issues; they wrote 13 of the 16 contributions. Only two writers were women. Files, as advisor to *Forge*, wrote an editorial in the *Daily* praising *Forge* for encouraging students from all faculties to write, noting “if there is anything to be gained from our next crop of Canadian writers, it should be showing itself in such ventures as *The Forge*.”⁵³ How hard this Harvard Bostonian worked for Canadian literature! Eight contributors were studying English literature but the others came from law, medicine, graduate nursing, science, sociology, biochemistry, and philosophy-political science. One contributor had poetry and a story, six had poems, four gave stories and five wrote essays. A *Daily* staffer identified only as B.S.

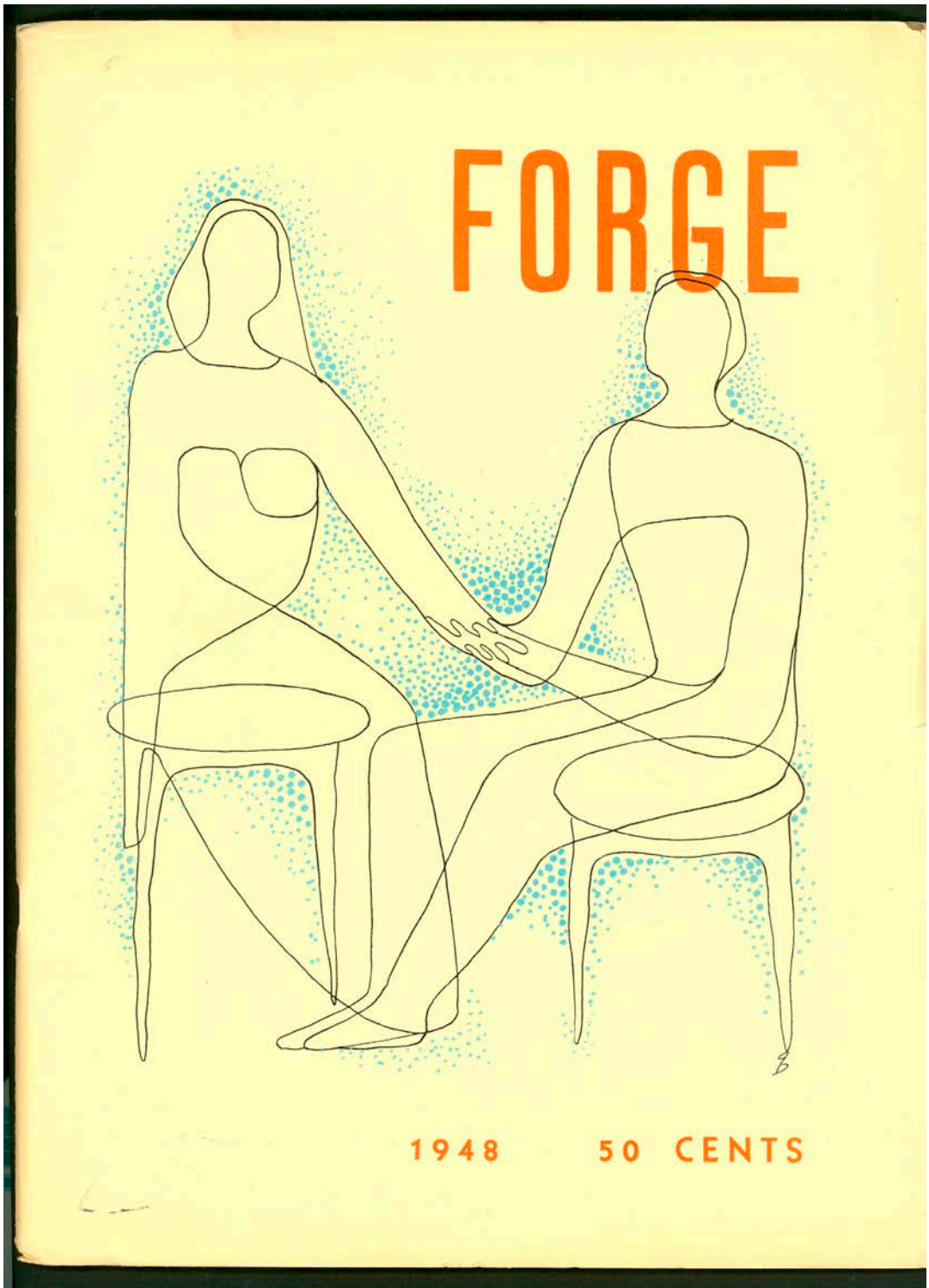


Figure 2. The 1948 issue of *The Forge* edited by Levine, with cover design by Guy Desbarats (B. Arch, 1948).
The Forge: McGill University Magazine. Montreal: McGill University.

[Betty Sinclair?]⁵⁴ interviewed *Forge's* board (Fig. 3), noting that “the guiding spirit of this year’s *Forge* is Norman Levine” and that Levine’s enthusiasm about the issue seemed justified. Levine praised the veterans’ preponderance as he had in 1947: “Norm thinks it significant, however, that thirteen out of the sixteen contributors are student-veterans and that their greater maturity is reflected in the style and subject matter they treat.” He also thought “all writers have to be poets at heart.” Bill Eccles, author of an essay on the historical novel, disagreed, while Christopher Wanklyn, who contributed a story about a mysterious Mexican girl, defended “the place of poetry as a distinct art.” Pat Johnston, the board’s only woman, declared a critical attitude “was the necessary prelude to any writing.” Biochemist Denis Giblin contended that writing “need not be a major occupation.” A decade before C.P. Snow warned against the lack of communication between the “Two Cultures” of science and the humanities, the board optimistically claimed that “science and art are not incompatible.”⁵⁵

Contributors Leo Ciceri, W.D. MacCallan, Wanklyn, and others read *Forge's* poems over the radio.⁵⁶ Later radio would benefit Levine and other writers through Robert Weaver’s commissions for stories for his CBC program,

Anthology. As early as February 1949, Weaver asked Levine if he or other McGill writers might be interested in submitting stories for broadcasts. Levine later credited the CBC commissions with keeping him from starving. In 2004, Weaver told Elaine Kalman Naves that the first *Anthology* program had carried poetry by Levine and a story by Mordecai Richler. He recalled dealing with both men over the years: Richler was brash and charming; “Norman was not as easy. Norman could be easily offended.” And Richler would tease Levine.⁵⁷

Levine contributed only two poems to the 1948 issue of *Forge*. One focused on the war: “A Dead Airman Speaks.” It begins: “Imagine a high-heeled morning / A night with holes in her stockings.”⁵⁸ Thirty years later Levine looked back at his other poem, “Autumn”: “I wasn’t interested in meaning so much as in the sound of the words going.”

The leaves blew trains’ departures and
the sheaves

Blushed a colour the trees never dreamed
of. Speechless

Blackbirds taste the day – smudge-birds.

“I mean, it was just sounds. Then I wrote a novel.”⁵⁹ *Daily* reviewer Peggy Goodin (M.A.



Figure 3. *Forge* Editorial Board, 1948. Standing: Giblin, Eccles, Wanklyn, seated: Levine, Johnston. *Old McGill*, 1948, 216.

1949) found *Forge* obscure, thereby setting off a controversy. Before arriving at McGill, she had already published a novel, *Clementine* [1946], which was being made into a film, *Mickey*. She was writing another, *Take Care of My Little Girl*, as her M.A. thesis in Files's program. Criticizing American college sorority snobbery, it would be a best-seller and be bought by Hollywood for \$30,000 to make a film starring Jeanne Crain.⁶⁰ Goodin's focus on story and social themes and her popular appeal clashed with the abstract, stylistic concerns of the *Forge* set. She declared most contributions lacked "substance, discipline and clarity." She left Levine unscathed – he had a charmed life at McGill: "If it were not for Editor Norman Levine, *Forge's* poetry would be sadly inept." She found "A Dead Airman Speaks" and "Autumn" skilful: "He builds concrete, palpable images to embody concrete, communicable ideas." But even Levine lacked "sufficiently important themes."⁶¹ By 1948 war writing had begun to bore critics, although Hollywood thrived on war movies – and westerns – well into the 1960s.

Forge looked cliquish with its dominance by veterans under Heuser and Levine. Moreover, all 1947 and 1948 board members published themselves in the issues they edited. Satirizing this, a little multilith pamphlet called *Whisper*, dated December 12, 1948 (when Levine was no longer on *Forge's* board), pretended to interview "Mr. Latrine," editor of "Gorge." Latrine admitted that 99.44 percent of "Gorge" was written by himself or his staff. The remaining fraction was by friends or written under assumed names (by then Levine had been unveiled as "Neville," the author of "Myssium").⁶² Perhaps stung by *Whisper* or other critics, the 1949 *Forge* board strongly reacted against self-publishing. Only one board member was published and "the editors decided that if any member of the board wanted to submit a story or a poem, they must do so under an assumed name to avoid any possibility of prejudice in their favour and to assure impartial judgement."⁶³ Obviously Heuser, Levine and the prolific veterans had aroused opposition. By 1949

their self-absorbed reign at *Forge* was ending but they had made the journal tough and modernist.

While editing *Forge*, Levine worked on the manuscript that would become the novel *The Angled Road*. It was inspired by his life in Ottawa and England through 1945. He recalled in 1969 how Files tutored him:

Every second Saturday morning I would go into his office and show him a chapter or part of a chapter. Often I wrote it the night before. And he would go over it, sometimes correcting the grammar of a sentence. Sometimes suggesting parts to leave out.... I am unable to read *The Angled Road* today. But at the time Files' encouragement was vital. He helped to build up confidence on the shakiest of foundations.⁶⁴

Levine was also helped by Professor Algy Noad (1898-1952) who, like Files, had taught at McGill since the 1920s. Noad had written *A Canadian Handbook of English* (1932) that stressed exactness of expression and had exercises to shorten wordy sentences.⁶⁵ Levine inscribed a copy of his *Myssium* chapbook to Noad "for much encouragement & direction."⁶⁶

Until school, his first language had been Yiddish. Levine's travel writer protagonist of *From a Seaside Town* owes his clean prose to having learned English as a second language: "I have a small vocabulary. No long words."⁶⁷ In 2001, Levine recalled a Bar Mitzvah gift, a Pentateuch with Hebrew and Wycliffe's English on facing pages; he had often read the English text for its style.⁶⁸ Levine sent "The Angled Road" to the Dodd, Mead college fiction competition in 1947 and 1948 but did not win. A typescript draft of it, ca. 1948, held in the Rare Books Division of the McGill Libraries was Levine's winning entry for McGill's Macnaghten Prize in 1948.⁶⁹ While the draft differs from the book published in 1952, they share the same autobiographical themes: family tensions, flying, romances in England, alienation on returning to Canada, and leaving

home to attend an unnamed university. There is no description of student life.

The McGill typescript of "The Angled Road" has a telling passage, underlined but eliminated from the published book, in which the protagonist, who wants to write, challenges himself about both his Proustean/Joycean style and his subject matter and settings. Most revealing, he asks himself why he does not write about Canada and Montreal. He replies that doing so would make him self-conscious; Canada lacks the traditions, stability, myths and culture to inspire his writing. His sense of values makes him seek out the old world. Yet he admits how badly he wants to describe Montreal and indeed the beauty of McGill as one enters the campus at the Roddick Gates.⁷⁰ It sounds like a conversation he might have had with Files or his future self. It summarizes his dilemma vividly and foretells how he later solved it – by writing about what he knew. If his writing at McGill served no other purpose, it made him realize his predicament: could he turn his own experiences and background into fiction? In 1975, Levine called *The Angled Road* "a terrible novel," which had reflected his reading of Hemingway, Faulkner, and Proust.⁷¹ After its publication, he stopped dressing up his style and characters: "And the first book to come out after that was *Canada Made Me*. My writing begins with that book."⁷² Most of the texts referring to

McGill cited here date from the 1950s through the 1970s, before his leanest writing, of which Cynthia Flood observed: "To strip out all that plugs up prose: this is Levine's aim."⁷³ And Levine declared: "the leaner the language the more ambiguous it becomes and the more suggestive."⁷⁴

Graduation, Algoma mine, & back to McGill, 1948-1949

Levine graduated B.A. on May 26, 1948 (Fig. 4) with first class honours in English Language and Literature, winning the Peterson Memorial Prize in Literature and the Macnaghten Prize, both for creative writing.⁷⁵ He recalled graduation in *Canada Made Me*; parties, renting gowns, forgettable speeches, honorary degree presentations, and roll call to pick up degrees. "You picked up the red cartridge cases with the sheepskin inside in Latin. And there was the garden party on the other side underneath the trees.... girls in summer dresses and large hats and families taking pictures by the 'Three Bares' [a fountain held up by three Herculean marble nudes]." Levine's description of the 1948 ceremonies was fairly accurate (perhaps he had kept his programme). The physical education students indeed went up first, as he related, although an honorary degree was not given to "a head from another university" but (closely enough) to W.E. Gallie, former medical Dean

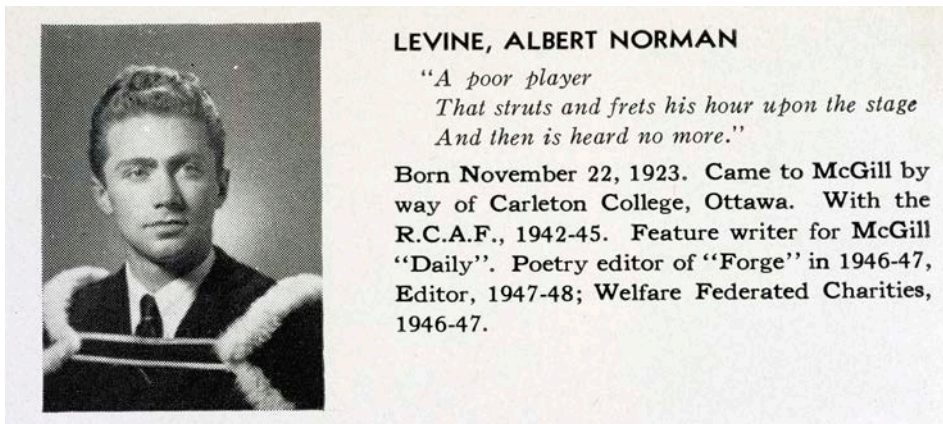


Figure 4. Levine's graduation photograph in *Old McGill*, 1948, 29.

from Toronto. Levine recalled “the guest speaker, the chief of the Boy Scouts, got up and gave a speech; I cannot remember a thing he said.” [An LL.D did indeed go to Lord Rowallan, Chief Scout of the Empire, who gave the main address.] Afterwards, cocktail parties, smuggling bottles into the ball in the Currie Gym, chaperons leaving at midnight, lights darkened, couples necking, “girls and boys whose fathers owned entire villages and towns in Northern Ontario and Quebec were getting quickly plastered.”⁷⁶

Levine had decided to do a master’s degree. He worked in the summer of 1948 at Algoma Ore Properties in Ontario (Helen Mine, Wawa⁷⁷) on the surface, not as a miner, and cleared over \$400.⁷⁸ He was struck by the grim landscape and the workers, many recruited from Europe, hoping for better lives. Three letters to Files record Levine’s passage from the student of 1948 to the expatriate writer of 1950.⁷⁹ Levine wrote Files from the mine on July 17, 1948. Cambridge had not yet replied to his application. He had revised and submitted “The Angled Road” to Dodd, Mead’s contest as he had in 1947. Again they had ranked it among the top ten, again he had not won. They had thought it much improved but still would not publish it. Levine quoted reports from the judges: “E.B.W.” [E.B. White?] found Levine very promising, his novel introspective, apparently autobiographical, and sensitive, though confusing in technique and presentation. A self-study of a young man’s escape from an unhappy home to the RCAF and university, its war content should not be held against it; obviously the war had shaped young writers.⁸⁰ Another judge, “A.T.K.,” noting the conflict between the protagonist’s drab life in Canada and his sensitivity, declared the work accomplished but sometimes unsympathetic. A.T.K. sensed that Levine’s style profited from his being a poet but objected there was too much art for art’s sake. A.T.K. accurately predicted Levine probably would achieve the high standard he sought, although his market might be limited.⁸¹ In 1949, May Ebbitt (later Cutler), reporting in

the *McGill News* on the success of Files’s writing program, noted that Dodd, Mead had called Levine’s “the best written novel we have received from a student” but had declined to publish it, fearing there was no longer a market for war novels.⁸²

Most intriguing, Levine told Files he had started a second novel. He would use archetypal characters (all men) to represent his generation’s struggle of ideals. They would be an immigrant from Poland to Canada, who is disappointed in love, and becomes a fascist; an agnostic science student; an ivory tower Anglican theology student; and, probably closest to Levine’s viewpoint, an introspective artist who rejects religion, lives for the present, and lacks the hatred needed to kill the cold-war enemy. Levine planned to adopt the technique of John Dos Passos in *USA*, following one character a while, then another. He would treat his characters objectively and keep himself out of the book [!]. He had not thought out the plot fully but it would have threads from fairy tales for satire, also the Bible, and end with a prose-poetry monologue. While this unfinished novel was a false start and the direct opposite of his future, autobiographically oriented writing, it probably got another imitative form out of his system – the Great American Novel. In closing, he thanked Files for all he had done for him.⁸³

Cambridge presumably refused him for he returned to McGill for 1948-1949 to write his M.A. thesis under Files. At this point he probably contemplated an academic career combined with writing. A master’s degree would increase his chances for further graduate work in England and a university post. He proposed an M.A. thesis on the controversial American poet Ezra Pound, then confined to an asylum, to analyse Pound’s poetry psychologically and technically. He cited Pound’s innovative approaches to art and culture, and his influence on Auden and Eliot. He found Pound puzzling and paradoxical; he was intrigued too by Pound’s self-imposed exile from America, ending in his being judged innocent of

treason by reason of insanity.⁸⁴ Planning to leave Canada soon, Levine may have seen something of himself in Pound. In 1969 he wrote that “one of the conditions of my being a writer is of living in exile” – exile in Canada as the son of orthodox Jewish parents, at McGill as “the poor boy among the rich,” and in England as a Canadian.⁸⁵ Levine told David McDonald in 1975, “I did Pound deliberately because he was in the loony bin.... I’ve always been attracted to all kinds of people that society frowns upon.”⁸⁶ Titled “Ezra Pound and the Sense of the Past,” the thesis (M.A. McGill, 1949) shows his early thinking about loss of values and identity. It opens:

In an age faced with the prospect of disintegration the course which the individual artist takes depends on his personality and background. He can escape from this age by embracing religion, writing imaginary voyages into the future, or else, look back to what has already happened. The poet who finds little of value in his age is faced with the problem of identification.⁸⁷

Levine knew about imaginary voyages from Professor Noad and had his own identifications to work out, as a Jew, Canadian, ex-RCAF flyer, and successful McGill student. He argued that Pound’s poetry had one thread throughout; “the sense of the past,” which he had pursued as an escape, while science and scepticism killed off the old beliefs people had shared. He examined Pound’s “retreat” to the past by looking at his personality in tandem with his writing, especially the autobiographical poem *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920) in which Pound dissected his past life and the emptiness of modern society. As he noted in his thesis, Pound (and Eliot) personified the poet-scholar – the career Levine was preparing himself for.⁸⁸ Levine planned to continue his study of disintegration and the decay of values in a thesis on Hardy, Lawrence, and Eliot that he would propose to University of London in 1949. He later developed these

themes in *Canada Made Me*, portraying the erosion of the values of his parents and other immigrants, in mining camps and universities, musing that “human relationships had become nothing more than a series of brief encounters. In wartime one accepted that.... Now one didn’t even have a war to justify one’s values or decisions.” He envied Graham Green’s characters who had “an established order of values” to rebel against. “One still clung to a morality but without the faith that ruled it. One was like a chicken running around without its head. All that was left was the personal.... One was condemned to feed on personal experience.”⁸⁹

In fall 1948, Levine’s *Myssium: a new book of verse* was published in the Ryerson Chapbook series. Six of its nine poems originally appeared in *Forge* or the *Daily*.⁹⁰ B.S. [Betty Sinclair?], who had admired Levine’s edition of *Forge*, reviewed it favorably in the *McGill Daily* in October 1948, quoting a poem that had a bomb explosion: “...a sheet of red flame. This would surely delight Ezra Pound himself.” B.S. observed that Levine used his war experiences and “eschews regular verse forms and writes in patterned free verse, eminently suited to his subjects.”⁹¹

Levine returned to the *Daily* as Features Editor for the issue of November 10, 1948. More important, he edited an ambitious revival of the *McGill Daily Literary Supplement* which appeared on March 17, 1949. The original *Literary Supplement* (1924-1925), edited by A.J.M. Smith (B.Sc.[Arts] 1925, M.A. 1926), had published poetry, reviews and other work by himself, F.R. Scott (B.C.L. 1927) and other students before it was succeeded by the *McGill Fortnightly*.⁹² First published in 1938, *Forge* had become the main vehicle of McGill’s student writing. Levine wrote only the editorial of the revived 1949 *Literary Supplement*. He praised *Forge* for serving undergraduate writing but found it strange that McGill lacked the kind of literary journals put out at Toronto, Dalhousie and Queen’s, which published staff and graduate

students. Such a more broadly based publication would reach a wider public than *Forge*, and present the University's "fund of intellectual diversity."⁹³ (It would also provide a continued editing forum for Levine now that he was a graduate student.) Levine's issue leaned heavily towards staff; nine of the ten contributors were McGill department heads, professors or lecturers. He thanked his 1948 *Forge* writers Giblin, MacCallan and Heuser and also Patrick Anderson, a lecturer, "who submitted poems but owing to lack of space cannot be included in this issue" – although he included Anderson's prose piece, "Alphabet of prejudice" with brief essays for letters A through M (G-is for Girls; M-is Montreal, etc.).⁹⁴ One cannot help wondering about the reactions of the *Forge* colleagues.

Levine rounded up a unique spectrum of professorial thinking. The *Supplement* concentrated on criticism and intellectual issues. Notably, it had no poems or fiction (perhaps to avoid competing with *Forge*). Levine maintained, however, his concern with modern verse by including essays on poetry and the writing process. The contributors examined literacy, the stultifying influence of the British and French past, the threat posed by American comics and movies to Canadian literature, and the intellectual facing totalitarianism. German chairman Willem Graff wrote on Rilke, French chairman Jean Launay on existentialism. The lone student, S. Lamb (B.A. 1949), wrote on "Metaphysical poetry and the Moderns." Two of Gordon Webber's "Design" paintings, 1948-1950, gave abstract counterpoints to the texts. Files and Noad were among four contributors from the English Department. In "The writer in our society," Files observed that creative writers rarely espoused the rules of truthfulness followed by scientists and philosophers, and so were criticized for being irresponsible. Yet the artist-writer often "shares in the general quest for truth in his time; or is the most memorable voice of that quest."⁹⁵ Files's views may have encouraged Levine's quest for truth in fiction. Similarly Noad

could have nudged Levine towards personal and autobiographical writing. Noad's article was an apologia for his research and teaching interests in diaries, autobiographies, memoirs and correspondence. No one could know an age without knowing "its individual self-revelations; hence an excellent case might be made in justification of such reading as a means to an end, a direct path into the consciousness of nations, culture, or historical period." He gave examples from St. Augustine to Pepys of writings which let us into peoples' lives. Unlike novelists and poets, the diarist and letter writer never knows how his story will end. Noad pointed out the "irrevocability of the word once written," which anyone reading his own old letters will feel and the "inexhaustible variety and perpetually-renewed delight" of personal writing, which rivalled anything novelists or playwrights could dream up, and constantly reminded the reader of "the homely details of everyday life."⁹⁶ This sounded like a challenge to fiction writers. Levine's own story-memoirs, full of homely details, might intrigue some future Noad.

Return to England and the end of academia, 1949-1950

Just as the *Supplement* came out, Levine won a Beaver Club fellowship. These sent Canadian ex-servicemen to British universities, and were worth up to 500 pounds a year, renewable for a second year. The Montreal press noted that Levine hoped to attend University of London or Cambridge.⁹⁷ (He would be accepted by King's College, University of London). He received his McGill M.A. on May 30, 1949 and would be denied England no longer. With his master's degree, the *Supplement*, and the fellowship, he was launched on an academic path. Better yet, he was on his way to being a writer: Jack McClelland agreed to market *The Angled Road* in Canada if Levine could find a London publisher. And like the narrator of "The English Girl," Levine assumed the English girl at McGill

would return to England soon.⁹⁸ In the story “A Canadian Upbringing” (1968), Levine’s narrator said he used to vary his reasons for going to England according to who asked. So he would tell an editor that his Canadian publisher had advised it. Or he would tell someone at a party “it was because of the attractive English girl who sat beside me at college and took the same courses I did, and who was going back when she graduated.”⁹⁹ He gave similar reasons for going to England in “Why I am an Expatriate”- because of the English girl and his happy memories as an officer, when for the first time he had been “living” not “marking time.”¹⁰⁰

He left McGill and Canada with few regrets. In retrospect at least, Levine felt he had forced himself into McGill’s academic and social mould, while there was “another man within me that’s angry with me.” As he stated in “Why I am an Expatriate;”

By the time I left McGill I was pretty confused. Things seemed so far to have fallen into my lap, as long as I continued to play this game – which was, for me, just a series of pretences. The postponement of any decision, which I got by going to university, was now up. The choice I had to make was either to continue the way I had, and it seemed all too easy and attractive to do so – or else try to come to terms. I didn’t think I could do this in Canada, where I would always feel a sense of betrayal..... I had by this time also realized that all I wanted to do was write. And I knew that this would be easier, at the beginning, away from home.¹⁰¹

Levine did not define betrayal but it partly involved his adaptation to McGill where he set aside his working class, Jewish roots. He told John Richmond in 1970 that he had written *Canada Made Me* “as a tribute to a generation of Canadians whose children were forced, by economic or other circumstances, to deny the old

country values of their parents.”¹⁰² He never fully spelled out what these lost values were or what his own were, except for truthfulness in writing – “One of the things a writer finds out is that you don’t lie.”¹⁰³ More cosmically, he reclaimed his Jewish background in *Canada Made Me*. He quoted a letter from a friend in Israel, which praised the Jewish families of their old “near-slum” Ottawa neighbourhood: husbands did not beat their wives or get drunk like their gentile neighbours. The friend recalled “the patriarchal set-up of our tight-knit Jewish family pattern, the religion, festival, synagogue which emphasized our apartness, gave us our values.” Revisiting Ottawa in 1956, Levine enjoyed traditional Sabbath services and “the wonderful food smells of a Friday night.” And in Montreal he enjoyed the Jewish neighbourhoods and food stores but recoiled from an innovative, Americanized reform service at Temple Emmanuel in Westmount: “The whole service was a parody...Gone was the richness of the Hebrew chants, the loudness, the cantor stammering over the ritual... One could believe in that.”¹⁰⁴

That was Levine by the mid-1950s. At McGill he and his narrators had not yet come to terms with their backgrounds. The narrator of *From a Seaside Town* (1970) had avoided “any Jews on the [McGill] campus who stuck together and went to the Hillel Club,” although he had enjoyed going a Jewish restaurant “for gefilte fish, helzel, lutkas, and to watch the others eat.”¹⁰⁵ In a 1969 memoir Levine declared:

At McGill I was running away from being a Jew. It sounds silly now... I made up so many identities. It all depended on who I was with. This helped to give my life there a dangerous edge. But it was to prove near fatal to the writing. For at the time I was writing *The Angled Road*. And in it I cut out the fact that my characters were Jewish. And by doing this, a whole dimension is missing; I made them smaller than they should have been.¹⁰⁶

He told David McDonald in 1975 that he had reacted against Canada and his orthodox Jewish background by marrying an English woman and moving to an isolated part of England “and then I found there that I felt very Canadian and very Jewish.... I think you’re a writer first, and you’re a Jew, a Protestant, a Catholic, a Canadian afterwards.”¹⁰⁷

Levine wrote to Files on 24 September, 1949 from Cornwall, just before starting at King’s College, London (Cambridge apparently had refused him).¹⁰⁸ He mentions McGill friends in England: Chris Wanklyn writing his M.A. thesis on D.H. Lawrence for the University of Sheffield, Leo Ciceri at the Old Vic acting school. He has spent the past summer in St. Ives, Cornwall, swimming, writing and getting to know the fishermen and artist colony there. [This visit was fateful for Levine would settle there for much of the next thirty years and have painter friends. Critics would say he wrote with a painter’s eye.¹⁰⁹] He has made changes to “The Angled Road,” written two stories, a poem, an essay, and book reviews, and hopes to send the *Montreal Star* letters on current English writing, art and drama. He is working on the new novel (it is not clear if it is the same one he started at the mine). England has gone down-hill. While the countryside is still beautiful, the national character has shrunk. The English envy and copy the Americans just as Canadians do the British. Culture and arts do well because of government support. He has thought a lot about Canada and now sees it more clearly. He also mentions he sent Faber and Faber his thesis on Pound. T.S. Eliot as one of the publisher’s chiefs wrote back praising the work but noting that it was hard to turn a thesis into a readable book and that the scope should expand to cover all the Cantos.¹¹⁰ [Levine enjoyed this letter from a poet who had influenced him and was one of the writers he planned to study in his proposed London thesis on the decay of absolute values. Much later he used an Eliot letter in the story “We All Begin in a Little Magazine.” The Levine-like narrator

meets a Levine-like poet “in his late fifties, short and stocky and wearing a shabby raincoat.” The poet wistfully hopes to publish something. “I had a letter from T.S. Eliot,” he said. “I kept it all these years. But I sold it last month to Texas for fifty dollars,” he says proudly. “My daughter was getting married. And I had to get her a present.”¹¹¹ Whether or not Levine himself had a letter from Eliot, he indeed sold the University of Texas the manuscript of *Canada Made Me* after it had been refused as a gift by the McGill Library in 1959.¹¹²

In February 1950 Levine confides in Files again, disillusioned, comparing King’s unfavourably to McGill. It has no campus, just a nondescript building next to a pub. [Fifty years later, he had mellowed: “I liked King’s because it was in the Strand and there was a pub, Mooney’s by its entrance.”¹¹³] He finds most students and lecturers dull, except for Professor Geoffrey Bullough, an authority on Shakespeare and on modern poetry, who is supposed to supervise his thesis on “The Decay of Absolute Values in Modern Society as Shown in the Works of Thomas Hardy, D.H. Lawrence, and T.S. Eliot.” Bullough had been surprised that Levine had chosen his own subject; most British postgraduates chose from a list. Ominously, Levine has not yet been confirmed in the Ph.D. Program as his McGill M.A. is not held equivalent to London’s. So he is doing a qualifying period of six months and negotiating his status. He praises McGill: no library rivals McGill’s except the British Museum’s; McGill Professor Joyce Hemlow prepared him as well in Anglo-Saxon as any course at King’s; and no one teaches modern poetry the way Anderson and Klein had at McGill. He has enjoyed London theatre, Olivier, Gielgud, Leigh, and Richardson. He is still revising “Angled Road.” He thinks his academic and creative work go well together, to the benefit of his second novel. He has begun to see how provincial Canada is, but is getting involved in projects of Canadians in London. He has met many London writers. They fall into two groups: university graduates inspired by Eliot

and Pound and non-grads concerned with social questions [soon to become the Angry Young Men]. Levine cares for neither; poet Kathleen Raine told him that creativity was low because all the men were homosexuals while women wrote the poems and novels.¹¹⁴ Levine hinted at his new life in his poem "Letter from England" (1950); "Then London and the cocktail parties, / And the clever young men and the clever young women."¹¹⁵ Later he came to admire the Angry Young Men; they did not play along with middle class values but wrote "about what they knew" – their working class backgrounds. His essay "A Letter from England" (1958) would praise the Labour government's welfare state and the exciting writing being done by writers from English speaking countries outside England.¹¹⁶

Apparently Levine could not get into the King's Ph.D program unless he took more courses or a second master's degree. So in 1950 he got the admirably flexible Beaver Club Fellowship officials to let him drop his academic course and spend his second year of funding to write.¹¹⁷ Besides revising his novel, he published poetry about Cornwall and analysed his own style in "Portrait of a Poet": "The Poets do not like my 'technique' / The 'other people' hate its plainness." Heine or Villon might have approved but now there was

No one except Pound.

And he is safe in a hospital,

In some other country.¹¹⁸

Pound stayed on his mind. Levine combined scholarship and writing at McGill but once he gave up doctoral studies in London he disowned academia. Already critical of McGill by his *Canada Made Me* tour in 1956, he declared in 1960 that when he had left Montreal (in 1949) he knew he had "no great interest in the academic. It was, mainly, just the means of getting me over."¹¹⁹ The narrator of "A Canadian Upbringing" (1968) recalled, "In London I soon discovered that I didn't care for the academic."¹²⁰ And Levine said in 1970, "The academic tries to separate literature

from life. My job, and I think any writer's job, is to weld them."¹²¹ The blocking of his doctoral hopes at University of London and, perhaps, the end of his McGill romance may have provoked some of his hindsight disillusionment with McGill. But the Beaver Club funding worked out well. It got him back to England, let him discard academia for writing, and discover Cornwall and London's literary life. A little money in time does all.

PART II: MCGILL IN RETROSPECT

Critical memories

Levine often mentioned McGill in his stories, poems, articles, and interviews. Most references were brief but in *Canada Made Me* (1958) and the story "The English Girl" (1964) Levine portrayed the University in strikingly similar terms, recalling parties, restaurants, dances, romance, and friends. In "The English Girl," he reduced what could have made a novel to a few evocative pages. But Levine and his story narrators also looked back at McGill with edgy regret and a sense of [mainly self-] betrayal, lamenting how easy and what a waste of time McGill had been. Levine noted:

At university I was in my element – mainly because I could not take it seriously. I graduated with two degrees, first class honours, various prizes, a scholarship, and the five thousand dollar fellowship. Even at the end, I was unable to take any of this seriously because I considered all along that my presence there was something in the nature of a fraud.¹²²

He seldom mentioned McGill without saying he could not take McGill seriously. Worse, he concluded that McGill had given him a false start as a writer. Presumably he did not include File's help with the basics. In "A Writer's Story," the narrator has an M.A., had edited the literary magazine at university, has recently married (as

Levine had in 1952), lives in Cornwall, has a novel about to come out, and is trying to write but does not know what to write about. "That's the trouble with going to university, I thought. I didn't have to try hard enough. The results for a little effort were too immediate and too great. You think you're a writer because those at university say so and make a fuss."¹²³ In the same vein, Levine said that as a writer he had had to "uneducate" himself, as an antidote to university.¹²⁴

He sold stories but was hard up in the 1950s and 1960s. When the travel-writer protagonist of *From a Seaside Town* (1970) passes through suburbs on the train from Ottawa to Montreal, he looks at the comfortable houses, envying men living there. "Why can't I settle for this? Why isolate myself in a cut-off seaside town in England that I don't even like?" Later, back in Cornwall, trying to think of what to write to make money, he muses, "Perhaps I'm in the wrong job. I could have been a professor in some provincial university in Canada." He would have an office, secretary, colleagues to talk to, students, regular pay, and coffee at the faculty club. "How I wish I was part of a community."¹²⁵ Levine had lost interest in the academic by 1951 and his fictional alter ego was playing "what if" but the story hints that Levine sometimes thought of the academic road started at McGill. He might have turned out like his fellow *Forge* editor, Alan Heuser, who also won prizes and wrote an M.A. at McGill but unlike Levine did a doctorate and taught in McGill's English Department from 1954 to 1992. Professors earned more than writers. Poverty was Levine's frequent theme, sometimes played as satire. In the story "I'll Bring You Back Something Nice" [1968], his protagonist, a McGill graduate living in Cornwall with a wife, children, and overdue bills, borrows money from his McGill classmates at a tenth anniversary reunion in London. They are embarrassed but we suspect he is not. The story's narrator and the real Levine, who tries to borrow money in *Canada Made Me* but is given a suit instead, both

poke fun at the "successful" classmates who have money they should be relieved of.¹²⁶

Levine visited Canada in 1954, described in his "Autobiographical Essay" (2001), and not to be confused with his 1956 *Canada Made Me* visit. Files took him to the McGill Faculty Club for lunch. They ran into the head of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and Levine, who could be a good promoter, persuaded him to put on an exhibition of his St. Ives painter friends. Back in England, he started using a map to inspire stories set in Canada. He got advances from London publisher Putnam and Jack McClelland in Toronto to go across Canada from March to June 1956 to write the travel book *Canada Made Me*.¹²⁷ Published in 1958, it had many McGill references, although of course its chief interest was as a melancholy, original critique of Canada as Levine mused on his past and present. It recreates dialogue and reads like the fiction-which-reads-like-nonfiction of his stories. While accepted by most critics (and here) on Levine's terms as nonfiction¹²⁸ in at least one instance, as John Metcalfe points out, it invents a character, a noseless woman. Inspired by a real woman in England, Levine had used her as a character in his story "A Piece of Blue" (ca. 1955-1956) about a McGill student working, as he had, at Algoma Mines. When Levine revisited the mine on the *Canada Made Me* trip, he pulled the noseless woman from his story into his nonfictional travelogue. Citing this, Metcalf observes: "Clearly, Levine is driven more, by the 'pressure of writing the story' than he is by the obligation to transcribe 'reality.'"¹²⁹ Far less important, Levine may have transposed the timing of his meeting with "P," mentioned below. Fictionalizing real-life people and events has always been accepted; inventing incidents in memoirs has not. One suspects that *Canada Made Me* very occasionally may have improved life into art.

Levine confronted his past in some of the places he revisited, especially the mine, Ottawa, Montreal, and McGill. He knew it would be

harder to write about places where he had lived than those he was seeing for the first time and could describe impressionistically – where there was nothing to feel any loss about or “to destroy, or to betray.”¹³⁰ Ira Nadel saw the book as more autobiography than travel book and Levine as “the autobiographer as survivor.... His 1956 return is not to find the country but himself.”¹³¹ Critics complained *Canada Made Me* focused on Canada’s down and outs. Levine admitted he preferred the poor side of town – perhaps reacting against the prosperous milieu he knew at McGill. Some Canadian booksellers treated the book like pornography. In December 1958, William Weintraub (B.A., McGill, 1947), wrote to Mordecai Richler that the book “will certainly cause some panics around this smiling, beautiful country,” and that the owner of Classics Books in Montreal tried to talk him out of buying it. Weintraub found the writing “really excellent – fine descriptive passages – but he certainly did find a lot of sordid stuff, bleak towns, vapid people.”¹³² Richler agreed, reviewing it in the same tone for the London *Sunday Times*: “It’s a sour, wilfully sordid book, evoking many scenes brilliantly, and far better than any other book I’ve ever read about Canada.”¹³³

Lawrence Mathews called the Levine of *Canada Made Me* “the stereotypical Angry Young Man.”¹³⁴ The book criticized mining camps, the sleazy new rich and the nervous old WASP rich, and McGill, which represented “wealth, snobbery, privilege.” Yet Levine liked the campus with its old grey stone buildings, “the stone tomb of James McGill. And the ghinko tree...A piece of country stuck right in the centre of Montreal” where “in the autumn at a five o’clock lecture you can hear the ship’s horns from the river.” To the west “sweeping upwards with the contour of the mountain, are the fine houses, the Presbyterian churches, the wealth of Westmount. East: the drab sour-smelling boarding-houses; the shabby apartments; one soon came to poverty.”¹³⁵ The charming campus aside, he resented what he had

come to see as the conformity and mediocrity McGill had offered and imposed:

I walked away from McGill with little nostalgia. It was one of those times when, looking back, one can see at what expense the good times were had. At its best it was ‘borrowed time’.... If you wanted to keep on the same way, you could, it was made all too easy. One had without knowing it joined ‘the organization.’ And in those four years it did its work. It sandpapered the personal rough edges while it continued to dangle a carrot in front, as long as one toed the line.¹³⁶

He said the same things not long after in “Why I am an Expatriate,” quoted earlier. T.D. MacLulich suggests that “Levine sees McGill as little more than an arena for social snobbery and social opportunism.”¹³⁷ Except for his sketches of friends such as the “English Girl,” “P,” “M,” and “Victor,” Levine painted the dominant Anglo-Saxon Protestant students as superficial, materialistic and fearful for their status, anticipating Mordecai Richler’s raspy treatment of them in *Joshua Then and Now* (1980). In *Canada Made Me*, Levine insisted repeatedly on the conformity demanded from students and the similarity of their upper middle class backgrounds. Students from other backgrounds quickly learned to copy. The students “were all much of a sameness. Not only have they inherited money but Puritanism and guilt as well.” Doomed to dull futures, they lived their best moments at McGill: “I remember W. chartering an airplane to fly him for a weekend with a girl he wanted to see in New York...R. staking the borrowed car he drove up in, on a throw of the dice at a fraternity crap game....the end of an all-night party with the girls in evening dresses and bare feet playing against the boys in a game of softball on the lawn.” Their student years were their last gasp of freedom. They would enter the prisons of their fathers’ professions. They would be worse off than their parents, have less

authority, be ashamed of being Canadian, and copy the British or Americans. They had their country cottages and the Junior League. "But they felt inferior to their parents' achievements, they looked ashamed most of the time as if they carried with them a family guilt, that they could not tell anyone, that was eating away from the inside."¹³⁸

From memories to memoir and fiction: friends, professors, rooms

In 1993 Levine wrote that he was often asked how autobiographical his work was: "Which is very difficult to explain. (It is not as autobiographical as it reads.) And does it matter?"¹³⁹ Michelle Gadpaille cites Levine distinguishing between autobiography and fiction: "Levine says: 'Life once lived, the way you remember it is fiction.'¹⁴⁰ Critics have focused on the mixture of autobiography and invention found in most of Levine's stories.¹⁴¹ Summing up his career in 2001, Levine noted that while friends appeared in his stories, once he started writing he expected the story to change: "And while writing this essay, I realize why this autobiographical material becomes more interesting as a short story or novel. Because only in fiction can I make connections. Between the personal and [something that wasn't there] something larger."¹⁴² He ended one story: "It is hard to write – or live for that matter – without hurting someone."¹⁴³ In "Class of 1949," the narrator says, "People are very generous. They let you into their lives. So you don't want to hurt them by what you write. In any case I write about people I like or have liked. And only about people I know."¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Levine told David McDonald in 1975 that he would tell people "what I think is the truth by saying I only write about people I like. I try to tell them that you take bits and pieces from all different people to make up one character, and that you invent and make up things because of the technical necessities that go into it."¹⁴⁵

But in the case of several McGill friends seen below, he took more than bits and pieces and not from different people. The originals once detected confirm that Levine started from real people but with the caveat that Levine and his narrators were not identical and that the real people became fictional characters once the story got going. Yet Levine kept his story characters far closer to the people who inspired them than do most fiction writers. Conventionally, he disguised individuals in his stories and in *Canada Made Me* with name changes or initials. However, he was so relentlessly truthful that the details he gave about "M," "P," "Victor," and the "English Girl" allow them to be identified, using student directories, yearbooks and other publications. Naming them is unnecessary and following Levine's lead they are not identified here nor their privacy invaded if some are still living [except for Leo Ciceri, the original of "Len Mason" in "Class of 1949," who died in 1970]. On the other hand, the identities of Professors Files and Noad, both long dead, are given because of their importance as Levine's teachers and to show that they match "The Professor" of *Canada Made Me* and Graham Pollack in "A Canadian Upbringing." To understand the situation of the unhappy Professor and Levine's relation to him, one needs to know he is Files; to appreciate the vignette of Pollock, lecturing on Utopias, one should know he is based on Noad, whose lectures on Utopias Levine would have heard.¹⁴⁶

Levine's earliest story using McGill background, "A Small Piece of Blue," (ca. 1955-56), has interested critics looking at how Levine transformed his own experience into fiction.¹⁴⁷ The protagonist is a McGill student working at the Algoma, Ontario mine site as Levine did in summer 1948. Levine had written Files that life at the mine was isolated, dull, and had changed how he looked at working. After the glamour of the RCAF and McGill, he discovered bleakness and dejected wage slaves. The story was written just before the nonfictional recollections in *Canada Made Me*; they shared several similar texts

and both criticize McGill. For the story, Levine invented the key character of the camp doctor, a middle-aged, disillusioned McGill graduate who has rejected the successful world McGill represents, writes poetry, and drinks. Levine later analysed how he had developed the story: starting from wanting to write about his experience, remembering “disconnected memories,” and then creating the doctor “in order to make the story work.”¹⁴⁸ The student admired the doctor’s refusal to follow the McGill path to success. They agreed McGill had been fun but a waste of time; that it instilled conformity and social graces not learning, intuition or individuality. T.D. MacLulich found that the doctor’s – and Levine’s – hostility to McGill “sounds exaggerated” and that the doctor may feel ashamed he did not live up to the ideals of his McGill education. Pointing to inconsistencies in the way Levine handled the mine episode in the “factual” *Canada Made Me* and in the story, MacLulich argued that Levine did not simply tell the truth in his fiction (as he claimed) but like most writers “has selected and arranged his materials to achieve the desired effect.” He also suggested that Levine transposed his disillusionment with Canada in 1956 to the student who had not yet been disillusioned in the story’s time of 1948.¹⁴⁹ MacLulich nearly convinces us, yet Levine probably had begun to be disillusioned as early as 1948. The narrator of his 1948 draft of *Angled Road*, cited earlier, could not force himself to write about Canada and already sounded not only disillusioned but alienated.

Canada Made Me portrayed Professor Files and four classmates: P, M, the English Girl, and through a quoted letter, the classmate he would call Victor in “Class of 1949.” Victor and the English Girl also appeared in stories; Professor Noad and classmate Leo Ciceri only in stories. Levine said he dropped the authorial commenting most writers make within their narratives in his later writing¹⁵⁰ but in *Canada Made Me* and the stories and interviews cited here he occasionally comments, mildly, regretfully, and pityingly. He

often refers to loss of values and betrayals – by himself, his protagonists and his characters. In particular, Levine saw P, and his narrator saw Victor, as having failed their early creative promise. Levine was hard on himself and on his writer-protagonists – they too had their failures – but at least they stayed the course as writers.

We will look at the five student friends first, then the two professors as they appear in stories and *Canada Made Me*. The first student is P, re-encountered on the *Canada Made Me* tour. Levine stated that when he first arrived in Montreal in March 1956, he stayed over just one night (at Mordecai Richler’s mother’s rooming house) before flying to Ottawa the next afternoon. On the day of his flight, he ran into P, whose identity is traceable through Levine’s usual trail of truthful details. His first term at McGill, Levine had shared a room with P in a boarding house. They wrote poetry, studied late for exams kept awake on Benzedrine, and drank at the Shrine. Now they have a brandy at the Press Club in the Mount Royal Hotel and talk about what they have done since graduation. P “had joined the CBC, had put on weight, married, three children, a small house in a suburb, a small car.” P had succumbed to security. They no longer have much in common. Levine recalls how they had talked as students: “The worries, the ambitions, the lies, the things one loved, one hated, one feared, that one confided... and now we had nothing to say to each other.” P had written poetry at McGill; now he said “I don’t even read poetry today.” Levine recalled good things about P. “He was never a phoney. At a time when those who came to McGill after the war, without money or family influence, and ruthlessly began to charm, to sell themselves, P never quite fitted in.” P would have gladly been an academic “with his slippers, the pipe, the glass of beer, the fire going, and books on all the walls: an insignificant lecturer in some provincial university in the States.” However, P had lacked the high marks and support from his professors that he would have needed to win a fellowship and go on for higher degrees. Their

talk dried up: “Both of us were reminders of something we had betrayed in our selves. Or perhaps one had merely become faithful to a new set of experiences.”¹⁵¹ On March 12, 1956, Brian Moore wrote William Weintraub that he had just met in the Press Club “with Norman Levine, who is staying here at the home of Mort’s mother and who emplanes for Ottawa tonight – I hope. He was full of questions, suggestions, etc.”¹⁵² [Moore bears no resemblance to P and did not attend McGill.] Maybe Levine remembered things incorrectly or maybe he actually met both P and Moore at the Press Club the day he left for Ottawa. But one risks making too much of little discrepancies.

On his return to Montreal, Levine visits M, a classmate he likes who belongs to “the Anglo-Scottish elite.” Her apartment building overlooks McGill (it was the only high building overlooking the grounds then). He studied for exams with her there and remembered looking down and watching nannies pushing prams on campus; he had used the prams in a poem of 1951, “Letter from McGill University.”¹⁵³ M’s first memory is of being wheeled on campus by her nanny. Her father, distinguished in his profession, has died recently, his funeral honored by McGill. “M is short, attractive, with a round Dutch-like face that makes her look like a schoolgirl. She looks astonishingly young for thirty.” Her graduation photo in *Old McGill* matches Levine’s description. They had sat together in English classes, passed notes in lectures. She has been engaged three times but is looking for “somebody that’s going somewhere, that I can push.” She tells him about their classmates; T committed suicide, J is high up in aluminum, lives in London and has acquired “an immaculate English accent,” someone else races cars.¹⁵⁴ Here, they sound a bit like the McGill hearties in London celebrating their class’s tenth anniversary in “I’ll Bring You Back Something Nice.”

In “Class of 1949” (1974), the narrator, who as usual closely resembles Levine, writes about his

friendship with “Victor,” who closely resembles a real-life friend of Levine’s at McGill. Victor had introduced the narrator to elegant houses, filled with paintings, first editions and butlers: “When Victor came in his car to pick me up for dinner with his parents and saw the basement room I had by the boiler on Dorchester next to the railway tracks, he put it down to some eccentricity on my part.”¹⁵⁵ The narrator and Victor both moved to England and spent the summer of 1949 writing in St. Ives, Cornwall. [In *Canada Made Me*, Levine describes sharing a cottage and writing that summer of 1949 with “another Canadian.”]¹⁵⁶ They later shared London digs. The narrator, like Levine, planned a thesis on “The Decay of Absolute Values in Modern Society.” Victor, like his real-life original, moved to Morocco. In about 1974 Victor visits the narrator in Cornwall accompanied by a young Moroccan man. The narrator recalls Victor used to like girls in their McGill days. Victor confesses to being a dilettante. As with P, it emerges that they have little in common anymore. Victor once wanted to write. The narrator remembers the novel Victor had begun: “The characters were lifeless.” In the unpublished passage of “The Angled Road” cited earlier, Levine’s narrator had criticized himself for not writing about what he knew. Levine’s stories excel at role changing and projecting, and the narrator of “Class of 1949” scolds Victor the way the narrator of “The Angled Road” had scolded himself. “I asked him [Victor] why he didn’t write about people he knew. About his family, about Montreal, his private school, McGill. He said he didn’t want anything to do with Canada or anything connected with it.... And how can you be a writer if you reject your past? Seeing Victor, I can see the person I was.” Indeed, Victor is a sort of bad twin to Levine’s narrator. Victor’s rejection of his roots is uncomfortably close to that of Levine and a few of his narrators. Victor’s abandoned lifeless novel may have alluded to Levine’s ghost novel mentioned to Files in 1948-1949. Yet Victor’s free, wandering, single life is enviable. Levine’s narrator only travels “back to

Canada – to keep in touch with the past.” And he stays uninvolved in Cornwall because he wants to hang on to his past.¹⁵⁷ The story sums up Levine’s own expatriate tensions and those of his characters such as Victor and Alexander Marsden, who is mentioned below. Like “The English Girl,” the story is foreshadowed in *Canada Made Me*, in which Levine quotes from “a letter from Morocco.” The unnamed writer matches Victor. Replying to Levine’s question why he left Canada, he says initially it had been for a change; he had planned to return. He has nothing against Canada, although the climate is atrocious and Canadians touting Canada put him to sleep. He likes learning new languages and customs and escaping Canada’s “dreary” borrowed Anglo-Scotch culture. Now he prefers Morocco [as many wandering Anglos had in fact and literature, 1900-1960]. Canada stands for his childhood which now revolts him.¹⁵⁸

“Class of 1949” also glimpses Levine’s classmate, Len Mason, based on Leo Ciceri (B.A. 1948) who became a distinguished actor and died in a car crash in 1970. At McGill, Ciceri had acted, written on Canadian theatre for Levine’s 1948 *Forge*, and read *Forge*’s poetry over the radio. The narrator asks Victor:

And remember Len Mason? One time the three of us were walking along Sherbrooke Street after a late lecture. It was winter. Lots of snow on the ground. We told him we were going to be writers. And he said he was going to be an actor. So we said we would write plays for him. Len did become an actor. He acted in Canada and over here and in the States. He was killed two years ago while driving a car on a highway.¹⁵⁹

Levine remembered “The English Girl” best; he published her story in 1964.¹⁶⁰ The narrator, a McGill graduate closely resembling Levine, looks back fifteen years after his romance ended. Reviewers disagree over whether Levine portrayed women convincingly but the English girl’s quiet

charm and wit come through.¹⁶¹ She was based on a real-life student whose father was dead, whose mother moved to Canada because she disliked post-war England, who lived in McGill’s Royal Victoria College, took English, and was a year or two behind the narrator (and Levine) at McGill. In real life and the story, they were a match. Both longed for England. She evoked hunt balls and decaying manors [not the Tudorbethan replicas Levine saw in Westmount]. Her picture in the *Old McGills* matches the narrator’s description: “She was tall, a longish face, dark eyes, a nice smile, black unruly hair. She hadn’t made many friends at university. Others thought her quiet, reserved. They put it down to her being English. I found this all very attractive.” The story’s narrator was a “pro-Britisher.... So it was no accident that I was attracted to the English girl.” Moreover, she was interesting in herself, not just because she was English: “I think she changed me as much as anyone is changed by another person.”¹⁶² The real-life girl may have sparked Levine’s writing. As Levine said to David McDonald: “I began to write a novel as an undergraduate, I think to please a girl and myself.”¹⁶³ Levine recreates the same activities in “The English Girl” that he described in *Canada Made Me* – including going to restaurants. The narrator and the English girl would lunch at Ben’s on smoked meat, Pauze’s on oysters, Slitkin and Slotkin on steak or go to Chicken Charlie’s. Supper spots were the Lasalle Hotel, Mother Martin’s, Chinatown and the Bucharest. They would meet under the Arts Building’s clock. She decorated his room and gave him her childhood copy of *Winnie the Pooh*. They skied at Mount Tremblant and nearly capsized a boat at Ile Aux Noix, where the narrator, like Levine, had worked as a family tutor in 1947 (also described in the story “South of Montreal”). The narrator made sure she did not meet his family. They assumed their lives would be together in England; the narrator applied for a fellowship “to make that possible.”¹⁶⁴

More traditional than his later stories (Maupassant, Maugham, and Irwin Shaw would

not have faulted it), “The English Girl” is Levine at his most honest and confessional with a sense of lost past. It must be his closest fusion of fiction and autobiography. Here is part of the real-life version in *Canada Made Me*:

Listening with her to the Messiah. Then back into the thick snow. The cups of coffee and crumpets in the “Honey Dew.” The early morning meetings for breakfast. She waited for me underneath the clock in the Arts building after the last lecture. Then the meal out, the Saturday night film, and at Christmas ski-ing at Mont Tremblant. Her mother, a widow, had brought her to Montreal after the war, after Labour had come into office.... She told me about an old house in Suffolk with earwigs coming out of the taps, of her nannie, of hunt balls, of being presented at Court.¹⁶⁵

She had brought her childhood icons from England, including *Winnie the Pooh*; she was homesick for Ivor Novello.¹⁶⁶

The fictional “English Girl” and the factual *Canada Made Me* share the same details: their breakfasts at the Honey Dew restaurant; her waiting for him under the Arts Building clock; her mother being a widow who moved to Montreal because she disliked postwar England; Christmas skiing at Mont-Tremblant; her copy of *Winnie the Pooh*; memories of hunt balls; her staying up all night to hear the broadcast of Princess Elizabeth’s marriage; and covering up her absence from Royal Victoria College to go to a hotel after Levine and his narrator’s graduation ceremony and celebrations.¹⁶⁷ The closest link between story and memoir are the descriptions of dawn in their hotel room, where they heard clanging plumbing and a man walking around whom they dubbed the hotel detective. Blue dawn came through the window, birds sang, “And we stood there watching, touched by some understanding that this was the end of something.” This sentence and the ten brief,

preceding sentences describing the hotel scene are identical in both the “nonfictional” *Canada Made Me* and the “fictional” story “The English Girl,” except for an adjective.¹⁶⁸ We read one passage as a memoir, the other as a story, but cannot help comparing them. Fiction or autobiography... perhaps we are meant to ask whether it matters.

The narrator, like Levine, left for England in June 1949. The English girl of the story [and real life] stayed to finish her B.A. at McGill. The story girl wrote often, then less often, once fall 1949 term began. Then she wrote she had met someone. The narrator sat in a pub: “And felt my world had been shattered.”¹⁶⁹ With this stark line, the story becomes more intense, more confessional than the “nonfictional” narrative in *Canada Made Me*. Levine wrote in 1989 that he thought of his stories “as tributes to people and to places that have meant something to me.”¹⁷⁰ Similarly, in 1993, he observed that he would get news of people, think of his connection with them, and write a story “as a kind of tribute” and that “The English Girl” had developed that way.¹⁷¹ The story itself ended this way: the narrator has kept a letter he received from the English girl, a year before the story was written and fifteen years after they broke up. She had heard something by him broadcast and “wanted to know what I was doing after all these years.” She and her husband “were just off for a winter cruise to see the temples at Abu Simbel before they are flooded.”

In spring 1951 Levine published a poem, “Letter from McGill University,” which was his first summing up of McGill. He calls up the same scenes he later sketched in *Canada Made Me* and “The English Girl” – skiing up north, harbour sounds, a place where “we listened / And always believed that the best was yet to come.” And McGill’s campus, with the Roddick Gates, ginkgo tree, and tomb of James McGill: “The children fat as pigeons watched through prams... The late-leave girl kissed surely in the bushes.... Underneath the trees sitting sometimes alone, We dreamt we were rebels.” His use of “we”

probably includes both his classmates and the English girl.

So were we a year, carried for four years
 As a wave starting from somewhere in
 the water
 Pushing its way towards land. We rose
 For a time, hanging there, alone as a
 racer
 With shoulders forward, breaking into
 colours
 Crashing to land. Then hushed to a
 white stillness.¹⁷²

And in 1952 he married a different English girl, Margaret Payne, with whom he had three daughters.

Levine wrote about his professors: Files in *Canada Made Me* and Noad, glancingly, in a story with an expatriate theme. From 1921 to 1951, Noad taught comparative literature, mainly of the 17th and 18th centuries and studied diaries and autobiographies. His archive at McGill has notes for a book on Utopias and imaginary voyages he never wrote.¹⁷³ Levine's story "A Canadian Upbringing" (1968) has a fictional pre-incarnation of a Levine-like writer called Alexander Marsden, who had written a book called *A Canadian Upbringing* [obviously a stand-in for *Canada Made Me*] in the 1930s and ended up poor and obscure in Cornwall. The Levine-like Marsden is visited by a young Levine-like narrator. Noad's tangential part is as the model for "Graham Pollack" a McGill English professor then dead [Noad died in 1953]. Pollack's office was piled with books; he had given the narrator a copy of Marsden's book.

I had never heard of Marsden until I went to McGill. In my second year, Graham Pollack, one of the English professors – poor Graham, he's dead now [sic]. No one, apart from the handful of students who took his courses, gave him much credit for the range of his reading,

nor understood the kind of humility he brought into the classroom. He lectured, in a weak voice, on Utopias throughout the ages; on Science fiction; and on Comparative Literature. Wiping away with a large handkerchief the sweat that broke out on his forehead.¹⁷⁴

The narrator reads "A *Canadian Upbringing*" at one sitting and decides Marsden had left Canada not to deny his background but [more respectably] to expand his world view. He realizes he will do the same. In Marsden and the narrator, Levine creates not his usual one but two alter egos.

Canada Made Me has a depressing portrait of "The Professor," another of the defeated people Levine met on his trip. Unnamed, he matches Harold Files. While Levine acknowledged Files's help elsewhere, here he risked hurting feelings. He lunched in 1956 with "my former English professor" at the Faculty Club. Some background may explain why he [Files] may have seemed defeated. The professor complained about departmental quarrels. He had been chairman but not for long, forced out in favour of someone from overseas. Files chaired English from 1947 to 1952 (a respectable but not long term). The overseas displacer matches George Duthie, who had come to McGill from Edinburgh in 1947 and was chairman from 1952 to December 1954, when he suddenly left to teach at Aberdeen. At McGill, Duthie was the Molson Professor of English and issued a book, *Shakespeare*, in 1951.¹⁷⁵ He outshined Files as the "publish or perish" era took hold. Files published no books; his students' writings and his course notes are his monument. In the *McGill News* of Spring 1951, just before he became chairman, Duthie reined in Files's novel-as-M.A. thesis program with subtle aggression:

It should be emphasized strongly that the English Department is not anxious that M.A. work in Creative Writing should be developed at the expense of

critical or historical research. Those members of the Department's staff who are directly concerned with Creative Writing are very clear about that.... The innovation is in no way a threat to our tradition of critical and historical scholarship.¹⁷⁶

Duthie was still chairman when Levine lunched with Files at the Faculty Club in 1954, described in his "Autobiographical Essay," but had been gone a year and a half by their 1956 lunch, described in *Canada Made Me*, with the comment below. Perhaps Files still brooded in 1956 or Levine may have transposed Files's frustrations from 1954 to 1956. As the professor "described a tale of deceit, suspicion, betrayal; and his complete innocence of this sort of thing," Levine thought:

What could one say? That the world never was the way you said it was. You never bothered, or had to bother, to see what it was like. You received your 'experience' of human nature on the cheap side, through literature. And it served you well as long as you were a junior, lecturing, with enough money. But you became a power; and there were others after power even though you were not... He looked beaten, washed out. We could talk no more about writing as we used to. All he could talk about was what had happened to him.¹⁷⁷

He wanted sympathy, so Levine listened, wondering at his naïve outrage. "I remember how he analysed the subtleties of human relationships as he found it in the 'set books'; but now that he was faced with his own, he was at a complete loss." That Files's book learning left him defenceless must have helped to confirm Levine's contempt for academia. Levine recorded Files at a bad moment; we hardly recognize the successful champion of creative writing at McGill.

Levine lived in at least five places during his McGill years.¹⁷⁸ Not surprisingly for a writer so

focused on place, atmosphere and real-life details, he wrote about three of them in his stories. In *Canada Made Me* he recalled sharing a room with P in 1946, east of McGill, in "a dismal, sour-smelling house in Prince Arthur Street run by an untidy ginger-haired woman, a Catholic with a wastrel of a son, on whom she doted, who had the habit of urinating in the kitchen sink whenever he found the toilet occupied." The occupants were students: Sy, sleeping with his physiotherapist; fat Edith seeking a rich husband, and a girl they helped to visit an abortionist.¹⁷⁹ The second room Levine described in *Canada Made Me* was in the basement of a house (now handsomely restored) at 4274 Dorchester Boulevard (Fig. 5), two miles southwest of McGill, where he lived ca. 1947-1948, while he edited *Forge*.

It was down wooden steps in the basement by the boiler. A narrow room, large enough for the plain iron bed and a chair. A tiny window by the ceiling just cleared the level of the ground and let in fresh air, the smoke from the passing trains, grit on the pillow, the walls, the skin. The small light was on all the time. One enjoyed this gesture of protest, for you knew you had control over it and could end it whenever you wanted. One's friends were invited down. They drove up in their father's cars and had a good look.¹⁸⁰

He described the room the same way in "Why I am an Expatriate" and in the story "Class of 1949" [in which Victor drove up in his car and put the room down to eccentricity]. The "gesture" of living in the basement let him play at poverty while he enjoyed the upper middle-class world of his friends M, Victor and the English girl: "It was on the whole very pleasant. I found myself going to magnificent houses."¹⁸¹ He recalled in *Canada Made Me* how he saved peanuts to eat at the end of the month when his veteran's cheque ran out; the narrator of one of his stories did the same.¹⁸² His M.A. year, 1948-1949, Levine moved to what



Figure 5. Levine lived in a basement room here, 4274 Dorchester Blvd. West, Montreal in 1947-48. Photograph: Robert Michel, 2007.



Figure 6. Levine lived in a basement room here, 1617 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal in 1948-1949. Photograph: Robert Michel, 2007.

he felt was a better basement at 1617 Sherbrooke St. – the house of the (Anglican) Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, which had an ornate facade and an English atmosphere inside (Fig. 6).¹⁸³ This time it was a gesture of confidence, to be nearer the English girl. She lived in McGill's Royal Victoria College, fifteen minutes' walk east. The room rented from the Dean was the scene of two similar book readings, one "fictional," one "real." In the story "A Canadian Upbringing," the narrator took the book of that title to his basement room, where "when I read the last page, I was far too excited and disturbed to go to sleep."¹⁸⁴ Very similarly, in a nonfiction article, "The Girl in the Drugstore," Levine recalled taking a copy of Faulkner's *Sound and Fury* to the same basement room, finishing it and being too excited to sleep. In this case, Levine's nonfictional version of an incident is more dramatic than his story: he went for a walk and inside a drugstore a young woman crossed herself when she saw him. Decades later, Levine remembered little of Faulkner's book but could not forget the girl and her gesture. "Later, I was to find out in writing that this is the way things emerge."¹⁸⁵

Levine had a good time at McGill in all his roles: writer, editor, honours student, veteran, man about town, friend of the British girl, cellar dweller and peanut hoarder. He won literary and social success. Soon he rejected both successes as betraying his roots and giving his writing a false start which he had to unlearn; he may have seen his romance and graduate studies as wrong turns as well. He found his destiny in England – as a writer turning his life into stories, not the professor he had been if unlucky. Nostalgic and critical, he said the same things in practically the same words about McGill for fifty years, in both fiction and nonfiction – he had enjoyed McGill but could not take it seriously and had betrayed his values there. McGill let him get imitation out of his system. He got McGill out of his system

by writing the vignettes of student life seen here, with their melancholic glimpses of remembered love and of classmates eroded by time, failure, and lack of values and staying power. His use of McGill friends as the starting point for his story characters Victor, the English Girl, Graham Pollack, and Len Mason confirms what he said about how he wrote; he started with real people and then the story and connections took over. Like every student, he got good and false starts at university. McGill launched him, praised and prized him. McGill did not make him but gave him writing experience, story characters and a good target.

APPENDIX

1. LEVINE'S WRITINGS AT MCGILL UNIVERSITY IN: *MCGILL DAILY, THE FORGE, MANUSCRIPT, AND MYSSIUM*

(Punctuations of poetry first lines, where they existed, are shown as they were in first publication.)

1.1. Levine's poems in the *McGill Daily*, 1946-1948.

Date	Title / followed by First Line / and Author's Signature or Attribution
11 Jan. 1946	"Ode to a Flier." / I saw Night / A.N.L.
15 Jan. 1946	"Fraternization." / The Earth was still thirsty / A.N. Levine. A variant text of same title was published in <i>McGill Daily</i> , 19 Dec. 1946.
18 Jan. 1946	"Sheffield." / Smoke / A.N.L.
22 Jan. 1946	"Leipzig, April 16, 1945." / Destructive demons driving down / A.N.L. [Includes a 2nd part sub-headed: "Crews report for briefing 2300 hours."] Reprinted in <i>McGill Daily</i> , 6 Oct. 1948.
18 Feb. 1946	"Take-off." / Clipped wings dragging chains of smoke / A.N.L.
28 Feb. 1946	"Saturday Night." / A cat screamed / A.N.L.
25 July 1946	"Dusk." / The smoke leaves the womb. / A.N.L.
25 July 1946	"Poem." / Time measures life's spider netting. / Unattributed, this verse appeared just beneath "Dusk" and presumably is by Levine.
3 Oct. 1946	"The Grey Cat." / The grey cat lay beside the fire / A.N.L.

6 Nov. 1946	"It was a Dull Day." / It was a dull day. / A.N.L. Reprinted in <i>Forge</i> , Winter 1947.
5 Dec. 1946	"Pastel in Snow." / Cold Cotton. / A.N.L.
19 Dec. 1946	"Fraternization." / The Earth was still thirsty / A.N. Levine. Variant text of same title published in <i>McGill Daily</i> , 15 Jan. 1946.
22 Jan. 1947	"1947." / The days of blowing smoke rings. / A.N.L.
6 Oct. 1948	"Leipzig, April 16, 1945." / Destructive demons driving down / A.N.L. [Includes a 2 nd part sub-headed: "Crews report for briefing 2300 hours."] Reprinted, first published in <i>McGill Daily</i> , 22 Jan. 1946.
1 Dec. 1948	"A Dead Airman Speaks." / Imagine a high-heeled morning / N. Levine. Reprinted from <i>Forge</i> , Spring 1948.

1.2. Levine's articles in the *McGill Daily*, 1946-1949

Date	Title and Author's Signature / Attribution
4 Feb. 1946	"The Daily Meets Jascha Heifitz." / Norman Levine.
20 Feb. 1946	"Sketches: Jean-Paul Sartre." / A.N.L.
17 Mar. 1949	"Editorial," <i>McGill Daily Literary Supplement</i> , 17 Mar. 1949. / A.N.L. (Levine was the editor of this issue.)

1.3. Levine's poems and stories in *The Forge*, 1946-1949

Date	Title / followed by First Line / and Author's Signature or Attribution
Winter 1947	"Prologue." [Story] / The clouds extended across the sky in tangled webs. / Norman Levine.
Winter 1947	"It was a Dull Day." / It was a dull day / Norman Levine. First printed in <i>McGill Daily</i> , 6 Nov. 1946.
Winter 1947	"Myssium." / A picker of stones am I / "W.A. Neville" [pseudonym for Norman Levine].
Winter 1947	"Circles." / Design your cheeks with curved lines / "W.A. Neville" [pseudonym for Norman Levine].
Spring 1947	"Our life is to be envied." [Story] / Norman Levine. Opens with verse, first line: "soiled animal skin." First prose line: "I was flying indifferently past finger-printed clouds..." A typescript noted below (in 1.4), same title, is in entries for the Macnaghten Prize, 1947. [Similar to part of the typescript of "Angled Road."]
Spring 1948	"Autumn." / The leaves blew trains' departures and the sheaves / Blushed a colour the trees never dreamed of. / A. Norman Levine.
Spring 1948	"A Dead Airman Speaks." / Imagine a high-heeled morning / A. Norman Levine.

1.4. Levine's manuscript poems and prose at McGill Libraries, Rare Books and Special Collections Division.

The Library retained Macnaghten Prize entries which won or which received honorable mention: *McGill University Calendar*, 1948-1949, 518-519. It is not clear which ranking was given to Levine's 1947 entries. According to the Programme, McGill University Annual Convocation, 1948, he won in 1948.

Date	Title / followed by First Line / and Author's Signature or Attribution, with McGill Rare Books and Special Collections Division catalogue reference.
1947	"Myssium." / A picker of stones am I / Albert Norman Levine, B.A. III. PS8235 C6C45 1947 folio. Submitted for the Macnaghten Competition.
1947	"Our Life Is To Be Envied". / Opens with verse, first line: "soiled animal skin." First prose line: "I was flying indifferently past finger-printed clouds..." Albert Norman Levine, B.A. III. [Similar to part of typescript of "Angled Road".] PS8235 C6 C45 1947 folio. Submitted for the Macnaghten Competition.
1948	"The Angled Road" (MS. of novel). Albert Norman Levine, B.A. IV. PS8235 C6 C45 1948 folio. Winner of the Macnaghten Competition; published in 1952 after major changes. An earlier version (not held) was completed in 1947 and submitted for the Dodd, Mead Intercollegiate Literary Fellowship Prize (for novels) as was this one.

1.5. Levine's poems published in *Myssium*, 1948, 8 pages, 250 copies, The Ryerson Poetry Chapbooks, Toronto 1948.

Poems marked with an asterix (*) were first published in *The Forge* or the *McGill Daily*. Punctuation occasionally varied from the original publication.

Date	Title / and where first published.
1948	"Myssium."* <i>Forge</i> , Winter, 1947, by W.A. Neville, pseud.
1948	"Autumn."* <i>Forge</i> , Spring 1948.
1948	"A Dead Airman Speaks."* <i>Forge</i> , Spring 1948.
1947	"It Was A Dull Day"* <i>Forge</i> , Winter 1947.
1948	"Our Life Is To Be Envied." This is a poem, not the prose piece of the same title published in <i>Forge</i> and in typescript in McGill's Rare Books and Special Collections Division.
1948	"The Green Was A Fresh Yellow Green." First line: The green was a fresh yellow green
1946	"Fraternization."* <i>McGill Daily</i> , 15 Jan. 1946, variant 19 Dec. 1946
1948	"I Am Captain Up Above." First line: Dress quietly
1947	"The Days Of Blowing Smoke Rings."* Variant of "1947," <i>McGill Daily</i> , 22 Jan. 1947.

2. PUBLISHED FICTION AND TRAVEL MEMOIR BY LEVINE REFERRING TO MCGILL UNIVERSITY

These are works, listed alphabetically by title, with passages about McGill or in which protagonists or characters are McGill students, graduates or professors. Most references to McGill are brief. Works making substantial use of McGill characters or events are marked with an asterix (*). The list may not be complete and is based on Levine's published story collections. Many of Levine's stories were collected more than once. Dates of first publication are given in brackets where specified (which was rarely) in the various collections. For convenience, two or three collections are given for most stories. There are three large collections of Levine's stories (which include most McGill-related ones): *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984 (23 stories); *By a Frozen River: the short stories of Norman Levine*, foreword by John Metcalf, L&OD, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2000 (reprints 18 of the stories in *Champagne Barn* and adds 8 others) and *The Ability to Forget: short stories*, foreword by A. Alexis, L&OD, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2003 (15 stories, none of which appear in *By a Frozen River*; 2 were in *Champagne Barn*).

Works cited

"Because of the War," 82: *Best Canadian Short Stories*, ed. John Metcalf and Leon Rooke, Oberon Press, Toronto, 1982; *Something Happened Here*, Viking, Toronto, 1991.

"By the Richelieu," *I Don't Want to Know Anyone Too Well*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1971; *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984. First titled and collected as "The Cocks Are Crowing" [1959], *One Way Ticket*, Martin Secker and Warburg, 1961.

"A Canadian Upbringing: a short story by Norman Levine," *The Montrealer*, April 1968, vol. 42, no. 4; *I Don't Want to Know Anyone Too Well and other stories*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1971;

Champagne Barn, Penguin, 1984; *By a Frozen River*, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2000.

**"A Small Piece of Blue" [1956], *One Way Ticket*, Martin Secker and Warburg, London, 1961; McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1961; *By a Frozen River*, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2000.

**"Class of 1949," *Thin Ice*, Deneau and Greenberg, Ottawa 1980; *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984; *By a Frozen River*, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2000. First published as "Class of 1948," *Queen's Quarterly*, Autumn 1974, vol. 81, no.3.

**"Class of 1948." Generally published as "Class of 1949." See above.

**Canada Made Me*, Putnam and Company, Ltd., London & McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1958. Reprinted by Deneau and Greenberg, Ottawa, 1979 and 1982; and by the Porcupine's Quill Press, 1993.

"The Cocks Are Crowing" [1959]. See "By the Richelieu" above.

**"The English Girl" [British *Vogue*, March 1964]; *I Don't Want to Know Anyone Too Well*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1971; *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984; *Montreal Mon Amour*, ed. Michael Benazon, Deneau, Toronto, 1989.

"Gifts," *Something Happened Here*, Viking, Toronto, 1991; *The Ability to Forget*, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2003.

**"I'll Bring You Back Something Nice"[1968], *Canadian Winter's Tales*, ed. Norman Levine, Macmillan, Toronto, 1968; published (as a self-contained story) as chapter 7:"A Trip to London," in *From a Seaside Town*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1970; *By a Frozen River*, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2000.

"The Lesson" [1960], *One Way Ticket*, Martin Secker & Warburg, London, 1961 and McClelland and Stewart, London, 1961.

"South of Montreal," *I Don't Want to Know Anyone Too Well*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1971; *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984; *By a Frozen River*, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2000.

"We all Begin in a Little Magazine" [1971] *Thin Ice*, Deneau and Greenberg, Ottawa, 1980; *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984; *By a Frozen River*, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2000.

"Why Do You Live So Far Away?" [1965], *Selected Stories*, Oberon, Ottawa, ca. 1975; *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984. Published with three added paragraphs as chapter 8 of *From a Seaside Town*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1970.

"A Writer's Story," *Thin Ice*, Deneau and Greenberg, Ottawa, 1980; *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984; *By a Frozen River*, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 2000.

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This article owes much to writings by Levine critics, especially Lawrence Mathews, John Metcalf and T.D. MacLulich and to Levine's interviewers, especially David McDonald, and of course to Levine's fiction, travel memoir and published comments about his own writing. Any misinterpretations are mine. While no replies were received to enquiries about Levine's archive at York University, the sources at McGill, particularly student publications, and Levine's writings from 1946 onwards, provided a surplus of information for the purposes of this article. My research, done mainly in 2006, owes much to the reference assistance of Gordon Burr of the McGill University Archives and to staff members David Poliak, Bruce Dolphin, and Jean-Marc Tremblay. Thanks also are due the staff of the Rare Books and Special Collections Division, McGill Libraries, including Richard Virr, Gary Tynski, Donald Hogan, and Raynald Lepage; and to Ann Marie Holland and Kendall Wallis, McGill Libraries; the staff of Westmount Public Library; the Atwater Library and Computer Centre, Westmount; and Barbara McPherson, Archives of the Diocese of Montreal. Various sources were supplied by Carol Wiens, Head, Library, Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital. Leonard Ashley, Patience Wheatley Wanklyn and William Weintraub kindly shared memories

of McGill in the 1940s. I am also grateful to John Hobbins, Lonnie Weatherby, Christopher Lyons and Peter McNally of *Fontanus*.

ENDNOTES

¹ Interview [31 Oct. 1975] by David McDonald: "Simplicity and Sophistication: a Conversation with Norman Levine," *Queen's Quarterly*, Summer, 1976, vol. 83, no. 2, 230. Levine's narrator had the same good time in "I'll Bring You Back Something Nice," *Canadian Winter's Tales*, ed. Norman Levine, Macmillan, Toronto, 1968; reprinted in Levine, *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984, 94.

² He has been acclaimed by writers and critics yet the recent *Penguin Book of Canadian Short Stories* (2007) left him out. See John Metcalf, "Thinking About Penguins," *Canadian Notes & Queries*, no. 74, 2008.

³ Wayne Grady, Interview with Norman Levine, *Books in Canada*, Feb. 1980, vol. 9, no. 2, 24.

⁴ John Metcalf, *Shut Up He Explained: a Literary Memoir, Vol. II*, Biblioasis, Emeryville, Ontario, 2007, 362.

⁵ Alan Twigg, "Norman Levine," *Strong Voices: Conversations with Fifty Canadian Authors*, Harbour Publishing, Madeira Park, B.C., 1988, 175.

⁶ In my title, "Fiction" refers to Levine's stories; "Faction" to literary genres which mix fact and fiction (for example, introducing real-life characters into fiction or presenting nonfiction in the style of a novel) and, to add a twist, to allude to Levine's frequent use of similar texts in both his fiction and nonfiction; and "Autobiography" to Levine's articles and interviews about his writing and life as well as his use of his own experiences in his fiction. This article joins my others in *Fontanus* on McGill's portrayal in fiction and memoir: "Floreath Plutoria: Satirical Fiction about McGill," *Fontanus*, IX (1996); "The Gates of McGill: an Unpublished Novel of the 1920s by Dink Carroll," *Fontanus*, XI (2003) and "Adversity Vanquished: Memoirs of a McGill Medical Student, Harold W. Trott, 1918-1924," *Fontanus*, XII.

⁷ Norman Levine, "The Girl in the Drugstore" [memoir], *The Sixties: Writers and Writing of the Decade*, ed. George Woodcock, University of British Columbia Publications Centre, Vancouver, 1969, 50.

⁸ McDonald: "Simplicity and Sophistication," 219.

⁹ Generally called *Forge*, the official title was *The Forge*.

¹⁰ Levine, Introduction, *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984, xv. Susan Patrick, Review of *Champagne Barn* (1984), *Canadian Book Review Annual*, 1984, 270-271, underlines Levine's autobiographical point, noting that the stories are grouped into 4 stages of Levine's life [youth in Ottawa; RCAF and McGill; struggling writer in England; and recognition].

¹¹ Biographical details are found in Levine, "Why I am an Expatriate," *Canadian Literature*, Summer 1960, no. 5, 49-54; "An Autobiographical Essay," *Canadian Notes & Queries*,

2001, no. 60, 7-19, and other articles and interviews cited in this article.

¹² Levine, "Autobiographical Essay," 8.

¹³ Levine, "Leipzig, April 16, 1945," *McGill Daily*, 22 Jan. 1946. He may have written some poems before going to McGill. And he refers to writing a short story about a hangman and to imitating a novel he found, set in Vienna, while he was at high school: "The Girl in the Drugstore," 49; "Why I am an Expatriate," 52.

¹⁴ McDonald: "Simplicity and Sophistication," 218; Levine, "Autobiographical Essay," 8-9.

¹⁵ Levine, *Canada Made Me* [Putnam & Co., London, 1958], Deneau and Greenberg, Ottawa, 1979, 237. All references are to D&G, 1979, which has the same pagination as the 1958 edition. This reprint and later ones (D&G, 1982 and Porcupine's Quill, 1993) have made the scarce 1958 work available. Two paragraphs in the 1958 edition were omitted in the later editions; they do not affect the McGill-related texts discussed here but their significance is argued by Randall Martin, "Norman Levine's *Canada Made Me*," *Canadian Literature*, Spring 1996, vol. 148, 200-203.

¹⁶ Levine, "In Quebec City," *I Don't Want to Know Anyone Too Well and Other Stories*, 1971, Macmillan, Toronto, 1971, 7.

¹⁷ Levine, "Why I am an Expatriate," 51.

¹⁸ Levine, "The English Girl" [1964], collected in *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984, 50-51.

¹⁹ He had kept the Rokeby Venus (by Valasquez) in his description of the mess hall in *The Angled Road* (Werner Laurie, London, 1952 and McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1952), 59.

²⁰ McDonald, "Simplicity and Sophistication," 218.

²¹ Levine, "The Girl in the Drugstore," 50.

²² Levine, "Why I am an Expatriate," 52.

²³ Levine, "The English Girl," *Champagne Barn*, 51.

²⁴ Levine, *Angled Road*, 150.

²⁵ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 220.

²⁶ Levine, "Why I am an Expatriate," 52. Levine may have meant Canadian football not rugby. The protagonist of Dink Carroll's novel about McGill in the 1920s also chose McGill because he admired its football team: Robert Michel, "The Gates of McGill," *Fontanus*, XI, 2003, 16.

²⁷ Levine, "Why I am an Expatriate," 52-53; Margaret Flannery, "Wrong Way Immigrants," *The Montrealer*, Oct. 1966, vol. 40, no. 10, 19; Levine, *From a Seaside Town*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1970, 43-44.

²⁸ Cary Fagan, "On Not Collecting Norman Levine," *Canadian Notes & Queries*, no. 60, 2001, 4.

²⁹ Levine, "I'll Bring You Back Something Nice," *Champagne Barn*, 94. First published separately as the story "I'll Bring You Back Something Nice," ca. 1968, the story was used as Chapter 7 ("A Trip to London,") in Levine's novel *From*

a Seaside Town. Likewise, the novel's Chapter 8 (no title), minus its first three paragraphs, also appeared as the story "Why Do You Live So Far Away?"

³⁰ Letter, Leonard R.N. Ashley (B.A. 1949, M.A. 1950) to Robert Michel, 23 Sept. 2006.

³¹ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 222-223.

³² Referred to in Levine's letter to Files from London, Feb. 1950, discussed later.

³³ According to the McGill University *Calendar*, in 1947-1948 Files taught English Composition (advanced); The English Novel, Richardson to the Present; American and Canadian Literature (with A.M. Klein); and offered graduate seminars on mystical and other religious literature in English in the late 17th and the 18th centuries, and Literary Criticism, and Special Studies in 18th century literature.

³⁴ A shelf-read of M.A. theses in the McGill library stacks turned up the following early M.A. thesis-novels: C. W. Gowdey, "Thirty Days Hath September: a novel," 1948; Mary M.M. Geggie, "Inhabit the Garden," 1949; Peggy Goodin, "Take Care of My Little Girl," 1949; Helen R. Leavitt, "Threshold" 1949. Others soon followed, such as May Ebbitt (Cutler), "The Walls of Sense: a novel," 1951. The University *Calendar* first announced the thesis-novel option in the 1949-1950 session, though it was available by 1948. On Files and the creative writing program, see Files, "Sometimes I Am Proud," *McGill Daily*, 1 Dec. 1948, 2, 4; May Ebbitt, "Professor Trains Student Authors," *The Standard* (Montreal), 26 March 1949, 4; Dusty Vineberg, "Of Trying Not To Let Civilization Down," *The Montreal Star*, 9 May 1964, 4.

³⁵ Nora Magid [B.A. 1946], "The Daily Meets Constance Beresford Howe," *McGill Daily*, 18 Jan. 1946, 2.

³⁶ Constance Beresford-Howe, "Stages in an Education," *McGill: a Celebration*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal, 1991, 92. With a Ph.D from Brown University in 1949, she taught at McGill into the late 1960s. She recalled: "In those postwar years, McGill was full of ex-servicemen completing their education on government grants. Many of my creative writing students were men my age or older, and this naturally led to a number of romantic complications very bothersome to all concerned." *Ibid.*, 96.

³⁷ Harold Files Fonds, McGill University Archives (MUA), MG 1037, C7, lecture notes, no date. The Archives acquired the papers (as Accession 289) soon after Files left McGill in 1964, from the English Department, where they had been mingled with the papers (MUA, MG 1063) of Professor Algy S. Noad (B.A., M.A., McGill). Files's papers include professional and personal correspondence and teaching notes as well as records relating to his administrative duties as Chairman, 1947-1952, and service on committees. Files supplied background on these records in a letter to University Archivist John Andreassen, 28 Oct. 1970: MG 1037, C1 (Acc. 1127/1).

- ³⁸ *The McGill Movement: A.J.M. Smith, F.R. Scott, and Leo Kennedy*, ed. Peter Stevens, Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1969. The best study of poets around McGill in Levine's time is Brian Trehearne, *The Montreal Forties: Modernist Poetry in Transition*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1999. On Montreal's and McGill's role in modern poetry, see Leon Edel, "Literary Revolution: the Montreal Group," in E.A. Collard, *The McGill You Knew*, Longman Canada, 1975; Louis Dudek, "The Montreal Poets," *Forge*, Feb. 1957, 3-6; and David McKnight, "An Annotated Bibliography of English Canadian Little Magazines: 1940-1980," M.A. thesis, Concordia University, 1992, 16.
- ³⁹ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 70.
- ⁴⁰ Lawrence Mathews, "Norman Levine," in Robert Lecker, Jack David, Ellen Quigley, eds., *Canadian Writers and their works*, Fiction Series, Volume Eight, ECW Press, Toronto, 1989, 95-96.
- ⁴¹ Levine, "By a Frozen River," *Champagne Barn*, 155.
- ⁴² Levine, "The Daily Meets Jascha Heifetz," *McGill Daily*, 4 Feb. 1946, 2. Levine free-lanced; he was not a regular *Daily* staffer. He also wrote a few book reviews for the local press.
- ⁴³ A.N.L. [Norman Levine], "Sketches: Jean-Paul Sartre," *McGill Daily*, 20 Feb. 1946, 2.
- ⁴⁴ A.N.L. [Norman Levine], "The Forge," *McGill Daily*, 29 Jan. 1947, 2.
- ⁴⁵ He told David McDonald, ("Simplicity and Sophistication," 218): "I don't think you need to have a wide experience. I think if you can go deeply into the experience you have you can dig up all the things you need."
- ⁴⁶ *Forge*, Winter 1947, 3, 13-14, 23. (No W.A. Neville appears in student directories).
- ⁴⁷ Incidentally, Levine varied the way he signed his McGill publications: A.N.L., A.N. Levine, N. Levine, Norman Levine, and A. Norman Levine – this may reflect a search for identity but more likely a whimsical inconsistency. The Appendix lists Levine's works at McGill as he signed them.
- ⁴⁸ Karine Collin, "New School of Writing in This Year's 'Forge,'" 6 Feb. 1947, 2. Collin does not appear in the 1946-47 *Directory of Students* or the *Directories of Graduates*.
- ⁴⁹ *Forge*, Winter, 1947, 13.
- ⁵⁰ *Forge*, Spring, 1947, 8-12. The McGill Library stamped it as received on 17 April 1947. It appeared too late to be reviewed in the *McGill Daily*, which had ended publication for the term.
- ⁵¹ Levine, *Angled Road*, 54. He dropped the adjective "artificial" in the book. The story's rainy bombing raid is similar to that published in *Angled Road*.
- ⁵² This March 1948 issue was on larger paper, had 51 pages of text plus advertisements at the end, and cost 50 cents instead of the previous year's 25 cents (in 1949 the price dropped back to 25 cents).
- ⁵³ Harold Files, "New Writing Forges Ahead," *McGill Daily*, 4 Mar. 1948, 2.
- ⁵⁴ *Daily* writers often signed only their initials. B.S. is probably Betty Sinclair who is listed as Features Chief Staff Writer on the *Daily* masthead, 4 Mar. 1948. She reviewed *Forge* 1949 in the *McGill Daily*, 14 Mar. 1949, 2.
- ⁵⁵ B.S., "The Daily Meets an Editorial Board; Finds *Forge* Lively If Controversial," *McGill Daily*, 4 March 1948, 2. Johnston's M.A. thesis (1948) was on "Aspects of the treatment of time in some modern English novelists." Levine's thesis had a similar time aspect: "Ezra Pound and the sense of the past;" perhaps they influenced each other. The University Archives and the McGill Libraries have paper and microfilm runs of the *McGill Daily* and paper copies of *Forge*.
- ⁵⁶ The *McGill Daily* announced the broadcasts in its issues of 2 and 3 Mar. 1948.
- ⁵⁷ Levine, "Autobiographical essay," 13; Elaine Kalman Naves, *Robert Weaver: Godfather of Canadian Literature*, Véhicule Press, Montreal, 2007, 35-36 (reprints letter from Weaver), 67-68 (on Levine, Richler). Levine, *Champagne Barn*, vii, acknowledged that 18 of the 23 stories had been broadcast on *Anthology* and that most had been commissioned.
- ⁵⁸ *Forge*, 1948, 27-28.
- ⁵⁹ Grady, Interview with Norman Levine, 24-25. Levine included "Autumn" in *Myssium*, Ryerson Poetry Chapbook 131, Toronto, 1948 and *The Tight-rope Walker*, The Totem Press, London, 1950.
- ⁶⁰ Peggy Goodin, "Take Care of My Little Girl," M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1949; same title, E.P. Dutton, New York, 1950; same title, 20th Century Fox, Jean Negulesco, Director, 1951. The \$30,000 figure is from Dusty Vineberg's account of Files's retirement, "Trying Not to Let Civilization Down," *McGill News*, June, 1964, vol.45, no. 3, 14.
- ⁶¹ Peggy Goodin, "Independent Critic Looks for Discipline in *Forge* – Calls for Literary Revolution," *McGill Daily*, 4 Mar. 1948, 2. Answered by W.D. MacCallan, "Reply to *Forge* Critique," *McGill Daily*, 5 March 1948, 2; replied to by Peggy Goodin, "Open Letter to Mr. MacCallan," *McGill Daily*, 8 Mar. 1948, 2.
- ⁶² A copy of *Whisper* is in the L.R.N. Ashley Fonds, McGill University Archives, MG 4216, C2, file 26. Ashley published humor while at McGill; perhaps the presence of *Whisper* in his papers is not wholly coincidental. *Whisper* also spoofed the *McGill Daily* and Montreal Mayor Houde.
- ⁶³ R. Gravina, "McGill's Magazine," *McGill Daily*, 14 Mar. 1949, 2.
- ⁶⁴ Levine, "The Girl in the Drug Store," 50-51.
- ⁶⁵ Algy Smillie Noad, *A Canadian Handbook of English*, Toronto, 1932, see 20-21.
- ⁶⁶ Copy in the McGill Libraries: PS 8523 E89M97 1948. Noad's papers (MUA, MG 1063, at present are partly mixed with those of Harold Files (MUA, MG 1037).
- ⁶⁷ Levine, *From a Seaside Town*, 146.

- ⁶⁸ Levine, "Autobiographical essay," 7. John Wycliffe and others translated the Old and New Testaments from Latin into English in the 1380s and 1390s. Levine learned English at school after the age of five: Lawrence Mathews, "Norman Levine," *Canadian Writers and their Works*, vol. 8, 83.
- ⁶⁹ Levine, "The Angled Road" (novel), typescript, 247 leaves. Submitted for the Macnaghten Competition. McGill Libraries, Rare Books and Special Collections Division: PS8235 C6 C45 1948 folio. Two prizes were usually awarded, one worth \$50, the other \$25. The prize (no ranking mentioned) was credited to Levine in the McGill Annual Convocation Programme, May 1948. Other Macnaghten winners have gone on to literary careers; the best known is probably Leonard Cohen, who won in 1955. Levine took his title from Emily Dickinson's poem "Experience is the Angled Road."
- ⁷⁰ "The Angled Road," typescript, McGill Libraries Rare Books and Special Collections Division, 183-184.
- ⁷¹ McDonald, "Simplicity and Sophistication," 220.
- ⁷² Levine, "The Girl in the Drug Store," 52.
- ⁷³ Cynthia Flood, "All the Heart Is in the Things," *Canadian Notes & Queries*, no. 60, 2001, 6.
- ⁷⁴ Levine, "Autobiographical essay," 18.
- ⁷⁵ Programme, McGill University Annual Convocation, 1948, 38. The prizes Levine won are described in McGill University, *Calendar for the Session 1947-1948*, 517, 523.
- ⁷⁶ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 224-225; the same comment about the Chief Scout is in "Class of 1949," *Thin Ice*, Ottawa, 1980, 15.
- ⁷⁷ Levine, "Autobiographical essay," 12.
- ⁷⁸ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 83.
- ⁷⁹ Harold Files Fonds, McGill University Archives (MUA), MG 1037. Containers (C) 8 & 10 contain Files's correspondence with students and others, ca. 1947-1952, some broken into narrower date ranges, mixed with other matters. Most letters, like those from Levine, are in general files, not under individual names. Files apparently made no carbon copies of his letters to Levine.
- ⁸⁰ Letter, Levine to Files, 17 July 1948, Harold Files Fonds, MUA, MG 1037, C8, Correspondence, ca. 1948-1950. It is tempting to guess that "E.B.W." was E.B. White, though I found no connection between him and Dodd, Mead.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁸² May Ebbitt, "Young McGill Writers: Course on the Novel Established and Conducted by Dr. Files Sets Encouraging Note," *McGill News*, Autumn, 1949, vol. 31, no. 1. In 1951 Ebbitt received the M.A. for her interesting MS. novel "The Walls of Sense."
- ⁸³ Letter, Levine to Files, 17 July 1948, Harold Files Fonds, MUA, MG 1037, C8, Correspondence, ca. 1948-1950.
- ⁸⁴ [Norman Levine] Outline of Proposed Thesis on Ezra Pound, 1 page, no date, ca. summer 1948, Harold Files Fonds, MG 1037, C8, Correspondence with graduate students, ca. 1948-1950.
- ⁸⁵ Levine, "The Girl in the Drugstore," 52.
- ⁸⁶ McDonald: "Simplicity and Sophistication," 219.
- ⁸⁷ [Albert Norman] Levine, "Ezra Pound and the Sense of the Past," McGill University, M.A. Thesis, April 1949 (typescript, 172 pp. and 12 pp. notes), 4. Copies are in the McGill Libraries.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 5, 170-172. Coincidentally, Pound's son Omar would receive an M.A. from McGill in 1958.
- ⁸⁹ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 105.
- ⁹⁰ "Myssium," "It Was A Dull Day," "Autumn," and "A Dead Airman Speaks." in *Forge*; and "Fraternization," and "The Days Of Blowing Smoke Rings" (the latter a variant of 1947) in the *McGill Daily*.
- ⁹¹ B.S., "Myssium. A New Book of Verse. By Albert Norman Levine," *McGill Daily*, 15 Oct. 1948, 2.
- ⁹² Discussed by Brian Trahearne, *Aestheticism and the Canadian Modernists*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Kingston and Montreal, 1989, 261-269.
- ⁹³ McGill had lost its early lead: *McGill University Magazine*, edited by Charles E. Moyse, 1901-1906, succeeded by *University Magazine*, edited by McGill's Sir Andrew Macphail, 1907-1920, issued by a committee for McGill, Toronto, and Dalhousie.
- ⁹⁴ *McGill Daily Literary Supplement*, 17 Mar. 1949, 1. The Supplement was a 7 column per page, 4 page news sheet.
- ⁹⁵ Harold Files, "The writer in our society," *McGill Daily Literary Supplement*, 17 March 1949, 3.
- ⁹⁶ Algy Noad, "The literature of personality," *McGill Daily Literary Supplement*, 17 March 1949, 3.
- ⁹⁷ *Montreal Daily Star*, 21 Mar. 1949: "Air Force Vet Awarded \$5,000 Beaver Club Scholarship," *Montreal Gazette*, 21 Mar. 1949: "Beaver Club Awards for 1949 Announced." Both stories had photographs of Levine. The figure of Can. \$5,000 appears to be an estimated equivalent of a two year award of 500 pounds per year.
- ⁹⁸ McDonald, "Simplicity and Sophistication," 219-220; "The English Girl," *Champagne Barn*, 52.
- ⁹⁹ Levine, "A Canadian Upbringing," *The Montrealer*, April, 1968, vol. 42, no. 4, 42; republished in *Champagne Barn*, 55. In this story he adds that the English girl later married an Englishman she met on the cross-channel boat to France, *Champagne Barn*, 57.
- ¹⁰⁰ Levine, "Why I am an Expatriate," 49, 51.
- ¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* 53.
- ¹⁰² John Richmond, "A little bit of expatriatism goes a long way" [title used both for Richmond's interview and a review of *From a Seaside Town* by Alan Heuser], *Montreal Star*, 26 Sept. 1970, 16.
- ¹⁰³ McDonald, "Simplicity and Sophistication," 225.

- ¹⁰⁴ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 48-50, 216-219
- ¹⁰⁵ Levine, *From a Seaside Town*, 44.
- ¹⁰⁶ Levine, "The Girl in the Drug Store," 52.
- ¹⁰⁷ McDonald, "Simplicity and Sophistication," 228.
- ¹⁰⁸ Letters, Levine to Files, 24 Sept. 1949; Levine to Files, 1 Feb. 1950, Harold Files Fonds, MUA, MG 1037, C10, Correspondence 1949-1950.
- ¹⁰⁹ He described the Montreal shoreline as looking like a landscape by L.S. Lowry: *Canada Made Me*, 266.
- ¹¹⁰ Letter, Levine to Files, 24 Sept. 1949, Harold Files Fonds, MUA, MG 1037, C10, Correspondence, 1949-1950.
- ¹¹¹ Levine, "We All Begin in a Little Magazine," *Thin Ice*, Deneau and Greenberg, Ottawa, 1980, 45. The story is analysed by George Slobodzian, "On First Reading Levine," *Canadian Notes & Queries*, no. 60, 2001, 25.
- ¹¹² According to Metcalfe, *Shut Up He Explained*, 41, Levine, insulted, had a dealer sell it to the University of Texas at Austin.
- ¹¹³ Levine, "Autobiographical Essay," 11.
- ¹¹⁴ Letter, Levine to Files, 1 Feb. 1950, Harold Files Fonds, MUA, MG 1037, C10, Correspondence, 1949-1950.
- ¹¹⁵ Levine, "Letter from England" [poem], *The Tight-Rope Walker*, The Totem Press, London, 1950, 29.
- ¹¹⁶ Levine, "A Letter from England," *The Tamarack Review*, Summer, 1958, issue 8, 42. Not to be confused with the similarly titled poem.
- ¹¹⁷ Levine, "Autobiographical Essay," 11.
- ¹¹⁸ Levine, "Portrait of a Poet," *Poetry Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 4, Winter 1951-1952, 127. Cornwall poems include "The Fishing Village," *Poetry Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 3, Autumn 1951; "Crabbing," *Poetry Quarterly*, vol. 14, no. 2, Summer 1952.
- ¹¹⁹ Levine, "Why I am an Expatriate," 49.
- ¹²⁰ Levine, "A Canadian Upbringing," *Champagne Barn*, 57.
- ¹²¹ Richmond, "A little bit of expatriatism goes a long way," *Montreal Star*, 26 Sept. 1970, 16.
- ¹²² Levine, "Why I am an Expatriate," 52.
- ¹²³ Levine, "A Writer's Story," *Thin Ice*, Deneau and Greenberg, Ottawa, 1980; *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984; 124 in latter edition.
- ¹²⁴ McDonald, "Simplicity and Sophistication," 224.
- ¹²⁵ Levine, *From a Seaside Town*, 149-150, 215.
- ¹²⁶ "I'll Bring You Back Something Nice," in *Canadian Winter's Tales* and *Champagne Barn*. He appreciated the suit and got loans from friends: *Canada Made Me*, 230, 256.
- ¹²⁷ Levine, "Autobiographical Essay," 12. Levine saw the resulting traveling art exhibition in Edmonton in 1956: *Canada Made Me*, 135.
- ¹²⁸ He listed it as a "Travel Memoir" in his "Autobiographical Essay," 19.
- ¹²⁹ Metcalf, *Shut Up He Explained*, 239. The woman appears in *Canada Made Me*, 67. The mine also appears, rather obscurely, in *The Angled Road*, 137-140, beginning: "Mine needs men..."
- ¹³⁰ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 49.
- ¹³¹ Ira Bruce Nadel, "'Canada Made Me' and Canadian Autobiography," *Canadian Literature*, Summer 1984, no. 101, 70-73.
- ¹³² William Weintraub, *Getting Started: a memoir of the 1950s with letters from Mordecai Richler, Mavis Gallant and Brian Moore*, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 2001: letter, Weintraub to Richler, 9 Dec. 1958, 222-223.
- ¹³³ Mordecai Richler, "Canadian Candour," review of *Canada Made Me*, *Sunday Times* (London), 8 Feb. 1959, 16. Jack McClelland disliked the book and only took 500 copies to distribute in Canada.
- ¹³⁴ Mathews, "Norman Levine," *Canadian Writers and their Works*, vol. 8, 99.
- ¹³⁵ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 221.
- ¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 225.
- ¹³⁷ T.D. MacLulich, "'You Don't Lie': Reflections on Norman Levine," *Writers in Aspice*, ed. John Metcalf, Véhicule Press, Montreal, 1988, 34-35, referring to *Canada Made Me* and the story "A Small Piece of Blue."
- ¹³⁸ Quotations are from Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 234-235.
- ¹³⁹ Levine, "Sometimes it works," *How Stories Mean*, ed. John Metcalf and J.R. Struthers, The Porcupine's Quill, Erin, Ontario, 1993, 219.
- ¹⁴⁰ Michelle Gadpaille, *The Canadian Short Story*, Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1988, 100.
- ¹⁴¹ On issues of truth and autobiography in Levine's fiction, see T.D. MacLulich, "'You Don't Lie': Reflections on Norman Levine;" and Lawrence Mathews, "Levine's Realism: A Reply to T.D. MacLulich," both in *Writers in Aspice*.
- ¹⁴² Levine, "Autobiographical essay," 13, 18.
- ¹⁴³ Mathews, "Norman Levine," *Canadian Writers and their works*, vol. 8, 113-114, citing the story "The Man with the Notebook."
- ¹⁴⁴ Levine, "Class of 1949" in *Thin Ice*, 27 and *Champagne Barn*, 144. First published as "The Class of 1948" in 1974.
- ¹⁴⁵ McDonald, "Simplicity and Sophistication," 226.
- ¹⁴⁶ Levine left fewer clues about other McGill students he mentioned and no identities have been attempted here for Bob and Ian, who went to the mine with Levine in 1948 nor for K, one of the wealthiest students at McGill, nor Hector B, a diplomat, all referred to in *Canada Made Me*, 77-78, 235, 276. Nor for "Archie Carter," a McGill friend of the narrator of "Because of the War," 82: *Best Canadian Stories*, ed. John Metcalf and Leon Rooke, Oberon Press, 1982, 57-73. A friend from Levine's teens in Ottawa is called Archie in *Canada Made Me*, 53.

¹⁴⁷ Levine, "A Small Piece of Blue," *One Way Ticket*, Martin Secker and Warburg, London, 1961.

¹⁴⁸ Levine, quoted in Metcalf, *Shut Up He Explained*, 238-9.

¹⁴⁹ See MacLulich, "You Don't Lie': Reflections on Norman Levine," 29, as well as Lawrence Mathews, "Levine's Realism: A Reply to T.D. MacLulich," *Writers in Aspice*.

¹⁵⁰ Levine, "Sometimes it works," 215-219.

¹⁵¹ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 34-35.

¹⁵² Letter, Moore to Weintraub, 12 March [1956], Weintraub, *Getting Started*, 166-167. Moore goadingly quoted Levine's remark to him that Weintraub "was a nice fellow but no get up and go," which Weintraub humorously and convincingly rebuts in his commentary.

¹⁵³ Levine, "Letter from McGill University," *Poetry Quarterly*, Spring 1951, 32-33.

¹⁵⁴ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 233-234. The same apartment and campus view is recalled by the narrator of "Class of 1949."

¹⁵⁵ Levine, "Class of 1949," *Thin Ice*, 14. First published as "Class of 1948," *Queen's Quarterly* Autumn 1974, vol. 81, no. 3, 377-389. The 1948/1949 ambiguity may stem from Levine's having received degrees in both years. The story concludes with a reminder from the McGill Graduates' Society that it was the 25th anniversary of the narrator's class.

¹⁵⁶ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 149-150.

¹⁵⁷ Levine, "Class of 1949," *Thin Ice*, 22, 29.

¹⁵⁸ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 43-44.

¹⁵⁹ Levine, "Class of 1949," *Thin Ice*, 20.

¹⁶⁰ Collected in *I Don't Want To Know Anyone Too Well*, Macmillan, Toronto, 1971; *Champagne Barn*, Penguin, 1984; and *Montreal Mon Amour*, ed. Michael Benazon, Deneau, Toronto, 1989. According to Benazon, 77, 289, first published in *British Vogue*, March 1964 (in a series "First Encounters with the Opposite Sex"). The citations here are from *Champagne Barn*, 49-54.

¹⁶¹ Alan Heuser found protagonist Joseph Grand's wife lacked vitality: review of *From a Seaside Town*, *Montreal Star*, 26 Sept. 1970, 16; Lawrence Mathews convincingly rebuts this: "Norman Levine," *Canadian Writers and their Works*, ed. Lecker et al., vol. 8, 107-108.

¹⁶² Quotations are from "The English Girl," *Champagne Barn*, 49-54.

¹⁶³ McDonald, "Simplicity and Sophistication," 219.

¹⁶⁴ Levine, "The English Girl," *Champagne Barn*, 50-53. Ben's lasted until 2006; the Bucharest was still around in the late 1960s, popular with students, a full course meal at \$1.24. Lively descriptions of Montreal's restaurants in Levine's student days are in William Weintraub, *City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and '50s*, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1996, 130-135.

¹⁶⁵ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 264.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ "The English Girl," *Champagne Barn*, 49-54 and *Canada Made Me*, 224-225, 264.

¹⁶⁸ Levine, "The English Girl," *Champagne Barn*, 53; *Canada Made Me*, 225. As for the different adjectives: in the "English Girl," the bird singing is "clear," in *Canada Made Me*, it is "distinct and loud." Levine received degrees in 1948 and 1949 and left for England in 1949; the 1949 celebration seems likelier in this context, given the couple's sense of something ending.

¹⁶⁹ Levine, "The English Girl," *Champagne Barn*, 54. In "A Canadian Upbringing," *Champagne Barn*, 57, there is a brief (fictional) reference to the English girl who has married an Englishman she met on the channel boat to France.

¹⁷⁰ Levine's introductory note to "The English Girl" in *Montreal Mon Amour*, ed. Michael Benazon, Deneau, Toronto, 1989, 77.

¹⁷¹ Levine, "Sometimes it works," *How Stories Mean*, 216-217.

¹⁷² Levine, "Letter from McGill University," 32-33.

¹⁷³ T.H.M.[Tommy Matthews], "Algy Noad: a personal tribute," *McGill News*, Spring 1953, vol. 34, no. 2, 54. Besides *A Canadian Handbook of English* (1932), Noad published, with C.H. Atto, *Expression through prose* (1938). Noad's work is referred to in Larry Capelovitch, "Behind the Scenes in the English Department" *McGill Daily*, 5 Dec. 1949, 2.

¹⁷⁴ Levine, "A Canadian Upbringing," *Champagne Barn*, 55-56.

¹⁷⁵ See David L. Thomson, "How not to Leave McGill," *McGill News*, Spring 1955, vol. 36, no. 2, 15, describing Duthie's rush to catch trains and ships when he left Montreal. The McGill Committee on Research gave a grant towards Duthie's book: *Shakespeare*, Hutchinson's University Library, London, 1951, acknowledged in the foreword.

¹⁷⁶ George I. Duthie, "Graduate Studies at McGill," *McGill News*, Spring 1951, vol 32, no 3, 7. McGill continued to emphasize critical scholarship and after Files left in 1964, McGill's creative writing program was soon rivaled, some would say surpassed, by a strong creative writing program offered by Montreal's Sir George Williams University, now Concordia University.

¹⁷⁷ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 226.

¹⁷⁸ According to *Canada Made Me*, 34, Levine's first room was on Prince Arthur St. (greystone row houses built before 1900, decrepit by the 1940s, more recently renovated). His address is not listed in the McGill University *Directory of Students* for the year 1945-1946 as he did not arrive until Jan. 1946. By the *Directory* for the year 1946-1947, he is listed at 4022 Oxford St., Montreal (in the more suburban N.D.G. district). The *Directory* for 1947-1948 gives his address as 4274 Dorchester W., Westmount (just west of downtown Montreal). He described it in *Canada Made Me*, and "Why I am an Expatriate." Another address, possibly ca. 1948 is

on the typescript of "The Angled Road:" 4003 Oxford St. Levine did not describe the Oxford St. rooms. The *Directory* for 1948-1949 gives Levine's address as 1617 Sherbrooke West, Montreal. He described it in "The English Girl," and refers to it in *Canada Made Me*, 258. Levine's home address was 363 Murray St., Ottawa (since demolished).

¹⁷⁹ Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 34-36, 212-213.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 212.

¹⁸¹ Levine, "Why I am an Expatriate," 53.

¹⁸² Levine, *Canada Made Me*, 141; *From a Seaside Town*, 82.

¹⁸³ Levine, "The English Girl," *Champagne Barn*, 51. The Dean from 1944 to 1952 was Kenneth Charles Evans, afterwards (Anglican) Bishop of Ontario.

¹⁸⁴ Levine, "A Canadian Upbringing," *Champagne Barn*, 56.

¹⁸⁵ Levine, "The Girl in the Drugstore," 50.