

A Typo *graphy* of *Impoverishment*:

*D.C. McMurtrie's Reception of European
Modernist Typography and an American Economic Depression*

Michael Golec

received his M.A. in art history
from the University of Illinois,
Chicago. He is currently a Ph.D.
candidate in the Department of
Art History at Northwestern
University, Evanston.
He lives and works in Chicago.

Northwestern University
m-golec@nwu.edu
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Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

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This paper pries into the disclosures of design history by addressing the question of American modernist typography from the blind side as it were. One possible source of leverage, the one I choose for this brief and modest article, is to simply ask the question: What was the temper of typography in light of an economic and social debacle? That it took a modernist cast is significant, therefore the queries raised from the nexus of American modernism and economic depression generates a particular course of inquiry beginning with location — McMurtrie, typography and Chicago.

Language is the amber in which a million subtle and precious thoughts are safely embodied and preserved – a storehouse in which is contained the incarnation of the thoughts and feelings of a nation.

Frederick W. Goudy¹

Goudy remarked on language as it related to typography. He wrote of an arrangement of alphabetic letter forms, the materialization of language composed, ordered and set. These modest marks gracing the pages of magazines, newspapers, billboards, etcetera, for Goudy, reflected the ideological state of the nation. Goudy wrote his introduction to Douglas C. McMurtrie's unassuming *Type Design* in the late 1920s, two years prior to this nation's downward slide into economic depression. In the 1920s the American economy was on a rapid and steady rise. A boom in advertising matched the country's prosperity; and advertising grew in response to an affluent public's purchase power. As a greater demand for promotional vehicles arose, primarily in the form of magazines, so too did the need for a diversity of typographic forms and layouts designed to capture the public's attention. But this would soon change, for by 1929 the stock market crash radically pitched the economic climb, and suddenly the nation's well-being took a calamitous dive. The 1929 collapse of financial markets effectively shattered the economy and the public's confidence in their country's financial institutions.

As Goudy would have it, the language of the day, circa 1929 and after, would have to store the nation's despondency, its destitution; while at the same time language would hold some glimmer of hope, a desire for a return to a lost prosperity. In light of an imminent depression, Goudy's articulation of language as specular, as mirroring the nation's sentiments, would take an apodictic turn. The auratic glow of language (like the glow of gold from which the nation's economic stability then depended upon), as Goudy would have it, soon faded into the semi-opaque veil of delusion. Indeed, by

the 1930s, language's teleology, made manifest in advertising through typography, was economic resuscitation and national preservation. As the depression era came to a close, Goudy's "storehouse" of language was packed with failed dreams and dashed hopes. The swift, and in its own way efficient, economic crash saw to this state of affairs.²

Despite national calamity, out of the depression's rubble rose a black cloud of typefaces and typographic production.³ I say "black" because typographic production for advertising partially obscured the social and economic problems of the decade. Throughout the 1930s, a massing of typography in advertisements hawking various products seemed to be at odds with the public's conservatism in their resistance (or in many cases inability) to purchase goods. And while advertising layout was fast becoming more reliant on visual images,⁴ the copy attached to ads suggested through what could be understood as obstinate language that the world was quite different than the public's Depression era experience.

The deliberate nature of this concealment is difficult to pry into, nonetheless, as it is historically apparent, one possible source of leverage is to simply ask the question: What was the temper of typography in light of an economic and a social debacle? That it took a modern cast is significant; therefore, the queries raised from the nexus of modernism and depression generates a particular course of inquiry that begins with location and proceeds as a mapping of the complexities and contradictions of the history of a depression era typography.

*McMurtrie
and Depression Era Typography*

The eye of this depression era typographic storm was the city of Chicago, then the printing capital of the United States. The person stirring up this storm was Douglas C. McMurtrie (1888-1944) publicist for the Ludlow Typograph Company.⁵ McMurtrie's *Modern Typography and Layout* (1929), *Some Modern Ludlow Typefaces* (1929), *The Fundamentals of Modernism in Typography* (1930), *Structure in the New Typography* (1930) and *Typography*

Overseas (1932) promoted European modernism in this country.⁶ Prior to his relocation to Chicago, McMurtrie had designed a typeface for *Vanity Fair* and the format of the *New Yorker*, and had imported a number of European typefaces into the American market as a founding member of the Continental Typefounders Association. While his work at that time (the early to mid-1920s) was more traditional in its appearance, Chicago seemed to have altered his vision. I can only speculate as to how this change took place. What is certain, however, is that McMurtrie was exposed to the European strain of typographic experimentation. Certainly he read *Advertising Arts, Commercial Art and Industry* and *Gebrauchsgraphik: The Monthly Magazine for the Promotion of Art in Advertising* (all publications which introduced the then current European trends), and he was in touch with the German scene. In fact, in 1926 McMurtrie contributed an essay entitled "Die Ersten Drucke im Englischsprachigen Nord-America (The First Printer in English Speaking North America)" to the German *Sonderabzug aus dem Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*. And since McMurtrie imported type from Europe he certainly was in contact with those who were commissioning the new styles.

McMurtrie's efforts corresponded to, and in some instances predate, the arrival of the better known European emigres, Alexy Brodovitch, Herbert Matter, Georgy Kepes and Lászlo Moholy-Nagy⁷ to name but a few, who were to impact the typographic arts and graphic design in America.⁸ McMurtrie's un-apologetic affirmation of the stripped-down, asymmetry of the "New Typography" was intended to establish an American brand of typographic modernism.⁹ McMurtrie's activities, however, were far from an unquestioning embrace of this foreign import. Acutely aware of the effect the European avant-garde had on modern typography, McMurtrie nonetheless downplayed the artistic experiments of the then new "socialist" style and instead opted for that which appealed to business. He wrote, "Needless to say, the expression of the modern spirit does not demand that we [Americans], too, adopt this [European radical] mental attitude."¹⁰ Denying the collective impulses of the Europeans, McMurtrie suggested that the American typographer need only strive for a unique brand of individualism.¹¹

European modern typography's radicality was predi-

cated, in part, on a position that viewed the United States as exemplary in technological progress, while at the same time European modern typography underlined the social and economic disharmony of the European continent. The forms rendered by artists, designers and typographers practicing overseas were significantly tied to a biased account of the American scene as much as these forms also mirrored a state of European post World War I malaise. That is, in the early 1930s, American industrial advances were mythologized and were held in contrast to European economic and industrial stasis regardless of the available facts regarding the American depression.

Across the Atlantic, McMurtrie proposed an American style of typography that mimicked the very pace of his nation. Yet, like his European counterparts, his assertions took for granted a vital social and economic environment; for McMurtrie, progress was a foregone conclusion. He maintained an attitude that assumed eternal forward movement. The formal tensions he underlined in European modern type and layout were, by his own account, well suited for America's industrial and economic progress (which was paradoxically in accord with the European proposals). But the era to which this body of work belonged was economically, and to a lesser extent, socially stagnant.¹² Therefore, the form and content of his propositions were coincidental only on an ideological level, for the radically shattered nature of European modernist typography was repressed by McMurtrie's attempts at de-radicalizing his version of modern typography. His typography was, like Goudy's language, reflective of desire rather than actual conditions. Where the European brand of typographic composition reflected a social and political milieu (the influence of dadaist and futurist poetry being a primary source), McMurtrie's version was geared toward the recalibration of a faltering American economy; his propositions were not representations, rather they were prescriptions.

Contrary to McMurtrie's proposals, the inherent discord of modernist typography — a trope used in advertising, as Roland Marchand suggests,¹³ to revitalize products

and to compel the consumer toward purchase thus resolving initial tension — mirrored that of the American economy in the 1930s. It is my contention that McMurtrie's introduction of modern typography to the United States was tacitly linked to the decline of the nation's wealth and spirit. Where McMurtrie saw richness in form, the historical record shows desolation in content. As an alternative, consider modern typography's stripped down and unbound character being an analog to the state of the nation — economically depleted and emotionally stressed. Further complicating matters, if modern typography was formally active, as McMurtrie asserted, then it was thought to possess the potential to activate the then dormant consumer, a task essential to the economy's recovery. That the consumer did not respond due to lack of disposable income and confidence in financial institutions underlines an inherent contradiction in McMurtrie's campaign. If typographic character, as McMurtrie stated, signaled the consensus of the social milieu, if an American style of modern typography exposed the concerns and rituals of the American nation, if one were to develop a style "that will best express the spirit of his own time and people,"¹⁴ if all these statements were historically accurate then one would expect a typographic style other than the so-called dynamism of the "New Typography." The key here, however, is to understand the nature of this dynamism, to consider it as active without activating any significant response.

*Active Type
for an Inactive Nation*

What of this reflectivity? What was it that the plastic character of typography should represent? Echoing Jan Tschichold's pronouncements, McMurtrie's attitude weighed more on the side of production.¹⁵ The typographer was not to be a slave to tradition, but to function:

*Form follows function. The application of this law to typography means simply that the inherent purpose of printing alone determines the form it shall take.*¹⁶

McMurtrie's adds to this in another text:

*That printing strikes the modern note, in the United States as well as elsewhere, which is simple, direct, clear, stripped of all purposeless accessories, unaffected.*¹⁷

What McMurtrie neglected to add to these assertions was that the function of printing was to aid business in creating demand for product (a position he would take in subsequent publications). Printing was a primary vehicle for advertising. The ideological utopianism of the Europeans transfigured by McMurtrie's texts into the ideological consumerism of American capitalism — both proclaiming their own brand of torqued vigor — simply did not represent the destitution of the depression era. And yet the formal qualities of McMurtrie's modernist typography did reflect a very real impoverishment; it was a manifest manic-dynamism fueled by (and despite) social and economic disintegration.

It appears that McMurtrie's modernist rhetoric was, whether intentional or otherwise, a convenient illusion aligned with business' ambition to jump start the economy. It was thought that active type made active ads, which in turn induced consumer spending. "It is preeminently the typography of business and industry, of the active life."¹⁸ The "active life" of business and industry may have been in vain, however, since the consumer was anything but active. The top heavy structure of over production and waning consumption created an imbalance that was expected to correct itself, but never did. Modern typography's inherent tensions, an unease affected through asymmetric composition, matched the nation's economic and social anxieties due to a sustained

depression. In both typographic and economic instances resolution was deferred and at the time was never certain. And American business' failure to enact such a redemptive scene is a matter of economic history:

*The failure of the capital markets after 1929 virtually halted the transition in economic structure that had been in progress over time. Poor sales and a short-run lack of investor confidence slowed the movement of capital out of old and into new industries. High rates of unemployment and of deflation, after the 1929 crash, biased effective demands so as to bolster more affluent consumption patterns, and dramatically weaken middle- and low- income demand.*¹⁹

Business' longing for a return of consumer spending was indicative of a "wait and see" attitude, one that allowed the depression to run its course in the hopes that the economy would miraculously recover.²⁰

Business' deferment was the hallmark of an idealism that proposed ultimate and inevitable rewards, and postponement was a main ingredient. Delay would heighten the anticipated resolution. The sparten nature of modern typography made an immanent teleology material while it simultaneously foregrounded the ever present tension exhibited both in concrete form and in desire. Thus it follows that a private sector faced with a country in the midst of economic ruin increased the promise of recompense through advertising in order to stem the possibility of consumer disobedience.

McMurtrie's Crusade

Regardless of the realities and eventualities, McMurtrie tirelessly crusaded throughout the 1930s to establish the "New Typography" in the United States. As the "Director of Typography" at Ludlow — a company offering slugline composition for display jobs — McMurtrie was for the most part in charge of promoting the company.²¹ Many of his essays and articles included a byline that indicated the author's affiliation. If modern typogra-

phy was called for in advertising then surely an ad agency or newspaper should purchase type from Ludlow. This sales pitch was often inferred, and many times it was made explicit. For example, in *Some Modern Ludlow Typefaces* McMurtrie wrote:

It is believed the modern types produced during the past two years by the Ludlow Typograph Company more nearly meet these specifications [simplicity, dynamism, and sans-serif] than those produced by any other American organization.²²

In fact, Ludlow boasted Stellar and Tempo, both designed by R.H. Middleton, as being well suited for modern style layouts. An acknowledged expert in the field, McMurtrie's judgment carried an impressive weight. It was not by accident that Ludlow supported his literary and research pursuits.

I am not so cynical to conclude that McMurtrie was simply a mouth-piece for Ludlow. His concerns were broader in their implications. Nevertheless, in reviewing all of his written work on the subject of modern typography I am struck by its redundancy. Early on he reflected on typography and printing in the age of capitalism:

For printing today is fully as active in "creating demand" for things new and truly wonderful as it is in preserving records of the past. [And]...typography is a typography of an active age. It is young, vigorous, athletic, swift.²³

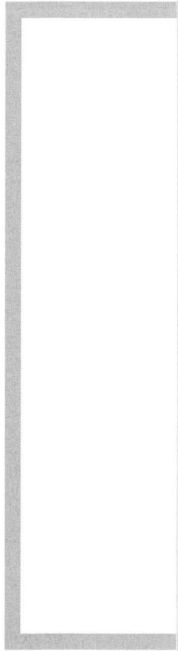
Rarely does he diverge from comments on clarity, functionalism and speed. His notion of speed was especially revealing, for it suggested that things were moving too fast, as if the world were getting ahead of itself. "It is always losing its balance because that is the way to keep moving"²⁴ Later, McMurtrie would assert the importance of rapidity and legibility, for "business men have more to do than they can crowd into a day." Therefore, "...we should plan printing to meet the fast-moving tempo of prospective readers."²⁵ The form of type should be in

accord with its function, that was to catch the always moving reader's eye:

*Above all, let us who set type make sure that when a reader once favors us with a moment's attention, there will be no question in his mind as to what our customer has to sell.*²⁶

The modernist typographic style signaled an accelerated society, one that had achieved such a momentum that it was, as McMurtrie described, tripping over itself. The quick read then led to an even quicker sale.²⁷ The advertiser had only moments to catch the consumer since the ad-man could never be sure of his or her state of ambulation, that is, whether he or she was smoothly on the go or stumbling to keep the pace. The sales of goods had to be in sync with a rapidly lurching consumer.

It was McMurtrie's articulation of speed that inadvertently corresponds to my inquiry into the interrelation of a modern typography that was "always losing its balance" and a depleted American economy. Was the dynamic of modern typography a dynamic of impoverishment that reflected a spiraling downward dive toward economic destitution? The idea of such a downturn would have been difficult to come to terms with, thus the consumer would expect a more positive spin. That is to say, the faltering economy would be countered by a typography of gains, not of loss, a typography of recovery. Given all of the above — McMurtrie's import of European modern typography, his subsequent promotion of an American brand of modern typography, and the economic circumstances that background his activities — this paper's proposed triangulation is admittedly simple: McMurtrie sold modern typography to ad agencies, who in turn created advertising for corporations, who in the 1930s were selling both goods and a hoped for revitalized market, hence modern typography and economic recovery were on one level coequal. In problematizing this equation, however, the notion of faltering typography for a faltering economy



has come to the fore. This necessitates an important alteration: Modern typography reflected a present state of imbalance, as well as a desired future state of recovery. This may have been the dynamic of a modern typography.

The Ups and Downs of Economies

There are many theories (far too many to list in a modest paper such as this) that account for the longevity of the depression. One in particular, what Michael Bernstein calls the "consumer wealth and spending" thesis, proposes that after the crash there was a pronounced decline in consumer confidence, thus came a reduction in consumer wealth and income.²⁸ Production continued, and the public's no-purchase power burdened the economy with superfluous goods due to low demand. Paradoxically, business raised prices and generated, by 1937, an increase in the public's resistance to spending thereby sustaining the depression.

As the theory of a cyclic economy was popular at the time, the downward slide would have soon transformed into an upswing. It was thought that the populace was conditioned to respond to advertising, thus if ads became clearer, more efficient, as McMurtrie's rhetoric suggested, consumers would indeed spend. As stated above, by the very nature of any cycle, however, a periodic decline was imminent. Business was not interested in curing once and for all the country's financial ills. On the contrary, the goal was to induce an upsurge, which would eventually segue into a fall. And it is by no coincidence that I use the words "cure" and "ill" to describe the symptomatic eternal return of an economic plunge. In fact, J.J.B. Morgan remarked in an address to the Midwestern Psychological Association in 1934 that

it is apparent that business has gradually been developing a functional instability which is growing into more and more clean-cut demonstrations of psychotic symptoms which are strangely similar to the symptoms of manic-depressive psychosis in the individual.²⁹

And yet, unlike manic-depression, which is a very real psychological and biological condition, the cycle theory was just that, a theory and therefore artificial. It was taken as a natural condition by business who, instead of radically challenging this ideology, affirmed it by doing business as usual. Business opted for a general state of repression by not addressing the social and economic problems at hand. There was only the blind confidence in the *natural* cure provided by consumer spending.

I would like to suggest that McMurtrie's modernist propaganda — his dynamic age reflected in asymmetrical typography — corresponded to business' eagerness for a cyclic turn. Indeed, his introduction of the "new" suggested a wish for the old, the return of a steady growing economy. Not that typography was to be stable, on the contrary, the very instability of modernist typography, its sparseness and rejection of fuss, maintained the possibility of eventual resolution. Its impoverished state, like that of the country, implied denouement, if not that then interminable stasis — death. McMurtrie's modernist typography's *gestalt* on the horizon functioned both materially and ideologically, for it created the illusion of the possibility of wholeness both in terms of an eventual coming together of fragmented parts (the lines and letter forms in modern ads) and the desired coherence of a nation in the act of consuming (the populace descending on department stores). Both the material character of modernist typography and the ideology of capitalism intrinsically telegraphed the coming of a better state (or Nation) of being. Nevertheless, McMurtrie's desire for a dynamic age remained an ideal due to the nation's sustained fiscal funk.³⁰

He may have simply made the best of a bad situation. Knowing the country was in for an excruciating stretch of hard times, McMurtrie might have preferred idealism over realism. As a man of conscience, I assume he did do his part. In fact, he was named editor of the Works Progress Administration's American Imprints Inventory,³¹ but this position would not affect any social change and achieved little more than bolstering his bibliography.

There is no question, however, that McMurtrie's modern typography reflected the depression era. And it did so in ways not anticipated by its most heart felt propagandist.³² One should not assume that the simplicity and clarity espoused by McMurtrie when declaring his allegiance to the new age of typography was unproblematic. That is, simplicity and clarity do not necessarily signify simple and clear circumstances of production when both may be indexical of impenetrable complexities and ungovernable decay. Indeed, Goudy's "storehouse" was more a labyrinth than a safebox. As such it deterred definitive resolution, thus the language of advertising made manifest via typography reflected, in this case, not the present, but the longed for future that was identical to a once prosperous past. ■

Endnotes

- ¹ Goudy, Frederick W. 1927. Introduction. In McMurtrie, D.C. *Type Design: An Essay on American Type Design with Specimens of the Outstanding Types*. Pelham: Bridgman, 3.
- ² For two views of this "swift" decline see Bernstein, Michael A. 1988. *The Great Depression: Delayed Recovery and Economic Change in America, 1929-1939*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Also Hall, Thomas E. and J. David Ferguson. 1998. *The Great Depression: An International Disaster of Perverse Economic Policies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- ³ The Ludlow Typographic Company's output of typefaces grew from forty-two fonts available in 1930 to fifty in 1940. *Ludlow Typefaces*. 1930. Chicago: Ludlow Typographic Company. *Ludlow Typefaces*. 1940. Chicago: Ludlow Typographic Company.
- ⁴ Printing had advanced to such an extent that by the 1930s, half-tone photographs and color reproductions allowed advertisers to foreground the visual over the verbal. Marchand, Roland. 1985. *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 153.
- ⁵ No doubt many readers will be struck by this essay's neglect of the numerous typographers working between the wars in Chicago. Better known practitioners readily come to mind, Oswald Cooper and Robert Hunter Middleton, for example. My focus on McMurtrie is not a matter of recovering a marginal figure from the sediment of history. On the contrary, it is Cooper and Middleton that I confine to the margins. While both typographers' contributions are readily acknowledged, it is McMurtrie who endeavored to alter typography as a practice beyond the design and manufacture of typeface.
- ⁶ McMurtrie, D.C. 1929. *Modern Typography and Layout*. Chicago; 1929. *Some Modern Ludlow Typefaces*. Chicago: Ludlow Typograph Company; 1930. *The Fundamentals of Modernism in Typography*. Chicago: Encourt Press; 1932. *Typography Overseas*. Chicago: [Printing Industry Reprint]; 1930. *Structure in the New Typography*. Chicago: Encourt Press. For a complete bibliography of McMurtrie's work see Heartman, Charles F. 1942. *McMurtrie Imprints*. Hattiesburg: Book Farm.
- ⁷ Brodovitch arrived in 1930, Matter in 1936 and Kepes and Moholy-Nagy in 1937.
- ⁸ Lorraine Wild addresses the issue of European influence. She writes, "What is striking about Bayer and Art Squad articles [*PM* (December 1939-January 1940)] is that, taken together, they vividly represent that moment when Modernism, as a conceptual premise and a visual style, began to take hold in American Graphic Design." Wild, Lorraine. 1989. "Europeans in America." In *Graphic Design in America: A Visual Language History*. New York: Abrams, 154. Wild's assertions appear overdetermined in light of McMurtrie's efforts on behalf of "modernism."
- ⁹ McMurtrie himself uses the term "New Typography." McMurtrie, Structure in the New Typography. Given the uncataloged state of the McMurtrie archive (held by the Newberry Library), it is difficult to say whether McMurtrie had read Jan Tschichold's *Die neue Typographie* (Berlin: Verlag des Bildungsverbandes der Deutschen Buchdrucker, 1928). As Ruari McLean states, Tschichold was not well known to Anglo and American typographers until 1935. McLean, Ruari. 1995. "Translator's Foreword." In Tschichold, Jan. *The New Typography*. Berkeley: University of California Press, ix.
- ¹⁰ McMurtrie, *The Fundamentals of Modernism in Typography*, 10.
- ¹¹ McMurtrie's disregard for historical models corresponded to Tschichold's avant-gardism. The notion of individualism, however, would be at odds with the German typographer's system. Also, it seems that McMurtrie changed his attitudes toward the traditional typeface as Goudy remarks on his typographic achievement being sensitive to history. Goudy, Introduction to *Type Design*, 4.
- ¹² Progressive social changes would not be instituted until the second phase (1935) of the Roosevelt administration's "New Deal."

¹³ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*, 145.

¹⁴ McMurtrie, *The Fundamentals of Modernism in Typography*, 10.

¹⁵ Tschichold's *The New Typography* transformed avant-garde artistic production into business communication and advertising. A brief discussion of Tschichold's neutralization of avant-gardist negativity is found in my review of the translation of *The New Typography*. See *Design Issues* 13:2, 81-82.

¹⁶ Golec, Review of *The New Typography*, 81-82.

¹⁷ McMurtrie, *Structure in the New Typography*, 16.

¹⁸ McMurtrie, D.C. 1930. *Active-Age Typography*. Chicago: [Printing Industry Reprints], 7.

¹⁹ Bernstein, *The Great Depression: Delayed Recovery and Economic Change in America, 1929-1939*, 46-47. Instability is the nature of capitalist economics and cycles and swings are also common characteristics, thus Bernstein concludes that crisis is an expected result of a dynamic economy. Bernstein, Michael A. 1994. "Understanding American Economic Decline: The Contours of the Late-Twentieth-Century Experience." In Bernstein, Michael A. and David E. Adler, editors. *Understanding American Economic Decline*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 5-8.

²⁰ The Roosevelt administration's New Deal (phase I established March 1933 and phase II implemented in January 1935, the latter being explicitly anti-business) would endeavor to rectify the nation's economic decline. See Couch, Jim F. and William F. Shughart. 1998. *The Political Economy of the New Deal*. Cheltham and Northampton: Edward Elgar.

²¹ Founded by William A. Read in 1906, the Ludlow Typograph Company originally supplied typesetting to small newspapers. By 1912, Ludlow retooled and devoted itself to the production of display jobs.

²² McMurtrie, *Some Modern Ludlow Typefaces*.

²³ McMurtrie, *Active-Age Typography*, 5.

²⁴ McMurtrie, *Active-Age Typography*, 5.

²⁵ McMurtrie, D.C. 1939. *Present and Future Trends in Typefaces and Layouts*. Chicago: [Printing Industry Reprints], unpaginated.

²⁶ McMurtrie, *Present and Future Trends in Typefaces and Layouts*.

²⁷ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity*, 40.

²⁸ Bernstein, *The Great Depression: Delayed Recovery and Economic Change in America, 1929-1939*, 4-7.

²⁹ Morgan, J.J.B. 1935. "Manic-Depressive Psychosis of Business." *Psychological Review* 42 (January), 91. Morgan proposed the correlation of the up- and downswing of business cycles and the mood oscillations of manic-depression. The inability of business to "cure" or level off the unhealthy dynamic of the economy led Morgan to conclude, "Since this looks like an impossible utopian idea in the present state of affairs, the only alternative is to adopt a defense mechanism different from the manic defensive episodes." Morgan, 107.

³⁰ It was the United States' participation in World War II that resolved the nation's economic problems. See Bernstein, "Understanding American Economic Decline: The Contours of the Late-Twentieth-Century Experience," 14-15.

³¹ The Works Progress Administration or W.P.A. was established in 1937 as a part of the New Deal (version II). See Couch and Shughart, *The Political Economy of the New Deal*, 97 and 223.

³² On the other hand, I might speculate on McMurtrie's knowledge of the social implications of typography. Given examples of his earlier writing, it is possible that he had a great appreciation of the interrelations of typographic production and history. See McMurtrie, D.C. 1928. *The Pacific Typographical Society and the California Gold Rush of 1849: A Forgotten Chapter in the History of Typographical Unionism in America*. Chicago: Ludlow Typographic Company. Any speculation on this point, however, does not discount the unintended afterlife of McMurtrie's writing during the depression.