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**Author(s):** Colton Klein

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## “Rust-Flavored Air”: Materiality and Ecocriticism in Charles Burchfield’s *Hillside Homes*

By: Colton Klein

**Abstract:** The verso of Charles Burchfield’s 1920 watercolor *Hillside Homes* reveals contextual information not afforded by the work’s title. Here, the artist’s hand-written inscription reads: “LOCALITY-ON THE OHIO RIVER/BETWEEN E. LIVERPOOL + WELLSVILLE.” Roland Barthes observes that such accompanying text functions as a “parasitic message” intended to load an image by quickening its connotation procedures. Taking this “parasitic message” as starting point, this paper employs new materialism and ecocriticism to read *Hillside Homes* as Burchfield’s toxic discourse on environmental damage caused by southeastern Ohio’s thriving clay industry during the early twentieth century. My analysis examines *Hillside Homes* in relation to contemporaneous textual accounts of the region’s ecological welfare from the artist’s personal journals and the geologist James Harold Hance’s 1918 PhD dissertation “Geology and Mineral Resources of the Wellsville, Ohio, Quadrangle.” Ultimately, this watercolor is both a prescient commentary on ecological toxicity and a material product of distributed agency that records natural degradation not only in subject matter, but also in its deteriorated physical condition resulting from environmental exposure. Conceiving of *Hillside Homes* as an assemblage—Jane Bennett’s term to describe the complex, interconnected, and surprising networks of agents that act upon material things—helps to explain one of its distinct visual features: the soiled yellow smog that discolors the blue sky. A study of this unplanned formal quality, a result of the paper’s reaction to relative humidity, acidity, or pollution, challenges

preconceived notions of artist intentionality. Heeding the call of Lawrence Buell, this piece aims to reinvigorate scholarly understanding of Burchfield's work through a more earth-conscious mode of art historical inquiry.

**Keywords:** *Ecocriticism, new materialism, Lawrence Buell, Hillside Homes, Charles Burchfield*

The literary critic Lawrence Buell begins his seminal essay “The Ecocritical Insurgency” with a dire warning: “It is not at all unlikely that the twenty-first century's most pressing problem will be the sustainability of earth's environment—and that the responsibility for addressing this problem [...] will increasingly be seen as the responsibility of all the human sciences.”<sup>1</sup> Charles Burchfield, an Ohio-born artist active during the early to mid-1900s, confronted these environmental responsibilities nearly a century before the present climate crisis.<sup>2</sup> The overwhelming majority of his extensive body of watercolors addresses issues of ecological welfare and equity, now primary concerns of ecocriticism.<sup>3</sup> Through close analysis of the artist’s 1920 watercolor and gouache on paperboard *Hillside Homes* (Fig. 1), I seek to reframe Burchfield as an important eco-artist whose early role as an environmentalist remains underacknowledged in current narratives of American art. This essay begins with visual analysis and contextualization before transitioning to an evaluation of the artist’s existing literature from a methodological standpoint. A broad review of this scholarship reveals that exhaustive applications of style have associated Burchfield with a multitude of divergent formal movements and consequently diluted his relevance in contemporary art historical discourse. Turning to the more recent methods of materiality and ecocriticism, I will consider *Hillside Homes* as a perceptive visualization of environmental toxicity and a material product of distributed agency, a theory that recognizes unexpected natural occurrences within works of art.

In *Hillside Homes*, Burchfield depicts the by-products of human incursion on the natural landscape. A double-track railway horizontally bisects the immediate foreground, which provides visual stability to the steep vertical climb of receding compositional elements. These four steel tracks, uniformly painted in off-white gouache, cross a series of evenly spaced wooden

sleepers that rest upon an earthen ballast. The clean lines of the rails and crossties contrast with the subtle undulations of the track center, the barren stretch of undeveloped terrain that runs between the railways. Advancing up and into the composition, the viewer encounters a low-slung, one-story clapboard structure that perceptibly mimics the horizontality of its abutting railroad. Several nondescript outbuildings and dead or dormant trees dot the surrounding property. The dark brown annexes at right continue the muddy palette of the foregrounded rails, drawing the eye from those perpendicular constructions to a precipitous stairway winding up the hillside.

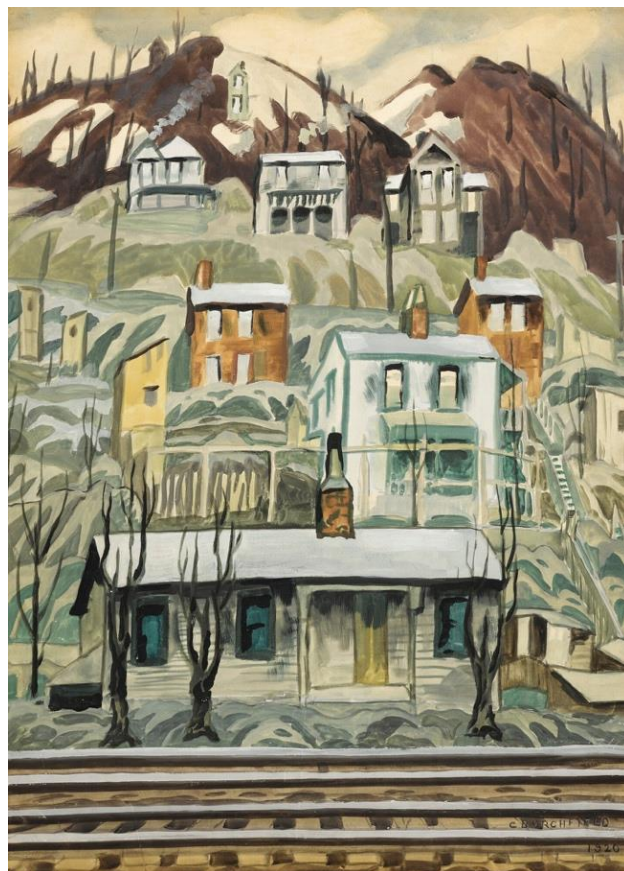


Fig. 1. Charles Ephraim Burchfield, *Hillside Homes*, 1920. Watercolor and gouache on paperboard, 26 × 19 in. (66 × 48.3 cm). Private collection. Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. © 2021; reproduced with permission of the Charles E. Burchfield Foundation.

Climbing these stairs, the viewer encounters a grouping of seven or more architectural structures, a fence, a few thin, leafless trees, and a conical edifice left of compositional center. Several of these buildings appear impossibly narrow without discernible entryways or clear purposes. Burchfield defines these architectural components with bold, geometric outlines that contrast with the fluid, biomorphic patterning of the surging landscape. The viewers' compositional ascent slows momentarily at a sloping ridge visible near the rooflines of the two reddish-brown homes. This diagonal bifurcation indicates a roadway lined with telephone poles. These tall, man-made wooden posts re-engage the optical incline and lead the eye upward toward another

group of houses, which appear more architecturally complex than those below. Smoke, billowing from two of these structures, rises to a barren hilltop spotted with branchless tree stumps. In the yellowed atmosphere above, Burchfield repeats the flowing organic forms of the landscape in the silhouettes of clouds against a faded blue sky.

To contextualize this work within Burchfield's larger oeuvre, one might file *Hillside Homes* among the artist's "house pictures," a term coined by curator Michael D. Hall to describe a series of watercolors produced between 1918 and 1920 that began to depart from his fanciful early style.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the art historians John I. H. Baur, Henry Adams, and Audrey Lewis generally segment Burchfield's career into three broader phases: expressive nature studies before 1920, realistic urban and industrial scenes from the early 1920s to the 1940s, and transcendental landscapes from 1943 until his death in 1967.<sup>5</sup> Burchfield scholar Nancy Weekly further delineates between these periods:

First, fanciful nature studies, begun in 1915, developed into an uninhibited, experimental symbolism from 1917 through the beginning of 1918. Postwar works of 1919 [...] are alternately brooding and curious [...]. These gave way to an urban or pastoral realism during the 1920s and 1930s, when American artists often looked for native subjects in their rejection of European modernism. In the 1940s, Burchfield returned to nature as his primary subject, incorporating symbols that chart his spiritual growth in unique reflections of pantheism, luminism, romanticism, and transcendentalism.<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly, the year 1920 appears to straddle a stylistic boundary in each of these scholars' organizational models. This indicates that works like *Hillside Homes*, which exist on the margins of multiple phases, might possess formal qualities that challenge art history's proclivity for orderly systems of compartmentalization. What happens to these works that resist neat categorization? Does stylistic classification restrict new ways of seeing and thinking about Burchfield's varied output? How could other methodological approaches more fully illuminate the multiplicity of histories and perspectives afforded by works like *Hillside Homes*? I will begin

to address these questions by assessing the current efficacy of continued applications of style to demonstrate the need for a new methodological approach.

Certainly, the art historical endeavor to identify the sequential repetition of similar phenomena extends to the founding of the discipline. In the late nineteenth century, Austrian art historian Alois Riegl proposed that each epoch developed its own *Kunstwollen*, a unique and non-repeatable form of design that clarified the association of various artists and individual artworks into a unified totality.<sup>7</sup> Riegl's contemporary Heinrich Wölfflin similarly conceived of style as a unique expression of an age, nation, or individual.<sup>8</sup> The segmentation of Burchfield's artistic career into three neat periods follows long-standing attempts at generalization inherent to historical applications of style as method.

Moreover, desires to systematize and homogenize Burchfield's diverse artistic output into rational narratives mirror larger scholarly efforts to categorize individual artists within the art historical canon. As early as 1930, the Museum of Modern Art director Alfred Barr alluded to problems of canonization when he described Burchfield as "one of the most isolated and original phenomena in American art."<sup>9</sup> *Time* magazine included the artist in an influential 1934 article on American Regionalism, the Midwestern-grown art movement led by Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood, and John Steuart Curry that represented a nationalistic return to figuration in response to Modernism and the 1913 Armory Show.<sup>10</sup> Shortly thereafter, a six-page article in the December 1936 edition of *Life* magazine described Burchfield's watercolors as "lonely but honest pictures of the American Scene."<sup>11</sup> Although *Time* and *Life* effectively cemented the artist's commonly-accepted stylistic connections to Regionalism and to American Scene painters like Edward Hopper and Reginald Marsh during the 1930s, these publications—unlike Barr's assessment—

either ignored Burchfield's formally dissimilar early watercolors or dismissed them as "overdramatized, sentimental technique."<sup>12</sup>

Problematically, Burchfield's late return to transcendental expressionism and apparent association with multiple artistic movements soon began to dominate critical discussions of his diverse output. In a 1970 article for *The New York Times*, Hilton Kramer described the artist's stylistic experimentation as a hinderance to his place within the canon: "[Burchfield] is one of those odd and interesting figures who belong neither to the history of the American avant-garde nor to the history of its true antagonists."<sup>13</sup> The critic Karen Wilkin further reckons with Burchfield's legacy in her 1994 review of *The Sacred Woods*, a traveling exhibition organized to celebrate the centennial of his birth:

Burchfield is one of those puzzling, seemingly peripheral figures [...]. His mystical pantheism, his desire to reveal the transcendental in the natural, are not only bound up with the odd conjunction of modernism and the occult peculiar to the early part of this century, but they are also related to conceptions of the sublime that deeply engaged his nineteenth-century ancestors, perhaps most notably the painters of the Hudson River School. Burchfield is puzzling, too, because his paintings can appear formally advanced, as though their maker were fully aware of the concerns of his most ambitious, inventive contemporaries, and at the same time naïve, as though he were unaffected by modernist models, or else indifferent to them [...]. You could categorize Burchfield as an amiable, oddball modernist, especially if you concentrated on his quasi-Fauvist early works [...].<sup>14</sup>

Unable to systematically classify Burchfield's idiosyncratic watercolors, Wilkin counterintuitively views Burchfield's individual synthesis of multiple modes of stylistic representation as peripheral to early twentieth-century art history. Likewise, the editor of the artist's journals, J. Benjamin Townsend, observes that critics have linked his watercolors to at least a dozen art movements: Realism, Regionalism, American Scene, Romanticism, the Baroque, Gothic Realism, Romantic Realism, Symbolism, among others.<sup>15</sup> Hall further detects elements of Modernism, Expressionism, Fauvism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Outsider Art, and Primitivism in Burchfield's "house pictures" of the late 1910s.<sup>16</sup>



Consequently, Nannette V. Maciejunes notes that these sustained attempts to delimitate Burchfield's various modes of style have inadvertently hindered his place within the early-twentieth-century canon: "In current histories of American art, Burchfield seems to be slipping off the page. Too familiar. Too peripheral. Maybe, irrelevant!"<sup>17</sup> Steven Nelson argues that the traditional art historical canon rarely encompasses artists who resist straightforward classification.<sup>18</sup> Reflecting the postmodern and post-structuralist concerns of Gayatri Spivak and Douglas Crimp, he posits that the rationally constructed canonical narrative further obscures the complexity of individual art objects.<sup>19</sup> Nelson suggests that scholars open the canon to include a broader range of methodological frameworks that allow for provocative, oppositional investigations of ambivalence within diverse visual practices.<sup>20</sup> If exhaustive applications of style have unintentionally weakened our ability to find new meaning in Burchfield's watercolors, which methods might productively re-engage works like *Hillside Homes* to address more urgent art historical questions?

To begin, I will return to close visual analysis of *Hillside Homes* as an individual material object. An inspection of the paperboard's verso reveals contextual information not afforded by the work's title. Here, Burchfield's hand-written inscription reads: "*LOCALITY—ON THE OHIO RIVER/BETWEEN E. LIVERPOOL + WELLSVILLE.*" Roland Barthes observes that such accompanying text functions as a "parasitic message" intended to load an image by quickening its connotation procedures.<sup>21</sup> In the presence of a caption, the image no longer illustrates the words; instead, the words illustrate the image. Barthes cautions that text, when retroactively applied, might invent entirely new—and sometimes inappropriate—interpretations. Here, Burchfield's pencil notation provides important spatial data designed to inform site-specific readings of the paperboard's recto. In late 1920 and early 1921, Burchfield traveled by interurban

electric car from his hometown of Salem, Ohio, to the Ohio River towns of East Liverpool, Wellsville and Steubenville for a series of sketching excursions.<sup>22</sup> From East Liverpool to Wellsville, the railway sliced through the base of a dramatic canyon called California Hollow (Fig. 2), likely the geological formation visible in *Hillside Homes*.

Proceeding from that “parasitic message,” this paper employs the interdisciplinary method of ecocriticism, which originated in literary theory, to read *Hillside Homes* as Burchfield’s “toxic discourse” on environmental damage caused by southeastern Ohio’s thriving clay industry during the early twentieth century. Buell defines “toxic discourse” as “expressed

anxiety arising from perceived threat of environmental hazard due to chemical modification by human agency.”<sup>23</sup> This analysis examines *Hillside Homes* in relation to contemporaneous textual accounts of the region’s ecological welfare from the artist’s personal journals and a site-specific geological survey published two years earlier in 1918. Ultimately, I argue that this watercolor should be considered as a visual representation of “toxic discourse” and a material product of

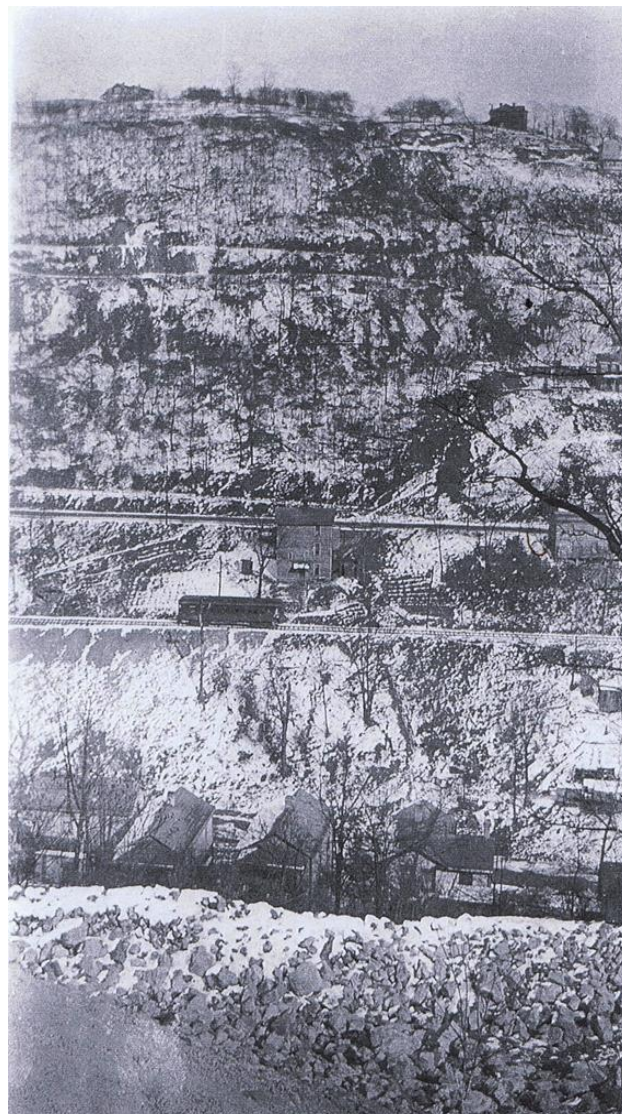


Fig. 2. [A trolley car making its way down California Hollow], c. 1905–31. East Liverpool Historical Society, East Liverpool, Ohio. Photograph courtesy of Timothy Brookes; reproduced with permission of Timothy Brookes.

distributed agency, the unexpected effect of nature within works of art. Deliberately avoiding methods of style, the subsequent inquiry acknowledges Burchfield's well-documented interest in ecology and encourages scholarly re-engagement with the artist's "seemingly peripheral" work through the lens of ecocriticism to uncover its relevance to our contemporary environmental reckoning.<sup>24</sup>

A devoted naturalist, Burchfield was acutely aware of the negotiations between human and nonhuman forces in the environment. He discovered the writings of John Burroughs at an early age and initially considered a career as a nature writer.<sup>25</sup> Toward the end of high school, Burchfield began recording his daily observations of the natural world in journals inspired by Henry David Thoreau.<sup>26</sup> He would continue these compulsive entries, which ultimately filled seventy-two volumes, until a few months before his death in 1967.<sup>27</sup> In addition to writing, Michael Kammen observes that Burchfield consistently engaged with the nature literature of Thoreau, John James Audubon, John Muir, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Herman Melville because their close observations of the natural world coincided with his own.<sup>28</sup> These texts directly contributed to the artist's keen ecological awareness and encouraged his artistic examinations of the interconnectedness between human and nonhuman spheres.<sup>29</sup>

In one of these journal entries from mid-June 1921, Burchfield articulates anxious concern for the ecological welfare of the environment surrounding East Liverpool and Wellsville. This contemporaneous text expands potential interpretations of the "parasitic message" associated with the geographic notation present on the verso of his 1920 watercolor. Burchfield's perceptive diary account suggests a distinctly haptic encounter with the toxic airborne pollutants excreted by the local clay industry:

In the background the sun-baked Main Street and the sultry twilight of the hills beyond—  
A heavy pall of what can only be described as pus-colored smoke (from tile-works and

brick kilns) which was mingled with the saline gas from the burning salt in the kilns. The latter kills all vegetation on the hills roundabout (trees stark and leafless) which only added to the sense of desolation—From a distance frogs and toads could be heard croaking; a freight train rumbled on its interminable slow progress thru the town—Even the lights from East Liverpool had a sinister look. A blank almost tangible stupor seemed to come down out of the night and settle over the town; a town in the grip of a soulless industrialism, that choked human life with complete callousness [...] waves of rust-flavored air [flowed] from off the railroad tracks [...].<sup>30</sup>

Burchfield's language accesses powerful affective registers—sight, smell, touch, and sound—in this description of toxic substances, chemicals, organic and inorganic matter, landscapes, and biological entities. The entry also functions as a workable visual analysis of *Hillside Homes* with its foregrounded railroad, conical firing kiln left of center, and barren background hillside.

Parallel to his textual observation, Burchfield's watercolor appears devoid of any figuration. The two plumes of smoke rising from chimneys at upper center are the only noticeable indication of active human life.

The visual representation of “toxic discourse” in *Hillside Homes* references similar environmental anxieties voiced by the geologist James Harold Hance in his 1918 PhD dissertation “Geology and Mineral Resources of the Wellsville, Ohio, Quadrangle.” Like Burchfield, Hance gives deference to the region's dramatic shale hillsides, which rise from fifty to six-hundred feet above the river outside East Liverpool and Wellsville.<sup>31</sup> His survey notes that the area's primary natural resources are clay deposits from the Lower Kittanning clay bed, which sustain the local economy (Fig. 3): “The pottery industry based on local clays has expanded so that this community ranks first in the United States in pottery products, and supports what is reported to be the largest pottery [business] in the world.”<sup>32</sup> The exploitation of this natural resource began in Ohio as early as 1826 when Joseph Wells began producing red earthenware and stoneware from firing kilns.<sup>33</sup> Hance concludes his geologic report with an observation of the harmful toxicity of the region's longtime trade: “The clay industry along the river, however,

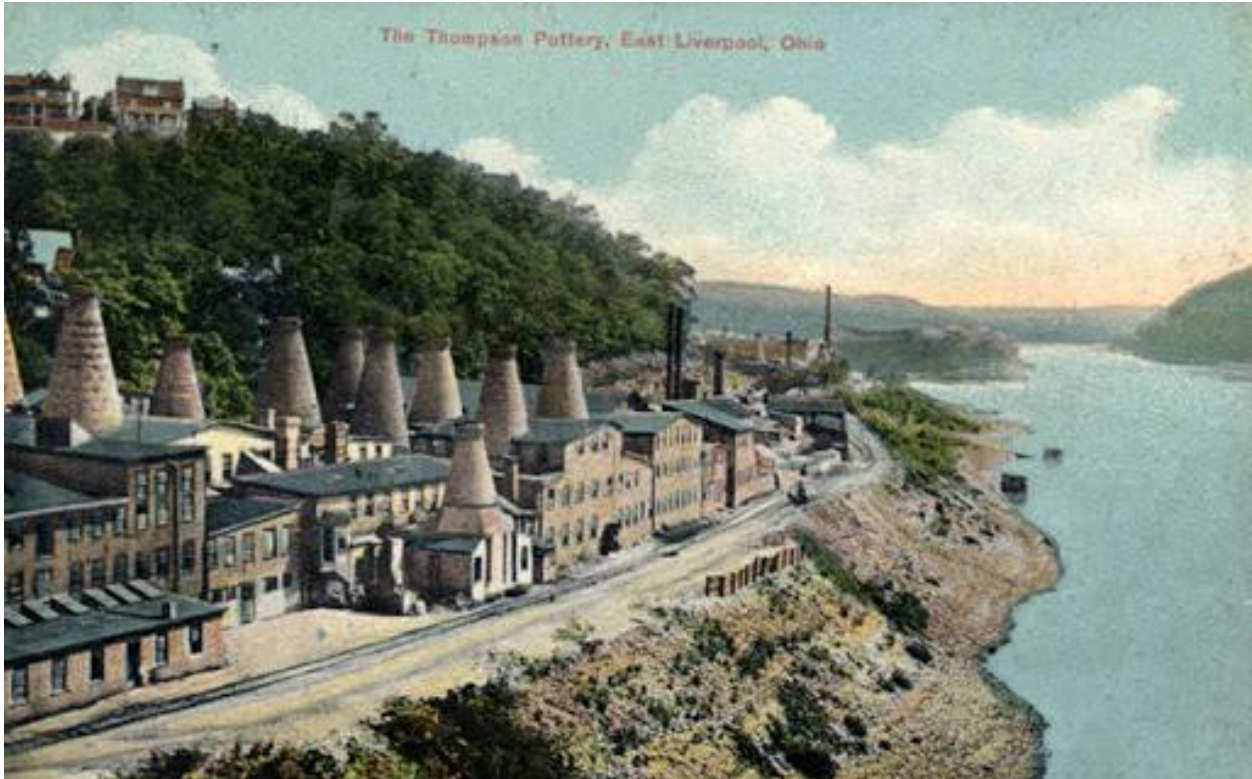


Fig. 3. Postcard of The Thompson Pottery, East Liverpool, Ohio, c. 1920. East Liverpool Historical Society, East Liverpool, Ohio. Photograph courtesy of Timothy Brookes; reproduced with permission of Timothy Brookes.

is apparently becoming a menace to fruit culture because of the Sulphur in the coal used in the kilns.”<sup>34</sup> A review of Hance’s comprehensive geological study reveals Burchfield’s critical awareness of the geological landscape and his fundamental understanding of the clay industry’s devastating effect on the region’s ecological welfare.

Furthermore, *Hillside Homes* records natural degradation not only in subject matter, but also in its deteriorated physical condition resulting from environmental exposure. Conceiving of Burchfield’s watercolor as a product of distributed agency helps to explain one of its distinct visual features: the soiled yellow smog that discolors the blue sky. Significantly, this formal quality results from natural aging rather than the artist’s brush. Citing Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, the eco-critic Timothy Clark contends that all agency, human or nonhuman, is fundamentally distributive because multifarious actants always work together to produce unexpected effects.<sup>35</sup>

Jane Bennett, a leading scholar in New Materialism, uses the concept of “assemblage” to describe the complex, interconnected, and surprising networks of agents that act upon material things.<sup>36</sup> In simpler terms, these scholars use the concept of distributed agency to acknowledge nature’s unforeseen interaction with human products, like light leaks in film photography or craquelure in oil paint. Read as an “assemblage,” Burchfield’s watercolor records distributed agency through the paper’s physical reaction to relative humidity, temperature, acidity, radiation, and pollution. According to conservation specialist Dianne van der Reyden, “These environmental factors initiate degradation mechanisms of hydrolysis, oxidation, and crosslinking [...]. Discoloration of paper stems from the formation of chromophores upon aging as a result of exposure to, among other things, light and volatile gases.”<sup>37</sup> The areas of localized oxidation visible in the sky could also be facilitated by accumulated water particles, contact with an acidic mat, or by the presence of inherent impurities within the paperboard.<sup>38</sup> These unexpected natural changes have formed a haze of yellow discoloration near the work’s top edge, which fortuitously evokes the “heavy pall of what can only be described as pus-colored smoke” that Burchfield witnessed above Wellsville.<sup>39</sup>

Here, the paper’s surface depicts the by-products of the natural environment on Burchfield’s watercolor. Toning appears most visible along the extreme upper edges of his sheet. Progressing inward from the perimeter, this discoloration gradually seeps into the center of the composition where it soils the formerly white highlights of the snowdrifts and low-lying cumulus clouds. Light exposure has diminished the vibrancy of Burchfield’s bright blue sky and, as a result, reduced its metaphoric capacity for hope or progress. The severely discolored edges suggestively contain the upper bounds of the composition within a claustrophobic framing



system. Although not intended by the artist, natural degradation of the paper has created a trapped yellow haze that rises like soot from the chimneys below to taint the air above.

Understood as an “assemblage” through distributed agency, *Hillside Homes* suggests the difficulty of extracting unmitigated compliance from the environment. According to Clark, “The notion of an ‘assemblage’ relates in turn to crucial notions of complexity and emergence—the way events may unfold from out of a complex interaction of agents, accidents and happenings, such that the result comes to exceed the human capacity for foresight, let alone control.”<sup>40</sup> This reading of *Hillside Homes* recognizes that Burchfield probably did not plan such serendipitous physical alteration through environmental processes. It should, however, provide belated comfort to an artist clearly anxious about ecological welfare and the agency of the natural world during early twentieth-century industrialization. Further, a study of this unplanned effect challenges preconceived notions of artist intentionality and supports the relevance of re-reading Burchfield through an eco-critical lens.

In conclusion, this marginal watercolor ought to be reassessed as an important record of site-specific ecological history by an early and overlooked eco-artist. Through a broad evaluation of the existing literature, this paper demonstrates that frequent methodical applications of style have inadvertently diluted Burchfield’s relevance in contemporary discourse. Taking this into account, my analysis purposely turns to the more recent methods of materiality and ecocriticism to view *Hillside Homes* as both a prescient commentary on ecological toxicity and a physical embodiment of distributed agency. Heeding Buell’s call, I aim to reinvigorate scholarly understanding of Burchfield’s work through a more earth-conscious mode of art historical inquiry.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> Lawrence Buell, "The Ecocritical Insurgency," *New Literary History* 30, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 699.
- <sup>2</sup> "Blistering Vision: Charles Burchfield's Sublime American Landscapes in the Public," News Releases, Burchfield Penney Art Center at Buffalo State College, posted August 10, 2016, <https://www.burchfieldpenney.org/general/news-and-updates/news-releases/article:08-10-2016-12-00am-blistering-vision-charles-burchfield-s-sublime-american-landscapes-in-the-public/>.
- <sup>3</sup> Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environment Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 112.
- <sup>4</sup> Michael D. Hall, "Cones, Cubes, and Brooding Shacks: Charles Burchfield's House Pictures 1918–1920," in *Charles Burchfield 1920: The Architecture of Painting* (New York: DC Moore Gallery, 2009), 12.
- <sup>5</sup> Audrey Lewis, "Burchfield's Nature—Surveying the Landscape," in *Exalted Nature*, ed. Nancy Weekly and Audrey Lewis (Buffalo: Burchfield Penney Art Center, SUNY Buffalo State, 2014), 15–45; John I. H. Baur, *The Inlander: Life and Work of Charles Burchfield, 1893–1967* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1984); Henry Adams, "A Heartland Artist Who Broke the Old Regionalist Mold," *Smithsonian* 28, no. 2 (May 1997): 58–69.
- <sup>6</sup> Nancy Weekly, et al. *Charles Burchfield: The Sacred Woods* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 9.
- <sup>7</sup> Alois Riegl, "The Main Characteristics of the Late Roman *Kunstwollen*" [1901] in *The Vienna School Reader. Politics and Art Historical Methods in the 1930s*, ed. and trans. Christopher Wood (New York: Zone Books, 2000), 87.
- <sup>8</sup> Heinrich Wölfflin, "Introduction," in *Principles of Art History. The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art* [1915], trans. M.D. Hottinger (New York: Dover Publications, 1950), 8.
- <sup>9</sup> Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "Introduction," in *Charles Burchfield: Early Watercolors, 1916–1918* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1930), 6.
- <sup>10</sup> "U.S. Scene," *TIME* 20, no. 26 (December 24, 1934): 24–27; Nannette V. Maciejunes and Karli R. Wurzelbacher, "Charles Burchfield: Modern American," in *Charles Burchfield 1920: The Architecture of Painting*, ed. Nannette V. Maciejunes, Karli R. Wurzelbacher, Michael D. Hall (New York: DC Moore Gallery, 2009), 23. The International Exhibition of Modern Art, later known as the Armory Show, took place from February 17 to March 15, 1913 at the 69th Regiment Armory on Lexington Avenue and 25th Street in New York City. The exhibition was organized by The Association of American Painters and Sculptors and introduced American audiences to the works of European modernists like Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp.
- <sup>11</sup> "Burchfield's America," *Life*, December 28, 1936, 24.
- <sup>12</sup> Burchfield 1936, 37. *Time* discusses Burchfield's childhood interest in dilapidated homes but does not address any of his early watercolors.
- <sup>13</sup> Hilton Kramer, "Charles Burchfield, a U.S. Provincial," *The New York Times*, January 24, 1970.
- <sup>14</sup> Karen Wilkin, "At the Galleries," *Partisan Review* 6, no. 1 (December 1994): 134–35.
- <sup>15</sup> J. Benjamin Townsend and Charles Burchfield, *Charles Burchfield's Journals: The Poetry of Place* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), XVII, 452.
- <sup>16</sup> Hall 2009, 12–19.
- <sup>17</sup> Nannette V. Maciejunes and Michael D. Hall, "Introduction: On the Middle Border: Charles Burchfield Revisited" in *The Paintings of Charles Burchfield: North by Midwest*, ed. Nannette V. Maciejunes and Michael D. Hall (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 13.
- <sup>18</sup> Steven Nelson, "Turning Green Into Black, or How I Learned to Live with the Canon," in *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and Its Institutions*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (New York: Routledge, 2007), 54–66. It must be acknowledged that Nelson's argument specifically addresses the canon of African-American art, and I do not intend to suggest a similarity between the complex history of that canon and other canons. Rather, I believe that Nelson's comments on the individuality of artistic practices and the limits of stylistic categorization have important and wide-ranging applications that support the postmodern deconstruction of canon-building.
- <sup>19</sup> Douglas Crimp, "On the Museum's Ruins," in *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 44–65; Gayatri Spivak, "The Post-modern Condition: The End of Politics?" in *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (London: Routledge, 1990), 17–34.
- <sup>20</sup> Spivak 1990, 65.
- <sup>21</sup> Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message," in *A Barthes Reader*, ed. Susan Sontag (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 204–205. Barthes' specifically applied this term to his discussion of press photography. This concept of text as signifier can be expanded beyond the press photo to include works of art in other media.
- <sup>22</sup> Townsend and Burchfield 1993, 465.



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<sup>23</sup> Lawrence Buell, *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. And Beyond* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 30.

<sup>24</sup> Wilkin 1994, 134.

<sup>25</sup> Adams 1997, 60.

<sup>26</sup> Adams 1997.

<sup>27</sup> Adams 1997.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Kammen, "Charles Burchfield and the Procession of the Seasons," in *The Paintings of Charles Burchfield: North by Midwest*, ed. Nannette V. Maciejunes and Michael D. Hall (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 44.

<sup>29</sup> Weekly, *Charles Burchfield: The Sacred Woods*, 10–11.

<sup>30</sup> Townsend and Burchfield, *Charles Burchfield's Journals*, 20.

<sup>31</sup> James Harold Hance, "Geology and Mineral Resources of the Wellsville, Ohio, Quadrangle," (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 1918), 26.

<sup>32</sup> Hance 1918, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Hance 1918, 114.

<sup>34</sup> Hance 1918, 4.

<sup>35</sup> Timothy Clark, *The Value of Ecocriticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 114–15; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Introduction: Ecology's Rainbow," in *Prismatic Ecology: Ecotheory Beyond Green*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), xxiv.

<sup>36</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 21.

<sup>37</sup> Dianne van der Reyden, "Conservation of Sacred Objects and Other Papers from the General Session of the 19th Annual Meeting of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 3–8, 1991," *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 31, no. 1 (Spring, 1992): 117, 122.

<sup>38</sup> Soyeon Choi, "Foxing on Paper: A Literature Review," *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 46, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 142.

<sup>39</sup> Townsend and Burchfield, *Charles Burchfield's Journals*, 20.

<sup>40</sup> Clark 2018, 115.

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