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EZRA POUND AS A POET-CRITIC: A STUDY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my late father.

To my mother, may Allah bless and protect her.

To my wife.

To my daughter, Juana.

To my family.

To my uncle, Mr. Adil Khlaif, and his family.

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ABSTRACT

Ezra Pound (1885-1972) is one of the major makers of modernism in English and American poetry both as a theorist and as a poet. Yet, little is written on him as a poet – critic. He is either assessed as a poet or a critic separately.

His critical writings are extensive and are not solely restricted to imaginative literature and poetry. He was a cultural critic as well. Yet, poetry occupies a distinguished place in his writings as he was an ardent seeker of the emancipation of English poetry from the fetters of conventionalism.

He sought to understand the nature of original poetry by studying other languages, especially the oriental, like Chinese and Japanese to which he resorts for certain poetic forms like the Haiku with the aim of modernizing the English poetry. Being a scholar of the Romance languages helped Pound to deploy poetic strategies and voices or personae which he borrowed from the Romance literatures of Europe, especially those of the Italian courtly love poets such as Cavalcanti and the troubadours of twelfth-century Provence.

The aim of the present study is to explore the polemics of identity of Ezra Pound as a poet – critic and to examine the extent to which he applies his critical theories of poetry into his actual poems. The study shall mainly limit its scope to pre- *The Cantos* poetry of Ezra Pound as this early poetry is a direct extension of Pound's critical theories of poetry.

The study falls into three chapters and a conclusion:

Chapter one is introductory, and is divided into two sections; section one , entitled **Ezra Pound's Early Poetry: A Progression towards Modernity,** gives an account of Ezra Pound's early poetry and his gradual development as a modern poet; section two, entitled **Ezra Pound's Literary Criticism and the Development of his Modern Poetics,** examines samples from Pound's literary criticism in order to reveal his mentality as a critic, to highlight the sources and the influences which went into the

shaping and development of his critical thinking and acumen to examine what influences this development had on his poetry .

Chapter two is divided into three sections; section one, entitled **Imagism**, focuses on Pound's theory of Imagism and seeks to evaluate the application of his Imagist tenets into his own poetic output by shedding light on his 'In A Station of the Metro,' which he published in his *Des Imagist: An Anthology* and which is considered an exemplary poem in which he put his critical beliefs in practice. An emphasis will also be thrown on some of the poems in his poetry volume, *Lustra*, which reflect his Imagist and Vorticist preoccupations.

Section two, entitled **Vorticism**, traces the development of Pound's Image into the Vortex, and studies his critical pronouncements concerning this development in his modernist poetics by showing his conceptualization of the Doctrine of the Vortex which he embraced as a way of distinguishing his art from the static, pictorial images that had become associated with Imagism .

This section throws emphasis on poems selected from the poetry volume, *Personae* (1926) which is one of the key texts of modernist poetry and which includes poems from Pound's Imagist and Vorticist phases. Thus, it serves as a record to how a major poet develops.

This section also furthers the subject under focus by highlighting the relation between the Chinese written character (the ideogram or pictograph) and Pound's Imagist theory. This serves as an indication that the ideogrammic method which Pound comes to apply in poetic composition is an evidence of his great interest in the cultures of the Far East (especially Japan and China) whose literatures were key to the development of his own poetry and Criticism.

Section three, entitled **The Ideogram,** features Pound's ideogrammic method which is a development of his vorticism and selects poems as examples of it.

Chapter Three falls into two sections; section one, **The Concept of the Poet-Critic**, addresses the critical definition of the poet-critic in relation to Ezra Pound; section two, entitled ,explores the dual identity of Ezra Pound as a poet and critic to reveal the relation between these two major facets of his career

Major among the critical issues to be traced in Pound's poetry are those of the nature, the function and the criteria of genuine poetry, the importance of tradition and craftsmanship, the relation between poetry, music, science and the visual arts such as painting and sculpture .

The conclusion sums up the views and findings of the study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ezra Pound's Early Poetry: A Gradual progression Towards Modernity.

"Mr. Pound," declared T. S. Eliot in his introduction to the *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* (1954), "is more responsible for the XXth century revolution in poetry than is any other individual.[1] This tribute reveals the essential role played by Ezra Pound to revitalize poetry and make it new. His literary status looms large in the artistic and cultural scene of the twentieth century and his multidimensional career as a poet, translator, critic, editor, anthologist and impresario placed him at the heart of literary modernism and made him the most effective and complex literary figure whose contributions to the twentieth century literary frame of mind cannot be overlooked.[2]

He revolutionized Anglo-American poetry, arguing that traditional poetic forms and themes could no longer encapsulate the experience of the modern world. He was a pioneer in the use of free verse and in his expansion of the subject matter of poetry. What makes him important was not only his poetic experimentation but also his thinking which was responsible for shaping modernism and which is best reflected in his theorizing about major issues traditionally associated with modernism such as disinterestedness vs. political engagement, elitism vs. democracy, tradition vs. novelty, abstraction vs. realism. He established an enormous influential system of literary values disseminated through his critical works and his editorial authority. He also constructed a cultural field by dealing with pressing intellectual questions of his day in the fields of philosophy, fine arts, economics, politics and education. This demonstrates his erudition and the different aspects of his talent which influenced both his poetry and criticism.[3]

Ezra Weston Loomis Pound was born on October 30, 1885. His family lived in Hailey, Idaho, where his father was a minor official in the United States Government

Land Office. Both parents were of old New England stock. In 1889, the Pounds left the Middle West for Philadelphia, settling permanently in the suburb town of Wyncote in 1891. Ezra Pound received his early education at Wyncote public schools, but in January, 1897, he entered Cheltenham Military Academy at Organtz, a few miles from his home. In the spring, he visited Europe for the first time and wrote what is purportedly his first poem which is preserved in a letter written to his father on June 7th.[4] This poem reads as follows:

This is a day
I haven't much to say
Except we are well and
hope you are the same
I remain your loving Ra
And Ma your loving, Dame.
(CEP, 1-6, 12)[5]

Ezra Pound's curriculum at Cheltenham focused on the classics. He studied Latin but no Greek, and graduated a year ahead of his class. At the age of fifteen, Ezra Pound entered the University of Pennsylvania and spent two undergraduates years, which were undistinguished. There Ezra Pound was given courses on the history of literary criticism which was taught by a professor of English, Josiah Penniman. Though Pound disapproved Penniman's philological approach, these courses helped Pound to acquire that sense of the history of English literary criticism from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries- from Gosson to Gosse. However, he continued his Latin studies and developed an interest in Ovid and Catullus. By 1902, Ezra Pound became seriously interested in writing poetry, particularly the poetry of ecstasy.[6] William Carlos Williams, Pound's early friend and later one of the important American poets, clearly expressed Pound's interest in writing poetry at that time. He pointed out that "this was the time …when Ezra Pound was writing a daily sonnet. He destroyed them all at the end of the year."[7] Again, W. C. Williams had something else to say about Ezra Pound' serious dedication towards his writing. He stated that :

> Ezra Pound would come to my room to read
> me his poems, the early ones, some of them
> in *A Lume Spento.* It was a painful experience.
> For it was almost impossible to hear the lines
> the way he read them… I listened… his voice
> would trail off in the final lines of many of the
> lyrics until they were inaudible.[8]

This same year Ezra Pound heard W. B. Yeats recite his poetry at the University and this was his introduction to contemporary verse. Then, he made his second visit to Europe. In September, 1903, Ezra Pound left the University of Pennsylvania because his parents were dissatisfied with his progress there. Instead, he joined Hamilton Collage, which was famous for the classical disciplines, and enrolled in the Latin-Scientific course. During his two years at Hamilton, Ezra Pound studied John Milton and Anglo-Saxon with J.D. Ibbotson, German with H.C.G. Brandt, and Romance Languages with Professor Shepard. Undoubtedly, Ezra Pound considered his literary education at Hamilton the real basis for his later writing, despite the claim of contemporary influence.[9] He stated that:

> Philologists, writers of theses, etc.
> frequently mistake the claims of exploitation
> for inventive work… I consider the hour
> spent with Layamon's *Brut,* or copying a prose
> translation of Catullus by W. McDaniel;
> Ibbotson's instruction in Anglo-Saxon or
> W.P. Shepard's on Dante and the troubadours
> of Provence – more important than any con-
> temporary influence.[10]

It was Shepard who would leave a lasting effect on Ezra Pound. As a result of his studies of the early languages and literature of France, Italy, Spain and Provence, Ezra Pound gained an interest in mediaevalism which he was never to lose. As he wrote to his mother in February, 1905:

> The joy I get from the mediaevalians is this, your current-eventors think you're *so* modern
> and so gol darn smarter than anybody else that [it] is a comfort to go back to some quiet old cuss of the dark, so-called silent centuries, and find written down the sum and substance of what's worthwhile in your present day frothiness… I praise Messire Dante Aligheri merely because he wrote a book most people are too lazy to read and nearly all the rest to understand. He was incidently a poet… although it is not recorded that he was president of a U. S. steel trust or the inventor of pin wheels.[11]

The above quotation indicates how Pound's impatience with the present was to grow and how he began to seek the cultural glory of the past. According to an unpublished letter to his mother written in June, 1905, Ezra Pound stated that, by his second year at Hamilton, his curricula included *The Cid,* Chansons de geste, troubadour verse and Dante, which combined with his own readings of *Egmont* , *Les Femmes Savates, Dona Perfecto* and Johann Paul Richter, showed that he was on his way to develop the cosmopolitan mind that was to confound his public in later years. From these interests Ezra Pound gained valuable experience from which he was later able to profit in his own work. As en evidence, his studies of Provençal verse sharpened his ear and gave him a valuable knowledge of strict verse forms, which in his own writing, challenged him to master them and bring his romanticism under control. Pound published in the *Hamilton Literary Magazine* his first poem, which was the first of many translations from Provençal, "The Belangal Alba, in May, 1905. The poem was written in medieval Latin

with a refrain in Provençal. For Pound, it represented the point of transition from Latin to the vernacular. He viewed Provençal poetry as the first vernacular poetry in Western Europe, and Provence would thus become a cornerstone for him in his search for "origins."[12]

Belangal Alba

Phoebus shineth e'er his glory flieth,
Autumn drives faint light athwart the land,
And drowsy watcher cryeth,
"Arise!"
Ref:
Dawn light, o'er sea and height, riseth bright,
Passeth vigil, clear shineth on the night.

They be careless of the gates, delaying,
When the ambush glides to hinder
Whom I warn and cry to, praying
"Arise!"
Ref:
O'er cliff and ocean white dawn appearth,
Passeth vigil, and the shadow clearth.

Forth from out Arcturus, North wind blowth
Stars of heaven sheath their glory
And, sun-driven, forth goeth
Settentrion.
Ref:
O'er sea-mist and mountain in dawn displayed

It passeth watch and maketh night afraid.

(CEP, 1-18, 14)

According to the College Records, Ezra Pound received his Ph.B. degree from Hamilton on June 29th. He decided to follow his interest in Romance Literature and continue his studies. So on October 3rd, 1905, he returned to the University of Pennsylvania to begin work on a Master's degree. His courses included a major in Romantics and a minor in Latin. Ezra Pound received his M.A. on June 13th, 1906. He then began to do research with Professor Rennert, an authority on Lope de Vega, studying Old Spanish, Provençal and Petrach, and started his Ph. D. dissertation on "The Grascioso in Lope de Vega and his Predecessors." According to the University of Pennsylvania records, Pound's doctorate was refused because he did not complete his second year. After that, Ezra Pound did do some more reading in Italian poetry, Dante, the *Poema de Fernandez Gonzales,* Spanish drama, the *Chanson de Roland,* and the Provençal Literature. Pound's formal education ended sometime during 1906-1907, and in August, 1907, he became an instructor at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. A year after he was fired from the College as a result of showing kindness to a stranded girl whom he let to sleep in his own room. Therefore he returned to Wyncote for a few weeks, and then left for Europe, turning his back on America to lead a life of poetic and scholastic exile. In April, 1908, Ezra Pound arrived in Venice and with the help of a friend of Pound's family, Reverend Robertson, Pound published his first book of poems, *A Lume Spento,* which Pound dedicated to "such as love this same beauty that I love somewhat after mine own fashion,"[13] but beauty was not all that he was attempting to portray. Pound's purpose is indicated in two excerpts from letters written at this time. In the first, an unpublished, undated letter to a friend Pound states:

> Each poem is in some extent the analysis of some element of life, set apart from the rest, examined by itself. The only question to answer is: 'Do I present these things

> honestly, or do I try to persuade the reader to accept a false set of values.[14]
>
> To me the short so-called dramatic lyric- at any rate the sort of thing I do- is the poetic part of
> a drama the rest of which (to me the prose part)
> is left to the reader's imagination or implied or
> set in a short note. I catch the character I happen to be interested in at the moment he interests me, usually a moment of song, self-analysis, or sudden understanding or revelation. And the rest of the play would bore me and presumably the reader. I paint my man as I *conceive* him. Et voilå tout![15]

Pound goes on to describe his "ultimate attainment" in his poetry:

> 1.To paint the thing as I see it.
> 2. Beauty.
> 3.Freedom from didacticism.

The poems in this first book represent many influences. Technically speaking, the influence of Browning ("Cino") and Yeats ("La Fraisne") can easily be detected in many of the poems. Villon, through Rossetti ("Villonaud: Ballad of the Gibbet"), can be seen as inspiring him as well.

Pound's early poetry was much influenced by Swinburne and Rossetti. His first volume, *A Lume Spento*, echoed Swinburne, Rossetti, and Browning in equal measure, and he was drawn to the Provençal poets by Rossetti's translations of the early Italian poets as well as by Browning's Sordello. Browning became the most important of Pound's nineteenth-century predecessors, for Pound thought Browning's meter, diction, and treatment of history a better starting point for an experimental poetics than the Pre-

Raphaelites' more conventional metrical practices and more aestheticized view of history.[16] Pound's early poems, letters, and essays show keen interest in writers of the aesthetic movement like Swinburne who though pervades the early verse of Pound, the latter deliberately distanced himself from his influence as he began to establish his career but still the distancing was ambivalent because throughout his career Pound admired Swinburne as a translator and for the musical qualities of his verse, but also thought that Swinburne produced "inaccurate writing", that "he neglected the value of words as words, and was intent on their value as sound."[17] This reveals that Pound objected to Swinburne's poetry because it is so intoxicated with the musicality of words that it neglects to pay proper attention to their sense. Provence too, asserts its influence ("Na Audiart") throughout. Swinburne is evident ("Salve O Pontifex"), and the Nineties provided a general emotional tone. The poems are also characterized by the predominance of vagueness of language and mood. The treatment of theme is subjective , without objective precision.[18] Thus from "Camaraderie":

Sometimes I feel thy cheek against my face
Close pressing, soft as is the South's first breath
That all the subtle earth-things summoneth
To spring in wood-land and in meadow space.

Yea sometimes in a busting man-filled place
Me seemeth some-wise thy hair wandereth
Across mine eyes, as mist that halloweth
The air awhile and giveth all things, grace…
(CEP, 1-8, 22)

Contemporary influences, although they appear derivative in this early work, were teaching Ezra Pound, as T. S. Eliot suggests, the value of verse as speech.[19] From his Romance studies, Pound was learning the value of verse as song. Ezra Pound's own comments on his early contacts with verse in English are interesting in so far as "they

illustrate the general reading background of the young poet, for the extent to which Pound learned from them, and surmounted the aesthetic and technical "blight" many of them provided, is part of the story of his development.[20] In this respect, Pound was keen to show that:

> [he] was brought up on the literature considered Respectable in that era, and studied the rest. Let Me say my grandmother read me Scott and some Dickens, and that I read Browning for myself after I had worked through Morris and Tennyson.[21]

> From 1902 to 1908 'we' read Symons, Dowson and Yeats also Fiona… The rest of the then writers have more or less faded. Hardy was alive but the boom in Hardy's came much later…In London in 1908 I heard of the "rhymers" and added a couple of poems of Plarr's to the list…In America the poetic life was almost exclusively contained in the 'Songs Of Vagabondia' by Carman and Hovey.[22]

Although many of the poems in this first volume, and in the ones immediately following it, are metrically conventional, there are poems which reveal Pound's early search for new rhythms. Thus he started "Amina Sola" with:

> That ye hear not
> Cannot discern
> My music is weird and untamed…
> And lo your outworn
> harmonies are behind me
> As ashes and mouldy bread.

(CEP, 1-6, p. 24)

But in the next stanza he wrote that:

My joy is the wind of heaven
My drink is the gall of night
My love is the light of meteors
The outworn heaven in flight
(CEP, 6-8, 24)

Apart from this early concern with metric, Ezra Pound also felt the need for experimentation with various verse forms. Thus he experiments with the sonnet, continually varying the sestet, even playing with the heroic couplet, and adding anapaests to speed up the tempo. He seems less derivative in the poems written in Provençal forms, and it is easier to trace the development of the influence of the intricate Provençal versification in these early poems, as Eliot suggests, than to "distinguish the element of genuine revivification of Provence" from the Romantic fantasy which Pound acquired from the Nineties.[23] By carefully examining the poems of *A Lume Spento,* one can note the use of Provence for subject matter, verse forms, rhythm and cadence. Besides, the concern for technique is also evident, but the rendering into English of what he learned from Provençal and early Italian poetry is a gradual and laborious progress. But sometimes Ezra Pound creates such a cadence and tempo that make his poetry song-like.[24] A good example is this fragment from "Cino":

I have sung women in three cities
But it is all one.

I will sing of the white birds
In the blue waters of heaven,
The clouds that are spray to its sea.
(CEP, 1-5, p.34)

After the publication of *A Lume Spento,* Ezra Pound left Venice for London by way of Paris. By the time of his arrival there, his second book was ready for publication, *A Quinzaine for this Yule.* Pound sought out the publisher Elkin Mathews, who decided to accept the work. Its publication in December, 1908, marks the beginning of Pound's London years. The poems in this book are filled with subjective responses of pre-Raphaelite gloom, loneliness and bitterness, which even Pound himself admitted was overdone. *Quinzaine* lacked somewhat the vigor and virility which gave *A Lume Spento* much of its charm. The workmanship is finer and more finished. However, the poems contain archaisms and syntactical inversions, such as this fragment from "Aube of the West Dawn":[25]

When svelte the dawn reflected in the west,
As did the sky slip off her robes of night,
I see her stand mine armouress confessed,
Then doth my spirit know himself aright,
And tremulous against her faint-flushed breast
Doth cast him quivering, her bondsman quite.
(CEP, 1-6, p.36)

One poem in this volume which is of special interest, in that it reveals a device Ezra Pound borrowed from Browning and was later to develop, is that of the "persona" or actor's mask, through which the poet implicitly, or in dramatic monologue, speaks as another individual. Through this device, Pound achieved self knowledge in the discovery of another self:

Histrion

No man hath dared to write this thing as yet
And yet I know, how that the souls of all men great

At times pass through us,
And we are melted into them, and are not
Save reflexions of their souls.
Thus am I Dante for a space and am
One François Villon, ballad-lord and thief
Or am such holy ones I may not write,
Lest blasphemy be writ against my name;
This for an instant and the flame is gone.

'Tis as in midmost us there glows a sphere
Translucent, molten gold, that is the "I"
And into this some form projects itself;
Christus, or John, or else the Florentine;
And as the clear space is not if a form's
Imposed thereon,
So cease we from all being for the time,
And these, the masters of the soul, live on.

(CEP, 1-18, p. 42)

The use of the *persona* device is an important aspect of Pound's historical method, and deserves some explanation. Ezra Pound is often accused of being pedantic, but it is his very ability to illuminate and reveal the present through the past that in the end saves him from this criticism.[26] As Eliot has said, this is not archaeology, but one method, and in Pound's case, a very high method, of poetry.[27] But Pound's method, although it is an attempt to rediscover the past through a character or mask, it is also a conscious search for self.

In the 'search for oneself ', in the search for
'sincere self expression', one gropes, one finds

> Some seeming verity. One says 'I am' this, that, or the other, and with the words scarcely uttered one ceases to be that thing… I began this search…in a book called *Personae [of Ezra Pound]* casting off as it were, complete masks of the self in each poem. I continued in a long series of translations which were but more elaborate masks.[28]

His method, then, involves the terms *persona* and personality. It is the continuing search for self, taking up and discarding masks afforded by the workings of the imagination, by which Ezra Pound ultimately finds his true self. In this respect, Eliot remarked that:

> He [Ezra Pound] is more himself (if we content ourselves with looking at his work part and part), more at ease behind the mask of Arnaut, Bertrand and Guido …than when he speaks in his own person. He must hide to reveal himself. But If we collect all these disguises we find not a mere collection of green-room properties, but Mr. Pound.[29]

According to an unpublished letter to his father, Ezra Pound began, in January, 1909, a series of lectures at the Polytechnic in London under the general title "A Short Introductory Course on the Development of the Literature of Southern Europe" by Ezra Pound, M.A. The series included six lectures, the first of which is an introduction to literary criticism entitled: "the search for the essential qualities of literature. Dicta of the great critics: Plato, Aristotle, Longinus, Dante, Coleridge, De Quincey, Pater and Yeats." The main lecture in the series was on "The Rise of Song in Provence," a discussion of the troubadours. These lectures are of interest here as they illustrate Pound's occupation

with poetry as song, and his belief that such poetry had reached its heights in the subtle music of Provençal verse.[30]

In April, 1909, Ezra Pound published another book of poems called *Personae,* the poems of which again can be considered poetic studies, from the variations in manner, style, and technique. Here, Pound seemed to be experimenting, borrowing and testing. The most important poems are of the *persona* type, such as "Marvoil" in which one can perceive the beginning s of an original accent. Ezra Pound was learning through Browning to concentrate on a kernel of thought and feeling in the dramatic lyric, which was helping him to escape the amorphous moods of the 'Nineties, and he was learning to sing in the fashion of the troubadours.

In October, *Exultations* was published. The majority of the poems in this volume are exercises in Provençal forms such as the sestina, the alba and the planh, indicating a shift in Pound's interest from Provence as content, to Provençal verse as form. At this early stage of development in Pound's poetry, it is very important to highlight the impression his early work was leaving with the English critics and to give an indication of the literary taste of London of 1908-12.[31] A part of a review from the *English Review*, which is printed as an advertisement at the back cover of *Exultations,* mentions that:

> Mr. Pound is a poet whom we have already welcomed. we should be inclined to say that of our younger poets he is the most alive, as he is the most rugged, the most harsh and the most wrong-headed. The quality of his thought, his very thoughts themselves, are apt to be obscured by the derivative nature of his language. But he uses his language with such force, hammering as it were, word into word, that we can have no doubt as to his vitality. And this is a quality too rare in the poet
> of today…

This means that Ezra Pound was early praised for his passion, musicality, virility and scholarship. His aesthetic approach to poetry is eagerly condoned, "his poems hold us steadily in his own pure, grave passionate world,"[32] but the following comments reveal the antagonism of the London literary scene, at this time, to experimentation:

> He baffles us by unfamiliar metres, he often seems to be scorning the limitations of form and metre, breaking into any sort of expression which suits itself to his mood.[33]

Later on, and through his continuing studies, Ezra Pound would be aware of the need for freedom from the stultifying influence of contemporary English rhythms. Here, Pound's ability to adapt metre to mood became more discernible. It was not long before Pound realised that he was often praised in the journals for the things in his verse he was coming to realise were "behind the times," and criticized for any effort which he believed was an improvement.[34]

In the fall of 1909, Ezra Pound began his second series of lectures in Mediaeval Literature at the Polytechnic, again with the emphasis on Italy and Provence. In the first term he dealt with mediaeval literature up to Dante, and in the second, from the "Divine Comedy" to Leopardi. A year later he worked his lecture notes into book form, and they appeared as *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* in June, 1910. With the publication of this book, Pound opened up for the reader limited to English, a comparatively unexplored poetic area, the Provençal and Tuscan poets, which he considered vital for the practicing poet to study.[35] Ezra Pound declared clearly that "Any study of European poetry is unsound if it does not commence with a study of that art in Provence."[36] This book is of interest here in so far as it throws light on Ezra Pound's own writing of poetry, and his search for an aesthetic. As he himself states in a postscript to the 1929 edition. He declared that:

> A good deal of what immediately follows can not

> be taken as criticism, but simply as information for those wanting a shortish account of a period. The mode of statement, its idiom or jargon, will have to stand as partial confession of where I was in the year 1912.[37]

Throughout *The Spirit of Romance*, Pound highlights and remains true to his vision of history as living tradition and this led him to launch a campaign against the philological treatment of history as repository of dead fact. Pound expressed his vision of history when he declared that "All ages are contemporaneous…. What we need is a literary scholarship, which will weigh Theocritus and Yeats with one balance; it will judge dull dead men as inexorably as dull writers of today" and will likewise "give praise to beauty" wherever it is found.[38]

Pound was highly conscious of his poetry's relationship with literary tradition, and while his essays insist on their originality, they also emphasize that originality in literature is compatible with learning from literary predecessors, and displaying that learning. Pound instructed new poets to "be influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt outright, or to try to conceal it."[39]

Pound's approach to literary tradition is apparent in his slogan 'make it new' which means that to make something new suggests that the something is not wholly new: it acknowledges a former existence. It means that Pound's slogan registers a desire to bring things from the past into the present, to make the historical contemporary. In his effort to make poetry new, he knew he must first learn from the past, as he noted in 1915: "the first step of a renaissance, or awakening, is the importation of models for painting, sculpture or writing… we must learn what we can from the past."[40] Pound's own mission in returning to the culture of the past whether Greek or Chinese, ancient or recent was to reinvigorate that culture, to reveal the links between it and Modernity, and to build an appreciation of things ancient and Modern that was bold, innovative and engaging.[41] T. S. Eliot summed up Pound's strong historical sense by remarking that "Pound is often

most original in the right sense, when he is most archaeological in the ordinary sense."[42] Pound's 'method of Luminous Details', by which the scholar presents a 'few dozen' carefully chosen facts, represents history as arranged in space, rather than developing through time. In 1938, Pound stated that "we do NOT know the past in chronological sequence. It may be convenient to lay it out anesthetized on the table with dates pasted on here and there, but what we know we know by ripples and spirals eddying out from us and from our time."[43] This spatial approach to history which substitutes linear history with a circular or cyclical history and which sums up Pound's reaction against the dominant way history had been characterized as progress in the nineteenth century, had a direct impact on Pound's major work, *The Cantos* which rejects linear and chronological narrative in favor of organizing its material by juxtaposition. Pound's method of organizing history was influenced by three contemporaneous influences. These are the anthropological studies of myth and ritual, early twentieth-century visual art, and the theory of Chinese language put forward by the American philosopher Ernest Fenollosa.[44]

In *The Spirit* the belief in art-for-art's-sake doctrine still prevails as Pound's criterion for poetry. The emphasis on beauty and freedom from didacticism continues: "Great art is made, not to please, but to call forth, or create ecstasy."[45] But it is also apparent that Ezra Pound was beginning to speak of poetry more in terms of technique. In other words he was beginning to emphasize the *way* of stating something, rather than the thing stated. He becomes more concerned with precision of statement:

> The interpretive function is the highest honour of the arts, and because it is so we find that a sort of hyper-scientific precision is the touch-stone and assay of the artist's power, of his honour, his authenticity. Constantly he must distinguish between the shades and the degrees of the ineffable.[46]

In his discussion of individual poets, Pound dealt at length with technical considerations; their skill in rhymes, their use of onomatopoeia, and their skill in blending sound with meaning. In *The Spirit of Romance*, Pound tackled the troubadours whom he considered to be the originators of the vernacular lyric tradition and who invented new harmonies depending not on quality but on rhyme and accent. He studied the troubadours in, among others, H. J. Chaytor's anthology *The Troubadours of Dante*, and clearly he approached them through lenses Dante provided in his critical treatise *De Vulgari Eloquio*, as well as his vivid portraits of Bertran, Sordello, and Arnaut in the *Commedia*. What Pound learned from Provence remained with him throughout his career. Like Dante (and unlike contemporary scholars), Ezra Pound singles out Arnaut Daniel as the master craftsman of the troubadours.[47] Pound focused on Arnaut Daniel's diction and metaphor, "his refusal to use the 'journalese' of his day and his aversion from an obvious familiar vocabulary."[48] It was Daniel who taught Pound to use the musical phrase as a rhythmic sequence, and thus indicated one mode of escape from the dominance of the iambic pentameter in standard English verse.

Pound's comments on Dante are interesting, since they point towards Pound's developing melopoeic theories. Ezra Pound demonstrated that:

> Dante has the advantage in points of pure sound;
> his onomatopoeia is not a mere trick of imitating
> natural noises, but is a mastery in fitting the in-
> articulate sound of a passage to the mood or to
> the quality of voices which expresses that mood
> or passion which the passage describes or expresses.[49]

He also praises Dante's precision, his ability "to reproduce exactly the thing which has been clearly seen."[50] Pound's interest in Italian literature was lifelong and formed an indissoluble part of his love for the culture, the land, and the people of Italy. At the center of his love for Italian literature stands Dante Alighieri who is undoubtedly the greatest single influence on his work. One central influence of Dante on Pound is Dante's

language, particularly his direct presentation of the image. Dante's language is not without figuration, but Pound always stressed that Dante's figures were functional not ornamental. Pound was very interested in Dante's lyrics and was also a careful reader of his prose : *De Vulgare Eloquentia, Il Convivio*, and *De Monarchia* are works that profoundly affected Pound's thinking about language, poetry, and politics. Dante was a crucial influence on Pound's exploration of Provençal poetry and later of Aristotle. Despite the indispensable importance of the Dantean influence on Pound, the latter's engagement with Italian literature does not stop with Dante; Pound was also influenced by other Italian writers such as Guido Cavalcanti whom he viewed as second in importance only to Dante. In some ways, Pound felt closer to Cavalcanti in spirit than he did to Dante, since he interpreted Cavalcanti as far more theologically and intellectually heterodox than Dante. Thus the *Spirit of Romance* contained statements of Ezra Pound's poetic values as they developed from his critical studies of the Provençal poets.[51] When Pound reprinted *The Spirit of Romance* in 1932, he inserted a new chapter 5, "Psychology and Troubadours: A Divagation from Questions of Technique," which was originally published in 1912 as an essay in G. R. S. Mead's spiritualist periodical *Quest*. Here Pound suggests tentatively that the Troubadours may have been into some kind of mystical cult connected with the Albigensian heresy, that Paganism may have survived in Provence, and speaks of eroticism and visionary experiences. This essay is of great importance as an early indication of Pound's "religion" and his religious opinions which are inclined to be heretical and which can be evidenced by his discussion, in the later essay "Cavalcanti", of the possibility that the Italian poets were also using a secret heretical code and by his attraction to Guido Cavalcanti as possibly more heterodox than Date. Thus, "Psychology and Troubadours" becomes one of Pound's central texts, opening up a field to be developed mainly in the "Postscript"(dated 1921) to Remy de Gourmont's *The Natural Philosophy of Love*, "Medievalism" and *Guide to Kulchur*.[52]

In December 1910, Pound published a volume of poetry called *Provença* and in July 1911, he published *Canzoni of Ezra Pound.* Pound's lifelong exploration of Cavalcanti led to two books, *Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti* (1912) and *Guido Cavalcanti Rime* (1932), as well as several essays on Cavalcanti, an opera, and most

strikingly the incorporation of a translation of all of Cavalcanti's canzone "Donna mi prega" in Canto 36.

Cavalcanti and Dante are the two major figures of Italian literature for Pound who undeniably thought that the high point of Italian literature was the work of these Tuscan poets between 1280 and 1321. In his introduction to the *Cavalcanti* volume, Pound gives his first prose statement of his melopoeic theories which means, according to Pound, the correspondence of rhythm, emotion and thought and which will be discussed later on.[53] These works were really practical demonstrations in technique gained from Pound's studies of the Provençal and Tuscan poets, studies which guided his metrical theories as he was drawn to the poetry of Provence and Tuscany – a poetry much of it was written to be sung. It was the music in the verse beyond the line length which caught Pound's ear.[54]

In December 1911, Ezra Pound began a series of weekly articles in *The New Age* under the title "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris," which ran until the middle of February, 1912. This was published in A. R. Orage's London weekly, *The New Age*, and was largely devoted to Cavalcanti and Arnaut Daniel, and to questions of technique. In this series of essays Pound stressed the importance of literary tradition which he considered vital to the poet whom he frequently compared to the scientist, and who is expected to have a rigorous knowledge of the subject before being allowed to practice science.

"I Gather the Limbs of Osiris" aims to define the "New Method in Scholarship" which Pound called the method of "luminous detail" by which he meant the presentation of detail rather than of sentimental comment and generalization. In these essays, Pound proposes to redefine the field of literary criticism by availing himself of the notion of "luminous details" which is basic to his poetry and to his criticism.[55] "A few dozen facts of this nature gives us intelligence of a period… These facts are hard to find. They are swift and easy of transmission. They govern knowledge as the switchboard governs an electric circuit" (*SP*, p. 87). Ezra Pound came to believe that these facts are hidden for reasons, and saw himself as the bringer of light who would finally show in his writings what civilization is all about and how to overcome obscurantists who impede the coming of paradise on earth. In this way the poet as critic and historian may bring about changes in society. This series also shows a gradual change in emphasis from aesthetic beauty to

technical excellence.[56] Thus Ezra Pound is now more interested in Cavalcanti, apart from the *beauty* of his poetry "for his exact psychology, for an attempt to render emotion precisely"(*SP*, p.155).

Ezra Pound also praised Arnaut Daniel as a "technical innovator," a man who conceived a manner of writing in which "each word should bear some burden, should make some special contribution to the whole" (*SP*, p. 178). With the indication of changing emphasis in Pound's approach, there is still evidence of lingering pre-Raphaelite sensibilities. Although technique signified the means of conveying an exact impression of exactly what one meant, this must be done in such a way as to "exhilarate."[57]

In 1912 he traveled to Provence and made extensive notes on his walking tour. He intended to publish a revised version of his notes under the title *Gironde* but apparently never completed them. His earlier walking trip shaped two of his important pre-Cantos poems, "Provencia Deserta" (1915) and "Near Perigord" (1915), his meditation on Bertran de Born, Dante, and historical processes, a work that would, in many ways, prefigure *The Cantos*. Pound's last sustained look at Provence before turning to *The Cantos* was "Homage à la langue d'Oc." He evaluated the troubadours so highly because of their skill in what he eventually called melopoeia, the combining of "motz el son," words and music. By February, 1912, there is more evidence of a growing awareness of the contemporary in Pound's poetry.[58] Pound made it clear that:

> As far as the 'living art' goes, I should like
> to break up clichés, to disintegrate those
> magnetised groups that stand between the
> reader of poetry and the drive of it, to escape
> from lines composed of two very nearly equal
> sections, each containing a noun and each noun
> decorously attended by a carefully selected epithet, gleaned
> apparently from Shakespeare, Pope, or Horace. For it is not

> until poetry lives again 'close to the thing' that it will be a vital part of contemporary life. (*SP*, p. 370)

Pound goes on to denounce poets who do not state what they mean, but are content to be "ornate and approximate." Pound's remedy for such poetry is again through beauty, but "beauty of the thing" as well as "beauty of the means,"[59] by which he meant that:

> …that one must call a spade a spade in form so exactly adjusted, in a metric in itself so seductive, that the statement will not bore the reader…we must have a simplicity and directness of utterance, which is different from the directness of modern speech, which is more 'curial,' more dignified. (*SP*, p. 370)

Ezra Pound realised that the only way to get rid of the poetic decadence of his time was the practice of technique in external form and expression through which "only has 'the art,' as distinct from the work of the accidently inspired genius, any chance for resurrection"(ibid)

The publication of *Ripostes* in 1912 marks end of Ezra Pound's exclusive study of the tradition, for this volume contains poems which show his growing concern with his own contemporary surroundings. The past , the moods of the Nineties, are still present in such poems as "Doria" and "A Girl"; his mastery of "free-verse" rhythm is evident in "The Return," and the poems as a whole indicate an increasing mastery of technique. But these qualities are refinements of what went before. What is new in *Ripostes* is the use of language and the tone of some of the poems which paved the way to the coming revolution of the word.[60] In his essay "Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry," published in 1917, T. S. Eliot stated that :

> In *Ripostes* there traces of a different idiom…The diction is more restrained, the flights shorter, the

dexterity of technique is less arresting. By romantic readers the book would be considered less 'passionate.' But there is a much more solid substratum to this book; there is more thought; greater depth, if less agitation on the surface. The effect of London is apparent; the author has become a critic of men, surveying them from a consistent and developed point of view; he is formidable and disconcerting; in short, much more mature.[61]

1.2 **Ezra Pound's Literary Criticism and the Development of his Modern Poetics.**

In February, 1912, Ezra Pound published "Prolegomena" in the second issue of Harold Monro's *Poetry Review*. It included his "Credo" which deals with rhythm, symbols, technique, and form. In this essay, Pound mentioned Daniel and Cavalcanti in whose arts he found that precision which he misses in the Victorians and he moved on to declare that "the nineteenth century, with respect to its achievements, I think we shall look back upon it as a rather blurry, messy sort of a period, a rather sentimentalistic, mannerish sort of a period."(*LE*, p. 12) He also praises W. B. Yeats who "has once and for all stripped English poetry from its perdamnable rhetoric. He has boiled away all that is not poetic…He has made our poetic idiom a thing pliable, a speech without inversions."(*LE*, pp. 11-12)

During his early London years, Pound came into contact with W.B. Yeats, through whom he became acquainted with symbolism. In an interview in 1962, Pound recalled his admiration of Yeats: "I went to London because I thought Yeats knew more about poetry than anybody else…"[62] Pound has also acknowledge his debt to W.B. Yeats (with whom one disagrees on:

> nearly all possible points, save in the belief that a poem should attain some degree of intensity): that he backs one in the belief that one should make no compromise with the public. He has also a theory of aesthetics to the effect that art begins only when one has ceased to react to the imbecilities of the multitude.
>
> (*LE*, p.378)

In his "Credo" Ezra Pound goes on to prophesize a new phase of transition into modernity as he characterizes a new kind of poetry which

> Will,… move against poppy-cock, it will be *harder and saner*; it will be what Mr. Hewlett calls "*nearer to the bone* ." It will be as much *like granite* as it can be, its force will lie in its truth, *its interpretative power* (of course, poetic force does always rest there); I mean *will not try to seem forcible by rhetorical din, and luxurious riot*. We will *have fewer painted adjectives* impeding the shock and stroke of it. At least for myself, I want it so, *austere, direct and free from emotional slither*. (*LE*, p. 12)

The quotation above highlights a significant change in Ezra Pound's poetic orientations, and points the way to the forthcoming revolutionary campaign which he led to modernize English poetry by stripping it of rhetoric and abstraction, among others . In his essay, "The Teacher's Mission," Ezra Pound stated that "The disease of the last century and a half has been 'abstraction'. This has spread like tuberculosis."(*LE*, p. 58) It is very important to note that it was throughout criticism that Ezra Pound aimed at revolutionizing the kind of poetry which dominated the last decade of the nineteenth-century and continued to influence the poetry of the first half of the twentieth-century including his. Thus, he declared that he has "since 1912 abandoned my own work for criticism because during this period I have noted in England an acceptance of the ultra-mediocre."[63]

Pound's first experience of generating and manipulating critical discourse appears to have been in connection with the production of his own first book of poems, *A Lume Spento*, printed in Venice in 1908. He conceived that what was really needed to launch *A Lume Spento* properly were ghosted reviews and he told his mother that "I shall write a few myself."[64] Pound calculated that if he could place such 'genuine and faked reviews' in London and New York newspapers then 'Scribner or somebody [could] be brought to see the sense of making a reprint'. This due to Pound's own conviction that literary texts

make their way in the world not by some intrinsic merit as literature but by claims made on their behalf by criticism. Thus he recognized the prime importance of criticism in the circulation and reception of literary texts."[65] By subverting what the official education system offered him, Ezra Pound managed to develop concurrently a theory of transhistorical and universal value which would enable him to "weigh Theocritus and Mr. Yeats with one balance."[66]

For Ezra Pound, critical prescience was simply a manifestation of the sensibility which enabled him as a poet to be avant-garde. This avant-gardist sensibility is reflected in his definition of the artists as 'the antennae of the race' and his 1912 conception of the poet as "the advance guard of the psychologist on the watch for new emotions, new vibrations sensible to faculties as yet ill understood."[67] Any poet who was avant-garde in this sense would have no difficulty becoming an avant-garde critic, for as Pound explained to the editor of the *Little Review* in September 1917, to write avant-garde criticism is simply a matter of 'saying things which everybody will believe in three years' time and take as a matter of course in ten'. This means that observations which are matter-of-fact to a poet-critic will be taken in the course of time as evidence of visionary and prophetic powers; for Pound, as for the English Romantic poets, the 'serious' artist is a seer, 'seereeyus'.(*L*, p. 380)

He believed that critics should not simply pass judgement on writing but involve themselves in its production by both example and a willingness to help other writers.[68] As an evidence, Ernest Hemingway described Pound as an generous poet who devoted a great part of his time to advancing:

> the fortunes, both material and artistic, of his friends. He defends them when they are attacked, he gets them into magazines and out of jail. He loans them money. He sells their pictures. He arranges concerts for them. He writes articles about them. He introduces them to wealthy women. He gets publishers to take their books. He sits up all night with them when they claim to be dying and he witnesses their

> wills. He advances them hospital expenses and dissuades them from suicide.[69]

Pound always insisted that his critical processes had nothing to do with his personal likes and dislikes which he considered quite irrelevant to his assessment of any piece of writing because for him, criticism entails a 'duty', as he saw it in October 1956, "to recognize … integrity and … merit."[70] Pound sees himself an unsparing critic following in the tradition of Alexander Pope. Eliot once declared that "Pound was always a masterly judge of poetry."[71] He has been credited with an inexplicable faculty which enabled him to bypass critical procedures and recognize genius immediately. The mystification of a critical discourse whose processes are held to be inscrutable and always result in unerring judgements made Pound's operations as a critic unassailably authoritative.

In his Introduction Eliot declares that "Pound's critical writings, scattered and occasional as they have been, form the *least dispensable* body of critical writing in our time."[72] Yet this criticism which he declared indispensable has by and large been dispensed with, since 1954 as earlier. It is not easy to understand why. But it is charitable to assume that it has something to do with the *kind* of critic that Pound is. And about this Eliot is again uncharacteristically emphatic, as well as eloquent. Pound, Eliot says,

> would cajole, and almost coerce, other men into
> writing well: so that he often presents the appearance of a man trying to convey to a very deaf person the fact that the house is on fire. Every change he has advocated has always struck him as being of instant urgency. This is not only the temperament of the teacher: it represents also, with Pound, a passionate desire, not merely to write well himself, but to live in a period in which he could be surrounded by equally intelligent and creative minds. Hence his impatience. For him,

> to discover a new writer of genius is as satisfying an experience, as it is for a lesser man to believe that he has written a great work of genius himself. He has cared deeply that his contemporaries and juniors should write well; he has cared less for his personal achievement than for the life of letters and art. One of the lessons to be learnt from his critical prose and from his correspondence is the lesson to care unselfishly for the art one serves.[73]

This serious dedication to art in general and poetry in particular found its strong expression in the critical prose Pound had written at this time. In his essay "The Serious Artist," Pound declared that "The arts, literature, poesy, are a science, just as chemistry is a science. Their subject is man, mankind and the individual…The arts give us a great percentage of the lasting and unassailable data regarding the nature of man, of immaterial man, of man considered as a thinking and sentient creature."(*LE*, p. 41) Then he moved on to define 'bad art' as that which is 'inaccurate.' It is art that makes false reports.' This great emphasis on accuracy is due to Pound's belief that "The touchstone of an art is its precision."(*LE*, p. 48) These qualities of accuracy, directness and precision, which Ezra Pound emphasized throughout the critical prose he wrote at this time, show the new path his poetry was taking.

In one essay "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," first printed in *Poetry* in March 1913, Pound gave a definition of the 'Image' as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." He also defined the tenets of Imagism. He warns against abstraction and superfluous expressions which "dull[s] the image." His advice is to "Consider the way of the scientists rather than the way of an advertising agent for a new soap."(*LE*, p. 7) This reveals the persistent presence of science in Pound's poetics and critical prose and which he valued for its process of empirical observation—its certitude and preciseness. Still, Ezra Pound, from his earliest years, was fond of using antisentimentalist rhetoric of science in his critical writings as a metaphor for accurate observation and occasionally as a sign of occult truth. In *The Spirit of*

Romance, Pound anticipated his Vorticist manifestoes when he advances aesthetic notions as types of mathematical formulas: poetry is "a sort of inspired mathematics, which gives us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres, and the like, but equations for the human emotions."[74] Great works of art contain equations that "cause form to come onto being."[75]

Pound's notion of the arts as performing a scientific function derives, through Ford, from the theories on the Naturalistic novel advanced by Emile Zola and followed by Guy de Maupassant, though for Ford the ultimate artist-as-scientist was Gustave Flaubert. Pound followed Ford's directions and became a life-long admirer of Flaubert. Various authors molded Pound's theories about science, nature, language, and poetry: the Aristotle of the *Physics and Ethics*, Francis Bacon, Leibniz, Vico, Rousseau, Jefferson, Emerson (*The Natural History of Intellect* [1893]), Whitman, John Heydon, Remy de Gourmont, Ernest Fenollosa, not to mention Confucius.[76] Pound increasingly developed his interests in the relationship between science and poetry from the end of 1920s to the beginning of the 1940s.

In his essay "Vorticism," published in 1914, Ezra Pound stressed the importance of the Image by making it "the poet's pigment."(*SP*, p. 51) He also gave an account of the composition of what would become his metro poem, "In a Station of the Metro." But most importantly he expanded his definition of the image from an "intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" to "a radiant node or cluster,…a VORTEX, from which, and through which and into which, ideas are constantly rushing."(*SP*, p. 76) It's important to note that Ezra Pound's initial emphasis on conciseness and exact diction was largely inspired by his study of Noh plays and Japanese haiku, and was steadily evolving toward a definition of the image as dynamic, interactive energy.[77]

Pound's critical faculties show to advantage in the articles on "How to Read" he contributed to the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1929, and collected in a pamphlet in 1931. It is the most condensed and forcible summary of his critical opinions on different kinds of writing and on the essential curriculum. He offers his definition of "great literature" as "language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree,"[78] reminiscent of Imagist condensation and sorts out writers in six classes: inventors,

masters, diluters, writers in the style of the period, belles lettres, and starters of crazes. A Poundian example of each class would be Cavalcanti, Homer, Virgil, Donne, Longus, Gongora. It is the third class that Pound particularly dislikes, and to which he would assign Petrarch and Milton; each of the others has its merits. In the chapter on "Language" Pound produces his handy distinction between three kinds of poetry: Melopoeia, which is poetry as music (canto), Phanopoeia, which is poetry of the visual image, and Logopoeia, defined as "the dance of the intellect among words," a poetry of irony, quotation, and allusion that Pound associates with Laforgue and T. S. Eliot. In *Carta da visita,* Pound granted Eliot preeminence in Logopoeia, or irony, while claiming to surpass him in Melopoeia, the musical art of Homer. Later sections of *How to Read* discuss individual authors, the merits of prose vs. poetry, and the essential reading list: Confucius ("in full"), Homer, Ovid, Catullus, Propertius, the Troubadours, Dante and Cavalcanti, Villon, Voltaire, Stendhal, Flaubert, Gautier, Corbière, and Rimbaud.[79]

In "How to Read," Ezra Pound created a dichotomous view of his predecessors, putting Browning, Crabbe, Landor, Beddoes, and Hardy in opposition with what he characterized as the "Macaulay-Tennyson" approach to history and Keats's approach to poetic diction. Though he admired and was influenced by D. G. Rossetti's and Algernon Charles Swinburne's poems and translations, Pound argued in his canonical polemics for another kind of language, one he associated with Flaubert and with Browning, whom he acknowledged as his poetical father. To Tennyson, Pound attributed a romanticized view of history, especially medieval history, and a Keatsian ideal of beauty that he believed had negatively influenced the Georgian poets. In rejecting Tennyson in favor of Browning and Hardy, he attempted to distance himself from his more immediate predecessors who were writing what he called "crepuscular" poetry at the turn of the century. On the other hand, Pound associated Browning with what he came to call, with Ford Madox Ford, the "prose tradition in verse," which he saw as marking the dichotomy between Realism and Romanticism and between social engagement and aesthetic detachment.[80] Pound discussed three technical terms which he introduced in "How to Read": phanopoeia, melopoeia, and logopeia. "The maximum phanapoeia is probably reached by the Chinese ," Pound writes, "due in part to their particular kind of written

language". The Chinese written sign or ideogram is "the picture of a thing; of a thing in a given position or relation, or of a combination of things. It *means* the thing or the action or situation, or quality germane to the several things that it pictures."[81] Ezra Pound's knowledge of Chinese language and literature was derived from three major sources: (1) the famous essay on Chinese poetry prepared by Ernest Fenollosa, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry,* which Pound edited and published in 1920 and again in 1936, and which would play a vital role in developing the ideogrammic method to become the basis for Pound's aesthetic and philosophical explorations throughout *The Cantos*; (2) some notes on Chinese poems that Fenollosa took from his Japanese instructors that Pound later made into *Cathy*; (3) an early-twentieth-century Sinological work by Herbert A. Giles, *A History of Chinese Literature (1901).*[82]

Pound finds the highest achievements in melopoeia in the poetry of ancient Greece, in the troubadour poetry of the south of France during the Middle Ages, and in the canzone of Renaissance Italy.

How To Read is in one sense an indication that a particular era of Pound's intellectual life was finished with, notably the days when he had taught the aesthetic doctrine that great art is non-didactic. "It exists as the tree exists", he wrote in 1913, but exhibits no purposefulness, for it "never asks anybody to do anything, or to think anything, or to be anything."[83] But it was the First World War that turned Ezra Pound from poet-aesthete cultivating the image into a poet-critic concerned with the regeneration of society. It had a profound impact on Pound who shifted his critical essays and poetry away from narrowly literary or artistic concerns to an awareness of the relationship between culture, politics and economics, the latter fuelled by his encounter with the Social Credit monetary reform theories of the economist C. H. Douglas in 1918 and occupied a prominent place in Pound's critical book, *ABC of Economics*.[84] He remarked, in the summer of 1921, that "the symbolist position, artistic aloofness from world affairs, is no good now."[85] He joined many other intellectuals disillusioned with the political leadership in setting out their own analyses of post-war situation and their prescriptions for a way forward. He underwent what critics have described as an ideological

'conversion experience' after the war: to a theory of economics that was the major formative force on his political and social ideas.[86]

ABC of Reading is considered a continuation of the educational reform agenda of "How to Read." Here, Pound's goal is to keep the best writing in circulation, that is, to keep the tradition alive. "The honest critic," Pound writes, "must be content to find a VERY LITTLE contemporary work worth serious attention; but he must be ready to RECOGNIZE that little, and to demote work of the past when a new work surpasses it."(*LE*, p. 27) The exactitude of the dissociations of style and technique which appear in the selections and comments of that small book gives it the distinction of being at once the shortest and the most heavily freighted account of English poetry. The short section on Chaucer is the only appreciation he has received since Dryden that relates him to the mind of Europe or that indicates, in contrast, the defects of Elizabethan culture.

One of the points Pound had restated in his articles was the importance of verse translation, claiming that "English literature lives on translation."[87] He readdresses the topic of translation in his book, *Instigations (1920)* which is primarily a collection of critical essays, most of which had appeared in various journals during 1918-1919. It also tackles various topics such as French literature, and his growing frustration with British and American culture and marks the first appearance in book form of Ernest Fenollosa's *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*. The collection opens with "A Study of French Poets," which is a loose essay Pound developed from a series of articles published in the *Little Review* in 1918. This "brief anthology of French poems" with comments by Pound includes work from Laforgue, Corbière, Rimbaud, Jammes, Vildrac, Romains, and others, as well as a section on unanimisme and reflects his immersion in French literature. Key contemporary French writers who drew Pound's interest during his London and Paris years (1908-1925) helped to shape his emerging poetics, especially Imagism, Vorticism, and the high Modernist style of the early cantos.[88] His studies of developments in English and French poetics from the Middle Ages to the turn of the century had convinced him the French were the precursors: "For the best part of a thousand years English have gone to school to the French. The history of English poetic

glory is a history of poetic steals from the French."[89] He sought to reform the Anglo-American Modernist canon by coordinating these "steals".

Ezra Pound had been emulating the form of medieval Provençal poets like Arnaut Daniel since his graduate studies at Hamilton College. His academic work culminated in *The Spirit of Romance*, but he did not become seriously interested in contemporary French poetry until he moved to London in 1908. There he joined the second Poet's Club (1909), composed of F. S. Flint, T. E. Hulme, and Florence Farr, among others, who introduced Pound to "les jeunes" like Jules Romains, Georges Duhamel, Charles Vildrac, Laurent Tailhade, Francis Jammes, Remy de Gourmont, and Émile Verhaeren. Pound began to value earlier poets like Rimbaud, Corbière, Laforgue, and the later Gautier who were undervalued by his contemporaries. He also focused increasingly on contemporary French poets as models for Anglo-phone Modernists, declaring in 1913 that the "important work of the last twenty-five years has been done in Paris.[90] In a series of writings spanning 1913 to 1925, Pound established a canon of French poets that would move English poetry out of its stymied post-Symbolist phase toward a new Realism : a more quotidian subject matter, a more natural speech-based prosody, and a more abstract treatment of form. As Scott Hamilton argues, these French poets provided Pound with models that enabled him to bring together the antithetical poetics represented by Yeats, a symbolist, and Ford, a Realist: how to "mediate between these opposed demands of quotidian realism and a Parnassian longing for ideal beauty."[91]

Pound's transition from Yeatsian Symbolism to the Prose-inspired Realism of Ford coincided with his discovery of French poets who provided him with concrete exemplars. Ford derived his Realist "prose tradition in verse" from modeling poetry on the rhetoric-free "constatation of fact" he found in French prose, in particular that of Flaubert, and to a lesser extent, of Voltaire and Stendhal. Ford saw himself as the "grandfather" of literary Impressionism which Pound at first embraced and defined as "a school of prose writers, and of verse writer for that matter, whose forerunner was Stendhal and whose founder was Flaubert,"[92] including Ford, Joyce, Jammes, Vildrac, and D. H. Lawrence, among others, and characterized by "clear hard prose" and "exact presentation". But by 1914, Pound had become critical of how Ford applied Flaubertian tenets in his own verse,

which he felt lacked condensation, lyrical intensity, and complexity of form. Despite his approval of Ford's verse, Pound consistently recognized Ford's importance as the first proponent of the "simple gallic doctrine of living language and the mot juste.[93]

In the 1929 essay "How to Read," Pound declared that "I believe no man can now write really good verse unless he knows Stendhal and Flaubert."(*LE*, p. 16) He also states in "The Renaissance" that "what one learns from other French poets, one might as readily learn from Voltaire and Stendhal and Flaubert.[94]

Pound was clearly guided by contemporary French theoretical works as well as poetry. Through the second Poet's Club, he had regular contact with Flint and Harold Monro, founder of the *Poetry Review*, who carried on an extensive correspondence with several French poets. Most notably, Flint and Monro received large amounts of material from Alexandre Mercereau, a member of the Abbaye de Créteil group, a group of writers, poets, and musicians who lived together and published their own work from 1906 to 1908. Their poetic treatises defined new poetic techniques for vers librists that would better emulate natural speech, such as irregular line length, and internal rhyme and assonance as opposed to end rhyme. The Imagist manifesto, cowritten by Flint and Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," twice refers to Duhamel and Vildrac's *Notes sur la technique poétique*, whose advice on rhythm is clearly the source of the third Imagiste rule.[95]

Pound's 1913 series in the *New Age*, "The Approach to Paris," and his "Editorial Comment: Paris," in *Poetry* that same year recommended key French writers and outlined qualities to be emulated: "I think our American bards would study Remy de Gourmont for rhythm, Laurent Tailhade for delineation, Henri de Regnier for simplicity of syntactical construction, Francis Jammes for humanity and the faculty of rendering his own time; and… intensity from Corbière."(*LE*, p. 339)

Pound greatly admired Remy de Gourmont, founder and publisher of the journal *Mercure de France* and author of the Symbolist anthology *Le Livre des Masques* (1896), as poet, philosopher, and leader of "les jeunes." Pound praises Gourmont's *Le Latin Mystique* for its rhythmic structures, which he defined as "a geometrical pattern made up of homogenous units."(*LE*, p. 342) As Richard Seiburth notes, "Between 1912 and 1922

he [Pound] was to devote more pages of enthusiastic appreciation and translation to Gourmont than any other single contemporary."[96] Pound credited Gourmont with knowing "more about verse-rhythm than any man living" and as having made "the most valuable contribution to the development of the strophe" since Arnaut Daniel by creating a new "wave-length," a rhythm made of homogenous parts as opposed to parts that differ."(*LE*, p. 353) In 1920, Pound left London for Paris which he increasingly saw as the current cultural vortex of Western civilization, and quickly became involved in the Parisian avant-garde Dadaists whose irreverence toward bourgeois values and journalists initially attracted Pound who eventually incorporated some Dadaist techniques in his poetics. He took a particular interest in the work of Dadaist Francis Picabia. Thus, his style underwent a significant change as a result of his involvement with Dadaists. Such change of style is apparent in his abandonment of the "strict rules of epic gravitas," and his adoption of a colloquial, urbane tone, and incorporation of prosaic materials.[97] Along with the Dadaists, Pound was interested in the work of the young Paul Morand, whom he saw as offering "the first clear eye that has been able to wander about both ends of Europe looking at wreckage." [98]He also admired Morand's sexual frankness, his ability to portray "race" or nationality, his "elliptical" style, and wry portrayals of European decay in the wake of the First World War.

One of Pound's critical works which gives an insight and a clear understanding to his critical thinking is entitled *Make it New*. It was first published in 1935 and it collects many of Ezra Pound's essays which were unavailable to the contemporary readers at that time due to their limited appearance several decades earlier in literary journals such as *Quarterly Review*, *Egoist*, and *Little Review*. The essays contained in *Make it New*, which were written primarily between 1912 and 1920 and which range in subject from the troubadours to Elizabethan classicists and French poetry, demonstrate Pound's understanding of what literary criticism should be, what forms it can take, and how the art of writing poetry has everything to do with it. In *Make it New* Pound considers Greek translation, the prose of the nineteenth century with his emphasis on Henry James and looks to antiquity for lessons in poetic craft. This results in a sense that criticism must at once "weed out" the lesser work of a given age, presenting only the highest examples of

that age to the public, at the same time that it teaches its reader *how* to read, the aim of which is to give them a more sophisticated historical and social awareness. Thus, the essays in *Make It New* focus on the central notion of what each writer, or writers, accomplished that was unique to his historical moment and why such a development remains useful to a Modernist sensibility. It's important to note that Pound understands each poet's ability to capture the spirit of his age as a reaction against morality and practices of that age. Pound certainly does not except himself from such a historical position and sees his criticism as performing essentially the same revolt as the text he considers.[99] In the introduction, titled "Date Line," he wrote that "As language becomes the powerful instrument of perfidy, so language alone can riddle and cut through the meshes. Used to conceal meaning, used to blur meaning, to produce the complete and utter inferno of the past century… against which, SOLELY a care for language, for accurate registration by language avails."(*LE*, p. 75) In this sense, the volume reveals Pound's insistence on the practical political power of poetry and criticism. It is also an important companion piece to any sophisticated understanding of Pound's achievement, as well as his obsession with economics, the role of history, and his fall into fascism. As a tool to "make it new," Pound's essays reflect his goal to remake the moment, its politics and social reality through language. It is the "it," the now, the word, that Pound wanted "new," and to be "new" and in the "now" means simply rejecting the mistakes of both the past and the present, regardless of one's particular historical moment.[100]

In an essay entitled "Pound as critic", Massima Bacigalupo makes it clear that "Pound is the author of some of the liveliest and most perceptive literary criticism of the modern period. His definitions of the kinds of poetry and writers, and of related concepts of "image," "vortex," and "ideogram," are permanently useful…. His criticism was the opposite of Euro-centric, and he believed that literature could only be understood in relation to painting, music, economics, etc."[101]

An exploration of Pound's different aspects of talent and his erudition is very necessary to understand the working of his poetic and critical faculties and to discover how they influence each other. Thus, any consideration of Pound as a poet-critic should highlight his wide-ranging interests and his multidimensional career.

NOTES

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[4] John Edwards, "A Critical Biography of Ezra Pound: 1885-1922," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1952.

[5] *Collected Early Poems* [*CEP*]. Ed. Michael King (New York: New Directions, 1976), all subsequent references are to this edition and are parenthetically given, in the text, with the abbreviation *CEP* followed by the line(s) and page number(s).

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[22] ----------, *Profile.* Milan, 1932.

[23] Peter Makin, *Provence and Pound*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1978, p. 26.

[24] Makin, p. 27.

[25] James J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris 1908–1925*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1990, p.23.

[26] Bornstein, p. 13.

[27] T.S. Eliot "Introduction," to *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), p. 5.

[28] Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," *The Fortnightly Review*, XVCVI (Sept., 1914), p. 463.

[29] T.S. Eliot, "The Method of Mr. Pound," *Athenaeum* (Oct., 1919), pp. 1065-1066.

[30] Makin, p. 31

[31] Ibid., 32.

[32] Edward Thomas in the *English Review*, quoted in Eliot, *Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry*, p. 6.

[33] Scott Johns in the *Daily News*, quoted in Eliot, *Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry*, p.7.

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[36] Ezra Pound, "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris," reprinted in *Selected Prose*, pp. 21-43; subsequent references are cited as *SP*.

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[72] Ibid., p. 12.

[73] Ibid., p. 14.

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[91] Scott Hamilton, *Ezra Pound and the Symbolist Inheritance*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992, p.39.

[92] Ezra Pound, "The Approach to Paris," p. 18.

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[94] Ezra Pound, "The Renaissance," p. 79.

[95] Hamilton, p. 52.

[96] Sieburth, p. 67.

[97] Quoted by Pondrom, p. 68.

[98] Quoted by Hamilton, p. 78.

[99] Burton, p. 136.

[100] Ibid., p. 139.

[101] Massimo Bacigalupo, 'Pound as critic', in Ira B. Nadel, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999, pp. 202-203.

CHAPTER TWO
EZRA POUND'S POETIC THEORY

2.1 **Imagism**

To deal with Imagism is to deal with Pound's efforts to modernize his poetry and lead a poetic revival and an aesthetic revolution. And to examine such efforts at modernity is to be aware of the influences which helped Pound in his revolutionary campaign. Among these influences are those of Ford Madox Ford and T. E. Hulme. The work of these two men supplemented Pound's studies of the tradition and provided the example and impetus of modernity, which effected a change of idiom and emphasis in his own work.[1]

Ford certainly, and perhaps to a lesser extent Hulme, indicated the direction poetry had to take to clear away the detritus of the Victorians and the 'Nineties, but their ideas supported what Pound was coming to see for himself. Pound obviously cannot be credited with initiating the "discussion of the image," but the poetry he was later to place under the title "imagisme" had little to do with Hulme's five poems or Ford's "Impressionism."[2] In *Profile* Ezra Pound stated that "Ford's preaching of French clarity, Yeats' insistence on 'intensity,' some study of comparative literature, etc., a new magazine needing a policy, ultimately produced the formulation of 'Imagisme.'[3]

Late in 1912, Pound wrote that:

> I would rather talk about poetry with Ford Madox Hueffer than with any man in London. Mr. Heuffer's beliefs about the art may be best explained by saying that they are in diametric opposition to those of Mr. Yeats. Mr. Yeats has been subjective; believes in the glamour and associations which hang near the words. "Works of art

> beget works of art." He has much in common with the French symbolists. Mr. Hueffer believes in an exact rendering of things. He would strip words of all "association" for the sake of getting a precise meaning. He professes to prefer prose to verse. You would find his prose origins in Flaubert. He is objective….[4]

He has often demanded that Ford Madox Ford be regarded as the "CRITICAL LIGHT of the 1912 period," declaring clearly that:

> In the dim mainly forgotten backward of 1908 and 1910 a few men in London groped to-ward the 'revolution of the word' … the revolution of the word so far as it affected the men who were of my age in London in 1908, began with the lone whisper of Ford Madox Ford.
>
> (*EPPP*, p. 49)

In an interview, he was asked the following question: "Did anyone ever help you with your work as extensively as you have helped others? I mean by criticism and cutting." Pound answered by saying that:

> Apart from Fordie (meaning Ford Madox Ford), rolling on the floor indecorously and holding his head in his hands, and groaning on one occasion, I don't think anybody helped me through my manuscripts. Ford's stuff appeared too loose then, but he led the fight against tertiary archaisms.[5]

In 1935, Pound wrote Dr. Williams: " I did Fordie as much justice as anyone (or almost anyone) did—but still not enough! Fordie knew more about writing than any of 'them' or us."[6]

The most important critical tenets Ford preached were on the problem of the poet's language. In this respect Pound maintains that:

> For ten years before I got to England, there would seem to have been no one but Ford who held that French clarity and simplicity in the writing of English verse and prose were of immense importance or in contrast to the use of a stilted traditional dialect, a ' language of verse ' unused in the actual talk of the people, even of ' the best people,' for the expression of reality and emotion.
>
> (*EPPP*, p. 51)

Pound's relationship with Ford began after his arrival in London. In 1909 Ford published four of Pound's poems in the *English* Review and four more in 1910. Douglas Goldring describes the critical discussions between the two on vers libre, the prosody of Arnaut Daniel, and "the villainy of contributors to the front page of *The Times Literary Supplement*."[7] *Personae of Ezra Pound* (April 1909), when perused by Ford's critical eye, as Pound records:

> … displayed me trapped, flypapered, gummed and strapped down in a jejune provincial effort to learn mehercule, the stilted language that then passed for ' good English ' in the arthritic milieu that held control of the respected British critical circles, Newbolt, the backwash of Lionel Johnson, Fred Manning, the Quarterlies and the rest of 'em.
>
> (*EPPP*, p. 54)

Ford wished to see poetry written in a living language about contemporary life and he wanted poetic communication to be as efficient as that of prose. His critical comments often seem implicitly aimed at Pound, who he felt was dissipating energy in creating vague moods in his verse.[8] The failure inherent in attempts to the books he characterized as follows:

> Most of the verse that is written to-day deals in a derivative manner with mediaeval emotions. This means that the poets have not the courage to lead their own lives. They seem to shut themselves up in quiet boo cabinets to read forever, and to gain their ideas of life forever from some very small, very specialized group of books.[9]

It is Ford's criticism that is responsible for the new note in *Ripostes,* as demonstrated by the poem already quoted "Portrait d'Une Femme," but Pound in 1912 still refused to accept Ford's plea for natural speech wholeheartedly.

> We must have a simplicity and directness of
> utterance, which is different from the simplicity and directness of modern speech, which is more' curial, ' more dignified. This difference, this dignity, cannot be conferred by adjectives or elaborate hyperbole; it must conveyed by art… By something that exalts the reader, making him feel that he is in contact with something arranged more finely than the commonplace.
>
> (*LE*, p. 370)

Pound's new interest in "breaking cliché" can also be traced to Ford, who in his early work Joseph Conrad was constantly trying to achieve style, in the French sense to create a habit of style, by writing "simply as the grass grows." To achieve style, the writer must avoid words that draw the reader's attention either by their "brilliant unusualness" or their "amazing aptness," either use " hangs up the reader."[10] To achieve simplicity, the poet must cut down on his use of adjectives and adverbs, and endeavor to achieve the "mot juste."

Ford's importance to Pound stems from the latter's belief that Ford was making important "experiments in modernity," and that he was "searching—perhaps a little nonchalantly, but no matter—for a vital something which has in too great a degree slipped out of modern poetry."(*LE*, p. 374) He considers Ford's poetry "revolutionary," because of "an insistence upon clarity and precision, upon the prose tradition."(*LE*, p. 375)

Nevertheless, Pound felt dissatisfied with the language of Ford's poetry which he felt inclined too far toward the conventional and missed the dignity and intensity, the dynamic quality, which should characterize the diction of poetry. He also expressed a more fundamental dissatisfaction with Ford's Impressionistic technique which:

> belongs to paint, it is of the eye…poetry is in some odd way concerned with the specific gravity of things, with their nature…their nature and show, if you like; with the relation between them, but not with the show alone. The conception of poetry is a process more intense than the reception of an impression. And no impression, however carefully articulated, can, recorded, convey that feeling of sudden light which the works of art should and must convey.[11]

Impressionism, as Ford practiced and preached it, was the stating in the simplest possible prose certain emotions or facts that come to the writer's mind, the "impression" of a moment, and getting poetic meaning out of the transcription of natural objects without any comment or opinion from the author.[12] Such a method is based on the eye; it results in description, the rendering of images seen. Thus, Pound objected to the Impressionist's technique of recording "impressions," which results in his inability to communicate the "feeling of sudden light," evoked by skilful handling of analogy, which requires that the artist penetrate to the essential meaning of his material. For this reason

Pound considers "the conception of poetry more intense than the reception of an impression."[13]

Another indispensable influence on Pound was T. E. Hulme. In January, 1912, Pound published "The Complete Poetical Works of T.E. Hulme," a series of five poems, in *The New Age*. Later in the same year they appeared again in the back of *Ripostes* with the following note:

> As for the ' school of Images,' which may or may not have existed, its principles were not so interesting as those of the ' inherent dynamists' Or of les unaministes, yet they were probably sounder than those of a certain French school which attempted to dispense with verbs altogether; or of the Impressionists who brought forth: 'Pink pigs blossoming on the hillside'; or of the Post-Impressionists who beseech their ladies to let down slate blue hair over their raspberry-coloured flanks… As for the future, *Les Imagistes*, the descendents of the forgotten school of 1909, have that in their keeping.
>
> (*EPPP*, p.251)

In an essay entitled "History of Imagism" (1915), F. S. Flint, an active translator of contemporary French poetry and an advocate of the *Vers Libre* and later an associate of Hulme's group and a member in Pound's Imagist school, recalls Hulme's foundation of the Poet's Club: "Somewhere in the gloom of the year 1908, Mr. Hulme…proposed to a companion that they should found a Poet's Club."[14] In a review of *Ripostes*, Flint describes these meetings in general:

> There were generally some six or seven of us- T.E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, Edward Storer, T.D. Fitzgerald, myself, Miss Florence Farr, F.W. Tancred; at times the sculptor Epstein would come; Mr. Pound himself did not join

> us until the third evening…However, the outcome of these meetings were three or four books of verse and Mr. Hulme's "Complete Poetical Works." We all had a hand in editing those Poetical Works.[15]

Strongly influenced by modern French symbolist poetry, the new group experimented with "Vers Libre," and with Japanese Tanka and Haiku verse forms. Hulme was the ringleader, according to Flint, and insisted on absolutely accurate presentation and no verbiage.[16]

Hulme felt that the basic problem which the modern poet faced was the worn out language with which he attempted to communicate emotions. The poet had to break through the verbal patterns in language which cause only a general emotional reaction in the reader if he wished to succeed in expressing an individual, personal one. The poet must strive to express what lies outside the area represented by the word as counter only. [17] In other words, "Each word must be an image seen, not a counter.[18] This means that the modern poet's task according to Hulme is to employ the image as a touchstone to render a "personal expression" , and to "reproduce the peculiar quality of feelings" (*FS,* p.72), by avoiding abstract 'conceptual' ideas which decrease the sense of reality and resorting to the technique of juxtaposing carefully-selected visual images to capture that reality which is evoked by the immediate perception of concrete things and behind which a reader can discover deeper truth. Hence Hulme's insistence upon the use of 'physical' language, the language of poetry that "arrests your mind all the time with a picture." (*FS,* p. 74).

Thus, the poet succeeds, according to Hulme, through his ability to use metaphor to reveal new analogies to the reader, which by their freshness and individuality can create a new vision. Freshness and individuality are caused by concreteness of imagery, because the reader reacts to an image in the same way as he reacts to a physical object, both evoking a personal emotional reaction; and by an original juxtaposition of images which produce a shock of recognition, that brings the reader to an abrupt stop. Hulme

saw the function of analogy as important in poetry as it enables the reader to dwell and linger on a point of excitement. The concrete visual quality of the imagery used in the comparison then, escapes the use of the word as counter, and the novel juxtaposition of the image forces the reader to linger over points the poet feels are significant.[19]

A poetry of images "endeavours to arrest you, and to make you continuously see a physical thing, to prevent you gilding through an abstract process."[20]

Hulme's theories insist that the poet's vision is unconventional and judged language really incompetent to express it. The reader can only be brought into the vision's range by reliance on concrete metaphors and analogies, thus avoiding the abstract, making language into a sharp instrument to probe human feelings.

By examining Hulme's five poems, one can discover that they are perceptions gained from everyday experience. The expression is personal, resulting from viewing a physical object in an unusual way. Originality and freshness are conveyed by analogy. The physical analogy reveals hardness, and its strange content escapes the conventional, and reveals refreshed insight.[21] Although Pound has given some credit to Hulme, mainly by publication of his "Poetical Works," and the mention of the "forgotten school of 1909," he has in other places tried to minimize Hulme's part as an instigator of the movement.[22]

Before 1912, Pound did not emphasize image or metaphor, nor did he stress the visual in poetry, but preoccupied as he was with melopoeic considerations he did not neglect these elements in his earliest verse and criticism. As early as 1908 he had declared his intention to "paint the thing as I see it," and in 1910 qualified this statement with the admonition that "The poet must never infringe upon the painter's function; the picture must exist around the words; the words must not attempt too far to play at being brush strokes." (*The Spirit*, p. 68).

In his general discussion of Dante, Pound dwells at length on Dante's metaphor making ability, quoting Aristotle's dictum on the image making faculty as follows: "The apt use of metaphor, arising as it does, from a swift perception of relations, is the hall-mark of genius" (*The Spirit*, p.158) , and praises Dante for it is in "the swift forms of comparison" (*The Spirit*, p.159) that he creates much of his beauty.

It is the presentation of things which establishes precision of statement, not their description which may lead to vagueness. Echoing Aristotle, Pound felt the former should be the poet's function. On this point Pound would seem in closer agreement with Hulme than with Ford. Pound had always been well aware of the importance of the image in poetry, and that if he borrowed the terms "image" and "imagisme" from Hulme, this does not prove that this philosopher was responsible for all that school's tenets as Pound preached them.[23]

In his essay "Farewell to Europe," (1940), Aldington recalls Pound's declaration of the movement:

> The Imagist movement was born in a tea shop— in the Royal Borough of Kensington. For sometimes, Ezra had been butting in our studies and poetic productions, with alternate encouragements and the reverse, according to his mood. H. D. produced some poems which I thought excellent, and she either handed or mailed them to Ezra. Presently each of us received a ukase to attend the Kensington bunshop. Ezra was so much worked up by these poems of H. D.'s that he removed his pence-nez and informed us that we were Imagists.[24]

Pound states that Imagisme "began certainly in Church Walk with H.D, Richard Aldington and myself," and that "it was started, not seriously to give H.D's poems a hearing."[25] In October, 1912, with the first of H.D's poetry that Pound sent to Harriet Monroe, the editor of *Poetry*, he included the following note:

> I've had luck again, and am sending you some modern stuff by an American, I say modern, for it is in the laconic speech of the Imagistes even if the speech is classic. At least H.D. has lived with these things since childhood, and knew them before she had any book-knowledge of them.

> This is the sort of stuff that I can show here and in Paris without its being ridiculed.
> objective – no slither; direct – no excessive
> use of adjectives, or metaphor that won't permit examination.
> It's straight talk, straight as the Greek!
>
> (*Letters*, p. 11)

These are exactly the principles he had pointed at in his 'Osiris' series even before he saw H.D.'s poems; moreover, they are the virtues Pound was seeking and propagating in a campaign to reform English poetry. He embarked on attacking such outmoded traditional techniques as narration, language hyperboles, rhetoric, verbiage and figuration. Poetic language, Pound argues, should be 'straight' that is active and forward-moving. By following those qualities which he discovered in H.D.'s "Hermes of the Ways," poetry would be "harder and saner," objective, impersonal and direct.[25] H.D.'s poems were accompanied by an essay of Pound's where he reported on literary events of the time by attacking the stock mannerism of contemporary poets, whereas he praised a promising school of the "Imagistes" and alluded to a program to be set forth later:

> The youngest school here that has the nerve to call itself a school is that of the Imagistes….Space forbids me to set forth the program of the Imagistes at length, but one of their watchwords is precision and they are in opposition to the nervous and unassembled writers who busy them- selves. With dull and interminable effusions, and who seem to think that a man can write a good long poem even before he learns to a good short one, or even before he learns to produce a good single line.[26]

Due to "many requests" for further information on Imagism, *Poetry* published in its March issue of 1913 two articles, one entitled 'Imagisme' signed by Flint which was the first formal manifesto of "the new movement" in poetry; besides Pound's 'A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste' which supplemented the manifesto and defined the "Doctrine of the Image' ". The two articles were the nucleus of the theory of Imagism.

The imagist manifesto identifies its members as "contemporaries to the Post-Impressionists and the Futurists," though "they had nothing in common with these schools" since they "were not [the Imagistes] a revolutionary school."[27] The Manifesto adds that the Imagistes seek "to write in accordance with the best tradition, as they found it in the best writers of all time-in Sappho, Catullus, Villon' "; this is a hint at Pound's concept of tradition as an ever-living source of experimentation. Thus it affirms that the Imagists are "absolutely intolerant" of a poetry that ignores tradition. [28]

Moreover, the Manifesto declares a few rules of writing by which the imagists judge all poetry:

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing', whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase,

not in sequence of a metronome.

The Manifesto reiterates Pound's basic ideas in his 'Osiris' and other articles of the preceding few months. There is little in the first three principles that Pound had not said, in one way or another, before 1913. He had condemned verbiage in poetry, concentrating with special vigor upon the superfluous adjective. In his letter to Williams in October, 1908, Pound had pointed out that, since originality is out of the question, one had best, when repeating what has already been said, use as few words as possible. Two years later he had tried to clarify the proper and functional uses of the adjective. In his "Prolegomena," in 1912, Pound declared that the new poetry would have "fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of it."(*LE*, p.11) The Manifesto does not explain the origins of the word 'Imagisme' and also lacks the authentic examples of the technical aspects and the aims of the school, though it claimed that the tenets would "at

least do keep bad poets from writing." It stipulates the elementary techniques of Imagist poetry.

Firstly, it entails dealing with 'thing' as the focal point, eliminating the conventions of telling a story or preaching an idea. The method relies on *presentation* as opposed to the conventional *representational.* The presentative method was already explained by Pound at length in his discussion of Ford's "prose tradition"; in brief, it recommends sticking closely to the object or the thing with an emphasis upon recovering a *personal experience* directly and with concentration.[29] This principle of concentration requires exactitude and precision in choosing the appropriate expression; hence the discard of verbiage.

By emphasizing the presentative method Pound wanted the data of the poem to be reliable and definite resulting from the accurate record of what the poet perceives, i.e. *to recover reality.*[30] To achieve the directness of presentation of reality, the poet, as a skillful craftsman, is expected to trample down "every convention that impedes or obscures the determination… or the precise rendering of the impulse" (*LE*, p. 9); "impulse" denotes that the data of the real personal experience should be conveyed *immediately.* Poetry, then, acquires the status of science as it becomes a reliable source of knowledge of reality. Thus, the Imagist method of presenting data (or immediate personal experience) strives for recovering *objective reality*.[30]

To help understand the Imagist method, Pound suggests considering "the way of the scientist rather than the way of an advertising agent for a new soap" (*LE*. p. 9). Again, it is a struggle in favor of scientific approach to literature; that is to seek out, through the method of scholarship, the 'Luminous detail' of the experience or the thing. As Pound says "the presentative method is equity. It is powerless to make the noble seem ignoble. It fights for a sane valuation.[31]

In a letter to Harriet Monroe (dated January, 1915), he spell out the merits of poetry based upon this method of science:

> There must be no cliché, set phrases, stereotyped journalese. The only escape from such is by precision, a result of concentrated attention to what is writing. The test of writer is

> his ability for such concentration AND for his power to still concentrated till he gets to the end of his poem, whether it two lines or two hundred. Objectivity and again objectivity, and expression: no hindside-beforeness, no straddled adjectives (as "addled mosses Dank"), no Tennysonianness of speech; nothing—that you couldn't, in circumstance, in the stress of some emotion, actually say.
>
> (*Letters*, p. 49)

As Pound strives for a poetry that equals science in its reliability and knowledge, the poet as a scientist should bridge the gap between object and word; that is to be closer to reality. In short, putting the imagist principles into practice, the poet becomes scientific; and hence poetry would give us—Pound contends—"The great percentage of the lasting and unassailable data regarding the nature of man, of immaterial man, of man considered as a thinking and sentient creature" (*LE*. p. 42).

Considering the third tenet, which is :"As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome," Ezra Pound stated, as early as 1910, a belief that poetry stands in closer relation to music, painting, and sculpture than to any part of literature which is not pure poetry; but in 1914 he restated this with a somewhat different emphasis. Before, he had been trying to minimize the significance of poetry as philosophy; now he is more concerned with enlarging upon the melodic, visual, plastic impact of its language, and classifying poetry on the basis of the kind of "non-literary" appeal that it makes. His awareness of image and metaphor as expressive devices is more definite, his insistence upon their importance more explicit.[32] He points out that:

> There have always been two sorts of poetry which are, for me at least, the most "poetic"; they are firstly, the sort of poetry which seems to be music just forcing itself into articulate speech, and, secondly, that sort of poetry which seems as if sculpture or painting were just forced or forcing itself into

> words. The gulf between evocation and description, in this latter case, is the unbridgeable difference between genius and talent.[33]

Pound emphasized recurrently the close relation between poetry and music and the importance of rhythm to both arts. "Rhythm is perhaps the most primal of all things known to us. It is basic in poetry and music mutually."[34] Rhythm, he said, is basic in music because it determines pitch and melody; pitch depends upon the frequency with which sound vibrations strike the ear; by varying frequency, one varies pitch, and these variations in pitch produce melody. For the same reasons, rhythm is basic in poetry; the pitch of a vowel or consonant sound depends upon the frequency of its vibrations; by varying frequency, one gets either a higher or lower sound, and the variation of these sounds produces the melody of the poetic line. Ezra Pound's theory emphasizes mainly the pitch of words and considers rhythm from the point of view of duration, or quantity, rather than stress, though he does consider stress as a part of the music of poetry.[35] He pointed that "the rhythm is a matter of duration of individual sounds and of stress, and the matter of the "word melody,"[36] depends largely on the fitness of this duration and stress to the sounds wherewith it is connected. By this definition of rhythm Pound aims at a quantitative rather than an accentual verse which is an issue that also leads him to support a "free" verse form and to be, by 1914, an influential champion of *vers libre.*

Pound extends his analogy by arguing that each emotion has an absolute rhythmical pattern which alone gives it adequate expression. As emotion organizes visible forms, so it organizes audible forms, and if the poet is capable of fully comprehending his emotion, he will express it in a rhythm which exactly corresponds to it and will thus be able to recreate the exact emotion in others. Throughout this correspondence of rhythm to emotion, Pound realized that if each emotion has an appropriate rhythm, then the poet can be bound by no conventional rules, and metrical patterns will be as varied as the emotions themselves.[37] In his Imagist "Credo," Pound points out that …he believe[s] in an "absolute rhythm," a rhythm which corresponds exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed. A man's rhythm must be

interpretative, it will be, therefore, in the end, his own, uncounterfeiting, uncounterfeitable. (*LE,* P.9) He goes on to say that: When this rhythm, or when the vowel or consonantal melody or sequence seems truly to bear the trace of emotion which the poem…is intended to communicate, we say that this part of the work is good."[38]

To display the practical facet of the theory of Imagism and to assert the latter as the leading Modernist movement and set it in opposition to the poetry of the Georgians, Pound published an anthology entitled *Des Imagistes: An Anthology* , for which he selected ten poems by Aldington, seven by H. D. , six by himself, five by Flint, and one by each of Ford, Williams, Joyce, Cannell, Amy Lowell, Upward, and John Cournos. Not all the poems included in this anthology agreed with the doctrines of Imagism and Pound's selection of these poems and their poets was as approximate as possible to his critical pronouncements, though all of them were modernistic which seems the reason behind his choice of the poems.[39] Among the poets who were included in the anthology and who showed greater understanding of Imagism in their critical views and poetry were Pound, H. D., Aldington and Flint who, according to Cyrena N. Pondrom, "had for several months [early in 1912] been meeting to discuss each other's verse, new developments in poetic diction, and French poetry.[40] Among these four poets only Pound and H. D. were strongly faithful in their adherence to the Imagist ideology. Despite this fact, most of the poems in *Des Imagistes* share certain unifying features that justify their publication together and these features were summarized by William Pratt who pointed out that the poems were "quite short, were prevailing in free verse and informal diction, and bore the stamp of three main influences: the classical Greek lyric, the Japanese, and French Symbolist poetry."[41]

The poems in Pound's anthology are non-representational, non-mimetic of actions and argument; they are non-rhetorical and hence presentational, but they imply dramatic dimensions since they deal with immediate intellectual-emotional experiences that are not stated. They also reveal their poets' fascination with non-English literatures and cultures. Apart from their interest in the Occidental cultures like Greek, French, Italian and Spanish, the Imagists in general and Pound in particular were attracted to the Japanese and Chinese traditions. Pound's *six* poems which he included in *Des Imagistes*

are 'Alba' 'Lui Ch'e', 'Ts'ai Chi'h', 'Fan-piece, for her Imperial Lord', 'In a Station of the Metro', and 'After Ch'u Yuan'.[42] These poems demonstrate the influential role the oriental poetry had played in Pound's imagistic poetry. It was the use of imagery in the Japanese poetry which interested Pound the most. In addition, in Earl Miner's words, Pound was attracted to the Japanese forms and to their implicit Imagistic techniques of "condensation and suggestiveness which are so much a part of the method of haiku.[43]

The haiku (alternatively called hokku and haikai), a short Japanese poetic form which developed about the middle of the seventeenth century. It consists of seventeen syllables in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables—the classical rhythm of Japanese poetry.[44] According to Earl Miner, joining the Poet's Club Pound was introduced to the haiku by Hulme and F. S. Flint who also showed him the value of contemporary French poetry.[45] By employing the technique of the haiku or the one image poem, which "is a form of super-position, that is to say it is one idea set on top of another," Pound was able to extricate himself from the impasse he had been left by his metro emotion.[46] There is a clear evidence that attests to his absorption in haiku about 1912. In his essay "Vorticism," Pound showed how haiku entered into the process of composition of one of his best known poems:

> Three years ago [1911] in Paris I got out of a "metro" train at La Concorde, and saw suddenly a beautiful face and another and another… And I tried all that day for words for what that had meant for me…And that evening…I found suddenly the expression…not in speech but in sudden splotches of colour. It was just that—a "pattern" or hardly a pattern if by pattern you mean something with a repeat in it. But it was a word, the beginning for me of a new language in colour… I wrote a thirty-line poem and destroyed it because it was what we call work of the second intensity. six months later I made a poem half that length; a year later [1912] I made the following hokku-like sentence.

The apparition of these faces in a crowd:
Petals on a wet, black bough. (*LE*, p. 54)

"In a Station of the Metro" is a statement of metaphorical relations; it employs analogy to convey an emotional "complex." The poem is limited in meaning to what could be suggested by a vivid imagery of natural objects. The poem seeks to achieve its effect through a single figure, both terms of the analogy being images of solid phenomena bringing language close to the physical object. The condensation involved in achieving the final version of this poem also demonstrates Pound's effort to cut back the poetic material required to express his emotion and to communicate with a minimum of speech. By confining poetry to a single complex of sensation or emotion arising out of an instant in time, the poet's sensitivity is taxed to reveal his insight through fresh resemblances by creating a language of metaphor alone.[47]

Lustra, which appeared in London in 1916, was the first volume to contain the results of Pound's discovery of the super-pository image technique. In Pound's experiments with metaphorical "super-position," if both terms of the metaphor were images of phenomena, of solid things, it is the second term of the analogy that introduces the complex of sensuous connotations. Thus from "April":

…the olive boughs
lay stripped upon the ground:
pale carnage beneath bright mist…

(*EPPP*, 1-3, p. 92)

Or from "A Song of the Degrees":

The wind moves above the wheat –
With a silver crashing,
A thin war of metal…

(*EPPP*, 1-3, p. 95)

And the method in reverse from "The Garden":

Like a skein of loose silk blown against a wall

She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington Gardens.

(*EPPP*, 1-2, p. 83)

In other imagiste experiments, the "complex" which the poem conveys is, in fact, not dominated by the effect of a striking analogy at all, but by beauty of imagery of light, colour and texture. And taken as a whole, Pound's imagiste poetry was more phanopoeic; the suddenly perceived metaphorical relation being less important than the clear visual images.[48]

The Coming of War: Actaeon

An Image of Lethe,
And the fields
Full of faint light
But golden,
Gray cliffs,
And beneath them
A sea
Harsher than granite,
Unstill, never ceasing;

(*EPPP*, p. 107)

In this example, the effect of sculpture or painting just forcing itself into speech can be noted, and so far as the poem produces an "image" this Image is dependent upon a series of images. This poem shows how a longer poem might be written by inter-weaving the "expository" element with apposite images.

Some of Pound's poems in the Chinese manner are composed in the same haiku technique. A very beautiful example is the famous "Lui Ch'e" which represents a conflation of Imagistic ideas, Vorticistic dynamism, and Fenollosa's poetics. Thus, a full discussion will be given to this poem in section two to explain how these three developments(Imagism, Vorticism, and "the Ideogrammic Method") in Pound's poetics combine in one poem to give a full picture of the gradual making of Ezra Pound as a poet.[49] In this poem, Pound has outdone himself by super-posing on a series of delicately

suggestive images still more beautiful one. A beautiful "Chinese" poem which suggests the haiku technique is "Fan-piece, for her Imperial Lord":

O fan of white silk,
Clear as frost on the grass-blade,
You are also laid aside.
(*EPPP*, p. 137)

An analysis of this poem is very salient because it will shed light, by an act of comparison between Pound's haiku technique and that of the Japanese, on the nature of his use and his misunderstanding of Japanese techniques. The is made up of seventeen words, and these in the haiku pattern of five, seven, and five in three lines. The title makes it clear that the poem is one sent as a message by a wife, concubine, or mistress to an imperial prince, her "Lord." The woman shows her tact and restraint by addressing the complaint to the fan instead of to the master. The nature of her complaint is made clear only in the last line with the shock of the adverb: "You are *also* laid aside."[50] The "also" uncovers a striking juxtaposition of two images; the image of the thrown fan and the image of the deserted woman which means that both the speaker and the fan are forlorn after being exploited. The resemblance of the silk of the fan to the frost on the grass is not only one of color. The point is that the clear frost melts quickly in the morning sun, that the beautiful fans are used by imperial princes for only a short time, and that even a woman's beauty will serve as an attraction for only a season. Thus, the theme of desertion is at once both intellectually and emotionally evoked.[51]

In this complaint poem Pound achieved poetic success by fusing imagery, rhythms, and suggestion and the result of this fusion gave a unified and moving poem. Yet the poem does differ from the haiku in that, firstly, haiku are nature poems, and exclude such topics as love complaints which are considered the proper topic of thirty-one syllable *waka.* Secondly, Pound's suggestion of the season (frost suggests autumn) lacks the over-riding importance of nature which is characteristic of *haiku.* The expression of the theme of evanescence does not acquire a deeper truth, therefore, the

meaning of the poem remained restricted to what might be called a psychological and aesthetic truth which is the third difference in Pound's use of haiku. This due to the poem's lack of "a centuries-old tradition of nature symbolism and a poetic practice to express it, as well as a language highly developed for brief, suggestive, and allusive poetry. What Pound has preserved to a great extent is his emulation of the techniques of haiku and the skill with which he has reproduced the tone of melancholy and restrained plaintiveness which is common in oriental poetry and rare in the Occidental.[52]

Pound has also used the word image (he means Image) to refer to the total effect or pattern of a poem, not necessarily primarily a visual effect. By the 'image' [Pound meant], such an equation, not an equation of mathematics, not something about a, b, and c, having something to do with form, but about sea, cliffs, and night, having something to do with mood.(*LE*, p. 469)

In the final analysis too, the question of the immediate origin of Pound's imagiste theories becomes unimportant with the realization that imagisme was for him a concept of poetry which he evolved from his own principles of good writing.[53]

Elaborating on the significance of the Imagist movement William Pratt points out that:

> There is no doubt that Imagism was the means by which most of the masters of modern English verse discovered their own style….If so, then the originality of Imagism need hardly be questioned, for, at last, it is a name which connects many of the major poetic talents of the present century. But it is also a name for a poetic form and a set of poetic theories which are basic to modern poetry in English.[54]

For Pratt, "Imagism was indeed the core of the whole movement of modern poetry in the beginning of this century…."[5]

2.2 The Vortex

In the early summer of 1914, Pound became involved in another artistic movement called "Vorticism." The founder of this movement was the painter and writer Wyndham Lewis, who had been a friend of Pound since their meeting in 1909, when both were published "discoveries" in Ford's *English Review.* Lewis had gathered around himself a group of artists, among them Etchells and Wadsworth, to combat an artistic movement of continental origin called "Futurism," which was being propagandized at the time in London. At first Lewis and his friends merely opposed Futurism by disrupting its meetings, for although they agreed with one of the tenets of Futurism, that the traditional and the academic in art should be overthrown, they did not agree with futuristic preoccupation with men and machines.[56] As Lewis declared of the leader of Futurism: "Cannot Marinetti, sensible and energetic man that he is, be induced to throw over this sentimental rubbish about Automobiles and Aeroplanes."[57] ("The Melodrama," pp.143-144)

Pound stated categorically: "I am wholly opposed to his [Marinetti's] principles."[58] It was not long before Lewis organized a countermovement, which Pound christened "Vorticism" (Lewis, *Blasting,* p. 254). With a headquarters established, called the "Rebel Art Centre," and a magazine, *Blast,* the group immediately set about preparing a manifesto. Pound joined the movement as its literary spokesman. Primarily a movement of the visual arts, Vorticism joined in the contemporary artistic will to eschew the depiction of natural scenes and objects, and to create abstract forms by means of geometric figures, planes, cubes etc.[59] This was to be the revolutionary artistic emphasis of the new art as Pound suggested:

> Whistler said somewhere in the *Gentle Art:* 'the picture is interesting, not because it is Trotty Veg, but because it is an arrangement in colour.' The minute you have admitted that,

> you have let in the jungle, you let in nature and truth and abundance and cubism, Kandinsky, and the lot of us.
>
> (*LE*, p. 464)

The members of the Rebel Art Center gathered on a common goal of exploring certain possibilities of Cezanne's constructive paintings and primitive, "geometric" abstraction in sculpture. Pound found out that the Rebel Art Center strove for a purity of form by adopting a method identical to the Imagistic presentative method. Like the Imagists, those artists embarked on eschewing the dependence upon the mimetic, representational aspects in painting and sculpture.[60] They wholly relied on the external values, since "the visible world must always be the starting point;"[61] so they accepted the mechanical, concrete world, but they did not "romanticize it." Thus, Pound deduced that the presentative method in painting, sculpture and poetry aims at a purity and non-discursiveness of form.[62]

One of the important lectures delivered to the group at its inception was Hulme's "Modern Art and its philosophy" in January 1914; the lecture contributed significantly to explain the modernistic vein of the movement and its major premises. In his consideration of "Modern Art," Hulme identifies two types of arts; the "vital" and the "geometric." The vital type is mimetic of things and nature; it is *Representational* because it indicates man's complacency with this world and his search for a utopia; it is the Renaissance art; whereas the "geometric" art is not mimetic of certain posed models; rather it distorts the natural and the human forms making them "lifeless and stiff" but rigid and exact.[63] It is presentational of substitute, abstract models; in Lewis's words; the geometric art "is no EQUIVALENT for life, but another life, as NECESSARY to existence…."[64] The geometrical shapes and paintings have "a tendency to abstraction" (Hulme's emphasis) ; hence the desire to move beyond the preconceived. Hulme concludes that the destiny of the moderns was the "attempt to create in art, structures whose organization is very like that of machinery" (*Speculations,* pp. 87-90).

Abstract, geometrical forms are the source of creation for the Vorticists because they suggest a new method of communication. In 1939, Lewis, in his memoire of

"Vorticism," wrote that the movement "accepted the machinery world; that is the point to stress," and that the Vorticists were indeed inspired by "the forms of machinery, factories, new and vaster buildings, bridges and works."[65]

The non-representational in art was not new to Pound; he had become interested in it as early as 1911 when he declared that

as far as I am concerned, Jacob Epstein was the first person who came talking about 'form, not the form of anything .' it may have been Mr. T. E. Hulme, quoting Epstein…"[66]

Even before the break with his Imagiste colleagues, Pound had enthusiastically entered the Vorticist movement, making its doctrine apply to poetry. He managed this by converting "Imagisme" as he understood it into "Vorticism," or rather, when Vorticism was announced, it encompassed Imagisme. In an interview, the interviewer asked Pound the following question: "You have been closely associated with visual arts—Gaudier-Brzeska and Wyndham Lewis in the vorticist movement, and later Picabia, Picasso, and Brancusi. Has this had anything to do with you as a writer?
And Pound's answer was that:

> I don't believe so. One looked at painting in galleries and one might have found out something. "The Game of Chess" poem shows the effect of modern abstract art, but vorticism from my angle was a renewal of the sense of construction…Then what I would call the sense of form was blurred, and Vorticism, as distinct from cubism, was
> an attempt to revive the sense of form….[67]

Pound's association with the Vorticists helped him to redefine the Image. By the Fall of 1914, Pound had become deeply interested in the abstract paintings and sculptures of Lewis, Wadsworth, Gaudier-Brzeska and Epstein. He developed an understanding of spatial, juxtapositional form which was to be incorporated into his whole life project of the *Cantos*. He was greatly influenced by Lewis's painting series of Shakespeare's play

Timon of Athens through which he learned how to incorporate the technique of spatial and juxtapositional forms into his project of writing a long Imagist poem. Pound discovered in Lewis's painting series narrative potentiality, "the unlimited subject-matter" and the "forms in combination", which could be a source of inspiration for a modern long narrative composition, which resulted in his *Cantos.*[68]

Early in his career Pound strongly believed that poetry is a "highly energized art" and that "the thing that matters in art is a sort of energy, something more or less like electricity or radioactivity, a force transfusing, welding and unifying" (*LE*, p. 49). Thus, Joining the Vorticism movement and his involvement in the visual arts during the Vorticist period awakened Pound's sense of form and developed his sense of the pictorial aspect of art, and demonstrated a kind of unity between the verbal and the visual arts. This unity is best reflected in Pound's "The Game of Chess" which was published in *Blast* (1915) and which could serve as a Vorticist equivalent to his Imagist 'Metro' poem:[69]

The Game of Chess; Dogmatic Statement
Concerning the Game of Chess: Theme for a series of Pictures

Red knights, brown bishops, bright queens,
Striking at the board, falling in strong 'L's' of colour.
Reaching and striking in angles,
holding lines in one colour.
This board is alive with light;
These pieces are living in form,
Their moves break and reform the pattern:
Luminous green from the rocks,
Clashing with 'X's' of queens,
Looped with the knight-leaps.
'Y' pawns, clearing, embanking!
Whirl! Centripetal! Mate! King down in the vortex,
Clash, leaping of hands, straight strips of hard colour,

Blocked light, working in. Escapes. Renewal of content.

(*EPPP*, 1-16, p. 345)

According to Pound, this poem should be examined in painterly terms because it has dissected the game into its essential constituents of form and colour by creating a Vortex and inviting the painter to perfect it to produce a maelstrom of energy—Vorticist emotion—and "arrangement of colours" in the consciousness of its beholder and reader. In this case, the poem becomes pregnant with meaning because of its mediation between the actual chessboard and the finished canvas. This mediation is to be achieved by a juxtaposition of superimposed Images of the abstract and energetic design which is something that makes this poem similar to Lewis's Timon portfolio.[70]

The ostensible connecting link between the abstract in the visual arts and the image in poetry was Pound's theory of the primary pigment:

> Every concept, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form. It belongs to the art of this form. If sounds, to music; if formed words, to literature; the image, to poetry; form to design; colour in position, to painting; form or design in three planes, to sculpture;
> movement to the Dance or to the rhythm of
> music or of verses.
>
> (*LE*, p. 153)

The primary pigment was considered the basic creative material of the artist. According to Ezra Pound, "The test of invention lies in the primary pigment, that is to say, in that part of any art which is peculiarly of that art as distinct from 'the other arts." (*EPPP*, p. 350) The vorticist maintains that the organizing or the creative-inventive faculty is the thing that matters. This inventive process, or ordering of the primary pigment, introduces the significance of the name of the movement.

The vorticist thought of art as being in part the result of energy which the artist receives from his stimulus. The artist experiences an intense personal emotion, he then

applies his intellect to ordering the subject or source of his emotion into form. He makes an equation.[72] In poetry, the result was an image or "the point of maximum energy." The image was not "an idea" it was "a radiant node or cluster," "a cluster of fused ideas…endowed with energy." It is "what I can, and must perforce call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which ideas are constantly rushing."(*LE*, pp. 470-471).

Pound is on firmer ground in his analysis of abstract form, and his appreciation of the effort of "contemporary" artists to realize some new aspect of reality by the objectification of emotion through, for example, planes in relation or colour arrangement. The artist's subject is not seen as a thing to be copied, but a thing to be penetrated to reveal its particularity.[73] In *Gaudier-Brzeska*, Pound pointed out that "the pine-tree in mist upon the far hill looks like a fragment of Japanese armour. The beauty of the pine-tree in the mist is not caused by its resemblance to the pine in the mist. In either case, the beauty, in so far as it is beauty of form, is the result of 'planes in relation.' the tree and the armour are beautiful because their diverse planes overlie in a certain manner." (p. 146)

The artist working in words only, may cast on the reader's mind a vivid image of either the armour or the pine by juxtaposing them or through use of the simile or metaphor. These are the tools of the poet who…works not with planes, or with colour, but with the names of objects and of properties. It is his business so to use, so to arrange those names or to cast a more definite image than the layman can cast." (*Gaudier-Brzeska,* pp. 146-147)

The types of poems Pound chose to associate most closely with the new painting and sculpture he describes as follows:

> I made poems like 'The Return,' which is an objective reality and has a complicated sort of significance like Mr. Epstein's 'Sun God,' or Mr. Brzeska's 'Boy with a Coney'…I have written 'Heather,' which represents a state of consciousness, or

> 'implies' or 'implicates'. It …These two latter sorts of poems are impersonal…they fall in with the new pictures and the new sculpture.
> (*LE*, pp. 463-464)

"The Return," sheds light on the connection between Ezra Pound's theories of rhythm and external form—a connection which needs to be emphasized, for he speaks of the art of poetry as combining the "essentials to thought" with the melody of words, which draws the intellect, and of that "form" which must delight the intellect. He defined "melody …. [as the] variation of sound quality, mingling with a variation in stress. By 'form' I mean the arrangement of the verse into ballads, canzone, and the like symmetrical forms, or into blank verse or into free verse, where presumably, the nature of the thing expressed, or of the person supposed to be expressing it, is antagonistic to external symmetry.[74]

The "essential to thought" defines the emotion, which establishes the rhythm. The resulting "form," made up of the sum of rhythm units, must please the intellect. This method poses difficulty because it necessitates the equivalence which must be established between thought, feeling, rhythm and form. "The Return" is the best example in which Pound managed successfully to achieve this equivalence in English in the writing of free verse. Here is an extract from this poem which best highlights Pound's success in this respect.

The Return

See, they return; ah see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
Wavering![75]

The poem begins by drawing an extended analogy between the return of the gods and the poem's own metrical experiments. By examining the extract above, it becomes clear Pound's use of rhythm to describe the scenario itself; he uses a

combination of long vowels and punctuation to keep the pace of the stanza slow, but he also interrupts it with that three-syllable staccato 'tentative' at the end of the first line to slow the pace of the rhythm a little longer. This slowing of the pace at the word 'tentative' serves as an enactment of the word itself. In other words, rather than simply describing the hesitant return of the gods, then, Pound reproduces their movement: he manipulates the poem's rhythm to close the gap between language and experience. This poem is an interesting experiment in audible form, as opposed to an organization of visible form or colours.[76]

"Heather," on the other hand, is an exercise in the creation of a pattern of colour images:

> The black panther treads at my side,
> And above my fingers
> There float the petal like flames.
>
> The milk-white girls
> Unbend from the Holly-trees.
> And their snow-white leopard
> Watches to follow our trace.
>
> (*EPPP*, p. 409)

The effect of the poem depends on the contrasts in colour between the first stanza and the second. The objects are primarily significant as vehicles for the colours and the texture of the colours.

Pound's association with Vorticism did not result in a different kind of poetry from that he had previously written under the aegis of Imagisme. However, the example of Vorticist painting and sculpture reinforced his theories. In fact he did try to bring over into his poetry something of the energy of the vigorous aesthetic impact which he saw in the creations of his fellow artists. The example of the work of his confrères like Gaudier

and Lewis helped to train his mind in more than abstract form as created the sculpture in three dimensional planes or the painter in colour and design[77]:

> What have they done for me these Vorticist
> artists?...These new men have made me see
> form, have made me more conscious of the
> appearance of the sky where it juts down between
> houses, of the bright patterns of sunlight which the
> bath water throws up on the ceiling, of the great V's of light
> that dart
> through the chinks over the curtain rings, all these are
> chords, new keys in design.[78]

Pound learnt to produce a kind of poetry of visual brilliance in which the word seemed to blend with the thing. It has a sharp, clear beauty of images:

> Concava Vallis
> The wire-like bands of colour involute mount from
> my fingers;
> I have wrapped the wind round your shoulders
> And the molten metal of your shoulders
> bends into the turn of the wind,
> AOI!
> The whirling tissue of light
> is woven and grows solid beneath us;
> The sea-clear sapphire of air, the sea-dark clarity
> stretches both sea-cliff and ocean.
>
> (*Selected Poems*, 1-10, p. 221)

The fusion of the word with the thing is achieved by giving the thing a clarity of definition and sharpness of existence, a force of actuality which makes possible

expression of intense feeling without the "slither" that accompanies the word in conventional (nonpoetic) usage. Thus the poem "grows solid" before the reader's eyes.[79]

In his "Osiris" series, "On technique," Pound explains "the masterly use of words" that "mean the same thing"; he gives the metaphor of a meaningful vortex as words highly charged with meaning:

> Let us imagine that words are like great hollow cones of steel of different dullness and acuteness; I say great because I want them not too easy to move; they must be of different sizes. Let us imagine them charged with a force like electricity… radiating a force from their apexes—some radiating, some sucking in.
>
> (*SP,* P. 34)

When three of four words—precisely and exactly chosen—are put in exact juxtaposition the energy of one word reinforce and multiply the energy of the others. This mutual exchange of semantic energy between the word-cones would engender a confluence of forces and hence the creation of the entire Vortex: "the point of maximum energy."

In his conceptualization of the Vortex, Pound enthusiastically hoped to make it Not merely knowledge of technique, or skill, it is intelligence and knowledge of life, of the whole of it, beauty, heaven, hell, sarcasm, every kind of whirlwind of force and emotion. Vortex. That is the right word, if I did find it myself. (*Letters,* p. 74) Thus, Pound's Vortex is a concept which seeks a purity of form and craftsmanship, a lively contact with modern life, and a whirlwind of emotions. Pound's frequent reference to the Vortex as a point of maximum energy makes it clear that he uses it precisely as it is in mechanics, where it works to engender "the greatest efficiency" (*LE*, p. 153). Pound conceives of the Vortex as functioning in poetry as it is in science. He said that For the modern scientist, energy has no borders, It is a shapeless 'mass' of force….the rose that his magnet makes in the iron fillings, does not lead him to think of the force in botanic terms, or wish to visualize that force as floral or extant. (*LE,* p. 154)

Because of its limitless energy, the Vortex should be harnessed by precision and no discursiveness. Its energy is powerful in that it gains a visually recognized form although the form the iron fillings make is not the botanic rose; rather, it is an energetic, geometrical substitute of the iron fillings.[80] This treatment of the Vortex on the part of Pound represents his strive to create an art of "first intensity" because Vorticism—according to him is an "intensive art," that is "dynamic" and charged with meaning and capable of creating a genuine artistic work which would "need a hundred works of any other kind of art to explain it" (*LE*, p. 462).

In his essay "VORTEX. POUND", Ezra Pound again emphasizes the powerful energy of expression of the Vortex which he defines as "The picture that means a hundred poems, the music that means a hundred pictures, the most highly energized statement, the statement that has not yet SPENT itself it [sic] expression, but which is the most capable of expression." (*LE*, p.153) Moreover, Pound maintains that the Vortex can be concentrated by the power of animating tradition; he says, earlier in "Osiris," that the "peculiar energy which fills the cones is the power of tradition, of centuries, of race consciousness, of agreement, of association, and the control of it is the 'Technique of Content'." (*SP,* P. 34).

Through Vortex, Pound emphasizes the permanent survival of tradition; this conviction differentiates the Vorticist creed from other schools which detested tradition like Futurism.[81] He stresses this by pointing out that "The Vorticist had not this curious tic for destroying past glories….we do not desire to evade comparison with the past, we prefer that the comparison be made by some intelligent person whose idea of 'the tradition' is no limited by the conventional taste of four or
five centuries and one continent."[82] Hence was the attempt to conceptualize a dynamic tradition; in this respect Pound wrote, in *Blast*, "All experience rushes into this vortex. All the energized past, all the past that is living and worthy to live. All momentum, which is the past bearing upon us, RACE, RACE-MEMORY, instinct charging the PLACID, NON-ENERGIZED FUTURE. (*SP*, p.153) This conceptualization of the Vortex, through which Pound strove to add dynamism to poetry, served him to refine the idea of the Image; the Vortex helped Pound solve the problem of the Imagist poetic form;

namely the possibility of writing a long poem and how to sustain the Imagist performance. It also served to widen the scope of the concept of the imagistic "intellectual and emotional complex.[83]

It was generally held that Imagism tends to be a poetics of "moment."

According to the Imagist Doctrine, the Image is "an intellectual and emotional complex" presented "*in an instant of time"* (emphasis added); the former phrase conveys the stillness of the term "complex" and the latter gives the impression that Imagist poetry is momentary, that is , it is preoccupied with delicate, fleeting states of mind or sudden realization of the metaphorical impulse. What consolidates this impression is other articulations of Pound's where he emphasizes the sudden moment of realization.[84] In his *Spirit of Romance (1910),* Pound states that; "Great art is made to call forth, or create, an ecstasy." In "Osiris," he points out that the purpose of technique is to present "exactly what one means in such a way as to exhilarate" (*SP,* p. 33). Ecstasy and exhilaration are the efforts of particular moment. Thus, the end of the Image is *simultaneity* in the presentation of the "intellectual and emotional complex instantaneously" (Pound's phrase). The Imagist poem thence, unfolds and dramatizes a moment of "sudden growth," for the sake of simultaneity and the dramatic surprise of the "superimposed" Image in the poem, the poet eschews such structural modes that encourage longer performance as narration and superflousness. As a consequence, the typical form of the Imagist poem should be as laconic and short as possible; the inevitable question that imposes itself even upon Pound is: "Could one do a long Imagist poem….?[85] And Pound found the answer in his redefinition of the Image as a Vortex which he developed into the ideogram.

2.2 Ideogram

During the years immediately prior to the first war, Pound came in contact with another tradition which served to develop his phanopoeic theories. As a result of reading a group of Pound's poems entitled "Contemporania," published in *Poetry* in April, 1913 , the widow of Ernest Fenollosa, the Sino-Japanese scholar, decided to make Pound her husband's "literary executor" (*Letters*, p. 31). Fenollosa had left some manuscripts from his own work, and that of the Japanese scholars Mori and Ariza, which consisted of a number of rough translations from the Chinese and the Japanese. The Chinese poems were a Japanese selection, for the most part attributed to the T'ang poet Li Tai Po (in Sino-Japanese Ri-ha-ku); the Japanese material was made up of literal translations of a series of Noh plays. The translations were rough but literal; in form the pages held columns of ideograghs with the literal English beside them.[86] Pound immediately set to work on the manuscripts, using other English and French translations. By the end of January, 1914, Pound had sent the Noh play "Nishikigi" to Harriet Monroe, telling her that "I think you will agree with me that this Japanese find is about the best bit of luck we've had since the starting of the magazine…This present stuff ranks as re-creation. You'll find W.B. Y [eats] also very keen on it.[87]

Through the summer and autumn of 1914, Pound worked on the Chinese translations. At the time, H.D. wrote to Amy Lowell that "Ezra is doing Chinese translations – and some are very beautiful! He comes running in four or five times a day now with new versions for us to read."[88]

By December, 1914, the *Cathy* manuscripts was ready for the printer, but it was not published until April, 1915, closely followed by *'Noh or Accomplishment* (January, 1916) and *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* (September, 1916). For Pound the discovery of oriental literature had untold possibilities; he considered "The first step of a renaissance, or awakening, is the importation of models for painting, sculpture or writing…the last

century rediscovered the middle ages. It is possible that this century may find a new Greece in China. (LE, pp. 214-15)

Pound began to use the Chinese ideogram or written character to support his imagiste theories in the Fall of 1913. The reason is not far to seek, for it lies in the nature of the Chinese ideogrammic method. The Chinese written character is based on form rather than sound, so that the written word is a picture of an object or an action. For example, the ideogram for "man" is a modified picture of one. The ideogram thus makes inevitable a poetry of pictures. But it is not only the literal and pictorial aspects of the ideogram which allow it to be related to Imagisme. It can also make an abstraction concrete by the metaphorical use of natural images to suggest immaterial relations.[89] Thus the Chinese ideogram of the English expression "to ramble or visit" consisted of a modified picture of a king and a dog sitting on the stern of a boat Such examples of the early Chinese ideographists using "exploratory metaphor" or the "language of exploration," (*LE*, p. 465), confirmed Pound's belief in the necessity for concreteness and directness in poetry. From the Chinese example too, he was made aware of the strength language gains when it sticks close to the natural object and process.

Among Fenollosa manuscripts was an analysis of the Chinese written character. Pound had readied this essay for publication by 1915, but "the adamantine stupidity of all magazine editors" (*Letters*, p. 61) delayed its appearance until 1919. Although Fenollosa's analysis contained little that was intrinsically novel for Pound, its effectiveness lay in his discovery of an alien poetic tradition which supported and expanded his own imagiste theories.[90] In his introduction to Fenollosa's essay Pound wrote:

> We have here not a bare philological discussion, but a study of the fundamentals of all aesthetics. In his search through unknown art, Fenollosa, coming upon unknown motives and principles un- recognized in the West, was already led into many modes of thoughts since fruitful in 'new' Western painting and poetry. he was a forerunner without it and

> without being known as such…The later movements in art have corroborated his theories.[91]

Fenollosa's theories stress verbal vividness and concreteness:

> The more concretely and vividly we express the interactions of things the better the poetry. we need in poetry thousands of active words, each doing its utmost to show forth the native and vital forces…Poetic thought works by suggestion, crowding maximum meaning into the single phrase pregnant, charged, and luminous from within.[92]

One is reminded of Pound's admonition in "A Few Don'ts," He recommended "…not use such an expression as 'dim lands of peace.' It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer not realizing that the natural object is always the adequate symbol. (*LE*, p. 5)

The Chinese ideogram in Pound's terms, as it does not attempt to picture the sound, or to be a written sign recalling a sound; but is the picture of a thing, of a thing in a given position or relation, or of a combination of things: "It means the thing or the action or situation, or quality germane to the several things that it pictures" (*ABC*, p. 21). Here is an example of the ideogram:

> First stands the man on his two legs. Second his eye moves through space: a bold figure represented by running legs under an eye, a modified picture of an eye, a modified picture of running legs, but unforgettable once you have seen it. Third stands the horse on his four legs.
> The thought-picture is not only called up by
> these signs as well as by words, but far more vividly and concretely. Legs belong to all three characters: they are alive.

> The group hold something of the quality of a continuous moving picture.[93]

The written Chinese words remain alive and plastic, "thing" and "action" are not formally separated. Again as Fenollosa expressed it: "in reading Chinese, we do not seem to be juggling mental counters, but to be watching things work out their fate."[94] The reader is reminded of movement: the simplest sentence moves. Something passes from subject to predicate: Man s – e – e – s Horse. This pictorial demonstration in the Chinese caused Pound to write a corollary to Imagism's principles in which he declared that "The defect of earlier Imagist propaganda was not in misstatement but in incomplete statement… If you can't think of imagism or phanopoeia as including the moving image, you will have to make a really needless division of fixed Image and praxis or action. (*ABC*, p. 52)

Fenollosa's demonstration was that the simplest sentence has a plot, and imitates an action. The Chinese written character also served to remind the poet that the whole delicate substance of speech is built upon substrata of metaphor. The Chinese ideograms provide a vivid shorthand picture, they deal in highly condensed juxtapositions.[95]

Metaphor to Fenollosa was "the revealer of nature…the very substance of poetry."[96] He believed that the Chinese written language had absorbed the poetic substance of nature, and built with it a second work of metaphor, and had, through its pictorial visibility, retained its original creative poetry, vigor and vividness: "It retains the primitive sap, it is not cut and dried like a walking-stick."[97] Because the etymology of the written word is constantly visible (the lines of metaphoric advance are still shown) the word becomes richer in the written poetry. Pound had the opportunity of consolidating his phanopoeic mode of speech. *The Essay* on the Chinese character provided a theory "which is a very good one for poets to go by" (*Letters*, p. 101), but the language to articulate the Chinese material had already been tested. As he wrote to Kate Buss in1917: I think you will find all the verbal constructions of *Cathy* already tried in 'Provincia Deserta' …the subject is Chinese, the language of the translations is mine."

(*Letters*, p.101) The first few lines o f this poem, written, according to Pound, before the Chinese translations were begun, although first published in March, 1915, reads:

At Rochecoart,
Where the hills part
in three ways,
And three valleys, full of winding roads,
Fork out to south and north,
There is a place of trees…grey with lichen.
I have walked there
thinking of old days.

(*Selected Poems*, p.121)

And from "The City of Choan" in Cathy:

The three mountains fall through the far heaven,
The isle of White Heron
Splits the two streams apart.
Now the high clouds cover the sun
And I am sad. And I cannot see Choan afar

(*Selected Poems*, p.138)

Pound's practice of carving his images exactly, and then leaving them bare, without decorations, is demonstrated in both selections. In the matter of the free verse rhythms, however, one can detect a change. As Kenner has pointed out *Cathy* is noteworthy as a demonstration of the poet filling in "the emotional air pockets" characteristic of the early attempts at the "vers libre" technique, without abandoning his essential method.[98] (p. 154)

Pound's efforts with the Japanese Noh plays were less successful than his Chinese work. As he stated in a letter to john Quinn in June, 1918:

And I found *Noh* unsatisfactory. I daresay it's all that could
be done with the material. I don't believe anyone else will

> come along to do a better book on Noh, save for encyclopaedizing the subject. And I admit there are beautiful bits in it. But it's all too damn soft. Like Pater, Fiona Macleod and James Mathew Barrie, not good enough.
>
> (*Letters*, p. 137)

For Pound, China was fundamental, Japan was not (letters, p. 102). The Japanese material he considered a special interest; it did not have the timeless quality of the Chinese, nor its solidity. However, the Noh plays were more confirmation of imagiste principles, for they had unity of Image:[99]

> …the Noh has its unity in emotion. It has also what we may call unity of Image[i.e. total effect] . at least, the better plays are all built into the intensification of a single Image: the red maple leaves and the snow flurry in Nishikigi, the pines in Takasago, the blue-grey waves and wave pattern in Suma Genji, the mantle of feathers in the play of that name, Hagorome.
>
> (*EPPP*, p. 237)

As Fenollosa had pointed out each Noh drama embodies some human relation or emotion, such as brotherly love, loyalty, love of husband and wife. Each play also contained a central concrete image, in which the emotion became concentrated and symbolized. The Noh drama interested Pound for their ability to produce a single unified impression, and for the part a central image played in their structure. (*EPPP*, p. 279) He remarked that "The intensification of the Image, this manner of construction, is very interesting to me to knew nothing of these plays when we set out in our own manner.(*EPPP*, p. 230) These plays are also an answer to a question that has been several times put to me: "Could one do a long Imagiste poem, or even a long poem in vers libre?" (*EPPP*, p. 237)

Pound applied his theories of Imagism, Vorticism, and the "Ideogrammic Method" in one important poem which represents, as it was mentioned earlier, a conflation of these three theories. This poem is:

Lui Ch'e

The rustling of the silk is discontinued,
Dust drifts over the court-yard,
There is no sound of the foot-fall, and the leaves
Scurry into heaps and lie still,
And she the rejoicer of the heart is beneath them:

A wet leaf that clings to the threshold.

(*Selected Poems*, p. 301)

The conflation is accomplished mainly by two premises: the Imagistic 'superpository' technique and the Chinese "things in motion, motion in things."[100] The poem presents two images; the Image of the natural scene and the Image of a leaf peeping at the poet as clinging to a nearby threshold.

Ecstasy and exultation are the effects of the piled Images since the leaf is personified as 'she' who rejoices the poet's heart. The image, the pivot of the poem, becomes the equation of an emotional experience evoked objectively by intensely concentrated relations to natural, physical objects. The poet articulates the experience as "a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective."[101] Clarity, precision, and efficiency characterize the pictorial scene presented by the concrete language. Even the "sequence of the musical phrase" is met, which helps convey perceptions vividly. One may sense the alliterative sounds of ss, fs, zs, ths, ts, which corresponds to the assonances that encourage the reader to *feel* the tangibility of the scene, to *smell* the flagrance of the wet leaf and to *see* the whole landscape of the setting in the autumnal weather. The poet presents realistically and selectively things that help formulate the "intellectual and emotional complex."

Furthermore, the poem reflects Fenollosa's conviction of "things in motion, motion in things," by which the leaf, the focal point of the experience, is recognized by what it does, and how it moves, and its impact when assuming the role of the rejoicer of both the reader's and the poet's hearts; hence the eyes of both see "noun and verbs as one," a unity that turns them into interacting things.[102] The provocation of the senses, especially the sense of smelling and seeing, enables the reader to *hear* the sounds of the movement of things in this poem. Therefore, "transference of power" to the whole parts of the scene, to the

reader and to the poet likewise is accomplished; in the meantime the Vorticist dynamism is achieved as the essential Image turns into a Vortex: "The point of maximum energy."[103]

NOTES

[1] Martin Wallace, "The Source of the Imagist Aesthetic." *PMLA,* 85,2 (March 1970), pp. 477-88.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ezra Pound, *Profile,* printed in Lee Baechler, Litz and Longenbach, eds., *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose: Contributions to Periodicals*.vol.2. London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991, p. 36. All subsequent references are cited parenthetically as (*EPPP*), with page number(s).

[4] Ezra Pound, "Status Rerum," *Poetry* (Jan. 1913), p. 12

[5] Donald Hall. "Ezra Pound," an Interview, in *Ezra Pound: a collection of criticism* . ed. Grace Schulman, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974, p.29.

[6] Leonard Unger, ed., *Seven Modern American Poets: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967, p.134.

[7] Quoted in Stanley K. Coffman, JR. *Imagism: a Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry*. New York: Octagon Books, 1977, p.134.

[8] Martin, p. 480.

[9] Ford Madox Ford, "The Critical Attitude," *English Review*, (Nov. 1912), p. 187.

[10] Ford Madox Ford, *Thus to Revisit*, *The Egoist*, (Jan. 1915), pp. 51-53).

[11] Quoted by Coffman, p. 140.

[12] Ford Madox Ford, "The *March*," Poetry, (Dec. 1911), p. 45.

[13] Beasley, p. 22.

[14] F.S. Flint, "History of Imagism," *Poetry* (March, 1913), pp. 198-200.

[15] F.S. Flint, "Review of Ripostes," *Poetry* (March, 1915), p. 61.

[16] Ibid., p. 66.

[17] Beasley, p. 13.

[18] T.E. Hulme, *Further Speculations*, ed., Samuel Hynes. London: University of Nebraska Press, 1962, p. 72. All subsequent references are cited parenthetically as (*FS*), with page number(s) included.

[19] Charles Altieri, *The Art of Twentieth-Century American Poetry: Modernism and After*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p.12.

[20] T.E. Hulme, *Speculations*: *Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art, ed. Herbert Read.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965, p. 134. All subsequent references are cited parenthetically as (*Speculations*), with page number(s) included.

[21] Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*. London: Faber and Faber, n.d, pp. 61-62.

[22] Martin, p. 483.

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[49] Bornstein, p. 72.

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[68] Timothy Materer, *Vortex: Pound, Eliot, and Lewis.* Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979, p. 86.

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[70] Materer, p. 49.

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[73] Reed Way Dasenbrock, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985, p. 72.

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[75] *Ezra Pound: Selected Poems*, ed. T.S. Eliot, p. 122. All subsequent references are cited parenthetically as (*Selected Poems*), with line and page number(s) included.

[76] Cork, p. 65.

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[79] Materer, p.74.

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[81] Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*, p.168.

[82] Quoted in Bacigalupo, *The Formèd Trace: The Later Poetry of Ezra Pound*. p. 110.

[83] Bornstein, p. 82.

[84] Pratt, p. 45.

[85] Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era.* p. 187.

[86] Edwards, p. 165.

[87] Quoted by Witemeyer, p. 96.

[88] Quoted by Cork, p. 95.

[89] Laszlo Géfin, *Ideogram: History of a Poetic Method.* Austin: U of Texas P, 1982, p. 23.

[90] Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*, p. 95.

[91] Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound, "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry; IV" *The Little Review*, VI, 8 (Dec. 1919), p. 68.

[92] Ibid., p. 69

[93] Ibid., p. 70.

[94] Ibid., p. 71.

[95] Cordell D. K. Yee, "Discourse on Ideogrammic Method: Epistemology and Pound's Poetics," *American Literature,* 59, 2 (May, 1987), p.243.

[96] "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry; IV," p. 71.

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[98] Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*, p.154.

[99] Cordell, p. 246.

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CHAPTER THREE

Ezra Pound's Dual Identity as A Poet-Critic.

Ezra Pound's poetry and literary criticism are inseparable. His criticism helped to prepare the ground for his poetry, and his poetry, in turn, was an exemplary illustration of the kind of poetry he advocated in his criticism. They are inextricably interwoven with each other; each derives its strength and authority from the other to the extent that each can hardly be taken on its own terms, independent, without the support of the other. This interrelatedness, a crucial factor in the nature and scope of the relation between Pound's poetry and his criticism, is expressed by T.S. Eliot, who stated that:

Ezra Pound spoke clearly about the relation between his poetry and criticism. Pound's critical prose has anticipated his poetry. Both his poetry and criticism have developed side by side, and any modification or change of attitude in the one is likely to be seen reflected and echoed in the other. Pound's criticism is a criticism of his own poetic practice because he was mainly concerned in his critical writings with his creative needs as a poet, and his best criticism is essentially devoted to expounding and justifying his poetic orientations.

Before plunging into an investigation of Pound's doubled identity as a poet-critic, it is worthwhile considering his views about the relationship between criticism and creation, and about the function of criticism and about the identity of the critic. Pound stressed the fusion of creation and criticism by his emphasis on the artist's conscious role in the act of creation and criticism. Pound emphatically stated that the only genuine criticism is that of the poet-critic.

According to Ezra Pound, the poet is not, so to speak, a *natural* critic; he is a practitioner, and as such he is mainly concerned with criticism as an aid to his art, rather than for the sake of objective truth or impartial judgement. Thus, in his negative

judgements on other writers, Pound points to qualities which he himself tries to avoid, and in his appreciative remarks he calls attention to merits that he hopes to achieve. As the creation of poetry is his ultimate aim, he is most concerned with those elements of the poetry of past and present which are most useful for his own creative needs. To illustrate the effect of Pound's preoccupation with his poetic and of the polemical advocation for his poetic project on his critical writing, it is necessary to investigate some aspects of the method he peruses in his criticism and some of its characteristics.

He is considered a practical critic who, in his critical evaluations and literary judgement, bypassed the critical procedures and was able to recognize genius immediately. In other words, Pound's measuring rod of critical judgement is intuition and not logic. Hence his objection to academic criticism which results in unsound judgement. In "The Serious Artist, Ezra Pound pointed out that:

> The only really vicious criticism is the academic criticism of those who make the grand abnegation, who refuse to say what they think, if they do think, and who quote accepted opinions; these men are the vermin, their treachery to the great work of the past is as great as that of the false artist to the present.
>
> (*LE*, p. 56)

Then he stated that "Every critic should give indication of the sources and limits of his knowledge. The criticism of English poetry by men who knew no language but English, or who knew little but English and school-classics, has been a marasmus."(Ibid.)
In How to Read,

> I suggest that we throw out all critics who use vague general terms. Not merely those who use vague terms because they are too ignorant to have a meaning; but the critics who use vague terms to *conceal* their meaning, and all the critics who use terms so vaguely that the reader can think he agrees with them or assents to their statements when he doesn't.

(*LE*, p. 37)

> The first credential we should demand of a critic is *his* ideograph of the good; of what he considers valid writing, and indeed of all his general terms. Then we know where he is. He cannot simply stay in London writing of French pictures that his readers have not seen. He must begin by stating that such and such *particular* works seem to him 'good', 'best', 'indifferent', 'valid', 'non-valid'.

Ezra Pound speaks about what is required of the critic to pass sound judgement. Pound's objection to Milton is a good example of the empirical(practical) and polemical character of his critical writings. Pound's preoccupation with his creative needs has also its impact on his critical method. It makes him often depend on a central statement or thesis which he expresses with clarity and brevity, before starting to work it out in the matter he sets out to discuss, and he often subordinates his argument to that central statement or thesis.

Ezra Pound's critical theory, evaluations and judgements form an essential part of his engagement in the task of establishing the new poetry and in creating a taste for it.

Ezra Pound's theorization concerning the nature and use of poetry have nothing to do with aesthetics in which he was not greatly interested; he said, in "The Serious Artist," "I take no great pleasure in writing prose about aesthetic. I think one work of art is worth forty prefaces and as many apologiæ."

Pound's experience with poetry, whether in writing or in criticizing it, was a direct experience which involved, according to Ian F. Bell,. His poetic criticism began with his own experience and his (general aesthetics developed from that point. Pound's views about what he considers good poetry can best be revealed when he speaks from his experience.

Pound has not written a systematic treatise on poetry.

Pound sheds light on the contemporaneity of tradition as opposed to its pastness, and the timelessness of literature(a unified vision of literature) In his avant-

garde literary practice, Pound .. His treatment of tradition points to his strong "historical sense" "which involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence." T.S. Eliot observes that Pound, through his complete "historical sense," is able to articulate the present. He explains that Pound's "erudition, his interest in the past, and his interest in the present are one; and that the variety of his work has a unity behind it." And that is because Pound has created poetry which is self-conscious, and language, in his hands, explores its historical context, articulating its tradition and seeing it as "timeless."

In Pound's own words, it is the duty of the poet to be a critic. T.S. Eliot remarked that Pound's criticism:

> takes its significance from the fact that it is the writing of a poet about poetry; it must be read in the light of his own poetry, as well as of poetry by other men whom he championed. Criticism like Pound's is advocacy of a certain kind of poetry; it is an assertion that poetry written in the immediate future must, if it is to be good poetry, observe certain methods and take certain directions.

Eliot insisted that Pound's criticism would not have the great value it has, without his poetry; and in his poetry there is, for the analytical reader, a great deal of criticism exemplified. He also remarked that "Pound was original in insisting that poetry is an art, an art which demands the most arduous application and study; and in seeing that in our time it had to be a highly conscious art." Eliot expressed Pound's belief that:

> A poet who knows only the poetry of his own language is as poorly equipped as the painter or musician who knows only the painting or the music of his own country. The business of the poet is to be more conscious of his own language than other men, to be more sensitive to the

> feeling, more aware of the meaning of every word he uses, more aware of the history of the language and of every word he uses, than other men.

Eliot pointed out that "Mr. Pound has never valued his literary criticism except in terms of its immediate impact.

> Much of the *permanence* of Mr. Pound's criticism is due simply to his having seen so clearly what needed to be said at a particular time; his occupation with his own moment and its needs had led him to say many things which are of permanent value, but the value of which may not be immediately appreciated by later readers who lack the sense of historical situation.
>
> It is necessary to consider Pound's literary pronouncements in the light of the circumstances in which they were written, both in order to grasp the extent of the revolution of taste and practice which he has brought about, and in order to understand the particular kind of critic of which he is so eminent an example.

According to Eliot, Ezra Pound "enlarged criticism by his interpretation of neglected authors and literatures, and by his rehabilitation of misesteemed authors." For Eliot " his [Pound's] criticism and his poetry, his precept and his practice, compose a single oeuvre." T.S. Eliot clearly remarked that "Pound's criticism is always addressed , implicitly, first of all to his fellow craftsmen; to all those who write in the English language." In "Date Line," Pound divides criticism as he conceives it into five categories: (a) criticism by discussion, as in Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, (b) criticism by translation, (c) criticism by imitation of style, (d) criticism by way of music, as he

illustrates in his two operas based on the poets Villon and Cavalcanti and (e) criticism by new composition. According to Pound, criticism has two functions: the first is that:

> Theoretically criticism tries to forerun composition, to serve as gun-sight, though there is, I believe, no recorded instance of this foresight having ever been of the slightest use except to actual composers. I mean the man who formulates any forward reach of coordinating principle is the man who produces the demonstration…. I think it will usually be found that the work outruns the formulated or at any rate the published equation, or at most they proceed as two feet of one biped.

Criticism' second function, according to Pound, is "Excernment. The general ordering and weeding out of what has actually been performed. The elimination of repetitions." Excernment is an unusual word which might broadly be understood as "seeing into" and in a narrower sense as editing. Pound is serious in both his poetry and criticism. His critical practice reveals the desire for betterment which he believes should animate the critic, who "is no idle smeller of roses but a fierce enemy of stupidity and ignorance." Thus, both poetry and criticism to Ezra Pound are didactic.

He carefully planned and executed an investigation into literary evaluation, using as data the literary texts he was required to read by teachers whose principal and sometimes only interest in them appeared to be philological. By subverting what the official education system offered him, he managed to develop concurrently a theory of transhistorical and universal value which would enable him to 'weigh Theocritus and Mr. Yeats with one balance'.

Pound's conception of criticism was shaped in one epistemic formation which is the Romantic mystification of individual genius as the sole and inexplicable origin of literature. Criticism written by poets can be 'technical and exact', Pound wrote in March

1914 when explaining his impatience with 'any criticism of the arts save that which is made by … a painter on painting, a poet on verse, a musician on music[4].

Pound delivered his critical judgements in an abrupt, brusque and aphoristic way and insisted that they are to be understood as immediately spun off from the imaginative work, thrown over his shoulder, as it were, as he hurries from one part of the workshop to another. In this, of the great poet-critics of the past the one he most nearly resembles is Dryden, whose criticism virtually always comes before the reader as the preface to a volume of original imaginative writing — including translations which, in this too like Pound, Dryden considers no less 'original' than poems he has made up for himself[5].

Undoubtedly, many of Pound's readers have felt affronted, and feel affronted still, by the authority he claims, the impatiently magisterial tone of much of his criticism. For the abrupt, hasty manner of Pound's criticism seems to some readers to carry the implication that no critic is worth listening to unless he has labored at the maker's workbench; that all worthwhile criticism of stories comes from story-tellers, that only poets are worth listening to about poems.

In the 1930s, critics so variously and widely influential as Allen Tate, Yvor Winters and F. R. Leavis each in his own way considered Pound's criticism, or some of it, and then instructed their readers that that criticism could safely be ignored[6]. An instance, and a momentous one, is Tate's review in *Poetry* for November 1932, of Pound's *How To Read*:

> The real criticism of Mr. Pound is not to be directed against his theory as such, but rather at the hasty headlong fashion in which he presents it, at the logical confusion of his intellect when it is not performing the task which is specifically his own, that task being poetry. The justification of Mr. Pound's thesis in *How To Read* is not his arguments, but his poetry[7].

F.R. Leavis, who countered *How To Read* with a booklet, *How to Teach Reading*, and Yvor Winters, who declared in 1937, 'Mr. Pound resembles a village loafer who sees

much and understands little', told the same story as Tate: Pound was a *naïf,* an imagination and sensory apparatus that consistently performed better than it knew, in ways that the maker's own discursive intelligence failed to comprehend or measure up to; in Winters's memorable and mordant judgement of 1943, 'a sensibility without a mind, or with as little mind as is well possible'. Their message was loud and clear —take Pound the poet, and ignore Pound the critic.

Moreover, the advice that in 1932 Tate implicitly offered — 'Read Pound's poetry, and ignore his criticism' — was disingenuous. For it turned out that Pound's poetry — *The Cantos* certainly but much of the earlier work also — could be understood and enjoyed only by those who had attended to Pound's criticism enough to grasp what it was that Pound was trying to do, or conceived himself to be doing, in his poetry.

By keeping criticism solely in the hands of 'creative' writers, on the grounds that they are the only people with the necessary qualifications for the task, Pound situated criticism 'inside' poetry and emphasized the close relationship between the critical and the poetic[(9)]. This interrelationship applies to Pound's poetry and criticism, a matter which T. S. Eliot emphasized.

Pound's critical writing is characterized by the Senecal or Johnsonian vigor and precision. He is the only writer of whose prose achieves the effect of actual conversation as it occurs among those who exist in an intense focus of complex interests. It shocks again and again with the dramatic stress of the spoken word.

He has incorporated in his prose the radical individualism of generations of seaboard Yankees--not the mannerisms only but the entire movement of mind--the intensity, the shrewdness, and the passion for technical precision. And these are just the qualities which he brought to bear on the reshaping of poetry in London in 1908-1922.

Pound's sentences are sharp and alert. He has been vehement and explicit about things such as verbal technique and poetic structures in which he had an immense interest.

With entire Yankee optimism he has insisted on the universal import of his interests.

In drawing the attention to poets of merit, Pound excluded many canonical poets such as Spenser and the Romantics because, for him, their works do not display the virtues of efficiency (every word must contribute to the meaning), clarity (natural word order, words used precisely and accurately", and singability (the words, their rhythms, the weight and duration of syllables, sustaining the musical phrase).

He has been credited with an inexplicable faculty which enabled him to bypass critical procedures and recognize genius immediately. The mystification of a critical discourse whose processes are held to be inscrutable and always result in unerring judgements made Pound's operations as a critic unassailably authoritative.

It is very important to note that it was throughout criticism that Ezra Pound aimed at revolutionizing the kind of poetry which dominated the last decade of the nineteenth-century and continued to influence the poetry of the first half of the twentieth-century including his. Thus, he declared that he has "since 1912 abandoned my own work for criticism because during this period I have noted in England an acceptance of the ultra-mediocre."

Pound's first experience of generating and manipulating critical discourse appears to have been in connection with the production of his own first book of poems, *A Lume Spento*, printed in Venice in 1908. He conceived that what was really needed to launch *A Lume Spento* properly were ghosted reviews and he told his mother that "I shall write a few myself."[64] Pound calculated that if he could place such 'genuine and faked reviews' in London and New York newspapers then 'Scribner or somebody [could] be brought to see the sense of making a reprint'. This due to Pound's own conviction that literary texts make their way in the world not by some intrinsic merit as literature but by claims made on their behalf by criticism. Thus he recognized the prime importance of criticism in the circulation and reception of literary texts."[65] By subverting what the official education system offered him, Ezra Pound managed to develop concurrently a theory of transhistorical and universal value which would enable him to "weigh Theocritus and Mr. Yeats with one balance."[66]

For Ezra Pound, critical prescience was simply a manifestation of the sensibility which enabled him as a poet to be avant-garde. This avant-gardist sensibility is reflected in his definition of the artists as 'the antennae of the race' and his 1912 conception of the poet as "the advance guard of the psychologist on the watch for new emotions, new vibrations sensible to faculties as yet ill understood."[67] Any poet who was avant-garde in this sense would have no difficulty becoming an avant-garde critic, for as Pound explained to the editor of the *Little Review* in September 1917, to write avant-garde criticism is simply a matter of 'saying things which everybody will believe in three years' time and take as a matter of course in ten'. This means that observations which are matter-of-fact to a poet-critic will be taken in the course of time as evidence of visionary and prophetic powers; for Pound, as for the English Romantic poets, the 'serious' artist is a seer, 'seereeyus'.(*L*, p. 380)

He believed that critics should not simply pass judgement on writing but involve themselves in its production by both example and a willingness to help other writers.[68] As an evidence, Ernest Hemingway described Pound as an generous poet who devoted a great part of his time to advancing

> the fortunes, both material and artistic, of his friends. He defends them when they are attacked, he gets them into magazines and out of jail. He loans them money. He sells their pictures. He arranges concerts for them. He writes articles about them. He introduces them to wealthy women. He gets publishers to take their books. He sits up all night with them when they claim to be dying and he witnesses their wills. He advances them hospital expenses and dissuades them from suicide.[69]

Pound always insisted that his critical processes had nothing to do with his personal likes and dislikes which he considered quite irrelevant to his assessment of any piece of

writing because for him, criticism entails a 'duty', as he saw it in October 1956, "to recognize … integrity and … merit."[70] Pound sees himself an unsparing critic following in the tradition of Alexander Pope.

Eliot once declared that "Pound was always a masterly judge of poetry."[71] He has been credited with an inexplicable faculty which enabled him to bypass critical procedures and recognize genius immediately. The mystification of a critical discourse whose processes are held to be inscrutable and always result in unerring judgements made Pound's operations as a critic unassailably authoritative.

In his Introduction Eliot declares that "Pound's critical writings, scattered and occasional as they have been, form the *least dispensable* body of critical writing in our time."[72] Yet this criticism which he declared indispensable has by and large been dispensed with, since 1954 as earlier. It is not easy to understand why. But it is charitable to assume that it has something to do with the *kind* of critic that Pound is. And about this Eliot is again uncharacteristically emphatic, as well as eloquent. Pound, Eliot says,

> would cajole, and almost coerce, other men into writing well: so that he often presents the appearance of a man trying to convey to a very deaf person the fact that the house is on fire. Every change he has advocated has always struck him as being of instant urgency. This is not only the temperament of the teacher: it represents also, with Pound, a passionate desire, not merely to write well himself, but to live in a period in which he could be surrounded by equally intelligent and creative minds. Hence his impatience. For him, to discover a new writer of genius is as satisfying an experience, as it is for a lesser man to believe that he has written a great work of genius himself. He has cared deeply that his contemporaries and juniors should write well; he has cared less for his personal achievement than for the life of letters and art. One of the lessons to be learnt from his critical

> prose and from his correspondence is the lesson to care unselfishly for the art one serves.[73]

This serious dedication to art in general and poetry in particular found its strong expression in the critical prose Pound had written at this time.

However, the America which Mr. Pound left about 1908 gave him a great deal which he translated into literary perception and activity. It was the technological America which Siegfried Giedion has been the first to explore in *Space, Time and Architecture* and in *Mechanization Takes Command*.

In the America of 1908 the most authentic aesthetic experience was widely sought and found in the contemplation of mechanical tools and devices, when intellectual energies were bent to discover by precise analysis of vital motion the means of bringing organic processes within the compass of technical means(13).

Pound records in his *Gaudier-Brzeska* the delight of his young contemporaries in examining and commenting on machinery catalogues, "machines that certainly they would never own and that could never by any flight of fancy be of the least use to them. This enjoyment of machinery is just as natural and just as significant a phase of this age as was the Renaissance 'enjoyment of nature for its own sake', and not merely as an illustration of dogmatic ideas"(14).

The impersonal concerns and impatience of Mr. Pound's critical outlook are everywhere associated with this passion for technical excellence: "The experimental demonstrations of one man may save the time of many--hence my furor over Arnaut Daniel-- if a man's experiments try out one new rhyme, or dispense conclusively with one iota of currently accepted nonsense, he is merely playing fair with his colleagues when he chalks up his result"(15).

This fascination with technological discovery co-existing with erudition and sensitivity in language and the arts was what gave Pound his peculiar relevance in London, 1908. It was a combination of interests indispensable to anybody who wished to undertake the task of importing into English letters the achievement of the French from Stendhal to Mallarmé.

The *ABC of Reading* was a later issue of this project. The exactitude of the dissociations of style and technique which appear in the selections and comments of that small book give it the distinction of being at once the shortest and the most heavily freighted account of English poetry. The short section on Chaucer is the only appreciation he has received since Dryden that relates him to the mind of Europe or that indicates, in contrast, the defects of Elizabethan culture.

The best example of his critical prose which is more exact, more pointed, more weighted with perception can be found in the last essays of Mallarmé, but nowhere else in English.

Thus when he says that *Sweeney Agonistes* contains more essential criticism of Seneca than Mr. Eliot's essays on English Senecanism he gives a typical observation whose form is that of exact juxtaposition. It is not a casual statement but an ideogram, a presentation of an analogical proportion depending on a precise analysis of Seneca, on one hand, and of *Sweeney Agonistes*, on the other.

W.B. Yeats, without offering a detailed criticism, clearly indicates the three principal limitations of Pound's poetic achievement. First, there is Pound's inability to create *form* which is a perfection which can be attained by artists who have the Unity of Being. According to Yeats, Pound cannot create the beauty which is compared to "a perfectly proportioned human body. He feels that Pound "has not got all the wine into the bowl," that even his best verse smasks of improvisation.

Yeats declared that Pound's achievement of style is limited, by an excessive use made of all those poetical means by which style is produced. He stated that "when I consider his work [Pound's] as a whole, I find more style than form; at moments more style, more deliberate nobility and the means to convey it than in any contemporary poet known to me." The phrase "deliberate nobility" implies that Pound lacks the spontaneous nobility of the born aristocrat. Here, Yeats had in his mind poems like "Apparuit" where the "quaint device" of quantitative verse and phrases like "caught at the wonder," "frosty with dew" changes what should be an instant of breathless suspense into a protracted pose. In "A Virginal" Yeats noted the cumbersome gallicisms like "the good hour," the imperatives "Move we and take the tide," the archaisms and preciosities.

Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
As winter's wound with her sleight hand she staunches,
Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour:
As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

Thirdly, Yeats declares Pound's style thwarted by a disturbing influence which seems to have a pathological origin. Pound's style, Yeats says, " is constantly interrupted, broken, twisted into nothing by its direct opposite, nervous obsession, nightmare, stammering confusion… Even where there is no interruption he is often content, if certain verses and lines have style, to leave unbridged transitions, unexplained ejaculations, that make his meaning unintelligible." What Yeats observed in Pound is the loss of self-control and not the breaking up of "the logical processes of thought by flooding them with associated ideas or words that seem to drift into the mind by chance."

For Ezra Pound, criticism is regarded as something merely instrumental to a writer's real work, and therefore of secondary importance. "I consider criticism merely a preliminary excitement," he wrote in 1923, "a statement of things a writer has to clear up in his own head sometime or other, probably antecedent to writing." Pound's experience of the history of literary criticism as represented by Penniman left him with the conviction that all academics who study criticism are mindless cataloguers of other people's opinions. He argued that "the ignoring of literary theory itself constitutes a theoretic position, and a bad one," and his typology of critical activities includes "creative" criticism, in which "by his act of criticizing the critic becomes an author".

The poet-critic whom Pound is close to in theory is the Romantic poet S.T. Coleridge. This supports the notion that when Pound writes about poetry he does so principally with his own poems in mind, and that what he produces as a result can be reconstituted as poetic theory.

To Ford Madox Ford, Pound's criticism constituted "craftsman's notes" rather than the balanced prose of "the Born Critic." T.S. Eliot, when reviewing Pound's

Pavannes and Divisions (1918) in December that year, stated that Pound's critical writings were "the comments of a practitioner upon his own and related arts."

Against a Romantic conception of poetry as the expression of a self, Pound developed a theory of poetry as the deployment of "masks" or personae, each of which would produce a different subjectivity-effect.

Pound's abandonment of his real work as a poet gave him time to develop and implement a style of critical discourse of such originality that Renè Wellek ranks him with T.E. Hulme and Wyndham Lewis as one of only three innovators in the history of English criticism in the first half of the twentieth century.

There are certain critical practices which belie Pound's critical integrity and seriousness; for instance, not all the poems which he included in his first anthology, *Des Imagistes*, agree with the tenets of Imagism. James Joyce's "I Hear an Army," is "Symbolist in its evocative vagueness, and presumably was included not because Pound discovered Imagiste precision and clarity in it but because Joyce was recommended to Pound by Yeats; and, according to Renè Taupin (quoting Aldington quoting Pound), a rather poor poem by Amy Lowell called "In a Garden" was included in *Des Imagistes* mainly because its author was wealthy." Taupin stated that "Pound needed money for the anthology, and this was a way of procuring it." According to John Tytell, Pound's attitudes to the poems of Nancy Cunard (the daughter of Lady Maud Cunard), who was to run a highly successful salon in Paris in the thirties, changed from indifference to interest when she took up publishing and became potentially co-optable to his own projects."

Recognizing the prime importance of criticism in the circulation and reception of literary texts, Ezra Pound did everything he could to control it by telling people what they ought to say about them, especially about his own poems. Flint's favourable review of Pound's *Ripostes* in the March 1913 issue of *Poetry and Drama* was done with Pound's assistance, although at Flint's own request, because he "didn't know what to say about the book." Ezra Pound also instructed his friends in detail on how to defend him against harsh critics of his own work, like the American critic F.R. Leavis who ridiculed Pound's *Homage to Sextus Propertius*. In reply to Leavis's criticism, Pound wrote a

favourable account and sent one to May Sinclair and another to A.R. Orage, each of whom incorporated it in a defence of *Homage*. This dissemination of favourable accounts of *Homage Sextus Propertius* was designed to create the illusion, especially in America, where the most adverse criticism had come from, that Pound's latest work was being appreciated already by a discerning readership in London.

According to William French, Ezra Pound divided people into:

> Wheels and cubes: wheels get things done, but you can't lean on 'em because they'll roll out from under you; cubes, on the other hand, are the foundations because you can not only lean on but built on them. Cubes would understand that the ends justify the means: if the only way of breaking the hegemony of a literary critical establishment is by ethically dubious reviewing practices, then these become inevitable, especially if you are convinced that the opposition habitually behaves just as disreputably.

Pound was willing to play double role as publisher's reader in recommending that a certain book be published, and periodical reviewer in welcoming what he had already recommended. He would also review the same book twice, especially in the case of T.S. Eliot and Joyce each of whom he regarded as his "discovery." Pound played games with readers naïve enough to believe that criticism is produced by impartial experts. Another "ethically dubious reviewing practice practiced by Ezra Pound was what he called "mutual puffery," which means that two writers agree to write a favourable review of the work of one another.

Thus, in September 1933 when Ford told Pound he was trying to arrange for *A Draft of XXX Cantos* to be reviewed in the *Transatlantic Review*, Pound assumed immediately that Ford would commission a favourable review, and asked: "ANY logs I can roll for you?"

Concerning Pound's processes of reaching at impartial critical judgement, contemporaries who read his criticism tried to determine what his criteria were when defending writers whose work was programmatically different from one another's. Fletcher wondered that how could Ezra Pound possibly admired Robert Frost's "Death of the Hired Man," with its echoes of Wordsworth whom Pound valiantly despised, and of the still more hated Georgians?"

Ezra Pound described himself in *Who's Who,* 1920 as a "constructive critic," and he approved of "constructive criticism" of his own criticism. For him, the critic's job is not criticism for the sake of finding faults to destroy the literary work by ignoring its merits, it is impartial process of accurate diagnosis of the literary value of the work to help it achieve high standards of literary excellence. Literary value is thought of by Pound as something intrinsic to literary texts, and not something conferred upon them by a particular readership with a particular set of interests in mind. Pound argued in February 1915 for the development of "a criticism of poetry based on world-poetry, on the work of maximum excellence."

In order to achieve such an aim, Pound had to define poetry in ways which would make his task manageable, and he did so by thinking of it primarily in terms of techniques and experimentation. His criticism concedes the existence of a number of qualities no writer can do without, such as "impulse", "*virtù*" and "curiosity". But these are "treated as manifestations of nature rather than nurture, and as such can be neither induced in people who lack them nor talked about profitably: like a sense of verbal consonance, they are given to a writer by God, or nature, or …whatever."(*SP,* p. 340). He stated that:

> The "impulse" is a pre-textual pretext for a poem, "the precise rendering" of which is dependent on technical competence in whichever medium one happens to be working, it being the business of "technique" to guarantee "a transmission of the impulse intact." *Virtù* is that quiddity we call individuality, as a result of which there is never more than "one Catullus, [or] one Villon".

It is "the artist's business to find his own virtù"(*SP,* p. 29), and the critic's to recognize it. And, as for "curiosity", Ezra Pound told an interviewer in 1961 that "you cannot have literature without curiosity." Pound claimed to have known at the age of fifteen that whereas "the impulse is with the gods…technique is a man's own responsibility." This distinction enabled him to redefine writing as technique rather than mystique, and thus to make it available as a pedagogy. This shift of emphasis, however, did not entirely demystify literary production. Ezra Pound regarded Horace, for instance, as a writer who had had everything except the "impulse", for Horace had "acquired all that is acquirable, without having the root." (*LE,* p. 28) The point of teaching people the technicalities of writing was not to try to turn non-poets into poets but to enable "genuine" poets to transmit their impulses more efficiently.

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