

EZRA POUND AND THE RHETORIC OF SCIENCE, 1901–1922

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I, Kimberly Kyle Howey, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.
Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this
has been indicated in the thesis.

ABSTRACT

This thesis identifies science as Ezra Pound's first extended extra-poetic interest. This reference to science in Pound's poetic theory and poetry is portrayed as rhetoric, with its emphasis on the linguistic signifier or word rather than the actual concepts and data of science. The material covers over two decades between 1901, when Pound entered university, and 1922, after he left London. Beginning with Pound's exposure to philology, the thesis establishes a correlation between his educational background and his use of scientific rhetoric in his prose. As he attempted to establish a professional status for the poet, he used metaphors linking literature to the natural sciences and comparisons between the poet and the scientist. Additionally, Pound attempted to organize poetic movements that resembled the professional scientific organizations that were beginning to form in America. In his writings promoting these movements, Pound developed a hygienic theory of poetry— itself an extensive rhetorical project—which produced a clean, bare poem and further linked Pound's poetic output with the sciences. Beyond his rhetorical use of science, Pound attempted to study the sciences and even adopted a doctor persona for his friends with illnesses—both diagnosing and prescribing cures. When Pound was planning to leave London, he also considered entering medical school—a biographical fact to which Pound scholarship has paid little attention. His decision not to formally study the sciences reinforced his identity as a poet and his representations of scientific knowledge as mere rhetoric. This interest in the sciences, and medicine in particular, influenced Pound's poetry and prose because of their frequent references and their alignment with literature. Additionally, this early use of rhetoric and an exploration into extra-poetic materials prepares Pound for his later, better-known and often infamous explorations of economics and social theory.

A NOTE ON CHANGES IN THE THESIS

Following the advice given to me at the doctoral viva, I have made changes to the original version of the text. I changed the title from *Ezra Pound and Science, 1901–1921* to *Ezra Pound and the Rhetoric of Science, 1901–1922*. I adapted the abstract and rewrote most of the introduction to reflect the new emphasis on Pound's use of the rhetoric of science. Accordingly, I have altered sections within each section of the thesis to reflect this focus. Additionally, I added specific page numbers to the citations of the collection *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, used as one of the primary sources of Pound's published material, and I corrected some mistakes in other citations.

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INTRODUCTION

From the time of his initial publications in London, Ezra Pound attempted to create a poetic theory. He states in 1910 in his first prose book, *The Spirit of Romance*, “the history of literary criticism is largely the history of a vain struggle to find a terminology which will define something.”¹ Pound eagerly participated in this historic struggle for a precise and accurate terminology. As the term *definition* relates to “stating exactly what a thing is, or what a word means,”² Pound necessarily works with words and the concept of representation or rhetoric. He often uses the term *rhetoric* in its depreciatory sense, “language characterized by artificial or ostentatious expression,”³ and he separates his concept of the “image” from rhetoric. “The ‘image,’” Pound writes in his essay “Vorticism,” “is the furthest possible remove from rhetoric.”⁴ In Pound’s discovery and recording of the concepts of image and rhetoric—both closely related—he evokes a modern notion of the linguistic sign.⁵ This sign often signifies an element of science, as Pound adopted a scientific discourse in his poetic theory.

Pound’s use of the vocabulary of science reflects the serious status of science at the turn of the twentieth century and the demands of a realist-based epistemology. It becomes clear early in his career that he is motivated in his use of the rhetoric of science by the legitimizing status of science. Pound argues for a scientific status for both the practice and the content of poetry, as he claims poetry is a science and poetry is comprised of scientific fact. This rhetoric then connotes a scientific value, and as Martin Kayman argues, the “chain of signifiers” then produce “knowledge-effects” that are effective “not so much in terms of its truth-content as of its status or ‘acceptability.’”⁶ Science is the only universal validation of “truth,” and therefore this truth and knowledge must be mediated by science. Pound

¹ Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910), p. vi.

² “definition, n.3” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

³ “definition, n.2a” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

⁴ Ezra Pound, “Vorticism,” *Fortnightly Review*, 46.573 (1 September 1914), 461–71. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C158, 275–85 (p. 276). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), pp. 94–109.

⁵ Philip Kuberski, *A Calculus of Ezra Pound: Vocations of the American Sign* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1992), p. 1. “In 1913 Ezra Pound became irrevocably modern, perhaps because he had discovered the central issue in the writing and reading of poetry is the value of the linguistic sign.” Also Marjorie Perloff, *The Dance of the Intellect: Studies in the Poetry of the Pound Tradition* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1985), p. 14. Marjorie Perloff claims that Pound “seems to be anticipating current semiotic theory.”

⁶ Martin Andrew Kayman, *Ezra Pound and the Phantasy of Science: An Introduction into the Relation between Pound’s Poetic Techniques and His Political Ideology, Through the Image and Its Scientific Background*, DPhil Thesis 1978 (York: DPhil Thesis, 1978), p. 90.

claims this status of “truth” in his presentation of poetry, and thereby must attempt to validate this claim with at least the appearance of science.

Pound’s use of scientific words and tropes is seen as a characteristic gesture of his early London career,⁷ partially originating from insecurity in his literary position and status, but also from a desire to define a personal and public poetic theory and to affirm his modernity. As he uses scientific references as rhetoric, Pound is not concerned specifically with any particular type of science; he uses examples from a range of sciences, such as physics, biology, mathematics, and even psychology. Consistent with early–twentieth-century conflation of the terms, Pound does not necessarily distinguish between the concepts of science and technology. These two terms were used interchangeably until about 1920 when Einsteinian physics emphasized the theoretical nature of some sciences and changed the popular conception of the terms.⁸

Pound generally seems to view science as an empirical discipline, based on a nineteenth-century materialist conception of science, but he sometimes uses the term *empiric* to represent a phenomenal concern with experience. The serious artist could be empiric and scientific because of his sincerity and his direct sensations and experience. In practice, Pound’s poetics are developed in part from a scientific discourse without necessarily reflecting, or *being* a reflection of, an objective reality. His poetics embraces a modern ideology of science, and during some crucial periods of Pound’s evolving theory, these poetics assert objective realities over subjective relations. When Pound does begin to emphasize subjectivity, such as in the development of his Vorticist theory, he still uses the materiality of the “real” to describe subjective or immaterial relations. He insists on “natural objects” and concrete signifiers; however, this insistence uses language and words. As Michael Davidson asserts, this definition of “materiality” in rhetorical terms is problematic; it “foregrounds” poetic devices and devalues language.⁹

Despite any inconsistencies in Pound’s language theories, he values not only “metaphoric or superpository” representations, but also the assertion of directness and exactness.¹⁰ Again, the nature of language problematizes this notion, as “any appreciation of directness of something has the paradoxical effect of drawing attention to the mode of

⁷ Ian F. A. Bell, *Critic as Scientist: Some Contexts for the Literary Criticism of Ezra Pound* (Reading: University of Reading doctoral thesis, 1978), 549.

⁸ Lisa Steinman, *Made in America: Science, Technology, and American Modernist Poets* (London: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 2.

⁹ Michael Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material World* (London: University of California Press, 1997), p. 79.

¹⁰ Natan Zach, “Imagism and Vorticism,” in *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890–1930*, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 228–42 (p. 236).

presentation, rather than the subject presented.”¹¹ Therefore, an irony develops in Pound’s theories: Pound argues for literary directness precisely using rhetoric, tropes, and metaphors in this theory, and in this problematic theory, he aligns poetics with the sciences, producing the effect of insincere correlation. This flawed theory ultimately serves to undermine the effectiveness of his use of the rhetoric of science.

However, Pound does effectively argue for the notion that art and science both rely on the same rhetorical figures and strategies—a concept emerging in de Gourmont’s *Natural Philosophy of Love*, which Pound translated towards the end of his London career.¹² Science, then, for Pound, could function as a signifier that, like poetry, produces knowledge from its linguistic interaction and nature.¹³ Pound generally understands science not in terms of its facts—he himself acknowledges he does not understand the minutia of scientific discoveries or data—but as a model of rhetoric and language use. The relation between poetry and science is, then, not a relation of nature, but a relation of linguistic expression and words. As Laura Dassow Walls states, the historic divide between literature and science has been most effectively bridged through an understanding of the two disciplines’ similar inscription of signs onto things.¹⁴

Pound utilizes certain classical concepts of rhetoric relating to a metaphorical concept. He displays evidence of using synecdoche, “a figure by which a more comprehensive term is used for a less comprehensive or vice versa,” or as “whole for part or part for whole.”¹⁵ He also uses metonymy, and even cites this particular term, meaning “the action of substituting for a word or phrase denoting an object, action, etc.” or “a word or phrase denoting a property or something associated with it.”¹⁶ He incorporates allegory, or the “description of a subject under the guise of some other subject of aptly suggestive resemblance.”¹⁷ Although Pound, during certain periods, argued for direct speech, in practice his use of rhetoric is quite evident. James Joyce described him as a “ventriloquist Agitator,”¹⁸ or an agitator, or agent, for one who practices ventriloquism. Joyce likely meant the term to signify Pound’s verbosity, but the term could also represent how Pound could

¹¹ Peter Howarth, *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 47.

¹² Kathryn V. Lindberg, *Reading Pound Reading: Modernism after Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 136.

¹³ Martin A. Kayman, “A Model for Pound’s Use of ‘Science,’” in *Ezra Pound: Tactics for Reading* (London: Vision Press, 1982), pp. 79–102 (p. 80).

¹⁴ Laura Dassow Walls, “Textbooks and Texts from the Brooks: Inventing Scientific Authority from America,” *American Quarterly*, 49.1 (1997), 1–25 (p. 2).

¹⁵ “synecdoche” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

¹⁶ “metonymy, a.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

¹⁷ “allegory, 1.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

¹⁸ Letter cited in Daniel Tiffany, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 163.

put words into a dummy's mouth, or could use words to configure empty rhetorical tropes. Pound, in fact, spoke approvingly of Aristotle's conception of metaphor.¹⁹ He quoted Aristotle in his book *The Spirit of Romance*: "But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learned from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity of dissimilars."²⁰ As metaphor, according to this definition, requires an intelligent perception of the relation of unlike things, Pound could have gained inspiration from this concept in originating the image. Both metaphor and Pound's image attempt to discover innovative relations. As Kathryn V. Lindberg argues, metaphors can either serve as a differential in ornamenting otherwise dull ideas or can serve as a relational character to portray two differing components.²¹ Pound consistently refuses any differential or ornamental functions of metaphor, but allows for the relation between two or more things.

Pound declares in *The Spirit of Romance* that "a number of sciences [are] connected with the study of literature,"²² and he correlates the subjects of study of both scientists and artists. He discusses the similar roles of the artist and scientist and implies that they are concerned with the same subjects. The scientist, he says, is concerned with the river, the color of its water, and its banks, while the artist is concerned with the "things that flow."²³ He places the poet in the same position as the scientist, observing the river, which places emphasis on the perspective of the self. Both subjects of study, or the signified, are essentially the same object, the river; the subjects that form the basis of knowledge are the same for scientist and poet. As Peter Halter states, the modern "scientific space, related to Cartesian rationalism and subsequent models of rational, scientific knowing, places the perceiving-seeing, understanding, grasping, mastering—self at the center as never before."²⁴ This emphasis on the individual's potential and power prepares Pound for his valuation of the individual and, even more so, the singular status of the poet in further theories.

In the same year in which Pound published *The Spirit of Romance*, his mother recommended that he read Hudson Maxim's book *The Science of Poetry and the Philosophy of Language*. Although he responds in a letter to his mother that it was "hardly worth

¹⁹ Theo Hermans, *The Structure of Modernist Poetry* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 87.

²⁰ Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910), p. 166.

²¹ Kathryn V. Lindberg, *Reading Pound Reading: Modernism after Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 40.

²² Th Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910), p. vi.

²³ Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910), p. vi.

²⁴ Peter Halter, *The Revolution in the Visual Arts and the Poetry of William Carlos Williams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 215.

reviewing,” he notes that he “sent off some copy on it” to *Book News Monthly*.²⁵ What might have been written as a hurried review is revealing of Pound’s interpretation of an example of a work explicitly comparing science to poetry. Among Pound’s criticisms of the book, he mentions a positive impression of the subject. “Mind you,” he writes, “poetry does admit of scientific analysis and discussion; it *is* subject to law and laws.”²⁶ He also notes, “poetry admits new and profounder explanations in the light of modern science,” which implies a sort of comparison or relation between the two. Pound states that the most valuable part of the book centered on “metaphor” in “the best chapter in the book,” or Chapter 3, labeled “What is poetry?” Pound cited in his review Maxim’s notion that poetry is “presented with the utmost economy of symbols” and that poetry is the “expression of imaginative thought by means only of the essentials of thought.” He affirms that thought is conveyed through symbols, economy, and essentials, and suggests that analytical geometry would have been an ideal example for Maxim to use to communicate this function. Equations in this form of geometry, he says, are “near” to poetry “in their essential nature”—that is, in their modes as representing something else—and that a “scientist” like Maxim should have noted their kinship. In this chapter that interested Pound, certain issues are raised that later appear in Pound’s critical theory:²⁷ that “metaphor, or trope” formulates “abstract thoughts in concrete terms” (26), metaphor is “like painting (32), and that “poetry transforms the abstract to the concrete, the intangible to the tangible” (37). The excerpt on imagination that Pound quotes in his review ends with the assertion that “poetry is the art of expressing abstract thought and imparting knowledge of intangible properties of things by the expedient of metamorphosing them into what they seem to be or into what they suggest” (43). This focus on metamorphosis shows one function of a metaphor—to portray one aspect in terms of another. In Maxim’s conception, the intangible nature of an idea is transformed into a form of “being.” Additionally, Maxim writes in terms of producing a new theory of poetry:

Let us start out with a new definition of poetry, one based upon trope and the office performed by trope in giving us a clearer perception of thought, by expressing the unfamiliar, the abstract, the intangible, and the insensuous, in terms of the familiar, the concrete, the tangible and the sensuous, which are analogous to, or in some way resemble or suggest, the things they are made to symbolize, thereby expressing in terms of experience thoughts lying outside experience: Poetry is the expression of insensuous thought in

²⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to Isabel Pound dated 7 October 1910, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2663.

²⁶ Ezra Pound, “The Science of Poetry,” *Book News Monthly*, 29.4 (December 1910), pp. 282–83. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C22, 40–41 (p. 41).

²⁷ Hudson Maxim, *The Science of Poetry and the Philosophy of Language* (London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1910).

sensuous terms by artistic trope and the dignifications of thought by analogically articulated imagery. ... Poetry transforms the abstract to the concrete, the intangible to the tangible...
(37)

Maxim emphasizes his own theory that in poetry, a rhetorical trope should be used to transform the abstract into the “concrete.” The signifier, or an intangible word, has the potential to become the signified, thereby providing a means for rhetoric to truly represent the object.

Hudson’s book, or at least this chapter detailing metaphor—despite Pound’s criticism of its style—must have impressed him, as he again quotes from the book two years later. He expresses the notion that all “inanimate and intangible things may assume the properties and attributes of tangible, living, thinking and speaking things.”²⁸ This transfiguration from word or signifier into the object or signified is illustrated in an example using analytical geometry, to which Pound had previously referred in his Maxim review. Pound uses analytical geometry to illustrate the power of substitution and representation: “By the signs $a^2 = b^2 = c^2$, I imply the circle. By $(a - r)^2 + (b - r)^2 = (c - r)^2$, I imply the circle and its mode of birth.”²⁹ A change in symbolic numbers represents a differing object. He then questions the value of representation with the valuation placed on the object: “Is the formula nothing?” he asks. He answers this question by stating that understanding the formula, the signs, allows one to be presented with the three-dimensional object in reality, in this case, a circular ink-well. He emphasizes the comprehension of the symbolism only with knowledge of the formulas and representation: “for the initiated the signs are a door into eternity and into the boundless ether.” This, then, places a privileged status on the poet and the mathematician or scientist. The poet’s work and the mathematician’s work, he affirms, are scientifically demonstrable.³⁰ This notion of demonstrating something through the rhetoric of science implies that a reality actually exists behind the poet’s words. In these early writings of Pound, he emphasizes the reality of poetry, in part, to legitimize poetry’s existence and to equate it with the value of science. As Herbert Schneidau writes, Pound is “striving for ‘the poetry of reality.’”³¹

Even in his 1912 article “Psychology and the Troubadours,” known for its mystical references, Pound searches for a scientific verity, or a “hyper-scientific precision.”³² He defines “ecstasy” not as “a whirl or a madness of the senses, but a glow arising from the

²⁸ Ezra Pound, “The Wisdom of Poetry,” *Forum*, 47.4 (April 1912), 497–501. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C45, 72–75 (p. 72).

²⁹ Ezra Pound, “The Wisdom of Poetry,” *Forum*, 47.4 (April 1912), 497–501. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C45, 72–75 (p. 75).

³⁰ Ezra Pound, “The Wisdom of Poetry,” *Forum*, 47.4 (April 1912), 497–501. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C45, 72–75 (p. 75).

³¹ Herbert N. Schneidau, *Ezra Pound: The Image and the Real* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), p. vii.

³² Ezra Pound, “Psychology and Troubadours,” *Quest*, 4.1 (October 1912), 37–53 (p. 37).

exact nature of the perception” (42). He uses various metaphors to describe his perception of “human composition,” one of which describes man as an electrical appliance (44), and another of which describes consciousness in terms of the currents of the wireless telegraph receiver (46). Pound represents his poetic and literary energies in terms of scientific energies of electricity, electromagnetism, and radioactivity—invisible and newly comprehended forces. This vocabulary gives Pound’s concepts the appearance of modernity and fact, rather than presenting them as an outmoded mysticism. Pound claims “reality” for even mystical experience, and uses rhetoric to describe both the physical world and “consciousness” or the psychical world in an effort to lay out an empirical basis for understanding both.

Pound’s reference to “things” in poetry portrays this focus on reality. This view reflects the remnants of Newtonian science, which claimed that science was a direct, “true” representation of nature. As Daniel Tiffany suggests, in Pound’s theories, “the word has become a thing,” which reflects the ancient rivalry of the word and image.³³ The poetic image is superior to the word, as the image must never be “degraded to the status of the word.”³⁴ The object itself is elevated over any words or representation of the object. However, Pound’s poetic theory necessarily reflects not a direct scientific reality, but a discursive use of science. Pound relies on words only in association with the things they denote, and he maintains a theoretical valuation of the “thing” over “word.”³⁵

In his “Osiris” series in 1911, Pound emphasized that the object is elevated over any linguistic signifier. In this first major series of articles, he offered a scientific “New Method of Scholarship” with materialist epistemologies incorporating the methods of “luminous detail.”³⁶ He states that the “modern” world allows for “accuracy of sentiment,” or an ability to measure mental or general feeling (45). He again values the object over the word: “A few days in a good gallery are more illuminating than years would be if spent in reading a description of these pictures.” Pound is placing emphasis on, in this case, the object of a painting or photograph—itsself a pictorial depiction—over description. Pound values presentation over description, which he describes as “imperfect inductions.” The “luminous detail” of his object should “remain unaltered” by subjective comment” (45). The focus on objective detail is compared to the work of scientists and depends on recognition of data of a particular kind: the luminous detail. This focus on carefully selected data reflects the shift

³³ Daniel Tiffany, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 158.

³⁴ Daniel Tiffany, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 162.

³⁵ Christopher Beach, *ABC of Influence: Ezra Pound and the Remaking of American Poetic Tradition* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), p. 56.

³⁶ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: II,” *New Age*, 10.6 (7 December 1911), 130–31. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C26, 46–47 (p. 44–45).

from a collection of a large array of facts, or “multitudinous detail,” to economize the efforts of science, as depicted in Karl Pearson’s 1892 book *The Grammar of Science*.³⁷ In Pound’s usage, his term “detail” focuses on specifics, while the adjective “luminous” allows this detail to be compared more broadly—a function of metaphor. This luminosity informs other “things,” and provides connotations for “exact things.” “I do not by any means mean,” Pound claims in this installment, “that poetry is to be stripped of any of its powers of vague suggestion” (57). This notion introduces a new and varying conception of poetry. In this series, Pound views mere description as a reduction of objectivity. An objective portrayal is not sufficient to adequately present the sign in poetry; “vague suggestion”—including connotation, suggestion, evocation, and figuration—now become a part of Pound’s poetic discourse. Pound is acknowledging subjective values, which he feels must be presented for an adequate, full modern portrayal.³⁸

This introduction of the detail and its luminosity also acknowledges the need for classification. Classification was an important aspect of Pound’s interest in and concern about the adequacy of language to describe a concept or object. Pound’s conception of a “new method” of art, aligning itself with a scientific method, portrayed his desire to organize knowledge to overcome inadequacies of language and literary criticism. He states in the “Osiris” series, “As for myself, I have tried to clear up a certain messy place in the history of literature; I have tried to make our sentiment of it more accurate. Accuracy of sentiment here will make more accurate the sentiment of the growth of literature as a whole, and of the Art of poetry.”³⁹ He insists on a classification system that doesn’t force data into a pre-established pattern. Pound is preparing a scientific method based solely on the selection of “luminous details,” rather than forcing sets of data into a pre-established pattern.

In part IX of the series, Pound returns more closely to an examination of rhetoric in his discussion of technique. He upholds the idea that a word is an arbitrary symbol, and meaning is only established superficially when the receivers agree on its meaning: “the word exists when two or more people agree to mean the same thing by it.”⁴⁰ Pound then uses a self-labeled “simile” to illustrate the meaning of a word or signifier. He compares words to “great hollow cones of steel,” each in different sizes and “charged with a force like

³⁷ Ian F. A. Bell, *Critic as Scientist: Some Contexts for the Literary Criticism of Ezra Pound* (Reading: University of Reading doctoral thesis, 1978, p. 264.

³⁸ Martin A. Kayman, *The Modernism of Ezra Pound: The Science of Poetry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), p. 38.

³⁹ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: II,” *New Age*, 10.6 (7 December 1911), 130–31. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C26, 46–47 (p. 44–45).

⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: IX. On Technique,” *New Age*, 10.13 (25 January 1912), 297–99. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C35, 57–58 (p. 57).

electricity.”⁴¹ These cones either emit or take in this radiating force, with “a greater variety of activity than with electricity—not merely positive and negative; but let us say +, −, x, ÷, +a, −a, xa, ÷a, etc.” Pound explains that the energy associated with the cones represents “the power of tradition,” “agreement,” and “association.” The control of it, he says, is the “‘Technique of Content,’ which nothing short of genius understands.” Not only is Pound using a simile as a figure of speech in his argument, but he is describing how figures of speech operate in their mode of representation. The understanding and control of this “association”—or the combination of the signifier and the signified—is viewed by Pound as a high-level skill. Words have variable, unstable meanings, he explains, because of the changing associations and subjectivities of the words.⁴²

Just a month later, Pound wrote “Prologomena,” in which he further shapes his poetic theory with consideration of the object and its linguistic representation. In detailing “Technique,” Pound points to the word *sincerity*, associated with a “precise rendering of the impulse.” *Sincerity* would imply an “elimination of all external agency” or rhetoric and a focus on the object itself.⁴³ Under the subheading of “Symbols,” Pound notes, “I believe that the proper and perfect symbol is the natural object, that if a man use ‘symbols’ he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude.”⁴⁴ This association of the “perfect symbol” to the “natural object” relates to the eleventh installment of “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris” the same month. In this installment, Pound promotes the idea that poetry can only become “a vital part of contemporary life” when “poetry lives again ‘close to the thing.’”⁴⁵ Pound notes this moment of closeness as being the “very crux of clarified conception.” He claims that a poet can only “escape from rhetoric and frilled paper decoration” through “beauty of the thing,” and he calls for simplicity and directness of utterance (69). This focus on the “thing,” with its positive connotation of beauty, again points to Pound’s return to a valuation of a sort of scientific empiricism. He also is valuing the “conception” or perception of this “thing.” In a call to aspiring poets for exactitude, Pound is unabashed in his direction. “Put down exactly what you feel and mean! Say it as briefly as possible and avoid all sham of ornament.”⁴⁶ He further asks them to consider if their poetic work

⁴¹ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: IX. On Technique,” *New Age*, 10.13 (25 January 1912), 297–99. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C35, 57–58 (p. 58).

⁴² Kathryn V. Lindberg mentions this unstable meaning in *Reading Pound Reading: Modernism after Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 35.

⁴³ Peter Howarth, *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 23, 36.

⁴⁴ Ezra Pound, “Prologomena,” *Poetry Review*, 1.2 (February 1912), 72–76. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C38, 59–63 (p. 60).

⁴⁵ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: XI,” *New Age*, 10.16 (15 February 1912), 369–70. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C42, 68–69 (p. 69).

⁴⁶ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: V,” *New Age*, 11.23 (3 October 1912), 539–40. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C56, pp. 90–100 (p. 99).

complies with “the laws inherent in itself” and if their “manner fit[s] close to the matter.”⁴⁷ In both questions, Pound is addressing the organicism of the poem in terms of science. The form of a poem should fit the content, and Pound communicates this through a reference to “laws” and to “matter”—both scientific evidences of veracity.

This didactic use of the rhetoric of science continued into Pound’s Imagist phase. Pound previously identified a word’s definition as the agreement of two or more people on its meaning. Similarly, Pound defined Imagism in the same way. In his first public declaration of the movement in *Poetry* magazine, Pound states, “A school exists when two or three young men agree, more or less, to call certain things good.”⁴⁸ The movement formed as a “school” simply because of its linguistic identifier: “The youngest school here that has the nerve to call itself a school is that of the *Imagistes*.” Pound produces various other examples of the conception of Imagism that point to the school’s name as being a mere linguistic construction. When Pound signed H.D.’s poem “Hermes of the Ways” with “H.D., Imagiste,” he was attaching a name to a name—a title to a movement to which H.D. was not even previously aware. Additionally, in Pound’s first public reference to the Imagists, in the appendix to his book *Ripostes*, Pound declared that the Imagists were the inheritors of an earlier school under Hulme: “*Les Imagistes*, the descendants of the forgotten school of 1909.”⁴⁹ Pound himself questioned if this earlier school even existed: the “‘School of Images’ which may or may not have existed.” The history of Imagism, according to Pound, is in a sense a fiction, not only in the question of whether the Imagistes were the inheritors of the theory of the 1909 school, but also in the question of their inheritance of a name, the unconfirmed “School of Images.” Additionally, some of Pound’s own poetry labeled imagist was written long before the public declaration of Imagism. Two poems in *Ripostes*, published in October 1912, were published as imagist poems in *Des Imagistes*, and various poems written in 1912, before the announcement of Imagism in March 1913, were published in *Poetry* magazine as characteristically imagist poems.⁵⁰ Pound himself refers to Imagism as a mere name to a concept that existed long before the origin of the linguistic term. He even claims Wordsworth was a sort of imagist: “He was a silly old sheep

⁴⁷ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: V,” *New Age*, 11.23 (3 October 1912), 539–40. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C56, pp. 90–100 (p. 100).

⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, “Status Rerum: I,” *Poetry*, 1.4 (January 1913), 123–27. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C68, 111–13 (p. 112).

⁴⁹ Ezra Pound, *Personae: The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1926), p. 251.

⁵⁰ Daniel Tiffany, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 55.

with a genius, an unquestionable genius, for imagisme, for a presentation of natural detail.”⁵¹

Pound, in originating the concept of Imagism—or inheriting the concept from Hulme—focuses on words and rhetoric, as he uses rhetoric in the name and conception of the movement itself. This focus is appropriate, considering the history of the term *image*. The word *image* originally meant a picture, imitation, or copy, deriving from the use of the term *icon* until the Renaissance.⁵² Pound seems to reference this historical connotation of the empty image in his translation of Voltaire’s version of Genesis. Voltaire writes of creation with the phrase “*De nihilo nihilum*,” or “out of nothing, nothing comes,” and continues by citing man’s origin from the “image” of God.⁵³ The association of the creation as evolving from nothingness or an empty image has fueled the historical conception of the term as signifying something other than real substance. Pound’s use of the term *ikon* in his short article of the same name in 1913 also relates the concepts of the icon with the image. “It is in art the highest business to create the beautiful image; to create order and profusion of images that we may furnish the life of our minds with a noble surrounding.”⁵⁴ The notion of the icon, interrelated with the image, belongs in “the life of our minds,” according to Pound. It is a rhetorical and linguistic sign. The historical term *figures* more closely resembles Pound’s use of the concept of the image, yet during periods of history such as the Restoration, the use of figures was considered a “dishonest tampering with the truth.”⁵⁵ The “new science” of the seventeenth century promoted hostility towards rhetoric, and especially to figures and metaphor. Pound, however, is able to combine the historically opposed concepts of rhetoric and science because he shifts the image away from logic and explanation and towards the sole image. In the history of the term *image*, there has been a gradual shift away from logic and explanation, and the twentieth-century imagist poem aims to contain only the image and to avoid explanation.⁵⁶

In his extreme definition of the image as representing reality, Pound does not need the image to represent something else, as the image is portrayed as a natural reality. His use

⁵¹ Ezra Pound, “The Rev. G. Crabbe, LL. B.,” *Future*, 1.4 (February 1917), 110–11. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C248, 188–89 (p. 188).

⁵² Ray Frazer, “The History of the Term ‘Image,’” *English Literary History*, 27.2 (June 1960), 149–61 (p. 149).

⁵³ Ezra Pound, “Genesis, or, The First Book in the Bible. (“Subject to authority”),” *Little Review*, 5.7 (November 1918), 50–64. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C422, 237–45 (p. 238). Unsigned and, according to a footnote, “translated from an eighteenth-century author [i.e. Voltaire].”

⁵⁴ Ezra Pound, “IKON.” *Cerebralist*, 1 (December 1913), p. 43. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), I, C114a, p. 203.

⁵⁵ Ray Frazer, “The History of the Term ‘Image,’” *English Literary History*, 27.2 (June 1960), 149–61 (p. 150).

⁵⁶ Ray Frazer, “The History of the Term ‘Image,’” *English Literary History*, 27.2 (June 1960), 149–61 (p. 157).

of naming in his poetry and criticism supports this view—placing a term on a pre-existing entity. The narrator of the poem “Ortus” of the “Contemporania” series seems to discover a new element, which the narrator proceeds to name:

How have I labored?
How have I not labored
To bring her soul to birth,
To give these elements a name and a centre!

She is beautiful as the sunlight, and as fluid.
She has no name, and no place.
How have I laboured to bring her soul into separation;
To give her a name and her being!

Surely you are bound and entwined,
You are mingled with the elements unborn;
I have loved a stream and a shadow.

I beseech you enter your life.
I beseech you learn to say “I”
When I question you:
For you are no part, but a whole;
No portion, but a being.⁵⁷

The “element” exists before the naming of the element; therefore, the naming is a mere linguistic signifier of the entity. This process of naming is reflected in Pound’s later depiction of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley. As Ian F. A. Bell explains, Mauberley is concerned with a precise terminology—the “relation / Of eye-lid and cheek-bone / By verbal manifestation.”⁵⁸ This leads to Mauberley’s crisis as he encounters the limitations of language as a means of representing reality accurately.⁵⁹ He becomes, as Bell argues, “trapped by the process immanent in such a nomenclature, confined by his own metalanguage.”

Pound seems to be continuing this movement towards a frustration with rhetoric mid-way through his London career, as he continues to insist on the ability of language to represent nature completely. He emphasizes the bare fact to such an extent that he uses a simile to compare “presentational” poetry to nature itself in his 1913 article “The Approach

⁵⁷ Ezra Pound, “Contemporania,” *Poetry*, 2.1 (April 1913), 1–12. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C76, 132–37 (p. 133).

⁵⁸ Ezra Pound, “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 549–63 (p. 559).

⁵⁹ Ian F.A. Bell, “Mauberley’s Barrier of Style,” in *Ezra Pound: The London Years, 1908–1920*, ed. by Philip Grover (New York: AMS Press, 1978), pp. 89–115 (p. 103).

to Paris.” “Constataion of fact,” he writes, “presents. It does not comment. It is irrefutable because it does not present a personal predilection for any particular fraction of the truth. It is as communicative as Nature. It is as uncommunicative as Nature.”⁶⁰ He emphasizes the poet presenting rather than subjectively commenting, and he labels this emphasis as the “presentative method.” Pound associates this mode of presentation with precision and truth in his series “The Serious Artist.” In this series, he uses arguments similar to the historic hostility towards rhetoric and metaphor—the notion that these linguistic representations are a sort of dishonest tampering with the truth.⁶¹ Pound makes this same argument for “bad art” or “inaccurate art” that “makes false reports,” and he further compares this to the lack of morality of a scientist making a false report and tampering with realism.⁶² Any linguistic attempt at depiction that falls short of a true and precise depiction, in a sense, falsifies the natural object. He cites a theoretical situation involving a scientist trying to alter the presentation of scientific laws or fact. Pound then relates this example to art: “By good art I mean art that bears true witness, I mean the art that is most precise.”⁶³ Precision, then, allows the accurate portrayal or “witness” of the image.

Similarly, in the fourth installment of “The Serious Artist,” Pound emphasizes the “thing.” The serious artist must, he writes, “get back to the thing,” which he describes as precision in verse.⁶⁴ The focus on the “thing” as primary data of experience could have originated from Hulme or from his reading during this period of his newly acquired papers of Ernest Fenollosa. This emphasis on the object rather than rhetoric parallels a general Modernist “disdain” for many of the traditions of poetry, such as the use of special rhetorical and formal devices.⁶⁵ This notion possibly helped drive the Imagist desire for plain or undecorated poetry. The concept of simple, undecorated language and rejection of historical poetic convention was intended to help view the “object in its own terms.”⁶⁶ This desire for the “direct treatment of the thing” communicates, at its extreme interpretation, such a focus on precision that it desires to make the sign disappear.⁶⁷ Theoretically, there

⁶⁰ Ezra Pound, “The Approach to Paris: V,” *New Age*, 13.23 (2 October 1913), 662–64 (662). In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C104, 180–83 (p. 181).

⁶¹ Ray Frazer, “The History of the Term ‘Image,’” *English Literary History*, 27.2 (June 1960), 149–61 (p. 150).

⁶² Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: I–II,” *The New Freewoman*, 1.9 (15 October 1913), 161–63. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C106, 186–88 (p. 187).

⁶³ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: I–II,” *The New Freewoman*, 1.9 (15 October 1913), 161–63. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C106, 186–88 (p. 187).

⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: IV,” *The New Freewoman*, 1.11 (15 November 1913), 213–14. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C114, 202–03 (p. 202).

⁶⁵ Albright, Daniel, *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot and the Science of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 114.

⁶⁶ Peter Howarth, *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 36.

⁶⁷ Peter Howarth, *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 43.

should be no division between the artist's matter and his technique or presentation. Pound's praise for William Carlos Williams during this period displays this focus on the bare image, accurately and plainly presented: "he is for the most part content to present his image, or the bare speech of his protagonist, without border or comment."⁶⁸

Pound mocks the idea of language acting as a barrier to the "thing." He reports on a statement in *Century Magazine* that it wants to "bring its fiction as near to truth, and make it as interpretive of life, as conditions allow." Pound balks at this: "'As conditions allow'!!!!!! 'Let the bridge come as near to bearing the strain of traffic 'as conditions allow.'"⁶⁹ Pound uses a metaphor of science that implies that engineering does not allow for a variance from truth or scientific law or reality in its application and practical use for society. Therefore, he aims toward this same rigor of depiction for poetry.

Pound's initial depiction of Vorticism portrayed it as a continuum from Imagism, again, implying that Imagism was a type of signifier for a concept that continued into the new movement of Vorticism. His initial Vorticist publications took on similar themes to that of Imagism—the first being a warning against mimicry. In his 1914 article "Vortex," he criticizes mimicry as mere imitation or copying. "The vorticist will not allow the primary expression of any concept or emotion to drag itself out into mimicry."⁷⁰ Pound tried to distance his theory from any form of representation, as the signified concept itself was still valued as supreme. He parodies the mimicry of ideas in an article in which a parrot repeats rhetorical phrases:

"Art should conceal art", said the parrot.

"Art is ennobling", said the parrot.

"Art is the ultimate combustion of the social-consciousness of the proletariat into the fine flower of penultimate culture; it is the expression of the soul-wave into the infinite of the ununderstandable je ne sais quoi", said the parrot.

Damn the parrot!

Damn the parrot, although there is a faint dilution of verity in each of these three remarks.⁷¹

Pound concedes that there is some truth to these statements, but he ultimately implies that the rhetorical phrases are mere repetitions, void of original argument. It is this lack of

⁶⁸ Ezra Pound, "The Tempers," *New Freewoman*, 1.12 (1 December 1913), 227. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C117, p. 207.

⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, "Allen Upward Serious," *New Age*, 14.25 (23 April 1914), 779-80. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C137, pp. 233-34 (p. 234).

⁷⁰ Ezra Pound, "Vortex. Pound," *Blast*, 1 (20 June 1914), 153-54. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C149, 259-60 (p. 260).

⁷¹ Ezra Pound, "The Audience," *Little Review*, 5.6 (October 1918), 64. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C407a.

creativity that Pound is critical of in the traditional use of “rhetoric.” It is what Pound termed a “half-truth” in literature, as it only represents a truth, rather than *is* a truth.⁷²

Pound warns against confusing realism and mimesis.⁷³ Mimetic poetry is to real art as “the barber’s wax dummy is to sculpture.”⁷⁴ Mimetic art is, to use Pound’s word, a “sham” or a mere copy. His analogy of mimetic poetry to a wax dummy and real art to sculpture implies a difference in quality and value—despite the irony of using the historically aligned mimetic sculpture as a symbol for reality. As mimesis relates to the sense of sight, it also holds the historically negative connotation of the sense. Sarah Riggs notes that the conceptions of vision as the most despotic sense are centuries old,⁷⁵ and Pound seems to be continuing with this tradition in his caution against mimesis.

Pound, however, is caught in yet another difficulty in his theory. Just as poetry cannot actually embody the natural object, poetry cannot even accurately portray the visual object. His theory, then, is never attainable—even in its desire to avoid a copy or mimesis of the natural object. As Riggs says, poetry is “reduced to producing an abstraction of an abstraction.”⁷⁶ Pound uses the mirror, a common trope for mimesis, to describe the reflection of form, a distillation of the actual image: “the form that seems a form seen in a mirror.”⁷⁷ His early poem “On His Own Face in a Glass” places the self of the narrator as the signified concept, and Max Nanny views the capital O that begins the first lines of poem as an icon for the narrator’s face mirrored in a looking-glass.⁷⁸ The poem “The Flame” in the “*Ung Drang*” series additionally displays “that mirror of all moments, / That glass to all things that o’ershadow it” in a portrayal of the impossibility of full reflection. These references to the trope of a mirror represent the visual depiction of the object of the poem; however, Pound’s theory moves away from mimesis or mere copying or reflection. This change in his thinking introduces the aspects of conception of vision, creativity, and energy that appear in Vorticist theory.

In his article “Vorticism,” Pound extends his argument about rhetoric, metaphor, and symbolism at length, while insisting on a new energy. In showing Vorticism’s

⁷² Ezra Pound, “Books Current. By Ezra Pound: Joyce,” *Future*, 2.6 (May 1918), 161–63. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C353, 95–97 (p. 97).

⁷³ Daniel Tiffany speaks of Pound’s mimesis on page 243, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁷⁴ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: XI,” *New Age*, 10.16 (15 February 1912), 369–70. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C42, 68–69 (p. 69).

⁷⁵ Sarah Riggs, *Word Sightings: Poetry and Visual Media in Stevens, Bishop, and O’Hara* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. xx.

⁷⁶ Sarah Riggs, *Word Sightings: Poetry and Visual Media in Stevens, Bishop, and O’Hara* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. xx.

⁷⁷ Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910), p. 93.

⁷⁸ Max Nanny and Olga Fischer, eds, *Form Miming Meaning: Iconicity in Language and Literature* (Philadelphia: John Benjamin’s Publishing, 1999), p. 180.

continuance from Imagism, Pound affirms that “Imagism” is a term used to describe an already existing reality, and he is outlining the development of the signifier *Imagism*. “Until recently,” he writes, “no one had named it,” implying that the concept of imagism had existed previously.⁷⁹ “Ibycus and Liu Ch’e presented the ‘Image.’ Dante is a great poet by reason of this faculty, and Milton is a wind-bag because of his lack of it.”⁸⁰ This affirmation of the existence of the signified concept before the signifier *Imagism* developed corresponds with a statement he made the following year. In describing poetry that he finds “the most interesting,” he states, “We now call it Imagist, it is not a new invention, it is a critical discrimination ... It most certainly has existed and been part of the tradition, unconsciously perhaps.”⁸¹ This continuation of Imagism, from a concept before the term, to a continuing concept after his new focus on Vorticism, helps Pound justify the changing terms for his poetic theory. Pound seems intent on affirming the existence of the concept of Imagism so that, under a new term, Vorticism, his critical theory can continue. In his “Vorticism” article, Pound separates Imagism and Vorticism from rhetoric: “The ‘image’ is the furthest possible remove from rhetoric. Rhetoric is the art of dressing up some unimportant matter so as to fool the audience for the time being. ... Even Aristotle distinguishes between rhetoric, ‘which is persuasion,’ and the analytical examination of truth.”⁸² According to Pound’s theory, the poet does not need to persuade, as the poem contains “truth” that only needs to be presented. As Pound points to the classical concept of rhetoric as persuasion and the more modern notion of rhetoric as unnecessary ornamental words, he further identifies specific classical concepts of rhetoric to distinguish Imagism from Symbolism. “Imagisme is not symbolism. The symbolists dealt in ‘association,’ that is, in a sort of allusion, almost of allegory. They degraded the symbol to the status of a word. They made it a form of metronomy [metonymy].” As allegory describes a subject under the guise of another subject, and metonymy substitutes a word or phrase with an associated meaning, these classical aspects of rhetoric act as variations of mimesis in Pound’s writing. He again uses mathematical metaphor to illustrate his derision of mimesis or straight representation: “The symbolist’s *symbols* have a fixed value, like numbers in arithmetic, like 1, 2, and 7. The imagiste’s images have a variable significance, like the signs *a*, *b*, and *x* in algebra.” The focus in Imagism or Vorticism is on “variable significance” that changes to represent the

⁷⁹ Ezra Pound, “Vorticism,” *Fortnightly Review*, 46.573 (1 September 1914), 461–71. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C158, 275–85 (p. 276).

⁸⁰ Ezra Pound, “Vorticism,” *Fortnightly Review*, 46.573 (1 September 1914), 461–71. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C158, 275–85 (p. 276). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), pp. 94–109.

⁸¹ Ezra Pound, “Imagisme and England: A Vindication and an Anthology,” *T. P.’s Weekly*, 25.641 (20 February 1915), p. 185. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C181, p. 19.

⁸² Ezra Pound, “Vorticism,” *Fortnightly Review*, 46.573 (1 September 1914), 461–71. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C158, 275–85 (p. 276).

full nature of the referent. As Natan Zach notes, Pound's heavy criticism of Symbolism develops into an "anti-Symbolist, anti-Impressionist platform," when, however, the image-equation is indebted to this way of presentation.⁸³ Despite his insistence otherwise, Pound is still dependent on symbolism because of the nature of language. Pound himself even recognized some Symbolist impact from Hulme, Yeats, and Symons.⁸⁴ Pound views Symbolism as a poetic in which the word loses its objective referent because of its emphasis on its figurative or abstract meaning.

As though to focus even closer on the object of the poem, Pound emphasizes in his "Vorticism" article the "one image poem." He describes this conception as "a form of superposition, that is to say it is one idea set on top of another."⁸⁵ This produces a type of metaphor or even metonymy, a new layer of rhetoric with which Pound can work. His poem "In a Station of the Metro" aptly illustrates this notion:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :
 Petals on a wet, black bough .⁸⁶

The faces are represented with the petals; the crowd with the black bough. The presentation emphasizes the physicality of each of the two objects, but the placement and form of the poem imply a connection, a type of metaphor, between them. The Imagist poem superimposes two or more signifiers with their signified concepts to create a unified image. The oneness of the image is created out of the combination and rhetoric of two concepts.

Related to this new theory, Pound increasingly acknowledged the functioning of the subjective in his Vorticist period. In "Vorticism," Pound described the interaction of objectivity and subjectivity in his poetry. "In a poem of this sort one is trying to record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective."⁸⁷ This emphasis on transformation again reflects the function of metaphor—the metamorphosis of one idea into another, and in this case, the metamorphosis of the objective and outward into the subjective and inward. This acknowledgement of change is portrayed in yet another extensive mathematical metaphor, in which Pound distinguishes four levels of mathematics in a hierarchy from description to conception. He progresses from Euclidean geometry with equations that evoke the surface of two-dimensional figures, to Cartesian geometry with equations that evoke form with three-

⁸³ Natan Zach, "Imagism and Vorticism," in *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890–1930*, ed. by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 228–42 (p. 234).

⁸⁴ Theo Hermans. *The Structure of Modernist Poetry*. London: Croom Helm, 1982. 99

⁸⁵ Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," *Fortnightly Review*, 46.573 (1 September 1914), 461–71. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C158, 275–85 (p. 281).

⁸⁶ Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro," in "Contemporania" series, *Poetry*, 2.1 (April 1913), 1–12. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C76, 132–37 (p. 137).

⁸⁷ Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," *Fortnightly Review*, 46.573 (1 September 1914), 461–71. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C158, 275–85 (p. 281).

dimensional figures. The analogy transforms the subjectivity of conception into form. The two-dimensional equations seem to represent for Pound a mere existence, a “being,” whereas the three-dimensional equations connote a true existence, a vitalization. This vitalization is further enhanced when Pound broadens his theory from not only a representation of the natural image, but of the subjectivity of this image. A strict objectivity can be limiting, and in this developing theory, the antithesis of subject and object no longer exists. As Martin Kayman writes, an objective language carries descriptive limitations, while subjective language could be used in excess.⁸⁸ Pound attempts to find a balance between objectivity and subjectivity. Perhaps representative of this increased reception of subjectivity, this notion circles back to Pound’s original, early conceptions of energies “not seen.” Pound’s intrigue with the world of hidden energies through visual registrations of this invisibility is portrayed in an episode with James Joyce. As Pound encouraged Joyce to obtain x-rays of his skull because of his eye problems, Joyce, unfamiliar with the concept of negatives, refused to view and accept the negative in preference of the “positive.” Pound, however, balked at this—representative of his acceptance of this index of the medium of invisible images.⁸⁹ “The Image can be of two sorts,” Pound expanded in his “Affirmations” series.⁹⁰

It can arise within the mind. It is then “subjective.” External causes play upon the mind, perhaps; if so, they are drawn into the mind, fused, transmitted, and emerge in an Image unlike themselves. Secondly, the Image can be objective. Emotion seizing up some external scene or action carries it intact to the mind; and that vortex purges it of all save the essential or dominant or dramatic qualities, and it emerges like the external original.

Here, Pound develops a new notion of the subjective—something arising in the mind. The source is still an “external cause,” but it emerges unlike itself as a subjective image. Pound inverts his previous notion of the supreme object. Instead of the natural object being signified by materialism or sensations, the materialism or sensations are represented by “things.” These “things,” then, continue to represent something—in this case, the original sensations. Pound is still working with rhetoric, metaphor, and representation, but he is broadening this discourse to incorporate more fully the subjective. He references this type of subjectivity in a review of *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in which Pound again uses the terms “subjective” and “external.” “On almost every page of Joyce you will find just such swift alternation of subjective beauty and external shabbiness, squalor, and

⁸⁸ Martin A. Kayman, *The Modernism of Ezra Pound: The Science of Poetry* (London: MacMillan Press, 1986), p. 46.

⁸⁹ Daniel Tiffany, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 227.

⁹⁰ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations IV. As for Imagisme,” *New Age*, 16.13 (January 1915), 340–50. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C173, 8–9 (p. 8).

sordidness.”⁹¹ Here, beauty is used not in a traditional sense, linked to a material object, but in the subjective sense. Pound describes a balance of subjective beauty of representation with the external, physical representation of city filth—precisely encapsulating the theory of a combination of subjective and objective that Pound had been proposing.

This loosening of objective emphasis helped Pound place an emphasis on imagination and was a means to escape the limitations of a strict materialist depiction. Pound used the terms “invention” and “discovery” almost interchangeably during this period. The newness of a discovery is in the inference, the way of portraying the metaphor and rhetoric, rather than the data. Pound states that his concept of the image evolved from a historic cycle—philosophy that claimed something “is” or exists, whereas Pound valued more than just existing; he placed an emphasis on receiving and conception or production. He criticized “the descent of Bergsonism and Pragmatism from a philosophic occultation of the doctrine that *appears = is*.”⁹² The literary condition of static mimesis and the empty representation motivated Pound to fashion his own evolving poetic theories. This therefore places Pound in the position of Mauberley, as “the age demanded an image.”⁹³

The three sections of this thesis deal in varying ways with Pound’s poetic theory and his use of the rhetoric of science. Chapter 1, “‘A China Egg Labelled Scholarship’¹²⁹: Pound, Philology, and Academe,” considers the claims for a scientific basis to philology and Pound’s criticism of the claim for this basis as consisting merely of rhetoric. Pound attributed the cause of the failure of the academy to the excessive focus on language, rhetoric, and rationalization, which displaced, in his view, the subject itself. He places value on the literary text, rather than on the philological methods used to examine this literature. “When the classics were a new beauty and ecstasy,” he writes in 1917, “people cared a damn sight more about the meaning of the authors, and a damn sight less about their grammar and philology.”¹³² He felt as though specialized scholarly attention focused too

⁹¹ Ezra Pound, “Books Current. By Ezra Pound: Joyce,” *Future*, 2.6 (May 1918), 161–63. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C353, 95–97 (p. 95).

⁹² Ezra Pound, “Julien Benda,” *Athenaeum*, 95.4706 (9 July 1920), 62. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C586a, 74–75 (p. 74). Review signed “B. L.,” of *Belphégor* by Julien Benda.

⁹³ “H. S. Mauberly” [*sic*], *Dial*, 69.3 (September 1920), 283–87. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C596, 88–91 (p. 88). A reprint of the first six poems of Part I of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920), A19

¹²⁹ Ezra Pound, “How to Read,” in *Polite Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p. 155–92 (p. 162). The paragraph reads, “Let us by all means glance at ‘philology’ and the ‘germanic system’.” Speaking as an historian, ‘we’ may say that this system was designed to inhibit thought. After 1848 it was, in Germany, observed that some people thought. It was necessary to curtail this pernicious activity, the thinkists were given a china egg labelled scholarship, and were gradually unfitted for active life, or for any contact with life in general.”

¹³² Ezra Pound, “Elizabethan Classicists: III,” *Egoist*, 4.10 (November 1917), 154–56. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C295, 290–91 (p. 291).

much on the detail, separating the text into “splinters” rather than looking at the detail in conjunction with the whole. He continues, “The humanizing influence of the classics depends more on a wide knowledge, a reading knowledge, than on an ability to write exercises in latin.” Placing value on wide knowledge, a specialized methodology serves to cut off important knowledge from the whole. He views that “the classics should be humanly, rather than philologically, taught, even in classrooms.” His definition of humanly teaching, therefore, differs from the methods of a classified philology and introduces instead “a wide knowledge.”

Pound criticizes the use of excessive rhetoric or rationalization, which he views as a methodology that displaces the examined subject. He labels all philologists, and most academics in general, as rationalists, as opposed to empiricists. He distances the Renaissance from this use of rhetoric, and claims that this period of rebirth valued precision instead. “The Renaissance sought a realism and attained it. It rose in a search for precision and declined through rhetoric and rhetorical thinking, through a habit of defining things always ‘in terms of something else.’”¹³³ He identifies further reasons for his criticism, the first of which included his belief that philology dulled any passion a student might have for the study of language or literature. A stringent methodology not only displaces the subject, but it strips enjoyment from the learning and observation processes.

Despite the public associations of science with philology, Pound refuses this scientific status to the discipline and to academia. He believes, instead, that science requires “instruments highly sensitized,” or a sensible awareness of objects, forces, or the material associated with mankind. As the term *humanity* includes a relation “to human sensibilities,” the sciences and the humanities are connected through the capabilities of the human senses. For Pound, the connection of the sciences and the humanities is man himself. Therefore, science for Pound relates to the primary material, direct perception, and empirical evidence of a pure or fundamental science, rather than to its associated rationalization and methodologies. Pound correlates science with pure knowledge, rather than with the methodologies used to obtain scientific findings. His focus is on the empirical sciences, rather than the theories of science resulting from scientific reductionism. He refuses to consider the benefit of theory and rationalization with empirical science, preferring the science itself. He is apprehensive of a dominance of reason in science, which he believes would overshadow the fundamental objects and forces themselves. “Axioms are the necessary platitudes of any science,” he hesitantly states, adding, “and, as all sciences must

¹³³ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations VI: Analysis of this Decade,” *New Age* 16.15 (11 February 1915), 409–11. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C179, 16–17 (p. 17). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Marvell Press, 1960), pp. 133–41.

start from axioms, most serious beginnings are affairs sententious, and pedagogical.”¹³⁴ Pound seems hesitant at traditional logic’s acceptance of the truth of an axiom or postulate as a starting point for deduction or inference before evidence can prove this truth. The article further emphasizes the importance of the evidence itself. “The artist seeks out the luminous detail and presents it. He does not comment.” He adds, “imperfect inductions” will vary “as the fashions, but the luminous details remain unaltered.” The permanency of poetry becomes a topic in his “Wisdom of Poetry” series in 1912. “The function of an art is to free the intellect from the tyranny of the affects, or, leaning on terms, neither technical nor metaphysical: the function of an art is to strengthen the perceptive faculties and free them from encumbrance.”¹³⁵ He then distinguishes between the poet and scientist, while emphasizing their similar focus on substance: “Our scientist reaching toward a truth speaks of ‘the essentials to thought’; these are not poetry, but a constituent substance of poetry.” He calls this substance to poetry the “dynamic particles, si licet, this radium.”

Pound’s interest in knowing the “whole systems of things” not only encouraged his investigation of the arts as well as the sciences—if not on the surface level—but it also permitted Pound to follow the methods of science in the relating of significant, detailed research findings to a greater whole.¹³⁶ Science not only searched for the particulars; it looked for the similarities between these particulars. From Pound’s earliest generalist tendencies—which became obvious as early as his undergraduate education—Pound opposed, in theory, specialized education that did not somehow lead to greater synthesis with other research. In the publicized statement of “Imagisme” written by F. S. Flint, but drafted by Pound, the Imagists are described as accepting influences from all fields: “They consider that Art is all science, all religion, philosophy and metaphysic.”¹³⁷ If Pound argues that Art naturally incorporates science, and that the arts and sciences are essentially related, then Pound thereby justifies his use of science despite any formal study of the discipline. In the same year as his publication of “Imagisme,” Pound notes that “the intellectual impulse” and “scientific impulse” are inspired by Renaissance and classical thinkers such as, he lists,

¹³⁴ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: II,” *New Age*, 10.6 (7 December 1911), 130–31. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C26, 46–47 (p. 47).

¹³⁵ Ezra Pound, “The Wisdom of Poetry,” *Forum*, 47.4 (April 1912), 497–501. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C45, 72–75 (p. 75).

¹³⁶ The concept of the “whole” is historically problematic in the philosophy of science, as Gregory Dale Adamson explains in his book *Philosophy in the Age of Science and Capital* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002). He states, “The synthetic unity which makes the apprehension of the field of perception a given whole is the same as that which enables equally infinite objects, such as natural or real numbers, to be conceived as a totality. Since the whole can only be given in thought and, as Kant made clear, cannot be made an object of thought, any objection to totality will always be an element of a greater whole and for this reason can never be said to be complete” (p. 40).

¹³⁷ F. S. Flint, “Imagisme,” *Poetry*, 1.6 (March 1913), 198–200. The document is recognized as having been written by both Flint and Pound. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C73a, p. 119.

Valla, Homer, Filino, Pico della Mirandola, and Leonardo da Vinci. He speaks of their varying fields of subject: “But the list of subjects of this conversation is the thing of note: the humanities, history, speaking, grammatica (that would be of Latin), philosophy, poetry, and even metrics, superstitions, theology and civil and cannon law.”¹³⁸ He asks, “Is it conceivable that one could converse profitably upon a similar list of topics with any living sovereign or prime minister?” Ultimately, Pound is inspired by the “scientific impulse” — coupling it with the overarching “intellectual impulse” or the basis of a generalist education — and he uses reference to this scientific impulse in his own poetic movements spanning his London career.

Chapter 2, “The Sage-Homme: Ezra Pound’s Doctor Personae,” shows how Pound adopted a persona, or a representation, of a medical figure in his poetic theory and in his attempts to alleviate the health problems of his artist friends. This extended project portrays Pound’s use of the rhetoric of science in his personal and public writings, which helped to convince himself of his own medical authority.

The chapter also portrays Pound’s embrace of the Renaissance focus on the individual, and specifically, man as a subject of examination. Pound considers whether “human beings are more interesting than anything possible else”¹³⁹ and considers his “collection of human forminifera” in his poetic work. He states that “humanity has been interesting, more interesting than the rest of the animal kingdom because the individual has been more easily discernible from the herd” and claims that he participates in the vorticist movement because it “is a movement of individuals, for individuals, for the protection of individuality.”¹⁴⁰

Pound considers man’s will as critical to his individuality. “Humanism,” he states, relates to a “sincere protest against the wastage of human material.”¹⁴¹ He views this wastage as evolving from man acting as a “unit” or being denied “a free exercise of the will.” The “free will” debate was pursued intensely throughout the Victorian age, and innovations in empiricist science and medical investigations into the physiological causes of involuntary reflexes led to questions about the extent to which humans maintain volitional

¹³⁸ Ezra Pound, “Chances and Remedies: I,” *New Age*, 13.1 (1 May 1913), pp. 9–10. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C79, 139–40 (139).

¹³⁹ Ezra Pound, “Indiscretions; or, Une Revue de Deux Mondes, By Ezra Pound: I,” *New Age*, 27.4 (27 May 1920), 56–57. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C578, 59–60 (p. 60).

¹⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, “Edward Wadsworth, Vorticist. An authorised appreciation by Ezra Pound,” *Egoist*, 1.16 (15 August 1914), 306–07. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), I, C156.

¹⁴¹ Ezra Pound, “Probari Ratio,” *Athenaeum*, 44.4692 (2 April 1920), 445.

control of themselves.¹⁴² The notion of free will as it applies to artistic theory insists that the human body is crucial to carrying out the will and asserts that, through art, man has the potential to become “something beyond man”— or an “over-man,”¹⁴³ as Pound would earlier express the same notion in Nietzschean terminology.

Pound considered himself “not a humanitarian, but a humanist.”¹⁴⁴ His frequent interactions on behalf of his fellow artists and writers were inspired, he states, by his desire to progress the arts through a type of rhetoric, rather than as a humanitarian gesture in the real world. These views evolved from various interactions with failed artists—close friends or associates who failed to produce their art because of a lack of will, or *abuelia*, or from physical or emotional illnesses. In each case, Pound felt that the “over-man” potentially could overcome these debilitating factors to reach an optimal level of achievement. His own independent studies of the medical sciences were inspired by both a desire to understand the nature of man, but also to comprehend the illnesses of his fellow artists. He states that an understanding of the nature of man is crucial to a civilization: “The term Civilisation implies some care for, and proficiency in, the arts, sciences and amenities. . . . The psychic state, and the psycho-physical, psychological, biological and other, character of not one, but every, people is the affair of every other people on the planet—England and America not excluded.”¹⁴⁵ He relates physical and emotional wellness to humanism: “The Greek gave us humanism; a belief in *mens sana in corpore sano*, a belief in proportion and balance.”¹⁴⁶ Ultimately, Pound revealed a desire to formally study science to become a doctor, and he indicated regret that he did not formally choose to enter the sciences earlier.¹⁴⁷ This statement corresponds with Pound’s public announcements that he planned to leave London and had become frustrated with the state of letters. “There are moments in one’s life when one is tempted to abandon positive literature,” he states towards the end of his London career.¹⁴⁸ This interest in the sciences, coupled with his frustration with letters, threatened to cut short his full-time literary career.

Chapter 3, “‘The Data of Hygiene’: Language of Cleanliness and Filth,” displays Pound’s preoccupation with hygiene and his incorporation of this idea into his poetic theory.

¹⁴² Lorraine J. Daston, “British Responses to Psycho-Physiology, 1860–1900,” *Isis*, 69.2 (June 1978), 192–208 (192).

¹⁴³ Ezra Pound, “Und Drang,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 164–172 (164).

¹⁴⁴ Ezra Pound, “Through Alien Eyes: II,” *New Age*, 12.12 (23 January 1913), 275–76. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C70, 115–16 (p. 115).

¹⁴⁵ Ezra Pound, “What America Has to Live Down: I,” *New Age*, XXIII. 17 (22 August 1918) 266–67.

¹⁴⁶ Ezra Pound, “Tagore’s Poems,” *Poetry*, 1.3 (December 1912), 92–94. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), I, C65.

¹⁴⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to Sibley Watson dated 1 March 1922, New York Public Library, Berg Collection, James Sibley Watson Papers, 10 TLS, 1 TNS.

¹⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, “Pastiche. The Regional: XVI,” *New Age*, 26.1 (6 November 1919), 16.

The rhetoric of hygiene became a trope that permeated Pound's poetic theory, yet the realities of hygienic health also began to affect Pound as he came to a greater understanding of the science itself. Pound's generation was one of the first to incorporate into their hygienic routine the practical effects of the invalidation of spontaneous generation. Pound admired the cultural power of this biological discovery, which produced germ theory and antiseptic and aseptic practices. He considers the power of a discovery, or a renaissance: "we have not realized to what an extent a renaissance is a thing made—a thing made by conscious propaganda."¹⁴⁹ Using a series of metaphors throughout his early career, Pound incorporates hygienic language into his poetic theory in his own attempt to start a renaissance through public awareness.

This poetic theory emphasized a bare, clean mode of writing with an emphasis on objective materiality. The incorporation of the physical object into the poem, however, carries the potential of contamination. Pound was aware of both physical and theoretical contamination, and became hygienic in both his daily routine of cleanliness and his poetic theories warning against contamination. He became excessively careful to avoid illness and unhygienic conditions in order to remain able to produce his creative work.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, he encouraged a positivist approach to writing poetry, focusing on sense experience and the image and associating intangible emotions with disease and filth. He criticizes the décor of writing introduced at the end of the Renaissance and in the work of certain writers since the Renaissance such as, he lists, Shakespeare or Pope. "For it is not until poetry lives again 'close to the thing' that it will be a vital part of contemporary life," he states.¹⁵¹ He further associates ornate writing with décor: "And the only way to escape from rhetoric and frilled paper decoration is through beauty—'beauty of the thing.'" Pound incorporated this vocabulary of design into his poetic theories, as décor became an association of the hygienic movement. The Victorian home during the end of the nineteenth century received unprecedented pressure to appear hygienically clean, to remove its extraneous decorations, carpets, and crevices.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Ezra Pound, "The Renaissance: II," *Poetry* 5.6 (March 1915), 283–87.

¹⁵⁰ Pound's daughter mentions his reactions to illness: "Babbo developed a cold. The fuss and the precautions seemed to me excessive; however, he soon got over it." Mary de Rachewiltz, *Ezra Pound, Father and Teacher: Discretions* (New York: New Directions, 1975), p. 12.

¹⁵¹ Ezra Pound, "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: XI," *New Age*, 10.16 (15 February 1912), 369–70. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C42, 68–69 (p. 69).

¹⁵² This manual instruction in the Victorian era continued into the early twentieth century, as seen in Vivienne Eliot's diary for 1914–1915, written on a "Boots Home Diary and Ladies' Note Book." The diary included health information, labeled "The A.B.C. of Health," published by the Ladies of Sanitary Association: **A**s soon as you are up, shake blanket and sheet, / **B**etter be without shoes than sit with damp feet. / **C**hildren if healthy are active, not still, / **D**amp beds and damp clothes will both make you ill." It also includes information on the Infectious Disease Notification Act of 1899, and instructions for hygienic helps such as thermometers and warm baths. *Boots Home Diary and Ladies'*

Pound fixated his disgust of filth on decadent or romantic writing. Not only did decadent writers often describe literal decay, but Pound's criticism of the decadence implied a metaphorical decay of earlier forms of literary expression, such as romanticism. Pound describes this decay of letters following the Renaissance: "The complete man must have more interest in things which are in seed and dynamic than in things which are dead, dying, static."¹⁵³ Additionally, Pound during his later London years increasingly used the language of filth to express his disgust with the condition of letters. Unlike his earlier writings that criticized stale writing yet retained an air of optimistic didacticism, his criticisms during and after the war years revealed increasing pessimism. This pessimism expressed his frustration with not only the arts, but with the sciences, as the sciences had been viewed since the nineteenth century as an ennobling power of man to overcome any challenges. In 1920, his desire for a renaissance is mixed with only faint hope and a negative sense of urgency: "It is absolutely necessary to START the new civilization," he writes. "Whether one builds it inside the decaying cortex of the present one or on the scraps doesn't seem to me much to matter. The present one will go to pot all quickly enough without one's pushing"¹⁵⁴ He refers to his location in London as a "Byzantium," possibly referring to the downfall of the empire to the Ottomans.

Pound worked towards his renaissance in many ways, some of which included his editing out the rhetoric of filth, or imperfect literature, and working against censorship. He combines these two aspects of his work by comparing the censorship of the toilet scenes of *Ulysses*—which he helped edit—to the fact that "the foecal analysis, in the hospital around the corner, is uncensored."¹⁵⁵ He believes that literature should be treated the same as any field depicting reality. He adds, "A great literary masterwork is made for minds quite as serious as those engaged in the science of medicine." These fields include "research and analysis, demanding the studies and imposing on its creator the duties of science ... seeking the facts." Pound's increasing references to the decay of civilization and of letters referred to more than his considerations of moving from London and even abandoning full-time literary pursuits. Within a year of leaving London, Pound staged his own death, mirroring the downfall of Mauberley.

Note Book. Calendar for 1914/15. Papers of Vivienne Haigh Eliot. MSS> Eng. Misc. e. 876-878 Ms. Eng. Misc. f. 532 Reel 3 of 3.

¹⁵³ Ezra Pound, "Affirmations VI: Analysis of this Decade," *New Age* 16.15 (11 February 1915), 409–11. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C179, 16–17 (p. 17). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Marvell Press, 1960), pp. 133–41.

¹⁵⁴ Ezra Pound, "Here's Your Chance, Washington University," *Much Ado*, 11.9 (1 November 1920), 2–3. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C603, p. 116.

¹⁵⁵ Ezra Pound, "Paris Letter: May, 1922. Ulysses [by James Joyce]," *Dial*, 72.6 (June 1922), 623–29. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), C642.

This thesis focuses on these three scientific aspects evident in Pound's poetry and prose between 1901 and 1921 — namely, scientific influences of the academic and institutional, the humanistic, and the hygienic. These scientific references are used by Pound as rhetoric rather than as a genuine understanding of the scientific methodologies and concepts. This research differs from existing publications about Pound and science in that it focuses primarily on Pound's references to the biological sciences and gives a historical and biographical context to his references. Additionally, it surveys fully the pertinent aspects of all of the available prose and poems written by Pound during these years, including some reference material only available in archives.

Various scholars have researched and published on the broad topic of Pound's use of science. Ian F. A. Bell's book *Critic as Scientist: The Modern Poetics of Ezra Pound* argues that Pound's modernism can be defined by his responses to scientific traditions and discoveries.¹⁵⁶ Bell's reading implies a high level of scientific understanding by Pound and portrays many possible sources of inspiration for Pound, from Henri Bergson to Henry James to John Dewey. These influences are primarily in the fields of philosophy and psychology, as Bell focuses less on the biological sciences and more heavily on metaphysics. Martin Kayman's book *The Modernism of Ezra Pound: The Science of Poetry*, however, takes a very different approach to examining the scientific in Pound's oeuvre.¹⁵⁷ Kayman views Pound's use of science as mere "phantasy" and argues that Pound had little if no real understanding of science. This use of rhetoric, Kayman argues, parallels Pound's use of the Image, which is viewed by Kayman as possessing a dual objective and subjective purpose. Kayman emphasizes the subjective, and even mystical, nature of the Image and asserts an influence of scientific mysticism on Pound by the Society for Psychical Research. Kayman extends this assertion in his chapter "A Model for Pound's Use of 'Science'" in the collection *Ezra Pound: Tactics for Reading*.¹⁵⁸ In this chapter, Kayman argues that Pound's science cannot be categorized as a materialistic science, as this science is associated with the nineteenth century that Pound so heavily criticized. Kayman looks primarily at Pound's language of energetics and emphasizes Pound's references to vitalism rather than to materialism. Paul Douglass's article in *Paideuma*, "Modernism and Science: The Case of Pound's ABC of Reading," examines Pound beyond the London years and focuses on

¹⁵⁶ Ian F. A. Bell, *Critic as Scientist: The Modernist Poetics of Ezra Pound* (New York: Methuen, 1981). Also Ian F. A. Bell, *The Critic as Scientist: Some Contexts for the Literary Criticism of Ezra Pound* (Reading: University of Reading doctoral thesis, 1978).

¹⁵⁷ Martin A. Kayman, *The Modernism of Ezra Pound: The Science of Poetry* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986). Also Martin Andrew Kayman, *Ezra Pound and the Phantasy of Science: An Introduction into the Relation between Pound's Poetic Techniques and His Political Ideology, Through the Image and Its Scientific Background*, DPhil Thesis 1978 (York: D.Phil. Thesis, 1978).

¹⁵⁸ Martin A. Kayman, "A Model for Pound's Use of 'Science,'" in *Ezra Pound: Tactics for Reading* (London: Vision Press, 1982), pp. 79–102.

Pound's encounters with influential figures such as Agassiz.¹⁵⁹ Douglass sees Pound, over the course of his entire career, adopt a "psychologic posture" towards the hard sciences, which led to a "conflation" between the hard sciences and the psychological sciences. Daniel Albright in his book *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, and the Science of Modernism* examines how these Modernist poets used scientific metaphors in their poetic theory.¹⁶⁰ Albright himself uses an extended metaphor of "elementary particles" to describe these scientific references. Like Douglass, Albright focuses much attention on Pound's career after London, and focuses almost exclusively on metaphysics or references to "wave-forms," particles, electrons, and energy of "modern science." Lastly, the material in Daniel Tiffany's book *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* most closely resembles the material of my thesis, as Tiffany focuses much of his attention on Pound's early career and identifies Pound's interest in the human body and biological sciences. However, Tiffany's argument varies drastically from my own; he argues that Pound's Imagism has an unempirical basis, and uses his book to focus on Pound's references to ghosts and spirits. Imagism, Tiffany argues, has an "antithetical character" and is a "movement without substance, by focusing primarily on poetics rather than on poems, theory rather than on practice."¹⁶¹

My thesis argues that Pound's conception of the Image evolves from an emphasis on the objective to an acceptance of the subjective, while maintaining an extensive use of the rhetoric of science. Pound's conception and portrayal of the Image functioned as a linguistic signifier for a signified concept that constantly changed and evolved during the development of his poetic theory. Pound's wide references to science and to scientific figures and influences—like most of his references—display his generalist tendencies, rather than a deep knowledge of the subject. Pound may have intended to portray a deeper understanding of science than what is reflected in his prose and poetry, but when he decided not to pursue his interest in medical studies at the end of his London career, he consciously admitted that he was not an expert in science. The conflation between the hard sciences and the psychological sciences, as argued by Douglass, is, in respects, one outcome of Pound's desire to incorporate *everything*—all types of sciences and subjects. This thesis attempts to look at the origins of this generalist tendency, focusing on one aspect of his many varied interests—science.

¹⁵⁹ Paul Douglass, "Modernism and Science: The Case of Pound's ABC of Reading," *Paideuma* 18.1–2 (Spring and Fall 1989), pp. 187–96.

¹⁶⁰ Daniel Albright, *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, and the Science of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁶¹ Daniel Tiffany, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In what could be considered Pound’s earliest attempt at an epic poem,¹⁶³ Ezra Pound placed academic scholars in a Dantesque hell. Begun during Pound’s undergraduate university education, the poem—labeled “ORBI CANTUM PRIMUM COSMOPOLITI E TOLERENTIAE CANO”—opens in grand epic terms. Pound compares the development of his epic project to Moses’ forty years of wandering in the wilderness:

not out of one vision but out of many have I made it
and forty the years of my wandering
have I set apart thereto, be it the spirit shall cause
me to finish it in less, or delay me the longer therein

Pound foresees a relevatory yet organic poem—one that will develop according to the needs of the subject and content. He also acknowledges a certain struggle—a “wandering” in forming the poem. As a result, his long poem will present a drifting narrative “not out of one vision but out of many,” portraying his desire for a multi-narrative poem composed of many “visions” or fragmented storylines. In one of these narratives in his early manuscript, Pound introduces a purgatorio, written in a style resembling the later Cantos—uncharacteristic for this period—with taut, incomplete lines, random line lengths, and much enjambment. He communicates the setting of an epic underworld not through a distinct subject-verb arrangement, but through two single-word images of Dante and Hell, polarized by two colons.

Dante :: Hell
The Spirit of Power dark, by the Sphinx
bidding me be strong to go forward .
I am the gate to Life. my toarch .

¹⁶² Ezra Pound, “How to Read,” in *Polite Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p. 155–92 (p. 162).

The paragraph reads, “Let us by all means glance at ‘philology’ and the ‘germanic system’. Speaking as an historian, ‘we’ may say that this system was designed to inhibit thought. After 1848 it was, in Germany, observed that some people thought. It was necessary to curtail this pernicious activity, the thinkists were given a china egg labelled scholarship, and were gradually unfitted for active life, or for any contact with life in general.”

¹⁶³ Various critical commentaries claim 1915 as the year in which Pound formally began the *Cantos*; however, there is evidence that Pound not only considered a long poem much earlier than 1915, but actually began drafts during his university undergraduate and postgraduate programs while formally studying epic poems, such as the *Divine Comedy*. The manuscript of the poem “ORBI CANTUM PRIMUM COSMOPOLITI E TOLERENTIAE CANO” is housed in the Beinecke Archives and published in part by A. David Moody and *Agenda* magazine in 1997. A. David Moody, “Dante as the Young Pound’s Virgil: Introduction to Some Early Drafts & Fragments,” *Agenda*, 34.3–4 (1997), pp. 65–88. Also cited in A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet, A Portrait of the Man and his Work*, Vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 45–46.

also. in Lomax. and later back calling in THE
meeting of the Winds.

Pound avoided rhyme or meter, possibly indicating that this draft was meant as mere notes or a first draft of an incomplete poem, considering Pound's ornate style of this period. This version of the canto therefore emphasizes the images and subjects of the poem segment, rather than linguistic conventions. Further in this manuscript's hell, Pound encounters a "desolate" place with "barren walls" whose inhabitants, with dry throats and dry voices, fail to communicate meaningfully and neglect any movement towards the light or opening of the cave.

Then through a place very desolate, full of fallen walls &
caverns filled
Broken, tumbled stone,
barren, without life, desolate,
dusky and it seemed to me without people,
when there came the sound of dry voices
& came upon a great concourse of people
some digging in the stony earth
& others chipping at the larger pieces of yellow rock,
and some peering with dulled eyes
at empty slabs as one that readeth in a failing light
& ever rattling in their dry throats, & all speaking together
so that none heard what his neighbour said.
& looking intently for some while I was not able to perceive
either that any one found anything
nor said anything new unto his fellow.
& when my wonder may have showed itself
the Florentine, before my question,
answered: "These be the searchers for dogmas
that go not onward to the light,
nor think thereon,
because of their will to make men from dead bones
and hope from ashes.
Who here seek some directions as to the way
forbidding that others go forward untill
they have accurately determined it
delaying their own & others salvation."

The inhabitants of hell—who become evident to the narrator's vision only after he adjusts his eyes and focuses on the scene—fail to read or communicate effectively. Their "dulled eyes" attempt to read "empty slabs" in the "failing light," and their "dry voices" are dulled

by the monotone ring of same-pitched voices. The narrator is portrayed as separate from, yet wandering among, these inhabitants, and he notes that none said “anything new” to the others. Dante, the narrator’s guide, then identifies these prisoners of the cavern: he labels them “searchers for dogmas” who, as in Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave,” refuse to move toward the light of the cavern’s entrance. Pound’s own allegory, incorporating the connotations of Plato’s classic allegory, also portrays layers of phenomenal experience. The allegory, for Plato as well as for Pound, could connote the various methods with which people experience the world. Pound’s cave is not only an empty space, but presents “barren” and “desolate” objects—symbolizing the emptiness of logic and rhetoric.

Considering Pound’s negative critique of academia beginning in this period, Pound is likely referencing formal academia, which he associates with the darkness of a cavern. He viewed professors and research students as merely “searching for dogmas” from the literature of the past, the dead bones and the ashes, in a race towards making their own discoveries, “untill they have accurately determined it.” This lack of hope for the future lies with the deadness of the past, resembling Pound’s view of dead modes of formal academia, with its use of traditional rhetoric. Pound, indeed, began this long poem with a stanza celebrating an escape or freedom from this competitive and dogmatic academia. He writes in the third line of this first stanza: “I have stripped off the bands of custom / and the swaddling clouts of shame / And my heart is free as the West wind.” The act of creatively writing poetry, then, is opposed to the images of a confining system, “the bands of custom” of a university structure to which Pound was bound during this time period for six years, from 1901 to 1907.

Similarly, Pound dismissed the specific academic field of philology as “a china egg labeled scholarship,”¹⁶⁴ a phrase implying a hollow or empty subject behind a fragile façade. This hollow state, like the barren cave, connotes Pound’s hostility toward philology and the modes of rhetoric it promotes and uses. Philology was commonly recognized as the branch of literary studies that focused on the structure, historical development, and relationships of languages.¹⁶⁵ He attributed the cause of this fragility to the excessive focus on language, rhetoric, and rationalization, which displaced, in his view, the main substance of literary studies: literature.¹⁶⁶ In a mock dialogue, written by Pound, between an American student and the sixteenth-century humanist Rabelais, the student claims, “the whole aim, or at least the drive, of modern philology is to make a man stupid; to turn his mind from the fire of

¹⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, “How to Read,” in *Polite Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), pp. 155–92 (p. 162).

¹⁶⁵ “philology, n.3” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

¹⁶⁶ Gail McDonald also writes about Pound’s critique of the rhetoric of academia in her book *Learning to Be Modern: Pound, Eliot, and the American University* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. viii.

genius and smother him with things unessential.”¹⁶⁷ This displacement of the literary substance or text and the limitations of a specialized system were Pound’s primary complaints against philology. The student in the dialogue contrasts pure humanism, or the discovery of and learning from the classics, with a modern academic philology program. “You speak of a time when scholarship was new, when humanism had not given way to philology,” he tells Rabelais. “The role of your monastery is now assumed by the ‘institutions of learning,’ the spirit of your class-room is found among a few scattered enthusiasts, men half ignorant in the present ‘scholarly’ sense, but alive with the spirit of learning, avid of truth, avid of beauty, avid of strange and out of the way bits of knowledge.” This portrayal of the ideal scholar, the “scattered enthusiast” who embodies a “spirit of learning” and who eagerly pursues “strange and out of the way bits of knowledge” exemplifies Pound’s own ideal of the pursuit of knowledge. When applying for a reader’s card at the British Museum reading room in 1908, after he formally abandoned academia, Pound refused to limit himself to the single line calling for a research topic. He listed his desire to “research ‘Latin Lyrist[sic] of the Renaissance,” but added his wish “to make a few notes on several scattered subjects.”¹⁶⁸

Pound’s initial plan to begin an epic contained various narratives and storylines deriding academia—a direction originating from his constant discomfort in the American university system. During this period, as Pound’s letters to his parents reveal, he was often overwhelmed with his university requirements; he “expect[ed] to have about time enough to take ½ breath to every 75 hours and 1/3 sneeze to every 150 weeks.”¹⁶⁹ His letters of these years and his later public criticism of university systems similarly cite a metaphorical deadening of life. With philology, in particular, Pound viewed the discipline as a stringent method of narrow scholarship that prevented a liberal or interdisciplinary examination of a subject. “This system was designed to inhibit thought,” writes Pound. He adds, philologists “were gradually unfitted for active life, or for any contact with life in general.”¹⁷⁰ Defined as a “systematic investigation of human language,”¹⁷¹ philology employed the systematic approach and investigative methods of the disciplines of science. William Gardner Hale, a prominent philologist who later publicly criticized Pound’s efforts at translation, aligns the

¹⁶⁷ Ezra Pound, “An Anachronism at Chinon,” *Little Review*, 4.2 (June 1917), 14–21. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C259, 208–15 (pp. 211–12).

¹⁶⁸ Ezra Pound Reader’s Ticket to the British Museum Reading Room dated 8 October 1908, British Library, ticket ref. no. A89730.

¹⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound dated 1905, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2650.

¹⁷⁰ Ezra Pound, “How to Read,” in *Polite Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), pp. 155–92 (p. 162).

¹⁷¹ Seth Lerer, “Introduction,” in *Literary History and the Challenge of Philology: The Legacy of Erich Auerbach*, ed. by Seth Lerer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 1–7 (p. 4).

discipline with the sciences: “Comparative philology, which deals with the forms or the syntax of several languages, and attempts to detect the operation of principles through which they have come to be what they are, is a science.”¹⁷² The early stages of philological study imitated the models of the natural sciences and attempted to discover mechanical laws of phonetics.¹⁷³ This movement, in conjunction with similar movements within the humanities, helped shape a new concept of liberal education and literary studies in the last decades of the nineteenth century in the United States.¹⁷⁴ Morton W. Easton, Pound’s professor of French at the University of Pennsylvania, states in a speech about philology that disciplines compete within the academy and therefore, he argues, philology should align itself with science. “The devotion paid to the physical sciences and, quite recently, to sociology, seem to have absorbed well-nigh all the energy of this decade,” he writes. “No one can doubt that the scientific study of the growth of the forms and syntax of the modern languages must, in the near future, be pursued, and should be pursued, with even more energy and enthusiasm than at present.”¹⁷⁵

As early as 1906, in his first published prose piece while still a postgraduate student, Pound expresses his contempt for philology and its Germanic roots. He identifies reasons for his criticism, first of which included his belief that philology dulled any passion a student might have for the study of language or literature. “The scholars of classic Latin, bound to the Germanic ideal of scholarship,” he writes, “are no longer able as of old to fill themselves with the beauty of the classics, and by the very force of that beauty inspire their students to read Latin widely and for pleasure; nor are they able to make students see clearly whereof classic beauty consists.”¹⁷⁶ Pound associates an enjoyment of study with a historically rooted sense of pleasure, opposing the newly emphasized professional or utilitarian purposes for study. This view corresponds with the changing definition of philology; until the nineteenth century, philology was defined broadly as a “love of learning and literature.”¹⁷⁷ Yet in the age of modernism, the usage shifted to the more specific and specialized “study of the historical development of language.” Additionally, Pound criticizes the excessive detail of philology, which precludes, he believes, a liberal arts education with a broad range of discoveries. “The scholar is compelled to spend most of his

¹⁷² William Garner Hale, “The Practical Value of Humanistic Studies,” *The School Review*, 19 (1911), 657–79 (p. 668).

¹⁷³ R. Howard Bloch, “New Philology and Old French,” *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 38–58. See also Peter Richardson, “The Consolation of Philology,” *Modern Philology*, 92 (1994), 1–13 (p. 2).

¹⁷⁴ William Riley Parker, “Where Do English Departments Come From?” *College English*, 28 (1967), 339–51 (p. 344).

¹⁷⁵ Morton W. Easton, “The Rhetorical Tendency in Undergraduate Courses,” *PMLA*, 4 (1889), 19–23 (p. 20).

¹⁷⁶ Ezra Pound, “Raphaelite Latin,” *Book News Monthly*, 25.1 (September 1906), 31–34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C2, 5–8 (p. 5).

¹⁷⁷ “philology, n.1” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

time,” he continues in his 1906 article, “in endless pondering over some utterly unanswerable question of textual criticism, such as ... ‘is a certain word *sica* or *secat*?’” Similarly, Pound criticizes the use of excessive rhetoric or rationalization, which he views as displacing the examined subject itself. He labels all philologists, and most academics in general, as rationalists, as opposed to empiricists. In his 1906 article, he describes academia as an empty or hollow pyramid and the blocks of this pyramid as rhetoric. “The scholar is bowed down to this Germanic ideal of scholarship,” he writes, “the life work of whose servants consists in gathering blocks to build a pyramid that will be of no especial use except as a monument.” He further describes this monument as carrying the scholars’ names “on the under side of some half-prominent stone, where by a chance—a slender one—some future stone-gatherer will find it.” His view, then, of philology is that it is a discipline dependent on excessive detail and reason, as opposed to meaningful subject matter, and is futile in making a lasting impression on the world. As a poet, he states that philologists scorn him as a “dilettante”: “No one knows the contempt and hatred that can be gathered into these few syllables until they have been hissed at him by one truly Germanized.”¹⁷⁸ Yet Pound ultimately is attempting to reverse the stereotypical roles of dilettante poet and specialized academic, as he labels the philologist as a producer of unsubstantive rhetoric while he implies that the generalist student or poet truly understands literature and its placement in the greater whole of knowledge.

Beginning with the Great War, Pound expressed his disdain for academia, and philology specifically, with the term *kultur*. His statements about kultur serve as a broad overview of Pound’s main arguments against academia during his London career. This Germanic word for “culture” used by Pound reversed any positive associations of the word in the early twentieth century and created, instead, a term connoting disgust. “If tyranny is visible in our modern world it is visible in the militarism of Germany,” he states in 1915.¹⁷⁹ However, he adds, “It is more insidiously present in ‘Kultur,’ i.e., German State-education, press campaigns, subsidized professors, etc.” Pound therefore attempts to convince the reader that the evident German militarism is a smaller threat than the “insidious” Germanic academic structures, waiting to entrap England. Two years later, in another *New Age* article, Pound again addresses kultur and associates it with philology and a diseased university system. “It has been possible to cook up for ‘the German’ so tempting a stew of anaesthetics that the whole nation was ‘fetched.’”¹⁸⁰ He believed that America was lured into this loss of

¹⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, “Raphaelite Latin,” *Book News Monthly*, 25.1 (September 1906), 31–34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C2, 5–8 (p. 5).

¹⁷⁹ Ezra Pound, “This Super-Neutrality,” *New Age*, 17.25 (21 October 1915), 595. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C209, p. 115.

¹⁸⁰ Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: I,” *New Age*, 21.11 (12 July 1917), 244–45. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C266, 231–32 (p. 232).

sensation or vitality, as its universities adopted aspects of the Germanic system. “America has been hauled out by the scruff of her neck. She had imbibed a good deal of the poison. Her universities were tainted.” He describes the German system as “evil wherever it penetrates” and as “a poisonous and most pestilent sort of pervasiveness. The drug is insidious and attractive.” Pound included in the series a continuation of the drug metaphor, in an attempt to censure the spread of German scholarship and as a warning of its reach into other lands. He pens a mock commandment, “Thou shalt not ‘save’ thy neighbour’s soul by any patent panacea or kultur.”¹⁸¹ In this particular comparison, Pound associates kultur with a patent cure-all medicine, a popular yet usually ineffective generic medicine. Along with associating the Germanic influence with a hazardous drug, Pound describes the concept of kultur as a contagious death-causing disease that continues to fester in the post-mortem body: “Kultur will still be found lurking by the grave of Munsterburg in the cemetery of the American universities.” Hugo Münsterberg, a German-American psychologist who promoted the spread of psychological theory in business, legal, and educational fields, had died just six months previous to this statement, and was publicly criticized for his loyalty to Germany during the First World War. Pound’s reference to his name further warned Americans of the ominous threat of Germanic influence. Possibly most revealing of Pound’s opposition to this form of academia, Pound contrasts kultur with the “real arts” and portrays the academic system as an empty set of theories without substance. “The kultur error,” Pound states, is “man being no use until you put an idea inside him. The idea that a man should be used ‘like a spindle,’ instead of existing ‘like a tree or a calf’ is very insidious.” He argues that man can individually learn and create without the structures of academia or a specialized field such as philology, and he implies his own belief in the inherent potential of man.

Additionally, Pound emphasizes the emptiness, or hollowness, that he associates with a field dealing solely, as he views it, with academic rhetoric. He uses the adjective *insidious* repeatedly to describe this empty promise of kultur, which appears beneficial and productive, yet in Pound’s view, is actually harmful. He returns to the hollow-image metaphor in this critique, labeling scholars of kultur an empty “spindle” rather than associating them with an image of solid substance. In this series, he again repeats his earlier, 1906 metaphor of kultur as an empty pyramid, yet additionally contrasts this hollow image with his concept of a substantive humanity. “It is evil because it holds up an ideal of ‘scholarship,’ not an ideal of humanity,” he writes. Scholarship, therefore, is a mere means to an end; it implies the “attainments of a scholar” and thereby places the emphasis on the scholar’s achievements rather than on the subject itself. Pound’s use of the term *humanity* in

¹⁸¹ Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: II,” *New Age*, 21.12 (19 July 1917), 268–69. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C267, 233–34 (p. 233).

this context corresponds with the definition of “language or literature concerned with human culture” and therefore places man—and his culture and literature—at the center of inquiry and study. Pound continues in his series by asserting that kultur “says in effect: you are to acquire knowledge in order that knowledge may be acquired. Metaphorically, you are to build up a dam’d and useless pyramid which will be no use to you or to anyone else, but which will serve as a ‘monument.’”¹⁸² Nine years after his original metaphor of the empty pyramid, Pound again incorporates the metaphor into his 1917 argument and explains that the blocks comprising the pyramid are the formal structures of academia that displace the research subject itself. Additionally, he appeals to the period’s utilitarian leanings by implying that a focus on the subjects of humanities would produce more useful results for mankind than would the traditions and structure of scholarship. He concludes that humanity—its literature and languages—is what deserves focus, not the mere structures of academia or the requirements of an increasingly specialized discipline. “Take a man’s mind off the human value of the poem he is reading (and in this case the human value is the art value), switch it on to some question of grammar and you begin his dehumanisation.”¹⁸³

Similarly, he criticizes the philologist’s fixation on seemingly trivial considerations instead of the general value of literature: “You cannot make a bred-in-the-bone philologist enjoy the quality of an author’s style rather than the peculiarity of his morphological forms.” Pound illustrates this loss of an ability to enjoy literature in his comparison of scholars with machinery. “The humanist ideals of the Renaissance are sounder than any that have been evolved in an attempt to raise ‘monuments’ of scholarship; of hammering the student into a piece of mechanism for the accretion of details, and of habituating men to consider themselves as bits of mechanism for one use or another: in contrast to considering first what use they are in being.”¹⁸⁴ Pound considers the *being* and the ontology of humanity, comprised of mankind and substantive literary materials. He contrasts this with the mere “monuments” or structures of academia and the drive of specialization for utilitarian output, thereby reducing the substance of literature to mere “accretion of details.” Further, he alleges that academia forces a student to become a mere machine or mechanism for compiling details, in a process he labels the “magnetising and mechanising of men.” He insists on man’s individuality and the view that “no man is merely a unit” that could be magnetized or grouped into one classified system.

¹⁸² Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: I,” *New Age*, 21.11 (12 July 1917), 244–45. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C266, 231–32 (232).

¹⁸³ Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: III,” *New Age*, 21.13 (26 July 1917), 288–89. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C268, 234–35 (p. 234).

¹⁸⁴ Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: I,” *New Age*, 21.11 (12 July 1917), 244–45. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C266, 231–32 (232).

Further in this installment, Pound continues with the mechanical metaphor and claims, “‘Kultur’ has propounded a mechanical complication for the deadening of the faculties.”¹⁸⁵ He associates the discipline of humanities to its human core—the “points that concern mankind, or appeal to human sensibilities.”¹⁸⁶ He contrasts this individuality with a bureaucratic academia that also relates to a “State” that limits individual freedom. “The ‘State’ forgot the ‘use’ of ‘man’ ... the use of the individual,” he writes. His condemnation of kultur relates not only to academia, but a whole Germanic state and the idea of a controlling power. This view of the Germanic academy corresponds with the university’s role in the unification of the German Empire after 1871. While the universities remained the responsibility of the separate state governments, the uniformity of the academic traditions in universities throughout the empire helped solidify the process of unification among the young generations of Germany.¹⁸⁷ Pound opposes this sense of nationalistic unification and emphasizes the importance of the individual in the study of literature, as humanity—or a concern for mankind—is at the core of its origins. “The moment you teach a man to study literature not for his own delight, but for some exterior reason, a reason hidden in vague and cloudy words such as ‘monuments of scholarships,’ ‘exactness,’ ‘soundness,’ etc., ‘service to scholarship,’ you begin his destruction, you begin to prepare his mind for all sorts of acts to be undertaken for exterior reasons ‘of States,’ etc. without regard to their merit.”¹⁸⁸ Pound returns to the designation of scholarship as unsubstantial and regards the traditions of academia as “vague and cloudy words” or rhetoric without substance. He explains that the material of scholarly enquiry, and its connection with humanity, should be weighted or valued over any rationalizing processes. “The human value as against the rationalistic explanation is always the weightier.” The rationality of philology, he views, is “dehumanisation” derived from “universities of Deutschland” that eschewed “grundrissen,” or the basics or fundamentals. This ignoring of the liberal arts in preference of specialization “divides facts into the known and the unknown, the arranged and the unarranged” while calling for “a retabulation of data, and a retabulation of tables already retabulated.” This methodological process turns men into mere machines and encourages “man [to] mak[e] himself into a tank or a refrigerator for as much information as he enjoys holding.” Pound views this kultur as encouraging a hollow man, or unsubstantial man who merely takes in information without individually or creatively integrating it with an active life.

¹⁸⁵ Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: III,” *New Age*, 21.13 (26 July 1917), 288–89. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C268, 234–35 (p. 234).

¹⁸⁶ “humanity, n.1b” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

¹⁸⁷ Robert David, *European Universities from the Enlightenment to 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 151.

¹⁸⁸ Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: III,” *New Age*, 21.13 (26 July 1917), 288–89. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C268, 234–35 (p. 234).

Pound summarizes his malevolence towards academia in 1918, a year after publishing his *New Age* series: “Kultur is an abomination; philology is an abomination, all repressive uniforming education is an evil.”¹⁸⁹ At the end of Pound’s London career, he expressed his opinion of kultur to the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*. Identifying kultur with his earlier opinions, Pound ranks the status of philology below the status of science, thereby attempting to disconnect any legitimate scientific associations from philology:

“England is largely insensitised,” Mr Pound continued, “suffering from the same poison that exists in German Kultur and in the American university system, and which aims at filling the student’s head full of facts to paralyze him with data instead of developing his perspicacity. And yet any scientist is anxious to have his instruments highly sensitised.”¹⁹⁰

Despite the public associations of science with philology, Pound refuses this status to the discipline and to academia. Pound believes, instead, that science requires “instruments highly sensitized,” or a sensible awareness of objects, forces, or the material associated with mankind. As the term *humanity* includes a relation “to human sensibilities,” the sciences and the humanities are connected through the capabilities of the human senses. For Pound, the connection of the sciences and the humanities is man himself. Therefore, science for Pound relates to the primary material, direct perception, and empirical evidence of a pure or fundamental science, rather than to its associated rationalization and methodologies. This view of science corresponds with the “modern devaluation of metascientific functions” since the early nineteenth century.¹⁹¹ Philosophy and science shared a unity in their explanations of the world until the “philosophical function of stabilizing the modern world became obsolete,”¹⁹² an issue which Kant began to examine as early as the Enlightenment.¹⁹³

Pound’s consideration of knowledge, or his epistemology, involves direct interaction or perception. He values knowledge itself rather than the processes of distribution of this information through the formal structures of academia. He sets out his admiration for knowledge in *The Spirit of Romance*: “Dante or Dante’s intelligence may come to mean ‘Everyman’ or ‘Mankind,’ whereat his journey becomes a symbol of

¹⁸⁹ Ezra Pound, “In Explanation,” *Little Review*, 5.4 (August 1918), 5–9. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C380, 142–45 (145).

¹⁹⁰ Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 295.

¹⁹¹ Jost Halfman, “The Dethroning of the Philosophy of Science: Ideological and Technical Functions of the Metasciences,” in *Methodology, Metaphysics, and the History of Science*, ed. by Robert Sonn  (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing, 1984), pp. 149–72 (164).

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹⁹³ Patricia Kitcher notes in her introduction to Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, “One of Kant’s basic messages in the Critique—perhaps his most basic—is that philosophy errs when it tries to draw metaphysical conclusions about the way the world is apart from our knowledge on the basis of epistemological arguments about how we do or must acquire knowledge of the world.” In Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason: Unified Edition*, ed. by Patricia Kitcher, trans. By Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1997), pp. xxv–jiii (xxvii).

mankind's struggle upward out of ignorance into the clear light."¹⁹⁴ Like the image of light at the cavern's entrance in Pound's early epic attempt, Pound associates "clear light" with individually obtained intelligence. Even his book's title, *The Spirit of Romance*, alludes to Pound's view that knowledge of literature relates to a type of "spirit" that should be met with due pleasure.

Corresponding with Pound's embrace of knowledge outside the rigors of academia, Pound also correlates science with pure knowledge, rather than with the methodologies used to obtain scientific findings. His focus is on the empirical sciences, rather than the theories of science resulting from scientific reductionism. This focus correlates with his view of philology: while embracing literature and languages, Pound eschews the methods and mechanistics of philology. He relates theory and methodological procedure to rhetoric, which he associates with philology and classified fields organized with a scientific basis. Philosophers of science would argue that scientific reductionism results almost instinctively from the evidence of empirical science, or the basic objects and forces of scientific observation. Jürgen Habermas, for example, argues that modernity actually evolved out of eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophy, which developed objective science, law, art, and universal concepts of modernity "for the rational organization of everyday social life."¹⁹⁵ As has been noted by scientific theorists, the rationalization of experience necessarily accompanies the processes of objectification.¹⁹⁶ The scientific method, additionally, is based on a circular dependence of theory and observation. Pound, however, refuses to view the interrelation of theory with science, and the interrelation of materialistic science and its rational effects—preferring instead to focus on the empirical fundamentals of science. He is apprehensive of a dominance of reason in science, which he believes would overshadow the fundamental objects and forces themselves. Rationalization does not, in Pound's view, add to pure knowledge; it merely organizes and structures this knowledge—thus leading further from an individual's ability to creatively process or use the material. Pound views this "materia poetica"¹⁹⁷ as the same material—objects and forces—observed in empirical science. This connection in fundamental subject matter is Pound's connection between art and science.

As early as his university studies in Pennsylvania, Pound indicates a rejection of philology in favor of focusing on the text itself. "There is nothing I approach with such

¹⁹⁴ Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910), p. 127.

¹⁹⁵ Jürgen Habermas, qtd. in Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations* (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), p. 233.

¹⁹⁶ Michael Bury, "Postmodernity and Health," in *Medicine and Health: Medical Sociology towards 2000*, ed. by Graham Scambler and Paul Higgs (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–28 (9).

¹⁹⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to William Carlos Williams dated 21 October 1908, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 37.

nausea and disgust,” he writes his professor Felix Schelling, “as Roman life (Das Privatleben). Of course if you consider the latter of more importance, I shall endeavor to make my hate do as good work as my interest.”¹⁹⁸ During his own studies, Pound rejected the German-labeled *privatleben*, or private life, affiliated with the study of philology, since material extraneous to the text would displace the text itself. In his introduction to *The Spirit of Romance*, Pound begins by claiming, “This book is not a philological work ... I am interested in poetry,” separating the fields of philology and poetry.¹⁹⁹ He then indicates his desire for a type of pure literature or fundamental literature, parallel to the concept of empirical science: “I have floundered somewhat ineffectually through the slough of philology, but I look forward to the time when it will be possible for the lover of poetry to study poetry—even the poetry of recondite times and places—without burdening himself with the rags of morphology, epigraphy, *privatleben* and the kindred delights of the archaeological or ‘scholarly’ mind.” He incorporates a metaphor to describe the similarities between science and literature, as he asserts, “there are a number of sciences connected with the study of literature.”²⁰⁰ In a comparison of art to a river, he includes details of the banks, the water color, and the river bed. “The scientist,” he states, “is concerned with all of these things, the artist with that which flows.” The material of interest to both the scientist and the artist, then, is the river itself—“that which flows.” While scientists can become overly precise in their investigation of the various aspects of the river, the convergence of science and art is the fundamental subject perceived. In May 1913, Pound specified the similarities between the “intellectual impulse” of literature and the “scientific impulse.”²⁰¹ The impulse, or force, of both science and literature was the material used that could not be refuted or changed through opinion or reasoning. “The force of a work of art is this, namely, that the artist presents his case, as fully or as minutely as he may choose. You may agree or disagree, but you cannot refute him. He is not to be drawn into argument or weakened by quibbling.” Like science, the impulse or force of the discipline of arts is derived from its ability to withstand argument. The strength of literature, therefore, is “the work itself,” as Pound notes, not “sham” or “false expression” or “argument [that] begets but argument and reflective reason.” As Pound reveals in a February 1915 letter to the editor of *New Age*, he is less concerned with the reasoning behind science than with the sensibilities and objects to

¹⁹⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to Felix Emanuel Schelling dated January 15 from Wyncote, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Felix Emanuel Schelling Papers, Folder 8.

¹⁹⁹ Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910), p. i. The introduction is labeled “Praefatio ad Lectorem Electum.”

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

²⁰¹ Ezra Pound, “Chances and Remedies: I,” *New Age*, 13.1 (1 May 1913), pp. 9–10. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C79, 139–40 (139).

which science points. “I do not pretend to understand the mind of Pyramus,” Pound notes, with reference to the irrational character of Roman literature, “neither can I explain why an electrical current generates pattern (demonstrable through certain instruments), nor why grass seed grows into grass (under certain conditions), nor why acorns grow into oaks, or why salt tastes salty.”²⁰² Human perception is emphasized as he lists observations obtained through the human senses. Additionally, Pound focuses on the observation itself rather than the methodology of tracking this observation; he addresses the instruments that can record electrical currents, yet he admits he fails to understand the workings of these instruments, just as he fails to understand why “salt tastes salty.” He confirms the evident electrical current and its pattern, as noted through human perception using scientific instruments—Ernest R. Rutherford had measured the distribution of an electrical charge within the atom in 1910, and three years later, Robert Millikan measured the electric charge on a single electron. Yet ultimately, Pound is concerned with sensations and perception, rather than the methodology of this perception. His knowledge of science, therefore, is at a basic, fundamental level and interests Pound predominantly because of its objective connection with poetry.

Pound’s various interests in the work of scientists and polymaths develop from this attention to this connection between science and literature. In his first part of a series introducing English readers to Remy de Gourmont, Pound identifies the materialist leanings of the author, in contrast to earnest political theoreticians of the period:

And I call the reader to witness that he, de Gourmont, differed from Fabians, Webbists, Shavians (all of whom, along with all dealers in abstractions, are ultimately futile). He differed from them in that his thoughts had the property of life. They, the thoughts, were all related to life, they were immersed in the manifest universe while he thought them, they were not cut out, put on shelves and in bottles.²⁰³

Pound associated these various groups of the period with “abstraction” and associated de Gourmont with the “thoughts” on the “property of life.” Non-abstract thinking, he states, relates to “the manifest universe” or to phenomena that can be observed through the human senses. He derides the eminence of this abstract thought in popular culture and labels the use of abstraction, “the worship of unintelligent, ‘messy’ energy.”²⁰⁵ Pound’s association of energy with mess correspond with the “apprehension of indeterminism” following the

²⁰² Ezra Pound, “Imagism” [letter to the editor], *New Age*, 16.15 (11 February 1915), p. 415. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C180, p. 18.

²⁰³ Ezra Pound, “Remy de Gourmont: I,” *Fortnightly Review*, 98.588 (1 December 1915), 1159–66 (p. 1164). In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C213, 125–32 (130).

²⁰⁵ Ezra Pound, “Remy de Gourmont: I,” *Fortnightly Review*, 98.588 (1 December 1915), 1159–66 (p. 1164). In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C213, 125–32 (126).

nineteenth-century discoveries in natural and social sciences.²⁰⁶ The empiricism of the nineteenth century emphasized that all knowledge was sense experience. New scientific theories, particularly in physics such as the special theory of relativity in 1905 and the theory of general relativity in 1916, were circumspect precisely because of their highly speculative bases.²⁰⁷ The question of whether matter and forces behaved like waves or particles, for example, was a well-debated subject for the late nineteenth century, and proposed theories about this subject were speculative or analytic,²⁰⁸ based on mathematical principles, until actual observational experiments emerged in the beginning of the twentieth century. Universal forces at subatomic levels behaved differently from everyday sensory experience, and therefore initially seemed—to public onlookers such as Pound—outside the realm of sense experience and dependent on rationalization.²⁰⁹ Pound associates rationalization with abstract thought—as he views both as unconnected to an empirical object—and labels both as mess and even unintelligence. In this same article, Pound praises de Gourmont’s loyalty to observation, as he “watch[es] his own experiment in laboratory” and writes with “scientific dryness.” Pound then relates this empiric observation to poetic observation. “I know there is much superficial modernity,” he writes. “The first difficulty in a modern poem is to give a feeling of the reality of the speaker, the second, given the reality of the speaker, to gain any degree of poignancy in one’s utterance.” Pound’s notion of “superficial modernity” is associated with the “feeling of the reality.” Pound seems to admit the unreality of description on a page, yet he urges the modernist writer to attempt to recreate reality as much as possible. Pound’s conception of reality in poetry corresponds with his views about academia and its effects on society’s philosophical thought. In this article on de Gourmont, Pound asserts that England is “safe” with the tendency to not “believe in ideas” or rely solely on theory, while, he adds, “Germany has got decidedly and disgustingly drunk.” He praises Paris as “the laboratory of ideas [where] poisons can be tested, and new modes of sanity be discovered. It is there that the antiseptic conditions of the laboratory exist.”²¹⁰ Pound acknowledges the reputation of academic systems of each nation; England was still known for the Arnoldian values of the liberal arts,²¹¹ Germany for

²⁰⁶ David Trotter, *Cooking with Mud: The Idea of Mess in Nineteenth-Century Art and Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 116.

²⁰⁷ Michael Bell, “The Metaphysics of Modernism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, ed. by Michael Harry Levenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 9–32 (p. 11).

²⁰⁸ Michael Martin, “How to Be a Good Philosopher of Science: A Plea for Empiricism in Matters Methodological,” in *Methodology, Metaphysics, and the History of Science*, ed. by Robert Sonn e (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing, 1984), pp. 33–42 (p. 33).

²⁰⁹ Michael Bell, “The Metaphysics of Modernism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, ed. by Michael Harry Levenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 9–32 (p. 11).

²¹⁰ Ezra Pound, “Remy de Gourmont: I,” *Fortnightly Review*, 98.588 (1 December 1915), 1159–66 (p. 1164). In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C213, 125–32 (p. 127).

²¹¹ Laurence W. Mazzeno, *Matthew Arnold* (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1999).

its unchallenged prestige and specialization,²¹² and France for its distinctness from a Germanic system while retaining a dual system of faculties and specialized schools.²¹³ Pound asserts his own preference for an educational system that does not emphasize mere theory, but its experiments and fact. Similarly, in his 1919 “Hellenist Series,” Pound states, “‘ideas’ as the term is current, are poor two-dimensional stuff, a scant, scratch covering. ‘Damn ideas anyhow.’ An idea is only an imperfect induction from fact.”²¹⁴ After heralding fact above ideas or induction, Pound then narrows his invective against ideas in general to ideas within poetry. He states, “obscurities ... occur when the author is piercing, or trying to pierce into, uncharted regions.” He emphasizes the objective over the theoretical using newly acknowledged scientific findings: “The solid, the ‘last atom of force verging off into the first atom of matter’ is the force, the emotion, the objective sight of the poet.” Two years later, Pound attempts to “sort out the real from the academic” and places the classifications of the “real” and of academia into separate dichotomies.²¹⁵ In December 1920, Pound describes a recording machine that was placed near the Seine for observation by a scientist “perched on the top of the bath-house in the Seine, under an umbrella.”²¹⁶ He described the recording device and states his belief that it could bring objective evidence to the study of linguistics. “This little machine with its two fine horn-point recording needles,” he writes, “and the scrolls for registering the ‘*belles vibrations*’ offers a very interesting field of research for professors of phonetics, and, I think, considerable support, for those simple discriminations which the better poets have made, without being able to support them by much more than ‘feel’ and ‘intuition.’” Just as the field of linguistics could benefit from basic scientific evidence apart from induction, the field of poetry, he states, could use “scientific justification of *vers libre*.” He believes that pure evidence in linguistics could prove that *vers libre* is the authentic mapping of natural human speech. “The scientific proofs that a lot of ‘rule’ and ‘laws’ of prosody as taught in the text-books,” he states, could be proven to “have no sort of relation to spoken reality,” and therefore, poetic forms such as *vers libre* could be “taken a little more seriously.” Pound is therefore attempting to argue

²¹² Robert David, “Chapter 11—Germany: Academic Golden Age” in *European Universities from the Enlightenment to 1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 151–61 (p. 153).

²¹³ Robert David, “Chapter 12—France” in *European Universities from the Enlightenment to 1914*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 176–90 (p. 180). The dual system of faculties and specialized schools, however much a natural produce of French political conditions, was now thought inferior to the integrated German universities, and the reform movement sought to introduce to France their seriousness, scholarship, and corporate independence.

²¹⁴ Ezra Pound, “Hellenist Series By Ezra Pound: V. Aeschylus,” *Egoist*, 6.1 (January/February 1919), pp. 6–9. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C433, 258–60 (258).

²¹⁵ Ezra Pound, “Historical Survey,” *Little Review*, 8.1 (Autumn 1921), pp. 39–42. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C628, 187–89 (p. 188).

²¹⁶ Ezra Pound, “The Island of Paris: A Letter,” *Dial*, 69.6 (December 1920), pp. 635–39. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C607, 121–23 (123).

that *vers libre* is an organic or natural expression of speech and also could be considered the basic material of science. The understanding of language, he argues, should follow a descriptivist understanding of actual language usage rather than mere language rules based on theory.

Like the term *kultur*, Pound associates the English term *culture* with academics. He views the concept of culture as a hollow shell, merely imitating the pure subject—art— itself. The primary definition of the term denotes the cultivation and development of the mind, faculties and manners, and improvement by education and training.²¹⁷ Yet Pound's treatment of the term mirrors his view of the academic displacement of materialistic science or observable data in its preference for theory and rhetoric. The traditions and behaviors associated with academia, he argues, displace the material of scholarship. In 1912, Pound asserts that he “detest[s] an education which tends to separate a man from his fellows.”²¹⁸ He focuses on the broken link between academia and reality, and views universities as creating a mere shell around the pure subject. “Yet where we have now culture and a shell,” he says, “we shall some day have the humanities and a centre.”²¹⁹ His plan for this transformation involves an incorporation of science into the development of disciplines including the arts, but with a refined compilation of objective results. “I detest what seems to me the pedantry of the ‘Germanic system,’ although I am not insensible to the arguments in favour of this method and mechanism. I want all the accuracy of this system, but I want a more able synthesis of the results.” His plans for using the results of scientific observation include “a certain carelessness, or looseness, if you will; a hatred of the sordid, an ability to forget the part for the sake of the whole, a desire for largeness, a willingness to stand exposed.” His method for creating a genuine culture and overturning imitations of culture would involve a creative use of findings and discoveries and an ability to relate these findings to a greater whole. Pound believed that artists had consistently associated themselves with the educated, or cultured, classes, and that this association had damaged their creative work. “There has been a generation of artists who were content to permit a familiarity between themselves and the ‘cultured’ and, even worse, with the ‘educated,’ two horrible classes composed of suburban professors and their gentler relations.”²²⁰ He aligns the terms *cultured* and *educated*, and his use of quotation marks introduces a tinge of sarcasm, implying that Pound views their culture and education as superficial. He uses other

²¹⁷ “culture, n.5a” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

²¹⁸ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia” *New Age*, 12.2 (14 November 1912), 33–34. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C63, p. 107.

²¹⁹ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia” *New Age*, 12.2 (14 November 1912), 33–34. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C63, p. 107.

²²⁰ Ezra Pound, “The New Sculpture,” *Egoist*, 1.4 (16 February 1914), 67–68. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C128, 221–22 (p. 221).

terms of superficiality to associate this lack of depth with the adoption of culture. “We are sick to death of the assorted panaceas, of the general acquiescence of artists, of their agreement to have perfect manners.”²²¹ He questions the effectiveness of the cure-all promise of culture and the adoption of this “perfect” culture among artists. A year earlier, he associated culture with patent medicine: “The profits of monopoly after monopoly have been poured into the endowments of universities and libraries, and into the collection of works of art,” he writes in May 1913. “And any hoax that is even labelled ‘culture’ will sell like patent medicine. That this does little good to the arts I grant you.”²²²

Having dismissed this empty concept of culture, Pound sets out plans to revitalize the arts and to create a new civilization. His call for a rejuvenated culture corresponds with the earliest usage of the word from the fifteenth-century cultivation of soil or the tillage of the land, which has developed into the modern, biological use of *culture* meaning the propagation and growing of microorganisms or cells.²²³ Like the original definition of culture, Pound’s use of the term relates to a natural cultivation of knowledge and literature.²²⁴ His use of the words *virtu*, *essence*, *primary*, and *pure* in his descriptions of ideal scholarship and literature emphasizes his promotion of empirical science, direct or unbiased knowledge, and organic presentation.²²⁵ Pound describes his ideal form of poetry as a natural, organic process of evolution, rather than a learned form. “Some poems may have form as a tree has form,” he wrote in his Imagist “Credo” in 1912.²²⁶ The sophistication of Imagism, he argues, is partially evident in its *vers libre*, which develops and branches into a form appropriate to the subject of the poem.²²⁷ This method of allowing the content or object of the poem to shape the poem’s form is illustrated in the original

²²¹ Ezra Pound, “The New Sculpture,” *Egoist*, 1.4 (16 February 1914), 67–68. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C128, 221–22 (p. 222).

²²² Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: II,” *New Age*, 13.2 (8 May 1913), 34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C80, 140–41 (p. 140).

²²³ “culture, n.3a” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

²²⁴ Pound distinguishes between a natural cultivation of culture and a forced culture in his later 1938 book *Guide to Kulchur*: “The point for my purposes is that the man in the street in England and the U.S.A. 1938 lumps ’em all in with the highbrows ... I mean as distinct from roast beef and the facts of life, as distinct from the things that come natural, ideas that he drinks in with his ‘mother’s milk.’” *Guide to Kulchur* (London: Faber and Faber, 1938), p. 26.

²²⁵ As Laura Dassow Walls states, “Pound encodes the fable of modernism: the eye learns to see pure truth, unimpeded by the mediation of history and culture, or so-called ‘vulgar knowledge’. Modern thinking sorts out pure nature from pure culture then melds the two into signature icon of modernism—that irreducible hybrid—the ‘organic’ whole.” Laura Dassow Walls, “Textbooks and Texts from the Brooks: Inventing Scientific Authority from America,” *American Quarterly*, 49.1 (1997): 1–25 (6).

²²⁶ Ezra Pound, “Prologomena,” *Poetry Review*, 1.2 (February 1912), 72–76. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C38, 59–63 (p. 60).

²²⁷ Peter Howarth, *British Poetry in the Age of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 24–25.

version of Pound's first published canto, printed in *Poetry* magazine in June 1917.²²⁸ Pound takes the "one" Sordello—of Browning's poem—and allows this "one" to tell his story in an organic, natural form. Pound's version of Sordello is portrayed as mere rags, stuffed in a bag, and even as a fish net with which Pound catches slimy sardines. Yet the sardines and rags are valued as "an art-form" and as "the marrow of wisdom." The "truth," he says, is "inside the discourse," rather than merely the "booth" or "speech" of the poem. The object of the poem is the truthful or pure knowledge—the marrow of wisdom—while the speech or words are only the poem's structure or skeleton, holding truth or meaning in its marrow.

Hang it all, there can be but one *Sordello*!
 But say I want to, say I take your whole bag of tricks,
 Let in your quirks and tweeks, and say the thing's an art-form,
 Your *Sordello*, and that the modern world
 Needs such a rag-bag to stuff all its thought in;
 Say that I dump my catch, shiny and silvery
 As fresh sardines flapping and slipping on the marginal cobbles?
 (I stand before the booth, the speech; but the truth
 Is inside this discourse—this booth is full of the marrow of wisdom.)
 Give up th' intaglio method.²²⁹

Pound insists that his "rag-bag" is an "art-form," despite established definitions and conventions of poetry. With his consideration of the content, or the marrow of wisdom, Pound additionally described his views in terms of established convention. He insists that the content of poetry is comprised of "the elements," or the pure knowledge that science presents, thereby aligning poetry with science through their shared materials. "Nature contains the elements," Pound begins in his memoir *Gaudier-Brzeska*.²³⁰ "It is to be noted that one is not forbidden any element, any key because it is geological rather than vegetable, or because it belongs to the realm of magnetic currents or to the binding properties of steel girders and not to the flopping of grass or the contours of the parochial churchyard. 'The artist is born to pick and choose, and group with science, these elements'" [emphasis his].²³¹ This shared subject matter is what Pound uses to justify his grouping of literature with science. Pound writes in his 1913 "The Serious Artist" series, "The arts, literature, poesy, are a science, just as chemistry is a science. Their subject is man, mankind and the

²²⁸ Ezra Pound, "Three Cantos: I," *Poetry*, 10.111 (June 1917), 113–21.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

²³⁰ Pound quotes James Abbott McNeill Whistler, whose Tate exhibition Pound mentions in a 1912 article. Ezra Pound, "Patria Mia: VIII," *New Age*, 11.26 (24 October 1912), 611–12. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C59, p. 103.

²³¹ Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), p. 125. Whistler's quotation, used by Pound, reads, "Nature contains the elements ... But the artist is born to pick, and choose, and group with science, these elements, that the results may be beautiful—as the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords." James Abbott McNeill Whistler, qtd. in John Rotherstein, *A Pot of Paint: The Artists of the 1890s* (Manchester, NH: Ayer Publishing, 1970), p. 100.

individual.”²³² Pound again grouped poetry with science in his Imagism manifesto, in which he listed as his first “rule” to poetry, “Direct treatment of the ‘thing’.” To this list of rules, he adds that the Imagists “consider that Art is all science, all religion, philosophy and metaphysic.”²³³ He implies a selfless presentation of information without personal bias or opinion, further aligning poetry to the sciences. In the same year that he revealed Imagism publicly, Pound declared that poetry is “constation of fact. It presents. It does not comment. It is irrefutable because it doesn’t present a personal predilection for any particular fraction of the truth.”²³⁴ Pound is separating poetry from rhetoric or logic. If poetry presents fact, it remains outside the realm of argument. He then aligns this recording of direct perception with nature: “It is as communicative as Nature. It is as uncommunicative as Nature. It is not a criticism of life. I mean it does not deal in opinion. It washes its hands of theories.”²³⁵

ORGANIZATION

The term *organization* is related to the term *organism* through a shared etymological root, the Greek *organon*, meaning an instrument that helped an individual’s living.²³⁶ The primary definition of the word *organization* additionally alludes to the natural organization of organic materials: “The development or coordination of parts (of the body, a body system, cell, etc.) ... Also: the way in which a living thing is organized; the structure of (any part of) an organism.”²³⁷ The term *organism* denotes “organic structure” and “a whole with interdependent parts, compared to a living being, an organic system.”²³⁸ It is this natural structure of an organism to which Pound seems to relate when he speaks of organization, form, or order. The form of a poem should appropriately fit the poem’s content, and therefore its organization should develop naturally. Additionally, the poem as a whole—both content and form—takes precedence over the precise details of the structure; the whole is valued over the parts. “Personally,” he states in 1911, “I think the *corpus poetarum* of more importance than any cell or phalange, and shall continue in sin.”²³⁹ The poem as a whole depends on its appropriate structure and the interplay of the lines against

²³² Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: I–II,” *New Freewoman*, 1.9 (15 October 1913), 161–63. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C106, 186–88 (p. 186).

²³³ F. S. Flint, “Imagisme,” *Poetry*, 1.6 (March 1913), 198–200. The document is recognized as having been written by both Flint and Pound. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C73a, p. 119.

²³⁴ Ezra Pound, “The Approach to Paris: V,” *New Age*, 13.23 (2 October 1913), 662–64 (662).

²³⁵ Ezra Pound, “The Approach to Paris: V,” *New Age*, 13.23 (2 October 1913), 662–64 (662).

²³⁶ Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), p. 21.

²³⁷ “organization, n.1a” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

²³⁸ “organism, n.1, 2a” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

²³⁹ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: II,” *New Age*, 10.6 (7 December 1911), 130–31. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C26, 46–47 (p. 47). Part I of this second part of the series is labeled “A Rather Dull Introduction.”

each other. Similarly, Pound described a poem's structure as evolving from its internal energy and was careful to distinguish this organic form from any derived, learned structure. He describes the "pattern" of a poem, and clarifies, "Perhaps I should say, not pattern, but pattern-units, or units of design. ... I am using this term 'pattern-unit,' because I want to get away from the confusion between 'pattern' and 'applied decoration.'"²⁴⁰ Pound avoids the threat of a poem's natural energy becoming obscured through excess decoration, and he distinguishes a poetic pattern from a pattern-unit. The pattern-unit, he states, is not a copied form from another source; rather, it creates the overall Image and evolves from the "subjective" mind or from the "objective ... external scene." He asserts that whether the Image originates from the mind or from a perceived object, "in either case the Image is more than an idea." The Imagist poem therefore avoids a strict structure or ornament that would obscure the natural Image and uses only "direct treatment." In this article, Pound labels the poet "a good seismograph" that can accurately record observations and pattern-units. The poet can "start his machinery going," and, like the "machine," can "produce order-giving vibrations." "The vorticist maintains that the 'organizing' or creative-inventive faculty is the thing that matters; and that the artist having this faculty is a being infinitely separate from the other type of artist who merely goes on weaving arabesques out of other men's 'units of form.'"

Pound relates his ideas about organization to academia, as he views the organizational tendency as a foundation of scholarship. "It divides facts into the known and the unknown, the arranged and the unarranged," he states.²⁴¹ He further implies that a university displaces the subject in its drive towards organization. He speaks of this organizational tendency: "It talks about the advancement of learning and demands 'original research,' i.e., a retabulation of data, and a retabulation of tables already retabulated." This strict methodological approach to dealing with subjects, Pound argues, has spread like "bacilli" from "the university to the Press and to the people." Ultimately, this stringent methodology not only displaces the subject, but it strips enjoyment from the learning and observation processes. Pound asserts that the negative effects of a structured academia are most detrimental to students. He referred to his own undergraduate education in retrospect: "Entered U.P. Penn at 15 with intention of studying comparative values in literature (poetry) and began doing so unbeknown to the faculty."²⁴² From the beginning of his university career, he asserts, the established academic organization worked to thwart his interests and

²⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, "Affirmations IV: As for Imagisme," *New Age*, 16.13 (28 January 1915), 349–51 (p. 349).

²⁴¹ Ezra Pound, "Provincialism the Enemy: III," *New Age*, 21.13 (26 July 1917), 288–89. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C268, 234–35 (234).

²⁴² K. K. Ruthven, *Ezra Pound as Literary Critic* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 6.

progress.²⁴³ He continued his retrospective report on his undergraduate experience at the University of Pennsylvania: “Chiefly impressed by ... lack either of general survey of literature or any coherent interest in literature as such (as distinct for example from philology).” After two years of undergraduate work at the University of Pennsylvania, from 1901 to 1903, Pound transferred to Hamilton College. After nearly a full academic year at Hamilton, Pound wanted to transfer back to Pennsylvania for his fourth and last year of his undergraduate degree. His letters to his parents indicate possible reasons for his first transfer and his desire for a second change of location. “I get more tired of the place every day,” he wrote his father in April 1904 from Hamilton. “And if it is as bad as it is now it will be worse next year. Fudge.”²⁴⁴ He adds a postscript, “Guess everything is for the best. Will know *where* I belong in the future.” Pound evidently did not feel a part of the university academic or social system, just as he did not feel part of Pennsylvania’s system. This feeling of isolation corresponds with Pound’s early poem, “Anima Sola,” published in *A Lume Spento*. “My music is weird and untamed / Out-worn harmonies are behind me / For I am a weird untamed / That eat of no man’s meat.”²⁴⁵ His early individualist, even anti-social, tendencies can be viewed in this early poem—tendencies that further shaped his poetry and poetic theory. Evidently receiving a letter from his father mandating him to stay at Hamilton for his last year, Pound resignedly accepted his fate: “The doing what you don’t like is more beneficial than the flush hired Epicureanism of an effete society. I think I’ll be more a man at the end of it. Cheer up.”²⁴⁶ In this response to his father, Pound acknowledges that the academy was distinctly not a source of pleasure for him, as he contrasts his state with that of Epicureans in their desired state of tranquility. By the following September, he was listing the pressures he felt from his classes: “with double French, anglo saxon, Spanish, analytics and three hours of Prix’s hot air I expect to come home a corpse.”²⁴⁷ Similarly, he wrote his mother in a typical letter, “Ang Sax exam tomorrow a.m. No great amount of time to read or to hunt for amusement. Spent an hour or more on greek this morning. ... I’m a bit tired of

²⁴³ Pound tried to avoid certain requirements and even registered as a Bachelor of Science student, which exempted him from the Greek language requirement, although he later shifted to a Bachelor of Arts special category. Ira B. Nadel, *Ezra Pound: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 98.

²⁴⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound dated 29 April 1904, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

²⁴⁵ Ezra Pound, “Anima Sola,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 33–34.

²⁴⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound not dated [1904], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

²⁴⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound dated September 1904, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

half-baked languages though.”²⁴⁸ Soon after writing these letters, Pound sent word on his impulsive escape from the university. “As you can see,” he writes on letterhead from the Ithaca Hotel, “I have broke out. I’d been bottled on that desolate mountain top about as long as I could stand it, so I’m taking a little vacation. Break it gently to mother, she wanted me to get shoes instead of enjoying life.”²⁴⁹ He defended his decision for a side trip: “I suppose I’m real devilish but I’m not a — [his dash] bit sorry and I’m not going to hatch up any mock repentances. I’d only been out of Clinton once and hadn’t done anything in Clinton except get mail and buy hardware. And I needed some sort of a variety and I’m taking it.” Still, Pound indicated in this letter that during his brief escape from his university, he spent time in a library in Ithaca studying Celtic texts and translations of the Vedas. His weariness of the university system stemmed from the structured workload and organized, set courses, rather than the academic material itself.

Because of his genuine dislike of the academy and its routine work, Pound did not initially attempt to enter graduate school formally. His father recalled Pound’s arrival home after obtaining his undergraduate degree. Pound had flung his diploma onto the sofa and announced, “Well, Dad, here I am! Educated!” to which his father replied, “Fine, Son. And what do we do now? You have to do something, you know.”²⁵⁰ Only after not securing a proper job did Pound enroll in graduate studies full-time. During his first year as a graduate student of romance languages at Pennsylvania in 1905–1906, Pound signed up for every course offered by the university, including three hours of “Special Work.”²⁵¹ His enthusiasm for languages evidently helped him manage the rigors of a structured curriculum. He received his master’s degree and was awarded a Harrison Fellowship towards his Ph.D.²⁵² — funds which he used to travel to Spain to study the plays of Lope de Vega. Pound most likely felt pressure to categorize his own interests for his Ph.D. research, such as when he chose to study a very specific aspect of Spanish literature—the *gracioso*, or buffoon, in the dramatic plays of Lope de Vega. Pound’s professor of romance languages, Hugo Rennert,

²⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to Isabel Pound dated “Monday” [1904], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2671.

²⁴⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound no date [1904], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

²⁵⁰ J. J. Wilhelm, *The American Roots of Ezra Pound* (London: Garland Publishing, 1985), p. 141.

²⁵¹ Miscellaneous Research Material on Ezra Pound, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Carl W. Gatter Papers, Folder 79. Emily Mitchell Wallace, “Penn’s Poet Friends” *Pennsylvania Gazette* (February 1973), 33–36.

²⁵² The documents in the University of Pennsylvania archives indicate that Pound received this fellowship at the last moment, as his name is not listed in the official listing of recipients of the Harrison Fellowship. Research Material on Ezra Pound 1954–1976 dated 26 December 1957, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Carl W. Gatter Papers, Folder 2.

published his own *Life of Lope de Vega* in 1904,²⁵³ just two years before Pound chose the author for his own thesis—implying that Pound felt pressure to choose a narrow subject familiar to his supervisor. He actually stated his contempt for Spanish in a letter to his mother in 1904: “Also I have a nasty Spanish exam tomorrow. I don’t like the beastly language any better than I liked the people. It seems to have been made for the sole purpose of saying vile things easily. Sort of a loose lifted filthiness inseperable from it. And fools compare it with the Italian.”²⁵⁴ Years later in a letter to Margaret Anderson of the *Little Review*, Pound expressed his disapproval at his having to specialize in order to progress in an academic department, which he described as “an enslaving system, as now arranged in our universities.”²⁵⁵ Like his brief escape trip and attempts to change universities in his undergraduate career, Pound was unsatisfied with his postgraduate program and cut short his research on the *gracioso*. He left Madrid early to travel to Paris and London, as he bluntly notified his mother in a letter, “As explained to father, I have got a cheap ticket to Paris.”²⁵⁶ Yet he indicated his interest in freely attending university lectures in the city and continuing in an unstructured learning environment without expectations on his own output: “I get there June 15 for two weeks Sorbonne lectures.” In an article he wrote during or immediately after his travels, Pound criticized “the Germanic ideal of scholarship” that he experienced in American universities. He claims, “The scholars of classic Latin, bound to the Germanic ideal of scholarship, are no longer able as of old to fill themselves with the beauty of the classics, and by the very force of that beauty, inspire their students to read latin widely and for pleasure. . . . The scholar is bowed down to this Germanic ideal of scholarship.”²⁵⁷ His image of a scholar bowing down portrayed the feeling he evidently experienced as a student needing to fulfill certain expectations for a degree, rather than focusing solely on obtaining a classic, liberal education. The experience of learning in the academy, for Pound, was accompanied by a loss of individualism. Soon after writing this article, he again registered for every course offered in romance languages except Portuguese; however, his record book, which indicated that it “must be submitted to every instructor at the end of the year,” only received a signature of completion by one of his

²⁵³ Hugo Albert Rennert, *The Life of Lope de Vega: 1562–1635* (New York: G.E. Stechert & Co, 1904).

²⁵⁴ Ezra Pound, letter to Isabel Pound dated “Sunday night” [1904], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2671.

²⁵⁵ Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson, Letter dated 29 November 1916, *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence*, ed. by Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York, New Directions, 1988), p. 4.

²⁵⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to Isabel Pound dated 24 May 1906, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2653.

²⁵⁷ Ezra Pound, “Raphaelite Latin,” *Book News Monthly*, 25.1 (September 1906), 31–34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C2, 5–8 (p. 5).

professors.²⁵⁸ Pound's failure to complete the requirements of his courses led to his fellowship not being renewed for his second year of Ph.D. work.²⁵⁹ Pound was never the ideal scholar—a fellow student remembered him in one instance loudly winding “an immense tin watch” as a blatant disturbance while the professor lectured²⁶⁰—yet he initially performed well enough to obtain a fellowship for his postgraduate work. His European summer trip and the subsequent loss of his fellowship seemed to persuade him to abandon his formal academic pursuits.

By the time Pound arrived in London, he separated his experiences as a student from his new experiences as a poet. Though he continued to read and translate texts and often researched in libraries, he associated his efforts with a free, unstructured pursuit, separate to the expectations of a university. In his first year in London, he writes his parents that he would return home if he could receive assurance of employment and implies that his work differs from that of a formal student:

I might be able to come back before I frighten the trumbling world into recognition of my gee-lorious services. If you can't I'll have to bide my time. If I could get enough into my head to take my Doctorate at the Sorbonne it would not be a bad thing. — I would seem to have wasted time but I haven't really been up to steady study, much before now. And my mucking round the latin in the museum here will use up about all the scholastic energy I'm likely to have before march.²⁶¹

Pound indicates that academic study is “steady” or ordered, and that “scholastic energy” is something distinct from his independent literary pursuits. He further indicates a personal separation from academic structure and order when he writes his mother about his experience writing *The Spirit of Romance* lectures and prose book. He juxtaposes his efforts with that of scholars. “Of course it's got to be more or less diabolically clever or there'll be no fun in doing it. It will have to cauterize the germanists and surpass them in accuracy or at least equal them. And yet seem careless (all this is not for general quotation).” Pound indicates his desire to write with an established scholarly method—emulating scholarship's “accuracy,” or precise detail—yet for this work to appear effortless for him. Additionally, he

²⁵⁸ Miscellaneous Research Material on Ezra Pound, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Carl W. Gatter Papers, Folder 79. Emily Mitchell Wallace, “Penn's Poet Friends” *Pennsylvania Gazette* (February 1973), pp. 33–36.

²⁵⁹ Pound later complained of the decision. In *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound writes, “Dated U. of Penn. 1906 when I suggested doing a thesis on some reading matter OUTSIDE the list of classic authors included in the curriculum, and despite the fact that Fellowships are given for research and that a thesis for Doctorate is supposed to contain original *research*.” Qtd. in J. J. Wilhelm, *The American Roots of Ezra Pound* (London: Garland Publishing, 1985), p. 143.

²⁶⁰ A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet, A Portrait of the Man and his Work*, Vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 29.

²⁶¹ Ezra Pound, letter to Homer Pound no date [1908], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

states his desire to conform to the work of other literary critics. “I am sick of the rotten sloppiness of diletante critics but I’ve got to pretend to be with them more or less.” Pound’s presentation of his literary pursuits at this time corresponds with this notion of “pretending” to be academic. In a description of Pound written by D. H. Lawrence, Pound seems to imitate the methods of professors while presenting the material of *The Spirit of Romance*: “He discussed, with much pursing up of lips and removing of frown-shaken eyeglasses, his projection of writing an account of the mystic cult of love—the Dionysian rites, and so on—from earliest days to the present.”²⁶² If Pound genuinely despised academia at this time, his efforts to rejoin a formal academic system were a part of this need to “pretend to be with them.” He wrote his parents about several plans to return to academia, many of which were considered out of necessity, in order to obtain a livelihood independent of his parents’ support. In November 1909, when he was presenting his lectures on romance literature at the Polytechnic, Pound asked his father to research the application process for an Oxford scholarship. “Will you please write to Judge Beaty to see if there is any reason why I shouldn’t have the Rhodes Scholarship from Idaho. A rumor reaches me from Oxford that it is vacant. I suppose Beaty will know any committee that there may be controlling it. I am investigating here. Don’t, please say anything to *anybody* until we find out. I could use £300 a year quite nicely.”²⁶³ Pound doesn’t immediately state what research he would pursue, but indicates his financial attraction to the scholarship. He seemed to abandon the idea, as he did not return to the prospect of Oxford in later letters. Yet within a year, he suggested to his mother that he apply for another fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania. “There’s a faint chance that I might land a ‘Fellowship in English’ but no need to publish the fact that I am applying.”²⁶⁴ As Pound remains hopeful of gaining an academic position,²⁶⁵ he also increasingly adds a pessimistic tone to his attempts and asks his parents not to publicize his ambitions. In the letter to his mother, he acknowledges the reality of obtaining a teaching position: “no decent job is open ’till I take their rotten Ph.D.” He indicates that his reason for returning to the United States would be to further his poetry career: “One might get an American publisher and certain American outlets for ones stuff.”

²⁶² D. H. Lawrence, Letter to Grace Crawford dated 24 June 1910, *The Cambridge Edition of the Letters and Works of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. by James T Boulton (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 166.

²⁶³ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound dated 23 November 1909, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2650.

²⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to Isabel Pound no date [1910], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2671.

²⁶⁵ Pound indicates later in 1910 to his mother, “have sent in my application for fellowship – will drift home sometime in the summer if I get it.” *Ibid.*

Yet throughout his career, Pound repeatedly attempted to obtain a doctoral degree for his independent work,²⁶⁶ indicating a personal regard for the status of academic degrees. After one such failed attempt at obtaining a doctorate degree based on his *Spirit of Romance* work, Pound attempted to create a new model of student through a fellowship system for the creative arts. In 1916 he wrote his former professor Felix Schelling at Pennsylvania about his idea: “fellowships for creation as a substitute for, or an addition to, fellowships for research.”²⁶⁷ He attempts to set out an initial step towards a revolution of the university system of students, and begins by suggesting “a fellowship given for creative ability regardless of whether the man had any university degree whatsoever,” putting forward as possible recipients Carl Sandburg and Edgar Lee Masters. He believes this fellowship would sanction a university to become a genuine thought center, as “NO American university has ever tried to be a centre of thought.” Pound’s criteria for “thought,” therefore, seem to imply a preference for creative writing over philological research. In an article published in America, he publicly suggests this idea for a creative-writing fellowship, again promoting Sandburg as a recipient. He additionally states that university funds should be consigned “where it would be most fruitful, most apt to be fused with a living will, [however,] they prefer the passive incompetents. Thus the darkness is maintained.”²⁶⁸ Pound contrasts active creative writers with academics, or “passive incompetents.” His fellowship suggestion ultimately was disregarded, as were his later attempts to attain a Ph.D. degree based on *The Spirit of Romance* and, later, his Guido Cavalcanti translations. Following this futile attempt to obtain a doctoral degree in 1920, Pound attempted to make a public call for an end to doctoral degrees. He wrote the editors of the *Dial* and proposed “a movement among the better men of the present generation to refuse the doctorate altogether. It is perhaps the strong lever of bochism, and boche philology.”²⁶⁹ To emotionally persuade the editors, and possibly a larger American audience, Pound uses an offensive term for not only a German, but a person of German descent—thereby including German immigrants living in America. He associates his contempt for the American university system with German stereotypes, and further, illustrates his belief that a movement—partially begun by himself—could overcome the established academy. He explains his reasoning: “The Germanic tone is a

²⁶⁶ Pound attempted to formally apply for a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1920 and again in 1931–1932. He received an honorary degree from Hamilton College in 1939.

²⁶⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to Felix E. Schelling dated 17 November 1916, Ezra Pound Research Collection, 1916–1948, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Folder 8, Felix Emanuel Schelling. Also in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 151. Pound suggests “Sandburg, Masters, and Johns.”

²⁶⁸ Ezra Pound, “Ezra Pound on Sandburg,” *Double-Dealer*, 3.17 (May 1922), 277–78. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C641, 234–35 (234).

²⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Scofield Thayer dated 16–31 August 1920, *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994), pp. 122–23.

menace, and the spirit of german study is part and parcel of the kultur that made the war. And the philological spirit is one of the worst possible enemies of thought and of literature.” In conflation of the academic culture in America—which he views as originating from Germany—with his contempt of a nationalistic state system—which he views as having caused the Great War—Pound is adding layers of complex, emotional, and prejudiced arguments to his general disregard of the university.

In addition to allowing his argument against academia to become a larger, political critique, Pound viewed a structured academia as, simply, limiting individuality. Especially during the conception of Imagism, Pound emphasized the need for individuality. In August 1912, the month he began corresponding with Harriet Monroe of *Poetry* magazine and just preceding the beginning of his Imagism publicity, Pound wrote his mother that he was “giving myself a course in modern literature.”²⁷⁰ Up to this point, he did not consider himself to be actively involved with modern literature. “I’ve taken the plunge,” he writes. He believed he taught himself about contemporary literature by “giving [himself] a course.” This new subject of “modern literature,” to Pound, was distinctly individualized and genuine, distinct from the academic pursuit of understanding literature. This association of modernization and teaching oneself corresponds with Pound’s statement to Harriet Monroe about T. S. Eliot: “he has actually trained himself *and* modernized himself *on his own*.”²⁷¹ But this view of one’s capability to teach oneself also corresponds with the nineteenth-century generalist view of the liberal arts. The assumption of the liberal arts included the notion that literature was self-interpreting; “literature teaches itself” was the common view before the humanities became accepted as legitimate university disciplines.²⁷² Pound thereby uses this generalist view, predominately of the nineteenth century, to justify the emergence of modernism.²⁷³ In a later statement, in 1917, Pound also justifies an individualist education because of modernist speed. A true modernist, he implies, would not have time for academia, and he gives suggestions for “the best substitute for a University education that can be offered to any man in a hurry.”²⁷⁴ As teaching oneself corresponds with discovery, Pound combines the idea of individuality with an opposition to academia in his theory of the Impulse, just months after formally announcing Imagism. “The artist is always beginning,”

²⁷⁰ Ezra Pound, letter to Isabel Pound dated August 1912, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2670.

²⁷¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Harriet Monroe dated 30 September 1914, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 80. Pound’s emphasis.

²⁷² Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 9.

²⁷³ Another possible influence of this view is the American doctrine of self-reliance.

²⁷⁴ Ezra Pound, “Landor (1775–1864). A Note,” *Future*, 2.1 (November 1917), 10–12. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C296, 291–93 (p. 291).

he declares.²⁷⁵ “Any work of art which is not a beginning, an invention, a discovery, is of little worth. The very name Troubadour means a ‘finder,’ one who discovers.” Pound associates poetry and art with discovery, necessarily excluding it from the learned modes of poetry in academia. He continues by describing his own search for poetry, adding that he planned to know at thirty “more about poetry than any man living.” This pursuit, he says, involved discerning “the dynamic content from the shell.” He associates the shell with academia: “I fought every University regulation and every professor who tried to make me learn anything except this, or who bothered me with ‘requirements for degrees.’” As the Impulse included an individual energy for pursuing creative and novel work, it necessarily differs from the established strictures of university research. “The Impulse is a very different thing from the *furor scribendi*. . . . It means that the subject has you, not you the subject. There is no formula for the Impulse. Each poem must be a new and strange adventure if it is worth recording at all.” Pound implies that formal scholarship encourages the scholar to “have,” own, or manipulate the subject for preconceived research purposes. However, the Impulse encourages an individual to become absorbed in the subject and allow the subject’s essence to dictate the poetic or creative handling of the subject. The poem, he emphasizes, must be “a new and strange adventure,” thereby differentiating poetry from formal, preordered organization. Ultimately, he states, “no amount of scholarship will help a man to write poetry.” Pound wrote his former professor at Pennsylvania Felix Schelling, and questioned whether academia could break from its formal organization and encourage individuality and creativity. “I always wonder when the creative element will be recognized,” he writes in 1915, “when the mind of the student is to be recognized as, at least potentially, dynamic, and not solely as a receptacle.”²⁷⁶

Pound’s antagonism towards academia seemed to be bolstered by, if not an influence on, T. S. Eliot during 1916 and 1917.²⁷⁷ In 1917, Eliot published “Eeldrop and Appleplex,” a parody of himself and Pound in the *Little Review*, to which Pound responded, “His two queer chaps are quite real, and I think they will be an excellent pair of pincers

²⁷⁵ Ezra Pound, “How I Began,” *T. P.’s Weekly*, 21.552 (6 June 1913), 707. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C86, p. 147.

²⁷⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to Felix Emanuel Schelling no date [1915], University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Felix Emanuel Schelling Papers, Folder 8.

²⁷⁷ Humphrey Carpenter (*A Serious Character*, p. 263) claims that in December 1915 Pound tried to persuade Eliot against returning to America to finish his doctorate. J. J. Wilhelm (*Ezra Pound in London and Paris*, p. 186) cited Eliot’s thesis acceptance in June 1916, and adds “but partially under the influence of Pound, Eliot rejected the academic life completely.” Carole Seymour-Jones (*Vivienne Eliot*, p. 68) claims “Pound’s support was deeply significant; his encouragement and example led Eliot to rethink his decision to continue with philosophy *faute de mieux*. Instead he began to contemplate an alternative course of action: to stay in England and make a reputation as a poet and editor, as Pound had done.” Bernard Bergonzi (*T. S. Eliot*, p. 36) states, “Ezra Pound would certainly have exerted energetic pressure in the direction of literature.”

wherewith to pick up and display certain present day types and characters.”²⁷⁸ Eliot describes their tendencies of individual study, aligning himself with theology and Pound with the sciences. “It may be added that Eeldrop was a sceptic, with a taste for mysticism, and Appleplex a materialist with a leaning toward skepticism; that Eeldrop was learned in theology, and that Appleplex studied the physical and biological sciences.”²⁷⁹ Their differences in subject interests, however, were minimized by their shared methods of learning. Eliot indicates that both characters preferred generalist learning and individuality to the classifications of a university system. “Both were endeavoring to escape not the commonplace, respectable or even the domestic, but the too well pigeon-holed, too taken-for-granted, too highly systematized areas, and,—in the language of those whom they sought to avoid—they wished ‘to apprehend the human soul in its concrete individuality.’” Eliot, like Pound, returns to the issue of individuality with the subject of scholarship. He indicates that the element that each character was attempting to avoid was systemization, rather than the “commonplace” or the everyday. Systemization was viewed as more detrimental to individuality than even the “commonplace” attitudes of groups or communities. During this time period, Eliot had asked Pound to write his father in support of Eliot’s decision to remain in London to pursue a writing career. In endorsing Eliot’s decision, Pound writes Henry Ware Eliot, “Even if his career is to be half scholastic, any philological job of the first rank must start and get its orientation in the British Museum.”²⁸⁰ Pound views poetry as superior to philology, and therefore the efforts of researching past texts—the limit of philology, in Pound’s view—is merely the foundation of a creative writing career. Within a year, Eliot wrote an unsigned review in which he criticizes the formal scholar: “the American graduate student, the prospective Doctor of Philosophy: his specialisation in knowledge, his expansion in ignorance, his laborious dullness, his years of labour and his crowning achievement—the Thesis.”²⁸¹ Like Pound, he was concerned about the formality and excessive organization of the university system and its effects on the student. “It crushes originality,” he states. “It kills style.”²⁸² Eliot, possibly under the influence of Pound’s own anti-philological views, underscores the failures of specialization in education, which resulted from philology and structured, measured methodologies accepted in various disciplines of the humanities. At the same time Eliot was writing the review, Pound was composing “An Anachronism at Chinon,” a mock conversational

²⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn postmarked 1 April 1917, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 98.

²⁷⁹ T. S. Eliot, “Eeldrop and Appleplex,” *The Little Review*, 4.1 (May 1917), pp. 7–11 (p. 8).

²⁸⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to Henry Ware Eliot, postmarked 28 June 1915, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 99.

²⁸¹ T. S. Eliot [unsigned], “Mr. Leacock Serious: Review of Essays and Literary Studies by Stephen Leacock,” *The New Statesman*, 7.173 (29 July 1916), pp. 404–05.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

dialogue between Rabelais and an American student, evidently Pound himself. Rabelais and the student discuss the failures of American education, to which the student adds, “I speak in no passion when I say that the whole aim, or at least the drive, of modern philology is to make a man stupid; to turn his mind from the fire of genius and smother him with things unessential.”²⁸³ Additionally, he reaffirms the opinion he communicated to Eliot’s father—that independent scholars or poets are superior to academics. “I am ‘educated,’” Pound’s student in the dialogue confirms, “I am considerably more than a ‘graduate.’” By encouraging Eliot to reject the academic world, Pound could receive partial compensation for his own rejection from the university system. Eliot’s turn against academe substantiated Pound’s own.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AS PROFESSOR

Pound encountered the climate of research and pursuit of legitimacy as an undergraduate working towards a general Bachelor of Arts degree, and in particular, when he began graduate work in 1905. As he embarked on his own research program and initiated his own claim to belong to the academy of languages, this academy was working to situate itself in the new research system. Only since 1872 were graduate degrees established in America, and the first Graduate School of Arts and Sciences was founded in 1890.²⁸⁴ By 1898, as the journal *Science* reports, 24 students in the U.S. were awarded doctorates in the sciences, history and economics, and the humanities—the classifications of fields recorded by the journal. “The American university is definitely a place for research,” the report announces, “where both teachers and students are engaged in research or in learning the methods of research.”²⁸⁵ The University of Pennsylvania developed its Germanic graduate program in 1891, followed by English a year later.²⁸⁶ Pound’s English professor, Felix Schelling, was one of the first students to pursue graduate work at Pennsylvania when it was not yet “fully organized,”²⁸⁷ and after obtaining a master’s degree in 1885²⁸⁸ essentially

²⁸³ Ezra Pound, “An Anachronism at Chinon,” *Little Review*, 4.2 (June 1917), 14–21. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C259, 208–15 (pp. 211–12). Also Ezra Pound, “An Anachronism at Chinon,” in *Pavannes and Divagations* (London: Peter Owen Ltd., 1960), pp. 77–105 (p. 90).

²⁸⁴ Eckehard Simon, “The Case for Medieval Philology,” in *On Philology*, ed. by Jan Ziolkowski (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), pp. 16–20 (p. 16).

²⁸⁵ “Doctorates Conferred by American Universities for Scientific Research,” *Science*, 8 (1898), 197–201 (p. 197).

²⁸⁶ “Degrees Conferred by the University of Pennsylvania (1757–2003),” Ezra Pound Research Material, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library.

²⁸⁷ *Schelling Anniversary Papers by His Former Students* (New York: The Century Co., 1923), p. 5.

²⁸⁸ “Felix E. Schelling” in *Felix E. Schelling: Speeches on the Presentation of a Bust of F. E. Schelling to the University of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), pp. 7–20 (p. 8).

restructured and ran the department from 1888.²⁸⁹ Schelling was part of the first generation of English teachers trained with an advanced degree, and this generation in particular was expected to pursue teaching at the university level. The American college metamorphosed “from boy’s work to man’s work” after about 1888 when graduate programs took hold, retaining students longer and requiring increasing numbers of professors.²⁹⁰ By 1900, 25 percent of college graduates were being hired back into the university system as instructors.²⁹¹

Pound broke from this method of research and teaching when he quit his graduate program after one year of doctoral work. In a letter dated 17 November 1916 to Schelling, with whom he corresponded for decades, Pound hints that the disparity between himself and his professors ultimately caused his departure from the university. “Dr. Rennert’s last letter to me five years ago implies that the ‘advancement of learning’ clause had come to be interpreted ‘continue as professor’ but then there was the university personal [*sic*] loathing me behind that decision.”²⁹² Pound here suggests that graduate work automatically leads to teaching within the field, and also seems to imply that he was discouraged from pursuing academia. As his Harrison Fellowship for his first year of doctoral work was not renewed, Pound seemed to develop resentment and suddenly had a financial reason for his decision not to continue his studies. A letter to Pound from Schelling reaffirms the statement, indicating that Pound ultimately made the decision to leave the university. “I have often wished that I might have the personal power to send two types of men away from the university,” Schelling writes. “One is the extraordinary man, the one in a thousand, who usually takes himself away as you did. The others are the stragglers who loaf along at the end of the procession.”²⁹³ In a graduate environment, Pound was expected to follow the lead of his professors, using their methodology and planning for a similar career. As Pound was expected to follow the lead of his philological instructors, his disengagement from academia was his first major act of rebellion. And in this rebellion, he identified an antagonist: organized academia.

In addition to criticizing the rigors and forced organization placed on students, Pound additionally denounces professors for enforcing this structure and for prioritizing university requirements before the teaching of students and the communication of their subjects. Pound portrays literature as a living, organic subject that an individual can absorb

²⁸⁹ *Schelling Anniversary Papers by His Former Students* (New York: The Century Co. 1923), p. 5.

²⁹⁰ Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976), p.139.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

²⁹² Quoted in Samuel Hughes, “Dear Doc Schelling,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 96 (1998), n.p.

²⁹³ The actual letter to Pound is now missing, although Schelling reprinted it in an article published in the University of Pennsylvania’s *General Magazine and Historical Chronicle* in 1938. See Samuel Hughes, “Moderns in the Quad,” *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, 96 (1998), n.p.

and learn precisely through personal experience—thus, denying a need for formal teaching. When Pound does speak of the role of professors, he views their role as merely a facilitator to an individual’s personal response to a text. He notes in 1917 his appreciation for a moment his professor taught about “young Icarus begorming himself” with wax in preparation for his winged flight, more than the “dead hours he spent in trying to make me a scholar.”²⁹⁴ Since philology encourages the “dissection of every dead matter” and presents “no provision whatever for the fostering of the creative energies,” the role of philological teachers, in Pound’s view, should be minimal, but is often detrimental.²⁹⁵ The detriment, Pound implies, results from the professor’s unneeded role in the learning process. Additionally, he associates formal academia with deceit or inauthentic motives, which leads to a stifled organization. At the turn of the century—labeled the period of professionalization in America—the motivations for university affiliation for both students and teachers in academia changed. The early educational practices since the Colonial era emphasized a broad liberal arts education primarily for a “social function,” and literature, in particular, was intended to be enjoyed rather than methodologically taught.²⁹⁶ During the shift to the professionalization era, students’ reasons for attending university leaned towards opportunistic motivations leading to professional careers, high pay, and social status.²⁹⁷ Additionally, with increased specialization in universities, the professor developed loyalties to the field rather than to teaching in a classroom.²⁹⁸

Most of Pound’s professors of languages at the University of Pennsylvania and Hamilton College readily subscribed to philological ideals. Pound acknowledges in his preface to *The Spirit of Romance* his professor William Pierce Shepard of Hamilton College, “whose refined and sympathetic scholarship,” Pound notes, “first led me to some knowledge of French, Italian, Spanish and Provençal.”²⁹⁹ However, this acknowledgement runs contrary to the anti-philological rhetoric of the preface, in which Pound states in the first line, “This book is not a philological work.”³⁰⁰ Despite Pound’s close friendship with his professor, Shepard displayed the leanings of a philologist, publishing such articles as “The Imperfect Subjunctive in Provençal”³⁰¹ and “The Syntax of Antoine de la Sale.”³⁰² In

²⁹⁴ Ezra Pound, “Elizabethan Classicists: III,” *Egoist*, 4.10 (November 1917), 154–56. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C295, 290–91 (p. 291).

²⁹⁵ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: II,” *New Age*, 13.2 (8 May 1913), 34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C80, 140–41 (p. 140).

²⁹⁶ Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 1.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁹⁹ Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910), p. viii.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. v.

³⁰¹ William Pierce Shepard, “The Imperfect Subjunctive in Provençal,” *Modern Language Notes*, 30 (1915), 44–45.

³⁰² William Pierce Shepard, “The Syntax of Antoine de la Sale,” *PMLA*, 20 (1905), 435–501.

his address “Parataxis in Provençal,” delivered to the Modern Language Association the year after Pound completed his classes at Hamilton, Shepard declared in the introduction, “Comparative philologists have long since recognized that the logical relation of mental concepts need not find expression in words,” and continued by exalting the facts and figures of a philology detached from a logical order of language.³⁰³ This view of language scholarship and its emphasis on order is challenged by Pound’s ideal view of scholarship, as outlined in his preface. “I look forward to the time,” Pound writes, “when it will be possible for the lover of poetry to study poetry—even the poetry of recondite times and places—without burdening himself with the rags of morphology, epigraphy, *privatleben* and the kindred delights of the archaeological or ‘scholarly’ mind.”³⁰⁴ In addition to Shepard, most of Pound’s professors can be found on the membership lists of the American Philological Association, formally founded in 1869,³⁰⁵ and the Modern Language Association, formed 15 years later, “Eve-like, by taking a rib out of the side of the older” association.³⁰⁶ As philology derived from the prevailing nineteenth-century methods of Latin and Greek scholarship, it initially concerned itself primarily with classical languages. Eventually encompassing the modern languages, the philological community initiated the MLA as a complementary language association to the APA. The early convention proceedings of both associations concentrated solely on linguistic issues, as literary texts were regarded as pedagogical tools rather than subjects in themselves. Pound disapproves of the neglect of the literary text in preference to the linguistic particulars. “I consider it quite as justifiable that a man should wish to study the poetry and nothing but the poetry of a certain period, as that he should study its antiquities, phonetics or palaeography and be, at the end of his labours, incapable of discerning a refinement of style or a banality of diction.”³⁰⁷ Philology’s preference for language use over the text as a whole further divides Pound from his professors. Pound’s German professor at Hamilton College, H. C. G. Brandt, for example, was a staunch philologist of the APA³⁰⁸ and one of the 17 original founders of the MLA.³⁰⁹ He addressed the first meeting of the MLA and argued for the discipline to turn to the sciences and to study language methodologically: “But let ‘English’ mean as it should and as it is bound to mean more and more, the historical scientific study of the language,

³⁰³ William Pierce Shepard, “Parataxis in Provençal,” *PMLA*, 21 (1906), 519–74 (p. 519).

³⁰⁴ Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910), p. v.

³⁰⁵ Frank Gardner Moore, “A History of the American Philological Association,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 50 (1919) 5–32 (6).

³⁰⁶ William Riley Parker, “The MLA, 1883–1953,” *PMLA*, 68 (1953), 3–39 (p. 25).

³⁰⁷ Ezra Pound, *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1910), p. v.

³⁰⁸ “American Philological Association, 1877–8,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1869–1896)*, 9 (1878), 1–36 (p. 2).

³⁰⁹ William Riley Parker, “The MLA, 1883–1953,” *PMLA*, 68 (1953), 3–39 (p. 3).

Beowulf and Chaucer.”³¹⁰ Brandt intermixes the term “language” with the literary text *Beowulf* and author Chaucer, illustrating an early philological focus on language through the literary text, rather than a focus on the literary text itself. Further, Brandt’s speech demonstrates the fervor with which philologists embraced a scientific methodology to legitimate their discipline and to make it as respectable as the utilitarian sciences within university schools of arts and sciences. “A scientific basis dignifies our profession,” Brandt declares, epitomizing this nineteenth-century imitation of the scientific method that had acquired prestige in the United States.³¹¹ Although the Arnoldian influence on the humanities was felt in the American system of education, value was still placed on utilitarian and specialized skill and knowledge, which contributed to the distortion of distinctions between humanistic and scientific disciplines. Philology, like other fields in the context of humanities, adopted the rhetoric of science in its quest for legitimacy in the emerging research universities and in the context of the dominant ideas of a utilitarian education. Philological scholarship therefore qualified literary studies for departmental status,³¹² and as a result, these departments emphasized research that contributed to a practical output equivalent to technical production. Acknowledging the public perception of language study, Brandt complains that languages, foreign and English, are considered as “accomplishments like dancing, fencing, or final touches to be put on ... young ladies in their seminaries,” and argues that this amateur attitude reflects badly on the language departments, making it look as if they were capable of “affording no mental discipline.”³¹³ This statement reflects Pound’s declaration soon after arriving in London: “serious people, intently alive, consider poetry as balderdash—a sort of embroidery for dilettantes and women,” he writes in 1911.³¹⁴ Pound similarly identifies the general perception of literature as soft, feminine, and merely aesthetic, and to counter this perception, attaches scientific images to the practice of poetry. In the same essay, he equates the poet’s realm to the engineering lab and describes his own literary criticism as “significant data ... a chemical spectrum.”³¹⁵ Despite his desire to disassociate himself from philology and its classified position in the university, Pound still observed its dependency on the sciences, and he used this branding in his own career of poetry.

³¹⁰ H. C. G. Brandt, “How Far Should Our Teaching and Text-books Have a Scientific Basis?” *PMLA*, 1 (1884–85), 57–63 (p. 61).

³¹¹ Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 69.

³¹² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³¹³ H. C. G. Brandt, “How Far Should Our Teaching and Text-books Have a Scientific Basis?” *PMLA*, 1 (1884–1885), 57–63 (p. 61).

³¹⁴ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris,” in *Selected Prose 1909–1965*, ed. by William Cookson (London: Faber and Faber, 1973), pp. 19–43 (p. 41).

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Pound himself occasionally filled the role of professor in his early literary career. Following the abandonment of his doctoral program, Pound needed to secure a job—a task made easier because of a peculiar moment in America’s university history. Universities doubled enrolments every decade from 1890 to 1930 in the United States,³¹⁶ causing a shortage of instructors. In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the number of faculty members increased 300 percent.³¹⁷ It was in this near-desperate academic atmosphere that Pound was able to obtain a job, offered to him at the interview, as he wrote to his mother, “without even having my shoes shined.”³¹⁸ Pound was now an American college teacher, “a mediocre talent seeker seeking shelter in the chapel ... a jack of all trades,”³¹⁹ as one nineteenth-century commentator described college instructors. Without much qualification apart from a master’s degree from Pennsylvania, Pound was hired as the “Chairman of the Department of Romance Languages,” according to various biographies, at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana.³²⁰ However, the College records indicate that Pound’s official title was actually “Instructor of Modern Languages.”³²¹ The English department had not officially established a branch of Romance Languages,³²² nor had they hired any other instructors for this branch. The title of “Chairman of the Department of Romance languages” derives from a letter from Pound to his parents in which he claims this title. Additionally, Pound’s portrayal of himself to the new academic community was likely exaggerated as well. An article in *The Wabash* newspaper featuring Pound’s hiring portrays a slight exaggeration of his qualifications, likely sourced from Pound himself. Ezra Pounds [*sic*], professor of romance languages ... wrote his thesis on the ‘Gracioso’ and the plays of Lope de Vega which is soon to be published³²³—neither of which was completed or published. This portrayal of himself as a chairman of an established department and as an author of a thesis-turned-book shows Pound’s willingness to “put on masks” to fulfill roles.

Pound’s desire to include himself in academia—however sincere this desire might have been—necessarily contrasted with his desire to be a free-thinking poet. One former student of Pound remembered, “he sat in his chair with both feet on the lecture-table, holding his book high. He would command a student to translate. At the first error the

³¹⁶ Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 59.

³¹⁷ Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976) p. 271.

³¹⁸ James J. Wilhelm, “On the Trail of the ‘One’ Crawfordsville Incident or, the Poet in Hoosierland,” *Paideuma*, 13 (1984), 9–47 (p.13).

³¹⁹ Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1976) p. 281.

³²⁰ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 71.

³²¹ Wabash College Archives, correspondence with Elizabeth Swift, archivist, 27 March 2006.

³²² *Ibid.*

³²³ James J. Wilhelm, “On the Trail of the ‘One’ Crawfordsville Incident or, The Poet in Hoosierland,” *Paideuma*, 13.1 (Spring 1984), 9–47 (p. 37).

beginner would make, Ezra (as we all called him) would drop the book to the floor and issue a blasphemous phrase in French.”³²⁴ Pound evidently discouraged the use of the title *professor*, corresponding with his untraditional habits. The student continued, “In a way, it seemed that Ezra was putting on an act ... I think many of the serious-minded boys were puzzled at what went on in the classroom.” The student’s observation that Pound was obviously “putting on an act” corresponds with Pound’s poetic title “Masks” in *A Lume Spento*, indicating the “old disguisings” that help in the telling of a story.³²⁵ Pound permitted himself to put on masks and different personas, not only in his translations and literary work, but to promote his own career. Additionally, this student’s anecdote demonstrates that Pound was aware of strict philological standards, but that he subtly mocked them in his own classroom. Other students from his French courses at Wabash recalled his lack of professional demeanor, firstly in his appearance. “He went bareheaded, a thing unheard of in that time,” one student commented.³²⁶ This student added that Pound’s choice of clothing left an unprofessional impression: “I recall him as an easy-going, Greenwich Village, bohemian-type guy, different from everyone else.” Even a detail as menial as sockwear was carefully chosen to make an anti-professional statement. “In a day when black cotton socks were almost universal wear even for college students, Ezra’s purple socks (sometimes green, lavender, or orange) were a sensation. ... He would sometimes put his feet on the desk to display his latest color.”³²⁷ Another student recalled Pound’s instruction for acquiring French pronunciation: “Wad up a dishrag, stuff it into your mouth, and then talk through your nose.”³²⁸ This same student recalled that Pound lamented the 8:00 a.m. lecture time: “I have often heard him say as he sprawled across the classroom table, ‘One shouldn’t have to get up before one o’clock.’” Pound’s teaching style reflected his disregard for organization, structure, or limitations. “It seemed to us that his method of teaching, especially the part dealing with paper work and blackboard copying, was planned to permit a maximum of freedom for his thoughts to meander during the recitation period.”³²⁹ From this description, Pound used the blackboard to express his own thoughts freely rather than to teach his students. Another student recalled that Pound did not limit his French course to the French language, but included several other languages in his lectures or discussions as well.³³⁰ Despite Pound’s lack of academic rigor in the classroom, he tried to focus on the

³²⁴ James Rader, “The Value of Testimony: Pound at Wabash,” *Paideuma* 13 (1984), 67–130 (p. 83).

³²⁵ Ezra Pound, “Masks,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 45.

³²⁶ James Rader, “The Value of Testimony: Pound at Wabash,” *Paideuma* 13.1 (Spring 1984), 67–130 (p. 75).

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

unbounded subject itself rather than on any educational methodologies—and he sought unconventional methods by which he could teach in his manner. He began social “evenings” in his home in Crawfordsville, at which his Wabash students could further hear him speak about a broad range of subjects. One attendee described an evening scene:

Pound seated himself on a chair, while his disciples and satellites dispersed themselves gracefully, but somewhat uncomfortably, cross-legged on the floor, at the feet of the master. The leader then began a spirited but disconnected discourse on many topics, leaping from subject to subject with the agility of a mountain goat. His dissertation was, at appropriate intervals, broken (but not interpreted) by sage interjections of argument by the artist ... a delicious collation was served. This consisted of sandwiches of some sour and bitter cheese between slices of black and sourish bread, with modest amounts of some sour wine served in chipped and cracked teacups.

The image of wine served in chipped teacups portrays Pound’s attempts at a European sophistication, and further shows his use of masks or personas. Yet Pound’s genuine interest in literature and discussion can be seen through this attempt at bohemianism; his “discourse on many topics” portrays a tendency that would continue during his lifetime. Even hosting a literary evening resembles his later Tuesday evenings in his rented room in London, which transformed the concept of academia into a new, independent model. He combined the idea of the salon with his own academic background in inviting literary aspirants to regular discussions in his home, while he retained the position of teacher, or leader, of the evening group. He wrote his mother in September 1912 that he began his “‘Tuesday’ evenings and the first 2 have gone very well. ... I’ve come on a young chap by name Aldington.”³³¹ Already, Pound was constructing an alternative educational system based on informality and volunteerism; the success of the enterprise depended on the voluntary impulse of the poets to attend, and Pound labeled the concept a success. A year later, after continuing the evenings, he commented to his mother that he was “conducting a literary kindergarten for the aspiring.”³³² Pound saw himself not so much as a teacher of kindergarten students, but as an innovator for providing the first literary enrichment of potential poets, when their own academic backgrounds, he believed, had previously failed to provide even an elementary level of instruction or inspiration.

Consequently, Pound separates the role of poet and teacher. As a teacher fails to provide adequate instruction with his overly organized methods, Pound associates this

³³¹ Ezra Pound, letter to Isabel Pound dated 3 September 1912, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2673.

³³² Ezra Pound, letter to Isabel Pound dated November 1913, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2670. Also *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 63.

position with superficiality, whereas the poet is portrayed as genuine, without external interests. Pound's quick dismissal from his position at Wabash—primarily stemming from the accusation of allowing a “girl from a stranded burlesque show”³³³ to stay the night in his living quarters—displays the easy removal of one mask, further emphasizing the superficiality of his masks. “Have had a bust up,” he wrote his father, yet he indicated his relief over dispensing with the role of professor. “I guess something that one does not see but something very big and white book of the destinies has the turning and the leading of things and this thing and I breathe again. Lovingly E.P. In fact you need say nothing to mother till I come.”³³⁴ Pound invokes the idea of destiny, implying that his destiny differs from that of other academics, and only when the “white book” of destiny leads him back to his correct, separate path of poetry, can he “breathe again.” Soon after his dismissal and financial settlement, the university officials actually reversed the decision and asked Pound to continue teaching—an offer he did not accept. He wrote his father, “Have been recalled but think I should rather go to see sunny Italia. . . . Have had more fun out of the fracasso than there is in a dog fight. I hope I have taught ‘em how to run a college.”³³⁵ Pound saw academia and poetry-writing as two separate routes, and when he was given the financial security to pursue his poetry career in Europe, he seized the opportunity.

Still, however, when his initial severance pay ran out in Europe, Pound depended on his parents for finances. He writes his father soon after arriving in London after his short stay in Venice, “I think this is the town for me to get settled in. only wish there weren't so much drain on your exchequer in the process.”³³⁶ He consistently searched for teaching jobs out of necessity, yet associated these teaching positions with a sense of insincerity and obligation. He often indicated his desire to work on poetry solely, but was compelled to look for and take teaching jobs. Learning that the Regent Street Polytechnic would continue his teaching contract for a full 1910 season after his initial six lectures in 1909, Pound responded, “I am to give 21 be d—d lectures at the Polytec. & I wish I wuz ded.”³³⁷ He also indicates in this letter his regret at losing time from his poetry writing. “I am *not* [*not* underlined three times] a literary hack or a schoolmaster, realy. And one can not write good poetry 24 hours a day.” Pound's first and only extended teaching appointment with an institution in London was with the Polytechnic from 1909 to 1910. He took pride in the

³³³ A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet, A Portrait of the Man and his Work*, Vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 60.

³³⁴ Ezra Pound, letter to Homer Pound dated 17 February 1908, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, no date [1908].

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, no date [1908].

³³⁷ Ezra Pound, letter to Isabel Pound dated July 1909, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

position's title and advised his father to refer to him in press releases for his literary work as "Lecturer on Romance Literature for the London Polytechnique,"³³⁸ while alternately, his syllabus for the Polytechnic lectures introduced him as a fellowship-holder at his despised former university: "Sometime Fellow of the University of Pennsylvania."³³⁹ Ten months after securing the initial teaching lectures, he was still referring to his academic credentials. In a November 1909 letter, D. H. Lawrence describes Pound as "an American Master of Arts & a Professor of the Provençal group of languages."³⁴⁰ The title of professor was not entirely accurate for the position Pound secured at the Regent Street Polytechnic. Its umbrella organization, the London Polytechnic, was an organization of technical schools, which by 1904 numbered 12 throughout London.³⁴¹ The polytechnic system originated out of the development of an industrial society, first as a "pre-professional" system for the lower and middle classes.³⁴² By 1910, a year after Pound taught the second half of his course, these technical schools outside the university system comprised 36.6 percent of the higher education population in England.³⁴³ Examined classes leading to a certificate or degree included practical trade and technology, engineering, commerce and business, domestic economy, as well as carriage building and ambulance work. The arts, however, were largely overlooked, as the founder explained: "I did not include the subjects you mentioned for fear of attracting a class of young men of a higher educational status than those for whom the institute was intended."³⁴⁴ As the polytechnic did not incorporate an English department, Pound's courses were unexamined classes, taught in the afternoon and evening for a small fee, and attracted mainly adults interested in a leisurely—as opposed to a scholarly—education in literature.³⁴⁵ As well as two other literature courses, *The Comedies of Shakespeare* and *English Literature (1770–1830)*, which were offered by the Polytechnic during Pound's beginning term, the other non-degree evening courses included such

³³⁸ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988) p. 102.

³³⁹ University of Westminster Archives, Prospectuses Spring and Summer Term 1909 folder, *Prospectus and Class Time Table*, Spring Term 1909, p. 6.

³⁴⁰ Quoted in Eric Homberger, *Ezra Pound: The Critical Heritage* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 38.

³⁴¹ Julie Stevenson, "A Neglected Issue in the History of Education and Training: Women Students of University College London and the Polytechnic at Regent Street, c. 1870–1930," unpublished doctoral thesis, Thames Valley University, 1996), p. 12, in University of Westminster Archives.

³⁴² Konrad H. Jarausch, "Higher Education and Social Change: Some Comparative Perspectives," in *The Transformation of Higher Learning 1860–1930: Expansion, Diversification, Social Opening, and Professionalization in England, Germany, Russia, and the United States*, ed. by Konrad H. Jarausch (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), pp. 9–36.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁴⁴ Roy Low, "The Expansion of Higher Education in England," *The Transformation of Higher Learning 1860–1930: Expansion, Diversification, Social Opening, and Professionalization in England, Germany, Russia, and the United States*, ed. by Konrad H. Jarausch (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), pp. 37–56 (p. 43).

³⁴⁵ University of Westminster Archives, *Polytechnic Education Department 1911–1912 School Year*, English literature students.

subjects as *Domestic Hygiene*³⁴⁶ and *First Aid to the Injured and Home Nursing*.³⁴⁷ Incongruously, it was to this audience that Pound prepared the lectures that would comprise *The Spirit of Romance*, published a year later, which Pound heralded as a serious work equal in status to anything published as philology. He indicated to his father that he wanted the lectures to be “diabolically clever” so as to “cauterize” the philologically trained or “German” scholars.³⁴⁸ Even the book’s full title, used only in the first edition, strives to distance itself from philological exactness: *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe*. Throughout his lectures, Pound used metaphors associated with science to support his credibility. His primary audience, as his letter to his father reveals, was not the adults attending his lectures; instead, he intended his research and presentation to impress the literary scholars of London. One student, Dorothy Shakespear, his future wife who attended mainly to support him, labeled his attempt of teaching “dismal”³⁴⁹—likely the result of his neglect of the audience’s general ignorance of the material. His criticisms of philology in his preface suggest his anticipated audience was the philological community of Britain, which, as in America, influenced the educated literary communities. During the expansion of higher education in British education in the nineteenth century, during which the number of British universities doubled,³⁵⁰ philology also grew in prominence. Imported from Europe in the early nineteenth century by pupils of Rasmus Christian Rask and Jacob Grimm,³⁵¹ the philological discipline formed the English Philological Society in 1842 and broadened its acceptance through the work of Friedrich Max Müller, author of the *Science of Language*.³⁵² It was to this relatively new philological community that Pound appealed with his Polytechnic lectures and his prose book. During his Polytechnic lectures, in February 1909, Pound continues to consider future career possibilities. He indicates in a letter to his father his plan to teach at “Temple College (‘University’ by courtesy and bluff. —hush man hush)” for winter 1910 and to instruct at Princeton summer school “if it can be worked.”³⁵³ In reporting to his parents about applying to deliver lectures at Cambridge, Pound indicates a hesitancy

³⁴⁶ University of Westminster Archives, Prospectuses Spring and Summer Term 1909 folder, *The Polytechnic: Science, Art, Technical and Commercial Schools*, p. 3. Also Lecture Booklet Spring Term 1909, p. 9.

³⁴⁷ University of Westminster Archives, *Courses of Afternoon Lectures to be Delivered During the Spring Term 1909* lecture booklet, p. 9.

³⁴⁸ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988) p. 125.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

³⁵⁰ William Riley Parker, “Where Do English Departments Come From?” *College English*, 28 (1967), 339–51 (p. 344).

³⁵¹ D. J. Palmer, *The Rise of English Studies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965) p. 76.

³⁵² William Riley Parker, “Where Do English Departments Come From?” *College English*, 28 (1967), 339–51 (p. 344).

³⁵³ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound dated 11 February 1909, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

for actually teaching, were he to secure the lectureship. His continual statements against teaching could be viewed as a genuine dislike of academia or as insecurity about entering academia after having been rejected by Pennsylvania by losing his postgraduate fellowship. “I’m applying for some lectures at Cambridge,” he wrote his parents in 1911, “tho’ I don’t much want ’em, and the chances are uncertain.”³⁵⁴ Pound, however, did secure a single lecture at Cambridge; he delivered his lecture in autumn 1912 to an audience including T. E. Hulme and Edward Marsh.³⁵⁵ While writing *The Spirit of Romance*, Pound continued his search for academic jobs in America. He wrote his mother, “I have applied to a job at Hobart Cawledge Geneva, N.Y. (\$1300 paid the present prof.) I suppose there’s a fair chance of getting it. The book ought to make that sort of thing easier.”³⁵⁶ He implies that he is writing his prose book as material with which he can gain an academic position. However, this effort, he admits, is contradictory to his own unorganized impulses. “I hope I never write another book in prose. ... My mind, such as I have, works by a sort of fusion, and sudden crystallization, and the effort to tie that kind of action to the dray work of prose is very exhausting. One should have a vegetable sort of mind for prose. I mean the thought formation should go on consecutively and gradually with order rather than epigrams.” Pound associates order with prose writing, which is linked to academia and opposed to poetry.

As Pound acknowledges his own willingness to emulate academia in order to promote his literary career, he notices this tendency in other literary aspirants. This acknowledgement of insincerity corresponds with his discomfort with forced organization, or the portrayal of something unnatural or unreal. In Pound’s letter to Eliot’s father, Pound insincerely uses this dual academic-poetic role to promote the status of a life of letters. During the same period, Pound criticized the false association of academia with poetic pursuits, which implies that Pound used this conflation disingenuously with Henry Ware Eliot to help Eliot remain in England. In a 1913 review of a poetry collection by Maurice Hewlett, Pound is critical of Hewlett’s academic slant and his “popular reputation for prose.”³⁵⁷ He indicates a divide between the academic and the poetic, and he implies that some poets’ use of scholarship merely obscures their natural poetry. “No hiding! Not even

³⁵⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound no date [after 3 October, before December 1911], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

³⁵⁵ Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1970).

³⁵⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to Isabel Pound dated 23 February 1910, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

³⁵⁷ Ezra Pound, “[A Review of] Helen Redeemed and Other Poems, by Maurice Hewlett,” *Poetry*, 2.2 (May 1913), 74–76. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C78, p. 138.

under the mask of the ‘man of letters,’ *le grand seigneur*, or at worst, ‘the academician.’”³⁵⁸ Pound promotes a genuine, sincere poetry, which he affiliates with an ideal of *virtu* or pure poetry, separate from the realm of academia. Scholarship within the academy, then, is associated with a type of applied science, while poetry is associated with a type of pure or fundamental science. Pound continued to promote this dichotomy between the genuine poet and the insincere, masked professor. In 1918, he criticizes promising literary figures by comparing them with professors lacking in innovation. “There appears to be nothing in America between professors and Kreymborgs and Bodenheim,” he writes Margaret Anderson of the *Little Review*. “Platonic hemiandroi. Anemia of guts on one side and anemia of education on the other.”³⁵⁹ These literary figures, who were gaining popularity in 1918, Pound compared with university professors. To attempt to change this seemingly banal method of producing and circulating poetry, Pound set out a plan for a formal change, to initiate a new system. He begins his proposal, written in 1913, by describing Abelard, who conflates the role of teacher and student. Pound notes that Abelard disputed with academia and “took up ascetic life” by leading “5,000 students into the wilderness.”³⁶⁰ Pound then relates the narrative of Abelard from the middle ages to his contemporary situation: “Now it is inconceivable that in this day and decade any unknown man could oust any professor of anything by a mere display of superior intelligence.” Yet Pound wishes to set up a similar opportunity for students to contradict or debate with professors. He calls for a monthly conference, in which “the two sets of ‘influences’,” professors and students, would debate. “It would provide a means for discerning the difference between the tyro, the dilettante, the drifter, and splurger in verse or prose, and the serious artist.” Pound’s proposal therefore would detect masks or pretense among both the academics and the poets, “in verse or prose.” He implies that both sides of the literary spectrum are prone to disingenuous writing. Additionally, he states that his idea should not be feared by professors, as they should be genuinely educated and prepared to discuss literary concepts with students. Yet he adds that the students’ perspective is what would most benefit the university in this scheme. “When the seminar managed to hit on an artist of parts, the debate

³⁵⁸ Ezra Pound, “[A Review of] Helen Redeemed and Other Poems, by Maurice Hewlett,” *Poetry*, 2.2 (May 1913), 74–76. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C78, p. 138.

³⁵⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret C. Anderson dated January 1918, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 185. Pound had published his *Des Imagistes* anthology in association with Alfred Kreymborg’s magazine *The Glebe*. By 1918, when Pound criticized Kreymborg to Anderson, Kreymborg had launched *Others: A Magazine of the New Verse*. He included Maxwell Bodenheim in the criticism, as well, after Bodenheim had founded a Chicago periodical and published verse in *Poetry* magazine.

³⁶⁰ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: III. Proposition I—That I Would ‘Drive the Auto on the Seminars,’” *New Age*, 13.3 (15 May 1913), 57–58. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C81, 141–42 (p. 141).

would be enlightening both to faculty and students. New life would be infused into the study of letters. Literature would come to be regarded as something living, something capable, constant transformation, or rebirth.” Pound views this opportunity of listening to the student, and reversing the role of the professor, as a means whereby “new life” could be created in academia. His plan for a “transformation” necessarily connotes newness: “the whole outrageous scheme would stir up more than a few backwaters of mental stagnation.”

Pound seems to believe that because the roles of academics and poets are opposed, particular subjects and methodologies for learning these subjects are assigned to each role. This assignment of roles and fields necessarily limits interests and specialties. In an article about H. D.’s classicism, Pound complains that professors “think the classics are their private ice-box” and “resent the intrusion of ‘mere men of letters’ thereinto.”³⁶¹ Pound’s involvement with W. B. Yeats’s poem “The Scholars” similarly reflects this concern with the restriction of academic subjects. Yeats, after several years of association with Pound,³⁶² wrote the poem “The Scholars,” which Pound placed as the first poem in his collection *Catholic Anthology* in 1915. In its early version dating to 1913 and also appearing in *Poetry*, the poem criticizes the monotonous methods of the translators of Catullus, emphasizing them as a group instead of viewing them individually with creative, instinctual abilities: “Old, learned, respectable bald heads // They’ll cough in the ink to the world’s end; / Wear out the carpet with their shoes / Earning respect.”³⁶³ The second stanza’s first four lines begin with the collective noun *all*, further portraying the scholars as an amalgamated group. Translators, or with a broader interpretation, all scholars, are juxtaposed in the poem with the young poets, alive with energy, “tossing on their beds” with inspiration and the extreme emotion of “love’s despair.” When Yeats collected the poem in his own book in 1916, Pound commented on the poem in his review published in *Poetry* magazine. The poem, he states, is “the sort of poem that we would gladly read more of. There are a lot of fools to be killed and Mr. Yeats is an excellent slaughter-master.”³⁶⁴ Similarly, among Pound’s uncollected poems written in 1913—around the time Yeats was writing “The Scholars”—is “Pax Saturni,” which produces a similar image of scholars. Speaking sarcastically in a biblical tone, Pound writes, “Speak of the open-mindedness of scholars: / You will not lack

³⁶¹ Ezra Pound, “H. D.’s Choruses from Euripides,” *Little Review*, 5.7 (November 1918), 16–20. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C418, 224–26 (p. 224).

³⁶² James Longenbach, *Stone Cottage: Pound, Yeats, and Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 131.

³⁶³ W. B. Yeats, “The Scholars,” in *Catholic Anthology 1914–1915*, ed. by Ezra Pound (London: Elkin Mathews, 1915), p. 1.

³⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, “Mr. Yeats’ New Book,” *Poetry*, 9.3 (December 1916), 150–51. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C244, p. 185.

your reward.”³⁶⁵ He also includes scholars in a societal group that are elevated in status: “Praise them that are praised by the many: / You will not lack your reward.” Similarly in 1913, Pound published “Salutation the Second” in both *Poetry* and the *New Freewoman*, calling academia to a renaissance: “professors / rejuvenate things!”³⁶⁶ In his “Hellenist Series” of 1919, Pound states that both professors and poets often use the same subject, the classics, yet only good poets adequately portray the spirit of these classics. He seems to imply that only those who will use the classics with novelty are entitled to adequately incorporate them: “The crowns, wreaths, *palmes académiques*, etc., should be removed from all the poetic statues at least twice in each century, and only put back when a new generation finds the work glorious and moving and indispensable.”³⁶⁷ The classical influence, he states, should be met with the same innovation and spirit as that in which they were written. “If we do not read the classics in the same spirit of ‘readiness to judge’ wherein we read Rimbaud and Corbiere, they become mere Nelson Columns, mere monuments in the landscape—deader, indeed, than stone columns.” He then directly criticizes academics “who do not care a curse for the subject, who are paid to keep order in classrooms (underpaid, perhaps, economically, but paid more than keeping order is worth), but who would not increase their screw by having an opinion, who therefore do not have opinions.” Again, Pound characterizes the academic as caring more about order than about the subject. Additionally, his statements implicate the disingenuous masks that the teacher puts on by teaching a subject while he “does not care a curse for the subject.” This attitude he labels in a letter to John Quinn as “the ‘English Department’ universitaire attitude: literature not something enjoyable, but something which yr blasted New England conscience makes you feel you *ought* to enjoy.”³⁶⁸ In criticizing both the professor and the “administrative educator,” Pound states that they are “bent upon crushing the students into a mould.” This implies “that the student is there for the college, not the college for the student.”³⁶⁹ He calls for a movement in 1919 to “de-academicize the prof.”³⁷⁰ In shortening the title of professor, Pound further displays his disregard of the profession. He states that for a “literary civilization,” a country must have a center of literary activity in the university,

³⁶⁵ Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations* (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 1170.

³⁶⁶ Ezra Pound, “Salutation the Second,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 266–67 (266).

³⁶⁷ Ezra Pound, “Hellenist Series: VI,” *Egoist*, 6.2 (March/April 1919), 24–26. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C448, 288–89 (p. 288).

³⁶⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 25 October 1919, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 151.

³⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, “Revolt of Intelligence: II,” *New Age*, 26.6 (11 December 1919), 90–91. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C517, 366–67 (367).

³⁷⁰ Ezra Pound, “Literary Review,” *New York Evening Post*, 1.13 (4 December 1920), 26. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C608, p. 126.

“(which they just now *aren’t*),” he adds. “Academicism,” he states, “is an obstacle to a literary civilization.”

UTILITY AND LOGIC

One reason for which Pound viewed the academy as useless or even detrimental was its propensity towards utility. The university system immediately after the turn of the century was at a high point for the promotion of a utilitarian education.³⁷¹ The year Pound left his position at Wabash College, the president of Harvard University, Charles W. Eliot, praised utility in education. “At bottom most of the American institutions of higher education are filled with the modern democratic spirit of serviceableness. Teachers and students alike are profoundly moved by a desire to serve the democratic community.”³⁷² This idea of educating and becoming educated to produce a beneficial output for the community and nation was entirely at odds with Pound’s individualistic rationale for knowledge. Yet his own alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania, was founded on utilitarian principles by Benjamin Franklin and was the first colonial institution to teach the sciences, government, and commerce alongside classical subjects.³⁷³ In the utilitarian spirit, the fields of humanities became increasingly aligned methodologically with the applied sciences. As Pound’s former professor, H. C. G. Brandt, stated to the Modern Language Association, “By introducing scientific methods, we shall show before very long that every body cannot [teach English], that the teacher must be as specially and as scientifically trained for his work in our department as well as in any other.”³⁷⁴ Alongside the Arts Building where Pound attended his lectures at the University of Pennsylvania, Pound could observe, by the end of his undergraduate career, many more buildings related to the applicable sciences: the Medical Hall, University Hospital, Gibson Wing for Chronic Diseases, Nurse’s Home, Maternity Hospitals, Medical Laboratories, Veterinary Hall and Hospital, Biological Hall and Vivarium, Laboratory of Hygiene, Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology.³⁷⁵ Within this emphasis on utilitarian education, the sciences received increased attention and funding. Columbia University in 1890, for example, created a separate School of Pure Science and a Faculty of Applied Science to adequately

³⁷¹ Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 118.

³⁷² Charles W. Eliot qtd. in Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 119.

³⁷³ University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Ezra Pound Papers, folder containing general information about the University of Pennsylvania.

³⁷⁴ H. C. G. Brandt, qtd. in Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 68.

³⁷⁵ University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Ezra Pound Papers, Catalogue for University of Pennsylvania 1902–03. The catalogue includes Pound’s full name according to the registry: Pound, Ezra Weston Loomis. A map of the campus indicates what buildings existed in 1902–1903.

manage the developing specialization of the sciences.³⁷⁶ One educational observer stated at the turn of the century:

On the one hand, there is a demand that the work of our colleges should become higher and more theoretical and scholarly, and, on the other hand, the utilitarian opinion and ideal of the function of a college is that the work should be more progressive and practical. One class emphasizes the importance of ... making ardent, methodical, and independent search after truth, irrespective of its application; the other believes that practice should go along with theory, and that the college should introduce the student into the practical methods of actual life.³⁷⁷

With this emerging dichotomy of pure knowledge and practical knowledge, Pound felt that disciplines within the language arts were aligning themselves unfavorably with a practical or utilitarian education. Among his first prose publications in *Book News Monthly*, Pound wrote about this emphasis on practical sciences and utility in education. Under the author credit “Ezra Pound Professor of Romance Languages in Wabash College,” Pound refers to the increasing emphasis on utilitarian degrees and the changing university atmosphere from a liberal arts education to a classified, utilitarian education. “What is beauty and where shall one lay hold upon it? If tradition tell us truth there were days of less scholastic enlightenment, when men were permitted to find fragments thereof in the long dead poets, and when degrees in ‘arts’ were less a sarcasm.”³⁷⁸ Pound associates the “days of less scholastic enlightenment” with “beauty” and “truth.” Additionally, he associates this valuation of minimal scholarship with the ability to obtain a general arts degree. Pound connects this generalist vision of education with pure science rather than with applied science. He views subject and knowledge as the ends of education, rather than as a means to the production of something more. “The universities train scientific specialists for utility,” he states in this 1908 article, “and the fugitive fragrance of old song-wine is left to the chance misfit or the much-scorned *dilletante*.” In referring to the differing status or classes of student—apparently labeled by society according to their output—Pound separates the roles of the generalist scholar and the utilitarian philologist. Seemingly against the attitude of a utilitarian-minded society, Pound praises the generalist, “those more interested in the genius of their author than in such artifice as intervenes between that genius and its expression: such as syntax, metric, errors in typography, etc.” Pound again addresses this question of usefulness to society in his poem “Famam Librosque Cano,” published in *A*

³⁷⁶ Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 122.

³⁷⁷ J. M. Barker qtd. in Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 122.

³⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, “M. Antonius Flaminius and John Keats: A Kinship in Genius,” *News Monthly*, 26.6 (February 1908), 445–47. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C7, 16–19 (16).

Lume Spento. He alludes to society's questioning of the pursuit of a poetry career by asking if his books will merely end up in a worn, used bookshop. As though taking a utilitarian perspective, he portrays poems as merely "songs" sung by mothers to their "little rabbit folk / That some call children" before they "pull on their shoes for the day's business, / Serious child business that the world / Laughs at."³⁷⁹ Pound portrays his professionalized society's impression of poetry, associating it with children and contrasting it with real business. His society valued fields such as the practical sciences, as the applied sciences promoted England, and later America, to their recognized positions as leading industrial nations.³⁸⁰ Fields of education therefore "won their recognition" through their utilization in "matters of everyday life."³⁸¹ In this portrayal of poetry's place in society, Pound foresees his own poetry book's future:

Such an one picking a ragged
Backless copy from the stall,
Too cheap for cataloguing,
Loquitur,
 "Ah-eh! the strange rare name. . . .
"Ah-eh! He must be rare if even *I* have not. . . ."
And lost mid-page
Such age
As his pardons the habit,
He analyzes form and thought to see
How I 'scaped immortality.

The applied sciences had become the new "immortals" of society, replacing the classics. Pound implies that his own poetry would escape immortality and would be destined to a mere mortal lifetime on a bookseller's uncatalogued stall. Similarly, in a poem withdrawn from his *Canzoni* collection, Pound portrays poets' work as "buried in anthologies."³⁸² Yet in this poem he defends the poet instead of the academic, who is "warmed by no fire save scholastic comment." He asks, "Will those among us who have pleased ourselves / Not sit more snugly than the crabbed elves / Who made the work a trade, as if 'twere so meant?" If the only production of poetry is a satisfied self, contentment in one's work, and an assurance that one did not force the subject into a "trade," then Pound values this production of poetry over other utilitarian concerns.

³⁷⁹ Ezra Pound, "Famam Librosque Cano," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 35–37 (35–36).

³⁸⁰ Jesse E. Thornton, *Science and Social Change* (Manchester, NH: Ayer Publishing, 1972), p. 48.

³⁸¹ Jesse E. Thornton, *Science and Social Change* (Manchester, NH: Ayer Publishing, 1972), p. 49.

³⁸² Ezra Pound, "Hic Jacet," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 173.

As Pound rejected a utilitarian education, he preferred pure knowledge, or knowledge for its own sake rather than for further application.³⁸³ He associated rhetoric and logic with practical or utilitarian knowledge, as he viewed both as verbalizations of knowledge, rather than as pure knowledge.³⁸⁴ As logic is not a direct source of pure knowledge,³⁸⁵ Pound allows that pure knowledge or fundamental science can appear to be unordered or even illogical. Pound defines the Image, for example, in opposition to rhetoric or rationality yet in association with the scientific and antirational “complex.” In “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste,” Pound defines the Image as “that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.”³⁸⁶ He then states that he uses the term as defined by the “newer psychologists, such as Hart.” In *The Psychology of Insanity*, first published in 1912, Bernard Hart sets out the concept of the complex. He defines a complex as “a system of emotionally toned ideas.”³⁸⁷ Upon “stimulation” from objective forces, the complex “exerts its effect upon consciousness.”³⁸⁸ Hart then aligns the complex with antirational thought:

The mode of thought produced in this manner by the activity of a complex is quite different from that occurring in genuine logical thinking. In the latter case each step is the logical consequence of the preceding steps, evidence is impartially weighed, and the probability of various solutions is dispassionately considered. Such genuine logical thinking is in ordinary life comparatively rare; in most cases a “complex bias” is only too obvious. Even in the world of science, generally regarded by the ignorant as the peculiar sphere of dispassionate and cold thought, complexes play a vast part.³⁸⁹

Hart further details that the complex does not appear in consciousness through rational thought. He states, “‘rationalisation’ is responsible for the erroneous belief that reason, taken in the sense of logical deduction from given premises, plays the dominating role in the formation of human thought and conduct.”³⁹⁰ Pound found this explanation of consciousness fitting for his understanding of poetic thought; his Image takes on this anti-rationalist tendency, in that it appears in “an instant in time” rather than develops through logic. Additionally, Pound’s antirationalist ideas did not contradict his scientific leanings, as Pound embraced fundamental science without the need for rational theorizing. This position

³⁸³ Martin Neil Bailly and Alok K. Chakrabarti, *Innovation and the Productivity Crisis* (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 1988), p. 115.

³⁸⁴ Cordell D. K. Yee writes about Pound’s belief that logic is not a source of knowledge in “Discourse on Ideogrammic Method: Epistemology and Pound’s Poetics,” *American Literature* 59.2 (May 1987), 242–56 (p. 246).

³⁸⁵ Wayne C. Booth speculates on the difference between pure science and rhetoric in Chapter 6 of *The Vocation of a Teacher: Rhetorical Occasions, 1967-1988* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 105–28.

³⁸⁶ Ezra Pound, “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste,” *Poetry*, 1.6 (March 1913), 200–06.

³⁸⁷ Bernard Hart, *The Psychology of Insanity* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), p. 61.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

corresponds with Hart's statement that a complex that eschews logic still "play[s] a vast part" in the "world of science." In this tendency towards anti-rationalism, Pound might have been influenced by Henri Bergson and T. E. Hulme, who both exemplified anti-rationalism in the "general current of anti-intellectualism developing at the time."³⁹¹

Hulme's use of the chessboard as a metaphor for anti-rational thinking³⁹² was possibly an inspiration for Pound's Vorticist poem "Dogmatic Statement on the Game and Play of Chess: (Theme for a Series of Pictures)."³⁹³ Pound describes the movement of chess pieces over a checkered, ordered chessboard using letters, the basic elements of language: "'L's' of colour," "'x's' of queens," and "'Y' pawns." The movements of the chess pieces break the logical pattern of the board: "Their moves break and reform the pattern." The colors of "red knights, brown bishops, bright queens," "luminous greens," and "straight strips of hard colour" further thwart the black-and-white order of the chessboard. Just as Pound associated Vorticism with breaking up logic, he earlier established Imagism in opposition to rhetoric. "The 'image' is the furthest possible remove from rhetoric."³⁹⁴ Pound associates the Image with empirical science rather than rhetoric or logic. "Even Aristotle distinguishes between rhetoric, 'which is persuasion,' and the analytical examination of truth," he states in his "Vorticism" article. He then describes his poetic development leading to the formation of Imagism as "the search for the real ... casting off, as it were, complete masks of the self in each poem." Again, Pound associates a sincere, genuine approach to knowledge with the "real," necessarily precluding rhetoric or empty logic. He states that Imagism helped him become a more genuine poet, shedding the "masks" that he previously employed to fit convention. Pound therefore associates Imagism with a type of directness or pureness. He describes the unstructured forms of Imagist poetry as a natural portrayal of the subject: "you let in the jungle, you let in nature and truth and abundance." In his association of unbounded nature with Imagism, Pound aligns the Image with the real: "An *image*, in our sense, is real because we know it directly." He therefore views the Image as an empirical observation of the senses. In describing Dante's "Paradiso," Pound classifies certain sections of the epic as belonging to an Imagist tradition, and other sections as belonging to

³⁹¹ *Further Speculations by T. E. Hulme*, ed. by Sam Hynes (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. xiv. Also Steven Foster, "Eidetic Imagery and Imagiste Perception," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 28.2 (Winter 1969), 133–45 (141). On page 143, Foster notes that Imagism, which began as "anti-rationalist dogma, is now appraised according to logical principles." He makes the point that logic is "not the original sensibility and doctrine of the school."

³⁹² T. E. Hulme in "Cinders," *Speculations*, qtd. in Patricia Rae, "From Mystical Gaze to Pragmatic Game: Representations of Truth in Vorticist Art," *ELH* 56.3 (Autumn 1989), 689–720 (689).

³⁹³ Ezra Pound, "Dogmatic Statement on the Game and Play of Chess: (Theme for a Series of Pictures)," *Blast 2: War Number*, 1.2 (July 1915), p. 19.

³⁹⁴ Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," *Fortnightly Review*, 46.573 (1 September 1914), 461–71. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C158, 275–85 (p. 276). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), pp. 94–109.

opposing philology. “The permanent part is Imagisme, the rest, the discourses with the calendar of saints and the discussions about the nature of the moon, are philology.” He associates permanency with Imagism and mystical elements with philology. Lastly in this 1914 article, he states that in the moment in which he viewed the metro scene in La Concorde station, he received a complex, or image, in the form of an equation. “There came an equation,” he states, that was “a ‘pattern,’ or hardly a pattern, if by ‘pattern’ you mean something with a ‘repeat’ in it.” This equation, like words, represents an empirical image that could be observed by the senses in the same manner that observation produces science. Pound clarifies that this image was not a pattern in which something was repeated in an orderly manner, but was a pattern of natural organicism. Within two years, Pound argues that words must represent “things” or the words lose their meaning and become merely rhetoric. “For when words cease to cling close to things, kingdoms fall, empires wane and diminish,” he writes in 1916.³⁹⁵ He speculates that this turn to rhetoric led to the downfall of lost empires: “Rome went because it was no longer the fashion to hit the nail on the head. They desired orators.” If the downfall of an empire was caused by the precedence of oratory and rhetoric, or words unconnected to objects, then a renaissance of an empire could be stimulated by the banishment of rhetoric, ultimately producing proximity to the object. Pound focuses on what could be viewed as the Renaissance portrayal of fundamental science, “the Renaissance ‘enjoyment of nature for its own sake,’ and not merely as an illustration of dogmatic ideas.” He places this pure description of nature in opposition to rhetoric or empty words: “The Renaissance sought a realism and attained it. It rose in a search for precision and declined through rhetoric and rhetorical thinking, through a habit of defining things always ‘in terms of something else.’”

Similarly, in his *Personae* poem “Guilliaume de Lorris Belated,” Pound condemns deductive reasoning, which begins with mere premises that are only presumed to be true. “That lower thing, deductive intellect, I saw / How all things are but symbols of all things.”³⁹⁶ He views deductive reasoning as a lower form of thinking, as its source is not pure knowledge but merely supposed premises. These premises are “but symbols” like mathematical equations, which Pound implies cannot be known, just as symbols represent something not fully known: “And each of many do we know / But the equation governing.” Pound’s hostility towards abstraction extends to the theoretical sciences, such as theoretical mathematics. In “The Wisdom of Poetry,” Pound uses a metaphor of a circle to describe his views of abstraction and reality. He states, “By the signs $a^2 = b^2 = c^2$, I imply the circle. By

³⁹⁵ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations: VI. Analysis of this Decade,” *New Age*, 16.15 (11 February 1915), 409–11. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C179, 16–17 (p. 16). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), p. 133–41.

³⁹⁶ Ezra Pound, “Guilliaume de Lorris Belated,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 92.

$(a - r)^2 + (b - r)^2 = (c - r)^2$, I imply the circle and its mode of birth.”³⁹⁷ He then compares these theoretical equations to the realities of circles that he can see—his “ink-well” and his “table-rim.” “Is the formula nothing?” he questions. He then states that society views the abstract mathematician as they view the poet, as both are commonly understood as dealing with abstractions rather than applied sciences. “As the abstract mathematician is to science so is the poet to the world’s consciousness.” Yet he insists, “Both are scientifically demonstrable,” arguing that the mathematician’s abstraction can be demonstrated in the real world, just as the poet’s words are based on this same reality. Pound praised Guido Cavalcanti, for example, as a poet who presented the world around him precisely and without rhetoric: “we have in him no rhetoric, but always a true description.”³⁹⁸ Pound associates this avoidance of rhetoric with Cavalcanti’s scientific background as “a very fine natural philosopher”—the early term for a scientist—and “‘physicus’ (? natural philosopher) of authority [*sic*].”³⁹⁹ Pound describes Cavalcanti’s poetry, void of rhetoric, as “the science of the music of the words.”

Ultimately, Pound’s incorporation of empiricism in his poetic theory results in an innovative, unorganized, and unbounded use of the material of science—objects and forces.⁴⁰⁰ The tradition of logical empiricism, which extended from pre-World War I to the mid-twentieth century, associated empiricism with logicity, and therefore lessened the capacity for creativity.⁴⁰¹ Pound’s use of empiricism, however, incorporated the possibility of creativity precisely because of its focus on the empirical image rather than logic or rhetoric. Logic relies upon already-established convention and knowledge, thereby not permitting creative interpretation and freedom. Pound depicts the barriers of traditional logic in his poem “The Cry of the Eyes” in *A Lume Spento*:

Free us, for we perish
 In this ever-flowing monotony
 Of ugly print marks, black
 Upon white parchment.
 Free us, for there is one
 Whose smile more availeth
 Than all the age-old knowledge of thy books:

³⁹⁷ Ezra Pound, “The Wisdom of Poetry,” *Forum*, 47.4 (April 1912), 497–501. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C45, 72–75 (p. 75).

³⁹⁸ Ezra Pound, “Introduction to *The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti*,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 187–95 (p. 188).

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p 191.

⁴⁰⁰ Cordell D. K. Yee. “Discourse on Ideogrammic Method: Epistemology and Pound’s Poetics,” *American Literature* 59.2 (May 1987), 242–56 (p. 252).

⁴⁰¹ Karl Raimund Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery: Logik Der Forschung* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 21.

And we would look thereon.⁴⁰²

The print on a page reflects already-known “age-old knowledge,” whereas Pound would prefer, for example, the creative, unbounded writing of his blackboard, as his student remembered. His own literary output, both prose and poetry, reflected this anti-linear, unorganized process of depicting images, as “monolinear thought must be inadequate to describe polylinear reality.”⁴⁰³

TRANSLATION METHODS

One example of Pound’s view of monotonous black “print marks” is an academic, strict translation. He established that words could have variable meaning, and in portraying this view, he compared the word to numbers. While a traditional or academic interpretation of words “have a fixed value, like numbers in arithmetic, like 1, 2, and 7,” an imagist, or Pound’s interpretation of words, allows for “a variable significance, like the signs *a*, *b*, and *x* in algebra.”⁴⁰⁴ The act of translation, then, allows for the translator’s and the readers’ response to the word, in addition to the transformation of the word itself into another language, or another form. As the definition of *translation* denotes “the action or process of turning from one language into another,”⁴⁰⁵ Pound views this process in academia as a stringent process that methodologically gives “a fixed value, like numbers in arithmetic.” However, Pound’s definition of translation aligns more closely with the idea of “transformation, alteration, change; changing or adapting to another use; renovation.”⁴⁰⁶ This concept of the purpose of translation allows for “variable significance” in the meaning of words and phrases. Pound disregards the strict definition of the term *translation*: “There was never any question of translation, let alone literal translation. My job was to bring a dead man to life, to present a living figure.”⁴⁰⁷ Pound refers to the organic life of literature, which constantly changes with each reader and each translator and allows for the evolution of a text to fit the age. In one of his earliest articles referring to his ideas about translation, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris,” Pound quotes his “Seafarer” translation and adds a tongue-in-cheek “Philological Note” that explains his haphazard decisions as translator. “The text of

⁴⁰² Ezra Pound, “The Cry of the Eyes,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 37.

⁴⁰³ Daniel Albright, *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot and the Science of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 192.

⁴⁰⁴ Ezra Pound, “Vorticism,” *Fortnightly Review*, 46.573 (1 September 1914), 461–71. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C158, 275–85 (p. 277). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), pp. 94–109.

⁴⁰⁵ “translation, n.II.2a” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

⁴⁰⁶ “translation, n.II.3a” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

⁴⁰⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to A. R. Orage dated April 1919, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 211–13 (p. 211).

this poem is rather confused. I have rejected half of line 76, read ‘Angles’ for angels in line 78, and stopped translating before the passage about the soul.”⁴⁰⁸ He justifies his decisions by arguing that earlier translators, with scholastic motivations, likely made unnecessary changes, thus “confusing” the original text. “It seems most likely that a fragment of the original poem, clear through about the first thirty lines, and thereafter increasingly illegible, fell into the hands of a monk with literary ambitions, who filled in the gaps with his own guesses and ‘improvements.’” Pound thereby feels justified in disregarding typical scholastic considerations. In a further indication of his lack of rigor in preserving the originality of the text in translation, Pound reviews another poet’s translation in 1913 and criticizes his attempt at absolute preservation. “The translations are slightly marred by ... their attempt to preserve the simplicity of the originals [and he uses] an occasional word or phrase which has been too far degraded by music-hall use to be longer effective in English.”⁴⁰⁹ It is this effect in English, in its translated form, with which Pound is concerned—ultimately displacing the importance of the original and emphasizing the newness or “renovation” of the final, variable form. Pound associates this effect as the “essence” of the original, which varies from “exact meaning.”

Following his first book-length translation, *The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti*, Pound was immediately scorned critically. Arundel del Re, for example, reviewed the book in *Poetry Review* and focused on Pound’s “slip-shod attempt to translate.”⁴¹⁰ “Mr Pound’s carelessness is nothing short of extraordinary,” del Re asserts, adding a list of misspellings of names and verbs, such as “Donna mi pregna” for “Donna mi prega.”⁴¹¹ He adds, “Without giving these slips an overdue importance, they are sufficient to condemn him a serious student.” Del Re associates translation with a scholarly pursuit. “I do not know if Mr Pound has more to learn than to unlearn,” he says.⁴¹² He adds that Pound “should, one would think, at least be free from slovenliness and inaccuracy. Accuracy and care has never been harmful to true art.” Del Re’s view of translation aligns with the scholar’s view of “accuracy and care,” rather than with Pound’s more creative approach at translation. Del Re does seem to catch the intent of Pound: “The translation ... shows the author to be earnestly striving after a vital idea of which one sometimes catches a glimpse

⁴⁰⁸ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: I,” *New Age*, 10.5 (30 November 1911), 107. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C25, 43–44 (p. 44).

⁴⁰⁹ Ezra Pound, “[A review, signed E. P.] *Art and Swadeshi*, by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy,” *Poetry*, 2.6 (September 1913), 226–27. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C89, p. 150.

⁴¹⁰ Arundel Del Re, “Review, *Poetry Review*, July 1912,” in *Ezra Pound: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Eric Homberger (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 86–88 (p. 86).

⁴¹¹ Arundel Del Re, “Review, *Poetry Review*, July 1912,” in *Ezra Pound: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Eric Homberger (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 86–88 (p. 87).

⁴¹² Arundel Del Re, “Review, *Poetry Review*, July 1912,” in *Ezra Pound: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Eric Homberger (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 86–88 (p. 86).

amidst the general tangle and disorder.” When defending this translation against del Re’s criticisms, Pound sets out his methods of translation in opposition to traditional or scholarly translation. “[The critic] seems to have misunderstood the aim of my work. I thought I had made clear in my preface that my endeavour was not to display skill in versification but to present the vivid personality of Guido Cavalcanti.”⁴¹³ He contrasts his own version with Rossetti’s earlier translation of “exact meaning” and “orderly rhymes.” Additionally, he claims that he searched for the “essential aspect of his [Cavalcanti’s] work,” which placed Pound’s emphasis on the essence of Cavalcanti’s thoughts rather than on the philologically defined meaning. As *essence* denotes “being, existence, viewed as a fact or as a property possessed by something,”⁴¹⁴ Pound’s use of the term contrasts with mere meaning.⁴¹⁵

Soon after Pound’s publication of *Cavalcanti*, Ernest Rhys hosted a dinner party at which Pound, “seeing the supper table dressed with red tulips ... took one of the flowers and proceeded to munch it up.”⁴¹⁶ Rhys recalls that Pound then repeated the act with a second tulip, until “by the end of supper all the tulips had been consumed.” He adds, “It was not until after the evening programme had run half its course that the tulip-eater recovered his insouciance and was able to join freely in the performances.” A recollection by del Re reveals that he was attending the same dinner party, although he identifies the flowers as roses:

Our Cavalcanti ‘feud’ fizzled out a few months later when we both happened to be invited to Sunday evening supper at Hampstead with Ernest Rhys (the founder of Everyman’s Library and an original member of Rhymers’ Club). This was the first time I had met Ezra at close quarters. He sat opposite to me—a very ‘montparnassian’ figure in a silk shirt, flowing tie and velvet jacket. His long face, accentuated by a sharply pointed imperial, his relentless eyes and shock of unruly tawny hair made me think of a youngish satyr in disguise. Mrs. Rhys and he were hotly discussing the merits of Ancient-Irish and Anglo-Saxon epic poems. Pound argued that the very strictness of the laws and conventions governing stress and alliteration enhanced rather than obscured the poet’s meaning and, to illustrate his point, began to intone—in a high-pitched key—a passage from his translation of *The Seafarer*: then, whether deliberately or not I have never been able to decide, his voice suddenly and

⁴¹³ Ezra Pound, “The Poems of Cavalcanti,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 569 (5 December 1912), 562. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C67, p. 110.

⁴¹⁴ “essence, n.1a” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

⁴¹⁵ Years after publishing the book, Pound reflects on his *Cavalcanti* work and portrays the experience of translation as “going over the text with a microscope.” Pound still describes his methods as not opposed to science, as his work still focuses on the object of the text. His description of his methodology still does not resemble a philologist’s structured approach: “I did a lot of rootin round for the meaning of ‘irci’ which aint ‘iracundia’ but ‘accensio sanguini circum cor.’ I think this line probably has *more* meaning, a more specific, possibly definite, physiological technical significance than you have given it.” Ezra Pound, Letter to Laurence Binyon dated 22 April [no year], British Library, Laurence Binyon Archive, Loan 103, Letters to Laurence Binyon, Vol. 9, p. 31.

⁴¹⁶ Ernest Rhys, *Everyman Remembers* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1931), p. 252.

most effectively broke, and with an expressive sweep of his hand he reached out to the bowl of red roses in the centre of the table, deliberately plucked off a petal, and put it in his mouth and, after a brief dramatic pause, continued his peroration. By the time we reached dessert, most of the roses had lost their petals and Mrs. Rhys, with a charming smile and a wicked twinkle in her bright blue eyes, turned to him and said, “Would you like another rose, Mr. Pound?”⁴¹⁷

Del Re notes that the two sat opposite each other soon after their Cavalcanti “feud,” as though their two opposing positions on translation were symbolically represented by their table positions. As Pound was opining about his method of translating appropriate to the meaning or essence of the particular poem, del Re interpreted the act of Pound’s now-notorious act of eating flower petals as an act of embarrassment or inferiority. Pound’s voice breaking creates an aura of immaturity, which Pound might have felt at this moment among critics of his translation methods.

Following the initial negative reception of his first book of translations, Pound published the poem “Tenzone” as one of his first group of poems in *Poetry* in April 1913, in which he questions, “Will people accept them? / (i.e. these songs).”⁴¹⁸ His placement of the object—the songs or poems—as a pronoun, “them,” adds to their obscurity while allowing the public, or “people,” the prominent subject-position of the poem. Additionally, Pound’s preparations for his *Cathay* translations were affected by his decreased confidence and increased worry about his translations’ reception. He describes his selection of translated poems in his postscript to *Cathay*: “But if I give them, with the necessary breaks for explanation, and a tedium of notes, it is quite certain that the personal hatred in which I am held by many ... will be brought to bear first on the flaws of such translation, and will then be merged into depreciation of the whole book of translations. Therefore I give only these unquestionable poems.”⁴¹⁹ Pound indicates that his decision to not follow an academic format of translation—with “explanation” and “a tedium of notes”—was made in an effort to avoid the necessary resulting academic scrutiny.

Pound again encountered rejection from the philological community after the publication of a shortened version of “Homage to Sextus Propertius”—in his words, “the left foot, knee, thigh and right ear of [his] portrait of Propertius”⁴²⁰ Pound likely composed his translation of “Homage to Sextus Propertius” in 1917, yet he had difficulty finding a

⁴¹⁷ Eric Homberger, “A Glimpse of Pound in 1912 by Arundel del Re,” *Paideuma*, 3 (1974), 86–88 (88). Del Re’s recollections of the evening were originally written 1959.

⁴¹⁸ Ezra Pound, “Tenzone,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 263.

⁴¹⁹ Ezra Pound, “Postscript to *Cathay*,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 260.

⁴²⁰ K. K. Ruthven, *A Guide to Ezra Pound’s Personae, 1926* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 83.

publisher until its publication in *Poetry* in March 1919.⁴²¹ Like his attraction to Cavalcanti, Pound was drawn to the persona of Sextus Propertius and attempted to bring out “the spirit of the young man of the Augustan Age, hating rhetoric and undeceived by imperial hog-wash.”⁴²² The translation was inspired by Pound’s own disregard of authority and its ill use of language, as he aimed to bring out “certain emotions vital to me in 1917.”⁴²³ In the issue of *Poetry* following the translation’s publication, William Gardner Hale of the University of Chicago published a letter identifying Pound’s mistranslations—most of which were a result of Pound’s refusal to consider carefully the grammatical relationships between the words. From the four sections of the poem that were published in *Poetry*, Hale identified about 60 errors. In his published letter, he describes one error in particular: “Pound mistakes the verb *canes*, ‘thou shalt sing’, for the noun *canes* (in the nominative plural masculine) and translates by ‘dogs’. Looking around then for something to tack this to, he fixes upon *nocturnae* (genitive singular feminine) and gives us ‘night dogs’!”⁴²⁴ This haphazard manner of translating was unprofessional to Hale, who was considered a singularly accomplished Latin expert who “combined in equal degree an intimate firsthand knowledge of the facts of Latin usage with a mastery of the historical-comparative method.”⁴²⁵ Hale, an avid philologist, Harvard graduate and Cornell professor, is included on the member lists of the American Philological Association from his membership election in 1882⁴²⁶ until his death in 1928⁴²⁷ and steadfastly attended the annual sessions. He was the founding director of the American School of Classical Studies in Rome, during which time he discovered unknown Catullus manuscripts in the Vatican.⁴²⁸ He was president of the American Philological Association from 1892 to 1893, and was in charge of creating the committee, on which he also served, that established college entrance requirements for Latin in 1909.⁴²⁹ His first publication, *The Art of Reading Latin*, became “the best-known guide for reading Latin with accuracy and taste”⁴³⁰ and he headed a committee that attempted to standardize the

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁴²² Ezra Pound, Letter to A. R. Orage, dated 1919, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 148–50 (p. 150).

⁴²³ Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations* (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 1305.

⁴²⁴ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 339.

⁴²⁵ “William Gardner Hale: 1849–1928,” *Classical Philology*, 23 (1928), 278–79.

⁴²⁶ “Appendix: Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Session, Cambridge, 1882,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1869–1896)*, 13 (1882), i–lxvii (p. iv).

⁴²⁷ “Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 59 (1928), i–cviii (p. vi).

⁴²⁸ “William Gardner Hale: 1849–1928,” *Classical Philology* 23 (1928), 278–79.

⁴²⁹ “Report of the Commission on College Entrance Examinations in Latin,” *The Classical Journal*, 5 (1910), 150–60.

⁴³⁰ “William Gardner Hale: 1849–1928,” *Classical Philology*, 23 (1928), 278–9.

variations of grammatical terms in school textbooks.⁴³¹ In an obituary published in *Classical Philology*, a colleague from the University of Chicago wrote that Hale was “one of the first chosen by President Harper to serve as ‘Head of Department,’ one of that distinguished group which was to give the new university an immediate standing in the scholarly world, and upon which the president relied to build up strong departments.”⁴³² Just as Hale opposed Pound’s uncontrolled, uncaredful method of translating, Pound disregarded, or pretended to disregard, Hale’s philological background and qualifications. One statement in particular that seemed to provoke Pound’s response was Hale’s assertion that Pound was not professional material: “If Mr Pound were a professor of Latin, there would be nothing left for him but suicide.”⁴³³ It was this criticism from a distinguished doctor of letters that Pound attempted to refute in a letter: “Allow me to say that I would long since have committed suicide had desisting made me a professor of latin.”⁴³⁴ Only Pound never sent the response to Hale or to be printed, preferring to write plaintively to his own friends and often referring to his figurative call to death by the philologist. To A. R. Orage, who later published the complete “Propertius” translation serially in the *New Age*,⁴³⁵ Pound again returned to the issue of professorship: “As a Prof. of Latin ... Hale should be impeccable and without error. He has NO claim to refrain from suicide if he errs in any point.”⁴³⁶ To Felix Schelling, Pound explained that he specifically included modern elements in the poem to distinguish the work from pure translation. “No, I have not done a translation of Propertius, that fool in Chicago took the ‘Homage’ for a translation, despite the mention of Wordsworth, and the parodied line from Yeats. (As if, had one wanted to pretend to more Latin than one knew, it wd. nt. have been perfectly easy to connect one’s divergencies from a Bohn crib. Price 5/- shillings).”⁴³⁷ Further, Pound states that he was attracted to Propertius because, as Pound believes, it is a text not particularly suited for scholarship. “I do not think, however, that the

⁴³¹ “Historical Sketch of an Attempt to Unify Grammatical Nomenclature,” *The English Journal*, 34 (1945), 215–16.

⁴³² “William Gardner Hale: 1849–1928,” *Classical Philology*, 23 (1928), 278–79.

⁴³³ Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations* (New York: Library of America, 2003) p. 1305.

⁴³⁴ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988) p. 340.

⁴³⁵ Ezra Pound, “Homage to Sextus Propertius By Ezra Pound: I,” *New Age*, 25.8 (19 June 1919), 132–33. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C471, p. 315. Reprinted from *Poetry*, March 1919. Also “Homage to Sextus Propertius By Ezra Pound: II. Difference of Opinion,” *New Age*, 25.10 (3 July 1919), 170. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C474, p. 317. Also “Homage to Sextus Propertius By Ezra Pound: III,” *New Age*, 25.12 (17 July 1919), 200. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C476, p. 318. Reprinted from *Poetry*, March 1919. Also “Homage to Sextus Propertius By Ezra Pound: IV,” *New Age*, 25.14 (31 July 1919), 231. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C479, p. 319. Also “Homage to Sextus Propertius By Ezra Pound: V,” *New Age*, 25.16 (14 August 1919), 264. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C481, p. 321.

⁴³⁶ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988) p. 341.

⁴³⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to Felix Emanuel Schelling dated 8 July 1922, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Felix Emanuel Schelling Papers, Folder 8.

homage has scholastic value. McKail (accepted as “right” opinion on the latin poets) hasn’t, apparently, *any* inkling of the *way* in which Propertius is using latin.” Pound is attempting to argue that certain texts are inherently unsuitable to the realm of scholarship, and therefore, are more suitable to a creative re-rendering of the text. Pound did, however, respond publicly to a negative review of “Propertius” in the London *Observer*, written by Robert Nichols but using quoted material from Hale. Pound claims that his translation was “a character sketch which never was, and never was intended to be, an *ad verbum* translation; in which I paid no conscious attention to the grammar of the latin text; and of which all my revision were made *away* from and not *toward* literal rendering; coming toward the wider issue of academic misinterpretation of the classics.”⁴³⁸ Pound distinguishes translation that moves away from the text from translation that moves toward the original text. He unmistakably aligns “all” his own work to translation that moves away from the original, and terms his work a “revision.” He additionally defends some of his particular choices of translation, such as “the division of *in* and *tacta*,” which Pound describes as Propertius’ intended irony, which a philologist neglects or refuses to consider or acknowledge. He defends his sexual rendering of the original as a meaning intended by Propertius, of which proper philologists would not approve.

“Huc mea Cynthia” — my Cynthia, with her *cause célèbre* past, with all that Propertius has matchlessly sung of her and with the remainder of that delectable poem — are we to suppose that he was never ironical, that he was always talking for Tennyson’s tea-table, that he attended Dr. Wilson’s mid-week prayer meetings, that he was as dull and humorless as the stock contributors to Mr. Marsh’s series of anthologies?

Or is the vaunted and recommended “tenderness” (like the white meat of a young fattened poularde?) supposed to be that quality of feeling which would prevent us from receiving our own Cynthias upon *their* returns from Lanuvium?

When Pound reprinted “Sextus Propertius” in *Personae* in 1926, he added the modern quip, “Nor is it equipped with a frigidaire patent”⁴³⁹ — his own modernized line to distance further the translation from philological exactness. Pound included a frigidaire in Propertius’ first-century Roman world, or at least brought Propertius into the modern world for the brief length of a line. In one of Pound’s post-Hale responses, he claims that his purpose was less to translate than it was “to bring a dead man to life.”⁴⁴⁰ That Pound saw “Homage to Sextus Propertius” as material that was alive and receptive to an addition of a Wordsworth allusion or a line of Yeats, further removes Pound from the methodologies of the philologists.

⁴³⁸ Ezra Pound, “Letters to the Editor: Propertius and Mr. Pound,” *Observer*, (25 January 1920), 5. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C533a, p. 12.

⁴³⁹ Ezra Pound, *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations* (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 1306.

⁴⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to A. R. Orage dated April 1919, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 211–13 (p. 211).

Pound claimed a desire to reinvigorate the academic field of philology by introducing new methods of translation. “The philologists have so succeeded in stripping the classics of interest that I have already had more than one reader who has asked me, ‘Who was Propertius?’”⁴⁴¹ He sees a lessening of familiarity with the classics as the language arts become more specialized. “As for my service to classical scholarship, presumably nil, I shall be quite content if I induce a few Latinists really to look at the text of Propertius instead of swallowing an official ‘position’ and then finding what the text-books tell them to look for.” Because Pound views academics as insincere searchers—those who accept “what the text-books tell them to look for”—he views scholars as wearing a kind of mask to continue a professional impression to promote their careers and reputations. He views this tendency in other poets with contempt. Responding to Eliot’s review of Pound’s collection *Quia Pauper Amavi* in 1919, Pound seems to discount any praise that Eliot has given his own poetry in the collection, since Eliot overlooked his “Propertius,” which was included in the collection. Pound turns the focus of this letter to the editor to the scholarly subject of translation. “Still struggling beneath the enormous weight of granite laurels wherewith the immortal author of ‘Sweeny among the Nightingales’ has so generously loaded my superstructure (Athenaeum, October 24, p. 1065); still puzzled to know—as perhaps the reader is also—whether T. S. E. has or has not found my ‘Homage to Propertius’ enjoyable.”⁴⁴² Pound then criticizes the mask that he views Eliot as wearing to promote his literary career. He identifies what he views as Eliot’s assumption of the status of scholarship: “the *universitaire* tendency, before noted in T. S. E.’s article on Hamlet, where, as in his later note, he seems to regard literature not as something in itself enjoyable, having tang, gusto, aroma; but rather as something which, possibly because of a non-conformist conscience, one *ought* to enjoy because it is literature (infamous doctrine).”

POETRY METHODS

In addition to wanting to change the field of philology, Pound primarily desired to change the literary field of poetry away from its traditional academic leanings and influences. In a letter to Thomas Hardy, Pound associates his Propertius translation experience with his overall desire to turn the focus of translation—and all of poetry—to a concentrated “subject” rather than to the poem’s form. “You have really said a good deal and diagnosed the trouble with nearly all the art and literature of the past thirty years.”

⁴⁴¹ Ezra Pound, “Letters to the Editor: Homage to Propertius,” *New Age*, 26.5 (4 December 1919), 82–83. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C516, p. 366.

⁴⁴² Ezra Pound, “Mr. Pound and His Poetry: To the Editor of *The Athenaeum*,” *Athenaeum*, 93.4670 (31 October 1919), 1132. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C502, p. 346.

Pound writes in March 1921.⁴⁴³ He reflects on his own translation work: “I ought—precisely—to have written ‘Propertius soliloquizes’—turning the reader’s attention to the reality of Propertius ... I ought to have concentrated on the subject.” Pound is evidently referring to a suggestion made by Hardy to Pound to change the title of “Homage to Sextus Propertius” to reflect Pound’s own vision of the piece—an idea which Pound reported to Schelling as “one impractical and infinitely valuable suggestion recd. from Thomas Hardy. ... He woke one to the extent of his own absorption in subject as contrasted with aesthetes’ preoccupation with ‘treatment’.”⁴⁴⁴ Years later, Pound still referred to Hardy as a source of genuine content in poetry; he labeled Hardy’s methodology as one of the main “roads” of poetry: “The old man’s road (vide Tom. Hardy)—CONTENT, the INSIDES, the subject matter.”⁴⁴⁵ This focus after Pound’s London career on the content, or “insides,” of a poem does not reflect a great shift from his earlier statements in London, during which he continually referred to a scientific focus on the object or facts rather than on personal comment. He speaks of the “prose tradition” in poetry in the *New Age* in October 1913, in the initial months of the formation of Imagism. “It means constatement of fact,” he states about the prose tradition in poetry.⁴⁴⁶ “It presents. It does not comment. It is irrefutable because it does not present a personal predilection for any particular fraction of the truth.” He associates poetry of this type with nature, or the natural forces that comprise the subject of science. “It is as communicative as Nature. It is as uncommunicative as Nature. ... It washes its hand of theories.” Pound focuses on the subject itself rather than the theories associated with the processes of science.

Similarly, in “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris” as early as 1911, Pound sets out the “New Method in Scholarship,” or the “method of Luminous Detail,” in which Pound argues for a method of relating a detail, or a scholarly subject, to a greater whole. This process is, like a scientific process, void of personal opinion or preference. “The artist seeks out the luminous detail and presents it. He does not comment.”⁴⁴⁷ Additionally, because of this detachment of the self or personal interpretation, the product becomes permanent and lasting. Pound associates the artist’s work with the scientist’s work, and relates poetry to both the soft and hard sciences: “His work remains the permanent basis of psychology and

⁴⁴³ Ezra Pound, Letter to Thomas Hardy dated March 1921, in Patricia Hutchins, “Ezra Pound and Thomas Hardy,” *Southern Review* 4 (1968), 90–104 (p. 99).

⁴⁴⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to Felix E. Schelling dated 8 July 1922, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 245–46 (p. 245).

⁴⁴⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to T. C. Wilson dated 30 October 1933, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 331–32 (p. 331).

⁴⁴⁶ Ezra Pound, “The Approach to Paris: V,” *New Age*, 13.23 (2 October 1913), 662–64. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C104, 180–82 (p. 181).

⁴⁴⁷ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: II,” *New Age*, 10.6 (7 December 1911), 130–31. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C26, 44–45 (p. 45).

metaphysics.” While the ideas, theories and “imperfect inductions, varying as the fashions” can change, the subject of the poem remains permanent: “the luminous details remain unaltered.” He states that theory or rhetoric in scholarship is inferior to objective fact, since theory is the base used to discover fact. “Axioms are the necessary platitudes of any science, and, as all sciences must start from axioms, most serious beginnings are affairs sententious and pedagogical.” Pound believes that if sciences traditionally begin with theory or axioms—generally accepted truths or propositions assumed to be true—they produce material for moralizing or teaching. Theory and the resulting moralizing material therefore form an academic cycle. Pound objects to the academic processes and rhetoric used to arrive at the detail, and states, “the drudgery and minutiae of method concern only the scholar.” While Pound does admit, “any fact is, in a sense, ‘significant,’” he elevates some facts above others in importance, thereby creating the term “luminous detail.” He states that in the history of civilization or literature, “a few dozen facts of this nature give us intelligence of a period—a kind of intelligence not to be gathered from a great array of facts of the other sort.” He then compares these facts to electricity: “They govern knowledge as the switchboard governs an electric circuit.” He cites his book *The Spirit of Romance*—which he earlier claimed was not a work of philology—as an example of presenting “certain significant data ... to make a sort of chemical spectrum of their art.” He is therefore designating a particular detail as representing a greater whole, creating a “chemical spectrum” or broad range of implication from the singular detail. He places importance on the whole rather than the parts; the adjective *luminous* refers to the conveyance of this detail to a greater whole. “Certain facts,” he writes, “give one a sudden insight into circumjacent conditions, into their causes, their effects, into sequence, and law.” It is this “insight into circumjacent conditions” that Pound emphasizes to distinguish his use of fact and detail from the use of fact in scholarship. “The method of Luminous Detail,” he defines, is “a method most vigorously hostile to the prevailing mode of to-day—that is, the method of multitudinous detail, and to the method of yesterday, the method of sentiment and generalisation.”

Pound defines his new scholarship method against the generalizations of the past, yet also defines his method against the rigors of contemporary academia, which focuses on “multitudinous detail” or various facts without relation to the greater whole. He attempts to maintain a balance between these two extremes: “The latter is too inexact and the former too cumbersome to be of much use to the normal man wishing to live mentally active.” He asserts his desire for a renaissance of education, to realign education into a balance of precise subject with general placement. “The aim of right education,” he states, “is to lead a man out into more varied, more intimate contact with his fellows.” He is taking the poet out

of the realm of the academic and the classified particular, into the broader realm of details that signify a greater whole. “The best of knowledge,” he states, “is ‘in the air,’” thereby disassociating the poet from any formal process of learning. He adds, “a few days in a good gallery are more illuminating than years would be if spent in reading a description of these pictures.” Pound supports direct perception, without the formal barriers of teacher between learner and subject. He criticizes the traditional separation of “common” knowledge and formal-educational knowledge. “Knowledge which cannot be acquired in some such manner as that of visiting galleries is relegated to the specialist or to his shadow, the dilettante.” Ultimately, Pound sets out a varied direction for utilitarian education in this article promoting the luminous detail. He praises the detail, which the applied sciences can promote, yet he calls for the “illumination” of this detail—a connection of this detail with other findings and observations.

Pound stated a desire for “more varied, more intimate contact with his fellows” in this 1911 article—implying direct learning without the structure of academia, in addition to the varied learning of an unspecialized, broad education. A year later in 1912, he similarly promoted an education in the real world: “I detest an education which tends to separate a man from his fellows.”⁴⁴⁸ He implies that academia divides the scholar from the rest of mankind, and therefore, from poets and artists. He thereby views a disconnection between formal education and the arts: “I should like to see the universities and the arts and the system of publication together for some sort of mutual benefit and stimulus.” Not only does Pound desire the discovery of interrelation between subjects, he also wants greater interrelation between systems of learning, particularly between the university and the arts. He reflects on this ideal model, which would develop from a merging of purpose between the universities, arts, and publications: “a certain carelessness, or looseness, if you will; a hatred of the sordid, an ability to forget the part for the sake of the whole, a desire for largeness, a willingness to stand exposed.” Pound views these various characteristics—all of which he admires—as potential outcomes of a de-academicized learning process. A disregard for academic structure would necessarily result in a positive, freeing carelessness, and a shift from classified research to generalist learning would emphasize the “whole” over “the part.” Most significantly, a learner outside of an academic setting would “stand exposed” and would produce work as an individual. This 1912 consideration of the relationship between the part and the whole, and the promotion of the whole, was a consideration that continued throughout Pound’s career.⁴⁴⁹ The whole, however, must be grounded in substantive fact. “Generalities,” he wrote in Canto 74, must be “born from a

⁴⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: XI,” *New Age*, 12.2 (14 November 1912), 33–34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C63, p. 107.

⁴⁴⁹ Frank Lentricchia, *Modernist Quartet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 195.

sufficient phalanx of particulars.” Knowledge is, in a Poundian view, “the digestion of particulars,” and knowledge as a whole is valued over each particular.⁴⁵⁰

This consideration of the part and the whole can extend to the structure of a poem, and particularly a long poem, as well. Pound viewed *The Waste Land* as an example of parts comprising the whole, and he called for the entirety of the poem in publication. “The Eliot, as you have probably decided,” he wrote the *Dial* editors, “is a whole and oughtn’t to be divided. (I have a complex on this subject, since necessity and haste permitted me to permit that bloody fool to print part of Propertius).”⁴⁵¹ He was conspicuously more relaxed about the publication of his own *Cantos*, and seemed to view each canto as a whole in itself, as he continuously viewed the collection of his *Cantos* as evolving and never having reach a finished whole. “As to the poem,” he wrote to Harriet Monroe about his “Three Cantos,” “string it out into three numbers if that’s the best you can do.”⁴⁵² In the published “Notes” to the 1917 publication of the first canto in *Poetry*, Pound justifies his decision to split the *Cantos* in its entirety at this point, precisely because he did not view the poem as having reached its completion. “I do not feel apologetic about presenting the opening cantos of an exceeding long poem,” he writes in the note, referring to the yet unknown length in general terms. “Most of the long poems that one can read were written before printing was invented, and circulated in fragments.”⁴⁵³ Similarly, he states that *Poetry* and other little magazines “make possible the current publication of work that otherwise would have been available only upon the issue of a complete volume of an individual’s work.” The decision to separate his *Cantos*, therefore, was a decision of practicality. Pound would insist on the wholeness of each particular canto, however, even in these initial years of their development: “The harm which other magazines have done to poetry is largely in that they have fostered a habit among poets of setting forth only so much of their work as may be intelligible and acceptable in bits, only a page or so at a time.” Pound’s interest in the presentation of the entirety of a poem relates to his promotion of the idea of wholeness in knowledge.

Pound does not view the whole as a compilation of similar components; he views the whole as still comprising diverse parts, each of which embodies its own individuality. “Humanity is a collection of individuals,” he states, “not a whole divided into segments or units. The only things that matter are the things which make individual life more interesting.”⁴⁵⁴ Pound views the whole as a positive network that brings together distinct

⁴⁵⁰ Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 79.

⁴⁵¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Scofield Thayer dated 8 February 1922, *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994), p. 227.

⁴⁵² Ezra Pound, Letter to Harriet Monroe dated 24 April 1917, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 165.

⁴⁵³ Ezra Pound, “Three Cantos: I,” *Poetry*, 10.111 (June 1917), 113–21.

⁴⁵⁴ Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: IV,” *New Age*, 21.14 (2 August 1917), 308–09. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C274, 251–52 (p. 252).

parts that otherwise would be disregarded or inaccessible. He cites the city as one example of the whole comprised of individual parts. “Civilisation is made by men of unusual intelligence,” he states. “And what man of unusual intelligence in our day, or in any day, has been content to live away from, or out of touch with, the biggest metropolis he could get to?” He envisions a line between Paris and London that he believes should be erased to bring together the two great cities: “At present the centre of the world is somewhere on an imaginary line between London and Paris, the sooner that line is shortened, the better for all of us, the richer the life of the world. I mean this both ‘intellectually’ and ‘politically.’ France and England have always been at their best when knit closest.” The city—and in Pound’s view, specifically the network of Paris and London—is an example of this idea of bringing together differing components to achieve an interesting whole. Pound insisted on “gather[ing] such dynamic particles together”—the various artists, the patrons, and the interested public.⁴⁵⁵

He constructed a plan to create a College of the Arts, based in these networks of cities, as early as his visit to America in 1910, as he revealed in the 1912 series “Patria Mia,” which he began conceptualizing during his America visit.⁴⁵⁶ At this early point in his career, he proposed his idea of a college, yet still was hesitant about immediately publishing a formal proposal after a failed attempt of publicizing the idea in America. “It is, perhaps, foolish to print in detail the constitution of such a college as I propose. I tried vainly to get it printed in New York.” In a letter to an American editor, Pound described his experience in New York in attempting to publicize his idea. “I used to be asked to ‘go away’ by ‘progressive’ New York editors for presenting a scheme not wholly unlike yours. I had in mind a permanent centre with a series of visitors coming in rotation as a stimulus to American art and literature, designed to give the young man in America the same sort of chance he would now have in Paris or London, namely, of getting his information first-hand from his elders in his own art rather than from dilutions of dilutions.”⁴⁵⁷ After returning to London, Pound sets out his idea as an “institution not unlike a ‘graduate school’ without professors.”⁴⁵⁸ His definition of his own institution used terminology such as “college” and “graduate school,” yet refused the structure of a teacher-student set-up. He envisions the initial idea in major American cities: “there should be a respectable college of the arts in New York (or Chicago, or San Francisco, or in all three), a college of one hundred

⁴⁵⁵ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: VII,” *New Age*, 11.25 (17 October 1912), 587–88. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C58, p. 102.

⁴⁵⁶ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: VII,” *New Age*, 11.25 (17 October 1912), 587–88. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C58, p. 102.

⁴⁵⁷ Ezra Pound, “Ezra Pound on the League of Ideas,” *Much Ado*, 10.2 (Christmas 1919), 16–17. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C521, p. 371.

⁴⁵⁸ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: VII,” *New Age*, 11.25 (17 October 1912), 587–88. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C58, p. 102.

members, chosen from all the arts, sculptors, painters, dramatists, musical composers, architects, scholars of the art of verse, engravers, etc., and they should be fed there during the impossible years of the artist's life—i.e., the beginning of his career.” Pound found support of the arts lacking, with funding and endowments going towards “utilitarian knowledge.”⁴⁵⁹ “Wherever there is direct ratio between knowledge and immediate definite profit you will, as I have said, find the American marvelously efficient, both in intuition and in methods of training.”⁴⁶⁰ Because of this imbalance of funding towards the arts and towards utilitarian knowledge, Pound tried to further publicize his conception of the College of the Arts by attempting to change public perception of the arts. He put forward the idea that the arts accompanied sciences precisely because knowledge should be viewed as one whole. If knowledge was a complete system, or a whole, then the arts and sciences are one. “The arts and sciences hang together. Any conception which does not see them in their interrelation belittles both. What is good for one is good for the other.”⁴⁶¹ He uses a metaphor in which he describes the job of a poet with the public expectations of the scientist, furthering his contention that the two fields should be viewed as similarly important. “It is as futile to expect a poet to get the right words, or any sort of artist to do real work, with one eye on the public, as it would be to expect the experimenter in a chemical laboratory to advance the borders of science, if he have constantly to consider whether his atomic combinations are going to flatter popular belief, or suit the holders of monopolies in some over-expensive compound.”

This view of the broad similarities between the pursuit of the arts and sciences is captured in Pound's third canto published in 1917. In describing the medieval humanist Lorenzo Valla, Pound emphasizes the “parts” that comprise his interdisciplinary achievements: “A man of parts skilled in the subtlest sciences; / A patron of the arts, of poetry; and of a fine discernment.”⁴⁶² He values the multiple and diverse “parts” that comprise a humanist and his scope of knowledge, both in the arts and the sciences. In his series “America: Chances and Remedies,” which theoretically laid the foundation for his college, Pound equated the dignity of the arts to that of the sciences. “The arts have at least the dignity of the processes of science; anyone who does not understand this is confusing art with the sham; he is confusing it with the fancy work of faintly emotional ladies and with

⁴⁵⁹ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: VII,” *New Age*, 11.25 (17 October 1912), 587–88. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C58, p. 102.

⁴⁶⁰ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: VII,” *New Age*, 11.25 (17 October 1912), 587–88. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C58, p. 102.

⁴⁶¹ Ezra Pound, “The Renaissance: III,” *Poetry*, 6.2 (May 1915), 84–91. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C189, 82–85 (p. 84).

⁴⁶² Ezra Pound, “Canto III,” *Poetry*, 10.5 (August 1917), 248–54 (p. 249).

the amusements of dilettantes.”⁴⁶³ In proposing the “super-college,” Pound argues that “the nature of the arts and humanities” are more closely aligned to the sciences than is generally understood, and because of this misunderstanding of the humanities, students who want to pursue productive, utilitarian courses avoid the study of humanities.⁴⁶⁴ He insists that if students want to gain a broad range of knowledge, they would avoid purely utilitarian courses: “It is true that the large enrolment of students is deceptive—if one consider it as earnest of intellectual aspiration, for the great bulk of the students are engaged in purely technical and utilitarian courses. As for ‘the humanities,’ the courses in these branches would seem to draw a preponderance of the dullest or weakest of the students.” The real problem in public perception of the humanities, he argues, is the disregard of the arts in the university system. “Roughly, taking stock of the machinery to hand, one finds it—dissociated, any one part useless to any other—as follows:—I. Art schools and their students, creative artists in all the media, from paint to music and literature. II. Universities, with endowment and with provisions for fellowships in the dissection of every dead matter, and no provision whatever for the fostering of the creative energies.”

When Pound read in the *New Freewoman* in October 1913 about a new religious order called the “Angel Club,” he wrote a response, asking the club to consider the request of the “unfounded order of the ‘Brothers Minor’,” which he defined as “an order to foster the arts as the church orders fostered painting.”⁴⁶⁵ He adds, “I have longed for some order more humane than the Benedictines who should preserve even the vestiges of our present light against that single force whereof the ‘ha’penny’ press and the present university and educational systems are but the symptoms of surface.” Similarly, within the year, Pound published his proposal for a College of the Arts in London’s *New Age*. He bases his idea on the American Academy in Rome: “The American Academy at Rome is a most commendable model. Ten men are kept there, for a term of three years each—painters, sculptors, architects.”⁴⁶⁶ Pound exhibits a desire to replicate a university structure based on the model of the American Academy, which in the same year, 1913, had been founded by a merger of the American School of Architecture and the American School of Classical Studies. The latter was established and run under the methodologies of philology; its founding director was William Gardner Hale, who would later humiliate Pound for his

⁴⁶³ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies, Part VI,” *New Age* 13.2 (8 May 1913), 34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C80, 140–41 (p. 140).

⁴⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies, Part VI,” *New Age* 13.2 (8 May 1913), 34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C80, 140–41 (p. 140).

⁴⁶⁵ Ezra Pound, “The Order of the Brothers Minor,” *New Freewoman*, 1.9 (15 October 1913), 176. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C107, p. 190.

⁴⁶⁶ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: V. Proposition III—The College of the Arts,” *New Age* 13.5 (29 May 1913), 115–16. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C83, p. 143.

inaccurate translations. Pound was evidently modeling his concept of the College of the Arts on a philologist-run academy, despite his proclamation in the prospectus that “a knowledge of morphology is not essential to the appreciation of literature, even the literature of a forgotten age or decade.”⁴⁶⁷ What Pound emphasizes in this model, however, is the diversity of subjects offered: “The mingling of young men engaged in *all* the different sorts of art has always proved most fruitful. One comes to a capital, in fact, in order that one may find the most dynamic minds of each variety.” He states that his college would differ from a typical university system that helps fund and encourage specialized research such as “the developments of ablauts in Middle High German; to make comments on the works of Quinet; to read Assyrian tablets.” Additionally, he emphasizes that his “super-college” would be a “college with no professors” and would notably lack an organizing body: “I should not have a freak committee, but as no institution has ever yet proved too revolutionary I should base the qualifications for admittance largely on originality.” His vision for revolution would be fulfilled by the degree of originality of the applicant. The more original an applicant is—and therefore, the more a student differs from the typical college student—the closer Pound would be to his dream of a revolutionary college. His envisioned success hinged on originality, the distinctness of the student from the norm.

By 1914 Pound had created a prospectus for the college, printing it in *The Egoist* and as separate flyers for distribution.⁴⁶⁸ As he wrote his parents about his plans, “Am stirring up a college of Arts, prospectus in next Egoist.”⁴⁶⁹ In a separate letter, he notes, “I have been busy with this College of Arts propaganda.” One of his pieces of propaganda to direct attention to the college idea was a letter to the editor of the *Egoist*, signed “Alf Arpur.” Arpur’s distinct dialect is reflected in his writing, and ultimately portrays any skepticism about the college as uneducated, unpolished, or reactionary. Arpur believes the college is a foreign infiltration designed to import foreign spies into England:

I aint bin able to find anybody wot could tell me wot it was about and as I coudent make it out myself conserkently I aint able to say if it was great or not. But I seed as how it was signed by a lot of furriners and had sumthing to do with culshure and the British Mooseum (the same where the mummies come from). So I says to myself, ‘Hello, its annuther little

⁴⁶⁷ Ezra Pound, “Preliminary Announcement of the College of the Arts,” *Egoist*, 1.21 (2 November 1914), 413–14. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C163, 316–17 (p. 317).

⁴⁶⁸ Donald Gallup, *Ezra Pound: A Bibliography* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), pp. 428–29. Also Ezra Pound, “Preliminary Announcement of the College of the Arts,” *Egoist*, 1.21 (2 November 1914), 413–14. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C163, 316–17 (p. 317).

⁴⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound dated 24 October 1914, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2670.

dodge to capshure German trade.' I arst my driver wot he thort about it. He only said,
"Blimey."⁴⁷⁰

Aside from his inclusion of the college idea in articles, Pound's college prospectus itself was its main propaganda, asking potential students to address all communications to "Vaughn Baron, Sec." in the "Secretarial Offices, 5, Holland Place Chambers," Pound's home address.⁴⁷¹ In this proposal, his main arguments for the college centered on the issue of diversity in knowledge and practice. In the second paragraph of the prospectus, Pound begins to define the college by its emphasis on diversity of study:

Recognising the interaction of the arts, the inter-stimulous [*sic*], and inter-enlightenment, we have gathered the arts together, we recommend that each student shall undertake some second or auxiliary subject, though this is in all cases left to his own inclination. We recognise that certain genius runs deep and often in one groove only, and that some minds move in the language of one medium only. But this does not hold true for the general student. For him and for many of the masters one art is the constant illuminator of another, a constant refreshment.

He adds that students could further diversify their education by taking other courses locally available: "It is always open to them, to fill in routine courses by application to the University of London (that is to say, ordinary mathematics or classics)." He emphasizes that the type of education offered by the College of the Arts is invaluable in comparison with a traditional foreign exchange education, in which students typically have "one single teacher who probably wishes them in the inferno." Pound produces a list of instructors who would be available to the student—most of whom did not obtain a formal university degree themselves. Of the 24 instructors listed, only Pound himself is acknowledged as having a university degree, "Ezra Pound, M.A." Many of the proposed instructors studied at arts and music schools, such as Arnold Dolmetsch in the Brussels Conservatoire, William P. Robins in St. Martins School of Art, Wyndham Lewis in the Slade School of Art. Others left their formal education or other careers to pursue their art, such as Reginald Wilenski, who left Oxford for painting, and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska who left his drafting to pursue sculpture. As Pound originally defined his college as an institution without professors, the instructors were intended as resources of learning for students. Additionally, the college was meant as much as a support of the instructors as it was meant as a support for students. The instructors' involvement in the college would guarantee them financial backing while giving them opportunity to interact with young artists. Additionally, he indicates that he would mandate diversity among the students: at least 10 percent of students must be "foreigners

⁴⁷⁰ Ezra Pound, "Another Raid on German Trade [letter to the editor]," *Egoist*, 1.23 (1 December 1914), 447. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C166, p. 320.

⁴⁷¹ Ezra Pound, "Preliminary Announcement of the College of the Arts," *Egoist*, 1.21 (2 November 1914), 413–14. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C163, 316–17 (p. 317).

from abroad” and not more than 20 percent could belong to the same religion.⁴⁷² Pound notes in a letter to Harriet Monroe describing the college that the proposal “embodies two real ideas: A. That the arts, INCLUDING poetry and literature, should be taught by artists, by practicing artists, *not* by sterile professors. B. That the arts should be gathered together for the purpose of inter-enlightenment. The ‘art’ school, meaning ‘paint school,’ needs literature for backbone, ditto the musical academy, etc.”⁴⁷³ As instructors and teachers were meant to come together for “inter-enlightenment,” their subjects of art and literature would interact and therefore become richer and more complex as a whole.

Pound’s emphasis at the school would be the observation of the “thing” itself, which basis would inspire creativity. “I would require nothing of him except that he painted the thing as he saw it, at his own rate and time, and that he showed up at a general sort of club rooms reasonably often, to quarrel, to dispute, to fraternize with, to backbite and to accelerate his fellows.”⁴⁷⁴ Pound sought the input of Eliot on his proposal, to which Eliot responded with more practical advice: “I have made only two comments in the text, and they can be easily erased. As to the rest, I should have liked a more crystallised statement of the function of the university and the need for an intellectual capital.”⁴⁷⁵ Ultimately, Pound abandoned the idea; aside from the impracticality of its establishment, many of the proposed instructors, such as Gaudier-Brzeska and Lewis, enlisted in the war.⁴⁷⁶ In 1920, when Pound was considering leaving London, he contemplated what he could do professionally in other cities. He mentions university lecturing and adds, “I have rather an itch for founding a wholly new sort of university, or super university; but that is probably too large an order to be filled ‘at sight.’”⁴⁷⁷ Though Pound now realizes the impracticality of the idea, he continues, “It is absolutely necessary to START the new civilization.” Additionally, he responds in 1919 to a manifesto of a new Federation Society of Arts, Letters, and Sciences

⁴⁷² Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: V. Proposition III—The College of the Arts,” *New Age*, 13.5 (29 May 1913), 115–16. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C83, p. 143.

⁴⁷³ Ezra Pound, Letter to Harriet Monroe dated 9 November 1914, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 44.

⁴⁷⁴ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: V. Proposition III—The College of the Arts,” *New Age*, 13.5 (29 May 1913), 115–16. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C83, p. 143.

⁴⁷⁵ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound from Merton College Oxford dated 15 April [1915], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2670.

⁴⁷⁶ In fact, Gaudier was already fighting in the war. Pound’s letters to his parents mentioning the development of the college idea also included updates on Gaudier’s encounters with the enemy on the front lines. Pound’s inclusion of Gaudier in his list of instructors suggests he believed Gaudier would return to London, or that Pound actually considered the college to be, and stay, theoretical.

⁴⁷⁷ Ezra Pound, “Here’s Your Chance, Washington University,” *Much Ado*, 11.9 (1 November 1920), 2–3. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C603, p. 116.

proposed by *Ésope* magazine and directed to the “Intellectuals of the Universe.”⁴⁷⁸ Pound responds, “one world at a time!” Yet he refers to his earlier efforts at creating a college: “In my younger days I also (in Arcadia) made out grandiose schemes in order that the world might be made safe for the arts. It will never be safe for the artist.” To this pessimistic turn of his earlier anticipation to rebuild academia, Pound still insists on viewing knowledge as a whole, and thereby disregarding any formal separations between degrees or status. “The soundest part of the manifesto is its attempt to break down the categoric walls between the savant, the scientist, and the artist and man of letters.” Additionally, he praises “men who really know whole systems of things.”

CLASSIFICATION

Pound’s interest in knowing the “whole systems of things” not only encouraged his investigation of the arts as well as the sciences—if not on the surface level—but it also permitted Pound to follow the methods of science in the relation of significant, detailed research findings to a greater whole.⁴⁷⁹ Science not only searched for the particulars; it looked for the similarities between these particulars. Darwin’s classification systems, for example, presented natural groups that share “essential” characteristics; the biological classification not only distinguished differences, but similarities between a family, genus, and species.⁴⁸⁰ From Pound’s earliest generalist tendencies—which became obvious as early as his undergraduate education—Pound opposed, in theory, specialized education that did not somehow lead to greater synthesis with other research. In practicality, even specialized education related at some level to other fields and other discoveries. However, Pound promoted the interrelation and communication of research findings above the focus of categorized findings.

These generalist tendencies illustrate that Pound’s style and content of poetry was directly influenced by his background and struggles with academia. A letter from Pound at Hamilton College to his mother in 1904 reveals his early energy and pursuits of diverse interests: “Will go to bed now if I don’t get interested in something,” he pens at the end of

⁴⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, “Esopo: France and the Trade Union,” *New Age*, 25.26 (23 October 1919), 423–24. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C498, 342–43 (p. 342).

⁴⁷⁹ The concept of the “whole” is historically problematic in the philosophy of science, as Gregory Dale Adamson explains in his book *Philosophy in the Age of Science and Capital* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002). He states, “The synthetic unity which makes the apprehension of the field of perception a given whole is the same as that which enables equally infinite objects, such as natural or real numbers, to be conceived as a totality. Since the whole can only be given in thought and, as Kant made clear, cannot be made an object of thought, any objection to totality will always be an element of a greater whole and for this reason can never be said to be complete” (p. 40).

⁴⁸⁰ Ernst Mayr, *The Growth of Biological Thought: Diversity, Evolution, and Inheritance*, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 209.

the letter.⁴⁸¹ His letters home frequently portray his new discoveries and interests: “Bibliography is attracting my special attention just now,” he writes in a 1905 letter. “Were you aware that in VI century scholars used to come from all Europe to Ireland to study Greek.—that is merely one item I’ve stumbled over.”⁴⁸² His most valued findings were discovered by chance through an unordered method. Even the physical location from where he established himself was affected by this desire to experience a multitude of locations. After securing his lecturing position at the Polytechnic, he initially planned on living “3 or 4 months a year in London,” as he told his mother, adding, “a couple of months in Italy with U.S.A. every other year and I should feel I was geographically correct as it were fitted into three parts of the earth where I belong.”⁴⁸³ Wyndham Lewis labeled Pound a “Demon pantehnicon driver,” signifying, from the late nineteenth century, a large van for transporting furniture—a term originating from the Pantehnicon building in London, which housed a haphazard jumble of arts, crafts, and furniture for sale.⁴⁸⁴ Pound responded in a letter to Joyce, “I feel Lewis’ definition of me as a ‘pantehnicon’ becoming daily more apt,” as he felt not only his interests, but his writing subjects and responsibilities cut through the fields of business, public relations, music, and sciences.⁴⁸⁵ His prose subjects—about which he wrote under several pseudonyms—ranged from portraiture painting⁴⁸⁶ to astronomy.⁴⁸⁷ He stated to the editors of the *Dial*, “Given a little patience and application (latter depending only on whether the book is about something I know or on chemistry or astronomy), I can write a review of any damn book you choose.”⁴⁸⁸ In this letter, he claims he could cover subjects as broad as “four thousand homunculi and mulierculae can flood in a[nd] produce flaccid dilutations.” The year Pound was first starting to publish his *Cantos*, he told his father he wanted “an almost infinite number of facts to select from.”⁴⁸⁹ With this idealistic aspiration of recording infinity, Pound desired to know, essentially, everything, which contributed to his “contradictoriness” as “polymath, bluffer; the enemy of all

⁴⁸¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Isabel Pound not dated [1904], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2653.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, letter believed to be written in 1905.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁴ “Pantehnicon, n.1a, 2” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

⁴⁸⁵ Ezra Pound to James Joyce, Letter dated 19 April 1917, *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 112.

⁴⁸⁶ Ezra Pound, “Art Notes. By B. H. Dias,” *New Age*, 22.18 (28 February 1918), 356–57. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C332, 62–63 (p. 62).

⁴⁸⁷ Ezra Pound, “Astronomy,” *Little Review*, 4.11 (March 1918), 59. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C337, p. 69. Signed X.

⁴⁸⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to Scofield Thayer dated 9 October 1920, *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994), p. 157.

⁴⁸⁹ Myles Slatin, “A History of Ezra Pound’s *Cantos* I–XVI, 1915–1925,” *American Literature* 35.2 (1963), 193.

beaneries, the Provost of ezuversity; Modernist, 19th-century medievalist.”⁴⁹⁰ Additionally, his “contradictoriness” reflected his desire to deal with the sciences even with his own predominantly literary background. He acknowledged the skepticism from other sources that questioned his ability to acquire and understand a broad range of subjects—one reason he might have tried to conceal his identity with pseudonyms while writing on these subjects. He noted about his London years, “Yeats used to say I was trying to provide a portable substitute for the British Museum.”⁴⁹¹ Additionally, he recounted his simultaneous desire to learn everything while realizing this feat was an impossibility. He wrote about an early experience using the British Museum reading room: “seated on one of the very hard, very slippery, thoroughly uncomfortable chairs of the British Museum main reading room ... I lifted my eyes to the tiers of volumes and false doors covered with imitation bookbacks which surround that focus of learning. Calculating the eye-strain and the number of pages per day that a man could read, with deduction for say at least 5% of one man’s time for reflection, I decided against it.”⁴⁹² Still, as some would argue, Pound attempts this very feat with the writing of his *Cantos*.

GENERALIST TENDENCIES

Common to a nineteenth-century school education, Pound’s childhood school claimed to provide a “liberal education.” A pamphlet from the school dating to the period that Pound attended included the study of languages: “Taking the languages are a necessary part of a liberal education, no extra charge is made for them in any class.”⁴⁹³ Supporters of a liberal arts education viewed formal education as a means of pursuing “the disinterested pursuit of truth, for the development of the intellectual life, and for the rounded development of character. Its primary aim is not to fit men for any specific industry, but to give them those things which are everywhere essential to intelligent living.”⁴⁹⁴ As Pound repeatedly referred to “intelligence,” his pursuit with education was similarly focused on this generalist view. Additionally, in the nineteenth century, the term *humanities* acquired a broader meaning and included a range of subjects associated with human experience. This broader understanding of the humanities developed out of a reaction to increasing scientific

⁴⁹⁰ Bob Perelman, “Pound’s Legibility Today: Pedagogy and/or Imitation,” in *Ezra Pound and Referentiality*, ed. by Helene Aji (Paris: Presses de L’Universite de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), pp. 31–41 (p. 32).

⁴⁹¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Sarah Perkins Cope dated 22 April 1934, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 257. Also in “How to Read,” Pound states, “I have been accused of wishing to provide ‘a portable substitute for the British Museum,’ which I would do, like a shot, were it possible. It isn’t.” (*Literary Essays* 16).

⁴⁹² Ezra Pound, *Guide to Kulchur* (New York: New Directions, 1952), p. 53.

⁴⁹³ University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Felix Emanuel Schelling Papers, Pamphlet for Cheltenham Boarding and Pay School, 1900–01, p. 10.

⁴⁹⁴ Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 85.

authority. A liberal education, it was viewed, could be “saved from scientific onslaught” by freeing it from its primary treatment of the classics, and aligning it with more stringent classified, methodological practices.⁴⁹⁵ While European universities in the late nineteenth century tended to separate the natural sciences from the sciences of man, American universities included broader sciences in their colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which emerged as the largest college in most American universities in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁹⁶ Generalists—those embracing the liberal arts and shunning specialized study—were at a disadvantage in the new system of Liberal Arts and Sciences colleges as the system became dominated with levels of degrees and singular research.⁴⁹⁷ The academics of the humanities who embraced specialization, such as philologists, felt “professionally closer” to a physical scientist than to a generalist.⁴⁹⁸ Pound commented on the virtues of a generalist education in a 1917 *Egoist* series, “Elizabethan Classicists.” “The humanizing influence of the classics,” he writes, “depends more on a wide knowledge, a reading knowledge, than on an ability to write exercises in latin.”⁴⁹⁹ He criticizes the emerging method of studying the classics and literature in general because of its increasing specialization. “When the classics were a new beauty and ecstasy people cared a damn sight more about the meaning of the authors, and a damn sight less about their grammar and philology.” Ultimately, in the series, he argues for a return to the traditional definition of “humanities” as relating to a generalist approach to the broad liberal arts. “The classics should be humanly, rather than philologically, taught, even in classrooms. A barbaric age given over to education agitates for their exclusion and desuetude.” Pound is again elevating content over the methodology; the classics over the methods and structure of the educational system.

Pound laments the shift in educational practices towards the classics. “The last dilection of Greek poets has waned during the last pestilent century,” he writes in 1918.⁵⁰⁰ “The classics have more and more become a baton exclusively for the cudgeling of schoolboys, and less and less a diversion for the mature.” He wrote a flippant poem the same year, “Cantico del Sole,” in which he repeats several times the lines, “The thought of

⁴⁹⁵ John Higham, *Writing American History: Essays on Modern Scholarship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1972), p. 11.

⁴⁹⁶ Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 301.

⁴⁹⁷ Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 55.

⁴⁹⁸ Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: Norton, 1978), p. 301.

⁴⁹⁹ Ezra Pound, “Elizabethan Classicists: III,” *Egoist*, 4.10 (November 1917), 154–56. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C295, 290–91 (p. 290).

⁵⁰⁰ Ezra Pound, “Early Translations of Homer: I. Hughes Salel,” *Egoist*, 5.7 (August 1918), 95–97. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C379, 140–42 (p. 140).

what America would be like / If the classics had a wide circulation / Troubles my sleep.”⁵⁰¹ He seems to view the increasing pressure for specialization—and the resulting lack of classical education—as a “sham” or an insincere education. He refers to the work of the “specialist” as the “fine-cut,” referring to the precise cutting away of seemingly extraneous material to get to the specific, focused subject. “The fine-cut is a dope. It is hedonistic. It is often sham-utilitarian; that is, it possesses all the vulgarity of the utilitarian tone; it professes to give “practical” information; and it is a sop to the tired or ineffectual mind, to the vagrant attention or inattention, and is fundamentally useless.”⁵⁰² Pound viewed specialization as ineffective because it was “unconnected with life” or failed to synthesize with other discoveries, other subjects, and the greater whole. Two years earlier, Pound’s former professor Felix Schelling addressed the University of Pennsylvania and speaks of specialization in a way he might have spoken of the topic with Pound’s class. “In these times of specialization,” he said of the university student, “he can rarely pretend to an expert knowledge beyond his own particular field.”⁵⁰³ The era of generalization had ended, in Schelling’s view, and any academic who attempted to continue as a generalist would be viewed as a merely “pretending.” Alternatively, Pound viewed the specialist as the pretender, labeling his work as “sham-utilitarian.” Pound’s view corresponds with a scientific philosophy that claims the hegemony of science is its ability to universalize data.⁵⁰⁴ Pound transferred this philosophy to the studies of the broader liberal arts. The power of a generalized education, therefore, was its ability to universalize its findings. A scientific authority would depend not only on discovery itself, but on the networks that these findings affect and change. It was this failure of networking, or spreading findings, that Pound criticizes with the emergence of classification. He began his *New Age* series in 1917, “Provincialism the Enemy,” by establishing a connection between a generalist mindframe and the discoveries and subsequent synthesis of science. He first criticized the limitations of specialization. He viewed specialists as having their “intelligence nicely switched on to a particular problem, some minute particular problem *unconnected* with life, *unconnected* with main principles (to use a detestable, much abused phrase). By confining his attention to *ablauts*, hair-length, foraminifera, he could become at small price an ‘authority,’ a

⁵⁰¹ Ezra Pound, “Cantico del Sole,” *Little Review*, 4.11 (March 1918), 35. Signed Ezra I. Y. H. X. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C334, p. 65.

⁵⁰² Ezra Pound, “Studies in Contemporary Mentality XI.—Hash and Rehash,” *New Age*, 22.2 (8 November 1917), 28–30. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C301, 301–03 (p. 301).

⁵⁰³ Felix Schelling, “Academic Rights and Privileges,” address to the University of Pennsylvania on 16 June 1915, in *Pedagogically Speaking: Essays and Addresses on Topics More or Less Educational* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1929), p. 79.

⁵⁰⁴ T. Hugh Crawford, *Modernism, Medicine, and William Carlos Williams* (London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 9.

celebrity.”⁵⁰⁵ The specialist, in Pound’s view, researches to gain authority or for the sake of scholarship itself, rather than for producing some progressive change. For Pound, it is this element of specialization that creates the sense of “sham.” “It is evil because it holds up an ideal of ‘scholarship,’ not an ideal of humanity. It says in effect: you are to acquire knowledge in order that knowledge may be acquired.” He specifically targets the specialization in graduate schools. “No one who has not been caught young and pitch-forked into a ‘graduate school’ knows anything of the fascination of being about to ‘know more than anyone else’ about the sex of oysters, or the tonic accents in Arumaic. No one who has not been one of a gang of young men all heading for scholastic ‘honours’ knows how easy it is to have the mind switched off all general considerations, all considerations of the values of life, and switched on to some minute, unvital detail.” Pound then relates this predicament to the field of science, and states that his views opposing specialization do not preclude his acceptance of science. “This has nothing whatever to do with the ‘progress of modern science,’” he writes. “There is no contradicting the fact that science has been advanced, greatly advanced, by a system which divides the labour of research, and gives each student a minute detail to investigate. But this division of the subject has not been the sole means of advance, and by itself it would have been useless.” Without a connection of discovery with other networks, the findings become mere words or substance for rationalization. As knowledge that was “originally embedded within everyday life became progressively separated and subjected to specialist development,” the subjects became increasingly distant from real-world experience.⁵⁰⁶ Additionally, as rationalization accompanies the objectification process,⁵⁰⁷ the subject becomes increasingly obscured.

Pound proposed a solution to this increasing separation of research from the real world. Whereas he felt that specialization retained information without making the information widely available, he viewed publication and cataloguing as potential sources of integrating specific research into a greater whole. Pound’s series “America: Chances and Remedies” in part criticizes American doctorate programs that do not allow the student “to think of his own minute discoveries in relation to the subject as a whole” and the inefficient library systems that fail to distribute Ph.D. findings. The scholar’s monograph, Pound argues, “is very apt to be like one pillar of a temple raised in the desert that no one will ever

⁵⁰⁵ Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: I,” *New Age*, 21.11 (12 July 1917) 244–45. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C266, 231–32 (p. 232).

⁵⁰⁶ Michael Bury, “Postmodernity and Health,” in *Modernity, Medicine and Health: Medical Sociology towards 2000*, ed. by Graham Scambler and Paul Higgs (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–28 (p. 9).

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

visit.”⁵⁰⁸ Further, he defends work not completed under the supervision of a university because this work is more likely to make connections with several disciplines. He calls this output a “super thesis, the product of some intellectual person capable of efficient synthesis.” He then parallels this integration of findings with the methods of science. “In branches of science it is possible that such synthesis actually occurs.”⁵⁰⁹ To energize scholarship and to make this scholarship useful, Pound argues, the humanities must follow the course of science in positioning its discoveries into a greater whole of knowledge. “No minute detail of knowledge is ever dull if it be presented to us in such a way as to make us understand its bearing on the whole of a science.”⁵¹⁰ His suggestions include publishing briefs of each thesis in established newspapers for the general public to read, producing a copy of the thesis for the university library, which would then be catalogued so students at other universities could become aware of simultaneous or past research.

PRECISION

Yet as Pound established his generalist tendencies in theory and practice, his desire for simultaneous precision seemed at odds with his primary tendencies. Additionally, the sheer impracticality of capturing the whole of knowledge in writing necessarily designates Pound’s generalism as theory rather than practice. A letter to the editor of the *Egoist* in 1914, signed by “Auceps,” or Richard Aldington, highlighted the overwhelming and impractical assumption of authority that Pound presented with his varied pursuits. “Ah! What a treasure you have in your recently discovered art critic!”⁵¹¹ Auceps writes. “I cannot claim to have spent more than a few idle years in the study of Greek, and, of course, Mr. Pound is a recognised European authority on the subject, as well as on the literatures of Provence, ancient and modern France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, America, Japan and Bengal, together with classic, mediaeval and renaissance Latin, mathematics, fencing, music and astrology, &c., &c.” To this letter, Pound responded, “Your correspondent, Auceps, complains that I have not stopped to quote the whole of Reinach’s ‘Apollo’ in my 1000-word article on ‘The New Sculpture.’ He is angry because I have not filled my page with

⁵⁰⁸ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies IV. Proposition II—That I would Drive the Seminars on ‘The Press,’” *New Age*, 13.4 (22 May 1913), 83. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C82, p. 142.

⁵⁰⁹ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies IV. Proposition II—That I would Drive the Seminars on ‘The Press,’” *New Age*, 13.4 (22 May 1913), 83. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C82, p. 142.

⁵¹⁰ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies IV. Proposition II—That I would Drive the Seminars on ‘The Press,’” *New Age*, 13.4 (22 May 1913), 83. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C82, p. 142.

⁵¹¹ Richard Aldington, “The New Art: Letter to the Editor By Auceps,” *Egoist* 5.1 (2 March 1914), 97.

ideas out of Pater and the Encyclopaedia Britannica.”⁵¹² Pound defends his treatment of various subjects because of their generality, rather than an approach resembling specifics. He then defends his review’s claim: “Let us confess that we have derived more pleasure from the works of Wyndham Lewis than from the works of Poussin or of Apelles.” To this statement, Auceps replies, “For, Madam, he has discovered Poussin and Apelles, and he prefers the work of Mr. Wyndham Lewis to either. He is fortunate above all living men, for, Madam—be it whispered gently—NO PAINTING OF APELLES IS EXTANT.”⁵¹³ Auceps then states that Pound likely refers to superficial secondary sources, such as an encyclopedia, for his information, rather than primary sources and his own genuine knowledge. “I made NO reference to NOR did I quote from the Encyclopaedia Britannica,” Auceps continues. “I can readily understand that any sort of knowledge of a subject would at once suggest to a person like Mr. Pound the idea that the writer had consulted that august work. But the Encyclopaedia Britannica did not enter my head all the time I was writing to you. And I fear that Mr. Pound’s reference to it and the new scraps of knowledge which he displays suggest only too obviously a recent pilgrimage to that Castalian source of journalism.”

Still, beyond any skepticism that his colleagues or audience might have developed because of his range of subjects, Pound continued to praise the “everyman.” In admiring the character of Leopold Bloom in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Pound could almost be describing himself in his desire to comprehend or embody all things: “Bloom also is the basis of democracy; he is the man in the street, the next man, the public, not our public, but Mr Wells’ public; for Mr Wells he is Hocking’s public, he is *l’homme moyen sensuel*; he is also Shakespeare, Ulysses, The Wandering Jew, the Daily Mail reader, the man who believes what he sees in the papers, Everyman, and ‘the goat.’”⁵¹⁴ The reflection of the highbrow and lowbrow elements of society illustrate the complete understanding of knowledge presented to the average man. Pound held up a desire for “scholarship not only wide but precise.”⁵¹⁵ In a review of *The Divine Mystery*, a book by Allen Upward—a polymath whom Pound revered—Pound states that Upward “has managed to tell so many interesting facts in three hundred pages ... he is nowhere content with a sham.”⁵¹⁶ He almost instinctively defends

⁵¹² Ezra Pound, “The Caressability of the Greeks,” *Egoist*, 1.6 (16 March 1914), 117.

⁵¹³ Richard Aldington, “The New Art: Letter to the Editor By Auceps,” *Egoist* 1.7 (1 April 1914), 137–38.

⁵¹⁴ Ezra Pound, “Paris Letter. May, 1922. Ulysses [by James Joyce],” *Dial*, 72.6 (June 1922), 623–29. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C642, 236–42 (p. 236).

⁵¹⁵ Ezra Pound, “The Divine Mystery. [book review of Allen Upward’s *The Divine Mystery*],” *New Freewoman*, 1.11 (15 November 1913), 207–08. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C113, 201–02 (p. 201).

⁵¹⁶ Ezra Pound, “The Divine Mystery. [book review of Allen Upward’s *The Divine Mystery*],” *New Freewoman*, 1.11 (15 November 1913), 207–08. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C113, 201–02 (p. 201).

against the charge of superficiality in conjunction with broad knowledge. “I do not write this as a specialist; but judging by those points where Mr. Upward’s *specialité* coincides with my own, I should say that he was led by a scholarship not only wide but precise. He shows remarkable powers of synthesis.” As early as 1912, Pound was contemplating the paradox of a broad liberal arts knowledge and the accuracy of a specialist education. “I detest what seems to me the pedantry of the ‘Germanic system,’ although I am not insensible to the arguments in favour of this method and mechanism,” he says in “Patria Mia.”⁵¹⁷ “I want all the accuracy of this system, but I want a more able synthesis of the results.” Pound’s answer to the question of where precision belongs in a generalist education often reverts back to the issue of synthesis. This synthesis, or the placing together of parts or elements to make up a complex whole,⁵¹⁸ demands a sophisticated understanding beyond surface-level understanding. Pound refers to this ability to synthesize in his series “The Revolt of Intelligence” in the *New Age* in 1920. “I am aware that this article looks like a mere disjointed heap of unrelated statements, that the connection between divorce, modern economics, belligerent instinct, etc., may not be superficially evident.”⁵¹⁹ Pound’s inclusion of the adjective *superficially* reveals his intent that a deeper meaning is brought out by his assembly of various and seemingly unrelated subjects. He compares this process of synthesizing various elements to produce a deeper meaning with science in a 1917 series, “Studies in Contemporary Mentality.” He speaks of several separate numbers that remain separate elements until they are brought together in an equation. Their synthesis in this equation presents a type of accuracy. “By the accuracy wherewith I divide, let us say 441/663 by 1077/9; I can assure him that this accuracy is science and dialectic.”⁵²⁰ To reach this accuracy, a man must obtain the skills to effectively obtain this synthesis. “He is foolish to combat it with ignorance.”

Just as the scientist must have the skills to create synthesis from his findings, a poet must have skills and intelligence to synthesize his elements effectively. Pound’s views on academia, his preference for the general over the classified, and his embrace of synthesis over rhetoric helped shape the poetry that Pound began writing during his London career. Ultimately, the conception of the *Cantos* derived from Pound’s experience with and reaction to academia. Pound’s poetic theory embraces his generalist views on knowledge and

⁵¹⁷ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: XI,” *New Age*, 12.2 (14 November 1912), 33–34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C63, p. 107.

⁵¹⁸ “synthesis.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. OED Online. Oxford University Press.

⁵¹⁹ Ezra Pound, “The Revolt of Intelligence. By Ezra Pound. VI,” *New Age*, 26.11 (15 January 1920) 176–77. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C531, 9–10 (p. 10).

⁵²⁰ Ezra Pound, “Studies in Contemporary Mentality XVI. Aphrodite popularis,” *New Age*, 22.8 (20 December 1917), 148–49. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C313, 317–18 (p. 317).

education and his desire for synthesis. His view of the treatment of various subjects is reflected in his poetic writing, as “writing is a form of knowing.”⁵²¹ Even his importation of schools, or –isms, into his poetic development reflects the influence of academia.⁵²² Pound and Flint’s initial “Imagisme” document stated a edict of “direct treatment of the ‘thing,’ whether subjective or objective,” but also included a description of the Imagists: “They consider that Art is all science, all religion, philosophy and metaphysic.”⁵²³ This directive brought poetry into the realms of both the scientist and the generalist; the poet was directed to treat the “thing” directly, focusing on the particular, while also considering their art as a whole with general knowledge—all science, religion, philosophy, metaphysics. Pound’s description of Vorticism, too, included the particular within the whole. “Vorticism is the use of, or the belief in the use of, THE PRIMARY PIGMENT, straight through all of the arts.”⁵²⁴ Again, Pound uses the term *all* to emphasize general knowledge: “all of the arts” as well as “all science, all religion, philosophy and metaphysic.” As with material that is rearranged and brings together a new synthesis, Pound claims that Vorticist art conveys “a new series of apperceptions.” He describes a multiplication of poetic materials as the everyday “stimulae” are rearranged and brought together in a new and different synthesis.

I have my new and swift perceptions of forms, of possible form-motifs; I have a double or treble or tenfold set of stimulae in going from my home to Piccadilly. What was a dull row of houses has become a magazine of forms. There are new ways of seeing them. There are ways of seeing the shape of the sky as it juts down between the houses. The tangle of telegraph wires is conceivable not merely as a repetition of lines; one sees the shapes defined by the different branches of wire. The lumber yards, the sidings of railways cease to be dreary.

It was during this year, when he asserted he was becoming more observant of everyday stimulae, that Pound comprised his first canto, which he called his “rag-bag” in which he would “dump [his] catch.”⁵²⁵ He described his poetic project to Joyce, “I have begun an endless poem, of no known category. Phanopoeia or something or other, all about

⁵²¹ Michael Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material World* (London: University of California Press, 1997), p. 70.

⁵²² Daniel Albright, *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, and the Science of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 7. Albright claims that in the beginning of the twentieth century poets became interested in the nomenclature of elementary poetical particles and began schools of poetry, or –isms, as basic units to be studied in those schools.

⁵²³ F. S. Flint, “Imagisme,” *Poetry*. 1.6 (March 1913), 198–200. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose* 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C73a, p. 119. Actually drafted by Pound and rewritten by Flint.

⁵²⁴ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations. By Ezra Pound Part II Vorticism,” *New Age*, 16.11 (14 January 1915), 277–78. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C170, 4–5 (p. 4).

⁵²⁵ Ezra Pound, “Three Cantos of a Poem of Some Length,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 318–30. Composed late 1915, first appeared in *Poetry* in 1917.

everything.”⁵²⁶ He refers to the Greek term *phanopoeia*, meaning “light-making” or “image-making.”⁵²⁷ He continues in his letter, “I wonder what you will make of it. Probably too sprawling and unmusical to find favour in your ears.” To John Quinn, Pound questioned the extent of his liberal tendencies. “I suspect my ‘Cantos’ are getting too too too abstruse and obscure for human consumption.”⁵²⁸ Still, Pound believed that his inclusion of generalist knowledge—particulars in synthesis—was the ideal mode of poetry. To a young poet in 1916, he recommended reading widely to prepare oneself as a poet: “Villon, Ford M Hueffer, the anthology *Des Imagistes*, nine verses by me, Omar Kayamin, forty-five volumes of dissection of plants and animals, Zola ... Perhaps you should read all of the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. Presumably no other living woman will have done so. One should always find a few things which ‘no other living person’ has done, a few vast territories of print that you can have to yourself and a few friends. They are a great defense against fools and against the half-educated.”⁵²⁹ While Pound was recommending broad subjects for reading, he was also recommending specialization—knowing “a few vast territories of print” to defend against the “half-educated.” Perhaps Pound’s definition of “half-educated” included those who specialized and disregarded the whole, or those who failed to find synthesis within generalist knowledge. It was a seemingly unwinnable predicament for a learner; like his *Cantos*, which was destined to continual expansion without an end, Pound’s own quest for knowledge attempted to reach this “infinity.”

⁵²⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to James Joyce dated 17 March 1917, in *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce*, ed. by Forrest Read (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), pp. 100–03.

⁵²⁷ Pound also used the term as a title to an Imagist poem first published in the *Little Review* November 1918 and later republished in *Umbra*.

⁵²⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 13 December 1919, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 181.

⁵²⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Iris Barry dated 20[?] July 1916, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 86–88.

THE “SAGE-HOMME”⁵³⁰: EZRA POUND’S DOCTOR PERSONAE

CHAPTER 2

In a 1914 *Egoist* article, Ezra Pound described an evening of lectures presented to the Quest Society, a theosophical group in London founded by G. R. S. Mead. He details that T. E. Hulme’s lecture on Cubism this evening “was followed by two other speakers equally unintelligible.”⁵³¹ According to Pound, the third speaker discussed the relation of the body to the will. Pound paraphrased the lecture, explaining that the speaker “got himself disliked by saying that one might regard the body either as a sensitized receiver of sensations, or as an instrument for carrying out the decrees of the will (or expressioning the soul, or whatever you choose to term it).” The comments were, as Pound notes, “unfavorably received” by the theosophical group; however, such a view of a bifurcated bodily experience, consisting of passive reception or physical causation through the senses on the one hand, and active instigation of volition or will through the motor nerves on the other, had long been voiced in philosophical and moral discussions. The “free will” debate was pursued intensely throughout the Victorian age, and innovations in empiricist science and medical investigations into the physiological causes of involuntary reflexes led to questions about the extent to which humans maintain volitional control.⁵³² Pure constraint in a physiologically determined causal universe, the argument went, erases not just free will, but also moral responsibility—how can one, for example, see sin as sin if one’s decisions are not products of one’s own free agency, but rather the products of environmental circumstances and the engines of causation?⁵³³

Most neurologists long before Pound’s time saw the body’s nerves as serving two simultaneous functions; a single healthy body contained both sensory nerves and motor nerves. Yet the Quest speaker to whom Pound refers indicates that these two functions are somehow mutually exclusive. Pound, in his account in *The Egoist*, notably reverts to using the first person “I” when elucidating the third speaker’s point, saying, “These two views are opposed and produce two totally opposed theories of aesthetic. I use the word aesthetic paradoxically, let us say two theories of art.” Thus, while medically speaking, a single body might be both a sensitized receiver of sensation and an instrument for carrying out the will,

⁵³⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to T. S. Eliot dated 24 December 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 498.

⁵³¹ Ezra Pound, “The New Sculpture,” *Egoist*, 1.4 (16 February 1914), 67–68. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C128, 221–22 (p. 221).

⁵³² Lorraine J. Daston, “British Responses to Psycho-Physiology, 1860–1900,” *Isis*, 69.2 (June 1978), 192–208 (192).

⁵³³ See John R. Reed, *Victorian Will* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1989).

when it comes to art or aesthetic theory, according to this third speaker, and increasingly, according to Pound himself, the artist cannot receive sensation and simultaneously carry out his own will, or be passive and active simultaneously.

The notion of free will as it applies to artistic theory is further explored when Pound continues his commentary on the third speaker's lecture:

Finding this statement unfavourably received and wishing to be taken for a man of correct and orthodox opinions; trimming his words to the wind, he then said that you could believe that man was the perfect creature, or creator, or lord of the universe or what you will, and that there was no beauty to surpass the beauty of man or of man as conceived by the late Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema; or that on the contrary you could believe in something beyond man, something important enough to be fed with the blood of hecatombs.

Surely the speaker was being facetious in his mention of Alma-Tadema, and was thus implicitly deriding the first of the two stated views. Man could not merely be limited to being a “perfect creature” in an empirically determined world. Through art and religion, man seeks to transcend man himself, seeks the position of a god or a force “important enough to be fed with the blood of hecatombs.” Unconstrained by ideas of progress, amalgamations of facts, or physical laws, the artist creates and carries out his will freely, and is therefore beyond the realm of science. This theory was a reaction to Victorian empiricist materialism and ideas of progress, in which poetry and art were not included. Additionally, the theory is a rejection of the prevalent understanding of will in which man's individual volition was a mere selfish corruption if divorced from divine will.⁵³⁴

Pound did not reveal in the *Egoist* article that it was *he* who was the third speaker addressing the Quest Society on 22 January 1914, just three weeks before the article's publication.⁵³⁵ Pound, then, clearly presents his own artistic theories in the lecture and in the article—insisting that the human body is crucial to carrying out the will, and asserting that, through art, man has the potential to become “something beyond man”— or an “over-man,”⁵³⁶ as he had earlier expressed the same notion in Nietzschean terminology, hinting at his later individualist Fascist views of the 1920s and beyond. This term of the “over-man”— displaying rhetoric in its ability to represent an ideal— influenced Pound, as it appears in his own writing during this period. For Pound, as for Nietzsche, the body and will are thus interrelated; the ability to achieve a superior strength and output, Pound proposed, corresponds to a free will to produce and achieve.

⁵³⁴ Samuel Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 134.

⁵³⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to Isabel Pound dated 23 September 1914, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2673. Also A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet, A Portrait of the Man and his Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 253.

⁵³⁶ Ezra Pound, “Und Drang,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 164–72 (p. 164).

Pound championed this willful, healthful over-man, which could be viewed as a rhetorical symbol of the superior individual. He reacted with disgust, for example, to an article in which D. H. Lawrence promoted a conversion to a new life through the abandonment of individual will. “Lawrence has pewked in the English Review,” he quipped.⁵³⁷ Even the more unconventional, avant-garde Modernism that Pound encountered promoted the idea that society was fragmented because of forces outside of an individual’s control. This was, in a sense, Modernism’s inheritance from the Victorian era—its most prominent thinkers frequently accepted the idea of a universal will. Futurism, for instance, condemned the past in an effort to restrain the effects of the troubled, fragmented society in which the individual could not control universal, exterior forces.⁵³⁸ Despite all its similarities with Futurism, Vorticism did not accept the call to extinguish the past, but expressed Pound’s refusal to believe that man was determined by and bound to a universal will that evolved from past traditions. In *Blast*, Pound portrays the energy of the past and present as being pulled into a turbine: “THE TURBINE. All experience rushes into this vortex. ALL THE ENERGIZED PAST ...All MOMENTUM.” He specifies that the vortex is a “human vortex,” and sets out the ways in which man could be viewed: “You may think of man as that toward which perception moves. You may think of him as the TOY of circumstance, as the plastic RECEIVING impressions. OR you may think of him as DIRECTING a certain fluid force against circumstance.”⁵³⁹ As in his speech to the Quest Society the same year, Pound portrays two theories of man’s role in the universe: as a “TOY” of a universal will, or as a controller of individual will. One of the points of *Blast*’s manifesto states that “this LIFE-EFFORT” is to encounter “a new Order and Will of Man”⁵⁴⁰ and that this new order of the individual man has not yet reached his potential: “the individual [is] masquerading as Humanity like a child in clothes too big for him.”⁵⁴¹ Pound held to the belief that man should control his own will rather than subscribe to a universal or divine will. The concept of the self, then, was vital for Pound; he attached himself to a Nietzschean belief in man’s potential—the theory of the *Übermensch* or superman. Pound’s over-man incorporated intelligence, productivity, and health that led to a heightened will, and he applied this model specifically to the production of poetry. His views evolved from various interactions with failed artists—close friends or associates who failed to produce their art because of a lack of will, or *abuelia*, or from physical or emotional illnesses. In

⁵³⁷ Pound/*The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence*, ed. by Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York: New Directions, 1988), p. 100. Letter 35, 1 Aug 1917.

⁵³⁸ Peter Childs, *Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 38.

⁵³⁹ Ezra Pound, “Vortex,” *Blast: Review of the Great English Vortex* 1 (20 June 1914) 153–54 (p. 153).

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

each case, Pound felt that the over-man potentially could overcome these debilitating factors to reach an optimal level of achievement. The only factor uncontrollable for individual man, he came to believe, was war. Ultimately, Pound viewed the two manageable—but potentially debilitating—factors of illness and a lack of will as interrelated, often forming a vicious cycle. A lack of will, in his view, often leads to illness, while illness also leads to a lack of will. The recurrence was, as Pound wrote, an “undiplomatic” and “pathological state.”⁵⁴²

Because the concept of the will related to the human body, Pound took up interest in the medical sciences and came to believe that the will—or any internal desire for productivity—was affected by physiology. In some cases, he even came to define will as chemical reactions of the human glands. Early in his poetry career, Pound assumed a metaphorical role of medical doctor in his poem “Redondillas, or Something of That Sort,” using an analogy or comparison between a doctor’s prescription and solutions to social problems. “If you ask me to write world prescriptions,” his doctor-narrator proclaims, “I write so that any can read it: ... A little less of our nerves / A little more will toward vision.”⁵⁴³ Broadly, Pound considers the role of an individual in society and communicates his findings with scientific rhetoric in an attempt to present reality with his ideal of “precision.” Yet at its most fundamental level, Pound’s interest in the medical sciences relates metaphorically to his desire for a healthy poetic output.

FAILED ARTISTS

In an attempt to break from his immediate poetic predecessors, Pound contrasts the modern poet with the ailing, feeble poet of the recent past. In his early poem “Und Drang,” collected in 1911’s *Canzoni* and as arguably the collection’s only distinctly modern poem, he distinguishes between the potential of the modern superman and that of the “Common Man,”⁵⁴⁴ or as he would later term the subject, *l’homme moyen*. “I am worn faint,” his narrator complains, “There is no comfort being over-man.”⁵⁴⁵ He portrays the Common Man “mid the many voices” as stripped of will after his failure to reach the status of the Nietzschean superman. As Pound explained to his mother in a letter, “Und Drang” refers to the eighteenth-century German Romantic movement, “full phrase ‘Sturm und Drang’ Storm

⁵⁴² Ezra Pound, Letter to Scofield Thayer dated 9–10 March 1922, *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994).

⁵⁴³ Ezra Pound, “Redondillas, or Something of That Sort,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 175–82 (p. 179).

⁵⁴⁴ Ezra Pound, “Redondillas, or Something of That Sort,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 175–82 (p. 176).

⁵⁴⁵ Ezra Pound, “Und Drang,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 164–72 (p. 164).

and Stress.”⁵⁴⁶ Pound associates the feeble narrative voice with this post-Enlightenment movement that emphasized subjectivity in opposition to the scientific rationalism of the period. He uses brief, trailing lines that suggest a man gasping for air:

The will to live goes from me.

I have lain

Dull and out-worn

with some strange, subtle sickness.⁵⁴⁷

Pound associates a vague form of physical illness with lack of will, further reflecting the theory of the *Übermensch*, in which humanity’s highest goal was to become a new creature by transcending the ordinary, enervated modern society. This theory takes on a physiological aspect involving the human body, its drives and impulses, and derives from an opposition to Schopenhauer’s earlier concept of the will. Schopenhauer viewed the will as an underlying cosmic force that led meaninglessly to suffering because the will could never be satisfied completely. Pound opposes Schopenhauer in a later poem—“Schopenhauer is a gloomy decadent”⁵⁴⁸—and in “Und Drang,” implies that man’s failure to control his will leads to a “strange, subtle sickness.” He denounces this sickness in Part V of the poem: “our modernity, / Nerve-wracked and broken // Crying with weak and egoistic cries!”⁵⁴⁹ In the same collection in which he relegated “Und Drang” to the last pages, Pound withdrew the poem “Redondillas” two months before its printing, possibly because of his hesitancy to print two unconventionally modern poems in his collection while still emerging in London literary circles.⁵⁵⁰ “Redondillas” again speaks of the “Common Man”—“I admit that he usually bores me”—and Nietzsche:

I believe in some parts of Nietzsche

I prefer to read him in sections;

In my heart of hearts I suspect him

of being the one modern christian

In not capitalizing “christian,” Pound borrows the term’s positive connotations of benefiting mankind instead of its literal religious denotation. The lack of capitalization also corresponds with Nietzsche’s attempt to disengage with society’s portrayal of the ultimate

⁵⁴⁶ Ezra Pound, letter to Isabel Pound dated 28 September 1911, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2666.

⁵⁴⁷ Ezra Pound, “Und Drang,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 164–72 (p. 165).

⁵⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, “Redondillas, or Something of That Sort,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 175–82 (p. 181).

⁵⁴⁹ Ezra Pound, “Und Drang,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 164–72 (p. 167).

⁵⁵⁰ Pound withdrew “Redondillas” in May 1911; *Canzoni* was published in July 1911. Richard Sieburth, *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 1238.

good. “The word *Übermensch*,” Nietzsche writes in *Ecce Homo*, designates “a type of supreme achievement, as opposed to ‘modern’ men, ‘good’ men, Christians, and other nihilists.”⁵⁵¹ Just as Pound later strung a banner reading “END OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA” across the Rebel Art Centre of the Vorticists,⁵⁵² Pound associates the theory of the *Übermensch* with a reconsideration of divine law that binds man to a destined future. In “Redondillas,” Pound almost claims to read Nietzsche as he would read a Bible, in sections only, and displays a belief in a modern concept of physiological man controlling willpower.

Pound’s early rhetoric conveys a vision of a revived future, a new renaissance of letters. Yet in putting forward this rhetoric, he bleakly condemns the illnesses of immediate poetic predecessors. He portrays the past poetic generation of England as feeble men allowing themselves to be swallowed in a false notion of a destructive, preconceived will. In “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley,” whose title conjures up the ’90s poet Selwyn Image, the figure of E.P. is equated with a passive aesthete who attempted to “maintain ‘the sublime’ / In the old sense.”⁵⁵³ As a metaphorical doctor-poet, E.P. attempts to “resuscitate the dead art,” yet finds this effort as unprofitable as “wringing lilies from the acorn.” The long poem continuously refers to the poets of the “Nineties”⁵⁵⁴ with a respectful, yet condemnatory tone, as they had established a poetry with “obscure reveries / Of the inward gaze.” Monsieur Verog—or Pound’s friend and former Rhymers’ Club poet Victor Plarr—is depicted cataloguing the human remains of his workplace at the library of the Royal College of Surgeons. He is almost equated with dead life, as he stands “among the pickled fetuses and bottled bones”—one, a specimen of life aborted before birth, and the other, a specimen of a body after death. Plarr, whom Pound had visited weekly on Sunday evenings at the start of his London career, is dismissed as “out of step with the decade.” Similarly, Pound names the Rhymers’ Club—originated by W. B. Yeats and Ernest Rhys in 1890—as an element of this stale decade. He portrays Lionel Johnson as a forgotten poet, whose surname would not be recognized by an audience of the ’20s, “Johnson (Lionel).” The myth of Johnson’s death overshadows any mention of his poetic output. His meaningless death—“By falling from a high stool in a pub”—resembles a fall from high respect in the poetic world and connotes as well Pound’s disapproval of the tragic physical ends of the Nineties poets. Johnson remains last mentioned in Pound’s poem as merely “Tissue preserved” from his autopsy, morbidly and ironically playing with alcohol’s preserving qualities, just as alcohol had caused

⁵⁵¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, qtd. in Santaniello Weaver, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), p. 81.

⁵⁵² Violet Hunt, *I Have This to Say: The Story of My Flurried Years* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926). Also James J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris: 1908–1925* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State Press, 2008), p. 148.

⁵⁵³ Ezra Pound, “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 549–63 (p. 549).

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 554.

Johnson's death. Ultimately, Johnson remains in "Mauberley" a mere physiological remnant left to be bottled and catalogued.

When Pound arrived in London in 1908, he soon met Ernest Rhys through his socializing efforts at Elkin Mathews's bookshop. Rhys held weekly dinner parties and teas reminiscent of the regular Rhymers' Club meetings on Fleet Street.⁵⁵⁵ Pound was immediately influenced by this older generation of poets, as he wrote his father months after arriving in London: "Ernest Rhys's to tea ... Selwyn Image talks of 'when old Verlaine' came over etc."⁵⁵⁶ Alongside another visit with Rhys, Pound mentions the "breakdown" of Arthur Symons in a letter to his father,⁵⁵⁷ and later notes Symons's need for an attendant—"charitably referred to as his 'keeper'"—as well as Yeats's worry over Symons's manic depressive psychotic state.⁵⁵⁸ Pound labeled his condition a "severe illness" that kept him "in the land of '95 ... very much 'out of the movement.'"⁵⁵⁹ Ultimately, Pound focused on Symons's "tragic" temporary loss of language ability: "His remarks were not always very coherent."⁵⁶⁰ This loss of words, or of the lost potential of producing words, deprives the man of letters of his esteemed title of poet. Even taking in stimulants for creative inspiration—as the Rhymers did regularly with their tankards in their pub meeting place—was seen by Pound as an inauthentic method of producing poetry, and further, as a mark of the Romantic spirit.⁵⁶¹ "The term decadent (dee-kay-d'nt)," he claimed in 1919, "conveys the impression of young man doped with opium in the act of dyeing his finger nails with green ink." Stimulants are an inauthentic means to productivity "that has led on the opium eaters," he wrote in a letter.⁵⁶² In *Blast I*, he initiates the new modern poetic spirit by blasting the publishing circles that "do away with good writers, / You either drive them

⁵⁵⁵ Pound writes to Rhys in a letter, "ever remembering of many Sunday afternoons. E.P." Letter to Ernest Rhys, no date, British Library, Ernest Rhys Papers, Eg 3247–3248, ff. 75–83 (p. 83).

⁵⁵⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound dated February 1909, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

⁵⁵⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound dated August 1909, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2662.

⁵⁵⁸ Qtd. in Donald Gallup, "EP's Experiment for Esquire," *Paideuma*, 22:1–2 (1993), 181–90 (p. 186).

⁵⁵⁹ Ezra Pound, "Arthur Symons," *Athenaeum*, 94.4699 (21 May 1920), 663–64. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C577, 58–59 (p. 59).

⁵⁶⁰ Qtd. in Donald Gallup, "EP's Experiment for Esquire," *Paideuma*, 22:1–2 (1993), 181–90 (p. 186).

⁵⁶¹ Pound told his doctor in St. Elizabeths that he generally avoided stimulants in his lifetime. Dr. Kavka asks Pound, "Have you used alcohol much, or drugs?" Pound responds, "No ... I have drunk very moderately. ... The first time I took absinthe, I pissed about four gallons and woke up like new. I took it two or three more times but gave it up. There is no alcoholic degeneration. I don't take wine regularly with meals. No drugs; it's Eliot who takes patent medicines." Jerome Kavka, "Ezra Pound's Personal History: A Transcript, 1946," *Paideuma*, 20.1–2 (Spring, Fall 1991), pp. 143–85 (p. 157).

⁵⁶² Ezra Pound, TL (carbon) of letter to Dr. Louis Berman n.d. [1922], New York Public Library, Berg Collection, James Sibley Watson / The Dial Papers 1920–1972, B7199281.

mad, or else you blink at their suicides, / Or else you condone their drugs.”⁵⁶³ The loss of a natural physical or emotional capacity to create poetry is considered by Pound as a tragedy, even more so than other effects of the incapacity.

One of Pound’s earliest experiences of this “tragic generation”—as Yeats termed his Rhymers’ group—was his brief encounter with the poet John Davidson, also a member of Yeats’s and Rhys’s group. Rhys recalls in his memoir, *Everyman Remembers*, a dinner party at which Pound was present and Davidson appeared unexpectedly.⁵⁶⁴ Davidson had published his *Testaments* poems in separate editions between 1901 and 1904, and had just published a collected edition of the long poem in 1908.⁵⁶⁵ The poems were, like some of Pound’s work of the period, heavily influenced by Schopenhauer’s and Nietzsche’s concepts of the will, and included a materialistic account of man in a godless world. The first number, “The Testament of a Vivisector” details an operation on a live horse, and the narrator discovers that an enquiry into materiality necessarily invokes pain. “I study pain, measure it and invent,” he states.⁵⁶⁶ “To the Materialist there is no Unknown; All, all is Matter,”⁵⁶⁷ and he connects this empiric perspective to a man-centered universe to finalize the poem: “the stolid bent / Of Matter, the infinite vanity / Of the Universe, being evermore / Self-knowledge.”⁵⁶⁸ It is this pain associated with a nineteenth-century, empiric view of matter and man’s place in society that Pound depicts in Part II of *Mauberley*. The poet Mauberley attempts to convey man using the ultimate symbol of persona, the face: “Given, that is, his urge / To convey the relation / Of eye-lid and cheek-bone.”⁵⁶⁹ This physical image of man is then portrayed as broken, as the description of man’s face is coupled with the image of pulled flowers—“wide-banded irises / And botticellian sprays”—plucked from the ground using a human physiological term, *diastasis*. As “diastasis” denotes the dislodging of the end of a long bone from its shaft without a fracturing of the bone itself, Pound implies that a broken life continues monotonously without fulfillment or total health. He adds that “anaesthesia” was noted a year late, implying that Mauberley underwent pain of a fundamentally broken self, in the same way that Davidson portrayed the live operation of a horse, without anesthesia.⁵⁷⁰ Soon after the poets met, it was publicly announced in

⁵⁶³ Ezra Pound, “Salutation the Third,” *Blast: Review of the Great English Vortex* 1 (20 June 1914) p. 45.

⁵⁶⁴ Ernest Rhys, *Everyman Remembers* (London: Dent & Sons, 1931), 251–52.

⁵⁶⁵ John Davidson, *The Testament of John Davidson* (London: Grant Richards, 1908).

⁵⁶⁶ John Davidson, *The Testament of a Vivisector* (London: Grant Richards, 1901), p. 22.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁵⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 549–63 (p. 559).

⁵⁷⁰ T. S. Eliot has claimed that he was influenced strongly by John Davidson. Some critics believe Eliot’s “etherized patient” was derived from *The Testament of a Vivisector*. Eliot wrote a preface to a selection of John Davidson poems: *John Davidson: A Selection of His Poems*, pref. by T. S. Eliot (London: Hutchinson, 1961). Eliot also included Davidson in his syllabus for his 1917 extension

March 1909 that Davidson had disappeared.⁵⁷¹ Just as the press covered Symons's incapacitated state, the London literary publications followed the clues about Davidson's disappearance for six months until his body was found off Penzance with a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

During this period, Pound published the poem "Revolt: Against the Crepuscular Spirit in Modern Poetry," in which he desires to replace mere appearances with genuine power, and mere wishes with the able individual.

I would shake off the lethargy of this our time,
and give
For shadows—shapes of power
For dreams—men.⁵⁷²

He further states that if man dreams, he must dream of "great deeds, strong men." He repeats terms related to physical illness to describe the worn poetry of the immediate past generation. Time is described as "dead" and must be reawakened to "grant balm / For ills unnamed," thereby working as a healer for past diseases. Flowers "languidly / Drop as o'er-ripened fruit from sallow trees," as the unhealthy, yellowish trees are equated with aged, diseased poets who produce overworked poetry. Most significantly, Pound describes men as "pale sick phantoms," giving even ghostlike apparitions a physical description of illness. These poet-phantoms portray a blurry reality in "mists and tempered lights" and "are grown such thin ephemera," or only produce weak works that cease to last. He calls for "some new titanic spawn to pile the hills and stir / This earth again." Pound plans to become this new titan of poetry, and he juxtaposes his position in a strong, materialistic world to the weak realm of "sick phantoms."

Pound's use of the term "phantom" to describe those who have lost the will to create corresponds with his use of the word and related terms, such as *fantastikon*, throughout his prose and poetry. A phantom portrays what is not physically present and, further, points to lost time; what has not expressed itself in its full during its time in existence is forever lost to the phantom realm.⁵⁷³ Imagism could be viewed as poetry that must be expressed at a precise moment. A poet must capture this moment at its ideal time or it is forever lost: "An 'image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex

lectures to the County Secondary School: "Suggestion for Papers ... Naturalism (the materialistic view of John Davidson, the fatalism of Hardy)." Ronald Schuchard, "T. S. Eliot as an Extension Lecturer, 1916–1919," *The Review of English Studies*, 25.99 (August 1974), p. 292–304.

⁵⁷¹ John Sloan, *John Davidson, First of the Moderns: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 274.

⁵⁷² Ezra Pound, "Revolt Against the Crepuscular Spirit in Modern Poetry," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 99–100 (p. 99).

⁵⁷³ See Daniel Tiffany, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

in an instant of time,” Pound set out in 1913.⁵⁷⁴ In a less-known description of Imagism, Pound again refers to this moment of capturing an image. In a self-written interview that he handed to F.S. Flint to publish under his name as interviewer,⁵⁷⁵ Pound originally wrote that Imagism included a “penumbra.” Writing as though he were Flint, he claimed: “He [Pound] told me later that the school consisted of three poets, one or two affiliated writers, and a . . . penumbra!”⁵⁷⁶ Pound decided to delete this description before publishing the piece, yet his inclusion of a penumbra illustrates his view that Imagism captures one specific moment in time to which the poet must be perceptive. The penumbra—an outer shadow that is lighter than an inner darker shadow, or umbra⁵⁷⁷—is an area between complete darkness and complete light, as in an eclipse. Its occurrence is a precise moment of light interacting with an object, and as Pound includes it with his description of Imagism, the school’s poets and affiliated writers must be aware of both the light and the object producing the shadow. The poet, then, must be perceptive of both the intangible and the tangible, and capable of precisely verbalizing this duality.

It is this desire for precision, or capturing an image in a moment of time, that Pound captures in his essay “Psychology and Troubadours.” This 1912 series attempted to argue that precision is vital to the poet and that precision allows the poet to create something almost tangible or material. He attempts to explain man’s physical capacity to think, create, and verbally produce something resembling an object. He states that physiologically, man is merely a combination of elements: “Chemically speaking, he is *ut credo*, a few buckets of water, tied up in a complicated sort of fig-leaf.”⁵⁷⁸ Yet man’s “consciousness” or “what the Greek psychologists called the *phantastikon*” is what individualizes him. In a letter to Harriet Monroe in March 1913—the month in which Imagism was launched—Pound states that the “fantastikon” was “what Imagination really meant before the term was debased.”⁵⁷⁹ Additionally, Pound sent Monroe a poem using the word *fantastikon*, which would be published in the April 1913 issue of *Poetry*. In “The Condolence,” Pound associates the fantastikon with the images and material a poet collects for his poetry. Addressing his fellow poets, his “fellow sufferers,” he describes the method for writing poetry: “We went

⁵⁷⁴ Ezra Pound, “A Few Don’t by an Imagiste,” *Poetry*, 1.6 (March 1913), 200–06 (p. 200).

⁵⁷⁵ Flint reveals in a letter to Hutchins that he did not actually write the interview questions; Pound had written the questions and answers and allowed Flint to make some changes before publication. Ezra Pound, Letter to Patricia Hutchins, Patricia Hutchins Papers, Add. 57725, ff. 1–164. Daniel Tiffany also cites this penumbra reference in his book *Radio Corpse*.

⁵⁷⁶ Qtd. in Christopher Middleton, “Documents on Imagism from the Papers of F. S. Flint,” *The Review* 15 (April 1965), 34–45 (p. 43).

⁵⁷⁷ *Umbra* is the title of Pound’s 1920 poetry collection.

⁵⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, “Psychology and Troubadours,” *Quest*, 4.1 (October 1912), 37–53. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C55, 83–99 (p. 90). Reprinted as Chapter 5 in *The Spirit of Romance* in editions published 1932 and later.

⁵⁷⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Harriet Monroe dated March 1913, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 16.

forth gathering delicate thoughts, / Our '*fantastikon*' delighted to serve us."⁵⁸⁰ The term here implies an individualistic response to the material collected by the poet and a capacity for imagination. Similarly, in a letter to Dorothy Shakespear, Pound claims that the phantastikon is related to "the meditation on one's *identity*. You try finding out why you're you & not somebody else."⁵⁸¹ Pound's emphasis on one's identity relates to his description in "Psychology and the Troubadours" that man is tied in a "fig-leaf," referring to the mythological creation of man from Adam. He believes that identity, then, goes beyond one's physiological makeup, and includes one's will or creative force.

As a representative poem of Imagism, Pound also published "In a Station of a Metro" in the April 1913 issue of *Poetry* just after the establishment of Imagism.⁵⁸² He used the word *apparitions* to describe the faces in the crowd, again interrelating Imagism and the concept of the phantom. In his "Vorticism" essay, published in September 1914, Pound reveals the origin of the poem as a scene he observed in la Concorde. He wrote a 30-line poem, then rewrote it extensively over a six-month period, reducing it to half the length. A year later he finally completed the three-line poem. As the poem was published in April 1913, Pound could have perceived this scene in Paris a year and eleven months earlier—the last time that Pound was visiting Paris before the publication of the poem. During this particular trip, he had returned to Paris from a walking trip in Provence upon hearing of the suicide of his patron, Margaret Cravens.⁵⁸³ An American music student living in Paris, Cravens had lived off of a \$1500 annuity trust arrangement and had donated up to \$1000 of this to Pound between their meeting in 1910 and her death in June 1912.⁵⁸⁴ Pound had corresponded extensively with Cravens about his theories of the "*materia poetica*"⁵⁸⁵ and his early formations of the *fantastikon*: "The events of a life like mine are of course fantasmagoria," he wrote in June 1910, "but the events working inward—I mean the effects of events on whatever in genius takes the place of the 'self' in a human being are even harder to follow." Pound refers to his theory that the individualist poet must create from his own will and must shape the *materia poetica* around him using a force of creativity. In the

⁵⁸⁰ Ezra Pound, "The Condolence," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 263–64 (p. 263).

⁵⁸¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Dorothy Shakespear dated 21 April 1913, *Ezra Pound and Dorothy Shakespear: Their Letters 1909–1914*, ed. by Omar Pound and A. Walton Litz (New York: New Directions, 1984), p. 206.

⁵⁸² Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" in "Contemporania," *Poetry*, 2.1 (1913), 1–12. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C76, 132–37 (p. 137).

⁵⁸³ The exact amount that Pound received from Cravens is unknown, but it could have been up to \$1000 between 1910 and June 1912. Pound's first request after receiving her offer was for \$100, while "the rest" was to be deposited for him in a Paris bank. *Ezra Pound and Margaret Cravens: A Tragic Friendship 1910–1912*, ed. by Omar Pound and Robert Spoo (London: Duke University Press, 1988).

⁵⁸⁴ *Ezra Pound and Margaret Cravens: A Tragic Friendship 1910–1912*, ed. by Omar Pound and Robert Spoo (London: Duke University Press, 1988), p. 5.

⁵⁸⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Cravens dated 25 April 1910, *Ibid.*, p. 30.

same letter, he comments on poetic influence and establishes that he works independently of the earlier British poetic generation: “That is to say that the movement of the ’90’ies for drugs and shadows has worn itself out. There has been no ‘influence.’” Pound seems to be stating that influence is minimal for a poet dependent on his own fantastikon, or creative force. Yet while Pound shared his theories of the creative will of the poet with Cravens, she had discussed her mental illness with Pound. H.D., who was in Paris when Cravens killed herself, commented in an essay that only Pound had known the extent of her neurasthenia. “Ezra had been especially kind to her and she had told him of her neurosis and Ezra only of us knew she slept with that beautiful little weapon under her pillow. None of us knew what to say: We were shocked.”⁵⁸⁶ Pound’s last meeting with Cravens, a day before her thirty-first birthday on 26 May, was apparently troubled, as Cravens referred to the discord when she wrote him three days later.⁵⁸⁷ Cravens had reportedly played a musical composition co-written by Pound and Walter Rummel moments before she wrote letters to them and shot herself.⁵⁸⁸ The “apparitions” in the Metro poem, then, could pertain to Pound’s imagination of Cravens appearing again in the Paris crowd of that time period. He wrote a similar poem, “Dans un Omnibus de Londres,” in which he thinks he sees the eyes of a dead female in the face of a Londoner. Early printings use the term “une morte aimée,”⁵⁸⁹ and the fact that it is written entirely in French again links the subject to Paris. Similarly, Pound submitted his poem “Post Mortem Conspectu” with the same series of poems in which “Metro” was published in *Poetry* in April 1913. At the time of submission, Pound had labeled the poem “His Vision of a Certain Lady Post Mortem,” yet had withdrawn the poem from publication.⁵⁹⁰ When Pound did publish the poem more than a year later, in *Blast*, he changed the title and omitted the original first line: “They call you dead, but I saw you.”⁵⁹¹ Pound’s insistence on remembering Cravens is further illustrated in a poem, “Aggelos”, originally paired with “His Vision” but also cut from the *Blast* typescript:

Like a bright mist, your mind came down about me.
You, who had no more need for subtle thought,

⁵⁸⁶ J. J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 96.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ezra Pound and Margaret Cravens: A Tragic Friendship 1910–1912*, ed. by Omar Pound and Robert Spoo (London: Duke University Press, 1988), p. 111.

⁵⁸⁸ Charles Timbrell, *Prince of Virtuosos: A Life of Walter Rummel, American Pianist* (Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2005), p. 26.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ezra Pound and Margaret Cravens: A Tragic Friendship 1910–1912*, ed. by Omar Pound and Robert Spoo (London: Duke University Press, 1988), p. 143.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ezra Pound and Margaret Cravens: A Tragic Friendship 1910–1912*, ed. by Omar Pound and Robert Spoo (London: Duke University Press, 1988), p. 141.

⁵⁹¹ Ezra Pound, Poems from “Post Mortem Conspectu” typescript, *Blast* folder, Box 111, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series IV, Manuscripts, Folder 4681

Sent me your knowledge of strange-opening flowers.⁵⁹²

These various considerations of Cravens's death, and their association with Pound's vision of the apparitions in Paris, convey his association of lost will with regret. "O my songs," he wrote soon after, in the poem "Coda" published in November 1915, "Why do you look so eagerly and so curiously into people's faces? / Will you find your lost dead among them?"⁵⁹³ The death of Cravens continued to disturb Pound for years, as evidenced in his continual re-rendering of his poetic tributes to her. This episode in his early poetic career probably helped formulate his theory of the necessity for the artist to maintain physical and emotional health alongside a creative will.

Pound mourned the lost potential of Cravens by indicating that he saw her image or phantom without her actual presence or her ability to live or create. Through his connection with the phantastikon in his letters and prose publications, he emphasizes the creative force and imaginative potential of the human mind. His use of the terms *phantom* and *apparition* reflect his reference to an object not existing in reality, but only in thought. An apparition of a human, then, is especially troublesome for Pound; it represents the appearance of a human in its realm of productivity while being denied the tangible nature of productivity. Additionally, the apparition represents the lost moments of precision or the inability to capture the image. Ultimately, an apparition connotes the failure of a human to create. Just two months after Cravens's death, a ballet dancer, with whom Pound apparently had an affair, also killed herself.⁵⁹⁴ A member of the New Freewoman circle, Jeanne Heyse used the stage name of Ione de Forest and was the subject of Pound's "Dance Figure" poem written in 1912 before her death. Ione, then, becomes the subject, or the apparition-like "figure," of the poem and is admired for her artistic ability. Pound focuses on her feet: "There is none like thee among the dancers, / None with swift feet."⁵⁹⁵ He again states these two lines in the final stanza. His poem "Ione, Dead the Long Year,"⁵⁹⁶ emphasizes the ceasing of the movement of her feet: "Empty are the ways of this land / Where Ione / Walked once, and now does not walk."⁵⁹⁷ He completes the one-stanza poem with the line "But seems like a person just gone." The final word illustrates her sudden disappearance, just as the poem underlines a sense of nothingness after her death. "Empty are the ways / Empty are the

⁵⁹² Ezra Pound, Poems from "Post Mortem Conspectu" typescript, *Blast* folder, Box 111, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I-IV), Series IV, Manuscripts, Folder 4681

⁵⁹³ Ezra Pound, "Coda," *Others*, 1.5 (November 1915), 84-85. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C210, 116-17 (p. 117).

⁵⁹⁴ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 136.

⁵⁹⁵ Ezra Pound, "Dance Figure," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 270-71 (p. 270).

⁵⁹⁶ First published in *Poetry and Drama* 2, December 1914.

⁵⁹⁷ Ezra Pound, "Ione, Dead the Long Year," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 290.

ways,” Pound repeats, “of this land.” Despite the obvious mourning of Ione, Pound adds a tone of scorn towards one who abandons the will. Ione is “just gone,” and her death results in nothingness: “empty” ways of the land. Years later, Pound again renders Ione in his early *Cantos*. In one of his early publications of the *Cantos* in the *Dial*, Pound writes:

Skeptic against all this one seeks the living,
Stubborn against the fact. The wilted flowers
Brushed out a seven year since, of no effect.
Damn the partition! Paper, dark brown and stretched,
Flimsy and damned partition.

Ione, dead the long year⁵⁹⁸

Pound seems to refer to a materialistic rendering of the partition between the living and the dead, and labels this partition as mere “paper,” a “flimsy” separation. He indicates a refusal to accept “the fact” of Ione’s death, resulting in a continual remembrance of her. Yet, in “seek[ing] the living,” he only encounters “wilted flowers”—corresponding with his use of the symbol of flowers in his original poem “Ione”—implying the death of something aesthetic and beautiful. Yet his acknowledgement of remembrance, after seven years, is coupled with a tone of scorn. The wilted flowers are “of no effect;” the talent of Ione was wasted and of no effect on the artistic world. One “seeks the living,” not the dead. Ione, like Cravens, is not a mere symbol of grief; she signifies for Pound the loss of potential and the abandonment of will.

It was during the month of Ione’s death that Pound first mentions the concept of Imagism in a letter to Harriet Monroe, calling his submission to *Poetry* a “post-Browning ‘Imagiste’ affair.” Within two months, in October 1912, Pound had described the Imagism concept publicly in his appendix to *Ripostes*, in which he refers to a school of Imagist poets in association with his publication of Hulme’s poetry. It is in this initial period of conceptualizing Imagism that Pound describes the imaginative capacity of the phantastikon in “Psychology and Troubadours,” and adds, “For our basis in nature we rest on the indisputable and very scientific fact that there are in the ‘normal course of things’ certain times, a certain sort of moment more than another, when a man feels his immortality upon him.”⁵⁹⁹ As Pound was developing Imagism, he was concerned with the perception of an image in a precise moment of time. The decision to capture this single, precise moment could correspond with Pound’s notion of the moment when one becomes aware of one’s immortality. Pound labels this moment as a “very scientific fact,” aligning the moment of

⁵⁹⁸ Ezra Pound, “Three Cantos,” *Dial*, 71.2 (August 1921), 198–208. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C625, 172–81 (p. 179). The excerpt is from the seventh *Canto*.

⁵⁹⁹ Ezra Pound, “Psychology and Troubadours,” *Quest: A Quarterly Review*, 4.1 (October 1912), 37–53 (p. 47). In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C55, 83–99 (p. 93).

the Image captured in a poem with the precise measurements of time. Writing poetry, therefore, could both confirm one's existence, as well as establish one's immortality. Pound's statement that a poet "feels his immortality upon him" could be read two ways—that the poet knows he must die and therefore must practice his will while living, and that the poet senses his poetry will immortalize him.

Perhaps Pound's earliest encounter with this concept of immortality was the death of his friend William Brooke Smith, to whom Pound dedicated his first book of poetry, *A Lume Spento*. Smith was an art student at the Philadelphia School of Industrial Arts when Pound met him at age 15 or 16.⁶⁰⁰ H.D. described him as "tall, graceful, dark, with a 'butterfly bow' tie," and added that his sister had just died, presumably of the same contagious disease that killed him.⁶⁰¹ Three letters from Smith to Pound reveal the intimacy of their relationship and their shared intensity of expression. "These days of awakening life," wrote Smith to Pound in April 1907, "and throbbing pulses 'like veins swollen with delight,' have perhaps made me wish to see everything through a golden veil, rather than through a violet mist."⁶⁰² Pound seems to echo this sentiment of blood as a source of life, energy, and vitality in his poem "Anima Sola," published the year after Smith's death. He claims himself to be "the life blood's ward," receiving "the blood of light"⁶⁰³ as though he would receive a blood transfusion from life and light. Not only does he receive this blood, but he is dependent upon it as its "ward." The contamination of blood, the source of vitality, literally could have led to Smith's death, as he was infected with tuberculosis, which can attack the circulatory system as well as the lungs, central nervous system, bones, and skin. Smith's third and last letter before his death states, "I can't sing the song, so you must, because you are part of me," and another, "believe that I am with you always." A metaphoric transfusion of blood would allow for Pound to take on this vitality of Smith; it would create a type of metamorphosis for Pound. He could assume the attributes of Smith and allow Smith to be "with [him] always." Pound again uses a transfusion image in "Guillaume de Lorris Belated," published the same year. He speaks of a "transfusion / Of all my self through her and she through me,"⁶⁰⁴ emphasizing the revitalization through a combined life source and metamorphosis using the terminology of physiology. Pound

⁶⁰⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to Carl and Elsie Gatter dated 26 December 1957, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Carl W. Gatter Papers, Research Material on Ezra Pound 1956–1976, Folder 2.

⁶⁰¹ H. D., *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound*, ed. by Norman Holmes Pearson and Michael King (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1980).

⁶⁰² James J. Wilhelm, "The Letters of William Brooke Smith to Ezra Pound," *Paideuma*, 19.1–2 (1990), 163–68 (p. 164).

⁶⁰³ Ezra Pound, "Anima Sola," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 33–34 (p. 33).

⁶⁰⁴ Ezra Pound, "Guillaume de Lorris Belated: A Vision of Italy," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 91–94 (p. 92).

explained in his title page of *A Lume Spento* that the collection was originally labeled *La Fraisne*, meaning *The Ash Tree*, yet with the death of Smith, Pound changed the name for publication. “But sith one of them has gone out very quickly from amongst us it [is] given A LUME SPENTO (WITH TAPERS QUENCHED) in memoriam eins mihi caritate primus William Brooke Smith Painter, Dreamer of dreams.”⁶⁰⁵ The title of his book reflects Pound’s realization that, despite the concept of a blood transfusion and a unity in spirit, Smith no longer produces the art that he worked towards; his taper, or candle, is quenched and extinguished. Additionally, Dante included the phrase in the *Purgatorio*, in which a heretic laments his unburied remains, as the bodies of heretics could be buried only with extinguished candles.⁶⁰⁶ Pound reinforces Dante’s Latin phrase in his collection’s full title with an English translation, repeating the notion that the light is quenched as a result of the death of a heretic or an unappreciated artist. The title communicates that both Smith’s body and his art has died. Years after Smith’s death, Pound wrote William Carlos Williams, “At any rate, thirteen years are gone; I haven’t replaced him and shan’t and no longer hope to.”⁶⁰⁷ Like the tubercular Keats who represented for Pound a weak Romantic lyricism, Smith and his work was cut short by a fatal, overpowering disease.⁶⁰⁸ During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the tubercular artist became a “romantic icon” because of the association of so many consumptive deaths of famous writers and artists.⁶⁰⁹ Yet Pound associates Keats with “the dead.” He reveals that he had actively studied Keats, even reading Keats’s archived proofs, yet he almost symbolically aligns the image of “the dead” and Keats’s archive with a sort of notion of the grave.

Besides knowing living artists I have come in touch with the tradition of the dead. ... I have enjoyed meeting Victorians and Pre-Raphaelites and men of the nineties through their friends. I have seen Keats’ proof sheets, I have had personal tradition of his time at second-hand. This, perhaps, means little to a Londoner, but it is good fun if you have grown up regarding such things as about as distant as Ghengis Khan or the days of Lope de Vega.⁶¹⁰

Pound later juxtaposes himself with Keats by more harshly portraying his work as a “residue” or waste: “And here we have today two groups: the official or Georgian group that

⁶⁰⁵ Ezra Pound, *A Lume Spento* (Venice: A. Antonini, 1908).

⁶⁰⁶ Daniel Tiffany, “The Cryptic Image,” *Paideuma*, 21.3 (Winter 1992), pp. 79–92 (p. 86).

⁶⁰⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to William Carlos Williams, *The Selected Letters of William Carlos Williams*, ed. by John C. Thirlwall (New York: New Directions, 1984), p. 125.

⁶⁰⁸ Pound often derided Keats’s poetry as feminine or weak. He associates Keats with domestic decoration in the article, “Wyndham Lewis”: “As there is poetry which is creation and not merely a spreading of Keatsian decoration over different but similar surfaces, so is there design which is creation and not merely applying the formula of Manet to different vistas.” Ezra Pound, “In the World of Letters,” *Future*, 1.2 (December 1916), 55–56. In *Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), C243a.

⁶⁰⁹ Virginia Scott, *Molière: A Theatrical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 243.

⁶¹⁰ Ezra Pound, “How I Began,” *T.P.’s Weekly*, 21.552 (6 June 1913), 707. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C86, p. 147.

offers a plate of Keats, Wordsworth and the Elizabethan Keats, with the general waste of poetic art. The second group is that which is labeled revolutionary.”⁶¹¹ Pound continues the article by describing the revolutionary poetry as beginning with Imagism, and he naturally contrasts himself, the strong revolutionary leader, with the legendarily weak, tubercular Keats.

ILLNESS AS A BARRIER TO PRODUCTIVITY

Despite Pound’s disregard for disease and illness, he personally experienced a prolonged illness about which he apparently never spoke in public. His silence on this episode in his early career appeared to cut short his productivity during this period. This experience engrained in Pound a careful avoidance of contagious or harmful elements, and could be the cause of his later hypochondriac tendencies.⁶¹² The experience left an impression on Pound that creativity and productivity are stifled when the human body is not well. In June 1910 Pound left Europe for America, where he might have had intentions to remain, yet during his eight-month stay, he contracted jaundice.⁶¹³ In the early twentieth century, this illness was described as a “functional disturbance of the liver” in which “the biliary coloring matter absorbed by the blood and deposited in the tissues of the body.”⁶¹⁴ Most common to early research on the disease was its symptom of a yellowish discoloration of the skin and eyes. Pound might have referred symbolically to this yellowish condition in a poem written during this time period, Part IV of “Leviora” in *Canzoni*. He refers to Midas’s touch of “thin leaves of gold,” and claims that his “fated touch begat such bright disease.”⁶¹⁵ Additionally, Pound’s poem “Apparuit,” published in 1912, contains references to the physiological body and yellowness. The narrator speaks of “the air, the tissue / golden about thee” and portrays this object-figure as “Swift at courage, thou in the shell of gold

⁶¹¹ “He aqui que tenemos hoy dos grupos: el official o grupo georgiano que ofrece un plato de Keats, Wordsworth y el isabelismo de Keats, con unos residuos generales del arte poetico. ... El segundo grupo es aquel que esta tachado de revolucionario.” Ezra Pound, “El arte poetico en Inglaterra contemporanea,” *Hermes*, 4.62 (August 1920), 447–50. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), C590, XI. My translation.

⁶¹² Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988). Carpenter also notes that Yeats remarked on Pound’s “dread of infections” (p. 129). Pound’s daughter, Mary de Rachewiltz, referred to Pound’s avoidance of sickness: “Babbo [Pound] developed a cold. The fuss and the precautions seemed to me excessive; however, he soon got over it.” *Ezra Pound, Father and Teacher: Discretions* (New York: New Directions, 1975), p. 112.

⁶¹³ J. J. Wilhelm asserts that Pound contracted jaundice at the “start of the new year,” and that the illness lasted six months. *Ezra Pound in London and Paris* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 65.

⁶¹⁴ Frederick Converse Beach and George Edwin Rines, *The Americana: A Universal Reference Library* (York: Scientific American, 1912), heading: *jaundice*.

⁶¹⁵ Ezra Pound, “Leviora,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 173–74 (p. 174).

cast- / ing a-loose the cloak of the body.”⁶¹⁶ The human body is described as a “cloak” and a “shell of gold,” as though the golden “tissue” of his jaundiced skin was merely a temporary, extraneous weight attached to his body. The break of “cast-ing,” if not a mere typographical outcome of the line placement on the page,⁶¹⁷ initially portrays “cast” as a noun and reinforces the notion that the diseased body functions as an isolating cast or mold. Pound later implies that he caught the diseases of America, which was the cause of his return to Europe and led to his reinstated will to pursue poetry seriously in Europe. “I at least waited,” he wrote Margaret Anderson, “until the country had brought on a jaundice. (physical, hospital case jaundice).”⁶¹⁸ A letter written soon after Pound’s release from the hospital reveals what little is known about his experience with the condition. In responding to a positive review⁶¹⁹ of the newly published *Provença*, Pound wrote the American critic Floyd Dell: “(dont mind my rambling—I’m just out of hospital & not having had a pen in my hand for some time it burbles.)”⁶²⁰ Pound’s experience of isolation corresponds with the modern practice of separating the diseased from the healthy, by transferring the ill body to the clinic or hospital.⁶²¹ For Pound, the hospital transfer detached him from a freedom and ability to pursue his writing. He continues his letter by pointing to this isolation: “This note seems to presuppose an ungodly amount of interest on your part, but I’ve only found one man to whom I can talk, or at whom I can theorize, or what you will, since I landed seven months ago, & voila, you get the effects.” Pound conflated his confinement in the hospital with his stay in America, as both further separated him from his literary pursuits.⁶²² Pound, further, refers to the concept of the will, or of individual control over outside forces, in his letter to Dell. “The other great set of influences,” he writes, “are the things from which we react.” Physical illness, and its debilitating effects on one’s output, worked to limit Pound’s

⁶¹⁶ Ezra Pound, “Apparuit” in “Two Poems,” *English Review*, 11.3 (June 1912), 343–44. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C47, p. 76.

⁶¹⁷ Pound’s inclusion of “Apparuit” in his collection *Ripostes*, after its appearance in *The English Review*, maintains the line break: “Swift at courage thou in the shell of gold, cast- / ing a-loose the cloak of the body.”

⁶¹⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated 27 September 1917, *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence*, ed. by Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York, New Directions, 1988), p. 128.

⁶¹⁹ Pound’s first book of poems in America, *Provença*, was published in November 1910. On 6 January 1911, Floyd Dell, an American critic, discussed Pound in the “Friday Literary Review” of the *Chicago Evening Post*. He described Pound as “a very new kind of poet” of “shocking vigour.” Noel Stock, *Ezra Pound’s Pennsylvania* (Toledo, Ohio: The Friends of the University of Toledo’s Libraries, 1976), p. 78.

⁶²⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to Floyd Dell, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series I, General Correspondence, Box 12, Folder 565. Letter also published in G. Thomas Tanselle, “Two Early Letters of Ezra Pound,” *American Literature* 34.1 (March 1962), 114–19.

⁶²¹ *Modernity, Medicine and Health*, ed. by Graham Scambler and Paul Higgs (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 8.

⁶²² *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, for example, does not include any letters written during 1910 or 1911—representing Pound’s frustrated method of literary production.

own energy and will. As nineteenth-century medical reports noted about jaundice, its observed symptoms included—in addition to the yellow discoloration of the eyes and skin—nausea and vomiting, slow and weak pulse, “feverish heat” and dryness of the skin, doubled or disordered vision, furred tongue, loss of appetite. The reports consistently note depression: “the mind is downcast and gloomy, or listless, wandering, and irritable,”⁶²³ and “great and apparently causeless depression of spirits.”⁶²⁴ The disease was a force to which Pound had to react, severely limiting his own willpower and volition.

Pound remained aware of the threat of recurrence of the illness, and for months after returning to Europe, reported on his health to his parents. Undoubtedly, his parents—his mother in particular—requested that he update them on his health, yet there is a sense of a genuine regard of and desire for wellbeing in his tone. His first notice to his parents—a postcard postmarked 3 March 1911—states his hope for rejuvenation in Paris: “Arrived paris. Life begins to look up. EP.” His first full letter to his parents from Paris, to which he traveled the day after arriving in London, reveals the connection Pound placed between physical health and thought. “I’m very comfortable in a big pension by the Odeon. But shall go out to Walters place in a week or so.—about as soon as I shall be fit for mental activity. ... I am here quite contented and my health will presumably improve in consequence.”⁶²⁵ Pound interrelates physical wellbeing with creative intake in a March 1911 letter: “Dear Mother, Enclosed evidence that my health is improving. I’ve been to more music and seen some more pictures.” On 26 March 1911, Pound writes, “Arnaut procedes. I am getting more vigorous,” which, in the close positioning of the terms, could imply that Pound saw a relation between his progress with his Arnaut Daniel manuscript work and his increased physical health.

This notion is especially evident when Pound, suffering from a recurrence of jaundice in October 1913, posed for his portrait with Alvin Langdon Coburn in his houserobe.⁶²⁶ It was a striking decision for Pound, who did not publicly mention his illness and only revealed his lack of health in his letters to Dell and to his parents. In a period when ailment overcame him once again, Pound attempted to display his control of a condition that seemingly overpowered his will a second time. Pound evidently tried to continue to write

⁶²³ Jefferson B. Fancher, *Medical, Matrimonial, and Scientific Expositor: Giving the Most Important Information Upon Every Subject Relating to Man and Woman* (New York: Dr. Jefferson B. Fancher, Publisher, 1867), p. 54.

⁶²⁴ George Bacon Wood, *A Treatise on the Practice of Medicine*, 6th ed., Vol II (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1866), p. 572.

⁶²⁵ Ezra Pound, Letters to his parents, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2666.

⁶²⁶ Patricia Hutchins notes, “Mrs W. B. Yeats said Pound posed in his dressing gown for Coburn as he was recovering from an attack of jaundice.” *Ezra Pound’s Kensington: An Exploration 1885–1913* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), p. 150. Also J. J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 131.

during his second bout with jaundice, even insisting that lack of rigor or focus could be termed “the jaundiced mind,” further aligning a physical malady with lack of will.⁶²⁷ Additionally, Pound could have written during this period several poems that relate to the concept of disease. He published several of his *Canzoni* poems prior to the book’s publication in July 1911—in the January 1910 *English Review*, as well as in the American collection *Provença*. However, many poems not published until their collection in *Canzoni* could have been written during his relapse of jaundice. These poems contain several references to the will—their inclusion possibly a product of Pound’s illness. In “Song in the Manner of Housman,” Pound criticizes Housman’s Victorian manner or presupposition to a determined fate: “People are born and die,” he voices in the satirical persona of Housman, “Therefore let us act as if we were / dead already.”⁶²⁸ In the last sequence of the collection, “Und Drang”—in which Pound alludes to Nietzsche’s “over-man”—Pound refers to the “sepulchral forces” that pull man into inactivity and conquer the modern man. “The will to live goes from me. / I have lain. / Dull and out-worn / With some strange, subtle sickness.”⁶²⁹ Pound’s narrator seems to adopt a view of the will laid out by Schopenhauer—he uses Schopenhauer’s term “will to live” or *Wille zum Leben*, which, like the narrator’s concept of the will in this context, implies a universal principle rather than an individual will of the mind and body.⁶³⁰ As Schopenhauer explains, this universal will to live manifests itself in the individual, and the human body becomes a representation of the will.⁶³¹ As Pound’s narrator feels no urge to control his motor nerves or body, the will is not manifesting itself and therefore “goes from” him. The “strange, subtle sickness” is the empty state of being that the narrator is experiencing after the universal forces—that typically drive man to remain alive and hold desire—abandon him. The sequence continues, in Part V, labeling “modernity” as “Nerve-wracked and broken” and further portraying the modern man as “Crying with weak and egoistic cries!” This portrayal of the modern man uses the common term “nerve” to indicate the vague concern with both the mind and body, to which psycho-physiological research had drawn attention during the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶³² Pound’s association of modern man with “egoistic cries” additionally portrays the state of helplessness modern man could feel after abandoning belief in a

⁶²⁷ Ezra Pound, “American Chaos: I,” *New Age*, 17.19 (9 September 1915), 449. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C204, p. 108.

⁶²⁸ Ezra Pound, “Song in the Manner of Housman,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 160.

⁶²⁹ Ezra Pound, “Und Drang,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 164–72 (p. 164).

⁶³⁰ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I, trans. by E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1969).

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5

⁶³² Lorraine J. Daston, “British Responses to Psycho-Physiology, 1860–1900,” *Isis*, 69.2 (June 1978), 192–208 (pp. 192–93).

universal will or even a Schopenhauerean blind will to live, which, with its connection with human misery, still contained the promise of forces that would drive man to remain alive and to convey impulses and desires. Pound also portrays a voice in translation from the German Romantic lyric poet Heinrich Heine.⁶³³ In a series of poems translated from Heine for publication in *Canzoni*, Pound excerpts a poem narrated by a whimsical princess with a castle who seems to portray a lighthearted but benevolent will to live. “Dead men stay always dead men,” she states. “Life is the live man’s part.”⁶³⁴ Her view of life is simplistic; she is described as “fair and golden” and her daily life involves “crystal halls” and “the dance of lords and ladies / In all their splendid gear.” Pound’s version of Heine’s poem, among the images of modern men struggling with overpowering forces, seems to satirize this simplistic way of portraying the will. Pound uses his poetic voices in this collection as a means by which he can satirize varying perspectives of the will to live, as many of his narrative voices in this collection render a lack of will, or an altogether simplistic view of this *Wille zum Leben*.

Yet Pound also portrays narrative voices that employ a strong individual will in *Canzoni*. Part V of “Und Drang” especially illustrates the shift in voices and perspectives, as Pound’s narrator first speaks of the “nerve-wracked” modernity, then, in a separate section divided by horizontal ellipses, the tone changes into a praise of will. “Only the restless will / Surges amid the stars / Seeking new moods of life, / New permutations.” Pound repeats the adjective “new,” aligning the possibilities of the will to change and potential. He states that only the restless will—or those who become motivated with this universal restless will or hold an individual restless will—can possibly seek successes. His inclusion of the term “new permutations” invokes a mathematical notion of the rearrangement of numbers, or more broadly, the possibility of changing reality as it is seemingly set out. The poem “Redondillas” takes this notion of the will further by reflecting the human body’s role in the will to seek “new permutations.” “I sing of the senses developed,” the narrator states, “I reach towards perceptions scarce heeded.”⁶³⁵ Pound is addressing the need for sense reception for an optimal sense of perception. This ability to be physically receptive and perceptive necessarily requires a healthy body. The narrator then takes on the role of medical doctor by writing a prescription for health: “If you ask me to write world

⁶³³ In a letter written at Coleman’s Hatch to Harriet Monroe on 21 January 1916, Pound states his admiration for Heine: “Heine is one of the very people on whom one wished to focus attention. It is Heine vs. the rhetoricians that one wants. I haven’t the back files down here, but I think I have definitely indicated Heine as one of the lights.” *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907–1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co, 1950), p. 67.

⁶³⁴ Ezra Pound, “Translations from Heine,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 161–64 (p. 164).

⁶³⁵ Ezra Pound, “Redondillas, or Something of That Sort,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 175–82 (p. 179).

prescriptions / I write so that any can read it: ... A little less of our nerves / A little more will toward vision.”⁶³⁶ Pound’s prescription for the world calls for less psycho-physiological troubles and more will, or desire, “toward vision,” implying both a physical ability to perceive accurately and a metaphorical sense of understanding. Pound connoted that he inherently had this ability of perception, as he notes in his memoir “Indiscretions” that he was able to make a correct diagnosis of his own ailments by age two.⁶³⁷ After insisting on this “vision” or ability of perception, the narrator of “Redondillas” then claims, with ethos: “I know this age and its works / with some sort of moderate intelligence.”⁶³⁸ Again, Pound refers back to the issue of the will: “Why should I cough my head off / with that old gag of “Nascitur ordo”?”⁶³⁹ This Latin phrase, “the order of things is born for me,” stemming from the seventh book of *The Aeneid*,⁶⁴⁰ connotes a fixed, universal will to which each man is bound. Pound associates this concept with distaste and a conception of illness, as modern man must “cough” out the phrase itself. He again refers to this term in a *New Age* series just two years later, in which Pound argues for the artist’s freedom and “impulse,” or free will. He lists the various impulses throughout history: “the intellectual impulse,” the “Latin impulse,” the “impulse of the later Greek mystic writers” and that of the Florentine platonic academy, as well as the “scientific impulse.” He states, “And all this took a good deal of time and required a deal of obscure and patient endeavour. ... And we do not know that they all went about shouting, “*nascitur ordo*.”⁶⁴¹ Pound is questioning the idea that the belief in a universal will has permeated history, and therefore is questioning whether man should continue to believe in a universal will. Further, he implies that not only was man *not* under the influence of universal forces, but man has created every invention and discovery on his own merit. This evidence, to Pound, is a basis to celebrate man and his freedom to create.

Pound’s reference to “the Florentine platonic academy” at the time likely could refer to his studies of Guido Cavalcanti, who belonged to the academy. Thus, in mentioning the “impulses” or creativity of artists and thinkers throughout time, Pound is generalizing his own very detailed findings from his own studies. In 1912, Pound published his “Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti” from the medieval poet whose work he would frequently revisit for decades. As Pound mentions in his introduction to his translation, Cavalcanti

⁶³⁶ Ibid., p. 179.

⁶³⁷ Ezra Pound, “Indiscretions; or, Une Revue de Deux Mondes, By Ezra Pound: I,” *New Age*, 27.4 (27 May 1920), 56–57. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C578, 59–60 (p. 60).

⁶³⁸ Ezra Pound, “Redondillas, or Something of That Sort,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 175–82 (p. 180).

⁶³⁹ Ibid., p. 180.

⁶⁴⁰ Andrew Laird, *Powers of Expression, Expressions of Power: Speech Presentation and Latin Literature* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 33.

⁶⁴¹ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: I,” *New Age*, 13.1 (1 May 1913), 9–10. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C79, 139–40 (p. 139).

“was one of the best logicians in the world, a very fine natural philosopher. Thus was he legiadrisimo ... most skilled in the liberal arts ... ‘physicius’ of authority.”⁶⁴² As Pound noted in his introduction, most information about Cavalcanti’s persona stems from Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, based on the writings of the thirteenth-century Florentine doctor Dino de Garbo. In the *Decameron*, Cavalcanti’s poetry is attributed to the tradition of science more than that of literature.⁶⁴³ Emphasizing this scientific aspect, Pound refers to Cavalcanti’s poetry as “the science of the music of the words.”⁶⁴⁴ Among Cavalcanti’s unique influences is the idea that the human body can progress the human intellect towards perfection.⁶⁴⁵ As Pound read the *Decameron*, he likely encountered the excerpt about Cavalcanti in a graveyard, leaping from behind the graves and in a calculated offense to the Florentine brigata, whom he believed to be intellectually inferior. “Gentlemen,” Cavalcanti is credited as saying, “you may say anything you wish to me in your home,”⁶⁴⁶ implying that the brigata belonged to the graveyard. Cavalcanti, like Pound, equates intellectual deadness with a metaphorical deadness. Like his “Song in the Manner of Housman,” Pound used the description of physical deadness to signify a lack of intellectual rigor or a lack of will. In aligning Cavalcanti with an intellectual “impulse” in his *New Age* article mentioning the Florentine platonic academy, Pound also communicates that the impulse, or the ability to create through free will, belongs in both the literary and the scientific realms. Cavalcanti, of interest to Pound primarily for his poetry writing, belonged to the platonic academy because of his association with the tradition of science. Both the writer and the scientist depend on the same sense of an individualistic will. “The artist is free,” Pound says. “He must be free, either by circumstance or by heroism.” He then uses the term “strong” to describe the necessity for a modern artist to survive successfully: “And even if a man be strong enough to overcome all these things the rare utterance will be for a time pushed aside by the continuous outpourings of fellows who having spent little or no pains and energy upon the work itself have abundant time for hawking it about.”⁶⁴⁷ Ultimately, Pound uses examples throughout the ages—such as Cavalcanti with his background in the sciences and his

⁶⁴² Ezra Pound, “Introduction of *The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti*” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 187–95 (p. 191).

⁶⁴³ Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Guido Cavalcanti and the Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) p. 4.

⁶⁴⁴ Ezra Pound, “Introduction of *The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti*” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 187–95 (p. 194).

⁶⁴⁵ Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Guido Cavalcanti and the Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) p. 5.

⁶⁴⁶ Boccaccio, *Decameron* VI, 9, qtd. and trans. in Maria Luisa Ardizzone, *Guido Cavalcanti and the Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) p. 3.

⁶⁴⁷ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: I,” *New Age*, 13.1 (1 May 1913), 9–10. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C79, 139–40 (p. 140).

emphasis on the human body—to support his view of the individual will. Yet his readings usually return to a practical issue in the everyday careers of modern writers. A writer could be “free” in terms of “circumstance” or “heroism,” implying differing levels of insistence to which the writer would need to pursue his work, likely based on financial status, reputation, or talent. Pound returns to a crucial word associated with the will—strong. As writers are “pushed aside,” they must be “strong enough to overcome” the external forces that often join to frustrate the individual will.

Pound uses the example of Cavalcanti to describe the modern poet in other ways as well, as he links Cavalcanti’s innovative poetic methods and content in the thirteenth century with that of the poet of modernity. The key to the connection, according to Pound, is the “impulse” or the freedom of one’s will to discover and invent the new. In his “Credo,” published in February 1912, he sets out a connection between innovation and the impulse. “*Technique*.—I believe in technique as the test of a man’s sincerity; in law when it is ascertainable; in the trampling down of every convention that impedes or obscures the determination of the law, or the precise rendering of the impulse.”⁶⁴⁸ He states that he would disregard—and even trample—any force that would prevent the impulse, or this individual force of creativity. The individual force, then, is of greater value to Pound than any other force or primordial will. In May 1913, Pound partners the impulse with the poet’s personality and individual nature, and warns of academia’s threats “to crush out all impulse and personality; which aims not to make men but automata.”⁶⁴⁹ Three months after publicly proclaiming Imagism, Pound sets out a more formal assessment of the Impulse, this time in the form of a movement, with the movement’s name using a capital letter.⁶⁵⁰ Associating innovation with the artist, Pound begins, “The artist is always beginning. Any work of art which is not a beginning, an invention, a discovery, is of little worth. The very name Troubadour means a ‘finder,’ one who discovers.”⁶⁵¹ He continues by stating that the will to produce art must derive from the artist himself: “It is his own fault if he does not become a good artist—even a flawless artist.” This statement further implies his belief that man originates his own will, and he is not bound under a necessity or universal will. He repeats the word *Impulse* four times in the first paragraph alone, and he sets out a loose definition:

The Impulse is a very different thing from the *furor scribendi*, which is a sort of emotional excitement due, I think, to weakness, and often preceding or accompanying early work. It

⁶⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, “Prologomena,” *Poetry Review*, 1.2 (February 1912), 72–76. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C38, 59–63 (p. 60).

⁶⁴⁹ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: I,” *New Age*, 13.2 (8 May 1913), 34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C80, 140–41 (p. 140).

⁶⁵⁰ Ezra Pound, “How I Began,” *T.P.’s Weekly*, 21.552 (6 June 1913), 707. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C86, p. 147.

⁶⁵¹ Ezra Pound, “How I Began,” *T.P.’s Weekly*, 21.552 (6 June 1913), 707. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C86, p. 147.

means that the subject has you, not you the subject. There is no formula for the Impulse.

Each poem must be a new and strange adventure if it is worth recording at all.

Pound's Impulse was defined differently from his Imagism, which he had formally put forward just months before introducing the Impulse. Imagism was a prescriptive method with a formal definition and a list of "don'ts." The Impulse, however, could not be described with a "formula." The method seems to set out a creative form of writing with practical bounds—not a haphazard "emotional excitement" due to "weakness," but a more controlled, willed presentation of the mind. The individual will is in control of the forces around the individual himself, including the very subject of the poetry: he "has ... the subject," not "the subject has you."

Pound illustrated methods of innovation in poetry with allusions to scientific discoveries, as each was born out of individual will. In his poem "Redondillas," Pound refers to Paul Ehrlich, recipient of the 1908 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine. "I've just heard of a German named Ehrlich. / Medical science is jolted," he notes, referring to his discoveries in immunology, specifically resulting in the discovery of arsphenamine to cure syphilis. He then refers to the earliest known physician and writer who documented syphilis: "We'll have to call back Fracastori / To pen a new end for "De Morbo." Girolamo Fracastoro, an Italian physician, poet, scholar, and atomist, first proposed that "spores" could transmit infection and cause epidemic diseases—a theory that authoritatively continued for three centuries before its displacement by germ theory. In 1530, Fracastoro wrote an epic poem, "Syphilis sive de morbo gallico," about a shepherd named Syphilis, the origin of the disease's name. Pound identified his own poetic innovation with that of Fracastoro in a letter to his friend Kate Buss in 1916. Responding to her requests for biographical information, he writes of his early life and adds, "Parallels in the life of Fracastorius."⁶⁵² During this period of examining the Impulse, Pound's inclusion of medical innovators in his poetry and as a parallel to his own life illustrates the critical aspect of innovation in Pound's attempt to establish a new method of poetry. His use of layers of innovators throughout history also implies his belief that a new method is built upon preexisting methods; Ehrlich "jolted" the work of Fracastori. Time, too, is an important aspect of this concept of innovation; what is innovative in one period is overturned and considered to be outdated in another period; innovation must be a "complex in an instant of time."⁶⁵³ Innovation, then, is historical and must be viewed in its historical context. This could be one reason why Pound rejected Modernism's bleak condemnation of the past, culminating in the Futurists' belief in the need to condemn history and burn books. Even

⁶⁵² Ezra Pound, Letter to Kate Buss dated 9 March 1916, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 119–21 (p. 120).

⁶⁵³ Ezra Pound, "A Few Don't by an Imagiste," *Poetry*, 1.6 (March 1913), 200–06 (p. 200).

Blast 1 put forward a condemnation of historical context, in an article “Long Live the Vortex!” likely penned by Spencer Gore, a Vorticist artist who died of pneumonia the same year.⁶⁵⁴ “TO THE INDIVIDUAL,” he writes, “The moment a man feels or realizes himself as an artist, he ceases to belong to any milieu or time. Blast is created for this timeless, fundamental Artist that exists in everybody.”⁶⁵⁵ Pound must have repeatedly encountered this notion that the modern individual, to truly realize his own personal art, must disengage from past traditions and influences. However, he continued to insist—paradoxically—that the past was crucial to individual will. In the same issue of *Blast* as the statement proclaiming timelessness by Gore, Pound states that the future is actually void of energy or will without the past: “ALL MOMENTUM, which is the past bearing upon us, RACE, RACE-MEMORY, instinct charging the PLACID, NON-ENERGIZED FUTURE.”⁶⁵⁶ He states that the past is what impregnates the future: “the past ... is pregnant in the vortex, NOW”—possibly drawing from his earlier 1913 viewing of *Rock Drill* in Jacob Epstein’s studio.⁶⁵⁷ The early version of the human like robot was pregnant, with an embryo inside the ribcage.⁶⁵⁸ Additionally in this *Blast* manifesto, Pound even describes a modern artwork as a hundred cumulative art pieces of the past. “It is the picture that means a hundred poems, the music that means a hundred pictures.”⁶⁵⁹ The key to his viewpoint was that Pound did not believe in a universal or primordial will. He refused to believe in the notion that universal forces combine to thwart the individual’s progress—and in this, differed from the more general Modernist view of a fragmented, uncontrollable universe. The innovations of the past have led to the innovations of the present, he believed. Pound did not believe that modern man could be swallowed by forces outside of personal control; modern man could, instead, start to shape his world through his own power and will, and could begin by forming his own innovations.

Discovering the new in poetry necessarily involves an innovation with language itself. Pound’s poem “Ortus”—published in the “Contemporania” series in the April 1913 issue of *Poetry*, just a month after his imagism poems were published—addresses the concept of language using a scientific content. Pound’s narrator begins by insisting on the extent of his work with these chemical elements: “How have I labored? / How have I not

⁶⁵⁴ The Brown University Modernist project, which posts a facsimile copy of the two issues of *Blast* online, attributes this article to Spencer Gore.

⁶⁵⁵ “Long Live the Vortex!” *Blast*, 1 (20 June 1914), 9–10.

⁶⁵⁶ Ezra Pound, “Vortex,” *Blast*, 1 (20 June 1914), 153–54 (p. 153).

⁶⁵⁷ Jacob Epstein, *An Autobiography* (London: Hamilton Press, 1955), p. 56.

⁶⁵⁸ Richard Cork, *Grove Art Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), n.p.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 153. This notion predates a similar theory in T. S. Eliot’s “Tradition and the Individual Talent.”

labored / To bring her soul to birth, / To give these elements a name and a centre!”⁶⁶⁰ He then describes the chemical processes involved in creating a new element from other elements: “Surely you are bound and entwined, / You are mingled with the elements unborn.” Pound focuses on the will of the scientist: “How have I laboured to bring her soul into separation; / To give her a name and her being!” The last stanza universalizes the origin of new elements, with the narrator’s almost alchemical spell: “I beseech you enter your life. / I beseech you learn to say I.” The will of the scientist to create a new element necessarily involves the linguistic aspect of identity, of creating a new name, of “learn[ing] to say ‘I.’” The poem’s title lays claim to the concept of *ortus* or “origins” in general, yet the scientific content and the focus on language to describe nature could allude to Johannes Baptista van Helmont and his *Ortus Medicinae*, or the *Origin of Medicine*. Van Helmont was a physiologist, physician, and chemist, and is considered the father of biochemistry.⁶⁶¹ He also built off of the findings of Paracelsus—to whom Pound referred in his previous work, *Canzoni*⁶⁶²—yet Van Helmont added distinct, groundbreaking findings based on new methods of experimentation. Elaborating on Paracelsus’ findings, Van Helmont believed that most diseases developed from invisible gases or spirits that entered the body and attached to the governing forces of organs. Under the influence of imagination, he believed, these forces resulted in specific diseases, which called for specific cures and remedies. He also acknowledged the importance of creating a language to describe the specific diseases and remedies. It is this interconnection of labor or impulse, discovery, and language that Pound identifies in his poem “Ortus.” As Pound insists, creation and invention comes into existence only with language, or a name: “To give her a name and her being!”

Pound reinforces this idea of innovation in an article he published five months after first publishing “Ortus.” In the third installment of “The Approach to Paris,” he speaks metaphorically of “resurrection or discovery” and compares his interest in literary discovery with “the same sort of interest that a new discovery in medicine might have for those to whom the science of medicine seems important.”⁶⁶³ He further hints at the connection of this literary innovation with the individual drive. In speaking of Jules Romains’s “new pathétique” of Unanimism, Pound writes, “I, personally, may prefer the theory of the dominant cell, a slightly Nietzschean biology, to any collectivist theories whatsoever.” He opposes the new method of Unanimism—or a collective literary consciousness—that was

⁶⁶⁰ Ezra Pound, “Contemporania,” *Poetry*, 2.1 (April 1913), 1–12. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C76, 132–37 (p. 133).

⁶⁶¹ Peter Elmer, *The Healing Arts: Health, Disease and Society in Europe, 1500–1800*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 121.

⁶⁶² Ezra Pound, “Paracelsus in Excelsis,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 146.

⁶⁶³ Ezra Pound, “The Approach to Paris: III,” *New Age*, 13.21 (18 September 1913), 607–09. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C95, 156–59 (p. 156).

gaining attention in Paris, and refers to the Nietzschean philosophy of the strength of the individual. Almost defending his own literary movement, Pound reinforces Imagism in individualist terms in the article, just months after its initial popularization: “at any rate I don’t much care about having my pathétique interfered with. It does very well as it is.”

Pound had referred to this interrelation of personal innovation in poetry and the inventions of science as early as 1910 just before or during his bout with jaundice in America.⁶⁶⁴ In his review of Hudson Maxim’s *The Science of Poetry and the Philosophy of Language*, he states, “Mind you, poetry *does* admit of scientific analysis and discussion.... Poetry admits new and profounder explanations in the light of modern science.”⁶⁶⁵ Just as Pound referred to poetry in general as the *corpus poetarum*,⁶⁶⁶ he portrays the field of science as a body in Part II of the 1913 version of “Xenia”:⁶⁶⁷

The cool fingers of science delight me;
For they are cool with sympathy,
There is nothing of fever about them.

For Pound, science was a way of portraying the new as an unemotional, anti-Romantic entity. “The cool fingers of science” connote an empiricist, rational discipline; the association of science with the fingers or hands implies a will or impulse towards progress and work. Pound encountered a reference to science in the form of a body during this period with Jacob Epstein’s 1913 version of *Rock Drill*. This early version of the artwork portrayed a humanlike image as heroic and strong, unlike the later maimed, victimized versions. According to Epstein, both Pound and Gaudier-Brzeska visited his studio when he had just completed the early version of the “machine-like robot, visored, menacing, and carrying within itself the progency, protectively esconced.”⁶⁶⁸ He remembers, “Pound started expatiating on the work. Gaudier turned to him and snapped, ‘Shut up, you understand nothing!’” Pound later wrote that *Rock Drill* signified to him an efficient machinery that could be beautiful, yet this beauty would oppose that of “sentimental aesthetics.”⁶⁶⁹ Pound admired the work,⁶⁷⁰ and its armored machine body seems to embody the “cool fingers of science” devoid of Romantic sentimentality, and instead infused with a Nietzschean concept of the strong, armored individual.

Perhaps this new, unemotional and unattached method of perception and the connection with the power of the individual—and therefore the human body—was what

⁶⁶⁴ Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 114.

⁶⁶⁵ Ezra Pound, “The Science of Poetry,” *Book News Monthly*, 29.4 (December 1910), 282–83.

⁶⁶⁶ Ezra Pound, “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: I,” *New Age*, 10.6 (November 1911), 130–31 (p. 131).

⁶⁶⁷ Ezra Pound, “Xenia,” *Poetry*, 3 (November 1913), 26. Also published in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 1172–73 (1172).

⁶⁶⁸ Jacob Epstein, *An Autobiography* (London: Hamilton Press, 1955), p. 56.

⁶⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), p. 17.

⁶⁷⁰ Ira B. Nadel, *The Cambridge Introduction to Ezra Pound* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 79.

attracted Pound to the “médecins-poètes” that he reviewed in 1913. “I have done some reviews of little Bill, and of Castiaux,”⁶⁷¹ Pound wrote Dorothy Shakespear in November 1913. He was referring to his friend and physician William Carlos Williams and to Paul Castiaux, who studied medicine at Lille and became known as one of the médecins-poètes along with Georges Duhamel. He also refers to Duhamel’s added sense of realism through his profession as medical doctor in a later 1917 article: “perhaps Dr. Duhamel, with his realism of hospitals ... will save us?”⁶⁷² Pound plays with the term “save,” as his doctor-poets not only save diseased or ill humans, but can save the ill state of poetry with their elevated sense of realism.

During the month in which he read and reviewed the doctor-poets, Pound began a series in which he further reveals his interest in medicine and its connection with poetry. In October 1913, just as Pound was encountering another attack of jaundice, he wrote the first and second installments of “The Serious Artist” series, published in *The New Freewoman*. In the two sections, Pound extends metaphors of the arts as a science and of the artist as a physician. “The arts, literature, poesy, are a science, just as chemistry is a science. Their subject is man, mankind and the individual.” Further, he states that the arts provide material about the “nature of man” and “begin where the science of medicine leaves off or rather they overlap that science. The borders of the two arts overcross.”⁶⁷³ He therefore places responsibility on the physician for skillfully diagnosing a disease and working ethically for the wellbeing of the patient, just as a poet holds the responsibility of precisely portraying accurately the subject of man. “As there are in medicine,” he says, “the art of diagnosis and the art of cure, so in the arts, so in the particular arts of poetry and of literature.” Pound draws attention to the importance of language in both the literature and medicine; diagnosis implies an identification of symptoms, as well as a linguistic label to the disease. Literature has the power to identify the symptoms of society’s ills as well as the precise details of the workings of man and his world. It is this ability to identify and describe that allows literature the power to “cure.” Lastly, Pound cites the specialization that both a physician and a poet must gain to practice their craft. “It is none the less true that it takes a skilful physician to make certain diagnoses or to discern the lurking disease beneath the appearance of vigour.” The poet, then, like the physician, has the power to discern what the common

⁶⁷¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Dorothy Shakespear dated 21 November 1913, *Ezra Pound and Dorothy Shakespear: Their Letters 1909–1914*, ed. by Omar Pound and A. Walton Litz (New York: New Directions, 1984), p. 277.

⁶⁷² Ezra Pound, “Imaginary Letters: VI (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn),” *Little Review*, 4.7 (November 1917), pp. 39–40. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C297, 293–94 (p. 294).

⁶⁷³ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: I–II,” *The New Freewoman*, 1.9 (15 October 1913), 161–63. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C106, 186–88 (p. 186).

man cannot readily see. Their skills allow them to discern illness “lurking” under the mere appearance of vitality.

HENRI GAUDIER-BRZESKA

Pound again made a connection between vigour and poetry around the time he first met Henri Gaudier-Brzeska in November 1913. During this month, he continued his “Serious Artist” installments in the *New Freewoman*, in which he immediately addresses the difficulty of gaining the title or status of “poet.” “Obviously, it is not easy to be a great poet. If it were, many more people would have done so. At no period in history has the world been free of people who have mildly desired to be great poets and not a few have endeavoured conscientiously to be such.”⁶⁷⁴ He then specifies the impulse or will that a poet must work towards. “We might come to believe that the thing that matters in art is a sort of energy,” he writes, “something more or less like electricity or radio-activity, a force transfusing, welding, and unifying. A force rather like water when it spurts up through very bright sand and sets it in swift motion. You may make what image you like.” In a letter written to an American doctor years later, Pound reveals the source of this obscure image that he used to describe the energy of the poet:

Fifteen years ago [about 1907] I was reading Plato, suddenly had the impression of crystalline liquid bursting up thru “bright brown sand” [insertion in handwriting: not a phantastikon] sensation, but organic, as if in the head; liquid certainly not like water, more brilliant, crystalline, like white curacao, if you like. Sand moving as bright yellow-brown sand will in a spring over the hole from which the water sprouts. ... Sensation has never recurred. Have clear phantastikon, not the least like hallucination. Doesn't fool one, doesn't alarm one. The sensation I speak of NOT in the least to be confused with visual faculty, i.e. faculty for seeing pictures.⁶⁷⁵

The letter's general content addresses innovation: “the start of new ‘train of thought’, the forcing open of new capacity, the development, or out-shore of new faculty, say of painter taking to music, writer to science, etc.” In addressing the source or origin of innovative thoughts, Pound writes that he imagined an image that came to have symbolic meaning for him. He details that the image came when reading Plato, and therefore when he was likely contemplating some aspect of Platonic form and considering the reality of the material world. As Plato theorized that physical objects are shadows or images of their ideal forms, here Pound is using a physical description of force to depict his ideal concept of the artist's

⁶⁷⁴ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: III—Emotion and Poesy,” *The New Freewoman*, 1.10 (1 November 1913), 194–95. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C112, 199–200 (p. 199).

⁶⁷⁵ Ezra Pound, TL (carbon) of letter to Dr. Louis Berman n.d. [1922], New York Public Library, Berg Collection, James Sibley Watson / The Dial Papers 1920–1972, B7199281.

energy. As he stated in 1913, this “force” is “a sort of energy” and he compares the picture of water dispersing sand to describe this electric or radioactive energy. It is the vitality and force of this energy that determines which poets become “great poet[s].”⁶⁷⁶ In the same month as the publication of this article, Pound first published his poem “Starved,” in which he speaks of two types of artists in the poem. The “helpless” and “broken” artists are “Thwarted with systems” and “Helpless against the control.” They yield to the powers of universal will rather than fighting through challenges using their own strength. The second type of poet is portrayed as stronger and aligned with Pound himself: “You who can not wear yourselves out / By persisting to successes.”⁶⁷⁷ He speaks to these artists directly: “You of the finer sense,” and states that he has overcome the challenges with which they are faced: “Take thought. / I have weathered the storm, / I have beaten out my exile.”

In July or August 1913, Pound met Gaudier-Brzeska at the Allied Artists Exhibition, yet did not spend substantial time with him until the end of the year in November. One of Pound’s primary concerns with Gaudier, according to his memoir of the artist, was with his health. Pound describes his overwork: “He next obtained a clerkship in the city, studied in museums in the evenings and on Saturday afternoons and spent half the night drawing. Then he brokedown.”⁶⁷⁸ Using this early twentieth-century word likely to denote physical exhaustion in this case, Pound in his memoir referenced Gaudier’s history of physical illness. On his nineteenth birthday in November 1910 in Paris, for example, Gaudier writes of his physical and emotional deterioration: “I have been ill—anaemia—the result of all the energy I’ve put into this hateful battle for existence.”⁶⁷⁹ Two years later, in February 1912, he still was battling physical distress: “I am enervated, tired and discontented with nearly everything I am wild and not fit to be talked to—and do not know what to do—so excuse these tiresome lines.”⁶⁸⁰ Additionally, his partner, Sophie Brzeska, also struggled with physical illness. Before meeting Gaudier, Brzeska had become ill with gastric catarrh⁶⁸¹ and “une abomination de pertes jaunes,” probably caused by gonorrhoea.⁶⁸² She sought a cure with a specialist in Baden, where the doctor informed her that her ill health was caused by nerves, lack of food and overanxiety. Yet even throughout the period

⁶⁷⁶ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: III—Emotion and Poesy,” *The New Freewoman*, 1.10 (1 November 1913), 194–95. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C112, 199–200 (p. 199).

⁶⁷⁷ Ezra Pound, “Poems,” *Poetry*, 3.2 (November 1913), 53–60. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C109, 193–97 (p. 195).

⁶⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), p. 43.

⁶⁷⁹ H.S. Ede, *Savage Messiah* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1971), p. 32.

⁶⁸⁰ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Letter to Haldane Macfall dated 12 February 1912, National Art Library, MSL/1947/4 86.DD.Box VI.

⁶⁸¹ H.S. Ede, *Savage Messiah* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1971), p. 13.

⁶⁸² Paul O’Keeffe, *Gaudier-Brzeska: An Absolute Case of Genius* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), p. 71.

in which Gaudier and Pound interacted, late 1913 until Gaudier's departure for France in 1915, Brzeska continued in her preoccupation with illness.⁶⁸³

Despite his and his partner's ill health, Gaudier was determined to succeed as an artist. He had, as Pound would have labeled it, impulse or will to create lasting artwork. In a letter to an English friend, Gaudier wrote in 1911:

I have strong artistic wants that must be satisfied or else the whole being is sick. I am compelled to live in towns, at least for some years—because only in towns can I find objects, materials which I may study from. ... I go out to the country every week to cheer up the ideas and get bodily strength as well. — Friends? I have none yet — I am very difficult now about them — they must be rare sorts of men, having the same needs as I have, whom I can understand and who can understand me — I know many people, but am not friendly with them, for my work would suffer from it. ... I must be very, very severe with myself if I want to succeed — I may not live to enjoy life only, but first of all to work, and this at any price, even if suffering and pain come from it. They have come already and will come on again, but I must be glad all the same—as long I can walk.⁶⁸⁴

In September 1912, Gaudier began to read heavily the works of Bergson, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer,⁶⁸⁵ which reinforced his concept of the will. Two years later, when Gaudier published his “Vortex” manifesto in *Blast I* in the pages immediately after Pound's own “Vortex” manifesto, Gaudier is considering the effects of the will on his art. He ends his manifesto, “Will and consciousness are our VORTEX.”⁶⁸⁶ His piece hints at his thoughts on the individual will, aligned with Pound's own views on the subject. “We have mastered the elements,” he proclaims, asserting that his power and will have given him strength to overcome his struggles. He speaks artistically of his newfound powers: “We have crystallized the sphere into the cube.” He seems to imply that he deserves the title of modern artist precisely because of his enduring will throughout his struggles with external forces. “And WE the moderns: Epstein, Brancusi, Archipenko, Dunikowski, Modigliani, and myself, through the incessant struggle in the complex city, have likewise to spend much energy.”

Gaudier's statement that he had to “spend much energy” corresponds with Pound's accounts that Gaudier overworked himself. Pound believed that physical health was requisite for maintaining a will and strength to pursue this will. In the series “The Renaissance,” written before Gaudier's death in 1915, he speaks of the artist's struggle to keep physically healthy with little reliable income while still maintaining a strong will to

⁶⁸³ Ibid., p. 153.

⁶⁸⁴ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Letter to Katie Smith postmarked 21 April 1911, Tate Britain Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Gaudier-Brzeska Collection, TGA 9115/1–26.

⁶⁸⁵ Report on the Works from the Collection of Ezra Pound, printed 1980 London: Anthony d'Offay, Tate Britain Hyman Kreitman Research Centre, Gaudier-Brzeska Collection, TGA 9115.

⁶⁸⁶ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, “Vortex,” *Blast*, 1 (20 June 1914), 155–58 (p. 158).

work. “Prolonged hunger, intermittent hunger and anxiety,” he states, “will of course break down a man’s constitution, render him fussy and over-irritable, and in the end ruin his work or prevent its full development.”⁶⁸⁷ Pound’s concern with his closest artist friends and associates was their “full development” or reaching their total potential. He believed he was working with not only great artists, but the best artists, and only their optimal productivity could maintain this status. This process of productivity involved not only the intellect, but physical health. In his prefatory note to Gaudier’s Memorial Exhibition in 1918, Pound writes that, “The great sculptor must combine two qualities: (a) the sense of form (of masses in relation); (b) tremendous physical activeness.”⁶⁸⁸ He focused on the physical activity required for greatness:

The sculptor must add to the power of imagining form-combination the physical energy required to cut this into the unyielding medium. He must have vividness of perception, he must have this untiringness, he must, beyond that, be able to retain his main idea unwaveringly during the time (weeks or months) of the carving. This needs a particular equipment. Easily diverted, flittering quickness of mind is small use.

When a man has all these qualities, vividness of insight, poignancy, retentiveness, plus the energy, he has chance of making permanent sculpture. Gaudier had them, even to the superfluous abundance of forging his own chisels.

In describing strength, Pound refers to the physical body and to the mind or intellect. He states that the sculptor needs the “particular equipment” of a strong mind and “vividness of insight,” again interrelating physical and intellectual strength. When Pound had known Gaudier for three months, his *Egoist* articles reflected his increased sensitivity to the will of artists struggling financially and physically. “There is a bond between the artist and the inventor,” Pound writes under the pseudonym Bastien von Helmholtz, first drawing attention to the creative will and the ability of the artist. He then distinguishes between the “digestive man,” or the man who receives impressions and fails to create, and the “dynamic man,” or the man who invents. “The consumer, the digestive man fears the dynamic man,” he writes. “The dynamic man exists. Nothing can inhibit his existence. He exists on a desert island. Starve him, you give edge to his style and double the acidity of his will force. Against him society has but the one weapon, seduction.”⁶⁸⁹ In the same issue of the *Egoist*, Pound further explains his metaphor of the digestive man. “The bourgeois is, roughly, a person who is concerned solely with his own comfort or advancement. He is, in brief,

⁶⁸⁷ Ezra Pound, “The Renaissance: III,” *Poetry*, 6.2 (May 1915), 84–91. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C189, 82–85 (p. 82).

⁶⁸⁸ *A Memorial Exhibition of the Work of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. Born 1891. Killed in Action 1915. With a Prefatory Note by Ezra Pound. London Exhibition No 259 May–June, 1918*. National Art Library, Catalogues Collection, 200.BL.

⁶⁸⁹ Ezra Pound, “John Synge and the Habits of Criticism,” *Egoist*, 1.3 (2 February 1914), 53–54. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C127, 220–21 (p. 220). Written under the pseudonym Bastien von Helmholtz.

digestive. He is the stomach and gross intestines of the body politic and social, as distinct from the artist, who is the nostrils and the invisible antennae.”⁶⁹⁰ Pound, then, associates the bourgeois, or those who receive artistic impressions and fail to create them themselves, with the base human mode of digestion. Only those with the impulse or will to create can be called artists—whom Pound associates with the more heightened acts of breathing and physical sensation: they are the “nostrils and the invisible antennae.”

It was during this period that Pound wrote his memorable “New Sculpture” article in response to the Quest Society speeches of Hulme, Lewis, and Pound himself. As he repeated in his article a crucial point of his speech—“that one might regard the body either as a sensitized receiver of sensations, or as an instrument for carrying out the decrees of the will”—the influence behind this idea could have been his exposure to the plight of writers and artists such as Gaudier. With his particular interest in the concept of the will, through his reading of Bergson, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer, Gaudier’s interaction with Pound from 1913 to 1915 seemed to narrow Pound’s attention to the issue of the will in extreme circumstances. In “New Sculpture,” Pound adds that one “could believe in something beyond man,” relating Pound’s opinion that the poet is above the common man, aligned instead with the *Übermensch*. He describes the well-rounded artist in his February 1915 installation of “Affirmations” and emphasizes the crucial elements of “will, impulse” and “intellect.”

There is another shibboleth of the artistic-slop crowd. It is the old cry about intellect being inartistic, or about art being “above,” saving the word, “above” intellect. Art comes from intellect stirred by will, impulse, emotion, but art is emphatically not any of these others deprived of intellect, and out drunk on its ’lone, saying it is the “that which is beyond the intelligence.”⁶⁹¹

Pound places art on equal ground as the intellect, and notes that art is a product of the will. He then includes Gaudier-Brzeska in this description of the ideal artist: “I do not hesitate to call Brzeska ‘complete artist.’ In him there is sculptural ability, that goes without saying, and there is ‘equipment’ in the sense of wide knowledge of his art and of things outside it, and there is intellect.”⁶⁹² He then describes the form and geometrical shapes in Gaudier’s work and perceives energy in these symbols and in this method of modern sculpture. The will, then, becomes evident in its own product. Pound later describes Gaudier’s will as

⁶⁹⁰ Ezra Pound, “The Bourgeois,” *Egoist*, 1.3 (2 February 1914), 53. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C126, p. 220. Written under the pseudonym Bastien von Helmholtz.

⁶⁹¹ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations: V. Gaudier-Brzeska,” *New Age*, 16.14 (4 February 1915), 380–82. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C176, 13–15 (p. 14). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), pp. 121–30.

⁶⁹² Ezra Pound, “Affirmations: V. Gaudier-Brzeska,” *New Age*, 16.14 (4 February 1915), 380–82. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C176, 13–15 (p. 14). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), pp. 121–30.

vitality “made flesh” in the form of a body with energy. In his description of “Red Stone Dancer” of 1913, Pound writes,

This last is almost a thesis of his ideas upon the use of pure form. We have the triangle and circle asserted, labled [sic] almost, upon the face and right breast. Into these so-called “abstractions” life flows, the circle moves and elongates into the oval, it increases and takes volume in the sphere, or hemisphere of the breast. The triangle moves toward organism, it becomes a spherical triangle (the central life-form common to both Brzeska and Lewis). These two developed motifs work as themes in a fugue. We have the whole series of spherical triangles, as in the arm over the head, all combining and culminating in the great sweep of the back of the shoulders, as fine as any surface in all sculpture. The “abstract” or mathematical bareness of the triangle and circle are fully incarnate, made flesh, full of vitality and energy. The whole form-series ends, passes into stasis with the circular base or platform.⁶⁹³

Pound describes every aspect of the sculpture, to its circular base. He interprets specific parts of the dancer’s body—the face, breast, arm, head, shoulders—and associates these body parts to the corresponding shapes on the sculpture that symbolize energy. The shapes are embodied in the sculpture, “made flesh” through “vitality and energy.” Pound’s interpretation of Gaudier’s work, like this reading of “Red Stone Dancer,” considers the effects of the will on the human body. This reading of Gaudier’s work likely stems from Pound’s own concerns about Gaudier’s physical health and strength of will. Similarly, Pound in 1915 was treating his own poetic work in similar bodily terms. His first published version of Canto 1, which was drafted in 1915,⁶⁹⁴ describes the *Cantos* in terms of a skeleton. “The truth / Is inside this discourse: / this booth is full of the marrow of / wisdom.”⁶⁹⁵ His booth, or “speech” as he explains in the stanza, contains marrow; therefore, his speech, or the words of the poem are the skeletal structure of his *Cantos*. Pound often referred to his frustration with maintaining a will to write his epic poem, beginning in 1915. He later refers to his work on the *Cantos* in terms of the structure of a body: “the skeleton had been brought to life.”⁶⁹⁶ This portrayal of energy in the form of the body—in Pound’s depiction of Gaudier’s work and in his own *Cantos*—in a sense relates to Nietzsche’s blending of the mind and body. As Western philosophy often portrayed a dualism or separation of the mind and body, Nietzsche argued for their unity in purpose. Pound, in his

⁶⁹³ *A Memorial Exhibition of the Work of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. Born 1891. Killed in Action 1915. With a Prefatory Note by Ezra Pound. London Exhibition No 259 May–June, 1918.* National Art Library, Catalogues Collection, 200.BL, p. 5.

⁶⁹⁴ J. J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 190.

⁶⁹⁵ Ezra Pound, “Three Cantos of a Poem of Some Length,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 318–30 (p. 318).

⁶⁹⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to Sibley Watson dated 27 June 1923, *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1994), p. 280.

first canto, portrays his “wisdom” as the marrow of his bones, thereby combining the images of mind and body.

Just a week after his “Affirmations” piece asserting the interconnection of will, impulse, and intellect, Pound’s next installation of “Affirmations” further defines the importance of the impulse, as he compares the concept of the vortex to a modern renaissance. “The Renaissance sought for a lost reality, a lost freedom.”⁶⁹⁷ This freedom aligns with the freedom involved with individual will. “We seek for a lost reality and a lost intensity. We believe that the Renaissance was in part the programme in contradistinction to, but not in contradiction of, the individual impulse.” Here, Pound addresses the potentially paradoxical notion of the individual will in movements that seem to highlight the communal nature of productivity. As the Renaissance promoted a chain of being, connecting individuals in one grand scheme of the universe, the individual was still promoted as “the center of all things”—a concept to which Pound referred in referencing Pico della Mirandola.⁶⁹⁸ Pound notes that the Renaissance, like Vorticism, is “in contradistinction to, but not in contradiction of”—different to, but not contrasted with—the impulse. The individual’s will, then, can exist within a larger communal network—a justification by Pound for his support of communal movements.

Pound associated Gaudier with the will, the human body, communal movements, as well as individualism. Each of these concepts Pound referred to again in his memorial writings of Gaudier after his death—writings that further elevated Gaudier to the status of a modern superman. His death—of which Pound received the news on 28 June 1915⁶⁹⁹—was the first “failure” of man to which Pound could not attribute a lack of will as the cause. War, Pound discovered, was an all-encompassing power to which even an *Übermensch* could not overcome; war took the lives of both “young blood and high blood,” as he wrote in “Mauburley.”⁷⁰⁰ Gaudier became for Pound, therefore, a type of savior figure, sacrificed for a greater good despite his own perfection.⁷⁰¹ He prophesied in February 1915 before Gaudier’s death that if Gaudier was killed, he could not be replaced, as he had a singular perfect existence. “And if the accursed Germans succeed in damaging Gaudier-Brzeska they will have done more harm to art than they have by the destruction of Rheims Cathedral, for

⁶⁹⁷ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations: VI. Analysis of this Decade,” *New Age*, 16.15 (11 February 1915), 405–11. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C179, 16–18 (p. 17). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), pp. 133–41.

⁶⁹⁸ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: I,” *New Age*, 13.1 (1 May 1913), 9–10. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C79, 139–40 (p. 139).

⁶⁹⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn postmarked 13 July 1915, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 29.

⁷⁰⁰ Ezra Pound, “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 549–63 (p. 551).

⁷⁰¹ Christina Biéłkaszka-DuVernay asserts that Gaudier becomes a Christ figure to Pound in her Ph.D. dissertation, *Ezra Pound and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Masculinity and Myth*, chapter 4, Columbia University, 1997.

a building once made and recorded can, with some care, be remade, but the uncreated forms of a man of genius cannot be set forth by another.”⁷⁰² In the month following Gaudier’s death, Pound published the poem “Reflection.”

I know what Nietzsche said is true,
And yet—
I saw the face of a little child in the street,
And it was beautiful.⁷⁰³

Pound seems to be questioning the universality of Nietzsche’s theories. He reveals to his father in a letter announcing Gaudier’s death that it was almost inevitable that Gaudier would yield to death in war. “Brzeska has been killed, which is pretty disgusting, though I suppose it is a marvel it hasn’t happened before.”⁷⁰⁴ Pound’s disgust could refer to both Gaudier’s lost life and his lost artistic potential and strong will. Just months after Gaudier’s death, Pound criticizes the war as the cause of the death of Remy de Gourmont, and he aligns de Gourmont and Gaudier as victims of war, the only external, overpowering force from which men cannot escape through the merits of their own willpower. “He is as much ‘dead of the war’ as if he had died in the trenches,” Pound says of de Gourmont, “and he left with almost the same words on his lips. ‘Nothing is being done in Paris, nothing can be done, *faute de combatants*.’”⁷⁰⁵ Pound then compares this idea of helplessness with Gaudier. “It was almost the same tone in which Gaudier-Brzeska wrote to me a few days before he was shot at Neuville St. Vaast: ‘Is anything of importance or even of interest going on in the world—I mean the ‘artistic London?’” To continue the questioning of the power of man’s individual will during wartime, Pound questions Nietzsche’s superman in Europe at that time. “Nietzsche has done no harm in France because France has understood that thought can exist apart from action.”⁷⁰⁶ Pound is reinforcing his idea that intelligence and thought must be combined with action. During war, potential artists are stripped of the opportunity for action, or the opportunity to fulfill their work’s potential. He states that war reduces the power of man, and therefore war is a state in which the status of superman is impossible. “The drudgery of warfare,” he states, “cannot be wholly modern. There is an emphasis on

⁷⁰² Ezra Pound, “Affirmations V. Gaudier-Brzeska,” *New Age* 16.14 (4 February 1915) 380–82. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C176, 13–15 (p. 15).

⁷⁰³ Ezra Pound, “Reflection,” *Smart Set*, 46.3 (July 1915), p. 395. Also published in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 1179.

⁷⁰⁴ Ezra Pound, letter to Homer Pound dated 30 June 1915, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2657.

⁷⁰⁵ Ezra Pound, “Rémy de Gourmont: II,” *Poetry*, 7.4 (January 1916), 197–202. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C214, 133–35 (p. 133).

⁷⁰⁶ Ezra Pound, “Rémy de Gourmont: II,” *Poetry*, 7.4 (January 1916), 197–202. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C214, 133–35 (p. 134).

war's reduction of man to an animal, to even a mechanical status."⁷⁰⁷ Pound's reference to machinery connotes a mindless state devoid of individual impulse or intelligence. His equation of man to an animal or machine during war signifies his belief that individual will is stripped from man, and therefore the artist, during periods of war. During the Great War, he specifically cites two other poets that he especially regretted as being lost to the war. In December 1916, he notes that an American poet in his twenties, Alan Seeger, had died. "Harvard students," he noted, "will remember him as a peculiar and moody young man, considering suicide at twenty-two as the suitable goal of man's ambition. He had, however, survived that year of his life and taken to more healthy ideas."⁷⁰⁸ Pound notes details illustrating Seeger's will to live and desire to become involved in London poetry circles at the Café Royal during his stay in London in the summer of 1914. Pound's mentioning of Wyndham Tennant in April 1917 further illustrates his regret at death by war:

Of the nine contributors [of *Wheels, An Anthology of Verse*] Wyndham Tennant has already been claimed by the war. One can not read his *Home Thoughts in Levantie* without being convinced that his loss is a loss to poetry as well as to those who knew him. It strikes me that real artists who have been plunged into the present inferno have written simply and without rhetoric, without any glorification of war. Gaudier-Brzeska wrote back from the front that the nightingales were still singing despite the bombardment.⁷⁰⁹

Pound distinguishes "real artists" as those who entered not only a war, but a Dantesque "inferno." The loss of men like Tennant and Gaudier-Brzeska, Pound notes, is not only a loss of soldiers, but the loss of artists. They are elevated into a position above that of the common soldier, "the best, among them."⁷¹⁰ His reference to Gaudier-Brzeska, over a year after his death, again portrays the weight that Pound places on the war's indiscriminate destruction of artistic lives. His reference to Gaudier's details of the nightingales implies the continuation of aesthetics despite the continuation of war.

Numerous parallels can be found between Pound's response to the death of William Brooke Smith and the death of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. Pound associated lost potential with Gaudier, just as he had with Smith. "For eighteen years," Pound wrote in 1934, "the death of Henri Gaudier has been unremedied. The work of two or three years remains, but the uncreated went with him."⁷¹¹ For both, Pound emphasized their youth; Smith was 25 when

⁷⁰⁷ Ezra Pound, "Art: War Paintings by Wyndham Lewis," *Nation*, 24.19 (8 February 1919), 546–47. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C442a, p. 283.

⁷⁰⁸ Ezra Pound, "In the World of Letters," *Future*, 1.2 (December 1916), 55–56. In *Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), C243a.

⁷⁰⁹ Ezra Pound, "A Flock from Oxford," *Poetry*, 10.1 (April 1917), 41–44. In *Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), C252.

⁷¹⁰ Ezra Pound, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 549–63 (p. 552).

⁷¹¹ Ezra Pound, "Gaudier: A Postscript," *Esquire* (August 1934) qtd. in Richard Cork, *Henri Gaudier and Ezra Pound: A Friendship* (London: Anthony d'Offay, 1982), p. 5.

he died,⁷¹² and Gaudier was 24. “Gaudier was at the beginning of his work,” Pound writes in the memorial exhibition pamphlet. “The sculpture here shown is but a few years’ chiseling. He was killed at the age of twenty-four; his work stopped a year before that.”⁷¹³ In a letter describing the death of Gaudier, Pound reveals his own obsession with the loss: “Gaudier-Brzeska has been killed at Neuville St Vaast, and we have lost the best of the young sculptors and the most promising. The arts will incur no worse loss from the war than this is. One is rather obsessed with it.”⁷¹⁴ Three years after Gaudier’s death, Pound wrote a pseudonymous review of the memorial exhibition of Gaudier’s work, and again repeats his notion of lost potential. “The death of this artist at Neuville St. Vaast was one of the great losses of the war, and we need not quibble over Mr. Pound’s statement (in the catalogue preface) that it was the greatest individual loss which the Arts have sustained in war.”⁷¹⁵ He then specifies why Gaudier’s lost potential was “the greatest individual loss” of the arts:

The amazing thing is the finish of each of the varied modes chosen by the young artist; the brevity of the time in which he attained a convincing finality in work done on formulae so apparently different. We must consider the amount of close thought, over and above the impulse, genius, and so on, required to begin and to will. He had thought of, thought up, so much to do; and he attained so marvellous [*sic*] a proficiency before his twenty-third year.

Even his youth is not the main point. The work would be remarkable if he died at fifty.

Pound returns to the detail of Gaudier’s youth and his productivity in depth and breadth in a short amount of working time, pointing towards the potential that was lost with his death. Pound states his death as “the greatest individual loss” of the arts, characterizing his death with Poundian extremes. Perhaps central to Pound’s statement in the catalogue preface was his relation of Gaudier with the will. Pound notes that “we *must* consider” [my emphasis] Gaudier’s will in evaluating his productivity as a whole. Gaudier’s “close thought ... to begin and to will” was, for Pound, even more important than his “impulse, genius, and so on.”

WYNDHAM LEWIS

When T. S. Eliot attempted to enlist and Wyndham Lewis successfully enlisted to fight in the war, Pound was opposed to the endeavors and was concerned about the

⁷¹² Research Material on Ezra Pound 1954–1976 dated 26 December 1957, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Carl W. Gatter Papers, Folder 2.

⁷¹³ *A Memorial Exhibition of the Work of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. Born 1891. Killed in Action 1915. With a Prefatory Note by Ezra Pound. London Exhibition No 259 May–June, 1918.* National Art Library, Catalogues Collection, 200.BL.

⁷¹⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to Felix Emanuel Schelling dated 1915, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Felix Emanuel Schelling Papers, Folder 8.

⁷¹⁵ Ezra Pound, “Art Notes,” *New Age*, 23.4 (23 May 1918), 58–59. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C360, p. 114. Published under the pseudonym B. H. Dias.

inevitable halt in their literary and artistic output. When it seemed as though Eliot would be accepted into the Army, Pound wrote John Quinn that he “went to the Embassy to point out that if it was war for civilization (not merely for democracy) it was folly to shoot, or have shot one of the six or seven Americans capable of contributing to civilization or understanding the word.”⁷¹⁶ He similarly viewed in hindsight his own initial attempts to join in the war efforts as an inevitable waste of artistic direction and energy.⁷¹⁷ “Had also received deputation to complain that civilization would fall and BLOOMSBURY rise on its ashes IF I departed. If I forsook my post or helm or what ever the helm it is.”⁷¹⁸ Pound portrays himself as the conqueror of literary civilization, having overrun and burned Bloomsbury to ashes. He similarly views Eliot and Lewis as cohorts in his conquest, a battle-won occupation superior to that of the Great War. In a letter to Lewis after Lewis’s enlistment, Pound responds, “I can not see that the future of the arts deamns [*sic*] that you should be covered with military distinctions. It is equally obvious that you should not be allowed to spill your gore in heather and furrin places.”⁷¹⁹ This opinion about Eliot’s and Lewis’s best roles coincides with Pound’s view that the artist’s status is above that of the common man, in addition to Pound’s general view that war was wasteful and indiscriminate with death. He compares the Great War to the “war for civilization” in the case of Eliot, and in his own case, states that he would have to abandon his “post” as literary conqueror of London if he were to leave for the other war. In the case of Lewis, Pound asserts that “the future of the arts” is dependent on his work and presence, and implies that the world would benefit more from Lewis’s art than from any unlikely “military distinctions” or honor that Lewis was struggling to earn at the time.

Lewis’s enlistment was delayed because of health complications from his gonorrhoea, a disease that had previously delayed the second issue of *Blast*, which had irritated Pound.⁷²⁰ Lewis insisted in a letter to Pound, “Blast will not be delayed many hours now,”⁷²¹ and in his “Notice to the Public” in *Blast 2*, he explains, ““The delay ... is due to the War chiefly; secondly, to the illness of the Editor at the time it should have appeared and

⁷¹⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 10–11 August 1918, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 156.

⁷¹⁷ J. J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 177. Soon after Gaudier’s death, Pound offered his military services to the British Government, as America was still neutral, but his offer was not accepted. He told Dr. Kafka in St Elizabeths that he had tried to enlist two other times but was repeatedly turned down.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷¹⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Wyndham Lewis, *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. Timothy Materer (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), letter 41.

⁷²⁰ *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. Timothy Materer (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), p. 5.

⁷²¹ Wyndham Lewis, Letter to Ezra Pound sent before July 1915, *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. Timothy Materer (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), letter 11.

before.”⁷²² Pound had taken over an assisting role with Lewis with the *Blast* project and was involved in assembling its literary content. The extent of his involvement can be viewed in a brief response from Pound to Lewis about Gaudier’s manuscript for *Blast*: “No. you took the Brzx mss. you put it in the right hand pocket of your coat & departed. Probably the other coat... anyhow put your hand in yr. rt. hand outside coat pocket on chance.”⁷²³ This particular and almost patronizing assistance is what Lewis again sought out during his military work in France. Pound volunteered as his agent, arranged for *Tarr* to be serialized and published, catalogued Lewis’s artwork, arranged for the purchase of artwork from John Quinn, and even started to make plans for a new issue of *Blast* to be published in America.⁷²⁴ Additionally, when Lewis feared a relapse of his gonorrhoea during his station in France, he sought Pound’s medical advice.⁷²⁵ Pound responded in a long letter, first playfully provoking Lewis: “Mon Cher Bummbadier: I should be much inclined to doubt whether your trouble were the clap, gleet or ghonnerrrea, but rather a natural secretion caused by the continual lubrication or function or pricktion of the route or rut march.”⁷²⁶ Yet he then asks for details so he can consult a physician and provide a reliable response. Adopting the language of a medical doctor, Pound also provides his own directions:

You should state whether same is accompanied by redness, soreness, irritation or whether it be a gentle deposit in the said longish foreskin of white gelatinous substance sans peur et sans reproche. Nothing but the actual presence of the bacillus ghonnococcae in the said secretion would induce us to assume that the same was caused by the aforesaid c. g. or g. ... You should however state WHEN you were last a prey to the gleetish activities. also your habits!!!!. Unless you notice a definite soreness or pain I don’t think you need be in any way worried, and even a soreness, so that it be not pustulent, is not of vital import. At any rate send ample detail before I go to said practitioner.

During Lewis’s stay at a military hospital, Lewis updated Pound on his recovery: “My disease is better: —practically well. ... I wish I had some nice wound instead of this stupid complaint.”⁷²⁷ And in July 1917, he continues, “I have less (or usually no) pain in my eyes. I am almost well.”⁷²⁸ Lewis’s updates on his physical health to Pound illustrate his

⁷²² Wyndham Lewis, “Notice to the Public,” *Blast*, 2 (July 1915), 9.

⁷²³ Ezra Pound, Letter to Wyndham Lewis sent before July 1915, *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. Timothy Materer (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), letter 7.

⁷²⁴ *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. Timothy Materer (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), p. 5. Pound also discusses the idea of an American issue of *Blast* with John Quinn. Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 1 June 1916, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), 73–75 (p. 75).

⁷²⁵ Roger Lewis, “Review,” *The New England Quarterly*, 58.4 (December 1985), 607–14.

⁷²⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to Wyndham Lewis dated June 1917, *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. Timothy Materer (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), p. 80.

⁷²⁷ Wyndham Lewis, Letter to Ezra Pound sent July 1913, *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. Timothy Materer (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), letter 70.

⁷²⁸ Wyndham Lewis, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 7 July 1917, *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. Timothy Materer (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), letter 73.

dependence on Pound in general, but additionally, serves to portray Lewis's assumption that Pound would take interest in his physical health and status.

Years earlier, Pound had associated his interest in Lewis with the historic notion of the mind-body duality or Cartesian Dualism. In the article "Wyndham Lewis" in the June 1914 issue of the *Egoist*, Pound states that Lewis "does not declare gaily that the intelligence can exist without aid of the body" but that he "declares somberly, if you will, but indubitably that the intelligent god is incarnate in the universe."⁷²⁹ Pound seems to make a feigned apology with Lewis for their shared views on intelligence and its source from the human body. Intelligence functions as part of the human body, he believes, and the "intelligent god" is man himself. Intelligence is "incarnate" or made human, he theorizes, precisely because consciousness derives from humans, rather than from a divine or external force. The idea of the mind belonging to the body opposes the Platonic and Aristotelian notions of intelligence originating from the faculty of the soul, separate from man's body. Additionally, Pound's view opposes the influential seventeenth-century thought of René Descartes, who viewed the mind as a nonphysical substance—resulting in the formal concept of consciousness. Pound references in the "Wyndham Lewis" article a continued, contemporary division of beliefs in the mind-body debate: "The race is however divided into disproportionate segments: those who worship their own belly-buttons and those who do not."⁷³⁰ In what could be disregarded as a nonsensical statement of social satire, this expression in its context points more directly to Pound's notion of mind/body unity, and therefore the preeminence of human intellect over a divine or universal intellect that is transferred to man's soul. Those who "worship their own belly-buttons" are those who believe man originates his own thoughts and consciousness. Pound references the mind-body duality in a mock dialogue between Molière and Paracelsus, which he translated from Bernard de Fontenelle and published in 1917. Molière begins by questioning Paracelsus whether he has considered the mind-body dualism:

Paracelsus. Oh, there is no philosopher so inconsiderable as not to have done so.

Molière. I suppose so. And you yourself have no indecisions regarding the nature of the soul, or its functions, or the nature of its bonds with the body?

Paracelsus. Frankly, it's impossible that there should not always remain some uncertainties on these subjects, but we know as much of them as philosophy is able to learn.

Molière. And you yourself know no more?

Paracelsus. No. Isn't that quite enough?

⁷²⁹ Ezra Pound, "Wyndham Lewis," *Egoist*, 1.12 (15 June 1914), 233–34. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C146, 251–52 (p. 251).

⁷³⁰ Ezra Pound, "Wyndham Lewis," *Egoist*, 1.12 (15 June 1914), 233–34. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C146, 251–52 (p. 251).

Molière. Enough? It is nothing at all. You mean that you have leapt over men whom you do not understand, in order to come upon geni?⁷³¹

Pound seems to identify with Molière's hesitancy in the dialogue to believe in a separation of the mind and body.⁷³² Molière in the excerpt questions the neoplatonic practice of "leap[ing] over men" to consider the soul, or disembodied geni. Pound supported the idea of coming to understand man with a physiological view of humans, as he praised Remy de Gourmont in a 1919 *Little Review* article: "He does not grant the duality of body and soul, or at least suggests that this mediaeval duality is unsatisfactory; there is an interpenetration, an osmosis of body and soul, at least for hypothesis. 'My words are the unspoken words of my body'."⁷³³ Pound writes approvingly of de Gourmont's belief in a unity of the body and the soul and his disregard of the "mediaeval" or historic theory stemming from Greek thought. Pound also includes a direct quote by de Gourmont that highlights the role of language in this conception; if the mind is fundamentally connected to the body, then language originating in the mind depends on health and wellbeing of the body. As early as 1912, Pound attempted to explain man in terms of his physiological existence, in addition to explaining consciousness within this physical existence. "Man is—the sensitive physical part of him—a mechanism, for the purpose of our further discussion a mechanism rather like an electric appliance, switches, wires, etc.," he writes in "Psychology and the Troubadours."⁷³⁴ Pound explains man physiologically, then addresses the issue of the mind—"as to his consciousness"—and attempts to explain the mind and thought with a vague reference to his theory of the phantastikon. During the next decade, he attempted to explain further this concept of the phantastikon with physiological proof from endocrinology and its study of the glands.⁷³⁵ Pound's view of the consciousness, even at his early stage of his consideration of the subject in 1914, was that the mind functioned as part of the physiological brain—that intelligence and thought derived from the functioning of the human body itself. He presented this notion as "indubitably" confirmed—a fact correlating with science and rational thinking, not open for questioning in his age.

⁷³¹ Ezra Pound, "Dialogues of Fontenelle. Translated by Ezra Pound. XII. Bombastes Paracelsus and Molière," *The Egoist*, 4.5 (June 1917), 70–71. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C257, p. 205.

⁷³² This characterization of Molière corresponds with his writings and comic plays, as well as the legend of his death from a hemorrhage from tuberculosis while acting the part of a hypochondriac character on stage. Virginia Scott, *Molière: A Theatrical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 243.

⁷³³ Ezra Pound, "De Gourmont: A Distinction (Followed by Notes)," *Little Review*, 5.10–11 (February/March 1919), 1–19. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C438, 265–76 (p. 266).

⁷³⁴ Ezra Pound, "Psychology and Troubadours," *The Quest: A Quarterly Review*, 4.1 (October 1912), 37–53. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C55, 83–99 (p. 90).

⁷³⁵ See the sections on Vivien Eliot and T. S. Eliot in this chapter.

This interrelation of the mind and body—“the ‘mens sana in corpore sano,’ the ethic of the Odyssey,” as Pound argued in 1913⁷³⁶—was a concept to which Pound returned in “L’Homme Moyen Sensuel.” This poem detailing the sensibilities of the average man, written two years prior to its printing in September 1917, evolved out of Pound’s concern of the mind and body in this period.⁷³⁷ Associated with the poem’s “average” man—with his average human capabilities of perception, function, and output—was a failed attempt at creating high art, resulting in “such mediocrities.”⁷³⁸ The poem contains recurring images of disease infiltrating a body. America is described, for example, as “incubat[ing] such mediocrities.” The term “incubate” at the turn of the century was defined as a build-up of disease-producing germs; incubation was the phase through which the germs of a disease develop its first symptoms.⁷³⁹ Additionally, the failed artist figure of the poem, Radley, is portrayed as being influenced by “Poe, Whitman, Whistler,” referred to as “the dead”: *De mortuis verum*—its Latin form suggesting the decay and bacterial growth associated with death. His other influences—his lecturers for example—“wrought about his ‘soul’ their stale infection.” Pound associates infection with Radley’s soul, even questioning the concept of the soul by using quotation marks around the term. He portrays Radley’s will as his protagonist drifts down a Dantesque river that runs “so close to ‘hell’ it sends a shiver / Down Rodyheaver’s prophylactic spine.” The name *Rodyheaver* could refer to Reverend Homer A. Rodyheaver, a Philadelphia evangelist associated with Methodist revivals during Pound’s youth.⁷⁴⁰ Pound, then, is depicting his protagonist as coming dangerously close to hell, with even this term questioned and placed in question marks. Rodyheaver’s “prophylactic” spine supposedly protects him and others from the diseases and influences around him. Pound portrays Radley’s ultimate failure as turning to God—“O clap hands ye moralists! / And meditate upon the Lord’s conquests. / When last I met him, he was a pillar in / An organization for the suppression of sin.” The overall sense of Pound’s disapproval with Radley is his abandonment of any artistic or cultural life, but also his abandonment in the faith of man by subscribing to a religious belief in a divine will for all. Radley’s downfall was ultimately letting go of his own will.

Pound’s interest in the artistic production of his friends and associates, such as Lewis, corresponded with his concern about their physical wellbeing. In *The Little Review*

⁷³⁶ Ezra Pound, “Rabindranath Tagore,” *Fortnightly Review*, 93.555 (1 March 1913), 571–79.

⁷³⁷ Ezra Pound, “L’Homme Moyen Sensuel,” *Little Review*, 4.5 (September 1917), 8–16. In *Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), C281. Pound’s note, on page 9, reads: “It is through no fault of my own that this diversion was not given to the reader two years ago ... the reader will have to accept the opusculus for what it is, some rhymes written in 1915.”

⁷³⁸ Ezra Pound, “L’Homme Moyen Sensuel,” *Little Review*, 4.5 (September 1917), 8–16. In *Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), C281.

⁷³⁹ “incubate” and “incubation,” Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford University Press. 2nd ed. 1989.

⁷⁴⁰ Guy Davenport, “Review: Ezra Pound,” *Contemporary Literature*, 11.4 (Autumn 1970), 579–85.

in May 1917 just before the gonorrhea outbreak of Lewis, Pound wrote that he accepted the post of foreign editor of the magazine because he “wished a place where the current prose writings of James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot, and myself might appear regularly, promptly, and together, rather than irregularly, sporadically, and after useless delays.”⁷⁴¹ In the same editorial, he implies that he sees potential and activity in one publication, *The Little Review*, but inactivity with another publication, *Blast*. He explained why *Blast* could not continue in its publication:

Blast, founded chiefly in the interest of the visual arts, is of necessity suspended. With Gaudier-Brzeska dead on the field of battle, with Mr. William Roberts, Mr. Wadsworth, Mr. Etchells, and Mr. Wyndham Lewis all occupied in various branches of the service, there is no new vorticist painting to write about. Such manuscript as Mr. Lewis has left with me, and such things as he is able to write in the brief leisure allowed an artillery officer, will appear in these pages.

It is quite impossible that *Blast* should again appear until Mr. Lewis is free to give his full energy to it.

With what was already long delayed because of Lewis’s complications from gonorrhea, *Blast 2* seemed to metaphorically catch the contagious disease, sentencing it to a slow death. In addressing *Blast*’s lack of a future, Pound addresses the main obstruction—war—but also addresses the issue of time, freedom, and energy. Other factors such as ill health, as Pound alluded to in his “Wyndham Lewis” essay, also prevent the full potential of the artist. Yet Pound still maintains that these factors are not excuses for a halt in artistic production; they are barriers that the artist must overcome. “The shell-fish grows its own shell, the genius creates its own milieu,” Pound continues in the editorial after mourning the death of *Blast*. The success and production of art originates in the artist himself, Pound suggests, again communicating his belief in the individual will rather than an all-controlling universal will. The general public, including *l’homme moyen sensuel*, can produce forces that might “thwart or distort” the progress of art, but could never control it entirely, as they are below the status of the superman or artist.⁷⁴²

In the summer of 1917, when Lewis spent much time convalescing from near-death in the trenches, Ford Madox Ford isolated himself to recover from a gas strike,⁷⁴³ and Joyce

⁷⁴¹ Ezra Pound, “Editorial,” *Little Review*, 4.1 (May 1917), 3–6. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C254, 195–97 (p. 195).

⁷⁴² Ezra Pound, “Editorial,” *Little Review*, 4.1 (May 1917), 3–6. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C254, 195–97 (p. 195).

⁷⁴³ Pound had apparently informed Lewis about Ford’s shell shock, as Lewis responded in a letter, “Thank you for news—Hueffer’s shell shock etc.” Wyndham Lewis, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 20 August 1916, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series I, General Correspondence, Box 29, Folder 1242. Also in *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. Timothy Materer (London: Faber and Faber, 1985).

suffered an attack of glaucoma,⁷⁴⁴ Pound published several prose pieces that identified the interrelation of the body, mind, and artistic output. Pound's "L'Homme Moyen Sensuel," with its reference to man's sensations, was published in *The Little Review*,⁷⁴⁵ in addition to his translation of the dialogue between Paracelsus and Molière, largely focusing on the mind-body divide.⁷⁴⁶ Additionally, Pound wrote "Aux Etuves de Wiesbaden," a loose translation or version of a letter written by the fifteenth-century humanist Gian Poggio Bracciolini.⁷⁴⁷ Poggio's description—filled with details of the people of Baden bathing in communal springs—was followed by Pound's own fictional Fontenelle-like dialogue between Poggio and Maunsier. Maunsier states that the church closed the baths in Marseilles because of its bad influence on their morals, to which Poggio responds, "The Church has always been dead set against washing ... baptism and the last oiling were enough."⁷⁴⁸ Pound alludes to the historic vehemence of the body and its association with evil. He portrays Poggio as refusing this repudiation of the body, and proclaiming, as a humanist, "What dignity have we over the beasts, save to be once, and to be irreplaceable! I myself am a rag-bag, a mass of sights and citations, but I will not beat down life for the sake of a model." Pound uses the well-known term for his early draft of the *Cantos*, a "rag-bag," to describe the diverse perspectives of humanist philosophy. Maunsier's response to this proclamation clarifies Pound's meaning by the term. "Would you be 'without an ideal?'" Maunsier asks Poggio. Poggio, however, prefers his rag-bag understanding of man over the prescribed "ideal" of the Church's or society's accepted understanding of man. Poggio states that he "will not beat down life for the sake of a model," or deny man's individuality for this accepted, singular view of the "ideal" man. Additionally, Poggio does not subscribe to the concept of a soul or a divine force that motivates man: "I do not count myself among Plato's disciples," he says. Maunsier then responds that he questions man's individual ability without the help of a greater force or will, especially when he considers his "poor uncle" and his unhealthy "slough of the senses": "I cannot make out ... how far we may trust to our senses." Poggio then responds with a narrative:

⁷⁴⁴ J. J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), pp. 200–01.

⁷⁴⁵ Ezra Pound, "L'Homme Moyen Sensuel," *Little Review*, 4.5 (September 1917), 8–16. In *Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), C281.

⁷⁴⁶ Ezra Pound, "Dialogues of Fontenelle. Translated by Ezra Pound. XII. Bombastes Paracelsus and Molière," *Egoist*, 4.5 (June 1917), 70–71. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C257, p. 205.

⁷⁴⁷ José Manuel Losada Goya, "Poetic Image and Tradition in Western European Modernism: Pound, Lorca, Claudel," *Comparative Literature and Culture*, 1.2 (June 1999), 1–10 (p. 6). Also Carroll F. Terrell, *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 9.

⁷⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, "Aux Etuves de Weisbaden, A.D. 1451," *Little Review*, 4.3 (July 1917), 12–16. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C263, 223–26 (p. 224).

When I read that from the breast of the Princess Hellene there was cast a cup of “white gold,” the sculptor finding no better model; and that this cup was long shown in the temple at Lyndos, which is in the island of Rhodes; or when I read, as I think is the textual order, first of the cup and then of its origin, there comes upon me a discontent with human imperfection. I am no longer left in the “slough of the senses,” but am full of heroic life, for the instant.

Pound, through the character of Poggio, reflects on the potential of perfection of the human body. Through the mold of the body and the “origin” of this cup—the body itself—Poggio becomes “discontent with human imperfection.” He dwells upon the potential of human perfection, ignoring the debilities of the body, the possible “slough of the senses.”

Pound used his interest in the human body as a metaphor for poetry. He spoke of the body of poetry as *corpus poetarum*,⁷⁴⁹ and later defined Imagism as a being in need of a body structure. Pseudo-imagist poems were “imitations of ‘imagism, vorticism, verse libre, etc., with no body to it’” and a “lack of organic centre.”⁷⁵⁰ Mere attempts at Imagist poems were, he said, “fluid and ubiquitous diseases.”⁷⁵¹ During this period, he uses medical terms such as “disease” to further the metaphor of poetry as a body. Good writers, he states in a July 1917 installment, are looked to for “a diagnosis of this disease”—the disease referring to provincialism in literature.⁷⁵² In an article about book reviewing, Pound labels popular publishing as a “pathology” and the role of the reviewer as “making autopsies.”⁷⁵³ And in a pseudonymous article, he labels his own method of writing as surgery: “They [the public] will no more endure Joyce’s hardness than they will Pound’s sterilized surgery.”⁷⁵⁴ The earliest version of Pound’s first canto contains an image of a skeletal structure, corresponding with Pound’s statement that pure Imagism needed a “body” and an “organic centre” or structure despite its free verse. In the original first canto, he defines the language he chooses to use in the poem as “the booth (the speech),” and begins, “this booth is full of the marrow of wisdom.” If the wisdom, or intelligence of the poem’s content, is the marrow, then the booth or speech and words themselves are the bones comprising a skeleton of poetic structure. In the original third canto, which Pound revised and placed as the standard first canto, he continues with the image of poetry as the body, as he portrays Odysseus’s revitalizing of Tiresias through a type of blood transfusion. “Then prayed I many a prayer

⁷⁴⁹ Ezra Pound, “The Science of Poetry,” *Book News Monthly*, 29.4 (December 1910), 282–83.

⁷⁵⁰ Ezra Pound, “Status Rerum—The Second,” *Poetry*, 8.1 (April 1916), 38–43. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C222, 151–53 (p. 151).

⁷⁵¹ Ezra Pound, “Status Rerum—The Second,” *Poetry*, 8.1 (April 1916), 38–43. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C222, 151–53 (p. 151).

⁷⁵² Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: I.,” *New Age*, 21.11 (12 July 1917), 244–45. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), C266, 231–32 (p. 231).

⁷⁵³ Ezra Pound, “Books Current, Reviewed by Ezra Pound,” *Future*, 2.11 (November 1918), 286–87. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C415, 215–16 (p. 215).

⁷⁵⁴ Ezra Pound, “Mr Villerant’s Morning Outburst (Four Letters),” *Little Review*, 5.7 (November 1918), 7–12.

to the sickly death's-heads," he writes.⁷⁵⁵ After sacrifice of sheep, from which Odysseus in the first person gathers the "dark blood," this blood is given to Tiresias. "Dark blood he drank then," after which Tiresias prophesied of Odysseus's further journey. In Pound's revisions of the poem during over the next few years, he emphasizes the strength that Odysseus's blood gives Tiresias. The final form of the canto reads, "And he strong with the blood, said then, 'Odysseus / 'Shalt return through spiteful Neptune, over dark seas.'" ⁷⁵⁶ In placing Odysseus and Tiresias at the start of his epic poem, Pound is portraying the act of Pound giving life blood to the ancients by resurrecting their poetry in his own living poetry. The strength of the body of Odysseus, transferred to Tiresias, displays Pound's desire for strong blood in the body of his great epic work.

JAMES JOYCE

In the same month in which Pound first published this original third canto, he received a letter from Nora Joyce, detailing the latest in a situation in which Pound literally was assuming a medical role. "I was too upset to write till now," she writes about James Joyce's latest bout with his eye troubles. "Jim was operated on Thursday. Professor Sidler told me the operation was complicated and difficult. Unfortunately after it Jim fell into a nervous collapse which lasted three days."⁷⁵⁷ The distant relationship between Pound and Joyce was fostered over a series of letters over several years. In 1915 Joyce first details his background, including his eye problems to Pound in an attempt to obtain Pound's help with finances and publishing. "As regards my eyes I have had seven attacks of irido-cyclitis, a consequence of malarial fever which I got in Rome after a drenching on the Pincio[?]. It comes on suddenly and incapacitates me for work for five or four weeks. Lately I seem better but it comes without warning."⁷⁵⁸ From this initial description of his physical ailment and the resulting interference with his work, Pound took up Joyce's cause for years, attempting to help medically, financially, and artistically. In 1916, Joyce sent Pound a photo of himself, to which Pound replied:

Dear Joyce: Thanks for the photo. It is a bit terrifying. I suspect your oculist of believing that your astigmatism is harmonic and not inharmonic. Hence the lines of eyestrain in the forehead. I'd like to see your glasses prescription. I had a rather alarming experience with

⁷⁵⁵ Ezra Pound, "Three Cantos: III," *Poetry*, 10.5 (August 1917), 248–54. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C272, 243–46 (p. 245).

⁷⁵⁶ Ezra Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 9.

⁷⁵⁷ Nora Joyce, Postcard to Ezra Pound postmarked 28 August 1917, British Library, Harriet Shaw Weaver Papers, Papers, 57345.

⁷⁵⁸ James Joyce, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 19 July 1915, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series I, General Correspondence, Box 26, Folder 1112.

my own eyes about ten years ago. Hence my quasi scientific diagnosis at a distance and on so little evidence.⁷⁵⁹

He then describes his former Philadelphia ophthalmologist, Dr. George Milbry Gould, who wrote several medical treatises including his theory about the connection between eye-strain and ill-health. Pound offers to write Gould about Joyce's situation, and adds, "At any rate, you let me know what glasses you are wearing" in an effort to convey the information to Gould for his opinion. Pound had kept in contact with his former doctor, who had sent him his published works periodically. In January 1913, he wrote Dorothy Shakespear, "Old Gould has sent me a volumn of essays—looks like religious biology, eheu fugaces."⁷⁶⁰ Additionally, Pound had been reading Remy de Gourmont's works—many of which related the human body to literary concerns. Pound stated that the works of de Gourmont should be "used as a text-book of biology"⁷⁶¹ and that he writes "with scientific dryness."⁷⁶² He observes that de Gourmont included the body in his literary theories: "there is an interpenetration, an osmosis of body and soul, at least for hypothesis."⁷⁶³ Pound uses scientific rhetoric to communicate de Gourmont's subjects; his notions of the body and soul are absorbed through the scientific process of osmosis, further supporting Pound's own support of the unity of the two concepts. Additionally, Pound's rhetoric implies that his ideas are laid out as "hypotheses" in the process of the scientific method. Pound adds in an article about de Gourmont that wisdom, "if not the senses, is at any rate via the senses. We base our 'science' on perceptions."⁷⁶⁴ The general notion of wisdom could be explained in more empiric terms through its connection with human sensibility. Because the mind and body belong to the same entity, as Pound believed, wisdom necessarily is gained through human perception, rather than from a divine goodwill or external force. Pound also explains the connection between wisdom, or the mind, and free will, as he interprets de Gourmont:

⁷⁵⁹ Ezra Pound to James Joyce, Letter dated 20 December 1916, *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 85.

⁷⁶⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to Dorothy Shakespear dated 8 January 1913, *Ezra Pound and Dorothy Shakespear: Their Letters 1909–1914*, ed. by Omar Pound and A. Walton Litz (New York: New Directions, 1984), p. 179. The "volumn of essays" sent to Pound was *An Infinite Presence* (1910), "a search for religion in biology." He wrote his mother, "Dr. Gould has sent me his work on the 'Infinite Presence' which I have not yet aborded." Ezra Pound, letter to Isabel Pound dated 11 January 1913, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2671.

⁷⁶¹ Ezra Pound, "De Gourmont: A Distinction (Followed by Notes)," *Little Review*, 5.10–11 (February/March 1919), 1–19. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C438, 265–77 (p. 268).

⁷⁶² Ezra Pound, "Rémy de Gourmont: I," *Fortnightly Review*, 98.588 (1 December 1915), 1159–66. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C213, 125–32 (p. 131).

⁷⁶³ Ezra Pound, "De Gourmont: A Distinction (Followed by Notes)," *Little Review*, 5.10–11 (February/March 1919), 1–19. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C438, 265–76 (p. 266).

⁷⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, "De Gourmont: A Distinction (Followed by Notes)," *Little Review*, 5.10–11 (February/March 1919), 1–19. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C438, 265–76 (p. 269).

“The mind, the imagination is the proper domain of freedom.” He then associates this free will to the ability to create literature. “M. de Gourmont’s position ... is as much the basis of a clean literature, of all literature worth the name, as is an antiseptic method the basis of sound surgical treatment.”⁷⁶⁵ Pound’s medical and hygienic language metaphorically compares literature to the body. If the free body has historically been reduced to an accepted, universal propriety, then literature, too, has encountered this propriety. If the “basis of a clean literature” is an “antiseptic method,” then literature must be stripped of this infection from outside, external forces and remain clean from its creation by a willed individual. In the historical context of Pound’s association with Joyce at this time, and the labeling of his literature as unacceptable or filthy by printers and the public, Pound’s association of free will with genuine, clean literature reverses two accepted notions of a controlled will and a controlled literature.

Pound contrasted the notion of a literary purity with the “diseased and ailing vulgar,” or ordinary public, who were unable to read Joyce’s novel *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, as he complained to Harriet Shaw Weaver.⁷⁶⁶ Only readers of *The Egoist* had access to the serialized novel, as printers initially would not print the novel in book form. Within the same week that Pound complained to Weaver, more details of Joyce’s own health problems surfaced in the correspondence of Pound and Joyce. “I have been suffering rather badly from an attack of rheumatism ... I hope also that you are in good health. I wish I could say as much for myself.”⁷⁶⁷ Pound foresaw Joyce’s potential and viewed his writing as healthy material that only his ill health threatened to stop short. “God knows where you have been and what you have gazed upon,” Pound writes Joyce in February 1917, “with your [crossout: myoptic] microscopic [crossout: eye] remarkable eye.”⁷⁶⁸ Here, Pound reverses the literal with the literary. He speaks metaphorically with Joyce, using the subject of his health ailment as a metaphor for the success of his writing. He crosses out the literal description of Joyce’s eyes—the myopia—and describes his eyes in terms of his metaphorical vision. Like his description of Joyce’s novel detailing literal filth as actually portraying a clean literature, Pound reverses the literal description of Joyce’s disability by, instead, portraying the acute vision, the microscopic ability, of his literary eye. Pound’s motivation to help Joyce physically was to promote a healthy literary production, which Pound believed his ill health would eventually halt. This apprehension was developed over a

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid., C438.

⁷⁶⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver dated 17 March 1916, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 122–23 (p. 123).

⁷⁶⁷ James Joyce, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 10 March 1916, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series I, General Correspondence, Box 26, Folder 1112.

⁷⁶⁸ Ezra Pound to James Joyce, Letter dated 9 February 1917, *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 91.

period of years during which Joyce's many letters complained that he could not continue writing his next novel, *Ulysses*, because of his recurrent eye problems. Joyce wrote John Quinn that he was forced to write sections of *Ulysses* on reams of butcher paper with red ink, writing words large enough that he could see them.⁷⁶⁹ Pound's view that Joyce's failed eyesight would ruin his literary opportunities is evident in a telegraph to Weaver after a particularly debilitating attack of glaucoma: "CONSULTATION THIS MORNING DOCTORS UNEXPECTEDLY ADVISE OPERATION OTHER EYE JOYCE RELUCTANT AS THIS MEANS CLOSURE HIS CAREER."⁷⁷⁰

Perhaps the strongest illustration of Pound's interaction with Joyce's eye troubles began in March 1917 after Joyce suffered an attack of glaucoma and synechia in January. In addition to seeing his own eye specialist, Joyce wrote Pound about the situation, to which Pound replied with a lengthy letter. He began by informing Joyce of his own eye problems since age five or six when he first began wearing glasses. He added that at age 20 it was discovered that he had "an inharmonic astigmatism" that "was supposedly driving toward blindness (probably very remote) and also twisting my spine."⁷⁷¹ He then gives a specific account of his diagnosis of astigmatism:

The astigmatism was very slight, I think the cylindrical cut in my glass is only .25. One optician left it out altogether. Another put both axes at 90 degrees.

The discovery that astigmatism is inharmonic is, I believe more or less Gould's own. ...

I never know where I am with English doctors and I have never been to an oculist on this side of the atlantic. I don't know whether they are still in the XVIIIth. century or not.

Time was, I believe, when they used to sort of strike an average between the astigmatisms of both eyes and thereby leave neither relieved.

That is to say, in my case, I was being plagued by two cylindrical grooves set thus Pound then drew a diagram of two parallel vertical lines depicting the lens angles of his left and right eyes. He continued, "In my lenses. But when Gould suddenly twisted the left cylinder into this position." Pound then drew another diagram, this time with the left line shifted to a 30-degree angle and the right line still vertically aligned straight up and down. "I suddenly felt 'a weight lifted,'" he writes, "and have had practically no bother since. I have reduced my general glasses to 1.37, and have a pair about 1.75 for *protracted* reading. Cylinders for astigmatism about .25 put in at above mentioned angles. Axes 145 & 90, I think." Pound's inclusion of the description "weight lifted" portrays the trust he places on

⁷⁶⁹ *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends*, ed. by Richard Londraville and Janis Londraville (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), p. 188.

⁷⁷⁰ Ezra Pound, Telegraph to Harriet Shaw Weaver dated 11 September 1917, British Library, Harriet Shaw Weaver Papers, Papers, 57353.

⁷⁷¹ Ezra Pound to James Joyce, Letter dated 17 March 1917, *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 100.

medical advice and the personal response he has had to his outcome. His memorization of his precise eye prescription further emphasizes the value Pound places on modern medical diagnoses and prescription.

In the letter, Pound also shifts to a discussion of Joyce's situation. He asks for more information and gives preliminary advice.⁷⁷²

You make no mention of astigmatism, yet it must almost surely be present in eyes so distorted as yours, also one eye is worse than the other according to your last note.

At least it can do you no harm to try cylindrical lenses, such as you should find in any opticians test room, twisting them about in the double grooved frames to see if they give any relief.

I doubt if any 6.5 eye can be perfectly spherical in its distortion or in its lens. Still it may be.

I don't much believe in habitually squirting drugs into anything so sensitive as the eye.

One other thing you can try, before being operated on, IS there a trained osteopath in Zurich? Atrophy of the deltoid and biceps shows that the trouble is not necessarily local and confined to the eye. I know an increasing number of people whom "regular" physicians have bungled, who have been cured and renovated by having a vertebra set right side up and thus relieving blood or nerve pressures.

...Try squinting through cylindrical lenses (put on over the spherical ones which probably may be of a lower curvature than 6.5), and if there is an osteopath (not a quack but one who has taken his proper degree after four years training like the training of other doctors) let him consider your vertebrae.

... About hallucinations. NO medico ever knew anything about the matter. Apply to an alcoholic flagellant in holy orders. Or a vertebraist, as suggested above.

Pound attempts to make a diagnosis from a distance, with only evidence from a photo and Joyce's written description. Additionally, he draws from his own experience. Believing that his eyesight had affected his spine, he suggests that Joyce's problems with sight might not originate in the eye. Additionally, Pound's reference to hallucinations suggests that Joyce mentioned this disturbance in a letter and considered the possible relation with his eye conditions, evidently connecting the visual faculty with this "perception in the absence of a stimulus."⁷⁷³ Twice, Pound expresses skepticism with traditional medicine: "'regular'

⁷⁷² Ezra Pound, Letter to James Joyce, *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 98–99. Quinn wrote an indirect reply to Pound's prescription in a letter to Joyce. "Tell him not to take the advice of any casual friend as to what specialist to get ... but the advice of the head of a hospital as to whom the best specialist is. Not the advice of an ordinary casual doctor; not the advice of an average professional man; but the advice of an expert as to what eye expert to get. ... I don't want to go against Pound's recommendation of Dr. Gould. But I have a profound mistrust of a man three thousand miles away advising on a condition that may be as acute or as critical or painful as glaucoma [*sic*] may be, if it is a deep seated glaucoma."

⁷⁷³ Philip Winn, *Dictionary of Biological Psychology* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 340.

physicians have bungled” cases of his associates, and “NO medico ever knew anything” about psychological occurrences, such as hallucinations. Responding to Pound’s letter in April, Joyce had evidently done what Pound had suggested. He reported to Pound his new glasses prescription, and stated that his doctor remarked that cylindrical lenses were possible to obtain, yet said that the “American theory of astigmatism has not found favour” in Switzerland.⁷⁷⁴ He reported on the next steps that his doctor advised, and added that he still sought Pound’s own advice: “however I shall wait for your confirmation of this.” After listing a string of medical terminology, Joyce erupts, “Evil take my absurd eyes!” This same frustration could be noted in a July 1917 letter to Pound, in which Joyce states that his ailment “brings to the surface and magnifies every weakness of the body or perhaps it is the result of nine years’ worry breaking out here and there.”⁷⁷⁵ Pound evidently continued to ask about the progress of *Ulysses* in addition to a lengthy continued correspondence about Joyce’s eye problems. In Joyce’s response to Pound in June, he states that other connections of Pound had contacted him with their recommendations for specialists, and further details the fees, operations, and procedures he is considering, including blood tests. He seems to respond to a direct question by Pound about the progress of his novel: “I am not allowed to write much because my eye becomes hard if I strain it. As regards *Ulysses* I managed to finish the draft of Hade house and also an cotseaters[?] and am getting together the notes for the solian episode.”⁷⁷⁶

During this correspondence, Pound began reading the poetry of Jules Laforgue and continued considering the issue of the will. In May, he translated a version of Laforgue’s “Pierrots” with the subject of eyes as the observer of the individual, and he used the pseudonym John Hall—the name of Shakespeare’s physician son-in-law. “Your eyes!” the poem begins.⁷⁷⁷ “Your eyes put me up to it. / I thought: Yes, divine, these eyes, but what exists / Behind them? What’s there? Her soul’s an affair for oculists.” This version of Laforgue’s poem again invokes the issue that Pound had been considering—with Joyce’s eye problems and with his reading of de Gourmont—the interaction between the body and the soul, or for Pound, between the body and the creative impulse or will. He wrote an article about Laforgue, published in the November 1917 issue of *Poetry*, in which he

⁷⁷⁴ James Joyce, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 13 April 1917, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series I, General Correspondence, Box 26, Folder 1112.

⁷⁷⁵ James Joyce, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 9 July 1917, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series I, General Correspondence, Box 26, Folder 1112.

⁷⁷⁶ James Joyce, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 5 June 1917, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series I, General Correspondence, Box 26, Folder 1112.

⁷⁷⁷ Ezra Pound, “Pierrots: Scene Courte Mais Typique (After the ‘Pierrots’ of Jules LaForgue),” *Little Review*, 4.1 (May 1917), 11–12. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C255, p. 198. Published under the pseudonym “John Hall.”

summarizes Laforgue's tragic life: "He was born in 1860, died in 1887 of *la misère*, of consumption and abject poverty in Paris. The vaunted sensitiveness of French perception, and the fact that he knew a reasonable number of wealthy and influential people, did nothing to prevent this."⁷⁷⁸ He then focuses on Laforgue's "two small volumes, one edition of each," signifying the scarcity and unpopularity of the work Laforgue was able to produce in his tragic life. Laforgue's consideration of the individual impulse, or being, along with a detail of the human body—the eye—appealed to Pound's promotion of the mind's interrelation with the body. Pound's correspondence with Joyce during this period likely heightened Pound's sensitivity to the notion that an unhealthy body necessarily limits the creative productivity of the individual.

During this autumn, in September 1917, Pound published his "Studies in Contemporary Mentality" series in *The New Age*. In Part VI, he aligns free will with the scientist, as opposed to "Divine Will" with the theologian. He states that man and his writings must be studied "like any other branch of natural science" and that "the individual specimens must, or at least should, be examined with microscopic attention."⁷⁷⁹ Each part of the series was unified by a lampoon of popular magazines, which Pound contrasted with serious literature that respected man's status and potential. He cites an advertisement for corsets that he saw in a popular magazine: "It will be a red-letter day for you when you receive the corsets, because it will be the beginning of new life. From the moment when you put them on a ceaseless stream of magnetism permeates the whole body from head to heel. The joy of New Life, of New Health."⁷⁸⁰ He puns the controlling function of the corset with the controlling, "grip-sack" writing of the "popular exhortionists." "We must make a very clear distinction between writing which definitely shapes the reader, or tries to shape him, and writing intended only as a drug." He refers directly to the will, in stating that this mode of popular culture is a method of controlling the human will, just as the corset or a drug controls the body. He broadens this concept of control from contemporary popular culture to wider examples in history.

As the paradisiacal promise, such as that concerning the corsets, has always been used as a lure, so this wheeze about the horror of nothingness, the end of the world, the day of judgment, etc., has been used as a shake-up, as an hysteria-producer to weaken the will, and

⁷⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, "Irony, Laforgue, and Some Satire," *Poetry*, 11.2 (November 1917), 93–98. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C298, 295–97 (p. 295).

⁷⁷⁹ Ezra Pound, "Studies in Contemporary Mentality: VI—'The Sphere,' and Reflections on Letter-Press," *New Age*, 21 (20 September 1917), 446–47. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C285, 272–74 (p. 272).

⁷⁸⁰ Ezra Pound, "Studies in Contemporary Mentality: XI—The Bright and Snappy," *New Age*, 22.1 (1 November 1917), 10–11. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C300, 300–301 (p. 300).

it has even masqueraded as an argument for believing or accepting or tolerating all sorts and conditions of doctrines.

He then states that with this insight, one can “sit upon any turnstile in the attitude of Rodin’s ‘Penseur,’” or, essentially, maintain an individual mind and individual will. Pound communicates the view that a general, societal control will naturally filter into a limitation for the individual and a “weaken[ing of] the will.”

It was this weakening of the will that Pound attempted to prevent during Joyce’s writing of *Ulysses*, while his earlier novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, was encountering societal control preventing its printing. “I think Joyce has the same mania for martyrdom ... I think Joyce has got this quirk for being the noble victim,” Pound states, referring to Joyce’s frequent letters referencing his physical inability to write and his resulting periods of lethargy.⁷⁸¹ Six publishers turned down *Portrait of the Artist*, and even after The Egoist Ltd. agreed to publish it, seven printers refused to set it.⁷⁸² Pound notes to Quinn that “the energy in Joyce, W[yndham]. L[ewis]. & myself is what upsets people. That indecency has nothing to do with it.”⁷⁸³ He views, then, that the source of their rejection is the grating of their energy and individual wills against society’s differing will. Pound devised a plan for the presses to set Joyce’s book leaving large blank sections where he himself would type the offending passages and paste them in.⁷⁸⁴ Harriet Shaw Weaver accepted the challenge to publish the novel, Pound told Quinn, “on the condition I send ‘em a series of 12 articles free,” which he describes as the “12 Dialogues translated from Fontenelle.”⁷⁸⁵ This was, consequently, his twelve “Dialogues of Fontenelle,” in which Molière and Paracelsus debate the mind and body. Additionally, during his intense correspondence with Joyce about his eyes, Pound not only provided his own perceived expertise, but also enlisted the help of various other sources, his former doctors and John Quinn. Through Quinn, Pound attempted to secure funding for a crucial eye operation for Joyce. He asked Quinn if he could sell two of his autographed letters of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain from the fifteenth century, which he had bought during his college trip to Spain. Quinn, however, financed the operation by mailing Joyce a cheque for \$125.⁷⁸⁶

⁷⁸¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 31 October 1920, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1920), p. 199.

⁷⁸² A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet, A Portrait of the Man and his Work*, Vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 281.

⁷⁸³ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 6 July 1919, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1920), p. 176.

⁷⁸⁴ Ezra Pound to James Joyce, Letter dated 16 March 1916, *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 74.

⁷⁸⁵ Ezra Pound to James Joyce, Letter dated 26 February 1916, *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 59–61 (p. 60).

⁷⁸⁶ A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet, A Portrait of the Man and his Work*, Vol. I (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 331.

Pound's efforts for both Joyce's literary production and his physical health further illustrates Pound's believe in the importance of the wellbeing of both mind and body.

T. S. ELIOT

In March 1916, when Joyce started detailing his eye problems to Pound and as Lewis left for war in France, Pound was also starting to worry about T. S. Eliot's health.⁷⁸⁷ During this month, Pound had also written Quinn describing his labeling of Vorticism. Included in the description of this new movement was what Pound personally wanted to bring to Vorticism—intelligence combined with skill. He emphasized the energy needed on the part of the artist: "It is 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 whirl-wind force, and emotion. Vortex. that is the right word, if I did find it myself. Every kind of geyser from jism bursting up white as ivory, to hate or a storm at sea. Spermatozoon, enough to repopulate the island with active and vigorous animals."⁷⁸⁸ Pound describes the essential energy of the artist with a "whirl-wind force," which image became an icon of the Vorticism movement. Additionally, he seems to incorporate a version of his earlier dream-image of a water force bursting through sand—only this version includes a more obvious sexual slant to the dream; the "geyser" "burst[s] up white" and is labeled "spermatozoon" with the virility to procreate more "active and vigorous animals." Pound wrote a series of poems during this period, which he published in the *Little Review* in November 1918 and later collected in *Umbra* as "Phanopoeia." He included several references to the movement of elements. "The swirl of light" and "The water-jet of gold light" move around the narrator, as he is "Lapped in the gold-coloured flame."⁷⁸⁹ In the second part of the poem series, labeled "Saltus," the narrator again speaks of a "swirling sphere" that "englobe[s]" the reader. The final part of the series, "Concava Vallis," again speaks of a "whirling tissue of light" that "is woven and grows solid beneath us." In the context of his Vorticist images of motion and energy, these poetic references could reinforce Pound's emphasis on the energetic will of the individual, as each whirl of energy surrounds or attaches to an individual. Pound speaks of the writer's need to use this energy without becoming overwhelmed by it. One "troubled season" of the writer, he says, is when

the mind suddenly bursts into 'too much' activity, functions profusely, but the sequences of ideas rush out in diverse swirls, intertwining rapidly, so that one loses the relations, or at

⁷⁸⁷ Donald Gallup, *T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound: Collaborators in Letters* (New Haven: Henry W. Wenning / C. A. Stonehill, Inc., 1970), p. 13. Information based on an unpublished letter, dated 12 March 1916, from Pound to Quinn archived at the New York Public Library Berg Collection.

⁷⁸⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 10 March 1916, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 66.

⁷⁸⁹ Ezra Pound, "Nine Poems," *Little Review*, 5.7 (November 1918), 1–6. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C416, 216–220 (p. 217).

least cannot state them in an orderly fashion either on paper or for oneself. (Typical condition of Coleridge as represented in tradition, reported effect of various drugs, etc.)⁷⁹⁰ Pound's warning of becoming overwhelmed with too much energetic will or external energies corresponds with the title of one of his *Umbra* poems, "Saltus," which speaks of a "swirling sphere" that englobes the narrator. The name *Saltus* could refer to Francis Saltus, who was an American poet and a leader of New York bohemian literary circles in the 1880s. He was known for his absinthe-drinking, and even wrote 30 sonnets about his 30 favorite drinks.⁷⁹¹ This reference seems to cite the general perils of a decadent life and poetry, with their excesses. Pound's poem "Concava Vallis"—meaning a hollow space or valley and possibly taken from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* VIII—similarly seems to imply an emptiness, which the "whirling tissue of light" potentially covers by becoming "woven and ... solid beneath us."

During this consideration of energy and fulfillment, Pound's concern over Eliot's situation heightened towards the end of the summer, when Eliot himself acknowledged the strain of his wife's "most acute neuralgia" and his own "anxiety all winter and spring."⁷⁹² On 3 September 1916, Pound told Quinn that Eliot "is producing very little, practically nothing," which he regretted.⁷⁹³ In a *New Age* article published three months after writing this letter, Pound refers the potential "human infirmity" of the artist, and further, to the critical need of artists to constantly manage their work, or other effects will overpower this work. "Few feelings are more annoying than the feeling that if one does not take a hand in things actively, the constituted authorities will make a mess of them."⁷⁹⁴ Critical of the English system of the arts, Pound acknowledges the need of writers and artists to maintain a strong independence from outside, negative forces. "This feeling and its inevitability have perpetually ruined our artists and musicians, and drawn them away from their work, for they, too, are English, and subject to personal human infirmity." Pound's interaction with Eliot often frustrated Pound, as it reminded him of the potential infirmity of the artist—his frailty and weaknesses—despite Pound's own insistence of the artist to become an "over-man."

⁷⁹⁰ Ezra Pound, "Pastiche. Regional: 18," *New Age*, 26.3 (20 November 1919), 48. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C511, 357–58 (p. 357).

⁷⁹¹ Max Putzel, *The Man in the Mirror: William Marion Reedy and His Magazine* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), p. 43.

⁷⁹² T. S. Eliot, Letter to Conrad Aiken, dated 21 August 1916, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 143.

⁷⁹³ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 3 September 1916, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 76.

⁷⁹⁴ Ezra Pound, "Music. By William Atheling. Le mariage de Figaro," *New Age*, 22.6 (6 December 1917), 113–15. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C311, 315–16 (p. 315).

Publicly, Pound was proclaiming the potential of energy, especially in the form of Vorticism. “It must not be thought that these very ‘modern’ poets,” he states in the *Little Review* in February 1918, “owe their modernity merely to some magical chemical.”⁷⁹⁵ He emphasizes the will, intelligence, and work that the modern poet must exert. Modernity was, in Pound’s view, something created by productive, almost superior, individuals rather than merely by happenstance. It was a movement built from preceding movements and did not appear from “some magic chemical.” He seems to grapple with the issue of movements, or groups, as the strong individual almost becomes suppressed in a community. He describes modern poetic groups, such as Paris Unanimism associated with Jules Romains, as “the nerve-centre, the dynamic centre.” In this sense, he describes a group of poets as a body, and the best of these poets as the nerve centre. These superior poets must be especially vivified and healthy to control the functions of the nervous system. Pound, however, then reinforces his ideal of the individual, even within the Modernist tendency for movements. He then writes of the English artistic scene: “Wyndham Lewis on giants is nearer Romains than anything else in English, but vorticism is, in the realm of biology, the hypothesis of the dominant cell.”⁷⁹⁶ Vorticism, according to Pound, still insists on the power of the individual, or the “dominant cell.” As the first issue of *Blast* proclaimed, “Blast presents an art of individuals.”⁷⁹⁷ Pound ends his article by stating that only Romains’s group in Paris “seems to me any where nearly so energized as the Blast group in London; the only group in which the writers for *Blast* can be expected to take very much interest.” Pound included T. S. Eliot in the second issue of *Blast*, and helped to feature a series of his poems, “Preludes,” and his “Rhapsody of a Windy Night.”⁷⁹⁸ By including Eliot in the second *Blast* in July 1915, immediately after his marriage and initial commitment to remain in England and continue writing poetry,⁷⁹⁹ Pound was attempting to incorporate Eliot into a network of artists and writers whom Pound associated with energy and livelihood.

Pound was making laudatory Vorticist pronouncements in public, yet in private, he was complaining of the lethargy of his writer associates. In the same month as his *Little Review* article proclaiming the energy of the Vorticists, Pound writes to Margaret Anderson that no one is motivated towards productivity. “Hueffer is dead, absolutely dead with army.

⁷⁹⁵ Ezra Pound, “A Study in French Poets,” *Little Review*, 4.10 (February 1918), 3–61. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C327, 17–54.

⁷⁹⁶ Ezra Pound, “A Study in French Poets,” *Little Review*, 4.10 (February 1918), 3–61. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C327, 17–54 (50).

⁷⁹⁷ “Long Live the Vortex!” *Blast: Review of the Great English Vortex*, 1.1 (20 June 1914), 10.

⁷⁹⁸ T. S. Eliot, “Preludes,” *Blast 2: War Number*, 1.2 (July 1915), pp. 48–49. Also “Rhapsody of a Windy Night,” *Blast 2: War Number*, 1.2 (July 1915), pp. 50–51.

⁷⁹⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Homer Pound dated 30 June 1915, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2676. Pound writes, “Eliot has suddenly married a very charming young woman.”

Eliot is dead with his bank. Lewis wanders about interrupting.”⁸⁰⁰ He even labels himself “astringent,” which could refer to his critical personae, but also could refer to his management role with his contemporaries. The scientific definition of *astringent* denotes a substance used on the skin to draw tissue together. Pound continually felt as though he were at the center of movements to draw writers and work together and that, often, his co-writers did not put as much effort into the projects as he did. He stated that he could be critical of writers publishing in England because they could not “take care of themselves and heal their own patent diseases.”⁸⁰¹ He speaks metaphorically of their literary flaws as bodily diseases, and explains, “A man’s poems are good or bad not because he voted the Republican ticket or because he was kind to his grandmother, but because he wrote them well or ill.”⁸⁰² Pound associates the writing, or the production of the writer, in terms of wellness or illness. His letter to Quinn illustrates this association as well; he pronounces his contemporaries as physically dead because of their lack of productivity. In this letter, he also states, “I am ageing rapidly ... I have but a few years left me. ... I desire to go on with my long poem.”⁸⁰³ The effects of literary production on his body cause him to literally age rapidly. This notion corresponds with a review he wrote the same year in which he refers to the tragedy of the aging human body in classical and medieval poetry. He refers to the “tragedy of physical decay” in poetry through the ages, from Gallus recalling “Homer’s old men on the walls of Troy” to François Villon.⁸⁰⁴ Additionally, he states, “the wasted body has no need of magical intensifications for its tragedy,” implying that these writers through the ages have captured a realistic depiction of the natural digression of human bodies. During the same year that addressed a historic account of the body in poetry, he reviewed a biography about Swinburne. He refers to Swinburne’s physical degeneration, and parallels this with the disregard of his poetic work. “There is more Swinburne, and perhaps more is to be told of his tragedy in a few vignettes,” he writes, “than is to be found in all Gosse’s fusty volume. Swinburne’s tragedy was that he ended as a deaf, querulous old man in Putney, mediocre in his faculties.”⁸⁰⁵ He relates the story of Swinburne looking towards a baby, to which the

⁸⁰⁰ Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson, Letter dated 20 February 1918, *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence*, ed. by Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York, New Directions, 1988), p. 186.

⁸⁰¹ Ezra Pound, “Avis,” *Little Review*, 4.1 (May 1919), 69–70. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C462, 305–06 (p. 305).

⁸⁰² Ezra Pound, “Avis,” *Little Review*, 4.1 (May 1919), 69–70. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C462, 305–06 (p. 306).

⁸⁰³ Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson, Letter dated 20 February 1918, *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence*, ed. by Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York, New Directions, 1988), p. 186.

⁸⁰⁴ Ezra Pound, “Books Current, Reviewed by Ezra Pound,” *Future*, 2.12 (December 1918), 311–12. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C428, 251–53 (p. 252).

⁸⁰⁵ Ezra Pound, “Swinburne versus Biographers,” *Poetry*, 11.6 (March 1918), 322–29. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C339, 70–73 (p. 71).

“cockney woman” responds, “*Narsty* old man, ’e sharn’t look at *my* baby”—emphasizing that Swinburne was socially inferior to a female Cockney Londoner. Pound focuses on the “sense of tragedy” of Swinburne, and in particular, his lost potential and lost faculties of strength and greatness: “Thus departed his mundane glory, the glory of a red mane, the glory of the strong swimmer.” He parallels this lost physical prowess with his lost writing capabilities. “He fell into facile writing, and he accepted a facile compromise for life.”

If a strength of writing corresponded with a strength of physical wellbeing, then Eliot’s domestic situation would be his literary downfall. The year of 1919 began with Pound at the Eliots’ home for New Year’s while Vivien was enduring one of her many migraines. She writes in her first entry for her 1919 diary that she woke up with a migraine and did not move all day. She adds that this migraine lasted for 26 hours, at the end of which Pound came over for dinner with her husband, and their voices in the other room only intensified her migraine.⁸⁰⁶ Richard Aldington suggested in his novella that Pound tried to encourage Eliot to separate from Vivien, as he believed her physical and emotional illnesses prevented Eliot from writing.⁸⁰⁷ Pound had written Quinn that her elimination would help Eliot’s productivity: “you might send someone over to elope, kidnap, or otherwise eliminate Mrs. E.”⁸⁰⁸ And to Scofield Thayer, Pound added, “If some one wd. Murder or elope with his wife it wd. have the same effect as finding a few hundred £.”⁸⁰⁹ Yet Pound also admitted that Eliot did not yet feel a need to separate himself from the physical ailments and worries of his wife, even though she had offered to live separately.⁸¹⁰ “He can’t simply chuck her in the Thames, even if he were so disposed, which he aint.”⁸¹¹ Pound likely saw a parallel between the relationship of Eliot and Vivien, and that of Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Sophie Brzeska, as both females consistently retired to bed in the evenings because of ill health and as their desperate physical situations expended the time and worry of their male partners.⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁶ Vivienne Eliot, 1 January 1919, *The Papers of Vivienne Haigh Eliot*, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, Mss. Eng.misc.e.876-78, f.532.

⁸⁰⁷ Carole Seymour-Jones, *Painted Shadow: A Life of Vivienne Eliot* (London: Constable and Robinson, 2001), p. 270.

⁸⁰⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 21 February 1922, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 205–07 (p. 206).

⁸⁰⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Scofield Thayer dated 25–26 November 1920, *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and The Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994), pp. 185–186 (p. 185).

⁸¹⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 4–5 July 1922, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 209–10.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁸¹² Dr. Jerome Kavka reported from St. Elizabeth’s Hospital that Pound’s distrust of women’s influence on men could have originated from his mother’s disappointment in her life and the strong influence from her misery on his own development in childhood. “I believe that he suffered an infantile depression with physiological concomitants, partly as a reaction to his mother’s distress early in her marriage. This could also account for his intense feelings about strong influence women have on men ... because of the influences her misery had on Ezra’s own emotional development.”

Two days after Pound's New Year's evening dinner with the Eliots, Pound seemingly sent his wife Dorothy to the home to visit with Vivien. "Dorothy P came to tea," Vivien wrote in her diary, "and stayed ages. Very tired."⁸¹³ Vivien's illnesses are meticulously recorded on nearly every page of the diary; 2 January records that she is feeling ill, and again on 7 January, she notes a slight migraine. Her earliest diary, from 1914, before she met Eliot, similarly records these same symptoms: listing nerves and depression, followed by illness and depression,⁸¹⁴ then a liver complaint, neuralgia, and fainting.⁸¹⁵ As early as 1916, her husband documents her stomach upsets, exhaustion, fainting, and "nervous collapses" in his own letters. Since the age of 16, Vivien had consumed regularly prescribed drugs or sedatives.⁸¹⁶ A pseudonymous theater review written by Vivien hints at her dependence on and relief from drugs: "I betook myself with a queasy stomach to *The Green Goddess* and found it as settling as a nice dose of bicarbonate of soda with sal volatile as handed to one over the counter by any chemist for four-pence."⁸¹⁷ Even in his early observations, Pound questioned the cause of Vivien's condition, which, in Pound's view, caused her to sleep extensively and monopolize Eliot's time. In a 1917 article, Pound associates popular culture with the tendency to consume manufactured pills and remedies. Pound indicates that a popular magazine, which he picked up randomly, included 24 pages of ads. In a modern assortment of jumbled images, Pound lists the bombardment of information:

Sic: Nerve force, free to the ruptured, asthma, drunkard saved (18 pictures showing swing of the pendulum), rupture, magnetic girl, whooping-cough, fits, why be fat, pine-forest in every home, children's powders, message to mothers, don't wear a truss, life-pills, test horoscope, no more grey hair, grey hairs, gold watch free, eye ointment, drink habit conquered, neuralgia, free offer superior to steel and pennyroyal, ditto, infinitely superior to bitter apple, pills for women, kidney, renal pills, given away: information to the married, pills, pills, £5 notes for correct answer and stamp, free gift, without medicine, gold watch free, surgical appliance, lung tonic, Eno's.⁸¹⁸

Of the advertisements listed, the majority of the products relate to common bodily ailments. He lists "pills, pills" twice to emphasize their generic abundance, next to worthless free

Jerome Kavka, "Ezra Pound's Personal History: A Transcript, 1946," *Paideuma*, 20.1-2 (Spring, Fall 1991), pp. 143-185 (p. 169).

⁸¹³ Vivienne Eliot, 3 January 1919, *The Papers of Vivienne Haigh Eliot*, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MSS. Eng. Misc.e.876-78, f.532.

⁸¹⁴ Vivienne Eliot, *The Papers of Vivienne Haigh Eliot*, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MSS. Eng.misc.e.876-78. Diary begins on page 12 of diary, 4 February 1914.

⁸¹⁵ Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot's Early Years* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 77.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁸¹⁷ Vivienne Eliot, "Letters of the Moment: II," *Criterion*, 2.7 (April 1924), 361-62 (p. 360). Written under the pseudonym "F.M."

⁸¹⁸ Ezra Pound, "Studies in Contemporary Mentality: XII—The Emblematic," *New Age*, 3 (15 November 1917), 48-49. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C302, 303-04 (p. 304).

gifts. Pound associated this physical weakness and the search for readily available drugs with the common man, as the magazine was chosen from a random sampling of popular literature. Additionally, he could have associated a dependence on drugs and quick remedies with Vivien's reliance on drugs for years, thereby associating Vivien with the common man, unworthy of Eliot's constant time and energy. Additionally, Pound associates this type of physical weakness to the frail poets of the decadent generation who looked to mind- and body-altering substances. "The term decadent (dee-kay-d'nt)," he writes in 1919 just after his New Year's evening at the Eliot's flat, "conveys the impression of young man doped with opium."⁸¹⁹ In this same issue of the *Little Review*, Pound reinforces his belief that the status of the human body and man's productivity are related. He incorporates the views of de Gourmont, whom he is reading at this time, to reinforce this idea. He cites de Gourmont's interrelation of the mind and body: "He does not grant the duality of body and soul ... [but grants] an osmosis of body and soul."⁸²⁰ Further, Pound states de Gourmont's view that man's wisdom is reached only through human sense; therefore, the state of the body as a receiver of sensations is critical to achieving and communicating wisdom. "His wisdom, if not of the senses, is at any rate via the senses. We base our 'science' on perceptions."⁸²¹ During the month of the publication of this article, Eliot was forced to take an extended break from his work because of his illness. Vivien writes in her diary after his return; she dates the entry 2 March, and adds that her husband went back to working at the bank and lecturing, even though he was not healthy.⁸²²

Pound's poem "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley," written during this period and published first by the Egoist Press in June 1919, documents a young writer's loss of will. In Part IV, E.P. watches soldiers return from war and bring with them "wastage as never before ... hysterias, trench confessions."⁸²³ In Part V, the narrator laments that "a myriad" died in the Great War, "And of the best, among them, / For an old bitch gone in the teeth, / For a botched civilization." The poem then shifts from the war's stripping of will and potential from soldiers to vignettes of poets and artist figures who had lost the will to produce meaningful work: Swinburne, the tragic generation of the Rhymers' Club, and Ford Madox Ford "beneath [his] sagging roof" that "leaks through its thatch." The second section of the

⁸¹⁹ Ezra Pound, Footnote, signed E.P., to "M. de Gourmont and the Problem of Beauty by Frederic Manning," *Little Review*, 5.10–11 (February/March 1919), 26–27. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C439, p. 277.

⁸²⁰ Ezra Pound, "De Gourmont: A Distinction (Followed by Notes)," *Little Review*, 5.10–11 (February/March 1919), 1–19. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C438, 265–76 (p. 266).

⁸²¹ Ezra Pound, "De Gourmont: A Distinction (Followed by Notes)," *Little Review*, 5.10–11 (February/March 1919), 1–19. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C438, 265–76 (p. 266).

⁸²² Vivienne Eliot, 2 March 1919, The Papers of Vivienne Haigh Eliot, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, Mss. Eng.misc.e.876-78, f. 532.

⁸²³ Ezra Pound, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (London: Egoist Press, 1919), part iv.

poem, “1920 (Mauberley),” portrays Mauberley’s weakening disposition to create. “For this agility chance found / Him of all men, unfit.” Inserted into “The Age Demanded,” a version of Pound’s energy dream appears and is divided from the rest of the poem by ellipses:

.....

The coral isle, the lion-coloured sand
Burst in upon the porcelain revery:
Impetuous troubling
Of his imagery.

.....

This memory is immediately followed by a reference to Nietzsche: “Mildness, amid the neo-Nietzschean clatter.” In Mauberley’s loss of will, he becomes troubled by images of energy and potential, such as the sand bursting. His lethargy resembles merely “mildness,” despite Modernity’s reach for Nietzsche’s ideal of power. The narrator reports that Mauberley denied himself the faculties of perception and therefore disengaged himself from the potential of the body: “Invitation, mere invitation to perceptivity / Gradually led him to the isolation.” Ultimately, Mauberley is left stranded at the end of the poem. He remains oarless in the sea, as his oar remains on the beach with the inscription: “I was / And I no more exist; / Here drifted / An hedonist.” The only words in the poem directly from Mauberley himself—inscribed, rather than spoken—ironically state his nonexistence and his past hedonism or seeking of pleasure rather than meaningful productivity. The last image of Mauberley drifting in the sea after leaving his oar on shore connotes a man who has abandoned his will.

Within two months of the publication of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* in book form, Pound attempted to help rejuvenate Eliot. He convinced Eliot to leave on a walking tour in France. Eliot writes about his trip: “I am very much run down and this is my first real rest for two years.”⁸²⁴ The purpose of the trip, according to Pound, was to “put him through a course of sun and sulphur baths.”⁸²⁵ Vivien had written in her diary that she saw him off at Waterloo station in an intense heat, then returned to bed for all the days of his travels.⁸²⁶ Similarly, Pound commented that Eliot arrived in Paris in August looking pale, thin, and nervous, seemingly reflecting both his and Vivien’s joint struggles with illness.⁸²⁷ Eliot apparently felt rejuvenated by the trip, as he wrote Sidney Schiff afterwards, “My trip was a

⁸²⁴ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Harold Monro dated 5 August 1919, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 325.

⁸²⁵ Donald Gallup, “The Lost Manuscripts of T. S. Eliot,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 November 1968.

⁸²⁶ Vivienne Eliot, 9 August 1919, *The Papers of Vivienne Haigh Eliot*, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, Mss. Eng.misc.e.876-78, f. 532.

⁸²⁷ J. J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 235.

complete success: I feel very much better for it.”⁸²⁸ Yet Vivien’s diary records his sudden lapse into depression upon his return to London. She records that her husband arrived home punctually, and she had discovered that he had grown a beard during his travels. She notes that he was very nice initially that day, but became depressed by the evening.⁸²⁹

The following autumn, the Pounds and Eliots continued to interact frequently. In one string of journal entries within a week, Vivien noted three dinners with the Pounds: one on 17 November, with both Ezra and Dorothy; another on 21 November, with just Ezra and Sidney Schiff, after which both stayed very late after dinner. Both stayed late; again on 23 November, a dinner at the Pound’s flat.⁸³⁰ By the end of the year, Vivien records that she is glad the year is over, and she imagines the next will be worse.⁸³¹ Eliot records their interrelated health problems, and notes that their dependency on each other also results in the continual weariness of each other and the inability to sustain their work.

Just before Christmas I had a bronchial attack which laid me up for a week ... I do not feel very well yet. Also Vivien got run down largely through nursing me, and she is not at all well. ... I have been trying to start work myself, and it is very difficult when *both* people in a household are run down. You know that I have felt for some time that I have been devoting myself too exclusively to weekly article writing, and felt that perhaps I was losing both the energy, and the power of sustainance (thought?) necessary for a longer piece of work.⁸³²

After detailing their physical illnesses, Eliot notes his belief that he was losing his will to write poetry, especially his ability to write a “longer piece of work.” Just six days after writing this letter, he wrote another letter to Schiff: “Vivien has broken down rather badly.”⁸³³ The cycles of ill health continued between the couple, which Eliot frequently communicated to Pound as one of the few with whom he could speak. “There are very few people in London whom one can talk to,” Eliot wrote Schiff. “I feel too physically tired to write a good letter—just at other times I am too mentally tired. I have too little time.”⁸³⁴ Likely because of Eliot’s few close contacts in London with whom he could discuss his personal problems, Eliot was especially dependent on Pound. When Pound moved to Paris, Eliot’s letters portray a near-desperate desire for continued connection. After Pound

⁸²⁸ T. S. Eliot to Sidney Schiff, Letter dated 15 September 1919, British Library, Sidney Schiff papers, BL 52918.

⁸²⁹ Vivienne Eliot, 31 August 1919, The Papers of Vivienne Haigh Eliot, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, Mss. Eng.misc.e.876-78, f. 532.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸³¹ Vivienne Eliot, 31 December 1919, The Papers of Vivienne Haigh Eliot, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, Mss. Eng.misc.e.876-78, f. 532.

⁸³² T. S. Eliot to Sidney Schiff, dated 12 January 1920, British Library, Sidney Schiff papers, BL 52918.

⁸³³ T. S. Eliot to Sidney Schiff, dated 18 January 1920, British Library, Sidney Schiff papers, BL 52918.

⁸³⁴ T. S. Eliot to Sidney Schiff, dated 22 August 1920, British Library, Sidney Schiff papers, BL 52918.

publicly announced his departure from London in December 1920, Eliot wrote Pound on the 22nd: “I infer that there is no prospect of seeing you. Your letter is extremely obscure, but it appears you are going South. This is a blow. Please write and explain lucidly what your plans are and for how long.”⁸³⁵ During the next year, Eliot’s personal letters documented the tragic cycles in his and Vivien’s health. “Certainly this is the way in which I have myself known disasters to follow each other,” Eliot writes about Vivien’s illness and her father’s near-death. “I am much concerned about her health; she manages to keep up and do a great deal, at the price of a migraine once a week, and bad nights. I have not at all been in a mood for work. ... Are any doctors or nurses ever satisfactory?”⁸³⁶ His notion of recurring disasters displays a possibility that Eliot believed—even before his formal interest in religion—in an underlying universal will to which men are subjected. That man is under the control of a series of events, and cannot escape this control, is one implication of Eliot’s desperate statement.

During this period, Pound continued to complain about Eliot’s lack of productivity, in addition to his larger complaints about the literary scene. He wrote Margaret Anderson of *The Little Review*: “London is dead to deadish. Eliot apparently giving way to the milieu.”⁸³⁷ During this month, Eliot admitted in a letter that he was not progressing with his long poem. “My poem has still so much revision to undergo,” he writes. “I want to get more of it done ... I have not had the freedom of mind.”⁸³⁸ Soon afterwards, Aldington informed Pound that he “saw T.S.E. the other day” who appeared “over-worked, which I believe is the modern substitute for happiness.”⁸³⁹ To John Quinn, Pound remarks pessimistically about Eliot and the literary circles with which he had worked for the previous 12 years: “It is not, either, that Europe isn’t pleasant. It was the feeling that anything one did here was like massaging a corpse, or offering opiates to a dying patient. Rather than building a civilization. ONLY one can’t put the top stones onto a civilization if it hasn’t at least got a skeleton of a middle structure.”⁸⁴⁰ Still, Pound continued in his attempts to strengthen the “skeleton” of literary

⁸³⁵ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound, dated 22 December 1920, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), pp. 426–27.

⁸³⁶ T. S. Eliot to Sidney Schiff, dated 30 November 1920, British Library, Sidney Schiff papers, BL 52918.

⁸³⁷ Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson, Letter dated 22[?] April 1921, *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence*, ed. by Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York, New Directions, 1988), p. 265.

⁸³⁸ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Sidney Schiff, dated 3 April 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), pp. 443–44.

⁸³⁹ Richard Aldington to Ezra Pound, Letter dated 16 June 1920, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Letters, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I-IV), Series I, General Correspondence Box 1, Folder 27.

⁸⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn postmarked 8 November 1920, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 202.

civilization when he accepted the London correspondent position with the *Dial*.⁸⁴¹ He informs T. E. Lawrence that he accepted the position mainly to organize the publication of writings by the best authors, including “Eliot, myself in homeopathic (very) doses.”⁸⁴² As homeopathy is a complementary disease treatment system, Pound still felt that Eliot maintained potential to produce good poetry ultimately to treat the diseased literary world.

During this time, Pound was researching French thinkers who wrote extensively about science and the human body—an interest that Pound passed on to Eliot, who, in turn, studied and wrote about these thinkers. In July 1920, Pound reviewed Julien Benda’s *Belphégor*, which was a comprehensive review of French criticism, but also set out Benda’s unique approach to see beyond the mere appearances of intellectualism in literature and to argue that science, over literature, continued as the superior method of inquiry. In a July 1920 review, Pound contrasts Benda’s scientific emphasis with Bergson’s metaphysics, and praises Benda’s “distaste for ‘mediaeval’ precision, i.e., precise definition by words.”⁸⁴³ Pound uses an extended metaphor in the review, associating Benda with a surgeon who cuts away at the popular Bergsonism of the time. “M. Benda has a beautiful instrument; beautiful in neatness as a surgeon’s instruments may be beautiful—utilitarian possibly.” He continues, “it is no less pleasant to watch M. Benda operating on Bergson.” The same month as the publication of this review, Pound evidently wrote Eliot, informing him about Benda. Eliot responds, “I have not yet received the Benda of which you speak.”⁸⁴⁴ About a week later, Eliot confirms that he has received the book: “*Belphegor* received and much pleased with it. If you can procure any other of J.B.’s works I will purchase them from you.”⁸⁴⁵ Additionally, Eliot recommends to Scofield Thayer that the *Dial* should “print it in full,” as “Benda’s book is ripping,”⁸⁴⁶ and the *Dial* soon serialized the book, translated into English, from September to December 1920.⁸⁴⁷ During this serialized publication of the

⁸⁴¹ Eliot helped to arrange the position through John Quinn. He wrote Quinn on 10 May 1920: “I was delighted at your prompt and effective intervention with the *Dial*. I think Pound will make a good job of it. I can testify that it had a great effect in raising his spirits.” Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 382.

⁸⁴² Ezra Pound to T. E. Lawrence, Letter dated 20 April 1920, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, T. E. Lawrence Letters 1214.

⁸⁴³ Ezra Pound, “Julien Benda,” *Athenaeum*, 95.4706 (9 July 1920), 62. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C586a, 74–75 (p. 74). Review signed “B. L.,” of *Belphégor* by Julien Benda.

⁸⁴⁴ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 3 July 1920, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 388.

⁸⁴⁵ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 13 July 1920, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 392.

⁸⁴⁶ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Scofield Thayer dated 10 August 1920, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 401.

⁸⁴⁷ “*Belphégor*: Essay on the Aesthetic of Contemporary French Society” in *Dial* 69.3 (September 1920), 252–56; 69.4 (October 1920), 377–91; 69.5 (November 1920), 490–504; 69.6 (December 1920), 568–82.

book, Eliot published an article, “Imperfect Critics,” in which he, too, portrays Benda as a doctor for the wearied modern world: “M. Benda ... is rather the ideal scavenger of the rubbish of our time. Much of his analysis of the decadence of contemporary French society could be applied to London, although differences are observable from his diagnosis.”⁸⁴⁸ Eliot’s notion of scavenging the rubbish of modernity became a poignant image of *The Waste Land*: “What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, / You cannot say, or guess, for you know only / A heap of broken images.”⁸⁴⁹ Man refusing to see metaphysical meaning into the rubbish, or material, of everyday life is a general concept promoted by Benda over Bergsonian impressions of the time.⁸⁵⁰

Similarly, Pound introduced Eliot to the French writer Remy de Gourmont. “The Gourmont stuff is a great scoop,” Eliot writes Thayer after the *Dial* translated Pound’s translations of de Gourmont’s unfinished notes, “Dust for Sparrows.”⁸⁵¹ Among the “Dust for Sparrows” notes were extensive references to the human body, often associating the physical body with intelligence or perception: “A solid and well-balanced intelligence in a healthy body will always be content with doing no more than is necessary to preserve its happy vegetative condition.”⁸⁵² De Gourmont also writes, “A state of perpetual physical and moral instability could lead only to the cemetery or to madness.”⁸⁵³ De Gourmont explains this idea further, as he views man as “the sole being who transforms sensation into consciousness.”⁸⁵⁴ This theory implies that man’s reception of nervous sensation is the material of consciousness, or, essentially, man’s thought derives from his perceptions obtained through the physical body. This process, however, implies the necessity of a will, or an energy on the part of man to actively produce consciousness or creative thought based on these receptions.

⁸⁴⁸ T. S. Eliot, “Imperfect Critics,” in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Barnes and Noble, 1932).

⁸⁴⁹ T. S. Eliot, “I. The Burial of the Dead,” in “The Waste Land,” in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 61–63 (p. 61).

⁸⁵⁰ André Schüller, *A Life Composed: T. S. Eliot and the Morals of Modernism* (Hamburg: LIT Verlag Berlin), p. 107, 109. Schuller discusses the influence of Julien Benda on Eliot.

⁸⁵¹ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Scofield Thayer, dated 10 August 1920, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 401.

⁸⁵² Ezra Pound, “Dust for Sparrows: II, by Rémy de Gourmont, translated with notes by Ezra Pound,” *Dial*, 69.4 (October 1920), 368–71. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C598, 99–102 (p. 101).

⁸⁵³ Ezra Pound, “Dust for Sparrows: V, by Rémy de Gourmont, translated with notes by Ezra Pound,” *Dial*, LXX. 1 (Jan. 1921) 24–28. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C611, 128–32 (p. 132).

⁸⁵⁴ Ezra Pound, “Dust for Sparrows: II, by Rémy de Gourmont, translated with notes by Ezra Pound,” *Dial*, 69.4 (October 1920), 368–71. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C598, 99–102 (p. 99).

Perhaps drawing from de Gourmont, Pound wrote his “last will and testament” or public withdrawal from London, centering his theories on man’s “consciousness” and using terminology similar to that of de Gourmont. Pound describes his valuation of direct perception while disregarding “the unknown and the non-knowable on the consciousness.”⁸⁵⁵ He incorporates the linguistic aspect of physiology by identifying the importance of naming a disease. “Consciousness may perfectly well register certain results, as sensation,” he writes, “without comprehending their nature. He may even die of a long-considered disease without comprehending its baccillus [*sic*].” Pound is again describing his theory in terms of the human body; he emphasizes the importance of perception and consciousness, of a full understanding of causes and effects. During the same year, Eliot, too, addressed the issue of perception through the human senses. In “The Metaphysical Poets,” he states that modern poets have lost a foundation of sensibility that had historically been associated with the role of the poet. “The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which could devour any kind of experience.”⁸⁵⁶ He then cites poets that Pound, too, had studied and translated, Dante and Guido Cavalcanti. “In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered,” Eliot adds. He portrays poets, and modern humankind, as ill or unrecovered from having lost a vital sense of physical sensibility or perception. He, like Pound, therefore believed in the poet’s innate yet lost ability to be physically receptive to natural phenomena. More specifically, Pound focuses on Eliot’s own personal inability to physically absorb sensations and perceive the phenomena around him while he is ill. He illustrates his theory about sensations in his “last will and testament” with an example painfully close to the situation of Eliot at the time. “Concerning the ultimate nature of the baccillus, however, no knowledge exists; but the consciousness may learn to deal with superficial effects of the baccillus.” It is this vagueness of diagnosis that Pound attempts to sharpen when he corresponds with Eliot about the precise causes or reason for his and Vivien’s physical suffering. In a letter to Dorothy Pound in May 1921, Eliot explains his own basic reasoning for Vivien’s latest illness: “the standing so much by her father’s bed precipitated internal displacements.”⁸⁵⁷ His unconvincing explanation corresponds with Pound’s theory that “consciousness may learn to deal with superficial effects of the baccillus,” while not actually dealing with the genuine cause. Eliot could not

⁸⁵⁵ Ezra Pound, “Axiomata,” *New Age*, 28.11 (13 January 1921), 125–26. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C614, 134–35 (p. 135).

⁸⁵⁶ T. S. Eliot, “The Metaphysical Poets,” in *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot’s Contemporary Prose* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 192–201 (198).

⁸⁵⁷ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Dorothy Pound, dated 22 May 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 456.

explain or name “the ultimate nature of the baccillus,” but initially only attempted to heal the effects of this “baccillus” or cause.

VIVIEN’S ILLNESS

This attempt to discover and diagnose the cause of Vivien’s illnesses employed Eliot and Pound intermittently for over a decade. On the same day that Eliot wrote Dorothy Pound with his basic reasoning for Vivien’s recent suffering, Pound wrote William Carlos Williams that he could have plenty of work in Europe if he moved overseas. “Cd. offer you at least four nerve cases—if that’s any inducement.”⁸⁵⁸ At this point, Pound associates Vivien’s condition with the generic, turn-of-the-century label of a nervous case. During one particular attempt to define Vivien’s illnesses, Eliot wrote Pound for advice. He mentions that the doctor was treating her for colitis—the one diagnosis to which they could hold to—yet even this label did not specify the actual root of the problem. “The doctor himself says that colitis is not a disease but a symptom, and that it may be a symptom of all sorts of more deep seated maladies.”⁸⁵⁹ Vivien, too, wrote Pound for his help and opinion, as she noted that Pound had discussed glands with Eliot during their visit in Italy together, and Pound had suggested that glands might be the source of her physical complications. Vivien’s response to his suggestion portrays her own desperate attempts to define her illness and her willingness to accept any trusted opinion. “I must say I have often thought of this possibility myself,” she writes.⁸⁶⁰ Additionally, her response implies her valuation of Pound’s ideas over her own. She details in the letter the treatment that the doctor had prescribed—taking Ovarian Opocaps, or bovine hormones—“animal gland capsules 3ce daily,” as Eliot described to Pound.⁸⁶¹ She acknowledged that this treatment was a “shot in the dark,” as her doctor told her. “I think,” she told Pound, “That English doctors are more fond of ‘shots in the dark’ than any treatment based on scientific knowledge.”⁸⁶² Vivien asks Pound to “make enquiries as you suggested to Tom” and lists her symptoms: Colitis, Temperature, increasing mental incapacity, Physical Exhaustion, Insomnia, Migraines. Her choice of labeling her mental instability as “increasing mental incapacity” communicates her pessimistic view of her condition, as she avoids perceiving her condition in terms of the

⁸⁵⁸ Ezra Pound to William Carlos Williams, Letter dated 21 May 1922, *Pound/Williams: Selected Letters of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams*, ed. by Hugh Witemeyer (New York: New Directions, 1996), p. 60.

⁸⁵⁹ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound, dated 9 July 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 538.

⁸⁶⁰ Vivien Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound, dated 27 June 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 532.

⁸⁶¹ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound, dated 9 July 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 538.

⁸⁶² Vivien Eliot, Letter to Dorothy Pound, dated 27 June 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 532.

“mental capacity” she has retained. “I should have great faith in anything you suggest, and I only hope you are still as interested in the subject of glands as you were when Tom saw you in Italy.” Eliot added a postscript to the letter, stressing their joint ignorance and frustration over verbalizing and comprehending her illness. “Vivien has shown me this letter, and I think it is *quite inadequate* as a description of her case,” he writes, continuing with an excusal, “but she is very ill and exhausted and I do not think she can do any better now. I will write to you a little later and go much more into detail and the history of her illness, as I am sure there is a lot more you would like to know.”⁸⁶³ Eliot’s details to Sidney Schiff, in a letter written two days earlier than the letter to Pound, reveal the extent of Vivien’s physical deterioration and their resulting desperation for help. Their specialist had recommended avoiding meals for days at a time: “The starvation is producing other symptoms which make me feel that some modification is necessary.”⁸⁶⁴ Eliot indicates his desire to change specialists: “we have heard of another man who uses the same treatment but very much better.” This recommendation likely refers to Pound’s suggestion of the American endocrinologist Dr. Louis Berman.

When Eliot traveled to Italy “for the purpose of health”⁸⁶⁵ and met Pound in Verona in May 1922, Pound attempted to finally determine the cause of Vivien’s physical problems. Pound describes his discussion with Eliot in a letter to John Quinn:

Eliot has always been very reserved about his domestic situation, so much so that I thought Mrs. E. had syph; & marveled that they didn’t get a dose of 606. Last time I saw him I got down to brass tacks. and find that the girl really has a long complication of things, tuberculosis in infancy, *supposed* to have been cured. Symptoms, so far as I now see, point to pituitary trouble, Berman, author of that gland book, turned up here on Sunday, is on his way to medical conference in Edinburgh. I am sending him to Eliot, and hope he will get best gland specialists on the job. Of course if the woman has a cramped cella turcica, the job is nearly hopeless. only one wd. at least KNOW what one was fighting.⁸⁶⁶

Pound identifies his diagnosis of Vivian as pituitary trouble, based on the symptoms he receives from Eliot. His language reflects the endocrinology research that Pound had engaged with at the time. Before leaving for Italy to meet with Eliot, Pound had read Berman’s book *The Glands Regulating Personality* and had corresponded with Berman and various editors about its endocrinology theories. Pound’s review of the book—rejected from *The Dial*—appeared in the 16 March 1922 issue of *The New Age*. His review not only summarizes Berman’s overall theory, but hints at why Pound became intrigued with the

⁸⁶³ T. S. Eliot note in Vivien Eliot Letter, *ibid*.

⁸⁶⁴ T. S. Eliot to Sidney Schiff, dated 25 June 1922, British Library, Sidney Schiff papers, BL 52918.

⁸⁶⁵ T. S. Eliot to Sidney Schiff, dated early June 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 527.

⁸⁶⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 4–5 July 1922, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 210.

physiological research. Pound summarized Berman's theory, which hypothesized that "the body has slowly developed about the endocrine glands" and that the glands are older than the brain and therefore control, or comprise, the subconscious. "When the secretions of these glands interact in certain ways," Pound summarizes the theory, "they produce definite chemical pressure, and that when this pressure reaches a certain intensity it forces itself on the consciousness." Therefore, Pound states, "the whole structure and temperament of the body is determined by these ductless glands, now called endocrines." Pound embraced this theory largely because of its physiological, objective description of the subconscious, or the soul. Man's thoughts, emotions, and state of being could be logically explained through chemicals originating in the glands. He found it to be a revolutionary mode of describing the creative faculties of man: "A whole new field of research is opened; five hundred specialists are at work; the general tendency is to recognise that human beings can differ widely from each other without being abnormal; and a strong scientific support of this "humanity" can only make for civilisation, tolerance, and an end of Fabian and Puritan endeavours to cram all human being into one button-mould."⁸⁶⁷ It was a discovery that explained the origin of creativity and individuality, as well as a discovery that *promoted* the concept of the individual will. Pound characterizes the theory as that of hard science, an answer to all mystical modes of explaining personality. "All this is upheld by experiment. The Freudians, according to Berman, try continually to relieve complexes by psychological means before considering whether chemical means would not be simpler." Pound envisions a sweeping revolution of the emerging science of psychology, as well as an integral understanding of physical and emotional man. "Long-suffering humanity," he writes, can be divided "into a new set of types (interest for all dilettante palmists, astrologers, character-readers, etc.). Napoleon, Darwin, the inevitable Oscar, reappear diagnosed, glandula, tenulla, vagula. Dr. Berman after a Voltairian survey of human misery and muddle looks forward to a new, but moderately distant, era." The review also reveals Pound's concern with the sella turcica, which he cited in his concerned letter to Quinn about Vivien Eliot. "Given an active pituitary, in a constricted sella-turcica (bone-cavity at base of brain) certain inconveniences follow. Given imperfect balance of glands or over- or under-activity, character must take certain trends, remediable or other." This description of Berman's theory reveals one of the possibilities that Pound was considering as a diagnosis for Vivien: the hyperactivity or under-activity of the production of glands, which could imply non-remediable effects that would affect Eliot indefinitely.

⁸⁶⁷ Ezra Pound, "The New Therapy," *New Age*, 30.20 (16 March 1922), 259–60. Manuscript in New York Public Library, Berg Collection, James Sibley Watson Papers, 10 TLS, 1 TNS. Pound's typescript was published word for word in *The New Age* without changes.

Pound thought Berman's work could revolutionize literature as well as the sciences. He attempted to review Berman's book in the *Dial*. "I think *Dial* ought to review Berman's book on glands," he wrote Sibley Watson.⁸⁶⁸ His letter to Berman⁸⁶⁹ revealed that he originated the idea to read and review the book, rather than as a random assignment from an editor. "Very much interested in yr. book on glands. Recommended it this a.m. for review by *Mercure de France*. ... If they haven't reviewed you by the time I get back from Italy, I shall try to do an article on you. Better, of course, that some recognized 'scientist' shd. do so." Despite Pound's recent studies of endocrinology and medical studies, he denies himself the title of "scientist." He again repeats his notion that Berman might question his credibility as scientific writer, but seems to embrace the idea that he is fully capable of covering the subject. "As to my writing of a review of you. Wonder if I shd. do it worse than some fool with a 'scientific training' who had got his mind 'set'?" The letter further indicates his interest in formally studying science, and his acknowledgement and regret that he did not formally choose to enter the sciences.

All very well to say 'don't think, experiment.' Cant, had hoped to take up medicine properly when I came to Paris last spring, but got solar-plexus punch on the finance. Want to study super-health, not pathology, (idiotic phrase that. I mean experiment with view to producing super-health, super-lucidity, rather than getting idiots up to nearly normal.)

Pound reveals that he had considered entering medical school after his London literary career, and that his intention was to study "super-health, super-lucidity." He defines this term *lucidity* in the letter: "What you may know, but what does not appear in yr book is this," after which he lists his own insights on the subject. "The Pineal is the seat of 'lucidity'; I don't believe for five minutes that it is an extinct eye. Don't confuse 'haalcinations' D. T. phobias, post-pit, with 'lucidity', sensation of light, nor the phantastikon, ordered presentation to oneself of visual images, the great soap bubble that surrounds one." Pound is denying that "lucidity" is a type of hallucination; here, he defines lucidity as a chemical process originating from the pituitary gland that produces a "presentation to oneself of visual images," and, using a metaphor that he published elsewhere as well, a description of "the great soap bubble that surrounds one." This reasoning is crucial to the understanding of Pound's intense interest in Berman's theories; Berman's explanations promise to provide a scientific analysis of a poet's ability to receive

⁸⁶⁸ Ezra Pound to Sibley Watson, Letter dated 1 March 1922, New York Public Library, Berg Collection, James Sibley Watson Papers, 10 TLS, 1 TNS.

⁸⁶⁹ Pound's letter to Berman apparently only exists in carbon copy form in an archive to James Sibley Watson at the New York Public Library. Pound had submitted his review of Berman's book to the *Dial*, and had included the carbon copy of his letter to Berman as support to the information he provided the editors. Therefore, the carbon copy was never stored in Pound's own archive, and Berman's copy of the letter possibly was not archived. This seemingly random location of Pound's letter probably explains why the information Pound reveals in the letter is not well known in Pound studies.

and interpret sensations, and therefore to produce poetic images. Pound's poem "Glaukopos" reflects this consideration of the phantastikon: "confuse my own phantastikon / Or say the filmy shell that circumscribes me / Contains the actual sun." In his letter, Pound speaks to Berman about a "Latin poet" who spoke of the thyroid.⁸⁷⁰ Additionally, and most significantly for Pound's concern with Eliot, Pound believes that the research on glands allows for "auto-diagnosis," particularly "the auto-diagnosis of men of genius, or of extreme intelligence," since with these findings, one can interpret one's own symptoms and discover and understand one's own illnesses. He notes that this personal diagnosis should "not result of some religious or traditional or logical influence," and that it should be based purely on science and physiological evidence. Pound was attracted to the notion that endocrinology explains the body in terms of the chemical processes of the glands. "Consciousness," or the processes of the mind, including that of the will, suddenly belonged to the realm of an explainable science. "Glad you emphasize that consciousness is not all in head," Pound continues to write to Berman. "Have known that also for some time. Also by auto-diagnosis."

Eliot, too, after his discussion with Pound about glands, began to research the subject of glands with the hope that he could identify Vivien's symptoms. "I shall be glad to have a conversation with Berman if he arrives in this country," Eliot writes Pound.⁸⁷¹ He adds questions stemming from his own research, "Have you ever heard of a man in England named Hogben in connexion with glands?" Just five days prior to Eliot's letter, Lancelot Thomas Hogben⁸⁷² published a paper "Studies of the Pituitary. I." in which he describes the physiological responses in "lower vertebrates" from the extraction of their posterior lobe of the pituitary gland.⁸⁷³ During this week, Pound had apparently arranged for Vivien to visit with Berman in Paris,⁸⁷⁴ yet Eliot would not take her across the Channel:

⁸⁷⁰ Pound notes that he couldn't remember which one, but that he would look it up and get back to Berman.

⁸⁷¹ T. S. Eliot to Ezra Pound, Letter dated 9 July 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 538.

⁸⁷² Hogben, a biologist and geneticist, had himself had a physical breakdown after World War I, after which he published a book of poetry, *Exiles of the Snow, and Other Poems* in 1918.

⁸⁷³ Lancelot Thomas Hogben and Frank Robert Winton, "Studies of the Pituitary. I.: The Melanophore Stimulant in Posterior Lobe Extracts," in *Biochemistry Journal*, 16, 619–30.

⁸⁷⁴ Pound wrote Williams at this time and mentions that Berman, through Pound's recommendation, had examined Joyce during Berman's visit to Paris in July 1922. He recommended an X-ray to be taken, and although Joyce would not look at the negative—he demanded that a copy of the positive be made—Berman discovered dental abscesses that, he said, could have affected Joyce's eyesight. Pound writes, "Any use my comin' over to fetch you, or to inspect your teeth. Endocrinology is humming under this roof at the moment. The G[rea]t. gland sleuth has jest went." Letter dated 22 July 1923 in *Pound/Williams: Selected Letters of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams*, ed. by Hugh Witemeyer (New York: New Directions, 1996), p. 62. Pound also writes John Quinn after Berman had examined Joyce in July 1922 and recommended that his teeth be extracted: "Berman has at least the virtue of having got Joyce's head X-rayed; he found three dental abscesses under the diseased eye. Joyce refused to consider the x-ray 'negative' wanted to wait for the 'positive' ... I told

The reason why I did not send Vivien over to Paris is that first she is extremely run down, and at a very low point where all weak spots break out—neuralgia, neuritis, eye trouble etc., and second that she has just been started on a new diet for colitis (of the colitis there is no doubt whatever) which involves great care in the preparation of food—all meat to be minced in a machine three times, milk to be the best sealed medical milk, certain proportions of vitamins and proteids daily; the diet seems to be the best so far and really doing her good. I didn't want to run the risk of upsetting her improvement at the start by letting her break the diet by Duval or even the Voltaire. But if Berman comes to London I should be delighted. Eliot affirms in his letter that he is still searching for more definition on the issue of glands. "Ask him does he know of a man named Hogben who is writing a book on hormones, in England," he directs Pound. "What I want to know and what I do not get from Berman's book is what treatment he gives after he has diagnosed. Both of the doctors Vivien has seen lately have examined her teeth with great care and were disappointed to find nothing wrong." Eliot continues by expressing his belief in Pound's organizational and medical abilities, despite his own refusal to take Vivien to Paris. "I should like to put her into your hands," he says to Pound, "but think that from present appearances Paris should be postponed till October."⁸⁷⁵ Soon after, Eliot again writes Pound, "I wait in hope that Berman is coming to this country."⁸⁷⁶ He also acknowledges his continued interest in Remy de Gourmont, and therefore his continued concentration on the subject of the mind-and-body connection. "I understood from Dorothy that a translation of Rémy's *Physique* with either an essay or supplement by yourself was soon to appear in New York. Am I to receive a copy or am I to order it myself through Messrs. Jones & Evans in Cheapside?"⁸⁷⁷

The attempt by both Pound and Eliot continued for several years. In 1926, Pound received a desperate letter from Viven: "Am ill (still ill) not ill again (always ill)." She then details her visits with her specialist, who confirmed that Vivien was starving and reported that she had problems with her liver:

the most terrible huge large vast hideous gastly rock-like shocking incredible L I V E R
I have ever

Berman in the beginning nothing would happen. Berman said 'but wont the fear of going blind ... make him get his teeth fixed????!!!! As you know, I [am] a Confucian, I consider that it is J.J's head, and that if he likes abscesses, that is his own affair.'" Letter dated 10 August 1922 in *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn, 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 216. Also, Richard Aldington reported to Pound: "I saw Joyce in Paris and had a consultation about his daughter Lucia who has been receiving endocrine treatment." Letter in Beinecke Rare Book and MSS Library, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I-IV), Series I, General Correspondence Box 4 Folder 162 [all dates marked on folder as 1925–26].

⁸⁷⁵ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound, dated 19 July 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 548.

⁸⁷⁶ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound, dated 28 July 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 552.

⁸⁷⁷ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound, dated 28 July 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 552.

seen or herd of or herd
tell of in life or on any
living or ded female. M U S T
go V I C H Y in the end.
I think, well—praps.⁸⁷⁸

Additionally, Vivien notes her nervous breakdown and her “trances” and asks Pound, “Do you believe in Liver?” She then begs, “Please E. P. relieve a tormented Celt (Am ½ Welsh ½ Irish). ... Just relieve me on a p. card on 3 points. -o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-.” Pound, in response, wrote Berman with a suggestion of his own treatment for Vivien. Berman responds:

As regards your diagnosis, I regret to say I cannot concur about the feeding of adrenalin. In the first place, adrenalin cannot be fed by mouth because it is not absorbed by the stomach. In the second place, fear states in women are not associated with adrenal, but with thyroid or ovarian trouble or bottle. It is a great pity your patient is not in New York. For I feel sure that if she were and I was given an opportunity to handle the problem, a combination of psychological and endocrine treatment, such as I am accustomed to use daily would clear the situation completely in short order.⁸⁷⁹

Pound continued to pursue Vivien’s cause, and apparently wrote Berman again with details about “pituitary headaches,” as Berman responds in a second letter: “Has she ever tried the leech experiment? The mere matter of the blood pressure being low should never be permitted to interfere as no leech could ever extract enough blood to make any difference.”⁸⁸⁰ Additionally, Pound must have responded to Vivien with Berman’s responses and his own ideas, as Vivien then sent Pound a letter likely with money or a gift: “To Ezra Pound. For medical attendance. Special long distance consultation. With love & thanks.”⁸⁸¹ A later letter, with letterhead “The Stanboroughs. A Modern Hydrotherapeutic Health Institution, Medical and Surgical, Watford, Herts.,” after Vivien’s admittance for mental instability, includes her call for help: “Pull him up o Ezra. S.O.S. Mrs. V. H Eliot.”⁸⁸²

ELIOT’S DIAGNOSIS

Vivien’s ill health undoubtedly affected Eliot’s own health and his writing career. Soon after *The Waste Land* was published, Vivien acknowledged her troublesome state and

⁸⁷⁸ Vivien Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound with no date, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Folder 675.

⁸⁷⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Louis Berman dated 21 July 1926, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV).

⁸⁸⁰ Louis Berman to Ezra Pound dated [1926?], Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV).

⁸⁸¹ Vivien Eliot, letter to Ezra Pound, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Folder 675.

⁸⁸² Vivien Eliot, letter to Ezra Pound dated “Dec. 14,” Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Folder 675.

its effect on Eliot's work. "Perhaps not even you can imagine with what emotions I saw *The Waste Land* go out into the world. It means man who has only his evenings, tired out by 8 hours in the city, and who fills hot water bottles and makes invalid food for his wretchedly unhealthy wife, in between writing."⁸⁸³ Before attempting a cure, Eliot coped with his symptoms without searching for a precise diagnosis. His letters informing of his rest cure merely indicated symptoms he had been experiencing: "[am] run down,"⁸⁸⁴ "I have been feeling very nervous and shaky lately, and have very little self-control,"⁸⁸⁵ "I feel very shaky, and seem to have gone down rapidly."⁸⁸⁶ Eliot refrains from labeling his condition; instead, he uses his physical descriptions or vague pronouns to refer to his condition, pointing to an obvious lack of diagnosis or Eliot's refusal of a diagnosis. "I ought to be very grateful for this, as I suppose I should have to have it some time, and having it now, before there is anything really serious wrong with me."⁸⁸⁷ Eliot initially seemed skeptical of any diagnosis or treatment. "I don't even know that I shall take this man's advice," he admitted.⁸⁸⁸ The reason for Eliot's leave from work was officially recorded as "nervous breakdown,"⁸⁸⁹ although Eliot did not use this terminology in his correspondence. His questioning of the term seems to be reflected in Vivien's description of his ailment in a letter to Bertrand Russell: "As you probably know, Tom is having a bad nervous—or so called—breakdown."⁸⁹⁰ Her hesitancy to label his illness as a nervous breakdown reflected his own hesitancy more than her denial of the term, as she elsewhere emphasizes her view of the seriousness of his illness. "Tom has had rather a serious breakdown," she writes to Scofield Thayer.⁸⁹¹

Whatever vague definition Eliot might have accepted for his illness, he associated Vivien's illness with his own and arranged that she take a rest cure along with him. "I am going to Margate tomorrow, and expect to stay at least a month," Eliot explains. "I am supposed to be alone, but I could [not] bear the idea of starting this treatment quite alone in

⁸⁸³ Vivien Eliot to Sidney Schiff, dated "Monday" [in pencil at top: "answered Oct 19/22"], British Library, Sidney Schiff papers, BL 52918.

⁸⁸⁴ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Wyndham Lewis, dated 30[?] September 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 470.

⁸⁸⁵ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Henry Eliot, dated 3 October 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 471.

⁸⁸⁶ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Richard Aldington, dated 3[?] October 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 473.

⁸⁸⁷ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Henry Eliot dated 3 October 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 471.

⁸⁸⁸ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Wyndham Lewis dated 30 September 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 470.

⁸⁸⁹ Peter Ackroyd, *T. S. Eliot: A Life* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1984), p. 114.

⁸⁹⁰ Vivien Eliot, Letter to Bertrand Russell, dated 1 November 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 482.

⁸⁹¹ Vivien Eliot, Letter to Scofield Thayer, dated 13 October 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 478.

a strange place, and I have asked my wife to come with me and stay with me as long as she is willing. After that she will return here. I hope that Margate will do her a little good too, as she certainly needs it as much as I do.”⁸⁹² Eliot’s perception of his own illness was so vague, he conflated it with his wife’s illness—corresponding with the general labels of “nervous disease” or “neurasthenia” at the time. During his intended rest cure in Margate, Eliot more seriously studied his ailments and attempts to define his condition and diagnose its cause. As he felt he got closer to his diagnosis, he realized that his current rest cure was not working for his condition. Additionally, he realized that his malady was quite distinct from Vivien’s own illness. As Vivien left Margate after two weeks of the joint rest cure, Eliot more seriously considered his condition, and related his predicament to a subject that Pound had written and spoken about considerably—the will. As Pound left Mauberley drifting in the sea, abandoning his will with his oar, Eliot portrays a boat out of control in *The Waste Land*, needing “the hand expert with sail and oar.”⁸⁹³ He emphasizes the need for control of a drifting and unsure will: “The sea was calm, your heart would have responded / Gaily, when invited, beating obedient / To controlling hands.”⁸⁹⁴ Eliot adds in the note to this section that the Upanishad reference in the text, preceding this image of the sail boat with oar—the word *Damyata*—translates to “control.”⁸⁹⁵

In the 1890s, a split occurred among French and American doctors of neurasthenia. Neurasthenia in the nineteenth century encompassed a broad range of symptoms—anxiety, depression, fatigue, disorder of the nerves—many of which fit both Eliot’s and Vivien’s symptoms. Yet increasing specialization began to differentiate neurasthenia of the nerves, or psychological conditions, from a neurasthenia based on the mind or willpower.⁸⁹⁶ The English doctors to whom Eliot was referred, and the specialist at Margate, specialized in neurasthenia of the nerves, often treating psychotic or hysteria patients, and used long rest cures, bed confinement, and sometimes even electrotherapy for treatment.⁸⁹⁷ Pound referred to the increasing societal need for a treatment of the nerves in “Mauberley”: “disillusions as

⁸⁹² T. S. Eliot, Letter to Richard Aldington, dated 13 October 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988).

⁸⁹³ T. S. Eliot, “V. What the Thunder Said,” in *The Waste Land: 1922*, in *T. S. Eliot: The Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 72–75 (p. 74).

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 74.

⁸⁹⁵ Note 401 reads: “‘Datta, dayadhvan, damyata’ (Give, sympathise, control). The fable of the meaning of the Thunder is found in the Brihadaranyaka—Upanishad, 5.I.” *Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁸⁹⁶ Ford Madox Ford was diagnosed with neurasthenia affecting the nerves. His doctor wrote a letter supporting Ford’s decision not to appear in court in the libel case of his wife: “In consequence of certain symptoms of neurasthenia affecting the central circulation, which have recently manifested themselves, I have examined Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer. In my opinion he is not in a fit state to appear in Court.” Albert E. Tebb, letter cited in Violet Hunt, *I Have This to Say: The Story of My Flurried Years* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926), p. 226.

⁸⁹⁷ See Matthew Thomson, “Neurasthenia in Britain: An Overview,” in *Cultures of Neurasthenia: From Beard to the First World War*, ed. by Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Roy Porter (Kenilworth, NJ: Rodopi, 2001), pp. 77–96.

never told in the old days, / hysterias, trench confessions.”⁸⁹⁸ Eliot began to question the appropriateness of his rest cure, as he definitively ruled out any kind of insanity or hysteria. “I went to this specialist [at Margate] on account of his great name,” Eliot explains to a former patient of neurasthenia. “But since I have been here I have wondered whether he is quite the best man for me, as he is known as a nerve man, and I want rather a specialist in psychological troubles.”⁸⁹⁹ Eliot’s use of the word *psychological* corresponds with the turn-of-the-century use of the term, which emphasized a lack of behavioral control rather than psychotic instability.⁹⁰⁰ A 1913 definition of psychology states that the field “is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior.”⁹⁰¹ Eliot insists to Aldington, “Nothing wrong with my mind”⁹⁰² Additionally, he writes Ottoline Morrell, “I never did believe in ‘nerves’, at least for *myself!*”⁹⁰³ On recommendation from Morrell, Eliot researched Dr. Roger Vittoz, a Swiss psychologist who originated a new concept of neurasthenia that he termed *psycheesthesia*, a type of neurasthenia but based on the psyche, or the patient’s history or past trauma. Vittoz theorized that every human had two brains: a subconscious brain, the source of sensations and ideas, and a conscious brain, or the will, reason, and judgment. He states that *psycheesthesia* prevents control between the two brains. His theory attempts “to give the patient the will power, concentration and consciousness which he lacks.”⁹⁰⁴ Eliot questioned a past patient of Vittoz, and specified, “I particularly want your opinion about him as a psychologist.”⁹⁰⁵ In his copy of Vittoz’s book, *Treatment of Neurasthenia by Teaching of Brain Control*,⁹⁰⁶ Eliot marked a passage about “Aboulie,” or “want of will”: “Every idea, every act of will causes a sensation of fear in the mind of the sufferer, he foresees that all

⁸⁹⁸ Ezra Pound, “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 549–63 (p. 552).

⁸⁹⁹ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Huxley dated 26 October 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 480.

⁹⁰⁰ Pound states that the term *psychology* changed during the twentieth century and that his use of the term in the title “Psychology and the Troubadours” implied something different in the early 1910s than it implied in the 1950s. “What is now ‘Psychology and Troubadours’ in new edition / Spirit of Romance / title was NOT polluted at that time / wd/ be impossible to use now after three decades of STENCH.” Ezra Pound, Letter to Patricia Hutchins dated 30 October 1953, British Library, Patricia Hutchins Letters, 57725–57726.

⁹⁰¹ “psychology,” *Psychology Review* 20 (1913), 158.

⁹⁰² T. S. Eliot, Letter to Richard Aldington dated 6 November 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 486.

⁹⁰³ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ottoline Morrell dated 30 November 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 490.

⁹⁰⁴ Roger Vittoz, *Treatment of Neurasthenia by Teaching of Brain Control* (London: Longman’s Green & Co., 1911), trans. by H. B. Brooks, p. 43. This is the English translation of Vittoz’s book.

⁹⁰⁵ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Julian Huxley dated 26 October 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 480.

⁹⁰⁶ *The Letters of T. S. Eliot* states in the footnote on page 480 that Eliot read the third French edition (1921).

effort is in vain, and he is paralyzed and fettered by doubt.”⁹⁰⁷ He wrote in pencil, “handwriting” in the margin next to the statement, “The muscles are at first more or less contracted and sometimes painful.” To Vittoz’s former patient, Eliot confirmed, “I shall go to Vittoz. . . . He sounds just the man I want. I am glad you confirm my opinion of English doctors. They seem to specialise either in nerves or insanity!”⁹⁰⁸ By 6 November 1921 in Margate, Eliot had come closer to diagnosing his illness and even attempted to adopt Vittoz’s label of the condition: “my ‘nerves’ are a very mild affair, due, not to overwork, but to an *aboulie* and emotional derangement which has been a lifelong affliction. Nothing wrong with my mind.”⁹⁰⁹ Pound was even more specific with his own diagnosis of Eliot:

I am afraid Eliot has merely gone to pieces again. Abuleia, simply the physical impossibility of correlating his muscles sufficiently to write a letter or get up and move across a room. . . . It is most “undiplomatic”, I dare say you and I have more reasons for wanting to wring his neck than any one else has; I mean we wd. have, or wd. have had, if it were not definitely a pathological state, due to condition of his endocrines.⁹¹⁰

Pound’s diagnosis includes the terminology that Eliot adopted from Vittoz; the reference to correlating the muscles to move relates to the excerpt in Vittoz’s book with which Eliot identified with handwriting. Pound, too, uses the term *Abuleia*, or lack of will, confirming his own theories about the individual will. Additionally, Pound adds his own diagnosis to this information that he must have received directly from Eliot. He identifies Berman’s endocrinology theories with Eliot’s descriptions, further aligning Eliot’s condition to a “pathological” or objectively understood physiological condition. Ultimately, both Pound and Eliot have come to a satisfactory diagnosis of Eliot’s suffering—*abuleia*.

Pound commented to Quinn about Eliot’s continual resistance to control his will to write, which reflects Pound’s opinion that Eliot believed illness resulted in quality writing. Eliot’s own statement about the emergence of *The Waste Land* implies that Eliot viewed his troubles as leading to its creation. After acknowledging Pound’s involvement with his decision to marry Vivien, he adds, “To her [Vivien], the marriage brought no happiness . . . to me, it brought the state of mind out of which came *The Waste Land*.”⁹¹¹ Additionally, Eliot later claimed, “it is commonplace that some forms of illness are extremely favorable,

⁹⁰⁷ Roger Vittoz, *Treatment of Neurasthenia by Teaching of Brain Control* (London: Longman’s Green & Co., 1911), trans. by H. B. Brooks, p. 26. This is the English translation of Vittoz’s book.

⁹⁰⁸ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Julian Huxley dated 31 October 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988).

⁹⁰⁹ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Richard Aldington dated 6 November 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 486.

⁹¹⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to Scofield Thayer dated 9–10 March 1922, in *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 236.

⁹¹¹ *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. xvii.

not only to religious illumination, but to artistic and literary composition.”⁹¹² Eliot indicated to Pound during the editing process of the poem that certain sections related to his recent experiences. They both indicate the “nerves monologue,” which likely refers to the third section, “The Fire Sermon.” In a letter written from Margate, Eliot refers to his writing of this section at Margate:

I have done a rough draft of part of part III, but do not know whether it will do, and must wait for Vivien’s opinion as to whether it is printable. I have done this while sitting in a shelter on the front—as I am out all day except when taking rest. But I have written only some 50 lines, and have read nothing, literally.—I sketch the people, after a fashion, and practise scales on the mandoline.⁹¹³

Eliot asks Pound whether the “sweats with tears” should go in the “nerves monologue,” to which Pound responds, “I dare say the sweats with tears will wait,” likely resulting in:

He wept. He promised “a new start.”
I made no comment. What should I resent’
/
On Margate Sands.
I can connect
Nothing with nothing.

Eliot associates the section referring to Margate with a “nerves monologue,” indicating a single speaker—thus the section in quotation marks—and a focus on the nerves, associated with the Margate specialist. That Eliot indicated that “I *can* connect / Nothing with nothing” [my emphasis], indicates that Eliot believed he had an ability to produce poetry during his illness. Other references deriving from Eliot’s biographical situation make their way into the poem—the sound of the mandolin, for example, drifts into the poem: ““This music crept by me upon the waters’ / The pleasant whining of a mandoline.”⁹¹⁴ These stresses and illnesses, to Eliot, became material for his writing—a source of inspiration which Pound would come to believe was almost addictive, or “pathological.”

Pound’s view, however, was that good health led to the possibility of creating good poetry. He emphasized that most of *The Waste Land* was written while Eliot was

⁹¹² Valerie Eliot notes, “Eliot said that he was describing his own experience in writing this section [Part V] in Lausanne when he wrote *The ‘Pensées’ of Pascal* (1931).” T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts*, ed. Valerie Eliot (London, Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 129. Additionally, Virginia Woolf had published her essay “On Being Ill” a year earlier, in 1930, which expressed similar views. “Incomprehensibility has an enormous power over us in illness, more legitimately perhaps than the upright will allow. In health meaning has encroached upon sound. Our intelligence domineers over our senses. But in illness, with the police off duty, we creep beneath some obscure poem.” Virginia Woolf, “On Being Ill,” *Collected Essays by Virginia Woolf*, Vol. 4 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1967), pp. 193–203 (p. 200).

⁹¹³ T. S. Eliot to Sidney Schiff, dated “Friday night” [in pencil at top: 6 Nov 21], British Library, Sidney Schiff papers, BL 52918.

⁹¹⁴ T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land: 1922* in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 61–80 (p. 69).

recovering, not while he was ill, and was, in fact, finished in Pound's flat in Paris. Pound wrote Quinn and connected Eliot's poem to his treatment: "Eliot came back from his Lausanne specialist looking O.K.; and with a damn good poem (19 pages) in his suit case, same finished up here."⁹¹⁵ Pound saw evidence that Eliot produced most of his poetry while regaining his health. In Margate, Eliot stated that he wrote about 50 lines; in Lausanne, he wrote at least the remaining 384 lines, plus three short sections that were later removed. After Eliot left Margate for Lausanne, he stopped in Paris to leave Vivien under the Pounds' care. It was during this time, after November 18, that Eliot showed Pound this version of the poem, which Pound began editing. He marked passages "*Echt*," meaning authentic, and crossed out other passages for deletion. This early editing and assistance, before Eliot wrote the majority of *The Waste Land*, was likely why Pound claimed to be the "sage-homme" of the poem. He helped birth the poem with his editing and suggestions before the majority of the poem was written, and perhaps most importantly, through his encouragement of Eliot's regained health and will to write. Eliot maintained a dependence on Pound during this period, as he left and returned from Pound's flat in Paris for his Lausanne treatment. He even gave correspondents Pound's address to contact him after his Lausanne treatment, as he notes he was planning to arrive in Paris around 5 January until his return to London on 15 January.⁹¹⁶ As Eliot acknowledged, the creation of most of the final poem corresponded with his final treatment in Switzerland. "I have written, mostly when I was at Lausanne for treatment last winter, a long poem of about 450 words [lines], which, with notes that am adding, will make a book of 30 or 40 pages. I think it is the best I have ever done, and Pound thinks so too."⁹¹⁷ Eliot cared about Pound's opinion of his work, which undoubtedly transferred also to Pound's views about Eliot's health. In Pound's lists of editorial directions for *The Waste Land* in January, he adds, with an almost forgiving tone, "The bad nerves is O.K. as now led up to."⁹¹⁸ Pound believed that while Eliot could draw from his experiences while ill, his true literary production developed while he was healthy, or in the process of becoming healthy.

This is why Pound, on first receiving news of Eliot's rest cure, supported the idea, despite the traditional definition of a rest cure indicating an absolute refrain from productivity while confined to a bed. "Eliot has been ordered away for 3 months rest," he

⁹¹⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn postmarked 21 February 1922, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 205.

⁹¹⁶ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Andre Gide dated 14 December 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), pp. 494–95.

⁹¹⁷ T. S. Eliot, Letter to John Quinn dated 25 June 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 530.

⁹¹⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to T. S. Eliot dated 24 December 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 497.

wrote his parents. “It is high time.”⁹¹⁹ For Pound, this opportunity evidently would lead to better overall health, yet ultimately he believed in the paradoxical notion that Eliot would be asserting his will even by doing nothing. The mere movement to a specialist and leaving for a rest cure would demonstrate Eliot’s assertion of will. Pound had stated to Quinn that he had seen Eliot during Pound’s brief visit to London in October 1921, and noted that the prospect of leisure enlivened Eliot before embarking on the rest cure. This observation signaled to Pound that a formal treatment would be beneficial for rejuvenating Eliot’s will to work—an issue that Pound had addressed for years.⁹²⁰

POST-WASTE LAND

Included in Pound’s editorial directions for *The Waste Land* to Eliot was a seemingly out-of-place or bawdy statement that, in actuality, could relate to Pound’s interest about the will and productivity. “May your erection never grow less,” Pound wrote. “I had intended to speak to you seriously on the subject, but you seemed so mountany gay while here in the midst of Paris that the matter slipped my foreskin.”⁹²¹ Pound had been reading and translating de Gourmont, and had just finished translating the manuscript notes “The Dust of Sparrows” and the book *The Natural Philosophy of Love*.⁹²² As Eliot had often mentioned de Gourmont in his letters to Pound,⁹²³ Pound likely had wanted to inform Eliot of the theories he had encountered during the translation. Although the book was not published until 1922, Pound had dated his postscript to the book as 21 June 1921. In the postscript, Pound summarizes one of de Gourmont’s claims—“that the brain itself, is, in origin and development, only a sort of great clot of genital fluid held in suspense or reserve.”⁹²⁴ He explains his theory further—that the mind ultimately evolves from sperm, taking on more development than from the female ovule:

⁹¹⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Isabel Pound dated 22 October 1921, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2683.

⁹²⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 22 October 1921, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991).

⁹²¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to T. S. Eliot dated 27[?] January 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 505.

⁹²² Pound’s translation of *Physique de l’amour*, or *The Natural Philosophy of Love*, was published in 1922 by Boni & Liveright. The publishers inserted in at least some copies a disclaimer that the book was intended only for members of the medical profession. The book was first published in England in 1926 by the Casanova Society. Donald Gallup, “Some Notes on Ezra Pound and Censorship,” *The Yale Literary Magazine*, 126.5 (December 1958), pp. 37–41 (p. 40).

⁹²³ His letter to Dorothy Pound on 22 May 1921, for example, expresses interest that the Pounds were living near the former home of Remy de Gourmont. “I am delighted to have your address at last, in an official channel, and to know that you are installed so near the ghost of Rémy.” T. S. Eliot, Letter to Dorothy Pound, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 456.

⁹²⁴ *Pavannes and Divagations* (London: Peter Owen Ltd., 1960), p. 203.

Thought is a chemical process, the most interesting of all transfusions in liquid solution. The mind is an upspurt of sperm, no, let me alter that; trying to watch the process: the sperm, the form-creator, the substance which compels the ovule to evolve in a given pattern, on microscopic, miniscule particle, entering the “castle” of the ovule.

Pound, in a sense, repeats his earlier recurring images of “an upspurt” or liquid shooting upwards as an image of energy and power. In this interpretation of de Gourmont’s theory, Pound identifies this image with sperm and equates it to the mind—associating the intellect and the source of willpower with the male sperm. He then further repeats that “thought is a ‘chemical process’ in relation to the organ, the brain.”⁹²⁵ Like his endocrinology studies, Pound explains the notion of thought—the origin of the mind and the root of creativity—as an empirically understood chemical progress. He further links the mind to creativity: “Creative thought is an act like fecundation, like the male cast of the human seed.”⁹²⁶ He specifically associates creativity with the sexual act of fertilization. The brain and its associated functions, which he lists as the “will,” a “clearer understanding,” and “physical refreshment and vigour,”⁹²⁷ is “the very fluid of life itself.”⁹²⁸ When Pound notes to Eliot that he had “wished to speak to you seriously on the subject” of sex, he could have intended, at least in part, to discuss the de Gourmont theories that linked sex to creativity. Pound’s quip, “May your erection never grown less,” could refer to Pound’s desire for Eliot to remain productive, following up on *The Waste Land* with similarly powerful works.

Pound’s “Sage Homme” poem continues the sexual-creative metaphor originating with his translations of de Gourmont. Eliot, a male “Mother” of the poem, conceived a poem that was “Sire[d] by a Muse,” corresponding with creativity—or genital fluid—acting as the sire of the poem.⁹²⁹ Eliot’s labor and birthing of his poem could not have been successful without Pound, who carried out the “caesarean Operation.” He specifically refers to Eliot’s poetic sperm: “His foaming and abundant cream / Has coated his world. The coat of a dream; / Or say that the upjut of his sperm / Has rendered his senses pachyderm.” Pound states that Eliot’s mind, then, has created thick skin, or resilience, for his senses despite any previous setback; he has rejuvenated his senses because of his creative will and force. Pound, too, had also referred to poems as children previously, evidently playing off the notion of de Gourmont’s theory of the sperm as originator of creative offspring. Pound earlier in 1921 had told Eliot that Joyce had “given birth to a son,” referring to the

⁹²⁵ Ibid., p. 206.

⁹²⁶ Ibid., p. 207.

⁹²⁷ Ibid., pp. 211–12.

⁹²⁸ Ibid., p. 214.

⁹²⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to T. S. Eliot dated 24 December 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), pp. 497–99 (p. 498).

development of *Ulysses* that year.⁹³⁰ Additionally, he previously had anticipated what his own offspring would be like, in his fictional “Imaginary Letters” in *The Little Review*. He writes that he “would produce only a victim—beautiful perhaps, but a victim: expiring of aromatic pain from the jasmine, lacking in impulse, a mere bundle of discriminations.”⁹³¹ Although the excerpt should not be read as a literal statement from Pound, the statement seems to portray Pound’s state of mind when corresponding with Eliot during and after the editing process of *The Waste Land*. Pound continually refers to his own frustrated attempts at progressing with his *Cantos*. “Complimenti, you bitch,” he writes Eliot, further continuing the mother metaphor with him. “I am wracked by the seven jealousies, and cogitating an excuse for always exuding my deformative secretions in my own stuff, and never getting an outline.”⁹³² He characterizes his own failed attempts at creativity and production as “deformative secretions,” or semen leading to a deformed offspring. “Art should embellish the umbelicus,” he adds, further extending the opinion that a creative mind should result in offspring. In a letter to Quinn after editing *The Waste Land*, Pound reports on this poem and *Ulysses*. “Am trying to emit adequate ejaculations,” he adds.⁹³³

What Pound encountered after Eliot’s visit after Lausanne was Eliot’s immediate return to illness. “Complimenti appreciated,” Eliot replied to Pound, “as have been excessively depressed.”⁹³⁴ Pound wrote Quinn with a tone of exasperation, “Wadsworth in yesterday on way to Marseilles reported that Eliot was again ill.” His choice of word *again* ... “I am worried about Eliot,” Pound writes in February 1922, “remains to be seen whether he can function.”⁹³⁵ He portrays Eliot as near-death,⁹³⁶ gasping for air: “E is at his last gasp. Has had one breakdown. We have got to do something at once.”⁹³⁷ Eliot, meanwhile, was considering retiring from writing: “am about ready to chuck up literature altogether and retire: I don’t see why I should go on forever fighting a rearguard action against time,

⁹³⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to Isabel Pound dated 18 September 1921, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), Series II, Pound Family Correspondence, Box 59, Folder 2673.

⁹³¹ Ezra Pound, “Imaginary Letters. IV. (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn),” *Little Review*, 4.5 (September 1917), 20–22. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C282, 268–69 (p. 268).

⁹³² Ezra Pound, Letter to T. S. Eliot dated 24 December 1921, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), pp. 497–99 (p. 498).

⁹³³ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn postmarked 21 February 1922, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 206.

⁹³⁴ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 24? January 1922, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. I, ed. by Valerie Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 504.

⁹³⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 21 February 1922, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 205.

⁹³⁶ Woolf—who later wrote an essay proclaiming illness to be a great stimulant of writing—reported that she saw Eliot broken down in his flat, with blurry eyes and ashen skin and unable to get up to show them out. Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot’s Early Years* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 123.

⁹³⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to William Carlos Williams dated 18 March 1922, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951).

fatigue and illness, and complete lack of recognition of these 3 facts.”⁹³⁸ He complains to Pound about his commitments with the *Criterion* and his lack of time: “I have not even time to go to a dentist or to have my hair cut ... I am worn out. I cannot go on.”⁹³⁹ Pound organized the elaborate Bel Espirit scheme, which attempted to gather patrons to financially support Eliot so he would not have to continue working his day job at Lloyd’s Bank.⁹⁴⁰ In his Bel Espirit leaflet, Pound states, “We are not a home for sick animals.”⁹⁴¹ This line glimpses Pound’s hope for a final rejuvenation of Eliot, physically and creatively. In later years, Pound continued to associate Eliot with illness and disease. When writing about Eliot’s turn to Christianity, Pound responded, “His diagnosis is wrong. His remedy is an irrelevance.”⁹⁴² And years later, Eliot responded to Pound in an exasperated letter, evidently replying to Pound’s – that Eliot was associated with a disease. “I don’t understand,” Eliot wrote in pencil, underlining *don’t* three times, “what *is* the disease? Should prefer [prefer underlined twice] your own unfinished medication. Do you think I have brain suffering? This gives me a jolt. T.”⁹⁴³

In a “Paris Letter” written by Pound to publicize the Bel Espirit program, Pound discusses a question evidently posed by Eliot himself. “Eliot asks for someone to sort out the universal and provincial elements in Dickens.”⁹⁴⁴ Pound responds that Dickens and other “provincial writers” make tragedy “disappear” to create a happy ending. They create an “‘answer,’ which the author and reader know.” Pound, however, responds that good writers, such as Flaubert, avoid this easy answer and avoid the concept of a universal will controlling man.

⁹³⁸ Schiff papers, BL 52918. 20.iv.22. Also published in Letters TSE to Sydney Schiff. 20 April 1922. P. 522.

⁹³⁹ T. S. Eliot to Ezra Pound, qtd. in Donald Gallup, *T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound: Collaborators in Letters* (New Haven: Henry W. Wenning / C. A. Stonehill, 1970), p. 25.

⁹⁴⁰ William Carlos Williams, just one intended patron, had sent two contributions, one of \$25 and one of \$5, each earned from delivering babies. He writes Pound on 29 March 1922, “Twenty five dollars I enclose were paid me by a jew named Katz. His wife had a baby last week. They own a steam laundry here. This is her third son. She leaned on the bed post and screamed enough to waken the saints—it was a Sunday afternoon. Before the baby came I made her go to bed. She shit on the bed. Then she bled all over the sheet. It leaked thru on the matrass [sic]. When a child is born the scrotum is—a male child—swollen and loose: like yours on a hot day at Lago de Garda. This child had an unusually full bag. Woe unto christianity. The woman’s breasts weigh (estimated) five pounds each. She stinks like hell—.” In a letter to Pound of 5 May 1922, Williams enclosed \$5 with an account of a forceps delivery, from which he earned the donation. *Pound/Williams: Selected Letter of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams*, ed. by Hugh Witemeyer (New York: New Directions, 1996), p. 49, 58, 61.

⁹⁴¹ Bel Espirit leaflet London 1922. 3page leaflet, folded “This Notice for private circulation only.” Printed by John Rodker, 1922. In Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV).

⁹⁴² Lyndall Gordon, *Eliot’s Early Years* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 69.

⁹⁴³ T. S. Eliot, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 1940, in Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43 (Series I–IV), folder 671.

⁹⁴⁴ Ezra Pound, “Paris Letter. August 1922,” *Dial*, 73.3 (September 1922), 332–37. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C646, 254–58 (p. 258).

With Flaubert, with the writer of first magnitude there is no answer, humanity being what it is, and the given character moving inside its own limitations there is *no* easy way out; the given situation has arisen, and will continue to arise; the impasse is a biological impasse. Human capacity, perseverance, endurance continuing static, it will continue to be an impasse. Hence the idea of literature assuming the duties of a science—despite the sentimentalist’s shudder and the lazy man’s objection to the term “science.” I take it that good poets have always believed this.

Pound referred to “good poets” that summer in a letter to his former university professor Felix Schelling. After noting that he was attempting to finish his first eleven cantos and hoped to “bring them into a design later,” he adds, “The fact that Arnaut, and Guido were psychological, almost physiological diagnosticians does interest me.”⁹⁴⁵ He compares this scientific aspect of their writing with “Provençal ‘poetry romantic,’” which, he says, “doesn’t so much interest me.” This is what Pound must have meant when he wrote another “Paris Letter,” emphasizing a line in the article with italics: “*A great literary masterwork is made for minds quite as serious as those engaged in the science of medicine*” [his emphasis].⁹⁴⁶

⁹⁴⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to Felix Schelling dated 8 July 1922, University of Pennsylvania Department of Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Folder 8 Schelling, Felix Emanuel [1916-1933].

⁹⁴⁶ Ezra Pound, “Paris Letter. May, 1922. Ulysses [by James Joyce],” *Dial*, 72.6 (June 1922) 623–29. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C642, 236–42 (p. 241).

“THE DATA OF HYGIENE”⁹⁴⁷: LANGUAGE OF CLEANLINESS AND FILTH

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION

The generation of Ezra Pound was the first to incorporate the practical effects of Louis Pasteur’s invalidation of spontaneous generation. This discovery produced germ theory and antiseptic and aseptic practices in scientific fields such as medicine—practices which made their way into the daily life of the general public. This discovery eventually affected the everyday routines of the common man—a practical use and power that impressed Pound. This type of applied science, which Pound thought more valuable than a theoretical science, appealed to Pound and became a model of rhetoric in his poetic theory. Pound sought to incorporate the practical influence of this early biological discovery with his own poetic theories—merging the practical with the linguistic—and he hoped his theories would similarly reach and affect a wide audience. Writing a half-century after Pasteur’s initial findings, Pound equates literature with science because of their use of “the data of hygiene.”⁹⁴⁸ “The arts, literature, poesy, are a science, just as chemistry is a science.” He adds, “If any sciences save medicine and chemistry were more able to determine what things were compatible with physical wellbeing,” he says in comparison with the literary arts, “then those sciences would be of more value for providing the data of hygiene.” Pound associates literature with science, and physical wellbeing with hygiene. Of the sciences, he gives medicine and chemistry a dominant role in understanding “the nature of man,” thereby placing emphasis on the empirical sciences and materiality in his poetic philosophy. Using a series of metaphors throughout his early career, Pound incorporates hygienic language into his poetic theory. This scientific tendency creates a stark, bare, clean mode of writing with an emphasis on objective materiality. This incorporation of materiality, however, also carries the potential of contamination. Pound was aware of both physical and theoretical contamination and became acutely hygienic in both his daily routine of cleanliness and his poetic theories warning against contamination. This development of a rhetorical and a practical awareness of hygiene hints at a societal connotation of the term hygiene—a cleansing of the socially unfit and unwell—which, too, appealed to Pound. This pattern of thinking and use of rhetoric, then, reflects a deeper belief system that would become more evident in Pound’s later years.

⁹⁴⁷ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: I[-II],” *New Freewoman*, 1.9 (15 October 1913), 161–63. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C106, 186–88 (p. 187).

⁹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, C106, 187.

POUND'S EARLY INTEREST IN HYGIENE

The hygienic revolution and the sanitary sciences rapidly developed from 1875, following a series of scientific discoveries, such as Pasteur's germ theory of fermentation, putrefaction, and disease; Lister's use of antiseptics in surgery; and the discovery of a bacillus for typhoid fever. New, modern sciences of pathology, aseptic surgery, bacteriology, and immunology were created, as the cause and mode of the transmissions of diseases were better understood.⁹⁴⁹ These scientific discoveries created a revolution in public health during Pound's final decade of American residence. In 1904, the United States Bureau of Labor reported that nearly 80 percent of the ninety-nine indoor and outdoor bathing facilities in America had been established between 1895 and 1904. This same decade also saw the rapid development of public institutions strongly associated with or influenced by hygiene, including sanitary inspection, garbage collection, paved streets and sidewalks, and hospitals.⁹⁵⁰ Pound refers to public reform movements, and to hygienic education specifically, in a *New Age* article in 1917. He views hygienic education as spreading slowly through the masses, just as the modernization of literature spreads slowly. "I am not sure there is any 'swing of the pendulum,'" he states. "The idea, or the mood, seems to rise from one man or from a small group and flows out like mud or lava over the people, overcovering and making its strata upon similar effluvia antecedent."⁹⁵¹ Ironically using a simile of filth, Pound uses his perception of the slow progress of hygiene education to illustrate the slow movement of artistic and social reform. He continues:

They tell me that Maxim Gorky's mother spent a great part of her life saying to her neighbours, "You should wash more. If you would wash more you would not have so many lice." We smile from the heights of our superior Hesperian cleanliness. Yet to judge from our periodicals the vast majority of our neighbours do not know enough science. . . . If it takes him on an average of, say, ten years to learn this simple principle of hygiene and happiness, how long, etc., will it take him to learn to wield a vote, and decide on the most expeditious way towards the happiness of the race, the happiness of a multitude of various people?

Pound places the hygienically aware in the sphere of the Hesperides, or the idealic garden in the far western corner of the world. He associates hygiene with happiness and implies that hygiene is just the first step in the progress of civilization towards greater social issues, such as practicing one's freedom to vote.

⁹⁴⁹ Ellwood P. Cubberley, *History of Education* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 1991), p. 469.

⁹⁵⁰ David Glassberg, "The Design of Reform: The Public Bath Movement in America," in *Sickness and Health in America*, ed. by Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald L. Numbers (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), pp. 485–93 (p. 485).

⁹⁵¹ Ezra Pound, "Studies in Contemporary Mentality XI: The Bright and Snappy," *New Age*, 22.1 (1 November 1917), 10–11. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C300, 300–01 (p. 300).

Pound often expresses interest in the hygienic practices of the family, which were seemingly developed from his childhood experiences.⁹⁵² He speaks of “untidy families” in his 1913 poem “Salutation,” reflecting the practice of hygiene in family units.⁹⁵³ The public health movement spread its sanitation message through family-based efforts, which initially resonated in the upper and middle classes.⁹⁵⁴ A survey in 1877 showed that the “better” classes cleaned themselves in at least a weekly bath, while the lower classes did not practice the “regular and systematic use of the bath” in the family home. By the turn of the century, when community baths became available for the urban poor who did not have plumbing in their homes, the Pound family house featured three bathrooms. Pound’s home from 1893 for 16 years included three bathrooms, a kitchen, seven bedrooms, and seven other living and sitting areas.⁹⁵⁵ The three-member Pound family paid \$6,000 to buy the house. The costs to plumb their home, according to 1890 estimations, would have amounted to about \$1,200, or 20 percent of the total building cost.⁹⁵⁶ These figures increased from 12 percent of the total building cost in 1860, which accounts for the more sophisticated bathroom fixtures of non-porous “vitreous china” baths and toilets, and tiled floors and walls, sometimes with a “cove base” or “hospital” tiles on the wall’s edges—“patent dustproof corners,”⁹⁵⁷ as Pound called them—which curved the transition between right angles to prevent dirt or water collection.⁹⁵⁸

Pound’s association of hygienic practices with his family could also originate from their acute religious observance associated with bodily cleanliness. As his parents were practicing Presbyterians, the family was likely familiar with a literally puritan notion of cleanliness, including the concept of personal hygiene and physical health—which was

⁹⁵² Pound’s sense of responsibility as a father to teaching correct hygienic principles can be seen in his daughter’s memoirs. His daughter, Mary de Rachewiltz, who was raised by Northern Italian peasants after her illegitimate birth in the mid-’20s, wrote of a childhood meeting with Pound, whom she saw very rarely: “As soon as she (Mamme) [her foster mother] left the room Tattile [Pound] showed great concern over my dirty fingernails. He fumbled in his luggage as though he were looking for something vital. . . . He found his nail file and scissors and cut and cleaned my fingernails. What about brushing my teeth? Sometimes I did. And the brush? Well, somewhere. No reproach or criticism, but the next day we went to Bruneck to equip me with brushes.” Mary de Rachewiltz, *Ezra Pound, Father and Teacher: Discretions* (New York: New Directions, 1975).

⁹⁵³ Ezra Pound, “Salutation,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 265. First published in *Poetry* in April 1913 and *New Freewoman* on 15 August 1913.

⁹⁵⁴ “Public Health and Personal Hygiene,” in *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine*, ed. by Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald L. Numbers (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), p. 483.

⁹⁵⁵ Noel Stock, *Ezra Pound’s Pennsylvania* (Toledo, OH: Friends of the University of Toledo’s Libraries, 1976), p. 7. The living and sitting areas consist of a dining room, large hall, front and back parlours, pantry, sitting room, and storeroom.

⁹⁵⁶ Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873–1913* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 90.

⁹⁵⁷ Ezra Pound, “George Antheil,” *The Criterion*, 2 (1924), 321–31 (p. 330).

⁹⁵⁸ Ellen Lupton and J. Abbott Miller, *The Bathroom, The Kitchen, and the Aesthetics of Waste* (New York: Kiosk, 1992), p. 31.

possibly one aspect of the Pound family's missionary work among the Italian immigrants in the Philadelphia community. Pound refers to this work with Italian immigrants in America in a 1913 article, in which he details unhygienic squalors of urbanity, including a man Pound passed on a sidewalk who had lost a leg and whose "cicatrice was still red" and his encounters with "odours, etc.!"⁹⁶¹ The religious, puritanical association of physical cleanliness with spiritual cleanliness influenced the American impression of cleanliness at the turn of the century, and Pound's upbringing in a household that readily ascribed to these notions was one American influence that persisted with Pound throughout his life.

BATHING AND CLEANLINESS

One result of the hygienic revolution was the evolution of the bathroom. Between 1870 and 1930, bathtubs became fixtures in American households.⁹⁶² Pound's references to the bathtub, and to aspects of the bathroom in general, portray the significance of these novelties in popular culture. For example, Pound refers to the mass-production of bathtubs in a 1915 article "The Renaissance" by comparing them to the mass-production of poetry. "Some good enough poet will be spoiled by trying to write stuff as vendible as bath-tubs."⁹⁶³ By associating the appeal and popularity of the bathtub with a poet's desire to sell poetry, Pound criticizes the poet who aspires to popular reception. He also refers to the connotations of cleanliness when referencing the bathroom. Arguing for the merits of an electric locomotive over the coal train, Pound states, "The engineer's cab is clean as a porcelain bath-tub."⁹⁶⁴ Additionally, in describing Mauberley's gaze at a woman's face, he describes the woman's skin with "the glow of porcelain ... Tempered as if / It were through a perfect glaze."⁹⁶⁵ The 1912 poem "The Bath Tub" directly addresses bathing in a simile of a man's cooling passion for a woman: "As a bathtub lined with white porcelain, / When the hot water gives out or goes tepid."⁹⁶⁶ In yet another metaphor using the bathtub, Pound refers to the artist's choice of subject and the responsibility to group this subject with modern science in a 1914 essay on Vorticism. "The artist is born to pick and choose, and *group with science*, these elements, that the result may be beautiful." He then describes images formed from the reflection of the water in his morning bath and aligns these images with his praise

⁹⁶¹ Ezra Pound, "Through Alien Eyes: II," *New Age*, 12.12 (23 January 1913), 275–76. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C70, 115–16 (p. 115).

⁹⁶² Sigfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 701–03.

⁹⁶³ Ezra Pound, "The Renaissance: II," *Poetry*, 5 (1915), 283–87 (p. 287).

⁹⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, "The City," *The Exile*, 2 (1928), p. 224.

⁹⁶⁵ Ezra Pound, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 547–63 (p. 560).

⁹⁶⁶ Ezra Pound, "The Bath Tub," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 279. Also "Zenita: VII," *Smart Set*, 41.4 (December 1913), 47–48. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C116, 205–06 (p. 206).

of 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 pattern 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 new chords, new keys of design.”⁹⁶⁷ In each of these metaphors or images incorporating the bathtub or the notion of bathing, Pound uses a symbol of everyday practice for the middle or upper class. This use associates his poetry—possibly unintentionally—with the “better” classes, but also introduces the connotations of cleanliness and bareness into his poetry through the use of subject matter. This insertion of cleanliness on the subject level, combined with the cleanliness of the form on a poetic-theory level, produces for Pound a poem celebrating the hygienic and the modernly new.

When Pound moved to Europe in 1908, he did not find a porcelain or streamlined style of modern design in the bathroom, which might have been one cause for his moving boarding houses at least six times during his first year in London.⁹⁶⁸ In an article in the *New Age*, published five years after arriving in London, Pound described his first boarding-house experiences.

During the prelude of my London experience ... before people began to let me into their drawing-rooms—I was permitted, even forced, to notice some of the viscera of the metaphorical beast ... the implacable dullness of Suburbia ... boarding-houses, complete with billiard table (no cushions), bath (out of order), hot and cold water (geyser not working), pink, frilly paper decorations, complete board and lodging, 12s. 6d. per week. ... Foods, unthinkable and unimaginable, odours, etc.! And I haven’t been anywhere near the bottom. I’ve been far enough.⁹⁶⁹

He later referred to a boarding-house odor in a simile for the “pathology” or ill-health of contemporary writing. He states that some writing styles are “nauseating,” and these “aromas of mind ... rise through a man’s writing as the smell of boiling cabbage ascends from the basement of a cheap lodging-house, filling all the interstices.”⁹⁷⁰ He further portrays his own disgust towards this literary influence by emphasizing the permeation of this odor: “You cannot pick it from the mantelpiece in the dining-room, you cannot detach it from the curtains in the third-floor back, and yet it is ‘everywhere present.’” Pound further

⁹⁶⁷ Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Marvell Press, 1960), p. 126.

⁹⁶⁸ J. J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 4. According to Wilhelm, Pound lived briefly on Portland Place when he arrived on 14 August 1908. He then moved to a northeastern suburb of Islington, then to Duchess Street. On September 27 he moved to 48 Langham Street. The beginning of September he moved to Hammersmith, then in September 1909 to Church Walk.

⁹⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, “Through Alien Eyes: II,” *New Age*, 12.12 (23 January 1913), 275–76. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C70, 115–16 (p. 115).

⁹⁷⁰ Ezra Pound, “Vadueville,” *Athenaeum*, 94.4692 (2 April 1920), 457–58. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C560, 43–44 (p. 43).

uses the unhygienic boarding house to speak about the circumstances facing young poets attempting to live in the city. “There are cheap and convenient lodgings, though you ought to have more plumbing than is usually found in them.”⁹⁷¹ It was in these boarding houses that Pound found himself living among different classes and nationalities, alongside varied manners and expectations of hygiene. He again shows his hygienic tendencies when writing about a fellow boarder at mealtime: “it was not a native, but an American officer, whom I saw combing his hair at table, between the soup and the fish.” Pound adds, “I was on the other side of the room, far enough to feel that my food was secure.”⁹⁷² Pound addresses the man as an “American officer” with higher expectations in hygienic behavior than that of a European “native.” That Pound notes these lapses in hygienic practice, and writes about them, shows his early hygienic tendencies. Additionally, his portrayal of these instances as obviously unhygienic—such as the officer combing his hair at mealtime—implies that Pound believes that his audience holds a similar standard of hygiene to which he adheres. This insight into Pound’s subject and mode of presentation in his prose writing further reveals the proportionally small, upper to middle class readership—similar to Pound himself—to which Pound imagined he was addressing.

In his initial settling-in period in London, Pound eventually moved to a small room on the top floor of a grocer’s family home in Kensington. This shared living space forced Pound to adopt the living conditions and standards of those around him. He paid 8 shillings a week for the room and use of its furnishings: an iron bedstead, a mahogany washstand that opened into a table which Pound used as a desk, and a small bathtub that slid under the bed for concealment. Robert Frost recalled that when he first called on Pound at his home, he was told to go up the stairs to his room, where he found Pound in his bath, which Pound later recalled as a “tub/ but not hip/ more like byby’s bawth.”⁹⁷³ He filled the small tub with cans of water from the kitchen boiler, and when not in use, the family used the tub when the roof leaked or they had trouble with plumbing.⁹⁷⁴ His toilet, in an outhouse in his backyard, was located near the graveyard of St Mary Abbot’s Church next door to his home.⁹⁷⁵ The urban graveyard became for Victorians and Edwardians an issue of public health and planning. As traditional churchyards within the city became spatially inadequate, public sentiment looked towards suburban, more spacious graveyards, thus leaving the pre-

⁹⁷¹ Ezra Pound, “Through Alien Eyes: IV,” *New Age*, 12.14 (6 February 1913), 324. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C73, p. 118.

⁹⁷² Ezra Pound, “Pastiche. The Regional: III,” *New Age*, 25.11 (10 July 1919), 188. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C475, 317–18 (p. 318).

⁹⁷³ British Library, Patricia Hutchins papers, Correspondence between Patricia Hutchins and Ezra Pound, 1953–1959, 57725 Vol I, ff. 1-164 (f. 70)

⁹⁷⁴ British Library, Patricia Hutchins papers, Correspondence between Patricia Hutchins and Ezra Pound, 1953–1959, 57725 Vol I, ff. 1-164 (f. 70)

⁹⁷⁵ British Library, Patricia Hutchins papers, Correspondence between Patricia Hutchins and Ezra Pound, 1953–1959, 57725 Vol I, ff. 1-164

Victorian cemeteries as symbols of the decaying past that contrasted with the vitality of the city around it.⁹⁷⁶ As Pound's window looked out towards this graveyard, his writing desk, too, carried associations with filth, or the attempt to clean this filth. As Pound's furnishings were consistent with late-Victorian portable washing appliances—often considered unsightly and were boxed or encased for concealment—his washstand folded to become his writing desk.

Pound was particular about his bathing, even while traveling. In Italy in 1912, he complained in a letter to Dorothy Shakespear that his preoccupation with rewriting his *Gironde* travel book prevented him from bathing that morning: “The thought is thoroughly exhaustive, so thoroughly exhausting, in fact, that it is now high noon and I am not yet tubbed.”⁹⁷⁷ This statement seems to imply a daily practice of bathing once a day in the mornings—far more frequently than other Europeans or Americans in this time period. The following year he wrote in a letter his predicament about shaving: “I am now reduced to the problem of ‘la barba’—if I go out first, I shall get cold in my face & my fingers (too cold for the operation), and if I shave now the sun will be lower when I go out.”⁹⁷⁸ His standard for bathing in London is further revealed in a letter to an aspiring poet who wanted to move to London. “Only you omit the most important detail, namely price of said room WITH BAWTH. ... I find a bath can be dispensed with,” he tells her, “PROVIDED one have a geyser that will make the liquid for dumpable detached bath really hot. Whereas the damp coolish hot bath of a boarding house is disgusting.”⁹⁷⁹ Within six months of this letter, he arranged for funding for James Joyce and his family to live in Zurich. He emphasized the need for Joyce to live in cleanliness: “Can you send me an estimate of what it costs you, your wife and the two (is it two?) children to live in Zurich at present (naturally, not with luxury but in a clean place, *devoid of bugs*” [his emphasis].⁹⁸⁰ Within three years, upon contemplating a return to America, his own preferences for a bath and hot water are specified in a letter requesting the “H. C. L.,” or the high cost of living, for these luxuries. “Has the time come, or is it coming, when I can return to America?” he asks. “One cdnt.

⁹⁷⁶ Samantha Matthews, “The London Necropolis: Suburban Cemeteries and the Necropolitan Imaginary” in *A Mighty Man of Brick and Smoke: Victorian and Edwardian Representations of London*, ed. by Lawrence Phillips (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 257–82 (p. 261).

⁹⁷⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to Dorothy Shakespear, dated 17 September 1912, *Ezra Pound and Dorothy Shakespear: Their Letters 1909–1914*, ed. by Omar Pound and A. Walton Litz (New York: New Directions, 1984), p. 158.

⁹⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to Dorothy Shakespear, dated 12 April 1913, *Ezra Pound and Dorothy Shakespear: Their Letters 1909–1914*, ed. Omar Pound and A. Walton Litz (New York: New Directions, 1984), p. 200.

⁹⁷⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Iris Barry, dated 25 January 1917, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 159–60 (p. 159).

⁹⁸⁰ Ezra Pound, 1 June 1916, in *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce*, ed. by Forrest Read (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p. 76. Pound was applying on behalf of Joyce for a grant from The War Emergency Fund of The Incorporated Society of Authors, Playwrights, and Composers.

live out of New York. I shd. like three rooms, a bath and a gas stove; though I suppose two rooms, if large enough, wd. serve. At any rate I must have a convenient means of getting plenty of hot water (which might bar the cheaper and more dilapidated rooms in Greenwich village).”⁹⁸¹ After his decision to move to Paris instead of America in 1921, Pound thoroughly cleansed and plumbed his rented flat. He reports in a letter, “Am in the midst of plumbers, gasistes, fumists, stovists, building furniture, and trying to clean the walls of this atelier, untouched since anterior decade.”⁹⁸²

If Pound’s response to his own home and bathing practices portrays a preoccupation with hygiene in the private sphere, his response to the city portrays his apprehension of the filth in the public sphere. “It is nearly impossible to appear clean in London,” Pound states in a letter to his mother in 1913.⁹⁸³ One source of London’s particular unhygienic appearance was its fog. The city’s fog problem reached its peak in the 1890s, yet persisted into the Edwardian era.⁹⁸⁴ Pound reports, for example, that his initial lecture series at the London Polytechnic was a failure because of heavy fog.⁹⁸⁵ According to the Whitaker’s London Almanack, the month of his initial lectures, January 1909, had 14 days of fog.⁹⁸⁶ The fog, due to the pollution in the air caused by, among other things, coal-burning, gave London the nickname “The Big Smoke.”⁹⁸⁷ Pound wrote soon after his return to London from his visit to his home country, “to return to America is like going through some very invigorating, very cleansing sort of bath.”⁹⁸⁸ Although Pound was speaking metaphorically for other ills troubling England, his statement could have double meaning because of London’s fogs and other sanitary problems.

In referencing the effects of the constant filth in the city, Pound in a personal letter home added a comment about the artist Jacob Epstein: “I wish he would wash, but I believe Michel Angelo *never* did, so I suppose it is part of the tradition.”⁹⁸⁹ The importance Pound placed on hygienic bathing is further revealed in his conversational dialogue published in

⁹⁸¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 24 September 1920, in *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 193.

⁹⁸² Ezra Pound, Letter to Scofield Thayer, 5 December 1921, in *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and The Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 222.

⁹⁸³ Ezra Pound, Letter to Isabel W. Pound, November 1913, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 25.

⁹⁸⁴ Peter Brimblecombe, *The Big Smoke: A History of Air Pollution in London Since Medieval Times* (London: Routledge, 1987), p. 111.

⁹⁸⁵ J. J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris: 1908–1925* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), p. 18.

⁹⁸⁶ *Whitaker’s London Almanack* (London: Whitaker’s, 1910), p. 19.

⁹⁸⁷ Peter Brimblecombe, *The Big Smoke: A History of Air Pollution in London Since Medieval Times* (London: Routledge, 1987), p. 111.

⁹⁸⁸ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: IX,” *New Age*, 11.27 (31 October 1912), 635–36. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C60, p. 104.

⁹⁸⁹ Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 182.

the *Little Review* in 1917, “Aux Etuves de Wiesbaden.” This loose translation or version of a fifteenth-century letter highlights the bathing traditions of the citizens near Marseilles during this time.⁹⁹⁰ Historically, bathing practices were motivated by a desire to invigorate the blood system, and modern ideas about bathing as a means of cleaning the body only developed with increased understanding of the science of the skin.⁹⁹¹ Pound, however, with his early–twentieth-century views of bathing, portrays the Weisbaden people as bathing for cleanliness in his own fictional dialogue of the citizens. After the local baths are closed by the local church, the character Maunsier responds, “Their health, I presume, none the better. The Church has always been dead set against washing. . . . Baptism and the last oiling were enough, to his thinking. St Augustine, more genial and human, took a bath to console himself for the death of his mother. I suspect that it was a hot one. Being clean is a pagan virtue.” Here, Pound portrays a medieval mindset, as he asserts, that originated from the Christian church. This belief taught that bathing was unnecessary, as the only bath required for humankind was that of baptism. Pound is using the medieval ignorance of bathing, and the acceptance of religious dogma, to portray the historic hesitance towards hygienic practices. A second character, Poggio, adds:

Say rather a Roman, the Greek philosophers died, for the most part, of lice. Only the system of empire, plus a dilettantism in luxuries, could have brought mankind to the wash-tub. The Christians have made dirt a matter of morals: a son of God can have no need to be cleansed; a worm begotten in sin and foredoomed to eternal damnation in a bottle of the seven great stenches, would do ill to refine his nostrils and unfit himself for his future. For the elect and the rejected alike, washing is either noxious or useless—they must be transcendent at all costs.

Pound satirically praises the reference to an empire bringing “mankind to the wash-tub.” His satire of this medieval Christian thinking aligns the unhygienic in his modern society to the ignorant followers of medieval times in their joint lack of bathing.

Pound seemed to believe that one mark of civilization was the existence and use of plumbing. A modern city, therefore, was not inherently civilized. “It is said that architecture is the first of the arts to arrive in a civilization,” he writes in 1918. “In the middle of the last century architecture gave way to plumbing and sanitation. The best minds in the building trade were not builders but plumbers. An inspection of London’s streets can lead to no other conclusion.”⁹⁹² Pound glorifies the existence of plumbing as a form of the “arts,” almost implying that it provides society a type of beauty as well as utility. He claims that America’s

⁹⁹⁰ Ezra Pound, “Aux Etuves de Weisbaden A.D. 1451,” *Little Review*, 4.3 (July 1917), 12–16. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C263, 223–26.

⁹⁹¹ Richard L. Bushman and Claudia L. Bushman, “The Early History of Cleanliness in America,” *Journal of American History*, 74 (1988), 1213–38 (p. 1223).

⁹⁹² Ezra Pound, “Art Notes. By B. H. Dias: Parallelograms,” *New Age*, 23.25 (17 October 1918), 400–01. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C411, 211–12 (p. 211).

greatest contribution in aesthetics to the rest of the world is the modern bathroom and other hygienic inventions.

If America has given or is to give anything to general aesthetics it is presumably an aesthetic of machinery, of porcelain baths, of cubic rooms painted with Ripolin, hospital wards with patent dustproof corners and ventilating appliances. Only when these spaces become clean enough, large enough, sufficiently nickel-plated, can a sense of their proposition and arrangement breed a desire for order.⁹⁹³

Pound lists inventions related to hygiene as America's supreme contributions in aesthetics and equates hygiene with order. He includes Ripolin, which was a modern form of whitewashing. "The Law of Ripolin," was a modern architectural phrase for whitewashing the extraneous and the unclean. It required a stripping away of the accumulation of mass-produced objects on the wall—wallpaper, hangings, shelves—and replacing it with a bare, stripped, clean wall. Pound equates this bare cleanliness with his desire for order against what he views as the "mess of modernity."⁹⁹⁴ He considers bathrooms and indoor plumbing as a symbol of modernity and describes his time as "the golden era of plumbing" when "the stationary bath-tub made its first bashful appearance." He continues praising plumbing and its effects in this 1918 article: "It was followed by the splendours of porcelain. Never since the days of the Roman decadence has the world known such plumbing as we in this era enjoy. But the art of making house fronts has been wholly eliminated by drains. ... All the brains have gone into devising new and luxurious lines for bath-room fitting and for the bodies of automobiles."⁹⁹⁵ He parallels the Roman innovations of plumbing with that of his own modern period—essentially implying that the modern period can recapture the grandeur of Rome. Additionally, Pound views the economic health of a nation as evident in its level of plumbing. He defines modern wealth not as physical money—as Pound notes, "no one cares a hang about even distribution of blank or stamped strips of paper"—but as luxuries such as the "abundance of good plumbing, baths well heated."⁹⁹⁶ Plumbing, and a means of bathing oneself, therefore becomes central to Pound's definition of a modern civilization. He looks beyond mere symbols, such as the paper of money, and to the everyday objects that can transform a society. He portrayed the bathtub, in this sense, as a symbol of progress. His statements comparing this symbolic progression to his hopes for the progression of literature often conveyed a pessimistic view that innovations in literature did

⁹⁹³ Ezra Pound, "George Antheil," *The Criterion*, 2 (1924), 321–31 (p. 330).

⁹⁹⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to James Joyce dated 12 December 1918, in *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce*, ed. by Forrest Read (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), pp. 147–48 (p. 148).

⁹⁹⁵ Ezra Pound, "Art Notes. By B. H. Dias: Parallelograms," *New Age*, 23.25 (17 October 1918), 400–01. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C411, 211–12 (p. 211).

⁹⁹⁶ Ezra Pound, "Pastiche. The Regional: XV," *New Age*, 25.27 (30 October 1919), 448. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C501, 345–46 (p. 345).

not carry the same power and resonance in society. Pound notes, “my own income will presumably never equal that of a plumber.”⁹⁹⁷

LITERARY CONNECTION WITH PLUMBING

Pound uses metaphors comparing hygienic plumbing innovations with literature precisely because the public would recognize and comprehend his intended meaning. He compares writers who just want to make a living to plumbers; the writers, Pound states, “do the trick” of pretending to write “interesting thought.” He continues, “Trade has brought us a generation of writers like plumbers. They can, lots of ’em, put in a good sink.”⁹⁹⁸ He seems to appreciate the uses for plumbing, but often uses its terminology as a metaphor for a utilitarian, rather than genuinely artistic, purpose. In setting Joyce’s playwriting apart from that of “clever, uninteresting people doing clever, tolerable plays,” Pound describes the “commercial efficiency” and success of other playwrights as “dramatic and literary fine plumbing.”⁹⁹⁹ This statement, made in February 1916, follows Joyce’s posting of his play “Exiles” to W. B. Yeats in September 1916, after which Pound, reading the play as well, believed it would never be produced because of its subject of infidelity. Pound labels the references to plumbing with the adjective *fine*, resulting in a modernized term for the fine arts. He associates this description of “finessness” regardless of the subject matter of the literary work, thereby placing emphasis on the style, language, and technique. As plumbing is a means to increased hygiene, the metaphor refers to Joyce’s contribution to the increased literary quality of theatre. Pound reinforces the metaphor by referencing the utilitarianism of plumbing when he adds, “the permanent art of any period is precisely that form of art into which the best artists of the period put their best and solidest work.” He is concerned with what will create a real and lasting literature, not just one that will become publicly popular. Similarly, he refers to a plumbing system when he compares the poetry in “‘better’ magazines” to “appalling fungus,” and adds, “I can only answer that a dead rat is no great affair unless it gets clogged in your water supply.”¹⁰⁰⁰ Popular poetry is here signified as “a dead rat”—possibly one of the most undignified objects in the material world: the rat signifying the lowest-regarded of rodents, and its deadness seemingly nullifying its potential harm. Yet caught in a plumbing system, or a publishing system—of which quality writing

⁹⁹⁷ Ezra Pound, “Letters from Ezra Pound,” *Little Review*, 4.6 (October 1917), 37–39. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C290, 281–83 (p. 282).

⁹⁹⁸ Ezra Pound, “Mr. Pound, Mr. Stephens, Mr. Joyce,” *Reedy’s Mirror*, 24.24 (6 August 1915), 13. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C203, p. 107.

⁹⁹⁹ Ezra Pound, “Mr. James Joyce and the Modern Stage: A Play and Some Considerations,” *Drama*, 7.21 (February 1916), 122–32. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C216, 136–46 (p. 141).

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: V,” *New Age*, 11.23 (3 October 1912), 539–40. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C56, 99–100 (p. 99).

also depends—the rat becomes a “great affair.” Using this same metaphor of clogged pipes to convey literary challenges, Pound details one of the “three troubled seasons” of the writer. “The mind sticks, clogs, does not work (condition of the vast passive part of mankind).”¹⁰⁰¹ Pound made this statement in 1919, the period when he admitted his frustration with the lack of progress on his great work, the *Cantos*—showing the extent to which this “clog” personally affected his output as a writer.

Pound refers to other forms of hygienic practice, beyond plumbing, when speaking metaphorically about literature. Just after Remy de Gourmont’s death in September 1915, Pound wrote a memorial series for the *Fortnightly Review*, in which he consistently used hygienic terms to praise de Gourmont’s critical work. He stated that de Gourmont wrote with “scientific dryness,” again repeating this idea in praising his “dry discussion” opposed to the “worship of unintelligent, ‘messy’ energy.”¹⁰⁰² The opposition of science, with its hygienic dryness, opposes the “messy” energy with its lack of perceptible boundaries. Pound’s use of the adjective *unintelligent* seems to distance this idea of energy from energy that is examined by precise science. Pound praised de Gourmont’s work as “the basis of a clean literature, of all literature worth the name, as is an antiseptic method the basis of sound surgical treatment.” His admiration stems from de Gourmont’s stated intent of “put[ting] down one’s thought frankly.” It is this frankness in style that attracts Pound, to which Pound addresses as an antiseptic method for surgery. He describes de Gourmont’s home, Paris, as the “laboratory of ideas” where “the antiseptic conditions of the laboratory exist.” Perhaps Pound was referring to the work published in the *Mercure de France*, which de Gourmont helped edit, or to the group “L’Effort Libre,” which Pound lists as including “Jules Romains, Vildrac, du Hamel, Chennviere, Jouve,” whom Pound records as meeting in Paris. Or perhaps Pound’s “antiseptic conditions” refer to de Gourmont’s specific and individualistic writing style, which he felt was the most important aspect in the craft of writing. This article also portrays Pound’s view that content should not determine the categorization of a work of literature as modern. With another reference to hygiene, Pound states that even nature can be written about in a modern style: “The mountain stream may be as antiseptic as the sterilized dressing.” Pound gives insight into his uneasiness with the popular understanding of modern literature. He states, “I know there is much superficial modernity” and describes how “the first difficulty in a modern poem” is to portray reality of

¹⁰⁰¹ Ezra Pound, “Pastiche. Regional: XVIII,” *New Age*, 26.3 (20 November 1919), 48. The two other problems include when the mind “works mechanically, mere reactions to stimulæ,” and when the “mind suddenly bursts into ‘too much’ activity” until the writer’s thought “loses the relations,” which he attributes sometimes to drug use. Adding to the problem of “‘too much’ activity,” Pound gives an example: “Typical condition of Coleridge as represented in tradition, reported effect of various drugs, etc.”

¹⁰⁰² Ezra Pound, “Remy de Gourmont: I,” *Fortnightly Review*, 98.588 (1 December 1915), 1159–66. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C213, 125–32 (p. 126).

the speaker, rather than to portray “the manifest universe.” Therefore, the aim of the true modernist writer is to portray reality through a speaker’s perspective, rather than primarily mimicking the material world, “cut out, put on shelves and in bottles.” Subject matter could therefore be a pastoral or a city scene; the mode of representation of this scene, however, would indicate a modern style. He criticizes what he views as an insincere modern approach to literature that is satisfied with a portrayal of a realistic subject matter. Modern writing, he states, “does not mean the over-emphasis of neo-realism, of red-bloodism, of slums dragged into light, of men writing while drugged with two or three notions.”

Again using references to hygiene, Pound communicates his admiration of the classics, in that they have not degenerated or lost their effectiveness. He refers to the classics as antiseptics, or that which opposes sepsis, putrefaction, or decay; an antiseptic prevents or arrests the growth of microorganisms. “The classics,” he writes, “‘ancient and modern,’ are precisely the acids to gnaw through the thongs and bulls-hides with which we are tied by our schoolmasters. They are the antiseptics. They are almost the only antiseptics against the contagious imbecility of mankind.”¹⁰⁰³ Pound includes both ancient and modern classics in this grouping of antiseptic literature to fight against the growth of microorganisms, or the “imbecility of mankind.” Pound wrote this comparison in the same month in which he first published his first three *Cantos* in *Poetry* in June 1917. As he incorporated references from the classics in his new work, he attempted to integrate their lasting or antiseptic nature into his own intended epic. Pound speaks of “lasting literature” again using hygienic terms in November 1918. He includes himself in a “high-brow” category of newspaper writing, using this term that originated in 1884 from the pseudoscience of phrenology.¹⁰⁰⁴ He stated that his “acid analysis” of newspapers “was a work of sanitation”¹⁰⁰⁵ and explained that the newspaper excludes the serious artists and their desire to portray significant, lasting issues, rather than news “of the moment.” Ultimately, Pound’s references to antiseptics connote his belief in the possibility of a lasting, permanent literature and further divide a highbrow work from that of filth.

CONTAGION, ILLNESS, AND DISEASE

In *Indiscretions*, a personal and family memoir written in 1923 after his London career, Pound implies that only a prominent scientific figure of his time could cure him when he was ill as a baby, and thereby continue his life and ensure his poetic legacy. He

¹⁰⁰³ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret C. Anderson, dated June[?] 1917, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 113.

¹⁰⁰⁴ “highbrow.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press. 2nd ed. 1989.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ezra Pound, “The Highbrow—How He Looks on American Newspapers,” *Pep*, 11 (November 1918), 10–11, 18. The editor explains in a note that EP’s title for this essay was “Stavvi Minos Orribilmente” (a quotation from Dante’s *Inferno*). [Translated: “There stood Minos horribly.”] In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C422a, 246–47 (p. 246).

relates the story of his mother and himself as a baby moving east after his birth in Idaho. While traveling in a blizzard on the first train that used the rotary snow plough after its recent invention, the inventor of this snow plough happened to be seated in the same train compartment as the baby Pound and his mother. He records how the inventor relieved him of his continuous coughing by feeding him a spoonful of kerosene oil and sugar. “Thus,” Pound deduces, “was the Infant Gargantua saved from a severe attack of the croup.”¹⁰⁰⁶ After asserting that his physical wellbeing was responsive and indebted to science, Pound then makes the claim in the memoir that he was able to diagnose correctly his own ailments by age two.¹⁰⁰⁷ This assertion implies an inherent knowledge of the human body and an assumption of the requisite medical terminology not only to discern the illness, but to know the correct terminology to communicate the diagnosis.

Pound claimed to understand illnesses inherently, but he knew he was not immune from them. Beyond his acknowledgement of the perils of disease as evidenced in his literary metaphors, Pound himself displayed literal tendencies of hypochondria.¹⁰⁰⁸ He became excessively careful to avoid illness and unhygienic conditions in order to remain productive in his creative work.¹⁰⁰⁹ His lines from his translation “The Seafarer” seem to embody this contempt for illness or disease: “Disease or oldness or sword-hate / Beats out the breath from doom-gripped body,”¹⁰¹⁰ just as his translation of Arnaut Daniel also portrays the age-old fear of disease: “In fell disease / I lie, and deathly fearing.”¹⁰¹¹ Letters from and about Pound are dotted with mention of illness. In a letter to John Quinn recording the end of the First World War, Pound writes of his cold—highlighting his hypochondriac tendencies centered around his own state of health in the shadow of the Great War. “Thank God the war is mostly over. Am suffering from cold contracted on Monday, wandering about for hours, mostly in drizzle, to observe effect of armistice on the populace.”¹⁰¹² Richard

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ezra Pound, “Indiscretions, or *Une Revue de Deux Mondes*,” in *Pavannes and Divagations* (London: Peter Owen, 1960), pp. 3–51 (p. 41).

¹⁰⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 437. Carpenter states, “Pound had a tendency toward hypochondria, but was usually perfectly well.”

¹⁰⁰⁹ Mary de Rachewiltz writes in her memoir about her father, Pound: “Babbo [Pound] developed a cold. The fuss and the precautions seemed to me excessive; however, he soon got over it.” *Ezra Pound, Father and Teacher: Discretions* (New York: New Directions, 1975), p. 112.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ezra Pound, “The Seafarer,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 236–38 (p. 238). Pound submitted a typescript of *Ripostes* to the London publisher Stephen Swift & Co. in February 1912, and the book was published in October that year. “The Seafarer” was first published in the *New Age*, 30 November 1911.

¹⁰¹¹ Ezra Pound, “Glamour and Indigo (From the Provençal of En Arnaut Daniel. By Ezra Pound,” *New Age*, 24.8 (26 December 1918), 122–24. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C431, 255–57 (p. 255).

¹⁰¹² Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 15 November 1918, in *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 168. In defense of Pound, however, Armistice Day on November 11 was the impetus for a second

Aldington often recorded Pound's feigned or real illnesses. "Pound looks terribly ill," Aldington writes in a 1914 letter to Amy Lowell. "He lies on a couch and says he has 'cerebral gout'!"¹⁰¹³ A 1918 letter reveals Pound's encounter with the influenza pandemic of that year. "Dear Joyce," Pound writes in 1918. "Am flat on my back with some crotchety variant of the chill-cum-flu-cum-spew. Faint animation reviving ... —enough of this dribble forgive the maunderings of a convalescent."¹⁰¹⁴ Pound published a poem in the *New Freewoman*, "The Sneeze (Par is Winter)," which equates the flu with damnation:

The drop ploppeth
 The slop sloppeth
 The cold stoppeth
 My circulation.
 The stove wheezeth
 My nose not breatheth
 Oh, J-HEE-zeth!!
 Flu and damnation!¹⁰¹⁵

In an interview with Dr. Jerome Kavka in 1946, Pound remembers his several bouts with flu in London. "I was laid out in one room and my wife in another," he recalls.¹⁰¹⁶ The years 1918 and 1919 were renowned for the influenza pandemic that killed as many as 100 million people worldwide.¹⁰¹⁷ Hilda Doolittle caught the influenza just before giving birth at the end of March 1919. Pound visited Doolittle at the hospital and soon after wrote about the influenza in his *New Age* series on 10 April. He conflates the literal influenza with artistic disease spreading across a war-weary continent. "The statement that influenza rages in England does not imply that the disease is not rampant elsewhere," he adds.¹⁰¹⁸ This notion implies that what can be seen of disease could potentially comprise only a small percentage of the overall effects of the disease, geographically or within the human body itself. In July, Pound again refers to the influenza—and to various attempts to quarantine against its continued spread¹⁰¹⁹—in a metaphor for the influence of literature and education

wave of influenza in Britain; as people gathered to celebrate, this strong virus swept through them in a particularly vicious and deadly wave of the influenza that year.

¹⁰¹³ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 295.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to James Joyce dated 17 July 1918, in *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce*, ed. by Forrest Read (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p. 144.

¹⁰¹⁵ Pound, "The Sneeze," in *Pavannes and Divagations* (London: Peter Owen, 1960), p. 223.

¹⁰¹⁶ Jerome Kavka, "Ezra Pound's Personal History: A Transcript, 1946," *Paideuma*, 20.1–2 (Spring, Fall 1991), 143–185 (p. 159).

¹⁰¹⁷ John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Epic Story of the Deadliest Plague in History* (New York, Penguin, 2005), p. 5.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ezra Pound, "Art Notes. By B. H. Dias," *New Age*, 24.23 (10 April 1919), 378–79. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C458, 301–02 (p. 301).

¹⁰¹⁹ Although England did not attempt to quarantine against the influenza epidemic of 1918–1919, Australia did quarantine against the spread, keeping its fatalities to only 12,000.

beyond borders. “I have, I trust, never intimated that idiocy is a national quality, or that any border quarantines prevail against it,” he writes. “One can but try to diagnose and discriminate between different species of imbecility, some international, some of them possibly local.”¹⁰²⁰ Capitalizing on this identifiable concern among London readers of the time, Pound plays with the idea of “idiocy” or “imbecility” being as contagious, nationally and internationally, as the influenza in this year, 1919.

In a metaphor possibly relating back to his association of contracting jaundice during his return to America, Pound associates America with a virus. He is most susceptible to this virus, he states, because of his family’s deep roots in America, dating to the seventeenth century.¹⁰²¹ He writes to William Carlos Williams, “But I (der grosse Ich) [the great I] have the virus, the bacillus of the land in my blood for nearly three bleating centuries.”¹⁰²² Pound associates his long American bloodline with a Puritan tradition susceptible to a provincial attitude toward literature. He uses the specific terms *virus* and *bacillus*. *Virus*, Latin for “toxin” or “poison,” signifies a submicroscopic infectious agent dependent on a host cell. Before its initial discovery in 1899, certain diseases could not be explained by bacterial infections and were thought to be due to toxins.¹⁰²³ During scientists’ process of comprehending a virus, it was viewed as a novel type of disease-causing organism because it did not replicate like normal cells, but rather depended on host organisms. Pound’s use of the term in 1917 is significant in that it was still a relatively new concept in science. The first virus was identified in 1899, and additional breakthroughs in the understanding of viruses were made in 1906 and 1913. Pound’s second scientific term in his letter to Williams, *bacillus*, also shows unusual understanding for the time, in that he used the term for a specific genus of bacteria. As bacteria occur in three forms, this genus takes a cylindrical form, reflected in its Latin name meaning “staff” or “rod.” Williams quoted Pound’s letter in his prologue to his next published book of poetry, after which Pound responded:

And you might in fairness have elaborated my quotation on virus. There is a blood poison in America you can idealize the place (easier now that Europe is so damned shaky) all you like but you haven’t a drop of the cursed blood in you, and you don’t need to fight the disease day and night; You never have had to. Eliot has it perhaps worse than I have—poor devil.

¹⁰²⁰ Ezra Pound, “Pastiche. The Regional: IV,” *New Age*, 25.13 (24 July 1919), 220. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C478, p. 319.

¹⁰²¹ J. J. Wilhelm, *The American Roots of Ezra Pound* (London: Garland Publishing, 1985), p. 50.

¹⁰²² Ezra Pound, Letter to William Carlos Williams dated 10 November 1917, in *Pound/Williams: Selected Letters of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams*, ed. by Hugh Witemeyer (New York: New Directions, 1996), pp. 30–33 (p. 31). Also in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 123–25 (p. 124).

¹⁰²³ Samuel John Martin, *The Biochemistry of Viruses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 2.

You have the advantage of arriving in the milieu with a fresh flood of Europe in your veins,
Spanish, French, English, Danish.¹⁰²⁴

Pound's response uses a more general, commonplace approach to describing an inflammation. The term "blood poison" was a more common term for septicemia in 1920. A 1914 reference to the term in a publication of legal proceedings defined "blood poison" as an inflammatory response to an infection,¹⁰²⁵ while an earlier 1905 medical journal defined it as "a morbid condition caused by absorption of poisonous substances into the blood through unnatural channels."¹⁰²⁶ Pound's reference to a blood poison would imply that an infection already exists in America, but this infection is an inflammatory response to this infection. Pound argues that he needs to fight against the "disease" or this inflammation continually, while Williams was immune because of his European blood, as his parents were immigrants. This exchange further displays Pound's glorification of Europe, and more specifically, European modes of literature, leaving America as a mere provincial territory. For Pound, Europe was, in one sense, the new, while America symbolized the outworn. Pound indicated a need to "fight" against the influence of America.

Pound's critique of American letters helped distance himself from his American heritage and therefore seemed to help him identify with European letters. His frequent references to American provincialism and unsophisticated letters served to emphasize his own relative success in the literary field, even after emerging from these debased origins. He again uses language of disease to portray the provincialism of American letters in his first installment of "Patria Mia" in 1912. Originating from notes began during his jaundice-plagued trip to America, Pound promises an "attempt to define the diseases of American 'literature.'"¹⁰²⁷ In his fourth installment of this series, he identifies these "diseases of American letters" as "dry-rot, magazitis," and "minor diseases" that identified themes about which Pound continued to write during his entire London career.¹⁰²⁸ One disease, labeled by Pound as "the school of virility, or 'red blood,'" identifies a male-dominated power, yet Pound's satirical presentation questions whether the "virile" truly possess this power, or if they merely believe they wield this power. Another disease, the "gorgeous school," identifies the excessive use of ornamentation or "polysyllabic adjectives" in poetry. The "sociological school" or "appalling fungus of our 'better magazines'" introduces the concept of the common man and the writer's desire to appeal to this mass audience.

¹⁰²⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to William Carlos Williams dated 11 November 1920, in *Pound/Williams: Selected Letters of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams*, ed. by Hugh Witemeyer (New York: New Directions, 1996).

¹⁰²⁵ *The Northeastern Reporter*, Vol. 105 (West Publishing Co., 1914), p. 184.

¹⁰²⁶ *The Critique*, Vol. 12 (Denver Publishing Co., 1905), p. 167.

¹⁰²⁷ Ezra Pound, "Patria Mia: I," *New Age*, 11.19 (5 September 1912), 445. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C48, p. 77.

¹⁰²⁸ Ezra Pound, "Patria Mia: IV," *New Age*, 11.22 (26 September 1912), 515–16. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C51, p. 80.

In his poem “L’ Homme Moyen Sensuel,” first published in 1917, Pound speaks of the average or common man and the negative influences imposed on him by American culture. In the stanza referencing influential American writers such as Poe, Whitman, Whistler, and James, Pound mentions the “ignorance” of the “Red Bloods”—an ignorance that he equates with “the nation’s botts, collicks and glanders.”¹⁰²⁹ Each term signifies a communicable disease: *botts* is a term for larvae of a botfly that infest the stomach, throat, or intestines of a horse; *collicks*, or colic, could represent severe abdominal pain often a condition of infancy; and *glanders* is a humanly contagious disease originating from horses caused by a bacterium that leads to ulcers of the respiratory tract and skin and often causes death. As Pound wrote in an article before the publication of “L’ Homme Moyen Sensuel,” he viewed Henry James and other great American writers as having given an “analysis, a diagnosis of this disease” of provincialism.¹⁰³⁰ Identifying James as a symbol opposing provincialism, Pound states, is “in favour of something human and cleanly.” In the following year, Pound published a “Brief Note” in the *Little Review* that praised James’s writing as having preserved “whole decades of American life that otherwise would have been utterly lost, wasted, rotting in the unhermetic jars of bad writing, of inaccurate writing.”¹⁰³¹ Pound notes that good writing must “make humanity aware of itself,” and as with James, “here the thing was done, the pages of diagnosis.”¹⁰³² As Pound viewed provincial writing as merely mimicking a style, he felt that this type of writing was not immediate and could not capture accurately the reality of American life. As he states, the writer needs to “diagnose” correctly, and therefore needs to examine, understand, and reflect the subject completely. Pound compares this immediacy in literature to the science, and he opposes the distant methods of provincial writing. Directly examining the subject, and precisely recording this subject is the aim of the writer. “We have ceased to believe that we conquer anything by having Alexander the Great make a gigantic “joy-ride” through India. We know that conquests are made in the laboratory, that Curie with his minute fragments of things seen clearly in test tubes in curious apparati, makes conquests. So, too, in these

¹⁰²⁹ Ezra Pound, “L’Homme Moyen Sensuel,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 504–11 (p. 505). First published in the *Little Review*, September 1917. Also published in *Pavannes and Divisions* in 1918.

¹⁰³⁰ Ezra Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy: I,” *New Age*, 21.11 (12 July 1917), 244–45. The first of four installments. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C266, 231–32 (p. 231).

¹⁰³¹ Ezra Pound, “In Explanation,” *Little Review*, 5.4 (August 1918), 5–9. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C380, 142–45 (p. 144).

¹⁰³² Ezra Pound, “In Explanation,” *Little Review*, 5.4 (August 1918), 5–9. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C380, 142–45 (p. 144).

novels.”¹⁰³³ Pound’s focus on the “minute fragments” displays just how precise and detailed he intends to become as a writer.

Another of Pound’s purposes for opposing provincialism is that, by definition, provincial writing could never embrace the new. This mode attempted to follow an established method of writing, thereby refusing to take up the banner of modern writing. Pound writes Alice Corbin Henderson, assistant editor of *Poetry*, in 1913, challenging her to take up the modern cause. “Still, I give you your chance to be modern, to go blindfoldedly to be modern, to produce as many green bilious attacks throughout the length and breadth of the U.S.A. as there are fungoid members of the American academy. I announce the demise of R. U. Johnson and all his foetid generation.”¹⁰³⁴ As fungus is parasitic, Pound could be referencing this generation’s mimicking, rather than innovating, methods. He writes Iris Barry three years later with similar recommendations, advising her to avoid “imitations of imitations of Yeats, and of the symbolistes ad infinitum. Soft mushy edges,” and admits, “At least I’ve suffered the disease.”¹⁰³⁵ As Pound became more and more modern and established his own style, he recognized his earlier tendency of falling into established writing styles—and this recognition in himself helped cause his vehement disgust at this practice. In a 1918 article, he speaks of the “slush-mindedness” of popular writers, after, as he says, he conducted “autopsies on the ‘novel’” in an attempt to “analyse the pathology of popular publishing.”¹⁰³⁶ He develops an intense disregard for public acceptance, and seems to equate popularity with unoriginal style—likely as a partial defense against his own decreasing popularity. In his attempt to emphasize the importance of modernizing poetry, he nudges himself between the popular movement of futurism and his concept of “Pastism,” and he equates both movements to disease because of their popular appeal. “At no time in the world has great art been exactly like the great art of any other time,” he writes in 1914.¹⁰³⁷ “A belief that great art will always be like the art of 1850 is ‘Pastism,’ a belief that great art will always be like the art of 1911 is ‘futurism.’ One hopes that one is not affected by either of these diseases.” Pound published this statement in the *Egoist* the day that Marinetti was to give a Futurist performance in the London Coliseum, 15 June 1914. He emphasizes the supremacy of his own literary movement, in that it is not subject to time. If the other two movements—Futurism and Pastism—are connected with time, then they are

¹⁰³³ Ezra Pound, “In Explanation,” *Little Review*, 5.4 (August 1918), 5–9. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C380, 142–45 (p. 144).

¹⁰³⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to Alice Corbin Henderson dated October 1913, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 23–24 (p. 23).

¹⁰³⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to Iris Barry dated 27 July 1916, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 88–91 (p. 90).

¹⁰³⁶ Ezra Pound, “Books Current, Reviewed by Ezra Pound,” *Future* 2.11 (November 1918), 286–87. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C415, 215–16 (p. 215).

¹⁰³⁷ Ezra Pound, “Wyndham Lewis,” *Egoist*, 1.12 (15 June 1914), 233–34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C146, 251–52 (p. 252).

also susceptible to disease, while Pound's movement is healthier or "saner," as he states in his own 1912 manifesto-of-sorts, "Credo."¹⁰³⁸

In his movement of Imagism, Pound employed poetic theories using hygienic language. The term *saner* corresponds with the primary definition of the word in the 1910s, meaning "in good health." This poetic theory in "Credo" evolves from Pound's early directive "A Few Don'ts," originating from a rejection notice he initially penned for *Poetry* magazine to provide direction for aspiring poets. Eventually becoming an unofficial manifesto, "A Few Don'ts" developed into an originating document for the Imagist movement. Pound's technical hygiene acted as an antiseptic and was written in negative terms. He set out what *not* to do in order to avoid the plagues of bad writing. "If you are using a symmetrical form," Pound writes in one of his directives, "don't put in what you want to say and then fill up the remaining vacuums with slush."¹⁰³⁹ This instruction, written in the negative, treats writing scientifically, as though poetic lines are vacuums, which are airtight containers under low pressure to prevent its contents from spoiling. Literary lines are treated as vulnerable to outside contamination. Pound introduces "slush" as a source of contamination into these poetic lines—a wet, sloppy source of mess that invades otherwise good writing.

Pound further affirmed his hygienic theory in subsequent articles. In "Credo," Pound contrasts the "blurry" writing of the nineteenth century with the "hard" writing of the twentieth. "As for the nineteenth century, with all 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."¹⁰⁴⁰ He then contrasts this messiness with his ideal of writing: "As to Twentieth century poetry, and the poetry which I expect to see written during the next decade or so, it will, I think, move against poppy-cock, it will be harder and saner, it will be what Mr Hewlett calls 'nearer the bone'. It will be as much like granite as it can be ... At least for myself, I want it so, austere, direct, free from emotional slither."¹⁰⁴¹ Pound's statement can be read as a modern hygienic development against dirtiness, softness, indirectness, and sensationalism. His initial assertion against poppy-cock implies a

¹⁰³⁸ Ezra Pound, "Prologomena," *Poetry Review, London* 1.2 (February 1912), 72–76. Includes "Credo." In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C38, 59–63 (p. 63). Also in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. by T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), pp. 9–12 (p. 12).

¹⁰³⁹ Ezra Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," *Poetry*, 1 (1913), 200–06 (206).

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, "Prologomena," *Poetry Review, London* 1.2 (February 1912), 72–76. Includes "Credo." In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C38, 59–63 (p. 62). Also in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. by T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), pp. 9–12 (p. 11).

¹⁰⁴¹ Ezra Pound, "Prologomena," *Poetry Review, London* 1.2 (February 1912), 72–76. Includes "Credo." In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C38, 59–63 (p. 63). Also in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. by T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), pp. 9–12 (p. 12).

movement against “soft dung,” which the word literally means in its Dutch derivative. Pound then asserts that poetry will become harder, corresponding with the hygienic movement against contaminated filth like “poppy-cock.” The acceptance of germ theory ushered in new hard, non-porous hygienic materials of the home, particularly of the bathroom and kitchen. These materials superseded the porous and dark materials of marble and wood, which happened to be the materials of Pound’s portable mahogany washstand at his unmodern boarding house on Church Walk.¹⁰⁴² Light-shaded vitreous china, ceramic tile, and strong granite were now used in the modern hygienic home to make dust and grime visible and easily cleanable. As Pound wrote, poetry should become “as much like granite as it can be.” This shift from porous to non-porous, soft to hard, dark to light, is included in other descriptions of Imagism by Pound. He explained to Amy Lowell in 1914 that “Imagism stands, or I should like it to stand for hard, light, clear edges.”¹⁰⁴³ In the same year, he proclaimed in *Poetry*, “We have had so many other pseudo-glamours and glamourlets and mists and fogs since the nineties that one is about ready for hard light.”¹⁰⁴⁴ His refusal of the “glamourlets” of the poetry of the 1890s corresponds to the sleek, unadorned, simplistic aesthetic of modernist poetry, which as he claims, bears hard light because it is not hiding dust or germs in its crevices. When reviewing Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Pound again uses the term *hard* to describe this realist writing. “Mr. Joyce’s realism,” he says, is “hard, clear-cut, with no waste of words, no bundling up of useless phrases, no filling in with pages of slosh.”¹⁰⁴⁵ He describes his reasoning for using this term by further associating the concept of hardness with health: “Clear thought and sanity depend on clear prose. They cannot live apart. The former produces the latter. The latter conserves and transmits the former.” A year later, Pound further explains this idea of literary hardness and references the term to a French writer. “I apologize for using these metaphorical terms ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ in this essay,” Pound states.¹⁰⁴⁶ “By ‘hardness’ I mean a quality which is in poetry nearly always a virtue—I can think of no case where it is not.” He references Théophile Gautier, who “suggests” the terms in *Emaux et Camées*. “He exhorts us to cut in hard substance,” Pound states, again repeating the phrase “to cut, metaphorically, in hard stone.” Pound references Gautier’s association with Parnassism, a literary movement between the romantic and symbolist periods and during the positivist

¹⁰⁴² J. J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris: 1908–1925* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 37.

¹⁰⁴³ Ezra Pound, Letter to Amy Lowell dated 1 August 1914, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 77–78 (p. 78).

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ezra Pound, “The Later Yeats,” *Poetry*, 4 (1914), 64–69 (p. 68).

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ezra Pound, “James Joyce: At Last the Novel Appears,” *Egoist*, 4.2 (February 1917), 21–22. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C246, 186–87 (p. 187).

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ezra Pound, “The Hard and the Soft in French Poetry,” *Poetry*, 11.5 (February 1918), 264–71. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C328, 55–58 (p. 55).

period of nineteenth-century France. Gautier influenced the movement with his reaction against the excessive sentimentality of romantic poetry. Parnassians, instead, looked to exactness, rigidity of form, and emotional detachment. This literary movement was inspired by the influx of scientific discovery of the nineteenth century, and specifically, to solve the problems that had developed in speculative philosophy because of these new scientific discoveries. Positivists rejected theoretical speculation as a means of obtaining knowledge and declared that the only authentic knowledge is knowledge based on actual sense experience.¹⁰⁴⁷

Pound adopted this emphasis of sense experience. He encouraged a positivist approach to writing poetry, focusing on the image while associating intangible emotion with disease and filth. His description in “Credo”—borrowed from fellow poet and essayist Maurice Hewlett—of his hope that poetry would become “nearer the bone,” implies a surgical cutting away of fat or extraneous material to the bone or core of the image. He extends this surgical metaphor in a later reference to the cleanliness of the tools that reach the “matter” of thought. “The very cleanliness of the tools, the very health of the very matter of thought itself,” he wrote in the late 1920s, contrasts with ineffective “*litterati*,” whose “work goes rotten, i.e. becomes slushy and inexact, or excessive and bloated.”¹⁰⁴⁸ Pound describes even thought as “matter,” emphasizing his positivist intentions in his theory. He opposes this clean and definite thinking with “rotten” or “inexact” writing. Similarly, he describes a platonic or intangible philosophy as filthy in a 1915 article: “‘The colourless and formless and intangible!’ No, the good Plato was writing of something else; besides, he said it was visible to the mind, the lord of the soul.”¹⁰⁴⁹ Pound continues this critiquing the invisible by labeling it “mud-coloured, formless, disagreeable.” He associates form with materialistic science, as he describes in a 1912 article that he desires a “bacteriological explanation” in literature, and claims that novel authors should attempt to “be aiming at something like definite ‘form,’ at a form that is as precise in comparison to prose as the sonnet is to verse.”¹⁰⁵⁰ Part of Pound’s definition of “the serious artist” in 1913 was a focus on the “thing” in verse. In discussing Stendhal, one of the pioneering realist novelists, Pound states, “If we cannot get back to the thing; if the serious artist cannot attain

¹⁰⁴⁷ Wolf Lepenies, “The Transformations of Auguste Comte: Science and Literature in Early Positivism” in *Between Literature and Science: The Rise of Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 19–46.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, “How to Read,” in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. by T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), pp. 15–40 (p. 21).

¹⁰⁴⁹ Ezra Pound, “American Chaos: I” *New Age*, 17.19 (9 September 1915), 449. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C204, p. 108.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Ezra Pound, “The Art of the Novel,” *New Age*, 10.13 (25 January 1912), 311. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C37, p. 59.

this precision in verse, then he must either take to prose or give up his claim to being a serious artist.”¹⁰⁵¹

His last adjectives in his “Credo” statement—“austere, direct, free from emotional slither”—form a basis for the empiric nature of Imagism. A direct observation and record of the object is a crucial aspect of positivism in the natural sciences. It implies precision and exactness, which Pound ascribes to Imagism. In the 1913 essay “The Serious Artist,” Pound asserts that “the serious artist is scientific” and compares the artist to the biologist who “will make a reasonable number of observations of any given phenomenon ... The results of each observation must be precise. ... The more precise his record the more lasting and unassailable his work of art.”¹⁰⁵² The Image, then, is portrayed as a measure of exactitude, progressing the field of poetry in the same way that the natural sciences have been able to progress, moving away from abstract theory. In Pound’s formal statement of Imagisme, he states what Imagisme is *not*, claiming it is “free from emotional slither.” Pound attempts to avoid the possibility of subjectivism contaminating the precise empiric nature of Imagisme. It is free of “slither,” implying an ooze or liquidness opposite to his requisite hardness. Pound disapproves of “the washy rhetoricians, this back flush of dead symbolism, dead celticism, etc.”¹⁰⁵³ In a letter to an aspiring Imagiste poet, Pound again derided the “soft mushy edges” of the “Symbolistes ad infinitum,” and listed the elements of Imagisme:

The whole art is divided into:

- a. concision, or style, or saying what you mean in the fewest and clearest words
- b. the actual necessity for creating or constructing something; of presenting an image, or enough images of concrete things arranged to stir the reader.¹⁰⁵⁴

His descriptive words *constructing* and *concrete things* further attest to the empiric nature of Imagism, which, in its theoretical positioning in the material world, becomes susceptible to contamination. Pound, in his self-proclaimed role as poet-leader, takes on the metaphorical role of hygiene educator to prevent the spreading of literary disease. In a statement with complex layers of meaning, Pound asserts that modern literature and art ironically is viewed by the public as filth or a disease. He hopes for a time “when the arts shall cease to be regarded as a dope, a drug, a narcotic, as something akin to disease, and when they shall be regarded as sustenance,” he states in 1913.¹⁰⁵⁵ He states that after this understanding of the arts, “man made in the image of the invisible should draw breath into his nostrils.” When

¹⁰⁵¹ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist, IV,” *New Freewoman*, 1.11 (15 November 1913), 213–14. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C114, 202–03 (p. 202).

¹⁰⁵² Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: II,” *The New Freewoman*, 9 (1913), 161–63 (p. 162).

¹⁰⁵³ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: II,” *New Freewoman*, 9 (1913), 161–63 (p. 162).

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter 103 to Iris Barry, 27 July 1916, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 139–42 (p. 141).

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ezra Pound, “America: Chances and Remedies: VI,” *New Age*, 13.6 (5 June 1913), 143. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C85, p. 146.

the public views literature as sustenance, or a mode of health, the poet—viewed as insignificant and invisible in society—would take form. The invisible would transform into the visible, with a humanly figure. This image of the poet gaining form and material existence replicates the biblical presentation of man’s creation from God, or the invisible. Pound calls for a rebirth of the poet into this earthly existence.

DECADENCE AND DECAY

The definition of literary decadence is widely debated but generally can be viewed as a late romanticism that accentuates the elements of this romanticism.¹⁰⁵⁶ Not only were decadent writers often fixated on literal decay, but Pound’s view of decadence referred to a metaphorical decay of earlier forms of literary expression, such as romanticism. In 1918 he equates “decadence” to “decay” and to “a system discarded because of its rottenness.”¹⁰⁵⁷ In 1915 he defined a decadent age: “An age may be said to be decadent, or a generation may be said to be in a state of prone senility, when its creative minds are dead and when its survivors maintain a mental dignity—to wit, the dignity or stationariness of a corpse in its cerements. Excess or even absinthe is not the sure sign of decadence.”¹⁰⁵⁸ Pound seems to describe decadence in terms of its romantic excess, but additionally, to its references to decay or decline, as he compares the age’s decadence to a death shroud. “For thirty or more years we have had in deluge, the analyses of the fatty degeneration of life,” Pound writes in February 1914, possibly summarizing his lecture given to the Quest Society earlier that month.¹⁰⁵⁹ “My generation is not the generation of the romanticists. . . . He has often dissected the dead and taken no count of forces.” In a 1917 article, Pound further refers to the aged literary tradition with decaying terms. “‘Matter,’ as Lewis has written, ‘which does not contain enough intelligence to permeate it, grows, as you know, rotten and gangrenous.’ It is not everyone who enjoys the aroma of a dormant and elderly corporis litterarum, nor the stertorous wheeze of its breathing.”¹⁰⁶⁰ Pound personifies the aged literary corpus in actual bodily terms, indicating its wheezing and difficult breathing, barely keeping alive. Pound again quotes this statement by Lewis in a *Poetry* article in November 1917, after which he continues, “Staleness he will not abide; jade may be ancient, flowers should be

¹⁰⁵⁶ David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), p. 3.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Ezra Pound, “What America Has to Live Down: V,” *New Age*, 23.20 (12 September 1918), 314–15. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C397, 186–87 (p. 186).

¹⁰⁵⁸ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations: II. Vorticism,” *New Age*, 16.11 (14 January 1915), 277–78 (p. 277). In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C170, 4–5 (p. 4).

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ezra Pound, “The New Sculpture,” *Egoist*, 1.4 (16 February 1914), 67–68. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C128, 221–22 (p. 222).

¹⁰⁶⁰ Ezra Pound, “The Reader Critic: Letters from Ezra Pound,” *Little Review*, 4.6 (October 1917), 37–39 (p. 37). In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C290, 281–83 (p. 282).

reasonably fresh, but mutton cooked the week before last is, for the most part, unpalatable.”¹⁰⁶¹ In this particular article, Pound is praising Jules Laforgue, who, Pound suggests in the article, was a leader of a modern style of poetry and who avoided imitation of the decadent writers. Although Laforgue is generally considered a symbolist, Pound emphasizes Laforgue’s ability to verbalize perceptible form with his symbolist purposes: “There is good verbalism, distinct from lyricism or imagism, and in this Laforgue is a master. . . . He has dipped his wings in the dye of scientific terminology.” Pound seems to address the notion that symbolism—which replaced the decadent style that took over from realism in a revolt against scientism and positivism¹⁰⁶²—still used the natural world to describe the intangible.¹⁰⁶³ As Pound writes in this article about Laforgue, “Verbalism demands a set form used with irreproachable skill.” This emphasis on form and skill again portrays Pound’s emphasis on the style of writing, rather than the content. While a material content seems to encourage a modern form and style, Pound does not rule out the possibility that an immaterial content could be approached in a modern style. His metaphor of wings to describe Laforgue could refer to an ethereal subject matter that has been dipped, or influenced by, the “dye of scientific terminology,” or precise language. Pound therefore avoids the theoretical conflicts between romanticism and realism, and between decadence or symbolism and realism. While the decadence viewed art or artifice as superior to nature, and romanticism looked to something beyond nature, Pound seems to set out that nature and art should be technically combined. He sometimes criticizes blunt realism as mere mimesis if the poet is not creating something alongside this image.

Pound praised a contemporary writer who seemed to be in accord with Pound’s theoretical views. George Slythe Street was considered a “counter-Decadent” who actively satirized aesthetes. Pound praises Street’s ability to subtly satirize the decadents: “Mr. Street’s writing is like some subtle fluid which both annihilates and preserves. (I believe arsenic has some such action.) The dead from of his era are, so to speak, clearly discernible in his bottle of alcohol.”¹⁰⁶⁴ Pound creates an image of the dead decadents, preserved in a scientific bottle of preserving alcohol. His image implies a permanency in Street’s method of writing, associated with preservation, as it will outlast the methods of the decadents who have already died. Pound refers to the decade in which Street’s satire pointed, the decade in which decadence was popular in England: “The late ‘nineties seem to have hovered between

¹⁰⁶¹ Ezra Pound, “Irony, Laforgue, and Some Satire,” *Poetry*, 11.2 (November 1917), 93–98. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C298, 295–97 (p. 295).

¹⁰⁶² William R. Everdell, *The First Moderns: Profiles of the Origins of Twentieth-Century Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 99.

¹⁰⁶³ David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), p. xii.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, “The Glamour of G. S. Street,” *Egoist*, 1.15 (1 August 1914), 294–95. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C155, p. 272.

Gomorrah and Hampstead,” referring to frivolous recreation and aesthetics that kept potential progress at a standstill. Similarly, in an article four years later, Pound portrays Victorian writing as an outdated specimen. “The England of a still rather whiskered age,” he writes, “in short the Victorian, is exquisitely embalmed, and ‘mounted’ as is, I think, the term for microscopy.”¹⁰⁶⁵ Like the decadents preserved in bottles, Pound places the Victorians on biology slides to imply their status as data of the past. In another article, he again derides the earlier romantic and decadent literary eras using the image of decayed fruit: “The ‘nineties’ have chiefly gone out because of their muzziness, because of a softness derived, I think, not from books but from impressionist painting. They rot with half decayed fruit.”¹⁰⁶⁶ Pound identifies a source of the softness of decadent writing as impressionist art, and refers to this softness using an image portrayed in these visual arts—fruit—only with a half-decayed, soft and wrinkled presentation. In the early poem “Anima Sola” from his first book of poetry, *A Lume Spento*, Pound refers to his own personality and poetry as being “weird and untamed” compared to his contemporaries. Yet he also confidently asserts: “And lo, your out-worn harmonies are behind me / As ashes and mouldy bread.”¹⁰⁶⁷

Pound continually tries to create opposition with the old, in identifying aged Victorian customs and symbols with decaying matter. He labeled his contemporary publications “ancestral publications, which still reek of eighteen-fifty” as opposed to, for example, the new publication *Others* with its “hair-breadth experiment.”¹⁰⁶⁸ In the same article, he criticizes decadent or symbolist poetry in France, “full of loose Hugoesque rhetoric, sociology, mucked mysticism for the multitude, aqueous bombast, and all the fluid and ubiquitous diseases.” Similarly, he describes publications that were founded in the Victorian period—*Century*, *Harper’s*, *Scribner*, the *Atlantic*, he lists—as “mould” left to the current editors and writers “by their predecessors.”¹⁰⁶⁹ These editors and writers “of no creative ability,” Pound writes, were “trying as long as possible to bear the cloak which has been left them without letting the public know that there is a new body inside it.” His description seems to refer to the long run of these magazines in America: *Century* was established in 1881; *Harper’s* in 1850, *Scribner’s* in 1887, and the *Atlantic* in 1857. Pound, however, associates this long run with stagnancy. His contempt for these magazines was based on his opinion that they “have done their utmost to keep America out of touch with

¹⁰⁶⁵ Ezra Pound, “The Middle Years” *Egoist*, V. 1 (January 1918) 2–3. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C316, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ezra Pound, “Lionel Johnson,” in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. by T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), pp. 361–70 (p. 363).

¹⁰⁶⁷ Ezra Pound, “Anima Sola,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 33–34 (p. 33).

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ezra Pound, “Status Rerum: The Second,” *Poetry*, 8.1 (April 1916), 38–43. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C222, 151–53 (p. 152).

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, “The Pleasing Art of Poetry,” *New Age*, 17.10 (8 July 1915) 229–31. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C198, 101–02 (p. 101).

the contemporary world, and have striven with all their inertia to ‘keep things anchored to 1876.’” He recalls being “marooned in a country cottage” with only books published at the end of the eighteenth century—likely recalling the winters he spent with W. B. Yeats in Stone Cottage in Sussex. Pound writes, “the people who read these books had minds which petrified early, and they brought up their children and grandchildren on the ideas which they had imbibed in their youth. And the minds of their children and grandchildren, by hereditary predilection, petrified early.” Pound’s disregard of people who read the same books as the past generation—and his disregard of traditional American magazines—stem from their lack of progress or forward movement. In 1917, he again speaks about contemporary publication in terms of science and the outdated Victorian era. He states that an examination of contemporary publications was “like any other branch of natural science ... the individual specimens must, or at least should, be examined with microscopic attention.”¹⁰⁷⁰ He speaks as a scientist presenting his report on the details of the magazines that he is criticizing, providing justification for his criticism, as he speaks as an expert who has examined the details. He asserts the thoroughness of his examination of the “more scientific and accurate and mature arrangement of such periodicals.” Pound summarizes his report by stating, “on the grave of the Victorian era, it is by no means surprising that many people should have desired to stop thought altogether.” He hints that this tiredness derives from the extraneous decoration demanded by the age: “a period of frumpery and too many petticoats worn at once, it is perfectly natural that people should take delight in ‘Eve’ with no petticoats whatsoever.”

DECORATION

The Victorian home during the end of the nineteenth century received unprecedented pressure to appear hygienically clean,¹⁰⁷¹ with popular culture’s acceptance of germ theory and new hygienic manuals, literature, and products to promote a healthy home.¹⁰⁷² Pound referred to a hygienic manual in his criticism of an editor and short-story

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ezra Pound, “Studies in Contemporary Mentality VI: ‘The Sphere,’ and Reflections on Letter-Press,” *New Age*, 21.21 (20 September 1917), 446–47. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C285, 272–74 (p. 272).

¹⁰⁷¹ This manual instruction in the Victorian era continued into the early twentieth century, as seen with Vivienne Eliot’s diary for 1914–1915, written on a “Boots Home Diary and Ladies’ Note Book.” The diary included health information, labeled “The A.B.C. of Health,” published by the Ladies of Sanitary Association: “As soon as you are up, shake blanket and sheet, / Better be without shoes than sit with damp feet. / Children if healthy are active, not still, / Damp beds and damp clothes will both make you ill.” It also included information on the Infectious Disease Notification Act of 1899, and instructions for hygienic helps such as thermometers and warm baths. *Boots Home Diary and Ladies’ Note Book. Calendar for 1914/15. Papers of Vivienne Haigh Eliot. MSS> Eng. Misc. e. 876-878 Ms. Eng. Misc. f. 532 Reel 3 of 3.*

¹⁰⁷² Eileen Cleere, “Victorian Dust Traps,” in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. by William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. 133–51 (p. 134).

writer of the *Little Review*, Jane Heap and Ben Hecht, who was then known as a late-decadent writer: “They should both be answered by an elementary manual of hygiene.”¹⁰⁷³ As one result of the hygienic revolution, the industrial arts disposed of its decorative carving, cornices, curtains, carpets, and crannies of the Victorian age.¹⁰⁷⁴ Pound associates this bareness with a healthy mindframe. He writes in an article about contemporary architecture, “plainness would appear to be almost the sole road to health.”¹⁰⁷⁵ Addressing the “causes of the Victorian era,” he speculates, “its disease might seem to have been an aggravated form of provincialism.”¹⁰⁷⁶ Therefore, Pound’s concerns about the Victorian age stemmed from a concern about its domineering power and appeal and the resulting influence on writers. He is suspicious of mimicry and the mere following of a movement. The “sham ornament,” he says, is a mere impression of something else.¹⁰⁷⁷ He criticized, for example, the “mendacity” or falsity of a cast-iron balcony he saw near Marble Arch. He viewed its “machine-made ‘ornament’” as “lies.”¹⁰⁷⁸ The deceptiveness presented in its ornate appearance disturbed Pound, just as he associated provincialism and literary mimicry as false. He explains, “The ornamentation is a mendacity, for ornament implies care, it implies affection for the surfaces treated with ornament.” In another article on architecture, Pound again criticizes “the horror of machine-cut stone trimmings” and the “whitish stone ornaments and borders and stripes and gew-gaws and scroll-saw effects favoured in the late

¹⁰⁷³ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 28 December 1918, in *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 171.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Eileen Cleere, “Victorian Dust Traps,” in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. by William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. 133–51 (p. 135). Pound himself accepted this transition to a sleek modernism in the home, as he built his own modern furniture after marrying and moving into his own flat in London, and later in his homes in Paris and Italy. Mary de Rachewiltz, Pound’s daughter, recalls Pound’s furnishings in his later home in Rapallo, which followed a simplistic, modern style. “The furniture, unpainted, was all made by Babbo. A long bookcase and a mirror in the entrance; a table in the dining room and four plain straw-bottomed chairs along the walls; a desk, a high broad shelf for music and violin and a narrow bookcase fitted in under the window in Mamile’s room. The only spot of color was given by the orange damask couch; the only ease was suggested by two armchairs, a broad one and a normal-size one, twins to the ones in Venice. A Babbo-made desk stood also in ‘my’ room, where the rest of the furniture was an iron bed, a night table with a marble top, and a chair. This was referred to as the Yeats furniture. It came from the flat my grandparents took over from the Yeatses. The only items in the house with a touch of hardness. There was nothing else in the house. ... No junk, no clutter. Only candlelight. ... There was nothing in ‘his’ room except two of his stools, a change of clothes and a packing-case dresser ingeniously disguised by chintz” (p. 116).

¹⁰⁷⁵ Ezra Pound, “Art Notes. By B. H. Dias. Super-Fronts,” *New Age*, 23.26 (24 October 1918), 414. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C412, 212–13 (p. 212).

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ezra Pound, “Books Current. Reviewed by Ezra Pound: Lytton Strachey on Left Over Celebrity,” *Future*, 2.10 (October 1918), 265–66. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C404, 193–94 (p. 194).

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ezra Pound, “Art Notes. By B. H. Dias. Building: Ornamentation!” *New Age*, 23.20 (12 September 1918), 320. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C398, 187–88 (p. 188).

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, “Art Notes. By B. H. Dias. Building: Ornamentation!” *New Age*, 23.20 (12 September 1918), 320. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C398, 187–88 (p. 187).

middle of the last century.”¹⁰⁷⁹ Again, the derivative nature of a copy, or “the horror of machine-cut stone trimmings,” lacks sincerity for Pound, as their true, original composition is hidden. “I do not know,” he writes, “whether these borders, copings, cornices, and so on are stone or a composition moulded into horrible forms and indented with ‘ornaments.’” He repeats, however, his opinion that “all the properties of good art it is of an utter simplicity.” Pound often stated the same concept when criticizing writers who mass-produced writing without authentic feeling or visual artists who he suspected were trying to appeal to popular opinion. He repeats this critique of Victorian ornamentation in an art review in 1918. “John Ruskin was the only man who ever worried over the horrors of 19th century British architecture and John Ruskin was driven insane,” Pound writes.¹⁰⁸⁰ He speculates that Ruskin’s “final insanity” is understandable after observing Oxford Street’s architectural ornamentation. Pound replies, “Simplex munditiis,” or elegant in simplicity, and adds that he prefers “the simple notching and growing of the stone” and “the simple grooving of the patterned wood in the old London door-ways!” Pound’s repetition of *simple* portrays his preference in authentic bareness. The extraneous decoration only serves to impede the clear view of the subject.

Pound incorporated this design aesthetic into his language theories. In a 1916 essay, he stated that the author’s responsibility is “not pestering the reader with frills and festoons of language,” and that this “is worth all the convoluted tushery that the Victorians can heap together.”¹⁰⁸¹ Festoons, meaning items used as decorations, are coupled with frills as examples of extraneous Victorian detail that are “heaped together” as indiscriminately placed waste objects. He continues the essay by identifying two well-loved nineteenth-century poets with this error: “this urge, this impulse ... leads Tennyson into pretty embroideries [and to an] adoration of Wordsworth.” These decorous embroideries are labeled as not only unneeded, but as insincere ornament or representations of an empty materialism. “Put down exactly what you feel and mean!” he instructs young writers in America in a 1913 essay. “Say it as briefly as possible and avoid all sham of ornament.”¹⁰⁸² In 1915 he again uses the metaphor of sham as an insincere mode of writing poetry: “The Image is more than an idea. It is a vortex or cluster of fused ideas and is endowed with energy ... and will not gain by being swathed in sham lace.”¹⁰⁸³ Pound is moving against

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ezra Pound, “Art Notes. By B. H. Dias. Buildings: I,” *New Age*, 23.18 (29 August 1918), 287–88. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C389, 172–73 (p. 173).

¹⁰⁸⁰ Ezra Pound, “Art Notes. By B. H. Dias. Building: Ornamentation!” *New Age*, 23.20 (12 September 1918), 320. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), C398, 187–88 (p. 187).

¹⁰⁸¹ Ezra Pound, “Elizabethan Classicists: II,” *Egoist*, 4 (1917), 135–36 (p. 136).

¹⁰⁸² Ezra Pound, “Patria Mia: V,” *New Age*, 11.23 (3 October 1912) 539–40 (p. 539). In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C56, 99–100 (p. 99).

¹⁰⁸³ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations: IV. As for Imagisme,” *New Age*, 16 (1915), 349–50 (p. 349).

aestheticism's interest in artifice¹⁰⁸⁴ and against Pater's notion of "art for art's sake" or a mode of living a highly ornamental, yet artificial, lifestyle. Pound asserts, "England, to her glory, was not always dowdy Victorian,"¹⁰⁸⁵ yet in this statement, implies a current dowdiness, or the unfashionable reality of England in 1917. He portrays this Victorian ornament in the 1918 poem "Moeurs Contemporaines."¹⁰⁸⁶ Pound describes a photograph, implying that the aged images of this Victorian scene are captured images and that the material objects are being described with accuracy:

A faded, pale, brownish photograph,
Of the times when the sleeves were large,
Silk, stiff and large above the lacertus,
That is, the upper arm,
And décolleté

He includes description of a woman's dress: the silk material, the large puffed sleeves, the décolleté, or front neckline. He then mentions this "lady" who plays a harp, a musical instrument of privilege and decadence. By her left foot is an infant of 14 months, who "beams" at the mother playing the harp, while the mother "re-beams" at the baby. He includes detail of the baby basket and the harp:

The basket is lined with satin,
There is a satin-like bow on the harp.

The two satirized images of decadence are linked to the description of the woman through their fine materials, silk and satin. These images are then linked to the home of a novelist, where the photograph is displayed. The novelist, too, owns a harp:

And in the home of the novelist
There is a satin-like bow on an harp.
/
I noticed an harp
And the blue satin ribbon,
And the copy of "Hatha Yoga"
And the neat piles of unopened, unopening books.
/
And she spoke to me of the monarch,
And of the purity of her soul.¹⁰⁸⁷

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Women and British Aestheticism*, ed. by Talia Schaffer and Kathy Alexis Psomiades (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p. 3.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Ezra Pound, "Landor (1775–1864)," *The Future*, 2 (1917), 10–12 (p. 10).

¹⁰⁸⁶ Ezra Pound, "Moeurs Contemporaines," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 522–26 (p. 524). "Moeurs Contemporaines" was first published in *Little Review* in May 1918 and in *Quia Pauper Amavi* in October 1919.

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Pound is implying the continuation of the Victorian tradition; the photograph of the woman in silk dress is likely the female novelist's mother, or possibly grandmother, and the harp, a family heirloom. Yet along with the artifice of the images of aesthetics and decadence—the satin-lined baby's basket, the blue satin ribbon on the harp—Pound notes the philistinism of unopened books used for interior décor and further implies the artifice of the novelist's education.

Pound felt that by eradicating the artifice or the embellishments, the poet could get closer to the actual image he is describing. "The point of Imagisme," he explained, "is that it does not use image *as ornaments*. The image itself is the speech. The image is the word beyond formulated language" [his emphasis].¹⁰⁸⁸ Imagisme becomes a "fence-wash" over "an attempt to 'apply decoration,'" writes Pound in 1915 to Harriet Monroe of *Poetry* magazine.¹⁰⁸⁹ As early as 1911, he wrote the theory of the Luminous Detail, a precursor to the Image. "For it is not until poetry lives again 'close to the thing' that it will be a vital part of contemporary life," he writes. "As long as the poet says not what he, at the very crux of a clarified conception, means, but is content to say something ornate and approximate, just so long will serious people, intently alive, consider poetry as balderdash—a sort of embroidery for dilettantes and women, ... rhetoric and frilled paper decoration."¹⁰⁹⁰ To escape this decoration, Pound gives directions of what not to do, foreshadowing his later "A Few Don'ts." The poet must not use, he writes, "florid adjectives or elaborate hyperbole." The poet should make the reader "feel that he is in contact with something arranged more finely than the commonplace," emphasizing the need for structure and order in a fine arrangement. He also calls for "fewer painted adjectives" in his "Credo" declaration in 1912, and states that this abandonment of the painted adjective will lead to a directness in language.¹⁰⁹¹ He uses a metaphor of embroidery in his "Patria Mia" series in 1912 to emphasize this directness. "Poetry is not a sort of embroidery, cross-stitch, crochet, for pensionnaires, nor yet a post-prandial soporific for the bourgeoisie."¹⁰⁹²

Pound also associates genuineness with this directness in language. In reviewing William Carlos Williams's poetry in 1912, Pound equates the opinion that "he apparently

¹⁰⁸⁸ Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," *Fortnightly Review*, 96 (1914), 461–71 (p. 466).

¹⁰⁸⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Harriet Monroe dated January 1915, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 91–92 (p. 92).

¹⁰⁹⁰ Ezra Pound, "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris: IX. On Technique." *New Age* 10 (1912), 297–99 (p. 298).

¹⁰⁹¹ Ezra Pound, "Prologomena." *Poetry Review* 1.2 (February 1912), 72–76. Includes "Credo." In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C38, 59–63 (p. 63).

¹⁰⁹² Ezra Pound, "Patria Mia: V," *New Age*, 11.23 (3 October 1912), 539–40. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C56, 99–100 (p. 100).

means what he says” with “he is not overcrowded with false ornament.”¹⁰⁹³ He argues for an organic poem—one that uses natural language, without ornament, to represent the subject. “Poetry—at least the sort of poetry in which I am interested—is written preferably in a living language.”¹⁰⁹⁴ He details this living language, or his “preference for realism, for a straight statement of life” as including “matter without curley-cues, ornaments and inversions.” The author “tries to make his words follow some rhythm which is at concord with his matter.” Pound’s desire to capture the subject through precision of language is viewed in his *Poetry* article “Correspondence” in 1916, in which he praises “objectivity and again objectivity.”¹⁰⁹⁵ He states, “language is made out of concrete things” and therefore does not need the “decorative frill adjective.” As Pound views that concrete things do not need decorative frill, he evidently finds beauty or purpose in the bare subject itself. Language is used to organically describe the subject’s beauty.

In the 1913 series “The Serious Artist,” Pound refers to the traditions that often portray images of beauty as being diseased and in need of diagnosis. He complains that “men have desired to effect more beautiful things although few of us are capable of forming any precise mental images of things, in their particular way, more beautiful than this statue or this building.”¹⁰⁹⁶ The decadent tendency, for example, celebrates art above nature, and the romantic tendency looks beyond nature for the sublime. Pound asserts the importance of the formation of a precise image of “things,” placing emphasis on the importance of nature itself. He adds that no one has been able to restore the “missing head of the Victory” and can only create “such heads in their imagination.” His example values the actual stone sculpture above the idea of the sculpture. Additionally, he writes that some skilled writers have countered the effects of romantic and decadent styles. He labels these writers’ attempts at changing the prevailing traditions as “diagnosis.” “As there are in medicine the art of diagnosis and the art of cure, so in the arts, so in the particular arts of poetry and of literature. There is the art of diagnosis and there is the art of cure.” He then discusses aesthetics in two aspects: as the subject matter of a work of literature, and as a style of writing. He writes about aesthetics as being both beautiful and ugly: “They call one the cult of ugliness and the other the cult of beauty.” Pound explains that the writers who broke tradition and diagnosed the problems of writing also introduced elements of reality or

¹⁰⁹³ Ezra Pound, “[Introductory note to] A Selection from *The Tempers*. By William Carlos Williams,” *Poetry Review*, 1.10 (October 1912), 481–82. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C54, p. 82.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations: Edgar Lee Masters,” *Reedy’s Mirror*, 24.13 (21 May 1915) 10–12. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C190, 86–89 (p. 86).

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ezra Pound, “Correspondence,” *Poetry*, 7.6 (March 1916), 321–23. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C218, p. 148.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: I,” *The New Freewoman*, 1.9 (15 October 1913), 161–63 (p. 162). In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C106, 186–88 (p. 187).

“ugliness” into writing. What he views as beautiful, or this new mode of writing, also presents the realistic ugliness of the world in its work. Beauty, he writes, is the hygienic freshness of this new innovative writing: “The cult of beauty is the hygiene.” He adds that the cult of ugliness is composed of the writers who changed tradition and who introduced stark reality into poetry: “The cult of ugliness, Villon, Baudelaire, Corbiere, Beardsley are diagnosis. Flaubert is diagnosis.” He then introduces the concept of satire as a means of diagnosing the disease in what appears to be beautiful, yet ultimately is not. “Satire is surgery, insertions and amputations.” The writers important to his ideal of a modern mode of writing are those who surgically eradicate corrupt or unhealthy styles of beauty inherited from the past, even if this involves creating, in the process, a “cult of ugliness.” Therefore, he states, “the cult of beauty and the delineation of ugliness are not in mutual opposition.”

In modern writing, the subject can be realist and aesthetically ugly, and yet its portrayal is beautiful. He praises Joyce’s portrayal of “the sordid” as beautiful. “He finds no need to disguise things to himself,” Pound writes, again identifying the authentic as a true source of beauty.¹⁰⁹⁷ “He writes with no trace of morbidity,” he adds, further separating Joyce’s work from that of the decadents. Pound states that Joyce “presents” in his writing, rather than calculating a method of romanticism or realism.

The sordid is there, but he does not seek for the sordid. He has the sense of abundant beauty. Often we find a writer who can get a certain delusive sense of “power” out of “strong” situations, or by describing rough life. Mr. Joyce is not forced into this. He presents his people regardless of “bareness,” regardless of their not being considered “romantic” or “realistic” material. ... For ourselves, we can be thankful for clear, hard surfaces, for an escape from the softness and mushiness of the neo-symbolist movement, and from the fruitier school of the neo-realists, and in no less a degree from the phantasists who are the most trivial and most wearying of the lot.

This article was published in 1915, after Joyce had only published *Dubliners* and was publishing *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in serialization. The year that Joyce began serialization of *Ulysses* through the help of Pound, in 1918, Pound again publicly defended Joyce’s choice of subjects while portraying Pound’s own disregard for outmoded decadence. “Vomit, carefully labeled ‘Beauty’, is still in the literary market,” Pound states, citing “the decayed-lily verbiage which the Wilde school scattered over the decadence.”¹⁰⁹⁸ He also satirizes the “Beaudelairian ‘vigour’” of “any decayed cabbage, cast upon any pale

¹⁰⁹⁷ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations VII. The Non-existence of Ireland,” *New Age* 16.17 (25 February 1915) 451–53. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C182, 20–21 (p. 20).

¹⁰⁹⁸ Ezra Pound, “Mr Villerant’s Morning Outburst. (Four Letters),” *Little Review*, 5.7 (November 1918), 7–12. In continuation of “Imaginary Letters.” Unsigned, but the issue is described as being “Devoted chiefly to Ezra Pound.” Reprinted as “Imaginary Letters, V–VIII.” In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C417, 221–24 (p. 223).

satin sofa.” He contrasts this decadent reference with “Joyce’s hardness” and “Pound’s sterilized surgery.” Pound distinguishes the subject matter of Joyce’s work from that of typical decadent writers. “Wherever Joyce has made use of lice, or dung, or other disgusting unpleasantness he has done so with the intention, and with, as a considerable artist, the result of heightening some effect of beauty, or twisting tighter some other intensity.” Ironically, Pound describes Joyce’s “sordid” details as a heightening of aesthetics. His focus, therefore, is on the style of writing and complete presentation of the subject presented. In a 1918 article, for example, Pound states that even the best classical poets portray the sordid. “The wasted body has no need of magical intensifications for its tragedy,” Pound states, perhaps referring to the decadent excess in the portrayal of decay.¹⁰⁹⁹ “The tragedy of physical decay has been of the inexhaustible matter of poetry since Gallus recalled Homer’s old men on the walls of Troy.” In stating that Joyce’s and Homer’s inclusion of sordid details heightens beauty, Pound therefore places emphasis on language use, rather than on the subject matter. The beauty in Joyce’s and Homer’s depiction of the sordid is in the mode of writing, rather than in the “tragedy of physical decay.” With this notion, Pound distinguishes between quality modern writing and token modern writing. The mistake that “false” modern writers make, he asserts, is that they choose a modern subject—based on the city, for example—and feel as though this subject matter automatically designates them as modern. “The bore, the demnition bore of pseudo-modernity, is that the avowed modernist thinks he can make a poem out of a steam shovel more easily and more effectively than out of the traditional sow’s ear. The accidents and detail are made to stand for the core,” Pound says in 1915.¹¹⁰⁰ The details, or extraneous decoration, take over from the “core” and displace the genuine subject. “Good poetry is always the same; the changes are superficial,” he adds. “We have the real poem in nature. The real poet thinking the real poem absorbs the *decor* almost unconsciously.” The poem, he states, should be organic, “in nature.” Pound speaks as though the poem naturally exists and the poet only has to discover it. The poem will evolve naturally, without embellishment. To emphasize his point, he adds that the “bare statement of something” is more important than “a bit of chiffon attached.”

Pound, then, views precision, or the “bare statement of something,” as indicative of modern writing. He compares this literary precision to the work of scientists in his “Serious Artist” series: “The serious artist is scientific,” he states. “The more precise his record the more lasting and unassailable his work of art.”¹¹⁰¹ As Pound views art as important to

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ezra Pound, “Books Current, Reviewed by Ezra Pound,” *Future*, 2.12 (December 1918), 311–12. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C428, 251–53 (p. 252).

¹¹⁰⁰ Ezra Pound, “Webster Ford by Ezra Pound,” *Egoist* 2.1 (1 January 1915), 11–12. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C168, 1–2 (p. 1).

¹¹⁰¹ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist I[-II],” *New Freewoman*, 1.9 (15 October 1913), 161–63. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C106, 186–88 (p. 188).

society—as he claimed in “IKON”¹¹⁰²—he strives for art that will not decay, as will nature. This “lasting” nature of literature is what permits literature to become a classic. The decadent and romantic styles, then, with their images of decay and excessive décor, were seen by Pound as not lasting or classic. “It is more desirable that a nation should have a firm literature than that paste-board nonentities should pour forth rehashed Victoriana on Sundays. Waste! Waste, and again, multiplicity, waste!”¹¹⁰³ As *waste* denotes a gradual loss or decrease by use, wear, or decay, Pound viewed as short-lived this type of contemporary literature that copied the style of the Victorians. In this same 1916 article, Pound states that good literature takes on “the studies and duties of science,” as science attempts to set lasting laws. He admits his own personal disregard for extraneous sensationalism. “Let me say at once that I make no plea for smuttiness, for an unnecessary erotic glamour, etc. etc. I have what I have been recently informed is a typically ‘French’ disgust at the coarseness of Milton’s mind. I have more than once been ridiculed for my prudery.” Despite this instinct towards prudence, possibly originating from his puritan background, he states that a writer must remain accurate in a realist depiction, neither embellishing nor ignoring certain subjects. He refers to Edmond de Goncourt, a leader of the naturalist school in France who used pathology in all his novels to emphasize realism. Pound adds to De Goncourt’s theory, “But if one can’t, *parfois*, write ‘as a physician, as a savant, as a historian,’ if we can’t write plays, novels, poems or any other conceivable form of literature with the scientist’s freedom and privilege, with at least the chance of at least the scientist’s verity, then where in the world have we got to, and what is the use of anything, *anything?*” Pound portrays the scientist as “free”—despite his containment within the material world and scientific laws—precisely because he is not bound by a sense of propriety or censorship. The scientist has the freedom to portray the real, despite its potential unpopularity, because he has evidence and data to support this portrayal. While the decadent would use nature to make a statement about what is beyond nature, the imagist portrays nature as would a scientist—focusing on the subject itself.

ORDER AND CENSORSHIP

During 1918, Pound encountered a situation in which his desire for realism and his instinct for propriety were tested. Joyce began sending Pound chapters of *Ulysses* to be serialized in the *Little Review*, for which Pound was working as foreign editor since 1917. Pound publicly praised Joyce’s handling of “sordid” material in his novel—such as in a

¹¹⁰² “IKON.” *Cerebralist*, 1 (December 1913), 43. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C114a, p. 203.

¹¹⁰³ Ezra Pound, “Meditatio: I,” *Egoist* 3.3 (1 March 1916), 37–38. Reprinted as “Meditations.” In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C219, p. 149.

May 1918 article in the *Future*: “On almost every page of Joyce you will find just such swift alternation of subjective beauty and external shabbiness, squalor, and sordidness.”¹¹⁰⁴ Again, Pound is attracted to the combination of the beautiful and the traditionally ugly, in the scenes of sordid realism. Pound asserts that this portrayal of filth is crucial to precision: “There is nothing so sordid that he cannot treat it with his metallic exactitude.” Pound again refers to his theory that the beautiful is possible only through realism or precisely capturing the subject. In discussing *Portrait of the Artist*, Pound writes:

I have yet to find in Joyce’s published works a violent or malodorous phrase which does not justify itself not only by its verity, but by its heightening of some opposite effect, by the poignancy which it imparts to some emotion or to some thwarted desire for beauty. Disgust with the sordid is but another expression of a sensitiveness to the finer thing. There is no perception of beauty without a corresponding disgust.

Perhaps this explanation explains Pound’s editorial response to Joyce’s work on *Ulysses*. If Pound views disgust as an “expression of a sensitiveness to the finer thing,” then he would be justified in expressing caution at printing some of Joyce’s new novel in serial form. The first month that the *Little Review* began publishing *Ulysses* in installments, Pound wrote to Joyce to discourage him from including details of excrement and waste.

The contrast between Blooms poetry and his outward surroundings is excellent, but it will come up without such detailed treatment of the dropping feces. ... I’m not even sure “urine” is necessary in the opening page. The idea could be conveyed just as definitely. In the thing as it stands you will lose effectiveness. The excrements will prevent people from noticing the quality of things contrasted. At any rate the thing is risk enough without the full details of the morning deposition. If we are suppressed too often we’ll be suppressed finally and for all, to the damn’d stoppage of all our stipends.¹¹⁰⁵

Pound indicates in a letter to the *Little Review* editors his fear of suppression if they publish Joyce’s work without excisions.¹¹⁰⁶ “Another chunk of Joyce has come in ... it might be well to leave gaps, at the questionable points, well marked.”¹¹⁰⁷ He suggests in the letter that

¹¹⁰⁴ Ezra Pound, “Books Current: Joyce,” *The Future* 2.6 (May 1918), 161–63 (p. 162). Review of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C353, 95–97 (p. 96).

¹¹⁰⁵ Ezra Pound, 29 March 1918, in *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce*, ed. by Forrest Read (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p. 131.

¹¹⁰⁶ Pound might have been behind Joyce’s earlier problems with sections deleted from his serialized *Portrait of the Artist*. A postcard sent to Pound from Joyce in 1915 about sections missing from his novel reads, “My dear Mr Pound, I find that deletions have been made in my novel in the [?] of 1 August and 1 January. Who has the typescript? Can you send me the paper corresponding to these instalments? If Mr Pinker has it you need not send it. If he has the published version I must have these deleted passages typed at once and sent to him as part of the novel which he is [publishing?] 31 July 1915.” Joyce postcard addressed to Ezra Pound, Harriet Shaw Weaver Papers, British Library, 57353.

¹¹⁰⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated 17 January 1918, in *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson*, ed. Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New

instead of publishing the sections, they could note, “He refers here to certain natural facts, doubtless familiar to the reader.” The magazine printed the first three installments without deletions, yet in March, Pound removed “about twenty lines” of the “Calypso” scene in the fourth installment without Joyce’s approval.¹¹⁰⁸ A comparison with the published *Ulysses* in book form¹¹⁰⁹ reveals that the *Little Review*’s serialized version of the “Calypso” passage in June 1918 differs greatly from Joyce’s intentions because of Pound’s deletions for the magazine,¹¹¹⁰ as indicated with brackets:

He felt heavy, full: then a gentle loosening [of his bowels]. He stood up[, undoing the waistband of his trousers]. The cat mewed to him. ...

[A paper. He liked to read at stool. Hope no ape comes knocking just as I’m.] ... [He kicked open the crazy door of the jakes. Better be careful not to get these trousers dirty for the funeral. He went in, bowing his head under the low lintel. Leaving the door ajar, amid the stench of mouldy limewash and stale cobwebs he undid his braces. Before sitting down he peered through a chink up at the nextdoor window. The king was in his counting house. Nobody.

Asquat on the cuckstool he folded out his paper turning its pages over on his bared knees.] Something new and easy. [No great hurry. Keep it a bit.] Our prize titbit... [Quietly he read, restraining himself, the first column and, yielding but resisting, began the second. Midway, his last resistance yielding, he allowed his bowels to ease themselves quietly as he read, reading still patiently, that slight constipation of yesterday quite gone. Hope it’s not too big bring on piles again. No, just right. So. Ah! Costive one tabloid of cascara sagrada.] Life might be so. It did not move or touch him but it was something quick and neat. [Print anything now. Silly season.] He read on[, seated calm above his own rising smell]. Neat certainly. ... He glanced back through what he had read and, [while feeling his water flow quietly, he] envied kindly Mr Beaufoy ... [He tore away half the prize story sharply and wiped himself with it. Then he girded up his trousers, braced and buttoned himself. He pulled back the jerky shaky door of the jakes and came forth from the gloom into the air.] In the bright light[, lightened and cooled in limb,] he eyed...”

Pound deleted direct reference to bowels, the waistband of Bloom’s trousers, the detailed scene of Bloom sitting on the cuckstool as he read the tabloid newspaper, and finally, the excrement and urine, and their foul smell among the mouldy limewash. Pound also deleted the act of Bloom using the tabloid to wipe himself, while retaining the description of the neatness of the tabloid: “something new and easy,” “something quick and neat,” “Neat

York: New Directions, 1988), p. 174. Manuscript available online University Wisconsin-Milwaukee Manuscript Coll 1: Box 3, Folder 2. Little Review. Records 1914–1964. 2 pages.

¹¹⁰⁸ Appendix C, *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce*, ed. by Forrest Read (London: Faber and Faber, 1967). The passages are also compared in Appendix C.

¹¹⁰⁹ The earliest printed book edition was published in 1922 by Sylvia Beach in Paris. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1922).

¹¹¹⁰ James Joyce, “*Ulysses: Episode IV*,” *Little Review*, 6 (1918), 39–52.

certainly.” Pound then stopped excising phrases in the scene after Bloom left the outhouse, and retained the more hygienic line “In the bright light,” before making one final excision, “lightened and cooled in limb,” possibly because of its indirect reference to human waste.

Pound again encountered similar images of filth in the “Sirens” installment. He immediately wrote Joyce:

One *can* Fahrt with less pomp and circumstance [3a. gallic preference for Phallus—purely personal—know mittel europa humour runs to other orifice.—But don’t think you will strengthen your impact by that particular. ... Abnormal keenness of insight O.K. But obsessions arseore-ial, cloacal, deist, aesthetic as opposed to arsethetic, any obsession or tick shd. be very carefully considered before being turned loose.= ... 4. Fahrt yes, but not as climax of chapter = not really the final resolution of fugue.¹¹¹¹

One method for Pound to insist on an appropriate presentation of subjects involving filth was through editing. As he placed emphasis on the language use and style, rather than the subject matter itself, his editing helped him control this aspect in others’ writings. He compared editing to both a microscope and a blade—tools for locating contamination and for excising inappropriate presentation. He idealizes order as one aspect of this presentation of language, and associates it with the tools of surgery: “beautiful in neatness as a surgeon’s instruments may be beautiful.”¹¹¹² Describing his editing for Laurence Binyon, Pound writes that he is “going over the text with a microscope.”¹¹¹³ Additionally, after reading William Carlos Williams’s first collection of poetry in manuscript form, he responds, “From where do you want me to show the sharpened ‘blade’?”¹¹¹⁴ As with Pound’s editorial work with Joyce’s novels, Pound encouraged the removal of scenes of human decomposition and human waste in T. S. Eliot’s manuscript of *The Waste Land*—as he stated, not because of the subject, but because of the failure of presentation. When Eliot had Pound edit the poem in December 1921, it contained three shorter poems, now gone, at the end of the series. One, labeled “Dirge,” meaning a song of mourning, was a 17-line poem that dwelt on the rotting of Bleistein’s body at the bottom of the sea.¹¹¹⁵ “Full fathom five your Bleistein lies,” it begins. “Under the flatfish and the squids. / Graves’ Disease in a dead Jew’s eyes! / Where the crabs have eat the lids.” Pound urged him to abandon this scene and the other two short poems. He stated they were “remaining superfluities” that Eliot had merely stuck on to the

¹¹¹¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to James Joyce dated 10 June 1919, in *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce*, ed. by Forrest Read (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p. 158.

¹¹¹² Julien Benda, *Athenaeum*, 95.4706 (9 July 1920), 62. A review, signed B. L., of *Belphégor*, by Julien Benda. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C586a, 74–75 (p. 74).

¹¹¹³ British Library, Laurence Binyon Archive, Loan 103, Letters to Laurence Binyon, Vol. 9, p. 31.

¹¹¹⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to William Carlos Williams dated 21 October 1908, in *Pound/Williams: Selected Letters of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams*, ed. by Hugh Witemeyer (New York: New Directions, 1996), p. 8.

¹¹¹⁵ Donald Gallup, *T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound: Collaborators in Letters* (New Haven: Henry W. Wenning / C. A. Stonehill, 1970), p. 21.

end. He adds, “One test is whether anything would be lacking if the last three were omitted. I don’t think it would.”¹¹¹⁶ Pound therefore edited out these lines because he viewed them as superfluous. Additionally, the beginning of “The Fire Sermon” originally included a section in heroic couplets imitating Pope’s *Rape of the Lock*. He describes Lady Fresca at a modern toilet instead of Belinda at a traditional toilet. The lines read, “Leaving the bubbling beverage to cool, / Fresca slips softly to the needful stool, / Where the pathetic tale of Richardson / Eases her labour till the deed is done.”¹¹¹⁷ Pound warned Eliot that since Pope managed to write the couplets better, and Joyce the defecation, there was no reason to repeat the image. Additionally, the last fourteen lines describing the typist was originally a 16-line piece in quatrains; however, Pound recommended cutting the last two lines: “And at the corner where the stable is, / Delays only to urinate, and spit.” Pound added the comment “Proba[b]ly over the mark.” Eliot took out the two lines, inserted ellipses, and disassembled the quatrains into a single long verse.¹¹¹⁸ Again, Pound’s reasoning, at least on paper, was that these details were “over the mark” or not needed in the description or for the poem as a whole.

These anecdotes from Pound’s editorial work portray the dilemma in which Pound sometimes found himself as an editor and as a poet. Just as he stated he wished the writer could enjoy “the scientist’s freedom,” Pound evidently felt restrained by the expectations of an audience emerging from the Victorian era. While romanticism and decadence seem to portray a larger scope of freedom for the writer—in that the writer is not bound to naturalism or realism—Pound associates freedom with the scientist and with the law-bound material world. The scientist is free to write facts with the assurance of proof, while the realist author should theoretically enjoy this same freedom without limits of the public’s approval or disapproval. However, the realist author still is plagued by the responses of an audience prone to subjective decadent and romantic tendencies. This is why Pound labels Joyce’s unresponsive audience the “diseased and ailing vulgar.”¹¹¹⁹

Pound views this “vulgar” or audience as allowing, or even promoting, decay because it does not support invention or the new. “Inventors are a disturbance,” Pound writes in 1920 towards the end of his London career, “and as such, exceedingly disliked.”¹¹²⁰

¹¹¹⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to T. S. Eliot dated 24 December 1921, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 233–235 (p. 234). Pound writes, “One test is whether anything would be lacking if the last three were omitted. I don’t think it would.” See also the letter from Pound to Eliot, January 1922 with Pound’s annotations.

¹¹¹⁷ Richard Ellman, *A Long the Riverrun: Selected Essays* (New York: Knopf, 1989), p. 69.

¹¹¹⁸ A. Walton Litz, “The Allusive Poet: Eliot and His Sources,” in *T. S. Eliot: The Modernist in History*, ed. by Ronald Bush (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 137–52 (p. 142).

¹¹¹⁹ Letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver dated 17 March 1916, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 74.

¹¹²⁰ Ezra Pound, “Obstructivity. *Apple (of Beauty and Discord)*,” 1.3 (July/Sept 1920), p. 168, 170, 172. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), C584, 70–72 (p. 70).

He gives an analogy of “thought-soil” that is allowed to grow into a “thought-tree,” and reflects that the opposite of growth occurs when invention is not encouraged. “When one sees [the inventive processes] outlawed one suspects the decay of the organism which tries to exclude them.” In a 1918 article, Pound refers to this resistance to invention with a reference to Vorticism. He foresees that the literary effects of the Victorian era would not just disappear, but would need energy and reinvigoration. “The Victorian era is like a stuffy alley-way,” Pound says.¹¹²¹ “The odour of defunct Victoriana” and “the heavy gas of the past decades cannot be dispersed by mere ‘BLASTS’ and explosions.” Pound even places other modern movements into this grouping of decay in his “Vortex” article published in *Blast* I. He states, “Impressionism, Futurism, which is only an accelerated sort of impressionism, DENY the vortex. They are the CORPSES of VORTICES. POPULAR BELIEFS, movements, etc., are the CORPSES OF VORTICES. Marinetti is a corpse.”¹¹²² Pound differentiates the vitality of Vorticism from other established movements. He portrays Marinetti as a decaying corpse-leader of a dead movement, as though his ideas are no longer fresh and new. Pound asserts that these movements, such as Futurism, are based on “likeness or mimicry,” rather than a genuine newness.

In his lecture on Vorticism, given at the Rebel Arts Centre, Pound again refers to the remaining expectations of the decadent age and the conflict that these outmoded expectations create against a new form of poetry. “The wickedest and most dashing publisher of ‘the nineties,’ of the ‘vicious, disreputable nineties,’ demands that our antiseptic works be submitted to ladylike censorship,” he says in the speech.¹¹²³ He then introduces the “species of quiet and sober sanity called Vorticism,” associating this new movement—as with Imagism two years earlier—with “sanity” or health, and, ironically, with a dignified quietness. This new sanity originates from a “life-force” or powerful “order and vitality” of the movement. Pound seems to attribute this new life to organization and order, aligning his movement even further with the sciences. He uses an analogy of a magnet ordering “a plateful of iron filings” to illustrate his assertion that “an organisation of forms expresses a confluence of forces.” It is through this order of force that “order and vitality and thence beauty” form from “a plate of iron filings, which are otherwise as ‘ugly’ as anything under heaven.” Pound speaks of the vitality of Vorticism as “energy expressing itself in pattern,” resembling nineteenth-century discoveries in physics of the atom and its components, and more recent work of Einstein with his theories of relativity. As energy is

¹¹²¹ Ezra Pound, “Books Current, Reviewed by Ezra Pound: Lytton Strachey on Left Over Celebrity,” *Future*, 2.10 (October 1918), pp. 265–66. Reprinted in *Instigations*. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C404, 193–94 (p. 193).

¹¹²² Ezra Pound, “Vortex. Pound,” *Blast*, 1 (20 June 1914), 153–54. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C149, 259–60 (p. 260).

¹¹²³ “Affirmations. By Ezra Pound Part II Vorticism,” *New Age*, 16.11 (14 January 1915), 277–78. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C170, 4–5 (p. 4).

often defined as the ability to do work or to cause change, Pound's admiration of energy seems to originate in its promise of potential. With energy, a literary work will not stagnate. Pound praises this energy in a 1918 article, which details that this energy does not just form from "some magic chemical," but from a "nerve-centre, the dynamic centre of the group."¹¹²⁴ He explains that "vorticism is, in the realm of biology, the hypothesis of the dominant cell," signifying a source of energy from a focused group of artists. That same year, when Pound was arguing against the "death of Vorticism" in 1918, he again returns to these essential notions of invention: originality and energy through organization. "Vorticism has been reported dead by numerous half-caste reporters of Kieff, by numerous old ladies, by numerous [*sic*] parasites who having done their best to prevent the emergence of inventions later find it profitable to make copy out of the same," he writes.¹¹²⁵ He again associates Vorticism with pattern and order, and states that the movement in a Vorticist work focuses on the issue of "*how the human eye is affected by colours and patterns in relation*" [his emphasis].

Pound associates pattern with Vorticism, in his effort to put forward a new movement that presents energy under controlled situations. As early as 1913, Pound used a term connoting pattern, *whirl*, to describe the activity of a city. "There is no week without some new thing of interest, no fortnight in which some new and interesting personality is not whirled up against one."¹¹²⁶ He additionally correlates this activity with newfound science, as he says, "these people come bringing you particles of knowledge and gossip, wearing you away little by little, filing against your salients." He describes the activity and information of the city as "particles" from every angle; the term *salient* possibly relating to the salient angle that describes an angle pointing outward at less than 180 degrees. The same year, Pound distinguishes Vorticism from the decay of decadence or of any past movements, in that it "cannot help but bring about changes as great as the Renaissance changes."¹¹²⁷ This change, he details, derives from a new energy and dynamism. "This force of external stimuli" in "the vortex of London" helps promote, he states, "things which are in seed and dynamic [rather than] things which are dead, dying, static." Two years later, just as Pound

¹¹²⁴ Ezra Pound, "A Study in French Poets," *Little Review*, 4.10 (February 1918), 3–61. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), C327, 17–54 (p. 50). In this section of the article, Pound is describing Jules Romains's function as a "nerve-centre" of the Paris literary "group" he is surveying in the article. This function of a community of writers then leads Pound to equate Romains's function with that of Wyndham Lewis with the Vorticists.

¹¹²⁵ Ezra Pound, "The Death of Vorticism," *Little Review*, 6.10/11 (February/March 1919), 45, 48. Unsigned. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C441, 279–80 (p. 279).

¹¹²⁶ Ezra Pound, "Through Alien Eyes: IV," *New Age*, 12.14 (6 February 1913), 324. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C73, p. 118.

¹¹²⁷ Ezra Pound, "Affirmations VI: Analysis of this Decade," *New Age* 16.15 (11 February 1915), 409–11. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C179, 16–17 (p. 17). Reprinted in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Marvell Press, 1960), pp. 133–41.

was introducing Vorticism in the beginning months of 1915, he describes the Vorticist portrayal of emotion as “pattern-units” while carefully distinguishing this precise unit from decoration.¹¹²⁸ This pattern-unit creates the image, Pound explains, thereby combining his Imagist efforts into the new movement of Vorticism. “Intense emotion causes pattern to arise in the mind,” he writes. He justifies his reference to emotion and to a term possibly misunderstood as decor, “Perhaps I should say, not pattern, but pattern-units, or units of design. ... I am using this term ‘pattern-unit,’ because I want to get away from the confusion between ‘pattern’ and ‘applied decoration.’” Pound thought it was important to distinguish pattern from decoration, to keep his Vorticism distinct from any hint of decadence, which he again associates with mimicry in this article. “The invention [of decoration] was merely the first curley-cue, or the first pair of them. The rest is repetition, is copying.” Pound places an emphasis on originality and order. This order creates the image, he states; this image, then, originates in a precise ordering of forms. “Not only does emotion create the ‘pattern-unit’ and the ‘arrangement of forms,’ it creates also the Image.”

Pound’s emphasis on order corresponds with his desire for bareness and cleanliness. Mary Douglas, author of the theoretical text on dirt and filth, *Purity and Danger*, claimed, “dirt is matter out of place,”¹¹²⁹ paralleling Lord Palmerston’s nineteenth-century statement defining “dirt” as “the right thing in the wrong place.”¹¹³⁰ Similarly, Pound viewed the organization and structure of writing as crucial to producing a modern, clean work. In 1913 Pound compares the unserious writer to an unorganized scientist. “Among thinking and sentient people the bad artist is contemned as we would contemn a negligent physician or a sloppy, inaccurate scientist,” he writes.¹¹³¹ “In the fog and outer darkness no measures are taken to distinguish between the serious and the unserious artist.” In Vorticism, then, Pound is attempting to establish the seriousness of the artist’s work by aligning this work with orderliness, or a precise meaning and purpose for each word and its position within the poem. While Vorticism, as presented in *Blast* and in definitive statements from Wyndham Lewis, tended toward the abstract, the disorderly and haphazard, Pound’s version of Vorticism focused on the ordered within the haphazard. His Vorticist poem, “Dogmatic Statement on the Game and Play of Chess,” published in *Blast 2*, contrasts order with disorder. The knights, bishops, and queens move along the chess board in Vorticist-like diagonal and straight lines, in “L’s” and “x’s” keeping with the order of the blocks of the board. When the king is taken, however, the order of the chess set is enveloped into a

¹¹²⁸ Ezra Pound, “Affirmations IV. As for Imagisme,” *New Age*, 16.13 (January 1915), 340–50. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C173, 8–9 (p. 8).

¹¹²⁹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 3.

¹¹³⁰ James H. Winter, *London’s Teeming Streets: 1830–1914* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 118.

¹¹³¹ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist: I,” *The New Freewoman*, 1 (1913), 161–63 (p. 162).

centripetal force: “whirl, centripetal, mate, King down in the vortex.” The vortex image of the whirl-swirl sweeps up the predominate figure of order, the king.

Pound’s tendency to control and order is evident in his participation with the invention of the vortoscope. As he wrote to Margaret Anderson, his worry about his own lack of poetic and artistic productivity was partially alleviated with the vortoscope.¹¹³² “When I say, I ain’t got no pome, I don’t think I am confessing to a complete sterility. . . . Coburn and I have invented the ‘vortoscope.’”¹¹³³ Pound’s involvement with the vortoscope—and the entire movement of Vorticism—displays his position within the “mess of modernity” while he attempts to make order of it.¹¹³⁴ Pound seems to take credit for inventing the vortoscope alongside Alvin Langdon Coburn, a celebrated photographer, in another letter to John Quinn. “Dont know that there is much to report save that Cobairn and I have invented the vortoscope.”¹¹³⁵ He continues by explaining their domination over the photographic output. “I think so far as design and composition are concerned we’ll be able to [do] pretty much what we like. Select the unit of design, cut out everything we dont want, and build the result.” The vortoscope was groundbreaking in that a triangular prism of mirrors fractured the photographic images into broken planes. Instead of viewing this process as a movement away from reality and toward abstraction or disorder, Pound viewed vortography as a movement away from abstraction and toward order. He described the Vortoscope using images of control. “It, the vortoscope, will manage any arrangement of purely abstract forms. The present machine happens to be rectilinear, but I can make one that will do any sort of curve, quite easily.”¹¹³⁶ He uses the term *arrangement* to describe the vortograph and adds that he can control and manipulate the device by changing the curve of the lines, which are then captured on film. Coburn’s initial series of Vortographs included Pound as the subject—his bespectacled face broken into patterned fragments, and later, his profile prominently posed in front of an open window, as lines of the window frame prismatically repeat around his multiplied silhouette. It is this repetition and ordered pattern that attracted Pound to vortography. Additionally, the project has a scientific origin; the labeling of the device by Pound as a *Vortoscope* implies a “scope” of mirrors as part of a

¹¹³² Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated 8 February 1917, in *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson*, ed. Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York: New Directions, 1988), pp. 15–16.

¹¹³³ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated 8 February 1917, in *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson*, ed. Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York: New Directions, 1988), pp. 15–16.

¹¹³⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to James Joyce dated 12 December 1918, in *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce*, ed. by Forrest Read (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), pp. 147–148 (p. 148).

¹¹³⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 13 October 1916, in *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991).

¹¹³⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 24 January 1917, in *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 117.

greater machine-like whole, as the suffix *-scope* is defined as “an instrument for seeing or observing.” Pound’s naming of the camera-machine could have derived from Coburn’s initial idea for the invention of the device. In a 1916 essay, Coburn relates that he admires the function of a microscope, in that the microscope uses prisms in its portrayal of images. “The beauty of the design displayed by the microscope,” he writes, “seems to me a wonderful field to explore from the purely pictorial point of view, the use of prisms for the splitting of images into segments has been very slightly experimented with, and multiple exposures on the same plate ... have been neglected almost entirely.”¹¹³⁷ Therefore, Coburn’s initial idea for the invention likely originated from a microscope, and the suffix *-scope* in “Vortoscope” further links the camera-device to a technical, machine-like function, as in a scientific microscope. Pound wrote an introduction to the exhibition pamphlet for the Vortography exhibition in London 1917 and included details of this sense of order. “It stands infinitely above photography in that the vortographer combines his forms at will. He selects just what actually he wishes, he excludes the rest. He chooses what forms, lights, masses, he desires, he arranges them at will on his screen. He can make summer of London October.”¹¹³⁸ Pound was not allowing for chance and not allowing for mess-making¹¹³⁹ in his visual creations of the vortoscope, just as his literary theories precluded chance and mess. This desire for control over chance implies a control over physical objects and a return to the scientific. “Hyper-scientific precision is the touch-stone and assay of the artist’s power and of his honour, of his authenticity,” he writes. Any emotion arising from art, he adds, “is not a whirl or a madness of the senses, but a glow arising from the exact nature of the perception.”¹¹⁴⁰ Pound argues that the senses are not a “whirl or a madness,” but a means to exact human perception. This exactness and “hyper-scientific precision” gives order to otherwise misrepresented perceptions.

Pound’s desire for order and cleanliness is further emphasized by the contrast with the Vorticist leaning towards disorder and mess. In 1914 Wyndham Lewis opened the Rebel Art Centre, funded by Kate Lechmere, on Great Ormond Street, just next to the Victorian-era Hospital for Sick Children. The walls of the art center, according to Violet Hunt, were covered with murals of raw meat.

The walls in Great Ormond Street were all painted by hand lovingly—and suggested a butcher’s shop full of prime cuts more than anything else! The slaughter house allowed on

¹¹³⁷ Patricia Leighton, “Critical Attitudes toward Overly Manipulated Photography in the Twentieth Century,” *Art Journal*, 37.2 (Winter 1977/78), pp.133–38.

¹¹³⁸ National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, “Vortographs and Paintings” exhibition pamphlet introduction by Ezra Pound.

¹¹³⁹ The “mess-making” term is used by David Trotter when he writes about chance and mess-making. David Trotter, *Cooking with Mud* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 10.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, “Psychology and Troubadours,” *Quest*, 4.1 (October 1912) 37–53. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C55, 83–99 (pp. 88–89).

the premises—upstairs—and the blood running down in gouts and streaks on the cornices and folding doors! ... I always felt rather like a Porterhouse steak myself (or is it a Chateaubriand?) sandwiched between two slabs of meat which were to stand the brunt of the cooking that would preserve my juices and make me exquisitely tender.¹¹⁴¹

This stark décor corresponded with Lewis's desire not only to surprise, but to disgust the seemingly unshockable avant garde. The center's interior contrasted with the interior of the hygienically clean walls of the hospital on the same side of the street. Lewis chose to paint the walls red, which Hunt described as blood-like. "The particular tone of red affected by this Society ... is of the tint of venous, not arterial, blood."¹¹⁴² He also wanted visitors to the center to wear brightly colored patches on their clothes—a further remove from the white hygienic ideal of the hospital workers nearby. "The Futurist—and eke the Vorticist—wanted," she said, "to make things brighter; wanted people to wear coloured patches on their clothes."¹¹⁴³ As David Trotter theorizes, "stains are the epitome of disillusioning mess."¹¹⁴⁴ The value of the stain is predicated, he says, on the society's agreement not to clean them and to allow them to remain.¹¹⁴⁵ As the Vorticist society allowed the image of rotting meat and the stain of blood to remain as décor and symbol of their avant-garde art—like their colored badges—the hospital, by contrast, hygienically cleaned and removed from its appearance the literal blood on its premises. The hospital's method of cleanliness is actually closer to Pound's hygienic theory than the practices of the Vorticists, with whom he publicly aligned himself. This personal preference is seen in his "Vorticism" address at the Rebel Art Centre, in which he identifies good works of literature as "antiseptic," a concept originated by Joseph Lister in 1867. Pound establishes that literature portraying the realities of society can be considered clean writing. The publishing world, he states, "demands that our antiseptic works be submitted to ladylike censorship."¹¹⁴⁶ An antiseptic reduces or prevents infection by the limit or elimination of the growth of microorganisms. Pound reverses the traditional view of censorship as acting as the antiseptic. Instead, he implies that modern writing acts as the antiseptic in that it eliminates the contaminates of meaningless and extraneous words. Obscenity and pornography historically have been associated with "smut," originally meaning "soot" or "smudge."¹¹⁴⁷ Their presence in literature has been viewed as a stain on the arts of letters, in the view of traditional society. Pound's view, however, was that literature changes as society changes, that literature

¹¹⁴¹ Violet Hunt, *I Have This to Say: The Story of My Flurried Years* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926), p. 213.

¹¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 214.

¹¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

¹¹⁴⁴ David Trotter, *Cooking with Mud* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 3.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ezra Pound, "Affirmations II. Vorticism," *New Age*, 16.11 (14 January 1915), 277–78.

¹¹⁴⁷ William A. Cohen, "Introduction," in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. by William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. vii–xxxvii (p. xii).

reflects the issues that society encounters in that time. He compared this societal change to the popular awareness of hygiene. In his “Anachronism at Chinon” fictional dialogue, he portrayed the philosopher Rabelais as saying, “There are certain contraventions of hygiene which always prove inconvenient. None but superstitious and ignorant people can ever confuse these two issues. And as hygiene is always changing; as it alters with our knowledge of physick, intelligent men will keep peace with it. There can be no permanent boundaries to morals.”¹¹⁴⁸ Hygienic medicine demands that the most diseased and unclean parts of the body be examined¹¹⁴⁹ in order to proceed to clean and heal these parts of the body, which is a function of antiseptics. Similarly, Pound argues, literature must examine the unclean parts of the societal body in order to work efficiently as an antiseptic.

In October 1917 the *Little Review* published a short story by Lewis, “Cantleman’s Spring-Mate,” while Pound was acting as foreign editor. The issue’s distribution was suppressed by the postmaster of New York who considered the issue “nonmailable” under Section 211 of the U.S. Criminal Code:

Every obscene, lewd, or lascivious, and every filthy book, pamphlet, picture, letter, writing, print, or other publication of an indecent character and every article or thing designed, adapted or intended for preventing conception or producing abortion, or for any indecent or immoral use ... shall not be conveyed in the mails or delivered from any post-office or by any letter carrier.

This decision by the post office was upheld by Judge Augustus Hand, who agreed that certain details of the story—including a scene in which a British soldier seduced and impregnated a young girl—violated the criminal code.¹¹⁵⁰ Pound responded to the decision in a letter to Quinn, “I think the statute which lumps literature and instruments for abortion into one clause is so fine a piece of propaganda for the Germans that it would be disloyal to publish it here till after the war.”¹¹⁵¹ He continues his criticism by focusing on the connection between, specifically, literature and contraception. “The text of the law re/ instruments, literature and the products of M. le Docteur Condom etc. is really too compromising to the nation to print during Armageddon.”¹¹⁵² While Pound himself often used sterile and clean metaphors to describe literature, he became strongly opposed to the

¹¹⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, “An Anachronism at Chinon,” *Little Review*, 4.2 (June 1917), 14–21. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C259, 208–15 (p. 215).

¹¹⁴⁹ Hugh T. Crawford, *Modernism, Medicine, and William Carlos Williams* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 110.

¹¹⁵⁰ Marisa Anne Pagnattaro. “Carving a Literary Exception: The Obscenity Standard and Ulysses,” *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 47.2 (Summer 2001), 217–40.

¹¹⁵¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 29–30 December 1917, in *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 132–133 (p. 132).

¹¹⁵² Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 29–30 December 1917, in *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 132–133 (p. 133).

connection between literature and contraception. This connection bound the suppression of literature to the already-established legal suppression of contraception and abortion in the United States. “I object to a campaign for free literature being mixed up with a campaign for Mrs Sanger, birth control, etc. And I object to a law which doesn’t keep the two issues distinct,” he wrote Quinn.¹¹⁵³ The secondary issue in this confrontation with censorship was the judge’s decision that the classics were “immune” to this decision. “I still think,” he wrote after the decision, “and I think any man of letters would think Hand’s paragraphs on the classics an immortal *jem*.”¹¹⁵⁴ Pound published an article specifically criticizing this aspect of the decision in March 1918, titled “The Classics Escape.” “There are to be no additions,” he says in regards to the classic literary canon. “No living man is to contribute or to attempt to contribute to the classics. Obviously even though he acquire fame before publishing, he can not have the sanction of ‘age.’”¹¹⁵⁵ Just months before the suppression of Lewis’s story, Pound had written an article to Margaret Anderson of the *Little Review*, and used the metaphor of antiseptics to portray the classics as good literature. In this letter, he emphasized that there are two kinds of classics: the ancient and the modern. “The classics, ‘ancient and modern,’ are precisely the acids to gnaw through the thongs and bulls-hides with which we are tied by our schoolmasters,” he began. “They are the antiseptics. They are almost the only antiseptics against the contagious imbecility of mankind.”¹¹⁵⁶

Pound continued to publicly speak against “the rotten copyright regulation,” and used his legal connections in an attempt at “straightening the American copyright mess.”¹¹⁵⁷ Yet within a year and a half, Pound and the *Little Review* again faced suppression. After just four months of serialization of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the U.S. Post Office determined the magazine was in violation of postal laws and refused to distribute certain issues in the mail. Pound informs the *Egoist* editors in July 1919, “Little Review has been suppressed for printing Joyce’s best chapter,” and he directs them to publish Quinn’s defense for the case.¹¹⁵⁸ Quinn argues in his 30-minute defense that the only excerpt he had found in the installment in question was “a company of two gonorrhoeal ladies, French Nellie and Rosalie, the coalquay whore,” yet contends that these descriptions are not “lewd or

¹¹⁵³ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 18 February 1918, in *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 141–142 (p. 141).

¹¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹¹⁵⁵ Ezra Pound, “The Classics ‘Escape.’” *Little Review*, 4.11 (March 1918) 32–33. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C333, 63–64 (p. 64).

¹¹⁵⁶ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated June 1917, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 168.

¹¹⁵⁷ British Library, Society of Authors Archive, ADD 63317, Vol. cxii ff. 215, ff. 1–9 Ezra Pound, f.2, stamped 12 Nov 1918.

¹¹⁵⁸ British Library, Misc. 1979 ADD MS 60391 ff. 1–172, Letter to The Egoist, dated 6-7-19 by Pound.

lascivious.”¹¹⁵⁹ While the case stretched into 1920, the *Little Review* continued publishing the installments until the court decided against the magazine and they were forced to halt serialization. The book, as a result of this decision, was banned from publication in America until 1933. Pound correlated the banning of *Ulysses* in America with the prospect of banning scientific achievements, as he believed the duties of a writer are similar to the duties of a scientist—to seek and present facts with accuracy.

And the book is banned in America ... Are there classes unworthy, misfortunes too low, dramas too ill set, catastrophes, horrors too devoid of nobility? Now that the novel is augmented, now that it is the great literary form ... the social inquest, for psychological research and analysis, demanding the studies and imposing on its creator the duties of science ... seeking facts ... whether or no the novelist is to write with the accuracy, and thence with the freedom of the savant, the historian, the physician? *A great literature masterwork is made for minds quite as serious as those engaged in the science of medicine* [his italics].¹¹⁶⁰

THE COMMON MAN

Just as Pound addressed the issues of the “classes unworthy” and “misfortunes too low,” the issue of censorship relates to material about the common man and for the common man. Vulgar material implies what is “obscene, lewd, or lascivious,” as the U.S. criminal code states. Yet the word *vulgar* comes from the Latin *vulgaris*, meaning “of the mob.” The material that caused Pound’s encounters with censorship was precisely about the mob, or the common man. That the common man, too, did not read or support this literature—which was about his own identity—was a source of frustration for Pound. When *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was published in 1916, Pound wrote Harriet Shaw Weaver:

A book like this which the diseased and ailing vulgar will not buy can take its own course. If all printers refuse (I have written this also to Joyce) I suggest that largish blank spaces be left where passages are cut out. Then the excisions can be manifolded (not carbon copies, but another process) by typewriter on good paper, and if necessary I will paste them in myself. The public can be invited to buy with or without restorations and the copyright can be secured [on] the book as *printed*... Joyce is ill in bed with rheumatism, and very worried, and I hope for his sake, as well as for few intelligent people who want the book, that it can manage to come out.¹¹⁶¹

Pound referred to the common reader as the “vulgus” or “aegrum vulgus,” meaning “diseased common people.” In a 1917 editorial he speaks directly to the powers of the

¹¹⁵⁹ British Library, Misc. 1979 ADD MS 60391 ff. 1–172, Typed copy of John Quinn argument for Judge Lamar in blue cover, dated June 14, 1919.

¹¹⁶⁰ Ezra Pound, “Ulysses: Paris Letter,” *Dial*, 72.6 (6 June 1922), 623–29.

¹¹⁶¹ Ezra Pound, Letter 86 to Harriet Shaw Weaver, 17 March 1916, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 122–23 (p. 123).

common man over the writers of literature. “You, the public, can kill genius by actual physical starvation ... the hydra-headed detestable vulgus.”¹¹⁶² He began setting the common man apart from poets as early as 1913. “The serious artist is usually,” he writes, “or is often as far from the aegrum vulgus as is the serious scientist.”¹¹⁶³ Pound implies that the poet and the scientist maintain a heightened distance from the common man, in their respectable professions, yet still observe the common man in their professions. In this same year, he associated the common man with the anti-modern. “When you do finally adopt my scale of criticisms,” he writes to Harriet Monroe of *Poetry* magazine, “you will, yes, you actually will find a handful of very select readers who will be quite delighted, and the aegrum and tiercely accursed groveling vulgus will be too scared by the array of delightees to utter more than a very faint moan of protest.”¹¹⁶⁴ He portrays the common readers as mere followers and depicts himself and “a handful of very select readers” as the leaders of the modernist movement. In 1917, he stated his belief that artists are a very select minority, distinguished from the masses. “The arts are kept up by a very few people; they always have been kept up, when kept up at all, by a very few people.”¹¹⁶⁵ Perhaps stemming from his interaction with artists and writers who received little or no support from the public or even their own families, Pound continued:

there are a few more people capable of knowing good art when they see it. Half of them are indifferent, three fourths of them are inactive, the exceeding few side with the artist; about all they can do is to feed him. Others, hating his art, may from family or humanitarian motives, feed and clothe him in spite of his art And attempt to divorce him from it.

These statements are simple, dull. One should write them in electric lights and hang them above Coney Island, and beside the Sarsaparilla sign on Broadway! The Biblical Text Society should embellish them upon busses.

Pound thought that this message—financially supporting artists—was one of the supreme responsibilities of a civilization. He implies that supporting artists should be a responsibility for even the common man, as he cites venues popular as entertainment centers, Coney Island and Broadway. During this same month, Pound wrote a similar article in a different periodical, in which he again focused on the small minority of the population that supports the arts and distinguished them from the common man. He impulsively decided to travel out of the city one day and mounted a bus at Piccadilly Circus, which took him through

¹¹⁶² Ezra Pound, “Editorial,” *Little Review*, 4.1 (May 1917), 3–6. Accepting post of Foreign Editor. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C254, 195–97 (p. 197).

¹¹⁶³ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist I[-II],” *New Freewoman*, 1.9 (15 October 1913), 161–63. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C106, 186–88 (p. 188).

¹¹⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to Harriet Monroe dated 30 March 1913, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 53–55 (p. 54).

¹¹⁶⁵ Ezra Pound, “Imaginary Letters IV (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn),” *Little Review*, 4.5 (September 1917), 20–22. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C282, 268–69 (p. 268).

Vauxhall and Clapham, then through “The Borough” and Hackney, past Lea River.¹¹⁶⁶ He stated that he is “certain, after having traversed those ’bus routes, that the millions are unplumbed by our ‘literature.’” He describes the “social order” of the masses that he passed that day, as he listed the hygienic habits of the classes. The higher classes used “boiled shirts,” or the clean, pressed men’s dress shirts of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, which were—before the washing machine—kept clean and stiff through a boiling process with starch. The educated elite who, he says, followed Mr. Shaw “advocate personal cleanliness but eschew the boiled shirt on principle.” Below them are the “reformers,” who “begin their economy on the laundry-bill” or avoid spending money on cleaning their clothing. These people, Pound notes, “regard the body as the tawdry, rather despicable servant of the civic instrument fixed in the head.” Below them in the social ladder are “the people,” he says, who live in “all this waste of low dung-coloured brick.” Of this group, “we are ignorant,” aside from what authors like Joyce have written about them, since “the books from them are unwritten, or unprintable.” In December of that year, Pound again writes of the poor areas of London in terms of its dark-hued filth. He speaks of the “dismal grey-yellow brick of the dingy houses, the grey soot-covered mud [that] appears to have pushed itself up into rectangularish hummocks of houses,” which are “spawned into grey sootish animalculae.”¹¹⁶⁷ He states that “grey sootish periodicals” are the only acceptable literature in these areas. His repetition of the adjective *grey* underlines the colorless monotony and filth that Pound saw in the neighborhoods, and he conflates this lack of vibrancy with the street literature found there. After first moving to London, Pound was bewildered by the social gradations of London, this “very large and very sickly elephant.”¹¹⁶⁸ The years 1908 and 1909 in London ushered in the highest unemployment that London had seen since 1886.¹¹⁶⁹ One-third of England’s urban population lived in poverty, according to a 1901 report, while three-quarters of the country’s population was urban.¹¹⁷⁰ Pound’s initial experiences in London boarding-houses and his work with Italian immigrants in America, he writes, gave him a perspective that “the social scale goes down, by imperceptible gradations. There are in it no ‘discreet differences.’ It goes down and down until one is glad to lose sight of it, down to the slave of a slave and down beyond that, where we stop in our

¹¹⁶⁶ Ezra Pound, “Studies in Contemporary Mentality VII. Far from the Expensive Veal Cutlet,” *New Age*, 21.22 (27 September 1917), 464–66. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C286, 274–76 (p. 274).

¹¹⁶⁷ Ezra Pound, “Studies in Contemporary Mentality XV. A Nice Paper,” *New Age*, 22.7 (13 December 1917) 129-30. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C312, 316–17 (p. 316).

¹¹⁶⁸ Ezra Pound, “Through Alien Eyes II,” *New Age*, 12.12 (23 January 1913), 275–76. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C70, 115–16 (p. 115).

¹¹⁶⁹ Derek Fraser, “The Edwardian City,” in *Edwardian England*, ed. by Donald Read (London: Taylor and Francis, 1982), pp. 56–74 (p. 70).

¹¹⁷⁰ Derek Fraser, “The Edwardian City,” in *Edwardian England*, ed. by Donald Read (London: Taylor and Francis, 1982), pp. 56–74 (p. 71).

keeping count and call it simply ‘abyss.’” This term, *abyss*, was a Victorian word commonly used to describe the socioeconomic difference between the rich and the poor.¹¹⁷¹

Because of this broad range of humanity in a city, Pound views the audience of modern writers as a select “few,” as stated in his poem “Au Salon” of the 1911 *Und Drang* series of *Canzoni*:

Some few whom we’d rather please
than hear the whole *aegrum vulgus*
Splitting its beery jowl
a-meaowling our praises.¹¹⁷²

Pound pictures the common man as one mass with a “beery jowl,” or mouths smelling of beer—the drink of the average man. He also includes the word *aegrum* to further deride the public, as if they are collectively diseased. Pound groups this lower class into an unhygienic population and portrays them as simultaneously diseased and anti-modern. Similarly, in the *Lustra* poem “To a Friend Writing on Cabaret Dancers,” Pound uses the word “jowl” to describe a cabaret dancer, who could be considered the epitome of the *aegrum vulgus*.

She will not bathe too often, but her jewels
Will be a stuffy, opulent sort of fungus
Spread on both hands and on the up-pushed bosom—
It juts like a shelf between the jowl and corset.¹¹⁷³

A “jowl” has an animal-like connotation, meaning the lower jaw or fold of flesh under the chin, as in cattle. The cabaret dancer—who was introduced to London by the avant-garde nightclub of Frida Strindberg, *The Cave of the Golden Calf*—is portrayed by Pound as being dirty, unbathed, with jewels like fungus spreading over her hands. He similarly describes the common man as unhygienic and possibly diseased in the 1911 poem “Redondillas, or Something of That Sort.” “I have met with the ‘Common Man,’” he writes. “I am sick of the toothless decay.”¹¹⁷⁴

Pound often presents the modern city with masses of people, then focuses on one person or image within this mass. In his early 1909 poem “Francesca,” he speaks of one woman out of a group:

You came in out of the night
And there were flowers in your hands,
Now you will come out a confusion of people,

¹¹⁷¹ Regina Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in a Market Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 214.

¹¹⁷² Ezra Pound, “Au Salon,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 170–171 (p. 170).

¹¹⁷³ Ezra Pound, “To a Friend Writing on Cabaret Dancers,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 311.

¹¹⁷⁴ Ezra Pound, “Redondillas, or Something of That Sort,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 175–182 (p. 176).

Out of a turmoil of speech about you.¹¹⁷⁵

He describes the group as a “confusion” and their voices as “turmoil.” His 1911 *Und Drang* series presents modernity as ill, and as similarly confused in a group “madness.”

How our modernity,
Nerve-wracked and broken, turns
Against time’s way and all the way of things
Crying with weak and egoistic cries!
/
I have gone seeking for you in the twilight,
Here in the flurry of Fifth Avenue,
Here where they pass between their teas and teas.
Is it such madness?
/
Yet I am fed with faces, is there one
That even in the half-light mindeth me.¹¹⁷⁶

The modern city scene presents a “flurry” of people on Fifth Avenue, hurrying to their unimportant dates for tea. This movement produces “madness” and a modernity that is “nerve-wracked and broken.” Ironically, the narrator feels alone and unnoticed in this scene in which he is the only observer. The image of the faces among the crowd was used in a poem written soon after Pound’s arrival in London. “Piccadilly,” published in America’s *Book News Monthly* and *Personae* in 1909, combines Pound’s dual incorporation of beauty and stark reality. “Beautiful, tragical faces,” he begins, “that are so sodden and drunken, / Who hath forgotten you? // O wistful, fragile faces, few out of many!”¹¹⁷⁷ Pound again repeats the word *faces* in the penultimate line—“But, oh, ye delicate, wistful faces”—placing emphasis on this symbol of the identity of a person, the face. Their stark reality of life is encountered in the description of their faces. It is not the whole being, but the faces that are described as “sodden and drunken.” Similarly, in “Reflection,” published unsigned in a periodical in 1916, but likely penned by Pound, a child is presented in a street—only the focus is, again, on the face rather than on the whole being. “I know that what Nietzsche said is true, / And yet— / I saw the face of a little child in the street, / And it was beautiful.”¹¹⁷⁸ The face of the child, rather than the child himself, was described as “beautiful.” He again refers to the image of the face in his “Metro” poem:

¹¹⁷⁵ Ezra Pound, “Francesca,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 117.

¹¹⁷⁶ Ezra Pound, “Au Salon,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 164–72 (p. 167). First published 1911.

¹¹⁷⁷ Ezra Pound, “Piccadilly,” *Book News Monthly*, 27.12 (August 1909), 920. Reprinted from *Personae* (1909). In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C13, p. 24.

¹¹⁷⁸ Ezra Pound, “Reflection,” *Smart Set* 48.1 (January 1916), 219. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C215, p. 135.

The apparition of these faces in the crowd :
Petals on a wet, black bough .¹¹⁷⁹

The petals denote cleanliness against the wetness and blackness of the bough, just as the faces are an apparition-like relief against the earthly reality of the crowd's dirty blackness. The contrast of the petals with the bough, and of the faces with the crowd illustrates Walter Benjamin's theory that the modern poet must "find the refuse of society on their street and derive their heroic subject from this very refuse." Baudelaire's concept of the *flâneur* forces the poet to find aesthetic value from the very worst circumstances on the city street.¹¹⁸⁰ Pound seems to update this concept by seemingly contrasting the form of the beautiful image with the grime of the city. However, the underlying meaning of his poems usually reveals a dirtiness in the seemingly clean. For example, contrasting dirty, poor children with a beautiful image, Pound writes about a woman wearing fine clothes as she walks through the park.

Like a skein of loose silk blown against a wall
She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington Gardens,
/
And round about there is a rabble
Of the filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor.
They shall inherit the earth.¹¹⁸¹

The gentleness and softness of the image of silk blowing against the wall contrasts with the heaviness of the "sturdy" and "filthy" children of deprived families. However, the woman in the beautiful silk clothing is also described as "dying piece-meal / of a sort of emotional anaemia." Pound complicates her outer beauty by reflecting her interior, emotional self as well. The 1913 poem "Simulacra" presents an image of a child in white entering into a black gutter. "Why does the small child in the soiled-white imitation fur coat / Crawl in the very black gutter beneath the grape stand?"¹¹⁸² The title, "Simulacra," repeats the purpose of the poem, and of Imagism itself. A representation or image of something, "simulacra" implies that an image resembles something else. The child, which could represent a simulacra for a naïve society in a false pure appearance, crawls slowly into filth or peril.

¹¹⁷⁹ Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro," in "Contemporaria" series, *Poetry*, 2.1 (April 1913), 1–12. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C76, 132–37 (p. 137).

¹¹⁸⁰ Joseph W. Childers, "Foreign Matter: Imperial Filth," in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. by William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. 201–24 (p. 206).

¹¹⁸¹ Ezra Pound, "The Garden," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 264–65 (p. 264). First published in *Poetry* in April 1913 and *New Freewoman* on 15 August 1913.

¹¹⁸² Ezra Pound, "Simulacra," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 291. First published in *Smart Set* 41.4, December 1913 as "Zenia." In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C116, 205–06 (p. 206).

Pound implies the natural evolution from health to disease, or purity to filth. Like his line, “They shall inherit the earth,” Pound disapproved of the lower classes and their tendency, in his view, to spread disease and filth. This mindframe may have been adopted from his parents, or from his experience working with his parents and their church with Italian immigrants in inner-city Philadelphia. “It is a crime rather worse than murder to beget children in a slum,” he writes in 1913, “to beget children for whom no fitting provision is made, either as touching their physical or economic wellbeing.”¹¹⁸³ This corresponds with a fictional letter written by Pound in the *Little Review*, written from the perspective of the character Walter Villerant, created by Wyndham Lewis and continued by Pound after Lewis’s departure to war. Pound’s Villerant claimed he was Malthusian, believing the world’s population increases at a faster rate than its subsistence unless it remains checked by moral restraint or disasters such as disease, war, or famine.¹¹⁸⁴ In this same essay, he describes American immigrants and equates their dirtiness with their lack of interest in the arts. “The arts are kept up by very few people,” he writes. “Unfortunately the turmoil of Yidds, letts, finns, Estonians, cravats, niberians, Nubians, Algerians, sweeping along Eighth Avenue in the splendour of their vigorous unwashed animality will not help us. They are the America of tomorrow.”¹¹⁸⁵ Pound’s perception of immigrants and his association of immigrants to “unwashed animality” correspond with an unexpected, unplanned result of the instigation of public bathhouses in America. As cleanliness was a standard for decent citizens, public reformers attempted to extend the right of common citizenship, and cleanliness, to all city dwellers. However, the bathhouses resulted in emphasizing, rather than diminishing, the abyss, or the distance between the “great unwashed,” such as poor immigrants, and seemingly proper society.¹¹⁸⁶

In Pound’s description of American immigrants, he specifically identifies a particular street of America where this description takes place—Eighth Avenue. In describing the “unwashed animality” of the masses, Pound often centers these crowds on the city street. The street, with its motorcars and buses and “black gutters,” are dirty spaces of the city where people and technology meet. The 1913 poem “The Street in Soho” portrays the city street as a dark place, producing the ugliness of humanity. “Out of the overhanging

¹¹⁸³ Ezra Pound, “The Serious Artist I[-II],” *New Freewoman*, I. 9 (15 October 1913), 161–63. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C106, 186–88 (p. 186).

¹¹⁸⁴ Ezra Pound, “Imaginary Letters. IV. (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn),” *Little Review*, 4.5 (September 1917), 20–22. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C282, 268–69 (p. 268).

¹¹⁸⁵ Ezra Pound, “Imaginary Letters. IV. (Walter Villerant to Mrs. Bland Burn),” *Little Review*, 4.5 (September 1917), 20–22. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C282, 268–69 (p. 268).

¹¹⁸⁶ David Glassberg, “The Design of Reform: The Public Bath Movement in America,” in *Sickness and Health in America*, ed. by Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald L. Numbers (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), pp. 485–93 (p. 485).

gray mist / There came an ugly little man.”¹¹⁸⁷ During the same year, Pound wrote an essay for the *New Age*, in which he described two men he encountered in the streets of London—streets that he specifically mentions by name and thereby made important to the scene. He describes each of the men as a genderless “it,” possibly in an attempt to distance himself from appearing as a “humanitarian.”

Once in Regent Street, going toward Oxford Circus. It had lost a leg, from the knees. It must have been fresh from the hospital, for the cicatrice was still red. It must have had on the clothing worn at the time of the accident, for the breeches were torn and showed the surgeon’s job. The other in Oxford Street, near Hyde Park. It was compact and been fed and sore-eyed and nearly blind with hunger. ... they were striking in this, that they were not inert ... The first moved swiftly, with great swings between its clumsy crutches, the second apparently slowly yet with a recklessness that marked its movement from that of anything else in the crowd about the bus-stop. The legs moved stiff from the hips, with no bend at knee or ankle. Each of these things moved in rhythm regular as a metronome, moved by a force as unreasoning as that of a tree or a flood. The first was young, the second over forty. ... I don’t wish to prevent anything. I am not a humanitarian but a humanist. The drama of life depends on inequalities. Let us maintain them? No. They will maintain themselves without our meagre assistance.¹¹⁸⁸

Like Lewis’s murals of meat, Pound’s detached and objective description of the two men is meant to shock the avant-garde readers. He focuses on the unhygienic details of the men’s physical states: the still-red cicatrice, torn breeches, sore eyes, and clumsy crutches. He attempts to create a sense of nausea with these unhygienic and squalid details, yet presents them without emotion to emphasize their reality.

Pound reinforces a social order in his descriptions of the lower social body. He not only portrays the poor and the dirty as anti-modern, but as unintelligent and therefore incapable of understanding his modern style of writing. “Damn the man on the street, once and for all, damn the man in the street who is only in the street because he hasn’t intelligence enough to be let in anywhere else.”¹¹⁸⁹ He blames “the man on the street,” solely, for his predicament. Yet the second half of the line, not divided by a comma between *street* and *who*, indicates that Pound is limiting his damnation to the men on the street who could, under their own volition, escape their situation, rather than damning all men on the street as having that ability. He criticizes most strongly the conditions that men impose on themselves when they have the power to escape this condition. One example is a lack of

¹¹⁸⁷ Ezra Pound, “Xenia: The Street in Soho,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 1172–73 (p. 1172).

¹¹⁸⁸ Ezra Pound, “Through Alien Eyes: II,” *New Age*, 12.12 (23 January 1913) 275–76. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C70, 115–16 (p. 115).

¹¹⁸⁹ Ezra Pound, “Wyndham Lewis,” *Egoist*, 1.12 (15 June 1914), 233–34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C146, 251–52 (p. 251).

education or a lack of reading. “Stupidity is a pest, a bacillus,” Pound writes in 1918, “an infection, a raging lion that does not stay in one place but perambulates.”¹¹⁹⁰ As knowledge or education continually grows through personal effort, Pound implies that “stupidity,” too, continually grows, and he uses a metaphor of a type of spreading bacteria to illustrate this idea. In 1919 he criticizes a fellow writer, H. L. Mencken, for not writing to the elite and intelligent modern audience.

WHAT is wrong with it, and with your work in general is that you have drifted into writing for your inferiors. . . . Inevitable I think where one is in contact with a public. . . . Still, on the island of Patmos with no early Christians to exhort, your style would solidify. . . . We have all sinned through trying to make the uneducated understand things. Certainly you will lose a great part of your public when you stop trying to civilize the waste places; and you will gain about fifteen readers.¹¹⁹¹

He acknowledges that the modern audience is small and elite. By refraining from writing to “the waste places” or the uneducated, he estimates a minimal increased readership.

Common readers are referred to as “the waste places,” or the refuse. On the contrary, he refers to humanity as fertilizer in a 1914 essay. “Humanity is the rich effluvium,” he says. “It is the waste and the manure and the soil, and from it grows the tree of the arts.”¹¹⁹² He then compares the poet to “Curie” and “Ehrlich,” two famous scientists, or as Pound labels them, “inventors,” who initially did not have an “audience.” Effluvium is defined as an unpleasant smell or harmful fumes given off by waste or decaying matter. Humanity, or the general readership of literature, is a mere waste product, yet this waste product is the substance or the rich soil of the work of writers.

The definition of the word *culture* has evolved since its earliest meaning of “a cultivated piece of land” in the Middle-English period.¹¹⁹³ The only remaining use of this sense of the word, associated with organic growth, is in the scientific field, in which “culture” means bacteria that is grown in a prepared environment. This sense of the word was what Pound was likely referring to with his effluvium metaphor. As a scientist creates a bacterial culture in a Petri dish, a writer similarly observes pockets of humanity directly in its original, often filthy sphere. A separate meaning of the word *culture*, evolving in the early century with the shift from country to city life, is the aesthetic sense of the word.

¹¹⁹⁰ Ezra Pound, “Imaginary Letters [X]. (W. Villerant to the ex-Mrs. Burn),” *Little Review*, 5.1 (May 1918), 52–55. “Imaginary Letters” [VII–]VIII and IX were written by Wyndham Lewis and appeared in the issues for March and April 1918. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C355, 106–08 (p. 106).

¹¹⁹¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to H. L. Mencken dated January 1919, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 98.

¹¹⁹² Ezra Pound, “The Audience: I” *Poetry* (October 1914), 29–30. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C159, p. 286.

¹¹⁹³ Jonathan Bate, “Culture and Environment: From Austen to Hardy,” *New Literary History* 30.3 (1999), 541–60. Bate documents the various definitions of culture through the centuries.

“Culture” since the early twentieth century has come to mean intellectual and artistic refinement. This is the culture that Pound refers to when he specifies that the writer should not try to “civilize the waste places.” He emphasized to Harriet Monroe that art and science are received by a very select few of the public. “Why you deny the name of science or art to everything the public don’t know, is beyond me.”¹¹⁹⁴ His modern writings were meant for the intellectually superior, often of the upper classes. He wrote that *Blast* was “a magazine one can appear in without a feeling of degradation—without feeling that one is slumming among mentalities of a loathsomely lower order.”¹¹⁹⁵ Pound ascribes orders to a social body; “slumming” has connotations of degradation and loathing. This ordering of a social body resembles the “lower body strata” theory of Peter Stallybrass and Allon White. They identify correlations between the lower class with the sewage and the underground, the literal lower areas of a city, since the mid-nineteenth century.¹¹⁹⁶ Pound incorporates a metaphor of the social body in a 1914 essay about social classes. “The bourgeois is, roughly, a person who is concerned solely with his own comfort or advancement. He is, in brief, digestive. He is the stomach and grow intestines of the body politic and social, as distinct from the artist, who is the nostrils and the invisible antennae.”¹¹⁹⁷ His social-body metaphor implies that humans have different positions in the social sphere, just as different body parts have different functions and importance.

The realm of the street and the underground connects the “bodily lower stratum” to the lower classes in physical and metaphorical location. Unlike the glorified vertical heights of a city, the streets and the underground systems of sewers and subways run horizontally in an unglorified position just over and under the street.¹¹⁹⁸ Pound views streets as filthy; he complained, for example, of “motor-lorries belching smoke in one’s face whenever one rides down Kensington gore.”¹¹⁹⁹ In his 1919 “Art Notes” series, he proposes a plan that would transform the modern city street. For the crowded districts such as, he lists, Piccadilly Circus, Ludgate Circus, Bank, and Liverpool Street, the pedestrians should have an elevated footway. He describes his plan:

¹¹⁹⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to Harriet Monroe dated 12 October 1914, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 43.

¹¹⁹⁵ James Longenbach, *Stone Cottage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.105.

¹¹⁹⁶ Pamela K. Gilbert, “Medical Mapping: The Thames, the Body, and Our Mutual Friend,” in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. by William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. 78–102 (p. 79).

¹¹⁹⁷ Ezra Pound, “The Bourgeois,” *Egoist*, 1.3 (2 February 1914), 53. Written by Bastien von Helmholtz. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C126, p. 220.

¹¹⁹⁸ David L. Pike, “Sewage Treatments: Vertical Space and Waste in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London,” in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. by William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. 51–77 (p. 51).

¹¹⁹⁹ Ezra Pound, “On Certain Reforms and Pass-Times,” *Egoist*, 1.7 (1 April 1914), 130–31. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), C136, 230–32 (p. 231). Published under the pseudonym Herman Carl George Jesus Maria.

canti-lever side-walks; buses boarded at roof-level, not from underneath the spatter of mud and petroleum; bays for vans and goods delivery from the big stores; bridges for footway around the circuses. No one will *mount* a bridge to cross a road, but the continuation of elevated side-walk is a vastly different matter from a bridge over the gap between two street-level pavements. There should also be bays for females who wish to lose themselves in the ecastatic contemplation of Messrs. Selfridge's and Messrs Otherbody's front windows. A two-level system permits those innovations. It also permits the widening of streets without the tremendous expense of buying miles of private property in the most expensive districts of London. One would leave but a very narrow street-level kerb for entering taxis, etc., etc.¹²⁰⁰

This plan would distance the filth of the street and sidewalk from the average pedestrian. It values the elevated over the ground level—the bridges and bays creating a cleaner, celestialized city space relative to the mud, petroleum, and imperfect gaps of street level.

Pound's poem "N.Y." addresses both positive and negative aspects of the city: the vertical and sleek, and the horizontal and grimy. "Thou art a maid with no breasts / Thou art slender as a silver reed,"¹²⁰¹ he praises the city. Yet a separate stanza, separated from this glorified-city image by horizontal-leaning italics, claims,

*Now do I know that I am mad,
For here are a million people surly with traffic;
This is no maid.
Neither could I play upon any reed if I had one.*

The images of the vertical buildings are shiny and silver, while the streets are overrun with people and motorcars. While the street is self-evidently dirty, what is even filthier than the street is the underground. Pound rejects the concept of the underground subway system: "The nightmare of triple subways and overhead railways is all buncombe. Intelligent man will not stifle in a mole-hole twice daily. A tunnel may possibly serve for eliminating the English Channel or the Straits of Gibraltar, but not for getting from 10th Street to 87th."¹²⁰² The underground was a location of sewage, drainage systems, and filth. London began its sewage system in 1844 and its underground system in 1863—both of which were modeled after the engineering of the Roman cloaca maxima with an arched tunnel construction. Pound's association of a mole-hole with the subway system actually resembled London's

¹²⁰⁰ Ezra Pound, "Art Notes. By B. H. Dias," *New Age*, 26.6 (11 December 1919), 96-97. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C518, 367-68 (p. 368).

¹²⁰¹ Ezra Pound, "N.Y.," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 234-35.

¹²⁰² Ezra Pound, "The City," in *The Exile* (New York: Covici Friede, 1928), pp. 224-226.

curved Underground railway lines, which also resembled London's unseen, yet similarly curved, sewer tunnels.¹²⁰³

Pound associated Henri Gaudier-Brzeska with the underground, as his last studio was located under a railway arch near Putney Bridge.¹²⁰⁴ Every ten or fifteen minutes, Epstein said, the trains would roar above the studio. Horace Brodzky noted that Gaudier lived in the studio, which did not maintain heat and created a "miserable" working and living space in the winter.¹²⁰⁵ Pound recorded details of the studio under the railway, emphasizing that it was "uncomfortable," "mud-floored," and a place where Gaudier slept at night. Pound also mentioned that the rain would seep into the studio and create puddles of several inches on the ground.¹²⁰⁶ In addition to its wet and unsanitary conditions, Gaudier cooked his food in the studio. Epstein described the stew as "very strong, with heaps of all kinds of things in it."¹²⁰⁷ This created a "nauseating smell," since Gaudier cooked a great portion of the *pot-au-feu* from cheap, days-old meat and vegetables, then reheated every evening until the pot was finished.¹²⁰⁸ This underground space is associated with Gaudier's own uncleanliness. Aldington recalled, "he was probably the dirtiest human being I have ever known, and gave off a horrid effluvia in hot weather,"¹²⁰⁹ while Violet Hunt remembered him as "ill-looking, almost toothless, wearing his blue workman's shirt."¹²¹⁰ Brodzky recalled that he bathed with a small bucket in the middle of the studio. "I am sure that he did not get himself clean," he added.¹²¹¹

In addition to associating Gaudier's space with mud and the sculptor's mess, this underground space could be associated with the lower body, or sexual perversion. Epstein recalled that the bust Pound commissioned from Gaudier was intended to be "virile," and Gaudier explained to him "the general biological significance."¹²¹² Pound later claimed with

¹²⁰³ David L. Pike, "Sewage Treatments: Vertical Space and Waste in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London," in *Filth: Dirt, Disgust, and Modern Life*, ed. by William A. Cohen and Ryan Johnson (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. 51–77 (p. 52).

¹²⁰⁴ Epstein, Jacob, *An Autobiography* (London: Hamilton Press, 1955), p. 45.

¹²⁰⁵ Horace Brodzky, *Henri Gaudier-Brzeska* (London: Faber and Faber, 1933), p. 128.

¹²⁰⁶ *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), pp. 47–48.

¹²⁰⁷ Epstein, Jacob, *An Autobiography* (London: Hamilton Press, 1955), p. 45.

¹²⁰⁸ Horace Brodzky, *Henri Gaudier-Brzeska* (London: Faber and Faber, 1933), p. 14.

¹²⁰⁹ Aldington writes about Gaudier: "He was probably the dirtiest human being I have ever known, and gave off a horrid effluvia in hot weather. One summer day he came to see us in our small flat; so we prudently placed him on a couch at one end of the room and ourselves retired to the other. Who should come in but Ford, who had been to a fashionable luncheon, and wanted to display his shiny topper and formal morning clothes with a red carnation in the buttonhole. Unluckily he had to sit beside G; and soon left. The next morning Ford gave me a paternal lecture on my wickedness in permitting such a creature to be in the same room with H.D. It was, he said, not done." Richard Aldington, *Life for Life's Sake: A Book of Reminiscences* (New York: Viking Press, 1941), p. 165.

¹²¹⁰ Hunt, Violet, *I Have This to Say: The Story of My Flurried Years* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926), p. 114.

¹²¹¹ Horace Brodzky, *Henri Gaudier-Brzeska* (London: Faber and Faber, 1933), p. 63.

¹²¹² Epstein, Jacob, *An Autobiography* (London: Hamilton Press, 1955), p. 59.

pride that the “Hieratic Head” was created to resemble a phallus, yet Brodzky recalls how the initial decision was made to create the bust in this phallic image.¹²¹³

As a portrait it was ridiculous. There was little that was human about it. I met Pound during the week and he proved surprisingly shy and nervous. I couldn’t understand why he should be so upset. He did not talk and was not at ease. I am sure that I had caught the conspirators in the act of developing the phallic idea. It was the kind of thing Brzeska would gloat over. He did it by way of disapproval and in contempt of Pound. . . . Pound having an attack of the nerves, which had got the better of him with a third person present, soon departed. I remained for some time, during which Brzeska told me about the Pound bust. He thought it a great joke on Pound.¹²¹⁴

According to this account, the phallic idea actually originated with Gaudier with humorous intention. Yet when Brodzky states, “the purpose and beginnings were entirely pornographic,” he means that Gaudier’s purpose and intent was to create a pornographic portrayal, not that it was Pound’s own idea to create a phallic bust. Brodzky’s view was that Pound was initially uncomfortable with the idea of portraying himself with a phallic symbol. A representation of the head, for Pound’s generation, was a highly symbolic and revealing representation of a person’s character. This generation not only inherited the tradition of the classical bust, but they found pseudo-scientific significance in the shape of the head, even conducting phrenological testing on marble busts. The nineteenth century’s fascination with phrenology promoted the belief that the brain shaped the skull, and therefore the shape of the head would signify a man’s talent, disposition, and character.¹²¹⁵ The significance of the representation of the head, combined with the expense of the marble, must have caused him anxiety for such an unconventional sculpture. Even his statements about the bust in his memoir *Gaudier-Brzeska* reveal his discomfort during the sculpting process, as the piece increasingly resembled the phallic symbol and less a sculpture in “kinesis” or dynamic movement. Pound’s self-proclaimed “prudery” led him after the completion of the bust to state, “Let me say at once that I make no plea for smuttiness, for an unnecessary erotic glamour, etc. etc.”¹²¹⁶ Pound’s statement against “smuttiness” could represent both his explicit avoidance of sexual sensationalism, but also his avoidance of filth and mess. He stated in an unsigned letter to the editor about form in sculpture that “the obvious reproduction of sexual organs” is not “the one means of producing ‘powerful’

¹²¹³ Epstein recalls that Pound asked Gaudier to make the bust “virile.” His view contradicts that of Brodzky, yet has been accepted and developed in Pound criticism.

¹²¹⁴ Horace Brodzky, *Henri Gaudier-Brzeska* (London: Faber and Faber, 1933), p. 60.

¹²¹⁵ Cecelia Tichi, *Embodiment of a Nation: Human Form in American Places* (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 27.

¹²¹⁶ Ezra Pound, “Meditatio: I,” *Egoist* 3.3 (1 March 1916), 37–38. Reprinted as “Meditations.” In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), II, C219, p. 149.

art.”¹²¹⁷ Additionally, the fact that Pound’s representation was being created in a mud-floored, underground space also likely unsettled Pound. When the bust was finished, Pound moved the piece to a clean garden site. As he lived in a flat and could not house the bust in his own home, he had the piece transported to Violet Hunt’s front garden in Kensington. Hunt’s maid commented that she often lent a brush and pail to Pound, who would be found “a-scrubbin’ his monument” clean.¹²¹⁸

Pound associated the filth of the First World War with Gaudier-Brzeska, as Gaudier was killed on the battlefield in France and Pound wrote a memoir of Gaudier immediately after his death. While Lewis created a Vorticist war design for *Blast 2*, glorifying war with soldiers holding rifles and canons, Pound usually portrayed a negative view of war during the Great War. He interpreted Lewis’s war depictions as not glorifying war, but portraying a stark reality. “There is an emphasis on the drudgery of warfare, a drudgery which cannot be wholly modern,” he writes in an article on Lewis’s war paintings.¹²¹⁹ “There is an emphasis on war’s reduction of man to an animal, to even a mechanical status.” Pound wrote about this war in terms of death and decay. Marinetti, like Lewis, used war as propaganda for his Futurist movement and claimed war to be the only hygiene of the world. In public health, disease eradication was often popularized using military metaphors, promoting a war on hygiene.¹²²⁰ Marinetti therefore essentially reverses this concept by using militaristic war as an example of hygiene. However, Pound writes of war using terms of disease and filth, and in opposition to Marinetti’s sureness, portrays a questioning and sometimes ambivalent attitude. “One wonders if the war is only a stop-gap. Only a symptom of the real disease,” he writes Harriet Monroe in November 1914.¹²²¹ When America entered the war, Pound revealed his opinions in terms of filth. “I was, I believe, neutral, genuinely neutral for the first weeks of the war,” he writes an American friend. “Anything you can send me to show that the U.S.A. has not befouled herself and dragged herself into the slime will be gratefully received.”¹²²²

Pound corresponded with various friends who fought and volunteered in the war, including Gaudier-Brzeska, T. E. Hulme, Wyndham Lewis, and May Sinclair. The images

¹²¹⁷ Ezra Pound, “Art,” *New Age*, 22.11 (10 January 1918), p. 219. Signed B. H. Dias. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C324, p. 13.

¹²¹⁸ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 232.

¹²¹⁹ Ezra Pound, “Art: War Paintings by Wyndham Lewis,” *Nation*, 24.19 (8 February 1919), 546–47. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C442a, p. 283.

¹²²⁰ Crawford, T. Hugh, *Modernism, Medicine, and William Carlos Williams* (London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 127.

¹²²¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Harriet Monroe dated 9 November 1914, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 44–47 (p. 47).

¹²²² Ezra Pound, Letter to [no first name] Bronner [no date, mentions vorticist show, so possibly 1917], in New York Public Library, Berg Collection, Ezra Pound Papers.

of war from their writings infected Pound's own writings. Hulme, for example, wrote about the deadness of the trenches:

The ground between the trenches, a bank which is practically never seen by anyone in the daylight, as it is only safe to move through it at dark. It's full of dead things, dead animals here & there, dead unburied animals, skeletons of horses destroyed by shell fire. It's curious to think of it later on in the war, when it will again be seen in the daylight.

Hulme adds that movement is "always in the same direction" and they must "make definite paths." He mentions that one of his fellow soldiers "discovered that one of these paths that we walk over led right over the chest of a dead peasant (Belgian)."¹²²³ From these images, Pound wrote "Poem: Abbreviated from the Conversation of Mr. T.E.H.," which he included in his collection *Catholic Anthology* in 1915. Pound describes Hulme's scene:

Night,
In the silence desultory men
Pottering over small fires, cleaning their mess-tins:
To and fro, from the lines,
Men walk as on Piccadilly,
Making paths in the dark,
Through scattered dead horses,
Over a dead Belgian's belly.
//

My mind is a corridor. The minds about me are corridors.¹²²⁴

Pound attributed the poem initially to Hulme in his *Catholic Anthology* collection; however, when he reprinted the poem in *Umbra*, he claimed it as his own.¹²²⁵ Pound essentially communicates an internalization of the human death and decay, turning the literal pathways of the trench soldiers into corridors of the mind contemplating this war. A letter from Gaudier to Pound reads, "I have heard from Hulme when he was at Havre on the way to the trenches; it will change him a bit from the comfort he had at Frith Street." Gaudier then continues by describing the environment and asserting, "But nowadays I am a trench veteran. I have experienced all sorts of weather in these hellish places, so that I can stand a night under a heavy rain without sneezing the next day, and sleep beautifully a whole day on hard frozen ground without any ill result to the 'abdomenalia.'"¹²²⁶ In another letter, Gaudier claims, "We killed 1,250, but the horrid side is the stench now."¹²²⁷ And another letter

¹²²³ James Longenbach, *Stone Cottage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 125.

¹²²⁴ Ezra Pound, "Poem: Abbreviated from the Conversation of Mr. T. E. H.," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 568.

¹²²⁵ James Longenbach, *Stone Cottage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 125.

¹²²⁶ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 27 January 1915, in Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), p. 59.

¹²²⁷ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Letter to Ezra Pound dated 25 May, in Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: Lane, 1916), p. 63.

claims, “It’s a gruesome place all strewn with dead and there’s not a day without half a dozen fellows in the company crossing the Styx. We are betting on our mutual chances—hope all this nasty nightmare will soon come to an end.”¹²²⁸

LANGUAGE OF FILTH

Associated with, and possibly stemming from, the war, Pound increasingly used the language of filth to express his disgust with the condition of letters. As with his Canto IV, his filth writings often combine war images with deep criticism of London’s literary state. “I know that I am perched on the rotten shell of a crumbling empire but it isn’t my empire and I’m not legally responsible,” he writes. “And anyway the Germans will probably run it as well as you do.”¹²²⁹ He relates the war to the slow decay of literary production in a letter to *Poetry* magazine’s editor Harriet Monroe:

The war seems to have stopped poetry here and in France. Undigested war is no better than undigested anything else. Now no one has time to digest. ... I do NOT see anything new or alive coming here, and one might perfectly well give up the English pages to French. This ought to have been done long ago. But anyhow. A magazine can’t stand still. It must grow or decay.¹²³⁰

Pound seems to write of poetry as belonging to a biological realm, as it must grow or decay. Unlike his earlier writings that criticized bad letters yet retained an air of optimistic didacticism, his criticisms during and after the war years revealed pessimism. He wrote in his 1914 summary of his Quest speech, focusing on the new sculpture, that the romanticist culture was still lingering: “To the present condition of things we have nothing to say but ‘merde.’”¹²³¹ He similarly used this French term to end a poem with hopeless abandon. “Et Faim Sallir le Loup Des Boys” in *Blast 2* speaks of “cowardly editors” attempting to control Pound’s writing. “Then they will have my guts,” Pound speculates, if he were to follow their directions, “And be before all a model of literary decorum. / Merde!” Pound uses this slang expression of filth to express his contempt of and despair over an inauthentic “literary decorum” and tradition in London. Another *Blast* poem, “Salutation the Third,” expresses this theme against editors and reviewers.

Let us deride the smugness of “The Times”: GUFFAW!
So much for the gagged reviewers,
It will pay them when the worms are wriggling in their vitals;

¹²²⁸ Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Letter to Ezra Pound, in Paul O’Keeffe, *Gaudier-Brzeska: An Absolute Case of Genius* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), p. 288.

¹²²⁹ Ezra Pound, “Through Alien Eyes: I,” *New Age*, 12.11 (16 January 1913), 239. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C69, p. 114.

¹²³⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to Harriet Monroe dated 26 August 1917, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 119–121 (p. 119).

¹²³¹ Ezra Pound, “The New Sculpture,” *Egoist*, 1.4 (16 February 1914), 67–68. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), I, C128, 221–22 (p. 222).

These are they who objected to newness,
 Here are their tomb-stones.
 /
 A little black box contains them.
 So shall you be also,
 You slut-bellied obstructionist,
 You sworn foe to free speech and good letters,
 You fungus, you continuous gangrene.¹²³²

Pound reverses the material of the gravestone poets—the revered graveyard for the honored dead—and uses the images of the “tomb-stones” and a “black box” coffin to describe the deadness of *Times* reviewers and obstructers of “free speech and good letters.” The poem refers to the decomposition of the body, the worms wriggling in the vitals, the fungus and gangrene associated with decline and death. He repeats the laughter of the *Times* reviewers, “GUFFAW!” and essentially reverses this laughter, claiming it as his own laughter of them. This word “GUFFAW!” matches an advertisement in the *Egoist* evidently written by Pound to advertise the appearance of the first *Blast* publication in 1914:

BLAST
 Discussion of Cubism, Futurism, Imagisme and all
 Vital Forms of Modern Art
 THE CUBE. THE PYRAMID.
 Putrification of Guffaws Slain by Appearance of
 BLAST.
 NO Pornography. NO Old Pulp.
 END OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA.¹²³³

The ad was printed before Pound coined the name Vorticism at the last moment before the issue was completely compiled. For the advertisement, Pound was left to describe the new movement with a jumble of preceding movements: Cubism, Futurism, Imagisme. The line in the advertisement, “Putrification of Guffaws Slain by the Appearance of BLAST,” underlines one of Pound’s purposes in associating with the magazine—he wants to stifle the laughter of his literary peers and superiors after a constant barrage of criticism over his self-proclaimed Modernist work. By re-claiming laughter and deriding the traditional literary society, Pound is claiming superiority over their work. “NO Old Pulp,” he promises; “pulp” being defined broadly as a soft or soggy mass, or in literary terms, as discardable writing on cheap paper. As if to reinforce his view, Pound included another derisive poem in *Blast* following his “Salutation” lines. “Monumentum Aere, Etc.” again takes up a modernized

¹²³² Ezra Pound, “Salutation the Third,” in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 569–70 (p. 569).

¹²³³ “Blast,” *Egoist*, 8.1 (15 April 1914).

version of graveyard themes to mock the agedness of traditional writing. By using images of a forgotten grave, Pound implies the short-lived status of literature written purely for the accolades of one age.

As for you, you will rot in the earth,
And it is doubtful if even your manure will be rich enough
To keep grass
Over your grave.¹²³⁴

In addition to criticizing the editors and writers of traditional literature, Pound criticized the mass of followers of the modern style, including the editors of progressive magazines such as the *Dial*, and the *Little Review*. Pound's criticism implied a high standard which he claimed to maintain for himself, and which very few could possibly reach. "I have taken," he assured John Quinn, "damn small part in the current diarrhoea of muck concerning 'vers libre' (*ver* meaning worm and *slibre* meaning oozy and slippery ... à la Alice in Wonderland)."¹²³⁵ Pound disassociates himself with the popularized vers-libre movement by not only disclaiming his part in the movement, but by tagging the term with unhygienic images of diarrhoea, muck, worms, and ooze. Additionally, he often uses the term *greasy* to communicate his disgust, implying a form of filth connected to the modern age of machines. He criticized censorship of one of Yeats's poems in a marginal notation of a copy of Yeats's *Responsibilitites*. Pound's note beside the poem that was censored read, "emended by W.B.Y. to 'some stale bitch' & then castrated by the greasy Macmillan."¹²³⁶ In an art review of an exhibition at the Grosvenor Galleries, his response is almost purely negative and he labels certain works "greasy": "Lavery opens fire with grease and mud," "Philpot, distressing portraits," "McEvoy disgusting portaits ... simply a man slopping through a bad job in perfect complacency," "Sir John Lavery's grease." He writes in a footnote to one painting, "greasy."¹²³⁷ Later that year, his *Art Notes* revealed a glimmer of hope in this proclaimed wasteland of art: "On the whole, it is no small comfort to the critic to find a couple of 'younger artists' emerging from the wash and waste of the London Group dreariness."¹²³⁸ Although the London Group represented independent artists who challenged the conservative Royal Academy and earlier were joined by the Vorticists, Lewis

¹²³⁴ Ezra Pound, "Monumentum Aere, Etc.," in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), p. 570. Published in *Blast* I.

¹²³⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 18 April 1917, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 101–04 (p. 103).

¹²³⁶ Donald Gallup, "Some Notes on EP and Censorship," *Yale Literary Magazine* 126.5 (December 1958), 37–41 (p. 39).

¹²³⁷ Ezra Pound, "Art Notes. By B. H. Dias. Navy, Mostyn, Lithography, Etc.," *New Age*, 24.15 (13 February 1919), 240–41. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C443, 283–84 (p. 284).

¹²³⁸ Ezra Pound, "Art Notes. By B. H. Dias," *New Age*, 26.1 (6 November 1919), 13–14. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), III, C504, 351–52 (p. 352).

declined to take part in this 1919 exhibition. Pound's statement about this exhibition seems to reflect a lack of support of the London Group in accord with Lewis. Soon after, Pound writes in a letter to Ford Madox Ford, "Art: merde. I am fed up. There have been Picasso and Wyndham, and there have been upon them their parasites."¹²³⁹ Therefore, Pound's pessimism at the art of letters continued into the realm of the visual arts, and even into his personal life.

Pound participated in editing and writing for several publications in both London and America even during his late London period. To express his disapproval to editors or writers, his strongest statements were interlaced with expressions of filth. "[D. H.] Lawrence has pewked in the English Review," he writes Margaret Anderson about Lawrence's 1917 article "The Reality of Peace."¹²⁴⁰ A few months later, he turns his criticism to America. "YES *The Seven Arts* is slop. YES," he writes Margaret Anderson of the *Little Review*. "And *The New Republic* is dung dust, with an admixture of dung, also dust dry."¹²⁴¹ To Marianne Moore, he revealed an early rejection from the *Atlantic Monthly* and his subsequent disregard of the magazine: "I also made early attempts at that desiccation *The Atlantic*."¹²⁴² His description of the *Atlantic* as desiccated, or dried and pulverized, matches the dry waste images he associated with the *New Republic*. Another American magazine came into criticism when it wanted to publish a play by Yeats. "It is not in the least satisfactory," Pound writes Quinn, "that Yeats' play should go to the North American Review. these people, ALL the old gang American magazines have shit on me, and they have shit on Yeats too whenever they bloody well got the chance... And I['m] DAMNED if I see why I should do a favor to the North Am. Review. or any of the others. They'd shit on me immediately after."¹²⁴³ And in criticism directly to the *Little Review* editors, Pound passionately disclaims their editorial work and typesetting in what could be considered one of the earliest examples of his own unconventional letter writing:

What the ensanguined llllllll is the matter with this BLOODY
goddamndamnbastedbastardbitabornsonofaputridseahorse of foetid and stinkerous

¹²³⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Ford Madox Ford dated 30 July 1920, in *Pound/Ford: The Story of a Literary Friendship*, ed. by Brita Lindberg-Seyersted (New York: New Directions, 1982), p. 36.

¹²⁴⁰ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated 1 August 1917, *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence*, ed. by Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York: New Directions, 1988), p. 100.

¹²⁴¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated September 1917, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 122–23 (p. 122).

¹²⁴² Ezra Pound, Letter to Marianne Moore dated 1 February 1919, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 146–47.

¹²⁴³ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn postmarked 4 November 1918, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 162.

printer????? ... IF this blasted numero appears with anything like one twohundredandfifteith part of these errors we are DONE.”¹²⁴⁴

Possibly Pound’s main source of editorial work during his late London career was with the *Dial*, which Pound criticized along with the *New Republic* to Anderson in 1917. “And *The Dial*, OH *gosh*, slosh, tosh, the dial, d, i, a, l, dial. Dial—the stationary part of a clock or other chronometer. AND the *New Republic*, desiccated, stodgied copy of the desiccated *New Statesman*. Why ‘new,’ why this association for ‘newness’ always confined to the title? Put there presumably to keep it out of the way. Not that one desires newness so awfully, AWFULLY, goodness would suffice.”¹²⁴⁵ Pound uses images of time to point out both publications’ lack of newness or originality. The *Dial*, he claims, is like an unmoving dial on a broken clock; the *New Statesman*, he claims, retains the “New” in the title so it doesn’t have to pay attention to newness in its pages.

In 1920 Pound was hired as foreign correspondent for the *Dial*. Its history, as one of America’s earliest little magazines, dates to 1840. Once a Transcendentalist magazine edited by Emerson, it subsequently changed in nature during several phases and editing locations.¹²⁴⁶ When Scofield Thayer bought the magazine in 1918, he attempted to return the journal to a focus on art and literature. Pound, in his new position as foreign correspondent, believed his experience and knowledge would resuscitate the magazine. After two months on the staff, Pound commented to Quinn, “It will of course be months before one can read the damn thing or get the dead matter out of it.”¹²⁴⁷ The same month he wrote Hugh Walpole, “*The Dial* for the past months has been too confounded dull to be born, it has been no better than the *London Mercury* or the *Athenaeum* or a dozen and one of these other mortuaries for the entombment of dead fecal mentality.”¹²⁴⁸ In his letters written directly to the editors of the *Dial*, Pound warned against impending death, often by comparison with other publications, which Pound viewed as dying or already dead. Pound informed Thayer that the *London Mercury*, which began just a year earlier in 1919, was “in brief, a backwash, an

¹²⁴⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated 2 February 1918, in *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence*, Ed. by Thomas L. Scott, Melvin J. Friedman, Jackson R. Bryer (New York: New Directions, 1988), p. 181.

¹²⁴⁵ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated August 1917, in *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: The Little Review Correspondence*, Ed. by Thomas L. Scott, Melvin J. Friedman, Jackson R. Bryer (New York: New Directions, 1988), letter 127. Also *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 113.

¹²⁴⁶ *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. xxi.

¹²⁴⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 30 June 1920, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 187.

¹²⁴⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to Hugh Walpole dated 30 June 1920, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), pp. 23–24 (p. 23).

attempt to keep the aged corpses in evidence.”¹²⁴⁹ Two months later, he adds, “we may make any sort of dangerous alliance with this somewhat non-mercurial Mercury and shall think it up to us not to catch any infection from the “corpses.”¹²⁵⁰ He publicly speaks of the *Mercury* editors and publishers as “pall-bearers” in a *Dial* article in 1920: “they hardly know that Gosse has become a sort of symbol for the past (granting that his corpse as regularly carried about in the London Mercury is probably more alive than the bodies and minds of the pall-bearers).”¹²⁵¹ He also identifies the *Dial* itself as a corpse to Thayer. “If you can turn the old corpse into a new *Mercur de France* (not de Londres). it will be damn well worth doing.”¹²⁵² Identifying the publication as a corpse implies a supernatural power to resurrect the publication into life. Pound takes on this godlike role, as he believes he has power to reverse the effects of decay and as he believes he resuscitated his own poetry career. Pound speaks of the “deadness of the British *cervelle*,” or brain, and relates this to his poetic progression.

Example if you like of the way I took the poison myself, 1909–11. descent from early work into “Canzoni”—I was caught—tried to, & succeeded in writing the *lingua morta* = Thought I was being so estimable. // Since then the gradual climb out / constant fight against it. ... present English stuff merely a fungus and mould & wet-rot on the ou[t]side of it ... the “seething mass of liquid putrescence” adumbrates.¹²⁵³

Pound hints that he has to constantly “fight against” the “lingua morta.” Language will become diseased and die unless one fights against this natural decline. Pound writes about language as though it is a living being, susceptible to disease. “Until the cells of humanity recognize certain things as excrement,” he writes Felix Schelling, “they will stay in human colon and poison it. Victoria was an excrement, Curtis, Lorimer, ALL british journalism, are excrement.”¹²⁵⁴ Pound then adds in this letter, “the Brit. Empire is rotting because no one in England tries to treat it. ... Art cant offer a patent medicine.”

¹²⁴⁹ Ezra Pound to Scofield Thayer, Letter dated 25 January 1920, in *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 11.

¹²⁵⁰ Ezra Pound to Scofield Thayer, Letter dated 8 March 1920, in *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 13.

¹²⁵¹ Ezra Pound, “The Island of Paris: A Letter, November 1920,” *Dial*, 69.6 (December 1920), 635–39. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C607, 121–23 (p. 121).

¹²⁵² Ezra Pound to Scofield Thayer, Letter dated 7 June 1920, in *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 37.

¹²⁵³ Ezra Pound to Scofield Thayer, Letter dated 30 October 1920, in *Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters*, ed. by Walter Sutton (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994), p. 171.

¹²⁵⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to Felix Emanuel Schelling dated 8 July 1922 from Wyncote, Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Department Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, Felix Emanuel Schelling Papers, Folder 8.

Pound's long poem "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" addresses his anxieties of this period—the digression of his poetic career, his constant struggle against the decay of language, and his confrontation with the British literary mentality. The "E.P." of the poem's first division, "*Ode Pour L'Élection de Son Sépulchre*," is already dead. His works are commemorated:

For three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry

Pound connects this idea of resuscitation with poetry, implying E.P. encountered a dead art and worked for three years to enliven this deadness. "Wrong from the start—" he then declares, then changes his mind in the following stanza: "No hardly." Pound struggles with the value of these seemingly fruitless years of work. E.P. was "bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn" and was engaged in a work that could not possibly have produced results. Pound, then, is legitimizing the failure of E.P., as his work is portrayed as an impossible task. "The chopped seas held him," he writes, "therefore, that year." E.P. was caught in a storm and was prevented from being able to successfully resuscitate the dead art. In section II, Pound satirizes what the age believed it needed: "The age demanded an image / Of its accelerated grimace." He describes this empty image that the age seems to want—something that would fill a "modern stage," or empty space, or "the classics in paraphrase," or even a "mould in plaster," resembling plaster copies of European sculptures, as could be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum at the time. Section IV mirrors his Canto IV of this period, which he wrote just after finishing "Mauberley." Pound returns to the subject of war, listing some of the different reasons men enlist to fight, followed by the communal reality of this fighting: they "walked eye-deep in hell." "Wastage as never before," Pound writes. "Young blood and high blood // hysterias, trench confessions, / laughter out of dead bellies."¹²⁵⁵ This description of hell-like war images leads to Section V:

There died a myriad,
And of the best, among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilization,

Pound includes the detail of a dead man's eyes as the body is buried: "Quick eyes gone under earth's lid." The remainder of the E.P. section then shifts to scenes in London, commenting on the artistic backwardness of the painters displayed at the Tate and the

¹²⁵⁵ "H. S. Mauberly" [sic], *Dial*, 69.3 (September 1920), 283–87. In *Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C596, 88–91 (p. 90). A reprint of the first six poems of Part I of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920), A19. Also in *Ezra Pound: Poems and Translations*, ed. by Richard Sieburth (New York: Library of America, 2003), pp. 549–63 (p. 549). *Mauberley* was first published in an edition of 200 copies by the Egoist Press in June 1919.

typical book reviewer's desire to be paid. "The tip's a good one," the reviewer says, "as for literature / It gives no man a sinecure." This reviewer attempts to talk a "boy" out of writing poetry: "And give up verse, my boy, / There's nothing in it." Pound similarly portrays the society as devaluing art, as their daily interests are centered on the menial tasks of life.

"Beside this thoroughfare / The sale of half-hose has / Long since superseded the cultivation / Of Pierian roses." Pound conjures an image of, possibly, a street market selling women's half-hose rather than the Pierian roses, a symbol of the Muses as referred to in the poetry of Sappho. Additionally, he uses the term *cultivation* in two senses of the definition—the sense of cultivating the growth of roses and the sense of cultivating the civilization, or its cultural arts, touched by the Muses.

The second section of the poem, "Mauberley," portrays a character unlike the more serious E.P. As E.P. attempts to powerfully shape and control his life, Mauberley drifts into his fate: he "drifted . . . drifted precipitate" [Pound's ellipses]. As "precipitate" implies a chemical change in which a solid separates out of a solution, Mauberley, then, drifts into changes in his life. He has a fascination with botany, and insists on classifying the flowers he discovers. "To designate / His new found orchid. . . . / To be certain . . . certain . . ." Pound adds that Mauberley has a tendency to record things precisely, as a scientist: "his urge / To convey the relation / Of eye-lid and cheek-bone / By verbal manifestation." In examining irises, and possibly tearing a part of the flower, he imagines "anaesthesia," or the loss of sensation through a drug, and "diastasis," meaning the dislodging of the end of a bone from its shaft without fracturing the bone itself. Pound again is using scientific images to create an image of change or displacement. "Chance" finds Mauberley "unfit" for what "the age demanded," yet he seems undaunted by the exclusion:

Non-esteem of self-styled "his betters"

Leading, as he well knew,

To his final

Exclusion from the world of letters.

As Mauberley was excluded against his will, his legacy was banished to, surreally, a description on a boat's oar, as if he drifted in a boat and was lost at sea:

"I was

And I no more exist;

Here drifted

An hedonist."

By the end of "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley," both its characters, E.P. and Mauberley, are dead, despite their separate ways of attempting to force or drift their way through life. For Pound, the poem was a reiteration of the message of "Homage to Sextus Propertius" and a statement against the decline of letters. The poem, he says, "originated as an attempt to

repeat the ‘message’ of *Homage to Sextus Propertius*. Propertius / is related to ANY empire declining onto the shit pile. When even tolerably intelligent people couldn't understand THAT, I did the *Mauberry*, all on the top; or at least with external details modern.”¹²⁵⁶ In the 1926 collection *Personae*, Pound added an epigraph to the poem: “The sequence is so distinctly a farewell to London that the reader who chooses to regard this as an exclusively American edition may as well omit it and turn at once to page 205.”¹²⁵⁷

Pound incorporated images of age and death with his plight over his career during his last years in London. He writes Anderson, “I am ageing rapidly. Byron is described as very old, or at least grey and showing age at 36. I have but a few years left me.”¹²⁵⁸ He continues in the letter by comparing his aging with the decay of his fellow writers. “I show signs of decay. Five English winters uninterrupted. I shall grow blubber like a walrus. Hueffer is dead, absolutely dead with army. Eliot is dead with his bank. Lewis wanders about interrupting... I shall follow the example of St. Augustine, and take a bath (in hot water).”¹²⁵⁹ Pound repeats the stark, one-syllable word *dead* to describe the lack of productivity of his contemporaries. He writes the editors of the *Little Review*, “London is dead to deadish. Eliot apparently giving way to milieu.”¹²⁶⁰ This observation of the decline of his literary peers, in addition to his own aging, leaves Pound hopeless. Taking a bath is his only recourse, symbolically, to escape the rigors and decay around him. Pound imagines Paris to be a bath that cleanses the filth of London, according to an editorial he wrote in 1920. The *New York Evening Post Literary Review* published a letter from Pound in December 1920, editing out various lines in which he made the bath analogy.¹²⁶¹ In 1922, the *Little Review* republished this letter in its original form, indicating with italics the words that had been deleted:

The “literary and artistic life” of London having dwindled, consisting, that is, in waiting for Mr. Wyndam Lewis’ next drawing and Mr. Eliot’s next (we believe his twenty-sixth) poem—or this equation of London containing a so negligible amount of exaggeration—the

¹²⁵⁶ Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 364.

¹²⁵⁷ Ezra Pound, *Personae: The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1926), p. 251.

¹²⁵⁸ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated [?] January 1918, in *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 142.

¹²⁵⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated 20 February 1918, in *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson*, ed. Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York: New Directions, 1988), p. 186.

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Letter dated 22[?] April 1921, p. 265.

¹²⁶¹ Ezra Pound, “Parisian Literature. Literary Review,” *New York Evening Post* 1.49 (13 August 1921), 7. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C626, p. 182. The published excerpt read: “The ‘literary and artistic life’ of London having dwindled, the bath of Paris is perhaps unduly pleasant; pleasant, at least, as a matinal cleanliness; hot tub after a fog, and a clean air with a recent vestige of rain.”

*bath of Paris is perhaps unduly pleasant; pleasant, at least, as a matinal cleanliness, a hot tub after a fog, and a clean air with a recent vestige of rain.*¹²⁶²

Pound claimed he would not only need a bath after leaving London, but “two days of anaesthesia.”¹²⁶³ Remaining in London, he said, was like “massaging a corpse, or offering opiates to a dying patient rather than building a civilization.”¹²⁶⁴ He describes London in the *New York Evening Post* in 1920: “This place is dead” after the “five years of war and two of muddle.”¹²⁶⁵ He comments that he believes New York rather than London will become the “centre of literature” for the English language, since it is “far less confirmed in its diseases.” To the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*, Pound stated his reason for leaving London was that he found “the decay of the British Empire too depressing a spectacle to witness at close range.”¹²⁶⁶ His near-death images referred to more than his considerations of moving from London, which had been his home for 13 years. In 1920 he wrote an American editor, who published Pound’s letter in his periodical. Pound stated that there were specific reasons “pour l’art, for my work, etc.” for his move to London, and specific reasons that he had stayed for so long. However, he notes, “they no longer exist.”¹²⁶⁷ He then questions if he should move to America. “It is absolutely necessary to START the new civilization,” he states. “Whether one builds it inside the decaying cortex of the present one or on the scraps doesn’t seem to me much to matter. The present one will go to pot all quickly enough without one’s pushing.” He adds:

The question of whether one (I) shd. stay here and send over stuff from this Byzantium, or come to America and send for it; is a genuine question.

Seems to me rather a question of time; shd. I emigrate to the U. S. now (probably prematurely) or wait till 1930 or 1940 or 1960?

... It is foolish to scrap all the past (as it is foolish to carry corpses); European civilization is too rich, really rich, to chuck altogether. But the good apples damn well want to be taken out of the barrel, and they want a bit of hunting for in the muck.

As Pound actually considered abandoning the field of writing to pursue medicine at this time, he was attracted to the health aspect of medicine, not the pathology, the diseases

¹²⁶² Ezra Pound, “The Literary Review of NY Evening Post for Dec 4, 1920. Suppressed Passage,” *Little Review*, 8.2 (Spring 1922), 34. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C635, p. 221.

¹²⁶³ —, “Indiscretions; or, Une Revue de Deux Mondes, By Ezra Pound: I,” *New Age*, 27.4 (27 May 1920), 56–57. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C578, 59–60 (p. 59).

¹²⁶⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn dated 8 November 1920, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 202.

¹²⁶⁵ Ezra Pound, “Literary Review [of the New York Evening Post],” 1.13 (4 December 1920), 26. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C608, p. 126.

¹²⁶⁶ James J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris: 1908–1925* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State Press, 1990), p. 254.

¹²⁶⁷ Ezra Pound, “Here’s Your Chance, Washington University,” *Much Ado*, 11.9 (1 November 1920), 2–3. In *Ezra Pound’s Poetry and Prose*, 11 vols (London: Garland, 1991), IV, C603, p. 116.

or illnesses.¹²⁶⁸ As with his poetic ambitions, he aspired to the superior class, the “super-health” and the super-poetics. Pound wrote Joyce that he sought to find “a poetic serum to save English letters from postmature and American letters from premature suicide and decomposition.”¹²⁶⁹ Failing this, Pound did abandon London, and within a year, staged his own death.¹²⁷⁰ He wrote his father and closest friends—William Carlos Williams, John Quinn, and Jeanne Foster, asking them not to contradict rumors of his death. “I am dead,” he wrote Foster in April 1922. He was writing from the *World of the Spirits*,¹²⁷¹ he explained, and sent a separate letter eleven days later with further instructions for his articles that were with American magazines waiting for publication. “Remember I’m officially dead,” he wrote, instructing her not to contradict “news of my demise.”¹²⁷² Similarly, he wrote Quinn with the same instructions. “If you hear a rumour of my death, don’t be disturbed but *fer Gawd’s sake DON’T CONTRADICT IT*. I shall be dead to the world.”¹²⁷³ To Williams, Pound wrote, “See here ole son: If you hear a report of my death don’t *fer Xt’s sake* deny it. Say you expected as much. Suggest Xification or assification or any other—& express perlite regret.”¹²⁷⁴ Pound even had a life mask made of himself by an American sculptor, Nancy Cox McCormack.¹²⁷⁵ Between seeing Eliot on 18 November 1921 when he left Paris for Lausanne, and his arrival back in Paris on 2 January 1922, Pound arranged for

¹²⁶⁸ See Chapter 2. In an unpublished letter, Pound declares to an American doctor that he wanted to study medicine after his London career, but finances prevented him from committing to a program. “All very well to say ‘dont think, experiment’. Cant, had hoped to take up medicine properly when I came to Paris last spring, but got solar-plexus punch on the finance.” Pound then revealed his ultimate purpose for his interest in medicine. “Want to study super-health, not pathology, (idiotic phrase that. I mean experiment with view to producing super-health, super-lucidity, rather than getting idiots up to nearly normal.)” New York Public Library, Sidney Watson papers, T. L. (carbon) to Dr. Berman. 70 bis, rue Notre dame des champs, Paris [n.d.] 6p. Noel Stock’s *The Life of Ezra Pound* mentions Pound’s interest in medicine without a reference: “He thought of returning to America, taking up medicine, but didn’t have funds for 4 or 5 years of study” (p. 293). Noel Stock replied to my letter, asking for the reference. Stock replied on 21 July 2006: “I am pretty sure that the remark you ask about, his wanting to become a doctor of med., was made in a letter to a correspondent in the U.S., possibly William Carlos Williams, but I don’t think so. My feeling in recording it back around 1968 was that it was not a deep long-standing desire but a sudden emotional burst caused by the european chaos after the First World War; and probably forgotten by him as soon as he became interested again in his literary and economic pursuits. Had I come across any later references in his letters or elsewhere I’m certain I should have mentioned it.”

¹²⁶⁹ Ezra Pound, Letter to James Joyce in *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce*, ed. by Forrest Read (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p. 186

¹²⁷⁰ Neither Hugh Kenner (*The Pound Era*) nor Charles Norman (*Ezra Pound*) nor other Pound biographers mention this self-imposed death. *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), p. 201.

¹²⁷¹ Ezra Pound, Letter to Jeanne Foster dated 12 April 1922, in *Dear Yeats, Dear Pound, Dear Ford: Jeanne Robert Foster and Her Circle of Friends* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), p. 200.

¹²⁷² *Ibid.*, Letter dated 23 April 1922, p. 201.

¹²⁷³ Ezra Pound, Letter to John Quinn postmarked 12 April 1922, *Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn 1915–1924*, ed. by Timothy Materer (London: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 208.

¹²⁷⁴ Ezra Pound, Letter to William Carlos Williams dated 21 May 1922, *Pound/Williams: Selected Letters of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams* (New York: New Directions, 1996), p. 59.

¹²⁷⁵ Lawrence S. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 131.

a life mask to be made of himself on 3 December.¹²⁷⁶ He took photos of this mask and sent it to the *Little Review* with a letter signed by his wife: “I have sent you the photos of Ezra’s death-mask. There is nothing more to be said. Yours sincerely, D. Pound.”¹²⁷⁷ The *Little Review* did not print the photos or believe the letter, after which Pound sent a scathing response:

Really you are IMPOSSIBLE. In response to repeated requests; requests for death, for crucifixion etc. etc. etc. I finally die. Why the hell shouldn’t I vary the bowling, and give this small drop of liquid pleasure to a long parched, long exasperated public. Why the hell shd.n’t I die? what is, after all so incredible in my coming to the fated end of all human perturbations? The comfortable cool of the sepulchre.¹²⁷⁸

In this desperate statement, Pound becomes E.P. of “Maunderley.” The italicized titles of the first division and first section of the poem run together typographically and read as though E.P. is selecting his own tomb before burial:

E.P.

Ode Pour L’Election de Son Sepulchre

The narrator Pound and the character E.P. both prepare their tombs and wait for death. For Pound, it was the ultimate act of control—arranging his death, yet arranging his resuscitation at the same time. This act seemed an appropriate end to Pound’s London career, during which he penned and mastered a movement that called for more and more condensation, working toward nothingness.

¹²⁷⁶ J. J. Wilhelm, *Ezra Pound in London and Paris* (London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990), p. 304.

¹²⁷⁷ Ezra Pound, Letter to Margaret Anderson dated 14 April 1922, in *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson*, ed. Thomas L. Scott and Melvin J. Friedman (New York: New Directions, 1988), p. 283.

¹²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Letter dated 13 July 1922, p. 287.

APPENDIX

IN SEARCH OF THE VORTOSCOPE:

THE MYSTERY OF EZRA POUND AND ALVIN LANGDON COBURN'S VORTICIST PROJECT OF 1916

England's Vorticism of the early twentieth century, like Futurism and Cubism, responded to the age of machines. As the only pre-war movement of England to fully develop the spirit of the 'new age' (Wees, 1965, p. 56), Vorticism disengaged itself from the prevailing idea of aesthetics by identifying itself iconographically with mechanical imagery. It attempted to legitimate itself as a movement by rebelling against outdated forms of art and representation and, in part, by implementing a visual aesthetic that valued the everyday presence and function of machinery. During the First Machine Age, beginning around 1910, the revolutionary movements of Vorticism, Futurism, and Cubism inspired the Modernist aesthetic, which extended into painting, architecture, and photography (Banham, 1999, p. 14). Speaking of this industrial influence of machines, Le Corbusier in his *Towards a New Architecture*—translated to English by a former Vorticist artist Frederick Etchells—argued that 'machines will lead to a new order both of work and leisure' and that these machines would provide a basis for a new visual aesthetic (Lipke, 1978, p. 76). The machine, therefore, represented the spirit of the time period and was the source of inspiration for the new, nontraditional works of art and architecture. In what became known as a model example of machine art, the Vorticist sculptor Jacob Epstein created a work of art, 'Rock Drill', using actual machinery. Placing a plaster robot-like figure on top of a rock drill in 1913, Epstein claimed it was his 'ardour for machinery' that inspired its creation, which became a symbol of the new age. In his autobiography, Epstein claimed that Pound and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska visited his studio and observed him working as he was at work on 'Rock Drill'—a name of which Pound would use in his later Cantos.

Another lesser-known creation of the age, the Vortoscope, similarly displays a veneration for machinery. Its creation—described by its creators Alvin Langdon Coburn and Pound as a 'machine' in itself—also followed the Vorticist ideal in allowing machinery to inspire further works of art. In 1916, the Pictorial photographer Coburn alluded to the traditional camera in his article 'The Future of Pictorial Photography'. 'I want to see [photography] alive', he writes, 'to the spirit of progress; and if it is not possible to be "modern" with the newest of all the arts, we had better bury our black boxes' (Coburn, 1916, n.p.). Coburn figuratively refers to the camera as a coffin, ready to be buried; however, he also was indicating his own non-traditional ambitions. In the same year, he was

preparing to alter his own camera and traditional photographic techniques to revolutionize photography. Pound writes in his Vortograph exhibition pamphlet essay, as recorded in a copy stored at the National Art Museum in London, that ‘Mr. Coburn had been long desiring to bring cubism or vorticism into photography. Only with the invention of a suitable instrument was this possible’ (1917, p.2). Coburn’s link to Cubism and Vorticism, and Pound’s ambitions to expand Vorticism into photography, causing a ‘renaissance’ within this artistic field, were embodied in this single instrument.

In 1916 Coburn and Pound collaborated to create the Vortoscope, a photographic machine or function that produced non-representational photographs—prismatic images termed ‘Vortographs’. Coburn and Pound created at least 40 Vortographs during the winter of 1916–1917, culminating in an exhibition in February 1917 at London’s Camera Club, in which 18 of the Vortographs were displayed. The exhibition proved to be one of the last functions of Vorticism; the final official function of the united Vorticist artists being held the same year at New York’s Penguin Club, to indifferent critical response. As William Lipke points out, it wasn’t until 1956 that the movement again surfaced, when a retrospective exhibition of Wyndham Lewis and Vorticism took place at the Tate Gallery (1978, p. 74). During the 40-year gap, Vorticism remained outside artistic interests and was absent from critical response. The neglect, according to Walter Michel, resulted from England’s hostility towards the spearhead of Vorticism, Wyndham Lewis, during the 1920s, and because of the emphasis on continental models of modern art during the 1930s (Lipke, 1978, p. 74). During these four decades of neglect, both Vorticism and the Vortoscope were forgotten and valuable aspects of their history lost. Of the Vortographs, only about 40 are accounted for; eighteen of which were the original prints displayed at the exhibition (Cork, 1976, p. 504). The Vortoscope was misplaced or possibly destroyed, and valuable sources of information about its form and function were disregarded and never recorded. Ironically, the Vortoscope itself was a Vorticist work of art, according to the movement’s standards of aestheticism. It was both an aesthetic machine, by its creators’ definitions, and it produced further artwork through its Vortographs. Because the movement was disregarded for four decades, the Vorticist valuation of the Vortoscope itself was not realized or appreciated, leaving present-day scholars to attempt to discover and define the Vortoscope’s function and form with the sparse information available.

THE VORTOSCOPE *MATERIA*

In his 1978 autobiography, Coburn, in describing the Vortoscope, wrote, ‘If anyone is curious as to its actual construction, I gave my original Vortoscope to the Royal Photographic Society, where I have no doubt it is still preserved’ (1978, p. 102). However,

the RPS curator Jane Fletcher, states in correspondence that neither she nor the previous curator has ever seen a record of the Vortoscope in the collection (2005, n.p.). Brian Liddy, researcher in the photo studio at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, which houses the Royal Photographic Society's collection, says the Vortoscope has never been registered, or perhaps even received, by the society. 'It is rumoured that the Vortoscope was donated to the RPS collection by Coburn, but nobody has ever actually seen it, and it has never been mentioned in any inventory listings of objects in the collection' (2005, n.p.). The monthly publication of the Royal Photographic Society records Coburn's 1930 donation of his collection in the article 'The Coburn Collection: A Munificent Gift'. Officially donating his collection at a meeting of the society on 1 April 1930, Coburn, an American, asserts, 'It is natural that it should go to the Royal Photographic Society because of the long association of American photographers with this Society' (1930, p. 241). The article, however, does not list the items and does not mention any donated equipment or the Vortoscope. One Coburn expert, Lionel Kelly, asserted in correspondence that he believes Coburn was accurate when he claimed the Vortoscope had been donated to the RPS. 'As far as I can tell, Coburn was usually reliable in his knowledge of where his plates and negatives were held—RPS, Eastman House, and so on, so that if he claimed the vortoscope went to the RPS, it probably did' (2005, n.p.). Kelly additionally speculates that the fate of the Vortoscope resulted from the lack of appreciation for it even by photography experts associated with the society's archives. 'As a fragile object whose significance was probably not fully understood by whoever received it many years ago, I suspect that it was simply broken at some point in time, and then thrown away'. Another possibility of the Vortoscope's fate lies in Coburn's statement to the society when presenting his collection. 'I was looking over a number of negatives', he recalled to the audience, 'and destroying a great many in the last few days. I should think they numbered in output 15,000' (1930, p. 241). Perhaps in the haste of organizing his collection, the Vortoscope was overlooked or destroyed by Coburn himself, especially as the archive has no record of receiving the Vortoscope. Additionally, Coburn's recollection of his donation of the Vortoscope was not recorded until 1978, 48 years after his donation to the society, and perhaps his memory of the contents of his massive collection had faded. Regardless of how the Vortoscope disappeared, its absence seems uncannily representative of the absence of Vorticism itself. By reinventing the Vortoscope, through piecing together the known information of its form and function, scholarly attention can help resurrect the neglected art of Vorticism.

Conflicting ideas exist about the form of the Vortoscope, whether it existed as camera-like 'object' in itself or as an attachment to or function of a traditional camera. Ruth Kitchin, RPS collections assistant, writes in correspondence, 'Having spoken to colleagues

here, the nature of the device Coburn used to produce his Vortograph isn't known for certain, and there are no records of what it looked like, and no known "Vortoscope" still in existence' (2005, n.p.). Liddy further explains, 'Rumour has it that it was simply three rectangular mirrors taped together, in a kaleidoscope-like arrangement. Coburn would then place it over a photographic print, and point his camera down into the mirrors and take another photograph, and that would be a Vortograph. But it's only a notion—no one really knows for sure'. Liddy's view of the Vortoscope, which seems to be a common 'rumour', as he says, among photography researchers, is that the Vortoscope was a method of photography rather than a device. The method consisted of the strategic placement of a trio of mirrors around the lens of a camera. If the Vortoscope was an actual device, as Martin Barnes, curator of photographs of the V&A Museum suggested in correspondence, most research seems to imply that the device consisted simply of the three mirrors (2005, n.p.).

Published descriptions of the Vortoscope by scholars vary slightly in their descriptions of the instrument, implying that the scholars themselves aren't sure how the Vortoscope really appeared or how it functioned. Most researchers work from Coburn's description of the device in his autobiography:

The instrument is composed of three mirrors fastened together in the form of a triangle, and resembling to a certain extent the Kaleidoscope—and I think many of us can remember the delight we experienced with this scientific toy. The mirrors acted as a prism splitting the image formed by the lens into segments. (Coburn, 1978, p.102)

Several researchers have attributed ownership of the mirrors to Pound, from one of his old shaving mirrors, although none of the researchers reference their source for this detail. Mike Weaver states that Coburn 'lashed together three of Ezra Pound's shaving mirrors' (1986, p. 9), suggesting that Pound donated three separate shaving mirrors, and that the mirrors were 'lashed' together as though by rope or cord. Richard Humphreys repeats Coburn's description, but begins the quotation after 'three mirrors' and inserts his unreferenced assertion that Coburn used 'bits of broken glass from Pound's old shaving mirror' (1985, p. 33). This view, then, works from the Pound mirror theory, but implies that it was one mirror broken into pieces, and these pieces from the single mirror were then used in the Vortoscope construction.

Aside from the mirrors, researchers speculate on the further arrangement of the device, often stating these assumptions as fact. Weaver, after asserting that three of Pound's mirrors were lashed together, then says they were 'rigged ... below a kind of glass lighttable' (1986, p. 9). Margaret Moore and Jennifer Huget claim that the three mirrors were fastened together in a triangle, then 'the lens of the camera was inserted into it, resulting in a kaleidoscopic image' (n.d., p. 10)—a theory that parallels Liddy's view. William C. Wees writes that the Vortographs were taken from 'photographing reflected

images in mirrors joined at varying angles' (1966, p. 215), implying that the camera took pictures of the mirrors, which reflected the broken images. And in an earlier essay, dated 1965, Wees claims that the Vortoscope was a 'camera-attachment' (1965, p. 66), implying that the mirrors were or could be somehow attached to the camera itself. Possibly the most credible source of the Vortoscope's form is from Richard Cork's 1972 interview of Helmut Gernsheim, who was a friend of Coburn. Gernsheim claimed that 'the subject was photographed by [Coburn] through the middle of [the mirrors] ... Whilst the mirrors of the kaleidoscope are always enclosed in a cardboard or metal tube, Coburn just used the mirrors in front of the sitter' (Cork, 1976, p. 499). In the case of a sitter being photographed, as Gernsheim is describing, a former curator of the RPS imagined that the mirrors were hinged and were 'supported in some way between the lens and the sitter' (Cork, 1976, p. 500).

Most researchers seem to imply that the Vortoscope was not an object in itself—that it consisted of the handling of a camera in association with external objects such as mirrors or a light table. However, these views tend to conflict with descriptions of the Vortoscope by both Coburn and Pound. Coburn states in his autobiography that the Vortoscope was a 'construction', implying a tangible object more complex than mirrors alone, which could actually be given to the Royal Photographic Society. Additionally, he uses the adjective 'original', implying that there might have been more Vortoscopes constructed by him. This statement matches Pound's 13 October 1916 letter to John Quinn: 'First apparatus clumsy, second one rather lighter', suggesting that Coburn and Pound either created at least two separate Vortoscopes, or they created one, and finding it unsatisfactory, possibly dismantled it and created another (1991, p. 53). Additionally, Pound's use of the word *apparatus* implies the Vortoscope's existence as an actual device—*apparatus* being defined as 'any complex device or machine for specific use'. Another letter from Pound to John Quinn claims, 'The present machine happens to be rectilinear' (1951, p. 158). Pound mentions the Vortoscope as being a 'machine' and describes its shape, as though it was an actual device in itself, as opposed to simply a method. Additionally, the labeling of the device by Pound, with the term *Vortoscope*, itself implies a 'scope' of mirrors as part of a greater 'machine'-like whole, as the suffix *-scope* is defined as 'an instrument for seeing or observing'. Pound's naming of the camera-machine could have derived from Coburn's initial idea for the invention of the device. In his 1916 essay, Coburn relates that he admires the function of a microscope, in that the microscope uses prisms in its portrayal of images. 'The beauty of the design displayed by the microscope', he writes, 'seems to me a wonderful field to explore from the purely pictorial point of view, the use of prisms for the splitting of images into segments has been very slightly experimented with, and multiple exposures on the same plate ... have been neglected almost entirely' (Leighten, 1978, p. 136). Therefore, Coburn's

initial idea for the invention likely stemmed from a microscope, and the suffix *-scope* in “Vortoscope” further links the camera-device to a technical, machine-like function, as in a scientific microscope. In addition to the scope aspect of the Vortoscope construction, the creators seem to include the camera as a part of the overall device. In the Vortograph exhibition catalogue, later published as Appendix IV of *Pavannes and Divisions*, Pound includes the camera techniques in his description of Vortography: ‘the medium of the vortographer is practically limited to ... the peculiar varieties in lightness and darkness which belong to the technique of the camera’ (1918, p. 251). This inclusion of actual camera techniques with the prism effects implies that the Vortoscope construction consisted of both the prism-producing triangular scope as well as the camera function.

POUND’S INVOLVEMENT

Coburn’s initial series of Vortographs included Pound as the subject—his bespectacled face broken into fragments, and later, his profile prominently posed in front of an open window, as lines of the window frame prismatically repeat around his multiplied silhouette. It was only after these Vortographs were complete that Coburn began to photograph other subjects, usually objects of nature such as crystals or small pieces of wood. That Pound was the subject of the first Vortographs significantly illustrates his involvement with the development of Vortography. Additionally, Coburn’s interaction with Pound is in itself an indication of the Vortography’s genuine involvement with Vorticism, in that the movement prided itself on not only its visual style, but also its product as a united group of collaborating artists.

It is thought that Pound’s association with Coburn probably began in 1913, when Coburn took the ‘seductive and sinister’ photo of Pound, which was used for the frontispiece of *Lustra* and was collected in Coburn’s *More Men of Mark*. They must have remained in contact with each other in the following years—not unusual, as Coburn associated with modern writers and artists, often photographing them. He wrote of Pound, “At almost any private view of the very latest in super-Modern Art are not his Leonine Mane and large lapis Coat Buttons to be found at the very heart and centre of the Vortex? Who in nine short years has displayed so great a variety of beard and moustache?” (Firebaugh, 1955, p. 225). As Coburn admired Pound’s eccentricity and association with modernist circles, and Pound eagerly associated with artists, the two began working together, although detail about their association is scarce. Richard Humphreys speculates from the sparse information available about their involvement that, ‘The two men worked quite closely together during the winter of 1916–17’ (1985, p. 71)—the period of time that the Vortoscope and all Vortographs were created.

The portrayal of Pound's participation with the creation and use of the Vortoscope also varies—stemming from the different readings of the firsthand source material. In his 13 October 1916 letter to John Quinn, Pound states, 'Dont know that there is much to report save that Cobairn [sic] and I have invented the vortoscope'—claiming the invention alongside Coburn. In the January 1917 letter to Quinn, Pound again seems to take credit for its invention and boasts that he can manipulate it himself: 'I can make one that will do any sort of curve, quite easily'. This statement would imply an in-depth understanding of the Vortoscope's construction and function, suggesting that Pound was more than a mere onlooker or encourager of the process.

However, as William C. Wees writes in an addendum to his previous scholarship on the Vortoscope, 'Pound was not as instrumental in producing vortographs as his letter to John Quinn had led me—and Lipke and Rozran—to believe. According to Alvin Langdon Coburn, with whom I talked last summer, the original idea for making abstract photographs and the actual means of producing them . . . came from Coburn' (1965, p. 66). Wees adds that Pound simply encouraged the photographs and labeled them 'Vortographs'. This corresponds with Coburn's autobiography, which states, 'I devised the Vortoscope', leaving all mention of Pound out of the description (1978, p. 102). Additionally, Coburn's history leading to the invention of the Vortoscope indicates his desire to break from convention. His October 1913 exhibition of Camera Pictures at Goupil Gallery includes, alongside conventional portraits of Shaw, Rodin, Sargent, and Yeats, a series of Cubist-like photos of New York City. In his catalogue preface, Coburn indicates a desire to venture into a new, modernist method of photography. *The Thousand Windows* photograph, he says, was 'almost as fantastic in its perspective as a Cubist fantasy; but why should not the camera artist break away from the worn-out conventions, that even in its comparatively short existence have begun to cramp and restrict his medium, and claim the freedom of expression which any art must have to be alive?' (1913, n.p.). Additionally, his 1916 essay, 'The Future of Pictorial Photography', indicates that Coburn wanted to plan an exhibition of abstract photographs in which 'no work [would be] admitted in which the interest of the subject matter is greater than the appreciation of the extraordinary'. Coburn cites his newfound interest in prismatic photography, predating the creation of the Vortoscope. 'The use of prisms for the splitting of images into segments', he says, 'has been very slightly experimented with'. These statements imply that Coburn was independently considering a rebellion against his own Pictorial methods; however, they do not disprove any later influence or involvement by Pound in the creation of the actual Vortoscope. Coburn's statements about his invention of the Vortoscope in the 1978 autobiography and the 1965 interview with Wees occurred 62 and 49 years, respectively, after the Vortoscope creation.

Possibly Coburn's memory had lapsed, and possibly, after decades of primary association with the Vortographs, Coburn assumed the role as sole inventor. Ultimately, whether Pound actually helped in the creation of the actual invention, the photographs' link with Vorticism was formed from Pound's influence. Pound is regularly cited as having invented the terms *Vortoscope* and *Vortograph*. Additionally, the implication that an outside source—Pound—actually influenced Coburn's creation could be made from the fact that these photographs, produced only during the period when he worked with Pound, differed radically from Coburn's other, Symbolist works. As David Bellman notes, the Vortographs vary greatly from Coburn's photographic style, and after his year-long experimenting with them, he abandoned them and returned to his formal method of photography (1994, p. 18). Possibly without Pound's encouragement, Coburn's revolutionary ideas would have remained undeveloped. A further indication of Pound's encouragement lies in the Vortographs themselves. Pound's image was captured in the first series of Vortographs created in 1916, followed by further Vortographs of crystals and objects of nature during the same year (Cork, 1976, p. 501). A short lull of time lapsed before Coburn again attempted more Vortographs in January 1917—this time, again with Pound as the subject. This subject matter could point to Pound's involvement in encouraging Coburn's continued commitment in Vortography, despite a lull in production.

Current scholarship in photography depicts Pound as an arrogant eccentric who schemingly used his influence to sway Coburn from his Symbolist style. As the centenary essay in the Royal Photographic Society's biography of Coburn states, 'Post-Impressionism produced in Coburn a perfected consciousness in those years immediately before the First World War. After that Ezra Pound tried to bully him into Modernism' (Weaver, 1982, p. 26). Additionally, Mike Weaver states that after Pound's anonymous introduction in the Vortograph exhibition pamphlet, Coburn wrote a postscript and 'expressed realization he had been used to further Pound's movement' (1986, p. 68). However, a copy of the original exhibition pamphlet in Britain's National Art Library contains the entire essay, which debates the view of the 'anonymous friend' that photography is a lesser art than painting, and that Coburn's paintings—thirteen of which were simultaneously displayed at the exhibition alongside the Vortographs (Coburn, 1978, p. 102)—were 'Post-Impressionist' and not Vorticist. However, Coburn never rejects his association with Pound nor with Vorticism, ending his essay with the proud line, 'this will go down to posterity as the first exhibition of Vortography'. Researchers additionally offset Pound's involvement with Coburn by citing that Coburn had quit producing Vortographs after a year. As David Bellman describes the seemingly failed high hopes of Vorticism as outlined in *Blast*, he then mentions 'the vortographs would occupy Coburn's interest for little more than a year'

(1994, p. 18), as though the method contained little of substance to maintain interest. Margaret Moore and Jennifer Huget call the production of Vortographs ‘trials’ and ‘short lived’, and add that Coburn later selected his traditional pre-Vorticist portrait of Pound for his *More Men of Mark*, rather than his Vortographs of Pound (n.d., p. 59), suggesting that Coburn preferred his traditional portraiture and possibly was making a statement to Pound by rejecting his image in the Vorticist style.

LEGACY

Although various researchers of Coburn tend to debase Pound’s influence and the Vorticist style, Vorticism has become an interesting facet of the history of photography. As a 27 April 2004 Christie’s auction entails, Coburn’s Vortographs sell for over USD \$200,000, equal to or more than his other photographs. One Vortograph sold in 2003 for \$228,560, which was a previous record for a Coburn photo, and another Vortograph sold in the April 2004 auction for \$209,100. Mike Weaver points out that Coburn’s work preceded other kaleidoscopic effects in photography by at least a year, which ‘has tended to propose his significance to the history of photography as an avant-gardist and early modernist’ (1986, p. 9). This ‘avant-garde’ quality is what Coburn was searching for. Coburn writes:

Yes, if we are alive to the spirit of our time it is these moderns who interest us. They are striving, reaching out towards the future, analyzing the mossy structure of the past, and building afresh, in colour and sound and grammatical construction, the scintillating vision of their minds; and being interested particularly in photography, it has occurred to me, why should not the camera also throw off the shackles of conventional representation and attempt something fresh and untried? ... Think of the joy of doing something which it would be impossible to classify, or to tell which was the top and which the bottom! (Weaver, 1986, p. 9)

This enthusiasm for Vortography mirrors Pound’s introduction written for the exhibition pamphlet. ‘The camera is freed from reality’, Pound exclaims in capital letters. He proclaims that the Vortoscope could solve the problems of form in aesthetics, and compares its breakthrough with the discovery of correct proportions in Renaissance paintings. He foresees a long future for Vortography: ‘That date of decline [of problems of form] is still afar off. Vorticism and vortography are both at the beginning of their course’ (Pound, 1917, p. 4).

It is debatable how influential Vortography has been to the field of photography, yet the influence did not seem to reach the proportions of the Renaissance discovery of perspective as Pound had predicted. According to the current Camera Club, the club’s archives were destroyed by World War II bombings of 1945, along with any of their recordings of the event of February 1917 (Camera Club, 2005, n.p.). Coburn returned to his

Symbolist photography until his retirement to Wales in 1930. Pound continued his literary and artistic interests, and only briefly alluded to Vortography again in 1923 when he attempted to repeat the Vortoscopic effect to create an abstract film in Paris—a project that was abandoned because the Dadaists were able to successfully achieve the effect first. However, the outcome of the Vortoscope experience could be viewed as influencing Pound's later literary career. Perhaps this involvement in the creation of a machine-invention inspired his later book, *Machine Art*, in which Pound commends the aesthetics of the machine. Additionally, the Vortography project fell at the center of Pound's 12-year London timeframe (Wees, 1965, p. 56) and signaled a change in his poetic output. Under the impact of the Vorticist aesthetic, Pound shed the softer Imagist tendencies in poetry for his preference for 'hard, light, clear edges' (Pound, 1914, p. 38). His involvement with other disciplines—the visual arts as well as the sciences—further became apparent with his involvement in Vortography, as his scientifically written preface to the exhibition catalogue reveals. The Vortoscope, he writes in his essay, 'plays a very important part in the discovery of such a system' of aesthetics and 'physics and optics' (1917, p. 5). This intense interest in other disciplines foreshadows Pound's eventual abandonment of traditional verse for his epic *Cantos*, interdisciplinary in scope.

For both Coburn and Pound, the Vortoscope produced a means for creating an ambiguous boundary between representation and non-representation. The subjects of the Vortographs could be viewed as representative by nature—the image of Pound or of a crystal—but its prismatic, multiplied presence in the print, as well as its blurred, clouded edges, produced an other-worldly effect. Coburn's exhibition was criticized by his fellow Pictorialists—notably by Frederick Evans, who expressed his displeasure publicly (Leighten, 1978, p. 136). Pound, too, ventured against his fellow poets' methodologies, against the Imagist preference in valuing the definite materialist world. In the exhibition preface, Pound acknowledged the symbolic or transcendental world, as he wrote that the 'arrangements' and 'complexities' of the Vortographs transmit to art 'whether or no [*sic*] they form a replica of known objects' (1917, p. 5). As Lionel Kelly states in correspondence, Pound's involvement with Vortography opened a differing interpretation of Pound's perception of the material world. 'Although Weaver, for example, reads Coburn's photographs as essentially symbolic', he writes, 'they generally take a representational form: in the sense that the physical objects of the world—trees, ponds, bridges, etc, are both representational and symbolic. . . . And though Pound would probably deny it, there seems to me a core of symbolist aesthetic in Pound's polytheism: as though he does believe in the transcendental at some level' (2005, n.p.). This venture from the earlier views of Imagism, valuing the definable material objects, further proves the independence of Pound's Vorticist

ideals from his earlier Imagist methods. The Vortographs legitimate the Vorticist movement as its own unique entity separate from Imagism, Futurism, or Cubism.

Perhaps the disappearance of the Vortoscope—the instrument promised to be a saviour of form (Pound, 1917, p. 3)—embodies the brief existence of the revolutionary hopes of Pound and Coburn. However, the information that can be discovered and reassessed further reasserts the machine's earlier existence and restores this creation to its mechanical-aesthetic prominence and significance to the history of photography, art, and literature.

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