A GUIDE TO EZRA POUND: 1885-1920

With Special Emphasis on his Poetic Theory and Practice

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

April, 1958

I consider original composition rather more important than the writing of semi-ignorant theses about the work or laundry lists of deceased authors.

-Ezra Pound

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PREFACE

This paper is offered as a guide to Ezra Pound the poet, critic, translator and writer of letters in the years before he began his major work, The Cantos. Few writers in modern times have published as extensively as he. His writings have appeared in innumerable periodicals and journals, and he has published many books. Most of the books published during the era covered by the present paper are long out of print, and the periodical literature can be found only in library collections. In recent years, however, selections from Pound's poetry, literary criticism, translations, and a collection of his letters, have been separately published, which has made the Pound canon much more accessible to the student of his work.

For the poetry written before The Cantos, Personae of Ezra Pound, New Directions, 1949 (erroneously subtitled "The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound") is available. This book contains poems the author has selected from his earlier books of poetry and from his contributions to periodicals. As Pound republished his poetry in successive volumes, constantly deleting and adding selections, but with little revision, an attempt has been made to establish the date of first book publication (up to 1920) of the poems listed in the Personae table of contents. This information is given in the chapter notes. In certain cases, poems from the earlier volumes which have been omitted from Personae can be found in Ezra Pound: Selected Poems, ed. T.S. Eliot, Faber and Faber, 1949. This information is also given in the chapter notes.

For the early criticism, Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, ed. T.S. Eliot, Faber and Faber, 1954, is available. The bulk of the material contained in this work was obtained from four books of Pound's criticism: Pavannes and Divisions (1918), Instigations (1920), Make It New (1934) and Polite Essays (1937). The individual essays in these four books were published earlier in periodicals. Eliot's selection, supplemented by the recent republication of The Spirit of Romance (New Directions, 1952) has brought much of the early criticism to light. However, when material quoted or referred to in the present text does not appear in Literary Essays, it is cited either from the most accessible of Pound's early volumes of criticism (many articles, like the poems, were often republished), or if need be, in the periodical literature.

For the translations, The Translations of Ezra Pound, ed. Hugh Kenner, New Directions, 1953, is available. Although this work duplicates somewhat the material contained in Personae (for instance the text of Cathay is published in both) it is the most recent source of Pound's revised versions of his early translations from Arnaut Daniel and Guido Cavalcanti, and of his translations from the Japanese.

For Pound's correspondence, The Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941, ed. D.D. Paige, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950, is available.

For convenient reference, the material quoted and referred to in the text of this study has been cited from these works wherever possible (see "List of Works Cited"). Where the date of first publication of any of the material appearing in these collections has been

deemed significant, this information has been provided in the notes appearing at the end of each chapter.

As a source of primary material, I am especially indebted to John Edwards, A Preliminary Checklist of the Writings of Ezra Pound, Kirgo-Books, New Haven, 1953. This work, supplemented by The Pound Newsletter, no. 10 (April, 1956), which contains all the additions and corrections made to the Checklist up to that date, is an invaluable aid to the student of Pound's writings. As a checklist for secondary material, the ten issues of The Pound Newsletter (ed. John Edwards and issued intermittently by the Department of English, University of California, Berkeley) also proved invaluable.

It will be noted that the bibliography of works cited is divided into two parts: the primary works are listed alphabetically by title, and the secondary works are listed alphabetically by author's surname. Brief titles of primary works, and the surnames of authors (if need be with short titles), including the pagination, are incorporated in the text.

CHAPTER I

The Early Years: 1885-1908

When a brilliant person or specialist in London gets tired of a set of ideas, or of a certain section of his conversation, or when he happens to need the money, he refrigerates the ideas into a book. And the London reviewers and journalists review it, and absorb some of the ideas, and dilute them to ten percent. And the American press dilutes the result to ten percent of the derivative strength, and the American public gets the "hogwash". And if you try to talk on any such exotic matters with Americans, you get the hogwash.

And if you have any vital interest in art and letters, and happen to like talking about them you sooner or later leave the Country.

-Patria Mia

CHAPTER I

The Early Years: 1885-1908

Ezra Weston Loomis Pound was born on October 30, 1885. His family lived in Hailey, Idaho, where his father was a minor official in the United States Government Land Office. Both parents were of old New England stock. Homer Pound traced his ancestry to a certain John Pound, a Quaker whaler, while Isobel Weston Pound was connected to the Presbyterian New England Wadsworths. Thus Ezra was distantly related to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

In 1889, the Pounds left the Middle West for Philadelphia, settling permanently in the suburb town of Wyncote in 1891. Pound received his early education at Wyncote public schools, but in January, 1897, he entered Cheltenham Military Academy at Organtz, a few miles from his home[1]. In the spring, he left for his first visit to Europe, where he wrote what is purportedly his first poem, preserved in a letter written to his father on June 7th.

> This is a day
> I haven't much to say
> Except we are well and hope you are the same
> I remain your loving Ra
> And Ma your loving, Dame.
>
> (Yale Collection)

Pound's curriculum at Cheltenham, the standard college preparation course, stressed the classics. He studied Latin but no Greek, and graduated a year ahead of his class. H.W. Spenser, one of his

instructors at the school, remembered him as "that bright vivid boy I knew" (Edwards, p. 22)[2].

At the age of fifteen, Pound entered the University of Pennsylvania as a special student, the University requiring that he pass certain conditional examinations. He spent two undergraduate years there, which were undistinguished, but continued his Latin studies (six hours a week), developing a particular interest in Ovid and Catullus. His extracurricular activities consisted mainly of fencing and chess. W. Quinn, his freshman English instructor, remembered him as abrupt, desirous of recognition, and frequently out of hand, disliked by teachers and students alike for his eccentricities (Edwards, p. 23). Although Pound already may have become somewhat of a poseur, without even the excuse of accomplishment, his sincere, sensitive qualities are revealed by an anecdote recalled by another of his instructors, Professor Weygant. In an English class, dissatisfied with the way a poem of Fiona Macleod's was being read, Pound strode to the head of the class and proceeded to recite himself. He had hardly finished the first verse, when overwhelmed with emotion, he fled from the room in tears (Edwards, p. 23).

By 1902, Pound was seriously interested in writing poetry, particularly the poetry of ecstasy. William Carlos Williams, an early friend, remembers (p. 53) that "this was the time... when Ezra Pound was writing a daily sonnet. He destroyed them all at the end of the year." Pound never explained or joked about his writing; he was always unwavering in his serious dedication towards it.

> Ezra Pound would come to my room to read me his poems, the early ones, some of them in A Lume Spento. It was a painful experience. For it was almost impossible to hear the lines the way he read them... I listened ... his voice would trail off in the final line of many of the lyrics until they were inaudible.
>
> (Williams, p. 56)

This same year Pound heard W.B. Yeats recite his poetry at the University (his introduction to contemporary verse) and made his second trip to Europe.

In September, 1903, due to parental dissatisfaction with his progress at the University of Pennsylvania, Pound left for Hamilton College (renowned for the classical disciplines) where he enrolled in the Latin-Scientific course.

As before, his relationships with his fellow students and the staff were not all they might have been, although he did manage to interest some of his instructors in discussing poetry and poets with him (Edwards, p. 29). His was the type of mind that responded only when challenged by another as vivid and imaginative as his own. He was unpopular because he did not conform easily to the norm, and would not submit to discipline. A good, but not brilliant student, he was younger and brighter than his classmates, uninterested in their social values. Then too, his acting out of what he thought was the "role of the poet" did little to endear him to most. Williams has a word to say on this point:

> What I could never tolerate in Pound... was the "side" that went with all his posturings as the poet. To me that was the emptiest sort of old hat. Any simpleton, I believed, should see at once what that came from; the conflict between an aristocracy of birth and that of mind and spirit - a silly and unnecessary thing. The poet scorning the other made himself ridiculous by imitating that which he despised.
>
> (Williams, p. 58)

Williams gives another interesting sidelight on Pound, particularly in the light of his later undisputed mastery of rhythm and metric in poetry, and his perhaps suspect role as a music critic and composer.

> He could never learn to play the piano, though his mother tried to teach him. But he played for all that. At home, I remember my mother's astonishment when he sat down at the keyboard and let fly for us - seriously. Everything, you might say, resulted except music. He took mastership at one leap; played Liszt, Chopin - or anyone else you could name - up and down the scales, coherently to his own mind, any old sequence.
>
> (Williams, p. 57)

> Pound's Wyncote (Pa.) days were marked by an occasional party when we'd stand around the piano, an upright piano, and sing... No one had a voice... Ezra himself couldn't even carry a tune as far as I ever heard.
>
> (Williams, p. 65)

During his two years at Hamilton, Pound studied Milton and Anglo-Saxon with the reverend J.D. Ibbotson (who remembered that he translated Beowolf "somewhat crudely but interestingly"), German with H.C.G. Brandt (with whom he read the Minnesingers), and Romance Languages with Professor

Shepard (Edwards, p. 29). There is no doubt that Pound considered his literary education at Hamilton the real basis for his later writing, despite the claim of contemporary influence.

> Philologists, writers of theses, etc. frequently mistake the claims of exploitation for inventive work... I consider the hours spent with Layamon's Brut, or copying a prose translation of Catullus by W. McDaniel; Ibbotson's instruction in Anglo-Saxon or W.P. Shepard's on Dante and the troubadours of Provence - more important than any contemporary influence.
>
> (A Visiting Card, p. 21)

The two hours a week spent with Shepard, a disciplinarian and a scholar, were to have a lasting effect on Pound. As a result of his studies of the early languages and literature of France, Italy, Spain and Provence, he gained an interest in mediaevalism which he was never to lose. As he wrote to his mother in February, 1905:

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

As the above quotation indicates, Pound's studies thrust home to him the provincialism of his age. His impatience with the present

was to grow, and in reaction he began to hearken after, what seemed to him, the cultural glory of the past.

By his second year at Hamilton, Pound's curricula included, according to an unpublished letter to his mother written in June, 1905 (Yale Collection), The Cid, Chansons de geste, troubadour verse and Dante, which combined with his own readings of Egmont, Les Femmes Savantes, Doña Perfecto and Johann Paul Richter, meant that he was well on the way to molding the cosmopolitan mind that was to confound his public in later years. But as esoteric as his interests may have been he gained valuable experience from which he was later able to profit in his own work. His studies of Provençal verse sharpened his ear and gave him a valuable knowledge of strict verse forms, which in his own writing, challenged him to master them and bring his own romanticism under control. Pound published his first poem (a translation) in May, 1905.

Belangal Alba

Phoebus shineth e'er his glory flieth,
Autumn drives faint light athwart the land,
And drowsy watcher cryeth,
"Arise!"

Ref:-
Dawn light, o'er sea and height, riseth bright,
Passeth vigil, clear shineth on the night.

They be careless of the gates, delaying,
When the ambush glides to hinder
Whom I warn and cry to, praying
"Arise!"

Ref:-
O'er cliff and ocean white dawn appeareth,
Passeth vigil, and the shadow cleareth.

Forth from out Arcturus, North Wind bloweth
Stars of heaven sheath their glory
And, sun-driven, forth goeth
Settentrion.

Ref:-
O'er sea-mist and mountain in dawn displayed
It passeth watch and maketh night afraid.
("Belangal Alba," p. 324)

Pound explained what he was trying to achieve in an undated letter to his father, which shows his early interest in verse as song.

> By the way, you may be interested in this translation of the "Belangal Alba" or "Dawn Song". It is in Mediaeval Latin with Provençal refrain, oldest Provençal written. Ms. of 10th century and sung probably older. I give three versions of refrain, as spelling of the time was unfixed and meaning is ergo not absolutely determinable. The first is I think best and closest.
>
> (Yale Collection)

On June 29th, 1905, Pound received his Ph.B. degree from Hamilton[3], according to the College Records, winning second prize in the Munson Examination in French. During the summer, following his interest in Romance Literature, he decided to enter graduate school and continue his studies. So on October 3rd, 1905, he returned to the University of Pennsylvania to begin work on a Master's Degree. According to the University Records, his courses included a major in Romantics and a minor in Latin. He received his M.A. on June 13th, 1906. He then began to do research with Professor Rennert, an authority

on Lope de Vega, studying Old Spanish, Provençal and Petrach, and started his Ph.D. dissertation on "The Grascioso in Lope de Vega and his Predecessors ."

In April, 1906, Pound went to Spain to collect material for his dissertation, taking time to journey through France and England. In mid-summer he returned to the University. In October he published his first prose - "Burgos: A Dream City of Old Castile" - as a result of his travels.

Pound had been granted the George Leib Harrison Fellowship in Romantics at the beginning of his second year of graduate work, consisting of a one year stipend of five hundred dollars. He was also admitted for the doctorate, according to the University of Pennsylvania records, but he did not complete his second year, and his doctorate was refused. He did do some more reading in Italian poetry, Dante, the Poema de Fernandez y Gonzalez , Spanish drama, the Chanson de Roland, and Provençal literature. Dr. Schelling at Pennsylvania subsequently wrote of the Pound of these years as follows: "I remember him as a remarkably idle student, absolutely evading all work to such an extent that I recall saying to him, 'Mr. Pound, you are either a humbug or a genius'" (Edwards, p. 37).

Pound's formal education ended sometime during the winter of 1906-07, and in August, 1907, he became an instructor at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. Certainly he was kept busy, for as he wrote to his father in 1907: "One French class of 57 so big that I had to annex the back of the chapel, 30 in Spanish and about 15 for

other French" (Yale Collection). It is Pound's story that he completed the full year's work in one semester and upset the faculty. However, one Wabash alumnus, according to Edwards, had reservations about his teaching: "Pound took an elementary French class and turned it into a lecture course on Dante. He wasn't doing any good" (p. 39). Pound seemed to have enjoyed his work, and his enthusiasm probably inspired some students, but his impatience with both the curriculum and the faculty paved the way for his dismissal. In February, 1908, as a result of his showing kindness to a girl stranded from a burlesque show, he was promptly fired. Pound wrote to W.C. Williams in October:

> Again, if you ever get degraded, branded with infamy, etc., for feeding a person who needs food, you will probably rise up and bless the present and sacred name of Madame Grundy for all her holy hypocrisy.
>
> (Letters, p. 5)

After this affair[4], Pound returned to Wyncote for a few weeks, and then left for Europe, turning his back on America to lead a life of poetic and scholastic exile.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1 For early biographical information on Pound, I am especially indebted to Edwards, John, A Critical Biography of Ezra Pound: 1885-1922, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1952. Edwards cites "Macpherson, in Arts in Philadelphia, 10." However, I was unable to consult this periodical, which was a monthly published October, 1937 to June, 1939.

2 As A Critical Biography is the only work by Edwards cited in the text, the references will be given throughout by author's name and pagination only.

3 Pound received the Ph.B. degree because he lacked the Greek requirement. He never did undergo any formal training in this language, but he began studying it later in London on his own.

4 D.D. Paige (ed. The Letters of Ezra Pound) writes in a footnote to Pound's outburst to Williams (p. 5):

> Pound spent the winter of 1907 at Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana...After having read late one night, he went into town through a blizzard to mail a letter. On the streets he found a girl from a stranded burlesque show, penniless and with nowhere to go. The centennial history of the college records that he fed her and took her to his rooms where she spent the night in his bed and he on the floor of his study. Early in the morning he left for an eight o'clock class. The Misses Hall, from whom he rented the rooms, went up after his departure for the usual cleaning. They were maiden ladies in a small mid-Western town and had let those rooms before only to an elderly professor. They telephoned the president of the college and several trustees; the affair thus made public, only one outcome was possible.

CHAPTER II

Melopoeia

wherein the words are charged, over
and above their plain meaning, with
some musical property, which, directs
the bearing or trend of that meaning.

-How to Read

CHAPTER II

Melopoeia

In April, 1908, Pound landed at Gibralter with eighty dollars in his pocket. In a few days he left for Venice. There, through the offices of a friend of the family, a certain Reverend Robertson, he published his first book of poems, A Lume Spento, in June. Of the fourty-four poems published in this volume, nine[1] can be found in the 1949 edition of Personae, the present "collected" edition of poems Pound wishes to keep in circulation.

Pound dedicated A Lume Spento to "such as love this same beauty that I love somewhat after mine own fashion," but beauty was not all that he was attempting to portray. Before considering any of the poems in this volume then, two excerpts from letters written at this time give some indication of his purpose. In the first, an unpublished, undated letter to a friend (private collection) he states:

> Each poem is in some extent the analysis of some element of life, set apart from the rest, examined by itself. The only question to answer is: 'Do I present these things honestly, or do I try to persuade the reader to accept a false set of values.'
>
> (Edwards, p. 41)

> To me the short so-called dramatic lyric - at any rate the sort of thing I do - is the poetic part of a drama the rest of which (to me the prose part) is left to the reader's imagination or implied or set in a short note. I catch the character I happen to be interested in at the moment he interests me, usually a moment of song, self-analysis, or sudden understanding or revelation. And the rest of the play would bore me and presumably the reader. I paint my man as I conceive him. Et voilà tout!
>
> (Letters, pp. 3-4)

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

> 1. To paint the thing as I see it.
> 2. Beauty.
> 3. Freedom from didacticism.
>
> (Letters, p. 6)

The poemsin this first book represent an assortment of influences (which can be detected in the poems from this volume retained in Personae); technically, the influence of Browning ("Cino") and Yeats ("La Fraisne") are easily apparent in many of the poems. Villon, through Rossetti ("Villonaud: Ballad of the Gibbet"), can be seen directing Pound's pen as well. Provence too, asserts its influence ("Na Audiart") throughout. Swinburne is evident ("Salve O Pontifex" - A Lume Spento), and the 'Nineties furnish a general emotional tone. Vagueness of language and of mood predominate, and the treatment of theme is subjective, without objective precision. Thus from "Camaraderie":

> Sometimes I feel thy cheek against my face
> Close pressing, soft as is the South's first breath
> That all the subtle earth-things summoneth
> To Spring in wood-land and in meadow space.
>
> Yea sometimes in a bustling man-filled place
> Me seemeth some-wise thy hair wandereth
> Across mine eyes, as mist that halloweth
> The air awhile and giveth all things, grace...
>
> (Selected Poems, p. 92)

Contemporary influences, although they appear derivative in this early work, were teaching Pound, as Eliot suggests ("Introduction: 1928," p. 5), the value of verse as speech. From his Romance studies, he

was learning the value of verse as song. Pound's own comments on his early contacts with verse in English are interesting in so far as they illustrate the general reading background of the young poet, for the extent to which Pound learned from them, and surmounted the aesthetic and technical "blight" many of them provided, is part of the story of his development.

> I was brought up on the literature considered respectable in that era, and studied the rest. Let me say my grandmother read me Scott and some Dickens, and that I read Browning for myself after I had worked through Morris and Tennyson.
>
> ("Crosby," p.401)

> From 1902 to 1908 'we' read Symons, Dowson and Yeats also Fiona, or rather one might say "Fiona" and then Yeats, if we are to be personal and American, rather than speak for the London world. The rest of the then writers have more or less faded. Hardy was alive but the boom in Hardy's came much later...In London in 1908 I heard of the "rhymers" and added a couple of poems of Plarr's to the list...In America the poetic life was almost exclusively contained in the 'Songs of Vagabondia' by Carman and Hovey.
>
> (Profile, pp.13-14)

Although a Venetian critic (Pound?) could write of the poems in A Lume Spento as "wild and haunting stuff, absolutely poetic, original, imaginative, passionate, and spiritual" (Cook, p. 140),[2] the level of attainment is not always high, as the following poem might indicate.

Motif

I have heard a wee wind searching
Through still forests for me,
I have seen a wee wind searching
O'er still sea
Thru woodlands dim
Have I taken my way
And o'er silent waters, night and day
Have I sought the wee wind.
(A Lume Spento)

The above poem does illustrate, however, that the poet is struggling with metric. There is a conscious effort to escape the iambic pentameter line. Although many of the poems in this first volume, and in the ones immediately following it, are conventional metrically, apart from the peculiarly Poundian habit of beginning his lines with a trochee and liberal use of the dactyl, his ear was tuned early in the search for new rhythms. Thus "Anima Sola" begins:

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

But in the next stanza he forgets:

My joy is the wind of heaven
My drink is the gall of night
My love is the light of meteors
The outworn heaven in flight
(A Lume Spento)

Beyond this early concern with metric, Pound also felt the need for experimentation with various verse forms. Thus he experiments with the sonnet, continually varying the sestet, and even plays with

the heroic couplet, liberally spiced with anapaests to speed up the tempo. He seems less derivative in the poems written in Provençal forms, and it is easier to trace the development of the influence of the intricate Provençal versification in these early poems, as Eliot suggests, than to "distinguish the element of genuine revivification of Provence" from the Romantic fantasy which Pound acquired from the 'Nineties ("Introduction: 1928," p. 12). The reader, if he is made aware of anything singular about A Lume Spento, will note the use of Provence for subject matter, verse forms, rhythm and cadence. The poet does impress one, as the anonymous Venetian critic pointed out, as "a minstrel of Provence at a suburban musical evening" (Cook, p. 138). The concern for technique then, is evident, but the rendering into English of lessons learnt in Provençal and early Italian is a gradual and laborious progress, and Pound's early articulation is rough. But sometimes the poet hits upon a cadence with just the right tempo to make poetry song, such as this fragment from "Cino":

> I have sung women in three cities
> But it is all one.
>
> I will sing of the white birds
> In the blue waters of heaven,
> The clouds that are spray to its sea.
> (Personae, p. 7)

"Scriptor Ignatus," a poem in this volume which contains a point of interest in the light of Pound's later achievement, shows that even at this time he was thinking of his writing as preparation for a master

work to be written in the future[3].

> ...when
> That great surge of power is upon me
> And I see my greater soul-self bending
> Sibylwise with that great forty years epic
> That you know of, yet unwrit...
> (A Lume Spento)

After the publication of A Lume Spento, Pound left Venice for London by way of Paris. By the time of his arrival there, his second book was ready for publication, A Quinzaine for this Yule. Pound sought out the publisher Elkin Mathews, who decided to accept the work[4]. Its publication in December, 1908, marks the beginning of Pound's London years.

The poems in Pound's second volume, of which only "Night Litany" survives in the collected poems, are competent but not exciting. They are filled with subjective responses of pre-Raphaelite gloom, loneliness and bitterness, which even Pound himself admitted was overdone[5]. Quinzaine lacked somewhat the vigor and virility which gave A Lume Spento much of its charm. The workmanship is finer and more finished. However, the poems contain archaisms and syntactical inversions, such as this fragment from "Aube of the West Dawn":

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

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

Histrion

No man hath dared to write this thing as yet,
And yet I know, how that the souls of all men great
At times pass through us,
And we are melted into them, and are not
Save reflexions of their souls.
Thus am I Dante for a space and am
One François Villon, ballad-lord and thief
Or am such holy ones I may not write,
Lest blasphemy be writ against my name;
This for an instant and the flame is gone.

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

The use of the persona device is an important aspect of Pound's historical method, and deserves some explanation. Pound is often accused of being pedantic, but it is his very ability to illuminate and reveal the present through the past, at the same time retaining an aura of that past, that in the end saves him from this criticism.

As Eliot has said ("The Method," p. 1065), this is not archaeology, but one method, and in Pound's case, a very high method, of poetry. But Pound's method, although it is an attempt to rediscover the past through a character or mask, it is also a conscious search for self.

> In the 'search for oneself', in the search for 'sincere self expression', one gropes, one finds some seeming verity. One says 'I am' this, that, or the other, and with the words scarcely uttered one ceases to be that thing...I began this search ...in a book called Personae [of Ezra Pound] casting off as it were, complete masks of the self in each poem. I continued in a long series of translations which were but more elaborate masks.
> ("Vorticism," p. 463)

His method, then, involves the terms persona and personality. Pound uses the first for explanation and definition of the second. It is the continuing search for self, taking up and discarding masks afforded by the workings of the imagination, by which he ultimately finds his true self. Eliot puts it this way:

> He is more himself (if we content ourselves with looking at his work part and part), more at ease, behind the mask of Arnaut, Bertrand and Guido... than when he speaks in his own person. He must hide to reveal himself. But if we collect all these disguises we find not a mere collection of green-room properties, but Mr. Pound.
> ("The Method," p. 1065)

In January, 1909, according to an unpublished letter to his father (Yale Collection), Pound began a series of lectures at the Polytechnic

in London under the general title "A short Introductory Course on the Development of the Literature of Southern Europe" by Ezra Pound, M.A. The series included six lectures, the first a rather audacious introduction to literary criticism entitled: "The search for the essential qualities of literature. Dicta of the great critics: Plato, Aristotle, Longinus, Dante, Coleridge, De Quincey, Pater and Yeats." The main lecture in the series was on "The Rise of Song in Provence," a discussion of the troubadours. Although these lectures were somewhat a rehash of his college lecture notes, they do demonstrate Pound's conviction of the immediacy of the past in verse, and the immediate as a thing of the past. "This is especially true of literature, where the real time is independent of the apparent, and where many dead men are our grand-children's contemporaries" (The Spirit, p. 8). Beyond this, they are of interest here as they illustrate Pound's occupation with poetry as song, and his belief that such poetry had reached its heights in the subtle music of Provençal verse.

In April, 1909, Personae of Ezra Pound was published, out of which four previously unpublished poems have been retained in the collected edition[6]. This volume gained Pound a certain degree of literary recognition, but the sales were slow. Again, these poems can be considered poetic studies, from the variations in manner, style and technique. Pound seemed to be experimenting, borrowing and testing. The most important poems are of the persona type, such as "Marvoil" (Personae, p. 22), in which the reader does perceive the beginnings of

an original accent. Pound was learning through Browning to concentrate on a kernel of thought and feeling in the dramatic lyric, which was helping him to escape the amorphous moods of the 'Nineties, and he was learning to sing in the fashion of the troubadours.

Praise of Ysolt

In vain have I striven,
    to teach my heart to bow;
In vain have I said to him
"There be many singers greater than thou."

But his answer cometh, as winds and as lutany
As a vague crying upon the night
That leaveth me no rest, saying ever,
    "Song, a song..."

(Personae, p. 16)

In October, Exultations was published, out of which eight previously unpublished poems have been retained in Personae, the collected edition[7]. The majority of poems are exercises in Provençal forms such as the sestina, the alba and the planh, indicating a shift in Pound's interest from Provence as content, to Provençal verse as form. Exultations contains a poem for which Pound was highly praised by the critics, the "Ballad of the Goodly Fere" (Personae, p. 33). The poem demonstrates Pound's agility with the ballad form, and as he stated later, "Having written the ballad about Christ...I had only to write similar ballads about James, Mathieu, Mark, Luke and John and my future was made[8]."

On the back cover of Exultations, part of a review from the English Review is printed as an advertisement. This may be quoted here to give an indication of the type of impression Pound's work was leaving with the English critics.

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

This review gives some indication of the literary taste of the London of 1908-12.

Pound was early praised for his passion, musicality, virility and scholarship. His aesthetic approach to poetry is eagerly condoned, "his poems hold us steadily in his own pure, grave passionate world,"[9] but such comments as the following[10] reveal the antagonism to experimentation:

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

Pound is here criticised for the very element in his verse which indicates a positive progress. His continuing studies in the Romance literatures, as we shall see later, were teaching him the need for

freedom from the stultifying influence of contemporary English rhythms. His very ability (becoming more discernible) to adapt metre to mood, lies at the core of his melopoeic theories. It was not long before Pound realised that he was often praised in the journals for the things in his verse he was coming to realise were "behind the times," and criticized for any demonstrated effort which he believed was an improvement. He became particularly aware of this in the question of language.

> I also suffered a lot of guff from amiable critics who in 1908-10 said I was a good poet who couldn't write 'English,' by which term they meant the ridiculous dialect employed by Oxonian publicists in the late 90s...
>
> ("On Criticism," p. 144)

In the fall of 1909, Pound began his second series of lectures in Mediaeval Literature at the Polytechnic, again with the emphasis on Italy and Provence. In the first term he dealt with mediaeval literature up to Dante, and in the second, from the "Divine Comedy" to Leopardi. In March he left England for the continent, where he visited France and Italy, and left for the United States. He returned to London in February, 1911. Before he left England, he had worked his lecture notes into book form, and they appeared as The Spirit of Romance in June, 1910.

With the publication of this book, Pound opened up for the reader limited to English, a comparatively unexplored poetic area,

the Provençal and Tuscan poets, but one he felt was all important for the practising poet to study. "Any study of European poetry is unsound if it does not commence with a study of that art in Provence" ("I Gather," p. 131). He disregarded reputation in his search for quality, and tried to ascertain exactly what was attained by whom. The work still stands as a labour of purification. This book is of interest here in so far as it throws light on his own writing of poetry, and his groping towards an aesthetic. As he himself states in a postscript to the 1929 edition:

> A good deal of what immediately follows can not be taken as criticism, but simply as information for those wanting a shortish account of a period. The mode of statement, its idiom or jargon, will have to stand as partial confession of where I was in the year 1912.
>
> (The Spirit, p. 10)

The belief in an art-for-art's-sake doctrine still prevails as Pound's criterion for poetry as revealed in this work. The emphasis on beauty and freedom from didacticism continues: "Great art is made, not to please, but to call forth, or create ecstasy" (The Spirit, p. 82), but he was beginning to speak of poetry more in terms of technique. In other words he was beginning to emphasize the way of stating something, rather than the thing stated. He becomes more concerned with precision of statement:

> The interpretive function is the highest honour of the arts, and because it is so we find that a sort of hyper-scientific precision is the touchstone and assay of the artist's power, of his honour, his authenticity. Constantly he must distinguish between the shades and the degrees of the ineffable.
>
> (The Spirit, p. 87)

> It makes no difference in kind whether the artist treat of heaven and hell, of paradise upon earth and of the elysian enamelled fields beneath it, or of love appearing in an ash-grey vision, or of the seemingly slight matter of birds and branches...through one and the other of all these, there is to the artist a like honorable opportunity for precision, for that precision through which alone can any of these matters take on their immortality.
>
> (The Spirit, p. 88)

In his discussions of individual poets, Pound deals at length with technical considerations; their skill in rhymes, their use of onomatopoeia, and their skill in blending sound with meaning. Arnaut Daniel particularly intrigued Pound. A poet who wrote in a decadent era, when chivalric song had lost its vitality, Daniel responded to the challenge by experimenting with and developing new techniques, until he earned the name given him by Dante, "il miglior fabbro" (Purgatorio, XXVI, 117). Daniel's record is impressive, for he foresaw the sonnet; in "Sol Sui" he experimented with a form of blank verse; he invented the sestina; he employed "rima equivocas" (rhyming of words of equivalent sound but different meaning)(Casper, p. 203). In his poetry as songs, he built large musical structures, often rhyming from stanza to stanza, rather than within a given stanza. Most

importantly, it was Daniel who taught Pound to use the musical phrase as a rhythmic sequence, and thus indicated one mode of escape from the iambic tyranny of standard English verse. Such were the practical lessons Pound was learning from his studies, and attempting to demonstrate in his own writing. We have only to compare Pound's early efforts to write in the manner of Provence with his later attempts when his technical virtuosity was proven, and he had learnt the value of the chiselled phrase, to see how in fact Pound became an Arnaut Daniel for his own time, and earned the dedication of Eliot's "Waste Land."[11]

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

> Dante has the advantage in points of pure sound; his onomatopoeia is not a mere trick of imitating natural noises, but is a mastery in fitting the inarticulate sound of a passage to the mood or to the quality of voices which expresses that mood or passion which the passage describes or expresses. (The Spirit, p. 160)

Contained in the Spirit of Romance then, we have statements of Pound's poetic values as they developed from his critical studies of the Provençal poets, and by inference, the attempt to apply what he learnt there to his own writing.

In December of 1910, Provença was published, made up of poems selected from Personae of Ezra Pound and Exultations, and poems later to be included in Canzoni, which need not concern us here. Pound's

next two books were Canzoni of Ezra Pound, published in July, 1911, of which fifteen poems remain in Personae [12], and The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti [13], published in May, 1912, his first book of translations. These works were really practical demonstrations in technique gained from Pound's studies of the Provençal and Tuscan poets. The reviews of Canzoni give an indication that the critics were perturbed by his "archaeology."

> So much of his inspiration seems bookish, so much of his attraction lies in the vivid picturesqueness of his romance besprinkled page...if Mr. Pound can find a foreign title to a poem, he will do so. It would almost be true to say, also, that if Mr. Pound can translate a poem, he will do so, rather than make one...the bulk of the work in this book is not ostensibly translated, but it reads as though it were.
>
> (Flint, "Canzoni," p. 28)

> [he would] gain and not lose if he could forget all about the poets of Dante's day, their roses and their flames, their gold and their falcons, and their literary amourousness, and walk out of the library into the fresh air.
>
> (Squire, p. 183)

Canzoni must be rated as mere exercise and experimentation in technique. Although the canzoni form lends itself to decorative effect, and allowed Pound scope to demonstrate subtly woven harmonies of phrase, rhythm and rhyme, its rigid elaborateness in English results in a certain frigidity. Pound made the mistake of publishing a good deal of his exercise work:

> Precisely, as a work of art made to please the artist may be comic...barbaric, even stupid...it will not be dead. It will not have the distinguishingly moribund character of a review in The Times, or the poems in my volume Canzoni.
>
> ("Historical," p. 41)

T.S. Eliot has reprieved one canzon from oblivion in the Selected Poems: "Canzon: The Yearly Slain" (p. 195), which gives an indication of the technical proficiency displayed in this work, and at the same time the limiting effect of Pound's still pre-Raphaelite language.

In his "Introduction" to the Cavalcanti volume, Pound gives his first prose statement of his melopoeic theories. He states his belief in an "ultimate and absolute rhythm" (p. 23) for poetry, i.e. that every emotion the poet wishes to express demands its particular cadence. It is of course the poet's responsibility that the emotion which governs the rhythm should correspond to the thought expressed. His general discussion of rhythm in poetry and music is worth quoting in full:

> Rhythm is perhaps the most primal of all things known to us. It is basic in poetry and music mutually, their melodies depending on a variation of time quality and of pitch respectively, as is commonly said, but if we look more closely we will see that music is, by further analysis, pure rhythm; rhythm and nothing else, for the variation of pitch is the variation of rhythms of the individual notes, and harmony the blending of these varied rhythms. When we know more of overtones we will see that the tempo of every masterpiece is absolute,

> and is exactly set by some further law of rhythmic accord. Whence it should be possible to show that any given rhythm implies about it a complete musical form - fugue, sonata, I cannot say what form, but a form, perfect, complete. Ergo, the rhythm set in a line of poetry connotes its symphony, which, had we a little more skill, we could score for orchestra. Sequitur, or rather inest: the rhythm of any poetic line corresponds to an emotion.
>
> It is the poet's business that this correspondence be exact, i.e. that it be the emotion which surrounds the thought expressed.
>
> ("Introduction," pp.23-24)

Of course the emotion evident in actual speech cannot all be contained in a line of poetry, nor could musical notation record it, but the blending of words or of syllables, according to Pound, may give an emotional equivalent.

As Pound's metrical theories do not vary appreciably during the years up to 1917, it is really the sum of a number of separate statements that serve to clarify them. Writing in The New Age he states:

> The art of music which still remains to the poet is that of rhythm, and of a sort of melody dependent on the order and arrangement of varied vowel and consonantal sounds. The rhythm is a matter of duration of individual sounds, and of stress, and the matter of the "word melody" depends largely on the fitness of this duration and stress to the sounds wherewith it is connected.
>
> ("The Approach," p. 727)

To postulate that Pound's metrical theories are an outgrowth of his studies in the syllabic Provençal and early Italian metrical systems, is not as paradoxical as might first appear. Much of the poetry in these languages was written to be sung, and it was the music in the verse beyond the line length, however defined, which caught his ear. He had discovered this even in Dante's syllabic verse, which, although not written to be sung, was influenced by the Provençal.

> Once in Sicily, I came upon a century old Italian school-book containing intelligent remarks upon metric...the author did not 'lay down rules,' he merely observed that Dante's hendeca-syllables were composed of combinations of rhythm units of various shapes and sizes and that these pieces were put together in lines so as to make, roughly, eleven syllables in all...I had discovered this point for myself in Indiana twenty years before and in my own work had made use of the knowledge continuously...This system represented versification when it was in a healthy state, when motz had not been divorced from son.
>
> ("Cavalcanti," p. 169)

It is the "rhythm unit," as part of the total musicality of a poem which interested Pound:

> It is quite certain that some people can hear and scan 'by quantity,' and more can do so 'by stress,' and fewer still feel rhythm by what I would call the inner form of the line. And it is this 'inner form,' I think, which must be preserved in music; it is only by mastery of this inner form that the great masters of rhythm - Milton, Yeats, whomever you like - are masters of it.
>
> ("I Gather," p. 344)

Pound's metrical theories emphasize the pitch of words, and consider rhythm from the point of view of duration, or quantity, rather than stress (although stress is mentioned as a part of the music of poetry). This tends toward a quantitative rather than an accentual verse, and leads to experiments in "free verse" forms. The line as a metrical or rhythmic unit can disappear, leaving in its place the syntactical group, which may be independent of the accentually defined rhythmic units, or feet.

The connection between Pound's theories of rhythm and external form should be emphasized, for he speaks of the art of poetry combining the "essentials to thought" with the melody of words, which draws the intellect, and of that "form" which must delight the intellect:

> By 'melody' I mean variation of sound quality, mingling with a variation in stress. By 'form' I mean the arrangement of the verse into ballads, canzoni, and the like symmetrical forms, or into blank verse or into free verse, where presumably, the nature of the thing expressed, or of the person supposed to be expressing it, is antagonistic to external symmetry.
>
> ("The Wisdom," p. 499)

The "essentials to thought" define the emotion, which establishes the rhythm. The resulting "form," made up of the sum of rhythm units, must please the intellect. The difficulty of this method of course, is the equivalence which must be established between thought, feeling, rhythm and form, to name only the variables we are concerned with here. Few have equalled Pound in achieving this equivalence in English in

the writing of free verse.

The Return [14]

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

See, they return, one, and by one,
With fear as half-awakened;
As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind,
and half turn back;
These were the "wing'd-with-awe,"
Inviolable.

Gods of the wingèd shoe!
With them the silver hounds,
sniffing the trace of air!

Haie! Haie!
These were the swift to harry
These the keen-scented;
These were the souls of blood.

Slow on the leash,
pallid the leash-men.

(Personae, p. 74)

It remains to consider Pound's discussion of rhyme and assonance to fill out his metrical views at this time. He states in The New Age ("I gather," p. 370) that he has no especial interest in rhyme because it tended to draw the poet's attention from the music of all the syllables (given equal stress in vers libre) to the metronomic stroke of those made prominent by the rhyme of the line ends. Here we find shades of Arnaut Daniel. Later in another article in The New Age he enlarges on this point:

> I am aware that there are resolutions of sound less obvious than rhyme. It requires more pains and intelligence both to make and to hear them. To demand rhyme is almost like saying that only one note out of ten need be heard in melody, it is not quite the same. No one would deny that the final sound of the line is important. I cannot bring myself to believe that even the unstressed syllables should be wholly neglected.
> ("The Approach," p. 633)

This rather lengthy series of quotations shows that Pound's groping towards "vers libre," and what critics described as formlessness, was not the result of an inability to write in strict verse forms. The early work already disposes of this criticism. As a result of intense study and experiment with accentual, syllabic, quantitative, and by 1912, alliterative systems, as far as scansion was concerned; rhymes in various arrangements, blank verse, and assonance as far as line terminations were concerned, Pound was able, with his profoundly sensitive ear, to reconsider for himself the whole problem of metric. His efforts to realign rhythm in poetry to musical rhythm, led him away from conventional prosody as practised in verse in English during these years, to metrical patterns as varied as the emotions themselves. He came to believe and logically to demonstrate, that in the final analysis, the movement of poetry is limited only by the nature of the syllables and of articulate sound, and by the laws of music, or melodic rhythm. Free verse was one end of the metrical spectrum, containing this minimum essential melodic rhythm only, defined quantitatively, and not by stress or accent.

> No one is so foolish as to suppose that a musician using 'four-four' time is compelled to use always four quarter notes in each bar, or in 'seven-eight' time to use seven eighth notes uniformly in each bar. He may use 1/2, 1/4 and 1/8 rest , or any such combination as he may happen to choose or find fitting.
>
> To apply this musical truism to verse is to employ vers libre.
>
> ("The Tradition," p. 93) [15]

In defense of vers libre, as he came to practise it, Pound was not slow in finding parallels in the tradition. Thus he refers to Jannaris' study of the Melic poets (who concluded that they "composed to the feel of the thing, to the cadence") and quotes passages from Euripides ("The Tradition," pp. 92-93). When he began studying the metrical theories of De Gourmont and Paul Fort, he was able to repudiate the recommendation that vers libre necessarily be given regularity by the repetition of a "constant," because "a rhythm-structure may be built up of parts which are homogeneous or of parts which differ among themselves...these things are a matter of music" ("The Approach," p. 578).

Returning to The Sonnets and Ballate to consider the translations, for which Rossetti was Pound's guide, again it is the pre-Raphaelite language which immediately strikes the reader as being at fault. As Pound himself stated eighteen years later, he had tried to infuse into his own translation what he felt Rossetti had missed, even though he knew that Rossetti "was indubitably the man 'sent', or 'chosen' for that particular job"("Guido's Relations," p. 193). What Pound thought

Rossetti had missed was a "robustezza," a masculinity, but Pound felt later that he had been unable to really achieve what he had hoped.

> My perception was not obfuscated by Guido's Italian, difficult as it then was for me to read. I was obfuscated by the Victorian language...the crust of dead English, the sediment present in my own available vocabulary...I hadn't in 1910 made a language, I don't mean a language to use, but even a language to think in...my early versions of Guido are bogged down in Dante Gabriel and in Algernon.
>
> ("Guido's Relations," pp. 193-194)

Although Pound was learning important technical lessons, as we have seen, he was not always able to demonstrate them in an English rendering. If we compare a translation of 1910 with a revised version made in 1917, we see the truth of Pound's criticism of himself. Taking the same stanza from two of Pound's translations of an alba by Giraut de Bornelh for comparison, we find in the Spirit of Romance:

> Fair companion, sleepest or art awakened?
> Sleep no more, arise softly,
> For in the East I see that star increasing,
> That leadeth in the day; well have I known it
> And straightway comes the dawn.
>
> (The Spirit, p. 51)

By 1918 we find [16]:

> Sst! my good fellow, art awake or sleeping?
> Sleep thou no more I see the star upleaping
> That hath the dawn in keeping
> And day comes on!
>
> (Personae, p. 172)

The first Bornelh is an exercise, an experiment in technique, but the language is stilted. The second version shortens the stanza lengths, omits the initial refrain, and speeds the final refrain. But most important, the drama contained in the second version is increased by the liveliness of colloquial speech.

Another example, this time taken from Arnaut Daniel, will illustrate the gulf that lay between Pound's awareness of qualities in the original and his ability to reproduce or simulate them. The Provençal is given with Pound's short prose introduction, to show how in 1910 Pound first fails, and then in 1920 succeeds in bringing into English the "verbal weight" of the original.

> One can form no accurate estimate of Daniel's technical skill in rimes, and more especially in onomatopoeia - making the sound follow the sense or word - save from a study of the original Provençal; but his vividness and his delicacy may be understood, I think, from the canzon which Dante praises in the De Vulgari Eloquentia (II, 2).
>
> L'aura amara
> Fals bruoills brancutz
> Clarzir
> Quel doutz espeissa ab fuoills,
> Els letz
> Becs
> Dels auzels ramencs
> Ten balps e mutz
> Pars
> E non pars...
>
> The bitter air strips clear the forked boughs,
> Which softer winds had covered thick with leaves,
> And holdeth dumb and stuttering the bird's glad mouths
> Amid the boughs, mates and unmated all.
>
> (The Spirit, p. 28)

L'Aura Amara[17]

The bitter air
Strips panoply
From trees
Where softer winds set leaves
And glad
Beaks
Now in brakes are coy,
Scarce peep the wee
Mates
And unmates...
("Arnaut Daniel," p. 127)

In the original poem the onomatopoeia, in imitation of the chatter of birds in autumn, depends upon the -utz, -etz, -ences and -ontz of the rhyme scheme, which make up seventeen of the sixty-eight syllables in each strophe. In Pound's first version this is lost on the reader, but in the second, Pound's technical proficiency allows him to find English equivalents in the sounds -eaves, -ates, -ee etc., which is difficult enough to achieve, but he has also managed to give a suggestion of the relative position of the tone leadings in the original in his translation.

How Pound's strength grew as his individuality asserted itself, when he realized that the poem in English must have a self-contained integrity of its own, the translator becoming a troubadour himself, can be seen by comparing the original anonymous alba "Quan lo rossinhols escria," and Pound's <u>persona</u> translation first published in 1918.

Alba

Quan lo rossinhols escria
Ab sa par la nueg e l dia,
Yeu suy ab ma bell'amia
   Jos la flor,
Tro la gaita de la tor
Escria: drutz, al levar!
Qu'ieu vey l'alba e l horn clar.
(in Casper, p. 206)

Alba[18]

When the nightingale to his mate
Sings day-long and night late
My love and I keep state
In bower,
In flower,
'Till the watchmen on the tower
Cry:
"Up! Thou rascal, Rise,
I see the white
Light
And the night
Flies."
(Personae, p. 171)

In rendering this anonymous poem, Pound has created new orders of rhyme, tighter and more provocative than those given him. The line velocity imitates the watchman's sharp tone, and the swiftness of the night. Then by reducing "lover" to "rascal" he performed new implications. Instead of a poem and a translation, we have two originals, different in both wording and meaning.

As a large part of Pound's work consists of "translations," and as they have been severely criticized by "literalists," it is worth considering the problem of translation generally before taking up the development of Pound's views on the subject. A translator can approach

an original work in two ways. He can make a prose translation, or gloss, which is meant to be read with the original, being concerned strictly with translation of meaning; or he can strive to awake in the consciousness and ear of the reader a response analogous to that created in the ear and consciousness of a reader of the original. Neither type of translation can be absolute. The fact of linguistic and cultural change makes this impossible, so that each generation must translate the classics for itself, but obviously the second method, that of transfusion rather than transliteration, opens a whole new range of problems. The accuracy of the translation, from the point of view of equivalence of imagery, form, rhythm, sound pattern, rhetorical emphasis, general mood, meaning - can be only relative at best. The translator must select from a number of choices. A translation of this kind then, is closely allied to original composition. The translator poet must imitate rather than copy, because he tries to cause a thing to recur in matter different from the original. The artistic success, or excellence of the result depends finally on the exactness with which the translator works out the ratio of A:B::C:D, i.e. the original vision is to the poem as the translator's vision is to the translation. If the sides balance, the translation is good art. Finding a vision to poem equivalent in one's own language is difficult enough; finding it in another is certainly no easier. The translator tries to make two loaves where there was one.

Pound has approached the problem of translation from both directions mentioned above, literal rendering and re-creation. Thus one

could place at antipodes in his method the prose gloss and the persona, but whatever his approach, he has always recognised the difficulties inherent in any method, "but then all translation is a thankless, or at least most apt to be a thankless and desolate undertaking" ("Translators," p. 268), and he has never forgotten that "any translation is a makeshift, it is one side of an original...no one but an imbecile ever tries to read a translation without attempting in some way to reconstruct the original." [19]

Pound's early poetic interest in Provence was content, as he stated to Felix Schelling in July, 1922, "My assaults on Provence:ist: using it as subject matter, trying to do as R. B[rowning] had with Renaissance Italy," (Letters, p. 179), i.e. persona of the "Cino" type. As his studies developed, he became more interested in technique, thus his early translations were diagrammatic, that is part of his studies in verse form - canzoni, planhs etc. "I have proved that the Provençal rhyme schemes are not impossible in English. They are probably inadvisable" (Letters, p. 179). This early training Pound saw as invaluable for any writer.

> For three decades I have believed, taught and practised that translation is the absolute best among all forms of writer's training. When the translation is made into a castigated and tried segment of the mother tongue itself, that training can be intensified.
>
> ("Debabelization," p. 410)

Apart from external form, translation was also a means of exercising his melopoeic techniques, although melopoeia is by far the most difficult element in a poem to translate, "it is practically impossible to transfer or translate it from one language to another, save perhaps by divine accident, and for half a line at a time" ("How to Read," p. 25). Because of this difficulty, Pound first translated prose glosses, as in The Spirit of Romance, but he was aware of the difficulty this presented the reader. Of the Cavalcanti translations he wrote in 1910, "it was my first intention to print only his poems and an unrhymed gloze. This has not been practicable. I can not trust the reader to read the Italian for the music after he has read the English for the sense" ("Introduction," p. 24).

By default almost, Pound was led to attempt to translate in the "scholarly" sense, trying to copy the original rather than to recreate it. Thus with a poet like Cavalcanti, he was forced to make a choice of form. "Where both Rossetti and I went off the rails was in taking an English sonnet as equivalent for a sonnet in Italian" ("Guido's Relations," p. 194.) Pound later saw his mistake, because the Italian sonnet form, "melopoeic lyricism," in which the words flow on a melodic current, to be sung, differ from the English sonnet form, that is "poetic lyricism" which concerns itself with the emotional force of the verbal movement ("Guido's Relations," p. 197). Then on the problem of a choice of language: There was no way Pound could render Guido through an English contemporary voice. If the attempt is made to render the

poem in pre-Elizabethan English, an effect is gained but at some expense, the objection being that the resulting translation may become "a mere exercise in quaintness; the 'misrepresentation' not of the poem's antiquity, but of the proportionate feel of that antiquity"("Guido's Relations," p. 200). Returning to external form again, if the translator tries to adopt the same form as the original author's, for example the canzon, he is met with further linguistic difficulties. It is not a question of sufficient rhymes in English, or even two-syllable rhymes, but that they contain the wrong timbre and weight.

> They have extra consonants at the end, as in flowing and going; or they go squashy; or they fluff up as in snowy and goeth. They are not rime agute; they do not offer readily the qualities and contrasts that Dante has discussed so ably in De Eloquio.
>
> ("Cavalcanti," p. 167)

In the face of such difficulties, and the above quotes certainly show Pound's awareness of them, he could only say in 1928 what he was well aware of in 1910, "For purpose of translation one has, as Rossetti remarks, to cut through various knots, and make arbitrary decisions" ("Cavalcanti," p. 160).

Pound's The Sonnets and Ballate provided the reader unfamiliar with old Italian with an instrument to assist him in grasping some of the qualities of the original. The translations are "diagrammatic" in that they are studies in verse form, and "interpretive" in so far

as they act as metrical glozes. The end result really pleases neither the ordinary reader of poetry nor the pedant. The average reader can appreciate the technical virtuosity, but perhaps misses the beauty Pound saw in the original. As he wrote to Felix Schelling:

> There is, however, a beauty in the Troubadour work which I have tried to convey. I have failed almost without exception; I can't count six people whom I have succeeded in interesting in XIIth century Provence.
>
> (Letters, p. 179)

The literalist, approaching a translation as he does from an unreal point of view, believing that the poem should be built solely around an exact prose gloss, often cannot see the poetry. Then too, Pound confounded the "experts" with his seeming carelessness, and there is no doubt that he was not always "precise" in judging detail that did not interest him, or that he felt was unimportant. In the Cavalcanti translation for instance, he was accused by Arundel del Re (a critic for the Poetry Review) of using an obsolete and untrustworthy text, of omitting to quote even the most important variants, and of misspelling many words, or at least allowing misprints to be published. This affronted scholar could only end his list of textual criticisms with the comment: "Without giving these slips an overdue importance, they are sufficient to condemn him as a serious student" (Arundel del Re, pp. 324-325).

The other side of Pound's translating technique, the persona-translation, where Pound makes a new poem inspired by the original,

paradoxically enough is where he seems most "faithful" to the original. If the persona method is followed to its logical conclusion, the close connection between the poet speaking through "character," and the poet speaking through "poet" is apparent. It is difficult really to distinguish between the two. In a "finished" poem, the poet is effaced. Pound in approaching such a poem for translation, immerses himself in it emotionally and intellectually and attempts to recreate it. He may be interested in recreating a totality, as in "The Seafarer" (Personae. pp. 64-66), or in rendering a particular "face" of an original he feels has been missed by previous translators, as was the case with "The Homage to Sextus Propertius" (Personae, pp. 205-230). The success of the result depends not on technique, because that is where his mastery lies, but in his understanding of the original, and beyond this, his evaluation of the quality of its feeling. If Pound's translation of the thought and emotional intensity of the original is correct or equivalent, the result is the same beauty, but in a different form.

The advantage of this approach lies in the freedom given the translator. He is no longer bothered by the same problems he is faced with in literal translation. He is better able to evaluate and choose techniques, or make a language for his re-creation. "It is not that one language cannot be made to do what another has done, but that it is not always expeditious to approach the same goal by the same alley" ("Cavalcanti," p. 169).

Translation through persona should not be charged with infidelity to the original. It is true that the poem must be faithful to the original, but not on the level of the individual word, the metre, or the form necessarily; it must be faithful to the spirit of the original. The poet must be under an emotional as well as a technical discipline.

The persona and the persona-translation then, do not differ in principle. If "Sestina Altaforte" (Personae, p. 28) be taken as an example of the first, we find that Pound has moulded into the sestina form, the essence of the troubadour Bertrans de Born, capturing in the process something of the spirit of mediaeval "Geste" and "Chivalry." By collating the prose and verse translations of de Born in The Spirit of Romance, it can be seen how Pound studies his sources and prepares the background for his mask. The roots of the persona lie in de Born's sestina "My Lady Battle" (The Spirit, pp. 47-48), with adaptations from the sirvente "A Perigord Pres del Muralh" (The Spirit, pp. 45-46) and the song "Quan Vey Pels Vergier Desplegar" (The Spirit, p. 46). A Browningesque effect, giving the poem immediacy, is achieved by introducing a monologue setting for the poem between Bertrans and his jongleur, Papiols. The poet's artistry can be demonstrated on two levels: The manner in which he recreates the man, making use of his poetry and life, but beyond this entering into the emotions of his model by aesthetically experiencing the enthusiasm for bloodshed and fighting himself, and his success with the sestina form. The dexterity

with which Pound interweaves the six repete terminal words in the stanza and his choice of them, can only be appreciated by reading the whole poem. Its vigorous pace keeps the action moving within the stanza so that it flows over into the next, the inherent danger with the sestina being the breakdown of the poem into fragments at the stanza level.

Sestina: Altaforte[20]

I

Damn it all! all this our South stinks peace.
You whoreson dog, Papiols, come! Let's to music!
I have no life save when the swords clash.
But ah! when I see the standards gold, vair, purple, opposing
And the broad fields beneath them turn crimson,
Then howl I my heart nigh mad with rejoicing.

II

In hot summer have I great rejoicing
When the tempests kill the earth's foul peace,
And the lightnings from black heav'n flash crimson,
And the fierce thunders roar me their music
And the winds shriek through the clouds mad opposing,
And through all the riven skies God's swords clash.
(Personae, p. 28)

From the two opening stanzas quoted, part of the total effect of the poem can be gained. Pound in his forward to the poem asks of Bertrans "Have I dug him up again?" This poem is not archaeology, but art.

Pound employs no conventional metric. If the syllables are counted, there are predominantly eleven to a line[21]. The spondaic quality of the verses, usually with five strong beats in the line,

gives an effect of quantitative rhythm. When the poem is intoned [22], the lines appear of unequal weight, but there is a definite rhythm which breaks through the line lengths, and it is not iambic. Pound has not tried to use an uninflected language as an inflected one, rather he has attempted to fit his prose into an exciting English verbal pattern. He has in fact broken new ground.

Turning now to a persona-translation, "The Seafarer," first published in the fall of 1911[23], an interesting comparison in method can be made. Although Pound stated in 1912 that "'The Seafarer' was as nearly literal, I think, as any translation can be" ("I Gather," p. 369), he places it in Umbra (1920) in a list headed "Major Personae" (p. 128).

His usual method of searching into the text is revealed by the following quote:

> I have found in 'The Seafarer'...a trace of what I should call the English national chemical. In those early Anglo-Saxon poems I find expression of that quality which seems to me to have transformed the successive arts of poetry that have been brought to England from the South. For the arts have come mostly from the south, and it has found on the island something in the temper of the race which has strengthened it and given it fibre.
>
> ("I Gather," p. 131)

"The Seafarer" demonstrates the double power of a successful Pound translation. It contains poetic qualities which appear to be innovations, in the present case, elements which had practically been

forgotten in English writing, and it stands as a happy fusion of the original and the mind of the translator. The end result is rejuvenation.

The poem is a monologue in Anglo-Saxon. A certain amount of controversy exists about the extent of the original text, which is fragmentary in character, and there is the problem of Christian elements which seem intrusive when the poem is considered as a whole. This is not a problem to be gone into here, but in a philological note introducing the poem, Pound[24] explains how he rejected:

> half of line 76, read 'Angles' for 'Angels' in line 78, and stopped translating before the passage about the soul and the longer lines beginning 'Mickle is the fear of the almighty' and ending in a dignified but platitudinous address to the deity: 'World's elder, eminent creator, in all ages, amen.'
> ("A Philological," p. 131)

The "lyric" as Pound accepted it, dividies into "the trials of the sea," and "the lament for age."

The way in which Pound works on the word level, from the feel of the original to its English equivalent, can be shown by turning briefly to the following fragment translated by Pound from "The Wanderer":

> Nor may the weary-in-mind withstand his fate,
> Nor in high heart his helping.
> For the doom-eager oft bindeth fast his thought
> In blood-bedabbled breast.
> (Patria Mia, p. 62).

He translates "domgeorne" (eager for renown) as doom-eager. The scholar is affronted by such liberties, but the poet can appreciate the choice, for Pound is essentially more faithful to the original

meaning of the word by mistranslating it:

> And 'dom' is both 'fate' and 'glory'. The 'domgeorne' man is the man ready for his deed, eager for it, eager for the glory of it, ready to pay the price.
> (Patria Mia, p. 62)

What Pound was trying to express comes through the word he has chosen, it would not be contained in a dictionary translation.

Returning to "The Seafarer," we find similar examples of what appear to be mistranslations, which after consideration appear to be more than justifiable. For instance he translates "eorðan rices" (line 81, Exeter Ms.) (kingdoms of the earth) as earthen riches. As he has already used "king" in the previous line, and as the available synonyms for "kingdom" have a French flavour, he chooses the homophone "riches," making a pun on the text, with a slightly incorrect meaning, but a completely right feeling.

In both the above cases, the translator has made purposeful changes in the texts, there can be no doubt, but in other cases, Pound has taken other liberties without perhaps the same excuse of getting his reader further into the poem, but even these cases can be argued. Lines 24-25 of the Anglo-Saxon original read:

> Stormas þǣr stān-clifu bēotan, þaer him
> steorn oncwaeð isig-feþera.

which Pound translates:

> Storms, on the stone-cliffs beaten, fall on the stern in icy feathers.
> (Personae, p. 64)

whereas a gloss would read:

> Storms there rocky cliffs beat on, there them
> the tern answered with icy feathers.

Pound has been accused by righteous critics of mistranslating "stearn" as the "stern" of the ship, but if the Anglo-Saxon text is examined it can be seen that a number of birds are mentioned in a rhetorical list. Pound's rendering of the text breaks the continuity of embellishing imagery, and fills the gap with an image that forces the reader's attention again on the narrator in his storm-tossed ship. The change is textually misleading, but again the change is faithful to the feeling of the poem. We can see that Pound's method is not entirely uncritical. In his efforts to crystallize in English what he felt were the essential qualities of the Anglo-Saxon text, he writes a poem of his own, only following the contours of the original. He does not always translate the words that have led him into the thing he wishes to express, in this case desolate seafaring, he remakes them. Then he deviates from the original words if they blur in translation or if his own language fails him.

Eliot wrote in 1917 that "The Seafarer" is "perhaps the only successful piece of alliterative verse ever written in modern English" (Ezra Pound, p. 17), and perhaps the reason for its success stems from Pound's boldness and resource in making a new form. He has not merely used the techniques of assonance and alliteration to colour his text,

in spite of their unconventionality, he has built these elements into a man's real speech. The result is the rendering of the whole man, his life course, and the age.

> May I for my own self song's truth reckon,
> Journey's jargon, how I in harsh days
> Hardship endured oft.
> Bitter breast-cares have I abided,
> Known on my keel many a cares hold,
> and dire sea-surge, and there I oft spent
> Narrow nightwatch nigh the ships head
> while she tossed close to cliffs...
> (Personae, p. 64)

Although an underlying hint of Anglo-Saxon metric is evident in Pound's poem, he has not hampered himself by following its rules strictly. Each line in Anglo-Saxon verse is divided by a caesura into two half-lines, each half-line containing two strongly stressed syllables, usually long. The stressed syllable usually alliterates with the first syllable of the second half-line. A glance at Pound's metric shows how he gives the effect of the Anglo-Saxon through a quantitative rhythm and liberal use of the spondee. The alliteration is not superficial, but based on the strong beats. Although the metric is similar to the original, it is Pound's own. It is, apart from the alliteration and the number of heavy stresses to the line (usually four) not dissimilar to the technique displayed in "Sestina: Altaforte." Pound gives the rhythmical effect of the original poem in mood, rhythm, and even word sound, but he has not tried to write an Anglo-Saxon poem. The translation defined its own metric in Pound's ear, the original

gave him the direction and the impetus.

In December 1911, Pound began a series of weekly articles in The New Age under the title "I Gather the limbs of Osiris," which ran until the middle of February, 1912. This series purported to be in illustration of the "New Method in Scholarship" which Pound called the method of "luminous detail" ("I Gather," p. 130) by which he meant the presentation of detail rather than of sentimental comment and generalization. These articles offered discussions and translations of his continuing work in pre-Renaissance literature, although he was beginning to feel the sting of the critics.

> In "The Spirit of Romance" I attempted to present certain significant data on mediaeval poetry in Southern Europe...to make a sort of chemical spectrum of their art. I have since augmented this study with translations from Guido Cavalcanti and Arnaut Daniel. I have allowed it to impinge on my own poetry in Canzoni, which is a great fault in the eyes of those critics who think I should be more interested in the poetry which I write myself than in 'fine poetry as a whole'.
> ("I Gather," p. 130)

Pound's criterion for "fine poetry," as we have seen, shows a gradual change in emphasis from aesthetic beauty to technical excellence. Thus he is now more interested in Cavalcanti, apart from the beauty of his poetry "for his exact psychology, for an attempt to render emotion precisely" ("I Gather," p. 155) and further, he distinguishes Guido as a "donative" rather than a "symptomatic" author, i.e. a poet who has drawn down into the art something which

was not in the art of his predecessors (p. 178). Arnaut Daniel is also praised as a "technical innovator," a man who conceived a manner of writing in which "each word should bear some burden, should make some special contribution to the whole" (p. 178). In his continuing work on translation, there is also evident a change in emphasis, he speaks of them as being free of what "Morris and Rossetti ...have taught us to regard as mediaevalism" (p. 201). They now contain "many a turn which would have delighted Robert Browning." He criticizes his poetic contemporaries for "it is not uncommon to hear 'poets' speak of 'technique' as if it were a thing antipathetic to 'poetry'," and prises Browning again, for he was "one classicist 'mid a host of Victorians" (p. 297).

However, with the indication of changing emphasis in Pound's approach, there is still evidence of lingering pre-Raphaelite sensibilities. Although technique signified the means of conveying an exact impression of exactly what one meant, this must be done in such a way as to "exhilarate." Technique does not mean that "poetry" is to be stripped of any of its power of "vague suggestion." It is the "indefinite impalpable" in art which excites us (p. 298).

By February, 1912, there is more evidence of a growing awareness of the contemporary; Pound's poetic eye turns more towards the present needs of his art.

> As far as the 'living art' goes, I should like to break up clichés, to disintegrate those magnetised groups that stand between the reader of poetry and the drive of it, to escape from lines composed of two very nearly equal sections, each containing a noun and each noun decorously attended by a carefully selected epithet, gleaned apparently from Shakespeare, Pope, or Horace. For it is not until poetry lives again 'close to the thing' that it will be a vital part of contemporary life.
>
> ("I Gather," p. 370)

Pound goes on to decry poets who do not state what they mean, but are content to be "ornate and approximate," for serious, alive people will consider such poetry "balderdash," a sort of "embroidery" for dilettants. Pound's remedy for such rhetoric, is again through beauty, but "beauty of the thing" as well as "beauty of the means":

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

Florid adjectives and exaggeration Pound saw as anathema to the art generally and to verse structure in particular. The practice of technique in external form and expression Pound realised was the only way to defeat the poetic decadence of his time. "Through it only has 'the art,' as distinct from the work of the accidentally inspired genius, any chance for resurrection" (p. 370).

The publication of Ripostes[25] in 1912 marks the end of Pound's exclusive study of the tradition, for this volume contains poems which show his growing concern with his own contemporary surroundings. The past, the moods of the 'Nineties, are still with him in such poems as "Doria" and "A Girl" (Personae); his mastery of "free-verse" rhythm is evident in "The Return," and the poems as a whole indicate an increasing mastery of technique, the fruits of his long labours in Provence. But these qualities are refinements of what went before. What is new in Ripostes is the use of language and the tone of some of the poems which point the way to the coming revolution of the word.

Portrait d'une Femme

Your mind and you are our Sargasso Sea,
London has swept about you this score years
And bright ships left you this or that in fee:
Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,
Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed waves of price.
Great minds have sought you - lacking someone else.
You have been second always. Tragical?
No. You preferred it to the usual thing:
One dull man, dulling and uxorious,
One average mind - with one thought less, each year...
(Personae, p. 61)

In the early spring of 1912, Pound was preparing to step out of the museum into the sunlight, or rather, having finished his apprenticeship in his craft, he was preparing to take up the duties and responsibilities of being a journeyman in his own time. His studies of the tradition had taught him invaluable lessons about the writing of poetry, its rhythms, its form, its language. He had learnt to break away from

convention as an arbitrary criterion for good art. Rhythm, he had decided, was "absolute," corresponding to the emotion expressed, which meant that it must be interpretative, in the final analysis, the poet's own. Technique he had come to see as the "gauge of a man's lasting sincerity" ("I Gather," p. 298) for it was the sacred duty of the artist to render impulses precisely. Form he saw as "fluid" or "solid" following the dictates of what the poet wished to express. Thus some poems had form as a tree creates form, and others filled a form as water fills a vase because "a vast number of objects cannot be precisely, and therefore not properly, rendered in symmetrical forms" (Prolegomena," p. 9).

Pound's studies of the tradition, his translations, his scholarship, whatever their deficiencies, had given him a valuable training in metric which in its scope, gave him a freedom from the narrow conventions of its contemporary practice.

> I think the artist should master all known forms and systems of metric, and I have with some persistence set about doing this, searching particularly into those periods wherein the systems came to birth or attained their maturity. It has been complained, with some justice, that I dump my note-books on the public.
>
> ("Prolegomena," p. 9)

Criticism aimed at the "derivative" nature of his poetry, Pound could disregard with an easy conscience, for this was part of the training in every art. "As for 'adaptations'; one finds that all

the old masters of painting recommend to their pupils that they begin by copying masterwork, and proceed to their own compositions" (p. 10). Pound was prepared in 1912 for the serious work of his own writing, and in his prophecy (written in the spring of 1912) for the future course of poetry in his time, we see the future development of his own verse.

> 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, its force will lie in its truth, its interpretive power (of course, poetic force does always rest there); I mean it will not try to seem forcible by rhetorical din, and luxurious riot. We will have fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of it. At least for myself, I want it so, austere, direct, free from emotional slither.
>
> ("Prolegomena," p. 12)

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 In Personae: "The Tree," "Threnos," "La Fraisne," "Cino," "No Audiart," "Villonaud for This Yule," "A Villonaud: Ballad of the Gibbet," "Mesmerism," "Famam Libriusque Cano"; in Selected Poems, in addition: "In Tempore Senatutus," "Camaraderie."

2 From a review of A Lume Spento in the Evening Standard Review.

3 Pound, in a conversation with Edwards (Biography, p. 32), claimed that he got the idea of writing The Cantos in the autumn of 1904, as a result of reading Dante.

4 Pound relates, in a letter to the Editor of the Boston Transcript (Letters, p. 62) the following conversation between himself and Mathews:

> Mathews: "Ah, eh, ah, would you, now, be prepared to assist in the publication?"
> E.P.: "I've a shilling in my clothes, if that's any use to you."
> Mathews: "Oh well, I want to publish 'em. Anyhow,"

5 Unpublished letter to Isobel Pound (January, 1909), Yale Collection.

6 In Personae: "In Durance," "Marvail," "And Thus in Nineveh," "The White Stag"; in Selected Poems, in addition: "An Idyll for Glaucus."

7 In Personae: "Guido Invites You Thus," "Sestina: Altaforte," "Pierre Vidal Old," "Ballad of the Goodly Fere," "On His Own Face in a Glass," "The Eyes," "Francesca," "Planh for the Young English King."

8 Quoted in Cowley, p. 7.

9 Edward Thomas in the English Review, quoted in Eliot, Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry, p. 6.

10 Scott Jones in the Daily News, quoted in Eliot, Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry, p. 7.

11 Eliot's dedication: "For Ezra Pound/ il miglior fabbro," Collected Poems: 1909-1935. London, 1936, p. 59.

12 In Personae: pp. 38-53; in Selected Poems, in addition: "Canzon: The Yearly Slain," "Canzon: Of Incense."

13 Revised translations from this volume can be found in The Translations of Ezra Pound, ed. Hugh Kenner.

14 First published in English Review, XI (June, 1912), 343.

15 First published in Poetry, III (January, 1914), 137-141.

16 First published in Little Review, V (May, 1918), 20.

17 First published in Instigations, 1920.

18 First published in Little Review, V (May, 1918), 19.

19 "Rabindranath Tagore," New Freewoman," 1, no. 10 (Nov. 1913), 188.

20 First published in English Review, II (1909), 419-420. F.S. Flint recalls ("History of Imagism," p. 71) how on April 22, 1909, as his initiatory gesture to the "Poet's Club," Pound read in clarion tones his "Sestina: Altaforte" until the entire Café trembled.

21 Pound's line is basically pentameter (hence decasyllabic), but when in English Pentameter the final syllable is unaccented the result is a line of eleven syllables.

22 A recording of "Sestina: Altaforte" read by Pound can be found in the Poetry Room, the Lamont Library, Harvard University. To the intermittent beating of a drum, the poem is chanted so as to stress the strong beats. The unstressed syllables are hurried over to fit the basic rhythm.

23 "The Seafarer," with "A Philological Note" was first published in New Age, X (Nov., 1911), 107.

24 Pound's interpretation of the Ms. reads further:

> There are many conjectures as to how the text came into its present form. It seems most likely that a fragment of the original poem, clear through 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." The groundwork may have been a longer narrative poem.

25 All but four of the new poems are reprinted in Personae.

CHAPTER III

The Early London Years - Contacts and Influences

> I don't know that there is much to be gained by writing or reading criticism of minor epochs, it may on the other hand be the best form of class-room exercise imaginable. You have a period of muddle, a few of the brighter lads have a vague idea that something is a bit wrong, and no one quite knows the answer.
>
> -Polite Essays

CHAPTER III

The Early London Years - Contacts and Influences

Soon after Pound arrived in London in 1908, his introduction to the London literary set began. Through May Sinclair he met Ford Madox Hueffer[1], then planning the English Review (Ford, Return, p. 373), and through Elkin Mathews, was introduced to T.E. Hulme's Poet's Club (Isaacs, p. 29). By 1909, Pound was a frequent visitor at informal meetings of poets from the Rhymer's Club at Ernest Rhys' "Derwen" house, where Yeats, Hueffer and Victor Plarr were often guests (Rhys, p. 243). By February, 1909, Pound could write to Williams: "Am by way of falling into the crowd that does things here. London, deah old Lundon, is the place for poesy" (Letters, p. 7), and in May he added "I am, after eight years hammering against impenetrable adamant, become suddenly somewhat of a success" (p. 8).

Although Pound obviously created quite an impression on the London literati, both as a poet and a personality, the eccentricities and posturings which had alienated him from his fellow students and instructors in his college days, continued to affect his relationships in London. As Wyndham Lewis recalls:

> It was announced one day that a certain Ezra Pound was to come into lunch, a young American poet. I forget the circumstances and who had invited him, but I remember he was not a particularly welcome guest. Several of our party had already seen him. And it was reported that S. had pronounced him a Jew...When Pound appeared

> I was mildly surprised to see an unmistakeable, 'nordic blond' with fierce blue eyes and a reddishly hirsute jaw, thrust out with a thoroughly Aryan determination. But this moment of disillusion past, I took no further interest in this cowboy youngster, said to be a young sprig of the kahal. I turned my back: I heard the staccato of the States: I 'sensed' that there was little enthusiasm. Most of those present felt that he was indeed a Jew, disguised in a ten-gallon hat, I later heard - a 'red Jew' it was decided, a subtle blend, but a pukka Kosher. And when I rose to go to the Museum he had whirled off - bitterness in his heart, if I know my Ezra. This was his first taste of the English.
>
> (Blasting, p. 280)

The key to a gooddeal of his behavior would seem to have been a sense of alienation, of not belonging. The personal tone of many of the early poems is one of superior withdrawal.

> For I am a weird untamed
> That eat of no man's meat.
> My home is the rain ye wail against
> My drink is the wine of sleet.
>
> (A Lume Spento)

> I was also brought up in a district and city with which my forbearers had had no connection, and I am therefore accusomed to being an alien, and it is just as homelike for me to be an alien in one place as another.
>
> ("The Revolt," p. 153)

This sense of alienation in Pound expressed itself in a never ending desire to impress, but the literary set involved was not of an impressionable kind, and resented his efforts heartily. Then too, the issue was complicated by the average "cultured" Englishman's disapproval of Americans. Not satisfied with being a poet, he

contrived to look like one.

> Ezra, with his mane of fair hair, his blonde beard, his rimless pince-nez, his Philadelphian accent and his startling costume, part of which was a single turquoise ear-ring, contrived to look 'every inch a poet.'
>
> (Goldring, p. 40)

To fill in the portrait, there were the trousers of green billiard cloth, the purple hat and green shirt, the open sandals and immense flowing tie. Such an ensemble fitted his social gaucheries, which did little to endear him to people who could have assisted him in many ways in his early efforts to establish a sympathetic audience among his poetic contemporaries. Thus at the Rhymer's Club:

> Willie Yeats, always a good monologuer, held forth on their new art of bringing music and poetry together, and possibly Ezra Pound, who could also be vocal on occasion, may have felt he was not getting a fair share of the festivity. So, in order to pass the time perhaps, and seeing the supper dressed with red tulips in glasses, he presently took one of the flowers and proceeded to munch it up, as Yeats, absorbed in his monologue, did not observe this strange behavior, and the rest of us were too well bred to notice, Ezra having found the tulip to his taste, did likewise with a second flower...by the end of supper, all the tulips had been consumed. It was not until after the Rhymer's program had run half its course that the tulip eater recovered his insouciance.
>
> (Rhys, p. 244)

As Wyndham Lewis points out ("Ezra Pound," p. 258), Pound behaved socially a little too much like the proverbial "singing cowboy," which led Edmund Gosse to describe him as "That preposterous American

filibuster and Provençal Charlatan." On one occasion, Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie having written a front page eulogy of the Georgian poets in The Times Literary Supplement, Pound wrote the following letter:

> Dear Mr. Abercrombie:
> Stupidity carried beyond a certain point becomes a public menace. I hereby challenge you to a duel, to be fought at the earliest moment that is suited to your convenience. My seconds will wait upon you in due course.
>
> Yours sincerely
>
> Ezra Pound
> (Fletcher, p. 72)

Abercrombie apparently took the challenge quite seriously, learned from friends that "Ezra was an expert fencer" and didn't know what to do. This exaggerated type of behavior, coupled with his poetic arrogance:

> Praise of Ysolt
>
> In vain have I striven,
> To teach my heart to bow;
> In vain I have said to him
> "There be many singers greater than thou..."
> (Personae, p. 16)

and his intellectual arrogance:

> He did not desire to prove to the people he had come amongst that he was superior in physical strength, but that he was superior to all other intellectuals in intellect, and all poets in prosodic prowess. They were to be the spectators merely - they were of little account...
> (Lewis, "Ezra Pound," p. 258)

led to feelings of dislike which were mutual and immediate. Pound rushed into the sophisticated but fragile post-Nineties society like the proverbial bull in a china shop, and although his lecture of precision and technique would have introduced a much needed discipline into an otherwise decadent literary culture, he was met at first by amusement and later by indifference. The English are notoriously unwilling to be lectured to, or to have their chronic amateurism exposed as bad art. In any case Pound arrived in London the unassimilable iconoclast and aggressive rebel, and by 1912 had established himself as a literary figure of some note. As Richard Aldington remembers:

> At all events in 1913 Ezra was great fun, a small but persistent volcano in the dim levels of London literary society. London was interested and amused by him. The evening papers interviewed him at length and published his portrait; and even Punch had to notice the existence of a certain Mr. Ezekial Ton who had achieved a new synthesis of Wardour Street and the wild and woolly West. Unluckily, Ezra had read Whistler's Gentle Art of Making Enemies, and practised it without the 'gentle.' And in his chivalrous generosity he made the absurd mistake of taking on himself the feuds and dislikes of his cronies, Yeats and Hueffer; for which there was no need whatever. Consequently, in spite of his endearing qualities, Ezra does not inhabit the White House at Chelsea.
>
> (Aldington, p. 105)

Pound was certainly not all fake by any means; it was unfortunate that his personality was not conducive to good first impressions, or lasting relationships, with people who couldn't accept him for what he was, a sincere poet dedicated to the arts, if irreverent and impetuous. Beyond this he was essentially a kind and serious man. Douglas Goldring,

who saw both sides of Pound, writes:

> I was a bit suspicious of Ezra at first, and, though I am rather ashamed to admit it, perhaps a trifle jealous of him. He struck me as a bit of a charlatan, and I disliked the showy blue glass buttons on his coat, indeed, his whole operatic outfit of 'stage poet,' stemming from Murger and Puccini...I failed to appreciate Ezra's cosmopolitan Yankee muse, and thought much of his verse pretentious, but one day I happened to see round Ezra's pince-nez, and noticed that he had curiously kind, affectionate eyes. This chance discovery altered my whole conception of him, perhaps it reveals part of the secret of his hold on Ford.
>
> (Goldring, p. 48)

At the outset of his campaign, Pound made two literary conquests, Ford Madox Ford and W.B. Yeats, and a literary raid, T.E. Hulme. The work of these men supplemented his studies of the tradition and provided the example and impetus of modernity, which effected a change of idiom and emphasis in his own work and led to his abortive efforts to lead the coming poetic revival and aesthetic revolution.

Pound has often demanded that Ford Madox Ford be regarded as the "CRITICAL LIGHT" in the period of muddle immediately preceding the first war:

> In the dim mainly forgotten backward of 1908 and 1910 a few men in London groped to-ward the 'revolution of the word'...the revolution of the word so far as it affected the men who were of my age in London in 1908, began with the lone whisper of Ford Madox Hueffer.
>
> ("We Have Had No Battles," p. 49)

The most important critical tenets Ford preached were on the problem of the poet's language.

> For ten years before I got to England there would seem to have been no one but Ford who held that French clarity and simplicity in the writing of English verse and prose were of immense importance or in contrast to the use of a stilted traditional dialect, a 'language of verse' unused in the actual talk of the people, even of 'the best people,' for the expression of reality and emotion.
>
> ("Ford Madox Ford," p. 1)

Pound's relationship with Ford began soon after his arrival in London. In 1909 Ford published four of Pound's poems in the English Review and four more in 1910. Douglas Goldring describes the critical discussions between the two on vers libre, the prosody of Arnaut Daniel, and "the villainy of contributors to the front page of The Times Literary Supplement" (Goldring, p. 47). Personae of Ezra Pound (April 1909), when perused by Ford's critical eye, as Pound records:

> ...displayed me trapped, flypapered, gummed and strapped down in a jejune provincial effort to learn mehercule, the stilted language that then passed for 'good English' in the arthritic milieu that held control of the respected British critical circles, Newbolt, the backwash of Lionel Johnson, Fred Manning, the Quarterlies and the rest of 'em.
>
> ("Ford Madox Ford," p. 2)

Ford criticized his contemporaries for their stuffiness and ivory towerism for he felt their art was divorced from reality. He wished to see poetry written in a living language about contemporary life and he wanted poetic communication to be as efficient as that

of prose. In a letter to Mrs. C.F.G. Masterman, a poetess who sent him some verse in 1912, he wrote:

> Your poetry should be your workaday life. That is what is the matter with all the verse of to-day; it is too much practised in temples and too little in motorbuses...Literary! Literary!
>
> Now that is the last thing that verse should ever be, for the moment a medium becomes literary it is remote from the life of the people, it is dulled, languishing, moribund and at last dead...for what the poet ought to do is to write his own mind in the language of his day...you live in our terrific, untidy, indifferent, empirical age, where not one single problem is solved and not one single accepted idea from the poet has any more magic...It is for us to get at the new truths or to give new life to such of the old as will appeal hominibus bonae voluntatis. Only to do that we must do it in the clear pure language of our own day and with what is clear and new in our individuality.
>
> (MacShane, p. 210)

Ford's critical comments often seem implicitly aimed at Pound, who he felt was dissipating energy in creating vague moods in his verse. The failure inherent in attempts to be bookish he characterized as follows:

> Most of the verse that is written to-day deals in a derivative manner with mediaeval emotions. This means that the poets have not the courage to lead their own lives. They seem to shut themselves up in quiet book cabinets to read forever, and to gain their idea of life forever from some very small, very specialized group of books.
>
> (Ford, The Critical Attitude, p.187)

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

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

Pound's new interest in "breaking up cliché" can also be traced to Ford, who in his early work with Conrad was constantly trying to achieve style, in the French sense to create a habit of style, by writing "simply as the grass grows." This meant a war on the cliché phrase - "jewels five words long" - which were to be replaced by the "mot juste," which did not mean "every word a sparkler." To achieve style, the writer must avoid words that draw the reader's attention either by their "brilliant unusualness" or their "amazing aptness," either use "hangs up the reader" (Ford, Thus to Revisit, pp. 51-53). As Ford saw it, the duty of the prose writer was to efface himself. The application of this technique to the writing of poetry means cutting to a minimum the number of words required to present an impression. To obtain simplicity, the poet must cut down on his use of adjectives and adverbs, and endeavour to achieve the "mot juste." Remembering Pound's

comment about "painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke" of poetry, we find another echo of Ford.

Impressionism, as Ford practised and preached it, was the stating in the simplest possible prose certain emotions or facts that come to the writer's mind, the "impression" of a moment, and getting poetic meaning out of the transcription of natural objects without any comment or opinion from the author (Ford, The March, p. 45). Such a method is based on the eye; it results in description, the rendering of images seen. Ford once compared impressionistic technique in writing to the Futuristic style in painting. A Futurist painter, in choosing a subject such as "A Night Out," might paint a canvas which has in one corner a pair of stays, in another a fragment of an early morning landscape, in the middle a pair of eyes. Although no direct statement is made, the essential elements of the night are rendered. Also, this "impression" is objective, and has hardness, which Ford believed was a quality contained in all works of art ("On Impressionism," p. 182). This placing of things in relation was of course a valid technique for the poet also:

> ...but the putting of the one thing in juxtaposition with the other, that seems to me to be much more the business of the poet of to-day than setting down on paper what he thinks about the fate of Brangaene, not because any particular 'lesson' may be learned, but because such juxtapositions suggest emotions...I would rather read a picture in verse of the emotions and environment of a George Street anarchist than recapture what songs the syrens sang.
>
> (Ford, "Impressionism," p. 185)

There is another aspect of Ford's impressionism which deserves some mention and that is his belief that the poet should be less ambitious. The impressionist tries to record, in objective terms, his impression of the moment:

> The larking of the anaemic girls...the shoulders of the woman in evening dress...the idealism of a pickpocket slanting through a shadow and imagining himself a hero whose end will be wealth and permanent apartments in the Savoy Hotel.
> (Ford, "Impressionism," p. 182)

He does not try to depict the totality, for "modarn life is so extraordinary, so hazy, so tenuous"; the poet should render "the definite and concrete spots in it" (Collected Poems, p. 15). Nowadays we may contemplate life steadily enough, but "it is impossible to see it whole" (The Critical Attitude, p. 28). Ford felt that poetry in the grand style was a dead art for the contemporary poet, who should restrict himself to writing about the small areas of experience which he can know about. By being introspective, he can render his own impressions and moods. Ford prophesied that "we are approaching, in fact, once more to a state such as that which produced ballads and folk songs," which are never "Great Poetry," but they throw "light upon the human heart" ("On Impressionism," p. 183).

It is the fleeting, personal moods which the modern poet can know, and according to Ford, these are what he should depict in concrete

visual terms, avoiding abstractions and vague expression. Again there are links between Ford's theories and Pound's new voice in The New Age and the Poetry Review.

Ford's comments on verse technique do suggest another parallel with Pound.

> From time to time words in verse form have come into my head and I have written them down, quite powerlessly...under the stress of certain emotions.
>
> (Ford, Collected Poems, p. 9)

There is a suggestion that there is an equivalence between rhythm and emotion, but Ford was not sure:

> But with verse I just do not know: I do not know anything at all. As far as I am concerned, it just comes. I hear in my head a vague rhythm ...and presently a line will present itself.
>
> (Ford, Collected Poems, p. 11)

The following example of Ford's verse taken from "The Starling" (1912) illustrates his verse style. The visual qualities are apparent, as well as the conversational tone.

> And so, for a mile, for a mile and a half - a long way,
> Flight follows flight
> Thru' the still grey light
> Of the steel-grey day,
> Whirling beside the road in clamorous crowds,
> Never near, never far, in the shade of the poplars and clouds.
>
> (Ford, Collected Poems, p. 33)

Although Ford suggested a kind of modernity which Pound was to strive to achieve, his "impressionistic" verse was too passive, too receptive

for Pound, who felt that:

> The conception of poetry is a process more intense than the reception of an impression. And no impression, however carefully articulated can, recorded, convey that feeling of 'sudden light' which the works of art should and must convey.
>
> ("The Book," p. 133)

Pound has also acknowledged his debt to W.B. Yeats:

> ...to W.B. Yeats (with whom one disagrees on nearly all possible points, save in the belief that a poem should attain some degree of intensity): that he backs one in the belief that one should make no compromise with the public. He has also a theory of aesthetics to the effect that art begins only when one has ceased to react to the imbecilities of the multitude.
>
> ("On Criticism," p. 253)

As we have seen, the early influence of Yeats on Pound was that of The Wind Among The Reeds. For instance, Pound's "The Tree" (Personae, p. 3) employs the archaic diction, metrical tricks and inverted syntax typical of the Yeats of this period. When Pound arrived in London, he was somewhat awed by Yeats' achievement and reputation, speaking of him as "the greatest living poet " (Letters, pp. 7-8), and it wasn't until he returned to London in 1911, after his visit to America in 1910, that he began a regular attendance at Yeats' Monday evenings, the two poets becoming intimate friends soon after. At the beginning of the relationship, Pound was further from modernity than the master, Yeats having scrupulously avoided

archaisms in his The Green Helmet and Other Poems, published in 1910. In his verse at this time he was developing and refining the dramatic lyric, intensity being created by contraction:

> Mr. Yeats had set an example (specifically as to the inner form of the lyric or the short poem containing an image), this example is obscured for posterity and for the present 'young'...by Mr. (early) Yeats' so very poetic language.
>
> ("Harold Monro," p. 9)

By 1912 the relationship had changed somewhat.

> One of his (Pound's) greatest triumphs in London was the way in which he stormed 18 Woburn Buildings, the Celtic stronghold of W.B. Yeats, took charge of his famous 'Mondays', precisely as he took charge of the South Lodge tennis-parties, and succeeded in reducing him from master to disciple.
>
> (Goldring, p. 49)

By 1913, during the period when Pound was Yeats' secretary at Stone Cottage in Sussex, Yeats wrote to Lady Gregory:

> Ezra never shrinks from work...a learned companion and a pleasant one...he is full of the Middle Ages and helps me to get back to the definite and concrete, away from modern abstractions. To talk over a poem with him is like getting you to put a sentence into dialect. All becomes clear and natural.
>
> (Hone, W.B. Yeats, p. 232)

In February 1912, Pound praises Yeats because:

> Mr. Yeats has once and for all stripped poetry of its perdamnable rhetoric. He has boiled away all that is not poetic - and a good deal

> that is. He has become a classic in his own lifetime and nel mezzo del cammin. He has made our poetic idiom a thing pliable, a speech without inversions.
>
> ("A Retrospect," pp. 11-12)

A year later, he became a little more critical of Yeats, and Ford as well, as his own theories began to congeal. In comparing the two writers he states:

> Mr. Yeats has been subjective; he believes in the glamour and association which hang near the words. 'Works of art beget works of art,' He has much in common with the French symbolists. Mr. Hueffer believes in an exact rendering of things. He would strip words of all 'associations' for the sake of getting a precise meaning...you will find his origin in Gautier or in Flaubert. He is objective. This school tends to lapse into description. The other tends to lapse into sentiment.
>
> ("Status Rerum," p. 133)

The problem of the Yeats-Pound relationship is complicated by the fact that Pound took the early Yeats as a model at a time when Yeats, tired of his early verse, was experimenting in new directions himself. Yeats' self dedication to poetry found an echoing chord in Pound, but aesthetically there could be little real common agreement. As Pound began to see that poetry needed to be hard and clear, "nearer the bone," Yeats' lingering concern for the symbol, a centrifugal force, moving the imagination of the reader out into wider meanings, although emotionally intense in a way Pound could appreciate, always points the way to a fuller statement. Pound by February, 1912,

wanted the concrete succinctly stated.

> 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; so that a sense, and the poetic quality of the passage, is not lost to those who do not understand the symbol as such, to whom for instance, a hawk is a hawk.
>
> ("A Retrospect," p. 9)[2]

In January, 1912, Pound published "The Complete Poetical Works of T.E. Hulme," a series of five poems, in The New Age[3]. Later in the same year they appeared again in the back of Ripostes with the following note:

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

T.E. Hulme founded a poetry club in 1908, which met every Wednesday in the Soho to dine and read poetry. But the interest of the founder began to wane when the club became too "conservative" for his tastes. Consequently in March 1909, with F.S. Flint, another disgruntled reader, he founded a new group. According to Flint, this group was

brought together by a common dissatisfaction with English poetry as it was then written (Flint, "The History," p. 70).

Strongly influenced by modern French symbolist poetry, the new group experimented with "vers libre," and with Japanese Tanka and Haikai verse forms. Hulme was the ringleader, according to Flint, and insisted on absolutely accurate presentation and no verbiage. Apparently there was a lot of talk and practice among the members of what they called "The Image" (Flint, "The History," p. 70).

In a review of Ripostes, Flint describes these meetings in general:

> There were generally some six or seven of us - T.E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, Edward Storer, T.D. Fitzgerald, myself, Miss Florence Farr, F.W. Tancred; at times the sculptor Epstein would come; Mr. Pound himself did not join us until the third evening...However, the outcome of these meetings were three or four books of verse and Mr. Hulme's "Complete Poetical Works." We all had a hand in editing those Poetical Works.
> (Flint, "Review of Ripostes,"p. 61)

Flint goes on to describe Pound's publication of Hulme's poems as "a good joke" adding that they were good enough to make one "regret" that Hulme "abandoned the making of little Japanese pictures in verse" (p. 61). The group lasted some months, but had broken up by the end of 1909.

Hulme's 1909 club was followed by his "Frith Street evenings," which brought together a number of people of varying interests "journalists, writers, poets, painters, politicians of all sorts, from

Conservatives to New Age Socialists, Fabians, Irish Yaps, American Bums, and Labour leaders" (Nevinson, p. 63).

In these "informal" gatherings, Hulme did not preside, nor was there any attempt to address the gathering as a whole. However, discussions of poetry were conducted on the philosophical level which interested Hulme, rather than on a level for the practising poet (Coffman, p. 7). It must be remembered that Hulme was primarily a philosopher. His forages into the arts were part of a search for practical proof of his theories of aesthetics. Before 1913, the particular artistic medium which interested him was poetry, but as the 1909 Poets' Club developed into the meetings held in Frith Street, his interests began to veer more towards the visual arts, particularly the "new constructive geometric art"[4] as then practised in London by such painters as Nevinson, Roberts and Bomberg, and the sculptors Epstein and Brzeska. Oddly enough, in the light of Hulme's present reputation as a literary innovator, it was as a critic and theorist of the new painting, rather than of the new poetry, that Hulme became known in pre-war London.

A good deal has been written on the origin of the movement which became known first as "Imagisme," and later when Pound separated himself from it, "Imagism" in the United States. Although Pound has given some credit to Hulme, mainly by publication of his "Poetical Works," and the mention of the "forgotten school of 1909," he has in other places tried to minimize Hulme's part as an instigator of the movement.

> Mr. Hulme is on the road to mythological glory; but the Hulme notes printed after his death, had little or Nothing to do with what went on in 1910, 1911 and 1912.
> ("Harold Monro ," p. 9)

On other occasions Pound has been a little more ambiguous: "There is no need to exaggerate or to disparage his 'influence' (Profile, p. 21). Flint, on the other hand, gives all the credit to Hulme in his "History of Imagism." But Flint's "history" was not impartial, as it was written during a time of literary troubles, when the leadership of the movement was at stake, and Flint was acting as spokesman for the Amy Lowell faction. The problem remains obscure, but as Coffman's study of the Imagist movement suggests (pp. 47-48), while parallels certainly exist between theories promulgated in the Imagiste manifesto and passages in Hulme's notes, they are not conclusive enough to support the debt usually claimed. It would be well to examine then, certain of Hulme's theories as they apply to aesthetics generally, and to the writing of poetry particularly, in an attempt to evaluate his influence on Pound during the years 1909-1912, and also to estimate his place in the Imagiste movement.

Hulme[5] felt that the basic problem which the modern poet faced was the worn out language with which he attempted to communicate emotions. The poet had to break through the verbal patterns in language which cause only a general emotional reaction in the reader if he wished to succeed in expressing an individual, personal one. The poet must strive to express what lies outside the area represented by the word

as counter only. The poet succeeds, according to Hulme, through his ability to use metaphor to reveal new analogies to the reader, which by their freshness and individuality can create a new vision. Freshness and individuality are caused by concreteness of imagery, because the reader reacts to an image in the same way as he reacts to a physical object, both evoking a personal emotional reaction; and by an original juxtaposition of images which produce a shock of recognition, that brings the reader to an abrupt stop. Hulme saw the function of analogy as important in poetry as it enables the reader to dwell and linger on a point of excitement. The concrete visual quality of the imagery used in the comparison then, escapes the use of the word as counter, and the novel juxtaposition of the image forces the reader to linger over points the poet feels are significant.

It is the poet's duty to reveal reality and to do this he must break through conventional word meanings, Only having penetrated this barrier to communication can he hope to reveal the inner life of things. Hulme did not believe that images express reality fully or even partially, but he was convinced that they provide the only means of approaching it. A poetry of images "endeavours to arrest you, and to make you continuously see a physical thing, to prevent you gliding through an abstract process" (Hulme, Speculations, p. 134).

Hulme's theories insist that the poet's vision is unconventional, and judged language really incompetent to express it. The reader can only be brought into the vision's range by reliance on concrete

metaphors and analogies, thus avoiding the abstract, making language into a sharp instrument to probe human feelings.

Hulme described literature as either "romantic" or "classic." The romantic writer is at fault because of his assumption that the human mind can approach a reality beyond the concrete things of the external world. The romantic, by talking of soul and of realities beyond those of the every day, suggests comprehension in areas where none may exist. Such a mixing of the known and the unknowable leads to fuzzy thinking and feeling:

> Verse to them [the romantics] always means a bringing in of some of the emotions that are grouped round the word infinite...I object to the sloppiness which doesn't consider that a poem is a poem unless it is moaning or whining about something or other.
> (Hulme, Speculations, pp. 126-127)

The classicist, on the other hand, limits himself:

> ...even in the most imaginative flights there is always a holding back, a reservation. The classicist poet never forgets this finiteness, this limit of man. He remembers always that he is mixed up with earth. He may jump, but he always returns back; he never flies away into the circumambient gas.
> (Hulme, Speculations, p. 120)

The terms in which Hulme described the two approaches to the writing of verse, indicate his desire that the poet should reject the romantic and turn to the classic, and he prophesied that "a period of dry, hard, classical verse is coming" (Speculations, p. 137).

Hulme's recommendation for a return to classicism, by definition, restricted the subject matter of poetry. Vast, vague emotions, and the inspirational, would be replaced by an individual personal expression of the vivid patches, the sudden lifts in life of love, fighting, dancing etc., the moments of ecstasy (Hulme, "Notes," p. 302). This ecstasy would be minor, almost trivial, resulting from seeing physical things in an unconventional way. For their expression the classical poet:

> chooses fresh epithets and fresh metaphors, not so much because they are new and we are tired of the old, but because the old cease to convey a physical thing and become abstract counters.
>
> (Hulme, "Searchers," p. 315)

These images will be conveyed, by implication, in some sort of free verse form: "I contend that this method of recording impressions by visual images in distinct line, does not require the old metric system" (Hulme, "Lecture," p. 267).

By examining Hulme's five poems, we find that they are perceptions gained from everyday experience. The expression is personal, resulting from viewing a physical object in an unusual way. Originality and freshness are conveyed by analogy. The physical analogy reveals hardness, and by its strange content escapes the conventional, and reveals refreshed insight.

Autumn

A touch of cold in the Autumn night -
I walked abroad,
And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge
Like a red-faced farmer.
I did not stop to speak, but nodded,
And round about were the wistful stars
With white faces like town children.
(Personae, p. 252)

It is interesting to note the amusing and ironic tone of Hulme's analogies, better illustrated perhaps by the following lines from "The Embankment":

Oh, God, make small
The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,
That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie.
(Personae, p. 253)

If the tone of ironic amusement lends an aura of triviality, it is not out of line with Hulme's approach to poetry, for it was after all "For the amusement of Bankers and other sedentary armchair people in after-dinner moods" (Hulme, "Notes," p. 293).

It would be of interest to compare for a moment the theories of Ford and Hulme. Although neither Hulme nor Ford were primarily poets, both men realised that the writing of poetry in England in the years immediately preceding the first war had reached an aesthetic impasse, and both had definite ideas about remedying the situation. Primarily, they saw the need for a poetic retrenchment, that the poet should restrict himself to certain known areas. He should be less ambitious and more concerned with the personal, fleeting emotions of the every

day. The symbolical and the abstract should be avoided at all cost for they led to vagueness. Poetry should deal instead with hard things and emphasize the visual, even at the expense of the "literary."

The striking difference between Ford's "impressionistic" and Hulme's "imagistic" verse concerns the analogy or metaphor. Since Ford saw the authors' duty as self-effacement, with a minimum of intrusion, he wanted no "sparklers" to "hang up" the reader. In his own poetry he consciously avoided the amazingly apt phrase or word in favour of the "mot juste."

The difference between the theories of the two men then, really stems from this point. Ford's impressionism is Hulme's practice without the éclat of the clever and ironic analogy.

It remains to consider one other poet who was demanding the need for experimentation in these years, F.S. Flint. A protegé of the editor of The New Age, A.R. Orage, he was writing verse reviews and articles in this paper as early as 1908. The dominant message in his writings was the contemporary need for poetic experimentation, and he held up the example of France. Well read in French symbolist verse, he was excited by the group spirit those poets exhibited, their concern for craft and enthusiasm for innovation, and in particular their experiments in vers libre. Well aware of the excitement in Paris, Flint deplored the lack of similar activity in England.

Flint's literary criticism, as it was elaborated in The New Age, also shows a concern for limiting the poet's scope: "The day of the long poem is over - at least, for this troubled age" (Flint, "Recent

Verse," p. 213). Rather, the poet should be interested in the artistic effects gained from "brief fragments." This belief led him to experiment with Japanese verse forms, which were then appearing in translation.

From the modern French example, although hesitant at first, Flint by 1910 was supporting unrhymed cadence, the rhythm to be forged by the poet "according to the impulse of the creative emotion working through him" (Flint, "Reviews," p. 234).

As far as Flint's interest in the image is concerned, he is more inclined towards its symbolic usage:

> ...the symbolist - and all essential poets are symbolists - takes a pure emotion and translates it by external images which become symbolical of man's everlasting desires and questionings.
>
> (Flint, "Verse," p. 413)

Flint saw no need to restrict the subject matter of poetry, in the way that both Ford and Hulme did, to the things or emotions that the poet knows about by his everyday experience; nor does he appear from his own practice to have been particularly interested in Hulme's striking analogy. His contribution to the verse of his time is really that of another voice demanding new vigour in the writing of poetry in English, and for the example he provided in some of his Japanese style poems.

Afternoon

Quiet -
   Save for a footfall -
wooed by
Bird and Child call.

Young buds
And blossom are bursting
green, white
And red mouth thirsting.

Under
The elm-tree, lying
On the
Thin Grass, I wonder.
(Flint, In the Net of the Stars, p. 63)

Before 1912, Pound did not emphasize image or metaphor, nor did he stress the visual in poetry, but preoccupied as he was with melopoeic considerations he did not neglect these elements in his earliest verse and criticism. As early as 1908 he had declared his intention to "paint the thing as I see it," and in 1910 he qualified this statement with the admonition that "The poet must never infringe upon the painter's function; the picture must exist around the words; the words must not attempt too far to play at being brush strokes" (The Spirit, p. 68). However, in The Spirit of Romance he praises Dante's precision in revealing "exactly the thing which has been clearly seen" (p. 126).

In 1910, Pound's standard for good art was as often described in terms of beauty as it was in terms of precision, but when he turned to the tradition, the beauty he presents is often the beauty of

concrete passages containing images of light. Pound's praise of a Dantean image in which the poet compares himself to the spray which bows its tip in the wind (The Spirit, p. 150), may be "delicate" in a way which would please the sensibility of the 'Nineties; at the same time it is a precise rendering of an accurate observation of something in nature: "It is beautiful because of the objective vision" (The Spirit, p. 149).

In his general discussion of Dante, Pound dwells at length on Dante's metaphor making ability, quoting Aristotle's dictum on the image making faculty as follows: "The apt use of metaphor, arising as it does, from a swift perception of relations, is the hall-mark of genius" (The Spirit, p. 158), and praises Dante for it is in "the swift forms of comparison" (p. 159) that he creates much of his beauty. Pound also discusses the "language beyond metaphor," distinguishing between epithets of "primary and secondary apparition." (p. 158), the former describing "what is actually presented to the sense of vision... give vividness to description and stimulate conviction in the actual vision of the poet" (pp. 158-159). Epithets of "emotional apparition," which he calls "transensuous," he exemplifies by Yeats' line "Under a bitter black wind that blows from the left hand" (p. 159), but criticizes this usage because it is "more vague" than Dante's use of the symbolical. Earlier in The Spirit of Romance, he had criticized Milton and Swinburne for their penchant for the "high-sounding word and not a swift symbol of vanished beauty" (p. 105).

In the Introduction to his Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti (dated November, 1910) Pound does state a belief in "absolute symbol or metaphor" (The Translations, p. 23), but he doesn't enlarge upon this except to state that "the perception of the intellect is given in the word, that of the emotion in the cadence. It is only then, in perfect rhythm joined to the perfect word that the two-fold vision can be recorded" (p. 23).

There is little hint in any of the above discussion that Hulme's experiments with the image influenced or even interested Pound, if one excepts the striking similarity in their mutual appreciation of the element of "swiftness" in the workings of metaphor, i.e., the importance of the mind's immediate perception of relations. Beyond this there is little evidence, which may seem surprising when we remember that Pound was not an infrequent visitor at Hulme's Poets' Club. However, Flint states that in 1909-10 Pound was only interested in the troubadours, and did little more at the meetings than attempt to refute or illustrate "our theories occasionally with their example" ("The History," p. 71). Pound's only elaboration of his contacts with Hulme would tend to bear this out:

> When the late T.E. Hulme was trying to be a philosopher in that milieu and fussing about Sorel and Bergson and getting them translated into English, I spoke to him one day of the difference between Guido's precise interpretive metaphor, and the Petrarchan fustian and ornament, pointing out that Guido thought in accurate terms; that the phrases correspond

> to definite sensations undergone; in fact very much what I had said in my early preface to the Sonnets and Ballate.
>
> Hulme took some time over it in silence, and then finally said: 'That is very interesting'; and after a pause: 'That is more interesting than anything I ever read in a book.'
>
> ("Cavalcanti," p. 162)

In "Prolegomena," published in February 1912, in the Poetry Review, Pound still speaks of "symbols" rather than "images" in his statement (already quoted above) about the natural object being the proper and adequate symbol, which was appropriate to his growing conviction of the need for precision of statement, and part of his mounting attack on vagueness and imprecision, and although in agreement with Hulme in principle, hardly shows his influence.

In the Spring of 1912, Pound still demonstrates caution in regard to the poet trying to paint with words:

> Thus, it is bad poetry to talk much of the colours of the sunrise, though one may speak of our lady 'of rosy fingers' or 'in russet clad,' invoking an image not present to the uninitiated; at this game the poet may surpass, but in the matter of the actual colour he is a bungler.
>
> ("I Gather," p. 343)

This reservation stems from his belief that art is bad when its content could have been more precisely expressed in another artistic medium. It is the presentation of things which establishes precision of statement, not their description, which may lead to vagueness. Echoing Aristotle,

Pound felt the former should be the poet's function. On this point Pound would seem in closer agreement with Hulme than with Ford.

It is only fair, in the light of the attempts made by some critics to prove otherwise, to show that Pound had always been well aware of the importance of the image in poetry, and that if he borrowed the terms "image" and "imagisme" from Hulme, this does not prove that this philosopher was responsible for all that school's tenets as Pound preached them.

The poetry and criticism Pound wrote under the Imagiste label, as we shall see in the next chapter, was a logical outgrowth of his previous experiments and studies, and represents in the totality of Pound's work, little more than a change in emphasis. Ford certainly, and perhaps to a lesser extent Hulme, indicated the direction poetry had to take to clear away the detritus of the Victorians and the 'Nineties, but their ideas supported what Pound was coming to see for himself. Pound obviously cannot be credited with initiating the "discussion of the image," but the poetry he was later to place under the title "Imagisme"[6] had little to do with Hulme's five poems or Ford's "Impressionism":

> Ford's preaching of French clarity, Yeats' insistence on 'intensity,' some study of comparative literature, etc., etc., a new magazine needing a policy, ultimately produced the formulation of 'Imagisme.'
> (Profile, p. 36)

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1 Ford Madox Hueffer legally changed his name to Ford Madox Ford in 1914.

2 First published in "Prolegomena," Poetry Review, I, no. 2 (Feb., 1912), 72-76.

3 First published in New Age, X, (25th Jan., 1912), 307.

4 Hulme wrote in New Age, XIV (1912), 341:

> I am attempting in this new series of articles to define the characteristics of a new constructive geometric art which seems to me to be emerging at the present moment.

5 The following paragraph is a paraphrase of Hulme's theories as set out in Appendix III of Roberts' T.E. Hulme under the title "Notes on Language and Style."

6 Flint states ("The History," p. 71) Pound "invented the term imagisme to designate the aesthetic of Les Imagistes."

CHAPTER IV

Phanopoeia

which is a casting of images
upon the visual imagination.

-How to Read

CHAPTER IV

Phanopoeia

The years 1912-1915 chronicle the rise of Ezra Pound to a position of eminence in the avant-garde literary world. Apart from the time and energy spent in writing poetry and criticism, he was the leader of poetry movements, critic of the arts, poet impresario, student, writer of letters and maker of books. If in the Spring of 1912 Pound was a recent convert from an over-ripe Victorianism, by 1915 he had become the protocosmopolite of modern letters.

In the late summer of 1912, as a result of his answering a circular for Ms. from Harriet Monroe, the founder and editor of Poetry, Pound became foreign correspondent (Letters, p. 10), and began a liaison which was to cause him much bitterness and exasperation, but which furnished him with an American outlet for his own work and that of his associates, and provided the circumstances whereby the Imagiste movement was launched in America. He was also at this time acting as "literary scout" for H.R. Wright's Smart Set (Fletcher, p. 90), and in England he was a regular columnist in A.R. Orage's The New Age. Harold Monro of The Poetry Review had befriended him so that Pound helped edit a number of that magazine devoted to modern American poetry in October, 1912. By August, 1913, Pound had also taken charge of the literary pages of Harriet Shaw Weaver's The New Freewoman (Letters, p. 22) later to become The Egoist in

January, 1914, as an English outlet for his Imagisme campaign. A few months later he became associated with Alfred Kreymborg's Glebe over the publication of his anthology Des Imagistes, published in America in February, 1914. By the fall of that year, Pound had thrown all his energies into the Vorticist movement and quickly became the moving force in the creation of that movement's organ, Blast.

Pound used these literary contacts for much more than to publish his own work. Taking upon himself the job of promoting "les jeunes" in whatever way he could, he constantly dispatched the many manuscripts which came into his hands to the most likely journal, and with equal equanimity, passed on the meagre financial returns. It was said of Pound during these years that he "knew almost everyone worth knowing, and scarcely an American poet passed through London but found his way to Ezra's flat" (Cournos, p. 271). The story of Pound the discoverer, mentor and publisher of poets is a fascinating chapter in the history of modern poetry, and can only be touched on here. But through his connections Pound was getting the work of English writers such as W.B. Yeats, Richard Aldington and Ford Madox Ford, and American writers such as Hilda Doolittle, John Gould Fletcher and William Carlos Williams, known in both countries.

T.S. Eliot has always been quick to acknowledge the debt the new poetry in general, and American poetry in particular, owe to Pound:

> Pound did not create the poets: but he created a situation in which, for the first time, there was a 'modern movement in poetry' in which English and American poets collaborated, knew each others works, and influenced each other. Who, I wonder, in England (to say nothing of the rest of Europe) has read any American poetry written between Whitman and Robert Frost? If it had not been for the work Pound did...the isolation of individual American poets might have continued for a long time.
>
> ("Ezra Pound," p. 29)

Wyndham Lewis has spoken of his generation's literary debt to Pound in a more personal reference:

> It is to take nothing away from that admirable and self-denying Quaker Lady to point out that it was not Miss Weaver, after all, who came across Joyce's novel, The Portrait of the Artist, and recognised its value: as a result of which recognition and warm support it was serialized in her review, The Egoist. (Nor was Eliot's verse, nor my novel Tarr - which she likewise serialized... [but] work brought to her notice by Pound.
>
> ("Ezra Pound," p. 265)

Apart from his unfailing support of writers with whom he might be said to be in basic agreement, such as the "later" Yeats or H.D., Pound could overlook aesthetic differences to praise the best work of writers for whom he was less sympathetic. Thus, in an early review of D.H. Lawrence's Love Poems and Others, although he could deplore the "pre-raphaelite slush" it didn't blind him to other qualities:

> Mr. Lawrence has attempted realism and attained it. He has brought contemporary verse up to the level of contemporary prose, and that is no mean achievement.
> ("D.H. Lawrence," p. 388)

Similarly in an early review[2] of Robert Frost's A Boy's Will, although he could characterize the verse as being "a little raw" and containing "a number of infelicities," he could praise it as well:

> This man has the good sense to speak naturally and to paint the thing, the thing as he sees it. And to do this is a very different matter from gunning about for the circumplectious polysyllable.
> ("Robert Frost," p. 382)

And in a review[3] of Frost's North of Boston:

> But why, IF there are serious people in America, desiring literature of America, literature accepting present conditions, rendering American life with sober fidelity - why, in heaven's name, is this book of New England eclogues given us under a foreign imprint?
> ("Robert Frost," p. 385)

Beyond his desire to see "modern" poetry written and published, Pound was anxious for the future of poetry in America. When in August, 1912, he answered Harriet Monroe's circular soliciting the work of American poets for her forthcoming journal, he wrote:

> Are you for American poetry or for poetry? The latter is more important, but it is important that America should boast the former, provided it don't mean a blindness to the art. The

> glory of any nation is to produce art that can be exported without disgrace to its origin.
>
> (Letters, p. 9)

That Pound gave more than lip service to a concept of poetry transcending language and time, we have had adequate proof, which partly explains his ambivalence towards the American, or the contemporary American variety; it was a battle between head and heart. Until American poetry attained certain standards, it would always lag behind even the mediocre productions of Europe. But Pound had faith in the future. In the same letter he wrote:

> Any agonizing that tends to hurry what I believe in the end to be inevitable, our American Risorgimento, is dear to me. That awakening will make the Italian Renaissance look like a tempest in a teapot! The force we have, and the guiding impulse, but the guiding sense, the discrimination in applying the force, we must wait and strive for.
>
> (Letters, p. 10)

A month after this letter was written, Pound was already in the throes of a series of articles on America in The New Age entitled "Patria Mia"[4], which ran from September through November, 1912. In this work he declared his belief that the possibility of true art expression and much of the hope for a realization and use of the arts, lay with America. Only in America existed the possibility and imminence of an art renaissance. The first step was to educate:

> I have said that the two things requisite in the renaissance were enthusiasm and a propaganda. For

> America I would say that the one thing lacking is the propaganda...
>
> (Patria Mia, p. 79)

However, in the field of poetry it was not to lack this for long.

Early in the Spring of 1912, Pound met Richard Aldington, a young English poet, and became reacquainted with Hilda Doolittle (H.D.), an American emigré poetess whom he had known during his Pennsylvania days (Williams, p. 64). On one occasion, according to Aldington, when the three young friends were reading and discussing each other's poetry in a London tea-shop, Pound "removed his pince-nez and informed us that we were Imagists" (Aldington, p. 135). Pound states that Imagisme "began certainly in Church Walk with H.D., Richard Aldington and myself," and that "it was started, not very seriously to give H.D.'s poems a hearing" (Monroe, p. 267). In any case, in October, 1912, with the first of H.D.'s poetry that he sent to Harriet Monroe, the editor of Poetry, he included the following note:

> I've had luck again, and am sending you some modern stuff by an American, I say modern, for it is in the laconic speech of the Imagistes even if the speech is classic. At least H.D. has lived with these things since childhood, and knew them before she had any book-knowledge of them.
>
> This is the sort of stuff that I can show here and in Paris without its being ridiculed. Objective - no slither; direct - no excessive use of adjectives, or metaphor that won't permit examination. It's straight talk, straight as the Greek!
>
> (Letters, p. 11)

H.D.'s poetry, although intensely personal and of a narrow range, does demonstrate some of the qualities Pound had always praised: concreteness and accuracy of observation. Metrically, her verse was unconventional, and Pound admired her classical, quantitative rhythms. The following extract from "Hermes of the Ways," is an example of what drew Pound's praise:

> The hard sand breaks,
> And the grains of it
> Are clear as wine.
>
> Far off over the league of it,
> The wind,
> Playing on the wide shore
> Piles little ridges,
> And the great waves
> Break over it.
>
> (Doolittle, "Hermes," p. 118)

The discovery of H.D.'s verse was perhaps adequate reason to found a movement or school which would give such poetry a hearing. In the January issue of Poetry, 1913, in addition to H.D.'s poems, there appeared a note by Pound which mentioned the "program of the Imagistes," and hinted that "one of their watchwords is Precision" ("Status Rerum," p. 126). In March, 1913, Poetry published the so-called "Imagiste manifesto,"[5] which consisted of Pound's now famous "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," together with an explanatory interview, written by Pound but under Flint's name[6], entitled "Imagisme." Pound's "A Few Don'ts reads like a poet's handbook of rules. In fact Pound has stated they were originally intended as little else.

> The 'Don'ts' in the following reprint had a plain utilitarian purpose in that they were intended as a rejection slip to be used by a trade paper. They are aimed at the faults most prevalent of poetry as we found it in 1905-1912.
> ("A Stray Document," p. 335)

It is fairly clear that at its inception, neither those who professed to be adherents of Imagisme, nor the public who were exposed to its tenets, knew what the word meant. Pound had enumerated three governing principles which he listed as follows[7]:

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.
("Imagisme," p. 199)

As Pound explained:

> Upon many points of taste and of predilection we [H.D., Aldington and E.P.] differed, but agreeing upon these three positions we thought we had as much right to a group name, at least as much right, as a number of French 'schools' proclaimed by Mr. Flint in the August number of Harold Monro's magazine for 1911.
> ("A Retrospect," p. 3)

There is nothing in these three principles that Pound had not said previously, nor, with the exception of the "doctrine of the image" was there anything in the "Don'ts" that seems radically new. But it is here that a distinction must be drawn between the different senses in which Pound used the word.

First of all there was "Imagisme" the advertising campaign, the movement which was to awaken the readers of Harriet Monroe's magazine to the new poetry. Thus Pound could begin training them in modernity, for under such a label the principles of good writing could be circulated, and the "Risvegliamento" hastened in America. Aware of the prevalent faults of his contemporaries, and what he had but recently expunged from his own verse, Imagisme also became Pound's word of praise for the modern verse that stood for "hard light, clear edges," and demonstrated "a certain clarity and intensity" (Letters, p. 38) whether such verse was characterized by an image or not. Even as a propaganda movement though, Pound saw the movement as restrictive rather than creative:

> Imagisme, if it is known at all, will be known chiefly as a stylistic movement, or a movement of criticism rather than creation.
> ("Vorticism," p. 461)

In America, Imagisme began with a vocal campaign in the pages of Poetry; in England, however, Pound seemed less interested in propagandising. Poetry and Drama published summaries of the Poetry articles, and described Imagisme as "a new school of English Poetry, still at present very small, under the formidable dictatorship of Ezra Pound" (Monro, p. 127). In September, 1913, Pound arranged for the publication of a group of poems in The New Freewoman which he described as by "the newer school" which included work by Aldington, H.D., and Flint, and to indicate that the movement had grown, poetry by Skipwith Cannéll, W.C. Williams and Amy Lowell.

Amy Lowell entered the Pound sphere of influence in the summer of 1913. Armed with a letter of introduction from Harriet Monroe, she visited Pound, and through him met others of the group. She soon underwent a literary conversion at the hands of the "school" for they proceeded to rewrite her poems, cutting out clichés and verbiage (Damon, p. 208). Pound was reported by Harriet Monroe to have told Robert Frost: "When I get through with that girl she'll think she was born in free verse" (Monroe, p. 275). As Miss Lowell was forced to admit: "He could make you write" (Damon, p. 208). When she returned to America, Pound wrote her in September mentioning that he was "cogitating" an anthology of poetry to be called Des Imagistes and that he wished to include her poem "The Garden" (Letters, p. 24).

The effectiveness of anthology publication had been ably demonstrated by Edward March's Georgian Anthology, published in 1912, which reportedly sold some 15,000 copies (Coffman, p. 17). Pound planned both an English and American edition for his venture; Harold Monro's Bookshop Press handled the English edition and the American one appeared as the fifth number of The Glebe[8].

Des Imagistes contained nine poems by Aldington, seven by H.D., five by Flint, one each by Hueffer, Williams, Cannéll, Lowell, Upward, Cournos and Joyce, and six by Pound[9]. As Pound conceived of it:

> The Anthology does not represent the personalities of those included, nor does it represent their differences, but the line where they come together, their agreement that the cake-icing on the top of poetry, the useless adjectives and the unnecessary similes which burden verse like cumbrous ornaments... should be avoided.
>
> ("Les Imagistes," p. 14)

During the summer of 1914, Pound's energies became absorbed in a new movement of the arts called "Vorticism" and its official publication Blast.

When Amy Lowell arrived back in London in July 1914, she wrote to Harriet Monroe that she had found the Imagiste movement suffering from Pound's neglect:

> I found our little group more or less disgruntled and broken up. Violent jealousy has broken out ...Poor old Ezra has got himself into a most silly movement of which Blast is the organ...The craze for advertisement has swept Ezra off his feet. His Imagiste movement is petering out because of the lack of vigor in his poets, and the complete indifference of the public.
> (Damon, p. 237)

Disgruntled herself by the fact that she had been included in Des Imagistes as "padding" (Damon, p. 233), she approached the other members of the group with a scheme whereby each of the poets elect would be allowed equal space in subsequent anthologies, thus dispossessing Pound of his anonymous editorship. The other members of the group were in favour of this plan, for as H.D. wrote to Amy Lowell, "We all agreed that Ezra could not expect to run us all his own way forever" (Damon, p. 239). Pound of course was furious; he felt that Amy Lowell was trying to make herself editor, and he disagreed violently with the principle of equality. As he wrote to her in August, 1914:

> ...if I abrogate my privileges, if I give way to, or saddle myself with, a dam'd contentious, probably incompetent committee. If I tacitly, tacitly to say the least of it, accept a certain

> number of people as my critical and creative equals and publish the acceptance.
>
> I should like the name 'Imagisme' to retain some sort of meaning.
> (Letters, p. 38)

The upshot of the affair was that when the group was asked to choose between Amy Lowell and Pound, it chose Amy Lowell, and left Pound outside the movement he had begun. As Miss Lowell tactfully put it, "If he chose to separate himself from us, we should be obliged, although most regretfully, to let him" (Damon, p. 239). If Pound had seriously entertained the thought of running Imagisme in America, and helping to run Vorticism in England, thus establishing himself as the kingpin of the avant-garde literary worlds on two continents, he had to remain content with only one.

In its early stages, Imagisme was little more than a label which characterised a group of poets whose verse Pound favoured. Such widely differing talents as Hueffer and Yeats were published under its aegis. However, in retrospect, Pound has emphasized the more technical aspects of the term:

> Once, to avoid vain discussion: to avoid argument as to what constitutes good poetry, and to define more exactly certain properties of one kind of good poetry, I invented a word (Imagisme). I intended it to be a technical term, exact as the terms of science are exact (as nearly as possible).
> ("Affirmations," p. 349)

It would seem then that it was not so much that a certain poet was an "Imagiste," but that he did on occasion write "Imagisme."

In the Imagiste manifesto, mention is made of a certain "Doctrine of the Image." The Image was defined as:

> ...that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time...It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.
>
> ("A Few Don'ts," p. 4)

For the moment, we shall be concerned with Pound's experiments with, and theories of, the "image" or "Image," in the more technical sense in which he used the term from 1912-1915. The emphasis on a visual kind of poetry, or phanopoeia[10], can be followed as a persistent thread in Pound's ars poetica, and it must be seen as complementary and parallel to the earlier emphasis on melopoeia. They are at opposite ends of the poetic spectrum:

> There have always been two sorts of poetry which are, for me at least, the most 'poetic'; they are firstly, the sort of poetry which seems to be music just forcing itself into articulate speech, and, secondly, that sort of poetry which seems as if sculpture or painting were just forced or forcing itself into words.
>
> ("The Later Yeats," p. 68)

The poem which Pound consistently chose from his own verse as an example of imagiste writing was "In a Station of the Metro," first published in April, 1913[11]:

> The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
> Petals on a wet, black bough.
> (Personae, p. 109)

A year and a half later, Pound described the circumstances surrounding the origins of this poem. Apparently, it was written as an equation for the feeling evoked by the sudden appearance of a few beautiful, unknown faces in a crowd at a Paris Metro Station. In fact, Pound stated the poem should really have been a painting, because it was an equation in colour:

> That is to say, my experience in Paris should have gone into paint. If instead of colour I had perceived sound or planes in relation, I should have expressed it in music or in sculpture.
> ("Vorticism," p. 466)

However, by employing the technique of the one image poem, which "is a form of super-position, that is to say it is one idea set on top of another," he was able to extricate himself from the impasse he had been left by his metro emotion.

> I wrote a 30 line poem, and destroyed it because it is what we call work 'of second intensity.' Six months later I made a poem half that length; a year later I made the following hokku-like sentence... [Pound quotes the poem] I dare say it is meaningless unless one has drifted into a certain train of

> thought...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.
>
> ("Vorticism," p. 467)

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

In Pound's experiments with metaphorical "super-position," if both terms of the metaphor were images of phenomena, of solid things, it is the second term of the analogy that introduces the complex of sensuous connotations. Thus from "April":[12]

> ...the olive boughs
> lay stripped upon the ground:
> Pale carnage beneath bright mist...
>
> (Personae, p. 92)

or from "A Song of the Degrees":[13]

II

The wind moves above the wheat -
with a silver crashing,
A thin war of metal...
(Personae, p. 95)

and the method in reverse from "The Garden":[14]

Like a skein of loose silk blown against a wall
She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington Gardens.
(Personae, p. 83)

As Kenner has pointed out (p. 62), Pound's experiments with the hokku form were attempts at creating "perspective by incongruity," which does not mean, as Pound once described some of Baudelaire's verse, "any decayed cabbage cast upon any pale satin sofa" (Imaginary Letters, p. 49). The poet is trying to effect more than a contrast, in fact he juxtaposes two kinds of perception to strike light from their interaction. Metaphor or swiftly revealed comparison is of course an important part of the technique, but the insight lacks the fundamental irony of Hulme's usage.

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

The Coming of War: Actaeon

An Image of Lethe,
      and the fields
Full of faint light
      but golden,
Gray cliffs,
      and beneath them
A sea
Harsher than granite,
      unstill, never ceasing;
(Personae, p. 107)

In this example, the effect of sculpture or painting just forcing itself into speech can be noted, and so far as the poem produces an "Image" this Image is dependent upon a series of images.

Pound has also used the word image (he means Image) to refer to the total effect or pattern of a poem, not necessarily primarily a visual effect:

> By the 'image' I mean such an equation, not an equation of mathematics, not something about a, b, and c, having something to do with form, but about sea, cliffs, and night, having something to do with mood.
> ("Vorticism," p. 469)

The fragile beauty of such a poem as "Doria," one of Pound's contributions to Des Imagistes, is achieved through the interplay of quantitative rhythm and the texture of the word units, rather than through visual images.

Doria

Be in me as the eternal moods
   of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are -
   gaiety of flowers,

Have me in the strong loneliness
    of sunless cliffs
And of grey waters,
    Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,
    The shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember thee.
(Personae, p. 67)

Even in Pound's practice, with the verse of his own that he included under the Imagiste label, there is considerable variation. More support to the view that the "image" was one means to an important end, that of focussing attention on freshening the language. Conciseness, economy and precision were necessary to achieve this end. Beyond this there is the evidence of Pound's phanopoeia, a more descriptive term than imagisme for the kind of poetry he was writing. Pound's imagisme then, like the experiments of Hulme, and the critical admonitions of Ford, share in the contemporary will to redefine poetry within narrower limits. In the final analysis too, the question of the immediate origin of Pound's imagiste theories becomes unimportant with the realisation that imagisme was for him a concept of poetry which he evolved from his own principles of good writing.

During the years immediately prior to the first war, Pound came in contact with another tradition which served to develop his phanopoeic theories. As a result of reading[15] a group of Pound's poems entitled "Contemporania," published in Poetry in April, 1913[16], the widow of Ernest Fenollosa, the Sino-Japanese scholar, decided to make Pound her husband's "literary executor" (Letters, p. 31). Fenollosa had left

some manuscripts from his own work, and that of the Japanese scholars Mori and Ariza, which consisted of a number of rough translations from the Chinese and Japanese. The Chinese poems were a Japanese selection, for the most part attributed to the T'ang poet Li Tai Po (in Sino-Japanese Ri-ha-ku); the Japanese material was made up of literal translations of a series of Noh plays.

The Translations were rough but literal; in form the pages held columns of ideographs with the literal English beside them (Edwards, p. 165). Pound immediately set to work on the manuscripts, using other English and French translations. By the end of January, 1914, Pound had sent the Noh play "Nishikigi"[17] to Harriet Monroe:

> I think you will agree with me that this
> Japanese find is about the best bit of luck
> we've had since the starting of the magazine...
> This present stuff ranks as re-creation.
> You'll find W.B. Y [eats] also very keen on it.
> (Letters, p. 31)

Through the summer and autumn of 1914 Pound worked on the Chinese translations. As H.D. wrote at the time to Amy Lowell:

> Ezra is doing Chinese translations - and some
> are very beautiful! He comes running in four
> or five times a day now with new versions for
> us to read.
> (Coffman, p. 156)

By December, 1914, the Cathay manuscript was ready for the printer (Edwards, p. 165), but it was not published until April, 1915, closely followed by 'Noh,' or Accomplishment (January, 1916) and Certain Noble

Plays of Japan (September, 1916)[18]. For Pound, his discovery of oriental literature had untold possibilities:

> The first step of a renaissance, or awakening, is the importation of models for painting, sculpture or writing...The last century rediscovered the middle ages. It is possible that this century may find a new Greece in China.
> ("The Renaissance," pp. 214-215)

Pound began to use the Chinese ideogram or written character to support his imagiste theories in the Fall of 1913, according to Fletcher (p. 88). The reason is not far to seek, for it lies in the nature of the Chinese ideogrammic method. The Chinese written character is based on form rather than sound, so that the written word is a picture of an object or an action. For example, the ideogram for "man" is a modified picture of one. The ideogram thus makes inevitable a poetry of pictures. But it is not only the literal and pictorial aspects of the ideogram which allow it to be related to Imagisme. It can also make an abstraction concrete by the metaphorical use of natural images to suggest immaterial relations. Thus the Chinese ideogram of the English expression "to ramble or visit" consisted of a modified picture of a king and a dog sitting on the stern of a boat ("Vorticism," p. 465). Such examples of the early Chinese ideographists using "exploratory metaphor" or the "language of exploration" (p. 464), confirmed Pound's belief in the necessity for concreteness and directness in poetry. From the Chinese example too, he was made aware of the strength language gains when it sticks close to the

natural object and process.

Among the Fenollosa manuscripts was an analysis of the Chinese written character. Pound had readied this essay for publication by 1915, but "the adamantine stupidity of all magazine editors" (Letters, p. 61) delayed its appearance until 1919[19]. Although Fenollosa's analysis contained little that was intrinsically novel for Pound (Kenner, p. 95), its effectiveness lay in his discovery of an alien poetic tradition which supported and expanded his own imagiste theories. In his introduction to Fenollosa's essay Pound wrote:

> We have here not a bare philological discussion, but a study of the fundamentals of all aesthetics. In his search through unknown art, Fenollosa, coming upon unknown motives and principles unrecognised in the West, was already led into many modes of thought since fruitful in 'new' Western painting and poetry. He was a forerunner without it and without being known as such...The later movements in art have corroborated his theories.
> (Fenollosa, p. 3)

Fenollosa's theories stress verbal vividness and concreteness:

> The more concretely and vividly we express the interactions of things the better the poetry. We need in poetry thousands of active words, each doing its utmost to show forth the native and vital forces...Poetic thought works by suggestion, crowding maximum meaning into the single phrase pregnant, charged, and luminous from within.
> (Fenollosa, p. 32)

One is reminded of Pound's admonition in "A Few Don'ts":

> Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands of peace.' It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer not realising that the natural object is always the adequate symbol.
> ("A Few Don'ts," p. 5)

The Chinese ideogram in Pound's terms, as it does not attempt to picture the sound, or to be a written sign recalling a sound; but is the picture of a thing, of a thing in a given position or relation, or of a combination of things: "It means the thing or the action or situation, or quality germane to the several things that it pictures" (ABC, p. 21). Thus, as Fenollosa glosses the ideogram (made up of 3 characters) which corresponds to the abstract statement in English "Man sees horse":

人見馬

> First stands the man on his two legs. Second, his eye moves through space: a bold figure represented by running legs under an eye, a modified picture of an eye, a modified picture of running legs, but unforgettable once you have seen it. Third stands the horse on his four legs.
>
> The thought-picture is not only called up by these signs as well as by words, but far more vividly and concretely. Legs belong to all three characters: they are alive. The group holds something of the quality of a continuous moving picture.
> (Fenollosa, p. 12)

The written Chinese words remain alive and plastic, "thing" and "action" are not formally separated. Again as Fenollosa expressed it: "In reading Chinese, we do not seem to be juggling mental counters, but to be watching things work out their fate" (Fenollosa, p. 13). The reader is reminded of movement: the simplest sentence moves. Something passes from subject to predicate: Man s - e - e - s Horse. This pictorial demonstration in the Chinese caused Pound to write a corollary to Imagisme's principles:

> The defect of earlier Imagist propaganda was not in misstatement but in incomplete statement ...If you can't think of imagism or phanopoeia as including the moving image, you will have to make a really needless division of fixed image and praxis or action.
> (ABC of Reading, p. 52)

Fenollosa's demonstration was that the simplest sentence has a plot, and imitates an action.

The Chinese written character also served to remind the poet that the whole delicate substance of speech is built upon substrata of metaphor. Even the pronoun, that unanalysable expression of personality:

> In Chinese they [pronouns] ...yield up their striking secrets of verbal metaphor...take, for example, the five forms of 'I'. There is the sign of a 'spear in the hand' = a very emphatic I; five and a mouth = a weak and defensive eye, holding off a crowd by speaking; to conceal = a selfish and private I; self (the cocoon sign) and a mouth = an egoistic I, one who takes pleasure in his own speaking; the self presented is used only when one is speaking to one's self.
> (Fenollosa, p. 25)

To expand the "five and a mouth" into metaphorical relations, following Kenner (p. 89) one could write:

This man	::	Speaker's mouth	::	Fist
Other men		Hostile audience		Enemy

It is a threefold proportion; the relation of this "I" to others are those of a speaker holding off a crowd, five fingered hand raised. The Chinese ideograms provide a vivid shorthand picture, they deal in highly condensed juxtapositions.

Metaphor to Fenollosa was "the revealer of nature...the very substance of poetry" (p. 27). He believed that the Chinese written language had absorbed the poetic substance of nature, and built with it a second work of metaphor, and had, through its pictorial visibility, retained its original creative poetry, vigor and vividness: "It retains the primitive sap, it is not cut and dried like a walking-stick" (p.28). Because the etymology of the written word is constantly visible (the lines of metaphoric advance are still shown) the word becomes richer in the written poetry. One of the problems of translating Chinese poetry was to preserve these metaphoric overtones[20].

In the Introduction to Ezra Pound:Selected Poems, T.S. Eliot claimed that throughout the work of Pound there was:

> ...a steady effort towards the synthetic construction of a style of speech. In each of the elements or strands there is something of Pound and something of some other, not further analysable; the strands go to make one rope, but the rope is not yet complete.
>
> ("Introduction:1928," p. 12)

When Mrs. Fenollosa perceived the poet of "Contemporania" to be fitted for the job of refining the poetic raw material that her husband had assembled from the Chinese, Pound had the opportunity of consolidating his phanopoeic mode of speech. The Essay on the Chinese character provided a theory "which is a very good one for poets to go by" (Letters, p. 82) and fitted in to "what has happened in art - painting and poetry"(Letters, p. 101), but the language to articulate the Chinese material had already been tested. As he wrote to Kate Buss in 1917:

> I think you will find all the verbal constructions of Cathay already tried in 'Provincia Deserta'... The subject is Chinese, the language of the translations is mine.
>
> (Letters, p. 101)

The first few lines of this poem, written, according to Pound, before the Chinese translations were begun, although first published in March, 1915[21], reads:

> At Rochecoart,
> Where the hills part
> in three ways,
> And three valleys, full of winding roads,
> Fork out to south and north,
> There is a place of trees...grey with lichen.
> I have walked there
> thinking of old days.
>
> (Personae, p. 121)

And from "The City of Choan" in Cathay:

The Three Mountains fall through the far heaven,
The isle of White Heron
splits the two streams apart.
Now the high clouds cover the sun
And I can not see Choan afar
And I am sad.
(Personae, p. 138)

Pound's practice of carving his images exactly, and then leaving them bare, without decorations, is demonstrated in both selections. In the matter of the free verse rhythms, however, one can detect a change. As Kenner has pointed out (p. 154) Cathay is noteworthy as a demonstration of the poet filling in "the emotional air-pockets" characteristic of the early attempts at the "vers libre" technique, without abandoning its essential method. Much of the early vers libre poetry, particularly that of H.D., and to a lesser extent that of Pound, tended to break down into short choppy gobbets of emotion. These isolated phrases, in Kenner's words are:

...admirably suited to choked reverie; isolated phrases acquire a maximum of poignancy without adjectival violations of tact. But it is obvious we are approaching the borders of parody.
(Kenner, p. 152)

The danger is that the lines, stretched too thin, break into saccharine phrases like:

ἱμέρρω

Thy soul
Grown delicate with satieties,
Atthis.
O Atthis,
I long for thy lips.
I long for thy narrow breasts,
Thou restless, ungathered.
(Personae, p. 112)

In Cathay the structural unit is still the line, but the extreme alterations in line length are rarer; there is more of the measured tone of:

The River Merchant's Wife:
A Letter

> While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
> I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
> You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,
> You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
> And we went on living in the village of Chokan:
> Two small people, without dislike or suspicion...
> (Personae, p. 130)

The verse is less prone to abrupt rhythmic shifts within the passages and the longer lines make for a more exuberant and less "delicate" verse. The effect of the phanopoeia, the almost kaleidoscopic quality of the images, is to draw out the rhythm. Thus from the "Exile's Letter":

> To the dynastic temple, with water about it clear as blue jade,
> With boats floating, and the sound of mouth-organs and drums,
> With ripples like dragon-scales, going grass green on the water,
> Pleasure lasting, with courtezans, going and coming without hindrances
> With the willow flakes falling like snow...
> (Personae, pp. 135-136)

The example of this method is found in the Anglo Saxon. As Pound notes in ABC of Reading:

> I once got a man to start translating The Seafarer into Chinese. It came out almost directly into Chinese verse, with two solid ideograms in each half-line.
> (ABC of Reading, p. 21)

Anglo-Saxon verse juxtaposes things, as can be seen from the following lines taken from Pound's translation of "The Seafarer":

> Bosque taketh blossom, cometh beauty of berries,
> Fields to fairness, land fares brisker,
> (Personae, p. 65)

The mode of this verse is phanopoeia (compare the effect of kennings such as "whale's acre" "whale-path" "flesh-cover" to the ideogram). An analogy can be drawn between the two ideograms in the half-line of the Chinese, and the two key words in the half-line in the Anglo-Saxon.

T.S. Eliot has said that Chinese poetry, as we know it today, is something invented by Ezra Pound, and that in three hundred years Pounds Cathay will be a "Windsor Translation" as Chapman and North are now "Tudor Translations" ("Introduction: 1928," p. 15). Again the question arises whether the poems in Cathay should be considered adaptations or transliterations. The poems appear translucencies; we think we are close to the Chinese. Pound described them as being "closer than the Rubaiyat"[22] (Letters, p. 61), but he has claimed all of Cathay as "Personae," and in particular he has singled out the "Exiles Letter" with "The Seafarer" as "major personae" (Umbra, p. 127). In spite of the freedom that is inherent in the persona method of translation, the translation qua poem discussed in Chapter II, Pound has been singled out by the expert sinologue Wen Tung Hsieh for praise as follows:

> Mr. Pound's errors are all obvious ones. For what he lacked in lingual access, however, Mr. Pound almost made up in an astonishing interpretive acumen, by which he often penetrated through the veil of an alien text to the significant features of the original: tone, poetic intention and verbal felicity.
>
> (Hsieh, p. 423)

Further, having followed Fenollosa's admonitions, Pound is the one translator who makes no such concession to the reader as to substitute explication for implication, or insert extraneous information into the poem (Hsieh, pp. 423-424). Hsieh compares three translations of a phrase from "Leave-Taking Near Shoku" (Personae, p. 138), a poem by Li Po in which no pronouns exist in the original.

> Your destiny has been settled!
> You will not need to consult kwang Ping, the fortune teller.
>
> (Christy)
>
> Go my friend! Our destiny's decided.
> You need not bother to ask Chuan Ping, the fortune-teller.
>
> (Obato)
>
> Men's fates are already set,
> There is no need of asking diviners.
>
> (Pound)
>
> (Hsieh, pp. 421-422)

Hsieh's comments on style are worth quoting in this context:

> Style is as important in translation as in composition. Messrs. Bynner, Waley, and Pound all have it. The drawback lies in the possession of a style: a style individual and inflexible, as in the case of Mr. Bynner. Mr. Waley submerges his individuality to re-express the original but compromises with English tradition (especially in the matter of articulation). Mr. Pound is the only one who, uninhibited by tradition, moulds his style on the text.
>
> (Hsieh, pp. 423-424)

The excellence of Pound's work can be judged by comparing two versions of a poem by Li Po:

On Climbing in Nanking to the Terrace of Phoenixes

Phoenixes that played here once, so that the place was named for them,
Have abandoned it now to this desolate river;
The paths of Wu Palace are cracked with weeds;
The garments of Chin are ancient dust.
...Like this green horizon halving the Three Peaks,
Like this island of White Egrets dividing the river,
A cloud has arisen between the Light of Heaven and me,
To hide his city from my melancholy heart.
(Witter Bynner and Kiang Kang-Hu - Hsieh, p. 422)

The City of Choan

The phoenix are at play on their terrace.
The phoenix are gone, the river flows on alone.
Flowers and grass
Cover over the dark path
where lay the dynastic house of the Go.
The bright cloths and bright caps of Shin
Are now the base of old hills.

The Three Mountains fall through the far heaven,
The isle of White Heron
splits the two streams apart.
Now the high clouds cover the sun
And I can not see Choan afar
And I am sad.
(Ezra Pound - Personae, p. 138)

Cathay is a highlight in Pound's work. However, we should not forget that Pound's style had developed to the point that he could transmute the content of the Chinese poems into English, and we must admit with Mr. Eliot, that: "The Cathay cathartic may have helped to purge Mr. Pound; but its importance is found in its place in his work, and not in its being Chinese" ("The Method," p. 1065). In the words of a

review of Cathay in the Times Literary Supplement: "A literal translation from something strange and good may surprise our language into new beauties." [23]

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

> And I find Noh unsatisfactory. I daresay it's all that could be done with the material. I don't believe anyone else will come along to do a better book on Noh, save for encyclopaedizing the subject. And I admit there are beautiful bits in it. But it's all too damn soft. Like Pater, Fiona Macleod and James Mathew Barrie, not good enough.
>
> (Letters, p. 137)

For Pound, China was fundamental, Japan was not[24] (Letters, p. 102). The Japanese material he considered a special interest; it did not have the timeless quality of the Chinese, nor its solidity. However, the Noh plays were more confirmation of imagiste principles, for they had unity of Image:

> ...the Noh has its unity in emotion. It has also what we may call Unity of Image [i.e. total effect] . At least, the better plays are all built into the intensification of a single Image: the red maple leaves and the snow flurry in Nishikigi, the pines in Takasago, the blue-grey waves and wave pattern in Suma Genji, the mantle of feathers in the play of that name, Hagoromo.
>
> (The Translations, p. 237)[25]

As Fenollosa[26] had pointed out (The Translations, p. 279) each Noh drama embodies some human relation or emotion, such as brotherly love, loyalty, love of husband and wife. Each play also contained a central concrete image, in which the emotion became concentrated and symbolized. The Noh dramas interested Pound for their ability to produce a single unified impression, and for the part a central image played in their structure:

> The intensification of the Image, this manner of construction, is very interesting to me personally, as an Imagiste, for we Imagistes knew nothing of these plays when we set out in our own manner. These plays are also an answer to a question that has been several times put to me: 'Could one do a long Imagiste poem, or even a long poem in vers libre?'
> (The Translations, p. 237)

But the problem with Noh as translated literature was that its beauty in the original lay in the concentration of a number of elements: costume, dancing, verse and music, which united to produce the single clarified impression (or Image). Then too the genre was highly symbolical, and the more symbolical drama is, the more the play has to be seen on the stage. As Eliot suggests:

> In reading the Noh, we have not so much help from our imagination, for the image we wish to form is the image on the stage...in seeing Noh, I imagine we have more help for our imagination.
> ("The Noh and the Image," p. 103)

The reader of Pound's translations is immediately made aware of the "celtic" tone which Pound imparted to his translations. He is constantly teased by Yeats. Thus from "Kakitsubata":

> And looking upon the waves at Ise and Owari,
> He longed for his brief year of glory:
> The waves, the breakers return,
> But my glory comes not again,
> Narihira, Narihira,
> My glory comes not again.
> He stood at the foot of Azama of Shinano, and saw the smoke curling upwards.
> (The Translations, p. 337)

However, there are also echoes of other sources. There is an alliterative, almost Anglo-Saxon quality about such lines as these from "Nishikigi":

> There is nothing here but this cave in the field's midst.
> Today's wind moves in the pines;
> a wild place, unlit, unfilled.
> (The Translations, p. 298)

There are echoes of the Provençal in this fragment from "Kakitsubata":

> 'She whom I left in the city?' Thought Narihira. But in the long tale, Monogatari, there is many a page full of travels...
> (The Translations, p. 338)

But the general impression is one of thinness, that the translator was remote from his text. Eliot has observed ("The Noh," p. 103) that with a Pound translation, when the writing is most like Pound, it also presents the appearance of being most faithful to the original. Certainly Pound is convincing in making the Chinese poet's world his own, creating

that happy fusion between the spirit of the original and his own mind, which results in the recreation of the Chinese text in English. If the series of Noh dramas are less successful, it is because there is less of Pound in them. They are exotic, and were appreciated by the poet rather than deeply felt. Even if less successful, the Noh volumes seem in retrospect a small price to have paid for Cathay[27].

In the early summer of 1914, Pound became involved in another artistic movement called "Vorticism." The founder of this movement was the painter and writer Wyndham Lewis, who had been a friend of Pound since their meeting in 1909, when both were published "discoveries" in Ford's English Review. Lewis had gathered around himself a group of artists, among them Etchells and Wadsworth, to combat an artistic movement of continental origin called "Futurism," which was being propagandised at the time in London. At first Lewis and his friends merely opposed Futurism by disrupting its meetings, for although they agreed with one of the tenets of Futurism, that the traditional and academic in art should be overthrown, as Pound put it: "We are all futurists to the extent of believing with Guillaume Appolinaire that 'On ne peut pas porter partout avec soi le cadavre de son père'" (Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 94), they did not agree with futuristic preoccupation with men and machines. As Lewis declared of the leader of Futurism:

> Cannot Marinetti, sensible and energetic man that he is, be induced to throw over this sentimental rubbish about Automobiles and Aeroplanes.
> ("The Melodrama," pp. 143-144)

Pound stated categorically: "I am wholly opposed to his [Marinetti's] principles"("Exhibition," p. 109). It was not long before Lewis organized a countermovement, which Pound christened "Vorticism" (Lewis, Blasting, p. 254). With a headquarters established, called the "Rebel Art Centre," and a magazine, Blast, the group immediately set about preparing a manifesto. Pound joined the movement as its literary spokesman, and found himself by comparison with the Imagistes "at last inter pares" ("Ezra Pound Files," p. 245).

> It cannot be made too clear that the works of the Vorticists and the 'feeling of inner need' existed before the general noise about Vorticism. We worked separately, we found an underlying agreement, we decided to stand together.
>
> ("Vorticism," p. 471)

Primarily a movement of the visual arts, Vorticism joined in the contemporary artistic will to eschew the depiction of natural scenes and objects, and to create abstract forms by means of geometric figures, planes, cubes etc. This was to be the revolutionary artistic emphasis of the new art as Pound suggests:

> Whistler said somewhere in the Gentle Art: 'the picture is interesting, not because it is Trotty Veg, but because it is an arrangement in colour.' The minute you have admitted that, you have let in the jungle, you let in nature and truth and abundance and cubism, Kandinsky, and the lot of us.
>
> ("Vorticism," p. 464)

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

> So far as I am concerned, Jacob Epstein was the first person who came talking about 'form, not the form of anything.' It may have been Mr. T.E. Hulme, quoting Epstein... ("Affirmations," p. 312)

Even before the break with his Imagiste colleagues, Pound had enthusiastically entered the Vorticist movement, making its doctrine apply to poetry. He managed this by converting "Imagisme" as he understood it into "Vorticism," or rather, when Vorticism was announced, it encompassed Imagisme. The ostensible connecting link between the abstract in the visual arts and the image in poetry was Pound's theory of the primary pigment:

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

The primary pigment was considered the basic creative material of the artist:

> The test of invention lies in the primary pigment, that is to say, in that part of any art which is peculiarly of that art as distinct from 'the other arts.' The vorticist maintains that the organizing or creative-inventive faculty is the thing that matters. ("Affirmations," p. 350)

This inventive process, or ordering of the primary pigment, introduces the significance of the name of the movement. The Vorticist thought of art as being in part the result of energy which the artist receives from his stimulus. The artist experiences an intense personal emotion, he then applies his intellect to ordering the subject or source of his emotion into form. He makes an equation. In poetry, the result was an image or "the point of maximum energy." The image was not "an idea" it was "a radiant node or cluster," "a cluster of fused ideas...endowed with energy." It is "what I can, and must perforce call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which ideas are constantly rushing." ("Vorticism," pp. 470-471).

Again, the situation is confused; it is not always clear which meaning of "image" he equates to the "vortex." As we have seen, the image, as Pound employs the term, may mean the conventional visual image, the metaphor involving two images, or the total effect of a poem, although with the latter there is always the suggestion that this has a visual basis, i.e. presents a picture which is in itself metaphorical. If an exact definition of what Pound meant by the image is difficult, the vortex by comparison he endows with almost mystical significance. Certainly the belief that the image is the "primary pigment" of poetry is the extreme to which his theorising about the visual in poetry went.

Pound is on firmer ground in his analysis of abstract form, and his appreciation of the effort of "contemporary" artists to realize some new aspect of reality by the objectification of emotion through,

for example, planes in relation or colour arrangement. The artist's subject is not seen as a thing to be copied, but a thing to be penetrated to reveal its particularity:

> The pine-tree in mist upon the far hill looks like a fragment of Japanese armour.
> The beauty of the pine-tree in the mist is not caused by its resemblance to the pine in the mist.
> In either case, the beauty, in so far as it is beauty of form, is the result of 'planes in relation.'
> The tree and the armour are beautiful because their diverse planes overlie in a certain manner.
> (Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 146)

The artist working in words only, may cast on the reader's mind a vivid image of either the armour or the pine by juxtaposing them or through use of the simile or metaphor. These are the tools of the poet:

> ...for he works not with planes, or with colour, but with the names of objects and of properties. It is his business so to use, so to arrange those names or to cast a more definite image than the layman can cast.
> (Gaudier-Brzeska, pp. 146-147)

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

> I made poems like 'The Return,' which is an objective reality and has a complicated sort of significance like Mr. Epstein's 'Sun God,' or Mr. Brzeska's 'Boy with a Coney'...I have written 'Heather,' which represents a state of consciousness, or 'implies' or 'implicates' it...These two latter sorts of poems are impersonal...they fall in with the new pictures and the new sculpture.
> ("Vorticism," pp. 463-464)

"The Return," as we have seen earlier, was an interesting experiment in audible form, or rhythm form, as opposed to an organization of visible form or colours. "Heather," on the other hand, is an exercise in the creation of a pattern of colour images:

> The black panther treads at my side,
> And above my fingers
> There float the petal like flames.
>
> The milk-white girls
> Unbend from the Holly-trees,
> And their snow-white leopard
> Watches to follow our trace.
> (Personae, p. 109)

The effect of the poem depends on the contrasts in colour between the first stanza and the second. The objects are primarily significant as vehicles for the colours and the texture of the colours (eg. velvety black). Whether this visualisation of a "state of consciousness" succeeds, is questionable. Pound had said in the preface of his The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti that every emotion and every phase of emotion had some toneless phrase, some rhythm phrase to express it. The above poem is perhaps an attempt to demonstrate a similar equivalence between an emotion and its image equivalent:

> To hold a like belief [the belief in absolute rhythm] in a sort of permanent metaphor is as I understand it, 'symbolism' in its profounder sense.
> ("Vorticism," p. 463)

Pound's association with Vorticism did not result in a different kind of poetry from that he had previously written under the aegis of Imagisme. However, as we have seen, the example of Vorticist painting and sculpture reinforced his theories. In fact he did try to bring over into his poetry something of the energy of the vigorous aesthetic impact which he saw in the creations of his fellow artists, characterized by this couplet of Pound's from Blast:

L'Art, 1910

Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth,
Crushed strawberries! Come let us feast
our eyes.
(Personae, p. 113)

The example of the work of his confrères like Gaudier and Lewis helped to train his mind in more than abstract form as created by the sculptor in three dimensional planes or the painter in colour and design:

> What have they done for me these vorticist artists?...These new men have made me see form, have made me more conscious of the appearance of the sky where it juts down between houses, of the bright patterns of sunlight which the bath water throws up on the ceiling, of the great V's of light that dart through the chinks over the curtain rings, all these are chords, new keys in design.
> (Gaudier-Brzeska, pp. 155-156)

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

of image:

Concava Vallis

The wire-like bands of colour involute mount from
my fingers;
I have wrapped the wind round your shoulders
And the molten metal of your shoulders
bends into the turn of the wind,

AOI!
The whirling tissue of light
is woven and grows solid beneath us;
The sea-clear sapphire of air, the sea-dark clarity,
stretches both sea-cliff and ocean.
(Personae, p. 170)

Paradoxically, considering Pound's doctrine of the primary pigment, his use of the image was often effective because it involved qualities of the plastic, of line and colour which, according to his own definition, were aspects of the primary pigments of other arts.

We have been tracing the development of Pound's phanopoeic theories, which represent another approach or emphasis in Pound's effort to bring poetry up to the level of prose. But these experiments and search for the strong clear-edged beauty, through Imagisme, the Chinese and Japanese translations and Vorticism, represent an extreme position. In a sense they are part of Pound's search for the essence of the poetic. Concurrently with his experiments in phanopoeia, Pound was working with a quite different kind of verse, although it obeyed the first tenet of Imagisme - that of direct treatment - social satire in the mould of the Latin epigrammist.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1 First published in Poetry, II (July, 1913), 149-151.

2 First published in Poetry, II (May, 1913), 72-74.

3 First published in Poetry, V (Dec., 1914), 127-130.

4 After publication in The New Age, the Ms. of "Patria Mia" was sent to Poetry. However, it was unfortunately lost and was not rediscovered until 1950, at which time it was published in book form by Ralph Fletcher Seymour, Chicago.

5 First published in Poetry, I (March, 1913), 200-206.

6 Published in Poetry, I (March, 1913), 198-199. Flint relates ("The History," p. 71) that Pound gave "an interview over my signature."

7 In January, 1915, Pound elaborated these three principles as follows:

> The Image can be of two sorts. 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 upon some external scene or action carries it intact to the mind; and that vortex purges it of all save the essential or dramatic qualities, and it emerges like the external original...by direct treatment, one means simply that having got the Image, one refrains from hanging it with festoons.
>
> Our second contention was that poetry to be good poetry should be at least as well written as good prose.
>
> Thirdly, one believes that emotion is an organization of form, not merely of visible forms and colours, but also of audible forms...Poetry is a composition or an 'organization' of words set to music. By 'music' here we can scarcely mean much more than rhythm and timbre.
>
> ("Affirmations," p. 349)

8 Glebe, I (February, 1914).

9 "Doria," "The Return," "After Ch'u Yuan," "Lin Ch'e," "Fan-Piece, for Her Imperial Lord," "Ts'ai Chi'h." All remain in Personae.

10 In ABC of Reading Pound wrote (p. 52): I have taken to using the term phanopoeia to get away from irrelevant particular connotations tangled with a particular group of young people who were writing in 1912.

11 First published in Poetry, II (April, 1913), p. 12.

12 First published in New Freewoman, I (December, 1913), 228.

13 First published as "Xenia IV" Poetry, III (Nov., 1913), 60.

14 First published in Poetry, II (Aug., 1913), 3.

15 Eliot, Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry, p. 22.

16 First published in Poetry, II (April, 1913), 1-12. It included the following poems retained in Personae: "Tenzone," "The Condolence," "The Garret," "The Garden," "Ortus," "Dance Figure," "Salutation," "Salutation the Second," "Commission," "A Pact," "In a Station of the Metro." "Pax Saturni" has been omitted.

17 First published in Poetry, IV (May, 1914), 35-48.

18 Cathay is republished complete in Personae and in The Translations. Extracts from the "Noh" volumes can be found in The Translations under the title "Noh Plays."

19 First published in Little Review, VI, no. 5-8 (Sept.-Dec., 1919), 62-64, 57-64, 55-60, 68-72.

20 The objection that the metaphoric "life" of many of the Chinese characters has been forgotten, or the argument that the Chinese reader would not be aware of seeing pictures in the words anymore than a reader of English, does not vitiate Fenollosa's demonstration.

21 First published in Poetry, V (March, 1915), 251. As Pound explains further in the letter quoted in the text:

> The only error seems to be in supposing that 'Albâtre' [Personae, p. 87] was in any way influenced by Chinese stuff which I did not see until a year or two later. The error is natural as Cathay appeared before Lustra, but the separate poems in Lustra had mostly been written before the Chinese translations were begun and had mostly been printed in periodicals either here or in America.
>
> (Letters, p. 101)

22 Letter to Felix Schelling, June, 1915. Pound goes on to add:

> ...but then the ideographs leave one wholly free as to phrasing. I mean, instead of 'hortus inclusus' you have a little picture of an enclosure with two or three stalks of [illegible ideograph] grain and flowers (very much abbreviated) inside.

23 "Poems from Cathay," Times Literary Supplement (April 29, 1915) p. 144.

24 Letter to John Quinn, January, 1917. Pound writes:

> Japan is a special interest, like Provence, or 12th-13th Century Italy (apart from Dante). I dont mean to say there aren't interesting things in Fenollosa's Japanese stuff (or fine things, like the end of Kagekiyo, which is, I think, 'Homeric'). But China is solid. One can't go back of the 'Exile's Letter,' or the 'Song of the Bowmen,' or the 'North Gate.'

25 First published in 'Noh', or Accomplishment, 1916.

26 Contained in The Translations is a section entitled "Fenollosa on the Noh" (pp. 268-285), dated 1906 and edited by Pound. This is reprinted from 'Noh' or Accomplishment.

27 Pound wrote to Iris Barry(undated, University of Buffalo Collection):

> I don't really believe in 'Noh,' but there are beautiful spots and the job was sent for me to do. It was even imposed as a price for delivery of the Chinese stuff.

CHAPTER V

The Satiric Impulse

I have had a printer refuse to print lines 'in any form' private or public, perfectly innocent lines refused thus in London, which appeared and caused no blush in Chicago; and vice-versa, lines refused in Chicago and printed by a fat-headed prude - Oh most fat-headed - in London, a man who will not let you say that some children do not enjoy the proximity of their parents.

-Pavannes and Divisions

CHAPTER V

The Satiric Impulse

During the years 1912-1916, Pound was experimenting with a different kind of verse from that we have been considering in the previous chapters. If his melopoeic and phanopoeic studies might be described as his search for the poetic, in conjunction with these studies he was writing verse in a lighter vein, full of biting social comment:

Society[1]

> The family position was waning,
> And on this account the little Aurelia,
> Who had laughed on eighteen summers,
> Now bears the palsied contact of Phidippus.
> (Personae, p. 111)

As much as Imagisme, but in quite a different way, Pound's satirical verse was part of his effort to bring poetry up to the level of prose, and particularly, to develop a language for poetry which could be called "modern," It must be remembered that it had been Ford Madox Ford who had impressed upon Pound the importance for the modern poet of a flexible contemporary language:

> I prefer personally the language of my own day,
> a language clear enough for certain matters,
> employing slang where slang is felicitous, and
> vulgarity when it seems to me that vulgarity
> is the only weapon against dullness.
> (Ford, "The Poet's Eye," p. 127)

Although satiric verse predominates in Lustra[2], the next volume after Ripostes which is largely concerned with "original" poems rather than "translations," there are, to use Eliot's phrase, many voices. There is the voice of Browning in "Near Perigord" (Personae, p. 151) and there are still some of the delicate poems like "Ortus" (Personae, p. 84) which characterized Ripostes, but what is new is the cold chisel of ancient Rome combined with the strident voice of the social critic. Satire, however, is evident in some of the earlier poetry published in Ripostes. Although tinged with 'Nineties syntax, there is an attempt at colloquial speech:

'Phasellus Ille'

This papier-mâché, which you see, my friends,
Saith 'twas the worthiest of editors.
Its mind was made up in 'the seventies,'
Nor hath it ever since changed that concoction...
(Personae, p. 63)

By 1913, with the publication of "Contemporania," the 'Nineties diction has disappeared, and the effect of colloquial speech is more evident:

Tenzone

Will people accept them?
(i.e. these songs).
As a timorous wench from a centaur
(or a centurion),
Already they flee, howling in terror.
(Personae, p. 81)

The predominant tone of the poems in "Contemporania," in fact of the 1916 edition of Lustra as a whole, is Latin. As Pound wrote to Iris Barry in July, 1916, "The Roman poets are the only ones we know of

who had approximately the same problems as we have" (Letters, p. 90).

The influence of Martial, and particularly Catullus is evident, and there are overtones from the Greek Anthology[3].

Of the Latin satirists, Pound favoured Catullus, for as he wrote to Iris Barry in July, 1916:

> Catullus, Propertius, Horace and Ovid are the people who matter. Catullus most. Martial somewhat...to keep your general notion of poetic development more or less shapely.
> (Letters, p. 87)

Pound was drawn to Catullus for, as he said, he is "the most hard-edged and intense of the Latin poets," but goes on to admit[4]:

> Even Landor turned back from an attempt to translate Catullus. I have failed forty times myself so I do know the matter.
> (Letters, p. 69)

In adopting the epigrammatic manner, Pound kept the lucidity and directness of the Latin satirical vision, combining it with simple colloquial diction, and for the first time, he succeeded in writing verse as speech, such as this fragment from "Salutation The Second":

> Here are your bells and confetti.
> Go! rejuvenate things!
> Rejuvenate even 'The Spectator.'
> Go! and make cat calls!
> Dance and make people blush,
> Dance the dance of the phallus
> and tell anecdotes of Cybele!
> Speak of the indecorous conduct of the Gods!
> (Tell it to Mr. Strachey)
> (Personae, p. 86)

Pound described his method in a letter to his father, June, 1913:

> 'Strachey' is actually the edtr. of The Spectator, but I use him as the type of male prude, somewhere between Tony Comstock and Hcn. Van Dyke. Even in America we've nothing that conveys his exact shade of meaning. I've adopted the classic Latin manner in mentioning people by name.
>
> (Letters, p. 21)

It must be remembered that the bulk of the poems included in Lustra were written during Pound's involvement first with Imagisme and later with Vorticism, and the question arises whether they can be connected with either programme, but his own statements on the subject do not really clarify the problem. When sending some poems of his "new work" (after "Contemporania") to Poetry, he wrote Alice Corbin Henderson in October, 1913:

> It's not futurism, and it's not post-impressionism, but it's work contemporary with those schools and to my mind the most significant that I have yet brought off.
>
> (Letters, p. 24)

A hint may be provided by a statement made by Pound much later in retrospect:

> It was my intention that there should have been two classes of Imagistes: Hellenists and modernistes. Mercantalism intervened.
>
> (A Visiting Card, p. 26)

Although Pound's satirical verse cannot be described as phanopoeic, it does obey the imagiste dictum of direct treatment, and it is imagiste

in that sense of the word which suggests a closer scrutiny of the word, the cleaning up of syntax and the war against rhetoric. So far as the poems "incite man to exist" to "profess a becoming egotism," are "a virile complaint and revolt on the part of the poet," to quote Jean de Bosshère (p. 27), they fit in with vorticist propaganda, although not necessarily vorticist theory[5].

There is, however, another aspect to the problem; Pound's phanopoeic poetry, what he himself called "the pretty poems and the Chinese softness" (Letters, p. 81), are more directly connected to the poems published in his first seven volumes in tone, if not in technique, than they are to the Lustra poems, which for the most part were written during 1914-15. It is as if for the first time he was able to look at his work, past and present, with detachment. Of his earlier volumes he could say[6]:

Salutation the Second

You were praised, my books,
  because I had just come from the country;
I was twenty years behind the times
  So you found an audience ready...
(Personae, p. 85)

And of his more recent work[7]:

Epilogue

O CHANSONS foregoing
You were a seven days' wonder.
When you came out in the magazines
You created considerable stir in Chicago,
And now you are stale and worn out...
(Personae, p. 114)

There is the suggestion in all this that Pound felt that with the writing of the poems included in Lustra he had become truly modern, and completed his break with the 'Nineties, and that for the first time his verse reflected the contemporary scene both by its rebellious tone and more natural language. But if Imagisme had had to battle the stigma of modernity, Pound was not unaware of the effect the Lustra poems would have on the average reader:

> 'Is this,' they say, 'the nonsense
> that we expect of poets?'
> 'Where is the Picturesque?'
> 'Where is the vertigo of emotion?'
> 'No! his first work was the best.'
> 'Poor Dear! he has lost his illusions...'
> (Personae, p. 85)

Pound was not unaware that adapting the methods of the Latin satirists to contemporary life was bound to shock his readers, and perhaps he took too great a satisfaction in his efforts to épater les bourgeois. Referring to a group of poems later to be included in Lustra, Pound wrote to one of the editors of Poetry in October, 1913:

> I wonder if Poetry really dares to devote a number to my new work. There'll be a howl. They won't like it. It's absolutely the last obsequies of the Victorian period... They won't object as much as they did to Whitman's outrages, because the stamina of stupidity is weaker. I guarantee you one thing. The reader will not be bored. He will say ahg, ahg, ahh, ahhh, but-bu-bu-but this isn't Poetry.
> (Letters, pp. 24-25)

Although Pound's anticipation at shocking staid Victorians is hardly disguised, his experiments with the lighter forms of serious verse do not warrant the charge of irresponsibility or the suggestion that he forsook the integrity of his purpose. As Eliot points out ("Introduction: 1928," p. 17), poetry cannot be written, even by a poet, all the time, and that it is perhaps better under certain conditions to write "what one knows is verse and make it good verse, than to write bad verse and persuade oneself that it is good poetry." Perhaps more than his strictly imagiste verse, Pound's epigrams represent a rebellion against the romantic tradition which demands that a poet be continuously inspired. They do represent Pound's personal rebellion against the standards of his times. In answer to a criticism from Harriet Monroe that his verse was improper, he angrily replied in May, 1914:

> Are we to satirize only the politer and Biblical sins? Is art to have no bearing on life whatever? Is it to deal only with situations recognized and sanctioned by Cowper? Can one presuppose a public which has read at least some of the classics?
> (Letters, p. 37)

In answer to his own question he was to write in 1918[8]:

> Cantico Del Sole
>
> The thought of what America would be like
> If the classics had a wide circulation
> Troubles my sleep,
> The thought of what America,
> The thought of what America...
> (Personae, p. 183)

Pound's epigrammatic verse was almost universally disliked. Part of the difficulty lay in the fact that few people were capable of enjoying even the very best epigrams as poetry. Even T.S. Eliot has indulged in backhanded compliments:

> I am not prepared to say that I appreciate epigrams: my taste is possibly too romantic. All that I am sure of is that Pound's epigrams, if compared with anything contemporary of similar genre, are definitely better.
>
> ("Introduction: 1928," p. 17)

"The Temperaments" is a good example of Pound's Latin ribaldry:

> Nine adulteries, 12 liaisons, 64 fornications
> and something approaching a rape
> Rest nightly upon the soul of our delicate
> friend Florialis,
> And yet the man is so quiet and reserved in demeanor
> That he passes for both bloodless and sexless,
> Bastidides, on the contrary, who both talks and writes
> of nothing save copulation,
> Has become the father of twins,
> But he accomplished this feat at some cost;
> He had to be four times cuckold.
>
> (Personae, p. 100)

According to Pound, W.B. Yeats, who in general detested Pound's "lighter vein," liked this poem. Pound wrote to H.L. Mencken in April, 1915:

> I see reasons for an editor's being reluctant. Still, Yeats likes 'The Temperaments.' He says I have achieved the true Greek (he should say Roman) epigram. (Besides Bastidides is such a perfect portrait of a certain distinguished author who wouldn't recognize it, that I should greatly regret not giving it, sometime, to the light of day.)
>
> (Letters, p. 56)

Pound's invective could be extremely personal. Hardly one to suffer fools gladly, he didn't shrink from abuse. Thus some of this verse appears to be trivial in retrospect:

The New Cake of Soap

Lo, how it gleams and glistens in the sun
Like the cheek of a Chesterton.
(Personae, p. 99)

When John Quinn, who acted for Pound in the American edition of Lustra, questioned the advisability of including the above poem in the American edition, Pound answered in August, 1917:

> ...re the two lines on Chesterton. Do what you like about them. Only they are part of my position, i.e., that one should name names in satire. And Chesterton is like a vile scum on the pond...If it were a question of cruelty to a weak man I shouldn't, of course, have printed it. But Chesterton is so much the mob, so much the multitude...a symbol of all the mob's hatred of all art that aspires above mediocrity.
> (Letters, p. 116)

One feels that Pound must have had even less of an excuse for lines such as the following from "Salutation the Third," which he published in Blast:

You slut-bellied obstructionist,
You sworn foe to free speech and good letters,
You fungus, you continuous gangrene.
(Personae, p. 145)

Such a display led critics like Aldington to complain:

> No one wants Pound to repeat his Provençal feats, to echo the 90's. Mr. Pound is one of the gentlest and modest, bashful, kind creatures who ever walked this earth, so I cannot help thinking that all this enormous arrogance and petulance and fierceness are a pose.
>
> ("Blast," p. 273)

Pound intended Lustra to be purgative, but it is hard to justify lines such as those quoted above. They certainly don't obey one of his own dicta concerning the object of poetry:

> To my mind, the object of poetry is to focus the light on something, and I do not care what the reader sees in a poem so long as he sees beauty: There are two ways of presenting beauty - by satire, which clears away rubbish and allows the central loveliness to reveal itself, and by the direct presentation of beauty itself.
>
> ("Les Imagistes," p. 14)

Pound's violent apostacy of beauty[9] began with the poems he published in Blast. The agressive tone of this periodical (including Pound's own contributions), in spite of the fact that it could boast a short story by Rebecca West, poems by T.S. Eliot, and cuts by Epstein, not only lost him readers and the support of friends, but also closed periodicals to his work:

> Dear Mr. Pound:
>
> Many thanks for your letter of the other day. I am afraid I must say frankly that I do not think I can open the columns of the Q.R. [Quarterly Review] - at any rate, at present - to anyone associated publicly with such a publication as Blast. It stamps a man too disadvantageously.
>
> Yours truly,
> G.W. Prothero.
>
> ("Remy De Gourmont: A Distinction," pp. 357-358)

Many of the poems in Lustra were written during the Blast period, and continue the verbal violence so characteristic of that periodical[10]. Certainly, between writing the poems in Ripostes and those in Lustra, Pound sees the world in harder outline, but this is not to say that his poetic vision has necessarily deepened. The bitterness and raillery, perhaps born out of attacks on his verse[11], although suggesting increased immediacy in the expression of his feelings in his work, indicate that the poet has not really controlled or channeled his emotion so as to produce good art. There are two aspects to Pound's poetry, as Eliot points out ("Introduction: 1928," p. 13), the aspect of technique and the aspect of deeper personal feeling. Tracing his technical development through the early influences - the early 'Nineties, Browning, the Provençal and Italian poets, the Anglo-Saxon and the Chinese - one notes increasing proficiency with the techniques of making verse, and as a corollary, the slow synthesis of a modern language. But the aspect of "deeper personal feeling," to use Eliot's phrase, is not invariably contained in the poems demonstrating technical accomplishment. The two things tend to unite in Pound's first major works, "Homage to Sextus Propertius" and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, but still in Lustra they are often distinct, or imperfectly united. As Eliot presents the problem:

> ...those who are moved most by technical accomplishment see a steady progress; those who care most for the personal voice are apt to think that Pound's early verse is the best. Neither are quite right; but the second are the more wrong. Ripostes is, I think, a more personal volume than the earlier Personae and Exultations; some poems in Lustra continue this development and some do not; Cathay

> and Propertius are more directly important on the technical side, as is The Seafarer; it is not until we reach Mauberley...that some definite fusion takes place.
> ("Introduction: 1928," p. 13)[12]

The reader of Lustra may feel that Pound strives too hard to be modern in this volume, and that he had not necessarily revealed the facts about contemporary society by making epigrams on Chesterton, society lawyers, society marriages, adultery, promiscuity or a new chop house. The poems were not meant to be profound, yet Pound is not always so skillful a handler of his medium that he can make his epigrams penetrating or brilliant enough to make them seem so.

One of the paradoxes of Pound's technique of the persona, is that when he handles material from periods other than his own, he manages to make himself a contemporary, and draws out of the situation something of the permanent in human nature. However, when he deals with modern life, his insights sometimes seem strained because he notes merely the accidental:

The Tea Shop

The girl in the tea shop
Is not so beautiful as she was,
The August has worn against her.
She does not get up the stairs so eagerly;
Yes, she also will turn middle-aged,
And the glow of youth that she spread about us
As she brought us our muffins
Will be spread about us no longer.
She also will turn middle-aged.
(Personae, p. 116)

Pound was not unaware of his problem:

> 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.
>
> That is to say, you must begin in a normal, natural tone of voice, and you must, somewhere, express or cause a deep feeling.
>
> ("Remy De Gourmont: I," p. 121)

One of the aspects of Pound's verse which finds further development in Lustra is his sense of rhythmic definition. We have seen that from his earliest poems, Pound had tried to fit the verse to the content, and had not tried to force the content into a verse form. The anecdotal society verse which makes its appearance in Lustra shows his new learnt proficiency with modern speech tones and rhythms:

> Our Contemporaries
>
> When the Taihaitian princess
> Heard that he had decided,
> She rushed out into the sunlight and
> swarmed up a coconut palm tree,
>
> But he returned to this island
> And wrote ninety Petrarchan sonnets.
>
> (Personae, p. 118)

So far justice has not been done Pound's more successful attempts at social satire. In poems like the following the tone is far from bitter, and the author speaks from a position of objective detachment:

Les Millwin

The little Millwins attend the Russian Ballet.
The mauve and greenish souls of the little
Millwins
Were seen lying along the upper seats
Like so many unused boas.

The turbulent and undisciplined host of art
Students -
The vigorous deputation from 'Slade' -
Was before them.

With arms exalted, with fore-arms
Crossed in great futuristic X's, the art students
Exulted, they beheld the splendours of Cleopatra.

And the little Millwins beheld these things;
With their large and anaemic eyes they looked out
upon this configuration.

Let us therefore mention the fact,
For it seems to us worthy of record.
(Personae, p. 93)

This poem contains no raillery or abuse, it does not self-consciously flaunt its determination to be iconoclastic. As Kenner suggests (pp. 117-118), the author has adopted a mask of ironic impersonality, in which the Millwins, the students, the opera, the writer and the reader are moulded together in a semi-comic relationship. In effect, the author has created an impersonal persona. The poems which achieve this objectivity point the way to the further use of a similar technique in "The Homage" and Mauberley.

Before turning to Pound's contacts with nineteenth century and contemporary French poets, the first influences of which appear in Lustra, there remains a longish poem written in 1915, although not

published until 1917, "L'Homme Moyen Sensuel."[13] This satire echoes the style and manner of Byron's Don Juan, although written in rhyming couplets rather than ottava rima. The poem (two hundred and forty lines) purports to be a satire on the American variety of the average man, but it achieves only a limited success. Pound intended it as a sort of light satire in which he hoped to speak directly to his compatriots. As he wrote to Mencken in April, 1915:

> I think that my statements in the present whoop are intelligible, that's the intention. I have made my quiet classical remarks elsewhere, but here I want ' 'em to know they are being spoken to.' I think there is very little that won't be understood.
>
> (Letters, p. 58)

Although the protagonist of the poem is a certain "Radway," whose life course is whimsically traced, Pound's old hatred of conformity asserts itself in the digressions:

> 'As free of mobs as kings'? I'd have men free of
> that invidious,
> Lurking, serpentine, amphibious and insidious
> Power that compels 'em
> To be so much alike that every dog that smells 'em,
> Thinks one identity is
> Smeared o'er the lot in equal quantities.
> Still we look toward the day when man, with unction
> Will long only to be a social function,
> And even Zeus' wild lightning fear to strike
> Lest it should fail to treat all men alike.
> And I can hear an old man saying: 'Oh, the rub!
> 'I see them sitting in the Harvard Club,
> 'And rate 'em up at just so much per head,
> 'Know what they think, and just what books they've
> read,
> 'Till I have viewed straw hats and their habitual
> clothing
> 'All the same style, same cut, with perfect loathing.'
>
> (Personae, p. 244)

Although Pound at the time felt half seriously that his poem was the best satire since Byron and that "long poems can be popular provided they aren't too poetic" (Letters, p. 58), his poem met with little success. As he explained in a note in the Little Review in 1917:

> ...the commercial [press] said it would not add to their transcendant popularity, and the vers-libre fanatics pointed out that I had used a form of terminal consonance no longer permitted, and my admirers (j'en ai), ever nobly desirous of erecting me into a sort of national institution, declared the work 'Unworthy' of my mordant and serious genius.
>
> (Personae, p. 238)

One of the body of influences on Pound's writing from 1912 to 1920 was modern French poetry and criticism. Indirectly, Pound had felt the influence of some of the later French writers, such as Verlaine and Baudelaire, through the English poetry of Arthur Symons and W.B. Yeats (Letters, p. 216). During his early years in London he was exposed to more contact with the later French poets through T.E. Hulme's Poets' Club, not all of it beneficial "We were very much influenced by modern French symbolist poetry" (Flint, "The History," p. 71). By 1913 he could state that he was "sick of the Mamby Pamby 'French influence,' a term usually held to describe any sort of emasculated descriptive verse which shows a certain smoothness and languor."[14] Direct influence of the French poets Pound has stated (Letters, p. 216) came relatively late, his first real contact originating with F.S. Flint's special French number of The Poetry Review for August 1912. Flint[15] himself bears this out:

> Before August, 1912, Ezra Pound used to say that he knew no French poetry after Villon. After August, 1912, he became like a cat in heat. He told my wife in the Ristoranti Italiana, Soho, that if I didn't write the book (on modern French poetry) he would. He could not contain himself.

In the spring of 1913, Pound made his last trip to Europe until after the first war. During a visit to Paris he met Jules Romain and Charles Vildrac (Letters, p. 119) and the American litterateur John Gould Fletcher. Fletcher states that one day Pound borrowed an armful of his French books[16], came back enthusiastically for more, and then began a series of articles entitled "The Approach to Paris" in The New Age, beginning in September 1913 (Fletcher, p. 73).

Both Flint and Fletcher felt exploited by Pound's sudden appearance as an authority on modern French literature[17], but Pound was excited and with characteristic aplomb he announced:

> There are just two things in the world, two great and interesting phenomena: the intellectual life of Paris and the curious teething promise of my own vast occidental nation.
>
> ("The Approach," p. 662)

It is interesting to note in relation to Imagisme, that the French poetry to which Pound was instantly drawn was not Symbolist, for technical as well as theoretical reasons:

> The symbolists dealt in 'associations,' that is, in a sort of allusion, almost allegory. They degraded the symbol to the status of a word. They made it a form of metonomy... symbolistic symbols have a fixed value, like numbers in arithmetic, like 1, 2, and 7. The imagistes images have a variable significance like the signs a, b and x in algebra...Moreover, one does not want to be called a symbolist, because symbolism has usually been associated with mushy technique.
>
> (Gaudier-Brzeska, p. 97)

Pound's imagiste theories are most closely reflected in the French poetry which differed from, or ignored, the metaphysical basis of symbolism. Imagisme restricted the materials of art to the objective world. The impact upon the readers of an imagiste poem was direct, without metaphysical implications. According to a letter Pound wrote to René Taupin in May, 1928, his "connaissance des poètes fr. mod. et ma propagande pour ces poètes en Amérique (1912-17-23) venait en sens générale après l'inception de l'Imagisme à Londres (Letters, p. 218). This is not to suggest that the idea of the image, in Pound's words, does not "doit 'quelque chose' aux symbolistes français via T.E. Hulme, via Yeats < Symons < Mallarme (p. 218).

Pound's taste did not reflect Flint's tutelage (Flint had translated the love poems of Verhaeren), he considered him uncritical: tolérance pour tous les fautes et imbécillités des poètes français" (p. 216).

Among the French authors Pound praised were Corbière and Rimbaud, writers whose verse achieved a surface beauty of colour and description. Of Rimbaud's "Tête de Faune" he wrote: it "is almost exactly the sort of beauty we are looking for now" ("The Approach," p. 726). And he

claimed later that Rimbaud had brought back to phanopoeia its clarity and directness:

> In Rimbaud the image stands clean, unencumbered by non-functioning words; to get anything like this directness of presentation one must go back to Catullus...
> ("How to Read," p. 33)

He praised also the experiments in "vers libre" of Duhamel and Vildrac[18], but rejected their recommendation of a rhythmical constant or return[19]. However, in the poem "Dance Figure"[20] the rhythmical pattern is built around a line containing two primary stresses, the stresses frequently emphasized by coincidence with long or heavy vowel sounds. Although this line recurs through the poem, it does not have the rigidly fixed count of the French rhythmic constant:

Dance Figure

> Dárk eyed,
> O wóman of my dréams,
> Ívory sándaled,
> There is nóne like thée among the dáncers,
> Nóne with swíft féet.
>
> I have not foúnd thée in the ténts,
> In the bróken dárkness.
> I have not foúnd thée at the wéll-héad
> Among the wómen with pítchers...
> (Personae, p. 91)

Pound stated by way of explanation in August, 1917:

> As a matter of detail, there is vers libre with accent heavily marked as a drum-beat (as par example my 'Dance Figure'), and on the other hand I think I have gone as far as can profitably be gone in the other direction...I mean I do not think one can use to any advantage rhythms

> much more tenuous and imperceptible than some I have used. I think progress lies rather in an attempt to approximate classical quantitative metres (NOT to copy them)...
> ("A Retrospect," pp. 12-13)

Pound reserved his highest praise for Remy De Gourmont and Théophile Gautier:

> If a student of the greatest of the arts... wanted still to learn something new, I could recommend him with a clear heart to Gautier and to Remy De Gourmont. And in their work - the best of it - he could find a sort of poetry that has not been written in English, that has been scarcely attempted.
> ("The Approach," p. 578)

It was De Gourmont's rhythmic technique which first attracted Pound; he claimed that De Gourmont "had made the most valuable contribution to the development of the strophe since Arnaut Daniel" (p. 578). Pound praised examples of metre in Les Saintes du Paradis, particularly the rhythm structure:

> Because I praise these rhythm units of M. De Gourmont and because they happen to be homogeneous, or very nearly so, I do not wish to appear hostile to rhythm structures composed of units which differ among themselves.
> ("The Approach," p. 578)

In reviewing De Gourmont's Livre de Litanies Pound again praised this author for his "most valuable contribution to our knowledge of rhythm structure" ("Paris," p. 29). Pound's "The Alchemist"[21] (Personae, p. 75) is a rhythmical experiment in the De Gourmont vein, as René Taupin

has pointed out (p. 137), and perhaps is a direct result of a study of the Litanies.

Théophile Gautier has most consistently received Pound's praise. The representative of a school against which symbolism had reacted, his verse shunned vagueness, mystery and abstraction. Pound was attracted by the later Gautier, the poet of Émaux et Camées, who "exhorts us to cut in hard substance, the shell and the Parian" ("The Hard and Soft," p. 285). Gautier was an example of a writer who wrote verses with "clear edges," who cut metaphorically in hard stone (p. 286). Writing of Gautier in 1913 Pound stated:

> '...Carmen est maigre...' wrote Gautier. I think this sort of clear presentation is of the noblest traditions of our craft. It is the prose tradition in verse. It means conditions of fact. It presents. It does not comment.
>
> ("The Approach," p. 662)

Émaux et Camées was made up of poems characterized by vivid pictorial imagery as the title suggests, and it was for this quality, as well as for their clarity and directness that they first impressed Pound. Gautier's concise language was appropriate to the criteria Pound had established with Imagisme's manifesto, in fact Gautier would have been an excellent model for the first principle of Imagisme.

The first unmistakable echoes of Gautier appear in "Albâtre," published in 1914[22]:

This lady in the white bath-robe which she
    calls a peignoir,
Is, for the time being, the mistress of my
    friend,
And the delicate white feet of her little white dog
Are not more delicate than she is,
Nor would Gautier himself have despised their contrasts
    in whiteness
As she sits in the great chair
Between the two indolent candles...
(Personae, p. 87)

Here the connection is obvious enough, the poem could be an added note for Gautier's "Symphonie en Blanc Majeur" (Gautier, p. 33). By 1911, Gautier's influence enters in more subtle ways, by the use of quotation and the incorporation of vocabulary, as in this fragment from "To a Friend Writing on Cabaret Dancers":

...And so Pepita
Flares on the crowded stage before our tables
Or slithers about between the dishonest waiters -

'CARMEN EST MAIGRE, UN TRAIT DE BISTRE
CERNE SON OEIL DE GITANA'

And 'rend la flamme,'
    You know the deathless verses.
I search the features, the avaricious features
Pulled by the kohl and rouge out of resemblance -
Six pence the object for a change of passion.
(Personae, p. 162)

John J. Espey has noted (p. 27) how the opening lines of Gautier's "Carmen" (p. 157) and the subsequent phrase from the same poem, conceal another echo of Gautier from another poem entitled "Coquetterie Posthume" which begins:

Quand je mourrai, que l'on me mette,
Avant de clouer mon cercueil,
Un peu de rouge à la pommette,
Un peu de noir au bord de l'oeil.

Car je veux, dans ma bière close,
Comme le soir de son aveu,
Rester éternellement rose
Avec du kh'ol sous mon oeil bleu.
(Gautier, p. 39)

Another possible echo is suggested at the end of Pound's poem:

Night after night,
No change, no change of program, 'Che!
'La donna è mobile.'
(Personae, p. 163)

Espey suggests the penultimate stanza of "Les Joujoux de la Morte":

Et des pleurs vous mouillent la joue
Quand la Donna è mobile,
Sur le rouleau qui tourne et joue,
Espire avec un son filé.
(Gautier, p. 169)

The above at least suggests the extent of Pound's immersion in Émaux et Camées as he begins to make use of Gautier's vocabulary and achieves his method of flat statement and general frame of reference.

Other than such surface evidence, such as has been pointed out above, there is little to suggest that the French poets were much of a direct influence on Pound during the writing of the poems in Lustra. There is no reason to doubt Pound's own assertions when the question of influences arises. In reply to queries as to the nature of modern

French influence on his work, Pound answered in the letter already quoted above to René Taupin:

> R. [imbaud] et moi n'avons point de rassamblance...Ce que vous prenez pour influence de Corbière est probablement influence direct de Villon. Influence de Tailhade, superficielle, Jammes!! j'espère que non...
>
> Avec toute modestie, je crois que j'etais orienté avant de connaître les poètes français modernes; que j'ai profité de leurs inventions techniques...Y'a aussi, les anciens: Villon, les Troubadours.
> (Letters, pp. 217-218)

Two years after Lustra was issued, Pound published a series of eight modern satires called collectively "Moeurs Contemporaines"[23] (Personae, pp. 178-182), the title deriving from Remy De Gourmont. These poems owe much to the Latin satirists and much to Gautier. Thus there is an echo of the first in "Stele":

> VI
>
> After years of Continence
> he hurled himself into a sea of six women.
> Now, quenched as the brand of Meleagar,
> he lies by the poluphloisboious sea-coast...
> (Personae, p. 181)

Gautier's method is conspicuous in such passages as the following from "Nodier raconte..." (Espey, p. 29):

V

At a friend of my wife's there is a photograph,
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...
It is a lady,
She sits at a harp
Playing...

(Personae, p. 180)

For Eliot, these poems were generally unsuccessful, and they led him to ask whether "the modern satirical vein is of permanent importance " ("The Method," p. 1065). He was irritated by such poems as "Mr. Styrax" and "Nodier Raconte..." because:

> They make you conscious of having been written by somebody. There are lines in them which are too much the voice of the accidental human being with a smile in conversation.
>
> ("The Method," p. 1065)

However, the speech tones and rhythms are deftly fitted in these anecdotal poems, showing how Pound was learning to fix an irony indelibly by an increasing capacity to create social nuances:

Mr. Styrax

Mr. Hecatomb Styrax, the owner of
a large estate and of large muscles...

Soirée

Upon learning that the mother wrote verses
And that the father wrote verses...
The young American pilgrim
Exclaimed:
'This is a darn'd clever bunch! '

Sketch 486.II

At the age of 27
Its home mail is still opened by its maternal
parent
And its office mail may be opened by
its parent of the opposite gender.
It is an officer,
and a gentleman,
and an architect.
(Personae, pp. 178-179)

During the war years Pound tried to sustain interest in the new verse he had done so much to create and establish, but he met increasing indifference. Hostilities put an end to Blast and to Pound's hopes of establishing "A College of the Arts."[24] Aimed at the emigré American student, the College was to offer "contact with artists of established position, creative minds, men who for the most part have already suffered for their art" (Letters, p. 41). The faculty was impressive - Gaudier-Brzeska, Wyndham Lewis, Edward Wadsworth, Edmund Dulac, Reginald Wilenski, Arnold Dolmetsch, Felix Salmond, K.R. Heyman, Ezra Pound, John Cournos, Alvin Langdon Coburn - but the times were not propitious for a new Italian Renaissance and the faculty was soon dispersed by the war. It wasn't too long before many of his friends were in uniform and off to the trenches: Lewis, Gaudier-Brzeska, Ford, Aldington, Hulme. However, in the early autumn of 1914 Pound met T.S. Eliot, at the time a student of Merton College, and soon exclaimed in enthusiasm to Harriet Monroe in September:

> I was jolly well right about Eliot...He is the only American I know who has made what I can call adequate preparation for writing. He has actually trained himself and modernized himself on his own. The rest of the promising young have done one or the other but never both (most of the swine have done neither). It is such a comfort to meet a man and not have to tell him to wash his face, wipe his feet, and remember the date (1914) on the calendar.
> (Letters, p. 40)

If Eliot in a sense was Pound's vindication of America, there were few among the poets writing there who attracted his praise. Carl Sandburg he felt could develop "but he needs to learn a lot about How to Write" (Letters, p. 50). Vachel Lindsay he wished well but admitted "We're not really pulling the same way, though we both pull against entrenched senility" (Letters, p. 49). For Edgar Lee Masters he showed early enthusiasm, writing to H. Monroe in 1914 "Get some of Webster Ford's [Master's pen-name] stuff for Poetry (Letters, p. 47). But Masters, although he "has some punch, writes a little too much, and without sufficient hardness of edge" (Letters, p. 51). William Carlos Williams he considered "the most bloody inarticulate animal that ever gargled." But his poetry was to be preferred to Amy Lowell's "bloody ten-cent repetitive gramophone, perfectly articulate (i.e. in the verbal section)(Letters, p. 131).

He summed up the situation in America in 1915 to Harriet Monroe as follows:

> Would to God I could see a bit more Sophoclean severity in the ambitions of mes amis et confrères. The general weakness of the writers of the new school is looseness, lack of rhythmical construction and intensity; secondly, an attempt to 'apply decoration,' to use what ought to be a vortex as a sort of bill-poster, or fence-wash. Hinc illae lachrymae.
> (Letters, p. 50)

In America generally, he watched with disgust the gradual decay of "Imagism" as Amy Lowell, the self-appointed leader of the movement, proselytized the country with free verse, editing in 1915 the first of her Imagist anthologies, Some Imagist Poets. Under Miss Lowell's undiscriminating aegis the movement was:

> 'joined' or 'followed' by numerous people who, whatever their merits, do not show any signs of agreeing with the second specification [of the original three principles] . Indeed vers libre has become as prolix and as verbose as any of the flaccid varieties that preceded it. It has brought faults of its own. The actual language and phrasing is often as bad as that of our elders without even the excuse that the words are shovelled in to fill a metric pattern or to complete the noise of a rhyme-sound.
> ("A Retrospect," p. 3)

As Pound wrote to Harriet Monroe in January, 1915, his own efforts at:

> keeping alive a certain group of advancing poets, to set the arts in their rightful place as the acknowledged guide and lamp of civilisation.. .
> (Letters, p. 48)

resulted in 1915 in his editing a second anthology called, ill-advisedly, Catholic Anthology. As a reaction to Some Imagist Poets, it included no credo or manifesto; it contained only the poems (featuring Eliot) which in Pound's opinion were the significant ones of the time. Although it was not expected to have much of a sale, Pound's refusal to change the title at his publisher's (Elkin Mathews) request didn't help matters: As he wrote to Kate Buss in March, 1916:

> I have told Mathews to send you also a Cat. Anth. The Jesuits here have, I think, succeeded in preventing its being reviewed in press (at least I have seen no review during the past months). Poor Elkin wailing, 'Why, why will you needlessly irritate people?'
>
> (Letters, p. 73)

Like Des Imagistes before it, and Profile and Active Anthology to come after in later years, Catholic Anthology was a way of preserving in book form a few of the poems Pound thought valuable. It was another of his several successful failures of this kind.

In 1915, Pound also edited another book for Elkin Mathews, the Poetical Works of Lionel Johnson. The first issue of the first edition included an introduction[25] by Pound which contained some of Johnson's judgments of his contemporaries (originally published in the Dublin Review) some of whom were still living. The issue was almost immediately withdrawn, and nothing in subsequent editions indicated Pound's part in the work. Some of Pound's comments on Johnson could just as easily have been made on Pound's own work by Ford Madox Ford three years earlier:

> His language is a bookish dialect; or rather it is not a dialect, it is curial speech and our aim is natural speech, the language as spoken. We desire the words to follow the natural order. We would write nothing that we might not say actually in life - under emotion.
> ("Lionel Johnson," p. 362)

On June 5, 1915, Gaudier-Brzeska was killed at Neuville St. Vaast, the first of the artists in Pound's circle to be sacrificed to the war. For Pound it was more than a personal loss, it was a loss to civilization. As he wrote to Felix Schelling soon after the event:

> ...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.
> (Letters, p. 61)

Pound published a memorial to this artist in 1916, entitled Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir. The book included Brzeska's published writings, selections from his letters and illustrations consisting of photographs of his sculptures. Pound also included some of his own articles on Vorticism, previously published in Blast and The Fortnightly Review. As a defence of Vorticism, the book was partly an attempt to rectify the impression that the movement was merely propaganda; that it had in fact serious contributions to make to the aesthetics of the time. But vorticist artists were involved in the war, and Pound's remained the lone voice propounding its doctrine in London. The movement finally collapsed, although many of its theories were picked up by post-war groups in Paris.

The death of Remy De Gourmont, also in 1915, points up another aspect of this writer's interest for Pound. Drawn first to De Gourmont for his poetry, Pound's interest shifted to his social criticism, particularly as it was intermittently published in the Mercure de France 1914-1915. Pound was attracted by the quality of De Gourmont's intelligence:

> As you read De Gourmont's work it is not any particular phrase, poem, or essay that holds you, so much as a continuing sense of intelligence, of a limpid, active intelligence in the mind of the writer.
> ("Remy De Gourmont:I," p. 113)

> 'Franchement d'écrire ce qu'on pense, seul plaisir d'un écrivain.' 'To put down one's thought frankly, a writer's one pleasure.' That phrase was the center of Gourmont's position. It was not a phrase understood superficially. It is as much the basis of a clean literature, of all literature worth the name, as is an antiseptic method, the basis of surgical treatment.
> ("Remy De Gourmont:I," p. 118)

De Gourmont was a man freed from conventional restrictions and a writer who constantly demonstrated to Pound clear, hard, intelligent toughness in a world he felt had gone soft. He was a constant guide and symbol, and his significance for Pound was not so much any individual work, or lesson of technique as it was his example, for he was a man who had dared to write for the few, who never lost touch with "les jeunes," never abandoned beauty, and yet in all that he wrote maintained precision of statement coupled with justness ("Remy De Gourmont:I").

The spirit of thought that De Gourmont represented meant the destruction of "all rhetoric and all journalism" because it means simply that a man writes his thought "with no regard whatsoever for existing belief, with no after-thought or beside-thought either to conform or to avoid conforming" ("Remy De Gourmont:II," p. 125). De Gourmont represented for Pound a degree of literary civilization that he felt was invaluable. "Outside a small circle in Paris and a few scattered groups elsewhere, this civilization does not exist" (p. 124), but he had hopes for the future:

> With the appearance of James Joyce and T.S. Eliot, and the more 'normal' part of Mr. Wyndham Lewis's narrative writings, one may even hope that intelligence shall once more have its innings in our own stalwart tongue.
> ("Remy De Gourmont: I," p. 114)

1916 saw the publication of 'Noh,' or Accomplishment and Certain Noble Plays of Japan, the translations from the Japanese Pound had worked on during the previous year, and Lustra. In spite of the difficulties attendant upon war-time conditions in London, Pound continued publishing, writing, translating and editing. His furious activity in the service of art, in addition to his own work, is staggering, as can be judged by the following fragment from a letter written to Kate Buss in 1916:

> My occupations this week consistin finally (let us hope) dealing with Brzeska's estate; 2, getting a vorticist show packed up and started for New York; 3, making a selection from old father Yeats' letters, some of which are very fine (I suppose

> this will lap over into next week), small volume to appear soon; 4, bother a good deal about the production of Yeats' new play.
> (Letters, p. 72)

The small volume Passages From The Letters of John Butler Yeats was published in 1917. Like his translation of twelve of Fontinelle's Dialogues Des Morts, published in the same year under the title Dialogues of Fontinelle[26] it contained material which Pound felt made valuable comments on human affairs that should be noted.

During the war years too, Pound continued in his role of instigator and teacher in the little magazines to which he regularly contributed, particularly The Egoist in England and Poetry in America, but by 1917 Pound had drawn further away from Poetry and closer to Margaret Anderson's The Little Review. Poetry had never been the organ of Pound's radicalism. During the years of his close association with Harriet Monroe, he had had to force into the magazine in turn, the poetry of H.D., Frost, Eliot, to say nothing of his own verse. As he wrote to her in April, 1917:

> You disliked 'Contemporania' and even the first of Frost himself, and you loathed and detested Eliot. 'Contemporania' didn't exactly ruin the magazine.
> (Letters, p. 110)

His anger over her narrow conception of poetry produced this outburst in November, 1914, when she procrastinated over publishing "Prufrock" (not published until June, 1915):

> No, most emphatically I will not ask Eliot to write down to any audience whatsoever. I dare say my instinct was sound enough when I volunteered to quit the magazine a year ago. Neither will I send you Eliot's address in order that he may be insulted.
> (Letters, pp. 44-45)

Then too, if the editor printed the best of what material came to her independent of Pound's influence, the level of the work was often incredibly bad as is attested by this fragment, chosen at random from Poetry in 1913:

> Swan Creek
>
> Stream, stream, stream
> Oh the willows by the stream;
> The poplars and the willows
> And the gravel all agleam...
> (Fish, p. 206)

Pound could only write in frustration "My Gawddd! This is a ROTTEN number of Poetry" (Letters, p. 60) and continue to prod her with advice:

> Can't you ever see the difference between what is 'good' and good enough for the public, and what is 'good' for the artist, whose only respectable aim is perfection?
> (Letters, p. 55)

Whatever Poetry's faults, the magazine had done in America what none of the established journals had managed to do, and that was to publish at all the work it did, even if under duress. As Pound summed up the situation in January, 1917, in a letter to Margaret Anderson:

> I have only three quarrels with them: Their idiotic fuss over christianising all poems they print, their concessions to local pudibundery, and that infamous remark of Whitman's about poets needing an audience.
> (Letters, p. 107)[27]

The Little Review began publication in 1914, but the extent of its radicalism in its early years was to support and nurture Imagism as it was promulgated in America by Amy Lowell. However, by 1916, the editor grew impatient with the movement and its poets, and contacted Pound whom she hoped would infuse new blood into the magazine through his European contacts (Hoffman, p. 52). The time was propitious for Pound, as his relations with Poetry were becoming strained. In reply to Margaret Anderson's offer of a foreign editorship in January, 1917, Pound replied:

> The Little Review is perhaps temperamentally closer to what I want done???Definitely then.
>
> I want an 'official organ' (vile phrase). I mean I want a place where I and T.S. Eliot can appear once a month (or once an 'issue') and where Joyce can appear when he likes, and where Wyndham Lewis can appear if he comes back from the war...A place for our regular appearance and where our friends and readers (what few of 'em there are), can look with assurance of finding.us.
> (Letters, pp. 106-107)

During the next two years, The Little Review regularly published the work of these artists, and the editor became the new recipient of prodding letters demanding perfection:

> Dear Margaret,
> What the ensanguined/////// is the matter with this BLOODY goddamnblastedbastardbitch-bornsonofaputrid seahorse of a foetid and stinkerous printer?????
>
> Is his serbo-croation optic utterly impervious to the twelfth letter of the alphabet
>
> JHEEZUSMARIAJOSE!!! Matri de dios y de dios del pesso. Saccrabosco di Satanas
>
> OF COURSE IF IF IF bloody well If this blasted numero appears with anything like one twohundredandfiftieth part of these errors we are DONE, and I shall never be able to cross the channel or look a French écrivain in the face...
> (Anderson, p. 162)

After Pound became Joyce's literary agent in 1916, the magazine, at his instigation, began the publication in 1918 of Ulysses in installments. Over a period of three years, four of the installments were confiscated and burned by the American Post Office Department (Hoffman, p. 59). Although Pound's name left the masthead in March, 1919, partly because of financial differences with the editor and partly because he felt the job of foreign editor too time consuming (Letters, p. 128), he wrote in retrospect:

> The Little Review had had the heart à outrance. Its editors never accepted a manuscript save because they thought it interesting and their review remains the most effective of any we have yet had.
> ("Small Magazines," p. 697)

During the years we have been considering, that part of Pound which was working on literary problems is to be found in the poems and

criticism he submitted to the little magazines with which he was connected; but there was another side to Pound which was responding to his growing sociological interests, that found expression in the columns of A.R. Orage's paper The New Age. These interests are discernible as early as 1912, when he began writing the series of articles for Orage entitled "Patria Mia." He followed this with a series of three articles entitled "Through Alien Eyes," further explications on American attitudes:

> Of course I am a pacifist; every American is a pacifist. War is a mess and a bother. It is, between nations of equal civilisation, an anachronism.
> ("Through Alien Eyes," p. 352)

In 1913 he also published in the same paper a series of articles entitled "America: Chances and Remedies" in which he again returned to the theme of an American art renaissance. Although he stresses that art need not contain any statement of a political, social or philosophical conviction, the implication was that it implied them:

> As touching 'arts-for-sake': the oak does not grow for the purpose or with the intention of being built into ships and tables, yet a wise nation will take care to preserve its forests. It is the oak's business to grow good oak.
> ("America," p. 10)

But it was the very neglect of the artist by society that drew him into the realm of economics, and particularly social credit:

> Whatever economic passions I now have, began
> ab initio from having crimes against living
> art thrust under my perceptions.
> ("Murder by Capital," p. 590)

Up until the summer of 1917, Pound's association with The New Age had been irregular, but in August of that year he began to appear in the paper with weekly regularity for the rest of his stay in London. Although most of the material Pound wrote concerned the arts directly[28], his closer association with Orage at a time when Major C.H. Douglas joined The New Age circle, laid the foundations for the more fully articulated economic theories he came to hold later.

The New Age came into being in 1907 through the efforts of A.R. Orage and Holbrook Jackson, members of the Fabian Arts Group. The times were then ripe for progressive social-labour journalism, and the paper was bought to express the opinions of some of the members of this group. However, the socialistic theories of The New Age were eclectic; part Morris, part Marx, part Shaw, part Plato, and the paper became a journal of independent opinions bringing together a number of different theories which gradually evolved into a defense of a form of guild socialism (Jackson, p. 114). The paper began to support a programme for foisting a guild system on the current trade union set-up, the goal being that the eventual control of each craft be delegated to the workers of that craft, with the hoped for result that artistry would return as a humanizing factor in a world growing more technical and impersonal. This approach differed greatly from the conventional

socialists' aim of collectivisation through state control. By 1917, the cause for National Guildism seemed lost, and Orage became increasingly interested in the Social Credit ideas of Major C.H. Douglas. Up to this point, Pound had shown little interest in the editorial policy of the paper. As he wrote in an obituary letter on A.R. Orage to the New English Weekly in 1934:

> The actual battle with ignorance in the acute phase wherein I shared, began with Douglas' arrival in Cursitor Street...The earlier Guild Socialism, and all other political or social theory had lain outside my view...I take it I was present at some of the earliest talks between these two leaders. At any rate my economic study dates from their union and their fight for its place in public knowledge.
> ("He Pulled His Weight," p. 109)

It would be out of place here to more than touch on the economic analysis of the social credit theorists, but a few points might be worth mentioning in the light of Pound's later support of social credit ideas.

Major Douglas, an industrial engineer, believed that the fundamental difficulty with the economic system in this century lay with the distribution of goods, not with their production, the Western countries having enough machinery to fulfill adequately all needs (Wykes-Joyce, pp. 221-222). But distribution depends upon the amount of money in existence in a country being equivalent to the amount of goods for sale in that country. Douglas reasoned that if the purchasing power of the workers could be increased through a system of social dividends,

production could be increased. Douglas saw the machine as a limitless production device, capable of turning out an endless supply of goods for the people. All that was needed was a reorganized distribution system whereby the producer,or the worker, would share more fully in the production. To bring this about Douglas advocated the establishment of producer's banks, their chief function being to distribute credit (p. 224). The socialists had proclaimed that economic power must preclude political power, the social creditors held that financial power must precede economic.

Without control of credit, of the financial center of an industrialized society, Douglas reasoned, nothing could be done, for under the present banking system the creation of credit is arranged by bankers "understandably, if lamentably, for their own gain" (Wykes-Joyce, p. 222). If credit could be controlled in the interests of the society as a whole, and if it could be created and dispensed for the health of the state, the difficulties of distribution would disappear and the enormous potentialities of the machine would be free to produce. The machine itself was not the enemy, but credit manipulation for the benefit of the few: usury[29].

From the point of view of the artist, why these theories were attractive to Pound becomes apparent:

> Twenty years ago [1914], before 'one' 'we' 'the present writer' or his acquaintances, had begun tothink about 'cold subjects like economics,' one began to notice that the social order hated any art of maximum intensity and preferred dilutations. The best artists were unemployed...

> the best writers of my generation got into print or into books mainly via small organizations initiated for that purpose in defiance of the established publishing houses of their time. This is true of Joyce, Eliot, Wyndham Lewis...and of the present writer, from the moment his intention of break with the immediate past was apparent.
>
> ("Murder by Capital," pp. 585-586)

Douglas' demand that the worker receive a proper return for his work included the worker as artist:

> C.H. Douglas is the first economist to include creative art and writing in an economic scheme, and the first to give the painter or sculptor or poet a definite reason for being interested in economics; namely, that a better economic system would release more energy for invention and design.
>
> ("Murder by Capital," p. 592)

Pound's study of economics, then, was not something separate from his artistic endeavors, it stemmed directly from his observation of the effects of economics on art in its social aspect and the opportunity given the artist to exist and practise his artistry <u>in</u> a given social order.

> The effect of capitalism on art and letters, apart from all questions of the relations of either capitalism, art or letters, to the general public or the mass, have been: (1) the non-employment of the best artists and writers; (2) the erection of an enormous and horrible bureaucracy of letters, supposed to act as curators, etc. which bureaucracy has almost uninterruptedly sabotaged intellectual life, obscuring the memory of the best work of the past and doing its villainous utmost to impede the work of contemporary creators.
>
> ("Murder by Capital," p. 592)

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1 First published in Poetry, V (March, 1914), 21.

2 Some confusion exists over which poems constitute Lustra. According to Edwards (A Preliminary Checklist, p. 4) there were two London editions, one public and one private, both in 1916, and two New York editions, one public and one private, both in 1917. It would appear that the London private edition included all the poems at present under the title "Lustra" in the Table of Contents of the 1949 edition of Personae, with the exception of "Ancient Music" and "The Lake Isle," which appeared in both New York editions. The London private edition also included the poems under the heading in the 1949 edition of Personae: "Poems from Blast (1914)." Both New York editions included the foregoing plus the first eight poems listed under the erroneous title: "Poems from Lustra (1915)" in the 1949 edition of Personae. The London trade edition was severely emasculated by the publisher Elkin Mathews. As Pound wrote to Iris Barry in May, 1916:

> The idiot Mathews has got the whole volume set up in type [Lustra], and has now got a panic and marked 25 poems for deletion. Most of them have already been printed in magazines without causing any scandal whatever, and some of them are among the best in the book...Some of the poems will have to go, but in other cases the objections are too stupid for words. It is part printer and part Mathews...The printers have gone quite mad since the Lawrence fuss...Something has got to be done or we'll all of us be suppressed, à la counter-reformation, dead and done for...
> (Letters, pp. 80-81)

3 See Eliot, Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry, pp. 16-22.

4 Letter to Harriet Monroe, February, 1916. Pound did include in Lustra a translation of one of the lampoons of Catullus "To Formianus' Young Lady Friend" (Personae, p. 113).

5 With the exception of the Chinese work, the poems Pound published in Blast were social satires of the Latin kind, and not examples of phanopoeia. From Blast no. I, in addition to those listed under the title "Poems from Blast (1914)" in Personae, the

following poems are preserved: "Epitaphs," "Woman Before a Shop," "L'Art, 1910," "The New Cake of Soap," "Meditation"; From Blast no. II, "The Game of Chess," "The Social Order," "Ancient Music," "Our Contemporaries," and "Ancient Wisdom, Rather Cosmic."

6 First published in Poetry, II (April, 1913), 8.

7 First published in Lustra, 1916.

8 First published in Little Review, IV (March, 1918), 35.

9 J.B. Yeats wrote to his son:

> The poets loved of Ezra Pound are tired of Beauty, since they have met it so often in plays and poems and novels and ordinary life - always, so much the same that they brave its tricks, or they think they do. It has ceased to be unintelligible, so very naturally and inevitably they turn to the ugly, celebrating it in every form of imitation.
> (J.B. Yeats Letters, pp. 244-245)

10 As Coffman explains:

> Blast avowedly aimed to shock; to 'make the rich of the community shed their education skin, to destroy politeness, standardization and academicism,' and it was so successful that its extremism and rudeness were about all its public noticed.
> (Imagism a Chapter, p. 200)

11 Jean de Bosshère wrote in Egoist, IV (Feb., 1917) p. 28:

> Pound has experience of the folly of the Philistines who read his verse. Real pain is born of their stupid interpretations, and one does not realize how deep it is unless one can feel, through the ejaculations and the laughter, what has caused these words.

12 Eliot added to this statement in a postcript (dated 1948) to the 1928 edition of Selected Poems, (p. 21): "Certainly, I should now write with less cautious admiration of "Homage to Sextus Propertius."

13 First published in Little Review, IV (Sept., 1917) pp. 8-16.

14 From an unpublished article entitled "Status Quo (in France)" submitted to Poetry in 1913. Harriet Monroe Collection. University of Chicago.

15 Quoted in LeRoy Breunig, "F.S. Flint, Imagism's Maître d'École," p. 133. Flint stated in this connection in his "History of Imagism" (p. 71): "Nil praetor 'Villon' et doctus cantare Catullum: Pound could not be made to believe there was any French poetry after Ronsard."

16 In reference to this occasion, Pound states in a letter to Harriet Monroe (August, 1917): "Certainly a lot of them had not undergone the paper cutter" (Letters, p. 119).

17 Pound stated in "Paris," Poetry, III (Oct., 1913), 29-30: "I have spent about four years puddling about on the edges of modern French poetry without getting anywhere near it."

18 Duhamel and Vildrac had published Notes sur la Technique Poétique in 1910, a defence of vers libre.

19 The "constant" was always composed of the same number of syllables, and by its repetition as a unit in consecutive lines, created an impression of rhythmical pattern. Regular or traditional verse consists entirely of constants; vers libre- of a constant and an additional unit that varies with the demands set up by content and the limitations of the speaking voice (see Coffman, p. 93).

20 First published in Poetry, II (April, 1913), 6.

21 First published in Ripostes (1912).

22 First published in Poetry and Drama, V (March, 1914), 20.

23 First published in Little Review, V (May, 1918), 26-31.

24 The prospectus of The College can be found in The Letters of Ezra Pound, pp. 41-43.

25 The Introduction is preserved in Literary Essays, pp. 361-370.

26 The Dialogues of Fontenelle can be found in Pavannes and Divisions, pp. 49-92.

27 "That infamous remark" refers to the motto from Walt Whitman on Poetry's cover: "To have great poets there must be great audiences too." According to Harriet Monroe, this motto "aroused merely antagonism in E.P., and led to a two part discussion in October, 1914." Pound had suggested a quotation from Dante: "The wisest in the city - 'He who the fools hate worst' " (p. 365).

28 In August, 1917, Pound began an analysis of the British press in The New Age entitled: "Studies in Contemporary Mentality," a bi-weekly which ran until January, 1918. In November, 1917, he began a bi-weekly art criticism, under the pseudonym "H.B. Dias," which ran until April, 1919; and in December, 1917, he began a bi-weekly music column under the pseudonym "William Atheling," which ran until December, 1920. Some of Pound's music criticism was later incorporated into his book Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony, Paris, 1924.

29 Pound had always been sympathetic to the traditional Catholic view of usury. It is worth noting in this connection that Pound's anti-semitism is economic rather than racist. Even so, his aggressiveness in this quarter can be evidenced as early as 1914, as can be seen from the following lines from "Salutation the Third" as published in Blast, I (1914), 45:

> Come let us on with the new deal,
> Let us be done with Jews and jobbery,
> Let us spit upon those who fawn on the Jews for their money...

These lines presently read in Personae (p. 145):

> Come, let us on with the new deal,
> Let us be done with pandars and jobbery,
> Let us spit upon those who pat the big-bellies for
> profit...

CHAPTER VI

Logopoeia

'The dance of the intellect among words'

- How to Read

CHAPTER VI

Logopoeia

Pound's work during the years we have been considering, both critical and poetic, forms a series of studies or explorations. The result is a number of statements on the writing of poetry, some formulated in verse, some in critical discourse, made by a man who saw the means of writing as very much the same as its end. We have the evidence of a poet who wrote as a professional, that is, he made the assumption that beneath the practice of his art must lie the necessary learning of craft. As a tireless craftsman he determined to master, and if possible to expand, the fundamental techniques of his trade, slowly refining a poetic speech supple enough to reflect the modern scene, and hard enough to break through the deadened sensitivities inherited from the 'Nineties. The theme then, of the decade following the publication of A Lume Spento was experimentation with the properties of language, the search for a modern language, and ultimately the modern poem. As we have seen, the search was sometimes for the proper context in which the poet could work, sometimes for traditions from which he could borrow, and sometimes for new devices to improve poetic communication. But always there was the search that would make possible a poetry for our time.

What the new poetic language was to communicate, remained largely a matter of indifference to him during these years. The means, the

technique, were the ends in view. Communication was impossible without a mastery of means, and this as Pound saw it was the primary job. At the beginning he explored melopoeia, or the musical qualities of language, poetry of the ear; later phanopoeia, the dynamic image and the poem as picture, emphasizing the eye; after 1916 Pound acquired his third method of charging language, logopoeia, or the intellectual play among words, emphasizing the sophisticated intellect.

Pound remembered[1] in 1948:

> I was a man in a hurry. When I got to London in 1908 I was an extremely unsophisticated individual. Eliot was born with all that, Laforgue and so on. I had to acquire it.

Pound began to read Laforgue in 1915, mainly as a result of his association with T.S. Eliot (Letters, p. 218), beginning with Les Complaintes and L'imitation de Notre Dame de la Lune (Ramsey, p. 47). The particular quality that Pound selected for praise was Laforgue's "delicate irony," for the ironist "is one who suggests that the reader should think" ("Irony," p. 281)[2]. Of the nineteenth century French satirists, Pound felt Laforgue was "the finest wrought; he is most 'verbalist'" (p. 283). Bad verbalism Pound called "rhetoric" or the "use of cliché" unconsciously, or a mere playing with phrases:

> But there is good verbalism, distinct from lyricism or imagism, and in this Laforgue is a master. He writes not the popular language of any country, but an international tongue common to the excessively cultivated...
> ("Irony," p. 283)

Laforgue's use of delicate irony can be illustrated by the way he takes literary poses and clichés as his subject matter, and makes them a vehicle for the expression of his own personal emotions:

> Je ne suis point ce gaillard-là!'ni Le Superbe!
> Mais mon âme, qu'un cri un peu cru exacerbe,
> Est au fond distinguée et fraîche comme une herbe.
>
> I am not'that fellow there!' nor The Superb!
> But my soul, which the slightest shrillness can disturb,
> Is at bottom distinguished and fresh as an herb.
> (Ramsey, p. 173)

In 1929[3], Pound made a more succinct definition of logopoeia:

> ...it employs words not only for their direct meaning, but it takes count in a special way of habits of usage, of the context we <u>expect</u> to find with the word, its usual concomitants, of its known acceptances, and of ironical play. It holds the aesthetic content which is peculiarly the domain of verbal manifestation, and cannot possibly be contained in plastic or in music.
> ("How to Read," p. 25)

Pound meant an excellence in the use of words, not as music or image, but as language. A word-poetry, made up of the careful, discriminating and subtle play among words, making irony possible, making possible in a larger sense, complex intricate communication. And as Pound defines it, logopoeia is very much a matter of purposeful ambiguity, the considered exploitation of multiple meaning. This kind of complexity Pound had sensed in Eliot's poetry in 1914, and hence discovered in Laforgue, although this kind of writing was not unique to Laforgue:

> ...we must almost say that Laforgue invented logopoeia observing that there had been a very limited range of logopoeia in all satire, and that Heine occasionally employs something like it, together with a dash of bitters, such as can (though he may not have known it) be found in a few verses of Dorset and Rochester. At any rate Laforgue found or refound logopoeia.
> ("How to Read," p. 33)

Sometime in 1917 (Personae, p. 205), when he was working on a long translation of the elegies of Propertius, Pound began feeling that academic translation of these elegies displayed "crass insensitivity," and he proceeded to "discover logopoeia in Propertius" ("How to Read," p. 33).

The new dimension which Pound's study of Laforgue gave to his approach to Propertius can be illustrated by comparing an early and late translation of one of the elegies. The original Latin reads:

> Haec tua, Persephone, maneat clementia, nec tu,
> Persephonae coniunx, saevior esse velis.
> sunt apud infernos tot milia formosarum:
> pulchra sit in superis, si licet, una locis!
> vobiscum est Iope, vobiscum candida Tyro,
> vobiscum Europe nec proba Pasiphae,
> et quot Troia tulit vetus et quot Achaia formas,
> et Phoebi et Priami diruta regna senis:
> et quaecumque erat in numero Romana puella,
> occidit: has omnes ignis ovarus habet.
> nec forma aetcernum aut cuiquam est fortuna perennis:
> longius aut proprius mors sua quemque manet.
> (Elegy III, . 26)[4]

Pound's early translation, first published in Canzoni, entitled "Prayer For His Lady's Life" and which omits the last two lines, reads:

Here let thy clemency, Persephone, hold firm,
Do thou, Pluto, bring here no greater harshness.
So many thousand beauties are gone down to Avernus,
Ye might let one remain above with us.

With you is Iope, with you the white-gleaming Tyro,
With you is Europa and the shameless Pasiphae,
And all the fair from Troy and all from Achaia,
From the sundered realms, of Thebes and of aged Priamus;
And all the maidens of Rome, as many as they were,
They died and the greed of your flame consumes them.
(Personae, p. 38)

In this first translation, Pound presents one dimension of the original, as seen through the eyes of a Rossetti or a Swinburne. But by 1917 Pound had a new language liberated from Victorianisms, and thanks to Laforgue, containing new perceptions:

2

Persephone and Dis, Dis, have mercy upon her,
There are enough women in hell,
quite enough beautiful women,
Iope, and Tyro, and Pasiphae, and the formal girls
of Achaia,
And out of Troad, and from the Campania,
Death has his tooth in the lot,
Avernus lusts for the lot of them,
Beauty is not eternal, no man has perennial fortune,
Slow foot, or swift foot, death delays but for a
season.
(Personae, p. 223)

As Kenner points out (p. 132), the tone of the whole stanza depends on a kind of pun from "quot Achaia formas," distressing to the Latinist, but which stands as recreation rather than transcription to the poet. Having forged himself a language that does not obfuscate his perceptions, Pound makes the poem anew, granting Propertius a sense of humour in the process. But logopoeia does not translate, as Pound points out, though

as he demonstrated, the attitude of mind it expresses may pass through a paraphrase.

> Or one might say, you can not translate it 'locally,' but having determined the original author's state of mind, you may or may not be able to find a derivative or an equivalent.
>
> ("How to Read," p. 25)

Pound's "Homage to Sextus Propertius" was first published in 1919[5], and was immediately singled out by the reviewers for criticism, mostly because of a misconception concerning what Pound was trying to do. As he himself stated in a letter to A.R. Orage in April, 1919, over the reaction the poem caused among the critics:

> 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.
>
> (Letters, pp. 148-149)

Beyond his interest in resuscitating a piece of literature which he felt had been wrongly consigned to the domain of the Latin text books, Pound had valid emotional and intellectual criteria for his Persona[6] (the word "Homage" in the title itself suggests more than scholarly humility). As Pound explained in a letter to the editor of the English Journal in January, 1931:

> I certainly omitted no means of definition that I saw open to me, including shortenings, cross cuts, implications derivable from other writings of Propertius, as for example the 'Ride to Lanuvium' from which I have taken a colour or tone but no direct or entire expression.
>
> (Letters, p. 231)

The extent of Pound's rearrangement of the original text or order of the elegies can be seen from Kenner's convenient listing of Pound's poem beside the standard Loeb text (pp. 148-149).

After his study of Laforgue it was impossible for Pound to be unaware, in Kenner's words, "of a calculated excess of atmospherics" or "risible implications" in the Propertius text (p. 147). Thus Pound rescribes the Latin

> Actia Vergilio custodis litora Phoebi,
> Caesaris et fortes dicere posse rates
> (Loeb - II, xxxiv, 61-62)

which could be glossed:

> 'Be it for Virgil to sing the shores of Actium
> o'er which Phoebus watches, and Caesar's
> gallant ships of war'

with an eye to "custodis" as:

> Upon the Actium marshes Virgil is Phoebus' chief of police,
> He can tabulate Caesar's great ships.
> (Personae, p. 228)

The Latin

> utque decem possint corrumpere mala puellas
> (Loeb - II, xxiv, 69)

which could be glossed:

> 'how ten apples may win the love of a girl'

Pound, finding a hint in "mala," transcribes:

> And how ten sins can corrupt young maidens.
> (Personae, p. 229)

Examples such as these, with which Pound's text abounds, and which have been dismissed as a "snowstorm of schoolboy howlers, gross misreadings and misunderstandings, major blunders that entirely pervert the meaning of the Latin" (Gilkes, p. 77), have been singled out and valid reasons inherent in the language discovered for almost all of them (Richardson, pp. 21-29). Some have been called "creative acts of the highest kind of delicacy and tact" (Blish, p. 212). It is a paradox that the pedants, who have pictured Pound as an uncritical upstart invading the sacred congeries of scholarship (Stuart, p. 177), have missed the point that Pound himself plays the pedant well; that he abandons "rendering" to explore and explain whenever he thinks something might be gained by pedantry. If he regards a dead language as dead he will resort to every method, including contradicting the original text, to resurrect it. To the scholar, again, this may be irreverent and unfaithful, but it cannot be accomplished through ignorance. Pound gives a knowledge which no modern grammarian has been able to give us (Blish, p. 212). It must be remembered too that there is reason to believe that a good many of the Elegies are as much translations of the Greek of Callimachus as Pound's "Homage" is a translation of Propertius. (Speirs, p. 410). As Kenner suggests:

> Pound has turned Propertius' pages for suggestions; not without a grin at the wholesale transpositions attempted by several editors in quest of rationale for a badly mangled text.
>
> (Kenner, p. 149)

Another aspect of Pound's translation devices, which comes naturally to the ingenious freshman asked to recite an unprepared text, is that he never misuses the value of possibilities that appear in the Latin text as it strikes the eye. Often with imagination and wit, he transmits by "mistranslation" the flavour and intricacy of the original. The Latin phrase "Gaudeat ut solito tacta puella sono ..." (Loeb - II, ii, 2) Pound translates "the devirginated young ladies" (Personae, p. 208). The "tacta" of Propertius is ambiguous:

> ...it included both: touched at heart and the opposite of intacta (virgin); Pound's rendering...does violence to the context, but it is the meaning which will escape a casual reader.
>
> (Richardson, p. 24)[7]

As conventional translations destroy the effect of the paranomasia in the Latin, Pound translates in what appears to be schoolboy fashion. Pound was early taken to task for this particular example by Professor Hale. As Pound wrote in exasperation to A.R. Orage in April, 1919:

> I note that my translation 'devirginated young ladies' etc. is as literal, or rather more so than his. I admit to making the puella (singular) into plural 'young ladies.' It is a possible figure of speech as even the ass admits. Hale, however, not only makes the 'girl' into 'my lady,'

> but he has to supply something for her to be 'touched BY.' Instead of allowing her to be simply tacta (as opposed to virgo intacta), he has to say that she is touched (not, oh my god, no not by the ---- of the poet, but by 'my words'). Vide his own blessed parentheses.
>
> If I were, however, a professor of Latin in Chicago, I should probably have to resign on divulging the fact that Propertius occasionally copulavit, i.e. rogered the lady to whom he was not legally wedded.
>
> (Letters, p. 150)

The above is not to pardon Pound's considerable untidyness in sophomorically playing with the spelling and pronunciation of the proper words he did not bother to look up while doing his "lessons." The result is "unpardonable catastrophies like 'Citharaon' and 'Phoecia' (Richardson, p. 23), which unlike other examples, make no use of the Latin original. Not to absolve Pound, he did exclaim in exasperation to Felix Schelling in July, 1922:

> As if, had one wanted to pretend to more Latin than one knew, it wdn't have been perfectly easy to correct one's divergencies from a Bohn crib - Price 5 shillings.
>
> (Letters, p. 178)

It seems difficult to dispute that Pound's approach in the handling of Propertius is most satisfactory, in that it results in a "translation" which brings into English the wit and delicacy of the original author through particularities, and uses English with the same odd mixture of poise and intensity which characterizes Propertius' Latin.

In the matter of the verse, Pound has extended his vers libre form beyond the limits of the line. Pound had written nothing previously, even in Cathay, as strong and as vibrant. The new confidence is evident in the opening stanza:

> Shades of Callimachus, Coan ghosts of
> Philetas
> It is in your grove I would walk,
> I who come first from the clear font
> Bringing the Grecian orgies into Italy,
> and the dance into Italy.
> Who hath taught you so subtle a measure
> in what hall have you heard it;
> What foot beat out your time-bar,
> what water has mellowed your whistles?
> (Personae, p. 207)

Kenner describes the technical components that produced Pound's Propertian synthesis as follows:

> The elegiac couplet of Propertius blended with the hokku techniques of the Lustra epigrams to give not merely lines of alternate lengths, but an actual current of movement forward and back; the sophisticated tone of the 'Moeurs Contemporaines' vignettes left off belabouring the dead to discover its own affinities with choreographic dignity and with Laforguian hot and cold; Seafarer intensity and Latin 'carpe diem' poetry of love united in a context of multiple irony that brisked every mode of passion with freshened alertness. A new momentum was given to Pound and a new elaboration to English verse.
> (Kenner, p. 155)

Quotations are inadequate to demonstrate the flexibilities of tone and the masterful rhythms achieved in the "Homage to Sextus Propertius."

There is the urbanity of:

> Out-weariers of Appollo will, as we know, continue
> their Martian generalities,
> We have kept our erasers in order...
> And there is no high-road to the Muses.
>
> Annalists will continue to record Roman reputa-
> tions,
> Celebrities from the Trans-Caucasus will belaud
> Roman celebrities
> And expound the distentions of Empire...
> (Personae, p. 207)

There is a Jacobian quality in:

> If she with ivory fingers drive a tune through the
> lyre,
> We look at the process.
> How easy the moving fingers; if hair is mussed on
> her forehead,
> If she goes in a gleam of Cos, in a slither of dyed
> stuff,
> There is a volume in the matter; if her eyelids sink
> into sleep,
> There are new jobs for the author;
> And if she plays with me with her shirt off,
> We shall construct many Iliads.
> And whatever she does or says
> We shall spin long yarns out of nothing...
> (Personae, p. 217)

and a measured grandheur in:

> When, when, and whenever death closes
> our eyelids,
> Moving naked over Acheron
> Upon the one raft, victor and conquered together,
> Marius and Jugurtha together,
> one tangle of shadows.

Caesar plots against India,
Tigris and Euphrates shall, from now on, flow at
his bidding,
Tibet shall be full of Roman policemen,
The Parthians shall get used to our statuary
and acquire a Roman religion;
One raft on the veiled flood of Acheron,
Marius and Jugurtha together.
(Personae, pp. 218-219)

and a gentle irony in:

And one raft bears our fates
on the veiled lake toward Avernus
Sails spread on Cerulean waters, I would shed tears
for two;
I shall live, if she continue in life,
If she dies, I shall go with her.
Great Zeus, save the woman,
or she will sit before your feet in a veil,
and tell out the long list of her troubles.
(Personae, p. 223)

There is a peculiarly modern flavour (yet true to the original spirit) in:

Nor are my caverns stuffed stiff with a Marcian
vintage,
My cellar does not date from Numa Pompilius,
Nor bristle with wine jars,
Nor is it equipped with a frigidaire patent...
(Personae, p. 209)

It is difficult to do justice by quotation to the enormous freedom and range of tone, the ironic weight, the multiple levels of tongue in cheek self-deprecation everywhere present in the "Homage," as Kenner points out (p. 158), but it is obvious that we have come upon the unpredictable fusion of techniques that made the Cantos possible.

Finally, there is a device, already evident in Lustra, which Pound has used with great success in his "Homage," and that is the ironic use of latinate diction, underlined in the following fragments:

> I had been seen in the shade, recumbent on
> cushioned Helicon,
> (Personae, p. 210)
>
> Gods' aid, let not my bones lie in a public location
> (p. 213)
>
> And a querulous noise responded to our solicitous
> reprobations.
> (p. 215)
>
> The Parthians shall get used to our statuary
> and acquire a Roman religion;
> (p. 219)
>
> What if your fates are accelerated,
> your quiet hour put forward,
> You may find interment pleasing,
> (p. 222)

Juxtaposition of formal latinate diction and the colloquial, alternate stiffenings and relaxations of the texture of the vocabulary is the mechanics of this logopoeia. It is this technique, coupled on occasion with the use of the passive voice, to lend dignity, the colloquial to give relief, that allow the love affairs of Propertius and Cynthia, riddled with irony, to withstand the pull torwards lyric cliché, the fate of most translations of carpe diem poetry. Such are the rhythmical, syntactical and verbal devices Pound used to organize the varied texture and tone of his verse; they are the basis of Pound's mature poetic practice.

So far we have been considering only one side of the "Homage," the poem in so far as it is a "translation," but there is another aspect of the problem, the poem in so far as it is an "original" poem, or to put it another way, the poem as a reflection of the contemporary scene. Pound has not only recreated himself in Propertius, he has more importantly recreated Propertius in himself; Pound's technique of the persona involves a two-way action. It is in the latter sense that the poem can be considered original.

Eliot has asserted that neither aspect is strong enough to sustain the poem without the other:

> If the uninstructed reader is not a classical scholar, he will make nothing of it; if he be a classical scholar, he will wonder why this does not conform to his notion of what translation should be.
> ("Introduction: 1928," p. 19)

And in speaking of the reasons why he omitted the "Homage" from his 1928 edition of the Selected Poems, Eliot continues:

> I felt that the poem...would give difficulty to many readers: because it is not enough a 'translation,' and because it is, on the other hand, too much a 'translation,' to be intelligible to any but the accomplished student of Pound's poetry.
> ("Introduction: 1928," p. 20)

Notwithstanding Eliot's objection, and perhaps he overestimated the "difficulty," it is possible to read Pound's poem with little concern for its relation to the Propertian Elegies. That is, to read

it as a poem about contemporary London behind a mask of Rome, rendering a society and an age that is centered in present day life more than it is that of the ancients. The reader, then, is amongst contemporaries, listening to a contemporary; the difficulties are the difficulties of our own lives. Ancient Rome is the mythology that softens, perhaps, the contemporary fact. Of course there is contained in the poem implicit criticism of Propertius, a deep and intimate study of him as even a classicist such as Gilbert Highet will admit (Highet, p. 700), but this does not necessarily concern the reader unless he wants it to.

That this method of approaching the "Homage" is perhaps closer to Pound's end in writing it, that he wished the reader to see a good deal of our own future as well as our own present, our own age with a background of the ages, is suggested by the following excerpt from a letter written to the Editor of the English Journal in January, 1931.

> ['The Homage to Sextus Propertius'] presents certain emotions as vital to me in 1917, faced with the infinite and ineffable imbecility of the British Empire, as they were to Propertius some centuries earlier, when faced with the infinite and ineffable imbecility of the Roman Empire. These emotions are defined largely, but not entirely, in Propertius' own terms. If the reader does not find relation to life defined in the poem, he may conclude that I have been unsuccessful in my endeavor.
> (Letters, p. 231)

It was perhaps with an awareness of doubt over the success of the "Homage" on this level that Pound wrote to John Drummond in February, 1932:

> I wonder how much the Mauberley is merely a translation of the Homage to S.P., for such as couldn't understand the latter?
> An endeavor to communicate with a blockheaded epoch.
>
> (Letters, p. 239)

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, in so far as it is about the uncongeniality of the modern world to the artist, and his dubious status there, can be related to the "Homage," in which Pound had taken passages from Propertius' work and created a poem concerned with the poet's place in a society that ignored private emotion in favour of false public morality. Mauberley, then, continues the postures and conflicts of the earlier poem, and is in this sense a popularization of the "Homage."

Much of Pound's early verse, apart from its special interest on the technical side and its demonstration of the slow synthesis of a poetic idiom, does not remain memorable from the point of view of its subject matter or the quality of the poet's feeling towards it. This is not to suggest that Pound's early work was merely verse exercise, but it is not until Hugh Selwyn Mauberley that a consistent fusion takes place uniting all these aspects in a single work. Pound himself has stated, partly in defence of criticism that his early work lacked more than technical interest, and partly as explanation, that:

> In one's youth one discusses style - or one should. The poetical reform between 1910 and 1920 coincided with the scrutiny of the word, the cleaning up of syntax. This should be tackled in addition to, almost apart from, the question of content.
>
> (A Visiting Card, p. 22)

In Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, although it contains a new technical synthesis, the division between technique and content cannot be made with ease. As F.R. Leavis has put it:

> In Mauberley we feel a pressure of experience, an impulsion from deep within. The verse is extraordinarily subtle, and its subtlety is the subtlety of the sensibility that it expresses. No one would think here of distinguishing the way of saying from the thing said.
>
> (Leavis, p. 138)

But for purposes of analysis, to delineate first of all more clearly what is new in Mauberley, or rather, what is the new synthesis which makes Mauberley the work of art possible, we will be concerned first of all with technical considerations.

In 1932, in an aside on the course literary events[8] had taken after the first war, Pound noted:

> [Mr. Eliot] displayed great tact, or enjoyed good fortune, in arriving in London at a particular date with a formal style of his own. He also participated in a movement to which no name has ever been given.
>
> That is to say, at a particular date in a particular room, two authors, neither engaged in picking the other's pocket, decided that the dilutation of vers libre, Amygism, Lee Masterism, general floppiness had gone too far and that some counter-current must be set going. Parallel situation centuries ago in China. Remedy prescribed 'Émaux et Camées' (or the Bay State Hymn Book). Rhyme and regular strophes.
>
> Results: Poems in Mr. Eliot's second volume, not contained in his first ('Prufrock,' Egoist, 1917), also 'H.S. Mauberley.'
>
> ("Harold Monro," p. 14)

Mauberley's metrics undoubtedly owe much to Émaux et Camées for the chiselled, cameo-like quality of the stanzas. Hard, brittle verses such as the following, chosen almost at random from Gautier's volume, served to rock back into Pound's ear something of the click of the metronome:

Inès de las Sierras

Un vrai château d'Anne Radcliffe,
Aux plafonds que le temps ploya,
Aux vitraux rayés par la griffe
Des chauves-souris de Goya...
(Gautier, p. 95)

Pound's aural immersion in these tight quatrains must have proved a relief from the prolix abuses of the vers librists. In any case their metrical discipline (and the example of ambitious international rhyming) made possible in Mauberley:

His true Penelope was Flaubert,
He fished by obstinate isles;
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials...

(Personae, p. 187)

The reader of Mauberley and Émaux et Camées is aware of metrical echoes, but the rhythms are so completely Pound's own that it is difficult, if not impossible, to point to specific origins.

Perhaps there is an echo of the strict stanza Gautier uses in "L'Art,"

Qui, l'oeuvre sort plus belle
D'une forme au travail
Rebelle,
Vers, marbre, onyx, émail...
(Gautier, p. 223)

much adapted in:

> Bewildered that a world
> Shows no surprise
> At her last maquero's
> Adulteries...
> (Personae, p. 192)

or more clearly in:

> Firmness,
> Not the full smile,
> His art, but an art
> In profile...
> (Personae, p. 198)

and most clearly:

> A consciousness disjunct,
> Being but this overblotted
> Series
> Of intermittences...
> (Personae, p. 203)

These examples, perhaps, are sufficient to demonstrate Pound's metrical debt to Gautier. But Pound adopted more than just metric from Émaux et Camées. Espey has pointed out that Mauberley not only contains two quotes from Émaux et Camées[9] but also, many words[10] and phrases[11] from this volume can be paired with similar examples in Mauberley. Specifically, Émaux and Camées enters into poems II and III of the first section of the poem, in which Pound passes judgement on the London of his day:

> Here the material from Gautier enters into vocabulary, general tone, and basic theme, starting with emphasis on the Attic virtues and becoming more pronounced with 'not , not assuredly, alabaster' and 'the "sculpture" of rhyme' with its echo of 'sculpte, lime, cisèle' from L'Art. 'The tea-rose tea-gown, etc.'

> continues the influence, revealing now the double use to which Pound puts Émaux et Camées as he derives both the classic theme and its contemporary degradation from Gautier.
> (Espey, p. 35)

Espey draws attention to other examples from the first section of Mauberley where Gautier's text can be seen to be operating on many levels (Espey, p. 37). More testimony to Pound's ability to assimilate rapidly from his readings, and his translator's technique fully perfected, his ability to take from his sources the colours and tones he required for the creation that is totally his own.

Mauberley's metrics are not drawn from Gautier alone. In the letter to Felix Schelling in July, 1922, Pound wrote:

> The metre in Mauberley is Gautier and Bion's 'Adonis'; or at least those are the two grafts I was trying to flavour it with. Syncopation from the Greek; and a general distaste for the slushiness and swishiness of the post-Swinburnian British line.
> (Letters, p. 181)

Bion's metrics are typified by hesitating rhythms which establish the note of melancholy and point up the ejaculations of grief typical of the pastoral tradition. As Espey paraphrases some of Professor Philippe Legrand's comments from the second volume of his Bucoliques Grecs:

> There is no question here of hunting for 'strophes'; the fragments that follow upon each other...are of quite unequal length...Repetitions of many kinds are frequent: repetition of a phrase which is brought back like an echo; repetition of the same word in two (in certain instances, symmetrical) parallel phrases; repetition of a word within the same phrase...

> Here and there...these repetitions, seeming to translate a hesitation, an effort towards greater exactness, greater sincerity, give to the expression something singularly touching. Combined with the balance of phrases different in form but similar in content, they produce in the end an effect of exhaustion, of morbid languishing, like assiduously repeated incantations.
> (Espey, p. 43)

It is the broken rhythms of Bion set against the fashioned quatrains of Gautier which produce Pound's new synthesis in all its subtle variety. As an echo of Bion there is the syncopated repetition of the following fragments taken from poem II in the first section of Mauberley:

> Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;
>
> Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries...
>
> ...not, not assuredly, alabaster...
> (Personae, p. 188)

In poem IV of the first section we have an example of Pound's brilliant adaptation of rhythmic patterns from the Greek example. Entire systems of sound are reproduced. Beside:

> Some quick to arm,
> Some for adventure,
> Some from fear of weakness,
> Some from fear of censure,
> Some for love of slaughter, in imagination,
> learning later...
> Some in fear, learning love of slaughter...
> (Personae, p. 190)

can be juxtaposed for the sound beside these transliterated lines from Bion's "The Lament for Adonis":

> Cho men oistos,
> os d'epi toxon eball
> os de pteron
> os de pharetran
> Cho men elyse pedilon Adonidos
> oi de lebeti;
> Chryseio phoreoisin udor,
> O de meria loyei,
> os d'opithen pterygessin anapsychei ton Adonin.
> (Ll, 81-85)

Adapting Bion's device, Pound extends the repetition and heightens it with rhyme.

Another technical device, which may be the result of Bion's influence, is the use of hesitating rhythm, as in these stanzas from poem II of the second section of Mauberley:

> Drifted...drifted precipitate,
> Asking time to be rid of...
> Of his bewilderment; to designate
> His new found orchid...
>
> To be certain...certain...
> (Amid aerial flowers)...time for arrangements-
> Drifted on
> To the final estrangement...
> (Personae, p. 199)

Here the punctuation and repetitions slow up the verse. However, the sources for Pound's use of the ellipse need not necessarily be traced to Bion. His readings in the classics in general, especially where the texts are mutilated or survive only in fragments, could have been example enough. There is, for instance, the evocative fragment

"Papyrus" in Lustra:

Spring...
Too long...
Gongula...
(Personae, p. 112)

Here a part, if not the important part, of what is to be understood is left unstated. The mind of the reader must jump across the gaps. The poet uses the ellipse in the same way that a musician uses silence or a painter space. The dots are the lacunae in the text which must be filled in by the imagination.

It is Pound's synthesis of Bion and Gautier, the two pulling, as it were, in opposite directions, which gives to the verse structure of Mauberley its extraordinary subtlety, its alternate action of tension and release. When one notices too, how the rhythm of the lines runs against the verse structure, and not with it, an appreciation of consummate craft practised and perfected over a period of twelve years can be gained.

Knowing my coat has never been
of precisely the fashion
To stimulate, in her,
A durable passion...
(Personae, p. 196)

Although Bion and Gautier are the new metrical sources evident in Mauberley, there are echoes of earlier enthusiasms. The intricate syllabic play of stanzas like:

> Faun's flesh is not to us,
> Nor the saint's vision.
> We have the press for wafer;
> Franchise for circumcision.
> (Personae, p. 189)

are as complex in English as Arnaut or Bertrans in Provençal. Again, in poem V of the first section:

> There died a myriad,
> And of the best, among them,
> For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
> For a botched civilization,
>
> Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
> Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,
>
> For two gross of broken statues,
> For a few thousand battered books.
> (Personae, p. 191)

The central distich, once the context before and after is known, makes both epitaph and epigram, and it is as near pure sound as words can be. The poem owes something to Latin, something to Langue d'Oc and something to Anglo-Saxon, and with its clarity and precision it is the prose tradition in verse. If this example is juxtaposed beside the "Envoi (1919)," the thirteenth poem in the first section, in which the melopoeia echoes the English lyrical tradition of Waller and Lawes, Eliot's praise of Mauberley's metrics seems almost understated:

> ...I perceive that the versification is more accomplished than that of any other of the poems in this book, [Selected Poems] and more varied...I know very well that the apparent roughness and naïveté of the verse and rhyming of Mauberley are inevitably the result of many years of hard work...
> ("Introduction: 1928," p. 20)

In the ABC of Reading, Pound wrote:

> ...the good writer chooses his words for their 'meaning,' but that meaning is not a set, cut-off thing like the move of knight or pawn on a chess-board. It comes up with roots, with associations, with how and where the word is familiarly used, or where it has been used brilliantly or memorably.
>
> (p. 36)

Purposeful ambiguity and the considered exploitation of multiple meanings make their appearance in Pound's work in his "Homage to Sextus Propertius" as we have seen. In Mauberley, these techniques borrowed from Laforgue reach their maturity, for it is the terse, compact quatrains borrowed from Gautier that allow Pound's new found logopoeia to be slapped home with a rhyme:

> Verbalism demands a set form used with irreproachable skill. Satire needs, usually, the form of cutting rhymes to drive it home.
>
> ("Irony," p. 283)

"Laforgue" Pound had said, was "an angel with whom our modern poetic Jacob must struggle" ("French Poets," p. 166); the complex interplay of words characteristic of Mauberley is testimony to Pound's success. Although Laforgue's essential tone occurs rarely in Mauberley, as Espey puts it "Pound's white remains Gautier's 'blanc d'albâtre' rather than Laforgue's 'blanc de cold-cream,' (p. 66) his techniques are omnipresent. Warren Ramsey has pointed out the following examples from the first poem in Mauberley entitled "E.P. Ode Pour l'Élection de son Sepulchre."

> The cliché, 'march of events,' is pressed into ironic service, according to characteristic Laforguian procedure. The verse depends on the literary reference as Laforgue's does, with 'l'an trentiesme de son eage' woven in. Here too are the long international words out of Latin, the sort of polysyllables to which Laforgue resorted on slight pretext. As the end of the [fifth] quatrain, 'No adjunct to the Muses' diadem' furnishes a familiar ironic sparkle of grandeur. Taken singly, no one of these traits would justify the term 'Laforguian.' Occurring all together, sustained by the ironically learned tone which was Laforgue's contribution to nineteenth century verse, they send us back to the Pierrot poems.
>
> (Ramsey, p. 207)

The significance of this added dimension to Pound's verse, gained from his studies of Laforgue, can be gauged by comparing an example of Pound's early "phanopoeic" poetry, published in 1912[12], with a "Logopoeic" example extracted from Mauberley

Apparuit

> Golden rose the house, in the portal I saw
> thee, a marvel, carven in subtle stuff, a
> portent. Life died down in the lamp and flickered,
> caught at the wonder.
>
> Crimson, frosty with dew, the roses bend where
> thou afar, moving in the glamorous sun,
> drinkst in life of earth, of the air, the tissue
> golden about thee.
>
> Green the ways, the breath of the fields is thine there,
> open lies the land, yet the steely going
> darkly hast thou dared and the dreaded aether
> parted before thee.
>
> Swift at courage thou in the shell of gold, casting a-loose the cloak of the body, camest
> straight, then shone thine oriel and the stunned light
> faded about thee.

Half the graven shoulder, the throat aflash with
strands of light inwoven about it, loveli-
est of all things, frail alabaster, ah me!
swift in departing.

Clothed in goldish weft, delicately perfect,
gone as wind! The cloth of the magical hands!
Thou a slight thing, thou in access of cunning
dar'dst to assume this?
(Personae, p. 68)

Medallion

Luini in porcelain!
The grand piano
Utters a profane
Protest with her clear soprano.

The sleek head emerges
From the gold-yellow frock
As Anadyomene in the opening
Pages of Reinach.

Honey-red, closing the face-oval,
A basket-work of braids which seem as if they were
Spun in King Minos' hall
From metal, or intractable amber;

The face-oval beneath the glaze,
Bright in its suave bounding-line, as,
Beneath half-watt rays,
The eyes turn topaz.
(Personae, p. 204)

The first poem is a subjective description of a vision the poet experienced. The visual surface is blurred by the emotional tone; ejaculations such as "ah me" ring changes on the 'Nineties. The poet is not satisfied with presenting the reader with something beautiful, he directs him to the conclusion of loveliness. In spite of any technical reason that might exist for this poem's preservation, it makes statements in archaic language that were the common-places of the art-for-art's-sake tradition. Even if Yeats could be satisfied that the poem "eternalizes

the brief ecstasy in which beauty is born" (Häuserman, p. 102) the twentieth century reader remains somewhat unconvinced, primarily because the poem lacks dimension; its subject matter is slight. He is more likely to describe it, as Pound in 1919 described the work of another, as "mid-Victorian pre-Raphaelite slush" (Letters, p. 151). Thus, like many of the early poems, "Apparuit" is commonplace in feeling and substance whatever its technical interest.

The second poem (which ends Mauberley) is also a description on the surface, but the reader is aware that some sort of intellectual discussion is taking place. Explicitly, a portrait of a singing woman, who is likened to a painting (?) by Bernardino Luini, is presented. The details of the scene are noted: the colour of the dress, the shape of the head, and the colour of the hair and eyes. The observer writing the poem is reminded of a Venus in Reinach's Apollo.

But if the poem is subjected to a more detailed analysis, we discover more hidden relations in the interplay of the words. Take the word "topaz" for instance; in one sense it is part of the scrupulously noted detail of the scene, carefully recording the colour of the eyes beneath the "half-watt rays" of the star-lit night (weak artificial light?), in another sense it blends colourwise with the "gold-yellow frock" (the colour of Hymen) and the invitation of the song beyond the piano's "vain protest" (the piano here sharing with Laforgue's pianos the never answered voice of invitation and love). Note that the observer is not reminded of a living Venus, but betraying his sterile

aestheticism, a reproduction out of Reinach. This ironic revelation of the observer's inadequacy is implicitly carried in the elegant yet decadent description. The second poem then, attempts complex communication.

It is worth noting that the expression "half-watt rays" probably derives from Laforgue who was fascinated with the "new" scientific vocabulary of his time (Espey, p. 64). It is, together with the shift from the word "sieve" to "seismograph" earlier in Mauberley (Personae, p. 199), a good example of what Pound described as Laforgue's "verbalism" adding "he has dipped his wings in the dye of scientific terminology" ("Irony," p. 283).

Undoubtedly, a great distance separates the falsely archaic, unduly simplified diction of the early poems from the complex, ironic wording of Mauberley, with its activity on the intellectual level, eliciting more than one kind of response from the reader.

While on the subject of Pound's diction, Mauberley is testimony to the extent Pound was beginning to insert non-English words and phrases in his texts. From the beginning he had displayed his penchant for the foreign title, the esoteric linguistic reference, and he was early taken to task for this particular brand of scholarly snobbery. Certainly Pound's usage often gives the impression of being mere affectation meant simply to show off his erudition, offering little if anything to the context in which it appears. The opposite effect, however, can often be shown. In Mauberley appear fragments from Latin, Greek,

mediaeval and modern French and Italian, all of which do play a part by virtue of their untranslated form. Pound was to write in his own defence in later years:

> If mere extensions of vocabulary, or use of foreign words is a sin, I surely am chief among all sinners living. Yet to the best of my knowledge, I have never used a Greek word or Latin one where English would have served. I mean that I have never intentionally used, or wittingly left unexpurgated, any classic or foreign form save where I asserted: This concept, this rhythm is so solid, so embedded in the consciousness of humanity so durable in its justness that it has lasted 2,000 years, or nearly three thousand. When it has been an Italian or French word, it has asserted or I have meant it to assert, some meaning not current in English, some shade or gradation.
> ("Debabelization," p. 410)

This is not to excuse slips and inaccurate quotations in the Mauberley text, or by extension, the misspellings of foreign names[13]. Although they should not alter a reader's judgment of the poem, they remain a source of annoyance to many a critic's scholastic sensibilities. Pound's constant haste, his enthusiasm to pick up and use whatever was at hand, however imperfect the assimilation at times, can produce results which perhaps justify the means. Unfortunately, Pound's search for le mot juste did not always lead to l'orthographe exacte.

Turning to the question of what Mauberley is about, as opposed to the techniques involved in its statement, one finds that the poem has received considerable critical notice since its publication and has suffered a variety of readings. The divergence of opinion stems from

continuing disagreement on two points: the relationship between Pound himself and the person of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, whether the two are to be identified wholly, or in part, or not at all; and secondly, the question of the poem's form, whether it is an integrated whole or a series of eighteen poems patched together. In an aside on Mauberley Pound wrote to Felix Schelling in July, 1922:

> Of course, I'm no more Mauberley than Eliot is Prufrock. Mais passons. Mauberley is a mere surface. Again a study in form, an attempt to condense the James novel.
>
> (Letters, p. 180)

Keeping this comment in mind, we shall first of all examine the problem of the Pound-Mauberley relationship.

F.R. Leavis has characterized all of Mauberley as: "the summing up of an individual life" (p. 138) and states further:

> One might, at the risk of impertinence, call it quintessential autobiography, taking care, however, to add that it has the impersonality of great poetry: its technical perfection means a complete detachment and control.
>
> (Leavis, p. 139)

Edith Sitwell, following Leavis, has characterized Mauberley as being "the complete record of an individual" (Sitwell, p. 44), and has stated that the second section of the poem "is a quintessence of the poem which precedes it" (p. 50). At the other extreme, J. Espey interprets that:

> Pound creates in the person of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, who appears only in the latter half of the poem and in contrast to Pound himself, a mask of the contemporary aesthete to show what the minor artist could expect from the England of the day...
> (Espey, p. 14)

The feature of Espey's reading being "its insistence on a complete divorce between Pound and Mauberley so far as the sequence itself is concerned" (p. 16).

Kenner has perhaps approached the nexus of the problem when he affirms, remembering Pound's comment, that although J. Alfred Prufrock is not Eliot, he speaks with Eliot's voice and bears intricate analogical relations with the voice of the later Eliot of Four Quartets:

> Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, on the other hand, does not speak with Mr. Pound's voice, and is more antithetically than intimately related to the poet of the Cantos. It would be misleading to say that he is a portion of Mr. Pound's self whom Mr. Pound is externalizing in order to get rid of him...it would be a more accurate exaggeration to say that he is a parody of Pound the poet with whom Mr. Pound is anxious not to be confounded.
> (Kenner, p. 166)

The problem posed by this critical disagreement on the Pound-Mauberley relationship can be resolved somewhat if the points of departure of the opposing views are analysed. If one agrees with Leavis, that Mauberley is "immediately convincing" (p. 135) but that it is difficult to be "interested in the earlier work" and that it is difficult to "have forseen Mauberley in it" (p. 138), then the judgment that the pressure

of experience we feel in the poem "seems to derive...from a recognition of bankruptcy, of a devoted life summed up in futility" (p. 138), is a logical, if perhaps hasty conclusion. If one adds to this basis Leavis' belief that the Cantos (up to and including A Draft of XXX Cantos, Paris, 1930) are "Mr. Pound's The Ring and the Book" (p. 156), and not only do not represent an advance, but actually a descent from Mauberley, the poem that is "the summit of Mr. Pound's superbly supple and varied art" (p. 150), his equation of Pound and Mauberley is understandable if unconvincing.

If, on the other hand, one agrees with Mr. Eliot that Pound's early work "represents a continuous development, down to Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, the last stage of importance before The Cantos," and that "the Cantos 'of a poem of some length' are by far his most important achievement" ("Introduction: 1928," p. 7), then Kenner's warning to the reader that he must be armed "against the two easy supposition that Pound found in Mauberley an eloquence of disillusion" (p. 169), in spite of the fact that the poem is in Pound's words his "farewell to London" (Personae, p. 185), is also valid. It is hard not to agree with Kenner that Mauberley "does not mark...a hurt awakening from aesthetic playgrounds into thin cruel daylight" (p. 168). We have seen that the postures and conflicts continue those of the "Homage," which expressed a robustezza hardly confoundable with hurt awakening. As Kenner points out:

> If a decisive point of maturation must be found, it is to be found in Propertius...It is easy, for that matter, to overestimate the re-orientation there involved vis-à-vis the earlier work. There need be nothing traumatic about supervening maturity... [enough] emotional maturation may be seen going on in the Lustra volume...to preclude any suggestion of a cataclysmic re-orientation a few years later.
>
> (Kenner, pp. 168-169)

In the light of the above, and as will be demonstrated further in an analysis of certain parts of the text of Mauberley, the person of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley can neither be completely divorced from Pound nor completely identified with him. It might not be misleading to describe him as a personification of a part of Pound. He is the result of the application by the poet of the persona to an aspect of his own self.

One more argument for at least this much separation of Pound and Mauberley is the relationship between Mauberley and the Jamesian hero. Pound had said that the poem was a study in form, an attempt to condense the James novel. This statement might only be to suggest that he had attempted to do in short compass for 1910-1920 what Henry James had repeatedly done, a couple of volumes at a time, for the 'Eighties. But there are other correspondencies: Kenner has suggested that the second section of Mauberley "is practically a précis of the flirtation with passionate illusion of Lambert Strether in The Ambassadors" and quotes the line 'of course I moved among miracles,' said Strether. 'It was all phantasmagoric,' which can be placed beside these lines from poem II of the second section of Mauberley:

> He had moved amid her phantasmagoria,
> Amid her galaxies...
> (Personae, p. 199)

One of the major themes of Mauberley (and of the "Homage") is the pressure exerted on the individual by society. Pound had seen in his older fellow expatriate as he wrote in 1918:

> ...the hater of tyranny; book after early book against oppression, against all the sordid petty personal crushing oppression, the domination of modern life; not worked out in the diagrams of Greek tragedy, not labelled 'Epos' or 'Aeschylus.' The outbursts in The Tragic Muse, the whole of The Turn of the Screw, human liberty, personal liberty, the rights of the individual against all sorts of intangible bondage!
> ("Henry James," p. 296)[14]

It is the "demands of the age" that Hugh Selwyn Mauberley can neither justify nor satisfy, and which lead to his introversion, isolation and ultimate death. But not only can Hugh Selwyn Mauberley be related to the Jamesian hero, taking a hint from Pound himself, the entire suite of Mauberley enjoys a structural relation to the novels of James as analysed by Pound ("Henry James," pp. 333-338). As Espey points out (p. 53), an awareness of this lends more weight to the view that the person of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley appears only in the second section of the poem. Pound almost parodies a Jamesian characteristic in delaying the presentation of the central figure:

> He [Henry James] appears at times to write around and around a thing and not always to emerge from the 'amorous plan' of what he wanted to present, into definite presentation.
> ("Henry James," p. 306)

It is possible to read Mauberley, then, as an elaborate metrical condensation of a James novel. The series of poems or chapters form a comprehensive whole, and each poem is dependent psychologically and rhythmically upon the others.

To better illustrate this, and some of the other points discussed above, we shall turn to the text of the poem. The subtitle "Life and Contacts," and the title-page footnote "The sequence is so distinctly a farewell to London..." (Personae, p. 185), orient the reader for the first of the eighteen poems of Mauberley, entitled: "E.P. Ode Pour l'Élection de son Sepulchre." Espey has demonstrated (pp. 17-21), however, how early printings of the Mauberley text caused confusion as to the material actually included under the "Ode." In the first two printings of the complete poem[15], neither table of contents gives a hint that the opening "Ode" is Ezra Pound's Ode[16]. In the Ovid Press Text, "E.P." is included in the "Ode" title, but is left out of the Boni and Liveright edition. The omission of "E.P." in both tables of contents, and in one of the texts, is enough to explain perhaps why some critics have identified Pound and Mauberley.

A further confusion stems from the fact that although both early printings of the table of contents made clear that the "Ode" was merely the first poem, in both the 1926 and 1949 editions of Personae, nothing in the general tables of contents suggests that the nine titled poems are in fact part of one poem, and the numbered poems are omitted altogether. In both the 1928 and 1949 editions of Ezra Pound: Selected Poems[17] the tables of contents are collected under the general title

"Hugh Selwyn Mauberley," but again the numbered poems are not listed. In the text of the poem as printed, the numeral I appears above (Personae) and below (Ezra Pound: Selected Poems) the title of the "Ode." Elsewhere in the text of the first section of the poem (as printed in Personae and Ezra Pound: Selected Poems, the numerals are omitted when an individual poem is given its own title. These textual ambiguities have led anthologists and critics into the error that the "Ode" designated the first five poems, yet there is nothing, once the misunderstanding is established, to prevent the inclusion of all thirteen poems in the first section.

To recapitulate briefly, although the person of Mauberley may be related to Pound, in fact even contained in him, they have separate identities in the text. Thus the restatement of phrases from the first section in the second or "Mauberley" section of the poem, in Espey's words:

> ...begin to look more like thematic variants than direct extensions; and a certain balance - even a logical structure - shows in the ordering of what has more than once been called a series of disconnected fragments. Even a typographical contrast emphasizes the division, with the use of the Greek alphabet in the first section's Greek quotations and tags as against the transliteration of Greek into the Roman alphabet in the second's.
>
> (Espey, p. 21)

Let us now examine closely poems I and II of the first section, and poem I of the second section, in detail, during which a condensed

reading of the poem as a whole will be proffered.

E.P. ODE POUR L'ÉLECTION DE SON SEPULCHRE

For three years, out of key with his time,
He strove to resuscitate the dead art
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"
In the old sense. Wrong from the start -

No, hardly, but seeing he had been born
In a half savage country, out of date;
Bent resolutely on wringing lilies from the acorn;
Capaneus; trout for factitious bait;

Ἴδμεν γάρ τοι πάνθ', ὅο' ἐνὶ Τροίῃ
Caught in the unstopped ear;
Giving the rocks small lee-way
The chopped seas held him, therefore, that year.

His true Penelope was Flaubert,
He fished by obstinate isles;
Observed the elegance of Circe's hair
Rather than the mottoes on sun-dials.

Unaffected by "the march of events,"
He passed from men's memory in l'an trentiesme
De son eage; the case presents
No adjunct to the Muses' diadem.

(Personae, p. 187)

Adopting a title from Ronsard: "De l'Élection de son Sepulchre" (Odes, IV, 4), Pound writes his epitaph in such a way as to reveal his own view of his early career (from the vantage ground of 1918) and ironically, the view of his "age."

For three years - from the publication of A Lume Spento to Ripostes - he attempted to resuscitate the "art" (in the sense of technique) of poetry (then in a state of decadence - viz. Pound "the backwash of Lionel Johnson"). In addition, he endeavoured to maintain

"the sublime" (the quotes suggest irony). This may refer to Pound's early attempt at the poetry of passion and ecstasy, or to Pound's early use of classical (Provençal, Latin) as opposed to contemporary (Fiona Macleod, early Yeats) models. In either case, the approach is wrong in terms of the age, because it is out of date.

Pound's American birth, both by the exaggerated judgment of the London world - "half savage country" - and by his own estimate (viz. Pound "I was twenty years behind the times"), explains why he was out of key and out of date. In any case, to produce art of any kind in the American environment is likened to wringing lilies from acorns (viz. Pound "You sooner or later leave the country") and Pound likens himself to Capaneus (one of the seven against Thebes who defied the Gods and was struck down for his impiety) and to trout rising to an artificial lure (Pound the young poet rising to the easy bait of the aritifical poetry of the 'Nineties).

The third stanza, opening with the quotation from the Odyssey (XII, 189) "For we know all the things that are in Troy," presents the poet as Odysseus menaced by sirens (pre-Raphaelitism). The fourth stanza extends the metaphor; the poet is saved, not only from the sirens, but also from Circe (dangerous beauty for its own sake) because his Penelope was Flaubert. Although Flaubert was the saint and martyr of the aesthetic faith, by emphasizing craft and the search for exact expression (viz. Pound "Flaubert - mot juste, présentation ou constation")[18] and also by his endeavour to expose the stupidity of accepted ideas (viz. Pound "Flaubert is diagnosis")[19], he preserved Pound from

whole-hearted acceptance of aestheticism.

The poet "fished by obstinate isles" (Pound's eclectic studies in many traditions or his literary battles with the stubborn British Isles) on his literary voyage, still more concerned with aesthetic discriminations and technical perfectionism than in being aware that time was running out on the pre-war era. The poet of Personae of Ezra Pound is affected by "the march of events" so as to become the poet of Lustra.

The "unaffected" Pound (the aesthete only) is outgrown by 1915 (l'an trentiesme). If Pound had "passed from men's memory," to stretch a point, prior to 1915, he would have appeared "unaffected" by external events.

The irony inherent in the use of the first line from Villon's Grand Testament points up Pound's ambivalence towards his early work. Is it or is it not an "adjunct to the muses diadem"? Pound is not sure: his irony cuts both ways.

II

The age demanded an image
Of its accelerated grimace,
Something for the modern stage,
Not, at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries
Of the inward gaze;
Better mendacities
Than the classics in paraphrase!

The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,
Made with no loss of time,
A prose Kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
Or the "sculpture" of rhyme.
(Personae, p. 188)

Having unsparingly revealed himself in the first poem, Pound proceeds to reveal the "age," denouncing its false values, but also by inference, still casting reflections on his pre-war self qua poet.

The first stanza, again somewhat ambiguously, presents the age's demand for contemporary art, yet the age is debased. The "age" demanded and got the poetic anarchy of "Futurism,"[20] it <u>needed,</u> but rejected, the stylistic clean up of "Imagisme." In one sense "Attic grace" may refer to what Pound himself called "the pretty poems," which, filled with archaisms, typified his early poetry, in another sense it may refer to a better type of poetry reflecting a nobler epoch. "Obscure reveries" again suggests Pound's early subjective poetry. "Better mendacities" leads into an ironic comment with perhaps the "Homage" as the main reference.

The age, however, did not "demand" Pound's benizen, technique (viz. Pound's efforts at the "scrutiny of the word the cleaning up of syntax"); it demanded, to quote Pound ("Status Second," p. 39), "the futurist's cinematographic fluidity." And in any case, vers libre very quickly became an excuse for formlessness (viz. Pound "went off into froth...with no body in it"). The "alabaster" of Imagisme, and the later example of the sculptural rhyme from Gautier, whatever their need, were certainly not the demands of the age.

Kenner has asserted that the "Ode" is largely Pound's career in London as seen through the eyes of an uncomprehending but not unsympathetic observer:

> As soon as we see that this epitaph is not...being written by Pound, the entire sequence falls into focus. The eleven succeeding poems (II-XII) present an ideogrammic survey of post-war England: of the culture which we have just heard pronouncing upon the futility of Pound's effort to 'resuscitate the dead art of poetry.'
>
> (Kenner, p. 170)

The eleven succeeding poems do present such a survey; to use Eliot's phrase they are "a document of an epoch" ("Introduction: 1928," p. 20). And it is also true that the poet summarily and perhaps even condescendingly dismissed in the "Ode" now begins to answer the criticism of "his time" by denouncing it. But the age notwithstanding, Pound was wrong <u>at</u> the start, if not necessarily <u>from</u> the start. To read the first two poems as being presented by the same voice, employing the same ironies, at least gives Pound credit for realising his own psychological growth, and this is not to condone the age. Some of Pound's roots were in the 'Nineties, cutting pre-Raphaelitisms out of his own verse meant denying a part of himself. Pound has said of Browning "Pourquoi nier son père" (<u>Letters</u>, p. 218); in the above poems Pound both asserts and denies aestheticism in the same breath.

Poems III to XII, as they present mainly surface difficulties which can be resolved satisfactorily by Espey's paraphrase (pp. 85-98), shall be considered only briefly. In these poems, Pound presents his "age." Its "taudry cheapness" (III) and commercialism, its insistence on money as an aesthetic standard, lead to the degradation of literature, democracy, even of Christianity. The denunciation is brought to a climax

with World War 1 and its sacrifice of youth (IV) all for a deseased tradition (V). Turning from the immediate present, Pound traces the sources of this degradation, beginning with the stifling of the pre-Raphaelite artists by the false official morality of the Gladstones, Ruskins and Buchanans (Yeux Glauques). This is followed by a view of the 'Nineties ("Siena Mi Fe; Disfecemi Maremma")[21] in which the artist has been driven into moral decay and "his art" has collapsed into mediocrity. Then follows a series, by implication, of Pound's contacts in the contemporary London world. Each vignette presents a character and his or her personal reaction to the demands of the age. The Jew ("Brennbaum")[22], exists only as a mask of correctness and conformity; the opportunist ("Mr. Nixon")[23] polishes reviewers to advance his sales; the dedicated stylist[24] (X) retires in anonymity to the country; the semi-educated middle class woman[25](XI), having become the repository of traditions she ignores, lives solely by dictated habit. Lastly (XII), Pound presents a patroness of the arts[26], who displays her false, if socially fashionable literary aspirations. Pound then bows out of the poem, leaving "Envoi (1919)" as a sample of his art.

It is worth stopping for a moment to consider this thirteenth poem, the last in the first section. Leaving the careful quatrains of Gautier, Pound sings a song (composed in the sequence of the musical phrase) based on Waller's "Go Lovely Rose." The poem echoes through the English tradition from Chaucer to Shakespeare, but the double irony is that as much as it triumphantly refutes Pound's own criticism of himself in the "Ode," it simultaneously drives home this very

criticism's validity.

The first poem in the second section, in which Hugh Selwyn Mauberley appears for the first time, reads as follows:

MAUBERLEY
1920

"Vacuos exercet aera morsus"

I

Turned from the "eau-forte
Par Jaquemart"
To the strait head
Of Messalina:

"His true Penelope
Was Flaubert,"
And his tool
The engraver's.

Firmness,
Not the full smile,
His art, but an art
In profile;

Colourless
Pier Francesca,
Pisanello lacking the skill
To forge Achaia.

(Personae, p. 198)

Hugh Selwyn Mauberley is introduced under an epitaph from Ovid (Metamorphoses, VII, 786) "he bites emptily at the air." The poet turns from the etching of Gautier to the profile medallion head of Messalina, the profligate Roman empress[27].

The second stanza ironically makes the connection with the poet of the "Ode." Mauberley remains contant to one faith - the aesthetic -

but on the level of the minor artist ("His art, but an art/In profile").

In the fourth stanza, noting as Friar suggests (p. 530), that Reinach in his Apollo (Mauberley's reference work - viz. "Medallion" above) speaks of Piero della Francesca's art as being "cold and impersonal" and mentions his "pale straight figures," and that Vittore Pisano was a Veronese painter and medallist, Mauberley is presented as being limited, unable to create a tradition of his own ("forge Achaia").

Mauberley, then, is not Pound, although in a sense he is contained in Pound. He shares more in common with the Pound of Personae of Ezra Pound than he does with the Pound of Lustra. He is a persona of that part of Pound concerned solely with aesthetic concentration. His demise is a projection of the artistic death lying in wait for Pound himself if he had not heeded the practical advice of Ford Madox Ford in those early years:

> Most of the verse that is written today deals
> in a derivative manner with mediaeval emotions.
> This means that the poets have not the courage
> to lead their own lives. They seem to shut
> themselves up in quiet book cabinets to read
> forever, and to gain their idea of life from
> some very small, very specialized group of books.
> (The Critical Attitude, p. 187)

Following on through the second section of the ppem, in his art (II), Hugh Selwyn Mauberley:

> Given that is his "fundamental passion,"
> This urge to convey the relation
> Of eyelid and cheek-bone
> By verbal manifestations...

can only present

> ...the series
> Of curious heads in medallion -
> (Personae, p. 200)

Like a pre-war Pound his art ("The Age Demanded"):

> ...made no immediate application
> Of this to relation of the state
> To the individual...
> (Personae, p. 201)

Mauberley, the aesthete par excellence, drifts into subjective reverie in isolation from the world; ultimately even "the artist's urge" (p. 202) is destroyed and for epitaph he leaves only (IV):

> "I was
> And I no more exist;
> Here drifted
> An hedonist."
> (Personae, p. 203)

The poem then ends with Hugh Selwyn Mauberley's poem "Medallion."

Any attempt at a running commentary, even in part, of a poem of the artistic stature of Mauberley seems an impertinence, for the poem qua poem incomparably explains itself. Any attempt to elucidate can only prove reductive, not only by virtue of what it attempts to explain, but also by what it leaves out. The main purpose in offering the above line tracings was to guide the reader towards an apprehension of the poem in terms that do not falsify either the earlier, or by extension, the later work, for Mauberley is both a summary of Pound's past career

and a prefiguring of his future artistry. In Eliot's words: "It is compact of the experience of a certain man in a certain place at a certain time" ("Introduction: 1928," p. 20).

A few months before the end of the war, in June 1918, Pound published Pavannes and Divisions, his first book of criticism since the publication of Spirit of Romance in 1910. Dedicated to John Quinn, for whom he considered the dedicatory epitaph "Americanus non moribus" (Letters, p. 139), the book was directed towards America, to help influence what Pound hoped was to be the post-war "Risorgimento." The book divides his interest between the old and the new, and the vital relationship between the two. Made up for the most part, of articles previously published in the little magazines, it was a hopeful gesture of instruction.

This work was followed in October, 1919, by a book of poetry entitled Quia Pauper Amavi which contained a series of Provençal translations under the title "Langue d'Oc," "Moeurs Contemporaines," "Three Cantos"[29] (the first versions of Cantos 1-3) and "Homage to Sextus Propertius," Hugh Selwyn Mauberley was published in April, 1920, followed by Umbra in June of the same year. Umbra was a reprinting of selected poems from the early volumes Personae of Ezra Pound, Exultations and Ripostes. Significantly, Umbra was the last English publication of Pound's poetry until 1928.

During and after the war Pound continued his labours of urging

pleading, berating and commanding for the "new idiom." At the same time he continued studying, writing, publishing and teaching. But his campaign in London was to end in one kind of victory and another kind of defeat. By the end of the war he had found a way to articulate the matter of the "Homage" and of Mauberley, and he had begun work on The Cantos, the poem that was to occupy his talents for the next forty-one years, but he had become convinced of the impossibility of remaining in England.

His attempts to establish in London a dynamic centre in which the new art, and particularly the new literature, could flourish failed. As he wrote to Williams in September, 1920:

> And now that there is no longer any intellectual life in England save what centers in this eight by ten pentagonal room; now that Rémy [de Gourmont] and Henry [James] are gone and Yeats faded, and NO literary publication whatever extant in England, save what 'we' print (Egoist and Ovid Press), the question remains whether I have to give up every shred of comfort, every scrap of my personal life, and 'gravitate' to a New York which wants me as little now as it did ten and fifteen years ago.
> (Letters, p. 158)

His relationship with the British literary scene, tenuous at best since Blast, had decayed completely. As he wrote to John Quinn:

> Have had two opulent weeks as dramatic critic on The Outlook, and have been fired in most caddish possible manner. Have had my work turned down by about every editor in England...
> (Letters, p. 151)

The post-war years shook even his faith in America. In 1920, Instigations of Ezra Pound, another book of criticism made up of reprints from his journal publications, fell on completely deaf ears. He had written to Marianne Moore in February, 1919: "Must return to the unconcern with U.S.A. that I had before 1911-1912" (Letters, p. 145). As he explained in later years:

> As I see it, 'we' in 1910 wanted to set up civilization in America...By 1920 one wanted to preserve the vestiges or start a new one anywhere one could.
>
> ("Small Magazines," pp. 698-699)

Over a period of some twelve years, Pound had tried to influence the course of literary events on two continents; faced with the failure of his efforts in terms of what he demanded of "the age," in spite of the real successes he had achieved, he left in bitterness for Paris in the constant search for a new "Byzantium."

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1 Quoted in Ramsey, Warren, "Pound, Laforgue, and Dramatic Structure," Comparative Literature, III (1951), 47.

2 First published in Poetry, XI (Nov., 1917), pp. 93-98.

3 "How to Read," New York Herald Tribune Books, V (Jan., 1929).

4 In the Loeb numbering - Elegy II, 28a.

5 First published in New Age, XXV (1919), 132-133, 170, 200, 231, 264, 292. Selections from "The Homage," were published in Poetry, XIII (March, 1919), 291-299, under the title "Poems from the Propertian Series."

6 "Homage to Sextus Propertius" was included in a list under the title "Major Personae" in Umbra, p. 128.

7 It escaped the Loeb translator, who wrote: "Let the heart of my mistress be moved with joy..."

8 Pound's growing dissatisfaction with vers libre can be noted from the following comments (dated 20 Aug. 1917 by Pound - "A Retrospect," p. 13):

> I think the desire for vers libre is due to the sense of quantity reasserting itself after years of starvation. But I doubt if we can take over, for English, the rules of quantity laid down for Greek and Latin, mostly by Latin grammarians.
>
> I think one should write vers libre only when one 'must,' that is to say, only when the 'thing' builds up a rhythm more beautiful than that of set metres, or more real, more a part of the emotion of the 'thing,' more germane, intimate, interpretative than the measure of regular accentual verse, a rhythm which discontents one with set iambic or set anapaestic.
>
> Eliot has said the thing very well when he said, 'No vers is libre for the man who wants to do a good job.'
>
> ("A Retrospect," p. 12)

9 "Daphne with her thighs in bark/Stretches toward me her leafy hands," (Personae, p. 196) can be placed beside the following fragment from "Le Château du Souvenir": "Daphné, les hanches dans l'écorce,/Étend toujours ses doigts touffus" (Gautier, p. 178). The second quote, if it can be so called, appears in: "Turned from the "eau-forte/Par Jaquemart" (Personae, p. 198). The source here is the title page of Émaux et Camées. After the author and title appear the words "avec une eau-forte par J. Jacquemart." The etching of Gautier's head (in profile) faces this page.

10 Pound's title "Yeux Glauques" (Personae, p. 192) finds its echo in Gautier's "Caerulei Oculi" (p. 57). Gautier's vocabulary - "Venus Anadyomène," "profil," "mousseline," "morts-nés" find their echo in Mauberley passim (Espey, p. 32).

11 From "Yeux Glauques" (Personae, p. 192) one can set beside "Thin like brook-water, with a vacant gaze," "The thin clear gaze," "questing and passive" - a similar series from "Caerulei Oculi" (Gautier, pp. 57-60) - "les langueurs de leurs prunelles," "leur transparence verdâtre," "son reflet clair," "l'abîme de ce regard," "ce regard ceruléen." (Espey, p. 34).

12 First published in English Review, XI (June, 1912), 344.

13 As Espey points out (pp. 22-24): "Vacuos exercet aera morsus" (Personae, p. 198) for "Vacuos exercet in aera morsus (Ovid, Metamorphoses, VII, 786); "NUKTIS 'AGALMA" (Personae, p. 199) for "NUKTOS' AGALMA (Bion?), otherwise a Greek root is combined with a Latin Genitive. Then there is "Jaquemart" (Personae,p. 198) for "Jacquemart," "Gallifet" (Personae, p. 193) for "Gallifett," "Bloughram" (Personae, p. 194) for "Blougram."

14 First published as a series of three articles in Little Review, V (Aug., 1918), 5-6, 6-7, 9-39.

15 Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, the Ovid Press, London, 1920; and as printed in Poems 1918-21, Boni and Liveright, New York, 1921.

16 The first six poems of Mauberley ("Ode" to "Yeux Glauques") were printed in Dial, LXIX (Sept., 1920), 283-287, under the title "Mauberly." The first poem was entitled simply "Ode Pour l'Élection de son sepulchre," the "E.P." being omitted.

17 The 1949 edition is a reprint of the 1928 edition except that T.S. Eliot has added a postscript dated 1948.

18 Letter to René Taupin, May, 1928 (Letters, p. 218).

19 "The Serious Artist," p. 45.

20 The application of futurism's principles to poetry resulted in the following (quoted from Coffman, p. 194):

Battle
Weight + Smell

Sun gold billets dishes lead sky silk heat bedquilting purple blue torrefaction Sun = volcano - 3000 flags atmosphere precision corrida fury surgeon lamp rays history sparks linen desert clinic x 20000 arms 2000 feet 10000 eye-sights scintillations expectation operation sand ship-engines Italian Arabs.

21 "Monsieur Verog" - the protagonist of this poem - is probably Victor Plarr. Born in Strasbourg, he was Librarian to the Royal College of Surgeons, a member of the Rhymers Club, and he wrote a book of poetry entitled In the Dorian Mood.

22 "Brennbaum" may be Max Beerbohm (who was not Jewish) - Pound had written: ("Remy De Gourmont: A Distinction," p. 340):

> there was the 'aesthetic' era during which people 'wrought' as the impeccable Beerbohm has noted; there was the period of furry symboliste trappings, 'sin,' satanism, rosy cross, heavy lilies, Jersey Lilies, etc...

23 "Mr. Nixon" may be Arnold Bennett - Kimon Friar quotes Pound as stating (Modern Poetry, p. 530) that: "Mr. Nixon is a fictitious name for a real person." In a letter to Michael Roberts in July, 1937 (Letters, p. 296), Pound alludes to "nickle cash - register Bennett."

24 The stylist may be Ford Madox Ford - immediately after the war Ford retired to the country under precisely the circumstances described in Pound's poem.

25 "Conservatrix of Milésien" - Pound had written in a letter to John Quinn in November, 1918 (p. 140):

> 'Conservatrice des traditions Milesienne,' as de Gourmont calls them. There are people who have no sense of the value of 'civilization' or public order.

26 "Lady Valentine" - As Espey points out (p. 98), the trisyllable name suggests both Lady Ottoline Morrel and Lady Geraldine Otter, neither of whose circles Pound would have found comforting.

27 Pound wrote Kimon Friar (quoted in Modern Poetry, p. 530) that he had in mind a particular portrait, but that he could not remember which.

28 The first versions of the first three Cantos were published in Poetry, X (1917), 113-121, 180-188, 248-254, followed by a fourth Canto in Dial, LXVIII (1920), 689-692. Three more Cantos (with Canto IV) were published in 1921 in Poems 1918-21. These first seven Cantos were later heavily revised and rearranged, and were never republished in their original form; a detailed consideration of this work belongs properly in a study of The Cantos as a whole.

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