

**“Anarchival Modernism and the Documentary Poetics of Ezra Pound’s Late Cantos”**

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the ways in which American modernist Ezra Pound's "documentary poetics" serve a broader historical and cultural function as archival spaces. Stepping off from Eivind Røssaak's identification of contemporary media culture as anarchival, this thesis aims to show how modernism's pre-digital aesthetic experiments with documentary forms presaged this turn away from traditional forms of archival thinking.

The first chapter surveys the intellectual legacies of archival epistemology from the Enlightenment through to the twentieth century, identifying the inter-war modernist movement as a definitive turning point towards new forms of figuring documentary history. This chapter then examines how this shift is visible Ezra Pound's early poetry and prose. The second and third chapters pay particular attention to the later poems of Pound's epic long-poem *The Cantos*, wherein his documentary poetics undergo radical structural changes. This portion of the analysis is supported in part by archival findings in the Ezra Pound Papers held at Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The final chapter interrogates these structural evolutions to Pound's documentary poetics in the late cantos in order to identify how they function and dysfunction as archival spaces and how they serve other anarchival functions.

This research hopes to provide an invigorating new point of entry to Pound studies, especially to the problematic late cantos, as well as encourage further research on the relationship between modernist aesthetics and our own contemporary anarchival culture.

Cette thèse a pour but d'examiner comment la 'poésie documentaire' du moderniste américain Ezra Pound fonctionne de façon plus étendue historiquement et culturellement en tant qu'espaces d'archives. En se basant sur les recherches d'Eivind Røssaak, selon qui la culture des médias contemporaine est "anarchival," cette thèse vise à montrer comment les expériences modernistes avec les formes documentaires avant l'ère numérique ont présagé un détournement des façons traditionnelles de conceptualiser l'archive.

Le premier chapitre surveille les contributions intellectuelles de l'épistémologie d'archives du siècle des Lumières jusqu'au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, en établissant le mouvement moderniste entre-guerre comme un virage définitif vers les nouvelles formes de conceptualiser l'histoire documentaire. En plus, ce chapitre examine comment ce virage est manifeste dans les premiers poèmes et les œuvres en prose d'Ezra Pound. Les deuxième et troisième chapitres se concentrent sur les poèmes qui paraissent plus tard dans le long poème *The Cantos*, dans lequel sa poésie documentaire subit des changements structurels radicaux. Cette section de l'analyse est soutenue par des recherches de documents d'archive faites dans la collection d'Ezra Pound au Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library à Yale University. Le dernier chapitre s'interroge sur les développements structuraux de la poésie documentaire de Pound dans les derniers chants afin de comprendre si ces poèmes fonctionnent en tant qu'espaces d'archives et comment ils servent d'autres fonctions "anarchival."

Cette recherche vise à donner un nouveau point de départ aux études de Pound, en particulier les derniers chants problématiques et à encourager plus de recherches sur les relations entre les esthétiques modernistes et notre culture contemporaine "anarchival."

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## **Preface**

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Mitchell C. Brown

## Appendix: Abbreviations

<i>ABC</i>	<i>ABC of Reading</i> . New York: New Directions, 1934. Print.
<i>EPP</i>	“The Ezra Pound Papers.” New Haven, CT: Yale University, Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library. YCAL MSS 43.
<i>GK</i>	<i>Guide to Kulchur</i> . New York: New Directions, 1952. Print.
<i>LC</i>	<i>Ezra and Dorothy Pound: Letters in Captivity, 1945-1946</i> . New York: Oxford UP, 1999. Print.
<i>LE</i>	<i>Literary Essays</i> . Ed. T.S. Eliot. New York: New Directions, 1968.
<i>PR</i>	<i>Personae</i> . New York: New Directions, 1990. Print.
<i>SP</i>	<i>Selected Prose: 1909-1965</i> . New York: New Directions, 1973. Print.
<i>SR</i>	<i>The Spirit of Romance</i> . New York: New Directions, 1968. Print.

## **Introduction**

I have been accused of wishing to provide a 'portable substitute for the British Museum,' which I would do, like a shot, were it possible. It isn't.

-Ezra Pound, "How to Read" (1929)

In his landmark essay, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire" (1989) Pierre Nora stated that modern memory is, "above all, archival. It relies on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image" (13). A decade and a half after the publication of Nora's essay, on the still-rising crest of the digital media revolution of the twenty-first century, our societal understanding of identity, history, and culture remains utterly dependent on archival thinking. Thanks to ongoing advances in digital technologies for the virtual reproduction, storage, and access of data, we are nearer than ever to realizing the lost Enlightenment dream of textually encoding all human knowledge in material form. This boon is being felt not only by bureaucratic and institutional bodies charged with official forms of record-keeping, but also by each of the billions of individuals around the world with access to even rudimentary forms of these digital technologies. Through our shared connectivity culture of uninterrupted access to internet and social media, we have rendered every facet of our lives increasingly materialized, even down to our most banal (and textually restricted) 140-character declarations; we are now unreservedly, as individuals and communities - the latter now also unrestricted by global proximity - obsessed with recording.

One of the defining features of our contemporary documentary culture is its capacity to perform both acts of archival deposit and withdrawal in real time. Our history, culture, and memory are now able to be discovered, read, and shared in the immediacy of the present. Our digital archives are neither static nor ever complete. They are predicated on their own posterity and the global collective insatiable to share and have shared its next significant foci. This unique

hyper-evolutionary nature and the decentralized form of mass public participation that drives it have, in fact, become more essential to our current epistemological thinking than the comprehensive and organizational imperatives of past archival cultures. Though we may be closer than ever to actually achieving some manner of *encyclopedia universalis*, we no longer view our documentary heritages as simply a matter of the past, restricted to the work of the specialist or historian. Our new archival consciousness is and must always be at least equally tied to the present and the incipient future; indeed, we care frighteningly little of even our own past deposits into digital space - accessible in the great virtual bulk by only another form of technical specialist - as these are rapidly replaced in significance by more prescient data. Divested of concerns for the breadth or scope of this virtual epistemological space, we instead insist on the immediacy and publicity of its access.

In Eivind Røssaak's recent collection, *The Archive in Motion: New Conceptions of the Archive in Contemporary Thought and New Media Practices* (2010), he describes our contemporary archival activity as in fact anarchival:

The historical society was structured around a single hegemonic and narratively constituted public reflected in the collections of the traditional archive and the way the historians narrativized these documents. Anarchival society lacks such a hegemonic nodal point. It certainly has its public, but they are multiple, fleeting and ad hoc. The multiplicity of storytellers flooding the Internet as well as the new lability of the websites produces the anarchic conditions of the anarchival society. (8)

Røssaak identifies the digital media innovations of the last two decades as the primary catalyst to



this anarchival mode of thinking, but there is in fact a somewhat older lineage to this epistemological transition. A similar turn towards the anarchival in documentary epistemology occurred in Western Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, appreciably in the wake of another technological revolution. With the rapid advances in photographic, filmic, and audio technologies through the first half of the century, coupled with the devastating encounters with the violability of documentary culture experienced during the First and Second World Wars, many modernist writers and thinkers began to radically refigure their material relationship to the world. This shift, prefiguring our own form of documentary culture, began to turn away from the inherited Enlightenment aspirations for archival or encyclopedic codification and toward a form of material engagement more widely accessible in and significant to the ever-changing present. Our current obsession with participating in (virtual) material culture is linked directly to these twentieth-century explorations and experiments with alternative forms of documentary epistemology.

Michael O'Driscoll argues that, "the archive may well be the central figure of twentieth-century literary and theoretical engagements with questions of knowledge" (284). Pointing specifically to Ezra Pound's modernist long-poem *The Cantos* and Irish modernist James Joyce's mono-mythic *Finnegans Wake*, O'Driscoll identifies the broader modernist movement as ineluctably tied to the problem of developing a new form of documentary culture. This thesis examines one of these particular forms of alternative epistemology proposed and variously deployed during this period: Ezra Pound's "New Method." Overwhelmed by the task of archival reading, Pound reflected in 1938 that "there must be some other way for a human being to make use of that vast cultural heritage" (*GK* 54). Throughout his career Pound experimented with various poetic and prose forms that might establish a new anarchival mode of understanding history, culture, and identity in documentary terms. By closely examining Pound's gradual

development of what he called ideogrammic forms of representation, my research will not only provide a newly invigorated point of entry for structural criticism in Pound studies, it will also provide a foundational analysis of one of the twentieth century's most prolific anarchival writers for the growing contemporary discourses on the anarchival in media studies.

This thesis begins by tracing the inherited epistemological traditions of twentieth-century Europe and pointing out the key historical pressures that brought these modes of thought into crisis at the turn of the century. Identifying Ezra Pound as one of the most prolific and unabashedly experimental thinkers engaged with the problem of developing an alternative form of documentary epistemology, I move to a survey analysis of his early prose and poetry as it struggles to resolve this proposed reconfiguration. Where Pound's prose anthologies and cultural-historical "handbooks" gravitate toward the anthology as a prose-form capable of resisting certain archival impulses, it is in his later poetry that Pound nearest approaches an anarchival form of historical subjectivity. Close reading of the complex structural developments to Pound's documentary poetics, from his early verse through to the early decads of his epic poem *The Cantos*, both of which deploy poetic voices that are notably always "multiple, fleeting, and ad hoc," provides the necessary framework to understand how his new ideogrammic method evolves over the course of his poetic career. Chapters two and three of this project then closely examine two of the most structurally distinct sections of the late cantos and interrogate the ways in which they most closely approximate Pound's aspired anarchival epistemology in aesthetic terms. Having mapped the structural development and penultimate figurations of Pound's anarchival poetics, I will then rigorously question how this alternative documentary epistemology functions and dysfunctions on archival terms as well as on terms of its own. Drawing from the expansiveness of Pound's poetic undertakings, this final analysis will provide substantive insights

into contemporary discussions on the nature of our own (supposedly) anarchival modes of thought.

## 1. Modernism and the Archive

When we have lost control, your eyes, Clio, into which  
 We look for recognition after  
 We have been found out. How shall I describe you? They  
 Can be represented in granite  
 -W.H. Auden, "Homage to Clio" (1960)

### **THE "B.M. ERA" - 1870-1930**

Pound's "British Museum Era" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has as a firm point of origin the grand encyclopaedic undertakings of the Enlightenment. As early as the late medieval period, figurations of historical subjectivity and cultural memory were already becoming widely established as relying upon documentary objects and material artifacts. The period between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries saw the increasingly textual administrations of legal and bureaucratic institutions across Europe expand and develop (see Clanchy *From Memory to Written Record*). It is not until the eighteenth century, however, that this administrative principle of documentary fidelity reached its first major crisis point. As "the Age of Encyclopedias" (Kafker "Encyclopedias"), the Enlightenment marked, on the one hand, a peak in Western Europe's faith in documentary culture and, more generally, in the textual codification of knowledge. Over fifty distinct encyclopedias were published in the eighteenth century alone - excluding all subsequent editions or supplements - many of which were bestsellers, printing in runs as large as 25,000 (Kafker). Appearing in French, German, English, Italian, and Latin, these compendia ranged from large single-volume works to the 242 octavo volume *Oekonomish-technologische Encyclopädie* (1777-1858). With the sheer volume of scientific and theoretical advances concurrent with their age, Enlightenment thinkers also began to question the efficacy, and thus the validity, of their primarily material figurations of history, culture, and knowledge (O'Driscoll 290). Texts like the *Oekonomish-technologische* challenged the textual

comprehensibility of a world increasingly supersaturated with epistemological data.

Michael O'Driscoll defines the problem of late eighteenth century encyclopedists as “an emerging crisis in the field of epistemic management: the gradual recognition of the unwieldiness of the encyclopedic project in the face of a burgeoning textual archive” (290). O'Driscoll points to a telling description found in the fifth volume of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, a prescient vision of “a world crushed beneath the weight of accumulated texts” (290). This admission introduces an added and far more dangerous feature to the problem of material epistemology: what is at stake in this crisis is not simply the impossibility of comprehensive transcription - that certain factual data might be inadvertently missed or excluded from our documentary codification of history and the natural world - but also that in the wake of such a failure, Western civilization would be stripped of the fundamental system through which it understand the world. In the wake of such an archival collapse, it is not simply the archive that is destroyed, but the world as we know it - that is, textually.

Carried forward into the nineteenth century, this strained epistemic system becomes an increasingly public problem, both for national institutions and individual citizens. The figuration of history was “the great obsession of the nineteenth century” (Foucault, “Other Spaces” 22). As Nietzsche qualifies, however, this “consumptive historical fever” was less a matter of retrospective nostalgia than a matter of the present and the immediate future: “We need [history] for life and for action [...] we wish to serve history only insofar as it serves living” (*On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History*). As documentary history formed the epistemological basis of “a single individual, a people, and a culture” (Nietzsche) - as both a past heritage and a figurative principle for future action - then the appropriation, organization, and preservation of signifying historical objects became an essential function of both private and state agents. With the continued growth of epistemological data, nineteenth century Europe sought to keep history

and cultural identity manageable in material terms through a correlative increase in the number of persons contributing to that archival labour. Thomas Richards identifies this growing archivization of history and identity in the nineteenth century as the “imperial archival complex.” By mid-century, Richards notes, these archival networks had stretched across the vast geographies of Europe’s colonial empires: in England, the British Museum was only one of many such historico-archival institutions, alongside The Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Society, The Royal Asiatic Society, and many others (107); in France, the National Archives, founded in 1790, were soon supplemented with the establishment of the Public Record Office in 1838 (Steedman 69). O’Driscoll argues that this civic multiplication of archival work was so significant that it justifiably marks the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as the point of origin to “what we now recognize as the age of information” (291).

Concurrent with this proliferation of bureaucratic epistemology was the innovative Victorian form of public engagement fostered to complement it. The widely celebrated large-scale fairs and exhibitions of this era were directly tied to the work of the imperial archival network: these state-sponsored exhibits, whether local, national, or international, celebrated cultural and technological heritage through the display of public and private artifacts (Briggs 53). By promoting public support and encouraging individual contributions to these nationally exhibited collections of significant scientific and historical objects, states not only took in sizable revenues for their many bureaucratic institutions but they were also able to further divide the material labour of codifying science and history among their citizens. The Manchester Exhibition of 1857 had more than a million visitors, drawn from all social classes, with notable attendees including “Napoleon III, Prince Frederick William of Prussia, Dickens, Tennyson, Hawthorne, Morris, Florence Nightingale,” and groups of sponsored children from the city’s poorer districts (84). Such large-scale exhibitions, held regularly in England, France, Germany, Belgium,

Hungary, and elsewhere, were composed of both nationally-owned artifacts as well as privately donated or loaned collections and objects - one 1862 exhibition held in London received some 9,862 applicants for private submission (57). The popularity of not simply attending but also contributing to these exhibitions reveals the extent to which this unique material site of cultural and historical representation came to be shared between individual citizens and their respective governments.

Even as collaboratively public and civic spaces, Victorian exhibitions remained rigorously organized. While there were inevitable elements of amateurism present in the public involvement - one applicant to the London exhibition of 1862 submitted a half-penny loaf claimed to be “the oldest piece of bread in the world” (Briggs 57) - all of these collections were meticulously classified, catalogued, illustrated, and commented upon (54). The Crystal Palace’s “public” status did not exempt it from the rigours of epistemic management. These celebratory spaces were always explicitly associated with the didactic imperative of formal Enlightenment epistemology: Prince Albert, President of Her Majesty’s Commissioners for the Exhibition of the Crystal Palace wrote to the citizens of Manchester prior to the 1857 exhibition that they were “‘not to aim at mere accumulation of works of art and objects of great interest’ but to ‘give your collection by a scientific and historical arrangement an educational character’” (86). This form of public engagement provided valuable support to the strained civic networks tasked with the ongoing maintenance of these documentary systems of classification. Public representation in these civic exhibitions reinforced the Enlightenment view that tied individual, collective, and historic identity to material epistemology.

Popular participation in this form of archival labour, however, also entailed a significant deviation from the encyclopedic mode of archival thinking. As the Victorian archive shifted increasingly into the public sphere through the popularity of the civic exhibition, it started to

undergo a concurrent shift in temporal focus away from the past and towards a celebration of material culture in the present and incipient future. Of the thousands of individual contributions proposed to these exhibitions by private citizens, the majority were of two kinds: significant historical artifacts as well as innovative industrial or domestic inventions (Briggs 370). The Victorian exhibition ground was not simply a shared museum of the past but an active archival space for the burgeoning knowledge of the immediate present, a knowledge that was continually growing in time, “a cluster of new things [...] with the promise of far more to come” (370). While the nineteenth century saw a steep rise in public engagements with documentary culture, it also marked a decentralization of the authoritative figurations of past knowledge presupposed by traditional archival spaces - the assumption that the past is definitively knowable in material terms through exhaustive labour. The Victorian exhibition ground, echoing Nietzsche’s call for present and future utility, was less concerned with supporting a more comprehensive or total form of documentary culture than it was with a more immediately relevant one.

For these public epistemological spaces to function in this new manner, however, they still required a degree of strictly material management; the “great world’s fair” exposition at Paris in 1900 still relied upon twenty-three different state archives to populate it (Briggs 99). Though less invested in the totalizing encyclopedism of the Enlightenment, Richards’ imperial archival complex rapidly reached a similar state of crisis. Between 1870 and 1940, even “institutions like the British Museum could not keep up with all the knowledge they were amassing” (Richards 104); they found themselves once again facing Diderot’s overwhelming task of recuperating “an exhaustive knowledge that was always in danger of entropy, loss, or destruction” (104). For Richards, the institutional breakdowns of the Victorian archive firmly established the work of archivization - synonymous with individual and collective identity-building - as “an ongoing labor of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction in the face of almost insuperable



obstacles” (108). The archive as it was inherited by the twentieth century was, according to Richards, a strangely material utopian space: an always unfinished catalogue that required constant material labour to preserve its perpetually state of becoming (130). I would argue that as a result of the nineteenth century’s promotion of public engagement with that epistemological labour, this problematic archival space became equally a matter of private concern and responsibility as it was a bureaucratic or civic one.

The Enlightenment legacy of epistemological and cultural dependence on documentary forms of history resulted, in the nineteenth century, in the unprecedented expansion of the bureaucratic archive and the promotion of a sense of civic responsibility to actively support its material processes in the lived present. In the twentieth century, this public responsibility toward documentary culture was only accelerated by the devastating cultural losses experienced during the First and Second World Wars. Alternative forms of material epistemology continued to find expression in the development of new, extra-civic bodies and spaces wherein to perform this documentary work. John Grierson’s essay “First Principles of Documentary” (1932) advocated for the “new and vital” function of documentary film-making afforded by its ability to observe “life itself” (79). In Britain, the first Mass Observation project (1937-1950) - a social research organization seeking to produce ““an anthropology of ourselves”” through the study of “everyday lives of ordinary people in Britain” (*MO*) - solicited public contributions to their cultural records through questionnaires, diary entries, and independently documented observations. Both Grierson’s films and *MO*’s early data-mining importantly emphasized the archival transcription of the present over the past, and in doing so further highlighted the responsibility of the individual observer-in-time to undertake that epistemological labour for themselves. Many modernist writers also began to explore alternative aesthetic figurations of this documentary management that the state institutions of Imperial Europe had failed to preserve adequately. For

the generation that witnessed both the first zeppelin bombings of civilian London and the devastating fire-raid of Dresden, the “aesthetic reification” of material history offered a form of resistance to the twentieth century’s “succession of creation and destruction that [denied] the individual” (Emig 125). Paul Saint-Amour has argued that many celebrated interwar modernist city texts (Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*, Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Doblin’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, and to a degree Eliot’s *The Waste Land*) can be read as “attempts to archive the city against the increasing likelihood of its erasure,” part of what he describes as “the modernist project of archiving the city” (132). These physical topographies provided precise structural frameworks to these seminal Modernist texts, but they also functioned as “synecdochic metropolises, surrogate cities, archived against the potential disappearance of the original” (156). For the moderns, documentary culture refigured in aesthetic terms provided both the new rigid structural forms and innovations demanded of the age as well as this significant socio-historical non-space requisite for the establishment and preservation of historical identity.

### **EZRA POUND AND DOCUMENTARY MODERNISM**

Ezra Pound in particular was one of the most active proponents of these documentary-aesthetic intersections. Having acted as an editor, anthologist, essayist, historian, amateur archivist, and poet, Pound’s entire career can be read in terms of his engagement with documentary history, an engagement that proved both essential and problematic as a guiding principle in Pound’s consideration of identity, aesthetics, and politics. Pound’s “documentary,” however, is importantly distinct from the work of Grierson or Doblin in that its objects and events are not exclusively drawn from the present. Pound’s experimentation with aesthetic alternatives to strictly material epistemology utilizes both significant historical objects and their potential resonances in the immediate observable world. In this way, both Pound’s poetry and his

prose reaffirm the importance of material epistemology while also attempting to gesture beyond some of its liabilities and limits. Pound's prose reinforces the authority of signifying historical objects while at the same time attempting to provide contracted anthologies or textbook compilations meant to mitigate the illegible bulk of the sum of Western literary history. His early poetry strives to develop correlative poetic form based upon what Pound calls his "Luminous Details" - images and symbols that are at once materially of the world *and* subjectively transcendent when perceived - but struggles to integrate the necessary degree of lyricism in their exposition without compromising the materiality of his inspiring objects. This struggle between documentary and lyric influence persists into Pound's epic "poem including history," and becomes the dominant structural feature of the documentary poetics deployed throughout *The Cantos*. The complex structural trajectory of the early and middle *Cantos* maps Pound's repeated attempts to develop documentary alternatives to the traditional, that is to say comprehensive and strictly objective, Western archive.

For Pound, all knowledge is derived from "a rain of factual atoms" (GK 98). Pound's overtly didactic *Guide to Kulchur* (1952) opens by presenting a single Confucian principle as the distilled centre of all human wisdom:

Said the Philosopher: You think that I have learned a great deal, and kept the whole of it in my memory? Sze replied with respect: Of course. Isn't it so? It is not so. I have reduced it all to one principle. (15)

[...]

Kung: To call people and things by their names, that is by the correct denominations, to see that the terminology was exact. (16)

In *ABC of Reading* (1934), Pound's other instructive handbook, he similarly extols the centrality of the objective fact. He reminds his reader that those who "want to find out something about painting [...] go to the National Gallery" (23), and recounts how the Duke of Milan sent the painter Pisanello to Bologna to buy horses, because Pisanello's work as a painter of horses had required him "to LOOK at the horses" (30). Whatever subsequent limits or complications might arise, Pound's post-archival or post-Victorian epistemological system remains fundamentally reliant upon observed data. General statements, principles, or processes, while a dominant focus of Pound's later work, must always be instantiated in the documentary detail: just like a blank cheque, he writes, "a general statement is valuable only in REFERENCE to the known objects or facts" (*ABC* 25).

As anthologist, Pound attempts to propagate the centrality of these object facts while at the same time resist the incomprehensibility of history's innumerable volumes of them. Between 1914 and 1933 Pound edited four different literary anthologies for publication, *Des Imagistes* (1914), *Catholic Anthology* (1915), *Profile* (1932), *Active Anthology* (1933). For Chris Baldick, this type of literary compilation was, in the 1930s, "the primary vehicle for circulating – and, in the process, defining – contemporary modernist verse" (Nichols 170). Pound similarly utilized the anthology as an organizational tool in his own work. In *GK*, he includes a short historico-literary survey entitled, "CHRONOLOGY for school use" (359), echoing the condensed sequence of "EXHIBITS" that concludes *ABC* - which as a whole was itself promised as a textbook (*ABC* 45). He provides other such contracted anthologies with the outline for an "Introductory Textbook" printed in 1938, and the highly selective collection of culturally significant definitions found in "Gists" (*Impact* 1960). Pound insists to his reader in *GK*, however, that, "despite appearances I am not trying to condense the encyclopedia into 200 pages" (23). Where the archive suffers at once from an over-abundance of data and its innumerable gaps and

absences inherent to the fragmentary historical record, the anthologist strives to mitigate both of these pressures by more actively selecting contents that will representatively gesture towards that which is excluded. Pound's anthology is not, in itself, an absolute distillation of an entire system; its function is not to represent a comprehensive archive in miniature. The Poundian anthology is not purely a material inscription of nature. It is an instructive tool that, as Said the Philosopher, teaches how to read properly rather than memorize extensively.

Pound identified his new anarchival method of reading, and the subsequent mode of writing that encourages it, "Ideogrammic" (*GK* 60). Borrowing directly from Ernest Fenollosa's limited understanding of Chinese pictogrammic writing - Pound was the first to edit and publish Fenollosa's "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry" in 1919 - Pound began to develop a new conceptual model for figuring documentary history. For Pound, Fenollosa's ideogram operated with dual structure of signification "with primary, literary meanings on the surface, and metaphorical transformations underneath" (*Jin* 17). These pictorial "bridge[s] whereby to cross from the minor truth of the seen to the major truth of the unseen" (Fenollosa 22-23) afforded a more authentic and effective means of representing the past in the present: one that was both material and transformative. In contrast to the strictly categorized and delineated archival collection that required exhaustive linear reading in order to access its relational significances, ideogrammic objects were "alive," able to suggest interrelations and new meanings between themselves and their interlocutor in the immediate present (*Jin* 27). Pound extolls the Chinese character for the colour red as an emblematic example, being a compounded pictogram of the abbreviated pictures for "ROSE," "IRON RUST," "CHERRY," and "FLAMINGO" (*ABC* 22). Ideograms also reaffirmed the generative role of the individual observer-in-time: the ideogrammic "fusion of 'scene' and 'emotion'" and its "transferences" of relational meaning occurred importantly between the reading subject and the object (*Jin* 15); the ideogrammic object

relies inherently on the act of readerly participation in order to signify anarchivally, that is transformatively beyond the spatial and temporal limits of its objective parts. This aesthetic form of documentary epistemology offered, for Pound, a more affective mode of representing documentary history while also discharging itself of the impossible labours and limits of the archival alternative.

In contrast to the supposed objectivism of the encyclopedia or archive, the anthology always implies an appraising subject and so is liable to commit subjective misrepresentation of its material content. For Pound, the ideogrammic anthology offered the potential to mediate this necessary relativism: by insisting on a high degree of documentary fidelity it would preserve the integrity of its individual artifacts, and by each of his subjective acts of selection. When Pound distinguishes the “multitudinous details” of his age from the luminous details of his “New Method,” he laments that often “the latter is too inexact and the former is too cumbersome to be of much use to the normal man” (*SP* 21). In *ABC*, he concedes in a prefatory note to the closing “EXHIBITS” that “the ideal way to present the next section of this booklet would be to give the quotations WITHOUT any comment whatever [...] I have learned that in the present imperfect state of the world, one MUST tell the reader” (95). Given that the relationality of individual facts may be difficult for a reader to discern in nature, and since *every* fact together obscures those significances, the ideogrammic anthology provides the most effective medium in which to perceive Pound’s “circumjacent conditions” (*SP* 22). By presenting “certain significant data” at the expense of comprehensive representation, the ideogrammic method is able to affectively represent for the reader nature’s historical principles and processes, along with insights into causes, effects, sequences, and laws (22). Just as art “vivifies a man’s total perception of relations” (268), Pound’s carefully selected anthologies and handbooks attempt to illuminate a “total perceptions of relations” via documentary facts, since a total representation of these facts would

only obscure or overwhelm.

This “New [Ideogrammic] Method” (*SP* 21) described in Pound’s prose equally informs his poetry. Each of Pound’s unique stylistic developments and experimental form structures strive to give aesthetic representation to this ideogrammic principle. In the first instance, Pound begins much the same as in his anthologies, insisting that poetic units must first adhere to documentary fidelity: the first principle of poetry is “direct treatment of the ‘thing’” (*LE* 3). Subsequently, he describes the proper poetic method as being aligned with that of the contemporary biologist: “careful **first-hand** examination of the matter, and continual COMPARISON of one ‘slide’ or specimen with another” (*ABC* 17). Just as with his ideogrammic anthologies, Pound’s poetic method presumes the luminous or significant nature of its material facts, and then strives to reveal by way of these particulars their broader “circumjacent conditions,” highlighted through assemblage. His involvement with Imagism provided a poetic form conducive to these budding epistemological principles: Imagistic units presented at once “an intellectual and emotional complex,” or a precise material object concurrent with a perception of broader relations free from time limits and space limits (*LE* 4). His translations of Arnaut Daniel’s troubadour ballads and of traditional Chinese Odes in *Cathay* (1915) employ a similar dual-structure. The task of the translator, in Pound’s mind, demanded that he keep “his eye on the object” (*LE* 209) while also highlighting immaterial relations and references (*SP* 27) necessary to make the object significant for a contemporary audience. These kaleidoscopic personae of Pound’s early poetry follow the ideogrammic method prescribed by his prose anthologies, utilizing carefully selected yet interchangeable material forms to illuminate principles, laws, or relations between documentary objects. In his poetry, however, Pound is unable to so easily shake his anxiety over the subjective nature of his ideograms.

Essential to Pound’s evolving documentary epistemology is the distinction between the

significant object itself and the act of reading or perceiving its relationality. Unlike *GK* or *ABC*, Pound's early poems directly consider how these two elements can complicate one another and pose significant challenges to the ideogrammic writer who seeks to marry them together. The poetic subject of Pound's early poetry is preoccupied with its precarious role as anthologist or mediator of its own luminous details. Pound insists, for example, that all of his Imagistic objects must be represented in such a way that "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" (*LE* 9).

Conversely, he warns against the incomplete statement, that which emphasizes only the surface or material meaning of the image (*ABC* 52) - that is, where the hawk is seen as *only* a hawk. The luminosity of a hawk, then, is liable to be both under and over-represented. The latter warning bears an added significance given Pound's concession that many material objects are not found in the "perfect" state in which the natural object exists (*LE* 9). Presaging his note to "EXHIBITS" in *ABC*, the three-line poem "Papyrus" points to the deeply unsettling reality of lost or partial artifacts, "the present imperfect state of the world" (*ABC* 95), and their inability to speak luminously without intervention. Far later in his career Pound continues to assert this fallibility of the documentary artifact, reflecting in his later notebooks that the "subjective emotions of war time were more Trustworthy than the contents of archives" (*EPP* b.118 f.4936). This anxiety between documentary fidelity and necessarily subjective editorial intervention stands at the heart of Pound's evolving documentary poetics.

In order to resist the deteriorative nature of his primarily material epistemological system, Pound's documentary poet must first be able to re-present his objects. To avoid reproducing unwieldy masses of archival volumes, however, he must employ paratactic selection, arrangement, explication, and reflection. In doing so, he is liable to obstruct or defame the integrity of the material facts he seeks to preserve in the first instance. Where Pound's prose



concedes to this problem parenthetically, his later short poems treat it directly. The poem “Ortus” struggles with this same tension between visionary and material representation operative in the subject’s articulation of his love-object:

How have I laboured?  
 How have I not laboured  
 To bring her soul to birth,  
 To give these elements a name and a centre!  
 She is beautiful as the sunlight, and as fluid.  
 She has no name, and no place.  
 How have I laboured to bring her soul into separation;  
 To give her a name and a being! (*PR* 85-86)

The amorous or visionary object in Pound’s earlier lyric poetry poses an impossible hurdle: how to physically represent and thus preserve something that is sunlight and fluid, something nameless and placeless. This tension also figures as one of the primary thematic concerns of “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley” and “The Ur Cantos.” Immediately before undertaking his monumental epic project, Pound confronts his necessarily selective (that is, subjective) forms of representation and the way in which they might undermine the virtue of the signifying objects upon which his documentary epistemology depends.

The poems of “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley” figure broadly as an ironic tribute to Pound’s early poetic career and mark a definitive stylistic departure immediately prior to his work on *The Cantos*. In their satirical representation of Mauberley’s overly-aesthetic and detached or non-vital forms of composition, these poems are also deeply concerned with the function of lyric in

Pound's new method. HSM is evidently filled with precise, Imagistic object units, most apparently the full poem "Medallion" - seemingly Mauberley's only memorable work. But the poetic subject's representation of his significant objects tends too far toward the subjective; Hugh is too detached from the material world to perceive anything more than private fantasy. His "Daphne with her thighs in bark ..." is hardly so:

"Daphne with her thighs in bark  
Stretches toward me her leafy hands," -  
Subjectively. In the stuffed-satin drawing-room  
I await The Lady Valentine's commands. (*PR* 193)

Though he seems to reach moments of illuminated perception, they are insufficiently grounded, rendered inauthentic by their having been "Subjectively." Hugh's supposed engagement with Pound's luminous relationality is in fact nothing more than "maudlin confession [...]" insubstantial manna, / Lifting the faint susurrus / Of his subjective hosannah." (200). Within the evolutionary development of Pound's documentary poetics, "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" warns against the use of subjective lyrical forms as a means of illuminating significant historical objects.

Even without overt sequences of lyric reflection, the documentary poet must still persist as a subject in order to provide "access" to his collection or anthology of luminous details. This implicit presence of the lyric subject in its acts of selection, arrangement, and representation is not itself without complications. Pound's "Ur-Cantos" labour over this complex relationship between the poetic eye/I and the historical objects it purports to represent objectively. In the first instance, there persists the anxiety of Mauberley, that the visionary perception is not in fact a sole product of material perception but rather is influenced by the subjective imagination:



And now it's all but truth and memory,  
 Dimmed only by the attritions of long time. (*PR* 233)

The luminous detail for Pound is essentially *both* truth and memory, both object and vision. Its relationality is always already contained within its materiality, but the two can only be brought together or perceived at once through the eye/I. In “The Ur Cantos,” Pound explores the possibility of a poetic form – Browning’s dramatic monologues or personae – that concedes the lyric presence required to marshal a collection of luminous documentary objects but remains reserved about its potentially defamatory influence over them. Years later, when drafting his notes that would become cantos LXXXV-XCV, Pound again returned to this struggle with Browning’s trademark poetic form and its inability to adequately transcend that subjective influence, reflecting, “Browning subjective EP objective” (*EPP* b.118 f.4943).

### ***THE CANTOS AND THE PROBLEM OF DOCUMENTARY POETICS***

This precarious interdependence between documentary and lyric modes in the anarchival collection figures prominently throughout *The Cantos*. By Pound’s own admission, *The Cantos* document “the defects inherent in a record of struggle” (*GK* 135); these poems record the structural tension inherent in Pound’s poetic figuration of the ideogrammic through their varying experimental forms. Rainer Emig has described the overall structure of *The Cantos* as Mythic or “Superhistorical,” deploying a “world-formula” through repeated parataxis (128). He goes on to argue that the archival tendency expressed by *The Cantos*’ “addiction to all forms of cultural heritage” (116) effectively “purges the text of a conventional identity” (129). For Emig, the subject/object anxieties and complications of “The Ur Cantos” are overcome through the poem’s Odyssean self-effacement:

[*The Cantos*] try to undertake a journey without a defined protagonist and without reliable orientations. This continually throws *The Cantos* back into their own system. The text becomes monadic, self-sufficient, and ends up in an ahistorical isolation [...] It declares the text to be reality. *The Cantos* are not an account of history, culture, and language; they are history, culture and language *in language*. (117-118)

But *The Cantos*, of course, do *not* contain “all forms of cultural heritage,” and as a result they retain the subjective or lyric fault-lines that record the ongoing tension inherent to Pound’s documentary poetics; *The Cantos* are continually drawn “between thesaurus and collection [...] between civilization and individual whim” (North 376). Emig’s unified view of Pound’s ideogrammic method is perhaps useful for understanding the broader aims or aspirations of *The Cantos*, but it does not hold up to close examinations of the different structural forms deployed throughout this modernist long-poem - especially those of the later cantos (LXXIV-CIX). This perceived monumentalism echoes Lawrence Rainey’s misappropriation of Pound’s own description of the project: Pound described his cantos as “a poem including history” (LE 86), whereas Rainey’s collection of textual studies of *The Cantos* is provocatively titled *A Poem Containing History* (1997). Again, the difference between historical inclusion and historical containment is paramount to Pound’s relation to the historical object; it is the difference between the strictly archival form of documentary epistemology and his potentially recuperative ideogrammic alternative.

Just as with his anthologies, Pound’s governing organizational principle throughout *The Cantos* is not inclusivity but exclusivity (O’Driscoll 181). Through these acts of exclusion - and

requisite processes of selection, arrangement, and representation - Pound's lyric eye/I remains structurally influential. While the poem's lyric presence is admittedly subdued in the earlier decades relative to Pound's experimentation with increasingly material forms of documentary poetics, the lyric subject's sustained presence throughout these early poems - and its dramatic resurgence in *The Pisan Cantos* - warrants a closer examination of how the structural anxieties of "The Ur Cantos" evolve through Pound's greater epic. In *Ezra Pound's Adams Cantos* (2012), David Ten Eyck provides a useful set of analytical tools for undertaking any analysis of *The Cantos*' documentary poetics. Firstly, he insists on plurality:

Pound's estimation of the role that documentary writing could occupy in the formal repertoire of *The Cantos* evolved over the years. It is therefore not adequate to think in terms of a single 'documentary method' [...] Pound's use of historical documents in his poetry underwent qualitative changes over the course of his career. (35)

This plurality of methods stemmed from Pound's struggle to conjoin both the definite form of his historical object and the required ubiquity of its visionary perception into a single poetic complex (37). Just as with HSM, this dual-deployment risks conceptual and temporal fissures: the documentary detail is liable to either be misrepresented through subjective distance or to fragment the "circumjacent conditions" by overly asserting its contextual rigidity and its historical distance. The generative tension between Pound's need to establish a poetic mode that remains at once documentary and lyric in its capacities incites his frequent use of dramatic monologue throughout his early poetry as well as the polyphonic personae with which he populates *The Cantos*. Through these masks, Pound can oscillate freely between their rigid,

historical exterior and the impassioned subject position beneath them.

Ten Eyck characterizes Pounds' experimental variations in poetic form that attempt to resolve this contradiction as an interplay primarily between three distinct modes: the documentary mode that "functions within the space delineated by a written text," representing the historical object in its original material terms; the narrative mode, which presents history as dramatic chronology while maintaining "the flexibility needed to summarize heterogeneous material in a unified account;" and a lyric mode that "functions outside of history," in the world of "timeless ideas or principles" (44). The rising and falling prevalence and varying arrangements of these three poetic modes offers an instructive lens through which to read the varying structures within the *Cantos* as part of an evolving whole. These sequences of reorganization and experimentation reflect a sustained engagement with Pound's primary structural dilemma: the tension between object and vision.

For Ten Eyck, the earliest cantos are far more narrative in composition, relying on allusive rather than truly documentary gestures towards the past. With the Malatesta Cantos, he sees the early frustration of bringing the purely documentary into dialogue with narrative and lyric, as the reproduced scraps of archival material on Sigismundo Malatesta introduce dissonance, absence, and interruption to the "clear thematic progression that had generally characterized the earlier cantos" (42). Before *Eleven New Cantos*, Pound's relational "process" was conveyed through a combination of documentary fragments, explicative narrative dramatizations, and lyric reflections on them. By *Eleven New* and the *Fifth Decad of Cantos*, this underlying knowledge is transmitted through the observation of many documentary fragments in relation to one another; "the interaction of different poetic modes that had characterized the Malatesta and Venetian Cantos becomes a much less important part of [Pound's] writing. Narrative commentary is extremely limited in the major documentary poems of both installments"

(52) - the American History (XXXI-XXXIV) and Siena Bank (XLII-XLIII) cantos. By the time Pound turned to Adams, the documentary had come to command all but sole occupancy of *The Cantos'* three-form modality; the John Adams Cantos include dozens of near-exact topographical replications of the president's written correspondences. Ten Eyck demonstrates how "over the course of the 1930s, Pound increasingly suppressed [...] the narrative and lyrical modes," reducing the influence of narrative to a "silent pressure" visible only in Pound's acts of documentary selection, and reducing the lyric to only the abstracted vision of the "whole subject engendered in the reader's mind by the documents (54). Ten Eyck argues that the Chinese History Cantos and the John Adams Cantos "employ documentary poetics to the almost total exclusion of other modes" (57). In these cantos, Pound's speaker is at his closest to Emig's total self-effacement: the selective/subjective eye/I is at its farthest remove, trusting the documents to reveal their own luminous significance.

## CONCLUSION

Pound's admission in "How to Read" (1929) that "I have been accused of wishing to provide a 'portable substitute for the British Museum,' which I would do, like a shot, were it possible. It isn't." (*LE* 16) is an emblematic one: it reinforces the authenticity of documentary understandings of history and the natural world but also insists on the practical impossibility of such an objective model. For Pound, anarchival epistemology must involve more or other than simply the multiplication of these discrete knowledge-bearing object-units while at the same time not abandoning them entirely. From here Pound undertakes the development of his ideogrammic poetics as an aesthetic complement to his prose anthologies, both seeking to function as alternative sites to the antiquated forms of archival organization and preservation deployed in the B.M. Era. From his earliest poetry through to his middle cantos, Pound struggles to fuse the



documentary and lyric as a means of efficiently and authentically transmitting relational knowledge through signifying historical objects. In the following chapters I will show how Pound dramatically reintegrates the lyric mode into the midpoint of his epic (*The Pisan Cantos*) and how that reintroduction forms the basis of his culminant poetic ideogrammic mode achieved in *Rock-Drill de los Cantares*.

## 2. The Pisan Cantos and Mnemonic Lyric

Of course all these last, apparently, scraps, of cantos, are your self, the memories that make up yr. person. Is one then only a bunch of memories?

-Dorothy Pound, "Letter, October 1945" (LC)

### INTRODUCTION

*The Pisan Cantos* mark one of the most distinctive poetic shifts in Ezra Pound's *The Cantos*. From their earliest reviews, these cantos were praised for being "unusually rich in passages of immediate lyrical appeal to the casual or uninstructed reader" (Kenner, "Caged" 583). It is primarily this lyricism, this degree of accessibility, that many critics credit for garnering Pound's Pisan decade the first Bollingen Poetry Prize in 1948. It is also perhaps why cantos LXXIV-LXXXIV are so often read in isolation, conceptually excised from the poetic whole of which they are an integral part - New Directions has continued to offer *The Pisan Cantos* in print separately from its larger work since its first publication. My reading of *The Pisan Cantos* seeks to reexamine its distinctive poetic figurations within the broader structural trajectories of Pound's relationship to documentary epistemology. Particularly, this analysis compares the function of this trademark lyricism within the documentary poetics of the Pisan set to the increasingly object-oriented modes deployed and expanded upon over the decades of cantos that preceded it.

The innovations of Pisa mark a significant point of growth or overcoming within Pound's aesthetic-epistemological system: they are the most substantial lyric enterprise in a career deeply suspicious of the visionary moment that strays too far from its material referent. The rightly identified lyric prominence in these poems is significant for more than simply the shared readerly empathy it elicits for Pound's "tard, très tard je t'ai connue, la Tristesse" (80/533). Ayon Maharaj has argued that "the 'subjectivity' of the poetic drama that is *The Pisan Cantos* requires radical reconceptualization. This is a subjectivity so grounded in the formal structures of the work itself"

(72). This lyricism is central to the structural changes Pound makes to his documentary method in this decad of cantos, changes that mark the Pisans as the penultimate aesthetic figuration of Pound's archival alternative: the anarchival ideogram.

In *The Pisan Cantos*, the lyric mode is violently reintroduced to the poem via Pound's "wholly subjective drama" at the American D.T.C. outside of Pisa in the summer of 1945. The result of this collision between the documentary and the lyric is a radical inversion of *The Cantos*' dual-mode wherein the documentary becomes a subsidiary to the subjective eye/I. Whatever its various structural developments, Pound's "poem including history" must always deploy some form of documentary materials. The refined level of documentary fidelity Ten Eyck identified in the Adams cantos, however, is radically disrupted in the summer of 1945. At Pisa, Pound was without access to either his historical materials or even his own previous cantos. Through the necessarily lyric or subjective transcriptions of his lived experiences, Pound maintains his collapsing epic anthology by rapidly depositing new materials into it, dramatizing his process of documentary reading. In these cantos we see the visionary or lyric subject processing its historical details in the lived present; documentary sequences are thus inherently lyrical, while the lyrical subject relies equally on these objects for its own mnemonic composition and self-preservation. The primary documentary contents of these cantos - the detailed recording of Pound's time in the D.T.C. through overhead quotations and the transcription of geographic and temporal markers - are not only framed by the decad's pervasive lyric refrains, they are drawn from inside that subject position. In *The Pisan Cantos*, what I would call 'the mnemonic lyric' preserves the suspension between object and vision not only by providing new documentary materials, but by presenting them always already connected to the poem's visionary lyric processes.

Mnemonic lyric in *The Pisan Cantos* can be defined as a poetic mode wherein the tension

between Pound's object and vision has been inverted. Rather than Adams' almost purely documentary object-units quietly subjected to the lyric eye's/I's processes of selection and arrangement, at Pisa it is that lyric eye/I that is brought forward to represent the luminosity of Pound's details. This inversion is visible primarily in two forms: when the documentary object is generated by and represented within the lyrical subject, and when that lyric voice constitutes itself as a mnemonic catalogue of historical objects. Here is the new variation of the three poetic modes of *The Cantos*: the documentary fidelity established by the Adams Cantos is now forced - by the conditions of composition at Pisa - into coexistence with a more dominant subjective voice. This is not to say that previously established poetic modes are entirely absent or supplanted in *The Pisan Cantos*. Canto LXXV's reproduction of the sheet music to Gerhart's Jannequin - specifically, "as printed in Townsman" (*EPP* b.76 f.3394) - is entirely aligned with the rigid documentary form of Adams and Malatesta. This new structural figuration in the Pisans, however, is both the most prominent within the set and the most consequential to the evolving structure of Pound's documentary epistemology as a whole. This poetic transcription of the documentary subject reading in time firmly restores the lyric mode as essential to the ideogrammic representation of documentary history. Pound's mnemonic lyric at once provides material mediation in the absence of organized epistemological data as well as the subjective capacity for relational perception of historical details, all the while remaining firmly rooted against the overly detached sentimentalism of "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley."

### **THE POETIC SUBJECT AND LYRICAL CONTROL**

Oral quotation abounds in *The Pisan Cantos*. Given Pound's restricted access to written research materials, these transcriptions of dialogue from within the D.T.C. become one of the most frequently incorporated source-documents in these poems. Banter such as, "Hey, Snag, wot

are the books ov th' bibl'' / 'name 'em, etc. / 'Latin? I studied latin.' / said the nigger murderer to his cage-mate" (76/474-475), regularly interrupt *The Pisan Cantos*. Compared with the often overlapping polyphony found in earlier sections of the poem, these forms of dialogue are unique for their shared historical source or point of origin - Pound's incarceration north of Pisa from March to October, 1945 - and for the consistency with which Pound parses them with grammatical notation. This prison chatter is often precisely demarcated with quotation marks and frequently includes a parenthetical indication of speaker or addressee. Apart from this prison-talk, *The Pisan Cantos* are still populated by the many voiced personae of Pound's earlier sections, but these constructed or remembered voices are presented in the Pisans as though they too emanated from within the D.T.C.. They are subjected to the same structural demarcation as the conversations actually overheard from Pound's cell:

Thus saith Kabir: "Politically," said Rabindranath

"they are inactive. They think, but then there is  
climate, they think but it is warm or there are flies or  
some insects "

"And with the return of the gold standard" wrote Sir Montague

"every peasant had to pay twice as much grain  
to cover his taxes and interest" (77/494)

It becomes difficult for the "uninitiated" reader to differentiate between the authentic oral documents from Pisa and those constructed by Pound from memory, given that they are presented in the same structural manner and often in sequence with one another. This regular

notation and the often complementary “he said” and “sd/ the...” not only reduce the narrative disruptiveness of these many voices speaking, but also affirm for the reader the presence of a single, persistent subject alongside them: the auditor.

While thematic connections between these highly fragmented dialogues and the general “processes” underlying the poem can be far less apparent than in earlier cantos, they are afforded a relative unifying significance by the presence of the listening subject within the poem. Leonard Diepeveen describes this mediation as the “fiction of lyrical control” (102). He argues that no quoting poem can be either purely lyric or purely dramatic, that is to say, absolved of any lyric trace or of any feeling of polyphonic disruption (101). Instead, the degree to which the intruding voice disrupts the cohesiveness or narrative progression of the poem determines its dramatic or lyric tenor. With longer, sustained quotations - as with the uninterrupted excerpts from the Adams letters or the *Histoire Générale de la Chine* - there is a feigned lyricism or narrative continuity felt within the bounds of the source-document itself. Conversely, shorter, incomplete, or competing quotations - like the 61 line sequence of dialogue interjections toward the end of canto LXXVII (*Cantos* 492-494) - can be held together by visual forces of lyric control: parentheses, demarcation, and visual arrangement (Diepeveen 113). Pound’s increased syntactical “control” over the polyphony of *The Pisan Cantos* reintegrates these necessarily fragmented and disruptive oral source-documents into his greater epic narrative. Further, by constructing his remembered source-documents as if they were in fact also oral documentary objects heard by the poem’s lyric subject, Pound incorporates what were previously employments of his narrative mode into this ubiquitously lyrical space. The remembered, reinterpreted quotations, that are in fact allusive rather than strictly documentary, are presented as otherwise. Both the documentary and narrative objects in the Pisans depend on the presence of the lyric subject for their exposition. It affords them a shared point of origin, a way “in” to *The Cantos*,

thus enabling them to signify beyond their own historical specificity through the phalanx of “circumjacent conditions” the epic includes.

Another distinct feature of the Pisan set is its extensive use of parentheses. These parenthetical statements come in two major types: the explanatory note and the reflective aside. Many of the note-style parentheses - often expanding the names of abbreviated initials or indicating specific addressees of a quotation, such as “her holding dear H.J. / (Mr. James, Henry)” (79/508) and “Entrez donc, mais entrez, / c’est la maison de tout le monde” / (This to me and H. Liveright vers le Noel)” (80/525) - came as later additions to the poem during Pound’s revision process. Sixteen such additions between cantos LXXVIII to LXXXIII were handwritten on the later typescripts of *The Pisan Cantos* prior to publication. In a note to his publishers accompanying these revisions, Pound remarks, “As you will see, I have elucidated a lot, adding names at end of lines” (*EPP* b.77 f.3405). While this indicates a concerted effort on Pound’s part to render his short-hand more accessible in these later cantos, the use of physical parentheses for these short interjections has the same effect within the poem as Pound’s controlled use of quotation. These explicative asides act to reduce the documentary or dramatic disruption of the poem’s own extensive catalogue of referents; by structurally differentiating this accompanying parenthetical voice, Pound reinforces the physical presence of that lyric eye/I operative from inside the text yet outside of its documentary referents.

Many of these reflective parenthetical asides in *The Pisan Cantos* have been praised as some of the most candid or lyric passages in all of Pound’s work – they are read as some of Pound’s most “accessible” lines of verse. The somewhat sardonic “[I heard it in the s.h. a suitable place / to hear that the war was over]” (77/487) offers curt acknowledgement of the end of the Second World War while remaining particularized to Pound’s own limited experience as a historical subject. The epiphanic “(O Mercury god of thieves, your caduceus / is now used by the

american army / as witness this packing case)” (77/491) presages the powerful choral refrains of “O Lynx, my love, my lovely lynx” (79/507) that come to haunt the remaining Pisan cantos. Canto LXXX’s famous “[Only shadows enter my tent / as men pass between me and the sunset,]” (535) is one of the most concise articulations of Pound’s struggle in this decad to sustain his poetic vision under the oppressive specificity of time and place experienced in the D.T.C.. In addition to their lyric weight, all of these passages share one important quality: their placement inside brackets. All of the above parenthetical asides, interestingly, were also handwritten into Pound’s various carbon drafts (*EPP* b.76 f.3393-3395) after his original composition, indicating a deliberate shift in the poetic function of these reflective passages in *The Pisan Cantos*.

While both lyrical passages and parenthetical asides appear in many earlier cantos, they rarely appear together. What is unique about these passages in the Pisan poems is that Pound regularly uses these structural markers to the opposite effect of their use in his explanatory notes. In his elucidating “names at end of lines,” the parenthetical markers imbed the lyrical control of an auditor or poetic subject between the reader and the documentary objects presented. In these already lyric passages, however, the parentheses dis-integrate them from the narrative continuity of the poem. These short, weighted, and now physically isolated bursts of lyrical candour disrupt the visionary narrative that worked to assimilate other objective and historical particulars. They are made to appear as rigid Imagistic units or documentary objects in themselves. We see a similar effect in Pound’s deeply personal admission “the loneliness of death came upon me / (at 3 P.M., for an instant)” (82/547): at a pinnacle moment of lyricism within the poem, Pound renders the revelation or vision temporally and structurally particularized. The reintegration of lyric into the *The Pisan Cantos* functions not only to mediate the object-oriented poetic structures required of Pound’s documentary poetics, but also to reconstitute that lyric eye/I as renderable within the confines of documentary specificity - where previously it had been represented in universal or



mythical forms. Articulable in historical parentheses, Pound's lyric subject is no longer as threatening to the object-imperative of his documentary poetics.

The representations of landscape and temporality in *The Pisan Cantos* both contribute to this newly inverted tension between Pound's documentary object and his lyrical vision. In the first instance, they are both deeply rooted in the particularity of time and space relative to Pound's incarceration. The landscape depicted in the Pisan poems is never separable from "the death cells in sight of Mt. Taishan @ Pisa" (74/447). The reader overhears dozens of broken conversations between inmates and personnel, which include most of the army vocabulary's "almost 48 words" (77/491), and Pound is repeatedly drawn to the imposing "4 giants in 4 corners" (74/449) guarding the perimeter of the camp and the fluctuating presence of the "birds on a wire" (79/505). This counting of birds also renders the temporality of the camp more tangible for the reader. These regular interjections function as a sort of audio-visual metronome that marks the passage of lived time - within Pound's experiences in the camp - directly into the progression of the poem. Similarly, the parading routine of camp activities, such as the "niggers scaling the obstacle fence / in the middle distance" (74/454), and the "diary-like" inclusion of dates (Bush, "Modernism" 77) reinforce the pervasiveness of lived history in *The Pisan Cantos*.

At the same time, these spatial and temporal object-markers must be seen through in order to preserve the ahistorical or relational backdrop already established by the poem's narrativization of its transcendental "processes." In *The Pisan Cantos*, the transmission of knowledge and understanding is inhibited by the rigidity of place:

and the news is a long time moving  
a long time in arriving  
thru the impenetrable

crystalline, indestructible

ignorance of locality. (82/545)

As a result, the lyric mode is used alongside the documentary in order to render its slow-moving objects more permeable. In these cantos, “Pisa becomes the vortex into which the lost fragments of other cities rush” (Selby 189); the boundaries between the city of Pisa and Pound’s internment camp begin to dissolve, and the significance of those localities starts to resonate with a mythic charge. This blurring image of the city in these cantos reflects their structural suspension of the documentary and the lyric:

It is in the idea of the city that the complex movements of feeling encountered in these cantos - the uneasy stance between elegy and affirmation, the confrontation between the ideal and the material, and the tonal shifts between lyric and epic modes - take their roots. Considerations of the City thus lead to the central concerns of Pound’s project, for in the image of the city [is] the play of lyricism between the city as sign and city as signifier. (195-196)

This transformation of a particular historical landscape into the ideological or visionary realization of a “paradiso terrestre,” a process which occurs importantly “in the mind indestructible” (74/450), is feverishly repeated in the first canto of the set:

4 times was the city rebuilt, Hooo Fasa

Gassir, Hoo Fasa    dell’ Italia tradita

now in the mind indestructible, Gassir, Hoooo Fasa,

With the four giants at the four corners  
 and four gates mid-wall Hooo Fasa  
 and a terrace the colour of stars  
 pale as the dawn cloud, la luna  
                                 thin as Demeter's hair  
 Hooo Fasa, and in a dance the renewal  
                                 with two larks in contrappunto  
   at sunset (74/450-451)

Ursula Shioji has shown how this same apotheotic process occurs to the natural landscape outside of Pisa and the D.T.C.. Borrowing directly from the Japanese Noh tradition, Shioji argues, the landscape of *The Pisan Cantos* presents a “horizontal view [...] dominated by a mountain and the nearby water,” animated by “the manifestation of divine beings in natural objects” (270). Shioji notes how the centrality of the mountain reflects the sacredness of the vertical dimension as the site where the spheres of heaven and earth meet (271). Pound's obsession with the whiteness of Mt. Taishan and the sprawling bodies of cloud reflects this blurring of material object and transcendental vision. Each of the central object-markers to the physical space within which the dramatic action of *The Pisan Cantos* occurs are elevated to their mythic correlatives. The four giants, Mt. Taishan, and the sky-scape are able to signify beyond themselves through the visionary capacity of the lyric subject perceiving them as objects. The same lyric control that afforded continuity to the fragmentary oral source-documents affects the dehistoricization of the poems' particular landscape.

Just as spatial specificity in the Pisan poems undergoes a lyric dissolution, so does the chronological march of time revert “to a mythic or archaic time as the means for ordering its

fragmentary contents” (Bishop 540). The poems complicate the recorded dates and the bird-marked metronome with alternatively panoramic descriptions of temporality: “things have ends (or scopes) and beginnings. To / know what precedes [C] and what follows [C] / will assist yr/ comprehension of process” (77/485). Conversely, mere historical time obstructs the transmission of “process;” “Time is not, Time is the evil, beloved / Beloved of the hours of *brododaktulos* / as against the half-light of the window” (74/464). Pound’s visionary half-light can only be accessed in the Pisan poems through an encompassing perception of time, where “things have ends and beginnings” (76/482) in the same instant. This holistic comprehension of time is not only described in *The Pisan Cantos*, it is also represented structurally. The Pisan poems sustain an “exceptional momentum” (Bacigalupo 122) through the use of frequent refrains, rapid transitions between poetic units within individual cantos, and slowly measured transitions between separate cantos. The opening of each canto frequently echoes the themes of the previous close (122) - as with the transition between canto LXXVII and LXXVIII:

#### LXXVII

[...]

For nowt so much as a just peace

That wd/ obstruct future wars

[...]

mind come to plenum when nothing more will go into it

the wind mad as Cassandra

who was as sane as the lot of ‘em

Sorella, mia sorella,

che ballava sobr' un zecchin' (77/494-495)

# LXXVIII

By the square elm of Ida

40 geese are assembled

(little sister who could dance on a sax-pence)

to arrange a pax mundi

*Sobr' un zecchin'!*

Cassandra, your eyes are like tigers,

with no word written in them (78/497)

Even without this topical carrying forward, the majority of *The Pisan Cantos* open and close with lyrical, or reflective, rather than object-oriented sequences. The similarly lyric refrains of the lynx chorus and the repetitions of “(periplum)” throughout these cantos continue to propel that poetic rhythm forward. This sustained momentum enables *The Pisan Cantos* to resist the ignorance of temporal locality; these poems are structured to move past or shake off the historical specificity of their composition in the D.T.C., while at the same time bounding off of those material markers.

One of the most telling instances of lyric control in *The Pisan Cantos* can be found in Pound's revision of their final lines. In its original typescript, Canto LXXXIV ended at what is now the third to last line, but with two differences: the final word “unproven” ended instead with

a comma, and was followed by “October 1945”. Prior to publication, Pound removed the date, replaced the comma with a period, and added the lyric couplet “If the hoar frost grip thy tent / Thou wilt give thanks when night is spent” (84/560). Ronald Bush has identified how this entire tenth canto was an unplanned addition to the new decad. Pound had written to his wife on October 2, 1945 regarding his completion of the Pisan set, which he specified as spanning cantos “74/83” (*Letters* 101), and it was only after he heard about the death of J.P. Angold (5 Oct 1945) that he began “an unforeseen Canto 84 with a cry of grief” (Bush *Modernism* 80). The distinctness of this canto’s political tenor, which still marks it somewhat apart from the other nine of the set, is reinforced by the abruptness of its opening line: “8<sup>th</sup> October:” (557). Had this canto also ended with a date entry, as Pound had originally penned, this canto LXXXIV would have been structurally isolated as an object-laden parenthetical aside to the entire Pisan decad. Pound’s addition of the lyric couplet thus reaffirms its at least partial continuity to previous set of poems. By echoing the structural function of the lyric couple that concludes canto LXXXIII - “Down, Derry-down / / Oh let an old man rest” (83/556) - the new final Pisan canto reaffirms that same intractability of the lyric subject central to this sequence.

### **MNEMONICS AND THE SUBJECT DOCUMENT**

The second structural consequence to the collision between documentary and lyric in *The Pisan Cantos* is the figuration of the lyric subject *as* a collection of documents. This mnemonic lyric does not only provide a unifying site for the poems’ fractured historical documents, but importantly serves the lyric poetic subject engaged in documentary reading. In these cantos where lyricism becomes essential for tying together the poem’s less-mediated documentary parts, the integrity of that lyrical presence comes equally under pressure. The lyric subject of these cantos appears radically fragmented by the traumatic experiences contingent to their composition

- having “passed over Lethe” (74/469). Thus, memory becomes central to the thematic unity of *The Pisan Cantos*: the poems’ lyrical admissions of forgetting and subsequent insistence on the functionality of such partially-recollected objects reflect an anxious relationship to the poetic content of the previous decads. It is only through “the elemental exercise of his mnemonic power” (Bush, “Pisa” 74) that Pound is able to preserve the lyrical continuity of his epic subject. The lyric mode resists its own fragmentation through the very same structural interdependence that unified this decad’s disparate object-referents: the mnemonic lyric. Pound’s lyric eye/I, which contends with amnesia and collapse, can preserve a degree of its integrity by structurally grafting itself into the poems’ treatments of documentary details.

On the surface, *The Pisan Cantos* are perhaps the most fragmented decad of Pound’s epic. They include an abundance of broken source-documents, unprecedented admissions of blanks or forgotten details, and they sustain a rapid pace, which magnifies these disruptions with an almost percussive rhythm. In these cantos we see “drastically abbreviated forms [...] the threads of Pound’s memory and imagination” (Monk 223) struggling to mediate the onrush of historical details with previously established “processes.” This lyric eye/I, dependent now on “the quality / of the affection - / in the mind - that has carved the trace in the mind” (76/477), confronts its own fallibility: the poems concede to including “what’s his name” (49/486), “Monsieur Whoosis” (80/511), and “this day October the whateverth” (84/508) - among other recorded instances of memory lapse. With the deteriorating lexical control over the Pisan poems’ remembered or immediate source-documents, *The Cantos*’ poetic subject is unable to represent its documentary content as both material and relational through its previously established poetic mode - the carefully mediating organization of the Adams anthologist, the ordering of history into emphatic yet objective sequences. Instead, the Pisans’ lyric subject brings itself to the foreground to perform the act of reading it can no longer induce in silence.

The poem's lyric subject, the voice of *The Cantos*' relational "processes," is made necessarily visible and sustained by the recollection of past objects and the integration of new ones; Pound both supplements his collapsing anthology - the ordered documentary mode constructed in the earlier cantos - and also dramatizes the process of documentary reading. In these cantos we see overtly how the visionary or relational representation of documentary details always depends on the interpreting subject. Objects cannot speak beyond their historicity in *The Pisan Cantos* without the lyric eye/I: "If a man don't occasionally sit in a senate / how can he pierce the darrk mind of a / senator?" (80/519-520). Even at the end of a strictly "B.M. Era / (British Museum era)" (80/526) it is possible that "with one day's reading a man may have the key in his hands" (74/447), but the key still requires this man's reading. In these cantos, the lyric depends on its documentary catalogue, but by their reconstitution therein these historical objects become a form of subject-document, no longer autonomous but dependent on that subject for their own relational interpretability.

The increasingly mnemonic relationship between poetic subject and its object-referents marks a significant development in one of *The Cantos*' central thematic concerns: the ideogram. The mnemonic reconstitution of an ahistorical lyric subject through its isolated documentary parts itself echoes Pound's ideogrammic mode of reading: in the ideogram, the literal and relational significations are syntactically synchronous. The documentary objects in the Pisans, like ideograms, remain historically particular while being imbued with a relational significance through the lyric subject's reading of them. For Ronald Bush, this mnemonic exercise is derived directly from Pound's Neoplatonic debt to Cavalcanti and Avicenna. Bush argues that the lyrical eye/I - "The suave eyes, quiet, not scornful" (74/445) - of *The Pisan Cantos* "help the soul re-ascend to its divine home" in the *nous*, or divine order ("Cavalcanti" 672). Through memory, according the Neoplatonic view ascribed to Pound, one can apprehend "the form of a thing from



its matter” (674). In this way, the mnemonic documentary lyric of *The Pisan Cantos* stands as an alternative poetic structure to the apotheotic function of the Chinese ideogram - a path to the relational that never fully departs the material.

The functional similarities between Pound’s mnemonic lyric and his ideogrammic method are not surprising given the strong presence of Chinese characters in these cantos. While Pound’s use of ideograms begins much earlier in the cantos (LII-LXXI), they occupy an unprecedented prominence in canto LXXVII - so much so that the canto ends with an explication table translating the nineteen characters used (496). The draft typescripts and carbons to *The Pisan Cantos* also reveal an extensive use of ideograms in this decad that were not carried into the final published version. This includes a right-margin column of four ideograms on the opening page of LXXIV (EPP b.76 f.3393), and a similar marginal column of thirteen ideograms on the second page of LXXIV (EPP b.76 f.3393) - among multiple other individual instances. Though these excisions deflate the overall significance of Chinese characters in *The Pisan Cantos*, their presence in the drafts reinforces Pound’s increased structural investment toward the ideogrammic method - an investment expressed more evidently in this decad through his experimentation with the mnemonic lyric.

## CONCLUSION

*The Pisan Cantos* are historical *a priori*. According to Massimo Bacigalupo, “we may graph the *Cantos* as a curve that makes contact with historical time only in the middle section [...] which corresponds within the poem to the *Pisan Cantos*, and in time to the summer of 1945” (Bacigalupo 2). Previous decads of cantos strove to anthologize their documentary content, and in the process minimize the presence of that organizing force. In this way, Pound hoped that his “phalanx of particulars” would appear to reveal for itself the relational “processes” beneath it.

This is not the case with Pisa. The objects rendered in Pisa's documentary mode are not temporally separated from their subjection to poetic transcription; they have not passed through as lengthy a process of archival appraisal and subsequent aesthetic refiguration. The historical and poetic contents of *The Pisan Cantos* occur more coincidentally. This immediacy affords these cantos a degree of tangible historicity unfelt elsewhere in *The Cantos*. The Pisans become, in a sense, more purely documentary by their less-mediated inclusion of the particulars of Pound's lived experience between the months of May and October, 1945. At the same time, the reality of that lived experience renders them absolutely lyric and subjective. With the Pisans, for the first time in *The Cantos* "the traditional opposition between 'subjective' and 'objective' collapses in the poetic act" (Maharaj 72). In order for the Pisans to maintain *The Cantos*' aesthetic and epistemological investment in a documentary mode of poetry, they must forgo their refined processes of research, selection, and arrangement. Cantos 74-84 dramatize the act of documentary reading, revealing the extent to which Pound's anarchival details can only straddle their materiality and their relational luminosity through the reading subject.

It is important to remember that the emergence of this visionary lyricism cannot be simply reduced to autobiography; the lyric eye/I in the Pisans' documentary poetics has structural precursors in Pound's earlier work, specifically "The Ur Cantos;" "[Pound] did not discover the eyes that *The Pisan Cantos* celebrate in the Pisan landscape, nor did they enter his consciousness either because of his incarceration or due to the kindness of his fellow inmates. He had them already in his mind, and he used them to filter his experience" (Bush "Modernism" 76). In *The Pisan Cantos*, Pound is forced to reintegrate the lyric subject he had been so apprehensive of throughout his early career. In doing so, Pound was afforded the potential to overcome the central structural tension between object and vision within his poetry, marking a formative structural transition point between the Adams Cantos and Pound's increasingly ideogrammic *Rock-Drill de*

*los Cantares*. The mnemonic lyric not only enabled the epic narrative of *The Cantos* to continue in documentary terms at all, it also inextricably tied the historical object to its subjective reading. As a result, these anarchival historical objects in sequence could be rendered luminous through the lyric dramatization of their being read relationally. At the same time, the constitution of that lyric eye/I in material terms eluded the complication of an overly subjectivizing influence in that act of intervention.

### **3. Section: Rock-Drill: Realizing the Ideogrammic Method**

It has been complained, with some justice, that I dump my note-books on the public.

-Pound, "A Few Don'ts" (1918)

## **INTRODUCTION**

According to Pound, "Cantos 85-100 is brick" (*EPP* b.118 f.4937); its poetic units and allusive textures are more compact than anywhere else in Pound's epic. As its title suggests, *Section: Rock-Drill* contains the most structurally condensed figurations of *The Cantos*' major recurrent themes. For Hugh Kenner, *Rock-Drill* recapitulates the poem's old matter with new power, with aphorisms that "vibrate on the target" ("Larches" 457). Massimo Bacigalupo characterizes *Rock-Drill* as a "suddenly more pronounced atomization" (240) of the poem's epic narrative. Contrasted with the lyric historicity transcribed in the Pisan set, *Rock-Drill* establishes its atemporal frame through the use and exploration of contracted ideogrammic units. Where the Pisans dramatize or perform the act of ideogrammic reading in time, *Rock-Drill* offers an anthologized sequence of monuments whose content and structure are both meant to provoke ideogrammic reading. *Rock-Drill*'s poetic structures strive to represent its documents after they have already been read and represented, specifically, rendered more legible as luminous objects through appraisal, selection, and organization. Cantos LXXXV-XCV preserve, however, the prominent function of the lyric eye/I established at Pisa. These objects are not presented as the letters of John Adams; they are meticulously sculpted and arranged. Further, the thematic emphasis on the visionary power of Love in these cantos, while not complementarily represented through dramatized lyric, reaffirms the Pisan revelation that the documentary fact can only transmit its dual-significance (objective and relational) through the mind's eye - that is, when it is perceived by a living subject. *Rock-Drill de los Cantares* seeks to teach ideogrammic reading by

presenting an anarchival catalogue of carefully selected documentary objects that explicitly discuss the relationship between subject and vision, and by representing those objects as equally material and relational, that is, as ideograms.

*Rock-Drill*'s extensive use of ideogrammic figures is presaged by the experimental image-signs that ornament earlier cantos: Canto XXII represents the physical frame of a nailed wall-placard reading "NO MEMBER OF THE MILITARY / OF WHATEVER RANK / IS PERMITTED WITHIN THE WALLS / OF THIS CLUB" (103); XXXIV frames a triangle around the declaration "CITY OF ARRARAT FOUNDED BY MORDECAI NOAH" to indicate "These words I read on a pyramid" (171); LXII draws a pictogram of "MOUNTAIN" (214); and canto LXXI, similar to XXII, frames "JOHN ADAMS / FOR PEACE / 1800" (418). In "Confucius Erased: The Missing Ideograms in *The Pisan Cantos*," Ronald Bush surveys the sizeable number of Chinese characters excised from *The Pisan Cantos*. The near-presence of these ideograms in the immediately preceding decad to *Rock-Drill* suggests a structural gravitation towards ideogrammic representation embedded in *The Cantos*' relationship to documentary epistemology. *Rock-Drill*'s ideograms are not as much an abrupt innovation as a traceable stage in the poetic development of Pound's epic. *Rock-Drill*'s relationship to the ideogram differs from earlier decads in three primary ways: the inclusion of an unprecedented number of overtly ideogrammic image-signs, the ideogrammic refiguration of documentary objects and *The Cantos* established documentary modes, and the thematic emphasis placed on ideogrammic exegesis and the act of reading.

*Rock-Drill* is suffused with ideogrammic structures. It is visibly distinct from the cantos that precede and exceed it through its incorporation of epigraphs, capitalized and enlarged-font text, and dozens of Chinese characters - among other foreign pictorial image-units. Even its seemingly familiar poetic modes are contracted to afford more outwardly resonant significance.

This radical poetic atomization realizes the most refined ideogrammic method achieved in *The Cantos*. For Pound (borrowing from Fenollosa), ideograms offered “a structure of signification with primary, literary meanings on the surface, and metaphorical transformations underneath” (Jin 17). Considered within the broader development of *The Cantos*, *Rock Drill*’s ideograms can be seen to resolve - or at least suspend - the structural tension Ten Eyck ascribes to Pound’s documentary poetics. Ideograms combine the documentary content and the subjectively perceived relational process into a single object-unit. Where *The Pisan Cantos* marked the first step toward such a structural overlapping of Pound’s documentary and lyric modes, the ideogrammic method refined in cantos LXXXV-XCV achieves the ultimate “sudden crystallisations of meaning” (Ten Eyck 148) sought between object and vision. Much of *Rock-Drill*’s thematic content compliments this structural turn, reflecting on the significance of ideogrammic exegesis. The documentary considerations in *Rock-Drill* - the contemplation of moral conduct in Couvreur’s *Chou King*, of politico-historical affairs in Benton’s *Thirty Years’ View*, and of spiritual life in Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius* - all emphasize the importance of ideogrammic reading as the means to understanding documentary history, the orders of Natural Law, and ultimately Pound’s “Paradiso terrestre.”

### IDEOGRAMMIC TRANSCRIPTION

The most distinguishing feature of *Rock-Drill* establishes itself in the very first line: the Chinese character *ling* (sensibility) appears enlarged - the largest physical ideogram ever to appear in the *Cantos*. As it takes the reader through Pound’s source-document (Couvreur), canto LXXXV goes on to include dozens of other Chinese characters - *ling* and *te* (virtue) being the most frequently repeated. Canto LXXXVI continues this pattern, including nearly forty more of these image-signs, often transcribed in isolated vertical columns that occupy the majority of their

respective pages. While the frequency of Chinese transcriptions gradually decreases after canto LXXXVI, other forms of pictorial characters continue to play a dominant role in this decad: LXXXVI visually demarcates the “HE” figure (reference to Franklin D. Roosevelt) by isolating it, enlarging it, and rendering in a different type (585 and 588); LXXXVIII ends with the symbols of the four card suits (609); XCI opens with a reproduction of medieval neumatic musical notation (630) and later includes the Egyptian hieroglyph for boats or “barques of the ‘daimones’” (Terrell 549)(632); and canto XCIII begins with the a line of hieroglyphs ascribed to King Kati followed by its English translation, “‘A man’s paradise is his good nature’ / sd Kati.” (643). At one point Pound had also inscribed a rough image-graph of an altar next to “the curled stone at the marge” line of canto XC:

To Zeus with the six seraphs before him

The architect from the painter,

the stone under elm

Taking form now,

The rivieri,

the curled stone at the marge                      [*reliefs*]

Faunus, sirenes,

the stone taking form in the air (627-628)

While this sign was absent in the first (Veronese) edition - and so consequently omitted from subsequent published versions (Bacigalupo 273) - the presence of this symbol is significant in this famously lyric canto, which uniquely goes almost uninterrupted by such signs. Pound’s attempt to ideogrammically represent “stone taking form” by his own pictorial invention

emphasizes the ideogram's central exegetical role at this stage of *The Cantos*. As *Rock-Drill* moves towards Pound's third Dantescan movement, its entering of the "Paradiso terrestre" in *Thrones de los Cantares*, it establishes ideogrammic representation as essential to writing and reading that paradise.

Even when not diligently decoded by the reader, Pound's pictorial characters serve an important structural function. In "Poetry: A Note in Ontology" (1934), John Crowe Ransom describes the foreign character in poetry as acting in "its natural or wild state [...] obeying its own law" (115). Jacques Derrida expands on this, pointing directly to Pound's use of Chinese as his example:

Up until now the use of Chinese graphic forms - one thinks of 'Pound' in particular - had as its aim, according to the worst hypothesis, the ornamentation of the text or the decoration of the page through the supplementary effect of fascination, which would haunt it by freeing the poetic from the constraints of a certain system of linguistic representation; according to the best hypothesis, it was intended to allow the forces of the designs themselves to play directly before the eyes of those who are not familiar with the rules of their functioning.

(*Dissemination* 356)

The idea that ideogrammic signs always suggest the rules and orders of other form-structures - even to those "not familiar with the rules of their functioning" - is especially important for understanding Pound's later cantos. Suffused as it is with unfamiliar figures, *Rock-Drill* bombards the reader with these haunting presences - the syntactic, aesthetic, and symbolic orders to which these various signs belong in origin. One need not be able to unpack or trace these



implicit orders actively informing the poetry in order to sense that lexical activity. These signs always imply an inaccessible surplus of relational meanings while remaining to the foreign reader wholly material - the uninitiated can only understand them as physical images. Thus, *Rock-Drill* is able to convey Pound's ideogrammic movement from roots to "process," as well as his belief in the power of active language, on an entirely structural level, prior to and independent of any grammatical or symbolic comprehension. Presumably, even a reader such as John Ciardi, who despaired of *Rock-Drill*'s "basic structure of hundreds of Chinese ideograms" (4) in his review of the decad in 1956, would be unable not to perceive the significance of such ideogrammic drilling.

Following these inherently pictorial Chinese characters, Pound uses typographical differentiation to render significant latinate words and phrases as similarly rigid or material. Appearing in all caps and in enlarged type, these units boldly declare themselves as more than simply the grammatical meanings they connote, but as material images on the page, evoking the Roman practice of etching stone tablets exclusively with the capital alphabet: "THEY LIED" (86/585); "PERENNE" (88/601); "(i.e. DEBT)" 88/604; "SCIRE FACIAS" (88/606); "CONstrued" (89/611); "POPULUM AEDIFICAVIT" (89/616); "EXPUNGED" (89/624); "The GREAT CRYSTAL" (91/631); "I'AMOR" (94/654); "ANTONINUS" (94/660); "PACTUM SERVA" (94/661). Pound's attempt to make his Latinate typography seem more Chinese or ideogrammic is also reminiscent of the anthologizing structure used in his prose. Extracted from the poems, these ideogrammic lynch-pins provide a sort of anthologized summary of the decad as a whole. Aligned alongside one another in this way, they bear a striking resemblance to the contracted definitions of Pound's "Gists" from 1960 - BOURGEOIS, SPENDING, A SLAVE, THEIRS, CRITICS, CERTAIN CIRCLES, NATIONAL WELL BEING, POISON, LAW, UTOPIA, ONE AT A TIME, USURY, SOVEREIGNTY, CIVILIZATION (*SP* 354-355). Typographically foregrounded, Pound's capital concepts take on an added ideogrammic

significance. The word-signs themselves are physically emblemized above their correlative subject examinations and treatments in the poetry; they are figured as synecdochic “gists” representative of the larger concepts treated in the poems in which they appear.

*Rock-Drill* regularly uses another form of synecdoche for the purposes of ideogrammic transcription. The majority of *Rock-Drill*’s eleven cantos - with the exclusion only of canto LXXXVII, LXXXVIII, and XCII - begin with an epigraphic statement:

LXXXV

LING [C]

Our dynasty came in because of a great sensibility. (563);

LXXXVI

WITH solicitude [C]

IV.xvi.18” (580);

LXXXIX

To know the histories [C]

to know good from evil

[C]

And know whom to trust.

Ching Hao. (610);

XC

Animus humanus amor non set,  
sed ab ipso amor procedit, et  
ideo seipso non diligit, sed amore  
qui seipso procedit. (625);

XCI

[Medieval nematic square-notation]

ab lo dolchor qual cor mi vai

[Medieval nematic square-notation]

AB LO DOLCHOR QU'AL COR MI VAI (630);

XCIII

[Egyptian hieroglyphs]

“A man’s paradise is his good nature”

sd/ Kati. (643);

XCIV

“Brederode”

(to Rush, Ap 4. 1790) (653);

XCV

LOVE, gone as lightning,  
enduring 5000 years. (663)

While the thematic significance of these introductory passages is easily identifiable in the content of the poems that follow, these summary lines also have a much greater structural consequence. Seven of these eight epigraphs are quotations, and are visually demarcated as such, again reinforcing *The Cantos* indebtedness to material or documentary history. These visually distinct headers, however, structurally isolate the individual cantos in *Rock-Drill* from the other poems in the epic. These compact epigraphic declarations visually and thematically interrupt whatever narrative continuity might have been carried through from prior cantos. While those echoes and resonances are still identifiable within the body of these poems, each canto in *Rock-Drill* begins abruptly with its own articulation of a thematic overview. Regardless of how effectively these openings achieve such an introduction or summary for the reader, they resist the narrative continuity of the greater decad. Cantos LXXXV-XCV immediately declare themselves as ideogrammic through epigraphic summation, and in doing so they always begin in narrative isolation from one another and *The Cantos* as a whole. These cantos resist being read as integrated parts of an epic narrative sequence, presented instead as a series of encounters with structurally atemporal, “rock-like” monuments. Each poem functions as its own enlarged ideogram, compressed into a series of introductory root-radicals (epigraphs) that signify towards the greater relational “process” beneath them (the expanded poetic content within each poem).

## STRUCTURAL RETURNS AND CONTRACTIONS

One of *Rock-Drill*'s primary functions within *The Cantos* is to perform a return. Following the disruption of Pisa - both biographically and poetically speaking - *Rock-Drill* must reassert the narrative trajectory of Pound's epic as well as summarily reintegrate its essential themes and developments. It is a return in both form and content. Contrasted with the unique

historicity of Pisa, *Rock-Drill* bears a much stronger structural resemblance to earlier periods of *The Cantos*. In addition to their innovative inclusion of pictorial ideograms, cantos LXXXV-XCV deploy many of the poetic figurations and modes established in the previous decades. These cantos contain documentary object-transcriptions of “THE FOUR TUAN” (c.85) - as found specifically in the pages of Couvreur - twenty-seven full lines of Philostratus rendered in their original Greek in canto XCIV, among countless transcriptions of pictorial images. Canto LXXXVIII contains several narrative distillations of the data mined from Benton, and a sustained lyrical sequence spans almost the entirety of cantos XC-XCI. *Rock-Drill* also includes the figurations of oral-source documents featured in *The Pisan Cantos*, incorporating quotations and dialogue with the same consistent use of quotation marks and explicative parentheses. The disparate documentary objects of the poems remain under the subtle unifying influence of Pisa’s lyric control. On the surface, Pound’s first decad since his release into St. Elizabeth’s seems to offer little structural renovation apart from its preoccupation with Chinese characters.

As a return, however, *Rock-Drill* is importantly not a repetition. In this decad, Pound refigures his entire documentary poetics towards a more ideogrammic mode of representation. While the decad as a whole is “overshadowed by large, silent, Chinese characters,” its English text becomes “compact and supple, shrinking to small bits of mosaic” (Bacigalupo 233). In one of his later notebooks from St. Elizabeth’s - those used for his research and draft-composition of *Section: Rock-Drill* and *Thrones de los Cantares* - Pound wrote in the centre of a page otherwise entirely scratched out, “[get rid of paraphernalia]” (brackets in original, *EPP* b.120 f.4956). This movement toward concision does not play out only in the inclusion of pictorial ideograms; it was a principle applied to each of the previously established modes of *The Cantos*’ documentary poetics. In *Rock-Drill*, documentary objects contract, narrative explications occur with less frequency and are actively resisted, and lyric reflection is compressed into a singular weighted

sequence.

Cantos LXXXV-XCV effect a structural contraction of their inherited documentary, narrative, and lyric voices in order to achieve a more ideogrammic poetic mode capable of serving an anarchival function. Documentary objects in these cantos have neither the imperfect edges of the Malatestan documents nor the exhaustive breadth appropriated from Adams. Their transcription is concise and directed, containing “a greater number of elliptical repetitions of lines, phrases, or single words” (Liebregts 291). Narrative explications are few, their purpose in *Rock-Drill* not being “to explicate sources, but to clarify tones” (Wilhelm 79). The poem’s narrative voice figures most apparently in the parenthetical asides to the dialogues and documents on display - similar to the parenthetical function in the Pisans. Rather than offering narrative refigurations of historic and mythic content, *Rock-Drill* presents self-speaking objects charged with “the process of intelligence” (Liebregts 9). The lyric sequence of cantos XC and XCI, while evidently not more contracted than the short lyric refrains scattered in the previous decads, gathers this lyric content together in the exact middle of the new set. As a result, the lyricism of cantos XC and XCI functions as both a structural and thematic fulcrum to *Rock-Drill*, the hinge that connects “the practical-historical didacticism of Cantos LXXXV-LXXXIX with the spiritual teachings of the second half” (Liebregts 299). *Rock-Dill*’s lyric mode is afforded greater structural density through its compilation and placement.

This contraction of *The Cantos*’ trimodal documentary poetics enables *Rock-Drill* to achieve a more structurally ideogrammic method of poetic representation for Pound’s anarchival form of documentary epistemology. *Rock-Drill*’s brusque deployment of its content unfastens these poetic units from the immediate temporal and narrative sequences in which they are located. Instead, these “condensed references, presented in both discursive and paratactic style,” begin to represent “condensed bodies of knowledge, which the reader is expected to have acquired by now”

(Liebregts 291). In these later cantos, ideogrammic relations supersede narrative ones. As ideograms, *Rock-Drill*'s poetic units are more easily identifiable as both intratextual reiterations from within *The Cantos*' broad documentary catalogue as well as symbolic representations of its visionary thematic "processes." In both cases, these ideograms signify "in a net of relations, which Leibniz (and Fenollosa) regards as Space," which illuminates "the utility of Pound's 'sorting' method: that is to view things in an ideogrammic eye with 'god's eye,' and perceive things in their organic wholeness" (Jin 167). *Rock-Drill*'s drilled-down poetic units are structured to signify outwards, either to recurrent vortices within *The Cantos* or to Pound's visionary universal provenances.

*Rock-Drill*'s repetition of "PERENNE" offers one example of the overlapping intra-textual and thematic exegeses in the later cantos. In addition to being an alliterative echo, "perenne" is presented as a structural correlative to *The Pisan Cantos*' "periplum": both occur within a repeated refrain ("as the winds veer in periplum / Io son la luna' . Cunizza / as the winds veer in periplum" (74/463); "Bellum cano perenne ..." (86/588), "Bellum perenne:" (87/599), "Cano perenne," (88/601)), both appear as the final word of individual cantos (82, 86), and both recur isolated and in parentheses ("and the cool of the 42<sup>nd</sup> St. tunnel (periplum) [...] Rais Uli, periplum" (74/467); "...between the usurer and any man who / wants to do a good job / (perenne)" (87/589); "Mencius on tithing, / PERENNE" (88/600-601)). Individually, both "periplum" and "perenne" function as ideogrammic figures for a central thematic issue within their respective decad - the Odyssean periplum of historical or archival time that invades *The Pisan Cantos* and *Rock-Drill*'s perennial struggle to conjoin the visionary object to its reading subject in the transcendental ideogrammic sign. This parallel representation doubles the ideogrammic significance of "PERENNE," resonating with both its own "net of relations" and that of its previous form. These refined units appear as thematic transformations of a singular

ideogrammic signature within the symbolic catalogue of *The Cantos*.

*Rock-Drill*'s consideration of "I' AMOR" (94/654) has a similar function. Rendered in all capitals, it is easily identifiable among this decad's other ideogrammically construed word-signs. As one of these visually monumentalized bedrocks to *Rock-Drill*, "AMOR" stands physically apart from its immediate syntactic and narrative sequence and echoes with *The Cantos*' larger thematic vortices. This concrete image-sign evokes the epic's previously established investment in the theme of love - the poem's frequent invocations of *Aphrodite* and *Eros* - and simultaneously points to *Rock-Drill*'s culminant reflection on that theme - "UBI AMOR IBI OCULUS EST" (90/629) ["Where there is love there is vision"]. In addition to demonstrating the intra-textual "processes" operative beneath the poem's discreet signs, *Rock-Drill*'s "AMOR" provides "evidence of the sempiternal existence of a divine order behind the universe" as a whole (Liebregts 325). By figuring *amore* through Richard of St. Victor, among *The Cantos*' many other documentary sources, *Rock-Drill* overlaps its internal, textual "processes" as a "recurring part of an ongoing tradition that spans the history of mankind" (Liebregts 325). The ideogrammic figuration of "AMOR" distills into an atemporal poetic unit the entire narrative progression of *The Cantos*' mythico-historical exploration of love, amor, *Aphrodite*, and its essential function in arriving at paradise. This function of Amor reestablishes the Pisan revelation, that the ideogrammic reading requires the subject to enter into union with its luminous object, but it does so importantly through the voice of *Rock-Drill*'s documentary collection rather than the voice of *The Cantos* lyric subject.

*Rock-Drill*'s documentary poetics are charged with intratextual references and broader thematic "processes." *Rock-Drill* does not only contain more pictorial ideograms than previous decads; its entire exegetical structure has become more ideogrammic than its predecessors. Through the ideogram, *Rock-Drill* establishes a poetic mode based in the documentary object but



that is formulated to be “maximally charged with meaning” (Bacigalupo 243). According to Ten Eyck, Pound’s various figurations of documentary objects in *The Cantos*, in varying proportions and relations to complementary narrative and lyric modes, can all be read as attempts to resolve the structural tension between his Imagistic object-units and the Dantescan world-vision undertaken in his epic. It follows, then, that the ideogram can be read as an arrived-upon structural resolution of that tension. The ideogrammic method achieved in *Rock-Drill* demonstrates the possibility of representing these two seemingly disparate forms simultaneously within individual signs. In Cantos LXXXV-XCV, Pound most effectively transcribes an anarchival form of documentary epistemology that insists upon both the materiality of the historical referent and the generative subject position engaged in the act of reading.

### NATURAL LAW AND IDEOGRAMMIC READING

Ideogrammic representation is the dominant structural feature of *Rock-Drill*. It is also its dominant thematic concern. Leon Surrlette has suggested that the central didactic purpose of *Rock-Drill* and *Thrones* is “the elucidation of the principles of good government” (230). I would argue that, while this does inform the selection of *Rock-Drill*’s documentary subject matter, the central didactic purpose of this first of the later decads is in fact the importance of ideogrammic reading. Admittedly, these can be read as one and the same: for Pound, ideogrammic perception *was* the single most important principle of good government; “the ideogram became a symbol of the way an entire civilization could become informed by the divine” (Liebregts 294), an assertion that “vision must go into action” (Bacigalupo 261). *Rock-Drill*’s structural innovations reflect its primary thematic articulation of the ideogram’s important role in matters political, moral, and spiritual.

The relationship between Pound’s documentary poetics and his construction of the

anarchival ideogram can be clarified by examining the Neoplatonic influence on Pound's aesthetics. In *A Light from Eleusis*, Surette summarizes the relationship as follows:

Pound's rhetoric, as we have seen, is based upon certain presumptions about the nature of the intelligible universe and the nature of human intellection. He assumes, following Plato, that the universe is of the same nature as the human mind, and further assumes that the patterns of the sensible universe reveal the patterns of the intelligible universe [...] they are revealed only through the congregation of particular sensible data. (225)

For Pound, resolving the aesthetic tension between his documentary objects and his epic vision addresses the perceived deficiencies to the traditionally archival modes of understanding historical subjectivity and cultural identity. Learning to "write" ideogrammically allows for the figuration of a documentary history that is neither removed from the world's sensible material nor withheld its luminous significance. Pound's structural refinement of an ideogrammic poetics in *Rock-Drill* cannot be read in strictly poetic terms, as it is both thematically and structurally tied to his ongoing quarrel with archival epistemology. Taken to its furthest ideation, the arrived-upon structural development of the later cantos performs for the reader *The Cantos'* concurrent political and spiritual ascension to the divine through the anarchival ideogram.

*Rock-Drill* paves the way for the coming paradise of *Thrones* by "exemplifying the possibility of a *paradiso terrestre*" (Liebregts 291). At the core of this didactic imperative is *ling* (sensibility), or the capacity to read ideogrammically - contrasted against those "who scatter old records" (85/563). *Rock-Drill's* first canto both begins and ends with this call for proper reading: "LING [C] / Our dynasty came in because of a great sensibility" (85/563); "aperiens tibi animum:"

[opening your mind] (85/579). Canto LXXXV teaches that this mode of reading requires, firstly, a respect for the divine in all things, the purity of the sign - “The sun under it all: / Justice, d’urbanite, de prudence” (564). Since “Heaven’s process is quite coherent / and its main points perfectly clear” (85/572) in all things, then to falsify any sign is to affront Heaven itself. Thus, the political order of Alexander the Great spanned the world because of this ideogrammic understanding: by paying the debts of his troops (85/568), an action emblematically returned to throughout the decad, Alexander’s politic recognized the sanctity of worldly representation.

Though canto LXXXV espouses that the divine process requires “not a lot of signs, but the one sign” (85/566), LXXXVI reminds the reader that it is still the materiality of such divine signatures that requires our contemplation. Canto LXXXVI reinforces that the ubiquity of heaven’s process in fact demands a greater diligence in material affairs. It asks “Quis edudiet without documenta?” [who instructs without documents?] (581) and appropriately includes ten numeric citations to the pages of its source-material in its own first two pages. LXXXVI also demonstrates how this dependence on the document can complicate our access to the divine. Even if the “process” remains “Non perituum” (86/581), usurious forces in history impede our ability to read it; “in the great Hamurabi Inscription: / THEY LIED. / That is the Regius Professorships / (apud Chris. Hollis) / to falsify history” (585). Thus the “Bellum cano perenne...” (86/584) of the first half of “Section Rock-Drill” (86/584), the historico-didactic condensation of usury contra the ideogram, of falsified history and the paying of debts, of “gold versus the gods” (Surette 228).

Cantos LXXXVI-LXXXIX refigure the main political and economic ideas of the poem (Cookson 90) as primarily issues of reading. Between usury and the natural order of the universe, between the poem’s Dantescan heaven and hell, “...between the usurer and any man who / wants to do a good job / (perenne)” (87/589) is the ideogram and its interpretation. In these first five

cantos Pound “drills” through Benton and Couvreur to show how to resist the “problem of issue”: “paideuma fading [...] attention to outlet, no attention to source” (87/589). In order to reach paradise, to (re)discover that “All things are lights” (87/591), have “POPULUM AEDIFICAVIT” [“He edified the people”] (89/616) and “know the histories [C] / to know good from evil / [C] / And know whom to trust” (89/610), we must “believe the Dai Gaku” [“The Great Digest”] (88/601). At the heart of *Rock-Drill* is the Confucian teaching that the process of obtaining divine knowledge, descended from Heaven to earth, “starts from investigating the “root” and “branch” of a thing and leads to a contemplation of “eternal form” or the “absolute beauty” of a thing (Jin 162). Following this ideogrammic process, the purpose of law becomes to ensure that “that there be / no coercion, either by force or by fraud” (89/621) not for the victim’s sake, but to prevent the falsification of the earthly divine.

*Rock-Drill*’s lyric centre (c. XC-XCI) departs from the *bellum perenne*, and distills its historical exemplars - Alexander’s respect for the debt of his soldiery and Benton’s currency “drawn in the name of the body” (88/608) - into an Apollonian principle. The second half of this decad asserts Love’s power to channel ideogrammic reading through its synchronous assertion of body and divine. These cantos demonstrate how “amorous contemplation is not introverted and narcissistic, but extroverted and active, always attended by signs, traces, *techne*” (Bacigalupo 261). In the relatively short canto XC, Pound explicitly aligns the experience of love with that of vision: “Animus humanus amor non est, / sed ab ipso amor procedit, et / ideo seipso non diligit, sed amore / qui seipso procedit.” [The human soul is not love, but flows from it, and it delights not in the idea of itself but in the love which flows from it] (625); “Ubi amor, ibi oculus. / Vae qui cogitatis inutile. / quam in nobis similitudine divinae / reperetur imago” [“Where love is, there is sight”; “Woe to you who think without purpose”; “The good things of will, through which an image of the divine will be found in us” (Terrell 541)] (626); “UBI AMOR IBI



il tremolar della marina  
 chh                      chh  
 the pebbles turn with the wave  
 chh                      ch'u  
 "fui chiamat'                      ["I was called  
    e qui refulgo"                      and here I glow"]  
 Le Paradis n'est pas artificiel  
    but is jagged,  
 For a flash,  
    for an hour.  
 Then agony,  
    then an hour,  
    then agony,  
 Hilary stumbles, but the Divine Mind is abundant  
    unceasing  
    *improvisatore*  
 Omniformis (640)

In Pound's reflection on St. Victor's visionary "AMOR," paradise is "immanent in the order of things: sea, woman, epiphanies all men have known" (Bacigalupo 308); paradise is not man-made but man-seen. *Rock-Drill*'s "AMOR" offers the means to perceive and thus preserve the divine-material order as coterminous, to see the relational world through but never beyond the objective one.

Canto XCIII refigures this *lecture Dantis* as "essentially an enlargement of 'good nature'



This emphatic proclamation expounds St. Victor's "AMOR," figured here as compassion and pity, as the basis of political, moral, and spiritual "light" - the concurrence of object and divine order. Canto XCIV reiterates this power of amorous vision through its opening invocation of Count Hendrik's "Brederode" (653). Moving through a rapid survey of other historical figurations of *brederode*, this canto stresses the paradisaical nature of these gestures and events. The presence of AMOR, that is the political recognition of the order in nature, draws them closer to the divine: "That is of thrones, / and above them: Justice" (660). To wield amorous vision, which is to say ideogrammic perception of heavenly process embodied, is "To build light" (662).

Canto XCV presents "the final computation" of the decad (Bacigalupo 327). It reinforces love's essential role in the ideogrammic perception of *The Cantos'* *paradiso terrestre*. Invoked as a comet, "LOVE, gone as lightning, / enduring 5000 years" (663), is figured as "a flash gone before it is perceived, known primarily by its absence - yet it is also, in objective experience, a solid light which nothing can arrest, the eternal *moving* and *flowing* of the Galaxy" (Bacigalupo 327). The canto follows this description with yet another declarative "drilling": "Deus est anima mundi, / animal optimum / et sempiternum. [...] Expergesci thalamis" [God is the spirit of the world, best and everlasting being. [...] To be awakened in the marriage bed (Terrell 585-586)] (663). Pound's divine being is at once everlasting and embodied, of the world, and it is through the eye of AMOR that its presence is felt. Having moved through an ideogrammic summation of *The Cantos'* dominant historical and thematic vortices, *Rock-Drill* has arrived at a distillation of perhaps its most central theme: "UBI AMOR IBI OCULUS EST."

Having achieved a structural culmination in the refinement of the ideogrammic method and a thematic culmination in the declaration of "I'AMOR", *Rock-Drill* ends with a return to *The Cantos'* origin. The final lines of canto XCV, alluding to Odysseus' plight and Leucothea's pity



(95/667), reinforce this sense of closure to the epic's narrative development. Firstly, this allusion contains the two-fold ideogrammic structure of the decad's compacted poetic units, pointing both to intra-textual and extra-textual "processes" contained within it. It also suggests a powerful reinterpretation of *The Cantos'* original Homeric trajectory. Returning to *The Cantos'* first documentary source - "for the first time since the writing of canto I [...] with consummate epical skill" (Bacigalupo 328) - Pound is textually and thematically tying *Section: Rock-Drill* back into the epic narrative initiated by the poem's opening lines. However, Peter Liebrechts has identified an ambiguity in Pound's quotation of Homer in these final lines of *Rock-Drill* - "*nostou / gaihs psaihkwon,...*" (95/667):

*Nostos* usually means "a return home," which would not make sense here.

Therefore most of the Homeric commentators render it as "arrival." However, in the context of Pound's poem, the use of *nostou gaihs psaihkwon* as the last words of *Rock-Drill* emphasizes that the island of the Phaeacians must be seen as the *paradiso* to which we may return again if we adopt the right state of mind. (328)

Pound's decision to preserve the original Greek, rather than adopting the customary translation, "strive to reach arrival at the land of the Phaeacians," suggests more than a characteristic insistence on Pound's part to retranslate his source material for himself. As Liebrechts notes, the lines in their original could instruct Odysseus to strive to see the divine order - "home" - in all sensible data, the universal intelligence of the natural world rediscovered in the human mind. Leucothea is telling Odysseus to read ideogrammically. At this crucial return in the poem, the path of *The Cantos'* Odyssean hero diverges from its Homeric antecedent: rather than follow his archival periplum to some final narrative destination, Pound's epic subject is challenged to cease

that linear movement and contemplate the final destination in all things, at all times, as transformatively omniformus.

## CONCLUSION

The ideogrammic method achieved in *Rock-Drill* can be read as a culminant developmental stage in Pound's documentary poetics. Having contracted and denarrativized its poetic objects as ideograms, *Rock-Drill* achieves Pound's idealized ideogrammic construction: a sign's material "roots" - its Dantescan "splendours of detail" - and its relational "sub-surge of truth" (SR 172) both manifest within a single poetic unit. *Rock-Drill* marks the intersection between both *The Cantos*' culminant structural and thematic treatment of Pound's anarchival mode of reading history. These ideogrammic units, refined down so as to signify atemporally within the thematic currents of the greater epic, provide a model for documenting history in such a way that might exceed the confined functionality of the archive. Through a process of hyper-organizational distillation, cantos LXXXV-XCV structurally accentuate the inherent relationality or transformative potential of their object-units on display; *Rock-Drill*'s increased degree of editorial intervention toward now deliberately ideogrammic ends, in fact reduces perceived influence of that poetic re-presentation. While all of Pound's later cantos remain loosely unifiable under the Poundian mind from which they sprang, *Rock-Drill*'s structural achievement enables Pound's cantos to at once resist or marginalize that archival influence as well as encourage his alternatively anarchival mode of reading.

#### 4. The Ideogram and the Archive

Clio may have nothing to say, but she has everything to write.  
-Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (2002)

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the latter half of his career, Pound came to reintegrate the subjective eye/I that he had turned away from in his early poetry as an essential component of his evolving anarchival aesthetic model, his documentary poetics. *The Pisan Cantos* featured the mnemonic lyric to dramatize the interdependent relationship between object and vision in Pound's new epistemological system. With the lyric monumentalism of *Rock-Drill*, Pound directly expounded upon that balance, all the while refining the poetic correlative to his ideogrammic anthologies. These two structural innovations in the late cantos return and respond to the structural tension operative in Pound's earliest documentary work and form logical developments in Pound's growing epistemological relationship toward language, metaphor, and interpretation (Jin 205). From these unwobbling pivots, Pound offers up a formulated alternative to the strictly objective cultural-historical space of the bureaucratic archive: the ideogram, or, rather, ideogrammic reading. For Pound, it is the ideogram not the archive that is both a more authentic and a more viable mode of engaging with documentary preservation, cultural edification, and historical identification.

If Pound's documentary poetry is something other than archival, however, it will not be without its own unique limits and liabilities. In this final chapter I will examine how Pound's "new method" might remain troublingly archival and, ultimately, interrogate the ways in which it might dysfunction on both archival terms as well as on terms of its own. By affording space and prominence to the reading subject's amorous eye/I in the late cantos, Pound's ideogrammic

method renders both its objects and its mode of access partially immaterial; the site of reading is displaced outside the objective realm of pure fact. Having abandoned the unwieldy objectivism of the strictly material archive, the ideogrammic anarchival must instead overcome the potentially reductive, totalizing, or inconsistent nature of a subjective catalogue that has no actual referent in nature. As an immaterial site, Pound's catalogue is not a factual record of certain significant loci of meaning - there is no historical or geographical place wherein these circumjacent conditions actually exist together as they are organized in *The Cantos*. Instead, Pound's documentary poetry constructs a catalogue populated by objective historical referents that render his subjective relational principles themselves materially accessible. What Pound's ideogrammic structures achieve in *The Pisan Cantos* and *Rock-Drill* is not the realization of a new physical form of documentary archive liberated from epistemological collapse, but rather the material figuration of the purely subjective process of documentary epistemology itself - the phenomenological transition from history to memory. Pound's anarchival ideogrammic collection posits a post-structuralist form of private documentary epistemology generative outside of any physical, that is archival, apparatus.

### **ARCHIVAL LIMITS AND THE IDEOGRAMMIC PROPOSAL**

The literary work of many twentieth century writers can be read as supplementing the preservative function of the Richards' imperial archival complex, reinscribing the cultural topographies and heritages of Western Europe in the face of their imminent destruction. For certain Modernists, there was also an equal if not greater investment in developing a more effective epistemological system in which to deposit this significant historical data. Pound's ideogrammic collections, Joyce's panoplied mythology, and Eliot's lexical distillations into a new symbolist mode all offered new aesthetic systems of signification that purported to function

in documentary terms while extending beyond the strained confines of strictly objective history - the documentary epistemology of the encyclopedia, the museum, and the archive. This need to evolve from the Enlightenment model, however, came not, for Pound, only as a response to its increasingly threatened status under the militarization of Europe in the twentieth century. From his earliest experimentations with documentary poetics, Pound remained vocal in differentiating from his manner of writing history with the inherent shortcomings and flaws of the traditional archival forms of the “B.M. Era” that preceded him, shortcomings to which he felt his ideograms could attend. He did not strive to support or buttress Diderot’s tragically doomed epistemological system; the New Method aimed to correct it. Pound believed that strictly material figurations of this inherited archival consciousness fundamentally misrepresented the relationship between historical knowledge and subjectivity.

Pound was vocally critical of the institutional archive, particularly for its structural inability to transmit relational knowledge or provide effective access to this form of understanding. His accounts of archival research - however necessary for populating his own illuminated ideogrammic texts - are nothing short of vilifying: while there were “as many libraries and archives as there are librarians and archivists” working in his contemporary moment, it remained that “naturally there [was] nothing duller than the results of such digging [...] how low the intelligence can be dragged by work on minutiae” (220-221). He was equally critical of encyclopedic projects that sought to supplement archival spaces using similar forms of classification or chronology - “civilized man (1938) has an approximate idea of the inadequacy of Larousse; of the so called *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and the *Encyclopedie de Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire*” (GK 150). Pound was deeply troubled with the labour demanded by such traditional forms of organizing and representing historical data. Seated in the “thoroughly uncomfortable chairs” of the British Museum reading room, he calculated “the eye-strain and the

number of pages a man could read, with deduction for say at least 5% of one man's time for reflection, [and] decided against it," declaring that "there must be some other way for a human being to make use of that vast cultural heritage" (53-54). The failed archival response to the crisis of documentary epistemology was not only of questionable posterity for Pound, but of a more pressingly questionable present. "Culture (damned word if there ever was one)" ought to yield luminous readings in the immediate, "NOT [...] be a blighted haystack of knowledge so heavy it crushes or smothers" (183). Pound's first critique of the archive was not simply that it might collapse beneath its own weight in the future, but that it both deterred and obstructed any present engagement with it by commanding such a looming yet violable presence.

Given Pound's reliance upon archival objects in his own work (see Ricciardi "Archives"), it is important to distinguish his criticisms of the archive itself from his valuation of its documentary contents. Material objects remain paramount to relational or ideogrammic perception - the anarchival must always bear a similarity to the archive proper - but it is the ways in which those artifacts are selected, arranged, and represented in the archive that obstructs rather than illuminates their exposition and the attitude with which they are approached. Even if one possessed the readerly capacity to commit the required eye-strain and number of pages needed to "access" an archive's principal data, Pound argued that this form of documentary organization would still not necessarily afford access to the relational processes intimated by alternatively organized sequences of historical material. He insists that "it does not matter a two-penny damn whether you load your memory with the chronological sequence of what has happened, or the names of protagonists, or authors of books, or generals and leading political spouters, so long as you understand the process" (51-52). He goes on to argue that not only does a linear understanding of history "not matter" relative to a visionary understanding of the past, but it is not, in fact, authentic: "We do NOT know the past in chronological sequence. It may be

convenient to lay it out anesthetized on the table with dates pasted here and there, but what we know we know by ripples and spirals eddying out from us and from our own time” (60). Echoing the active imperative of Nietzsche’s “On the use and abuse of history for life,” Pound’s documentary culture must interact with the present; historical data cannot be seen as truly luminous or relational in the absence of the reading subject’s perceived historical particularity. The anarchival model of history must be transformative both spatially and temporally. Pound’s dominant underlying quarrel with the archive is its misrepresentation of historical subjectivity - that we, as living subjects, cannot know the past in the way the archive presents it, that is, objectively.

Beyond Pound’s personal denunciations of archival labour, his ideogrammic method itself clearly operates outside the functional logic of the archive. Unlike the archive’s autonomous network of significations, the ideogrammic site of this dual-perception between the objective and the visionary must exist somewhere between the document and the eye/I. The archive qua archive produces a “general system of the formation and transformation of statements” and objects deposited into it (Foucault, *Archaeology* 130), but it generates this system within the physical bounds of its marked cabinets and papers. The relational significance of archival objects is predetermined by the physical sum of those objects. This system of signification exists, once established, internally; though it requires material labour and intervention to preserve, its meaning-making function is generated out of itself. The formative and transformative functions of an ideogrammic object or statement, by contrast, occur at the point of contact between subject and object. That is to say, Pound’s ideogrammic collections do not contain within themselves all that is required to arrive upon luminous understanding. They offer only a selected sequence of highly charged particulars, condensed “to the utmost possible degree” (*ABC* 36) so as to provide sufficient opportunity for the subjective eye/I to discover the circumjacent conditions between

itself and these particulars (61). Without that act of reading, the luminous or relational process latent within the objects cannot properly be made manifest:

Knowledge is or may be necessary to understanding, but it weighs nothing against understanding, and there is not the least use or need of retaining it in the form of dead catalogues once you understand the process.

Yet, once the process is understood it is quite likely that the knowledge will stay by a man, weightless, held without effort. (*GK* 53)

This progression from knowledge to understanding is essential to identifying the extra-archival function of Pound's ideogrammic method. Pound expands upon this progressive model of knowledge by differentiating between three distinct modes of thought: cogitation, which "flits aimlessly about the object," meditation, wherein the mind "circles about [the object] in a methodological manner," and contemplation, wherein the mind is "unified with the object" (77). In order to first progress from cogitation to precise meditation, the subject relies upon the material specificity of its objects - Dante's "*Ex diffinientium cognitione diffiniti resultat cognitio*" - "Knowledge of a definite thing comes from a knowledge of things defined" (*SP* 76). To progress toward visionary contemplation, however, requires the amorous union of Spinoza's "intellectual love of a thing" (*ABC* 88) - the lyric engagement of Pisa or the variously iterated "UBI AMOR IBI OCULUS EST" (90/629) of *Rock-Drill*. Understanding what is required to progress from each of these forms of thought to the other, it is no surprise at Pound's hostility toward the archive. The organizational principles of any given archive render it "a symbol or form of power," restricted to its own limited ways of knowing (Steedman 2): the archivist "creates the past that he purports to restore" (9), encoding his archive with the logic of an



interrogation wherein “the interlocutor has been removed” (47); its objects, events, happenings, “[have] been altered by the very search for [them]” (77). By incorporating material data into these systems of classification, the archive immediately alters the originary formation of these natural or historical objects. Under its own power, it also precludes the possibility of transformative readings generated from outside of its lexical system - as the “system of discursivity” under which all of its signs and objects reside, the archive lays down the total of its own “enunciative possibilities and impossibilities” (Foucault, *Archaeology* 129). The archive, then, fundamentally resists Pound’s ideogrammic reading, reading that requires the subject to participate in the production of relational meaning, by generating its own predetermined relationalities.

The development of a new form of documentary culture able to facilitate ideogrammic reading required Pound to resist a central archival impulse: organization. Understood in this way, the experimental and paratactic structure of *The Cantos* as a whole can be read as representing such an anarchival method whose only organizational principle is precise definition and juxtaposition. Pound’s documentary poetics encourage the requisite amorous-yet-objective reading of history by presenting seemingly random significant objects in a deliberately unclassified sequence - though it is not until *The Pisan Cantos* and *Rock-Drill* that this mode of reading is directly demonstrated or explained. Pound’s aesthetically achieved revision of European documentary epistemology is not executed with some new form of archive, but rather through the production of ideogrammic collections. While Pound felt that his prose anthologies *had* to be subjected to a degree of organizational intervention and explication in order to be accessible at all, his poetry more effectively realizes his New Method than his prose. *The Cantos’* scenes and images “connect, fuse, or evoke each other [...] in a mimesis of life [...] In the cantos, the ceaseless transformations and comparisons make the fixed outward meaning of a particular

phenomenon less important” (Jin 205). As nearer textual approximations of material or historical life, these ideograms are made legible by the light, “My light, light of my eyes” (“Homage” *Pers* 219) rather than the narrow illuminated paths of the archive’s system of classification or the inconsistent candlelight of its reading rooms.

### **IDEOGRAMMIC LIMITS AND THE PROBLEM OF MEMORY**

In its ideal form, Pound’s ideogrammic collection is deliberately other than archival, and so cannot be fairly evaluated on archival terms. Just as the traditional archive was found to be structurally resistant to ideogrammic reading, so too would the paratactic documentary collection fail to fulfill any familiar archival function - the elucidation of historical timelines or causal links, for instance. It is apparent with little to no formal analysis that Pound’s cantos are at best reluctant to provide any such clear chronologies. Since Pound proposes an entirely new mode of reading correlative to his evolving textual practices, then it is by those proposed functional standards that his New Method ought to be measured. This new mode of reading and writing documentary culture relies overtly upon the generative phenomenological space that exists between historical referent and perceiving subject. But to what extent do Pound’s prose anthologies or his documentary cantos effectively produce this space? Do Pound’s ideogrammic forms of writing lend themselves to genuinely ideogrammic reading? Or, to what extent are *The Cantos* actually an unorganized, ideogrammic collection of documentary objects free of an encoded network of internally relational significances?

I would argue that the early and middle cantos come close to approximating this naturalism or mimetic disorganization. In these early decads, Pound’s dominant epic vortices have yet to become familiar enough to be identifiable as governing themes embodied by the poem’s various personae. As a result, its assemblage of events, persons, and objects appear

radically disjointed from one another upon first encountering. That said, the historical content of these cantos always quietly invokes the presence of their spectral mediator or anthologist. Even if it is not understood as such, there is an assumed order behind Pound's selection of these specific historical referents. While "any fact is, in a sense 'significant'," Pound admits that "certain facts give one a sudden insight" (*SP* 22). This relative luminosity of objects between distinct readers forms a divisive fault line in Pound's new method: it implies the exclusionary act of selection requisite for documentary writing. The early cantos, much like the archive, are haunted by their material absences, absences which distort and prefigure relational meaning. Unlike the archive, however, the ideogrammic collection deliberately produces these absences it suffers from. Pound's idealized "phalanx of particulars" is further disrupted in these early cantos by their complementary use of narrative and lyric modes of explication and reflection - ironically, modes meant to balm over *The Cantos'* generated absences. This incipient archival texture in Pound's collections remains throughout *The Cantos*, but as he progresses into the Chinese History Cantos and the John Adams Cantos, as David Ten Eyck has shown, Pound strives to actively reduce the unifying lyric influence of his poetic subject/anthologist. The almost exclusively documentary poetics of these decads, then, can be seen as most effectively rendering Pound's documentary imperative in "natural," that is ideogrammically legible, states.

What occurs with the radical reintroduction of the lyric subject in *The Pisan Cantos* - a structural development necessary for these poems to realize and dramatize the necessary subjective component of Pound's ideogrammic reading - is in fact a disintegration of *The Cantos'* tenuous ideogrammic pretense. At the moment Pound clearly reintroduces the requisite eye/I of his new method, the poems themselves become less open to such subjective/circumjacent reading, they become archival in that their relationality is overtly predetermined by a central organizational principle: Pound's lived historical experience in the summer of 1945. *The Pisan*

*Cantos*, however more accessible to readers on a syntactic or empathetic level, temporarily unify the paratactic landscape of Pound's epic. Pound's deployment of mnemonic lyric dramatizes the act of ideogrammic reading and thus textually represents his new anarchival epistemology, but in its demonstration it fails to allow for or induce that form of reading outside of itself.

Where Pisa achieved material representation of Pound's ideogrammic reading through dramatization, *Rock-Drill* similarly transcribes that new mode through ideogrammic writing. Cantos LXXXIV-XCIV initially seem to return to the firm object-juxtapositions of the earlier cantos, while carrying forward Pisa's restored subjective contemplation as the dominant thematic "process" in these poems. *Rock-Drill*, however, figures its documentary content quite differently from Pound's representations of Sigismundo Malatesta or the letters of John Adams. While both forms of documentary poetics induce paratactic readings, *Rock-Drill*'s objects in sequence are, as we have seen, hyper-organized and refined as ideograms themselves. By exercising such visible degrees of structural control over its content and as a result transforming plain objects and images into materially multivalent symbols and ideograms, *Rock-Drill* can be read as perhaps betraying the documentary fidelity - the mimesis of life - required to induce luminous perception between the object and the eye/I. They come close to deviating too far from the archival to properly function as anarchival; their material representation of the anarchival collection's ideogrammic principle is perhaps too rigid to allow for that transformative activity to continue. In these cantos, Pound's objects are made relationally significant wholly within the material confines of *The Cantos* themselves, potentially precluding subsequent phenomenological engagements with another readerly eye/I. The rock-like units of this decad are not natural objects to be read according to the new method, but rather are the transcribed products of that visionary reading discovered by *The Cantos*' poetic subject at Pisa; *Rock-Drill*'s documents are difficult to read ideogrammically because they have been so determinately written ideogrammically.

The entire repertoire of diverse documentary poetics in *The Cantos* can be read as operating under a loosely ideogrammic logic. Identifying the poetic structures of *Rock-Drill* as the *most* ideogrammic in Pound's epic is not to say that they represent an ideal or perfect figuration of that unique form of epistemological practice - *Rock-Drill*'s refined collection of ideograms is, of course, resistant to its own prescriptive form of reading. As a documentary collection, all of Pound's cantos imply their author's acts of appraisal and deposit. These objects, however structurally isolated or drilled down in their representation, are never fully severable from the unifying Poundian mind that selected and arranged them. In this way, the paratactic naturalism of *The Cantos*' objects is always, however subtly or resistantly, archival - what is produced is "always something else, a creation of the search itself" (Steedman 77). The problem with this incipient archival nature to Pound's ideogrammic cantos, is that this governing principle that restricts relational reading is itself immaterial: the Poundian mind, Pound's lyric subject, *The Cantos*' Odyssean polymetis, all of these spectral presences shape the poem's plenitude of meanings from the margins. Pound's insistence that the material value of his object-referents is secondary to their deduced relational processes obscures his own restrictive influence over these documentary objects. By suggesting that "the facticity of the document is not as important as the idea of the fact of the document itself *and* the emotional, intellectual, symbolic value with which we invest it" (Creet 268), Pound averts his reader's gaze from his material interventions and exclusions.

The ideogrammic collection, like the archive, encodes its objects into a restrictive organizational apparatus. With the archive, however, this internally generative semiotic network manifests physically: it exists in the legible spaces and organizational structures of the archive itself and thus affords relatively transparent access to its own predetermined relationalities. Pound's ideogrammic collection, as emphatically anarchival in its engagement with the amorous

eye/I-in-time, actively effaces and denies that influence; *The Cantos* “processes” exist beyond the strictly objective logic of the archive, while still subscribing to it. How, then, are we to understand a form of documentary epistemology that is archival but remains outside the materiality of archival space? What are Pound’s ideogrammic collections in and of themselves, as objects and spaces of gathering? Michael O’Driscoll provides a useful distinction for analyzing archival systems, writing that, “to distinguish between *citing* the archive and *siting* the archive is to distinguish between the management of ideal knowledge and the management of material texts” (288). For O’Driscoll, the materiality of the archive, its site, “neither exists prior to its discursive representations nor is entirely constructed by that discourse,” but instead, drawing from Judith Butler, only represents the “reiterative citational practice by which power it produces the effects that it names” (285). While the archive is always, “first and foremost, historical,” it is itself composed of neither actual events nor objects (291); it is at all times both a power/process (cite) and a product (site). Parsed in this way, Pound’s method becomes more legible, and through it so does our contemporary form of digital anarchival epistemology: the ideogrammic collection deploys and generates archival power without producing an archival product; it is a siteless archival cite.

With the exception perhaps of *The Pisan Cantos*, which are more identifiably archival or materially historical, Pound’s collections record and drive his epistemological system with all the generative and restrictive influence of an archive but without the archive’s rigid material articulations of that power. His paratactic sequences of “certain significant data” never afford sufficient space for that organizational principle to represent itself textually; none of Pound’s various thematic and semiotic throughlines are translatable or locatable in purely documentary terms. The countless relational significances that exist between Pound’s epic decads, his individual cantos, their stanzas, and even his discreet images are absolutely irreducible whether

from within his monumental text itself or through radial pursuits into its own bibliographical history. *The Cantos*, and thus other forms of anarchival epistemology as well, function as one of Pierre Nora's post-structuralist "lieux de memoire," which "are created by a play of memory and history, an interaction of two factors that results in their reciprocal overdetermination" (19). Presaging Jacques Derrida's notion of the "mal d'archive" (*Archive Fever*), Nora's non-sites are unsustainable in themselves and so require subjective engagement, but at the same time can only ever be partially realized or resolved by that labour. Pound's emphasis on the subject's affective engagement with the material object in order to discover luminous relationality between them mimics Nora's (and Derrida's) indefinite play between memory and history. Ideogrammic reading can be neither purely objective history nor completely dislocated from historical objects, just as ideogrammic writing is "the order of representation rather than a reflex of real events [...]" its temporality is that of the reworking of earlier material rather than that of a causality working as a line of force from the past to the present" (Frow 234). In this way, *The Cantos*' immaterial landscape of processes, essentially populated by tangible object-markers, can perform the preservative and restorative function of archival power without being bound to its physical limitations:

The lieux we speak of, then, are mixed, hybrid, mutant, bound intimately with life and death, with time and eternity; enveloped in a Mobius strip of the collective and the individual, the sacred and the profane, the immutable and the mobile. For if we accept that the most fundamental purpose of the *lieu de memoire* is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial [...] all of this in order to capture a maximum of meaning in the fewest of signs, it is also clear that *lieux de memoire*

only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications. (Frow 8)

For Nora, “memory has never known more than two forms of legitimacy: historical and literary. These have run parallel to each other but until now always separately” (24). I would argue that Pound’s ideogrammic collections presage Nora’s post-structuralist lieux, marrying together the literary and historical, the memorial and documentary. *The Cantos* operate under their self-generated epistemological system, a system that is always mobilizing its relational significances outside the bounds of its foundational object-referents. *The Cantos*’ are not both history and memory; they are at once history and memory in each instant:

Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it, it nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic - responsive to each avenue of conveyance or phenomenal screen, to every censorship or projection. History, because it is an intellectual and secular production, calls for analysis and criticism. Memory installs remembrance within the sacred; history, always prosaic, releases it again. [...] Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. (8)

Nora’s description of these *lieux* as utopian points of suspension between documentary knowledge and mnemonic understanding accurately characterizes the dual nature of Pound’s ideogram and anarchival reading:



Contrary to historical objects [...] *lieux de memoire* have no referent in reality; or, rather, they are their own referent: pure, exclusively self-referential signs. This is not to say that they are without content, physical presence, or history; it is to suggest that what makes them *lieux de memoire* is precisely that by which they escape from history. In this sense, the *lieu de memoire* is a double: a site of excess closed upon itself, concentrated in its own name, but also forever open to the full range of its possible significations. (23-24)

In the same way that Nora's *lieux de memoire* "escape from history" without sacrificing their material historicity, so too are *The Cantos*' luminous vortices closed within their particular ideogrammic objects while at the same time radically multiplying their relational significances through those more-than-material structures.

Steedman describes memory's potential space as "one of the few realms of the modern imagination where a hard-won and carefully constructed place, can return to boundless, limitless space" (83). She reflects that this potentiality leaves room for "an etymology curiously dislocated" from the bureaucratic archive, a place to interact with History less "as *stuff* [...] than as *process*, as ideation, imagining and remembering" (76). Importantly, Steedman's new etymology is not to be detached from the archive, only dislocated from it; its interaction with History is to be *less* as stuff, not without any tangible stuff at all. Pound's uniquely anarchival poetic collections afford such an alternative non-space in which to read history through memory and memory through history, to arrive at relational understanding through discreet knowledge.

While it is not until his later poetry that Pound most effectively realizes his new anarchival method in structural terms, the essentiality of both history and memory (object and

vision) was always paramount to his evolving documentary system. Though works like *GK* and *ABC* - along with *The Pisan Cantos* and *Rock-Drill* - are less ideogrammically legible given their more transparent organizational structures, all of Pound's documentary poetry and prose insists on the dual nature of his ideograms. In his strictest moments of documentary fidelity (Adams), Pound's poems are still never purely paratactic but always loosely unified or relational in their shared editor/mediator and in their intersections with *The Cantos*' greater thematic vortices. At his most relational or visionary, as in *The Pisan Cantos* and his earlier lyric poetry, Pound's poetic subjects still reach outwards for objective referents. From whichever side of this dual-structure they begin, all of Pound's documentary undertakings strive to fuse together memory and history in an aesthetic space. For both his poetry and his prose, the ideogram affords a flexible structure in which to both breathe relational, transformative meaning into material history as well as render the divine light of universal understanding into subjectively accessible form.

## CONCLUSION

Pound's new method can be fairly described as a "compendium of archival documents and textual fragments" that, together, amount to "countless gestures towards fictive and factive images" (O'Driscoll 293). Whether more fictive or factive in any one of its given textual figurations, Pound's ideogrammic system offers "a linguistic utopia in which its real-world textual referents might somehow coexist in the non-space of language and citation" (293). This new documentary epistemology provides the semiotic meaning-making power of the archive while escaping from its restrictiveness and, more importantly, its unconquerable material losses and labours. Anarchival collections like *The Cantos*, as objects themselves, are textual figurations not of pure history or pure subjectivity, but of the historical subject; they record not the relationality between historical objects and the natural world but the phenomenological

relationality between the individual subject and its understanding of itself as possessing a historical identity. While, in the first instance, the masked or obscured archival influence in Pound's cantos can be seen as insidious - that his poems inauthentically feign an ungoverned parataxis that is in fact held in union by a self-conscious mediating subject - there is an arguably higher degree of semiotic authenticity in the historical subject's ideogrammic understanding of history. Where the archive's materially constructed parameters to signification will always delimit its objects' relational processes, the anarchival ideogram is far more free to signify luminously to a multitude of observers-in-time, both in the present and in the future. While admittedly varied and particularized to each of its given subjects or readers, the ideogram more accurately represents the ubiquity of Pound's divine light of universal knowledge inherent in the material world. The archive, however, can only produce and preserve relational significance under the unnatural light of the windowless corridors and climate-controlled atmosphere of the modern archival storehouse (Creet 274).

## Conclusion

What David Ten Eyck describes as Pound's plurality of documentary poetic forms can be more accurately identified as a progressive evolution towards a more refined mode of ideogrammic transcription. While this new method finds its structural and thematic acme in *The Pisan Cantos* and *Rock-Drill*, the two final installments of *The Cantos* continue to forward this anarchic epistemological system. That Pound's "endless poem, of no known category [...] all about everything" (Cookson xxiii) continues to perform its historical polymetis for two additional decades after its great revelation reinforces the transformative nature of the anarchival collection. *Thrones de los Cantares* (XCVI-CIX) returns to a more narrativized inclusion of diverse historical source materials that all work to reinforce the circumjacent principles of good government pursued throughout the epic - principally, Alexander del Mar's *History of Monetary Systems*, the eleventh century works of St. Anselm, and the writing of English jurist Sir Edward Coke, "the clearest mind ever in England" (107/778). The fragmentary and unfinished nature of *The Cantos'* last poems - "Drafts and Fragments" (CX-CXVII) - further suggests this perpetual state of becoming characteristic of the anarchival collection. Pound's ahistorical "processes" *shall* extend forward in time as much as they extend backward, allowing for an indefinite number of future representations and realizations in documentary terms, thus producing a necessarily endless documentary poem.

Ronald Bush has further argued that "Drafts and Fragments," more than any other decad, vacillates back and forth between the two sides of Pound's structural idiom, "between the openness of a diary and the shapeliness of a distinct thematic organization, and in the political coloring of the stories he told between authoritarianism and anarchy ("Unstill" 397). He goes on to suggest that the visibility of this "internally divided" nature to cantos CX-CXVII reveals how

Pound's paratactic mode of composition, read across his prolific career, is not necessarily betrayed by his unifying presence as sole composer: Bush suggests that it would be both useful and more apt when reading Pound to entertain "the heuristic fiction that there was more than one "Ezra Pound" self-constructed or constructed [...] and that different versions of "Ezra Pound"" are legible even within the variant aspects of a single text ("Unstill" 421). This evocative reading of *The Cantos*' fractured closing lines provides an insightful response to the problem of subjective influence in Pound's ideogrammic collections: if the anarchival logic of representing history, culture, and identity imbues a transformative potential into its signifying epistemological referents, then both the luminous objects themselves as well as their subjective readers-in-time can never be reduced to a fixed state of being, and thus, "Ezra Pound" the man can impose no unifying order or presence to his recorded object-visions.

Read in Røssaak's anarchival terms, Ezra Pound's ideogrammic poetics can be seen as representing a form of documentary epistemology that discards the need for "a hegemonic nodal point" in favour of a fleeting, ad hoc multiplicity of storytellers that demands engagement in a public sphere. From his early verse through to the structural refinements of his late cantos, Pound is continually engaged with trying to aesthetically represent his interdependent object-vision duality, his anarchival epistemology. Where the rigidly objective archival sites of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries failed to adequately resolve documentary epistemology's foundational desire for "wanting things that are put together, collected, collated, named" (Steedman 81), Pound's anarchival ideograms offered a figuration of documentary history that was perpetually nameable; the ideogrammic principle of metamorphic transformation relocates the signifying historical object from the archive into the ever-evolving present. If the grammatical tense of the archive is the future perfect, "when it will have been" (Steedman 7), then the grammatical tense of the anarchival would be the present progressive, when it is in the process of being.

Christopher Carr has praised Pound's "cryselephantine poem" as offering an illuminated "signal case for thinking about the mode of existence of literary works" (477). I have demonstrated how *The Cantos*' unique documentary "mode of existence," its anarchival epistemology, provides not only an important point of origin to contemporary discourses on the post-archival digital age, but also an invigorated new lens through which to read modernism's variously allusive and historical textures. Carr argues that *The Cantos*' unavoidable hypertextuality, produced by its "attentiveness to the smallest details of [the] texts' bibliographical codes" (480), erodes "the boundary between author and reader, creating a kind of virtual democracy in which each can take an equal part" (486). Examining further how this "virtual democracy" of interpretation comes to be imbedded into modernism's other experimental aesthetic structures will be invaluable to understanding not why but how it is that modernist aesthetics are so resistant to temporal or geographical closure at the onset of post-modern and contemporary cultural studies.

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