

GORILLA LANGUAGE: POUND'S PICTOGRAPHING
TECHNIQUE IN THE PISAN CANTOS

BY

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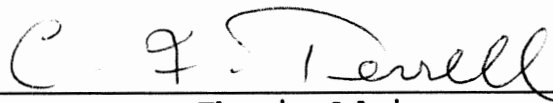
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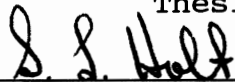
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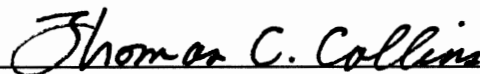
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PREFACE

The highly original poetic techniques Ezra Pound employs in his Pisan Cantos are a direct result of his serious concern and careful attempt to create a unique poetic medium, a verbum perfectum, or a gorilla language that is hard, precise, and concrete. To this end, he creates an interaction between the Chinese ideograms and the English text. Through his careful line breaks, Pound makes the English text visually mirror the spatial contour of the ideograms. Such a "pictographing" technique points to two important facts: Pound's attempt to create an ideogram-like poetic medium and his attempt to freeze time via a temporal temporality in art, a task heretofore thought impossible. In fact, Modernists, such as Stein and Williams, have all tried to slow down time, having been also influenced by the aesthetics of the modern visual arts, Cubism in particular. Pound, a Picasso of modern poetry, broke the old tradition through a series of innovation involving, line breaks, fragmentation, and juxtaposition of Chinese and English text. Pound's "gorilla language" in the Pisan Cantos truly marks a turning point in his poetic style. The poetic medium manifests itself as a culmination of his lifetime study of the Chinese ideograms as well as his active involvement in the aesthetic movement of modern visual arts.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the individuals who assisted me in this project. In particular, I wish to thank my major adviser, Dr. Guy Bailey, for his intelligent guidance, inspiration, and invaluable aid. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Smith Holt, Dean of Arts and Sciences, for his kind participation as a committee member in my project.

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NOMENCLATURE

WORKS BY POUND

ABC	<u>ABC of Reading</u>
CON	<u>Confucius</u>
GB	<u>Gaudier Brzeska: A Memoir</u>
GK	<u>Guide to Kulchur</u>
LE	<u>Literary Essays</u>
SL	<u>Selected Letters</u>
SP	<u>Selected Poems</u>

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ezra Pound's the Cantos is, no doubt, one of his most celebrated works. The work itself, a culmination of his life-time's endeavors, contains some one hundred and seventeen cantos. Although the Cantos as a whole is challenging and inviting, Pound scholars and readers often concur that the Pisan Cantos merit particular attention. Their argument, among others, is that the emotional and private voice rendering the harrowing experience of incarceration reaches them most deeply. Indeed, various scholars have devoted themselves to the Pisan Cantos; and as a result the work has been scrutinized from almost every literary perspective. Despite the bulk of this literature, however, attention has yet to focus on the rather unusual visual patterns of the English-Chinese text.

Pound's incorporation of Chinese ideograms into the English text seems rather eccentric, to say the least. Yet no one has examined the peculiarity and oddity of the visual pattern. Perhaps one reason for such neglect seems rather obvious: unusual line breaks occur throughout the Cantos, rendering the visual layout of the whole work unconventional. Thus, at first reading, the visual patterns of the Pisan Cantos, with or without Chinese ideograms, may not appear as particularly anomalous, given the donnee of the

work as a whole. After all, Pound was known to experiment with almost every verse form, ancient or modern, which he came to know.

To a more careful reader, however, Pound's odd line breaks and peculiar visual patterns call attention to themselves; in particular, the line breaks and visual patterns of the English-Chinese text strike the informed reader as intentional and purposeful. Indeed, the first impression may be an overwhelming sense of artificiality, one which often arrests the careful reader. On the one hand, the Chinese ideograms appear obtrusive to the English text. Yet, on the other hand, the English text itself seems to pictorially reflect the visual patterns of the ideogram under consideration. The second impression, therefore, is one of confusion; is this conjunction of texts, Chinese ideogram, and Western verbiage meant to be destructive or instructive?

Standing immediately next to the Chinese ideogram, the English text visually echoes, however sketchily, the overall pattern and the visual contour of the Chinese character. In short, text resonates the ideogram pictorially. It is, therefore, my contention that Pound's seemingly eccentric visual patterning of English-Chinese text in the Pisan Cantos is deliberate and purposeful. Not simply an elaboration of his much-discussed contrapuntal technique, this patterning, in effect, evinces the fact that Pound was

trying to create a new poetic medium: a gorilla language¹ that interweaves the two major languages known to mankind, ones which best represent the West and the East. His effort, I believe, was aimed at creating a unique poetic medium. Through this new medium, which is different from either English or Chinese, Pound was trying to embody the new world order that he envisioned.

This dissertation will demonstrate that Pound consciously lays out, or "pictographs," the English-Chinese text in such a specific way that it pictorially reflects the shape, shades, and strokes of the ideogram. In order to prove my argument, I realize that I must also examine various elements that play a part in this "pictographing" technique. To this end, Chapter One and Two will establish, through a review of literature, Pound's proclivity for various forms of poetic experimentation and his openness to artistic experimentation among his fellow Modernists, especially questioning his experience with the line, with concrete poetry, and with line breaks. Particularly, in Chapter Three, I will discuss Pound's poetic technique in the Pisan sequence. Chapter Four will focus on the peculiar relationship between the poetics of the Western literature and the operation of the ideograms and the ideogrammic method as a poetic technique. In this chapter, I will exclusively explore the idiosyncratic characteristics of Chinese ideogram, a poetic medium with which Pound was very

much enamored throughout his career. Chapter Five will examine the relationship between modern visual arts and modern literature; in particular, I shall investigate the confluence between modern visual arts and modern literature through a careful textual analysis of Stein's Three Lives, a novel, and Williams' "The Red Wheelbarrow," a poem. Following on this train of thought, Chapter Six will examine Pound's involvement with modern visual arts. Finally, Chapter Seven will consider the pictographing technique in a larger aesthetic context of Pound in those crucial years.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE PISAN CANTOS²

The Jewel in the Crown

According to Noel Stock's The Life of Ezra Pound (New York, 1970), in 1940 (some five years ahead of his arrest), Pound, describing his plans for his oeuvre the Cantos, wrote to his American publisher that "From [Canto] 72 on we will enter the empyrean, philosophy, Geo. Santayana. [sic] etc" (376). Exactly five years later, as he was in the midst of struggling to accomplish that philosophical enterprise, his dream was suddenly shattered. At the end of April, 1945, he was arrested by two Italian partisans (Ackroyd 85), an event that disrupted his literary plans and career.³

Then, from his detention cage in the Disciplinary Training Center near Pisa, he composed the Pisan Cantos (1948), a work which shocked his literary contemporaries. Least among the shock waves was the immediate sense that the Pisan Cantos were so dissimilar from Pound's previous Cantos, in particular those that led up to this section.⁴ To some extent, the Pisan Cantos, nonetheless, do enter into the empyrean world he spoke of. The work is pregnant with flashing moments of paradiso terrestre. However, as almost all Pound critics would acknowledge, the work bears little resemblance to any other writings Pound had done so far. To say the least, the Pisan Cantos were not what Pound had

originally intended to compose, a crucial point that deserves particular attention.

While pointing out the danger involved in guesswork about any unwritten cantos, Parbara C. Eastman perceptively contends that the different outcome would have been as follows had Pound not been arrested:

Had the paradiso-design of 1940 been realized instead, it is not inconceivable that it would have carried over the structural clarity of the History Cantos' epic sweep into the projected final volume from Canto 72 to the end. The complete absence of lyric invention from Cantos 52 to 71 is so definitive a break with the evolving pattern of the work, which to that point had consistently interwoven epic with lyric song. . . .

(416)

To objectively assess the literary significance of the Pisan Cantos, however, I too think that it is necessary to postulate, as Eastman does here, the outcome of the unwritten Cantos. Particularly, keeping in mind that Pound's initial plan for the Canto 72 and on was much different from what we now know as the Pisan Cantos, perhaps it is almost imperative to ponder what the Pisan Cantos does to the whole corpus of the Cantos. Consider, for example, the literary significance of Ezra Pound's the Cantos without the Pisan Cantos. Imagine for a moment that the Pisan Cantos had not

been a part of the Cantos, that Pound had never been arrested and detained in the Army Disciplinary Training Center, and that he had not written the Pisan Cantos at all.

Although the Cantos, in the absence of the Pisan Cantos, remain one of the most memorable works ever been written in English language, the work without the Pisan Cantos will hardly bear the same literary prominence it now holds. In their book The Modern Poetic Sequence: The Genius of Modern Poetry (New York and Oxford, 1983), M. L. Rosenthal and Sally M. Gall, for example, concur that the Pisan Cantos deserve particular attention:

The Cantos as a whole runs some 800 pages in the complete 1972 edition, and one wishes Pound had sacrificed some the pages he evidently thought necessary for didactic purposes. Yet it is always tricky to describe just which pages--much the same problem as deciding which portion of a Whitman catalogue could be left out. In any case, we can say with reasonable certainty that The Pisan Cantos LXXIV-LXXXIV (1948) is the outstanding group in the volume. . . . (204)

Indeed, as my detailed examinations in the following chapter will attest, to many Pound scholars, the Pisan Cantos (Cantos 74-84), located near the middle of some 117 cantos, operate like a heart within the corpus. The Pisan Cantos, therefore, "stabilize the whole, in preparation for

the series of almost Mosaic pronouncements of the Rock-Drill Cantos (85-95)" (Pearce 99). Furthermore, the work enlivens and charges the entire work. It is indeed the jewel in the crown. In such capacity, the Pisan Cantos, composed during one of the most difficult periods of his life, truly deserves the Bollingen Prize for poetry which Pound won in 1948.⁵

One of the most anthologized sections of the Cantos (Durant 58)⁶, this section draws multitudinous critical attention and interpretations from Pound scholars worldwide. Such diverse readings and criticism speak to the remarkable complexity of the work itself. Consequently, no single glance by one critical view will successfully wolf the totality of the Pisan Cantos.

Despite such multitudinous interpretations of the work, however, Pound scholars in general recognize certain elements in this section that render the Pisan Cantos unique and memorable.⁷ A primary aspect of the Pisan Cantos which, for example, various critics commonly observe and agree upon is the undeniable sense of disjunction, the abrupt mutation that distinguishes this section from the other Cantos. The innovation occurs in many areas: in particular, in Pound's voice and poetic technique.

Indeed, the poet's voice here in this section becomes more subjective, personal (often autobiographical), emotional, and thus more lyrical--a style that is in stark contrast

to the traditional epic mode.⁸ Ironically, critics argue that it is this anti-epic mode in the work that makes the Pisan Cantos successful. Similarly, Pound employs many extreme forms of fragmentation, much more so than in the earlier Cantos, as well as many different languages. Perhaps what is even more important is that among these varying registers, the poet "registers" himself and speaks in the time here and now.

In his informative book Reading The Cantos (New York, 1966), Noel Stock traces possible reasons why Pound insisted upon this world here and now:

His intellectual struggle for more than thirty years was to escape from the dream atmosphere of nineteenth-century poetry into the world of reality and matter from which his predecessors had turned in fear, despair, or disgust. He wanted to escape the one and embrace the other, because, burdened by an inferior metaphysics, he feared that the world of matter was, if not the whole, then the main or most important portion of reality and in danger of passing him by. His concern with facts, his mixing in politics and economics, his insistence on 'scientific' precision in writing and 'scientific' method in criticism, was because he believed or suspected that there was the real world. (75)


However, Stock also points out later in the same chapter that "within a short time the war was over, his [Pound's] worldly hopes shattered beyond repair. He was imprisoned by the Americans at Pisa" (76). Therefore, Pound "in the Pisan Cantos leaves the world of facts, history and economics, and returns, fortified now by a mature technique, to the dream world of his early years." While contending that "one of the themes of the Pisan section is decline and fall, decay and destruction, in the material world," Stock continues that "all that really matters, he [Pound] says, is the thing held in the mind"--the eternal city of Dioce based on the legend of Gassire's lute which Pound read about from Frobenius (76).

In his critical book The Poetic Achievement of Ezra Pound (Berkeley, 1979), Michael Alexander best sums up this particular aspect of the work: why does the Pisan Cantos arrest the reader despite Pound's deluded political misjudgment? :

In the Pisan Cantos . . . we see the disciple of Adams facing a charge of treason. Yet as his crankiness stands revealed for what it is, his poetry achieves an emotional freedom and force, a fusion of mythical and actual, a psychological necessity, which it had perhaps never before possessed. The voice realizes the movement of the mind so perfectly that the reader can reach a

stage when he is no longer bothered by Pound's deluded political judgement. (193)

Yet another area of interest for a diverse group, which is broad enough to include both Harold Bloom's mythological intertextuality and Daniel Pearlman's autobiographical-cum-Freudian approach, is the examination/elaboration of the poetic ritual of self-purification. Through this ritual, this group convincingly argues, the poet--often identified as the poet/prisoner Pound himself--searches for the Confucius Center

"Chung" ( [1504])⁹ lost deep within himself. In his biography The Life of Ezra Pound (New York, 1970), for example, Noel Stock points out that "in those few desperate months he [Pound] was forced to return to that point within himself where the human person meets the outside world of real things, and to speak of what he found out there" (411-12).

In a similar vein, Humphrey Carpenter in his biography A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound (New York, 1988), also reiterates the theme of regret found in the Pisan Cantos:

Given their position in his life story, and their distinct and pervading tone of regret, it is not surprising that since their first publication the Pisan Cantos have been widely regarded as an act of contrition, renunciation and expiation, a con-

fession of failure and error--particularly, of course, the errors of Fascism and anti-Semitism.

(671)

Critics, consequently, argue that the poet's pilgrimage for his lost CENTER (my emphasis) is, therefore, the central focus of the section. Without this process of purging, they point out, the poet will be unable to channel the Divine Wisdom from the eternal (heaven) to the finite (earth).

Furthermore, they regard this quest for the lost CENTER as a prerequisite for the survival of the poet, a psychological as well as a physical necessity. Rosenthal and Gall justly point out that "in the Pisan Cantos the active pursuit of memories and minute observation of nature are holds against madness--resources for maintaining equilibrium under the pressures of disaster, imprisonment, and debilitating self-doubt" (207). In fact, according to the informative correspondence-interview between Carroll F. Terrell, an eminent Pound scholar himself, and John L. Steel, commander of the Disciplinary Training Center at Pisa at the time of Pound's incarceration, writing for the poet in the cage was a life and death matter:

Writing seemed a worthwhile defense against mental deterioration, which we [the Army] certainly did not want to risk. We had almost no resources to offer, but Ez was quartered with the few officer

prisoners in the medical enclosure, and so was allowed to use a typewriter at the medical building during off-duty hours. (298)

Elaborating on this central theme of self-purification, Pound scholars suggest and employ diverse schemes as organizing principles in the Pisan Cantos. Perhaps, Helen M. Dennis' introduction to her article best represents such critical efforts:

These structures or concepts all come in triads. They can be stated briefly as follows: The Dantescan Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso, experienced as states of emotion in the D.T.C.; the Victorine cogitation, meditation and contemplation, which describe the various mental state of the poet/prisoner, the intellectual discipline with which he approaches his materials; and the endeavor to sift his subject matter into three categories, namely the transient, the recurrent, and the durable but permutable, which focuses attention on the nature of the material being reviewed rather than the manner in which the poetic mind is observing it. (273)

Contending that her scheme of Eleusinian Mysteries serves better as an organizing principle than these triads for the Pisan Cantos, Dennis, nonetheless, acknowledges how in the past "these sets of triads have been connected with

the Schifanoia Frescoes and their threefold division into the Civic world, the allegorical level, and the divine realm or empyrean" (273).¹⁰

Other critics, however, are not so much interested in finding the single-fitting organizing principle of the section. Rather, they are more interested in various elements present in the Pisan Cantos--only to identify them as major factors that make the purging, the search for the CENTER, possible for the poet/prisoner Ezra Pound.¹¹

Theme of Self-Purification

The theme of self-purification invites two different critical views. One camp sees the self-purification as a positive force, a quintessential step toward the eventual salvation of the poet. Almost all critics belong to this camp. However, others such as Michael Andre Bernstein disagrees. He interestingly claims that the Pisan Cantos are not about the self-purification that leads to the salvation of the poet. Rather, he insists that it is about poet's recognition and his consequent acceptance of failure, the rude awakening that his poetic vision, after all, failed in the end. I think both camps of critics see one and the same coin: they only emphasize the side they happened to recognize more.

Many critics do concur that the self-purification in the section is a positive force for the poet's ultimate

survival. They contend that the Pisan Cantos offer the poet an opportunity, an altar, for self-reexamination and spiritual realignment with the divine and the natural worlds. For example, Hugh Kenner, one of the foremost Pound scholars, satisfactorily contends that the significance of the Pisan Cantos lies in the poet's quest to recapture the unwobbling pivot, the CENTER:

. . . the Pisan Cantos compose a peace with himself, the great poet forcing the angry propagandist to surrender all but a few cragged redoubts. Plucked out of the world where he had been so desperately busy, the world of the typewriter pounded six hours a day, the world of ten thousand letters, some calm, some furious, of radio scripts and economic tracts, of histories condensed in frantic haste; enclosed by barbed wire in a timelessness . . . around which the great world itself seemed to have stopped, he welcomed all of himself that he had excluded for so long--ever since London--to aid in recovering what had been lost in the cage. (PE 475)

In a similar vein, George Kearns convincingly points out that the Pisan Cantos offered the poet a period of spiritual realignment for his own survival. He continues that the poet/prisoner, like the lone ant Pound himself speaks of in this section, looks back on his past from a

broken anthill, a metaphor for the destruction of Europe (i.e. Western civilization) (76). He, therefore, argues that the Pisan Cantos are "about a poet saving his sanity: they are also the instrument by which he [Pound] saved it" (45).¹²

The Pisan Cantos are about the poet saving himself from the wreckage and rebuilding a new world somewhere beyond the possibility of destruction, building it in the mind. The poet has become "a man on whom the sun has gone down" (74), and what was a mystical prophecy in Canto I--"Lose all companions"--has become reality. (150)

Likening Pound's Pisan experience to that of Odysseus' in the Hades, Lillian Feder sees the D.T.C. as the literal hell for Pound (116). Furthermore, elaborating how Pound's harrowing experience in hell echoes the traditional myth-quest pattern, Feder contends that the heroic descent into the Hades means an heroic ascent back to an empyrean realm later:

Throughout the Pisan Cantos, woven through the depiction of a real prison, which is also the visible structure of an inner hell, is the theme of love as the sole preserver and healer. If hell is the "night of the soul," the externalization of suffering beyond pain, and the projection of an image of omnipotence deep in the mind of the per-

sona, it has never quite extinguished the traces of love which memory now revitalizes as he struggles to survive. (117-18)

Insisting that the fragmented autobiographical elements in the section signify a crisis and a climax, Michael Alexander too perceptively identifies the poet as an Odyssean figure:

"Pound sees himself in the Pisan Cantos not only as an individualist Odysseus who has sacked Troy but also as an Aeneas who has survived the ruins of Troy and is planning 'to build the city of Dioce, a fusion of mythical and actual, a psychological necessity which it [Pound's poetry] had perhaps never before possessed." (193)

In a similar vein, while lamenting the fact that "the poem for many is largely an unvisited mausoleum whose contents are forbidding and unfamiliar . . . with good reasons" (165), William H. Pritchard also points out a similar Odyssean quest motif in the Pisan Cantos: "Finally, a poem in which it seems inevitable and right to think of Pound as Odysseus, the hero of a modern 'plotless' epic; in which from the earlier Cantos surveying Hell and Purgatory, we emerge in the Pisan sequence and the ones beyond to a vision of Paradise" (167).

Some critics carry the theme of self-purification a little further. They liken the poet/prisoner Pound to a

Christ figure. For example, in his interesting article "Pound's Progress: The Pisan Cantos" (Pai, 4, 1), Michael Scheuldiner asserts that Pound's harrowing experience parallels that of Christ:

The progress in the Pisan Cantos, at the personal level, is toward justification of past action. The affective reorientation that occurs at illumination provides the framework within which Pound's actions are affirmed. . . . The virtues are the dimensions of the cross that Pound adopts. The caritas, as Paul defines it in Ephesians, had been dealt with by most of the early commentators on the Bible; and breath, length, depth, and height which the caritas would reveal were spoken of as the dimensions of the cross. (80)

Continuing with the descent theme, in his celebrated book Dante and Pound: The Epic of Judgement (Maine, 1974), Wilhelm claims that "it is in the Pisan Cantos where Dante's images and characters suddenly emerged with a new and vital expressiveness helping the poet to reassess his life and re-estimate the value of everything he held dear" (133):

Dante's citizens of Hell merged with Pound himself, lending him sustenance; they were no longer mere personae waiting for adaptation. Feelings of guilt, suffering, and finally compassion suddenly showed in Pound's writing in a way that made clear

their absence in the earlier work. We may say that the Pisan Cantos, in fact, constitute a true purgation for the work, as meaningfully as does the ritual act of Dante atop Mount Purgatory. (DP 133-34)

On a slightly different tack, Ronald Bush argues that the section provides for the poet a chance to reaffirm his earlier vision, on the one hand:

The sequence [the Pisan Cantos] draws upon the rich resources of his memory to affirm the continuation of his vision of a civilized cultural tradition amidst the defeat of Mussolini's Italy and the wreckage of many of the poet's most cherished hopes. (96)

On the other hand, he perceives, somewhat myopically, but nonetheless interestingly, that Pound's affirmation is an assertion of "his essential American identity with Whitman, Sadakichi Hartmann, Richard Hovey, Trumbull Stickney, Frederick Wadsworth Loring, Bliss Carman" (97).

While pointing out the autobiographical strength of this section, Daniel D. Pearlman also emphatically recognizes the poet's reaffirmation of order in his mind after an initial struggle, particularly those ones appeared in earlier Cantos:

Paradisal motifs, intimations of ideal order, have mingled with infernal and purgatorial elements

throughout the Cantos in accordance with the general contrapuntal nature of the poem. At the same time, however, the Cantos has displayed a progressive or linear structure in passing from a predominantly infernal phase through a purgatorial section. Now, with the Pisan Cantos, the paradisaical state of consciousness achieves dominance, and all the materials of the poem are thrown into a new perspective: a breakthrough into the realm of the permanent--"the peace that passeth understanding."

(237)

Similarly, Noel Stock suggests that "in the Pisan Cantos Pound leaves the world of facts, history and economics, and returns, fortified now by a mature technique, to the dream world of his early years" (RC 76), another variation on the central theme. Stock also recognizes the importance of autobiographical elements in the section: "the Pisan Cantos would not be the success it is, if Pound had omitted all reference to fact, government, money, and the here and now" (78). Other critics take the autobiographical aspect of the Pisan sequence a little further. Harold Watts, for instance, goes so far as to argue that "the Pisan Cantos has the effect of a coda: "Pound's recollection and conflicts led to clarification of his view of the world and the writing of the Cantos" (89).

While interestingly suggesting that the central ideo-

gram in the Pisan Cantos is Pound's symbology of the numeral "four," James J. Wilhelm claims that "this realignment with the four basic elements [God (heaven), man (sun), earth (maker), and woman (moon)] is what ultimately saves the poet" because, according to him, "this ability to group things into units and to see the essential core of the whole is a vital part of the vision of the true poet" (LC 18).

On the other hand, however, Michael Andre Bernstein disagrees with all these views. In his famous book The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound and the Modern Verse Epic (New Jersey, 1980), he insists that Pound's self-purification, his search for the CENTER, only serves as an indication that he failed.

The Pisan Cantos are more tragic than we have usually recognized, not because they relate Ezra Pound's personal suffering, but because, amid the ruin of his social world, he is forced to acknowledge that for now the just kingdom exists only in the mind--dove sta memoria. . . . In the Pisan Cantos, permanence has been achieved solely in the realm of myth (Artemis, Kuanon) or art (Pound's memories of Ford, Joyce, Yeats, and all the other "companions" of his youth); the world whose renovation the poem was intended to celebrate has been surrendered to those who "conquer with armies / and whose only right is their power (LXXVI:463)"

(119).

In a similar vein, William M. Chace points out that the Pisan Cantos are a record of the eventual outcome of world events:

. . . with Mussolini's death, with the disappearance of Social Credit as a monetary possibility for any great number of people, and with the post-war splintering of the avant-garde Pound had led, his [Pound's] own world came to an end. . . . He thus became not so much a creator as one who would salvage from the rubble that which was largely lost, not so much a poet as a stunned observer. He at last fully entered a world he had for years been building, a world at once lyrical, decomposed, and solipsistic. (105)

In essence, Harold Bloom too belongs to this camp. While examining the relationship between Whitman and Pound that appears in the Pisan Cantos, he points out that Pound failed to cut his own branch in poetry, that he did little for America, and that he is no Whitman: "I am aware that I am in apparent defiance of the proud Poundian dictum: **Make It New**. Whitman made it new in one way, and Browning in another, but Pound's strength was elsewhere" (2).

Furthermore, Bloom's jingoistic and therefore myopic reaction (in this day and age of New World Order) against the expatriate patriot Pound goes so far as to totally

discredit Pound's contribution to American literature. His insistence upon the American nationalism sounds as in fact another form of Fascism of which Pound is often justifiably accused:

Pound was half right about Whitman [who is mentioned in the Pisan Cantos 82-83 twice]; Whitman does teach us his country in his country, but his form and his content are not so split as Pound says, and his fundamental meaning resides in nuance, beautifully shaped in figurative language. Pound's faults are not superficial, and absolutely nothing about our country in this century can be learned from him. He conveys an image only of himself, and the only way to enjoy him is not to seek a fundamental meaning that is not there, but to take his drafts and fragments one by one, shattered crystals, but crystalline nevertheless. He had brought the great ball of crystal, of poetic tradition, but it proved too heavy for him to lift. (8)

However, Bloom's jingoistic criticism against Pound and his poetry is polite and mild compared with a critic published (1950) by the Saturday Review. Mr. Saturday, an anonymous name given to the journalist [Robert Hillyer]¹³ from the review, claims, among other accusations, that Pound's Pisan Cantos did not deserve the Bollingen prize for

poetry, that "there are no standards of criticism of poetry" (22), that the judges were inconsistent (31), that "Poetry does not exist in a vacuum" (20), that "it [poetry] is answerable as everything else in life is answerable," that the content of the poem is offensive to the majority of the society (19), and that the Pisan Cantos is a poem . . . written in a private pig Latin, stuffed with pedantic tags in four or five languages, tainted with fascist propaganda, staled with homilies on Major Douglas's Social Credit and fouled up from beginning to end with the kind of infantile nose-thumbing at the United States. . ." (22).

Here, to say the least, the tone of the reviewer reminds the reader of the tremendous hostility and controversy that once, if not still, associated with Pound's Bollingen prize around 1950's.¹⁴ For the work itself, the reviewer has no sympathy whatsoever:

Look at it. It's pedantic to the point of incoherence. It's a pedant's pie, a lexicographer's salad, a Ph. D.'s delight of quotations and tags in Greek, Latin, French, Chinese and occasionally English with a wastebasket full of torn-up notebooks, old newspaper Clippings and unidentified snapshots stirred in. No one who wasn't with Pound in the United States Army Disciplinary Training Center . . . could possibly guess . . . that "God's messenger Whitehead" was not a Harvard

philosopher but a Negro turn-key. . . . (4)

This criticism on the Pisan Cantos, assuredly one of the most blunt and most damning and severest of its kind, sums up the reaction of the majority of the American readership that dismisses, ignores, and accuses Pound as a Fascist expatriate. Such readership, in fact, consists of rather big names in the literary world, such as Bloom himself and Malcolm Cowley, to name a few. For Cowley, for example, the inaccessibility of Pound's work in general and the Cantos in particular demonstrates how Pound wanted to escape from the maddening crowd:

From his early ballads to Ripostes, to Lustra, to Mauberley, his [Pound's] poetic career might be explained, not as a search for something, but rather as a frantic effort to escape. I pictured him as a red fox pursued by the pack of his admirers; he led them through brambles and into marshes. . . . At present, in the Cantos, he had fled into high and rocky ground where the scent was lost and the hounds would cut their feet if they tried to follow. . . . Then, with his weakness for defying the crowd, for finding crazily simple explanations and for holding eccentric opinions, to what new corner would the fox escape? (124)

Finally, there exists yet a third group of critics whose critical view stands neutral: they neither agree or

disagree with the fact whether the self-purification in the Pisan Cantos is positive or negative. Usually critics in this camp are more interested in finding one binding organizing principle of the work (more often than not a concept or a philosophy) than they are in the controversy.

In his informative article "The Pisan Cantos: Making Cosmos in the Wreckage of Europe," for example, A. D. Moody confirms that "the Pisan Cantos are the great test or proof of Pound's effort to make Cosmos [etymologically, the right ordering of things]" (136). Moody goes on to say that "what may at first seem a shamble is in fact a process of making Cosmos" (137).

Arguing that to observe the presence of "metonymy or discontinuity, or a striking absence of self in the Cantos is only half-right," Moody claims, after all, "the whole work coheres, a progress beyond metonymy to the discovery of necessary natural relations and essential identity: 'man, earth: two halves of the tally--when one has learnt one's place in the green world'" :

And this perception of identity gives rise to a new conception of the self. The function of the discontinuities has been to break down conventional perceptions and received ideas, such as that Man is the master of nature. It is a deliberate rejection of the Western idea of the supremacy of the "rational soul," and of all its works. But

this rejection is on behalf of a reconstruction of the world and the self upon the basis of the one life that is in all things. That is the positive and active Subject of the Cantos, and what makes Cosmos in them. (146)

The list of critics goes on. However, as I have so far illustrated, the opinions of critics vary, generally swinging from a total rejection of Pound to a total welcome. Their focus largely depends on what they have in their mind, not what is truly out there in Pound's Pisan Cantos. It seems that critics see only what they expect to see or what they want to see. Indeed, "we are what we know" and what we know depends on what we already have in our brain--the conditioning of our ontological circumstances such as racial, ethnic, national, cultural, geographical, educational, economical, social, sexual, situations that environ us (Burke 11). Having thus briefly examined the general reaction of the critics to the controversial Pisan Cantos, I now move on to stylistic consideration of the sequence.

Notes

1. I use the term "Gorilla language" to exclusively suggest a poetic medium Pound creates in the Pisan Cantos, a language that is primitive, powerful, concrete, and immediate--a language that has yet to suffer T. S. Eliot's "dissociation of sensibility." Of course, I am, too, well aware that Pound himself dubbed the cage of the D. T. C. as "the Gorilla cage" :

The night before his arrival at the camp, acetylene torches used to reinforce a cage gave off a blue light that lit up the sky. There was a row of such cages, ten to the row, each of them reserved for a man about to be executed. His was the tenth cage of the ten, at the extreme end of the column, a specially constructed, grilled "security cage," heavy duty air strip welded over galvanized mesh. Pound called his cell the "gabbia," gorilla cage. Like the others, it measured six feet by six and a half. A tar paper roof provided little shelter from sun or rain. By night a special reflector poured glaring light onto his cage alone. He slept on the cold cement floor. He was fed meager rations once a day. His toilet was a tin can. He was the only civilian prisoner in camp. . . .
(Heymann 160-61)

2. In his book Pound's Cantos (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), Peter Making offers an interesting overview on the general criticism of the Cantos (310-16). I find it so informative and interesting that here I offer a brief summary:

(1) 1917-1945

An inadequate period of criticism: Eliot in general maintained a polite silence on the Cantos, with a few exceptional praises (on verse technique). Later, he criticized the theology manifest in 'Hell Cantos' in 1934. Joyce praised (nothing specific, however) and in private parodied the Cantos. Yeats in 1928 wrote "his version of Pound's explanation of the structure" (310). Wyndham Lewis, in Time and Western Man (1927) accused Pound of being a man without an independent sensibility, but with a remarkable faculty for vicarious emotions. He argued that Pound, a believer of Golden Ages, strove for modernity through the "unconvincing voice of the tough guy, the 'strong silent man'" (311). Although critical comments from Eliot, Joyce, Yeats and Lewis helped

the general reader toil through the Cantos (since the Cantos' Guides were yet to be written), their comments consisted of vague praise plus specific and brilliant attacks.

Minor critics echoed Yeats and the others, on the theme of empty brilliance as well as the lack of major form. For example, in 1932 F. R. Leavis found that the Cantos' technique gave no values to the allusive materials they worked with: the Cantos was regarded as a little more than a game. Yvor Winters (1937, 1943) found the Cantos' method anti-rational: there was no framework of theme, but only a principle of 'unity of mood, carefully established and varied.' R. P. Blackmur added his own arguments about obscurity (particularly, the presentations of anecdotes).

Cleanth Brooks published his Modern Poetry and the Tradition "without any discussion at all of Ezra Pound" (312).

In general, poets, such as Glenway Westcott (1925), Basil Bunting (1931), Marianne Moore (1934), George Barker (1935), Edwin Muir (1937, 1940), Louis Zukofsky (1931: Dantescan relations between moral values and structure in the Cantos), and William Carlos Williams (1931, 1935) contributed to the criticism of the Cantos.

2) 1946-1960

In 1949, Pound was awarded for the Pisan Cantos the Bollingen Prize for Poetry (by the judges such as Eliot, Lowell, Auden etc.). John Berryman, in the same year, analyzed the first three Cantos and showed how they precursored the form and materials of the whole work. Eliot wrote again in 1946 about the Pisan Cantos: why it was a failure and why it had "no real religious comprehension" (1950). In 1973, he found a new Gospel for Catholicism in them, however. Tom Gun destroyed Thrones but in 1969 disallowed his review to be reprinted. In 1969, Charles Tomlinson reacted against such a damning review. Then the Pound Newsletter (1954-5) appeared edited by John H. Edwards. Lewis Leary in 1954 assembled useful essays. Earl Miner's 1958 book on Japanese-English poetic influence and on image-juxtaposition in Cantos appeared. In 1957, David W. Evans "brought out finely the movement of the personal situations hinted at in the Pisan Cantos" (313).

Hugh Kenner's monumental work The Poetry of Ezra Pound (1950) provided the backbone of Pound scholarship. Instigations, Gaudier Brzeska, Guide

to Kulchur and ABC of Reading were published although the Letters and Literary Essays were not. "Kenner justified the Cantos' structure by justifying Pound's ideogram theory, and justified that in turn partly by tracing, over the centuries, the rise and fall of the sense that the poet's job was to present 'substantial form' in the world outside him, not merely to arrange 'essence', as mind addressing mental entity" (313). He further showed how Pound made it new the old concepts of Aristotle and Wordsworth, fit to the age of Eisenstein, Einstein, and Joyce (314). "Kenner paid a good deal of attention to placing Pound within particular culture-streams, but without falling into the cultural determinism that swamps the author in question under a mass of trivia, each alleged to be a factor determining his action, and each (apparently) equally significant" (314).

In 1957, J. H. Edwards and W. W. Vasse edited and published Annotated Index to the Cantos of Ezra Pound. The journal Agenda (1958 onwards) carried articles and criticisms on Pound. Writers, such as Robert Creeley, Charles Olson, and Allen Ginsberg, helped renew Pound criticism.

3) 1961-1970

George Dekker's Sailing after Knowledge appeared in 1963. In 1970, Noel Stock published his important Pound biography Life. "The book of the decade was Donald Davie's Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor in 1965 (315)." The book "showed the weakness of Enlightenment elements, tending towards abstraction, in the Cantos; but finely demonstrated the radical difference between ego/nature relations in Yeats and in the Pisan Cantos, with Coleridge's and Ruskin's notebooks and Keats's letters as the true predecessors of the latter" (315). In 1969, Daniel Pearlman wrote Barb of Time which argues that "the Cantos set up a duality of mechanical time and of escape from that into a mystical timelessness" (315). Walter Baumann in 1970 demonstrated how "two Cantos (IV and LXXXII) branched out into the meanings of the whole poem" (315). Donald Gallup produced an exemplary Bibliography of Ezra Pound in 1963.

4) 1971-1983

Kenner produced another monumental work The Pound Era (1971):

It extended understanding of elements in the traditions that had led to Pound (such as James's), and scientific parallels to Pound's concepts (such as Buckminster Fuller). It watched 'ideograms' of typically Poundian perceived detail grow through his prose and verse, and showed how Pound's fundamental structural insight repeatedly triumphed over his local ignorance, It described the development and dispersal of the energy-centre constituted by Pound, Eliot, Joyce, Lewis and Williams. And it held its encyclopedic information together with a recurrent theme, which was about the precedence of immaterial shapes over material constituents, in art, physics, biology, phonology and myth. Like the engineer, the despised artist created such shapes, alleged to be useless in their immediate context, but organizing the human ecology's future. (315)

Donald Davie's Pound (1975) showed conservative aspect in Pound. He further read "Cantos meters to show unperceived ways in which Pound developed verse tradition" (316). Massimo Bacigalupo published in 1980 The Formed Trace: The Later Poetry of Ezra Pound. Carroll F. Terrell, whose dedicated efforts since 1972 as editor of Paideuma, culminated in his two volumes of Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound. "It clarifies the poem passage by passage, adducing comment, fact and cross-reference pragmatically, according to the requirements of each case rather than of a lexical rigidity" (316). Of course, as such they are indispensable. Also, many important articles by Wilhelm (1977), Hesse (1975), and Fender (1977) were appeared as well as important books such as Makin's Provence and Pound (1978), McDougal's Ezra Pound and the Troubadour Tradition (1972), and Sieburth's Instigations (1978). "Essays such as Mottram's on Pound and Merleau-Ponty consider fundamental questions of outlook" (316). As Peter Makin mentions, Pound scholarship, one may safely say, has now reached at its peak.

3. In his informative book The Formed Trace: The Latter Poetry of Ezra Pound (New York, 1980), Massimo Bacigalupo interestingly suggests that the anecdote between Lao-tzu and the custom officer offers a parallel situation to Pound's arrest in D. T. C. But he fails to recognize in the analogy that in the former there was no rivetting personal grievance which was demanded upon the person. The analogy that Tao owes his existence to the custom officer and Pound owes his to only the Pisan Cantos grossly ignores other achievements of Pound (1-4) and limits greatly the power of Lao-tzu's work.

4. Some authors particularly point to the disjunction between Cantos 72 and 73 which immediately proceed the writing of the Pisan Cantos, essentially Cantos 74-84. Indeed, these two Cantos are often excluded, at the request of the poet and later his family, from the general corpus now known as Ezra Pound's the Cantos. For more particular information about these missing Cantos, see Barbara C. Eastman's article "The Gap in the Cantos: 72 and 73" (Paideuma 8-3 [Winter 1979]: 415-27). In his book Reading the Cantos: The Study of Meaning in Ezra Pound (New York, 1966), Noel Stock traces the historical development that led up to the Pisan Cantos:

IN AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER [sic] to a friend more than fifty years ago, Ezra Pound included on a separate sheet, dated 'Saturday', the words, 'To build a dream over the world'. We have here the germ of the Pisan Cantos. . . . There is, first of all, talk in his correspondence of the time, of reviving old pagan customs, of keeping a lamp before a shrine. Complementary attitudes may be discerned in the published work, poetry and prose, right through until 1920. In cantos 4 and 5, published in 1919 and 1921, he mentions Ecbatan, 'City of patterned streets', where the god descended on Danae in a golden shower. In 1920 or 1921 Pound and the friend of the early letter together visited Brancusi's studio in Paris and watched the sculptor at work on column. These facts, ideas and symbols--the dream, the shrine, the column, the 'City of patterned streets'--began to merge and take new shape in the poet's mind. By 1938 he is writing to the same friend that 'after twenty years waiting' Brancusi is now building the temple in India, and that the column 'of which you saw the small start' is now set up at Jargu in Rumania. Two years later he inserted in his own hand in a copy of Cantos LII-LXXI, near the date 11 February 1940, the words:

To build up the city of Dioce
(Tan Wu Tsze)

Whose terraces are the colour of stars

Finally, in the Pisan Cantos, it became

To build the city of Dioce whose terraces are
the colour of
stars.

But it is not just the single line we see developing, it is the whole section. The Pisan Cantos were made from the dreams that remained after his world

had been destroyed in the Second World War. . . .
(72-73)

5. Lionel Kelly details Pound's life and his living condition at the time of his composition of the Pisan Cantos:

The composition of the Pisan Cantos is a remarkable history: the longest sequence of the Cantos composed in the shortest time--a matter of a few months--in the most adverse circumstances. Without access to his own or other libraries, the dynamics of creation are here crucially dependent upon memory, and in particular, the memories of personal history; the poet, his history, his friendships, become--not exclusively but significantly--the subject of his poem. (119)

6. Alan Durant. Ezra Pound, Identity in Crisis. Sussex: Harvester, 1981.

7. Myth criticism of the Pisan Cantos and the Cantos in general abounds. This particular critical view point will be discussed in much more detail later in this chapter.

8. Lionel Kelly in fact contends that "it is a commonplace, but nonetheless important, that it is precisely this sense of the poet as a presence in the poem that gives the Pisan Cantos their particular appeal, makes them accessible to readers for whom many of the other cantos are too remote" (126). It is, he continues, "the centrality of 'personal history' that is a significant index to the success of the Pisan Cantos" (132).

9. When I quote a Chinese ideogram throughout this dissertation, I use the method of citation after Carroll Terrel's A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound (Vol. II [p.777-791]): i.e. Matthew numbers and the standard Wade-Giles transliteration.

10. On this issue, refer to Kay Davis' engaging accounts in Fugue and Fresco: Structures in Pound's Cantos (Maine, 1984).

11. Although the following lists may not necessarily exhaust all the available criticisms on the Pisan Cantos, they fairly well represent, nonetheless, major views across the section about the work.

12. All quotations from the Cantos will be cited in number without any prefix as done here. For instance, "(76)" means the Canto 76.

13. C. David Heymann Ezra Pound: The Last Rower (New York, 1976, p. 220).

14. According to C. David Heymann's account in Ezra Pound: The Last Rower, the members of the board for the "Bubble-Gum Award" (221), to use Pound's own word, were Conrad Aiken, W. H. Auden, Louise Bogan, Katherine Anne Porter, Karl Shapiro, Allen Tate, Willard Thorp, Robert Penn Warren, Theodore Spencer, and Leonie Adams.

CHAPTER III

CRITICISMS ON THE STYLE OF THE PISAN CANTOS

It will be a self-adulation, a vanity (to use Pound's dictum), to entertain myself with the notion that I can cover all or do any meaningful stylistic analysis of the Pisan Cantos in a single chapter. Such an endeavor will probably require volumes of books. I shall, however, make an effort to survey major criticism and comments written on Pound's poetic technique in the Pisan Cantos. Through this endeavor, limited though it may be, I hope to arrive at what Hugh Kenner aptly calls "a nodal point" in Pound's poetic technique, a point of understanding "at which the diversely collected rays meet and are brought under simultaneous control" (P 14).¹ As my review of criticism illustrates, one critical view on Pound's style may well be applicable to both the Cantos in general and the Pisan Cantos in particular.

Despite its literary fame and frequent anthologizing, however, the Pisan Cantos, as far as the analysis of its poetic technique is concerned, has yet to receive a thorough critical examination. Not a single book has been written on the subject.² The following critical opinions I quote appear largely in a chapter of a book, in an article, or in a paragraph of a chapter often as passing comments on the Pisan Cantos. The time may be ripe, if not urgent or too

late, for someone to write a book-length examination on Pound's poetic technique, especially in his Pisan Cantos.

As far as Pound's poetic technique in the sequence is concerned, three different types of major criticism are available. One camp discredits Pound's use of fragmentation, foreign idioms, persistent juxtapositions (the "ideogrammic method"), and above all the personal, autobiographical references, abundant in the work, as a failure of his poetic artistry. On the contrary, however, another camp of critics recognizes these devices and techniques as the quintessential strength of the sequence, a genuine inventiveness on the part of the poet.

Often, therefore, a controversy thrives on the much-debated contention whether and how the Cantos as a whole cohere: does it have one over-arching, binding, organizing principle? If it does, they further argue what role does the Pisan Cantos play in the grand scheme? Almost always critics of the first camp deny the presence of any such governing principle in the Cantos. Similarly, ones that belong to the latter camp usually recognize and concur that indeed the Cantos exhibits over-arching, binding principles. They believe that the work as a whole coheres. Of course, to them, the Pisan Cantos plays a vital role in the overall scheme of the Cantos.

Yet a third group holds a neutral stance. Although they show little interest in the controversy, critics of

this camp often preoccupy themselves in finding an all-encompassing GUT (Grand Unifying Theory as in modern physics), a binding principle or concepts such as the "ideogrammic method," "concrete poetry," "lyricism," "highest form of free verse," "scientific objectivity," and "the influence from Japanese Noh drama," to name only a few. Using these concepts, they attempt to explain the overall scheme of the Cantos as well as Pound's intricate and at times rather intriguing poetic techniques of the Pisan Cantos. I will discuss each binding concept in detail since all of them, in one way or another, contribute to the stylistic examination of the work.

Perhaps, Harold Bloom's view on the poetic technique of the Pisan Cantos would best represent the criticism of the first camp. In his "Editor's Note" to his book Ezra Pound (Modern Critical Reviews, New York, 1987), Harold Bloom disagrees with those critics who find Pound's poetic technique in the sequence an artistic breakthrough. While "centering upon Pound's relation to Walt Whitman, particularly as manifested in the Pisan Cantos," Bloom curtly dismisses Pound because "the Cantos contain material that is not humanly acceptable" to him (1).

He complains that "Pound did not **Make It New**" ; that "the Pound phenomenon seems now only another continuity in the long history of Romanticism" ; that "he almost never manages to achieve an ellipsis of further troping by his own

inventiveness at metaphor" ; that despite Pound's poem on Whitman "A Pact," "there was a failure in commerce between Whitman and Pound" ; indeed that "Pound was half right about Whitman," that "Whitman does teach us his country in his country, but his [Whitman's] form and his [Whitman's] content are not so split as Pound says." As final censure, Bloom gripes that "absolutely nothing about our country in this century can be learned from him [Pound]" ; "he conveys an image only of himself." So, finally, "the only way to enjoy him is not to seek a fundamental meaning that is not there, but to take his drafts and fragments one by one . . ." (1-8).

More specifically, Bloom condemns Pound's style, particularly his technique of fragmented juxtapositions or the ideogrammic method (i.e. collage or imagistic montage), as being "dubious." According to Bloom, these collages are mere "baroque elaborations of the anterior metaphors" (2). Furthermore, he complains that "the long poem [the Cantos] is marred throughout by Pound's relative failure to transume or transcend his precursors'" :

Their ancestral voices abound, and indeed become more rather than less evident as the sequence continues. Nor is this invariably a controlled allusiveness. Collage, which is handled as metaphor by Mariane Moore and by the Eliot of The Waste Land is fairly problematical, yet nowhere

near so dubious as it is in the Cantos. Confronted by a past poetic wealth in figuration, Pound tends to resort to baroque elaborations of the anterior metaphors. What he almost never manages is to achieve an ellipsis of further troping by his own inventiveness at metaphor. (2)

Interesting as his comments are, Bloom's quick dismissal of Pound hardly does Pound any justice here. In particular, his speedy conclusion--that "absolutely nothing about our country in this century can be learned from him"--bothers me a great deal, not because Bloom is wrong but because he seems to de-emphasize Pound's works over Pound the person. Despite Bloom's initial vow--that the focus of his "Editor's Note" is not on Pound's politics--it seems to me that his overall commentaries center not necessarily upon Pound's poetry but rather upon his person, his politics, and his ontological circumstances.

I do agree that Pound is not always easy to grasp and at times he may as well sound self-contradictory. In fact, I am not the first one to admit that reading Pound's works is doubly demanding on the part of the reader, and I too at times feel that maybe Pound is "beyond" me. But, as Kenner convincingly argues in his seminal book The Poetry of Ezra Pound (Nebraska, 1951), what is important in Pound "is not where the components came from but how they go together" (P 14):

The components of Pound's poetic world--Homer, Cavalcanti, Dante; Confucius; Jefferson and the Adamses; distributive economics and the corporate states of thirties; Flaubert and Chinese linguistics--appear, it is true, in mere listening, haphazard and heterogenous to an unsupportable degree. The same, for that matter, could be said of the shoal, the poisoned chalice, the trumpet-tongued angels, and the naked babe of one of Macbeth's speeches.

Although I agree that Pound was an American at heart, I am not sure if he himself wanted to be considered only as a great American poet. Such a title, however flattering it may be to some, would have been too parochial to stomach for a man of his lung: indeed, at one point, Pound is alleged to disparage the regionalism in William Carlos Williams, saying that "he lives in a hole in America." The argument that Pound had done nothing for America speaks for itself; yet, on the contrary, one must focus on the larger picture, on Pound's prophetic, futuristic, one-world-community vision, an insight that is in much demand in today's world. In fact, Timothy Materer's fine article (Pai, 18, 1989) attests to Pound's "well known belief in internationalism in the arts" : as early as 1915, Pound warned about the danger in American jingoism:

It is true that America is largely populated by

people who care nothing for civilization, who know little of civilization, who have neither given nor received gifts to or understand America without realizing these isolated, desert, derelict communities which exist throughout all the United States, where most of the inhabitants neither speak nor understand English, to Soap Gulch and Ketchum in "The Rockies", [sic] and through the flat mud-colored reaches of the sallow and middle west. (207)³

Pound always believed that the world was one community and repeatedly asserted that the Cantos is indeed "a tale of the tribe" (GK 194), a term for which he credits Rudyard Kipling. His prophetic vision, in fact, fits the New World Order we frequently and rather belatedly speak of now at the onset of twenty-first century. In her article "The End of The Cantos," Eva Hesse justly admits that "The Cantos as a whole are conceived as a poem written from outside of Western civilization, their point of departure being Pound's break with narrow Western thinking and their goal a cultural renewal" (my emphasis 25).

Similarly, in his book A Sinking Island: The Modern English Writers (London, 1988), Hugh Kenner redefines the boundary of the so-called traditional English Literature:

Walt Whitman was a real poet only after 1868, when William Michael Rossetti [an Englishman] hailed

his accord with Pre-Raphaelite revolutionary sentiment, and Americans felt duly flattered. This is no longer true. There is now a literature written out of English dictionaries that England either can't claim or doesn't know it wants to. English by about 1930 had ceased to be simply the language they speak in England. It had been split four ways. It was (1) the language of International Modernism, having displaced French in that role. And it was (2) the literary language of Ireland, and (3) of America, and yes, (4) of England, countries which International Modernism bids us think of as the Three Provinces. (3-4)

In fact, Kenner goes as far as to justly argue that "Ulysses (1922), and its companions, The Waste Land and the early Cantos, helped establish the potential independence of literary 'English' from any nation" (4).

Finally, Bloom's insistence that Pound should have done something for his own nation is an old, fast-disappearing paradigm like the one that fooled millions of young poppies throughout the human history: "Dulce et decorum est pro patria morti." Such a paradigm splinters humanity, an unfit philosophy that jars against the teachings of Confucius Pound.⁴

In his book The Continuity of American Poetry (Princeton, 1961), Roy Harvey Pearce offers a far more extensive

view about the relationship between Whitman and Pound (84-101). Pearce claims that "By 1934 . . . Pound could accept Whitman by splitting his meaning off from his manner" (84). Among others, Pearce bases his argument on Pound's own statements in his A B C of Reading, a crucial document Bloom ignores:

Whitman's faults are superficial, he does convey an image of his time, he has written *histoire morale*, as Montaigne wrote the history of his epoch. You can learn more of 19th-century America from Whitman than from any of the writers who either refrained from perceiving, or limited their record to what they had been taught to consider suitable literary expression. The only way to enjoy Whitman thoroughly is to concentrate on his fundamental meaning. (ABC 192)

Furthermore, not only does Pearce find many Whitmanesque technique and allusions in Pound's Canto 82 but he also discovers a complete reunion between the two American poets, a crucial fact Bloom refuses to see: "So the poet, in what he says have been his purgatorial years, makes the fullest (some would say, most arrogant) truce with Whitman, one of identification" (88). Pearce, in fact, explains their reunion on the ground that Pound firmly established Americanness in his epic:

Declaring that Whitman failed in everything except

his aspirations, Pound would begin again and make a poem, a modern epic, which does what Whitman's really could not do. He would, as he has repeatedly insisted, write the kind of poem which would make of his reader a whole man, absolutely at home in his world. (88)

Unlike the critics of the first camp, however, the majority of Pound critics agree that Pound's technique in the Pisan Cantos is a sign of poet's genius and his inventiveness, the cutting of a new branch. For example, Reed Way Dasenbrock offers a different view than that of Bloom. Unlike Bloom, who dismisses Pound's ideogrammic technique as a "dubious collage," Dasenbrock sees Pound's use of fragmentations as his strength.

In his informative book The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound & Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting (Baltimore and London, 1985), Dasenbrock convincingly argues that it is none other than Pound's new acceptance of fragmentation as his poetic technique that allows Pound to break new poetic ground in the Pisan Cantos:

Pound's formal imperative to order particulars was linked to his Confucian politics of order; in Canto 74, Pound comes to accept a new measure of disorder. He comes to accept that the city and paradise and many other ideals he tried to realize exist only in fragments and perhaps will always

exist only in fragments. . . . To read these cantos adequately we as readers need in turn to accept Pound's difficult acceptance of fragmentation, which is the heart of the Pisan sequence. How does one construct something upon which to rejoice when all one has is excellent sausage and the smell of mint? (218)

David Perkins also sees Pound's poetic techniques in the Pisan Cantos as a stylistic breakthrough; in particular, he regards Pound's harmonious marriage of fragmentations and autobiographical materials as a rare poetic achievement, an artistry nobody has achieved before Pound. In his book A History of Modern Poetry: Modernism and After (Cambridge and London, 1987), Perkins convincingly asserts that all the stylistic techniques Pound employs in the Pisan Cantos help the poet to distance his voice, especially because the materials Pound had to work with were all too personal:

Because he was writing with a personal and autobiographical dimension, Pound emphasized elements of style that would put even his most intensely personal feelings at a distance. Unlike many poets since who also worked with personal materials, he was not striving to enhance our impressions of intimacy and sincerity by diminishing our impression of artistry. On the contrary, his thoughts,

memories, and immediate sufferings were to be placed in a context and handled in a way that would give them the hardness and objectivity of art. (236)

Furthermore, in line with Kenner, who at one point classifies the Pisan Cantos as a "Stasis: Contemporary crisis in guise of personal lyric / or Remembered co-presence" (P 315), Perkins, too, perceptively argues that the Pisan Cantos should "be read both as ideogram and as interior monologue (237):

Yet since this could also be said of some earlier Cantos, The Pisan Cantos are so much different not simply because they unite the two modes, but because in them the ideograms have an imaginative splendor, the characterization of the persona an emotional appeal beyond anything Pound elsewhere achieve (237).

Probably, one of the best accounts on Pound's poetic technique in general and that of the Pisan Cantos in particular is the one Max Nanny offers in his excellent book Ezra Pound: Poetics for an Electric Age (1973). According to Nanny, the age demanded from Pound a new poetic technique:

Pound thought that the new electric technology and the environment it was creating called for a radical rearrangement of modern man's psychic ration, of the ground rules of society and its

social organizations; a rearrangement that would not only deeply affect economics and politics but modern thought and art, too. (19)

And Pound came up with the answer: the ideogrammic method. In a nutshell, "the ideogrammic method . . . was conceived to replace the syllogistic line of logical thought by a kind of verbal 'circuit' since this method allows an instant and simultaneous presentation of a whole configuration of 'luminous facts'" (21). Pound knew that "the thing that matters in art is a sort of energy, something more or less like electricity . . . a force of transfusing, welding, and unifying" (LE 49). In my opinion, Nanny's seminal approach to Pound's poetic technique best explains the style of the Pisan Cantos as well as the Cantos. In later chapters, I shall further discuss how indeed Nanny's suggestion works in the analysis of Pound's poetic technique in the Pisan Cantos.

As I have already pointed out in the opening of this chapter, yet a third group of critics offers another view on Pound's poetic technique in the Pisan Cantos. They try to explain Pound's poetic technique in the sequence through various concepts and ideas, such as "the strong personal voice," "lyricism," "musical lucidity," "free verse," "ideogrammic method," "scientific objectivity," "concrete poetry," "the principle of obscurity," and "the Noh influences," etc. Very much in line with those critics who find

Pound's poetic technique in the sequence unique, they, too, attempt to find one governing technique that will explain not only the Pisan Cantos but also the Cantos as a whole.

The Presence of the Unwobbling Personal Voice

Some critics argue that what makes the Pisan Cantos memorable is the strong presence of the authorial voice. For example, in his article "Personal History in the Cantos (Orono, Maine 1985), Lionel Kelly affirms that the power of the Pisan Cantos results directly from "the controlling voice of the poet located firmly in the present of the poem" (131). He therefore contends that the poet throughout the sequence holds his CENTER [my emphasis] despite his condition in the D.T.C. :

What is remarkable about this canto is that within the affectionate recall of his friends there is relatively little sense of anxiety about his present condition, there in the Disciplinary Training Center at Pisa: indeed, his presentation of himself in the act of composition is remarkably buoyant, though not without a controlled quality of irony: so that even the presentation of aging and loss comes largely as an objective lament. (132)

Pound refuses to use any persona or voice, an option which he could have easily chosen, as he had used it so often in his earlier "persona" poems. The speaker of the

poem is the prisoner/Pound, a weathering old poet himself. As C. David Heymann notes, throughout the sequence, Pound retains his sense of reality: "Contrasted to his responding senses and the small natural phenomena of ants and wasps is the jarring drama of the stockade, re-created in these Cantos in startlingly realistic terms" (166).

Of course, had Pound employed a persona, it would simply have distanced the much-needed immediacy of the personal emotion Pound imparts. By using the strong authoritative voice throughout the sequence, however, Pound maximizes the impact and the directness of emotion he wants to render. In his The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound and the Modern Verse Epic (New Jersey, 1980), Michael Andre Bernstein also recognizes a strong authorial presence in the Pisan sequence.

For example, Bernstein justly states that in the sequence Pound avoids "alter-narrators" :

Within the poem [the Pisan sequence] . . . what has happened is that the author has found a new relationship to the objects of his admiration, has found a new relationship to the objects of his admiration, has found a technique that allows for a full self-representation in the role of the lover who gives rather than borrows names. The much-admired new note of penitence, the thematic confessions of error, result, paradoxically, in a

far more assertive poetic stance, a far stronger demonstration of independent authorial existence. (179)

According to Bernstein, therefore, another strength of the sequence is that "In The Pisan Cantos, the poem openly records the experiences of an individual's unique sensibility--it no longer pretends to function as a spokesman for values acknowledged as part of the entire community's heritage" (180).

Alan Durant, in his book Ezra Pound, Identity In Crisis (Sussex, 1981), also recognizes the existence of the authorial person present in the sequence:

Clearly the Pisan Cantos can stand pre-eminent among poems judged as eloquent expressions of personal feeling, since not only do they constantly display sentiment, but their poignancy is underscored by the extreme adversity of the circumstances in which they were written. (58-9)

In a nutshell, Pound's direct treatment of his personal and private emotions without any pretentious persona or voice resulted in a creation of a poem that became one of the best modern lyrics.

Crystal Lyricism

Others indeed recognize the importance of lyricism in the sequence. For example, Bernstein again appreciates the

sheer lyricism of the Pisan Cantos.⁵ He continues that in Modernism "the inner world of a poem was increasingly confined to that of a single, intensely felt perception, to a moment of absolute insight or emotion crystallized into a timeless pattern" (7), a critical comment that directly addresses itself upon the poetic style of the Pisan Cantos.

While pointing out that "Walter Pater also appeals to 'life' . . . in stressing the aesthetic primacy of the single lyric," Bernstein agrees with Pater that "'lyric poetry, precisely because in it we are least able to detach the matter from the form, without a deduction of something from that matter itself, is, at least artistically, the highest and most complete form of poetry'" (rpt. Studies in the History of the Renaissance p. 137). Perhaps someone needs to write a book and make a strong case on Pound's lyricism in the Pisan Cantos, as such a fine view deserves a thorough examination.

In his seminal biography The Life Ezra Pound (New York, 1970), Noel Stock, too, discovers in the sequence a powerful lyricism in the midst of fragmentations and seeming confusions:

They [the Pisan Cantos] are confused and often fragmentary; and they bear no relation structurally to the seventy earlier cantos; but shot through by a rare sad light they tell of things gone which somehow seem to live on, and are probably his best

poetry. . . . If at times the verse is silly, it is because in himself Pound was often silly; if at times it is firm, dignified and intelligent, it is because in himself Pound was often firm, dignified and intelligent; if it is fragmentary and confused, it is because Pound was never able to think out his position and did not know how the matters with which he dealt were related; and if often lines and passages have a beauty seldom equalled in the poetry of the twentieth century it is because Pound had a true lyric gift. (412)

Highest Form of Free Verse

Herbert Read also recognizes in the sequence the undeniable "passages of purest lyricism which, in themselves, if extracted, would constitute a body of poetry for which there is no contemporary parallel" (18). "Technically," Read justly points out, "the poem is the perfection of Pound's taut free verse" with "a definite pattern and structure--a controlling force" :

In the complex structure of the Cantos these passages are relatively rare, and what we have to explain is a mosaic of images, ideas, phrases--politics, ethics, economics--anecdotes, insults, denunciations--English, Greek, Latin, Italian, Provençal, Chinese--without division, without

transition, without pattern. But all the same there is pattern, there is structure and there is a controlling force. Pound himself has used the image of the magnet and the iron filings: "The forma, the immortal conchetto, the concept, the dynamic form which is like the rose-pattern driven into the dead iron fillings by the magnet, not by material contact with the magnet itself, but separate from the magnet itself. Cut off by a layer of glass, the dust and filings rise and spring into order. Thus the forma, the concept rises from death." (18)

Furthermore, Read argues, Pound's poetic technique forces the reader to form in his/her mind "conceptual reasoning" (19) and it is not the business of the poet to provide the reader with any linear logic or reasoning: "Ideas do not exist as abstract counters in a process of logical reasoning; rather they are dropped into the mind of the reader as separate concrete entities which then set up mental reactions" (19).

Similar to what Kenner suggests in his discussion about the ideogrammic method in the Pisan Cantos, Read, too, recognizes that an undeniable mental reaction--an ideogram of sort--forms and rises in the mind of the ready reader. Read asserts that as a poet Pound's business was "to see, to present, to condense, to combine . . . all active process-

es," and that Pound's concept "ideas in action" thus becomes as "the general characteristic of the texture of this immense poem."

Humphrey Carpenter also argues that despite seeming chaos of fragmentations, the Pisan sequence coheres. Contending that "the principle message of Canto 74 and really of the entire Pisan Cantos" is "Ezra's withdrawal of his ideal into his private mental world," Carpenter sees a binding purpose in the sequence of fragments:

. . . They [personal memories and references of the section] are not, as some critics suggested when the sequence was first published, just random jottings from a poet's notebook, but are supposed to indicate a purposeful search through the memory in the hope of finding the perfect city, or at least the materials with which it may be built. Certainly Ezra dredges up only fragments, but he now believes (as he says half-way through Canto 74) that 'Le Paradis' is only to be found in, or built from, splinters like this. Perfection is of necessity 'spezzato' (broken, fragmented); 'apparently / it exists only in fragments'.

(673)

Musical Lucidity

In a similar vein, Hugh Kenner recognizes the lucidity

of the lyrics in the Pisan Cantos. Although he acknowledges the enormous task of examining "Pound's use of fragments side by side" in the Pisan Cantos, Kenner argues that Pound's musical lucidity in the sequence coincides with his aesthetics, and in particular that for Pound the ideogrammic exactitude of word choice represents "racial or national consciousness" (P 47):

. . . Music: not necessarily a lilt or unbroken vowels, but 'music of ideas', a phrase frequently tossed into a gap in the speaker's knowledge during discussions of Eliot, but actually susceptible of definite exemplification--the tension, interplay, and mutual modification among juxtaposed units each of which is the verbal embodiment of a sharply defined perception. Such verbal exactitude, taken from the correspondence of John Adams, are set in motion in the . . . Cantos LXII-LXXI. The poetic rationale of the Pisan Cantos, with the 'items' largely phrased or re-phrased by Pound and drawn from a very wide variety of sources, is identical in principle. No-one [sic] will deny the unforgettable lucidity of any fragment of that sequence. (P 48)

In fact, Kenner is not the first critic who recognizes the musical lucidity in Pound; for years, Pound was known for his uncanny poetic ear. Speaking of Pound's poetry in

general, William Carlos Williams was once known to comment that "Ezra Pound is one of the most competent poets in our language, possessed of the most acute ear for metrical sequences, to the point of genius, that we have ever known" (Davie 245).⁶ But by far, however, one of the most important contributions made by Kenner to Pound scholarship and criticism is no doubt his brilliant analysis of Pound's ideogrammic method. Alexander Schmitz also recognizes a strong sense of musicality in Pound's Cantos: ". . . the ideogrammic structure (of the single image, the single poem, the single canto, single groups of cantos, and finally all cantos taken together) mirrors the structure of the musical chord" (Pai, 20, 46).

Similarly, while pointing out that "Pound has managed to take lyrical structure without losing intensity despite the condensed mixture of Greek, Latin, French, Old French, and Italian [in Canto 80]," and further that in general "he manages still faster shifts of tone than Eliot," Rosenthal and Gall argue, "virtually every line [in Canto 80] can, when needed, convey a distinct tonality" (207). They continue that "one does not need to 'decipher' to see the shiftings signaled along the way," and that "the context provided by the Cantos as a whole prevents such rapid shifts from irreparably fragmenting the poetry and helps clarify and refine the resonances of each line or phrase" (207).

Ideogrammic Method

What is ideogram? An ideogram is a picture word, or a composite of pictures whose unmistakable common denominator suggests a clear meaning. The classical explanation of how an ideogram operates appears in Pound's ABC of Reading (New Directions, 1960). There he explains that when an ancient Chinese wanted to signify the abstract concept "red," he put together the abbreviated pictures of ROSE, IRON RUST, CHERRY, and FLAMINGO in a composite drawing, an ideogram (22).

What then is the ideogrammic method? According to Pound, "the ideogrammic [sic] method consists of presenting one facet and then another then another until at some point one gets off the dead and desensitized surface of the reader's mind, onto a part that will register" (GK 51). Pound goes on to claim that the writer's goal is an epiphanical revelation by looking at and presenting things from a "new" angle:

The "new" angle being new to the reader who cannot always be the same reader. The newness of the angle being relative and the writer's aim, at least this writer's aim being revelation, a just revelation irrespective of newness or oldness.

(GK 51)

In short, instead of arbitrarily assigning alphabetized characters to signify an object, a system of language that bears no pictorial resemblance to the signified at all, the

Chinese ideograms relied on raw data of pictures readily available in nature. Therefore, individual data become very important to the aesthetics of Pound because they are the nuts, the essential grains that bring forth the plants of characters. Hence, Pound's emphases on the luminous details and his quintessential aesthetics--"All knowledge is built from a rain of factual atoms" (Bernstein 161).⁷

The task of a poet, then, is to present data side by side in a composite picture in an attempt to form in the mind of the reader an emotional equation of what he/she originally felt. Therefore, for a poem to be successful, the common denominator among composites of pictures must necessarily be abundantly clear, as transparent as possible, to the reader. In short, each raw data in an ideogram as well as in a poetic line must give off an energy that electrifies all the other components. The poet must therefore find an image or the "primary pigment" Pound speaks of in his manifesto in Blast:

The vorticist relies on this alone; on the primary pigment of his art, nothing else. Every conception, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form. It is the picture that means a hundred poems, the music that means a hundred pictures, the most highly energized statement, the statement that has not yet SPENT itself its [sic] expression, but which is the

most capable of expressing.⁸

As Pound explains, an Image becomes therefore "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (LE 4):

It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.

Therefore, it is indeed "better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works." As Pound proclaims elsewhere, an image is "a radiant node or cluster . . . a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which ideas are constantly rushing." Kenner paraphrases the same vortex as "a patterned integrity accessible to the mind; topologically stable; subject to variations of intensity; brought into the domain of the senses by a particular interaction of words" (PE 146). Therefore, a true image (a vortex) is "not the water but a patterned energy made visible by the water."

The ideogrammic representation, according to Kenner, bespeaks itself of the fundamental "process of human cognition itself" (P 73). How could a primitive man perceive and represent what he/she has perceived without gathering bits and pieces of raw data. This collection of data as a means

of communication and at the same time as a means of a new scientific poetic medium was to impact on Pound's aesthetics greatly. In fact, one may summarize Pound's technique in the Pisan Cantos as the ideogrammic method: collection of data standing side by side suggesting many a particular emotional equivalent.

The ideogrammic method, however, was a strikingly different means of communication unknown to the West. For example, most modern European languages do not operate in a similar fashion at all (Kenner 73-105). More specifically, each alphabetized word in the English language does not present a picture of the signified. The poet, who uses such a medium, consequently has to overtly supply what the reader of a poem should feel when he/she reads a word or line in a given poem. This uninvited authorial intrusion became unbearable to Pound, and for him, it was this very nature of the English language that corrupted the currency of words, among others.

Kenner explains the difficulty of a poet who must employ such an alphabetized poetic medium, like English, which too quickly sheds its original vitality and currency through the very act of splitting the meaning into artificial symbols (alphabets):

. . . in Shelley . . . there is visible . . .
distrust of the possibility of any communication,
especially of emotional states, without constant

comment, constant overt appeal to the reader's experience, habits, and day-dream. Poetic, that is, has given way to rhetoric. The poet in a dialectical milieu is conscious of an audience to be influenced rather than of a poem to be made. And the quality of what is communicated suffers in consequence, so that technical judgments are inseparable from moral. (72)

In short, as Kenner justly explains it, "the image is to be presented to the mind's eye without superfluous words, and without the opposite danger of presenting merely a pretty noise" (P 60). Therefore, "a poem is an imitation in the sense that it offers an image, an action, a chain of events such as, on contemplation, may yield the intelligible species proper to the initial experience" (73). Therefore, for Pound, writing poetry becomes an activity in search of emotional equivalents that will explain itself without the authorial intrusion:

Poetry is a sort of inspired mathematics, which gives us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres, and the like, but equations for the human emotions. If one have a mind which inclines to magic rather than science, one will prefer to speak of these equations as spells or incantations. . . . (SR 5)

Indeed, an ideogrammic poem, that is a poem which

employs composites of picture languages, does not overtly intrude upon the reader's interpretation of a poem. It does not tell, nor does it supply, the reader what to feel or how to read certain words or lines, but rather it shows and suggests, through picture languages and their interactions, the kind of emotion the poet tries to render.⁹ In a sense, therefore, the meaning of a poem could become more open and expansive than closed or structured.

This aspect of non-intrusive speaker in a poem is quintessential to the objective aesthetics of Modern Poetry in particular, T. S. Eliot's concept of Impersonality. According to Kenner, this recognition of a new poetic technique brought "Pound, Eliot, Joyce, and Yeats" back to "the Aristotelian benison" (P 72), a thought-provoking suggestion which I will discuss in the following chapter. Having understood the workings of the ideogrammic method, then, the reader can now apply the same paradigm to the poetic style of the Pisan Cantos. Fundamentally, one can regard the sequence as a huge composite of pictures (metaphorically speaking), whose "luminous details" manifest themselves as emotional equivalents.¹⁰

Other critics, however, recognize other poetic techniques than the all important ideogrammic method. On the one hand, some critics find the logic of imagination in the sequence. On the other hand, others argue that Pound's poetic technique in the sequence results from his readings,

translations, and observations of Japanese Noh dramas, a provocative insight that deserves a thorough investigation.

The Logic of Imagination

In his Reading the Cantos (New York, 1966), Noel Stock points out that in the Pisan Cantos ". . . dreams, experiences and perceptions, are woven together with the what-might-have-been of history and his interpretation of real events, to form a new unity" (78). "This unity," he goes on, "is so remarkable, considering the jumble of materials out of which it is composed . . . Two things, which by their absence from other sections lead to confusion, here by their presence mean success. They are unity of tone and logic of imagination." Stock explains these two concepts present in the sequence as follows:

The unity of tone is of a man remembering. The logic of imagination, while not altogether separate, reaches deeper. It can, and often does, in poetry, provide cohesion at a level too deep to plumb. Just so here. Sometimes, even where the surface connexion between images or ideas is bordering on the banal, a deeper 'logic' hidden but no less real holds them together. The poet, as unaware as we are, of what he is doing, or more so perhaps, is nevertheless touching something we call can feel. (78).

Furthermore, Stock argues that in the Pisan Cantos, the logic of imagination operates on a deeper level than we normally assume. According to Stock, "Good imagery . . . does not operate through mere imagery alone, or any comparison we may draw between one thing and another. It draws on fantasy and abstract ideas as well" (79). Contending that "most discussion goes astray in assuming that imagery exists only in the form of images we can see, as with the eye," Stock argues that "the mind can see various ways and at different levels," and that "whether the levels in imagery are unified, ignored, left separate, or only intermittently drawn together, depends on the education in poetry of the reader and the quality of the poem" (79). He claims convincingly that "the mind can see things without necessarily forming a representational image: it is capable of forming another kind which we see without necessarily forming a representational image" (79). In short, according to Stock, all the fragmentations Pound employs in the Pisan sequence become something "new"--"the basic cohesion of which is arrived at through logic of imagination" (80).

A Poetic Style after Noh

Akiko Miyake, for example, recognizes the utter simplicity, a typical characteristics of Japanese Noh drama, in Pound's Pisan Cantos:

Yet in the Pisan Cantos Noh returned to him sud-

denly. The Noh poets saw faithfully man's infernal existence, even to the very depth of it, and wrote out their vision for what Pound called in the note to "Kakitsubata" ['Noh' or Accomplishment, p. 220] "an absolutely unemphasized art." The enormous energy of psychological crises which might justify any sudden outburst is calmly suppressed into intense lyricism in Noh. Thus the ruined phantoms of the characters actually move the audience through their rare tragic intensity of life. They haunted Pound so much at Pisa as he mused, "we who have passed over Lethe" [74/449]. . . . The more seminal influence of Noh grew gradually but steadily. As the Cantos advances to its fragmentary ending, we notice some rare unemphasized lines which should be treasured. Who will not be amazed at the transparent lightness and the suppressed tragic intensity together in the line, "A blown husk that is finished" [115/794]? (463)

No doubt, the suggestion that Pound's simplistic style originates from his observations of Japanese Noh dramas strikes me very interesting. However, I have so far failed to come across with an article or a book that thoroughly investigates this phenomenon.

On the other hand, however, the chapter "The Invention of Language" in The Pound Era (Berkeley and Los Angeles,

1971), Kenner convincingly offers a fine explanation of Pound's simplistic style. Kenner argues that it was around 1913 when Pound started to "labor all his mature life to bring the Cantos into the domain of such intensities, and achieve the way of it finally--"So slow is the rose to open" (PE 78):

When Pound noted (1913) among the poetic kinds certain passionate simplicities "beyond the precisions of the intellect"--Guido's Perch'io non spero di tornar gia mai / Ballatetta, in Toscana--common Italian words from which Eliot in turn was to make "Because I do not hope to turn again" using only eight of the commonest words in English--or Yeats's "The fire that stirs about her, when she stirs"--his attention, with less ceremony than Mallarme's, was upon just such a mystery, the rare cooperation of genius with common speech: neither the laconic expertise of a Flaubert ("Comme elle etait tres lourde, ils la portait alternativement") nor the adoption of that "real language of men" which is but another persona, but the power to charge simple vocables with all that they can say. (107)

Interestingly, nonetheless, in his book The Poetry of Ezra Pound, Kenner points out that "the Pisan Cantos are" not full of Noh dramas, but "full of hokku" instead (63).

He argues that "the simple sentence moves" because "the 'motion' of the moving image is contained, ultimately, in the word-to-word jostle of language itself."

Furthermore, while defining hokku as "'perspective by incongruity'", Kenner perceptively suggests that "the action of the simplest category of lyric, the two-line Japanese hokku with which Pound experimented extensively, depends on Aristotle's central plot-device, peripeteia, or 'reversal of the situation'" (62). "The point to be noted here [in the Pisan Cantos] is that the next word or phrase is always **unexpected**" (63). Other critics are more concerned with the visual aspect of the sequence--the form of the Pisan Cantos--than the aspect of simplicity.

Concrete Poetry

A number of critics note the interesting visual layout of the Pisan Sequence. One critic, among them, suggests that Pound's visual layout is an exemplification of concrete poetry, for instance. Furthermore, he proclaims that it was Pound, with his ideogrammic structure in The Cantos, who brought to Brazilians the idea of concrete poetry. In his interesting article "Pound and Brazilian Concretism" (Pai, 6-3 [Winter 1977]: 279-94), Douglas Thompson suggests that "Ezra Pound, with whom the Brazilians began to correspond in 1953, figures prominently in the development of the theory of concrete poetry" (279). Heavily quoting from Teroria

da Poesia Concreta (by Augusto de Campos, et all [Sao Paulo, 1965]), Thompson attempts to draw a close connection of concrete poetry among Mallarme, Apollinaire, Brooke-Rose, Pound, Fenollosa, and 'Noigandres' [Brazilian concretists]:

It is a theory that draws from a number of different sources and borrows freely from other arts and disciplines, including painting, music, cybernetics, and advertising. The most important writers in the concretists' pantheon are Mallarme ("Un Coup de Des"), Apollinaire (Calligrammes), e. e. cummings (the experimental poems), James Joyce, (Ulysses and, particularly, Finnegans Wake), and in Brazil, Ezra Pound ("The Cantos and its ideogrammic structure. (279)

According to Thompson, concretism originates from "Mallarme's recognition (in "Un Coup de Des") of the importance of typography and of the use of blank space in a poem . . . where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

Furthermore, Thompson points out that concrete poetry employs technical devices, such as a) use of different types, b) position of the typed lines, c) graphic space, and d) spacial use of the page (280).

Thompson then categorizes rather extensively numerous characteristics unique to concrete poetry. And it is worth the pain to quote here all the characteristics he lists in his article:¹¹

- 1) From Apollinaire, the "Noigandres" poets borrowed the pictographic technique of Calligrammes, using it in conjunction with Mallarme's typographic variations.
- 2) They also found in Apollinaire the beginning of what they call the "ideogrammic method," which demands an intelligence to comprehend in a synthetic-ideographic (ideographic logic) manner rather than in an analytic-discursive manner (grammatical logic).
- 3) Such poems should, in the end, present a pictorial complex related to the theme. In this way, one can achieve the almost perfect ideogram.
- 4) Haroldo de Campos related the ideogrammic concept to a method of composition closely akin to serial composition in music.
- 5) The concretists also drew from the visual arts (as should be obvious: concrete poetry is meant to be seen as we have seen, especially in Mondrian and Calder).
- 6) They relied as well on the theories of such linguists as Sapir and Cassirer, on the study of cybernetics, and on theories of Gestalt psychology.
- 7) The "Noigandres" poets turned to the language of the everyday world, particularly that of the

"mass media," for their idiom.

8) They were neither as arbitrary nor as random in their selection of sources as they might seem; these sources have in common a basic underlying notion, that of the ideogrammic technique: the revelation of pattern by juxtaposition of independent elements.

9) From Fenollosa and Pound, two concepts are of tantamount importance: first, Fenollosa's emphasis on the verbal quality of the Chinese ideogram and second, the ideogrammic technique--"crowding maximum meaning into a single phrase."

10) From Brooke-Rose, they learned that the technique "of capturing the poetry in the juxtaposition of components by means of live and active, not dead, words and syntax, even if the juxtaposed elements make up an abstraction."

11) They abolished the notion of "paraphrāsable plot" in the poem--"traditional notions of beginning-middle-end, syllogism, verse, tend to disappear, to be replaced by a poetic-gestaltian, poetic-musical, poetic-ideogrammic structural organization: CONCRETE POETRY.

12) They wanted a new form of communication: "a mental process of organization of the poem in exact congruity with that urgent needs for more

radical, direct, and economic communication of verbal forms which characterizes the modern, pre-eminently antidiscursive and objective, [sic] spirit."

13) They introduced space into the ideogram as a substantive element of the poetic structure: in this way, a new spacial-temporal rhythm is created. The traditional rhythm is destroyed.

14) Concrete Poetry: Tension of word-things in space-time.

15) A logical consequences of the concretists' treatment of words and space as objects is that the poem itself becomes an object, neither a representation nor an interpretation of the "objective" world; it is itself an object in that world.

16) As it is not tied to communication of contents and uses the word . . . as compositional material and not as a vehicle of interpretations of the objective world, literature is true to its content.

17) The poem, once constructed, becomes a separate entity not only in relation to the world in which it exists, but also in relation to the poet who constructed it.

18) The chosen structure will determine rigorously, almost mathematically, the elements of the

whole and their relative positions.

19) Concrete poetry tends towards a rejection of organic structure in favor of a mathematical (or almost mathematical) structure: the desire to construct overrode the desire for expression or for self-expression.

20) The result is a "new" object, a poem which communicates no meaning outside itself, a poem whose structure, content and meaning are all one-- a poem which is itself.

21) Concrete Poetry: verbalvocalvisual actualization

of the
essential OBJECT

I find Thompson's article fascinating and very suggestive; I must confess that some of his assertions are cogent and convincing. At the same time, however, I also find that some of his argument invites serious conflicts, nonetheless. In particular, the characteristics of "concrete poetry" he lists in his article fail to answer Pound's quintessential poetic techniques. Nor does he offer any textual analysis from Pound's work, in particular from the Cantos: indeed, he does not provide a single line of textual evidence to support his point of view.

First, preoccupied with his main thrust--the Brazilian concrete poetry and its movement, whose connection to Pound's aesthetic is at best dubious--Thompson fails to

point out any relationship between his "concrete poetry" and the traditional "concrete poetry." His use of the term "concrete poetry," therefore, confuses the reader.¹²

Thompson should have provided the reader with better terminology or he should have defined the term "concrete poetry" much more narrowly than the one he uses in his article.

More specifically, he totally turns away from the long tradition of "pattern poems or emblem poems," which, according to M. H. Abrams, also "experiment with the visual shape in which a text is presented on the page (31). In fact, Abrams argues that the tradition of such technique goes as far back as to the Greek poetry, beginning in the third century B.C. when poets "shaped their poems to represent an object which the text signifies or suggests." Not a word is mentioned about this fact by Thompson.

According to Abrams, "in the Renaissance and seventeenth century there was a considerable vogue of such patterned forms, called emblem poems, in which the lines vary in length in such a way that their printed shape is in the outline of the subject of the poem" (31). Of course, one of the most familiar examples in English are George Herbert's "Easter Wings" and "The Altar." Certainly, Thompson could have made some meaningful literary connection between this type of traditional concrete poetry and his own theories of form.

Second, according to Abrams, "concrete poetry became a

world-wide movement, which was largely inaugurated in 1953 by the Swiss poet, Eugen Gomringer," an important fact that is also missing from Thompson's article. In fact, Abrams' account of the concrete poetry echoes major characteristics of the same, which Thompson lists in his article:

The practice of such poetry varies widely, but the common feature is the use of a radically reduced language, typed or printed in such a way as to force the poem on the reader's attention as an object which is to be perceived as a visual whole. Many concrete poems, in fact, cannot be read at all in the conventional way, since they consist of a single word or phrase which is subjected to systematic alterations in the order and position of the component letters, or else are composed of fragments of words, or of nonsense syllables, or even of single letters, numbers, and marks of punctuation. . . . some of their shapes are called "kinetic," in that they evolve as we turn page after page. (31)

Third, despite Thompson's claim--that in 1953, through correspondence, Ezra Pound contributed to the foundation of concrete poetry in Brazil (279)--Thompson does not offer any specific letters, a physical evidence of correspondence between the two parties that attests to the fact. Had Pound in fact written letters to the poets in Brazil, in an at-

tempt to awaken them as Thompson argues to the notion of concrete poetry, then Thompson should have used such vital information, which, in turn, would surely have strengthened his article.

Fourth, Thompson states that, among others, the visual artists, such as Mondrian and Calder, also contributed to the movement of concrete poetry. But he does not fully explain the relationship (if there was any) between these artists and Pound. Furthermore, Thompson does not mention either Wyndham Lewis or Gaudier Brzeska, two artists with whom Pound was, in fact, closely associated. Thompson could have easily explored the close connection between Pound and these two artists and related their contribution to the Brazilian concrete poetry if indeed there was such a connection. Certainly, those artists Thompson mentions are not as well known in Pound circles as the two examples I mentioned, an aspect that demands more exploration. Ironically, Thompson mentions, however briefly, Italian Futurism and its relationship to Brazilian concrete poetry. But then again, he fails to mention the possible influence of Vorticism, which Pound organized and was actively involved in, to Brazilian concrete poetry.

Fifth, Thompson argues that concretists favored the use of "the language of the everyday world, particularly that of the 'mass media' for their idiom" (282). This fact may be true with e. e. cummings and the Brazilian concretists, but

where in the Cantos does Pound heavily rely on "the language of mass media?" Most important, what about the fact that Pound used several different languages such as Greek, Italian, English (formal and extremely informal), French, Chinese, and Hebrew? They are not at all "the language of the everyday world." In fact, a good number of them are the languages of days gone by. Furthermore, what about Pound's use of proper nouns, largely those names of individuals whom Pound alone knew. In particular, those proper nouns in the Pisan Cantos are so personal and autobiographical that at times, as critics rightly argue, they make the poem appear too esoteric, if not solipsistic.¹³

Sixth, Thompson asserts that in concrete poetry "the structure of the poem is its true content, an object in its own right," and therefore, "there can be no sentimental connection between the poem and the world" (288). He continues that "the desire to construct overrode the desire for expression or for self-expression results in a 'new' object, a poem which communicates no meaning outside itself, a poem whose structure, content and meaning are all one--a poem which is itself" (289). Such an argument implies that Pound's visual rendition of the Cantos has neither content nor message whatsoever outside itself. It implies further that Pound composed the Cantos the way it is without any conscious effort at all but for the mere visual pattern, that is for the sake of patterning.

That suggestion is flagrant, if not blasphemous, to Pound's sincere artistic effort. That Pound's particular visual rendition of his lines, in particular using the so-called ideogrammic method in the Cantos, becomes an end to itself is ridiculous. Such a suggestion is in violent conflict with Pound's aesthetics. Indeed, Pound is known to write about the Pisan Cantos that the form of the poem strives towards its inner shape. In short, he was trying to match and marry the inner form to that of the outer one; therefore, the outer form of the poem is never the result of a mere whim.

Furthermore, Thompson's suggestion questions the utmost importance of Pound aesthetics as an artist--sincerity:

"An artist's technique is a test of his personal validity. Honesty of the word is the writer's first aim, for without it he can communicate nothing efficiently. . . . Orthology is a discipline both of morale and morals" (P 50).¹⁴

Thompson's assertion fails to account for Pound's lifelong commitment to educate the populace. If indeed Pound's poetry has no content but whimsical patterns, how can one account for his numerous writings, such as ABC of Reading and Literary Essays, to name only two, where Pound attempts to educate young writers, always telling them what they should read and how they should write? If indeed what Thompson suggests is correct, how can the reader justify

Pound's pedantic thrusts apparent in almost all of his writings?

Most important, Thompson's suggestion that Pound's poetry is an end to itself fails to explain Pound's lifetime obsession of making it new, through Imagism and Vorticism in particular. It was exactly against this type of deadness (art that had lost its purpose) in the use of language that Pound abandoned "Amygism" and recharged the word Image with Vortex:

The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must call a VORTEX, from which, and through which and into which ideas are constantly rushing. . . . (LE 4)

In view of Pound's efforts, it is outrageous to suggest that Pound's ideogrammic technique is a whimsical play of various visual patterns and that Pound rendered his Cantos the way he did largely for no reason other than boredom. If indeed Pound rendered his Cantos only for the sake of its visual structure, then how could he charge them with the "electricity . . . a force transfusing, welding, and unifying?" (LE 23)¹⁵

Furthermore, as Andrew Clearfield accurately points out, one can never over-emphasize Pound's sincerity and commitment to the art of poetry. Thompson argues that Apollinaire's ideogrammic method was seminal in the Brazilian concretism (280), and according to Thompson's line of

argument, Pound blossoms in the Cantos with a "practical demonstration" of "the ideogrammic method" (286). The argument that Pound's ideogrammic method originates from Apollinaire's poetic technique (Clearfield 131), not from Pound's readings of the Fenollosa essays, may be debatable, although I personally doubt such a red herring.¹⁶ Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that Pound did not like Apollinaire's poetry for none other than the lack of its sincerity:

The most probable reason for Pound's dislike of Apollinaire [despite the striking similarity in their poetic technique] and the Dadaists is in his [Pound's] attitude toward the work of art itself. Pound could be irreverent toward established traditions, and dispense with three hundred years of a literature by means of a joke, but what was left was to be taken seriously. (132)

Finally, Thompson's article ignores the crucial relationship between ideogrammic method and the modern world. More specifically, it fails to account for the modern poet's concern for a new poetic technique that will embody the concept of simultaneity of time. In his seminal book Ezra Pound: Poetics for an Electric Age (1975), for example, Max Nanny argues that Pound's ideogrammic method is a poet's creative response to the modern era, an artist's attempt to capture the sense of simultaneity of an electric era (37).

Quoting from Marcel Martin's Le langage cinematographique, Nanny differentiates between the two different types of cinematic technique: "narrative montage and expressive montage" (40).

Narrative montage, according to Nanny, is "the simple product of 'putting individual shots together in chronological order to tell a story." Furthermore, likening this mode of montage to that of Eisenstein's "'epic' principle of 'unrolling an idea with the help of single shots," Nanny explains narrative montage as follows:

. . . [is] an extension of the typographical principle of a continuous arrangement of arrested and isolated 'shots'--visual moments of experience in impressionism

--whose connected and homogeneous sequence is passively fused into an organic whole by the viewer's eye which serves as a kind of projector.

(40)

But according to Nanny, what Pound was aiming at was NOT this type of narrative montage, for a simple product of this kind does not have any underlying purpose. What Pound had in mind, according to Nanny, is expressive montage, a similar technique of stringing shots together with a definite underlying purpose (40). As Nanny points out, in fact it was "the non-literate modes of the Chinese ideogram and the Japanese haiku and tanka that helped Eisenstein derive

the concept of expressive montage." Unlike Thompson's argument--that ideogrammic method presents only a structure for the sake of its visual pattern and for nothing beneath and beyond its spatial form--Pound's idea of ideogrammic technique involves the active volition and the persistent purpose on the part of the poet in presenting poetic lines in a particular visual pattern. As Nanny justly observes, Pound's ideogrammic method indeed demands an active volition as well as the persistent purpose on the part of the poet.

In conclusion, despite its merits, which deserve credit, Thompson's article does not fully explain the ideogrammic method of Pound. In particular, Thompson fails to show how his theories stand next to the actual text under discussion from Pound. More fundamentally, his idea--that concrete poetry is an end itself, with no meaning whatsoever beyond the page on which it is presented--conflicts with Pound's fundamental aesthetics: "the thing that matters in art is . . . a force rather like water when it spurts up through very bright sand and sets it in swift motion" (LE 49).

The essential difference between the Thompson's argument and Pound's aesthetics is that for Pound the form is organic, whereas the form in the concrete poetry Thompson argues is molded. Consider, for example, Pound's own remark on the form of the Pisan Cantos as he wrote a note to his base censor: ". . . The form of the poem and main progress

is conditioned by its own inner shape, but the life of the D. T. C. passing OUTSIDE the scheme cannot but impinge, or break into the main flow" (my emphasis, Heymann 172).

Obscurity as a Poetic Technique

Yet another interesting suggestion on the poetic technique of the Pisan Cantos, according to Peter Ackroyd, is one called "poetic obscurity" (90). Ackroyd recognizes in the poem that "Pound reverts continually to his last years in London," a reminiscing act that creates the problem of being too "self-indulgent" :

Although he is at the center of the sequence for obvious reasons, Pound is often too commanding a figure--"As a lone ant from a broken ant-hill / from the wreckage of Europe, ego scriptor"--and the wanderings of his subjectivity often become obscure or disharmonious. The problem of poetic obscurity has in fact to be faced continually in the work, since Pound places it squarely at the center of his poetry. . . . But in the Pisan Cantos the obscurity is often portentous and clumsy: madness, at least Pound's madness, is saying what he means without reference to any other context, whether social or linguistic. In this sequence Pound saves himself from self-reflective inanition only in the passages of intense observa-

tion, or in conventional lyric. But the rest of the poetry emerges as the rumblings of a wounded soul, a work of memory--or rather of nostalgia, the ghost of memory. (90)

On the one hand, critics, such as Max Nanny, approach the issue of obscurity from a totally unconventional angle. In his interesting yet unconvincing article "Context, Contiguity and Contact in Ezra Pound" (rpt. Ezra Pound. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York, 1987), Nanny suggests that "Pound's mental make-up and predilections as well as his innovative strategies of reforming an excessively metaphorical poetic tradition pushed him close to the metonymic pole" (77). Furthermore, relying heavily on Herbert Schnedau's original idea, Nanny contends that "Pound seems to show symptoms of a 'similarity disorder' or 'selection deficiency', for there seems to be 'an uncanny correspondence between the Pound-Fenollosa poetics and the aphasic who cannot perform similarity functions, and who grasp words literally but not metaphorically'" (77).

In my view, this is an exemplar of criticism that has lost its center. Although both critics make it abundantly clear the fact that they are not suggesting that "Pound actually suffered from an aphasia of the similarity-disorder" (77), they nonetheless attribute a similar pathological condition to Pound:

As proofs of Pound's quasi-aphasic "escape from

sameness to contiguity" . . . Schneidau mentions his general irritable attitude towards the similarity functions of analogy and metaphor; his contempt for poetic similarity devices such as regular metre, rhyme, regular stanzas; his "crossing" verse with the prose tradition of realism which is "forwarded essentially by contiguity; his belief in discontinuity and in the juxtapository process of the ideogrammic method; and . . . his tendency towards ellipsis and elliptical sequels that leads his poetry to the brink of aphasia and explains his fascination with all forms of concision, the epigram, the Japanese haiku. (77)

On the other hand, however, other critics find in the chaos and obscurity of Pound's poetic style a sense of coherence like the one finds in the style of Joyce or Faulkner.

The Stream of Consciousness

In his book The Barb of Time: On the Unity of Ezra Pound's Cantos (1969), Daniel D. Pearlman, for example, points out that "the method of 'narration' is not chronological, but resembles rather the stream-of-consciousness technique" (41):

. . . certain images are briefly and obscurely introduced at the beginning, then picked up again

and expanded, and later retrieved and elaborated ever more explicitly until there is a final merging of the separate strands into coherence. . . . The logic of the stream-of-consciousness technique is the subjective logic of images whose sequence "is causally determined in the outside world."¹⁷

Although here Pearlman's criticism dwells largely upon the earlier Cantos, I think, his assertion holds its validity in the Pisan sequence, nonetheless. Consider, for example, his remark that "Pound's technique involved the initial 'planting' of certain myths of passion which are then to be elaborated in various ways through the progressive introduction of new materials--mythic, literary, historical, autobiographical" (42).

Part of the "initial planting of the myth" in the Pisan Cantos that comes immediately to my mind is his use of Dioce, a symbol of eternal city, among others. According to Pearlman, "the new materials are intended to have significant associations with the initial myths; flashes of history, for example, reveal the timeless verity of the truths shadowed forth in myth" (42).

Similarly, Michael Bernstein also recognizes the associative power in Pound's poetic technique in the Cantos. In his article "Image, Word, and Sign," for example, Bernstein justly appreciates a new poetic artistry apparent in Pound's poetic technique. "For the verse form of The Cantos,"

Bernstein points out, "Pound created a dazzling repertoire of acoustic and metrical patterns, a repertoire that went much further than merely 'break[ing] [sic] the pentameter as the dominant rhythm of English verse (80:518)" (172). But Pound achieved this depth of associative power without violating the fundamental metrics nonetheless:

Yet for all the poem's justly praised metrical subtlety and inventiveness, it is striking how rarely Pound violates the autonomy of the line, seen as a single unit of verse composition. Throughout The Cantos there is remarkably little enjambment; rather than the complex interweaving of end-stopped and run-on lines characteristics of such otherwise quite distinct contemporaries as William Carlos Williams and Wallace Stevens, Pound's typical procedure was to compose in clearly separable lines, each often signaled by a spondiac or anapestic ending, as though to emphasize the elements of closure within an otherwise variable pattern. The link between the visual and the prosodic line and between the scrupulous tracing of the painterly line and the capacity of moral discrimination may seem more associative than logical. . . . (172)

The Pisan Cantos as the Last of Epic

Similarly, other critics also recognize a strong sense of obscurity in Pound's poetic technique. For example, Christine Froula complains in her chapter "The Pound Error: The Limits of Authority in the Modern Epic" (To Write Paradise: Style and Error in Ezra Pound's Cantos [Yale, 1984]) that Pound made numerous mistakes in the Cantos. One of the cardinal mistakes Pound made, according to Froula, is digression Pound makes in the poem: "the epic task Pound undertook entailed creating a form and language which could register such incursions of history into History, of actual experience into ideas about the world; and for this reason, the historicity of The Cantos is not of a kind which precludes error" (143).

Most important, Froula argues that it was The Cantos that "end all epics" (144). In particular, the obscurity incurred by the Chinese ideograms did not help the Western readers at all. Furthermore, "in the Cantos, the symbolic collision of the Western epic tradition--and the alphabetic writing that carries it--with the metaphorical East invoked by the Chinese ideograms scattered through the text marks the limits of the Western epos, grounded since the Iliad in a tradition of conquest by violence" (144):

There can be very few readers for whom the Chinese characters ever become translucent signs. Their most powerful import remains, even after one

learns their significations, the unassimilable difference with which their obscure and silent presence confronts the Western reader. Their alien mode of representation betokens all that exists beyond the closed culture celebrated by the Western epic tradition; their mere presence, apart from particular meanings, frames and limits the humanistic traditions of the Western epic, throwing into relief its ethnocentric conditions.

(144)

For Froula, "the Chinese writing in Pound's text obscurely signals its anti-epical dimension: a symbolic 'going East' of the Western epic, an attempt to escape the correlated epistemological and symbolic models" (145). But then, despite these assertions, Froula contradicts the earlier statement by saying that "The Cantos' anthropological array of fragmented images and its open form mark the end of the celebration of the closed culture."

As for the form of the Cantos, Froula continues that it "defeats our fantasies of wholeness, completion, and authority, no less than it did its author's" (158). Pointing out that the Cantos is not "an encyclopedic representation of modern culture" but "a 'ragbag' full of errors," Froula yet again praises Pound's style in the Pisan Cantos:

The Pisan style, broken as it is and full of errors and 'blanks', is yet an unsurpassed instru-

ment for recording what it helps us to know as history. It is in essence a chronicler's style, not a historian's. . . . And it is this metonymic Pisan style, alive to every chance and contingency--and not the metaphoric style of Canto 4--that best fulfills and 'redeems' Pound's desire, early and late, to write Paradise. . . . Insofar as the Pisan consciousness makes history as it makes cosmos, it writes into literary history the different paradise Pound sought. (159)

On the Form of the Pisan Cantos

According to Peter Ackroyd's book Ezra Pound and His World (New York, 1980), the Pisan Cantos, somewhat ironically, if not self-contradictorily, has both "open and structured form," which best reflects the "paradoxical temperament of the man" and "his condition in ten feet square and seven feet high gorilla cage" (86):

These new Cantos were now being written in the medical compound, as Pound reflected upon the destiny which had delivered him there. He had written, three years earlier, '[sic] We find two moments in history; one that divides, shatters and kills, and one that contemplates the unity of the mystery.' In this shattering moment, Pound was searching for the unity. . . . the poem was the

matrix of his life, giving notions (the form itself, both open and structured, perfectly suited the paradoxical temperament of the man).

Scientific Objectivity

In line with the ideogrammic method, a poetic technique that emphasizes the objectivity of each data (historical or emotional) expressed in a poem, some critics suggest that it is Pound's scientific objectivity, a philosophy, not necessarily a poetic style, in the Pisan Cantos that best explains the success of the sequence. For example, in his book Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor (New York, 1964), Donald Davie points out that in the sequence, Pound, unlike Romantic poets or Symbolists, does not identify himself with the natural objects: "We attend to natural landscape, not for the sake of delighting in it, nor for what it may tell us of supernatural purpose or design, but so that the imperious personality, seeing itself there reflected, may become the more conscious of its own power . . ." (174):

In fact, what lies behind a passage . . . is an attitude of mind that is incompatible with the symbolist poet's liberation of himself from the laws of time and space as those operate in the observable world. In order to achieve that liberation the poet had to forego any hope or conviction that the world outside himself was meaningful

precisely insofar as it existed in its own right, something other than himself and bodied against him. (174)

Davie continues that "the wasp retains its otherness as an independent form of life; it is only by doing so that it can be a source of comfort to the human observer" (177). And he concludes that this type of attitude in Pound is consistent with his aesthetics that a poet is a scientist:

This quality of tenderness, and this capacity for sympathetic identification with inhuman forms of life, make up an attitude of reverent vigilance before the natural world, an attitude which, if it is no longer the attitude of the physicist, is still surely the habit of the biologist, in the field and the laboratory alike.

In fact, other critics also view Pound's success in the Pisan Cantos as largely a result of a strong sense of detachment, the objectification and the distancing through the use of foreign language--French. For example, William Flemming goes so far as to say that "generalizing tendency of French Rationalism, now embedded now in the French language itself" helped Pound accomplish this distancing effect(147):

Ezra Pound, like the French Rationalists, increasingly has become committed in his methodology, which he took outside of poetry into the realm of

"thought," not to "things" (substantial realities, essence), but to "facts," bits of evidence, ideas. . . . And it is here too that so much twentieth-century poetry, largely under Pound's aegis, has come to lose significant direction. A legitimate fertile poetic technique, available for intelligent dramatic use--the juxtaposition of images and passages, without bridging mater--has been erected into an all-valid of rationation, resulting in the glorification of irrationality and incoherence. (147-8)

And finally Fleming insists that "Pound's eventual realization of this inner debt of his to the French language--its entrenched modalities" appears in the Pisan Cantos, "when he found it necessary to 'intrude' directly into the poem his own personal emotions . . . he eschewed English and composed directly in French" (148). Similarly, in her article "The End of The Cantos" (1987), Eva Hesse points out that Pound distances his personal emotion by escaping into foreign language:

And as was to be noticed earlier in The Pisan Cantos, which also contained a personal note albeit far more restrained, the unfailing sign of the poet's "going private" is his trick of alienating the emotion by switching to a strange language.

(25)

Linguistic Criticism

Pound scholars who had been influenced by modern linguists also have found Pound's poetic technique in the Cantos intriguing. Donald Davie's article "Res and Verba in Rock-Drill and After" (Ezra Pound. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987) shows how a mimetic view clashes against that of a structuralist (127-140). Pointing out that Pound's own stance in this regard is no doubt that of mimesis, Davie points out, nonetheless, that "Pound's own practice in the Cantos (throughout, but more markedly in the later sequences, Rock Drill and Thrones) lends itself more readily to explanation in structuralist [rather] than in mimetic terms" (127). He goes on to explain that "Pound's transitions seem to be frequently from verbum to verbum (by way of often translingual puns, fanciful etymologies, echoings of sound) with no appeal over long stretches to the res supposedly under discussion" (127). For example, Davie argues that "Pound moves often from signifier to signifier, leaving the signified to take care of itself."

Pound's poetic technique, Davie points out, rings closer to a "structuralist assumption than a mimetic approach" although Davie himself recognizes "difficulties in the way of the structuralist" (128). According to Davie, such a self-contradictory practice becomes even more apparent when Pound writes his Pisan sequence:

First of these [difficulties] is the assumption, made by most structuralists though not all, that there is a radical breach between "the modern" and all previous centuries of verse-writing. Typical is John Steven Childs [Pai, 9, 2]: "it is not the interactions of characters which afford meaning in Modernist literature; it is the mental character of the writer/narrator himself which orders events and feelings." Or again, "Modern poetry, eschewing directly social or didactic functions, is based on the exploitation of non-referential discourse." Both of these dicta plainly go against the bent of Pound's temperament, so imbued with pietas towards the recorded and inherited past, so ready to risk the didactic, and so vowed--until the Pisan experience in some degree compelled otherwise--to avoid the overtly and unashamedly "subjective." (128)

In the end, however, Davie proves himself to be a Poundian. Like Pound, Davie too asserts that mimetic approach must take precedence over that of structuralist in the examination of the Cantos:

. . . much as structuralist criticism can illuminate for us what is going on in many pages of The Cantos, and however much non-structuralist criticism must refine its assumptions so as to allow

for this, yet in the end Pound's claim to attend to res not verba can be, and must be vindicated; and that a thoroughgoing or dogmatic structuralism milks this text, as presumably any other, of human pathos and human significance. (139)

Summary

As I have demonstrated, critics have so far formulated numerous stylistic analyses on Pound's poetic technique in the Pisan Cantos. Assuredly, there are more such critical approaches in the making. All these critical diversities attest to the hard fact that Pound's Pisan Cantos, a masterpiece of Modernism, deserves an extensive and intensive critical attention just as other Modern classics, such as The Waste Land and Ulysses, do. All these approaches--"the ideogrammic method," "crystalline lyricism," "scientific objectivity," "Noh influences," "the unwobbling presence of the authorial voice," "concrete poetry," "the intentional obscurity," etc--are mere attempts to single out one major characteristic of Pound's poetic technique in the sequence. Consequently, they cannot, as individual concepts, discuss the poetic technique in its entirety. Keeping such a complexity associated with Pound's poetic technique in mind, I will briefly digress into a similar topic that will further explore the relationship between the ideogrammic method and other concepts in poetry.

Notes

1. Kenner explains that every stage of study of a great writer is interconnected and will eventually bring the nodal point:

Every great writer operates from some such node. It is the point--to change the metaphor--at which the local operation of words in lines and passages becomes continuous with the operation of passages in the main design, and of whole works in the poise and thrust of a lifetime's output. To see, for instance, a hierarchy of parodies in the sentence as in the situation as in the book, in the book as in the cycle, is to occupy the point of leverage in the world of James Joyce. Pound has made it especially easy to locate this point in his own work, by telling us repeatedly what and where its it.
(P 14)

2. According to my research, the Pisan Cantos so far has evaded any book-length criticism.

3. Timothy Materer "Ezra Pound: On American and World War I." Paideuma. 18-1&2 (Spring & Fall 1989): 207-14.

4. In my opinion, in this particular instance, the critic did not fully "surrender" himself to the world of the writer whom he studies and examines, a quintessential attitude for any good critic as Kenner astutely points out:

One cannot 'place' a poet by one's maturest standards (not merely literary standards) until one has first surrendered oneself to his world, and scrupulous critical rigor is frequently no more than a mask of the self-possession that will not make that surrender. (P 15)

5. Bernstein, among others, points out that it was in fact Baudlaire who tried to "purge the deadening, accumulated weight of new-classical or romantic rhetoric" and it was he who enabled Modern poets (particularly Pound) to express the "intrinsically sordid and 'unpoetic'" materials (6).

6. rpt. from Donald Davie's Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor (New York: Oxford Up, 1964), but originally from Charles Norman's Ezra Pound (New York, 1960): 412-14.

7. rpt. from "Image, Word, and Sign: The Visual Arts as Evidence in Ezra Pound's Cantos." Ezra Pound. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987. 161.

8. rpt. from Ezra Pound, Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts (New York: New Directions, 1980, p. 151).

9. Wayne C. Booth also recognizes the important distinction between the techniques of telling and showing in modern fiction (The Rhetoric of Fiction Chicago and London: U of Chicago, 1961, p. 3).

10. Hugh Kenner has done such a monumental job in his pioneering work The Pound Era (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971) where he demonstrates how the ideogrammic method works in the Pisan Cantos. Therefore, I will not repeat here what Kenner has done better else- where.

11. Thompson incorporates numerous ideas into his own assertions, often directly quoting from various sources which he identifies in his article. The following quotations are a synthesis of sort, directly quoted from both Thompson and his various sources. I took the liberty of not identifying all the sources because they all originate from Thompson's article.

12. Remember, it was Pound himself who suggested that "we throw out all critics who use vague general terms. Not merely those who use vague terms because they are too ignorant to have a meaning; but the critics who use vague terms to conceal their meaning, and all critics who use terms so vaguely that the reader can think he agrees with them or assents to their statements when he doesn't" (LE 37). And also it was he who repeatedly stressed the importance of using the right definition:

'Unless a term is left meaning one particular thing, and unless all attempt to unify different things, however small the difference, is clearly abandoned, all metaphysical thought degenerates into a soup. A soft terminology is merely an endless series of indefinite middles.' (Make It New 389 [rpt. from Kenner's The Poetry of Ezra Pound 47])

13. The journalist from the Saturday of Review of Literature attested to this fact:

. . . No one who wasn't with Pound in the United States Army Disciplinary Training Center near Pisa from May to October of 1945 could possibly guess-- it is made any difference--that "God's messenger Whitehead" was not a Harvard philosopher but a negro turn-key; that "Washington, Adams, Tyler and Polk" were not presidents of the United States but Negro prisoners; that "the Lane gang" was not a gang but a squad of incorrigibles; that "Steele

that is one awful name" refers to the stockade commander, a lieutenant colonel of infantry otherwise unknown to letters. And no one who wasn't fresh from graduate work in English, French, Anglo-Saxon and the literary gossip of London in the First World War would know that one "Willy" is Collette, another "willy" is Yeats and a third "Willy" is Villars (if, in fact, they are) or that "sumne fugol othbaer" is an Anglo-Saxon quotation from The Wanderer. . . . (MacLeish 3-4)

14. Originally from Polite Essays (London: Faber and Faber, 1938. p.193), rpt. in Kenner's The Poetry of Ezra Pound (50).

15. As William H. Pritchard points out, Pound spent his entire life fighting against the messiness of language in poetry:

My conviction . . . is that we are dealing with a man who throughout his life had a penchant for making strong, incisive distinctions, like a sculptor impressing on his material the form of a mind; a poet who--because he believed that poetry should "present" things, and whose virtuous terms were "simplicity," "juxtaposed images," "hardness," "clarity of definition," the mot juste. (168)

16. In his article "Thoughts That Join Like Spokes: Pound's Image of Apollinaire" (Pai, 18, 1989), Willard Bohn attempts to draw even a closer relationship between Pound and Apollinaire than Thompson does. But Bohn points out nonetheless that "While it is true that Apollinaire called his first visual poems 'ideogrammes lyriques,' Pound's experiments with ideographic technique antedate his [Apollinaire's] own by some two years" (143).

17. rpt. from "The Barb of Time." Ezra Pound. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987. 41-56.

CHAPTER IV

THOUGHTS ON FUNDAMENTAL POETIC PRINCIPLE AND ITS IDEOGRAMMIC OPERATIONS

In the preceding chapter, I have briefly considered fundamental operations of both the Chinese ideogram and the so-called ideogrammic method in Modern Poetry. I have demonstrated, in particular, how the ancient Chinese communicated themselves using a written composite of jumbled pictures (ideograms), whose disparate units of pictures offered a common denominator of meaning to the ready, informed reader. I have also suggested that, as a poetic technique, such a method of jumbling, or juxtaposing, or super-imposing disparate pictures together (the ideogrammic method) attracted Modern Poets in general and Pound in particular.

On the surface, the ideogrammic method as a poetic technique appears to be an idiosyncratic characteristic unique only to the Chinese language. This point, however, is not true. Assuming that graphic representations of languages, at one point or another, originated from various kinds of primitive picture-language, then the writing systems we use today must have once been a system of crude pictures of animals, stars, trees, sun, moon, and so on. For instance, one can generalize that the Egyptian hieroglyphic, a system of pictorial symbols, which were used to represent words or sounds, is a linguistic cousin to the

Chinese ideograms in the development of graphic representation of language.

The fact that a language was originally a system of pictures bespeaks itself to the fundamental workings of poetry on the one hand and the operation of the Chinese ideograms on the other, simply because a writing system in essence, as far as it is not alphabetized, must have been a pictorial representation, as in the Egyptian hieroglyphic as well as in the Chinese ideograms: a system of pictorial drawings that record the human cognition of our various ontological circumstances. In a sweeping generalization, poetry records (representation) man's awareness (cognition) of his ontological circumstances; similarly, the primitive picture language does also record the savage's awareness of his environment, another issue of cognition and representation. Just as the symbol (the signifier) a poet uses no longer is the thing (the signified) itself, the picture drawn by the savage is a mere representation of the signified. Both signifiers in either case attempt to conjure up the signified through simplified representation of the thing signified (or represented). In this regard, one may easily argue that the picture language of the savage was the first recorded poetry. Indeed, as Pound points out, "Poetry only does consciously what the primitive races did unconsciously" (Instigations 378).

In his A B C of Reading, Pound expounds on the quintes-

stantial difference between the Egyptian hieroglyphics and the Chinese ideograms thus:

The Egyptians finally used abbreviated pictures to represent sounds, but the Chinese still use abbreviated pictures AS pictures, that is to say, Chinese ideogram does not try to be the picture of a sound, or to be a written sign recalling a sound, but it is still the picture of a thing; of a thing in a given position or relation, or of a combination of things. It means the thing or the action or situation, or quality germane to the several things that it pictures. (21)

Assuming that all the graphic representations of languages started as pictorial drawings, then, they must have been a kind of poetry themselves: a system of signifiers that conjures up the images of the signified, however arbitrarily. Perhaps, one of the major differences between the rudimentary pictographs of the primitives and languages we use today is the degree of systematization and simplification of the signs themselves. Due to this pictorial aspect of the Chinese ideogram, Pound notes that "Gaudier Brzeska, who was accustomed to looking at the real shape of things, could read a certain amount of Chinese writing without ANY STUDY [sic]. He said, 'Of course, you can see it's a horse' (or a wing or whatever)" (ABC 21).

Since I am not a linguist, I cannot remain much longer

on this topic, yet my common sense tells me that the farther we regress back to the past, the more rudimentary the graphic representation of a language must be getting. And pursuing this line of argument, then, there must have been a time when the signifier and the signified were one and the same.

Theoretically, this view postulates a prelapsarian world of the sort in which its writing system has yet to succumb to the process of adulteration: the irreparable divorce of meaning between the signifier and the signified. At this point, the graphic representation of the language has yet to go through the stages associated with its evolution of which Northrop Frye speaks: (Revelation)---Metaphor---Metonymy---Descriptive Writing---[Fourth Phase] (26). Or, to use T. S. Eliot's dictum, it has yet to suffer from the cancer called "dissociation of sensibility" (64).¹

According to Frye, the Bible presents us a prime example of the first metaphorical phase of language:-----

The origins of the Bible are in the first metaphorical phase of language, but much of the Bible is contemporary with the second-phase separation of the dialectical from the poetic, as its metonymic "God" in particular indicates. Its poetic use of language obviously does not confine it to the literary category, but it never falls wholly into the conventions of the second phase. There

are no true rational arguments in the Bible, not even in the New Testament, which despite its late date keeps very close to the Old Testament in its attitude toward language. What may look like rational argument, such as the Epistle to the Hebrews, turns out on closer analysis to be a disguised form of exhortation. Nor is there much functional use of abstraction. (27)

On the other hand, however, to Pound and Fenollosa, the Chinese ideograms did not evolve beyond the metaphorical phase: to them, the Chinese ideograms were arrested in that stage of evolution:

But Chinese notation is something much more than arbitrary symbols. It is based upon a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature. In the algebraic figure and in the spoken word there is no natural connection between thing and sign: all depends upon sheer convention. But the Chinese method follows natural suggestion. [人 見



] First stands the man on his two legs. Second, his eye moves through space: a bold figure represented by running legs under an eye, a modified picture of an eye, a modified picture of running legs but unforgettable once you have seen it. Third stands the horse on his four legs. The thought picture is not only called up by these

signs as well as by words but far more vividly and concretely. Legs belong to all three character: they are alive. The group holds something of the quality of a continuous moving picture.

(Instigations 363)

On the importance of the last point, Pound further asserts that "One superiority of verbal poetry as an art rests in its getting back to the fundamental reality of time. Chinese poetry has the unique advantage of combining both elements. It speaks at once with the vividness of painting, and with the mobility of sounds" (363). Therefore, "reading Chinese we do not seem to be juggling mental counters, but to be watching things work out their own fate" (363).

My point then is that the graphic representation of the language itself, as a sign or symbol (of the signified), at its conception, was a kind of poetry of pictures. As a poem does, language in the pictorial stage, too, registers externally and visually our cognition of various ontological circumstances.

Following this line of argument a little further, then, one can see a foundation for the claim that the primitive picture-language itself was the first poetry of mankind. To Pound, the Chinese ideograms, being arrested at the metaphoric stage in the scheme of Frye's linguistic evolution, still retained the rudiment characteristics and power of

such primitive picture-languages.²

In his book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (London, 1962), Thomas S. Kuhn notes that revolutionary ideas usually come from an individual who is fresh and relatively new in any given field of study because, as an outsider, he/she has yet to be brainwashed by the old system of thoughts and paradigms in that given area of interest (90).³ Pound was one such revolutionary for the pictograph. He did not grow up speaking Chinese; yet, his view as an accomplished poet about the workings of the Chinese ideograms was as creative as that of the ancient Chinese who first invented the ideograms. Hence, his insight was revolutionary. According to Pound, this poetic ability to instantly seize up the hidden associative power among sundry objects cannot be taught:

This active, instant and present awareness is NOT handed out in colleges and by the system of public and/or popular education. In this domain the individual will remain, individualism will remain, without any theoretical and ideological bulwarks.

(GK 52)

Pound's emphasis on individualistic poetic genius, in fact, echoes Aristotle's assertion that a great poet possesses an inner vision that perceives a binding resemblance among sundry things.⁴

To Fenollosa and Pound, then, what was truly remarkable

about the Chinese ideograms was that they were sort of living fossils of language, fossils which still reveal the long-forgotten pattern and operation of the primitive graphic representation of the language. Indeed, as Kenner points out in The Pound Era, Pound "could see that Chinese written characters are neither archaic nor modern. Like cave paintings they exist now, with the strange extra-temporal persistence of objects in space" (31).

Therefore, the revelation discovered in the graphic representation of the Chinese ideograms throws lights and insights to our understanding not only of the origins of writing systems but also of our own cognition process itself, yet another point Kenner notes in The Poetry of Ezra Pound (76-94). In short, the Chinese saved the language by not adopting the alphabet system of the West and by holding fast onto the awkward tradition of time-consuming drawing-writing that often blotches one's sleeves with sooty ink. Therefore, depending on one's point of view, one may assert that the alphabetization is the father of all evil, since, among others, it accelerated the process of divorce of the signifiers from the signified.

In their pioneering work The Medium is the Massage (New York and London: Bantam books, 1967), Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, in fact, illustrate how the alphabetization of the graphic representation accelerated the process of cultural fragmentation:

Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication. The alphabet . . . is a technology that is absorbed by the very young child in a completely unconscious manner, by osmosis so to speak. Words and the meaning of words predispose the child to think and act automatically in certain ways. The alphabet and print technology fostered and encouraged a fragmenting process, a process of specialism and of detachment. . . . (8)

According to their theory, consequently, the influence of the alphabet in the Western world cannot be overemphasized:

Western history was shaped for some three thousand years by the introduction of the phonetic alphabet [sic], a medium that depends solely on the eye for comprehension. The alphabet is a construct of fragmented bits and parts which have no semantic meaning in themselves, and which must be strung together in a line, bead-like, and in a prescribed order. Its use fostered and encouraged the habit of perceiving all environment in visual and spatial terms
--particularly in terms of space and of a time that are uniform. . . . (44)

In this chapter, pressing on this line of thought, I shall briefly consider how the so-called ideogrammic method as a poetic technique, which appears to be uniquely Chinese, stands in the larger context of Western literature as a whole. I believe that this seeming digression bears much significance to my overall thesis in the long run. Through this investigation, I aim to prove that the same powerful impulse that drives underneath the operation of the Chinese ideograms has, in fact, driven, as the single most important force, the poetry of mankind.

Ever since I came across the Poundian concept of the ideogrammic method, I have always been fascinated by the striking similarities between the ideogrammic method and numerous poetic concepts in the Western literature, especially in the English poetics. For example, when Aristotle contends that the [innate] poetic ability of a poet that enables him/her to find a resemblance among dissimilar things marks the genius of a great poet, he, in essence, explained, however inadvertently, the very operation of an ideogram:

It is a great matter to observe propriety in these several modes of expression as also in compound words, strange (or rare) words, and so forth. But the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another; it is the mark of genius, for to make good

metaphors implies an eye for resemblances. (rpt. from Adams, Critical Theory Since Plato 62)

Kenner explains the Aristotlean metaphor thus: "Metaphor, as Aristotle tells us . . . affirms that four things (not two) are so related that A is to B as C is to D" (Poetry 87). He continues that "when we say 'The [sic] ship ploughs the waves', we aren't calling a ship a plough," but rather, "we are rather intuitively perceiving the similarity in two dissimilar actions: 'The ship does to the waves what a plough does to the ground'" (87):

No perception of the vivid little multiple plot here presented in two lines is possible to a sensibility blinkered by analysis in the fashionable terms of 'tenor' and 'vehicle', for which metaphor, or imagism, becomes simply a circuitous way of saying something else: 'The Day has dawned.' The latter is abstraction. The former ['The ship ploughs the waves'] is the mind feeding on particulars. (Poetry 88)

In a similar vein, then, consider, for example, Pound's own explanation about the operation of an ideogram, which echoes what Aristotle said a long time ago. In his ABC of Reading (New Directions, 1960), as I have already pointed out in the preceding chapter, Pound explains that when an ancient Chinese wanted to signify the abstract concept "red," he put together the abbreviated pictures of ROSE,

IRON RUST, CHERRY, and FLAMINGO in a composite drawing, an ideogram (ABC 22). Obviously, to the uninformed, ordinary mind, ROSE, IRON RUST, CHERRY, and FLAMINGO are disparate things, having nothing in common. While arguing that "the purpose of writing is to reveal the subject," Pound similarly explains the ideogrammic method as follows:

The ideogrammic method consists of presenting one facet and then another until at some point one gets off the dead and desensitized surface of the reader's mind, onto a part that will register.

(GK 51)

Going back to the discussion of an ideogram, one must possess almost a poetic eye⁵ to be able to recognize the concept of "red" in this set of dissimilar components--"an acute intuition of their [things] similarity and dissimilarity" (Kenner, Poetry 91), that would enable one's mind to perceive the "resemblances" among them: i.e. the RED, the metaphor. "To escape a word or a set of words loaded up with dead association," Pound points out that "Frobenius uses the term Paideuma for the tangle or complex of the inrooted ideas of any period" (GK 57), a term Pound himself redefines as "the gristly roots of ideas that are in action" (58). Indeed, when a society employs a set of words that retain the maximum power of their associations, as the ideogram RED does here, then, for Pound, the network of "the gristly roots of ideas" is activated i.e. it is "not the

Zeitgeist but the total Paideuma that is anti-usura" (GK 109).

In his recent article "Pound, Leibnitz and China" (Pai, 19, 35), in fact, Peter Crisp argues that the Chinese thinking is ideogrammic in essence, a peculiar logic or a unique mode of thought that is drastically different from that of the West:

The Chinese did not think in terms of a personal God who commanded things, externally coercing them, but rather of things spontaneously co-operating with each other, of each thing freely fitting into the overall pattern of the parallel. . .

. (35)

Similarly, Wallace Stevens, too, has noted that "One must have a mind of winter / To regard the frost and the boughs / Of the pine-trees crusted with snow" because "For the listener, who listens in the snow, / And, nothing himself, beholds / Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is" (9).⁶ Here both the Chinese and Stevens are addressing the same fundamental issue of cognition. To recognize such a resemblance among disparate things, one must indeed possess a mind that conceives the RED:

Art does not "happen." The vision that made it is part of it. The eye of vision sees systems of connectedness; this may not be that, but it has the same structure. A bull's form, some drawn

lines, are so similar that we "recognize" a picture of a bull, but part of the picture is the mind that conceived it. (Kenner, Poetry 33)

In my opinion, William Carlos Williams' much anthologized and criticized poem "The Red Wheelbarrow" operates in a very similar way: i.e. through a system of connectedness. The sense of RED comes alive ["happens"] thanks largely to the system of connectedness through the fact that it is "glazed with rain / water / beside the white / chickens."

Now having just cited Kenner above, I recognize that his statement, particularly toward the end, borders on the now-popular philosophy of Deconstruction, provided that one defines Deconstruction as a critical theory which holds that we, as readers, bring meanings to the text, which in itself stands blank, like a tabula rasa, having no meaning whatsoever by itself.⁷ Kenner's perception is right: "the eyes of the vision must see a system of connectedness." In passing, according to James Burke, the author of The Day The Universe Changed (Boston and Toronto, 1985), we indeed see largely what we know:

. . . the brain imposes visual order on chaos by grouping sets of signals, rearranging them, or rejecting them, Reality is what the brain makes it. The same basic mechanism functions for the other senses. This imposition of the hypothesis on an experience is what causes optical illusions. It

also modifies all forms of perception at all levels of complexity. To quote Wittgenstein once more, 'You see what you want to see.' (308)

The "Metaphoric Principle" of the Chinese ideogram then is strikingly similar to what Aristotle says in the earlier quotation. As Kenner rightly points out, "Aristotle's mimesis, which is inseparable from his account of perception, is related to the transfers of force between words in a passage of poetry" (Poetry 88), one of the most idiosyncratic characteristics of the Chinese ideogram.

Again, as Kenner points out, the Chinese ideograms, as composites of pictures, provides a moving picture, a force in them. Consider, as I have already illustrated earlier, the Chinese ideograms for "Man sees horse [人見馬]," for example:

First stands the man on his two legs [人].
 Second, his eye [目] moves through space; a bold figure represented by running legs [儿] under an eye, a modified picture of an eye, a modified picture of running legs but unforgettable once you have seen it. Third stands the horse on four legs [馬]. . . . Legs belong to all three characters; they are alive. The group holds something of the character of a continuous motion picture. (Poetry 88)⁸

To say the least, this deductive method--presenting raw

data (such as ROSE, CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO) from nature without any intrusive comment--does indeed coincide with Pound's much-embraced aesthetic of the **scientific method** in poetry writing (ABC 26):

He [the ancient Chinese] is to define red. How can he do it in a picture that isn't painted in red pain? He puts (or his ancestor put) together the abbreviated pictures of

ROSE, CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO

That, you see, is very much the kind of thing a biologist does (in a very much more complicated way) when he gets together a few hundred or thousand slides, and picks out what is necessary for his general statement. Something that fits the case, that applies in all of the cases. (ABC 22)

Therefore,

The proper **METHOD** for studying poetry and good letters is the method of contemporary biologists, that is careful first-hand examination of the matter, and continual **COMPARISON** of one 'slide' or specimen with another . . . By this method modern science has arisen, not on the narrow edge of medieval logic suspended in a vacuum. (ABC 17-18)

The ideogrammic method shows and never tells. While pointing out that "in the history of Pound's career, movement toward the theory of the ideogram . . . has proceeded thus: image>vortex>ideogram," Roy Harvey Pearce, too, notices the non-discursiveness in the ideogrammic method:

That he successively refined his theory of the image and its functioning until he arrived at a stage where he felt that language itself could be made to work non-discursively (or, as we have been recently urged to say, presentationally); that the crucial catalyst in this segment of the history of his thought is his discovery of the possibilities of Chinese as a language which still worked, to a significant measure, pre- (or infra-) discursively; that although his theories are wrong according to even the most charitable of sinologists, they nonetheless are right for the kind of poem he aspires toward. (94)

Obviously, to Pound, the ideogrammic method was an extremely objective poetic technique, one reason why it strongly appealed to the aesthetics of Modern Poetry, in particular the concept of Impersonality, such as Eliot embodies in his works.

To be quickly able to perceive the meaning among disconnected things, then a good poet must possess an acute eye [an inner vision] that enables him to see "resemblances" in

disparate things, one of the most quintessential ingredients necessary in the operation of any good poem in any given literary era. Indeed, a good metaphor works like a lightning that suddenly pierces into the darkness of a storm that blankets many sundry, disparate things invisible, uniting them together under one flash of instant visibility: a moment in which all sundry objects are charged by this sudden electricity of meaning. Alexander Schmitz goes so far as to liken this instant visibility of meaning in Pound's Cantos to a musical chord: "the ideogrammic structure (of the single image, the single poem. the single canto, single groups of cantos, and finally all cantos taken together) mirrors the structure of the musical chord" (Pai, 20, 46). Then, Schmitz further identifies his musical chord (i.e. the clarity of ideogrammic metaphor) with Matrix Schwartz's "'visual chord'" (73), a key image that brings in a sudden cohesiveness among seemingly disconnected images.⁹

When I stated that a good metaphor, one that works on four different levels as Kenner insisted earlier, is like lightening that offers a sudden visibility (clarity) of meaning among chaotic, dissimilar elements, I realize that I have reiterated Pound's definition of an Image, a concept that later becomes Vortex in his aesthetics:

"An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time," or
 "an instantaneous presentation of a 'complex'"

which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the great works of art" (LE 4).

In essence, therefore, an Image is an ideogram. An ideogram is bound by the power of lightening metaphoric meaning: within an ideogram, a number of various elements are almost shouting their common characteristics. When a Chinese finds this common denominator among disparate things, he/she can feel the sense of sudden growth, the sudden sense of freedom from time and space, as Pound speaks of. Similarly, a good poet must be able to bring the electrifying, epiphanical moment, a sudden jolt of mind-opening hereto unknown, to various dissimilar things that seem, as Aristotle said, totally unrelated to one another. In Pound's words, therefore, an Image becomes a Vortex, and never a stationary image as in much-denounced Amygism:

The vortex is the point of maximum energy. It represents, in mechanics, the greatest efficiency. . . . You may think of man as that toward which perception moves. You may think of him as the TOY of circumstance, as the plastic substance RECEIVING impressions. OR you may think of him as DIRECTING a certain fluid force against circumstance, as CONCEIVING instead of merely observing

and reflecting. (CP 434)

Likewise, to communicate effectively, the Chinese, therefore, must feel this sense of Image or Vortex, the force of maximum energy that binds and runs through a set of dissimilar objects such as ROSE, CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO in the ideogram of "Red."

"Red," in this sense becomes the metaphoric binding principle, the "primary pigment" (CP 435), as Pound explains the concept: "Every conception, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form." In fact, one can safely summarize Pound's involvement with Vorticism as a sincere effort of a poet to maintain the primary pigment throughout his poetry:

It is the picture that means a hundred poems, the music that means a hundred pictures, the most highly energized statement, the statement that has not yet SPENT itself its [sic] expression, but which is the most capable of expressing. (CP 435)

Later, in the same argument, Pound reiterates the importance of the primary pigment in poetry as follows: "The vorticist will use only the primary media of his art. The primary pigment of poetry is the **IMAGE**."

That sudden electrifying jolt of enlightenment bringing together the essential sameness of disparate things is exactly how an ideogram operates: the RED among ROSE,

CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO. The RED, as the primary pigment of the ideogram, brings in an epiphany of meaning. The careful and ready reader feels the current running through these dissimilar pictures. As long as one can find that binding principle under which all these pictures are jumbled together, the meaning is rendered like thunder. Indeed, a good metaphor operates by the same principle: the discovery of resemblances among things that are often outrageously dissimilar. The more dissimilar, the better, in fact. In essence, the Chinese ideogram may be considered as a metaphor.

Furthermore, Aristotle's careful word choice "an eye for resemblances" (my emphasis) is very significant in that almost all ideograms depend for their primary pigment [meaning] upon the visual patterns they contain. The visual orientation of Modern Poetry, it seems to me, results from, among others, modern poets' interests in and influences from the Chinese ideogram (particularly Pound's, who was the leader of the pack), a system of language that still functions through pictorial images. In fact, strengthening this notion of the "visible" leanings of the Modernists, Reed Way Dasenbrock goes as far as to claim that "in modernism, all art aspires towards the condition of painting" (5), an important topic that I shall discuss further in the following chapter.

By no means, however, am I the first one to note the

striking similarities between the Chinese ideograms and the Aristotlean poetics. In fact, Hugh Kenner has already pointed out clearly and abundantly such similarity in his seminal book The Poetry of Ezra Pound (Chapters 7-10 in particular):

The example of cinema makes it easy to see how a concatenation of images adds up to Aristotle's paraxis. It should also remind us of Pound's caution against supposing that by 'image' here is meant something stationary, snapshotted, only. To the statement that the presented image is the perfectly adequate expression or exposition of any urge, one has only to add the moving image. . . .
(Poetry 61)

Having thus identified the Poundian Image with the Aristotlean paraxis, Kenner also demonstrates how T. S. Eliot's concept "objective correlative" (PE 61), another important concept in the poetics of the Western literature, in essence, reflects the same idea as Pound's "moving image" :

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative" ; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience,

are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.

(Selected Prose 48)

Correspondingly, as Kenner correctly recognizes (Poetry 61), the connection between Eliot's objective correlative and the Poundian concept of "human emotions as an equation of inspired mathematics" (SR 14) is undeniable:

Poetry is a sort of inspired mathematics, which gives us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres, and the like, but equations for the human emotions. If one have a mind which inclines to magic rather than science, one will prefer to speak of these equations as spells or incantations; it sounds more arcane, mysterious, recondite. Speaking generally, the spells or equations of "classic" art invoke the beauty of the normal, and spells of "romantic" art are said to invoke the beauty of the unusual. (SR 14)

Indeed, Eliot's objective correlative--the rising of particular emotion through a set of [particular] objects and events--echoes the Poundian "mathematical equations of human emotions." Similarly, one can further assert that in the ideogram RED, the RED, an objective correlative, can be a "mathematical equation" among ROSE, CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO. Therefore, in essence, the ideogram, the objective correlative, and the inspired mathematics share undeniable common characteristics as poetic concepts.

It is then apparent that Eliot's "objective correlative" strikingly resembles the operation of the Chinese ideogram. More specifically, consider the ideogram RED: the particular emotion or the concept of RED comes through "a set of objects," such as ROSE, CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO, as a kind of objective correlative. Consider yet another example. The much honored ideogram by Pound "Ming" (明 [4534])¹⁰, a compound noun of the sun (日) and the moon (月) carries the "objective correlative" of brightness or illumination. Yet a third example is the ideogram meaning adultery (姦). Individually, the ideogram (女) means a woman; hence, if a man possesses more than three women at one time connotes the "objective correlative" of committing adultery. The list goes on.

The striking resemblance in the operation of various poetic concepts, such as the Chinese ideogram, the Aristotlean metaphor, the Poundian human emotions as mathematic equation, the primary pigment, Image, Vortex, the ideogrammic method, and Eliot's objective correlative, in fact, does not stop here. Consider, the Anglo-Saxon poetic concept known as "kenning," for instance. Again as Kenner notes (Poetry 89), the ideogrammic method of presenting raw data from nature, without any intrusive, authorial comments, becomes apparent in "kenning" :

Pound, it may be recalled, discovered Chinese after translating Anglo-Saxon. The Anglo-Saxon

scholar's term for just such a vivid figure is 'kenning': the particulars by which the person or object in question is known. 'Whale-road,' 'soul-bearer,' are both ideogram and metaphor. (Poetry 89)

"Kenning," as a figure of speech, indeed compounds two nouns, such as "the bent-necked wood," "the ringed prow," "the foamy-necked," "the sea-wood," and the "sea-farer," for ship; "the swan-road" and "the whale road" for the sea; the "leavings of the file" for the sword; the "storm of swords" for the battle; and the "peace-bringer among nations" for the queen.¹¹

Just as in the Chinese ideograms, the Anglo-Saxon keening also combines two or more nouns in order to produce a third meaning, which is independent of the two individual components. To signify the East (東), for example, the Chinese ideogram compounds two nouns, the tree [木] and the sun [日]. In these two different techniques of compounding nouns, one must, however, note that the final meaning (i.e. the metaphoric image) must never be a stationary image. The former is alive; but, the latter is dead. Kenner accurately differentiates this metaphoric, associative power of Poundian Image (the former) from the stationary image (the latter, i.e. an image in Amygism):

The Chinese ideograph, like the metaphor, deals in exceedingly condensed juxtapositions. But it

should not be thought that it is an overhaul of diction alone that is in question. Otherwise the impact of Fenollosa on Pound would have bred merely picturesque phraseology of the Hopkins order. Poetic method, on the contrary is all of a piece; if the principles that are carried out in detail do not extend to the organization of the whole, the relation of images to poem remains that of plums to cake. . .so a metaphoric mode of perception of things implies about it the organization of an entire poem. (Poetry 89)

Furthermore, pressing this line of thoughts, Kenner argues that it was Japanese hokku "with which Pound experimented extensively in his Lustra volume, [that] contains the condensed essence of all poetic expression" (Poetry 90). Through the hokku's structural juxtaposition, he continues, "things illuminate one another, and gear dramatically with juxtaposed (i.e. complex) emotions (Poetry 90)." In the footnote, Kenner further explains that the act of illumination, "this releasing of intelligibility enforces Aristotle's remark that in the best poetic actions peripeteia and 'discovery' are simultaneous (Poetics, XI)."

Kenner goes so far as to contend that a poet can employ the ideogrammic method as an essential poetic technique:

As things are set in relation in metaphor, according to an acute intuition of their similarity and

dissimilarity, so actions, passions, places, times, blocks of experience are set in relation in a more extended poem. This is as true of the hokku as of the epic, of King Lear as of the Cantos.

(Poetry 91)

Now, having thus considered the unmistakable resemblances between the ideogrammic method and various Western poetic concepts, I would like to consider yet another major poetic concept: "metaphysical conceit," a dominant poetic concept in Seventeenth Century English literature.

According to M. H. Abrams' A Glossary of Literary Terms (4th ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981), the word "conceit" originally meant "a concept or image, which now means figures of speech which establish a striking parallel--usually an elaborate parallel--between two apparently dissimilar things or situations" (28). The very definition of conceit--"a striking parallel between two dissimilar things or situation"--no doubt echoes the Aristotlean metaphoric resemblances in disparate things.

Furthermore, according to Dr. Samuel Johnson's own definition of the term, a metaphysical conceit is "a kind of disconcordia concors; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. . . The most heterogenous ideas are yoked by violence together."¹² Abrams points out that one of "the most famous sustained conceit is," of course, "Donne's parallel

(in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning") between the continuing relationship of his and his lady's soul, despite their physical parting, to the coordinated movements of the two feet of a draughtsman's compass" (29).

Indeed, Donne's poetic inner vision that enabled him to recognize the parallel between the abstract notion of love and the concrete operation in the object of a compass is extraordinary and fresh. Such a striking conceit also occurs in the operation of the Chinese ideograms. Going back to the original example Pound used, consider once again the metaphysical conceit of sort in the ideogram of RED. As I have already repeatedly pointed out the ideogram consists of ROSE, CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO, most heterogenous objects. But the metaphoric illumination of RED serves indeed as a kind of discordia concors, a discovery of occult (my emphasis) resemblances in things apparently unlike, thus yoking the most heterogenous ideas by violence together.

Consider, for instance, one of the most complicated ideograms Pound employs throughout the Cantos. In Canto 84, Pound uses "Ling" [SPIRIT] (靈) in order to illustrate the harmony flowing from heaven (the divine) to earth (the human). The ideogram means among others spirit and it is a composite of pictures, such as HEAVEN [天], RAIN [雨], RAIN DROPS [雨] or MOUTH [口] by Pound,¹³ and ALTER [巫]. These seeming dissimilar objects, in fact, render themselves a discordia concors to

the informed and ready reader, as combined together, they stand for SPIRIT.

Having thus considered some interesting relationships in the operation of the ideogrammic method between the Chinese ideograms and the Anglo-Saxon poetic concept kenning and the Seventeenth Century poetic technique the "metaphysical conceit," now I move on to yet another critical poetic concept of the nineteenth century: fancy and imagination. In his famed Biographia Literaria (Chapter XIII),¹⁴ Samuel Taylor Coleridge delineates imagination from fancy:

The IMAGINATION then, I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead. (516)

"The primary IMAGINATION," then, according to Coleridge, is "the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM," a concept that is, of course, in a sweeping generalization, strikingly identical to the Neo-Platonic IDEA, or ANIMA MUNDI [NOUS],¹⁵ or the Lao-tze's TAO (in particular, when we consider the meaning of TAO as the supreme principle of the universe whose manifestations are many). Whether Coleridge's primary IMAGINATION is similar to Lao-tze's TAO deserves another treatise. Rather, what concerns me here is Coleridge's idea of "the secondary Imagination" and "FANCY."

Coleridge argues that "the secondary Imagination dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create," and it is "essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead." Similarly, the operation of the Chinese ideograms and the ideogrammic method can be regarded as a mode of cognition that provides an essential vitality among fixed and dead objects. The metaphor RED enlivens the fixed and dead objects such as ROSE, CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO, for instance. Indeed, these objects will become dead and fixed objects, without serving as the Poundian "luminous details," if they do not have the vital associative power of RED.

Furthermore, according to Coleridge, "FANCY," a different percept from his IMAGINATION, has no such vitality

nor the metaphoric associative power:

FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its material ready made from the law of association.

Then, Pound's Image--"that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (LE 4)--is organic¹⁶ like Coleridge's "secondary Imagination."

Pound's Image is a "'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits" (LE 4). Just as Coleridge's "secondary Imagination dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to re-create, to idealize, and to unify," Pound's Image also congeals and coagulates as a coherent, organic vitality.

In a similar vein, M. H. Abrams, paraphrases the difference between Coleridge's fancy and imagination thus:

The imagination . . . is able to "create" rather than merely reassemble, by dissolving the fixities and definites--the mental pictures, or images, received from the senses--and unifying them into a

new whole. And while the fancy is merely mechanical, the imagination is "vital" : it is an organic faculty which operates not like a machine, but like a living and growing plant. As Coleridge says elsewhere, the imagination "generates and produces a form of its own," while its rules are "the very powers of growth and production.

Most important, Coleridge speaks of almost Poundian Image when he explains the synthetic power of imagination:

The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and . . . fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissible, though gentle and unnoticed, controul [sic] (laxis effertur habenis) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar

objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgement ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter. . . . (519)

Here, the gist of the argument, of course, lies in Coleridge's statement that "through the synthetic and magical power of imagination, a poet brings in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities." Again, using Pound's own illustration, the ideogram RED, through its magical power of imagination brings in a sudden reconciliation among opposite or discordant qualities, such as ROSE, CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO.

To the informed and ready Chinese, the ideogram RED brings a sudden spiritual manifestation (an epiphany): "Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object . . . seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany."¹⁷ Indeed, from the vestment of appearance among these seemingly discordant objects, such as ROSE, CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO, the soul, the whatness of them [RED] leaps to us, and the metaphoric meaning of the ideogram becomes radiant and luminous to us. Indeed, a good poet, as Coleridge points out, must be able to reconcile

discordant objects through the power of a sudden awakening. In his article "History and Vision in Pound and Dante: A Purgatorial Poetics," Stephen Sicari paraphrases this sudden awakening thus:

. . . the artist seeks out whatever is luminous, radiant, light-filled in an object and presents it. The poet must find the detail that will reveal the "light" that the object contains (and all objects contain light). . . . (Pai, 19, 27)

Having thus demonstrated some striking similarities between the fundamental operation of the ideogram as well as the ideogrammic method and in the workings of numerous poetic concepts of the English poetics, I will now finally consider one of the most important poetic concepts of Pound--i.e. luminous detail--in particular, in its relationship to the aesthetics of the ideogrammic method. According to Kenner, "in a series of 12 articles published in A. R. Orage's weekly New Age, 30 Nov. 1911-22 Feb. 1912: 'I Gather the Limbs of Osiris'," Pound was known to be in the process of drafting a book on Arnaut Daniel which deals with "'New Method in Scholarship'" (PE 150). Kenner explains the crux of Pound's new method in scholarship thus:

"The New Method in Scholarship," furthermore, turns out to be "the method of Luminous Detail," used intermittently "by all good scholars since the beginning of scholarship," and hostile both

"to the prevailing mode of today, that is the method of multitudinous detail, and to the method of yesterday, the method of sentiment and generalizations." Luminous Details are the transcendentals in an array of facts: not merely "significant" nor "symptomatic" in the manner of most facts, but capable of giving one "a sudden insight into circumjacent conditions, into their causes, their effects, into sequence, and law."

(PE 152)

As we now know, the fundamental operation of the ideogram and the ideogrammic method originates itself from this method of Luminous Details. Again and again, consider, for instance, the ideogram RED. We have here an "array of facts" such as ROSE, CHERRY, IRON RUST, and FLAMINGO. These are, however, "not merely 'significant' nor 'symptomatic' in the manner of most facts, but capable of giving one "a sudden insight into circumjacent conditions, into their causes, their effects, into sequence, and law." Among these seemingly disconnected details does exist a patterned energy:

Luminous Details, then, are "patterned integrities" which transferred out of their context of origin retain their power to enlighten us. They have this power because, as men came to understand early in the 20th Century, all realities whatever

are patterned energies. If mass is energy (Einstein), then all matter exemplifies knottings, the self-interference inhibiting radiant expansion at the speed of light. Like a slip-knot, a radioactive substance expends itself. Elsewhere patterns weave, unweave, reweave: light becomes leaf becomes coal becomes light. (PE 153)

Therefore, to Pound "the artist himself, a patterned integrity, manifests his own spectrum of forces, called his virtu" (PE 156), just as "a magnet brings 'order and vitality and thence beauty into a plate of iron filings,' their design expressing 'a confluence of energy'" (PE 146). Kenner further explains how Pound significantly closes the first Pisan Cantos with the image of patterned energy:

. . . he [Pound] closed the 74th Canto with a double image of patterned energy: the magnet's "rose in the steel dust" and the fountain's sculptured flow through which passes renewing water, tossing a bright ball. The same passage mentions the winds Zephyrus and Apeliota, moving energies so stable they have names and cites Verlaine's comparison of the soul's life to the fountain's and a phrase of Jonson's uniting Charis and swans-down, and Dante's abduction of the souls of the blessed composing in space a great rose: poetic images, patterned energies. . . . "Energy creates

pattern." Like molecules of water in fountain or vortex, particulars of the pattern mutate; the pattern is stable, an enduring integrity, shaped by the movement, shaping. This is a whole time's way of thinking. "Art never improves," wrote T. S. Eliot in 1919, "but the material of art is never quite the same". . . . (PE 146-7)

Therefore, to Pound, "a classic is classic not because it conforms to certain structural rules, or fits certain definitions" (ABC 14). But rather, "it is classic because of a certain eternal and irrepressible freshness" (14), the lightening metaphoric power. Thus, to put it simply, "literature is language charged with meaning" (28) and "literature is news that STAYS news" (29). Stephen Sicari, in fact, goes so far as to assert that "Imagist poetry attempts to create a new way of seeing and thus a new object of perception, the light of the holy" :

The poet's job is "to build light," as Ocellus said (94/642). He is attempting just this kind of building when he says, "The poplar tips float in brightness" (83/531). The substance in which these trees grow is not transparent air but semi-opaque brightness. The brightness is so thick that the poplar tips "float" in it: the air has become a glowing liquid. The Image is meant to create this object for us, to focus our attention on what

seems a new object but that in reality has always been there, just not seen anymore since the first people. . . . Pound sees "a sky wet as ocean/flowing with liquid slate" (80/494). Such lines present the Image: they attempt to create new objects for our perception by creating a new consciousness that can see the holy. . . . (Pai, 19, 34)

To perceive and record the inner light of things--i.e. to arrest the essential whatness of things--is not an easy task. According to Pound, a poet must charge the language. And to do just that, Pound explains as follows: "to charge language with meaning to the utmost possible degree, we have . . . the three chief means:

I throwing the object (fixed or moving) on to the visual imagination.

II inducing emotional correlations by the sound and rhythm of the speech.

III inducing both of the effects by stimulating the associations (intellectual or emotional) that have remained in the receiver's consciousness in relation to the actual words or word groups employed.

(phanopoeia, melopoeia, logopoeia) (GK 106)

Conclusion

As I have demonstrated the fundamental workings of both the Chinese ideogram (or the ideogrammic method) and some of

the poetics of Western (English) literature, writing poetry, in essence, is indeed a sudden discovery of this patterned energy. Perhaps one of the better analogies that explains this sudden discovery of patterned energy manifest itself best in the form of lightening¹⁸ in a dark stormy night. The stormy night represents our chaotic reality that constantly changes with unfathomable, multitudinous variables so that we can hardly seize up our ontological condition in it.

Nonetheless, however, whenever lightening strikes, we can, however momentarily, recognize our living condition, rightly or wrongly. The objects that surround us become charged with visible meanings: the electricity of lightening connects them together. Consider then the lightening as a patterned energy that suddenly binds us into the understanding of dissimilar things which overwhelm us in the chaotic reality. It is this lightening that suddenly transforms sundry things into Luminous Details. It is this lightening with its transference power that throws "a sudden insight into circumjacent conditions, into their causes, their effects, into sequence, and law."

To use Joyce's words, the whatness¹⁹ of the Luminous Details illuminates itself as if a filament in an electric bulb brightens up as the current of electricity passes through it. Nothing happens when there is no lightening. Nothing happens when details do not show their transference

power. Therefore, indeed "all truth has to be expressed in sentences because all truth is the transference of power. The type of sentence in nature is a flash of lightning" (Kenner, PE 157). As soon as we experience this inner lightening, everything becomes clear. Life then takes on some meaning. As Robert Frost says elsewhere, the act of writing is then truly "a momentary sustain against the chaos."

Consider, for example, one of the most famous Imagistic poems of Pound "In a Station of the Metro" :

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

Here, "these faces" in the chaos of the Metro appear as nothing but a dim "apparition" until they are superimposed, by the lightening transference power (the associative, metaphoric power in the Chinese ideogram), upon "Petals on a wet, black bough." Faces and petals, two natural objects with little inter-connectedness, are brought together revealing their resemblance, discordia concors, becoming an objective correlative, or "petal face" as in kenning. As Coleridge noted, "the imaginative creates rather than merely reassemble, by dissolving the fixities and definites--the mental pictures, or images received from the senses--and unifying them into a new whole." The primary pigment [the quick resemblance between faces and petals] enlivens seemingly dissimilar objects into a vivid, coherent Luminous

Details.

Finally, Pound's knowledge of the Chinese ideogram contributes rather significantly in the shaping of the layout in the Pisan Cantos. As I have illustrated, the Chinese ideogram contains many sundry elements that are seemingly disconnected and disorienting; likewise, the visual layout of the Pisan Cantos contains many sundry fragmentations. But, as the Chinese ideograms reveal their whatness by their own fate, the fragmentations in Pound's Pisan Cantos also reveal their whatness by their individual fate. The seeming chaotic visual line breaks in the Pisan Cantos contains the impulse of disparate elements in a Chinese ideogram--elements once electrified by their transference of power illuminate their meaning like lightening. Pound was aiming at exactly such an ideogrammic impulse in the fragmentations of his odd line breaks in the Pisan Cantos.

As I have thus illustrated, the metaphoric power of the Chinese ideograms "springs from their power of combining several pictorial elements in a single character" (Instigations 384). As I have already pointed out, it is this pictorial element that distinguishes a great poet from a minor one in Aristotle's aesthetics: i.e. the genius of a great poet lies in his ability to see resemblances among dissimilar objects. Hence, discordia concors in Johnson. It is this pictorial element that enables Eliot to assert

that the objective correlative is a set of objects or scenes that provokes a particular emotion unique to that particular set of objects or scenes.

For Pound an Image is a vivid presentation of pictures that opens one's eye with a sudden discovery of resemblances between dissimilar objects, as the Anglo-Saxon kenning attempts to achieve the same effect through a more rudimentary fashion. My point here is then that despite the obvious metrical importance of poetry, the visual-orientation of poetry, another quintessential aspect of the art, has largely been ignored and lurking underneath in Western (English) Literature. It was the discovery of the Chinese ideogram by Fenollosa and Pound that significantly contributed to unearth the lurking, all-important visual-orientation of poetry in Modernism.

Of course, there are other factors, which also deserve a serious look, that are responsible for bringing in the visual-orientation of Modern Poetry. For instance, Einstein's discovery of Fourth Dimension brought artists' attention to the importance of time, or the conception of time in art, particularly in visual arts, such as in Cubism, which, in turn, played an important role in Modern Poetry. Particularly, the unconventional line-breaks in Modern Poets, such as William Carlos Williams and Pound, demonstrate poets' effort to embody time in the temporal art of poetry, a task that was heretofore thought impossible.

Therefore, one cannot ignore the important relationship between Modern Poetry and modern visual arts. Indeed, in the immediately following chapter, I shall briefly investigate the relationship between modern visual arts and Modern Poetry as well as Pound's involvement with modern visual arts.

Notes

1. According to Eliot, "The poets of the seventeenth century, the successors of the dramatists of the sixteenth, possessed a mechanism of sensibility which would devour any kind of experience. They are simple, artificial, difficult, or fantastic, as their predecessors were; no less nor more than Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Guinicelli, or Cino" (SP 64). But all that has changed in the next century, Eliot asserts:

In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; and this dissociation, as is natural, was aggravated by the influence of the two most powerful poets of the century, Milton and Dryden. Each of these men performed certain poetic functions so magnificently well that the magnitude of the effect concealed the absence of others (Selected Prose 64).

2. The controversy--that to the Chinese, the ideogram has already evolved into the descriptive stage and, therefore, it no longer holds the associative power Pound and Fenollosa discovered--matters little to our current discussion because to Pound and Fenollosa it still retained that power.

Such evidence, that among the users of the Chinese ideograms the medium has indeed lost its metaphoric, associative power it once had held, may indeed attest favorably to Frye's concept of linguistic evolution. However, for Pound and Fenollosa, the Chinese ideograms still held the metaphoric significance--the etymological pictures--in them, a point that matters to our discussion.




3. "Almost always the men who achieve these fundamental inventions of a new paradigm have been either very young or very new to the field whose paradigm they change . . . these are the men who, being little committed by prior practice to the traditional rules of normal science, are particularly likely to see that those rules no longer define a playable game and to conceive another set that can replace them" (90).

4. In fact, Pound scholars often question whether he was knowledgeable enough to know how to pronounce the Chinese ideograms he was investigating, a point that makes little difference to us. What concerns us here is not the sonic aspect of the Chinese ideograms but rather the visual, the pictorial aspect of them.

5. According to Pound, this poetic ability to instantly seize up the hidden associative power among sundry objects cannot be taught:

This active, instant and present awareness is NOT handed out in colleges and by the system of public and/or popular education. In this domain the individual will remain, individualism will remain, without any theoretical and ideological bulwarks.
(GK 52)

Pound's emphasis on individualistic poetic genius echoes Aristotle's assertion that a great poet possesses an inner vision that perceives a binding resemblance among sundry things.

6. Wallace Stevens, The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens. New York: Vintage Books, 1982.
7. "Derrida undertakes to show that all philosophical attempts to demonstrate such as absolute foundation [ultimate referent outside the play of language] in presence are illusory" (Abrams Glossary, 38-39).
8. rpt. from Kenner's The Poetry of Ezra Pound.
9. rpt. from Alexander Schmitz "Ideogram-Audiogram" (Pai, 20, 46).
10. Again, when I quote a Chinese ideogram throughout this dissertation, I use the method of citation after Carroll Terrell's A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound (Vol. II [p.777-791]): i.e. Matthew numbers and the standard Wade-Giles transliteration.
11. Holman, C. Hugh. 4th ed. A Handbook to Literature (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1980), p. 240.
12. "Life of Cowley," rpt. from Abrams A Glossary of Literary Terms (p. 29).
13. Some critics note that Pound took this ideogram [] as mouth, which indeed stands as mouth as a single unit [], but when these three stand together as a single ideogram it means rain drops ().
14. Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Literaria Biographia. Major British Poets of the Romantic Period. Ed. William Heath. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1973.
15. About "nous," Pound writes that ". . . the Platonists after him have caused man after man to be suddenly conscious of the reality of the nous, of mind, apart from any man's individual mind, of the sea crystalline and enduring, of the

bright as it were molten glass that envelop us, full of light" (GK 44).

16. In fact, Coleridge's thought on organic form--which is "innate; it shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fullness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form" (rpt. from Abrams A Glossary p. 67)--shares Pound's confessed abhorrence against a mechanic form, "a preexistent shape such as we impose on wet clay by mold," such as the traditional "metrical box-stuffing" as David Perkins puts it elsewhere.

17. rpt. from Abrams' A Glossary of Literary Terms. (on James Joyce's epiphany) p. 54.

18. Light in various forms becomes a very important aesthetic concept in Pound as well as in Dante. For instance, in his article "History and Vision in Pound and Dante: A Purgatorial Poetics," Stephen Sicari likens the Poundian metaphor of light as Dante's supernatural vision:

As he [Pound] goes through Paradiso in his "Dante" essay, he presents chunks of Dante's supernatural vision. He focuses mainly on images that describe a supersensuous, supernatural, transcendent light. Some instances: "With such beauty as this the Paradiso is radiant" (142); "the beauty of the Paradiso hardly suffers one to transplant it in fragments (143); "with constant light and ever-increasing melody the ascent continues. To the double rainbow" (147); "in the fifth heaven glows the glorious cross of Mars" (147); "the Paradiso holds one by its pervading sense of beauty" (149). . . . Pound finishes his "commentary" by simply labeling Dante's images of beauty and light: "the Emyrean of pure light," "the river of light," "the paradisaal rose," "the final manifestation" (151-152). The beauty of this transcendent light awes the young Pound whose final words of Paradiso call for homage: "Surely for the great poem that ends herewith our befitting praise were silence" (153).
(Pai, 19, 14)

19. rpt. from Abrams Glossary (on epiphany p. 54).

CHAPTER V

MODERN ARTS AND MODERN POETRY: POUND AMONG AND OUTSIDE HIS CONTEMPORARIES

By the time he writes his magnum opus the Pisan Cantos (1945), Pound has become a master craftsman in his trade of poetry writing. On the one hand, his knowledge of the Chinese ideograms, in particular, its scientific operation as well as its imagistic thrust, helped him see a new poetic technique fit to the modern age: i.e. the Image, the vortex, juxtaposition, fragmentation, and the impersonality aesthetic, among others. On the other hand, his active role as a catalyst (as he had shown in his involvement with Vorticism) between Modern Arts and Modern Poetry allowed him to master and translate the new aesthetics of modern visual arts into modern poetry. By his own definition, Pound was a true "inventor, discoverer of a particular process or of more than one mode and process" and at the same time a "master, who apart from their own inventions, are able to assimilate and co-ordinate a large number of preceding inventions" (LE 23). In order to truly appreciate and evaluate Pound's role and contribution to modern poetry as well as his inventiveness and master-craftsmanship, one must examine the revolutionary paradigmatic shift that had occurred at the dawn of the twentieth century in Europe. In order to have an adequate understanding of that period, I first need to digress to the rather controversial issue of

"inter-art" study.

Any inter-art study, a study that draws a comparison between two (or more) different forms of art, is by no means an easy subject. Indeed, such a study rightly deserves volumes. Knowing the difficulty and the magnitude involved in such an endeavor, therefore, I shall narrow my focus here to three aspects of the inter-art study, aspects that are quintessential understanding the context of Pound's gorilla language and aesthetic on the larger world of Modern Arts.

First, I shall point out the simple fact that the inter-art study deserves much more attention by scholars than it has received to date. For example, the inter-art study deserves more solid, scientific grounding in behavioral science and perceptual theory, which will provide critics with better tools to tackle the complicated process of human perception itself. Such a new approach will, no doubt, help to better understand and compare the various forms of art across the board, regardless of their inherently diverse media. Indeed, it is my view that the inter-art study calls for a close collaboration among various disciplines across the board, especially Behavioral Science, Psychology, Philosophy, Fine arts, Music, and Literature. Without such collaboration, any advancement of the field is hardly likely.

Second, I shall prove the undeniable fact that despite some obvious difficulties and problems often associated with

the inter-art study, modern artists live in an environment where they cannot avoid various aesthetic confluences from arts other than their own. Indeed, as critics such as Bram Dijkstra and Reed Way Dasenbrock point out, modern visual arts and modern poetry, for instance, share some undeniable aesthetic grounds despite intrinsic differences in their artistic media.

Third, I shall consider the importance of Cubism in the modern visual arts as well as in modern poetry. I will briefly examine the historical background that fostered Cubism in the modern visual arts. Then, finally and most important, I will actually analyze how aesthetics of Cubism become embedded or incorporated in the aesthetics of modern literature through a close reading of two Pound's literary contemporaries: Gertrude Stein, the novelist, and William Carlos Williams, the poet. Basically, in this chapter, I attempt to prove that obvious confluences exist between the modern visual arts and modern literature, and if we look writers, who were Pound's contemporaries, we will have not only an understanding of that confluence but a context into which we can place Pound's own literary artistic achievement.

Although this chapter may appear too much of a digression, a clear departure from my main focus of Ezra Pound and his Pisan Cantos, as I shall prove later, it is nonetheless crucial at this point to understand the aesthetic and artis-

tic currents of the times in which Pound was writing. By examining the obvious confluences existing between the modern visual arts and modern literary arts as represented by Stein and Williams, we can eventually come to a clear understanding of how Pound's experiments set him apart even in this modern age of experimentation.

This Hot Potato of Confluence: Controversies
Involved in Inter-Art Study

Literary scholars and art critics in the past and of late have attempted to conduct some serious comparative studies between two arts, particularly in painting and poetry. In fact, as Jo Anna Isaak points out in her introduction to her book The Ruin of Representation in Modern Art and Texts (Ann Arbor, Michigan: U of Michigan Research Press, 1986), as early as "in the seventeenth century they [painting and literature] were called the Sister Arts" (1). But, as almost all serious inter-art study scholars would admit, the subject is extremely difficult and challenging to anyone who is sincerely interested in such an endeavor.

Of course, the fundamental issue lies heavily in the fact that different arts take different mediums as their mode of expression. More specifically, individual modes of arts differ drastically from music to painting, to sculpture, and to poetry. For example, poetry is a temporal art: an utterance in time and space. On the other hand, however, painting is a visual art, whose medium heavily relies on the

visual space. In poetry, as soon as the poet utters a word (or writes a sentence), time ticks. Therefore, his utterance can never be severed from the flux of time. Nor can any utterance exist independent of the realm of time.

Not so in painting, however. A painter can arrest the moment on canvas: he can freeze time there almost forever. Simply put, different arts take different mediums. It is, clearly, the very medium each art employs that makes each art unique and complete, independent of each other. Consequently, for the inter-art study scholar this difference in the medium brings with it special problems, the first of which is a fundamental difficulty in proving the legitimacy and validity of any inter-art study.

Despite the inherent, obvious differences in both painting and poetry, however, scholars and critics have often sought to justify the inter-art study on various aesthetic grounds. For instance, using the notion of "Sister Arts," some scholars regard the metaphoric relationship between painting and poetry as sufficient ground for an inter-art study. Not every one agrees, however. Some critics complain that such a comparative inter-art study, an analysis largely based on the metaphoric relationship between painting and poetry, more often than not raises suspicions in the mind of the reader (Isaak 1). They argue that such a metaphoric emphasis only ignores fundamental problems involved in any inter-art study.

Of course, the problem is rather obvious. On the one hand, to perform any meaningful comparison between two things, it is prerequisite for them to have some obvious, undeniable common denominators. Furthermore, once the existence of such common denominators between the two things is confirmed, it is also necessary to have a clear criteria, a standard against which the examiner can bring the two things for comparison and contrast. But as far as my research goes, no two inter-art critics agree upon the common denominators each sees in painting and poetry. Consequently, their criteria, too, differ.

As I shall demonstrate, what can happen in any inter-art study is that one critic will emphasize the importance of one particular aspect over the other, such as the use of figurative language, while others may place value elsewhere, on yet another aspect, such as the metaphoric relationship of the two arts. In general, however, for the legitimacy of any visual art/literary art inter-art study, or that compares visual and literary arts, critics usually rely and agree upon the fact that painting and poetry share metaphoric similarities. They, therefore, insist that any analogous comparison and contrast based on metaphoric similarities of painting and poetry should be valid simply because the field of inter-art study lacks, if not defies, any systematic scientific approaches for the moment.

As a result, when it comes to comparing these two

"Sister Arts," there is no well-established or clearly-articulated standard, a criteria that will allow the critic to analyze both painting and poetry without being prejudicial to one particular medium over the other. In essence, therefore, we have yet to discover true, scientifically-viable, common denominators between painting and poetry, a task perhaps we should leave to the scientific community since the issue involves such a complex and controversial topic as the fundamental human perception.

As might be expected, for many inter-art study scholars, this lack of a well-established criteria has been the focal point for discussion. It is not surprising at all, then, that almost all inter-art critics usually open their arguments with an apology or an explanation why their inter-art study or their particular approach is unique and legitimate /or more convincing than those of others. Indeed, this lacking of a clear-cut criteria explains why this field deserves a more serious investigation, especially in the relatively unexplored inter-art study between painting (the visual art) and poetry (the temporal art).

Walter Pater's The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California Press, 1980), for example, examines the phenomena of arts in various forms. In his book, while arguing that "the basis of all artistic genius lies in the power of conceiving humanity in a new and striking way" (170), Pater asserts that "in

poetry and painting, the situation predominates over the character; in sculpture, the character over the situation" (172). In spite of such an excellent argument, however, I find his claims to be rather general and opaque due largely to the fact that, like many other inter-art critics, he, too, fails to provide a system of concrete criteria in his examination of different forms of arts.

In her book The Colors of Rhetoric: Problems in the Relation between Modern Literature and Painting (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1982), Wendy Steiner also attempts to legitimize her inter-art study by exploring the analogous relationship between poetry and painting. While citing from M. H. Abrams' assertion that "'critical thinking, like that in all areas of human interest, has been in considerable part thinking in parallels, and critical argument has to that extent been an argument from analogy'" (1), Steiner contends that "any similarity . . . depends upon concurrent dissimilarities" and that "as long as the similarity is sufficiently striking, the differences can be pushed aside" (2).

Furthermore, she insists that "when the analogy is explored to the point where the dissimilarities become troublesome, the current formulation of the comparison is usually discredited as a mere 'metaphoric similarity'" Therefore, she concludes thus:

. . . the painting-literature analogy has followed

just such a Sisyphean pattern and is bound to continue doing so. For there can be no final consensus about whether and how the two arts resemble each other, but only a growth in our awareness of the process of comparing them, of metaphoric generation and regeneration. (2)

However, Joseph Frank attempts to solve the chicken and egg issue philosophically. In his article "Spatial Form in Modern Literature" (The Widening Gyre. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1963), Frank bases his inter-art study on the aesthetic foundation of Lessing, who asserts in his Laocoon that:

. . . aesthetic form is not an external arrangement provided by a set of traditional rules. Rather, it is the relation between the sensuous nature of the art medium and the conditions of human perception. . . . Similarly, art was to create its own forms out of itself rather than accept them ready-made from the practice of the past; and criticism, instead of prescribing rules for art, was to explore the necessary laws by which art governs itself. . . . Form issued spontaneously from the organization of the art work as it presented itself to perception. Time and space were the two extremes defining the limits of literature and the plastic arts in their relation to sensuous

perception. (8)

Having thus established his footing in the inter-art study, Frank insists somewhat convincingly that "for modern literature, as exemplified by such writers as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce, is moving in the direction of spatial form" and that "all these writers ideally intend the reader to apprehend their work spatially, in a moment of time, rather than as a sequence" (8-9).

Unlike Steiner and Frank, Jo Anna Isaak approaches the problems of inter-art study from a more commonsensical angle. In her book The Ruin of Representation in Modern Art and Texts (Ann Arbor, Michigan: U of Michigan Research P, 1986), Isaak attacks the traditional, if not more popular and common, view on inter-art study expressed by Christopher Gray: "the affinity between the painting and the poetry of the Cubist movement does not lie in a common technical means--for, after all, the processes of visual representation of paints cannot be directly adapted to the written word--but rather in a common set of ideas about the aesthetic problems" (2).¹

One of the reasons why Isaak disagrees with Gray's point of view on inter-art study is that Gray disregards the more abundant and obvious confluences between the visual arts and modern poetry "in favor of past literary origin" (Isaak 2) in his explanation of Guillaume Apollinaire's calligramme, for instance. Instead, Isaak suggests that

"the modern period--with its preoccupation with the question of form, and the various attempts to break the 'laws' of aesthetic perception" offers " a genuine connection established between the visual and verbal arts" (2):

Without professing to establish a set of first principles or criteria of modernism, it is possible to locate within the developments of art and literature of the modern period certain salient features common to both arts and, in doing so, illuminate more fully the universe of discourse to which each belongs . . . to present the various elements that any interdisciplinary study will be obliged to take into account . . . primarily by areas of artistic exploration rather than by individual movements. . . . (2)

Issak is not the only critic who discovers this particular problem in the inter-art study, in fact. Dasenbrock also exemplifies a similar instance when Harold Bloom refuses to recognize any connection between Wallace Stevens poem The Blue Guitar and Picasso's painting "The Old Guitarist."²

Perhaps only Harold Bloom would find these poems of Shelley a more relevant context for Stevens's [sic] poem than Picasso's painting, but time and again critics make moves reminiscent of Bloom's here, replacing an interartistic context explicit-

ly given in the work by a context of other works in the same art, which is not coincidentally the art the critic is expert in. This approach is largely a function of academic specialization: all of us know more about one art than another, so that to a critic saturated in Shelley and not Picasso, Shelley--not Picasso--will naturally be an operative context for Wallace Stevens despite the explicit reference to Picasso in The Blue Guitar. (9-10)

Another inter-art critic Franklin R. Rogers, on the other hand, insists that it is "the figurative plays a in verbal metaphor . . . in the sense of a reference to visuo-spatial images" (9) that provides a legitimacy of the inter-art study between painting and poetry.³ To prove his point, Rogers heavily relies on what other poets throughout the history have said about the undeniable affinity between painting and poetry:

. . . an imposing number of other poets, in insisting that poetry and metaphor are one (poetry here designating all works of art using words as a medium), insist in effect that through the poem makes, as Robert Frost phrased it, the poet achieves just such an immediate single unified impression by means closely related to those of the painter. Thomas Hardy, among others, was even

more direct in his assertion when he wrote, "Probably few of the general body denominated the reading public consider, in their hurried perusal of novel after novel, that, to a masterpiece in story there appertains a beauty of shape, no less than to a masterpiece in pictorial or plastic art, capable of giving to the trained mind an equal pleasure." (9-10)

Then, he employs an elaborate mathematical formula (imported from French mathematician Rene Thom of the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques) in which mythos and fabula become denotative languages in contrast to mythos and logos that connotes literary language, which further connotes "form" as in painting (10-12). Although this elaborate scheme is yet another serious effort to establish the legitimacy of inter-art study between painting and poetry, Rogers, too, fails to tackle the fundamental problems associated with such an endeavor: like others, he cannot find critical terms, the much-needed criteria, which will help art critics.

Yet, one of the better arguments made for the legitimacy of the inter-art study is the idea of confluence. Especially, in modernism, the inter-art study can be less problematic because the sense of confluence among different arts is undeniable. For example, while pointing out that "literature and the visual arts have always been very close-

ly related" and that "no one would deny that often their stylistic development has been remarkably parallel," Bram Dijkstra points out the absurdity of questioning the rather obvious confluence among different arts in modernism in his book Cubism, Stieglitz and the Early Poetry of William Carlos Williams (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1969):

It is considered perfectly legitimate to point to the influence of one writer on another, or the debt of one painter to another, but few people, apparently, accept the notion that painters and poets might have had an immediate formative influence on each other, that the structure and content of a writer's work might have been influenced quite directly by specific paintings, or a specific style of painting. Comparative studies of reciprocal influences between various literatures are becoming quite common, but the connections between literature and the visual arts are almost never approached from this view, even though many writers have openly shown a singular fascination for certain structural developments in painting or for the works of specific painters. (vii-viii)

Dijkstra then argues that the fundamental issue lies in different mind-set between that of the artists and that of the critics:

. . . while the artistic mind . . . is expansive

and almost indiscriminately receptive to possibilities, the scholar's attitude is likely to be reductive, and narrowly focused. The critic, after all, tends to judge, to evaluate the works he is concerned with, according to a personal set of generalized positives and negatives whose range . . . is limited to the bounds of his own knowledge. The artist . . . usually takes the whole field of the creative imagination, in all its disparate forms, as proper material for the construction of his own method of expression. (viii)

As I have briefly considered, the difficulties involved in any serious inter-art study are not a matter of coming up with a quick fix. The field rightly demands more research and investigation. It needs a well-established and clearly-articulated criteria, tools that are essential in comparing and contrasting two different art forms. As I stated earlier, the inter-art study needs help from other disciplines, such as medicine, psychology, and behavioral science, in particular, because, it seems to me, the problem deals with the human perception itself. The end result is the same whether one is moved by a great painting, by a great music, or, yet, by a great poem--although all three entered into our perception through diverse means. Yet, there must be some way to explain the different chemical reactions in each sensory stimulation.

Perhaps, the issues involved in the inter-art study bespeak themselves to the fundamental problems associated with the very process of human perception. Furthermore, to a certain degree, the issues also address themselves to the larger, ontological condition of our existence: they explain why we desperately need an artificial yardstick to measure the chaotic reality we are living in and why we are always desperate to make the best sense out of it, although we may be very well aware of the fallibility of the yardstick we are using and the fallibility of our own senses.

Modern Visual Arts and Modern Poetry

Studying the relationship between modern visual arts and modern poetry perhaps is not as cumbersome a subject as the validating the actual inter-art study itself, however. In fact, a number of books deals with how modern poets experienced and shared the confluences from various arts, particularly from painting, in their formulation of their fundamental aesthetics.

Looking, as we are, at the modernist artists, the task becomes easier. On the one hand, due to technological advances, an artist, more often than before, is exposed to all kinds aesthetic grounds from other arts. Unlike a medieval painter, for instance, the artist's existence is no longer cloistered inside the church which he was commissioned to paint. Rather, his senses are constantly bombard-

ed by electronic media which bring other forms of arts into his living room, into his TV set at the command of his fingertip. He is and must better be living in a global community where "electric technology fosters and encourages unification and involvement" (McLuhan 8).

On the other hand, a modern artist, regardless of his geographical, ethnic, national, societal, economical, and educational orientations, is, to a large extent, a product of almost two thousand-year old human civilization. And since all civilization, by and large, moves from simplicity to complexity, it is my opinion that now at this point in time our intellectual development has become broad and complex enough--vertically as well as horizontally--to rationalize such a complicated issue as the inter-art study.

This type of endeavor would have been much more difficult, if possible at all, in the Middle Ages although the so-called Renaissance man was indeed equipped to excel simultaneously in painting, architecture, sculpture, medicine, and anatomy. Yet, to practice and participate in various arts is one thing, but to be able to detach oneself from one's various artistic endeavors--in order to meditate upon the very activities themselves--is another. In my opinion, the latter is the more difficult task because such an ability shows a high degree of maturity, perhaps much like the self-contemplative faculty in human that separates man from the animals.

In fact, a number of books deal with the relationship between the modern visual arts and modern poetry. However, if I have to choose a single book to use to investigate about the confluence between the modern visual arts and modern poetry, it has to be Reed Way Dasenbrock's The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985). As the title indicates, not only does it explain in depth the role Ezra Pound played in his involvement of Vorticism but it also provides the reader with one of the better accounts as to how the modern visual arts come into play its aesthetic influences to modern poetry, in particular. More specifically, it illuminates how "it was towards the condition of modernist painting that modernist art in general aspired" (7), a very important thesis, indeed.

For example, against Clement Greenberg's argument that each art has its inherent instinct to remain pure and exclusive against any other art forms, Dasenbrock convincingly points out that in modernism the opposite is true:

Much more happens between the arts in modernism than is implied in Greenberg's stress on purity and exclusion. The arts may not fuse in modernism but they certainly interact, and their interaction is in fact extremely rich and fruitful.

Greenberg's very use of a word like modernism, which is not specific to any one art (and gained

currency first in theology), implies that there is some kind of unity to the arts of this period denied by Greenberg's emphasis on purity. Something does bring the arts together in the modern period if we can confidently speak of Schonberg and Picasso and Joyce as modernists. (4)

In fact, Dasenbrock goes so far as to argue that "in Pater's analysis, what brings the arts together, somewhat paradoxically, are the limitations of each art, or rather what each art does to try to overcome those limitations" (5). To prove his point, Dasenbrock cites from Pater himself who contends that:

Each art may be observed to pass into the condition of some other art, by what German critics term an Anders-strehen--a partial alienation from its own limitations, by which the arts are able, not indeed to supply the place of each other, but reciprocally to lend each other new forces.

(5)⁴

Of course, the most important point in the above citation is the arts "reciprocally lend each other new forces" despite their inherent differences. Heavily relying on this last point, Dasenbrock then asserts that it is possible for one art to help other arts:

The arts are not to try to take each other's place then but to lend and borrow in an artistic economy

according to their needs. In Pater's view, music is the biggest lender because it is "the typical, or ideally consummate, art." This is so because in music the distinction between matter and form is eliminated, and it is to this condition of form and matter being perfectly unified that the other arts should aspire, not to the special mode--the concrete means--of music.

Furthermore, Dasenbrock regards the modern visual arts exactly the way Pater saw Renaissance music. Pater, Dasenbrock goes on, is not necessarily suggesting that "music is not only art from which other arts should borrow because after all 'The School of Giorgione' is a discussion of painting" (5):

Hence, Pater's aesthetics involve no simplistic insistence that the arts be musical; rather, music as the quintessential art is a source of inspiration from which the other arts ought to borrow, precisely because it is the quintessential art. It is this view of music as the quintessential art that places or dates Pater as belonging to the nineteenth century. . . . Once properly historicized, therefore, Pater's dictum is perfectly correct: music was the central art of the romantic period, the supreme vehicle of the romantic imagination. For this reason, much romantic

art did aspire towards the condition of music.

(5)

Therefore, Dasenbrock concludes that "for the modern period . . . painting takes the place of music as the central, quintessential art. In modernism, all art aspires towards the condition of painting" (5). He concludes that "the painting [in modernism] became richest source of metaphor for aesthetic theory and the richest inspiration for the other arts: in Pater's terms, it becomes the biggest lender in the economy of the arts" (6).

As a prime example of the inter-art confluence in modernism or rather how modern visual arts influenced the modern poetry, Dasenbrock points out the tremendous aesthetic force of Cubism as follows:

By 1914, Cubism had abandoned the traditional representation of space; it had broken with the traditional attitude towards materials and had incorporated real objects in collages, papiers colles, and constructions; Kandinsky, Kupka, and others had painted abstract, nonrepresentational paintings--in short, most of the distinctive features of modernist painting were in place. Literature and music was far less advanced: the twelve-tone system was years away, as was stream-of-consciousness or the discontinuity and fragmentation of Eliot's The Waste Land or The Cantos of Ezra

Pound. The period that marks the emergence of high modernism in music and literature is the early 1920s, not 1908-14, as in painting. (6)

In short, Dasenbrock claims that "painting set the example that the other arts followed . . . and Cubism seems the central moment in modernism in a way no other movement in any other art could" (6).⁵ He accurately points out the undeniable fact that "although the Italian Futurism initially began as a movement of poets, today is known primarily as a movement of painters" (6). Furthermore, he lists a number of modern American writers whose artistic "orientation" (6) began, in fact, in painting: among them Gertrude Stein and William Carlos Williams.⁶ Therefore, he astutely argues that "the aesthetic of modern American poetry is an aesthetic largely derived from modern painting" (7).

Clouds of Iconoclasm at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century:
Realism, Impressionism, Cubism, and Futurism
in the Modern Visual Arts

Modernism (1914-1950) is a term that "is often used to identify what is considered to be most distinctive in concepts, sensibility, form, and style in the literature and art since the First World War" (Abrams 109). And the movement usually "involves a deliberate and radical break with the traditional bases both of Western culture and of Western art" (109). To understand modernism, therefore, one must, as much as possible, understand the fundamental causes that

initially triggered the reaction against the old aesthetic paradigm of the Western art and culture.

Hence, anyone interested in this subject of confluences between the modern visual arts and modern poetry must first begin to investigate as to how it all started in the first place. What was it that caused the revolutionary change in the aesthetics of the modern visual arts in the early twentieth century? Of course, to understand the aesthetic shift in the modern visual arts, one must also understand the paideuma, not the zeitgeist as Pound carefully differentiates the two terms, at the dawn of the twentieth century. The revolution was universal. As far as modernism is concerned, there appears to exist a number of easily discernible, narrowly defined, aesthetic parallels between the modern visual arts and modern poetry. The revolt against the old paradigm, in fact, occurred across the board. Modernism in arts was merely a small expression of that overall iconoclastic impulse toward the old aesthetics of the Western art and culture.

Cubism: a Modern Renaissance (1907-1914)

Cubism, a culmination of such a revolutionary effort, indeed records one significant chapter in the development of human awareness. The inundation of new scientific discoveries in the early twentieth century has resulted in many changes in our ways of thinking. Especially the old ways,

in which we used to ontologically relate ourselves to the universe in the past, has become obsolete at the dawn of twentieth century. The old truth has lost its teeth. The history has outrun the human spirit: the old aesthetic paradigm failed to provide adequate answers to our ontological problems and questions. Painters were the first to feel this sense of ineptitude in the old aesthetics. To keep up with the rapidly changing modern age, therefore, they had to come up with a new mode of expression that would accommodate the unprecedented dynamic environment.

Western painters in the early twentieth century most keenly felt this need and thus revolted against the traditional mode of painting, which had been largely dominated by Realism. Realism attempted to merely reproduce or imitate the conventional dimensions and perspectives of nature (i.e. the real). As a reaction against this lifeless photographic duplication, Impressionism, a forerunner of Cubism, then appeared around 1870 in Paris.

It is important to know why it all happened in Paris. As Edward F. Fry rightly describes in his book Cubism (New York and Toronto: Oxford UP, 1966), Paris was a "cultural mecca" (11) at the dawn of the twentieth century for many reasons:

In its beginnings . . . and until about 1912, cubism was an exclusively Parisian phenomenon, and it probably could not have been born elsewhere,

for reasons of history, geography, and culture. No other city in the world in the early years of the twentieth century could boast of a comparable century-long history of outstanding artistic activity; and the relatively central location of Paris in western Europe served only to facilitate the migration of the most gifted young artists and writers from Spain, Italy, Germany, Russia, and the Low Countries toward this cultural mecca. Paris offered them not only the challenge of their most gifted contemporaries, but also its great art museums; it offered a tradition of moral and intellectual freedom, and an artistic bohemia in which they could live cheaply at the edge of society without suffering the ostracism inflicted by the bourgeoisie in smaller, more conservative, and less cosmopolitan European cities. (12)

In short, "by the early part of the twentieth century, Paris constituted an intellectual 'critical mass that soon produced a series of revolutionary cultural explosions" (Fry 12).

Going back to the Impressionism, it was, as any dictionary would define the term, "a theory or style of painting originating and developed in France during the 1870's, which is characterized by concentration on the general impression produced by a scene or object and by the use of unmixed

primary colors and small strokes to simulate actual reflected light." (The American Heritage Dictionary 647). However, the mere play with impressions created by the subtle nuance of light in bright colors (optical allusions) was not expressive enough to facilitate the vitality of a machine age. Yet, this new technique still failed to facilitate the much-needed expressiveness of the vital age and of the artist in the works of art.

The attempt to break away from the old convention, in fact, appeared much earlier. Even before the Cubists, artists had experimented with primitive arts and with various fantastic and hallucinatory effects of all kinds in order to find a more powerful mode of expression. According to Christopher Gray, for example, there was The Fauves [The Wild Beasts]. As the predecessor of Cubism, however, the impact of the Fauves was too limited to be considered as a major movement" (Gray 39-44). In fact, as the name suggests, "fauvism was a derogatory label given to the work of Henri Matisse (1869-1956) and his followers who, starting in about 1904, used colour [sic] with an unprecedented freedom, intensity and arbitrariness" (Fry 12).⁷

Furthermore, as Fry points out, at the turn of the century the sense of uniformity (the Euro-Centrality) in the aesthetics of the Western art was losing its foothold for the first time:

No less important was the discovery, and apprecia-

tion for the first time on aesthetic grounds, of African and Oceanic art; this discovery was made by several of the fauve painters, notably Vlaminck, Derain, and Matisse himself. . . .

'Primitive' sculpture was shortly to play a brief but important role in the evolution of cubism.

(12)

Thus, neither realistic nor impressionistic styles responded to the urgent need of the new artists: in particular, the desire to express the dynamism of the machine age. Artists now badly wanted to embody the powerful expressiveness of the age through their work. It was, therefore, this very lack of expressiveness and dynamism in the visual arts at the dawn of the century that eventually blossomed into Cubism. The Cubists were quick to revolt against incompatible conventions, which had ignored the expressiveness of the artist living in a dynamic new environment. The general sense of ineptitude of the old aesthetics felt by the Cubists provided the artistic communities across the board with a solid foundation for a general strike across the artistic communities, called "Modernism."

In his book Cubism: a History and an Analysis 1907-1914 (Boston: Boston Book & Art Shop, 1968), in fact, John Golding goes so far as to argue that "Cubism was perhaps the most important and certainly the most complete and radical artistic revolution since the Renaissance" (15). In a

similar vein, Christopher Gray also points out in his book Cubist Aesthetic Theories (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1953) that "Cubism occupies a position as important as that of Romanticism in the nineteenth century" (3). Indeed, the statement that Cubism was a modern "Renaissance" (Golding 15) or "another Romanticism" (Gray 3) may be an understatement, especially when we consider the overall impact it had created not only in the modern visual arts in general but also in modern poetry, in particular.

Cubists, in short, realized that the new age "demanded" (using Pound's dictum) a direct, bold, concrete, and explicit expression charged with the vital energy of the modern machine age. Therefore, the old aesthetic tradition of the Western art (i.e. the fake optic play of Realism and Impressionism) had to go.

Most important, Cubists, in their paintings, now wanted to express and embody a new concept of reality, especially the one recognized and informed by the new scientific discoveries of the twentieth century. In particular, they wanted to embody in their works the newly discovered concept of time: the late discovery of Einstein's fourth dimension (1905).⁸ Cubists indeed attempt to depict the "universal co-presence of time" through their paintings. For example, in order to arrest the fourth dimension in his painting Nude Descending a Stair Case, Marcel Duchamp depicts a nude figure descending the stair, flight by flight, in a

sequence, as if he captures the figure, cut by cut, in a slow-video motion.

Considering its consequent impact to the modern visual arts and then later to modern poetry, the impact of this new time cannot be overemphasized, especially when we recall that time was one of the most crucial aspects that separates the visual arts from the temporal art. As I will show later in this chapter and in Chapter Five, modern writers, too, in general struggled to embody this new concept of time in their prose as well poetry. Arresting time in temporal art (literature) was heretofore considered impossible, however. As I will show in my discussion of Gertrude Stein (fiction) and William Carlos Williams (poetry), they, nonetheless, tried to stop the flow of time in their writing, a temporal art.

In fact, Dasenbrock goes so far as to contend that the modernists writers attempted to create a spatial form with their temporary art:

. . . the modernist writers seek to give time and history itself a shape or form. This aim can only be achieved spatially, as form or shape is a property of space, not of time. Paradoxically, therefore, modernist literature uses spatial form to represent the form of time. If time has a form, it is dynamic, not static, and the spatial forms used to represent history in modernist literature are

really dynamic forms codified diagrammatically in spatial terms. . . . Yeats, Joyce, Pound and Eliot are full of such diagrams--the diagrams of A Vision and the map of Finnegans Wake--and more prominently, of concrete images that are nearly as schematic--the gyring birds of Yeats's lyrics, Chinese ideograms, Pound's favorite image of the rose in the steel dust, and the patterns created by birds, stars, the dance, and the "Chinese jar" in Burnt Norton. (146)

All these new discoveries, scientific or otherwise, accelerated toward the formation of Cubism, which was to destined to go through as many as three different stages of development. But for the purpose of this chapter, we do not need go no further. In summary, in an attempt to embody the vitality of the modern machine age as well as the newly discovered concept of reality informed by scientists and in an attempt to break away from the dying tradition of the Western art, cubist painters deliberately employed the following techniques to create central aesthetic effects, among others: fragmentation, geometric lines and patterns, repetition, flattened perspective, elimination of details, intentional ambiguity, playfulness, conceptual composition, multiple perspectives, and "chiaroscuro [a metaphor for contrast]."9

Gertrude Stein: the Confluence of Modernist Fiction
and Modernist (Cubist) Painting

Having thus identified some of the aesthetic characteristics of Cubism, I will now consider how a modern novel actually attempts to embody the aesthetic effects of modernist painting, of Cubism in particular. In the immediately following pages, therefore, I aim to prove how Gertrude Stein successfully embodies the aesthetics of Cubism in her novel Three Lives. For the legitimacy and validity of my own inter-art study endeavor, I rely on what Wallace Stevens says about painting and poetry:

No poet can have failed to recognize how often a detail, a propos or remark, in respect to painting, applies also to poetry. The truth is that there seems to exist a corpus of remarks in respect to painting, most often the remarks of painters themselves, which are as significant to poets as to painters. All of these details, to the extent that they have meaning for poets as well as for painters, are specific instances of relations between poetry and painting. I suppose, therefore, that it would be possible to study poetry by studying painting or that one could become a painter after one had become a poet, not to speak of carrying on in both metiers at once, with the economy of genius, as Blake did. . . . Just as

poets can be affected by the sayings of poets and so can both be affected by sayings addressed to neither. . . . These details come together so subtly and so minutely that the existence of relations is lost sight of. This, in turn, dissipates the idea of their existence. (111-12)¹⁰

Les Demoiselles de Bridgepoint?:
a Cubistic Reading of Stein's
Three Lives

Despite the apparent danger and difficulty involved in drawing a comparison between spatial art (painting) and temporal art (writing), a good deal of Stein criticism has attempted to account for "influences" from modern paintings, Cubism in particular. Several critics have examined Stein's Three Lives (1909) from the cubist point of view.¹¹ So far, however, no critic has successfully provided enough textual evidence to prove such influence, due largely to two problems. On the one hand, as far as my research goes, Stein has never confessed that she was influenced by Cubism. On the other hand, there remains the fundamental question: is it really possible to compare visual art with temporal art?

At one point, Stein confessed that the sense of "realness" in apples, chairs, people, and landscape in C zanne's paintings motivated her to write (Lectures in America 76-77). But nowhere did she explicitly state that she was

influenced by Cubism. However, the fact remains that she settled in Paris, 27 rue de Fleurus, as early as 1903 (Toklas 7 & 35, Brooks 2236), a crucial period in the making of the history of Western art. Just a year later, for instance, Henri Matisse, a close associate of Stein, launched Fauvism, whose aesthetics later becomes essential in the foundation of Cubism.

More importantly, a few years later in 1907, Cubism was born by another close friend: Pablo Picasso, whom Stein met in 1905 and for whom she sat for her portrait as many as "ninety" times in the same year (Toklas 55).¹² As Alice B. Toklas acutely observes, the sittings served as a turning point for both Picasso and Stein:

In the long struggle with the portrait of Gertrude Stein, Picasso passed from the Harlequin, the charming early italian [sic] period to the intensive struggle which was to become cubism. Gertrude Stein had written the story of Melanctha [sic], the second story of Three Lives [sic] which was the first definite step away from the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century in literature. (66)

Viewing all these facts, I am convinced that Stein and Picasso must have discussed art, among other things, during the long "ninety times" of the sitting and during the regular dining on Saturday evenings (Toklas 60). Furthermore,

with her uncanny artistic sensibility, Stein must have felt that she was at the hub of the wheel, witnessing a turning point in the history of Western art; so she described Paris as "'the place that suited those of us that were to create the twentieth century art and literature'" (Brooks 2221). With her painter-friends like Apollinaire, Picasso, and Braque, all innovative artists who eventually brought Cubism into existence, Stein was "breathing," one may say, the zeitgeist of Cubism:

each period of living differs from any other period of living not in the way life is but in the way life is conducted and that authentically speaking is composition. . . . Any one creating the composition in the arts does not know it [a new mode of expression] either, they are conducting life and that makes their composition what it is, it makes their work compose as it does. Their influence and their influence are the same as that of all of their contemporaries. . . . ("Composition" 24-5)¹³

Considering all these facts, I must agree with the majority of Stein critics who believe that Stein, the discoverer, patron, and early collector of Picasso's work must have been influenced by Cubism to a great extent when she was writing Three Lives.

On the other hand, the age-old controversy still ex-

ists. No common language exists between spatial and temporal art: there is no universal, critical, aesthetic standards that can be applied to both without resorting back to the fundamental question--is it possible to compare a spatial art with a temporal one when the two arts depend on quintessentially different media? I think so. Aesthetically, Stein and Picasso were working under the same paradigm, a revolutionary breaking away from the traditional Western art, as Toklas pointed out; therefore, they must have shared similar, iconoclastic impulses, defamiliarization of the familiar, a common denominator that can be applied to both arts. As Wendy Steiner astutely observes, "as long as the similarity [between literature and painting] is striking, the difference [of medium] can be pushed aside," because "there can be no final consensus about whether and how the two arts resemble each other, but only a growth in our awareness of the process of comparing them, of metaphoric generation and regeneration" (2).

According to Edward F. Fry, Cubism goes as far back as Cézanne, the so-called post impressionist whose paintings Stein was very familiar with. It is Cézanne, Fry argues, who broke away from the tradition of impressionistic "optical realism" for another "realism of the psychological process of perception itself" (14), a shift Stein also must have felt.¹⁴ Despite the static nature of its analytic and synthetic stages, Cubism, at the time of its conception,

demanded a direct, bold, and powerful expression in order to break away from the optical realism (Impressionism). Cubists, to repeat myself, have most acutely felt the ineptness of Impressionism in embodying the vitality of modern machine age and the newly discovered concept of reality informed by scientists.¹⁵

In fact, as for the significance of cubists' initial iconoclastic impulse, some critics go as far as to name Cubism as a modern "Renaissance" (Golding 15) or "another Romanticism" (Gray 3). To embody this newly recognized modern dynamism and the concept of reality in their paintings, cubists employed diverse techniques such as fragmentation, geometric lines, repetition, flattened perspective, elimination of details, intentional ambiguity, playfulness, conceptual composition, multiple perspectives, and "chiaroscuro."¹⁶ Consciously and faithfully, cubists employed these techniques to shock the observer with unfamiliarity, newness, and, above all, unconventionality.

Correspondingly, Stein's Three Lives shocked the literary world with its newness and unconventionality: its "otherness" was so astonishing that no publisher wanted to publish it until 1909, six years after its conception. More significantly, Stein seems to achieve the sense of shocking unconventionality by analogously employing techniques that are unmistakably from Cubism, such as fragmentation, repetition, elimination of details, intentional ambi-

guity, playfulness, multiple perspectives, and indeed, a sort of literary chiaroscuro despite the quintessential difference of medium in literature. By carefully examining the presence of these techniques, the major devices for defamiliarization, we can affirm how rigorously Stein observes and analogously attempts to reflect the vigor and spirit of Cubism in Three Lives.

To achieve the sense of iconoclastic newness or "otherness," a cubist pursues fragmentation and repetition: the artist intentionally and repeatedly interrupts or fragments the geometric lines and patterns which compose the subjects of his paintings, as Pablo Picasso does in Man with Violin (1911) or Georges Braque does in Still-Life with Harp and Violin (1912). In both paintings, the artist consciously disfigures the objects (instruments and man) into broken geometric fragments, a mode of expression that dedeparts shockingly from the traditional, three-dimensional rendition. Merely relying on the bits and pieces of broken objects scattered all over the canvas, the observer must use his intellect or the "conceptual logic" (Steiner 180) in order to visualize a given object in his mind.¹⁷

Analogously, Three Lives also achieves the utter unconvencionality through fragmented repetitions which too demands a logical conceptualization of a given character due to the lack of details; Stein too repeats words, phrases, and sentences, which are scattered, in bits and pieces,

throughout Three Lives: "the good Anna" (11, 12, 13, 15, 23, 24, 54, 61, 63, 64, 66, 75, 79, etc), "the cheerful Lizzy" (14, 23), "the melancholy Molly" (14, 23), "the rough old Katy" (17, 18, 23), "the stupid Sally" (18, 23), and "the dreamy Lena" (246, 268), to mention a few.¹⁸

As the cubist refuses to render a given object in a three dimensional, photographic representation, Stein also avoids the more traditional, full rendition of a given character, as the above examples illustrate. The artlessness of these repetitious adjectives does not describe character very much; just as fragmented, simple, repetitive, geometric lines in a cubistic painting do not depict a given object very much either. Recurring unsophisticated adjectives, such as good, cheerful, rough old, dreamy, melancholy, and stupid, remind the reader of unceremonious simplicity often found in Homeric epithets such as "wise Odysseus" or "cleaned-heeled Achilles." A cubist heavily relies on the bare, essential, geometric lines and patterns and renders his object through utter simplification; analogously, Stein's use of these unpretentious adjectives provoke in the reader the unassuming simplicity associated with a character. In Les Demoiselles d' Avignon (1907), arguably the first cubist painting, Picasso, for instance, paints human figures in geometric lines, "based not on gesture and physiognomy but on the complete freedom to reorder the human image, figures evoke[ing] previously unexpressed states of

mind" (Fry 13).

Furthermore, repetitions help the process of conceptualization in both Three Lives and Les Demoiselles. Reading the same phrase over and over again ("the good Anna," for instance) insulates the reader from the real meaning of the phrase. After a while, the meaning becomes nebulous, like an abstract thought. Correspondingly, to appreciate a cubistic painting, the observer must be able to connect the often disrupted, distorted, and repeated lines and patterns so that he may form in his mind a complete picture of the object the painter attempts to render. For example, the thighs of the two figures at the center of Les Demoiselles are interrupted by a curtain-like fabric; yet, the viewer understands that they are hidden underneath the cloth because, using his intellect, he can connect missing parts with the remaining anatomy, which reappears after a brief interruption.¹⁹

Besides helping the process of conceptualization, repetitions also serve as authorial intrusions in Three Lives. Being obtrusive and disturbing, they often have little to do with what goes on in the story other than being focal, referential points. Similar to repetitive, individual, patterns and shades, as in Les Demoiselles, authorial intrusions seldom blend into the harmonious whole.²⁰ Instead of explaining in detail how Anna succumbs to Mrs. Lehtman's decision to move into a larger house, the

narrator obtrusively provides a simple answer: "Remember, Mrs. Lehtman was the romance in Anna's life" (35). The imperative mood ("Remember") Stein repeatedly uses particularly disturbs the reader, as it calls attention to itself.²¹

Repetitions at times serve as focal, referential points. In Three Lives, they usually highlight the meaning of a given text as they "sum up" (Hoffman 65) what goes on in the story. To describe the "happiest days of Anna" with Miss Mathilda, the narrator sums them up as, "Anna scolded and cooked and sewed and saved . . ." (63), a repetition of the same phrase that she used earlier to depict Anna's happy life with Dr. Shojen (51). Such summarizing statements help the reader quicken the process of conceptualization.

Most important, repetitions tend to expand the duration of time. By repeating the same sentence, for instance, Stein disrupts the sequential, temporal, linearity--or at least stretches the duration of time. Since nearly the same (or similar with few variations) sentence recurs throughout the story, the linear movement of time's progress is disrupted; time is almost standing still. To freeze the totality of the action "descending" in time, Marcel Duchamp, a cubist, similarly repeats geometric patterns, and paints a nude figure, successively, descending a stair case in his Nude Descending a Stair. In Stein's story, time thus stopped, "every page is just as important as any other page,

just as every part of a cubistic painting is as important as every other part" (Fitz 231).²² Stein's attempt to somehow arrest the linear progress in Three Lives by stretching the duration of time through repetitions evinces the fact that she is trying to incorporate the spatiality of the visual art into a temporal art.

Relying heavily upon repetitious, bare, geometric lines and patterns, a cubist consciously eliminates details; due to this elimination, the observer needs to conceptualize even more vigorously.²³ In Stein, such effort manifests itself in her superficial prose: "the language of surfaces" (Fitz 228) or "art by subtraction" (Burke 410). In Three Lives, the superficiality of Stein's prose--based largely on ungrammatical colloquialism,²⁴ repetitions, monosyllabic, simple, portrayals of characters, and words often chosen only for the sake of musicality--defies any traditional, symbolic, connotative meaning. As L. T. Fitz convincingly argues, Stein always "emphasizes the importance of divorcing oneself from one's own memories and experiences" and "tries to catch the essence of an object or character by delineating its surface characteristics" (233). Such "techniques of temporal and linguistic defamiliarization" in Stein become indeed "methods of heightening and prolonging the process of perception . . ." (Jones 3595).

For example, Stein portrays Lizzie, the first servant Anna takes in Miss Mathilda's house, as "a pretty, cheerful,

obedient, happy, irish girl" (14). Yet, Stein does not support her description with details (Hoffman 71): this "telling adds up to the abstractness of the story because such technique does not 'show' in the Jamesian sense" (Hoffman 66). The reader, for instance, does not know how and why such a "cheerful, obedient, happy" girl one day disappears "without her notice" (14).²⁵ He must fill the vacuum by focusing on a specific set of circumstances, using his intellect. Such brief portraits necessitate a rather vigorous conceptualization on the part of the reader.

Stein's preoccupation with musicality in her prose also invites the process of conceptualization. Her description of Lena, for example, calls attention to itself rather than helping the reader picture her:

Lena was a **brown** and pleasant creature, **brown** as blonde races often have them **brown, brown**, not with yellow or the red or the chocolate **brown** of sun burned countries, but **brown** with the clear color laid flat on the light toned skin beneath, the plain, spare **brown** that makes it right to have been made with hazel eyes, and not too abundant straight, **brown** hair, hair that only later deepens itself into **brown** from the straw yellow of a german child. (240 my emphases)

According to this description and that immediately following, Lena has hazel eyes, black thick eyebrows (as the

narrator informs the reader in the following page), brown hair, and "earth made pureness of brown, flat, soft featured face" (241). Finding such rare combination as "black thick eyebrows with brown hair" among German children seems to me too fanciful: Stein's portrayal of Lena resembles an abstract painting as she whimsically subtracts brown, yellow, red, and so on.²⁶ This sense of childish capriciousness involved in Stein's description of Lena parallels the arbitrariness of Cubism such as rendering human figures in geometric simplicity. Further, due largely to this arbitrariness, the reader, again, must conceptualize what Lena is really like.

The apparent musicality further intensifies the superficiality of her prose. For example, the repetition of words brown and hair as well as the alliterative "b"s and "l"s (blonde, burned, beneath, been, and Lena, pleasant, blonde, yellow, laid, flat, light, plain, and later) produce rhythm.²⁷ Similarly, Stein's whimsical coloration scattered disorderly here and there, brown, blonde, yellow, red, hazel, heightens the arbitrariness of her prose. Due largely to this musicality and fanciful coloration, the portrait of Lena becomes even more abstract. They further call attention to themselves and prolong the process of conceptualization.

Stein's preoccupation with the "languages of surfaces" (Fitz 228) also creates ambiguity, another characteristic of

cubistic paintings. One example of ambiguity is the obtrusive, repetitious, authorial intrusion: "Remember, Mrs. Lehntman was the romance in Anna's life" (30, 34, 52, etc). The reader cannot ascertain, for example, if he should take the word "romance" for a lesbian love affair. To me, at least, the point is never clear. Mrs. Lehntman's relationship with "the evil and mysterious" (71) doctor too is as foggy as her "romance." This type of ambiguity, resulting directly from the elimination of details, also invites conceptualization: again, the reader must intellectually supply the necessary information as best as he can.

Perhaps one of the most intriguing ambiguities comes from the word wisdom (or knowledge) in "Melanctha." Repeated throughout the story (96, 101, 103, 104, 105, 217, to mention a few), not only does the meaning of the word seem to change from worldly knowledge or experience (96) to sexual experience (101), but it also remains unexplained. Stein creates ambiguity by yoking a verb to an abstract noun: " in the distance [Melanctha] saw wisdom" (96 my emphasis) or "Melanctha wandered on the edge of wisdom" (101 my emphasis). Just as repetitions tend to change an epithet into an abstract thought, this type of intentional ambiguity, resulting from the yoking of an abstract noun with a verb, for instance, accelerates the process of conceptualization, a technique that is somewhat analogous to cubists' intentional disfigurement of an object to defamiliarize

it.²⁸

Stein also closely observes and reflects cubistic angularity and disfigurement. As almost all cubistic paintings utilize various angular geometric patterns, Stein too shows her preoccupation with such a concept in describing her characters. For example, Miss Mathilda's little house, "one of a whole row of all the same kind that made a close pile like a row of dominoes knocked over" (11 my emphasis), resembles the successive ("the same kind") rows of squares and cubes ("dominoes") in a cubistic painting.

The narrator's portraiture of Anna too evokes angularity associated with Cubism: "Her worn, thin, lined, determined face would form for itself new and humorous creases" with her "angular body" (38). Words such as "creases" and "breakneck courage" (91, 95) remind the reader of distorted cubistic figures as in Les Demoiselles. Mrs. Haydon too is portrayed as "short, stout, hard built" with a "doubled chin well covered over with the uproll from her short, square neck" (243). The monosyllabic staccato--short, stout, and built as well as the square neck--sharpen the sense of angularity in her. Among others, Katy too is depicted as having a "bony, square dull head with its thin, tanned, toughened skin and its sparse and kinky grizzled hair" as well as a "strong, squat figure a little overmade on the right side" (17), and she makes "queer guttural broken moans" (18). Furthermore, she is known to speak "a strange

distorted german english" (17).

Angularity, exaggeration, and distortion of a given object evoke a sense of playfulness and humor in cubistic paintings. Stein does not fail to notice this element. When Anna first visits Miss Mathilda, having just been to a medium, the narrator pokes fun at the whole situation: "had it not all been just as the medium said, the good Anna would never have taken the place with Miss Mathilda" (61).

Further on, while talking about Foxy, the dog allegedly impregnated by Peter, another dog, the narrator humorously comments, "Periods of evil thinking came very regularly to Peter and to Rags and to the visitors within their gates" (13). Here, Stein's use of the abstract noun as the subject of a sentence--"Periods of evil thinking" (my emphasis)--strikes the reader as funny and humorous, for the reader does not necessarily expect the "Periods of evil thinking" to have human attributes: "came very regularly" (my emphasis). Stein further intensifies the humor by treating the two heterogenous elements, the dog and the humans equally. She uses this technique elsewhere: "Sallie never answered Anna back, no more did Peter, Old Baby and little Rags" (19). The humor usually results from a sudden, unexpected contrast between two inherently opposite elements, a technique known as "chiaroscuro" in painting, which initially meant the arrangement of light and dark elements in pictorial work of art but which now signifies "modelling by color"

to provokes a sense of sharp contrast (Fry 15).²⁹

Perhaps "chiaroscuro" stands out as one of the quintessential elements of Cubism. This technique sharply contrasts two or more solid colors, such as red and blue, by juxtaposing them. In order to obtain a sense of "chiaroscuro" in writing, Stein employs, among other things, contrast and contradiction. Anna, for instance, is depicted as speaking a "queer / piercing / german / english" (14 my slashes to intensify the sense of isolation). "A queer piercing german english" is one thing and "a serious, earnest, good young joyous doctor" (110) is another. In the latter, the reader expects a serious man to be earnest and good; in the former, however, queer is not necessarily the word the reader expect in ordinary usage to modify a piercing voice. Perhaps, adjectives such as harsh, metallic, or clashing would better modify a "piercing" voice than the odd adjective "queer," for example. The narrator, further, could have said, "Anna speaks English with a German accent" rather than "Anna speaks german / english." Each word, one may say, "repels" against each other.

Perhaps the best example of this, say, "enveloping," "repelling," or "unblending" technique--the isolating the meaning of each word, phrase, or sentence within each word, phrase, or sentence--is best exemplified in Stein's writing on Picasso:

This one was always having something that was

coming out of this one that was a solid thing, a charming thing, a lovely thing, a perplexing thing, a disconcerting thing, a simple thing, a clear thing a complicated thing, an interesting thing, a disturbing thing, a repellent thing, a very pretty thing. (W & L 1911-1945 204)

In order to capture the totality of a brothel life in Avignon, Picasso captures female nude figures from multiple perspectives: all the figures are arrested from different angles and Picasso further jumbles the frontal and the profile views of a face in the figure at the bottom right hand of Les Demoiselles.

Correspondingly, in the above quotation, Stein freezes the totality of Picasso in multiple bits and pieces of adjectives in order to arrest the totality of Picasso the person. Just as Picasso's jumbled face creates a sense of disharmony, the individual adjectives are often self-contradictory and unblending: charming, repellent; simple, complicated; lovely, disconcerting; perplexing, clear; and so on. Nonetheless, these adjectives, taken as a whole, capture the extremely complicated personality of Picasso in a paragraph.

This juxtaposition of contrasting words does not blend in color or in meaning. The meaning of each word, thus severed and isolated, is caught and stopped within itself. It recoils, calling attention to itself, like individual objects and shades in cubistic paintings. This self-reflex-

iveness echoes the fragmented nature of cubistic paintings, achieved through "chiaroscuro."

Similarly, Stein uses verbs and adverbial phrases to contrast one aspect of action from another: "she [Anna] cooked and saved and sewed and scrubbed and scolded" (51). Here, the paratactic style, using the noncommittal conjunction "and," draws the attention to individual verbs: each verb has its own self-contained world, and due to its idiosyncratic meaning, it too recoils to itself. Cooking, for instance, is not saving; nor sewing scrubbing.

Each verb, like a fragmented individual cube or shade in a cubistic painting, assumes one solid color, so to speak, that defies to be blended into the next one. Despite this recoiling, however, the alliteration seems to connect these disparate aspects with seeming musical fluidity, perhaps just as briefly interrupted geometric lines in cubist paintings soon reappear after momentary disruption.

Stein contrasts adverbial modifiers, too: "Jeff Campbell and Melanctha Herbert sat there on the steps, very quiet, a long time . . ." (119). Here Stein, using commas, isolates three different aspects: (1) there on the steps, (2) very quiet, and (3) a long time. Just as solid colors in cubist paintings individually provoke different feelings and moods, the three adverbial modifiers denote totally different meanings: place, attitude, and time.

Stein similarly uses oxymoronic descriptions to height-

en the sense of "chiaroscuro." For instance, Jeff Campbell is depicted as "strong, and good, and understanding, and innocent, and firm, and gentle" (129). According to the description, he is firm yet understanding, strong yet innocent, and firm yet gentle. Lizzie is depicted as "an obedient happy servant" (15). How can one be happy, while being obedient? Furthermore, granted that one can be happy while being obedient, why does she disappear one day "without her notice" (14)? The description "innocent blind old Baby" calls attention to itself too because, granted that the adjectives "innocent" and "blind" go together, old and Baby or old and innocent strike the reader as oxymoronic.³⁰

Self-contradictory statements also heighten the sense of "chiaroscuro." Jeff Campbell's mood, for instance, teems with such a self-contradictory state as "Jeff always loved now to be with Melanctha and yet he always hated to go to her" (136). Often, in Stein's story, "the statements contained in consecutive sentences may have no ostensible relation to one another, to anything said in the previous paragraph, or to the supposed subject of the writing" (Hoffman 30). This lack of coherency heightens the sense of "chiaroscuro."

The technique of "chiaroscuro," in fact, operates on many different levels. Anna's personality conflict against Jane's, for instance, resembles the sharp contrast created by two solid colors in cubist paintings: Anna confesses, "I

can't have Miss Jane watching at me all the time" because in " every minute something new [will happen]" (36). Due to this very conflict, Anna had to quit working for Miss Mary Wadsmith. In fact, while she was working for Miss Mathilda, Anna had to replace four under-servants in five years (14).

The "chiaroscuro" technique is, in fact, crucial to understanding the structure of the story. The "chiaroscuro" technique pairs "antithetical characters" (Ruddick 1547) or "polar opposites" (Weinstein 19). Each under-servant as well as each woman, with whom Anna becomes associated throughout her life, respectively constitutes fragmented, isolated cubes and shades with solid colors (cubistically speaking) in the total painting of Anna. In his Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (1910), for example, Picasso, using fragmented geometric cubes, renders anatomically a nose here, a hand there, a wine glass here, and so on in order to capture the totality of the subject.

Analogously, Stein's brief portrayals of individual characters--"The cheerful Lizzies, the melancholy Mollies, the rough old Katies and the stupid Sallies"--operates like isolated cubes, the building blocks, within the totality of a painting called "The Good Anna," for instance. In general, these characters did not get along too well with Anna; thus, the sense of disharmony resulting from personal conflicts reminds us, it seems to me, of the disharmonious oddity in cubist paintings, which is a result of the use of

fragmented cubes and interrupted geometric patterns.

In this sense, one may say, all the characters in each story respectively constitute a facet in the totality of Anna, Melanctha, and Lena, just as a plane cube in cubist paintings depicts an anatomical part of a figure, and the individual parts, taken as a whole, in turn, constitutes a whole portrait as in Picasso's Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler. Thus, individual characters in "The Good Anna" becomes integral parts of Anna's portrait.

Similarly, in the totality of Melanctha, there are fragmented cubes with solid colors, unblending, each representing Rose Johnson, James Herbert, Jane Harden, Jeff Campbell, and Jem Richards, just as in a cubistic rendition of "The Gentle Lena," there are her German family, Mary, Nellie, Mrs. Haydon, Mathilda, Bertha, the good cook who always scolded Lena, Herman, Lena's babies and so on. Together, the three women mirror the five figures in Les Demoiselles, who sum up "the life in a brothel" (in Avignon). The three figures in Three Lives, of course, summarize "the lives of low class women in Bridgepoint."

The "chiaroscuro" technique also enables Stein to capture the element of time, just as Picasso freezes it by arresting the five figures from multiple perspectives on a flat canvas. In, say, Les Demoiselles de Bridgepoint, for instance, "the story is presented as an all-at once revelation, like something painted on a wall . . ." (Brinnin 60).

Stein freezes time by the circularity of each story--all three stories open "in medias res," followed by "flashback" that leads to the present moment. It is true that all three stories go past the beginning point in the end, but in each story, flash back takes a great deal of space. The structure, thus, resembles a snake biting its tail. This sense of non-time created by this circularity heightens the self-reflexiveness of the story, which, in turn, reinforces the sense of spatiality.

Stein intensifies the spatiality through the circularity, for it does not indicate "beginning, end, or middle from a narrative point of view" (Hubert 338). In each story, as I have already pointed out, repetitions defy any linear progression: in each sentence, each word, unblending and recoiling, being self-reflexive, stops time. Stein's work, therefore, should be "apprehended spatially, in a moment of time, rather than as a sequence" (Frank 9), just like Picasso's Les Demoiselles. Although I am very well aware that Stein finished Three Lives before Picasso's Les Demoiselles, in my opinion, it was very likely that she may have seen Picasso painting it during 1906-1907, which is just after Picasso's painting her own portrait. Or maybe she has not seen it at all, but such an argument does not make much difference because, as Toklas has already made the point, Picasso and Stein, just after the portrait, respectively shock the world with new art: they both knew what the age

demanded.

In fact, other similarities between Les Demoiselles de Bridgepoint and Les Demoiselles d'Avignon are apparent. The socioeconomic situation of the three characters in Three Lives resembles that of five prostitutes in Les Demoiselles: to survive, the three must "serve" others. Stein's careful selection of black and white characters seems to reflect those black and white figures in the painting.³¹

Melanctha, "whose strength can stop an average man" (96), appears to reflect the masculinity the figure, in the far left of Picasso's Les Demoiselles, exhibits. Similarly, the gentle Lena's doomed frustration seems to reflect the ominous, melancholic mood that the darkened face, in the top right, imparts.

The five figures in Les Demoiselles respectively evoke different feelings and emotions, just as Anna, Melanctha, and Lena embody different states of mind. Picasso uses three different colors--reddish brown, gray, and blue--for the background of Les Demoiselles. Most interestingly, the reader can easily identify Anna's compassion and humaneness with the warmth of earthy reddish brown, Melanctha's intermediacy with gray, and Lena's melancholy Lena with blue. The contrast among these colors in Les Demoiselles seems to suggest the three distinct personalities in Three Lives.³²

Both share a strong sense of primitivism. Les Demoiselles, for instance, reflects primitivism through the

reddish-brown earth color Picasso uses.³³ Stein's similes and metaphors, such as "as ragged as a buzzard and as dirty as a dog" (12), "I [Anna] slave and slave to save money" (21), "tingling blood, burning winds" (23), and "a torture chamber [Anna's half brother's house]," (57) express the "tang" of savageness. Similarly, Katy is "uncouth and aged peasant hide," or she "was too coarsely made from natural earth . . ." (17 my emphasis). Meanwhile Lena possesses "earth made pureness of her brown. . ." (241 my emphasis). It is interesting to note that painters who anticipated Cubism--such as Cézanne, Gauguin, and Picasso--predominantly use an earthy-brown color, a color heavily associated with primitivism.³⁴

Furthermore, throughout Three Lives, just as in Les Demoiselles, there are overwhelming emphases on the primitivistic massiveness and dynamism associated with characters. Miss Mathilda (the alleged Stein herself), Miss Wadsmith, Mrs. Drehton (who has "stalwart" sons), and Mathilda in "The Gentle Lena"--all are depicted as fat, large, and massive which reminds the reader of paintings of Henri Matisse, a fauvist whose idea later became incorporated into the aesthetics of Cubism. This emphatic use of "earth brown" color as well as the primitivistic dynamism reminds the reader of Gauguin's later paintings of Tahitian women, whose primitivistic style and influence, in turn, are apparent in the earlier Cubism.

As Stein describes the early spring time in the south, the sense of negro dynamism in her writing reminds the reader of William Carlos Williams' attitude toward black people: "The earth was wet and rich and smelling for them [negroes]. The wind was very gentle and yet urgent to them. And the buds and the long earth-worms, and the negroes, and all the kinds of children were out every minute farther into the new spring, watery, southern sunshine" (195). Stein's emphasis on the primitivistic elements again mirrors the earlier stage of Cubism.

In conclusion, Cubism was a reaction against the impressionistic, static, and photographic representation of nature. Creating an illusion of the external world, however, was not enough for cubists who have acutely felt the dynamism of the modern machine age. Les Demoiselles, for instance, shows "cultural dynamism" (Fry 16) as it exhibits influences from various sources such as Cézanne, Fauvism, Iberian sculpture, Gauguin, African art, and, above all, the newly discovered Einstein's theory of relativity, whose quintessential element is time (Fry 9-16).

Three Lives too teems with such cultural dynamism, especially in its attempt to slow time in temporal art. It breathes the vigor and spirit of Cubism such as the self-reflexive circularity found not only in the structure of the whole story but also in the disparate adjectives and verbs in a single sentence. Stein's use of paratactic concatena-

tion, on the one hand, anticipates, in the long run, The Cantos, The Waste Land, and Finnegans Wake, in all of which "the phrase, not the sentence, is the fundamental unit of meaning" (Dasenbrock 136). On the other hand, such circuitous, self-reflexive recoiling defies "the traditional sequentiality or temporality of literature" (Dasenbrock 130), and insures the freezing of time throughout the story. The "chiaroscuro" technique used in both Cubism and Three Lives furthermore adumbrates Imagism, which too attempts to superimpose two images upon one another as in cinematic montag . (Is it a sheer coincidence that Chinese ideograms in essence operate on the same principle of "chiaroscuro": the simultaneous juxtaposition of different pictures?) Further on, the dynamism Melanctha cherishes in a railway station (98-99) foretells the much-honored mobility and vitality in Futurism and Vorticism. As a forerunner of these movements, Three Lives truly represents a literary turning point. It was Three Lives, one might even argue, that influenced Les Demoiselles rather than vice versa.

Summary

As I have so far demonstrated, between the modern visual arts and modern literary arts (in this case the modern novel), there, no doubt, exists a strong aesthetic confluence. Gertrude Stein's cubistic impulses indeed come

alive in her novel. In the immediately following chapter, then, I shall investigate how aesthetics of Cubism also manifests themselves in modern poetry. I have already pointed out how the new concept of time became important both in the modern visual arts and modern poetry.

William Carlos Williams: the Confluence of Modernist
Poetry and Modernist Painters

It was in 1905 that the invisible stuff called ether, which had been alluring scientists and poets alike for ages, became finally defunct (Burke 296; Hawkins 20), for Albert Einstein's theory of relativity eliminated the "purest air" that allegedly sustained, among others, the lives of (Miltonic) angels. Replacing ether, however, was the discovery of the fourth dimension which shattered the conventional concept of reality. According to this new concept, reality must contain space and time simultaneously. In a similar vein, William Carlos Williams attempts to embody this new reality in his poetry by sustaining the progress of time and suspending it as long as he can in the air, thus elapsing it: the measured duration of a line movement in a poem, the actual time spent in transit, as in flight, by a moving word, phrase, or line. No longer was the old notion of absolute time viable. Having been informed of this new view, the simultaneity of space and time became arguably the most important issue for the modern artist. In his famous painting Nude Descending a Stair Case, for example, Marcel

Duchamp attempts to arrest a span of time and space by depicting--as if reviewing a videotape, frame-by-frame, in slow motion--successive, sequential movements of a nude figure, seen from multiple angles, descending a stair case. As Reed Way Dasenbrock points out, major modern writers likewise become increasingly concerned with "Einsteinian spatio-temporal" form (135-147). Although not named by Dasenbrock, William Carlos Williams expressed his concern with this new reality. Williams, himself a painter and poet and physician, in fact, advocated in his article "The American Spirit" that modern poetry must let go "the old line, the medieval masterbeat" (219) and adapt a new line break that incorporates the Einstein's new time:

How shall we deploy the poetic line, having abandoned the old way of measuring which the selective feudal spirit dictated? Accent, as we have known it, must go. Accent is the selective maneuver, we are fed up with it. In all probability we shall have to measure the line by elapsed time, as did the Greeks. But we must measure it--perhaps relativity will come in here. . . . (220)

In this discussion, I will examine the work of William Carlos Williams, a modernist in regard to his impulses to freeze time, as evidenced by his poem "The Red Wheelbarrow." A familiarity with Williams' theoretical efforts to deal with elapsed time as well as his corollary technical efforts

at re-defining the line should not only help in locating Williams working within the same socio-aesthetic atmosphere as Stein and Pound, but also assist in putting Pound's experimentation in these contemporaries in Modern Literature.

"Measuring the Line by Elapsed Time" as the Source "That Denotes a Certain Unquenchable Exaltation" in William's "the Red Wheelbarrow"

In his rather informative essay "The American Spirit in Art," Williams observes that the line break is the major problem in modern poetry:

The line is our battlefield. . . . The line must be broken down before it is built up anew, on a broader basis, according to another measure. . . . Accent, as we have known it, must go. Accent is the selective maneuver; we are fed up with it. In all probability we shall have to measure the line by elapsed time, as did the Greeks. But we must **measure** it--perhaps relativity will come in here--we must measure it, there is no such thing as free verse, there is only verse in transition from one measure to another, from one position to another. . . . Verse is measure. We must measure it--but it has to be a new measure. (219-20)

If we have to summarize this quotation in a single phrase, it would probably be "measuring the line by elapsed

time as a new measure."³⁵ Despite such an enlightening comment, however, critics fail to observe such measuring in Williams' poetry in general. In particular, when it comes to viewing one of his "oddest" poems "The Red Wheelbarrow," they do not pay much attention to the significance of the iconoclastic line break--the quintessence of the poem. Despite Williams' own comment about the poem that "the rhythm though no more than a fragment, denotes a certain unquenchable exaltation" (qtd in Moore 396), no critic has so far found "the rhythm of a certain unquenchable exaltation" in the poem. Critics fail to realize that such exaltation comes from his unusual line breaks, line breaks based on elapsed time. Yet, Williams' concept of measuring the line by elapsed time is the key to understanding his poem. So much depends upon whether or not the reader recognizes this new measure.

"The Red Wheelbarrow" is one of Williams' most anthologized and criticized poems.³⁶ However, the critical opinions of the poem vary widely. Perhaps, William H. Pritchard's negative reaction to the poem best typifies the undiscerning eyes of critics: "one should not punish a piece of whimsical originality for the descriptive sentences that have been heaped on it" (281). Or, the poem is the best example of so-called "typewriter-poem, a typographical creation of white spaces and black marks rather than something sung or spoken" (288). What amazes me the most in

these remarks is not how Pritchard slights the poem (although these unperceiving comments do), but rather how he misses the point while uncannily perceiving in the poem the sense of time slowing down ("something heaped up on it") and visual quality (the poem is neither to be sung nor to be spoken).

A few critics, however, sense something different about the poem. Harold Bloom, for instance, astutely recognizes Williams' invention of new metaphors in Spring and All: "the best poems in Spring and All unfold themselves, the reader can be persuaded that Williams has invented freshly the accurate metaphors for our American sense of imaginative belatedness" (5). However, he does not make clear what he means by "freshly invented accurate metaphors." Besides such overall comments, critical opinions about Williams in general fall into two major camps: "space" camps and "time" ones.

Probably Henry M. Sayre best represents the views of "space" camps. He convincingly suggests that poems in Spring and All are in general self-contained and open-ended: "The Red Wheelbarrow" is a "self-contained structure in which 'so much depends / upon' the form into which Williams molds his material . . ." (17). I cannot disagree about the importance of "rendering" the poem. But he does not realize that the self-containment and open-endedness results from Williams' measuring the line by elapsed time.

On the other hand, others do not think of Williams as being essentially spatial. In her book review on Henry M Sayre's The Visual Text of Williams Carlos Williams, Bonnie Costello sharply points out the danger involved in our easy generalization of "visualness" in Williams:

The plasticity' of language is trivial by comparison to the plasticity of painting. The visual artist rightly centers his conceptualizations in the visual since that is the essence of his medium, but referentiality and even sound are more essential aspects of language, engaging more sophisticated mental processes. (31)

Most importantly, in his seminal essay on Williams in Poets of Reality, J. Hillis Miller astutely observes one of the quintessential aspects of Williams' poetry as follows:

[In Williams], the word is not by itself, in slackness, but is endowed with its power of connecting itself to other words in a network of meaning. The word reaches out with all its strength toward the other words which are for the moment absent. . . . Conjunctions, prepositions, adjectives, located at the end of a line express an energy as arrows of force, reaching to the other words. (299-30)

Although his comment strikes me as brilliant, when it comes to viewing "The Red Wheelbarrow," Miller does not seem

to recognize similar "arrows of force" stretching out to reach other words that are momentarily absent.³⁷

In essence, whether one supports "space" arguments or "time" theorists, it does not really matter because they both speak of the zeitgeist of the age in general and in particular to two major characteristics: visual art. As Bram Dijkstra illustrates, Williams' concern with spatiality has already been pointed out and proved through his involvements with the visual arts. However, Williams' obsession with freezing time has not received commensurate attention. As both camps correctly point out, Williams renders the poem in such a way that he is able to freeze space and time on a blank page, just as a painter captures space and time on a canvas. More specifically, Williams does that through measuring the line by elapsed time.

In "The Red Wheelbarrow," Williams measures the line by elapsed time, and it is this measuring that creates Miller's "arrows of force" in broken words. Consider, for example, the line break between the words "rain" and "water" in the third stanza. Due to its isolation, the word "rain" draws full attention to itself, since it is located at the end of the line, alone, isolated from the noun it modifies. Also, because it is a noun, which can stand by itself with its meaning complete, the word "rain" has its own world, with its meaning complete. Time slows down; it elapses. Furthermore, no period interrupts its taking off, reinforcing

the sense of time expanding.³⁸

Williams' own explanation about the operation of poetic imagination analogously illustrates this concept of measuring the line by elapsed time: "as birds' wings beat the solid air without which none could fly so words freed by the imagination affirm reality by their flight" ("Spring and All" 25). Despite its initial taking off into indefinite space and time, however, the word "rain" cannot fly indefinitely. As soon as the reader reaches the next line, he immediately recognizes that the word "rain" has been used as an adjective (adjectival noun), which modifies another noun "water." The "flight" must stop at this point.

The meaning of the word "rain" is thus yoked through modification. The visual picture associated with the word "rain" from the previous stanza therefore must carry over to the next line to complete the meaning of the noun "water" as "rain water." Does "glazed with rain water" change the meaning of "glazed with rain"? Of course, it does. To say the least, "glazed with rain water" implies that the rain has stopped and the sun is out. Stanely Archer goes so far as to convincingly argue that the word glazed is "the most important word of the poem because it suggests luminosity at the very transient moment" (27). As the modifier is isolated and suspended, time extends, resisting the linear progression of time.

The time-lapse resulting from Williams' intentional

line break between the word "rain" and "water," thus, provides a sudden expansion of time and space--until the "flight" is caught and restricted by the following noun. Had Williams written the stanza without the line break between the words "rain" and "water" as "glazed with rain water" in a single line, the effect of moment and space expanding indefinitely into the open space would have been lost. It is exactly the kind of form Williams often speaks of: "The line must, as a minimum, have a well-conceived form within which modification may exist. Without this internal play upon the stops, it cannot achieve power" (Selected Letters 136).

A similar "play upon the stops" occurs between "a red wheel" and "barrow." For instance, until the reader moves to the next line ("barrow"), the meaning of "a red wheel"--whatever that may be--takes off into infinite space and time. As Bram Dijkstra correctly points out, "In the original edition of Spring and All, the poems did not have titles, but were given roman numerals" (167n). Originally, then, "The Red Wheelbarrow" has the roman numeral xxi in place of its title.

The absence of the title (not to mention the unconventional line breaks) in the original edition further reinforces the sense of suspense; at his first reading, the reader could not have been able to expect whether the word "barrow" to immediately follow after "the red wheel," for

instance. Thus, the sense of unexpected shock, which results from the iconoclastic isolation of a compound noun, must have heightened the sense of sudden expansion. At the least, the reader had to slow down to figure out what was going on. Again, such an effect would have been lost had Williams not used his new measuring technique based on time lapse.

Similarly, the line break between the words "beside the white" and "chickens" prolongs the duration of time. Williams' deliberate isolation of the adjective "white" from the noun it modifies creates anxiety in the mind of the reader. Since we almost exclusively use the word "white" as an adjective, the absence of the noun it modifies irritates us: the white what? It is precisely this sudden, deliberate deflation of the reader's expectation that heightens the suspense. It forces the reader to "hang in the air," and time is arrested. Just as the overwhelming blank space in the poem suggests the openness of space, Williams' unusual line break further suspends the moment almost indefinitely in that openness.

Perhaps, one may argue such a technique fails in the first stanza because the line break occurs between a verb and a preposition. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to visualize the verb "depends" and worse still the preposition "upon." Not so. Since the two words are almost always used together as an idiomatic expression, they have the cohesive-

ness of glue. The word "depends" evokes immediacy and suspense due largely to two reasons. As the reader later realizes, "depends" is after all the main verb of the poem, upon which "hangs" the whole meaning of the poem. Yet, it is an intransitive verb whose "life" usually depends on auxiliary prepositions "upon" or "on" in order to complete the thought as a phrase.

Due to their cohesiveness as one unit of an idiomatic expression, the isolation of the two words creates a sense of anxiety. It is this sense of urgency that Williams is aiming for through measuring the line by elapsed time. By forcing a line break between the two words, which always appear as a unit, Williams successfully suspends time almost indefinitely. Yet, the reader senses the intense energy shooting forth from the verb to meet its completion, as Miller pointed out (299). Such isolated words as depend, wheel, rain, and white stop time, however momentarily. Again, such a prolongation of time would not have resulted had Williams not isolated these words via his line breaks.

As Cecelia Tichi quite accurately observes, the poem operates like an ideogram, which Ezra Pound defines as pictures of actions frozen in time (Instigations 360-67). Williams' efforts to marry the utterance to time by sustaining the moment remind us of the way an ideogram works. As Fenollosa points out, "A true noun, an isolated thing, does not exist in nature" and as the Chinese ideogram exempli-

fies, our eye "sees noun and verb as one: things in motion, motion in things" (Instigations 364). Similarly, the broken words in the poem reveal the power of a verb due to Williams' measuring based on time lapse.

More specifically, emancipated from the grammatical tyranny, the involuntarily severed words in the poem come alive with unexpected vitality. Since Williams' unusual measure arrests time, the vital strength of each disjoined word shoots forth energy, like the growth of a sycamore tree. At the same time, again due to the line break based on time lapse, the poem is charged with internal tension, the kind of tension which Williams specifically anticipates in the new, futuristic line break:

". . . the modern line must have an internal tension which is now nowhere" (Selected Letters 135).

Through such internal tension, Williams enlivens individual words, charging them into motion as they stretch out to fill the vacuum. The very absence of the adjoining word further intensifies the energy that shoots forth. The energy, thus freed, reminds us of the "Blouaugh!" of a sea-elephant. Words like depends, wheel, rain, and white--all become released from the tyranny of convention and become vital "force of arrows," (Miller 299) flying into the infinite vacuum. It is exactly this sense of freedom and openness, charged with immediacy, that Williams wanted to have as the new concept of time: ". . . a new time that catches

thought as it lags and swings it up into the attention will be read . . . with that breathlessness . . ." (Selected Letters 136).

As Williams himself has already pointed out, "The Red Wheelbarrow" is not free verse. In each stanza, the poem has an undercurrent of rhythm (the pulse of "unquenchable exaltation" Williams talked about earlier), as each word takes off and returns in each line break. As Miller acutely points out, "the grammatical peculiarity" of Williams poetry is indeed a "perfect imitation of the activity of nature."

(9) Indeed, the vital energy shooting forth out of the severed words reminds us of the vital energy of "wild carrot [s] taking the field by force" ("Queen Anne's Lace"). Marianne Moore with her keen poetic sensibility detects such "dissatisfied expanding energy" and "urgency" in Williams' poetry:

The poem often is about nothing that we wish to give our attention to, but if it is something he wishes our attention for, what is urgent for him becomes urgent for us. His uncompromising conscientiousness sometimes seems misplaced . . . but there is in him . . . that dissatisfied expanding energy, the emotion, the ergo of the medieval dialectician, the "therefore" which is the distinguishing mark of the artist. ("Things Others Never Notice" 327)

It is precisely this dynamism of the "dissatisfied expanding energy" and "urgency" that differentiates his poems from other so-called free verses.³⁹ As Williams points out, his short lines are far different from those of Yvor Winters:

Yvor Winters seems to me bogged in ideas. His line has a self-inflicted tendency to become short and to stay so. It excludes too much. It has no largesse for the mind or the emotion. (Selected Letters 132).⁴⁰

Besides the apparent line breaks, other factors also slow down the progression of time. For example, as Breslin has already pointed out, "short jagged lines and long vowels ["wheel," "glazed," "rain," "besides," and "chickens"] slow down our movement through the poem" (54). Breslin is right about the point that due to the terseness of each line, the reader must slow down. As Williams himself repeatedly tells us, his poem is not for hearing: "I will express my emotion in the appearances" ("Vortex" 58), "A rose is--are words which stand for all words and are very definitely not roses--but are nevertheless subject to arrangement for effect--as are roses . . ." ("French Painting" 70), or " . . . it is no longer what you paint or what you write about that counts but how you do it: how you lay on the pigment, how you place the words to make a picture of a poem" ("The American Spirit in Art" 218).

"The Red Wheelbarrow" indeed lacks the auditory impact of a more traditional verse: deliberately, the poem works against that tradition. Had Williams rendered the poem in the traditional iambic pentameter line, for instance, Williams' new measure would not have worked: the overriding metronomic rhythm would have killed the effect of the new time-measure. His new measure, therefore, works best in short poems with short lines such as "The Locust Tree in Flower," for often short lines can be free of traditional meters.

Williams' attempt to stop the moment further manifests itself in his use of a complex loose sentence: it "hangs on" or "stretches" the moment, slowing down time. Furthermore, through restriction, the sense of one continuous process of the moment is heightened: the sentence thus becomes one organic entity, suspended in the span of an instant. Hugh Kenner correctly observes this point: "These are stanzas you can't quite hear, especially as one very simple sentence runs through all four of them" (58). Also, his use of present tense "depends" disallows any progression of time: the poet is concerned with here and now, nothing more, nothing less.

The technique of measuring the line by elapsed time as well as all the other devices that I have mentioned so far help Williams freeze the moment. Into his poem, Williams thus successfully incorporates time, the major concern of

the age; as Williams acknowledges, the new form " will take its shape from the character of its age, not the social character . . ." (Selected Letters 130). Although the form of poetry is primarily of language, he continues, "the work of Einstein also merges into it, hardly a social phenomenon" (131).

Williams furthermore points out, "speech for poetry is nothing but time" and "time is the root of the matter" (Selected Letters 136). Williams analogously explains the choking rigidity of the conventional metronomic time: "The new verse is a new time--'rag-time' is only a penny sample; 'jazz' is excessively like that of all that we have outgrown. Take away its aphrodisiac qualities and it is stale" (136). Through the new concept of measuring the line by elapsed time, Williams embodies the new time. In fact, Miller goes so far as to convincingly argue that Williams' poetry "is not primarily spatial. Time, for him, is the fundamental dimension of existence" (WCW 9).

For Williams, the seeming whimsical freedom in his line break is a sincere attempt to harmonize the form and the content in one:

I seek my emotions for the reasons given above: to put them beside others by which I affirm and recognize both my existence and that of others which again react confirming mine. And thus in the same way by expressing whatever emotion may occur,

taking it without choice and putting it surface against surface, I affirm my independence of all emotions and my denial in time and place of the accident of their appearance. ("Vortex" 58-9)

To Williams, arresting time in temporal art was one of the major tasks in his career:

man is the theme, his solitary existence in time, the point where, in a three-dimensional world, time and its creature, man, give a fourth dimension. In art it can be worked out. In that sphere, today when no other way is offered, the great tradition lives. ("The Neglected Artist" 87).

In fact, his concern with the line break appears as late as 1960. In a letter to Mary Ellen Solt (April 25, 1960), Williams praises her line break: ". . . you have a conception of the poetic line which is Revolutionary. . . . Work at your lines . . ." (WCW Review 11. 2 [1985]: 3). Given the serious efforts Williams made to measure the line by time lapse, the ambiguous meaning of the controversial line "so much depends" becomes rather clear: so much depends on whether or not the reader recognizes Williams' measuring the line by elapsed time. Here, Williams is almost pulling the reader's leg by placing the most unusual line break in the first stanza between a verb and its auxiliary preposition.

Through his willingness to adapt a new technique,

Williams was able to freeze the moment, a task that was previously considered impossible in temporal art. As he explicitly states, it is this form that he has been searching for: "It must be large enough, free enough, elastic enough, new enough yet firm enough to hold the new well, without spilling . . ." (Selected Letters 133). Williams' poetic ingenuity manifests itself in this new form.

Conclusion

As I have illustrated both Stein and Williams share one common characteristic of Modernist: they both were innovative experimentalists. In particular, they both attempted to assimilate the new aesthetics of modern visual arts (Cubism) into their literary works. Most important, they both attempt to arrest time in their temporal art, a task heretofore thought impossible due to inherent differences of the media each art employs. They were iconoclastic experimentalists. Perhaps, Ezra Pound's uncanny comments on Williams' poetry might help us better understand the character of Williams' poems in general and in particular the ones written according to this new technique of measuring the line by elapsed time:

Where I see scoundrels and vandals, he sees a
spectacle or an ineluctable process of nature.
Where I want to kill at once, he ruminates. . . .
I mean it [Williams' creative process] is a

qualificative, contemplative, does not drive him to some ultra-artistic or non-artistic activity.

(Literary Essays 392)

Despite their inventiveness, however, Stein and Williams failed to become "masters." To be a true master, one must be a catalyst like Pound himself:

This is a very small class, and there are very few real ones. The term is properly applied to inventors who, apart from their own inventions, are able to assimilate adjuncts and co-ordinate a large number of preceding inventions . . . they either start with a core of their own and accumulate adjuncts, or they digest a vast mass of subject-matter, apply a number of known modes of expression, and succeed in pervading the whole with some special quality or some special character of their own, and bring the whole to a state of homogeneous fullness. (LE 23)

Notes

1. rpt. from Christopher Gray's book Cubist Aesthetic Theories (p.100).
2. Dasenbrock argues about the following citation he quotes from Bloom in which Bloom argues that Wallace Stevens "The Blue Guitar" has "little to do with Picasso's painting "The Old Guitarists" and much to do with Romantic poetry, particularly with Shelley in his final year, 1822, writing poems to Jane Williams, one entitled With a Guitar, To Jane, and another celebrating her song as she played the guitar" (Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate [Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1977], pp. 120-20).
3. Franklin R. Rogers Painting and Poetry: Form, Metaphor, and the Language of Literature. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1985.
4. rpt. from The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis (p. 5).
5. Edward F. Fry, in fact, argues in his book Cubism (New York and Toronto: Oxford UP, 1966) that "the effects of cubism are reverberating still throughout modern culture . . . " (9).
6. While pointing out that Cubism started around "the decade ending in 1914 [more specifically between 1907 and 1914]," Fry indicates that it was "a period which saw the emergence of Mann, Proust, Apollinaire, Gertrude Stein; of Gropius and Frank Lloyd Wright; of Stravinsky and Schoenberg; of Planck, Rutherford, Einstein, Bohr; and of Croce, Poincare, Freud, Bergson, and Husserl" (9). In painting and sculpture, he goes on to list, "these same years produced Matisse, Picasso, Braque, Gris, Leger, Delaunay, Duchamp, Mondrain, Malevich, Kandinsky, Brancusi, Archipenko, Boccioni, and Lipchitz, to name only the most prominent of a brilliant galaxy of artists" (9).
7. According to Fry, fauvism took a strange turn in the historical development of the modern visual arts. It served as a "recapitulation and intensification of such previous developments as the modified pointillism of Signac, the brilliant colouristic achievements and expressive brushwork of Van Gogh, and Gauguin's decorative colour patterns" (12). At the same time, however, it also provided an important aesthetic foundation to Pablo Picasso's Desmoiselles d'Avignon (1907), a masterpiece often considered as the first work of Cubism (12).

8. Stephen W. Hawking A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes (Toronto and New York: Bantam Books, 1988) p.20

9. These characteristics are my summary from various sources, such as Edward F. Fry's Cubism, John Golding's Cubism: A History and an Analysis 1907-1914, Robert Rosenblum's Cubism and Twentieth Century Art, and Christopher Gray's Cubistic Aesthetic Theories. For more information of each source, see my bibliography.

10. Wallace Stevens "The Relations between Poetry and Painting." Poets on Painters: Essays on the Art of Painting by Twentieth-Century Poets. Ed. J. D. McClatchy. Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California Press, 1988.

11. L. T. Fitz, for example, neglects to provide specific examples from Stein's works, while arguing that Stein's style is similar to Picasso's: (1) a cubist approach; (2) a style which concentrates on what is seen rather than what is remembered; and (3) a calligraphic or nonsymbolic concept of language (230). Charles H. Cagle also points out that Stein's style reflects the "immediacy and solidity of color and form in Cézanne" created by "subtraction" (as in cubistic) technique in painting (271), but he does not provide textual evidence. Similarly, Marianne DeKoven argues that Stein captures the essence of things by the "pictorial surface," "fragment perception," and "multiple perspectives" ("GS & MP" 80), yet she too fails to provide specific examples found in Stein's writing. Although Marilyn Gaddis Rose shows how Stein's writing is non-representational through cubistic "abstraction and rearrangement" (544), her textual evidence is not thorough enough (543-555).

12. According to James Burke, the famous author of The Day The Universe Changed (1985), it was also in 1905 when Albert Einstein published his famous theory of relativity (296), which denies the concept of absolute time and absolute space in reality. This revolutionary concept has thoroughly changed ways in which we ontologically related ourselves to the universe; and many twentieth century artists attempted to embody this new concept of reality in their arts through, among other things, multiple perspectives and attempts to capture the motion itself.

13. Gertrude Stein's concept of confluence (in the sense of arts' influencing one another and being influenced by one another in a given era) reminds the reader of René Wellek's view on the same subject as Steiner quotes him in her book (15):

No doubt they [the various arts] are in constant relationship with each other, but these relation-

ships are not influences which start from one point and determine the evolution of the other arts; they have to be conceived rather as a complex scheme of dialectical relationships which work both ways, from one art to another and "vice versa," and may be completely transformed within the art which they have entered.

My personal opinion is each era operates under a dominant paradigm--the total body of scientific knowledge in a given era that makes the best ontological sense of our existence in this vast chaotic universe, and it is this dominant paradigm whose concept permeates through all arts in a given age. Furthermore, I think, it was the theory of relativity that was the dominant paradigm in the era of Stein and Picasso.

14. Stein's obsession with Cézanne's paintings are well accounted for by Alice B. Toklas (35-42).

15. See note # 11.

16. The term "chiaroscuro" often used in painting to depict the technique of using light and shade in pictorial representation cannot be translated into an adequate literary terms, other than perhaps as a metaphor for "contrasting technique."

17. My working definition of the term "conceptualization" is "to form a concept or concepts largely of objects through reasoning or logic." Such conceptualization is, however, difficult in an impressionistic painting which appeals to the senses, not the intellect, to evoke a mood, atmosphere, and illusion. Against this photographic reproduction of nature, Cubism arose because impressionism ignored the artists' expressiveness.

18. Among many examples of repetitions are "Anna led an arduous and troubled life" (11, 13, 21), "Mrs. Lehtman was the romance in Anna's life" (30, 34, 52, 54, 55, 64), "Anna never liked her brother's wife" (49), "Anna cooked and saved and sewed and scrubbed and scolded" (51, 63), "Melanctha was a graceful, pale, yellow, good looking, intelligent, mysterious, attractive negress" (90, 107), "Jane really had a good mind" (114), "Melanctha always and strong the sense for real experience" (116), "I don't say never (ever)" (117), "living good and regular" (121), "I am a colored man and I ain't sorry" (121), and "[Lena] was dreamy, not there" (245).

19. cf. Picasso's Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (1910)

20. In an impressionistic painting, each detail contributes to evoke a mood or an illusion by blending into a larger har-

monious whole. Renoir and Monet, in general, illustrate this point very well.

21. This imperative "remember" may be read as Stein's conscious reminder to the reader that the story depends on "remembering," conceptualizing.

22. Stein's rejection of temporal progression as well as her decapitalization of proper nouns such as "english," "german," or "irish" also parallels a cubist's efforts to disregard the conventional three-dimension seeking photographic representation in painting. A cubist flattens the perspectives into two dimensions instead (Fitz 229). Both Stein and the cubist thus disregard convention.

23. The more detailed it is, the closer to the impressionistic painting the painting becomes. In a cubistic painting, even the suggestive lines are often broken up, thus, forcing the observer to connect them using his intellect.

24. Examples of ungrammatical, colloquial sentences are abundant throughout the story, especially in "Melanctha." Therefore, I skip any specific exemplification here. They not only suggest Stein's defiant spirit against the conservative literary tradition, but they also call attention to themselves, a fact that reminds the reader of the self-reflexiveness of the work.

25. In fact, the reader is not sure if the "good" Anna is indeed good upon finishing the story.

26. Lena, to me, resembles one of the Tahitian women Gauguin depicts in his later paintings.

27. "Stein herself. . . came to regard words as things in themselves. She enjoyed not the meaning of a word but the way it sounded" (Fitz 235), a fact that explains further the superficiality of her prose. Also, Stein was known to be extremely sensitive of musicality in language: at one point, she even noticed the rhythm of her dog drinking water (Laughlin 521).

28. For example, Picasso's Still-life with Chair-caning (1912) is extremely ambiguous.

29. As I have already pointed out, the term "chiaroscuro" originally meant the painting technique of using light and shade in pictorial representation. But since I could not find a better literary term that will substitute such technique in writing, I take the liberty of interpreting it as broadly as possible to mean as a technique of contrast.

30. Stein's "words are often wrenched from ordinary lexical meanings" (Hoffman 30). This lack of ordinary lexical meanings in words accentuates Stein's arbitrariness and superficiality in her prose.

31. Some art critics argue that in Picasso's Les Demoiselles, the contrast between "angelic eyes" and "demonic eyes" heightens the sense of conflict (Rosenblum 25).

32. It is a well-known fact that while Picasso was painting Les Demoiselles (1906-1907), Stein was sitting for her portrait in Picasso's studio (Rose 544).

33. The emphasis on primitivism in this painting largely results from the influences of the African and Oceanic arts (Fry 12). Also, "Fauvism" was in the air when Picasso was painting Les Demoiselles (1906-1907). In a primitive art, the reddish brown color usually dominates the canvas; for example, the aborigines paint the entire background of a painting red to vitalize whatever they are painting.

34. Picasso "uses the primitive as a token of the violent, the horrible, the unspeakable" (Dasenbrock 80); although in this case the brown is not necessarily associated with violence, the reader can easily confirm Stein's use of brown colors to suggest primitive violence in Three Lives, especially in "Melanctha."

35. Whether Williams' concern with time originates from the influence of the (French) visual art or the social zeitgeist after the theory of relativity is not my concern here. My opinion, however, is that the theory became a master paradigm under which both painters and writers struggled to emulate the new concept in their arts. On several occasions, Williams mentions his indebtedness to both. For example, in his essay "Vortex," he confesses that if he saw an advantage from other arts, he would not hesitate to adopt it (59). Similarly, at one point, he unaffectedly admits that French painting has been "highly instructive" to him ("French Painting 70). As it progresses, my paper will abundantly prove Einstein's influence on Williams.

36. Although seldom do two critics' opinion of the poem concur, their views, in general, fall in two groups: "space" camps and "time" camps. (The following lists by no means exhaust the annually increasing body of criticism of the poem, but they cover major ones.)

A. Space theorists

Robert Kern argues that the poem exhibits Williams' newly developed aesthetics of primitivism (45-57). Thomas R.

Whitaker interestingly recognizes that in order to acquire the abstract quality of a painting, the long vowels such as are in "wheel," "glazed," "rain," and "besides," are set against and modulate into short-vowelled trochees of "barrow," "water," and "chickens." Although Stephen Tapscott too discovers the poem's affinities to painting, he fails to recognize the significance of the unusual line break: "Composed like a still-life painting and attentive to color (red, white) and to texture (glazed), this Imagist piece works structurally through a series of progressively more specific observations . . ." (89). In his seminal book Cubism, Stieglitz, and the Early Poetry of William Carlos Williams, Bram Dijkstra too views that "The Red Wheelbarrow" exemplifies the aesthetics of Stieglitz group: "Just as the prose sections of Williams' Spring and All . . . reflect his study of the ideas of the writers of the Stieglitz group, so the poems in that book reflect his attempts to put these ideas into practice. Williams' famous little poem 'The Red Wheelbarrow' (xxi of Spring and All) is perhaps one of the best examples of the object-image poetry he was developing" (167). Anne Waldron Neumann detects in the poem, among others, small wheelbarrows: ". . . given Williams' pendant for uniformly-shaped stanzas, we can feel sure all of the poem's stanzas are meant to be seen as little wheelbarrows" (16).

B. Time theorists

James E. Breslin keenly perceives "circular process" in many poems in Spring and All in general. In particular, he correctly notices in "The Red Wheelbarrow" that "short, jagged lines and long vowels slow down our movement through the poem, breaking off each part of the scene for exact observation" (54). I agree with him although he does not see the importance of the line break. Stanely Archer declares that the word "glazed" is the key word of the poem because it captures the scene at a very transient moment (27). James Laughlin writes a poem "So Much Depends" and argues that "so much depends on the way you saw, the way your heart saw, and what your eyes saw not" (48).

37. Although the overall comments do suggest the frozenness of an instant, Miller's remarks are not specific enough. At least, it is not clear if he recognizes that the frozenness of the moment occurs due to measuring the line by elapsed time:

The wheelbarrow, in a famous poem, does not stand for anything or mean anything. It is an object in space dissociated from the objects around it, without reference beyond itself. It is what it is. The aim of the poem is to make it stand there for

the reader in its separateness, as the words of the poem stand on the page. (307)

38. In his interesting book William Carlos Williams and the Meaning of Measure, Stephen Cushman explains that "enjambment" ("straddling") is the key reason why Williams divided the lines as he did in Spring and All (15). But later on, he confesses that "Enjambment is difficult to define" (31). When it comes to discussing "The Red Wheelbarrow," he is mute (60). As Cushman exemplifies, the concept of enjambment is too narrow and thus inadequate to explain Williams' technique of measuring the line by elapsed time.

39. To an undiscerning eye, the odd line break may look as nothing but an eccentricity (of a quack poet), as Pritchard did. Not so. Williams repeatedly tells us that the seeming formlessness of his poems is almost always an attempt to reflect the shape of his thought, the culmination of his knowledge with which he makes a sense of his existence in the age he lives in:

It looks, sometimes, as if I'm merely putting haphazardly what I feel in something called 'free verse'. [sic]: That isn't so. I write as I do, rightly or wrongly, because I think my way of writing has taken the contours of a way of thought which is essential to the modern world which I know, eminently here. (Zorbnik 131)

The last line of the quotation is memorable: he is referring to the newly discovered concept of reality that must include the fourth dimension--time.

40. Through this technique of measuring the line by elapsed time, Williams may have realized the significance of grouping lines, which, in turn, may have helped him develop the so-called "variable foot." The possibility becomes rather strong when we consider his own remark about the authenticity of grouping lines. In 1932, nine years later after the publication of "The Red Wheelbarrow," Williams reveals what he has been doing so far in order to answer the problem of formlessness in modern poetry:

. . . For myself, I have written little poetry recently. Form, the form has been lacking. Instead I have been watching speech in my own environment from which I continually expect to discover whatever of new is being reflected about the world. . . . I have been actively at work (if such sketchy trials as I employ can be called such) in the flesh, watching how words match the act, especially

how they come together. The result has been a few patches of metrical coherence which I don't as yet see how to use--but they seem to run to groups of lines. Occasionally they give me the feel of authenticity. (Selected Letters 130).

CHAPTER VI

EZRA POUND, A PICASSO OF MODERN POETRY CUBISM, IMAGISM, FUTURISM, VORTICISM

In the previous chapter, I have examined the critical fact that, as far as modernism is concerned, the "interartistic" (Dasenbrock 9) confluence, especially between the modern visual arts and modern literature, is rather evident. Principally, I have demonstrated that the aesthetics of both the modern visual arts and modern literature manifest themselves through their iconoclastic impulses against the obsolete Western art tradition. Indeed, as Dasenbrock accurately notes, "the period of modernism is unprecedented . . . in the richness of the interaction of the arts, and the very character of modernism itself seems intimately involved in this interaction" (9). In short, as Harriet Zinnes succinctly puts it in her important work Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts (New York: New Direction, 1980), around 1908 (by the time Pound arrives England) "the first machine age was claiming its aesthetic response" (xii).

Having thus confirmed the "interartistic" confluence between the modern visual arts and modern literature, I will now consider the crucial role Ezra Pound had to play in the paradigmatic shift of modern poetry.¹ In my view, he was a true catalyst, who translated and channeled the aesthetics of Cubism, the first serious aesthetic response to the machine age, into modern poetry. Consequently, Pound's

Imagism, a truly remarkable movement in modern poetry, shares numerous aesthetic parallels with Cubism, a corresponding earth-shattering movement in the modern visual arts.

In this chapter, then, I will trace how Pound's aesthetics in Imagism echo those of Cubism particularly as manifested at its conception around 1907 in Paris and how ironically the failure of Cubism also adumbrates the eventual downfall of Imagism, as it later became Amygism. I will show further how directly the advent of Amygism fosters the coming of Vorticism, yet another important movement in both modern poetry and the modern visual arts. By comparing similarities and aesthetic parallels among Cubism, Futurism, Imagism, and Vorticism, I aim to illustrate how closely all these movements, in essence, resemble the initial aesthetic impulses of Cubism, a tremendous desire of artists wanting to break clean away from the "old bitch gone in the teeth" (SP 64). Indeed, the paradigmatic change that occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century was a revolution, a Renaissance of a modern kind.

Furthermore, I will suggest a new way of perceiving Pound's role in modern poetry. I will prove how Pound's catalytic role in modern poetry mirrors the iconoclastic role Picasso played, who was himself an "inventor," never "diluter," as Pound judiciously distinguishes the two (LE 23). Picasso, like Pound, also actively sought out and

embodied new aesthetics brought about by modern science and technology. It was Picasso who was to truly set the course of the modern visual arts in the long run, just as Pound and Einstein, respectively, set the new course for modern poetry and modern science. Finally, I will examine a possible relationship between Cubism and the Chinese ideograms; in particular, I will consider how the Chinese ideograms themselves in essence mirror the fundamental aesthetics of Cubism.

Twin Brothers within Two Sister Arts: Cubism and Imagism

In Chapter Four, I have examined the Paideuma of the Western culture at the dawn of the twentieth century. For example, I have proved how the Western culture in general, at this crucial moment in history, was undergoing unprecedented changes due largely to the new scientific discoveries and technological advancement. I have also discussed how all these changes of progress, in turn, demanded from the artists a new mode of expression that would accommodate the vitality of the new age. To do just that they needed, I have explained, a new set of aesthetics that will help artists embody the expressiveness and the dynamism of the machine age. In fact, Edward F. Fry goes so far as to call this period as "one of the golden ages of Western civilization" (9), especially because the artists tried to synthesize all sorts of human knowledge into their art:

The evolution of painting, and of cubism in particular, shared with science the common characteristic of drawing upon late nineteenth-century achievements, but, in so doing, of intensifying and transforming them. The result was the overthrow of much of the heritage of the nineteenth and earlier centuries. In certain respects cubism brought to an end artistic traditions that had begun as early as the fifteenth century. (9)

To better understand Cubism and its iconoclastic impulse toward Western art's tradition, perhaps I need to reiterate the important characteristics of Cubism at its conception, using a close discussion of the first cubistic painting: Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.) (1907). First of all, in Les Femmes d'Alger, Picasso deliberately chose not to paint the traditional nude subjects, ones that are almost always associated with the biblical holy figures, such as Maria and her child. Rather, he insisted on painting prostitutes instead in "a brothel scene . . . , the lives of those on the margin of society, as in fact he himself lived during his years in Montmartre, beginning in 1904" (Fry 13).

Furthermore, the way Picasso rendered prostitutes in his painting was also strikingly unprecedented. In fact, as Fry points out, "in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century painting, the brothel as a theme appeared frequent-

ly" (13). But none of them were as striking as Picasso's version: Les Demoiselles was "as far removed from the spirit of irony or pathos of his [Picasso's] predecessors as it is from the empathy and restrained lyricism of his own earlier painting." In short, Picasso rendered the painting in such a detached, impersonal manner that was unprecedented, an important aesthetic of Cubism that later becomes popular in Vorticism as well:

Pound's linking of imagism to vorticism relates first of all to his feeling already mentioned that all arts have "some sort of common bond, some inter-recognition." (The age, like our own, was an age of intermedia arts. Consider Cocteau, Picabia, Picasso, etc.) But there was a specific bond that he [Pound] saw in the rebel arts of the early decades of the century. Common to all was a hard, nonemotional, impersonal quality. (Zinnes xvii)

In fact, the geometrical reduction of an object, a popular technique in both Cubism and Vorticism, was in part responsible for this aesthetic impulse toward impersonality, perhaps one of the most dominant emotions of the machine age. The artists' concern for impersonality was, therefore, an expression and an attempt to embody the similar sympathy they felt in the machine age.

Another remarkable aspect of the painting was

that Picasso totally ignored "the classical norm for the human figure" as well as "the spatial illusionism of one-point perspective" (Fry 13). Having been influenced by African sculpture,² Picasso now learned to "treat the human body more conceptually than was possible in the Renaissance tradition." In short, he "reduced human anatomy to geometrical lozenges and triangles as he also abandoned normal anatomical proportions" (Fry 13). Unlike other painters, Picasso, in short, attempted to capture the "conceptual essentiality" of the object he painted, another important aesthetic concern in modern poetry often expressed as elimination of unnecessary words in presentation of an object or emotion. As I have already pointed out in previous chapter, William Carlos Williams' poem "The Red Wheelbarrow" is the case in point.

According to Fry, however, "the treatment of space" was "by far the most significant aspect of Les Demoiselles, especially in view of the predominant role of spatial problems in the subsequent development of cubism" (14). More specifically, Picasso had to depart from the "optical illusionism [Realism]" (Fry 14), which depicted three-dimensional relationships in one point perspective--a painting technique that often attempted to create photograph-like realism.

According to Fry, Cezanne was the first who realized the ineptness of this carbon-copying technique in painting:

. . . Cezanne had broken with the Renaissance tradition of composition by which forms were disposed harmoniously within the illusionistic stage-space of one-point perspective. Cezanne, instead, had gone a step beyond the break with tradition represented by the impressionists' optical realism, to a realism of the psychological process of perception itself. . . . And, in the overall composition of a painting, Cezanne would organize parts of the whole into perceptual areas, within which 'distortions' occurred in the interests of formal contrast and the realization of a visual gestalt of the highest possible unity, as it particularly noticeable in his still-lives. (14)

In fact, Fry goes so far as to declare that "in Les Demoiselles one finds the Cezannian 'passage' linking together foreground and background planes, an alternative to Renaissance perspectival space" (14). Indeed, Picasso's union of multiple perspectives into one single form best explains his iconoclastic impulse against the traditional Renaissance perspective. In particular, the "mask-like-face" (Fry 14) of the nude figure at the bottom of the right in the painting shows a strange combination of multiple perspectives: her face, nose, and back, all seen from various angles, are visible at once (Fry 14). Such a rejection of traditional perspective suggests the importance of

simultaneity of time and space, newly informed by scientific discoveries [the Fourth Dimension]. Through his technique of jumbling many perspectives into a single form, Picasso manages to arrest the multiple perspectives at once. Later, in his Pisan Cantos, Pound perfects a similar technique commonly known as the ideogrammatic method or "ideogrammatic loop" (Dasenbrock 100): the juxtaposition of cultural temporal fragments.

The iconoclastic impulse against the tradition of Western art also appears in Picasso's careful play with color. To the careful viewer, the colors he employs appear rather striking since each color, juxtaposed from one another, contrasts against each other: "the strong pink and ochre" and the "alternating bands of fauve-like green and red" (Fry 15). As Fry rightly points out "the juxtaposition [of these colors] creates strong simultaneous contrast" (15). Fry goes on to argue that Picasso, in fact, took "the traditional system of modelling by chiaroscuro" to another dimension: "in Les Demoiselles Picasso utilizes colour modelling in conjunction with his abandonment of one-point perspective, thus freeing himself equally from the single vantage point and from a similarly specified, and therefore accidental, source of light" (15). In other words, his technique of sharp color-contrasting further enhances the multiple perspectives he wanted to create.

Yet another important aspect of the painting is the

cultural diversity shown through the work. The sources of the painting indeed range from "Cezanne and fauvism to Iberian sculpture, El Greco, Gauguin, and African art" :

the painting, more than any painting of its time, was a crossroads of aesthetic forces, which the prodigious gifts of its creator fused, if only imperfectly, into a great work of art and a turning point in the history of occidental painting.

(Fry 6)

In brief, the painting shows that the aesthetic orientation of Western art now was no longer Euro-central: it had to abandon the tradition that had been the backbone of Western painting. No doubt, the cultural diversity that Picasso achieves in Cubism subject-rhymes with what Pound had done to modern poetry through his introductions of Provencal and Italian poetry, Anglo-Saxon poetry, and the Chinese ideogram, to name a few.

The iconoclastic impulses of Cubism manifest themselves through the cubists' emphasis and insistence on multiple perspectives, cultural diversity, "non-illusionistic features" (Fry 17), juxtaposition of contrasting colors, impersonal treatment of ordinary subjects, simultaneity of time, and above all conceptuality through "geometrical lozenges and triangles" (Fry 13).

Pound's Imagism shares similar aesthetic impulses in modern poetry. The controversy as to whether Pound was

influenced by T. E. Hulme or Ford Madox Ford in his formulation of Imagism little interests me, nor does the similar dispute as to whether Picasso was influenced by Cezanne in his formulation of Cubism.³ What is important for the present discussion is how, through Imagism, Pound emulates and exhibits the iconoclastic impulses found in Cubism against the old tradition of English poetry. Perhaps, the place to start this examination is in Pound's own recollection of the original impulses of Imagism:

In the spring or early summer of 1912, 'H.D.', Richard Aldington and myself [Pound] decided that we were agreed upon the three principles following:

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

And later in the same article, Pound announces the quintessence of his Imagism that "An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (LE 4). Furthermore, he elaborates on the same Image as "the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that

sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art" (LE 4).

Although it may be difficult to compare and contrast, word by word, Pound's aesthetics in his Imagism to those of Cubism, one can, nonetheless, clearly see the undeniable connection between the two. I have already pointed out that one of the most important characteristics of Cubism was its emphasis on conceptuality. In short, according to the aesthetics of Cubism, art must happen in the mind, the intellect of the viewer, conceptually. Therefore, a cubist painter does not have to draw every little details of the object he is painting: i.e. no photographic reproduction of nature, but only the conceptual essentiality of the object.

In a similar vein, Pound also recognizes the importance of the conceptual aspect of an Image. An Image is, indeed, an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time, a notion that takes the conceptual aspect of poetry most seriously. A great poem happens in the mind, in the intellect of the reader. Consider, for instance, the opening lines of the Pisan Cantos:

The enormous tragedy of the dream in the peasant's
bent shoulders
Manes! Manes was tanned and stuffed,
Thus Ben and la Clara a Milano
by the heels at Milano
That maggots shd/ eat the dead bullock
DIGONOS, , but the twice crucified
where in history will you find it?⁴

In this example, not only does Pound subject-rhyme

object, a cubist painter would strip off all unnecessary aspects of the given object and reduce the essentiality of the object into geometrical lines and patterns. Similarly, Pound also preaches "to use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation." As I have already illustrated, to accomplish such an exactitude of presentation, he, in fact, does not hesitate to use sentence fragments. Furthermore, as a cubist painter would reach the conceptual essentiality of an object through a few strokes of geometrical lines, Pound insists on "direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective. In fact, Pound sounds like a cubist painter when he stresses on this direct treatment of the thing. Cubists, as I have already pointed out, rejected the messiness of optical, illusionistic impressionism that largely depends on the atmospheric, optical realism, a technique that emphasizes the overall ambience or mood by blurring all the objects in a scene. Pound, similarly, does not want any imprecise, atmospheric, purple patches in poetry that attempt to depict the overall mood and atmosphere (being "viewy"). Rather, he wants to capture the essence of the object or emotion through direct treatment.

Let us take some specific examples here. Take, for instance, William Butler Yeats' much-anthologized poem "The Lake Isle of Innisfree." For the purpose of my argument, it is worthwhile to quote the poem at length:

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
 And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made
 Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-
 bee,
 And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes
 dropping slow,
 Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the
 cricket sings;
 There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
 And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
 I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
 While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
 I hear it in the deep heart's core.⁵

Despite some interesting images, such as "evening full of the linnet's wings," and some specificity, such as "a cabin made of clay and wattles as well as nine bean-rows," Yeats' poem attempts to create an Edenic scene, a dreamy landscape one often finds in impressionistic paintings. Yeats' strokes (to use a painting term) almost always hide and blur objects in the poem: "midnight is all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow."

Furthermore, the atmospheric mood of the dreamy landscape becomes even more static and inert by Yeats' personification of "peace," which "comes dropping slow" as well as by the hypnotic, somniferous, incremental repetition: "I will arise and go now." In short, everything in the poem is deep in thick mist--as if a blind man is groping the scene in the distance--very much like the "leafy island" that is about to be swallowed up by the lake in yet another impressionistic poem "The Stolen Child."

In fact, Pound drills his points home as he lists "A Few Don'ts" (LE 4):

Use no superfluous word, no adjective which does not reveal something. Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands of peace'. It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realizing that the natural object is always the adequate symbol. Go in fear of abstractions. (LE 4-5)

One cannot help but think that Pound wrote this criticism almost exclusively for Yeats since Yeats loved to commit the deadly sin--mixing the abstract with the concrete: "peace comes dropping slow," "veils of the morning," "midnight's all a glimmer," "noon a purple glow," and "evening full of the linnet's wings."

Furthermore, Pound insists that a poet should avoid purple patches as well:

Don't be 'viewy'--leave that to the writers of pretty little philosophic essays. Don't be descriptive; remember that the painter can describe a landscape much better than you can, and that he has to know a deal more about it. Consider the way of the scientist rather than the way of an advertising agent for a new soap. The scientist does not expect to be acclaimed as a great scientist until he has discovered something. He begins

abstraction of modernism, in both art and poetry.

. . . (Zinnes xvii)

Earlier, I have also pointed out that thanks to the discovery of the Fourth-Dimension, cubist painters, such as Picasso and Duchamp, attempted to capture the co-presence of all time [multiplicity of views] in a single space. For example, Duchamp would paint a nude figure descending the stair case, frame-by-frame, as if in a slow video motion, to capture the newly discovered multiple perspectives. In my opinion, Pound, too, shows his concern with this new time when he used the word "moment" very carefully in his definition of an Image. It is not clear, however, whether Pound was addressing the fundamental issue of time in temporal art when he said that "An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (my emphasis).

But his next statement, it seems to me, unmistakably does address that fundamental issue, whether he was aware of it or not: "it is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art" (my emphasis). At least, it is safe to say that in the beginning, the cubist painters showed their concern with this newly discovered time in the modern visual arts. And now such an aesthetic

concern, no doubt, reached to the temporal art of modern poetry. Pound's careful word-choice "liberation" also suggests a suspense of time, a newly discovered time that is now perceived as much more circuitous and self-reflexive and multiple--vertical as well as horizontal--than linear.

In fact, Pound perfects the technique of freezing time through juxtaposition of fragmentations by the time he composes "Mauberley" (1920), as he exemplifies here in Part V:

There died a myriad,
And of the best, among them,
For an old bitch gone in the teeth,
For a botched civilization,

Charm, smiling at the good mouth,
Quick eyes gone under earth's lid,

For two gross of broken statues,
For a few thousand battered books.

Except the first line, which indicates the linear time passage through the use of the verb died, the remaining fragments does not reveal any time-orientation. They all dangle, as if suspended in the air, frozen in a moment, very much like the moment arrested by a painter upon his canvas. Furthermore, Pound's use of anatomical body parts and other pieces, such as teeth, mouth, eyes, lid, broken statues, and battered books, almost reminds the reader of those broken parts and pieces one often finds in a cubist painting, especially in the Analytic Phase of Cubism.

Most important, Pound's insistence upon the employment of "the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome"

(LE 3) in composing a poem, further suggests that the traditional concept of time in poetry, which was believed to be only linear and thus unstoppable, was changing. For example, when a poet composes a poem "in sequence of a metronome," he/she cannot stop the flow of time due to the mechanistic beat of the meter. The traditional iambic pentameter, for instance, often quickens the tempo of the line, unless one enjambes it. A poet cannot help but producing "the regular stuff, [where] you fall too flatly into the 'whakty whakty whakty whakty whak' of the old pentameter" (SL 77), as the meter dictates the tempo due to the self-imposing regularity of the beat. Pound, realizing the weakness of traditional meters, therefore, warns us not to use such a mechanistic metronome beat:

Don't chop your stuff into separate iambs. Don't make each line stop dead at the end, and then begin every next line with a heave. Let the beginning of the next line catch the rise of the rhythm wave, unless you want a definite longish pause.

(LE 6)

A free verse, however, is less rigid: there is no self-imposing, rigid, regular meter that dictates the tempo. In essence, therefore, one of the major contributions of the free verse, of which Pound was a champion, is that it slows down the time. It freed the poetry from the rigid tyranny of the old [linear] time, often associated with "the medi-

eval masterbeat," as William Carlos Williams so eloquently calls it in his article "The American Spirit in Art" (219).

Another possible aesthetic parallel between Cubism and Imagism involves the insistence upon choosing ordinary subject matters (in painting) and symbols (in poetry). I have indicated that Picasso deliberately painted prostitutes instead of the traditional "Madonna" figures. In a similar vein, Pound also insists that "the proper and perfect symbol is the natural object, that if a man use 'symbols' he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude" (LE 9). Indeed, an esoteric symbol can be obtrusive, too far removed from the real in which we experience our daily existence. Of course, cubists felt that a painter must not paint "Madonna," a very important religious figure nonetheless, over and over because she was too esoteric, too removed from the reality of here and now, particularly in the machine age.

Juxtaposition, used as a means of obtaining impersonality in both Cubism and modern poetry is another aesthetic parallel between the two arts. In fact, as Fry points out, Picasso does not render his personal emotion when he painted Les Demoiselles. Indeed, this non-committal attitude, a sense of either objectivity or of emotions suppressed, of the artist expressed in the painting is what makes the painting truly striking.

In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1918), T. S.

Eliot nails home the importance of impersonality in modern poetry: ". . . the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways" (42). In a sweeping generalization, I think that the impersonality aesthetic became important because of, among others, Einstein's discovery of the Theory of Relativity at the dawn of the century. The discovery taught us that we can no longer relate ourselves ontologically to reality through a fixed, subjective, personal view, as almost all Romantic poets did. No truth is permanent once one realizes that the sun, the traditional symbol of eternity, must one day go as a supernova. The Theory of Relativity along with the technological advances of the modern machine age shook the traditional concept of truth by the root.

My generalization becomes even more convincing when we consider the chronological events that contributed to the formulation of impersonality aesthetic. For instance, as I have already pointed out, it was around 1905 when the Theory of Relativity first came out, and Cubists then emulate the concept into their aesthetic (1907-1914) as Marcel Duchamp illustrates. The gap between 1905 (the discovery of Relativity) and 1907 (the conception of Cubism) merely suggests "a sinking time" that is almost always necessary in any major paradigmatic shift. No revolution is an isolated

phenomenon, indeed. And by the time, Eliot digests the new paradigm and writes "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1918-1930), it took at least thirteen years after the initial discovery of Relativity. Of course, this is only an educated speculation, a topic that perhaps yet deserves research.

Nonetheless, modern poetry embraced the aesthetic of impersonality through Imagism, in particular. Eliot, again, sums up the importance of impersonality:

There are many people who appreciate the expression of sincere emotion in verse, and there is a smaller number of people who can appreciate technical excellence. But very few know when there is an expression of significant emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. . . . (44)

As far as the aesthetic of impersonality is concerned, there exists yet another important discovery made by Pound himself; namely, his bringing the Chinese ideogram into Western poetics. An event that was to become so crucial to this discovery took place between 1913-14. He discovered Fenollosa:

It was Pound's understanding when he received the

bulk of the material from Mrs Fenollosa in 1913 that her husband wanted it handled as 'literature' rather than as 'philology'. He took the notebooks with him to Stone Cottage and worked on them there during the winter of 1913-14. (Stock, Life, 148-149)

In fact, as early as 1917 Pound himself adumbrates that his discovery of the Chinese ideogram is earth-shattering and will change the course of modern poetry. In a letter to John Quinn (London, 10 January), Pound wrote of having finished the Fenollosa manuscript:

I have just sealed up Fenollosa's "Essay on the Chinese Written Character," to send to them [the publisher]. It is one of the most important essays of our time. But they will probably reject it on the ground of its being exotic. Fenollosa saw and anticipated a good deal of what has happened in art (painting and poetry) during the last ten years, and his essay is basic for all aesthetics, but I doubt if that will cut much ice. (SL 101)

As I have abundantly illustrated in Chapter Three, the Chinese ideograms, among others, seldom tell what they mean. Rather, they show their meanings through collection of raw data readily available in nature, as in science, a scheme that perfectly fits the aesthetic of impersonality as well as the scientific method which Pound embraces. Therefore,

all these lucky events--the discovery of the Theory of Relativity, Cubism, Imagism, and the discovery of the Chinese ideogram and its scientific method--have consolidated, it is my opinion, the important impersonality aesthetic in modern poetry.

There are still a number of other possible aesthetic parallels between Picasso's Cubism and Pound's Imagism. For example, to intentionally violate the traditional mode of painting, a cubist would fragment, dissect, and isolate body parts in a human figure: a button here, a hand there, and a face there, etc.⁷ Cubist painters no longer wanted to paint human figures, for example, in the traditional three-dimensional perspectives, a tradition that goes as far back as Renaissance. To avoid such a photo-realism, they often used fragmented, geometrical lines and patterns that suggest conceptually the hidden parts of an object. Similarly, in order to treat the subject directly with absolutely essential words, an Imagist would not hesitate to use sentence fragments. The immediately following paragraph explains the case in point.

Pound also shuns away from the rigidity of the traditional grammar in composing a poem. Take Pound's most famous imagistic poem "In a Station of the Metro," for instance: "The apparition of these faces in the crowd; / Petals on a wet, black bough." There is no verb in the poem: we have two sentence fragments. In fact, Pound even

uses a semicolon fragment at the end of the first line, thus violating the conventions of standard written English, as any sensible student in a freshmen composition class would know.

Nonetheless, despite the lack of verb, despite the semicolon fragment, and despite the overwhelming brevity of the poem, the reader, using his/her intellect, can conceptually make a sense of these two seeming cryptogrammic fragments. In fact, as I will prove later, Pound uses fragments profusely in his Pisan Cantos. About the conceptual operation of an Image, Herbert Schneidau defines that "the Image of the Imagists is an attempt to combine the essentiality of the conceptual image with the definiteness of the perceptual image; this cannot be achieved, at least in poetry, through merely visual means" (quoted in Dasenbrock 93).⁸

Ironically and sadly, however, Cubism and Imagism share yet another parallel in their final fate. At the onset, they both demonstrated their iconoclastic impulse against the obsolete Western artistic tradition. After the successful initial stage, however, their fundamental aesthetics established by the original founders (i.e. "the inventors" as Pound calls them) undergo rather severe misrepresentation by "the diluters, these who follow either the inventors or the 'great writers', and who produce something of lower intensity, some flabbier variant, some diffuseness or tumidity in the wake of the valid" (LE 23).

Edward F. Fry explains how the diluters, among others, adulterated the original aesthetics of Cubism through misrepresentation:

1911 saw the spread of cubism beyond the circle of Picasso and Braque. . . . The result of this spread of cubism became publicly known in the Salon des Independants of the spring of 1911 and at the 1911 Salon d'Automme, in both of which the new adherents to cubism formed a distinct group; during 1911 also the term cubism came into general usage. None of these painters, however--Gleizes, Metzinger, Le Fauconnier, Lhote, and many others--contributed anything new or essential to the cubism of Picasso and Braque; and few, if any of them, really understood it. Furthermore it is difficult to believe that these newcomers to cubism arrived at their art independently of Picasso and Braque, who must in the end be considered the one source from which the new style spread. (25)

An informed reader can quickly identify corresponding similarities apparent in the final fate of Imagism. Pound, the "inventor" of Imagism, also, became disillusioned by the myriad of diluters that later jumped on the bandwagon, whose misrepresentation of the original aesthetic utterly shocked him. When, for instance, Pound saw "an advertisement of Amy Lowell's Sword Blades and Poppy Seed, reading: Of the poets

who to-day are doing the interesting and original work. . . . The foremost member of the 'Imagists'--a group of poets that includes William Butler Yeats, Ezra Pound, Ford Madox Hueffer . . . " (SL 43-44), his ire came alive in a letter:

Dear Miss Lowell: In view of the above arrant charlatanism on the part of your publishers, I think you must now admit that I was quite right in refusing to join you in any scheme for turning Les Imagistes into an uncritical democracy. . . . I think you had better cease referring to yourself as an Imagiste, more especially as The Dome of Glass certainly has no aspirations in our direction. (SL 44)

Even before this event took place, in fact, Pound had made it very clear to Amy Lowell that he would have none of Amygism: he wrote that he would sanction "an Imagiste anthology, provided it were clearly stated at the front of the book that 'E. P. etc. dissociated himself . . .'" (SL 38). Just as Futurism was an attempt to resurrect the dying Cubism in its last stage, Vorticism, largely by Pound's individual initiation, now came into being "to resuscitate the dead art" (SP 61), to use Pound's phrase.

As I have illustrated, Cubism and Imagism share a number of identical aesthetic parallels; in particular, at the first stage, the aesthetical characteristics of both

arts resemble each other so closely that one can almost disregard their inherent difference in modes of expression. In view of all these facts, I believe, it was Cubism in the modern visual arts that in the long run begot Imagism in modern poetry. Hence, in modern poetry, Pound's role as an "inventor" as well as a "master" (of Imagism and later Vorticism) resembles the similar role Picasso played in the modern visual arts (Cubism): both of them were indeed "able to assimilate and co-ordinate a large number of preceding inventions" (LE 23).

In his book The Literary Vorticism of Pound and Wyndham Lewis (1985), however, Dasenbrock likens Pound's later involvement with Vorticism to Apollinaire's association with Cubism, an interesting analogy that deserves a closer look at length:

Cubism was a strong influence on Vorticist painting, but Cubism as a movement had little to teach Vorticism as it was too exclusively a movement of painters, though the poet Guillaume Apollinaire was a close friend of the Cubists and wrote about their art extensively. The importance of Apollinaire in the promotion of Cubism does demonstrate both the utility of writers for artistic movements and the extent to which poets at this point were taking their inspiration from painting. Pound, like Apollinaire, was inspired by artists

and put his talents to work to promote their work: in this respect, he is the Apollinaire of Vorticism. But he is more than that. As a poet, Apollinaire remained outside of Cubism, which offered no basis for a movement across the arts. Pound saw this limitation at the time: "Obviously you cannot have 'cubist' poetry or 'imagist' painting" (G-B 81). (19)

Such an analogous comparison between Apollinaire and Pound seems quite convincing at first glance. However, Dasenbrock's analogy becomes inept when we carefully examine the following facts. He fails to grasp the aesthetic influence of Cubism, the first legitimate reaction against the old tradition. He, furthermore, does not realize to the fullest extent the significance of the overall paradigm shift and its consequent impact across the board at the dawn of the twentieth century--a phenomenon that reaches as far back as Einstein's discovery of Theory of Relativity, for instance. Hence, Dasenbrock's view on Vorticism cannot help but be myopic. As the title of his book indicates, Vorticism is his focus and therefore his answer for all. In short, Dasenbrock's simplistic view fails him to grasp the whole picture although he himself at one point acknowledges that "Cubism seems the central moment in modernism in a way no other movement in any other arty could" (6).

It was Cubism, the first legitimate and serious artis-

tic movement in Western culture, that laid the quintessential aesthetic foundation for the twentieth century arts across the board: "(The age, like our own, was an age of intermedia arts. Consider Cocteau, Picabia, Picasso, etc.) But there was a specific bond that he [Pound] saw in the rebel arts of the early decades of the century" (Zinnes xvii). In fact, Futurism, in the development of the modern visual arts, especially compared to the magnitude of Cubism, is almost ingorable: it was a branch, never the stem. In fact, the currency of the term "Cubism" was and is more wide spread than that of Futurism, a short-lived esoteric phenomena, which confined itself largely to painting in a parochial town in Italy. A greater number of people, who has yet to hear about Futurism, in fact, knew and still do know about Cubism and its impact.

Correspondingly, a greater number of people were aware of Imagism (and they still are in my opinion) than they were about Vorticism. Nobody calls an Image a Vortex any more, for instance. As Dasenbrock notes, "Vorticism" was "a short-lived movement that flourished in London around 1914" (10). On the other hand, although Pound's personal involvement with the movement was less than a year, Imagism expands itself between the years 1912 and 1917 (Abrams 80), much longer than Vorticism. Also, the term "image"--whether it signifies Pound's Image or Lowell's image--still retains its currency even today.

In my opinion, Vorticism was merely another phase of Imagism, a branch but never the stem, just as Futurism was to a large extent another phase of Cubism. Vorticism was in essence an accelerated Imagism as Futurism was, as Dasenbrock himself acknowledges, an accelerated Cubism (20-1). In fact, Vorticism served as an extension of Imagism: "the most important aspect of Pound's theory is his notion of the 'primary pigment', which is essentially an application of the image of the vortex to aesthetics" (Dasenbrock 16-7).

No artistic movement at the dawn of the century was an isolated event. In a sweeping generalization, the Renaissance tradition in painting begot Realism that begot Impressionism that begot Fauvism that begot Cubism that begot Futurism, just as Cubism begot Imagism that begot Vorticism in modern poetry and painting. Pound himself, at one point, acknowledges the aesthetic connection that binds all these movements together when he states that:

. . . vorticism . . . is roughly speaking, expressionism, neo-cubism, and imagism gathered together in one camp and futurism in the other. Futurism is descended from impressionism. It is, in so far as it is an art movement, a kind of accelerated impressionism. . . . (GB 90)

The difference between Imagism and Vorticism is then largely the terminology that went through metamorphosis:

the Image accelerated now became the Vortex. Like the vortex, an Image was a concentrated energy--that which expands beyond the time and space limits--a dynamic force Pound discovers exclusively in Picasso as he praises Picasso's art in his letter to John Quinn (London, 10 March):

It seems to me that Picasso alone, certainly alone among the living artists whom I know of, is in anything like the same class. It is not merely knowledge of technique, or skill, it is intelligence and knowledge of life, of the whole of it, beauty, heaven, hell, sarcasm, every kind of whirlwind of force and emotion. Vortex. That is the right word, if I did find it myself. - - - - [sic] In all this modern froth--that's what it is, froth, 291, Picabia, etc., etc., etc., Derain even, and the French--there isn't, so far as I have had opportunity of knowing, ONE trace of this man's profundity. (SL 74)

In view of all these overwhelming facts, then, Picasso becomes a better analogy for Pound than the rather obscure yet important dilettante Apollinaire. Most important, to insist that Pound was an Apollinaire, as Dasenbrock insists, is to totally ignore the overall literary impact Pound has achieved throughout his career.

The evidence that Picasso becomes a better counterpart

of Pound than anyone else in the period does not stop here. Consider, for instance, Pound's connection to Gaudier Brzeska, another important sculptor, himself heavily indebted to Cubism:

At first influenced by Rodin, Gaudier soon began to feel representational art to be unsatisfactory. During 1911 he wrote to Sophie that great classical sculpture was beautiful because 'the masses of which it is composed have sufficient truth in their disposition to give the sensation of many rhythms', but line in itself, the accurate representation of the human body or other subjects, was 'nothing but a decoy' and had nothing essentially to do with beauty'. He began to experiment with non-representational forms in which 'energy' could be conveyed by the relationship between 'masses', and emotions expressed through 'the arrangement of surfaces'. On these principles he sculpted works that had a certain resemblance to Cubism, but also a strong flavour of ancient Egyptian statuary and African totems. (Carpenter 215-16)

Incidentally, as we recall, at the conception of Cubism, Picasso also studied non-European sculptures, such as Iberian and African ones, a reason that may explain why Brzeska, too, was drawn by them. To many Pound contemporaries, Pound's innovative and iconoclastic reactions against

the obsolete poetic tradition strikingly resemble those of a cubist--so much so that he was, at one point, called a cubist, indeed: "an American . . . Europeanized [who] has contracted all the absurdities of the day, and is now a cubist . . ." (quoted from Carpenter 229).

Finally and most important, as early as 1908 (just a year later after Cubism had started in Paris)⁹, Pound was well aware of dramatic changes that were taking place in Western arts across the board. In fact, not only was he aware of the changes taking place in the aesthetics of Western arts but he himself was also already experimenting with various meters other than the traditional English metrics, as his letter to his buddy Williams (London, 21 October) attests:

I wonder whether, when you talk about poetic anarchy, you mean a life lawlessly poetic and poetically lawless mirrored in the verse, or whether you mean a lawlessness in the materia poetica and metrica. Sometimes I use rules of Spanish, Anglo-Saxon and Greek metric that are not common in the English of Milton's or Miss Austen's day. I doubt, however, if you are sufficiently au courant to know just what the poets and musicians and painters are doing with a good deal of convention that has masqueraded as law. (SL 4)

In fact, as Harriet Zinnes notes in her seminal work

Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts (New York: New Directions, 1980), by the time Pound arrives in London, the aesthetic paradigmatic changes in arts was imminent:

For a young poet who was soon to astonish Yeats and help promote a revolution in the literary and visual arts, his [Pound's] arrival in England in 1908 was propitious. Paris had already been in an artistic ferment. The year 1907 saw a memorial exhibition of Cezanne, who was now considered the Master of Aix, and in the same year Picasso painted (though never "finished") Les Demoiselles d'Avignon. Cubism had been born. Soon Pound was to foster first imagism and then the related movement, vorticism. . . . (xii)

Pound, Futurism, and Vorticism

Dasenbrock, however, rightly points out that Futurism sprang out of the final stage of Cubism (Synthetic Cubism) because of the following reasons. First, the Synthetic Cubism lacked the dynamism which the original Cubism was initially aspired to depict; instead, the movement at this stage became interested in painting exclusively "the immobility, the frozenness and all the static aspects of nature" (quoted in Dasenbrock 29-30).¹⁰ Second, the subject matter of Cubism had become too artificial: cubists were no longer interested in painting nature. Musical instruments,

among others, became chief objects they depicted. To many painters of Futurism, these subjects were not necessarily every day, ordinary objects:

They are tasteful but lack energy and dynamism, and their subject matter is embarrassingly trivial: "HOWEVER MUSICAL OR VEGETARIAN A MAN MAY BE, HIS LIFE IS TO SPENT EXCLUSIVELY AMONGST APPLES AND MANDOLINS." (Dasenbrock 31)

Finally, the means or modes of expression, such as using papiers colles (Fry 39), now received more attention than the overall objectives of painting at the Synthetic stage of Cubism. Furthermore, as Dasenbrock points out, Cubism at this stage became "too analytical . . . dissecting objects instead of identifying with them" (32). Therefore, at the final stage, the initial iconoclastic spirits were swallowed up by a solipsism, against which Cubism stood in the first place. One revolutionary circle is thus now completed: the snake bit its tail and swallowed its head at the end. Therefore, a vast gap now stood between initial Cubism and Synthetic Cubism. Around 1910 in Italy, against this messiness and solipsism of the Synthetic Cubism rose the Futurism.

Ironically, however, Futurism was not without its own flaws. Among many, one of the most important problems of Futurism was its formlessness (Dasenbrock 32). Initially, Futurism lamented the fact that the Synthetic Cubism was

static and dead, having no motion associated with the modern machine age. But the overemphasis on the action, movement, and motion of the machine age by the Futurists also resulted in the formlessness in their expression. The pendulum swung from one extreme to the other:

In trying to be dynamic, the Futurists succeeded merely in being fluid and imprecise; their art was too formless and blurred. What caused this formlessness was their wish to be faithful to the sensations they received in the presence of the subject; the Futurists in fact explicitly declared that "painting and sensation are two inseparable words." (Dasenbrock 32)

Against this formlessness of Futurism rose Vorticism around 1914 in London (Dasenbrock 10). The paradigmatic shift which initially had taken place in the fields of science and technology had now finally reached modern literature via, among others, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Imagism, Futurism, and Vorticism. It was indeed a long journey to reach this far, but the process simply illustrates how difficult it is for any paradigm to change.

Vorticism

Initially, Dasenbrock explains, "Vorticism, a short-lived movement that flourished in London around 1914, was

founded by Wyndham Lewis, "who was a painter and a writer, and the poet Ezra Pound" (10-11). Later, he goes on "a number of painters and sculptors such as Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and Jacob Epstein" (11) joined the movement. Therefore, as Dasenbrock rightly points out "Vorticism from its conception was" pronouncedly "a movement across the arts" (11) although he acknowledges that no musician was involved in the movement (16). Consequently, he argues, Vorticism was a different movement altogether:

First, Vorticism set out to be a movement across the arts, so it is explicitly and deliberately, not implicitly or accidentally, part of the phenomenon I seek to explain. Second, its prime movers, Lewis and Pound, went on to produce works of literature that are among the most important of the century and had a potent influence on the works of many of their contemporaries and followers. . . . Finally Vorticism is an appropriate movement to study because, frankly, the painting and sculpture of the Vorticist movement are not so significant as the literature it inspired and influenced. (11)

In the first issue of Blast (1914), Pound defines the meaning of "vortex" as follows:

The vortex is the point of maximum energy.
It represents, in mechanics, the greatest effi-

ciency. We use the words "greatest efficiency" in the precise sense--as they would be used in a text book of MECHANICS. You may think of man as that toward which perception moves. You may think of him as the TOY of circumstance, as CONCEIVING instead of merely observing and reflecting.

(Zinnes 151)

Despite all these seemingly fresh ideas and concepts associated with Vorticism, as I have already mentioned, the movement was, to a large extent and invariably, a mere extension of Imagism (i.e. Imagism accelerated). According to Dasenbrock, "the most important aspect of Pound's theory [of Vorticism] is his notion of the 'primary pigment' which is essentially an application of the image of the vortex to aesthetics" (16-7). Similarly, in Pound's own words, the primary pigment means "a vivid consciousness in primary form" :

The vorticist relies on this alone; on the primary pigment of his art, nothing else. Every conception, every emotion presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form. It is the picture that means a hundred poems, the music that meant a hundred pictures, the most highly energized statement, the statement that has not yet SPENT itself it [sic] expression, but which is the most capable of expressing. (Zinnes 151)

In short, Pound goes on to explain how this concept of primary pigment is an Image in poetry although it also operates in various forms in different arts:

If you are a cubist, or an expressionist, or an imagist, you may believe in one thing for painting and a very different thing for poetry. You may talk about volumes, or about colour that "moves in," or about a certain form of verse, without having a correlated aesthetic which carries you through all of the arts. Vorticism means that one is interested in the creative faculty as opposed to the mimetic. We believe that it is harder to make than to copy. We believe in maximum efficiency. . . . We go to a particular art for something which we cannot get in any other art. If we want form without colour we go to a painting, or we make a painting, If we want form without colour and in two dimensions, we want drawing or etching. If we want form in three dimensions, we want sculpture. If we want an image or a procession of images, we want poetry. If we want pure sound, we want music. (Zinnes 6)

Perhaps one of the most crucial remarks here is that "Vorticism means that one is interested in the creative faculty as opposed to the mimetic." This particular remark, in fact, goes as far back as the conception of Cubism.

Cubism revolted against the mimetic nature of painting closely associated with Realism and Impressionism because their main aesthetic concern was to create optical illusion in painting by almost photocopying the object. Just as Cubism revolted against the optical illusionism or realism in three dimensions at the dawn of this century, Vorticism, too, reacts against the similar aesthetic temperament. Just as the Image achieved the sudden growth through a precise, concrete, hard composition against the inexact use of words in traditional metrical box-stuffing, a vortex similarly demands "a maximum efficiency" (Zinnes 6).

Vorticism also emphasized the importance of "Dynamic Form" (Dasenbrock 29), which means for Pound that "an organization of forms expresses a confluence of forces" (Zinnes 7).¹¹ To Pound this confluence of forces manifests itself through, for example, "a plateful of iron filings beneath a strong magnet" : "an example of energy expressing itself in pattern " (7), a notion that becomes crucial to the organization of the Pisan Cantos. In short, if a poet composes a poem using a musical rhythm, not in metronomic beat, the poem will have an "organic form" (Zinnes 8), one that grows out of the inner shape of the poem, a form one cannot expect to have if he/she stuffs the metrical box according to the traditional meter.

While explaining Vorticism, at one point, Pound confesses his indebtedness to vorticist painting and sculpture,

particularly in the area of "form" :

And vorticism, especially that part of vorticism having to do with form--to wit, vorticist painting and sculpture--has brought me a new series of apperceptions. . . . I have my new and swift perceptions of forms, of possible form-motifs; I have a double or treble or tenfold set of stimulae in going from my home to Piccadilly. What was a dull row of houses is become a magazine of forms. There are new ways of seeing them . . . this new conception, this state of mental activity, brings with a great joy and refreshment. I do not wish to convert anyone, I simply say that a certain sort of pleasure is available to anyone who wants it. . . . It is possible that this search for form-motif will lead us to some synthesis of western life comparable to the synthesis of oriental life which we find in Chinese and Japanese painting. This lies with the future. (Zinnes 9)

In fact, Zinnes goes so far as to assert that "Pound clearly saw that modernism . . . is an emphasis on pure form" :

. . . vorticism from my angle was a renewal of the sense of construction. Color went dead and Manet and the impressionists revived it. Then what I would call the sense of form was blurred, and

vorticism, as distinct from cubism [i.e. Analytic and Synthetic Cubism], was an attempt to revive the sense of form. . . . (Quoted in Zinnes xv)

According to Dasenbrock, another important aesthetic of Vorticism is emotional detachment. In fact, we, of course, recall that emotional detachment was one of the quintessential aesthetics of Cubism, a notion that has already expressed itself through the theory of Impersonality in modern poetry. Therefore, the vorticists insistence of detachment is yet another example of accelerating the earlier aesthetics of Imagism. Dasenbrock goes on to argue that abstraction as a means of representation is another example of Vorticism, a notion that goes as far back as Cubism.

Abstraction in arts, in fact, starts in Cubism when cubists, in an attempt not to replicate objects in three dimensions (as Realism and Impressionism did), uses simplified geometric patterns and triangles: in particular, when they mixed objects seen through multiple dimensions in plain, flat perspective, just as Picasso does with the figure in the right hand bottom of his Les Demoiselles. Imagism, then, adopted this aesthetic of abstraction through its emphasis of eliminating all unnecessary words through fragmentation. Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" is the case in point. In his opinionated article "The Strange Case of Ezra Pound," in fact, Nathaniel Weyl protests that thanks to Pound's Imagism, poetry now became cryptograms:

A dilettante student of the Chinese written language, Pound was entranced with the ideogram and experimented with the instantaneous presentation of complex thought in an ultimate of compactness. This resulted often enough in "intellectualized chop suey," or, more accurately, in the reduction of poetry to cryptograms--the deciphering of which was an arduous mental process wherein the emotional reactions of the reader were inevitably deadened. (8)

According to Dasenbrock, yet another characteristics of Vorticism is "the ideogrammatic loop: using the past" (78). He then points out that "the past Epstein and Gaudier-Brzeska use in their sculpture is the primitive past" (79). "The signature of primitivism in early twentieth-century art," he goes on, "is the use of the simplified forms broadly characteristic of primitive art." He is right. In fact, as I have already pointed out, Picasso, at the conception of Cubism, was influenced by "African sculpture, particularly sculpture from the Ivory Coast and other French colonies in West Africa, which he saw either at the Trocaero Museum . . . or at the shops of second-hand dealers. . ." (Fry 13). In short, Cubism has already set the trend of using the past in the sense of "the ideogrammatic loop" as Dasenbrock speaks of.

Perhaps, one of the most important contributions of

Dasenbrock's book is his excellent illustration that how modernists, such as Pound, Eliot, and Joyce, attempt to arrest time in temporal art, a task often thought impossible: "Eliot, Pound, Joyce, Proust, and others by a space-logic replaced the sequential time-logic of narrative: 'Past and present are apprehended spatially, locked in a timeless unity that, while it may accentuate surface differences, eliminates any feeling of sequence by the very act of juxtaposition'" (140). The last point, indeed, becomes crucial to the technique Pound employs in the Pisan Cantos. Dasenbrock goes on that "Joyce, Pound, Proust, and Stein" are "particular exemplars of a larger time-mind that permeated modern literature and culture" (140).

In the beginning, Einstein's Theory of Relativity shook the world undermining the old paradigm of Western civilization (1905). Following on Einstein, the cubists wanted to embody in their paintings the newly discovered concept of Fourth Dimension (1907-1914), as Marcel Duchamp did with his Nude Descending a Stair. Then, around 1912-1917 the Imagists picked up this aesthetic of freezing time in temporal art, a task often thought impossible. To embody the new time in temporal art, Pound, for example, eliminates the verb in his composition of "In a Station of the Metro" (1913). Also, Stein and Williams, among other modernists, incorporate rather successfully a similar impulse in modern literature, as I have noted in detail. In view of all these

facts, then, the concern for slowing down time in temporal art is not a new phenomenon unique only to Vorticism, as Dasenbrock sees it. It goes as far back as Einstein's discovery.

Conclusion

By the year 1945, when Pound starts working on his magnum opus the Pisan Cantos, the new paradigm, which was once conceived at the beginning of the century triggered by new scientific discoveries and technological advancement, has established its strong foothold in the soil of the twentieth century arts across the board. The new paradigm now has become the backbone of all aesthetic foundation in all Western arts. Realism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, Imagism, and Vorticism were merely a series of allergic reactions--a natural mechanism for survival in all Modernists, who suddenly found themselves living in a new environment where the old aesthetic paradigm no longer held water.

Pound, who had been at the hub of the wheel throughout these storms of changes, by now had mastered, improved, and perfected new poetic techniques. At his disposal, he had almost all the important aesthetic tools the early half of the twentieth century could offer. Perhaps, one of the most important aesthetics he, like other modernists, had learned was how to freeze time in temporal art of poetry through

juxtaposition of fragments, a task that was heretofore thought impossible.

On the other hand, Pound's poetic mind also grew all this while. For instance, his maturity as a poet now shows through his flexible stance toward the aesthetic of impersonality. In the Pisan Cantos, Pound marries the Imagistic precision with autobiographical materials in such an unprecedented way that many considers the work arguably as the best lyric of our time: they [Cantos], "move between verse as speech and verse as song, are in either genre, supreme" (O'Connor 31).¹² Pound's ability to marry his autobiographical materials with Imagistic precision, in turn, proves yet another artistic genius of his. This notion of disembodied autobiographical voice, a result from Pound marrying autobiograhpy with impersonality aesthetic, might be equated with Picasso's paintings, particularly ones about his mistresses in their bedroom. In my opinion, despite Pound's initial rejection of subjectivism in modernism, his late adoption of personal voice in the Pisan Cantos opened up yet another literary era called Post-Modernism where Confessional Poetry, among others, becomes one of the newest paradigms in contemporary poetry for the second half of the twentieth century.

Cubism and the Chinese Ideograms

In my view, the fundamental aesthetics of Cubism, in

fact, are echoed in the graphic representation of the Chinese ideograms, a possible reason that explains why Pound's introduction of the latter to modern poetry became propitious and congenial. Pound, in fact, relates to us that Gaudier Brzeska, a trained sculptor who was influenced by Cubism as I pointed out, was able to tell the meaning of certain Chinese ideograms without having any previous knowledge of the language:

Gaudier Brzeska, who was accustomed to looking at the real shape of things, could read a certain amount of Chinese writing without ANY STUDY. He said, 'Of course, you can see it's a horse' (or a wing or whatever). (ABC 22)

In a sweeping generalization, both Cubism (especially the earlier stage of the movement) and the Chinese ideograms move towards simplification in their graphic representation of objects. They no longer depict things in detail as they are in nature. Rather, they both tend to render things through a much simplified pictorial representation. In brief, they both aim to capture the "conceptual essentiality" through minimal strokes. In fact, the few, the better. I have already pointed out that Picasso "treated the human body more conceptually than was possible in the Renaissance tradition" (Fry 13), as he does in his Les Femmes d'Alger: "this new approach appears most clearly in Les Femmes d'Alger in such details as the reduction of human anatomo-

my to geometrical lozenges and triangles, as well as in the abandonment of normal anatomical proportions" (Fry 13).

Pound also recognizes how the Chinese ideograms would arrest the "conceptual essentiality" of the signified in fewest possible strokes:

In tables showing primitive Chinese characters in one column and the present 'conventionalized' signs in another, anyone can see how the ideogram for man or tree or sunrise developed, or 'was simplified from', or was reduced to the essentials of the first picture of man, tree, or sunrise. Thus man [人], tree [木], sun [日], and sun tangled in the tree's branches, as at sunrise, meaning not the East [東]. (ABC 21)

Furthermore, Picasso's impersonal rendition of his first cubistic painting Les Femmes d'Alger can be characterized as what Pound later calls "the ideogrammic method" or "the method of science" (ABC 26): "Picasso's version [of painting prostitutes] is as far removed from the spirit of irony or pathos of his predecessors as it is from the empathy and restrained lyricism of his own earlier painting" (Fry 13). In a similar vein, Pound speaks of the ideogrammic method:

HANG a painting by Carlo Dolci beside a Cosimo Tura. You cannot prevent Mr. Buggins from preferring the former, but you can very seriously impede his setting up a false tradition of teaching on

the assumption that Tura has never existed, or that the qualities of the Tura are non-existent or outside the scope of the possible. A general statement is valuable only in **REFERENCE** to the known objects or facts. (ABC 26)

Then, he goes on to explain why the Chinese ideograms work: they hold "the efficiency of verbal manifestation with the transmittibility of a conviction" :

One of the pleasure of middle age is to find out that one **WAS** right, and that one was much righter than one knew at say seventeen or twenty-three. . . . This doesn't in the least rule out the uses of logic, or of good guesses, or of intuitions and total perceptions, or of 'seeing how the thing **HAD TO BE**'. It has, however, a good deal to do with the efficiency of verbal manifestation, and with the transmittibility of a conviction. (ABC 26-7)

However, their attempt to capture the "conceptual essentiality" of the object with minimal strokes invariably resulted in abstraction. Consider, for example, Picasso's Portrait of Ambroise Vollard (1909-10). Although an educated eye can conceptually reconstruct the whole figure [the alleged Ambroise Vollard] without much problem, the overwhelming fragmentations and geometrical patterns harbor a chaos. And by the time he paints Still-life with Clarinet (1911), one can hardly tell, without the title, what the

painting is all about. I have, in fact, already spoken about the formlessness associated with the latter stage of Cubism, against which the Futurism came into being.

Similarly, as any Chinese acknowledges, the Chinese ideograms have gone through an oversimplification process. No longer can they tell what an ideogram originally depicted due to a simplification of the strokes. The Chinese ideograms have already evolved beyond what Northrop Frye calls the "metaphoric phase" (26). In fact, I suspect that both Cubism as well as the Chinese ideograms suffer from the same malaise that affects any written signifier. Indeed, as Jacques Derrida claims in his famous article "The End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing," "the inflation of the sign 'language' is the inflation of the sign itself, absolute inflation, inflation itself" (6) :

The written signifier is always technical and representative. It has no constitutive meaning. This derivation is the very origin of the notion of the "signifier." The notion of the sign always implies within itself the distinction between signifier and signified . . . they are distinguished simply as the two faces of one and the same leaf. (Derrida 11)¹³

Notes

1. Harriet Zinnes explains Pound's catalytic role in her pioneering work Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts as follows:

For a young poet what was soon to astonish Yeats and help promote a revolution in the literary and visual arts, his arrival in England in 1908 was propitious. Paris had already been in an artistic ferment. The year 1907 saw a memorial exhibition of Cezanne, who was now considered the Master of Aix, and in the same year Picasso painted (though never "finished") Les Demoiselles d'Avignon. Cubism had been born. Soon Pound was to foster first imagism and the related movement, vorticism, as a consequence of his close involvement in London with the philosopher T. E. Hulme and with such artists as Wyndham Lewis and Gaudier-Brzeska. . . . Edwardian London had lured not only Pound but the sculptor Jacob Epstein from New York and the young Gaudier from France. . . . The first machine age was claiming its aesthetic response.
(xii)

2. According to Fry, despite Picasso's public denial, he nonetheless was influenced by a number of sources, "the most influential of these being Iberian sculpture, El Greco, and the work of Gauguin, particularly his carved sculpture" (13).

3. According to Alun R. Jones, the author of The Life and Opinions of T. E. Hulme (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), "the word Imagism was coined by Pound and the so-called Imagist Manifesto was written by him, but the term and the manifesto merely classify the experiments and ideas worked out by Hulme and his followers" (35).

4. All the quotations of Cantos are from The Cantos of Ezra Pound (New York: New Directions, 1972).

5. William Butler Yeats Selected Poems and Two Plays of William Butler Yeats. New York: Collier Books, 1962. pp. 12-13.

6. Ezra Pound. Selected Poems of Ezra Pound. New York: New Directions, 1957. pp. 38-29.

7. Almost all cubistic paintings, especially the ones that belong to the Analytic Stage of the movement (around 1910 and on), maximize this technique of fragmentation: Picasso's Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (1910), Still-life with Clarinet (1911), Man with Violin (1911), George Braque's Still-life with Harp and Violin (1912), and The Violoncello (1912), to name a few.

8. rpt. from Dasenbrock's The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound & Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985. p. 92. Originally from Schneidau, Ezra Pound: The Image and the Real (p. 45).

9. According to yet another account by Harriet Zinnes, the author of Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts (New York: New Directions, 1980), "Pound's discussions on art began at least with Smith in Philadelphia around 1908" :

By the fall of 1908, when Ezra Pound was settled in London, he had already developed a strong interest in the visual arts. He had arrived there with his first book of poems, A Lume Spento (which he translated as "With Tapers Quenched"), just published for him by A. Antonini in Venice. The title comes from Dante's Purgatorio III. 132, and as with Dante's phrase, Pound's alludes to premature death. The reference is to the death of the poet's "first friend" (at fifteen or sixteen), the painter William Brooke Smith. (xi)

10. rpt. from Dasenbrock's The Literary Vorticism (29). Originally from Umbro Apollonio, ed. Futurism (Milan: Mazzotta, 1970), p. 90.

11. Pound further explains this concept as follows:

These forces may be the "love of God," the "life-force," emotions, passions, what you will. For example: if you clap a strong magnet beneath a plateful of iron filings, the energies of the magnet will proceed to organize form. It is only by applying a particular and suitable force that you can bring order and vitality and thence beauty into a place of iron filings, which are otherwise as "ugly" as anything under heaven. The design in the magnetized iron filings expresses a confluence of energy. It is not "meaningless" or "inexpressive." (Zinnes 7)

12. from New York Herald Tribune Weekly Bk R. p. 7 Ag 22 '48 550 w.

13. Of Grammatology. translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976.

CHAPTER VII

"VERBUM PERFECTUM": GORILLA LANGUAGE IN THE PISAN CANTOS

The Pisan Cantos mark a true turning point in Pound's poetic aesthetics and technique. The work is, indeed, a culmination of his lifetime endeavors. In fact, what Pound accomplishes in the Pisan Cantos became so revolutionary in my opinion that his poetic technique can be easily discussed in terms not only of visual arts and modern poetry but also in terms of film theories, especially the montage technique. Consider, for example, the following explanation of juxtaposition in film by Sergi M. Eisenstein (The Film Sense 1974):

Why do we use montage at all?This property consisted in the fact that two film pieces of any kind, placed together, inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition. This is not in the least a circumstance peculiar to the cinema, but is a phenomenon invariably met with in all cases where we have to deal with juxtaposition of two facts, two phenomena, two objects. We are accustomed to make, almost automatically, a definite and obvious deductive generalization when any separate objects are placed before us side by side. . . . "The raven flew, while a dog sat on its tail. How can this be?" We automatically combine the juxtaposed ele-

ments and reduce them to a unity. As a result, we understand the query as though the dog were sitting on the tail of the raven, while actually, the riddle contains two unrelated actions. . . . This tendency to bring together into a unity two or more independent objects or qualities is very strong, even in the case of separate words, characterizing different aspects of some single phenomenon. (4-5)

I believe in essence what Eisenstein explains is the key to the understanding of the all-important poetic form and technique Pound employs in the Pisan Cantos, if not the whole Cantos. Furthermore, as we recall, Eisenstein's montage, also, explains both the fundamental aesthetics of Cubism and the essential operation of the Chinese ideogram. Simply put, Pound, too, attempts to bring together into a unity two or more independent thoughts and experiences in the sequence. Of course, the riddle [the Pisan Cantos] contains countless unrelated actions and experiences. It is, therefore, the reader's responsibility to recognize out of these myriad of fragmentations some single phenomenon, the forma, "the rose in the steel dust" (Vorticism 18) as Pound elaborates on the concept as follows:

. . . if you clap a strong magnet beneath a plateful of iron filings, the energies of the magnet will proceed to organise form. It is only by ap-

plying a particular and suitable force that you can bring order and vitality and thence beauty into a plate of iron fillings, which are otherwise as "ugly" as anything under heaven. The design in the magnetised iron filings expresses a confluence of energy. It is not "meaningless" or "inexpressive." (Zinnes 8)

Furthermore, Pound goes on to insist that this type of automatic confluence of energy alone will not accomplish much, as the failure of automatic paintings abundantly illustrate the point. Rather, he argues, it is the instinct and the intellect [of the artist] that consciously control, direct, and master this type of energy into an art form:

The vorticist is expressing his complex consciousness. He is not like iron fillings, expressing electrical magnetism; not like the automatist, expressing a state of cell-memory, a vegetable or visceral energy. . . . One, as a human being, cannot pretend fully to express oneself unless one express instinct and intellect together. The softness and the ultimate failure of interest in automatic painting are caused by a complete lack of conscious intellect. Where does this bring us? It brings us to this: Vorticism is a legitimate expression of life. (Zinnes 8)

Pound's juxtaposition indeed embodies his poetic will,

the conscious intellect. Only when he combines the poetic consciousness, Pound's juxtapositions become a successful poetic form that depicts the inner landscape of the poet. As Eisenstein points out in his Film Form (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), "it is exactly through elementary naked juxtaposition that must be worked out a system of the complicated inner (the outer no longer counts) juxtaposition that exists in each phrase of ordinary normal literate montage speech" (246).

In fact, without resorting to such a montage technique, a form that truly demands the constant involvement of a "conscious intellect," how could Pound have rendered such a complex of feelings in a single verse paragraph?

Serenely in the crystal jet
 as the bright ball that the fountain tosses
 (Verlaine) as diamond clearness
 How soft the wind under Taishan
 where the sea is remembered
 out of hell, the pit
 out of the dust and glare evil
 Zephyrus / Apeliota
 This liquid is certainly a
 property of the mind
 nec accidens est but an element
 in the mind's make-up
 est agens and functions dust to a fountain pan other-
 wise
 Hast 'ou seen the rose in the steel dust
 (or swansdown ever?)
 so light is the urging, so ordered the dark petals of
 iron
 we who have passed over Lethe. (74/449)¹

As the reader realizes, Pound forges myriad shots-- various facets of the mind of the prisoner/poet--carefully into a single organic whole, which is never the sum of the

parts. Each single facet operates individually as a single grain of the complex whole [i.e. the mind], respectively. The example we just examined, for instance, contains numerous facets of the complex mind: mythical as well as inter-cultural ("Taishan," "Zephyrus," and "Apeliota"); purely lyrical ("Serenely in the crystal jet / as the bright ball that the fountain tosses / as diamond clearness" and "This liquid is certainly a / property of the mind"); philosophical ("so light is the urging, so ordered the dark petals of iron"); aesthetic ("Hast 'ou seen the rose in the steel dust / (or swansdown ever?)" ; meditative ("nec accidens est but an element / in the mind's make-up"); classical ("we who have passed over Lethe"); and personal as well as biographical ("How soft the wind under Taishan / where the sea is remembered / out of hell, the pit / out of the dust and glare evil"). In fact, without conscious effort on the part of Pound, all these allusions will indeed become nothing but a magnetized iron filings, automatic writing.

Here, the reader must also note that, despite his earlier emphasis on impersonal aesthetics in modern poetry, Pound now incorporates his subjective, personal, and private circumstance into his poetry, consciously. Such a conscious flexibility, no doubt, shows his maturity: the growth of the poetic mind. In my opinion, this type of innovation in the long run becomes propitious and fosters a poetic environment that leads into the Post-Modern Confessional School

of poetry.

Most important, each shot in the montage also represents, respectively, the past (mythical) and the present (biographical and personal) and the future (philosophical). By employing this type of juxtaposition, Pound arrests, of course consciously, the progression of linear time in temporal art. He succeeds in suspending the moment as long as possible. At one point, in fact, Pound explains what he consciously tries to achieve with time in temporal art:

If I [Pound] prefer Lewis' most abstract work to any other phase of his, it is possibly because I am not primarily interested in the arts of space. Working in time, by time, by the designing and combination of durations sometimes combined with the conventionalized sound combinations of language there are of necessity periods in which I am comparatively unaware of current developments in the spatial arts. (my emphasis, Zinnes 304)²

Fragmented juxtapositions indeed freeze the moment, however momentarily, in the mind of the reader as if they were broken lozenges and geometrical patterns of an object in a cubistic painting. Yet, as broken lines in a cubistic painting engage the intellect of the viewer to form the whole figure of the given object--no matter how much it is fragmented, interrupted, and disfigured--Pound's fragments, too, provide the reader with an overview of the total mental

picture [state] of the speaker.

It is only at this point that Pound's montage technique reaches at a higher unity as Eisenstein explains a true montage in film: "For us montage became a means of achieving a unity of a higher order--a means through the montage image of achieving an organic embodiment of a single idea conception, embracing all elements, parts, details of the film-work" (Film Form 254).

Furthermore, just as cubists attempt to render the totality of an object by capturing only the "conceptual essentiality" of an object by eliminating the details, Pound, also, stripes off unnecessary details in his rendition and registers only the bones of emotion in a precise, concrete, hard, imagistic fashion. Using Pound's own analogy, each fragment operates like a single grain of iron filings, which becomes fully magnetized by the confluence of energy Pound consciously engages the reader. Therefore, various planes in relations weave into one another forming "the dark petals of iron" in the mind, in the intellect, of the reader, where linear time slows down and is finally arrested. Therefore, the seemingly chaotic fragments come alive and are full of dynamic vitality:

What is essentially involved in such an understanding of montage? In such a case, each montage piece exists no longer as something unrelated, but as a given particular representation of

the general theme that in equal measure penetrates all the shot-pieces. The juxtaposition of these partial details in a given montage construction calls to life and forces into the light that general quality in which each detail has participated and which binds together all the details into a whole, namely, into that generalized image, wherein the creator, followed by the spectator, experiences the theme. (Eisenstein 11)

Furthermore, the seemingly random selection of fragments in the sequence is not truly random since such an arbitrary selection often works against providing a complete image, as Eisenstein accurately observes:

Representation A and representation B must be so selected from all the possible features within the theme that is being developed, must be so sought for, that their juxtaposition--that is, the juxtaposition of those very elements and not of alternative ones--shall evoke in the perception and feelings of the spectator the most complete image of the theme itself. (11)

Let us consider then yet another passage from the Pisan sequence and see how "there still arise this whole host of its separate elements, but now not as a chain, but as something single--as a whole characterization, as its whole image" (Eisenstein 16) of the mental state of the

poet/prisoner Pound:

And now the ants seem to stagger
 as the dawn sun has trapped their shad-
 ows,
 this breath wholly covers the mountains
 it shines and divides
 it nourishes by its rectitude
 does no injury
 overstanding the earth it fills the nine fields
 to heaven

Boon companion to equity
 it joins with the process
 lacking it, there is inanition

When the equities are gathered together
 as birds alighting
 it springeth up vital

If deeds be not ensheaved and garnered in the
 heart
 there is inanition

(have I perchance a debt to a man named
 Clower)

that he eat of the barley corn
 and move with the seed's breath

the sun as a golden eye
 between dark cloud and the mountain
 (83/531)

Please note that how the above passage as "a work of art, understood dynamically, is just this process of arranging images in the feelings and mind" of the poet since "it is this [process] that constitutes the peculiarity of a truly vital work of art and distinguishes it from a lifeless one, in which" the reader "receives the represented result of a given consummated process of creation, instead of being drawn into the process as it occurs" (Eisenstein 17).

Finally, let us consider yet another passage, perhaps

one of the best lyric passages in our time, and examine how this "process of arranging images in the feelings and mind" indeed "constitutes the peculiarity of a truly vital work of art" in Pound:

The ant's a centaur in his dragon world.
 Pull down thy vanity, it is not man
 Made courage, or made order, or made grace,
 Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down.
 Learn of the green world what can be thy place
 In scaled invention or true artistry,
 Pull down thy vanity,
 Paquin pull down!
 The green casque has outdone your elegance.

"Master thyself, then others shall thee beare"
 Pull down thy vanity
 Though art a beaten dog beneath the hail,
 A swollen magpie in a fitful sun,
 Half black half white
 Nor knowst'ou wing from tail
 Pull down thy vanity
 How mean thy hates
 Fostered in falsity,
 Pull down thy vanity,
 Rathe to destroy, niggard in charity,
 Pull down thy vanity,
 I say pull down. (81/521)

Going back to the notion of montage as the key concept for the understanding of this sequence, Pound, in fact, profusely employs throughout the work this type of juxtaposition, a technique others term the "ideogrammatic loop" (Dasenbrock 100). Thanks largely to this new poetic technique, a technique that exhausted his literary career, the poetic medium he forges anew in the Pisan Cantos becomes a unique verbum perfectum. In particular, using his peculiar line breaks in the English text, which mirror pictorially and visually the contour and shape of the Chinese ideograms

standing next to it, Pound creates a unique poetic form in the Pisan sequence. This new form, indeed, becomes the heart of the matter in the sequence. His poetic form becomes a sort of an ideogrammatic English, a gorilla language that is hard, precise, concrete, and above all memorable. This gorilla language, in essence, operates as a gigantic metaphor, a large Image, and vortex in biblical proportion, perhaps: ". . . the juxtaposition of two separate shots by splicing them together resembles not so much a simple sum of one shot plus another shot--as it does a creation" (Eisenstein 7).

Despite Pound's deliberate line breaks and apparent montage technique in the sequence, however, many readers are baffled and often complain about the seeming formlessness of the section. In fact, Mr. Bollingen had to, at one point, defend himself against such an accusation made by Mr. Saturday, who failed to see in the sequence "a confluence of energy the magnetized iron filings express," but saw rather "a plate of iron filings, which are otherwise as 'ugly' as anything under heaven" (Vorticism 18):

And if what he [Pound] thinks he perceives is a vast disorder; a confused, bewildered, materialistic civilization running blindly and without dignity or faith upon vulgarity and death; a generation lost to its past and its future, to beauty and to grace;--if the coherence he perceives is

this in-coherence, is it not precisely this his work must reveal? (O' Connor 88)³

In spite of such a clever rhetorical turn, here employed by a rather desperate Mr. Bollingen, I find, despite his seeming logical cogency, this defense against the formlessness of the sequence rather inadequate. He does not seem to understand the Modernists' concern for the all-important form. In fact, the issue of form in modern visual arts as well as in modern poetry is crucial, as we recall. Harriet Zinnes, the author of Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts (New York: New Directions, 1980) goes so far as to argue that modernism is form and pure form is modernism: "The vortex for Pound had superseded the image, and it was the vortex that stood for all forms of modernism. . . . Pound clearly saw that modernism . . . is an emphasis on pure form" (xv).

At one point, Pound, in fact, praises Constantin Brancusi's form: "The effect of Brancusi's work is cumulative. He has created a whole universe of **FORM**. You've got to see it together. A system. An Anschauung. Not simply a pretty thing on the library table" (Zinnes 308).⁴ In the same article, he sums up that the form goes hand-in-hand with practicality: "The maximum efficiency creating the maximum beauty of **FORM**" (Zinnes 308)--i.e. vortex.

Furthermore, as I have illustrated in previous chapters, to achieve this pure form Pound now employs in the

Pisan Cantos, the reader must understand the arduous, aesthetic journey Pound had to take throughout his career as a poet. For instance, through Imagism, Pound had learned, among others, the importance of precision and the ideogrammatic methods: the juxtaposition of fragments that reveals their whatness through luminous details, the key operative principle of the Chinese ideogram. By the time Pound got himself involved with Vorticism, he learns, among others, how to arrest time in temporal art largely through the juxtaposition of fragments. In short, the vortex and the ideogrammatic method enabled Pound to use spatial order in temporal art, creating a notion of sequence, which is, in essence, the apparent culprit for the seeming formlessness of the work: "Past and present are apprehended spatially, locked in a timeless unity that, while it may accentuate surface differences, eliminates any feeling of sequence by the very act of juxtaposition" (Frank 59).

Consider, for example, Pound's own perception on form as he relates it to the development of Vorticism:

The principles of vorticism have been amply set forth by Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound and Gaudier-Brzeska. The immediate ancestry is given in two quotations in Blast: Pater's "All arts approach the condition of music" ; and Whistler's "We are interested in a painting because it is an arrangement of line and colours." Cezanne began taking

"impressions" of masses. The term "mass" or "form" has been more prominent than the term "line" in recent discussions. The vorticist principle is that a painting is an expression by means of arrangement of form and colour in the same way that a piece of music is an expression by means of an arrangement of sound. (Zinnes 154-5)

Later on, Pound goes on to explain that "In vortography colour is practically excluded" although "there can be suggestion of colours" (Zinnes 155) simply because the color became less important than the form: ". . . the medium of the vortographer is practically limited to form (shapes on a surface) and to a light and shade; to the peculiar varieties in lightness and darkness. . . (Zinnes 155).

Therefore, for Pound, the form is never accidental, as he himself clarifies the point in his article "The Camera is Freed from Reality" :

The vortoscope is useless to a man who cannot recognise a beautiful arrangement of forms on a surface. . . . VORTICISM has reawakened our sense of form, a sense long dead in occidental artists. Any person or animal unable to take pleasure in an arrangement of forms as he or she takes pleasure in an arrangement of musical notes, is thereby the poorer. People are sometimes tone-deaf and colour-blind. Other people, perhaps more numerous, are

form-blind. Some ears cannot recognise the correct pitch of a note, and some eyes get no pleasure from a beautiful or expressive arrangement of forms. (Zinnes 155)

Hence, Pound ends his article asserting that:

Pleasure is derivable not only from the stroking or pushing of the retina by light waves of various colour, BUT ALSO by the impact of those waves in certain arranged tracts. This simple and obvious fact is the basis of the "modern" "art" "revolution." The eye likes certain plainnesses, certain complexities, certain arrangements, certain varieties, certain incitements, certain reliefs and suspensions. It likes these things irrespective of whether or no they form a replica of known objects. (Zinnes 156-7)

In fact, Pound at one point speaks of the poetic form of the Pisan Cantos. As he was composing and sending manuscripts of the Pisan Cantos to be retyped by Maria Rudge, Pound first had to subject his manuscripts to the base censorship at D.T.C. According to Peter Ackroyd (Ezra Pound and His World [New York, 1980]), Pound "wrote one of the few coherent accounts of his own work" (88), in particular, about the very form of the Pisan Cantos:

The Cantos contain nothing in the nature of cypher of intended obscurity. . . . There is also extreme

condensation in the quotations. . . . The form of the poem and the main progress is conditioned by its own inner shape, but the life of the DTC passing OUTSIDE [sic] the scheme cannot but impinge, or break into the main flow. (88)

Obviously, the quintessence of his words is that "the form of the poem and the main progress is conditioned by its own inner shape" (my emphasis): i.e. "the confluence of the energy the magnetized iron filings express" (Vorticism 18). Again and again, Pound stresses this organic nature of form as he reiterates its significance in his article "Cavalcanti" (LE 152):

The best Egyptian sculpture is magnificent plastic; but its force comes from a non-plastic idea, i.e. the god is inside the statue. . . . The god is inside the stone, vacuos exercet aera morsus. The force is arrested, but there is never any question about its latency, about the force being the essential, and the rest 'accidental' in the philosophic technical sense. The shape occurs.
(152)

In view of all these statements addressing the importance of the form, no sensible critic can quickly and categorically dismiss the Pisan Cantos as formless. In fact, as I shall prove throughout this chapter, the seeming formlessness of the sequence bespeaks itself loudly to the contrary.

Of course, the form Pound judiciously employs here is not the obsolete, traditional form, with which the readers of English poetry are all too familiar. Rather, it is the kind of new form that manifests itself when Pound asserts that "the eye likes certain plainnesses, certain complexities, certain arrangements, certain varieties, certain incitements, certain reliefs and suspension" (Zinnes 157). Even in this very statement, I sense, Pound is flirting with the very concept that he tries to explain through, of course, repetition.

Throughout the Cantos in general and in particular in the Pisan Cantos, Pound is working to create a new form. Out of the seemingly chaotic rubble of fragments and juxtapositions, Pound brings out the god, rescuing the force and the latency, the inner "conceptual essentiality." In this chapter, then, I shall examine how Pound's pictographing technique--his deliberate line breaks in the English text that mirror spatially the contour and shape of the Chinese ideograms--becomes "a particular and suitable force that brings order and vitality and thence beauty into a plate of iron filings" (Vorticism 18).

Used as a poetic medium and technique, Chinese ideograms, arguably one of the most important components in the Pisan Cantos, have brought diverse reactions from various critics. Some, focusing heavily on the ineptitude involved in Pound's lack of Chinese knowledge, view Pound's use of

ideograms as "totally erroneous." Many, however, find the gist of the idea in the original--the key message that Pound wanted to make known to the reader--is still intact, unharmed.⁵ In a recent article, for example, Edith Sara reemphasizes "that Pound never worked directly from first-hand knowledge of archaic Chinese (who does?), that the intermediary sources he relied upon most consistently (Legge, Mathews's) were flawed or inappropriate" (30).⁶ Yet, she, too, contends that, in the long run, Pound "ended [up] with a few, very few Poundian, very Confucian contributions to those infrequent, almost unheard of exchanges between the literature of ancient China and that of the modern West--the invention of a memorable voice, a transposable rhythm, a kind of song that strives to be doubly responsive" (my emphasis, 20).

In line with John Steven Childs, John Cayley has proved further that more often than not Pound elaborates his own interpretation of a given ideogram, thus, creating his own meaning of the character, which, at times, can be totally irrelevant to the actual meaning of the ideogram (228-251). Indeed, as Childs noted earlier, "it is not the interactions of characters [literal] which afford meaning in Modern literature; it is the mental character [psychological or emotive] of the writer/narrator himself which orders events and feelings" (290). Although Pound usually had access to Chinese dictionaries throughout his life,⁷ "the chances

are," Cayley maintains, "he was using his eyes and not his dictionaries" (235). Cayley goes on, being powerfully driven by his Brezeskian impulse, Pound usually creates his own Chinese, based on "linguistic images" (quoted in Cayley, 230), as he often does--willfully and wishfully--perceive certain visual images more readily than others in a given ideogram.

According to my limited research, however, no critic has recognized that, in this process of "visualization-oriented" translation, Pound often lays out the English text in such a way that it pictographically mirrors the ideogram under translation. Here, I do not mean Pound literally uses English texts to draw ideogrammatic strokes, an obviously impossible task. What I mean by Pound's pictographing is that in the Pisan Cantos and elsewhere, Pound attempts to visually transliterate Chinese into English: he magnetizes the fragments of both languages, subverting, tearing the languages down, even as he galvanizes the languages to each other. In essence, he uses line breaks and placement on the page to forge a union between the Chinese and English texts; that is he uses the elements of concrete poetry to visually mirror the ideogram.

Pound's sense of language is inferior to none, in spite of his large abuse of it. He is sometimes betrayed by a desire to make English do the work of the Chinese ideographs with which the text is

peppered, and there are large dull stretches in which he rambles on, mulling over memories of men and books, trivial anecdotes, old animosities, talking unintelligibly to himself. But the last passages in the Cantos, which move between verse as speech and verse as song, are, in either genre, supreme. (O'Connor 31)⁸

Incidentally, this book reviewer is rather perceptive: Pound attempts to make English into an ideogram-like poetic medium in the Pisan Cantos. This pictographing demonstrates how doggedly obsessed Pound was with the idea of "verbum perfectum" ("le mot juste"). A close observation of Pound's Chinese translations in the Pisan Cantos proves that he "pictographs" English texts into a sort of Chinese in order to pictorially mirror the Chinese ideogram under discussion.

Pound's transliteration of the Chinese ideogram "Hsien [顯], " the first ideogram in the sequence, for example, illustrates such a pictographing technique. Here, despite the "enormous tragedy of the dream" (425)⁹ that opens up Canto 74, the speaker of the poem attempts to re-contact the divine light through the "green light [that] gleams in his shell [in Disciplinary Training Center near Pisa]" (428). He, therefore, "contemplates"¹⁰ upon the "'sunt lumina'" on Mt. Taishan (429)¹¹:

in the light of light is the virtue
 "sunt lumina" said Erigena Scotus
 as of Shun on Mt. Taishan

in tensile

顯 1

literally rhyme with the short, dangling line--"the prime s.o.b."--in the text as "in tensile" starting proportionately from the far right suggests the initial two strokes [7].

Furthermore, Pound's slants his lines 3 and 4 against the lines 2 and 5 as if to mimic the zigzag movement of the stroke "shining silk thread under the tensile light [8]." In fact, many vorticists often used slant or diagonal lines in their works to maximize the sense of dynamism and vitality: Wyndham Lewis, Timon of Athens (1912); Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Red Stone Dancer (1913); David Bomberg, The Mud Bath (1914); and Jacob Epstein, Rock Drill (1913-15) and his unforgettably haunting piece Cursed Be the Day Wherein I Was Born (1913-15). In fact, Dasenbrock goes so far as to assert that "Owing to their curving lines and contrasting colors these shapes [in the vorticists' paintings] generate a strong sense of rhythm and motion despite their abstractness" (my emphasis 38).¹³ Of course, Pound was all too familiar with these works.

Apparently, the second line "in the light of the light is the virtue" visually rhymes with the "sun [9]." Similarly, Pound repeats his leitmotif twice--("the light of the light" (2) as "Light tensile immaculata" (18) and "sunt lumina" (3) as "sunt lumina" (20)--as if to suggest the two almost identical ideogram of light on either side of the ideogram [10] and [11]. Finally, it seems to me that

down" as Pound likens his ontological situation with that of "an Odyssean hero in time of trouble" (Terrell 369). Apparently, Pound recognized in the ideogram that the "sun [☉] has gone down [~~✖~~]," a leitmotif that repeats itself as "a corona of angels" or "in glory of sunset."



As I have already noted, Pound, again, heavily slants his lines diagonally, a placement which visual-rhymes with the bottom part of the ideogram. The bottom half literally means "largeness or greatness" (since a man is stretching his four limbs [大]), a gesture that seems to suggest an extreme frustration of a man with a large lung like that of Pound. Note, how this radical is tilted slightly to the right against the English text (lines 6 through 11) that is almost diabolically skewed to the left, thus creating a tremendous sense of dynamism and tension. For me, the English text seems to pictograph a human figure (an Atlas) holding up the globe, the sun on his shoulder. The way Pound sculptures the English text here suggests a strong vorticistic impulse.

Here, I am all well aware, some might argue that I am reading too much into the lines, and that I am baking the cake to eat it. Not so. Consider, Pound's own remark about what Brancusi does with his human sculpture:

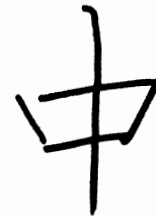
There's no secret about great art, I mean not in one sense. It is great art because the bloke **KNOWS** what he is doing. If sculptor he knows **MORE** about

form than does the next bloke. (Zinnes 307)¹⁶

I think Pound knew exactly what he was doing when he sculptured these lines: "If poet he knows **MORE** about form than does the next bloke" in my opinion. Indeed, as he put it, "Pleasure is derivable not only from the stroking or pushing of the retina by light waves of various colour, **BUT ALSO** by the impact of those waves in certain arranged tracts" (Zinnes 156).

A similar example appears in Canto 76 where the speaker of the poem, after having been exposed to the harsh elements in the DTC ("the ground and the dew" [76/454]), contemplates upon the significance of "the unwobbling pivot Chung []" and "sincerity []." Again, Pound artfully lays out the English text to mirror spatially the ideograms that he attempts to transliterate:


la pigrizia to know the ground and the dew
but to keep 'em three weeks Chung
we doubt it




1

and in government not to lie down on it

the word is made 5

perfect 

better gift can no man makes to a nation
than the sense of Kung fu Tseu
who was called Chung Ni
nor in historiography nor in making anthologies (76/454)¹⁰

Yet, another favorite ideogram of Pound, "Chung []" etymologically suggests an arrow that has pierced the heart of the target. Hence, its meaning "center," "middle," or

the "unwobbling pivot" (Terrell 393). As illustrated above, the unusually large line breaks (quadruple spaces) and scarcity of words in the English text visually echo the ideogram standing next; in particular, Pound imitates the overall funnel shape by deliberately breaking lines 2 and 3 ("we doubt it"). In fact, in Canto 77, Pound similarly pictographs yet another "Chung" in the midst of the English text using a large space. Here, from lines 1 to 4, especially on the right half of the English text, there appears a reversed triangle in the shape of vortex due to Pound's sculpturing. In short, Pound's line breaks help the English text pictograph the funnel of vortex, which appears clearly when we remove the left side of the English text that is not essential for our current purpose:

the ground and the dew

weeks Chung
we doubt it




on it

Similarly, the fourth line ("and in government not to lie down on it") mirrors the long horizontal bar in the next ideogram "Ch'eng [誠]," another important character that Pound uses to sum up his entire Cantos as if to suggest that "he has brought the language into perfection in his book." The right half means "to perfect," "to accomplish," or "to bring focus" (Terrell 393). The fifth line ("the word is made") is isolated far to the right as if to visually echo

the isolated dot of the radical. Pound significantly places the word "perfect" immediately next to the ideogram "language [言]," again as if to suggest that he has brought the language to perfection. Often, this radical is translated to mean "sincerity" (Terrell 393).

Probably one of the more obvious pictographing occurs when Pound incorporates the Chinese ideograms in the text as he does in Canto 77: "know what precedes [先] and what follows [後]" (77/465). In this particular case, Pound uses the two ideograms rather emphatically since the meaning of the ideograms corresponds to what the English text states, literally.

Yet, another excellent example of Pound's pictographing the English text occurs when he incorporates the ideogram "Tan [旦]" in Canto 77:

Bright dawn  on the sht house 1
 next day
 with the shadow of the gibbets attendant

3

(77/466)

Rather obviously, the third line ("with the shadow of the gibbets attendant") visually suggests the horizontal stroke (which literally means the horizon) at the bottom of the radical. Likewise, the first and the second lines visually captures the sun beyond the horizon or above the roof of "the sht house," as Pound yokes this lofty cosmological event to his pathetic ontological circumstance. Taken

as a whole, the gorilla language (the combination of the English text with the Chinese ideogram) operates like a concrete symbol of sort, a linguistic sculpture that is hard, precise, and memorable. In this gorilla language, there exists a strong sense of "mathematical equation," which Pound often speaks of, between the mental state of the poet and the poetic medium he uses: i.e. the equation between the signifier and the signified. In particular, the ideogram of the sun appears as a sort of cubistic or vorticistic rendition: the ideogram captures the "conceptual essentiality" of the sun in sheer four dynamic strokes. So does the horizontal bar.

Another example of Pound's sculpturing happens in Canto 78 when he incorporates "Tao [道]," "the process" or "the Taoist Way" (Terrell 421). This is an important ideogram since, among others, it subject-rhymes with numerous Taoistic remarks, such as "the wind is part of the process," "the rain is part of the process," or "grass nowhere out of place" (74/435).¹⁷

inside a system and measure and gauged to human 1
 inside the nation or system requirements

and canceled in proportion

to what is used and worn out 5

Although the right half of the radical [首] means a human head, Pound, again, seems to recognize it as the brightness or illumination associated with the ideogram



"Ming [明]." In fact, the overwhelming space in the middle of the English text suggests the light source located visually at the core of the pictograph, which no doubt subject-rhymes with "inside a system" (my emphasis 1) and "inside the nation or system" (my emphasis 3). Perhaps, Pound would could have replaced the literal meaning of the human head with "to human / requirements" in lines one and two. Apparently, the lines three, four, and five visually echo the left half of the rascal which literally means "a road." Pound intentionally stretches the last line--"to what is used and worn out"--far to the right as if to suggest the bottom stroke of the left half of the rascal. Again, an abstract concept of an ideal government system "measured and gauged to human requirements in side the nation" is captured in Pound's concrete sculpturing of the English text into a sort of ideogrammatic reflection.

A similar rendition recurs in Canto 80 when Pound transliterates the ideogram "Ch'uan [犬]," a dog (499):

man and dog		1
	on the S. E. horizon	
dent	and we note that dog precedes man in the occi-	3
	as of course in the orient if the bloke in the	
	is proceeding to rightwards (80/499)	5

Of course, taken as a whole, the English text too shows a movement toward the right just as Pound makes a note of a similar movement apparent in the rascal "Chuan [M1650]" (Terrell 434). Again, Pound's painter-like visual-orienta-

tion manifests itself in the fact that he sees a man, "the bloke" [人] in the rascal and regards the dot on the right as the dog when in fact the entire ideogram is based on a figure of a dog holding up one of its front paws. Similarly, he recognizes the horizontal bar with which he is familiar: "on the S.E. horizon." Hence his comment that "dog precedes man in the occident / as of course in the orient." Overall, Pound's deliberate line breaks--two short lines (1 and 2) followed by three lines that become shorter and shorter--mirror the movement of a man and a dog as he sees them.

In Canto 82, Pound does a similar pictographing with the ideogram "Jen [仁]," which means, as he translates, "humanitas" (82/525):

and had more humanitas  jen 1

(Cythera Cythera)
 With Dirce in one bark convey'd
 Be glad poor beaste, love follows after thee
 Till the cricket hops 5
 but does not chirrp in the drill field
 8th day of September
 f f
 d


 g 10
 write the birds in their treble
 scale
 Terreus! Terreus!

 there are no righteous wars in "The Spring and
 Autumn"
 that is, perfectly right on one side or the other 15
 total right on either side of the battle line
 (82/525)

As Terrell perceptively observes in his Companion (vol. 2), "the left component [𠄎] is the character for man [人], when used as one element among others in an ideogram. The top stroke is "heaven," the bottom one "earth." Thus, the man who lives out heaven's process on earth is the perfect man [CON, 22]" (457). In fact, Terrell's perceptive explanation, however, is half right because the right half of the component means "two" although he, as Pound does here, interprets them to be bars, representing the heaven and the earth, respectively. When translated roughly, this ideogram "Jen [仁]," the nut-core of the Confucianism, corresponds to the love (Corinthian) in Christianity and the humanitas in Buddhism. Therefore, contrary to Pound's wishful interpretation, the right component literally means "humaneness between two people" because indeed humanitas is something that happens between people.

Again, this wishful interpretation of the ideogram by Pound yet once more bespeaks to his visual-orientation when perceiving an ideogram. Nonetheless, recognizing the ideogram man [人], Pound deliberately conjoins the two "humanitas" and "Jen [仁]" side-by-side. Of course, the apparently blank space in the text visually echoes the space between the two bars in the right half of the radical. Most important, as Terrell notes, Pound's wishful interpretation --that the two bars suggest the heaven and the earth--becomes clear in his pictographing in lines between 7 and 11.

Here, the movement of the birds not only suggests "their treble scale" but also suggests visually a harmony descending from the higher note (heaven) to the lower one (earth), a leitmotif that repeats itself with variations: "there are no righteous wars in 'The Spring and Autumn'" (13), "that is, perfectly on one side or the other" (15), and "total right on either side of the battle line" (16). The literary allusion to Williams' work The Spring and Autumn further suggests Pound's attempt to marry the ancient Chinese philosophy to that of contemporary philosophy of the poet: ideas in action (from heaven to earth).

Speaking of Williams and his aesthetics of ideas in action, Pound reminiscences about his old buddy at the end of Canto 78. In fact, the hieroglyphic ending of Canto 78 serves as yet another illustration of Pound's gorilla language sculpturing. This particular example is rather interesting since it does not involve any ideogram. Here Pound's obsession to pictograph an object, the thing itself,¹⁸ manifests itself in his pictorial representation of a wheelbarrow as well as the Chinese ideogram "chung []," or the funnel of the vortex:


Tre donne intorno all mia mente	1
but as of conversation to follow,	
boredom of that roman on Olivia's stairs	
in her vision	
that stone angle all of his scenery	5
with the balustrade, an antipodes	
and as for the solidity of the white oxen in all this	
perhaps only Dr Williams (Bill Carlos)	
will understand its importance,	
its benediction. He wd/ have put in the cart.	10

(And the Jaz slidin' down Pike's Peak on a tea tray)
 The shadow of the tent's peak treads on its corner peg
 marking the hour. The moon split, no cloud nearer than
 Lucca.

In the spring and autumn

In "The spring and Autumn" 15

there
 are
 no
 righteous
 wars. (78/483) 20


Pound's sculpturing becomes rather obvious in that the passage, taken as a whole, emerges like the ideogram "Chung [)", arguably one of the most important characters throughout the entire works of The Cantos, appears almost in the shape of "the pine tree in Ise," as the whole layout forms into a shape of a pine. The wheelbarrow portion visually becomes the rugged stem of the pine (that is typically short and sturdy as one often finds them throughout Southeast Asia, particularly near a village well, as in Korea) as suggested by the disorderly word "righteous" that protrudes on both sides.¹⁹


The reader cannot overemphasize the thematic significance of the "wheelbarrow," the ideogram "Chung," and the "pine of Ise" (Canto 4) or "Baucis" (Canto 90), the two trees that grow twined together at Takaso as well as in Baucis. As we are all aware, The Cantos are arguably about the poet's attempt to recapture the center "Chung," "the

the poet's attempt to recapture the center "Chung," "the unwobbling pivot," in himself and in the society²⁰ as well as the Dionysian energy expressed by the intertwined pines that reaches from earth to heaven. The imagistic superimposition of the Williaemesque wheelbarrow, the ideogram "Chung," and "the pine in Ise," therefore, becomes almost like a language-sculpture.

The pictograph symbolizes, for instance, the "ideas in action": the wheelbarrow (the physical) and the ideogram "Chung" (the abstract) in one ("put in the cart"). On the literal level, the idea of no wars occurring in spring and autumn (because these two seasons are for seeding and harvesting, thus, unnatural and unfitting for wars) is safely sustained and contained in the "cart" (wheelbarrow). Hence, the wheelbarrow becomes a true sculpture symbol for ideas in action.

Thus, the visual shape of the lines establishes, however momentarily, a sense of suspended order (the still point) and implies the energy properly channelled. The shaft or the vortex, as suggested by the shape in the pictographing, operates from heaven right down through the center of the earth, a concept summarized in another ideogram: "Sensibility [靈]" (Canto 85, 543). At this point, the metaphor of the pine aptly becomes the great ash tree at Ygdrasail (Cantos 85 and 90), the symbolic tree "whose roots reaches to the center of the earth and whose branches

supports the Heavens: it contains and expresses the universe" (Terrell vol. 2, 540). In short, the ash tree symbolizes the proper channelling of the divine light, branching out throughout the universe, reaching out to the corners of the earth, as the ideogram "Ling [21

The central stroke of the character "Chung [wheels of the wheelbarrow ("wars" i.e. actions) turn.

The great ash tree in Ygdrasail or "the pine of Ise" further accentuates the sense of cosmic harmony or order, a thematic reminder which suggests the union of the yin and yang, "Olivia's vision or the moon" and "the solidity of the white oxen." The three ladies in the persona's mind ("Tre donne intorno all mia mente") could mean the "archetypal triad of feminine deity" of The Cantos: Circe (or Diana), Aphrodite, and Persephone (Terrell 1). As a result of this reunion of both male and female sexual energy, the persona is overwhelmed, thus seeking a Williamsesque cart to "understand its importance" in a more concrete terms. As if to mark such divine moment,²² the persona looks at the "shadow of the tent's peak tread[ing] on its corner peg / marking the hour [the periplum]" in the dead silence of equilibrium:

"The moon split, no cloud nearer than Lucca" (Canto 78, line 14 in the above quotation [p.12]).

The visual pattern of "Chung," "the shaft," "the unwobbling pivot," "cosmic balance [equilibrium]," "the axis," or "the vortex," in fact, recurs throughout the entire Cantos with slight variations in the pattern. Just like the central thematic movement of a fugue,²³ which, with variations, repeats itself over and over throughout the piece, this visual pattern also recurs throughout the Cantos, as I have already demonstrated one such pattern (Canto 76). In short, the ideogram "Chung" seems to me "the connective of the thematic musculature" (Childs 290).²⁴ Among these variations, such as in Canto 94 (641 middle) and Canto 103 (top of 789), the one in Canto 110 (778) is perhaps the most obvious:²⁵

Yellow iris in that river bed	1
yueh	
ming	
mo	
hsien	5
p'eng	
Quercus on Mt Sumeru	
can'st'ou see with the eyes of turquoise?	
heaven earth	
in the center	10
is	
juniper	

As I have abundantly illustrated, Pound pictographs the English text into a sort of an ideogram. Despite the limitations of such an endeavor, the intrinsic difference between English and Chinese, Pound attempts to capture the thing itself. His endeavor demonstrates his dire attempt to

create an almost perfect poetic medium, a gorilla language, one that is perhaps the only expression for the thing it refers to ("le mot juste"), the "unfallen" language, if you will, that has not yet felt "the dissociation of sensibility" (Eliot 64).²⁶ This absolute language perhaps is like the Platonic "forma" of language; therefore, as Sara Edith has pointed out, this language is neither Chinese nor English but "a memorable voice extremely Poundian."

Finally, we must ask ourselves the inevitable question: Why does Pound pictograph so heavily in the Pisan Cantos? Among many possibilities, I can only speculate. When one experiences harsh physical confinement, as Pound did in the DTC,²⁷ his sensibility becomes ultra sensitive: Pound even observes, for instance, the minutest details of an insect's movement illustrated throughout the Pisan Cantos, his condition having been almost merged with the harsh environment he was experiencing. His language shows just such an identification with the thing itself, the referent, the nature.

Conclusion

As I have illustrated, Pound consciously creates a gorilla language through his careful pictographing technique in the Pisan Cantos. What ultimately does it prove? On the one hand, his gorilla language proves that he wanted to create a Chinese ideogram-like poetic medium to compose his

magnum opus. He pushed the English language he employs to the limit, forcing it to function almost like the Chinese ideogram, precise, concrete, and hard. In particular, considering his unfortunate ontological circumstances in D.T.C., a gorilla language fits better than an inexact English language that has lost its currency for the description of the raw condition he was forced into.

On the other hand, Pound's fragmented gorilla language reflects in a larger context--the Paideuma of the twentieth century. More specifically, it reaches as far back to the aesthetics of Cubism, which many rightly call the Renaissance of the twentieth century. In particular, Pound, too, just like many other Modernists, attempts to freeze and arrest the time in his temporal art, a task heretofore thought impossible. Pound's odd line breaks not only visually and pictorially mirror the contour of the Chinese ideograms standing next to the English text but they also slow down time.

Therefore, everything that happens in the Pisan Cantos, one might argue convincingly, happens to the poet in one big, sustained moment, a frozen moment in which Pound experiences not only the Hell itself but also the paradiso spizzato. As a painter would have done, Pound renders his painting of the Pisan Cantos on his canvas of pages, sustaining time and space in the air, so that the viewer can appreciate his work as if it were a Picassoian cubistic

rendition of the Purgatorio.

Interestingly, Pound's own evaluation of the American painter Whistler seems to best describe his own achievement, a statement which serves as an adequate conclusion to this thesis:

For the benefit of the reader who has not seen this exhibition I may as well say that it contains not the expected array of "Nocturnes," but work in many styles, pastels of Greek motif, one pre-Raphaelite picture, and work after the Spanish, the northern and the Japanese models, and some earlier things. . . . The man's struggle was set before one. He had tried all means, he had spared himself nothing, he had struggled in one direction until he had either achieved or found it inadequate for his expression. After he had achieved a thing, he never repeated. There were many struggles for the ultimate nocturnes. I say all this badly. But here was a man come from us. Within him were drawback and hindrances at which no European can more than guess. . . . Whistler's comprehension and reticence would never have permitted any but the more austere discussion of their technique; of their painting as painting. And this technique is the only field of the art critic. It is the only phase of a work of art about which

there can be any discussion. The rest you see, or you do not see. It is the painter's own private knowledge which he shares with you, if you understand it. What Whistler has proved once and for all, is that being born an American does not eternally damn a man or prevent him from the ultimate and highest achievement in the arts. And no man before him had proved this. And he proved it over many a hindrance and over many baffled attempts. He is, with Abraham Lincoln, the beginning of our Great Tradition. (Zinnes 2)

Afterword

Pound's gorilla language, the sculpturing of English texts into an ideogram-like medium, a technique that started initially and largely in the Pisan Cantos, becomes a dominant feature in the Rock-Drill Cantos. In fact, Pound incorporates a larger number of ideograms in this later section as compared to the Pisan Cantos. Furthermore, it is my impression that the English texts in the Rock-Drill Cantos are arguably more concise and harder than those in the Pisan Cantos: Pound raises his gorilla language up yet on another dimension, a higher plateau. Overall, there exists a tendency towards the beauty of simplicity, as if Pound were trying to compose a single musical score that sums up his entire life, as we progress from the Rock-Drill Cantos and on:

That her acts
 Olga's acts
 of beauty
 be remembered.

Her name was Courage
 & is written Olga

These lines are for the
 ultimate **CANTO**

whatever I may write
 in the interim. (Fragment/815)

As evident in the citation, Pound seems to conjoin every form of art--such as visual and sculptural (note the dynamic curve moving forward), literal (the assonance and consonance), and musical (the allusion to Olga, the musician, who

appears like a musical note on a scale, perhaps)--into one pure form. In fact, if Pound had to compose a single poem about his entire life, what else could have been more appropriate than this fragment? This type of poetry is indeed "pure poetry" in which "the inner world of a poem was increasingly confined to that of a single, intensely felt perception, to a moment of absolute insight or emotion crystalized into a timeless pattern" (Bernstein 6-7). It will be another interesting study to examine how successfully Pound's new poetic form and technique embodies and facilitates the overall theme of the Rock-Drill Cantos.

Most important, in the Rock-Drill Cantos, Pound not only sculpts with the Chinese ideograms but also with the English text (86/568), using pictures of poker cards (88/589) and hieroglyphics (93/623, 626-7, and 631, to name a few). Simply put, Pound seems be more confident than ever in his language-sculpting: he wants to experiment with other pictures and picture-languages beyond the Chinese ideogram.

Using the artifacts of other cultures, the hieroglyph and the cards, elements embedded in language and consciousness, Pound forges a poetics ringing from his own dictum "to make it new." And through his language-sculpting, Pound brings a sense of unity among these sundry tongues of the world, a concept that fits his poetic vision: the world history as "the tale of a tribe" (GK 194) or the one global

community under the new world order.

Notes

1. All parenthetical citations indicate the Canto number and the page where it appears in The Cantos of Ezra Pound (New York: New Directions, 1986).
2. "Collected Prose" Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts Ed. Harriet Zinnes. New York: New Directions, 1980, p. 305.
3. MacLeish, Archiblad. "Poetry and Opinion." A Case on Ezra Pound. New York: Cornwall P, 1959.
4. "Brancusi and Human Sculpture." Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts. Ed. Harriet Zinnes. New York: New Directions, 1980.
5. Yao-hsin Chang, for example, argues that Pound's "obsession with his imperfect analysis of Chinese written characters made his translation of the Confucian 'Four Books' a failure" although Chang willingly acknowledges that "the whole Confucian ethical concept, with its emphasis on order, virtuous princely leadership, and even distribution of wealth a feature of which is slight taxation, served as the unifying theme of the Cantos" ("Chinese Influence in Emerson, Thoreau, and Pound." DAI. 46.05A [1985]: 1270).
6. I personally find R. H. Mathews' Chinese-English Dictionary (Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Pres, 1931) very unreliable, especially in the area of etymology; although it provides rough explanation of individual components, it is hard to figure out which component in the ideogram is being referred to, not to mention that the discussion of the interrelationship between the component and the following explanation is disjointed.
7. At Pisa, as John L. Steele points out, Pound had The Chinese Classics in his possession although he did not have a Chinese dictionary ("Ez at the DTC: A Correspondence Between Carroll F. Terrell and John L. Steele." Paideuma 12.2-3 (1983): 293.
8. from New York Herald Tribune Weekly Bk R. p. 7 Ag 22 '48 550w
9. This citation and all the following textual citations are from The Cantos of Ezra Pound (New York: New Directions, 1986).
10. According to Richard St. Victor, Pound writes (Guide to Kulchure 77), "there are three modes of thought, cogitation, meditation, and contemplation. In the first the mind flits

aimlessly about the object [Hell], in the second it circles about in a methodical manner [Purgatory], in the third it is unified with the object [Paradise]" (A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound 471).

11. In order to accentuate the visual layout Pound renders, I place four spaces, instead of the conventional two, between the text and the block quotation.

12. In fact, in his pioneering books A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound (II) (Berkeley and London: National Poetry Foundation, 1984), Carroll F. Terrell also explains the ideogram as such:

Hsien [M2692]: "display, be illustrious." Pound uses as "tensile light descending" and relates it to the Ming ideogram [M4534]: "The sun and moon, the total light process . . . hence, the intelligence. . . . (367)

13. According to Dasenbrock, this dynamism of forms in Vorticism originates from Cubism (form) and Futurism (dynamism), respectively (38).

14. A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound. vol. 2. Berkeley: California UP, 1984. 367. Item 88.

15. Elsewhere, Pound translates this radical as "sun's silk" (91/612).

16. "Brancusi and Human Sculpture" Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts. Ed. Harriet Zinnes. New York: New Directions, 1980, p. 307.

17. In fact, Pound's attitude toward the harmonious process manifested in the operation of nature makes me often question and reconsider his passing negative remarks on the Taoist's philosophy and Taoists, a topic that deserves perhaps another treaty.

18. In the sense of William Carlos Williams' esthetics: "no ideas but in things."

19. This disorderliness also suggests the "whirling motion" in a vortex.

20. John Steven Childs similarly points out the thematic importance of "center" in Cantos (Paideuma 9.2 [1980]: 290).

21. Pound's earlier poem "The Tree," similarly, expresses an identical divine experience in which the speaker of the poem sees a tree "that grew elm-oak amid the wold":

I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
 Knowing the truth of things unseen before;
 Of Daphne and the laurel bough
 And that god-feasting couple old
 That grew elm-oak amid the wold.
 'Twas not until the gods had been
 Kindly entreated, and been brought within
 Unto the hearth of their heart's home
 That they might do this wonder thing;
 Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood
 And many a new thing understood
 That was rank folly to my head before.

22. Helen. M. Dennis similarly argues that:

Pound saw the deities not as fixed, distinct personalities, but as crystallized visions or manifestations of states of mind or emotion, which are continuously 'in flux.' The gods are part of the process of the interaction between human nature and the natural world; they manifest themselves differently on each specific occasion. The form in which any divinity is made manifest will differ from person to person, and will even vary at different times in the religious life of any one individual.
 (274)

23. John Steven Childs point out that The Cantos orchestrates "like the later quartets of Mozart" (291). Kay Davis also discusses the analogy between fugue and The Cantos ("Fugue and Canto LXIII." Paideuma 11.3 [1982]: 15-38.

24. John Steven Childs contends that "like the thematic center, the ideogram [here, in general] is made up of recurrent meaning; in fact, themes themselves are frequently distilled into ideogrammatic expression during the progress of The Cantos" (290).

25. Since the visual shape of this quotation is too obvious, I skip any redundant explication here.

26. "Twentieth-century literature, in fact, is a history of the recognition that language and culture exist as two vast world while always remaining distinct from it. All literature is by in its very nature 'phatic' expression; a complex of messages which in part point only to themselves" (Childs 293).

27. Fuller E. Torrey, in his Pound biography The Roots of Treason: Ezra Pound and The Secret of St. Elizabeths (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984), offers an in-depth look at Pound's real life starting from 1885 (Philadelphia) till 1972 (Ven-

ice). Focusing upon the capital punishment Pound surely felt as his destiny, the chapter "The Gorilla Cage (Pisa: 1945)" objectively examines what went on in Pound's mind in the tumultuous years after the war.

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