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TRANSCENDENT REALITIES: THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN THE  
MODERNISMS OF YEATS, JOYCE, AND POUND

A dissertation submitted in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

to the faculty of the department of

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at

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by

David A. Price

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Dr. Stephen Sicari

## ABSTRACT

### TRANSCENDENT REALITIES: THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN THE MODERNISMS OF YEATS, JOYCE, AND POUND

David A. Price

This dissertation examines the binary of transcendence and immanence in the poetry of W. B. Yeats, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, and James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Utilizing a theoretical lens provided primarily through the writings of Jacques Derrida and an historical context established by Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, the paper argues that the literary texts of Yeats, Pound, and Joyce deconstruct a Western cultural history of a transcendent-immanent binary and seek to revive elements of the transcendent as a cure to the consequences of the dominant materialist-immanent worldview of Enlightenment modernity. This paper relies on the distinction between twentieth century literary modernism and modernity, seeing literary modernism as an avant-garde movement that experiments with style and a more responsive, adaptable, de-centered, view that is suspicious of the stratified, hierarchical, mechanistic view of modernity, a view of human life which can lead to a flattened and oppressive view of reality and the universe. Modernity, beginning around 1500 according to Taylor, in its emphasis on rationality and the empirical, and its de-emphasis on belief in the spiritual or enchanted, has had a negative effect, a sense that something is missing in twentieth century views of life that these works seek to address. Ultimately, these works produce moments of the transcendent in their fragmented twentieth century view of the world that do not coalesce into a stratified view but allow for the incorporation of elements of both the immanent and transcendent.

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## Introduction: Searching for the Transcendent

By most accounts, the first half of the twentieth century in most of the world, and certainly in the West, was a time of great change and social upheaval. Even before the Great Depression and the tragic events of two world wars, there was a sense in America and Europe that the world was fundamentally different. This awareness of historical change becomes a defining aspect of literary modernism. Prior to 1900, W. B. Yeats awaited and attached a supernatural significance to the new millennium (Foster, *The Apprentice Mage* 162). Thereafter, he mythologized its significance in conjunction with the advent of literary modernism in an introduction to the *Oxford Book of Verse* where he cited 1900 as the “defeat” of Victorianism (Sheils 4). The first chapters of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, set on June 16, 1904 sent by Ezra Pound for publication in 1918, were heralded by Margaret Anderson at the *Little Review* as a “key moment” in the “history of modern literature” (Bowker 242). Virginia Woolf, whom I do not cover in this paper, but who is considered an important figure in literary modernism, famously stated that “in or about December, 1910, human character changed” (2). Ezra Pound, perhaps the most integral shaper of literary modernism, begins writing the modern epic, *The Cantos*, around 1915, having had the initial idea somewhere around 1909 (Albright 59). My point here is not to exhaustively define literary modernism, so much as to show that the idea of modernism was rooted in the idea that it was borne out of a newness in the age, and as such, was a response to what came before.

What came before could be labeled modernity, but literary modernism could also lay claim to a modern perspective, so what I will discuss now is how literary modernism responds to and differentiates from the concept of modernity. In using

the broad definition of the term modernity, I am referring to the Post-Enlightenment Western world that saw the advance of science, the preponderance of teleological views of progress, the privileging of Reason, the development of industrial-capitalist nations, and the move towards an empirical view of the universe over a spiritual one. Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age*, whom I will discuss in detail, places this beginning of modernity around 1500. The hallmarks of modernity still define the society and culture we live in today, but beginning in the twentieth century, the dominance of those features was seriously questioned and confronted, causing a change in how Western society views modernity. Some may argue that we live in a Postmodern culture and society now, and while that is not the specific topic of this paper, I will argue that it is evidence of the ambiguous nature of how we define the current age. Western society is both aware of it still being in a modern world while seeing things differently from the modernity that began around 1500. Literary modernism, which helped to foster the Postmodern view, is a reason for that change in view.

In the twentieth century there was a sense that the hallmarks of modernity had fallen short of their promise, their newness had become stale. As Stephen Sicari notes in *Modernist Humanism and the Men of 1914*, “Modernism is an artistic response to the negative effects of modernity” (8). To help define this dichotomy I will briefly summarize Sicari’s work from that text. Sicari discusses how modernity came to be conflated with modernism in the work of many twentieth century philosophers, but more recently it has been noted that literary modernism was, for the most part, antithetical to the values and worldview of modernity (8-9). Modernity in this view is the Cartesian/Galilean view of the world that focuses on rationality and progress. David Harvey notes that the promise of this kind of



Enlightenment thinking “promised liberation from the irrationalities of myth, religion, superstition, release from the arbitrary use of power as well as from the dark side of our own human natures” (qtd. from Sicari, 9). The danger of this modernity, according to Sicari, is that its valuation of rationality and universality can disconnect from humanity and lead to domination and the horrors of systematically organized oppression. Sicari also discusses an alternative to this kind of Enlightenment modernity in the early humanist modernity of Renaissance writers and thinkers of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries that was more open to thinking about what it means to be human and skeptical of rationality.

While I understand Sicari’s argument as it relates to issues associated specifically with Enlightenment rationality, in my view it still struggles with the immanent-transcendent binary with its focus on what it means to be human. The Christian aspect of this view for me is one of the many vestiges of the past that provide some transcendent meaning but are still part of a pre-modern view. I don’t see it as any more significant than the other transcendent views that the modernist texts of my paper incorporate through paganism, Greek mythology, Romantic idealism and spirituality, or a transcendent view of art. These transcendent modes allow for a disruption to the dominance of the empirical view of modernity, but their commitment to a worldview that is no longer fully possible in the modern age means they also are limited in what they can offer. To further explain why, I will now turn to Charles Taylor’s views in *A Secular Age*.

The Enlightenment view of modernity is the one that coincides with Charles Taylor’s *A Secular Age*, in which he argues that Western society has moved from an enchanted age to a secular one and this has had profound implications for meaning and worldviews in modern society. Around 1500, according to Taylor, advances in

science and reason moved society from an enchanted one to a “disenchanted” one, stating that “our present spiritual predicament ... is historical, ... our understanding of ourselves and where we stand is partly defined by our sense of having come to where we are, of having overcome a previous condition. Thus, we are widely aware of living in a ‘disenchanted’ universe; and our use of this word bespeaks our sense that it was once enchanted” (28). It is in this context that I will be looking at the role of transcendence in an increasingly secularized modern world. It is my contention that modernism’s seeking of meaning, reaction to and use of the past is directly connected to this “Secular Age” issue. The sense of “disenchantment” felt in modernism is connected to this “Secular Age” disenchantment.

The prevailing idea of literary modernism was that, with experimentation and the exploration of a higher meaning entailed by rationality and empiricism, things could be made new again. Literary modernism then encapsulates both this critique and this sense of hope. The major issue I will explore is one that relies on this sense of history, this sense of searching for meaning. For this reason, these definitions of epochs and movements will be important to my paper, but I will be looking at an issue that can be traced back into classical times, and I see as a central issue in the modernisms of W. B. Yeats, James Joyce, and Ezra Pound. My dissertation will focus on a selection of Yeats’s poems from 1904-1939, Joyce’s *Ulysses*, and sections of Pound’s *Cantos* dealing with the transcendent. The issue I want to focus on is the issue of transcendence, but to do so brings up a host of issues, two of which will be central to my dissertation concerning the cultural history of the concept. The first issue is the concept of transcendence itself. And the second issue is why transcendence is an issue for these writers to begin with, which I’ve already

hinted at, has to do with the need for a sense of hope and meaning in the twentieth century.

In explaining the first issue I will also explain my rationale for utilizing some concepts of Jacques Derrida in this paper. Derrida, in his analysis of language and writing, traces a history of Western epistemology, ontology, and metaphysics; or more simply, a history of philosophical meaning. Of particular importance for me are several concepts. The first being that “*the history of (the only) metaphysics...* not only from Plato to Hegel (even including Leibniz) but also beyond these apparent limits, from the pre-Socratics to Heidegger, always assigned the origin of truth in general to the logos” (*Of Grammatology* 3). Second, the gap between the signified and the sign and the traces of meaning caused by this gap that result in the play of meaning: “there is not a single signified that escapes, even if recaptured, the play of signifying references that constitute language” (*Of Grammatology* 7). Thirdly, the binary structure of Western thought and the concept of “deconstruction.” Most of Derrida’s philosophy rests on these premises, but I find this statement from *Positions* particularly useful: “...in a classical philosophical opposition we are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a *vis-à-vis*, but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of the two terms governs the other (axiologically, logically, etc.), or has the upper hand. To deconstruct the opposition, first of all, is to overturn the hierarchy at a given moment” (41). This is important because it reveals how I will be looking specifically at the transcendent/immanent binary and its deconstruction in these texts.

Derrida is clear about the system of meaning that occurs simultaneously within a text, a field, etc., but also that the larger system of meaning that informs these texts/fields is the cultural philosophical history of Western society. This is, in

some ways, disruptive because of these gaps and traces of meaning, but Derrida makes it clear that there is a paradox; one cannot escape this system of meaning. This also where it can get confusing for my purposes because he is also discussing the role of the transcendent signified. Here is where Derrida's philosophy is one of immanence as he sees the idea of transcendence, while a part of idealism, not possible in the classic sense of those concepts because they are part of the immanent system of meaning that is Western philosophy, part of the material sensory world. This is, I think, Derrida's largest issue and why he thinks there is a need for deconstruction or "grammatology," but it's difficult to escape the origin of meaning that is tied to the logocentric philosophy and language. Derrida's point about the relationship between interiority and exteriority along the concept of *différance* helps to show why this escape is difficult. The project of philosophy and the hermeneutics of finding meaning in textuality is a project of circular reasoning where meaning, essentially the same meaning, is both inside and outside the text, but its momentary alienation of being outside the text makes it appear as though it is being revealed in the text from a higher transcendent source that was at first unfamiliar until it was revealed in the text. For example, from *Writing and Difference*, "the notion of an Idea or 'interior design' as simply anterior to a work which would supposedly be the expression of it, is a prejudice: a prejudice of the traditional criticism called idealist" (11).

Derrida similarly applies this thinking to wider system of philosophy: "All that functions as metaphor in these discourses confirms the privilege of the logos and founds the 'literal' meaning then given to writing: a sign signifying a signifier itself signifying an eternal verity, eternally thought and spoken in the proximity of a present logos" (*Of Grammatology* 15). The implication, then, is that the

transcendent is simultaneously far off and hidden and must be brought out into the world. But Derrida is saying that the Western concept of transcendence isn't some ontological dimension separate from the immanent world where this transcendent exists, but rather it exists in a system of meaning constructed by Western philosophical language. This shouldn't be confused, though, with the idea that God or a "Transcendent"\* realm beyond the immanent doesn't exist or can't have any influence on meaning, only that the use of the concept of transcendence in the Western cultural system of meaning is tied to the immanent logos. In a simplified view, God or an actual transcendent, is an ultimate other, unable to be incorporated into an immanent systematic view of meaning. In this view, while we have some experiences and some effect of the transcendent, we do not have access to its intelligibility or the ability to incorporate it into meaning logically; in this way it is closed off. (There is a connection in this concept with Taylor's view of the limit experience which I will explain shortly.)

In my analysis I want to show how these works tap into the cultural context of the Western metaphysics concept of the transcendent and how they (because of the issues outlined above) contend with the ambiguities, gaps, traces, *différences*, of the word/concept of transcendence and its binary of immanence. While I have used a capital "T" "Transcendent" above to differentiate from the Western metaphysical concept of transcendence and the possibility of a real "Transcendent" realm that the immanent world does not have access to, for the rest of the paper I will only be using the lowercase "transcendent" to indicate both meanings, the Western metaphysical concept and the other "Transcendent." I do this because, although the concept is burdened by its immanence, I believe that the trace of its otherness as a possible "Transcendent" is contained in the word. Additionally, this double meaning is

possible as a feature of literary texts and figurative language, as opposed to a philosophical text that relies on the history and logic of philosophy. At the risk of confusing things, I will also want to distinguish these two definitions with a third meaning, the most immanent version of the transcendent. This is of course the common meaning of the word as the OED defines it: “The action or fact of transcending, surmounting, or rising above; ascent, elevation (*obs.*); excelling, surpassing; also, the condition or quality of being transcendent, surpassing eminence or excellence.” This definition refers to things that go beyond any kind of average or ordinary accomplishment or event, and often associated with things that go beyond the particularities of time and place. The connection to the transcendence that I’m referring to in that concept of transcendence goes beyond the time and place of ordinary reality. The difference, of course, being that this dictionary definition refers to things that remain in the immanent world. While I’m more concerned with the metaphysical concept of transcendence, this immanent dictionary definition becomes relevant because one of the consequences of modernity is that the very concept of transcendence becomes flattened and disenchanted, to use the language of Charles Taylor, and thus more immanent. There are traces of metaphysical transcendence in Ezra Pound’s *Cantos*, but ultimately, even in these connections to a metaphysical transcendence through paradisaical or utopian themes, Pound’s *Cantos* remain immanent. Yeats’s poetry and Joyce’s *Ulysses* are a bit more complicated on this, but more connected to the possibility of the metaphysical transcendent, and therefore, that metaphysical transcendent concept applies more.

The way I will be incorporating the concept of deconstruction is in its cultural binary in the West. I will be partly explaining and showing how these texts reveal the ambiguities and contradictions of the binary, and how the terms themselves

shift in their dominant position. Additionally, the fragmentation and experimentation in style is a feature of modernism that reflects this instability and search for meaning. Some of the critical works reflect this deconstruction of the transcendent-immanent, just not explicitly, because deconstruction, due to the slipperiness of language and its dependence on context for meaning, happens culturally and in all texts. For example, many of the critical texts on Pound reveal both an immanent viewpoint and a transcendent one. Stephen Sicari's theory of Humanism differs from the Exclusive Humanism of an immanent perspective that Charles Taylor outlines. This may differ from the way that deconstruction has been used in literary criticism to show the contradictions and the breakdown of logic and binaries within texts themselves. To some degree, I will be doing this, but there is no real method to deconstruction as it is more about the slipperiness of language and the instability of meaning constructed by systems. My method in this paper is more about how these texts contribute to the deconstruction of the transcendent/immanent binary present in Western culture through their attempts to incorporate both in their texts. We see how these definitions and categories begin to fall apart and reveal inconsistencies and ambiguities in the terms. I will examine the way in which transcendent tropes present new possibilities for meaning in areas of empirical reality by revealing the way in which these tropes interpolate and deconstruct narrative's reliance on material logic. Deconstruction does not negate the transcendent tropes, nor nullify their meaning, but makes an open space for the possibility of an immanent-transcendence. My theory is that this deconstructive approach is also commensurate with the fragmentary style of these authors' modernist visions that are skeptical of totalizing teleological narratives, and the duality of a Modern Western immanent reality that denies transcendence.

Hegel and Marx have a significant influence on my understanding of the immanent-transcendent, and more importantly, a philosophical and cultural legacy that has shaped the binary. The rise of science and empiricism during the Enlightenment gave way to social sciences, so that, society, in trying to find meaning, still maintains the scientific-empirical in every facet of understanding the world. This immanent worldview is also seen in the political realm since it is characterized by the machinations and power structures that govern human affairs and society. History is a bit more complex and can be viewed from a transcendent perspective, but I also include it in the immanent domain because it takes place in the material world of time and place. History is material in the work of Hegel and Marx, and thus belongs to the immanent domain predominantly.

Conversely, Hegel also makes absolute the force of Reason which brings the Enlightenment to the level of transcendence and idealism. This is really a tricky spot, but if we look to Derrida I think we can see that his critique shows the problem with Hegel's elevation of Reason to the transcendent level. There is some precedent here in philosophy being committed to reason and idealism in the Classical Greek and Apollonian traditions. I see "Reason" as part of the rationality aspect of the scientific worldview, but, in philosophy, reason becomes elevated to Reason, the supremacy of the mind, and its connection to the metaphysical and the transcendent; in a word, idealism. And this is what's really important for my purposes in this dissertation. There is a history in philosophy of associating meaning and reality with an ideal realm which is transcendent and given epistemological access to humanity through the human mind. Hegel wants to rescue the immanent world from its empirical fatalism and does so by separating these worlds, indicating history as material, but elevating Reason to spirituality, the



transcendent, and the absolute, and having it overcome the material, to reach consciousness.

Marx picks up on this language and reverses the dialectic, placing reason, rationality, and materiality, in my view, in its proper immanent sphere, and instead of elevating Reason to the level of spirit and idealism, brings the mind into the material world where ideology is the result of the material. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society — the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. (Marx xi-xii)

This perspective, along with Derrida's, is ultimately why I'm making a distinction between reason and rationality in the immanent sphere and idealism in the transcendent, despite Hegel's elevation of reason to idealism.

The second question of transcendence is why these authors are concerned with transcendence, and for this, I turn to Charles Taylor primarily, but first we see the difficulty of defining transcendence in Taylor as well. He finds the term

problematic and is purposely general: “a word like ‘transcendent’ is very slippery—partly because...these distinctions have been reconstructed or redefined in the very process of modernity and secularization” (15). Taylor mainly defines the word in terms of this historical change and its binary of immanence when he states, “We have moved from a world in which the place of fullness was understood as unproblematically outside of or ‘beyond’ human life, to a conflicted age in which this construal is challenged by others which place it (in a wide range of different ways) ‘within’ human life” (15). This is the closest Taylor comes to defining transcendence, that which is beyond humanity, beyond the natural world. The move away from God also plays a role in this shift: “a shift in the understanding of what I called ‘fullness’, between a condition in which our highest spiritual and moral aspirations point us inescapably to God, one might say, make no sense without God, to one in which they can be related to a host of different sources, and frequently are referred to sources which deny God,” (26). This leads to an association of the transcendent with “fullness” and God, and with immanence we associate explanations for meaning and reality that are either agnostic or atheist.

As I stated previously, Taylor argues that after the Enlightenment, we are living in a disenchanted age. In my view, this results in an increasing influence of the immanent, this lack of the transcendent, or the transcendent made immanent. While I’m seeing this as deconstructing the binary, I also want to note the increase of the immanent and the effect of immanence on society. Taylor identifies “three forms which the malaise of immanence may take: (1) the sense of the fragility of meaning, the search for an over-arching significance; (2) the felt flatness of our attempts to solemnize the crucial moments of passage in our lives; and (3) the utter flatness, emptiness of the ordinary” (309). I think it’s important to note these forms

because they provide a basis for how the immanent worldview can be seen in the texts of this paper. While the texts are primarily associated with the immanent, at times, I think they will show how the effects of immanence influence their concept of the transcendent, and their searching and need for a transcendence that has been othered in this context.

Along that same rationale is the concept of a limit experiences and its relationship to “fullness.” Taylor describes two major modes of difference between the age of secularity and its predecessor. The first being that “all pre-modern society was in some way connected to, based on, guaranteed by some faith in, or adherence to God, or some notion of ultimate reality, the modern Western state is free from this connection” (1). This, according to Taylor, has caused public spaces to be “emptied of God, or of any reference to ultimate reality” (49). In the “second meaning, secularity consists in the falling off of religious belief and practice, in people turning away from God, and no longer going to Church” (58). Taylor then describes what he terms experiences of fullness and what that means in terms of belief, not just “theories or sets of beliefs subscribed to” (136). Fullness is an important concept for Taylor and one that may point to the transcendent. Fullness is a sense of meaning and purpose in our lives. One may experience it as a “limit experience” whereby one has the sense that there is something more, something other that cannot fit into worldly experience. “In this case, the sense of fullness came in an experience which unsettles and breaks through our ordinary sense of being in the world, with its familiar objects, activities and points of reference. These may be moments, as Peter Berger puts it, describing the work of Robert Musil, when ‘ordinary reality’ is ‘abolished’ and something terrifyingly other shines through’, a state of consciousness which

Musil describes as ‘der andere Zustand’ (the other condition)” (110-13). This “other condition” is one that I will be exploring as it ties into Derrida as well.

This lack of purpose and alignment corresponds to Taylor’s next point, that this other experience or experience of fullness can also produce the opposite effect, one of “distance,” “absence,” “exile,” “or worse, the condition often described in the tradition as melancholy, ennui (the ‘spleen’ of Baudelaire)” (122). The works of these authors elicits a similar feeling and effect that could be, in my opinion, attributed to an understanding of the need for Taylor’s concept of fullness, more aptly, the sense that fullness is lost. It could take on the form of a kind of forgetting of fullness, of its possibility, “but the misery of absence, of loss, is still there, indeed, it is in some ways even more acute” (123-4). There exists in the work of all three authors this sense of loss, of seeking for something gone that was present in the past. Taylor states that this could also take the form of exile (124), a relevant motif for Pound and Joyce. While Taylor outlines a history of modernity in terms of its secularism and its effect on meaning, he is also hitting on some of the consequences of the immanent becoming dominant over the transcendent. And this is a major part of my focus. The transcendent/immanent is a major area of concern, partly because of the cultural history, but also because there is a crisis of meaning that modernism addresses in its exploration of the dominance of the immanent over the transcendent in the “secular age” or modernity. So, another major aspect of this paper is showing how these texts explore this binary in the context of modernity and the effects outlined by Taylor.

### **The immanent influence on modernist texts**

So far, I have outlined the reasoning for my deconstructive approach and the cultural history of the immanent-transcendent binary, defined the term and cultural

history of the transcendent, explained why the modernists would be concerned with the transcendent, and outlined Taylor's effects of the immanent/secular worldview. As I've noted, Taylor has already hinted at some possible constructions of meaning used to fulfill the absence of the transcendent in modernity, but now I will explain how I view the immanent's role in the modernist texts of this dissertation.

While I don't want to dismiss the idea of God as being an option in the immanent world, I've already covered this with Taylor. What I want to emphasize now is the attention paid to materiality in modernity and its importance to these texts. I will show that there is value in this influence, but also that in the immanent sphere, there are markers of the transcendent. The influence of the transcendent in modern immanent meaning is also suggested by Taylor and M. H. Abrams.

The first influence of the immanent in these texts is the material influence on content and theme. By this, I mean material broadly in the Marxist sense, or in the sense of the movement in Enlightenment thinking towards the empirical. The science of modernity being dominated by Newtonian physics also favors seeing the world and reality as mechanical, physical, and within a system of observable and dependable laws of nature. This coincides with the Industrial Revolution, which not only put these material and mechanical laws into practice, but affirmed the philosophy as well. Politics, economics, and, to a degree, history become a major part of the immanent worldview portrayed in the texts of this paper. Taylor traces some of the sources of this through Kant and naturalistic theories. The naturalistic theories also make use of reason, but do so, while throwing out Kantian freedom and autonomy, i.e. Copernicus, Darwin, Freud (169). This is not to say that one can simply remove oneself from these immanent issues, but rather they are in a Marxist sense, material. We see this worldview most explicitly in literary naturalism. One

major criticism of modernism was that it was too focused on the aesthetic and a similar criticism has been lodged at new critics who saw works of art as autonomous. I don't wish to affirm this view. In fact, I'm saying that modernism does greatly concern itself explicitly with these issues that are immanent because they are concerned with an empirical, scientific, or material explanation of meaning and/or reality. Pre-modern literature on the other hand, although certainly influenced by materiality, was often directed towards the transcendent as a fundamental aspect of literary purpose and the pre-modern worldview. Literary subjects and themes were, as a matter of course, the divine and the enchanted. While there was certainly a political and social dimension to many of these works, their worldview included a sense of transcendent as an explanation for ultimate reality.

Another way the world becomes more immanent in regards to meaning, is in looking to nature as a source of spirituality, as in American Transcendentalism and British Romanticism. Taylor sees this as denial of the transcendent because, according to Taylor, "They are to be found in Nature, or in our own inner depth, or both" (174). The rejection of transcendence also finds its way into modernism through this Romantic strand of "naturalism," another level of tension in looking for meaning in a secular age. M.H. Abrams also notes how the Romantics applied this Judeo-Christian transcendent spirituality to the material world and secularized this hope for the beyond. While I agree that this is more immanent when compared to metaphysical transcendence, the purpose of this meaning is an alternative to cold mechanical empiricism and industrialism of the nineteenth century world. Its purpose is to find some higher purpose and spirituality in humanity and nature. This connection is most definitely transcendent in this respect and is one way that we see the transcendent and immanent binary being deconstructed. It will be

something that Joyce, Yeats, and Pound all contend with and are influenced by in their search and construction of meaning.

This desire for meaning that comes out of the age of modernity, and is directly related to my exploration of modernism, is the idea of unity and narratives of progression. Taylor sees the Romantic period narratives of Hegel, Holderlin, and then Marx, as combining “both forward and backward looking models... to recover the beautiful unity of the Greeks, which the progress of Christian society had disrupted, but which could be regained as part of a higher synthesis” (315). “They saw an original unity, followed by a division which sets its two terms in opposition: reason versus feeling, humans versus nature, etc. This in turn allowed for a recovered, more complex and richer unity, which resolved the opposition while preserving the terms” (315). This becomes extremely important to my discussion of Derrida and deconstruction, and ultimately my discussion of these modernist authors as it is the narrative framework that modernism operates out of in the search for meaning. A major part of modernism’s experimentation is a deconstruction of these narratives of progress and meaning in the dialectical movement. Derrida’s theoretical model is largely based on a critique of the Western philosophical system of metaphysics that Taylor is citing here.

While these teleological narratives provide a narrative framework for the immanent-transcendent, the authors in this dissertation look even more deeply into the past and into more alternative spiritual religions and myths. This also has a precedence in Romanticism, and in many ways is a reflection of the immanent. The connection to Greek mythology is an obvious one, as it has had a profound effect on Western literature for centuries. The British Romantics, however, brought it to the forefront of meaning as an alternative to Judeo-Christianity and Enlightenment

rationalism. It is this in this way that modernism utilizes it as well. Joyce utilizes the Greek influence explicitly in framing his novel through Homer's *Odyssey*, but also bringing a "mythic" method to the forefront as a new way of showing revelatory meaning. Yeats and Pound are influenced by Greek myth as well, but their connection to the paganism and the occult runs even deeper. A large aspect of my chapters on Yeats and Pound will deal with their use of paganism and the occult, and how this pagan-occultism reflects elements of the immanent and the transcendent.

Paganism and nature are two areas embraced by the British Romantics and the modernist authors of my dissertation as an antidote to the empirical flattening of meaning. Many would suggest that these are part of the immanent sphere, and while there are clearly situated in this world in their immediacy and materiality, their meaning in the Romantic context points to a higher spirituality, a divine other. This, of course, brings up key questions of the transcendent: can the transcendent be accessed in the immanent world? how does one know what the transcendent is? But I would also argue that nature and paganism would be considered transcendent in the pre-modern world. It is modernity that has relegated them to realm of the immanent; nature, because it is part of the physical world, and paganism, because it is seen as a primeval binary to the Judeo-Christian dominant worldview. In the pre-modern world, the natural world was believed to have divine powers or to be controlled by the divine (Horkheimer and Adorno 4-6). Similarly, paganism is the worship of this divinity in the natural world, or the divine accessed through ritual. The binary between the transcendent and the immanent did not exist as clearly as in modernity, and it is these spiritual properties in the world that the Enlightenment erases, creating this seeming binary. The natural world becomes



immanent when it becomes a part of empirical reality and obeys the laws of science. Paganism becomes immanent when it is labeled as superstition and cultural mythology, divorcing it from its essence as an expression of divinity. To bring it back to Taylor, when the world is “enchanted,” in my view, it doesn’t make sense to think of the transcendent because the divine is in the world, and a part of reality. But certainly, pagan gods and rituals transcended the common experience and limits of humanity, the limits of history. This is what the Romantics tapped into in their use of nature and myth. This is what then influences the works of my modernist authors. This was also connected to their use of idealism, something I am associating with the transcendent because of its binary with empiricism or materialism, the view that all reality is material.

Another way I’m looking at the influence of immanence is through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century forms of realism and naturalism that influence the immanent perspectives and styles of these authors. This paper is only obliquely concerned with these movements as a reflection of a material view of the world and purpose of literature as portraying a material reality. When I refer to realism and naturalism, I am referring to this movement in literature towards immanence through, not only seeing reality as empirical and material, but seeing the task of literature as trying to portray that reality. Some distinction should be made between the two however.

In *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, “realism” is defined in terms of the movement of a specific type of novel in the nineteenth century associated with certain writers or more broadly in different time periods and literary genres tasked with “representing human life and experience in literature” (333). Fredric Jameson’s discussion of realism in *The Antinomies of Realism* provides some insight into the

connection between realism and modernism as it relates to my thesis. Jameson, like Taylor with transcendence, finds defining realism problematic but associates it with narrative, “the undermining of romance as a genre, along with the use of its idealizing values to foreground features of the social reality they cannot accommodate” (4). And sees its end modernism’s “literary representation of affect” (10). It is in naturalism that we see the major influence of the immanent-materialist perspective. As *A Glossary of Literary Terms* succinctly defines the movement, “a product of post-Darwinian biology in the nineteenth century, held that a human being exists entirely in the order of nature and does not have a soul nor any access to a religious or spiritual world beyond the natural world; and therefore, that such being is merely a higher order animal whose character and behavior are entirely determined by two kinds of forces: heredity and environment” (334). This definition clearly reflects the influence of immanence, and while modernism doesn’t adhere to this level of naturalism, the works clearly are influenced by the ideas of determinism, and the effects of environment. There is an even greater connection in style when in many examples of naturalism, “naturalistic writers...try to present their subjects with scientific objectivity and with elaborate documentation, sometimes including an almost medical frankness about activities and bodily functions usually unmentioned in earlier literature” (334). *Ulysses* is, of course, filled with such examples while Pound’s documentary method has a clear precedent here. Yeats, I will argue, while less explicit, also explores the influence of materiality.

W. B. Yeats’s poetry will be the first chapter and is an important figure to start with because of his explicit connection to Romantic poets and ideas, of which he writes extensively, and influence his aesthetic practices. George Bornstein outlines

the ways in which Yeats articulates his poetic ambitions in a Romantic context. According to Bornstein, “The Tower’ seizes upon the high romantic theme of mind encountering the world through imagination...and (the poem) is a Greater Romantic Lyric, in which poetic movement follows a special course of imaginative mental action” (*Poetic Remaking...* 51). Bornstein’s ideas on Yeats’ Romantic context reveal the way that Yeats connects to the transcendent through the Romantic tradition even during the modernist phase of his poetry.

James Longenbach explores both the development of Yeats’s modernist project as it relates to his relationship with Ezra Pound and the occult beliefs that influence Yeats and are explored in detail by Susan Johnston-Graf. Longenbach’s text, *Stone Cottage: Pound, Yeats, and Modernism*, covers the Stone Cottage years of 1913-16 as well as the cultural and social developments, especially in the work of Yeats, that preceded these years. This text will provide the content of the early modernisms of Yeats and Pound and explains their importance to each other in those formulations. Longenbach’s study provides further evidence of the Western and specifically Romantic influence on modernism present in Yeats’s and Pound’s work as he details early attempts at the symbolism of Yeats and the imagism of Pound and their connection to the transcendent via the occult and the attaching signification to an outer sign. Longenbach outlines the mystic texts that Yeats and Pound were engaged in during their time at Stone Cottage, including *Le Comte de Gabalis*, *History of Magic*, and Swedenborgian texts. Longenbach also details the way in which *A Vision*, and *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, are integral to understanding Yeats’s poetic philosophy.

I want to say that a return to this mythology shows both a failing of Yeats early attempts at transcendence and a return that is partially caused by his own

critiques of his political and aesthetic ambitions. Much of Yeats' poetry deals with a central tenet of the difficulty of the transcendent in that it differentiates and becomes material as it becomes immanent. Yeats's portrayal of the transcendent becomes more material and particular as he develops his modernism and differentiates from his early poems. Michael North assesses this final stage of Yeats's politics as such: "But he finally chose to refer the whole problem to another, higher level, where human problems become features of eternity and seem sacred because they resist solution" (73).

In chapter two, I argue *Ulysses* utilizes and then confronts the immanent framework of naturalism and realism. In addition to confronting the limits of realism, which develops out of an Enlightenment empirical ethos and context, *Ulysses* explores the limits of Western systems and contexts of meaning. *Ulysses*, with its multiplicity of narratives and styles, challenges the efficacy of language system's ability to point to meaning, and much like Derrida's position, it also reveals the language system's reliance on historical context for meaning. Additionally, *Ulysses*, because of the attention to and use of style, is closely connected to Derrida's theory of language presented in *Of Grammatology*. Most of all, *Ulysses* is most closely connected to Taylor's discussion of modernism as living in a shattered world, yet still finding meaning in lived experience. The Joyce criticism that I will be utilizing coincides well with these points, as they discuss topics dealing with the connection between form and language, the theoretical concerns of modernism, the connection to realism, and alterity. The idea of alterity, which comes out of Derrida's critique of Western philosophy's reliance on logic to develop metaphysical truth, is closely connected to the possibility for meaning.

In *The Illicit Joyce of Postmodernism*, Kevin Dettmar outlines the attention given to James Joyce use of expressive form and Joyce's abandonment of this theoretical position of meaning in *Ulysses*. Dettmar challenges critics that see a mimetic correspondence between form and meaning in *Ulysses* arguing that the carnivalesque style, recalling M. Keith Booker, mocks Joyce's serious undertakings of expressive form in his earlier writings. Dettmar points to the excessive overabundance of "wind" references in "Aeolus" as evidence of this mocking. Those that read this as a serious attempt strain to logically fit the, at times, non-sensical and sensational, headlines into a mimetic correspondence between the chapter's style and content.

John Gordon, on the other hand, in *Joyce and Reality: the Empirical Strikes Back*, outlines the mimetic relationship between an objective reality and the events, experiences and stylistic choices of *Ulysses*. Gordon's first premise is that "Joyce was a realist, aggressively, always. From the beginning his deepest disdain was for writers who fudged or muddled the truth" (xi). Needless to say, much is dependent on the idea of truth here, but this brings attention back to supremacy of material empirical reality as more ontologically significant in what Taylor calls the "disenchanted age." Additionally, Gordon sees aspects of style that don't traditionally conform to mimetic standards as simply challenging readers to hold onto this feature of the novel's form. Even this kind of realism, which Gordon outlines in *Ulysses* as well, would seem to preclude an idea of transcendence in the literature of Joyce, yet I will be arguing for its influence in *Ulysses* as the language and literary meaning of material realism as Gordon proposes, falls short of the larger meaning that *Ulysses* seeks. Transcendence in *Ulysses*, is, like in *The Cantos*, present in the gaps of narration, where the literary styles fall short of their

form's ideology disrupting a totality of meaning. Rather than constituting a total commitment to empirical reality, Joyce's use of the empirical is one aspect of a crucial commitment to a larger reality that is grounded in material reality. Since Joyce is depicting multiple realities in *Ulysses*, he is showing each's significance is based on context, but falls short of explaining total reality.

Another aspect of *Ulysses* is the Judeo-Christian tradition that informs a large part of the text's dealings with something specifically transcendent. Stephen Sicari shows the way in which the novel can be seen in this light. I will be looking at these points very closely as the argument is most pertinent to my own. Where I will differ is in attaching the Judeo-Christian context as the answer to the Enlightenment Humanism that Sicari explains that Joyce is reacting to. One reason is because of the ambivalence and criticism that Joyce expressed about Christianity which Sicari addresses. While Ellmann notes "in a letter of 1912, as well as in the ending of *A Portrait...*, Joyce spoke of himself as one of those trying to instill a soul or conscience into his 'wretched race,' he also makes it clear in the next sentence that, "The faith was not Christian, or in any way institutional" (*Ulysses on the Liffey*, ix-x).

In chapter three, my analysis of *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* will focus on the "early cantos," the "Malatesta Cantos," "Eleven New Cantos," "The Fifth Decad of Cantos," the "Adams Cantos" and a brief discussion of the "later cantos." Firstly, similar to Joyce, there is a concern with a material function of texts and language. Specifically, I am referring to Pound's ideas on symbolism and Vorticism that are a major component of his early ideas on modernist poetry and influence the early construction of his cantos. I want to show how this stylistic theory is dependent on a transcendent/immanent duality and develops in the fragmentary and documentary

style present in these cantos. “The image is the word beyond formulated language,’ Pound writes in ‘Vorticism,’ and the Imagist poem is an attempt to embody the transcendental Image in words” (Longenbach 80). Some discussion of the role of mythology, politics, and history will also inform points of this chapter.

Pound undoubtedly seeks the transcendent in history, in language, in mythic order, but he is both insistent on seeking the transcendent via an immanent frame of materiality, and that the transcendent’s ultimate meaning order the chaos inherent in the immanent frame of modernity. His project’s picture of reality is in the immanent frame in order to find some anti-romantic authenticity, the really real, but the transcendent appears in a material form first in the guise of the deification of the symbol, then in culture, and then through history. The immanent frame is a key idea of Charles Taylor and reflects a common worldview of Modern society. It includes “the dominance of instrumental rationality” and “secular time” which go together (542). It is a move away from cosmic order to what Taylor describes as a “buffered self or identity.” Stephen Sicari uses this frame to more specifically talk about Pound’s work in terms of an Enlightenment Humanism, the key feature again being instrumental rationality. I want to pick up on this argument by saying that while Pound takes transcendence out of a higher metaphysical realm by making it immanent, and rejecting a more romantic idealism of the concept, he does not completely abandon transcendence, but this tension also disrupts his Enlightenment materialist project resulting in a more complex and radical transcendence that is not antithetical or over and above material existence. Neither narrative is supreme or absolute, but the fragmentation of both allows for a more significant immanence and transcendence.

I utilize David Ten Eyck's *Ezra Pound's Adams Cantos* to show some of the ideological and historical concerns and research of the "Adams Cantos". Eyck's text is somewhat of an extension of Lawrence Rainey's study, *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos*, in that it explores the way in which Pound uses historical material to construct his view in *The Cantos*. "In terms of their poetic technique, the Adams Cantos can be most profitably read in terms of an evolution of the documentary method which Pound first began to utilise in the early 1920s. Pound's technique of integrating found material from pre-existing prose documents into his poem was first employed in the Malatesta Cantos (8– 11)" (Eyck, Kindle Locations 1152-1157). Eyck further claims that Pound's documentary method undergoes a transformation whereby his poetic voice becomes consumed by these historical documents (1157-8). This text, therefore, will provide additional evidence of the deconstructive effect of the duality between the immanent frame and the transcendent. Pound's attempts at a material poetics result in such an alterity, that his subjective voice becomes lost in the text. I will argue that despite this increasingly material poetics, the transcendent in actuality becomes more authentic.

While trying to aestheticize a solution to the tension between a fragmented society and the need for unity, Pound's cantos actually aestheticize the gaps in totalizing narratives. To unite them would destroy their most meaningful aesthetic feature which is a defense against the totalitarianism that Pound sought. *The Cantos* represents a failed attempt to make meaning outside/overarching the text revealing the fallibility of a worldview/metaphysics that sees the transcendent as over and above the material. In fact, *The Cantos* show how the transcendent is never wholly outside but in the text. I can't really say that there is a consistent



figuration of the transcendent because that reduces it to material textuality and literary conceptuality. Paradoxically, the transcendent “appears” when there are gaps or fissures in the logic/materiality of the text. Additionally, the transcendent is radically other, so that attempts to limit its figuration, or make it known materially, reduce and limit its very meaning.

## Chapter 1: The Twentieth Century Poetry of W. B. Yeats- Confronting Modernity and Developing The Paganist Transcendent

In this chapter I will examine the interplay of transcendence and immanence in W.B. Yeats's modernist period of poetry beginning with *In the Seven Woods*, published in 1904, to his last published poems in 1938. Of the authors in this dissertation, Yeats may be the strongest believer in an unseen reality, and, for this reason, his poetry would seemingly be the most conducive to themes of transcendence. In this regard, it is important to note that Yeats's poetry begins in a tradition closely connected with Romantic idealism, which is also closely aligned with a faith in a spiritual transcendence that reacted against dogmatic institutional Christianity and the Enlightenment's emphasis on material reality. R. F. Foster in his biography on Yeats notes his "early and enduring reverence for Shelley's poetry" (*The Apprentice Mage*, 29). George Bornstein in his work *Transformations of Romanticism in Yeats, Eliot, and Stevens*, also points to the Romantic connection:

Romanticism tends to displace Christian internal apocalypse to a secular framework, usually with imagination as a redeemer. Blake and Shelley wanted to strip away veils of mental illusion, associated with material nature, to reveal a world transformed by imaginative perception. They were poets of psychic transformation, both in theme and in form. So was Yeats. (35)

This view of Romanticism, and one that connects immanent nature to transcendence, is also noted in M. H. Abrams foundational 1970s work on the concept of the Supernatural in the depiction of the "Natural" in Romanticism:

“Romantic” writers “undertook...to save traditional concepts, schemes, and values which had been based on the relation of the Creator to his creature and creation, but to reformulate them within the prevailing two-term system of subject and object, ego and non-ego, the human mind or consciousness and its transaction with nature” (13). This “natural-supernaturalism” in Romanticism is one of the ways that a modern view of the world replaces the traditional transcendental in the pre-Modern “enchanted view” that Taylor noted, as discussed in the introduction.

Even in Yeats’s modernist poetry, there is still the trace of the Romantic transcendence that was a major part of his early poetry. I believe Yeats’s arc in regards to transcendence deals specifically with society’s loss of mythological belief systems, as well as concerns with humanity’s ability to access the transcendence. By the end of his career, Yeats laments the loss of an easy transcendence in a modern world that emphasizes material values, whilst still holding onto the significance of a transcendent reality that poetry allows access to through its aesthetic dimension.

The Yeats I will be most concerned with and analyzing will begin in the early twentieth century, just at the end of Yeats “early period.” Next, I will move towards the “middle period” which I will show as the beginning of this tension between a modernist realism, poetry that privileges the object and material reality, and the transcendent, seen through the supernatural and idealism. The later Yeats section will begin with 1919’s *The Wild Swans at Coole* and move through the 1920s and a few selections from *New Poems* and *Last Poems*. As I will further explain, my choice of coverage will be to look at the “modernist” Yeats as it concerns his use of mythology and the occult as a means to, and figuration of, the transcendent in his poetry and prose during this time period. When I refer to “modernist” Yeats I’m referring to the Yeats that experiments with poetic form and subjects that deal with

material reality through both an attention to the physical world and matters of politics and history. While Michael North argues for a pre-Modernist attention to politics in a poem like “The Lake Isle of Innisfree,” and Yeats’s nationalist politics was seen in his use of Irish myth and folklore prior to 1900, I’m writing about the more explicit move to politics and history as subjects and the experimentation with poetic form and Romantic poetic tropes beginning in the 1904 collection, *In the Seven Woods*.

Specifically, Yeats seeking of something more meaningful and significant correlates with Charles Taylor’s claim that “ontic doubt about meaning itself is integral to the modern malaise” (303). The lack of meaning one experiences in the dominant immanent worldview of the modern age manifests itself in the seeking of some higher cause or reality. While Yeats’s early Romantic and lyrical poetry utilizes Irish myth and occult symbols and characters, it is Yeats’s early modernism in the early twentieth century that begins to explore everyday reality, where the dominant immanent worldview becomes the subject of his poetry and influences his style. My main historical framework, best summed up by Taylor’s view of the historical context of disenchantment, will be a broad one and serve as a modern Western cultural lens: “it is a crucial fact of our present spiritual predicament that it is historical, that is our understanding of ourselves and where we stand is partly defined by our sense of having come to where we are, of having overcome a previous condition. Thus, we are widely aware of living in a ‘disenchanted’ universe; and our use of this word bespeaks our sense that it was once enchanted” (28). More specifically, Yeats’s early “modernist” themes best coincide with what Alex Owen describes in *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*:

*The Place of Enchantment* spans the period between 1880 and 1914, those crucial “hinge” years during which reference to “the modern” and “we moderns” took on a new and urgent meaning. These are the years in which Britain emerged as an identifiably modern nation, but the approach of “the modern era” was heralded with an optimism marked by anxiety. Rapid social and political change were accompanied by fears of cultural decay and imperial decline, and even the most committed “moderns” looked to the horizon with a degree of uncertainty. (7)

Yeats heavy involvement in both modern Britain and the occult society of Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn of this time period helped to shape his attention to seeking a re-enchantment to modernity.

Yeats has a strong sense of the world as becoming more logic-centered and disenchanted and observes this as feature of the world that he seeks to transform. As Susan Johnston Graf notes in *W.B. Yeats Twentieth Century Magus: An In-Depth Study of Yeats's Esoteric Practices and Beliefs, Including Excerpts from His Magical Diaries*, “The ideal of a ‘Higher and Divine Genius’ became the centerpiece of Yeats's poetics” (Kindle Location 177). Yeats specifically talks about the effect his mystic beliefs have on his literary work in a letter he writes in 1892:

If I had not made magic my constant study I could not have written a single word of my Blake book, nor would *The Countess Kathleen* have ever come to exist. The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write. I hold to my work the same relation that the philosophy of Godwin held to the work of Shelley and I have always considered myself a voice of what I believe to be a greater renaissance-the revolt of the soul

against the intellect-now beginning in the world (L, 211). (qtd. from Johnston-Graf locations 203-208).

In posing the central tenet of his work as “the revolt of the soul against the intellect,” Yeats reveals his connection in his early poetic beliefs about the fundamental shift and tension of Western society from one that values and places importance in what Taylor calls ‘the enchanted world’ to one that has its roots in Enlightenment Humanism, valuing reason and logic. It is these competing worldviews and subsequent value systems that I will be highlighting, in addition to noting the figuration of enchanted worlds in relationship to more immanent concerns of logic and/or contemporary politics and socio-historical frameworks.

While I see Yeats's poetry expressing several stages in regards to the overall context that I've outlined, I also see two consistent themes through these stages. Desire, because of its immanent-bodily character and association with seeking something more than the immanent, is one of the two themes (cynicism being the other) that remains a consistent presence through Yeats's twentieth century poetry. Along these lines, Sean Pryor in *W.B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, and the Poetry of Paradise* describes the poetry of Yeats (and Pound) as places of desire: “...paradise for both poets is a land of heart's desire. It is a blissful realm or state” (7). Additionally, desire is emblematic of the poet's relationship to the transcendent as it is both representative of the seeking of transcendence and the earth-bound body that defines the human state. But it is this desire that makes it real, possible, and brings it closer to human experience. Again, Pryor notes Yeats's explicit awareness of this hope of bringing the heavenly and earthly together, an idea he sees rooted in poetry of Wordsworth and Keats and Arthur Symons's definition of the Symbolist movement: “in the conclusion to *The Symbolist Movement* Symons defines art, ‘in its

mingling of heaven and earth', as 'the creation of heaven out of earth'" (22). In Pryor's analysis of Keats's "Endymion" he notes that "the quest for paradise may therefore represent a desire to speak a divine language, the language of the angels, the gods or God" (23). Yet Pryor suggests an alternative to this desire in that, recalling Symons's definition, "to quest for paradise may be to seek some union of our words with heavenly words" (23). This can be seen in Yeats's 1896 quote which predates Symons's Symbolist definition: "...perfecting earthly power and perception until they are so subtilised that divine power and divine perception descend to meet them, and the song of earth and the song of heaven mingle together" (qtd. from Pryor, 23). Yeats's explicitly expresses the desire to transform, via poetry, the earthly and heavenly, to bring them together. This is the clearest expression of the importance and role of the immanent and transcendent in Yeats poetry and the literary-cultural context for this relationship. Yeats's desire then is to bring the two worlds together showing the importance of the transcendent in meaning along with a fundamental progression towards bringing the transcendent to the immanent world. It reveals the way in which both realms lack something and need something in the other.

### **I. Early Yeats: Traces of Romanticism in Confronting Modernity 1904-1914**

In the case of Yeats, it is the mythical and transcendent that is privileged throughout most of his career, but his experiments with and the influence of immanent material reality are an important binary influence. While the modernist early Yeats contains elements of Romanticism, it also begins to confront modernity. It is here where we see the elements of transcendence and immanence interacting since it is in modernity that immanence gains its dominant worldview. This

complex relationship, and perhaps what drives Yeats into modernism, is suggested by Michael North who proclaims that “Yeats’s life and work show as those of any poet how aesthetic modernism emerges with modernity’s quarrel with itself” (21). He suggests this quarrel is also personal for Yeats, “an internal contest between individualism and nationalism, right and duty, freedom and history” (21). This view of North slightly differs from mine in its focus. I see the quarrel more about progress and change in modernity, and a lost beauty and stability in the past. In the early twentieth century, Yeats’s poetry celebrates aspects of the past that have been lost in modernity, while at the same time acknowledging a need for something new.

This is a complicated line that sometimes falls into a space of uncertainty, and the poetry reflects this as well. In this section I will show how Yeats’s poetry reflects the transcendent through the depiction of the past as something noble and beautiful. At times, this is reflected in an homage to poetry itself through poetic conventions that transcend particular time periods, suggesting a Keatsian truth and beauty to them. Other times, this is reflected in Yeats’s use of nature. The natural world provides a space and symbolism that conveys ideas of immanence and transcendence as the natural world is quite clearly an immanent material realm, but also has been attached to spiritual significance through nineteenth century Romanticism and Transcendentalism, as well as various pagan religions of the past. Yeats’s poetry reflects, in this section, a guarded optimism about modernity, seeking something new in modernist themes and experimenting with form and style. At the same time, modernity is also reflected negatively through a sense of loss and a critical cynicism about modern society.

The first twentieth century collection, *In the Seven Woods*, published in 1904, marks a move away from the “Romanticism” and formalism of nineteenth century



Yeats. While this isn't a clean break, as there are still influences and similarities with his earlier poetry, *In the Seven Woods* is often cited as the beginning of the modernist Yeats; *Much Labouring: The Texts and Authors of Yeats's First Modernist Books* by David Holdeman is one such example. It begins a less ornate style and a focus on contemporary events in a contemporary voice (Holdeman 27), along with a critical reflection on the past focusing on a change from the old to the new.

All the poems of *In the Seven Woods* contain a sense of loss and cynicism about the newness of the modern world. While this provides the poems' foundational theme, the variations on this theme provide the possibilities the poet is searching for. The responses of the poet range from lament and nostalgia to anger and disgust, to transformation and redemption. Similarly, Yeats's experimentation with form, employing elements of sonnet, lyric, and epic poetry, reflects this ambivalence about tradition and modernity.

While considered still to be part of "early Yeats," *In the Seven Woods* marks the beginning of Yeats's modernism as the poems contain experimentation with form and a stronger thematic aim of examining the loss of the past's magic in the immanent worldview of modernity. Concurrently, it contains elements of early Yeats and marks a transition from specifically Irish myth and poetry with a romantic sensibility to an examination of those motifs in a larger cultural picture. In some poems, there is still a mythical motif complicated by a modern awareness, but it's the main theme of loss, and the sense of loss, that is central to charting the need for the transcendent in modernism. In this set of poems, Yeats sets up the void and flatness of modernity and introduces a cynicism towards transcendent ideas and tropes. One of the major poems, "Adam's Curse," is influenced by his relationship to Maud Gonne, and, in fact, many of the poems can be read as being influenced by the

ending of this relationship, a relationship he attaches spiritual significance to.

While we can see the poems in this light, seeing *Gonne* as a muse suggests a much larger significance, one that does go back to the beauty and mysticism of the pre-modern world through poetry and Yeats's occult beliefs. In it, we see this guarded optimism, a call to the past, and the association of the past with beauty.

The transition from the past is also seen in the first poem of this collection as there are remnants of Yeats's earlier romantic poetry in the form of a reflection on the past and Irish symbolism, but it is less a building of Irish heritage and mythology as it is a colder focus on symbols and, perhaps, lost myths. Therefore, the realism and newness of earlier modernism is seen in Yeats's early twentieth century poetry as there is a focus on contemporary events, an awareness of something lost in modernity, an awareness of new and changing social realities, and a focus on Irish history and nationalism. This is a clear movement towards a more immanent view of the world, one concerned with the empirical quality of historical and political questions. Additionally, the poems of this collection show a more focused awareness on the material quality of places in terms of their attention to physical and sensory detail as well as their place in time.

Although a slight poem, and one that may be overlooked despite its titular connection to the collection, "In the Seven Woods" is one of these poems that reflects this complex new Yeats and bears significant and novel meaning when analyzed closely. The poem utilizes a more contemporary realist style to talk about the current day's politics, and their impact on personal reflections, while maintaining a Romantic sensibility. There are, for example, Romantic similarities in meditating on nature, "I HAVE heard the pigeons of the Seven Woods / Make their faint thunder, and the garden bees / Hum in the lime-tree flowers" (lines 1-3).

The poem, alternatively, differs from Romantic poetry as it does not use nature as a place of spiritual redemption or explicit transcendent connection:

The unavailing outcries and the old bitterness  
 That empty the heart. I have forgot awhile  
 Tara uprooted, and new commonness  
 Upon the throne and crying about the streets (4-7)

In these lines, Yeats shifts the poem to try to understand how the world has changed from a place of wonder and enchantment to the loss of myth and the arrival of “new commonness,” a phrase that is directed towards the modern age.

One way the poem grapples with this dichotomy is through the use of distance and sound in the poem. In poems of transcendence, distance and sound are key themes, as they express the ability, or lack of ability, of the poet to communicate/commune with the transcendent. The poem’s first nature images come by way of understated “heard” experiences, the “faint thunder” of the pigeons and “hum” of the garden bees, to express the short distance (in both time and space) of the reflection. Sean Pryor devotes a large portion of his critical text, *Yeats, Pound and the Poetry of Paradise*, to the importance of distance and sound to the transcendent realm. He does not specifically discuss the *In the Seven Woods* collection, but I would like to examine some of the key issues he brings up about these themes, as I see them as important to this collection and this poem in particular.

As I mentioned, the poems in this collection bear some Romantic connections to Yeats’s earlier poetry that work to contrast the new, more immanent viewpoint. For example, on the point of sound, Sean Pryor notes its importance to the “Lake Isle of Innisfree,” (1890), an important early poem of “paradise” in Pryor’s

estimation. What I notice is the similarity to the sounds the speaker hears in “Seven Woods” that Pryor analyzes in the earlier poem:

In a poem intoxicated by sound, from the bees’ loud hum to the cricket’s singing, the sound of Innisfree seems already present. In listening to this sound, the poet is magically transported. The repetition of ‘hear’ in lines 10 and 12 inverts the earlier insistence on ‘there’ in lines 2, 3 and 5, and makes Innisfree here. But really what the poet hears is the sound of his own voice. He alliterates l sounds and creates the lapping of a lake. He delights in the adjacent long vowels and cloying consonants of the words ‘bee-loud glade’ (4) and imagines the silence-filling hum of bees. In a play of sound which moves from mimesis to solipsism, he intones the final line such that, in addition to the line’s orthographic rhyme, hear-ing and here-ing are found and resound in the ‘deep heart’s core’ (12).

In “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” the poem’s use of sound brings about a reconciliation between viewing the transcendent as far off and bringing the transcendent into the setting of the poem through the poets’ experience of the present along with the paradisaical quality of Innisfree. In this poem, there is a kind of bringing of the transcendent to the world that will be continued in “In the Seven Woods,” but it is clear that the here and now of the transcendent experience is the main feature of “Lake Isle of Innisfree.” “In the Seven Woods” uses sounds in a similar way but presents a more complicated view of the temporality of the transcendent, a more modern awareness.

Due to its modern awareness, “In the Seven Woods” also contains nostalgic reflections; the speaker (has) “heard” these sounds in the woods. This nostalgia is indicative of Yeats’s desire to, as Holdeman puts it, “to reject the ‘elaborate music’ of

the Shelleyan, symbolist tradition, and to choose instead the second of the ‘two ways before literature’ Yeats described in 1906: that is, the way ‘downward, taking the soul with us until all is *simplified* and *solidified* again” (42; emphasis Holdeman). The speaker of the poem nonchalantly recalls these sound memories, coolly indifferent to their import and depth, de-emphasizing their romantic quality and critiquing the solipsism of the romantic transcendent presented in the earlier style of “Innisfree.”

The fantastical far-off quality is replaced by something more down to earth, and cynical, but is made more real, and it is this more real quality that fosters the cool confidence of the speaker’s foregone triumphant conclusion of demythologized mythic allusions. The speaker is directly affected by the sensory experience of the Seven Woods, a real place, as he hears the pigeons and bees, and notes their spatial relationship, one being far-off, and the other in the lime trees. Poetically, the immanent quality of the poem is more self-conscious and thus deconstructs the absolute transcendent experiences the poet may have experienced in a poem like “Innisfree.” The poet is, because of this experience, able to “put away the unavailing outcries and old bitterness that empty the heart.” Similar to a transcendent experience, things of the past have become superficial, and deflating.

On one level, one senses the metaphorical importance of this observation in regards to Yeats’s own attempts at mythology as a nationalistic project and its context in the Irish Republican movement. These kinds of political movements and meanings have a “flattening” effect, and Yeats’s 1892 letter referenced earlier shows how Yeats would find that troubling. At the same time, the poet’s tone is simplistic, as the simple sounds of the bees and pigeons allow him to forget these troubles. Here is an antidote to a modern malaise; allowing a simple experience to be

appreciated, contrasts the utilitarian and mechanical values of modernity.

Additionally, transcendental narratives *and* modernity place a lot of pressure on the world to be grand and meaningful. There is something to be said for material reality's simplicity. While we may see the flattening of the world in a pejorative sense in looking through a transcendental lens, when viewed through an immanent one, there can be comfort in simple pleasures. The experience of "Seven Woods" seems, at this point in the poem, to have that effect on the poet. The superficiality of the past is eclipsed by the reality the poet is experiencing.

This is a very important poem for the new modernist Yeats, and the starting point for my analysis, because it explores the effects of the demythologizing and flattening of the world that take place in modernity. At the same it shows how the world is being redefined, but the past is not erased, as it still has traces of that mythological meaning that affect one's concept of the modern world. There is something greater at stake than the poet has let on in the beginning. "Tara uprooted" and "new commonness upon the throne" move the poem towards this ambivalence about modernity, and a lament on what has been lost. This does not seem as superficial as "unavailing cries" nor as pithy as "old bitterness."

One could also read the park as a paradisaal metaphor, and thus move the poem from an experience of material reality and concerns into a transcendent one, where those concerns are not resolved, but transformed by the context of this transcendent experience which, we cannot forget, is based in a material reality. As present, real, and sensory as the first few lines of the poem are, the poem then begins to explore transcendence, conveyed by the pleasing sounds from birds far off enough to faintly be heard and bees in lime trees. The fact that this place can transform the subject also indicates is transcendental power. Additionally, the place

does not allow the poet a permanent state of peacefulness. This can be interpreted two ways, and thus, is a tricky spot for places as metaphors for transcendence. This amnesic dynamism, that the poet is able to “forget for awhile,” indicates it is a temporary respite, an oasis of sorts, and will allow the poet to be rejuvenated, as opposed to frozen in time. It is, after all, a temporal place; as much as one feels something transcendent or peaceful, its temporality is the reminding feature of its ultimately immanent reality. But temporality also allows for the dynamism suggested by the poem that will allow for a greater transformation. The first hint of dynamism is clearly suggested by the poet’s temporary forgetfulness. The poet’s thoughts return, though, to the initial issues or problems that he has only temporarily forgotten.

The poem is, ironically, a reflection of the flatness that Taylor notes because Taylor identifies flatness as a problem of the lack of meaning, and here, we see Yeats hoping to “move downward” in order “simplify” and “solidify” as a solution to the demystification of mythology, of which Yeats is ironically contributing. In other words, Yeats is attempting to combat the impression of romantic poetics as disconnected and idealistic by bringing it into a plainer style and more contemporary political context, but in doing so, one could argue that he’s contributing to the ennui and flatness of modernity as all is reduced and simplified to an empirical/material world and context. Ultimately, the poem utilizes the mythological figures of “Quiet Wanders,” “the Great Archer,” and “Tara” to resolve a contemporary socio-political conflict in which the poet feels wronged. Conversely, in this poem, a poet who appears to lack desire, is “contented” by the knowledge that awaits triumphantly. Similar to the Christian belief that Christ will return on Judgment Day, the poet here is sure of the prophetic knowledge gained by earthly *and* mytho-transcendent

experience, one that will ultimately right wrongs and bring that knowledge to the earth. An ambiguity that may be problematic surfaces when there is no clear delineation between the transcendent and the earthly, but there is a particularity in this message not usually associated with the transcendent. “Quiet Wanders” becomes, ultimately, a mythologizing of one of the parks that Yeats frequents.

The *In The Seven Woods* collection contains other poems that reflect varying degrees of doubt or cynicism about modernity’s ability to deliver on its promise of a better world. While lacking specific complaints about modernity, this critique is seen through the skeptical voice and tone of the poet. “The Arrow’s” interplay between material forces and abstract ideas indicates that the doubt present in these poems is, to some degree, due to forces of immanence. While “The Arrow” may be seen as another minor poem, for me, it illustrates a fundamental aspect of the conflict present in the divide between modernity’s privileging of a material world and the attraction towards early twentieth century forms of occult mysticism, as the poem explores the power of the mind in connecting to some higher ideal and having that ideal realized in material matter. In the opening line, the speaker states, “I thought of your beauty, and this arrow,” indicating the opposing forces that the speaker will seek to reconcile in the poem. The arrow’s specificity is inherent to its immanent qualities while beauty’s abstractness is more akin to the far-off and ephemeral quality of transcendence. The physicality of the poem is inextricably linked to the poem’s mental action as well: “I thought of your beauty, and this arrow, / Made out of a wild thought, is in my marrow” (lines 1-2). Rather than inspiration to ecstasy or elevated thought, the thought of beauty creates a thing so bodily and material that it “is in my marrow.” The marrow is a deeply physical and corporeal metaphor bringing beauty into not just materiality but the body itself. At the same time,



there's a disconnect between the thought of beauty and the material nature of the arrow and the marrow, suggesting that the idealism associated with the past cannot simply come into material being.

The poet cannot write inspired poetry because the muse has become civilized and ordinary, but what the muse has inspired reveals a critique, leading to a tool for change, namely, poetry itself. This idea is another reason I find the poem to be more important than its lack of attention and, seemingly, slight surface would suggest. The poet is not ready for this change to the tame and ordinary, and views the modern masses of humanity with suspicion, wanting to protect this initial beauty and keep it protected from a modern society that has devalued and demythologized the luster and magic in classic poetic beauty. "There's no man may look upon her, no man, / As when newly grown to be a woman, Tall and noble but with face and bosom/ Delicate in colour as apple blossom" (lines 3-6).

The poem's conclusion is conciliatory in its reflective nostalgia for the beauty of the past: "This beauty's kinder, yet for a reason/ I could weep that the old is out of season" (lines 7/8). The vague yet simple "a reason" suggests a need to lament beauty that no longer exists. At the same time, the finality of the poem's conclusion suggests a kind of reconciliation, so long as it knows that the conditions at least exist for the lamentation that the "old is out of season." This view acknowledges the importance of the past while equally acknowledging what the beauty of the present has to offer. This is a less caustic view of modernity, but one that gives credence to the effect of perception that the old has on the new, that of difference and history. The new is beautiful in its appearance and innocence but is also tinged with the maturity and knowledge of the loss of the past's beauty, which the poem suggests is deeper, but certainly deeper by virtue of its history, something that "the new,"

inherently, cannot have. Concurrently, however, the new's current presence is valued for its inherent beauty as well. Finally, when seen in the context of the poem's title, the poem suggests that even when modernity is marked by moving forward, there is logic to the emotional attachment to the past. This emotional attachment reveals that the past offers something that can be felt more deeply in contrast to modernity which is more often associated with a colder logic and mechanical universe. We don't get that kind of cold, mechanical imagery here, but "the arrow" logically points in that direction.

"Old Memory" shares a similar perspective in thinking about the past, but is more specific in showing consequences of the loss of a noble society devolving into modern nihilism and explores the possibility of perspective that could provide an antidote to that loss in a changed world. An alternative would be in reference to an Irish revivalism, but unlike "In the Seven Woods," there is no specific reference to a historical or cultural movement. In this case, the conceit here is the broader problem of modernity and modernism's search for meaning. We see here one of the major tenets of modernism, that the great projects of modernity that offered so much hope and belief in the progress, have simply led to "nothing." "Through the long years of youth, who would have/ thought/ It all, and more than it all, would come to naught, / And that dear words meant nothing?..." (lines 7-9). The poem, much like the last rhyme, strains to recall an old memory, and, even more so, yearns for it to provide some recompense or viability as an alternative to the nihilism one could easily associate with modernity.

In imagining a reconciliation between the promise and hope of a classical age, and the reality of the broken promises of a new age, the poem strays from the systemic, cyclical logic of the opening conceit and a tragic view into something more

nuanced and aware of its limitations. The poem goes back to before modernity, to the “Queens that were imagined long ago” in order to offer the hope that “it might call up a new age.” The difference between the beauty of antiquity and the shortcomings of modernity is stark when viewed in these nostalgic terms, but as I stated, the poem does move to a reconciliation. That reconciliation comes in a shift in point of view, one that confronts reality, the awareness of idealism, and the fecklessness of regret when the poet settles for a conclusion that no longer wants to blame the change from antiquity to modernity, and how blaming that change would be cruel to “children that have strayed.” This is key because it suggests the possibility that the modern subject need not be imprisoned by the limits of modernity or forced into a viewpoint of regret, even as one acknowledges the defining features of an age that would suggest such a position and viewpoint. While the poem acknowledges the role and limits of idealism, it does not fall into the trap of material determinism. The speaker, seemingly, seeks the transcendent through traditional tropes of idealism, poetic incantation, mythological time, but does so through the perspective of the more immanent, skeptical/reflective point of view, giving the poem a cynical subtext that is counter-balanced by the hopeful moments of faith provided by the poem’s opening wish and closing imaginative sympathy. At the same time, that moments of hope for the transcendent can come through, suggests the possibility for new meaning. This is an idea that I believe is unique to a lyric poem that examines the modern perspective, as opposed to a philosophical logos centered view that struggles to separate itself from the context of modern thinking. One may lament the disappointment, but new ways of looking at the world and changing perspectives provide hope as well. This poem does not explore that in detail, but leaves that possibility open, in that, in its lowest point, it has faith in

something more. The poem's indeterminacy reveals the ambiguity between the past and the modern, idealism and materialism.

"Never Give all the Heart" and "The Withering of the Boughs" offer a more damning view, suggesting that this collection still leans more towards cynicism than hope when thinking about what the modern age has wrought, and the possibility for change in the twentieth century. Still, their critiques show a viewpoint that is seeking something more, something better than what recent society has been able to offer. The danger, however, is a perspective that, hurt by the idealism or optimism of the past, may become too closed off or guarded. In their own way, they are clearing the path for something new, not simply wanting to retreat into the old familiar themes and movements of the past, but still protective and aware of the dangers of too fully embracing something new.

"Never Give all the Heart" specifically is about the dangers of Romanticism, investing too much in hope, emotion, and idealism; things often associated with the transcendent. It is about the consequence of what happens when belief and hope fail, bringing one down to unfulfilling reality. The poet issues a damning revelation about the limits of romantic love, specifically, and about the brevity of the material reality of an idealized passion, generally. "Never Give all the Heart," the most guarded in its cynicism, suggests an approach to the new age is something that should not be fully invested in, in order to protect one's self. The individualized sobering reality undercuts total investments in romanticized, idealized hopes. It's an important fear and warning, and one that offers no solution, but experiential solace and knowledge, an opposition to the imagined, idealized knowledge associated with the transcendent. "He that made this knows all the cost, / For he gave all his heart and lost" (lines 13-14). The noble tone of this closing line suggests, ironically,

both a critique of the idealized vision and a heartfelt acknowledgement of its role in the creation of art. While some poems seek the newness of modernity, “Never Give all the Heart” is a major impediment to the reconciliations seen in “The Arrow” and “Old Memory.” The poem suggests there can be no ultimate fulfillment due to the damage of a total emotional romanticized investment in something. The loss here is fundamental to the modern perspective and offers no hope for something new to replace what was lost in the past.

Similarly, “The Withering of the Boughs” shows a poem dealing with loss, but on a larger scale. “The Withering of the Boughs,” in title alone, suggests an antithesis to “The Wind Among the Trees,” and thus an explicit end response to the earlier poem. It is appropriate, then, that it contains similar motifs of magic, myth and nature, but does so with a sense of the loss of hope these new poems harp on. The poem’s folkloric and elegiac quality, akin to earlier Yeats’s poems, establishes themes of loss and loneliness, connecting to a sense of disillusionment, a lack of place, and is a further commentary on Yeats’s earlier poetry, given the importance of place and belonging: “cried when the moon was murmuring to the birds:/ ‘Let peewit call and curlew cry where they will, I long for your merry and tender and pitiful words,/ For the roads are unending and there is no place to my/ mind.’”(lines 1-3).

Disillusionment is one theme, but in keeping with other poems in the collection, the poem elevates these feelings and their association to an immanent place: “The honey-pale moon lay low on the sleepy hill, / And I fell asleep upon lonely Echtge of streams” (5-6). Echtge according to Oxford Reference, is the mountain range in Ireland linked in Irish folklore to “a lady of the Tuatha Dé Danann, who was given them as a dowry. Lady Gregory acknowledged that Irish-speaking villages in these mountains, now abandoned, were the source of much of the folklore in her

Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland.” The Tuatha Dé Danann “in Irish mythology, {were} the members of an ancient race said to have inhabited Ireland before the historical Irish. Formerly believed to have been a real people, they are credited with the possession of magical powers and great wisdom. The name is Irish, literally ‘people of the goddess Danann’” (“Echtge”). Much like in his earlier poetry, Yeats uses Irish mythology to connect to magical and transcendental qualities of a mythical past, but, here, it is tinged with a greater sense of loss and abandonment, a greater counter image to ideas of progress and modernity, a lamentation, rather than a source of power or political/social commentary and nationalism. There is a movement towards the transcendental being a source of comfort and emotion that softens and humanizes the traditionally idealistic spiritual quality of transcendence.

This lament of idealism, and possible movement towards an emotional transcendence, one more closely connected to humanity, is repeated in each stanza’s closing refrain. “*No boughs have withered because of the wintry wind:/ the boughs have withered because I have told them my dreams* (15-16). The implication here is a complex one. The poet’s dreams are juxtaposed rather than aligned with nature, drawing a line of demarcation rather than symmetry. Romantic poetry and Yeats’s early poetry would be more inclined towards a natural symbiosis between the mind and nature, pointing to the supernatural. Here, the mind is connected and, at the same time, contrasted with nature as though the poet’s dreams are now othered from nature, unless these are dreams of hopelessness or sorrow and the boughs are affected by this somber quality, in which case, the poet is still connected to nature, but in a way that expresses a more sorrowful reality. The poet’s dreams reflect knowledge of an antiquated world, and rather than spurring life, have moved into a metaphor that reflects that same sentiment. The “withered boughs” are the result of

the poet's dreams not coming to fruition. It is another poem of a distant and magical past that no longer exists immanently, but rather in the knowledge of the poet's imagination. In the second stanza, the poet states, "I know of the leafy paths the witches take...where the Danaan kind / Wind and unwind dancing when the light grows cool" (12-13). Yeats associates the Irish mythology with a reality displaced from the present, taking on a tone of an almost lost paradise. Simultaneously, this distance makes it half-nostalgic; it's a place the poet seems wistful for but is again showing a natural ending here in the "withering of the boughs."

Like the other poems, the poem is ambiguous and critical, while at the same time seeming to long for something about the transcendent/far-off place. The last stanza refers to a kind of idyllic, majestic paradise, "a sleepy country, where swans fly round / Coupled with golden chains, and sing as they fly" (17-18). To further emphasize the majestic and antiquated tone, there is "A king and a queen...wandering there, and the sound / Has made them so happy and hopeless, so deaf and so blind / With wisdom, they wander till all the years have gone by" (19-21). On the one hand, this seems like a paradise of wonder and wisdom, but it's also a place that has made the king and queen so happy and hopeless, and so deaf and blind with wisdom that they just wander, a contented theme that will be revisited in "The Grey Rock." This complex, bittersweet tone of longing and ambiguity is similar to the later "Sailing to Byzantium." The negative tone laments the disconnection from reality, a far cry from celebrating the power of the past, and much more of a critique of transcendental idealism.

In *The Green Helmet and Other Poems*, several poems continue to examine this dichotomy, but move towards a more definitive questioning of the past as well as delving into a more self-conscious and meta-analysis of the construction of events

and meaning. “No Second Troy” is the most responsive to the poems of *In the Seven Woods*. A major theme of the poems of *In the Seven Woods* was the question of what the nobleness of the past could deliver to the modern present. While there was some ambiguity, two major ideas flowed from these poems. One, that knowledge of the magic and majesty from the past did inform the reality of the present, often through the individual’s memory and imagination. Secondly, that the past was in fact a distant memory, however real, and deserved to be lamented, as it was not easily accessible to present reality. Something of the past could not exist in the modern present. While the poet lamented and critiqued this, dealing with the complex issues and emotions that surfaced in remembering the past, there was still a morsel of hope in focusing on the past’s magic and majesty. In terms of seeing this as an antidote to the modern malaise in regard to the lack of transcendence in the modern worldview, there are two ways to view these poems. On the one hand, they do provide some recompense, some basis for otherness to the immanent, that makes the modern worldview less threatening and flat. On the other, one could view them as providing an antiquated and false-nostalgic hope which makes it harder to find some new form of spirituality or transcendence that is appropriate and efficacious in the modern immanent worldview.

The skepticism in *Green Helmet* is a theme that began in *In the Seven Woods*, but in a new search for meaning in this collection, it is coupled with the construction of events, a newer theme that emphasizes a dual relationship between ideology and materialism, and shuns a transcendent idealism that would favor a mimetic view. If we move into this view then, the ideals of beauty of the past become more subject to their material conditions and relativism. This is a way that Yeats shows a modernist aspect that is a result of a world where metaphysical



transcendent meaning has been replaced by a secular-material view of the world, as attention to constructs of poetry and myth imply, an attention to how they are borne out of material conditions. At the same time, these poems look to fill that loss with something akin to the metaphysical transcendent in the form of cultural transcendence, i.e., great works; or through a metaphysical reality more closely connected to the physical world. The metaphysical reality comes in the quasi-science of the spiritualism of the time which could be accessed by the enlightened individual; as Alex Owen notes, “The occult taught that self-consciousness was the route to an objective reality, albeit a reality that could be accessed and known only through the offices of the prepared and disciplined mind” (148). This brings the metaphysical transcendent a bit closer to the scientific view and material world of the modern viewpoint, and provides the alternative to a Platonic or Judeo-Christian realm beyond material being.

“A Woman Homer Sung” and “Words” are centered around a “she” as an object of identity and meaning along with the ability of the speaker to understand and construct a higher level of meaning through knowledge. In developing ideas connected to the artifice of art and the vision of the artist, these poems balance the material world with a meaning that may transcend it. It is unclear whether these poems see this artificiality as having the ability to tap into the transcendent, but I want to show how these poems are a stepping stone into the later and more fully realized “Sailing to Byzantium,” as well as shifts into a poetic consciousness that is much more aware of its own material artifice and hence, immanence.

“In a Woman Homer Sung,” the title implies that the creation of the “Woman” is simultaneous with the act of creation; there is no “Woman” preceding the act of creation. The poem takes a narrative bent, “If any man drew near / When

I was young,” (lines 1-2) to discuss the buildup to the artistic figure. This experience leads to the poet reflecting and recalls a view of art as a mirror of life. In this stanza, one gets the impression that the poet has been so moved by this experience of a physical beauty that it has caused him to be inspired to mirror that beauty in writing. The final stanza reverses this platitude however, to show that the beauty was a fictive figure to begin with: “For she had fiery blood/ When I was young, And trod so sweetly proud/ As ‘twere upon a cloud, / A woman Homer sung, / That life and letters seem/ But an heroic dream” (15-21). The last stanza reveals the fictive power of art on reality, and subsequently, new creations. The construction is what inspired the writer, but the artificiality doesn’t make it less real, “For she had fiery blood,” a very bodily and life affirming detail. Poetic transcendence does not spring some from metaphysical well in this poem, but from poetic creation itself.

“Words,” as well, examines the relationship between creation, artifice, and meaning via the medium of the poet, words. Ultimately, the poet is trying to laud his own power in conveying truth via words: “My darling understands it all, / Because I have come into my strength, / And words obey my call;” (lines 10-12). In the very next line, the speaker abruptly questions the declaration, suggesting the uncertainty of what one can communicate through language: “That she had done so who can say/ What would have shaken from the sieve?” (13-14). The lack of authority and uncertainty of the outcome suggest a far more unstable picture of meaning and the ability to control meaning. The thought causes the poet to reflect on his life’s mission and direction, highlighting the indeterminacy and purposeful context of language, especially rhetorical language designed to convince or persuade. “I might have thrown poor words away/ And been content to live” (15-16). On the one hand, this shows the pathos of the poet’s mission in life, to try to convey some

truth to a specific audience at the expense of his/her's own ability to live. On the other, it shows, again, a more abstract truth about the contingency of language and its disconnection from "life." Words have a specific purpose, and cannot fully convey what it means to live, and, in fact, can have the opposite effect of taking one away from life. The implication here is that the transcendence as an experience, cannot actually be put into words even as the poet may try to express that. What we may have is something different from the intended message, or a message that attempts to convey but does so inadequately. It reveals a worldview that is conscious of its own immanence, and how meaning may be entirely material. However, the inability to convey transcendence does not preclude it, as the poem shows the transcendence is beyond the immanent world. It is this awareness that explores the transcendent in new, and seemingly contradictory, ways: history, immanence, realism, objectivity.

## II. Overcoming Cynicism, 1914-1928

I view the early twentieth century poetry of Yeats as viewing modernity skeptically, with its defining features of disenchantment and progress or newness, while still incorporating elements of the past and seeking something new. The collection of *Responsibilities* is a more concentrated turning point for Yeats, with the seeds of development occurring in the early twentieth century. The movement towards a more modern worldview reduces the amount of magic and mythic folklore, along with a Romantic sensibility that provided the basis of Yeats's earlier poems. At the same time, Yeats is still thinking about the occult and becomes very close to Ezra Pound, having daily correspondence in their winters at Stone Cottage. So, while Yeats is still thinking about ideas associated with a more mystical view of life, he becomes more systematic, concrete, and ambitious in his goals. I don't mean to

suggest that the poetry has abandoned all misgivings and completely embraced modernity, however, as there is still a level of criticism or cynicism towards the idealism of modernity's confidence in the material world and secularism. But Yeats does embrace some level of the material world in an experimental viewpoint, looking at the constructs of history, poetry, and realism. It is for this reason, I've labelled the section "Overcoming Cynicism." While not totally rejecting the lyric verse and mythic, the poems of *Responsibilities* move towards a viewpoint that deals more concretely with the issues of modernity. The transcendent, attached to idyllic and dream-like, fantastical and imaginative imagery, becomes even more of a symbol of a lost promise, a world sometimes attached to the glory of the past, sometimes attached to imaginary worlds. At the same time, there is the underlying belief in the transcendent which doesn't always figure in the symbolism/imagery, or even specifically in the subject of individual poems, but does figure in the project's ethos. The project's largesse and ambitious nature, for one, also takes into account the idea of the transcendent, that there is something more than the material world. The aim or purpose of *Responsibilities* is to reach a larger goal, while not becoming entangled in the minutiae and materialism of modern life. In these two ideas there is an alternative to pre-modern transcendence.

One such emblematic poem is "The Grey Rock" which establishes themes of fiction as a construction of reality, the demythologization of folklore, and exploration of meaning in social communities. Like *The Green Helmet* there is a meta-fictional element that also blurs this line. Although not as self-conscious, the fictive voice is aware of and incorporates the idea of fictionality in its thematic conceit. In "The Grey Rock," Yeats differentiates this voice with italics.

*POETS with whom I learned my trade,*

*Companions of the Cheshire Cheese,*  
*Here's an old story I've re-made,*  
*Imagining 'twould better please*  
*Your ears than stories now in fashion,*  
*Though you may think I waste my breath*  
*Pretending that there can be passion*  
*That has more life in it than death,*  
*And though at bottling of your wine*  
*The bow-legged Goban had no say;*  
*The moral's yours because it's mine. (Lines 1-11)*

Yeats opening invoking "The Rhymers Club" in line 1 provides an alternative to the deeply individualistic experience often associated with the transcendent as it acknowledges the social dimension of literary expression and purpose. One could also see this social dimension, the source of its unity, literary tradition, a separate entity and alternative to the transcendent, as the source of meaning and antidote to the "modern malaise." The main idea of this opening stanza emphasizes a similar theme of modernity's reduction of meaning to the frivolity and whims of "fashion." The poet wants to make a case not for the wholly new, but the re-imagining of the old. The poet also acknowledges the perceived futility of such an act, using the word "passion" to indicate the emotional intensity lacking in the modern worldview.

While Yeats still seeks something meaningful, he moves to the well of mythology to do so, and so does not yet abandon magic and mythology in his attempt to construct meaning. The poem then goes on to describe a group of gods. There is a folkloric quality to the poem, making it seem ageless and timeless, and at the same time, near and familiar. As the preface certainly undercuts this artifice, so does the

poem's opening lines, "When cups went round at close of day –/ Is not that how good stories run? –" (lines 12-13). In keeping with the folkloric quality, the poem has a narrative quality as well. Narrative is more akin to the realism movement of nineteenth century British literature, so, in the poem, Yeats is both testing and constructing a version of reality.

The meta-fictional question brings in fiction's role in creating reality, causing a problematic vision of the transcendent. In this poem, one would expect that having gods and mythology would lend itself to a more assured view of the transcendent, but, in fact, the poem's realism, along with a meta-critical voice and cynical tone, undercut the transcendent as real. This also lends credence to, and opens up the space for the transcendent, as it breaks down the binary of the immanent as reality and the transcendent as imaginary. The gods are quite ordinary: "The gods were sitting at the board/ In their great house at Slievenamon. / They sang a drowsy song, or snored, / For all were full of wine and meat" (lines 14-17). While certainly gods in myth and folklore can take on anthropomorphic qualities, the introduction to the gods here contains the most basic and simple of human desires. As noted previously, and as will be discussed in later poems, the theme of desire is an important one in regards to transcendence as it has a debated and complex relationship to visions of paradise. Desire can contradict idealistic and logos-based visions of reality and humanity, or it can provide the energy to reach such a vision. Also, many versions of transcendent realms often place desire as below a divine realm into an earthly "fallen" human one. Here, the gods satiated state suggests either a paradise that includes desire, or a "fallen" state. The poem's ambiguity shows the complexity of desire in its relationship to the "paradisal" or transcendent state.

The poem's opening is indicative of the immanently focused poems contained in *Responsibilities*, ones that seem to question humanity's redemptive possibility. As an alternative to transcendent, the majesty and wonder of the immanent-natural world and humanity's capacity to experience the wonder of the immanent universe are emphasized. The collection is anti-transcendent in that most poems do not engage with a transcendent world or possibility, but rather in history and materialism, but these poems also show the consequences of the lack of transcendent view. Many of the poems of *Responsibilities* also make use of a belief in myth, magic, and ghosts as part of this world and the present, so these spiritual possibilities are present in the immanent world. One needs to be open to these possibilities to experience them, so there is a critique and lament of a society that is increasingly unaware and hostile to the spiritual level, even on the immanent plane. The poems diminish temporality and humanity while uniting the two and placing humanity as the inferior half of the binary, yet also giving the inferior humanity power as it exerts its will on the opposite term. Yeats turns the relationship on its head and subverts the hierarchical dimension attached to transcendence. If one views transcendence as over and above, how is it that the lesser of the binary exerts will and power? Yeats reveals a more complicated relationship. As the "The Grey Rock" states, "Why must the lasting love what passes/ Why are the gods by men betrayed?" (114-15). The lines use enjambment and caesura to connect questions about perspectives traditionally associated with transcendence and immanence, blurring the line between the two. Both lines rhetorical questions suggest a power to immanence, rather than transcendence, which is traditionally associated with being over and above the immanent world, the dominant pair of the binary. The questions imply that the transcendent part of the binary needs the other, "the

lasting” “love(s)” “what passes,” “the gods” have enough of a relationship to “men” that they can be “betrayed.” It’s usually thought of as the other way around, with the immanent in need of the transcendent.

This attention to the immanent is seen more specifically in poems such as, “To a Wealthy Man who promised a second Subscription to the Dublin Municipal Gallery if it were proved the People wanted Pictures” and “September 1913,” which reveal how modernity has redefined transcendence. In “To a Wealthy Man...” the title and subject is so specific that it would seem to be a totally worldly and immanent-context dependent poem. There is seemingly no room for transcendence or mysticism in a poem that seems to be so utilitarian. It’s a poem of logic and patronage in a severely defined social context. This patron of the arts idea is one that Yeats shares with Pound as seen in the “Malatesta Cantos,” and it is one of the few ways that an issue of modernity, in this case modern capitalism, can be addressed with a practice from an earlier point in modernity that would materially satisfy a potential barrier to transcendence via the medium of art. While this is the impetus for the poem, the poem, in looking at these issues, becomes about value and judgment and how these things cannot necessarily be quantified and qualified via a materialist/utilitarian immanent worldview. This is central to my paper and will be discussed in Pound’s *Cantos* as well. A major part of these modernist projects is to move towards subjects and techniques that I see as immanent because they favor a materialist view of the world through their attention to material matters of economics and society, and the logic of a material view of the world, but, at the same time, are deconstructed by the fragments of modernist experimentation and the transcendent yearnings of the other in this binary. It’s when we see the increase in the immanent perspective that it becomes deconstructed; the binary breaks down



because of this need for the other of the transcendent, coupled with a necessary fragmentation due to the breakdown of modernity's stability and progressive narrative.

As I mentioned, the connection to Pound is seen in the poem's subject of the patronage of the arts. For Pound, patronage is essential to the survival of art that can transcend the immanent influence of capitalism's pressure to work for social survival. Patronage provides the economic security needed for the talented artist to create something that taps into a larger truth. Although Alec Marsh doesn't specifically name Yeats since Yeats predates his 1930s subset that includes Pound, I believe Yeats corresponds to Marsh's view that in the twentieth century poets injected economics into their poetry as a defense of poetry's ability to "subsume" production (93). In contrast to Pound, I would argue Yeats's "To a Wealthy Man..." presents a more complicated view of patronage than Pound's idealistic one. The necessity of patronage highlights the social and economic reality of immanence, and the patron's decision to fund an artist is a clear marker of this material reality in the most classically Marxist sense. Regardless of whether or not the patron influences the ideology of the artist, the patron's decision to fund an artist is fundamentally social and/or political. "To a Wealthy Man..." rather than being about the production of art is about the preservation and display of cultural artifacts, and is, therefore, even more materially focused as it is about the material product, physical preservation, and place in the social-cultural world.

The poem reflects social classes coming into conflict over this issue, and questions how they can come into cohesion, revealing how transcendence can become determined by historical context. In the first part of the poem, Yeats derides the idea of the middle-class demand for the art being a valid reason for the gallery, but his

use of the term “some of sort of evidence” is a critique of the larger issue of the watering down of culture through the quantification of demand and the development of mass culture. Yeats does make a case for aristocracy being the determiner of such things and sees populism as irrelevant: “What cared Duke Ercole, that bid / His mummers to the market-place, / What th’ onion-sellers thought or did” (9-11).

While the poem is not directly about transcendence, Yeats is rejecting and reacting to a flattening of culture to the tastes of the masses, and the power of numbers and logic over intrinsically valuable or “transcendent” works. The issue here is that Yeats in a sense flattens the idea of transcendence (a tendency first revealed in the early twentieth century poems) and destabilizes the definition into a material context when the poem brings up the problem of artifacts as evidence of some greater idea, assigning the aristocracy, a problematic social construction of history and wealth, the role of determining such works. Transcendence becomes determined by historical context because works that are canonized by the ruling/elite class or popular opinion become the cultural artifacts that come to represent something greater than their particular social and historical context.

The poem shows awareness of this paradox, acknowledging both history and the differences in environment that lead to works being preserved and lauded. Yeats gives several examples of other preservers of culture not worrying about public opinion and ending in “the San Marco Library, Whence turbulent Italy should draw/ Delight in Art whose end is peace, / In logic and in natural law/ By sucking at the dugs of Greece” (lines 24-28). While the poem’s last line, “sucking at the dugs of Greece,” suggests unworthy praise and questioning of popular opinion and mass culture, the absolute quality attached to these paintings, “Delight in Art whose end is peace” seems to transcend the unseemly approach to, and appropriation of, the

artwork. Art, according to the poem, has the power to transcend the petty and material concerns and predicaments that commodify art in an immanent world. While Yeats touches upon the complexity of the relationship between art and society, he, like Pound, returns to an idealist view of artwork, suggesting that art is ultimately part of a higher plane of meaning and reality. Even as the artwork occupies a space in the material world, it belongs to a meaning that transcends the minutiae of society and economics. The poem, as a work of art conscious of this minutia, is a bit more subversive in its meaning. It's another poem that acknowledges the influence of modernity but is unsure of its effect. Is the future of art to be about social, political, cultural concerns?

The speaker of "Running to Paradise" wants that not to be the case, but the speaker's need to go to "paradise" implies a non-paradise setting as a starting point. It continues the idea that is also in "The Withering of the Boughs," of the poet desiring a radically other dimension, told in an understated and matter-of-fact way, since the speaker occupies the more ordinary, common-place world. This is a classically idealist premise, one that does not question the reality of paradise, a change from the modern skepticism of the time period. Stylistically, the poem is more lighthearted, and Yeats even describes it as being a return to an "early style" ("The Growth" 251). A simplicity to the poem deviates from the seriousness of more modern poems. Although not strictly a limerick, the poem's rhyme scheme, and playful language and images, offer a light-heartedness that delights in play. This ease of joy, where things come without effort, "And all that I need to do is to wish/ And somebody puts his hand in the dish/ To throw me a bit of salted fish:" (lines 4-6) is a respite from the pressures and strife of the modern immanent world. This ease of purpose and joy is contrasted by the suffering of the brother, "Mourteen," who is

“worn out” and has a “poor life.” This contrast suggests the light-hearted simplicity and by extension, idealism, of the poem, has a deeper tragic subtext that the speaker wants to simplify into amusement and ease. The point of view reflects a desire for enchantment in a disenchanting world.

This otherness, the stark difference between this world and a “paradise” one, is also reflected in the Christian-like reversal of fortune as each stanza ends with “*And there the king is but as the beggar.*” The poem establishes the transcendent as an opposing realm to the earthly world. Wealth and power lose their status in this realm. The cycle of poverty and wealth is addressed specifically in the third stanza. “Poor men have grown to be rich men, / And rich men grown to be poor again, And I am running to Paradise;” (lines 15-17). The poem reveals how a dream of transcendence remains in an immanent context and appears as an escape or relief from the overwhelming pressures and cycles of the modern immanent world. Additionally, associating the transcendent with a motif of paradise and a desire to seek an “othered” far off place becomes a theme in later poems, “The Wild Swans at Coole” and “Sailing to Byzantium.” These poems are what Sean Pryor refers to, in my view, when he says, “Many of Yeats’s and Pound’s poems are haunted by the ineradicable otherness of the other world” (29).

*The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919) continues a more socially and historically conscious Yeats, prone to a simplicity of style; at the same time, just as Yeats is entering his most “modernist” phase, there is a new return to the motifs of the earlier Romantic/transcendent Yeats. With “In Memory of Major Robert Gregory” and “An Irish Airman Foresees His Death,” Yeats continues the more immanent turn of his early modernist poetry, but “The Wild Swans at Coole” shares many of the same motifs and themes presented in the poems of *In the Seven Woods*, and in

particular, the eponymous poem. Given that the poem shares the same site of inspiration as those in the earlier collection, the poem shares in this context and significance as a site of meaning for the past and the mythological and spiritual significance that Yeats places in Coole/Seven Woods. As stated throughout, desire is a consistent theme through Yeats's twentieth century poetry. In the "Wild Swans at Coole" there's a paradox to this desire that surprisingly flips the binary and reveals how the chaos of the twentieth century may also contribute to the move towards the immanent. While desire has shown to be more towards the out of reach transcendent, in this poem desire connects to Yeats's hope to "move downward" in order to have "all simplified and solidified again," ("Personality..."), and it is one that I will show is complexly and paradoxically related to the transcendent.

Sean Pryor's argument about these intermingling of worlds in "Wild Swans at Coole" is based on "... the poem's first moments {where} the affinity of versifying and counting swans is explicit in the old pun on *numbers*" (435) and sees the use of the swans as a symbol of the discrepancy between the earthly and paradisaical worlds whereby the "verb may even, in this poetic sense, have a transitive force like Pound's 'to write Paradise', so that to number the swans would be to remake them in verse. Yet in the finished poem the swans live in a kind of eternity, an eternity denied to the mortal poet and his temporal song." Pryor asks, "Does the act of versifying the swans reduce them to our world of mutability or redeem verse from that world? What differing worlds are brought together or set apart in the landscape of this poem?" (435-8) Pryor describes the poem as "earthly" and states that the "wild swans are emblems of all the poet lacks and desires – eternal love, unwearying youth – and (in comparison to an earlier poem) all explicit mention of the after-life has disappeared as well" (446). I agree and disagree with Pryor's assessment

because I do think the swans represent the divine, or transcendent, in the ways that he describes, but more than lack and desire, I think it is the poet both coming to grips with reality/change and placing hope in the stark difference between these two worlds.

This poem represents the culmination of two of the major themes I have pointed out in Yeats's development in regards to transcendence and immanence, and I believe Pryor's assessment, while accurate, also overemphasizes the duality of these two worlds in the poem. The first theme I have depicted is Yeats's tendency to view the past as both a symbol of a world that is regrettably lost and as a promise of hope and renewal. It is this complex view of the past that is essential to viewing the swans, as well, in this complex way, not merely as symbols of immortality, or all that the poet is lacking. The second theme is the intermingling of what I've been terming material realism, starting in the twentieth century, with a more traditional romantic idealism that produces transcendent motifs. I contend that this poem, perhaps more than in any other, shows Yeats working out this conflict, and revealing the depth of meaning present in this kind of intermingling of styles. While I also agree that this has a basis in Wordsworth, I would argue that it is because Wordsworth is the romantic most akin to a realistic style. Wordsworth's poetry relied on the sensory for description and the cataloging of personal introspection as keys to meaning. His is a romanticism based in realism.

In "The Wild Swans at Coole" the calm and weary tone, along with the autumn setting, suggests a trodden speaker looking for meaning: "The trees are in their autumn beauty, / The woodland paths are dry, / Under the October twilight the water/ Mirrors a still sky;" (1-4). It is a personal poem, and there is a sense of realism; the poet/narrator is describing the scene of witnessing the wild swans at

Coole in comparison to when he first looked at the swans. Much like Wordsworth in “Ode: Intimations of Immortality,” Yeats is returning to a site of a great spiritual place in nature. Additionally, Yeats in “In the Seven Woods” explored similar themes, and yet, here he is years later. “I have looked upon those brilliant creatures, / And now my heart is sore. / All’s changed since I, hearing at twilight, / The first time on this shore, / The bell-beat of their wings above my head, / Trod with a lighter tread” (lines 12-18). Once again, the main themes of weariness and change inform the poet’s perspective. Now, the difference is, the poet relating this sensory, symbolic experience to his life. The meaning is brought on by the poet’s lived experiences coming into contact and merging with the sensory experience of the material moment, a moment that reveals the earthly, immanent realm, and the value of realism.

Stanza four continues this mix of observation and meaning, but there is a pivot from the poet’s personal experiences with the scene, to the poet beginning to attach meaning to the observation of the swans: “Unwearied still, lover by lover, / They paddle in the cold/ Companionable streams or climb the air;/ Their hearts have not grown old;/ Passion or conquest, wander where they will, / Attend upon them still” (lines 19-24). While the poet’s thoughts guide this interpretation, it moves out towards the swan’s interaction with nature and reality. The swans become an other figure, both in their realistic portrayal and in their ever-increasing role as symbols of transcendence. They are both part of nature and timeless here. It is in the last stanza, when the swans reach their most transcendent figuration, that the speaker becomes detached from the scene into uncertainty and doubt. Again, it starts with a material observation, but quickly moves into imaginative wonder: “But now they drift on the still water, / Mysterious, beautiful;/ Among what rushes will they build, /

By what lake's edge or pool/ Delight men's eyes when I awake some day/ To find they have flown away?" (lines 25-30).

The poet is uncertain of meaning in this poem, relying on twentieth century realism combined with modernist symbolism, but what is produced by these two concepts is simply more uncertainty. It is an important beginning to the collection. The counting and almost plain description is an inventory of a-priori concepts of reality, a reflection on the past and stock-taking of what has previously been postulated or found to be true. In other words, what can the poet use as a platform for meaning and utilize as a schema for further inquiry. Unfortunately, nothing is wholeheartedly endorsed, as Pryor suggests, or explicitly known, as he states. That nothing is explicitly known, although unstable, also provides opportunity. Also, while desire is present in this opportunity, it is not entirely manifest either. In fact, nothing is entirely present or immanent even as the poet catalogues his earthly experience. This suggests the difficulty of articulating the imaginative dimension of the transcendent. Pryor seems to acknowledge this as a possibility before dismissing for more stable and clearly demarcated ground: "new desire\* is born in retreat from the explicit...possible only in a landscape where distance – neither too great nor too small – makes paradise uncertain and difficult to see.... (It) brims...with implicit paradises; intent upon its earthly vision, it keeps abstract, literary or fanciful paradises a little hidden" (451).

Overall, the poem suggests that Yeats's modernism would be marked by romantic imagination over realism, even when a kind of realism, relying on description of landscape and cataloguing the internal thoughts of the speaker is incorporated. "The Wild Swans at Coole" marks Yeats's break from attempts at the realism of Pound and other early twentieth century writers. In 1916, as Yeats is in



the process of writing the poems that would appear in “Wild Swans...,” he writes, in an introduction to Pound’s *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* that “realism is created for... all those whose minds, educated alone by schoolmasters and newspapers are without the memory of beauty and emotional subtlety” (qtd. from Longenbach 253). Additionally, Longenbach states, “Pound knew that Yeats was at heart ‘a romanticist, symbolist, occultist’ because he had already seen the poems of ‘The Wild Swans at Coole’...” (254). Yeats’s rejection of realism as a limited viewpoint and Pound’s assessment of Yeats reveals both a contrast to other modernists and a belief system that allows for transcendence.

The mix of specific historically contextual poems and imaginative poems exploring myth and culture continues in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* with a more abstract view of time and history against the backdrop of modern warfare. A representative poem from this collection, as well as one of Yeats most well-known and discussed poems, “The Second Coming,” is the poem dealing most specifically with the issues of modernity and his belief system’s response to these issues. While Yeats doesn’t publish his philosophical work, *A Vision*, until 1925, his ideas for the work began shortly after his marriage to George Hyde-Lees in 1917 (*A Vision*) and we see in this poem some of those ideas in the poem’s reliance on the gyres and “*Spiritus Mundi*.” In working on the poems for this collection, Yeats told Olivia Shakespear about his connection between history and a deeper spirituality:

One finds that Greeks & Romans were very religious & that their religion was full of all those images you & I have found in vision.... I read many books of this kind now, searching out signs of the whirling gyres of the historical cone as we see it & hoping that by their study I may see deeper into what is to come.

I am writing a series of poems (thoughts suggested by the present state of the world' or some such name). I have written two, & there may be many more. They are not philosophical but simple & passionate, a lamentation over lost peace & lost hope. (qtd. from Foster *Vol. II*, 193).

While Yeats describes these poems as “not philosophical,” he does include some ideas that end up being deeply philosophical; but the initial feeling here reveals that larger view connecting the lost religious feeling to some of the contemporary lost hope of the current age. In fact, “A Second Coming” was thought to be perfectly in line with the philosophy and make clear the emerging “system” of *A Vision* (Foster *Vol. II*, 161).

It is the first stanza of “A Second Coming” that a view of reality as a gyre presents Yeats’s polemical critique of the modern age. It is characterized by a lack of communication, disorder, and chaos all stemming from a larger cyclical breakdown. Yeats describes the situation with matter-of-fact brevity and generality. “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;/ Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,” (lines 3-4). The generality here shows that Yeats’s sees this as a natural conclusion of the age, part of a larger cycle, an inevitable outcome of the immanent world. Additionally, the complexly understated, “Mere anarchy,” with its play on the word “mere” reveals the deflating outcome of the hope and promise of the modern immanent world that was initially optimistic about creating a better world through knowledge, reason, and science. “Anarchy” is an especially poignant word choice, an ironic assessment of all the systems of government that have failed to provide order, purpose, meaning and security, let alone the promised utopias the most optimistic visions of society suggested.

The poem has a mythic quality, a contrast to programmed views of society that have produced a world where, “The best lack all conviction, while the worst/ Are full of passionate intensity” (lines 7-8). The first stanza of “The Second Coming” shows how utopian visions of society built on a modern immanent worldview can easily flip to a dystopian reality. A major component of this propensity for dystopia in modernity is the absolute totalizing view of reality. The immanent worldview can only produce idealistic utopias ironically disconnected from material reality and the complexity of that interaction. This lack of interaction, the disconnection between the real and ideal, leads to single-minded authoritarianism that seeks to implement its vision of the world and hide contrarian viewpoints and evidence. This idealism cannot hold up to material reality and history which is why “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;” (line 3). The line encapsulates the inherent fallibility of modernity’s attempts to construct and believe in a better world through teleological narratives, government systems, industrialization, and the overall promise of Enlightenment thinking.

The position of the speaker’s perspective is emphasized more strongly in the second stanza, one that makes the frustration felt by the twentieth century citizen more acute. The skeptical speaker still believes in a higher power, but there is a hint of doubt and frustration that the teleological narratives of modernity and Christianity are not coming to their inevitable ends when all empirical evidence, in the speaker’s view, points to that conclusion. “Surely some revelation is at hand;/ Surely the Second Coming is at hand.” Then, much like the disruption that occurs in the first stanza, the deconstruction of the narrative occurs, “When a vast image out *Spiritus Mundi* Troubles my sight:...” (lines 12-13). Here, the logos-centered metaphysical and teleological narrative is deconstructed by the poetic convention of

imagery, and on a deeper level, by Yeats's belief in individual vision, but a vision that has a deeper well than the individual perspective, out of "*Spiritus Mundi*." This is where the more spiritual view of religion, and therefore an important implication for transcendence as more than a logical idea, is inherently disruptive.

The poem moves next to the Judeo-Christian transcendent as the pagan philosophy of "*Spiritus Mundi*" produces a troubling image of Christ, borne out of the not completely definable spiritual element of religion and the mythological narrative of Christianity. It is a troubling site, but also a hopeful one in that it does *not* adhere to some caricature or commonplace image of Christ. This image is alive, iconoclastic, and foreboding because it emerges out of a perspective that has reduced it to simple immanent narrative. The image fights against the reduction as well as a simply paradisaical other that would simply serve to affirm the immanent narrative: "A shape with lion body and the head of a man, / A gaze blank as pitiless as the sun, / Is moving its slow thighs" (lines 14-16.). This is a powerful Christ figure, and the apocalyptic progression of history is depicted in the next movement of the poem as "twenty centuries of stony sleep/ Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle," (lines 19-20). This unusual description draws attention to the tension that the Christian narrative causes in Western history, and "vexed" encapsulates this tension. The OED definition for vexed is "troubled, harassed; kept in a disturbed or unquiet state." Vexed is paradoxical, as is a "nightmare" being caused "by a rocking cradle." Vexed suggests that although things are disturbed, they remain in this state.

While the poem's trace of Christianity contains an important element of meaning, it is also disruptive to a staid, fundamental, and stagnant narrative of Christianity, hence the "stony sleep" being "vexed by a rocking cradle." The image of

the cradle contains the trace of the image of Christ as infant, as innocent, in a dormant and protected state. The juxtaposition of the nightmare with this image immediately disrupts and deconstructs this simplistic view and sets up the Christian narrative as something different in this age, and therefore, a part of material history. At the same time, we are left with something radically other and something awaking, creating a much more dynamic interpretation that can evolve, via disruption or a deconstruction of the common narrative: “And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, / Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?” (21-22).

There is in these last two lines a beginning and an ending. These lines have a context specific to both the contemporary modern age of the poem and the Christian narrative context, each deconstructing the other as the poem deconstructs the very logic it rests upon through binary paradox and juxtaposition. While it represents some level of cynicism in its lack of belief in modernity, it also represents how this period revealed a Yeats committed to finding some deeper meaning through his pagan belief system and philosophy, an alternative transcendence with a deep connection to the earthly realm.

“The Second Coming” is such an important poem because its abstractions and imagery confront Christianity in antiquity and modernity, Enlightenment idealism, and the forces of modern warfare, as well as dealing with the major conflict of finding some higher meaning in post-Enlightenment society. This is a case where we do see Yeats putting forth his own personal philosophy, and the conflict it inherently contains in its major leanings towards an occult system confronting a Judeo-Christian cultural legacy. This poem is the clearest representation of my paper’s convergence between issues of modernity, modernism, and the central binary of the immanent and the transcendent. The poem is clearly both searching for some

new messiah, some new faith, looking to the past's mythology and religious iconography while laying out the predicament of a failed modernity and the estrangement and otherness of the past's religious symbols and images. This failure and otherness has caused a chaos and fragmentation that allows for the new to emerge, but this new image is not one recognized, embodying something unknown and possibly horrid. And it's not clear what this image represents, is it good or evil? Is it a new spiritual being or a monster of modernity? Perhaps this ambiguity, this unfamiliarity, this otherness, are all signs of the new age, an age that eschews the flatness of the past, the absoluteness of the past. After all, these are the things that are being critiqued, that have fallen apart, that have allowed for something new to emerge. In the next phase of his work, this will lead to what is a major marker of transcendence in modernism, conveying a fragmented world with moments of transcendence.

### **III. Fragments and Revelations: 1928-1935**

*The Tower* marked a collection of poems that began in the early 1920s but did not come to fruition until a full seven years after *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*. It is at this point that I see Yeats search for meaning beginning to come together. The experimentation phase of modernism has led to a twentieth century style that has matured and become more self-assured. Concurrently, Yeats has mapped out and published his belief system in *A Vision*. In turning to poetry, Yeats is able to explore the major themes more in keeping with his original mission of bringing together heaven and earth. *The Tower* is a culmination of these views and topics. The idea of transcendence and immanence is marked by a larger view of history, an overarching view that includes the metaphysical view of gyres. Ideas about the

artifice of poetry and its connection to transcendence are explored. In this view, Yeats approaches a Derridean context that sees meaning coming from material sources, not transcendent, but that creative act taps into a larger transcendent meaning. This view has its roots in occult philosophy as Demetrios Tryphonopoulos points out in his book *The Celestial Tradition: A Study of Ezra Pound's The Cantos on the Occult and Pound*, and which I will cover in more detail in that chapter. This kind of confidence, maturity, and stability then would be an unlikely source of the fragmentary nature I see in this period. Whereas earlier Yeats's poetry was filled with cynicism, doubt, and experimentation, the move to make things more solid has led to a fragmented view and poetry. In other words, the unity and order of Yeats's metaphysical philosophy in *A Vision* provides a level of stability and meaning, but his poetry, about emotions and the material world is conflicted, ambiguous, and disjointed. Yeats acknowledges this, but does not see them as absolutes, and seeks to incorporate the moments of transcendence in these fragments of reality.

In perhaps the most transcendent of Yeats's poems, "Sailing to Byzantium" reveals a shift back towards pre-modernist Yeats in consciously thinking about the transcendent as a source of meaning. Of course, this Yeats has been impacted by modernist pursuits and there is an obvious change in the tone and foundational beliefs that became more skeptical in the twentieth century. The ancient city associated with Greek antiquity shows that Yeats has moved into a wider conception of transcendence and history than the Irish cultural and nationalist politics movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. R. F. Foster notes that "he had already established the theme of much of his poetry over the next decade, which owed a great deal to the explorations behind *A Vision*: the artist regarding himself in the mirror of history" (*Vol II*. 197-198).

In utilizing Greek myth, Yeats once again has some precedent in the Romantic poetry of Keats, Coleridge and Byron. For this reason, in this poem, Yeats is more explicitly widening his focus and addressing the question of transcendence in Western society. Using Byzantium as setting and destination allows Yeats to utilize both the both imaginative and mythic idealism attached to the transcendent and the materialism of immanent reality, as the city is attached to a real city in history. Similarly, the poem rests on the idea of both desiring and fulfillment, being and becoming, a poem about a place that the speaker is sailing towards: “Caught in that sensual music all neglect/ Monuments of unageing intellect” (lines 7-8). Most of all, however, the poem challenges the idea of the transcendent as the realm of the ideal, as it is the “artifice of eternity.” The poem, therefore, suggests an immanent view as well. Artistic meaning is constructed from the material world, previously explored in earlier poems, as opposed to representing, mirroring, or finding inspiration in a purely transcendent idealistic realm. While there is a similar theme of escape, unlike the previous poems of “Running to Paradise,” and “The Wild Swans at Coole,” which depict the transcendent in idealistic but ambivalent ways, this poem seems to revel in a transcendence that is closer to the immanent world and reliant on the creative productions of humanity.

This idea of constructed artifice could also lead to a lack of unity; a common theme of immanence in modernism is that literature that is concerned with the loss of meaning and fragmentation. Yeats addresses this explicitly in a poem appropriately titled “Fragments,” a minor poem, but one that is directly connected to my argument. Yeats’s short sections suggest an unfinished work, one that does not produce a full picture of meaning, but hints at a larger meaning. For Yeats, experimentation with form and the conscious reduction of words to highlight their



materiality, a modernist trait of immanence, still addresses questions of religious and spiritual transcendence, and by extension, an engagement of those realms with the more immanent, materialistic attention being paid to historical context. Section I is a short four-line stanza: “Locke sank into a swoon;/ The Garden died;/ God took the spinning-jenny/ Out of his side” (lines 1-4). Here, we see Yeats playing with context specific subjects, and as in the other poems of the period, juxtaposing a historical narrative with the Christian one. The critique of logic is seen in the poem’s opening line, as there is not only something absurd about a historical figure like Locke being described in this manner, but Locke is one of the most famous figures of Western logo-centric metaphysical philosophy, so his sinking into a “swoon” has an inherently deconstructive effect on his meaning as a historical character.

The poem also taps into the idea of constructed truth. “Out of a medium’s mouth” means it is mediated. But “Out of nothing;” means it must be created or constructed then. The next two lines suggest some particular substance and context, and evoke image, rather than concrete materiality, so truth does not come of some purely material causality either. The “forest loam” perfectly depicts this sense of immaterial-materiality. It is a move to the organic which challenges the very systemic binary of spirit and matter. It is material, but produces something naturally hybrid, substantively different than the more industrial/mechanistic metaphorical ethos of modern immanent materialism.

The poem’s particular setting, much as in “Sailing to Byzantium,” fosters both a particular concrete place and a mythological one, thus delving into the transcendent context as well. Nineveh is an ancient Middle Eastern/Mesopotamian city and contains an archaic, exotic, mythic trace attached to its historical reality.

One cannot ignore the Western/Eastern and Modern/Classical binary here. The othering of Eastern culture and society, especially in regards to ancient cultures, is a common literary motif in Western literature. This othering also makes for a complementary partner in the othering of the transcendent as radically different from reality. “Nineveh” consequently becomes a site for the real and the otherness of the transcendent. In this sense there is no stable Nineveh, but a constructed one whose reality depends on its context.

This instability and context dependence can be seen in the poem’s close relationship to “The Second Coming” in its reference to Nineveh. Nathan Cervo notes, in an *Explicator* article titled “Yeats: The Second Coming,” that Dante Gabriel Rossetti in his poem “The Burden of Nineveh” “reflects on a ‘Winged beast from Nineveh’ (10),” a reference to the statue in the British Museum. While this analysis is focused on the reference to “The Second Coming,” it opens up a possible interpretation for the allusion in “Fragments.” Cervo shows how in Rossetti’s poem the statue will, ironically, and “in contrast to ‘Christ’s lowly ways,’” come to represent a worshipped figure due to its prominence and figuration in a London cultural center. Cervo sees this same irony in “The Second Coming” in that one should not look to the Apocalypse as a key to reading the poem, but the similarity to the Rossetti poem which is filled with references to the desert, suggesting it is human pride that causes the fall. In contrast, “Fragments” plays on this idea as it is not meant to reach some absolute unity of meaning. Here the reference to Nineveh serves multiple meanings, none of which brings a complete picture as one may yearn to find in other narratives of meaning. Nineveh becomes, then, not an alternative paradise, but rather an alternative approach to meaning.

The reference to myth in “Leda and the Swan” suggests a larger philosophical project in this period and serves to deconstruct the very myth, or history, it relies on in a most violent fashion. One cannot logically deduce the mythic story’s contribution to a divine transcendence as it revolves around the basest of desires and actions. It represents the sharpest critique of the connection between myth and transcendence and forces readers to confront the basest of human desires, of sexuality and violence, connected to power and ego. Similar to “The Second Coming,” it confronts the greatest danger of transcendence, the tendency or chance of the justification for egomaniacal solipsist evil through supposed idealistic transcendent pursuits (one more acutely discussed after the horrors of WWII, but possibly foreshadowing). Yeats makes clear this is a violent act as the poem begins with “A sudden blow: the great wings beating still” (line 1). The next line indicates this comes from “Above the staggering girl...” (line 2). It is not surprising that a god comes from above, but it is surprising this violence comes from above, suggesting the association with the transcendent as above and beyond can also be correspondingly negative in its power. The poem could easily fit into the *Responsibilities* collection, but here the focus is on the power and force contained in the act, and the danger of associating power with beauty. The first stanza emphasizes the helplessness of Leda as the description indicates ensnarement and a total loss of control by the victim to the aggressor. Her “thighs [are] caressed/ By the dark webs;” her “nape [is] caught in his bill,” and finally, “He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.” This is the embodiment of the nightmare that one can envision when the entitlement and will of a transcendent god is combined with the desire and biological need of humanity in an immanent lens. There is some precedence for this in the earlier poem about Celtic mythological gods.

The nightmare of aggression and abuse continues in the second stanza, and the theme of violent unity between an aggressor and an unwilling partner on one level is a frightening existential and psychological depiction of rape. The intention here differs, as it does not seem to be about the experience of rape due to the abstraction of the depiction and the mythological characters that are the subject of the poem. My point is the poem does verge on graphic reality of a painful and sensitive topic, but the purpose still remains metaphorical. I mention this because I think the realism of the experience points to the caustic sharpness of the metaphor that could only be achieved through such pointed visceral questions rather than ephemeral obfuscation. The metaphor would not work without this level of realism, so the poem also stylistically contributes to denouncement of transcendence which is often more associated with fantastical and imaginative styles.

These poems represent a more forceful Yeats poetry, a dramatic and poignant change from an earlier Yeats that struggled to find his new “modern” voice and hemmed around themes of doubt, cynicism, and nostalgia for the past. The critiques of society and classical notions of transcendence are clear even in suggesting the ambivalences of a hybridity between the material world and the spiritual. Yeats here is establishing something new in terms of meaning, not retreating into the familiar. Instead of lamenting what has been lost in society or pointing out doubts about modernity, as was done the earlier stages, the thesis about this new age is put forth in a context that takes into account the whole of history, and the role of both the material and the metaphysical in meaning. This fusion and the chaotic nature of the modernist experiment, of bringing together various ideas, of breaking up the bedrock of classical and modern, produces these fragments, but there is an

emergence of transcendence from within the fragments as opposed to from an absolute far off source. *The Tower* may be above, but it is not out of reach.

#### IV. Later Yeats: Reconciliation and Loss 1935-1939

In later Yeats, there are a few select poems that provide further ideas on the themes I have discussed that bear some recognition. One such group of poems of significance is a series of short poems contained in *The Winding Stair and Other Poems*. “Symbols”, “Spilt Milk,” “The Nineteenth Century and After,” “Statistics,” and “Three Movements” are all six lines or less and are commentaries on the larger questions of modernism and the modern world. Their brevity and content playfully critique the ambitions of modernism while continuing a common theme of regret about the kind of society and life the modern world has produced. Additionally, I believe they are a kind of reflection on the many projects and causes that Yeats has engaged in through his life. Many of the themes are brought together to provide some finality and directed towards how these ideas could impact society. The turn is toward the immanent, but with an eye toward the transcendent, as there is meant to be something left behind that transcends the life and career of the poet. This is similar to Pound’s *Cantos* project in that it is trying to create a better world that can transcend the ills of society. For Yeats too, there is still an idealism if only each person can pursue the right goals, the right occupation, in a metaphysical system of meaning that connects to a socio-political system.

“The Gyres” and “Lapis Lazuli” published in *New Poems* (1938) have a tone of exasperation and hostility as if the speaker has had enough, a tone hinted at previously, but here more apparent. In “The Gyres” this exasperation ironically stems from Yeats’s own metaphysical beliefs, as though the repetitious cycle of the

universe makes the world insignificant: “The gyres! The gyres! Old Rocky Face look forth;/ Things thought too long can be no longer thought/ For beauty dies of beauty, worth of worth, / And ancient lineaments are blotted out” (lines 1-4). This suggests that the speaker is resigned towards accepting that things can be insignificant. The lines also encapsulate a critique of immanent logical thought and support a deconstructive philosophic worldview. The next half of the stanza suggests an upheaval similar to the one seen in “The Second Coming” and more in concert with Yeats’s occult views as he references Empedocles: “Irrational streams of blood are staining earth; Empedocles has thrown all things about;” (lines 5-6). While this seems a tragic view at first, the poet here begins to accept the madness as a truth about the cycle of life that is greater than any logical philosophy. The resulting reaction is one where “We that look on but laugh in tragic joy” (line 8).

In “Lapis Lazuli” we encounter a similarly toned opening stanza where “everybody knows or should know that if nothing drastic is done/ Aeroplane and Zeppelin will come out, / pitch like King Billy bomb-balls in / until the town lie beaten flat” (lines 4-7). Both poems seem to delight in the spectacle of illogical madness and at the same time in the knowledge of a greater wisdom that these iterations are part of a greater cycle that cannot be reduced to the flattening of the modern world. Additionally, the speaker here, while lamenting this, realizes a greater meaning beyond this world and dejected viewpoint, something more accepting than earlier attempts to build on some ancient meaning. The poem goes back to themes established earlier in “Sailing to Byzantium,” the role of the artist, and the role here seems to have little effect on the ordinary world, the world of immanence. Additionally, the poem hits upon a major theme of transcendence seen previously about the materiality of these works in “To a Wealthy Man...,” but has

taken on another meaning in this phase as it relates to “The Gyres,” as to whether or not these works stand through time and what their lasting meaning may be. This a poem about materiality: stages, marble, draperies, Lapis Lazuli, a musical instrument. In this sense, the speaker is reveling in what these material productions can bring, but there is a downside to each as their material nature necessitates.

In the second stanza productions of Hamlet and Lear are stuck in the same machinations, great as they are: “Upon a hundred thousand stages / It cannot grow by an inch or an ounce” (23-24). This is the static world where meaning is perpetually contained by its own limits and the structural containment of meaning. The cyclical nature is depicted in the next stanza, “All things fall and are built again / And those that build them again are gay” (35-36). This stanza is “The Gyre’s” connection. One’s happiness in this scenario is a bit promising, but it is tinged by the knowledge that these “things” will fall. This has a melancholic perpetual cycle tone that is bittersweet. It leaves one wanting something more, but also minimizes some of the grandness to these projects of modernism that are obsessed with creating something new. This can be seen as a change in tone to Yeats’s views on modernism, the desire to create something. It is still valuable, but nothing is entirely new or permanent. Modernism’s avant-garde and experimental aspects have been a valuable move away from the static and flat character of Victorian poetry and modernity’s mechanical ethos, but they also run the risk of falling victim to their own limitations if pressed too far. This collection and poem utilizes the larger aspect of modernism, critiquing the totalizing narrative of modernity, and seeking a higher meaning. This is also where we encounter the ideas of immanence and transcendence that continue to be explored.

The last section of the poem covering two stanzas is where the poem most closely mirrors Yeats's own "Sailing to Byzantium," and Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn." In "Sailing to Byzantium" Yeats suggested a place that was artifice but also a sublime reality blurring the line between the immanent and transcendent, and bringing myth, artistic creation, and a transcendent reality together. It was also a place that blurred the line between mortality and immortality, traits associated with an immanent/transcendent binary. "Ode on a Grecian Urn" suggests that art and the art object have the ability in its aesthetic value to tap into a greater truth that implies something transcendent and can embody that ideal. In "Lapis Lazuli" there are many parallels. The poem ends with an object that has preserved a living moment, similar to the Grecian urn. In this case, Yeats is fairly direct with his symbols of the eternal and ephemeral, the eternal represented by "a long-legged bird / A symbol of longevity" flying over the three "Chinamen" in the engraving. The use of the bird as the eternal evokes the wild swans at Coole, in this case, the bird flying over them clearly indicates a transcendent presence to contrast but also elevate their mortal and particular excursion. The bird is connected to the humans through the fact that they share a life in the natural world, but the bird represents the supernatural aspect of the natural world as well, something that humanity is capable of tapping into. This is communicated by the poet's imagined scenario of them sitting, contemplating life's tragedies, and listening to the musician play, "Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes, / Their ancient, glittering eyes, are gay" (55-56). This scene is ephemeral as it involves the playing of music, the imagination of the speaker, the thoughts of the subjects, but the poem, invoking it through the carving preserving the subjects, mixes in the eternal element. The message of the object exceeds its materiality as the poet's reception of the image frozen in time gives



it new life in the poem. The poem comes to peace with mortality and the transient because it views them as part of something more, something that is ultimately transcendent because it continues to exist and have meaning.

In terms of Yeats's career arc, it shows that despite anything new that comes from modernity or modernism, he sees the importance of the past and its existence as part of a larger meaning. This also goes for the artistic projects of the present. Poets are "gay" because they tap into something greater, something beyond the present even when the threat of destruction introduced in the opening stanza is apparent. In this view then, yes, the secular age, modernity's emphasis on the quantifiable, the flattening of the world, are all cause for concern in so far as they discourage the creation of works that tap into this larger reality, but no time period is divorced from this greater reality which makes it possible to access, provided the right medium and mind-set, that values the eternal in the experience of the ephemeral.

"Among School Children" and "Circus Animals Desertion," two of Yeats's later poems, explore similar themes. I want to briefly discuss Helen Vendler's view of the poems because it shows some parallels to my own view, but my argument provides a way to see these poems in a larger historical and cultural context where Vendler's view narrows it down to a philosophy on how to view a singular life cycle. In Vendler's chapter on Yeats from her book, *Poets Thinking: Pope, Whitman, Dickinson, Yeats*, she argues that the two poems here show a Yeats that is battling with a search for meaning and examining the role of thought and imagery in his life and work. Her analysis concludes with importance of the structure of the poems and the effect it has on readers, seeing something worthwhile in the experience of the poems as the answer to the meaning that Yeats is looking for in the poems. Both

poems search for images to convey poetic meaning but are frustrated by life and by process. In each poem, in Vendler's view, that process and the product that it leads to are the reward. I think this shows a limited view of the poems.

In "Among School Children" Vendler shows that Yeats is contemplating the end of his life, what its value is, what his early experiences have led to. She sets up the poem's formal aspects as diptych's and shows how the poem ends in a perfect stanza of the ottava rima form after altering it previously; this is meant to show some finality to the poem's struggle to make sense of life in old age. Key to this, that I find compelling, is the attention to the cultural ideas the poem conveys about Western binaries:

The antinomies here are labor versus spontaneous blossoming or voluntary dancing, mortified body versus erotic body, beauty versus the despair it occasions in its frustrated worshipper, and an effortless wisdom versus the scholar's ruined eyes. (97)

While Vendler rightly brings attention to these aspects, she dismisses them as problems the poem is trying to solve. Whereas, she ends here analysis with the dancer dancing symbolizing the material nature of fate and the reactions of the subject as he/she as the "dancer" dances through life according to the beats and sounds that influence the moves of the subject; I see this poem as an example of this arc where Yeats is grappling with these larger issues of modernity. This is one example of a later poem where Yeats is using his life and poetic career as an allegory for the larger issues of modernity and the secular age. In fact, his contemplation here shows the importance of the past and the present. The "Dancer Dancing" is like the musician of "Lapis Lazuli," an inconclusive, relative ending. The "Dancer Dancing" is meant to show ambiguity; the past stays with one's self, just as the past

stays with the present age. Way leads onto way, not with choreographed logical precision like a machine, but with spontaneity and missteps.

As I mentioned previously, I see the later Yeats as taking stock in his career and life and utilizing these poems as an allegory for the larger movements of history, exploring meaning and fullness in the modern age, the significance of the past on the present, and the impact of modernism in its experimentation and critique of modernity. In "Circus Animals Desertion" this stock-taking and examination of meaning is most apparent. For Vendler, the poem is about a poet whose well of images has run out and his own past uses of images have gone stale or fail to meet the present needs. Again, I agree with Vendler's premise here, but its narrow focus fails to take into account that Yeats's poetry has a larger historical context. Yeats's poetry has frequently used time and the past as important aspects of meaning, and an issue that has been central to his poetry's themes. As Martin McKinsey argued in his article, "Classicism and Colonial Retrenchment in W. B. Yeats's "No Second Troy,"" the role of Greek myth and epic is something that Yeats may have rejected as a possibility for present day Ireland in "No Second Troy," but he also continued to see Maud Gonne as a symbol of Greek beauty and a Hellenic figure. McKinsey and Vendler both note the importance of genre in the role of meaning too. Yeats attempted many different genre styles; drama, epic, and a realist novel; but ultimately comes back to lyric poetry. In Vendler's view this poem then is important in its use of images and thoughts as it is these qualities that make up the poem genre. Since these are the two central aspects of the poem genre and the well of imagery has dried up, the poet must rely on thought. This takes him into the process of deciphering why the well has dried up and shows a reflective pensive state, ultimately becoming about showing the importance of imagery. I think

Vendler doesn't properly acknowledge the importance of imagery in terms of its relationship to symbolism, and why these examples show an unfulfilled poet, and what that means for the present state. For me, this leads to the question of whether or not lyric poetry can express the meaning that is needed for the twentieth century culture? The poem questions whether it is large enough to contain some higher, grander meaning that was present in the Classical age, but can also speak to the issues of mechanization and flatness of modernity, and the chaos and fragments of twentieth century modernist society, that is often expressed in modernism.

I would like to end by looking at "Parnell" and "What Was Lost" because they encapsulate the main idea of the immanent worldview and loss of faith that is a major component of the modernist project. There is what I would like to call a playfulness in these poems, not an irreverent or cynical playfulness that would be indicative of the modern malaise, but rather a playfulness that corresponds to a Derridean view of unstable meaning, a lack of a center that points to a movement towards a more postmodern worldview. While middle Yeats lamented this lack of center, and the diminution of meaning, later Yeats revels in it. There is an irony here, but that becomes part of the appeal, a movement towards the thing itself that marked later realism. That is, the poem, celebrates itself and all that characterizes it, rather than a means to an end. It's the kind of inherent value that in a modern or classical world was attached to an absolute beyond the material, and also came under attack in a modern world that was increasingly about utilitarian value.

The antidote, ironically, is not a cure, but the thing itself. This is significant because it allows for inherent value without reverting to an absolute, totalizing view of the world. For example, in "Parnell," the two line "poem" simply states, "Parnell came down the road, he said to a cheering man;/ 'Ireland shall get her freedom and

you still break stone.” While we still have the very epitome of the modern immanent subject, we do not have the grandiose and poetic tone of a “Second Coming” where “the best lack all conviction.” It’s a simple gesture; the hero is not coming with fanfare or triumph. Although the great feat and ideal of freedom has been accomplished, he simply “came down the road.” This is the culmination of the flattening effect that Yeats sought in his earliest modernist poetry, but this is flattening taken to the extreme. Parnell’s “quote” as well is a kind of flattening, and, on first read, would seem to suggest a negative and cynical tone, the kind Yeats has taken on at times in his lament of missed opportunities and lost hope. But I would like to suggest there is trickery and double-meaning in this line, that the simplicity that flattens the idealism and hardship of a “successful” revolution and freedom that seems to diminish it, in actuality, celebrates what it has wrought, and that is the simplicity of the thing itself. It is the very alternative to a grand and absolute/totalizing narrative.

And while embracing the simplicity of objectivity and realism, it also does not place this simplicity as the pinnacle of experience or meaning either. In other words, it is a move away from a logos-metaphysical system of meaning that is a key component of the modern narratives’ inevitable movement towards the modern malaise. When Parnell says to the cheering man, “you still break stone,” it seems to suggest an accusation of the frivolity of the Irish working masses, and this would be in keeping with some of Yeats elitist views, but I would like to suggest rather that there is a populist nobleness here not previously seen in Yeats’s poetry and it is due to the acknowledgment of the value of returning to simplicity. The simplicity of this action is that at the end of the alternating binary of the grand projects of modernity and the modern malaise, there is the simple reality that continues to exist, that

gives a culture its character, and, on a deeper level, its meaning, its connection to the past. Transcendence becomes a very simple act, but one that takes place in reality, in the masses, on the immanent level, and is not solely an ideological, imaginative, faith or logic-based concept or reality.

Similarly, “What was Lost” would seem to suggest either a cynical or hopelessly defeated lamentation indicative of the modern malaise. But much like Parnell, the main feature of the poem is irony as indicated by the poem’s opening line: “I sing what was lost and dread what was won” (line 1). This line most succinctly encapsulates Yeats’s view of the modern world. Although one may interpret the line as a reference to the Irish struggle and revolution, it makes the most sense in the context of Yeats’s poetry overwhelmingly lamenting and trying to revive what has been lost in the modern world as well as critiquing modernity. Much like many of the poems during this phase, it is a reflection on his poetic career and life as a poet. The next two lines are also common motifs of Yeats’s poetry, the cyclical and the archaic: “I walk in a battle fought over again / My king a lost king, and lost soldiers my men;” (lines 2-3). Again, the language suggests that the context of the “war” is a much larger one; the motif of loss takes the form of the archaic leader of a classical heroic world and the soldiers, a term that could be applicable classical and modern times. The motif of loss takes on a different connotation, one of being misplaced, another feature of the modern world, a lack of orientation.

The theme of lack of orientation is emphasized by the “ironic” features of the poem. The poem favors chiasmus over parallelism in line 3 and again in line 4, “Feet to the Rising and Setting may run.” Line 4 contains other confusions such as beginning with “Feet,” as opposed to the head, and having “run” close the line that contains “Rising” and “Setting.” Again, like “Parnell,” the poem, with all its seeming

confusion, comes back to a simple act, and like the cheering man, the poem ends on a stone aggressively acted upon. In this case, there is an abstract “they,” whose antecedent is the “lost soldiers my men,” of line 3. “The always beat on the same small stone” (line 5). The last line of this poem then reflects a similar subject, the commoner, a similar continuity, “always beat,” and the same object, the stone. Yeats makes the case for humble work and realism that focuses on the smallest object as an alternative to the grand narratives of modernity, and a metaphor for poetic work. It is not a major pronouncement, but a deeper understanding of the meaningful act of common work whose poetry is often overlooked.

At the same time, I do not want to suggest that this is the answer to all of life’s questions of meaning, nor a naive romanticization of work. There is an awareness of futility in these poems, a necessary one that realizes both its smallness and its repetitiveness. This awareness suggests something greater in its awareness; its meaning comes in the consciousness that there is something greater, making it worthwhile and meaningful to still break the stone and always beat on the same small stone.

We see in Yeats’s poetic arc a strong attention to romanticized ideals of the transcendent interacting with a strong awareness of the modern immanent worldview in both form and content during the twentieth century modernist period. The tension between this binary is a central concern of many poems, and in the process deconstructs and destabilizes many of the assumptions and identifying features of these two “realities.” In fact, reality as well becomes destabilized when the bedrock of the Modern Western worldview is put to the task. In the early twentieth century, Yeats is polarized by these two spheres. On the one hand, he is still exploring the tropes and ideas of Romantic idealism, but on the other,

experimenting and leaning towards the more empirical viewpoint of historical content and the material realism of Victorian literature. A dominant theme and conflict is seen through an alternating cynicism about the modern world and a sense of loss and hopelessness. At the same time, the speakers of Yeats's poetry often paradoxically, and due to Yeats's cyclical metaphysical philosophy, find hope in the classical civilizations and cultures made new. The poems of *The Tower* and *Responsibilities*, on the other hand, begin to explore the images and possibilities of a destabilized worldview. While not providing simple answers, they open up a dialogue that reinvents one's conception of modernity, and the binary of transcendence and immanence. Images and motifs of both in close proximity and in dialogue produce a worldview that is unstable but whose deconstruction opens up spaces for new ideologies and realities to exist. In the end, I believe, Yeats's poetry finds stability in a simplicity and self-consciousness that exists only by virtue of this upheaval, and it is why the image of a stone can contain so much meaning. In the closing of this arc, meaning doesn't come from grandiose logos-centered, totalizing projects of modernity, but from the dialogue and deconstruction of the major tenets of transcendence and immanence that are the basis of the tension in the modern worldview.



## Chapter 2: James Joyce's *Ulysses* – Exploring the Limits and Transcendent Possibilities of Modernity and Modernism

In James Joyce's *Ulysses* the transcendent/immanent binary is explored through the novel's themes, characters, and stylistic innovations. Similar to the other modernist writers in my dissertation, Joyce is heavily influenced by both Romantic and Naturalist movements, as well as the contemporary secular views of Western society and the Catholic tradition of his homeland. This produces in *Ulysses* a complex view of meaning, and a main premise of the novel, that views the loss of transcendence as a serious, but not hopeless, concern. While many critics want to view Joyce as committed to a secular-realist position, and see him as entrenched in that cultural milieu, I believe his employment of mythology and religious ideas in *Ulysses* reflects a genuine articulation of the need for belief and a transcendent reality. On the other hand, *Ulysses* also reflects the Enlightenment insights and perspectives that critique some of the issues that have plagued transcendent belief systems and brought about a greater understanding of the natural or immanent world.

One area where the immanent view is reflected is in Joyce's style which shows a deep commitment to the scientifically-influenced objectivism and adherence to "reality" of late nineteenth and early twentieth century naturalism. While many critics have noted Joyce's connection to naturalism in *Dubliners* and the early episodes of *Ulysses*, I want to make it clear I am referring to in terms of naturalism. Naturalism, cited in *The New Dictionary of the History of Ideas* as "fiction that exaggerates the techniques of realism, sacrificing prose style and depth of characterization for an exhaustive description of the external, observable world"

(1601). Joyce only partly fits this definition because his “exhaustive description” is mostly focused on the internal thoughts of the characters and couldn’t be said to be “sacrificing...depth of characterization.” I would argue that there is also a precedent for characterization in naturalism in the use of interior monologue that may be associated with the “realism” of Jane Austen, as the use of third person interior monologue is a noted distinguishing feature. Exaggeration of realism is most certainly an aspect of Joyce’s early episodes’ style in that Joyce is looking to capture, mimetically, the reality of his characters and the reality of the environment of his characters and setting. The immanent view is also reflected thematically, throughout, in doubts about religion and the influence of history and society on the Irish people. Additionally, Buck Mulligan represents a strongly scientific worldview, while many of Leopold Bloom’s thoughts are of a scientific nature.

Joyce’s hyper-awareness of realism as a literary style and his commitment to portraying reality reflects the immanent worldview of empiricism. Kevin Dettmar and John Gordon take opposing positions in regards to Joyce’s style as indicative of his commitment to realism. Gordon maintains that Joyce was absolutely committed to maintaining adherence to “reality,” while Dettmar believes Joyce’s exaggerations of mimesis mocked such a commitment to form and content. It is my contention that such commitment is purposefully ambiguous: on the one hand acknowledging the importance and value of empiricism, and on the other, conscious of its limits and confinements. *Ulysses* discovers that material, empirical reality does not adequately explain existence and only conveys the knowledge and meaning of its material domain while evidence of other truths and meaning are still viable and wanting. As the novel develops it shows the limitation of the naturalist view and style, and, even

in the early, initial style episodes begins to show moments of this style and view breaking down.

This breakdown and evidence of the style's limitations increases in the middle episodes. The novel's experimentations with style and point of view in the later episodes reveal the text's searching for meaning. While there are still traces of the naturalist style, the novel's fragmentation, multiplicity, and attempts to articulate meaning through a variety of stylistic techniques show the inadequacy of the naturalist style and the empirical perspective, allowing for a complex, varied, and deeper meaning than the immanent-transcendent binary of modernity offers. In this view, there are moments of transcendence and immanence, but neither coheres into a dominant, absolute view of meaning and reality. *Ulysses*, as a result, suggests that the use of elements of both empirical and spiritual truth in a decentered and varied way is a possible route to a deeper and new understanding of meaning and reality.

The transcendent view can be seen in the many examples of religious doctrine and experience explored in the novel, and the mystical and mythical other, that fill the novel's episodic narrative. While not as explicitly paganist as Yeats's or Pound's construction of meaning and spiritual beliefs, Joyce's *Ulysses* explores and utilizes alternatives to Christian dogma, as well as showing evidence of occult beliefs in seeing a connection between the physical world and a metaphysical one. And while for my purposes I am drawing a sharp distinction between the immanent/empirical and transcendent/idealist, the novel often incorporates a hybrid delineation, in keeping with my view that these modernist texts deconstruct this Western Enlightenment cultural binary. Ultimately, it is my argument that Joyce's *Ulysses* as a modernist text does not take an absolute position in regards to

immanence and transcendence, but utilizes and incorporates both, revealing the necessity, limits and possibilities of each in their construction of meaning.

My view of the hybridity between the immanent and transcendent shares a similarity with Stephen Sicari's view outlined in his text, *Modernist Humanism and the Men of 1914*. Much of the basis for this work and its relationship to my own was discussed in my introduction. As it relates to *Ulysses* and Joyce, there are specific parallels as well. The main premise for Sicari is a Christian response by Joyce to the issues of Platonism. The issue of the Platonic ideal which separates the mind from the body sets up an easy cynical debunking of such idealism. Joyce addresses these concerns in his previous works when the characters struggle to elevate beyond their material world. For Sicari, Joyce's use of the body and the theme of love in *Ulysses* are evidence of a Christian humanism that presents a worldview that solves this issue. It also has the added meaning of responding to secular humanism in the use of the term. In my view, I see the binary being about transcendence and immanence, so Christianity and the Platonic would both contain elements of transcendence and immanence, and neither would necessarily solve this issue, but rather operate out of this tension. Sicari's use of the idea of Christian incarnation, the unity between the material world and the Christian transcendent is an element of a solution to the problem of meaning in modernity, but I would suggest comes too close to proposing itself as the solution, an absolute view that *Ulysses* wants to avoid.

My reading of Taylor suggests that the secular- post-Enlightenment age has diminished the kind of thinking that privileges the transcendent, so, in my view, both Christianity and Platonism, being pre-modern, privilege the transcendent and see the immanent as something to conquer or overcome. Sicari, through my lens of

the immanent/transcendent binary, would, I believe, agree with the idea that they both contain this binary, but Platonism's (along with Cartesian and Enlightenment thinking) privileging of the mind as transcendent and the body as immanent is problematic for Joyce. Christian humanism, on the other hand, provides a way to find a middle ground that values both the body (immanence) and the mind or the ideal (transcendence). For this to be true, Sicari cites "a tradition of Christian writing [Augustine, Dante, Rabelais, and Swift] that makes the body central to its understanding of human nature and our destinies" (89). The transcendent aspect of this view relies on the idea that Joyce in *Ulysses* is able to "elevate what had been reduced by skepticism and doubt" (89) in seeing Bloom as a Christ-like figure through acts of love and forgiveness, as well as associations that recall the ideas of Christian transcendence in depicting Bloom as "the traditional figure of hypostasis" (88).

My own view has been shaped by Sicari's work, so I share many similar ideas as well as a similar framework. I do see several interrelated differences, however, that I will develop through the chapter. First, I'm not making a claim about Joyce's artistic intention as a central focus of my interpretation. Sicari's argument is focused around the idea that Joyce's modernist project is trying to resolve this tension, clear out the debris, and put something valuable and worthwhile in its place. While I do consider Joyce's intentionality as an important part of the meaning of the text, and will be considering that context in shaping my interpretation, I view the meaning of the text as shaped by larger socio-historical and cultural forces along with Joyce's specific social and cultural milieu. Also, in analyzing the text, I will be considering language's connotations and traces of meaning and the system of meaning constructed by the text of *Ulysses*. Some may

argue that one must choose a particular paradigm, but I believe a text like *Ulysses* must be viewed in this varied way, and I attempt to make sense of the various contexts and influences without falling into too many contradictions or unclear ambiguities. Also, as I have already discussed, I see a much more pronounced binary between the immanent and transcendent due to the Western cultural history that has been outlined. While I think Sicari makes a strong case for a Christian humanism, I would still argue that Christianity is a pre-Modern source of the transcendent. Although the body and the idea that Christ lived within history, along with early modern Christian texts make a compelling argument for seeing value in the immanent world, it is still the transcendent power of Christianity that is emphasized through redemption and ascension. I don't see the value of the material world and the scientific viewpoint coming primarily from a Christian worldview in *Ulysses*.

While I disagree with John Gordon's view in *Joyce and Reality: the empirical strikes back* that Joyce is strictly a "realist," I do think Joyce sees value and importance in incorporating a materially "realist" perspective in portraying reality in literary works. The point, however, is that there is more to reality, a portrayal that only accounts for material reality misses the larger meaning, misses a large aspect of reality, and misses the spiritual nature of humanity. *Ulysses* incorporates a variety of viewpoints that try to convey this message which is harder to find and has become diminished in modernity and the secular age. Christianity is one such force and source of meaning because of its emphasis on the transcendent, and its pre-modern origin; its otherness, deconstructs the stability of modern immanent-transcendent binary which would perpetuate the status quo as a system of meaning and keep the transcendent inferior. To suggest that Christianity is the answer for

this issue of meaning would turn it back to the former way, and only be illusionary and facile, as it just reverses course. For me, Christianity is a destabilizing force, not a resolution. Sicari approaches this similar idea when discussing the criticism of the progressive nature of modernity, citing God being described as a “shout in the street” by Stephen Dedalus in “Nestor.” I would argue, however, that he reverses course in tying everything back to a Christian narrative. I want to take the “shout in the street” a step further and say that this is meant to show that there are moments of breakthroughs of the systems of meaning that prevent it from coalescing into an absolute meaning.

To put this in Taylor’s terms, *Ulysses* is filled with “limit experiences,” the sense that there is something more and other that cannot fit into the worldly experience. Another way to say this is succinctly captured by Dwight Eddins in an essay that begins by paraphrasing Hugh Kenner’s position that “*Ulysses* is a comedy of finitude, an interplay of correspondences within a closed set designed to suggest the exhaustion of possibilities” (804). The “comedy of finitude, an interplay of correspondences within a closed set” could characterize the deconstruction framework as it relates to specific contexts and structural fields, and is the reason why Derrida critiques Western metaphysics that make claims about transcendence. And while Derrida’s critique shows how these logical systems can only make claims about the immanent world and relies on an immanent context for meaning, it shows a limit to the immanent world and logical systems in the same way *Ulysses* does as a closed text. Perhaps, then, the concept of transcendence takes on a new meaning as well. The transcendent provides a way out of the immanent, stagnant, closed system that would perpetuate itself. While contained in the deconstructive spaces of the system, it is never wholly integrated because it is inherently outside the system.

*Ulysses*, with its plethora of meanings, layers of encyclopedic references, and ironic humor is a text that questions any single worldview or system of meaning, and challenges those worldviews in the process. “A double laughter, [Derrida argues], runs through the text: a sardonic, triumphant laughter that takes pleasure in the work's totalizing power, and a light, dancing laughter that opens the work to otherness” (Attridge *Kindle Locations 7045-7046*). In this light, I will be explaining how the text confronts ideas that show both the value and limitations of reason and scientific knowledge on the one hand, and on the other, the way that the transcendent, despite being diminished in the secular age of modernity, in this text disrupts and provides moments of a deeper meaning.

I have divided the chapter into three major sections. In the first section I deal with the “Telemachiad” episodes of Stephen and the immanent and naturalist ideas presented in the initial style of the early episodes. I start here to show that how the novel conveys, legitimately, some of the truths of a worldview that values the material world and an objective reality. These episodes also begin to show the limitations of this worldview, conflicts in its logic, and additional layers of religious meaning that go unacknowledged in a strict materialist view. In the next section, I draw on episodes from the early and middle episodes to show how the novel/text’s use of the naturalist style begins to break down and reveal moments of transcendence. In these episodes, there is still evidence of the naturalist style and themes in the narrative, but the emergence of ambiguities and confusions cause the alternative transcendent view to momentarily break through. This section is a bridge between first episodes and the later episodes which I address in my next section dealing with the experimentation and stylistic innovations of the later episodes. The later episodes abandon the naturalist style, but still are concerned



with dominant worldview of modernity, the attention to a materialist viewpoint. These stylistic innovations produce fragments that allow clearer moments of transcendence to break through, showing possibilities for a transcendent viewpoint in modernity and breaking down the binary. Lastly, I show how the novel's final three episodes reflect on this othered experience, and the breaking through of the transcendent to find something that is sustainable and dynamic. The novel's final episodes suggest a new paradigm that avoids absolutes, but also finds value in the contextual truths in a materialist and a transcendent view of the universe.

### **I. Themes and Limits of the Immanent-Naturalist Perspective in the Early Episodes**

The first three episodes centered on Stephen Dedalus and the following three episodes characterized by the "initial style" deal most specifically with themes of immanence and adhere to the naturalist style that fits such themes. I will be concentrating on the novel's first four episodes in this section because I see them as providing the most direct exposition of the naturalist style and immanent themes of the novel. Subsequent episodes will also deal with similar immanent themes, but the novel's changes in style and experimentation with language, voice, and the novel form produce new ideas that I want to address separately. While I see themes about the material world and spiritual or religious concerns running through the novel and will need to come back to them, I think the novel deals with these ideas differently in the first four episodes.

As I noted in the introduction, I am associating modernity with the dominance of the immanent view that privileges a materialist and rational view of the world. I have proposed that the naturalist style's emphasis on material reality and a deterministic view is an articulation of that modernity. For this reason, I see

the first four episodes of *Ulysses*, the most naturalist in style and providing the novel's exposition, as integral to my argument. In these first four episodes, Joyce picks up on the themes and naturalist style of *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* that were exemplary and notable, but not a radical departure from the fiction style of short stories and novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The third person interior monologue, the use of detailed description, themes of idealism and social determinism were all familiar terrain. It makes sense that Joyce begins the novel in this familiar domain as the novel is meant to explore the epoch of modernity along with the contemporary culture of twentieth century Europe. This is another example of the larger historical framework of modernity intersecting with the specificity of the naturalist movement in literature. By beginning in this fashion, with the main character and a similar naturalist style of *A Portrait...*, Joyce is establishing that these are the ideas and the cultural ethos that provide the basis for his epic novel; the themes and issues the novel will either build on or challenge, but ultimately be responding to. These episodes help to set up the structures that are later deconstructed in the text's experimentation in style and content that produce the ambiguities in the binary.

In the first four episodes of *Ulysses*, Joyce introduces the themes of modernity that are the most evident and critical in the setting of nineteenth and twentieth century Western industrial and secular society. While it is the immanent ideas and values that dominate the style and themes, in conjunction with their dominance in the society, these episodes also display possibilities for transcendence in accordance with the immanent-transcendent binary of Western culture. In keeping with my theoretical basis of Taylor and Derrida, these episodes' use of the naturalist style and immanent themes reveal this system of meaning's limitations

and result in the limit experiences that Taylor describes in *A Secular Age*. This kind of limit experience is in keeping with a modern experience and the basis for the opening chapters because it relies on the belief that there is some base level of meaning in the empirical-material world that has replaced the superstitions of the pre-modern world, but also increasingly aware that the experience of the world suggest that something is lacking in this new empirical-materialist belief. It is my contention that Joyce begins with an emphasis on the materialist-naturalist view and style in order to show the limitations of just such a view.

Concomitant with this limited viewpoint are the themes and issues that one would associate with a culture that is predicated on the immanent-transcendent binary in a modern materialist perspective. In a Derridean context, these first four episodes establish the signs of a modern system of meaning that will be explored and deconstructed through the text. The themes and issues that arise from this viewpoint are also contained in the modernist projects of Yeats and Pound that I cover in the other chapters. The immanent themes and issues of cynicism and doubt, the material body, and the feeling of exile, reflect the dominant themes of the episodes. On the other hand, the transcendent themes are obscured by the immanent overtones that precede them, and many times are couched in the dominant terms and given an othered and archaic dimension. I hesitate to name these transcendent moments explicitly as I did with the immanent because I believe they are purposefully less transparent. Because of the lesser attention in the binary, their presence is often felt in their absence, or in more ambiguous terms. For clarity's sake, however, I will be discussing themes of religion, idealism, hope, heroism, and love as signs or markers of transcendence.

Just as *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* cleverly begins its story with “Once upon a time,” so too does *Ulysses* begin with a clever bit of misdirection that hints at a deeper meaning. The first pages of the novel couch religious symbolism in the viewpoint of Buck Mulligan, the mocker and cynic of such things. Mulligan is often cited as a cynic or realist and his character has a “real life” inspiration whom Joyce viewed with ambivalence (Bowker 77). In Mulligan’s opening monologue, the symbols of faith and transcendence are presented in an othered context highlighting their alterity and *différance* in this stripped down common setting: “Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed...He held the bowl aloft and intoned: -- *introibo ad altare Dei*” (1. 1-6). There are several differences conjured up here in Mulligan’s speech. The first, the phrase, “*introibo ad altare Dei*,” (I will go up to God’s altar), is reverent and steeped with meaning in the Judeo-Christian covenant with God, a promise of faith and communion. This is the explicitly religious tradition where the transcendent was an inherent given in the meaning of life. The line itself, however, is a reference to the Latin mass of Catholicism that dominated religious life of Ireland for centuries. While mass is meant to be a kind of direct experience with God, by virtue of its function as a ritual to mediate that experience, the line itself is indicative of that difference; its very utterance arises out of that need and, therefore, its meaning is dependent on this mediated/distant context. This gap between the earthly realm and the divine, of course, is fundamental to religious faith, and has always been a feature of religious faith and practice, and is, therefore, not unique to a modern immanent world, but it does become more problematic in the modern immanent world when truth and reality become associated with empiricism and the immediate sensory world.

Faith has, by definition, always been a difficult tenet of religious belief, but modernity's commitment to rationality and empirical data attacks the fundamental nature of faith. When viewed through the Enlightenment context and the progressive narrative of modernity, religious faith is seen as an archaic, naïve vestige of the past. Although this gap is a necessary component of religious faith, when one looks to the context of the church as a modern social institution of political and historical origins and influence, the line fades further from its source of uplifting transcendent meaning. The Mass ritual becomes a symbol of that institutional history and takes on this meaning of power and influence. Further, and more particularly, its meaning is influenced by the Roman Catholic Church's effect on the socio-political and cultural life of Ireland. Every Joyce scholar I've encountered agrees that Joyce was critical of this aspect of the institutional control and power of the Catholic Church. Mulligan's invocation suggests this, but has an additional mocking context, another removal from the line's context in that it takes a mocking form in the guise of "a bowl of lather" and "a razor lay(ed) cross." (1.) Gifford's notes on *Ulysses* also remind us that this also recalls, in a "mocking" tone, the calling on the muse of epic poetry as occurs in *The Odyssey* (13), another possibility for the construction of transcendent meaning.

Many who argue for *Ulysses* as a text devoid of religious context and a connection to the transcendent, such as Geert Lernout and John Gordon, both of whom I will discuss in detail shortly, rely on a one-dimensional view of their interpretation of Joyce's views on religion. While I agree that the immanent view is presented through Mulligan's cynical take, what I have shown is that the religious context is still important to the meaning here. The mocking usage and tone, while important to the context, does not preclude the reverent and transcendent tone of

the scene and lines. In fact, there is support for a stronger tone and meaning in the face of this contradiction as it makes one more aware of the history and reverential quality.

Ironically, Mulligan's mockery frees that institutional context that is marked by the ennui and the flattening of meaning that most scholars agree Joyce is critiquing. While Mulligan's aim is mostly likely twofold, mocking the religious beliefs as well as the institution, in the satirical dimension attached to the latter, he frees it from the staid and cold context of the institution. On this level then, Mulligan's mockery is appropriate and effective, but as I have shown there still exists the reverent quality, and a deeper insight into the displacement of the spiritual communion that is intended in the Eucharist by the layers of convention in the modern rituals of the mediated institutional experience of the Church. This layered meaning of transcendence and immanence as expressed through *différance* and alterity continues in the inculcation of Stephen, "--The mockery of it! he said gaily. Your absurd name, an ancient Greek!" (1.34). This Greek myth connection is a reason why I consider Christianity not to be the only transcendent aspect of the text. For Mulligan then, either all things outside of the present immediate context, all things that are "other," are not to be taken seriously, or the connection between classical meaning and transcendence simply is incompatible with present modern society context.

In this case, I don't think the two are mutually exclusive, and could actually serve to dually strengthen Mulligan's view. I say this because Mulligan's viewpoint is both a fair critique and a limited oversimplification (similar to how Joyce views objective realism, an important development, but limited in scope). In Mulligan's view then there is no room for transcendent meaning and hallowed symbols of a

larger view of reality. On the one hand, it's a fair critique of modern society. Reverence and spiritual meaning do not make sense in the modern world, and a cynical worldview seems to be a closer fit for this reality. Since we are in the naturalist phase of the novel, it makes sense to have a character in sync with and determined by the immanent/modern ethos of contemporary society.

The novel, even in its most naturalist phase suggests, through Mulligan's absolute cynicism and closed-mindedness, that there must be more. Just as in Dettmar's view, Joyce's realism reaches a level of absurdity in its exactitude, Mulligan's modern cynicism mocks belief so incessantly it becomes absurd. While Mulligan's critique is a necessary one, it cannot be sufficient for meaning, and its aggrandizement to the level of absolute, viewing all otherness as ridiculous, represents a closed off reduction of meaning as well. This is why I think citing Mulligan as evidence of the anti-religious view of Joyce and the novel as Geert Lernout does in *Help My Unbelief* falls flat. Lernout suggests Mulligan represents one of the Freethinkers, a group of respected secularist thinkers with whom Joyce was familiar and who often critiqued the bible (68). Lernout later acknowledges that Joyce had a falling out with Oliver St. John Gogarty, the person that Mulligan is based on. As Lernout states, "their later alienation explains the violence and the venom in the novel's characterization" (95). Given this fact, I think it's clear that Mulligan's view is not one that Joyce fully endorses.

As I've explained, Mulligan's cynicism and mockery represents a modern immanent viewpoint, but within this critique exists a larger possibility of transcendent contained in the immanent perspective of Mulligan in the form of a religious spirituality and reverence. This spirituality and reverence is in the trace of meaning of the signs and symbols of the religious context of the Christian story, a

pre-modern belief system whose meaning has been diminished by the practices of modern social institutions. In modern society, the intended meaning and rituals do not have the same impact. By having these symbols othered in an unfamiliar and satirical context, they are freed from that confining context and able to be seen anew, paradoxically, in a way that brings them closer to their intended spiritual, higher meaning context.

In my next example, Stephen's dilemma also plays out a similar situation, but is modified by his more complex character. Stephen's feelings on his mother's death, his exile prior to the novel, his conversation with Mr. Deasy, his ruminations in "Proteus," his theory on Shakespeare and, of course, his interactions with Bloom, all show different instances of skepticism or cynicism, elements I'm associating with a modern-immanent worldview. This doubt is not as extreme and closed off as Mulligan's viewpoint as it incorporates the possibility of meaning and the otherness of experience that could allow for new or different meaning. The skeptical or cynical viewpoint is what modernity offers in place of blind faith or naive belief. In this we see the influence of the Enlightenment's privileging of empirical proof and rationality as the path to truth and reality. As a modern character, Stephen is often skeptical of claims and worldviews that emphasize an archaic or pre-modern belief system, but at the same time as a sensitive artist educated in Classical-Medieval philosophy and Catholicism, he is attracted to their other-worldly possibilities. Stephen Sicari shows how this dichotomy in the character is rooted in how Joyce sees the issue of Platonism in his culture, an issue dealt with in both *A Portrait of the Artist* and *Ulysses*: "the problem for both novels is gravity, that incessant downward pull on anything that tries to move upward" (34). The problem is, according to Sicari, that Platonism cannot solve this dilemma because its denial of



the body and material world makes it “susceptible to the powerful debunking of a cynical culture epitomized by Buck Mulligan” (34). In this respect I agree that Platonism, in its idealism, epitomizes the problematic nature of the immanent-transcendent binary in Western culture. Sicari also notes how Stephen recognizes this dilemma, what I am calling the skepticism in Stephen’s characters. In “Nestor” Stephen’s comments on William Blake’s poetry which eschewed time and place and Stephen’s most recognized line from the novel – “History is nightmare from which I am trying to awake”—reveal Stephen’s recognition of the “severe constraints of history and our material conditions of existence” (68). Sicari also notes the importance of the next (unspoken) line in the text, — “What if that nightmare gave you a back kick?”—as evidence of this awareness of the material effect of history (68). This is extremely important because it shows how the skeptical attitude of the modern character that Stephen exemplifies is stuck in a predicament of awareness that doesn’t allow one to fulfill the meaning that was present in a pre-modern enchanted view of the universe. This does not negate the benefit of the Enlightenment view that dispels superstitious beliefs, but it also doesn’t replace what is lost when that enchanted view is discarded. Stephen’s doubt and search for meaning are apparent in the novel and exemplify a prototypical experience of a modern subject who feels the loss of the transcendent and has no clear solution to that loss. I will come back to this point in the novel shortly, but first I want to address some of the ways this affects Stephen’s character and exemplifies this predicament.

Stephen and Mulligan are rightly often contrasted, with Mulligan conveying a strict cynical and empirical viewpoint, and Stephen looking more deeply into things. In my view, they represent two possible viewpoints of the modern

perspective. Mulligan is a product of the dominant worldview, while Stephen has internalized the binary of idealism and materialism. Because Stephen sees things from both these perspectives, a dilemma that his own culture struggles with, he has doubts about fully endorsing either viewpoint. I see this as again fitting in with the purpose of these early episodes, to show the limitations of this binary view.

Stephen's insights into the binary reveal that each path has its own set of negatives and positives, but a simple middle ground does not exist as each view is insistent on being absolute.

This is seen in the depiction of heroism in the novel. Heroism is a good Joycean theme because it spans history and comes back to the possible purpose or meaning of literature and can tap into a deeper meaning through its connection to the "mythic" level of the text. To show the significance of Stephen's doubts, I'm actually going to start with one of his surest statements. Stephen's observation to Mulligan—"You saved men from drowning. I'm not a hero, however" (1.63)—at a superficial level is a very sure statement, but I see it as indicative of the doubts Stephen has about mythic meaning and modern society. Stephen's statement is espousing here the flattened view of the hero of the immanent perspective, a recognition of the dominant worldview that Stephen's social self participates in since it is the dominant worldview. I would argue that there is a subtext of doubt, here, that is actually a critique and deeper recognition of the limited view of heroism that characterizes the immanent modern world. Many of Stephen's statements are either qualified or hashed over in his mind repeatedly. The fact that he issues such a sure statement here should make the reader suspect. His sureness here indicates his doubts about the two contexts for the heroic identity, the mythological and the modern. The negation of the possibility of his own heroism reveals how he could not

embrace either worldview to elevate himself to the level of hero. On the other hand, by affirming Mulligan as the heroic figure, he confirms materialist/cynical viewpoint as the ideal for the modern age.

The reference to Mulligan's heroic actions are of an obvious physical nature; risking one's life to save another's is easily identifiable even in modern society as heroic. In emphasizing this difference, Richard Ellmann sees a pattern in Stephen and Bloom both being contrasted with characters who are strong, in order to show them as more passive, non-traditional heroes. In this instance, Ellmann notes, "Stephen can't swim while Mulligan swims beautifully" (372). I do think a case could be made for Stephen and Bloom as alternative heroes, but I think that misses the point that the heroic has become flattened. Mulligan as hero because of athletic ability shows a limited view of the hero and is once again focused on the material body. Additionally, action and will, things that bring immediate material results, become valued more highly than Stephen's philosophical outlook and ability to consider higher causes or meaning.

Stephen's doubt also relates to his guilt-ridden thoughts about his mother which brings back the issue of religion. Several critics have discussed its importance along these lines. Geert Lernout notes this critique of religion and sees elements of "freethinking" and "unbelief" in *Ulysses* as more prevalent than most critics realize in his book, *Help My Unbelief: James Joyce and Religion*. For this reason, Lernout notes that even as Stephen thinks about his dying mother, he does not do so in religious terms (141). However, Lernout ignores the religious context here. The only reason for this conflict is a religious one, as Mulligan notes (1. 91-94). Otherwise, there would be no reason for Stephen not to have fulfilled his mother's dying wishes. Stephen's doubts about religion are a well-documented component of

his character, and his lack of religious conviction does not preclude a religious dimension to the novel of *Ulysses*. Just as Joyce had specific issues with the institution, Stephen does as well. I believe that Lernout confuses the institutional critique with a dismissal of religious ideas. Stephen's struggles with the Catholic faith are largely institutional. The fact that he does not dismiss the idea of religion completely reveals his viewpoint is predicated on doubts, not an outright rejection of religion.

On the opposite spectrum, Gian Balsamo, in *Joyce's Messianism: Dante, Negative Existence, and the Messianic Self*, sees the silence of specifically religious language as part of the religious significance. Balsamo's theory relies on an abundance of literary references, but primarily Mallarme and *Dracula*. Stephen's thoughts and the "Vampire Poem" of the "Proteus" chapter suggest a post-apocalyptic transcendence of mute-ness. Where Lernout sees a lack of explicit thoughts as evidence of a lack of religious connotation, Balsamo uses literary allusions to suggest a deeper meaning.

While Stephen does not directly inculcate religious thought with his dying mother, this is a major part of the conflict, and the sea becomes a metaphor for her and his inability to save her becomes equated with drowning. "Isn't the sea what Algy calls it; a great sweet mother?...*Thalatta! Thalatta!* She is our great sweet mother" (1. 77-80). Here again Mulligan refers to Greek myth, showing its importance. Shortly after this metaphorical allusion, Mulligan references that the aunt thinks Stephen killed his mother and questions why Stephen could not obey his mother's dying wish to kneel down and pray for her. In Mulligan's view again, we have limited and obvious calls to defining things simply. In contrast, Stephen is dealing with a more complex set of feelings and issues; the force of which is more

dramatic and harder to articulate and decipher. Stephen is overwhelmed by these complexities and tormented by memories, but Mulligan wants to reduce everything down to material causes, suggesting everything comes down to superficial reasons. This view contains no depth and borders on nihilism, but is eminently practical:

--And what is death, he asked, your mother's or yours or my own? You saw only your mother die. I see them pop off every day in the Mater and Richmond and cut up into tripes in the dissectingroom. It's a beastly thing and nothing else. It simply doesn't matter. You wouldn't kneel down to pray for your mother on her deathbed when she asked you. Why? Because you have the cursed jesuit strain in you, only it's injected the wrong way. To me it's all mockery and beastly. Her cerebral lobes are not functioning. (1. 204-211)

This view of Stephen's experience with his mother shows the two different viewpoints that have resulted from a modern empirical worldview. Mulligan fully embraces that there is no deeper meaning, the universe is physical, mechanical. As Sicari explains it, "He represents the Enlightenment modernity that places its faith in science and reason to evaluate all human existence" (76). I believe Sicari is correct in this assessment, along with this being an example of a limited view, in that Mulligan "neglects any other possible way of evaluating life and death" (76). We see here the central dilemma in these viewpoints. Stephen is burdened by a set of beliefs and ideas about the world that meet only absence or resistance in the modern world due to either a modern empiricism, or a modern corruption of those ideals and beliefs. There is no way to work through this larger view of the universe, this deeper meaning. Stephen is put in the unenviable position of either rejecting his beliefs and feelings or diminishing their importance entirely. Stephen

encapsulates the “lost” feeling that Taylor describes when an individual finds there is no outlet or a resistance to a set of practices with which to articulate or make sense of these deeper feelings and beliefs. As Stephen has doubts about the two worldviews that dominate Western culture, he falls into a condition of instability, a feeling associated with the loss of the transcendent. Whereas Sicari sees Stephen’s character tasked with finding the middle ground between the extremes of a Blakean vision and the knowledge of material reality, I emphasize Stephen as a character who knows the limits and problems of each as an absolute view, but is beset by a modern condition of being unable to find the higher purpose that would allow one to fulfill such a vision. At this point in the novel, trapped in the naturalist worldview, Stephen is unable to articulate such a vision. The clearest example of this issue is when Stephen, at his most cynical, explains a theory about Hamlet in “Scylla and Charybdis” that he acknowledges he doesn’t even believe. I will discuss in my next section as evidence of this actually deconstructing the immanent-transcendent binary. In this section, we do get a hint of this deconstruction in “Nestor,” and “Proteus,” but nothing so radical or conflicting as to break apart the logic and stability of the binary.

In “Nestor,” Stephen, in talking to Mr. Deasy after thinking about history’s back kick, which I discussed earlier in the context of Sicari’s, shows his awareness of the material nature of meaning. Next, the conversation very briefly turns to God. Sicari also addresses this exchange later in his chapter. I agree with Sicari that Mr. Deasy’s comment— “All human history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God” (2.380-81)—is a clear Hegelian-Enlightenment view that Stephen rejects (83). I slightly differ on the nuances of Stephen’s response however: “That is God... A shout in the street” (2. 383, 386). Sicari states, “for Stephen, God

is a sudden eruption, joyous and spontaneous, into time and space” (83). Sicari sees this as aligned with the Christian incarnation which allows for a view of history that values “space and time as the conditions for God’s participation in human affairs but not in the excessive manner of the Enlightenment” (83). Unlike Mulligan’s naturalism, this view values the divine, not just “the material and natural” (83). This view is similar to my own in showing Stephen’s critical view of the binary between seeing the transcendent God as wholly outside of time and place or simply non-existent in a materialist view. I want to characterize the “shout in the street” more as a disruption than an “eruption... into time and space.” In Sicari’s formulation the same relationship and logic is still present. The binary issue still remains, but it come together to produce this new vision that incorporates both. This is an appealing compromise, but is also similar to Hegel’s dialectic, which is predicated on recognition of the self in its opposite that brings them together to produce a third identity closer to the absolute. For me, the “shout in the street” disrupts this binary, and while I see it as a moment of transcendence, it does not cohere into an identifiable message of unity or meaning as suggested by a connection to Christianity. God becoming flesh and body, a living being in history, in the Christian narrative is a much more significant and sustained articulation of God’s intervention in the material world. Stephen’s comment is more, in my view, about the incoherence and brevity of a transcendent God that cannot be fully integrated into a systematic view of meaning. Much like Mulligan’s use of the razor as a cross, this othered context defamiliarizes the view of God of Mr. Deasy’s that has become orthodoxy and flattened its significance. The naturalist context cannot account for this disruption, so it becomes a singular moment that does not coalesce into anything more significant.

Because of Stephen's doubts about the two major ways of seeing the world, he lacks a place that he truly feels at home. As Taylor discussed in *A Secular Age* this is one of the features of the modern condition, a consequence of the loss of the transcendent as a prevalent feature of a worldview. Taylor states that this lack of home leads to a feeling of, or condition of exile, since one is wandering, searching for that feeling of home that was provided by the meaning or significance that the transcendent or an enchanted world provided. This feeling is increased by the alienation one may feel in modernity when the body becomes estranged from what it means to be human, and when the world becomes more mechanical and machine-centered through industrialization and Newtonian physics, the dominant understanding of the physical universe in modernity. Sicari also discusses this point about alienation in *Modernist Humanism and the Men of 1914*, but my focus here is on the exile motif as it connects Stephen with Bloom, and of course, *Ulysses*, the mythic source for the novel. Ellmann also notes that Joyce had "an affinity for the Jews as a wandering, persecuted people" (373). This theme first comes up through the character of Stephen, who has come back from a self-imposed exile which leads to his own wanderings through Europe, but his return "home" does not assuage the exile feeling and wandering. Stephen continues to search for meaning and a place that is a home, a place that one feels like they belong. As I've already stated, neither of the worldviews of transcendence and immanence in modernity offer that to him. When we contrast Stephen as an exiled wanderer searching for meaning with Mr. Deasy's anti-Semitic comment on wandering, we see once again why Stephen feels disconnected from the orthodoxy of his environment: "They sinned against the light, Mr Deasy said gravely. And you can see the darkness in their eyes. And that is why they are wanderers on the earth to this day" (2.361-63).



The wandering exile theme continues with Stephen through the novel and is another instance of his identity as someone who struggles with finding meaning in modern culture. Episode three, *Proteus*, set entirely in Stephen's mind is the pinnacle of the binary of the dreamer idealist and the material reality. Stephen spends the episode thinking about and contemplating many things, but they serve to illustrate his propensity for thought, the world of ideas. Many realities and material concerns shape and upset those ideas, and in doing so, we see the deconstruction of these spheres as absolute. It also represents, in terms of Stephen's growth, a kind of maturity, an opening up to possibility that a character like Deasy is unwilling to participate in, to leave the old for something new, for the unknown. This mental wandering does not lead to absolute or bold conclusions (how could it?), but rather shows the ambiguous possibility for meaning, acknowledging the limits of these contexts. However, the limits here are not debilitating even though they do not lead to an epiphanic moment that transcends the material world.

Leopold Bloom, on the other hand, seems to defy this kind of exiled character motif in the immanent/transcendent sense because he is in many ways a character comfortable in the immanent world. Bloom, in my view, is the main character, the character that Joyce is utilizing to both show the positives and negatives of modern Western culture's propensity towards a materialist viewpoint. He often has thoughts that reveal a scientific view of the world, is not an overly religious character, is certainly at home in his body, and bodily language and appetites are frequently associated with Bloom. But the complexity of Bloom's character reveals a character very much in exile, a wandering character in search of meaning, and a character whose religious thoughts and associations are non-traditional and skeptical at times, but apparent. As Sicari points out in *Modernist Humanism and*

*the Men of 1914* this is a part of the Judeo-Christian faith as Christ is meant to be physically present, flesh and blood (72). *Ulysses* depiction of Bloom, while corporeal and bodily, deconstructs associating the body with a lower, baser immanent reality. In episode four, "Calypso," Joyce's naturalistic style converges with a character who encapsulates some of the same duality between materialism and idealism. John Gordon makes the point that Joyce's work moves toward a "unified-field theory embracing macrocosm and microcosm, natural and supernatural, physical laws and psychical phenomena" (67).

The introduction to Bloom contains the bodily imagery earlier associated with Mulligan. "Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He like thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart... Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine" (4.1-5). On one level this shows Bloom's animalistic appetite, a way to emphasize the animal quality of being human and an extreme application of a naturalistic style. On another level, the bodily imagery of innards emphasizes the corporeal and real material structure of animal bodies. The aesthetic here is hyperbolically material and entertains no dimension of traditionally transcendent diction that may emphasize the ethereal nature of the soul or heavenly ideas. The detailed organ list presents a binary contrast to more hallowed language that one may see in an epic poem. The main plot of the episode involves Bloom going out to buy kidney. This kind of language continues, but the point is emphasized further and suggests that Joyce, as Dettmar argues, is critiquing the naturalist style and, in my opinion, the mechanistic ethos of the materialist position as well as the unfettered idealistic position of Romantic idealism. The language begins to incorporate some mental and ethereal language to show the limits of each as an absolute view, which again, is my

main thesis for this section: “Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly... Gelid light and air were in the kitchen but out of doors gentle summer morning everywhere. Made him feel a bit peckish” (4.6-9). The language suggests a mental and physical perspective of the world and a deterministic element, as well as the environment, has an effect on Bloom’s thoughts and mood. Contrasts between the kitchen environment and the outside environment, cold and warmth humorously causes Bloom to feel “peckish.” The language and style subtly satirize the oversimplification of meaning into these binary states.

Bloom’s relationship with Molly embodies the materialist/immanent side of the binary as well. Firstly, Bloom associates with Molly the sensual details of material life, and the physical presence of her body. “To smell the gentle smoke of tea, fume of the pan, sizzling butter. Be near her ample bedwarmed flesh. Yes, yes” (4.237-39). Additionally, Molly is associated with physical changes in Bloom, and, of course, her relationship with Boylan is to become physical as is revealed here in the letter that Bloom finds addressed to Molly (4. 244-45). Also, in their interactions, the bodily or sensuality is emphasized: “Following the pointing of her finger he took up a leg of her soiled drawers from the bed” (4. 321-22). Later in their discussion of the term “metempsychosis,” which fittingly comes from a somewhat racy novel, Bloom feels the need to embody the term which is about the movement of the soul into a new “body,” and also uses the term reincarnation as a synonym: “They used to believe you could be changed in an animal or a tree, for instance. What they called nymphs, for example” (4. 374-76). The trace of the concept of the immateriality of the soul, and the ancient and classical belief system of meaning are presented but given substance in Bloom’s relationship to Molly. The need to give material, bodily substance is seen in this exchange and in their interactions and relationship.

The last element I will discuss in this “naturalist” section is the use of Eastern exoticism to show the limits of the immanent-modern view and a facile depiction of the transcendent. Edward Said in *Orientalism* explains the basis for the Western world seeing the Arab world as other and exotic as it constructs an uneven power dynamic, and a place of fantasy. In “Disorienting Modernism: National Boundaries and the Cosmopolis,” Celena E. Kusch explains how this otherness attached to the non-Western world was a component of modernism’s exclusivity (40). And Joyce has a precedent for using the Eastern world as an other and exotic locale to contrast the paralysis of Dublin and express desires and longings of its inhabitants in his *Dubliners* stories of “Araby” and “Eveline.” Also, when we consider that the Middle East is the origin of the Abrahamic religions, it provides a religious dimension that is important to Bloom’s character and the novel as a whole. Through the character of Bloom, *Ulysses* actually provides some material context that demythologizes and particularizes the Western context, making it more real as well. This happens because of the attention to materiality present in Bloom’s thoughts and his personal connection through his Jewish heritage.

Bloom’s connections to the Middle Eastern and Arab world reveal the complexity of his character, both through his Jewish connection and the insight it provides into his materialist and fantastical musings. Again, since we are in the naturalist phase of the novel still, Bloom’s materialist thoughts are stronger than his limited references to a transcendent view. There is a trace of the transcendent in his connection to the Middle East because of the associations that I’ve outlined, but alas, they are either muted or naïve because Bloom is the character that shows the dominant worldview of materialism and a vague sense of the transcendent, just as the culture of Western society does. In “Calypso” there is a brief moment where

Bloom's memories connect Molly to an exotic and Middle Eastern context that connects to this brief and slight transcendent meaning, but we also see in this description how Bloom's attention to material and particular details situate the context in something more real than the fantasy attached to a Western depiction of the East.

As Bloom is walking along Dorset street he notices a sign, "Agendath Netaim: planters' company" (4.191-92). The sign is a reference to a Zionist colony in Palestine that will plant and harvest trees for people who want to invest (Gifford 74). Bloom's reaction is to think about the material, practical nature of this showing his materialist worldview: "Olives cheaper: oranges need artificial irrigation" (4.196-97). Also, Joyce here shows the point of contact is material as well, as it indicates the socio-political and context of Bloom's encounter through the sign. The material dimension of this encounter, a point of contact that shows the Western influence of settlements and the Zionist movement grounds the depiction of and Bloom's thoughts about the East in their particular time and place. *Ulysses*, here, shows the benefit of the naturalist style and the empirical as its attention to material concerns produces a depiction of a specific area of the Middle East that demythologizes and provides a specificity aware of the West's relationship to the Middle East that may be lacking in other formulations of the culture and area by Western texts. It is limited in its scope, however, because it does not exceed the subjective experience and thoughts of the Western character of Bloom.

At the same time, I'm arguing that it does have this cultural dimension that the West attached to the East as a place of fantasy and religious context. Bloom is also associating this with Molly to create an othering dimension associated with the transcendent. This memory leads to the association with Molly as he remembers

her spitting out seeds of olives when they lived elsewhere: “Pleasant evenings we had then. Molly in Citron’s basketchair. Nice to hold, cool waxen fruit, hold in the hand, lift it to the nostrils and smell the perfume...Always the same, year after year” (4.207-09). The memory of Molly in the neighbor, Citron’s, chair connects to a larger context in reference to the fruit that Bloom associates with Molly, “Must be without a flaw, he said. Coming all that way: Spain, Gibraltar, Mediterranean, the Levant” (4.210-12). Again, we have a list of exotic locales and added significance being attached to them, but also the phrase, “Must be without a flaw,” is a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles, “a thanksgiving for the completed harvest and a commemoration of the time when the Israelites lived in tents during their passage through the wilderness.” And more importantly, there is an observance that requires the use of citron that must “be perfect in every way” according to the *Babylonian Talmud* and combined with twined branches “represent all the scattered tribes of Israel and are symbolic of the coming redemption that will reunite all the tribes” (74). While this is not directly connected to Molly, it suggests that Molly represents something of greater significance to Bloom that transcends the ordinary, and can only be represented through this connection to deeper religious meaning along with the poetic and othered qualities that one associates with the transcendent. Thus, this relationship also represents Bloom’s seeking of higher meaning whilst in a state of immanence in the modern materialist world. Bloom is revealed as more than a flat-materialist character like Mulligan. While Bloom, unlike Stephen, is more comfortable in the dominant materialist worldview, he’s thoughts reveal a similar longing for transcendence lacking in this worldview. This nexus of thoughts and associations embodies the modern experience of exile, longing, otherness, familiarity, nostalgia, and empiricism.

These first four episodes introduce the novel's themes depicting the particular articulations of the modern experience, and in the use of the naturalist style, reveal the limits of immanent-materialist perspective. The cynical and materialist perspective of Mulligan shows the extreme view of the modern materialist perspective and its consequences in being unable to acknowledge the depth of meaning present in the divine and spiritual elements of reality. This extremely flattened view of the world is a consequence of Enlightenment thinking that privileges rationality and empirical evidence which secularized and diminished the transcendent. Mulligan's perspective allows him to tap into the dominant worldview of Western culture, easily dismiss higher concerns, and be successful in society. Stephen's role in the exposition is to show how this binary worldview in the modern world falls short of a fullness of meaning, purpose, and reality. Stephen recognizes the incompleteness of the materialist viewpoint, but the diminished viewpoint of the transcendent in this context also is lacking. Stephen's doubts about the world lead him to a condition of exile, searching for meaning and fullness in the possibilities offered by each worldview, while embodying the limits of each. Finally, Bloom shares similarities to both characters. His appetites and materialist thoughts indicate a character comfortable in the dominant material viewpoint and physical world like Mulligan. Like Stephen, he is open to the possibility of a higher meaning and spirituality and whose identity is deeper and more complex than being determined by the material reality of modern society. At the same time, since the novel is in its naturalist phase, these transcendent possibilities for meaning are only hinted at and unable to be fully articulated or realized.

## II. The Breakdown of the Immanent, and Emergence of the Transcendent, in the Early and Middle Episodes

In my first section I depicted how the text sets up the themes of a modern empirical worldview and identity, and shows the limits of such a view, using the naturalist style. The importance of the bodily language is intrinsically connected to an empirical viewpoint and the mind/body duality of Western culture that saw the mind as connected to the transcendent idealist view. The Enlightenment period, as Taylor and Sicari note, also corresponds to a more material view of the world via scientific empiricism and objectivity. I've continually maintained that we see this commitment to material and objective reality in the naturalism style of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When we see the naturalist style, we also see the ethos of scientific empiricism that prevails as the hegemonic worldview in nineteenth and twentieth century Western culture. As the world becomes disenchanted, there is a movement towards what I would call re-enchantment through a more spiritual or meaningful view of the empirical, material world. This is done in a variety of ways, but in primarily three dominant interrelated ones: first, the mechanical universe as progressing towards some major moment, second through seeing the physical laws of the universe in a cosmological and phenomenological way that excites awe and wonder, and lastly, in attaching a mystical significance to material world as seen in Romanticism and neo-pagan or new age belief systems. This is primarily seen in the Occult, Spiritualist, and Neo-Platonist movements that I cover in my Yeats and Pound chapters, but Joyce, in *Ulysses*, attempts to show spiritual or religious significance in the material world and quasi-scientific theories.



As I have already discussed, *Ulysses* is very committed to this material view of the world, as it is both connected to how the naturalist style, but also on a more exhaustive level, how people think, feel, and are determined by the sensory world. *Ulysses* then explores how this material view of the world can lead to something higher or can result in a transcendent experience. To varying degrees these episodes address elements of the immanent worldview: determinism, the mechanical view of the universe, the sensory material world. I will continue to discuss the themes I've introduced in the first section because they are the themes that are developed through the novel as they are connected to this issue of modernity that I've outlined, and Taylor depicts in *A Secular Age*. Where these episodes differ is that they begin to move away from the naturalist style that corresponds to the dominant materialist system of meaning in modernity that creates a stratified and strict binary that limits the possibilities of meaning and fullness. As the text breaks down and innovates, so too, does the strict binary revealing the ambiguities and contradictions that deconstruct this system of meaning and binary. This allows for open spaces of meaning and moments of breakthroughs by the lesser binary pair of transcendence. My view picks up on some of the points, but, ultimately, argues against John Gordon's view that Joyce was a strict materialist in these episodes.

In this section of the chapter, I will be looking into the different sections of the novel: the first six episodes as the initial style connected to naturalism, episodes seven through ten as the middle episodes, and episodes eleven through eighteen as the later innovative episodes. I will have detailed analysis of "Lotus Eaters," "Hades," "Lestrygonians," and "Scylla and Charybdis" episodes to show how the materialist ideas are portrayed, but do so, in a way that suggests a deeper meaning to the material world or an insight into the transcendent. As I previously stated,

these transcendent disruptions to the text prevent it from coalescing into the dominant binary logic of a materialist view. “Lotus Eaters” and “Hades” are part of the initial style episodes, but I include them here because I see them as taking naturalism to more extreme measures that causes the style to begin its breakdown.

“Lotus Eaters” takes naturalism to an extreme and problematic level in trying to connect the material-sensory experiences and transcendent experiences rooted in the spiritual. I believe Joyce attempts this depiction because of the ideas that groups like The Golden Dawn were investigating in trying to find a link between the mind and the spiritual realm. Alex Owens notes an interest in mysticism and the new “spiritual movement” of the age was widespread by the 1890s in Victorian society (4). Additionally, a large part of the occultism of this time were psychical experiments that tried to connect to the spiritual plane. Joyce would certainly have been familiar with these ideas. He was not a full-fledged believer, however, as Gordon Bowker notes that Joyce was briefly interested in Theosophy in 1901 but rejected it due to his education in Aquinas (78). Joyce also “mocks,” according to Bowker, George Russell’s interest in spiritualism in *A Portrait...* and *Ulysses* (78). While Joyce may have not been a committed follower himself, I’m wary of attaching too much significance to what is being “mocked;” what Joyce mocks in his work is from the perspective of the cynic, as with Buck Mulligan and Christianity and Greek myth. Joyce may have had his own personal doubts, but I see *Ulysses* as a text open to the various possible transcendent meanings present in his culture at the time. Also, while I disagree with John Gordon’s major argument that Joyce was only a realist, I agree with his point about the seriousness that Joyce attached to occult beliefs and their impact on his view of reality. Gordon labels these beliefs as “Orphic” from Joyce’s notes (xii). He extends this to Joyce’s brand of

naturalism too. Since the possibility for “telepathy, ghost-visitation, metempsychosis” were seen as plausible reality then Joyce’s naturalism is simply incorporating this type of reality (xii). Additionally, he acknowledges the use of pre-Freudian and Jungian psychologies which had some ideas that would be dismissed as lacking scientific credibility now, namely “associationism” and “the mechanics of neural synapse” (xiii). I agree with Gordon when he says this has a basis in an early twentieth century view of reality, and therefore has a connection to a naturalist style, but I believe it stretches that definition too far. When Joyce includes these views as part of a naturalist style it doesn’t just expand the style, it breaks it down because it goes against the view of reality that gave rise to naturalism that suggested a spiritual dimension was naïve and superstitious. Joyce is trying to portray reality through a naturalist style, but as the novel begins to incorporate a deeper view of reality to include the spiritual, the naturalist becomes insufficient.

In the “Lotus Eaters” scene of *The Odyssey*, Odysseus’s men and the inhabitants succumb to the effects of the lotus flower so that they become contented and forgetful. The chemical properties of the flower change the physical-sensory world for the user causing a material change that leads to a heightened awareness that goes beyond the physical-sensory world. The thematic message is that this is a false paradise, an illusion borne out of the chemical reaction in the brain the plant causes. In *Ulysses*, Bloom goes to the chemist to get a lotion made up and, in a strong connection to “Lotus Eaters” of *The Odyssey*, describes his impression of the practice: “Shrunken skull. And old. Quest for the philosopher’s stone. The alchemists” (5.473-74). There is a manipulation of “reality” or how one perceives the world. Also, Bloom’s description taps into a larger tradition on the use of drugs, and

one that could also be seen as a mystical one that would tap into the transcendent, the “Quest for the philosopher’s stone.”

This example illustrates John Gordon’s point that “many of Joyce’s contemporaries, literary and otherwise, were intensely interested in how individual consciousness might be extended or rarified” (168). I would also suggest that Joyce utilizes the thematic message to show illusionary paradises of both a physical and psychological variety, a critique of both the idea that the material world constitutes reality and the psychological effect of religious utopian language. In conversation with McCoy during the episode, Bloom’s interior monologue notes the expression, “Paradise and the peri” (5. 132-33), indicating “so near to paradise and yet prevented” (Gifford 87). In this instance, Bloom was utilizing the expression to note the interference of a tram car as he was leering at an attractive woman in stockings. The expression and examples reveal the episode’s larger purpose to depict experiences that deceptively promise, but don’t fulfill an authentic spiritually transcendent experience, including but not limited to the religious experience. This is the modern version of how one can be duped into a false utopian reality that has a physical dimension.

There are many parallels here to the critique of religion reflecting a level of ignorance and pseudo-science. While not institutionally religious, the quest for the philosopher’s stone, like religion, contains a spiritual and mythical dimension that promises a better way of living verging on the paradisaical as well. Bloom sees in the church service and belief system something incompatible with reality, and a lack of truth in the language here as well as he doesn’t really understand the point and cultural practices of the church. Most importantly, Bloom expresses his cynicism

about the whole belief system, a fertile ground for those who see the novel as a wholehearted critique of religion:

Look at them. Now I bet it makes them feel happy. Lollipop. It does. Yes, bread of angels it's called. There's a big idea behind it, kind of kingdom of God is within you feel. First communicants. Hokypoky penny a lump. Then feel all like one family party, same in the theatre, all in the same swim. They do. I'm sure of that. Not so lonely. In our confraternity. Then come out a big spreeish. Let off steam. Thing is if you really believe in it....Blind faith. Safe in the arms of Kingdom come. Lulls all pain. Wake this time next year. (5. 359-368)

Critics have pointed to this as proof of the fallibility of religion. There are two main ideas running through Bloom's observations. The first and most indicative of secular society is the critique of belief or faith in religion at all, the idea that religion is a manipulated, naively fantastical or superstitious view of reality that has no place in modern society (this idea is revisited in Episode 6, "Hades," so I will come back to it). Bloom preferring an ounce of opium, that believers must be stupefied first, and "hokypoky" indicate this. Paradoxically, Bloom's specific Dublin culture is dominated by religious views and thus represents an anomaly in terms of modern secularity. According to the 1911 census of the Ireland National Archives, Dublin was "83% Catholic, 13% Church of Ireland, 2% Presbyterian and Methodist and 2% others, including a growing Jewish presence" ("Dublin Religion"). This is significant because it goes against the prevailing secularism of the wider Western culture. Bloom's perspective is less the norm in the Dublin culture, but the wider Western readers of *Ulysses* generally would be more apt to identify with a critical eye towards religion and thus share Bloom's overall cynicism.

In Dublin, however, Bloom's an outsider because of his lack of religious, and specifically Catholic, understanding, and often characterized as such as an elemental part of his character; thus, it is appropriate to view the events through this lens, but I think there is something deeper and more complex going on here. As an outsider, Bloom is misinterpreting some of the data he is encountering, and his criticism is more as an outsider. As stated earlier, one of the features of *A Secular Age* as Taylor points out is exile, the feeling that one is lost, alone, on the outside of the goings-on of the universe, disconnected. This is a feature that Bloom, as an exile, on a deeper level, is tapping into here, the realization of this condition through its other, "confraternity," "all like one family," "all in the swim." And most importantly, "not so lonely." The modern age prizes individuality, but at the same time, the negative aspects of the fall of religious communities highlight the importance of community and its effect on humanity. It is not an absolute good, but a good society and the flourishing of humanity, would seem to need some sense of the community and shared belief with others that Bloom notes here. A superficial, but valid, criticism and fear of an ignorant community that diminishes critical reflection, individuality, and authenticity reveals the complex view of religion again. Bloom's observations, however, do suggest that there is something illusionary in this as a possible transcendence because it happens through language and the shared psychological experience. I would suggest that Bloom's limited view doesn't preclude the idea that there is a physical/sensory element to transcendent experiences, only that there are physical/sensory experiences that deceptively mirror the physical extra-sensory characteristics of a transcendent experience. There is a danger to religion offering this kind of illusionary transcendent experience, but the example also reveals that an authentic transcendent experience can produce physical,

material effects. Bloom, given only a glimpse into the experience, perceives it as the former.

In what becomes a pattern, we see these moments of transcendence briefly and without warning as though they are both fragments and pieces within the fragmented spaces of the immanent constructed system that fails to be a closed totality. One such example recalls Bloom's "Eastern" associations with Molly in "Calypso," but also is significant because it illustrates Bloom's binary character and thought process that deconstructs the immanent-transcendent. Bloom is getting some tea and an allusion to the "othered" East and a Romantic conception of nature suggest a paradisaal-transcendent quality when he finds a brand from the "far east," "Ceylon," triggering the same pattern and mixture of associating the East with exotic paradise and a "naturalist" deductive logic: "Lovely spot it must be: the garden of the world, big lazy leaves to float about on, cactuses, flowery meads, snaky lianas they call them" (5.29-31). The Edenic language and reference give this an obvious paradisaal connotation, but Bloom is not lost in reverie as he subjects it to some critical imaginary thinking, "Wonder is it like that" (5.31). This is a small line, but this is always the case for paradisaal, it is always a little out of one's immanent experience, one's fully physical/sensory experience, and must be "wonder"-ed about.

One's experience in the modern world also contains this doubt about the transcendent, "Wonder is it like that." This wonder and doubt leads to more empirical inquiry. This shows that the move towards "truth" in the modern immanent world is increasingly empirical. And while Bloom's question aligns with this type of inquiry, his thoughts come back to the transcendent. This exemplifies a "limit experience" in Bloom's case and is a microcosm of the larger "limit experiences" of the "Lotus Eaters." Bloom tries to connect material environmental

causes to the behaviors of the area's population: "Those Cinghalese lobbing about in the sun in dolce far niente, not doing a hand's turn all day....Too hot to quarrel. Influence of the climate. Lethargy. Flowers of idleness" (5. 31-34). Bloom is imagining this experience and is limited by his understanding of the world he is imagining, but also in his imaginary projection there is something lacking and insufficient about this kind of relaxed, lethargic life. The idleness and laziness of the kind of life he imagines the Cinghalese live seems unfulfilling and incomplete even as it hints at a paradisaal place, acting as a kind of limit experience for what is possible in a material sensory world. The trace of the paradisaal world is there but contrasted by the reality of material existence.

In contrast, science, which is the dominant modern worldview, provides a way to understand the material world. Bloom's thoughts become more philosophical, and here we see the transcendent, as the talk about weight and gravity suggests the opposite: "What is weight really when you say the weight? Thirtytwo feet per second, per second. Law of falling bodies: per second, per second. They all fall to the ground. The earth. It's the force of gravity of the earth is the weight" (5. 43-46). Bloom's repetition of the word "law" in this passage shows how science is seen as immutable and inevitable. It cannot be challenged by the material world and gives it credence. Of course, this is a scientific "law" and is limited to the domain of the material world. If all there is, is science, then all is reduced to these laws of the physical world. All one would have is "falling" bodies, "weighted" bodies, subjected to the pull of the earth's gravity. Everything in this model is brought down and subject to material laws. This episode is about this material existence, but it contains the trace of its binary. This particular law brings things down into the immanent framework, but the alternative would be transcendence, so in this



immanent, scientific framework, transcendence, “rising above,” the spirit, become othered, and deconstruct the immanent scientific framework. In this instance, the transcendent is suggested by its absence, by Bloom’s insistence of the scientific laws which he repeats again, “Per second per second. Per second for every second it means” (5. 51-2). There is a curious quality to the thought too, as though Bloom is trying to make sense of its greater significance. That greater significance, however, is not scientific.

This kind of material immanent sensory experience hinting at a greater transcendent significance, subsequently, fills the episode. There is something incomplete and unsatisfying about each encounter in the episode as if there isn’t a proper language to deal with death, an idea more specifically revisited in “Hades.” This makes sense in the immanent framework given that death is not fully covered by scientific and material data, except as the absence of life processes. The message of “Lotus Eaters” exemplifies that “material reality” as a basis for “objective reality” is a fallacy as the material world produces mirages and representations. There is a variety of examples that reflect an aversion to truth and an incompleteness or lack of fulfillment. These represent less than ideal circumstances, in a sense, a result of material necessity in that there are physical or psychological needs that must be met and compensate for the less than ideal reality that one encounters in the immanent world.

So, are these altered experiences meant to be dismissed as inconsequential because they are superficial or manipulate reality? I don’t think that’s the aim of the episode as it is similarly a more complex view of reality than what is initially and superficially presented. On the one hand, I do think there is a cynical view, one in keeping with the modern immanent one, that sees the muddling and manipulation

of the immanent world, of objectivity, as dangerous and fleeting. These experiences are to a degree illusionary, a misrepresentation of the material world, but they also bring up questions about a deeper reality. After all, all these events contain some experience in the real material and sensory world. Is a world that can be so easily manipulated and materially or sensorially changed, really real? These experiences deconstruct the material world as real, and suggest, both through their underlying greater possibility for meaning, and their altered experiences of the world, the possibility of transcending the material world.

But I do think there is something missing in these experiences; they do not fulfill the significance they promise but are mostly about the immediate illusory material (sensory) experience/reality, a kind of surrogate, but a material and immediate, therefore satiable surrogate. They give a glimpse into the other transcendent, by virtue of their groundedness in the material world. The other, the surrogate, the altered state, the extra-ordinary, is what characterizes the episode whether through numeric-scientific laws that verge into substantiation and the resurrection, Bloom as Henry, the Communion wafer as the body, the Church as confraternity, or Bloom's paper as a horse tip; these real stable things become destabilized, othered, estranged, and give a glimpse into the Transcendent othered altered reality. This mix of real-earthly being, and estranged-transcendent other, is capped by the episodes final description of Bloom taking a bath. First Bloom becomes Christ-like, "Here is my body" and then transformed into an extra-sensory elevated experience:

He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth, oiled by scented melting soap, softly laved. He saw his trunk and limbs riprippled over and sustained, buoyed lightly upward,

lemonyellow: his navel, bud of flesh: and saw the dark tangled curls of his bush floating, floating hair of the stream around the limp father of thousands, a languid floating flower. (5. 567-572)

This description of Bloom, in an earthly moment, elevates him into a transcendent context with the Judeo-Christian associations, suggesting the simultaneous meanings and contexts, a fitting end to the episode's hybridity and aspirations.

The "Hades" episode deals most directly with death, another area where the modern immanent worldview is problematic. The episode mainly concerns Dignam's funeral, but also references Bloom's father's suicide, and Bloom's son Rudy's death. Death in the modern world is where the absence of the transcendence or the enchanted world is felt most poignantly and the return to religious rituals and beliefs becomes most necessary and convenient. Of course, as we shall see in this episode, these religious observances and ideas have been transformed to fit the modern secular age and often have been lessened in their religious aspects. The modern age sees death in more physical, material ways along with a psychological context for dealing with death.

Dignam's death is dealt with in traditional Catholic funeral rites and the characters pay due respect, but the way in which the funeral is treated as a commonplace social obligation, and the reticent and superstitious talk about death in the episode, suggest a difficulty with the process. The most extensive conversation of their ride to the funeral about Dignam comes when Cunningham suggests they be more serious:

-- He had a sudden death, poor fellow, he said.

-- The best death, Mr Bloom said.

Their wide open eyes looked at him.

-- No suffering, he said. A moment and all is over. Like dying in sleep.

No-one spoke. (6. 311-315)

Bloom expresses a non-religious view of death, one that focuses on the material world as reality. He prizes quickness, a lack of suffering, and then nothing, "A moment and all is over." This leads to silence, revealing how difficult and inadequate the contemporary social context is for dealing with death, a lack of conversation between a dogmatic Catholic faith view of death and a scientific-materialist one. The episode doesn't seem to champion either viewpoint, but rather the inadequacy of each in its own domain. The characters are left with a wanting, insufficient amount of the comforting and truthful view of death that a religious and scientific view could provide: "Paltry funeral: coach and three carriages. It's all the same. Pallbearers, gold reins, requiem mass, firing a volley. Pomp of death" (6. 498-499). In conjunction, both could offer a language and viewpoint to deal with death, and we see moments of this, but, more predominantly, we see the negative aspects of both, a religious viewpoint that has become too institutionalized and feckless, and a scientific viewpoint that reduces the body to a physical end, where the best one can hope for is the least amount of suffering. If the immanent material world is all there is, then anxiety over the ephemeral nature of existence becomes the standard philosophical feature of the worldview, whereby death signifies the ultimate end, as it is the end of material existence.

Bloom's observations about Dignam's body and burial express this materialist immanent worldview and its corresponding fears and anxieties. The horror of decomposition and the material reality of death are seen through Bloom's thoughts about Dignam's body falling out of the hearse: "Quite right to close it. Looks horrid open. Then the insides decompose quickly. Much better to close up all the orifices.

Yes, also. With wax. The sphincter loose. Seal up all” (6. 424-426). The modern immanent world makes the death of the body a horrid thing because of its exposure of the end of the material existence of the human body which, in this view, it also its existential end. Similar to Mulligan’s view, Bloom reduces the body to a physical mechanism, “The circulation stops. Still some might ooze out of an artery” (6.434). And later, “Broken heart. A pump after all, pumping thousands of gallons of blood every day. One fine day it gets bunged up and there you are. Lots of them lying around here: lungs, hearts, livers. Old rusty pumps: damn the thing else. The resurrection and the life. Once you are dead you are dead” (6.673-76). This reduction of the body to its physical nature is the dominant worldview of the empirical and mechanistic. It allows Bloom to take a superficial view of death in order to comfortably not have to confront what may be lacking in this view. Bloom is similar to Mulligan in that he seems to mock the Christian story of Lazarus: “That last day idea. Knocking them all up out of their graves. Come forth, Lazarus! And he came fifth and lost the job. Get up! Last day! Then every fellow mousing around for his liver and his lights and the rest of his traps” (6. 676-680). Unlike Mulligan, Bloom’s doubts are from fear and anxiety and a genuine attempt to try to understand the religious viewpoint, but are being prevented by the inability to believe the logic and defiance of material laws.

If the thoughts stopped there we’d have Bloom as Mulligan, a corresponding view with the immanent, materialist view of modernity, but as Bloom explores these thoughts and fears, things do begin to “ooze” out and the earth becomes dynamic as a result. The combination of dead bodies and the earth transforms Bloom’s materialist modern immanent fears into something more organic, alive, dynamic, spiritual and immanently transcendent: “More room if they buried them standing.

Sitting or kneeling you couldn't. Standing? His head might come up some day above ground in a landslip with his hand pointing. All honeycombed the ground must be: oblong cells" (6. 765-768). The earth becomes less mechanically materialist and more spiritual. As we see here, Bloom begins talking about burials in a pragmatic material sense and then begins through cracks fissures in logic into something more transcendent and spiritually/earthly dynamic. The material breakdown here produces something mystical and newly alive. Bloom begins the thought with the term, "Holy fields," suggesting something transcendent/immanent right away. Then, the immanent thoughts of bloom begin with scientific language, "oblong cells," for instance, along with pragmatic scientific thinking: how are things coming together materially? What's the best use of space?

Next, his thoughts drift into an allusion to the Far East, mind altering, pleasure inducing drugs, and "gardens" continuing the imaginative venture into a possibility of transcendence: "Ought to be flowers of sleep. Chinese cemeteries with giant poppies growing produce the best opium Mastiansky told me. The Botanic Gardens are just over there" (6. 768-770). Again, the motif of the East as the exotic transcends the immanent reality as well as the altering of the human material existence with drugs. While set in the immanence, the transcendent begins to emerge. The other, the transcendent, the paradisaical come together again and lead to a more direct comparison to Judeo-Christian transcendence: "It's the blood sinking in the earth gives new life. Same idea those jews they said killed the christian boy" (6. 771-772). Bloom's interpretation here shows the immanent world being transformed into the transcendent through the death of human body. This suggests there is something more to the human body than just cells, something spiritual that

not only lives, but can revive and give new life through the immanent world, a profound thought that provides a brief moment of transcendence.

While there are moments, I believe, of transcendence and deconstruction of the immanent framework, the main idea of the episode is a critique of the shortcomings inherent in the immanent framework's reduction of death to material and social concerns. Bloom encapsulates this point in reference to the priest's eulogy, "Said he was going to paradise or is in paradise. Says that over everybody. Tiresome kind of a job. But he has to say something" (6. 629-630). Here we see the way the cynicism of the immanent framework and also how religion is looked at as offering false promises of paradise. Bloom's thought expresses both the weariness and futility of dealing with the metaphysical possibility of life after death in the modern world. The hope or promise that should exist in the priest's eulogy has become devoid of meaning and is indicative of the Church's inability to convey, seriously, a greater meaning to life and death in the modern world. "Hades" reveals the most pessimistic relationship between immanence and transcendence and offers the most damning critique of their lack of meaning and contribution to that lack of meaning in the modern world. "Hades" is the last episode considered part of the initial style, so while there are moments of transcendence begin to breakdown the immanent view, overall it is more about these limit experiences contained in the materialist view.

The transcendent moments of "Lestrygonians" are in the breakdown of these limit experiences, a "middle episode" whose stylistic innovations result in this new development in the novel. The episode's titular connection produces its many references to eating and drinking and the necessity of such, but just the material nature of death in "Hades" becomes its grossest form, so too do these appetites and

satiation of these bodily needs in “Lestrygonians.” For example, in reflecting on a brewery, Bloom muses, “Vats of porter, wonderful. Rats get in too. Drink themselves bloated as big as a collie floating. Dead drunk on the porter. Drink till they puke again like christians. Imagine drinking that! Rats: vats” (8. 47-50). The imagery here suggests the disgusting conditions of the industrial age, where urban centers inevitably invite such gross and unsanitary conditions but produce most of what is consumed; it also suggests a comparison to humans, reducing them to lowly vermin, consuming too much, like the rats that become engorged on what they ingest. Bloom directly compares the rats to Christians drinking till they puke, demythologizing the sanctity of the symbolic significance of the blood of Christ in the form of red wine, and placing it in the immanent context. In the immanent worldview, humans as material beings become reduced to consumers of materials, as well as their defining activity.

Bloom rejects this setting, revealing the choice one does have in environment even when the world seems to be pushing one into a particular direction. I wouldn't say this is a rejection of immanence and the principles of literary Naturalism because proponents would argue for equally materialist/deterministic rationale for Bloom's decisions, but I would say this is symbolic of humanity's ability to do so, and Bloom represents a character who, while certainly entrenched in the immanent world, understands there is something more and is able to reject a reductionist view of the world.

“Lestrygonians” forcefully reveals the desire and need for something more and intimates the inadequacy of the immanent framework. Spiritual ascension, in a scientific principle, suggests something more. Bloom, connected to Christ through the “Blood of the Lamb,” and even that language can produce beauty and genius by



virtue of its “flow,” suggests that something natural can lead to something transcendent. Bloom doesn’t go into the bar; he, a man, who ate his kidneys with relish and defecated in the outhouse in the early naturalist episodes, rejects the baseness and voracity of the human biological needs and appetites, suggesting there is this aspect to the immanent world that should be rejected, not celebrated.

This movement away from the immanent-naturalist perspective is also seen in Stephen, who, I suggested in my first section, represented a level of cynicism and doubt. In “Scylla and Charybdis” he attempts to find meaning and purpose in the literary social circle, and, in doing so, reveals several possibilities for meaning and their challenges. Most poignantly, a considerable amount of the episode is Stephen outlining a literary theory he is working on. The unfolding of the theory itself shows a meta-theoretical recognition of the construction of theory. In other words, by having Stephen outline this theory, it becomes readily apparent the way in which meaning itself is not inherent, but dependent on this kind of inventive and deductive process. The fact that Stephen’s theory is not well-received also reveals the social function of meaning, that meaning is chosen and produced by arbiters and authorities of the social system. It is a language game, and one dependent on interplay and social context. While this seems like a negative response to the issue of meaning, it actually frees Stephen from the “Scylla and Charybdis” of the doubts he had about the materialist and religious viewpoints. There is no inherent meaning, and language does not adhere to some stable and transcendent source as the critic/character George Russell suggests in this episode when he espouses the view of “eternal wisdom” (9.52).

Stephen’s theory, while more socio-historically conscious, is still similar to the mimetic correspondence approach. It is a kind of vestigial relic of the

correspondence to the transcendent as a source of meaning, and one that also characterizes the correspondence of the contemporary realism/naturalism style of late nineteenth, and early twentieth century. Stephen's theory is more complex and rooted in much more immanent realist approach involving history, biography, and psychology. Its materialist approach is novel and seems to suggest some place to gain order. But I think this is a kind of red herring that reveals more about the doubt of meaning, the inability to be satisfied with this kind of approach; but, ultimately, Stephen is meant to show this duplicity, as his character is equally duplicitous, revealing the ultimate cynicism of the modern immanent worldview.

Stephen of *A Portrait...* had changed into the Stephen of the early episodes, and now changes into the Stephen we see here, exemplifying the change from an idealist to a realist, to the most extreme type of realist, a cynic. He has become, as Simon foretells in "Hades," more like the archetypal cynic, Buck Mulligan. Like his namesake, Daedalus, Stephen metaphorically flies into the heavens due to his idealism, but he is also the "fabulous artificer" (9. 952) which undercuts the ideal as real and reveals that meaning in reality is never far from invention and fluid materiality. The cynical viewpoint is characteristic of the modern immanent age where meaning is constantly in doubt. Stephen is more than a cynic, but he offers the ultimate cynical viewpoint when, after spending considerable time elucidating and defending his theory, he flatly admits that he doesn't even believe it (9.1065-67); a similar ambiguity to the belief systems that will be seen in the later episode of "Nausicaa" in Gerty and Bloom. Much like the illusion theme of "Nausicaa" and the artifice of eternity in Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium," there isn't absolute condemnation of such a viewpoint, but rather an epistemological acknowledgement that one does not have logical access to transcendent truth and that engagement in

the materiality of the universe, along with the subjectivity of the individual, necessitates a level of artificiality. Additionally, this level of play with meaning is a defining characteristic of an age that doubts absolute transcendent meaning.

Another important point in the unfolding of this theory is the famous “word known to all men” line that answers the question put to Stephen by his mother, and later revealed in “Circe”, with “Love, yes” (9. 429). Richard Ellmann sees this as central to the novel’s meaning as it is the most frequent and enduring thematic development in the novel, and central to its main character’s thoughts and actions (371). Love pervades the novel’s the most poignant moments, is affirmed by the central characters of Stephen, Bloom, and Molly, and is antithetical to the idea that war and hatred are the driving force of history. More currently, Stephen Sicari makes the case for its importance to the novel’s meaning as well linking Bloom to “Christian love and mercy” (65).

I also see love as an important theme. It interrupts Stephen’s logic-based theory and is a gap in the narration of the episode in the strictest sense, thus deconstructing the “meaning” that is supposed to be put forth in the episode. Meaning comes out of this disruption to the narrative and Stephen’s argument. It shows the possibility that something more meaningful can come out of disorder and fragmentation as opposed to mimetic naturalism and logical narrative. Love too can be an illogical and disruptive force and contain more meaning than a logos-centered or scientific material view of life. One cannot fully rationally explain love, but one does not deny its meaningful effect on humanity. Love then offers a possibility for meaning that’s survived the disenchantment of the modern world, the reason/rationality of the Enlightenment Age, and the immanent worldview of Modernity. Ellmann suggests this same idea occurs in the novel and takes it one

step further to argue that this idea is what brings humanity closest to paradise, an idea I've closely associated with the transcendent:

The book revolts against history as made up of hatred and violence and speaks in its most intense moments of their opposite. It does so with the keenest sense of how love can degenerate into creamy dreaminess or into brutishness, can claim to be all soul or all body, when only in the union of both can it truly exist... Affection between human beings, however transitory, however qualified, is the closest we can come to paradise. ("The Big Word in 'Ulysses'")

Love, more than any concept, can be seen as equally immanent and transcendent. Although Stephen displays a level of cynicism in his theory, I see it as a necessary critique, and freeing development that begins to play with meaning on the level of artifice. It is the breaking down of the binary between a materialist viewpoint and a religious one, the idea that either one could feeling depict reality and lay claim to absolute meaning that allows Stephen to tap into the transcendent theme of Love.

It is in these early and middle episodes that the text shows the limits of the naturalist-materialist perspective and its corresponding binary of the religious or idealist perspective. At the same time, it begins to move forward, to combine some truths from each perspective, and show moments of transcendence.

### **III. Experimentation, Deconstruction, and Transcendent Moments in Later Episodes**

The later, most experimental episodes, do not overtly show a sense of the transcendent, but the modernist techniques, the experimentation with the materiality of the novel genre and language, allows them the fragmentary space needed for the transcendent to be explored. In these later episodes, after the

naturalist view has been exhausted, the immanent-transcendent binary of modernity has been critiqued, and the novel's characters have begun to move forward; the text now searches for meaning and tries out or exemplifies different systems of meaning and styles. One of the major ideas I'm looking at is how meaning is constructed in the absence of the clear transcendent view of the world that religion and the "enchanted" pre-modern world provided. Concurrently, I'm looking at how language systems construct meaning rather than point to the transcendent and thus are subject to the immanent worldview. And in the vein of Derrida's exploration logocentric thinking showing how these "transcendent" ideas are deconstructed. There are disruptions to the narrative that offer this kind of possibility for meaning. "Wandering Rocks," "Sirens," "Cyclops," and "Oxen of Sun" all explore decentered, or fragmented narratives. In the "Nausicaa" episode I explain how both Bloom and Gerty order and attach meaning to events based on their socially constructed worldviews.

"Wandering Rocks" attempts a transcendent viewpoint by being over and above the urban environment, but the viewpoint is deconstructed by the minutiae of daily life and the pastiche of characters. The episode also explores the socio-historical utilization of transcendence as an instrument of power in the form of universality. It begins with the stale and stratified Roman Catholic institution and viewpoint revealing the need for the deconstruction of meaning that occurs. Father Conmee is a self-assured character whose reserved and archaic attitude reveals an entrenched socially, politically powerful, but out of touch, religious order. While there are hints of a spiritual and deep meaning, it has become institutionalized and subsumed by the modern immanent world to the point of impotence in regards to connecting people to something transcendent in a meaningful way.

The chaotic nature of the episode also suggests this lack of meaning, but as I have stated, it is this chaos that deconstructs the old, entrenched, and stale binaries of the past that have lost their meaning, allowing for spaces in the fragmented world to produce new meaning. The multi-character brief narratives produce this kind of chaotic and fragmented view, one that suggests the atomic nature of the masses in the modern worldview. Additionally, the narratives are mostly mundane, the daily goings-on of the characters' lives. There are moments of possibility for meaning, but nothing offers a final conclusive idea. The "crumpled throwaway, Elijah is coming" (10. 294) makes an appearance in the Liffey, under the bridge, in the section where Katey, Boody, and Maggy Dedalus share a paltry meal together suggesting something more significant is coming despite the paucity of the current state of things. Boylan's smarmy interaction with a shop girl, Stephen's foray into a possible life in music, represent other alternate realities. This kind of instability and multiplicity of narrative makes it difficult to articulate and categorize meaning and find order in life. The alternative viewpoints and narratives here present themselves as othered, and thus, become less othered as they come into being through the episode's exploration of alternative viewpoints and realities. This, in and of itself, is a meaningful and useful exercise in that it does, to some degree, articulate the condition and ethos of the twentieth century, late modern viewpoint.

"Wandering Rocks" shows how a de-centered narrative and multiplicity can lead to the chaotic and exemplifies the difficulty of entering into a view where the stable binary and assuredness of a materialist begins to break down. To continue to follow the same reality and narrative path as though the world has not changed, and one can find meaning in the same worldview, would be an exercise in futility as

exemplified in Father Conmee's outdated worldview and position of authority.

Similarly, the episode ends with the outdated modern force of the British Empire.

Finding something meaningful in the immanent world occurs in "Nausicaa" through the connection between the disillusionment of scientific worldview and the illusion(s) inherently present in belief systems. Simply, can truth be found in illusion, or is truth, and hence "real" meaning dependent on disillusionment? It is a particularly relevant question given that the scientific worldview seems to lay claim to a more real truth because of empirical evidence, and atheists, like Freud in *Future of an Illusion*, who argue the detrimental effect of belief in an "illusionary" God and heaven. Additionally, the novel as a genre is an important aspect of the episode through Gerty's association with the "sentimental novel *The Lamplighter* (1854)," (Gifford 385), and often connected to the realist movement (Jameson 3). This combined with the episode's connection to its Homeric origin through "The Projected Mirage" of *The Odyssey*, (Gifford 384), suggests this interplay between illusion and disillusionment.

The grasp of the scientific worldview melds with the transcendent imperatives of religious language to produce a mystical science and materialism that gives greater significance and context to the material world. The transcendence is rooted in the materiality of the world and suggests that there is something greater at work in the material world. In other words, a worldview that sees causality and material reactions as essential to the natural world, but also includes an unseen spiritual force present in the physical world. In "Nausicaa" we see this specifically and this relates to some of Joyce's beliefs as well. As I referenced earlier, John Gordon argued Joyce was foremost a materialist thinker who tapped into mystical pagan views of the cosmos rooted in the physical properties of the universe, what he

called the “Orphic,” after Joyce’s own notes. This ethos gives shape to some of the actions and thoughts of the episode as Bloom’s physical material desires are a driving force for the episode’s content, but it is suggested have a greater mystical meaning through their connection to greater forces. Rather than just mirroring the “reality” of Joyce’s time period, I see the suggestion of the material world and body offering something divine and mystical as an alternative to the dogmatic religious views of Catholicism and the flattening materialism of modernity.

First and foremost, the episode is about the physical body, and addresses the relationship between the desires of the body and the spirituality of the body, a theme already suggested in “Hades.” The attachment of a greater significance is also developed in this act through coincidental serendipity. Bloom suggests that maybe there is a magnetic connection between his watch stopping and what might be happening between Boylan and Molly:

Wonder is there any magnetic influence between the person because that was about the time he....Back of everything magnetism. Earth for instance pulling this and being pulled. That causes movement. And time? Well that's the time the movement takes... Because it's arranged. Magnetic needle tells you what's going on in the sun, the stars... Molly, he.” (13. 984-993)

Here Bloom is working out scientific and technological developments and trying to incorporate them into a worldview seeking higher significance. This is a condition of the modern worldview that has, in areas of searching for significance and higher causes, replaced a religious view of the world with the causality of a scientific one. But again, I want to stress, how Bloom’s musings about science point to a greater significance and yearn for higher causes bordering on the religious thought couched



in scientific language and thought. Attaching magnetism to he and his wife's connection suggests something metaphysical manifested into the physical world, the very essence of philosophical naturalism. The scientific worldview, while purportedly, or reductively objective and materialist, becomes quasi-religious in the modern worldview that has dismissed the significance of religion.

Bloom and Gerty's worldviews, while not explicitly religious, provide some of the same illusions and meaning that the religious narrative and worldview provides, and thus, find in their beliefs and interpretation a modern way to re-enchant the world. They are akin to viewing the world in an almost religious way, not in content, but in the basic principles and function of those worldview. While there are not fairies and magical events, the metaphysical and transcendent possibilities attached to these events, through the respective characters' interpretations, suggests a more enchanted world than one would expect to find in the modern worldview.

Overall, the episode suggests that while there is a danger to "illusionary" narratives, they serve a greater purpose and are necessary to defining meaning in the world. In other words, one cannot simply reduce the world to illusion and disillusionment, and the idea that disillusionment is synonymous with truth is reductive at best. This doesn't excuse naïve conceptions of the world, but rather the source of those conceptions is part of a larger contextual narrative, whether that contextual narrative is nineteenth century sentimental novels or modern scientific worldview. To take it one step further, these worldviews become individualized and are dependent on subjective belief if they are to have meaning. Gerty's and Bloom's romanticized perspectives rely on the immanent worldview, but each requires what many would associate with a religious context, a belief in that worldview that can't

be empirically proven, a use of that worldview to order and consign meaning to events and data, and an extra-sensory metaphysical attachment of greater meaning to events providing hope and intrinsic value.

The novel's search for meaning continues in "Cyclops" whose experimentation comes in the form of a "Cyclops" character's point of view, a view steeped in an aggressive xenophobic and ethnocentric nationalism. There is a chaotic disorder similar to "Wandering Rocks" and an illusory worldview similar to "Nausicaa" at times in the episode caused by the narrator's propensity towards the citizen's overbearing ignorance and fervent nature. "Sinn Fein! says the citizen. Sinn fein amhain! The friends we love are by our side and the foes we hate before us" (12. 523-524). The Cyclop's episode reveals the emergence of nationalism as a way to combat this lack of meaning as it provides an emotional and compellingly historic narrative through which to find meaning. Additionally, the episode brings up the exile motif and the way that religion itself can be manipulated to fit into a modern, political, and seemingly historical viewpoint to reduce it down and also allow it fit into and authorize political and national identity. Bloom suggests that not only is this inadequate, but, in fact, fosters hatred, and in doing so, also sets up a clear binary here and brings back the theme of love as central to the narrative's meaning:

But it's no use, says he. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women, insult and hatred. And everybody knows that it's the very opposite of that that is really life.

-- What? says Alf.

-- Love, says Bloom. I mean the opposite of hatred. (12. 1481-1485)

The binary here of love and hatred is used to produce meaning and critique many of the immanent modern worldviews that have produced hatred. In a novel that seems

to be so many times searching for meaning, we have the clearest indication here about the meaning of life, and it's not an esoteric, abstract, or materialist concept, but simply, love. There is a beauty to this simplicity that contrasts both the complex and complicated style of *Ulysses* and the abstract complexity of modern theoretical approaches to meaning, which Joyce, with his encyclopedic knowledge and myriad of contexts, clearly engages in throughout the novel. Similarly, I don't want to reduce the entire novel to this theme and statement. I do think that part of the novel's complexity and style suggests that binary and totalizing approaches to meaning are overly simplistic and reductive, but to totally dismiss relational meaning, and the larger aspects of what it means to be human, also misses and confuses the point of life, and can lead to obfuscation, disorder, reduction, and even hatred.

Bloom often favors a more materialist and scientific worldview, so his simple observation and relational point, the love/hate binary, is in keeping with his character and worldview, but at the same time, it transcends the moment and becomes a profound statement against the negative side of immanent materialist viewpoint. Rumors about Bloom are heartily discussed by the pub's patrons reflecting the superficiality and ignorance of their concerns. These concerns, indicative of the immanent, also fix their focus on issues of religion as they jest about Bloom's Jewish heritage. Ultimately, it leads to a long list which exemplifies the quantitative over the meaning that is meant to be conveyed by religious narrative. And while, in some ways, it mirrors the listing of genealogy in the bible, here, translated into modern times, it becomes a tedious and cumbersome list devoid of meaning:

And at the sound of the sacring bell, headed by a crucifer with acolytes, thurifers, boatbearers, readers, ostiarii, deacons and

subdeacons, the blessed company drew nigh of mitred abbots and priors and guardians and monks and friars: the monks of Benedict of Spoleto, Carthusians and Camaldolesi, Cistercians and Olivetans, Oratorians and Vallombrosans, and the friars of Augustine, Brigittines, Premonstratesians, Servi, Trinitarians,... (12. 1676-1682)

The scene reads like a false imitation of a sacred and noble act as the characters involved here were repeatedly ignorant and petty. A more contemporary and plain style is re-introduced with humility as Bloom enters to actually do something worthy of praise, the over-looked and misperceived act of helping the widow Dignam.

This give rise to a final trace of the transcendent, an indication that Bloom's words and actions tap into something more meaningful through the transcendent:

When, lo, there came about them all a great brightness and they beheld the chariot wherein He stood ascend to heaven. And they beheld Him in the chariot, clothed upon in the glory of the brightness, having raiment as of the sun, fair as the moon and terrible that for awe they durst not look upon Him. And there came a voice out of heaven, calling: Elijah! Elijah! And he answered with a main cry: Abba! Adonai! And they beheld Him even Him, ben Bloom Elijah, amid clouds of angels ascend to the glory of the brightness at an angle of fortyfive degrees over Donohoe's in Little Green Street like a shot off a shovel. (12. 1910-1918)

One could argue that the language and style is equally inappropriate, but in this case, I think the actions and words of Bloom which are understated and noble in the face of the pettiness and ignorance he's suffered in the episode warrant this call to a more righteous and sacred allusion and style. The episode suggests even in the

immanent, modern world, where calls to nationalism and ethnicity often are the source of pride and meaning, but mostly result in nihilism and hate, the transcendent and remnants of the past's noble and sacred traces of meaning can exist. Additionally, this kind of confusion of identity, and trace of identity, that depend on another context, reveal the narrow-mindedness of the Citizen's viewpoint, along with affirming the insularity of the other patrons. Identity, and also meaning, transcend the reductive quality of the many theories and abstractions that come out of the modern immanent worldview. Categorization and binaries used to order and allow for meaning can reduce and distort meaning so as to become unintelligible and devoid of meaning. The triumph of Bloom and allusion to Elijah produces a transcendent effect that critiques such a problem. Bloom's ascension is over the narrow-mindedness of the Citizen, a trace of meaning attached to his actions and words, but also not a full ascension that was possible in the context of Elijah. This, I would argue, doesn't make it less meaningful or miraculous.

So far, I've loosely been exploring the relationship between narrative and style with a focus on language and how this relates to an overall theme of meaning and the particular theme of the immanent/transcendent binary. In "Oxen of the Sun," context and style, with a particular attention to language, come to the forefront. The different styles appear bewildering and a disruption to narrative coherence, but as I've been noting throughout the chapter, the opposite isn't necessarily going to produce meaning, and the disruptive style can actually lead to more meaningful ideas.

The progressive styles here, John Gordon argues, come out of the context of the characters' consciousness and are thus connected to realism. Additionally, Gordon sees the episode's lexicon connecting to generative properties of fathering

and authoring lends a dimension of meaning that is ultimately connective and discernible. Gordon also sees this in opposition to a deconstructionist view which I would like to address in particular:

And, too, what appears to be exoskeletal, allegorical, metonymic turns out to be endogenous, symbolic, metaphoric: things register, connect, and reverberate, from the inside out, from origin to derivative, cause to effect. Apparently a ripe plum for the deconstructionists, this episode ‘demands’ and demands not deconstruction but construction.  
(105)

While Gordon sees this as a difficult episode, he believes it ultimately is meant to be figured out. Gordon gives a very detailed reading of the episode connecting the language and events to the overall schematics of the novel, essentializing the novel as a whole and the episode in particular as never straying from the realist style of correspondence between real world events and characters’ thoughts. Gordon also states that this interpretation precludes any theoretical interpretation that sees the episode as disruptive or deconstructionist: “and the conclusion I have come to is that if I am right then they are wrong, and vice versa. One at most, or the other: not both” (115). Gordon does the job of connect the text to plot events and references to explain some of the episode’s major questions and events, and I respect his expertise. At the same time, without delving into an ancillary debate, I believe this kind of narrow interpretation is similar to the one critiqued in “Scylla and Charybdis” and the “Cyclops” episodes. Everything strains to be reduced to this definition when the text seems to be playing with language and meaning in its voluminous detail and word choice.

While Gordon sees this as affirming some generative end point, I see this episode's use of style and generation as critiquing narratives of teleology while seeking, but never achieving, some form of higher meaning in the episode's ethos of modern progression. As we "progress" through the episode we begin to see moments of transcendence coming through the chaos of deconstruction, and the façade of a style that conflicts with the socio-historical and cultural context of the novel. The narrative's use of different styles is inherently theoretical, and while it is manifested in style, the type of correspondence Gordon would authorize, the reflexive nature of incorporating a kind of history of styles in an anachronistic way invites a more disruptive reading than Gordon would authorize. The traces of meaning in these contexts suggests a degree of arbitrariness to contexts, as well as a critical reflection, that leaves things in a general state of mystery and bewilderment.

It is this kind of absolute belief in meaning, the modern-age approach to meaning, that is being critiqued in the avant-garde modernism of *Ulysses*. While Gordon describes Joyce as "pre-structuralist" in that he was unaware of a structuralist critique, I don't wholly subscribe to this characterization for several reasons, and Derrida's critiques of textual meaning are still applicable. Joyce's systemic view of meaning is highly structural, and while the correspondences of realism are part of Joyce's goal as an author, it does not negate the deconstructive possibilities the text constructs due to language's traces of meaning and the fallibility of a logos-centered view of metaphysical meaning.

Interestingly, Gordon points to some of the ways that the pagan elements incorporate some level of meaning but wants to continually hide them in the context of realism. My take on this is that these pagan elements suggest another possibility of meaning as a source of something mythical and metaphysical as an alternative to

more sanctioned and materialist but neutered and disenchanting contexts like scientific, secular, and institutionalized religion. My main idea here again is more the utilization and deconstruction of the transcendence/immanence binary, so, to a degree, Gordon's "realism" interpretation accords with my view. Where I would like to depart is in the singularity of his interpretation, but in terms of realism, the main points here suggest a movement in favor a more immanent view of the world. On the surface, the episode's style and use of language emphasizes this immanent worldview that rejects the transcendent possibility of meaning:

It had better be stated here and now at the outset that the perverted transcendentalism to which Mr S. Dedalus' (Div. Scep.) contentions would appear to prove him pretty badly addicted runs directly counter to accepted scientific methods. Science, it cannot be too often repeated, deals with tangible phenomena. The man of science like the man in the street has to face hardheaded facts that cannot be blinked and explain them as best he can. (14. 1223- 1230)

The episode's commitment to textuality and style, while remaining committed to realism, would suggest the influence of material reality even in abstraction and stylistic concerns. In my view, the primary stylistic experiments here emphasize the decentered postmodern view of meaning, and even in an episode about generation, the episode's use of language suggests a disconnect between ages, not a smooth progression. The particular styles and use of language reveal the way that language is tied to meaning and a cultural/historical context. The styles here do not match the reality of this time and place of *Ulysses*. At the same time, the language and style incorporated here suggest the trace of meaning that these particular styles and time periods evoke. While they do not strictly adhere to



realism, they do convey the multiplicity of reality, and the larger context of meaning contained in reality and language. The styles give the episode and novel a larger context which increases the significance of the particular moment and narrative that generated from it. The episode's use of archaic styles also shows a disconnect with the past and the difficulty of finding meaning in a style that does not fit the consciousness of an age. The style, in a sense, shows the possibility and the reality of othering that occurs in the text's own hegemony of style.

These styles, which are the precedents and origins of the English language are difficult to find meaning in and defamiliarize what one takes for granted in finding meaning in the English language. The cultural, historical "roots" of the language are as "foreign" as any other unfamiliar entity, exposing the construction of language and its false appearance as logical and fixed, and deconstructing the English language. The episode's opening styles' immediately conflict and the initial announcement is in a foreign language. The tone of this initial style suggests something sacred. "DESHIL HOLLES EAMUS. DESHIL HOLLES EAMUS. DESHIL HOLES Eamus....boyaboy hoopsa!" (14. 1-14). The *Annotated Ulysses* notes the style beginning with three incantations in the tradition of The Arval Brethren, a Roman company of priests, "whose principal function was to conduct public ceremonies in honor of the Roman goddess of plenty and fertility" (Gifford, 408).

While this meaning gives a more sacred and spiritual tone and also sets the theme of birth, the difference in style and tone that reflects the difference in time period and culture also informs the meaning of the episode. One can't help but grasp that we do not live in a world/society where this is a common practice and usage of language, and reflects not only a different set of beliefs, but a different way

of thinking about the world and language. In the Anglo-Saxon style, “Some man that wayfaring was stood by husedoor at night's oncoming. Of Israel's folk was that man that on earth wandering far had fared. Stark ruth of man his errand that him lone led till that house” (14. 71-73). The abstract nature of the action is superseded by the religious and hallowed overtone of the style and connotation of Judeo-Christian allusions to themes of faith articulated through vigilance and the historical journey of the Jews. In fact, the Anglo-Saxon style is rife with Judeo-Christian references suggesting that the literary style was inherently linked to this Judeo-Christian enchanted worldview: “Full she dread that God the Wrecker all mankind would fordo with water for his evil sins. Christ's rood made she on breastbone and him drew that he would rathe infare under her thatch” (14. 83-86). Seeing reality in this way gives people a higher sense of purpose and leads to a philosophic truism.

The religious worldview is not exclusive to the style, and still remains highly philosophical in an arguably secular way, but sees a more magical and cyclical view of life. The “medieval” worldview in its articulation of beliefs and values is, in this style, an enchanted view of the world, and shows both a discrepancy with the modern and a nostalgia for this kind of inherent and magical meaning and order. It is similarly emphasized in the casting of Bloom as a kind of pilgrim/knightly figure in the Medieval Romanticized style. The action itself, here, is not particularly meaningful, but the diction and syntax suggest a noble and heroic quest, thus attaching a more meaningful context to the action, one dependent on the transcendent being linked to the “real” world, however highly imagined and elevated that “real” world is. While castles, knights, and dragons, are not transcendent in the traditional sense, they tap into same emotional wonderment, courage, hope, and

most of all, sense of something beyond one's immediate surroundings as the transcendent. This contrast with the realism style makes it apparent how modernity and rationalism have stripped language and literature of this natural link between the immanent and the transcendent.

The argument against the style is that it manipulates "reality" for a naïve and manipulatively fantastic version of events. What is apparent is that this style seems out of place, out of its appropriate context, but, simultaneously, adds a meaningful dimension to an already constructed and imagined event and character. A stringent commitment to a realism/naturalism style is equally based on a version of reality, and this contrast, like the others in the episode, deconstructs the fallacy that the realism/naturalism style is inherently more real, natural, and truthful. In fact, a stringent commitment to that style strips the characters and narrative of meaning by appearing fixed and privileging a material/immanent view of reality that is the result of Enlightenment era and modern immanent worldviews. Not to dismiss the plot, but this is really the main point I want to emphasize in the episode.

While the episode is about birth, mothers/fathers, generative themes, I see no consistent causality, no improvement upon previous styles. Each style fits its context and the worldview that constructs it. Similarly, only if we look at these styles through the lens of progress, do we see progress. And while this may be true in a context, one could make the case for other ways of viewing these styles. I'm not trying to point to a superficial, infinite number of possibilities of meaning, only that while one may find progress in the styles, like one may see growth in a child to an adult, there is great value in each stage that is lost, and not necessarily for some greater end or for the sake of progress. This kind of utilitarian/causal thinking is another mark of scientific modern worldview and one, ironically, that points to the

religious worldview of paradise or utopia, in a word transcendence, and connects to the teleological worldviews of modernity. If this theory holds in this particular episode, then we should have some greater end that is the result of this “progress.” Only we don’t. First and foremost, it privileges the English language as some inevitable perfect language. Secondly, modernism itself, the experimentation with languages and styles going on in this very novel, this very episode becomes highly problematic. Lastly, parallel with the progress of styles, the episode would result in some similar crossroads of progress as evidenced in modernism, or possibly point to some greater end. Instead, we see the consistent theme of the transcendence disrupting the context and style and the episodes eventually leading to bawdiness and the corporeal and lust-driven Stephen being followed by Bloom to a brothel. The episode, however, returns to the possibility of transcendence with religious and archaic context allusions such as “Elijah is coming!” (14. 1580) and “Shout salvation in King Jesus.” (14. 1588), contradicting the supremacy of the immanent worldview and the idea of linear progression.

All this leads to novel’s most deconstructive and experimental episode of “Circe.” Just as in the novel’s other representations of altered sensory realities, there is both a great attention to material causality, and an altered state that appropriately produces an alterity that deconstructs fixed material reality and allows for the transcendent to exist in the open spaces of the fissures of deconstructed reality. The drinking that takes place in the episode, especially of absinthe, is the primary material cause of the altered states of the characters in the episode, and the altered and slightly disconnected style of the episode. This alterity, I will say, ultimately leads to the transcendent, but first, this alterity leads to the opening up of the subconscious and the psychological viewpoint, the replacement for

the meaning aspect of religion that owes its origin to the logic and causality ethos of the scientific worldview. Additionally, the psychological meaning is tapped into through the sexual desire and energy produced by the brothel setting.

For Bloom, this leads to several subconscious fears and desires related to his close relationships playing out in the episode's play-dialogue form. This shows some of the major tenets and ideas associated with a psychological view of meaning. The lens produces a meaning valued by the scientific, immanent worldview as Bloom's subconscious fears and desires are displayed. In previous episodes, Bloom's corporeal, human, and psychologically-fallible self, have been shown, but this episode's commitment to this kind of characterization, taken to the extreme, becomes so hyper-psychologized that it becomes fantastic and surreal. The effect is two-fold and, once again, connects the naturalism/realism style to the modern immanent worldview. The subconscious effect is the deepest logical conclusion for finding meaning in material causes. The episode's content and style are so over the top grotesque, imaginative, fantastic, hyperbolic, bawdy that one must see a level of illusion or farce in its depiction of the logical extension of immanent meaning and the naturalist style of the psychological dimension. Gordon again strains to connect this to the realist style, and while I'm willing to concede there may be a material/realist basis for the actions and language of the episode, I think it misses the larger point that I'm making. Meaning, in a realist context corresponding to the logical extension of the immanent worldview and the naturalist style, becomes ridiculous or incomprehensible as evidenced by such statements as "LYNCH— Pornosophical philotheology. Metaphysics in Mecklenburgh street" (15. 109-110). While there are some moments of "truth" and meaning, and reality in the psychological context, the style here is also a mock critique of an absolute and over-

zealous application of the modern immanent worldview and the naturalist style. It becomes an othered and strange version of such a worldview and style and thus deconstructs the fixed system of the worldview and style.

As I stated, Bloom's interactions exemplify the classic aspects of psychology's view of truth and the unconscious, familial and sexual relationships, and painful loss. The first of these is Bloom's interaction with his father which expresses Bloom's worldly and primary feelings of inadequacy. Even in this interaction there is reference to a religious context suggesting a more transcendent meaning, "Are you not my dear son Leopold who left the house of his father and left the god of his fathers Abraham and Jacob" (15. 262-63). This is subsequently followed by an interaction with his mother, his wife, and then devolves into a sexually perverse scene of desire and domination. This action and dialogue is a play on the prevalence of psychological theories of meaning that are prevalent in the modern immanent worldview involving sexual desire, and one's relationships to their parents. In this context, Bloom's identity and meaning as a character is reduced to these psychological and subconscious fears and desires.

Bloom's trial, examination, and exposure are equally an exposure of the cultural signs and ideals that operate as the novel's premise for meaning. The scientific immanent worldview, the transcendent allusions, and various identities are given examination through Western institutions of extracting and evaluating truth. These inquiries of Bloom also call into question the foundations of meaning. After the trial, a blatant portrayal of such evaluative questioning, "The Man in the Macintosh," the symbol of mysterious identity, misidentifies Bloom as "Leopold M'Intosh, the notorious fireraiser." And identifies "his real name" as "Higgins"(15. 1560-62). Additionally, there are the religious identities often associated with

Bloom: “Bloom, are you the Messiah ben Joseph or ben David?” (15. 1833). The episode explores the construction of identity through the context of the modern immanent worldview and the trace of transcendent meaning deconstructing that context.

The remaining action of the episode centers around Stephen’s similar conflicts of the immanent of history and the subconscious as his story revolves around his relationship with his mother (which is tied to social/cultural effects of the Catholic Church) and the effect of the British Empire on Ireland. The physical and physiological effects of the drinking in turn affect the psychological states of the characters which heighten and distort these immanent concerns and conflicts. As we saw with Bloom, Stephen must engage and confront these concerns in a hyperbolic fashion. First, the emotional intensity and guilt associated with his mother and, secondly, the historical and political conflict of Irish independence and nationalism. In the first instance, it seems that Stephen wants to be released from this conflict, and the exchange revisits earlier themes of Stephen as a site of the conflict between transcendence and immanence, and love as a possible reconciliation between these two competing lenses of meaning. As we see in here in Stephen’s pleading towards his mother, “(eagerly) Tell me the word, mother, if you know now. The word known to all men” (15. 4192-93). On the one hand, there are certainly psychological implications here, but the line also expresses a hope that love can transcend these kinds of petty and material concerns of strife and socio-political context.

The theme of love, one aspect of which is care for others, especially in relationships that have no biological connection, transcends the immanent and material conflicts that conclude the episode. As a corollary to this main point, I also

think it's important that Stephen is not an immediate close relation to Bloom. It introduces a sense of otherness to Bloom's looking out for Stephen that makes it transcendent on a personal level. There isn't an inherent rational obligation, but rather one motivated by human emotion, (again similar to Stephen's relationship with his mother), becoming a site of reconciliation between the immanent and the transcendent.

The episode ultimately blends the immanent and the transcendent, but this only happens through the deconstruction of the immanent. As the episode comes to its close, the immanent conflicts devolve into their most extreme dramatic qualities of outward hostile cynicism by Stephen, an unfamiliar trait, and physical aggression by Stephen's British friend and the British troops patrolling the area, becoming a symbol of such immanent force. The transcendent reconciles this conflict as Bloom transforms his psychological immanent conflict into aiding and showing love and concern for Stephen when he saves him from the troops and invites him home to convalesce.

#### **IV. Reflections: Endings and Beginnings**

This leads to "Eumaeus," and Part III of the novel, which becomes a reflection on the plot and experimental style of the novel; a stock-taking of the deconstruction, chaos and disorder, a way to make sense of what has happened. This corresponds to Kenner and others' view of seeing Bloom as a kind of father figure, where Stephen and Bloom discuss and reflect on a variety of topics. The episode's return to the immanent sphere through discussion of politics and the working out of individual subconscious fears and desires suggests the transcendent does not simply overcome the immanent, but rather provides a space through which to work out immanent



concerns and issues. The other marker of meaning is the tired, worn-out style and language of the episode, reflecting the old and worn out worldview of the modern-immanence. This, along with the multiplicity of identities being tried on in the episodes, suggests the episode is conscious of the need for change and the complexity and contextuality of meaning that occurs when the classic binary of transcendence and immanence is deconstructed. After all the experimentation with styles and meaning in the previous episodes, along with the corresponding drama, the episode can also be a reflection and return to the familiar that allows one to make sense of and find meaning in the new and chaotic. Some things that are stated/said in the episode exemplify the return to the main narrative and reflect a slight return to a more conventional style: Stephen refers to Lynch as Judas, there's a discussion of Stephen helping out an acquaintance that Bloom's dismissive of, Stephen's a bit glib about his reasons for leaving home, Bloom suggests Stephen could go back home and shows concern about his friends deserting him and his dislike of Mulligan, a discussion that reflects Stephen's lack of self-worth caused by Stephen's poverty, Stephen's critique of his father as "All too Irish" (16. 384), sailors thinking of the wrong person, a homecoming that reflects the exile motif/allusion to *Odysseus*, the exotic/other of the sailors' adventures. All these events bring the reader back to the action and themes that have been depicted throughout the novel and that I have covered. I don't want to dismiss them as unimportant, only that they do not elicit any new points for my argument other than a return to points about plot and theme that I've covered.

Similarly, "Ithaca" does this kind of practice of stock-taking assessment, but in a more systematic, modern way that I must address in more detail. The style of the episode is a kind of checklist of information and facts, a way to compile the data

of the various contexts, with a focus on the previous episode's conversation. The style reflects an illusion to the foundation of modernity's belief in objectivity and facts as the basis for truth. The style is modern in the way that it turns the novel into a system of data. As a system of data, textual meaning becomes reduced to quantifiable information dependent on a closed system for context. Data is the most reductive form of meaning and only makes sense with a highly structured context. Modernity prizes this quality as it provides a system for meaning and progress consistent with its cultural values.

The episode appears to be giving facts, a sort of question-answer dialogue between the episode's narrator and the text. Readers become hyper-aware of the episode's context and meaning becomes flattened in the sense that it's both stylistically presented as factual and no series of question and answer is qualitatively different. This is a straightforward critique of modernity's reduction of meaning through its immanent scientific ethos, but this is also deconstructed as this context is disrupted by other contexts. Patrick McCarthy in "Joyce's Unreliable Catechist: Mathematics and the Narration of 'Ithaca'" attributes this critique due to intentional errors in the text: "in 'Ithaca' Joyce uses the language of science and mathematics to develop the illusion of objective reliability, then shatters his own smug pose by introducing errors and inconsistencies into the text" (616). My point is that the style and language would necessarily produce inconsistencies and ambiguities in logic and relationship to the rest of the novel, but McCarthy's insight shows that Joyce sought to emphasize this point.

While the textuality of the episode does not discriminate, the additional contexts and connotations of particular questions open up larger and disruptive

contexts. For instance, in the beginning of the episode there are several questions and responses that stylistically in tone and word choice suggest the scientific and fact-based tone of the episode:

What reflection concerning the irregular sequence of dates 1884, 1885, 1886, 1888, 1892, 1893, 1904 did Bloom make before their arrival at their destination?

He reflected that the progressive extension of the field of individual development and experience was regressively accompanied by a restriction of the converse domain of interindividual relations. (U. 17. 60-66)

The emphasis on the “irregular sequence of dates” as posed in the initial question reveals the way in which meaning, when quantified, is dependent on patterns, and deviation from such patterns presents an anomaly that necessarily requires some reason, and thus meaning. This is the systematic ethos of meaning that the episode draws attention to. If things are working as they should, then they are less meaningful because they behave as they are supposed to and thus do not require analysis or reflection. In the scientific immanent worldview, it is that which disrupts this order, like religious thinking, Stephen’s idea of God as a “shout in the street” (2. 386), that requires the most attention, as it does not fit into the empirical order. This is also in keeping with Derrida’s view of meaning as part of a larger system and context-dependent. It reveals meaning being reduced to a particular context, and one that could be seen as inappropriate in the stylistic context of the chapter, but, in fact, works. While it may be seen to reduce meaning to the particular context, it also allows for a translated meaning. A level of meaning is lost in the translation, but there is also an added level of meaning, in addition to the

trace of meaning, that does not preclude a transcendent one, but actually invites such a meaning; a disruptive one yes, but one that comes out of the system's own logic. Reason and the scientific method which rely on logic and data to produce meaningful statements and ideas are paradoxically beholden to that which goes against their logic and data.

This tone can be seen in preceding questions, but most directly examines the different views and the impact of the relationship between Stephen and Bloom. The differences and similarities reflect the complex relationship and the prevalence of the immanent and transcendent. For example, the answer to the question "Did Bloom discover common factors of similarity between their respective like and unlike reactions to experience?" reveals how immanent ideas such as environmental factors influence the transcendental concerns and produce a modernistic distrust of entrenched views. Some level of individuality is inherent in the following answer, but also reflects a modern view of the causal link between environment and individuality: "Both indurated by early domestic training and an inherited tenacity of heterodox resistance professed their disbelief in many orthodox religious, national, social and ethical doctrines" (17. 23-26). The logical binary between heterodox and orthodox is set up here as well as a default for meaning in the episode, again suggesting a link between the episode's modern understanding of meaning as connected to Enlightenment logical thinking and the Western binary thinking that Derrida points out. The answer also suggests that Bloom and Stephen are inclined toward this heterodoxy meaning; they are inherently skeptical of orthodoxy which perhaps makes them outliers in this sense, good subjects for novels in that they are not ordinary, and thus perhaps not indicative of societal norms. Perhaps this is a bit off topic, but I think it's an important distinction of literary

meaning that it differentiates from the kind of modes of meaning, like the rise of social sciences, that we see in immanent developments in determining meaning. In other words, literary modernism in particular, and literature in general, is more likely to engage in the kind of othered alterity of the dominant ethos, in this case the immanent worldview, and thus be more prone to exploring the deconstructive element of transcendence.

Stephen and Bloom are “divergent,” though, in regard to the religious history of Ireland despite their shared “disbelief” in the “orthodox...doctrines.” In identifying the “anachronism,” Stephen shows his commitment to history, and the “shout in the street” which is a disruptive feature of history, as an important marker of truth, as opposed to Bloom’s larger view of such issues and concern with detail when it comes to scientific inquiries, i.e., “The collapse which Bloom ascribed to gastric inanition and certain chemical compounds of varying degrees of adulteration and alcoholic strength, accelerated by mental exertion and the velocity of rapid circular motion in a relaxing atmosphere...” (17. 36-40). Rather than dismissing religious belief, Stephen engages with it on this historical level, a level where much modern interpretations of religious meaning are based. A viewpoint that even secular critics like Geert Lernout have endorsed. It is not enough to believe, but one must have logical and/or historical traditions and proofs for religious truth.

The rest of the questions and answers are, generally speaking, variations on this theme and has been noted as a problem of the episode. Aside from emphasizing these differences in perspective and summarizing the content of the episodes, there is a lack of differentiation between these questions’ importance. Avrom Fleishman, for example, notes how this reflects a scientific viewpoint that “limits its interest to the observable phenomenon, designs its investigation for a controlled approach to

certain elements of the field, and presents its data in their narrowest, verifiable form, leaving inference and implication to the reader” (212). Volume and detail of the answer doesn’t necessarily correspond to the importance of the meaning in the episode. Another problem here is the lack of traditional narrative action and style to highlight important themes or action. The plethora of information and the lack of narrative highlight the kind of modern experience of trying to find meaning in a world that lacks qualitative differentiation in its emphasis on quantity and logic. In this particular case, the problem of scientific language and inquiry, a systemic approach seems to problematize meaning. In this way, I believe the text is deconstructing the immanent sphere as well as it shows its limits in emphasizing a particular type of scientific truth when readers at his point in a novel or looking for something different.

To expand on Fleishman’s point, while the text doesn’t necessarily privilege one set of data over another, readers certainly will, which breaks the text down in another way. The textuality of the text, while perhaps frustrating for the reader, also requires the reader to make sense of it, to privilege certain data, word choices, nuances, and ideas, over others. The reader necessarily brings in the traces of meaning from earlier in the text and, of course, their own experiences and contexts, to make sense and meaning out of the text. As a result, the episode interrogates the foundational structures, styles, and suppositions from earlier in the novel that provided a basis for meaning and the reader must do this as well in attempting to find meaning in the episode. A totality of meaning may appear to be constructed by the episode, but it falls apart due to the complications of totality it presents in its construction.

When that totality is disrupted, there are moments that relate to the context of the immanent/transcendent. When Bloom attempts to enter the house, the text asks, "Did he fall?" suggesting a simple answer, but instead we get a scientific view that transforms into religious and mythical references:

By his body's known weight of eleven stone and four pounds in avoirdupois measure, as certified by the graduated machine for periodical selfweighing in the premises of Francis Fraedman, pharmaceutical chemist of 19 Frederick street, north, on the last feast of the Ascension, to wit, the twelfth day of May of the bissextile year one thousand nine hundred and four of the Christian era (jewish era five thousand six hundred and sixtyfour, mohammedan era one thousand three hundred and twentytwo), golden number \$, epact 13, solar cycle 9, dominical letters C B, Roman indication 2, Julian period 6617, MXMIV. (17. 90-99)

There are other examples that mix this quantifying language of immanence with an underlying reference to transcendence. For example, their ages are broken down into a myriad of mathematical relationships only to be undercut by the possibility that these calculations might be nullified by an inevitable end to the world or simply the death of either (17. 462-465). And in this question about meaning in reference to Stephen: "He affirmed his significance as a conscious rational animal proceeding syllogistically from the known to the unknown and a conscious rational reagent between a micro- and a macrocosm ineluctably constructed upon the incertitude of the void" (17. 1012-1015).

The episode does contain deep and poignant questions and answers about Bloom that reflect the scientific viewpoint with a deeper and spiritual

acknowledgment of reality. And when the text asks Bloom about his feelings on the variety of beliefs, the answer suggests a viewpoint that reveals the indeterminacy of ultimate truth, and, to a degree, an incompatibility between a scientific view of the world and a religious one: “Not more rational than they had then appeared, not less rational than other beliefs and practices now appeared” (17. 1903-1904). This shows how Bloom represents an immanent perspective, and while he has a deeper meaning and connection to transcendence, that meaning is still subject to the worldview of modernity, and the particular character.

There are larger points being made here as well. For one thing, it firmly dispels the myth of modernity that science can provide a wholly objective view of reality and meaning using data and mathematics. It’s significant that it does so in an episode built around scientific-mathematic language and viewpoint as it illustrates the fallacy without completely dismissing the value and importance of scientific inquiry and truth. As Fleishman pointed out, the field of science itself had begun to reveal this truth through its own projects and theories, but the preponderance of modernity’s view of scientific objectivity as the path to truth still dominated society. Along with dispelling this myth of modernity, the episode also critiques another, that of absolute truth. The teleological narratives of modernity, Hegel’s *Reason in History* for example, assumed that there was something absolute, something that could bring reality together and be the basis for existence. This occurred in science as well through the idea that material reality could be accounted for by the immutable laws of science. In this context, religious views, as well, emphasized the creator God as beyond the world, the ultimate truth. “Ithaca’s” emphasis on relativity and the fallacy of objectivity shows how fraught with peril the quest for the ultimate truth is.



This is not to say definitively that there are no absolutes, only that the idea is mistaken from the start, as the quest begins from a subjective and mediated vantage point. Nor does this preclude the value of context-dependent or mediated truths. These truths do reveal important ideas about the self, and about the world, just as they do about the characters in “Ithaca,” and about the narrative of *Ulysses*. It is these ideas that lead to larger truths about the world that have been missing in secular modernity, a disenchanting world. As Joyce himself stated, “Ithaca” was meant to reach a higher meaning in combining math, science and religion into a “mathematical catechism:”

‘All events are resolved into their cosmic, physical, psychical etc. equivalents, e.g. Bloom jumping down the area, drawing water from the tap, the micturating in the garden, the cone of incense, lighted candle and statue so that the reader will know everything and know it in the baldest and coldest way, but Bloom and Stephen thereby become heavenly bodies, wanderers like the stars at which they gaze.’

(qtd. from Bowker 286)

Joyce’s intentions here bespeak a worldview that does want to emphasize the strictness attached to a scientific view of reality, but rather than having the perspective leave the characters deflated and stuck in secular modernity, it brings them into a transcendent realm that I would characterize as a modernist transcendence because it does not shun the material-scientific world for a metaphysical one. Some would argue that this is still an immanent realm since it is still the physical world. I would suggest that this shows evidence of the ambiguity and hybridity of the binary. Joyce’s term “heavenly bodies” conveys this ambiguity, but also clearly shows a transcendent connotation. Although science deals with the

material universe, as it ventures into more complex terrain, terrain not easily observable, (sub-atomic particles or deep-space entities), it begins to rely more on theoretical mathematics. When it ventures into this territory, the connection to the empirical begins to deteriorate. Bertrand Russell states that this “was already recognized by physicists” even prior to Einstein since “force was known to be merely a mathematical fiction, and it was generally held that motion is a merely relative phenomenon” (qtd. from Fleishman 209). This theoretical universe also becomes more like a belief system that requires faith, inspires awe, and leaves one with more questions than answers. In short, it starts to resemble a religious view of the universe, another example of the text’s use of mystical science. The narrator expresses this awe and wonder in passages like this one describing “Pascal’s two infinities:”

Of the eons of geological periods recorded in the stratifications of the earth: of the myriad minute entomological organic existences concealed in cavities of the earth, beneath removable stones, in hives and mounds, of microbes, germs, bacteria, bacilli, spermatozoa: of the incalculable trillions of billions of millions of imperceptible molecules contained by cohesion of molecular affinity in a single pinhead: of the universe of human serum constellated with red and white bodies, themselves universes of void space constellated with other bodies, each, in continuity, its universe of divisible component bodies of which each was again divisible in divisions of redivisible component bodies, dividends and divisors ever diminishing without actual division till, if the progress were carried far enough, nought nowhere was never reached. (17.1058-69)

This is one way that Ithaca's premise about quantity and data, cold facts, can eventually lead to this transcendence and religious connotation. Additionally, this directly contradicts the idea of teleological narrative that would suggest a final absolute goal. This view is further emphasized later in "(Bloom's) logical conclusion" (17.1137) that "it [the constellation] was a Utopia, there being no known method from known to the unknown: an infinity renderable equally finite" (17.1140-1141). In this description of infinite, that absolute end is never reached, opening up the narrative and view of reality.

I would argue this episode also shows the influence of the cultural effect of the rise in the occult and Neo-Platonist societies that Joyce was aware of and had a profound impact on Pound and Yeats. One of the main tenets of these sects was to find connections and unity between the physical universe and the spiritual realm. This episode shows that Joyce didn't totally dismiss this aspect even though, overall, he felt these groups went against his education as I showed previously. Although he may have been influenced, it shows that Joyce did have a different take on the connection between the physical universe and the spiritual, showing a fair amount of skepticism in the quasi-scientific, dogmatic, and esoteric approach of these sects. There isn't as smooth a commensurability between the scientific and spiritual realms as the occult sects describe. The style of "Ithaca," and the difficulty the episode has in developing a spiritual theme, show an incongruous level of incompatibility between the contexts. The episode does not go so far as to make a religion out of science but does show how it can lead to something beyond the material into a deeper meaning, re-enchanting the universe.

In addition to the religious tone that the episode's "scientific" language and style begins to imply, there are also increasing references to myth and religion,

suggesting this bent, and the limitations of the empirical scientific view in describing the deeper reality of the universe. One such example is the comparison to a Utopia that I just referenced, but more directly is one that Stephen Sicari notes as a key to the episode's meaning. Sicari makes the case that Bloom has become a Christ figure as seen through Stephen's vision of him as the "the traditional figure of hypostasis, the joining of the human and divine" (86). Evidence of this comparison is also seen in "Bloom finding out his weight on the feast of Ascension, which is the mystery of Christ rising against gravity." And when Stephen and Bloom go out to the garden to urinate, they perform a comic ritual that is an allusion to Exodus, the departure of the Israelites from Egypt (86). Sicari cites "an outburst of lyric poetry in an otherwise prosaic episode" during this star-gazing as "The heaventree of stars hung with humid nightblue fruit" (17.1039) as further evidence.

As I have already stated, I don't wholly disagree with Sicari's interpretation, but see it as one aspect of a religious viewpoint reflecting the importance and breaking through of the transcendent into the immanent viewpoint. This is a momentary revelation, a view into alterity that emerges as the episode's scientific language and viewpoint begins to breakdown. Sicari's observation that this is an "outburst of lyric poetry" I see as reflecting this view and is what I would emphasize. Also, as I have pointed out, there is a religious connotation in the reverential tone of the other passages that discuss the constellations and "scientific" facts of the infinite. Along with this, is the fact that Bloom is characterized as a wanderer, a reference to Odysseus, one seen again here when he is referred to a "Everyman or Noman" (17.2008). Bloom's comparison to these figures is in his role as a heroic figure for the novel, a connection to transcendence that is lacking in modernity, but situated in a character whose identity is also commensurate with the contemporary

modern world. This also connects with the novel's premise of showing the relational complexity of truth, its context dependent instability. Bloom's identity as Christ is also dependent on the situation and Stephen's perception of him. It is not a stable characterization, but an indication of the moment and character's transcendent significance.

The novel's ending episode, "Penelope," brings readers back to the narrative's main conflict and naturalist style of the early episodes. I started off the chapter by indicating that in the initial episodes we see the dominant features of the immanent-modern view and that Bloom was both at home in this view, but also a wander-exile indicating his search for meaning and the limits in the immanent-modern view. The novel's return to this style and Bloom's return home brings the novel back to this realm, this dominant worldview, but with a difference and a change in perspective. Although Bloom has transcended the world in "Ithaca" in travelling with the stars, it is an alien world, and he was still a wander/not at home in this dimension. The text's experimentation and exposure of the gaps and limits of the immanent-modern view allowed that experience to take place, but it is a temporary moment. Despite this temporality, Bloom's return suggests that he has found a deeper meaning and view of the world. At the same time, there is some level of grounded-ness to the world. Joyce's novel is not ready to abandon the modern immanent world's basic worldview and belief that there is a stability to meaning and reality.

The novel returns to the theme of love as Bloom returns to his wife, even with the knowledge that she has been unfaithful to him, even as the memory of the loss of their son still affects their relationship. This is a final call to transcendence, however, as it goes against the logoi-based viewpoint of scientific immanent worldview. Logic and superficiality, along with human emotions and desires, along

with deterministic social values, all point to a character who by all means should reject and dismiss his wife. This is where the novel rejects a naturalist viewpoint, Bloom is not determined by material reality. Molly's final lines in the novel are life and love affirming and point to a spiritual dimension as well. In a lecture on the significance of "Yes" in the novel, Derrida suggests that it is like a signature and represents a unique presence that affirms an alterity and responds to a "counter-signature" that is implied in the first "yes" (Attridge, location 6870). There is a complexity and an affirmation to the process that occurs in the novel that produces a dynamic reality. So even as the novel comes to a finality, and utilizes a word, "yes," that would seem to totalize and close the novel, its repetition and affirmative suggest a continuity and meaning beyond the novel. This requires both immanence and transcendence.

Joyce's *Ulysses* contains moments of transcendence and immanence, often in the same sentence. Over the course of the novel the various lenses of immanence and transcendence are incorporated, tested, played with, and ultimately shown how their meaning depends on their contextual basis. In doing so, *Ulysses*, destabilizes the binary and the totality of each as an absolute view of reality. The novel's commitment to reality, however, is genuine, and in this, we see moments of truth in both perspectives. While *Ulysses* is suspect of totalizing and absolute narratives of modernity, it returns to a level of belief and faith in reality that grounds the world in a perspective that acknowledges the need and viability of the transcendent. At the same time, it reveals the importance and limits of the immanent worldview.

**Chapter 3: *The Cantos* of Ezra Pound – Developing Transcendence in The  
Fragments of Immanence**

That I lost my center  
                                   fighting the world.  
 The dreams clash  
                                   and are shattered—  
 and that I tried to make a paradiso  
                                   terrestre. (Notes for CXVII, 822)

The “Notes for CXVII” is one of the last pieces of writing included in the last authorized edition of *The Cantos*, and while it is debatable whether they are part of *The Cantos* proper, they do provide valuable insight into the mission that Pound had in mind for the epic poem. In this “Canto” Pound makes clear a goal he views as a central aspect of his epic project that went unfulfilled. I’m including it to show it not as evidence of the overarching meaning and teleological end point of the project, but rather as evidence of the author trying to make sense of the project at this end stage and its correspondence with my own view of the project. *The Cantos* are trying to make meaning out of a fractured and chaotic modern world; their ambition reflects the broken promises of modernity’s ideals, and ultimately, Pound was hoping to create a transcendent reality in the immanent world, the “paradiso terrestre.” Some might object to this view on the grounds that this is a project of immanence then, as it is an “earthly paradise.” Yes, in the traditional sense, an earthly paradise would be immanent, and there are many examples of such in antiquity. I take it as Pound’s end goal, a goal that only makes sense in the lack of a paradise. Modernity

is marked by a secular immanent worldview; in this there isn't a paradise. Paradise is the transcendent other of the binary to put it in Derridean terms.

**Could a poem/text/author bring the transcendent into the immanent?**

It has been my goal to focus in on the beginnings of "modernism" and the first half of the twentieth century. For this reason, I'll mainly be focused on the early and middle cantos. At first, I'll concentrate on how the early cantos, Cantos I through XI, reveal Pound's commitment to the source of his inspiration and how they reflect the transcendence through Greek myth. Here, I'll be looking at Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos's points about the influence of the occult on Pound's work. A large amount of the chapter's coverage will be in the next three sections covering the "Malatesta Cantos," "Eleven New Cantos," "The Fifth Decad of Cantos" and the "Adams Cantos." While the sections share many similar foundational themes and are linked stylistically through the documentary method, I will show how they differentiate in scope and commitment and how this reflects different ideas about immanence and transcendence.

In the case of the "Malatesta Cantos," cantos VIII-XI, there are the beginnings of a political-economical viewpoint that is extremely immanent but is rudimentary in its infancy. Pound's romantic idealism, as defined by Lawrence Rainey, takes over the section and coincides with my views about the link between idealism and transcendence. These views are put forth in conjunction with the immanent movement of Malatesta's "quest" and commitment to building a cathedral and preserving his "love" for Isotta. While there is a complex relationship between the immanent and transcendent, the singularity and individuality of the subject confines it to the limitations of its particularity. Also, stylistically, the experimentation is limited (mostly) to a straight biographical narrative of



Malatesta's history. There are a few moments of openings in the narrative where Pound inserts other elements, but the attention to Malatesta is less fragmented than later sections.

The next two sections are divided into one section covering "Eleven New Cantos" and "The Fifth Decad of Cantos" in one and "The Adams Cantos" in the next. These Cantos reveal a more concerted effort, while still utilizing the documentary method, to show a deeper criticism of society and how to bring transcendence into the modern state and society. There is a wider scope to these Cantos that incorporates Pound's thinking about politics, language, and economics as they relate to a more fruitful and authentic social system that could allow for human nature to flourish. These sections have overlapping themes and styles as they reflect Pound's most concerted efforts to incorporate his fascist and economic theories. I differentiate these sections by focusing on the political and economic Jeffersonian and beginning Fascist views in the first section, and then the change to an Adams section that focuses more on systems of meaning, and how these systems could lead to a better society, rooting out unnatural corruption of modern society. Also, both sections are influenced by Pound's naturalistic philosophy, but in the first, it is seen through his views on government, and in "The Adams" section, it is seen through Pound's use of the ideogrammic method that utilizes the Chinese characters. This use of the ideogram method also produces a fragmentation and disruption to the narrative and text that, in my view, produces open spaces for transcendent developments.

Lastly, I will look at "Later Cantos," post-"The Italian Cantos," to show how they relate to the themes of transcendence and immanence presented in the previous sections of the chapter. These "Later Cantos" are also important in terms

of how they relate to the overall meaning of the text, as it is part of my argument to view meaning in terms of the materiality and structure of the text itself. Ultimately, I see these “Later Cantos” illustrating Pound’s failed attempts to bring the immanent and the transcendent together.

My chapter focuses on three main points that are intertwined through the chapter, but for clarity’s sake, I will explicitly state them here. First, in thinking about immanence and transcendence, *The Cantos* also engage in the same modernist and “Secular Age” issue of thinking about where meaning comes from in modernity, in a flattened and skeptical world. Secondly, how do humans have access to and develop a higher meaning in light of a more material and skeptical view of the universe where immanence seems to be the default worldview? Lastly, and this is the point most specific to the chapter, the use of transcendence in *The Cantos* is mostly closely connected to the immanent world of the modernist works I am writing about.

Pound’s *Cantos* relate to the immanent and transcendent in many ways and show the closest connection to a Derridean context in their exploration and figuration of meaning. It’s my contention that Pound is the most immanent of the authors in his use of history, documentation, politics, economics, and aesthetic style and philosophy. Pound’s use of the transcendent is immanent in many ways too. The historical figures transcend their historical moment and hint at a greater transcendence, but never to the degree of a total mythical or metaphysical transcendence like a god or prophet. Even when Pound is at his most immanent, in the use of documents and history, it’s in service of this larger mission towards a greater, almost utopian society.

Pound's *Cantos* illustrate many of the motifs of Taylor that I outlined in the introduction, so while not always explicitly transcendent, *The Cantos* are acutely connected to the loss of the transcendent in modern society. Pound scholarship addresses the issues of transcendence in a variety of ways. Sean Pryor, whom I utilized in my Yeats chapter, explores the theme of paradise in *The Cantos* from the same lens as with Yeats and shows how specific Cantos deals with the issues of creating, accessing, and writing about paradise. While paradise can be immanent, one cannot think about paradise without a transcendent connotation. Stephen Sicari, another writer I utilized previously in my Joyce chapter, argues for Pound's inclusion in the modernist humanism definition through a "personal transcendence" in *The Cantos*. Leon Surette and Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos published fully committed treatments on myth and the occult in Pound's writing. Tryphonopoulos' text argues that Pound's *Cantos* are specifically driven by concepts in Theosophy and I will explain how they relate to my own view. Herbert Schneidau in *Waking Giants* makes the case for the importance of myth in *The Cantos*. Other critics have explored these dimensions as well, but have done so in a more ancillary way, focusing more on what I would call immanent concerns. These texts, though, show even immanent concerns must delve into the transcendent, which I will cover in specifics in the chapter.

Like Joyce, Pound's stylistic and theoretical positions are firmly influenced by an immanent empirical modern worldview. Quite simply, Pound seeks and privileges in his literary modernism material reality and the object. This attention to a privileging of materiality is present in the early imagism movement. The main idea to imagism was sparseness in language and a more concrete style that produced images and a musicality. As Pound states in "A Retrospect" a few principles of the

movement: “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.” The standard reason for this movement is as a reaction to the flowery language and abstraction of poetry in the early twentieth century that Pound frequently decried.

In contrast to the materially driven empirical-immanence, there are also elements of the transcendent in early Pound. There is precedent for this in opposing influences on Ezra Pound of Yeats and Robert Browning. Hugh Witemeyer states that “even as Pound was drawn to a learned, neo-classical conception of poetry, he was no less powerfully attracted to a visionary, neo-romantic ideal” resulting in early poetry that results in “a mystical and ethereal imaginative world” (45). Witemeyer goes on to say that Yeats and Browning represented two opposing forces of influence in Pound’s poetry, with Yeats, the “mystical and the visionary,” with Browning, the “empirical and historical” (46). While my focus will be on how these polarizing forces will be worked out in *The Cantos*, it’s important to put Pound’s immanent/transcendent in its social and historical context as I am claiming there is a shared cultural and historical perspective in the modernisms of these writers. Thus, while *The Cantos* is experimental in nature and forges innovations in literary style and concepts, I believe this innovation works out these competing influences that Witemeyer observes in Pound’s early poetry.

## I. Early Cantos: Paganism and Material Concerns

In the early Cantos the influence of the materialist and the mythic is seen. Pound's initial plan for *The Cantos* is developed and many of the early drafts for *The Cantos* are developed during this time period as well. Many critics have used this as a marker of division, for Pound goes through a long stretch where he becomes more focused on variety of other projects in the 1930s and as well as a philosophical shift more focused on economic theory and an interest in fascism. I do see a consistency in the incorporation of the mythic paganism on the one hand, and the materialist worldview on the other, running throughout *The Cantos*, but also note some changes in their importance to *The Cantos*' project. The early Cantos in my view are more focused on the mythic as part of the past, and there is a hope in their meaning becoming relevant to the present while still showing an awareness of their incompatibility, a paradox to be explained. Whereas, I see the middle and later Cantos wanting to transform the material reality, via the will of individuals and an ideal economic/social system, into a utopian world. I don't want to call it a Utopia because I think *The Cantos* want something more real than that word implies.

The modern, secular influence of Browning is a major influence that helped shape the early cantos and Pound's aims for the poem. According to Witemeyer, Pound alludes to Browning's *Sordello* because he "sees (it) as the most recent long poem that offers a viable model for his own ambitious endeavor" (52). Similarly, Daniel Albright states, "he felt it was time to make a contribution of his own [to the modernist movement], by composing a grand poem worthy of Homer and Dante" (59). The ambitious nature of the project reflects both the staleness of modernity and its overarching influence. Pound's project seeks a larger meaning not contained in the present conceptions of the literary world. This indicates the need for

something more meaningful, hence the transcendent, in the form of Greek myth, that is missing in the modern world. Pound's conception of this transcendence will be shaped by experiences with W. B. Yeats and A. R. Orage in the "London" years.

Additionally, this staleness is also present in the contemporary genres of lyric poetry and the realist novel. These modern literary forms are committed to limited immanent viewpoints and the tired binary of the immanent/transcendent and realist/Romantic idealist. Witemeyer notes the limits of Pound's early poetry and its relationship to the period: "After writing *Propertius* and *Mauberley*, [Pound] was convinced that only a huge, indigestible poem would stick in the craw of a monstrous, all-consuming age. Into that poem he would put what needed saving" (57). At the same time, modernity is present in the early *Cantos* attempts of seeking something sacred and a higher meaning through a self-conscious exploration of history and poetic meaning.

Only a modern poem, a poem characterized by making something "new," could have this kind of reflective mission characterized by skepticism over belief, absence and seeking of meaning and a higher cause. This reflective mission will lead to the poem's deconstructive path as it comes to select and discard elements of the epic that conflict with the contemporary world. While Pound wants to create an epic, unlike his predecessors, he must start from a modern viewpoint that questions immaterial reality and does not have foundational belief system, nor a clear view of the absolute that the epic would aspire to. This, of course, creates a de facto "journey" that coincides with a major element of the epic genre and, as Taylor noted, modernity, since Pound must search for meaning through his research, contemporary experiences, and experimentation with style. While not as large and specific a claim as my own, Daniel Albright also suggests this as a necessarily

reflexive and I would also add deconstructive project. “The sequence of Pound’s *Cantos* interrogates itself, casting off out-worn versions of itself in the search for renewal” (59). I want to stress that this shows the poem’s higher purpose must take a deconstructive path, a major departure from the binary and progressive teleological narratives of modernity.

I also want to stress here the search for meaning in modernism as a reaction to and differentiation from modernity is necessarily unstable because of this breakdown of binaries and inherent lack of linear progression. At the same time, there does seem to be some faith in this process, and some faith that this process will lead towards some ultimate meaning. A trace of the transcendence of mythic narratives, and the utopian narratives of modernity are present throughout *The Cantos*. In this way *The Cantos* also does owe some of its purpose to the past enchanted world, and the more immediate modern world.

Several major themes deconstruct the transcendent/immanent binary in the early cantos (I-IV). The early cantos lay the groundwork for the historical-immanent framework as they incorporate history and historical figures in purposeful ways. Also, we see here the influence of the epic genre that gives the poem its tonal and narrative purpose, suggesting a greater meaning. This greater meaning, while not explicitly transcendent in the sense of some divine other world, is closely related in both the modern definition as transcendent and leading to a more meaningful end. These cantos lead to a greater truth which is missing in the modern world and closely related to what is lost in the absence of the transcendent.

The opening Cantos simultaneously call forth the elevated level of meaning and the doubt and deconstruction of calling forth these varied and mythic contexts. This fits into my larger meaning for *The Cantos* because multiple narratives are

seen throughout the entire poem opening up the possibility of meaning. In my view, here, and through the poem, they do not coalesce into a unified meaning. The poem cannot erase the modern skeptical viewpoint and abandon the immanent reality for such a neat and tidy idealism.

The epic begins both in process and at the beginning of a journey, bringing forth the tumultuous modern context:

And then went down to the ship,  
 Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and  
 We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,  
 Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also  
 Heavy with weeping, and winds from sternward  
 Bore us out onward with bellying canvas,  
 Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess.

(I/3)

While the poem is looking to the past in its use of history and mythology, it also very conscious of its inability to return to the past, but rather, is borne out of that past in the midst of a chaotic moment. The “We” is taking stock and preparing to move forward. It is, of course, a starting point for the poem’s journey, but also metaphorically for the disenchanting people of modernity who must move forward into the unknown due to the chaos and dejection of the modern world, “Heavy with weeping.” The invocation of Circe, a goddess of transformation, indicates both the negative connotation of the changes that have already taken place, and the need for still more change to come. Additionally, the poem’s mythic basis provides the context for the needed religious depth of the poem as a large portion of the canto offers prayers, libations, the invocation of several gods, and memorials for the dead.



Canto II abruptly shifts into modernity and how this is a poem about not only finding meaning but constructing it out of a particular context. One could see this as a return to the immanent frame, one that sees meaning as Derridean textual/contextual more specifically than transcendent tropes present in Canto I. The direct reference to “Robert Browning” and the suggested particularity of “there can be but the one ‘Sordello.’ (II/6) seems to cut down the higher hopes of canto I. The inspiration of *The Odyssey* is contrasted with the futility of trying to create something new when it has already been accomplished and can’t be repeated without difference. Here, we have the question of the source of meaning, and a very clear connection to Derrida’s key insights into iteration, presence, *différance*. This makes the transcendent as meaning problematic, but also offers hope for meaning as it breaks out of the fallacy of materiality as well. As much as the poem has doubts about the presence of the past in meaning, its use of contexts from the past suggest they are not limited to the confines of time and place. This is the paradox I referenced in the introduction.

The Canto, as a retelling of an Ovid story, also explores truth through the Dionysian/Apollonian binary as the “young boy” (II.7) that the speaker invites to “Cum’ along” (II.7) is a reference Dionysus on his way to “Naxos,” the same destination as the ship and “a center of the Dionysus cult” (Terrell 6). As a celebration of energy, desire, spontaneity, and the human body, the Dionysian is at home in the immanent framework, while the Apollonian counterpart resides in the transcendent in privileging the mind and the metaphysical. The Canto’s use of *Ovid* also suggests an interaction between the human and divine. Pound sees the theme of metamorphosis presented in Ovid “not as a poetic fiction, but as a metaphor for the relationship between the human and the divine, the third subject

of *The Cantos*, ‘the magic moment of metamorphosis, bust thru from quotidien into “divine or permanent world”’ (qtd. from Tryphonopoulos 3-4). This is not enough as the speaker seems to try to convince himself of the import and depth of what he knows and believes:

And I worship.

I have seen what I have seen.

When they brought the boy I said:

“ He has a god in him,

though I do not know which god.”

And they kicked me into the fore-stays.

I have seen what I have seen.

(II.9)

The uncertainty about religion is reflected in these lines in terms of the specific type of faith, or question of which god, but there is a certainty in god’s existence, one that is not in conflict with the immanent, as the speaker repeats, “I have seen what I have seen.” There are multiple references to pagan gods in the Canto, suggesting a lack of certainty, a possible downfall of this kind of divinity. This lack of certainty, due to multiplicity, could also relate to modernity as well. As Taylor noted, the belief in god becomes one of many options for understanding the universe. *The Cantos* are constantly dealing with multiplicity and fragmentation as a feature of modernity, and part of their mission is to find some unity, some grand purpose and coherence. The line suggest both this issue for modernity and its relationship to antiquity, a source Pound is looking to for meaning.

As I’ve discussed, these early Cantos which rely on a retelling of Classical Western works are how Pound is bringing meaning into a modern world

characterized by secularism and the materialist values of the Enlightenment. If we think about this through the Derridean concept of the trace of meaning, it is certainly a plausible way to bring about a more sacred and meaningful view of the world. Of course, the other side of this view is that it is just a trace. Contained in the trace is the absence of meaning that the new context calls to, never able to fully embrace the origin of its meaning, whatever that may be. In a sense, then, the meaning of the poem is forever calling on the past, a feature of modernity that modernist texts feel compelled to include. The question is whether this a feature that helps build a dynamic meaning in the poem, or if a bitter note of nostalgia suggests a hopelessness in modernity that can never be fulfilled. For Pound, it is more the former than the latter, as Furia explains in *Pound's Cantos Declassified* that Pound's use of multiple narratives is a reaction against a "historical black-out" of monumental cultural texts (1,2) and the use of the definition of the epic as "a poem including history" was meant to signify the original intention of the epic as a "tribal archive"(3).

These early cantos tap into the paganist beliefs of Pound as well, which represent a need for the transcendence, but do so in an immanent way if we see paganism as immanent. Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos suggests that this is key to the poem's meaning in *The Celestial Tradition* stating that Pound's "cosmos is imbued with his 'religious' understanding" (2). Tryphonopoulos work brings into play a level of meaning that taps into a transcendence that exceeds the text and even the culture, and perhaps taps into the larger metaphysical transcendence definition. If this is the case, however, and Tryphonopoulos is very clear that in his view it is, there are problems in viewing *The Cantos* in this way, ones that I've discussed in relation to Derrida. According to Tryphonopoulos *The Cantos* serves an

initiation for the reader in keeper with a theory of “initiation rites” and for this reason, the early *Cantos* begin the initiation process. This initiation process then corresponds with *The Cantos* being a text that will reveal an esoteric understanding that will enlighten the initiated, taking place over the course of the poem.

Tryphonopoulos’ text claims a correspondence and absolutism about this influence, even as he acknowledges other influences and interpretations. This view is too one-dimensional and rigid for a poem that looks to so many different sources for meaning. For my purposes, I see them as being an important aspect of the text’s transcendent yearnings within the immanent sphere, which for me, is the major use of paganism and myth. The paganism and myth are most clearly seen here in these early *Cantos*, but something Pound returns to when he attempts some closure to the poem.

The biggest claim that I endorse, and which reveals the hybrid immanent-transcendent philosophy that informs *The Cantos*, is the argument for the role and influence of Neoplatonism and a broader concept of “The Celestial Tradition.” The important connection, for me, is the way it incorporates the transcendent into the material world and eventually leads to Pound’s interest in Theosophy. In Neoplatonism, Pound has a basis for seeing the divine in the natural world since in Neoplatonism “the body and the natural world are not evil but only less good than the ‘things’ above them” (36). This idea is fostered in his experiences with Theosophy and occult studies in his relationship with Yeats as well as other intellectuals, as Tryphonopoulos notes, during the London years (1908-21). I will pick up Tryphonopoulos’ argument that this influence continues after these years, a view contrary to many Pound critics, but in this section I’m connecting this influence to the early *Cantos*.

The essay "Psychology and Troubadours" (1912) provides evidence that Pound was thinking of these ideas even before beginning *The Cantos*. In this essay Pound's beliefs show a clear idea about the importance of myth as real, and I think it's important to note this is connected to a kind of scientific understanding of how the human mind could connect to the divine: "I believe that Greek myth arose when someone having passed through delightful psychic experience tried to communicate it to others and found it necessary to screen himself from persecution...Certain it is that these myths are only intelligible in a vivid and glittering sense to those people to whom they occur... These things are for them *real*' (SR 92). Tryphonopoulos says this quote (which he quotes in full) shows that for Pound the "status of the experience is never in doubt" and "he sees the myth-making process as a masking or transformation of the real experience" (16). For my purposes, it shows how Pound views the divine experience as something that can be experienced by humanity, and communicated through myth, revealing its importance to *The Cantos* transcendent and immanent hybridity.

This kind of relationship between the natural world, pseudo-science, and the divine is seen most clearly in the Theosophical movement. According to Tryphonopoulos, "Theosophy is used to denote those forms of religious and philosophic thought primarily concerned with the knowledge of the hidden mysteries of the Divine nature" (49). Theosophy incorporates Spiritualism, but without a belief in communicating with the dead. Spiritualism with its roots in eighteenth century Mesmerism and Swedenborgianism, attempted to connect the physical and spiritual worlds through its philosophy and experiments (see Tryphonopoulos 46). "According to Swedenborg, every natural object is the effect of a spiritual cause and, thus, there exists a correspondence between the visible cosmos and the spiritual

cosmos...The natural world...can reveal the spiritual world” (Tryphonopoulos 47). It is well-known that Swedenborg was a major influence on the American Transcendentalist movement, so the influence and desire to connect immanent-transcendent already had a key cultural precedent, but Tryphonopoulos notes that Pound was directly influenced as well through his studies with Yeats at Stone Cottage in 1913 and again in the 1950s (47). Swedenborg becomes an enduring interest for Pound (Tryphonopoulos 65). Pound was then interested in Yeats’ connection to the occult prior to meeting him (Tryphonopoulos 67). Theosophy also was a part of the occult social milieu of Pound’s London and which he was a part of, and in Modern Theosophy we see more explicitly the connection between the immanent and transcendent. Additionally, its pagan roots have a strong connection to “Hellenistic Alexandria” according to Tryphonopoulos (51), increasing its relevance to *The Cantos*. The founders of the Theosophical Society in New York which began Modern Theosophy in 1875 include the objectives of their society “to encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy, and Science;” and “to investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man” (49). This kind of movement reflects a culture awareness of the loss of the transcendent, but also wanting to incorporate the Post-Enlightenment worldview.

Pound was engaged in the occult through a variety of relationships and there are many instances of this affecting his own work and thinking. Prior to meeting Yeats, the mixture of the divine and earthly in Pound’s reflection on *Celtic Twilight* “feeling myself corporal [sic] and a self aetherial ‘a dweller by streams and in woodland,’ eternal because simple in elements” (Tryphonopoulos 67). While Pound disagreed with the specific “psychic experiments” and “spiritualism,” the mythic and transcendental aspects provide a connection (69-71). For example, Pound in a letter

to Dorothy Shakespear expounds on the importance of “symbolism”. There’s an important distinction here between imaginative “aesthetic” symbolism and “occult symbolism.” According to Michael H. Levenson, in a critique of modernism, Pound is critical of Yeats’s technique of “suggestion” and “invocation” “as well as its straining after the ineffable. Pound prefers a more scientific technique in regards to language in keeping with a “tradition” in “occult science” (Tryphonopoulos 73). But he does not reject the “symbolist metaphysical mysticism” nor its “transcendentalism”(73). James Longenbach provides more detail on Pound’s relationship with Yeats in *Stone Cottage* but agrees with the major premise about the influence of the occult in this relationship.

Another view that supports the idea of transcendence and where Yeats and Pound overlap is Pryor’s work in *W.B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, and the Poetry of Paradise*:

I use the term paradise, then, to encompass a ‘rich tapestry’ of myths and beliefs, which Yeats and Pound inherit. It seems a better term than heaven, which may be modified to heaven on earth but which can also mean Providence or God’s law. One might choose the otherworldly, the supernatural or the divine, but the experience of these is not necessarily desirable. Furthermore, paradise is the word which Pound employs most often. (6)

In Pryor’s work we see how the influence of a larger cultural heritage also connected to the Judeo-Christian culture may play a part in Pound’s conception of the transcendent. This is important to my paper because of the focus on the notion of paradise; additionally, there is a specific attention to the influence of British Romantic poetry, showing how this need for the transcendent is embedded in

modern literary culture. Pryor suggests Wordsworth as a probable influence based on a Yeats letter during their time at Stone Cottage, for example (8). And much like Tryphonopoulos' examination of paganism, Pryor suggests that the search for paradise can be earthly, but in contrast, must necessarily be out of reach:

[The] quality of otherness is fundamental to the archetype of paradise, and to Yeats's and Pound's poetic quest to deliver paradise. Paradise necessarily exceeds our reach, whether spatially, temporally, conceptually, linguistically, poetically or in some other fashion. Perhaps no more than a mirage on the horizon, paradise has to be desired and imagined. (7)

Given Pound's penchant for having something concrete and disliking an aesthetic of imagination, I think the paradisaical theme is never really meant to be fulfilled in the poem, but rather a continual quest. At the same time, that quest is to make it real. This is really what Pound is getting at when he says "make it new" as Herbert Scheideau points out in his discussion of the importance of mythology in Pound (266). This desire to bring together the transcendent and the immanent through myth or paganism on the one hand, and material history and language on the other, in the text, and in the present, rests on this continual deferral of an absolute meaning or paradise; this thing that is continually out of reach, in Pryor's terms. Pound's subjects are always moving towards some greater meaning, much like Pound's use of all these subjects and histories, these fragments, continually picking up pieces, but the pattern, the consistency, is this lack, this desire for more, and the acute awareness that the two major worldviews can interact, but always resist a smooth integration.

This immanent-transcendent hybridity and desire, can specifically be seen in Canto IV with the influence of the Noh Play and a connection to the unity of the



earlier imagist poetics. According to Daniel Albright, the purpose of the Noh play is a “movement towards enlightenment: what is surrounded by material illusion at last reveals itself in its true supernatural glory, a glory that reaches its perfection in the characteristic dance of that spirit” (66). This idea of enlightenment is also seen in paganism according to Tryphonopoulos and Surette suggesting an epiphanic quality similar to Joycean transcendence. Specifically, in Canto IV, according to Albright, “Pound cunningly arrests and arranges [the various] bright shards of narrative in such a way that they seem all part of a single incurved action” (67). While I’m skeptical of such a singular vision and unity, I agree with the idea of a seeking of such a unity, something transcendent to connect the various pieces, but I think this would bring the poem back to the stale traditions that the poem is consciously avoiding. This idea of enlightenment as inspired, bursting through ordinary reality with blinding truth, contrasts the colder view of reason that I’m associating with the Enlightenment as the major source of the immanent. It’s another way the text shows the ambiguity, and deconstructs, the binary. This is one example in the opening Cantos that reveals that the poem cannot erase the modern skeptical viewpoint and abandon the immanent reality for a neat and tidy idealism.

The reference to “Danaë” in canto IV suggests my thesis that the multiple narratives open up the possibility of meaning, but do not coalesce into a unified meaning. The tension I see is in the form of a connection between immanent/transcendent in the motif of desire/virginity. A brief reference towards the end of the canto states, “Danaë! Danaë!/ What wind is the king’s?”(IV. 16). Danaë’s story is one of both intentionality and desire. Danaë’s father, Acrisius, seeks to imprison her to prevent his own destruction as prophesied in an oracle, but Zeus’s desire for her results in a golden rain that impregnates her (Terrell 14).

Acrisius's earthly or immanent desire shows worldly concerns of immediacy and limitation. They are concerns of existence, or appetite, as survival is an instinct that has its basis in a natural, mortal world, and desire is a basis for that natural and mortal survival. Acrisius's desire to imprison in order to survive shows the function of desire in the confinement of the material world. In a world where existence and survival are threatened, the desire to control the world to increase your control of the material need for existence is tantamount. Zeus's desire, in this case, suggests a spontaneous divine desire that bears fruit and fulfills the divine. It's a desire that seeks union and growth and is not threatened or compromised by material existence or limitations. As such, its main motive isn't to seek material growth and control. This is an early indication of *The Cantos* privileging a hierarchy of desire, something one would associate with the transcendent, producing an immanent result. This fusion between the immanent and transcendent becomes even more apparent when one considers that the mythology of Danaë is associated with "the transition from the fertility rites of the earth to the later cult of heaven, the great goddess representing the earth religion and the later male deities the sky religions of light...The golden rain of light into Danaë's lap thus symbolized the sexual consummation of the marriage of earth and heaven in the form of rain and light" (Terrell 14). This is another influence of a very specific pagan view of knowledge of the divine. Additionally, Pryor points out the difficulty of desire in a paradisaical context as well.

Ultimately, I would have to disagree with Albright because of the multitude of voices in the Canto and this central tension between desire and virginity. The transcendent can be associated with virginity in that it is untouched by material world, and a source of seeking of fulfillment rather than the embodiment of that

fulfillment. This necessarily produces the complementary other of desire, an earthly concept, as I discussed previously in my Yeats and Joyce chapters. Desire, of course, connects to the early Cantos connection to the Dionysian as well. Canto IV depicts this tension and ambiguity about the role of virginity and its connection to desire and connects this tension to the role of intentionality and objectivity. As much as Pound desires unity, the material nature of his objects, the traces of meaning in the poem's allusions and narratives, leave the poet in a state of desire, a continual tension between the immanent and the transcendent, and, for me, a theme of the whole *Cantos*.

Similarly, there are many other references and connections to the tension between virginity and desire, the immanent and the transcendent: Diana, Sennin, Gyges, Madonna. "The valley is thick with leaves, with leaves, the trees,/ The sunlight glitters, glitters a-top,/ Like a fish-scale roof,/ Like the church roof in Poitiers/ If it were gold" (IV.14). The Canto's images are equally heavenly and earthly as well as incorporating human structures of divinity. The poem's imagistic character reflects Fredric Jameson's view that "with modernism, the halo of divinity gives way to the aura of the aesthetic..." (192). The Canto, characteristic of these early Cantos, is contending with material and supernatural forces.

I have just focused on the first four cantos to show how they introduce the major themes I am discussing and suggest an early view that privileges mythology and paganism as the source of the transcendent, a way to bring a deeper meaning into modernity. Simultaneously, the early Cantos inculcation of such a meaning reveals, along with Pound's aesthetic goals, the material difficulties inherent in such a desire, desire becoming a defining and important term in the groundwork of the poem's journey. Additionally, in my discussion of the first four cantos, I've laid some

groundwork of my own through which to view the interactive forces of immanence and transcendence over the course of *The Cantos* in the critical views and cultural context.

## II. Malatesta Cantos: Paganism and The Documentary Method

I want to move now to “The Malatesta Cantos” beginning in Canto VIII to show how paganism is still a central concern, but now, instead of incorporating Classical myth, the subject, Malatesta, connects to paganism. Additionally, Pound begins to incorporate the documentary method with these Cantos, a greater concern over materiality in some respects and, therefore, immanence, but I will show how this “method” also shows Pound’s particular idealism. In connection to the early Cantos, these Cantos also reflect the immanent-transcendent and pick up on the same themes of unity between heavenly idealism and earthly desire. This section reflects *The Cantos*’ ethos of desiring transcendent meaning in the immanent world, but also the privileging of material symbolism, material change, material structures, along with real action and accomplishment reflecting the values of an immanent worldview. The pagan element in “The Malatesta Cantos” that reflects the need for the divine emerges more clearly now in opposition to some of the identified issues of society; issues of secularism and materialism associated with modernity. “The Malatesta Cantos” confront the bureaucracy and State which dehumanizes and reduces meaning to a logical, mechanical, rationalist philosophy.

While thematically Pound is exploring and critiquing the immanent viewpoint and seeking to find something transcendent, stylistically, the principles of realism that are privileged by an immanent view are incorporated in an obsessive commitment to materiality in the form of documentary method which becomes a

defining feature of *The Cantos*. Lawrence Rainey in *Ezra Pound and The Monument of Culture* highlights the more material-realist style-based contexts when he cites “the direct quotation of prose documents, a device that effectively dissolved the distinction between verse and prose” (4). “The Malatesta Cantos” poring over of thousands of historical documents situates them in a particular history and culture, and a major part of these Cantos involves the building of a physical structure, the renovation of a church. Malatesta and his life’s projects seek to incorporate the transcendent in the world, and his life, symbolic of that hope, offer a way to bring meaning into the world.

In outlining Malatesta’s struggles with the State and bureaucracy, *The Cantos* suggest that this struggle, while more directly relevant to Pound’s twentieth century social setting, is a feature of modernity since its inception, and is a restrictive force in the seeking of higher transcendent projects and meaning. Malatesta’s struggles also begin the idea of will as an important motif, a necessity for *The Cantos* in bringing transcendence into the immanent. This is suggested by Pound’s statement in *A Guide to Kulchur*, “All that a single man could, Malatesta managed *against* the current of power” (159). This also suggests that Pound’s “transcendence” will always be aimed at immanence because of the necessity of will in fulfilling an earthly need or desire. This also relates to the act of creation, however, which has a connection to divinity, a topic Pound certainly saw a higher purpose in. Malatesta constructing his church and bringing pagan artifacts into the church reflects both this act of will and higher meaning creativity.

In some respect this sets up a very clear prism the artist may seek to transcend, but the modern materialist system of meaning also forces that

transcendence to be necessarily disruptive and deconstructive as it goes against the prevailing worldview. So, a major part of the meaning of “The Malatesta Cantos” is this underlying need to find an alternative to the power of the immanent sphere which confines the spirit to the mechanical universe. Canto IX shows progress in the immanent world in regard to this project and is tied to the socio-political developments of Malatesta’s world. The poem’s repetition of “And” helps convey the progress and connection between the socio-political and the construction of the temple. It begins with the origin of Malatesta’s fight with the political establishment.

And he, Sigismundo, was Capitan for the Venetians.

And he had sold off small castles

and built the great Rocca to his plan,

And he fought like ten devils at Monteluro

and got nothing but the victory

And old Sforza bitched us at Pesaro;

In Pound’s earliest draft this combination of scholarship and ideology positioned him to pit Francesco Sforza as the opposing antagonist to Malatesta. Sforza was a noted adversary and the father of Polissena, who Malatesta had married for political reasons. The opposing characters would allow “for a contrast between Sforza’s concentration on affairs of state and Sigismondo’s patronage of ‘art,’ between the transient and the eternal” (Rainey 218). This corresponds to my view because it shows how Pound was seeking to construct this binary, the “eternal” being associated with the transcendent, and the “transient” with the immanent. It also reveals that Pound privileged the eternal and saw art as being able to tap into that state of being. Malatesta would be used strategically to convey that idea, instead of

Pound being deeply committed to a view that primarily and stringently tried to adhere to a documentary-materialist method that would be more in keeping with an immanent view of art and poetic style. This will also come up again as an area of concern in "The Adams Cantos."

Another restrictive feature of modernity is its reliance on an economic system of value and production. Again, this is directly relevant to Pound's own critiques of twentieth century capitalism (specifically, Pound's critique of the banking system and the practice of usury). *The Cantos'* economic concerns also reflect a broader modern approach to production and value as essential to meaning, leading to a capitalist system that fosters manipulation of either currency or labor, to the detriment of a transcendent or intrinsic possibility of value or meaning. This kind of system is subject to the same immanent laws of mechanical and material production and leaves the artist unable to produce work of transcendent, transformative, or intrinsic value. On the one hand it shows the way that Pound still believes and has faith in the Romantic notions of idealism and meaning. On the other, it's a critique of the modern immanent world in terms of its reliance on capitalism, governing politics, and mass culture. This idea is seen in Pound's own views on usury, patronage, and in his essay against provincialism:

Throughout the period 1910-1917 Pound had mounted in his critical prose a wide-ranging critique of what intellectual and literary work had become under capitalist modernization. In "Provincialism: The Enemy" (1917), for instance, he complained, as Emerson had in many places, that the university was chiefly in the business of "habituating men to consider themselves as bits of mechanism for one use or another" (SP, p. 195). This supposed last bastion of the life of the mind

had become, in Pound's estimation, "one with the idea that the man is the slave of the State, the 'unit,' the piece of the machine" (p. I92).

(Wolfe 29)

While Wolfe's point has more to do specifically with the economics attached to literary and artistic production, he also hits on a key point that Pound is speaking to in regard to modernity's effect on the ability of the artist to produce meaningful work, and how that work is reduced by the modern immanent systems of economics and the mechanical worldview. Art becomes reduced to a unit of measurement, becomes quantitative and reduced to a confined system of functionality.

Canto VIII introduces this immanent conflict and historical documentation when the poem makes use of a letter from Malatesta urging that the question of finances, and also the question of power and control, not disrupt the artistic endeavor of the "*Maestro di pentore*"... "So that both he and I shall/ Get as much enjoyment as possible from it," (VIII. 28-29). The first documentation here also trends towards the immanent, ensuring the artist has the space within which to work, and the use of the term "enjoyment" suggests the sensory level of aesthetic value, a reminder of the materiality of "art" and thus implying the materiality of the poem. The Canto also addresses the issue of economic patronage. And while the poem refers to the particular socio-historical issue of patronage that was common in the era, it also relates to Pound's contemporary critique of modern capitalism's effect on art and the artist and his own efforts to ensure artistic autonomy, specifically attempting to find patronage for Eliot during this time period according to Moody (28):

I want to arrange with him to give so much per year  
And to assure him that he will get the sum agreed on.



You may say that I will deposit security

For him wherever he likes.

...

And for this I mean to make due provision,

So that he can work as he likes, (VIII. 29)

We see here again the necessity of engagement with those in power, and the need to negotiate terms and conditions, a common feature of a society more concerned with the socially constructed laws and customs, and a feature of the modern immanent world. This is contrasted by the more natural and casual tone of the stated purpose, “So that he can work as he likes, / Or waste time as he likes.” This kind of natural endeavor, one that comes from preference, and suggests an authenticity, is the part of the immanent worldview that can be taken either as an alternative to the religious transcendent or as a related feature. In my view, this shows a deeper interaction with the relationship between the material world and the transcendent than connecting it to Pound’s “Patron of the Arts” idea exclusively, which sees the need for the material needs of the artist to be met in order to transcend. I don’t disagree with that assessment, but I’m arguing that this shows that ideally the artist will not just have their economic worries absolved, but that an artist can produce transcendent work by virtue of being moved in a natural way. This natural way, “So that he can work as he likes,” means the artist is able to be moved, to have the space necessary to be spurred by natural impulses, and not artificial and arbitrary motivators like money or material needs. Pound stated that ‘Art is part of biology’ (qtd. from Moody 72). Pound’s views on natural production and inspiration begin to take shape here as a way to find the transcendent in the immanent world of human labor and production. “Pound wanted to bring about a renaissance, to recover

such a vision of the universe alive as would move men of good will to make a paradise on earth. Sigismondo Malatesta afforded a case study of what a man possessed of the vision which brought about a renaissance in Italy in the fifteenth century had actually achieved under the conditions then prevailing” (Moody 51).

A large part of the Malatesta Cantos’ claim to offering an alternative to the more mechanical nature of the immanent is most notably in the Romantic love that Malatesta has for Isotta, and for whom the temple is supposedly constructed. The first line discussed by Lawrence Rainey from Canto IX suggests a controversial point in this matter, “And he began building the TEMPIO / and Polixena, his second wife, died” (35). For Rainey, this line reveals a lot of about Pound’s ideological commitment, for it downplays both the significance of this death and the role that Malatesta may have played in it. Polissena Sforza was the illegitimate daughter of Francesco Sforza, and according to Rainey, “The marriage was meant to seal a political alliance significant for both Sigismondo and Sforza” (83). “Sigismondo wished to receive support and patronage..., while Sforza hoped to gain strategic access to the Riminese territory under Sigismondo...” (Rainey 83). Again, just as in pitting Sforza as an antagonist, here the forces of immanent concerns come to the forefront. This certainly does not preclude him as a heroic figure, one motivated by and interested in bringing the transcendent into the immanent but reveals a pattern for Pound’s heroic figures arguably being more concerned with the immanent world, or at the very least capable and adept at having a tangible impact in the immanent world and not beholden to inaction due to ideological reasons.

It is in the previous Canto, Canto VIII, though, that the possibility of the transcendent emerges. The most poignant example of the importance of Malatesta’s

love for Isotta for these cantos comes in form of a fragment of a poem supposedly written by Malatesta in the middle of Canto VIII:

“Ye spirits who of olde were in this land  
 Each under Love, and shaken,  
 Go with your lutes, awaken  
 The summer within her mind,  
 Who hath not Helen for peer

Yseut nor Batsabe.” (30)

Rainey points out that the poem, according to “scholars,” “is a poem for Isotta.” Its placement, “in the center,” “organizes the otherwise heterogenous and disparate activity.” Its importance is essential to the Malatesta Cantos. As Rainey points out:

It is for her that the monument of civilization is constructed; and *only* because it is *for her* can the poem, and by extension the church of San Francesco, be a “temple of love,” be something more than just another building constructed for practical or ideological motives shared by contemporaries. Here is the consummate testimony at the core of Pound’s entire project. (178)

Rainey stresses the thematic and historical importance of this poem to the meaning of the cantos. This inculcation of love as an important aspect of transcendent meaning is similar to its importance in *Ulysses* as well. On the one hand, we cannot ignore that love is an important message in Judeo-Christianity, but this love also feels different, more human and personal, a contradiction rather than a correspondence with what religion has become. Rainey notes its importance to the narrative here as well, equating this love with the fate of civilization for Pound. When Pound refers to her in Canto IX as “Italiae decus, diva Isotta,” it contains a

refutation that she was ignorant, as it brings to mind a medal, “allegedly by Pisanello” which “evokes not just the documentary report of contemporaries, but the transcendent testimony of art via its association with the medal” (165). Accordingly, “one could find no higher testimony to the ethical and spiritual worth of Isotta, no surer proof than this exquisite ‘example of civilization’” (165). This shows that at this juncture, Pound’s interest in Malatesta as a central figure wasn’t just as a strong-willed person, but as someone who sees transcendent ideals like love and art as worthy of development and preservation in the immanent world.

The other major aspect of the Malatesta Cantos is its relationship to paganism. Specifically, in relation to the “culture of neopaganism (as he understood it), the culture of Provençal poetry, and the project of writing his own poem” (Rainey 181). Pound connects, according to Rainey, Arnaut Daniel with Malatesta, and, in doing so, connects “Pound’s belief that a vital thread of cultural continuity links the culture of medieval Provence with quattrocento Rimini; the mantle of indigo becomes the emblem of a cultic vision, and Malatestan Rimini its spiritual heir” (182-183). So, here, we now have the pagan-cult spiritual connection and an immanent way to inspire and invoke something transcendent, something that goes beyond an isolated time and place, and hints at the power of the individual to transcend, simultaneously, immanent and transcendent.

Another area of debate is to what degree the Temple represented a pagan spirituality. In my view, Paganism is such an important feature of modernism’s search for the transcendent because it more readily taps into something spiritual and meaningful in the immanent sphere. Others may see Paganism as more immanent because of its connection to the natural world and its lack of a transcendent realm or deity. My contention is that the otherness and spiritual

transcendence of the immanent moment reveals it as essentially committed to the transcendent, although not in the strict binary sense of Judeo-Christianity. There is also some precedent here in the type of Transcendentalism depicted by American Transcendentalists which was partially driven by a secular spirituality and love of nature. Pound's experiences at "Stone Cottage" revealed he was not only amenable to such beliefs, but in his occult experiences and communication of ideas with Yeats, he saw them as a possibility for something sacred in literature and culture (Longenbach 48-50).

Pound emphasizes the pagan qualities of the church built by Malatesta, and, in doing so, shapes its meaning. This, along with it being a symbol of Malatesta's love for Isotta, are what give the Malatesta Cantos their greatest significance. This is evident in the construction of the Temple, which can be seen as a metaphor for artistic production and alternative to Christian orthodoxy transcendence in this letter:

'Damn remnants in you of Jew religion' because of her trying to keep her readers in ignorance of the fact that he did 'NOT accept... the dregs of the Xtn superstition', 'refuse[ d] to accept ANY monotheistic taboos whatsoever' and considered 'the Hebrew scriptures the record of a barbarian tribe, full of evil'. He wanted her to let it be known that he considered 'the Writings of Confucius, and Ovid's Metamorphoses the only safe guides in religion'. . . . Hence his approval of Sigismondo's Tempio with its many pagan divinities, and its honouring Isotta's divinity. (Moody 45).

Additionally, Pound's ideology influencing how the temple became associated with paganism is the S over I that is frequently seen as a symbol in the temple.

According to Rainey, Pound “reclaims and reasserts the secular spirituality that had lived in Provence and Malatestan Rimini, spirituality charged with shades of vitalism and aestheticism, sensuality and voluntarism.” In this context, the symbol “epitomiz[es] the entire project of *The Cantos*—to discern and write the counter-history of secular vitalist spirituality, as well as to place that spirituality at the core of a new ethical culture in the twentieth century” (209). While Rainey’s conclusion, similar to my own view, suggests that *The Cantos* is seeking an alternative to the immanent/transcendent binary, it brings in a problematic binary as well. Although Pound has his criticisms of Christianity, those criticisms are actually more based in the Church’s secularity, and to label a pagan alternative as secular seems to miss that very point. As I pointed out earlier, several critics have noted Pound’s seeking of a higher purpose can hardly be labeled secular, and spirituality, by its very nature, is not a secular notion. This issue reflects a conflict between the values of historical truth and the poem’s transcendent goals. When confronted with a binary choice, Pound is forced to acknowledge that the text cannot seamlessly blend the immanent with the transcendent wholly. Ultimately, I think Pound has something different in mind, as evidenced by the natural link that he is seeking.

Although Rainey makes valid points about Pound’s ideological goals shaping “The Malatesta Cantos,” I think this section shows, through the use of documentation, that Pound’s *Cantos* acknowledge a difference in the fundamental reality between the immanent and transcendent, the need to transform and deal with material reality. *The Cantos* begin to suggest that there can be a connection to the transcendent in the form of enlightened individuals whose responsibility it becomes to help transform the world into a more transcendent place. The access to the transcendent, however, is a problematic idea, and Pound’s *Cantos* have figures

who desire to transform the world, not through an immediately metaphysical presence, but one connected to their present and material reality. In the case of Malatesta, it's his love of Isotta and belief in Paganism that connects to the transcendent and is in direct contrast to the immanence, paradoxically, of the Church and State's politics and bureaucracy which leads to war and vapid ennui. The economic system also plays a role in the supremacy of the immanent over the transcendent, but this is an idea that will be explored in more depth later in *The Cantos*.

### III. Middle Cantos: Fascist and Agrarian Perspectives

"Eleven New Cantos" and "The Fifth Decad of Cantos" are written at a time when Pound is becoming increasingly focused on issues of economics and government in his understanding of history and its role in *The Cantos* conveying a modern paradise. Part of the development of this idea of a modern paradise hinges on a "naturalist" philosophy that I briefly touched on in the "Malatesta Cantos" in my discussion of the "Patron of Arts" ideal. This "naturalist" philosophy is tough to define because it's built on a self-referential idea that natural inclinations are ideal and produce ideal results. The idealism in this view is wholly immanent, but there is a quasi-divine and transcendent aspect to it. It suggests that the internal logic and knowledge in nature, present in human nature, should be the basis for work, social systems, and, most importantly, guide Pound's economic views that have an enormous effect on the Middle Cantos. The naturalist viewpoint is seen in humanist philosophies and Rousseau, but one that Pound picks up through the influences of Romantic poetry, studies with Ernest Fenellosa, and his strong connection to the Agrarian Jeffersonian philosophy. Alec Marsh in *Money and Modernity: Pound,*

*Williams, and the Spirit of Jefferson* explains the importance of the Agrarian Jeffersonian connection to Pound and its specific role in the development of Canto XLII of *The Fifth Decad of Cantos* where Pound focuses on the value of the Siena Bank, Mont de Paschi. This naturalist philosophy extends into Pound's views on government and political philosophy and coincides with Fascist views that produce the conditions for the necessary order. This Fascism informs the section as well, a fuller view of the role of the state than expressed in the earlier cantos.

In "Eleven New Cantos" Pound begins to explore this naturalism as an alternative to a Judeo-Christian transcendence. The call to a natural caretaking combined with a prudent economic leader connects the utopian vision of the section and is a precursor to the major ideas of "The Adams Cantos." As Ian Bell notes, a major idea of "the middle cantos" is the "relationship between time and work" (94). He sees these Cantos as representing a "mystical vision expressed in terms of human government and society" that is "based upon a notion of work within 'natural time' and within an economic system that contests usury through a reliance upon nature's productivity and a 'right name'" (95). Bell's reading of the connection between these sections of "the Middle Cantos" reveals the way in which Pound looked to connect the immanent and transcendent through these periods of history, "idealist thought" associated with transcendence and "pragmatic politics" with immanence (95). Additionally, the "notion of work within 'natural time'" brings the transcendent into the immanent sphere as a way to imbue nature and work with a quasi-divinity in the here and now. The natural world and work, which in a strict binary of immanence and transcendence are seen as symbols of the lacking immanent sphere, are turned into symbols of the union of immanence and transcendence, and thus, meaning, importance, and hope as well. There is a sense



in these Cantos that a more ideal state/society is possible through a combination of what I would call idealism, naturalism, will-power, and a desire for order. This is reflected in Pound's views on economics and Fascism. This section relies on ideologies of fascism, an underconsumptionist economics, and a naturalistic agrarianism. Additionally, Pound's utopian vision of society relies on cultural transcendence, a spiritualized naturalism, and the paradisaal trace of utopia.

Daniel Albright in his essay on "The Middle Cantos" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Cantos* focuses on schematic, structural and tonal changes, noting some of the thematic features (86). On the whole he seems to emphasize the "improvisational" quality and this seems to be a common point critics begin to stress as a major feature of the poem. Reed Way Dasenbrock also emphasizes change in his article, "Jefferson and/or Adams: A Shifting Mirror for Mussolini in the Middle Cantos." Hugh Kenner, however, emphasizes the poem's stability in the midst of its dynamism: "The Cantos scan the past for possibilities, but the dynamic is turned toward the future. And they enumerate so many places, so many stones, so many buildings, because nothing is so irrefutable as a stone" (325). During the composition years of these Cantos, Pound's other literary projects also emphasized a similar grounding: "His editorial choices do seem to have been governed simply by what interested him personally, namely realism both objective and subjective, experiment and innovation, and the condition of America" (Moody 98). While this doesn't directly reflect immanence and transcendence, it reflects the upheaval of their deconstruction and why the modernisms of the writers of my dissertation in general, and *The Cantos* in particular, are marked by change and experimentation.

Pound's *Cantos* and the criticism note this pattern of seeming chaos or fragmentation but are balanced by some grounding concept or stylistic feature. For

me, this is where we see the competing influences of concreteness and abstraction, both related to immanence and transcendence, immanence being associated with concreteness and realism, transcendence with abstraction and experimentation. Albright sees “Eleven New Cantos” emphasizing the concrete stating that Pound’s ideogram method becomes a governing principle for this set of Cantos. Described as “a signifying whole extrapolated from a heap of particulars,” it “helped Pound to explain what he had done, and also provided a dominant model for the Cantos to come” (90). In Canto XXXVIII Albright cites a passage dealing with language to show how Pound wanted an English language “with tremendous powers of evoking concrete action, but without generalization” (90). Again, this shows the continuing influence of the immanent, and the complex way it was to be implemented stylistically.

In contrast, the content in this section of *Cantos* also suggests that the idealism that may transcend the immanent world is, in fact, a formidable force. As Albright notes, the triumphs of American leaders; Adams, Jefferson, J. Q. Adams; are brought down by the “little corrupt leaders – Clay, Calhoun, Webster,” and “we are in the world of child labor, mud, and mid-European stupidity, coarseness, and venality” (86). In Pound’s searching for a more real idealism, *The Cantos*, at times, suggests a naturalism within which society and the natural world, environment and human biology, work in concert. The great individuals that Pound utilizes in the Cantos are like catalysts and maintainers of what should happen more naturally and divinely inspired. Some of the accomplishments that Albright cites in this section reflect this while others reveal its fallibility: “studying European architecture, planning canals, civilizing the Indians, finding rice and turnips adapted to the American climate” (86). The colonization has often been associated

with a biblical new world, a new Eden to be shaped naturally and divinely. Canto XXXI and XXXII introduce a more cynical view of the ideologies associated with the American Revolution while also exemplifying some of the real work and motivations that led to the formation of early America:

And thus Mr. Jefferson (president) to Tom Paine

With respect to his motives (Madison writing) I acknowledged  
I had been much puzzled to divine any natural ones  
without looking deeper into human nature  
than I was willing to do. (154)

The examples cited show the markers of the Enlightenment in that they reflect scientific progress and reasoned planning, but they also reflect the ideas of divine inspiration and a spiritual connection to the natural world. These immanent and transcendent influences come together in producing the kind of moment and civilization in the formation of early America that *The Cantos* value, along with, in my view, the High Modernist movement:

Take away appetite, and the present generation would not  
Live a month, and no future generation would exist;  
and thus the exalted dignity of human nature etc. ....  
Mr Adams to Mr Jefferson, 15 Nov. 1813. (156)

These examples show the way that the leaders were in conflict about the exalted transcendence attached to the idealism of the American Revolution, and fully acknowledged the baser aspects of what characterized the Revolution as a product of immanent needs and results. It is a precursor to revealing the need to accomplish things in the immanent sphere that paves the way for Pound's heroes of the era and eventually leads to his placement of Mussolini in this section of *The Cantos*.

“Eleven New Cantos,” which revolve mostly around the figure of Thomas Jefferson, develop the theme of the need for work and planning by elite individuals in building a society that can develop and foster the transcendent in the immanent world. Instead of a single person against the establishment as in “The Malatesta Cantos,” this section begins with those in power planning and creating a more just society. In other words, these Cantos shows Pound’s desire to have the natural and social worlds develop into a place where the transcendent is realized in the material present, not some far off idealism. This is shown immediately in Canto XXXI as Jefferson writing to George Washington emphasizes the need for development of the country through the building of a canal, “...I consider this canal / if practicable, as a very important work” (31.153). The documentary method continues in “Eleven New Cantos” through quoted letters, but thematically, become more about progress and the mission of Enlightenment thinking. Additionally, problems of modernity are introduced. Reed Way Dasenbrock notes the connection between Malatesta/Jefferson/Mussolini. The three figures are important to Pound because of their Machiavellian notions of the importance of getting things done in an innovative way if necessary as a function of a good society (510). This shows how a problem of immanence as a world that needs transformation lends itself to Pound’s heroic figures, and why the importance of will becomes a prized value in Pound’s *Cantos*. This can also be problematic though, as the “heroic” individual is responsible for bringing the “greater good” into fruition. The bigger point, however, is that it reveals the limitations of the immanent world as an inherently imperfect world that must be transformed. It’s a problem that Pound deals with in “The Adams Cantos” by tapping into a larger natural unity between work and society. This “naturalism’s” greater obstacle is the problem of usury, which Pound’s sees as

the corruption of modern society that prevents flourishing, but these kinds of heroic individuals are the main source of hope at this stage of *The Cantos*. The two issues converge when Pound presents the economic theories of Major Douglas to Mussolini (Moody 137). The issues of usury and the need for a natural economics begin to take shape in the “Eleven New Cantos” and continue into the “Fifth Decad of Cantos.”

The importance of the natural is further emphasized in showing consequences of corruption. Canto XXXIII delves into different examples of bureaucracy and the modern-industrial state, but, interestingly, begins with a comparison between oligarchy/aristocracy with an autocratic ruler in a letter from J. Q. Adams. The main point is a critique of absolute power but suggests the shortcomings of all kinds of governing: “absolute power...unlimited sovereignty....[of] a popular assembly,/ and an aristocratical council, an oligarchical junto,/ and a single emperor, equally arbitrary, bloody,/ and every respect diabolical” (XXXIII. 160). Neither does he see hope in a populism, a critique of ignorant masses, “Litterae nihil sanantes...whether serpents’ teeth sprang up men...(XXXIII. 161). Communism and general bureaucracy are likewise rejected: “limits of his individuality (cancels) and develops his power as a specie. (Das Kapital) denounced in 1842 still continue.” Problems of industrial society/bureaucracy, “And if the small boys are merely shifted from the spinning room to the weaving room or from, how can the inspector verify the number of hours they are worked and bureaucrat” (163). There is a similar critique of progress in Canto XXXIV, “Banks breaking all over the country,/ Some in a sneaking, some in an impertinent manner.../ prostrate every principle of economy” (167). These examples point to these Cantos’ ambivalence towards the modern state apparatus and its ability to deliver a “transcendent” reality.

One powerful way that the ideogrammic method is displayed in this section, reflecting a transcendent-immanent sign of meaning, is in ending Canto XXIV with the Chinese character for integrity in order to show how these modern states can be redeemed from their trappings of power and authority that lead to their downfall. Because of Pound's beliefs in the Chinese character as a more authentic sign, one that erases the gap between sign and meaning, the symbolic quality of the Chinese character and the value of integrity suggest something real, but also transcendent; some would say real in the sense that integrity stands the capriciousness of time and systems of government. It is a moment of stability amongst the chaos and represents a uniqueness that was present during the American revolutionary period. "Then it means, as Fenollosa observed in his essay on 'The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry,' concentrating the attention upon particular, concrete things, and seeing them as acting themselves, or acting the forces that pulse through them; and then as acting upon and interacting with other things" (Moody 76). While the Cantos, here, recognize the capriciousness and materiality of the formation of governing systems of power, the Chinese character of integrity suggests that their material nature, the need to work in material reality, does not require such an imperfect system. With the right kind of ethics and knowledge, these material systems can point to a higher source of meaning. In the next Canto, we get a sense of what that higher source of meaning could be.

The Chinese character is one of the disruptive fragments that deconstructs the immanent logos of the American Revolutionary context that dominates the section. Another such moment that fractures this and produces a moment of transcendence is in the use of Calvacanti's *Sordello* and the suggested theme of love. As Albright noted, Canto XXXVI is a shift in tone and focus, hearkening back to

Medieval poetry with Calvacanti's "Sordello," much like Rainey noted in the "Malatesta Cantos." Love's basis for meaning transcends the logos-based thinking and authority that comes from immanent sources such as history and societal institutions. Love also fits into the larger transcendence that Pound sees in nature. As Alec Marsh states, "To Pound 'Love' means something like 'in tune with nature' or 'righteous living'" (116-117).

Pound, wrote in a letter that he was working on "Guido's philosophy," and discovered the phrase "natural dimostramento" from Étienne Gilson's book on medieval philosophy, a phrase also in "Donna mi prega." Moody states that it was a significance phrase as Pound took it to mean "proof by natural reason' or even 'proof by experiment', or still further 'biological proof', then it would show that Guido's mind was not subject to the authority of medieval theology and to the syllogisms of Aquinas, as his young friend Dante's was. His thinking about love would have instead the authority of knowing it truly 'from nature's source'" (Moody 108). Again, Pound returns to the natural, and finding something both transcendent and immanent in the theme of love allows it to have that "authority." Moody further emphasizes the natural as a reaction to modernity and its connection to the transcendent:

Pound was attempting to recover that 'very complicated structure of knowledge and perception, the paradise of the human mind under enlightenment', which he believed 'had run from Arnaut [Daniel] to Guido Cavalcanti' but had been 'hammered out of François Villon. The word 'paradise' in that sentence, it should be noted, is delimited by 'knowledge and perception' and by 'the human mind': it would be a paradise of the mind, not of an immortal soul. (Moody 110)

For me, this is meant to signal a moment of transformation from immanence to transcendence. It is a break, a fissure, not just a mixture or amalgamation of time periods and cultures. In the early Cantos, Pound's use of paganism was more logically connected to the context, as it was more directly relevant to the mythology of antiquity and the narrative of Malatesta. Here, it is more disruptive and connected to the larger naturalist philosophy which transcends the particularities of politics and culture. Canto XXVI's message matches this idea by showing the importance of the relationship between moments of time and the transcendent, the transcendent existing in the real and the natural, but its eternal nature not being subject to the limits of time and logical causality. One such example:

He draweth likeness and hue from like nature  
 So making pleasure more certain in seeming  
 Nor can stand hid in such nearness,  
 Beautys be darts tho' not savage  
 Skilled from such fear a man follows  
 Deserving spirit, that pierceth. (XXXVI. 179)

Another aspect of the poem and its appeal is the reputation Medieval poetry has for exploring the bodily and sensual. This style of poetry was seen as not only antithetical, but heretical, in the view of the Church, the institutional body most associated with the transcendent. But here, in this context, juxtaposed with the other Cantos of the section, it becomes more transcendent than immanent, transforming and elevating the bodily and sensual attributes that made Medieval poetry immanent into something transcendent as well. According to Moody, this idea I'm suggesting about the more immanent viewpoint in the usage of this poem was something that Pound was keenly aware of:



Pound quite deliberately stops short of any suggestion of Dante's paradise of beatified souls, as does Cavalcanti's Canzone. Its light is wholly natural, and works to perfect nature, and particularly to perfect natural intelligence.

There is no hint of an immortal soul or of an eternal heaven, nor indeed of a Deity; and with those foundations removed Dante's whole system, and the entire Catholic system, would fall apart. (113)

This perspective reveals my position that, while there are moments of transcendence, ultimately, those moments are the result of the fragments and cracks that open up in the process of deconstruction. I also want to emphasize that reflections on the systems and teleological narratives that seek and suggest order is a feature of modernism. This is what I think Pound means by Cavalcanti being "much more 'modern.'" There isn't a progressive, coherent, neat whole that goes from the immanent into the transcendent.

As the poem becomes more historically and politically motivated, beginning with the "Malatesta Cantos," but felt more acutely in the poem after, how do these moments of experimentation and literary abstraction fit into this purpose? According to David Moody, "The Cantos, of course, were not designed to have immediate effect in 'the sphere of action'" (106). Canto XXXVI, in invoking "Sordello," makes the gap between poetic meaning and the immanent world a thematic feature, as the Canto brings the context into the poetic realm more acutely than the surrounding Cantos that rely on letters and historical documentation as their source. The content of the Canto also takes this on as an issue. This Canto suggests it takes the will of a person to bring it into the world and have it come to fruition. The first part of the Canto muses on the existential possibilities of its protagonist, but what solves the dilemma is will: "Cometh he to be / when the will /

From overplus / Twisteth out of natural measure”(XXXVI. 128); “And his strange  
 quality sets sighs to move / Willing man look into that forme’d trace in his mind /  
 And with such uneasiness as rouseth the flame (XXXVI. 128).

This, of course, leads to the subject matter of Fascism and Mussolini in Canto  
 XLI. Comparisons have been made between Malatesta’s and Mussolini; Leon  
 Surette, for example, states in *Pound in Purgatory*, “His hope is to make Mussolini’s  
 self-declared dictatorship palatable on a great man, or Caesarist, view of historical  
 causation—a view Pound had already articulated in the Malatesta cantos” (72). Here  
 in “Eleven New Cantos” we have the introduction of Mussolini as a part of *The  
 Cantos*, and a comparison to Jefferson as well. What attracted Pound to these  
 figures is the idea that they had the will to get things accomplished, and the acumen  
 and vision to know the things that were culturally and socially important that were  
 needed to bring about a flourishing society and culture. In my view of seeing *The  
 Cantos* through the binary and problem of how to incorporate the transcendent into  
 the immanent, these figures had the ability and will to do so. These individuals are  
 needed in this sense, but also to cut through the muck that is the modern immanent  
 world:

Ma Questo,”

said the Boss, “e divertente.”

catching the point before the aesthetes had got

there;

Having drained off the muck by Vada

From the Marshes, by Circeo, where no one else wd. have

drained it.

Waited 2000 years, ate grain from the marshes;

Water supply for ten million, another one million “*vani*”

that is rooms for people to live in.

XI of our era. (XLI. 202)

For Pound, that muck is primarily ignorance and corruption as evidenced in his “hell” cantos, the bureaucratic and corrupted lack of vision of Malatesta’s antagonists, and here in “Eleven New Cantos,” there are a variety of issues. The issues here are succinctly noted by Albright, as I previously mentioned, and also by Stephen Sicari, who notes that the Jefferson/Adams letters were of primary importance to reveal “the battles being waged against the evils of a fraudulent banking system led by Alexander Hamilton” (131). And as David Moody states, Pound believed it was up to an individual to wage this battle, “By 1930, still more paradoxically, he was looking for an individual leader to manage the state and maintain civilization” (100). More importantly, “‘the *raison d’être* of Fascism’ for Pound, could be seen as at once an attack on faceless bureaucrats and their obstructive imbecilities” (Moody 101).

Fascism according to David Ten Eyck is a more complicated and complex issue for Pound. He focuses on “The Adams Cantos” exclusively but notes its importance which is relevant here. He suggests that Pound’s interest had to do more with the ability of the state to allow for individual liberty: “The solution Mussolini offered, like the ones Pound had begun to explore, bound ‘the real essence of the individual’ to the community in an integral relationship that sought above all else to ensure ‘the only liberty worth having, the liberty of the state and of the individual within the state’” (Kindle Locations 3487-3490).

Sicari and Moody also point to the fact that Pound connected Mussolini and Jefferson in the mutual value of land, something Pound valued as well. “Pound was

moved to say in an interview with an Italian journalist that Mussolini's 'effective program, which includes land reclamation, the 'battle for grain', . . . put him in mind of Thomas Jefferson; (Moody 101). While Sicari notes, "Pound's Mussolini, like Jefferson and his descendants up to Bryan, sees the land as the source of all cultural value" (133). This comes up as a matter of course in the "Eleven New Cantos," and while some may see this as an outdated, antiquarian value of Pound's politics, I think it's further evidence of Pound's connection to a re-invention of naturalism that originated in the nineteenth century as a way to connect the transcendent and the immanent. Additionally, it shows that Pound's faith in the figure of Mussolini was connected to his own vision of a perfect society, a modernistic way of thinking about what is possible in the immanent world, despite the amount of experimentation, spontaneity, fragmentation, and disorder present in his literary work.

The importance of this naturalist philosophy is seen most clearly in "The Fifth Decad of Cantos" in Canto XLII. As Alec Marsh succinctly summarizes his very important work in this regard: "Pound's Agrarian ideology led him to believe that true wealth, and therefore true credit, existed in the fertility of nature. Pound translated the details of the Sieneese bank's founding into his Cantos in hopes that it would find modern imitators" (119). Marsh's work details how the Sieneese bank fits into the naturalist philosophy and then could be a model for a more just system of banking that would translate into a more ideal society. The first important aspect of the bank is that Pound stresses its connection to nature through the word "Mont," suggesting that it is "literally a part of nature" (120). Next, Pound, in accordance with "canonists" felt that the low 5% interest was in accordance with nature, instead of the usurious interest rates that he viewed as a corruption (120). Another description of the bank is important in my view because it connects to the larger

social implication, Marsh explains how “banco de giro” description in the Canto reflects the idea of a gyre, a bank that “distributes” and circulates wealth and productivity (120). This shows how the bank, when connected to this specific naturalist philosophy, can lead to a more fruitful society. This idea is further stressed when Pound in the next stanza emphasizes that “the specie / be lent to whomso can best USE IT” (XLII 209). As Marsh explains, “Usury, like finance capitalism generally, promotes exchange values at the expense of use values. By their very nature, exchange values inhere not in things but in the money that one can get for things” (121). For me, this is a critique of modernity’s emphasis on quantitative value and the capitalist system. Pound’s naturalist philosophy is also in a sense modern in its emphasis on materiality, but Pound’s modern viewpoint is also critical of a modernity that has no substance and shows an awareness of the need for something more meaningful. Pound doesn’t want to throw out modernity, as he emphasizes the importance of a material gain, but he is also vehemently opposed to a world that has devolved into only quantity and an overly mechanized-unnatural system. The idea of seeing things more systemically will be more of a focus in “The Adams Cantos,” but we see the beginnings of that thinking here.

In these Middle Cantos there are several major developments that take place. Each of the developments reflect Pound’s increasing attention to seeing how the immanent world and issues of modernity that have de-emphasized the meaning that was present in an enchanted viewpoint, can be replaced with an immanent meaning. The increase in fragmentation and experimentation reflects the instability of this emerging viewpoint. While the documentary method that began with “The Malatesta Cantos” is still present, the disruptions of competing narratives and the ideogrammic method present obstacles to a cohesive narrative of unity. While

Pound expresses in his politics and economic philosophy a need for order, there is an ambivalence about how to enact that order. As he tries to bring together these ideas into a natural system, he also depicts the need for individuals, or a particular individual, to bring this order into the world.

#### IV. The Adams Cantos: Systems of Meaning

It is in “The Adams Cantos” that the issues of naturalism, fascism, and a systemic view of meaning come to the forefront. This emphasis on a systemic view of meaning as a reason for change from Jefferson to Adams, is proposed by Reed Way Dasenbrock: “Earlier, in Jefferson and/or Mussolini, [Pound] argued that governmental machinery did not matter; what mattered was the will to change and the economic arrangements behind the machinery. But in his radio talks and in the Adams Cantos, he keeps coming back to the need to study systems of government: (519). David Ten Eyck explains how Pound sees an interrelated connection between “nature, language, and government” (loc 2870). It is this connection that I want to emphasize as it shows how Pound sees a unity possible between transcendent idealism and material reality. One major idea of “The Adams Cantos” will be the way the American Revolution reflected the interrelated connection.

In exploring the link between language and meaning through a natural language, these Cantos seek to avoid the problem of seeing language as inherently arbitrary, the Saussurian idea that Derrida builds on in his philosophy of language. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida writes about Saussure and the natural connection between the sign and the meaning of the sign. The problem in English writing according to this theory is that the natural connection occurs between the phonetic aspect of the language which is masked or subverted by the written language (35).

Pound hints at a similar idea in his work with Ernest Fenollosa, an issue they felt could be addressed the Chinese character because of its pictorial quality. Fenollosa's essay "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry," a foundational essay for Pound, argues for its value as a naturalistic language. As Cai Zong-Qi states in his essay on the subject, "The bulk of the Fenollosa- Pound essay is devoted to an analysis the Chinese character evokes the dynamic force of nature ideogrammic, morphological, and syntactical" (172). David Ten Eyck also notes Pound's naturalistic philosophy suggests that language is linked to a natural connection (loc 3552). This is important for my thesis in building on the immanent/transcendent movements and ideas of nineteenth century Romantic philosophies and writers as well as the Transcendental-Naturalist writings of American writers, an alternative to traditionally divinely transcendent as noted by Taylor.

The desire for order and a naturalism that fuses elements of the transcendent and immanence that could produce a utopian vision of society becomes central to "The Adams Cantos." While still interested in Fascism as mode of doing so, along with the practical need for the will, "The Adams Cantos" presents a possibility for a system to ensure such practical considerations that would lead to a natural relationship between government and freedom. According to Ten Eyck:

By the time Pound composed the Adams Cantos he had already begun to consider the concept of *chêng* (誠, sincerity) as expressing a bond between organic nature and verbal expression. He understood the term both in the traditional sense of being free from deceit, hypocrisy or falseness (the qualities of 'honesty and straight-moving' [C, 62/ 350]

he praised in Adams, for example, or the faithfulness to the historical record he promises in the opening lines of Canto 62) and a far broader idea of proximity to natural process. (Locations 3604-3610)

With spirituality and divinity becoming attached to nature in the post-Enlightenment world, it also allows a kind of transcendence, and a utopian vision of language and society that an arbitrary view of language would preclude. We see this very clearly in this quote from Pound:

The inborn nature begets this activity naturally, this looking straight into oneself and thence acting. These two activities constitute the process which unites outer and inner, object and subject, and thence constitutes a harmony with the seasons of earth and heaven. (qtd. from Ten Eyck, loc 3621)

Pound's comment here reflects the basic tenet of modernism's approach to the immanent/transcendent binary, an embrace of the immanent, but a transformation that allows for a unity with and fostering of the transcendent.

The underlying philosophy of Pound's *Cantos* often begin with an immanent view, and his philosophy on and use of language is no different; similarly, this philosophy and utilization of the Chinese characters shares a quasi-transcendence view to them as well, as the ideal of a natural language suggests a divine connection:

Pound's attempt to reduce the Chinese written language to concrete components which are assumed to reflect material things is only the most obvious example of his broader desire to reconcile language with natural process. Language, he attempts to affirm through the example of Chinese characters, is not so much a product of social relations as it is transcendental in its origins. In its most perfect form it is actually a



medium that objectively reflects the natural world, rather than one that originates over time through a variety of culturally specific attempts to interpret nature. These ideas allow Pound to imagine the possibility of establishing an empirical basis for language, rather than accepting it as 'mere epistemology' (C, 87/ 587), an attitude that is of basic importance to his Confucianism. (Ten Eyck Locations 3589-3597)

Pound's view modifies language to make it more immanent, but not to the degree of the Saussure/Derrida view of language which sees language as socially constructed and arbitrary because Pound views language as capable of a natural mimesis; Pound's view does not link to a metaphysical transcendence, a Platonic or Judeo-Christian realm outside/above the natural world, but does transcend a more hardline view of language as its own entity, a socially constructed view of language, and usage/context dependent. The connection to nature, and nature as something beyond that can order human society and behavior, then, takes on a transcendent quality. Ten Eyck shows how Pound's view wants an "empirical" language, something "concrete," and an "objective" reflection of the "natural world." This is the language of immanence. At the same time, Pound does not want to reduce language to the material causality or arbitrariness of an immanent viewpoint. He also sees language as "transcendental in its origins." Here, I have to note that where Pound locates this transcendence is unclear, but in shunning a Judeo-Christian theology of transcendence, Pound often uses a definition of transcendence that is more familiar to the idea of transcending time and culture. Transcendence is not locked into an absolute immanent world but is more immanent than a Platonic or Judeo-Christian concept of transcendence. I think this aligns with both the deconstruction of the

binary and his tendency to have transcendence more closely connected with immanence and reality.

My view of “The Adams Cantos” is that they negotiate between the flatness of modernity and the promises of a transcendence that can come to fruition in the immanent world. This flatness is seen in “The Adams Cantos” when we look at them simply as a historical narrative or in terms of their realist component of inserting documents into the text. This can be seen in Furia’s *Cantos Declassified* whose basis for meaning is an explanation of the historical context and the importance of textuality. Furia explains the context of Adams struggle to gain independence from British authority by citing previous English texts and arguing for the autonomy of the colonies in regard to issues of taxation and governance which occupy much of the “Adams Cantos.” Of particular importance is when Adams brings in a specific charter that refutes the idea that judges held office for life; the particular use of the charter highlighted by Pound suggests, according to Furia, a deeper meaning about the importance of texts: “Pound's slangy recasting of the documentary language mirrors Adams's updating of the charter to meet new times, and the image of documents as sacred stones echoes the Chinese Cantos, where ancient charters are valued above precious jewels” (95). This view attempts to show the greater meaning of textual importance and the role of Adams in creating a more meaningful world through incorporating historical documentation and making it new. This is a standard way in which to view “The Adams Cantos” as possibly transcending their moment in history and also reflects the re-imagining of the past to show its importance in a contemporary culture. But I also think it’s a limited view, one that reflects a logos-centered and progressive narrative of modernity. I also would suggest there’s a dullness to these historical procedural

details. The textuality becomes decidedly one note in this lens. In my view, the fragmentary nature of *The Cantos*, and the lack of connective tissue between the parts, is what necessarily deconstructs this flatness. By virtue of their incompleteness, “The Adams Cantos” allows for the alterity of the event in relationship to the textual record to come into the meaning of the text. This, in conjunction with “The Adams Cantos” reflecting some of Pound’s naturalistic philosophy, are what gives them their meaning in relation to the transcendent and immanent.

Canto LXII suggests that *The Cantos* in general, and “The Adams Cantos” in particular, do not try to thrust the immanent world into a transcendent one, a common issue of teleological narratives, and immature/naïve depictions of the immanent/transcendent binary. A large issue is how to apply laws to particular situations and circumstances, even in parts that relate to a more idealistic vision of society: “Encourage arts commerce an’ farmin” there is the push and pull of human capriciousness, as in the need for “encourage(ment)” by “guv-nor council an’ house of assembly” (62. 342). And in discussion of jurisprudence: “let us try cases by law If by.... common men like the rest of us / subjekk to / passions (64. 342, 43). The passage exposes the deficiencies of the Pound’s idealist “natural” philosophy, specifically when codified into law. Government, composed of law and humans, is socially constructed preventing a real utopic unity between natural inclinations and those codified by social convention. While both human passions, subject to the whims of biology, and law, dependent on social context, have their own singular weaknesses, they also fail to complement each other at times, coming into conflict. In this Canto, Pound uses the Chinese character for tea which seems inconsequential, but it helps to emphasis this natural transmission as tea originates

from Ancient China. Here, in a modernist context it has become displaced and a sign of an unjust political-economic system. It is also significant that it refers to a material good as the other Chinese characters in “The Adams Cantos” are usually in reference to concepts or ideals. Giving the first character a material basis sets up the concrete connotation that Pound wants to attach to the use of the Chinese language and the ideals they embody.

Two points could help to explain the apparent contradictions in Canto LXII. The first would point to this being an early canto in “The Adams Cantos” and reveals the beginnings of American government, the possibility for a union of government and nature that has yet to come to fruition. The second would suggest Pound’s complex view of provincialism and fascism, a topic whose details are not central to my paper, but main idea as noted by Ten Eyck suggests that Pound sees government of being capable of providing the environment for a utopian vision of a natural society whereby people can pursue their passions and have genuine authenticity in their work that inherently provides meaning and purpose (loc 3525). I note this to show how the “naturalist” philosophy runs into issues of the immanent world revealing that contrary to pre-modern transcendence; immanent transcendence requires a working out of such issues of immanence as opposed to “magical thinking” that could simply erase such conflicts, or never encounter them, since a transcendent world would not be subject to such immanent world laws. In being part of a scientific/mechanical world, however, Pound’s utopian vision, (in keeping with much of the Enlightenment thinking of the nineteenth century), needs causality; to bridge the gap between the transcendent and immanent, the system needs fixing. So long as government allows and maintains/orders the environment correctly, the natural inclinations of humans can prosper.

This working out of government and government's role in people's lives, its power, its responsibilities, and the philosophical basis for its governing, shows primarily immanent concerns and can be seen throughout "The Adams Cantos." The Revolutionary period, though, also afforded an opportunity to simultaneously have a transcendent and immanent view of history and government. Cantos LXIV-LXVI reveal this dual thinking. On the one hand, Adams reflects on, according to Terrell's notes, Alexander Pope's 4<sup>th</sup> satire of John Donne in Canto LXIV, "Solitude: a person, a NURSE / plumes: is she angel or bird, is she a bird or an angel?" (355). On the other hand, we have specific issues of the Stamp Act replete with detailed #s:

whereof 4 crops a year, seed he had of Gridly of Abingdon  
 pods an odd thing, a sort of ramshorn of straw  
 about 70 bushel of 1/4<sup>th</sup> an acre of land  
 his potatoes  
 sub conditione fidelitatis  
 is it ever known that Oliver ever advised to lay internal taxes  
 upon us?  
 (355)

The former example reflects the kind of transcendent language of the American Revolution. Other examples include, "One party for wealth and power/ at expense/ of the liberty of their country" (LXIV. 361); "Resentment a duty, a man's person, property, liberty/ not safe without it" (LXV. 367); "Now I see it./ I will write home at once on this subject/ To exempt fishermen husbandmen merchants as much as possible from evils of future wars" (LXV. 378); "this act, the Stamp Act, wd/ drain cash out of the country/ and is, further, UNconstitutional/ yr/ humanity counterfeit/ yr/ liberty cankered with simulation" (LXVI. 382). I'm pointing to these lines as

possible moments of transcendence because they share a commitment to finding an underlying philosophy that can provide a way of living beyond the particular moment. It is during the American Revolution era that transcendence becomes secularized and actualized through the events of the period and theories of government and society relying on universalized principles that combine the language of the Enlightenment with that of religion, so that the immanent and transcendent become intertwined. In “The Adams Cantos” the shift from Classical transcendence of myth, religion, and Platonism is replaced by the natural rights and political philosophy of philosophers like Locke and Rousseau. Transcendence becomes modernized, part of a system that can ensure ideals of humanity and nature. Transcendence is still othered in this binary but becomes the inferior by virtue of laws and logic determining its existence.

This kind of abstract thinking comes through in a realist way as well, emphasizing the immanent style even in this experimental modernism. For example, when the American Revolution begins in Canto LXIV, the philosophical context combines with narrative details which subsume the start of the war into a real historical occurrence:

Mr. Hancock never consented, never voted for it himself  
nor for any man to make any such law

whenever

we leave principles and clear propositions

and wander into a wilderness

a darkness wherein arbitrary power

set on throne of brass with sceptre of iron...

Suspended, in fact, only after Battle of Lexington

which ended all such prosecutions (358-59)

Wilderness and darkness evoke the “Hell” of Dante’s inferno, but we see here they are connected to a lack of clarity in the law, and the antiquated “arbitrary power” of the crown. The “Battle of Lexington,” rather than dramatized, becomes part of this socio-historical context and chain of events, an important detail, among other observed details. Also included in the “Stamp Act Canto,” are such observational, narrative details such as what a man ate at a bar, the music that was heard being played by the “Sons of Liberty,” the time there was supposed to be a “signal of fire,” a man who needed council but could not get any, a visit to an old woman who “prayed for deliverance.” My point here is this, much like *Ulysses*, tries to bring in the various details of the particular moment in order to make the text more like the principles of literary movement of naturalism that are the result of the immanent viewpoint’s privileging of objectivity, causality, and empiricism. Even when *The Cantos* moves towards some great feat of significance, of something that could be looked to as transcendent, stylistically, they continue to incorporate ways to increasingly emphasize an immanent view.

Canto LXV also incorporates this style, “We then walked up Broadway / magnificent building, cost 20, 000 pounds / N. Y. currency / Ship / of 800 tons burden lest leveling spirit of New England should propagate itself in New York” (363), but there’s also an overriding theme in the Canto that suggests it participates in a greater meaning. It is the Canto I would point to, in this section, as most dealing with the themes of modernity as it concerns issues of industry, capitalism, globalism, politics, and the systems of colonialism and slavery. These issues are, in many respects, being issues of modernity, issues of immanence, but there is also transcendence present in the way the Canto starts with these minute details, and

then moves into something larger, and also reveals the way these immanent concerns fall short of greater meaning. Also, they hint at some of the barbaric elements that the systemic practices of colonialism and slavery seek to hide, a feature of modernity's reliance on causality and quantification. The Canto starts off mundanely as my quote references above, and also in terms of content, discusses the issues of trade with foreign countries and whether or not the U.S. should have a Navy. Buried in the discussion is the reality of trade that includes colonialism and slavery: "After December 1<sup>st</sup> no molasses / coffee pimento from Domenica / fine bowling green and fine turtle, madeira" (LXV. 364). These are items that are acquired specifically because the system of the Atlantic Slave Trade and Colonialism make that possible. There is little discussion of this fact because the system benefitted those in power. I certainly don't want to attribute this solely to an immanent worldview, but the system hides the qualitative aspects of humanity in a veneer of progress that values quantity and industry. In other words, it was allowed to flourish because it relied on the immanent worldview of scientific rationality which provided a basis for its continuation. The immanent context allowed it to appear as natural, a downside to the kind of nineteenth century use of naturalist philosophy and political-ethnocentric manipulations of science.

The Canto shifts focus and hearkens back to romanticized views. Again, we see a pattern of disruption of the immanent worldview with literature of the past connecting to something deeper and in contrast to the quantitative values of immanence. In one part, the Canto recalls a high seas adventure that connects to the literature of Greco-Roman epic poems, bringing the poem's perspective out of the immanent worldview it is stuck in. The passage, which lasts about a third of the Canto, recounts an American ship going to France with J. Q. Adams aboard:



“Smoke, smell of sea coal, of stagnant and putrid water / increase the qualminess but do not occasion it / in calm with our guns out” (LXV. 369). There is a similar style of visual details, making no mistake that we are still in the immanent sphere of a naturalist style, but the trace of meaning of the epic poems that utilized the Sea as a setting for the fortunes and destinies of its heroic adventures and the fates of its characters is unmistakable. The inclusion of this trip and its details gives the Canto a sense of deeper purpose and meaning. Another example of this more romanticized catalogue and use of descriptive detail comes toward the end of this section of the canto: “From perils of the sea, intrigues, business wangles / rural improvements are brought down to the water’s / edge / muddy water, grand seats, beautiful groves / a number of vessels in the river land, cattle, horses after / so long a journey” (LXV. 370). There is a temporary break from the direct political and legal language that more specifically corresponds to the Adams section as a whole and evokes its immanent concerns. The sea journey provides a more mythical and mystical context, a transcendent moment in the midst of the chaos of and, at times, flat ennui of the setting up of a government. Shortly after there is a commemorative moment that suggests a transcendent quality, “Lights in the garden and an Inscription / GOD SAVE LIBERTY THE CONGRESS AND ADAMS” (LXV. 371).

The rest of the “The Adams Cantos” take to seeing how the government can come together, form an order, and unite the revolutionary chaos and idealism. Here is where much more of the political and “naturalist” philosophy come into play, along with the “ideogrammic method” that influences this section of *Cantos*. There is a tension between those practices or ideas that can divide and/or disrupt, and the necessity for some ideas or actions that can put things into order and allow for a natural or organic flourishing. Pound uses a similar Chinese character in three

Cantos in a row: LXVI, LXVII, LXVIII. In LXVI and LXVIII it is Ching Ming, “right name,” and in LXVII, a shortened form, Ching, “upright/true.” In all three instances the ideogram serves as a contrast to the immanent modernity that produces an artificial manipulation of currency or law. These ideograms act as an othering dimension, just as the transcendent is othered in the immanent-modern context. Their meaning here also has a mixture of the transcendent and the immanent that reflects the Revolutionary period’s realization in the immanent world of transcendent ideals. “Right name” and “upright/true” are in a sense immutable ideals and laws, laws in a natural sense, and therefore, are ideals/laws that transcend a particular context of time and place which makes them “right” or “true.” This is why the ideograms have a transcendent connection. They are also immanent too, as their appearance makes them so. “Right name” and “upright/true” can only come to fruition through time and place. It is similar to the embodiment of a Platonic ideal but does not exist outside nature; its existence is in the natural world.

For my purposes, there is an unfolding of the transcendent in an immanent sense because it outlines the practices and ideals that could forge something utopic and lasting, as opposed to the short-sightedness of an immanent view that sees progress in mechanical and scientifically empirical ways. Those threats take the form of injustices that reveal short-sighted gain and thus go against the greater good or transcendent laws:

we have mortification to see one Act Parliament after  
another  
 money collecting from us continually without our consent  
 by an authority

in the constitution of which we have no share  
and see the little coin that remained among us  
transmitted to distance

with no hope of return (LXVI. 383)

One gets the same sense of the modern citizen stuck in the immanent domain, without hope and knowing the great distance between immanent and the transcendent. In contrast, the transcendent takes the form of continuity or unity; “RESOLUTION to maintain duty and loyalty to our sovereign / and to Parliament as legislative in all cases of necessity / to preserve the Empire as a whole” (LXVI. 383). This Canto is reflecting back on pre-Revolution activity, so at this stage, and one reason why the American Revolution is a site of such conflict, the hope that the crown, tradition and government, can provide some stability and something to overcome the capriciousness of arbitrary exercises of power and human desire, is held onto. While the state and tradition are sources of transcendent stability, there are too many immanent pressures in relying on this to maintain something transcendent. Instead, there needs to be immutable laws which takes the form of an appeal to natural rights, which I discussed previously as a kind of both immanent appeal to reason, but also a transcendent ideal that contains a faux divinity. The end of this Canto has several appeals to natural laws and natural rights, and this is the basis for such a transcendence that can provide hope and promise, while still being the basis for action and work that can produce results in an immanent world: “means for redress...natural rights...charter right” (LXVI. 384). It is also argued in the Canto that these laws are part of the historical precedence established over time and by tradition, hence “charter right.” It suggests that “natural” laws must work in concert with society, but not that society constructs these laws arbitrarily or out of

only a social sphere, which would more stringently confine it to an immanent world. It is why, as Ten Eyck points out, “The colonists’ appeal to fundamental principles of government based in ‘nature’, that is – while serving as a powerful means of criticising the British Empire and of arguing for the restriction of parliamentary authority – could also potentially be used to establish absolute principles of government.” Some of this case is made in Canto LXVII, “Lock Milton Nedham Neville Burnet and Hoadly / empire of laws not of men” (391). “I was apprehensive in particular that / ‘natural history’ and ‘good humour’ wd/ be struck out,” (392). In LXX, “power follows balance of land” (411). And lastly, Ten Eyck points out this principle is mostly clearly expressed in the ending of “The Adams Cantos:”

Thus, references to the law of nature lose the quality of being a guarantor of individual liberty, as in Locke. Instead, natural law becomes the source of a fundamental order with which government must ideally conform; an order most completely expressed in the Adams Cantos by the Zeus of Cleanthes’s ‘Hymn’ who, through the ‘inborn qualities of nature, by laws [governs] all things’.<sup>30</sup> As he worked to develop such ideas in his social criticism of the 1930s, Pound coined the term ‘organic democracy’ to describe the political vision of the American founders. (Locations 3878-3890)

The lines are written in the original Greek, but, according to Terrell, Pound rearranged the lines to adjust the metrical component to his needs, and Terrell translates the lines as “Most honored of the immortals, worshipped under many names, all powerful forever, Zeus, founder of the natural order, who rules over all things by law” (360). Ten Eyck’s observation about the importance of these lines to natural law and their importance to governing, to creating a society that functions in concert with natural order, is in keeping with my own views about the importance of

a natural order to “The Adams Cantos” and how it shapes the perspective of government in the Cantos, but I need to stress the importance of these lines to my larger argument. Here we have, not an implied or trace of meaning, but a direct reference to a divine source being connected to the immanent world. After all the detailed fragments relating to particular ideals and minutiae of the Adam’s revolutionary lens, “The Adams Cantos” end with the transcendent being connected to the natural world. Ultimately, it is this connection between the transcendent and immanent that provides hope for order and meaning, especially in the chaos and fragments of modernity.

Pound saw Adams as the protagonist of these Cantos, as one such man who can make this happen. But the main content of these cantos is meant to show how Adams could be part of a greater order, not necessarily the designer of such an order:

The most basic way in which the poetry of the Adams Cantos functions is by associating the material culled from the Works with a relatively small number of themes. The reader quickly learns to recognise these themes: John Adams’s active and passionate intelligence; the cultivation of natural wealth and the careful attention to natural processes; the law as a means of defining the legitimate basis of authority and erecting the framework of a well-ordered state; the basic importance of economic justice to good government; and the clear definition of language, or the ‘right naming of things’. Eyck (Locations 2278-2286)

Eyck shows that while “The Adams Cantos” are centered around the life of Adams, the Cantos are more about the socio-political context of the time period and its relationship to creating the possibility for a better society in conjunction with these

ideals that Pound sees as imperative to doing so and make up the poetic project of *The Cantos*. This section of *The Cantos* reveals the complex nature of how they seek a unity between a transcendent idealism and a material realism. As Pound moves away from the will of an individual being the major source of how to bring this transcendent into the world, *The Cantos* explore how systems of meaning and production, specifically as a fundamental aspect of immanence, influence outcomes, values, and identities. “The Adams Cantos” begin to assert that the right systems of language, economics, government are the right systems as part of a larger natural system. This, for me, shows an unmistakable transcendent quality that was present in pre-modern society. Pound attempts to modernize this quality and make it immanent by placing it in nature and society. As I have stated, stylistically the use of the ideograms combined with the fragments disrupt this teleological view, this attempt to bring things together in unity. I believe this to be an important difference between Pound’s theories and beliefs and his poetic project, and a defining characteristic of literary modernism.

#### **V. Later Cantos: Attempts at a final transcendent meaning**

Pound’s experiences post-1930s contribute greatly to changes in the Later Cantos, beginning with “The Pisan Cantos.” Later Cantos return to paganism and mythology along with a more focused desire to achieve the paradisaical. All along I have suggested that the breaks and fissures of *The Cantos* suggest a transcendence that deconstructs the immanent and provides an opening for something new to provide meaning in the face of the absence of such in the “Secular Age” of modernity. I think it was a benefit to the poem that Pound was not entirely sure about how the poem could accomplish a modern epic, but continually returned to something from

the enchanted past that would disrupt his more immanent view of concrete language, history and economics, and the documentary method. Michael North has a different view than mine, seeing in Pound, before Pisa, “a confidence that revolutionary breaks would return society to a stable, that modernization would restore a traditional society” (185). On the one hand, Pound believed “modernization” in the sense of making the past “new” would benefit society and that a philosophy of naturalism, “underconsumptionist” economics, and fascism could produce a utopian stability and meaningful production. And I do think that Pound certainly dreamed of it all coming together, but the text never reaches that unity, and there are enough ambivalences and contradictions between fragments of materialism and idealism that prevent this totalizing narrative. I see this as a positive critique of modernity that is an aspect of modernism, one that doesn’t fall into a trap of a modern progressivism. After all, it is this modern progressivism that has led to the issues that *The Cantos* are meant to solve to some degree.

I have argued that The “Middle” and “Adams” Cantos are when the poem is at its most immanent, but the material reality of the author, the presence of the author is most acutely felt in the Later Cantos, specifically in “The Pisan Cantos.” In this there is an immanence that is slightly different than the larger presence of secular modernity that I have outlined. Many critics have noted this effect in “The Pisan Cantos,” and in this I’m in agreement, but want to show how it relates to my thesis. Sicari notes that it causes Pound to confront “the problems associated with the body, its limitations, and its complex needs and desires” (142). North’s view shows how the “accidents of camp life” begin to take the air out of the “dogma” of unity that the previous cantos had clung to (184). Also, North states that “Pound violates the boundaries between his poem and the outside world” in this section

(185). Christine Froula notes that the “‘poem including history’ *becomes* history” (qtd. from Morrison 44). In my view, it is more akin to the Derridean presence of a signature in a text whose indelible mark materially affects the text. The physical predicament and historical circumstances of the author act as a material marker on the text in a way that is unavoidable in the meaning of the text, and makes the larger transcendent ideals confront the particularities of such a material predicament.

The confinements and dashed hopes present in “The Pisan Cantos” are perhaps the most fitting themes for a critique of immanence. They reflect the ideas associated with the loss of transcendence and the limitations of modernity. The poet’s isolation and exile are also a fitting condition for the age. Small moments of confinement pervade the section, but none so as explicit as those that occur in Canto LXXXIII. There is the image of “caged panther’s eyes:” and shortly after, “Nor can who has passed a month in the death cells / believe in capital punishment / No man who has passed a month in the death cells / believes in cages for beasts” (550). Rather than exclaiming a positive idealism, the turn to negation signifies the level of dejection, what one cannot believe in. The logic connects personal experience and beliefs that can no longer exist after such experiences. This coming after Pound’s own experiences calls into question some of his own idealism and the importance of real experiences to curb such idealism. It critiques the totalizing force of belief systems, turning the primacy of experience and materialism on its head. The end of Canto LXXXIV provides another such image; “so light is the urging, so ordered the dark petals of iron / we who have passed over Lethe” (469). Here, while Pound is experiencing captivity, there is a movement back to mythology; the attention to realistically portraying “history” through documentation has been shunned. While



Pound's experience directly affecting the themes and images makes this an immanent moment in the most immanent sense of the word, his portrayal of the experience suggests an attempt to transcend the moment and the materiality of the experience. Using a phrase like "passed over" suggests this as well.

Sean Pryor highlights the Pisan Cantos language and the ambiguity with which it approaches the transcendent. In Pryor's terms, "neither the shut garden nor a Dantescan rising seem sufficient, though their ghosts haunt the volume" (loc 233-241). The "shut garden" and "Dantescan rising" are two ways that the "paradise" theme had been seen previously. This indicates that this canto is problematic in this respect. For my purposes it shows the complications of the absolute transcendent, and expresses, for the first time, a difficulty in accessing and incorporating transcendence. In fact, it may even favor the directness and simplicity of an immanent realm, leaving the transcendent far off, to "haunt" it, in Pryor's term. This is one reality with which to deal with the death of a transcendent worldview, coming to terms with its loss while still be affected by its legacy and memory, like a deceased loved one. Pryor quotes Anna Kventsel who also sees this as an immanent canto where the "fragmented paradise is a vision of Good that is not teleological, that is immanent in its apparent imperfection" (loc 241). This would differ from the "Middle" and "Adams" Cantos which point to some utopian finality. Here then is a compromise, but one that doesn't operate under the false assumptions of a greater end, ever out of reach. Of course, there was precedent in the "Middle" and "Adams" Cantos where work and movement were seen in everyday terms, in building government, but the idealism of those cantos seem to shake the fragmentation. Here, it is the very transcendent that becomes fragmented, and thus the idea of a final absolute "paradise."

### **A higher plane of existence?**

Demetres Tryphonopoulos sees Cantos XCI and XCII from “Rock-Drill” as the best example of the movement of palingenesis. Palingenesis again is a “rebirth” from the death of a physical life to “a new spiritual life of the ‘*mystes*’ or initiate into the mysteries” (4). Tryphonopoulos wants to distinguish them as paradisaical, traditionally seen as a “higher realm”, but in his view emphasizes them as a “higher plane of existence” and in Canto XCI specifically accesses this through “Mead’s doctrine of the ‘subtle body’” (159). Tryphonopoulos’s theory rests on the idea that the whole of the cantos is an initiation/enlightenment for the reader into this higher plane. Tryphonopoulos doesn’t think Pound believes it can bring readers to full revelation though, but how close is found in Canto CXVI, “I have brought the great ball of crystal; / who can lift it? / Can you enter the great acorn of light? (116/795)” (162). This imagery is found in Canto XC as well giving a connection, but the most pointed example of Pound addressing the reader is in Canto XC “where the poet’s attempt to write the ‘paradise’ he had planned in 1940 begins in earnest” (162). Tryphonopoulos points to several images that have been utilized in earlier parts of the poem to show that Pound is looking to ‘bust through into the divine’ in this section, and to unify the “beatific spirits” “as exemplified by ‘Ygdrasail,’ the ash tree of Norse mythology, whose roots and branches join heaven, earth, and hell” (163). According Tryphonopoulos, for Pound “it is always this world that matters most” and “even though the roots of things might be in heaven, we arrive to a ‘full [εἰώως],’ by understanding their particular manifestations on earth” (163). For Tryphonopoulos this is a key point as it shows the idea of “correspondence,” “which is universal in the occult and fundamental to it” (163). Also, in the Canto in citing several key figures of the “celestial tradition” Tryphonopoulos argues that Pound’s “paradiso terrestre” is

a “state of being” rather than a place. The mystes in his view enter a “higher plane of existence.” Love is also important here as it represents the “divine in man” (167).

Tryphonopoulos acknowledges the multiple traditions here; “in describing the palingenetic ascent of the soul, Pound alludes to Greek, Egyptian, and Christian Easter rites.” Ultimately, though, the rising of the soul into light reflects in his view the occult palingenesis (167). Mead describes such an earthly resurrection in *The Subtle Body*, the mystes remain on earth but “enters a paradisaal state of mind” (169). This continues in Canto XC. Odysseus, Apollonius and Heydon are all example of those who have achieved a gnosis and the elevated plane of existence in the Canto. In the beginning of the Canto sees the crystal waves a “dynamic movement esoterically understood as a bidirectional and fluid activity in the direction of transcendence but also subsidence back into the hyllic world” (177).

While Pound has been experimental and fragmented throughout, there was always something to pull things together. In my view, while there were moments of disruptive transcendence, that transcendence pointed to a higher meaning, while the immanent grounded the text in historicity, “facts,” or, at least, documentation. The difference here, however, is apparent in “Rock-Drill.” As Sicari states, “the container has burst and the fragments of effective statements spill over.” Sicari sees Pound losing control, overwhelmed by history and in danger of drowning: “now, history has become so complex that he cannot maintain control and becomes almost lost in the effort to assemble some fragments into a unity” (152). Sicari, though, sees Pound saved by love, the sight of Leucothea’s naked body, a reference to *The Odyssey’s* parallel, “allows him to reach land, from the safety of which he will begin the process of assembling the fragments all over again” (152). Sicari and Tryphonopoulos offer

compelling and convincing arguments about the role of transcendence in this section.

In both cases, they align very closely with my view, and in both cases they both address an immanent concern of the section. They differ in which cultural tradition they assign to the text, Sicari, a Judeo-Christian one and Tryphonopoulos, a pagan-occult one. While their specificity in these respects is a credence to their arguments, it's also where I must diverge. I'm seeing this as another example, but one that looks more specifically at these cultural traditions than in previous sections. Pound's reasoning for this collection of Cantos makes clear that he is trying to hammer home a thesis. One can see this, then, as a point in favor of a specific idea such as proposed by Tryphonopoulos and Sicari, and certainly this may be Pound's attempt to finally will his own work's contribution to a more meaningful world into existence. But I think this goes against the work's search for meaning, and the resulting deconstruction of the immanent/transcendent binary. To some degree, this section exposes that the materiality of modernism has changed the teleological goal of modernity, and Pound's intentionality here becomes transformed by the failure of modernity. It is not a rescuing or an elevation of mind, but, for me, another example of the search for meaning in the immanent and transcendent. I realize this seems like a too general point, but there is no specific tradition that ultimately reaches an absolute meaning. These traditions are for Pound, by virtue of a link to transcendence, meant to resurrect a meaning not present in the more immanent modern world. It is, however, a changed and chaotic world; to impose an order from another time in such a fully realized way is incommensurate with the present reality, one that has its own virtues as well. To make them new is to

produce something different, but that difference is seen in the very nature of the overall narrative.

We see here many fragments and ambiguities, and also, the desire for immanence and transcendence. Both arguments do try to take this into account. Pound's use of love and the occult themes are transcendent, but the immanent elements show a desire for them to exist in the earthly realm, a desire that's not ultimately met. For example, in Canto XC Tryphonopoulos points to the roots and branches as evidence, but this is also in keeping with his naturalist philosophy presented in the "Middle" and "Adams" Cantos. This imagery shows something out of the author's control. If it is natural, then it wouldn't have to be drilled down by the author. Rather, it shows how despite the author's willingness to have a clear-cut thesis, things have grown in another direction; the embracing of this new idea of a connection between the transcendent and immanent, this new naturalism, means things can go in another direction, spring forth from the ground, from the spaces in the fragments. My conception of love in *The Cantos* is similar in that it is always at a moment of otherness compared to the text's more logos-based thinking, a radical departure from the flatness of the text. In "The Malatesta Cantos," it comes in the middle of a Canto through the Cavalcanti; in "Eleven New Cantos," it is Cavalcanti too, coming at an unexpected moment in the section. Here, it comes in different moments, but so also by virtue of the fragments and upsetting the attempts at logical order.

### **Is this an earthly paradise?**

In my view it would mean that the immanent and transcendent have come together, but as we know from Sicari and Furia, one of Pound's goals for *The Cantos* is to educate/to enlighten in keeping with Enlightenment goals and as a reaction to

the “historical black out.” This is a very immanent way of seeing the world in that knowledge must be transmitted and communicated and that it must be done through some material medium. When we get to “Rock Drill,” we have a Pound who has been humbled by history and trying to create an ordered utopia through the political and cultural landscape of the material present. *The Cantos* become the medium through he can achieve some willful material end in this purpose. As Pound means this to be an earthly paradise, we must get the earthly notes, the immanent sphere as I am calling it- the history, the politics, the information transmitted to its readers (it’s also this heterolytic nature that I believe that t’s neat tidy pagan occult view falls short). The pagan-occult view is there, though, because it marries the immanent and transcendent. What we get, however, is sprawling and filled with gaps and translations, markers of the immanent world.

So then do we also get the paradise, and, if so, how do they come together? Pound forces them together, again, “Rock Drill.” But to force things together means they don’t come together “naturally;” this is the truth that Pound comes to by accident, so even though we have paradisaal aspects, nature aspects that are meant to connect things naturally, ultimately; we see the issues of modernity and immanence here, but there is hope in these spaces. If Pound had been successful in bringing things together, what would that look like? Sicari suggests triumph, or a heroic rescuing, but that produces a static world, a finality; it means that what comes before is a means to an end. That would be a world that completely negated and erased the conditions that allowed for the transcendent to emerge in the first place.

Views on Pound and *The Cantos* are some of the most diametrically opposed in all of literature. The negative view involves Pound’s endorsement of fascism, his

anti-Semitism, and *The Cantos* disjointed and chaotic use of language and documentation. The more positive criticisms point to his innovative style and groundbreaking use of secondary research and literary allusions. Similarly, in Pound's ideas and *The Cantos* we see an enormous amount of contradictions or paradoxes depending on how one views them. One of those greatest paradoxes is Pound's utilization of a naturalistic philosophy to convey a hope for a transcendent basis for a State and society. In this, we see an immanent view of the world, an idea that humanity and nature can exist in a perfect system, but a system that must be ordered and organized by the State. Philosophically, this is closely aligned with what comes to be in the 1930s a view of language in the Chinese character, and the ideogram, a view of language as connected to the natural, but at the same time transcending the socio-historical context of its origin and a meaning that transcends its particularity. Pound's own views of religion caused him to dismiss the transcendent in religious, so these ideas served as a replacement for that kind of transcendence.

Another major paradox is Pound's desire for unity and order while compiling a modernist amalgamation of fragmented allusions and documentary sources. This fragmentary nature of *The Cantos*, of course, is part of the problem that Pound is identifying in the modern era, while the unity and order might be the solution. This is a conflict not easily resolved, and one of the issues of modernity is its propensity for totalizing narratives and systems, which can exclude and flatten the depth of reality, sometimes violently. The absolutist quality and metaphysical basis for authority of the transcendent is at times associated with this totalitarianism as well. The problems of immanence are featured prominently in *The Cantos* as well, not just in the chaos and fragmentation, but in the examples of war, provincialism, and

corruption, and used to justify such a view. *The Cantos* is a long, sprawling poem, seeking a higher order, something consistently beyond the grasp of immanent reality. In my view, this, along with fragmentation, the calls to the past, are a depiction of reality in flux, destabilizing the stagnant and static, and showing the need to seek something higher, while not finding simple answers. While Pound may have ultimately wanted his project to come together in unity and order, it is my view that these cantos are an articulation of modernism's deconstruction of the immanent/transcendent binary and reflect this uncertainty and need for meaning beyond the dominant immanent worldview of modernity.



## Conclusion

The story I'm telling is the story of transcendence and immanence in Western society. Prior to around 1500, the pre-modern world had faith and belief as a fundamental part of its worldview. People believed in fairies, ghosts, superstitions, gods, and, of course, with the spread of monotheism, God. They believed there was something more than the physical world, and that something more, the transcendent, impacted the physical world, the daily lives of individuals, and many of the explanations society had for why things happened. While certainly dynamic and chaotic at times, and filled with many individuals who questioned this belief system, or were even indifferent to it, the transcendent provided a basis for understanding the world and finding meaning in one's life. With the "Secular Age" as Taylor refers to it, the world becomes "disenchanted." Modernity, the Enlightenment, the Scientific and Industrial Revolution(s), displace and fundamentally change how society views the world. There is still religion, of course, and religion, in the present, still has a tremendous impact on people's ideals, values, beliefs, and the socio-political and cultural world. But it is not the default worldview, and our culture and society are not embedded with religious institutions and hegemony. Religious ideals and views in the West are not what we encounter when we step out into the world and go about our day; they are not the bedrock of meaning and explanation that we inherently share with others. Cynicism and doubt about there being something more than the physical world is common, and even those who believe in something more, do not often make it a determining factor or have it intertwined in their everyday lives. Science, logic, reason, and empiricism, are the hallmarks of our worldview. They are how we explain, in modern times, the

physical universe, and often how we make decisions about meaning, life's larger questions. With this worldview, greater value is placed in quantity, causality, industry, and the tangible effects of the material world. Systems of commerce, industry, government, society are the *modus operandi* of this worldview.

This effect is compounded by the Western cultural practice, and a feature of scientific, logos-based thinking, to see meaning in binary terms. In a Manichean worldview, transcendence becomes its inferior opposite. This is not to say that the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution did not have a positive effect on society, exposing dangerous superstitions and ignorant beliefs, but something was lost in modernity. The exploration of this binary, this issue, and the consequences and features of the deconstruction the binary, in the modernist works of Yeats, Joyce, and Pound has been my main focus. This is a feature of modernism, and can also be seen in other modernist works from Virginia Woolf, Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot, and Wyndham Lewis. I also see this as an important aspect of Romanticism and the British Romantic writers William Blake, Percy Shelley, John Keats, and William Wordsworth, which influenced the works I have chosen. The idealism, self-consciousness, direct engagement with transcendent tropes, lyric poetics, paganism, mythological allusions, spiritualization of nature and the natural, and critique of immanent values make their presence felt.

And while I credit the Romantics with exploring this binary, modernity at this stage was very much still in its infancy. They could revel in the oasis of the mind and nature; things seemed changed and developing rapidly, but there were spaces and conversations not yet inundated with industry and skepticism. There was still hope and promise, even if there was a diminished belief in the transcendent. By the time we enter the twentieth century, the pendulum has swung

further into immanence. The Western literary world has become further influenced by the scientific materialist perspective as the realism and naturalism movements emphasize objectivity, social classes and deterministic philosophies. The idea of portraying reality through inner monologue and describing the physical world marks a move towards the immanent perspective and dominant worldview. The world of ideas becomes more materialist as well with cause and effect, structure, mechanics and the removal of the transcendent dominates the theoretical discourse. The world becomes more urbanized, mechanical, industrial. It is this world the modernists address.

In addressing this binary, it is my view that these modernists, to varying degrees, are seeking and portraying both the immanent and the transcendent in their texts. The search for meaning becomes a theme in this lens and the experiments with form and language that characterize modernism serve to help deconstruct this binary and open up spaces for meaning. The deconstruction of this binary develops new ideas about these worldviews and break down some of the stale characteristics and ideas. This corresponds to the change and chaos or disorder that is also addressed in modernism. The sense of loss pervades these works as they seek to recover a foundational belief system that can provide meaning and hope in the modern immanent world.

The works of these authors show many similar ideas and stylistically reflect this tension between the immanent and transcendent. They differ in their degree, however. The work of Yeats in its use of mythology, paganism, and connection to Romanticism is the most explicitly transcendent. At the same time, as his work changes and modifies over time, we see a poet who wavers about its hope and possibly and many times directly laments the effects of modernity and the losses he

observes in society. Also, while Yeats's fascination with paganism and the occult takes on a mystic and magical quality that is often missing and has been lost in modern society, but there is also an immanent quality to this as well. His systematic and categorical outlining of his philosophy in *A Vision*, and its inclusion in his poetry reveals the logos and causality of a modernist worldview. His experiments with automatic writing in Stone Cottage take on some of the principles of a scientific view. Yeats insisted that this was a part of reality, not something in another dimension, terms like gyres, and animus mundi, while quasi-spiritual and not material, were part of the physics of causality and reality of the immanent world. Yeats's poetry was also reliant on the biographical, the political, the historical, and the social worlds that he occupied. These "immanent poems" addressed the reality of his modern world. My paper only focused on one in particular, but others across his career, most notably the *Responsibilities* collection, also were an essential part of this immanent view. My focus was on the more iconic and modernist poems of Yeats career, noted for their experimentation and tackling of the larger themes and values of modernity. These poems explored the transcendent and critiqued the modern immanent world. For Yeats then, there was a movement from a guarded optimism, but palpable sense of loss in the early 1900s, one that relied on romantic imagery to an experimentation with theme and form that become more conscious of the material world and cynical about the effects of modernity and what was lost, to an embrace of that artificiality of the material world that creates a transcendent space that is never divorced from reality. We saw in these movement too, the cracks and fissures of this binary in poems like "Fragments" and "No Second Troy." Finally, the end of Yeats, there is a resignation about the efficacy of the movements of the immanent world and an incessant and ever vivacious desire for something more that

cannot be replaced, a kind of return to romantic hope with knowledge of the reality of the immanent world

In James Joyce, we have a writer noted for his experimentation and early commitment to the naturalist style. The immanent and transcendent pervade the entire work of *Ulysses* in theme and form. Opinion on Joyce's view and the perspective of *Ulysses* on the immanent-transcendent issues is divided. Some see him as a realist, some as an artist mocking narrow definitions, and others as a Christian. I see him as in the middle of these perspectives, and in the middle of my three authors. *Ulysses* is a complex work, certainly interested in reality, certainly interested in the spiritual, certainly lamenting modernity's loss of faith, but very influenced by principles from the spheres of immanence and transcendence. In the initial style of the early episodes the immanence is portrayed through the cynicism of Buck Mulligan, the doubts of Stephen Dedalus, and the scientific-bodily inner monologue of Bloom.

Over the course of the middle section of the novel some of the issues of immanence are seen in the novel's events. Bloom's travels' highlights the limits of an immanent worldview: the exile experience, the questioning of altered experiences, the lack of language in dealing with death, the futility of nationalist fervor. At the same time, these experiences also hint at and critique the transcendent. Bloom experiences moments of reverie in contemplating a cup of tea that comes from a far-away land, of thinking about what happens to the body in death and associating that with Christ, of standing up to hate with a proclamation of love. I say these things critique the transcendent as well because they are all experiences based in material reality or undercut the naïve idealism associated with the transcendent. In the beginning and middle episodes as well, we see these layers

of meaning, the traces of meaning from deeper transcendent contexts, that cannot be empirically proven, but still have meaning in the world. The beginning episode and the meaning of the cross is a powerful symbol, references to Elijah and Christ in reference to Bloom, Bloom thinking about his deceased son.

In the novel's most experimental episodes, where John Gordon believes this to be still a realist novel, I have shown that these episodes once again show the limits of immanence and the style of realism. Taken to its logical conclusion we end up in a world of chaos, confusion, and disorder. This is the most deconstructive part of the novel, and in it we see the effects of an overabundance of quantification, material determinism, and structural context as the basis for meaning. The novel returns to naturalism, but in the end rejects a deterministic view, a totalizing absolute view as Bloom despite all the mechanical, societal, biological reasons not to, returns to his wife as the novel ends with an incantational series of affirmations.

Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, while varied and complex as well, reveal the most immanent perspective, the one most critical of religion. *The Cantos* main desire is to bring the transcendent into the world, to make it immanent. Even the use of the transcendent as a concept is the most immanent as Pound's *Cantos* see the transcendent in terms of cultural and historical transcendence as opposed to a metaphysical transcendence. And while Joyce's *Ulysses* develops along the lines of naturalism, Pound wants language to be precise, concrete, to eliminate abstraction. Also, his use of documentary evidence points to a meaning rooted in material history. His role as an "artificer" is to shape and compile information into a meaningful and transcendent work though, revealing an ultimate goal to transform the materials into something new that can outlast their materiality. This idea of shaping and transforming is embedded in his heroic subjects too: Malatesta,

Jefferson, Adams, Mussolini. Their wisdom and ability to see beyond the limits of particular material concerns of history and politics, and the vision to see something greater than the present disorder and chaos makes them heroic shapers of history and society with the goal being a culture and society that works to produce something bordering on the utopic, a transcendent dream. The logic here is one of immanence, the will to change things to produce work and action is needed in the imperfect immanent, but the ultimate goal is where things can then work naturally within a system of order, unity and meaning; where desire and value are properly placed and executed. So even as I am describing Pound as the most immanent, *The Cantos* that I have presented suggest a hope, faith, outcome that is the transcendent. I am of the opinion, however, that while *The Cantos* produces moments of transcendent, these moments never point to something fully realized in the text, the unity of the immanent and transcendent, a resolution and ordering of the fragmented and chaotic.

I see this as a positive feature of modernism, the lack of totalization and the deconstruction of stale binaries leaves open the spaces for moments of truth and reality, however unstable, to exist. The failure of modernity is in its totalizing narrative and systems that close off hope and meaning and reduce everything to their constituent parts. These texts, in their experimentation, their incorporation and deconstruction of both the immanent and transcendent reveal a more complex view of reality than iterations that privileged one over the other.

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