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## Sanehide Kodama, ed. Ezra Pound & Japan: Letters & Essays.

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utterance can be found to gloss the *Cantos*. Second, despite their denial that they are doing so, they find spurious excuses for his anti-Semitism, which they explain as a rhetorical stance, part of Pound's "habit of calculated offensiveness" (p. 8) in dealing with the public. But even if names and ideas overlap between letters and *Cantos*, the sixty-seven pages of academic apparatus that are provided to flesh out (puff up?) the one hundred and one pages of letters still can't make the letters *into Cantos*. In fact these letters show, painfully and perhaps all too thoroughly, the narrowest, least attractive, and least interesting part of Pound's mind. Pound's jabber is more readable than almost anyone's, and even lightly sprinkled with brilliance—I think of Eliot's "sapphires in the mud." But finally it is still jabber.

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Sanehide Kodama, ed. *Ezra Pound & Japan: Letters & Essays*. Redding Ridge, Conn.: Black Swan Books, Inc., 1987. 249 pp. + illus. \$25.00

The above work consists mainly of the correspondence that passed between Pound and his Japanese friends and acquaintances, particularly Michio Ito (1893-1961), a modern dancer; Tamijuro Kumé (1893-1923), a painter; and Katue Kitasono (1902-1978), an important Modernist poet in Japan and the editor of the *avant-garde* magazine *VOU*—together with Pound's contributions to Japanese newspapers, especially the *Japan Times*; an essay by Tami Koumé (sobriquet of Tamijuro Kumé) on his "Spirito-Etheric" art; poems written by the Japanese members of the *VOU* Club, with Kitasono's notes; and some notes of James Laughlin, Michael Reck, and Mary de Rachewiltz, Pound's daughter. Included also are the letters of Mary Fenollosa to Pound. She was the widow of the pioneer American educator and student of East Asian fine arts, Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), who lived many years in Japan. She chose Pound to be her late husband's literary executor. All this material is arranged and presented by Kodama with intelligence and clarity.

Hailey, Idaho-born, Philadelphia-bred, Pound settled in London in 1908 to begin his amazing literary career. Already committed to a passionate interest in early European culture, he was relatively ignorant at this time of the great civilizations of China and Japan. No doubt he knew something already of the Japanese *ukiyo-e* school of color-prints—Hiroshige's snow, mist, and moonlight scenes had influenced the painter Whistler in the 1870s. In 1909 Pound was introduced by

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T. E. Hulme and his circle to the Japanese verse forms, the *tanka* and the *haiku* (the latter being erroneously called the *hokku* by Pound, which is a different form). His brief poem "In a Station of the Metro": "The apparition of these faces in the crowd / Petals on a wet, black bough" (*Personae*, 1909) was undoubtedly influenced by the *haiku* form, although a *haiku* is a three-line and not a two-line poem. Also, prior to his receipt of most of the Fenollosa material, Pound had written some Chinese-inspired poems such as "After Ch'u Yuan" and "Liu Ch'e."

By the end of 1913 Pound had received all of the Fenollosa stuff and examined it. It included Fenollosa's transcriptions of the lessons given him on the *no* drama by the actor Umewaka Minoru; Kiichiro Hirata's English translations of *no* performances (he had been a pupil of Fenollosa's); Chinese poems with translations rendered by Fenollosa's assistants, Kainan Mori, a scholar of Chinese language and literature, and Nagao Ariga, a professor of International Law and a student of literature (he had acted as Fenollosa's interpreter). Pound's examination of these materials revealed a whole new world to him. By 1916 Pound had served Fenollosa well in bringing to publication *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* and 'Noh'; or, *Accomplishment, a Study of the Classical Stage of Japan*.

Thus, when Pound received his first letter from a Japanese correspondent in 1911—from the poet Yonejiro Noguchi—he had little knowledge of Japan and its culture, whether ancient or modern. But while attempting to put Fenollosa's *no* plays into effective English, he introduced them to his friend William Butler Yeats. The Irish poet became so enthusiastic about them that he wrote the introduction to the published volume and became occupied with writing abstract plays himself employing dancers, musicians, and masked actors. His efforts were later collected in *Four Plays for Dancers* (1921). One of these plays was *At the Hawk's Well*, which was first performed on 2 April 1916. Edward Dulac designed and made the costumes and masks. The part of the Hawk was played by Michio Ito. While promoting this play Pound met Michio Ito, Tamijuro Kumé, and Jisoichi Kayano. They proceeded to enlighten him regarding *no*, Zen Buddhism, Japanese customs, and the Japanese language.

From this time forward until a few years before his death in 1972, Pound sought to promote international understanding in his letters to his Japanese friends and acquaintances as well as in his writings published in the *Japan Times*. At the same time, it is clear that his main concern was with learning about and propagating, as Matthew Arnold proposed, "the best that is known and thought in the world"; always he exemplified Arnold's definition of culture as a "single-minded love of perfection." Unfortunately, Pound's correspondence and essays

also reveal his intellectual shortcomings—his mental aberrations and his emotional obsessions: his impractical political *naïveté*; his admiration for fascist economic reforms; his anti-Hebraism and belief in conspiracies perpetrated by capitalist governments in collusion with Jews and bankers; his misunderstanding of the causes of war; his obsession with monetary and banking practices, causing him to see usury, international loans, and the profits of armament makers as the roots of all evil. But if any of his Japanese correspondents understood him on these matters, they never let on.

But Pound was a great poet and is a major literary figure. He exerted an influence in ways never achieved by Eliot or Yeats. Kodama's collection is not only highly interesting but also an important contribution to Pound studies.

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William Brevda, *Harry Kemp: The Last Bohemian*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1986. 278 pp. \$37.50

Before reading this illuminating biography, I had known vaguely of Harry Kemp as someone who was somehow related to Upton Sinclair. I did not know that he and Sinclair's wife, Meta, were the "Godwin and Wollstonecraft" of their time and that their love affair became widely regarded, in Scott Fitzgerald's words, as "the most expensive orgy in history."

The author of nineteen books—including drama, poetry, and fiction—Kemp was better known in his own day as "The Tramp Poet," than he was for what he wrote, although Upton Sinclair once referred to him as a "modern Walt Whitman." Brevda demonstrates, however, that although Kemp's belief that his "tramp poetry" was somehow "unique and significant" was not completely without foundation, he was not another Walt Whitman. Whitman's man of the open road poetry is generally a metaphor "for a spiritual state of mind" and intended "to evoke the virtues of the national spirit." If Whitman, as John Jay Chapman wrote, gives "utterance to the soul of the tramp," he has little love for his body: "No diseas'd person, no rum drinker, or venereal taint is permitted here," he wrote, suggesting, as Brevda points out, that "Whitman was not interested in particularizing the actual tramp." His persona "has more in common with Bunyan's Christian than he does with the hordes of actual tramps" who were more and more commonplace in the first two decades of this century. Unlike many