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On 20 February 1905, Walter Raleigh, Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford, addressed the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers who had gathered for a banquet held at the Café Royal in London. They were celebrating the imminent opening of a memorial exhibition of the works of James McNeill Whistler, the Society's first president, who had died a year and a half before.

The Society was a respected group: its current president was Auguste Rodin, and the Honorary Committee included a prince, ten peers of the realm, two foreign ambassadors, and the directors of ten major international art galleries. But in his speech, Raleigh chose to emphasize Whistler's antagonistic relationship with the art establishment and the societies to which he had belonged:

He stood aloof—more completely aloof, perhaps, than most other great artists have done—from the movements and schools of his own time. . . . [I]n the main he was independent and original—in the right sense of that word. That is to say, he began at the beginning; in each of his works he creates afresh, as it were; he accepts every subject as presenting a new problem to be grappled with, a new set of conditions to be studied and subdued, by new devices, to the service of beauty.¹

Raleigh's somewhat euphemistic rhetoric gives an indication of how early-twentieth-century artists and critics could appropriate a nineteenth-century impressionist as the spirit of modernity. Whistler was professionally, as well as chronologically, a Victorian. For Queen

Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887, he produced a lavishly illustrated address presented by the Secretary of State. The Queen admired it so much that she granted a royal charter to the association currently enduring Whistler's presidency, the Society of British Artists.² But early-twentieth-century accounts preferred to represent him as one who "flits across the Victorian years—gay, debonair, laughing, quarrelsome, huffy—a dandified exquisite of a man, insolent, charming, unexpected—a wit amongst the chiefest wits—and he drew his rapier upon them all!"³ Whistler's aggressive aloofness, then, seems to anticipate the attitude cultivated by the new century towards its increasingly coagulated notion of Victorianism, and Raleigh's description of Whistler's originality prefigures the self-consciousness of modernist aesthetics more than it recalls the terminology surrounding nineteenth-century artistic practice.

Like his erstwhile antagonist Ruskin, Whistler was part of the landscape of modernism—literary modernism as well as modernism in the visual arts. When T. E. Hulme produced his prescriptions for "modern poetry" in 1908, he referred to Whistler's impressionism as "the spirit of our times," and he commended attempts in poetry to reproduce "the vision of a London street at midnight with its long rows of light."⁴ Even in 1913 Ford Madox Ford described "the real stuff of the poetry of our day" by painting a Whistler nocturne to describe "[t]he strongest emotion" he ever had, an experience that occurred as he emerged from the Shepherds Bush Exhibition and saw "crowds and crowds of people—or no, there was, spread out beneath the lights, an infinite moving mass of black, with white faces turned up to the light, moving slowly, quickly, not moving at all, being obscured, reappearing."⁵

Ford's anecdote is remarkably similar to a more famous statement by Ezra Pound that had been published two months earlier, in which Pound explained how he came to write that archetypal modernist, and very Whistlerian, poem "In a Station of the Metro."⁶ But although Pound's admiration for Whistler is well known, the depth of Whistler's impact on Pound's thought and, as a consequence, on the structures of modernism, has not been adequately appreciated. Pound's indebtedness to Whistler only becomes fully evident in his 1916 memoir of the French sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, but the cluster of references to Whistler there is baffling: What is an impressionist doing at the heart of a book about vorticism? In this essay, I examine the genesis of those references to determine what it was about Whistler and

his work that attracted Pound. Because Whistler was one of the first modern artists to inspire Pound's enthusiasm, much of Pound's thinking about art, and about interart relations, is performed in the context of this enthusiasm. Also, because Pound reconfigured his responses to Whistler and his paintings several times, attention to his remarks about Whistler can illustrate the way Pound put the visual arts at the service of his poetics and his career.

My discussion also has a more general relevance for studies of modernism, since Pound's writing about Whistler can be read as a case study that documents modernism's emergence from aestheticism. Pound deployed Whistler to create an aestheticist past he could use. The odd moves and defensive gestures he made in the course of creating this heritage contribute to a compelling account of the way the artist's role was being reconfigured at the turn of the century.

1906–08: Twentieth-Century Aesthete

The roots of Pound's interest in Whistler can be found in two unpublished typescripts. One of these essays is ten pages long and untitled; the other, six pages long, is headed "Art." Although neither typescript is dated, their contents suggest that they were written during the winter of 1906 to 1907, after Pound's trip to Europe the previous summer, since they claim first-hand knowledge of Parisian galleries.⁷ "Art" appears to be a draft of a review, written for the *Half Hour*, of that winter's exhibition at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Art Club of Philadelphia, and the T Square Club.⁸ In part, the piece is criticism of Mary Cassatt, who was exhibiting an oil painting at the Art Club. Pound describes the painting as "one of her usual horrors, which no jury is ever impolite enough to turn down and no critic sufficiently impolitic to antagonize." He compares Cassatt's work to "certain chintz curtains a misguided relative sent me in undergraduate days, the harmony was there free and unaccompanied by Miss Cassatt's horrible distortions of humanity." He defends his judgment by concluding: "I do not criticize her canvas out of unwillingness to recognize any and every expression of personality in art, but because I think that she is usurping attention that rightly belongs to other artists who are doing better work in a less glaring manner. . . . Anyone who has ever seen a Paris salon knows the tremendous amount of rot, there is no other title, that gets into it."⁹

Cassatt, of course, was a Philadelphia success story; she exhibited in four of the impressionist exhibitions in Paris and was enormously influential in introducing contemporary French painting to American collectors. By writing off her considerable achievements, Pound is pitting his own cosmopolitan credentials against hers—a competition he was scarcely favored to win. The two paragraphs following this criticism of Cassatt clarify the style and motivation of Pound's art criticism. Addressing "the Gentlemen of the Sketch club, the students of the academy, and all others in authority," he writes:

If the crescent art forces here want this sort of open court for Everyman and his opinion, they will have to maintain it. Contribute ideas if you have any, and since this publication can not run on air, fork out, cough, subscribe.

The BLACK MIRROR does not appear as often as we would wish. I can not hope to imitate the crispness of that pamphlet whose tone I confessedly follow as near as may be considering the discrepancy between the brilliancy of its and my own stumbling. ("A," 5)

The *Black Mirror* was a journal of art criticism edited by a group of New York artists between 1903 and 1907 and printed in Chicago, one of a breed of periodicals published in the United States at the turn of the century that descended from Elbert Hubbard's immensely popular the *Philistine: A Periodical of Protest* (1895–1915).¹⁰ The *Philistine* and its relatives were antiestablishment journals, which held a loosely Emersonian belief in the power of the artist, figured as an outsider and an individualist, to regenerate society. The first issue of the *Black Mirror* appeared in 1903, four months after Whistler's death. The first page, edged in black, reads:

James McNeill Whistler
One of the greatest of the Dead

And an anonymous voice describes him as follows:

Once upon a time a man began to paint; he knew no rules and cared for none. He was honest and he was truthful and his creed was beauty. Honest because he was true to himself and to his profession, and his Truth was the essential Truth of the Universe. His canvases spoke naught of the merely accurate, but whispered the mysterious voice of nature of those great and unseen essentials which underlie

the smaller apparent manifestations. But I attempt to describe the indescribable.¹¹

As this extract implies, the magazine set itself against academic art criticism in favor of a belief in the revelatory power of art, especially through the use of color (its subtitle is "The Journal of the Colorists"). In the second issue, the editor exhorts his or her "children" to "make this land the home of the colorist, and to relegate the academic pedant to his proper little place."¹²

It is in the context of these publications and this culture of art criticism that we must situate Pound's early ideas about art. "We are in perfect sympathy," he states in "Art," "with those who want to see more criticism from the standpoint of the artist and less from that of the uncultivated public. Our favor is to the underdog" ("A," 3). The shift from the first person singular used earlier in the essay to the first person plural here contains an ambition typical of Pound's early writing: his critical voice frequently overreaches to claim the authority of a spokesperson, but the identity of the group for whom he is speaking is consistently unclear. When Pound employs this device in his imagist and vorticist writings, his attachment to these movements adds some credibility to his "we," but perhaps this early, nonspecific use indicates that Pound's first person plural is primarily rhetorical, and not necessarily an attempt to speak for others beyond himself.

It is not difficult to imagine for whom Pound purports to speak. In these unpublished essays, and in some of his early verse, Pound clearly encourages his readers to imagine that he is voicing the opinions of a group of artists and art lovers who, in setting themselves against what they perceive to be mainstream culture, have styled themselves as guides to modern taste and, less specifically, societal transformation—in other words, the kind of people who were writing for, and buying, the *Black Mirror* and the *Philistine*.¹³

Whistler was a central figure for such Americans. By the time of his death, he was a cult figure in his homeland, praised for the spirituality of his work, which was said to expose the materialistic cast of most American painting.¹⁴ Moreover, since the 1880s, American critics had been crying out for a nonprovincial American artist—an artist of international importance, who could act as a figurehead for American culture. Although Whistler himself was conspicuously uninterested in having his work read through his nationality, he was acclaimed as the

answer to that call.¹⁵ Whistler also fit the stereotype of the outsider artist, the underdog that Pound favored, who battled against both the “uncultivated public” and the “academic pedant.”

This portrayal of Whistler is the subject of Pound’s untitled typescript. In the first paragraph, Pound writes: “Do not let a professor of English refer you to Ruskin’s *Modern Painters* and think you can read it safely until you have read the First part of Whistler’s ‘Gentle Art of Making Enemies’ which is the most perfect introduction and interpretation of the ‘Great Critic’s’ [Ruskin’s] maunderings in the realm of paint” (UT, [1]). The opposition Pound sets up here is the one that propels Whistler’s collection of articles and lectures, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, whose prologue consists of John Ruskin’s infamous comment about *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (1875):

For Mr. Whistler’s own sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen, and heard, much of cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public’s face.¹⁶

This statement induced Whistler to launch a libel case against Ruskin. The trial, heard in 1878, marked a turning point in Whistler’s self-presentation. In order to set himself against the hegemony of the art establishment (represented by Ruskin) and the “uncultivated public” (represented, and reported on, by journalists), Whistler actively cultivated an impression of artistic individualism in lectures, essays, and letters, playing down influences and artistic allegiances. The voices of the public and the art establishment are present throughout Whistler’s *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*; through careful selection and ironic juxtaposition, he quotes them abundantly but without direct comment, causing them to ridicule themselves. Whistler does not quote any of his supporters—indeed, as Linda Merrill points out, in Whistler’s account of the libel case, he “pointedly omitted the testimony of the three witnesses who spoke on his behalf, so that the victory, such as it was, could be construed as his alone.”¹⁷

Pound’s untitled typescript asserts Whistler’s superiority to Ruskin by assembling a series of quotations from *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, which he sets into his own (rather confused) definitions of

art. Like the writer in the *Black Mirror*, Pound reads Whistler as the purveyor of universal truths, acknowledging in the last two pages that “[t]here is absolutely nothing new in this note. . . . I repeat, and I know it, bunglingly, things that Whistler has said with final beauty in his ten O’clock Not because Whistler has said them but because I have myself seen them as must everyman that enters into that exaltation that is the soul of all the arts and thru which are all the arts akinnd.”¹⁸ These things seen by Pound and said by Whistler in his most famous lecture, “Ten O’Clock,” are channelled through an argument that “[t]here is in every man an instinct toward the beautiful,” which enables him to appreciate art without guidance from expert instruction, such as “the crass botching in Ruskin” (UT, [4], [2]). One is instructed instead by instinct and nature. Consequently “[t]hat man has an art education (or a Talent—one or two of us have genius but that is another matter) who can get a morning’s enjoyment from a horse chestnut and a single blossom of honey suckle, watching the varying harmonies of brown and white as the strength of the sunlight varies” (UT, [5]). As the allusion to Whistler’s paintings suggests, Pound is concerned with an idea of beauty that minimizes the distinction between art and nature, and he therefore conflates the sensibilities of artist and audience—or critic. Artistic appreciation and expression spring from a common source in human instinct—or “soul,” which was surely a reassuring idea to the student Pound, critic of Provençal poetry, and writer of American verse. But Pound’s interest in Whistler was informed not only by general cultural factors. I want to suggest that at the time he wrote these essays, he was preoccupied with a stylistic problem in his own verse that contributed to his fascination with the details of the Whistler v. Ruskin trial.

Several of Whistler’s paintings were discussed during the trial. In the attempt to decide whether Whistler was indeed an imposter passing as a serious artist, the critic William Michael Rossetti (for the prosecution) and the artists Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones and William Powell Frith (for Ruskin’s defense) were asked to explain and evaluate Whistler’s style, a process that produced a series of conflicting definitions of “good art.”¹⁹ Frith’s conservative reactions to Whistler’s paintings were by far the most damaging to the prosecution’s case, not because they supported Ruskin’s position but because they struck a chord with popular opinion. In reference to *Nocturne: Blue and Gold—Old Battersea Bridge* (1872–73), for example, Frith re-

marked: "There is a beautiful tone of color in the picture of Old Battersea Bridge, but the color does not represent any more than you could get from a bit of wallpaper or silk. I cannot see anything of the true representation of water and atmosphere in it; there is a pretty color that pleases the eye, but nothing more."²⁰ This domestication (and feminization) of Whistler's paintings was a critical commonplace, repeated at other points in the trial and anticipated by cartoons and reviews in the press—Henry James had made the same point in the *Nation*.²¹ The force of the statement about "true representation" is derived from an aesthetic exemplified by Frith's own paintings, like the immensely popular *The Derby Day* (1856–58) and *The Railway Station* (1862)—canvases crammed with detail that aim to be morally instructive not only in their narrative content but also in their precision and clarity of style, their didactic distinctions. Such comparisons lie behind the widespread perception of Whistler's looser style as immoral. In *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, for example, Whistler reprinted the *Richmond Eagle's* remark that "[t]here is no moral element in his chiaroscuro," a criticism Pound quotes in his untitled typescript, followed by the indignant comment, "is a man expected to paint pictures or moral philosophy."²² Pound's division between art and moral philosophy, expressed in a question so confident of its answer that its question mark is omitted, reveals an aesthetic at some distance from that underpinning *The Cantos*.

However, it is an aesthetic that is already troubled, as closer examination of "Art" makes clear. The last two pages of the essay present the familiar arguments of Paterian aestheticism. For example, Pound writes: "The function of the painter is neither to rival the camera in exactness of reproduction of line and mass. Nor is it simply the filling of space with color (tho this is a closer approach to it) for here his work drifts into that of the oriental rug maker, whose results he can never excel" ("A," 6). Pound's rug is surely cut from the same cloth as Pater's "Eastern carpet" in "The School of Giorgione" chapter of *The Renaissance*.²³ For Pound and Pater alike, rugs and carpets exemplify finely judged coloring that lacks the refinement and subtlety contributed by the artist. But Pound is more anxious than Pater about art that looks like textiles—as he should be, given his castigation of Casatt's chintzy paintings two pages earlier, in spite of his knowledge that precisely this criticism had been directed at Whistler's paintings.

This paradox in his aesthetic produces an irresolute conclusion to the essay: "From the vile and lucrative side, the vulgo if accustomed to color harmony at all, is accustomed to that harmony in *textiles*. We have our color on the walls and floor and want something different in our picture frames."²⁴ That "something different" is, for Pound, "a blending of these two things, design and color; in selection; and in harmony which is ever the essential of beauty" ("A," 6). But is Pound actually making a critical distinction here or only claiming to do so in order to free art from the domestic associations of textiles? It seems that Pound has set up an untenable opposition between Whistler and Cassatt, since what he admires about one is almost identical to what he despises about the other. Art defined as color harmony might assert the value of Whistler's paintings, but it does not distinguish them from Cassatt's. This is not to say, of course, that it is impossible to make a distinction between Whistler and Cassatt, nor even that Pound has failed to distinguish between them. What seems to be causing the contradiction is that Pound would have us believe that he is making an aesthetic distinction, based on essential, universal characteristics of art. In fact, the distinction is based on components of Pound's taste he does not examine, derived from ideas about the relation between art and popular opinion. As a result, Pound's use of the first person plural requires attention once again.

Throughout "Art," Pound's "we" refers to the imaginary community of artists, opposed to the "they" of academic pedants and the uncultivated public. But in the final paragraph, quoted above, we find him identifying with the public, and the typescript shows that this identification was the result of some indecision. First he typed a version of this paragraph identifying himself with the public, using "we" and "our." Then he crossed out these pronouns and replaced them with third person pronouns. Next, on a separate piece of paper, he typed the paragraph I quoted but began the second sentence, referring to the "vulgo," with "they." This was finally crossed out and replaced once more with "we," then confirmed as the authoritative version by a note on the original typescript: "insert white sheet."

Why this anxiety at the end of "Art"? The problem is that Pound's arguments are out of date. He identifies himself with Whistler's anti-establishment, antipopular stance on the assumption that Whistler's aestheticist views are shocking to the public and the art establish-

ment alike. But by 1907 aestheticism had become both popular and, for the most part, critically secure. So while Pound wants to align himself with the ethos of aestheticism, whereby the appreciation of art for art's sake acts as a tool of social separation, he is also conscious that aestheticism is no longer the preserve of the elite. The final paragraph of "Art" brings these conflicting beliefs into proximity, where they simply do not make logical sense.

In the other typescript, Pound tries again to make a universalizing distinction between types of painting:

Can we not, please, recognize once for all that there are several things that can be done with paint, brushes, canvas and other mediums of pictorial expression. . . . One may express an abstract idea, in paint. e.g. Watt's canvases in the "Tate." Mind I do not say that Watts is no painter. BUT the prevailing effect of his canvases is that of a draughtsman expressing great ideas in design, filled in with color in fact with the exception of Turner, most of the so called English school are designers and draughts men.

Mind I do not say this in disparagement. They are some of them creators of very wonderful and beautiful things. Therefore let us distinguish. Between the art of *painting*, i.e. the art of filling a given space with color and lines, with harmony of color, with rhythm of line, and balance of light and shade, balance of color, balance of mass. AND a totally different art. i.e. that of the expression of ideas, ideas so beautiful that one perhaps forgets (if he be not painter) that the colors do not glide into one another or hold each other at arm's length and smile into each other's eyes, that one forgets the lack—even of the truths of form in the interest one feels for a child in the picture or in one's interest in the contending passions or beneath the face of "Peter" as his feet are washed by his Lord. (UT, 2-3)

Again, the distinction is more rhetorical than actual, and again, Pound is trying to find aesthetic grounds on which to base his elitist principles of art. Despite his claim that he is not disparaging G. F. Watts's style, Pound's remarks about designers and draughtsman do seem derogatory. And although in the final paragraph, the prose contains an enthusiasm that at first appears to contradict his earlier pejorative comments about art as an expression of ideas, Pound nevertheless seems to be confirming his aestheticist allegiance to the art of painting. The art of ideas, after all, is the art appreciated by the nonpainter,

who is seduced by the ideas into an uncritical admiration, not noticing the lack of “truths of form.”

I do not offer this reading of the elitist element in Pound's early prose as evidence of a protofascist streak. Pound's growing sympathy with Italian fascism during the 1920s involved the rejection of as many of his early ideas as it retained. I do think that Pound's belief in the power of the elite group to preserve culture and effect social change was relatively consistent. But at this stage Pound figured the elitism as aesthetic, transcending political terms, even though it was derived from the obviously political decision of the French avant-garde to detach creativity from social context after 1848.

The problem we see Pound facing at the beginning of his career, then, is a problem that confronted all artists working in the aftermath of aestheticism: How can the artist define himself or herself, when the definitions provided by the nineteenth-century avant-garde have become absorbed into the society it opposed? Modernism has often been read as a version of aestheticism, a continuation of the decadent ideology that marks off the cultured few from the masses. But as more recent research demonstrates, that ideology could not be simply re-run in the changing cultural marketplace of the twentieth century. As Lawrence Rainey has said, modernism forged “a strange and unprecedented space for cultural production, one that did indeed entail a certain retreat from the domain of public culture, but one that also continued to overlap and intersect with the public realm in a variety of contradictory ways.”²⁵ The importance of Pound's writing on visual art at this very early stage of his career is that it documents his growing recognition that aestheticism could not provide an adequate account of the artist's role in the twentieth century. Aestheticism had to be significantly reworked if it was to provide a usable legacy.

In 1907 Pound was still working within the aestheticist framework, trying to pin down an essential quality in art and nature that could be perceived as the epitome of “beauty” by those few who have “genius.” But he was beginning to perceive the limitations of aestheticism, since the essential quality to which Whistler led him, color harmony, could also look like a Cassatt or a curtain. In August 1908, Pound wrote a poem, “For Italic Brass,” about such misreadings. As Anthony Ozturk notes, the poem seems to describe the painting *Il Ponte del Redentore* by the painter Italic Brass, who lived near Pound when he was staying in the San Trovaso quarter of Venice in 1908:²⁶

verse: he has the narrator “dip” his “brushes” and “choose” his “hues” in a highly self-referential fashion.²⁸ In another poem from this period, “In That Country,” the speaker is pondering his vocation, wondering whether it is better

To hover astral o'er some other soul
 And breathe upon it thine own outpouring passion
 Of how this line were wrought or how from chaos
 The God outwrought the sprinkled dust of stars
 Or say what blending
 Of hue on hue on hue would make the ending
 Of such a sketch.²⁹

Here “line” is the line of both the painter and the poet, but the ambiguity contained in that word subsequently collapses into the exclusively pictorial metaphor of the hues that make up the sketch.

“For Italice Brass” and “In That Country” are poems from the San Trovaso notebook that Pound compiled in the summer of 1908. In December, he selected some of the notebook’s poems for publication as *A Quinzaine for This Yule*, but he omitted the most painterly poems, including “Sonnet of the August Calm,” “For a Play,” “Autumnus,” “Fratello Mio, Zephyrus,” “In That Country,” and “For Italice Brass.” Therefore it appears that before 1908, Pound had been experimenting with a painterly aesthetic at the same time that he was trying to formulate a definition of art in painterly terms. But that very attempt at definition shows up the inadequacy of an aesthetic of color harmonies, which could too easily be enjoyed by nonartists. *A Quinzaine for This Yule* ends with “Nel Biancheggiar,” a poem that would seem to be a hangover from this painterly style:

Blue-grey, and white, and white-of-rose,
 The flowers of the West's fore-dawn uncloze.
 I feel the dusky softness whirr
 of color, as upon a dulcimer
 “Her” dreaming fingers lay between the tunes,
 As when the living music swoons
 But dies not quite, because for love of us
 —knowing our state
 How that ‘tis troublous—
 It wills not die to leave us desolate.³⁰

The use of color as a metaphor for music is an analogy that pays homage both to Whistler's contentious naming of his paintings as musical pieces and the symbolist and Paterian admiration for music as the art that could most effectively communicate emotion. It is certainly the closest Pound comes to writing a poetic equivalent of color harmony. But unlike "Fratello Mio, Zephyrus," the poem does not paint a picture, and unlike "In That Country," it does not use painting as an analogy for poetry. It may well refer to Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The Blue Bower* (1865),³¹ but it unmakes that painting to create a fluid colorscape for the music. The echo of Shelley's "Music, When Soft Voices Die" is in keeping with Pound's view that "so far as I know Shelly has written no poem for painting. . . . [H]is kin art was music, as Browning's is that of the brush."³² In light of Pound's rejection of a poetics based on painting, which is suggested by his revision of the San Trovaso notebook before publication, "Nel Biancheggiar" might be read as an attempt to make an art of color harmonies less accessible, using vague vocabulary and disrupted syntax to confuse the reader and represent an experience beyond the normal confines of perception. The first line presents colors as mixtures, for which there are no single words, so the reader has to oscillate between blue and grey and white and rose, both bound by the words Pound has given and aware that they are inadequate to describe the colors the speaker sees. The third and fourth lines do not make literal sense—the problem is the preposition "of" instead of "with," which makes the word "whirr" ambiguous: it could be a verb or a noun.³³ Evidently, this poem is at pains to convey something beyond color and line; the visual referents are only the springboard to something "more."

1908–13: Aesthete to Imagist

As Pound continued to reassess aestheticism, he increasingly set Whistler apart from it. In 1909 he wrote his mother:

There are two kinds of artist

1. Waterhouse who painted perhaps the most beautiful pictures that have ever been made in England.

but you go from them & see no more than you did before. The answer is in the picture.

2. Whistler & Turner.—to whom it is theoretically necessary to be

“educated up.” when you first see their pictures you may say “wot’t-‘ell.” but when you leave the pictures you see beauty in mists, shadows, a hundred places where you never dreamed of seeing it before.

The answer to their work is in nature.

—
The artist is the maker of an ornament or a key as he chooses.³⁴

Here Waterhouse represents the art-for-art’s-sake position, and Whistler and Turner have been turned into Ruskinians, whose paintings are not simply beautiful objects but keys: specialist tools one has to be educated to use, which perform an educative function themselves. Pound has extrapolated this theory of art as a key from Whistler’s essay, “The Red Rag,” but he has rewritten it for his own purposes. Whistler writes: “The imitator is a poor kind of creature. If the man who paints only the tree, or flower, or other surface he sees before him were an artist, the king of artists would be the photographer. It is for the artist to do something beyond this: in portrait painting to put on canvas something more than the face the model wears for that one day; to paint the man, in short, as well as his features; in arrangement of colours to treat a flower as his key, not as his model.”³⁵ For Whistler, the key is not the work of art but the subject that inspires the art; in the letter to his mother, Pound has reversed the terms, so that the arrangement of colors is the key to the flower. By making art a key to nature (or any other external referent), Pound subordinates art to its referent, completely undoing the art-for-art’s-sake doctrine advocated by Whistler. This act of dissociation lays the groundwork for an aesthetic that can conceive of art as moral philosophy—and underpin *The Cantos*—but in the first place, it enables Pound to establish Whistler as a protomodernist.

In 1912 Pound visited an exhibition of Whistler’s paintings at the Tate Gallery, wrote a poem about the exhibition (“To Whistler: American”), and started his first poetic movement, imagism. In August, he agreed to collaborate on the new Chicago-based periodical *Poetry* in order to kick-start “our American Risorgimento,” and he sent editor Harriet Monroe his poem about Whistler, commenting: “I count him our only great artist, and even this informal salute, drastic as it is, may not be out of place at the threshold of what I hope is an endeavor to carry into our American poetry the same sort of life and intensity which he infused into modern painting.”³⁶ Pound was starting to draw

up an American artistic tradition, into which imagism could fit, and he needed a key figure to place at the beginning of a genealogy he would define. He began to describe the “American Risorgimento” in a series of articles published in the *New Age* from 5 September to 14 November, entitled “Patria Mia,” which he followed in 1913 with a look at England (“Through Alien Eyes”) and “America: Chances and Remedies.”

These articles are Pound’s version of Whitman’s prefaces to *Leaves of Grass*. Both Pound and Whitman discuss the nature of America and of Americans in general terms, to affirm the country’s literary potential. But where Whitman had looked for an authentically American voice, Pound dismisses that project as no longer relevant. Pound’s American tradition must yield voices that can speak with international authority. Of the three artists Pound discusses in detail—Whistler, Whitman, and Henry James—it is Whistler who finds most approval. Whitman is too American: “He was so near the national colour that the nation hardly perceived him against that background.”³⁷ Depicting Whitman as a representational poet, Pound describes his work as lacking diagnostic and psychological qualities. Indeed, Pound seems to find America—and Whitman, America’s voice—too confident of itself to produce the reflective art he needs as a model.

Six years later, Pound would find in Henry James’s work the qualities he was seeking, but at this earlier stage he seems uncertain of the use he can make of James. Perhaps James’s novels are too polished to provide a guide to stylistic development, since it is Whistler’s evident struggle to find a style that Pound finds revelatory in 1912:

[W]hile I had taken deep delight in the novels of Mr. Henry James, I have gathered from the loan exhibit of Whistler’s paintings now at the Tate (September 1912) more courage for living than I have gathered from the Canal Bill or from any other manifestation of American energy whatsoever.

And thereanent [*sic*] I had written some bad poetry and burst into several incoherent conversations, endeavouring to explain what that exhibit means to the American artist.

Here in brief is the work of a man, born American, with all our forces of confusion within him, who has contrived to keep order in his work, who has attained the highest mastery, and this not by a natural facility, but by constant labour and searching.³⁸

Pound's "bad poetry" runs as follows:

You also, our first great,
 Had tried all ways;
 Tested and pried and worked in many fashions,
 And this much gives me heart to play the game.

Here is a part that's slight, and part gone wrong,
 And much of little moment, and some few
 Perfect as Dürer!

"In the Studio" and these two portraits, if I had my choice!
 And then these sketches in the mood of Greece?

You had your searches, your uncertainties,
 And this is good to know—for us, I mean,
 Who bear the brunt of our America
 And try to wrench her impulse into art.

You were not always sure, not always set
 To hiding night or tuning "symphonies";
 Had not one style from birth, but tried and pried
 And stretched and tampered with the media.

You and Abe Lincoln from that mass of dolts
 Show us there's a chance at least of winning through.³⁹

Using the same terms of admiration as in "Patria Mia," Pound claims that the strength of Whistler's personality enabled him to produce art not circumscribed by national boundaries. Unlike Whitman's poems, Whistler's paintings are not American. It is conspicuous that the poem's heroes (Whistler, Lincoln, Pound himself) are American but that the painting is European, variously evocative of Germany, Greece, and France.⁴⁰

Characteristically, Pound has more to say about Whistler than about his paintings, although he attached a footnote to the poem that identifies the portraits as *Brun et Or—De Race* (1896–1900) and *Grenat et Or: Le Petit Cardinal* (1900–01) (see figs. 1 and 2). It is notable that Pound does not choose those paintings that can most easily be talked about in terms of color harmonies nor those we might think of as the most modern or abstract (see fig. 3). In fact, abstraction is the last thing Pound wants from his paintings: "And Velazquez could not have painted little Miss Alexander's shoes, nor the scarf upon the chair.



Fig. 1. James McNeill Whistler, *Brun et Or—De Race*, 1896–1900. Oil on canvas.
© Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow.



Fig. 2. James McNeill Whistler, *Grenat et Or—Le Petit Cardinal*, 1900–01. Oil on canvas.
© Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow.



Fig. 3. James McNeill Whistler, *The Artist in His Studio*, 1865/66. Oil on paper mounted on panel, 62.9 × 46.4 cm. Friends of American Art Collection. Photograph courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago.

And Durer [*sic*] could not have outdone the two faces, 'Grenat et Or' and 'Brown and Gold—de Race.' . . . These two pictures have in them a whole Shakespearean drama, and Whistler's comprehension and reticence would never have permitted any but the most austere discussion of their technique, of their painting as painting."⁴¹ Pound seems to be interested in all these paintings for their psychological insight—their representation of both their subject's personality and their painter's integrity. Precisely because of that integrity, Pound implies, the paintings contain Whistler's "own private affair, which he shares with you, if you understand it." Whistler's painting demonstrates the perspicacity of both the painter and the audience.

A letter Pound wrote to William Carlos Williams just after he had moved to London in 1908 shows the self-referentiality of his comments on Whistler. After defending some of the poems in *A Lume Spento* by comparing them to the work of Villon, Browning, and Shakespeare, Pound writes: "To me the short so-called dramatic lyric—at any rate the sort of thing I do—is the poetic part of a drama the rest of which (to me the prose part) is left to the reader's imagination or implied or set in a short note. I catch the character I happen to be interested in at the moment he interests me, usually a moment of song, self-analysis, or sudden understanding or revelation. And the rest of the play would bore me and presumably the reader. I paint my man as I *conceive* him. Et voilà tout!"⁴² Browning's influence on Pound's description of his poetry is not only evident in his choice of genre but also in his analogy with painting, which recalls Browning's famous letter to Ruskin, where he objects that Ruskin "would have me paint it all plain out, which can't be; but by various artifices, I try to make shift with touches and bits of outlines which *succeed* if they bear the conception from me to you."⁴³ Pound's painting, like Browning's—and Whistler's—is deliberately partial, even impressionist, but it is also tied to the idea of a dramatic narrative. It is via Browning that Pound interprets Whistler's style as lessons for poetry.

This helps us to understand Pound's liking for the particular portraits he mentions in "To Whistler—American," but it does not tell us much about the poem itself. For a start, why does he publish a poem he thinks is bad? Pound's assessment is fair—the poem is disjointed, rather disorganized, repetitive—yet it has much more life than the poems he published over the next few years under the banner of imagism—and it is free of their snide humor. However, as the first poem

Pound published in *Poetry*, his new flagship for modern verse, it is a somewhat odd choice.

But to read this poem as an attempt at modern verse is to misread it. In the letter to Monroe that accompanied the poem, Pound referred to it as “a note on the Whistler exhibit,”⁴⁴ and throughout his career, he clearly distinguished between art that had a claim to permanence and work characterized by “an accumulation of such wild shots [that] ends by expressing a personality”;⁴⁵ personality, both Whistler’s and Pound’s, is what this poem is about. Moreover, the poem’s argument is predicated on its own failure, since in the context of the Whistler and Whitman distinction Pound was making almost simultaneously in “Patria Mia,” the poem clearly values the achievements of American painting over those of American poetry. Pound highlights the distinction by voluntarily adopting what he saw as Whitman’s main fault, that is, the identifiably American voice. In this poem, writing is in no danger of achieving the internationality it craves: the American speaker is measuring the distance he has to go.

I read this poem, therefore, as a prologue to Pound’s imagist phase, and indeed “To Whistler: American” was followed, on the next page, by a poem Pound did intend to be read as an example of modern verse: “Middle-Aged: A Study in an Emotion.” He told Monroe that it was an “an over-elaborate post-Browning ‘Imagiste’ affair,” which suggests that he was not very happy with this poem either, but he does draw attention to its place in his new movement, which marshals its French name and Kensington birth against the risk of American provincialism.⁴⁶ The emphasis on the “image” (in theory, “that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time”; in practice, pictorial delineation) evidently carries the legacy of Pound’s early interest in Whistler. Even if color harmonies are no longer desirable, their once socially divisive effects are. But imagism’s cultivation of “snobisme” causes it to sacrifice just those qualities Pound admired in Whistler’s painting: suggestiveness and integrity.⁴⁷

1914–48: Whistler’s Personality

It was in 1914 that Pound found the terms that would ground Anglo-American poetry in modern European painting. Michael Levenson and, more recently, Lawrence Rainey have emphasized the potential for publicity that Pound saw in the vorticist movement, inspired by

Marinetti's notorious propaganda on behalf of the Italian Futurists.⁴⁸ But Pound's interpretation of that propaganda is anticipated in his writing on Whistler. Vorticism is figured as a site of modernity, intellectual power, antagonism, and formalism, as is Whistler's art, and vorticism gave Pound the means to bring the features of his earliest ambitions into a twentieth-century currency. Not surprisingly, then, Pound's vorticist writings are riddled with odd configurations, places where one can see him yanking his ideas together. First, and most obviously, there is the genealogy of vorticism he created for *Blast*:

ANCESTRY.

"All arts approach the conditions of music."—*Pater*.

"An Image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time."—*Pound*.

"You are interested in a certain painting because it is an arrangement of lines and colours."—*Whistler*.

Picasso, Kandinski, father and mother, classicism and romanticism of the movement.⁴⁹

It is quite an achievement that Pound manages to make his own contribution the most incongruous part of this anthology. Pater, Whistler, Picasso, and Kandinsky coexist as straightforward formalists, whereas Pound's year-old sound bite tries to fuse romanticism, Bergson, space, time, and the new psychology into an ambiguously visual-verbal construction. The genealogy is descended from the definitions of art that appeared in Pound's 1906 essays—and the many essays Pound wrote about vorticism provided further opportunities for redefining art. In "Vorticism," published in September 1914, he famously compared art and geometry: "Thus, we learn that the equation $(x - a)^2 + (y - b)^2 = r^2$ governs the circle. It is the circle. It is not a particular circle, it is any circle and all circles. It is nothing that is not a circle. It is the circle free of space and time limits. It is the universal, existing in perfection, in freedom from space and time. . . . [I]n analytics we come upon a new way of dealing with form. It is in this way that art handles life. The difference between art and analytical geometry is the difference of subject-matter only."⁵⁰ Pound's desire to define art is once again characterized by conflicting reductive and idealist claims, but this time he has changed his approach, realizing that an analogical, rather than literal, definition will be more flexible and more easily transferable across mediums. Art defined as color harmonies

would always make more sense in relation to painting than to poetry. Geometry also carries the useful connotations of specificity, difficulty, and logic superseding taste, which means that if art could be made to look like geometry, it would self-evidently mark out its creators and explicators as intelligent experts.⁵¹

Pound's most extensive discussion of Whistler occurs in his memoir of the French sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, published in 1916. The book was a useful piece of marketing—not only of its subject but also of the vorticist movement itself, even, perhaps, of modernism in general. The book, and the articles of which it consists, advertise a shared modernist tendency across literature, sculpture, and painting that promises to sort out the elect from the rest, as Whistler's own art had done in 1878. Therefore, Whistler emerges as Pound's prime example of an innovator in form and dogmatic critic of popular taste and academic pedantry, who is now revered by the institutions that despised him during his lifetime. *Gaudier-Brzeska* includes four new pieces about Whistler's impact on modern art. In the longest of these (chapter 13), in which he defends art criticism, Pound writes: "Our battle began with Whistler, the delicate, classical 'Master.' . . . Whistler was the only man working in England in the 'Eighties' who would have known what we are at and would have backed us against the mob."⁵² The resonances of that final word cast vorticism as an equivalent of the French avant-garde, literally attacked, put on trial (like Whistler), and forced to mount its own defense.

The chapters on Whistler incorporate a defense of vorticism in a characteristically oblique fashion, but Pound also uses them to mount a very personal defense. At the end of chapter 13, Arthur Symons suddenly appears—hardly the person to call on when trying to bolster one's claims to modernity. However, Symons, apparently, has understood Whistler best. "Perhaps the finest thing said of Whistler," writes Pound, "is to be found in an essay by Symons: 'And in none of these things does he try to follow a fine model or try to avoid following a model.'"⁵³ All Pound's quotations from Whistler are contained in Symons's chapter on Whistler in *Studies in Seven Arts*, and Pound's main points are either repetitions of or reactions to Symons. Symons, for example, comments that Whistler "spared no form of stupidity, neither the unintelligent stupidity of the general public, and of the critics who represent the public, nor the much more dangerous stupidity of intelligences misguided, as in the 'leading case' of Ruskin."⁵⁴ And Pound: "The art of the stupid, by the stupid, for the stupid is not all-

sufficient. Whistler was almost the first man, at least the first painter of the last century to suggest that intelligent and not wholly ignorant and uncultivated men had a right to art."⁵⁵ On the last page of his chapter, Symons writes:

It is significant of a certain simplicity in his attitude towards his own work, that Whistler, in all his fighting on behalf of principles, has never tried to do more than establish (shall I say?) the correctness of his grammar. He has never asked for more praise than should be the reward of every craftsman who is not a bungler. He has claimed that, setting out to do certain things, legitimate in themselves, he has done them in a way legitimate in itself.⁵⁶

And in the last paragraph of his first piece, Pound writes:

Whistler was the great grammarian of the arts and one should not confuse the particular form of his expression, *i.e.* the peculiarity or the individuality of his expression of himself and his temperament, with the principles he uttered, or with the form or art whereby some of those principles will become apparent when they apply in the expression of some one else's temperament or individuality.⁵⁷

Symons draws attention to the modesty of Whistler's critical claims, the fact that they were made specifically in defense of his own paintings, in response to the libel trial and public censure. Pound, on the other hand, uses Symons's terminology to make quite a different point. He dissociates Whistler's personality from both his grammar, or principles, and from the legacy of these principles in the work of other artists—like the vorticists and Pound himself. The sentence is oddly phrased: it is not that the development of the point is obscure—which is often the reason for confusion in Pound's prose—but that Pound's own grammar breaks down in his expression of a straightforward remark. The number of clauses in the sentence gives the effect of nervous justification, and the last three lines are so awkward that the meaning is almost lost: "whereby," "will become," and "apply in the expression" all seem to be attempts to make the remark as general, vague, and impersonal as possible. What I take Pound to be saying here is that Whistler set out important general principles relating to the arts and that one should not be misled by his idiosyncratic mode of expression into undervaluing them (as perhaps he thinks Symons does). Nor should one think that works by artists who employ Whistler's principles are further expressions of Whistler's personality: his

principles can be used to create art that expresses one's own personality. This paragraph belatedly betrays Pound's defensive recognition of his overidentification with Whistler.

This overidentification with admired artists handicapped Pound's critical judgments throughout his career. In the 1920s, for example, his excessive esteem for Francis Picabia came at the expense of appreciating Picasso. But this personality trait has an identifiable genealogy: valuing the artist as an integral part of the art work is an obviously aestheticist, but particularly Whistlerian, attitude. Robert Jensen sums up Whistler's reconstruction of the categories of art and artist as follows:

In the totality of Whistler's self-presentation, from the clothes he wore, to his manner of speech, to the letters he wrote, to the paintings he exhibited, to how he exhibited them, to the catalogues and books that excoriated his critics, Whistler conducted every action of the artist as if it were intrinsically a work of art. No other artist before the generation of the Expressionists so thoroughly conceived of the artistic enterprise as infusing every aspect of an artist's life. And no artist before the Italian Futurist F. T. Marinetti was so inventive and multifaceted a propagandist for his own art.⁵⁸

Whistler's personality, then, was integral to the way he sold his work—to the point that the personality and the work of art became a single commodity. And this conjunction coexisted with, indeed facilitated, Whistler's art for art's sake aesthetic. As Pierre Bourdieu has argued, “[A]s the art market began to develop, writers and artists found themselves able to affirm the irreducibility of the work of art to the status of a simple article of merchandise and, at the same time, the singularity of the intellectual and artistic condition.”⁵⁹ Pound's cultish attitude toward certain artists' personalities, then, makes an ideological, as well as a psychological, point.

It is a point that Pound makes repeatedly in *The Cantos*, not only in the description of the people who process through the poem but also in the poem's technique, the ideogrammic method by which he meant to recreate the immediacy achieved by his dramatic lyrics, which, as we have seen, were closely related to the psychological insights of Whistler's portraits. Whistler is mentioned three times in *The Cantos*: once in passing as part of the artistic society in late-nineteenth-century Paris, once to repeat Pound's admiration for the portrait of Cicely Alexander, and once, more substantially, to relay an anecdote that George

Sauter, sometime honorary secretary of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers, told against himself. Sauter

never cd/ see

the portrait of Sarasate

“like a black fly hanging stuck to that canvas”

till one day after Whistler's death

I think it was Ysaÿe was with him

who saw the Whistler

for the first time and burst out:

What a fiddle!⁶⁰

The last line's pun is produced by Eugene Ysaÿe, the Belgian violinist, unintentionally calling Whistler a charlatan, as Ruskin and others had done before him, when he means to praise the depiction of the violin in Whistler's *Arrangement in Black: Portrait of Señor Pablo de Sarasate* (1884). The main point in the context of the rest of the canto is that good art proceeds from precise knowledge, but Pound simultaneously emphasizes that such art is appreciated by an expert clientele, like Ysaÿe, though this expertise is not that of the art establishment, represented by Sauter. Whistler's legacy in modernism, then, is not only the iconography of the nocturne. More importantly, the early twentieth century read Whistler's career as a story about artistic integrity triumphing over both philistine public opinion and the academic art establishment. For Pound, this integrity was overwhelmingly legible in a technique that was expressive of intelligence through experimentation, rather than redundant polishing. This is the integrity that he describes in “Patria Mia,” and it is the integrity that the combination of obscure detail and loose brushwork of *The Cantos*, if I may be permitted a painterly analogy of my own, were meant to suggest.

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Notes

Part of this essay was presented at the annual conference of the Association of Art Historians, at Southampton University, United Kingdom, 9–11 April 1999. I would like to thank Katharine Craik and Catherine Maxwell for their comments.

- 1 Walter Raleigh, *In Memoriam: James McNeill Whistler* (London: Heinemann, 1905), 9.
- 2 See Elizabeth Robins Pennell and Joseph Pennell, *The Life of James*

- McNeill Whistler*, 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1908), 2:65–67; and Margaret F. MacDonald, “Whistler for President!” in *James McNeill Whistler*, ed. Richard Dorment and Margaret F. MacDonald (London: Tate Gallery, 1994), 52–53.
- 3 Haldane Macfall, *Whistler: Butterfly, Wasp, Wit, Master of the Arts, Enigma* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Foulis, 1905), 9.
 - 4 T. E. Hulme, “A Lecture on Modern Poetry,” in *The Collected Writings of T. E. Hulme*, ed. Karen Csengeri (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), 53.
 - 5 Ford Maddox Hueffer, “Impressionism—Some Speculations,” *Poetry* 2 (August 1913): 181.
 - 6 See Ezra Pound, “How I Began,” *T. P.’s Weekly* 21 (June 1913): 707: “For well over a year, I have been trying to make a poem of a very beautiful thing that befell me in the Paris Underground. I got out of a train at, I think, La Concorde and in the jostle I saw a beautiful face, and then, turning suddenly, another and another, and then a beautiful child’s face. All that day I tried to find words for what this made me feel. That night as I went home along the rue Raynouard I was still trying. I could get nothing but spots of colour.”
 - 7 On Pound’s trip, see Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1974), 37–39. Both essays are filed in the “College Essays” section of the Ezra Pound Papers, Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. In quoting from these essays, I have reproduced Pound’s idiosyncratic spelling and punctuation in many cases; divergent punctuation that hampers clarity or misspellings that appear to be accidental I have silently corrected. The folder containing the two essays also contains an eight-page typescript on Robert Browning dated “July 31 07”; for a discussion of this essay, see George Bornstein, “Pound’s Parleyings with Robert Browning,” in *Ezra Pound among the Poets*, ed. George Bornstein (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985), 106–27.
 - 8 Stock writes: “*The Half Hour* was printed about this time at the author’s (or perhaps his father’s) expense. It was small (about 4 by 3 inches) and contained few pages. There was only one issue” (*Life*, 45). The information in Pound’s untitled typescript does not support this description: “The Half Hour has offered me a place for my utterances,” he writes, then comments on the editor’s corrections of his work. Pound’s statement may be a pretense to support the persona of a significant figure in the Philadelphia art world, which he assumes in these essays (see untitled typescript, 2; Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; © 2002 by Mary de Rachewiltz and Omar S. Pound; used by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Further references to this typescript will be cited parenthetically as UT).
 - 9 Ezra Pound, “Art,” 1, 4–5 (Unpublished manuscript, Beinecke Rare Book

and Manuscript Library, Yale University; © Mary de Rachewiltz and Omar S. Pound; used by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. Further references to "Art" will be cited parenthetically in the text as "A"). In Pound's last sentence, the word "Sufficiently" was interpolated in pencil and the whole sentence subsequently crossed out. Throughout the piece, Cassatt's name is crossed out and replaced with either "Miss Cxxxx" or "xxx." (In the untitled typescript, Pound writes that "the Editor in chief turned down my last month's criticism in order to keep me out of a libel suit" [UT, 4]. It seems highly likely that Pound is referring to "Art.") If I am correct in my dating of this essay, the painting would have been *The Sun Bath* (1901) exhibited as *Après le bain* in the Art Club's Eighteenth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture, which ran from 19 November to 16 December 1906.

- 10 See Bruce A. White, "Elbert Hubbard and *The Philistine: A Periodical of Protest* (1895–1915): The Muscular Journalism of an American Free-thinker," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 19 (fall 1986): 83–89. The *Philistine* had a monthly circulation in excess of 100,000, and Hubbard became one of the most highly paid lecturers in the United States. The *Black Mirror* announces its affinity to the *Philistine* in "How and Why We are Here," the editorial of the first issue.
- 11 *Black Mirror* 1 (1903): 10–11.
- 12 *Black Mirror* 2 (1904): 44.
- 13 For a discussion of the third person plural in Pound's early verse, see N. Christoph de Nagy, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound: The Pre-Imagist Phase*, 2d ed. (Bern, Switzerland: Francke, 1968), 37–41.
- 14 See, for example, Charles H. Caffin, *The Story of American Painting: The Evolution of Painting in America from Colonial Times to the Present* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, [1908]), 382.
- 15 In "The Red Rag" (1878), Whistler wrote: "Art should be independent of all clap-trap—should stand alone, and appeal to the artistic sense of eye or ear, without confounding this with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism, and the like" (in *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* [1890; reprint, London: Heinemann, 1994], 127–28). Nevertheless, Arthur Jerome Eddy was one of many who believed that Whistler "was infinitely more of an American than thousands who live at home and ape the manners of Europe" (*Recollections and Impressions of James A. McNeill Whistler* [Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1903], 48).
- 16 John Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*, in *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols. (London: Allen, 1903–12), 29:160; quoted as "Prologue" to Whistler, *Gentle Art*, [1].
- 17 Linda Merrill, "A Pot of Paint": *Aesthetics on Trial in Whistler v. Ruskin* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 2.
- 18 Pound, UT, [9–10]. In his typescript, Pound originally emphasized that the "things" he and Whistler saw in the same way he himself had "seen"

- before ever reading Whistler: the words “before ever read Whistler” are crossed out.
- 19 See Merrill, “*A Pot of Paint*,” 133–97.
 - 20 William Powell Frith; quoted in Merrill, “*A Pot of Paint*,” 177. The official transcript of the trial was destroyed after the action had been settled; Merrill’s reconstruction of the trial is compiled from contemporary newspaper accounts. Whistler provided his own reconstruction in “The Action,” in *Gentle Art*, which includes the second sentence of Frith’s remark (17).
 - 21 In “The Grosvenor Gallery,” Henry James writes: “Mr. Whistler’s productions are pleasant things to have about, so long as one regards them as simple objects—as incidents of furniture or decoration. The spectator’s quarrel with them begins when he feels it to be expected of him to regard them as pictures” (*Nation*, 23 May 1878; reprinted in *The Painter’s Eye: Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts by Henry James*, ed. John L. Sweeney [London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1956], 165).
 - 22 Whistler, *Gentle Art*, 102; Pound, UT, [7].
 - 23 See Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, in *The Works of Walter Pater*, 8 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1900), 1:133.
 - 24 Pound, “A,” 6. There are two versions of this final paragraph; here I have given the second version. (Pound’s “vulgo” is a mistake. It is the adverb derived from the Latin noun “vulgus,” the common people.)
 - 25 Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1998), 3.
 - 26 See Anthony Ozturk, “Ezra Pound and Visual Art” (Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1989), 14.
 - 27 Pound, “For Italic Brass,” *Collected Early Poems of Ezra Pound*, ed. Michael John King (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), 253. The poem is dated “Aug. 7” [1908]. It was first published in *A Lume Spento 1908–1958* (Milan, Italy: [Scheiwiller], 1958), a volume celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *A Lume Spento*.
 - 28 Pound, untitled poem fragment, notebook (1899–1907), 162, Ezra Pound Papers, Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; © 2002 by Mary de Rachewiltz and Omar S. Pound; used by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.
 - 29 Pound, “In That Country,” *Collected Early Poems*, ed. King, 248.
 - 30 Pound, “Nel Biancheggiar,” *Collected Early Poems*, ed. King, 72.
 - 31 See Ozturk, “Ezra Pound and Visual Art,” 30.
 - 32 Pound, “In Praise of the Masters,” [1], Ezra Pound Papers, Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; © 2002 by Mary de Rachewiltz and Omar S. Pound; used by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation.
 - 33 “Nel Biancheggiar” seems to be written to Yeats’s prescription, laid out

in his 1903 essay "The Symbolism of Poetry": "[W]hen sound, and colour, and form are in a musical relation, a beautiful relation to one another, they become, as it were, one sound, one colour, one form, and evoke an emotion that is made out of their distinct evocations and yet is one emotion." The poetry that conforms to Yeats's theory of symbolism will "seek out those wavering, meditative, organic rhythms, which are the embodiment of the imagination"; its words will be "subtle," "complex," "full of mysterious life," and the "form of sincere poetry, unlike the form of the 'popular poetry,' may indeed be sometimes obscure, or ungrammatical" (*Essays and Introductions* [London: Macmillan, 1961], 157, 163–64).

- 34 Pound to Isabel Weston Pound, 7 January [1909], *Ezra Pound Papers*, Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; © 2002 by Mary de Rachewiltz and Omar S. Pound; used by permission of New Directions Publishing Corporation. In 1910 Pound rewrote the point, substituting Burne-Jones for Waterhouse (see *The Spirit of Romance: An Attempt to Define Somewhat the Charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe* [London: Dent, (1910)], 162).
- 35 Whistler, *Gentle Art*, 128.
- 36 Pound to Harriet Monroe, [18] August 1912, *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907–1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 10.
- 37 Pound, "Patria Mia: XI," *New Age*, 14 November 1912, 33.
- 38 Pound, "Patria Mia: VIII," *New Age*, 24 October 1912, 612.
- 39 Pound, "To Whistler, American: On the Loan Exhibit of His Paintings at the Tate Gallery," *Poetry* 1 (October 1912): 7.
- 40 "[S]ymphonies" in the line "You were not . . . always set / To hiding night or tuning 'symphonies'" alludes to Théophile Gautier's poem "Symphonie en blanc majeur," if not directly, then via Paul Mantz, who, in 1863, called *The White Girl* (1862) a "symphonie du blanc," a designation Whistler seems to have adopted informally, since in 1867 he named one of his paintings *Symphony in White, No. 3* and renamed *The Little White Girl* (1864) *Symphony in White, No. 2* (see Mantz, "Salon de 1863," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 15 [July 1863]: 61).
- 41 Pound, "Patria Mia: VIII," 612. Pound mentions Whistler's portrait of Cicely Alexander again in "Remy de Gourmont," *Fortnightly Review* 98 (December 1915): "Just as there is more wisdom, perhaps more 'revolution,' in Whistler's portrait of young Miss Alexander than in all the Judaic drawings of the 'prophetic' Blake, so there is more life in Remy than in all the reformers" (1164). He made the same point in *Guide to Kulchur* (London: Faber & Faber, 1938), 180–81.
- 42 Pound to William Carlos Williams, 21 October 1908, *Selected Letters*, ed. Paige, 3–4.
- 43 Robert Browning to John Ruskin, 10 December 1855, Ruskin, *Works*, 36: xxxiv.

- 44 Pound to Harriet Monroe, [18] August 1912, *Selected Letters*, ed. Paige, 10.
- 45 Pound, "Paris Letter," *Dial* 71 (October 1921): 458. Pound is referring to Francis Picabia's Dadaist squibs.
- 46 Pound to Harriet Monroe, [18] August 1912, *Selected Letters*, ed. Paige, 10.
- 47 Pound, "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," *Poetry* 1 (March 1913): 200; F. S. Flint, "Imagisme," *Poetry* 1 (March 1913): 200.
- 48 See Michael H. Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine, 1908–1922* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984), 120–26; and Rainey, *Institutions*, 10–41.
- 49 Pound, "Vortex—Pound," *Blast* 1 (June 1914): 154.
- 50 Pound, "Vorticism," *Fortnightly Review* 96 (September 1914): 469.
- 51 See Ian F. A. Bell's account of Whistler's significance for vorticism, in his *Critic as Scientist: The Modernist Poetics of Ezra Pound* (London: Methuen, 1981), 7–22.
- 52 Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* (London: John Lane. The Bodley Head, 1916), 145.
- 53 Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 148; see Arthur Symons, *Studies in Seven Arts* (London: Constable, 1906), 128.
- 54 Symons, *Studies*, 125–26.
- 55 Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 151.
- 56 Symons, *Studies*, 147–48.
- 57 Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, 149.
- 58 Robert Jensen, *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994), 42–43.
- 59 Pierre Bourdieu, "The Market of Symbolic Goods," in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge, Eng.: Polity Press, 1993), 113–14.
- 60 Pound, *The Cantos* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), 517.