

TO WRITE PARADISE: A STUDY OF EZRA LOOMIS POUND

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Martha Adaline Mitchell-Cook

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Martha Adaline Mitchell-Cook

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Signature: Martha Adaline Mitchell-Cook May 2, 2001
Martha Adaline Mitchell-Cook, Student Date

Approvals: Steven Reese 2 May 01
Steven Reese, Ph.D., Thesis Advisor Date

James J. Schramer 2 May 2001
James J. Schramer, Ph.D., Committee Member Date

Stephanie A. Tingley 2 May 2001
Stephanie A. Tingley, Ph.D., Committee Member Date

Peter J. Kasvinsky 5/3/01
Peter J. Kasvinsky, Dean of Graduate Studies Date

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of specific aspects of the works of the American Poet, Ezra Loomis Pound. Although Mr. Pound remains a controversial figure in the view of some scholars, many have come to appreciate the genuine Mr. Pound. To enjoy his work requires an in-depth examination of not only his poetry and essays, but the reason he took the political stance attributed to him, why he chose the canto style of writing, why Confucianism became his philosophy and why he frequently wrote employing the Chinese ideogram.

Mr. Pound is an important figure in literary studies due to his efforts in determining the dawn of the Modernist Age of writing, which changed forever the way poets present their art. Also, his support and aid to other artists such as James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and Robert Frost (to name a few) adds to the respect that is his due. Besides these significant facts, his poetry is a brilliant example of Imagist writing in the canto style, which guides the reader through a history, through magnificent imagery, and through a philosophical view of our world.

These issues are addressed herein to aid in the understanding of an artist and his accomplishments.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
PART II: ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE IDEA OF THE CANTOS... ..	4
PART III: POUND'S CANTO STYLE OF WRITING AND PREFERENCE FOR CONFUCIANISM.....	7
PART IV: USE OF THE CHINESE IDEOGRAM.....	22
PART V: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE POET IN THE CHINESE CANTOS ..	27
PART VI: THE PRIZEWINNING PISAN CANTOS.....	30
PART VII: WHAT THEN, POUND?.....	41

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To my youngest sister, Margaret Ellen Mitchell-Brewer, I dedicate this thesis—until we meet again (1940-1990).

I. Introduction

Let the Gods forgive what I
 have made
 Let those I love try to forgive
 what I have made. (Notes for CXVII et seq.)

Who is the real Ezra Loomis Pound? Is it Pound the poet? Is it Pound the anti-Semite? Is it Pound, the traitor to his country? Is it Pound, the resident of St. Elizabeth's Hospital for the Insane in Washington, D.C.? What were his beliefs, and why would a talented, often kind, helpful, and influential person permit his ruinous philosophies to corrupt and destroy his reputation and his life? After all, Pound was known among his many friends as a kind and caring man, the sort of man described in author Ernest Hemingway's view of Pound:

So far we have Pound the major poet devoting, say, one fifth of his time to poetry. With the rest of his time he tries to advance the fortunes, both material and artistic, of his friends. He defends them when they are attacked, he gets them into magazines and out of jail. He loans them money. He sells their pictures. He arranges concerts for them. He writes articles about them. He introduces them to wealthy women. He gets publishers to take their books. He sits up all night with them when they claim to be dying and he witnesses their wills. He advances them hospital expenses and dissuades them from suicide. And in the end a few of them refrain from knifing him at the first opportunity (Tytell 193).

Other authors and poets, such as Hilda Doolittle, Wyndham Lewis, and Alfred Kreymborg, gave generous praise to Pound's kindness toward those who displayed the "faintest spark of submerged talent" (Bornstein 23).

Actually, he was more than influential in the success of discerning artists including James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and Robert Frost. He was also helpful to W. B. Yeats during their winters together at Stone Cottage when he served as the Irish poet and playwright's secretary (Nadel 2). Most famously, Pound's annotations to the manuscript of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* demonstrates the influence and advice Pound was willing to provide other artists. Joyce's *Ulysses*, considered by some to be the greatest work of fictional art in the twentieth century, also benefited from Pound's advice. Pound helped with the editing of *Ulysses* and its serial publication in *The Little Review* in 1917 (Tytell 140). Tytell also recounts Pound's help to publish Frost's poetry during the time that Frost spent in England, but not without Pound's occasional scathing comments. (Although Pound initially endorsed Frost's poetry, he wrote in a letter to Alice Corbin Henderson that Frost was honest, homespun, dull and virtuous, but "pig-headed as any New Hampshire hick that ever put pumpkin seed into a granite field with a shotgun." [Tytell 85]). Frost was not a modernist and therefore lacked true power, in Pound's opinion. Frost later more than repaid the favor of having his work promoted by Pound when he participated in arranging Pound's release from St. Elizabeth's Hospital for the Insane in Washington, D. C.

Besides Pound's many male friends, his female friends included publisher Alice Corbin Henderson, publicist Harriet Monroe, and Ethel Moorehead, who was a Scottish painter with financial independence. She was "an angel" with whom Pound founded the

magazine *This Quarter* and who stated, “[Pound] is meriting the gratitude of this generation” (Wilhelm 10). There is evidence that Moorehead gave monetary support to Pound in addition to great praise, an indication of the depth of his friendship with her.

This writing reviews the origins of Pound’s beliefs and in doing so attempts to reconcile our contradictory image of him. The tapestry woven herein does not attempt to exonerate Pound from the charges of treason during World War II, nor does it excuse his anti-Semitism. This study attempts to examine the origins of his opinions, of his canto style of writing, of his attraction to Confucianism and use of the Chinese ideogram throughout his poetry—in short, the origins of the stylistic and philosophical elements that were central to Pound’s thinking and his actions. Ezra Loomis Pound is a figure of multiple contrasts, and this study is an effort to define the grounds of those contrasts.

We begin our study with a review of Pound’s anti-Semitic views and his use of the canto style of writing.

Part II: Anti-Semitism and the Idea of the Cantos

Pound's association with London editor A. R. Orage distinguishes the beginnings of his anti-Semitic beliefs. Pound wrote for Orage's *The New Age* in London from 1911 through January of 1921 (Redman 17). *The New Age* was considered an important socialist publication, "the left-wing paper, which everybody who was anybody read," according to Margaret Cole in the *New Statesman* in 1959 (Redman 18). In "*The New Age*, Orage blasted the inequality of the sacrifice being made in the World War I conflict by the British working class: the conscription of men, but not of capital; the sacrifice of lives, but not of profit" (Redman 23). The bankers were blamed for financing a war, fueled by the lives of the hardworking, innocent youth. Bankers throughout the world were predominantly of Jewish lineage, and London was no exception.

The anti-Semitism of the times before World War II is well recorded, is well understood, and is known to have been general throughout the Western world. According to Fritz Redlich, professor emeritus of psychiatry at the University of California and author of *Hitler*, the case of worldwide anti-Semitism is well documented. Redlich recounts that the Catholic Church revealed that "the bishops and clergy were generally anti-Semitic"(96). In the same text, there is mention of Hitler's admiration for America's Henry Ford, who wrote in *The Dearborn Independent* that the international Jews were responsible for World War I—one of Hitler's favorite topics (47). World War II writer Mihail Sebastian writes in his diary of anti-Semitism in wartime Bucharest. Sebastian vividly describes the impending horror of the Jewish plight in the days leading up to World War II (*New Yorker* 106). Hitler was on his way to conquering all of Europe in 1941, and if the toss of the coin had been any different than history records, Pound may

have been hailed a prophet who recognized a problem before most others did. Anti-Semitism flourished in England as far back as 1278, when the whole of English Jewry was imprisoned, and in 1290, finally expelled (Casillo 103). In Pound's *Canto XCVII*, there is explicit reference to "a gold Bacchus on your abacus, Henry the Third's second massacre." This, according to Carroll F. Terrell's *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound*, explains that "corrupt coins made their appearance in all directions...in that age the solution of all monetary problems was found in torturing the Jews" (Terrell 614). This recorded evidence gives the Pound examiner the knowledge that anti-Semitism was not exclusively Pound's, but was widespread.

However, when the depth of the anti-Semitic world attitude was discovered via the Nazi death camps, a new view coated anti-Semitism. The horror that was witnessed, photographed, discussed, reviewed, and written about was beyond what the world community had ever known or could have imagined. It was not just the numbers of the six million murdered and tortured, not just the hatred directed at the Jews, the ugly propaganda films and speeches, but it was the organized, planned, methodical extermination that struck the heart and minds of the world community. It was a scene intolerable to the human psyche. Anyone who had expressed anti-Semitic sentiments was considered guilty or insane, and Pound plunged into the core of this judgment partly due to his anti-Semitic writings, but especially due to his World War II anti-Allies broadcasts from Italy. He had favored fascism over democracy, and so he had favored Mussolini over Roosevelt. His broadcasts made his sentiments crudely clear. Interestingly, "Italy was virtually without overt anti-Semitism in any form and Mussolini

was philosemitic” (Flory 289). There are, however, recorded events in Pound’s life discounting a blanket condemnation, at least early on, of all things Jewish.

One such event occurred during his trip by an inexpensive cattle boat to Europe in February of 1908. “He disembarked in Gibraltar in April, met a Jewish man who helped him find accommodations and work as a guide, and who took him to a synagogue, where Pound watched a rabbi pass around a snuffbox after a ceremony and Pound did partake,” writes Tytell, who suggests the irony of this communion between a people who were forced to become international wanderers and the nomadic poet (35). Later in life, when Pound’s writing was clearly anti-Semitic, the reader also notes, as pointed out by Tytell, that he was also anti-Christian and anti-American (244).

Thus, the evidence, as is often the case in Pound’s life, is complicated. But it is plain too, that Pound was seeking a philosophy that would express his world view, and a poetic form that would enable him to turn that philosophy into art. The result was *The Cantos*. Formally, Pound’s epic poem was based on Dante and the troubadours he had long studied, but philosophically, Pound would look to the East for inspiration.

We turn now to Pound’s philosophy and his canto style of writing.

Part III: Pound's Canto Style of Writing and Preference for Confucianism

The Cantos (the Italian word for song) reveal a style of writing, notably in the beginning *Cantos* (I-III) accredited to Dante, a Pound favorite, and as also found in the *Iliad* or Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. Pound began the idea of a canto when working on the vortex concept in 1914. *Vortex* suggests "a rush of ideas finding themselves down, focusing on some central point, [which] seems more useful to an epic poet" (Pound, *Cambridge* 60). Therefore, what emerges is not quite a song, but as explained by Daniel Albright, "an allegation of music that indeed can be heard, but only fitfully, as if the whole poem were a transcript of a radio broadcast that kept losing the proper channel, dissolving into static, or into the blare of the aggressive wrong stations occupying a bandwidth close to the faint right station (Albright, *Cambridge* 61). However, after reading through a *Canto*, the reader begins to "tune in" to the poet's intent. The meaning is present, but unclear initially, brilliant when reread and studied, and intellectually enduring.

The Pound narrative relates that since his college days, Pound wanted to become a modern Dante who would write a world history in the style of *The Divine Comedy*. According to J. J. Wilhelm in *Ezra Pound: The Tragic Years*, Pound spoke of this idea to pianist Walter Morse Rummel as early as 1910 (4). In Tytell's account of Pound, it is the Hamilton College Professor and Reverend Joseph Darling Ibbotson, known to his students as "Bib," who sparked an interest in Pound to write "a long epic poem about history that would become *The Cantos*." This thought was present as far back as 1903 (23). Wilhelm suggests that Pound decided to write about the "utopian Social Credit system advocated by Major C. H. Douglas of London toward the end of World War I"

(4). “In 1928 I began an investigation of causes of war, to oppose same,” Pound wrote, which is recorded in Tytell’s account. Also, Tytell narrates, “Pound’s father, Homer, worked in the United States Mint all of his life, and his son had grown up with talk about devalued currency and government issuance of valueless scrip” (147). Hearing discourse of the devalued currency, and with the involvement of his grandfather, Thaddeus Pound, with politics, Pound’s interest in and admiration for finance and politics grew. Dante’s *Divine Comedy* and Dante’s style were the elements that prepared Pound to enter a new expanse in writing. He was to have stated that “all great poets—Homer, Shakespeare, Dante—made history a part of their poetry” (Meachem 46).

Throughout his life, when asked what he believed, Pound would refer the inquirer to Confucius and Ovid. He avowed to believe the *Ta Hio*, the Confucian classic or great learning, the study of individualism and social responsibility (Cheadle 1).

According to Wilhelm, Pound had determined to use the ethics of the Chinese sage, Confucius (the Latin translation for the Chinese name Kung according to the *Cambridge Encyclopedia*) as opposed to the monotheistic writings of Dante. Mary Paterson Cheadle, wrote in her account of the Confucian translations that “a respect for individuality is precisely what Pound found most essential to Confucianism initially” (Cheadle 17). In a review of *Canto XIII*, as mentioned by Cheadle, there is a profound affirmation for individual thinking demonstrated when Kung asks four of his disciples a question, and each answers in a different way. When asked who had answered correctly, Kung stated that they all did, “each in his own nature” (Cheadle 17). This would have been a positive reason for Pound to study and patronize Confucianism. Respect for individuality is a crucial point of Pound’s personal philosophy. Another point of opposition to the

Christian point of view was found in a letter Pound wrote to his father in 1923 stating that “beginning in the middle of oneself is excellent, the exact reverse of Christian churchism which teaches: thou shalt attend to thy neighbor’s business before thou attendest to thine own” (Cheadle 17). Cheadle continues, “This beginning in the middle of oneself also implies not only to [Shakespeare’s] Polonius’s ‘to thine own self be true’ but a responsibility to discipline and reform oneself” (Cheadle 17). That particular ideology is found over and over in Pound’s writings and clearly states that the individual must find order within the self, and this order eventually spreads to the community and then the country.

Further evidence of Pound’s leaning toward Confucianism, and away from Christianity, was found in Pound’s *Provincialism the Enemy, II* (193) and in an untitled article of *The New Age* printed around 1917 and quoted in Emery’s *Ideas into Action*. The statement was also quoted by Cheadle in the *Confucian Translations* text:

Confucius was a “statesman” and “a man of great genius, a minister high in the State and living to his full age”; Christ was only a “profound philosophic genius... an intuitive, inexperienced man, dying before middle age... a provincial genius, a man of a subject nation, without the need, therefore of an ethics of government.” (Pound 193). Confucius was a worldly man, and his philosophy was an ethics of individual, social, and political conduct, whereas Christ, having been young, outcast and therefore absorbed, presumably, with the self, founded an ethics of the soul and its afterlife. If Confucian fraternal deference were “introduced” in the West, Pound wrote around 1917, it would “finish off Christianity” (Cheadle 18).

Pound was known to expound his dislike of Christianity, Judaism, and also Islam, according to Wilhelm (4). Confucianism seemed the perfect *fit* to include in the *Cantos*, which were to be “an epic of judgment” (4). The Pound *Cantos* also consist of historical data, and names, and fragments from famous writings, at least in the first few *Cantos*, which is similar in style to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.

However, it serves this effort to review the writings of Kung and to analyze how those prolific views were incorporated into Pound’s thinking, thus shaping his writings. Wilhelm states that Pound found that “Confucian morality was the most acceptable, because it is not concerned with pie-in-the-sky miracles and lives-after-death, but with controlling oneself first of all and then one’s home and then one’s state” (Wilhelm128). Pound condemns those who taught otherwise. He was especially hard on most Greek philosophers because he said that they tend to be highbrow elitists with no concern for the people, and the only exception was Aristotle (Wilhelm 128). In 1928, Pound wrote *The Great Digest*, and in 1947, he wrote *Confucius: The Unwobbling Pivot*, incorporating the Confucian *Analects* into this writing in 1950; they are now combined in one publication. The reasoning behind the “unwobbling pivot,” according to Wilhelm, was to place the Aristotelian *mean* as a norm of conduct next to the Chinese ideogram (Chinese character or symbol) for “the middle,” *chung*, which he interprets as a kind of unwobbling pivot (129). We can assume from this information that Pound searched for the teachers whom he felt were most concerned for the common man. A study of the *Cantos* reveals, often times, an informal type of speech that Pound frequently used, and this most logically is in opposition to elitist thinking and behavior and thus favoring the common man.

When it came to Christianity, which Pound did not admire, those few he quoted were St. Ambrose (against the “hoggers of harvest”) and St. Anselm (“Authority proceeds from right reason”). However, Pound did not accept the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, “because he tried to turn theology into logical hair-splitting, as if trying to convert Aristotle to Christianity,” according to Wilhelm (129). Wilhelm also mentions that the approach to religion, in Pound’s view, is not through discursive logic, but through poetry (120). Cheadle interestingly points out that Pound writes of good manners, taught by Kung, and the subject of manners is sprinkled throughout *The Cantos*, specifically mentioned in *Canto XCIX*, in which he says that manners starting with oneself, spread ultimately to the empire (Cheadle 18). This philosophical thinking is in direct contrast to the man, Pound. In England, he was known for his lack of manners. His lack of manners was portrayed by his boots and cowboy actions, his Philadelphia accent, and American barbarisms, that included bizarre talk, and loud, uncultured array of clothing. His wardrobe included green trousers made of billiard cloth that he wore with a pink velvet coat adorned with blue glass buttons. His character was supported by a walking stick. Tytell, in *Solitary Volcano*, concludes that he looked like a character out of a Puccini opera (5). He was also outlandish as a student in America, but even more so when he lived in London. Tytell claims that the role of the fool, that Pound often played, permitted the release of Pound’s spontaneously rapid judgments: “The unpredictability of the fool and his defiance of acceptable manners and mores caused suspicion and disfavor” (Tytell 30). We are noting the beginnings of many contrasts.

However, returning to Pound’s interest in Kung and reviewing Pound’s *Confucius: The Unwobbling Pivot*, the reader immediately is introduced to the stone tablets that

“were placed in the Imperial Academy in the metropolis.” Several Chinese dynasties placed the Confucian teachings near learning institutions, where they could be studied and given measured importance:

And the books were incised in stone

46 tablets set up at the door of the college (*Canto LIV*)

In the Judeo-Christian community, Moses brings the commands written on stone to the populace. This mode of communication has the sense of permanence and command of significance. However, in *Canto LIV*, Pound explains that the forty-six stones were torn down and used to build a Buddhist Temple. (Pound refers to the Buddhists as Foe or Fu; translated from the French, that is goddam buddhists.) Since we are aware of the perseverance with which Pound translated and reflected on Confucianism, especially in *Cantos LII* through *Cantos LXXI*, which are the *Confucian Cantos*, the Pound student is encouraged to believe that Kung was of inestimable standing in Pound’s thinking.

Immediately, in the Confucian Text, the student is invited to think for him or herself. Kung places as much emphasis on thinking as on learning, according to an advising editor, Betty Radice, in the remarks at the beginning of *The Analects*. Therein, the intelligence increases through the process of looking straight into one’s own heart and acting on the results; it is rooted in watching with affection the way people grow, in coming to rest, being at ease in perfect equity (1. Confucius’ Text). This is a clarifying and focused approach to thinking.

During Pound’s and W. E. Yeats’ years at Stone Cottage, both poets studied Confucianism. In Logenbach’s account of those years, it is Yeats who begins an

admiration of Kung, quoting him “as a preface to his own exhortation of his personal and cultural heritage” (160).

In a reading of the *Analects*, Kung is quoted as stating, “Exemplary people understand matters of justice, small people understand matters of profit” (Book 4:16). If Pound believed this Confucian philosophy, then he could not have believed that profit was desirable for those trying to reach that peak of personal perfection. He would have particularly opposed banks earning exorbitant amounts of interest. This would seem reasonable, and we know through his many negative references to usura (usury) that this is Pound’s true thinking. Pound devotes *Canto XLV* to the subject of usury, and, at the conclusion of this *Canto*, Pound adds an explanation that usury is a charge for the use of purchasing power, levied without regard to production, often without regard to the possibilities of production, and uses as an example “the failure of the Medici bank” (231). This is a theme referenced throughout his lifetime of writing. This is what is at the basis of his problems with governments and people, especially the Jewry whom Pound blames for utilizing “usury.” The Jews were heavily involved in banking in the world community and were logical targets. Pound focuses on Kung, as having the model for government, ideologies, and success for every citizen.

To further explore the authority Pound allotted Kung, the student must study *Canto XIII*. Pound refers to Confucius, as Kung or Kung Fu-tse, which translates to Venerated Master Kong. An interesting exchange is recounted between the Master and an old friend who was seated by the roadside:

You old fool, come out of it,

Get up and do something useful

And Kung said
 Respect a child's faculties
 From the moment it inhales the clear air,
 But a man of fifty who knows nothing
 Is worthy of no respect. (*Canto XIII*)

This quote is wise. According to Cheadle, "it is not right to respect authority blindly since authority may be corrupt." Cheadle reminds us that "Confucius advises a father to hide his son if his son has committed murder, and that is why Confucius gives his daughter and niece away in marriage to men who have themselves been imprisoned or evicted from government" (Cheadle 21). We know from Pound's history that he was frustrated with authority. In Cheadle's account, Pound was "convinced the political authorities in particular were to blame for the tragedy and travesty of World War I" (Cheadle 21).

In another epic poem, *Canto XLIX*, Pound refers to the floater (a person sitting by the road with begging bowls instead of working on the land). Kung did not prize the lazy man, and neither did Pound. There is also a passage, dwelling on order, from the common man to those who hold office, that interprets to "and if the prince has not order within, he cannot put order in his dominions", again a strong and meaningful charge, and an oft repeated theme that defines Kung to the student (*Canto XIII*).

Kung also expounds a similar philosophy to Aristotle's *golden mean*, the concept that moral excellence is the acquired rational capacity to choose the mean between extremes, as written in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics Book II* (Stewart 175-176). In the Kung statement, "It is hard to stand firm in the middle" (*Canto XIII*), Kung suggests it is easy to hit past the mark or run to excesses. Pound concludes *Canto XIII* with the

passage, “The blossoms of the apricot blow from the east to the west, and I have tried to keep them from falling.” This signifies Pound’s effort to keep Confucianism (Kung was traditionally associated with the apricot blossom) alive by bringing Confucian philosophy from the East (Orient) to the West (Terrell 64).

We note that Pound frequently ridicules organized religion. In *Canto XLIX*, he writes, “And don’t believe papists merely because they helped with the calendar.” Cheadle indicates that Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* presented an alternative to Christianity, as Confucianism did: “There was no tyranny or taboo; there was no single code of behavior imposed upon the individual by some external authority such as God, the church, or society” (25). Pound could relate to the social relations and order of Ovid and Kung and replied to the question “What does Mr. Pound believe?” by telling the inquirer to read Kung and Ovid (Cheadle 25).

In *Canto XCIX*, there is a beautiful line, “by the silk cords of the sunlight,” which according to Terrell’s *Companion*, refers to the Chinese ideogram *hsien*, often used in Pound’s writings. The ideogram is referred to by Kung as “unmixed is the tensile light, the Immaculata, there is no end to its action” (Pound, *Confucius* 187). In Pound’s thinking, and according to *Canto LXXVII*, light is thought, and the sun is connected with language; the sun is God’s mouth. In Casillo’s account, light is the means by which the word or logo is transmitted, while the logo itself is identified with intelligence and light. “The sun is thus a logo-centric sign, a symbol of the divine origin or parent of speech, reason, and order,” writes Casillo (25-26). Many cultures view the sun, or light, as divine, but in Pound’s writings, he expresses particular respect for solar religion, arguing that true religion derives from agriculture, thus the dependence on light and on the sun

(Casillo 44). In yet another account of Pound and his reference to the sun, Casillo refers to *Canto LXXXV*, in which Pound states, “The sun under it all,” giving the sun the sense of stability. Linguistically, it is the basis for a cluster of themes and ideas that return ceaselessly, along a kind of metaphorical chain back to the idea of the sun as origin, sets the system into motion, and lies under linguistic definition (Casillo 217). This connects perfectly with Kung, whose disciples Tzu-Kung and Tseng Tzu both claimed the “Master to be bleached by the autumn sun, so immaculate was he that his whiteness could not be surpassed” (*Analects* 53). The Confucian purpose was to enlighten. This is clearly an enticement for Pound to emulate Kung’s teachings, since he found in Kung a sense of perfection, a sense of enlightenment.

Since Pound used the Chinese ideogram in his work, it is important to understand the reason for this form of writing. The first ideogram in Pound’s text of Confucian studies refers to light descending (from the sun, moon, and stars). This translates to a component of ideograms indicating spirits, rites, and ceremonies. The second ideogram is the sun and moon side by side, indicating radiation, reception, and reflection of light—hence, the intelligence. The third ideogram is described as “sincerity.” This is the sun’s lance (beam) coming to rest on the precise spot verbally. The right hand portion means to perfect or bring into focus (Pound, *Confucius* 20). It would not be a great revelation to note that Pound is attracted to Kung’s teachings because there is reference to light, and light shows the way to perfection. However, in the Confucian text, the fourth *analect* states “that light comes from looking straight into the heart and then acting on (what is revealed), and when this is done they first set up good government in their own states; wanting good government in their states, they first established order in their own

families; wanting order in the home” and so on, until order is established. The conclusion of this *analect* states: “[T]hey set to extend their knowledge to the utmost. This completion of knowledge is rooted in sorting things into organic categories” (Pound, *Confucius* 29). Kung then notes that when knowledge is rooted in sorting things into organic categories, then knowledge is moved to fulfillment and again goes through the order of everything, and concludes in the fifth *analect*, that method by which the empire was brought into equilibrium. Kung then refers to the emperor down to the common man, singly and altogether, that this self-discipline is the root (Pound, *Confucius* 33). Of course, what makes the root grow is the heat of the sun, and the root and its produce is the sense of enlightenment. The seventh *analect* declares that if the root is in confusion, nothing will be well governed. Thus far, Kung is prompting the reader to take a second look at this manner of thinking. It is straight and uncomplicated. It does not request miracles or regeneration from a Divinity, but it demands the individual to take charge of the self. It begins with the ruler and ends with the peasant. This is a teaching of responsibility. So far, it is good, reasonable, and understandable.

There is a reference for “finding the precise word for the inarticulate heart’s tone which means not lying to oneself, as in the case of hating a bad smell or loving a beautiful person, also called respecting one’s own nose. On this account the real man has to look his heart in the eye even when he is alone,” and this quote is taken from the Confucian disciple Tseng, who made comments on Kung’s teachings (Pound, *Confucius* 47I). Tseng comments on the method of improving oneself. He notes that “you can improve the old homestead by adding material riches and irrigation; you enrich and irrigate the character by the process of looking straight into the heart and then acting on

the results. Thus, the mind becomes your palace, and the body can be at ease; it is for this reason that the great gentleman must find the precise verbal expression for his inarticulate thoughts,” Tseng comments in the Sixth Chapter of *Comments* (Pound, *Confucius* 51).

In reviewing how Pound wrote, it is obvious that he wrote in a precise manner, saying just what he meant to say and having “fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of it [poetry]” (Pound, *Cambridge* 3). In his essay, *How to Read*, Pound wrote about critics and denounced those who use vague terms, claiming they should be thrown out; and that these people were “too ignorant to have a meaning; but the critics who use vague terms to conceal their meaning, and all critics who use terms so vaguely that the reader can think he agrees with them, or assents to their statements when he doesn’t” (Pound, *Essays* 37). Again, the reader sees the attraction toward Confucian thought and why Pound chose Kung as a model for his studies. There is no fluff with Kung, and no fluff with Pound. As a point of fact, this lack caused him a considerable amount of trouble. One example of trouble can be noted when Pound writes regarding Joyce. Pound states, “[I]t is surprising that Mr. Joyce is Irish. One is so tired of the Irish or ‘Celtic’ imagination (or ‘phantasy’ as I think they now call it) flopping about” (Pound, *Literary Essays* 400). This could not have endeared him to the Irish, but it was a compliment for Mr. Joyce. However, when Joyce attempted poetry and showed his work to Pound, “Pound condescendingly recommended that Joyce stuff the poems in a Bible or family photograph album” (Tytell 192). Was this a brutal insensitivity as Tytell suggests, or was it a brutal honesty that the student might suspect from studying those whom Pound found to admire, such as Kung?

On the other hand, Pound wrote essays regarding those who wrote directly, without anything insubstantial or trivial. He wrote an essay about Robert Frost, the unofficial American poet laureate who was excellent at his trade in his particular style. The reader may recall that Frost wrote and read his poetry at the 1960 presidential inauguration in his eightieth year. Earlier, Frost went to England and became acquainted with Pound around 1913. They were introduced by F. S. Flint, a renowned critic of the day (Tytell 45). Pound sympathized with Frost in an essay in which he states, “Frost has been scorned by the ‘great American editors’. It is the old story”. Pound continued his disgust with America and the American critics. He reviews Frost’s *A Boy’s Will* by saying, “Mr. Frost’s book is a little raw, and has in it a number of infelicities; underneath them it has the tang of the New Hampshire woods, and it has just this utter sincerity”(Pound, *Literary Essays* 382). While he does not see Frost as a poet in the Modernist Style, he does offer that Frost’s work comes from his own life: “[H]e is without shame and without affectation” (Pound, *Literary Essays* 383). This admiration for the beauty of sincerity harkens back to the teachings of Kung. Whether by design or accident, Kung is there. In *The Unwobbling Pivot*, Pound serves the words of Tsze Sze, a Confucian disciple: “[S]incerity is the goal of things and their origin, without this sincerity nothing is. On this meridian the man of breed respects, desires sincerity, holds it in honor and defines his terminology” (179).

Further, Kung did not teach of a life after death or reward for a life well lived. Morality is worth pursuing for its own sake. This developed thinking would have complemented Pound’s thinking. Kung did not die a martyr’s death or claim to be a descendant from a deity. His writings centered around wisdom, benevolence, and

courage. These qualities would have attracted Pound. Born around 551 B.C., according to Huston Smith, a renowned scholar of religious studies, Kung was kind, loved to be with people, loved to talk, to teach, to drink, but not to excess, and enjoyed music and poetry. He cut across class lines, never slighted a poor student who could not pay him, was capable of sarcasm when he thought it deserved, and was exacting of himself even more than of others

(157-5). In many ways, we are describing Ezra Pound.

In contrast to Confucianism, the *Tao Te Ching*, the work of the Chinese sage Lao Tzu, could not be put into words. The opening line of the *Tao Te Ching* clearly states: “The Tao that can be spoken is not the true Tao,” indicating that the Tao, or the Way, is beyond human comprehension. “Those who know do not say, those who say do not know.” These words are intriguing, but unattractive, to Pound, who requires that the truth and the obvious be laid out before those who rule and those who obey the rule. Tzu was born around 604 B.C. and lived during the time of Kung. In fact, there is an indication that Kung met Tzu and asked to be tutored in the rites. Tzu was said to have spoken:

The very bones of those you talk about have turned to dust. All that remains of them is their words. You know that when a noble lives in times which are good, he travels to court in a carriage. But when times are difficult, he goes where the wind blows. Some say that a wise merchant hides his wealth and thus seems poor. Likewise the sage, if he has great internal virtue, seems on the outside to be a fool. Stop being so arrogant; all these demands; your self-importance and your over keen enthusiasm – none of this is true to yourself.

That is all I have to say to you. (Palmer 35).

Kung did not understand Tzu, whom he claimed was like a dragon that is not trapped by the lure of power, wealth, or position. While Tzu was certainly a sage to be revered, these thoughts are only fragments of his life and teachings. Pound would have required meanings to be framed by words and not ideologies that cannot be understood or cannot be spoken. Again, it is apparent why Kung became the sage for Pound's reference.

However, the American poet, Allen Ginsberg talked with Pound near the end of Pound's years. Although Pound had professed to be a pure Confucian, Ginsberg stated that "it has long been known from his talk about 'the process' that Pound subscribed more to Taoist principles than he acknowledged" (Wilhelm 348). We note again that there are contrasts in the convictions of Pound. There is a yin and a yang.

Part IV: Use of the Chinese Ideogram

In the study of linguistics, there is a theory known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, or linguistic relativity hypothesis, which is the belief that the structure of a language shapes the way speakers of that language view reality (Eschholz et al. 614). When reviewing the way Pound viewed and used language and the way he perceived reality, the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis becomes even more interesting. First, we recognize the extensive use of the Chinese ideogram that Pound employed throughout the *Cantos*. According to Cheadle, Pound was introduced to Chinese literature in the early 1910s through Laurence Binyon, who was not only a Pound friend, but also the Orientalist in the British Museum. Also, the Harvard graduate Ernest Fenollosa, who lived and taught in Japan, also studied Chinese poetry. Following his death, Fenollosa's widow presented Pound with her husband's notebooks in the expectation that Pound would translate them for publication. During this time, Pound wrote *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* (Cheadle 34-35).

According to Cheadle's study of Pound's Confucian translations, "the economy of expression of written Chinese is not unlike that advocated by the Imagists in the period between 1912 and 1915" (15). The ideogrammic method employed by Pound avoided abstractions and "is grounded in the concrete particulars of nature, especially of natural processes rather than natural objects" (Cheadle 15). An example of the meaning of an ideogram is the *idea* of "shine" or "shining," which is expressed in the word *ming*, and is composed of the symbols for "sun" and "moon" or "window" and "moon." The color red, according to the more famous example Pound gives in *ABC of Reading*, is indicated by a word composed of the symbols for "rose," "iron rust," "cherry," and "flamingo":

each of these symbols and all in combination form metaphors expressing the idea of “shine” and “red”(Pound, *ABC of Reading* 22). An example of how the thought is formed comes to the reader when Pound writes the phrase “La rivoluzione continua.” The first ideogram reading from right to left represents the Fascist axe for the clearing away of rubbish of a tree and is referred to as *xin*, and the middle two ideograms are the sun sign, the day sign named *ri*, to *xin ri ri xin*, which translates via ideogram to “renovate, day by day renew” (Cheadle 37). This phrase can be found in *Canto LIII*, but Pound refers to the characters as *hsin jih jih hsin* and translates them to:

Day by day make it new

Cut underbrush,

Pile the logs

Keep it growing.

In the beginning of the *Chinese Cantos*, Pound writes a paragraph that explains the basic discontent that most knowing people would feel with “a transliteration of Chinese names.” Pound further explains that he uses the “french form. Our European knowledge of China has come via latin and french and at any rate the french vowels as printed have some sort of uniform connotation” (Pound, *Cantos* 254).

The point of an investigation into the ideograms is to understand the Chinese thinking as Pound began to understand and use the ideograms in his writing. We have established that the Imagists wanted to make poetry and writing new, thus Pound’s version of Modernism. When Pound attempted to translate the ideograms for an example of his slant on the Confucius *Ta Ho*, he used the symbols for *ming ming tê*, meaning “understanding the inborn luminous virtue,” but translated them into “the intelligence

increases through the process of looking straight into one's own heart and acting on the results" (Ming Xie, *Cambridge* 212). Understanding the *inborn luminous virtue* would indicate that the human species is born with an innate knowledge, but Pound's translation requires the individual to concentrate on the individual thinking, and feelings and act on what the individual realizes through this scrutiny. These are two entirely different views of the three ideologies that represent the words *ming ming te*. Ming Xie explains that the character *tê*, which translates to virtue, has an "eye" and a "heart" component. A further review of this phrase explains *ch'in min* as "renewing the people," and it is rendered as watching with affection the way people grow because the character *ch'in* also has an "eye (seeing)" component (Ming Xie, *Cambridge* 213). With a distant understanding of the Chinese ideologies, Pound did not always get it exactly right. This accepted, Pound was off to a start in understanding the Chinese pattern of thinking. Did this inadequacy of not always getting it right damage his poetry?

The Chinese teacher reminds the Pound scholar that the Chinese ideogram is a panoramic experience rather than a linear experience like the English alphabet. It is a picture, or it is pictographic. The human mind accepts a view of the picture in a variety of ways. Furthermore, the Chinese teacher advises that the Chinese ideogram is seen as one entire picture with parts superimposed upon another part or added on either side of the main, but still one picture not to be separated. The Chinese reader would see the character as a whole, not in parts, "and that is the way we see our country or our family which cannot be divided" (J.P. Bai, qtd. 12/28/00). This is a confirming statement for the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. Pound quotes Fenollosa's interpretation of the Chinese

ideogram as “a language rooted in the concrete processes of nature” (Cheadle 40). This would have had great appeal to Pound and his imagist writings.

For translation purposes, Pound used several Chinese dictionaries but seemed to rely heavily on Reverend Robert Morrison’s dictionary. Cheadle indicates that the “imagistic power of its definitions would have been attractive to Pound” (39). The symbol for *xin*, as Morrison defines it, means “from hatchet, to erect, and wood. To cut down wood; fresh; new; to renovate; to renew or improve the state of; to restore, or to increase what is good, applied to persons increasing in virtue, and to the daily increase of plants.” Another dictionary, which is by Herbert Giles, defines *xin* as “to get fuel...new; novel.” In his 1940 dictionary, Bernhard Karlgren defines it simply as “new, renew” (Cheadle 39). Obviously, there are a variety of ways to view the ideogram, and Pound was not always accurate.

This study of Pound’s use of the ideogrammic method of writing poetry and the use of Confucianism as a philosophy makes sense. Pound saw in Confucianism the “totalitarian instinct,” a sense of a whole social order, the individuals having a sense of responsibility, requiring discipline, where the social sense is innate and needs no teaching, and he saw Kung thought as a root and a branching out. Confucianism starts at the root, moving upward; the pattern is simple, but moving from the twig downward will cause a muddle (Cheadle 78). Pound wanted to connect Fascism and Confucianism, with the state and the individual working together with a sense of integration. Pound was known to state that “Fascist doctrine had its origin in Kung, passed by way of Cavalcanti, Flaubert, Leo Frobenius and Enrico Pea directly to Mussolini, Hitler, and Oswald

Mosley” (Cheadle 81). There was a totalitarian philosophy at work for the Nazis and for the Fascists.

Part V: Significance of the Poet in the Chinese Cantos

Remembering that Pound was a poet brings the Pound student to the examination of the shaping of the *Chinese Cantos*, gleaned from these works a sense of the imagery that Pound could produce.

True to the form that the *Cantos* were intended, *Canto LII* begins with a description of the past state and nature of things in the world, focusing on China, with a suggestion to begin where you are. *Canto LIII* introduces Kung to the reader and the plea or instruction to “make it new.” *Canto LVI* has a touching moment among the historical notes:

And in south province Tchín Tiaowen had risen

And took the city of Tchang tcheou

Offered marriage to Ouang Chi

Who said: It is an honour.

I must first bury Kanouen. His body is heavy.

His ashes were light to carry

Bright was the flame for Kanouen

Ouang Chi cast herself into it, Faithful forever

High the hall TIMOUR made her. (305)

This is the tender story of love true to death and beyond. Pound achieved the effect of an historical event, but with the art of the poet seeping through the words. The reader pauses to realize what has happened. It is clear, sad, poignant. With few words, it remains in the mind as a reference to true love. Also, it is important to note the presentation of the words. There are often those words that stand out through the use of all uppercase letters, but the noted indentation gives a moment's pause to consider the

critical act. The reader envisions a beautiful woman of considerable power and status, devastated at the death of her husband in battle, and offered marriage by the conqueror and thus safety. She chooses death with her husband instead of a good life. She stood by her principles and her murdered husband by joining him in death. So impressed was the good and honest Timour Khan, the grandson of Kublai Khan, that he built a great hall in her memory.

The rhythm of each *Canto* and the rhythm within each *Canto* vary, change, begin abruptly, and end abruptly. However, in some places, the rhythm is comfortable and trips along beautifully, even melodically. For example, in *Canto LIX*, the story is of the Russians, the shared Chinese border, and the embassy at the Amur River frontier when the lines break into a canter:

But we wanted our martin sables, our huntin’

That was on the north side of the Amur

Where are mountains and great lakes in the valleys. (327)

These lovely words flip off the tongue and are witness to the abilities of the poet.

The words also continue to tell the narrative of Chinese history. Splashed about in the *Cantos* are humorous notes, such as Kang Hi, “who played the spinet on Johnnie Bach’s birthday/...he at least played on some such instruments.” Pound refers to a portagoose, which is interpreted in Terrills *Companion* as “Portuguese,” and a frog which is a “Reference to French people” (252).

In his essay, *A Retrospect*, Pound writes of the way twentieth-century poetry will appear: “It will be harder, saner,” and he uses a quote of Maurice Hewlett, “nearer the bone” (12). Pound refers to the new poetry as granite, and he stresses *truth* in its

interpretive power. It would seem to be minus “rhetorical din and luxurious riot” as he states in *A Retrospect*. This is refreshing and throws the reader’s focus directly back to Kung who requests that “we look inward and act upon what we see”: Kung’s request for truth. There is a demand for honesty in this directive. Honesty with oneself directs the individual to be honest as a citizen, which will ultimately make for honest government. Pound’s philosophies begin to hook together.

Each line is flaked with imagery and deserves review. Imagine for a moment the view of the ambassadors arriving to determine the frontiers and with these officials, “five thousand 800 sojers and a spot of artillery. They passed the great wall” (*Canto LIX*). This is an impressive scene.

Throughout the *Cantos*, the reader finds flecks of Latin, or Italian, or a language that needs interpretation. The Chinese ideogram is also placed deliberately throughout the writings. There is a line in *Canto LXI* in which the FU ideogram is used after a quote: “A man’s happiness depends on himself, not on his Emperor. If you think that I think that I can make any man happy you have misunderstood the FU (the Happiness ideogram) that I sent you” (*Canto LXI*). Again, this is a line to ponder because it puts the responsibility, even for happiness, squarely on the individual’s shoulder. It is Confucianism, and it is Poundian philosophy poetically presented.

However taken, line for line, the *Cantos* relate history, are entertaining, colorful, and are grand poetry. But this is not Pound’s best poetry. We recall that he was awarded the Bollingen Prize for poetry in 1949 for his *Pisan Cantos*. Does a thread of the *Chinese Cantos* weave into the *Pisan Cantos*? Is there a connection?

Part VI: The Prizewinning Pisan Cantos

The challenge for this writer in examining the *Pisan Cantos* (*Canto LXXIV-LXXXIV*) is to note a connection from the *Chinese Cantos* to the prizewinning *Pisan Cantos*. Then the question is, were these *Cantos* worthy of the Bollingen Prize? *A triumph for liberalism* was the assignation from noted poets and those who voted for Pound to receive the 1949 Bollingen Prize for Poetry (Wilhelm 279). Wilhelm, in *Ezra Pound: The Tragic Years*, stated that this was Pound's best poetry and perhaps the best poetry ever written. Wilhelm also notes the one definable difference was finding the "P" in this poetry (221).

First, to set the stage for the writing of Pound's prizewinning works, we note that the war in Italy was concluding rapidly in favor of the Americans. Pound had been broadcasting to England, to parts of Central Europe, and to the United States in favor of the Nazis, but in particular, the Fascists and Mussolini (Tytell 261). Since Pound was an American citizen, he bought for himself an indictment of treason by the United States. When Mussolini was fleeing northward out of Italy, he was caught and killed by the Nationalists, and Pound decided the same fate could be his and it was time to surrender to the United States occupying forces. With some difficulty initially, especially in finding someone who knew of his case, he finally was taken prisoner and incarcerated while paperwork and the formalities of his case were worked through before he was taken to the United States for trial. This is when he began to write his more perfect poetry. The time period of the incarceration at Pisa, Italy, was May through November of 1945. Bearing in mind that his reference library during the incarceration at Pisa was extremely

limited, and his instruments for writing were near primitive, so it became Pound alone with his talent and his memories that produced this epic writing.

The first *Pisan Canto*, *LXXIV*, laments Mussolini's death and his crushed dreams, and Pound faulted the partisans. Mussolini was shot, and the reader notes the play on Eliot's (whom Pound referred to as Possum) poem, *The Hollow Men*: "[Y]et say this to the Possum: a bang, not a whimper" (*Canto LXXIV*). This line interprets to the world ending with the bang that killed Mussolini. Pound declares the tragedy of Mussolini's death. Pound makes it clear that Mussolini planned to build the perfect city (country) when he writes of Dioce, the first great ruler of the Medes, who built a visionary city such as Pound envisioned Mussolini would have built (Terrell *Companion* 362). The *Chinese Canto* connection here is a link to the *process*, the Taoist *way* where all life should blend and flow with nature. In the next line, the poet poses the question: "[W]hat whiteness will you add to this whiteness, what candor?" If whiteness refers to light, then the poet is asking what can be said of this sad situation as we see it? Sadly, at this point, he is still praising Mussolini and casting doubt again on the American President Roosevelt by calling him "a snotty barbarian." Pound refers to China and things Chinese when he looks at a mountain that he could see from the detainment area and writes of it as Mt. Taishan, which is a sacred mountain in China "where many shrines are noted on the road to the top, on which stands the temple. A mountain Pound could see from the detention camp reminded him of Taishan" (Terrell *Companion* 365). In the same *Canto*, Pound writes of a man by the name of Till who was hung for rape and murder. Pound, already indicted for being a traitor, feared for his own life at this point and was not certain what his fate would be, thus the ideogram for *negative*, *not*, or *no* (Terrell

Companion 369). The Chinese references are obvious, but there is less history in this *Canto*. There is discussion about the recent events, which no doubt devastated Pound. He was in a major difficulty, with no companions (Pound was accustomed to intellectual discussions with his friends, was always surrounded by books, able to write and receive correspondence and always in command of the situation, but now alone in a crude prison cage). He apparently was not yet willing to admit any fault for his plight. The world had not yet learned to learn. He tried to teach society about war and economics, but he failed. This failure came through in his first *Pisan Canto*, especially in the final lines with references to light, crystal jet (forms of light): “so light is the urging, so ordered the dark petals of iron/we who have passed over Lethe” (The River of Forgetfulness in *Dante’s Hades*). Terrell explains “a pattern of steel dust formed by a magnet, suggesting divine intervention –in this case, a rose; another example is the pattern of frost on a window pane, which also suggests a mystery of life (Terrell *Companion* 388).

There begins that slight move to a centered writing. In the *Chinese Cantos*, there was a cold recollection of historical dates, battles, philosophies, reigns of kings and queens, cruelties, but they were mostly cold and hard facts. In the *Pisan Cantos*, there is an immediate focus on the tragedies of life, the beauty of life, the yin and the yang of life. There is warmth here:

Hast ‘ou seen the rose in the steel dust

(or swansdown ever?)

so light is the urging, so ordered the dark petals of iron

we who have passed over Lethe.

In the next *Canto*, *LXXV*, the first line refers to “Phlegethon”, which is the River of Fire in Hades, where the screams and laments of the condemned can be heard. But Pound writes, “Out of Phlegethon,” and this may also be a reference to the city of Dresden, which was firebombed by the Allies. Recalling the first word of this *Canto* “OUT”, and then realizing the two following pages consist of a musical score by Munch, and a reference in the *ABC of Reading* instructs that “the birds are still in the music even though the music was originally a troubadour melody, transcribed to violin music, and the birds ARE still there in the violin part” (Pound, *ABC of Reading* 54). What is the reader to make of this? Terrell advises the reader to pause for thought: “*Canto LXXV* is an exemplum of the *forma* or the dynamic form of *The Cantos* as a whole as well as a transitional move out of hell toward *paradiso terrestre*” (Terrell, *Companion* 389). There is a concluding Chinese ideogram interpreted to mean “make it new” (389). Now this is optimism. This is poetry.

At this time, Pound was living in a 6 x 6 ½ x 7 ft. cage with ragged steel wiring around the bars; it was open at the top except during inclement weather. From a guard by the name of David Feldman and reported in the Wilhelm account, Pound’s eyes watered from the constant sun and wind, and he asked for boric acid to wash his eyes. He was stared at, and he stared. He paced back and forth in his cage like a panther, and sometimes he would shadow box or play imaginary tennis for exercise. He was used to playing tennis and walking, and therefore was in fairly good shape physically when he arrived at the Pisa camp (Wilhelm 218). In *Canto LXXVI*, Pound uses the ideogram for *chung*, or middle, when he writes of the ground and the dew, which according to Terrell, may mean his sleeping conditions (between the ground and the dew). He also uses the

ideogram for sincerity, adding “better gift can no man make to a nation/ than the sense of Kung Fu Tseu or Kung, Confucius, the Master (Terrell 393). Pound has kept his link to the *Chinese Cantos* and to his sincere appreciation for Kung. He repeats conversations of other prisoners, crudely. He describes his surroundings, sadly. He becomes more profound.

Nothing matters but the quality
 Of the affection—
 In the end—that has carved the trace in the mind
 Dove sta memoria

Pound was forced to look back on his memories (dove sta memoria translates to “where memory liveth”), to look at the present in nature and his present surroundings in the camp, and to relate it to whatever:

As a lone ant from a broken ant-hill
 From the wreckage of Europe, ego scriptor.
 The rain has fallen, the wind coming down
 Out of the mountain
 Lucca, Forti dei Marmi, Berchthold after the other one... parts reassembled.
 ... and within the crystal, went up swift as Thetis
 in color rose-blue sunset
 and carmine and amber,
 spiriti questi? Personae?

Terrell suggests the mention of Thetis (mother of Achilles), of the colors, and of the question, is this a spirit? means the line suggests a visionary experience (Terrell *Companion* 397). Pound continues with beautiful lines:

Her bed-posts are
of sapphire
For this stone giveth sleep.
And in spite of hoi barbaroi
Pervenche and a sort of dwarf morning-glory
That knots in the grass, and a sort of buttercup

Et sequelae (*LXXVI*).

Terrell interprets this as an interpretation of a letter that circulated in sixteenth century Europe and that described a Christian utopia where a man whose bed is covered with sapphires sleeps with beautiful women only for procreation. The sapphire in Pound's case may be interpreted as a spiritual repose. The final line here is interpreted as "and the consequences" (Terrell *Companion* 398). While there was nothing much to do but write, there is no doubt that Pound would experience a repose, and it may well have been spiritual. This *Canto* includes Greek words and Greek mythology as well as tears. Reading this *Canto* over several times reveals a poet trying to make sense of his chaos, or relating his chaos to a Greek tragedy.

Pound continues with references to the Chinese ideograms, and he makes references to Kung. In this dire situation, he was still able to use his sense of humor in the first lines of *Canto LXXVII*:

And this day Abner lifted a shovel...

Instead of watchin' it to see if it would
take action.

Later, in this *Canto*, he answered the inquiry, "Wot Izza comin"?:

I'll tell you wot izza comin'
Sochy-lism is a comin

Then the poet lapses into some memories of his youth and describes his present surroundings.

He uses an ideogram for: "Bright dawn ... on the sht house/next day with the shadow of the gibbets attendant." He goes on to describe the Pisan clouds and compares them to Scudder's Falls on the Schuylkill, and we detect a sentimentality that was not present in the *Chinese Cantos*. In this particular *Canto*, there are copious ideograms and direct quotes of Kung. He lashes out at the Italians, calling them wops:

And the dog-damn wop is not, save by exception,
Honest in administration any more than the briton is truthful.
Jactacy, vanity, peculation to the ruin of 20 years' labour (*LXXVII*).

The poet has returned to the murder of "the boss", or Mussolini, and demonstrates his anger by cussing the Italians.

Pound refers to the *Analects*, continuing this reference in the *Pisan Cantos*. The reader notes especially the line: "like an arrow, and under bad government like an arrow/ Missing the bull's eye seeks the cause in himself" (*LXVII*), and Terrell interprets this as "the ethic of Confucius and Mencius is a Nordic ethic...It is concentrated in the Mencian parable: 'An Archer having missed the bullseye does NOT turn round and blame

someone else. He seeks the cause in himself” (Terrell *Companion* 407). There is the ongoing reference to Kung.

We recall that the idea of the Imagists of the early twentieth century was to write free verse, using common language and concrete images, thus making it new. This was to be a new concept in writing. Clearly, in *Canto LXXVIII*, Pound has used the common language, as the *Canto* begins with “60 geese assembled.” There was much babbling, we can assume, at the internment camp, and according to Terrell, it may have reminded Pound of the judgment of mythological character, Paris, on Mt. Ida (Terrell *Companion* 497). However, the reference to Cassandra, “your eyes are like tigers, /with no word written in them” Terrell explains by saying “the image of eyes becomes more pronounced after this reference” (Terrell 415). Speaking the common language, the reader notes the writing emulating a lisp owned by someone Pound heard speaking. There is a reference to a chemical plant, with a mention to “they”, and “those who did not want it to come to an end”—clearly references to the money lenders, the bankers that finance wars and make a profit. Such indictments make up Pound’s repetitive pronouncement of shame.

Admittedly, the topics move about rapidly. The language also moves about rapidly. One line will be extremely common language, often with a regional dialect, and the next will be an expression of eloquent poetry. Some of it is beautiful; all of it is concrete. He cleverly describes his trip from Rome back to the North and his daughter Mary’s welcome (in German). He recounts the errors and terrors of the British government, including a return to the gold standard orchestrated by Winston Churchill. This act caused a depression in England, and suffering other places in the empire (Terrell 321). Pound is keeping up with his old enemies, and if there is anything to be said against the

Fascists and/or Nazis, the reader is reminded of the troubles caused by the Allies. The final lines are worth the struggle of interpreting the poem, and the final ten words are from Kung:

The shadow of the tent's peak treads on its corner peg
 Marking the hour. The moon split, no cloud nearer than Lucca.
 In the spring and autumn
 In "The Spring and Autumn:
 There
 Are
 No
 Righteous
 Wars (LXXVIII).

There is no doubt that Pound is a poet: a great poet. There is also no doubt that few people will read *The Cantos* because they are so difficult, requiring explanations throughout. There is excellent imagery in the *Cantos* that is timeless, and damning racial slurs that are not acceptable. Also, he had a unique sense of humor:

I wonder what Tsu Tsze's calligraphy looked like
 They say she could draw down birds from the trees,
 That indeed was imperial; but made hell in
 The palace
 As some say: a dark forest
 The warp and the woof
 That is of heaven

“and I be damned” said Confucius; (*LXXX*).

This passage refers to the Empress Dowager of China, who ruled from 1898—1908. The reference to birds and other wildlife appears throughout the *Pisan Cantos* (Terrell *Companion* 431). He explained war by quoting one of the sergeants at the camp:

“Why war?” sd/the sergeant rum-runner

“too many people! When there git to be too many

you got to kill some of ‘em off.” (*LXXX*)

These lines are chilling, because there are people who see war for the purpose of purge.

The conclusion to the search for a connection between the *Chinese* and *Pisan Cantos* is simply that there is a connection. The ideogram is still used, and Kung’s philosophy is ever present, but the difference is in the writing of the here and now with fewer historical references. There is a connection to nature with the references to birds, ants, and such. Pound notes the position of the moon, the stars, and even the birds on the wires and their patterns. This sensitivity to nature, the deeper imagery, and crystal descriptions produced what the Bollingen judges decided was the winning poetry for 1949.

Whether or not Pound should have been awarded the Bollingen Award for Poetry depends on what account the student studies. According to Tytell’s account, it was Archibald MacLeish who said that Eliot, Cummings, W. H. Auden, Allen Tate and Joseph Cornell, all friends of Pound, “conceived a plan to award Pound the first national prize for poetry, which was to be administered by the Library of Congress, plus a one-thousand-dollar prize. The money was to be contributed by the Mellon family” (302). Winning this award would “put the Department of Justice” in an awkward position and

force it to drop the charges against Pound (302). Wilhem describes the furor over the award, and the magazine articles; there were those who declared that it was a “triumph of liberalism”(279). Pound referred to the award as the “Bubble-gum Prize”. That same year, T. S. Eliot won the Nobel Prize for Literature, which was much more prestigious and worth more money. However, Pound did gain new friends and began some publishing, including the translation of *Odes of Confucius*, and the road to his release from the hospital had begun.

Part VII: What Then, Pound?

We have established from his writings and references that Pound was anti-Semitic and have identified when his unfortunate philosophy began and the basic tenets that Pound professed. Yes, it is a fact that Pound was anti-Semitic. We have reviewed his canto style of writing and the *Chinese Cantos*, his devotion to Kung and Confucianism and the resulting use of the Chinese ideogram throughout Pound's writings. We have examined the *Pisan Cantos*, voted to be his greatest, and we have determined that the *Pisan Cantos* that won the Bollingen Prize for Poetry are a grand example of Modernist Poetry. In Harry M. Meachem's *The Caged Panther*, Meachem states:

“it cannot be confirmed, however, it is reliably reported that Pound had been nominated for the Nobel prize, and since he had a powerful advocate in Dag Hammarskjold, it was believed that he would get it. The poet was also nominated for the Gold Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, but this was withdrawn. The ruckus over the Bollingen had made cowards of us all.” (Meachem 118)

We have reviewed his anti-Allies broadcasts during World War II and the consequential indictment for treason. In a letter written to Attorney General Biddle and dated August 4, 1945, he replied to the charges by saying, “I have not spoken with regard to this war, but in protest against a system which creates one war after another, in series and in system. I have not spoken to the troops...Free speech under modern conditions becomes a mockery if it do(es) not include the right to free speech over the radio”(Wilhelm 199). His supporters included Hemingway, Eliot, Frost and Archibald MacLeish. We next look at the possibility of insanity, which became his eventual plea.

Pound requested that he be allowed to conduct his own defense, but assigned Chief Judge Boitha J. Laws refused, stating that “the charge was too serious” (Tytell 285). The court appointed Attorney Julien Cornell, who wrote that he found the poet under a “mental cloud.” A claustrophobic problem, from which Pound suffered, manifested during his wait for trial and was described by Tytell as a claustrophobic attack that followed from his being locked in a cell and deprived of exercise (due to another inmate’s escape attempt). The result was mental and physical exhaustion, and Pound was sent to an infirmary. Cornell suggested that he plead “insanity,” and Pound did not object. At this point, there is no doubt that Pound thought of William Joyce, an Irishman hateful of and executed by the English for broadcasts Joyce made during the war, and also of Douglas Chandler, an American accused of being a traitor, and sentenced to life imprisonment in Boston (Wilhelm 249). When Cornell asked if Pound would stand mute or enter a plea, “his mouth opened once or twice as if to speak, but no words came out. He looked up at the ceiling and his face began to twitch. Finally, he said he felt ill and asked if he could go back to the infirmary” (Tytell 286). The initial meeting between Pound and Cornell found Pound talking fitfully about a wide variety of subjects. Coupled with his request to return to the infirmary, his claim that he could be of help to President Truman, and his statement that hanging a poet could be of great benefit, the guilty arrow was now directed to the insanity bullseye.

Many were Pound’s supporters, including Hemingway, Laughlin, and Archibald MacLeish, poet, author, and assistant secretary of state from 1944 to 1945 (Bush *Cambridge* 111), who felt a civil rights defense would not work because of his anti-Semitism stance and so advised the insanity plea (Tytell 285). James Laughlin wrote to

Eliot that “[we] realize Ezra is ‘sane’ and the world is ‘insane’, but since it is the world which habitually hangs or torments men of genius or vision this solution seems the most practical” (Tytell 285). A shocked and concerned Dorothy Pound read in the newspaper that Pound was violently insane, but Cornell advised her that this was not the case and that she need not be alarmed. In his note to Dorothy, Cornell mentioned *paranoid in character* and was unable to defend himself. Pleasantly, Cornell concluded, “[A]ny man of his genius would be regarded by a psychiatrist as abnormal” (Tytell 286).

The brief trial concluded with Pound in silence, his hands were folded, his head was downcast; he was shuffling from one foot to the other and continuously rubbing his eyes, “which seemed full of pain” (Tytell 287). The judge ordered Pound to a local hospital to be examined by four psychiatrists, three appointed by the government and one appointed by Cornell. In *E. P.: The Solitary Volcano*, Tytell mentions a book written by Dr. Fuller Torrey, a psychiatrist. In Torrey’s account, two members of the team were not eminently qualified and were excessively influenced by Dr. Overholser, chief of St. Elizabeth’s Hospital for the Insane in Washington, D.C., where Pound was placed. Later in 1984, a Poundian author by the name of Carroll F. Terrell, at present the editor of *The Paideuma* and author of *The Companion to the Pound Canto*, stated that after thirty-five years of considering the problems with which Torrey dealt, he completely disagrees with Torrey. Terrell states that Pound did not seek the defeat of the United States in World War II, so he was *not* guilty of treason, and if brought to trial, he would have been found not guilty. Further, Overholser did not commit perjury and did not coerce the three other witnesses into a conspiracy to join him in such perjury. He further stated that Pound required ego-support, security, and eventual freedom from fear. Initially, after admittance to St.

Elizabeth's Hospital for the Insane, Pound was frightened that a lobotomy would be performed and/or shock treatments, which would have ended his ability to write (Terrell, *Paideuma* 149-153).

Let us review what is well documented about Pound to further explore the insanity charge. Pound, an only child, was born in 1885 in Hailey, Idaho. After a few months of frontier living, his mother uprooted her infant Ezra to live in New York, then Philadelphia. The plush Victorian Style house in Philadelphia included "customary family portraits, a precious Ming vase, some oriental drawings, India prints on the chairs, a few heirlooms, lots of books, a piano and a small Hammond organ. The household also included a maid and the pretensions of grandeur" (Tytell 15-16). According to this account, Pound was read Longfellow before naptime. Apparently, he grabbed onto poetry as part of his comfort zone, which included the security of his mother, a lovely home and all the fittings of mental and bodily nourishment. At the age of eleven, he wrote his first poem about William Jennings Bryan. It was the same year of Bryan's attempt to defeat the banking establishment and gold standard, and this subject left an imprint on the child's mind (Tytell 17). (William Jennings Bryan, a fundamentalist, was famous for his "Cross of Gold" speech, which was instrumental in his presidential nomination in 1896, 1900, and 1908 (Rosenbaum, et.al, *New American Encyclopedia*).

Also, Pound was an impressionable child, who often attended the Presbyterian Church with his grandmother. He heard the rants of the Reverend Charles Henry Parkhursts, and Tytell claims the pastor was an early model for the later rants of Ezra Loomis Pound (18). He often reacted negatively to his mother, and in a letter to Dorothy, his future wife, he proclaimed his mother a prude (Tytell 19). Recognizing his more than

common, earthy expressions throughout life and in the Cantos, there is clearly a rebellion against mother Isabel's sense of propriety and control, but she also gave Pound a sense of himself "as a dandy" (Tytell 19). From these early descriptions, we can detect that Pound saw himself as a nonconforming poet. In 1901, in college, he employed a gold-headed cane and sometimes a broad-brimmed hat with a swooping feather (Tytell 19). This is a crying out for attention. The reader can, no doubt, recall those of extraordinary intelligence who have quirks in their makeup that are merely cries for attention.

However, Pound's parents gave him attention and were encouraging. They believed his "grand declaration" that "I want to write, before I die, the greatest poems that have ever been written" (Tytell 19). College was not a positive experience for Pound, who was the victim of constant tricks. One of his classmates saw him as a "lone wolf... shy dreamer who didn't seem to have or want any friends." Another referred to him as "a sort of screwball very easily duped and the basis of many practical jokes" (Tytell 20). When Pound moved, accompanied by his mother, on to another college he was excluded from a fraternity, and one time his room was stripped, and his belongings were moved into the courtyard (Tytell 22).

These examples of behavior and fellow-student reaction to Pound indicate a problem with negotiating the River Adolescence. There is a concern for his self-esteem, which can be judged as poor during this time. Pound described himself as a "lanky whey faced youth" (Tytell 19). Physical appearance is an especially powerful contributor to self-esteem in adolescence. In a study by Susan Harter, "[P]hysical appearance consistently correlates the most strongly with global self-esteem, followed by peer social acceptance" (Santrock 319). This is a lifetime situation: Self-concepts regarding physical

attractiveness are the strongest predictor of overall self-esteem. The negative indicators for self-esteem include:

1. puts down others by teasing, name-calling, or gossiping
2. uses gestures that are dramatic or out of context
3. engages in inappropriate touching or avoids physical contact
4. gives excuses for failures
5. glances around to monitor others
6. brags excessively about achievements, skills, appearance
7. verbally puts self down, self-deprecation
8. speaks too loudly, abruptly, or in a dogmatic tone
9. does not express views or opinions, especially when asked
10. assumes a submissive stance

(Santrock Table 10.1 319).

There are examples of Pound putting down others, using dramatic gestures, giving excuses for failure, bragging excessively, verbally putting himself down, speaking loudly, and assuming a submissive stance. All of these indicators of Pound's low self-esteem are documented.

According to *Adolescence* by Santrock, knowing the self, having an understanding of the self, and developing a healthy level of self-esteem and self-concept are critical to making a proper self-identity and to discovering where one fits in society (Santrock 334). Self-identity is critical to the self in life. There are those in society who live their entire lives in a troubled state not understanding and unable to identify themselves.

We have noted that Pound was a loner in college and did not enjoy group friendships. It is more than possible that Pound experienced emotional isolation (when a person lacks an intimate attachment), but it is certain that he experienced a social isolation (when a person lacks a sense of integrated involvement). Being deprived of participation in group or community, of companionships, and of shared interests, organized activities, and meaningful roles causes a person to feel alienated, bored, and uneasy (Santrock 333). Pound was a loner, but not totally isolated. In Tytell's account, there is a college picture of Pound participating in a play. The year is 1903. He had an attachment to Hilda Doolittle who would remain a lifelong friend (Tytell 25). (Doolittle became a popular Imagist poet and was known as H. D., according to the *New American Desk Encyclopedia*.) We also know that Pound was a friend to author William Carlos Williams. Tytell recounts a story of these two in a casual fencing match. Pound almost succeeded in dislocating William's eye, "an event that made Williams wonder whether his friend could be trusted" (Tytell 21). Later, when asked to identify Pound's radio voice, Williams called him "Lord Ga-Ga, a pitiable spectacle, a fool and a spoiled brat" (Tytle 268).

Later, in the year 1928, Homer Pound retired, and the two parents came to Italy to live with Pound, at Pound's insistence, according to Wilhelm (32). Isabel, Pound's mother, was the stoic, staid New England woman whom Pound claimed "he did not appreciate until she was dead." Conversely, Pound's father was plain, old-fashioned, and the Italians "probably saw him as the sheriff out of the Grade-B cowboy movies popular in Italy at the time" (Wilhelm 33). Also, according to Wilhelm, Pound's father had been doling out money to Pound since Pound left America for England in 1908. With this

information, we are aware of a young man who had an attachment for his parents, in particular his father, and who relied on them for sustenance. This also gave him a measure of security and freedom. Wilhelm suggests that their dotting presence gave Pound two more affirmative votes for anything that happened to pop in his head (34). Pound's original flight from America resulted from his invitation to a female male-impersonator to stay in Pound's apartment because she was "down on her luck." At that time, he was a teacher in a small college in Crawfordsville, Indiana, and the conservative community did not accept his kindness to the female impersonator. He was released from his contract and left America assured that his college teaching days were finished (Tytell 33).

Another issue we need to address is the marriage to Dorothy Shakespeare, who was also an artist, a painter. H. D. is reported to have stated, she (Dorothy) appears to be aloof, and after ten years of marriage, they are more friends than lovers... she is very English and very cold" (Tytell 179). They had a child, Omar, while living in Italy who was sent to England so that the grandmother could raise him. Meanwhile, another friend, a violinist by the name of Olga Rudge from Youngstown, Ohio, bore Ezra a daughter, Mary. Mary was boarded with a German couple who raised her. This would seem a slight off-center, off *chung*, off the middle for taking responsibilities. These are immature actions in delicate situations. Also, his style of dress, his mannerisms, and his bid for constant attention indicate an immature person. "Once at a literary luncheon Pound deliberately and delicately munched a center piece of tulips when he felt neglected," writes Tytell (5). "At a Wyndam Lewis art exhibition opening, he draped a flag that proclaimed the 'End of the Christian Era,' " and caused an uncomfortable stir

(Tytell 5). His bibliographies are filled with overstatements, excesses in criticism, and insults. He could not control his mouth, his actions, or himself in general. All of these acts are signs of immaturity.

Even though he lacked maturity, he was a genius of his own type. He studied and spoke a wide variety of languages, read extensively, could be charming enough to secure financial and influential aide when need be, and he kept two intelligent and talented women tied to him for life. Most important, he engineered a new age in writing with the beginning of the Modernist Age. We have reviewed his involvement with other artists, his help to them, and their resulting successes. He seemed to have always wanted to be in the center of things, the vortex. The Poundian can be comfortable knowing the philosophies that he embraced were noble and the reasons that Confucianism became his “religion.” He was, no doubt, a species of genius beyond understanding in many instances. His writing is of great value, with great insights.

His poetry must be read and reread, and the reader will find phrases that haunt because of their lucidity. The reader will never look again at an anthill in quite the same way or the “shafts of silk-like light shining through a cloud.” The drive to know of him is haunting, because unlike most humans, he is an exaggerated version of the yin/yang, the black/white image, the pairs of opposites, the contrasts.

In conclusion, Pound was released after twelve and a half years of confinement in St. Elizabeth’s in 1958. While there, he interacted with a steady stream of artists that came to see him, talk to him, talk with him, talk at him, or listen. He was loved by those who loved him, but few understood him. Robert Frost came to his rescue, along with Archibald MacLeish, Hemingway, and Eliot. Frost had just been honored with degrees

from Oxford and Cambridge and was highly regarded in the United States. Frost and MacLeish arranged the appropriate meeting with the Department of Justice. Even though Pound had been rude to Frost at times, the American poet laureate was instrumental in his release.

A note of encouragement to the Poundian is Pound's statement near the end of his life, made to Allen Ginsberg in 1967: "Any good I've done has been spoiled by bad intentions—the preoccupation with irrelevant and stupid things. . . . But the worst mistake I made was that stupid, suburban prejudice of anti-Semitism" (Wilhelm 344). Ginsberg graciously gave him his "blessing," and when Ginsberg asked if he accepted it, Pound replied, "after a moment of hesitation: 'I do' " (Wilhelm 345).

It is easier to face advanced age and the inevitable when goals have been accomplished and a measure of satisfaction has been achieved. At Pound's 82nd birthday party in 1967, he was known to make the statement, "Basil Bunting told me that the Cantos refer, but do not present" and Wilhelm offers that this is actually a very perceptive comment on Pound's work. However, Ginsberg gallantly offered that Bunting told him that Pound was to be praised for his economy of language (Wilhem 344).

In 1963 Pound was living with Olga in Italy, while Dorothy had returned to England in poor health. It was this year that Pound granted an interview with a reporter for an Italian magazine during which "Pound admitted, 'All my life I believed I knew nothing, yes I knew nothing. And so words became devoid of meaning'" (Tytell 335). This is a sad statement for a man who lived by use of the *word*. There is a deep and total lack of self-esteem and a strong indication of his lack of maturity. Was he just putting on a show all of his life?

When he was not involved in a thousand activities, i.e., writing operas and plays, editing his friends works and helping them publish their works, getting money for the backing of projects, and so forth, he wrote mind-stabbing lines. He wrote not only poetry, but also rich prose, and books that are sought after today, especially his *ABC of Reading*. The *Paediuma Journal* is dedicated to Poundian studies. Periodically, Poundians gather to discuss, review, and enjoy his work. Pound is a fascinating study, and the question was how could such genius end so tragically? I return to the yin and the yang. There was beauty and tragedy, successes and failures, dramas and disasters, loves and hatreds, but much accomplished. It was Pound who edited Eliot's *The Wasteland*, and it was Pound that aided in the editing and publishing of Joyce's *Ulysses*. His greatest impact on writing, of course, is his influence on the Imagist poets and the introduction of the Modernist Age in writing that revolutionized the way poetry is written.

That so much could be accomplished in one lifetime of eighty-seven years is in itself mysterious and in its own way a writing of paradise.

I have tried to write Paradise

Do not move

Let the wind speak
that is paradise.

Let the Gods forgive what I
have made

Let those I love try to forgive
what I have made. (Notes for CXVII et seq.)

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