

**The Art of Sincerity:
Confucianism, Ezra Pound, and the Malatesta Cantos**


by

Kent Allen Castonguay
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Dr. Luke Carson, Supervisor (Department of English)



Dr. Toby Foshay, Departmental Member (Department of English)



Dr. Marc Lapprand, Outside Member (Department of French)



Dr. Wesley T. Wooley, External Examiner (Department of History)

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University of Victoria

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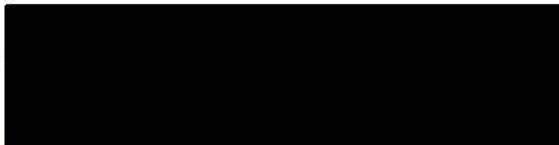
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Supervisor: Dr. Luke Carson

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses upon *sincerity* as the distinguishing characteristic of Ezra Pound's modernist ethos and aesthetic. It assumes as its foundation the *Ta Hio* (*The Great Learning*) of the Confucio-Mencian tradition, a text Pound translates twice over the course of eighteen years in the belief that its teaching might revitalize modern culture. The first chapter explores the main discrepancies between the two translations, discovering with Pound that sincerity is not simply a state of mind, passively obedient to circumstance and indiscriminate with the facts of history, but an active force that is always transforming and completing things, effectively shaping and enlightening our existence. From this principle, the second chapter champions sincerity as the central condition of Pound's "new method in scholarship," celebrating the pivotal responsibility of the artist in the articulation and determination of cultural character. The third chapter then examines the art of sincerity in terms of the Chinese or ideographic manner of exemplum, demonstrating the integrity with which Pound sought to stimulate the need for a new cultural renaissance by foregrounding the deeds of a fourteenth-century Italian mercenary, Sigismondo Malatesta, in light of the dark moral context in which it was his misfortune to be born.

Examiners:



Dr. Luke Carson, Supervisor (Department of English)



Dr. Toby Foshay, Departmental Member (Department of English)



Dr. Mark Laprand, Outside Member (Department of French)



Dr. Wesley T. Wooley, External Examiner (Department of History)

**FOR
CLARE AND LOUISE CASTONGUAY**

***my brother*
MURRAY**

***and my mentor*
EZRA POUND**

To act on one's definition? What concretely do I myself mean to do? I mean to say that one measure of a civilization, either of an age or of a single individual, is what that age or person really wishes to *do*. A man's hope measures his civilization. The attainability of the hope measures, or may measure, the civilization of his nation and time.

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Chapter One

The Immediate Need of Confucius

The men of old wanting to clarify and diffuse throughout the empire that light which comes from looking straight into the heart and then acting, 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, they first disciplined themselves; desiring self-discipline they rectified their own hearts; and wanting to rectify their hearts, they sought precise verbal definitions of their inarticulate thoughts [the tones given off by the heart]; wishing to attain precise verbal definitions, they set to extend their knowledge to the utmost. This completion of knowledge is rooted in sorting things into organic categories.

Mencius¹

From early in his career when he appeals to "common knowledge" as the basis of his "heresies," through to Vorticist manifestos, radical economic and socio-political programmes, a call for "Kulchural" regeneration, and his unfinished monument, *The Cantos*, Ezra Pound displays an unorthodox brand of heroism, championing his "unmitigated gall" as the virtue by which he will subject authority to "certain forms of civility, consideration, and efficiency" (*SP* 21-2).² His critical texts are hardly the ABC's of interpretation and understanding in the conventional sense, more dazzling and disseminative than coherent or refined. Over and again he argues for a "precision and clarity of thought" (*LE* 22), and from Imagism on, seeks to perfect his dictum that "[g]reat literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree" (23). His so-called "luminous detail[s]," whether words, phrases, or historical facts, are at once informative and interpretive, giving one "sudden insight into circumajacent conditions, into their causes, their effects, into sequence, and law" (*SP* 22), and becoming ever more radiant and empowering when combined masterfully; likewise the term *Paideuma* as an expression of cultural vitality is by definition a transformational force, at once displaying "the complex of ideas which is in a given time germinal," while yet serving to criticize that

very complexity, "conditioning actively all the thought and action of its own time" (284).³ In short, as the passage cited above from Pound's translation of Mencius's *The Great Digest (Ta Hio)* describes the circulation of such "vivid and dynamic meaning" (78), the responsibility of authority, that is, consciousness on all levels of good government, lies in the sincerity of its insight to the inner nature and condition of man, the "light" of which, as it yields the determination of the will, "comes from looking straight into the heart and then acting."

Throughout much of his prose, Pound readily acknowledges the vital role Confucian thought has had in the development and improvement of his own self-knowledge.⁴ When asked by T.S. Eliot in 1934 to clarify his faith, Pound answered without hesitation: "I believe the *Ta Hio*" (LE 86).⁵ The nature of this belief is articulated more insightfully years later when in 1939 Pound describes its focus and application: "I can conceive of a man's believing that if, and in measure as, he brings order into his own consciousness (his own 'innermost') that order will emanate from him" (SP 66). His first translation of the *Ta Hio* was published in 1927 and based on the "pooled results" of French scholars Pauthier and Bazin from some ninety years earlier, their work, however "prolix and inferior" (SP 82) to the original, displaying what Pound regards as "[t]he shored relics of a very human and high state of culture" (GK 24). That he held his own version in much higher esteem is stated with telling reserve when he writes in 1937 that he waits for the modern reader to see if it "is the most valuable work I have done in three decades.... And for each to discover its 'value' to the 'modern world' for himself" (SP 75). Indeed, it is in the spirit of discovery that Pound offers the *Ta Hio* as a potential remedy to modern social ills, a "modus vivendi" (GK 25) that might ground Western philosophical abstraction and revitalize its "moral obtuseness" (SP 76): "Rightly or wrongly," he suggests, "we feel that Confucius offers a way of life, an Anschauung or disposition toward nature and man and a system for dealing with both" (GK 24).

Of particular interest to Pound is the first chapter of *Ta Hio*, what he describes in an essay on the "Immediate Need of Confucius" as the *mantram* (SP 77) of the text, from which the "law" of the Great Learning emanates as a natural and practicable philosophy. Based largely on the Mencian decree that human nature is originally good, the first chapter establishes "the duty of developing and of restoring to its primitive clarity the bright principle of our reason" (TH 11). That Pound took this duty to heart is implicit from his ongoing effort to interpret the text as faithfully and accurately as possible, beginning in 1927 with what he admits was "only a superficial acquaintance with Oriental intuition and language" (SP 80), through to an intense study of Chinese characters in the 1930's, when he worked with bilingual texts, glossaries, and the authoritative Mathews dictionary, to his second translation in 1945 while in detention in Pisa. Accordingly, the latter translation is marked by a much finer and more vital understanding of Confucian genius, a perspicacity and enthusiasm more in harmony with the character of the text. The duty of *The Great Digest* does not appeal to reason, but to "the heart's law" (C 11) as the principle of intelligence, to a latent vitality or *desire* in human nature that must ever be acknowledged and affirmed: "Make clear the intelligence," Pound translates, "by looking straight into the heart and then acting. Clarify the intelligence in straight action" (C 40).⁶ In short, what Pound first understands as the "duty" of the *The Great Learning* (1927), the need to cultivate the gift of "one's rational moral nature" (TH 11), becomes testimony in *The Great Digest* (1945) to his own poetic insight and determination, the need to articulate "the tones given off by the heart" with sincerity and precision. This discrepancy exemplifies in its own right the kind of ethos Pound wanted to re-establish in Western culture, one which "does not definitely proclaim any heresy, but ... shows leanings toward not only the proof by reason, but toward the proof by experiment" (LE 149).

As its title suggests, *The Great Learning* deals largely with the method and procedure of education, particularly the role of authority in social and political matters.⁷ To this end, it seeks to abolish the distinction between politics and ethics, discovering truth in human

nature and drawing upon an inherent sense of responsibility in human actions. From the state through to the family and the individual, *The Great Learning* has been invaluable to Chinese culture as a measure of sincerity and will-power, to Pound's mind "the only process that has repeatedly proved its efficiency as a social coordinate" (C 33). Its virtue, he suggests, is one of precision, of one man's desire to render useful the vitality of the past, in this case some "two thousand years of documented history," in a language that would be lauded by those "in high official position" (33), yet understood and pursued by all.⁸

It is OF the permanence of nature that honest men, even if endowed with no special brilliance, with no talents above those of straightness and honesty, come repeatedly to the same answer in ethics, without need of borrowing each other's ideas....

The 'Christian virtues' are THERE in the emperors who had responsibility in their hearts and willed the good of the people; who saw that starvation can gnaw through more than the body and eat into the spirit; who saw, above all, that *in so far as governing the people went, it begins with a livelihood, and that all talk of morals before that livelihood is attained, is sheer bunkum and rotten hypocrisy.* (SP 89-90 italics mine)

That *The Great Learning* was written during a time of "moral and political chaos," when the feudal system of the Chou Dynasty was breaking down and the power of the Emperor "had dwindled to nothing" (Yutang 8), is but further testimony to the magnitude of its achievement, to the efficacy of human genius in organizing, forming, and communicating what lay inrooted within popular memory and imagination. As with the effort registered by so many of Pound's heroes, this was conceived *against* the oppressive authorities of the day, against their "bunkum and hypocrisy."⁹

Pound's admiration of *The Great Learning* is in this respect twofold: first and foremost, it interprets a certain vitality within human nature which ever has the potential to regenerate itself and create meaning; secondly, it remains an illuminating example of how an individual may derive power, direction, and determination from feeding on the harsh

conditions of his age. According to the pre-eminent Confucian scholar Lin Yutang, the time was in this case especially opportune for some kind of reform:

The situation was so bad that there was no point in ... trying to see the weak Emperor at all.... Treaties were scrapped, and there were alliances and big and little ententes, which never lasted very long. Taxation was frightful, in order to keep up the growing armies, and the smaller states were constantly worried about invasion by the powerful neighboring states.... The ancient rites and insignias of rank had fallen into a terrible confusion; there was great inequality of wealth.... In this atmosphere, the greatest intellectual activity, coupled with the greatest freedom of thought, brought about the greatest richness and variety in Chinese philosophy. (7-8)

Prefiguring a social and political climate comparable to Pound's own, *The Great Learning* proved the most enduring and enlightening of the new philosophies for its down-to-earth approach, offering itself then and over the course of Chinese history as "a meeting-place" or "field of agreement" (*SP* 78) wherein the individual strengths of the Chinese people could be realized and their social needs addressed.¹⁰ At a time when the tide of individualism had all but washed away the traditional values of Chinese culture, when "[r]eason was replacing social habit, and self-interest outdistancing the expectations of the group" (Smith 169), Confucianism offered a "deliberate tradition" (176), one which shored up the values of the past by giving them attention and re-enforcement. *The Great Learning* is in this respect a model of "social genius" (176), for as Huston Smith suggests, the best answer to a period of social instability and unrest is one which carefully balances the preservation of past ideals with a receptiveness to modern innovation:

It must preserve true continuity with the past, for only by tying it in with what men have known and are accustomed to can it be widely accepted.... The answer must also take sufficient account of new factors that now render the old answers inapplicable. Confucius' answer met both requirements superbly. Continuity was preserved by keeping tradition in the center of the picture And yet it wasn't the old answer. All the way through Confucius was reinterpreting, modifying. *Unknown to his people, he was*

effecting a momentous reorientation by shifting tradition from an unconscious to a conscious base....

The shift from spontaneous to deliberate tradition requires that the powers of critical intelligence be turned both to continuing the force of tradition intact and to determining what ends tradition shall henceforth serve. A people must first decide what values are important to their collective well-being.... Then every device of education, formal and informal, should be turned to seeing that these values are internalized as far as possible by everyone. (176-7 italics mine)

To this end, *The Great Learning* has in its own right become the living understanding of Chinese culture, something passed on and modified over the ages through which a common determinative will has been developed and improved. Smith's analogy is most perceptive when he suggests that it has been "transmitted from generation to generation unthinkingly, passed on to the young *cum lacte*, as the Romans would say, 'with the mother's milk'" (167).¹¹ Thus Pound considers it to be an "affirmation ... of a permanent human process" (86), its doctrine "extending to every detail [of being human] as the nature of being oak or maple extends to every part of the oak tree or maple" (82). Ever "luminous" (84) and "omnipresent" (90) to the Chinese psyche, *The Great Learning* displays responsibility for the whole social order as it interprets a certain vitality within each individual.¹²

That *The Great Learning* exemplifies the very virtue it extols, realizing the highest instincts of individual talent and brushing aside idle faith in divine ideals, is for Pound the mark of its authority: "The putting order inside oneself first, cannot be omitted from the Confucian-Mencian practice if [it] is to be valid.... Faith without works is fake, and the Mencian suggestion is that one should act right before formulating the axiom tried in act, and therefore after follow it" (SP 96). This ethic of self-discipline and exemplary conduct is manifest most clearly in Canto XIII when Pound directs us to Confucius himself:

And Kung said, and wrote on the bo leaves:
 If a man not have order within him
 He cannot spread order about him;
 And if a man have not order within him

His family will not act with due order;
 And if the prince have not order within him
 He cannot put order in his dominions.
 And Kung gave the words "order"
 and "brotherly deference"
 And said nothing of the "life after death." (13.59.13-22)

Correspondingly, the so-called "eight steps" of the first chapter are the blueprints for translating the concept of humanity into actual living, "carefully maintaining the balance and harmony of the individual on the one side and society on the other" (Chan 84). Thus Pound attributes the profound influence that Confucianism has held over the course of Chinese history to a carefully concentrated programme of personal cultivation and self-sacrifice to the common wealth, to the ethical conviction "that order should be promoted from where one is; that order should start inside one's own cerebrum, in the *directio voluntatis*" (SP 66).¹³ Such is the sincerity with which Confucianism has given direction to each individual and integrity to the meaning of authority.¹⁴

In so far as 'at the centre of every movement for order or reconstruction in China you will find a Confucian' (this referring to the procession of the centuries) ... there appears to be here a common field not only for the men of Bombay and London, but for pilgrims from an even wider circumference. To my mind there is need, very great need of such common *locus* of mutual comprehension. (SP 79)¹⁵

In short, Pound's contention in the "Immediate Need of Confucius" and "Mang Tsze" is that tradition has become inadequate to holding Western society together, that reason is the poor substitute for value in modern education, and that modern culture is in need of something more heartfelt and substantial, a deliberate tradition that would get back to the "[f]undamental issues" (LE 48) of meaning. This he believes to be the responsibility of artistic discipline, for "[t]he arts give us our data of psychology, of man as to his interiors, as to the ratio of his thoughts to his emotions" (48).¹⁶ Following Pound's insight into *The Great Learning* and his ongoing attempts to satisfy this need in Western thought, what must be examined more closely is the enigmatic *substance* of human nature, the residual

"something" which he claims the Occident has lost, and which, as he implicitly regards his own cultural role, "may require a certain individual to produce it" (*LE* 151).¹⁷

Most rewarding in Pound's discussion and translation of *The Great Learning* is the economy with which this text organizes and affirms many of his earlier insights into the social and political function of the arts in modern culture. Much as Mencius transforms the stuff of legend into objective measures of character, so Pound argues that it is the role of artistic genius to transform the exemplary energies of the past into articulate public structures. "This is not 'the revival of classicism,'" he suggests, but "an understanding of, and an awakening to ... the value of centralization, in matters of knowledge and art, and of the interaction and stimulus of genius foregathered" (*LE* 220).¹⁸ By way of approaching what Pound sought to initiate as a "New Method in Scholarship," one that he believed "would be of much use to the normal man wishing to live mentally active" (*SP* 21), a brief discussion of the focus of the text, the so-called "luminous principle" at the heart of humanity, will set the stage for the kind of authority he thought would lead his country to realize the "inevitable, our American Risorgimento" (*SL* 10). As the discrepancies in his translations of the text will show, the issue at stake is the matter of human virtue, whether humanity may be characterized as morally and rationally responsible, in Pound's terminology "democratic," or whether there is a certain property of the mind, a latent desire in human nature, which ever requires nourishment and direction. To Pound's mind, the distinction is as vital as the blood that courses through our veins, for if, as he contends, the "best asset" of an age "is a *thing* of the spirit" (*LE* 219 italics mine), it is for the genius of art to address that spirit in the terms most conducive to the general health and welfare of the state.¹⁹ "That nation is profoundly foolish which does not get the maximum of best work out of its artists. The artist is one of the few producers. He, the farmer and the artisan create wealth; the rest shift and consume it" (*LE* 222). As Confucius recognizes in the concept *Wen*, good government must employ artists and scholars alike, both as the craftsmen of cultural wealth and the purveyors of cultural vitality, if it is at once to sustain

and direct its national character and satisfy popular need: "When the prince has gathered about him / 'All the savants and artists, his riches will be fully employed" (Canto 13.59.11-12).²⁰ From Pound's earliest insights into how "the serious artist" may best serve and articulate this wealth, how he may in effect generate and determine a sense of cultural vitality, it is clear that *The Great Learning* is an exemplary model of artistic discipline in its own right, and a "thing of the spirit" that may ultimately prove "nutriment[al]" (SP 80) to the twentieth-century American:

It is obvious that ethics are based on the nature of man, just as it is obvious that civics are based upon the nature of men when living together in groups.

It is obvious that the good of the greatest number cannot be attained until we know in some sort of what that good must consist. In other words *we must know what sort of animal man is, before we can contrive his maximum happiness....*

The arts, literature, poesy, are a science, just as chemistry is a science. Their subject is man, mankind, and the individual. The subject of chemistry is matter considered as to its composition.

The arts give us a great percentage of the lasting and unassailable data regarding the nature of man, of man considered as a thinking and sentient creature. They begin where the science of medicine leaves off or rather they overlap that science....

If any science save the arts were able more precisely to determine what the individual does not actually desire, then that science would be of more use in providing the data for ethics. (LE 41-3 italics mine)

Recalling Pound's claim that *The Great Learning* could hold a medicinal value for the West, it is clear throughout his discussion of the text that he considers it not only a just and equitable way of understanding human nature, but as a veritable tonic that might yet stir men "to an enthusiasm productive of action" (GK 347). Thus we need consider how Pound translates "what sort of animal man is" in *The Great Learning*, and accordingly, the way in which he contrives a state-of-the-art system that will contribute to his maximum happiness.

In preface to the *The Great Digest*, Pound includes opening remarks made by the influential Confucian scholar Chu Hsi, most notably, that the following text is but "the initial study for whomso would pass the gate into virtue," and secondly, that we may appreciate the exemplary conduct of "the men of old" solely because it has been rendered concretely and passed on for successive generations to bear witness (C 37).²¹ This preface is significant for two reasons: first and foremost, we are given what Pound considers "an examination with a clear purpose[,] ... the examination of motivation" (GK 79); secondly, and implicitly, we are given testimony to the efficacy of art: "[Confucius] demanded or commended a type of perception, a kind of transmission of knowledge only from such concrete manifestation" (28). In either instance, it is clear that there is a certain kind of knowledge being transmitted, an underlying truth to the text which "matters" because it is within us to be moved.²² Thus Pound writes with confidence that if "[o]ne should meditate upon it for a long time, ... one will never succeed in exhausting the sense" (TH 10), for the text is to his mind a veritable "treasury of wisdom" (SP 78), vivid in wealth and dynamic in application.

In Pound's first translation, this knowledge is first described as the "luminous principle of reason which we have received from the sky," establishing a sense of radiant vitality within human nature that must be realized and restored to its original brilliance: such is human genius, the natural "gift of intelligence" (11) peculiar to our race. The "second item" of the text, "to renew mankind" (7), is directly related to the first, and anticipates the ethical function of art to display and impart this sense of genius with precision and intensity, the effectiveness of which is soon demonstrated within each chapter of commentary when various historical citations in verse serve to interpret and clarify the virtue of human nature as it applies to all levels of organization.²³ The "third item" of the text, "to place its [mankind's] ultimate destination in perfection, the sovereign good" (7), is largely political in nature, and manifest in terms of exemplary moral conduct (11), in particular, the sense of direction and well-being that is generated by employing one's most

effective means: "From the man in highest dignity, down to the humblest and most obscure, duty is equal (for all): to correct and better one's 'person,' that is the fundamental basis of all progress, of all moral development" (9).²⁴ With each item, it is clear that the text seeks to communicate a sense of enlightenment, an awakening to human potential.

Though *The Great Learning* is generally accepted as a way of bringing order into human affairs, its rationale does not seek to appropriate the natural world to human ends; rather, it directs one to concentrate upon the "light" which inheres in and motivates all things, most significantly, as Pound here translates, our "rational moral nature" (11): therein lies its potential and vitality. In so many words, the "luminous principle of reason" is Pound's way of interpreting the Confucian concept of an all-embracing natural order, the intelligence of which is imparted to us at birth, and which *The Great Learning* directs us to rediscover and apply as "life force" (GK 347): "Human nature, endowed by Heaven, is revealed through the states of equilibrium and harmony, which are themselves the 'condition of the world' and the 'universal path'" (Chan 95).²⁵ However enigmatic and mysterious, this "force" informs and sustains the natural world, is in fact its motivation and reason for being: "The *way* is the process of nature, *one*, in the sense that the chemist and biologist so find it. Any attempt to deal with it as split, is due to ignorance and a failure in the direction of the will" (SP 87). Thus Pound considers the text an "examination with a clear purpose," for if the so-called "eight steps" of the first chapter are followed to plan, and if its luminous principle should then become "clear and manifest to an intelligence ... long and persistently exercised"(19), he believes that one must become "suddenly conscious of the reality of the *nous*, of mind, apart from any man's individual mind, of the sea crystalline and enduring, of the bright ... molten glass that envelops us, full of light" (GK 44). In short, this is what it means to perfect one's knowledge of ethics, to become enlightened and sincere in one's actions, for the liquid light of the *nous*, Pound clarifies elsewhere, induces order in those who perceive it.²⁶

This liquid is certainly a

property of the mind
 nec accidens est but an element
 in the mind's make-up...
 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.

As Pound here implies, there is "an element / in the mind's make-up" which corresponds with that force which has given swansdown its beauty, something intuitive and vital which occasions discrimination and virtue in human affairs. To the extent that the exposition of the *The Great Learning* consists largely of poetic or verse explanation, it is clear that art must assume a central role in expressing this "property of the mind," and in turn generating a sense of social responsibility and directed goodwill.²⁷

If we consider, however, that *The Great Learning* is but "the initial study for whomso would pass the gate into virtue," there is some confusion in Pound's first translation as to whether virtue is the substance of an entirely moral universe, whereby goodwill would be the natural response of one's "rational and moral motivation" (30), something spontaneous which "spreads by a sort of contagion without specific effort" (cited by Hyde 221), or whether human actions in effect stem from a knowledge that is inrooted and profound, from "the urging" of what Pound interprets in his latter translation as "the heart's law" (C 10) instead of "the luminous principle of reason." Although the discrepancy between what this "property of the mind" is may seem slight, perhaps even a matter of terminology, it lies implicit in a note Pound includes to his first translation that there is a fundamental ambivalence in the text between a moral and natural philosophy, that there is in fact harmony within human nature, and that this harmony *underlies* our moral being and prevails throughout the universe.²⁸

The heart or thinking principle in man is eminently immaterial, eminently intelligent; it is far from being deprived of all natural knowledge (or aptitude, *savoir naturel*) and human actions are equally far from being causeless or without reason for being.

...[F]or this reason the 'Book of Great Learning' begins by teaching men that those among them who study moral philosophy should take pains to make a long and profound investigation of natural creatures and human actions, in order that, starting from what they already know about the motivations of actions, they may increase their knowledge, and penetrate into their most intimate nature. In setting oneself thus to make use of all one's energy and of all one's intellectual faculties, one arrives after a long time at some knowledge and intimate comprehension of the real motivations of actions; and one penetrates the intrinsic and extrinsic nature of human behaviour, not merely the obvious factors of it, but also the subtler essence. (*TH* 18-9)

Clearly, this "subtler essence" presupposes something more vital than moral, something intimate yet "not quite soluble" (*SP* 31) which is the "real motivation of actions," and which ultimately animates the human character. Though Pound is quick to admit that "trying to rationalize the prerational is poor fishing" (*GK* 45), he is adamant throughout his work that there exists a nutritive and transformative force within the natural world which is prior to thought, and which might only be discovered and manifest with great labour. If *The Great Learning* is invaluable to Pound's mind as "a way of life," it is because it seeks to harness this vitality as it encourages us to live.

What is most curious about Pound's first translation of *The Great Learning* is his preoccupation with its morality. Significantly, however, the term moral is not once used in the most definitive modern and contemporary translations of the text from native Chinese scholars, nor does Pound use the term in his latter translation: by consensus, the educational program of the text consists in preserving and manifesting the "clear character."²⁹ Recalling the Mencian decree that human nature is originally good, it is hardly unwarranted that Pound would understand and translate the process of the great learning to be a moral one, as a matter of discovering virtue within oneself and applying that knowledge to "a whole series of good conducts" (*GK* 80), and yet it does betray what Pound later admits was only "a superficial acquaintance with Oriental intuition and language," that there is something inrooted within the Chinese character(s) which might

only be attained by "greater labour, ... carried on until perception is habit" (GK 145). If we consider the text as Pound first received it, as a "shored relic" passed along by Pauthier and Bazin, and as something he then proceeds to translate largely from early nineteenth-century French, it is not surprising that, for as much as he thought he had improved it, *The Great Learning* appears from a perspective more rational than heartfelt, as something lacking the precision and intensity of personal insight.³⁰ That each chapter of commentary begins with the phrase "On the duty of" is hardly an expression of sincerity or conviction, nor does the pervasive use of such loose terms as "soul" and "spirit" suggest that Pound had thought through the text individually. Indeed, the essay "Mang Tsze" (1938) is written largely to correct and address some of his earlier remove:

Having drawn an ideogram, quite a simple one, three times WRONG, I am humbled but not in any dust of the occident.... I committed the same error three times running before I found out what was wrong.... This note is the result of an experiment, necessarily personal....

Without knowing at least the nature of ideogram [sic] I don't think anyone can suspect what is wrong with their current translations. Even with what I have known for some time I did not sufficiently ponder it. The *Ta Hio* is of textures far more mixed than Pauthier's version. (SP 81-2).

For as much as Pound does try to clarify many of the ambiguities of his first translation in his later prose, the actual text remains unclear and ineffective in many respects, if simply because he does not follow his own dictum: "A narrative is all right so long as the narrator sticks to words as simple as dog, horse, and sunset. His communication ceases almost entirely when he writes down 'good', 'evil' and 'proper'" (GK 48). Although he admits that he was simply trying to present as much of it as he could understand, "free from needless clutteration of dead verbiage" (SP 80), there is lost in the translation a sense of internal vitality, the very principle of the text's rationale: "The school of Kung included intelligence without cutting it from its base.... [A]t no point does the Confucio-Mencian ethic or philosophy splinter and split away from organic nature.... Any attempt to deal with it as a

split [i.e. according to reason alone], is due to ignorance and a failure in the direction of the will" (*SP* 87). In effect, the major shortcoming of Pound's first translation is the way in which it abstracts the human character in decidedly moral terms.

The first chapter of commentary illustrates this point nicely, for it is here that the text *should* explain what one should understand by the phrase "to develop and restore to light the clear principle of reason which we receive from the sky." What Pound must do, however, is explain the explanation, noting in admiration of "the Chinese or ideographic manner" of exemplum how Mencius proceeds "not by abstraction but by citing three historical characters who behaved in a commendable, rational, and enlightened way" (12). This is in accord with Pound's own belief that an authority on any subject "does not, as a rule, sling generalities; he gives the particular case for what it is worth; the truth is the individual" (*SP* 33). The irony of Pound's translation is that he does resort to abstraction, that however the examples are *supposed* to show what it means to "cultivate one's rational moral nature," whether posited as a "luminous" or "sublime" principle (*TH* 11), they do not do so in any particular or characteristic way.³¹ Contrast this with the same chapter from *The Great Digest*, when each of the three characters is clarified in terms of acting upon and defining his "self-knowledge" (*C* 40), when the so-called "luminous decree of heaven" is manifest individually in terms of the desire for "precise verbal definitions," and Pound's first translation seems unexceptional and largely contrived: authority appears simply a matter of making intelligible a generic and ultimately reasonable form of truth. Such emotional and implicitly immoral factors as desire and ambition are rendered negligible, and the natural law appears to be a moral one, an issue of some metaphysical soul or spirit instead of something felt to be more inherently vital, useful, and productive.³²

That this inadequacy is largely a matter of translation is made clear in Canto XIII when Pound is more accurate in articulating the nature of Confucian truth. Here Confucius asks

of his disciples how they will make themselves known, and each responds according to his desire for order:

And Tseu-lou said, "I would put the defences in order,"
 And Khieu said, "If I were lord of a province
 I would put it in better order than this is."
 And Tchi said, "I would prefer a small mountain temple,
 "With order in the observances,
 with a suitable performance of the ritual,"
 And Tian said, with his hands on the strings of his lute
 The low sounds continuing
 after his hands left the strings,
 And the sound went up like smoke, under the leaves,
 And he looked after the sound:
 "The old swimming hole,
 "And the boys flopping off the planks,
 "Or sitting in the underbrush playing mandolins."
 And Kung smiled upon all of them equally.
 And Thseng-sie desired to know:
 "Which had answered correctly?"
 And Kung said, "*They have all answered correctly,*
"That is to say, each in his nature." (13.58.13-31, italics
 mine)

In each instance, truth is the matter of individual interpretation, of "answering to" and "putting in order" what is inherent within one's disposition. Of the four responses, the first three are rendered subjunctively and conditionally, in terms of what each character *would* do to make himself useful. As if to express the harmony of their desire while articulating his own sense of order, Tian literally *performs* his response with the authority and immediacy of something sublime yet understood, in the imaginative terms of art.³³ Indeed, there is a sincerity about his song which is at once evocative and encouraging, a tone of familiarity which runs throughout this canto in terms which are neither moral nor reasonable, but natural and unselfish:

And they said: If a man commit murder
 Should his father protect him, and hide him?
 And Kung said:
 He should hide him.

And Kung gave his daughter to Kong-Tch'ang
 Although Kong-Tch'ang was in prison.
 And he gave his niece to Nan-Young
 although Nan-Young was out of office. (13.59.27-
 34)

To a large extent, Canto XIII describes what it means to manifest the "clear character" in ways that Pound's first translation of *The Great Learning* does not. Ethical decisions appear more conditional than rational or moral, and character is determined by context, in particular by an individual's ability to "do something useful" in a way that warrants "respect" (13.59.5,10).³⁴ Smith sums this up nicely when he describes how Confucianism assumes "that the mind must always operate in a context of attitudes and emotions that are conditioned by the individual's relationships with his group, and that unless his experiences in this latter area dispose him to cooperation, reason however strengthened and refined is likely to prove no more than an instrument for rationalized self-interest" (174-5). In short, the cultivation of reason alone is simply inadequate to the Confucian program; what "the great learning" does seek to cultivate is something more inrooted within humanity, a latent energy or desire which informs the mind with responsibility, and which might only be expressed effectively with sincerity or character:

And Kung said, "Without character you will
 be unable to play on that instrument
 Or to execute the music fit for the Odes.
 The blossoms of the apricot
 blow from the east to the west,
 And I have tried to keep them from falling." (13.60.7-12)

As character is here interpreted in terms of artistic or natural genius, as an attempt to sustain a certain vitality, it is useful to consider Pound's own cultural program as an attempt to keep things of great beauty from falling to become a "mass of dead matter" (*GK* 23). "Certain kinds of awareness"(23) are necessary, he maintains, if we are to be culturally and ethically enlightened, to which end he, like Confucius and Mencius, gives to his disciples the tools of self-discipline: "Government is rooted in men, it is based on man. And one reaches men through oneself... One orders a system of ethics with human

qualities" (C 23). What need be considered more carefully in this respect is Pound's peculiar understanding of Confucian virtue and goodwill, particularly in light of *The Great Digest*, and in turn, how this would explain his claim that "good art however 'immoral' it is, is wholly a thing of virtue. Purely and simply ... good art can NOT be immoral. By good art I mean art that bears true witness ... and define[s] for us the inner nature and conditions of man" (LE 44). What Pound understands and translates more effectively in *The Great Digest* is that morality must ever subscribe to "the heart's law," to the *virtu* of human desire, for as he makes clear of the Confucian metaphysic, "[t]hose who want to institute a process alien to mankind [at variance with human nature] cannot make it function as an ethical system" (C 16-7).³⁵

As earlier noted, Pound's translation of *The Great Digest* was written while he was in detention at Pisa in 1945, his knowledge and understanding of the Chinese characters by then a matter of memory and intimately personal interpretation.³⁶ Accordingly, what we experience are the insights of an individual who has long since meditated upon the text and applied it as a source of "personally directed energy" (C 36), finer in detail and more vital in its idiom. Everywhere it is clear that Pound has added to the reasoning of the text his own personal sensibility and enthusiasm, the very intensity of self-awareness that the text seeks to promote. Even the title has been modified as if to suggest that he has been literally so consumed by the text that he may now appropriate its vitality and wisdom as his own, his concern now the need for self-discipline over moral cultivation, and the virtue of formulating one's desire in a useful and productive way.³⁷ However ambivalent the focus of *The Great Learning* to give "fullest scope to the moral intelligence" (8), there is little doubt in *The Great Digest* that virtue is the deliberate consequence of concentrating one's mind to the "inarticulate" will, to the "indefinite" and "impalpable" (SP 33) tones of the heart. With such concentration and will-power, such *sincerity* to act upon one's intuition, must begin "every conscious renovation of learning" (GK 58), for as one Chinese commentator clarifies, "[s]incerity is not just a state of mind, but an active force

that is always transforming things and completing things, and drawing man and Heaven (*T'ien*, Nature) together in the same current" (Chan 96).³⁸ As Pound translates, "The inborn nature begets this activity naturally, this looking into oneself and thence acting. These two activities constitute the process which unites outer and inner, object and subject, and thence constitutes a harmony with the seasons of earth and heaven" (C 29).³⁹ No longer are the eight steps of the first chapter riddled in abstraction; they define *Humanity*, in the full sense of the word, "[t]he 'know thyself' carried into action" (C 34). This sincerity, Pound continues, is our only recourse to truth, and with the smile of one in the know, of one who had acted upon his intuition in Italy, he clarifies that "[t]o translate this simply as 'virtue' is on par with translating rhinoceros, fox, and giraffe indifferently by 'quadruped' or 'animal'" (34): truth is particular to each individual, and sincerity a matter of "precise verbal definitions," of saying exactly what one means in such a way as to exhilarate.

Throughout much of his prose, Pound reminds us over and again that "[t]he touchstone of an art is its precision" (*LE* 48), that "[t]he serious artist is scientific in that he presents the image of his desire, of his hate, of his indifference" (46) as precisely as possible: "technique," he clarifies, "is the only gauge and test of a man's lasting sincerity" (*SP* 34). To this end, Lewis Hyde suggests, "Pound was an idolater in the old sense: he put himself in the service of his images" (219). Significantly, however, what we experience in *The Great Digest*, in marked contrast to *The Great Learning*, are the insights more of an "officer" (C 35) than of an initiate to the Chinese character(s), of one who has served his time and may now pass on his own perspective with due deference and sincerity:

When I get a good idea from the ideograms I do not think it is my idea. If by chance my ideas are better than the Man of Tsau's offspring, then, of course, my tablet should be placed in the Temple and my views replace those of earlier sages.... What matters is the true view. If my views are better than those in the

ideogram, pray do accept them, but accept the burden of proving it. (*SP* 83)

In short, much as Pound himself had laboured to understand "what matters" in the Chinese characters, so now he gives to modern readers the task of discovering the "true view" within themselves. Such to Pound's mind is the intelligence which "the great learning" must impart and ultimately activate, making actual the mystery, the latent knowledge or sensation, of being human. Along this same line of thought, Pound writes in a letter to William Carlos Williams, before he had discovered Chinese written characters: "I am interested in art and ecstasy, ecstasy which I would define as the sensation of the soul in ascent, art as the expression and sole means ... of passing on that ecstasy to others" (cited by Hyde 220). To the extent that Pound treats *The Great Digest* as a way of passing on this ecstasy, of articulating and engaging a certain vitality in human nature, he interprets his earlier understanding of Confucian virtue into something more akin to his own: to discipline and formulate one's desire, that is the root of human progress (*C* 38-9), and of a healthy culture in general.⁴⁰

Misquoting Confucius, one might say: It does not matter whether the author desire the good of the race or acts merely from personal vanity. The thing is mechanical in action. *In proportion as his work is exact, i.e., true to human consciousness and to the nature of man, as it is exact in the formulation of desire, so is it durable and so is it 'useful'*; I mean it maintains the precision and clarity of thought, not only for the benefit of a few dilettantes and 'lovers of literature', but maintains the health of thought outside literary circles and non-literary existence, in general individual and communal life. (*LE* 22 italics mine)

That Pound thus qualifies authority, Confucian or otherwise, as provisional and transformational, as a medium of exchange for desire and display, is the substance of his heresies, and one which, like the "underlying purpose or current" (*GK* 99) he so wished to establish beneath the facts of history, draws attention to that impulse which courses through our veins. Such is his attempt to create a "deliberate tradition," one that would express a certain understanding of what men have known and been accustomed to, in a

language correlative to modern desire, while shaping the existing conditions of life to be consonant with that understanding, as testimony to modern resolve.⁴¹ "The essential thing in a poet," Pound writes in preface to "I gather the Limbs of Osiris", "is that he builds us his world" (*SP* 19), to which end we may sense genius in the machinery and "life in the fusion" (*GB* 117).

If *The Great Digest* seems much more readily comprehensible than *The Great Learning*, it is because Pound establishes what the substance of human nature is to Confucianism by placing first his translation of *Chung Yung--The Unwobbling Pivot (The Doctrine of the Mean)*. Though the two texts complement each other and are often taught in conjunction, Pound is right to place *The Unwobbling Pivot* first, if simply because as a discourse on psychology and metaphysics, it establishes that human nature is central (*chung*) to a universal and harmonious natural order (*yung*):⁴² "What exists plumb in the middle is the just process of the universe and that which never wavers or wobbles is the calm principle operant in its mode of action" (*C* 9). Together, Pound suggests, the two ideograms *chung* and *yung* represent "a process in motion, an axis round which something turns" (12). For Pound's own purposes, *The Unwobbling Pivot* also represents the central way in which the doctrines of the Confucian school have been transmitted: "The spirit of this work ... [has been] memorized and talked back and forth as mutual control of the invariable modus of action. Tsze Sze, fearing that with the passage of time the tradition might be distorted, wrote it out on the bamboo tablets and thus it came down to Mencius" (9). Here and throughout Pound's prose, there is a direct correlation between the course of human nature, "the just process of the universe," and the language that records it, "the calm principle operant in its mode of action." To this end Pound considers the function of authority, in its most liberal sense, as a provisional and transformational mechanism of enlightenment: "Properly, we shd. read for power. Man reading shd. be man intensely alive. The book shd. be a ball of light in one's hands" (*GK* 55). Thus it becomes clear that much as we are to consider *The Great Digest* as the initial study "for

whomso would pass the gate into virtue," its eight steps tracing the inward concentration of desire, so *The Unwobbling Pivot* affords us an understanding beyond the threshold, in terms of what Pound claims "is usually supposed not to exist, namely the Confucian metaphysic" (C 10):

At its start the book speaks of the one principle, it then spreads out into a discussion of things in general, and concludes by uniting all this in one principle.... Its savour is inexhaustable. It is, all of it, solid wisdom. *The fortunate and attentive reader directing his mind always to the solid, delighting in it as a gem always carried, penetrating into its mysterious purity, when he has come to meridian, to the precise understanding, can use it till the end of his life, never exhausting it, never able to wear it out.* (9 italics mine)

"Thought is organic", Pound writes elsewhere, "[i]t needs these 'gristly facts'" (SP 334), such "solid wisdom," as nutriment for action. Thus it lies implicit that we are to consider the "one principle" of the text as the "the heart's law" (9), the psychological equivalent of the human body, or the principle of the unity of life: natural and immanent in all activity, it is inborn as the will to live, and self-generative to the same extent as is the development of an organism. In short, it is the substance of thought, the very principle of desire.

The Confucian metaphysic, Pound clarifies, is divided into three parts: "the axis; the process; and sincerity, the perfect word, or the precise word" (9). Accordingly, these three parts correspond with the "three items" of *The Great Digest* as a way of bringing order into human affairs:

Metaphysic: Only the most absolute sincerity under heaven can effect any change.

Politics: In cutting an ax-handle the model is not far off, in this sense: one holds an ax-handle while chopping the other. Thus one uses men in governing men.

Ethics: The archer, when he misses the bullseye, turns and seeks the cause of the error in himself.

With respect to the so-called "axis," the "metaphysic" itself, Pound makes clear throughout his translation--whether we consider it "the liquid light of the *nous*," "a fountain of clear

water descending from heaven immutable" (C 11), or quite simply the "Way (*Tao*)" (Chan 98)--that it is an *operant* natural force, a "fecund, distributive, tranquil, secret and minute" (C 16) energy, that must be discovered within oneself and utilized.⁴³ "The main thing," he emphasizes, "is to illumine the root of the process," for "[t]he components, the bones of things, the materials are implicit and prepared in us, abundant and inseparable from us" (C 11):

What heaven has disposed and sealed is called the inborn nature. The realization of this nature is called the process. The clarification of this process [the understanding or making intelligible this process] is called education. (11)

What is most fascinating about Pound's translation, here and throughout the following two texts, is this sense that if humanity is to realize its latent potential, generating in and of itself a vivid and dynamic culture, it must come to terms with its "inborn nature," with something inrooted yet substantial that "heaven has disposed and sealed" as a *gift*.⁴⁴ To this gift Pound ascribes the term *virtu*, a latent "magnetism" (LE 152) which underlies the natural world as truth, and which, when realized and manifest, becomes testimony to human understanding and genius, "as that which appears as truth to a certain sort of mind under certain conditions" (SP 361).⁴⁵ It is in this respect that we say someone is gifted, whether he be Shakespeare, Beethoven, a keen translator, or simply someone with a knack for fixing things: "genius," Pound contends, is "an inevitable swiftness and rightness in a given field, ... [t]he direct simplicity in seizing the effective means" (GK 105-6). To the extent that this force exists as an undercurrent to thought, influencing one's "point of view," "attitude toward life," or "way of thinking" (SP 28), it is the impulse of action and intuition, something that carries with it the fullness of one's undeveloped powers as they long to be acknowledged and affirmed.⁴⁶ Individual in nature yet social by definition, it is the "*idée fixe*" (LE 155), the formulative notion of *becoming*, within one's personality or character.⁴⁷ It is also "the actual generative power" (19) within all things, the "interactive force" (LE 152) or "process" of the universe, at any one point itself yet ever moving.⁴⁸

Thus the focus of "the great learning," the very substance of "adult study" (C 38), is in *The Unwobbling Pivot* posited in terms of unadulterated desire and emanating light, the "[h]armony of will and of all else" (C 19). Such is our "natural intelligence," the clarification of which, through "the process of looking straight into one's own heart and acting on the results" (C 38), is in harmony with "the total light process, the radiation, reception, and reflection of light" (C 34). What distinguishes humanity from the natural world, or rather, what draws it to realize and fulfill its *virtu*, is the critical and creative quality of *sincerity*, that aspect of consciousness which must interpret and nourish its needs as "the heart's law," and which in turn seeks to articulate and define itself as the agent of human understanding and will-power.⁴⁹

Intelligence that comes from sincerity is called nature or inborn talent; sincerity produced by reason is called education, but sincerity [this activity which defines words with precision] will create intelligence as if carved with a knife blade, and the light of reason will produce sincerity as if cut with a clean scalpel. (C 28)

To his own credit, Pound takes the matter of sincerity and translates it into the testimony of his craft, that sincerity is that "activity which defines words with precision," ever mediating the transformation and completion of things as it shapes and enlightens our existence: "*Ex diffinientium cognitione diffiniti resultat cognitio*" (SP 76).⁵⁰ Much as it is the responsibility of the "sage" in *The Unwobbling Pivot* to carry "his transmuting and operative power to the utmost" (C 12), to render sincere the spirit of "the heart's law" as "the invariable modus of action" (9), so Pound evaluates the serious artist by the sincerity of his desire, by his ability to "bring the inborn talent to the full and empty the chalice of nature" (28).⁵¹

From the onset of *The Great Digest*, it is clear that the Confucian epistemology seeks to understand "*Humanitas*, humanity, in the full sense of the word" (C 35), as a living organism, a "something in process" which has "certain impulses and appetites to keep it going" (GK 348). Of these impulses and appetites, the most noble is sincerity, "the *desire*

to manifest coherent perceptions in language" (Ginsberg cited by Hyde 271), and conversely, the desire for honesty and understanding, for a genuinely enlightening form of education. Much as "the men of old" clarified and diffused their *virtù* in the interest of the common wealth (C 40, 50), so Mencius interprets their wisdom in a useful and productive way: "Sincerity, this precision of terms is heaven's process. What comes from the process is human ethics" (C 27).⁵² Thus, as Louis Zukofsky suggests of Pound's interpretation of *The Great Learning*, "morality and immorality become a matter of accuracy and inaccuracy" (68), to which extent the most basic condition of authority is that of "the man who stands by his word" (SP 85), and correspondingly, in human ethics, "the first act of government [is to] 'call things by their right names'" (85): "Qui secundum quod cor dictat, verba componit" (71).⁵³ In this respect, the need for sincerity becomes the central condition of Pound's "new learning," a point made clear when in the first chapter of his *Guide to Kulchur* he carefully juxtaposes those aspects of Confucian discourse which demonstrate a just concern with particulars, the clarity of exact terminology, and the value of real knowledge based on actual processes in nature as opposed to generalities:

Humanity? is to love men.

Knowledge, to know men.

It is written: Fan-tchi did not understand what Kung meant by these answers....

Said Kung the Master: I have passed whole days without food, entire nights without sleep for the sake of my meditation, and in this there was no real use. It wd. have been better to have studied something in particular. (18-9)

In short, only from an accurate observation of particulars, their juxtaposition, and a grasp of their relation to revelation may one arrive at *true seeing*, the vision of nature's oneness. Such is the *virtù* of Confucian genius.

With respect to the function that the arts are to serve in determining cultural character, Pound makes clear that they must bear the responsibility of giving us "a clear idea of the

diverse states of our consciousness ("les mouvements du coeur")" (*LE* 31), a sense of unity and purpose wherein "thought has its demarcation, the substance its *virtu*" (154). This he refers to as "the power of efficient presentation" (45), the immediate need of art to engage the human memory and imagination, the things that make life worth living, in a meaningful and productive way.⁵⁴

When I say ... that technique is the means of conveying an exact impression of exactly what one means, I do not by any means mean that poetry is to be stripped of any of its powers of vague suggestion. Our life is, in so far as it is worth living, made up in great part of things indefinite, impalpable; and it is precisely because the arts present us these things that we--humanity--cannot get on without the arts. The picture that suggests indefinite poems, the line of verse that means a gallery of paintings, the modulation that suggests a score of metaphors and is contained in none: it is these things that touch us nearly that 'matter'. (*SP* 33)

We might come to believe that the thing that matters in art is a sort of energy, something more or less like electricity or radioactivity, a force transfusing, welding, unifying. A force rather like water when it spurts up through very bright sand and sets it in swift motion. You may make what image you like. (*LE* 49)

Implicitly, if we are to understand humanity as a living organism, as an "Intellectual and Emotional Complex" (51), then sincerity, this "precision of terms," must seek to correlate and fulfill the more basic desires of an organism for self-preservation and physical satisfaction, in short, what Pound considers to be those of vegetable and animal existence respectively. Though such "dissociation and tidiness" has a peculiarly "mediaeval" (*SP* 77) flavour to it, Pound makes clear in the "Immediate Need of Confucius" that the *The Great Digest's* epistemology presupposes this tripartite understanding of human nature:

Man triplex, seeks the useful, this in common with vegetables; the delectable, in common with animals; the *honestum*; and here he is alone; vel angelicae naturae sociatur. (77)

Thus when Pound appeals to common knowledge, adding in a translator's note to the text that "Ethics are born from agriculture" (*C* 23), he draws attention to the most basic

understanding of Confucianism, that humanity must perceive within itself a certain responsibility or usefulness, for if it is to realize and maintain a vivid and dynamic cultural ethos, it must bear witness to the essential unity which is the way of the natural world. This point is summarized nicely by Lewis Hyde when he writes that "nature's fecundity depends upon its unity, and we shall not long enjoy the fruits of that fecundity if we cannot perceive the unity. The rituals of ancient mysteries were directed toward the apprehension (and therefore the preservation) of this unity" (217).⁵⁵ With respect to the *honestum*, that aspect or quality of humanity which is "in harmony with earth and with heaven" (C 23), Pound makes clear throughout his translation that when Confucius discusses the "*semina motuum*" (C 47), the inner impulse of all existence to realize itself, he draws attention not only to that energy which bespeaks the fecundity of the natural world, but to the latent desire of the mind as it bespeaks the fecundity of human genius as well.⁵⁶ Such is our disposition for knowledge and understanding, the desire for enlightenment.

To the extent that language represents the living understanding of human genius, is in fact something which has evolved in accordance with the desire to organize, form, and communicate what is alive in memory and imagination, it becomes clear why Pound has chosen to translate the Confucian notion of sincerity in terms of "precise verbal definitions," for much as the farmer must ever cultivate his land as sustenance for the state, so authority, with due sincerity, must ever cultivate and display human *virtu* as sustenance for cultural vitality.⁵⁷

He who can totally sweep clean the chalice of himself can carry the inborn nature of others to fulfillment; getting to the bottom of the natures of men, one can thence understand the nature of material things, and this understanding of the nature of things can aid the transforming and nutritive powers of earth and heaven [ameliorate the quality of the grain, for example] and raise man up to be a sort of third partner with heaven and earth.

He who does not attain to this can at least cultivate the good shoots within him, and in cultivating them arrive at precision in

his own terminology, that is, sincerity, at clear definitions. The sincerity will begin to take form; being formed it will manifest; manifest, it will start to illuminate, illuminating to function, functioning to effect changes. (C 28)⁵⁸

In effect, by understanding the Mencian ideal of sincerity in terms of language, as the one truly nutritive and transformative measure of human nature, Pound establishes that authority should ever serve as an ameliorative force in the lives of men, that it should seek rather to nurture and educate the "inborn nature" of its time than profit from popular ignorance and naivety: "The great thing [in a system] is to render honor to the honest talent; ... a country does not profit by making profits, its equity is its profit.... Honesty is the treasure of states"(C 23, 52). As Pound makes clear throughout his prose, language represents "the health of the very matter of thought itself" (LE 21), in which respect authority must assume the vital responsibility of formulating the image of its desire with clarity and precision, so cultivating *virtu* with such sincerity that it will at once display the "desires characteristic of a great number of people" (GK 348) as it nurtures and encourages individual interpretation. In this way, authority serves as a measure in the exchange of ideas, in the articulation and determination of will-power. To Pound's mind, therein lies the circulation of meaning, for much as language serves our impulse and appetite for knowledge, it is ever the field of reference through which a common determinative will may be developed and improved.

Notes

¹This passage is taken from Pound's translation of Mencius's *Ta Hio* (*The Great Learning* or *The Great Digest*). Mencius, a latinization of the Chinese *Meng-tzu* or *Mengzi*, meaning Meng the Master, was a Chinese philosopher of the 4th century B.C.. *The Great Learning* is considered to be one of the four great texts of Confucianism and was published in 1190 with explanatory notes by the great Chinese scholar Chu Hsi. As Wing-Tsit Chan notes of their significance to Chinese thought, "[t]hese four books and Chu Hsi's commentaries on them were the basis of the civil service examinations from 1313 to 1905, replacing other Classics in importance and influence" (51). The central doctrine of *The Great Learning* is based on the notion that human nature is *originally* good, from which were developed the following principles:

(1) ... [man] possesses the innate knowledge of the good and 'innate ability' to do good; (2) ... if one 'develops his mind to the utmost,' he can 'serve Heaven' and 'fulfill his destiny'; (3) ... evil is not inborn but due to man's own failures and his inability to avoid evil external influences; (4) ... serious efforts must be made to recover our original nature; and (5) ... the end of learning is none other than to 'seek for the lost mind'. (Chan 50)

That Pound was deeply moved by the *The Great Learning* is suggested by the fact that he undertook the task of translating it twice (first in 1927 and then again in 1945 while in detention in Pisa), his revisions of which and deviations from available translations are testimony to how he applied the work to his own self-knowledge and poetic *virtu*.

²Clearly pleased by the "classic sweetness" of this term as he imagines it would have been applied to his temperament by "late pastors and masters," Pound develops his "unmitigated gall" over the course of his lengthy career, and eventually perfects it, much to the detriment of his own well-being. Increasingly frustrated by the lack of depth and responsibility he perceived in modern culture, he allows his call for discrimination to become overtly racist, particularly antisemitic, which, in retrospect, he refers to as a "stupid suburban prejudice" (cited by Hyde 271). Lewis Hyde's sub-chapter on Pound and "The Jew in the Hedge" (244-57) is most insightful in this respect, though I do contend his understanding of Pound's "willfulness" and demonstrate the integrity with which Pound sought to achieve a new Renaissance in modern culture.

³With respect to what Pound considers the "masterful" use of language, we must turn to "How to Read":

The term is properly applied to inventors who, apart from their own inventions, are able to assimilate and co-ordinate a large number of preceding inventions. I mean to say they either start with a core of their own and accumulate adjuncts, or they digest a vast mass of subject-matter, apply a number of known modes of expression, and succeed in pervading the whole with some special

quality or some special character of their own, and bring the whole to a state of homogeneous fullness. (*LE* 23)

⁴That the *Ta Hio* is written in the spirit of Confucius is rightly acknowledged by Pound in 1938 in his article "Mang Tsze" ("The Ethics of Mencius"): "By taking the 'ethics of Mencius' I include the ethics of Kung... Mencius' great merit is that he did not think he had a better mind than Confucius" (*SP* 82-3).

⁵Pound also sends us to Ovid and to the mysteries of Eleusis to convey the nature of his faith. The focus of the latter, as I will demonstrate in the final chapter, is not unlike the "luminous principle" we discover in the *Ta Hio*: "I believe that a light from Eleusis persisted throughout the middle ages and set beauty in the song of Provence and of Italy" (cited by Hyde 218).

⁶For matters of clarity, I will from hereon in refer to Pound's translations of the *Ta Hio* as he does, in 1927 as *The Great Learning*, and in 1945 as *The Great Digest*.

⁷According to Pound's translation, the social role of authority is the renewal of mankind, the duty of which is "equal for all: to correct and better one's 'person,' that is the fundamental basis of all progress, of all moral development" (*TH* 9). The political role of authority is based on aiming at perfection, that is, "mak[ing] use of all one's energies and of all one's intellectual faculties"(19) in the name of the common wealth.

⁸Such was Pound's own dilemma in his attempt to make the arts *appealing* to modern culture: "How ... shall the poet in this dreary day attain universality, how write what will be understood of 'the many' and lauded of 'the few?'" (*SP* 32).

⁹For a good description of the injustices Confucius sought to correct, see Smith pp.160-73: "Not only was he always ready to champion the cause of the common people against the oppressive nobility of his day, but in his personal relations cut 'scandalously' across class lines...." (163).

¹⁰Yutang's observations in 1938 are most insightful here, particularly with respect to Pound's response that same year:

During the political chaos and battle of ideas in the centuries immediately following Confucius, Confucianism won the victory over Taoism, Motianism, Naturalism, Legalism, Communism and a host of other philosophies. It maintained this supremacy over the Chinese people for the length of two thousand five hundred years, with the exception of a few periods, and it always came back to its own stronger than ever.... Today Confucianism meets a still greater rival, not Christianity, but the entire system of Western thought and life and the coming of a new social order, brought about by the industrial age. As a political system aiming at the restoration of a feudal order, Confucianism will probably be put out of date by the developments of modern political science and economics. (3-4)

In the essay "Mang Tsze", Pound takes into account the numerous abuses of Confucianism which have led to much of its discredit in modern China, yet argues that it remains a work of eminently "good taste" that might fulfill a certain need in the West:

I am not ... trying to give a modern Chinese feeling about the effects of such Confucianism as survived in China in 1900, and Mr. Lin Yutang will probably admit that the citizen of a chaos which has long *lacked* a certain code of ideas and perceptions is bound to see that code differently from the citizen of a chaos wherein such ideas have long been abused. (SP 96)

What Pound values in Confucius is his method of "getting in to one's own 'intentions'", the *virtu* of which, he suggests, "is now atrophied in the Occident. This is precisely how we do *not* think" (SP 78). The comparison between Mencius' age and Pound's own is clarified in the essay "Mang Tsze": "Serious approach to Chinese doctrines must start with wiping off any idea that they are all merely Chinese. Mencius had an holy fear of cranks and idiots, and nearly all the most recent forms of idiocy had already pullulated in his time, among sectaries of one sort or another" (SP 83-4).

¹¹Pound echoes this sentiment in *Guide to Kulchur* when he argues for the more natural philosophy of Kung over those concerned with abstract reasoning:

The point for my purposes is that the man in the street in England and the U.S.A. lumps 'em [modern philosophies] all in with the highbrows.... I mean as distinct from the things that come natural, ideas that he drinks in with his 'mother's milk' or from the synthetic feeding bottle of the occident as we know it. (26)

¹²In this way Pound argues that his own cultural programme seeks to discover "a lost reality and a lost intensity": "We believe in the value of a programme in contradistinction to, but not in contradiction of, the individual impulse" (GB 117).

¹³These two complementary aspects of humanity are central throughout Confucian thought and are generally rendered as "conscientiousness" and "altruism" (Chan 84). Yutang is most insightful in this respect when he suggests of Confucianism that "[t]he centrality and basic appeal of its humanism have a strange strength of their own" (3). That the individual *is* the "centrality" from which its strength and appeal derives is summarized in the following terms:

To put it briefly, Confucianism stood for a rationalized social order through the ethical approach, based on personal cultivation. It aimed at political order by laying the basis for it in a moral order, and it sought political harmony by trying to achieve the moral harmony within man himself. (Yutang 6)

To be fair, Lewis Hyde remarks of Pound's understanding of Confucianism that "[i]n its barest formulation the idea of 'Kungian order' seems like an anarchist ideal, order spread

not by coercion but "by a sort of contagion" (227-8). In practice, he continues, it has not always worked so well.

¹⁴The concept of sincerity will be discussed in detail as Pound understands it in his translation of *The Great Digest*. In Confucian ethics, it is the one quality that distinguishes humanity from other forms of existence. From the Chinese character *Jen*, a combination of the characters for "man" and "two",

it names the ideal relationship which should pertain between people. Various translations as goodness, man-to-man-ness, benevolence, and love, it is perhaps best rendered as human-heartedness. *Jen* was the virtue of virtues in Confucius' view of life....

Jen involves simultaneously a feeling of humanity toward others and respect for oneself, an indivisible sense of the dignity of human life wherever it appears. (Smith 179)

¹⁵This sentiment is echoed in *Guide to Kulchur* when Pound writes that "whenever and wherever order has been set up in China; whenever there has been a notable reform or constructive national action, you find a group of Confucians 'behind it', or at the centre" (32).

¹⁶Though somewhat dated, Huston Smith's comments here are as valid today as they were in Pound's time and in the 1950's:

When tradition is no longer adequate to hold society together man faces the gravest crisis that has beset him. It is a crisis that the West should have no difficulty in understanding, for in recent years it has returned to face her in an acute form. America provides the clearest example. A genius for absorbing peoples of various nationalities and traditions has earned for her the reputation of being a melting pot. But in reducing these distinctive patterns of life without replacing them with a clear alternative of her own, America has become one of the most traditionless societies in history. As substitute she has proposed reason. (169)

With respect to "fundamental issues," Pound's response in "The Serious Artist" is obviously written with a certain bias: "They [the people] want 'The value of art to life' and 'Fundamental issues'. As touching fundamental issues: The arts give us our data of psychology, of man as to his interiors, as to the ratio of his thought to his emotions, etc...." (*LE* 48).

¹⁷With respect to the certain fineness of perception which the West seems to have lost, Pound clarifies in "Mang Tsze" that we might learn from the "Confucio-Mencian" ethic what it means to harness that vitality and sense of order which is peculiar to the human mind:

I am not inveighing against the best Christian ethic or against the quality of Western mind shown in Bishop Grosseteste's treatise on light. I am against the disorderly tendencies, the anarchy and barbarism which appear in poor christian teaching, fanaticism and superstition; against the lack of proportion and failure of objectivity when dealing with texts extant.... (SP 95)

¹⁸As Bob Perelman clarifies, Pound's "ambition was to transform poetry from a minor social ornament into an activity of central social importance" (47).

¹⁹With respect to *The Great Learning*, Pound makes clear that we are to conceive of the first chapter of the text as one large ideogram of humanity:

The blood circulates everywhere in the veins. From the beginning [of the first chapter] to the end, the grave and the gay are embodied with a great deal of art and finesse. The reading of this book is agreeable and full of soothing. *One should meditate on it for a long time, and one will never succeed in exhausting the sense.* (TH 10)

²⁰Huston Smith is most helpful in summarizing this aspect of Confucianism:

[The concept *Wen*] refers to the 'the arts of peace' as contrasted to 'the arts of war'; to music, art, poetry, the sum of culture in its esthetic mode. The intriguing aspect of Confucius' doctrine of *Wen* ... is neither his esteem for the arts in their own right nor his confidence in their didactic power but his insight into their relevance for international affairs..... Confucius contended that the ultimate victory goes to the state that develops the highest *Wen*, the most exalted culture--the state that has the finest art, the noblest philosophy, the grandest poetry, and gives evidence of realizing that 'it is the moral character of a neighborhood that constitutes its excellence.' For in the end it is these things which elicit the spontaneous admiration of men and women everywhere. (187)

See also Kenner, pp. 445-6.

²¹Pound does not include this note in his first translation of the text, nor does he acknowledge in the second that they are the words of Chu Hsi (1130-1200), the scholar largely responsible for re-establishing Confucianism in China (Chan 588-92), and the Four Books (the *Analects*, the *Book of Mencius*, the *Great Learning*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*) as the basis of the civil service examinations. With respect to how *The Great Learning* was passed on 'concretely', it was recorded and preserved on strips of bamboo (C 37).

²²In "I gather the Limbs of Osiris," Pound examines why it is that humanity cannot get on without the arts and works such as *The Great Learning*, on the one hand because they say exactly what they mean, and on the other, because they maintain the power of vague

suggestion. With respect to the 'virtue' posited as the focus of *The Great Learning*, this would certainly seem to back Pound's claim that "it is these things which touch us nearly that 'matter'" (*SP* 33).

²³There is some controversy surrounding the second character, which has alternately been translated as *hsin* (to renovate) and *ch'in* (to love) (see Chan 86). The latter is more generally accepted however. That Pound translates these characters in *The Great Learning* and *The Great Digest* as "renovate" and "love" respectively suggests either that the distinction is slight, or that Pound is simply more accurate in his latter translation. With respect to the ethical function of art to perform either of these 'actions', see "Savoir Faire" in *Guide to Kulchur*, pp. 144-5.

²⁴This is related to Pound's understanding of "genius" as clarified in "Savoir Faire" (*GK* 144-6). Also worth noting in this respect are Pound's comments in "I gather the Limbs of Osiris": "We are ... one humanity, compounded of one mud and of one aether; and every man who does his own job really well has a latent respect for every other man who does *his* own job really well; this is our lasting bond" (*SP* 33).

²⁵Pound does not truly address this concept until his translation of *The Unwobbling Pivot*:

[The] axis in the center is the great root of the universe; that harmony is the universe's outspread process [of existence].

From this root and in this harmony, heaven and earth are established in their precise modalities, and the multitudes of all creatures persist, nourished on their meridians. (*C* 11)

²⁶Lewis Hyde clarifies that there should thus be no discrepancy between Confucian order and Eleusian fecundity, a "tension" which scholars such as Clark Emery have foregrounded as the key to understanding Pound. As Hyde suggests, "I am not sure it is immediately apparent why any such tension should exist. Fecundity is not without order. Order inheres in all that is fertile in nature, and the liquid light of the *nous*, Pound tells us, induces order in those who perceive it" (220). See also *Guide to Kulchur*, p.152.

²⁷When Pound writes that "the greater the artist the more permanent his creations, and this is a matter of WILL," he clarifies that "it is also a matter of the DIRECTION OF THE WILL." Smith clarifies that "even a society composed of individuals can, if it puts itself to the task, spin a web of enveloping tradition, a power of suggestion, which its members will internalize and which will prompt them to behave socially even when out of sight of the law" (177).

²⁸Indeed, even Confucius' pupils were unclear on the relationship between man's "rational moral nature" and the Way of Heaven as they were directed to contemplate it in *The Great Learning* and the *Analects*. See in particular *Analects* 5:12 and *The Great Learning*, chapter 10.

²⁹The translations I understand to be most definitive are those by Lin Yutang (1938), whose work Pound was certainly familiar with (see "Mang Tsze" in *SP*, esp. pp.95-7), and Wang-Tsit Chan (1984). With respect to "manifesting the clear character," see Chan, p. 86, and Yutang, p. 138.

³⁰With respect to his first translation, Pound clarifies in "Immediate Need of Confucius" that "I certainly cannot condense the *Ta Hio*. I have tried to present as much of it as I understand, free from needless clutteration of dead verbiage" (*SP* 80). That he translated the text largely from French is also discussed by Dasenbrock, p. 222, and Terrell, p. 61.

³¹Peculiar to the Chinese written character, of course, is the way in which it renders ideas concretely, what Pound otherwise refers to as a precision of observation and reference whereby, for example, each of the three characters in the first chapter of commentary would carry with it a vivid yet dynamic meaning. Pound's admiration for the precision and particularity of the Chinese written character is made clear both in his translations and in his prose: "No one has ever exhausted the wisdom of the forty-six ideograms of the first chapter. No one has ever attained so complete a wisdom that he can find no further nutriment in this *mantram*" (*SP* 80).

³²In the only chapter of commentary which actually mentions 'human nature' in *The Great Learning* (Chapter X, Sections 6, 7, 8), it is useful to note the discrepancy between Pound's preoccupation with "rational and moral motivation" in his former translation, and the self-knowledge of *virtu* in his latter.

³³Thseng-sie, or Tsang Hsi, is another name for Tian. In Pauthier's version, Confucius agrees in particular with Tian's response: "Le Philosophe, applaudissant à ces paroles par un soupir de satisfaction, dit: Je suis de l'avis de Tian." [The philosopher praised these words by a gratified sigh and said: I agree with Tian.]. See Terrell, p. 62.

³⁴In a way that certainly disturbs what we may assume to be a certain Chinese propriety toward the elderly, "Kung" remarks to "Yuan Jang ... his elder", who sits idle by the roadside pretending to be receiving wisdom, "You old fool, come out of it, / Get up and do something useful" (13.59.4-5).

³⁵It is useful to recall Smith's insight to how a "deliberate tradition" might be created: "A people must first decide what values are important to their collective well-being.... Then every device of education, formal and informal, should be turned to seeing that these values are internalized as far as possible by everyone" (177). Implicitly, authority should serve to measure these values and display them with all due sincerity. That the arts in particular are to determine what values are desirable is to a large extent the subject of "The Serious Artist", especially *LE* 41-3.

³⁶See the essay "Mang Tsze" in *Selected Prose*, especially pp. 81-90.

³⁷With respect to the above comment that truth might only be attained by "greater labour, carried on until perception is habit," it is important to recall that Pound translates *The Great Digest* while in detention at Pisa: "I do not know that I would have arrived at the center of his [Mencius'] meaning if I had not been down under the collapse of a regime" (cited by Cookson *SP* 16).

³⁸As Kenner notes, "The character [of sincerity] occurs some 35 times in the *Ta Hio* and the *Chung Yung*, and 20-odd of its usages in the latter resonate with mysterious intensity which incites Legge [one of the translators Pound uses] to talk of its 'mystical significance'"(452):

Hence to entire sincerity there belongs ceaselessness.

Not ceasing, it continues long. Continuing long, it evidences itself. Evidencing itself, it reaches far. Reaching far, it becomes large and substantial. Large and substantial, it becomes high and brilliant.... (cited by Kenner 452)

The significance of Pound's translation of this passage will be discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

³⁹As Kenner summarizes, the principle of sincerity "pervades not only human conduct but the universe. Nature proclaims it, the sun awakens its seeds by its efficacy, it is implanted in every human heart" (455). Kenner may be off the mark, however, when he writes that "So implanted, it is our rational moral nature" (455), for sincerity as it appears in both *The Great Digest* and the *Chung Yung* appeals to "the heart's law" rather than reason.

⁴⁰Closely related to this process of concentration upon the "tones of the heart" is Pound's conception of the artist as discussed in "Affirmations: As For Imagisme":

The good artist is perhaps a good seismograph, but the difference between man and a machine is that man can in some degree 'start his machinery going'. He can, within limits, not only record, but create. At least he can move as a force; he can produce 'order-giving vibrations'; by which one may mean merely, he can departmentalise such part of the life-force as flows through him. (SP 376)

This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

⁴¹"Deliberate tradition," Smith clarifies, "differs from spontaneous tradition in requiring attention. It requires attention first to maintaining its force in the face of the increased individualism confronting it. This Confucius regarded as the main responsibility of education on its broadest terms. But, second, it requires that attention be given to the ends it is to serve" (179).

⁴²The differences between the two texts are summarized by Chan:

The Great Learning deals with social and political matters, while *The Doctrine of the Mean* is a discourse on psychology and metaphysics. *The Great Learning* discusses the mind but not human nature, whereas with *The Doctrine of the Mean*, the opposite is true. *The Great Learning* emphasizes method and procedure, whereas *The Doctrine of the Mean* concentrates on reality. *The Great Learning* is essentially rational in tone, but *The Doctrine of the Mean* is religious and mystic. (95)

⁴³With respect to realizing one's "inborn nature," Pound translates that "[t]he author wants the student to seek not a surface or single stratum of himself but to find his plumb center making use of himself" (C 12).

⁴⁴In his first translation Pound refers to what heaven has disposed and sealed as "the gift of intelligence" (TH 11), whereas in his second translation, the issue of "the heart's law,"

the virtue of sincerity, takes precedence as a more formulative gift, "the 'know thyself' carried into action."

⁴⁵Pound's explanation of the term *virtu* is admittedly complicated if not obscure. According to the Chinese lexicon, it is best to consider it as the substance and motivating force of the natural world, in which case it is realized as desire and rendered with sincerity as "humanity" (see Chan 788-9): "it [is] the character of production and reproduction, consciousness, seeds that generate, the will to grow, and one who forms one body with Heaven and Earth, or 'the character of love and the principle of mind.' In modern times, it has even been equated with ether and electricity" (789).

⁴⁶With cutting irreverence, Pound makes clear that he employs the term *virtu* as a focal point 'to express certain relations':

As contemporary philosophy has so far resolved itself into a struggle to disagree as to the terms in which we shall define an indefinable something upon which we have previously agreed to agree, I ask the reader to regard what follows not as dogma, but as a metaphor which I find convenient to express certain relations.
(*SP* 28)

⁴⁷Pound discusses this concept in the essay "Mang Tsze," the character of which "implicates quite definitely naming the emotion or condition" (*SP* 84). See also "Cavalcanti," *LE* p. 155.

⁴⁸See in particular Chapter XVI of *The Unwobbling Pivot* and Pound's comments on the "total light process" in "Cavalcanti":

I am not considering the merits of matter, much less those merits as seen by a modern aesthetic purist. I am using historic method. The god is inside the stone, *vacuos exercet aera morsus*. The force is arrested, but there is never any question about its latency, about the force being the essential, and the rest 'accidental' in the philosophical technical sense. The shape occurs. (*LE* 152)

⁴⁹As Chan suggests of *The Doctrine of the Mean*, "The quality that brings man and Nature together is *ch'eng*, sincerity, truth, or reality." Anticipating the educational program of *The Great Learning*, he also suggests that "if sincerity is to be true, it must involve strenuous effort at learning and earnest effort in practice" (96). With respect to the term genius, it is in Pound's books synonymous with one's individual *virtu*, and on a larger scale, with the tutelary spirit of an age, its *Paideuma*.

⁵⁰This line is Dante's and translated in the "Immediate Need of Confucius" as "Knowledge of a definite thing comes from knowledge of things defined," a concept which underlies much of Pound's translation of *The Unwobbling Pivot* to the extent that he directly renders sincerity as "precise verbal definitions": "He who defines his words with precision will perfect himself and the process of this perfecting is in the process" (29). See also Kenner, pp. 452-3, when he discusses how Pound makes sincerity, "the attaining of precision of speech with oneself, a 'clarifying activity' which starts with discriminating thing from thing, category from category, impulse from impulse, and (like

light) 'neither stops nor stays'" (453). As Kenner summarizes, "De Gourmont's watchword, 'dissociation,' is behind this, and Arnaut's consonantal disjunction or word from word, and Cavalcanti's lost world 'where one thought cuts through another with a clean edge, a world of moving energies,' and Agassiz' reading of natural signatures, distinguishing fish from fish" (453).

⁵¹This is clarified at some length in "The Serious Artist":

If an artist falsifies his report as to the nature of man, as to his own nature, as to the nature of his ideal of the perfect, as to the nature of his ideal ... of god, if god exist, of the life force, of the nature of good and evil ... of the degree in which he suffers or is made glad; if the artist falsifies his reports on any of these matters or on any other matter in order that he may conform to the taste of the time, to the properties of a sovereign, to the conveniences of a preconceived code of ethics, then that artist lies. (*LE* 44-5)

Moreover, Pound is quick to point out how the ideogram for *humanitas* "represents the sacrificial vase" (*C* 23). With respect to what is being given or "sacrificed," it is clear that if we consider "sincerity" as the application or function of *virtu*, it is realized and manifest as "a dissolving fluid energy", as the activation and direction of the will. To my understanding, the relation between *virtu* and the will is comparable to that between potential and kinetic energy.

⁵²Otherwise described as "technique," this "precision of terms" is fundamental to Pound's aesthetic, for as he suggests in an early essay, it "is the only gauge and test of a man's lasting sincerity" (*SP* 34).

⁵³Translated from Richard of St. Victor, this passage reads "Who composes words, as the heart dictates" (*SP* 71).

⁵⁴Pound also refers to this as a certain "precision of observation and reference," the product of which, as he discusses it in terms of art, is a "symbol of perceptive intelligence, sincere, making no pretence to powers beyond its own, but seeing out of its time and place, rejoicing in its perspicacity" (*SP* 27-8). Such is the "scientific spirit" he claims will overthrow "minds jaundiced with sentiment and romanticism" (28). As Kenner suggests, "Pound's interest in the Fascism he idealized is continuous with his interest in the *Chung Yung*: in the belief that a ruler of sufficient sensibility, sufficiently steady will, could catalyze a whole people's *senso morale*" (457), in particular, to Pound's own advantage, through the efficacy of art.

⁵⁵To Pound's mind, this is "the true basis of credit, to wit the abundance of nature and the responsibility of the whole people" (*GK* 194).

⁵⁶As Hyde points out, the ancient Greeks "believed that each man had his *idios daemon*, his personal spirit which could be cultivated and developed; ... the *genius* [or *daemon*] made one 'genial'--sexually potent, artistically creative, and spiritually fertile.... The *genius* or *daemon* comes to us at birth. It carries with it the fullness of one's undeveloped powers. These it offers to us as we grow, and we choose whether or not to accept, which means we

choose whether or not to labour in its service. For ... the genius has need of us" (53). See also Pound's comments in *Guide to Kulchur*, p. 307.

⁵⁷As Pound here translates, "Equity is something that springs up from the earth in harmony with earth and with heaven.... The great thing [in a system] is to render honor to the honest talent" (C 23).

⁵⁸See note 38 above, and Kenner, pp. 452-3.

Chapter Two

Toward a New Method in Scholarship

How to see works of art? Think what the creator must perforce have felt and known before he got round to creating them. The concentration of his own private *paideuma*, whereof the shortcomings show, my hercules, in every line of his painting, in every note of his melody.... You can cover it up more or less in symphonic or 'harmonic' writing, you may even be able to camouflage it a little in counterpoint by patience and by application of process. But you can't damn well even learn that process without learning a great deal by the way.¹

In the early essay "I gather the Limbs of Osiris," Pound makes clear that the "New Method in Scholarship" (*SP* 22) he hopes to initiate will prove more efficient and enlightening than the inexact and cumbersome methods professed and encouraged at so-called modern universities. His appeal is to education in the "humanities," the subject of which, presumably, would "lead a man into more varied, more intimate contact with his fellow men" (21). The present system, he believes, has a knack for doing the opposite, hoarding knowledge like buried treasure for the learned few, its maps archaic and inaccessible. Consequently, the scholar has become effectively removed from practical concerns, his discoveries hardly the stuff of public interest or utility: "The result of education in the present and usual sense, is usually to rear between the 'product of education' and the unproduced, a barrier, a *chevaux de frise* of books and of mutual misunderstanding" (21). Some twenty-five years later in "The New Learning" section of his *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound argues this sentiment more vehemently, pointing out not only how philosophy has come to mean a "highbrow study, [and] something cut off from both life and wisdom" (24), but also how it has even "abstracted" those writers who did advocate "modes of life" (25):

The point for my purposes is that the man in the street in England and the U.S.A. 1938 lumps 'em [vital authors such as Zeno and Epicurus] all in with the highbrows.... I mean as distinct from

roast beef and the facts of life, as distinct from the things that come natural, ideas that he drinks in with his 'mother's milk' or from the synthetic feeding bottle of the occident as we know it.
(26)

Whether speaking of education or the state, men of letters, commerce, or the government, Pound is concerned with what he refers to as "the feeding problem" (*GK* 42) in general, the unwillingness of authority to correlate and distribute information in a useful and productive way.² In education he ascribes such impoverishment to an emphasis on "mental nutriment" and "the cutting off of learning from appetite" (99), the vapidness of which he compares to a diet of "fat greasy words which conceal three or four indefinite middles" (344): attention is wasted and unfocused, much of the material insubstantial. That Pound equates universities with "beaneries" (344-5) is even more telling of the ends to which scholarship is being directed, and of the stifling atmosphere one would expect of maintaining the status quo:³ tradition is no longer an inspirational force in the lives of men, nor does authority appear to serve any exemplary role in determining cultural character.

On numerous occasions, Pound states that he seeks to effect in modern letters an epistemological reorientation, a re-awakening to our natural potential:

We have not sufficiently looked to ourselves. We have not defined the hostility or inertia that is against us.... [*W*]e have not realized to what extent a renaissance is a thing made--a thing made by conscious propaganda. The scholars of the quattrocento had just as stiff a stupidity and contentment and ignorance to contend with.... They were willing to work at the foundations. They did not give the crowd what it wanted. (*LE* 220 italics mine)

In short, Pound argues that if modern culture is to serve the "emotions and beliefs" that are its "motive forces" (*LE* 219), scholarship must make itself more efficient, even if this requires subverting the conventional rationale of authority by "working at the foundations," by gathering and foregrounding what is largely unconscious in our cultural memory and re-evaluating what has been unquestioningly accepted. Such as we have

seen is the function of human genius, and of art in particular, to shift the "intelligence" of tradition "from an unconscious to a conscious base." As is clear from his understanding of *The Great Learning* and, as will later be discussed, the dawning of the Renaissance, Pound believes that when tradition can no longer hold its own in the face of the eroding wash of reason and self-interest, a certain "conscious propaganda" must shore it up by giving its foundations new and dynamic meaning: "Run your eye along the margin of history," he implores, "and you will observe great waves, sweeping movements and triumphs which fall when their ideology petrifies" (*GK* 52). The implication is that once any cultural system becomes top-heavy and intellectually oriented, it not only loses contact with all natural measures of value, but is ever in danger of internal atrophy and decay.⁴ Thus "the Catholic Church went out of business," Pound argues, "when its hierarchy ceased to believe in its own dogma" (75); likewise does he perceive little but inefficiency and cultural sterility should the American public continue to live under the predominant attitude of "a 'puritanical' hatred to what is beyond understanding" (*LE* 219). To this end he challenges "the mediocre spirit which is the bane and hidden terror of democracy" (224) and demands more sincere insight into the inner vitality which has informed and motivated the great cultural achievements of the past:

We must learn what we can from the past, we must learn what other nations have done successfully under similar circumstances, we must think how they did it. (*LE* 219)

My pawing over the ancients and semi-ancients has been one struggle to find out what has been done, once for all, better than it can ever be done again, and to find out what remains for us to do, and plenty does remain, for if we still feel the same emotions as those which launched the thousand ships, it is quite certain that we come on these feelings differently, through different nuances, by different intellectual gradations. *Each age has its own abounding gifts yet only some ages transmute them into matter of duration.* (11 italics mine)

Though Pound's insistence on re-evaluating the "motive forces" of the past "through different nuances and intellectual gradations" may be perceived as an idiosyncratic quirkiness, Laszlo Gefin contends that in the scientific spirit which marked the new vision of the universe provided by Einstein, Planck, and the "new atomists," along with seminal discoveries made by archaeologists and anthropologists, Pound adopts a method which "testifies to a common human effort in the early part of our century to make the world whole again," in his own field of research, "to retrieve and put to use those valuable elements in our cultural heritage which had become well-nigh obliterated by the tyrannical superstructure of postplatonian reason and logic" (xv, 3).⁵ What one makes of these insights or gifts is a matter of sincerity, of deciding what values are important and then clarifying the intelligence which they impart and ultimately activate, which is precisely the issue Pound seeks to raise, for as he admits in all fairness, his business is to act as a "guide TO not THROUGH human culture. Everyman must get to the insides or the inside of it for himself" (GK 343).

Pound does not, we may recall, seek "the revival of classicism" (LE 220), nor does he wish to dictate any one perspective or mode of action; rather, he argues that it is the responsibility of authority to discriminate within our abundant cultural heritage such "luminous insights" that will, when "displayed in relation" (LE 19), serve as objective measures of character, as "points of departure, or lines" (GB 119) along which modern culture may advance.⁶ "[T]here is no shame," he maintains, "in desiring to give great gifts and an enlightened criticism does not draw ignominious comparisons between Villon and Dante" (LE 48).⁷ Thus, in terms reminiscent of *The Great Learning*, Pound suggests that "in matters of knowledge and art," authority should serve a provisional and transformational function in the lives of men, displaying "an understanding of" and generating "an awakening to ... *the value of centralization*" (LE 220 italics mine). Much as Mencius employs the exemplary characters of tradition to illustrate the simultaneously natural and hierarchical law of *The Great Learning*, so Pound argues that "the value of

centralization" is to be propagated by "the interaction and stimulus of genius foregathered" (220).⁸ In modern letters, this means that the writer must select "specimens from works that contain ... discoveries" (*LE* 19), interpretive details that will afford in particular an "explicit rendering" of life, "be it of external nature, or of emotion" (11). This "is very much the kind of thing a biologist does," Pound clarifies, "when he gets together a few hundred or thousand slides, and picks out what is necessary for his general statement" (*ABC* 22); correspondingly, the writer's data are the so-called gifts of human genius, whether from Dante or Villon, exemplary insights that "bear witness to and define for us the inner nature and condition of man." As for how such data should be organized poetically, Pound's praise of Arnaut Daniel is most revealing when he describes how Daniel "conceived of a manner of writing in which each word should bear some burden, should make some special contribution to the effect of the whole" (*SP* 27). So, too, of course, did Mencius, for as Pound makes clear in *The Great Learning*, this whole is the concept of humanity, the *mantram* of the text an ideogram of individual responsibility and self-sacrifice to the common wealth.⁹

With respect to the state and modern culture, "the value of centralization" is realized in terms of the state getting "the maximum of best work out of its artists," for if, as Pound contends, the artist is one of "the few producers," generating wealth as "the rest shift and consume it," then good government must literally employ its artists as the mentors of cultural genius:¹⁰ "a great age is brought about only with the aid of wealth, because a great age means the deliberate fostering of genius, the gathering-in and grouping and encouragement of artists" (*LE* 221). Though Pound hardly disguises his plea for endowment to the arts, he also draws attention to the kind of wealth that artistic genius will generate in response:¹¹

Democracies have fallen, they have always fallen, *because humanity craves the outstanding personality*. And hitherto no democracy has provided sufficient place for such an individuality. If you so endow sculptors and writers you will begin for America

an age of awakening which will overshadow the quattrocento; because *our opportunity is greater than Leonardo's: we have more aliment, we have not one classic tradition to revivify, we have China and Egypt, and the unknown lands lying upon the roof of the world....* (224 italics mine)

The modern sense of the 'creative, constructive individual' (vide Allan Upward's constant propaganda....) is just as definite a doctrine as the Renaissance attitude 'De Dignitate,' Humanism. As for external stimulus, new discoveries, new lands, new languages gradually opened to us; we have great advantage over the quattro- or cinque-cento. (GB 116 italics mine).

At stake, Pound contends, are the imaginative energies of our race, the "aliment" of which could only empower American culture and allow it to achieve what he thought was inevitable, an "American Risorgimento." Much as "[t]he Renaissance sought for a lost reality, a lost freedom," so Pound argues that his own programme seeks "for a lost reality and a lost intensity" (GB 117): "We believe in the value of a programme in contradistinction to, but not in contradiction of, the individual impulse" (117). Poetically, Pound seeks to sort out and gather from the history of literature "the essentials to thought" (SP 359), "the live items ... from the dead ones" (LE 18); politically, he promotes a cultural programme sustained and directed by the authority of artistic genius.¹² In short, for Pound the serious artist must assume a pivotal responsibility in the articulation and determination of human ethics, formulating from tradition an up-to-date, objective image of reality that might stimulate in modern culture a self-conscious yet regenerative interest.

Pound's contention that there is something "defective in the contemporary methods of purveying letters" (LE 15) is based on his belief that because the system as a whole lacks "sense and co-ordination," it has become a "dead and uncorrelated ... field full of redundance" (16). By way of illustrating its inefficiency, Pound directs us to consider modern scholarship in terms of mining:

If a man owned mines in South Africa he would know that his labourers dug up a good deal of mud and an occasional jewel, looking rather like the mud about it. If he shipped all the mud and uncut stones northward and dumped them in one heap on the

shore of Iceland, in some inaccessible spot, we should not consider him commercially sound. In my own department of scholarship I should say the operations are rather of this complexion. There are many fine things discovered, edited, and buried. Much very dull 'literature' is treated in like manner. They are dumped in one museum and certain learned men rejoice in their treasure. (*SP* 22)

Though deceptively simple, the analogy is most useful to bear in mind, for Pound here sets the stage for "the method of Luminous Detail" (21), and what would later become, as Gefin contends, the most influential method of our century, the *juxtapositional* or *ideogrammic* method.¹³ Before approaching what Pound proposes as a more equitable and enlightening system of distribution, however, we must first consider the misappropriation of wealth the analogy implies. As the passage stands, Pound puts in layman's terms what is to his mind an indiscriminate if not usurious system of education. With respect to present modes of research, Pound is concerned with the internal matter of education, with the critical process of cultivating the past--that is literature as the field of human consciousness (*LE* 18)--in the interest of discovering and producing the "occasional jewel":¹⁴ "in each age one or two men of genius find something, and express it... We proceed by a study of discoveries" (*LE* 18-9). To these men of genius Pound ascribes the term *inventors*, "discoverers of a particular process or of more than one mode or process" (23).¹⁵ Accordingly, much as it makes little sense to treat all matter equally, the uncut stone like so much mud, so Pound demands discrimination in modern scholarship, the need to separate the more valuable and interpretive insights of literature and historical discourse, the "luminous details" of human intelligence, from mundane fact. In this way he seeks to "plough" (*LE* 3) or "break up [the] intractable soil" (*GK* 106) of conventional reasoning in light of "an intuitive affinity for ... particulars" (Bush 11):

Any fact is, in a sense, 'significant'. Any fact may be 'symptomatic', but certain facts give one sudden insight into circumajacent conditions, into their causes, their effects, into sequence, and law....

In the history of the development of civilisation or of literature, we come upon such interpreting detail[s]. A few dozen facts of this nature give us the intelligence of a period--a kind of knowledge not to be gathered from a great array of facts of the other sort. These facts are hard to find. They are swift and easy of transmission. They govern knowledge as the switchboard governs an electric circuit....

In the study of the art of letters these points are particular works or the works of particular authors. (*SP* 22-4)

Though Pound consoles us that such groundwork need concern only the scholar, his dictum implicitly applies to all divisions of labour: "We are one humanity and every man who does his own job really well has a latent respect for every other man who does *his* own job really well; this is our lasting bond" (*SP* 32-3). Accordingly, Pound employs organic metaphors to describe "the latent energy of Nature" (25) as it exists in particular "fields of reference," and ascribes the term "genius" to any deliberate act of consciousness which cultivates and harvests such energy to yield the "occasional jewel." "Genius," we may recall, is "an inevitable swiftness and rightness in a given field, ... the direct simplicity in seizing the effective means" (*GK* 109). To the extent that Pound considers his field of reference, the *corpus poetarum* (*SP* 24), to "give us our data of psychology, of man as to his interiors" (*LE* 48), it is clear that "the latent energy of Nature" he seeks to discover and manifest corresponds with a latent desire in humanity, with "a certain fluid force" (*GB* 89) or *virtu* which inheres in and motivates thought, and which, when rendered with sincerity--whether in "precise verbal images" or "luminous details"--may serve as testimony to a new cultural ethos, "governing knowledge as the switchboard the electric circuit" (24). Ever serving the critical and creative interests of humanity, the serious artist is thus the most exemplary scholar, his work a medium of exchange for desire and display:¹⁶ "the Arts work on life as history works on the development of civilisation and literature. The artist seeks out the luminous detail and presents it. He does not comment. His work remains the permanent basis of psychology and metaphysics" (*SP* 23).

As is clear from his analogy, however, Pound's intent to generate a "conscious renovation of learning" derives largely from his discontent with how information *had* been presented to the public, for when it comes to the matter of tradition, there can be no claim to ownership—it is our common wealth:

The permanent property, the property given to the race at large is precisely [the] data of the serious scientist and the serious artist; of the scientist as touching the relations of abstract numbers, of molecular energy, of the composition of matter, etc.; of the serious artist, as touching the nature of man, of individuals. (*LE* 47)

Thus when he suggests that in his own department of scholarship many fine things are discovered and rendered inaccessible, he challenges the way in which vital information is misappropriated by authority, its poignancy quite literally taken away and "diffused" (*GK* 30), at the expense of our natural intelligence—"the health of the very matter of thought itself" (*LE* 21):

Save in the rare and limited instances of invention in the plastic arts, or in mathematics, the individual cannot think and communicate his thought, the governor and legislator cannot act effectively or frame his laws, without words, and the solidity and validity of these words is in the care of the damned and despised *litterati*. When their work goes rotten—by that I do not mean when they express indecorous thoughts—but when their very medium, the very essence of their work, the application of word to thing goes rotten, i.e. becomes slushy and inexact, or excessive and bloated, the whole machinery of social and of individual thought and order goes to pot. (*LE* 21)¹⁷

Over and again Pound emphasizes that the "precision of observation and reference" (*SP* 27) is instrumental to the efficient presentation of ideas, that "the application of word to thing" must be tempered with sincerity.¹⁸ "The Renaissance," he reminds us, "rose in a search for precision and declined through rhetoric and rhetorical thinking, through the habit of defining things always 'in terms of something else'" (*GB* 117). Underlying his indictment of the *litterati* in this respect is the notion that because language mediates

conscious and sentient perception (*LE* 42), it must be displayed with such "accuracy of sentiment" (*SP* 23) that it will be a source of enlightenment and liberation, effectively encouraging us to live.¹⁹

In the culture of the mind, as in the culture of fields, there is a law of diminishing return. If a book reveal to us something of which we were unconscious, it feeds us with its energy; if it reveal to us nothing but the fact that its author knew something which we knew, it draws energy from us. (*SP* 30)

It appears to me quite tenable that the function of literature as a generated prize-worthy force is that it does incite humanity to continue living; that it eases the mind of strain, and feeds it, I mean definitely as *nutrition of impulse*. (*LE* 20)

To this end, Pound demands in modern scholarship "a species of correlation of learning" (*GK* 54) whereby "the vital statistics and fragments of history" will not only "become the common possession of every man in the street" (*GK* 55), but will serve as sustenance to thought in such a way as to "strengthen the perceptive faculties and free them from encumbrance, such encumbrances, for instance, as set moods, set ideas, conventions" (*SP* 360). Much as the farmer cultivates his fields as sustenance for the state, so it is the responsibility of scholar and artist alike to produce from our cultural heritage something viable for human consumption. What has occurred instead is at the heart of the wasteland language has become, its vitality and application to life sacrificed in the name of commercial or ideological interests, its significance "a mass of nomenclatures completely unstuck from reality" (*GK* 44).²⁰ As Pound makes clear, the bitter irony of the problem is that those whose task it is to evaluate and distribute "solid" and "valid" insights, thus facilitating a strong currency in the exchange of ideas and invigorating cultural development, have in fact been responsible for the usury of information and the obstruction of learning in general.²¹

Though Pound may be criticized for demanding too much of his readers, for expecting us to have read all the classics, let alone for directing us to pursue the far more obscure

paths of research, he does attempt what few scholars can hardly consider, that is, to correlate the "heteroclitic mass of undigested information" (*GK* 23) which has accumulated over time, in our libraries and in those "processes biological, social, [and] economic" (51) which envelop us as we speak, and to render that information applicable to our individual concerns. To those who would deny him any such method, as did T.S. Eliot in describing the "paradoxically elliptic and redundant notes" of Pound's essays in the thirties, Pound's response was clear and uncompromising: "Any fahrt can write orderly essays" (cited by Lindberg 87-8).²² Unlike conventional methods of scholarship which seek to educate and refine the average person, bestowing upon him the gifted insights of those who maintain a tradition which "never improves" (Eliot *SP* 39), Pound's method affords "the average reader ... a few tools" (*GK* 23) with which he may digest a large amount of information and determine its vitality in an encouraging and constructive way.²³ "Real knowledge," he contends, must be earned; it "does NOT fall off the page into one's stomach" (*GK* 107). Thus he believes that "the new learning" will assume a much more natural and substantial responsibility than that of conventional education, presenting "matter ... to the intelligent, over-busy public *bonae voluntatis*" (*SP* 22), but in such a way as to stimulate interest productive of action.²⁴ Such is the "civility, consideration and efficiency" (22) Pound argues is necessary if authority is to perform an ameliorative role in cultural regeneration:

[W]e must make a clean cut between two kinds of 'ideas'. Ideas which exist and/or are discussed in a species of vacuum, which are as it were toys of the intellect, and ideas which are intended to 'go into action', or to guide action and serve as rules (and/or measures) of conduct. (*GK* 34)

In short, the former kind of ideas typify the inadequacy and impotency Pound perceived to be the bane of conventional education and orthodox reasoning in general, the obfuscation and diffusion of knowledge in the vacuum of ideological and increasingly specialized theoretical discourse. By contrast, Pound makes clear that the latter kind of

ideas are intended to serve an active and influential role in the project of ethics, on the one hand, "to establish a *basis* and a desire for *unification*" (Gefin 37), and on the other, to generate possible imaginative ideals worth imitating as modes of self-development.²⁵ Such is what Pound considers the usefulness of "conscious propaganda," the need for authority to transform the received ideas of history into instruments of critical thought, and so "set hunger in men for building."²⁶ In similar terms, Kathryn Lindberg suggests that Pound "does not want to fill America's ideological vacuity with empty abstractions, or [to dictate] American aesthetic thought, but to advance ideas which will motivate action or generate new wisdom out of ancient beauty" (171). So long as the author's work is exact, runs Pound's maxim, "true to human consciousness and to the nature of man as it is exact in the formulation of desire," so it will be durable and useful.

Pound's claim that ideas must "go into action" is to a large extent a kind of battle-cry for a new and more vital aesthetic. "The poem is an organism," he contends, "in which each part functions" (*SP* 27), "a *functioning organism*," moreover, which is "created, like nature, out of precise particulars whose juxtaposition will establish relations between them and will give the reader a 'sudden insight'" (Gefin 6). Along this same line of thought, Pound explains elsewhere that he hopes to re-establish in poetry a certain "quality" (*LE* 150) or "meaning" (154), an "assertion of value" (150) that might only be attained by "*natural demonstration*" (158). Thus he privileges "the proof by experience or experiment" (158) over "the proof by reason" (149), for when it comes to the matter of representation, he makes clear that he is not of the mind to deny natural processes, "the force being the essential, and the rest 'accidental' in the philosophic technical sense. The shape occurs" (152).²⁷ This essential "quality" or "force," in short, is the *virtu* of our natural intelligence, a reality or intensity which Pound believes has been lost to the modern world, and which might only be reproduced under the direction of artistic genius:

There is [a] residue of perception, perception of something which requires a certain individual to produce it. Which may even

require a certain individual to produce it. This really complicates the aesthetic. You deal with an interactive force: the *virtu* in short. (151-2)

We appear to have lost the radiant world where one thought cuts through another with a clean edge, a world of moving energies '*mezzo oscuro rade*', '*risplende in se perpetuale effecto*', magnetisms that take form, that are seen, or that border the visible, the matter of Dante's *paradiso*, the glass under water, the form that seems a form seen in a mirror, these realities perceptible to the sense, interacting... (154)

The good artist is perhaps a good seismograph, but the difference between man and a machine is that man can in some degrees 'start his machinery going'. *He can, within limits, not only record, but create. At least he can move as a force; he can produce 'order-giving vibrations'; by which one may mean merely, he can departmentalise such part of the life-force as flows through him.* (SP 376 italics mine)

"The history of a culture," Pound writes elsewhere, "is the history of ideas going into action" (GK 44), to which end we must consider his attempt to "departmentalise such part of the life-force as flows through him," his own particular *virtu* as a poet, as a way of communicating a self-generative and conditional reality. In doing so, Pound demonstrates "that culture is not a thing in itself but a transformational force" (Lindberg 184). However radical to the accepted beliefs of his time, this is the "common knowledge" upon which Pound seeks "to build the airy fabric of [his] heresies" (SP 21). Thus we must begin to trace the development of a method, a discovery peculiar to the modern age, wherein what really matters is always something "which may lie in the dimension of depth, not merely of some novelty on the surface" (LE 19).

From early in his career, Pound laments the plight of the poet in a culture "desensitized" (GK 51) and hence unsympathetic to the value of aesthetic experience:

[W]e are asked if the arts are moral. We are asked to define the relation of the arts to economics, we are asked what position the arts are to hold in the ideal republic. And it is obviously the opinion of many people ... that the arts had better not exist at all. (LE 41)

How, then, shall the poet in this dreary day attain universality,
how write what will be understood of 'the many', and lauded of
'the few'? (*SP* 32)

Pound's original contribution to modernist poetics, his own self-proclaimed invention, was an attempt to attain such universality through the Image, what he describes in his imagist manifesto as a cluster of solid and precise observations arranged in juxtaposition.²⁸

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of a metronome.

An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.... It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; [a] sense of sudden growth.... (*LE* 3-4)

Thus the Image was conceived as an agent of transformation, as something vivid yet dynamic which gives a sense of sudden growth, liberation, and freedom. This, as Stephen Kern suggests, involved "a transformation in the very purpose of art from the interpretation of an optically perceived reality to the creation of an aesthetically conceived one" (196). The question that soon arose, however, was whether the Image *was* something active that sought to inform and liberate modern consciousness, or whether it was yet another subjective response to the world, something passive that amounted to mere visual impressionism.²⁹ As Reed Dasenbrock summarizes, Imagism "degenerated into a mode of writing viewy descriptive poems, images of something"(93) that did not sustain an "active and exploratory" (96) content. "Pound repeatedly warned against this chief vice of Imagism," adds Dasenbrock, "and against the misapprehension that by an image he meant a visual image" (93).³⁰ As the principles of Imagism clearly indicate, Pound demands work "of the 'first intensity'" (*GB* 84), and as such, eventually distances

himself from the path that other Imagists were to pursue.³¹ Conrad Aiken summarizes this path nicely when in 1915 he all but dismisses the new breed of Imagists as painters of pleasant pictures.³² Years later, in his *ABC of Reading*, Pound criticizes the "diluters" of Imagism for thinking "only of the STATIONARY image" (52), and emphasizes that the primary strategy of the Imagist poem, the method of *juxtaposition* or *parataxis*, was to force his readers into becoming actively involved in exploring particular connections and *then* defining the poem's statement, generating what Gefin describes as "a vision of both concrete and conceptual realities" (9). Dissatisfied with what had evolved into a largely descriptive and static art, Pound writes in "The Serious Artist" that "[g]radually you wish to communicate something less bare and ambiguous than ideas. You wish to communicate an idea and its modifications, an idea and a crowd of its effects, atmospheres, contradictions" (*LE* 51). Accordingly, and as testimony to the internal dynamism he sought to achieve, Pound rewrites his definition of the Image and warns in his essay "Vorticism": "The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing" (*GB* 92). In effect, this becomes the basic principle of an aesthetic that could sustain a longer poem, and one which, by combining archaic vision with empirical observation--"epic amplitude with Imagist concision" (Dasenbrock 97)--seeks to interpret a certain intelligence working in and through the words as it conceives of a unity "beyond formulated language" (*GB* 88). This intelligence, in short, is the *virtu* of humanity and human genius, to which end Pound aims to organize the exemplary insights of the past toward what is conceivable, and what in conceiving it, one might be.³³ In this respect, Pound hopes to generate an *interpretive* aesthetic at once critical and creative, establishing a tension "between one kind of indefinability and another" (*SP* 33), the subject "man, mankind, and the individual," the operative force desire, its ethos display. His aim is not to satisfy his audience, but to re-establish by means of art "our kinship to the vital universe" (*SR* 91).³⁴

As we have seen, beginning with "I gather the Limbs of Osiris" and the method of Luminous Detail, Pound becomes increasingly concerned with how to employ historical and literary information in a way that would revitalize modern perception. Initially he ascribes this to "the masterly use of words" (SP 34):

Let us imagine that words are like great hollow cones of steel of different dullness and acuteness.... Let us imagine them charged with a force like electricity, or, rather, radiating a force from their apexes--some radiating, some sucking in. We must have a greater variety of activity than with electricity--not merely positive and negative; ... three or four words in exact juxtaposition are capable of radiating this energy at a very high potentiality.... *This peculiar energy which fills the cones is the power of tradition, of centuries of race consciousness, of agreement, of association; and the control of it is the 'Technique of Content', which nothing short of genius understands.* (SP 34 italics mine)

Though it is clear that Pound does wish to afford insight into the intelligence of certain periods in the past, he makes equally clear that his purpose in this essay is "to be of service to the living art" (SP 24), and as such, his aim is twofold: to establish beneath the facts of history "an underlying purpose or current" (GK 99), and to provide accurate testimony to the authority of artistic genius, in particular, to the *virtu* of his own poetic vision, in a way that would stimulate modern desire.³⁵ As is implicit in the notion of "word-cones" charged with energy, the method of Luminous Detail is an attempt to gather and display the interpretive data of tradition in such a way that the past is not only investigated, but brought to shed light upon and transform the present: "the concatenation of these foci can give us an approximation of the poet's vision and an insight to the intelligence of that period. The method is not static but dynamic; the rapid succession of luminous data reaches a point where the particulars will shine forth in their unique reality, yet stand transformed" (Gefin 8). Hence the title of the essay from which Pound first establishes the need for artistic genius is in itself a clear indication that he hopes to bring to modern culture a renewed sense of vitality, the procreative force and manifest wealth

of the resurrected Osiris.³⁶ If, as we may recall Pound's insight into *The Great Learning*, language represents the living understanding of human genius, and as such, has evolved in accordance with the desire to organize, form, and communicate what is alive in memory and imagination, then the "control" that Pound demands is one which literally seeks to display the power of tradition with such intensity as to "keep alive the intellectually-inventive-creative spirit and ability in man" (*GB* 109): cultural enlightenment is thus conceived holistically in terms of the energy that the words transmit and may ultimately activate in the mind of the reader, their power rendered with pin-point accuracy in a network of channels or "meridians."³⁷ To this end, Pound does not simply record the facts of culture, but in effect seeks to generate them, poetry the medium whereby the latent vitality of tradition and human intelligence may be discovered within oneself and applied as "life-force" (*GK* 347), "the 'know thyself' carried into action" (*C* 34). By way of illustrating this point, Pound retranslates the traditional Platonic "Mind into action," therewith making Plato a luminous detail in his own right, or rather, as Lindberg suggests, "an actor ... in a dramatic history of ideas played out upon the stage of general culture" (183):

If Plato's ideas were the paradigms of reality in Plato's personal thought, their transmutation into phenomena takes us into the unknown. What we can assert is that Plato periodically caused enthusiasm among his disciples....

The history of a culture is the history of ideas going into action. Whatever the platonists or other mystics have felt, they have been possessed sporadically and spasmodically of energies measurable only in speech and in action, long before modern physicians were measuring the electric waves of the brains of pathological subjects. (*GK* 44-5 italics mine)

That Pound has likewise "caused enthusiasm among his disciples" is testimony to a method which he contends seeks rather to nurture the individual impulse than punish or abuse it (*LE* 150-1).³⁸ His master metaphor in this respect is the term *Paideuma*, an inherently organic yet critical notion of culture which by definition operates as a

provisional and transformational force in human affairs. As the method of Luminous Detail implies, it is the responsibility of artistic genius to sustain and direct this force with conscious propaganda, at once displaying "the complex of ideas which is in a given time germinal," while yet serving to criticize that very complexity, "conditioning actively all the thought and action of its own time." "This kind of research," Pound explains, "goes not only into the past and forgotten life, but points to tomorrow.... This is not *mere* utilitarianism, it is a double charge, a sense of two sets of values and their relation" (*GK* 57). To this end, Lindberg suggests, "Pound stresses the movement and mediation, the reception and communication, *not the finality* of ideas and facts" (171). Thus, as a self-proclaimed "specialist who is expected to serve the general reader" (*LE* 15), Pound demonstrates that he does not want merely to educate people with ideas that are "dead, dying, [and] static" (*GB* 117), nor does he wish to satisfy people with "the inferior thing ready for instant consumption" (*LE* 151), but to employ a "considered conscious method" (*LE* 16) that would bear witness to the inner vitality of human nature and give "a clear idea of the diverse states of our consciousness ('les mouvements du couer')" (*LE* 31).³⁹ Like Mencius long before him, Pound seeks to establish a deliberate tradition, one that would interpret, display and engage the "knowing that is *in* people, ... the gristly roots of ideas that are in action" (*GK* 57-8).

In the 1915 essay called "Affirmations--As for Imagisme," Pound describes in slightly different terms how something subjective and heartfelt might be organized and displayed objectively, preparing the theoretical groundwork from which longer imagistic or vorticist poems could evolve:

Intense emotion causes pattern units to arise in the mind.... [P]erhaps I should say, not pattern, but pattern units, or units of design.... By pattern-unit or vorticist picture I mean the single jet. The difference between the pattern-unit and the picture is one of complexity. The pattern-unit is so simple that one can bear having it repeated several or many times. When it becomes so

complex that repetition would be useless, then it is a picture, an 'arrangement of forms'.⁴⁰

The best artist is the man whose machinery can stand the highest voltage. The better the machinery, the more precise, the stronger, the more exact will be the record of the voltage and of the various currents which have passed through it. (*SP* 374; 376)

As both Pound's vortical understanding of words and his "pattern-units" imply, transmitting this "peculiar energy" or "single jet" is a matter of technique, of a machinery or discipline that could organize a large amount of information--"be it of external nature, or of emotion"--and distribute its vitality in a vivid and dynamic way.⁴¹ From early in his career, and in terms which anticipate his translations of *The Great Learning*, Pound describes the organization and distribution of knowledge in terms of *sincerity*, suggesting that the serious artist must first be discriminate in his evaluation of "literature, ... [and] its subject-matter, the human consciousness" (*LE* 18), and so learn to cultivate and express his own particular *virtu* with clarity and precision.⁴²

I believe in technique as the test of a man's sincerity; in law when it is ascertainable; in the trampling down of every convention that impedes or obscures the determination of the law, or the precise rendering of the impulse. (LE 9 italics mine).

One 'moves' the reader only by clarity. In depicting the motions of the 'human heart' the durability of the writing depends on the exactitude. It is the thing that is true and that stays true that keeps fresh for the reader. (*LE* 22)

On the one hand, Pound contends that the most valuable art affords us "a first-hand knowledge of life" (*SP* 30), that the serious artist acts upon his intuition and "express[es] what is 'true for himself'" (*GB* 102): "truth is the individual ... [and] technique is the means of conveying an exact impression of exactly what one means in such a way as to exhilarate" (*SP* 33). To this end, the law Pound here refers to is "the heart's law," sincerity that aspect of consciousness which must ever attend to and nurture the *virtu* of

its "inborn nature," and which in turn seeks to articulate and define itself as the agent of human understanding and will-power.⁴³

It is the artist's business to find his own *virtu*;only that man who cares and believes really in the pint of truth that is in him will work, year in and year out, to find its perfect expression;beyond the discovery and expression of his virtue the artist may proceed to the erection of his microcosmos. (29; 34; 29)

On the other hand, his concern is with the "underlying impulse" or "voltage" of tradition, with the *virtu* which inheres in and motivates thought, as our *natural* intelligence, and which, when rendered with sincerity, may serve as testimony to a new cultural ethos. As Pound makes clear, determining this law must take precedence over convention, trampling it down, or rather grounding it, wherever it may impede or obscure one's sense of truth:⁴⁴ "If [artist's] do not care enough for the heritage to have a personal conviction," Pound argues, "then they have no licence to write" (*LE* 56). If this seems reminiscent of *The Great Learning*, of one man's desire to render useful the vitality of the past in terms of self-discipline and sincere self-expression, it is because Pound discovers in 1914, through the research of sinologist and modern linguist Ernest Fenollosa, a striking similarity between his own aesthetic ideas and those which inform the Chinese written character or ideogram.⁴⁵ As Gefin summarizes,

Pound's first significant reference to Fenollosa's essay on the Chinese written character occurs in an article entitled 'Imagisme and England,' published on February 20, 1915.... While not claiming absolute originality for 'imagisme,' Pound perceived that the kind of poetry the imagists were writing was strikingly similar in some ways to the Chinese poetry translated by Fenollosa. His earlier ideas about 'luminous details,' 'language beyond metaphor,' 'intellectual and emotional complex,' and 'pattern units' appear to have fallen in place as soon as he read Fenollosa's essay. For Pound realized that his search for a new form, *a natural poetic expression*, had finally met with the exact model which could be the basis for a new poetics. He wrote in the article, 'We have sought the force of Chinese ideographs *without knowing it*.' (14)

Shortly after "Imagisme and England," Pound translates and publishes Fenollosa's work as *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, claiming that the Chinese written character is "valid scientific thought" which "entails following as closely as may be to the entangled lines of force that pulse through things" (*CWC* 12). In short, Pound realizes in Fenollosa's work, in particular, in his insights into the Chinese written character, the ability to generate meaning objectively by juxtaposing particularly interpretive details: "Poetic thought works by suggestion, crowding maximum meaning into the single phrase pregnant, charged, and luminous from within. In Chinese character [sic] each word accumulated this sort of energy in itself" (28). Implicitly, it is the poet's business to create forms in language that approximate natural processes, "the entangled lines of force that pulse through things," and demonstrate that the universe is *alive*, "full of homologies, sympathies, identities" (21-2). In turn, Pound increasingly understands his own "search for 'sincere self-expression'" (*GB* 85) in terms of "precise verbal definitions," images which are literally informed with the power of tradition with such intensity that they communicate the vivid and dynamic meaning of humanity, the *virtu* of our natural intelligence, now and over time (*SP* 78). To this end, the need for sincerity becomes the central condition of Pound's "new learning," for if the artist can express what is true for himself by employing the interpretive ideas of tradition, he not only creates something immediately impressive, but transforms those ideas into instruments of critical thought, encouraging the exploration and interpretation of new relationships, while yet providing the framework within which those relationships are to be perceived.⁴⁶ Thus Pound states with confidence, in terms which anticipate his evaluation of the Confucian "Anschauung," that "[w]e believe in the value of a programme in contradistinction to, but not in contradiction of, the individual impulse" (*GB* 117).⁴⁷ Increasingly, of course, Pound employs "new discoveries, new lands, new languages gradually opened to us" to construct his own "microcosmos," demonstrating in a useful and productive way how

traditional values are not only subject to, but enhanced by modern innovation, and in turn, how the sincerity of artistic genius is central to cultural growth.

That sincerity is essentially a critical and procreative force, in harmony with the will and thus fundamental to the evolution of our species, is clarified when in his book on close friend and Vorticist exemplar Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Pound draws a distinction between the man who passively accepts prescribed ideas and the man who acts upon his intuition:

There are two opposed ways of thinking of a man: firstly, you may think of him as that toward which perception moves, as the toy of circumstance, as the plastic substance *receiving* impressions; secondly, you may think of him as directing a certain fluid force against circumstance, as *conceiving* instead of merely reflecting and observing. (GB 89)

Thus, as we may recall from *The Great Learning*, sincerity is not simply a state of mind, passively obedient and indiscriminate, but "an active force that is always transforming and completing things," effectively shaping and enlightening our existence. This is what eventually leads Pound to translate the Confucian concept of sincerity as that "activity which defines words with precision," as conscious propaganda which conceives of itself in affirmation of a permanent human process: "Knowledge of a definite thing comes from a knowledge of things defined" (SP 76). As suggested earlier, Pound relishes this aspect of Confucianism if simply because it demands that humanity perceive within itself a certain responsibility or usefulness, for if it is to realize a vivid and dynamic cultural ethos, it must bear witness to the essential unity which is the way of the natural world, to that "certain fluid force" which inspires us with life and determination. For Pound, of course, it is the responsibility of artistic genius to draw attention to this latent desire of the mind, to render sincere the heart's law as "the invariable modus of action." Correspondingly, as Charles Altieri suggests, it is the artist's business to effect with precision "the transformation of subjective desire into articulate public structures" (284),

and in so doing, to display "the vital statistics and fragments of history" as sustenance to thought, as objective measures of character in and through which the inborn nature of others may be realized with due sincerity and carried to fulfilment.

Citing the Victory of Samothrace as a classic instance of this sincerity, Pound explains that however common the desire for such expression may have been at the time, the fact remains that one man did so concretely, and in a way that remains moving:

We have the Victory ... to witness ... that humanity is a species or genus of animals capable of a variation that will produce the desire for a ... Victory, and moreover capable of effecting that ... Victory in stone. *We know from other testimony of the arts and from ourselves that the desire often overshoots the power of efficient presentation*; we therefore conclude that other members of the race have desired to effect a ... Victory. We even suppose that men have desired to effect more beautiful things although *few of us are more capable of forming any precise mental image of things, in their particular way, more beautiful than this statue....* So difficult is this that no one has yet been able to effect a restoration of the missing head of the Victory. At least no one has done so in stone, so far as I know. *Doubtless many people have stood opposite the statue and made such heads in their imagination.* (LE 45)

In short, the Victory is testimony to "the power of efficient presentation," a "luminous detail" or "precise mental image" which interprets and displays the vitality of human nature *objectively*. That the statue remains headless only furthers Pound's argument that the authority of art lies not in the perfection of accomplishment, but in its ability to incite in humanity a self-conscious yet regenerative interest.⁴⁸ With respect to language, this is what eventually leads Pound to translate the Confucian concept of sincerity in terms of "precise verbal definitions," what he holds in such high esteem in *The Great Learning* as "a type of perception, a kind of transmission of knowledge obtainable only from such concrete manifestation" (GK 28). With such concentration and will-power, such sincerity to act upon one's intuition concretely, must begin "every conscious renovation of learning," for the art of sincerity, Pound suggests, is by nature bound to truth, bearing

witness to and defining for us that "not quite soluble" force or continuity--"the *forma*, [or] immortal *conchetto*"(152)--which inheres in and motivates human intelligence. Thus, in seeking to attain the "maximum efficiency of expression" (*LE* 56), to construct a machinery that would stand the "voltage" of tradition and "centuries of race consciousness," Pound increasingly grounds both history and the conventions of artistic representation in the "characterizing patterned energy" (Kenner 453) of sincerity, discovering first from his experiments with Imagism, and then from his research into the Chinese written character, or ideogram, that when "three or four" particulars are arranged "in exact juxtaposition," they are not only immediately impressive, but in and of themselves may continue to generate a luminous and dynamic meaning:⁴⁹

At last a reviewer in a popular paper ... has had the decency to admit that I occasionally cause the reader 'suddenly to see' or that I snap out a remark ... 'that reveals the whole subject from a new angle'.

That being the point of the writing. That being the reason for presenting first one facet and then another--I mean to say *the purpose of the writing is to reveal the subject. The ideogrammic method consists in presenting one facet and then another until at some point one gets off the dead and desensitized surface of the reader's mind, onto a part that will register.*

The 'new' angle being new to the reader who cannot always be the same reader. The newness of the angle being relative and the writer's aim, at least this writer's aim being revelation, a just revelation irrespective of newness or oldness. (*GK* 51 italics mine)

The Art of Poetry consists in combining [the] 'essentials to thought', these dynamic particles, *si licet*, this radium, with that melody of words which shall most draw the emotions of the hearer toward accord with their import, and with that 'form' which shall most delight the intellect. (*SP* 360)

In short, Pound increasingly undermines "logical, anthropomorphic, and transitional" (Gefin xvi) modes of representation, and subscribes to a form that would more effectively display and generate a "first-hand knowledge of life": reality--and revelation for that matter--is relative, an ongoing process of enlightenment.⁵⁰ From "luminous details" to

"word-cones," vorticism to the ideogram, Pound generates an aesthetic that seeks at some point to penetrate the reader's mind and to afford him a "sudden insight," not into some metaphysical truth, but into his own latent potential. As Pound makes clear, such ecstasy is not something arcane or mystical; it is not "a whirl or a madness of the senses, but a glow arising from the exact nature of the perception" (*SR* 91).⁵¹

From Imagism through to Vorticism and *The Cantos*, Pound increasingly assumes an unorthodox path to greatness, discovering within his cultural heroes, and implicitly, within himself, a certain life-affirming quality, "some exceptional faculty, strength, or perception" (*LE* 56), which defines itself against "the hostility or inertia" of the status quo, and which in turn displays an active responsibility for the whole social order: "no age can be a great age", Pound declares, "which does not find its own genius" (*GB* 101). If, as Pound contends, "a renaissance is *a thing made* by conscious propaganda," by definition a deliberate attempt to organize, form and communicate what lies inrooted within our cultural memory and imagination, then it is the responsibility of artistic genius, Pound believes, to substantiate that vitality, in short, "to build us his world" (*SP* 15). As suggested earlier, he must formulate the image of his desire with clarity and precision, so cultivating his *virtu* with such sincerity that his work will at once display "the desires characteristic of a great number of people" (*GK* 348) as it nurtures and encourages individual interpretation. Thus, to understand more precisely what Pound does mean by genius, and the role that he sought to play in a new cultural renaissance, we must consider his desire to attain universality as an attempt to become a *master* of the arts, on the one hand, "to digest a vast mass of subject-matter" and reduce it to its essential elements, and on the other, to construct from those elements something monumental, the "special quality" or character of which might inseminate in modern culture a new breed of men:⁵²

The term [master] is properly applied to inventors who, apart from their own inventions, are able to assimilate and co-ordinate

a large number of preceding inventions. *I mean to say they either start with a core of their own and accumulate adjuncts, or they digest a vast mass of subject-matter, apply a number of known modes of expression, and succeed in pervading the whole with some special quality or some special character of their own, and bring the whole to a state of homogenous fullness.* (LE 23 italics mine)

The so-called major poets have most of them given their *own* gift but the peculiar term 'major' is rather a gift to them from Chronos. I mean that they have been born upon the stroke of the hour and that it has been given them to heap together and arrange and harmonize the results of many men's labour. *This faculty for amalgamation is a part of their genius and it is, in a way, a sort of modesty, a sort of unselfishness. They have not wished for property.* (LE 49 italics mine)⁵³

Whether speaking of Confucius, Homer, Dante, or Shakespeare, Pound makes clear that each served an immediate and pivotal function in their respective cultures, that in transforming the received ideas of their time into instruments of critical thought, their genius was central to cultural regeneration. Over and again Pound reminds us of the need for such an outstanding personality in modern culture, for a man like himself who would serve as "a symbol of perceptive intelligence, sincere, making no pretence to powers beyond its own, but seeing out of its time and place, rejoicing in its perspicacity" (SP 27-8).⁵⁴ As is clear throughout his prose, Pound does not seek to make art a commodity, neatly packaged for mass consumption, nor does he wish to bestow upon the learned few something they would relish for the time being; rather, he seeks to demonstrate in a useful and productive way how on all levels of society artistic genius is *essential* to cultural growth, preserving the "character of the fostering or parental emotion" (LE 51) while nurturing and directing *the desire for understanding*.⁵⁵ In similar terms, Bob Perelman suggests that one of the best ways to approach Pound is to take the advice he offers in *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* and apply it to Pound rather than Mussolini (28):

Jefferson was one genius and Mussolini is another.... Any thorough judgement of MUSSOLINI will be in a measure an act of faith, it will depend on what you *believe* the man means....

Treat him as *artifex* and all the details fall into place. Take him as anything save the artist and you will get muddled in contradictions. (*JM* 19; 33-4)

This, of course, is what Pound values most about Mencius and *The Great Learning*, that he offers a way of life with such sincerity as to occasion discrimination and virtue in matters of the heart, and yet ultimately, as we may recall Pound's evaluation of the text, "one will never succeed in exhausting the sense." To this end, Pound explains, the victory of art and artistic genius does not necessarily proclaim "a belief in a permanent world," but is effective as "a belief in that direction" (*GB* 84).⁵⁶

Although Pound's describes his "new method of scholarship" as a deliberate attempt to assimilate and co-ordinate historical and literary information in a way that would revitalize modern perception, his application of this method remained unfocused, if not ineffective, through the initial stages of his cultural epic, *The Cantos*. In short, however Pound sought to organize and distribute "the vital statistics and fragments of history" as sustenance for cultural regeneration, what remained to be seen was the "special quality" or "character" that would bring his *Cantos* "to a state of homogenous fullness." This is made clear in 1919 when Pound acknowledges disparagingly to John Quinn that the first seven cantos had become "too too too abstruse and obscure for human consumption" (*LPQ* 81). Implicitly, for as much as Pound had sought to rework the foundations of tradition and build something monumental, he realized that his *Cantos* remained inaccessible and unclear to a culture governed by reason and self-interest.

Some two years later, when Pound had all but abandoned his work on *The Cantos*, T.S. Eliot sent him the manuscripts and typescripts for a poem that seemed to summarize the sense of futility that was plaguing modern culture.⁵⁷ Upon receiving this initial version of *The Waste Land*, Pound was not only moved by the ambitious scale of the poem, but perhaps even inspired, as his letter to Eliot on the 24th of December, 1921 implies, to begin working on his *Cantos* again: "Complementi, you bitch. I am wracked by the seven jealousies, and cogitating an excuse for always exuding my deformative secretions in my

own stuff, and never getting an outline" (*LTSE* 498).⁵⁸ For helping to provide Eliot with an outline, in effect, for drawing attention to the underlying rhythm of the poem and editing much of the material that was not essential to its meaning, Pound would be rewarded with the title "*il miglior fabbro*"--"the better craftsman." What Pound needed, however, was a shaping outline for his own material, not the supposedly unifying consciousness of Tiresias, the omniscient spectator of *The Waste Land* who has "foresuffered all" (line 243), but a "factive personality" (*GK* 194) like himself, someone who would be a craftsman in his own right and illustrate in *The Cantos* the character of "intelligent constructivity" (cited by D'Epiro 6).⁵⁹ In short, the inchoate *Cantos* were at this point an epic in need of a hero, an individual who would characterize Pound's own struggle to assimilate and co-ordinate various cultural layers in a way that would prove viable for "human consumption."

Pound, of course, had long since anticipated this need, discovering in "The Renaissance" that what the modern age really demanded of art was something substantial and impressive, in effect an "architecture" that could be "given to all men" (*LE* 219):

[A]rchitecture comes first, being the finest branch of advertisement, advertisement of some god who has been successful, or of some emperor or of some business man--a material need, plus display. (219)

This need for a deliberate tradition, for a form of "conscious propaganda" (220) that would nurture and stimulate popular desire, is reiterated some six years later when in "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly," Pound anticipates the character he would give to his *Cantos*:

The age demanded an image
Of its accelerated grimace,
Something for the modern stage,
Not, not at any rate, an Attic grace;

Not, not certainly, the obscure reveries
Of the inward gaze;
Better mendacities

Than the classics in paraphrase!

The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,
 Made with no loss of time,
 A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
 Or the "sculpture" of rhyme. (*Selected Poems* 61-2)

In short, the age was in need of a certain sincerity, an "image" that would transform "the obscure reveries of the inward gaze" into something immediate and substantial, that is, into "a prose kinema" that would be viable for "the modern stage."⁶⁰ What we see in the Malatesta Cantos (Cantos VIII to XI) is an attempt to accommodate this need, for even though Sigismondo Malatesta was hardly an emperor or successful businessman, let alone a model prince, he was an individual who, despite the chaotic society in which he lived, with its superstition, violence, and treachery, managed to transform the vitality of the past into something useful and productive. To this end, the main thrust of the Malatesta Cantos is indeed that of *exemplum*, for if "in a land teeming with cattle thieves" Malatesta could bring his city of Rimini to the "apex" (*GK* 159) of cultural achievement, then surely Pound could do likewise in *The Cantos* and induce in a vast and wealthy country like America the desire for a modern Risorgimento.

Notes to Chapter Two

¹This passage is from "Europe or the Setting" in *Guide to Kulchur* (114), and to a large extent justifies the elliptical method of explication that one must adopt in approaching Pound's "own private paideuma." With respect to the "process" that underlies Pound's poetry and prose, one should recall Pound's insight into *The Great Learning*, that it is a veritable "treasury of wisdom," vivid in wealth and dynamic in application, and that if "one should meditate upon it for a long time, one will never succeed in exhausting the sense."

²Pound writes with respect to the lack of direction and substance in modern education that the study of literature since about 1848 has been "so designed as to draw the mind of the student away from literature into inanity" (*LE* 20). In *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound clarifies that "The world had and has lost...a species of correlation of learning" (54).

³This point is well noted by Gaudier-Brzeska in "Vortex": "*Vortex is energy!* and it gave forth *solid excrements* in the quattro e cinque cento, *liquid* until the seventeenth century, *gases* whistle until now. *This is the history of form value in the West until the fall of impressionism*" (*GK* 65). Pound himself echoes the sentiment when he remarks in "How to Read" that beyond such "doddards" as Palgrave to have been incorporated in modern anthologies, there are "less blatant cases" of how "vested interest[s]" dictate the study of such writers as Hemans, Collins, Cowper and Churchill, all of whom are "touched with a slighter flavour of mustiness" (*LE* 18).

⁴To cite but one instance of when the Middle Ages gave ground to the Renaissance, Pound directs us to a telling passage from Jacob Burckhardt: "In this year the Venetians refused to make war upon the Milanese because they held that any war between buyer and seller must prove profitable to neither." To Pound's mind, this passage interprets a moment when "the old order changes, [when] one conception of war and the State begins to decline.... A ruler owning a State and wishing to enlarge his possessions, could under one regime, in a manner opposed to sound economy, make war; but commercial sense is sapping his regime" (*SP* 22). The point to be made is that "commercial sense" appropriates and distorts all natural measures of value.

⁵In modernist poetry, Pound was the first to cultivate certain areas of the past in order to construct, as he said, "the airy fabric of [his] heresies" (*SP* 21). His first book to draw serious critical attention was *Personae*, published in London in 1909. As Gefin explains of Pound's "new method,"

....formal 'heresies' were combined with a highly idiosyncratic subject matter and treated with great originality: transliterations, adaptations, derivations from Provencal troubadours and medieval Italian poets, transliterations from Heine, poems with suggestive titles such as "De AEgypto" and "Paracelsus in Excelsis." Even his most sympathetic reviewer, Edward Thomas, had to admit that 'it is easier to enjoy than to praise Mr. Pound, easier to find fault with him, easier to ridicule.' (3)

⁶"In the study of physics," Pound explains to illustrate his case, "we begin with simple mechanisms, wedge, lever and fulcrum, pulley and inclined plane, all of them as useful as

when they were first invented.... We are not asked to memorize a list of the parts to a side-wheeler engine. And we could, presumably, apply to the study of literature a little of the common sense that we currently apply to physics or to biology. In poetry there are simple procedures, and there are known discoveries, clearly marked" (*LE* 18-9). Along this same line of thought, Lewis Hyde writes that "The greatest art offers us images by which to imagine our lives. And once the imagination has been awakened, it is procreative.... Reading the work, we feel gifted for a while, and to the degree that we are able, we respond by creating new work (not art, perhaps, but with the artist's work at hand we suddenly find that we can make sense of our own experience)" (193).

⁷Such an "enlightened criticism," as we shall see, is the trademark of human genius.

⁸In *Gaudier-Brzeska*, Pound argues that "no age can be a great age which does not find its own genius" (101). "Genius," Bob Perelman clarifies, "is an emblem for the desires that drove [Pound] to conceive of such ambitious writing structures or strategies" (2). With respect to the Poundian hero, a matter to be taken up in the third chapter of this thesis, Perelman's comments are most insightful:

The ideogrammic method was not a specific poetic technique or rhetorical effect: it was a language speakable only by a hero or genius, and it entailed a vision of a simultaneously natural and hierarchical society--Pound's China or his Italy--where poetry was central and the center was poetic. Only in such poem-societies would ideograms have the meanings claimed for them: language would not be contaminated by abstraction or deadened by cliché; it would be a totalizing medium stretching in an ordered continuum from the state to nature. (60-1)

⁹Pound belabours the fact that the first chapter is composed of exactly forty-six individual "characters," each of which makes "some special contribution to the effect of the whole," yet which in their own right are particularly vivid and meaningful. Accordingly, he leaves little doubt that the chapter is to be conceived as one large ideogram of Humanity. See also Chapter 1, note 19 above.

¹⁰Indeed, Pound would later relish this aspect of Confucianism. For a good discussion of the relation between art and good government, see Smith's insights to the Confucian concept *Wen*, pp. 186-7.

¹¹Pound does not really make a distinction between scholarly and artistic genius. Implicit throughout his essay "The Renaissance" is the sense that they are one and the same activity: "The universities can no longer remain divorced from contemporary intellectual activity.... Art and scholarship need not be wholly at loggerheads" (*LE* 221).

¹²That Pound's notion of genius seeks to overcome any divisions between poetry and politics is clarified by Bob Perelman when he points out that "for Pound the field in which the poet's activity was autonomous was the entire extent of society" (60): "Seen through the lens of Pound's faith, ... the artist of the State was a genius--a union of utter acuity and irresistible force who perceived multiple perspectives instantly and had only to pronounce his clear and powerful word to create social value, a new language, and a new world" (29).

¹³This is the main thrust of Laszlo Gefin's book *Ideogram: History of a Poetic Method*: "The central method and main form of modernism I call the *juxtapositional* or, to use the name given to it by its 'inventor' Ezra Pound, the *ideogrammic* method" (xii):

The method of the ideogram asserts that a true representation of reality (one that is in accord with nature's own movements) is possible in poetry (and art in general) by an asyndetic juxtaposition of linguistic (or pictorial, spatial, tonal) particulars which the mind of the reader (onlooker, listener) will organize into a coherent whole just as he or she does with particulars in the real world. Not only are connectives relics of an outmoded transitional practice, but they are redundant, in fact, because they are not present in nature.... [I]deogrammic writing is mimetic only in the sense that it attempts to enact natural processes. (Gefin xvii)

¹⁴Pound's own cultural jewel was to be *The Cantos*. With respect to what Pound considers an "invention" or "discovery," he writes in "How to Read" that the artistic gems he seeks are those insights which have made "a definite contribution to the art of verbal expression" (*LE* 17).

¹⁵Pound also refers to the genius of these men as "symptomatic" of a particular time: "In them we find a reflection of tendencies and modes of a time. They mirror obvious and apparent thought movements. They are what one might have expected in such and such a year and place. They register" (*SP* 25).

¹⁶That the artist is in fact a scholar of sorts is the main thrust of Pound's essay "The Serious Artist": "The serious artist is scientific in that he presents the image of his desire, of his hate, of his indifference as precisely as that.... The more precise his record the more lasting and unassailable his work of art" (*LE* 46). Moreover, as Gefin explains how Eliot perceived Pound's artistic research or cultivation of the past,

Eliot ... was fully aware of Pound's intentions and their significance. He saw these methods as a modernist gesture of doing away with romantic notions of 'originality' in poetry. In its proper meaning originality was seen by Eliot to lie in grasping certain things which are 'permanent in human nature.' Accordingly, in Eliot's view, ... 'One of Pound's most genuine claims to genuine originality is ... his revivification of the Provençal and early Italian poetry. (4)

¹⁷Earlier in this same essay ("How To Read"), Pound rebukes the standards of contemporary letters quite persuasively: "The general contempt of 'scholarship', especially any part of it connected with subjects included in university 'Arts' courses; the shrinking of people in general from any book supposed to be 'good'; and, in another mode, the flamboyant advertisements telling how to seem to know it when you don't, might long since have indicated to the sensitive that there is something defective in the contemporary methods of purveying letters" (*LE* 15).

¹⁸Elsewhere Pound writes that "One 'moves' the reader only by clarity. In depicting the motions of the 'human heart' the durability of the writing depends on the exactitude. It is the thing that is true and that stays true that keeps fresh for the reader" (*LE* 22).

¹⁹Though there are numerous examples that would support this contention, "I gather the Limbs of Osiris" is largely based on the notion that modern scholarship and the literary arts in general must continue to revitalize what Pound refers to as the *corpus poetarum* (*SP* 24). Moreover, as I will demonstrate, good poems are to Pound's mind *functioning organisms*, created, like nature, out of precise particulars whose juxtaposition will establish relations between them and give the reader "a sudden insight."

²⁰Pound writes "imperial and sentimental exploitation" (*LE* 21), terms which may be slightly overstated for the effect. Likewise in "Watch the Beaneries," Pound leaves little doubt as to the damage conventional education perpetuates, hiring "fools who take fifteen years to admit a truth because it is safer and more immediately profitable to them to go on teaching a falsehood," and refusing to alter material "that has nothing to do with real life" (*GK* 345). One further insight should also be cited, if only for the sheer force of its vehemence:

The modern and typical prof holds his job because of his slickness in *avoiding* the thesis, because he crawls under the buggy rug of a moth-eaten curriculum in sheer terror of known fact and active discovery. That is what the half-louse is PAID for.
(345)

I use "wasteland" with obvious reference to Pound's editorial work on T.S. Eliot's modern masterpiece, but more particularly, I want to draw attention to the kind of revolution in learning Pound sought: "Perhaps out of a sand-swept country, the need of interior harmony" (*LE* 151). The sentiment is echoed in "Sparta 776 B.C." with particular reference to the inadequacy of philosophical abstraction when Pound writes that "[f]or some reason philosophy has meant to the man in the street an arid and futile quibble over abstractions. Leading to the desiccation of culture" (*GK* 40-1).

²¹Though usury is primarily an economic term, there is ample evidence to suggest that Pound is equally concerned with the currency and vitality of information. As George Kearns notes, a usurious system founds its profit upon "negation, the creation or illusion of scarcity; upon the production and consumption of things we do not need....; and upon convincing us that money [or information], which should be a useful sign, free from private control and regulated for the welfare of the 'whole people', is also a commodity in short supply" (88-9). Of considerable interest in this respect are Pound's insights to the American University system and its unwillingness to develop an efficient mode of intercommunication among its different institutions: "Usurers do not desire the circulation of knowledge" (*GK* 51-62). With respect to authority in general, or what he often refers to as "a doxy, or diffused opinion," Pound's insight to the trappings of the Catholic Church clearly outlines the usury of information and language in general:

We know that there is ever one enemy, ever-busy obscuring our terms; ever muddling and muddying terminologies, ever trotting out minor issues to obscure the main and the basic, ever prattling of short range causation for the sake of, or with the result of, obscuring the vital truth. Captans annonam etc. (that is to say hogging the harvest, aiding the hoggers and so forth). (GK 31)

²²For a detailed examination of how Pound sought to subvert conventional methods of scholarship, whether foregrounding simple spelling or grammatical errors, mistranslating or failing to cite all of the words in a translation for his own ends--"I leave out wordz that don't comport with wot I'ma driving at"--or blatantly violating copyright, see Kathryn Lindberg's chapter on "Tradition and Heresy", pp. 76-125.

²³Lindberg's insights are most useful here with respect to the influences that may have led him to conceive of a new "literary pedagogy":

Pound's attempt to redefine 'culture,' to gather its 'luminous details' into a literary pedagogy and ultimately into a new political order, brought him, by way of [Leo] Frobenius and [Jacob] Burckhardt, into conjunction with modern German (if not neo-Nietzschean) redefinitions of *Kultur*. Thus, his 'Kulchur' differs radically from the Arnoldian--which is to say 'English' but also 'Eliotic'--notion of culture as a stay against the anarchy of modern urbanization and the attendant perils of foreign influence and the 'philistinism' of the new bourgeoisie. (181)

²⁴Thus Altieri suggests of Pound's methodology that "The endless, supplemental process of self-justification gives way to direct, expressive measures of personal worth, based, not on ideas about the self, but on qualities in one's compositional acts. Selves are not had as gifts, but selves are earned" (306).

²⁵Moreover, Lindberg suggests that although Pound's "transpositions and translations of heterogeneous quotations do not comprise an ethical or aesthetic system,...they agitate, recirculate, and otherwise 'activate' out-worn words and ideas, ... ideas which, he claims, retain the potential for action" (172).

²⁶This will be discussed in some detail in the third chapter on the Malatesta Cantos. The passage cited here is from an early draft of Canto VIII when Pound discusses the catalytic function of Gemisthus Plethon, the Greek neo-Platonic philosopher, with regard to the Tempio:

...Gemisthus, an old man talking the gods.
/Came later/ [Later] Alberti that the painter should
set hunger in men for building.

And thus [grew, thus sprang to flower,]
sea poppy, luteumve papaver.
By the sea gate, /&/ the sun's gate.

[caught in stone.]

a song caught in the stone. (cited by D'Epiro 28)

²⁷That "Nature abhors a vacuum" is as central to Pound's aesthetic as it is to the "new physics": "the universe is full of fields of energy in various states, and space can be thought of to be as substantial as a billiard ball or as active as a bolt of lightning" (Kern 154).

²⁸Eliot once described Imagism as "the starting-point of modern poetry" (cited by Tucker 83). As for "juxtaposition," Dasenbrock summarizes:

The poet places one concise perception next to another without a transition in a way that implicitly creates a connection, but it is up to the reader to fill in the transition and to make the connection explicit. The best Imagist poems [ie. "In a Station of the Metro"] had implicitly worked in this manner, but only in his writings on Vorticist art does Pound explicitly grasp juxtaposition as an aesthetic principle. (96-7)

²⁹The idea is from Wyndham Lewis, when, in defining Vorticism in 1915, he begins by saying that "[b]y Vorticism we mean (a) *Activity* as opposed to the tasteful *Passivity* of Picasso" (*WLOA* 96). Moreover, as Dasenbrock summarizes,

Imagism was a crucial step in the evolution of Pound's aesthetic but it did not and could not provide him with a coherent aesthetic. In the cardinal notions of Imagism, there are poetic principles important and valuable for Pound's thinking. However, in his search for a viable aesthetic, Pound made absolutes out of these principles, which simply cannot stand as absolutes.... [I]n Imagism ... there is no synthesis, no recognition of the play of opposites which alone can produce a coherent aesthetic. (92)
Passivity is ... the word for what is wrong with the Imagism Pound [came to] disown. (96)

Dasenbrock goes on to suggest that what ultimately proved to be of value to Pound in Imagism was the notion of an "affective aesthetic": "a poem's value is a function of how interesting the work is that the reader must do to understand it, and how profound a transformation the work manages to effect in the reader" (97).

³⁰In *Gaudier-Brzeska*, Pound clarifies that "All poetic language is the language of exploration.... The point of Imagisme [what became of Imagism, i.e. Vorticism] is that it does not use images *as ornaments*. The image is itself the speech. The image is the word beyond formulated language" (88).

³¹The history of Imagism is well-documented, at least from Pound's perspective, by Herbert Schneidau in *Ezra Pound: The Image and the Real*. Hugh Kenner's treatment of the movement in *The Pound Era* is also useful (173-91). With respect to the path that Imagism pursued, Pound began the movement in the spring of 1912 and more or less concluded his management of the movement after publishing the anthology *Des Imagistes*

in March of 1914. Shortly after this anthology appeared, Amy Lowell arrived in London and all but captured the movement from Pound, publishing anthologies in 1915, 1916, and 1917 entitled *Some Imagist Poets*, in which each contributor chose what would represent his or her own work. Pound soon quit the movement in disgust, claiming that his Imagism had been transformed into "Amygism."

³²The passage as cited by Noel Stock is from *The New Republic* of 22 May 1915 and reads:

They [the new Imagists] give us frail pictures---whiffs of windy beaches, marshes, meadows, city streets, dishevelled leaves; pictures pleasant and suggestive enough, but seldom is any of them more than a nice description. (225)

³³Such is Pound's call for a new *Paideuma*, or cultural Renaissance:

The value of Leo Frobenius to civilization is not for the rightness or wrongness of his opinions but for the kind of thinking he does....

He has especial seen and marked out a kind of knowing, the difference between knowledge that has to be acquired by particular effort and *knowing that is in people, 'in the air'*. He has accented the value of such record. His archaeology is not retrospective, but immediate....

To escape a word or set of words [ie. culture or civilization] loaded up with dead association Frobenius uses the term *Paideuma* for *the tangle or complex of the inrooted ideas of any period*....

When I said that I wanted a new civilization, I think I could have used Frobenius' term ... *Paideuma* for *the gristly roots of ideas that are in action*. (57-8 italics mine)

³⁴It is interesting to note that discoveries in modern physics gave way to an understanding of such a "vital universe." Kelvin in particular was of the view that "there is a continuous, homogenous and incompressible fluid filling space and that what we call an atom is 'a vortex ring, ever whirling in this continuity'" (Kern 184). With respect to how Pound does *not* seek to satisfy his audience, see *GK*, pp. 160-1:

The supreme evil committable by any critic is to turn away men from the bright and the living. The ignominious failure of ANY critic (however low) is to fail to find something to arouse the appetite of his audience, to read, to see, to experience.

It is the critic's BUSINESS *adescare* to lure the reader. Caviar, vodka, any hodge-podge of oddities that arouses hunger or thirst is pardonable to the critic.

He is not there to satiate.... (161)

³⁵Thus Pound writes in "Zweck or the Aim" that "it may be convenient to lay it [the past] out anesthetized on the table with dates pasted on here and there, but what we know we know by ripples and spirals eddying out from us and from our own time" (*GK* 60).

³⁶See Hyde, pp.181-2, for a more detailed account of the Osiris myth as employed by Whitman and later Pound.

³⁷Charles Altieri suggests that beginning with *Gaudier-Brzeska* and Pound's explication of the Vorticist ethos, Pound becomes increasingly aware of "the two resources distinctive to language: 1) the variety of selves inherent in the kinds of memories that language preserves and 2) the modes of ethical responsibility that language makes possible" (288). With respect to the "meridians" of consciousness, see Chapter 1, note 25 above, and *The Unwobbling Pivot* (C 11).

³⁸To a large extent, this is the focus of Pound's essay on "Cavalcanti," where he posits an understanding of the body as an energetic and vibrating whole, and thus conceives of a decidedly unorthodox approach to health and disease. Speaking of the medieval Italian poets, Pound suggests that "They are opposed to a form of stupidity not limited to Europe, that is, idiotic asceticism and a belief that the body is evil.... [The] invention of hell for one's enemies ... is always symptomatic of supineness, bad hygiene, bad physique (possibly envy); even the diseases of the mind, they do not try to cure as such, but devise hells to punish, not to heal, the individual sufferer" (150). A few pages later he writes that we must begin to think of "the body as the perfect instrument of the increasing intelligence.... The lack of this concept invalidates the whole of monastic thought" (152). The holistic approach which Pound offers to treat the disease of "monastic thought" appeals to "the heart's law" and is not unlike the Chinese method of acupuncture, his ideograms working with pin-point accuracy to stimulate the body's own self-healing powers. However lightheartedly, Pound describes the body's mechanism in the following terms:

Whether it is necessary to modernize or nordicize our terminology and call this 'the aesthetic or interactive vasomotor in relation to consciousness', I leave to the reader's own taste and sense of proportion. I am inclined to think that a habit of mind which insists upon, or even tends toward, such terminology somewhat takes the bloom off the peach. (*LE* 152)

³⁹See "Education or Information" in *Guide to Kulchur*, pp. 219-21. Pound's argument here focuses on the need for "conscious propaganda," on the need for certain individuals to afford "lines" of thought along which the student may proceed to make his own insights: "Some kind of line to hang one's facts on is better than no line at all" (*GK* 221), indirection being the bane of modern education.

⁴⁰The Image is the focus here, and in decidedly complex terms, Pound describes two sorts of Images, one which arises within the mind, and as such, need be organized and expressed, and one which is "given" as an object, and as such, need be processed and reduced to its essential quality as an "interpretive" or luminous detail:

The Image can be of two sorts. It can arise within the mind. It is then 'subjective'. External causes play upon the mind, perhaps; if

so, they are drawn into the mind, fused, transmitted, and emerge in an Image unlike themselves. Secondly, the Image can be objective. Emotion seizing up some external scene or action carries it intact to the mind; and that vortex purges it of all save the essential or dominant or dramatic qualities, and it emerges like an external original. (SP 374-5)

⁴¹To this end, Charles Altieri clarifies, "[t]he artwork becomes at once a display and a test: It is possible to give form to an infinite range of qualities by synthesizing a system of equations, and the capacity of those equations, one created, to serve as instruments intensifying the perceptions and resistances of others becomes the public measure of the value in private acts. Art expresses not worlds or selves, but ways of seeing and arranging the world" (299).

⁴²Pound explains this in "I gather the Limbs of Osiris":

[T]he man who has some standard reasonably high ... does, while he is striving to bring his work within reach of his own conception of it, get rid of the first froth of verse, which is in nearly every case quite like the first verse-froth of everyone else. He emerges decently clean after some reasonable purgation, not nearly a master, but licensed, an initiate, with some chance of conserving his will to speak and seeing it mature and strengthen with the ripening and strengthening of the mind itself until, by the favour of the gods, he come upon some lasting excellence. (SP 35)

⁴³As suggested in the first chapter, virtue is the deliberate consequence of concentrating one's mind to the inarticulate will, to the "indefinite" and "impalpable" tones of the heart (SP 28-9; 33).

⁴⁴It is not coincidental then that years later, in his *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound closes his discussion of the Confucian *Analects* by pointing out that "[t]he dominant element in the sign for learning in the love of learning chapter is a mortar. That is, the knowledge must be ground into fine powder" (21).

⁴⁵Pound actually received the manuscripts of Fenollosa (some sixteen notebooks) in 1913 from his widow, Mary Fenollosa, and proceeded to translate and edit them for the following two or three years.

⁴⁶In somewhat more elliptical terms, Pound explains what he means by this "sincerity" in the essay "Cavalcanti":

Not the pagan worship of strength, nor the Greek perception of visual non-animate plastic, or plastic in which the being animate was not the main and principal quality, but this 'harmony in the sentience' or harmony of the sentient, where thought has its demarcation, the substance its *virtu*, where stupid men have not reduced all 'energy' to unbounded undistinguished abstraction. (LE 154)

⁴⁷This statement bears remarkable similarity to Pound's suggestion that "rightly or wrongly we feel that Confucius offers a way of life; an Anschauung or disposition toward nature and man and a system for dealing with both."

⁴⁸Speaking to Pound in an interview in 1967, Allan Ginsberg explains what he believes to be the concrete value of his perceptions: "The Paradise is in the desire, not in the imperfection of accomplishment--it was the intention of Desire we all respond to--Bhakti--the Paradise is in the magnanimity of the *desire* to manifest coherent perceptions in language" (cited by Hyde 271).

⁴⁹My jumping around from Imagism to Vorticism and "the ideogrammic method" is justified by Gefin: "Just as the theory of the image had solidified in his mind when already a vorticist, so his systemic definition of the method he named ideogrammic came about when he renewed his Chinese (particularly Confucian) studies in the thirties" (27). The seeds of this latter method had been planted as early as November of 1913 when Pound was first given the notes, translations and essays of Ernest Fenollosa. As Gefin suggests, "His earlier ideas about 'luminous details,' 'language beyond metaphor,' 'intellectual and emotional complex,' and 'pattern units' appear to have fallen into place as soon as he read Fenollosa's essay" (14). This essay was later edited and published by Pound as *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* (1916). Years later, in his *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound clarifies the opposition between "real knowledge" and "syllogistic connection" in terms which set Fenollosa's "notion of the verbal, metaphoric and metamorphic force of Chinese writing ... against Western logic--especially the Christian *Logos*" (Lindberg 174):

Ernest Fenollosa attacked, quite rightly, a great weakness in western ratiocination. He pointed out that the material sciences, biology, chemistry, examined collections of facts, phenomena, specimens, and gathered general equations of general knowledge from them, even though the observed data had no syllogistic connection. (*GK* 27-8)

For detailed discussions of the impact of Fenollosa on Pound, see Gefin pp.13-26, and Lindberg, pp. 60-3.

⁵⁰Gefin suggests that Pound subscribes to a form that would more adequately depict "the isomorphic nature of reality" (xvi) and gives numerous examples of what he means by isomorphism, particularly as Pound would have understood the concept:

Fenollosa's reaching back to the Chinese ideograph finds its philosophic counterpart in Wittgenstein's reference to the Egyptian hieroglyph; Fenollosa observed that 'relations are more real than the things which they relate' because true relations do not point to analogy but to 'identity of structure.' His statement shows concerns similar to Wittgenstein's as they are formulated in the latter's picture theory, for 'there must be something identical

in a picture and what it depicts,' and this is an identity of the Heraclitean 'latent structure.' (xvi)

See also Pound's remarks on the research of Leo Frobenius in *Guide to Kulchur* when he explains the "sense of two sets of values and their relation" (57-9).

⁵¹Patricia Rae is most insightful in this respect in her discussion of Vorticist art and William James's concept of "pragmatic truth" (692):

One of his [James's] central accomplishments as a psychologist had been the examination and description of those experiences in which a person believes that he has apprehended some absolute truth: experiences that had habitually and perhaps erroneously been called 'mystical.' When he later turned to philosophy, the problem that most intrigued him was how one should represent and wield such insights, when one could have no idea of knowing that they were what they seemed. James's project as a philosopher, in other words, was to trace the same inexorable arch as the 'new classical' theorists of art [i.e. Hulme and later, as Rae argues, Pound]: to seek a suitable mode of expression for an insight whose epistemological status remained uncertain. And the construct he defined in answer to this dilemma, the 'pragmatic' truth, had the same tensional structure as the poems and paintings of Vorticism. (692)

To a large extent, Rae continues, James undermines metaphysical speculation and concludes his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) with the final analysis that the moment of enchantment might be a "gift of our organism" just as possibly as "a gift of God's grace" (*VRE* 47; cited by Rae 694). Moreover, "[j]ust as James imagines his pragmatic truths being asserted and put to work in the world, so Pound suggests that the poet's insights ought to be recorded in such a way that they may be grasped and tested against experience. The analytical equations, passed on to the reader, become instruments for living" (704).

⁵²As Perelman summarizes, the essay where Pound "is most unbuttoned with his ideas in this area" is "The Postscript to Remy de Gourmont's *Natural Philosophy of Love*." Here Pound speculates that the brain is "only a sort of great clot of genital fluid held in suspense and reserve" (*PD* 203). As Perelman suggests,

....this remarkable fact does not apply to the species as a whole, it only concerns the genius, 'discharging at a high pressure.' Creation is spermatic: 'light is a projection from the luminous fluid'; 'the sperm [is] the form-creator, the substance which compels the ovule to evolve in a given pattern.' All other causality is overruled: 'I believe, and on no better ground than that of sudden emotion ... that the species changes as suddenly as a man makes a song or a poem, or as suddenly as he *starts* making

them, more suddenly than he can cut a statue in stone'. (*PD* 210, 206, 208) (cited by Perelman 68-9)

See also Chapter 1, note 45 above with respect to how *virtu* is conceived in terms of Chinese thinking, and Hyde with respect to how *virtu* moves through a person as desire and has procreative and healing power (35).

⁵³As Lewis Hyde suggests in this respect, "when art acts as an agent of transformation we may speak of it as a gift" (47):

The work of art is a gift because the gifted artist contains the vitality of his gift within the work, and thereby makes it available to others. Works we treasure are those which transmit that vitality and revive the soul. Such works circulate among us as reservoirs of available life. (25-6)

⁵⁴Perelman goes on to clarify that "Seen through the lens of Pound's faith, Mussolini the *artifex*, the artist of the State, was a genius--a union of utter acuity and irresistible force who perceived multiple perspectives instantly and had only to pronounce his clear and powerful words to create social value, a new language, and a new world" (29).

⁵⁵In "Zweck or the Aim," Pound distinguishes between "retrospective" and "prospective" study: "An 'education in 1938 which does not fit the student for life between 1940 and 1960 is a sham and an infamy.... I mean there are ideas, facts, notions that you can look up in a phone book or library and there are others which are in one as one's stomach or liver, one doesn't have to remember them, though they now and again, make themselves felt" (*GK* 56-7). Moreover, in outlining the major themes in Cantos XVII-XXX, Pound writes on a page of unpublished manuscript that his individualist values will be useful in "Making out of desire the new person"--"Formando di disio nuova persona" (cited by Sherry 155).

⁵⁶Likewise was Vorticism conceived as an acephalous aesthetic governed by an internal dynamism.

⁵⁷See Ackroyd, especially pp. 118-9, on "futility" as the informing principle of the original version of *The Waste Land*. As Ackroyd summarizes of the year in which it was composed, 1921 was marked by "intense political and economic discontent: the post-war boom had collapsed, there were two million unemployed and the economic chaos was exacerbated by the indecisiveness of the coalition government" (109).

⁵⁸Ackroyd is right to suggest that Eliot's new poem may have prompted Pound to begin his own work again, but off by a month in stating that this letter was written on the 24th of January, 1922. Eliot rather *responds* to Pound's letter on this day: "Complementi appreciated, as have been excessively depressed" (*LTSE* 504).

⁵⁹The phrase "intelligent constructivity" has been taken from the unpublished letters of Ezra Pound and is cited by the letter number in the Paige Collection of Pound's letters at Yale's Beinecke Library. As will be discussed, Sigismondo Malatesta was the perfect individual for Pound to inform his epic project, a point made clear when just one year after the publication of *The Malatesta Cantos*, Pound still considers Malatesta the archetype for his next major character: "Am....ready for another long chunk; and trying to find some

bloomin historic character who can be used as *an illustration of intelligent constructivity*. *Private life being another requisite*. S.M. amply possessed of both; but other characters often being fatally deficient" (*Paige* #700 cited by D'Epiro 6; italics mine). The relationship between Pound and Eliot during the early stages of the Malatesta cantos is well-chronicled by D'Epiro (pp. 5; 21-9), particularly his insights into the first draft: "Pound and Eliot are ... presented against a backdrop of futile personal ambitions and amidst a detritus of crumbled civilizations--a setting that partially accounts for the attempt, on the part of both poets, to 'shore' their fragments, namely those incorporated into *The Waste Land* and the Malatesta canto" (21).

⁶⁰D'Epiro's insights into *why* Pound repudiates Mauberley's aestheticism are most useful here:

Pound's repudiation of Mauberley's aestheticism ... owes a great deal to his growing conviction that the arts can best thrive in an atmosphere of social, political, and economic sanity. In Pound's view, a poet like Mauberley has evaded his responsibility to use art as a weapon in the struggle for a better society, for one which--unlike the London of *Mauberley I*--will welcome the serious artist.... Pound's vision of the just society was ... one in which much depended on the wisdom and the noble intentions of its ruler, the man who could accomplish the greatest amount of good in the shortest space of time. (99)

Chapter Three
The Malatesta Cantos

I believe in a love of deeds,
in a healthy desire for action...

I sing of the special case,
The truth is the individual.¹

.....

"When he got back here from Sparta, the people
"Lit fires, and turned out yelling: 'PANDOLFO!'"
In the gloom, the gold gathers the light against it.²

In early 1922, a certain discovery led Pound to refocus his energies upon the Italian Renaissance, or rather, as he describes it, "the great Roman vortex," when out of "the darkness of decentralization" emerged "the numerous vortices of the Italian cities, striving against each other not only in commerce but in the arts as well" (*LE* 220). This discovery was Rimini, a city marginal in might and political clout, yet outstanding for two particularly luminous reasons--its leader, patron and hereditary lord, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta (1417-1468), and his monument to his family, the Malatesta Temple, or *Tempio Malatestiano*.

Though it is not clear exactly how Pound came across his "Vorticist *condottiere*," there is every reason to believe that he had Sigismondo Malatesta in mind when he set out in March of 1922 on an extended vacation in Italy (March 27th--July 1st) to visit, among other places, Siena, Ancona, Ravenna, Venice and Rimini, all of which figure largely in the Malatesta Cantos.³ Here Pound discovered a way to "manifest the clear character" of his *Cantos*, "to bring them into some sort of design or architecture" (*L* 180).⁴ By July 2nd, when he had returned to Paris, Pound writes to his father that his newest canto "may swell out into two," and by the middle of August is deeply immersed

in his background research, discovering that "all the *minor* points that might aid one in forming an historic rather than a fanciful idea of [Malatesta's] character seem 'shrouded in mystery' or rather lies" (cited by Pearlman 302). Indeed, the more Pound penetrates the fiction history seemed, the more he discovers a character of sincerity and genius, a man that did "[a]ll that a single man could ... *against* the current of power," registering "a state of mind, of sensibility, of all-roundedness and awareness" (*GK* 159). In short, Pound saw that Malatesta could be used "as an illustration of intelligent constructivity" (cited by D'Epiro 6), that is, as an outstanding individual who had transformed a cultural need into something useful and concrete.

That same August, Pound tells John Quinn of Malatesta's attempt on the life of Pope Paul II and of Platina's description of his conversations with Malatesta (11.50.30-11.51.8), concluding that it was "a bloody good period, a town the size of Rimini, with Pier Francesca, Pisanello, Mino da Fiesoli, and Alberti as architect. The pick of the bunch, all working there at one time or another" (cited by Pearlman 302-3).⁵ Then in his "Paris Letter" to the *Dial*, in the November issue in which *The Waste Land* first appears, Pound gives public expression to the value of his research, and goes on to make a specific reference to the patronage and efficacy of Malatesta:

It, the vortex, has, historically, come from free groups, or from groups formed about men who had reached a condition of more than freedom; and these men or groups have acted as consumers. *Whatever they have constructed, they have also consumed....* It has been repeated often enough in these pages that '*the only thing you can give an artist is leisure*' (i.e., food, shelter, et cetera, plus leisure) to work in.

There was once a man in a small town who had Pisanello, Pier Francesco, and Mino da Fiesole all working for him at one time or another. They might have turned out bad jobs, but they didn't. They might have smashed up their work when they had finished, and he would have been out of several months' board. (cited by D'Epiro 2 italics mine)

As Pound would clarify years later under the frontispiece of his *Guide to Kulchur*, Malatesta's achievement "registers a concept. There is no other single man's effort equally registered": provisional centers generate wealth. Accordingly, what began in early 1922 as one canto had by Christmas of that year grown into three, and by the end of the year, blossomed into four. Clearly satisfied with his work at this point, Pound submits the four cantos to James Sibley Watson of the *Dial*, indicating that he would like to have them printed in the July issue of the magazine, and that he did not expect there to be much by way of revision.⁶ To the contrary, however, Pound ends up rewriting a good portion of the Malatesta Cantos, not because he had a change of heart with respect to his hero's merit, but because, upon returning to Italy in early 1923, he discovers a host of first-hand material about Malatesta, letters and documents dug out of various Italian archives, that would allow him to amplify and variegate his account.⁷ In short, Pound saw that he could delete many of the weak generalizing passages that spoke *about* Malatesta in favour of interpretive details that would present his case more directly. Published some five months later in the July 1923 issue of the *Criterion*, the Malatesta Cantos not only undermine the accepted facts of history, but celebrate the sincerity and achievement of a man who, as Erwin Panofsky claims, "swallowed up the world that surrounded him until his whole environment had been absorbed by his own self" (cited by Davie 130-1).

By most accounts, Sigismondo Malatesta was perhaps too hungry for his own good, in fact, was eventually excommunicated and condemned by the papacy for adultery, rape, incest and murder (10. 44. 19-24) among other things.⁸ Later appraisals by John Addington Symonds and Jacob Burckhardt were no more flattering, nor do they appear to be the stuff that would incite admiration:

Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta ... might be selected as a true type of the princes who united a romantic zeal for culture with the vices of the barbarians.... This Malatesta killed three wives in succession, and committed outrages on his children.... As *condottiere*[mercenary], he displayed all the duplicities, cruelties,

sacrileges, and tortuous policies to which the most accomplished villain of the age could have aspired.

Unscrupulousness, impiety, military skill, and high culture have been seldom so combined in one individual as Sigismondo Malatesta.... But the accumulated crimes of such a family must at last outweigh all talent, however great, and drag the tyrant into the abyss.... The verdict of history ... convicts him of murder, rape, adultery, incest, sacrilege, perjury, and treason, committed not once, but often. (cited by D'Epiro xiii)

Contrast these perspectives, however, with a more modern and judicious appreciation of the man, and we may begin to understand why Pound, at a time marked equally by orthodox and commercial interests, chooses an individual who undermines authority to such an extent that he emerges as one of the most responsible men of his age:⁹

Sigismondo Malatesta is one of history's reprobates, a man burdened for centuries with the character of moral outcast.... Modern opinion is more circumspect. It is now understood that Sigismondo Malatesta ... owes much of his evil reputation to hostile testimony.... The worst allegations against him were all transmitted to posterity by one authority: ... Pius II, whose interests as ruler ... envenomed him against the Malatesta [family], and whose published anathemas and, still more, his widely read historical *Commentaries*, represented Sigismondo with medieval gusto and indiscriminacy as a monster guilty of every possible public and private outrage. Many of these charges can be dismissed at once as the conventional invective of *curia* and church. Others, among the most grave, convicting him of the murder of his first two wives, Ginevra d'Este and Polissena Sforza, and of killing and dishonouring the corpse of a German noblewoman, were either inaccurate, improbable, or the offspring of malicious rumour. (Jones 176-7)

Indeed, much of Pound's admiration for Malatesta derives from what he *actually did* that so evoked the wrath of the papacy. Here was a man who, as Guy Davenport suggests, "practically embodied every ideal of his time" (166), yet who appeared in the eyes of the Catholic Church as a serious and subversive threat to orthodox beliefs (10. 44. 25-29). Here also was a culture much like Pound's own, one plagued by the "hostility or inertia" of reason and self-interest, and in turn, one increasingly divested of its sense of purpose

and direction. Faith had become the rhetoric of the wealthy, and morality a usurious instrument of denial and deceit.¹⁰ In the midst of this sterile and gloomy atmosphere, when most traditional measures of value had been sacrificed in the name of profit and material gain, Malatesta is indeed one of the most responsible men of his time, not for the sins he purportedly committed, but for effectively resisting and challenging orthodox interests by *acting upon* his beliefs.¹¹ He does so first as a young man whose family refused to pay the papal *census* (dues or rents) for three years, and who then successfully defended Rimini from the invading papal forces (9.33.4-8); for the better part of his career he then serves as a mercenary hiring himself out to the various princes and communes of Italy, this to earn wages to supplement the slight revenues of his own principality of Romagna (including Rimini and the smaller cities of Fano, Cesena, and Pesaro);¹² finally, and in total, as an assiduous patron of the arts, he fought to register permanently an unorthodox yet natural set of values. However unlikely a hero a mercenary may seem, Pound makes clear that Malatesta was not only a formidable opponent and innovative strategist, but a man of sincerity who redistributed much of what he earned into the construction of a temple. This we shall see is the achievement that Pound celebrates, for on the one hand, Malatesta's Tempio is a deliberate attempt to keep alive a vital aspect of our cultural heritage, and on the other, a summary of all that the man cared for, including personal glory, his city and his family. As D'Epiro summarizes,

The Tempio was dear to Pound for many reasons: for its 'clean and beneficent Christianity'--that is, for its neo-pagan spirit--, for its glorification of earthly love, for its 'make it new' aspect, for its remarkable workmanship, and for its being the *idée fixe* of a turbulent, passionate, and cultured man. (xviii)

Accordingly, Pound does not ask us to wander in the mazes of moral ambiguity, whether Malatesta was right or not in his actions, or whether the church and his enemies did have a case against him; rather, he directs us to consider how character is determined by

context, in particular, by an individual's ability to do something useful in a way that warrants respect. This he does by employing the ideographic manner of exemplum, foregrounding Malatesta's deeds in light of the dark moral context in which it was his misfortune to be born.

In an early draft of the Malatesta Cantos, Pound draws a clear parallel between Malatesta's creative audacity in constructing a temple "full of pagan works" (9.41.10) and his own in writing an epic for a culture loath to appreciate it:¹³

[Chien de metier,
 [hopelessness of writing an epic,]
 chien de metier,
 [hopelessness of building] a temple,
 in Romagna, in a land teeming with cattle thieves. (cited by Sherry 146)

Much as Pound here focuses upon the inhospitable age in which Malatesta was constrained to piece together his Tempio, so this early draft also directs us to the plight of the poet in modern culture, presenting Pound and Eliot in "1920 of thereabouts" (78.481.8-9) "against a backdrop of futile personal ambitions and amidst the detritus of crumbled civilizations" (D'Epiro 21). As noted earlier, Pound was well aware of Eliot's attempt in *The Waste Land* to shore together various fragments from our literary and cultural heritage as a kind of bulwark against the ruin of the modern age, and yet, as those familiar with the poem must concur, its resolution is tenuous at best, uncertain in its comprehension of meaning (i.e. "what the thunder said") and ultimately recondite that there is a peace which passes understanding.¹⁴ Such at any rate was one of the more judicious reactions to the poem when it first reached publication, for as Conrad Aiken summarizes in the *New Republic* (February 1923), *The Waste Land* succeeds "by virtue of its incoherence, not of its plan; by virtue of its ambiguities, not of its explanations": in short, he called it the work of an "intensely literary consciousness" (cited by Ackroyd 127).¹⁵ Though Pound would write that *The Waste Land* was "the justification of the 'movement' of our modern experiment since 1900" (cited by Ackroyd 127), he felt his

Cantos were in need of a more affirmative thrust to snap modern culture out of its torpor and disarray.

As is clear from the early drafts of the Malatesta Cantos, Pound realized that reinscribing tradition to a culture that has essentially lost its sense of worth would indeed be a "dog of a task," yet he also recognizes in Malatesta's Tempio a certain design, an "argument for a cultural synthesis" (Lindberg 145), that encourages him to adopt a decidedly more sincere approach to our cultural heritage than had Eliot in *The Waste Land*.¹⁶ This is made clear from the very beginning of the Malatesta Cantos, when in one of the few lines to survive the early drafts--"These fragments you have shelved (shored)" (8.28.1)--Pound makes an obvious and direct allusion to Eliot ("you") and to a concluding line from *The Waste Land* ("These fragments I have shored against my ruins"), indicating that his newest cantos will pick up where Eliot had left off.¹⁷ As George Dekker summarizes, "Eliot's poetic method in *The Waste Land*, far from making the useful part of the past more available, rather 'shelves' it again. Pound, on the other hand, will 'unshelve' the useful part of the past, as he does in the Malatesta Cantos" (31). Indeed, when Pound first submitted the Malatesta Cantos to James Sibley Watson in January of 1923, his greatest concerns were that they be read with comprehension and rendered accessible to the general reader:

I shd. very much like to know, from you, who presumably have not mugged up the history of Romagna, whether I have made the *main* points of the story CRYSTAL CLEAR....

And DO if you have the patience. Write me a list of the events, that you gather from the story. Also any doubts or obscurities. Anyone here from whom I might get an honest opinion, has heard me talk about S.M. and therefore comes to the cantos with a damaged instead of a perfect ignorance: or some fortuitous, unfair interest in the subject, apart from that shoved at them by the page. (cited by D'Epiro 33)

Pound of course had good reason to worry, for over the course of the past nine months, he had accumulated many hundreds of pages of notes and drafts for these cantos and

then reduced them to a mere twenty-five pages of printed text. Although they do become increasingly clear upon further revision, D'Epiro is right to point out that Pound was working all along under the Aristotelian dictum that "All men by nature have a desire to know," and as such, is sometimes too clever for his own good.¹⁸ At any rate, the Malatesta Cantos do mark a significant shift in both focus and style for *The Cantos*: they are Pound's first attempt at a full-length portrait; they are the first to incorporate original documents and letters; and they are the first to translate history into a predominantly modern idiom and prose. In short, it is clear that Pound was trying deliberately to focus his readers' attention, to whet our appetite in such a way that we might learn to appreciate "the effect of the factive personality" (GK 194).

Directly following Pound's allusion to *The Waste Land*, we find ourselves in the midst of a rather nasty quarrel between Truth and the muse of epic poetry, Calliope, who are "Slanging each other" (8.28.3) with the epithets "Slut!" and "Bitch!" (8.28.2). However far removed from the lyric beauty and epic stateliness of the earlier cantos, this exchange does serve to pique our interest immediately. By displaying the utter incompatibility between historical fact and epic sublimity, Pound sets the tone for many of the tensions that will follow: Calliope considers History a "bitch" for having exposed the more unlikely aspects of Malatesta's character; Truth by contrast considers Calliope a "slut" for being so promiscuous as to conceive of this bastard of a tale. Though Pound seems to ally himself with History, carrying his research into the life and times of Malatesta through to an overwhelming amount of detail, he is in no wise interested to present an unbiased factual record, making clear that from beneath the accepted facts of history he will produce something vital and monumental.¹⁹ These cantos are "openly volitionist," Pound would write years later, "establishing, I think clearly, the effect of the factive personality, Sigismundo, an entire man" (GK 194).

Much as Malatesta struggles purposefully against a hostile world so that he may transform the vitality of the past into a certain "mould," so the Malatesta Cantos are

themselves the testimony of "sincere self-expression," demonstrating that sincerity is not simply a state of mind, passively obedient to circumstance and indiscriminate with the facts of history, but an active force that is always transforming and completing things, ever shaping and enlightening our existence.²⁰ Such was the sincerity with which Pound first approached the Malatesta Cantos, as is made clear in latter he writes to Felix E. Schelling, just as he was beginning work on the Malatesta material:

There are things I quite definitely want to destroy, and which I think will have to [be] annihilated before civilization can exist...
If poets don't make certain horrors appear horrible who will?
 All values ultimately come from our judicial sentences...
Humanity is malleable mud, and the arts set the moulds it is later cast into. Until the cells of humanity recognize certain things as excrement, they will stay in [the] human colon and poison it...). (*SL 181 italics mine*)²¹

Though Pound's aim in the Malatesta Cantos might well be perceived as a subversive and destructive one, as an arbitrary and problematic way of skirting the issue of historicism, his primary concern, as D'Epiro suggests, was with "presenting the parable of Sigismondo's struggle to preserve himself and his dream of the Tempio against the prejudice and hostility of a greedy and insensitive society" (65). To this end, the parable that he gives us does "make certain horrors appear horrible," yet these horrors are meant to comment upon the usuriousness and vacuity of modern society as well. As such, Pound does not necessarily appeal to our sense of reason or moral propriety, but to values which are more immediate and heartfelt, in Malatesta's time as in our own, to values which are essential to *living*. Implicitly, by celebrating what Malatesta achieved "outside the then system, ... against the power that was, and ... without great material resources," Pound seeks to draw attention to his own attempt in *The Cantos* to create something monumental, something that he felt would nurture and stimulate a cultural need.

For this parable to be most effective, however, Pound realized that Malatesta would have to appear in a more favourable light than history had allowed him. Recalling Pound's

claim that "all the *minor* points that might aid one in forming an historic rather than a fanciful idea of [Malatesta's] character seem 'shrouded in mystery' or rather lies," it is clear that Pound in fact sought to ground the more fanciful ideas about Malatesta's character in a deliberate tradition, one in which "all the minor points" would attest to his sincerity and conviction. What Pound needed in this respect was a mode of presentation that would cut through the "bunkum and hypocrisy" of the historical records, particularly the rhetoric of the Catholic Church, and draw attention to Malatesta's *deeds*. Because a war-weary modern audience was unlikely to embrace an apparently godless and debauched mercenary, Pound thus chooses to adopt an ironic mode of presentation, one that would cut through the dark moral context in which Malatesta lived and ruled and stimulate interest in what he achieved: "*if you consider the Malatesta and Sigismundo in particular, a failure, he was at all events a failure worth all the successes of his age*" (GK frontispiece). At the same time, because many of Malatesta's actions could hardly be justified from a sober, modern viewpoint, Pound chooses to bring us back to the Italian Renaissance and *into* the very thick of things, affording us an eye-witness account of Malatesta's life as it would have appeared to one of his contemporaries. Although there are in fact three distinct narrative perspectives, one "that of a somewhat pedantic modern historian, who, in the service of 'Truth,' painstakingly transcribes a number of Renaissance documents for us," another the voice of Pound himself who speaks "in several lyric passages infused with pathos" (D'Epiro 64), the most immediate and effective narrator is one of Malatesta's subordinates, presumably one of his soldiers, who gives us many of "the minor details" about Malatesta's life as he was there to witness them.²² From this perspective we are led to appreciate Malatesta's efforts against the current of power, for much as Malatesta derives power, direction, and determination from feeding on the harsh conditions in which he lived, so Pound shows us, through the eyes of an interested yet unpretentious narrator, that these conditions literally *define* Malatesta, for they are the conditions in and through which his sincerity is developed and manifest. In short, Pound

adopts what D'Epiro terms a "deflated epic style" of narration, "highlighting Sigismondo's heroic stature by setting it off against the slightly ludicrous and certainly nonheroic milieu into which it was his misfortune to be born" (63).²³ By picking up on D'Epiro's approach to the text, particularly in the latter three cantos of the sequence, it will be clear that Pound adopts this deflated epic style in order to reduce the rhetoric and feigned humanism of the age to its essential elements; by contrast, and in light of the gloomy moral context in which Malatesta was constrained to piece together his Tempio, Pound will celebrate Malatesta's achievement in the "characterizing patterned energy" of sincerity. As a fragment by fragment reading of the text will illustrate, Pound has carefully reworked the historical record to such effect that the impulse in Malatesta that led to the construction of his Tempio is developed and manifest as the *virtu* of his own poetic vision in these cantos. Recalling that the main thrust of the Malatesta Cantos is that of exemplum, Pound thus focuses our attention on the vitality that is working in and through each fragment, on the "intelligence" that lies in "the dimension of depth, not merely of some novelty on the surface" (*LE* 19).

Looking now more closely to the text itself, we are first introduced to Malatesta as an Italian princeling whose deeds have largely been neglected by history. Although the epic hero is typically a figure of national importance, Malatesta here appears as a kind of afterthought: not only does the first mention of his name seem obscured by a very specific reference to "That Alessandro" (8.28.4), the "Eternal watcher of things" (7.27.27) from the previous canto, but even insignificant as it is broken into two lines and introduced by the indefinite "And"--"And Malatesta / Sigismund" (8.28.4-5). That Malatesta's deeds have been forgotten by history is implicit in the first fully developed fragment of the text (8.28.6--8.29.24), a letter addressed to Giovanni de' Medici, youngest son of Cosimo de' Medici (whose family governed the largely usurious Medici bank), when Pound unshelves a document he has discovered in his research.²⁴ By doing so, Pound indicates that he will present Malatesta in a more favourable light than history

has given him, that is, in terms that are more sublime. On the one hand, Pound introduces the fragment with the formal address "*Frater tamquam / Et compater carissime*" ["Brother, as it were, and most dear companion"] (8.28.6-7), drawing attention to the letter as an official document and giving to the sequence an air of legitimacy which seems to justify his following translation of the contents; at the same time, however, Pound also draws attention to a certain detail, to what is "written on the back" of the letter, where the seal of the Malatesta family partially, and subversively, obliterates the illustrious name "Iohanni de Medicis de Florentia":²⁵

tergo
...hanni de
...dicis
...entia (8.28.7-10)

Clearly, "something" here serves in marked contrast to the name of a pre-eminent social and financial figure, something that has been removed from the historical record and yet something that demands our attention. Though not readily evident here, the contrast becomes a cultural one, for much as "Giovanni of the Medici" represents the type of authority that was concerned solely with the profit and gain of war at the expense of the land and its people, so Malatesta sought to appropriate as much wealth as he could from the Medici's, not for idle profit, but for redistribution into the cultural wealth of Rimini. As Pound would clarify years later, the seal of the Malatesta family is a sign of that wealth, a measure of what one man managed to accomplish over and above all others, indicating "the thoroughness of Rimini's civilization, ... as it was carried down and out into details" (*GK* frontispiece; 159). Thus the implications of the address are twofold: first and foremost, because we are not actually given the seal, Pound draws attention to something that is missing, something that is mysteriously absent from the historical record and that warrants greater scrutiny; at the same time, Pound also draws attention to the way in which he is going to "shore" these fragments for us, affording us an apparent

"Equivalent to" (8.28.11) historical fact by stamping it with a modern precision, sensibility, and, as we shall see, poetic licence.

The letter written to "Giovanni of the Medici" (8.28.12) is striking for a number of reasons, most notably because it creates a favourable first impression of Malatesta as he appears the focus and provisional center of a complex set of relationships. As in the argument between Truth and Calliope, we find ourselves in the very thick of things, for the letter is dated 1449, at the exact midpoint of Malatesta's active career (1430-68), when Malatesta is "in the field" in the midst of a campaign against Cremona. Here Pound establishes Malatesta's sincerity, translating in no uncertain terms the provisional nature of his character: "arranging peace" between Florence and "the King of Ragona" (8.28.17) would give him "the greatest possible pleasure" (8.28.19); the "service money" (8.28.24) that he requests of the Medici will implicitly be forwarded, at least in part, to the "*Maestro di pentore*" (8.28.27), who, like his future patron, also "needs cash" (8.29.6); and, as we may recall, the leisure that Pound argues is the only thing with which a patron can provide an artist will apparently be guaranteed by the terms of Malatesta's offer to the painter:

I want to arrange with him to give him so much per year
 And to assure him that he will get the sum agreed on.
 You may say that I will deposit security
 For him wherever he likes....
 For I mean to give him good treatment
 So that he may come to live the rest
 Of his life in my lands--
 Unless you put him off it--
 And for this I mean to make due provision,
 So that he can work as he likes,
 Or waste his time as he likes. (8.29.7-10; 12-18)

As noted earlier, the painter Piero della Francesca was but one of many great artists whom Malatesta took under his patronage; under similar terms, we may infer, he also employed one of the best architects of the age, Leon Battista Alberti, and one of the best sculptors, Agostino di Duccio.²⁶ "[N]ever lacking provision" (8.29.21), Malatesta indeed

appears an enlightened and benevolent leader, determined to bring the best artists of the time to Rimini so that he could build a temple and "Get as much enjoyment as possible from it" (8.29.4). From this fragment it is clear that Malatesta is no ordinary condottiere, if simply because he is fighting for something in which he believes.

As at the beginning of this fragment, the conscientious historian who is presumably translating the letter gives us a small dose of the original Italian: "*(affatigandose per suo piacere o no / non gli mancherà la provixione mai)*" (8.29.19-20). This of course seems to authenticate what we are reading, lending an air of credibility to the rather formal and business-like English ("with all due dispatch," "memoranda," "party to," "adherent," "deposit security") with which Malatesta appeals to the illustrious Giohanni of the Medici for his good grace. Most conspicuous, however, are those terms which are translated in a predominantly colloquial, if not slangy, modern idiom ("needs cash" and "Unless you put him off it"), suggesting one of two things, that our historian is simply being accurate in translating Malatesta's own informal directness, or that the very accuracy of an apparently factual translation is being ironically underplayed. This latter possibility seems more likely when, for all the actual Italian and legalistic terminology we are given, our historian seems obligated to justify his use of the phrase "chucked away" (8.28.31), putting in parentheses the Italian equivalent "*buttato via*" (8.28.32), which is a rather unusual attempt to be accurate in a technical detail which does not seem to warrant that much attention.²⁷ In effect, this irony serves to remind us that for all the profusion of detail, here and in the fragments to follow, we must not lose sight of the main thrust of the poem, Malatesta's commitment to getting things done efficiently.

In the second fragment of the text (8.29.25--8.30.10), Pound once again incorporates an original document into his account of Malatesta's life, this from the "*register of the Ten of the Bailey*" (8.30.10) who discusses an agreement between Malatesta and the city of Florence.²⁸ Although the letter is dated some three years later on "Aug. 5 1452"

(8.30.10), Pound creates the illusion of continuity by beginning in the middle of the register's report:

.....and because the aforesaid most illustrious
 Duke of Milan
 Is content and wills that the aforesaid Lord Sigismundo
 Go into the service of the most magnificent commune
 of the Florentines
 For alliance defensive of the two states. (8.29.25-30)

This illusion of continuity is of course enhanced by the repetition of "aforesaid," for at this point, the Duke of Milan has not yet been mentioned, nor are we aware that Malatesta is in fact a "Lord." Because the term is repeated, however, it does leave us wondering what *was* said: why the Duke of Milan is "content" and why he wills the service of Malatesta. Upon closer examination, the irony in the transition between the two fragments is clear: in the first fragment, Malatesta is "in the field" leading his forces against Cremona, which was then indirectly under the control of Francesco Sforza;²⁹ in the second fragment, the Duke of Milan who is engaging Malatesta's services to defend Florence is Sforza himself. Although Sforza was perhaps the foremost condottiere of the day, he is here introduced to us not by what he actually did, but by means of a rather conservative legal document wherein, as the "most illustrious Duke of Milan," he appears quite content to have others do things for him. Having fought both with *and* against Malatesta before, Sforza is simply employing the best that money could buy. Although this in itself does not seem too terribly out of character for a man in Sforza's position, Pound will later review his character in more detail: by the end of Canto VIII, we learn that Sforza is no more than a "peasant's son" (8.31.9) with a particular fondness for "fishing" (8.31.12); and little is said of his role as a condottiere other than that he once received "an excellent hiding"(8.31.15).³⁰ By contrast, we have already learned, by the end of the second fragment, that Malatesta is not only a valuable asset in the field, but an ideal patron with a passion for the arts.

Adriatic Sea near Rimini" (38). By including names that were virtually unknown to his audience, Pound undermines the national, international, or even cosmic scope of many epic works, generating in and through this image "a sense of immediacy greater than that which a chronologically and culturally distanced narration could provide" (D'Epiro 19). Because "the forked rocks of Penna and Billi" are hardly the twin peaks of Parnassus, nor the Marecchia the mighty Scamander, Pound makes clear that this particular tale is dictated more by the *actual* needs of the time than it is by moral and / or epic conventions.³¹ In effect, the sense of obscurity and desolation that is evoked draws our attention to a material need, that is, for something that would *define* the setting. This is made clear a little further on in Canto VIII when Pound states explicitly that "here they wanted a setting, / By Marecchia, where the water comes down over the cobbles" (8.32.24-5). Recalling Pound's claim that "architecture" is the one thing that can be "given to all men," the most impressive in addressing a "material need," it lies implicit that what they "wanted," or rather, lacked, was something substantial and inspiring, in effect, something monumental that would attest to the vitality of the past and display a renewed sense of purpose for the present. Thus, much as Pound here appears to be grounding the conventions of epic representation, piecing together long neglected documents and images of unknown places to create a deliberate tradition, so will Malatesta do what he can to bring to his culture a perdurable monument, that is, "life in a setting," before the extinction of his dynasty.³²

Now that Pound has impressed upon us with imagistic precision the harsh conditions in which Malatesta lived and ruled, the fourth fragment of the text offers us a brief moment of respite. Based on a song Malatesta had written to praise Isotta degli Atti, his mistress during his second marriage, and eventually his third wife, this lyric interlude once again serves in marked contrast to the styles that have preceded it:

Lyra:
 "Ye spirits who of olde were in this land

Each under Love, and shaken,
 Go with your lutes, awaken
 The summer within her mind,
 Who hath not Helen for peer
 Yseut nor Batsabe." (8.30.16-22)

Much as Malatesta himself will incorporate numerous classical motifs (the "spirits of olde") into the design of his Tempio and stamp everywhere upon it the monogram of he and Isotta ("S" and "I"), so Pound now stamps history and this epic tale with his own brand of lyricism, taking lines from Malatesta's actual song and including his own isolated references to Helen, Yseut and Batsabe. In this way Malatesta is kept at the center of the picture, while Pound goes about reinterpreting and modifying some of the details. At the same time, even though it is largely implicit that Malatesta is in fact the original author of this fragment, its purpose within the context of the poem is clear: placed immediately following the sense of desolation evoked in the third fragment, and then suddenly interrupted by the next fragment (8.30.23-32), which picks up on the letter to "Jiohanni di Cosimo" (8.30.25) to address the practical matters of war (when Malatesta is "in the field" writing of the difficulties he is having digging new ditches to set up the cannons as "it rains here by the gallon"), it resonates with the hope that the "spirits who of olde were in this land" will return and bring with them a renewed sense of vitality and purpose. What Pound draws attention to here is the function that the arts must serve in addressing a certain property of the mind, for even when the forces of reason and self-interest have laid waste to all natural measure of value, it takes but one song to summon up the summer of better times.

In the sixth fragment of the text (8.30.33--8.31.15), Pound directs us to a much happier time in the relationship between Malatesta and Sforza, that is, to the summer of 1442 when Sforza and his new wife Bianca Visconti--"the peasant's son and the duchess"(8.31.9)--had visited Rimini on their way to Ancona and "the wars southward" (8.31.10). Here Rimini appears no "mud-stretch full of cobbles," but a vibrant and festive city in which culture had been "carried down and out into details":

Under the plumes, with the flakes and the small wads of colour
 Showering from the balconies
 With the sheets spread from windows,
 with leaves and small branches pinned on them,
 Arras hung from the railings; out of the dust,
 With pheasant tails upright on their forelocks,
 The small white horses, the
 Twelve girls riding in order, green satin in pannier'd habits;
 Bianca Visconti, with Sforza ...
 To Rimini, and to the wars southward.... (8.30.33--8.31.8, 10)

Such at any rate is the image of the Rimini that Malatesta bears in his mind as he now prepares some seven years later to lay siege upon Cremona, then defended by Bianca Visconti, and indirectly, by Sforza himself. Though it remains to be seen what precipitated the dispute between Malatesta and Sforza, this fragment does serve to depict Rimini in a vivid and dynamic way, recalling what Pound believed was a time of civic pride and responsibility, "when the individual city tried to outdo its neighbor in the degree and intensity of its civilization, to be the vortex for the most living individuals" (*P/J* 204).³³ Indeed, there is a sense of harmony and order amidst this lively celebration, a sense that this grand display of Rimini's wealth is meant to impress Sforza and gain his favour as the two men make their way to "the wars southward."³⁴ The implication is that this was an age in which the arts and statecraft were meant to complement each other, when cultural order was the mark of political strength and prestige. At the same time, Malatesta's hospitality serves in contrast to the inhospitable conditions we have seen in the third and fifth fragments. Romagna is not yet ravaged by war; rather, there are "Boats drawn on the sand, red-orange sails in the creek's mouth" (9.31.11), and Malatesta appears the ideal host, taking Sforza "For two days' pleasure, mostly "*la pesca*," fishing, / *Di cui* in the which he, Francesco, *godeva molto*" (9.31.12-3). As if to remind us that these fragments are being translated for our convenience, our conscientious historian continues to draw attention to even the most minor details, bringing us back to the beginning of the Renaissance by writing as he does above in a sort of macaronic verse.

As D' Epiro suggests, "[o]nly in this way did Pound feel that he could both present Malatesta in his own milieu and convey to us, simultaneously, his relevance for our own times" (67). In this particular instance, of course, the milieu is a thriving Rimini, here depicted as a paradigm of cultural order--"to wit the abundance of nature and the responsibility of the whole people" (GK 194)--whereas ironically, the man whose arrival this passage is supposed to celebrate is soon made to appear "the peasant's son" that he was, for after all is said and done, we learn at the conclusion of this fifteen line run-on sentence that when Sforza did reach Ancona, he "received an excellent hiding." By contrast, and in terms which anticipate Pound's own treatment in Pisa, Malatesta treats his defeat in Ancona with the unassuming smile of one who had simply tried to be efficient with all that he "set [his] hands to" (8.31.23):

And in the gate at Ancona, between the forgate
 And the main-gates
 Sigismundo, ally, come through an enemy force,
 To patch up some sort of treaty, passes one gate
 And they shut it before they open the next gate, and he says:
 "Now you have me,
 Caught like a hen in a coop." (8.31.26-32)

Indeed, as the first spoken words from Malatesta, such an acknowledgement is hardly what one would expect from an epic hero, and yet it does ring with the modesty of self-deprecating humour that allows us to sympathize with his plight.

Having now been introduced to Rimini as a model capital, we are brought back some three years earlier to 1439 when Pope Eugenius IV and "the Greek emperor" (8.31.16), John Paleologus, met in Florence to heal the split between the Church of Rome and the Greek Church.³⁵ Among the great men who attended this unprecedented meeting (the so-called Council of Ferrara) was "Gemisthus Plethon" (8.31.18), a Byzantine Neoplatonist philosopher, who in Pound's view was responsible for bringing "over a species of Platonism to Italy" (GK 224) that would encourage the revival of Greek studies

in the Western world (*GK* 160). Also in attendance was Malatesta, who, as we shall see, was definitely influenced by what the old philosopher had to say:

....Gemisthus Plethon
 Talking of the war about the temple at Delphos,
 And of POSEIDON, *concret Allgemeine*,
 And telling of how Plato went to Dionysus of Syracuse
 Because he had observed that tyrants
 Were most efficient in all that they set their hands to.... (8.31.18-23)

However steep the references, the main thrust of the passage is, as Terrell suggests, to convey Gemisthus's dream of "grafting polytheistic myths onto the Christian religion, an aim with which Pound was in sympathy" (39). More tellingly perhaps, the details themselves are meant to convey what Malatesta remembers about the old man's words, for it lies implicit from the previous fragment that Malatesta has already adopted a 'hands on' approach to governing Rimini, and will yet serve a provisional and transformational role in rendering these words concrete.³⁶ To this end, much as the previous fragment celebrates "the abundance of nature and the responsibility of the people," so, too, will Malatesta celebrate the abundance of a different nature, that is, of the Greek classical tradition. This is made clear in an earlier draft of the Malatesta Cantos, when Gemisthus's catalytic function with regard to the Tempio is stated explicitly:

...Gemisthus, an old man talking the gods.
 /Came later/ [Later] Alberti that the painter should
 set hunger in men for building.

And thus [grew, thus sprang to flower,]
 sea poppy, luteumve papaver.
 By the sea gate, / &/ the sun's gate.

[caught in the stone.]
 a song caught in the stone. (cited by D'Epiro 28)

In short, what Malatesta makes of Gemisthus's words becomes a matter of personal responsibility, for we are led to believe from the fragment that we are given in the final version of the text that Malatesta will indeed "set his hands to" building something monumental, something that would testify to the variety and vitality of values that were

"Past ruin'd Latium" (9.41.12), and that would in turn incite among his people the desire for cultural renewal, that is, for a renaissance.

If by this point in Canto VIII we have learned to respect Malatesta for the determination with which he seeks to realize a particular vision, the following fragment (8.32.1-21) conveys syntactically as well as thematically the rather chaotic conditions in which he was constrained to do so:

With the church against him,
 With the Medici bank for itself,
 With wattle Sforza against him
 Sforza Francesco, wattle-nose,
 Who married him (Sigismundo) his (Francesco's)
 Daughter in September,
 Who stole Pesaro in October (as Broglio says "*bestialmente*"),
 Who stood with the Venetians in November,
 With the Milanese in December,
 Sold Milan in November, stole Milan in December
 Or something of that sort,
 Commanded the Milanese in the spring,
 the Venetians at midsummer,
 The Milanese in the autumn,
 And was Naples' ally in October. (8.32.1-15)

Although the forces of orthodox reason and commercial self-interest (the "church" and the "Medici bank") are here only briefly alluded to, they were perhaps the most formidable obstacles that Malatesta had to face, and as such, are given considerable attention in the following cantos. By implication, however, they are no less shifty than the "wattle-nose" Sforza, who now appears to have gained much of his power by ignoble means.³⁷ As if to emphasize this point, our narrator draws attention to an historical term used to describe Sforza's actions, the Italian "*bestialmente*," in this case foregrounding a detail, Sforza's theft of Pesaro from Malatesta, that will eventually be interpreted as the catalyst in the dispute between the two men, and the cause of Malatesta's misfortunes (9.34.29--9.35.13). What stands out most significantly from the "general indefinite wobble" (35.173.8) of the church, the Medici bank, and Sforza, however, is Malatesta's

steadfastness of purpose. Lest there be any confusion after the first fifteen lines of this fragment, the following line states explicitly that "He, Sigismundo, *templum aedificavit*" ["he built a temple"] (8.32.16). To ensure that Malatesta's achievement would stand out from the text itself, Pound once again draws our attention to the original Latin, a phrase which in this case becomes all the more poignant when we discover that it is from the *Commentaries* of Pope Pius II. Ironically, the individual who would later condemn Malatesta as "a monster guilty of every possible public and private outrage" is here made to attest to the sincerity of Malatesta's greatest achievement. This as we are reminded in the next line occurs "In Romagna, teeming with cattle-thieves" (8.32.17).

Most curious about the conclusion to Canto VIII is the sense of urgency with which all of the details are being placed before us. In a matter of twenty one lines (8.32.22--8.33.9), we are led from the flowering of an earlier renaissance, when "Guillaume Poitiers, / had brought the song up out of Spain" (8.32.22-3), to the dark times of Malatesta da Verrucchio (1212-1312), Sigismondo's incorrigible great-grandfather and first Lord of Rimini (1293), through to Malatesta at the age of twelve, when "the dusk rolled / to one side a little" (8.33.1-2), and finally to a number of indeterminate years, riddled with "And's," that mark a period of intense activity:

And Poitiers, you know, Guillaume Poitiers,
 had brought the song up out of Spain
 With the singers and the veils. But here they wanted a setting,
 By Marecchia, where the water comes down over the cobbles
 And Mastin had come to Verrucchio,
 and the sword, Paolo il Bello's,
 caught in the arras
 And, in Este's house, Parasina
 Paid
 For this tribe paid always, and the house
 Called also Atreides',
 And the wind is still for a little
 And the dusk rolled
 to one side a little
 And he was twelve at the time, Sigismundo,
 And no dues had been paid for three years,

And his elder brother gone pious;
 And that year they fought in the streets,
 And that year he got out to Cesena
 And brought back the levies,
 And that year he crossed by night over Foglia, and...(8.33.1-9)

In earlier versions of the Malatesta Cantos, Pound had tried to provide a genealogy from Poitiers, the first to have introduced troubadour music into France, through to Cavalcanti and Malatesta, putting "into some order" the evolution of "the new learning."³⁸ What we sense in the version before us is the *need* for "the new learning," that is, for an individual such as Malatesta who was willing "to overthrow [the] superstition and dogma" (*SP* 28) of the status quo, and who in turn would provide something more immediate, substantial and heartfelt, in so many words, "life in a setting," "a song caught in the stone." Thus the last nine lines of this canto focus upon Malatesta as he appears to have been born upon the stroke of the hour, "when the dusk rolled to one side a little" (9.33.1-2), to resist the usuriousness and deceit of his age by acting upon his innermost beliefs. At the same time, however, because we learn first that "this tribe paid always" (9.34.31), a reference to the dark and rather tragic history of the Malatesta, each and every attempt to defend his patrimony, even from the age of twelve ("no dues had been paid for three years"), is proleptically viewed as *ultimately* futile. Thus the last nine lines end with an ellipsis, indicating that it is pointless to go on enumerating these details, if simply because Malatesta will be defeated in the end at any rate, however great his resistance. What should concern us then is not the defeats that Malatesta will suffer at the hands of his enemies, for indeed there will be many; rather, we should consider what he achieves *despite* his enemies, in particular, his ability to derive, power, direction, and determination from feeding on the harsh conditions in which he lived, for as we shall see in Cantos IX, X, and XI, the Tempio is all the more remarkable if we approach it as a record of sincerity and will-power, as "the apex of what one man has embodied in the last 1000 years of the occident" (*GK* 159).

Approximately midway through Canto IX, Pound ascribes to his hero the Odyssean epithet "POLUMETIS" (9.36.29), summarizing in a word the nature of Malatesta's *virtù*:

The things that the *polumetis* knew were the things a man then *needed* for living. The bow, the strong stroke in swimming, the how-to-provide *and* the high-hat, the carriage of the man who knew how to rule, who had been everywhere, Weltmensch, with 'ruling caste' stamped all over him, so that a red, cracked skin and towseled hair as he came out of the underbrush left him 'never at loss'. (GK 146)

Accordingly, the main narrative thrust of the following three cantos is more particular in its account of what Malatesta then *needed* for living, locating itself directly in the midst of a hostile and usurious milieu. From the flurry of activity that concludes Canto VIII, we are led from the very beginning of Canto IX to perceive exactly what Malatesta was up against, first with respect to the hostility of the elements,

One year the floods rose,
One year they fought in the snows,
One year hail fell, breaking the tress and walls,

and soon succeeded by the hostility of man:

Down here in the marsh they trapped him
in one year,
And he stood in the water up to his neck
to keep the hounds off him,
And he floundered about in the marsh
and came in after three days,
That was Astorre Manfredi of Faenza
who worked the ambush
and set the dogs out to find him,
In the marsh, down here under Mantua,
And he fought in Fano, in a street fight,
and that was nearly the end of him. (9.34.1-15)

Marked by his straightforwardness and colloquial idiom, our narrator then proceeds to associate himself with Malatesta, recalling in the next line that "the Emperor came down and knighted *us*" (9.34.16, italics mine), while leading us to believe all along that his

master was a man of such character and strength that any one of his exploits commands respect:

And he, Sigismundo, was Capitan for the Venetians.
 And he had sold off small castles
 and built the great Rocca to his plan,
 And he fought like ten devils at Monteluro
 and got nothing but the victory.... (9.34.24-8)³⁹

At the same time, once the narrative focuses upon the forces that were conspiring against Malatesta (9.34.6--9.36.9), more than half of the sentences begin with "and" (forty out of seventy, to be exact), creating the impression that our narrator can hardly say enough about his lord's leadership. This is especially true when, for all of the hardships that Malatesta is said to have endured, we learn that he still found the time to establish a "setting" for cultural events, in this case a literary duel between Porcelio Pandone, "the anti-Hellene" (9.34.21) and "Basinio [de Basini]" (9.34.18), a Greek scholar who "talked down" Pandone in what would prove to be but one of many victories for "the new learning."⁴⁰

By employing a somewhat biased contemporary to give us all the immediate details about Malatesta's life, and by presenting his narrative in a predominantly modern idiom, Pound draws us *into* the very heart of Renaissance Italy, leading us to believe that the period we are reading about is not unlike our own: "Modern civilisation comes out of Italy, out of renaissance Italy, the first nation which broke away from Aquinian dogmatism, and proclaimed the individual; respected the personality" (*SP* 199). This sentiment of course echoes Pound's claim that "a renaissance is a thing made by conscious propaganda" (*LE* 220), in particular, an "advertisement" of some individual who has been "successful" (219). The way in which Pound proclaims Malatesta's success, however, warrants greater scrutiny, for although it would appear that Pound is indeed forwarding some facile form of propaganda, particularly as one discovers upon a closer examination of the details that he has carefully reworked the chronology of events

to paint a more favourable picture of Malatesta, we are reminded on numerous occasions that Malatesta was in fact defeated from the very beginning. According to D'Epiro, this signifies the largely deflationary scheme of the Malatesta Cantos, for what we are given through the eyes of our amusing and irascible narrator is more a record of Malatesta's sincerity than it is of his success, more an account of what one man managed to do with limited resources than a celebration of some final victory.⁴¹ In short, our narrator appeals to values that are immediate and heartfelt, demonstrating that in the midst of the hypocrisy and deceit that so characterized his age, Malatesta was among the few individuals to assume responsibility by showing "a healthy desire for action." Thus many of Malatesta's misdeeds are actually deemphasized with respect to the larger purpose that he served, whereas those of his enemies are foregrounded to illustrate the horror of their pettiness and deceit.⁴² In what is perhaps the most syntactically and thematically pivotal example of such treachery, we are told what really happened with Pesaro:

And old Sforza bitched us at Pesaro....
 "that Messire Alessandro Sforza
 is become lord of Pesaro
 through the wangle of the Illus. Sgr. Mr. Federicho d'Orbino
 Who worked the wangle with Galeaz
 through the wiggling of Messer Francesco,
 Who wagged it so that Galeaz should sell Pesaro
 to Alex and Fossembrone to Feddy;
 and he hadn't the right to sell. (9.34.29--9.35.6)⁴³

And he [Malatesta] went down to the old brick heap of Pesaro
 and waited for Feddy
 And Feddy finally said "I am coming!...
 ...to help Alessandro." (9.36.31--9.37.2)⁴⁴

At the heart of all this "wiggling" and "wangling," of course, is Pesaro itself, here described as an "old brick heap" that would hardly be worth mentioning were this an epic of a larger scale, and yet its loss, as our narrator concludes with some pride in his leader's tenacity,

...cut us off from our south half [Fano]
 and finished our game, thus, in the beginning,
 And he, Sigismundo, spoke his mind to Francesco
 and we drove them out of the Marches. (9.35.10-14)

Implicitly, even though Pesaro may not have been worth all that much, sold off as it was by Malatesta's cousin "Galeaz...to get pay for his cattle" (8.32.21) (which the "cattle-thieves" had presumably carried off in the first place), it was of great strategic importance in defending the Malatesta family's hereditary domain. As such, the eventual loss of Pesaro marks a transitional point in Malatesta's fortunes, for he also ends up losing "his job with the Venetians" (9.37.6), finds the "jobs getting smaller and smaller" (9.37.15), and eventually signs on with Siena (9.37.16), a relatively minor position compared to his earlier status with Florence and Venice. From an historical perspective, Malatesta's efforts would thus appear to be less than admirable, if simply because the Catholic Church and the Medici bank were by then consolidating their efforts to bring peace to the land by restricting the movement of the condottieri and other minor despots. From the more immediate perspective that we are given, however, it is clear that Malatesta is not solely concerned with defending his patrimony (for that "game" was over from the beginning), nor are his actions mercenary for personal profit; rather, he braves a hostile world so that he may render concrete a certain understanding of the past in terms that might stimulate in his culture a self-conscious yet regenerative interest. As Pound writes in an earlier draft of the Malatesta Cantos, it was a good thing that he did, for there would be "no history, no anything from 1507-1807 / under the papal sway."

In the midst of all the hostility and treachery that marks the first half of Canto IX, Malatesta appears at first glance to be no better than his enemies, for we soon learn that in betraying the Aragonese, he earned the undying hatred of King Alphonso ("the King o' Ragona, Alphonse le roy d'Aragon / was the next nail in our coffin"), and in betraying the Sienese, the wrath of Pope Pius II (10.44.12,17).⁴⁵ Where Malatesta's enemies seem bent on little more than profit and material gain, however, Malatesta himself "began

building the TEMPIO" (9.35.24). To a large extent, this constructive work seems to absolve Malatesta of any wrongdoing, for it lies implicit in the following fragment that Malatesta's spoliation of the great basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna was the justifiable act of a man who was trying to put the treasures of the past to better use:

And Sigismundo got up a few arches,
And stole that marble in Classe, "stole" that is....

Casus est talis:

Filippo, commendatary of the abbazia
Of Sant Apollinaire, Classe, Cardinal of Bologna
That he did one night (*quadam nocte*) sell to the
Ill^{mo} D^o D^o Sigismund Malatesta
Lord of Ariminum, marble, porphyry, serpentine,
Whose men, Sigismundo's, came with more than an hundred
two wheeled ox carts and deported, for the beautifying
of the *tempio* where was Santa Maria in Trivio
Where the same now are on the walls. Four hundred
ducats to be paid back to the *abbazia* by the said swindling
Cardinal or his heirs. (9.36.5-6, 10-21)

Implicitly, so, too, is Pound engaging in a bit of constructive work, for although it would appear that this is yet another original document, there are not any citation marks to indicate its legitimacy, nor are the "four hundred ducats" that the cardinal had received for his acquiescence borne out by the historical records.⁴⁶ At the same time, Pound himself may be accused of having stolen a great deal of the material for the Malatesta Cantos (and *The Cantos* in general)--to wit, the original documents, letters, proclamations, and even personal love poetry we have seen translated thus far--and yet he does so with the intention of generating new wisdom from that material. Thus Terrell is quick to point out that "his defense of Sigismundo from the charge of stealing is therefore not devoid of a self-serving element" (45).⁴⁷ Within the context of the poem, of course, Malatesta's sincerity in "beautifying the *tempio*" stands in marked contrast to the pettiness and deceit of his enemies, in this case, to "the said swindling / Cardinal or his heirs," who "hadn't the right to sell" the treasures of the basilica in the first place. Lest there be any

doubt who the real swine in the matter were, the following line affords us the onomatopoeic explanation "grnh! rnh, pthg" (9.36.22). Although this is supposed to imitate the sound of the "wheels, plaustra, oxen under night shield" (9.36.23) as the "marble, porphyry, and serpentine" are stripped from the basilica and then carried back to Rimini, our first impression is the correct one, for in the lines that follow, Malatesta shows a certain degree of concern for the peasants whose fields and crops were damaged "in that scurry" (9.36.26), whereas "The next abbot" is concerned more with receiving an additional "200 ducats" in "receipt" (9.36.25) for the damage than he is with retrieving the stolen goods.⁴⁸

If in the first half of Canto IX the pettiness of the church and Malatesta's enemies is set in contrast to the sincerity of Malatesta's constructive work in building from meagre resources his Tempio, the latter half of this canto is testimony to the sincerity of Pound's own constructive work in building from personal letters an ideogram of Malatesta's character. To begin with, Pound establishes that Malatesta has been engaged by the Sieneese to reclaim the castle of Sorano from the Count of "Pitigliano" (9.37.19), Aldobrandino Orsini. Upon discovering that Malatesta had in fact made a truce with Pitigliano, the Sieneese raid Malatesta's headquarters and confiscate his "post-bag" (9.37.17) in search of treasonous documents. Their pettiness in this affair is made clear when we learn that Sorano was little more than a "ten acre lot, / Two lumps of tufa / ... with six hundred pigs in the basement" (9.37.19-20, 24).⁴⁹ At any rate, the Sieneese do manage to confiscate some fifty letters from Malatesta's post-bag, eight of which now appear in one form or another to illustrate, as Terrell suggests, "the preoccupations of Sigismundo's mind" (47).⁵⁰ Although there is some problem with respect to how we come to be reading these letters, our narrator does state clearly that "this is what they found in the post-bag" (9.37.26), indicating that we are to be reading them over the shoulders of the Sieneese. Having gained our interest that these may well be treasonous documents, Pound directs us instead to an odd assortment of Malatesta's personal letters

that deal with such apparently trivial matters as his son's pony, a bit of messy gossip concerning "Sr. Galeazzo's daughter" (9.38.14-5), specific details about the materials for the Tempio, and one puzzling excerpt about how "Unfitting ... it is that [the addresser, Trachulo] should offer counsels to Hannibal..." (9.40.2).⁵¹ Although these sometimes illiterate letters are neither what we nor the Sieneese are led to expect, they do nonetheless give us our first extended view of Malatesta, that is, by means of the ways in which his servants and his family communicate with him. As noted above, Pound may be accused of stealing these long-neglected letters from the Italian archives (in much the same way that Malatesta steals the long-neglected treasures of the basilica), and yet it is by means of these meagre resources that Pound may attest to the sincerity of Malatesta's cause. In short, the letters illustrate how Malatesta was needed and respected as much within his domestic circle as we have been led to believe he is needed within his culture at large:

"Where you are everyone is pleased and happy here we are the reverse as you might say drifting without a rudder." (9.38.21-3)

"Everyone wants to be remembered to you." (9.38.25-6)

"...nobody hear can do anything without you." (9.39.5-6)

"...in consideration of your paternal affection..." (9.39.23-4)

Such details of course give us a very different impression of a man who "fought like ten devils at Monteluro," and yet the letters do, in total, serve to present Malatesta "as a solicitous and devoted paterfamilias who did not allow his domestic affections to be stifled by even the most sublime architectural aspirations"(D'Epiro 42).⁵² Thus our narrator reminds us of how, ironically, the theft of the post-bag does not end up proving Malatesta's guilt, but rather adds up "to the effect that / he 'lived and ruled'" (9.41.2-3). In effect then, this favourable picture of Malatesta has been carefully calculated to offset the remarks of Pope Pius II, who in the tenth and eleventh cantos will invoke the wrath of

righteousness and God's will to condemn Malatesta for political, economic, and moral reasons.

The irony that concludes the post-bag section is sustained when Pound once again uses Pius's words to praise Malatesta, in this case, his two main loves, Isotta and the Tempio:

"et amava perdumente Isotta degli Atti"
 e *"ne fu degna"* (9.41.4-5)
 ["and he loved Isotta to distraction / and she was worthy of it"]

"and built a temple so full of pagan works." (9.41.10)

The latter statement was of course meant to be a condemnation of the Tempio, and yet clearly, because we have just read about the attention and detail that is being given to its construction (9.37.27--9.38.12; 9.40.3-35), and because the Tempio is being built largely in celebration of Isotta's worthiness, Pius's words serve an ironic purpose. Malatesta may well have been distracted in his love for Isotta, yet it is a natural distraction which, as Pound suggests, results in "a failure worth all the successes of the age." In short, the Tempio's glorification of earthly love, its so-called "paganism," is one of the main reasons why Malatesta was so important for Pound: not only was the Tempio "one of the first edifices in Europe to ensure that the pre-Christian canons of sculpture and architecture should survive 'Past ruin'd Latium'" (D'Epiro 77), but its amalgamation of classical and medieval motifs--"The filigree hiding the gothic / with a touch of rhetoric in the whole" (9.41.13-4)--would display and draw attention to a more natural set of values--that is, of the Greek classical tradition--registering permanently the new humanism of the Renaissance. Thus, as Pound would write years later under the frontispiece of his *Guide to Kulchur*, even though the Tempio might appear to be "*a jumble and a junk shop, it nevertheless registers a concept,*" namely, it offers a way of life with such sincerity as to occasion discrimination and virtue in matters of the heart. Accordingly, Pound admits that the eclecticism of the Tempio is not entirely successful when he depicts Malatesta

inspecting the interior and "noting what was done wrong" (11.49.33), and yet he also explains some ten years after the completion of the Malatesta Cantos that "[t]he Tempio in Rimini would have been a far less daring synthesis had all its details been fully digested and reduced to a unity of style, a la Palladio. As a human record, as a record of courage, nothing can touch it."⁵³ Although we have been led to assume that the Tempio's so-called "paganism" would thus represent a serious and formidable threat to orthodox beliefs, we soon discover that the papacy had ulterior motives for objecting to Malatesta's achievement.

In an early draft of the Malatesta Cantos, Pound establishes in no uncertain terms the nature of the papacy's condemnation of Malatesta and its increasingly aggressive attitude toward the strongholds of Romagna:

Then replied Pio Secundo,
speaking like the shits in our own day....

....not saying "I want the land" but saying
that Sigismund was an heretic, and a despiser of
religion. (i.e. papal monopoly).... (cited by D'Epiro 20)

The reference is to Pope Pius II, who represents in Cantos X and XI the "current of power" against which Malatesta was struggling to get the money together for his Tempio before the extinction of his dynasty. Although the individual references and smatterings of Latin and Italian become increasingly obscure in these two cantos, it is clear that Malatesta's fortunes are definitely on the wane: "*anno messo a sacco el signor Sigismundo*" (10.42.25). Canto X picks up on the account of the siege of Sorano when, as we may recall, Malatesta had been forced to accept a relatively minor position with the Sieneese, and was subsequently suspected of double-dealing with the man whom he had been sent to attack, "Orsini, Count Pitigliano" (10.42.3). We now learn that the individual who was largely responsible for discrediting Malatesta and initiating the raid upon his headquarters was the Bishop of Siena, soon to become Pope Pius II. Infuriated that he

had been betrayed, the Bishop sought to exact his revenge in a number of ways, first by inviting Malatesta to discuss the situation in Siena, an "invitation to lunch" (10.42.20) as it were, which Malatesta wisely declines to accept.⁵⁴ As if to expose the horror of quattrocentesco politics for its barbarism and deceit, Pound then presents us with the rather mysterious circumstances surrounding another invitation to lunch, this to illustrate what might have happened to Malatesta. Here the recently wed "Giacomo / (Piccinino)" (10.43.20-1) is feasted by "Ferdinando of Naples" (10.43.26) only to fall "out of a window ... / Three days after his death" (10.43.24-5).⁵⁵ The next attempt by the Bishop to exact his revenge occurs when Malatesta is finally surrounded by some of his enemies and ultimately forced to come to terms with his Sieneese adversary, the recently elected Pope Pius II. As Terrell summarizes, Malatesta was forced to "surrender some of his strongholds to Federigo d'Urbino and Pius II, and undertake to abstain from all military activities for ten years. Sigismundo broke the treaty the following year by seizing two fortresses from Federigo d'Urbino and attacking Sinigaglia. Pius II immediately excommunicated him, declaring all his possessions forfeit and instituting legal proceedings against him" (52). Pound of course is quick to pick up on the absurdity of these proceedings, citing not once, but three times, the "elegant oratory" (10.45.18) with which Malatesta was found guilty of virtually every sin imaginable.

For the following two pages of text, Pound is at his most effective in foregrounding the assumed morality of the age in all its bombast, and then in deflating that morality for what it was worth. In what appears as the first of Pius's condemnations of Malatesta, we are given from the original Latin of the *Commentaries* a lengthy and impartial account of Malatesta's eventual punishment (10.43.29--10.44.10) at the hands of the papal court. Capitalized in Roman typescript as if to signify a triumphant victory, this fragment establishes the official version of what happened when Malatesta finally met his match:⁵⁶

SIGISMUNDO HIC EGO SUM
MALATESTA, FILIUS PANDULPHI, REX PRODITORUM,

DEO ATQUE HOMNIBUS INFESTUS, SACRI CENSURA SENATUS
IGNI DAMNATUS. (10.44.2-5)

In the second of Pius's invectives, we return to the events that led up to the *auto-da-fe* that has just been announced with such rigorous authority. Here Pound establishes the bias and hypocrisy with which the fiscal agent of Pius II was ordered to present the case against Malatesta before the consistory of cardinals, recalling how both men were from Siena, and implying that Pius's motives in sending such an individual may not have been without a certain profit in mind:

So that in the end that pot-scraping little runt Andreas
Benzi, da Siena
Got up to spout out the bunkum
That the monstrous swollen, swelling s.o.b.
Papa Pio Secundo
Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini
da Siena
Had told him to spout, in their best bear's-greased latinity. (10.44.11-18)

We are from this decidedly partisan view of things prepared for the following list of Malatesta's sins as it was "spouted-out" by the individual Pound later refers to wryly as "this Aeneas"(10.46.13):⁵⁷

Stupro, caede, adulter,
homocidia, parracidia ac periuris,
presbitericidia, audax, libidinosus,
wives, jew-girls, nuns, necrophiliast, fornicarium ac sicarium,
proditor, raptor, incestuosus, incendiarius, ac
concupinarius.... (10.44.19-24)

Indeed, this is hardly the Malatesta we have been allowed to see thus far, and yet the sheer vehemence of this list indicates more the ravings of a frustrated and obsessed individual than it does convince us of Malatesta's guilt. In the third of these invectives, we are given a more modern translation (Soranzo's) of Pius's wrath, replete with Italian trimmings and thirteen additional charges against Malatesta, as if to suggest that history has only added insult to injury:

*"Lussurioso incestuoso, perfide, sozzure ac crapulone,
assassino, ingordo, avaro, superbo, infidele
fattore di monete false, sodomitico, uxoricido" (10.45.12-14)*

What Pound draws attention to in this third and final indictment is the indiscriminacy with which conventional authority perpetuates itself, ever embellishing the received facts of history with the airy wand of rhetoric and self-righteousness, without taking into account the underlying motives, in this case, neither of the Church nor of the accused. Of the many charges laid against Malatesta in this respect, the two most outstanding are those which Pound takes from Pius's *Epistolae* and translates for us in English: "and he said that the monks ought not to own property, / and that he disbelieved in the temporal power" (10.44.26-7) of each and every religion.⁵⁸

Now that Pound has presented us with the "whole lump lot" (10.45.15) of charges against Malatesta, he proceeds in turn to expose the horror of the trial for the sham that it was. He first cites Pius's appraisal of Benzi's presentation to the cardinals, stressing that even Pius's approval of his own words was subject to some dissimulation and controversy:

I mean after Pio had said, or at least Pio says that he
Said that this was elegant oratory "*Orationem
Elegantissimam et ornatissimam
Adivimus venerabilis in Xti fratres ac dilectissimi
filii...*"(10.45.17-21)
["We have heard a most elegant and highly ornate speech
of our reverend brother in Christ and most beloved son"]

Known generally for his elegant Latin, Pius here appears to be at odds in justifying the vulgarity of Benzi's list of charges, ironically, because it derives from his own personal animosity toward Malatesta. Pound then draws attention to the consistory bishop himself, in this case, "To that kid-slapping fanatic il cardinale di San Pietro in Vincoli" (10.45.24), an individual reportedly so "ill-tempered" as to have excommunicated "persons seen dancing in public" (Terrell 53), and to the character witnesses who were called to the stand to support Pius's indictment, "Messire Federico d'Urbino" (10.45.26), Malatesta's

arch-enemy (10.43.15-17), "And other equally unimpeachable witnesses" (10.45.27). Needless to say, Malatesta was found "guilty ... of the lump lot"(10.45.25), and summarily condemned. Soon after, Malatesta was given another invitation, not under the pretense of a luncheon this time, but to be burnt alive in Rome. Declining the offer in lieu of more pressing matters at home, Malatesta is subsequently "burnt ... in effigy" (10.45.28) so that all could witness his shame. This of course brings us back full circle to the imposing passage from Pius's *Commentaries* that initiated this sequence. Having introduced Malatesta's trial with an apparently impartial conclusion to the whole affair, and then undermining that very conclusion gradually and effectively with increasingly cutting irony, Pound now presents us with the substance of Pius's condemnation of Malatesta for what it was worth, "A rare magnificent effigy costing 8 florins 48 bol" (10.45.29), adding with one final stab that this was "for the pair, as the first one wasn't a good enough likeness" (10.45.30). Thus an individual known historically as an outstanding humanist appears to us now as he would have at the time: "And Borso said the time was ill-suited / to *tanta novità*, such doings or innovations" (10.45.31-2).⁵⁹ In effect, now that Pound has reduced Pius to appear in blatant violation of the humanistic spirit of the age, he affords us one last irony in this sequence, placing above the head of Malatesta's effigy the inscription "I.N.R.I. Sigismund Imperator, Rex Proditorum" (10.46.2), implying that the threat Malatesta posed for the papacy will indeed be resurrected.⁶⁰

Now that Pound has devoted much of Canto X to placing in the foreground the horrors of quattrocentesco politics and revealing the underhandedness of the Catholic Church, the concluding fragment affords us one final glimpse of Malatesta as he is preparing for what would be his last and greatest military victory.⁶¹ The time is 1461 when, after the *auto-dà-fe* by inanimate proxy, Pius sent a large army against Malatesta to finish him once and for all:

And they came at us with their ecclesiastical legates
 Until the eagle lit on his tent pole.
 And he said: The Roman would have called that an augury
E gradment li antichi cavaler romanj
davano fed a quisti ammuti,
 All I want you to do is follow the orders,
 They've got a bigger army,
 but there are more men in this camp. (10.47.4-11)⁶²

Here Malatesta appears the heroic warrior in the ancient Roman mould [*"li antichi cavaler romanj"*], deriving power from a natural phenomenon ["the eagle lit on his tent pole"] so as to exhort his men to victory. That we are to consider Malatesta a real man who will indeed defy the odds is made clear in the laconic irony which concludes the passage, for here Malatesta's military success is premised on his antihomosexual prowess.⁶³ In true epic fashion, the opening lines of Canto XI begin with a formulaic repeat of the Italian lines that conclude Canto X, and take us immediately into a catalogue of the noble "chiefs"(11.48.3) who will be leading Malatesta's forces. As with so many of the references to Romagna and the individuals who were serving Malatesta, these chiefs appear to us now as little more than names on a page:

Bernardo Reggio, Nic Benzo, Giovan Nesterno,
 Paulo Viterbo, Buardino of Brescia,
 Cetho Brandolino,
 And Simone Malespina, Petracco Saint Archangelo,
 Rioberto da Canossa,
 And for the tenth Agniola da Roma
 And that gay bird Piero della Bella,
 And to the eleventh Roberto. (11.48.5-12)

At the same time, however, there is a tone of familiarity about this list that implies the cooperation and determination of a united front, the sense that these men are fighting for their lives. With the battle about to begin, our narrator then recounts just how uneven the field was, casting upon his description a hint of irony that functions, as D'Epiro suggests, as a kind of "safeguard against the possibility of slipping into the mode of sentimentalized bombast" (82):

Sogliano,
 Torrano and La Serra, Sbrigara, San Martino,
 Ciola, Pondo, Spinello, Cigna and Buchio,
 Prataline, Monte Cogruzzo,
 and the villa at Rufiano
 Right up to the door-yard
 And anything else the Rev^{mo} Monsignore could remember.
 And the water-rights on the Savio.
 (And the salt heaps with the reed mats on them
 Gone long ago to the Venetians)
 And when lame Novvy died, they got even Cesena.(11.49.16-26)

Although it would seem that the papal forces have indeed achieved a righteous victory, the list lapses ironically into the very particular defeat at Rufiano, where the "papishes" claimed everything up to the door-yard. Implicitly, these places were the very life-blood of Malatesta's domain (i.e. the loss of "the water-rights on the Savio"), and as such, the peace dictated by Pius II all but lays the land to waste. As if to emphasize *why* the papal forces were so bent on destroying Malatesta, Pound concludes this fragment by mentioning the loss of Cervia with its lucrative salt industry, and the eventual loss of Cesena, where Malatesta's younger brother Novello had most recently brought back hundreds of Greek manuscripts for his newly founded library, the *Bibliotheca Malatestiana*. As Pound would clarify years later in his *Guide to Kulchur*, "Usurers do not desire the circulation of knowledge" (62), nor of course do they desire the circulation of wealth.⁶⁴

After all is said and done, when Malatesta has been successfully defeated by the papacy and gloated over by his enemies ("*Par che è fuor di questo... Sigis... mundo*"), Pound does not allow his tale to lapse into tragedy, but rather celebrates the sincerity with which Malatesta continued to look after his city and his people. Stricken by the plague when the papal forces had attacked Romagna, Rimini was spared by Federigo d'Urbino (11.49.7-13) and eventually left as the only possession Malatesta could keep under the terms of the peace agreement. Thus we now see Malatesta as an older and much wearier man who, despite his losses, remains worried about the design of the Tempio, and,

correspondingly, about the need to take care of his impoverished and plague-stricken subjects:

And one day he was sitting in the chiexa,
 On a bit of cornice, a bit of stone grooved for a cornice,
 Too narrow to fit his big beam,
 hunched up and noting what was done wrong,
 And an old woman came in and giggled to see him
 sitting there in the dark
 She nearly fell over him,
 And he thought:
 Old Zuliano is finished,
 If he's left anything we must see that the kids get it,
 Write that to Robert.
 And Vanni must give that peasant a decent price for his horses,
 Say that I will refund. (11.49.30--11.50.9)

At no point, however, do we sense that Malatesta is helpless, for this is an individual, we may recall, who is "never at loss." In short, even though Malatesta has now been despoiled of virtually all the external trappings of wealth and power, his defeat is public, not private, to which end Pound will now conclude the Malatesta Cantos by celebrating the richness of Malatesta's character.

To highlight Malatesta's honesty and *virtù* in these last fragments, Pound initially plays upon the name that Pius II's successor, Paul II, had originally wanted to be called, "Formosus" ["Handsome"] (11.51.2), drawing our attention to the new pope's vanity and hypocrisy for having chosen a rather un-Christian name that might allude to his good looks:

Damn pity he didn't
 (i.e. get the knife into him)
 Little fat squab "Formosus"
 Barbo said "Call me Formosus"
 But the conclave wouldn't have it
 and they called him Paolo Secundo. (11.51.16-21)

This is set in contrast to Malatesta's sincerity as recorded by the great humanist Platina, who had been arrested by papal decree "For singing to Zeus in the catacombs"

(11.50.33) (i.e. at the "Accademia Romana"), and forced to confess what he knew about Malatesta's plot to assassinate "fatty Barbo" (11.51.2).⁶⁵

And they want to know what we talked about?
"de litteris et de armis, praestantibusque ingeniis"
 Both of ancient times and our own; books, arms,
 And of men of unusual genius,
 Both of ancient times and our own, in short the usual subjects
 Of conversation between intelligent men." (11.51.4-9)

Implicitly, of course, Pope Paul II's fat-headedness would have been most unreceptive to such subjects. At any rate, even if the papacy *did* have a case against Malatesta, for all that he has done to defy orthodox interests, Pound makes clear that Malatesta has captured the imagination of the common people by acting upon his beliefs:

And the castelan of Montefiore wrote down,
 "You'd better keep him out of the district.
 "When he got back here from Sparta, the people
 "Lit fires, and turned out yelling: 'PANDOLFO!'" (11.51.26-9)

Thus it is in light of the gloomy moral context in which it was his misfortune to be born that Malatesta stands out among all others for having demonstrated a healthy desire for action, not for profit or material gain, but for the cultural benefit of his people. To Pound's mind, the Tempio is a monument of that sincerity, a luminous detail that attests to what one man accomplished *against* the current of power, as one of the few good things in a predominantly bad time:

In the gloom, the gold gathers the light against it. (11.51.30)

Although this majestic line would seem to signify once and for all the brilliance of Malatesta's achievement, Pound does not allow him to fade from our minds as some ideal hero who ultimately stands above and beyond daily concerns. Rather, the sequence ends with Malatesta appearing all too human, as an individual who maintains his sense of humour despite losing virtually everything else:⁶⁶

And one day he said: Henry, you can have it,
 On condition, you can have it: for four months

You'll stand any reasonable joke that I play on you,
 And you can joke back
 provided you don't get too ornry.
 And they put it all down in writing:
 for a green cloak with a silver brocade
Actum in Castro Sigismundo, presente Roberto de Valturibus
...sponte et ex certa scienta...to Enricho Aquabello. (11.52.1-9)

Thus the Malatesta Cantos end on neither a somber nor tragic note, but on the notarization of a document regarding who was entitled to play a practical joke on whom, with the understanding that both men would be good for their word.

To put this rather abrupt conclusion to the Malatesta Cantos into better perspective, it is useful to turn our sights back to Pound's understanding of *The Great Learning*. In the essay "Mang Tsze," we may recall, Pound claims that if the most noble impulse and appetite of humanity is sincerity, then the most basic condition of authority is that of "the man who stands by his word," and "the first act of government ... [to] 'call things by their right names'" (*SP* 85). With respect to the latter of these two statements, we have seen over the course of these cantos that Malatesta's actions are for the most part motivated by such sincerity and determination, by a desire for honesty and understanding in an age of denial and deceit. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Tempio itself, for it remains as testimony to Malatesta's good government that he transformed the knowledge and vitality of the Greek classical tradition into something useful and concrete, indeed, what must have been at the time a genuinely enlightening form of education for his people. To the extent that the need for sincerity is the central condition of Pound's "new learning" (which is in itself testimony to the way in which Pound sought to "translate" the knowledge and vitality of Confucianism into something viable for Western culture), Malatesta thus emerges in *The Cantos* as a champion of the heart, as an exemplary individual who clarified and diffused his *virtu* in the interest of the common wealth. To the extent that the Malatesta Cantos are themselves the testimony of "sincere self-expression," so, too, does Pound clarify and diffuse his own *virtu* by presenting us this parable of the individual's need to

preserve himself against the prejudice and hostility of a greedy and insensitive society. In short, the conclusion to the *Malatesta Cantos* *cannot* lapse into tragedy, nor should we feel disappointed if it fails to meet our expectations, for whether we speak of Pound or Malatesta, both did all that they could do with limited resources, and in the end were simply exhausted.⁶⁷ To this end, much as Pound depicts Malatesta inspecting the interior of the Tempio and "noting what was done wrong," so we might safely imagine that even after numerous revisions, Pound was at odds with how to resolve *all* of the details into a just and coherent conclusion. Thus the *Malatesta Cantos* end with a flurry of activity, presented from a variety of perspectives, that might only rest in the most basic condition of authority, the understanding that Pound has been good for his word.

Notes To Chapter Three

¹This excerpt is from "Redondillas, or Something of That Sort," a poem withdrawn from *Canzoni* (1911).

²The passage cited here is from Canto 11.51.28-30 and refers to both Malatesta and his monument, the Tempio Malatestiano.

³As D'Epiro points out, "Pound has not told us how he first came to be interested in Sigismondo Malatesta. It may have been the result of his seeing the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini or of his general research in the history of the Italian Renaissance" (xiii).

⁴Over a period of about five months, Pound not only revises and renumbers the cantos written through 1919, but completes Canto VIII (published in the *Dial* in May 1922, though now appearing, with some changes, as Canto II) and at least a rough draft of four new cantos. From Pound's letters, it is clear that one of these cantos was to be on Malatesta alone (then Canto IX), the others drafts of the 'Baldy Bacon,' 'Kung' (Confucius), and 'Hell' cantos (then Cantos X, XI, and XII respectively, and now Cantos XII, XIII, and XIV-XVI). On June 20th, 1922, Pound informs Quinn that he has "blocked in four new cantos" after Canto VIII. As D'Epiro summarizes, "Since the Malatesta canto here indirectly referred to would have been numbered "Canto 9," it seems that Pound had at least a rough draft of the "Baldy Bacon," "Kung," and one of the "Hell" cantos (present Cantos XII to XIV), in addition to the Malatesta material" (1). As Sherry suggests, "*A Draft of XVI. Cantos* (1925) includes poems written in three separate spurts over the course of a decade (1915-17; 1917-19; 1922-24), but this gathering witnesses a decided effort on Pound's part to project a comprehensive design; in effect, to organize the first movement as a unity, a microcosm of the cantos to follow" (145).

⁵Platina's description of his conversation with Malatesta, who had been arrested "For singing to Zeus in the catacombs," uncannily seems to anticipate Pound's own arrest and detention at Pisa. The heart of this description is the talk "*de litteris et de armis, prestantibusque ingeniis*" (11. 51.4) [about books, arms, and men of unusual genius] which Platina considered to be *natural* between intelligent men.

⁶This information is taken from D'Epiro, p. 3. The cantos submitted to Dr. Watson will be referred to as the Watson Typescript.

⁷In addition, a new perspective on Malatesta's relations with Pope Pius II in a book-length study by Giovanni Soranzo, and a close examination of Gaspare Broglio's manuscript life of Malatesta afford Pound the opportunity to present his hero more *personally*. As D'Epiro summarizes, "[u]p to this point Pound had relied heavily on Yriarte for most of the documents translated or transcribed into his poem. He had also used Clementini, Battaglini, a long, tri-partite article by Soranzo, and Pius II's *Commentaries*.... Soranzo's book-length study ... was to become an important source of the Malatesta Cantos. But more crucial for the evolution of these cantos was his perusal, in March 1923, of Gaspare Broglio's manuscript life of Sigismondo, housed at Rimini's Gambalunga Library" (3).

⁸One of the lists of Malatesta's sins comes from the "bear's-greased latinity" (10.44.18) of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II) in Canto X:

*Stupro, caede, adulter,
 homocidia, parracidia ac periurus,
 presbitercidia, audax, libidinosus,
 wives, jew-girls, nuns, necrophiliast, fornicarium ac sicarium,
 proditor, raptor, incestuosus, ac
 concubinarius. (10.44.19-24)*

⁹Carroll F. Terrell suggests that Edward Hutton's account of Malatesta in 1906 may have been the first to catch Pound's attention. Terrell also adds that "Sigismondo, although in many ways a heroic figure in his lifelong struggle against superior odds, was by no means without blemishes of character which can even be discerned between the lines of the Malatesta Cantos" (37).

¹⁰Pound's favourite phrase for this state of affairs is "Hoggers of the harvest, cursed among the people" (*GK* 45), an allusion to the Catholic Church which Pound employs onomatopoeically, and subversively, in Canto IX. The "grnh! rnh, pthg" (9.36.22) is supposed to refer to the sound of "oxen under night shield" (9.36.23), but because it is placed immediately after mention of "the said swindling / Cardinal or his heirs" (9.36.20-1), Pound makes his point with a bit of a smile.

¹¹D'Epiro's account of the life and times of Malatesta is perhaps the most concise and judicious (*xv-xxii*). For a strictly chronological record, see Davenport, p. 159-62.

¹²See Jones, p. 178, with respect to how mercenary pay was a necessity for Malatesta.

¹³From hereon in, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta will be referred to simply as Malatesta, and his family members by their given names.

¹⁴One of the first drafts is actually dedicated to "T.S.E.," opening with an evocation of a line from *The Waste Land*, and proceeding to associate the literary fragments supposedly "shelved" by Eliot with the architectural fragments collected by Malatesta,--"Sigismondo / had shelved / a broken arch, spoils of Ravenna" (cited by D'Epiro 21)--and, implicitly, with the fragments of the life that Pound had assembled concerning his new hero. With respect to "the Peace which passeth understanding," this is Eliot's own "feeble translation of the content of [the] word" *Shantih*, repeated three times at the conclusion of the poem, and in its traditional use "as a formal ending to an Upanishad" (note to line 433, *TWL* 149).

¹⁵Ackroyd's summary of the reactions to *The Waste Land* are most useful here:

The reviews in the English press were variously baffled and respectful, although some of the less fashionable critics, like Squire in the *London Mercury*, pronounced it incomprehensible. They were probably right....Most of the poem's celebrants saw it as a public statement, an expression of the 'malaise of our time,' while its detractors considered it to be the expression of a wholly private sensibility and a kind of literary game. (127)

¹⁶D'Epiro summarizes these first drafts as "circular but intricate" (21):

Eliot's text gives rise to Pound's, which, in turn, leads to an autobiographical sketch that comments on the two texts while re-creating the gloomy emotional state that had helped to generate them in the first place. Nevertheless, Pound later abandoned this strategy: he became more interested in Malatesta in his own right and more reticent about presenting sensitive personal issues so explicitly. (21)

¹⁷This line survives from the earliest drafts of the Malatesta Cantos through to the Watson Typescript and the final version. See D'Epiro, pp. 21, 33-4, 69.

¹⁸A point in fact is the matter regarding "Trachulo's damn'd epistle" (10.42.9), a reference to the seventh letter read from Malatesta's post-bag as it was confiscated by the Sienese. As D'Epiro suggests, the problem with this fragment derives from Pound's shift in narrative technique (i.e. are we to be reading this letter over the shoulder of Malatesta, or are we to be reading this letter *after* it has been confiscated by the Sienese). Moreover, Pound hardly gives us enough evidence in the text to guess that the "counsels to Hannibal" (9.40.2) offered by Trachulo in this seventh letter were in fact treasonous ones. Hats off to D'Epiro for a most perceptive discussion, pp. 16-7; 43; 51.

¹⁹With respect to the detail that Pound put into these cantos, see D'Epiro, pp. 7-11.

²⁰As Davenport suggests, Malatesta "was probably not aware that later ages would see his symbol [the Tempio] as one of personal energy and idiosyncrasy rather than as a vision of the past, ages that have entirely separated the arts from statecraft" (171).

²¹Indeed, Pound celebrates the fact that Malatesta was "willing to work at foundations" (*LE* 220), that he drew attention to a certain set of aesthetic values "Past ruin'd Latium" (9.41.12)--that is, beyond the decline of paganism in the West--and, "For singing to Zeus in the catacombs" (11.50.33), effectively exposed the prejudice and hostility of a greedy and insensitive society.

²²D'Epiro is right to point out that "any evaluation of Sigismondo must take into account the fact that Pound makes use of multiple narrators in the Malatesta sequence in order to present his hero from three different but mutually complementary viewpoints" (64).

²³As D'Epiro suggests,

[Pound] assembled all the materials necessary for an epic, heroic treatment of Sigismondo, but he deflated the potential windiness of such an undertaking by the use of irony, humor, and bathos, thereby creating the sense of controlled confusion out of which emerges the dauntless figure of Malatesta, scheming and contriving to build his Tempio and defend his patrimony. (63)

²⁴The usuriousness and deceit of Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464) and the Medici bank is well summarized by Terrell who suggests that much of the elder Medici's power was based on monetary policies that withdrew capital from the market in order to force certain balances that were conducive to the family's wealth (41).

²⁵The seal, as it would have been inserted between the sheets of parchment, depicts Sigismondo's profile as it is shown facing the title page of Pound's *Guide to Kulchur*. The

missing name should actually read "Iohannes de Medici de Florentia" as it would appear in the dative.

²⁶Terrell agrees that the painter referred to here is probably Piero della Francesca (38). See also *Guide to Kulchur* when Pound writes that Malatesta "had all he cd. get of Pier della Francesca" (159).

²⁷There are numerous instances of such diversions, for example 9.36.13, 9.37.5, and 10.45.32.

²⁸As a sign of the times, the so-called "ten of the baily" ["Dieci della Balia"] "was the emergency council of Florence, appointed during wars and rebellions when the ordinary citizens rights were suspended" (Terrell 38).

²⁹Cremona was in 1449 under the control of Sforza's wife, Bianca Maria Sforza (a natural daughter of the late Visconti, Duke of Milan), whom he had married in 1441. At the time of the agreement in the second fragment (1452), Sforza had "finally achieved his ambition to become Duke of Milan ... and founded a ducal dynasty" (Terrell 38).

³⁰In Canto XI, Pound contrasts Sforza's fondness for "fishing" with Malatesta's more noble passion for hunting (11.49.27-8).

³¹The best example of this occurs when we later discover that the Pesaro that helps to ruin Malatesta, and that Galeaz (Malatesta's cousin) sold "to get pay for his cattle" (8.32.21)(which the 'cattle thieves' had presumably taken away), is no more than an "old brick heap" (9.36.31), and yet the loss of this very "brick heap" is what cuts Malatesta and his men "off from our south half [Fano] / and finished our game in the first place" (9.35.10-11).

³²This anticipates Pound's later justification of Malatesta for stealing marble from the basilica of S.Apollinaire in Classe, Ravenna (9.36.5-26). In an early draft of the Malatesta Cantos, Pound writes:

[The urge,] life in a setting, and the word made
stone.
Against his ruin and the house's ruin [fifty years] later
and no history, no anything from 1507-1807
under the papal sway. (cited by D'Epiro 22)

Terrell summarizes this "urge" when he writes that "the Tempio incorporates cultural layers from various periods (the Gothic church, the Renaissance shell, the Byzantine marbles), as Pound does in *The Cantos*. Pound's defense of Sigismondo from the charge of stealing is therefore not devoid of a self-serving element"(45). In his *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound openly acknowledges the way in which he has 'borrowed' many of his cultural 'ideas': "There is no ownership in most of my statements and I cannot interrupt every sentence or paragraph to attribute authorships to each pair of words, especially as there is seldom an a priori claim to the phrase or the half phrase" (60).

³³When Malatesta is later defeated at the hands of the papacy, he will once again recall the beauty and stateliness of Rimini:

Vogliamo [It is our desire that the women],
che le donne, we will that they, *le donne*, go ornate,
 As be their pleasure, for the city's glory thereby. (11.50.27-29)

As Terrell summarizes, "Sigismundo had ... decreed that the womenfolk residing in his domains should dress up in all their finery. His command was in sharp contrast with the petty restrictions on the attire of women imposed in other parts of Italy at that time in order to maintain the class barriers between aristocracy and commoners" (57).

³⁴As Terrell summarizes, this indeed was the case, for over the following two years (1442-1444), "the two [would] fight unsuccessfully against Sforza's enemies, the agreement between them being that Sforza would as quid pro quo help Malatesta gain Pesaro, a city of great strategic importance for him and part of the hereditary domain of the Malatestas which had been split off and awarded to another line of the family" (39). Sforza's betrayal of Malatesta on this account (9.34.29--9.35.13; 9.35.32--9.36.4; 9.36.31--9.37.5) is what caused Malatesta's ruin "in the beginning" (9.35.11).

³⁵As Pound notes, the so-called Council of Ferrara was moved to Florence, "Ferrara having the pest" (8.31.17).

³⁶In this ideogram, the term "*concret Allgemeine*" (the "concrete universal") is perhaps most curious, for it seems to recall Pound's admiration of Confucius for demanding "a type of perception, a kind of transmission of knowledge only from ... concrete manifestation" (GK 28). As Terrell notes of the reference,

Pound is quoting from Fritz Schultze, who described Gemistus Plethon as a 'realist' in the medieval sense, that is, as taking the position of the *universalia in re* represented by Aristotle: 'generals are known by particulars' [see 74.441.30-5], or as Pound [quoting Aquinas] said: 'nomina sunt consequentia rerum'-not abstract and arbitrary labels pinned onto concrete things as the Nominalists would have it. (40)

That Malatesta *did* render Gemistus's teaching concrete is implicit in Pound's capitalization of 'POSEIDON'. As Terrell summarizes, "Gemistus's own hierarchy of the Greek gods placed Zeus first and Poseidon next in a certain correlation to the Neoplatonic hierarchy of values. Pound associates the water/stone motifs, which are so characteristic of Sigismondo's Tempio, with Gemistus's teaching about the god of water" (40). See also *Guide to Kulchur*, pp. 223-5.

³⁷"Wattle-nose" is a rather candid reference "to the somewhat pendulous fleshy nose of Sforza" (Terrell 40). Pound will also use such interpretive physical details to make a great general and illustrious patron of the arts, Federigo d'Urbino, an outstanding humanist, Pope Pius II, and his successor, Pope Paul II, appear less saintly and more human than the historical records would care to admit. Federigo d'Urbino is referred to as "that nick-nosed s.o.b. Feddy Urbino" (11.49.5), Pope Pius II as "that monstrous swollen, swelling s.o.b." (10.44.14), and Paul II as "fatty Barbo, 'Formosus,'" and "Little fat squab 'Formosus'" (11.51.2,18).

³⁸As Terrell notes, Guillaume Poitiers "is believed to be the composer of the earliest troubadour lyrics extant and to have introduced troubadour music to France" (41). With respect to the earlier drafts, Pound abandons his rather lengthy genealogy because too much was said of Provençal lore at the expense of his subject--Malatesta's deeds. The passages cited here are taken from one of these drafts. See D'Epiro, p.18.

³⁹Malatesta was engaged as captain by the Venetians in 1437 when he was only twenty years old. In that same year, Malatesta began building La Rocca, a fortress, at Rimini, a project that would take him nine years to complete (1437-1446). As Terrell summarizes, "[i]ts design and execution were largely undertaken by Sigismundo himself, and the fortress was one of the main achievements of his life. In its day La Rocca was considered one of the marvels of Italy" (43).

⁴⁰Pandone had espoused the thesis that one may be an elegant Latin poet without having studied the Greek authors. Basinio, by contrast, had studied Greek (a rare accomplishment at the time), and defended his studies by showing the dependence of Latin literature upon Greek (a view shared by Pound) and the importance of Greek scholarship in the new humanistic Renaissance. See Terrell, p.43.

⁴¹Although D'Epiro does not use the term sincerity, it is implicit in his argument that Pound employs a deflated epic style in order to ground the accepted facts of history in a deliberate tradition, one that would attest to what Malatesta accomplished *against* the current of power, and yet that would not "risk bathos at every turn" (65):

Pound ... present[s] his hero, for the most part, through the eyes of a biased contemporary of Sigismondo--an amusing, irascible narrator, unaware that he is writing 'deflated epic verse' (indeed, he thinks of himself as a 'tough guy,' just stating the 'facts'), and completely engrossed in the figure of Malatesta. Pound seems to have hoped that this narrator's obvious fascination with Sigismondo would set the proper tone for the ideal reader of the Malatesta Cantos. (65)

⁴²One particularly good example of how Malatesta's misdeeds are deemphasized occurs when in passing our narrator makes mention of some "row about the German-Burgundian female" (9.36.27), a reference to the rather cloudy circumstances surrounding the death of a German girl in Verona whom Malatesta was reputed to have raped and then killed. Although the authorities at the time were unable to find the culprit, Pius II was quick to blame Malatesta. Pound's own understanding of the matter is discussed in a letter to John Quinn (August 10, 1922). See Terrell, p.45, and D'Epiro, pp.14-5.

⁴³Terrell's summary of this rather complex and confusing passage is most useful here:

Pesaro had been part of the hereditary domain of the Malatesta family founded by Mastin [Malatesta da Verrecchio]. It now belonged to Sigismundo's cousin Galeazzo, called the "Inept," who had no heirs. In order to regain Pesaro for himself, Sigismundo formed an alliance with Sforza [ie. the sixth fragment of Canto VIII] and even married his illegitimate daughter

Polissena. But Galeazzo sold Pesaro to Sforza for 20,000 florins so that his niece Constanza could marry Sforza's brother Alessandro, who was to become Lord of Pesaro. At the same time (1445) Galeazzo sold Fossombrone to Federigo d'Urbino, Sigismundo's arch-enemy. (40)

⁴⁴Once Pesaro was under the control of Alessandro Sforza, the elder Sforza was still very much aware of the threat that Malatesta posed in reclaiming it, particularly as Malatesta was then in the service of the Venetians, and therefore enjoyed a high status. As Terrell summarizes, "In order to separate him from Venice, Sforza again used Pesaro as bait and induced Federigo d'Urbino to pretend that he would help Sigismundo take Pesaro from Alessandro Sforza. But when Sforza's forces came up from the rear and were welcomed in Urbino, Sigismundo knew that he had been tricked" (44). See also 9.35.32--9.36.4.

⁴⁵Pound is clever to include in the midst of Pius II's tirade against Malatesta that "Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini" was from Siena.

⁴⁶As Terrell notes of Battaglini's account of the transaction, Sigismundo approached the Cardinal Bishop of Bologna and "easily obtained his authority to remove as much as he desired" (45). No mention is made of any cash transaction however.

⁴⁷In an earlier version of the *Malatesta Cantos*, Pound offers the following rationalization for Malatesta's underhanded procurement of the marble:

Il Tempio, --theft,
oh well, you can replate Apollinaire in Classe
with flat marble slabs, whenever the wish takes you
no idea is needed.....

Fragments against his ruin. (cited by D'Epiro 22)

⁴⁸As Terrell suggests, the concluding lines of this fragment "are intended to show Sigismundo's concern for the peasants and the integrity of his arrangement with the abbot" (45).

⁴⁹Indeed, this is hardly the stuff of an epic conquest, for although Malatesta almost loses his life in the squabble over Sorano, the fact remains that this castle was not really worth that much in the first place.

⁵⁰In the Watson Typescript, we are meant to be reading the letters over Malatesta's shoulders, in which respect the letters that appear in their entirety are generally those which deal with familial matters. The letters regarding the construction of the Tempio are either abbreviated, as if to suggest that Malatesta did not bother to finish them upon discovering their content, or left until the end of the sequence (i.e. letter 8), *after* he has read about more personal matters. To some extent, Pound keeps this format in the final version of the text, though not without some confusion. See D'Epiro, pp.42-3, and 51.

⁵¹See note 18 above with respect to the fragment "Unfitting as it is that I should offer counsels to Hannibal" as it relates to "Trachulo's damn'd epistle" (10.42.9).

⁵²More than a year after the completion of the *Malatesta Cantos*, Pound would clarify that the responsibility Malatesta assumed within his private life was as important as the responsibility he assumed within his culture: "Am ... ready for another long chunk; and

trying to find some bhloomin historical character who can be used as an illustration of intelligent constructivity. Private life being another requisite. S.M. possessed of both; but other characters often fatally deficient" (cited by D'Epiro 6).

⁵³This is from an untitled review of Adrian Stokes's *Stones of Rimini*, published in the *Criterion*, 13 (April 1934), 495-97, and cited by D'Epiro, p.77.

⁵⁴As Terrell notes, Pound believed that there was no "deceit, conspiracy, treachery, slander" that Pius II would not stoop to in order to bring about Malatesta's ruin (49).

⁵⁵As Terrell summarizes, Piccinino was a powerful condottiere and sought to establish a dynasty as other condottieri had done: "Thus he was a constant threat to anyone in power in Italy up to the year of his death.... Piccinino married Drusiana [10.43.20], another daughter of Franscesco Sforza, at Milan and was invited to celebrate the event ... at Naples by Alphonso of Aragon's son Ferrante ["Ferdinando of Naples"]. Ferrante feasted Piccinino for 27 days and then had him thrown into a dungeon and strangled, afterward spreading the rumour that Piccinino had fallen out a window. This crime shocked all Italy" (50-1).

⁵⁶Translated the following passage concerns the *auto-da-fe* at which Malatesta was burned in effigy and reads: "SIGIMUNDO MALATESTA, SON OF PANDOLPHO, KING OF TRAITORS, HATED OF GOD AND MAN, CONDEMNED TO THE FLAMES BY VOTE OF THE HOLY SENATE." D'Epiro suggests in addition that Pound has transcribed Pius's words in Roman capitals "in order to suggest ancient Latin inscriptions--such as those recording memorable feats on triumphal arches" (78). The weight of historical "truth" that we sense upon reading through the formal Latin is enhanced when Pound cites his sources in scholarly fashion at the conclusion to this fragment: "*Com. Pio II, Liv. VII, p.85. / Yriarte, p.288*" (10.44.9-10).

⁵⁷In one of his lighter moments, Terrell notes how "Pius even went to the extreme of 'canonizing' Sigismundo as 'a devil in hell,' thereby rather exceeding his sphere of jurisdiction" (53). With respect to the phrase "bear's-greased latinity," Terrell also notes that "Pius was generally known for his elegant Latin, although most of his references to Sigismundo were characteristically vulgar, for which reason some of them were omitted from the official version of his *Commentaries*" (52).

⁵⁸To this end, as Terrell suggests, Pound may have intended to show how Malatesta's "ideas were far ahead of his age, prefiguring the criticism later to be leveled against the Church by the Reformation" (52).

⁵⁹As Terrell summarizes, "Borso is voicing the general opinion in Italy at the time that the auto-da-fe of Sigismundo violated the humanistic spirit of the age" (53)

⁶⁰Translated the initials I.N.R.I. read '*Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum*', and the passage, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, General Sigismundo, King of Traitors."

⁶¹Historically, this refers to the battle of Nidastore on July 2, 1461.

⁶²As Terrell notes, Pound here translates Broglio's Italian "without heeding his diacritical marks" (55). The passage should read "The ancient Roman knights put great faith in such omens."

⁶³This is verified by Terrell when he writes that "[t]he clue to this address of Sigismundo to his captains before sending them into battle against the superior papal forces ... is its allusion to the number of homosexuals among the ecclesiastical legates under the command of the Bishop of Corneto: "Though they outnumber us in heads, we have more men" (55).

⁶⁴See Chapter Two, note 21.

⁶⁵Although Pius II had made Platina a member of the College of Abbreviators, the college was dissolved by Paul II, "an act that brought him a letter of protest from Platina, who was therewith thrown in jail for four months. Platine later became a member of the Accademia Romana" (Terrell 57). Cast into jail once again, Platina was visited by Malatesta when the latter arrived in Rome hoping for a chance to assassinate Paul II. When asked under torture what he and Malatesta had spoken about, Platina gave the answer cited below by Pound. The Accademia Romana itself was devoted to the classics, and accused of worshipping pagan deities such as Zeus. "Like Sigismundo in his Tempio and Gemistus Plethon, they visualized a synthesis between the Christian religion and Greek polytheism, an idea to which Pound subscribed" (57).

⁶⁶As Plutarch suggests, "the most glorious exploits do not always furnish us with the clearest discoveries of virtue and vice in men; sometimes a matter of less moment, an expression or a jest, informs us better of their characters and inclinations, than the most famous sieges, the greatest armaments, or the bloodiest battles whatsoever" (810).

⁶⁷I use the term "exhausted" with specific reference to the passage cited in Chapter 1 from *The Great Digest*: "He who can totally sweep clean the chalice of himself can carry the inborn nature of others to fulfillment...." (C 28). The overwhelming amount of work and detail that Pound put into these cantos should also be clear by now.

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VITA

Surname: Castonguay

Given Names: Kent Castonguay

Place of Birth: Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	1992-1995
University of Regina	1984-1990

Degrees Awarded:

B.A. (Honours)	University of Regina	1990
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Honours and Awards:

University of Regina General Proficiency Award	1988
University of Regina Teaching Assistantship	1988-1990
University of Victoria Writing Clinic Assistantship	1994


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