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WRITING AND READING HISTORY

A Study of Ezra Pound's Malatesta, Jefferson and Adams Cantos

Stephen Wilson

A Thesis submitted to the School of English at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2002

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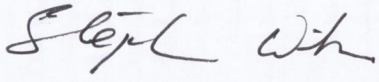

Stephen Wilson

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Without Paula Noga this thesis would not have happened. I owe her this and much more.

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SUMMARY

This thesis examines Pound's claim that *The Cantos* are "a poem including history"(Pound's definition of an epic). The principal focus is on the three sequences usually referred to as the Malatesta Cantos (VIII-XI), the Jefferson Cantos (XXXI-XXXIV) and the Adams Cantos (LXII – LXXI). It is argued that in the first of these sequences, Pound generated a set of rhetorical and textual strategies, referred to here as pseudo-chronicle, that with modification and adaptation form the basis of historical narrative in the poem up to the Adams Sequence. Pseudo-chronicle, although inherently flawed, provided Pound with a working solution to the crisis of historicism to which, as a historiographer, he was heir, and also to the problems of writing a modern verse epic. From the beginning Pound's "poem including history" and his commitment to Fascism were inextricably linked thematically and formally: his modern epic corresponded to and celebrated Fascism and was sustained by it. The end of Fascism meant the end of Pound's epic as it had been conceived in 1922 and as it had developed up until Cantos LXII - LXXI beyond which point it could no longer be sustained.

Chapter One, "Beginning the Poem Including History," argues that the Malatesta Cantos constitute a decisive point in the development of the poem, its real beginning in Edward Said's sense of that term. It reads the opening lines of Canto VIII as an equivalent of the epic exordium in which Pound asserts the superiority of his own epic historiography over other modes of perceiving and representing the past. The chapter presents this turn in the poem as a response to a series of interlocking crises in Pound's personal life, in Modernism and in post-War Europe.

Chapter Two, "Poetry and History," begins by looking in more detail at Pound's representation of Malatesta and explores his significance for Pound and *The Cantos*. It also argues that Pound's "poem including history" radically challenges received ideas of the relationship between poetry and history, and goes on to analyse Pound's construction, emplotment and authorisation of historical narrative. The final three sections may be described as case studies in Poundian historiography.

Chapter Three, "American Revolutions," deals generally with Pound's engagement with American history and politics, focusing for the most part on his prose writing and correspondence. It prepares for the more detailed analysis of his

representations of American history in the chapters that follow. It argues that Pound's interventions in American public life can be characterised as idiosyncratic but not eccentric.

Chapter Four, "Jefferson: Nuevo Mundo," looks in detail at Pound's portraits of Jefferson, John Quincy Adams and Martin Van Buren and begins by charting the changes and continuities in pseudo-chronicle between Cantos XXXI – XXXIV and the Malatesta Cantos. It is argued that Pound's representations of the American past are a reflection of what Pound saw as the idyllic present of Mussolini's Italy and an attempt to export that present to the contemporary United States.

Chapter Five, "John Adams," deals with the longest of the sequences of history cantos and argues that although the sequence is held in generally low esteem, it is in many ways the poem's most accomplished exercise in pseudo-chronicle. Ironically, it is also the section in which it becomes apparent that the epic historiography made possible by that method can no longer be sustained. This chapter also draws attention to the increasingly instrumentalist tenor of the Adams Cantos.

The Conclusion rehearses the rise and fall, over nearly twenty years and seventy-one cantos, of Pound's modern epic, and briefly sketches out the consequences of the collapse of the original conception of the poem.

Abbreviations

ABCR. . . . . *ABC of Reading*

CEP. . . . . *Collected Early Poems of Ezra Pound*

CSP. . . . . *Collected shorter Poems*

GB . . . . . *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*

GK . . . . . *Guide to Kulchur*

J/M . . . . . *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*

SL . . . . . *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941*

EP/LR . . . . . *Pound/The Little Review.*

EP/WB *The Correspondence of Ezra Pound and Senator William Borah.*

EP/BC . . . . . *EP and Senator Bronson Cutting / ...*

EP/FMF. . . . . *The Correspondence Between EP and F. M. Ford ...*

EP/ACH. . . . . *Letters of EP to Alice Corbin Henderson*

EP/JJ. . . . . *The Letters of EP to James Joyce*

EP/JL. . . . . *EP and James Laughlin / Selected Letters*

EP/WL . . . . *P/Lewis: The Letters of EP and Wyndham Lewis*

EP/JQ . . . . *The Selected Letters of EP to John Quinn*

EP/DS . . . . . *EP and Dorothy Shakespear: Their Letters 1909-14*

EP/GHT. . . .. *"Dear Uncle George": The Correspondence Between Ezra Pound and Congressman Tinkham of Massachusetts*

LE. . . . . *Literary Essays,*

PD . . . . *Pavannes and Divagations*

EPPP. . . . . *EP's Poetry and Prose / Contributions to Periodiicals,*

RSWWII. . . . *."EP Speaking": Radio Speeches of WW II*

SP. . . . . .. *Selected Prose, 1905-1965, ed. W. Cookson*

SR. . . . . *The Spirit of Romance*

WTSF . . . . . *A Walking Tour in Southern France*

References to the Cantos are given parenthetically in the text thus: (8: 28) which signifies Canto VIII page 28.

INTRODUCTION

If I had to identify a point of origin, a genesis, for this thesis I suppose it would be a long undergraduate essay on the Malatesta Cantos written at Magee College in Derry in 1972 and submitted to Dr Walter Baumann. I cannot remember what I wrote in that essay (and it has, I am pleased to say, long since disappeared) or why the Malatesta Cantos was its subject (I think that was Walter's idea).What I do remember is borrowing Walter's copy of Edwards and Vasse's *Annotated Index to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (there wasn't one in the Magee library) and even some already yellowing numbers of the *Analyst* and with their help trying to pick my way through Cantos VIII to XI. To my disgust I found that even this wasn't enough and that if I wanted to learn the difference between a consistory and a condottiere it was necessary to venture into hitherto unexplored sections of the college library. In Canto XIII Pound quotes Confucius on historians:

> And even I can remember
> A day when historians left blanks in their writings,
> I mean for things they didn't know (13: 60)

I fear the Confucian virtues were not respected in 1972 (although the lacunae were no doubt obvious enough). This thesis can be read as an attempt to fill in a few of those blanks.

My concern in the chapters that follow is with what I call the history cantos. By the history cantos I mean the Malatesta Cantos (VIII-XI), the Jefferson Cantos (XXXI – XXXIV) plus the single canto devoted to Martin Van Buren (XXXVII), and the Adams Cantos (LXII-LXXI). I am aware that other cantos and groups of cantos, for instance, the Venice Cantos (XXIV – XXVI), could be included in this list but the line had to be drawn somewhere and I decided to include only those cantos that were organised around a single central figure. The China Cantos (LII - LXI) would require a separate study (one I am quite unqualified to undertake); my reasons for excluding anything after the Adams Cantos will become apparent in the course of the thesis.

It is customary for anyone working on *The Cantos* to claim that the section with which he or she happens to be concerned is one of the least read, least understood and

most unjustly dismissed sections of the poem. I will not break with tradition in this matter and will claim that status for the history cantos. There are honourable exceptions but it is generally the case that the history cantos, and the Adams Cantos in particular, have attracted little attention and that much of the attention they have attracted has been hostile. Pound's individual histories, his accounts of, say, Malatesta or John Adams, have been denigrated as naive, inaccurate, partial, incoherent or simply boring. My discussions of the individual groups of cantos will specify and substantiate this claim (and identify the exceptions); for now I want only to comment briefly and generally upon the tendency.

I would disagree to a greater or lesser extent with all of the above charges except those of being inaccurate and partial (but those are qualities that Pound shares with all historians). Nonetheless, it is not difficult to see why the history cantos have been either neglected or dismissed. They are embarrassing, both politically and poetically. Politically because they bring the reader into an inescapable confrontation with Pound's commitment to Italian Fascism. Poetically, because they run counter to the prevailing formalist orthodoxy (in the first instance in the shape of New Criticism's doctrine of the autonomy of the text). *The Cantos* compound the offence by the very action of bringing together politics and poetics (theory) and by doing so create further embarrassment. For me, this is the poem's greatest merit.

Burton Hatlen begins his essay "Ezra Pound and Fascism" by posing two questions: "To what extent did Pound commit himself during the 1930s not only to Mussolini as a leader but also to fascism as an ideology? And to what extent do the cantos which he wrote during this period serve as a vehicle for such an ideology?"[i] Part of Hatlen's purpose is to urge scholars and critics of Pound to attend to these questions. In itself this is admirable but it is also superfluous. In reading or writing about Pound, certainly in reading or writing about *The Cantos* these questions are always present and to ignore them is to take a position. One could say that they can never be simply passed by. They must either be addressed or cut. My choice is to address them.

In an acerbic review of Frank Kermode's *The Genesis of Secrecy*, William Empson took issue with Kermode for wanting to read histories as if they were novels; it is much better, he argued, to read novels as if they were histories.[ii] I would not endorse this as a general principle but it can be pressed into service as a rough indication of what I am trying to do in this thesis. That, however, raises the question of how history should be read. The short answer to this is carefully. Ciaran Brady has described history as a

"complex and slippery body of accumulating knowledge whose statements required the closest care in formulation and development before they could sustain any claim to authority."[iii] I am happy to appropriate this for my own endeavours.

What I am trying to do is perhaps easier to define negatively. To read Pound's "poem including history" as a historical work is to read it as a poem that engages with and is enfiladed by history in various and complex ways. This enterprise cannot share the assumption, described by Lawrence Rainey as common to structuralism, post-structuralism and modern hermeneutics, "that literary works exhaust their being in their linguistic structures" or its corollary that "linguisticality (or *Sprachlichkeit*) is the pregiven context of all reflection, and no vantage point outside it exists."[iv] To subscribe to such a view would be effectively to declare my discussion of *The Cantos* over before it had begun.

I will not use this introduction as a vehicle for a theoretical or methodological exposition but will cite Rainey's contention that a successful reading of the Malatesta Cantos must be both an "intrinsic" and an "extrinsic" reading as a model for reading *The Cantos*. What Rainey means by an extrinsic reading is one that has recourse to "disciplines such as paleography, codicology, diplomatics, bibliography, and epigraphy."[v] I cannot follow this plan to the letter, but I do wish to retain in some looser or weaker sense the idea of an "extrinsic" reading, that is a reading that includes much that a narrowly formalist reading would exclude.

Chapters One and Two deal primarily with the Malatesta Cantos. Chapter One argues that although Pound began work on his "long poem" some seven years before his first encounter with Sigismondo Pandolpho Malatesta and the church of San Francesco that encounter, which crucially took place in the context of the rise of Fascism and Mussolini's take over of the Italian state, effectively inaugurated the "poem including history" and so marks the beginning of *The Cantos*. Chapter Two, "Poetry and History," explores the theory and practice of historiography in Cantos VIII-XI and proposes strategies for reading Pound's epic histories. The third chapter, "American Revolutions," describes the American mise-en-scène of Pound's "poem including history" and demonstrates the continuity of Pound's concerns with those more mainstream figures and institutions in the United States. Chapters Four and Five, "Jefferson: Nuevo Mundo" and "John Adams," trace the development and modifications of the historical method of the Malatesta Cantos in the Jefferson and Adams Cantos. Essentially those modifications and developments are presented as a

complex response to contemporary events in Italy and the United States, and are viewed furthermore as instrumentalist in that they are intended to make the poem a more effective instrument of direct intervention in the world of public and political action.

CHAPTER ONE
BEGINNING THE POEM INCLUDING HISTORY

things have ends and beginnings (76: 476).

INTRODUCTION

It is scarcely surprising that a poem of more than 800 pages, published in instalments over fifty odd years, starting with drafts and finishing (but not ending or closing) in fragments, should give rise to speculation about its beginning and end. In order to make sense of *The Cantos* as they are, or as they have been at successive stages in their long and public elaboration, readers, and the poet, marooned in an often fraught and anxious middle, have constructed fictions of a beginning and an end.[1] This point applies equally to those, like Hugh Kenner, who claim that to speak in such 'conventional' terms misses the point.[2]

This is perhaps most obvious in the case of the ending; end-speculation began with the publication of the first cantos and has continued ever since. The beginning of *The Cantos*, while it has received its share of critical attention, has generally been thought of as being less problematic or as being problematic in a different way. The beginning, it is assumed, is available, authorially given or at least recoverable, and so does not have to be constructed or imposed; to borrow A.D. Nuttal's distinction, it can be "read in" the poem and so does not have to be "read into" it .[3] My discussion of the beginning of *The Cantos* assumes precisely the opposite: that beginnings, like endings, are something imposed, constructed or "read into" the poem by the poet and by a succession of readers and critics.

Section 1, "Origins and Beginnings," outlines the early history of *The Cantos*, discusses existing versions of what Ronald Bush has termed the "genesis"[4] of the poem, and argues that the advent of the Malatesta Cantos constitutes a decisive point in the development of the poem, in Pound's life and career and (by implication) in the history of Anglo-American modernist poetry. The second section, "The Argument *Sous Les Lauriers*", reads the opening four lines of Canto VIII as Pound's equivalent of the formal opening or invocation to the Muse with which epic poems traditionally begin. As such, these lines establish generic conventions and expectations that clearly distinguish what follows them from what preceded them; further, they define the difference between

Pound's poetic practice in these and subsequent cantos and that of other modernists (particularly T.S. Eliot).

The Malatesta Cantos have received a massive amount of critical and scholarly attention, including two book-length studies of them (Peter D'Epiro's *A Touch of Rhetoric: Ezra Pound's Malatesta Cantos* and Lawrence S. Rainey's *Ezra Pound and the Monuments of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos*). Consequently they have become one of the most accessible portions of the text. This was not why I chose them as a model for Pound's epic historiography, but there are obvious advantages for me in this situation and these must be recognised. My many debts to earlier scholarship in this field are, of course, fully acknowledged and appropriately documented. However, I would also like to state clearly, and at the outset, that whatever claims to originality my account of the Malatesta Cantos may have depend, for the most part, on published material, shifts of emphasis and differences of interpretation.

1 ORIGINS AND BEGINNINGS

The most extravagant claims concerning the origins of *The Cantos* have been made by Pound himself. Writing to Professor Harold W. Thompson in 1936 he offered, for inclusion in the *Hamilton Alumni Review*, the following information:

> As Hamilton ITEM, might record that the CANTOS started in a talk with 'BIB,' and Bib's remarks on Bentley's attempts to 'edit' Milton as he had edited, textually, Horace etc.[5]

'Bib' is Professor Joseph Darling Ibbotson, who taught Pound English literature at Hamilton College between 1903 and 1905. Pound repeated, and strengthened, this assertion in the 1962 *Paris Review* interview:

> I began the *Cantos* about 1904, I suppose. I had various schemes starting in 1904 or 1905. The problem was to get a form - something elastic enough to take the necessary material. It had to be a form that wouldn't exclude something merely because it didn't fit. In the first sketches, a draft of the present first *Canto* was the third.[6]

Here Pound seems to be conflating his Hamilton project and the three early drafts of cantos (sometimes called the "Ur-Cantos") he published in *Poetry* in the summer of 1917. Even without this evidence of confusion, to take at face value Pound's claim that he

began working on, or even conceived of, *The Cantos* in anything like their present form as early as 1904 or 1905, in Leon Surette's words, "flies in the face of all bibliographic and manuscript evidence."[7] The "Hamilton genesis" belongs to the mythology rather than the history of *The Cantos*.

The interesting question is: why should Pound, some thirty years on, choose his less than satisfactory two years at Hamilton[8] as the *terminus a quo* of his most significant work? Writing to Professor Thomson in 1936 Pound may have been angling for the honorary doctorate that he eventually did receive from Hamilton in 1939. This, however, will not explain why Pound should have repeated the claim in 1962. Kenner speculates that the Hamilton conversation was significant for Pound because of something that 'Bib' said. Unfortunately, there is no record of it other than Pound's. (Kenner suggests that Ibbotson's remarks on Milton and Bentley may have been instrumental it making Pound aware that a modern epic cannot, or should not, be read or written as if it were classical poetry or that he may have stimulated Pound's imagination by citing "that staple of every Milton course, the varied and long-pondered Plans for the Magnum Opus, recorded in the Trinity ms." [9]) An alternative explanation is advanced by Leon Surrete, who argues that 1904 was significant for Pound because it was in that year that he met the pianist Katherine Ruth Heyman. According to Surette, Pound misrepresented the date at which he began *The Cantos* "in order to assert the truth that in that year he encountered his first romantic passion": further, this sets up an "unspoken analogy" with Dante: "as Dante's *Commedia* was in a manner begun when he saw Beatrice at the age of nine, so *The Cantos* were when Pound met Miss Heyman at the age of nineteen."[10] This idea has been taken up and further developed by Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos in his essay "'That Great Epic Year': Ezra Pound, Katherine Ruth Heyman and HD." I find both these accounts of Pound's relationship with Miss Heyman impressive, particularly in their use of her to establish Pound's links with mysticism, and in their articulation of the importance of those links for Pound's work as a whole. However, I am less than convinced by their claims for her as Pound's Beatrice.

The only poem of Pound's that can be definitely associated with Miss Heyman is "Scriptor Ignotus" (written in 1906[11]); it was published in Pound's first book *A Lume Spento* and carries the dedication "To K. R. H. / Ferrara 1715." This poem is a monologue spoken by one Bertold Lomax,[12] described by Pound in a note to the poem as an "English Dante scholar and mystic [who] died in Ferrara 1723", and addressed to his beloved, an "organist of Ferrara" (*CEP*, 26). Lomax refers to "that great forty-year epic/

That you know of, yet unwrit" (*CEP*, 24-25) and to the "new thing/ As hath not heretofore been writ" (*CEP*, 26), and offers his beloved these as a "comfort." Pound adds in the note that Lomax died "with his 'great epic,' still a mere shadow, a nebulla crossed with some few gleams of wonder light" (*CEP*, 26). The poem's situation (the "lady organist" and the lovelorn Dante scholar) and dedication suggest that it is autobiographical. There may also have been something that corresponded to the "great forty-year epic," but to identify it with *The Cantos* is surely wishful thinking. "Scriptor Ignotus" establishes that at an early date Pound was interested in the epic, or perhaps more accurately in the Romantic idea of a great work to which the artist's life is sacrificed, and it links that interest to Heyman. Beyond that I cannot follow Surette and Tryphonopoulos. Witemeyer describes Lomax as "a rather transparent mask for Pound himself, voicing Pound's own epic aspirations and fears."[13] Again, this may be so but there are no grounds for projecting those "epic aspirations and fears" beyond the immediate context of the poem.

If Pound was subject to "epic fears and aspirations" in 1906, he seems to have abandoned or subordinated them to other concerns following his move to London in 1908. James Longenbach dates the "initial gestation period" of the *Cantos* from "late in 1911 when Pound first asked Dorothy Shakespear if she had any suggestions for his 'long poem.'"[14] This is a reference to a letter, *from* Dorothy *to* Ezra, in which Dorothy writes: "I am sure I have no suggestions for your long poem. You might damn the Commonplace - and all the unemployed, (meaning myself)" (*EP/DS*, 82). While it is reasonable to assume that this refers back to some earlier mention, by Pound, of a "long poem," it is not, as Omar Pound and Walton Litz claim, "further evidence that EP was planning a 'long poem,' ultimately the *Cantos*, as early as 1911" (*EP/DS*, 84). Nothing follows directly from this or connects it to any the subsequent references to a "long poem"; it is an isolated remark, not totally devoid of interest, but far too slight a peg upon which to hang the origin of *The Cantos*.

Myles Slatin's "A History of Pound's *Cantos* I - XVI, 1915 - 1925" and Ronald Bush's *The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos*, the two most authorative studies of the early history of *The Cantos*, agree that work began on the poem in 1915. Slatin begins his account with a letter (dated 18 April, 1915) from Pound to H. L. Mencken, offering to the *Smart Set* a projected verse satire modelled on Byron's *Don Juan* (*SL*, 57-58). Mencken was not interested in Pound's satire and nothing came of the proposal. While acknowledging that this projected "long poem" is unrecognisable as even an embryonic

Cantos, Slatin describes *Don Juan* as an "appropriate model," and says of the letter to Mencken that it "does predict both the social comment of *The Cantos* and the mode of its appearance, in instalments."[15] Later he speaks of Pound as having "exchanged Byron for Browning as a guide,"[16] and in his conclusion he categorises *The Cantos* as "a poem of experience, like *Don Juan* and like so much post-Romantic literature."[17] I find this highly unconvincing. The letter to Mencken is a frankly opportunistic attempt to sell a "satire" to the *Smart Set*, and while it may be evidence that Pound was thinking in terms of a "long poem" at that date it has little, if anything, to do with the history of *The Cantos*. In the letter Pound states that the satire could be "printed as prose *or* as verse" and assures Mencken that "I don't expect the same rate per line for a lark of this length" (*SL*, 58). This suggests that he did not take the project too seriously as poetry.

In May and June 1915, in letters to his mother and father, Pound reports that he is working on a "long poem," which, Slatin says, cannot be positively identified.[18] He is more confident in identifying the "very long poem"[19] mentioned in a letter of 25 September as a possible reference to "the beginning of *The Cantos*"[20] (Bush, more positively, asserts that Pound "began the composition of *Three Cantos*" in September 1915[21]). In a letter of 18 December, Pound tells his father that he is working on a long poem divided into cantos and modelled on Browning's *Sordello* and reports that he is "in the Vth."[22] This, indisputably, is a reference to the cantos published in *Poetry* in June, July and August 1917 (the "Ur-Cantos" or the *Three Cantos*). After this, the trail becomes more clearly visible, and Slatin follows it through Pound's published and unpublished letters and through the sporadic publication of the early cantos (with various revisions, excisions and additions) to the hiatus of December 1919 to May 1922, and beyond to the publication of *A Draft of XVI Cantos* in 1925.

Bush covers the same ground more thoroughly, and extends the range of his study to include detailed discussion of the influence of Browning's *Sordello*, the relationship of the early cantos to Pound's critical and theoretical writing of the period and particularly his developments and elaborations of imagism and vorticism (he writes of seeking the origins of *The Cantos* "in the crevices of [Pound's] London prose"[23]), and the impact on Pound's work of the work of T. S. Eliot and James Joyce.

Slatin and Bush clearly establish that Pound began work on *The Cantos*, or on what became *The Cantos*, in late 1915 and worked on them discontinuously but intensively up to the publication of *A Draft of XVI Cantos of Ezra Pound for the Beginning of a Poem of some Length* by William Bird's Paris-based Three Mountains

Press in January 1925. If Pound's work on the poem was discontinuous during this period, the line of development described by Slatin and Bush is unbroken and unimpeachable. On the existing evidence, their work makes any further exposition of the origins and development of *The Cantos* superfluous. Recognising this, I still find their account less than satisfactory, and would argue that *The Cantos* as a "poem including history" begin with the Malatesta Cantos (composed and published 1922 - 1923). This can be done, not by contesting the impeccable scholarship of Slatin's lucid chronicle or Bush's synoptic history, but by putting into question their concept, their theoretical model, of a "beginning."

The versions of the origin or beginning of *The Cantos* considered thus far have implied, or tacitly subsumed, one of two basic metaphors. The first of these is the "organic metaphor" whereby the history of the poem is viewed as a biological process: the sowing of a seed leads to germination or conception, followed by a period of growth or gestation and finally a flowering or nativity. This is explicit in Longenbach's reference to an "initial gestation period" and the "genesis" of Bush's title is more biological than biblical. The second metaphor sees the poem as a river to be traced back to its source and I would term it "geographical" or "cartographic." Slatin's patient tracing of a progress fits well into this category. The logic of both is retrograde, that is to say they argue from the poem back to its origin or beginning (the seed or source); both, in the narrative articulation of that argument, invert that order and so present as a conclusion what is in fact a starting point (the poem). Obviously such strategies of explanation will tend to reproduce the assumptions brought to them in the first instance. More seriously, the 'seed' or the 'source' form no part of the experience of reading, are never directly given, and so do not supplement or complement the poem but displace it. This is not an assertion of the formalist doctrine of the primacy of the 'poem on the page,' rather the opposite. The pursuit of the 'seed' or the 'source,' because it in effect insists that the poem is its own explanation, bolsters the ideology of the autonomous text.

In *Beginnings*, Edward Said distinguishes between an "origin" and a "beginning": "I use *beginning* as having the more active meaning, and *origin* the more passive one: thus 'X is the origin of Y,' while the 'The beginning A leads to B.'"[24] Applied to a literary work, and perhaps particularly to a narrative, such an active sense of "beginning" implies intention or agency - in Said's words:

> In short, the designation of a beginning generally involves also the designation of a consequent *intention*. We might not actually say as much

> every time, but when we point to the beginning of a novel, for example, we mean that from *that* beginning in principle follows *this* novel. Or, we see that the beginning is the first point (in time, space, action) of an accomplishment or process that has duration and meaning. *The beginning, then, is the first step in the intentional production of meaning.*[25]

Elsewhere in *Beginnings* Said links beginning and intention even more strongly, when he distinguishes between "intransitive beginnings" and "transitive beginnings," which assume that "an individual mind wishes to intervene in a field of rational activity."[26]Part of the intention of beginning is always to move, or break, away from something (the past, the old or what *is*) towards something else (the new). Here again Said distinguishes between a "beginning" and an "origin"; to begin is not to call into being or to create in a void, but to participate in an "interplay between the new and the customary."[27] The key term here is "difference":

> beginning is basically an activity which ultimately implies return and repetition rather than simple linear accomplishment [. . .] beginning and beginning again are historical whereas origins are divine [. . .] a beginning not only creates but is its own method because it has intention. In short, beginning is *making* or *producing difference*; but - and here is the great fascination in the subject - difference which is the result of combining the already-familiar with the fertile novelty of human work in language.[28]

In order to apply this model to *The Cantos* it is necessary, as I have already indicated, to identify such a "beginning" in the poem itself. Speculation about what happened at Hamilton College, letters or even discarded drafts of the poem can provide only origins or origin myths. To thus insist on a concretely manifested textual beginning is not to call for a narrowly formalist reading. The Malatesta Cantos have been widely recognised as constituting such a "beginning," although to the best of my knowledge this recognition has not hitherto been explicitly articulated in Said's terms. The Malatesta Cantos are the poem's first sustained attempt to "include history," and it is in them that many of the techniques now recognised as characteristic of historical narrative in *The Cantos* are first encountered. Rainey claims a critical consensus for this view:

> Though we are ignorant about many matters in Pound's work, at least one point has gradually attracted a substantial consensus: the decisive event in the formation of *The Cantos* occurred when Pound composed the Malatesta Cantos in 1922 and 1923. This event marked a catalytic moment. It enabled Pound to discover poetic techniques essential to the formal repertory of *The Cantos*.[29]

Michael Bernstein goes a step further and describes the Malatesta Cantos as "one of the decisive turning-points in modern poetics."[30]

The most obvious of these techniques is the insertion into the texts on a large scale of letters, memoranda, treaties, bills, reports and other historical documents and fragments of documents. Although allusion, pastiche and quotation are to be found in Pound's early poetry, and in the first seven cantos, the Malatesta Cantos, and those that come after them, are, quantitatively and qualitatively, significantly different in this respect. The sheer bulk of material quoted is perhaps the most immediately apparent aspect of this; in Canto IX, for instance, some 115 lines (out of 266) are devoted to the transcription (and translation) of Malatesta's "post-bag," a bundle of correspondence abandoned by Sigismondo when he retreated from Sorano in 1454 that eventually ended up in the Siena Municipal Archive. What is quoted also changed. The first seven cantos for the most part quoted, sometimes quite extensively, from other literary texts; in the Malatesta Cantos the range is dramatically extended to include, among other things, Sigismondo's letters of instruction to the artists and artisans working on the Tempio (and reports from them), documents setting out the details of his contract or commission as a *condottiere* and a papal anathema. These and other related aspects of the Malatesta Cantos will be dealt with in greater detail in subsequent sections, and I will conclude this section with a discussion of what, following Rainey, I call the "extrinsic" evidence for considering *The Cantos* to have begun with the composition of Malatesta Cantos.[31]

Slatin writes that sometime in 1923 "the design of the poem suddenly crystallised, perhaps partly as a result of the long and intensive labor which went into the Malatesta group."[32] Rainey, less circumspectly, describes the effect of the Malatesta Cantos on the early development of the poem as "catalytic."[33] To recapitulate: Pound had started working on what eventually became *The Cantos* by December 1915; drafts of three cantos were published in *Poetry* in summer 1917; in October a revised version of these three cantos was published in the American editions of *Lustra* (October 1917). 1919 saw the *Lustra* cantos reprinted in *Quia Pauper Amavi*[34] and the publication of a fourth canto; in December he reported to his father that he had completed seven cantos.[35] At this point, in Slatin's words, "Pound must have felt that he had found the beginning he wanted and that the poem would continue to progress smoothly and rapidly" but instead it "stopped."[36] Nearly three years later, in May 1922, apparently out of nowhere, [37] the "Eighth Canto" appeared, in the *Dial* – this proved to be another false start.

In the month in which the "Eighth Canto" appeared Pound visited Rimini for the first time; by 9 June, at the latest, he had begun work on the first draft of a Malatesta canto.[38] Initially projected as a single canto (IX according to the original numeration), it had expanded to two by September and to four by the beginning of 1923. For the next year the Malatesta Cantos consumed most of Pound's time and energy; he sought material on Malatesta in Italy, France and England, consulted primary sources in Paris and in several Italian cities and even walked the sites of Malatesta's battles in the company of Ernest Hemingway. At the same time he was involved in a protracted process of re-drafting and revision that continued up to, and beyond, the publication of the "Malatesta Cantos (Cantos IX to XII of a Long Poem)" in the *Criterion* of July 1923.

All of this had a dramatic impact on the development of the poem. Between 1915 and 1923, Pound's "long poem" had been evolving, or perhaps simply accumulating, in fits and starts with more anxiety than urgency and without any clear direction. Between the first publication of the Malatesta Cantos in July 1923 and May 1924 (by which date the manuscript of the first sixteen cantos seems to have been in the hands of the printer[39]), Pound largely scrapped the already much-revised opening, inserted a revised version of the "Eighth Canto" as Canto II (thus causing the Malatesta Cantos to assume their present position as cantos VIII - XI) and, in his own words, "knocked [. . .] into shape"[40] Cantos XII to XVI (this may have been as much a matter of fitting already written sections into the now established pattern as of new composition). Clearly, Slatin and Rainey were fully justified in describing the impact of the Malatesta Cantos as "catalytic" or "crystallising." Even if the Malatesta Cantos are seen not as the agent of this "crystallisation" but as a corollary of it (and that, in my view, is the weakest interpretation that can, reasonably, be put upon the evidence) they must still be recognised, according to Said's definition, as the "beginning" of *The Cantos*.

Pound's letters provide abundant testimony to the importance and centrality of the Malatesta Cantos, and to their decisive role in the development of *The Cantos*; to appropriate Said's terms, to the *difference* they made. This can clearly be seen in the tone of Pound's references to his work in progress pre- and post- Malatesta. Pre-Malatesta Pound's mood is one of uncertainty and even anxiety; this is apparent in a letter to Felix E. Schelling of 8 July 1922 (by which time Pound had begun working on the Malatesta Cantos but had not fully realised their significance):

> Perhaps as the poem goes on I shall be able to make various things clearer. Having the crust to attempt a poem in 100 or 120 cantos long after all

> mankind has been commanded never again to attempt a poem of any length. I have to stagger on as I can. /.../ I hope, heaven help me, to bring them into some sort of design and architecture later (*SL*, 180).

Compare this with Pound's brusque, even arrogant, admonition to R.P. Blackmur on 26 March 1925, "Stray bits of curiosity re unfinished work have no general utility" (*SL*, 198), and the difference the Malatesta Cantos made becomes immediately apparent. The progress of *The Cantos* did, of course, continue to be a matter of concern to Pound after 1925 but there was no return to the pre-Malatesta mood until the 1960s. It might also be noted that between 1915 and 1922 Pound wrote cantos *and* other poetry (both "Homage to Sextus Propertius" and "Mauberley" belong to this period); post-Malatesta he devoted his poetic energies exclusively to *The Cantos*.

After he had completed the Malatesta Cantos, Pound began to use them as a sort of B.C./ A.D. line of demarcation for the progress of the poem; in two letters of summer 1923 he reported himself as working on the "fifth on from Malatesta," and as having finished the "fifth after the Malatesta."[41]The Malatesta Cantos also came to function as a model, or prototype, for future cantos: in October 1924 he wanted to "start on another LONG hunk of Canti, like the Sigismundo," and in November he was "ready for another long chunk; and trying to find some bhloomin [sic] historic character who can be used as illustration of intelligent constructivity. Private life being another requisite. S[igismundo]. M[alatesta]. amply possessed of both."[42] In what was probably a slip, albeit a highly significant one, in a letter to his mother of May 1923, Pound describes the forthcoming Three Mountains Press edition of the first sixteen cantos as a "de looks edtn. of Malatesta."[43] Interestingly, this use of the Malatesta Cantos as, to quote D'Epiro, a "synecdoche"[44] for the poem as a whole is not confined to Pound. In a 1932 pamphlet, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound: Some Testimonies*, Ford Madox Ford in his "Editor's Note" describes its purpose as bestowing "an Academic blessing on the celebrator of Sigismund Malatesta" (*EP/FMF*, 115). Well into the 1930's Pound used Malatesta and the Malatesta Cantos as a touchstone of political and literary merit. In a letter to John Drummond (18 February 1932) he wrote: "Don't knock Mussolini [. . .] he will end with Sigismondo and the men of order" (*SL*, 239). He made a similar comparison the following year in an essay entitled "Murder by Capital": "Mussolini is the first head of a state in our time to perceive and to proclaim *quality* as a dimension in national production. He is the first man in power to publish any such recognition since ... Sigismond Malatesta" (SP, 230). In *Guide*

to Kulchur (which uses as a frontispiece a Malatesta family seal) the Malatesta Cantos are cited as an example of the 'poem including history' at its most successful:

> No one has claimed that the Malatesta cantos are obscure. They are openly volitionalist, establishing, I think clearly, the effect of the factive personality, Sigismond, an entire man (*GK*, 194).

The biographical evidence for considering *The Cantos* to have begun with the composition of the Malatesta Cantos is equally compelling. The years 1918-1925 were a decisive and eventful period for Pound; it was during this period that he first met Major C.H. Douglas (this was probably a consequence rather than a cause of his increasing interest in politics and economics), left London and, after a brief sojourn in Paris, moved permanently to Italy. *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* were published in 1922. Pound had been, in different ways, closely involved with both works, and saw them as "the justification of the 'movement,' of our modern experiment, since 1900" (*SL*, 180). The events of these years have sometimes been scored, by Pound and by his admirers, as a triumphal march, but they are probably more usefully regarded as a series of strategic retreats. In 1920, Pound told the Paris edition of the *New York Herald* that he had left London because he found "the decay of the British Empire too depressing a spectacle to witness at close range," and that "England is largely insensitized."[45] But if Pound was disenchanted with London, London was also disenchanted with Pound. He had alienated so many people, that by 1920 he was finding it difficult to get published let alone to make a living. He had also been largely eclipsed as the spokesman for the *avant garde* by his former protégé T.S. Eliot. After flirting with the idea of returning to the United States – he got as far as asking John Quinn about the cost of living in New York (*EP/JQ*, 193- 4) – he opted for Paris. Once there he felt out of place among the new generation of literary exiles (although he did strike up a lasting friendship with Hemingway); possibly the 'lost generation' lifestyle held little appeal for the abstemious Ezra. For whatever reason, Paris was not a success and Pound left for Rapallo in October 1924.

This second move is more interesting, and more radical; in moving to Rapallo Pound was not simply swapping one metropolitan centre for another but opting for a new and different concept of culture (Pound would probably have said 'civilisation') and of the role of the individual in it. He had come to believe that not only was 'civilisation' possible outside the great cosmopolitan centres such as London and Paris, but that it was precisely outside those centres that the efforts of a single individual could have the

greatest impact. He was inspired in this belief by the example of the Manlio Torquato Dazzi, librarian of the Malatestine Library in Cesena, whom he had first met in 1923 while researching the Malatesta Cantos. Recalling Dazzi's achievements (as scholar, librarian and manager of Cesena's concert programme) in a 1936 article entitled "Possibilities of Civilization: What the Small Town Can Do," Pound claimed that they "show(ed) what a man could do outside a big city," and acknowledged that Dazzi had "taught me a good deal" (*I*, 78). Although the Malatestine Library in Cesena was founded not by Sigismondo but by his younger brother Domenico Malatesta ("Malatesta Novello"), Pound associated Dazzi and Sigismondo. In 1925 Pound told William Bird that a copy of *A Draft of XVI Cantos of Ezra Pound for the Beginning of a Poem of some Length* had been "placed in the Malatestiana at Cesena by own honourable hands with fitting inscription," and that he had "read Dazzi the Sidg" (*SL*, 200). Nearly twenty years later he used Sigismondo and Dazzi as protagonists in one of the two Italian cantos he wrote during World War II. If Dazzi provided the contemporary example, the immediate stimulus, for Pound's attempt to build "civilisation" in a "small town," Sigismondo Malatesta provided the dimension of heroic romance. This new order of civilisation required a new order of epic to celebrate it; beginning them, or beginning them again, with the Malatesta Cantos allowed *The Cantos* to fulfil that requirement; that is precisely what Pound did.

2 THE ARGUMENT "*SOUS LES LAURIERS*"

I have argued that the Malatesta Cantos constitute the beginning of *The Cantos* as a poem "including history," that they mark the point at which Pound announces his epic intentions, and generates a new order of discourse and a new set of controlling strategies and conventions to enable *The Cantos* to meet his specifications for a modern epic. The opening lines of Canto VIII play an important role in this process. They can be seen as the equivalent of the formal invocation of the Muse with which epics traditionally begin: their position in the sequence of cantos, the space they seek to occupy - "sous les lauriers"- and the allusion to Calliope (the Muse of Epic Poetry) support this view. The traditional epic had privileged access to certain areas of experience (according to Horace, "the exploits of kings and commanders and the miseries of war"[46]), and to a range of procedures of textual organisation agreed upon as being characteristic of and appropriate to itself and recognised as requiring from the reader a particular order of attention and

submission. For the modern epic no such state of affairs exists, and Pound could not, as he was well aware, simply sound the appropriate note and assume the responses. Rather, the modern epic must begin by making a space for itself, by recognising the claims and merits of other ways of handling the same material - in this case history - and by distinguishing itself from them and establishing, or at least asserting, the value of its own practice. This is precisely what the opening lines of the Malatesta Cantos do.

To discuss *The Cantos* in this way, to describe Pound's poem as an epic in the first instance, is to enter into the area of genre theory. The model of genre assumed in this present discussion derives from Northrop Frye. For Frye, the "basis of generic criticism [...] is rhetorical, in the sense that genre is determined by the conditions established between the poet and his public" and its purpose is "not so much to classify as to clarify [...] traditions and affinities."[47] The advantages of this model of genre in the present context are twofold. Firstly, my concern with historical narrative in *The Cantos* requires just such a clarification of " traditions and affinities" - and differences; in other words, what links Pound's writing to, and distinguishes it from, other modes of historiography, including, of course, that offered by the verse epic. Secondly, to conceive of genre in this way is to view writing as a purposive social act, and permits generic markers, conventions and codes to be read as emblems of textually transacted intention and not simply as taxonomic hieroglyphs.

The view of *The Cantos* as a modern epic, or as an attempted modern epic, enjoys the not entirely unimpeachable authority of Pound himself. Over a period of nearly fifty years, Pound's comments on his work in progress are, unsurprisingly, many and various, to the point that they may fairly be said to provide the student of the poem with an embarrassment of riches; one disconcerting consequence of this being that it is often possible to cite 'Pound on *The Cantos*' in support of radically opposed views of the poem. It would be tedious, and in the present context unnecessary, to attempt to track Pound through the inconsistencies of terminology, shifts of emphasis, tactical modifications, revisions and simple changes of mind that make up the public record of his statements on *The Cantos*. Without, for the time being, considering the internal or textual evidence (the poem's testimonies to its own generic status), it can be stated confidently that from, at the latest, August 1922, when he wrote to John Quinn complaining of his difficulties with his "epict" (*EP/JQ*, 217), Pound continually, if not continuously or consistently, declared himself to be at work upon an epic poem. This view of *The Cantos* has also attracted widespread support among critics and commentators on the poem;

Bush, who is very properly sceptical of taking at face value Pound's own accounts of his work, and of the usefulness of a Pound-derived critical vocabulary in dealing with it, notes:

> Pound's readers are still waiting for a description of the *Cantos*' major form that will assimilate into one whole the poem's structural idiom, its generic characteristics, and its hierarchy of psychological values. It seems likely that when such a description is realised it will depend less on Pound's experimental method than on certain deep structures of the epic. Pound intended his long poem to be the latest in a line of transformations that began with the way Virgil altered the narrative inflections and the symbolic associations of the *Odyssey*'s tale of return.[48]

There are, of course, dissenters from this view. Those who argue that *The Cantos* float free of genre as of all other conventional categories and expectations present the least difficulty. Hugh Kenner, the most conspicuous and the most articulate of this school, apparently has no problems with recognising that Pound's poem is, *inter alia*, an epic and writes of it as such. In the 1950s and 1960s it was something of a critical commonplace to hold that the merit, the lasting value, of *The Cantos* lay, if anywhere, in its lyric or elegiac passages to be found throughout the poem. This view reflects the then prevailing New Critical orthodoxies (and a reluctance, understandable up to a point, to engage with Pound's politics), but it also contains an implicit generic argument. For these critics, Pound was, for long stretches of *The Cantos*, wrong-headedly working against the grain of his own essentially lyric genius. Time, and judicious editing, would, they confidently expected, produce a shorter but superior version. The problem with this is that it simply leaves out too much and, as a consequence, often fails to produce an adequate account of what is left. *The Cantos*, and the modernist enterprise generally, raise issues that formalist critical orthodoxies (such as New Criticism) find uncomfortable; these issues cannot be adequately addressed by re-writing the poem into conformity with those orthodoxies.

More recently, the view that *The Cantos* can be most usefully read as an epic has been challenged by Max Nänny, who argues, in two articles in *Paideuma*, that "*The Cantos* seem to be more indebted to the menippean than to the epic tradition."[49] "The great modernists," Nänny contends, "Joyce in *Ulysses*, Eliot in *The Waste Land* and Pound in *The Cantos*, each in his individual way, revived the old, almost forgotten genre of the Menippean satire."[50] In support of this he delineates a "Menippean tradition" including Rabelais, Voltaire, Flaubert (*Bouvard et Pecuchet*) and Joyce (all writers Pound valued highly) and points to the presence in *The Cantos* of such "Menippean

characteristics" as *prosimetrum* (a mixture of prose and verse), the cento, *polyglossia* (the presence of a number of different languages), pathos and bathos, the "theme of words and their numinosity (but more often their correct usage)," and puns.[51] All these things are certainly present in *The Cantos*, but they are not unique to it and so cannot be said to define or distinguish it, or to establish *The Cantos* as a Menippean satire (any more than the fact that Pound knew and admired the work of Rabelais proves that he wanted to write like him). Jerry Palmer, in his study of the thriller, argues that the genre of a work is established by a "dominating procedure" that organises the elements found in that work (which may in themselves be common to a number of genres) into a coherent whole, and thus determines its "aesthetic impact."[52]. If Nänny's argument is that the Menippean characteristics he identifies in *The Cantos* constitute a "dominating procedure," and that the same procedure is to be found in *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*, then he is, demonstrably, wrong. Pound may have seen Eliot and Joyce as literary allies, and certainly he admired their work, but he was also clearly aware of what separated him from his fellow modernists; as I shall show, both in the poem itself and elsewhere, he distinguished, very deliberately and meticulously, his own practice in *The Cantos* from that of both Joyce and Eliot. If these Menippean characteristics do not constitute a "dominating procedure" it is difficult to see what point Nänny is making.

Nänny's work, like most recent work on the Menippean tradition, derives its theoretical underpinning from Mikhail Bakhtin. In "Epic and Novel" (1940), and elsewhere, Bakhtin has maintained that the epic "as it has come down to us is an absolutely completed and finished generic form" belonging to an "absolute past of national beginnings and peak times."[53] As such, to employ Bakhtin's terminology (which I do with some trepidation), it is monologic and so cannot function in, or engage with, the modern world of *heteroglossia*, which requires a dialogic mode. This argument is radically flawed in that it contains what Raymond Williams in his discussion of modern tragedy called an "abstraction of order."[54] In other words, Bakhtin has taken a specific instance of epic (probably the classic verse epic) and translated, or abstracted, it into a generic model of epic. As John P. Mc Williams astutely comments: "Bakhtin's view of the epic as a static genre elegizing past heroism does not allow for the rebellion and transformations that have occurred within the epic tradition itself."[55]

Pound's conception of the epic tradition, and hence of what he was trying to do in *The Cantos*, can best briefly be established by quoting two of his maxims: "an epic is a poem containing history," and "poetry asserts a positive" (*LE*, 86, 324). Taken together

these clearly convey the essential features of Pound's model of epic: its concern with history as a repository of records and models of good and bad government, fiscal probity and cultural high points ("History is a school book for princes" [54:280]), and its didactic intent. As Surette has noted, the two are, in practice, inextricable: "the didactic purpose of *The Cantos* becomes, for Pound, central to its claim of epic status."[56] The best available account of *The Cantos* as epic, Michael Bernstein's *The Tale of the Tribe, Ezra Pound and the Modern Verse Epic,* corroborates this view. Bernstein argues that *The Cantos* should be read as a public, didactic poem the function of which is to celebrate and transmit the record of the "tribe's" achievements, the deeds of its great men, its laws etc. The poem is public both in the sense that it deals with "public events" and in being "addressed to the citizen, not to the private individual."[57]

It is important to recognise that Pound's model of the epic is not an eccentric or idiosyncratic one (it is, indeed, rather a traditional one). Paul Merchant in his study of genre sees the inclusion of historical material as an essential, a defining, feature of the epic from Homer onwards (indeed, he speculates that the epic "may have originated in the need for an established history"[58]). Didactic intent is also an integral part of the epic tradition. The Greeks regarded Homer as an authoritative guide even in such specialised matters as dressing a wound or the tactics of chariot racing[59]. This, of course, has long since ceased to be the case but later epic poets, and theorists, continued to insist on the didactic element of the epic. Spenser, in "A Letter of the Authors" with which he prefaced *The Faerie Queen*, declared that: "the generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline."[60] Alexander Pope described the *Odyssey* as "a moral and political work, instructive to all degrees of men, and filled with images examples and precepts, of civil and domestic life." [61] Pound was, by all accounts, a relentlessly didactic individual. Gertrude Stein called Pound a "village explainer," and Gail McDonald perceptively remarks that he "had no relationship that was not pedagogic and wrote no poetry or prose that did not consciously instruct."[62] For all of that, I would argue that the didactic element of *The Cantos* is most usefully understood in terms of the generic imperatives of the epic and not as an expression of Pound's compulsive didacticism.

The formal opening, or exordium, which is a generic convention of traditional epic, is also a "beginning" ("*the first step in the intentional production of meaning*"). The exordium has a three-fold function: firstly, it announces the poem's theme or argument; secondly, it calls upon the muse to assist in this task (the muse, it should be noted, is a

source of information as well as inspiration – Nuttal describes Vergil's muse as "an *aide-mémoire* or expert witness"[63]); finally, it launches or leads into the narrative proper. My contention is that a detailed analysis of the salient elements of the first five lines of Canto VIII, the allusion to T.S. Eliot and the Truth/Calliope quarrel, will show that they perform the same function as the traditional epic opening and do so in much the same way; that they exhibit a similar formal and rhetorical structure: "statement of argument - invocation - inauguration." [64]

The first line of Canto VIII is, of course, a quotation (or misquotation) of a line ("These fragments I have shored against my ruins") from Section V, line 430, of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. So much is obvious, but what point is being made? Is it, as Carroll Terrell suggests - stressing the word "fragments" and noting that both the first draft of *The Waste Land* which Pound saw in January 1922 and the "still inchoate *Cantos*" might be described as fragments[65] - essentially a gesture of solidarity, an acknowledgement on Pound's part of a sense of a community of concern and method with Eliot? Or is it an attempt on Pound's part to mark a distinction between himself and Eliot? George Dekker argues that Pound sees "Eliot's poetic method in *The Waste Land*" as "shelving" the past rather than "making the useful part of [it] more available."[66] Both these readings have something to be said for them but they cannot both be correct, and the question cannot be finessed by an appeal to the virtues of ambiguity or openness (Pound is often obscure but rarely, by design, ambiguous). The problem is interesting in itself and as an illustration of the limitations of the ways in which *The Cantos* are usually read. Traditional Pound criticism has, in large part, concerned itself with the work of exegesis, and much erudition and ingenuity has been expended in identifying, tracing to their sources and glossing the vast number of proper names, quotations, allusions and esoteric references to be found in *The Cantos*. Necessary and impressive as this work is, it is not, of itself, sufficient. The line under discussion has long since ceased to be difficult (in the somewhat limited sense that word usually has when applied to *The Cantos*), but Terrell's *Companion to the Cantos*, in many ways a monument to the strengths and weaknesses of traditional Pound criticism, cannot come up with a satisfactory reading of it.

In his brilliant discussion of Pound's practice of quotation, Lawrence S. Rainey observes that "in the problem of quotation, many of the central questions concern not just roots, but routes of reference - not just origins but functions."[67] To privilege, as much Pound criticism has done, the "roots" or "origins" of quotation, is to forget that quotation

is never simply a repetition but a rereading, rewriting and reinscription of the original in a new context; such an approach allows, at best, only a partial reading:

> Focusing on the intrinsic dimensions of quotation becomes a means of bracketing from analysis the kinds of forces that are registered by its extrinsic dimensions - quotation's function within social groupings, its historical transformations, its transmissional dynamics, everything that might be summed up in routes of reference.[68]

My account of the opening line of Canto VIII will consider "routes of reference."

This should begin by correcting, or emending, an earlier statement. Pound's source for "These fragments you have shelved (shored)" was not, and could not have been, *The Waste Land* but the manuscript draft of a long poem (at that stage provisionally entitled "He Do the Police in Different Voices") that Eliot left with Pound in Paris in January 1922. *The Waste Land* was not published until October 1922 while a recognisable version of Pound's line is to be found in drafts of the Malatesta Cantos written in June 1922. Replying to an enquiry from Peter Russell in May 1948, Eliot confirmed this:

> I have no idea whether Canto viii followed or preceded *The Waste Land.* I am under the impression that it followed, [it did] because of course Mr. Pound saw the manuscript of *The Waste Land* immediately on its completion in January 1922.[69]

The final section of the January 1922 draft (it is untitled) is, as Eliot recalled, untouched by Pound - he wrote "OK OK from/here on/ I think" at the top of the first page of it.[70] The line as it was originally written read "These fragments I have spelt into my ruins," "shored against" has been written above "spelt into" but the latter does not appear (from the facsimile) to have been crossed out - thus:

shored against
These fragments I have spelt into my ruins.[71]

Eliot made two other corrections on the same page of the manuscript and in both cases the rejected portion of text is clearly and firmly cancelled. This would seem to indicate either that Eliot was still undecided as to the final version of the line when he left the manuscript with Pound or that "shored against" was an afterthought. (As the line never again appears in any form but the one now printed, probably the latter.) This anomaly

may have been what focused Pound's attention on the line; it also foregrounds the word in the line that Pound himself changed most significantly. What is certain is that the line certainly stuck in Pound's mind and, to adapt another line of Eliot's, compelled his imagination.

The earliest typed draft of a Malatesta canto is dedicated to "T.S.E." and begins with the line "These fragments you have 'shelved'" and the phrases "fragments against his ruin" and "against his ruin" are used as a sort of refrain throughout.[72] The version of the episode of Sigismondo stealing the marble for the Tempio provides a good illustration:

> Il tempio, - theft,
> oh well, you can replace Appollinaire in Classe
> with flat marble slabs, whenever the wish takes you
> no idea is needed .....
> Fragments against his ruin.[73]

In addition, Eliot is a major figure in the draft, almost on a par with Malatesta himself: "roughly one half the length of the whole [. . .] deals primarily with two meetings between Pound and Eliot on the Continent, the first in Provence, in the summer of 1919, the other, in Verona, '1920 or thereabouts' (78/481)."[74] The meeting with Eliot in Verona in fact took place at the beginning of June 1922[75], that is at about the time Pound began working on the early drafts of the Malatesta Cantos. D'Epiro gives the following brief description of this section of the draft:

> Pound and Eliot are now presented against a backdrop of futile personal ambitions and amidst the detritus of crumbled civilisations - 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.[76]

I know this draft only from D'Epiro's and Rainey's accounts of it, and from the shorter version of it that resurfaced in the 'Watson typescript' (which D'Epiro prints as "Appendix C" of *A Touch of Rhetoric*). It describes a visit to the Roman arena in Verona by Pound, Eliot and two others. One of these, referred to as "Thi", "Ti" or "Galla Placida" (421-50: a Roman empress) was Evelyn St Bride (Bride) Scratton (1883 - 1964). Pound had met Mrs Scratton in London in 1909 or 1910, and had encouraged her in her writing.[77] The precise nature of their relationship is difficult to determine; Carpenter believes that, by 1922, it was at most one of close friendship,[78] but Rainey presents

compelling evidence to the contrary.[79] (For what it is worth, Mrs. Scratton's husband, who in 1923 petitioned for divorce on the grounds of adultery and cited Pound as co-respondent, was of Rainey's opinion.[80]) In any event, it seems safe to assume that the situation was a somewhat difficult one for all concerned, particularly if, as Rainey claims, the fourth person (identified only as the "Roman"), was Dorothy Pound. [81] This conjunction of the predicament of Pound, Eliot and company and the ruins of the arena (D'Epiro's "detritus of crumbled civilisations") gives rise to an elegiac (or perhaps simply gloomy) meditation on the theme of "things run, and run to the worse."[82] At one point Pound, as narrator, describes himself as anguished witness to the entire course of history:

> I have sat here a thousand years, /or/
> forty-four thousand, ~~to be more exact~~
> /years/, [83]

This is, obviously, reminiscent of the figure of Tiresias in *The Waste Land:* in the 'Watson typescript' version Eliot is tentatively offered a share of this role: "Tomas, amics, we sit here,/For fourty-four [sic] thousand years,/at least I have."[84] Given that the only word of Eliot's line that does not occur anywhere in Pound's draft is "shored," D'Epiro's use of "shore" to describe what he considers to be an activity common to both strikes me as obtuse.

The next draft, and the "earliest [. . .] that bears even the remotest resemblance to what we now know as the Malatesta Cantos", exhibits a dramatic change: "the material dealing with Pound himself, Eliot and "Ti" has been completely expunged [...] even the former opening line."[85] Pound was obviously reluctant to lose that line: it was originally included and then crossed out, and D'Epiro cites two occasions when he wrote on the typescript "then fragments?" and "~~these~~ fragments?" apparently seeking an appropriate point at which to re-insert it.[86] These changes were probably occasioned by Pound's growing interest in Malatesta and his consequent feeling that the contemporary material was a distraction. From mid-summer 1922 Pound worked intensively on Malatesta, consulting what material there was available in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and acquiring his own copies of some works – for instance, Yriarte's *Un Condottiere au XV^e. siècle*.[87] This work continued until the end of 1922 and the fruits of it are apparent in the twenty-seven page draft of the Malatesta Cantos (numbered "9" to "12") that Pound sent to James Sibley Watson; the "Watson typescript" was a far more detailed and elaborate

account of Sigismondo than any Pound had hitherto produced, and may, unlike the earlier drafts I have been discussing, properly be termed "an early version of the Malatesta Cantos."[88] The "Watson typescript", as has already been pointed out, restores the Eliot and Galla Placida material. Watson 9 opens with the allusion to *The Waste Land*, in the form in which it now appears as the opening line of Canto VIII, and the Verona episode is inserted at the end of Watson 12 and so forms the conclusion or the ending of the entire sequence; thus the "Watson typescript" restores structural pattern of the first draft, with Eliot "framing" the account of Malatesta.[89]

Shortly after Pound sent Watson his material he again left Paris for Italy. It seems probable that at this stage he considered the "Watson typescript" to be close to a finished or definitive version of the Malatesta Cantos (presumably they were sent to Watson with a view to publication in the *Dial*). This was not to be the case. What Rainey describes as "ten long weeks of archival research from February to April 1923"[90] at various locations in Italy gave rise to further revisions and rewritings, and as a result the four Malatesta Cantos published in the *Criterion* in July 1923 (still at this stage numbered "9" to "12") are significantly different from the "Watson typescript" versions.

Of most immediate interest is the disappearance, for the second time, of T.S. Eliot from the Malatesta Cantos: neither the opening allusion to *The Waste Land* nor the Verona episode appear in the *Criterion* cantos. The latter was a casualty of the process of revision, and the Malatesta Cantos are undoubtedly the better for its excision; it reappears in much shorter versions in cantos XXIX (29:145) and LXXVIII (78:481). The omission of the former was an editorial decision of Eliot's; he wrote to Pound asking permission to omit the line and stating his objections: "I object strongly on tactical grounds to y$^{r.}$ 1st line. People are inclined to think that we write our verses in collaboration as it is, or else that you write mine & I write yours. With your permission we will begin with line 2."[91] Pound evidently accepted this decision, and Criterion Canto 9 begins "'*Frater tamquam et compater carissimme*";[92] that is, with what are now printed as lines 6 and 7 of Canto VIII. The 1925 Three Mountains Press edition of *A Draft of XVI Cantos of Ezra Pound for the Beginning of a Poem of some Length* restored the opening line and added the other four lines of the exordium:[93] this and the renumbering of the Malatesta Cantos as "8" to "11" are the most important changes between the *Criterion* text and that of the *A Draft of XVI Cantos*, which is substantially the text of all subsequent editions.

By demanding that the reference to *The Waste Land* be removed, Eliot was insisting on the erasure of the last visible trace of his presence from Pound's text; a

presence that had once been extensive, and overt, and which remained (and remains), I believe, highly significant. If this were not the case, why should Eliot have objected so "strongly", and on such inadequate grounds, to Pound's opening line? Eliot's letter to Pound is patently disingenuous - his declaration that his objections are "tactical" being about the only half-way honest statement in it. Who are these "people ... inclined to think that we write our verses in collaboration as it is, or else that you write mine & I write yours"? Why should Eliot, not normally remarkable for his 'readerliness,' be so concerned on their behalf? The readership of the *Criterion*, or the audience for modernist poetry generally, was not, in 1923, a large one, and it could, one would think, have been trusted not to have confused Pound with Eliot. Nor does it seem likely that those who were hostile to modernism, or to Pound and Eliot in particular, would be mollified by the absence of the line. Eliot, who unlike Pound had an acute sense of audience, must have been aware of this.

In the letter to Peter Russell, quoted earlier, Eliot wrote: "I should think also that his putting the word "shored" in brackets at the end would indicate a deliberate reference to *The Waste Land* which the reader was intended to appreciate."[94] If this was the case then to have insisted on this omission crucially changed Pound's text, and the ways in which it was possible to read it. Again, the full significance of this only emerges when the identity of this reader is put into question. The contemporary reader probably finds the allusion to Eliot among the least problematic elements in the Malatesta Cantos. *The Waste Land* is a fixture on university, and even secondary school, courses and is widely known, or is at least recognised, by those who might be termed the "culturally literate." The same cannot be said of Sigismondo Malatesta.

In 1923, however, the opposite was the case. Rimini was one of the "essential stops" on what Rainey calls "the cultural itinerary of elite travel" that established itself between 1875 and 1910.[95] Rainey describes this itinerary as "both real and psychological; it was "real" in that it corresponded to, and was made possible as a concrete social practice by, rail networks and timetables, and psychological in that it reflected a specific "historicist *mentalité*"[96]: Bradshaw and Baedeker hand in glove. Further, this "cultural itinerary overlapped with a specific configuration of genres: history, travel writing, and art history";[97] such writing serviced, and was in turn supported by, the "cultural itinerary of elite tourism", and gave currency to such figures as Sigismondo Malatesta. This cultural phenomenon, and the world in which it flourished, has disappeared; indeed, it

probably reached its high point before 1914 and was already beginning to decline by the early 1920s - although it would still at that time have been accessible.

By contrast, in 1923 *The Waste Land* still belonged very much to a coterie culture, to a small and self-conscious *avant-garde*. It was only in the middle to late 1920s that Eliot's poem found a somewhat wider cult audience; according to Samuel Hynes, "from 1924 to 1926 or '27, an influence that began on the decadent fringe of undergraduate life [...] moved to the centre," and *The Waste Land* became "the essential vision of the post-war world, and the generation's *donnée*." [98] Eliot's distaste for this audience is well-known, but it could not have been the one he had in mind when he insisted that Pound withdraw his opening line, for the simple reason that at the time it did not exist. The number of readers who, in 1923, would have been capable of catching and decoding the reference to *The Waste Land* must have been very small indeed; they would also have been as close to an ideal audience as Pound or Eliot were likely to get, and in terms of the future development of modernism a highly influential one. Eliot's strong "tactical" objections to Pound's appropriation of his line only make sense in reference to this audience. To spell it out: he was not, as he claimed to be, attempting to avoid confusing the uninitiated but preventing the initiated from reading the Malatesta Cantos as Pound intended them to be read.

In *A Genealogy of Modernism: A study of English literary doctrine 1908-1922* Michael H. Levenson, evoking the terminology of Christian disputation, distinguishes between "apologetics" (the defence of Christianity against the non-Christian, the hostile other) and "polemics" (which refers to disputes within the Church or Christian community).[99] This seems to me to be useful in the present context. A literary movement, and particularly one such as modernism, must also have recourse to apologetics and polemics in order to come into being and to survive. Apologetics and polemics, it should be noted, are neither in opposition, nor are they alternatives, but are continuous and complementary elements in the process of the establishing, contesting and maintaining of a body of doctrine or canonical works.

In 1917 and 1918 Pound and Eliot had collaborated as apologists and polemicists on behalf of their version of modernism, taking on the conservative London literary establishment and such modernist heretics as Amy Lowell. Writing in the *Criterion* in 1932 (Eliot had commissioned him to write an obituary notice on Harold Monro) Pound recalled his earlier alliance with Eliot and noted that there had been "divergence later."[100] This attack on Eliot clearly shows that by 1932 Pound recognised and resented Eliot's

eminence and his own increasing marginalisation: at one point he refers to Eliot as the "Editor" and to himself as the "Loathed Disturber" [101] (highly significant terms in the context of the above discussion of the publication of the Malatesta Cantos in the *Criterion*). The "divergence" between the two was apparent as early as 1919 when Eliot gave *Quia Pauper Amavi* a "distinctly lukewarm" review and Pound complained of Eliot's "universitaire tendency," and his "infamous doctrine" that literature was not "something in itself enjoyable" but something "one ought to enjoy because it is literature."[102] He repeated these complaints in a letter to John Quinn of 25 October 1919, but added "I daresay it is what is best in that quarter"(*SL*, 151). This clearly illustrates the ambivalences and complexities of relations between the two: in a single week, and using almost the same words, Pound can represent Eliot as a rival polemicist and a fellow apologist. If Eliot's 1923 letter to Pound is disingenuous, it is also ingenious: Eliot is acting as a polemicist but he appeals to Pound as a fellow apologist knowing that even if he saw through it Pound would find such an appeal difficult to refuse.

This "divergence" between Pound and Eliot was neither a trivial nor a purely private matter; as Levenson points out, "though nothing like a formal break developed between the two, there was a perceptible shift in the balance of literary power"[103]: broadly, this power shift was from Pound to Eliot. Levenson comments on the founding of the *Criterion* in 1922 as follows:

> If we look for a mark of modernism's coming of age, the founding of the *Criterion* in 1922 may prove a better instance than *The Waste Land*, better even than *Ulysses*, because it marked the institutionalisation of the movement, the accession to cultural legitimacy. The journal provided Eliot, its editor, with a capacious forum; it had financial stability and intellectual weight; it constituted a respectable vessel for sometimes suspicious contents.[104]

If it was modernism's coming of age, it was also Eliot's, and whatever benefits were conferred upon the movement were also conferred on the individual who had come to be seen as its central figure. It was also in 1922 that Pound began working on Sigismondo Malatesta. If the *Criterion* and the Malatesta Cantos do not take modernism in different directions, they certainly set it off on different trajectories. These two trajectories intersected, briefly, in July 1923 with the results I have been describing.

On the basis of the above, two points are, I hope, obvious: that Pound intended the allusion to *The Waste Land* to distinguish his own practice from Eliot's, and that the key to understanding this distinction is "shelved (shored)". Terrell is doubly mistaken in

seeing the line as turning on "fragments". Firstly, in ignoring "shelved (shored)" and, secondly, in his view that Pound's and Eliot's techniques of fragmented, or discontinuous, composition are identical. In *These Fragments I Have Shored: Collage and Montage in Early Modernist Poetry*, Andrew M. Clearfield describes Pound as "the montage poet par excellence, Eliot is the example in English (at least before the post-modern period of renewed French influence) of a collage poet."[105] The fragmentation of montage and the fragmentation of collage are significantly different. Montage, for Clearfield, "is marked by a succession of visually disconnected images which, cut together, (i.e. without transition) tell a coherent story or furnish some sort of ironic commentary on that story."[106] In this context the key difference between the two techniques is that the montage, but not the collage, poem may be described "as (at least intermittently) transparent. The text describes something else greater than itself."[107]

It is widely recognised that Pound and Eliot shared a number of beliefs and assumptions about the nature of history. Both had a strong sense of the importance of the past, and believed that the present should stand in some sort of significant relationship to it, and, further, would have agreed that no such state of affairs existed *circa* 1922. They also tended to see history, particularly recent history, as decline following a historically locatable 'fall' (whether it be the "dissociation of sensibility" or the administration of Woodrow Wilson). The differences are more difficult to identify, or at least to describe briefly. Crudely, it could be said that, in his poetry and particularly in *The Waste Land*, Eliot tends to evoke the past elegiacally or as a standing rebuke to the present; it is not made available, as Pound believed it could and should be, as a source of revitalisation in a lapsed world, or made to serve as a dynamic example to the present. In a 1935 review of John Buchan's *Cromwell* Pound wrote:

> Buchan has a little mislaid the real reason for writing and reading history, namely that the past should be a light for the future. That the purpose of history is instruction, that is to make people think and to guide their thought toward what will elucidate today and tomorrow (*SP*, 266).

As Gail McDonald has argued, there may not have been any deep-rooted philosophical disagreement between Pound and Eliot on this matter; it may simply have been that "Eliot was less sanguine about the power of education [. . .] than the optimistic Pound"; or that he had "a more sophisticated self-awareness of the box he inhabited"[108] than Pound. The differences between Eliot and Pound may not have been great; they may have been, as McDonald suggests, finally, a matter of temperament, or of emphasis, or

they may have been "tactical." They were, nonetheless, real and it is, as I have said, the function of beginnings to make, or to articulate, difference: in Canto VIII this is done by "shelved (shored)".

Dekker is correct in reading Pound's line as marking a distinction between himself and Eliot, and in seeing the line as being critical of Eliot, but he is wrong in reading "shelved" as meaning put aside or discarded (put on the shelf) and as being a pejorative reference to "Eliot's poetic method in *The Waste Land*." It is Eliot's own word, "shored," that applies to *The Waste Land*, and which is the pejorative term (if either is). "Shored" suggests 'shoring up', a holding action against the forces of erosion and decay, or perhaps brought to shore, beached, something retrieved from the rising tide of "futility and anarchy"; "shored" conveys a sense of attrition and precarious purchase that is wholly appropriate to *The Waste Land* but not to *The Cantos*. It is "shelved" that refers to Pound's practice. From the earliest drafts on Pound consistently replaces "shored" with "shelved", and consistently stresses the fact that he is doing so; in the June 1922 text the line reads "These fragments you have 'shelved'", "shelved" is the only word which is not a direct quotation and the only one to be placed in quotation marks. In the first draft "shelved" is also applied to Malatesta's activities, and specifically to his work on the Tempio: "Sigismundo/ had shelved/ a broken arch, spoils of Ravenna."[109] This is a strong indication that "shelved" denotes an activity of which Pound approves, and of which the reader is also intended to approve.

In later versions "shelved" is foregrounded by the parenthetical "shored". Pound uses this typographical trope elsewhere in the Malatesta Cantos: for instance:

> And it wd. be merely work chucked away
> (*buttato via*) (8:28).

The purpose here is to establish the accuracy of Pound's translation of a historical document in Italian; "chucked away" sounds suspiciously colloquial and so Pound cites the original Italian to prove that his version is, in fact, an accurate, even a literal, translation. It is a good example of how, in the Malatesta Cantos and elsewhere, Pound uses scholarly procedures as rhetorical devices. "Shelved (shored)" works in essentially the same way. Pound is making clear that his misquotation is not inadvertent and signalling that the difference is significant; he is also, literally and figuratively, bracketing off ("shelving") Eliot's practice. The pseudo-scholarly recognition of a conflict of textual

testimony, and the giving of the *varia lectionem* in a parenthesis, could also be seen as a side-swipe at Eliot's "universitaire tendency".

"Shelved" should be read not as meaning put to one side, or abandoned, but as made more easily and readily available - as books are shelved in libraries. Shelving in this sense of ordering information so that it becomes more easily accessible and so more useful is a distinctly Poundian activity. In his 1918 essay on Henry James, Pound defines "honest criticism" as "saying to one's reader what one would say to the friend who approaches one's bookshelf asking: 'What the deuce shall I read?'" (*LE*, 306) This makes explicit a dramatic situation, an assumed relationship with the reader, that characterises a good deal of Pound's prose (and that is also to be found in *The Cantos*); it is one in which the bookshelf plays a central role, as a record and a repository, but also as a source of remedy and as a dynamic example. The Malatesta Cantos, indeed *The Cantos* generally, consisting as they do of a row of historical documents, letters and other texts could be seen as a rebus of a bookshelf. Philip Furia's *Pound's Cantos Declassified* strongly endorses this reading of the poem. For Furia, *The Cantos* return epic to its "original function as a tribal archive" and its heroes "are the archivists - men like Kung, Coke, and an army of scholars, editors, and the translators who preserve and 'make new' the important documents of the past"; Pound's epic is "the record of a struggle to preserve, process, and transmit documents."[110] As Furia shrewdly recognises, this emphasis on "its documentary bulk" reveals the "deeply conservative character of *The Cantos*, a conservatism that has its affinities with Pound's politics":

> The whole project of preserving and updating documents, for example, is conservative by definition, but Pound's attitude toward his documents is even more profoundly reactionary. In the document, he believed, he had the key to historical truth, provided he could get beyond the written text to the speaking voices buried beneath it. As poet, his task was to resurrect those dead voices and let them speak again to the present age. [111]

My only reservation here is that the terms "conservative" and "reactionary" are not, in this context, interchangeable. The work of the archivist is conservative, but Pound was a reactionary, a radical reactionary, and both the politics and the poetics of *The Cantos* reflect this. Pound's belief in "voices" is an affirmation of *presence*, and that affirmation is central to *The Cantos*. (Furia recognises this when he describes Pound's "view of writing" as giving "contemporary literary theorists" the "shudders").[112] The multiplicity of voices in *The Waste Land* deconstructs presence; in the last analysis, the multiplicity of

voices in *The Cantos* may achieve the same result but it is also important to recognise that Pound's intention was to affirm, and celebrate, presence.

This point becomes clearer when the opening of Canto VIII is read in the context of the canto that precedes it. Canto VII, published in the *Dial* of August 1921, has been compared to, and even identified with, *The Waste Land*; Surette describes it as "in some respects anticipating *The Waste Land*"[113] and Guy Davenport who entitles the chapter on Canto VII in *Cities on Hills: A Study of I - XXX of Ezra Pound's Cantos* "Wasteland."[114] It is not difficult to see why this should be so; it is Pound's first extended treatment, in *The Cantos*, of the contemporary world, of "the essential emptiness and tawdriness of modern times,"[115] and, at points, it strikes a distinctly Eliotic note:

> Life to make mock of motion:
> For the husks, before me, move,
> The words rattle: shells given out by shells.
> The live man, out of lands and prisons,
> shakes the dry pods,
> Probes for old wills and friendships, and the big locust-casques
> Bend to the tawdry table,
> Lift up their spoons to mouths, put forks in cutlets,
> And make sound like the sound of voices. (7:27)

Dekker discovers a number of echoes of Eliot's early poetry in this canto, but concludes that "the lingering odours and paper partitions which were the necessary stage properties of Eliot's poetic world are rejected here by Pound."[116] I think this is correct, but would want to go further and say that this emphasis on Eliot is really something of a red-herring. Eliot is only present in the canto to the extent that he is symptomatic of a larger tendency.

Canto VII can be more usefully read as an extended essay in pastiche in which Pound depicts the contemporary world by assuming the discourses of some of the available modes of perceiving and representing it, the most important of which is that of the modern novel; Flaubert and Henry James (and particularly the latter) are far more significant presences in the canto than T.S. Eliot. Flaubert is invoked by the following cullings from *Un Coeur Simple*: "'Contre le lambris, fauteuil de paille,/ 'Un vieux, piano, et sous le baromètre...'" (7:24) and "Le vieux commode en acajou" (7:25). The following passage describes James as Pound knew him in London before World War I:

> And the great domed head, *con gli occhi onesti e tardi*
> Moves before me, phantom with weighted motion,
> *Grave incessu*, drinking the tone of things,
> And the old voice lifts itself

weaving an endless sentence (7:24).

This recollection of James introduces a sepia-coloured rendering of the Parisian social scene circa 1920 in the 'Jamesian' mode. It is too long to quote in full but the following extracts convey the flavour:

> The wilted flowers
> Brushed out a seven years since, of no effect.
> Damn the partition! Paper, dark brown and stretched,
>
> Low ceiling and the Erard and the silver.
> These are in "time." Four chairs, the bow-front dresser,
> The panier of the desk, cloth top sunk in (7:25)

Canto VII represents the modern world largely through such inventories of rooms and catalogues of bric-a-brac – what Pound called James's "dam'd fuss about furniture" (*LE*, 308). However, a careful reading of it reveals that it is as much a critique of the discourses it assumes, and of the world views they imply, as it is a straightforward (and rather conventional) condemnation of the superficiality and sordidness of modern life; Pound recognized the justice of this view of modernity, but fretted at the limitations of a discourse seemingly impotent in the face of it and unable to do more than register distaste. This impatience is apparent throughout the canto, most obviously in the interjections with which Pound interrupts and subverts his pastiche surfaces: "Sceptic against all this one seeks the living,/ Stubborn against the fact" and a few lines later, "Damn the partition!" (7:25). More positively, Pound studs the canto with allusions to, and fragments of, epic poetry (Homer, Vergil, Dante and the Portuguese epic poet Luis de Camões). The phrase "Rooms against chronicles" (7:25) suggests that these allusions and fragments are to be seen as an alternative to the inventories and catalogues of the contemporary novelist. At the end of the canto Pound moves decisively away from the modern world of husks, shells and surfaces to the Italy of Lorenzaccio de Medici - from "rooms" to "chronicles" - where he finds more life than among the living:

> Lorenzaccio
> Being more live than they, more full of flames and voices. (7:27)

Read in this way, Canto VII prepares the reader for the poem's annunciation of its epic intentions at the beginning of Canto VIII, and helps clarify the nature of the argument or statement of theme implicit in that annunciation. It also suggests some of the

ways in which Pound's epic will differ from other available modes of writing (including T.S. Eliot's), but that is to anticipate the discussion of the second element of the exordium - the invocation of the muse. Before moving on to that, Pound's argument or statement of theme must be made explicit. Pound's epic will be concerned with 'shelving' the past , making it available as a dynamic example, something that will, in Pounds words (quoted above), "elucidate today and tomorrow"; it will seek to resurrect the dead voices and affirm them as a vital presence in the modern world.

The second element of the exordium, the "Truth/Calliope" slanging match, appears to be somewhat more straightforward. Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, it may be assumed is also the guiding spirit of Pound's "poem including history." To this extent "Calliope" is something of a known quantity. What "Truth" might signify in this context, why "Truth" and "Calliope" should be so much at odds, and how, and to what extent, this opposition re-defines "Calliope", is more problematic. "Truth" is often, perhaps usually, read ironically and glossed as something like official history or received opinion, and so, particularly in the case of Malatesta, not truth at all but the opposite. Again *The Companion to the Cantos* may be cited as articulating a consensus: "Her [Calliope's] quarrel with "Truth" refers to the persistent campaign of denigration that has followed Sigismundo for centuries, owing mainly to the campaign of character assassination initiated against him by Pius II in his *Commentaries*."[117] The usefulness of the ironic reading depends to a large extent on whether its implicit criticism of history is seen as having a local and specific application or as applying to history generally; whether "Calliope" is seen as offering a truer (i.e., more accurate) account of Sigismondo Malatesta, or as being concerned with some ahistorical (but higher) order of truth.

The latter view seems to deny the value, or even the possibility, of historical writing in *The Cantos.* To argue that Pound's central concern in *The Cantos* is to transcend, or escape from, history into the timeless and eternal world of permanent values, is to make Pound's "Calliope" the muse of a "poem *excluding* history." In such a poem the Malatesta Cantos would be an essentially mythopoeic exercise: the recreation in historical space of an archetypal figure. Pound did, of course, believe in such 'permanent' values, and in the transcending patterns of archetype, and *The Cantos* are (as I have already argued) an affirmation of them, but to place them outside, or in opposition to, history is to misunderstand the whole nature of his epic enterprise. For Pound, what Aristotle called "universal truths" were true and were, in Aristotle's formulation, "worthy

of serious attention"[118] precisely because they were universal (or ubiquitous); because, as Pound wrote to his father, they "repeat in history"(*SL*, 210).

Although *The Cantos* make extensive use of the conventional epic apparatus of gods and goddesses, Pound was not much interested in myth; that is to say, he was not interested in myth as an alternative to, or an escape, from history. This is clear from his disagreement with Eliot over *Ulysses*, the major issue of which was the significance of the correspondences or parallels with the *Odyssey*. Pound saw the correspondences as "part of Joyce's mediaevalism [. . .] chiefly his own affair, a scaffold, a means of construction, justified by the result, and justifiable by it only" (*LE*, 406). For Eliot, on the other hand, "Mr. Joyce's parallel use of the *Odyssey* has a great importance," and while he did not openly take issue with Pound he referred slightingly to those by whom "it has been treated as an amusing dodge, or scaffolding for the purpose of disposing his realistic tale."[119] Eliot saw the parallels as the basis of Joyce's "mythical method," defined as "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history,"[120] and so a means of transcending history, and as "a step toward making the modern world possible for art."[121] For Eliot, Joyce's use of the "mythical method" was something "others must pursue after him";[122] for Pound, *Ulysses*, while it "does add definitely to the international store of literary technique," is "unrepeatable [. . .] you can't take it as a 'model' [. . .] but it does complete something begun in Bouvard"(*LE*, 405). (What was begun in Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pecuchet* was the diagnosis, or anatomy, of the cultural and intellectual condition of the modern world.)

In "Spenser and the Allegorists" Frank Kermode says of Edmund Spenser:

> He does not convert event into myth, but myth into event [...] he welcomes history, not seeking to lose his own time in some transhistorical pattern. Such patterns of course exist; but only the unique and present moment can validate them.[123]

This could be applied with equal justice to Ezra Pound (I am not suggesting Kermode would so apply it); it is, indeed, the best short description of myth and history in *The Cantos* of which I am aware. For Pound the possibility of modern art was predicated on engagement with contemporary history, and not on devising elegant strategies for side-stepping it.

Limiting the line's range of reference, so that the ironic identification of "Truth" with 'official history' applies only, or primarily, to the case of Sigismondo Malatesta,

avoids these problems, and by acknowledging their concern with specificity and historical accuracy can generate a stronger reading of the Malatesta Cantos. Michael Harper's "Truth and Calliope: Ezra Pound's Malatesta" illustrates both the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. Harper's essay is a spirited defence of the claim of the Malatesta Cantos to be taken seriously as history, and of Pound's referential poetics generally against those formalists who would reject them as at best quixotic. Harper may be said to have succeeded in the first of these endeavours in so far as he demonstrates that Pound did a great deal of reading and research and that his account of Malatesta cannot be dismissed out of hand. This, however, does not in itself sanction Harper's claim that Pound was right about Malatesta. He is less successful in his second endeavour. Harper is correct in seeing *The Cantos* as radically disconcerting the assumptions of formalism in all its guises, and in his assertion that there has been little in the way of an adequate response to this challenge, but using Pound as a stick with which to beat such assorted "theorists" as Barthes, Derrida and Hayden White is not a constructive contribution to the debate. However, there are more specific, and in this context more significant, problems with Harper's essay.

Firstly, Harper's view of the historical debate about Malatesta is derived, somewhat uncritically, from Pound himself. To see Pound as a lone and heroic revisionist battling against a historiographical conspiracy (going back to Pius II) to vilify Malatesta is naive. That Pius was biased in his account of Sigismondo, and that that account has been influential, is not in doubt. However, by 1922 there existed, as Rainey demonstrates, a very considerable and varied body of writing on Malatesta, and by no means all of it took Pius's line. To take an obvious example. The entry on Malatesta in the 1886 and 1911 editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (it was the same in both) was written by the distinguished scholar and statesman Pasquale Villari and may be taken as a reliable indicator of the state of opinion. Villari's article is sympathetic but not uncritical; he describes Pius as Sigismondo's "declared and mortal foe"[124] and is suspicious of the evidence of the *Commentaries* and he emphasises many of the aspects of Malatesta's history and character emphasised by Pound (his work on the Tempio, his love for Isotta, his military skills and the range of his intellectual and cultural interests). The image of Pound as Malatesta's single heroic defender, attractive as it may be, will not stand up to scrutiny.

Secondly, Harper contends that Pound's skills as a poet, and as reader of poetry (particularly his "attention to technique" which, according to Harper, "was never what

critics have all too often taken it to be - a limitation, the sign of an aesthete"[125]), can be transferred directly to the field of history and makes Pound a better historian than those historians who are not poets. Harper derives this view from Pound:

> Only if one knows how to read, he believed, can one penetrate to the reality behind the words; only if one knows how to read can one tell whether a poem, for example, honestly reports the experience it professes to present; only if one knows how to read can one determine the true significance of a historical document. ("Lorenzo Valla somewhat altered the course of history by his close inspection of Latin usage," says Pound in his Cavalcanti essay, reminding us that Valla proved the Donation of Constantine to be a forgery.)[126]

Even accepting that Pound's distrust of Pius's allegations was based on his distaste for Pius's style (and not vice versa), this argument is seriously flawed. According to Harper Pound's rejection of Pius's allegations was purely intuitive. Valla's assertion that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery was based on textual evidence (which proved to be unassailable), and so was the work not of a poet but of a textual critic. Intuition certainly has its place in textual criticism but to thus equate the poet and the textual critic is simplistic. Pound's intuition, it might also be pointed out, led him to support Mussolini.

My third, and perhaps most serious, problem with Harper's approach is that it does not get beyond its concern with the accuracy of the Malatesta Cantos. Thus, even were it not flawed in the ways I have indicated, Harper's essay could not be considered as an adequate account of Pound's "poem containing history" but only of Pound's history (and that in a rather limited sense of the term). Harper may be said to share the preoccupation of much traditional Pound criticism with "roots" at the expense of "routes", and so his "Calliope" is very little concerned with the actual production of a history. Yet it is on the level of production – the writing of history, the narrative representation of events and the transmission of those histories – that Pound's "poem including history" will succeed or fail. While Harper must be commended for recognising the concern with specificity and historical accuracy entailed in the poem's referential imperative, his failure to see that the Malatesta Cantos are not, and could never be, "a transparent account of the recognisable world"[127] must be censured. To see the quarrel between "Truth" and "Calliope" in the opening lines of canto VIII as being merely concerned with degrees of historical accuracy, or transparency, renders it naive, if not meaningless, and makes Harper's Calliope a more appropriate muse for the *Companion to The Cantos* than for the *The Cantos*.

Given that the quarrel between "Truth" and "Calliope" was added to the Malatesta Cantos at such a late stage, it might be expected to refer to something other than Pound's disagreement with Pius II, or with the anti-Sigismondo historical tradition generally, which after all had been there from the outset. In the twentieth century the decisive challenge to the traditional role of the epic poet as the keeper of the record, the bearer and bestower of the laurels, has come not from the historian but from the novelist. In Georg Lukács's words:

> The novel is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality.[128]

The quarrel between epic poetry and history goes back a long way, at least as far as Aristotle, and it seems improbable that it should erupt with such vehemence (and in such terms as "Slut!" and "Bitch!") in 1923. Such language is more appropriate to contesting the usurpation by the *parvenu* genre of the novel of epic's traditional role and prerogatives. To see "Truth" as representing the mode of access to the past, and to contemporary history, afforded by the novel, and so to read the argument "*sous les lauriers*" as referring to the rival claims of the verse epic, seems to me the most useful way of reading these lines.

The terms of this argument can be more clearly understood by referring back to my earlier discussion of Canto VII, and its use of pastiche as a critique of the capacity of the novel to deal adequately with the modern world. In Canto VII Pound recognises and concedes the novel's capacity to record accurately, to render the surface, while finally finding it unsatisfactory, lacking in that quality he terms the "living":

> Sceptic against all this one seeks the living,
> Stubborn against the facts. (7:25)

"All this" and "the facts" are the contemporary world as it is represented in prose fiction ("the wilted flowers," "the Erard," and the rest of the bric-a-brac); Pound does not deny that this an accurate reflection of the surface of the modern world, that it is in a sense the "truth," but resists it in the belief that there is something else, "the living," a positive value not to be found in the novel but, it may be inferred, accessible to poetry.

Pound repeatedly praised Flaubert, and admired and promoted the work of contemporaries such as Joyce and Hemingway, but he was not a great admirer of the

novel, or it seems much of a reader of novels. Carpenter says of him: "in a moment of honesty he once admitted that he 'never did read novels apart from Flaubert and H. James for specific purposes', and to [Ford Madox] Ford [. . .] he wrote: 'I never did like NOVELS just as such.'"[129] According to K. K. Ruthven, Pound was a "slow reader" and resented the time it took to read a novel and so tended to concentrate on poetry, which in these terms was more cost effective.[130] Most of Pound's critical writing is devoted to poets and poetry, and only two novelists appear in his curriculum of essential reading ("call it the minimum basis for a sound and liberal education in letters") given in "How to Read": "STENDHAL - (At least a book and a half)" and "FLAUBERT (omitting *Salambõ* and the *Tentation*)" (*LE*, 38). Pound's long essay on Henry James, first published in the *Little Review* of August 1918, is a significant exception to this rule. Whatever its worth as James criticism, it is Pound's most sustained treatment of prose fiction and as such is a significant document in this context.

Pound's impatience or irritation with his subject matter is apparent throughout the essay: he begins by describing it as "a dull grind of an affair" and complains that while "Flaubert is in six volumes [. . .] James is strewn over above forty," and wonders: "can we conceive a five or six volume edition of James so selected as to hold its own internationally? My contention is for this possibility" (LE, 295 & 330-331). Not all comparisons with Flaubert are so much to James's disadvantage. Pound quotes Flaubert's comment on the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, "If they had read my *Education Sentimentale*, this sort of thing wouldn't have happened" (*LE*, 297), and makes a comparable claim for James in respect of World War I: had the project on which James "spent himself," the "whole great assaying and weighing, the research for the significance of nationality" been 'read' then what Pound refers to as "Armageddon" might have been avoided (*LE*, 300 & 296).

For Pound, this represents the highest achievement to which the novel can aspire. The limitations of the novel are set out in a long footnote in which Pound attempts to explain the difference between prose and verse:

> Most good prose arises, perhaps, from an instinct of negation; is the detailed convincing analysis of something detestable; of something which one wants to eliminate. Poetry is the assertion of a positive, i.e. of desire, and endures for a longer period. Poetic satire is only an assertion of this positive, inversely, i.e. as of an opposite hatred.
> [. . .]
> Most good poetry asserts something to be worth while, or damns a contrary; at any rate asserts emotional values. The best prose is, has been a

> presentation (complicated and elaborate as you like) of circumstances, of conditions, for the most part abominable or, at the mildest, amendable. This assertion of the more or less objectionable only becomes doctrinaire and rotten art when the narrator mis-states from dogmatic bias, and when he suggests some quack remedy (prohibition, Christianity, social theory of one sort or another), the only cure being that humanity should display more intelligence and goodwill than humanity is capable of explaining. Poetry = Emotional synthesis, *quite as real, quite as realist* as any prose (or intellectual) analysis (*LE*, 324). (emphasis added)

Even the great novelists (Flaubert, Joyce and James at his best) are subject to these limitations; their art is essentially critical or analytical, in Pound's terms "negative," it can diagnose but not prescribe: to put it another way, the novel cannot transcend the conditions it describes. Poetry, by reason of its ability to "assert a positive" and its capacity for "emotional synthesis," can go beyond prose in this respect - it can express the "living" and so address the cure. The cure, very crudely stated, seems to be to make people wiser. What this might mean in practice was made slightly more explicit (and some of its more sinister implications highlighted) when Pound reformulated this doctrine in *Guide To Kulchur*: "The Duce and Kung fu Tseu equally perceive that their people need poetry; that prose is NOT education but the outer courts of the same. Beyond its doors are the mysteries. Eleusis. Things not to be spoken save in secret" (*GK*, 144- 5). In this context Pound's insistence that poetry can be "*quite as real, quite as realist* as any prose" must mean something more than that poetry has an equal capacity to reproduce accurately the surface of the world, to "fuss about the furniture." Again, the work of Georg Lukács provides an insight into what this something more might be.

Lukács's concept of the novel as the "bourgeois epic" was considerably modified in his later and more orthodox Marxist writings. Central to this modification was the distinction between realism and naturalism, for Lukács "the two main trends in contemporary bourgeois literature."[131] Lukács called realists those writers who "can recapture and recreate a harmonious totality of human life", and realism that form of art uniquely capable of resisting "the alienation and fragmentation of capitalist society [and of] projecting a rich, many-sided image of human wholeness " [132]. In this sense Greek epic and drama, and Shakespeare and such novelists as Scott, Balzac and Tolstoy are realists. Naturalism, on the other hand, arose after 1848 and is associated with the work of Zola and Flaubert (particularly the former); in naturalist writing, according to Eugene Lunn:

> the outer world is experienced increasingly as a succession of completed material substances, seemingly operating through automatic mechanisms - a reflection of the full maturity of capitalist mystification [. . .] the writer will tend toward the merely factual description of objective reality [. . .] Reflecting the writer's more passive relation to the social forces of the age, he/she becomes a mere observer of scenes. [133]

For Lukács, the difference between realism and naturalism should not be seen as a distinction of "stylistic 'techniques' in the formalistic sense," but as reflecting "opposed views of the world - dynamic and developmental on the one hand, static and sensational on the other."[134] Thus realism is always progressive, moving towards a " concrete *terminus ad quem*: the establishment of a new order"; for the realist, "however indefinite the structure and content of the new order, the will towards its more exact definition was not lacking."[135] Naturalist writing, by contrast, does not progress but remains trapped in its *terminus a quo*, its world of autonomous things, irrespective of the political opinions of its author.

In a highly impressive discussion of what he calls Lukács's "hostile diagnosis of symbolism" (for Lukács symbolism and modernism were essentially sub-species of naturalism) Fredric Jameson notes that "symbolism [. . .] is always a second best, always a kind of admission of defeat on the part of the novelist [. . .] which implies that some original, objective meaning in objects is henceforth inaccessible to him."[136] Jameson then offers the following account of the "source of the symbolic":

> in their origin, all objects have a human meaning. Even nature itself is humanized, by the manner in which man makes his home within it, in which he converts it to his own use [. . .] . The original meaningfulness of objects becomes visible only when their link with human labour and production is unconcealed. But in modern industrial civilisation this link is hard to find: objects appear to lead an independent life of their own, and it is precisely this illusion that is the source of the symbolic. ... Henceforth the furniture in *The Spoils of Poynton*, the brooding cities of Dickens and Dostoyevsky, the morally expressive landscapes of a Gide or a D.H. Lawrence, exist in the work of art as self-sufficient elements, carrying their meaning built into them.[137]

The problem, for Jameson, is not in how Lukács conceives of, or theorises, naturalism but in his hostility to it. If realism is the product of those historical moments when the "original meaningfulness of objects" is apparent and naturalism of those when it is not, then the fate of both the realist and the naturalist is effectively "sealed for him by the

logic of his moment in history."[138] Given this, Lukács's hostility, particularly as it is manifested in some of his more intemperate remarks about the decadence and perversity of naturalism, hardly seems an appropriate, or a reasonable, response. Jameson sees the "same ambiguity [...] in Marxist revolutionary theory [...] where the revolution cannot come into being until all the objective conditions are ripe for it, but where at the same time Lenin can force this condition by sheer willpower, can create a proletarian revolution before the preceding middle-class revolution has had time to run its course."[139] The possibility of a modern realist presumably depends on an equivalent, or analogous, act of "sheer willpower."

Pound and Lukács are strange bedfellows. The differences between the two are massive and striking, but there is also, in the aspects of their work I have been describing, a degree not perhaps of similarity but of congruence. What Pound dislikes about modern novels (apart from their taking too long to read) is precisely their naturalism, and Pound's search for the "living" could also be described as a search for "original meaningfulness." Pound's ideal of a poetry "*quite as real, quite as realist*" as prose seems to me to correspond more closely to Lukács's concept of realism than it does to any other definition of the "real" or "realist" of which I am aware. 'Will' or 'desire' also played a significant role in the thinking of both men; it is "sheer willpower" that keeps Pound "stubborn against the facts," and the search for the "living" begins in the desire for it. Pound described the Malatesta Cantos as being "openly volitionalist" (*GK*, 194): that is, as the product and expression of will or desire.

I am not saying that "Truth" and "Calliope" equal, or can be identified with, Lukács's (or even Pound's) theoretical models of realism and naturalism, but that those models afford a useful commentary on, or insight into, the argument between them. Obviously, "Truth" and "Calliope" should not be seen as the textual equivalent of the icons on a computer menu that can be 'clicked-on' to load one programme or another. What I have been trying to do is to articulate the quarrel "*sous les lauriers*" in broader terms than is usually the case. That the conflict between an orthodox and a revisionist view of Sigismondo Malatesta is present I would not deny, but there is much else there besides. To conclude this discussion of the "Truth"/ "Calliope" argument I would like to make two points. Firstly, the poet invokes the muse to help ensure the successful realisation of his epic ambitions; or, to put in another way, to establish the necessary rhetorical context, the patterns of convention and expectation that make an epic possible. Pound only felt the need to call on Calliope at a "very late stage" in the production of the

Malatesta Cantos; the months of research and the successive stages of composition and revision were completed without assistance from the muse. Calliope only enters the poem between the *Criterion* publication of the Malatesta Cantos and the appearance of the Three Mountains Press edition of the first sixteen cantos, that is at the point at which Pound's epic entered the public sphere of modernism. This suggests that her function in the poem relates to that public sphere; specifically, that she serves to distinguish Pound's from other modernist practices (and particularly that of T.S. Eliot). Secondly, what the muse supplies to the poet is not simply inspiration (eloquence or technique) but also information (subject matter or theme - what Aristotle called 'thought'). In this case the information that Pound was seeking from Calliope cannot have been of the kind he had already acquired by more prosaic means from libraries and archives (i.e. the 'facts' in the case of Sigismondo). My reading of Canto VII suggests that what Pound (and the reader) needed was access to the "living" and in order to get that he required Calliope's assistance in getting beyond the "partition" and negotiating the "furniture." Calliope is required to teach the epic poet, and his audience, to hear "voices" in the world of naturalism where "Truth" speaks the "basic silence of things."[140]

All that now remains to do in this section is to offer a brief account of the remaining elements of the exordium: the epithets ("Slut!" and "Bitch!") that "Truth" and "Calliope" apply to each other and lines "*That* Alessandro was negroid. And Malatesta/ Sigismund". "Slut!" and "Bitch!" have been assumed to be almost purely expressive: they function as intensifiers, indicating the degree of acrimony existing between "Truth" and "Calliope," but beyond that are opaque or devoid of significance. I would not dispute this reading. However, the use of such gender specific epithets does require some further comment. Gail McDonald has convincingly argued that there was a significant element of misogyny inherent in Anglo-American modernism, and particularly in the project to 'professionalize' poetry, which for both Pound and Eliot also *necessarily* involved 'defeminizing it'. Writing to his father in 1917 Eliot described some of the difficulties of "editing a small paper [the *Egoist*]: "I struggle to keep the writing as much as possible in Male hands, as I distrust the Feminine in literature, and, also, once a woman has had anything printed in your paper, it is very difficult to make her see that you should not print everything she sends in."[141] In a letter to John Quinn Pound made a similar point with characteristically less discretion: "I wonder if it would be possible to make a really bold plunge and hoist the banner: 'No woman shall be allowed to write for this magazine'" (*EP/JQ*, 53). McDonald comments that:

> Excluding women and amateurs drew the boundary lines - a *cordon sanitaire* - around the serious artist and serious scholar of the arts. Read broadly, then, 'women' was code for whatever stood in the way of serious, productive creation (including impediments within the poet himself). [142]

"*That* Alessandro" presents a more conventional Poundian difficulty - who is he? Carroll Terrell suggests Alessandro de Medici (1511 - 1537) on the grounds that he was the "son of Pope Clement VII and a Moorish slave."[143] Alessandro Sforza (1409 - 1473), who was the brother of Francisco - a significant figure in the Malatesta Cantos - and who is himself alluded to several times in them, is also a possibility. Neither candidate seems to fit the context and the usual way of reading this line is to see as an example of the sort of trivial and pedantic detail with which "Truth" (i.e. official history) is concerned. My own guess is that a figure referred to by Rainey as the "pseudo-Alessandro" is a more likely candidate. (I should make clear that Rainey, from whom my account of the "pseudo-Alessandro" is derived, does not identify him as the 'Alessandro' of Canto VIII.) The "pseudo-Alessandro" was "a zealous monk from Rimini writing around 1650 [. . .] [who] fabricated a brief but "ancient" chronicle [and] attributed it to one Alessandro."[144] This chronicle claimed to be a contemporary account of various of Sigismondo's misdeeds and, although entirely bogus, contributed significantly to his bad reputation. According to Rainey, Pound was deeply intrigued by references to the mysterious chronicle of Alessandro.[145] This makes as much sense in itself as any other version and allows a stronger reading of the epithet "negroid" - which was all too probably entirely Pound's own. Pound was given to using expressions such as "white folks" to express approbation: "At any rate the people in this list are 'white folks', and they won't chuck the book on the dump heap"(*EP/JQ*, 108). Conversely, he used terms like "negroid" as general expressions of disapprobation, as in the following description (also from a letter to Quinn) of an unspecified individual who was frustrating Pound's attempts to stage an exhibition of Gaudier-Brzeska's work in New York: "Welsh, Sibolian, negroid or fibroid" (*EP/JQ*, 70). There may, however, be a more specific reference here. Pound had a long-standing feud with the *Boston Evening Transcript*'s reviewer William S. Braithwaite (described by Carpenter as "one of the first black authors to win public attention in America"[146]). In July 1915 Braithwaite claimed that "Robert Frost was the only American poet of his generation who 'unheralded, unintroduced, untrumpeted' had won the acceptance of an English publisher on his own terms."[147]. Pound was incensed, and wrote to the editor of the *Boston Evening Transcript* setting the record straight and

complaining about "your (?negro) reviewer"(*SL*, 62). It seems possible that Pound associated the two instances of historical misrepresentation and that "*That* Alessandro was negroid" compounds Sigismondo's traducer with Pound's. The point here is not that Pound was both sexist and racist. That is not in dispute. Rather, my reading of these lines (and particularly the epithets) is intended to support the argument "sous les lauriers" is essentially a modernist polemic.

Finally, the closing words of the exordium, "And Malatesta / Sigismund", can, I hope without any comment from me, be read as inaugurating the narrative.

CHAPTER TWO
POETRY AND HISTORY

This is not a work of fiction

nor yet of one man (99: 722)

Introduction

Chapter Two takes the Malatesta Cantos as a model, or prototype, of Pound's attempts to write a poem 'including history' and seeks to establish how such a poem might most usefully be read. I will argue that this is most usefully done by privileging the ways in which poetry and history resemble rather than differ from each other. A specific starting point for this endeavour is provided by Hayden White's definition of what he terms the "historical work": "a verbal structure in the form of a narrative [. . .] that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of *explaining what they were by representing* them."[1] In literary studies White's work is usually appealed to in support of approaches that may be loosely described as post-structuralist; that is to say it is appropriated to provide part of the theoretical underpinning for a range of critical practices that are essentially formalist. My own use of White is different (I hope clearly so).

As I am attempting to describe Pound's construction of historical narrative, it is inevitable, and proper, that there should be a formalist aspect to my work. It is, however, only one aspect of my discussion of Pound's poem as a historical work. To read the Malatesta Cantos as a historical work is not simply a question of attempting to assay their 'accuracy,' as the term might be applied to conventional historical narrative or a newspaper report, as an account of the life and times of Sigismondo Malatesta but it does mean that the question of their relation to a past that exists independently of Pound or his poem, to other explanations of that past, and to the subsequent literature to which they have given rise cannot be dismissed or ignored. At this point, it is useful to recall my commitment to a reading that is both an "intrinsic" and an "extrinsic," and to reaffirm my belief that only such a reading can produce an adequate account of the Malatesta Cantos, or of *The Cantos* as a whole.

Section 1, "Pound's Malatesta," offers an account of what for my purposes are the salient aspects of Malatesta and of his significance in *The Cantos* and for Pound generally. Sections 2 and 3, "Aristotle's Injunction" and "The Grammar of History",

establish a provisional theoretical and methodological basis for my reading of the history cantos. Section 2 argues that a critical reading of Pound's "poem including history" must start from the recognition that it represents a radical challenge to Aristotle's famous distinction between history and poetry, at least as it has come to be understood. Section 3 analyses how Pound constructs, emplots, and attempts to authorise his historical narrative in the "Malatesta Cantos." This section also contains a critical account of Pound's own theoretical models of historical narrative in the *Cantos* (particularly the "ideogrammic method").

Sections 4 - 6 ("Malatesta/Odysseus/ Pound," "Renaissance Men: Malatesta and John Quinn" and "New Men: Malatesta and Mussolini") explore the cultural, political and autobiographical dimensions of Pound's history. These three sections also offer some account of Malatesta as what D'Epiro terms "the supreme embodiment of a recurrent type in Pound's verse."[2]

1 POUND'S MALATESTA

The first Malatesta to rule in Rimini, Giovanni, was elected podestà (chief magistrate) in 1237, but his son, Malatesta da Verucchio, who succeeded him in 1247, is usually regarded as the founder of the dynasty. Malatesta da Verucchio and another of Sigismondo's ancestors Paolo il Bello (Paolo the Handsome), the Paolo of the "Paolo and Francesca" episode in canto v of Dante's *Inferno*, are referred to in Canto VIII. As clients and allies of the Papacy, and as "papal captains,"[3] the dynasty thrived and by the generation immediately preceding that of Sigismondo, the Malatesta, and particularly Carlo Lord of Rimini, were a major regional power. Carlo died childless in 1429 and Rimini was added to the inheritance of his brother Pandolfo (who had pre-deceased him) thus reuniting the Malatesta states of Rimini and Fano. The Malatesta held Rimini and their other possessions as papal vicariates conditional on the payment of an annual *census* (the unpaid "dues" of Canto VIII) and the succession was secured when Pope Martin V legitimised Pandolfo's three sons: Galeotto, Sigismondo Pandolfo (1417-1468) and Novello.

When Galeotto, the "elder brother gone pious" (8:33), died in 1332 Sigismondo became Lord of Rimini. It might appear that the most famous, or infamous, of the Malatesta began his rule in auspicious circumstances but this was not the case. The power and influence of the Malatesta had reached a peak with Carlo and thereafter it declined. As Philip Jones, in *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal States: A Political*

History, points out the age of Carlo was "the last age of the small *signore*, adventurer and *condottiere*"[4] The larger Italian city states such as Milan and Naples were becoming increasingly powerful and the smaller states and their rulers, such as the Malatesta, were reduced to playing increasingly minor roles in ever larger conflicts. In the Papal States, Martin V's policy of restoring and strengthening Papal authority put further pressure on the Malatesta; Martin died in 1431 but the general direction of his policy was continued by his successors. Sigismondo was, then, even at the time of his accession an anachronism, a throwback to an earlier period of Italian history. Pound's claim that all Sigismondo's achievements were made "*against* the current of power" (Gk, 159) may be read, in part, as a recognition of this point.

If Sigismondo was an anachronism, he was certainly not redundant. The thirty years of what Jones describes as "incessant warfare"[5] that led up to the peace of Lodi (1454) gave ample scope to Sigismondo's undoubted military talents, and to his passion, unfortunately not matched by any corresponding talent, for political intrigue. He found almost continuous employment as a *condottierre* from the age of fourteen onwards; indeed such was his reputation that he was, at least at the outset of his career, very much in demand and between the mid-1430's and 1454 he participated in every major Italian conflict.

In many ways he was a typical figure. Most of the *condottierri* were, like Sigismondo, petty *signori*, or sometimes landless adventurers, for whom hiring themselves, and their citizens or followers, out as mercenaries to larger states represented a vital source of income. In addition there was also the possibility that the hazards of war would provide opportunities for the *condottieri* to further their dynastic ambitions. A spectacular example of this is provided by the career of Sigismondo's older contemporary Francesco Sforza (1401-1466). Of comparatively humble origins, Sforza became one the leading *condotierre* of his day, mostly in the service of the Duke of Milan. In 1441 he married the Duke's daughter, and in 1450 usurped the dukedom and founded a new dynasty. Sforza is a significant figure in the Malatesta Cantos, sometimes featuring as Sigismondo's ally and sometimes as his adversary.

Few of the *condottierri* were so fortunate; more often the clash between the *condottiere's* professional obligations and his private or dynastic ambitions operated to the detriment of both. This was certainly the case with Sigismondo, as the following episode from Canto IX illustrates:

And he fought like ten devils at Monteluro
        And got nothing but the victory
And old Sforza bitched us at Pesaro;
        (*sic*) March the 16th:
"that Messire Alessandro Sforza
        is become lord of Pesaro
through the wangle of the Illus. Sgr. Mr. Fedricho 'Orbino
Who worked the wangle with Galeaz
        through the wiggling of Messer Francesco,
Who waggled it so that Galeaz should sell Pesaro
To Alex and Fossembrone to Feddy;
And he hadn't the right to sell.
And this he did *bestialmente;* that is Sforza did *bestialmente*
As he had promised him, Sigismundo, *per capitoli*
        To see that he, Malatesta, should have Pesaro" (9: 34-35)

This passages conflates two episodes in Malatesta's career. The first two lines refer to the defeat of the papal forces by the combined forces of Sigismondo and Sforza at the Battle of Monteluro on 8 November 1443. The credit for this victory seems to have been entirely Malatesta's: Jones says that the battle was "forced on by Sigismondo against the cautious advice of Sforza" and records a contemporary chronicler's opinion that Sigismondo was "alexandrino animo et nestorio consilio" ("An Alexander in spirit and a Nestor in counsel").[6] Advantage was not taken of this rout because Sigismondo then insisted on diverting his forces to an ill-advised attack on Pesaro, a city ruled by his cousin Galeazzo ("Galeaz").[7] In Pound's version the Battle of Monteluro and its aftermath is run into an obviously related but separate sequence of events in 1444 and 1445 that led eventually to Galeazzo selling those parts of the Malatesta lands under his control, Pesaro to Sforza and Fossembrone to Federigo d'Urbino ("Mr. Fedricho d'Orbino" and "Feddy"). Sforza then assigned Pesaro to his brother Alessandro (Pound's "Alex") who became ruler of the city on 16 March 1445. This permanently alienated Pesaro from the Malatesta dominions.

Pound's narrative is structured around the stark and dramatic contrast between the Sigismondo who "fought like ten devils" and got "nothing" and the three conspirators whose duplicity got them what was rightfully Sigismondo's. "Wangle," "wiggling" and "waggled' convey opprobrium and also take up and strengthen the implication of the verb "bitched" in the third line that Sigismondo's enemies are 'unmanly'. There is little doubt that Galeazzo was a singularly incompetent ruler [8] or that Sforza and Urbino were not over-scrupulous in their dealings with friend or foe,

but Pound's account by its collapsed chronology omits evidence that would make Sigismondo, in part, the author of his own misfortune.[9]

For the larger states the use of mercenary captains had the advantage of keeping military power out of the hands of individual citizens and thus provided a safeguard against any latter-day Caesar and saved the expense of maintaining a standing army. The economic base of the system is treated in some detail in the Malatesta Cantos. In Canto VIII, Pound translates a contract of service (or *condotta*) drawn up between Sigismondo and the Florentines:

> ..... and because the aforesaid most illustrious
> Duke of Milan
> Is content and wills that the aforesaid Lord Sigismondo
> Go into the service of the most magnificent commune
> of the Florentines
> For alliance defensive of the two states,
> Therefore between the aforesaid Illustrious Sigismund
> And the respectable man Agnolo della Stuffa,
> ambassador, sindic and procurator
> Appointed by the ten of the baily, etc., the half
> Of these 50,000 florins free of attainder,
> For 1400 cavalry and four hundred foot
> To come into the terrene of the commune
> or elsewhere in Tuscany
> As please the ten of the Baily,
> And to be himself there with them in the service
> of the commune
> With his horsemen and footmen
> (*gente di cavallo e da pie*) etc.
> Aug. 5 1452, register of the Ten of the Baily. (8:29 30)

Sigismondo is being hired by Florence (the "Ten of the Baily" was the ruling council of Florence during periods of emergency[10]) in conjunction with the Duke of Milan (Sforza) and the terms of service (how many men and of what type, who was to lead them, where they were to be deployed and how much was to be paid) are specified. This seems reasonably clear but the *condotta* from which Pound is translating, committing Sigismondo to the service of Florence from 1 July 1452, is almost certainly a clarification of an earlier one, signed the previous year, that had not been honoured. Sigismondo was notorious for his unreliability in this respect but in this he was hardly unique; complaints of broken contracts, of services not performed and service money not paid were commonplace.[11]

I will not attempt to trace in detail Sigismondo's career as a *condottiere*. Pound seems to have believed the loss of Pesaro in 1445 was a watershed in Sigismondo's career ("And this cut us off from our south half/ and finished our game, thus, in the beginning" [9:35]); this may well have been the case, but it was not apparent at the time. Jones describes 1445 and the years immediately following "as a period of high success" and as a time when Sigismondo's military reputation was at a height.[12] He enjoyed notable successes in siege warfare at Roccacintrada (1445) and Vada (1452) and on both occasions had commemorative medals struck.[13] The reduction of Vada is also commemorated in Canto IX: "And he set up the bombards in the muck down by Vada/ Where nobody else could have set 'em" (9:37). On the other hand, he remained inveterate in his designs on Pesaro often to the detriment of his efficiency as a mercenary captain, as an incident recounted in Canto IX illustrates ("old Foscari" is Francesco Foscari, Doge of Venice, Gaspare Broglio was Sigismondo's companion and the author of the *Cronaca universale*, the phrase in Italian means "he's tricked me"[14]):

> And he went down to the old brick heap of Pesaro
> And waited for Feddy
> And Feddy finally said "I am coming! ...
> ... to help Alessandro."
> And he said: "This time Mister Feddy has done it."
> And he said: "Broglio, I'm the goat. This time
> Mr Feddy has done it. (*m'l'ha calata*)."
> And he'd lost his job with the Venetians (9: 36-37).

In 1450 Sigismondo was in command of the Venetian forces against Francesco Sforza; Sforza and Federigo d'Urbino lured him away from the Venetians using Pesaro as bait and then double-crossed him. It is interesting to note that if this passage is compared with the account of the loss of Pesaro in 1445, discussed above, Pound, or any rate his narrator, is much more critical of Sigismondo's behaviour.

The Peace of Lodi was signed between Sforza and Venice in April 1454 and the other Italian states were then invited to join; by August all, including Sigismondo, had done so except Naples. In January 1455 Alfonso, King of Naples, ratified the peace but insisted that Malatesta, against whom he had outstanding claims, be excluded.[15] Alfonso's grievance had its origins in a broken *condotta* of 1447: Sigismondo signed on with Alfonso against the Florentines and accepted an advance of service money but then defected to Florence and kept the advance (Pound's version of this incident is to be found in Canto IX). After Lodi Sigismondo found employment as a condottiere

increasingly hard to come by ("And the jobs getting smaller and smaller" [9:37]). In 1454 he was taken on by the Commune of Siena as their commander in a local war with unsatisfactory results for both parties. This comparatively unimportant episode had two significant consequences. Firstly, in his retreat from Siena Sigismondo had to abandon his baggage and his correspondence which were impounded by the Sienese;[16] the correspondence was subsequently placed in the city archive where in 1923 Pound was to consult it (a selection from it is included in Canto IX). Secondly, Sigismondo's treatment of Siena may have given the Sienese prelate Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II) an animus against him.[17]

To be readmitted to the "community of states" Sigismondo had firstly to settle Alfonso's claim against him; this he professed himself willing to do but prevaricated whenever an occasion to do so presented itself. In addition his feud with Federigo d'Urbino continued to threaten the peace. Sigismondo had powerful enemies and few if any allies, his precarious position was further complicated by the necessity of accommodating Giacomo Piccinino, another *condottiere* with dynastic ambitions. With the election of Pius II events began to move more swiftly and decisively.

Initially the accession of Pius did not seem to be against Rimini's interests, and Malatesta, apparently anxious to avoid war, submitted in principle to the terms of a series of disadvantageous treaties, agreements and judgements. However, when these proved to be even more disadvantageous in their implementation than they were on paper Sisismondo became increasingly recalcitrant. By 1460 he seems to have decided that he had little to gain from further cooperation and accordingly began preparations for war seeking allies wherever he could find them; he made a treaty with Piccinino and signed an agreement with the Angevins (French pretenders to the throne of Naples).[18] This act, which brought non-Italians into an intra-Italian dispute, probably cost Sigismondo much of what little sympathy he had and made war inevitable.

Hostilities were opened in October when Pius demanded that Sigismondo pay the arrears of the *census* immediately. When this was not done he excommunicated Sigismondo and, in January 1461, at a public consistory in Rome, had read out a charge, or anathema, against him. This document, which is the source of many of the accusations subsequently levelled against Malatesta, is quoted at length in Canto X (10:44-46). Not satisfied with merely excommunicating Malatesta, Pius launched what Jones describes as "some process, inverting canonisation, which would enrol Sigismondo a citizen of

Hell."[19] In April 1462, as the conclusion of this process, Sigismondo was burned in effigy in Rome:

> So they burnt our brother in effigy
> A rare magnificent effigy costing 8 florin 48 bol
> (i.e. for the pair, as the first one wasn't a good enough likeness) (10:45)

The detail of the second effigy made (and paid for) is indicative of the intensity of Pius's hatred of Malatesta. The distinction of undergoing a process "inverting canonisation" is, to the best of my knowledge, unique to Malatesta.

On the worldly front Pius's campaign got off to a slower start and at first things went, militarily, Malatesta's way[20]. He won a victory over numerically superior papal forces ("They've got a bigger army/ but there are more men in this camp" [10: 47]) at Nidastore in July 1461:

> And we beat the papishes and fought
> Them back through the tents
> And he came up to the dyke again
> And fought through the dyke-gate
> And it went on from dawn to sunset
> And we broke them and took their baggage (11:48)

However, in August Pius defeated Malatesta in a battle near Sinigaglia, a "reverse" from which "Sigismondo was never permitted to recover,"[21] and within days Piccinino was also defeated in battle. Pius was determined on the total destruction of Malatesta and the war continued into 1463. Sigismondo, without allies or effective means of defence, sued for peace in October 1463 and got it although on harsh terms: he lost everything except Rimini, which he was permitted to hold for his life time. This was the end of Sigismondo as a political or military force in Italy, and effectively the end of the Malatesta dynasty. Before his death in October 1468 Sigismondo appointed Isotta and her son as his heirs but power soon passed to Roberto, his son by a previous mistress, who was re-granted the vicariate of Rimini in 1473:[22]

Two episodes in Sigismondo's later life call for some attention. In 1464 he led an expedition against the Turks to Morea in the Peloponnesus; Pound offers a succinct account of this in Canto XI:

> And he gone out into Morea,
> Where they sent him to do in the Mo'ammeds,

With 5,000 against 25,000,
And he nearly died out in Sparta,
Morea, Lakedæmon,
And came back with no pep in him (11:50)

Militarily the expedition achieved little or nothing, but Sigismondo did bring back from Morea to Rimini the remains of the Neoplatonist philosopher Gemisthus Plethon. Curiously, given Pound's interest in Plethon and the importance attached to it by some commentators on the poem, this incident does not appear in the Malatesta Cantos. Plethon is only mentioned in the sequence as one of the party accompanying the Byzantine Emperor John Paleologus on his visit to Italy ("And with him Gemistus Plethon/ Talking of the war about the temple as Delphos" [8:31]).

Pius II died in 1464. Although less antagonistic to Malatesta than his predecessor, the new Pope, Paul II, was insistent that the 1463 terms were not open to renegotiation. At some point it appears that Paul contemplated offering Sigismondo Spoleto and Foligno in exchange for Rimini. Sigismondo was so angered by this that he is said to have set out for Rome determined to murder the Pope. Paul, suspicious of Sigismondo's intentions, at first refused to receive him and then, the next day, received him in the presence of seven cardinals and denied that he was contemplating any such exchange.[23]

Pound's version of this incident gives little or no context for it, and appears to be mainly concerned with jeering at the Pope's vanity (Pietro Barbo wished on election to take the name Formosus [Handsome] but this being deemed inappropriate he became Paul II[24]):

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 Secondo. (11:51)

Of more importance, for Pound, is the description given by the Papal librarian, Platina, of his conversation with Sigismondo at that time:

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)

This passage so impressed Pound that quoted it in a letter to John Quinn and added the comment: "Hang it all a bloody good period" (*EP/JQ*, 217).

So far I have not dealt with the two aspects of Pound's portrait of Malatesta that are usually regarded as the most important: Sigismondo's role as a patron of the arts, particularly as this is manifested in the construction of the church of San Francesco, Pound's "Tempio," and his *amour fou* for Isotta degli Atti. These two are often connected in the assertion that the Tempio was built as a shrine or monument to Isotta, and that it celebrates Sigismondo's love for her. This is what Rainey terms the "Romantic interpretation of the church of San Francesco"[25]; by extension it has become an interpretation of the whole of Sigismondo's life and work. The reasons for my omissions are organisational and tactical. Organisational because I will be referring to Sigismondo as patron and to his relationship with Isotta elsewhere in this chapter. Tactical because I am concerned to redress the balance, or imbalance, characteristic of much criticism of the Malatesta Cantos, between the attention given to these aspects of the figure of Sigismondo and that given to his military and political exploits. The successive stages of revision by which the originally projected single canto became four cantos, were largely a matter of adding more and more detail on Malatesta's political and military career; from a crudely quantitative point of view this material constitutes the bulk of the Malatesta Cantos. This is not to say that Isotta and the building of the Tempio are not important and central elements in the Malatesta Cantos; indeed they are, but their importance and centrality can only be understood in relation to the mass of other material. Before moving on I will furnish some basic information about the Tempio and Isotta.

In the first instance Sigismondo's plans to re-model the 13th century church of San Francesco seem to have been limited to a side chapel, and this work began in 1447.[26] The project grew in ambition and scope and around 1450 Sigismondo entrusted it to Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472); Alberti's plans and his innovative execution of them radically transformed the church of San Francesco. He completely changed the façade incorporating into it the design of a Roman triumphal arch (based on the Arch of Augustus in Rimini), but what Rainey describes as his "handling of the technical problems" was more remarkable:[27]

> Since the first chapel had been reconstructed before his intervention, he was obliged to retain the body of the earlier church; he responded by constructing the new façade as a "shell" that was literally wrapped around the exterior of the older church.[28]

The interior has a fresco by Piero della Francesca but what has struck most commentators is the prevalence of pagan and profane themes and motifs: bas-reliefs representing "Jupiter, Venus, Mars and Diana," zodiacal motifs, emblems of the Malatesta (elephants and the rose) and of course the monogram consisting of the letters 'S' and 'I' intertwined (something like $) – this last is particularly significant for the advocates of the "Romantic interpretation' because it is believed to incorporate the initials of Sigismondo and Isotta. In the niches of the outer wall were placed burial urns containing the ashes of scholars and humanists including those of Gemisthus Plethon. Sigismondo ran out of money and worked stopped in 1460 leaving the job unfinished. Money was a problem from the beginning and, in order to obtain the materials necessary for the construction of his Tempio, Sigismondo resorted to despoiling existing monuments. The most notorious example of this is his raid on the church of S. Apollinaire in Classe described in Canto IX.

Isotta degli Atti was Sigismondo's mistress and eventually his third wife. Sigismondo's love for Isotta is famous and amply attested. Isotta was born sometime in the early 1430s[29]; Vilari says "she was of noble birth and seems to have attracted Sigismondo's attention as early as 1438,"[30] this date is based on the misattribution of a poem and can be disregarded. Rainey's assertion that "the first testimonies indicating Sigismondo Malatesta's love for Issota degli Atti" date from 1445 inspires more confidence.[31] In 1456 she became Sigismondo's third wife – perhaps for contemporaries the most remarkable aspect of the story (love matches were not the fashion of the day). Sigismondo's marriage to Isotta is all the more remarkable for fact that it occurred at a time when his fortunes were at a low ebb and when a more expedient match might have improved them.[32] As I have already pointed out Sigismondo appointed Isotta, and her children, his heirs but she was not able to hold Rimini for long or to ensure the succession of her sons.

In the "Introduction" to *A Touch of Rhetoric* D'Epiro remarks that "it is difficult to say how Pound first became interested in Malatesta."[33] The question is an intriguing and important one. In attempting to answer it is useful to begin by recalling the point made in Chapter One that in the early nineteen-twenties Sigismondo Malatesta was not

the recondite and exotic figure he is considered to be today and that Rimini was one of the "essential stops" on "the cultural itinerary of elite travel"[34]. When Pound arrived in Rimini in May 1922 he must have known more or less what he would find there; he was evidently impressed by the Tempio but it is unlikely that he was completely surprised – the Church of San Francesco would have been familiar to him from the literature that underpinned that cultural itinerary (this is not to say that he didn't find more there than he was expecting). Pound's interest in, and knowledge of, the Renaissance was not, of course, limited to what was in the guide books. The Renaissance, especially but not exclusively the Italian Renaissance, had been a significant presence in his work from at least 1910. When he arrived in Rimini in 1922 Pound was not merely an unusually well informed elite tourist but a man who had written extensively on the Renaissance; a man who brought with him a conceptual model of the Renaissance developed over more than a dozen years. The main lines of this development can best be traced by examining four pieces on the Renaissance published between 1910 and 1922: Chapter X, "Camoens", of *The Spirit of Romance* (1910), "The Renaissance" (1915),[35] "Affirmations: Analysis of this Decade" (1915) and Pound's *Dial* "Paris Letter: January 1922."

Luís Vaz de Camões, Pound's Camoens, was the author of the Portuguese national epic *Os Lusíadas* (1572). *Os Lusíadas* ("The Portuguese") celebrates the voyage of Vasco da Gama (c. 1469-1524) around the Cape of Good Hope to India; a voyage that opened a sea-route for trade with the Far East. The chapter on Camões begins with the following reflection on the Renaissance:

> In 1453 Constantinople was captured by Mohamed II [. . .]. This event and the invention of printing did not cause the Renaissance, but precipitated it. During the dark ages there had been a series of attempts; of abortive Renaissances; Charlemagne, Alfred, Alcuin, Rosclin, Abelard, the so-called awakening in the Tenth Century and in the Twelfth, Petrarch, and Bocaccio, all precede that period which is termed the Renaissance. But without the printing press, or without such trained slaves to multiply manuscripts, as there had been for the publishers of Imperial Rome, there could be no victory over the general ignorance; no propagandist movement could be more than local or temporary (*SR*, 214).

Pound adds that the more immediate and concrete effects of the fall of Constantinople were, firstly, that "classical scholars and manuscripts" were "scattered [. . .] over Europe" and, secondly, that it "closed the old caravan routes" thus "making it necessary, if trade with the East one must, to trade by some other way; whence the doubling of the Cape of Good Hope, and the discovery of America" (*SR*, 214). This is a somewhat

conventional view of the Renaissance, not least in being profoundly *heliotropic*[36]; that is to say that Pound sees the revival of learning as moving from east to west and so following or tracking the westward movement of the sun. The extent of Pound's investment in this trope is apparent in his use of the phrase the "dark ages." This is a somewhat surprising expression for so enthusiastic a medievalist as Pound to use, particularly when its meaning is extended as far forward as the twelfth-century. However, Pound was not being pejorative, he was simply denoting those ages upon which, as a matter of historical fact, the sun had not risen.

Pound's view of the Renaissance no doubt derives from those larger metahistorical tropes or fictions, the *translatio imperii* and the *translatio studii*, which are also, in their more orthodox and influential versions, *heliotropic*. These tropes generate a universal history in which what is usually termed the Renaissance figures as an event or instance, albeit an epochal one. Given that Pound is careful to state that the fall of Constantinople and invention of printing are not the causes of the Renaissance but merely the occasions and agents of its precipitation at a particular time and place, it seems likely that some such idea as the above underpinned his view of the Renaissance in *Spirit of Romance*. Certainly, he was later to develop his own full-blown version of the *translatio imperii* and the *translatio studii*; a version that combined his advocacy of Confucianism as an ethical philosophy and his belief that "a light from Eleusis persisted throughout the middle ages and set beauty in the song of Provence and of Italy" (*SP*, 53). [37]

For Pound, Camões was "not a force but a symptom. His work is utterly dependent upon the events and temper of his time; and in it, therefore, we may study that temper to advantage" (*SR*, 215). This may appear to be an unsympathetic, even harsh, judgement (it certainly strikes many Portuguese readers that way) but Pound's essay is not an attack upon Camões but as a celebration of an age in which even the representative or typical product was worthy of serious attention. Pound's comments on *Os Lusíadas* can be read as bearing this out:

> Although Camoens is indubitably a poet, one reads him today with a prose interest. *Os Lusíadas* is better than an historical novel; it gives us the tone of the time's thought. Thus far it is epic (SR, 216).

What he finds to praise in the poem is what he terms the "real" ("geography, as fresh then as is aviation today" and the descriptions of "the costumes of people in strange

places"), the "furniture of the dieties" he finds a "nuisance" (*SR*, 216). Toward the end of the essay, Pound speculates "that all that part of art which is not the inevitable expression of genius is a by-product of trade or a secretion of commercial prosperity" (SR, 221). This is, as K. K. Ruthven has pointed out, Pound's first attempt to link literature and economics;[38] it also, as a matter of more immediate concern, introduces economics, and the question of the relationship between the economic structure of a society and its culture, into this account of the Renaissance. In the essay on Camões this question is left undeveloped but it is there and will later become central to Pound's understanding of the Renaissance.

Pound's extended visit to the United States (June 1910 to February 1911) stimulated his interest in the Renaissance and turned it in a new and significant direction. This is apparent in Pound's reflections on his return to the United States published in the *New Age* in 1912-13, "Patria Mia" (published in eleven instalments in autumn 1912) and "America Chances and Remedies" (six instalments in May and June 1913). Early in "Patria Mia" Pound declares that he is writing not "to find fault with the country" but to "defend the thesis [. . .] that America has a chance for Renaissance" (*SP*, 102). He had, he believed, seen intimations of the coming Renaissance in the architecture of New York and in "the surging crowd on Seventh Avenue [. . .] pagan as ever imperial Rome was, eager, careless, with an animal vigour unlike that of any European crowd" (*SP*, 104). However, he further states that it is not his intention "to flatter the country by pretending that we are at present enduring anything except the Dark Ages," and castigates American culture (and particularly American letters) for its debilitating gentility and its provincialism and derivativeness: "How often do I hear it said of American writers by Europeans, 'I can't see that they do anything but send us back copies of what we have already done'" (*SP*, 111, 114).

In "America Chances and Remedies" Pound turned to a consideration of how this potential can best be realised and adduced the Italian Renaissance as a model. His account of the Renaissance stresses the importance of collectors, "when the fire of the old learning began to run subtly from one end of Italy to the other, certain rich collectors sent out their agents through Greece and through all the East to gather what fragments they might of the ancient beauty" (*SP*, 126), and of the humanists such as Lorenzo Valla: "In Latin, and even in Greek, these men spread their praise and their malice [. . .] squabbled among themselves and plotted the modern world" (*SP*, 129). The collectors and the humanists provided the "two things requisite" for a Renaissance – "enthusiasm"

and "a propaganda" (*SP*, 126); in other words, the collectors put up the money and the humanists, by changing the substance and tone of the age's conversation, put in place the necessary intellectual infrastructure. Pound believed that in 1912 America already had collectors and hence the requisite enthusiasm but that the propaganda was lacking and so it was "indiscriminate" (*SP*, 131). America's millionaires, its new ruling class, had the potential to become the Medicis of the new Renaissance (*SP*, 126) but lacking direction and guidance their enthusiasm (and their cash) was misplaced.

To be effective propaganda for an American renaissance must reach an American audience and the *New Age* could not provide that. "The Renaissance", published in *Poetry* (Chicago) beginning in February 1915, is Pound's attempt to get his propaganda for the coming Renaissance before an American audience. In August 1912 Harriet Monroe had written to Pound inviting him to contribute to her new magazine, *Poetry*, and Pound had responded by appointing himself "foreign editor."[39] From the outset Pound regarded *Poetry* primarily as a vehicle for his Renaissance propaganda; this is clear from the postscript of his first letter to Monroe: "Any agonising that tends to hurry what I believe in the end to be inevitable, our American Risorgimento, is dear to me. That awakening will make the Italian Renaissance look like a tempest in a teapot! The force we have, and the impulse, but the guiding sense, the discrimination in applying the force, we must wait and strive for" (*SL*, 10). "The Renaissance" is a reworking of "Patria Mia," omitting the earlier piece's sketches of American life but reasserting Pound's belief in an American Renaissance and advocating broadly similar measures for fostering and promoting it; it is not, however, merely a shorter version of "Patria Mia" but a significant development of it.

Pound begins "The Renaissance" by arguing that "a criticism of poetry based on world-poetry, on the work of maximum excellence" is the antidote for the provincialism that is the root cause of "America's literary and artistic barrenness" (*LE*, 225, 218). Such a criticism requires, in the first instance, imported models of excellence: "the first step of a renaissance, or awakening, is the importation of models for painting, sculpture or writing" (*LE*, 214). In this respect it can be said that Pound's model of the future American Renaissance remains fundamentally heliotropic; heliotropic thinking pervades the entire essay – Pound even describes Americans as "look[ing] to the dawn" (*LE*, 218).

What is new in "The Renaissance" is Pound's interest in China. Towards the beginning of the essay he speculates that "this century may find a new Greece in China"

(*LE*, 215). This would usually be seen, largely correctly, as the first fruits of his work on the "Fenellosa papers" which he had received in late 1913. Fenellosa was a major influence on Pound but Pound's interest in China pre-dates his acquisition of Fenellosa's papers and was by no means unusual in an American of his generation and background. China was a significant presence in the United States in which Pound grew up; it had for some time been a focus of American missionary activity, and with the emergence of the United States as an international power in the 1890s it became the object of more conventional imperial designs.

Surveying the United States for intimations of the forthcoming renaissance, Pound notes: "we have, or we are beginning to have, collections. We have at least one scholar in Ernest Fenellosa, and one patron in Mr Freer" (*LE*, 219). Fenellosa requires no comment here but "Mr Freer" deserves, and will repay, further attention. Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919) was a wealthy retired railroad magnate; in 1899 he had "engineered the consolidation of thirteen car building companies, including his own, to create the American Car and Foundry Company" and shortly thereafter retired from business.[40] He began collecting art in the early eighteen-eighties and quickly came to specialise in the work of Whistler (eventually becoming the major holder of Whistler's work). Whistler first stimulated Freer's interest in Oriental art but Fenellosa (who he met in 1901) provided the "specialized knowledge and the tools of connoisseurship" that enabled Freer to put together a collection of Asian art described as "outrank[ing] in size and quality any other private holding in the United States."[41] Freer offered his collection to the Smithsonian (with the condition that it was to remain in his possession during his lifetime) and provided funds for building a gallery in Washington to house the collection.[42] According to Zhaoming Qian: "For Americans of Pound's [. . .] generation, Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919), Ernest Fenellosa (1853-1908), and the Oriental Wing of the Boston Museum of Fine arts were the names associated with their initial awareness of the Orient."[43]

Apart from two fairly casual mentions in letters to Dorothy Shakespear (*EP/DS*, 177, 264) there are no further references to Freer in Pound's work, that I have been able to find, and as far as is known the two men never met. Nonetheless, Freer is a significant element in the development of Pound's model of the Renaissance. Firstly, and most obviously, the allusion to "Mr. Freer" in "The Renaissance" signals Pound growing awareness of and interest in China. Secondly, Freer, 'Gilded Age' nabob turned patron on a grand scale, served as the model of an "American Medici"; Pound did not develop

this in the essay but for readers of *Poetry* in 1915 "Mr. Freer" would have been a familiar name and one readily associated with lavish patronage. Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, the collocation of Freer and Fenellosa provides Pound with an example of what can be achieved when the collector and the scholar (humanist), enthusiasm and propaganda, are brought together.

In "The Renaissance" Pound argues that "great art does not depend on the support of riches" but "a great period" requires a conscious and concerted effort and can be "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). No detailed account of Pound's prescriptions for how this could best be done can be given here but the following points should be noted as important for an understanding of the evolution of Pound's concept of the Renaissance.

Firstly, although Pound, in "The Renaissance" and elsewhere, advocated financial subsidies for writers and other artists he did not believe that subsidies alone could directly produce great art (by commission, for example). Rather, he saw its function as prophylactic; in other words, it could, by buying the artist time and leisure and freedom from financial constraints, prevent the production of bad art and create the necessary conditions for the production of good art. Without subsidy "some good enough poet will be spoiled by trying to write stuff as vendible as bath-tubs; or another because [. . .] he had to make his mind didactic by preparing to be a professor of literature" (*LE*, 221). This is essentially the view that informs Pound's portrait of Sigismondo Malatesta as the ideal patron; in the following passage Malatesta is writing to Giovanni de' Medici asking for his assistance in procuring the services of a "*Maestro di pentore*" (probably Piero della Francesca[44]):

> 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
> *(affatigandose per suo piacere o no*
> *non gli manchera la provixione mai)*
> never lacking provision. (8:29)

Secondly, in "The Renaissance" Pound invokes Lorenzo Valla's work on the Latin language, *Elegantiae Linguae Latinae* (1444), not as philology or antiquarianism

but as "an appreciation of the great Roman vortex, an understanding of, and an awakening to, the value of a capital, the value of centralisation, in matters of knowledge and art, and of the interaction and stimulus of genius foregathered" (*LE*, 220). He further notes that Valla's "reawakening to the sense of the capital" did not give rise to the "single vortex" of Dante's "ghibelline speculations" but to the "numerous vortices of the Italian cities, striving against each other not only in commerce but in the arts as well" (*LE*, 220). For Pound this clearly suggests a viable model for the United States. There is significant shift in Pound's thinking on this question between "Patria Mia" and "The Renaissance". In "Patria Mia" Pound laments that America has no capital city in the European sense: "a city to which all roads lead, and from which there goes out an authority" (*SP*, 101). "The Renaissance" commends a different, polycentric, model of culture; this is not a retreat from Pound's demands for a truly cosmopolitan culture but a recognition that such culture can be achieved without a single metropolitan centre. When it exists in "numerous vortices" the "sense of the capital" becomes diffuse and all pervasive. In part this is, no doubt, a concession to the American realities, but it can be seen as a first step in Pound's movement away from metropolitan centres and models of culture; a movement that would take him from London and Paris to Rapallo, via Rimini.

Finally, in "The Renaissance" Pound argues that patronage of the arts is not the prerogative of the state or of the very rich, although these, of course, have their role to play, but is the responsibility of everyone who can afford it: "I am not leaving you out, reader, because you have only one million or half of one" (*LE*, 224). Pound insists that anyone who can endow a local college or church, "sterile professors" and "vacuous preachers" (*LE*, 223), can endow the arts. What Pound is advocating here is not a communal or cottage industry model of the arts but an extension – a democratisation if you wish—of the concept *noblesse oblige*. This anticipates Pound's celebrations of Malatesta and John Quinn as patrons of limited means.

In "Affirmations: Analysis of this Decade," Pound for the first time explicitly recognises the Renaissance as an object of historical inquiry and a subject of historical discourse, as an event, or epoch, that has provided a slogan, example or precedent for subsequent movements. "The Renaissance," Pound writes "is a convenient stalking-horse for all young men with ideas. You can prove anything you like by the Renaisance." This can be read as a description of Pound's own practice in "Affirmations: Analysis of this Decade" and in the other pieces under discussion, and as an indication of the extent of his absorption in the Renaissance. It should also be noted that the two historians of the

Renaissance Pound mentions by name in this essay, Jacob Burckhardt and Pasquale Villari, both contributed significantly to the historiography of Malatesta.

Pound's main concern in "Affirmations: Analysis of this Decade" is to "draw up a brief table of forces: first, those which seem to me to have been the effective propaganda of the Renaissance; secondly, those which seem to me the acting ideas of this decade" (*GB*, 111-2). Pound's Renaissance "table of forces" is, by now, a familiar one: humanism, paganism and the "sense of realism". Pound's inventory of the "acting ideas of this decade" consists of a list of contemporary writers and artists whose works is, in Pound's view, the equivalent of the principal tendencies of the Renaissance; for instance, Fenellosa is cited as a contemporary humanist and Ford Hueffer's "sense of the *mot juste*" is the counterpart of the Renaissance's concern with realism and exactness (*GB*, 115).

Pound argues that his generation are the true heirs to the Renaissance because "we have begun deliberately to try to free ourselves from the Renaissance shackles, as the Renaissance freed itself from the Middle Ages"; all the "intervening movements" were for Pound merely "revivals" or "continuations" (*GB*, 114). Proof of this is that the new art is "to many a most obnoxious art" just as "there were many people to whom the art of the quattrocento and the paganism of the Renaissance seemed equally damnable, unimportant, obnoxious" (*GB*, 115). Finally, Pound asserts that "the Renaissance was in part the result of a programme" and that "we believe in the value of a programme in contradistinction to, but not in contradiction of, the individual impulse" (*GB*, 117).

In this essay when Pound writes of the new he often does so in the first person plural; this is clearly significant but determining exactly who or what this "we" might have been is not easy. The essay belongs to Pound's Vorticist period and some of those he includes in the ranks of the new were Vorticists (Wyndham Lewis, Gaudier-Brzeska and Edward Wadsworth) but others (Fenellosa and Hueffer) were not. Pound's participation in such movements as Imagism and Vorticism was both unorthodox and opportunistic; that is to say, he tended to use the movement to promote his own ideas (whatever they might be at the moment) and to co-opt for the movement anyone of whom he approved. It is perhaps most useful to describe the ensemble for which Pound is speaking as the moderns or modernists (although Pound nowhere in the essay uses the term). What is most significant about this essay is that in it Pound realises the potential of the Renaissance to furnish him with an idiom in which he can articulate his own modernity and modernism.

The 1922 Paris Letter is not concerned with the Renaissance in the way that the previous three essays were. It is not easy to say what it is about; it moves rapidly from topic to topic (the Flaubert Centenary, the Prix Goncourt, James Joyce, censorship in the United States, C.H. Douglas, etc.) and while Pound's likes and dislikes do come across nothing that could be called a theme or an argument emerges. If anything can be said to give it coherence it is a concern with the relationship between the artist and his *milieu*, or more broadly between the individual and society. By January 1922 Pound had left London, pronouncing it moribund, but had failed to settle in Paris. The *Dial* piece can usefully be read as expressing this predicament.

Towards the end of it Pound inserts this comment: "our envy must be for a period when the individual city (Italian mostly) tried to outdo its neighbour in the degree and intensity of its civilisation, to be the vortex for the most living individuals."[45] This is a return to the idea of a non-metropolitan, polycentric, model of culture, to a diffusion of the "sense of a capital," found in "The Renaissance." During World War I, Pound had reverted to his earlier and more conventional belief in a metropolitan model; to his commitment to what, in "Patria Mia," he described as "the double city of London and Paris" as *the* capital, the modern Rome (*SP*, 114). In "Provincialism the Enemy" (1917) he identifies Germany with the forces of provincialism and argued that "peace, our ideas of justice, of liberty [. . .] proceed from a metropolis," and proclaimed: "at present the centre of the world is somewhere on an imaginary line between London and Paris" (*SP*, 200). The American Renaissance was put on hold for the duration of hostilities: "in a few centuries the centre may have shifted to the west side of the Atlantic, but that is not for our time" (*SP*, 200). However, by early 1922 Pound was disillusioned with both halves of the "double city" and was looking for an alternative. He found it the polycentric world of Renaissance Italy.

In January 1922 Pound was at a point of crisis. He was unsettled, sources of income were rapidly drying up and his major poetic project, the long poem that would eventually become *The Cantos*, was stalled. It was also a moment of crisis in Modernism. The publication of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land* (both in 1922) can be seen as a triumphant moment, and Pound recognised and celebrated it as such. Pound's problem was that the triumphs of 1922 had institutionalized and established the "movement" that henceforth it would be known as Modernism, and in a way that tended to diminish significantly his own role in it. In writing of the new, his command of the first person plural was much more precarious than it had been in 1915. Pound's often

cited comment to John Quinn that *The Waste Land* was "about enough [. . .] to make the rest of us shut up shop" (*EP/JQ*, 206) is both a sincere compliment and a recognition of his new situation. Pound's alternative to shutting up shop was relocation to Italy. The Paris Letter of January 1922 can be seen as marking a decisive stage in this process. In "Affirmations: Analysis of this Decade" the Renaissance furnished Pound with an idiom that enabled his emergence as a modernist; in 1922 he reverted to it to find a solution to the crisis precipitated by the triumph of Modernism.

The elements that made up Pound's matrix of the Renaissance, and which are central to his account of Malatesta in Cantos VIII-XI, were all present when he arrived in Rimini in May 1922 and "discovered" the Tempio. At that point he was already seeing the Renaissance as heliotropic, as the locus of a complex negotiation between past and present involving simultaneously renewal and a radical break (Pound's maxim "make it new" provides a convenient shorthand here, the Renaissance is the point at which the process of 'making it new' operates with maximum effect – it is this that allows it to be a dynamic example to the present), and as polycentric (and thus potentially able to offer an alternative to metropolitan models of culture). He had also developed a high regard for the contribution of the humanists and a concern with patronage and the relationship between the state and the artist. This is not to say that he simply labelled a pre-constructed model '*quattrocento* Rimini.' Pound's encounter with Sigismondo had profound implications for his thinking on the Renaissance, and on history generally, but it operated on what was already there; on that day in May 1922 Pound brought as much to the Church of San Francesco as he took away from it.

This description of Pound's matrix of the Renaissance omits, or downplays, paganism. As the above account shows, Pound associated the Renaissance and paganism from as least as early as "Patria Mia" onwards. Paganism was also an important factor in the appeal of Malatesta, initially it may well have been the key factor. To the best of my knowledge, no commentator on the "Malatesta Cantos" has drawn attention to the reference to Sigismondo in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). In the novel Wilde describes an imaginary novel that depicts "the awful and beautiful forms of those whom vice and blood and weariness had made monstrous or mad"; among these is:

> Sigismondo Malatesta, the lover of Isotta and the lord of Rimini, whose effigy was burned at Rome as the enemy of God and man, who strangled Polyssena with a napkin, and gave poison to Ginevra d'Este in a cup of emerald, and in honour of a shameful passion built a pagan church for Christian worship.[46]

As a late Victorian account of Malatesta this is nothing out of the ordinary. What is significant about it is its linking of paganism and aestheticism in the person of Malatesta. Pound was not a great admirer of Wilde's but it is unlikely that he did not know *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. I am not suggesting that this passage from Wilde is the 'missing link' in the narrative of Pound's involvement with Malatesta or that it provides a sort of master key to the Malatesta Cantos. What it does is to establish that Sigismondo was held up as a type of aesthetised paganism in a book of pervasive influence and so, at the very least, demonstrates the possibility of perceiving and representing him in that way.

Recent Pound criticism, particularly Leon Surette's *The Birth of Modernism* (1993) and Timothy Materer's *Modernist Alchemy: Poetry and the Occult* (1995), has argued convincingly that Pound's involvement in and commitment to what might loosely be termed the 'occult' was far greater than was previously thought. Pound's writings on religion and the occult are diverse and scattered and up to a point inconsistent (which may only be to say that his beliefs and the degree of his commitment to them fluctuated). My own view, briefly and crudely stated is that for most of his adult life Pound was a pagan and a polytheist (to the extent that when he speaks of the Olympic pantheon, and even of his own encounters with members of it, it cannot always be assumed that he is speaking figuratively) with strong leanings towards the occult. Having said that, although I consider the work of Surette and Materer to be a valuable contribution to Pound scholarship I am sceptical of its claims to offer a total explanation of *The Cantos* in general or of the "Malatesta Cantos" in particular.

What is, however, certain is that from a very early stage in the composition of the Malatesta Cantos Pound sought to accommodate Sigismondo to his metahistorical grand narrative of occult survival. As Rainey's account of them makes clear, this was explicit in the earliest drafts of the Malatesta Cantos. In the final version this link is not explicitly or directly given but it remains a significant presence; it could be said to haunt the following passage from Canto VIII:

> And Poictiers, you know, Guillaume Poictiers,
> had brought the song up out of Spain
> With the singers and viels. But here they wanted a setting,
> By Marecchia, where the water comes down over the cobbles
> And Mastin had come to Verucchio,
> and the sword, Paolo il Bello's,
> caught in the arras
> And, in Este's house, Parisina

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 (8:32-3)

The biographical evidence supports and corroborates the idea that Pound's interest in the occult was a significant factor in the genesis of the Malatesta Cantos. Early in 1922 Pound wrote to Margaret Anderson, the editor of the *Little Review*, announcing the end of the Christian era: "The Christian era came to an end at midnight of Oct 29-30. I have had this new calendar lying round ever since, but my private life prevented my getting it off" (*EP/LR*, 282). Pound's use of his new calendar thereafter was sporadic and inconsistent –he dated a letter to Eliot (written on 24 December 1921) in the new style: "24 Saturnus, An 1" (*SL*, 169 – in the 1930's it becomes conflated, confusingly but significantly, with the Fascist calendar (in which 1922 was "*anno primo*"[47]). The earliest drafts of the Malatesta Cantos explicitly link Sigismondo with the dawn of the new era: "And the world began again last October ----- / and the Tempio – in October."[48] Again, although this explicit linkage disappears in the course of subsequent re-writings and revision it remains significant for an understanding of the Malatesta Cantos as they now stand. (The lines "And we sit here. I have sat here / For forty four thousand years," [11:50] are a vestige of this type of epochal thinking.) I would agree with Rainey that "the vehemence of Pound's desire to invoke a new age derived from a complex of motives, some social and some personal."[49] That same "complex of motives" heightened Pound's interest in the occult generally at this juncture and so, I believe, rendered him particularly receptive, and susceptible, to the appeal of the pagan condottiere Sigismondo Malatesta.

The disappearance of the explicit links between Malatesta and the occult, and the previously noted paucity of references to Isotta, who because Sigismondo's love for her is seen as a revival and transformation of the troubadour 'love cult' is the key figure in any occult reading, requires further comment. Isotta is referred to by name only four times, twice as Isotta and twice as Ixotta. In three of these she is mentioned almost in passing in letters giving Sigismondo news of Rimini, the fourth, however is significant:

"et amava perdutamente Ixotta degli Atti"
e *" ne fu degna"*
" constans in proposito

"*Placuit oculis principis*
" *pulchra aspectu* "
" *populo grata (Italiaeque decus)*
" and built a temple so full of pagan works " (9:41)

In the entire sequence this is Pound's only overt assertion of Sigismondo's love for Isotta (and it is juxtaposed it with the building of the Tempio). Much could be said of this but here I will confine myself to a statement of the obvious. Of the six lines that refer to Isotta, the first two are in Italian and the rest in Latin; translated they read: "And he loved Isotta degli Atti to distraction/ and she was worthy of it / constant in purpose / She delighted the eye of the prince / lovely to look at / pleasing to the people (and the ornament of Italy)."[50] Why at this point in a canto that contains much translation and is for the most part sparing in its use of languages other than English should Pound move into Italian and Latin? Pound uses languages other than English for a variety of reasons, on this occasion he is seeking what Gibbon termed "the obscurity of a learned language." He is explicitly affirming the significance and centrality of Isotta but in a way that is not intended to be easily understood.

By contrast the following short lyric cannot be considered obscure:

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)

This is a translation of part of a poem Pound believed, erroneously, to have been written by Sigismondo for Isotta. That, however, is nowhere made explicit although other documents, for example a letters, are clearly and meticulously identified. In the passage from Canto IX discussed above Pound was explicit but unclear, here he is clear but inexplicit.

This suppression or excision of the occult should not be taken as evidence that it is unimportant in the Malatesta Cantos, or that its importance for Pound diminished as he was writing them. What Pound is doing is deliberately occluding the occult in his account of Malatesta, so that the historical narrative of the *Cantos* mimes or repeats the occlusion of the occult in the historical record. Among other things this means that the

Cantos acquire both a manifest and a secret sense and that is something quite different from what is usually meant by those who speak of their difficulty or obscurity. It is of the nature of mysteries to be mysterious and the occult is by definition occluded. On 31 October 1939, Pound wrote to the Reverend Henry Swabey, a fellow "Social Creditor":[51] "the mysteries are *not* revealed, and no guide book to them has been or will be written" (*SL*, 327).

2 Aristotle's Injunction

Aristotle's *Poetics* have been described as "probably the most important single book that has ever been written about poetry, both for what it says and for what it has been taken to say."[52] Certainly, what Aristotle said and has been 'taken to have said' about poetry and history has been extremely influential, and its long shadow includes a penumbra of 'Aristotelian' doctrine that Aristotle did not promulgate.

"The difference between the historian and the poet," for Aristotle, was not that "one writes in prose and the other in verse" but that the historian "tells of what has happened" while the poet tells of "the kinds of things that might happen," and he adds that "for this reason poetry is something more philosophical and more worthy of serious attention than history; for poetry speaks more of universals, history of particulars."[53] This has been taken as establishing an absolute and normative distinction between history and poetry; as a prescription that decrees that poetry cannot, and should not even attempt to, speak of "particulars" (that is, historical facts).

A line of thought, running out of and away from Aristotle, in English its principal relay points are Sir Philip Sidney's *The Defence of Poesie* (1595) and Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry" (published posthumously in 1840 but written between 1820 and 1822), has established this prescription, or the common sense of it, as one of the received truths of our post-Renaissance and post-Romantic heritage. This has bedevilled critical discussion of *The Cantos*. In these terms to take *The Cantos* seriously as history is to cease to read them as poetry; while if they are regarded as poetry whatever they include, "historical material," ceases to be history and becomes something else: myth, fiction, text, discourse or whatever – something conceived of as being essentially *not* history. Perhaps the best way out of this is to go back to what Aristotle said and to re-examine the distinction between poetry and history and redefine the terms of the debate to which it has given rise.

In Chapter 6 of the *Poetics*, "A Description of Tragedy," Aristotle distinguishes six "constituents" of tragedy ("plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and song") of which "two represent the media in which the action is represented, one involves the manner of representation, and three are connected with the objects of representation"; of these "the most important is the plot, the ordering of the incidents"; it is he asserts "the first essential of tragedy."[54] In Chapters 7 – 14 he explains what he means by "the ordering of the incidents": a plot must possess wholeness or completeness (it must have a beginning, a middle and an end) and unity (it must be the representation of a single action). Chapter 23 extends this ordinance to the epic:

> As for the art of representation in the form of narrative verse, clearly its plots should be dramatically constructed, like those of tragedies; they should centre upon a single action, whole and complete, and having a beginning, a middle, and an end [. . .].[55]

For Aristotle the poet's art consists in producing "mimetic structures of action"[56] or plots ("the poet must be a maker of plots rather than of verses, since he is a poet by virtue of his representation, and what he represents is action"[57]).

Before moving on to consider the question of poetry and history, one further point must be clearly established. In the terms of this schema plot must be "connected with the objects of representation," in other words a plot is the imitation of something that exists independently of the poet. The plot is the product of selection and organisation but it is not imagined or "made up" (although the elements that constitute it may be fictive). The poet's "mimetic structures of action" imitate the order of the *kosmos* (the divine order) as the Greeks understood it. This was an order of beginnings, middles and ends, in which each and every action had necessary consequences and it was a just order in which virtue was rewarded and evil punished *in the long run*. Human life is lived in the middle and the beginnings and ends (and the justice) of the long run are not always apparent. The poet shapes or structures (plots) human actions so that they conform to, or are congruent with, the divine 'plot'. Such a plot may be conceived rather than perceived but it is a conception that exists independently of the poet and, even when it has no concrete existence outside the poetic representation of it, the poet cannot be said to be the author of it.

The distinction between poetry and history occurs in the opening paragraph of Chapter 9 of the *Poetics*, that is in the middle of the group of chapters devoted to the discussion of plot; it reads in full:

> It will be clear from what I have said that it is not the poet's function to describe what has actually happened, but the kinds of things that might happen, that is, that could happen because they are, in the circumstances, either probable or necesssary. The difference between the historian and the poet is not that one writes in prose and the other in verse; the work of Herodotus might be put into verse, and in this metrical form it would be no less a kind of history than it is without metre. The difference is that the one tells of what has happened, the other of the kinds of things that might happen. For this reason poetry is something more philosophical and more worthy of serious attention than history; for poetry speaks more of universals, history of particulars."[58]

Probability and necessity here are functions of the plot, the poet is concerned only with events that are "probable" and "necessary" in that they constitute a single action (and so contribute to the wholeness and unity of the plot that is the representation of that action). Events that are, in these terms, non-essential, casual rather than causal, accidental, can simply be omitted by the poet. This does not mean that the poet's 'facts' are in themselves more 'important' than the historian's. S. H. Butcher observes that poetry is "higher" than history in the sense of being "higher in the scale" not in the sense of being "more serious" or "more moral"; it is "higher in the scale" because it "tends to express the universal" -- "which itself derives its value from being a 'manifestation of the cause' or first principle of things."[59] Plot is the privileged vehicle for the imitation of this "first principle of things," so it is by reason of being integrated into what Malcolm Heath calls a "connected series of events" (a plot) that the poet's 'facts' are raised to the "higher level."[60] It should be apparent from this that Aristotle's distinction between poetry and history is, in the first instance, a distinction between what Heath calls "an ordered structure"[61] and a mere sequence or series of events. This is made more explicit when Aristotle returns to the subject in a later chapter on epic:

> Nor should epics be constructed like histories, in which it is not the exposition of a single action that is required, but of a single period, and of everything that happened to one or more persons during this period, however unrelated the various events may have been. For just as the sea battle at Salamis and the engagement with the Carthaginians in Sicily took place at the same time, but did not work towards the same end, so too in any sequence of time events may follow one another without producing any one single result.[62]

Plot is primary to the distinction between poetry and history and whether something happened or not is secondary; Aristotle is explicit on this point: "even if he

deals with things that have actually happened, that does not make him any the less a poet, for there is nothing to prevent some of the things that have happened from being the kind of thing that may happen according to probability, and thus he will be a poet in writing about them."[63] Heath emphasises and clarifies this point:

> If a poet wants to construct a plot out of a given sequence of events, it is not enough that those events actually happened; what is essential is that they are connected with each other in the way defined in chapter 7; and if they are so connected, *it does not matter whether they actually happened or not.*[64]

When the distinction between poetry and history is understood in these terms, Pound's "poem including history" ceases to be a scandal. Far from being a violation of some supposedly Aristotelian principle, Pound's inclusion of historical material, "things that have actually happened," in the Malatesta Cantos and elsewhere, is explicitly sanctioned in the *Poetics*. Whether Pound can be described as "a maker of plots" is, of course, another question.

If this question is taken to mean 'do the Malatesta Cantos constitute a coherent and intelligible structure of action with a beginning, middle and end'? the majority answer would be an emphatic 'no,' and although the difficulties of reading the Malatesta Cantos for plot have been exaggerated, by Donald Davie and Marjorie Perloff among others,[65] it would be difficult to disagree. However, the problem may be not that the Malatesta Cantos lack a plot but that they are plotted differently.

As I have said, the Aristotelian plot with its beginning, middle and end is a representation of the teleological workings of the *kosmos* as Aristotle understood them, it is "a 'manifestation of the cause' or first principle of things". Different conceptual models of the *kosmos*, and of the cause or first principle of things, should therefore give rise to different plot structures. This, I believe, is the case with the Malatesta Cantos, they are structured or organized in accordance with Aristotle's principles but they do not possess what is sometimes referred to as an 'Aristotelian plot'. To move this argument a stage further I will complement Aristotle with Hayden White's work on plot.

For White, who approaches the poetry/ history distinction from the side of history, to press 'history' into service "as a kind of archetype of the realistic pole of representation" is simplistic.[66] He argues that the "the specifically literary aspects," should be recognised "as crucial, and not merely subsidiary, elements in [. . .] historiographical technique," and that "the distinction, as old as Aristotle, between

history and poetry obscures as much as it illuminates about both. If there is an element of the historical in all poetry, there is an element of poetry in every historical account."[67]

History is at its most "poetic" in its reliance upon plotted (White would say "emplotted") stories. Historians tell stories with a beginning, middle and end and these stories are not to be found in 'history' but have to be constructed, 'made up':

> No given set of casually recorded historical events in themselves constitute a story; the most that they offer to the historian are story elements. The events are made into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific representation, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like – in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or a play.[68]

This is what Aristotle said poets do when he spoke of plot as the ordering or arranging of the incidents. White terms this process of constructing historical narrative "emplotment": "Providing the 'meaning' of a story by identifying the *kind of story* that has been told is called explanation by emplotment. [. . .] Emplotment is the way in which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind."[69] This applies equally well both to those representations of the past normally termed history and to those designated as literature. Both literary and historical explanations or representations are produced by what is an essentially similar process; the production of human order and meaning, in the form of a plotted narrative, from the factual chaos, the brute sequence, of the historical field by the intervention of an active subject. The role of plot is central in that it is the privileged vehicle of both explanation and representation.

These modes are not inherent in events but are imposed on them; in White's words "their status as models of historical narration and conceptualization depends, ultimately, on the preconceptual and specifically poetic nature of their perspectives on history and its processes."[70] Pound brought a number of such perspectives to his encounter with Sigismondo Malatesta of which, for present purposes, the most significant was his belief that "a light from Eleusis persisted throughout the middle ages and set beauty in the song of Provence and of Italy."

The Cantos chronicle particular cultural, political and economic highpoints that come into being through the agency of a wise and benevolent ruler. These highpoints, so far, have not proved sustainable but they are never permanently lost; in the intervals between them usury and its attendant evils hold sway. Michael Bernstein has described

what he terms Pound's "Confucian" view of history thus: "history was conceived not as a series of changing circumstances requiring new techniques of government, but as a closed arena in which a fixed set of already known qualities and practices would assure success."[71] Particular rulers and dynasties and the political and cultural orders they created fall, but the "qualities and practices" are permanent. Pound views history not as cyclical but as repetition, quite literally the same thing happens again and again, and repetition is difficult to plot or emplot.

The 'light from Eleusis' hypothesis provided the solution. By taking it to a higher level of generalisation Pound turned it into a narrative trope of occult persistence and recurrence that became the metanarrative of *The Cantos*, a plot structure. This metanarrative intricates Sigismondo in the figural economy of *The Cantos*. The various facets of Pound's portrait of Malatesta (*Odysseus polumetis*, the enlightened and benevolent patron, the ideal prince or ruler, etc.) represent ideals or types that are repeated in subsequent cantos and groups of cantos. Thomas Jefferson and Mussolini, as they are represented in *The Cantos*, are both types of Malatesta, as is the Confucian wise prince of canto XIII ("'When the prince has gathered about him/ 'All the savants and artists, his riches will be fully employed'" [13:59]).

The Malatesta Cantos are also the story of an individual who "lived and ruled" (9:41) in Rimini between 1417 and 1468, and as such have a plot structure and a logic of their own. Pound saw Malatesta's life and work as a whole and the battles, sieges, intrigues, etc. are not just there to provide a contrast to the building of the 'Tempio.' Nor is it at all certain that Pound saw Malatesta as a failure. In context his description of Malatesta as "a failure worth all the successes of his age" is qualified by the preceding "if you consider the Malatesta and Sigismundo in particular, a failure" and elsewhere in *Guide to Kulchur* he meditates on the Tempio in terms that suggest he thought it anything but a failure: "the Tempio was stopped by a fluke? or Sigismundo had the flair when to stop it?" (*GK*, 159). It is undeniable that Pound identified strongly with Sigismondo, and in 1922 he no doubt saw much of himself in the figure of the embattled and isolated Lord of Rimini, but Malatesta did not provide Pound with a tolerable fiction of failure. What must also be taken into account is the impact on Pound, and on the Malatesta Cantos, of his earliest encounters with Italian Fascism. I will have more to say about this later, for now it must suffice to point out that for Pound Fascism offered the possibility of transforming the marginalized maverick struggling "against the current of power" into the leader whose will determines the direction of that current.

Roger Griffen, in his description of "generic fascism," has noted that "fascism tends to operate as a charismatic form of politics," and that the "epitome of such politics" is the "leader cult."[72] Fascism gives great importance to the power of the will, either collective (that of the nation or 'the people') or individual (usually the leader), to direct and control events. Denis Mack Smith writes of Mussolini:

> He was anxious to appear as the *volitivo*, the man of strong will and sudden decisions, who from his youth onwards wanted to 'put my stamp on institutions and people' by an act of will, to pass into history as a superior being, a superman.[73]

The power of the will – what he termed in canto LXXVII the "directio voluntatis" -- was also an important concept for Pound. The Latin phrase is taken from Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and can be translated as the "direction of the will"; essentially, for Pound, it signified the capacity to "put 'ideas into action.'"[74]

Pound thought of Malatesta in terms that are significantly similar to those used by Smith to describe Mussolini. In *Guide to Kulchur* he described the Malatesta Cantos as "openly volitionist, establishing, I think clearly, the effect of the factive personality, Sigismundo, an entire man" and asserted that "Sigismundo cut his notch" (*GK*, 194, 159). Pound and Denis Mack Smith are working, in different ways and to different ends, in the same lexical field, that of Fascist discourse. For me, this makes it highly unlikely that Pound emplotted the Malatesta Cantos as an elegiac account of heroic failure. Pound's 'Sigismundo' is a hero, the *volitivo*, and the Malatesta Cantos are the record of the triumph of his will, his 'cutting his notch'; the violence and disorder is an integral part of the story – the degree of disturbance Sigismondo generated, his capacity to affect the course of events, is an index of his force, his "*directio voluntatis*." The advent of Fascism supplies the triumph: it meant, for Pound, that the "current of power" was finally with Sigismondo.

The ending of the Malatesta Cantos, the final lines of Canto XI, confirms this reading:

> And one day he said: Henry, you can have it,
> On condition, you can have it: for four month
> 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 silver brocade
> *Actum in Castro Sigismundo, presente Roberto de Valturibus*

I know of no satisfactory explanation of why this episode should have been chosen to close the sequence. D'Epiro finds in it an implicit contrast with Odysseus ("we see him [Malatesta] ... no, not exterminating suitors, but playing practical jokes on his courtiers") and an indication of "the scope of a man who spans the entire gamut of mood and expression"; Terrell describes it as an "illustration of Sigismundo's unquenchable spirit even in adversity."[75] I find it difficult to believe that Pound ends the Malatesta Cantos by commending the virtues of domesticity (even the domesticity of princes) and of the 'good loser.' What strikes me about this passages is that it ends the sequence with Sigismondo striking a bet and promising to settle at a later date, writing a cheque on the future. Is this to be dismissed as wishful thinking? The wager with "Henry" is solemnly sealed, documented and authorized, by the two closing lines in Latin. This is a rhetorical strategy that is characteristic of the Malatesta Cantos as a whole, so that to take those lines anything but seriously puts the entire sequence into question. This is not a portrait of "a man on whom the sun has gone down" (74:445) but of a man 'on whom the sun is about to rise.'

This brings into alignment the story of Sigismondo as it is told in cantos VIII – XI and the metanarrative of the *Cantos*, thus establishing an elegant homology between the macro and micro levels of the poem. The problem with this is that it is achieved, to a large extent, at the expense of the Malatesta Cantos themselves. I do not mean by this that I have misread them, although, of course, in arguing for one reading over another I have strategically downplayed their complexity and ambiguity. Nor am I suggesting that Pound's representation of Malatesta is inaccurate or in some other way egregiously 'wrong.'

Sigismondo is both a type and an individual (who lived in a specific place and time and did particular things). The story of recurrence and occult survival is finally indifferent to the fate of individuals, the ideal types suffer and die only in their accidents; the Malatesta Cantos, on the other hand, are concerned with Sigismondo as an individual, and depend for their full effect on the reader sharing the poet's patent empathy with him as such. If the story of recurrence and survival subsumes the story of the individual into a relationship of homology then all the vicissitudes of Sigismondo's life are mere accidents, and the reader is justified in asking why Pound should have devoted so much time to research and why with each successive stage of revision the accidents became more and not less important.

Before going any further it will be useful to try to state more precisely what is at issue here. The fact that *The Cantos* is a multi-layered narrative and that on each layer the narrative tends to move in a different, sometimes even in an opposite, direction does not make it unique or even all that unusual; much the same could be said of any historical narrative of a certain scope and complexity. Anyone attempting to write a history of Sigismondo Malatesta has to recognise that the overall tendency of the period, the main line of historical development, was for the larger Italian city states (Milan, Naples, Florence, Venice and the Papacy) to become increasingly powerful and significant while the smaller states and their rulers, such as Malatesta, became increasingly marginalized. Sigismondo's career, for a time, displayed the opposite trajectory and it is perhaps this, rather than his colourful excesses, that makes him an object of interest for historians such as Philip Jones; Malatesta is an instructive eddy in the mainstream of history. More orthodox historical narrative has a sense of perspective that permits such elements to be integrated and subordinated, so establishing hierarchies of significance, plots and sub-plots, main lines and digressions, etc.. The *Cantos* do not deliver such an 'orthodox historical narrative' and it is perhaps more useful to think of this problem not in terms of the formal integration of narrative levels but in terms of negotiating complex transactions between myth (pattern or paradigm) and history (events).

When stated in these terms the nature of the problem becomes clearer. If the plot of recurrence and occult survival is seen as subsuming the story of the individual then this transaction involves subordinating event to pattern, history to myth, and Pound is failing to meet his own specifications for an epic. Earlier I cited Kermode on Spenser ("he does not convert event into myth, but myth into event. [. . .] he welcomes history, not seeking to lose his own time in some transhistorical pattern") as an apt description of Pound's practice in the *Cantos*, but if there is in fact homology here then he is converting event into myth and so writing not a "poem including history" but a poem that regresses history to myth (a point that holds even if one believes, as Pound did, that the metanarrative of *The Cantos* is also the plot of history). If there is no transaction between myth and history, if the two are seen as being simply simultaneously present, then the Malatesta Cantos are bifurcated to the point of incoherence and can only be held together by the poet's good intentions and the reader's good will (neither of which can be unproblematically assumed).

In his essay "The Origin of Plot in the Light of Typology" Jurij M. Lotman distinguishes between two "text-generating mechanisms" that he sees as "primordially opposed."[76] The texts generated by the first of these, the "central text generating mechanism," are what Lotman calls myths and their "chief particularity [. . .] is their subjection cyclical-temporal motion"; in such texts "human life is regarded not as a linear segment enclosed between birth and death, but as a constantly recurrent cycle" and there is a "tendency to make different characters unconditionally identical [. . .] characters and objects mentioned at different levels of the cyclical mythological mechanism are different proper names for the same thing."[77] The "orientation" of myth "is towards the establishment of iso- and homo-morphisms and the reduction of the diversity and variety of the world to invariant images" and to reduce "the world of excesses and anomalies which surrounds man to norm and system"; thus, in what Lotman terms "pre-scientific cultural formations," the "central text-forming mechanism fulfils a very important function – it constructs the picture of the world, establishes unity between its remote spheres, in essence realizing a number of the functions of science."[78] The "central text generating mechanism" required "as contracting party" a second "text-generating mechanism organized in accordance with linear temporal motion" and precisely oriented towards "the world of excesses and anomalies" and which generates "historical texts, chronicles and annals" – texts concerned with "the fixing of unique and chance events, crimes, calamities – anything considered the violation of a certain primordial order." According to Lotman this "was the historical kernel of plot-narration" and, he adds, "it is not fortuitous that the elementary basis of artistic narrative genres is called the 'novella,' that is to say the 'piece of news.'"[79]

"The modern plot text," Lotman goes on to argue, "is the fruit of the interaction and reciprocal influence" of 'myth' and 'news.'[80] Historically the dominant form of this interaction, occasioned by the "destruction of the cyclical-temporal mechanism of texts, (or at least the sharp decrease of the sphere of its functioning)" – I presume Lotman means the replacement of "pre-scientific cultural formations" by "scientific cultural formations" – has been "the mass translation of mythological texts into the language of discrete-linear systems (verbal re-tellings of myth-rituals and myth-mysteries should be considered as translations of this kind)."[81] The first consequence of this was "the loss of the isomorphism between the levels of the text" with the result that "the characters at different levels were no longer perceived as different names for a single person" but "broke up into a great number of figures" and the "multi-heroed text came into being."[82]

This dominant mode of interaction also "raised the possibility of the reciprocal influence of two diametrically opposed types of text – the one describing the regular course of events, and the other, chance deviations from that course"; an interaction that "determined in large measure the later fates of the narrative genres."[83]

It is not difficult to find 'myth' and 'news' in Pound's account of Malatesta but defining or describing how they interact is more of a problem. At first sight it may appear that the Malatesta Cantos are a regression to an earlier mark and that in them the two "text-generating mechanisms" do simply coexist (albeit complementarily), but this is not the case. The Malatesta Cantos, indeed the *Cantos* generally, are in many ways a self-consciously reactionary narrative (the very act of writing a verse epic in the twentieth-century practically guarantees this) but they are not in this sense anachronistic or a nostalgic pastiche. The 'translation' required to produce a "modern plot text" – which is what the Malatesta Cantos are – has taken place but aberrantly. Aberrantly because what is translated and the translation sometimes appear to be the same thing. In *The Cantos*, a "multi-heroed text" containing "a great number of figures," "the characters at different levels" are often *a single names for different persons (or types)*. Thus Pound's "Sigismundo" is both a recurring ideal type and a discrete historical figure. Perhaps a better way to put it is to say that Pound transcribed myth into non-cyclical narratives, "linear" and "discrete" but repetitious, without a "loss of the isomorphism between the levels of the text." Pound's "modern plot text" allows myth to be written as news, without euhemeristically de-mythicizing myth, and news to be written as myth, without turning history into myth. As I have already argued, for Pound the possibility of modern art was predicated on an engagement with contemporary history, and not on devising elegant strategies for side-stepping it, and in the Malatesta Cantos he generated a strategy, a mode of plotting, that made that engagement possible.

Pound was able to do this, without, as I have said, resort to pastiche or antiquarianism, and without falling into fantasy, because he believed that the plot of his "modern plot text" imitated, or corresponded to, an objective historical pattern of events that was, as he was writing the Malatesta Cantos, manifest in the emergence of Mussolini's Fascist regime in Italy (a set of events to which, in part, Pound was an eye-witness).

Between May 1922 and July 1923 Pound was able to jump start his stalled epic because he discerned and imitated a plot, as Aristotle said poets should, that allowed him to present history as a single action, whole and complete and worthy of serious

attention. "An epic," Pound asserted in the Camões chapter of *Spirit of Romance*, "cannot be written against the grain of its time [. . .] the writer of epos must voice the general heart" (*SR,* 216). In other words, an epic narrative imitates or corresponds to a larger master narrative and ultimately derives its coherence from it. Pound read Fascism as the 'grain of his time' and 'the general heart', and wrote his epic accordingly.

3 The Grammar of History

My concern here is with the mechanics of narrative, with how the individual units or elements of the narrative are combined and articulated to form stories. The application of the term narrative to historical writing generally and to *The Cantos* in particular raises theoretical and methodological problems. I will begin with a brief discussion of these and at the same time make more explicit the theoretical and methodological assumptions that underpin my account of historical narrative.

John H. Arnold defines history as "a true story of something that happened long ago, retold in the present." It is "true" in that "it must agree with the evidence, the facts that it calls upon" and is not 'made up'. [84] As far as it goes this definition is unexceptionable; even so by collocating 'truth' and 'story' and 'past' and 'present' in this way it calls attention to these problems. Should the emphasis be put on "true" or on "story" and should history's orientation to the past or to the present be privileged? To see history as primarily a science relegates narrative to a secondary and auxiliary role, while an emphasis on narrative (and on its orientation towards the present) 'embarrasses', to appropriate a term of Hayden White's, history's claim to be a science.[85] Many would seek a middle path and assert with Morton White that "history is a literary art as well as a discipline aimed at discovering and ordering truth."[86] The balance is a precarious one. Fortunately, I am not called upon to resolve this question and can state simply that my perspective privileges 'story' and an orientation towards the present.

Of more immediate interest is Hayden White's description of two "modes of address" identified and distinguished in historiography:

> In traditional historical theory, at least since the mid-nineteenth century, the story told about the past was distinguished from whatever explanation might be offered of why the events related in the story occurred when, where, and how they did. After the historian had discovered the true story of "what happened" and accurately represented it in a narrative, he might abandon the narrational manner of speaking and, addressing the reader directly, speaking in his own voice, and representing his considered

> opinion as a student of human affairs, dilate on what the story he had told indicated about the nature of the period, place, agents, agencies, and processes (social, political, cultural, and so forth) he had studied. This aspect of the historical discourse was called by some theorists the dissertative mode of address and was considered to comprise a form as well as a content different from those of the narrative.[87]

Building on this, I would argue that neither the "narrative" nor the "dissertative" are ever to be found in a pure state and that the two terms are most usefully considered not as alternative historiographical modes but as the ends or poles of a continuum. All histories can be placed on this continuum to the extent that each one is more or less narrativistic or dissertative. I will articulate with this a further distinction of White's – that "between a historical discourse that narrates and a discourse that narrativizes, between a discourse that openly adopts a perspective on the world and reports it and a discourse that feigns to make the world speak itself and speak itself as a story."[88]

Pound's belief that "the purpose of history is instruction, that is to make people think and to guide their thought toward what will elucidate today and tomorrow" (*SP*, 266) orientates his history towards the present. Another way of putting this would be to say that historical narrative in *The Cantos* must be seen as working on a formal and political level. History, according to White, "is always written for a specific (manifest or latent) purpose [. . .] is never simply history, but always 'history for'."[89] The narrative structures and techniques described in this section must finally be recognised as a set of strategies and procedures by which a particular history seeks power, primacy in relation to other histories and authority over the reader, in support of this purpose or aim.

All of the above, indeed the whole enterprise in which I am engaged, is predicated on the assumption that *The Cantos* is a narrative poem. This is not an assumption that would meet with universal assent. Dissent from this view is usually based on the assertion that Pound's long poem is *sui generis* and so cannot, or anyway should not, be considered under such conventional headings as 'narrative poetry.' This argument is unsound. To begin with, to describe *The Cantos* as a narrative poem is not to say that it is a conventional narrative poem. In arguing for *The Cantos* as epic in Chapter One I have already covered much of this ground. Nobody has denied that *The Cantos* do contain narrative, and certainly the Malatesta sequence, and the other "history cantos", more than satisfy White's specification of the minimum requirements for "what can count as a narrative": that the "text is 'referential' and contains a representation of temporality."[90]

Pound, it is well known, rejected conventional narrative strategies in favour of a method he came to refer to as the "ideogrammic method." This term derives from Fenellosa's essay "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry", published with notes and comments by Pound in 1919. Fenellosa believed that Chinese written characters, ideograms or ideographs, were essentially and in their origin highly stylised pictograms, so that, as Pound explained in a letter of June 1915 to Felix E. Schelling, "for 'to visit, or ramble' you have a king and a dog sitting on the stern of a boat" (*SL*, 61). Whatever the merits of Fenellosa's theory as a description of the Chinese language (Zhaoming Qian describes it as "absurd and misleading"[91]), Pound saw in it an alternative to the entire western tradition of logical, linear and syllogistic thought and exposition. For Pound "Fenellosa emphasizes the method of science, 'which is the method of poetry', as distinct from 'philosophic discussion'" (*ABCR,* 20) and in doing so opens the way for a revolution in criticism, a revolution that will confer upon criticism the objectivity and precision (and status) of modern science. By the early 1930's Pound had extended the remit of the ideogrammic method to the whole range of his concerns, and *ABC of Economics* (1933) and *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* (published 1935 but written in 1933) as well as *How to Read* (1931) and *ABC of Reading* (1934) proclaim themselves to be examples of it in action. In 1933, in an irate letter to the editor of *The New English Weekly* (quoted in full by Bush[92]), Pound, provoked by what he saw as the obtuseness of critical response to the early volumes of Cantos, announced that it was central to his work in progress.

As a narrative method it works by juxtaposition and contiguity: the elements of the narrative are given without connection, in no discernible logical or chronological order and without any overt or direct commentary. In theory, it does not seek to impose meaning or significance on the material it presents (as does, say, logical exposition or argument that subordinates certain elements and foregrounds others in a hierarchy of significance or a conventionally plotted story that arranges its elements according to a grammar of causation), but rather seeks to present its component elements without privileging any particular one, allowing the meaning or significance inherent in them to emerge by a process of induction. Thus, Pound argues, is the 'objectivity' of modern science conferred upon literature and history.

Canto VIII is the first in which this method appears in a recognisable form. Its portrait of Sigismondo Malatesta is built up by collocating and juxtaposing extracts from his letters and other historical documents, anecdotes and fragments of more conventional

historical narrative. In the first letter given in the canto (from Malatesta to Giovanni d'Medici) Sigismondo is shown by turns to be a statesman discussing high matters of war and peace ("As to arranging peace between you and the King of Ragona" [8:28]), as a cash-strapped *condottiere* dropping broad hints about overdue service money ("As for my service money"[8:28]), and finally, in a passage quoted earlier, as an enlightened and generous patron of the arts setting out the conditions he is prepared to offer an unidentified "M*aestro di pentore*" (8:28). This is followed by the detailed transcription and translation of part of a *condotta* between Malatesta and the Florentines (quoted in Section 1) and this in turn is juxtaposed with Pound's rendering, also previously quoted, of the poem that he believed Sigismondo to have written to Isotta. A further letter to Giovanni d'Medici, this time inscribed to him as "Johanni di Cosimo" (Johnny son of Cosimo) suggesting that this is one young man writing to another, shows Sigismondo as a soldier on active service giving a laconic account of his campaigning: "And it rains here by the gallon,/ We have had to dig a new ditch (8:67). There is also a brief but significant allusion to the building of the "Tempio": "He, Sigismundo, *templum ædificavit*" (8:32).

Although incomplete, this description gives a sense of how the ideogrammic method works. On one level it can be said to be successful: the elements of canto VIII as described above do constitute a sort of composite portrait, or ideogram, and Malatesta does come across, as Pound intended he should, as a type of the *polumetis*, the many-minded, multi-faceted, many talented man. Canto IX operates in much the same way but cantos X and XI cannot be so readily accommodated to the ideogrammic model.

To read the Malatesta Cantos in this way, stressing relations of juxtaposition and contiguity, privileges their spatial dimension at the expense of the temporal, and so makes the Malatesta Cantos appear more static than they in fact are. Even in the markedly ideogrammic Cantos VIII and IX there is significant narrative movement. Canto VIII ends with a pastiche chronicle that is continued in the opening lines of canto IX:

> 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)

> One year floods rose,
> One year they fought in the snows,
> One year hail fell, breaking the trees and walls. (9:34)

The first set of lines give an account of the Sigismondo's problematic accession to the lordship of Rimini; second set refer to the years 1440 ("floods rose"), 1444 ("fought in the snows") and 1442 ("hail fell"). The scrambled chronology cannot disguise the forward drive and momentum of the narrative that is apparent when these passages are read 'run-on.'

Cantos X and XI tell, more or less in chronological order, Malatesta's story from the peace of Lodi (1454) onwards: his ill-fated service with Siena, his dispute with King Alfonso of Naples, the animosity of Pius II (and Malatesta's excommunication and 'canonisation in Hell'), his alliance with the Angevins and the war against the Papal alliance (including the battle of Nidastore) and finally the disastrous peace of 1463 and its aftermath. In these cantos, as Malatesta's career moves rapidly towards its catastrophic end, events take on a logic and momentum of their own, and the forward drive of Pound's narrative becomes more marked. So much so that it is possible to speak of a methodological rupture in the Malatesta Cantos between canto IX and canto X; a rupture that can be characterised as movement from the spatial and static to the temporal and dynamic. I am not suggesting that the Malatesta Cantos turn into a compulsive 'page turner' or a 'rattling good yarn' but there is certainly more narrative pace and momentum, and more 'followability', than is generally recognised.

Structurally X and XI are not fundamentally different from VIII or IX, although significantly in Cantos X and XI transcriptions of documents tend to be displaced by anecdotes or fragments of narrative, but their *gestalt* invites a quite different type of reading. The emphasis is very much on moving from event to event in a temporal sequence rather than on a set of spatial relationships. To read the Malatesta Cantos in this way is to read them not as ideograms but as montage. (In my first chapter, I cited Andrew M. Clearfield's description of montage as being " marked by a succession of visually disconnected images which, cut together, (i.e. without transition) tell a coherent story or furnish some sort of ironic commentary on that story"[93] as being particularly applicable to the Malatesta Cantos.)

Whether the Malatesta Cantos are read as ideogram or montage, Pound's model of how they work as narrative is difficult to reconcile with other claims he made for them

and for poetry generally (for instance, that "poetry asserts a positive"). Pound frequently adduced the Malatesta Cantos as an example of the success of his epic project; they were, he claimed, "openly volitionalist" (i.e. intentionalist) and "establish clearly the effect of the factive personality" (*GK,* 194). Broadly, this can, I think, be granted. But, unless it is assumed that the text is totally transparent upon history, that the patterns of meaning and significance that historical events assume in *The Cantos* are inherent in the events themselves, that Pound alone was in possession of the facts and that they admit of only one interpretation, then it must be concluded that historical narrative in the poem does not operate as Pound said it did. If Pound had simply presented the "facts" and left the rest to the reader the Malatesta Cantos should have generated readings as diverse as the judgements passed on Malatesta himself by historians and commentators. This has, emphatically, not been the case. The Malatesta Cantos, and *The Cantos* generally, are peculiarly impatient of interpretation as opposed to exegesis. It must therefore be concluded that Pound's ideogrammic method, like all other forms of historical narrative, is essentially interpretative and necessarily imposes significance, order and meaning on its constitutional elements through the intervention in the historical field of an active subject (who is also an ideological subject), and that it seeks, rhetorically, to establish and maintain the authority of that interpretation.

The "family groups" found in *The Cantos* clearly illustrate this. For example, Malatesta, Thomas Jefferson and Mussolini will be readily recognised by any competent reader of *The Cantos* as constituting such a group. The three are linked by a complex set of repetitions, juxtapositions and echoes across the text. Jefferson is linked to Malatesta by Pound's use of Malatesta's personal motto, "Tempus loquendi,/ Tempus tacendi," as the opening lines of the first Jefferson Canto and in turn Malatesta and Mussolini are brought together by the following lines from canto XLI:

> Having drained off the muck by Vada
> From the marshes by Circeo, where no one else wd. have
> drained it. (41:202)

These lines are clearly intended to recall the lines "And he set up the bombards in the muck down by Vada/ where nobody else could have set 'em" (9:37); Mussolini is recovering marsh land for agricultural purposes and Malatesta conducting a siege but both are shown to be energetic and resourceful individuals – men who get things done

where others could or would not. Malatesta, Jefferson and Mussolini are all men who put "ideas into action," who are possessed of, or embody, the "directio voluntatis."

There is nothing intrinsically absurd or fantastic in this "family group." There is no reason why a *quattrocento condottiere*, an eighteenth-century political philosopher and revolutionary statesman, and a twentieth-century dictator should not be associated in this way, or in a number of other ways. These family resemblances are not inherent in the figures or events themselves and such "family groups" do not exist in the historical field but are constructed by historians. When applied to historical narrative in *The Cantos* Pound's ideogrammic or scientific method ceases to be a cognitive instrument and becomes a principle of composition (or from the point of view of the reader/ interpreter construction).

This is obvious, but worth spelling out because it is precisely the conclusion that Pound did not want, or intend, the reader to reach. Pound's basic strategy is to attempt to validate his history by denying that it is history (i.e. a subjective interpretation of events) and by attempting to erase the subject. The word 'history', as Arnold points out, "often refers to both the past itself, and to what historians write about the past."[94] Pound's narrative could be described as an attempt to conflate the two, or to pass the latter off as the former. In Hayden White's terms Pound's historical discourse is highly "narrativistic" as opposed to "dissertative," and it is "a discourse that narrativizes [. . .] that feigns to make the world speak itself and speak itself as a story." The whole point of the ideogrammic method is to disguise this. Thus, while the 'ideogrammic method' as a concept is useful in so far as it designates a range of strategies that are characteristic of historical narrative in *The Cantos* it is also important to attempt to describe and analyse Pound's historiography in terms other than its own.

The historical narrative found in Cantos VIII-XI, and elsewhere in the poem, may, I believe, most usefully be described as pseudo-chronicle, taking chronicle to mean "a conjunction of non-causal singular statements which expressly mention the subject"[95] but also including the sense of chronicle as something anterior to history, the record of events from which the historian selects and reorganises certain elements in order to produce a history. "By a noncausal statement," Morton White explains, "I mean a statement that does not connect two statements of fact with a word like "because," a statement which is not employed by a historian in order to state a cause or effect of something – explicitly."[96] The presence or absence of an explicit grammar of cause and effect thus may been seen as a key distinction between history and chronicle; Pound's

narrative does not contain explicit causal statements but it is pseudo-chronicle because they are not so much left implicit as concealed or suppressed. Consider the following passage from canto X:

> And what of it *any*how? a man with a ten acre lot,
> Pitigliano... a lump of tufa,
> And S. had got back their horses
> And the poor devils dying of cold...
> (And there was another time, you know,
> He signed on with the Fanesi,
> and just couldn't be bothered...)
> And there were three men on a one man job
> And Careggi wanting the baton,
> And not getting it just then in any case.
>
> And he, Sigismundo, refused an invitation to lunch
> In commemoration of Carmagnola
> (vide Venice, between the two columns
> where Carmagnola was executed.)
> *Et*
> "*anno messo a saccho el signor Sigismundo*"
> As Filippo Strozzi wrote to Zan Lottieri, then in Naples,
> "I think they'll let him through at Campiglia"
>
> *Florence, Archivio Storico, 4th Series t. iii, e*
> *"La Guerra dei Senesi col conte di Pitigliano."*
>
> And he found Carlo Gonzaga sitting like a mud-frog
> in Orbetello
> And he said:
> "*Caro mio,* I can not receive you
> It really *is* not the moment."
> And Broglio says he ought to have tipped Gorro Lolli.
> But he got back home here somehow,
> And Piccinino was out of a job,
> And the old row with Naples continued.
> And what he said was all right in Mantua;
> And Borso had the pair of them up to Bel Fiore,
> The pair of them, Sigismundo and Federico Urbino,
> Or perhaps in the palace, Ferrara, Sigismund upstairs
> And Urbino's gang in the basement,
> And a regiment of guards in, to keep order,
> For all the good that did:
> "*Te cavero la budella del corpo!*"
> *El conte levatosi:*
> *"Io te cavero la corata a te!*"
> And that day Cosimo smiled,
> That is, the day they said:
> "Drusiana is to marry Count Giacomo..."

(Piccinino) *un sorriso malizioso.*
Drusiana, another of Franco Sforza's;
It would at least keep the row out of Tuscany.
And he fell out of a window, Count Giacomo,
Three days after his death, that was years later in Naples,
For trusting Ferdinando of Naples,
And old Wattle could do nothing about it.

Et: (10:42-3)

The prevalence of verbs in the simple past, signifying a completed action, and Pound's insistent use of the conjunction 'and' (and the Latin 'et'), signifying either simple sequence (what is *post hoc* rather than *propter hoc*) or mere accumulation, give a 'chronicle-like' aspect to the above (presumably in order to lend authenticity to it as a narrative of *quattrocento* doings). But it is something more, or other, than a pastiche chronicle. The individual elements of the narrative – Malatesta's employment by Siena against Count Pitigliano, the deterioration of his relations with Venice, Sigismondo's failure to resolve his long-standing problems with Naples and with Federico d'Urbino and the marriage of Sforza's illegitimate daughter Drusiana to Giacomo Piccinino – all represent reversals for Sigismondo, some of which are of his own making, and all contribute significantly to his downfall. Taken together they describe the downward spiral of Malatesta's career, a spiral that is clearly beginning to run out of control. Equally clearly this is not a casual chronological sequence or catalogue of events, there is probability and even necessity here, the products of cause and effects, and the whole narrative moves towards an inescapable conclusion. In canto X this passage is immediately followed by a description of Malatesta being burned in effigy at the command of Pius II, and the final "*Et*", italicised and typographically isolated in mid-page, has a consequential rather than a conjunctive function. The selection and organization, and the "emplotment," necessary to produce a history have taken place but have been concealed or suppressed. If chronicle proper is held to be a sort of ur-history or a stage in the production of a history, then pseudo-chronicle, like the above, could be described as history that has been regressed to chronicle, or to a chronicle-like narrative.

As a historian Pound was heir to the historiographical crisis of the nineteenth century, which, for present purposes, can be characterised as a dispute over whether or not history can be considered as a science. Ciaran Brady offers the following succinct and useful account:

> The view that historical investigation could be equated with the methods of empirical science – a view most bluntly expressed in 1902 by the Irish historian J.B. Bury – had been under intense attack from philosophers and social critics long before Bury spoke. Heinrich Rickert's systematic demonstration of the incompatibility of the logic of scientific method and historical argument combined with Wilhelm Dilthey's and Benedetto Croce's arguments affirming the impossibility of sustaining a categorical distinction between the contemporary mind and the fragments of the past it sought to read as external phenomena had seriously begun to trouble the generation of historians who came of age around the turn of the century."[97]

Dilthey and Croce valued history but as an art and not as a science. Dilthey believed that, in Collingwood's words, "genuine historical knowledge was an inward experience (*Erlebnis*), whereas scientific knowledge is the attempt to understand (*begreifen*) phenomena presented [. . .] as outward spectacles,"[98] and classed history as one of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, a term that is usually translated as 'sciences of the mind.' As the title of his earliest essay on the philosophy of history, "History Subsumed under the Concept of Art" (1893), suggests, Croce applied the term 'art' to history in a more straightforward and narrower sense: history, for Croce, was an art in much the same way as poetry or drama was an art. In thus denying the possibility of an 'objective' scientific history, and as a corollary the possibility of formulating laws of history akin to the laws of physical science, Dilthey and Croce undermined history's claim to be "a true story of something that happened long ago, retold in the present." This is perhaps most obvious in the case of Croce. The distinction between the 'intuitive' and the 'conceptual,' and the proposition that the two are mutually exclusive, is fundamental to Croce's theory of aesthetics, and art, in these terms, belongs to the realm of the intuitive. Thus, when Croce defines history as an art he is defining it as a form of intuition, and, as Collingwood points out, "intuition, just because it is intuition and not thought, knows nothing of any distinction between the real and the imaginary."[99] Croce did come to realise this (in the preface to the 1919 reprint of his essay he wrote: "I did not detect the new problem raised by the conception of history as artistic representation of the real. I did not see that a representation in which the real is dialectically distinguished from the possible is something more than a merely artistic representation or intuition").[100] He subsequently revised and reformulated his view of history but the 1893 essay remained highly influential.[101]

Fredric Jameson has identified four "traditional 'solutions' to the dilemma of historicism"; he terms them: "antiquarianism, existential historicism, structural

typology, and Nietzschean antihistoricism."[102] "Existential historicism" is the "solution" of most interest in this context:

> existential historicism does not involve the construction of this or that linear or evolutionary or genetic history, but rather designates something like a transhistorical event: the experience, rather, by which *historicity* as such is manifested, by means of the contact between the historian's mind in the present and a given synchronic cultural complex from the past. This is to say that the methodological spirit of existential historicism may be described as a historical and cultural aestheticism.[103]

In thus seeking to capture and deliver the "experience of historicity" the mode, or as Jameson prefers trope, of existential historicism offers the possibility of restoring human meaning to the past. Recovering the "experience of historicity" restores meaning to the past and makes that meaningfulness – that "richness" in Jameson's words – available to the present ("a present in which few enough of those potentialities are practically available to any of us").[104] It is existential historicism's sense that "the past has a vital urgency for us" that distinguishes it from antiquarianism, which also aestheticizes the past, but lacks that sense of a significant relationship to the present and so is "essentially" a "refusal" or "repudiation" of "the dilemma of historicism."[105]

Unsurprisingly, in the last two decades "existential historicism" has achieved a certain currency in Pound criticism. Two recent studies of the early stages of *The Cantos*, and so necessarily of Pound's engagement with history, James Longenbach's *Modernist Poetics of History: Pound, Eliot, and the Sense of the Past* (1987) and Mary Ellis Gibson's *Epic Reinvented: Ezra Pound and the Victorians* (1995), make extensive and, up to a point, valuable use of Jameson's concept. I will focus on Longenbach; Gibson's work, which draws on Longenbach as much as it draws on Jameson, has much of interest to say in its own right, but does not add much to the concept of existential historicism *qua* concept. Longenbach traces the development of Pound's existential historicism from "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris" (1911-1912) and *Canzoni* (1911) to the Malatesta Cantos with particular attention to "Near Perigord" and the 1917 *Three Cantos*; that is, from Pound's move away from the antiquarianism of his early work to his eventual abandonment of existential historicism.

"Near Perigord" and *Three Cantos* can certainly be appropriately described as instances of Pound's turn to existential historicism. The former can be read as an articulation and dramatisation of the "dilemma of historicism" sketched out above that finally embraces a form of existential historicism. In this context I would read the 1917

cantos as explorations of the possibility of writing a long poem in the existential historicist mode. Longenbach is also correct in seeing the Malatesta Cantos as marking a point at which a decisive break takes place. Citing Bernstein to the effect that in the Malatesta Cantos, and thereafter, Pound "wanted the text to give the impression of the tribe's own heritage narrating itself, of the different historical voices addressing us as if without the mediation of one unique narrator or controlling author," Longenbach offers the following account of the "poem including history":

> Indeed *The Cantos* offers merely the *impression* of a history narrating itself, the impression of historical objectivity, the impression of the absence of an omniscient author. Pound's rhetorical strategy was to remove the signs of his personal presence from the poem in order to give the illusion of impersonal objectivity. And whether this strategy is any more conscientious or any less falsifying than any other strategy is highly debatable. Whether or not Pound makes his presence visible, he is present at every moment of *The Cantos*, shaping a discourse that is a profoundly personal and selective interpretation of history. Pound's removal of the signs of authorial presence from *The Cantos* is finally a political strategy designed to make his idiosyncratic interpretations of history and economics seem as inevitable as nature itself. Unless we want to excuse Pound's unattractive politics, we cannot accept his fiction that the poem "narrates itself." The history included in *The Cantos* is not factual or inevitable in any absolute sense; it is one man's interpretation.[106]

I have indeed argued much the same thing in different terms and, in part, I cite Longenbach in corroboration of my own account of Pound's epic historiography. There are, however, also a number of points with which I would take issue. Longenbach is too ready to write off Pound's move away from existential historicism as, at best, naiveté and, at worst, bad faith. Pound's history may be "one man's interpretation" but so is Ranke's and even if existential historicism is, as Longenbach seems to suggest that it is, our inescapable condition there are still useful, and necessary, distinctions to be made between those modes of historicism that manifest a desire for objectivity and those that do not. For Longenbach Pound's pseudo-chronicle is a reversion to positivism (he writes of "the neopositivist method of concatenation of facts" and of Pound's "positivist methodology"[107]); again an adequate response requires a more nuanced reading.

Pound's narrative strategy in the Malatesta sequence, and thereafter in *The Cantos*, was certainly, as Longenbach says it was, both rhetorical and political and invites criticism as such, but "rhetorical" or "political" are not in themselves terms of disapprobation. Given this, to say that "the history in *The Cantos* is not factual or

inevitable in any absolute sense" is, even in Longenbach's own terms, inappropriate. Naiveté and bad faith are perhaps not all on one side here. Rhetoric is the art of persuasion and Pound was a political writer. It is, therefore, to be expected that he will use all the rhetorical means at his disposal to persuade, seduce or coerce the reader into agreement. The reader, in turn, is equally free to resist and to censure (and the critic to criticise). To take at face values claims to omniscience or absolute objectivity or appeals to the order of nature (even for the purpose of being outraged by them) is to be a victim of one's own gullibility as much as of Pound's sharp practice. I have no desire to condone or excuse Pound's politics and do not believe that I am in any danger of doing so by disagreeing with Longenbach over the narrative strategy of *The Cantos*. Fascism grew in less than twenty years into an international movement with tens of millions of adherents and by the late 1930s threatened democracy throughout Europe. To describe it as "unattractive," although it provides an excellent illustration of existential historicism in action, does not contribute much to a critical understanding of it.

Any adequate account of the highly narrativistic history of the Malatesta Cantos must acknowledge the element of conscious illusion but should also recognise a more complex motivation. Pseudo-chronicle, by seeming to erase the author/ subject and so creating the illusion of an objective account of events that narrates itself, did allow Pound to meet the generic specification that an epic treat of what is communal and public rather than what is individual and private. It also conveniently elided the question of Pound's personal authority. However, pseudo-chronicle also allowed Pound to offer an order of historical explanation that his earlier mode, or modes, of historicism would not permit and so added a further dimension, a vital one, to his "poem including history." In this aspect, pseudo-chronicle is most usefully seen as a response to significant changes in Pound's view of Sigismondo and, correspondingly, in how he wanted to represent him in *The Cantos*. To understand this it is necessary to return briefly to the history of the composition of the Malatesta Cantos

Pound composed the earliest draft that is recognisably a version of the Malatesta Cantos in Paris between July and December 1922. During this time Pound read whatever he could get hold of on Malatesta and the period generally. [108] As a result Pound's view of Malatesta became not only more detailed but also more sophisticated and critical. In particular, he came to believe that many of the accusations against Sigismondo (with which he was perhaps already familiar from Burckhardt and Symonds) were false or at least highly suspect, and that Sigismondo, in his own time and after, had been the victim

of a systematic campaign of defamation initiated by Pius II. As might be expected, the impact of this was considerable – it could indeed be credited with giving rise to the Malatesta Cantos in their current form.

Further insight into this can be obtained from Pound's correspondence. On 10 August 1922 he wrote to John Quinn:

> Am reading up historic background for Canto IX. don't know that it will in any way improve the draft of the canto as it stands; shall probably only get more bewildered; but may avoid a few historic idiocies, or impossibilities.
> Authorities differ as to whether Sigismund Malatesta raped a german girl in Verona, with such vigour that she "passed on", or whether it was an italian in Pesaro; and the pope says he killed her first and raped her afterwards; also some authorities say it was Farnese and not Malatesta who raped the bishop of Fano, and in fact all the minor points that might aid one in forming an historic rather than a fanciful idea of his character seem "shrouded in mystery" or rather lies
> I suppose one has to "select". If I find he was TOO bloody quiet and orderly it will ruin the canto. Which needs a certain boisterousness to contrast with his constructive work.
> Francesco Sforza, whom I had first cast for the villain seems also to have had good reason for etc. etc.
> At any rate I had some interesting hours of research or at least reading; which are probably of no practical use (*EP/JQ*, 217).

This letter is interesting, and worth quoting at length, because it catches Pound at an early but crucial stage of transition. He is still thinking in terms of a single canto and seems to have in mind something along the lines of "Near Perigord" (setting Sigismondo's "boisterousness" against his "constructive work" as he had earlier set de Born the "stirrer up of strife" against de Born the poet and lover). But he is clearly becoming increasingly engrossed in the subject and is beginning to suspect that the truth might be more complicated than he had previously believed, although at this point he sees his "research" as being of "no practical use" (that is of no use to him as a poet) and even as potentially a threat to his poetry. The suggestion that Malatesta's character may be "shrouded in [. . .] lies," offered here as an alternative or apparent afterthought, is, in hindsight, suggestive and indicates the direction in which Pound was moving and that was towards something that is far closer to what more conventional historians, academic historians for instance, do or are believed to do – sifting and weighing evidence and arguing a case for or against a particular interpretation of events.

Pound's problem now was to find a narrative form or mode that could accommodate this to the requirements of his poetic enterprise. As Rainey's account shows, in the pre-Watson drafts he experiments with various ways in which this might be done, most notably by introducing a narrator: "one solution is a narrative that stresses the limitations of its point of view, highlighting the narrator's subjectivity by localizing him as fully as possible. In Draft *E* he tries this, selecting Sigismondo's brother as a narrator."[109] This experiment proved unsuccessful and was abandoned. There were clearly problems with Pound's execution of this strategy and it was ill-conceived to begin with; it could not have served Pound's purposes, at most an unreliable and limited (non-omniscient) narrator could have conveyed scepticism and a sense that there were two sides to the story. Pound did not, however, completely give up the idea, and the Malatesta Cantos are the only section of the poem that has a narrator. *The Cantos* are full of voices and on occasions long stretches of the poem are handed over to one or other of these voices but it is only the Malatesta sequence that has – intermittently – an autonomous or quasi-autonomous narrator of the type usually associated with prose fiction.

In the sequence as it now stands the "indeterminate narrator who seems to be one of Malatesta's subordinates" [110] sometimes carries the narrative and at other points assumes a choric role commenting, often ironically and occasionally critically, on Malatesta's actions. His recounting of how Sigismondo came to desert Naples for Florence (while keeping the service money already paid by the latter) illustrates both aspects (the use of the first person plural is also characteristic):

> And the King o' Ragona, Alphonse le roy d'Aragon,
> was the next nail in our coffin,
> And all you can say is, anyway,
> that he Sigismundo called a town council
> And Valturio said " as well for a sheep as a lamb"
> and this changeover (*haec traditio*)
> As old bladder said "*rem eorum saluavit*"
> Saved the Florentine state; and that, maybe, was something.
> And "Florence our natural ally" as they said in the meeting
> for whatever that was worth afterward. (9:35)

D'Epiro, who has given the fullest account of this aspect of the Malatesta narrative, argues that Pound employed this narrator because he "wished to convey a sense of immediacy greater than that which a chronologically and culturally distanced narration could provide."[111] D'Epiro suggests, I believe correctly, that "Pound's ultimate narrative

strategy may [. . .] owe something to Edward Hutton's historical novel on Malatesta, in which events are narrated by a fictitious contemporary of Sigismondo named Pietro Sanseverino."[112] I would take this further and argue that Pound's narrator is a freely adapted version of Pietro Sanseverino.

Hutton's narrator was an itinerant humanist who left home at fifteen going firstly to Rome and then in the hope of finding a teacher of Greek to Florence; from Florence, inspired by the Neo-Pagan teachings of Gemisthus Pletho, he went to Byzantium where he spent seven years "learning Greek and copying many manuscripts" before returning to Italy and finally "on an October evening" arriving in Rimini. In Rimini he was taken up by Malatesta and became a member of his court circle of scholars and humanists, and found a home.[113] Pietro's narrative purports to be a memoir, written in old age, of "Sigismondo, whom I have loved"[114] and he emphasises Sigismondo's cultural and artistic achievements and his love for "Madonna Isotta" (in a sanitised and sentimental version). Hutton's Pietro is a typical late Victorian or Edwardian product as his agonising over "how to account for a certain barbarism in one who in some things was the foremost humanist of his day" shows.[115]

At first sight Pietro Sanseverino and Pound's narrator – described by D'Epiro as "a man of action rather who "thinks of himself as a 'tough guy,' just stating the 'facts'"[116] – would seem to have little in common. However, D'Epiro's description is in some respects inaccurate; the "man of action rather than thought" can quote the Pius's *Commentarii* and his own comments on high politics are shrewd. Pound, I believe, took Hutton's narrator and 'toughened him up,' made him, if you like, more 'macho'. The young American writers and World War I veterans he met in Paris in the early 1920's may well have influenced him in this matter. Hemingway, who accompanied Pound on part of his 1923 trip to Italy and explained to Pound "how Sigismondo's battles [. . .] would have been fought,"[117] stands out as a possible model. Pound, it could be argued, saw Hemingway as a modern counterpart of a Renaissance humanist and re-fashioned Hutton's narrator accordingly. This may seem a bizarre judgement but he was perhaps no more unlike the humanists than was Hutton's bookish sentimentalist. The 'Renaissance Man,' for Pound, was not merely a polymath but someone who could function well in different *métier* or spheres of activity (who could, for example, write and fight as Hemingway claimed to be able to do). Pound also saw through Hemingway's anti-intellectualism: "you cd. at least in Hemingway's case get him to admit that mind had its

uses. The careful and alert reader will find admission in Hemingway's writing" (*GK*, 146-7).

D'Epiro discerns a "second voice" in Cantos VIII-XI: "that of a somewhat pedantic modern historian, who, in the service of 'Truth,' painstakingly transcribes a number of Renaissance documents for us, sometimes citing the sources directly in the text."[118] This is well-observed but D'Epiro's fails to see that this "second voice" is an aspect, or inflection, of pseudo-chronicle (and so not a persona or a narrator, not, in D'Epiro's sense, a voice at all) and thus serves "Calliope" and not truth.

In the first instance, pseudo-chronicle puts across Pound's view of Malatesta by deploying the strategies I have previously ascribed to it. That is, by telling it as a story that 'speaks itself and speaks itself as a story;' by presenting Pound's history, or representation of the past, as the past or as the unprocessed historical field – a field of documents and 'raw' data. There is, however, a further and necessary dimension to it. Pseudo-chronicle as I have described it could not have provided Pound with an entirely adequate solution, because while the account it offers might be said to have plausibility and probability it does not have authority, it cannot claim to be 'truer' than other historical accounts of Malatesta. Pound attempted to remedy this by incorporating into pseudo-chronicle what Brady terms the "idiom of academic historical discourse."[119] It may seem inconsistent, even contradictory, to say that Pound's pseudo-chronicle denies its own status as history and at the same time assumes the discourse of academic history, but, in so far as one is a strategy of representation and the other of argumentation, the two are not only compatible but complementary.

Pound's adoption of the "idiom of academic historical discourse" is most obvious in his practice of quotation and citation: for instance, "*Florence, Archivio Storico, 4th Series t. iii, e / "La Guerra dei Senesi col conte di Pitigliani."*" (10:42) and *"Com. Pio II, Liv. VII, p.85. / Yriarte, p. 288."* (10:44). These could certainly be described as scholarly; in the second example Pound even scrupulously acknowledges that he has culled his quotation from Pius's *Commentarii* from a secondary source, Yriarte's *Un Condottiere au XVe. siècle*. Rainey asserts that more typically "Pound adopts the trapping of positivist fidelity to primary sources even when engaged in a reading of much later, quite secondary sources." [120] Whether the above examples are mere trappings or exceptional instances of scholarly virtue, Rainey's assertion does suggest a useful and more general insight into Pound's historiography. In these terms pseudo-chronicle could be described as an attempt to pass off a secondary source for life and times of

Sigismondo Malatesta, the Malatesta cantos, as a primary source, or as a compendium of primary sources.

Although D'Epiro's characterisation of the "second voice" as a "somewhat pedantic modern historian" is a misreading it is a brilliant one. "Pedantic" is, of course, a relative term and by "modern" D'Epiro may intend only to distinguish the second narrator from the first who is Sigismondo's contemporary. However, these two terms can usefully be applied to the Malatesta Cantos in a way that suggests a significant parallel between Pound's appropriation of the "idiom of academic historical discourse" and contemporary (that is, contemporary with Pound) practices in academic historiography. I am thinking particularly of what are usually referred to as 'New Historians', both in the United States and England, who responded to the crisis of historicism by purging their work of what Brady describes as the "deceptive rhetorics of the romantics and the scientists" and based "their claim to represent a distinct and coherent body of knowledge on the integrity of good practice", that is to say on the "purification of method in the collection, criticism and citation of sources"[121] and on the internal logic and coherence of their explanations. The New Historians should not be seen, Brady argues, as crudely proclaiming history to be a 'value free science' but as professional practitioners acutely aware that they were dealing with a "complex and slippery body of accumulating knowledge whose statements required the closest care in formulation and development before they could sustain any claim to authority."[122]

If, at first sight, the Malatesta Cantos seem to be a travesty of the New Historian's model of "good practice" they are at least a recognisable one. Pound may not have purged his work of the "deceptive rhetoric of the scientists" but in other respects it can be seen as corresponding, if not always very closely, to the practice of the New Historians. One of the advantages of looking at the Malatesta Cantos in this way, of, to paraphrase Empson's dictum quoted in the introduction, reading poetry as if it were history, is that it takes Pound's work seriously as a response to the "dilemmas of historicism." Pseudo-chronicle may be (although I don't think it is) a meretricious response but it is a serious one. Indeed, in the Malatesta Cantos Pound is engaging with the "dilemmas of historicism" and the dilemmas of existential historicism; he is attempting, as Croce did in the preface to the 1919 reprint of his earlier essay, to come to terms with the "problem raised by the conception of history as artistic representation of the real." I am not saying that the Malatesta Cantos succeed in solving this problem but they are not an avoidance of it or merely a reversion to naive positivism.

Pound's 'solution' raised problems of its own, and two of which require further attention. The first of these may be said to be inherent in Pound's chosen mode of historical narrative and explanation. The narrative mode of the Malatesta Cantos however one may choose to characterise it – as ideogrammic, montage or pseudo-chronicle – is undeniably a species of what Collingwood calls "scissors-and-paste history," which for him is "not really history at all, but we have no other name for it": "history constructed by excerpting and combining the testimonies of different authorities I call scissors-and-paste history."[123] Further, for Collingwood "scissors-and-paste" history because its mode of argument is necessarily inductive can offer at best what he calls "permissive proof" ("where all a proof can do is to justify the thinker in affirming its conclusion, granted that he wishes to do so").[124] The second problem, which has potentially even more serious implications for Pound's epic ambitions, is inherent not in the nature of history but of poetry, perhaps even of language itself. Put simply, it is that Pound, or any other poet, has no way of guaranteeing that what he says will be what the reader hears, that what he means to say will be what the reader understands him to say. No text, and particularly not one as complex as *The Cantos*, can ever, by authorial fiat, be finally closed.

Taken together these two problems seriously threaten the viability of Pound's modern epic. If the poet is to become a legislator and exhorter, a layer down of laws and canons, as Pound believed the epic poet should, then it must be possible to ensure that what is laid down is what is taken up and that it has the force of compulsion. The monologic and univocal provenance usually ascribed to primary epic solves this problem, but this option was not available to Pound. Many of the features already noted as characteristic of the Malatesta Cantos – extreme compression, their elliptical and paratactical structure, and their sometimes brutal and violent language – can be seen as a response to this; all are attempts to control the reader's response and to impose a strict construction of the text. The compression, ellipsis and parataxis seek to eliminate all redundancy, all surplus signification, which the reader could use to construct an alternative reading. The brutal and violent language is also an attempt to control or direct and limit the reader's response, it is essentially a form of editorialising. The most famous, or infamous, instance of this in the Malatesta cantos is the description of Pius II as "that monstrous swollen, swelling s. o. b." (10:44).

Finally, one more characteristic of historical narrative in the Malatesta cantos must be mentioned and briefly described. Andrew M. Clearfield says of the montage poem that it is " (at least intermittently) transparent. The text describes something else greater than itself."[125] Hayden White argues that "the chronicle must approach the form of allegory, moral or anagogical as the case may be, in order to achieve both narrativity

and historicality."[126] Like montage and chronicle proper, Pound's pseudo-chronicle has an allegorical dimension. Indeed, for Pound this dimension was present in all histories; in "Pastiche: The Regional VIII," published in the *New Age* in August 1919, he wrote that to read history, even "a French text-book of history printed in 1862 for the use of Catholic schools," was to experience "the constant burning of allegory."[127] In so much as Pound uses Sigismondo to speak of others (for instance, John Quinn or Mussolini or somewhat differently of Odysseus and of himself), the Malatesta Cantos may in a loose sense of the word be said to be allegorical. The three remaining sections of this chapter give brief accounts of their allegorical aspects.

4 Malatesta/Odysseus/ Pound

The view that the *Odyssey* provides a structural principle and an interpretative key to *The Cantos* is almost as old as Pound's poem itself. Pound's decision, taken in the course of his 1923 revision of the early drafts, to open the poem with an account of Odysseus' descent into Hades translated from a Renaissance Latin version of the *Odyssey* by Andreas Divus (it had previously formed part of the third canto) initiated the first such reading. It has subsequently become a staple of academic criticism of *The Cantos*. It is no part of my present concern to contest or to rehearse this view, although no account of the Odysseus *motif* in the Malatesta Cantos can ignore the wider contexts of the poem as a whole or of more than two thousand years of post-Homeric representations of Odysseus in European literature. Due acknowledgement must also be given to the work of two earliest scholars in the field. Walter Baumann's *The Rose in the Steel Dust* (first published in 1967) and his later essay "The Odysseus Theme in Ezra Pound's *Cantos*," taken together, constitute the best synoptic account of Pound's use of Homer's poem and its hero.[128] Behind Baumann's work is that of the classicist William Bedell Stanford whose *The Ulysses Theme* offers a critical account of the representation and reinvention of Odysseus from Homer to James Joyce and Nikos Kazantzakis. *The Ulysses Theme* makes no mention of *The Cantos* and it is not the least of Baumann's achievements that he gave Stanford's formidable scholarship currency in the field of Pound criticism.

The 'Odysseus theme' in *The Cantos* has a number of distinct but not separate or autonomous, aspects. Most obviously, there are those cantos (notably I, XXXIX and XLVII) in which Odysseus appears *in propria persona*. Closely associated with this is

what may be termed the trope of identification. This trope is authorial both in that it can be said to originate with Pound and in so far as it identifies Pound and Odysseus. Pound's identification with Odysseus predates *The Cantos*. The persona of "The Seafarer" can be seen as a proto-Odysseus (a reading that is confirmed by Pound's use of a verse form derived from his translation of the Old English poem for Canto I) and Odysseus is a significant presence in *Mauberley*. The first canto establishes an analogy or parallel between Pound's poem and the *Odyssey* that is sustained, discontinuously, to almost the end of the poem, and by extension the writing of *The Cantos* and the vicissitudes of Pound's career during the poem's forty-year public elaboration are seen as an 'Odyssey'. As Baumann points out, Pound's *Odyssey* is incomplete, his Odysseus does not succeed in returning to Ithaca. In the later cantos Pound's *nostos* (Odysseus' homeward journey) repeatedly stalls at the point when Odysseus, sailing from Calypso's island to the country of the Phaeacians, is shipwrecked by Poseidon and then rescued by Leucothea who gives him her veil to sustain him in the sea until he finally makes land. In *Guide to Kulchur* Pound singled out this episode from *Odyssey* Book V as an instance of Odysseus' fortitude in the face of adversity and heroic "self-reliance." It is evoked in the *Pisan Cantos* as the nadir of Odysseus-Pound's fortunes, a snapshot of the 'dark night of the soul':

> when the raft broke and the waters went over me (80:527)

Allusions to the episode persist in *Rock Drill* and that section ends with Pound's most extended rendition of it:

> That the wave crashed, whirling the raft, then
> Tearing the oar from his hand,
> broke mast and yard-arm
> And he was drawn down under wave,
> The wind tossing,
> Notus, Boreas,
> as it were thistle-down.
> Then Leucothea had pity,
> "mortal once
> Who now is a sea-god:
>
> νόστου
>
> γαίης Φαιήχων, ..." [95:661]

The Greek fragment (glossed by Terrell as "to reach the land of the Phaeacians"[129]) and the "..." (conventionally indicating something omitted or to be supplied by the reader or writer but here also a refusal of formal syntactic or typographical closure) convey a sense of a continuing action, even of an eventual fulfilment, but suggest it may be problematic (the crisis is straightforwardly rendered in English while the hoped for ending remains in Greek). *Thrones* opens with a series of references to Leucothea and there are scattered allusions to her throughout the sequence but, as I have said, *The Cantos* cannot get beyond this point; the final echo of the "Odysseus theme" in the poem is provided by the typographically and semantically isolated Greek word "Καλλιαστράγαλος" (110:794) – "Kalliastragalos" (beautiful or slender ankles) is Homer's epithet for Leucothea.[130]

As has already been noted, in *The Cantos* Pound also presents a succession of what are often referred to as 'Odysseus figures,' recurring instances of an ideal type seen as embodying the Odyssean virtues, and occasionally vices, and particularly the quality of being *polumetis*. Most of what Baumann terms the "explorer scientist[s]" and "leader[s] of men"[131] who are the 'heroes' of the poem (for instance, Hanno, Jefferson, Mussolini, Van Buren, and Adams) fit this description, but Sigismondo is the prototype; Baumann describes him as "the most fully developed Odysseus figure in *The Cantos*."[132] This aspect of the 'Odysseus theme' in *The Cantos* cannot be completely separated from the trope of identification. Pound is present in his own poem as an 'Odysseus figure' and as I have pointed out he put something of himself into his portrait of Sigismondo (and into his other 'Odysseus figures'). The Malatesta of *The Cantos* is, on one level, both Odysseus and Pound (just as Pound is Malatesta and Odysseus) but he is not merely a projection or *alter ego* of Pound's (he cannot be considered a persona because his speech, what there is of it, is never the mimesis of direct address to the reader) or Odysseus in Renaissance costume anymore than Pound is Odysseus or Malatesta in modern dress. My use of solidi, something that as a rule I avoid, in the title of this section is an attempt to convey a sense of this intricate and precarious balance, which, as I have argued, is central to Pound's claim to have written a "poem including history."

While the concept of the 'Odysseus figure' is a familiar, and useful, one, discussion of it has focussed on the first rather than on the second term, and so while Pound criticism has had much to say about the significance of Odysseus in *The Cantos* it has been largely silent on how that significance is generated. Most accounts assume

some vaguely archetypal or mythopoeic mechanism to be at work in the poem and are content to leave it at that. Kenner's notion of "subject-rhymes"[133] provides a good description of this aspect of *The Cantos* in terms of what happens but not of how it happens (it also over-privileges the synchronic axis of the poem). The short description of the typological mechanics of *The Cantos* that follows is based on the belief that Pound's 'Odyssseus figures' are most usefully seen as instances of what Erich Auerbach terms *figurae*.

According to Auerbach, " originally *figura* [. . .] meant 'plastic form'"; he further notes that "in our two oldest examples *figura* occurs in combination with *nova*," which is significant because "the notion of the new manifestation, the changing aspect, of the permanent runs through the whole history of the word."[134] With "the Hellenization of Roman education in the last century B. C.," and the need to find Latin counterparts for the "incomparably richer scientific and rhetorical vocabulary" of Greek, *figura* took on new meanings. Specifically, *figura* was pressed into service to provide an equivalent for the many Greek words for the "concept of form" (for instance, *morphē*, *eidos*, *schēma*, *typos*, *plasis*). *Figura* took on a wide range of meanings; it could be used "in the sense of grammatical, inflected, or derived form" ("figura *multitudinis* means the form of the plural") but could also mean "model," "copy," "figment," or "dream image." Of particular interest in the context of a discussion of *The Cantos*, is the sense of *figura*, presumably corresponding to *typos*, as the "imprint of a seal;" a usage that can be found in Ovid and Dante.[135]

In the writings of the Church Fathers *figura* takes on a "strangely new," and for my present purposes highly significant, meaning. In Tertullian, and those who followed him, "figura is something real and historical which announces something else that is also real and historical. The relation between the two events is revealed by accord or similarity."[136] Thus Old Testament characters such as Adam or Moses can be seen as *figurae* of Christ; for example, Moses in his role of deliverer and lawgiver to the Children of Israel can be seen as prefiguring Christ as Saviour and as the bringer of a new law. The correspondences between the figure and the fulfilment, the antitype and the type, are usually much more sophisticated and detailed than in my example. Nor are they always so crudely obvious:

> Often vague similarities in the structure of events or in their attendant circumstances suffice to make the figura recognisable; to find it, one has to be determined to interpret in a certain way.[137]

"The aim of this sort of interpretation," as Auerbach points out, "was to show that the persons and events of the Old Testament were prefigurations of the New Testament and its history of salvation."[138] In other words, figural interpretation sought an accommodation between the Old and the New Testament (it was precisely the accommodation that established the Old and the New Testament) and a reconciliation between those who advocated a "purely allegorical interpretation of the Holy Scriptures" maintaining "that the Old Testament was a kind of hermetic book that became intelligible only if one discarded the literal historical meaning and the vulgar interpretation" and those who held to that meaning and even wished to retain it with the force of law.[139] In figural interpretation the old, the figure, retains its carnal sense but acquires, by the fact that it is recognised as a figure, a spiritual sense:

> Moses is no less historical and real because he is an *umbra* or *figura* of Christ, the fulfillment, is no abstract idea, but also a historical reality. Real historical figures are to be interpreted spiritually (*spiritaliter interpretari*), but the interpretation points to a carnal, hence historical fulfillment (*carnaliter adimpleri* ...) – for the truth has become history or flesh.[140]

The survival of the carnal sense and the "historical reality" of both the figure and the fulfilment are essential to Auerbach's model of figural interpretation. In a later passage Auerbach returns to, reaffirms and amplifies this point:

> Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfills the first. The two poles of the figure are separate in time, but both, being real events or figures, are within time, within the stream of historical life. Only the understanding of the two persons or events is a spiritual act, but this spiritual act deals with concrete events whether past, present, or future and not with concepts or abstractions; these are quite secondary, since promise and fulfillment are real historical events, which have either happened in the incarnation of the Word, or will happen in the second coming.[141]

This quality of "historicity" defines the figural mode and distinguishes it from other allegorical modes; thus Auerbach asserts that while "figural interpretation is 'allegorical' in the widest sense [. . .] it differs from most of the allegorical forms known to us by the historicity both of the sign and what it signifies."[142] "Historicity" also serves to distinguish figural interpretation from what Auerbach terms "the so-called

symbolic or mythical forms, which are often regarded as characteristic of primitive cultures" (and it may be added from the archetypal and mythopoeic modes of interpretation that have been elaborated from and around them). Again Auerbach is concise and unequivocal:

> What actually makes the two forms completely different is that figural prophecy relates to an interpretation of history – indeed it is by nature a textual interpretation – while the symbol is a direct interpretation of life and originally no doubt for the most part, of nature.[143]

According to Auerbach, "in most European countries figural interpretation was active up to the eighteenth century" and from "a very early date profane and pagan material was also interpreted figurally."[144] To this it can be added that the "figural view of history" and its corresponding mode of interpretation crossed the Atlantic with the Puritans. The famous "City upon a Hill" passage from John Winthrop's 1630 sermon on board the Arbella, "for wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are uppon us; soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our god in this worke wee have undertaken and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a byword through the world,"[145] presents the new colony as the fulfilment of a figure in Matthew 5:14-16: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." From the eighteenth century on the overt practice of figural interpretation declined, at least in the main stream of American intellectual life, but the figural view of history survived, and it may be detected, albeit in an etiolated and unconscious form, in later assertions of American exceptionality and of the special destiny of the United States.

In his discussion of the extension of the figural to profane history Auerbach returns to his insistence on its "historicity", again emphasising that it is an essential element of the trope and making clear that the preservation of the carnal, historical, sense is not a question of doctrinal or stylistic preference but a generic mandate, necessary and integral to the production of a spiritual sense. This is explicit in his riposte to those who advocate a "purely allegorical or symbolic" reading of the figure of Virgil in the *Divine Comedy* and "reject the historical reality as 'positivistic' or 'romantic':"

> But actually there is no choice between historical and hidden meaning; both are present. The figural structure preserves the historical event while interpreting it as revelation; and must preserve it in order to interpret it.[146]

The relevance of all of the above to Pound's "poem including history" should, I hope, be obvious; as the sequence Odysseus-Malatesta-Jefferson-Mussolini clearly illustrates the "Odysseus figures" if *The Cantos* are *figurae* and function in the poem very much in the way described by Auerbach. Odysseus' status as a historical figure is not a problem here, firstly because the figural has long been open to such mythological characters and, secondly, because Pound's decision to introduce him into *The Cantos* via a translation of Divus' version of the *Odyssey* embeds Odysseus in a 'history.' It might also be pointed out that *The Cantos* not only include but also contain, in the sense of define and control, history, and so whatever is included in the 'poem including history' is, or becomes, history. Odysseus in canto I is a figure that is fulfilled, in the first instance, by Sigismondo Malatesta (cantos VIII-XI) and by this process Malatesta is constituted as a type of Odysseus and Odysseus becomes the antitype of Malatesta and both thereby acquire another, a spiritual, sense. In turn Malatesta becomes a figure of which Jefferson is the fulfilment and both subsequently serve as types for Mussolini, and with each successive stage of fulfilment there is an accretion of meaning. At the risk of stating the obvious, the original carnal, historical, sense is preserved (Malatesta remains a fifteenth century *condottiere* and Thomas Jefferson never ceases to be the third president of the United States) but layer after layer new, spiritual or secret, senses are added as these figures evolve in what I have earlier referred to as the poem's figural economy. *The Cantos* 'determine' such a reading by means of the already noted patterns of recurrence and repetition (Kenner's "rhymes").

Stanford describes Odysseus as "of all the heroes of Greek and Roman mythology [. . .] by far the most complex in character and exploits."[147] This is not simply a question of Odysseus being a 'round' character (which in comparison to other Homeric heroes he is) nor is Odysseus' complexity of the same order as that of, say, Oedipus or Psyche. His distinctive characteristic is "intelligence" and this has an "inherent ethical ambiguity [. . .] it may take the form of low and selfish cunning or of exalted, altruistic wisdom."[148] It is this ambiguity that makes Odysseus, in the *Iliad*, a highly valued contributor to the councils of the Greek leaders and an efficient operator behind Trojan lines. What Stanford terms the "Autolycan" aspect of Odysseus (from his grandfather Autolycus who "excelled all men in deceptions and fallacious oaths"[149]) is

present in Homer but is usually either offset by his more virtuous side, as is generally the case in the *Iliad*, or else it is portrayed as being justified by the circumstances, as is the case with his deception of Polyphemous *Odyssey*. In the post-Homeric tradition the Autolycan element has at times prevailed and given rise to highly pejorative representations of Odysseus; Sophocles's *Philoctetes* and Virgil's account of the sack of Troy in *Aeneid* II are notable examples.[150]

For Pound in the Malatesta Cantos, and elsewhere, Odysseus' salient characteristic is his intelligence, and this quality raises him to almost divine level; in *Guide to Kulchur* Pound wrote of Odysseus:

> And as Zeus said: "A chap with a mind like THAT! the fellow is one of us. One of US." (*Guide* 146)

Pound designates this quality by the epithet "polumetis," culled the description of Odysseus in the opening lines of the *Odyssey* and translated by Terrell as "many minded."[151] In W.H.D. Rouse's translation, on which Pound advised, the passage reads:

> This is the story of a man, one who was never at a loss. He had travelled far in the world, after the sack of Troy, the virgin fortress; he saw many cities of men, and learnt their mind; he endured many troubles in the struggle to save his own life and bring back his men safe to their homes.[152]

The epithet occurs twice in *The Cantos*. The second occurrence – "many men's mannirs videt et urbes *πολύμητις*" (78:496) – may be read as Pound's gloss on the term (it is essentially a macaronic version of Rouse's rendering); in this sense the epithet, although it is not here applied to him, certainly fits Malatesta, who was both literally and figuratively a 'Renaissance Man.' The first occurrence, which conveys a somewhat different sense, is specific to Sigismondo:

> And it was his messianic year, Poliocretes,
> but he was being a bit too POLUMETIS (9:36).

These lines, which follow and are followed by accounts of some of the more dubious episodes in Sigismondo's career (including a reference to his alleged rape and murder of "that German-Bergundian female" [9:36]), clearly show Pound's awareness

of the "inherent ethical ambiguity" of Odyssean intelligence. The collocation of "POLUMETIS" with "poliocretes" ("taker of cities"), an epithet Malatesta appropriated to himself on a commemorative medallion he had struck[153], is particularly noteworthy.

Baumann's account of the "crime and punishment motif" in Pound's treatment of Odysseus, which contrasts "the maritime adventure morals of Odysseus" (*GK* 38) with the higher ethical values of the Noh plays and Confucius, while it does not remark the *poliocretes/ polumetis* juxtaposition, emphasises Pound's condemnation of the "pure devilment" of the "sack of the Ciconian town" (*LE,* 212).[154] Applied to *The Cantos* as a whole Baumann's argument is a compelling one, but it is precisely as an account of the 'Odysseus theme' in the Malatesta sequence that it is weakest. Baumann is correct to say that Pound's description of Sigismondo as "a bit too POLUMETIS" is intended as a censure but he misread what is being censured.[155]

A more useful approach is provided by Stanford's distinction between the "Iliadic" and "Odyssean" Ulysses: "one may distinguish two Ulyssean types in the post-Homeric tradition [. . .] . One, broadly speaking, is that of the politician, the second [. . .] that of the lonely wanderer [. . .]. The first may be called the Iliadic hero. This Ulysses is the warrior, strategist, orator, counsellor, negotiator, and, if needs be, spy."[156] Pound's various writings on Homer show a distinct preference for the *Odyssey*, and in the *Cantos* he is generally perceived to have been almost exclusively concerned with the Odyssean hero. Nonetheless, I would argue that Sigismondo has all the attributes listed above and that he can be read as Pound's version of the "Iliadic Ulysses." The princes and *condottieri* of the Malatesta Cantos are Renaissance equivalents to Homer's heroes, and, like the *Iliad*, Pound's sequence has a markedly dramatic structure; Sigismondo is persistently shown in counsel, negotiation, confrontation or simply conversation with his peers such as Giovanni de' Medici and Sforza (although these interlocutions are often conducted by letter). The problem of the "ethical ambiguity" of Odyssean intelligence is raised in a more acute form by the "Iliadic Ulysses." In the *Odyssey* the Autolycan aspects of Odysseus' character and behaviour can, as I have already said, be justified by circumstances; he is pitted against monsters or supernatural (and even divine) beings and in his intercourse with fellow mortals is most often either posing as a beggar or is a beggar *de facto*. In the *Iliad*, on the other hand, Odysseus is part of the "aristocratic and conventional community" of "the High command at Troy," a community of heroes "trained up to definite code of

etiquette in war and peace." Heroic etiquette permitted the wanton attack on the Ciconians but not Autolycan deceptions.

It is in this context, rather than in terms of his later espousal of Confucian ethics, that Pound's censure of Malatesta should be read. In canto IX "being a bit too POLUMETIS" has, I believe, a specific and local reference, and should be glossed as something like capriciousness or fickleness. It was for this quality and not for his alleged outrages and impiety that Sigismondo's peers, often themselves unscrupulous and brutal men, most reprobated him: "no complaint of Sigismondo was commoner than of his 'mobilitas,' his restlessness, his uncertain loyalty."[157] Malatesta while he possessed the *directio voluntatis* was not always *constans in proposito*, he allowed himself to be distracted by side issues and trivial matters and so did not finish his great work. It should perhaps be added that Pound was not constant in this view. For Pound Mussolini had the *directio voluntatis* and was *constans in proposito*, he was a model of single-mindedness and so in his own terms it was entirely consistent and logical that *The Cantos* should censure Malatesta but not Mussolini. Pound was quite wrong about this and Mussolini was far more like Malatesta in this respect than he was prepared to recognise.

Also useful is Stanford's distinction between Homer's homeward bound hero and the outward bound Ulysses of the later tradition; in this there is, he says, "a radical contrast between Homer's conception of Odysseus and that of many later writers on the Ulysses theme:"

> The movement of the *Odyssey* is essentially inwards, homewards, towards normality. As conceived by later poets like Dante, Tennyson, and Pascoli, Ulysses's urge is centrifugal, outwards towards the exotic or abnormal.[158]

Homer's *Odyssey* is, as epics were supposed to be, the story of a single centripetal action, a *nostos*, Odysseus' return from Troy and his reassertion of his rightful position in Ithaca; Odysseus' various adventures along the way with Circe, Cyclops, *et al* are precisely that – adventures, outside the main design, fortuitous and epiphenomenal; he might desire and even actively seek experience and knowledge (as is the case in episode of the Sirens) but that desire is always finally subordinated to the *nostos*. In Dante, Tennyson and other later writers the search for new experience becomes an end in itself. Pound, much influenced by Dante, and possibly by Tennyson, is usually seen as belonging to the centrifugal tradition: "Pound's Odysseus-figures and Pound himself,

who dons them as masks, are far more home-deserters, outward bound on their quest for knowledge."[159] This is certainly true of such of Pound's Odysseus figures as Hanno the Carthaginian (40:199-201) and of the "explorer-scientists" in the later cantos such as Alexander von Humboldt and Louis Agassiz (described by Baumann as being for Pound "the truest descendants of Odysseus"[160]). I would, however, again claim that Malatesta, although he is certainly a 'sailor after knowledge,' represents a partial exception to this, and that the Malatesta Cantos constitute Pound's version of the centripetal Odysseus.

Of all Pound's 'Odysseus figures' only Malatesta is strongly associated with a particular place, Rimini, and his love for it pervades the entire sequence. It is sometimes most apparent when it is the motivation for Malatesta's more ill-advised actions; his obsession with Pesaro can, in large part, be explained by the fact that he considered it to be an integral part of the Malatesta homelands and his abortive plot to assassinate Paul II was inspired by the discovery that Paul was planning to deprive him of Rimini.

Malatesta is also the only Odysseus figure in *The Cantos* whose *nostos* is not stalled. In *Odyssey* XI, Tiresias predicts that Odysseus will survive all his hardships and live to enjoy a serene old age:

> Death shall come to you from the sea, death ever so peaceful shall take you off when comfortable old age shall be your only burden, and your people shall be happy around you.[161]

Malatesta's final years were less idyllic, but as Pound's depicts them in canto XI they are sunlit, admittedly by a setting sun, and have, at least in comparison with the turbulence of what went before, a degree of tranquillity. My earlier argument that Mussolini's rise to power can be seen, typologically, as Malatesta's final triumph strengthens the reading of Malatesta as a centripetal Odysseus figure.

The trope of identification can usefully be invoked in this context. Pound composed the Malatesta Cantos at the point in his life when he was in the process of leaving London and Paris and moving to Rapallo. As I have already argued, moving to Rapallo meant, for Pound, abandoning the model of metropolitan culture in favour of a model that diffused the "sense of the capital" among "numerous vortices," small local centres of excellence. *Quattrocento* Rimini was for him the ideal type of such centres and the Malatesta Cantos can be read, in part, as a rationalisation and celebration of that decision. His move to Italy was also, although in 1924 he may not have fully realised it, a form of homecoming; he was to spend the rest of his life there apart, of course, from

his thirteen years of involuntary residence in the United States. It is not, I think, over fanciful to read into cantos VIII-XI an account of Odysseus / Pound, who had indeed seen "many cities of men, and learnt their mind," reaching his Adriatic Ithaca.

Both Baumann and Charles Boer, who wrote the Foreword to the Spring Publications edition of *The Ulysses Theme*, pose the question: why does Stanford not mention Pound or *The Cantos*? Baumann calls this an "amazing" omission in an otherwise "comprehensive study of the fortunes of Odysseus from Homer's time to our own," and concludes that Stanford "may, like other classical scholars, have decided that a man like Pound, who mistranslates Propertius and fights a running battle with Greek diacritics, is unworthy of serious study."[162] Boer takes a more sinister view of the matter and suggests that Stanford excluded Odysseus because to have included him would have exposed the "Ulysses theme [. . .] for the outright fascism it fundamentally is?[163]

The narrative Stanford delivers, his 'Odysssey' of the Odyssseus figure, is essentially a tale of dissociation and reintegration. In Homer the various aspects of Odysseus' character – the "Iliadic" and the "Odyssean," the "Grandson of Autolycus" and the "Favourite of Athene," the centriptal and the centrifugal – are all integrated in a single complex but coherent figure, in the post-Homeric tradition this figure fragments and the various aspects take on, as it were, a life of their own, and then in the two great twentieth-century versions of the "Ulysses theme" – Joyce's *Ulysses* and Kazantzakis' *Odyssey: A Sequel* – they are reintegrated. James Joyce and Nikos Kazantzakis are the heroes of Stanford's story. Pound worked in a way that was very different from either of them. Pound's strategies of representation, and in particular what Kenner terms his "cubist" technique (the substitution of the "designer's structure" for perspective[164]), offers a multifaceted portrait that articulates the various facets of Odyssey in a way that resists both integration and dissociation. To have included Pound would have ruined Stanford's tale of dissociation and reintegration and Stanford was too good a storyteller to have permitted that to happen.

5 Renaissance Men: Malatesta and John Quinn

The concept of patronage is central to the Malatesta Cantos and to his thinking about literature and the other arts generally. This I have already established and I have also on a number of occasions referred to the New York lawyer and art collector John Quinn,

mostly as a correspondent of Pound's. This section will attempt to describe and define Quinn's role in the Malatesta Cantos.

Although Quinn is not specifically referred to in the sequence he is a significant presence in it. Quinn does appear in canto XII as "Jim X..." who relieves the boredom of a "bankers' meeting" by telling the ribald "Tale of the Honest Sailor" (12:55-57). The bankers bore "Jim X..." by their hypocrisy and greed but his distaste for them also has an aesthetic dimension ("Bored with their bloomin' primness/ and the little white rims/ They wore around inside the edge of their vests/ To make 'em look as if they had on two waistcoats"). The positioning of this episode obviously suggests a continuity between Malatesta and "Jim X..."; this is to found, principally, but not only, in their role as patrons. There is without doubt much of Quinn in Pound's Malatesta but that is not to say that the Malatesta Cantos are a sort of verse *roman à clef*; Quinn could be described as Pound's model for Malatesta, or as one of them, but that is not exactly what I want to say either. Pound saw Malatesta as a Renaissance Quinn rather than Quinn as a modern Malatesta, a statement that is not only true in the literal sense that he knew Quinn before he knew Malatesta. As the Renaissance furnished Pound with an idiom in which he could articulate his own modernism, so Malatesta furnished him with an idiom in which he could speak of, and pay seemly homage to, John Quinn; an idiom that was, as I have already said, in the loosest sense allegorical.

Pound first met Quinn through J. B. Yeats in New York in August 1910; although the two men were to meet twice more (in Paris in 1921 and 1923), their relationship was mainly conducted by letter and so Pound knew Quinn, as he knew Malatesta, textually. At the time of their first meeting Quinn was already a successful and prosperous financial lawyer and a collector of some note. According to B.L. Reid, his biographer, he had begun collecting "first editions of Pater, Hardy, Morris, and Meredith"[165] while still at high school. On his first visit to England and Ireland in 1902 he bought "nearly a dozen paintings" from Jack Yeats and commissioned a series of Irish portraits from J.B. Yeats,[166] and met most of the leading Irish artistic and literary figures of the day. He returned to Ireland in 1903 and 1904 and became an enthusiastic and active supporter of Irish literary and artistic endeavours; as well as buying paintings and manuscript and smoothing out legal difficulties for Irish writers in the United States, he helped found a New York branch of the Irish Literary Society, promoted lecture and fund raising tours by W.B. Yeats and Douglas Hyde, and financed the publication of copyrighting editions of Synge's *Poems and Translations*

and *Deirdre*.[167] In 1909 he also began buying work by the Welsh painter Augustus John.

Although Pound's first meeting with Quinn is fondly recalled in the *Pisan Cantos* ("William's, old "da" at Coney Island perched on an elephant/ beaming like the prophet Isaiah/ and J. Q. as it were aged 8 (Mr John Quinn) /at the target" [80:52]) the day out does not seem to have been such a great success, J.B. Yeats wrote to his son that "Quinn liked Pound" (EP/JQ, 1) but Pound seems not to have taken to Quinn. In 1917 Pound wrote to Margaret Anderson that "Quinn made me mad the first time I saw him (1910). I came back on him four years later, and since then have spent a great deal of his money" (*SL*, 111). I distrust this letter, Pound was telling Anderson not to be hasty in judging Quinn and spinning a little parable in support of his injunction. Whatever happened that day Quinn does not seem to have made any great impression on Pound and he is not mentioned in any of Pound's subsequent accounts of his return to the United States. I suspect that in 1910 and for sometime after Pound simply, over-simply, pigeonholed Quinn as 'Irish' and so did not consider him as a potential recruit for his American Renaissance. Pound did occasionally participate in Yeats's Irish campaigns but generally kept apart, or was kept apart, from them.

The relationship between the two men began in earnest, in January 1915 when Pound in the course of a *New Age* piece complaining about the neglect of contemporary artists, and of Jacob Epstein in particular, took a sideswipe at "American collectors buying autograph MSS. of William Morris, faked Rembrandts and faked Vandykes." (*G-B*, 100) Quinn, who had, in 1911, bought autograph MSS. of Morris's translation of the *Odyssey*[168], responded indignantly; he recalled their earlier meeting, commended Pound's honesty and forthrightness and vigorously defended his own record as a collector and supporter of contemporary art. He asserted, quite justifiably, that "if there is a 'liver' collector of contemporary art in this country for a man of modest means, I should like to meet him" and added that he already possessed six pieces by Epstein.[169] Pound's reply begins "thanks, apologies , and congratulations. If there were a few more like you we should get on with our renaissance" (*EP/JQ*, 20). He goes on to boost fellow Vorticists Wyndham Lewis and Gaudier-Brzeska and to offer an exalted view of the role of the patron:

> My whole drive is that if a patron buys from an artist who needs money (needs money to buy tools, time and food) the patron then makes himself equal to the artist, he is building art into the world. He creates.
> If he buys even of living artists who are already famous or already making £12, 000 per year, he ceases to create. He sinks back to the rank of consumer (*EP/JQ*, 23).

To which he adds:

> Besides, if a man has any sense, the sport and even the commercial advantage is so infinitely greater. If you can hammer this into a few more collectors you will bring on another Cinquecento. (*G-B*, 23)

Quinn's response was all Pound could have wished for (or at any rate more than he could reasonably have expected) and within months Pound was negotiating on Quinn's behalf for work by Gaudier-Brzeska, plans for a Vorticist exhibition in New York were being advanced and the two had entered upon a protracted and detailed correspondence about a projected fortnightly or monthly magazine for Pound to edit. (This did not materialise but a subvention from Quinn did buy Pound a measure of editorial control over the *Little Review*.)

The collector and the propagandist had been brought together and Pound's renaissance was getting on. In March 1916, Quinn told Pound that: "I like to spend money, when I can afford it." Pound indulged Quinn's desire in this matter but also gave due weight to the qualification, he used Quinn's money judiciously and was "as businesslike as possible [. . .] keeping careful accounts and obtaining receipts" (*EP/JQ*, 55). Materer offers the following summary of the "Pound-Quinn collaboration":

> By 1918 the essential achievements of the Pound-Quinn collaboration were completed. Most of the finest Gaudier-Brzeska sculptures were in America, an experimental group of English painters had been sustained through the wartime period, Pound's works were at last appearing in America, and the *Little Review* was regularly publishing works by Pound, Eliot, and Wyndham Lewis. As the climax to this support of innovative art, the *Little Review* began publishing Joyce's *Ulysses* in April 1918, continuing to the final suppression of the episodes in 1920 (*EP/JQ*, 137).

I would take issue with this in one crucial aspect – the time frame should be extended. It is the case, as Materer's account suggests but perhaps does not sufficiently emphasise, that the collaboration's major achievements were in the field of literature and those were by no means over by 1918. Quinn's support for Pound, Eliot and Joyce– arranging and

partly financing American publication of the work of all three, finding lucrative employment for Pound, and fighting Joyce's legal battles and occasional loans and 'stakes' – continued almost until his death. Quinn played an important role in the development of Anglo-American Modernism, and that role was made possible by and through his collaboration with Pound. However, all of this is sufficiently well documented,[170] and for the remainder of this section I will focus on those aspects of Quinn, and his relationship with Pound, that highlight his affinity with Malatesta.

The most obvious of these is that Quinn, like Malatesta, was a patron who accomplished a great deal with "modest means." Writing of Malatesta in *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound stressed this and the other difficulties that beset him – "outside the then system, and pretty much against the power that was, and in any case without great material resources, Sigismundo cut his notch" (*GK*, 159) – and clearly regarded his achievements as all the more admirable because of it. The repeated references to money in the Malatesta Cantos suggest the 'modesty' of Sigismondo's means and it could be said that his military adventures and much of his misfortune is directly or indirectly the result of his need to earn a living as a *condottiere*. By most standards Quinn was a wealthy man but, as he was acutely aware, as a collector he had rivals with considerably deeper pockets; writing to Henri-Pierre Roché, his Parisian agent, of one such, Dr. Albert Barnes, he observed: "if I had the money of that *brute* Barnes [. . .] what a time we would have had in the noble art of buying."[171] In 1920 Quinn described his financial situation to Pound:

> I have made money and lots of it, and spent it, lots of it, often like a drunken sailor. I have never loafed much in 28 years. The first ten at the bar here left no cash balance in the bank. During the last twelve I have made money and spent it. [172]

This statement may be, as Reid says, "expansive and optimistic," but it still suggests limited resources. Of all those who benefited from Quinn's largesse, Pound was perhaps the one who least needed to have this pointed out to him; in the 1917 letter to Margaret Anderson, cited above, Pound defended Quinn against the charge (presumably levelled by Anderson) that he was "tightwad" pointing out that he and not Quinn had set the subvention to the *Little Review* at £150 and adding:

> Quinn is not a rich man in the American sense of the word. He has what he makes month by month, and most of it goes to the arts. I know part of what he does and I know somewhat of how he does it. (*SL*, 111.)

As was the case with Malatesta, in Pound's eyes this enhanced Quinn's achievements. Indeed, it could be said that the "modesty" of Quinn's means was essential to his status as a Poundian hero. To begin with Pound simply did not have access to the Freers and Morgans, and only a collector of "modest means" could have been represented as a modern counterpart to Malatesta. As I have already argued, for Pound patronage was not the preserve of the very rich, of millionaires, but was something that could and should be practiced by all who could possibly afford it. Pound, whose own means were considerably more modest than Quinn's, gave small sums of money to those even less well-off than himself and bought work from Gaudier at "what would have been a ridiculous figure had it not been that he had no market and that I have next to no income" and gave him the commission for what became known as the "Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound."[173] Amy Lowell complained of what she regarded as Pound's unreasonable demands upon her purse and added that "like many people of no income, Ezra does not know the difference between thousands and millions, and thinks that anyone who knows where to look for next week's dinners, is a millionaire."[174] This is unjust and, more importantly, it completely misses the point of his ideal of enlightened patronage. For Pound the point was not to acquire collections of museum class pictures but, as he wrote in his first letter to Quinn, to 'build art into the world,' to 'create.' Reid comments perceptively on Quinn's strengths as a collector:

> Yet it was exactly the limitation of his means that made Quinn's collecting uniquely intense and impressive, made him probably, the greatest American collector of art of his day [. . .] . For it was not wealth but the lack of it that made the true "rigor of the game," put before him the exciting and exacting test of how much excellence he could acquire with modest means.[175]

Towards the end of his book, Reid adds that Quinn's collection "was an incredibly rich shirt-sleeve collection, formed by a man working out of his own current earned income, loving the process as well as the product of art."[176] Pound would, I think, have agreed with this; intensity, rigour (and risk), excitement, excellence and process were central to the ideal of patronage he celebrated in Quinn and Malatesta. He did know the difference between thousands and millions and his was not the sentimental logic of the widow's

mite; for him patronage was, like art, an end in itself and could be good in and of itself (which is not to say that all patronage is good any more than all poetry is good – Pound gave no marks for effort), its value depended not on quantity but on the above qualities. It was on this scale of values that Amy Lowell was found wanting.

Reid and Materer agree in calling Quinn a modern 'Renaissance man,' and in seeing that it was through his collaboration with Pound that he assumed that status, but disagree over what precisely this might mean and how it was achieved. By Reid's account, Pound developed the "character of the patron which became part of Quinn's notion of himself and his ideal modes of behaviour." Pound offered an "'equal' part with the artist in the production of enduring work, the sport of the chase, the generosity that might turn out to be good business, the image of a modern Medici" and these "rosy ideas" Quinn "grasped frankly, and thereafter he was not only a friend of Pound and his enthusiasms but a Poundian patron of the arts in general." Thus did Pound "'put style upon' Quinn's half-spoken image of himself."[177] Materer accepts the substance of this but argues that Reid's view of Quinn as an "*artist manqué*" leads him to misinterpret the collaboration (*EP/JQ*, 3). I think Materer misrepresents Reid but would agree with him that there was "nothing *manqué*" about Quinn, or at any rate about Pound's Quinn. The qualification is important, Quinn is only fully realised as a 'Renaissance man' in the Malatesta Cantos; in any discussion not centred on the Malatesta Cantos descriptions of him as a "Modern Medici" or "a figure of Renaissance proportions" are merely conventional expressions of approbation. Two factors that are not given their full weight by either Reid or Materer are the high degree of reciprocity that characterised the Pound-Quinn collaboration and the fact that it was not the only, or even the principal, avenue of Quinn's activity as a collector.

To take the second point first. As a collector Quinn's major investment – financial, intellectual, and emotional – was in modern French art and not in any of the areas that Pound advocated. To say this is not to diminish Quinn's commitment to and belief in Joyce or Eliot, or in Pound himself. Pound may have, as he told Anderson, "spent a good deal" of Quinn's money (*SL*, 111), but never at a rate remotely comparable to the $62, 000 Quinn spent on French art in eight months in 1922 (I doubt that Pound spent that much of Quinn's money in eight years).[178] This was a taste Pound did not share. Materer attempts to 'periodize' this and has Quinn and Pound moving apart after 1918 but this will not stand up; as I have shown, Quinn continued to be active in causes advocated by Pound long after that date and his taste for French painting dates back at

least as far back as the Armory Show of February 1913. If, after 1915, Quinn was operating as a "Poundian patron" he was often doing so in a field in which he, quite correctly, gave little weight to Pound's judgement and about which Pound, prudently, for the most part kept his reservations to himself.

As a correspondent Pound tended to be pedagogic and overbearing, but his letters to Quinn are an exception – he never tries to lecture or bully Quinn. He was, of course, writing to a man from whom he was hoping to extract money and Quinn had a notorious temper. Reid describes him at one point as "busy, prosperous, and irritable" and elsewhere as a "man of fierce feelings, a fierce lover and a fierce hater."[179] But I do not think Pound's deference was that of the supplicant or client and he was not intimidated by Quinn; he was never obsequious and on occasion (for instance, over Sir Roger Casement) the two disagreed sharply. Although Pound knew Quinn to be a personal friend of Casement's, he was adamant and forthright in his condemnation:

> RE/ Casement. I am afraid I cant sympathize. I was very sorry that MacDonagh shot. (sic) Some of the men made a fine end. But Casement was an educated man who had been taking British money all his life. He ought to have known better. He was responsible for the loss of a lot of life, absolutely innocent men on both sides of the fight. (*EP/JQ*, 80-81.)

In an early letter to Quinn (dated "26 August 1915"), writing of the problem of finding people for their projected magazine, Pound interjects: "God! a man who knows his own job!!!!! when once in six years you find him." (*EP/JQ*, 43) Pound regarded himself as such a man and believed that in Quinn he had found another and this I believe was the basis of their working relationship and later of their friendship. Pound wrote to Quinn not as a client (he asked very little for himself[180]) or even as Quinn's agent but as his partner in a joint enterprise; in purely financial terms he may have been the junior partner (and as Pound was probably aware Quinn was famous in New York legal circles for having sacked five junior partners in a year[181]) but the two men treated each other as equals and, for the most part, with a marked degree of respect.

Because he asked nothing of Pound other than that he 'know his own job' and did not depend upon him, Quinn was someone, perhaps the only person, to whom Pound felt able to unburden himself as he did in a letter of 18 March 1916: "I have never been so rushed, I seem to be a universal committee for the arts."[182] Quinn once called Pound "the worst and most persistent" of those who made unreasonable claims on his time and attention, but generally their relationship was amicable and mutually supportive; Reid

notes that Quinn "wrote regularly of his professional affairs in surprising detail to Pound" and describes him as "one of the few friends and beneficiaries among the artists who seemed to feel, and occasionally to show, some insight and sympathy for the continual tension of Quinn's professional life."[183] That Quinn appreciated and valued Pound as a friend and associate and regarded him as a "special case" is apparent from a letter of April 1920:

> You and I can swear in writing at each other, and talk and write straight from the shoulder, whereas some of these younger fellows don't understand it.[184]

Quinn was, in several senses of the term, a 'man of affairs:' as well as being a highly successful financial lawyer, he was active and influential in Democratic and Irish-American politics and although he never married he had a succession of 'proteges' and 'companions,' a number of mistresses and, apparently, numerous short-lived liaisons. All of these areas of activity, apart from the last, are frequently referred to in Pound's letters to Quinn.

About Quinn's public and professional life Pound was anything but reticent; he even offered Quinn legal advice – suggesting that he might find Jefferson useful in preparing his defence of *Ulysses* against charges of obscenity (*EP/JQ*, 202). American presidential politics, the United States entry into World War I (both were strongly in favour) and events in Ireland figure prominently in the Pound-Quinn correspondence. Pound does not always appear to advantage in this area. He was something of a 'political groupie' and is very much impressed by Quinn's friendship with Theodore Roosevelt and scatters references to "T.R." and "Teddy" throughout his letters. In his letters to Quinn Pound is not yet the frenzied critic of the American political system that he was later to become, although there are occasional foretastes of his later manner (for instance, his reference to "Mr. Woodhead Cowrow Codfish Wislon"). What, however, is not in doubt is Pound's sincerity or his relish for discussion of public and political matters; in February 1916 he wrote to Quinn:

> It always pleases me when I manage to see straight in American affairs from this distance [...] and perhaps it is some satisfaction to find that my head isn't absolutely useless when tried on something outside my own particular job. (*EP/JQ*, 63)

Quinn's abrasiveness may be reflected in Pound's portrait of Malatesta, although it is difficult to see why Pound should think that the received image of Sigismondo required any touching up in this regard. Materer's observation that "a financial lawyer may engage in conflicts as ferocious as those between Italian city-states" (*EP/JQ*, 3) strikes me as forced and unconvincing. It is more reasonable to see Quinn as providing Pound with, in addition to an instance of enlightened and creative patronage, a model of the man who was a "*bit too polumetis*." I would also see it as contributing significantly to the narrative strategy of the Malatesta Cantos as I have described it in Section 3; Quinn is Malatesta and Pound his forthright, tough-talking, humanist chronicler and apologist.

6 New Men: Malatesta and Mussolini

Pound's Malatesta is the of ruler Rimini and is portrayed as doing those things that rulers normally do: ordering and regulating the internal affairs of the state and conducting its external relations. He is, in other words, portrayed as going about what would normally be considered the business of politics, yet Malatesta is not usually thought of as a politician or a political figure, and the Malatesta Cantos, unlike those groups of cantos devoted to Jefferson and John Adams or even the China Cantos, are not regarded as 'political.' One possible explanation of this is that the Malatesta Cantos are frequently held to pre-date Pound's emergence as a political writer, and Malatesta, while he is recognised as the prototype of the line of heroic leaders that appears in the later cantos, is seen as having more in common with the 'non-political' personae of the early poetry. This is a misreading both of the Malatesta Cantos and of the trajectory and chronology of Pound's development as a political writer.

An alternative explanation would be that it is difficult, if not impossible, to see the events chronicled in the Malatesta Cantos as corresponding to any sort of coherent politics or policy. It must, of course, be remembered that this is a period in which, as Jones remarks, "the means to power were not votes or manifestos, but force, fraud, proficiency in gang war."[185] But even in terms of the politics of dynastic aggrandisement and self-preservation, Malatesta's actions lack consistency and coherence and appear to be dictated largely by expedience or caprice. It is, of course, possible to write a political history of Sigismondo - Philip Jones has done so - but the politics of such a history, the "gradual emergence [. . .] of a few great territorial states, with regional or wider, Italian ambitions" and the consequent squeezing of minor despots such as Malatesta,[186] had little or no

interest for Pound. He does, in *Guide to Kulchur*, describe Malatesta as working "*against* the current of power" (*GK*, 159) but that "current" is not described or particularised.

As I have pointed out, for Pound the reading, and writing, of history were attended by "the constant burning of allegory;" it is only through some mode of allegoresis that history can fulfil the function Pound ascribed to it: "to make people think and to guide their thought toward what will elucidate today and tomorrow"(*SP*, 266). From Jefferson's theory and practice a whole political philosophy can be elaborated, as is evidenced by the number of people, including Pound, prepared to describe themselves as Jeffersonians. For Pound, Van Buren's opposition to Biddle's Bank is an instance of transcendent fiscal virtue while Adams's avoidance of war with France or Britain between 1797 and 1801 (the years of his presidency) set an example to all subsequent administrations (one that was particularly appropriate in 1940, the year in which the Adams Cantos appeared). As my account of them has already made clear, the Malatesta Cantos, for all that they may appear to resist translation and transcendence, "elucidate" the "today and tomorrow" of Italian Fascism.

Pound is generally held to have been politicised by World War I, and his first meeting with C.H. Douglas in 1918 is often cited as marking the beginning of an engagement with economics and politics that led to his embracing Italian Fascism and, eventually, to Pisa and St Elizabeth's. At what point he became a supporter of Mussolini is a matter of some dispute. Stock writes of Pound's move to Rapallo in October 1924 that "I doubt whether at this stage Pound saw Italy in terms of politics" and pushes the period of his most intense political engagement forward into the 1930's (his chapter entitled "Politics and Economics" covers the years 1937-1939).[187] Carpenter's account of the move stresses Pound's dislike of Paris and the conventional attractions of Rapallo (sea-views, climate, etc), although he does have him writing to Harriet Monroe "at the end of 1926" that he thinks "extremely well of Mussolini."[188] Peter Nicholls picks up this same letter to Monroe (*SL*, 205) as Pound's "first declaration of enthusiasm for Mussolini."[189] Surette states categorically that Pound was "not a Fascist sympathizer until 1931," while Tim Redman locates Pound's "turn to Fascism" even later in 1932-33.[190] One thing on which all of the above agree is that when he composed the Malatesta Cantos Pound was not engaged with Fascism or a Fascist sympathiser.

This is wrong in almost every important detail. By 1918 he was already a 'political' writer. During World War I he had campaigned vociferously against American neutrality. His belligerent stance is apparent in his 1918 essay on Henry James (*LE*, 295-296) and in

"Provincialism the Enemy" (1917). Pound's letters to Quinn offer further proof of his engagement in politics before 1918. As I will argue in the next chapter, there is a significant degree of continuity between Pound's early and later political writing. Pound was an eyewitness to some of the events of the Fascists' seizure of power, and even if, as Carpenter says, he "did not yet read newspapers" in 1923 he must have been aware that something was happening; further, Stock reports that on his visits to Italy in 1922 and 1923 he found "the atmosphere [. . .] to his liking" and a half-joking reference to Pound's "fascist pals," in a 1923 letter from Hemingway (quoted by Carpenter), suggests that Pound's pro-Fascist tendencies were already apparent.[191] Pound, however, was more than a tourist caught up in events or even an interested and sympathetic spectator.

In *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture*, Lawrence Rainey has established, I believe beyond reasonable doubt, that Pound was aware of and committed to Fascism significantly earlier than has hitherto been recognised and that his engagement with Fascism played a significant role in the composition of the Malatesta Cantos.[192] Pound was already intrigued by Fascism before he left Paris to move to Rapallo. As Rainey shows two of Pound's earliest encounters with Fascism came through women he met in Paris, the Marchesa Luisa Casati and Nancy Cox-McCormack.[193] In late November or early December 1922 Pound attended a lecture by Lincoln Steffens "modern revolutions" (Mexico, Russia and Italy) in Paris. Steffens had attended the Lausanne peace conference and had been much taken with Mussolini and praised his contempt for traditional politics and his boldness of thought and action. Pound was reported "listening with rapt attention, his eyes glued to the speaker's face."[194] Hemingway, who covered the conference for the *Toronto Daily Star*, reported that Mussolini was "the biggest bluff in Europe" and noted his "genius for clothing small ideas in big words"; adding that "there is something wrong, even histrionically, with a man who wears white spats with a black shirt."[195] The two men were in regular contact at this time and it is unlikely that Pound was unaware of Hemingway's views. Pound normally set great store by such details as wearing white spats with a black shirt (see, for instance, his description, quoted above, of the bankers' waistcoats in the John Quinn anecdote in canto XII), indeed he can be said to have constructed a whole epistemology around them, but by this stage his enthusiasm for Italy's 'man of action' was already sufficient to overwhelm his susceptibility to the "luminous detail."

The most significant of Pound's early encounters with Fascism was through his Rimini "hotel-keeper," Averado Marchetti. A much decorated war veteran, Marchetti was

a founder member of the local Fascist party, the *Fascio riminese*, who took an active part in the *squadrismo* (the systematic and violent intimidation of political opponents or simply of non-Fascists). In March 1923, Pound made two visits to Rimini in order to consult documents relating to Malatesta in the municipal library. On his first visit, 12 March, he found that the library was closed (the functionary in charge of it had flu) and the city librarian, who was also a school teacher and an authority on the church of San Francesco, declined to open it. Furious, Pound spent a week visiting other places in the region associated with Malatesta and returned to Rimini on 20 March. Marchetti, at whose hotel Pound was staying, now came to his aid and in short order Pound obtained access to the library. Pound was delighted and deeply impressed by the "noble fascist" (Marchetti), Rainey comments: "here, for Pound, was swift action replacing bureaucratic delay. He would never forget it."[196]

Indeed, Pound did remember Marchetti; from Paris he sent him an inscribed copy of *Lustra* and in June 1925 he returned to Rimini and presented him with a proof copy of *A Draft of XVI Cantos* (an event duly celebrated in the local Fascist newspaper). Pound was also impressed by Marchetti's devotion to Mussolini, in *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* he wrote of him:

> "NOI CI FACCIAMO SCANNAR PER MUSSOLINI," said my hotel-keeper in Rimini years ago, thinking I knew nothing about the revolution and wanting to get it into my head. Nothing happens without efficient cause. My hotel-keeper was also Comandante della Piazza, we had got better acquainted by reason of his sense of responsibility, or his interest in what I was doing. The local librarian had shut up the library and the Comandante had damn well decided that if I had taken the trouble to come to Romagna to look at a manuscript, the library would cut the red tape.
>
> "Scannar" is a very colloquial word meaning to get scragged. It has none of the oratorical quality of "we will die for," but that's what it means. And my friend M. was expressing a simple fact (*J/M*, 26-27).

It should be noted that while Pound finds Marchetti's eulogy of Mussolini entirely appropriate he does imply that it was superfluous, that in March 1923 he did not need to be told about the "revolution".

In a compelling reading of Pound's account of the Battle of Nidastore, Rainey demonstrates that these qualities of swift and decisive action and unflinching devotion to the figure of the leader are central to the Malatesta Cantos; and that the links between the sequence and the emergent Fascist state are not only circumstantial and contextual but are

textually transacted and intrinsic to the sequence. Pound's account begins, in the closing lines of canto X, with Malatesta exhorting his troops before the battle:

> And they came at us with their ecclesiastical legates
> Until the eagle lit on his tent pole.
> And he said: The Romans would have called that an augury
> *E gradment li antichi cavaler romanj*
> *davano fed a quisti annutii,*
> All I want you to do is to follow the orders,
> They've got a bigger army,
> but there are more men in this camp. (10:47)

With its "soldierly simplicity" and "direct appeal to manly pride and camaradie" this is very much a set-piece, even Sigismondo's appropriation of the eagle as an "augury" can be seen as generic.[197] However the two lines he transcribes in the original from his source, Broglio's *Cronaca universale* (significantly one of the documents he consulted in Rimini's municipal library in March 1923), translated by Rainey as "And the ancient Romans placed great faith in such annunciations,"[198] strike a somewhat unusual note; an invocation of Roman valour would be a commonplace but here it is Roman interpretative strategies that are stressed. The account continues in the opening lines of canto XI with a repetition of the two lines from Broglio followed by a roll-call of Sigismondo's captains and an inventory of the relative strength of the two armies (which confirms the earlier statement of the numerical superiority of the "papishes"). These retard the narrative and build up suspense before the episode ends with an already quoted account of Sigismondo's rout of the Papal forces beginning with the lines:

> And we beat the papishes and fought
> Them back through the tents (11:48)

Sigismondo's victory was a triumph for his military and interpretative strategy. The switch to a first-person plural mode of narration is a significant and sweeping gesture that includes Sigismondo's men and the larger audience of readers in this triumph.

For Rainey, Malatesta "achieves his victory by virtue of his capacity to interpret an event as an augury, a sign":

> Confronted with an unexpected event in the face of a cataclysm that threatens his destruction, Sigismondo reads it through the prism of history, interprets its significance for the present, and transforms it into a guide for conduct in the future, so lending interpretation a performative dimension

> within "the present" of the text, turning it into an exhortation to action in the face of an overwhelmingly hostile reality.[199]

Rainey calls this "the 'Sigismondo paradigm' of interpretation – an ideal configuration of event and text, reading and history – which constitutes one of the principal protocols offered by *The Cantos*, a paradigm of its own interpretative activity and a model of how that activity should be assimilated by readers."[200] In the Malatesta Cantos Sigismondo's act of interpretation, "an act of will that is simultaneously an act of memory and of vaticination," enables him to "wrest" a "momentary order, an evanescent victory" from what Rainey, quoting Davie, describes as the "ever murkier chaos" of events. "What is recovered at such moments," Rainey defines as, "an experiential essence, a glimpse of pure being as it stands stripped of historical and social accretions, a laying bare of fundamental identity."[201]

The story of the hotel-keeper, the librarian and the traveling scholar and poet conforms to the same paradigm. Marchetti's faith in and devotion to his *Duce* is the source of his "sense of responsibility," and of his power of swift and decisive action (he can cut through "red tape" and bureaucratic inertia as Sigismondo can through his enemies). It is also a paradigmatic narrative of what Griffin refers to as the "core myth" of Fascism ("the vision of the (perceived) crisis of the nation as betokening the birth pangs of a new order. It crystallises in the image of the national community, once purged and rejuvenated, rising phoenix-like from the ashes of a morally bankrupt state system and the decadent culture associated with it").[202] In this respect it is instructive to compare Pound's account of the Battle of Nidastore with a speech made by Mussolini "three days before the March on Rome and on the very day on which he drew up plans for the March."[203]

Mussolini begins, like Sigismondo, by flattering his followers and by assuring them that he will not betray the ideals of Fascism or its adherents in order to win a place in government: "we Fascists have no intention of coming to power by the tradesman's entrance; we Fascists do not intend to turn our backs on the first recruits of our movement, such fearsome and ideal followers, for a miserable dish of ministerial pottage." This, he explains, is because "we have a vision of the problem that could be called historical, in contrast to that other vision which could be called political or parliamentary."[204] Mussolini's audience would probably have understood this as referring to *trasformismo*, the complex system of temporary and pragmatic (as opposed to ideological) coalitions and alliances between political factions (usually the representatives of local and sectional interests) that, in the absence of strong political parties, had

dominated Italian politics. Mussolini is promising that Fascism will not be assimilated and neutralized because it is not interested in "assembling any old government" but in "injecting into the liberal State [. . .] all the force of the new Italian generation which resulted from the war and our victory."[205] The historical logic of Fascism is thus not the logic of a history of particular and concrete political institutions and practices but of the history of "something spiritual,"[206] the nation, and this history is not authorized by its fidelity, as a representation, to any set of "past structures and processes" but on the "faith" invested in it. The Fascist "vision" is not, in practice, "historical" but mythical.

The parallels with Malatesta's exhortation to his troops in cantos X and XI are obvious: in both total "faith" in the leader's "vision" and in his capacity to translate that vision into action ('obeying orders') are salient. "Faith" and "obedience" were Fascism's cardinal virtues; in 1923 Mussolini told "individual fascists [. . .] that they had only one duty, that of absolute obedience to himself" and in 1925, Farinacci, the party secretary, declared that "faith [. . .] was more useful than brains."[207]

This speech, as Griffin points out, "also adumbrates the creation of a 'total(itarian)' state"[208] and this can be seen as providing another significant parallel with the Malatesta Cantos. I have described Pound's *quattrocento* Rimini as "proto-totalitarian state" and by this I do not mean simply that it was an undemocratic state ruled by a single individual intolerant of opposition or dissent and so a prefiguration of modern totalitarian regimes such as Mussolini's (although this is to an extent the case). When Pound was composing the Malatesta Cantos no fully-fledged totalitarian state existed although the Bolsheviks and Mussolini's Fascists were in the process of creating such. Although Pound was keenly interested in, and broadly approving of, both regimes and, initially at least, seems to have regarded them as essentially akin, I am not suggesting that he simply projected them back into Renaissance Italy as models of a proto-totalitarian state. It is, perhaps, more accurate to say that Pound saw, and understood or misunderstood, them as modern instances of his version of Renaissance Rimini.

Pound's model of the "proto-totalitarian state" was derived, I believe, from Burckhardt's concept of the "state as a work of art." For Burckhardt the long "struggle between the Popes and the Hohenstaufen" (the Holy Roman Emperors) decisively weakened both and brought into being a "multitude of political units [. . .] whose existence was founded simply on their power to maintain it" and, as a corollary "a new fact appears in history – the State as the outcome of reflection and calculation, the State

as a work of art."[209] From this "follows, worked out in detail, the purely modern fiction of the omnipotence of the State":

> The prince is to take everything into his charge, to maintain and restore churches and public buildings, to keep up the municipal police, to drain the marshes, to look after the supply of wine and corn; so to distribute the taxes that the people can recognize their necessity; he is to support the sick and the helpless, and to give his protection and society to distinguished scholars, on whom his fame in after ages will depend.[210]

Although Burckhardt celebrated the intellectual and artistic achievements of these "political units" he was also aware of their sinister potential, their proto-totalitarianism.[211] For Burckhardt these despotisms were an aberrant form of the Renaissance cult of the individual that produced both "the richest development of human individuality" and the individuality of the despots for which "no other individuality could be suffered to live and thrive but their own and that of their nearest dependents."[212]

The influence of Burckhardt on Pound, and the equally significant differences between the two, is nowhere more apparent than in Pound's thinking on the relationship between the individual and the state. Pound saw Fascism as being on the side of the "responsible" individual (the qualification was necessary to sustain the fiction). This is readily apparent in the story of the hotel keeper and the librarian which in Pound's version becomes a fable of an individual "sense of responsibility" reducing the state to its "its proper, and wholly mechanical functions."

According to Hayden White, "the voice with which Burckhardt *addressed* his audience was that of the Ironist" and he held that "the truths taught by history were melancholy ones. They led neither to hope nor to action."[213] Pound appropriated much of Burckhardt's analysis but not this "Ironic" vision of history. For Pound *quattrocento* Rimini was the epitome of "the state as a work of art," although he never actually so described it, and it is represented as such in the Malatesta Cantos. In the process what was in Burckhardt analytical and profoundly ambiguous becomes an ideal and a model for emulation. The concept is implicit in the encomium to the "thoroughness of Rimini's civilization in 1460" in the Frontispiece to *Guide to Kulchur*, but what Pound understood by "the state as a work of art" is more readily apparent from his description of a state that fails to achieve this status in the less frequently cited "EPILOGUE to balance the frontispiece." In the "EPILOGUE" Pound gives the following account of pre-First World War London:

> There was in London 1908 to '14 an architect named Ricards (of Lanchester & Ricards), the last pastoral mind, and a man with true sense of form, that is in three dimensions and hollow. His buildings were magnificent until finished. Their structure was the work of genius and their final encrustation the tin-horn ornament of the never sufficiently damned 1900. (*GK*, 346)

In its organisation, in the ordering of relation of part to part and of parts to the whole, "the state as a work of art" should exhibit the 'organic unity' of a good poem, painting or piece of sculpture. This is not a question of formal arrangement of elements or parts but is the product of the *virtù* of the prince or ruler. The "the state as a work of art" is the creation of a ruler-artist, such as Malatesta who "cut his notch" (*GK*, 159), who works the material of the state, including the human material, as a poet works language. Pound discerned these qualities in the nascent totalitarianism of Fascist Italy. Mussolini he insisted was such an ruler-artist:

> I don't believe any estimate of Mussolini will be valid unless it *starts* from his passion for construction. Treat him as *artifex* and all the details fall into place. (*J/M*, 33-34)

Pound may have only 'theorised' his model of the 'totalitarian state as a work of art' in the early 1930's but it is presented in its essence in the Malatesta Cantos some ten years earlier.

Griffin's definition of a "mythic core" establishes further significant connections between what he terms "generic fascism" and the Malatesta Cantos. Noting its "recurrent obsession with national rebirth and the need for a 'new man,'" Griffin defines "generic fascism" as "a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism."[214] Griffin defines "palingenesis" as "rebirth" but, following the *OED*, this should be understood in the looser and wider sense to cover regeneration, revival, re-animation and resuscitation.[215] Revival, rebirth, rejuvenation, renaissance and *risorgimento* were, as I have shown, recurrent terms in Pound's literary and cultural writings from 1910 onwards and after 1920 they became central to his political and social polemics. For instance, in *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* Pound recalls his earliest impressions of the "Italian awakening" under Fascism in terms significantly similar to those he had used to describe the American Renaissance some twenty years earlier (note in particular the importance given to translation – for Pound always the harbinger of a revival):

> The bookshop windows began to change. In place of the old line, Dante, Petrarch, Tasso and Ariosto, there began to appear slowly translations of Kipling and Dostoievsky and, as the hole in the dyke widened, the torrent of translations good, bad and indifferent [. . .] though not yet any real criteria nor any successful effort to get the best before the worst. As far as the public is concerned no such effort is apparent in France, England, or America. (*J/M*, 84)

Again, this emphasis on revival and the advent of a "new man" can be traced back to Burckhardt who described "the firstborn among the sons of modern Europe" and argued that at the Renaissance "man became a spiritual *individual,* and recognized himself as such."[216] Again he links this development specifically with the rise of the despots:

> Despotism, as we have already seen, fostered in the highest degree the individuality not only of the tyrant or Condottiere himself, but also of the men whom he protected or used as his tools – the secretary, minister, poet, and companion. These people were forced to know all the inward resources of their own nature, passing or permanent; and their enjoyment of life was enhanced and concentrated by the desire to obtain the greatest satisfaction from a possibly very brief period of power and influence.[217]

Antonio Beltramelli whose 1912 *Un tempio d'amour* 1912 (*The Temple of Love*) was an important source for the Malatesta Cantos[218] provides an additional, and more explicit, connection between the "new men" of the Renaissance and those of the Fascist era. Beltramelli, who joined the Fascist party in 1919 and was active on its behalf in the cultural field until his death in 1930, published the first biography of Mussolini, *L'uomo nuovo* (*The New Man*), in 1923. In that biography "seeking to furnish Mussolini with a cultural genealogy, Beltramelli located his forerunners in the house of Malatesta."[219] It is difficult to believe that Pound was not aware of, or that he would not have approved of, this significant conjunction.

Finally, it may be noted that shortly before he began work on the Malatesta Cantos Pound staged his own palingenesis. In April 1922 Margaret Anderson received photographs of what purported to be Pound's death-mask and a postcard from Dorothy (dated Siena "April 14 1922") informing her that there was "nothing more to be said"

(*EP/LR*, 283). Two days previously Pound had written to Quinn, "if you hear a rumour of my death, don't be disturbed but fer Gawd's sake DONT CONTRADICT IT. I shall be dead to the world" (*EP/JQ*, 208). Probably this was a ruse to obtain a respite from the pressures of work. Alternatively, Pound may have intended some sort elaborate hoax or joke, probably connected with his announcement of the end of the Christian Era, at the expense of Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap.

What can be said with certainty about this bizarre and enigmatic episode is that the most important shade Pound encountered on his self-imposed return trip to Hades was that of Malatesta and that he returned to the land of the living, Paris, in early July 1922 a 'new man' of sorts – the author of "a poem including history."

CHAPTER THREE
AMERICAN REVOLUTIONS

no American history,
no centre, no general root, [85:563]

Introduction

"American Revolutions" is intended to suggest, in the first instance, Pound's 'turn' to the matter of America and also, more loosely, the 'turn' of historical and contemporary events in the United States. Revolution also bears a stronger and narrower meaning in this context. Pound frequently described Mussolini's usurpation of power in Italy as the "Fascist Revolution" and in the 1920s his model of an "American Renaissance" began to take on aspects of an 'American Revolution,' parallel or equivalent to, the "Fascist Revolution."

This chapter deals generally, but not comprehensively, with Pound's engagement with American history (including literary history) and politics focusing for the most part on his prose writing and correspondence. However, to speak here of 'context' or 'background' would be misleading in so far as it implies a relationship between text and context very much at odds with my broadly extrinsic approach. What I am trying to do in this chapter could perhaps best be described as an attempt to give a critical account of the *mise en scène* of the American history cantos, taking *mise en scène* to signify the totality of the staging and not merely the stage setting.

The first two sections, "National Epic and the American Long Poem" and "Uses of the Past," explore the specifically American dimension of questions raised earlier in the thesis. Section 1 inserts *The Cantos* into the long-running debate about an American epic, a debate that has shifted from prescriptive demands for a national epic to descriptive assertions that the "long poem" is a characteristically American form. "Uses of the Past" asserts the fundamental didacticism of Pound's historiography and relates it to contemporary attempts to 'create a usable past.' Section 3, "Teethadorus and the Codfish," describes Pound's view of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson and argues that this early foray into American politics establishes a significant pattern that is repeated in his later more notorious political engagements. "Italy's Boss, America's

Duce" focuses on how Pound 'Americanised' Mussolini and places this in the context of perceptions of and responses to the Italian dictator in the United States. The final section, "Correspondences," examines Pound's relationships, conducted mostly by mail, with three American politicians. These correspondences are attempts to intervene directly in the American political process; although they were a failure as such, they provide valuable insights into Pound's political thinking and can also be read as an interesting and significant counterpart to the American history cantos.

This chapter is more loosely organised than the two that have preceded it, or than the two that will follow it. It seeks to convey two important points. Firstly, although I do not provide a comprehensive account of Pound's historical and political concerns I do establish the scope and seriousness of his engagement with American history and politics and its centrality to *The Cantos*. Secondly, while I am not primarily concerned with questions of influence (either of others on Pound or of Pound on others), I am interested in discovering affinities, congruences and parallels between Pound and his contemporaries. The purpose of this is not to prove that Pound was right or wrong but to demonstrate that while he was undeniably idiosyncratic he was rarely eccentric.

1 National Epic and the American Long Poem

By 'national epic' I mean those now largely unread works of the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary period, loosely (or simply inexpertly) modelled on traditional epics, that celebrate American achievements and heroism – Joel Barlow's *The Columbiad* (1807) is perhaps the best-known example. The 'American long poem' (*Leaves of Grass* is usually seen as the earliest example) is more difficult to define briefly. It is most often, and perhaps most usefully, characterised as 'open-ended' or simply as open. It is open in that it lacks narrative or formal closure, and "because it needs to include, or to seem to include, everything it encounters during the course of its composition."[1]

Most accounts of the American long poem predicate its emergence and development on the earlier and ignominious demise of the national epic. Even those critics and scholars who prefer the designation "modern verse epic" for such works as *The Cantos* and *Paterson*, and who argue that they belong to and transform the epic genre, tend to see them as rejecting the national epic. Bernstein states this explicitly:

> While it is true that at least since Joel Barlow the theme of celebrating the United States has been part of the country's literary tradition, this was far from the solution that Williams envisaged. [2]

The problem with this is not, or is not only, that it is incomplete or inaccurate but that it is constructed around what John P. McWilliams calls an "absent center," and so is a history of "two ends without a middle."[3] This results in a distortion, a loss of perspective, whereby differences are thrown into high relief while significant continuities, correspondences and generic affinities with the traditional epic and with its distinctively American variant are erased or obscured. McWilliams's revisionist history of the American epic, *The American Epic: Transforming a Genre 1770 – 1860*, supplies the "middle" at the expense of the "two ends."

For McWilliams the origin and essence of epic – *epos* – is heroic narrative, and *epos* is neither identical to nor coextensive with the traditional verse epic. Etymologically this may be dubious, but McWilliams's basic point that the essence of *epos* can, and should, be distinguished from the accidents of the Homeric or Virgilian epic is a valid one. It was also the case, according to McWilliams, "that, once prose became the dominant literary medium, no poem could any longer do the cultural work required of epic."[4] The nineteenth-century American *epos*, McWilliams argues, is to be found in the prose forms of history and the novel, in such works as Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843) and Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851). I would agree, and would add to the above list Hawthorne's cycle of tales dealing with colonial and Revolutionary history – "Endicott and the Red Cross," "The Maypole of Merry Mount," "The Gray Champion" and "Legends of the Province House" (all from *Twice-Told Tales*, 1837) – which seem to me to have at least an equal claim to the status of epos.

Unfortunately, when he comes to consider Whitman, and the post-Whitman long poem, McWilliams's sense of generic flexibility deserts him, and his commitment to prose leads him to reject the possibility of a modern verse *epos*:

> Whether one calls these works "personal epics," "poetical autobiographies," "tales of the tribe" or "self-generated myths," they will always remain long, loosely unified works, without narrative, without a culturally accepted hero, and written in a literary form valued by a miniscule fraction of the reading public. [. . .] In all these respects, the writing of a personal epic is at variance with the basic connotations of the term *epos*.[5]

McWilliams is entitled to his antipathies but, I would argue, he is mistaken in seeing *epos* and the modern verse epic, and in particular *The Cantos*, as incompatible. *Epos*, as McWilliams defines it, represents and engages with historical events (sometimes fictionalised) and it has what McWilliams elsewhere describes "a choric role in defining its people's identity."[6] This can scarcely be seen as being "at variance" with Bernstein's previously quoted description of *The Cantos*, and of the modern verse epic generally, as a public, didactic poem whose function it is to celebrate and transmit the record of the "tribe's" achievements, the deeds of its great men, its laws etc. The poem is public both in the sense that it deals with "public events" and in being "addressed to the citizen, not to the private individual": [7] for McWilliams *epos* is defined, as the epic was for Pound, by the 'inclusion of history.'

This, however, does not solve the problem of the audience or of the lack of one. It is because it can appeal to only a "a miniscule fraction of the reading public" that the modern verse epic cannot "do the cultural work [. . .] required of epic" or fulfil a "choric role:"

> From Whitman's time to Berryman's, the American poet who has claimed that his own visionary power is sufficient for heroism has been discovered, promoted, supported, and read, not by the American people as a whole, but by the academy and other writers.[8]

It is, of course, true to say that the modern verse epic does not make the bestseller lists but that in itself does not justify the point McWilliams is trying to make. His view of traditional epic as a form of folk art is naive and inaccurate. Internal evidence (for example, the scene in *Odyssey* VIII in which the bard Demodocus sings of the Trojan War) suggests that even primary epics were courtly poems aimed primarily at the ruling elite; the secondary or literary epic flourished in ages in which literacy was the exception rather than the rule and so was of necessity a minority form. A similar point could be made about the nineteenth-century American epos. Cooper's work had, by the standards of its day, a wide audience (although *Moby-Dick*, during Melville's lifetime, did not) but the claim that it spoke to, or for, "the American people as a whole" cannot be sustained.

Gore Vidal, whose books do sell and who could be described on the basis of his historical novels as a contemporary producer of American *epos*, has defined fame for the writer (or "any artist") as "the extent to which the Agora finds interesting his latest work," and on this basis has declared: "There is no such thing as a famous novelist now, any more than there is such a thing as a famous poet."[9] For Vidal the Agora's lack of

concern with poetry is axiomatic and most contemporary readers would agree with him (if only to deplore the fact). Pound belonged to an age in which there were, in Vidal's sense of the word, famous poets (for example, Kipling and Yeats), and he never lost his belief in such poetic fame. He wanted, desperately, a public poetry, a poetry written *pro bono publico*, a poetry that could pass as current on the Agora (the place where the business of the *res publica* was conducted), and tried to write it. For Pound, that did not require a mass audience (civilisation was the work of the few and not of the many). Even in his own terms, Pound did not succeed in this, but, while the intention cannot be taken for the deed, the desire, the imperative, must be recognised and given due weight. McWilliams is wrong to see Pound, and other modern poets, as having, perversely and wilfully, turned their backs on some contemporary equivalent of the nineteenth-century "reading public;" rather, the modern verse epic should be read as a complex and significant response to the loss of the possibility of such an audience.

There is, in fact, a greater and more significant, degree of continuity between the modern verse epic and the national epic than is generally recognised. Critical failures even in their own day, the "soporific poems of the early Republic"[10] have long been consigned to the dustbin of literary history, or at best to the footnotes. The most obvious explanation for the failure of the national epic – lack of talent or lack of the talent peculiar to the verse epic – may be sufficient but it is not entirely satisfactory. What McWilliams describes as the "insoluble problems of content and form" faced by Barlow and others must also be taken into account.[11]

The first of these was the problem of a subject – what should a national epic be about? Barlow chose to celebrate the discovery and settlement of the continent and the colonists' struggle for independence culminating in the Revolution. William Tudor, writing in the *North American Review* in 1815, argued that the heroic age of the New World belonged to the Indians and that the history of their intertribal conflicts could furnish the matter of an authentically American –indeed, a Native American – heroic literature.[12] The *Bible* was also pressed into service as a source of matter for the national epic; Timothy Dwight's *The Conquest of Canaan* (1785), recounts at considerable length the story of Joshua and was generally understood as a figural narrative in which Joshua was a type of George Washington (Dwight denied that such was his intention).[13]

Each of these solutions to the problem of a subject raised further problems and so all of them proved to a greater or less extent unsatisfactory. The work of discovery and exploration was largely carried out by the Spanish and Portuguese (and later the French);

Columbus, the primary hero of the saga of discovery, was an Italian in the service of the king of Spain. This in itself was a problem as, although it was rarely baldly stated, it was expected that the national epic would be a WASP epic. (In the *Columbiad,* Barlow presents Columbus as a disgraced prisoner in a Spanish gaol thus separating him from the idea of Spanish imperial power by making him a victim of it.) To focus on the period of discovery, exploration and settlement also exposes a fundamental contradiction in the identity of those who aspired to produce a national epic: they were colonisers who conceived of themselves as heroic opponents of colonialism. An 'Indian epic' would, of course, have made this contradiction even more starkly and uncomfortably apparent.

For the most part, the poets of the early Republic sought to work within a tradition of epic (running from Homer to Virgil to Milton) that was essentially imperial. David Quint has argued compellingly that in the *Aeneid* Virgil accomplished "the appropriation of Homeric epic, of its imaginative and aesthetic power that is inseparably bound up with its representation of the power of the hero, for the ends of empire: as a source of inspiration or authorizing model for political domination on a mass scale."[14] Further, literary or secondary (i.e. post-Virgilian) epic is characterised by a high degree of what Quint terms "epic continuity" – "the conservative tendency of the epic genre, which inclines to perpetuate – through imitation – its own formal structures of narrative and diction, its motifs and commonplaces of plot [. . .]": thus ensuring that the "encoded" imperial message is generically "transmitted."[15]

As the subject of a national epic the Revolution raises all these problems, sometimes in an acute form, and others peculiar to itself. The American Revolution was a complex and ambiguous event that had (and has) no single agreed upon interpretation. (Political parties in the United States had their origins in disputes about the meaning and legacy of the Revolution.) This was particularly problematic for the would-be national bard; the epic is certainly a highly politicised genre and a party political epic is, at least theoretically, possible but it cannot, by definition, also be a national epic. Writing in 1815, William Tudor decreed that only "some centuries hence [. . .] when ages will have consecrated its principles and all remembrance of party feuds and passions shall have been obliterated" would the Revolution "become a fit and fruitful subject for an heroick poem."[16]

Also unhelpful to the poets, was the view, around which a measure of consensus did exist, that "the truly heroic subject, the 'real revolution,' is not the battlefield heroics of Bunker Hill, but the change in human nature made possible through political

republicanism."[17] This may well be true but it is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with the demands of a genre that recognises no higher argument than force; in traditional epic "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" are not "inalienable Rights" but are commonly the prizes or forfeits of combat. Barlow, in his preface to the *Columbiad*, articulates the difficulties of reconciling the political philosophy underpinning the Revolution and the *ethos* of the traditional epic when he writes of the *Iliad*:

> Its obvious tendency was to inflame the minds of young readers with an enthusiastic ardor for military fame; to inculcate the pernicious doctrine of the divine right of kings; to teach both prince and people that military plunder was the most honorable mode of acquiring property; and that conquest, violence and war were the best employment of nations, the most glorious prerogative of bodily strength and of cultivated mind.[18]

To this Barlow adds that "the moral tendency of the Eneid [sic] of Virgil is nearly as pernicious."[19]

The conviction that "the future of a Christian agrarian republic was the higher argument" (higher, that is, than any provided by existing heroic literature), McWilliams argues, gave rise to utopianism.[20] A tendency that can be seen in Crèvecoeur, and, more dramatically, in the official iconography of the Republic. The Great Seal of the United States proclaims the advent of a *Novus Ordo Seclorum* – a phrase that derives from Virgil, significantly not from the *Aeneid* but from the Fourth (or 'Messianic') Eclogue.[21] This utopian impulse, taken to its logical conclusion, made America's epic the world's epic, and so the hapless poets of the early Republic were required to produce not merely a national epic but a universal epic. Thus Barlow can describe the *Columbiad* as a "patriotic poem" with a "national and historical"[22] subject and then claim:

> But the real object of the poem embraces a larger scope: it is to inculcate the love of rational liberty, and to discountenance the deleterious passion for violence and war; to show that on the basis of the republican principle all good morals, as well as good government and hopes of permanent peace must be founded. [23]

It is difficult to accommodate such transnational or universalist sentiments to a nationalistic and imperialist genre such as traditional epic. For a radical like Barlow, the military triumphs of Washington, properly regarded, were as much victories for England as for the "rebels," and so the Americans and the English cannot, or should not, be presented as latter day Greeks and Trojans.

This ambiguous and problematic relation with England and Englishness presented America's aspiring epic poets with yet another difficulty. Epic, as Bakhtin has observed, belongs to an "absolute past of national beginnings and peak times;"[24] it celebrates the founders of social orders, nations and empires and the historical explanations it offers are, typically, filiopietistic. It is difficult to be filiopietistic in writing about, since an American poet engaged upon an epic of the Revolution must, "the fields of valor on which the British father had been killed."[25] The suggestion, or accusation, of patricide, although it is rarely openly articulated, was a profoundly troubling one. In "Old Esther Dudley," Hawthorne's description of the Revolutionary leader John Hancock as wearing "a gouty shoe, which, however, did not lessen the stateliness of his gait"[26] may be a naturalistic detail but it is also, unmistakably, an allusion to the patricide Oedipus ("swell-foot" in Greek). One of the most widely-known stories associated with the Revolution, the banal anecdote of George Washington and the cherry tree, can be read as a parable of how it is possible to set aside the authority of the father and still retain honour and virtue.

For McWilliams the "insoluble problems of [...] form" confronted by the poets of the early Republic were largely the result of trying to write an epic in the age of the novel, an age characterised by Lukács as one "in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given."[27] These have been discussed at some length in Chapter One. A more specific formal difficulty was that of avoiding anachronism and absurdity in a plausible and poetically satisfying articulation of the past and the present. A concrete instance of this is provided by the "vexingly apparent problem" of "the portrayal of divine agency." Traditional epic poets deployed an elaborate mythological or supernatural apparatus and introduced gods and goddesses as actors into their narratives. By the end of the eighteenth century this was simply not possible without a massive loss of credibility and violation of decorum. I cannot better McWilliams's statement of the problem: "to assert that God's Providence had willed republican victories was not quite the same as claiming that Moloch had physically walked the battlefield at Saratoga."[28]

Barlow and the other national epic poets fretted against the exigencies and restrictions of a genre to which they could not successfully conform and which they were unable to transform or transcend. They were, at best, mediocre poets but it should also be recognised that the strategies and techniques, and the underpinning generic 'theory,' available to them were inadequate to the task at hand. The view that they were succeeded by a generation of geniuses who began again at the beginning, and that with Whitman a

new poetic order emerged and rendered obsolete both the abortive epics of the previous generation and their entailed problems is simplistic and unjust. Whitman and those who came after him were the heirs to the problems unsuccessfully confronted by the national epic poets – the heirs who succeeded in solving those problems; there is a greater, and more significant, degree of continuity between the American long poem and the national epic than is generally recognised.

Fender traces the American long poem back to Emerson's essay "The Poet" (1844) and quotes the famous passage beginning "I look in vain for the poet whom I describe," the poet with a "tyrannous eye, which knew the value of our incomparable materials, and saw, in the barbarism and materialism of the times, another carnival of the same gods whose picture he so much admires in Homer [...]."[29] For Fender, Whitman was that poet. The problem with this is that it places all the emphasis on what is new and discontinuous in Emerson; it would be equally possible to argue that the poet Emerson looked for had much in common with the ideal national bard sought by earlier generations and that the real difference between Joel Barlow and Walt Whitman, in this respect, was that the latter succeeded where the former failed.

Fender goes on to argue that while the earlier poets depended on a "European model" (a literary model such as the *Aeneid*),[30] Whitman and the poets who followed him "adapt to the sphere of aesthetics an old English and American tradition of millennial prophecy."[31] Thus the "American long poem," like all millennial writing, is concerned with a "new dispensation" brought about by the "stripping away" of "all the elaborations of law, polity, formula and image" of the old order.[32] This is "intensely 'American'" because the "millennial habit of thinking" has been "so strangely prolonged in the history of the American imagination."[33] There is more continuity than Fender allows. "Millennial poetics" can be seen as a successful solution to the problem of finding a mode for the expression of American universalism (the oxymoron is deliberate) – a problem that the poets of an earlier generation were acutely aware of but unable to solve. The utopian tendency of the national epic can be seen anticipating the "millennial poetics" of the long poem. The resort to millennialism as a mode of accommodating traditional epic to a new dispensation while it may be "intensely 'American'" is not peculiarly or distinctively so, nor is it new. The writers of the early Church did something very similar with Virgil, transforming his prediction of a Roman *imperium sine fine* into a prophecy of the Christian millenium.

2 Uses of the Past

The title of this section is derived from Van Wyck Brooks's essay "On Creating a Usable Past" (published in the *Dial* in 1918). There is much in Brooks's essay with which Pound would have agreed, not least Brooks's commendation of writers as the voice of the present and his contention that the most urgent task facing the contemporary American writer was the acquisition of such a "usable past" (what Barthes might have called a *scriptible* past). Brooks's description of how a "usable past" has been, and may again be, created forcefully recalls Pound's desription of Odysseus holding his sword over the "dark blood" to "keep off the impetuous impotent dead" until Tiresias should bid him "Stand from the fosse, leave me my bloody bever" [1:3-4]:

> We have had our historians, too, and they have held over the dark backward of time the divining-rods of their imagination and conjured out of it what they wanted and what their contemporaries wanted. [34]

However, while I am happy to note these parallels as evidence of Pound's non-eccentricity, I don't want to build too much on them.

I have begun with "On Creating a Usable Past" because it is, somewhat obliquely, illustrative of larger tendencies. Firstly, although Brooks was primarily concerned with literary history, his call for a historiography orientated towards the present aligns him with Charles Beard and the American New Historians. Secondly, Brooks's critique of the poverty of contemporary historicism ("the past that survives in the common mind of the present is a past without living value."[35]) appeared at a time when the uses of the past were a matter of urgent public and political significance. In 1917 and 1918 America's past was being mobilised as never before, and put to work in support of, or in some cases in opposition to, the war effort (the United States entered World War I on 6 April, 1917). Historians "because their talents lent themselves to explaining and publicizing the background and issues of the war" were central to this process.[36] This is not to say that all historians became propagandists – some, of course, did – but to recognise that in periods of fundamental and traumatic change the role of the historian as chronicler and explainer is a high profile one.

Hayden White asserts that history "is never simply history," but always "'history for,' history written in the interest of some infrascientific aim or vision."[37] This is true, but it is a truth that is more readily apparent at some times than at others; 1917 to 1919 in

America was one such time. Thus Pound began his turn towards history, and towards a "poem including history," at a time when historical explanations had a significant public role and a clearly defined purpose. *The Cantos* are clearly and strongly marked by this historiographical provenance. The remainder of this section asks what Pound's histories were 'for' – to whom were they addressed and to what end.

From June to November 1919, Pound published, in *The New Age*, a series of articles under the general title "Pastiche: the Regional," most of which were written between April and September in southern France. Part travel writing and part a loosely textured series of meditations on history, literature and the state of the contemporary world, these pieces show Pound taking stock and beginning to move tentatively in a new direction; they are essential documents for an understanding of the development of *The Cantos* as a "poem including history," a view shared by Bush who reads them as a riposte to Joyce's view of "history as nightmare" and describes "The Regional" VII and VIII as an "admirable gloss" for Cantos V and VI.[38] Carpenter finds in them "some very precise thoughts about the method he was beginning to practise in his new cantos."[39] What has not been adequately explored is the American dimension of the series.

Pound had been unable to leave England while the war lasted and the 1919 trip was probably an attempt to get back in touch with his pre-War world, more specifically he may have been trying to recreate his walking tour of 1912;[40] if so, he was unsuccessful. What confronted Pound in France was his own problematic Americanness. In 1919 America was everywhere visible in France; Toulouse had a "Place President Wilson" and a "Bar President Wilson":

> I am recuperating. I am, I trust, attaining detachment far from the "Place President Wilson," for the Toulousains have rechristened the centre of regional vice "Place President Wilson;" far, also, from the "Bar President Wilson", for the Toulousains, wishing to compensate the American troops for the impending drought in Missouri, have provided a "Bar President Wilson" – from which I have escaped to bull-baiting and to the sanctuary of schism (*EPPP* III, 314).

The most important discovery Pound made on his 1919 trip to France did not concern Montségur or the Troubadours, schismatics and heretics of medieval Provence: it was the realisation that the United States was now a world power.

In the "The Regional" III, published two days before the Treaty of Versailles was signed on 28 June 1919, Pound presents and juxtaposes two vignettes of his visit to Arles; the first features an American officer, presumably a member of the American

Expeditionary Forces (many American soldiers remained in Europe after the Armistice as what Gary Mead describes as "reluctant participants in the messily complicated post-war settlement"[41]), and the second a small party of English tourists. I will quote the passage at length:

> Let it stand, however, – since we are on the subject of manner and manners – that it was not a native, but an American officer, whom I saw combing his hair at table, between the soup and the fish, not in a pension bourgeoise, but in a rather good hotel (i.e., one that I would not have entered if I had known how much the lunch was to cost me). This perhaps shows transpontine naïvete; it is a habit of which a good woman (or even a passably pretty woman) could probably cure him in a fortnight. At any rate, my compatriot's action was not aggressive; it tended towards cleanliness of his person; his companions did not seem to mind it, and I was on the other side of the room, far enough to feel that my food was secure.
>
> The imperial "symbol" manifested itself in Britanic splendour somewhat later. There are at adjoining corners of the Place du Forum two fraternal hotels. They, two males and one female of the middle acting or lower stockbroking contingent (phonetics identified by the sound "Snizer" for the graphic representation "It is nicer") were not content with the benches in front of their own hotel – seat of the same format, same outlook, same apparent advantages. Seeing their distress I amiably moved to the end of the bench I was occupying. At the end of seven minutes I heard the middle male uttering wishes that I would depart and leave them in full possession. It is of course accidental that I understand the English of this particular caste; many Frenchmen would not have understood it; but the spirit of this brief prayer costs England many millions per annum. It is at the root of a great deal of trouble in India, and the "Orient." No Hindu can be expected to like it; no Irishman can be expected to like it. I, on the contrary, could welcome it in this instance, as an opportunity for critical impartiality. There is, I understand, a vast level of this sort of nature (*caractère*) in England, stretching from the said stage to the lower rungs of the "Intelligentsia." (*EPPP* III, 318)

At first reading this appears to be a tale of two stereotypes – the uncouth 'Yank' (or perhaps the 'innocent abroad') and the xenophobic 'Brit' for whom the French are foreigners even in France – and in part it is, but there is a good deal more to it.

By June 1919 the euphoria that two years earlier had greeted the first United States troops to arrive in France had largely disappeared and the American soldier in France was "no longer an honored saviour from a hated oppressor, but an alien who had overstayed his welcome."[42] Pound's officer is a compound of two of the most frequently complained of characteristics of Americans in Europe – bad manners and too much money (he is lunching in an expensive restaurant where, by implication, he has no

business).[43] Pound's treatment of him, however, is sympathetic, if slightly patronising: his faults are those of "naïvete" rather than malice and are readily curable, they might even be seen as stemming from a misguided but virtuous impulse (the love of "cleanliness"), and above all he is not "aggressive."

Pound's portrait of the English tourists, by contrast, is harsh, and stresses not insularity or cultural insensitivity but aggression. Pound explicitly introduces the "imperial" motif at the outset and then carefully and clearly establishes a sequence of events: the English leave their own perfectly adequate space and invade his, are "amiably" received and then they attempt to drive him out of it. It is a gratuitous, if feeble and futile, act of territorial aggression that allows Pound to present himself, briefly and comically, as a victim of British imperialism. He didn't like it. However, to emphasise Pound's momentary sympathy for his 'fellow victims' is to miss the point. The point is that Pound was not a "Hindu" or an "Irishman" but an American and that, in 1919, changed everything; what Pound felt was not resentment at the arrogance of power but contempt for a failed imperial order. Pound's anatomising of English "stockbroking contingent" is brutally anthropological, and anthropology, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, was the prerogative of the imperial master.

What I have delineated is the representation of an event in the history of the anglophone *imperium*, an event that could be described as a version of the *translatio imperii*. Taken together, Pound's two vignettes chronicle the shifting of imperial power from Britain to the United States, or at any rate a "luminous" episode in that process. In 1919 this was not in itself news. From before the Boer War (1899-1902) the more intelligent British imperialists, such as Kipling, saw that the British Empire could only survive as some form of Anglo-American enterprise. However, this version of the *translatio imperii* is far removed from the imperial partnership Kipling dreamt of two decades earlier when he exhorted the United States to "take up the White Man's burden." The idea of an Anglophone empire held some appeal for Pound (the two hotels in the vignette are "fraternal") and his move away from it here reflected larger historical changes rather than the onset of Anglophobia (a term that is generally unsatisfactory as a description of Pound's complex attitude to England). The alliance between Britain and the United States, eagerly sought by the former and, finally, almost as eagerly embraced by the latter, did not prove an entirely happy one and the differences between the two became more marked in the immediate post-War period.

In this respect Pound's 1919 version of the *translatio imperii* was a typical product of its historical moment.

"The Regional" III also marks a momentous event in the history of Pound's evolution as an epic poet. Whether he was aware of it at the time or not, in that hotel dining room, which he would not have entered had he known in advance the price of the lunch, Pound discovered, in a gauche AEF officer, the reader for whom he would write *The Cantos*. This statement, although it requires explanation and qualification, is not as fanciful or outlandish as it may appear to be at first sight. Obviously, I am not claiming to have found Pound's Beatrice or suggesting that for forty or so years the image of this anonymous individual remained (comb in hand) constantly before Pound's mind's eye as the sole addressee of *The Cantos*. I intend the AEF officer as a type, a representative figure of an audience that Pound sought to address.

Any attempt to define, or even describe, the audience or readership of *The Cantos* is beset with methodological and theoretical difficulties. There is a considerable discrepancy between the reader required by the text, what is sometimes called the "implied reader," and Pound's ideal reader (the reader he thought he was writing for or hoped to reach). The required reader of *The Cantos* might be described as a polymath with a lot of time and patience and the run of a good library or failing that someone with access to Terrell's *Companion*. My guess (I have no way of quantifying or substantiating it) is that most actual readers of *The Cantos* are Pound scholars or students, and belong to one or other of these categories or fall somewhere between the two. The ideal reader is quite different. Pound conceived *The Cantos* as the "tale of the tribe" and as "a school book for princes" and his intentions, as I have said repeatedly, were fundamentally didactic and instrumentalist. The ideal reader must have, in the first instance, the wit and erudition to work out what is being said, but also the "directio voluntatis" (the capacity to put ideas into action), and some degree of executive power, the ability (essentially political) to make things happen.

In a useful account of "Pound's conception of his audience," Bernstein argues that "the actual number of its readers" was less important than the "requirement [. . .] that those readers represent a decisive force in establishing the political and social conditions of the whole society":

> The poem itself might be read by only all-powerful Emperor and by the small educated class occupying the culturally and politically dominant

> administrative posts, and still exert a profound indirect influence upon the populace. [. . .] In order fully to realise their intentions, *The Cantos* probably needed to reach – and guide – a Jefferson (or, in Pound's case, a Mussolini), capable of ordering the nation by the authority of his judgements. Pound's naïveté about the likelihood of such a situation is part of his entire political outlook.[44]

Of particular interest here is the idea that Pound's discourse can have a direct and indirect object and the possibility, suggested but not developed by Bernstein, that the Emperor might be 'guided' by something that he has not actually read. Pound's "naïveté" is indisputable, but he was aware that he had to do more than, metaphorically, whisper in the ear of a Mussolini or a Roosevelt. Italian Fascism, and its most astute critic, Gramsci, recognised the importance of "intermediate elites" whose function was to "explain or justify the needs of the dominant interests to the rest of society."[45] Pound would hardly have put it in these terms, but his celebration, in *The Cantos* and elsewhere, of the Confucian scholars of the Chinese imperial bureaucracy and of the Renaissance humanists who served, in various capacities, the despots of the Renaissance show that he was aware of the importance of such intermediate classes of intellectuals. It was, I believe, among the modern equivalent of these that Pound looked for his ideal audience and sought to establish a new hegemony in support of his political, cultural and economic agenda.

Although in 1919 Pound was probably not thinking of the long poem on which he had begun working as "the tale of the tribe," he was thinking, intensely and urgently, about the condition of post-War Europe and about his own situation as an American ex-patriot; this is made explicit in "The Regional" VII: "'Once in a lifetime [. . .] a man may try - without rhetoric, without hankering after grandiose utterance - to straighten out his ideas on history, the rise of nations, the development and atrophies of civilisation [. . .]" (*EPPP* III, 323). This rethinking led Pound to a rescription of his own Americanness, and this in turn entailed an obligation to instruct his fellow citizens ("citizens" must be insisted upon –Pound represents Americans not simply as culturally different from Europeans but as belonging to a different polity): specifically to educate them to fulfil their newly acquired global role. The American soldier at Arles clearly stood in need of such instruction (and was, Pound believed, susceptible to it), as an officer he was a member of an elite and so had some part, however small, "in establishing the political and social conditions of the whole society." He can be seen as a type, a representative figure, of the emerging American imperial order that Pound sought to educate.

This reading is consistent with Pound's view of the epic tradition as I have described it in the first chapter. Spenser's declaration of his intentions in writing *The Faerie Queen*, "the generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline,"[46] can be applied almost without qualification to this view of *The Cantos*. In *Guide to Kulchur* Pound lists the "things that the *polumetis* knew," and which could be learnt from Homer (and by extension from *The Cantos*) among them are:

> 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 a loss". He might as well have met Nausikaa in gibus and opera cloak. (*GK*, 146.)

Again the fit is a good one: these are precisely the qualities that Pound believed his doughboy needed to acquire.

Pound's view, if not his prescription, would have met with widespread agreement. Gary Mead writes of the AEF that its "real weakness [. . .] was, in manpower terms, its lack of capable, experienced and competent middle ranking commissioned officers."[47] The pre-War United States army was, in Mead's estimation, "fairly unimpressive"; its senior officers were "elderly men who had made their mark as fighters against Native Americans" and of the "5000 or so officers and some 120,000 other ranks" under their command "few [. . .] had ever fired a shot in anger."[48] Between 1917 and 1920 four million officers and men served in the United States Army.[49] Such a massive expansion required exactly those "capable, experienced and competent middle ranking commissioned officers" that the AEF did not have and that the United States lacked the resources to produce. The fact that the United States was now a world power meant that this was not simply a military problem or a narrowly American one. America's newly acquired world role required a *cadre* of subaltern or intermediate functionaries to administer and sustain it, and that *cadre* would in some measure determine its nature and quality (what Pound might have called its level of civilization). If, as Pound believed it could and should, the American *imperium* was to become something more than a worldwide network of 'Bars President Wilson,' its formation and education was a matter of the first importance. Pound recognized this in 1919, and set to work.

In a popular song of 1919 – Sam M. Lewis and Joe Young's "How 'ya Gonna Keep'em Down on the Farm (After They've Seen Paree)?" – an old farmer, Reuben, tells his "wifey dear" that things will be different when the "boys" come home:

> Mother Reuben, I'm not fakin',
> Tho' you may think it strange;
> But wine and women play the mischief,
> With a boy who's loose with change:
> How 'ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm,
> After they've seen Paree? [50]

The popularity of Lewis and Young's song no doubt owed a great deal to its topicality, but it also rehearses a theme with deep roots in the American tradition: the problematic encounter of America and Europe, innocence and experience, and the new and the old world. The distinctively modern variation on this theme, in which the encounter of America and Europe takes the form of a traumatic loss of innocence, emerged in the post-war works of Hemingway and Fitzgerald (among others); "How 'ya Gonna Keep'em Down on the Farm?" is a popular, and burlesque, version of this.

Pound's concerns were somewhat different, but for him, as much as for Lewis and Young, the 'farm' and 'Paris' were the salient areas of American experience. If America was to be a world power (and it evidently was) then Americans must be educated in the exercise of that power. How was this to be done and particularly could it be done without losing traditional American virtues and values? The problem is precisely to achieve a balance of the 'farm' and 'Paris,' or, if you like, of stopping officers of the U.S. army from combing their hair at table without turning them into effete and decadent Europeans.

In General Order No. 30 (13 February, 1919) General Pershing, commander of the A.E.F., wrote: "This citizen army must return to the United States prepared to take an active and intelligent part in the future progress of our country."[51] To this end a network of schools was created in France and provision made for American soldiers to enrol in French and British universities; those who had passed beyond the scope of the former but who lacked the formal qualifications for the latter, were promised "an A.E.F. educational centre [. . .] to provide college and technical training." The promised "educational centre" materialised as the A.E.F. University at Beaune, described by Mark Meigs, in "Crash-Course Americanism: the A.E.F. University 1919," as "a democratic educational institution imbued with the ideals of Progressivism."[52] (This at a time when in the United

States, as a result of the Student Army Training Corps programme, universities were becoming increasingly militarised.[53]) Although it lasted for less than a year the A.E.F. can be considered a success; teaching began at Beaune in March 1919 and when "the University was in full action at mid-term, it was offering 240 courses in 36 departments to a total class enrolment aggregating 13,243."[54] The courses at Beaune were certainly varied: business was popular and there was an agricultural college and also "technical training and trigonometry, salesmanship and French literature."[55] Art classes and "endless field trips around Beaune to look at old churches and chateaux" were available.[56] In addition there was a compulsory course in citizenship (Meigs' "crash-course Americanism") consisting of a weekly one hour lecture – topics included the world food supply (given by Herbert Hoover), "The Principles of Democratic Government" and "Applied Arts and Education" – followed by two hours of "discussion, films, and lantern slides."[57]

More of a coda than a conclusion, this brief account of the AEF University at Beaune does, however, throw an interesting sidelight on *The Cantos*. The AEF University also addressed the problem of striking the balance between the farm and Paris, of how to broaden the intellectual horizons of American and at the same time affirm and maintain traditional American values. Some of the solutions found at Beaune can be seen as anticipating later developments in the mainstream of American academia.

Among the changes in American universities brought about by the War was the setting up of War Issues Courses; Gruber describes these courses as a "redeeming feature" which "proved to have long-range educational implications."[58] War Issues Courses had a "broad purpose and no uniform syllabus" (Minnesota's "began in 1870, with the creation of the German Empire [. . .] and the Franco-Prussian War," Columbia's in 1815 and Harvard's with the "Old Regime").[59] Programmes such as "the required course in contemporary civilisation at Columbia" (introduced shortly after the end of War) were, Gruber convincingly argues, a development of the War issues course.[60] This type of programme is now a standard feature of university courses in the United States and elsewhere. The "crash-course Americanism" of the AEF University may be seen as precursor (a generally unacknowledged one) of the American Studies (or American Civilisation as it was then often referred to) courses that began to develop in American universities in the 1920s and 1930s. Pound intended *The Cantos* to be, in part, the text book for just such pedagogic enterprises. Most accounts of Pound stress what is

shocking, eccentric or simply different about *The Cantos*, that they were also an attempt to "get with the programme" is less often recognised.

3 Teethadorus and the Codfish

My task in this section is three-fold: firstly, to describe and comment on what Pound wrote about Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, "Teethadorus" and the "Codfish, and the public positions he took in relation to them; secondly, to demonstrate that, although neither ever assumed the central role later accorded to Mussolini or Franklin Delano Roosevelt, they were during and immediately after World War I a significant presence in Pound's work; and, thirdly, to argue that Pound's response to, and representation of, Roosevelt and Wilson established a pattern that continued into his later work.

Pound's first published poem, "Ezra on the Strike," was written in praise of Roosevelt.[61] In October 1902 Roosevelt intervened in the five-month anthracite coal strike, compelling the mine owners and the strikers to settle the dispute by arbitration thus averting a threatened fuel-shortage. Pound's poem celebrated this 'triumph:'

> By shucks! it seems to me,
> That you and I orter be
> Thankful, that our Ted could see
> A way to operate it.
> [. . . . . .]
> No use talkin', he's the man –
> One of the best that ever ran,
> Fer didn't I turn Republican
> One o' the fust? (*EPPP* 1, 3)

Pound's family political tradition seems to have inclined to 'Radical' or 'Roosevelt Republicanism.' His grandfather, Thaddeus Coleman Pound, served three terms as a Republican congressman and was a Mugwump (one of those Republicans who "bolted" rather than support the party's nominee, James G. Blaine, in 1884). In the 1930s Pound reinvented Thaddeus as an exponent of Social Credit *avant la lettre*, but in the first instance he seems to have regarded his grandfather's political legacy as a distinctively American phenomenon, indeed as a pure product of the "Western States;" in *Indiscretions* (first published in 1923) he wrote of him:

> Thaddeus thus bequeathed to his son, my father, [. . .] a certain sophistication, a certain ability to stand unabashed in the face of the largest national luminaries, to reduce the objections of doorkeepers and minor functionaries, to pass the "ropes," etc., designed for restricting democratic ingress and demoralising the popular enthusiasm at processions (*PD*, 15).

There are scattered and broadly benign references to him in "Patria Mia" and one in "The Renaissance,"[62] but it was World War I that moved Roosevelt back to the centre of Pound's attention and concerns. From the beginning, Pound advocated American entry into the War on the side of Britain and France and saw Roosevelt as an ally in this cause. In "The Net American Loss" (written in 1915 but not published until 1989), Pound identified the "issue of this war:" "on one side stand those who believe that the state exists *for* the sake of the individual, and [. . .] on the other side, the Prussian side, stand those who believe that the individual's function is to be of use to the state."[63] It is not the Allies or civilisation that suffers from America's non-intervention but America; had America joined the Allies she would have ended the War "if not the centre of civilisation, at least a component and very significant part of the civilized organization" but "by her commercially profitable absenteeism, she reduces herself to the status of an outskirt or colony."[64] Wilson's policy, America's "commercially profitable absenteeism," was venal and dishonourable, and, in Pound's view, short-sighted in that it swapped the lesser good for the greater. In a sentence echoing, faintly and in a minor key, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," Pound sets Roosevelt's vision of Roosevelt against Wilson's myopia: "America had her chance, and Theodore Roosevelt saw it . . . and other Americans have seen it."[65]

Pound's enthusiasm for Roosevelt is apparent in his letters to John Quinn. Quinn was a Democrat and very much a political insider while Pound was an outsider and a Republican. This is, to say the least, an unpromising basis for dialogue but their shared admiration for Roosevelt (Quinn was a personal friend), dislike of Wilson and support of American entry into the War provided the necessary common ground. The most interesting Roosevelt thread in the correspondence begins in a letter dated 29 February 1916; Pound is thanking Quinn for his unsuccessful efforts to find a publisher for "The Net American Loss" (Quinn has evidently shown the piece to Roosevelt):

> Thanks for the trouble you are taking with the article. I almost got up my nerve to send a copy to T[heodore]. R[oosevelt]. myself, and then thought

> it would probably be dropped into his daily basket of letters from cranks, and thought I would wait [for] a proper introduction (*EP/JQ*, 63).

Pound was not normally so diffident – in the postscript he strikes a more characteristic note:

> BY THE WAY NEXT TIME YOU ARE EATING TEETHADORUS'S T. ROOSEVELT'S OYSTERS you might note that THE REAL TROUBLE WITH A LOT OF OUR COM-PATRIOTS IS *IGNORANCE* just BONE Abyssinian ignorance (*EP/JQ*, 64).

Here it is quite plain that Pound is attempting to conduct a correspondence with Roosevelt through Quinn. This tendency continued and with America's entry into the War took a remarkable turn. The following letter (dated 3 April 1917) refers to Roosevelt's proposal that he be allowed to raise, and lead in person, a volunteer company similar to his Rough Riders in the Cuban campaign of 1898 (the proposal was firmly rejected by Pershing[66]):

> Is Roosevelt coming to France? If so can I get "took on" as interpreter, liason-officer, correspondent or *anything*.
> I have french, italian, spanish, and some german. [. . .]
> I have also some mathematics, which might help me to learn artillery if there were any likelihood of the war going on long enough for America sufficiently to train new officers for technical work (*EP/JQ*, 100).

"If you are lunching with T. R.," Pound suggests to Quinn "you might mention the matter," and adds: "I have always been told that T. R. and my grandfather were on the same side of the fight in the party convention of '84 [. . .]" (EP/JQ, 100-101). I should think it highly unlikely that Quinn did "mention the matter," but Pound was not to be put off. On 30 April he wrote again restating his linguistic qualifications (adding "a faint reading knowledge of Portugee") and was if anything more insistent:

> I should like you to speak to Theodore if you find it convenient.
> The sensible thing would be to have him request that I be sent to France *now* to pick up what I can, attached to some division, I suppose (*EP/JQ*, 110).

On 17 May Pound made a third approach to Quinn, again stating his willingness to serve either an interpreter or an artillery officer ("It is not every grocer who can manage the necessary mathematics for the latter service" [*EP/JQ*, 116]). On this occasion Roosevelt

is not mentioned but the ulterior motive is obvious. Pound did not receive his commission and the matter seems to have been dropped; it was not, however, forgotten: in "What America Has to Live Down" (*New Age* 12 September 1918) Pound castigated the United States for its failure to make the fullest use of its expatriots during the war (*EPPP* III, 187).

There is no mention of Wilson in Pound's published work before 1914 but he does feature prominently in the articles Pound wrote on the War between 1915 and 1918. The earliest of these are attacks on Wilson's policy of neutrality. In "This Super Neutrality" (*New Age*, 21 October 1915), Pound, "writing as a citizen of a country that has quite possibly disgraced itself," argues, as he did "The Net American Loss," that this policy is short-sighted and self-defeating: "a man can be so clever at selling a horse as to lose his best friend in the process" (*EPPP* II, 115). Wilson, Pound alleges, has failed as president in his duty to the American people and to the international community and is a hypocrite into the bargain:

> The President of the United States is in a peculiar position, he is, if you like, a wilted cod-fish, a mouthpiece, a man employed to protect the interests of the American people, and bound to consider the interests of that people primarily. But the interest of that people is not solely one of immediate cash. Also after the safety of that people is within its own borders reasonably secure, there is the interest of humanity, concerning which Mr. Wilson has occasionally spoken (*EPPP* II, 115).

In a review of William Morton Fullerton's *The American Crisis and the War* (published in the *TLS* 19 October 1916) Pound endorses Fullerton's indictment of the illegality of Wilson's policy (the United States was a signatory to the Hague Convention guaranteeing Belgian neutrality and Wilson had a constitutional obligation to uphold all treaties "made under the authority of the United States").[67] Pound also agrees with Fullerton that Wilson had "damaged his country internally" and that he failed to take advantage of "a great opportunity to unite the varied elements in America."[68]

When Wilson began to take a more belligerent stance Pound attributed it to political opportunism; on 8 April 1916 he wrote to Quinn "it is too late for America to be the slightest damn use in this war, and if she does anything creditable it will be because Mr. Woodhead Cowrow Codfish Wislon wants to be reelected" (*EP/JQ*, 71). In "What America Has to Live Down" (published in the *New Age* between 22 August and 19 September 1918) Pound continued to hold Wilson responsible for America's late entry into the War: "America's delay in entering the war was an error for which President

Wilson is probably more responsible than the American people [. . .]" (*EPPP* III, 189). By this time Pound was inclined to apportion England a share of the blame "for America's tardy entry," but in doing so is careful to emphasize that he is "not whitewashing President Wilson" (*EPPP* III, 185). Even Pound's most positive, and uncharacteristically generous, assessment of Wilson reiterates the charge that he lacked vision:

> he would, I think, have made an excellent director of America's internal affairs, had he not been called upon to look at Europe in 1914. He makes, I think, an excellent war president, now that the country is finally in the war (*EPPP* III, 184).

In so far as America, even as a late entrant, emerged from the War at the centre of the world stage, Pound was quite wrong about Wilson's policy; this is implicitly recognised in "Pastiche: The Regional" but never explicitly acknowledged. As late as 1928, by which time his view of the war had changed radically, Pound was still maintaining that entry into the war at the beginning would have been beneficial to America: "the immense engulfment of bunk and sentiment [. . .] would have been spared us, perhaps by an immediate Rooseveltian Fourth of July in 1914" (*SP*, 219).

Wilson's academic background and prose style also attracted Pound's scorn. Pound disliked academics as a species and, as jeering references to "Dr. Wilson" and "Woodrow Wilson, Ph.D." (*EPPP* II, 115) indicate, he made no exception for Wilson. The implicit contrast with Roosevelt as 'man of action' (rancher, irregular cavalry officer, big-game hunter, etc.) is as obvious as it is largely misplaced. With Wilson's prose style he was on firmer ground. Wilson was widely regarded as an effective, even eloquent, public speaker, but he was not one that was ever likely to appeal to Pound; even an admirer recognises that "his meaning was sometimes abstruse" and that when "his oratory took flight [. . .] it was something to be felt rather than understood."[69] Pound described it as "a pseudo-professorial journalese language full of altitudinous generalities and unpunctured by hard, concise statement" (*EPPP* III, 171).

In their time Roosevelt and Wilson provoked intense emotion and Pound was by no means alone in strongly preferring one to the other. Yet the similarities between the two men are perhaps more striking than their differences. Both are sometimes described as Progressives, but it might be more accurate to say that both were temperamental conservatives who recognised the need for, and inevitability of, reform and administered it homoeopathically. The difference between Roosevelt's "New Nationalism" and

Wilson's "New Freedom" (the choice that confronted voters in the 1912 election) has been described as "that fantastic and imaginary gulf that always has existed between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee."[70] Roosevelt's view of the White House as a "bully pulpit" and Wilson's of the president as "the national spokesman who could appeal to people over the heads of Congress"[71] reveal a fundamentally similar conception of the presidency (and an impatience with constitutional checks and balances). On foreign policy too there was a large measure of agreement; John Milton Cooper writes: "On the issue that both considered paramount – American expansion and a larger world role – even their passionate engagement was nearly the same."[72] Even in1914 their differences were more apparent than real; Roosevelt was noisier and more bellicose but he must have known that the state of the American armed forces made war in 1914 an impossibility.[73]

This is not to say that the partisanship of Pound, and many others, or the animosity that the two men felt towards each other after 1914 – an animosity that went beyond party rivalry – was "fantastic" or based on "imaginary" differences. The differences between the two were real, but they were not primarily differences of policy or even of principle. John Milton Cooper offers the following compelling explanation of the terms of Roosevelt's "engagement" with Wilson:

> The interpretation that has come closest to capturing the full range and richness of Roosevelt's engagement is Robert E. Osgood's invocation of Friedrich Nietzsche's "distinction between the Warrior and the Priest." According to Osgood, Nietzsche's Warrior "is the man of true nobility, the man of honor transcending self-interest." Osgood further observes that toward the Priest, Nietzsche's Warrior "reserves a special loathing . . . for the will of the Priest is not the frank, straightforward will of the Warrior but rather the devious influence of a crafty intellect, which compensates the Priest for his physical weakness by investing cowardice with the semblance of morality."[74]

This, of course, should be read not as a description of Roosevelt and Wilson but as an account of a mode of perceiving and organising the world – one that Pound in large measure shared. Pound saw Roosevelt as a "Warrior" and Wilson as a "Priest" and had a marked preference for the "Warrior."

Pound's 'heroes' and 'villains,' both inside and outside *The Cantos*, can be divided into "Warriors" and "Priests." Malatesta, Adams, Jefferson, Van Buren and Mussolini are all, for Pound, men "of true nobility [. . .] of honor transcending self-interest," and their opponents all lack "frank, straightforward will" (typically they

"wangle"). It might be better to say that Pound's 'heroes' stimulate the "Warrior"- lover in him and his 'villains' the "Priest"-hater; this avoids the danger of displacing historical specificity and complexity by an a-historical pattern. A point that can be made clearer by looking at what is perhaps the most obvious application of this paradigm: Pound's engagement with Mussolini and Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR).

To say that Pound saw Mussolini as a "Warrior" and FDR as a "Priest" establishes the continuity of Pound's political concerns, and will explain the intensity of Pound's admiration for the former and hatred of the latter. But it is important to recognise that what is operating here is not a private mythology or a delusional belief system but a trope of historical thinking (albeit a defective one). For this to be the case it is not sufficient to assert that Pound was predisposed to love "Warriors" and hate "Priests," it is also necessary to establish that there was something there – some degree of correspondence or affinity, between, on the one hand, Roosevelt and Mussolini, and, on the other, Wilson and FDR – that triggered the response.

The affinities between Wilson and FDR are obvious and have been widely acknowledged: both were essentially conservative interpreters of the Progressive tradition who shared a view of the president as "the national spokesman." (Unfortunately, in this context, Theodore Roosevelt fits squarely into the same tradition.) As John P. Diggins records, in the 1920s American journalists frequently compared Mussolini and Roosevelt and Mussolini professed himself "very glad and proud" at the comparison, claiming that he "greatly admired" Roosevelt. [75] Pound recognised the similarities but also insisted on the differences: "Theodore Dentatus Roosevelt might have made up twenty per cent. of a fair Mussolini, but I can't believe anybody was quite ready to go out and die for dear Theodore" (*J/M*, 90). (Given his earlier eagerness to join Roosevelt's irregulars this is a remarkable instance of the selective workings of memory). For all of this, and despite Roosevelt's aggressive nationalism and enthusiasm for war and violence generally, I would be reluctant to describe him as a fascist or even a protofascist. Martin Walker comments perceptively that Roosevelt's notions of "valor" and "the grandeur of sacrifice" could not have survived "the squalid reality of the Western Front" and that "by the time of his death, eight weeks after World War I ended, Roosevelt was a very old fashioned man." [76] Orwell's argument that Kipling was a product of the pre-modern world and so "was further from being one [a fascist] than the most humane or most 'progressive' person is able to be nowadays" could, with some reservations, also be applied to Roosevelt.[77]

There are, nonetheless, intriguing parallels between Roosevelt and Mussolini. Both were highly charismatic individuals who, face to face, could exert a powerful influence; one contemporary described meeting Roosevelt thus: "You go into Roosevelt's presence, you feel his eyes upon you, you listen to him, and you go home and wring the personality out of your clothes."[78] As politicians they sought to create a personality cult by projecting this to a wider audience, and both owed a great deal to an ability to manipulate the media and so their public image. Roosevelt learnt the value of providing reporters with "good copy" early in his career and had a highly developed 'media consciousness.' In the Cuban campaign "he made special provision for reporters and photographers to accompany his regiment, including a pair of men with motion picture equipment"; as President he would permit himself to be photographed riding, hiking or hunting but not "playing or dressed for tennis" because "tennis carried leisurely and effete connotations."[79] I have previously quoted Hemingway's description of Mussolini as "the biggest bluff in Europe" (Chapter Two, section 6) and much the same could be said of Roosevelt (indeed, has been said by Gore Vidal in "Theodore Roosevelt: An American Sissy"). Far from "speaking softly and carrying a big stick" Roosevelt and Mussolini were, to appropriate Henry James's term, "noisy" bullies.[80]

Redman explains "Pound's exaggerated esteem for Mussolini" by arguing that "for whatever reason [. . .] the figure of Mussolini is highly cathected in Pound's psyche" (explaining in a footnote: "I use this term [cathected] in the precise sense in which it is employed in Freudian psychology, to indicate the concentration of psychic energy upon a given object"[81]). Although this is not the whole story, it is a useful insight. There is also an element of cathexis in Pound's attitude to Roosevelt. This may go some way towards explaining but it cannot excuse. Pound built an epistemology and a politics on his own heightened sensitivity to the "luminous detail;" he should not have allowed his partiality for "Warriors" to deafen him to the 'noisiness' of Roosevelt and Mussolini.

4 Italy's Boss, America's Duce

There is some truth in the cliché that Mussolini was famous for making the trains run on time – the Duce's achievements in this area were exaggerated but the propaganda line was indeed widely credited. But even when recognised as a half-truth it is misleading in so far as the perception of and response to Mussolini in the United States was more varied and of greater scope. Class, religion, ethnic origin and even geographical or

sectional factors to some extent determined how Americans saw Mussolini and Fascism and their views changed over the years (the Depression, Hitler's rise to power, the invasion of Ethiopia and, of course, World War II all had a significant impact).

With this qualification, Mussolini and the trains makes a useful beginning in that it conveys a sense of the cult of the Duce and the myth of the benign totalitarian state: the idea that "one person alone should command, and even in insignificant matters his fiat must not be questioned."[82] In the United States this line appealed to the far right minority (Silver Shirts and other generic fascists) and to what Diggins terms "the larger right – the business community and the solid citizens," who, particularly after the Wall Street crash of 1929, saw Mussolini as offering an alternative to the precariousness of unregulated capitalism and Soviet Communism.[83] It was to this constituency that the *Saturday Evening Post* extolled the virtues of Mussolini, describing him "as a political saviour who had 'turned red terror into white fear' and an economic genius who had engineered a 'commercial revolution.'"[84] It was not, however, only the predominantly *petit bourgeois* and middlebrow readers of the *Post* that swallowed this line. Wallace Stevens also saw Mussolini as an agent of order (although no doubt of a higher order of order than is to be found in a railway timetable); in 1935 he declared himself to be "pro-Mussolini personally" and informed one correspondent that "the Italians have as much right to take Ethiopia from the coons as the coons had to take it from the boa-constrictors."[85] Pound's story of the 'librarian and the hotel-keeper' is in many ways an upmarket version of the vengeful fantasies of a disgruntled commuter faced with a delayed or cancelled train.

Italy was part of the furniture of the American mind long before the March on Rome; elite tourism and large scale immigration (to identify two salient elements in a complex situation) gave rise to contradictory views of Italy as "a nation steeped in history, a nation left behind by history; a culture rich in art and music, a culture poor in mass education and formal learning; a humane, ebullient, and kind people, an 'inferior,' indolent , and debauched people."[86] Diggins terms these two "images" the "romantic" and the "nativist" and argues that their "interplay [. . .] goes far toward explaining America's peculiar perspective on Italian Fascism." [87] Mussolini and his apologists appealed to both and could to some extent synthesise the two. The "romantics" could see Mussolini as a latter day Medici or Malatesta or as the new Cavour (as Diggins points out a love of Italian culture and sympathy for Italian "political causes" often went hand in hand[88]). For the "nativists" Mussolini was both a symptom of and a cure for Italy's ills

(and a model for the United States in its treatment of Italian-Americans). Those who saw Italy as "backward" saw the Fascist state as an instrument of progress while those who saw it as Arcadia were grateful for some of the Duce's 'improvements' (Arcadia with good roads and efficient public transport is, if not the American dream, certainly an American dream).

Mussolini received extensive coverage in the American media in the 1920s and into the 1930s but often as a celebrity, even a curiosity, rather than as a serious politician and world leader. Diggins describes him, borrowing an "illuminating concept" from Daniel Boorstin, as a "human pseudo-event":

> The term suggests a news event that is deliberately arranged to impress the public mind. At least, it means "managing" the news; at most, "milking" it for all it is worth.[89]

Much of the responsibility for this lay with Mussolini himself; he was, as I have said, an adroit manipulator of the media and a relentless self-promoter with a good eye for what would 'play well.' Again Diggins is worth quoting at some length:

> Mussolini's skillful guile, his incessant arranging for effects, his flair for self-dramatization and the proper role, in a word, his virtuosity, were more than any newspaper man could ask for. Thus when Mussolini wrestled with a lion cub, when he stripped to the waist to harvest wheat amid bemused peasants, when he dispatched a squadron of planes to fly to Chicago, when he donned tie and tails and played his violin, when he christened ships and presided over parades celebrating the March on Rome, or when he frolicked with his children and rode his horse, he was in effect producing ready-made news for American newsmen.[90]

The fact that while stories about making trains run on time found a ready market it was considerably more difficult to get serious writing about Mussolini, or Fascism, published confirms this analysis. Pound's *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*, which although it recycled many of the clichés was 'serious,' is a case in point. Pound wrote *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* in 1933 but it was not published until 1935 having been rejected, Pound claimed, by forty publishers (*J/M*, Foreword). Pound was inclined to blame American provincialism and a conspiracy of vested interests for this delay.

The similar fate of a book strongly critical of Mussolini, George Seldes's *Sawdust Caesar*, suggests a different explanation. George Seldes (1890-1995), one of the most distinguished American journalists of the twentieth century, completed *Sawdust*

Caesar in 1932 but was unable to find a publisher until 1936. British publishers rejected it because it was "dangerous stuff" and out of fear of a libel action (there was also some pressure from the "authorities" who advised that it would be "unwise" to publish such a book at that time).[91] American publishers also rejected *Sawdust Caesar* but for different reasons; in December 1932 Lincoln Schuster wrote to Seldes commending his "brave and brilliant and fascinating piece of work" but declined to publish. This was "partly because of the threat of bombings and stilettos, but not entirely": "We carefully analysed the sales record on most of these Mussolini books and although we recognise that yours is better than the others, we feel the sledding would be just too tough." [92] In 1932 and 1933 there was no market for a serious book either for or against Mussolini. Interest in Mussolini was not of the kind that sold books. By 1936 the situation had changed; the invasion of Ethiopia, the Spanish Civil War, Mussolini's gravitation towards Hitler and the increasing likelihood of a European war made Mussolini the object of serious journalism. One result of this was that his "image" was torn "to rags."[93]

The above can be read as an account of the importation of Mussolini to the United States, the remainder of this section deals with the complementary process whereby Pound, in his denomination of Mussolini, attempted to 'Americanise' Italian Fascism or to graft an American dimension on to it.

Pound made frequent use of aliases and nicknames or else abbreviated or otherwise distorted proper names and titles; every element, including Pound himself, incorporated into Pound's linguistic domain underwent a greater or lesser degree of warping. Some such warping is inherent in the process of translation from one discourse to another, but in Pound's writing it is particularly strongly marked and clearly significant. A successful reading of *The Cantos* depends upon one's ability to identify, for example, "Billyum" (80:496) and "Fordie" (80:508) as references to W.B. Yeats and Ford Madox Ford. Pound employed a number of different designations for Mussolini, among which were: "Benito Mussolini," "Mussolini," "the/il Duce," "Ben," "Muss," "M" and "the Boss." For present purposes the most important of these are "Muss" and "the Boss."

"Muss" like "Ben" and "M" is, obviously, an abbreviation; "M," but not "Muss" or "Ben," may also sometimes be intended to be cryptic as in the lines "and the only people who did anything of interest were H., M. and/ Frobenius der Geheimrat" (74:450). As a nickname "Muss" carries connotations of familiarity and affection. Given Pound's fondness for playing on near homophones, it might also be intended to suggest

or recall "Bull Moose." Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party was popularly known as the Bull Moose Party and Roosevelt himself was sometimes referred to as the "Bull Moose." In a letter to Bronson Cutting Pound referred to Mussolini as "the Bull Moose down in Rome" (*EP/BC*, 107).

In *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* Pound described Fascism as "organisation, with the organizer at its head, to whom power has not been GIVEN, but who has organized power" (*J/M*, 108) but had no English word for the 'organizer of power'. He rejected "dictator" – "the term dictator has been applied by foreign envy, as the Tories were called cattle-stealers" – and used Duce translating it as "Leader" (*J/M*, 110). Evidently he felt that this would not do for *The Cantos*. In the earliest and most extended treatment of Mussolini in *The Cantos*, the first 28 lines of canto XLI (probably written at about the same time as *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*) Pound solved this problem by referring to Mussolini as "the Boss." It was, in its own way, an elegant solution.

Boss can mean a big or powerful animal and this admittedly largely obsolete sense could be seen as connecting through "Muss" to "Bull Moose." However, of greater interest is the use of boss as a synonym for master or more broadly to mean anyone who gives orders. Although this sense was established standard British usage by the 1930s it was originally an Americanism.[94] Boss, from the Dutch *baas* (master), entered American English in the seventeenth century (the *OED* attributes its earliest usage to John Winthrop in 1649). By the nineteenth century boss as a synonym for master had come to be seen as distinctively and egregiously American. In 1833, Captain Thomas Hamilton in "Men and Manners in America" cited boss as one of the "prevalent barbarisms" of American English "rarely used by the better orders."[95] Somewhat more surprisingly, in *The American Democrat* (1838) Cooper deplored the use of "boss" and "help" for master and servant:

> In consequence of the domestic servants of America having once been negro-slaves, a prejudice has arisen among the laboring classes of the whites, who not only dislike the term servant, but have also rejected that of master. So far has this prejudice gone, that in lieu of the latter, they have resorted to the use of the word *boss*, which has precisely the same meaning in Dutch! How far a subterfuge of this nature is worthy of a manly and common sense people, will admit of question.[96]

Mencken attributes the preference for "boss" over "master" to the "American language" having "gone upon the grand bust that had begun with Jackson uprising"[97]

Later in the nineteenth century "boss" acquired a more specialised and specifically political meaning: the organizer and controller of a political party or party machine. "Boss" in this sense could even be used as a title as in the case of two infamous New York Democratic bosses: "Boss Tweed" (William Marcy Tweed 1823 – 1878) and "Boss Croker" (Richard Croker 1841–1922). Such bosses wielded more power than the elected politicians who were the nominal party leaders and, while they often determined the outcome of elections, they rarely sought elected office. According to Mencken, boss "did not acquire its special political significance until c. 1875."[98] The late nineteenth century was perhaps the great age of bossdom but the term was certainly still current in the 1930s – although by then it had acquired the somewhat broader sense of a political leader of any sort (Fr Coughlin in his "Roosevelt or ruin" phase addressed Franklin Roosevelt as "Boss").[99]

Pound's appropriation of "boss" as a title for Mussolini furnished him with a demotic designation of non-democratic authority and with a distinctively American term for an 'organizer of power,' and thus did succeed, partially, in Americanising Fascism.

5 Correspondences

Pound's letters to Senators William Borah (1865-1940) of Idaho and Bronson Cutting (1888-1935) of New Mexico and Representative George Holden Tinkham (1870-1956) of Massachusetts represent a fraction of the "dozens of letters each week to monetary reformers, politicians, and public figures of every kind" that Pound wrote in the 1930s.[100] This was part of Pound's attempt to create what Philip J. Burns terms "Vortex Rapallo" – "a vital center of intellectual, artistic, and spiritual activity [. . .] that could sustain him in his various endeavours and by extension the culture at large" (*EP/GHT*, Introduction, 20). In London and Paris, Pound had been at the centre of such vortexes and he was eager to re-establish this condition in Italy.

However, by the 1930s the scope of Pound's "endeavours" had widened considerably and political and economic issues were at the top his agenda. What Pound was trying to set up was a circle of intellectuals and experts in various fields (including politicians and administrators and opinion formers in the fields of education and the media) who would swap ideas and information and, more importantly, could disseminate and implement those ideas that promoted sound economics and good governance. Pound was attempting to create the type of small dynamic elite that he believed determined the

direction of a social and political order and the quality of its culture. Pound perceived his own role in the Rapallo Vortex variously as catalyst, facilitator of exchange (he was continually trying to put people 'in touch' with one another), lobbyist, policy wonk and publicist. In practice, what he did was to write a great many letters. If this sounds condescending it is not intended to be. For Pound letter writing was not the last refuge of marginalized impotence, or even a gesture of protest, but an important and constructive political action.

Borah, elected to the Senate in 1907, was prominent in the successful opposition to American participation in the League of Nations, and in 1924 became chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations – a position of considerable power (it was said that Frank B. Kellogg, Secretary of State 1925-1929, "made foreign policy by ringing Borah's doorbell."[101]) That power decreased after Roosevelt became President but Borah's remained a staunch and influential isolationist. For Pound this made him, in Pearlman's words, "the most *important* politician he could choose to correspond with in the whole nation."[102] Certainly foreign policy and the need for the United States to avoid involvement in European wars featured largely in Pound's letters to the Senator. For all of this, Pound's correspondence with Borah is possibly the least interesting of the three. Between November 1933 and January 1939 Pound wrote twenty-eight letters to Borah and received three somewhat perfunctory replies (the last dated 30 October 1935) which may or may not have been written by Borah.[103] Pearlman asserts that Borah "never once threw a letter from Pound into his 'Crank' file"[104] but nor did he ever make any serious attempt to engage with the issues raised in Pound's letters; reading through the correspondence it is patently obvious that Borah was not interested in Pound or his views.

In Pound's correspondence with Bronson Cutting there is more of a meeting of minds. Cutting did not always agree with Pound but he did take him seriously, and his letters show him engaging with and responding to Pound's ideas; he even sometimes acted upon them. Like Theodore Roosevelt, Cutting was the son of a New York patrician family who went west for health reasons; in 1912 he settled in New Mexico and became active in local politics. Appointed to the Senate by the state governor in 1927, the following year Cutting "was elected in his own right by the largest plurality in the history of the young state"; in 1934 he "was the only prominent Republican in New Mexico to win reelection." In May 1935 he was killed in a plane crash.[105] Pound's correspondence with Cutting falls into two distinct episodes (from November 1930 to November 1932

and from February 1934 to April 1935); Walkiewicz and Witemeyer argue that in the second "the focus [. . .] shifts from cultural to economics matters" (*EP/BC*, 83).

Cutting came to Pound's notice as the leader of opposition in the Senate to the provision of the Smoot-Hawley Bill that gave customs officers the power to impound any "obscene" or "subversive" material entering the United States. Cutting's opposition led to an amendment whereby customs officers retained the power "to initiate actions for seizure" but the power of "adjudication" was vested in the U.S. district courts (with appeals going to the federal appeals courts; it was this amendment that in 1933 allowed *Ulysses* to be admitted to the United States (*EP/BC*, 15-19). In the opening letter of the correspondence Pound applauded this achievement, and urged Cutting to turn his attention to Article 211 of Chapter 321 of the United States Criminal Code which "gave postal employees the right to impound obscene material and objects circulating through the U.S. mail and to initiate criminal prosecutions of senders and recipients" (*EP/BC*, 24). Pound had been campaigning against Article 211 since the *Little Review* fell foul of it in 1919 (over a number containing the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode of *Ulysses*). Cutting agreed with Pound and acted. Between 1931 and 1934 he sponsored or supported four bills aimed at amending or scrapping Article 211 (*EP/BC*, 24-27). Although these were unsuccessful (many of the provisions of Article 211 are still in force) this episode shows Pound at his best and most effective as a lobbyist. Other issues raised in the first batch of letters include diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union, Prohibition and Pound's *bête noire*, passports.

Opposition to the New Deal and Pound's advocacy of Social Credit and Gesillite economics dominate the second tranche of the correspondence. Some of Cutting's policies for dealing with the Depression were broadly similar to those advocated by Pound (for instance, he called for measures "emphasizing consumption rather than production" and proposed "a modification of the banking system through public control of credit"[106]) but it does not follow from this that Pound had any direct influence on Cutting in these matters. Cutting published Pound's "Ez Sez" columns touting Douglasite and Gesellite nostrums in his newspaper, the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, and played host to C.H. Douglas in Washington in April 1934 (*EP/BC*, 128), but if, as appears to have been the case, Pound believed that he had converted him to Social Credit he was almost certainly mistaken (*EP/BC*, 100). If there is, as Walkiewicz and Witemeyer claim, a "somewhat greater familiarity" (*EP/BC*, 84) in the later letters there is also less real dialogue. However, Cutting did continue to give Pound something more

than a respectful hearing; while Pound, for his part, wrote shortly after Cutting's death: "it seems very probable that we lost the best mind in the senate" (*EP/BC*, 206).

The correspondence with Tinkham is, quantitively and qualitatively, the most developed and the most interesting of the three. Tinkham, who could claim descent from a Mayflower pilgrim, commanded the loyalty of a largely Irish and Catholic electorate (which no doubt appreciated his denunciations of Britain), and, in a Boston increasingly dominated by the Democrats, held the 10th District for the Republicans. He was, to say the least, an unusual politician:

> Bald, rotund, bushy-bearded, and clad in suits liberally spattered with soup stains, Tinkham was very much the New England eccentric. He seldom campaigned during the election season, deeming it more "humane" for candidates to leave the voters alone with their decision making. Instead he used the time to travel the world, study distant cultures, and hunt big game.[107]

He did, however, campaign energetically for his chosen causes. He strongly opposed Prohibition and was described as the "wettest wet in Congress" – his abuse of one of the leaders of the Anti-Saloon League, Bishop James Cannon Jr., provoked a libel action (it was unsuccessful). He also campaigned against the illegal disenfranchisement of African-Americans in the South. His distrust of international entanglements and organisations bordered on the paranoid, and that is perhaps being charitable: he opposed American participation in the League of Nations, the World Court, the International Labour Organisation and even rejected the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact (which other isolationists such as Borah supported).

On 6 February 1933 Pound wrote to Tinkham congratulating him on a speech he had made in the House of Representatives attacking the Carnegie Endowment as "disloyal and seditious." Tinkham replied (28 February) sending Pound a copy of the speech (*EP/GHT*, 43-45). The correspondence thus initiated continued until late in 1940 and led to the two meeting in Venice in September 1936. Although Pound sent more than he received, the Pound/ Tinkham correspondence is, as Burns expresses it, "more reciprocal" than either of the other two (*EP/GHT*, 16). Tinkham wrote to Pound at some length on the state of economic thought in the United States, the global economy, and American neutrality (*EP/GHT*, 64, 114-16 and 179-80), and Pound believed that on these and other topics he was getting "a straight answer" from Tinkham (*EP/GHT*, 65). Reading through the letters one gets a sense of the two men exploring and developing

political and philosophical common ground. Tinkham shared Pound's admiration for Mussolini, writing that "Mussolini [. . .] in his age and generation is a great man [. . .] a man of strength and he has my admiration" (*EP/GHT*, 75). A further degree of affinity is suggested by Burns's description of Tinkham as a man who "spent his time gathering vast stores of information that would support his political philosophy and supply ammunition for his eloquent harangues" (*EP/GHT*, 16). This is the only one of the three correspondences that developed into a friendship, this is apparent in the ways in which Pound and Tinkham addressed each other. Pound's began by addressing Tinkham as "Sir," this became "My dear Mr. Tinkham" or "Dear Mr. Tinkham," and then, after they met in Venice, "Dear G.H.T." or "Dear Uncle George;"; some of Pound's later letters were signed "devotedly yrs," "devvotedly yrs" and "yrz deevotedly" (*EP/GHT*, 43, 46, 50, 85 & 88 and 156, 200 & 208). Tinkham addressed Pound as "My dear Mr. Pound," "My dear Professor Pound," "My dear Doctor Pound, " and finally as "My Dear Ezra" (*EP/GHT*, 45, 51, 59 and 114).

There is a degree of what I have earlier referred to as cathexis, a concentration of psychic energy, in Pound's attitude to Tinkham; in one letter he writes: "I want you to lead and I will follow as ordered" (*EP/GHT*, 88). This is further apparent in the central episode of the correspondence – Pound's attempt to promote Tinkham as the Republican presidential candidate for 1940. Pound first broached this openly in a letter of March 1936: "I am for 'Tinkham 1940'. And I am not writing this letter frivolously. I am not interested in impossibilities [. . .]" (*EP/GHT*, 71). The idea appears to have been that Tinkham should become vice-presidential candidate on Borah's ticket in 1936 and then either replace Borah as the head of the ticket or succeed him as President in 1940. If Pound was vague he was very much in earnest: "If this were a mere matter of laboratory work, I wdn't be impelled to buy the postage stamp on this letter" (*EP/GHT*, 72). Tinkham described Pound's proposal as "flattering" (*EP/GHT*, 75) but took it no further. Pound, however, was persistent and returned to the matter in a number of subsequent letters (*EP/GHT*, 104, 132 and 153); in February 1939 he attempted to kick-start the campaign by writing to the *Boston Herald* proposing Tinkham as Republican candidate for President in the following year.[108]

The Cantos furnish further evidence of Tinkham's importance for Pound. Pound refers to Tinkham on six occasions in the later cantos, recalling their meeting in Venice and celebrating his political achievements (particularly his opposition to the League of Nations and Prohibition):

> Lodge, Knox against world entanglement
> Two with him in the whole house against the constriction of
> Bacchus
> moved to repeal that god-damned amendment
> Number XVIII
> Mr Tinkham (78:495)

Borah and Cutting are also mentioned in the later cantos but only Tinkham is given the status of one of the poem's minor heroes.

Pound's letters to Borah, Cutting and Tinkham provide ample, if not always lucid, testimony to the range and seriousness of his political concerns, although they tend to fill in gaps and confirm what is already known rather than adding anything new. Two points in particular should be emphasised. Firstly, these letters reinforce the point that Pound's politics, in Walkiewicz and Witemeyer's words, "were far less eccentric than people generally assume" (*EP/BC*, 3). Few of Pound's correspondents, and certainly not the practicing politicians, could be brought to share his enthusiasm for Douglas or Gesell but nor did they reject it out of hand. In the United States, and elsewhere, the politics of the 1930s has been airbrushed into conformity with the post-World War II political consensus. In these correspondences Pound's more outrageous remarks – references to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (EP/GHT, 205) and to Masonic conspiracies (EP/BC, 150) – are generally passed over in silence. It is improbable that, even at his most extreme, Pound was saying anything that Borah, Cutting and Tinkham had not heard many times before. In "The State of the Union: 1975," Gore Vidal recalls "an evening at my family's house shortly after the second war began:"

> A group of West Point generals took some pleasure in denouncing that Jew Franklin D. Rosenfeld who had got us into the war on the wrong side. We ought to be fighting the Commies not Hitler. But then FDR was not only a kike, he was sick in the head – and not from polio but from syphilis. Anyway, everything could be straightened out – with just one infantry brigade they would surround the White House, the Capitol, remove the Jew . . .[109]

Secondly, the correspondences confirm the view of Pound as "emotionally and philosophically committed to the Grand Old Party,"[110] or at any rate to his own version of it. Pound could be highly critical of leading Republicans such as Hoover and he even described Roosevelt's election in 1932 as "slightly cheering" (EP/BC, 78), but, by definition, uncritical party loyalty is not to be expected from a maverick; after

Roosevelt's second and more emphatic victory in 1936 he did express concern for the plight of the "PORE OLE EFFERLUNT [the Republican Party]" (*EP/GHT*, 94).

Pound's letters to Borah, Cutting and Tinkham and *The Cantos* can be seen as counterparts. This is not to say that the letters and poetry are the same thing (it is important to distinguish between them) but to recognise that they share a rhetorical imperative to "make action urgent and its nature clear."[111] Burns argues that although "Pound's political letter writing [. . .] did not succeed in bringing about the political and economic changes that he sought" it did achieve some of its "lesser rhetorical aims" (*EP/GHT*, 30). The first of these, "a dominant aim of his correspondence in general," was "to establish a network of intelligent people, a 'chosen six hundred' who would form the core of an enlightened civilisation" (*EP/GHT*, 30). Burns then goes on to distinguish two "rhetorical motives" in Pound's letters, one "pedagogical" and the other instigative or motivational ("a call to action"), and argues that "as a pedagogue Pound was successful in getting his message across, but as a motivator he failed to inspire practical action" (*EP/GHT*, 37). Pedagogically, "Pound's aim," according to Burns, "was to convey to Tinkham information [. . .] in such a way that the information would effectively register on Tinkham's intelligence" but this does not imply conversion or indoctrination – it is a model of pedagogy "that allows the 'teacher' to teach but does not require a 'student' who learns" (*EP/GHT*, 34).

This description of the "rhetorical aims" of Pound's letter writing can be applied to *The Cantos* – Burns does not explicitly do this although he does comment upon the "ideogrammic" structure of some of the letters (*EP/GHT*, 35-36). The *Cantos* also seek "to establish a network of intelligent people [. . .] who would form the core of an enlightened civilisation," a discursive community: Pound's "tale of the tribe" has called into being a tribe of the tale (although perhaps not the one that Pound envisaged). Burns's model of pedagogy is if anything more appropriate to *The Cantos* than to the letters. In the political correspondences intransitivity must be deemed, rhetorically as opposed to formally, a failure. In the poetry, on the other hand, it is possible (perhaps necessary) to posit what Barthes terms a "middle voice" (that is a voice between active and passive in the grammatical sense) that neither demands nor excludes transitivity and which leaves "the writer [*scripteur*] inside the writing, not as a psychological subject [. . .] but as the agent of the action."[112] Unless the letters are aberrantly accorded the same status as the poetry, the "Sage of Rapallo," the Pound of the correspondences, is and can

only be a "psychological subject." This distinction is central to a correct understanding of the relationship between the correspondences and *The Cantos*.

While the Rapallo Vortex was always a fantasy, and Pound was never going to change the United States by writing letters from an Italian seaside resort, many of the specific failings of Pound's political letters can be attributed to Pound as subject. Firstly, when it came to conveying detailed and specific information accurately Pound was often simply a bad letter writer. His typographical quirks, departures from standard usage and other idiosyncrasies make the letters difficult, sometimes impossible, to decipher. Ford Madox Ford once in exasperation advised Pound: "Get the waiter at your hotel to write your letters for you; he will at least write comprehensible dog-English" (*P/F*, 156).

Secondly, Pound was operating at too great a remove from the action. This was not simply a problem of distance. Pound tended to see it as a problem of communication, and believed that all would be well if the artificial constrictions on the flow of information were removed and he could get "straight answers." In fact, Pound was well-informed about the day to day processes of government and events in America and I doubt if he would have fared any better had he moved back to the United States. Given his belief that small elites, insiders, determined the course of events, for Pound any form of political action involved assuming the role of an insider and this is what he attempted, unsuccessfully, to do in his political correspondences. Pound was attempting to operate in a domain in which he had no *locus standi*, and in which, whether he was in Washington or Rapallo, and no matter how much data he accumulated, he was and would always be an outsider. The problem was not one of geography or communication but essentially one of authority.

Thirdly, Pound's correspondences make extensive use of the ideogrammic method, the inherent defects of which, both epistemological and rhetorical, have been set out in Chapter Two and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that those defects, and in particular its inability to furnish compulsive (as opposed to permissive) proof, make it almost useless as a mode of political argument or persuasion, and so seriously impair the effectiveness of Pound's letters.

Finally, in his political correspondences, and indeed in his writings on politics and economics generally, Pound is too often cognitively irresponsible. I have culled the phrase "cognitive responsibility" from Hayden White and use it to mean the capacity of an argument to engage with another argument that does not share its postulates.[113] Pound's cognitive irresponsibility means that he is unable to do this. Those who do not

agree with him about, say, the nature of money are either obtuse or perverse and (to Pound) self-evidently wrong; as a result his arguments are fundamentally circular ('I'm right because I'm right') and he can preach, and then often not very effectively, only to the converted. Pound was strangely opaque to himself, but in the letters there are moments when he was aware that his message was not getting across. Unfortunately, these tended to produce eruptions of incoherent frustration rather than clarification:

> If MONEY is considered as certificate of work done, taxes are no longer necessary. (if you dont understand think, god damn it I will explain.) All govt. papyments shd/ be made in stamp scrip (stamp 1% to be affixed first of every month.) (*EP/WB*, 30)

The injunction to "think" is a standard pedagogical strategy but "god damn it I will explain" is troublingly ambiguous: is it an expostulation at Borah's obtuseness, an assertion of an intention or right in the face of some unspecified resistance or a sort of memo to himself?

These problems of authority, epistemology and mode of argumentation also seriously threatened Pound's epic ambitions, yet *The Cantos* often succeed where the correspondences fail. This can be explained by arguing that *The Cantos* are "writing," the letters are not (even when they appear to be saying the same thing), and that in the condition of "writing" the problematic subject is erased. The implications and limitations of this view will be explored in the two last chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR
JEFFERSON NUEVO MUNDO

or to write dialog because there is
no one to converse with (80:513)

Introduction

Chapters One and Two may be read as describing a two-fold learning process; two-fold because it traces the processes of learning to write and of learning to read "a poem including history." Pound's year of work on Malatesta furnished him with a set of strategies for reading and writing history; Daniel Albright observes of the increased pace of production of cantos in the 1930s: "after Pound clarified his method and his themes to himself, he could work faster."[1] As a result, the Malatesta Cantos may be said to provide a model or template, one that was to undergo significant modifications and adaptations, for the later history cantos. I would make the analogous claim that my two chapters on the Malatesta Cantos have furnished a set of strategies, a model, for reading, and writing about, Pound's histories. Again this model will have to be modified, adapted and supplemented to accommodate changes in the poem itself.

The most significant of these was Pound's turn to American history in the Middle Cantos (XXXI – LXXI); a turn that, in Redman's view, "demonstrates both a growing interest in political matters and an attempt to articulate his own American identity after so many years of expatriation."[2] This process began in *Eleven New Cantos XXXI-XLI* (1934)[3], the current chapter is an account of the American history cantos from that volume: the "Jefferson Cantos" (XXXI –XXXIV) and canto XXXVII (Martin Van Buren). Sections 1 and 2, "Continuities: Malatesta to Jefferson" and "Modern Dress for Your Statue," chart the development of Pound's epic historiography in the cantos XXXI - XXXIV. "Renaissances and Revolutions: *Tempus Loquendi*" analyses Pound's representations of the American Revolution and argues that the Revolution is the major event of *Eleven New Cantos* (and perhaps of the poem as whole). The fourth section, "The Cannibals of Europe," offers a close reading of two significant lines of Canto XXXII. The final two sections, "JQA: The Epigone as Hero" and "The Only Good

Dutchman Ever," deal with John Quincy Adams and Martin Van Buren as they are portrayed in cantos XXXIV and XXXVII, respectively.

I will not, in this chapter, supply the detailed biographical information on such figures as Jefferson and Adams for the obvious reason that it is not necessary – the founders of the United States are familiar figures (or at any rate information about them is readily available). However, by way of orientation I offer the following brief summary of Jefferson's career (John Adams will be dealt with in the next chapter and necessary information will be given on John Quincy Adams and Van Buren where appropriate).

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), political philosopher, Revolutionary leader and statesman, trained as a lawyer and was admitted to the Bar in 1767; two years later he entered the Virginia House of Burgesses where he became one of the leaders of the faction opposed to British policy in the colonies. He attended both Continental Congresses and in 1776 was the principal author of the Declaration of Independence. After 1776 he served in the Virginia legislature and was governor of the Virginia from 1779 to1781. In 1784 he went to France, where with Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, he worked negotiating treaties between the United States and various European countries; he remained in Paris as American minister until 1789 (he was present for the beginning of the French Revolution). He was Washington's Secretary of State from 1789 to 1794 and Vice-President under John Adams (1797-1801); in 1801 he became third President of the United States and served two terms before retiring in 1809. It is worth noting that what would usually be thought of as the high points of Jefferson's career, the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and his period as President, seem to have interested Pound least.

1 Continuities: Malatesta to Jefferson

The first of the Jefferson Cantos, it is also the first in *Eleven New Cantos*, begins with the lines:

> Tempus loquendi,
> Tempus tacendi.
> Said Mr Jefferson: It wd. have given us time. (31:153)

"Tempus loquendi,/ Tempus tacendi" is a version of Sigismondo Malatesta's "personal motto" in which the original order (it is taken from *Ecclesiastes* 3:7) is reversed giving precedence to the "time to speak."[4] This clearly 'rhymes' Malatesta and Jefferson, or, as

I would prefer to put it, makes Jefferson the antitype or fulfilment of Malatestsa. The final canto of *Eleven New Cantos*, XLI, opens with Mussolini's first appearance in the poem; more specifically with Mussolini's words to Pound on the occasion of their only meeting in January 1933 (they are usually translated as, "But this is amusing" and refer to the copy of *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (1930) that Pound had sent in advance to the "Boss" – Pound's mistaking of a commonplace remark for the "quick comprehension" of genius has been much commentated upon[5]):

> "Ma questo,"
> said the Boss, "è divertente."

These lines obviously parallel the opening of XXXI; Mussolini fills the "time to speak" with speech, and so adds another link to the chain of types and antitypes so that it becomes: Malatesta, Jefferson, Mussolini.

I have already described the figural mechanism of *The Cantos* (the process whereby Malatesta becomes a figure of which Jefferson is the fulfilment and both subsequently serve as types for Mussolini, and both in turn are fulfilled by Mussolini, and the consequent accretion of meaning as layer after layer of new, spiritual or secret, senses are added) and need not do so again. It is, however, worth repeating and emphasising that this is not a private mythology but a mode of historical explanation and argument, a mode of argument that is built into the architecture of the poem. This architectural dimension first becomes apparent in *Eleven New Cantos*; it was latent in the earlier cantos but it was only with the development of the poem, with the addition of further blocks of cantos, that it could be realised.

To state the obvious, this works both ways. If Malatesta may be said to determine how, in *The Cantos*, Jefferson is represented and read, Jefferson also rescripts, retroactively determines, the representation and reading of Malatesta. The poem is thus continually revising and reformulating itself – it is, in this respect, a process and not an object. T.S. Eliot's description, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," of the impact of a "new work of art" on the "existing order" provides an almost perfect analogy:

> The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations,

> proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new.[6]

From this it should be clear that the Jefferson Cantos are central to what Redman identifies as the dominant concerns of *Eleven New Cantos*; the typological linking of Malatesta, Jefferson and Mussolini knits together Pound's "growing interest in political matters" and his "attempt to articulate his own American identity" and brings them into conformity with what has gone before.

The words "Tempus loquendi,/ Tempus tacendi" are not to be found in the Malatesta Cantos and, in order to identify them as Sigismondo's motto, the reader must know more about Malatesta than the poem divulges. It is a rhyme on a missing word. Pound might reasonably have expected the reader to pick up the allusion to *Ecclesiastes* but the Malatesta reference is, even by Pound's standards, a steep demand on the reader. Given the importance of the link between Malatesta and Jefferson it is a strange thing to have done. Pound was not, I think, being wilfully obscure (although, as I have argued in Chapter Two, there is an esoteric dimension to *The Cantos*). Partly the purpose of this is to solicit, or rather compel, the reader's collaboration and complicity. It is also, I suspect, a pedagogical tactic – something like a surprise quiz or a remark made by a teacher to check that the class has done the prep. and is paying attention.

As I have argued in Chapter One, Pound recognised almost immediately that the pseudo-chronicle of the Malatesta Cantos provided a model for future cantos; in a letter of 25 October 1924 he wrote: "Must start on another LONG hunk of Canti, like the Sigismundo, having used up the chop-chop in the five now drafted [. . .] Am using a bit of Jefferson in the XX or thereabouts."[7] The "chop-chop" was presumably the discards from earlier drafts that Pound was able to re-cycle. The "bit of Jefferson" ended up in XXI and will be discussed more fully in the next section. To be fully successful, pseudo-chronicle requires a strong central figure like Sigismondo; the truth of this statement is illustrated by the "Venice Cantos" (XXIV – XXVI). Pound's problem, as he told his father the following month, was finding "some bhloomin historic character who can be used as illustration of intelligent constructivity."[8] In an earlier letter to his father Pound had raised the possibility of using American Presidents and had asked Homer for information about them ("facts indicative of personality") and added: "Jefferson's letters I have read. He was probably the only civilised man who ever held down the job."[9] In fact, Pound's interest in Jefferson pre-dated his interest in Malatesta. In 1920 he sent Quinn a quotation from Jefferson that he thought might be useful to Quinn in preparing

the defence of the *Little Review* (then being prosecuted under Article 211 of the United States Penal Code); in a subsequent letter he described Jefferson as an "extremely interesting writer" (*EP/JQ*, 173, 202).

Although the Lord of Rimini and the third President of the United States might seem an odd couple, Jefferson was the obvious choice for the role of the 'new Malatesta.' What made the typological linking of Malatesta and Jefferson possible was Pound's view that the two men were *polumetis*, and both possessed the *directio voluntatis*:

> Jefferson was *polumetis*, many-minded, and as literature wasn't his main job, this multiplicity is now recorded item by item in his letters, one interest at a time, and the unreflective reader gets simply the sense of leisure without perceiving the essential dynamism of the man who did *get things* DONE. (*J/M*, 89)

The fragments of letters of which Canto XXXI is composed build up a composite portrait of a *polumetis*, and are an impressive testimony to the range of Jefferson's activities and interests. There is the politician with a passion for construction and what Pound refers to elsewhere as the "Jeffersonian drive" (*J/M*, 14) to get things done:

> "I remember having written to you while Congress sat at
> Annapolis,
> "on water communication between ours and the western country,
> "particularly the information .... of the plain between
> "Big Beaver and Cayohoga, which made me hope that a canal
> ..... navigation of Lake Erie and the Ohio. You must have had
> "occasion of getting better information on this subject
> "and if you have you wd. oblige me
> "by a communication of it. I consider this canal,
> "if practicable, as a very important work.
> T.J. to General Washington, 1787 (31:153)

There is also Jefferson the man of science – "..... flower found in Connecticut that vegetates when suspended in air... / ... screw more effectual if placed below the surface of the water" (31:153) – and Jefferson the shrewd and enlightened economist:

> But observe that the public were at the same time paying
> on it an interest of exactly the same amount
> (four million dollars). Where then is the gain to either
> party which makes it a public blessing? (31:155)

As a revolutionary conspirator Jefferson displays an Odyssean wiliness, writing to James Madison from France: "This country is really supposed to be on the eve of a XTZBK49HT / *(parts of this letter in cypher)*" (31:154). Pound's Jefferson further resembles Odysseus in having seen "many cities of men, and learnt their mind":

> I can further say with safety there is not a crowned head
> in Europe whose talents or merits would entitle him
> to be elected a vestryman by any American parish.
> T.J. to General Washington, May 2. '88. (31:155)

It is not only Jefferson's 'voice' that is heard in the Jefferson Cantos, Pound also inserts fragments of letters from Jefferson's contemporaries (notably John Adams), and in Canto XXXIII quotations from Marx's *Capital* and extracts from a speech made in the Senate on 25 February 1931 by Senator Smith Wildman Brookhart (XXXIV, of course, is given over to John Quincy Adams). Thus Cantos XXXI – XXXIV are not a monologue but a conversation, a contrapuntal structure of complementary voices. While working on the Malatesta Cantos, Pound had been deeply impressed by Platina's account of his conversation with Malatesta; he wrote to Quinn citing it as evidence of what "a bloody good period" the *quattrocento* had been (see Chapter Two) and included a version of it in Canto XI:

> 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)

The topics have, of course, changed as might be expected given the move from Renaissance Italy to Revolutionary America; although John Adams speaks *de armis*: "with sixty cannon, ten tons of powder,/ 10,000 muskets and bayonets" (32:157). Nonetheless, both conversations function as index of the high level of civilisation prevailing in their respective epochs. Pound's essay "The Jefferson-Adams Letters as a Shrine and a Monument," which is essential to any reading of the Jefferson Cantos, confirms and elaborates this view. Pound's tendency to see the level of conversation as an index of the level of civilisation goes back a long way; in "Patria Mia" he commends

Theodore Roosevelt and Wilhelm II as the two living heads of state or government (Roosevelt was neither in 1912) who might come close to matching, but would not equal, the conversational range of Pope Nicholas V— in this context an ideal Renaissance type (*SP*, 129).

Conversation also furnishes a useful structural and organisational model for the Jefferson Cantos, and indeed for the poem as a whole. Conversation, unlike argument or dialogue, does not move towards a conclusion and it is open in that it does not exclude anything (which is not to say that it includes everything) nor is it (necessarily) centred on or organised around a single topic or subject. The conversational structure of the Jefferson Cantos is clearly visible towards the end of Canto XXXIII when Pound moves from an account of the economic incompetence (or worse) of the Soviet Union to Senator Brookhart's denunciation of the appointment of New York stockbroker Eugene Myers to the Federal Reserve Board[10] by means of the parenthetical interjection "(to change the subject)" (33: 164). This eminently conversational phrase allows Pound to negotiate an abrupt, even dramatic, shift (from Moscow to Wall Street) while still suggesting a degree of continuity (financial malpractice is common to both Soviet Communism and American capitalism); the subject changes but the conversation does not.

Pound's Jefferson further resembles Malatesta in being a wise and benevolent ruler who "has gathered about him/ All the savants and artists" (13:59). Jefferson's status as an enlightened patron of the arts in the tradition of Malatesta is firmly established by the following letter to the radical political philosopher Tom Paine (1737-1809), whose pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776) had influenced the Declaration of Independence:

> And thus Mr Jefferson (president) to Tom Paine:
> "You expressed a wish to get passage to this country
> in a public vessel. Mr. Dawson is charged with orders
> to the captain of the 'Maryland' to receive and accommodate you
> with passage back, if you can depart on so short a warning ....
> in hopes that you will find us returned to sentiments
> worthy of former time.....in these you have labored as
> much as any man living. That you may long live to
> continue your labours and to reap their fitting reward....
> Assurances of my high esteem and attachment." (31:153-154)

This letter obviously echoes and parallels Pound translation of Malatesta's letter about the *Maestro di pentore* in Canto VIII. At the time Jefferson's letter was written, Paine was living in exile in France (where he had fled to avoid a charge of treason in England);

in 1802 Paine returned to the United States and remained there until his death. It may also be noted that this is one of the rare occasions on which Pound represents Jefferson as President; the date of the letter (18 March 1801) suggests that the invitation to Paine was one of the earliest acts of Jefferson's administration.

I will end this section by looking briefly at some of the differences between the Malatesta Cantos and the Jefferson Cantos. Firstly, in the Jefferson Cantos, Pound abandoned all pretence at archival research or of working from original documents: "The first three cantos of the middle group (31.33) are drawn largely from Pound's copy of *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1905) published in twenty volumes."[11]

Secondly, while, as I have argued in Chapter Two, the revisionism of the Malatesta Cantos (the desire to rescue Sigismondo from his critics) has been exaggerated, the revisionist strain in the Jefferson Cantos has been almost completely ignored. Unlike Malatesta, Jefferson is not and never has been one of "history's reprobates" but, as Joyce Appleby observes, his reputation was at "its nadir in the closing decades of the nineteenth century."[12] These were Pound's formative years. John Milton Cooper points out that Woodrow Wilson "never [. . .] liked Jefferson as a thinker," and Theodore Roosevelt considered him "one of the most mischievous enemies of democracy, one of the very weakest whom we have ever had in public life."[13] Pound began his engagement with Jefferson in an America in which the Hamiltonian vision was triumphant (think of Calvin Coolidge's dictum that "the business of America is business") and it is far from inconceivable that he regarded the Jefferson Cantos as a necessary work of historical restitution.

Finally, when Pound was first casting around for another Sigismondo for forthcoming sections of the poem he specified, in a previously quoted letter of November 1924, that a "private life" was a "requisite."[14] He seems originally to have believed that Jefferson and other American historical figures were deficient in this respect and therefore too bland to be heroes of his modern epic. If this was the case then he changed his mind; the Jefferson of Cantos XXXI-XXXIII does not have, in the sense that Malatesta did, a "private life." There is a certain irony in this because Jefferson did have what Pound calls a "private life" (although it was not as lurid as Sigismondo's) and it has recently been the object of a great deal of attention. If Pound was aware of the existence of Sally Hemings he makes no mention her. One must be beware of

anachronism here: this is a silence that speaks more loudly to contemporary ears than it would have done to Pound's or to those of his first readers.

2 "Modern Dress For Your Statue"

Paul Newman is said to have turned down the title role in *Ben Hur* because after his "first movie, a disastrous Roman affair called *The Silver Chalice*, he had sworn never to act in a cocktail dress again."[15] The analogy with the attempt to write a modern epic may not be an exact one but this anecdote does convey a sense of the danger inherent in any artistic representation of the past – that of falling into ludicrous and unseemly incongruity. A plausible and poetically satisfying articulation of the past and the present must be at the same time authentic and modern, must avoid both anachronism and antiquarianism. As I have argued in the previous chapter, how to achieve this was the problem that faced the national epic poets (who could not solve it).

That Pound, a century later, faced the same problems in apparent from the fourth line of Canto XXXI: "'modern dress for your statue....." (31:153). The source of this line is a letter from Jefferson to Washington, written from Paris in August 1797, in which Jefferson approves Washington's choice of modern dress for his statue (Washington had evidently asked for an opinion); Jefferson adds: "I think a modern in an antique dress as just an object of ridicule as a Hercules or Marius with a periwig and a chapeau bras."[16] I do not know if Jefferson's advice was taken in this particular instance but, for certain, his warnings were not generally heeded. What Harvey Wish calls the posthumous "patriotic cult" of Washington created a market for anything connected with the first President, and "artists [. . .] chose him as a subject and capitalized upon the rising investment values of Washington pictures, especially those that attitudinized in the classical manner."[17] In late 1832 Congress commissioned Horatio Greenough (1805-1852) to produce a statue of Washington in the classical manner for the rotunda of the Capitol. Described by Wish as "totally uninspired" Greenough's "twenty-ton figure of Washington wearing a Roman toga [. . .] was hastily pushed from place to place, and finally was lodged in the uninfluential Smithsonian Institute."[18] The actors in the Revolution tended at times to imagine and represent themselves in terms derived from the ancient world (Marx's "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" contains a famous account of a similar tendency among the French Revolutionaries of 1789-1814).[19] Translated into the realm of art, this tendency was all too prone to produce the sort of monumental kitsch described above.

In the Malatesta Cantos, Pound's use of what I have termed pseudo-chronicle provided him with a solution to these problems. Taken together the device of presenting the poem's historical figures largely in their own words (a form of verbal period costume that is almost impeccable, although not unimpeachable) and the highly elliptical or paratactic structure of the sequence, its montage technique, provide authenticity and modernity. (*Homage to Sextus Propertius* [1919] could be seen as another early attempt to solve this problem.) This solution was successful in the case of Malatesta and, as I have already pointed out, furnished Pound with a template for future history cantos. It was, however, not one that could be applied without significant modification and adaptation; dress, in order to stay modern, must be continually altered. An examination of Pound's earliest, pre-Jefferson Cantos, representation of Jefferson makes this immediately apparent.

Thomas Jefferson first appears in *The Cantos* writing to an unidentified correspondent (it was probably Giovanni Fabbroni) in search of a gardener:

> "Could you", wrote Mr Jefferson,
> "Find me a gardener
> Who can play the French horn?
> The bounds of American fortune
> Will not admit the indulgence of a domestic band of
> Musicians, yet I have thought that a passion for music
> Might be reconciled with that economy which we are
> Obliged to observe. (21:97)

Jefferson proposes to reconcile his "passion for music" with the need for "economy" by recruiting his domestic servants from France "where music is cultivated and / Practiced by every class of men" (21:97), and where he hopes to find "A gardener, a weaver, a cabinet-maker, and a stone-cutter [. . .] who could perform on / The french horn, clarionet, or hautboy and bassoon" (21:97). In this way "one might have a band [. . .] without enlarging [. . .] domestic expenses" (21:97). In return Jefferson promises "A certainty of employment for/ Half a dozen years," passage money and "reasonable wages" (21:97).

This is a direct application of the method of the Malatesta Cantos. Pound inserts into Canto XXI a lengthy extract (it runs to 27 lines in total) from a document; there is

no need for translation here but the transcription is a free one (the first three lines quoted above – which function like the 'hook' paragraph of a newspaper article – are Pound's). As Kenner points out the Jefferson of Canto XXI is "rhymed" with Malatesta and retrospectively with the Jefferson of Cantos XXXI *et seq.* both thematically and by the interpolation into Jefferson's letter of the phrase "*affatigandose per suo piacer o non*" (21:97), Pound rendered this as "So that he can work as he likes,/ Or waste his time as he likes"(8:29):

> the introduction in Canto 9 of Sigismundo's post-bag (1454) [. . .] is rhymed with the Adams-Jefferson letters of Canto 31 (1787-1814), a simple citation of the Malatesta motto [. . .] serving to link the latter to the former, as in Canto 21 an Italian phrase had linked a letter of Jefferson's seeking a musical gardener to a letter of Sigismundo's (Canto 8) seeking to retain a painter.[20]

For all of this, Pound's first attempt to use Jefferson in *The Cantos* simply did not work. It is extremely unlikely that Pound intended anything other than a positive portrait of Jefferson, but what comes across most strongly is not his passion for music but his concern with "domestic expenses." Alec Marsh attempts to read this passage as an exploration of the place of the arts in an "austere republic" (as opposed to the decadent polities of Europe).[21] I find this unconvincing. In comparison with Malatesta and sandwiched between Cosimo and Lorenzo d'Medici, as he is in Canto XXI, Jefferson cuts a poor, somewhat 'Pooterish' figure; the letter's final lines confirm this: "Sobreity and good / Nature would be desirable parts of their characters" (21:98). The reader is left not with an image of Jefferson as an American Renaissance man but with the impression that he asked rather a lot in return for "reasonable wages."

A glance at the letter to Tom Paine (quoted in section 1) shows that, by the time he came to write the Jefferson Cantos, Pound had solved these problems. Pseudo-chronicle in cantos XXXI – XXXIV is characterised by a faster narrative pace, by the muting of Pound's own voice and by tendency to move further towards what in Chapter Two I called, quoting Ciaran Brady, the "idiom of academic historical discourse."[22] (I should stress that this is not intended to make an absolute distinction between the Malatesta and the Jefferson Cantos – it is a description of a tendency or direction.)

The faster pace is the result of more abrupt and rapid cutting (in the cinematic sense) between the individual units, the scraps and snippets of letters and other documents, that go to make up the canto. The prevalence of shorter individual units (sometimes only three or four words) further enhances this effect. The accelerated gait of the Jefferson Cantos is, in part, intended to impress Jefferson's "essential dynamism" upon "the unreflective reader" who might miss the point if allowed to proceed at a more leisurely pace. More generally, Pound tended to use ellipsis and parataxis, and much else that is recognised as most typical of *The Cantos* (for instance, extreme compression and brutal language), as strategies for exerting authority; his abrupt transitions and breaking-offs are an attempt to control the reader's response and to impose a strict construction of the text. The Jefferson passage in Canto XXI precisely fails to do this, it is over-elaborated and too leisurely, it is in effect a short dramatic monologue, and so leaves itself open to interpretation. In *The Cantos* such openness is not a virtue but a grave threat to the poem's didactic purpose and hence to its epic status; ambiguity is not a source of a rich plurality of meaning but of wanton misreading. Meaning in the Jefferson Cantos, as Ian F. A. Bell quoting Paul Smith and Alan Durant points out, "becomes a given object, to be handed on by the writer; and manufactured by the writer, not by the reader."[23]

Pound's voice is muted because the bulk of the words in these cantos XXXI – XXXIV are not his but those of Jefferson or Adams. Surette asserts that "Pound wrote no part of these cantos [. . .] except for a few parenthetical remarks such as: '(*parts of this letter in cypher*).'"[24] More precisely, Nick Selby identifies seven lines that are "not direct quotations from a source," one of these being "*Hic Explicit Cantus*" (31:156).[25] Pound is, of course, present in the Jefferson Cantos as a *scripteur*, the hand that moves the pen or hits the keyboard. His function might also be described as editorial, selecting, excerpting and arranging. The kind of abusive editorialising, by Pound or a proxy narrator, found in the Malatesta Cantos (for example, describing Pius II as a "monstrous swollen, swelling s. o. b." [10:44]) is, however, completely lacking.

In addition to Canto XXXI's seven lines that are "not direct quotations from a source" there are, Selby notes, "some 19 lines that Pound has inserted in order to indicate the source of the original letter," for example, "(from Paris, 1785)" (31:154) or "Mr Jefferson to Mr Adams" (31:155);[26] similar lines are also to be found in XXXII and XXXIII. It is in these lines that Pound's driving of pseudo-chronicle towards the "idiom of academic historical discourse" is most readily apparent. In the Malatesta Cantos

Pound sometimes includes the addressee or signature of a letter but this is different; in the Jefferson Cantos Pound is for the most part working from a single readily available source (more readily available at any rate than the Siena Municipal Archive), and the information provided can lead a reader who is so inclined to follow it to the source. What Pound is doing in other words is inserting footnotes into texts, or more exactly he is aberrantly inserting the note or reference itself where one would normally expect the footnote cue.

Anthony Grafton observes that in academic historiography "footnotes are the outward and visible signs of [. . .] inward grace – the grace infused into history when it was transformed from an eloquent narrative into a critical discipline."[27] It is required of historians, by their peers and by their readers, that they "examine all the sources relevant to the solution of a problem and construct a new narrative or argument from them. The footnote proves that both tasks have been carried out."[28] That at least is the theory; in practice, by Grafton's compelling account, footnotes perform two somewhat different functions:

> they persuade: they convince the reader that the historian has done an acceptable amount of work, enough to lie within the tolerances of the field. [. . .] Second, they indicate the chief sources that the historian has actually used. Though footnotes usually do not explain the precise course that the historian's interpretation of these texts has taken, they often give the reader who is both critical and open-minded enough hints to work this out – in part. No apparatus can give more information – or more assurance – than this.[29]

Pound's 'footnotes' clearly fulfil the first of these functions. They are, on one level, rhetorical devices intended to persuade the reader that Pound "has done an acceptable amount of work" thereby investing his histories with authority and impressing that authority on the reader. In the case of the Jefferson Cantos, the second function is more problematic in so far as it raises the vexed, and intricated, questions of the relation between Pound's poem and its sources and of the relation of the reader to both. To clarify this, and to move towards a conclusion, it is necessary to look more specifically at the "idiom of academic historical discourse" appropriated by Pound – that of the New Historians.

"The footnote," Grafton writes, "is bound up [. . .] with ideology and technical practices of a profession."[30] For present purposes, American 'New Historians' such as Charles Beard (to name one with whose work Pound is known to have been familiar), and their English counterparts, can be characterised as strongly present orientated (Beard proclaimed that he "consistently subordinated the past to the present"[31]) and what Brady terms "instrumentalist."[32] By this it is meant that they saw history as an instrument for effecting social, political or cultural change (they did not, of course, expect that it would or could do this directly). One consequence of this was that the "statements about the past which were both internally coherent and externally defensible" (see Chapter Two) that the New Historians claimed to offer were addressed to two audiences: to their fellow historians on whose approval their professional reputation and institutional status (prospects of future employment, promotion, etc.) depended and to a (notionally) larger and wider audience, the object of their instrumentalist historiographical practice. One might expect that in this situation the footnote would function, fairly straightforwardly, as the first line of external defence, as a hallmark of sound practice for those who could read the code it and as a badge of authority for the larger audience. This, however, reckons without the essential doubleness of the footnote, one might almost say its innate treacherousness. Given that "no accumulation of footnotes can prove that every statement in the text rests on an unassailable mountain of fact" the footnote can open the door to both proof and refutation.[33] The footnote is at best a hostage to fortune and at worst the enemy within. What Grafton says of Gibbon's footnotes – that they both "subverted" and "supported" the "magnificent arch of his history" – is true of all footnotes and all histories.[34] The New Historians response to this was to take refuge in a "practice of irony [that] permitted the historian to organise his discourse in a manner that commanded assent not by any external referent but by its own pellucid logic" – a solution that was achieved largely at the expense of their intrumentalist aspirations.[35]

Considered as a historian Pound had much in common with the New Historians. He was, as I hope I have demonstrated, present orientated and instrumentalist, and he certainly approved of Beard's insistence on the centrality of economics to history.[36] Pound was not a professional historian, and his work was not subject to institutional control or, considered as history, to peer review, but by driving the Jefferson Cantos toward the historiographical idiom of the New Historians brought upon himself the problems confronted by them (and indeed by all historians who seek to 'command assent' by appeal to an "external referent"). Pound could, of course, have got out of this

dilemma by simply abandoning the "external referent" but that would have meant also abandoning his epic aspirations and subverting *The Cantos* as a "poem including history." This is what those who argue for a "metonymic" reading of the Jefferson Cantos contend effectively did happen (although they would probably say that "poem including history" subverted itself because that after all is 'the way language is'). I have registered my dissent from this view and cite it here because it brings me back to those vexed, and intricated, questions of the relation between Pound's poem and its sources and of the relation of the reader to both.

The question of the relation of Pound's poem to its sources is perhaps the more straightforward. Donald Davie, an unsympathetic reader of the history cantos generally, writes of Pound's practice of quotation in Cantos XXXI-XXXIII (he makes an exception for XXXIV) that "it is kindest [. . .] to suppose that Pound intended by these cantos to do no more than tease the reader into looking up his sources."[37] This is hardly praise but it does recognise Pound's broadly pedagogic intention and the attempt to move the reader away from the 'poem-on-the- page.' Fender is more positive both in identifying the Jefferson Cantos as a radical challenge to "the words-on-the page critical approach" and in his approval of it:

> The sources are not just there to add authority to the poem [. . .] the documents are indispensable, not only to an understanding but also to a *reading* of the *Jefferson* Cantos. The poems quite simply cannot be construed without them. In fact, they are not just sources but parts of the poems. I mean this literally. [38]

What Fender calls Pound's "hermeneutic approach to American history" (by which he means that Pound tended to use "*recherché*" sources such as the "eccentrically edited" Lipscomb and Bergh edition of Jefferson's writings[39]) leaves "the reader [. . .] to do the work" and that work ("searching out documents [. . .] using indexes where provided, reading collateral works of history, sending letters of his own, asking friendly historians, consulting fellow Pound enthusiasts") is "the experience of the Jefferson Cantos."[40] Selby makes a similar point more modishly: "Canto XXXI exists not as two autonomous texts in a dialectical structure, one of 'original documents' and one which is 'apparent on the surface,' [. . .] it is a text constituted from a continuing dialogue between texts."[41] I would agree with both Fender and Selby that the Jefferson Cantos are

something more than "the words-on-the page;" however, it is not only what is read but how it is read that is important. Fender having argued that the Jefferson Cantos are a radically different type of poem, a "poem off the page," then reads it as if it were a poem on the page; as his use of the word "experience" suggests what he proposes is a standard New Critical "ironical" reading (using "ironical" in Cleanth Brooks' very broad sense – "the *obvious* warping of a statement by context we characterise as 'ironical'").[42] Fender's attempt, in *The American Long Poem*, to present a simulacrum of the "poem off the page" on the page by printing on parallel pages Pound's texts and the source passages from Lipscomb and Bergh illustrates this tendency and reinforces my argument.[43] Selby's reading may also be seen as ironic but in a different sense. Selby's is fundamentally a deconstructionist reading (it is possibly the best of its kind) and the narrative it delivers is of Pound's attempt to escape the inescapable condition of textuality; it is distinguished from other such readings by being more intelligent and by Selby's skill in presenting Pound's struggle as if it were not a foregone conclusion. I call this ironic in the sense that Hayden White uses the term when he defines the satiric or ironic mode as "dominated by the apprehension that man is ultimately a captive of the world rather than its master."[44]

At one point Fender asks rhetorically if Pound's demands on his readers are "really so unlike (except in degree) what other poets require of their readers" and answers with a qualified negative. If the question is whether or not Pound is a uniquely 'difficult' poet, more difficult than say Donne or Wallace Stevens, then Fender is probably right. But Pound does make demands on his readers that are 'unlike' (and not just in degree) those made by other poets, or perhaps it is better to say that Cantos XXXI-XXXIV demand to be read in a way in which it is no longer usual to read poetry: they require to be construed rather than interpreted. When Fender uses the verb "to construe" of the Jefferson Cantos (see above) he intends it, as far as I can see, as a near-synonym for construct but there is another and perhaps more useful sense. To construe can also mean to apply a prescribed set of procedures to a canonical text in order to arrive at an equally canonical sense or meaning. To construe in this sense is not to interpret. To interpret is to produce meaning, to discover new senses, and it is, at least theoretically, an open-ended process both in that, *a priori*, it excludes nothing and in having no end or limit; the process of construing while it may be, in practice, complex and highly protracted is finite and in most instances leads to something that is already known.

In Canto XXXII Pound quotes from three letters in which Jefferson attacks Chief Justice John Marshall (1755-1835). The first of these, a composite of two letters of 19 and 2 June 1807 to George Hay (Pound's order), criticises directly and indirectly Marshall's handling of the trial for treason of Aaron Burr, Jefferson's Vice-President from 1801 to 1804 and political enemy (at that time the candidate receiving the second largest number of votes in the electoral college became Vice-President):

> Witnesses will some of them prove that he (Burr) had
> no interest in the Ohio canal....
>
> coram non judice (32:157)

The phrase "coram non judice" (literally 'not before a judge') "is a legal expression meaning that a court has no jurisdiction in a particular case"[45] and is presumably intended to suggest that Marshall had overstepped or abused his powers. The second, from a letter to Judge William Johnson of 12 June 1823, is a more general attack on Marshall's judicial practice:

> out of his case, to say what the law in a moot case would be,
> Judge Marshall is irregular... (32:159)

In this instance Pound has significantly altered the wording of the source (which reads "This practice of Judge Marshall, of travelling out of his case to prescribe what the law would be in a moot case not before the court, is very irregular and very censurable"[46]) in order to emphasise Marshall's 'irregularity.'

What is at issue in both of the above is the constitutionally guaranteed balance of powers between the three branches of government (the legislature, the executive and the judiciary). Jefferson believed that by claiming the right of judicial review (essentially the right of the Supreme Court to declare unconstitutional the acts of the other two branches) Marshall was tilting the balance in favour of the legislature. In Jefferson's view this was unconstitutional because it was not based on a strict construction of the Constitution. By his loose construction of the Constitution Marshal was "travelling out of his case" literally and metaphorically.

These passages, I would argue, can also be read (construed) as an injunction to the reader to observe a strict construction of Pound's text and not to 'travel out of his case' by indulging in wanton interpretation. Jefferson's readings of the Constitution and

his strictures on Marshall's defective strategy of reading and Pound's reading of both provide a paradigm, a paradigm for reading both the poem and its sources. This was Pound's solution to the problems raised by his choice of historiographical idiom.

3 Renaissances and Revolutions

The American Revolution is the central episode of two sets of cantos and constitutes the overt subject matter of fifteen individual cantos, and is referred or alluded to at varying length in at least as many more. This alone establishes it as a major element in *The Cantos*. A similar point could be made in respect of the Italian Renaissance. If the two are somehow combined or run together (as they are by Pound) the resulting complex may fairly be regarded as the major element of the poem (particularly if one considers principally the first seventy-one cantos). This view, which is central to my thesis, can hardly be called original; it would, I think, meet with wide agreement (although I have never seen it stated in precisely this form). At this point it is useful to attempt to establish a distinction between my work and most of the other work in the area by stating clearly an assumption that has underpinned and informed what I have written on the Renaissance and what I will write in this chapter and the next on the Revolution. Most discussions of Pound's use of historical material that I have read assume, at least implicitly, that Malatesta or Jefferson or Martin Van Buren are interesting, in Aristotle's phrase "worthy of serious attention," because they figure so largely in *The Cantos*; I believe that it is because *The Cantos* deal with Malatesta, Jefferson and Van Buren (among others) that they are "worthy of serious attention."

The renaissances and revolutions referred to in the title of this section are, most obviously, the Italian Renaissance and the American Revolution. To these must be added an American renaissance, Mussolini's seizure of power in 1922 and the subsequent creation of a totalitarian state (what Pound usually referred to as the Fascist revolution) and a second American revolution, a counterpart to the Fascist revolution which would take the form of a reversion to, and rescription of, the American Revolution. In Pound's historical grand narrative all of these were part of a single continuing action; neither Pound nor, as far as I am aware, anyone else has ever put a name to this action but it is, as I have said, the major element of *The Cantos* – it is, indeed, the history (at any rate the occidental history) that the "poem including history" includes. *Eleven New Cantos* is in all respects central to this; it is the mid-point of the pre-Pisa cantos (I-LXXI), it explicitly

and formally links the major episodes in the history outlined above and its five American history cantos chronicle the American Revolution and an American renaissance.

Pound had been a prophet of, and active propagandist for, an American Renaissance since *Patria Mia* (1911); in Chapters Two and Three I have traced the development of Pound's concept of the Renaissance (and of an American renaissance) from *Patria Mia* to the Malatesta Cantos and shown that in the 1920s that renaissance began to take on aspects of an American revolution parallel or equivalent to the Fascist revolution. As early as *The Spirit of Romance* (1909), Pound had used the Renaissance as an occasion to speculate on the relation of culture (here art and literature) to the wider political and economic characteristics of an age. Pound came to see the Renaissance as a period in which the various facets of human activity (the artistic, economic and political) were integrated and in which culture (although always produced by an elite minority and imposed from above) permeated all aspects of life (the Malatesta Cantos represent this ideal in so far as it could be achieved "against the current of power"). This view of the Renaissance hardened into a prescription: a renaissance is, and must be represented as, a moment in history at which the totality of human life is "directly given." (For a discussion of the concept of totality applied to Pound's work see Chapter One.)

The Jefferson Cantos, and particularly Pound's presentation of the Jefferson-Adams correspondence around which they are built, are a model or representation of this renaissance and revolution. In "The Jefferson-Adams Letters as a Shrine and a Monument" (the essay printed under this title in *Selected Prose* first appeared in *Impact* [1960] and is a much revised version of an essay first published in 1937, "The Jefferson-Adams Correspondence") Pound states that "the MAIN implication [of the letters] is that they stand for a life not split into bits" (*SP*, 152). For Pound, Jefferson and Adams had the capacity to embrace the totality of life without compartmentalising it into narrow specialisations: "neither of these two men would have thought of literature as something having nothing to do with life, the nation, the organisation of government" (*SP*, 152). This quality is most immediately obvious in the sheer range of topics covered in the correspondence, from Plato (Adams writes to Jefferson that he only learnt two things from the Greek philosopher one of which was "that sneezing is a cure for hickups" [33:162]) to gossip about their contemporaries ("Adair too had his kink. He believed all the Indians of/ America to be descended from the jews" [31: 155]).[47] It was not, however, simply, the range of Adams and Jefferson's interests, which he attributed to the influence of the "Encyclopaedists" and to an "omniverous [sic] (or apparently so)

curiosity," but their habit "of thinking of things in general as set in an orderly universe," which he dubbed "Aquinian" (*SP*: 154), that so impressed Pound. In the earlier version of the essay Pound makes this point more explicitly:

> Jefferson in his range of knowledge and empirical curiosity, was the heir of the encyclopedists [sic], but he was Aquinian in his tendency to fit everything observable into an orderly system. He had the totalitarian view, seeing forces not in isolation but as interactive. (*EPPP*, VII, 267)

The word "totalitarian" here should alert the reader to the "burn of allegory." As the *quattrocento* Rimini of the Malatesta Cantos was an allegorical portrait of a proto-totalitarian state so the Revolutionary America of the Jefferson Cantos, in so far as it is a representation not of a specific moment in the history or of a particular set of political practices and institutions but of a "conversation" (in the sense, declared obsolete by the *OED*, of "the action of consorting or having dealings with others; living together; commerce, intercourse, society, intimacy"[48]), is a portrait of an idealised totalitarian state; or, it might be better to say, the Malatesta Cantos represent a totalitarian state struggling against the "current of power" and the Jefferson Cantos a totalitarian state operating with the current power.

While I disagree, for reasons already stated, with Tim Redman's view that Pound's 'conversion' to Fascism took place in the early 1930s, there is no doubt that the period between the first publication of Cantos XXXI – XXXIII in the July/Sept. 1931 number of *Pagany* (Boston) and the publication of *Eleven New Cantos* in October 1934 was a significant epoch in Pound's political development. While he was working on Canto XLI, probably shortly after his first and only meeting with Mussolini in January 1933, Pound drew up a plan of post-war history divided into three acts:

1° atto
1918 - 1920
2° atto
1920 - <1922>
3° atto
1922 - 1932[49]

Redman's gloss of this is concise and to the point: "the first act the postwar crisis that formed the climate for the onset of fascism, the second act Mussolini's road to power

culminating in the March on Rome, and the third act the first ten years of Mussolini's rule, the *decennio* of fascism whose celebration in 1932 so impressed Pound."[50]

Up to a point Pound's schema gives an accurate, if incomplete and partisan, picture of the history of Italy between 1918 and 1932. Fascism did develop in response to the post-war crisis and did rise to power between 1920 and 1922. The ten years after 1922 were a period of consolidation; that is to say, Mussolini established himself as a dictator by suppressing all opposition (including opposition within the Fascist party) and undermining Italy's democratic institutions to the point that where they survived it was in name only. Even so the process of consolidation was not without its problems. Fascism had no direction or aim and no coherent policies other than the seizure and retention of power. The lack of direction and coherent policies did not concern Mussolini overmuch, but what he could not afford was to be seen to be standing still. Fascism was proclaimed to be "THE CONTINUING REVOLUTION," Pound's rendering of the slogan "*rivoluzione continua*" (*JM*, 28), but this, although it was a good slogan, was not in itself sufficient – movement or the appearance of it was also essential. Foreign policy could provide a measure of this and Mussolini took an aggressive line with his immediate neighbours in the Balkans and began to think in terms of more far flung colonial adventures (the invasion of Ethiopia was at an advanced stage of planning by the end of 1932).[51] In addition, considerable stress was laid on spreading the Fascist revolution beyond Italy; Italians were told that Fascism was "advancing rapidly in Britain and the United States" and "that foreigners feared and admired [Mussolini] and looked to him as 'the redeemer of Europe.'"[52] The most conspicuous example of the successful 'export' of Fascism, the Nazi seizure of power in Germany, proved to be a disaster for Italy but in 1933 Hitler could be pointed to with pride as a 'German Mussolini.'

On the domestic front, Achille Starace, who became secretary of the Fascist Party in December 1931, played an important part in solving the problems outlined above. Whatever his faults (and they were many) Starace was a "good organiser and a severe disciplinarian"[53] who purged the party of remaining dissident elements and set about 'fascistising' "the dead corners of [. . .] national life."[54] What Starace did was to fabricate a Fascist history and tradition. He glorified, and distorted, the short history of Fascism so that "it was not enough just to be a fascist: it was preferable to have been one before October 1922 or, better still, a *sansepolcrista* dating from March 1919."[55] Starace introduced the 'Roman salute' (although that "superbly aesthetic gesture" and

"exquisitely fascist greeting, envied and imitated throughout the world" never really caught on with Italians) and a proliferation of ever more gaudy uniforms (cabinet ministers might have as many as twenty). The *decennio* and the exhibition of 1932 that celebrated it were also Starace's effects; the exhibition featured "clothes stained with Mussolini's blood" and "bottles of castor oil" and "cudgels" (reminders of the 'heroic' age of the *squadristi*).[56]

In retrospect, despite the *opera bouffe* trappings (and much else that wasn't at all comic), the period between 1929 and 1934 was the high noon of Fascism. At that juncture the ill-conceived and executed invasion of Ethiopia and the rise of Nazism were in the future and Mussolini's reputation was still largely intact. Pound, who wrote the bulk of *Eleven New Cantos* and *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* in these years, certainly saw it this way; during this period he would have recognised himself as being in the happy condition ascribed by T.S. Eliot to the classic poet of having "a critical sense of the past, a confidence in the present, and no conscious doubt of the future."[57] Between the appearance of Cantos XXX-XXXIII and the publication of *Eleven New Cantos* (and for some time after) Pound's engagement with Fascism was very much in the mode of romance (defined by Hayden White as "a drama of the triumph of good over evil, of virtue over vice, of light over darkness, and of the ultimate transcendence of man over the world in which he was imprisoned by the Fall").[58] The idealised, almost idyllic, world of the Jefferson Cantos and their decorous and elegant conversation reflect this. Northrop Frye, from whom White derived his historiographical modes, described romance as the "nearest of all literary forms to the wish-fulfilment dream" and added that "in every age the ruling social or intellectual class tends to project its ideals in some form of romance."[59] This is precisely what Pound was doing in the Jefferson Cantos.

For Pound, Fascist Italy was the contemporary counterpart of this world; this is made quite explicit in a letter to Tinkham:

> Discussion IN ITALY seems to me in healthier state than elsewhere. Bottai, Rossoni, Farinacci all honestly WANT the truth.
>
> I dont believe an article like mine in the Vita Italiana for Jan. could be published in any other country with the approval of man [sic] of cabinet rank. Any number of people here seriously interested in mechanism of government AS Jefferson's circle was 120 140 years ago. (*EP/GHT*, 67-68)

Although Pound continually protested that he saw Fascism as an Italian solution to specifically Italian problems and claimed that what he wanted to 'export' to England or America was Fascism's "general sanity and not the local accidentals, not the advisabilities of a particular time and place" (*JM*, 127), he clearly believed that America's road back to the golden age of the Jefferson-Adams lay via Italy.

The Jefferson-Adams correspondence was, for Pound, an American renaissance in the more conventional and obvious sense that it represented a peak of achievement, a "shrine and a monument," "a still workable dynamo left to us from the real period" (*SP*, 147). Pound also considered these letters as an "American Renaissance" in the sense that F.O. Matthiessen used the expression in the title of his famous study of nineteenth-century American literature – *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941). Pound deplored the ways in which American literature was taught in universities, seeing it as "restricted mostly to second-rate fiction," and believed that the writings of Jefferson and Adams marked a high point of American literary achievement and that they "ought to be in curricula" (*SP*, 147-148). Daniel Pearlman explicitly contrasts Pound's view with Matthiessen's: "These documents comprise the true American literary renaissance for Pound, as they do not, for example, for F.O. Matthiessen."[60]

In *Patria Mia*, in the course of a discussion of the prospects for an American renaissance, Pound refers to the American as a "southerner, a man of the Midi," and adds that "New York is on the same parallel with Florence, Philadelphia is further south than Rome"; this he believes is significant because "climate has about as much to do with the characteristics of a people as has their ethnology" (*SP*, 102-3). Later in the essay he claims that the American form of government can also be derived from Renaissance Italy: "free cities now here, now there, contrived to hold out against the feudal system and are the model for our present constitutional government" (*SP*, 126). This is essentially an early form of the "light-from-Eleusis" trope – the "free cities" maintained a republican ideal that derived, via Rome, from ancient Greece. Pound subsequently somewhat modified this view, possibly as a consequence of his tendency in later life to give greater weight to "ethnology"; in "The Jefferson-Adams Letters as a Shrine and a Monument" he wrote: "As Americans we are neither Teutonic nor in any strict sense Mediterranean, though we should be fools to neglect either element of private nutrition" (*SP*, 148). Nonetheless, the view of the Revolution found in the Jefferson Cantos is still substantially that set out in the 1911 essay; that is to say, he

sees the American revolutionaries as heirs to a tradition that goes back through the city states of the renaissance to Rome (and ultimately to Greece).

This view was by no means peculiar to Pound. The revolutionaries tended at times to see themselves in this way and, as I have already observed, the official iconography of the Republic invokes the heroic image of Roman republicanism. Twain's reference, in *Innocents Abroad* (1869), to Venice as the "Venerable Mother of Republics" is evidence of how widespread such thinking once was; Twain was, characteristically, turning a cliche, a commonplace, to his own ends.[61] More recently, in *The Machiavellian Moment* (1975), J.G.A. Pocock has argued that a continuous tradition of "Machiavellian" thought runs from early modern Florence to eighteenth-century America. The "Machiavellian moment" of Pocock's title is defined as "the moment in conceptualised time in which the republic was seen as confronting its own temporal finitude, as attempting to remain morally and politically stable in a stream of irrational events conceived as essentially destructive of all systems of secular stability."[62] To summarise, and no doubt greatly oversimplify, a long and complex argument, the "Machiavellian" tradition as Pocock conceives it is concerned with the problem of legitimacy, and specifically with the attempt to give legitimacy to political entities that have lost or rejected traditional forms of legitimacy (those based in custom or usage) and so are essentially illegitimate; the despotisms of the Renaissance Italy and the United States in the Revolutionary era would both, in different ways, fit this description. The success of this endeavour depended on the outcome of a confrontation between *fortuna* (the "stream of irrational events") and *virtù*. I am not suggesting Pound anticipated Pocock's argument, or that Pocock provides a key for reading Pound, but it is certainly the case that the heroes of *The Cantos* are all, in one way or another, instances of the triumph of *virtù* over *fortuna*.

From Pound's point of view, the great advantage of this view of the Revolution is that it can readily accommodate the Fascist revolution (although in its more orthodox forms it would not do so). What in both versions of the essay on the Jefferson-Adams correspondence Pound calls the "Mediterranean paideuma" is a rewriting of this historical trope in conformity with an ethnological model of culture derived from the German anthropologist Leo Frobenius so that it begins in Sparta and ends in Fascist Italy (*EPPP*, vii, 265-6 and *SP*, 148-50); in this rewriting Fascism is not only integrated into the history but becomes its culmination and fulfilment and it is Jeffersonian ideals such

as freedom and representative government that are reduced to the status of "local accidentals" and "the advisabilities of a particular time and place."

4 The Cannibals of Europe

The phrase the "cannibals of Europe" occurs twice in Canto XXXII; for the first time in the typographically isolated line "Cannibals of Europe are eating one another again...." (32:159) and then some twenty lines later the canto closes:

> a guisa de leon
> The cannibals of Europe are eating one another again
> quando si posa. (32:159)

The Italian phrases are two halves of a line from *Purgatorio* VI describing the troubadour Sordello ("Like a lion when he crouches")[63]; Dante's encounter with his fellow Mantuan Sordello leads to an extended colloquy on the contending factions and civil strife that are tearing Italy apart (thus echoing and reinforcing the reference to "cannibals.") The repetition and the allusion to Dante (a strategy that is less common in the history cantos than elsewhere in the poem) would seem to underline the significance of the reference.

The source of Pound's line is a letter from Jefferson to Adams (1 June 1822):

> To turn to the news of the day, it seems that the cannibals of Europe are going to eating one another again. A war between Russia and Turkey is like the battle of the kite and snake. Whichever destroys the other, leaves a destroyer the less for the world. This pugnacious humor of mankind seems to be the law of his nature, one of the obstacles to too great multiplication provided in the mechanism of the universe. The cocks of the henyard kill one another up. Bears, bulls, rams, do the same. And the horse, in his wild state, kills all the young males, until worn down with age and war, some vigorous youth kills him, and takes to himself the harem of females. I hope we shall prove how much happier for man the Quaker policy is, and that the life of the feeder, is better than that of the fighter; and it is some consolation that the desolation by these maniacs of one part of the earth is the means of improving it in other parts. Let the latter be our office, and let us milk the cow, while the Russian holds her by the horns, and the Turk by the tail. God bless you, and give you health, strength, and good spirits, and as much of life as you think worth having.[64]

"Cannibals" here would seem to refer specifically to the Russians and the Turks; Russian expansionism and the long decline of the Ottoman Empire meant that, from

the late seventeenth to the late nineteenth century, war between Russia and Turkey was an ever present possibility (the two were not openly at war in 1822). The rest of the letter is a classic statement of American difference and exceptionalism, a rehearsal of what in Chapter Three I called, quoting McWilliams, "the higher argument" for the superiority of "a Christian agrarian republic was the higher argument" (Jefferson denominates it as "Quaker"). For Pound exceptionalism translated directly into isolationism, in *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* he wrote of Jefferson:

> He believed in keeping out of European affairs and America was kept out until 1812
>
> "The cannibals of Europe are eating each other again." That's up-to-date (1932) all right enough. Read Corbaccio's edition of the volume on cannon-touts, it may indicate the spirit of Europe, or of North Europe as distinct from Mediterranean sanity. (*JM*, 79)

If this is read as a gloss on the cannibal lines from Canto XXXII then the "cannibals" are those Europeans, particularly the arms dealers, who live outside Italy where "Mediterranean sanity" prevails (perhaps by figurative extension those who have not joined in mind or spirit the new dispensation announced by Mussolini) and the lines should be read as a warning to Americans to avoid "foreign entanglements." This is a fairly rough reading but it is accurate enough as far it goes, but that is not far enough and there is, I believe, a good deal more in these lines.

To begin with, it should be recognised that "the cannibals of Europe are going to eating one another again" is a somewhat unusual remark for Jefferson to have made or for Pound to have taken up. As Pound quite correctly observes, the Jefferson-Adams "letters abound in consciousness of Europe" and neither man was "afflicted" with the "truly appalling suburbanism" that makes Americans mindlessly reject or uncritically emulate Europe (*SP*, 156). The 1 June 1822 letter is also untypical of Jefferson in being frankly personal. In 1822 both Jefferson (b. 1743) and Adams (b. 1735) were old men; Jefferson was clearly disturbed by his own failing health and he confesses to Adams that he has "ever dreaded a doting old age" and "the life of a cabbage [. . .] when all our faculties have left, or are leaving us."[65] Jefferson's sense of the precariousness of his own humanity may explain the uncharacteristically bleak view of the human condition expressed in this letter (also the prevalence of animal imagery in the passage quoted above). Pound, too, was not anti-European (he lived most of his life in Europe and spent much of his time and energy trying to 'import' European writing, art and

ideas into America) and he certainly did not believe that wars were the result of "the pugnacious humor of mankind."[66] Nor should it be forgotten that while the "gloss" in *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* was written in 1932, Canto XXXII was composed sometime in 1928-1929. In 1928 the "cannibals of Europe" were in fact behaving themselves surprisingly well and in August most of them signed up to the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact which was designed to outlaw war as an instrument of policy. The Peace Pact was ineffective and most of the signatories, including Italy with its "Mediterranean sanity," flouted its conditions, but that is something that Pound could not have known in 1928-1929, although it may have been apparent to him by 1932. For the United States, the Kellogg-Briand Pact was a "foreign entanglement" but it was one designed to prevent all further such entanglements. The phrase, "the cannibals of Europe are going to eating one another again," while it may be striking and memorable is not, on this evidence, a particularly appropriate one and Pound seems to have left himself open to the accusation of having "dented an idea for a phrase's sake" (82:539) – exactly what he censured Yeats for doing and praised Ford for not doing.

The good things about Europe (for instance, the heritage of Rome and the Renaissance and the Fascist revolution) are, as I have argued, a significant presence in the Jefferson Cantos but they are never explicitly referred to, when Europe, and particularly contemporary Europe, is explicitly referred to, invariably negatively. In this respect, "The cannibals of Europe are eating one another again", is an extreme but not an isolated example. I have already quoted Jefferson's opinion that "there is not a crowned head/ in Europe whose talents or merits would entitle him/ to be elected a vestryman by any American parish" (31:154/155)." There is also Adams's catalogue of European monarchs (which occupies most of the space between the two references to cannibals in Canto XXXII):

> Louis Sixteenth was a fool
>
> The King of Spain was a fool, the King of Naples a fool
>
> they dispatched two courriers weekly to tell each, over a
> thousand miles
> what they had killed...the King of Sardinia
> was, like all the Bourbons, a fool, the
> Portuguese Queen a Braganza and therefore by nature an idiot,
> The successor to Frederic of Prussia, a mere hog
> in body and mind, Gustavus and Joseph of Austria
> were as as you know really crazy, and George 3d was in
> a straight waistcoat, (32:159).

This is not patriotism, or xenophobia, or a display of republican zeal on Adams's part; nor should this passage, and others like it, be read as a rupturing the decorum of the Jefferson-Adams conversation – rather it strengthens it. In "The Jefferson-Adams Letters as a Shrine and a Monument" Pound wrote of the world of Jefferson-Adams: "America was a civilised land in those days. Jefferson could imagine no man leaving it for the pleasures of Europe. He and Adams had been there and met Europeans" (*SP*, 152). In the Jefferson Cantos Pound attempted to present an idyllic portrait, a portrait in the mode of romance (the mode of "wish-fulfilment"), of the America of those days (any satiric thrust there might be is directed not at Europe but at the America of these days).

The almost Roman contempt for the barbarians of the east, and particularly the reference to the "cannibals of Europe," displayed by Adams and Jefferson is part of this. Cannibalism functions as a marker of the uncivilised, it is always the sign or badge of the "other;" historically, it has existed on, or beyond, the frontier of European colonisation, which the colonisers equated with the marches of civilisation. For the Europeans, this had the convenient corollary that the uncivilised had no claim to the benefits of civilisation; people who eat each other are by definition uncivilised and could be attacked, despoiled and exploited at will. The early European explorers of the New World accused the "Indians" they found in possession of cannibalism (sometimes falsely) and treated them accordingly. In the Jefferson Cantos the description of Europeans as cannibals inverts this process and Jefferson's claim to be the arbiter of civility, implicit in his resort to the analysis of savagery to explain "the news of the day" from Europe, establishes the civility of America. Thus, the line, "The cannibals of Europe are eating one another again," signifies, primarily, the accomplishment of the *translatio imperii* and the *translatio studii* (here it might be useful to recall what in the previous chapter I described as Pound's "anthropological" treatment of the English tourists in Arles).

Cantos XXXI – XXXIV begin with two lines of Latin, culled from the Vulgate Bible via Isotta degli Atti's tomb, and end with the first Chinese ideogram to be inserted into *The Cantos* and so can be seen as being congruent with the grand heliotropic narrative of history. The presentation of the American Revolution that fills the space between Renaissance Rimini and Confucian China thus becomes a revolution, a turn of events, in that narrative.

5 JQA: The Epigone as Hero

A problem with filiopietistic history, indeed with any history that looks back to a golden or heroic age, is that it tends to devalue the present and to drain it not of only of significance but of the capacity to be significant. Filiopietistic historiography characteristically situates itself not at but after the end of history; things continue to happen, life goes on, but the significant action of history is over, the heroic deeds have all been done and the great men are dead. The archetypal American myth of the cowboy hero who tames the town and so creates the conditions necessary for founding and continuance of a social and civic order provides a good illustration. The lone cowboy rides into town and, in one way or another, eliminates the 'bad guys' and then rides out again or, in some versions of the story, he marries and settles down. What he does not and cannot do is to remain as a hero, he must either leave or become a citizen. The social order is founded on heroic deeds but it has no place for heroes; it belongs to the farmer, the schoolteacher and the man who runs the store or perhaps to the saloon-keeper, the corrupt politician and the shyster lawyer.

What follows the intervention of the hero is either the humdrum life of the 'happy-ever-after' or stagnation and decline. These might provide material for the novelist or the satirist but not for the epic poet. Again this calls to mind the dilemmas of the would-be national bards of the early Republic and Emerson's call for a poet who "knew the value of our incomparable materials." Whitman's celebration of the heroism of the ordinary was one solution to this dilemma. John Quincy Adams (JQA) was scarcely ordinary (and was certainly not humdrum or ignoble), nonetheless I would argue that Canto XXXIV should be read as Pound's response to this dilemma, as an exploration of the possibilities of epic in a post-heroic world.

In "The Jefferson-Adams Letters as a Shrine and a Monument" Pound divides American history "provisorily" into four periods – the passage is important enough to quote at length:

> 1. American civilisation, 1760 to 1830.
> 2. The period of thinning, of mental impoverishment, scission between life of the mind and life of the nation, say 1830 to 1860.
> 3. The period of despair, civil war as hiatus, 1870 to 1930. The division between the temper, thickness, richness of the mental life of Henry Adams, and Henry James, and that of say U. S. Grant, McKinley, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover.

> 4. The possibilities of revival, starting perhaps with a valorisation of our cultural heritage, not merely as something lost in dim retrospect, a tombstone, tastily carved, whereon to shed dry tears or upon which to lay a few withered violets, in the manner of, let us say, the late Henry (aforementioned) Adams. The query being: should we lose or go on losing our own revolution (of 1776-1830) by whoring after exotics, Muscovite or European? (*SP*, 147)

Jefferson and Adams belong to the first period (later in the essay Pound defines the period of "American civilisation" more specifically as the period when "two civilised men lived and to a considerable extent reigned in America" [*SP*, 147]) and Pound to the fourth. These two periods are clearly open to the epic and the third period, equally clearly, is the domain of prose (as I pointed out in Chapter One, Pound saw prose as the "detailed convincing analysis of something detestable" [*LE*, 324]). The second period, however, is problematic. John Quincy Adams's life and career spanned the first two periods, he was an epigone of the great age who survived long into the period of "thinning" (Canto XXXIV opens with an account of a dinner with Jefferson and Dr Mitchell in 1807 and ends with references to events of 1843 and 1844).

Before going any further it should be said that by most standards the long career of John Quincy Adams (1767 – 1848) was a distinguished one: as a diplomat he represented the United States in Berlin, St Petersburg and London and was one of the commissioners in the talks that led to the signing of the Treaty of Ghent that ended the Anglo-American War (1812 - 1815); he was senator for Massachusetts from 1803 to 1808, Monroe's secretary of state from 1817 to 1825 (during which time he negotiated the ceding of Florida from Spain to the United States and was chief architect of the Monroe Doctrine), in 1825 he succeeded Monroe as President (winning an inconclusive election in the House of Representatives), and in 1830 he returned to Congress as a representative and served until his death (he suffered a stroke on the floor of the House while speaking against a proposal to render the thanks of the House to officers who had served in the Mexican War). During his time in Congress he became a leader of the faction opposing the extension of slavery and was instrumental in lifting the "gag rule" which prevented Congress from receiving anti-slavery petitions or even discussing slavery. It is the fate of epigones to suffer by comparison with the fathers and JQA was no exception. In comparison with his biological father, John Adams, or with Jefferson, JQA can perhaps be considered a minor figure but this is setting the bar very high: if not to have brought about the "fall of an empire" or the "birth of a nation" is to be minor, then JQA was minor.

Although Canto XXXIV, which is drawn almost entirely from JQA's diaries, chronicles most of these achievements Pound seems to have had no revisionist intentions; the JQA of Canto XXXIV is a minor figure, or perhaps more accurately is a figure presented in a minor key. Neither, in the canto, does Pound seem very interested in JQA's ideas or policies, although elsewhere he makes much of his advocacy of "free land" and his "statalist" inclinations. In "An Introduction to the Economic Nature of the United States" (1944), he wrote: "John Quincy Adams, almost alone and smeared as an eccentric, supported a doctrine giving more authority to the state. He wanted to conserve the national lands as property of the nation" (*SP*, 177). "What is Money For?" (1939) represents JQA as almost a fellow Social Creditor: "J.Q. Adams, one of the American founders, had some nice socialist ideas about reserving the national wealth for educational and 'higher purposes'" (*SP*, 297). Some of these ideas are to be found in Canto XXXIV, but nothing much is made of them.

What I mean by saying that Pound presents JQA in a minor key is apparent in the representation of him as an Odysseus figure. Like Adams, Jefferson and Malatesta, JQA is a *polumetis* and can talk of "Shakespeare, Milton, Virgil and of the Abbé Delille...." with Count Romanzoff, the Russian minister for foreign affairs, in the intervals of negotiating "a treaty of commerce" (34:165). However, not all of JQA's conversations reach this exalted level, his encounter with Czar Alexander I is rendered as a single line commonplace: "'Monsieur Adams' said the Emperor, "'il y a cent ans que je ne vous ai vu'" (34:165). His literary interests lack the luminosity of Jefferson's – he fails to illuminate even his family circle:

> Xmas, 1820, read aloud after breakfast
> From Pope's "Messiah." Not one of my family
> Except George,
> appeared to take the least interest,
> Nor is there any one of them
> who has a relish for literature. (34:168)

The very fact of the inclusion of such a domestic scene indicates a loss of intensity, a lowering of the pressure, in Canto XXXIV; there is a decline, a falling off, not, or not primarily, in the cultural level but in the level of energy – the "Jeffersonian drive" is absent (the more leisurely narrative pace also suggests this). There is, however, none of the unintentional bathos that marred the Jefferson passage in Canto XXI; in Canto

XXXIV, Pound's portrait of JQA is perfectly pitched and exquisitely modulated to achieve the desired effect.

JQA only emerges as a hero after he "took seat Number 203" (34:169), that is in the years after he was elected to Congress in 1830 (significantly the date that for Pound marked the end of "American civilisation" and the beginning of the period of "thinning"). In Pound's account of these years JQA comes alive, becomes "full of flames and voices" (7:27). The lines in which Pound celebrates his heroic opposition to slavery are perhaps the most memorable in the canto:

> The world, the flesh, the devils in hell are
> Against any man who now in the North American Union
> shall dare to to join the standard of Almighty God to
> Put down the African slave trade ... what can I
> Seventy-four years, verge of my birthday, shaking hand
> ...for the suppression of the African slave trade ..... (34:170-1)

Scarcely less impressive are the following lines in which JQA condemns the state of Georgia's treatment of the Cherokees:

> haec sunt infamiae...
> wrongs of the Cherokee nation
> These are the sins of Georgia
> These are the lies
> These are the infamies
> These are the broken contracts... (34:171)

However, to focus on these high points perhaps distorts JQA's real achievement, which lay in the daily practice of the unspectacular virtues of constancy and tenacity. These are commemorated in the final words of the canto: "Constans proposito.... / Justum et Tenacem" (34:171) – Edwards and Vasse give "constant in purpose ..../ just and enduring" as a translation.[67] At times JQA is merely a witness to the age's progressive loss of definition and clarity – the following lines refer to James B. Buchanan (President from 1857to1861) and the soldier-politician General Winfield Scott (both of whom were prospective candidates for the 1844 election):

> Buchanan the shade of a shade,
> Scott a daguerreotype of a likeness (34:171)

In the entry on JQA in *American National Biography*, he is described as "a poor politician, unwilling to cater to popular interests and reluctant even to compromise ."[68] Pound's favourite historian, W.E. Woodward, described JQA's "political sense" as "rudimentary," and added that his "contempt for public opinion was boundless" and that "he pursued his own course, when he was convinced that he was on the right track, regardless of what friends or enemies thought of it."[69] These descriptions of JQA's political 'faults' can be appropriated as descriptions of his virtues in Canto XXXIV. A minor figure in the age of John Adams and Jefferson, JQA grows ever more luminous as Pound's chronicle moves into the second period. The famous line from Canto XI – "In the gloom, the gold gathers the light against it" (11:51) – is often read as Pound's epitaph for Malatesta, it would serve at least equally well for the John Quincy Adams of Canto XXXIV.

Donald Davie, who, as I have pointed out, was generally an unsympathetic reader of the history cantos, singles out Canto XXXIV for praise: "the canto by itself, without recourse to the *Diary* it is hewn from, establishes John Quincy Adams as a rounded and sympathetic character [. . .] the alleged decline in standards of taste and enlightenment from the heyday of John Adams to that of his son is wittily and convincingly depicted."[70] I would agree with Davie that JQA is a "rounded and sympathetic character" and that Pound's depiction of the "alleged decline" is "witty and convincing" but am more sceptical about the claim that this is done "without recourse" to the source material. If what Davie means is that Canto XXXIV is more of a 'poem-on-the-page' than Cantos XXXI-XXXIII then he is right; Canto XXXIV has a greater degree of 'followability' and is a much 'easier read,' than the cantos that immediately preceded it. One might describe it as a montage the component elements of which can readily, or at least more readily than is usually the case in *The Cantos*, be sewn together to form a coherent narrative. Whether this can be done without some knowledge of the source, or at any rate a fairly detailed knowledge of the history of the period, is doubtful. Certainly the relationship between text and source is different in Canto XXXIV, the two do not comprise a single "text" or "poem off the page" as Selby and Fender argued, largely correctly, was the case with Canto XXXI. This may reflect the relative status of the Jefferson-Adams letters and the JQA *Diaries* as elements of the Poundian curriculum: the former is required reading and the latter is not; it is, if you like, secondary bibliography – one should have some sense of what it is about, but need not fear encountering it in the examination.

Frank Kermode's distinction between *kairos* ("a significant season" or "a point in time filled with significance") and *chronos* (mere succession empty of human meaning) is useful in this context.[71] In these terms, the age of Jefferson and Adams would be *kairos* and the post-1830 period a slide into *chronos*. It is the traditional function of literature, and history, to turn *chronos* into *kairos* by giving it a narrative order, a plot, thus imposing causation and necessity and therefore significance; it was precisely this function that the national epic poets could not fulfil. *Leaves of Grass* is not, in the usual sense, a plotted narrative, but Whitman's capacity to realise the heroic potential of the ordinary can be seen as analogous. Pound's fellow Modernist Joyce delighted in capriciously turning *chronos* into *kairos* and *kairos* into *chronos*:

> False lull. Something quite ordinary.
> Messenger took out his matchbox thoughtfully and lit his cigar.
> I have often thought since on looking back over that strange time that it was that small act, trivial in itself, that striking of that match, that determined the whole aftercourse of both our lives.[72]

In Canto XXXIV Pound is not concerned with turning *chronos* into *kairos*, nor with the subversion of that traditional function; what he was attempting to do (and in my opinion he succeeds) is to make poetry out of *chronos*.

6 "The Only Good Dutchman Ever"

Martin Van Buren (1782 – 1862), eighth President of the United States (1837-1841), and the first not to have been born under British rule, is the least likely of Poundian heroes. In terms of the distinction between the "Warrior" and the "Priest," Van Buren, whose tactical astuteness as a politician earned him the nickname the "Little Magician," was very much the "Priest;" tactical astuteness is at best an ethically ambiguous quality and Van Buren's career was dogged by accusations of unscrupulousness and opportunism from its beginnings in the New York State Senate (1812-1820). A much recycled anecdote gives a sense of how Van Buren was regarded:

> Once a Senator accepted a bet that he could trap Van Buren into committing himself to some positive belief.
> "Matt," he said, "it's been rumored that the sun rises in the East, Do you believe it?"
> "Well, Senator, I understand that's the common acceptance, but as I never get up till after dawn I can't really say."[73]

Holmes Alexander, whose version of the anecdote I have quoted, notes that Van Buren tells this story against himself in his autobiography but "lives up to his name by declining to say whether or not it actually happened."[74] While Pound emphatically rejects this image of Van Buren – "'I publicly answered more questions/ than all other presidents put together'/ signed Martin Van Buren" (37:186) – Canto XXXVII can accommodate his "Autolycan" streak; the following lines refer to a speech Van Buren gave in 1827 on a proposed increase on the tariff on woolen goods (the phrase "in the mirror of memory" introduces Van Buren's recollections):

> Said one of the wool-buyers:
> "Able speech by Van Buren
> "Yes, very able,"
> "Ye-es, Mr Knower, an' on wich side ov the tariff was it?
> "Point I was in the act of considering"
> replied Mr Knower
> In the mirror of memory: have been told I rendered
> the truth a great service by that speech on the tariff
> but directness on all points wd. seem not
> to have been its conspicuous feature. (37: 186)

Holmes Alexander's *The American Talleyrand*, which was published a year after *Eleven New Cantos*, also compares Van Buren to Odysseus, as a representative of "a race of men who set out to pillage a fair nation," and styles him "the Founding Father" of "political America."[75] This was not intended as a compliment. Alexander, like Pound, saw American history as a decline from the "golden age" of the early Republic and both agree that Van Buren occupied "a pivotal position" but their views of what that position was could not be more opposed; by Alexander's account:

> In his day men called him the Little Magician. It was with the wave of his wand that statesmanship vanished from the American scene and politics remained in its stead. He stands in the pivotal position between the sublime and the ridiculous. He lived through the administrations of fifteen Presidents. Of the seven who preceded him to the chief magistracy – Washington, the Adamses, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson – at least six can be called statesmen by world standards. Of the seven who followed – Harrison, Tyler, Polk, Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan – the best hardly scales the knoll of mediocrity. Before Martin Van Buren had his will of the body politic, it was quality of mind and intensity of purpose that made a man First Citizen. Afterwards, it was availability, subservience and party regularity. The Little Magician brought the presidency down within reach of the Average Man.[76]

Pound would have agreed with much of this, but in this context the value of the passage is that it indicates, precisely and in some detail, what Pound did not think about Van Buren.

The opening lines of Canto XXXVII run together two episodes in Van Buren's career in New York politics, his proposing of a bill in the State Senate to outlaw imprisonment for debt and his sponsoring, during his brief spell as Governor of New York in 1829, of a safety fund to compensate those who suffered because of the loss in value of banknotes (this measure was to be financed by a tax on the banks).

> Thou shalt not," said Martin Van Buren, "jail 'em for debt."
> "that an immigrant shd. set out with good banknotes
> and find 'em at the end of his voyage
> but waste paper.... (37:181)

The nineteenth-century American historian George Bancroft, in *Martin Van Buren to the End of his Political Career* (1889), one of Pound's sources, wrote "he that will turn to the record of New York Senate will find Van Buren opposing steadily the whole system of banking of that day, giving his vote and using his voice against at least thirty bills for bank charters"; to which he added: "Van Buren was, from the commencement of his political career, active in his efforts to do away with the unnatural lien which, under the old laws, the creditor possessed on the body of his debtor."[77] The lines quoted above announce what were, for Pound and Bancroft, the great themes of Van Buren's political career, and so of Canto XXXVII: opposition to the power of banks and creditors.

As Jackson's Vice-President (1833-1837), he supported Jackson in his opposition to the second Bank of the United States, a private bank that effectively controlled the public finances (according to Woodward it was "a magnified pawnbroker's shop endowed with extraordinary privileges [. . .] anti-social and greedy"[78]), and in his determination not to renew its charter when it expired in 1836 (Pound would have said that Van Buren was the 'brains behind' Jackson's policies). In 1837 Van Buren inherited, along with Jackson's anti-bank policies, a financial crisis that threatened the viability of Jackson's reforms. The mid-1830s were a period of reckless speculation, perhaps fuelled by the easier access to credit that resulted from Jackson's decision to withdraw government money from the Bank of The United States and distribute it among local banks (during the eight years of Jackson's presidency the number of banks in the United States more than doubled[79]). Inevitably the bubble burst and by the time Van Buren took

office a full-blown depression had set in; 618 banks failed in 1837, bankruptcies multiplied and "half the working population of New York lost their jobs within a few weeks after Van Buren's inauguration."[80] Political enemies of Jackson and Van Buren blamed this on Jackson's "Specie Circular" of July 1836, which instructed public land agents only to accept payment in gold and silver. (This may, indeed, have precipitated a local crisis, but it cannot be held responsible for the worldwide panic and depression of 1837.[81])

Van Buren's response to all of this was to do nothing. That is to say, he maintained that Jackson's policies were economically and fiscally sound in that they reduced public debt, and were consistent with a strict construction of the Constitution, and resisted the clamour to repeal or amend them:

> Relief is got not by increase
> but by diminution of debt.
> .....as Justice Marshall, has gone out of his case... (37:183)

Canto XXXVII is essentially the story of Van Buren's steadfastness and heroism in standing by these principles and withstanding both the pressure of events and a sustained campaign of character assassination; Pound believed that both the turn of events and the character assassination were orchestrated by the bank and its supporters:

> "employing means at the bank's disposal
> in deranging the country's credits, obtaining by panic
> control over the public mind" said Van Buren
> "from the real committee of the Bank's directors
> the government's directors have been excluded.
> Bank president controlling government's funds
> to the betrayal of the nation....
> government funds obstructing the government... (37:184)

For Pound, Van Buren was not the trimmer and opportunist, whose every action could be "authentically traced to political expediency",[82] that he is sometimes represented as having been, but a man who throughout his long career, from the New York Senate to Washington, never deviated from, much less betrayed, his basic principles (essentially opposition to the private control of public credit and a strict construction of the Constitution). The culmination of this came on 4 July 1840 when, in Bancroft's words, "Van Buren had the happiness of setting his name to the law which established the independent treasury."[83]

This measure split the Democratic Party and contributed significantly to Van Buren's failure to win re-election in 1840 (he was heavily defeated by Benjamin Harrison). Nonetheless, according to Bancroft (and Pound certainly agreed), because of it Van Buren's career should be regarded as ending in triumph:

> It gave a treasury truly independent – independent of foreign sway, independent of the fluctuations of business, independent of corrupt influences, independent of all but the will of the people as expressed in the Constitution and the laws.[84]

Bancroft's plangent tribute provides an excellent gloss for the lapidary closing lines of Canto XXXVII:

HIC
JACET
FISCI LIBERATOR (37:187)

Van Buren's achievement in 'setting free the public finances' placed him with "the men who fought for the making of the Republic, John Adams, Jefferson, Van Buren" (*EPS*, 76).

Canto XXXVII cannot be said to represent an advance on Cantos XXXI – XXXIV in terms of Pound's historiographical technique (it uses essentially the same method as Canto XXXVII). Perhaps because of this, and perhaps because the minutiae of the fiscal policy of the United States in the 1830s is a less than compelling 'read,' the Van Buren canto has received very little critical attention and some of those who have commented on it have found it, and particularly Pound's presentation of its central figure, unsatisfactory. Davie complains that in Canto XXXVII "the vulgarity of Van Buren, the extent to which he was himself a product of tasteless demagoguery, is concealed."[85] Peter Makin concludes a more extended and generally more sympathetic reading of the canto by arguing that Pound erased Van Buren's "capacious blandness" and "significantly improved" his language and so gave him "a voice that he might have done well to possess."[86]

Davie and Makin miss the point. Unlike JQA, Van Buren is not a survivor from the period of "American Civilisation", but a hero of the second period constructed from the material of that period. This does not diminish him – Van Buren is superior to JQA because he has the greater capacity for heroic action (or inaction). Van Buren was also,

in Pound's view, a hero, an appropriate model for emulation for contemporary politicians; when Pound was urging Tinkham to put himself forward as Borah's running-mate in the 1936 election, he wrote: "For the republican party to DO anything, the sole chance is a combination on the lines of Van Buren Jackson. You wd/have to supply the Van B// element, the sharp definition of ideas" (*EP/GHT*, 73). A further significant parallel is suggested by Pound's description of Van Buren, also in a letter to Tinkham, as "the only good dutchman ever." In a broadcast of 2 March 1942 Pound described Roosevelt as "a lying Dutchman." Both Van Buren and Roosevelt, the "good Dutchman" and the bad Dutchman, were faced with the task of steering America through a depression; the good Dutchman did it without increasing debt or violating the Constitution, the bad Dutchman did both.

CHAPTER FIVE
JOHN ADAMS

We will be about as popular as Mr John Adams
and less widely perused (84:538)

Introduction

The series of American history cantos begun in *Eleven New Cantos* continues in the Adams Cantos (LXII – LXXI), first published in *Cantos LII-LXXI* (1940). As several commentators have noted, *Cantos LII-LXXI* takes the form of a diptych with ten cantos devoted to Chinese imperial history and another ten to the life and times of John Adams.[1] The two groups of cantos are of approximately equal length (80 and 83 pages respectively) but are wildly asymmetrical in the periods of time they cover; the China Cantos chronicle thousands of years of history from "2837 ante Christum" (53:262) to 1776 while the Adams Cantos deal, for the most part, with the period between c.1760 and 1801. The China and the Adams Cantos were derived from two multi-volume sources – Father Joseph-Anna-Marie de Moyria de Mailla's *Histoire Générale de la Chine*, 13-volumes (1777-85) and *The Works of John Adams*, edited by Charles Francis Adams, 10-volumes (1850-56) – and all twenty cantos were composed in very short order sometime between June 1938 and February 1939.[2]

George Kearns describes *Cantos LII-LXXI* as "the longest, least read, and least admired of the separately issued sections of the poem."[3] Reviewing the original volume in 1940 Randall Jarrell wrote: "*Cantos LII-LXXI* contain the dullest and prosiest poetry he [Pound] has ever written."[4] Surette writes of the China and Adams Cantos that he "can think of no possible defence for the rhetoric and organisation of these sections" and the generally laudatory Makin complains of a lack of "emotive shape."[5] Many later scholars and critics (there are notable exceptions such as Peter Nicholls and Jean-Michel Rabaté) have dismissed these groups of cantos by default, that is, by simply ignoring them as far as possible; Terrell notes: "Little exegesis has been done for the Adams cantos. Most Pound scholars mention them in passing or with a generalised comment."[6]

It is not difficult to see why this should be so. The Adams Cantos, like John Adams himself, are not easy to like; nonetheless, this is a consensus from which I would dissent.

Section 1, "Composition," addresses questions that come under the rubric of "rhetoric and organisation"; that is to say they consider Cantos LXII – LXXI as a development of the modes of epic historiography discussed in earlier chapters. The second section, "Pater Patriae," offers an account of Pound's portrait of Adams and contrasts Adams and Jefferson as Poundian heroes. Sections 3 and 4, "The Revolution in the Minds of the People" and "The Germanic Germ," are concerned with the American Revolution as a major event in *The Cantos*; the former examines Pound's representation of an Adams-centred Revolution and the latter relates it to Pound's larger vision of American history (and of history generally) and to the development of Pound's political though and to his position as an ex-patriot supporter of Mussolini in the late 1930s. The final section, "Enter 'Ego Scriptor Cantilenae,'" considers the related questions of voice and authority in the Adams Cantos. As with Jefferson in the previous chapter, the introduction concludes with a brief biographical account of John Adams.

John Adams (1735-1826) was born into a family that first settled in Massachusetts in 1628, where, as Pound points out in Canto LXII, they were neighbours of Pound's mother's family the Westons. Adams was sent to Harvard College, apparently with the intention that he should become a clergyman, but on graduation in 1755 he opted for the law and was admitted to the Boston Bar in 1768 and began practicing in Braintree (where he also served for two years as selectman). In the 1760s Adams became active in patriot politics and came to prominence during the Stamp Act crisis of 1765 when he published a series of articles in the *Boston Gazette* arguing that the act was illegal because the colonists had not consented to it. In 1768 Adams moved to Boston and two years later won further fame as the successful defender of the British officer and soldiers accused of murder for their role in the Boston Massacre. By 1774 Adams was a believer in independence for the American colonies and staunchly advocated this policy in the First and Second Continental Congress; the Second Congress elected him to the committee charged with framing the Declaration of Independence (later, typically, he claimed that "too much attention was paid to the Declaration, 'a theatrical show,' where 'Jefferson ran away with all the stage effect [. . .] and all the glory).'"[7] In a series of letters published in 1774-75 and written under the pseudonym "Novanglus," Adams put forward his version of the case for independence:

> Adams insisted that Parliament had no power over the colonies, and America owed only a conditional, contractual allegiance to the king. This had always been so, he argued: "The patriots of this province desire nothing new; they wish only to keep their old privileges." Adams recounted in great detail how a new notion of absolute parliamentary sovereignty had emerged in the 1760s with Governors Francis Bernard and Hutchinson, who were abetted in their conspiracy against American liberty by an England "sunk in sloth luxury and corruption."[8]

Between 1778 and 1788 Adams spent most of his time in Europe negotiating diplomatic recognition for, and crucial treaties on behalf of, the fledgling United States. With John Jay and Benjamin Franklin he negotiated the Treaty of Paris (1783) which ended the Revolutionary War and in 1785 he was appointed the first United States minister to Great Britain. It was also during this time that he wrote the *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (1787), a book that greatly influenced the drafting of the Constitution of the United States. In 1789 he became Washington's Vice-President (and so first Vice-President of the United States) and served two terms; in 1797 he succeeded Washington as President, with Jefferson as Vice-President. In the election of 1800 he was defeated by Jefferson. After he left office in 1801 he retired to Quincy and devoted himself to writing; his reconciliation with Jefferson in 1812 led to the correspondence celebrated in Cantos XXXI-XXXIII and in "The Jefferson-Adams Letters as a Shrine and a Monument."

1 Composition

In a letter to Faber director Frank Morley, Pound wrote of *Cantos LII-LXXI*: "you are gittin something NEW in the cantos; not merely more of the same. Trust at least two advances in mode will be perceptible [. . .]."[9] Surette endorses Pound's claim and, with palpable disapproval, identifies the "advances":

> The novelty of these twenty cantos can scarcely be denied. Never before had Pound simply transcribed from a single work for a whole section as he does for both the Chinese and Adams sections (with some trifling exceptions). Never before had an entire section been bare of any substantial reference to the Odyssean and Eleusinian themes. Never before had he put together twenty cantos with only half a dozen lines of original composition.[10]

Surette exaggerates both the lack of reference to the major themes of the poem (they are there and are "substantial" but are not always explicit) and the paucity of original composition. The advances he identifies are mostly differences of degree rather than kind; essentially, Surette sees *Cantos LII-LXXI* as representing the extension of a method (transcription from a single source) already successfully used for individual cantos and smaller groups of cantos to an entire twenty-canto section of the poem. It is, however, not simply a question of the method being inherently flawed but also of Pound's indifferent application of it. Carpenter puts the case against the Adams Cantos in this respect forcefully and in some detail:

> Ezra rushed through the ten-volume Charles Francis Adams edition of the John Adams *Works* (1850-56) – as he had done with de Mailla – picking out incidents from Adams's life and activities that caught his eye, and transposing them into the Cantos. However, whereas de Mailla presented his Chinese information chronologically, the Adams *Works* were organized differently, with the material divided according to sources. Hard as it is to believe, Ezra simply ignored this, and put his chosen quotations into the Cantos in the order in which they happened to appear in print in the *Works*. In consequence he made complete nonsense of Adams's life.
>
> For the most part he trawled wildly through the *Works*, picking up some phrase or event every page or so that took his fancy, rather than looking for any special catch. This means that no reader can make more than the most fragmentary sense of John Adams and his activities without the *Works* at hand (or at least an exegesis based on them), and even that does not facilitate interpretation, since Ezra is quite capable of taking a line or phrase from one passage in the *Works* and grafting it on to something lifted from somewhere else. On top of this, there are frequent inaccuracies in transcription.[11]

Carpenter's indictment is a damning and, at first sight, a conclusive one; the Adams Cantos fail because of a defective method and over-hasty and careless execution. It cannot be denied that Pound was often careless in such matters as notetaking and transcription or that he worked quickly, probably too quickly, on this section of the poem.

Exactly when Pound composed the Adams Cantos and how long it took him is a matter of debate. It is generally agreed that he could not have begun work on them before June 1938[12] and it is known that the typescript of the entire volume was with Faber by March 1939. In the best account of the composition of the Adams Cantos of which I am aware, Carol H. Cantrell and Ward Swinson advance the astonishing, but entirely

convincing, claim that Pound only began work on them in January 1939 and "wrote the Adams cantos in notebooks and made a rough typescript of them in something like five weeks."[13]

Pound's haste was in large part a response to the pressure of events; by the summer of 1938 it was obvious that a European war was inevitable but Pound believed that the United States could still be kept out of it and bent his best efforts to that end. A month or so after he had completed *Cantos LII-LXXI,* on 13 April 1939, Pound sailed to the United States as a self-appointed peace envoy; he failed to secure an interview with Roosevelt but did get to meet a number of senators, including Borah, and the Secretary of Agriculture (and later Vice-President) Henry A. Wallace. When Pound sent a copy of *Cantos LII-LXXI* to Mussolini he accompanied it with a note beginning: "Duce, I hope I have done some useful work, especially in condensing some historical facts in my CANTOS 52/71."[14] It should also be recognised that by 1938 Pound's private life was beset by difficulties. He had acquired and assumed responsibility for an unconventional family consisting of his wife Dorothy, his mistress Olga Rudge and their daughter Mary and his elderly parents who had retired to Rapallo some years earlier. The death of Dorothy's mother, Olivia Shakespear, in October 1938, greatly improved the Pounds' financial situation but may also have added to his personal perplexities by giving him more options.

A diametrically opposed view of the Adams Cantos is put forward by A.D. Moody in "Composition in the Adams Cantos." Moody acknowledges that the Adams Cantos are the product of a period of "excited, over-stimulated, hectic activity" and admits that "on the face of it, this block of Cantos seems to have been a rushed and botched job"; nonetheless, he finds "the writing completely controlled, awesomely assured" and has "no doubt that Pound knew exactly what he was doing."[15] In a detailed analysis of a fourteen-line passage from canto LXVI Moody discovers a complex musical structure of "statement and counterstatement, followed by variations" that he claims would hold good for the entire sequence (were it to be subjected to the same patient and exquisite reading) and establishes "that there is a controlling intelligence at work, composing something like a sonata movement with the materials taken from the Adams's diaries for the years 1783 to 1786."[16] I find Moody's essay seductive and would certainly agree with him that there is a great deal more control and composition, more art, in the Adams Cantos than is recognised by Carpenter and others. I am, however,

sceptical about the claims for a sonata-like form and suspect that the recondite musical structure Moody discovers owes too much to his own ingenuity as a reader.

More convincing evidence for the presence of a "controlling intelligence" is provided by what I have referred to as the diptych form of *Cantos LII-LXXI*. Kearns describes this as "a conceit, and a good one, a play of time and space" adding the reservation: "The aesthetic question is whether it is more interesting to think about the conceit itself than to reread the 160 pages that allow it."[17] Leaving aside the "aesthetic question," for the moment, this is an accurate and useful description. A conceit requires a "controlling intelligence," and Pound clearly intended *Cantos LII-LXXI* as a model or type of a universal history in which the dynastic history of Cantos LII – LXI and the American history of Cantos LXII-LXXI are discrete but linked episodes. De Mailla's *Histoire Générale* stops at 1780 in the reign of the poet Emperor Kien-Long, of the Twenty-second (or Ch'ing) Dynasty, who came to power in 1736.[18] The China Cantos also end with Kien-Long but explicitly link his reign with the American Revolution: "Came KIEN, 40 years before 'our revolution'" (61:338). The closing lines of Canto LXI (which refer to Kien-Long) read:

> And he wrote
> a poem on the Beauties of Mougden
> and condensed the Ming histories
> literary kuss, and wuz Emperor
> fer at least 40 years.
> Perhaps you will look up his verses. (61:340)

Thus the two histories, that of the Emperors of China and that of John Adams, are made chronologically continuous and, in Kearns's word, "Pound effects a transfer of energy from China to America at exactly 1776."[19]

The line in which Pound records the birth of John Adams furnishes further evidence of design:

> Born 1735; 19th Oct. old style; 30th new style John Adams (62:341)

The sources of this line are two passages from Charles Francis Adams's biography of his grandfather (in Volume I of the *Works of John Adams*); the first simply records the fact of Adams's birth, "John Adams, born 19 October, 1735," and the second describes the inscription on Adams's tomb: "The inscription on a marble tablet at the tomb of John Adams records his birth date as $^{19}/_{30}$ October, 1735."[20] Interestingly the two passages

conflated in this line are more than 600 pages apart in the source, therefore breaking the rule that the Adams Cantos follow the printed order of the *Works*. It might also be noted that "old style" and "new style" are not direct quotations from the source and so might be considered as Pound's own words. The reason for the double date is that in 1752 England switched from the Julian ("old style") to the Gregorian ("new style") calendar thus 'losing' eleven days, and in the inscription, Adams's dates have been adjusted accordingly. The more interesting question is why should Pound be at such pains to point this out. The obvious answer is that Pound was striving to represent Adams as a man who bestrode and perhaps transcended historical epochs and presenting his own history as a universal history and not merely the history of one particular dispensation. This, however, does not quite exhaust the significance of the line. 1735 is also the last specific date given in the China Cantos, it is the date of the death of Yong-Tching, the last Emperor whose reign falls entirely within the period covered by De Mailla's and Pound's histories: "Died 1735 at 58/ in the 13th year of his reign" (61: 338). There are many dates given in *The Cantos* and Pound's deployment of them is far from consistent, but the line under discussion is particularly puzzling; even if the importance of the year 1735 is granted it is difficult to see why the day and month of Adams's birth need to be recorded so elaborately (none of the other heroes of the poem have their birthdays celebrated in this manner). The only explanation that occurs to me is that Pound was born on 30 October 1885 and that Mussolini assumed power on 30 October 1922. While I have no doubt that this conjunction of dates and events is purely coincidental, I am equally certain that Pound did not see it as such. The exact nature of the numerological, or worse, fantasy Pound was nurturing in these lines is of less interest, in this context, than the fact, which seems to me undeniable, of design and plotting.

For reasons already stated, I agree that Pound's historiographical method is inherently flawed, and would further agree that its flaws are thrown into high relief in the Adams Cantos. However, derivation from a single source and the absence of Pound's own words, the features most often complained about by critics of *Cantos LII-LXXI*, were nothing new in the poem by 1940; in these respects the pseudo-chronicle of Cantos LXII-LXXI is essentially similar to that of Cantos XXXIV and XXXVII. It could, of course, still be argued that the Adams Cantos overuse it, taking it to an intolerable length. This is what Kearns calls an "aesthetic question" and so cannot be finally determined. I would incline more to Stock's opinion that in the Adams Cantos "the chop-and-change method is for the first and only time in the work successful for pages at a

time."[21] Even Pound's adherence to the printed order of his source is not new or, as Fender argues convincingly, necessarily a defect:

> The contexts of Cantos 31, 32, and 37 show that the excerpts are often taken in the order in which they appear in the original documents, as though Pound had been merely leafing through his books. The same apparently casual order of reference characterizes the poems by Whitman, Crane, and Williams. These authors all exploit what Hugh Kenner has called 'the one great American aesthetic invention', the 'work of art as an organiser of heteroclite material'.[22]

In a lengthy footnote to this passage, Fender further demonstrates that this is also true of non-history cantos: "Canto 39, though it appears to result from a thorough grounding in the classics, citing the *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Greek Anthology, and the *Pervigilium Veneris*, owes much of its structure to the edition of the *Odyssey* which formed most of the poem's field."

Peter Nicholls argues that what he terms "Pound's increasingly instrumental claims for language" led him, after 1937, "to reappraise the loosely dialectical structure of Cantos XXXI-LI," and that *Cantos LII-LXXI* are, in part, the product of this reappraisal.[23] Nicholls's argument assumes a rupture in the development of Pound's thinking and writing in the mid- to late-1930s that I would deny (have indeed already denied) but he is correct to see the Adams Cantos as being strongly marked by instrumentalism. An obvious example is provided by those passages in the sequence that Pound marked with a vertical line in the margin; there are three of these:

> For my part thought that Americans
> Had been embroiled in European wars long enough
> easy to see that
> France and England wd/ try to embroil us OBvious
> that all powers of Europe will be continually at manoeuvre
> (65:377)

> few of the human race have had opportunity like this
> to make election of government, more than of air, soil or climate
> (67:391)

> Every bank of discount is downright corruption
> taxing the public for private individuals' gain.
> and if I say this in my will
> the American people wd/ pronounce I died crazy. (71:416)

In the first and third of these passages, Adams's words are simply a vehicle for Pound's isolationist (or non-interventionist) and anti-bank views; the second is more problematic (and more interesting). At first sight these lines would appear to be a celebration of American democracy but this is almost certainly not the case. "Thoughts on Government: Applicable to the United States," from which these lines were derived, was written by Adams in 1776, originally in the form of a letter to William Hooper of North Carolina (it was later published as a pamphlet), as a contribution to the debate about the eventual forms of government of the former colonies. In "Thoughts on Government," Adams was concerned, firstly, to counter the view "that the particular form of a government made no difference if the government was well administered" and, secondly, with trying to steer a middle course between the radicalism of Tom Paine (and those who shared his "levelling" views) and "the 'insolent domination' of 'a few, a very few, opulent, monopolizing families'" – between what Adams would have characterised as mob rule and aristocratic rule.[24] As a recent biographer puts it, "for Adams the structure of government was a subject of passionate interest that raised fundamental questions about the realities of human nature, political power, and the good society" (hence his conviction that "the 'true idea' of a republic was 'an empire of laws and not of men'")."[25] When Adams wrote of making an "election of government" he meant choosing, or selecting, a form or system of government and not electing to office one individual or party rather than another.[26] Thus Pound's lines celebrate not democracy but creative political intelligence and the Confucian virtue of standing firm in the middle (qualities that, in 1939, Pound would have associated with Italy rather than the United States).

The marginal vertical lines in the Adams Cantos draw attention to what is important, to what needs to be understood, remembered and acted upon. This, indeed, is what such marks normally do but it is usually the reader and not the writer who adds them to the text; thus Pound may be said to be usurping the reader's role, to be presenting his poem already read. That this establishes Pound's "instrumental claims for language" is, as I have said, obvious. However, instrumentalism in itself does not distinguish the Adams Cantos from the earlier blocks of history cantos (I have already quoted Ian Bell's assertion that in Canto XXXI meaning "becomes a given object, to be handed on by the writer; and manufactured by the writer, not by the reader").[27]

The Cantos were always patently didactic and from the outset had sought, in Nicholls's words, "to provide an effective guide to action."[28] In 1938 and 1939 this didactic and instrumentalist imperative took on a greater weight and urgency; as I have

pointed out, in those years Pound became increasingly driven by events and everything, including his poetry, was subordinated to his political objectives (such as his self-imposed errand to keep the peace between the United States and Italy). There is no doubt that the Adams Cantos reflect this, but in doing so they differ only degree from the earlier cantos. Pound's account of Malatesta's reading of the omen of the eagle before the Battle of Nidastore in Canto X and his strictures on Marshall's loose construction of the Constitution in Canto XXXII perform essentially the same function as the emphasis marks in the Adams sequence (that is, they impose a reading on the reader). The difference is that the bold black lines in the margins of Cantos LXV, LXVII and LXXI are cruder; in the Adams Cantos the drive and urgency of Pound's desire to get his message across is such that subtlety is not necessarily a virtue.

2 Pater Patriae

Canto LXII ends with a plangent passage (Kearns writes of its "gestures of full-throated oratory" and "strongly stressed accents"[29]) celebrating the apotheosis of John Adams:

> But for the clearest head in congress
> 1774 and thereafter
> pater patriae
> the man who at certain points
> made us
> at certain points
> saved us
> by fairness, honesty and straight moving
> ARRIBA ADAMS (62:350)

The fact that while Canto LXII consists, for the most part, of quotations culled from Charles Francis Adams's life of his grandfather these word are almost entirely Pound's own (only the phrase "the clearest head in congress" can be traced to a source [30]) further sets apart and emphasises these lines. Pound intended his hieratic commemoration of Adams's achievements, and his ordination of him as "Pater Patriae" (Father of his Country), to come across as strongly and as unambiguously as possible.

The closing lines LXII are formally a peroration, they recapitulate the synoptic chronicle of Adams's career given in the body of the canto (and anticipate fuller accounts of individual incidents and episodes in the later cantos of the sequence). The three stages of the peroration ("congress / 1774 and thereafter" – "at certain points/ made us" – "at certain points / saved us") correspond to the three major phases of Adams's

career: his time as a representative of Massachusetts in the First and Second Continental Congresses (1774-1777), in Europe his work as a diplomat and representative of the United States (1778-1788) and his presidency (1797-1801).

As I have already pointed out, Adams was in both Continental Congresses an unswerving advocate of full independence and the opponent of those who advocated reconciliation. In the First Congress such views were in a minority and those who held them were regarded with suspicion, and Adams felt "obliged to act with great delicacy and caution"; by the time the Second Congress convened in May 1775 the Battle of Lexington and Concord had taken place and Adams became a dominant figure (the "Atlas" or the "Colossus" of independence).[31] The following passage sketches Adams's activities during this period:

> weekly in the Boston Gazette from '74 until Lexington
> wrote Novanglus, then shooting started
> allus them as putts off taking a side
> and lastly in superintending the preparation of
> bills of credit, to serve as dollars durin' the struggle
> then moved for a navee
> which he got after some ridicule
> Guided pubk mind in formation state constitutions
> e.g. N. York and N. Carolina
> retain what experience has found good,
> central authority, war, trade, and disputes between states
> republican jealousy which seeks to cut off all power
> from fear of abuses
> quite as much harm as a despotism
> 9th Feb to end of that year probably very laborious
> Birth of Nation (62:344)

These lines portray Adams as a pamphleteer ("Novanglus") and as political philosopher ("Thoughts on Government" was an important influence on the "formation [of] state constitutions"), as a principled politician whose actions are timely but not tailored to the mood of the moment (he was not one of those who "putts off taking a side"[32]) and as indefatigable committee man attending to the nuts-and-bolts work of setting up the new state. In other words he perfectly fulfils the Poundian ideal of a man of ideas and action, of a man who puts ideas into action. The phrase "Birth of Nation," which does not occur in the source,[33] clearly anticipates Pound's later designation of Adams as Pater Patriae. Terrell's suggestion that Pound's use of the phrase "refers to D.W. Griffith's 1914 film of the same name" and that it is intended to counter the Popular "20th-century view that regards the Civil war as the real crucible in which the nation was formed and regards

Abraham Lincoln as the true founding father" is, I think, substantially correct (although *The Birth of a Nation* was in fact first shown, under the title *The Clansman*, in 1915).[34]

Adams played an important role in bringing the Second Continental Congress to a declaration of the independence of the Colonies; this is commemorated in LXII:

> with pomp bells bonfires on the 2nd day of July
> than any social community has ever yet carried out (62:345).

These lines run together a passage from a letter by Adams to his wife Abigail ("'The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epocha [. . .] in the history of America [. . .]. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of the continent to the other, from this time forward, forevermore") and Charles Francis Adams's commendation of his grandfather's defence of Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence against those who sought to amend it and water it down ("the tenacity of Mr. Adams saved its substance, which will remain to a distant future, to inspire a far more perfect system of liberty than any social community has ever yet, in its practice, carried out").[35] What perhaps strikes most readers is that in lines that turn on the idea of commemoration and fame, Pound (and his sources) get the date wrong – it is the 4th and not the 2nd of July that is the day of "pomp and parade."

Even after the opening of hostilities at Lexington, the Congress was reluctant to commit itself to independence and radical separatists like Adams and Richard Henry Lee of Virginia were still regarded with suspicion in some quarters. This stemmed, in part, from a perhaps understandable desire to avoid, if at all possible, a drastic and irrevocable measure but sectional rivalries also played a part (the prosperous middle colonies of New York and Pennsylvania felt particularly threatened). In April 1776 Adams complained to a correspondent that for some of his fellow delegates "independency is an hobgoblin, of so frightful mien, that it would throw a delicate person into fits to look it in the face."[36] Nonetheless, on 7 June 1776 Congress was brought, largely by the machinations of the Massachusetts and Virginia delegations, to debate a motion, proposed by Lee and seconded by Adams, calling for a declaration of independence. The motion was strongly opposed and on 10 June "the 'cool party' succeeded in having the final vote delayed for twenty days, until July 1, to allow delegates from the middle colonies time to send for new instructions." At the same time it was agreed that work should begin immediately on

the framing of a formal declaration and the task was assigned to a committee consisting of Adams, Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman and Robert Livingstone.

The actual writing of the declaration devolved upon Jefferson. Exactly why this should have been the case has never been satisfactorily established; it was, no doubt, partly a recognition of Jefferson's superior rhetorical powers and partly a concession to sectional interests (it should also be remembered that at this juncture Adams was involved in twenty-six other committees and Franklin was old and ill).[37] When Jefferson had completed a draft of the declaration it was reviewed by the committee and "Franklin made several changes and Adams half a dozen more."[38] The declaration was now ready to be submitted to Congress but, before that could happen, the deferred vote on Lee's motion had to take place.

On 1 July, Congress reconvened to vote on the motion. John Dickinson of Pennsylvania spoke against and Adams replied. Although no copy of the speech survives, and no notes were taken at the time, McCullough asserts that "it was the most powerful and important speech heard in Congress since it first convened, and the greatest speech of Adams's life." It was this speech that led Richard Stockton (of the New Jersey delegation) to describe Adams as "the man to whom the country is most indebted for the great measure of independency [. . .] the Atlas of American independence [. . .] who sustained the debate, and by force of his reasoning demonstrated not only the justice but the expediency of the measure."[39] Despite Adams's best efforts, at the end of the day's session the Colonies were nine to four in favour of independence (that is, four short of the desired unanimity) and a final vote was postponed until the next day. After a night of intense politicking and bargaining, and following the dramatic eleventh-hour arrival of a messenger from Delaware, the motion was passed unanimously (with New York abstaining) the following day (2 July); Jefferson's text was then presented to Congress and after some debate (and various cuts) the Declaration of Independence in its present form was adopted by Congress and signed by John Hancock and Charles Thompson, the President and Secretary of Congress respectively, on 4 July 1776.

This brief account of events in Philadelphia make it clear why he should have chosen the second rather than the fourth of July as America's day of "pomp and parade." That he should have done this, and that everybody else should have chosen the fourth, is wholly typical. Adams was concerned, to the point of obsession, with the 'verdict of history'; he was also convinced that it would be partial and unfavourable to him and he

did, indeed, tend to be unfortunate in this respect. The *Dictionary of National Biography* says of him:

> Adams believed himself unjustly neglected and criticized by his contemporaries, as he predicted he would be by posterity. "The history of our Revolution will be one continued lie from one end to the other. The essence of the whole will be that Dr. Franklin's electrical rod smote the earth and out sprang General Washington. That Franklin electrified him with his rod – and thence forward these two conducted all the policy, negotiation, legislatures and war . . . . If this letter should be preserved and read a hundred years hence, the reader will say, 'The envy of . . . JA could not bear to think of the truth.'"[40]

This is overstated but Adams had a point. Much of his own writing, including his letters to Jefferson, is concerned with correcting this view and this task was taken up by his son and grandson. According to Peter Shaw, John Quincy Adams "set to work cataloging the John Adams papers in preparation for writing a biography" after his defeat in the election of 1828; his return to Congress interrupted this work and it was eventually completed by his son Charles Francis, who believed that his grandfather "had been neglected while his less-deserving contemporaries were raised above him in public estimation."[41] Charles Francis's ten-volume *Works* is a monumental act of filial piety; Pound's epitome of it is, in its way, no less filiopietistic, as the epiphet "Pater Patriae" and his use of the first person plural ("made us"/ "saved us") indicates. Pound would also have been attracted by the idea of Adams as one of history's victims, one of the misrepresented or unjustly neglected, and may have felt a degree of empathy with someone who celebrated Independence Day two days early, someone who, like himself, was idiosyncratic but not eccentric.

The Declaration of Independence asserts that "these United Colonies [. . .] as Free and Independent States [. . .] have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do." During his years as a diplomat and representative of the United States in France, Holland and Britain, Adams did more than anyone else to realise these aspirations. For Pound his achievements during this phase matched those of his time in Philadelphia:

> so on the 19th of April
> John got his answer and recognition, categoric
> Mr Adams has demanded a categorical answer
> for the U.S.N.A. letters of credence / we say that he is

to be now
admitted as envoy 1782 Birth of a Nation
corps diplomatique (62:346)

In August 1780 Adams left Paris for Amsterdam in an attempt to secure financial aid for the United States (the previous month Congress had determined that he should undertake precisely such a mission but Adams was unaware of this when he left Paris).[42] At first Adams's mission did not progress and he became convinced that to succeed in obtaining a loan he must first "gain recognition of American independence and arrange a Dutch American alliance" and "pressed Congress for greater authority"; this was granted and in December Adams was appointed minister plenipotentiary to the Netherlands.[43] The following spring he went on the offensive:

> On April 19, 1781, six years to the day from the battle of Lexington and Concord, Adams completed and signed a sixteen-page memorial, addressed to "Their High Mightinesses, the States General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries." A strong, even passionate appeal for cooperation, it began by affirming that the American people were "unalterably determined" to maintain their independence and that if ever there was a "natural alliance," it would be between the two republics of the Netherlands and the United States.[44]

On 4 May, Adams presented his memorial to the President of the States-General (having previously arranged for its publication in pamphlet form in Dutch, French and English).[45] This was a serious breach of diplomatic etiquette, which decreed that "no emissary ever proclaimed his mission – his 'public character' – until the government to which he was credited was ready to receive him,"[46] and a very high risk strategy. The price of failure would have been high for Adams and his diplomatic career would have ended in ignominy (the more so since he had acted in the matter without consulting Congress). Adams himself described it as "militia diplomacy."[47] It was, however, successful and in 1782, on 19 April, the States-General voted to recognise Adams as the ambassador of the United States and the following day Adams presented his letter of credence to the assembly. This was the first diplomatic recognition of the United States and Adams thus became his country's first ambassador. It was, indeed, diplomatically, the "Birth of a Nation" and Pound's claim that in this phase of his career Adams "at certain points/ made us" is fully justified.

The presidency should have been the climax of Adams's forty years of public service but his administration ended with him being "Dismissed to the joy of both

parties" (71:414) in 1800; of the first six Presidents only John and John Quincy Adams failed to win a second term. Pound's line is culled from a letter of 1805 in which Adams presents himself as a misunderstood and mistreated Cincinnatus:

> From the year 1760 to the year 1800 I was swallowed up in cares, anxieties, and exertions for the public. At the close of the 18th century, I was dismissed to the joy of both parties, to a retirement in which I was never more to see anything but my plough between me and the grave.[48]

As Washington's Vice-President, Adams was heir-apparent but in the election of 1796 he only defeated the Republican candidate, Jefferson, by 71 electoral college votes to 68 (his opponents would later deride him as "The President by Three Votes"[49]). Adams thus took office with a Vice-President from the opposition party and as the nominal leader of party split by factional rivalries and in-fighting; the High Federalists, even those within the cabinet, owed their real allegiance to Alexander Hamilton (whose supposed retirement from political life was, in practice, more a strategic withdrawal). The fiction that the President was above party and faction could not be sustained in the post-Washington era, and, unsurprisingly, Adams's administration was crippled from the outset by such disputes. The political atmosphere of the time is vividly conveyed by an incident in Congress in January 1798. The Vermont Republican, Mathew Lyons, felt that he had been insulted by Federalist Roger Griswold of Connecticut and crossed the floor of the House and spat in Griswold's face; the two then set about each other (the former wielding a pair of fire-tongs and the latter a cane) until they were physically separated.

The main problem that faced Adams on coming into office was the deteriorating relations between the United States and France. The French government took a dim view of the improved relations between Britain and the United States (the Jay Treaty of 1794 was a particular cause of resentment). Adams was caught between the generally Francophile Republicans and the pro-British High Federalists of his own party (who if they would not have actively welcomed war with France were determined to do nothing to avoid it). Adams's response, in a speech to Congress in May 1797, was to call "for both 'a fresh attempt' at negotiating with France, and a buildup of American military strength"; as McCullough further remarks "the speech bore a strong resemblance to the America Eagle, an olive branch in one talon, and in the other the 'emblems of defence.'"[50] Needless to say, it pleased neither faction. Adams then sent John Marshall and Elbridge Gerry as envoys to France (with the intention that together with ambassador Charles Pinckney they should form a three-man peace commission). This overture was

rebuffed by French Foreign Minister Talleyrand and in a message to Congress of March 1798 Adams conceded, "that the diplomatic mission had failed, and thus he must call again for the measures necessary to defend the nation in the event of attack."[51] War now seemed inevitable but in the face of pressure from within his own party, public clamour and French provocation (which included attacks on American shipping) Adams continued with preparations for war but did not ask Congress for a declaration of war. This situation continued into 1799 when in February Adams, without consulting cabinet (or as his enemies were quick to point out his "old woman"[52]), Adams sent a message to Congress appointing the American ambassador to Holland, William Vans Murray, minister plenipotentiary to France with a brief "to discuss and conclude all controversies between the two Republics by a new treaty."[53] Again this was a high risk strategy, McCullough describes it as "perhaps the bravest" act of Adams's career,[54] and again it paid off (the Convention of Mortefontaine, October 1800, effectively put an end to the threat of war). It also put an end to any prospect Adams had of being re-elected for a second term.

This was exactly the sort of individual, dramatic and decisive action that was calculated to appeal to Pound and it is celebrated in Canto LXII:

> Mr A. not caught asleep by *his* cabinet
> so that on the 18 th of Feb. the senate recd/ the nomination
> of Murray
> and a communication of Talleyrand's document
> assuming no risk in trusting
> the professions of Talleyrand.
> Not vindicative that I can remember
> though I have often been wroth
> at any rate staved off a war (62:349)

For Pound the 'staving off' of war with France was what "at certain points/ saved us," and it was the great achievement of Adams's presidency, perhaps of his whole career. Indeed it could be said that it is the main point of the Adams Cantos. Cantrell and Swinson argue that Pound believed "that the ideas embodied in Chinese history and in Adams's life could prevent war" and that Pound's 1939 trip to the United States and the composition of the Adams Cantos "dovetailed" (that is, that both were part of his anti-war initiative).[55] Obviously, in this respect Pound intended Adams as a model for Roosevelt and perhaps particularly in his willingness to sacrifice his own electoral prospects to the cause of peace (Pound believed that Roosevelt was doing the opposite).[56] The italicising of "*his*" in the passage quoted above may refer to Pound's

belief that Roosevelt allowed himself to be ill-advised and misled by those closest to him.

Both Nicholls and Carpenter cite letters written to his father in the 1920s in which Pound refers to Adams as a "bum" and a "dud" as evidence that Pound's interest in Adams was, in the late 1930s, a comparatively recent development. This is particularly significant for Nicholls for whom *The Cantos* turned from a Jefferson-centred to an Adams- centred view of American history as "the poet moved further to the Right"; noting that "Jefferson had become a hero of the New Deal democrats during this period," Nicholls cites Pound's contention that "John Adams had the corrective for Jefferson" (*GK*, 254) and argues that "Adams's writing provided Pound with a 'corrective' to the vein of radical reformism and optimism in Jefferson's thought" and to "the Jeffersonian commitment to minimal government" which Pound had once favoured but which had come to seem "increasingly open to appropriation by 'liberalism.'"[57] This argument, while it is not totally wrong, is seriously flawed.

To begin with, Carpenter and Nicholls give too much weight to off-hand remarks in letters to his father; these can be valuable documents but it must always be borne in mind that well into adult life Pound, in writing to his parents, liked to play the *enfant terrible*. Pound did indeed move "further to the Right" in the 1930s but the key term here is the comparative "further." As I have already argued, Pound's commitment to Fascism began significantly earlier than Nicholls and others recognise, and his move to the right in the late 1930s was a shorter and more predictable journey than it is sometimes represented as having been. Pound's choice of Adams rather than Jefferson does not mean, as Nicholls seems to imply, that Pound was dropping Jefferson in favour of Adams. Adams is a significant presence in the Cantos XXXI-XXXIII (they might more accurately be called the Jefferson-Adams Cantos) and often functions in those cantos precisely as a 'corrective' to Jefferson; that this is true even in Canto XXXI is apparent in the following passage (a critique of Franklin's view of man as a "rational creature"):

> "Come let us suppose a rational man.
> "Strip him of all his appetites, especially his hunger and thirst.
> "He is in his chamber, engaged in making experiments,
> "Or in pursuing some problem.
> "At this moment a servant knocks. 'Sir,
> " 'dinner is on the table.'
> " 'Ham and chicken?' 'Ham!'
> " 'And I must break my chain of thoughts to

" 'go down and gnaw a morsel of damned hog's arse?
" 'Put aside you ham; I will dine tomorrow;'
Take away appetite, and the present generation would not
Live a month, and no future generation would exist;
and thus the exalted dignity of human nature etc. ....
Mr Adams to Mr Jefferson, 15 Nov. 1813. (31:156)

There is no doubt that Pound did become more reactionary between 1930 and 1940, but Cantos LXII-LXXI cannot be said to be more right-wing than Cantos XXXI-XXXIV. The most immediately obvious difference between the two groups of cantos is the loss, in the later group, of the idyllic world of the Jefferson Cantos. That idyllic world, with its many voices finally blending into a harmonious whole, is, however, one that tolerates no opposition or dissent. It is all too easy to be seduced by the totalitarian elegance of these cantos and not to recognise their sinister element. The Adams Cantos, by contrast, are the representation of movements in a non-idyllic world; in them the romance of the Revolution, of its men and deeds, is recognised – "*magis decora poeticis fabulis*" (71:420) – but it is a world in which difficulties are stubbornly resistant to the charm of myth and romance:

been 30 years among these rocks whistling
(Amphion) and none wd/ ever move without money. (62:349)

What can be said about the Adams Cantos is not that they are more Fascistic than the Jefferson Cantos, but that, both for Pound and for his readers, they are more problematically Fascistic.

Finally, it should be noted that Pound experienced extreme difficulty in acquiring a copy of the ten-volume Charles Francis Adams *Works*. According to Cantrell and Swinson he began actively seeking to buy a copy as early as 1932, and by January 1937 he was desperate enough to urge Ibbotson "to duplicate or steal the copy at the Hamilton college library, or even 'out of the Congressional library or anydamnwhere ellus.'" He may, they speculate, finally have acquired a copy on his visit to London in November 1938.[58] Sometimes, the most obvious explanation of why something should appear in *The Cantos* at a given point, and not earlier, is the correct one.

3 The Revolution in the Minds of the People

The expression the 'revolution took place in the minds of the people' is not to be found in Cantos LXII – LXXI, although the entire sequence could be described as the representation of just such a revolution, but it, or a recognisable variation of it, does appear three times in the earlier cantos. It first occurs at the beginning of Canto XXXII run-on with an apparently unconnected inventory of the cargo of the French ship the Amphitrite, which ran the British blockade to deliver military supplies to the Colonists during the Revolutionary War:

> "The revolution," said Mr Adams,
> "Took place in the minds of the people."
> .....with sixty, cannon, ten ton tons of powder,
> 10,000 muskets and bayonets, lead, bed-covers,
> uniforms and a colonel, to affirm their neutrality ... the Amphitrite
> (32:157)

It is repeated, and elaborated on, in Cantos XXXIII and L (where it functions as a sort of epigraph for Pound's account of the "Leopoldine Reforms"):

> .... was in the minds of the people, and this was effected from 1760 to
> 1775 in the course of fifteen years..before Lexington..... (33:161)

> Revolution' said Mr Adams 'took place in the
> minds of the people
> in the fifteen years before Lexington', (50:246)

According to Jean-Michel Rabaté, "following the first American Cantos, two key ideas emerge [. . .] that the revolution was not primarily of a military nature, but above all moral and political; and that the Battle of Lexington was but a symptom of a deeper evolution of thought."[59] I agree with Rabaté but would stress the "primarily"; in all of the above the chronological primacy of the "Revolution [. . .] in the minds of the people" is stressed (it took place "before Lexington") but that "moral and political" event is never separated from the military aspects of the Revolution (when Lexington is not mentioned it is, as I have said, collocated with an inventory of military supplies). Adams intended his account of the Revolution, written over fifty years after the event, as a refutation of a crudely militaristic, and Washington-centred, view of the Revolution (and it may be added as an attempt to replace it with one in which his own

role was given greater prominence). The Adams Cantos share this intention, not surprisingly given that they consist almost entirely of Adams's words, and are clearly subversive of received views of the Revolution and of heroic myths such as "Paul Revere's Ride" and "Valley Forge." This is readily apparent in the following lines (based on a diary entry for 19 April 1786[60]):

> 19th, Wednesday, anniversary of the battle of Lexington
> and of my reception in Holland
> which latter event is considered of no importance (66:381)

However, while the idea of a "revolution [. . .] in the minds of the people" is central to the Adams Cantos, it must also be recognised that the sequence as a whole is considerably more martial than the Jefferson Cantos, in which the actual events of the Revolution (including the Declaration of Independence) are, for the most part, conspicuous by their absence. The conventional figure of the hero has become a somewhat trite and easy target, but in the Adams Cantos Pound is not concerned with debunking or subverting the heroic but with redefining and extending it to include such superficially unglamorous actions as negotiating treaties and loans. Pound's Adams is usually, and correctly, described as an Odysseus figure but there is also streak of Achilles in him; as the passage quoted in the previous section shows, he was much concerned with questions of reputation and fame, and had a sharp sense of what might be called comparative status. Nor is the conventionally heroic entirely absent:

> Tucker in old age said
> that J. A. was out with a musket like any damn common marine
> 'Ordered him; but there he wuz out agin
> I sez: Me orders, sir, are to get yew to EUrope' (65:370)

These line recount an incident during Adams's first voyage to Europe on board the U.S. frigate *Boston*; Captain Tucker later recalled that when he engaged and captured an armed British merchantman Adams refused to remain safely below deck and insisted: "I ought to do my share of the fighting."[61]

The source of the phrase "revolution took place in the minds of the people," as Cantrell and Swinson point out, is a letter from Adams to Jefferson of August 1815 and not, as Terrell asserts, a letter from Adams to Dr. J. Morse of November 1815.[62] The relevant passage in the letter to Jefferson reads:

> What do we mean by the revolution? The War? That was no part of the revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it. The revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was effected from 1760-1775, in the course of fifteen years, before a drop of blood was shed at Lexington.[63]

However, the letter to Dr. J. Morse, Jedidiah Morse (1761-1826) who might be described as the Noah Webster of American geography (he was author of *The American Geography* [1789] and *The American Gazetteer* [1797]) and who also wrote a number of historical works including *Annals of the American Revolution* (1824), is alluded to in the Adams Cantos. Morse wrote to Adams requesting, in Terrell's words, "information about the causes and course of the Revolution."[64] Something that Adams, as might be expected, was only too happy to provide. The following three lines collate and condense passages from two letters from Adams to Morse, of 1 January 1816 and 29 November 1815 in that order (incidentally providing another example of Pound deviating from the printed order of his source):

> fleet to protect Paxton, Birch, Temple
> Credit Otis with a great part of my argument
> he showed illegality; toward destroying the charters (71:419)

The first line, taken from the later letter, describes the extraordinary measures necessary to allow British customs officers and agents such as Paxton, Birch and Temple to operate in New England in the 1760s.[65] The second and third lines, which derive from the letter of November 1815, refer to the crisis over the Writs of Assistance in 1760-61.

Pound had accurately and succinctly set out the origins of this crisis earlier in the sequence:

> An inferior officer in Salem
> whose name was Cockle petioned
> the justices for a Writ of Assistance
> to break open ships, shops, cellars and houses
> Mr Sewall expressed doubt of legality,
> Oxenbridge Thayer with Otis,
> a contest appeared to be opened. (63:354)

Writs of Assistance are described by Page Smith as "writs provided for by parliamentary statute to uphold the provisions of the acts of trade and navigation, especially those acts referring to the payment of duties on imported goods and the apprehension of smugglers"; such a writ allowed a customs officer to enter, by force if necessary, "ships,

shops, homes or warehouses suspected of containing smuggled goods" and "was thus, in effect, a general search warrant."[66] Writs of Assistance were regularly issued in Britain but in the Colonies they were widely regarded as an attack on the rights of property and traditional freedoms; further, the issuing of such a writ in New England raised the fraught question of whether the Parliament in London had the right to legislate for the American Colonies. When James Cockle applied to the Essex session of the Massachusetts Supreme Court for a Writ of Assistance, Stephen Sewall, Chief Justice of that court, who doubted the constitutionality of such writs, referred the matter to the Boston session; Oxenbridge Thacher (mistranscribed by Pound as "Thayer") and James Otis were the lawyers who would oppose the application. The "contest" thus "opened," in the view of Adams and Pound, was the American Revolution.

By the time the issue came to the Boston session, Sewall had died and been replaced by the pro-British Hutchinson and Cockle got his writ, but it was, if ever there was one, a Pyrrhic Victory (it might be said to have cost the British an empire). Otis, Adams's friend and mentor, spoke brilliantly against the issuing of a writ; according to Smith he "with his flair and fire, his magic power over men's minds and sensibilities [. . .] brought the issue out of the labyrinth of legal terms and precedents into the clear light of common understanding."[67] Although he failed to achieve his immediate goals he was more than successful in his larger aims. Over fifty years later Adams wrote to Morse of Otis's speech:

> Here, then, Sir, began the revolution in the principles, views, opinions, and feelings of the American people. Their eyes were opened to a clear sight of the danger that threatened them and their posterity, and the liberties of both in all future generations.[68]

Certainly, this speech may be said to have politicised Adams (he recorded in his diary that "every man [. . .] appeared to me to go away, as I did, ready to take arms against writs of his assistance"[69]) and as Pound's rather free rendition of the letter to Morse suggests provided him with the arguments for independence that he would later push to a successful conclusion ("Credit Otis with a great part of my argument / he showed illegality; toward destroying the charters"[70]).

As I understand them, these arguments maintained that the American colonies were originally under the sole jurisdiction of the King and that Parliament had no control over them. These prerogatives were progressively diminished or set aside but as Bernhard Knollenberg, to whose account of these matters I am deeply indebted, points

out "while firmly establishing its authority over colonial trade and related matters [. . .] Parliament had consistently abstained from taxing the colonies for revenue"; this abstention "was in harmony with principles of the English constitution recognizing the existence of certain basic, unalterable rights of Englishmen, one of which was no taxation without representation."[71] These "basic, unalterable rights" effectively limited the power of Parliament in so far as no law that violated them could be enacted or enforced. Knollenberg adds:

> The concept of basic principles constituting permanent limitations, reaching back at least as far as Magna Carta, had been affirmed in one of the great documents of English political and constitutional history. The Bill of Rights, enacted by Parliament in 1689, declared that a number of fundamental rights and privileges "shall stand, remain and be the law of this realm forever."[72]

Otis and Adams argued that the Writs of Assistance (and later the Stamp Acts) were essentially taxation for revenue and so violations and usurpations of these traditional rights (rights which were in the case of the colonists further strengthened by the colonial charters). By resisting such measures they were merely asserting their rights as Englishmen (they were, indeed, doing no more than their fellow Englishmen, who happened to live on the other side of the Atlantic, had done in the Glorious Revolution of 1688).

In *Inventing America*, Garry Wills writes of the eighteenth-century sense of the word revolution:

> Americans were willing to call their action a revolution precisely *because* it was an orderly and legal procedure. The first English meaning of "revolution" had been astronomical – the revolving of the heavens, an exchange of planetary position; or the "period" (which is simply "revolution" in Greek) covered by such alteration. Hooker used "the Christian revolution" to mean the Christian *era* [. . .]. The accepted word for violent withdrawal from allegiance was "revolt", not revolution. Revolt was synonymous with rebellion.[73]

In this sense almost any turn of events can be termed a revolution, but Wills notes that in colonial America "*the* Revolution" was the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and on this basis argues that "true revolution" was held to be "the extraordinary act that is needed to maintain the flow of ordinary ones." [74] (12)

Pound's "revolution [. . .] in the minds of the people," in both the Jefferson and Adams sequences, has much in common with the eighteenth-century model described

by Wills. This is perhaps made most explicit in a passage in LXXI in which Adams hotly denies that he is engaged in rebellion and transfers the epithet "rebel" to the British:

> Rebel!
> I was disgusted at their saying rebel. I wd/ *meet* rebellion
> when British governors and generals should begin it,
> that is, their rebellion against principles of the constitution. (71:414).

Peter Nichols perceptively comments that the "Adams Cantos" are "best read, as, in part, an exploration of ideas and legitimacy; this will allow us to grasp the central theme of 'conservative revolution.'"[75] The American Revolution as it is represented in Cantos LXII-LXXI is a 'conservative revolution,' in so far as it is modelled on England's Glorious Revolution and not on the French Revolution, and in claiming legitimacy as a reassertion or maintenance of traditional English freedoms and rights. It can also be described as a 'conservative revolution' in that as the events of the Adams-centred Revolution chronicled in these cantos (the congresses, battles, negotiations, etc) are represented primarily as constituting an act of "rectification." In other words, in the Adams Cantos the Revolution brings about a more just relation between the *res* and the *verba*, by recognizing the existence of a new thing (an independent branch of the English people in North America brought into being by the "revolution [. . .] in the minds of the people") and calling it by its correct name. The lines, quoted in Section 2, describing Adams's diplomatic triumph in Holland, explicitly foreground this process of recognition and naming:

> so on the 19th of April
> John got his answer and recognition, categoric
> Mr Adams has demanded a categorical answer
> for the U.S.N.A. letters of credence (62:346)

4 Germanic Germs

The title of this section is taken from Frederick Jackson Turner's "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893). In that essay, Turner, on the basis of a bulletin of the Superintendent of the Census for 1890, declared the frontier closed and went on to reflect on the frontier as the determining force in American history. In a famous, and much quoted passage, he describes the frontier as the principal instrument, the engine, of Americanisation:

> Our early history is the study of European germs developing in an American environment. Too exclusive attention has been paid by institutional students to the Germanic origins, too little to the American factors. The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. The wilderness masters the colonist [. . .] at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe, not simply the development of Germanic germs, any more than the first phenomenon was a case of reversion to the Germanic mark. The fact is, that here is a new product that is American. At first, the frontier was the Atlantic coast. It was the frontier of Europe in a very real sense. Moving westward, the frontier became more and more American. [. . .] Thus the advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines. And to study this advance, the men who grew up under these conditions, and the political, economic, and social results of it, is to study the really American part of our history.[76]

This view of American history has been immensely influential, so much so that it has achieved a wide currency even among those who have never heard of Frederick Jackson Turner – who does not know how the west was won or that space is the new (or final) frontier? Among historians Turner's essay was, and is, usually seen as a call for a "really American" American history that privileges "American factors" rather than "Germanic origins" or "European germs" ("germ" here carries the sense of "that from which anything springs or may spring; an elementary principle; a rudiment" [*OED*]). This is an over-simplification and a distortion; Turner was certainly contesting an orthodoxy and proposing a shift in emphasis but, as Harvey Wish points out, "he rebelled in 1893 merely at the current *exclusive* emphasis on Teutonic origins."[77]

Much has made of Turner's boyhood near Portage, Wisconsin, and of the resolutely local character of his master's and doctoral theses, respectively on "The Influence of the Fur Trade in Wisconsin" and "The Character and Influence of the Indian Trade in Wisconsin (A Study of the Trading Post as an Institution)."[78] Less is made of the fact that Turner presented his doctorate at Johns Hopkins University where he studied under Herbert Baxter Adams. Like many of the leading American historians of his generation, H.B. Adams had studied in Germany and held a doctorate from Heidelberg and is credited with having "successfully introduced the Ranke-type historical seminar" at Johns Hopkins.[79] H. B. Adams's seminars not only propagated German scientific method, they "inculcated the idea that democratic institutions evolved from Anglo-Saxon

and Teutonic roots" and "Adams taught or wrote about the Germanic origins of New England towns or on Saxon tithingmen in America."[80] H. B. Adams was concerned with tracing the origins of western democratic institutions in the social and political culture of the ancient German tribes as Tacitus had described it. Tacitus had been much impressed by the valour and resoluteness of the warlike tribes who lived in the German forests on the borders of the Roman Empire, and by their system (as it seemed to him) of majority rule.[81] In all of this H. B. Adams may be said to have represented, if not a consensus, an orthodoxy; an orthodoxy that privileged institutional history and maintained, not always tacitly, "that 'Anglo-Saxons were the salt of the earth and the heralds of freedom.'"[82]

Although he sought a change of priorities within it, Turner was clearly part of this orthodoxy; as Wish reports, he had no "quarrel with the chauvinistic Anglo-Saxon overemphasis in history" and his doctoral thesis traced the history of trading posts back to the Phoenicians.[83] The influence of the "Germanic germs" is also clearly apparent in Turner's mode of argument, which is a textbook example of the Hegelian dialectic in operation (and also a rather mechanistic one): thesis (the European), antithesis (the wilderness), synthesis ("the really American"). Further, Turner's history of the "moving frontier" and H. B. Adams's histories of New England moots and Yankee tithingmen (and "germ theory" generally) can all be considered as instances of what I have earlier called the heliotropic grand narrative of history. All of them deliver a narrative of the westward progression of arts, civilisation and empire; what Turner did was to demand a greater focus on the specifically American chapter of that history.

The representation of the American Revolution in the Jefferson Cantos as the heir to a classical republican tradition transmitted via "free cities now here, now there" that " contrived to hold out against the feudal system" and became "the model for our present constitutional government" (*SP*, 126) is a history of the development of European "germs," and is, consistently with Pound's view of history generally, profoundly heliotropic. The same can be said of the Adams Cantos; the key difference is that in the later sequence the "germs" are "Germanic." In Cantos LXII-LXXI, Pound, like H. B. Adams, traces the history of American institutions back not to Rome or Greece but to England:

> common lay of England, BIRTHRIGHT of every man here
> and at home (66:384).

Pound's source, in the widest sense, was not, of course, Herbert Baxter Adams but John Adams's attempts to establish the legality and legitimacy of the American Revolution by reference to traditional English freedoms and rights going back to Anglo-Saxon times (in the lines quoted above Pound changes "law" to "lay" presumably to enhance the sense of antiquity[84]). The Adams Cantos do not, however, simply abandon the historical vision of the earlier sequence, but revise and extend it to include a significant English dimension; a rescription that moves Pound's history markedly closer to the Machiavellian tradition of political thought described by J.G.A. Pocock.

For Pocock, Adams was "classical to the point of archaism" and his *Defence of the Constitutions of the United States* was "a vindication of the federal republic as a strict classical blend of natural aristocracy and democracy [. . .] perhaps the last major work of political theory written within the unmodified tradition of classical republicanism."[85] This aspect of Adams's thought is somewhat obliquely alluded to in the lines:

> Locke, Milton, Neville Burnet and Hoadly
> empire of laws not of men (67:391)

These lines are taken from Adams's "Thoughts on Government"; the source passage reads:

> A man must be indifferent to the sneers of modern Englishmen, to mention in their company the names of Sidney, Harrington, Locke, Milton, Nedham, Neville, Burnet, and Hoadly. No small fortitude is necessary to confess that one has read them. [. . .] They will convince any candid mind, that there is no good government but what is republican. That the only valuable part of the British constitution is so; because the very definition of a republic is "an empire of laws, and not of men."[86]

Adams is invoking an English republican (or Machiavellian tradition) in order to argue that the proposed constitutions of the United States are consistent and continuous with what is best in the British constitution; he is making the point that it is the English and not the Americans who are in revolt against that constitution. Pound's redaction of this passage omits the most important name, that of the political philosopher James Harrington (1611-1677), from whom Adams took the phrase "an empire of laws, and not of men"[87] and a significant influence on Adams's thought in general (Smith describes Adams as having been "concerned with establishing a new and purified kind

of political community, founded on the Christian religion and the precepts of John Locke and James Harrington among others" and reports that he reread "Harrington and Hoadly" immediately before the Massachusetts constituional convention[88]). According to Pocock, Harrington "brought about a synthesis of civic humanist thought with English political and social awareness" and is a "crucial figure" for those, like himself, who "seek to show that the English-speaking political tradition has been a bearer of republican and Machiavellian [. . .] concepts and values."[89] Although Harrington is a significant figure even in his absence, I do not think that Pound's omission of his name is in itself significant. As his running together of the names of Henry Neville and Sir Thomas Burnett to form Neville Burnett indicates Pound's transcription of his source was careless (probably through haste). Alternatively, he may simply not have realised how important Harrington was to his argument.

Pound's version of this tradition of "republican and Machiavellian [. . .] concepts and values" is most fully and explicitly set out in Canto LXVII, which is, for the most part, derived from Adams's polemical writing of the 1770s (the *Boston Gazette* articles of 1773 grouped together by Charles Francis Adams as the "Independence of the Judiciary," the Novanglus pieces and "Thoughts on Government"). The canto begins with the quasi-mythical origins of English liberties in the Anglo-Saxon period:

> Whereof memory of man runneth not to the contrary
> Dome Book, Ina, Offa and Aethelbert, folcright
> for a thousand years (67:387)

These lines refer specifically to Alfred the Great's codification of Anglo-Saxon law that, according to Adams, was the foundation of all subsequent English law. (Ina, Offa and Aethelbert were Saxon kings of the sixth and seventh centuries.) The canto then goes on to review various models and theories of government from classical times onwards and finds most of them wanting. Put somewhat crudely, Adams's argument was that a republic was not in itself a guarantee of just and equitable government, this could only be achieved by a bicameral legislature and a clear separation of powers between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. Where these things are lacking republics will fall into oligarchy or tyranny. The history of Geneva provides an illustration of the former tendency:

> Whole history of Geneva:
> the people have given up all balances
> betraying their own rights and those of the magistrates
> into the hands of a few prominent families... (67:394)

The following lines chronicle the bloody history of the doges of Venice (Paul Luc Anafeste was the first doge[90]):

> Venice at first democratical...
> Anafeste's real merit. 5 massacred, 5 blinded and exiled
> 9 deposed, one killed in a foreign war
> thus 20 of 50 doges, plus 5 abdications
> before they thought of limiting powers (67:394)

England had a bicameral legislature and, in Adams's view, separation of powers and so was, as he argues in the passage from "Thoughts on Government" quoted above, more truly republican, and so a more appropriate model for the United States, than many nominal republics:

> orders of officers, not of men in America
> no distinct separation of legislative, executive and judicial
> heretofore save in England. (67:394)

Pound continues this argument into Canto LXVIII and ends it, significantly in this context, with a reference to Tacitus: "in Tacitus and in Homer, 3 orders, in Greece as in Germany" (68:395). It should perhaps be emphasised here that although the words are those of Adams the argument, particularly in its Germanic aspects, is Pound's and not only because he omits Adams's qualification that in Greece and Germany the "orders" (executive, legislative and judicial) were not independent nor were their "prerogatives and privileges" clearly defined.[91]

However, the view of the Revolution expressed in the Adams Cantos, although like Pound's histories generally it is much less eccentric than it is sometimes made out to be, is not simply a reversion to an earlier orthodoxy. There are indeed significant similarities between it and the histories produced by Herbert Baxter Adams, among others, but there are also differences and those differences are at least as significant. The orthodox institutional histories of the late nineteenth century were not, to be sure, Tory (in the sense that the term had in eighteenth-century America – an opponent of the Revolution), but they were conservative, to view the Revolution as a primarily Anglo-American affair was useful in distinguishing it from the French Revolution and its

perceived "excesses," and, at least latently, pro-British. It is a short step from the "chauvinistic Anglo-Saxon overemphasis" of H.B. Adams to the Anglophilia of the "Imperial School." This was a group of historians who, around 1900, began to reinterpret the Revolution insisting that it "could only be understood when considered in terms of the (British) empire as a whole."[92] A leading member of the school, George Louis Beer (1872-1920), in *British Colonial Policy: 1745-1765* (1907) described the Revolution as a "tragic mistake" and as a "temporary separation of two kindred peoples";[93] in contemporary political terms this translated into a strongly pro-British stance – during World War I Beer worked to promote Anglo-American understanding and, in *The English Speaking Peoples* (1917), argued for an alliance between the United States and the British Empire as the best basis for a future world order.

As is apparent in "Provincialism the Enemy" (1917) and "Henry James" (1918), and in his published and unpublished prose of the period generally, during and immediately after World War I Pound was very close indeed to the position of the "Imperial School." However, by the late 1930s he had moved a long way from this position and the other "Germanic germs" can be detected at work in his writing of the period, including the Adams Cantos. In particular, by the time he came to write Cantos LXII-LXXI he had come under the influence of the German anthropologist Leo Frobenius. Pound took on Frobenius's concept of the "paideuma," "the tangle or complex of inrooted ideas of any period" (*GK*, 57), and adapted it to his own ends: "I shall use Paideuma for the gristly roots of ideas that are in action" (*GK*, 58). Also important for Pound was Frobenius's distinction between "knowledge that that has to be acquired by particular effort and knowing that is in people, 'in the air'" (*GK*, 57).

The two lines from Canto LXVII quoted and discussed above, "Locke, Milton, Neville Burnet and Hoadly / empire of laws not of men" (67:391), are, in context, preceded by an Italian phrase from Cavalcanti's "Donna mi priegha": "*ma che si sente dicho*" (67:391) – translated by Pound in Canto XXXVI as "But 'tis felt, I say" (36:178). This is an assertion that the "knowledge" that runs from the Anglo-Saxon law givers through Locke, Milton, etc. is part of the "knowing that is in people"; it is, in other words, 'blood knowledge' and racially transmitted (hence Pound's emphasis on "BIRTHRIGHT" and "folcright"). As I have pointed out in the previous chapter Frobenius's model of culture is essentially ethnological (and becomes when translated into the social or political sphere not only racial but racialist). The implications of this in both the historical context and the more immediate context of the poem are all too

obvious; they are made manifest in another non-English phrase, it is in German (Italian and German, it should be remembered, were the languages of the two principal fascist powers), interpolated into Canto LXII: "Schicksal, sagt der Führer" (62:345) – "fate, said the Führer."[94] The word "germ" can also signify the carrier or transmitter of a disease.

5 Enter "Ego, Scriptor Cantilenae"

Near the beginning of Canto LXII the reader is offered the following piece of information (the statistic is gleaned from Charles Francis Adams's life of his grandfather but the parenthetical comparison is Pound's):

> (Boston about the size of Rapallo)
> scarce 16,000 (62:342)

The fact that colonial Boston had approximately the same number of inhabitants as the Italian seaside resort in which Pound was living when he wrote the Adams Cantos is interesting (if one is interested in that sort of thing), but its heuristic value is, I would imagine, low (most readers who have difficulty in envisaging 18th century Boston will not find a comparison with Rapallo in the late 1930s of much help). Of more interest is the question of why this coincidence should have struck Pound so forcibly that he thought it worth recording in the first place.

The passage in the source to which these lines refer reads: "To be sure, the town of Boston in New England, relatively to the densely populated metropolis on the Thames, was but a speck. Scarcely sixteen thousand souls could be counted within its limits [. . .]."[95] Charles Francis Adams, in thus emphasising the disparity between the imperial power and its rebellious provinces, is setting up the struggle for independence as a David and Goliath contest. Pound, I believe, identified with this; Rapallo, like colonial Boston, was a "speck" and from it Pound challenged the metropolitan cultural, political and economic hegemonies of his day as Adams had once defied the imperial might of Britain. There is, as I have pointed out, an element of identification in the Malatesta and the Jefferson Cantos but in the Adams Cantos it is more strongly marked and the "burn of allegory" is more intense. Pound saw Adams as someone who had fought the same battles as he was fighting (or at least had fought on the same side); he identified with Adams as a conservative patriot who placed the public good before popularity, and who consequently often found himself in a misrepresented and

misunderstood minority, as an enemy of the vested interests of big business and "big money" (represented in Adams's case by Hamilton and in Pound's by Roosevelt), and above all as an opponent of American involvement in a European war.

The Adams Cantos may be read, in part, as the story of "the prophet without honour in his own land," and, in part, as an exploration of the conflicts of loyalty at a time of crisis when political and other commitments often cut across and ran counter to more traditional allegiances (for instance, those of loyalty to the country of one's birth and its leaders). Read in this way, Adams's defence of British soldiers involved in the "Boston Massacre" (62:342-3) becomes not a manifestation of a disinterested concern for justice, or, as it probably was, a shrewd political manoeuvre whereby Adams (at the cost of a temporary loss of popularity) outflanked those who argued that resistance to British policy equalled mob rule, but as an example of the virtue of standing firm in the face of an adverse majority opinion, and so a heroic model for Pound's own political isolation. The "burn of allegory" is more readily apparent in Pound's renderings of Adams's attempts to establish the legality and legitimacy of the colonists' actions in opposing British policy and in finally withdrawing their allegiance from Britain.

Adams's arguments in these matters are protracted and complex (some account of them has already been given); Pound's redactions of them are shorter but no less complex. The general tendency of Adams's arguments was that disobedience and even outright and open resistance to the government of the day can be justified in the name of a higher loyalty, to the constitution or the law for example. One strand of his argument was that the colonists were "feudatory" and did not owe allegiance to Parliament but to the King; Pound renders this point (somewhat obscurely) in the following lines:

> We are merely
> under the monarch
> allegiance is to the king's natural person "The Spensers"
> said Coke, hatched treason denying this
> allegiance follows natural, not politic person
> are we mere slaves of some other people? (62:343)

As Wills explains, "Adams distinguishes three kinds of dependence on the King. There is loyalty to his person, to his crown (i.e. to his family line, to the crown as hereditary), and to his crown and realm (the King-in-Parliament)."[96] The dependence of the colonists, Adams maintained, was of the first kind and this effectively freed them from any allegiance to Parliament (the last line rhetorically asserts the point that the colonists

did not depend upon the English people and their representatives in Parliament). The reference to "the Spensers" (Hugh le Dispenser, Earl of Winchester, and his son were executed for treason in 1326) and to the English jurist Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634) establish the antiquity of these claims.[97]

Adams further argued that colonisation had no legal status, that it was not covered by English common law:

> colonisation is at common law a *casus omissus*
> no such title is known in that law
> no known punishment at common law even for treasons
> committed out of the realm (67:388)

Adams invoked the concept of "peregrination," travelling or sojourning outside the realm with the King's permission, to explain the legal status of the colonists. According to Wills's account, the King had the power "to forbid a subject's departure from his geographical sphere of authority" and where this power was not exercised "those who left peaceably were [. . .] presumed to do so with permission, in the King's good grace and with continuing loyalty to him."[98] (Pound's lines "the king might have commanded them to return but/ he did not" [67:390] are an assertion and extension of this.) At the same time "the King is unable to exercise his authority" over his subjects outside his realm; an English subject travelling in, say, Portugal is bound by the laws of that jurisdiction and not by English law and to break English law in that jurisdiction or to conform to the laws of that jurisdiction is not treasonable. On this basis, Adams argued that the colonists, having left England peaceably and, if only by default, with the King's permission, were no longer bound by English law and particularly not by any laws passed since their departure from England:

> tend to the independency of the colonies
> bound by no laws made by Parliament
> since our ancestors came here (65:364)

Pound's application of this to his own position is fairly straightforward: an American citizen's loyalty is to the Constitution and not to the current administration or Congress, and as a *peregrinator* or sojourner in another jurisdiction Pound considered himself in large measure exempt from obedience to United States' laws enacted in his absence, or from any loyalty to the Roosevelt administration (itself, in Pound's view, disloyal) while still retaining the rights and privileges of a citizen of the United States.

It is difficult today, in writing of this aspect of the Adams Cantos, not to recall that within a couple of years of writing them Pound was himself indicted for treason. It is not necessary to attribute the power of prophecy to Pound in order to assert that the two are connected. By 1939, Pound was aware that the course of action to which he was committed was likely to make his already marginalized and precarious position substantially worse and was beginning to think in terms of self-justification if not defence. When he wrote Cantos LXII - LXXI he was probably still thinking in ethical rather than legal terms, but he was not then, or later, an 'innocent abroad' (except possibly in a narrow and, as far as I have been able to ascertain rather dubious, legal sense).

At this point, it is appropriate to mention Pound's commendation of Adams's pardoning of "poor dutch Fries and his companions" (62:350). John Fries, a Pennsylvania Dutch (that is, ethnically German) farmer, was one of the leaders in 1799 of a short-lived and abortive rebellion against a federal land tax. Adams ordered in federal troops and, although the rising was over before they got to Pennsylvania, Fries and two other supposed ring-leaders were arrested, tried for treason and sentenced to be hanged. They appealed to the President and Adams, after reviewing the case in detail, decided that they were guilty only of riot and not rebellion and in 1800 pardoned them. This was strongly opposed by Hamilton and the High Federalists in Adams's cabinet who argued that an example should be made of the men.[99] This incident is referred to, briefly, twice in the Adams Cantos: "a pardon for all offenders/ (i.e. poor dutch Fries and his companions)" (62:350) and "Towards the sending of Ellsworth/ and the pardon of Fries" (63:351). Kearns sees this "compassion for 'poor dutch Fries,'" who he describes as "officially a traitor, but of no real importance," as an instance of "Adams's humanity and balance."[100] He is, I think, nearer the mark when he goes on to contrast Fries with Hamilton, "the real traitor, in Pound's view, though seldom recognised as such";[101] Pound, I believe, empathised with Fries as an opponent and potential victim of the forces of usury represented by Hamilton and is suggesting, at least latently, that a false accusation of treason is one of the traditional weapons of those forces. If he was also suggesting that Adams might have shared these views then he was, in all probability, very much mistaken.

Although, as has been said several times, the Adams Cantos are largely made up of snippets from Adams's *Works,* Pound's voice is more insistently (and more significantly and disturbingly) present in them than in the earlier sequences of history

cantos. Pound has, of course, always been present in *The Cantos* but in the Adams Cantos he is no longer the *scripteur* of the Jefferson Cantos but "ego scriptor cantilenae" (62:350) or "ego scriptor cantilenae/ Ez. P" (64:360), 'I, the writer of the canto' – a self-proclaimed authority figure. This voice is not confined to those passages in which Pound speaks *in propria persona*; it could be said that in the earlier American history Pound speaks through Jefferson, John Quincy Adams and Van Buren, but in Cantos LXII-LXXI John Adams speaks through Pound. The voice of "scriptor cantilenae" is disconcertingly similar to Pound's voice in his letters of the 1930s (and even more disconcertingly reminiscent of the voice of the Rome radio broadcasts). Pound's signature typographical quirk, the use of a solidus where a full point or a colon might be expected (as "Capn Preston etc/" or "BE IT ENACTED / guv-nor council an' house of assembly"), is a commonplace in the sequence. As he does in his correspondence, he puts on accents to suit his subject matter; thus the British Prime Minister Lord North is rendered in 'Cockney' as "Lard Narf," Boston becomes "Bastun" and Charles Francis (Adams) "Chawles Fwancis" (this is presumably intended to mimic the effete speech of the upper-classes). There are also plays on words that turn documents into "doggymints" and Houses of Parliament into "Louses of Parleymoot." (All the above examples are taken from one page, LXII page 342, chosen more or less at random.)

I have already commented on Pound's use of abbreviations, nick-names and other verbal distortions; they are not unique to the Adams Cantos but they are, again, more marked in that sequence. This could be seen as an example of Pound's increasing "instrumentalism" in the late 1930s, but if this is so it is difficult to see what purpose it serves. "Louses of Parleymoot" is witty and verbally inventive (even Joyce might have been proud of it) and does make a point, but "doggymints" is merely facetious. Pound may have been attempting to sugar the pill, to offset the danger of monotony inherent in his move from a medley of voices to a single voice (although this was not a problem in Cantos XXXIV and XXXVI) and to make the 'lesson' more interesting. If this was the case then he failed, over the long stretch of the Adams Cantos Pound's typographical and verbal dodges are irritating and a distraction from what he is actually saying.

However, these aspects are not merely superfluous and misguided attempts at decoration; they are indications of Pound's insistent and significant presence in the poem. A presence that is a function of Pound's didactic and political purpose (his "instrumentalism") but also of the contradictions and ultimately the breakdown of that

purpose – a breakdown that is both immanent and imminent in the Adams Cantos. I will finish this section, and the chapter, and attempt to clarify and elaborate upon this point, with an account of the two most significant of those anomalous passages in the Adams Cantos that are mostly in Pound's own words: the final twelve lines of canto LXII (from "and as for Hamilton" (62:356)) and the "vignette in margine" in LXIX (69:407).

The "vignette in margine" is a virulent condemnation of Hamilton and his supporters. Its immediate occasion is the question of the United States government "assuming" debts incurred during the Revolutionary War, a measure promoted and executed by Hamilton in 1790 (most of these debts had been bought at a discount by speculators who made a handsome profit when the government took them over). This leads Pound into a denunciation of Hamilton in general and of the founding of the first Bank of the United States (1791) in particular. These two measures effectively created a national debt and a bank to manage it (and profit from it) and were, of course, anathema to Pound. The vignette proper begins with a list of names of those members of Congress who supported Hamilton and who were subsequently rewarded with directorships in the Bank[102] ("King, Sam Johnson of N. Carolina/ Smith (W.) S. Carolina, Wadsworth (Jeremiah / J. Lawrence, Bingham, Carrol of Carrolton/ gone piss-rotten for Hamilton" [69:407]), goes on to condemn them as the "squad of the pink-haired snot [Hamilton]/ traitors blacker than Arnold" (69:407), and ends by describing them as "sifilides/ advance guards of hell's oiliness/ in their progeny no repentence" (69:407).

Pound's creation, typographically and semantically, of a privileged space – "in margine" – for this denunciation and his return to the manner of the earlier cantos, allusions to Dante's Inferno and reference across the text (the vignette echoes cantos XIV and XV, the Hell Cantos) clearly signal the importance of these lines. They are important because they establish the ethical and political centre of the sequence (opposition to the creation and exploitation of debt) and provide a crucial link between Adams's America and the present in which Pound is engaged in a battle with Hamilton's "progeny." If these lines are central they are also profoundly anomalous; apart from the features identified above, the vignette, and indeed the entire account of the Assumption Bill, is derived not from Adams's *Works* but from Claude G. Bowers's *Jefferson and Hamilton: The Struggle for democracy in America* (1925).[103] Sanders suggests that "these lines express Pound's 'editorial' judgement of Alexander Hamilton and his followers";[104] this is certainly the case but it fails to grasp the significance of what is happening at this point in the poem. Pound's authorial intervention is a serious breach of the decorum of the

poem but it is necessary because without it Adams cannot be made to call Hamilton a traitor or even to express the more general point that to serve the financial interests of a minority (banks, big business or whatever) is a form of treason.

The passage from LXII exhibits a similar pattern; Pound interrupts the narrative in order to intrude a denunciation of Hamilton and a commendation of Adams:

> and as for Hamilton
> we may take it (my authority, ego scriptor cantilenae)
> that he was the Prime snot in ALL American history
> (11th Jan. 1938, from Rapallo)
> But for the clearest head in the congress
> 1774 and theareafter
> pater patriae
> the man who at certain points
> made us
> at certain points
> saved us
> by fairness, honesty and straight moving
> ARRIBA ADAMS (62:350)

Kearns describes this as "the finest of the sixty-one pages [of the Adams cantos]";[105] perhaps it is, but is certainly one of the most momentous pages of the entire poem. In these lines Pound's "poem including history" collapses: breaks down irretrievably. Although Pound's description of Adams as "pater patriae" can be justified by reference to what has gone before in the canto (as my earlier discussion of it shows), Pound's historiographical method, what I have been calling pseudo-chronicle, simply cannot sustain, or sanction, such ringing denunciations and acclamations. The poem cannot be made to say what at this point it needs to say and Pound has to step in and say it. This is radically different from the kind of abusive editorialising encountered in earlier cantos (for instance, the description of Pius II as "that monstrous swollen, swelling s.o.b." [10:44]), which is essentially a strategy for combating the inability of pseudo-chronicle to provide more than permissive proof, and is much closer to lines like "the loneliness of death came upon me / (at 3 P.M., for an instant)" (82:527) from the Pisan Cantos. Kearns may indeed be right, it is a moving moment, even a heroic one, but it is, for all Pound's bravado, a moment of defeat.

This breakdown occurs on the political as well as on the formal level of Pound's history. In the Adams Cantos, and the history cantos generally, Pound's principal mode of political argument is allegory. Pound's representations of the American Revolution were also representations of the Fascist revolution -- representations that concealed its

real nature (perhaps even from Pound himself). The end of Canto LXII and the "vignette in margine" mark points at which Pound's real concerns emerge from behind his allegorical discourse and can be seen for what they really were; points at which the radical reactionary in Rapallo in 1939 is revealed behind the mask of the conservative revolutionary in Boston in 1776 and it becomes apparent that the two are not on the same side or fighting the same battle; points at which the discourse of an eighteenth-century conservative revolution can no longer legitimate or disguise the real nature of twentieth-century right-wing rebellion. Exactly what that real nature was is revealed in the final line of canto LXII: "ARRIBA ADAMS" is, obviously, intended to echo "Heil Hitler" and the shift into Spanish is necessary for the alliteration but it also recalls, and I believe is intended to celebrate, Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War.

Conclusion

The Malatesta Cantos end with the mock solemnization of a wager between Sigismondo and Henry, his Steward. In Chapter Two, I described this as striking a bet and as writing a cheque on the future, a post-dated cheque. The whole of *A Draft of XVI Cantos of Ezra Pound for the Beginning of a Poem of some Length*, but particularly the four Malatesta Cantos, could be described in similar terms. As Edward Said recognises when he defines a beginning as "*the first step in the intentional production of meaning*,"[1] a beginning involves the giving of hostages to fortune. The first line of a poem, the opening chapter of a novel or the introductory paragraph of an essay promises something that the writer has not at that point delivered and deferred payment, necessarily, involves risk and is always to some degree a gamble.

In Chapter Five, I argued that the "poem including history" breaks down, comes to an end, in the final lines of Canto LXII when Pound stepped into the poem to authorise his anathema of Alexander Hamilton. Appropriately, scriptor cantilenae's entry into the poem including history is meticulously notarised: "(11th Jan. 1938, from Rapallo)" (62:350). What I did not point out in my earlier discussion of the lines was that this date is almost certainly incorrect. All the available evidence on the composition of the Adams Cantos establishes that Pound cannot have written these lines in January 1938. Cantrell and Swinson propose a solution to this problem: "11 days into a new year Pound made the same mistake we all do in our checkbooks, giving the previous year in error."[2] This is a brilliant and, I am sure, correct solution (it wasn't a printer's error and there is no conceivable reason why Pound should have deliberately inscribed the wrong date). For me, it is also a particularly happy one as it allows me to present Pound's "poem including history" as beginning with a post-dated cheque and ending with a bounced cheque (a pre-dated cheque will normally bounce), as a gamble that didn't pay off, as a beaten docket.

Of course, *The Cantos* continued after the end of LXII. I am not subscribing to the view that the Adams Cantos represent, poetically or aesthetically a falling off from what went before – that they are a dull and incoherent botch; they are not and on one level they contain historical writing that is at least as accomplished as anything to be found in the Malatesta or Jefferson sequences. Nonetheless, it is generally recognised that there is a break or rupture or change of direction after the Adams Cantos. It may even have been intended, although not in the form it actually took; George Kearns writes:

> When the proofs of the 1940 volume were returned from London, Pound began what he thought would be the final section of the *Cantos*. He was finished, he said, with 'money in history,' and it was now time for Dante, Cavalcanti, Scotus Erigena, philosophy, the 'empyrean.'"[3]

My thesis can be read, in part, as a rescription of this. In the Malatesta Cantos Pound put in place a set of rhetorical strategies, pseudo-chronicle, designed to make possible a "poem including history." Those strategies were developed and elaborated in subsequent history cantos and in Cantos LXII-LXXI broke down (although not in the sense that ceased to be capable, on the micro-level of the narrative, of representing historical events).

In 1933 Pound wrote "I bet on Italian fascism years ago and came here to live in the middle of it."[4] Pound was speaking autobiographically and the wholeheartedness and sincerity of his commitment to Fascism cannot be doubted: he not only moved to Italy but became an unofficial ambassador at large for the regime, and even if his activities were not always appreciated his investment of time, energy and money was impressive (and worthy of a better cause). What is not explicitly stated in the above was that *The Cantos* were also part of the stake. As I argued in Chapter Two, Pound believed that an epic "cannot be written against the grain of its time [. . .] the writer of epos must voice the general heart" (*SR,* 216) and he misread Fascism as the 'grain of his time' and the voice of "the general heart." Pound's great Modernist epic, the "poem including history," was inextricably linked with Fascism from the beginning. An epic's plot imitates or corresponds to a larger master narrative and ultimately derives its coherence from it; Pound's epic corresponded to and celebrated Fascism which in turn provided it with a master narrative. The promised ending, Pound believed, would be provided by History (very definitely with a capital "H") in the form of the advent of a Fascism millennium. By January 1939 it was apparent that this was not going to happen, or was not going to happen in the form Pound had anticipated. I am not suggesting that Pound foresaw the outcome of World War II – he was I think confident of an Axis victory until 1942 or '43 – but the very fact of war (of a war that was not fought against "savages" such as the Abyssinians) put an end to his hopes and aspirations.

The Cantos did not, of course, simply stop. The Pisan Cantos are the response to this catastrophe and they chart the process of Pound putting back together the pieces of himself and his poem; but in the terms of the opening lines of Canto VIII, he is

"shoring" and not "shelving." Pound's desperate situation, there was a strong possibility that he would be returned to the United States and tried and found guilty of treason (he was indeed "a man on whom the sun has gone down" [74:445]), gives the sequence urgency and directness while the D.T.C. and its day to day life provides unity and a dramatic counterpoint to its other elements (for instance, elegiac evocations of his London years, Confucian philosophy and invocations of the harmonious world of myth). By assuming in his own person the conflict between *fortuna* and *virtù*, which for Pound was history, he was able to reassert himself as a poet:

> As a lone ant from a broken ant-hill
> from the wreckage of Europe, ego scriptor (76:472)

Significantly he is now simply "ego scriptor" rather than "ego scriptor cantilinae." The planctus is a powerful textual ritual when it is competently performed (and Pound performs it more than competently), but what is happening in these cantos should not be sentimentalised. In the context of the poem as a whole the *Pisan Cantos* do not represent a change of direction, much less a change of heart, but a tactical démarche; Pound remains adamant (even defiant) in his views and positions:

> I surrender neither the empire nor the temples
> plural
> nor the constitution nor yet the city of Dioce (74:448)

The "city of Dioce" is one of Pound's types of the ideal city in the *Cantos*; in the *Pisan Cantos* it is described as being "now in the mind indestructible" (a recurring phrase in the sequence). This does not mean that Pound had given up the idea that the "city of Dioce" could, and would, be built in this world. His new order survived, "dove sta memoria" [76:471] ('where one remembers'), not as an unrealisable ideal but as a practical proposition awaiting its historical moment and the *Cantos* would now serve the vehicle of its occult survival. Significantly, the phrase "Dove sta memoria" first occurs in the Adams Cantos (63:353).

The *Pisan Cantos* are a stunning display of authorial power: in them, Pound puts his derailed poem back on track and drives it forward, but not as the "poem including history" that he had begun in 1922. The Pisan Cantos, and those that followed them, do

contain historical material but do so differently. Under the always malign influence of "Frobenius der Geheimrat" (74:450) Pound regressed his chronicle to a series of inscriptions of "facts" within the text intended as a guide for the initiated. Occult survival now furnished Pound with both matter and trope. As Pound had known from the beginning, the poem could not be sustained, or brought to a conclusion, by a single individual working 'against the grain' and the poem closes, without ending, in the facile aposiopesis *Drafts & Fragments of Cantos CX-CXVII* (1970).

I have addressed and answered Burton Hatlen's questions: "To what extent did Pound commit himself during the 1930s not only to Mussolini as a leader but also to fascism as an ideology? And to what extent do the cantos which he wrote during this period serve as a vehicle for such an ideology?"[5] I would agree with Hatlen's answer to the first question (that the statement " 'Ezra Pound was a fascist' is indisputably true") but not with his contention that *The Cantos* cannot "accurately be labelled a 'fascist poem,' simply because Pound's political ideology undergoes a radical decomposition – or if you like a deconstruction – as it is transmuted by Pound's ideogrammic method."[6] Unless I am completely wrong this is nonsense. Indeed, for me it is precisely the merit of Pound's poem that it does not deconstruct fascism and it is for that reason that , in Aristotle's words, it is "worthy of serious attention."

For Hatlen, and he voices a widely held view, if the *The Cantos* could "be labelled a 'fascist poem'" it would cease to be worth reading (cease even to be readable). Again I would emphatically disagree. The most obvious reason for reading such a poem is clearly stated by Fredric Jameson in the Preface to *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis the Modernist as Fascist*:

> However embarrassing the contents of his novels may be for liberal or modernist establishment thought, it cannot but be more painful for protofascism itself, which must thereby contemplate its own unlovely image and hear blurted out in public speech what even in private was never meant to be more than tacitly understood.[7]

As Jameson's reference to "protofascism" suggests, the "lessons" of Pound's poem in this respect are not only for those who are attracted to the cult of the leader and the bogus ceremonies and uniforms once so enthusiastically promoted by Starace. Here I should recall that it has been another main concern of my thesis to demonstrate that Pound,

while idiosyncratic, was not eccentric. There may be irony but there is no contradiction, or surprise, in the fact that at St Elizabeth's Pound, indicted for treason but deemed "unfit to plead," applauded the efforts of Senator Joseph McCarthy and his Committee on Un-American Activities of the House of Representatives.[8]

This last point applies at least as much to Pound as a Modernist as to Pound as an American. Modernism was the major artistic and literary movement of the twentieth-century and fascism the century's most distinctive contribution to the stock of political ideologies. With a few honourable exceptions most of the major Modernist writers flirted, at the very least, with Fascism. It is hard to believe that this was accidental. It has become commonplace to speak of Post-modernism and neo-fascism but it is premature to consign either the literary or the political movement to the waste-bin of history. The connection, and perhaps the complicity, between these two movements is a question that calls for urgent attention. No adequate account of it has yet emerged; when that adequate account is written Pound's record of his engagement with Fascism will be central to it.

What I would not want to do is to hold Pound up as a parable of the dire consequences of poets messing with things that they don't understand like politics and economics (and the history of the same). It is possible to applaud Pound as a public poet while deploring the public stances he took. I would also commend Pound's referential poetics. Strange to say, Pound's complicity with one form of totalitarianism gave rise to a poetics that radically disconcerts another totalitarianism – that of formalism in all its guises. I would not recommend that anyone learn history from Pound, but can testify that learning history with Pound can be a rewarding experience and a "poetic" one.

"An epic is a poem including history"; "the purpose of history is instruction, that is to make people think and to guide their thoughts toward what will elucidate today and tomorrow" (*SP*, 266). Pound did succeed in elucidating today and tomorrow, although not in the ways in which he expected to or to the ends he desired. For that we may be thankful. He did not succeed in writing the great modernist epic on which he embarked in 1922, but *The Cantos* demand our attention as the great epic of Modernism and Modernity.

Notes

Introduction

1. Burton Hatlen, "Ezra Pound and Fascism," in Marianne Korn, ed., *Ezra Pound and History* (Oronno: U Maine, 1985) 146.
2. William Empson, *Argufying: Essays on Literature and Culture*, ed. John Haffenden (1987; London: Hogarth Press, 1988) 516.
3. Ciaran Brady, "'Constructive and Instrumental': The Dilemma of Ireland's First 'New Historians,'" in Ciaran Brady, ed., *Interpreting Irish History; the Debate on Historical revisionism 1938-1994* , ed. (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994) 19.
4. Lawrence S. Rainey, *Ezra Pound and the Monuments of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos* (Chicago and London The University of Chicago Press, 1991) 6.
5. Rainey 7.

Chapter One

1. To speak thus of "fictions" of the end or the beginning clearly indicates the influence of Frank Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).
2. Hugh Kenner, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* (1951; Lincoln: U of Nebraska P 1985) 252.
3. A. D. Nuttal, *Openings: Narrative Beginnings from the Epic to the Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon , 1992) 201.
4. Ronald Bush, *The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1976) .
5. Quoted in Charles Norman, *Ezra Pound: a Biography* (1960; London: McDonald, 1969) 356.
6. George Plimpton, ed., *Poets at Work: The Paris Review Interviews* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989) 138.
7. Leon Surette, *A Light from Eleusis: A Study of Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979) 7.

8. See Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: the Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber, 1988) 46- 58.
9. Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era: the Age of Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce and Wyndham Lewis* (1972; London: Faber, 1975) 354.
10. Surette 7.
11. Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos, "'That Great Epic Year': Ezra Pound, Katherine Ruth Heyman and HD" in Jacqueline Kaye ed., *Ezra Pound and America* (Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1992) 150.
12. Bertold Lomax is apparently Pound's creation. Surette reports that he has been unable to find any reference to a Bertold Lomax in the British Library. (See Surette 268). My own investigations in the British Library and elsewhere have proved similarly fruitless. That Pound should have made up such a figure is sufficiently unusual to be worthy of note in itself.
13. Hugh Witemeyer, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound: Forms and Renewals, 1908 - 1920* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1969) 60.
14. James Longenbach, *Modernist Poetics of History: Pound, Eliot, and the Sense of the Past* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1987) 131.
15. Myles Slatin, "A History of Pound's *Cantos* I - XVI, 1925" *American Literature* 35.2 (1963): 184.
16. Slatin 185.
17. Slatin 195.
18. Slatin 184.
19. Quoted in Slatin 185.
20. Slatin 185.
21. Bush 48.
22. Quoted in Slatin 185.
23. Bush 4.
24. Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia UP, 1975) 6.
25. Said 5.
26. Said 50.
27. Said xvii.
28. Said xvii.

29. Lawrence S. Rainey, *Ezra Pound and the Monuments of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991) 4.
30. Michael Bernstein, *The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound and the Modern Verse Epic* (Princeton: Princeton UP,1980) 40.
31. Rainey 6-7.
32. Slatin 191.
33. Slatin 191.
34. Ezra Pound, *Quia Pauper Amavi* (London: Egoist, 1919).
35. Slatin 188.
36. Slatin 188.
37. Slatin decribes it as "not previously referred to" (189).
38. Rainey 105, 29.
39. Slatin 192.
40. In a letter to his father, dated 24 August 1923, Pound wrote of having "knocked some more Canti into shape"; quoted in Slatin 191.
41. Slatin 191.
42. Slatin 193-194.
43. Slatin 192.
44. Peter D'Epiro, *A Touch of Rhetoric: Ezra Pound's Malatesta Cantos* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1983) 5.
45. Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (1970; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974) 296-7.
46. Horace, "The Art of Poetry," *Classical Literary Criticism*, ed. Penelope Murray and T.S. Dorsch, 2nd. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000) 68-9, 100.
47. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957) 247.
48. Bush 16.
49. Max Nänny, "More Menippus Than Calliope: A Reply," *Paideuma* 13.2 (1984): 263.
50. Max Nänny, "Ezra Pound and Menippean Tradition," *Paideuma* 11.3 (1982): 405.
51. Nänny "Ezra Pound and Menippean Tradition" 397, 401-2.
52. Jerry Palmer, *Thrillers: the Genesis and Structure of a Popular Genre* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978) 142-5.

53. M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: U of Texas P, 1981) 15.
54. Raymond Williams, *Modern Tragedy* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966) 50.
55. John P. McWilliams Jr, *The American Epic: Transforming a Genre 1770 – 1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989) 6.
56. Surette 6.
57. Bernstein 71.
58. Paul Merchant, *The Epic* (London: Methuen, 1971) 3-4.
59. In Plato's "Ion" Socrates contests the rhapsode Ion's competence to pronounce on precisely these aspects of Homer. See Plato, *Early Socratic Dialogues*, ed. Trevor J. Saunders (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987) 59-61.
60. Edmund Spenser, *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser,* ed. J.C. Smith and E. De Selincourt (London: Oxford UP, 1935) 407.
61. Alexander Pope, *Selected Prose of Alexander Pope,* ed. Paul Hammond (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987) 120.
62. Gail McDonald, *Learning to be Modern: Pound, Eliot, and the American University* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 61.
63. Nuttal 3.
64. My account of the function of the exordium draws on M.H. Abrams's discussion of epic openings. M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 4th ed. (New York: Holt, 1981) 52.
65. Carroll F. Terrell, *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1993) 36-7.
66. George Dekker, *Sailing After Knowledge: the Cantos of Ezra Pound.* (London: Routledge, 1963) 31.
67. Rainey 59.
68. Rainey 60.
69. T.S.Eliot,. *The Waste Land: a Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, ed. Valerie Eliot. (London: Faber, 1971) 129. The parenthesis is Mrs Eliot's.
70. Eliot, *The Waste Land* 70-71.
71. Eliot, *The Waste Land* 80-81.
72. D'Epiro 20-1.
73. D'Epiro 22.

74. D'Epiro 22.
75. Rainey 238.
76. D'Epiro 33.
77. Stock 105.
78. Carpenter 396.
79. Carpenter 396; Rainey 240.
80. Carpenter 396.
81. Rainey 241.
82. Quoted in D'Epiro 23.
83. D'Epiro 23.
84. D'Epiro 123.
85. D'Epiro 25.
86. D'Epiro 25-7.
87. Charles Yriarte, *Un Condottiere au XV^e^ siècle,* (Paris, 1882); see also Rainey. 120, 293 n. 119.
88. D'Epiro 33.
89. D'Epiro 33 - 47.
90. Rainey 68.
91. Quoted in Carpenter 419. The letter is undated but is probably from June 1923.
92. Ezra Pound, "Malatesta Cantos (Cantos IX to XII of a Long Poem)," *Criterion* July (1923): 363.
93. D'Epiro 33. According to D'Epiro these "were added at a very late stage of composition."
94. Eliot, *The Waste Land* 129.
95. Rainey 106.
96. Rainey 107.
97. Rainey 107.
98. Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (London: The Bodley Head, 1976) 27.
99. Michael H. Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984) 153.
100. Quoted in Levenson 214.
101. Quoted in Levenson 214.
102. Levenson 215.

103. Levinson 214.

104. Levinson 213.

105. Andrew M. Clearfield, *These Fragments I Have Shored: Collage and Montage in Early Modernist Poetry* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1984) 111.

106. Clearfield 9-10.

107. Clearfield 10-11.

108. McDonald 132, 118.

109. D'Epiro 21.

110. Philip Furia, *Pound's Cantos Declassified* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1984) 3.

111. Furia 3.

112. Furia 5.

113. Surette 30.

114. Surette 30; Guy Davenport, *Cities on Hills: A Study of I - XXX of Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1983) 151.

115. Jean-Michel Rabate, *Language, Sexuality and Ideology in Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1986) 26.

116. Dekker 19-21.

117. Terrell 37.

118. Aristotle, *Poetics*, in Murray and Dorsch, 68-9.

119. T.S. Eliot, *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1975) 175.[1]

120. Eliot, *Selected Prose* 177.

121. Eliot, *Selected Prose* 177, 178.

122. Eliot, *Selected Prose* 177.

123. Frank Kermode, *Shakespeare, Spenser , Donne* (London: Routledge, 1971) 22.

124. "Rimini," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 1911 ed.

125. Michael F. Harper, "Truth and Calliope: Ezra Pound's Malatesta". *PMLA* 96 (1981): 88.

126. Harper 88.

127. Frank Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy: on the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge MA: Harvard UP, 1979) 101.

128. Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel,* trans. Anna Bostock (1920; London: Merlin Press, 1978) 56.

129. Carpenter 111.
130. Kenneth K. Ruthven, *Ezra Pound as Literary Critic,* (London: Routledge, 1990) 35.
131. Georg Lukács, "The Ideology of Modernism," (1955) *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (London: Longman, 1972) 474.
132. Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1976) 27-8.
133. Eugene Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism: an Historical Study of Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin, and Adorno,* (1982; London: Verso, 1985) 80.
134. Lukács, "The Ideology of Modernism" 475.
135. Lukács, "The Ideology of Modernism" 483.
136. Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971) 19, 197.
137. Jameson 197.
138. Jameson 198.
139. Jameson 198.
140. Jameson 197.
141. T. S. Eliot, *The Letters of T .S. Eliot Volume 1 1898-1922*, ed. Valerie Eliot, (London: Faber, 1988) 204.
142. McDonald 87.
143. Terrell 37.
144. Rainey 92.
145. Rainey 122.
146. Carpenter 297.
147. Stock 229.

Chapter Two

1. Hayden White, *Metahistory* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973) 2.
2. Peter D'Epiro, *A Touch of Rhetoric: Ezra Pound's Malatesta Cantos* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1983) xiii.
3. Philip James Jones, *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal States: A Political History* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974) 80.

4. Jones 102.
5. Jones 157.
6. Jones 188. The rough English version is mine.
7. Jones 189.
8. Jones 186.
9. Jones 189, 191-2.
10. Terrell 38.
11. For a fuller account of of the "thoroughly immoral relation between the governments and their Condottieri, which is characteristic of the fifteenth century" see Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S.G.C. Middlemore, 2nd ed. (1878; Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1981) 13-14.
12. Jones 194.
13. Jones 194, 209.
14. Terrell 40, 41. 46.
15. Jones 211.
16. Jones 211.
17. Jones 211.
18. Jones 226-8.
19. Jones 229.
20. Jones 229-230.
21. Jones 232.
22. Jones 248.
23. Jones 243-4.
24. Terrell 57.
25. Lawrence S. Rainey, *Ezra Pound and the Monuments of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos* (Chicago and London: The U of Chicago P, 1991) 14.
26. D'Epiro xviii; Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 9.
27. Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 10.
28. Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 14.
29. Terrell 47; Rainey *Monument of Culture* 1.
30. "Rimini," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* , 1911 ed.
31. Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 85.
32. Jones 213.
33. D'Epiro xiv.

34. Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 106.

35. The essay was published in three installments in *Poetry*, February, March and May 1915. In *LE* it is incorrectly dated 1914.

36. I have culled this term from Paul Morrison who speaks of "the 'heliotropic' from its eastern origins to its western fulfilment," see Paul Morrison, *The Poetics of Fascism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Paul de Man* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 30.

37. For a much fuller account of the working out of the 'light from Eleusis hypothesis' in Pound's work see Leon Surette, *A Light from Eleusis: A Study of Ezra Pound's Cantos.*

38. K.K. Ruthven, *Ezra Pound as Literary Critic* (London: Routledge, 1990) 150.

39. Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (1970; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974) 151.

40. "Charles Lang Freer," *American National Biography* 1999 ed.

41. "Charles Lang Freer," *American National Biography* 1999 ed.

42. "Charles Lang Freer," American National Biography 1999 ed.

43. Zhaoming Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1995) 2.

44. Terrell 38.

45. Ezra Pound, "Paris Letter: January 1922," *Dial.* February 1922: 192.

46. Oscar Wilde, *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (Glasgow: HarperCollins*Publishers,* 1994) 109.

47. Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (1981; London: Phoenix, 1994) 65.

48. Quoted in Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 37.

49. Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 47.

50. Terrell 48. For a detailed discussion of the shortcomings of Terrell's version of these lines see Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 159-166.

51. Carpenter 578.

52. D.A. Russell and M. Winterbottom, eds, *Ancient Literary Criticism: The Principal Texts in New Translations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) 85.

53. Aristotle, *Poetics* in Penelope Murray and T.S. Dorsch, eds *Classical Literary Criticism,* 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2000) 68-9. This is my default version of the *Poetics* and will be cited as Aristotle.

54. Aristotle 64-5.

55. Aristotle 89.

56. George Kennedy, ed. *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, vol. 1 (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge UP, 1989) 158.

57. Aristotle 69.

58. Aristotle 68-9.

59. S.H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts with a Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics* (1911; London, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1927) 190.

60. Malcolm Heath, Introduction, Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath (Harmondswoth: Penguin, 1996) xxiii.

61. Malcolm Heath, Introduction, xxiii.

62. Aristotle 89.

63. Aristotle 89.

64. Heath, Introduction, xxvii. Emphasis added.

65. Donald Davie, *Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965) 125-6; Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981) 181.

66. Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, eds Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978) 42.

67. White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" 59-60.

68. White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact" 47.

69. Hayden White, *Metahistory* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1973) 7.

70. White, *Metahistory* 4.

71. Michael Bernstein, *The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound and the Modern Verse Epic* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980) 55.

72. Roger Griffen, ed., *Fascism*, Oxford Readers (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 4-5.

73. Smith 114.

74. Terrell 224.

75. D'Epiro 82-3; Terrell 58.

76. Jurij M. Lotman, "The Origin of Plot in the Light of Typology," trans. Julian Graffy, *Poetics Today* 1.1-2 (1979): 163.

77. Lotman 161-162.

78. Lotman 162.
79. Lotman 163.
80. Lotman 163.
81. Lotman 164.
82. Lotman 164.
83. Lotman 171.
84. John H. Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, Very Short Introductions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 3, 13.
85. Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) 21.
86. Morton White, *Foundations of Historical Knowledge* (1965; New York: Harper and Row, 1969) 222.
87. White, *The Content of the Form* 27-8.
88. White, *The Content of the Form* 2.
89. Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985) 56.
90. White, *The Content of the Form* 6.
91. Qian 108.
92. Ronald Bush, *The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976) 13-14.
93. Andrew M. Clearfield, *These Fragments I Have Shored: Collage and Montage in Early Modernist Poetry* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984) 9-10.
94. Arnold 5.
95. Morton White 222.
96. Morton White 222.
97. Ciaran Brady, "'Constructive and Instrumental': The Dilemma of Ireland's First 'New Historians'" in Ciaran Brady, ed., *Interpreting Irish History; the Debate on Historical revisionism 1938-1994*. (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994) 18.
98. R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (1946; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961) 172.
99. Collingwood 193.
100. Quoted in Collingwood 192-3.
101. See Collingwood 194-204.

102. Fredric Jameson, "Marxism and Historicism," New Literary History 11. 1 (1979): 45.
103. Jameson 50-1.
104. Jameson 51.
105. Jameson 51, 45.
106. Longenbach 142-3.
107. Longenbach 141, 143.
108. For a full account of Pound's reading at this epoch in the composition of the Malatesta Cantos see Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 119-128.
109. Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 125.
110. D'Epiro 19.
111. D'Epiro 19.
112. D'Epiro 19.
113. Edward Hutton, *Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini: A Study of a XV Century Italian Despot* (London: J.M.Dent, 1906) 3-6.
114. Hutton 6.
115. Hutton 25.
116. D'Epiro 64, 65.
117. D'Epiro 3- 4.
118. D'Epiro 64.
119. Brady 26.
120. Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 122.
121. Brady 24.
122. Brady 19.
123. Collingwood 257.
124. Collingwood 261.
125. Clearfield 10-11.
126. White, *The Content of the Form* 22.
127. *New Age* vol XXV. No. 18. August 1919: 300.
128. See Walter Baumann, *The Rose in the Steel Dust: An Examination of the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (1967; Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970) Part Two "In the Wake of Odysseus" 57-92 and *Roses from the Steel Dust: Collected Essays on Ezra Pound* (Orono: The National Poetry Foundation, 2000) "The Odysseus Theme

in Ezra Pound's Cantos" 83-97. Hereafter referred to as, respectively, Baumann 1967 & Baumann 2000.

129. Terrell 590.

130. For a more detailed account see Baumann 2000 95-97.

131. Baumann 2000 90.

132. Baumann 2000 92.

133. Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* 92-93.

134. Erich Auerbach, *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* "trans. Ralph Manheim in Erich Auerbach (1959; Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984) 11-12.

135. Auerbach 12-23.

136. Auerbach 29.

137. Auerbach 29.

138. Auerbach 30.

139. No doubt this is a gross over-simplification. See A fuller and more erudite account can be found in Auerbach's "Figura" III ("Origin and Analysis of Figural Interpretation"), Auerbach 49-60.

140. Auerbach 34.

141. Auerbach 53.

142. Auerbach 54.

143. Auerbach 57.

144. Auerbach 61, 63.

145. John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," *Early American Writing* , ed. Giles Gunn (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1994) 112.

146. Auerbach 68.

147. W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero*, 2nd ed. (1963; Dallas: Spring Publications, 1992) 6-7.

148. Stanford 7.

149. Stanford 11.

150. For a further account and spirited defence of Odysseus in these two works see Stanford 108-111 & 130-137.

151. Terrell 46.

152. Homer, *The Odyssey: the Story of Odysseus* trans. W.H. D. Rouse (1937, Harmondsworth: Mentor (Penguin), 11. For Pound's collaboration with Rouse see *SL* 262-264, 268, 269-270, 271-272, 273-275, 297-299, *GK* 145; Baumann 2000 87.

153. Terrell 46.
154. Baumann 1967 72-78; Baumann 2000 91-2.
155. Baumann 2000 93, 92.
156. Stanford 162.
157. Jones 178.
158. Stanford 50.
159. Baumann 1967 66.
160. Baumann 2000 90.
161. *Odyssey* 126.
162. Baumann 2000 85.
163. Charles Boer, "Foreword," W. B. Stanford. *The Ulysses Theme* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1992) xix.
164. Kenner 1972 138.
165. Benjamin Lawrence Reid, *The Man from New York: John Quinn and his Friends* (New York: Oxford UP, 1968) 5.
166. Reid 8.
167. Reid 12, 17-19, 28, 40-2; 67,85.
168. Reid 97.
169. Reid, 198.
170. Reid, Stock and Carpenter all provide adequate accounts of the Pound-Quinn collaboration; Reid's is the fullest.
171. Quoted in Reid 555.
172. Reid 457.
173. Carpenter 216-7, 230-2.
174. Quoted in Stock 207.
175. Reid 555.
176. Reid, 652.
177. Reid 199-200.
178. Reid 559-60.
179. Reid 90, 138.
180. *SL*, 111; Reid 343.
181. Reid 402.
182. quoted in Reid 248.
183. Reid 488, 457.

184. quoted in Reid 435.

185. Jones 20.

186. Jones 102.

187. Stock 324; 435-74.

188. Carpenter 438-9; 458.

189. Peter Nicholl, *Ezra Pound: Politics, Economics and Writing: A Study of The Cantos* (London: Macmillan, 1984) 48.

190. Surette, 92. Tim Redman argues his case for a late "turn to Fascism" at length in *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991) 93-98. His most categorical and succinct statement of this view is to be found in his essay "Pound's Politics and Economics" in Ira B. Nadel (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) 254-255.

191. Carpenter 428; Stock 324.

192. Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture*, The Henry McBride Series in Modernism and Modernity (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1998) 107-145. The chapter on Pound, "From the Patron to il Duce: Ezra Pound's Odyssey," is a reworking of his earlier essay "'All I Want You to Do Is to Follow the Orders' : History, Faith, and Fascism in the Early Cantos."

193. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* 138-9, 130-1.

194. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* 139.

195. Hemingway's article appeared in the Tornoto Daily Star on 27 January 1923. My quotations are taken from William White, ed., *By-Line: Ernest Hemingway: Selected Articles and Dispatches of Four Decades* (1967; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970) 74.

196. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* 128-130, 206-207 n. 48-50.

197. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* 110.

198. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* 110.

199. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* 111.

200. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* 112.

201. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* 125.

202. Griffin 3.

203. Griffin 43-4.

204. Griffin 43.

205. Griffin 43.

206. Griffin 44.
207. Smith, *Mussolini* 65, 101.
208. Griffin 43.
209. Burckhardt 2.
210. Burckhardt 5.
211. Burckhardt 7.
212. Burckhardt 7.
213. White, *Metahistory* 250 & 230.
214. Griffin 3-4.
215. The term palingenesis is also applied to *The Cantos* by Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos, "*The Cantos* as Palingenesis" (*Paideuma*, vol. 18 Spring and Fall 1989, nos. 1 & 2, 7-33). Tryphonopoulos is concerned with the occult rather than the political dimensions of Pound's work and his use of the term is clearly distinct from mine.
216. Burckhardt 81.
217. Burckhardt 82.
218. Rainey, *Monument of Culture* 31-33.
219. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism* 118.

Chapter Three

1. Stephen Fender, ed., *The American Long Poem: An Annotated Selection* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977) vii.
2. Michael André Bernstein, *The Tale of the Tribe: Ezra Pound and the Modern Verse Epic* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980) 197.
3. John P. McWilliams Jr., *The American Epic: Transforming a Genre 1770 - 1860.* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989) 4.
4. McWilliams, *The American Epic* 6.
5. McWilliams, *The American Epic* 237. Parenthesis mine.
6. John McWilliams, "The Epic in the Nineteenth Century," *The Columbia History of American Poetry* ed. Jay Parini (New York: MJF Books, 1993) 52.
7. Bernstein 71.
8. McWilliams, *The American Epic* 52.
9. Gore Vidal, *Screening History* (London: Abacus, 1992) 3-4.

10. McWilliams, *The American Epic* 4.
11. McWilliams,"The Epic in the Nineteenth Century" 36-37.
12. William Tudor, "Excerpt from *North American Review*," *American Literature, American Culture*, ed. Gordon Hutner (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) 12-23.
13. McWilliams, *The American Epic* 43-44.
14. David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993) 7.
15. Quint 8.
16. Tudor 13.
17. McWilliams, *The American Epic* 26.
18. Joel Barlow, *The Works of Joel Barlow* eds. William K. Bottorff and Artrhur L. Ford, vol. 2 (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles & reprints, 1970) 378-379.
19. Barlow 379.
20. McWilliams, *The American Epic* 42.
21. The motto on the Seal is a shortened form of the line "magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo" (Eclogue IV, l. 5). See George Earlie Shankle, *State Names, Flags, Seals, Songs Birds, Flowers and Other Symbols*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wilson, 1941) 224-229. Shankle wrongly gives the source of the motto as "Eclogue I, line 5."
22. Barlow 375.
23. Barlow 382.
24. M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: U Texas Press, 1981) 15.
25. McWilliams, *The American Epic* 34.
26. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Complete Novels and Selected Tales*, ed. Norman Holmes Pearson (New York: The Modern Library-Random House, 1937) 988.
27. McWilliams, *The American Epic* 5-7.
28. McWilliams, *The American Epic* 31.
29. Fender 1-2.
30. Fender vi.
31. Fender 2.
32. Fender 3.
33. Fender 4.

34. Van Wyck Brooks, "On Creating a Usable Past," *American Literature, American Culture*, ed. Gordon Hutner (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) 215.
35. Brooks 213, 215.
36. Carol S. Gruber, *Mars and Minerva: World War I and the Uses of the Higher Learning in America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1975) 8.
37. Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985) 56.
38. Ronald Bush, *The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1976) 211-14.
39. Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber 1988) 346.
40. See Ezra Pound, *A Walking Tour in Southern France: Ezra Pound Among the Troubadours*, ed. Richard Sieburth (New York: New Directions, 1992).
41. Gary Mead, *The Doughboys: America and the First World War* (2000; London: Penguin, 2001) 400.
42. Lieutenant- Colonel Calvin Goddard quoted in Mead 405, 477 n. 18.
43. Money was a fruitful source of friction. An American soldier's pay was ten times that of a French soldier – this is one possible explanation of the nickname "Doughboys" (Mead, 67). The French saw the willingness of the Americans to pay high prices for scarce goods as a prime cause of post-war inflation, while the Doughboys "felt themselves subjected to merciless financial exploitation" (Mead, 404). There appears to have been right on both sides.
44. Bernstein 71.
45. Alexander De Grand, *Italian Fascism: Its Origins and Development* 2nd. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989) 7.
46. Edmund Spenser, *The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser*, eds J.C. Smith and E. De Selincourt (London: Oxford UP, 1935) 407.
47. Mead 72.
48. Mead 69.
49. Mead 66.
50. *Duke Sheet Music Collection*. 7 July 2002 http://www.lib.duke.edu/music/sheet_music_images/Farm_a.jpg
51. Quoted in Mark Meigs, "Crash-Course Americanism: the A.E.F. University 1919," *History Today* August 1994: 37.
52. Meigs 37-38.

53. For a description of the impact of the S.A.T.C. programme on American academic life see Gruber 213 – 37.
54. Letters Home from the War 14 July 2002 <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~rstaley/wwfootnt.htm >
55. Meigs 37-8.
56. Meigs 42-43.
57. Meigs 39-40.
58. Gruber 237- 8.
59. Gruber 239.
60. Gruber 243-244.
61. "Ezra on the Strike" appeared in the Jenkintown *Times Chronicle* for 8 November 1902. See Donald Gallup, *Ezra Pound: A Bibliography* (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1983) 225 and Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (1970; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974) 18-19.
62. See *SP* 115, 129 and *LE* 224.
63. Ezra Pound, "Ezra Pound on America and World War I," *Paideuma* 18.1 & 2 (1989): 210.
64. EP on WW I 208, 210.
65. EP on WW I 208.
66. Mead 123.
67. EP on WW I 212.
68. EP on WW I 213.
69. Sean Dennis Cashman, *America Ascendant: From Theodore Roosevelt to FDR in the Century of American Power, 1901 – 1945* (New York: New York UP, 1998) 40.
70. Cashman 36.
71. Cashman 38.
72. John Milton Cooper, Jr, *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge MA: The Belknapp Press of Harvard UP, 1983) 61.
73. Martin Walker, *Makers of the American Century* (2000; London: Vintage, 2001) 39. The pre-war regular army has already been described. The navy was little better: in 1914 the U.S. had 8 "frontline battleships and battle cruisers" as compared with Britain's 34 and Germany's 21 (Walker 8-9).

74. Cooper 286.
75. John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1972) 63.
76. Walker 16.
77. George Orwell, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, ed. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, vol. 2 (1968; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970) 215.
78. Richard Washburn Child quoted in Cashman, 3. Any suggestion of irony here should probably be discounted. Child later became an enthusiastic admirer of, and apologist for, Mussolini. Diggins 27-28.
79. Cooper 39, 70.
80. Vidal cites James's opinion that Roosevelt was "the mere monstrous embodiment of unprecedented and resounding noise" (Gore Vidal, in *United States: Essays 1952-1992* [1993; London: Abacus, 1994] 734).
81. Tim Redman, *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991) 98.
82. Dennis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (1981; London: Phoenix, 1993) 124.
83. Diggins 37.
84. Diggins 27.
85. Diggins 245.
86. Diggins 5.
87. Diggins 6.
88. Diggins 7.
89. Diggins 55.
90. Diggins 55-6.
91. Diggins 53-4.
92. Diggins 54-5.
93. Diggins 55.
94. H.L. Mencken, *The American Language: An Inquiry into the Development of English in the United States*, 4th. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1936) 231.
95. Mencken 24.
96. James Fennimore Cooper, *The American Democrat*, eds. George Dekker and Larry Johnson, 2nd ed. (1838; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989) 175.
97. Mencken 69.

98. Mencken 295.
99. Albert Fried, *FDR and his Enemies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999) 57-58.
100. Carpenter 521-2; Stock 406.
101. "William Edgar Borah," *American National Biography*, 1999 ed.
102. Daniel Pearlman, "Fighting the World: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Senator William E. Borah of Idaho," *Paideuma* 12. 2-3 (1983): 420.
103. In a letter to Daniel Pearlman appended to Sarah C. Holmes' edition of the Pound/ Borah correspondence Charles E. Corker, who was a junior clerk in Borah's Senate office between 1937 and 1939, wrote of the "practice in the office": "All of his staff members signed his name to letters imitating his signature" (*EP/WB*, 82).
104. Pearlman 419.
105. "Bronson Murray Cutting," *American National Biography*, 1999 ed.
106. "Bronson Murray Cutting," *American National Biography*, 1999 ed.
107. "George Holden Tinkham," *American National Biography*, 1999 ed.
108. Stock 415; Carpenter 527.
109. Vidal 929.
110. Pearlman 420.
111. The phrase is W.H. Auden's. See "To Christopher Isherwood," W.H. Auden, *The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writing 1927-1939* ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber, 1977) 154.
112. Roland Barthes, "To Write: An Intransitive Verb?" (1966) in Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato eds., *The Structuralist Controversy: The Language of Criticism and the Sciences of Man* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972) 142.
113. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1973) 15.

Chapter Four

1. Daniel Albright, "Early Cantos I-XLI," *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*, ed. Ira B. Nadel (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999) 85.

2. Tim Redman, "An Epic Is a Hypertext Containing Poetry: Eleven New Cantos (31-41) by Ezra Pound," *A Poem Containing History: Textual Studies in The Cantos*, ed. Lawrence S. Rainey (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1997) 118.
3. The subtitle "Jefferson: Nuevo Mundo" was added in post-war British editions (Peter Makin, *Pound's Cantos* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985] 173).
4. Carroll F. Terrell, *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1993) 120.
5. Terrell 167.
6. T.S. Eliot, *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1975) 38-39.
7. Quoted in Myles Slatin, "A History of Pound's *Cantos* I - XVI, 1925," *American Literature* 35.2 (1963) 193.
8. Quoted in Slatin, 194.
9. Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber, 1988) 437.
10. Redman "An Epic" 131-139.
11. Redman "An Epic" 118. The full reference is Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh, eds. , *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* 20 vols. (Washington D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1905). Fender has argued that "the sequences and distribution of Pound's citations suggest that he used the 1907 edition" which "combined the twenty volumes into ten, but retained the original numbering of the volumes" (Stephen Fender, ed., *The American Long Poem: An Annotated Selection* [London: Edward Arnold, 1977] 93). Possibly Fender had not seen "the heavily marked and annotated" twenty volume edition (a gift from T.S. Eliot) to which Redman refers. The edition I have used, downloaded from the Constitution Society homepage < http://www.constitution.org/>, is in 19 volumes and designates Bergh as the single editor. In all other respects it is identical to the 1905 edition. Throughout this chapter it will be cited as *Writings of Thomas Jefferson.*
12. Joyce Appleby, "Introduction: Jefferson and His Complex Legacy," *Jeffersonian Legacies*, ed. Peter S. Onuf (Charlotteville: University Press of Virginia, 1993) 2.

13. John Milton Cooper, Jr., *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge MA: The Belknapp Press of Harvard UP, 1983) 122, 303.
14. Slatin 194.
15. Gore Vidal, *Palimpsest: A Memoir* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1995) 302.
16. *TWJ*, vi, 275.
17. Harvey Wish, *The American Historian: A Social-Intellectual History of the Writing of the American Past* (New York: Oxford UP, 1960) 41-42.
18. Wish, 42.
19. Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" in *Surveys From Exile* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973) 146-7.
20. Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (1972; London: Faber, 1975) 376.
21. Alec Marsh, *Money and Modernity: Pound, Williams, and the Spirit of Jefferson* (Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama Press, 1998) 51.
22. Ciaran Brady "'Constructive and Instrumental': The Dilemma of Ireland's First 'New Historians,'" in *Interpreting Irish History; the Debate on Historical revisionism 1938-1994*, Ciaran Brady, ed., (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994) 26.
23. Ian F. A. Bell, "The Paralyzed History of Canto XXXI," *Ezra Pound and History*, ed. Marianne Korn (Orono: The National Poetry Foundation, 1985) 77.
24. Leon Surette, *A Light from Eleusis: A Study of Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979) 135.
25. Nick Selby, "Revolutionary Figures in Canto XXXI" in Jacqueline Kaye, ed., *Ezra Pound and America* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992) 120, 130 n.12.
26. Selby 120.
27. Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (London: Faber, 1997) 24.
28. Grafton 4-5.
29. Grafton 22-3.
30. Grafton 5.
31. Quoted in Carol S. Gruber, *Mars and Minerva: World War I and the Uses of the Higher Learning in America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1975) 40.
32. Brady 5.
33. Grafton 22.
34. Grafton 3.

35. Brady 25.
36. Pound held that "history that omits economics is mere bunk" (*GK*, 259). He seems to have regarded Beard as somebody who was on the right road but who had not gone far enough along it. In a broadcast from Rome of 2 March 1942 he said: "Beard, Bowers, D.R. Dewey (not Tommie) been gettin' down TOWARD but not TO the real bedrock" (*EPS*, 50). His reference to Beard in Canto LXXXIV confirms this impression: "and Mr Beard in his admirable condensation/ (Mr Chas Beard) has given one line to the currency/ at about page 426" (84:538).
37. Donald Davie, *Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965) 136.
38. Stephen Fender, "Ezra Pound and the Words Off the Page; Historical Allusions in Some American Long Poems," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 8 (1978): 105.
39. Fender, "Words Off the Page" 99. I would disagree with Fender over this. The Memorial Edition while it may not have been the cheapest or most easily available was scarcely "*recherché*" and Pound used it because he had it to hand.
40. Fender, "Words Off the Page" 106.
41. Selby 116-117.
42. Cleanth Brooks, "Irony as a Principle of Structure," in *Debating Texts: A Reader in Twentieth-Century Literary Theory and Method*, ed., Rick Rylance (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987) 38.
43. Fender, *The American Long Poem* 94-109.
44. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1973) 9.
45. Fender, "Words Off the Page" 103.
46. *TWJ*, xv, 447.
47. The first of these is from a letter from Adams to Jefferson ("QUINCY, July 16, 1814"), the relevant passage reads: "I am very glad you have seriously read Plato; and still more rejoiced to find that your reflections upon him so perfectly harmonize with mine. Some thirty years ago I took upon me the severe task of going through all his works. With the help of two Latin translations, and one English and one French translation, and comparing some of the most remarkable passages with the Greek; I labored through the tedious toil. My disappointment was very great, my astonishment was greater, and my disgust shocking. Two

things only did I learn from him. 1. That Franklin's ideas of exempting husbandmen and mariners, etc., from the depredations of war, was borrowed from him. 2. That sneezing is a cure for the hickups. Accordingly, I have cured myself, and all my friends, of that provoking disorder, for thirty years, with a pinch of snuff" (*WTJ*, xiv, 156-157). On 11 June 1812 Jefferson wrote to Adams of James Adair, author of a History of the American Indians (1775): "Adair too had his kink. He believed all the Indians of America to be descended from the Jews; the same laws, usages, rites and ceremonies, the same sacrifices, priests, prophets, fasts and festivals, almost the same religion, and that they all spoke Hebrew" (*WTJ*, xiii, 157). Pound is transcribing this omits the capital "J" of "Jew."

48. I was first alerted to the possibilities of this sense of conversation by Kermode; see Frank Kermode, *Forms of Attention* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985) 47.
49. Given in Redman, "An Epic Is a Hypertext Containing Poetry" 124.
50. Redman, "An Epic Is a Hypertext Containing Poetry" 124.
51. Dennis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (1981; London: Phoenix, 1993) 174.
52. Smith 171.
53. Smith 175; Smith adds that "his police dossier contained allegations of involvement in prostitution, drugs, peculation, rape and pederasty."
54. Smith 179.
55. Smith 177.
56. Smith 176-7.
57. T.S. Eliot, *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber, 1975) 119.
58. White 9.
59. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957) 186.
60. Daniel Pearlman, *The Barb of Time: On the Unity of Pound's Cantos* (New York: Oxford UP, 1969) 140.
61. Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869; Cambridge: Library of America Eds., 1984) 170.
62. J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975) viii.

63. Carroll Terrell, *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: The U of California P, 1993) 128. The translation given by Terrell is slightly ambiguous – my reading of the line is that Sordello had the aspect of a crouching lion.
64. *WTJ*, xv, 372-3.
65. *WTJ*, xv, 372, 371.
66. In June 1928 Pound, in a letter to the Carnegie Endowment jointly written with Count Albert von Mensdorff-Pouilly-Dietrichstein (the Endowment's European agent), identified the causes of war: "1. Intense production and sale of munitions.... 2. Overproduction and dumping leading to trade rivalries and irritation. 3. The intrigues of interested cliques" (*EP/GHT*, 44). See also Stock, 351-352.
67. John Hamilton Edwards and William Vasse, *Annotated Index to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1957) 43.
68. "John Quincy Adams," *American National Biography*, 1999 ed.
69. W. E. Woodward, *A New American History* (London: Faber, 1938) 302-303.
70. Davie 136.
71. Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1967) 46-49.
72. James Joyce, *Ulysses: Annotated Students' Edition* (1922; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992) 177.
73. Holmes Alexander, *The American Talleyrand: The Career and Contemporaries of Martin Van Buren, Eighth President* (New York: Harper, 1935) 8.
74. Alexander 9.
75. Alexander 12.
76. Alexander 6.
77. George Bancroft, *Martin Van Buren to the End of his Political Career* (New York, 1889) 51-2, 53.
78. Woodward 331.
79. Woodward 335.
80. Woodward 337-8.
81. Woodward 336-7.
82. Alexander 7.
83. Bancroft 218-9.
84. Bancroft 223.

85. Davie 137.
86. Peter Makin, *Pound's Cantos* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985) 193-4.

Chapter Five

1. George Kearns, *A Guide to Ezra Pound's Selected Cantos* (Folkestone, Kent: Dawson, 1980) 126; Peter Makin, *Pound's Cantos* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1985) 224; Jean-Michel Rabaté, *Language, Sexuality and Ideology in Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1986) 108.
2. Humphrey Carpenter, *A Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber, 1988) 569; Leon Surette, *A Light from Eleusis: A Study of Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979) 146.
3. Kearns 126.
4. Randall Jarrell, "Poets: Old, New and Aging" (1940) in Eric Homberger, ed., *Ezra Pound: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1972) 348-9.
5. Surette 147; Makin 212.
6. Carroll F. Terrell, *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: The U of California P, 1993) 259.
7. "John Adams," *American National Biography*, 1999 ed.
8. "John Adams," *American National Biography*, 1999 ed.
9. Quoted in Surette, 146-7. No date is given for the letter but I assume it accompanied the typescript of *Cantos LII-LXXI* (sent to Faber in March 1939).
10. Surette 147.
11. Carpenter 573.
12. Carpenter 569; A.D. Moody, "Composition in the Adams Cantos," ed. Jacqueline Kaye, *Ezra Pound and America* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992) 79.
13. Carol H. Cantrell and Ward Swinson, "*Cantos LII-LXXI*: Pound's Textbook for Princes," *Paideuma* 17. 2-3 (1988): 125.
14. Quoted in Carpenter 575.
15. Moody 80, 79, 84.
16. Moody 88.
17. Kearns 126.

18. John Hamilton Edwards and William Vasse, *Annotated Index to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1957) 303.
19. Kearns 126.
20. Frederick K. Sanders, *John Adams Speaking: Pound's Sources for the Adams Cantos* (Orono: U of Maine P, 1975) 52-53. Wherever possible, that is where it makes no substantive difference to my argument, I have, for convenience, used Sanders's exegetical compendium of Pound's sources rather than the 10 volume *Works*.
21. Noel Stock, *Reading the Cantos: A Study of Meaning in Ezra Pound* (London: Routledge, 1967) 68.
22. Stephen Fender, "Ezra Pound and the Words Off the Page; Historical Allusions in Some American Long Poems," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 8 (1978): 95-6.
23. Peter Nicholls, *Ezra Pound: Politics, Economics and Writing: A Study of The Cantos* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984) 104.
24. Page Smith, *John Adams,* vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1962) 245, 249.
25. David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001) 101, 102.
26. This is clear in the original context: "You and I, my dear friend, have been sent into life at a time when the greatest lawgivers of antiquity would have wished to live. How few of the human race have ever enjoyed an opportunity of making an election of government, more than of air, soil, or climate, for themselves or their children! When, before the present epocha, had three millions of people full power and a fair opportunity to form and establish the wisest and happiest government that human wisdom can contrive?" (Sanders, 335-6).
27. Ian F. A. Bell, "The Paralyzed History of Canto XXXI" in Marianne Korn, ed., *Ezra Pound and History* (Orono: The National Poetry Foundation, 1985) 77.
28. Nicholls 104.
29. Kearns 147.
30. It is taken from a tribute by an unidentified member of the Congress quoted by Charles Francis Adams: "In a word, I deliver to you the opinion of every man in the House, when I add that he possessed the clearest head and firmest heart of any man in the congress" (Sanders, 80).
31. "John Adams," *American Nation Biography*, 1999 ed.

32. The source of this line is the following observation by Charles Francis Adams: "In all civil convulsions, there is a class of men who put off taking a side as long as they can, for the purpose of saving a chance to solve the interesting question, which will prove the stronger" (Sanders, 68).
33. The relevant passage in Charles Francis Adams's life of his grandfather reads: "It is probable that the period embraced between the 9 th of February, the day of his return to Philadelphia, and the end of the year, was the most laborious and exciting in Mr. Adams's long life. . . . He felt, not that three millions of men were to declare their own emancipation, but that a nation was to come into being for a life of centuries (Sanders, 71).
34. Carroll F. Terrell, *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1993) 265.
35. Sanders 76-77.
36. Quoted in Smith 1 251.
37. David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001) 119-20.
38. Smith 1 267.
39. Quoted in Smith 1 268- 9.
40. "John Adams," *American National Biography*, 1999 ed.
41. Peter Shaw, Introduction, *John Adams* by John Quincy Adams and Charles Francis Adams, American Stateman Series (1871; New York: Chelsea House, 1980) xvi, xvii.
42. McCullough 243.
43. McCullough 252.
44. McCullough 254.
45. McCullough 256.
46. McCullough 253.
47. McCullough 254.
48. Sanders 459.
49. McCullough 485.
50. McCullough 484.
51. McCullough 496.

52. McCullough 524. Unusually for a man of his time, Adams placed considerable reliance on the advice of his wife, Abigail. Although he did not consult her on this occasion she thoroughly approved of his action.
53. McCullough 523.
54. McCullough 523.
55. Cantrell and Swinson, *Paideuma* 17: 125- 26.
56. Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (1970; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974) 469.
57. Nicholls 129-30.
58. Cantrell and Swinson, *Paideuma* 17: 123- 4.
59. Jean-Michel Rabate, *Language, Sexuality and Ideology in Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Albany: State U of New York P, 1986) 111.
60. Sanders 269.
61. McCullough 186.
62. Cantrell and Swinson, *Paideuma* 17: 122- 3 n. 22; Terrell 125.
63. Sanders 508.
64. Terrell 125.
65. The source reads: "the remonstrances and associations against the execution of the acts were so formidable, that the ministry thought it necessary to send the fleet and army to protect Temple, Hallowell, Paxton, Birch, and Robinson, their adherents and followers" (Sanders 494).
66. Smith I 51.
67. Smith I 55-6.
68. Sanders 495.
69. Smith I 56.
70. The source reads: "Otis displayed so comprehensive a knowledge of the subject, showed not only the illegality of the writ, its insidious and mischievous tendency, but he laid open the views and designs of Great Britain, in taxing us, of destroying our charters and assuming the powers of our government, legislative, executive, and judicial, external and internal, civil and ecclesiastical, temporal and spiritual; and all this was performed with such a profusion of learning, such convincing argument, and such a sublime and pathetic eloquence [. . .]" (Sanders 494-5).
71. Bernhard Knollenberg, *Origins of the American Revolution 1759-1766* (1961; New York: The Free Press, 1965) 149, 150.

72. Knollenberg 150-1.
73. Garry Wills, *Inventing America* (New York: Vintage, 1978) 51.
74. Wills 52.
75. Nicholls 125- 26.
76. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, March of America Facsimile Series 100 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilm Inc., 1966) 201.
77. Harvey Wish, *The American Historian: A Social-Intellectual History of the Writing of the American Past* (New York: Oxford UP, 1960) 183.
78. Wish 184; Turner, foreword.
79. Wish 182.
80. Wish 124, 183.
81. Wish 182- 83.
82. Wish 124.
83. Wish 183- 4.
84. Adams wrote: "the common law of England, the birthright of every man here as well as at home" (Sanders 294).
85. J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975) 531, 526.
86. Sanders 334.
87. McCullough 102.
88. Smith 235, 439.
89. Pocock viii.
90. Terrell 394.
91. Sanders 361- 2.
92. Jack P. Green, *The Reinterpretation of the American Revolution 1763-1785* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) 4.
93. Green 5.
94. Terrell 266.
95. Sanders 55.
96. Wills 86.
97. Terrell 263.
98. Wills 85.
99. McCullough 540.

100. Kearns 146.
101. Kearns 146.
102. Terrell 334-7.
103. Carol H. Cantrell and Ward Swinson, *Cantos LII-LXXI*: Pound's Textbook for Princes," *Paideuma* 18. 1-2 (1989): 73.
104. Sanders 426.
105 Kearns 145.

Conclusion

1. Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) 5.
2. Carol H. Cantrell and Ward Swinson, "*Cantos LII-LXXI*: Pound's Textbook for Princes," *Paideuma* 17. 2-3 (1988): 124.
3. George Kearns, *A Guide to Ezra Pound's Selected Cantos* (Folkestone, Kent: Dawson, 1980) 128.
4. Quoted in Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture*, The Henry McBride Series in Modernism and Modernity (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1998) 143; 210 n.85. The sentence taken from an unpublished revision of "Fascism or the Direction of the Will."[1]
5. Burton Hatlen, "Ezra Pound and Fascism," *Ezra Pound and History*, ed Marianne Korn (Oronno: U Maine, 1985) 146.
6. Hatlen 146.
7. Fredric Jameson, *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis the Modernist as Fascist* (Berkeley: U California Press, 1979) 23.
8. E. Fuller Torrey, *The Roots of Treason: Ezra Pound and the Secrets of St Elizabeth's* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson: 1984) 236.

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