Sincerity, this precision of terms is heaven's process.
What comes from the process in human ethics. The sincere man finds
the axis without forcing himself to do so. He arrives at it without
thinking and goes along naturally in the midst of the process [T's'ung
yung chung tao], he is a wise man. He who is sincere seizes goodness,
gripping it firmly from all sides. —The Unwobbling Pivot

The sincere man and the wise man, Pound learned from Confucius,
finds his personal point of balance (his "still point," the "axis," the
"unwobbling pivot") by means other than Western logic, reason, and
the incessant abstraction of the mind. In the U.S.A. Detention Train­ing
Center north of Pisa in 1945, Pound discovered that "Le Paradis
n'est pas artificiel." It is not unusual that this lesson and this discovery
should come together, for they were, in fact, the two sides of the same
coin, the two faces of the same open page. Pound, sixty years old and
locked up in a hellhole of a wire cage, had only notebooks to keep him
alive, and in these notebooks he worked on both translations of Con­
fucius (The Great Digest and The Unwobbling Pivot) and the Pisan
Cantos (the record of the making of a wise old man). The two literally
interpenetrate and work together. But Confucius, although dominant, is
not the only figure behind the Pisan Cantos. Pound commentators
have been eager to appoint various heroines, Venus, for example,2 or
Persephone.3 This hero(ine) hunting can only be misleading, for the
important point is that in the Pisan Cantos there is, on the contrary, no
one personage (either historical or mythical) and/or no one particular
path which Pound takes to "le paradis."

Pound was in severe need of grace under pressure, and he looked for
it and found it in as many places and in as many dimensions as possi­
ble: the natural landscape, personal memory, the third world, traditions
of all kinds, the utopian imagination, the prisoners around him. In this
way he is so unlike Williams, who in *Paterson V* proposed essentially only one way to counter old age and death: that of the museum, the modern tomb of dead civilizations.

Williams, in his reliance on slice-of-life imagism, on pictorial imagism, on "re-painting" the flowers in the Cloisters Tapestries, on a kind of sweet domesticity, failed. He failed in great part because the "art" he chose was unrelated and set apart from the culture in which he lived (the lower-class industrial city of Paterson), and he could not, as Pound could with his own choices of art of the past, make it new; he could not successfully reintegrate the traditions of the past into the culture of the present. In the end the Cloisters Tapestries of Williams remain merely beautiful, not immediately meaningful or useful. Pound, we remember, believed that "the setting of the museum above the temple is a perversion," and Pound is right. Williams lacked, at that crucial time in his life and his poetry, a sense of the divine, the religious, the sacramental. This is one of the reasons why his creaky symbolism of whore-virgin-and-unicorn did not work any better than his reweaving of the Tapestries. Williams, one concludes, tried to set the stage for experiencing in *Paterson V* what we could (not so generously) call a moment of reassurance, a moment possessing none of the religious qualities of Pound's conception of the "magic moment." But Williams only succeeded in talking around it, and perhaps in talking himself, but not us, into it.

Why could Pound achieve in the *Pisan Cantos* what Williams could not in *Paterson V*? In great part Pound's achievement was possible because of the "method" of the Cantos, their extreme openness of form. This is not as simplistic or as obvious as it might sound. Paradise, Pound says, is "spezzato," broken:

\[
\text{it exists only in fragments unexpected excellent sausage,}
\text{the smell of mint, for example,}
\text{Ladro the night cat.}
\]

By this he means that an eternal, continuous paradise is impossible, never again possible (was it really ever possible?). He also means that it can exist, does still exist, in "unexpected" moments, fragments which not only point to something else, something larger, something
beyond, but also are the "'divine or permanent world.'" What is important here is the concept of the unexpected. Pound's notion parallels that of Zen where a simple, unanticipated event (the falling of a petal, for example) can trigger, can invite atasal. One must be ready but one cannot be consciously looking. As Pound translated Confucius, the sincere man "arrives at it without thinking and goes along naturally in the midst of the process."6

This leads us to the chief difference between the openness of Pound's Pisan Cantos and that of Williams' Paterson. Although both are squarely in the American tradition of the open poem and although both find heirs in the Black Mountain poets and the Beats, Pound, however, had early on made a commitment about (and to) his poetry, a commitment crucial to the development of American poetry, which Williams never had. For Pound, the question of openness was not just a matter of the way the poem was allowed to look on the page. Nor was it only an acceptance of what had before been regarded as undesirable foreign matter—the mixing of prose and poetry, for example, or the injection of scraps from historical accounts into a lyric base. More importantly, for Pound the openness of the Cantos meant that the act of writing and his life were somehow one and the same. The two could not be neatly separated the way one could divide (and conquer) the Life and Works of T. S. Eliot or the Work and Writing of Wallace Stevens. The teachings of Confucius and the draft of the Pisan Cantos literally run through each other in the manuscript notebooks, and so do Pound's writing and his life. And just as life has no plot, neither do his Pisan Cantos. They are, even more so than the preceding Cantos, a kind of daybook, a journal, a form which, interestingly enough, became popular in American poetry in the sixties and seventies (think of Gary Snyder, of Paul Blackburn, of Allen Ginsberg).

To say this is not to say that Pound did not have a vague, general notion of the direction he wished the Cantos to take. He certainly did, and critics are fond of quoting from his famous 1927 letter to his father in the hallowed name of an articulate structure:

Have I ever given you outline of main scheme : : : or whatever it is?
1. Rather like, or unlike subject and response and counter subject in fugue.
At Last, the Real Distinguished Thing

A. A. Live man goes down into world of Dead
C. B. The "repeat in history"
B. C. The "magic moment" or moment of metamorphosis, bust thru from quotidien into "divine or permanent world." Gods, etc.

The model is the Divine Comedy, we could say, or the model is the Odyssey. A model is not the same as a plot, however. A model permits flexibility, it is an undercurrent, a substructure, a scaffolding on which the substance is built. A plot, on the other hand, is by definition the focus of attention in the genres which it dominates—the novel, the drama—but not in poetry. A plot is a chain of events (a chain), it is planned in advance. But Pound's Cantos are not a novel or a five-act drama with a neat dénouement. They are an unfolding of his life (Pound was among the first to invent this form; to my knowledge it is only Zukofsky in "A" who preceded him). Pound may have begun with the figure of Odysseus in the back of his mind, but he could not have anticipated the Second World War and the D.T.C. And that the model is latent, and best left so, is easily seen when we compare Pound's use of the homeomorph (to use Kenner's term) with Williams' cumbrous and overweening use of metaphor in Paterson. Williams grafts the Giant onto the city of Paterson or the city onto the Giant, it little matters which. In the Cantos the journey of Odysseus resonates with the journey of Pound; the paradigm of the Divine Comedy works on a subliminal level (or would, if only commentators would not be so heavy-handed in digging it up).

Pound had, in fact, once said that the Divine Comedy was not an epic but rather a lyric, "the tremendous lyric of the subjective Dante," and the same is true of his own Cantos. In the Pisan Cantos especially, the act of writing upheld his life in a more immediate way than Mallarmé would ever have understood: "As a lone ant from a broken ant-hill / from the wreckage of Europe, ego scriitor" [LXXVI]. Writing for Pound was more than ever before a way of talking to himself ("to write dialog because there is/no one to converse with" [LXXX]) and of saving himself. The Pisan Cantos are nothing less than a survival piece.

Pound had long held the theory that you see nothing and find nothing if you start with a map, if you proceed into unknown territory with a
plan in hand as to what is important, if you use someone else’s guide, someone else’s categories and abstractions. Territory, he believed, must remain unknown until personally explored so that the unexpected is possible. If the unexpected is possible, then the future (change and growth) is also possible. “Periplum,” the method of charting life by points of experience, is a watchword of all of the Cantos, not just the Pisan Cantos.

But in the Pisan Cantos the word as mantra and the concept behind the word take on a more poignant meaning. Pound’s dream for Italy had twisted into nightmare. He opens the sequence:

The enormous tragedy of the dream in the peasant’s bent shoulders
Manes! Manes was tanned and stuffed,
Thus Ben and la Clara a Milano
That maggots shd/ eat the dead bullock
DIGENES, διηνεκής, but the twice crucified
where in history will you find it?

[LXXIV]

His Italy was gone. Pound himself had been stripped of his freedom, and his wife, and his books—all this by a country that he loved. He questioned his very future:

we will see those old roads again, question,
possibly
but nothing appears much less likely

[LXXIV]

He had to start again, to find what he could live on. This is periplum with a vengeance. But in a way, this hell is just what made those fragments of Paradise possible.

“Periplum”: in the Pisan Cantos it connects with Pound’s notion of mysticism as being based on “direct perception”:

The flavours of the peach and the apricot are not lost from generation to generation, neither are they transmitted by book-learning. The mystic tradition, any mystic tradition, is of a similar nature, that is, it is dependent on direct perception, a ‘knowledge’ as permanent as the faculty for receiving it.
As he wrote in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*, "An image... is real because we know it directly." Direct perception: what Pound accepted as a matter of course, Wallace Stevens debated his entire life. Was direct perception possible? Stevens fussed. At times he would answer no, arguing (reasonably, rationally, in the Lockean tradition) that the categories of the mind intervened (these categories could be logical, as in "Metaphors of a Magnifico," or metaphorical, as in "Someone Puts a Pineapple Together"). At times he would answer yes, yet add that plain-and-simple perception (the "painting" of carnations in "The Poems of Our Climate"), the fruit of imagism, was not enough.

In this Stevens and Pound agree. Pound had long ago articulated the canon of this brand of imagism, a "technical hygiene" as Hugh Kenner has so aptly labeled it:

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

Like Stevens, Pound rejected this doctrine as being insufficient (Williams, however, never really did). But whereas Pound was always sure of alternatives, steady in his beliefs in the "Symposium of the Whole," to use Robert Duncan's words, Stevens was not. Pound was interested in the emotional as well as the intellectual component; we recall his "second" definition of the image: "An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time."

But Stevens was uneasy with the emotional, the personal, as a means of validating the "real." In one of his later poems, "Bouquet of Roses in Sunlight," for example, perception of the real (the object) is based on feelings, and this basis Stevens hastens to undermine:

```
Say that it is a crude effect, black reds,
Pink yellows, orange whites, too much as they are
To be anything else in the sunlight of the room,
Too much as they are to be changed by metaphor.
```
Too actual, things that in being real
Make any imaginings of them a lesser thing.

And yet this effect is a consequence of the way
We feel and, therefore, is not real, except
In our sense of it, our sense of the fertilest red,

Of yellow as first color and of white,
In which the sense lies still, as a man lies,
Enormous, in a completing of his truth.

What "we feel... is not real"; such experience only reflects ourselves
(we think of Mallarmé gazing out of the window and seeing only his own image reflected); the room is one of solipsism. In his last poems
Stevens is finally able to put aside the internal dialogue of the mind and accept without serious qualification "direct perception." The title of the last poem in the *Collected Poems* testifies to this: "Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself" (but it also testifies to his never having rejected Western dualism).

But the question to ask is: How does Stevens' concept of "direct perception" differ from that of Pound? For the difference is vast. Stevens' aesthetic is, finally, an aesthetic of glimpses, of moments which give nourishment and an impulse to continue living. But for Stevens one moment does not connect with another, nor does the experience of a particular moment connect with something larger. For him the moment of perception is literally a fragment unto itself, not as for Pound a fragment which is a part of a whole. For Pound the "still point" is much more akin to the Wordsworthian notion of "seeing into the heart of things," although it is far more complex than that. Unlike Stevens, Pound believed in a possible unity of culture and nature, in a union of the historical and the mythical. He could write, for example, in a relatively little known poem called "Religio, or, The Child's Guide to Knowledge":

What is a god?
A god is an eternal state of mind.
What is a faun?
A faun is an elemental creature.
What is a nymph?
A nymph is an elemental creature. When is a god manifest? When the states of mind take form. When does a man become a god? When he enters one of these states of mind.\(^\text{16}\)

He could pose such questions directly, and he could answer them directly, without vacillation, something Stevens could never have done. He believed, without question, in the gods. He accepted, without question, the mystical experience.

In *The Spirit of Romance* he wrote, "I believe in a sort of permanent basis in humanity, that is to say, I believe that Greek myth arose when someone having passed through delightful psychic experience tried to communicate it to others and found it necessary to screen himself from persecution." The word "delightful" is weak; we would do better to use the word "ecstatic," which Pound himself uses elsewhere in the same essay to describe the emotion which great art calls forth.

And what is "ecstasy"? "Ecstasy," he says, "is not a whirl of madness of the senses, but a glow arising from the exact nature of perception."\(^\text{17}\) In a *Guide to Kulchur* (kulchur and mysticism are linked together, the latter, in part, is a guide to the formation of the former), Pound distinguishes between two kinds of mysticism:

Two mystic states can be dissociated: the ecstatic-beneficent-and-benevolent, contemplation of the divine love, the divine splendour with goodwill toward others.

And the bestial, namely the fanatical, the man on fire with God and anxious to stick his snotty nose into other men's business or reprove his neighbor for having a set of tropisms different from that of the fanatic's, or for having the courage to live more greatly and openly.

The second set of mystic states is manifest in scarcity economists, in repressors etc.

The first state is a dynamism. It has, time and again, driven men to great living, it has given them courage to go on for decades in the face of public stupidity. It is paradisical and a reward in itself seeking naught further... perhaps because a feeling of certitude inheres in the state of feeling itself. The glory of life exists without further proof for this mystic.\(^\text{18}\)

In the *Pisan Cantos* Pound experiences the form of mysticism where "the feeling of certitude inheres in the state of feeling itself."
Pisan Cantos mysticism, direct perception, periplum, the unexpected moment, paradise, the whole: all these are connected.

Despite the fragmented appearance of these Cantos, the fragments cohere, they spin together. There is a paradox here, if we compare the Stevens poem with the Pound poem. The form of a Stevens poem is well-mannered. All the lines begin politely, properly capitalized, at the left side of the page. Poems are stanzaed and clearly sectioned like oranges. They are carefully crafted, or crated, well-wrought aesthetic urns, they do not spill out "life" in the way that Pound's Cantos or Robert Rauschenberg's combines do. No questionable typographic symbols (+, $, @) or "foreign" foreign languages (Greek, Italian, Latin, to say nothing of Chinese) or disreputable abbreviations (wd/, sd/, s.o.b., and s.h., a.h., and c.s.) intrude. More to the point, the line of a Stevens poem has a clearer narrative direction than do the various Cantos (apart from the fact that the Pisan Cantos follow, in time, Pound's stay at the D.T.C.). Stevens built "To an Old Philosopher in Rome," for example, carefully, step by step, block by block; these parts cannot be interchanged, they logically lead to a climax, a kind of epiphany. In the Pisan Cantos, on the other hand, bits and pieces of the past, cultural landmarks, snatches of conversations, and memories are tossed together like a salad. But while a syntax of individual parts is missing, the syntax of the whole is not (and we can generalize, the opposite is often true with Stevens). To borrow vocabulary from systems theory, the Pisan Cantos are a whole, not a heap. "The excuse for parts of Ulysses," Pound once wrote to Joyce himself, "is the WHOLE of Ulysses; 'serially' it is 'weak.'" The same can be said of the Pisan Cantos. It is a grabbag on the level of the individual page, a hodgepodge whose parts, however, form a personal vortex, which is, as Kenner puts it, "a circulation with a still center: a system of energies drawing in whatever comes near." For Pound, Kenner continues, the unwobbling pivot is a transcendent norm.

What is important in the Pisan Cantos is just this interpenetration of so many disparate elements. Pound could not sift his life for like images and themes, separating them into so many discrete poems, into clearly labeled bags of corn and oats and wheat. What literary critics do, he could not. To winnow the chaff from one theme (which critics do for the sake of analysis, if not always for the sake of the poem),
does more violence to Pound's Cantos than, say, to the poems of Eliot and Stevens. His *Pisan Cantos* are not the Chinese History Cantos or the Adams History Cantos or the Malatesta Cantos. They are his Golden Notebook (to invoke the title of Doris Lessing's well-known novel) where he brings everything together.

I. THE PICARESQUE SAINT

*Humanity? is to love men.*

*Knowledge, is to know men.*—Kung

Too much emphasis has been given to the view that the bits and pieces of the *Pisan Cantos* are fastened together by the Poundian act of reminiscence. Noel Stock says bluntly, "The unity of tone is of a man remembering." Hugh Kenner says, "What holds the events of the Pisan sequence together is that they are transacted explicitly within Pound's mind," and this mind is the "mirror of memory." True, in comparison with the preceding Cantos, the tone of elegy and reminiscence is dominant in the Pisan sequence. But the pressure of the present, Pound's fellow prisoners in the D.T.C., the events in the camp—all these are crucial in shaping Pound's experience, and his poem.

Although it is risky to suggest comparison between the novel and poetry (and particularly so after having argued that the narrative line in the *Pisan Cantos* is for all practical purposes nonexistent), still I think one parallel can be quite useful. And that is the similarity that exists between the figure of the picaresque saint which R. W. B. Lewis identifies as central to what he calls second generation fiction and the figure of Pound himself in the *Pisan Cantos*. Lewis proposes, and convincingly so, that while in general twentieth-century (Western) fiction has been concerned, perhaps obsessed, with death in all its forms and meanings (the death of the self, or civilization, of the potency of myth, of God), the first generation of modern writers (Proust, Joyce, Mann) dealt with it by withdrawing into the realm of art, and the second generation (represented for Lewis by Camus, Silone, Moravia, Faulkner, Greene) found "grounds for living in life itself." "Where, in the first generation," Lewis writes, "the image of disin-
tegration was redeemed by the absolute value of art, the sense of
nothingness has been transcended, in the second generation, by an
agonizing dedication to life." Both of these solutions, we could say,
were adopted by Pound (although not by Stevens), and Pound, for one,
would certainly not have found any contradiction between them.
Pound straddles, belongs to, two worlds.

But the more important point is this. Lewis describes the picaresque
saint as a figure who moves from a sense of loss to a potential gain (a
form of conversion), who in great part finds his source of meaning in
human companionship and compassion (the sharing of suffering), and
who, perhaps most importantly, is both a saint and a sinner. "The
picaresque saint," says Lewis, "tries to hold in balance..., by the
very contradictions of his character, both the observed truths of con­
temporary experience and the vital aspiration to transcend them." In the work of Ignazio Silone, Lewis points out, the emphasis shifts
from politics to charity, and the same is in great part true in Pound’s
Pisan Cantos. The clearest example of the picaresque saint, Lewis
argues, is found in Graham Greene’s character of the unnamed Mexi­
can priest, the incompetent whiskey-priest who has fathered a child,
who is the last practicing Catholic priest in the now totalitarian state,
who is an outlaw, who is finally imprisoned with common and not-so-
common criminals. It is in prison, says Lewis, that conversion takes
place,

for it is by seeking God and by finding Him in the darkness and stench
of prisons, among the sinners and the rats and the rascals, that the
whiskey-priest arrives at the richest emotion second generation fiction
has to offer: the feeling of companionship, and especially the compan­
ionship of the commonly guilty and wretched.

The parallel, rough as it is, between the priest in Greene’s The Power
and the Glory and Pound in the D.T.C. is instructive. But for Pound, it
is no fiction, no parable. The emotion of the Pisan Cantos is not
recollected in Wordsworthian tranquility. The act of writing is not
practiced, as it is with Stevens, in a comfortable upstairs study, in a
comfortable solitude, late in a quiet night. Pound feared for his life (his
death) not at the hands of metaphor or nature, but from the government
of men.
During the thirties in Italy, as we can judge from his letters, Pound became increasingly isolated. As he heard from fewer and fewer of his friends, as he worked for fewer magazines, his expression becomes gnarled, his tone shrill and more vituperative. During the war, as we all know, vituperation yielded something more poisonous. That poison, however, is all but missing in the *Pisan Cantos*. Pound had passed, as he puts it, "over Lethe." He had lost his bearings in the world, he was "noman," and had no name, he was in neither Italy nor the United States. He was detained, he was removed and set apart. The cage and the camp were for him διχοουσιος, without time and independent of time. They were also his Mt. Taishan, the mountain where the sage retires to breathe "the process."

Here Pound, picaresque saint, discovers that the rabble, whom he had long held in Shakespearian contempt, was not of a piece:

Criminals have no intellectual interests?
"Hey, Snag, wot are the books ov th' bibl'"
"name 'em, etc.
"Latin? I studied latin."

said the nigger murderer to his cage-mate
(ecn't be sure which of the two was speaking)
"c'mon, small fry," sd/ the smaller black lad
to the larger.
"Just playin'" ante mortem no scortum
(that's progress, me yr' " se/call it progress/).

[LXXVI]

"Dawley," "Tom," "Whiteside," and "Romano Ramona," and "Scott," "Salazar," and "Washington," and "Benin," especially "Benin"—these names are just as important to Pound as "William B.Y.," "Dr. Williams," and "dear H.J. (Mr. James, Henry)," or "Demeter" and "Cythera" or any of those which form any of the other countless categories of names. With these people Pound found companionship. From them he received charity, perhaps learned charity. As he relates in the opening Canto:

and Mr Edwards superb green and brown
in ward No 4 a jacent benignity.
of the Baluba mask: "doan you tell no one
I made you that table"
methenamine eases the urine
and the greatest is charity
to be found among those who have not observed
regulations.

[LXXIV]

And a few pages later he writes, "Filial, fraternal affection is the root of humaneness" (LXXIV).

In the *Pisan Cantos* Pound also fulfills another dimension of the picaresque saint. He confesses, "J'ai eu pitié des autres/probablement pas assez, and at moments that suited my own convenience" (LXXVI). He admits, "There can be honesty of mind/will-overwhelming talent" (LXXX). He learns that no one "who has passed a month in the death cells/[can] believe in capital punishment" (LXXXIII). He vows that "nothing matters but the quality/of the affection" (LXXVI). He affirms, "Amo ergo sum" (LXXX), and in so doing rejects the dominant tradition of dualism, the unhealthy bias toward the "objective" and the "scientific," in Western thought since the Greeks and certainly since Descartes.\(^{28}\)

"Senesco sed amo" (LXXX): This is both a personal revelation and a declaration as to how one should live. Pound chooses, in the words of Castaneda, a path with a heart.\(^{29}\) In these Cantos we see him honoring the dead in order to live by that rule. It is, in other words, not so much out of nostalgia as out of a desire to pay homage to what he has loved in his life that Pound composes his hymn to the dead. He recites the litany of restaurants and cafes ("Dieudonné," "La Rupé," and "Dullier") and the litany of artists of his generation ("Jepson" and "Newbolt" and others: "Lordly men are to earth o'ergiven" [LXXIV]).

As a result of this, which is first and foremost an act of love, Pound plots the curve of his own past. Periplum: I am getting old but I love. He establishes his own existence. He makes the Cantos his archives. He gives us (as he certainly could never resist doing, but here the spirit is not Poundian didactic imperative) a bibliography, an inventory of an important part of the twentieth-century past. The bibliography: like the journal, it too has become an important form in the seventies, provid-
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ing a thread to follow through the information explosion (think of Ihab Hassan and his paracriticism, of the *Whole Earth Catalogue* and its countless imitators, of Norman O. Brown's work). Pound was thinking, we can suppose, not only of pinpointing a specific landscape for himself (with accurate dates and names and places, this no Wallace Stevens landscape of the mind), but of the future "archeologist" and historian as well who would want just those objects as *markers*, as raw data. Here again the appropriate parallel in the visual (and plastic) arts is with Rauschenberg, whose work ("combines") of the fifties not only represents a whole (a state of mind, perhaps) but includes, in fact, the object—objects—thus transforming "life" into "art" only by shifting these objects from one context to another (a new text), by leaving them otherwise to stand primary, as fact. In the *Pisan Cantos* fragments of memory are, like Rauschenberg's objects, as hard and as durable and as lasting as the stone carvings of the Santa Maria dei Miracoli, which Pound so highly cherished. They confer a kind of benediction:

and as for the solidity of the white oxen in all this
perhaps only Dr Williams (Bill Carlos)
will understand its importance,
its benediction. He wd/ have put in the cart.

[LXXVIII]

II. THE RESACRALIZATION OF THE LANDSCAPE
THE SPIRIT OF ROMANCE

The celestial and earthly process pervades and is substantial; it is on high and gives light, it comprehends the light and endures.

—Confucius

Pound, with his monetary history of the West, is the Milton Friedman of American poetry. Pound, with his *Guide to Kulchur*, his support of Mussolini, and his life-long devotion to the classics, wherever he found them, is the supreme poet of culture, both pragmatic and imaginative, among America's great Modernists. And so it is with some surprise, a pleasant surprise, that Pound ("I detest the country") turns to the "green world" in the *Pisan Cantos*. Pound, the
poet of culture, becomes the poet of nature as well. So much so, in fact, that at several points these Cantos resemble the greater Romantic lyric of the English Romantics.

If we adopt the Confucian model of man's development, we see that Pound, having looked into his own heart, was now able to turn to the larger world beyond, to be part of the "process." At one with himself, he could now be one with the mysteries of the world. One of the Confucian passages that he translated at the D.T.C. describes this very shift in perspective:

He who possesses this sincerity does not lull himself to somnolence perfecting himself with egocentric aim, but he has a further efficiency in perfecting something outside himself.

Fulfilling himself he attains full manhood, perfecting things outside himself he attains knowledge.

The inborn nature begets this activity naturally, this looking straight into oneself and thence acting. These two activities constitute the process which unites outer and inner, object and subject, and thence constitutes a harmony with the seasons of earth and heaven.32

For Pound the goal now becomes the union of inner and outer, and the outer is the entire system of the natural world, "the seasons of earth and heaven," and not, as it is for Stevens, the single object, the "thing itself."

For Pound the natural landscape offered permanence and continuity. He believed that it is nature that ultimately remains (today, of course, in our artificial landscape of freeways and state camping grounds, we know that nature's permanence is threatened). He believed that the beauty of nature could be found everywhere, and that this beauty could save him; as he remarks throughout the Pisan Cantos, "the clouds near to Pisa/are as good as any in Italy" (LXXVI). But more importantly, Pound understood man's essential dependence upon the land, his origins in the land: "man, earth : two halves of the tally" (LXXXII). He called upon the natural world for protection ("o lynx, guard my vineyard" [LXXIX]). In the D.T.C. it was nature—the green lizard, the butterfly, the wasp building her nest, the ant's forefoot—which sustained him, and more, fulfilled him:
in about 1/2 a day she has made her adobe
(la vespa) the tiny mud-flask
and that day I wrote no further.

[100]
The quiet miracle of the wasp constructing an object of "culture" (the adobe) in and out of the "natural" (the mud) eases the need for Pound to make his own shelter through the act of writing; the natural and the cultural, he realizes as witness to this event, can be, could be, are, not separate and distinct, but two aspects of the same reality.

When man is concerned only with man, Pound wrote in _The Spirit of Romance_, he "forgets the whole and the flowing." Never a humanist, Pound looked to the green world for centering and balancing. The world, he knew, was not man's world, but rather man was part of the world:

The ant's a centaur in his dragon world.
Pull down thy vanity, it is not man
Made courage, or made order, or made grace,
Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down.
Learn of the green world what can be thy place
In scaled invention or true artistry,
Pull down thy vanity,

Paquin pull down!
The green casque has outdone your elegance.

[100]
But Pound's view of the green world is more profound and more magical and more visionary than this. "Wisdom lies next thee, / simply, past metaphor," he writes of Terra (LXXXII); and "Arum vult nemus" (LXXVIII): the grove needs an altar. It is just this altar which he discovers (or better, gives) in the _Pisan Cantos_. What is an altar? An icon, a cultural artifact, and culture, Pound believed, must again be formed and called upon to serve nature. Among other things (and he himself is included), what he offers to the green world, what he makes new, is the mythology of Greece and Rome. And this is a lesson profoundly important for our time. Since the seventeenth century, the emphasis of Western science on "objectivity" has worked to sever
man from nature, allowed man to regard nature as dead, as a mere thing and a lifeless object, and thus sanctioned the rape of the earth. The emphasis on methodology, reason, and logic in the wake of Descartes and Bacon has discredited other forms of awareness, among them, the intuitive and the imaginative.

As Roszak points out, the psychological mode is different in the two cases:

Objectivity involves a breaking off of personal contact between observer and observed; there is an act of psychic contradiction back and away from what is studied for the sake of a sharp, undistracted focus. In contrast, moral unselfishness means to identify with the other, to reach out and embrace and feel with. Far from being a contraction of the self, here we have expansion, a profoundly personal activity of the soul. At its warmest and more complete, this expansive relationship of self to other becomes love, and issues forth gracefully in compassion, sacrifice, magnanimity. And these, not any sort of rational calibration or intellectual precision, are the secret of peace and joyous community. These alone provide a balance to the murdering furies of the political arena.

In the first case, there is a distancing of the self from the other; the relationship is clinical and cold, and the “other” is reduced to the status of the object. In the second, the self and the other move toward each other; the relationship is ethical and “warm.” As Roszak traces the curve of Western intellectual history, he observes that with the triumph of the attitude of objectivity, there is a progressive “thickening of the world’s substance,” ending in the totally desacralized world of the twentieth century. “What becomes of a world purged of its sacramental capacities?” he asks. “It dies the death of the spirit,” he answers, and concludes that “beauty cut loose of its sacramental base is a decadent pleasure and a vulnerable one.” For a solution to our problem Roszak turns to the English Romantics for a politics of eternity, but he could have turned to Pound as well. For Pound too believed that “we have lost the radiant world where one thought cuts through another with clean edges, a world of moving energies.”

Kenner accuses Pound of indulging in several of the early Cantos in “a kaleidoscope of fancies, visions, glimpses, flickering wonders that merge into postwar reality.” In the Pisan Cantos there are also
visions and glimpses and flickering wonders but here it is no indulgence. For Pound, the earth is feminine, the earth is mother, and it is also alive with her goddesses. The natural and the mythical merge, become interchangeable, identical. The natural and the mythological here are different aspects of the same reality; the name of the one calls the other. Metaphor collapses to unity, identity; identity resonates with meaning and metaphor. The wind is part of the process, the wind is Zephyrus, Zephyrus is thus part of the process. Tellus is the divinity of earth, nature is another name for divinity. The familiar landscape is populated with goddesses transformed, tree nymphs, the hamadryas, who were changed into poplar trees while mourning their brother Phaethon: the nymph and the tree are one. The earth is both mother and lover, she is Ἐγκόσια γενε, Μήτηρ ἔσσει and Demeter, the goddess of fruitfulness and harvest:

bel seno (in rimas escarsas, vide sopra)
2 mountains with the Arno, I suppose, flowing between
them so kissed the earth after sleeping on concrete

bel seno Δήμητρης copulatrix
thy furrow.

[LXXVII]

This passage, and the Pisan Cantos as a whole, is particularly interesting because it illustrates how Pound has merged the two paths to wholeness—the ascetic and the chivalric—which he had outlined many years earlier in The Spirit of Romance. In that book he had championed the chivalric path (exemplified by the troubadour who seeks wholeness through sex, through union with his opposite, woman) rather than that of the ascetic (exemplified by the monk who, Pound had said dryly, achieved wholeness, “at infinite trouble and expense,” through contemplation). Here, in Pisa, through the force of a Coleridgean imagination, he keeps the path of the troubadour open (Stevens, of course, had never recognized its existence, and Williams never really had another) while at the same time following the contemplative path of the ascetic. The system is complete; in the Pisan Cantos Pound practices a kind of ecology of ideas. The metaphor is organic; mind works on matter. His consciousness is what he called in The Spirit of Romance, “germinal”:
Their thoughts [those who possess a "germinal" consciousness] are in them as the thought of the tree is in the seed, or in the grass, or the grain, or the blossom. And these minds are the more poetic, and they affect mind about them, and transmute it as the seed the earth. And this latter sort of mind is close on the vital universe; and the strength of the Greek beauty rests in this, that it is ever at the interpretation of this vital universe, by its signs of gods and godly attendants and orads.\textsuperscript{40}

In the \textit{Pisan Cantos} the act of contemplation (or better, state of contemplation) cannot be separated from the power of woman, the feminine; the one (each one) makes the other possible. We remember that of the three modes of thought—cognition, meditation, and contemplation—that Pound had identified, the last was of the highest order, its truth verifiable by experience. "In the first," he wrote in \textit{Guide to Kulchur}, "the mind flits aimlessly about the object, in the second it circles about it in a methodical manner, in the third it is unified with the object."\textsuperscript{41} Unified with the object: woman.

But the earth is for Pound more than his lover, she is his savior. Pound loses himself in order to gain his self, a new self:

\begin{verbatim}
man, earth : two halves of the tally
but I will come out of this knowing no one
neither they me
connubium terrae ἐφατα πόσις ἐμός
ΧΘΩΝΙΟΣ, mysterium
fluid ΧΘΟΝΟΣ o’erflowed me
lay in the fluid ΧΘΟΝΟΣ
that lie
under the air’s solidity
drunk with 'ΙΧΩΡ of ΧΘΟΝΙΟΣ
fluid ΧΘΟΝΟΣ, strong as the undertow
of the wave receding

[LXXXII]
\end{verbatim}

Death by water? yes, but as in Eliot’s "The Waste Land," the water is a primal fluid, it returns one to the source. This is one of the reasons, we can suppose, that the sage (as Confucius, and after him, Pound, observed) is associated with water. "The humane man has amity with the hills," writes Pound in Canto LXXIII, and he is that humane man. But the "sage / delighteth in water," and he is that too.
The earth for Pound is magical and alive with power. And in the *Pisan Cantos* he is able, finally, to draw on this power. He becomes a shaman; the eucalyptus pip and the texts of Confucius are his allies. Know thyself: that was the first step, to recognize and confess his lack of compassion for others, to open his heart. The second step was to honor and embrace a power larger than his, an inhuman power, the other world. The third step is more aptly termed a condition, a state of mind. It is repeated throughout the *Pisan Cantos*:

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“Non combattere’” said Giovanna,
meaning: don’t work so hard.
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[LXXVI]

Meaning, as Mencius had instructed: “Let not the mind forget its work, but let there be no assisting the growth of nature.” Meaning, the ease of mind, which Stevens, we remember, also seeks in his last book of poems. It is that ease of mind, the arrest of the Western habit of categorizing and dividing, that allows the unexpected to happen, that permits multiplication of possibilities. And the unexpected is—what? It is itself that inexplicable state of mind (“States of mind are inexplicable to us.” [LXXVI]) where different worlds, alternative realities, interpass and penetrate. Pound has learned how to call up the spirits of both realms—the natural and the mythical—when he needs them, and this we must take literally, as he did.

In one of the most lyrical passages in the *Pisan Cantos* he calls upon the lynx not only to protect his vines but to keep Dionysus running in his veins. As we see in the closing lines of Canto LXXIX, the lynx and Aphrodite are two forms of the same power; he can pass from one to the other without visible (logical) transition:

```
O lynx guard my vineyard
As the grape swells under vine leaf
This Goddess was born of sea-foam
She is lighter than air under Hesperus
dεῦνα εἶ, Κύθηρα
terrible in resistance
Κόρη καὶ Δήλω καὶ Μαῖα
trine as praeludio
```
Aphrodite is only one of the many goddesses he summons. The names are for him charms. This he had asserted long before. In *The Spirit of Romance* he had observed that "alchemy and mystical philosophy interpenetrate each other, and that feminine names were used as charms or equations in alchemy"; and that furthermore, "anyone who has in any degree the faculty of vision will know that the so-called personifications are real and not artificial."

Knowing that such things are real and not just figures of speech—this is the spirit of romance. The names and the names behind the names flood these Cantos: Persephone and Pallas Athena and Cytherea and Maya and Aphrodite and the Heliads and Cassandra. In Canto LXXXI the goddess goes unnamed but her existence is no less concrete for that:

> Ed ascoltando al leggier mormorio
> there came new subtlety of eyes into my tent,
> whether of spirit or hypostasis,
> but what the blindfold hides
> or at carneval
> nor any pair showed anger
> Saw but the eyes and stance between the eyes,
> colour, diastasis,
> careless or unaware it had not the
> whole tent's room
> nor was place for full *Eidōzos*
> interpass, penetrate
> casting but shade beyond the other lights
> sky's clear
night's sea
green of the mountain pool
shone from the unmasked eyes in half-mask's space.

[LXXXI]
The eyes of the goddess(es) enter his tent; no metaphor: "I assert," he had said in Guide to Kulchur, "that the Gods exist." Invisible, they yet cast shadows; translucent, they show him the "clear" and "green" landscape of the natural world.

This point is not Εὐδῶξ, the full revelation, but in the last of the Pisan Cantos there is a final transference. Those eyes become his eyes, he sees the magical/natural world with the eyes of that world. Recall the first of the Pisan Cantos where Pound speaks of the eye containing nature, but only in simile; when that was achieved it would be time to go:

night green of his pupil, as grape flesh and sea wave
undying luminous and translucent

Est consummatum, Ite.

[LXXIV]
And in the next to the last Canto, in pellucid, simple lines that are almost overlooked, Pound can write:

A fat moon rises lop-sided over the mountain
The eyes, this time my world,
But pass and look from mine
between my lids
sea, sky, and pool
alternate
pool, sky, sea.

[LXXXIII]
This is not the empyrean of pure light, the mystic ecstasy which Dante felt looking at Beatrice (which Pound took as a model), but it is a union with the magical other. This is Pound's point of stillness and peace. Now, "in the drenched tent there is quiet / sered eyes are at rest":

or
as he was standing below the altars
of the spirits of rain.

[LXXXIII]

In the *Pisan Cantos* Pound succeeds in resacralizing the landscape for us as well as himself, and "out of all this beauty," even in Pisa, in spite of Pisa, because of Pisa, "something," he believes, "must come" (LXXIV).

III. ETHNO-UTOPIA

My *Paradiso* will have no St Dominic or Augustine, but it will be a *Paradiso* just the same, moving toward final coherence. I'm getting at the building of the City, that whole tradition. Augustine, he don't amount to a great deal. —Pound, 1953

In the *Pisan Cantos* the reinvestment (as in "religious vestments") of the landscape with a living, sexual dimension, or to put it another way, the reunion of the natural with the magical and mythological (the super-natural) is analogous to the equally important fusion of the historical with the mythical. As William Irwin Thompson has deftly pointed out, myth is the detritus of history. Just as the goddesses exist and are to be believed, so myth contains truths which are not merely metaphorical but real, historical. It was Pound, not Eliot, who understood what the discoveries in the then-new field of anthropology meant. Eliot accepted the parables of Western culture (the journey to the Perilous Chapel to see the Fisher-King) as convenient metaphor to point to the contemporary Western wasteland. But Pound knew, as he wrote in the *Pisan Cantos*, that Homer had been a medic, that that ancient journey had been based on rock-real experience. And if that were so, then he could conclude that the dreams of utopian cities and civilizations could also have been based on the historical record.

In the *Pisan Cantos* Pound resacralizes the landscape, and her goddesses bring him peace. Only with such a personal equilibrium, Confucius had taught, could a man bring amelioration to the state. And for Pound, if those luminous eyes deliver peace, it is the city which gives inspiration. If the first represents the feminine principle of acceptance and union, the second does not so much represent the masculine
principle of action (the hero constructing his civilization's meaning in monument), as it incorporates the two. In the *Pisan Cantos* Pound, like Confucius, his master and ally, is a sage, a wise old man. It is his mission to reinvent the imaginary city, to dream the city anew, to resurrect an ideal. Years before, he had asked in his *Guide to Kulchur* if a modern Eleusis was "possible in the wilds of a man's mind only." In the *Pisan Cantos* he answers yes.

Of the four great American Moderns, Pound was the only poet to believe in what we now call ethnopoetics—the coupling of anthropology and poetry, the opening up of other, nonwestern cultural traditions—both as method and metaphor. In the *Pisan Cantos* Pound was fighting not only for his own personal survival, but for the survival of the Western world as well. For survival, he knew that the industrial West had to turn to cultures which were based on values other than that of profit, and ideals other than that of the economy of abundance with its concomitant disposable and interchangeable objects, its scorn of both masterpiece and craft. He turned to Provence and to Greece, but more significantly he turned to China, and Africa, and even, occasionally, to the American Algonquin.

Thus, to dwell on Pound as exile, as directing his major effort toward breaking the English tradition, represented by the pentameter, is to belittle his achievement. Pound was not so much an exile as he was a citizen of the world. He had defended himself against that charge; as he had written to Harriet Monroe in 1914, "Are you going to call people foreigners the minute they care enough about their art to travel in order to perfect it?" Pound did believe in kulchur, in what he called a "vortex," in what his favorite anthropologist, Froebenius, called "paideuma," but he was not foolish enough, fortunately he was not provincial enough, to confuse this with nationality and the nation-state.

In the *Pisan Cantos*, achieving wholeness, attaining that point which I have called the still point, has multiple meanings. It not only refers to the personal state of peace which Pound experiences and which is, importantly, both psychological and social; these two aspects are interrelated by the process of his integrating himself into the human ("criminal") community, and here the relationship of the self to the social unit is an ethical one. But, the still point also refers to the quiet
union of Pound with the natural world ("and that day I wrote no further" [LXXXIII]), and here the relationship of the self to the other is a sacramental one. And the still point also refers to that ideal of human civilization which Pound reincarnates for himself, in both his heart and his mind, and for us in the living text of the poem. Here the relationship of the self to the ideal is a creative one.

While Pound does not provide us with a blueprint for utopia, we can conclude that for him the perfect society would be a completely integrated "pure" culture which drew on its own traditions for its foundation, as he presumably believed China had. Having lost this, the commercial West (dating from the invention of the institution of banking), he believed, had no other choice but to embrace cultural pluralism. This presents us with a problem, for the goal and the method are contradictory. In the Pisan Cantos, Pound is interested above all in opening up and bringing together as many different domains as possible—the domain of affection, the domain of the magical, the domain of alternative traditions—and yet the ultimate ideal is that of a closed and static society. Although this contradiction cannot be resolved in the real and historical world (history implies change, change in great part comes from the collision of cultures), Pound attempts to resolve it through art.

"To build the city of Dioce whose terraces are the colours of stars" (LXXIV), a heavenly city on earth, that is the goal. The city of Dioce was Persian but the model Pound appeals to is African:

4 times was the city rebuilded, Hooo Fasa  
Gassir, Hooo Fasa  dell' Italia tradita  
now in the mind indestructible, Gassir, Hooo Fasa,  
With the four giants at the four corners  
and four gates mid-wall Hooo Fasa  
and a terrace the colour of stars.

[LXXIV]

The promise of Gassir's city offers a promise to Italy:

I believe in the resurrection of Italy  
4 times to the song of Gassir  
now in the mind indestructible.

[LXXIV]
Pound is not here resurrecting myth (Gassir and the African city) so as to make history possible (the triumph of Italy). Rather he is resurrecting history so as to make the myth of Italy’s future possible. The act is an imaginative one, a pure one:

funge la purezza,
and that certain images be formed in the mind
to remain there
formato locho.

This is another way of saying that the word must be made perfect (‘‘cheng ming’’), that language (and literature) constitute the building blocks of civilization. And as the feminine principle is at the root of nature, so it is at the base of the legend of Gassir’s lute, for Wagadu is woman. It is woman that man must find again, as we see in the following account of the legend, which, of course, Pound was familiar with:

Four times Wagadu stood there in all her splendour, four times Wagadu disappeared and was lost to human sight: once through vanity, once through falsehood, once through greed, and once through dissen­sion. Four times Wagadu changed her name. First she was called Dierra, then Agada, then Ganna, then Silla. Four times she turned her face. Once to the north, once to the west, once to the east, and once to the south. For Wagadu, whenever men have seen her, has always had four gates: one to the north, one to the west, one to the east, and one to the south. These are the directions whence the strength of Wagadu comes, the strength in which she endures no matter whether she be built of stone, wood, or earth, or lives but as a shadow in the mind and longing of her children. For really, Wagadu is not of stone, not of wood, not of earth. Wagadu is the strength which lives in the hearts of men and is sometimes visible because eyes see her and ears hear the clash of swords and ring of shields, and is sometimes invisible because the indomitability of men has overtired her, so that she sleeps. Sleep came to Wagadu for the first time through vanity, for the second time through falsehood, for the third time through greed, and for the fourth time through dissen­sion. Should Wagadu ever be found for the fifth time, she will live again, so forcefully that vanity, falsehood, greed and dissen­sion will never be able to harm her.

Hooh! Dierra, Agada, Ganna, Silla! Hooh! Fasa!
The promise: if found a fifth time, Wagadu "will never be lost again."

Deliverance: in the *Pisan Cantos* the song is "now in the mind indestructible" (LXXIV).

What did Pound believe in, Eliot has asked. "I believe," he answered, "the *Ta Hio*." What Confucius offered him was a "responsible" way of life: Confucius thinks, as Pound put it, "for the whole social order," something which both Greek and Christian thought did not do. Thus for Pound poetry is tied to "the whole social order," to politics and to economics and to ethics, and the link is a direct, not an indirect, one; as he wrote, for example, to René Taupin in 1928, "Je viens de donner un nouveau version du *Ta Hio* de Confucius, parce que j'y trouve des formulations d'idées qui me paraissent utile pour civiliser l'Amérique (tentatif)." This belief that the province of poetry is "the whole social order" is Pound's great strength, his source of optimism, and one of his major contributions. We have him to thank for his persistent affirmation throughout the first half of the twentieth century, a period in Western history preoccupied with its "heap of broken images," of the possibility of a "new sacred book of the arts," as Yeats called it. A sacred book which would heal the splits in culture, remove, in effect, the banks from the position of power and place the artists in the position of authority.

Pound, all his life, assumed a role of leadership and wrote from a position of confidence and authority. His tone is vigorous and bracing as well as inspiring. His style embodies that kind of idea which, as he describes it, is "intended to 'go into action', or to guide action and serve us as rules (and/or) measures of conduct." What is the other kind of idea? It is that which exists and/or is, Pound says, "discussed in a species of vacuum," which is as it were a toy "of the intellect." It is to this second category of ideas that we could assign Stevens' notion of a supreme fiction, and the contrast between his idea of a supreme fiction and Pound's hopes and beliefs is a telling one.

For Stevens, Western culture had broken and could not be made new. The only strategy was to hold two opposing and irreconcilable ideas in the mind at once. "The final belief," Stevens had written, "is to believe in a fiction, which you know to be a fiction, there being
nothing else. ’’55 The strategy was, in other words, solely an individual matter and could not, did not, include society, the community. But for Pound the ‘‘fiction’’ (whether it was Wagadu or the goddesses or the companionship of men) was not a fiction but real. And the ‘‘fiction’’ involved not just the healing (the state of wholeness) of the individual but the dream of an integrated, healthy social order and an harmonious relationship between these two systems (man and society) and that of the cosmos as well, where the cosmos is equivalent to the mysteries. ‘‘Our time,’’ Pound had written, ‘‘has overshadowed the mysteries by an overemphasis on the individual.’’56

The ‘‘unwobbling pivot’’ is not only the metaphor for, but also the actual point of, balance of all these systems both together and separately. ‘‘The master man finds the center and does not waver,’’ Pound translated Confucius, and that ‘‘axis in the center is the great root of the universe.’’57 The wisdom of the Pisan Cantos is the wisdom of one wise old man, Pound, who himself understands that we must listen to the wisdom of the old, internalize the old, and not fall prey to the tradition of the new (which is an economics of consumption and waste on all levels). ‘‘Philosophy is not for young men’’ (LXXIV), Pound wrote early in the Pisan Cantos. This is another way of saying that wisdom is reserved for, is the privilege of, the old. And as Simone de Beauvoir points out, the important thing to understand is that the status of the old is ‘‘never won but always granted.’’58

15. See Hugh Kenner's discussion of the difference between the "glimpse" and the "vision" in *The Pound Era*, pp. 69-72, 173-91.
22. Stock, *Reading the Cantos*, p. 78.
28. As Pound wrote in a letter to Katue Kitasono on November 15, 1940 (*Selected Letters of Ezra Pound*, p. 347): "Ideogram is essential to the exposition of certain kinds of thought. Greek philosophy was mostly a mere splitting, an impoverishment of understanding, though it ultimately led to development of particular sciences."
29. See the "novels" of Carlos Castaneda.
98  At Last, the Real Distinguished Thing


42. This is a gesture from the fourth dimension: “The fourth; the dimension of stillness. / And the power over wild beasts” (XLIX).


44. *Guide to Kulchur*, p. 77.

45. Interview at St. Elizabeth Hospital, July 17, 1953; quoted by Guy Davenport, “Pound and Frobenius,” in *Motive and Method in the Cantos of Ezra Pound*, p. 52.


48. Jerome Rothenberg, whose influential anthology *Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia, and Oceania* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968) first brought into sharp focus the likeness of contemporary oral poetry to “primitive” poetries, has repeatedly affirmed the continuities of the oral tradition, and each time he has emphasized (1) that the golden spool (as André Breton called it) has spun a thread traversing Pound’s idea of the “image,” (2) his regard for Worringer’s account of the primitive in art, and (3) his restoration of the oral impulse as the ground of poetry. The term “ethnopoetics” was coined by Rothenberg and Dennis Tedlock in the first number of the journal *Alcheringa* (Fall 1970), which they coedited; in that issue they quote from Ezra Pound’s *Guide to Kulchur* (p. 5). In his 1973 interview with William Spanos published in the Spring 1975 issue of *Boundary 2* (the entire issue is devoted to contemporary oral poetry), Rothenberg again pays homage to Pound’s work, as well as that of Stein, Williams, Cummings, Duchamp, the Dadaists, the Surrealists, the Objectivists, and so on, as “germinal” for his own generation, but regrets Pound’s “reluctance to follow through on the implications of his own poetic practice” (p. 521). But Rothenberg’s reservations mostly center on the implications and practice of New Criticism, which has been based on the Eliot-Pound nexus in literary criticism.


58. *The Coming of Age*, p. 129.