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'BARRED LIGHTS, GREAT FLARES, NEW FORM'; A STUDY OF 'A DRAFT
OF XXX CANTOS' OF EZRA POUND.

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER FOR THE
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to identify the presence of unity in the initial stages of the development of Ezra Pound's Cantos. The analysis focuses largely upon the 'Three Poetry Cantos' (1917), that Pound later rejected from the opening of the epic, and 'A draft of XXX Cantos' (1930), that now forms the starting point of the poem. The reason for choosing this section in the development of the epic was that these initial cantos illustrate stages of transition in the poem, highlighting Pound's struggle to locate both a suitable epic voice and a relevant poetic form.

As such, Chapter One serves as an exegesis of the 'Three Poetry Cantos', examining how Pound begins the epic by evoking the voice of Browning's nineteenth century epic poem Sordello. These three rejected cantos then dramatize the quest for a new narrative structure that was flexible enough to accommodate the complexities of contemporary experience. The three cantos chart the progression of the poem through epic time as Pound replaces the persona of Sordello as a representative epic voice with that of Odysseus, advancing the Cantos to the point at which they now begin in canto I.

The following Chapters Two to Nine trace the complex and fragmented epic journey that Pound undertakes through history and myth, assessing the way in which unity and coherence is established between and within cantos that superficially appear to lack order and continuity. The thesis strives to celebrate the positive achievements that Pound makes in generating a new kind of poetic order that transcends the need for surface continuity.

DECLARATION

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INTRODUCTION

'THE THREE POETRY CANTOS' AND 'A DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS'

Oh, we have worlds enough, and brave *decors*,
And from these like we guess a soul of man
And build him full of aery populations.
Mantegna a sterner line, and the new world about us:
Barred lights, great flares, new form, Picasso or Lewis.
['Three Cantos I:121]

The Cantos could be viewed as being a poem that is devoid of unity, where not only individual cantos, but individual lines within the cantos appear disjointed and incoherent, a condition that questions the validity of the poem as a whole. However, the fragmented structure of the poem, rather than being a failure, offers the reader significant challenges that forces a reinterpretation of the concept of unity and continuity. Indeed, as the poem itself attests, the systematic accumulation of material drawn from innumerable historical and literary sources combine to generate a fragmented recreation of modern experience, a matrix for a future epic verse where past and present collide in an intellectual and sensual miasma. The structure, with its inherent ambiguities and contradictions, serves as a representational rendering of the complexities of contemporary experience, as the past is employed to highlight the crisis of the present. In this sense, both the rejected 'Three Poetry Cantos' and 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' can be seen to represent Pound's struggle to locate a new direction in poetry, and a new and relevant voice for the

expression of the quest to realistically capture the diversity of the modern age.

In both 'A Draft Of XXX Cantos' (1930) and the initial three cantos published in the Poetry magazine in June, July and August of 1917 Pound can clearly be seen to be searching for a "new form" for an epic poem that could express "the new world about us". As such, from the very outset of the Cantos, it is evident that the location of a relevant structure was of prime importance to the poet, as it had to be flexible enough to accommodate the "aery populations", the complexities of the present and the influence of the past, within a coherent whole. Indeed, the question of coherence is one that has haunted the Cantos from the beginning, with Pound himself often fuelling the debate about the success or failure of this quest for a new form, as statements such as those made in a letter to Felix E. Schelling in 1922 display;

The first 11 cantos are preparation of the palette. I *have to* get down all the colours or elements I want for the poem. Some perhaps too enigmatically and abbreviatedly. I hope, heaven help me, to bring them into some sort of design and architecture later.'

In the reading of the initial section of the Cantos that follows, it emerges that, whilst the poem does not follow what could be termed as conventional epic order in the mould of the other epics that Pound alludes to, those of Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Dante and Browning for example, there is a degree of "design and architecture" that gives the poem coherence and order in a new and vibrant way. These cantos introduce the process, evident throughout the Cantos, where Pound develops narrative strands and establishes themes only to have them

apparently dissolve, to be replaced by new narratives and new themes as the flow of the poem dictates.

The reference in 'Three Cantos I' to the process of building, and to "design and architecture" in Pound's letter to Schelling, is, in a sense, pertinent to the structure of the Cantos as expressed in both the 'Three Poetry Cantos' and 'A Draft of XXX Cantos'. As such, the method that Pound adopts in the initial stages of the evolution of the epic is to "build" the individual cantos out of fragments of "colours or elements" drawn from a myriad of sources. These elements are then invested with an enhanced meaning that is derived from their juxtaposition with other fragments. This is a technique that is evident in canto VI of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', where Pound weaves together elements that inform the whole of the epic, from its origins in Greek mythology with Odysseus, that recalls canto I, and references to Sordello that evoke the rejected 'Three Cantos I', to the story of Sordello's lover Cunizza da Romano, whose liberating influence recurs in canto XXIX, in the 'Pisan Cantos LXXIV-LXXXIV' (1948) and in 'Section: Rock-Drill De Los Cantares LXXXV-XCV' (1955).

Specifically, canto VI is 'constructed' out of the merging of several poetically charged fragments that draw history and myth together, displaying that, out of the divergent fragments of poetic meaning, a new unity and coherence is created. Further, with the image strands from which the canto is formed coming to recall past cantos and anticipate future ones, it serves as a locus of unity within the Cantos as a whole. This exemplifies the structural method that Pound adopts throughout, as he introduces themes and images into the poem that are

then abandoned, only to be returned to at a later stage in the development of the narrative. This can be seen in canto VI, where Pound initially introduces Cunizza da Romano as a liberator of captives;

Cunizza, da Romano,
That freed her slaves on a Wednesday
Masnatas et servos, witness
Picus de Farinatis
and Don Elinus and Don Lipus
 sons of Farinato de' Farinati
"free of person, free of will
"free to buy, witness, sell, testate."
[VI:23]

The implication of this fragment is that, through her act of selflessness, Cunizza is herself liberated, becoming "free of person, free of will". She is purged of her wrongs, primarily associated with her adultery with Sordello, through the physical act of liberating others. As such, the fragmentary rendering of Cunizza serves, in the initial cantos of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' as a presentation of a moral highpoint in the development of the narrative that is set aside as Pound moves, in canto VII, to chart the condition of the living dead, "The old men's voices, beneath the columns of false marble" (VII:24) analysed in Chapter Two. However, with the crisis of the 'Pisan Cantos' for example, it is made explicit that Cunizza, as a representation of liberty, has not been forgotten but simply stored in the memory to be relocated later, as Pound displays in canto LXXIV;

tira libeccio
now Genji at Suma , tira libeccio
 as the winds veer and the raft is driven
 and the voices ,Tiro, Alcmena
 with you is Europa nec casta Pasiphae
 Eurus, Apeliota as the winds veer in periplum
Io son la luna. Cunizza
 as the winds veer in periplum.
[LXXVI:457]

Here, as the narrative merges history with present fact, the verse is dominated by Pound's imprisonment in the American Army Disciplinary Training Centre at Pisa. At this critical moment, the memory of Cunizza as evoked in canto VI is recalled as a counterpoint to his own experience of captivity in a moving expression of the desire for creative freedom. The passage communicates the quest to transcend the physical barriers of the cell and to achieve the liberation of the "Apeliota", the East winds. The vision of Cunizza as liberator, established early in the "design" of the poem, is thus reinterpreted in the later canto, but the initial detail of her actions can now be omitted as the statement is condensed and the poetic urgency increased. In this sense, in the imaginative world of the Cantos as a whole, Cunizza is transformed into a representation of a unifying image strand that brings a tangible note of coherence to the two diverse sections of the poem. With this technique of resurrecting and reintroducing characters and images previously abandoned to the epic memory centre, an accumulative "design" is achieved through the presence of the unifying mind of the poet, the perceiver of epic reality.

Indeed, this technique of condensing and reinterpreting material throughout the evolution of the Cantos exemplifies one of the key methods that Pound adopts in the quest for a new kind of coherence in the poem as a whole. However, in both 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', and in the 'Three Poetry Cantos' that preceded, Pound can be seen to be the searching for a more explicit form of epic unity. In these cantos, Pound draws together myth and history, past and present, in an attempt to forge a comprehensive statement that communicates the condition of contemporary civilization. As such,

whilst the cantos are "built" from the accumulation of fragments, they do strive for the expression of order as Pound attempts to create the suggestion that the individual cantos flow into each other to form a coherent whole. This is most evident, for example, in the 'Malatesta Cantos' VIII-XI where an explicit unity, and a degree of surface continuity, is generated around the heroic figure of Sigismundo Malatesta. In other places too, where this degree of continuity is less evident, Pound can often be seen to include a bridge between two cantos, for example as in cantos II and III where an implied unity is suggested though the concluding of canto II with the ambiguous conjunction "And..." (10), there is little actual thematic progression into canto III. Specifically, canto II investigates the concept of metamorphosis, of rejuvenating change amid the flux of existence, whilst canto III shifts from autobiography to an analysis of the trials of El Cid to display the reductive processes of cultural and intellectual decay in the present. As such, Pound creates a real sense of fragmenting unity that mirrors the dissolution of order in contemporary experience in a dramatically short space of time.

The reference to the theme of metamorphosis, as developed in canto II, is significant to the progression of the poem as a whole, as the structure of the Cantos is one that directly embodies the concept of constant change. Specifically, in canto II, Pound evokes the energy inherent in the motion of the sea, aligning this environment with the ceaseless process of metamorphosis that is evident in both the historical and the creative realms. As the Cantos develop, it becomes clear that the sea plays a central role in the revelation of meaning, and unity is emphasized through an evolving perception of the sea, from the opening image of canto II with "So-shu churned in the sea" (II:6),

to the mythically charged central allusion to the "sinews of Poseidon" (II:9), and concluding in the tranquil vision of the "Sea-fowl stretching wing-joints" (II:10). The canto creates a perception of the potentials inherent within this medium that is then employed to inform the rest of the poem, with Pound using references to the sea throughout 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' and the poem as a whole as both a signifier of the potentials of metamorphosis and a unifier of meaning.

This raises the distinction that the Cantos make between unity and continuity. In this sense, following Pound's evaluation of the centrality of the sea as an image of flux and fusion that mirrors the processes of the poem, this recognition is then allowed to dissolve into the memory centre of the poem as other more urgent themes arise. Continuity is abandoned as the impulse to fragmentation becomes dominant. However, the image of the sea recurs as an insistent whisper that urges the narrative forward, for example in canto V as the "Sea-change, a grey in water" (V:18), in canto VII as the "Ear, ear for the sea-surge (VII:24) and in canto XVII as "the rock sea-worn" (XVII:77). It is significant that these sustained references are universally hyphenated, implying the merging and unifying property of the sea as it joins with other elements and actions. The thematic implications of these cantos are different, but unity is created through the recurring presence of the sea, as continuity is replaced by an organic rather than a linear flow of narrative progression. In these terms, Pound could be seen to be responding to a recognition made by the aesthetic philosopher and essayist T.E. Hulme who stated in the essay 'Humanism and the Religious Attitude' what could be seen to be a blueprint for Pound's method in the Cantos;

One of the main achievements of the nineteenth century was the elaboration and universal application of the principle of *continuity*. The destruction of this conception in, on the contrary, an urgent necessity of the present.'

Hulme is a figure who Pound alludes to with affection throughout the Cantos, notably in canto XVI as "ole T.E.H" (XVI:71). He emerges as a figure who represents clarity of thought in the poem, one who offered great potential but was destroyed by what Pound identifies as the evil of the First World War in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos'. In the essay, Hulme analyses the pervasive sense of urgency that was evident in art in the early decades of the twentieth century, an urgency that was to increasingly consume the Cantos themselves, resulting in the intense condensation of the narrative that Pound generates with such effect. Specifically, Pound, like Hulme, was aware of the need to make art representative of reality, and the reality of the present as presented in the poem is one of increased fragmentation and complexity. Therefore, if art is to be representational, the aesthetic structure must mirror this external reality. However, whilst this urgency infuses the poem with a heightened poetic intensity, it could also be seen to result in a degree of obscurity, an obscurity that could be interpreted as incoherence.

Pound's sustained deployment of recurring unifying image strands, for example those associated with the sea or implied by the repetition of characters such as Cunizza da Romana, go some way to offset this problem, allowing for the creation of poetic and epic order whilst avoiding what Hulme saw as the nineteenth century conception of continuity. Further, it could be argued that it was Pound's desire to

'T.E. Hulme: Speculations: 1924: 3.

avoid this limiting impulse that led him to reject the 'Three Poetry Cantos' when he published the initial 'Draft of XVI Cantos' in 1924. Specifically, in 'Three Cantos I', as is analysed in some detail in Chapter One, Pound began his epic with a debate with Browning regarding the validity of *Sordello* as a suitable epic personage, alluding to Browning's nineteenth century epic of that name and questioning the relevance of Browning's methods in the present, as the following passage suggests,

So you worked out new form, the meditative,
Semi-dramatic, semi-epic story,
And we will say: What's left for me to do?
Whom shall I conjure up; who's my *Sordello*,
My pre-Daun Chaucer, pre-Boccaccio,
As you have done pre-Dante?

['Three Cantos I':117]

This statement, representing Pound's struggle to locate a suitable poetic voice for the development of the epic in the twentieth century, dramatizes the desire to progress beyond the "meditative", the "semi-epic story" that relies upon an explicitly linear narrative, the nineteenth century principle of continuity that defined Browning's approach. The canto analyses Pound's recognition of the need to reject Browning's epic model and to work out, as Browning himself did in *Sordello*, a "new form" for the epic, one that contained the past but also illuminated the present.

As a representation of the quest for both a new and relevant epic voice, and for a suitable epic structure that progressed beyond Browning's reliance upon linear narrative continuity, the 'Three Poetry Cantos' and 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' emerge as being what Pound christened them as in the above quoted letter to Felix E. Schelling,

where he identified them as a "preparation of the palette". In this sense, these cantos are a 'Draft' for the future development of the epic, but one where many of the central concerns and poetic techniques that come to dominate the later Cantos are already in evidence. These are cantos in which Pound evocatively charts the struggle for a new direction in poetry as he foregoes the known, as symbolized initially by Browning's Sordello in 'Three Cantos I', and embarks upon a journey into the unknown, following the path into the underworld taken by Odysseus at the opening of what is now canto I. From this beginning, Pound creates a diverse imaginative world where narratives are introduced, juxtaposed with other narratives, abandoned, and returned to at other stages of the evolution of the epic. In this sense again, the structure of the poem evokes the central image of the sea, as fragments of meaning clash, separate, and merge anew in the continual process of the renewal and metamorphosis of heightened poetic meaning. Ultimately, Pound displays in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' that there can be unity without the limiting presence of continuity. The Cantos is not a poem devoid of unity, it is an epic that journeys towards the creation of a new unity.

CHAPTER ONE

THE THREE POETRY CANTOS AND OTHER TRANSITIONAL PIECES

And I have many fragments, less worth? Less worth?
Ah, had you quite my age, quite such a beastly and can-
tankerous age?
You had some basis, had some set belief.
Am I let preach? Has it a place in music?
['Three Cantos I':115]

Here, in the first of the 'Three Poetry Cantos', Pound outlines a series of questions and difficulties which reach to the very heart of the poem as a whole; questions and difficulties which not only influenced the future development of the epic but which also fuelled a fervent critical debate in its wake. Pertinent doubts as to the poem's unity, its basis in rationality or madness, the validity of the ideas it espouses, and its position in the Modernist canon are suggested by the author, displaying from the outset that in any realistic assessment of this "beastly and cantankerous age" there can be no certainty. As such, the lines necessarily imply an ambiguity, a duality that defines a struggle to locate a new direction in verse. On one hand, the passage is indicative of a poet on the verge of a major transition, and thus it embodies and displays a new and deep rooted sense of uncertainty with regard to how to proceed, as highlighted by the predominant question of the role of the authorial voice within the narrative, to be amplified later. On the other hand, however, this brief extract also enforces the crucial air of ambiguity

that clouds not only the Cantos but Pound's writing as a whole. Whilst giving life to the poetic crisis out of which the new epic was born, Pound forcefully and with great certainty sets forth his matrix for the future of epic verse; the essentially fragmented recreation of the modern experience, the need for a rejuvenation and expansion of tradition, and the potential conflict between lyricism and didactic plain speaking.

Indeed, Pound determines to give emphasis to the fact that, just as Homer's Odyssey was about his time, about his "beastly and cantankerous age", and Dante's Divina Commedia was about his, the Cantos were to be an epic for and about western civilization as it stood at the time of writing. The complex and meandering analysis of the historical process that was to follow, and form much of the substance of the work, was merely an attempt to not only display a knowledge of the decline and crisis of civilization, but to gain the essential facility of understanding in order to locate a potential for renewal. As such, in many ways, the Cantos can be seen as a practical means of achieving a unity of knowledge and understanding and thus a way of instigating progression, as Pound notes in 'Three Cantos I';

So, for what it's worth, I have the background.
And you had a background,
Watched "the soul," Sordello's soul,
And saw it lap up life, and swell and burst-
"Into the empyrean?"
So you worked out new form, the meditative,
Semi-dramatic, semi-epic story,
And we will say: What's left for me to do?

{117}

The implication, here, is that from the outset Pound has the knowledge, "the background", and the quest, as had Browning when working through

the history of the thirteenth century Troubadour poet, to acquire an understanding of this knowledge in the present; as knowledge without the potential for development that derives from understanding is valueless. In these terms, Pound's epic, as with those that have gone before, strives to contain both the social, in the form of comment upon the ambiguities of the age, and the personal, in the form of the struggle of how to transform these ambiguities into a universal and valid statement that will transcend the age.

It is evident that his concern with tradition and epic continuity lay behind the choice of Robert Browning's Sordello for the framework around which to build the initial statements of the Cantos, Browning being Pound's closest predecessor. As such, the implication is that Pound was directly attempting to bring the epic form up to date by beginning where the tradition ended, identifying flaws and locating points of progression. Although this aim clearly represents a false start, being in every way the opposite of the process that was eventually chosen, that is by beginning at the beginning of the epic tradition with Homer, it highlights Pound's desires to revitalize and re-integrate the totality of that tradition, merging it with the modern experience and the modern milieu, desires that did not change even though the opening of the poem did. The fact that Pound recognized the flaws in this narrative process employed at the start of 'Three Cantos I' is evident in his rhetorical question "What's left for me to do?". This suggests that this beginning is merely a temporary one until he can locate a more substantive voice.

The very rejection of these cantos is itself enough

to suggest that the poem was fuelled by a sense of crisis, a sense of urgency and immediacy coupled with a desire for spiritual accuracy which infuses and animates the Cantos as a whole. Beyond this, however, these three largely ignored transitional pieces in themselves capture, in both their narrative preoccupations and their structural complexity, the moment of creative turbulence that is vital and enlightening. These cantos, therefore, imply an inner conflict between uncertainty of form and clarity of intention. As such, it is evident that the initial crisis for Pound was not one of what to say but of how to say it, and equally importantly, where to begin. In this context, the assimilation into and alignment with tradition dominate these early experiments, and it is evident that a deep-seated dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of this process lead ultimately to their eventual rejection in favour of what is now the accepted opening.

In 'Three Cantos I', Pound directly addresses the question of the need for narrative accuracy in his work, using the poetic achievements of Browning to give weight to his analysis. In general terms, the canto follows a debate conducted between Pound's first person narrator, the epic poet of the twentieth century, and Pound's view of Browning, the epic poet of the nineteenth century. The relationship created is one of mentor and student, but the roles are often interchanged and reversed. Indeed, the opening of the canto itself displays that the transfer of knowledge and understanding is not to be all one way;

Hang it all, there can be but one Sordello!
But say I want to, say I take your whole bag
of tricks,

Let in your quirks and tweeks, and say the
thing's an art-form

[113]

The modulation of tone is highly expressive. Initially, Pound is dismissive of his mentor's example. The statement is exclamatory and assertive, parodying the harsh colloquial diction that Browning adopted in the 'masks'. In his rejection, Pound is direct, concise, and aggressive. This self-assurance is short-lived, however, as the uncertainty as to his own direction assumes a dominant role and the precocious student again turns to the master for advice. The initial emphasis is undercut, and the debate becomes disparate, the phrases broken to disrupt the momentum initiated in the opening line. Repetition adds further to the loss of impetus as self-doubt replaces clarity of intention. In this sense, the canto is highly effective in displaying a poet on the verge of a major transition. Through the varied tonal shifts in narrative form, Pound gives expression to the inner conflicts inherent in the initial stages of a significant change in direction; in this case, the change from Modernist poet to epic renewer.

Further evidence of the transitional nature of these cantos is implied in the relationship that is created and sustained between Pound, the first person narrator, and the resuscitated figure of Browning, the recipient of Pound's struggles. Throughout, the exchanges are rich in dualities and complexities, with the former at once celebrating and criticizing the latter. Indeed, Pound finds much that is of value in the work of Browning, much that must be preserved and assimilated into the epic tradition. Specifically, Pound alludes to

Browning's disregard for the superficial accuracies of history, choosing instead to present a vision of Sordello not as an artifact locked in time, but as a living figure amid the flux of history. The implication is that Pound, as Browning, is to be less concerned about factual detail as about poetic effect, by observing that;

And half your dates are out, you mix your eras;
For that great font Sordello sat beside--
'Tis an immortal passage, but the font?--
Is some two centuries outside the picture.
Does it matter?

Not in the least ...

[114]

The point here is that, on the surface at least, Browning's historical vision is deeply flawed, rendering the poem invalid from an academic standpoint. However, Pound makes the crucial differentiation between historical document, which attempts to relay facts in an accurate but dry and sterile manner, and poetic re-interpretation, which, to him, attempts to breath new life into these dry facts. This differentiation clearly has a central role to play in Pound's poetry, both prior to the Cantos, in Personae and Exultations (1909), in the intermediary 'Homage To Sextus Propertius' (1919), and in the Cantos proper, as figures such Sigismundo Malatesta (cantos VIII-XI) are vigorously reincarnated in terms of their spirit rather than the facts of their existence.

From a reading of 'Three Cantos I', it is clear that Pound's initial struggle was concerned with the location of a pertinent historical point of entry into the epic world. In this context, the tentative exploitation of Browning's nineteenth century vision of the thirteenth century troubadour poet, Sordello, is highly appropriate, suggesting as it does a sense of the process of historical renewal, a

concept central to the internal organisation of the Cantos as a whole. Further, the debate with Browning, which forms the backbone of the canto, serves to facilitate an extension of this process into the modern age, with Pound displaying a concern to combine the living aspects of the poetic tradition with the requirements of the present. As such, the figure of Sordello, evidently already dismissed as a suitable persona to carry the weight of an epic development, is of a lesser importance than the determination to advance the epic form beyond the achievements initiated by Pound's closest predecessor, a recognition that is made explicit in the lines,

. . . You had your business:
To set out so much thought, so much emotion;
To paint, more real than any dead Sordello,
The half or third of your intensest life
And call that third Sordello;
And you'll say, "No, not your life,
He never showed himself."

[114]

Clearly, Pound is ambiguously commenting upon the way in which Browning, and not Sordello, is the real subject of his own epic. The statement is ambiguous in that there is a strong note of criticism inherent in the observation, but yet Pound is overtly falling into the same trap; presenting the poetic self without recourse to objectification. This inclusion of the self, through the repeated use of the first person as consistently expressed in 'The Three Poetry Cantos', could be seen to be one of the reasons for their subsequent abandonment, with Pound, from here on, separating the personal from the poetic, creating a sense of objectivity that is sustained until 'The Pisan Cantos', a further section born out of a deep personal crisis. Indeed, the degree to which Pound was occupied with this problem is evident from the numerous

revisions made to the initial opening, as chronicled by Ronald Bush in The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos [p.p. xiii-xv : 1976], which sees the poet struggling to sharpen the focus of his statements whilst retaining the potency of the argument, a struggle that was lost with the major reorganisations made to the poem in 1923.

Beyond this, it could also be argued that the passage is ambiguous in that Pound recognises that through introducing the self, as an artifact of the present, Browning is able to breathe new life into the long dead Sordello, to explore and to express the contemporary relevance of events and emotions that appear separated by time. In these terms, Pound acknowledges, and determines to emulate and expand upon, the way in which Browning brings new life to his chosen subject, creatively placing him in his historical context whilst introducing a timeless relevance, expressing a real sense of historical continuum, as he states in his question to Browning;

It's worth the evasion, what were the use
Of setting figures up and breathing life upon them,
Were 't not our life, your life, my life, extended?
[115]

It is pertinent to note that the questioning tone adopted here does not suggest the previous air of uncertainty, but rather one of assurance. The statement is clearly rhetorical in nature, affirming rather than probing, presenting an argument that, to Pound at least, is already settled. Further than this however, it could be argued that, at this stage, Pound is attempting to locate a way of emerging from behind the series of masks or personae that he has previously employed in an attempt to present history as a living aspect of contemporary existence,

thus learning from Browning, his epic predecessor, and extending his achievements into the twentieth century.

Where Pound recognises that he must leave Browning behind, however, is to a large extent inspired by the increased demands of a language divided by time, in that language and the demands of poetic form have essentially evolved. To the Modernist perception, in linguistic terms Browning's "way of talk" (116) represents the subjective imprecision of the Romantic age, lacking the clarity and directness of force required to capture contemporary experience. If it is accepted that one of the major achievements of the Imagist experiment was the sharpening and hardening of a new poetic language, clearly it must be seen that one of Pound's main aims in framing his epic is to broaden and invigorate the epic language. The differentiation, and thus progression, of the new epic from the old is given expression through the form of a debate that is conducted between the present and the past epic voyagers. In order to achieve this, at crucial moments Pound closely aligns his narrator with that of Browning's Sordello, adopting shared geographical locations and developing explicit textual echoes. This Pound achieves in 'Three Cantos I' by visiting scenes from Browning's epic and highlighting the reality behind the myth, as he emphasizes in the reference to the custom house steps in Venice;

Your "palace step"?
My stone seat was the Dogana's curb,
And there were not "those girls," there was one flare, one
face.
'Twas all I ever saw, but it was real. ...

[116-117]

Here, in this telling reinterpretation of a passage taken from Book III

of Sordello, the contrast created between Browning's nineteenth century vision and Pound's twentieth century revision captures a sense of the more general poetic movement away from the sublime Romantic statement towards a more direct and realistic form of language. Specifically, Pound employs carefully chosen quotations from the original, which are suggestive of an idealized Venice, and undercuts them with his own more earthy vision. The obvious difficulty that Pound was experiencing here, however, is expressed in the third and fourth lines of this passage, where Browning's "those girls" is transformed into an Imagistic statement, paradoxically combining clarity with ambiguity. The tensions that exist between the language of realism, the prosodic clarity of denotative expression, and that of lyricism, the evocative and elevatory medium of poetry, are analysed, leaving the reader with the impression that what is desired is not a rejection of lyricism but a synthesis of prose and poetry, forging a new genre of poesis that displays the clarity and immediacy of the former whilst maintaining the ethereal potency of the latter.

In this sense, these early cantos can be seen, in classic dialectical terms, as being representational of the moment of crisis instigated by the volatile meeting of the thesis, the culmination of the past epic tradition as suggested by Browning's Sordello, and the antithesis, the new ideas defined to change, advance and revitalise the epic for the new age. As such, it is only to be expected that the 'Three Poetry Cantos' offer the reader questions rather than answers. Beyond this, however, the dynamics of the dialectical process are not confined to a struggle that is taking place between Pound and his ancestors; there is also a tendentious internal conflict taking place

between Pound the Pre-Raphaelite inspired poet of short evocative verse, and Pound the Arch-Modernist engaged in incorporating the panoramic vistas of the totality of Western Civilization into a new poetic form. This desire for a revised methodology is again expressed in a passage, at the opening of 'Three Cantos I', where Pound is explicitly placing himself inside Browning's narrative, adopting the objectifying effect of separating the speaker from the action by placing him inside a diorama booth, so as to be able to witness, but not to be implicated in, the events as they unfold upon the screen,

(I stand before the booth, the speech; but the truth
Is inside this discourse--this booth is full of the marrow of
wisdom.)

Give up th' intaglio method.

[113]

On one level, the passage implicitly suggests that the real meaning, the real "truth", that which is inside the discourse, is concerned with the complex interplay that exists between art and its audience, and that "the marrow of wisdom" is revealed when the viewer/reader reaches beyond the surface to isolate that eternal thread of universal truth. The implication is that, for Pound in this canto, "the marrow of wisdom" is associated with the recognition of the need to reject the minute, the small scale "intaglio method" which had occupied him during 'Ripostes' (1912) and his contributions to the 'Des Imagistes' anthology and Wyndham Lewis' BLAST (1914), and to forge a work of panoramic and all-inclusive potential that incorporates the beneficent aspects of Imagism whilst expanding the scope.

As is characteristic of Pound's method throughout the Cantos, this brief reference to "intaglio" is made with almost

innocuous intent. It appears merely as a short command, a warning against his own tendency towards the micro, but as such it highlights the deep sense of poetic crisis that gave rise to the more explicit depictions of personal struggle evident elsewhere. Behind this statement lies the expression of a highly complex set of tensions that underlie not only the 'Three Poetry Cantos' and those to follow, but also much of Pound's other work. "Intaglio" implies not merely an intricate form of close-quatres engraving, it is also suggestive of a concern purely with the surface, with that which adorns the external and thus ultimately acts in such a way as to mask the beauty inside. A similar concern can be seen to have been evident in the earlier poetry, for example in 'Apparuit' (1912) where the imagery is associated with the evocative interplay of surfaces brushing delicately against each other;

Clothed in golden weft, delicately perfect,
gone as wind! The cloth of the magical hands!
Thou a slight thing, thou in access of cunning
dar'dst to assume this?

[Selected Poems: 1948:80]

Here, the true inner nature of the subject is hidden by the contradictory vision created by the appearance of the surface. There are clear parallels to be found between this ambiguous form of aesthetic intensity and that facilitated by the intricate surface incision typical of intaglio design, an art-form where the cold hard reality of the sculptured material is defied by the finely textured external embellishment. In the Cantos, it is evident that Pound is intent upon examining not only the surface but the inner reality of existence. There is strong evidence of a recognition of the need to reassess the position of Art, to make Art representative of contemporary experience

and not to act as a gloss, a misleading facade hiding a cold reality.

A significant difficulty encountered in the 'Three Poetry Cantos' is associated with the struggle to give this vision of the cold, hard reality of experience poetic form on an expanded scale. Earlier, in Imagist poems such as 'In A Station Of The Metro', 'L'Art, 1910', and 'Women Before A Shop', Pound showed that this was possible on a reductive level, capturing the immediacy of the moment, but presenting it as an isolated and temporal vignette, an amputated microcosm of a much wider picture. This is, in a sense, a feature of the aggressively Modernistic approach that lies at the heart of the 'Maunderley' sections of 'Hugh Selwyn Maunderley' (1920), and one that Pound seeks to exorcize through the process of creativity, as is evident in Part I of the poem,

Firmness,
Not the full smile,
His art, but an art
In profile;

Colourless
Pier Francesca,
Pissanello lacking the skill
To forge Achial.

[SP:1948:182]

Here, in the very first poem to be attributed to the persona of Maunderley, Pound criticises the way in which this poet can only create a flat and lifeless two-dimensional image, a Modernist caricature of "the intaglio method" identified in 'Three Cantos I' as being an unsuitable model for a new poetic. In this context, it is pertinent to note that 'Hugh Selwyn Maunderley' was written in the period directly following the completion of the 'Three Poetry Cantos', when Pound was struggling with the opening of the epic, and as such it can clearly be argued that the

persona of Mauberley served as a means of working out the frustrations and crises encountered therein. The two asymmetrical halves that make up the whole serve as the two central tensions that are manifested in the 'Three Poetry Cantos': the inherently traditional poet who desires the warm lyricism of Browning, and the aggressively Modernist poet who constantly strives for the radically new. Thus, in 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley', the underlying implication, the lesson to be learned, is that both of these directions have their respective value to the future of poetry, but neither should be seen to triumph over the other; that there is a need to merge the two in order to create a language that is resonant, containing the reverberations of tradition, but yet that has the hard-edged quality relevant to contemporaneous experience.

This merger, what is essentially a synthesis of past and present, is at best only implicit in the 'Three Poetry Cantos'. In terms of poetic method, these experiments bear a relation to the analytical modes exploited in 'Near Perigord' (1915), where questions are posed but answers are not forthcoming. Only in brief but poignant flashes do the elements cohere, to provide moments of heightened poetic intensity which serve to illuminate the path forward, as in the passage of lyrical intensity that evokes Pound's own experience of Venice;

Gods float in the azure air,
Bright gods, and Tuscan, back before dew was shed
It is a world like Puvis'?
 Never so pale, my friend,
'Tis the first light--not half light--Panisks
And oak-girls and the Maenads
Have all the wood. . . .

[118]

In this passage, rightly salvaged to form an integral link between

autobiography and history in canto III, Pound creates a heady mix of the past and the present, displaying how a mythologically charged paradisaical and spiritual vision, associated with long lost gods, can be recaptured to elevate a contemporary experience. Whilst the statement appeals to the ethereal however, it must also be seen that at the centre there exists not a romanticized or idealized acceptance of spiritual intensity, but a quest, a search for paradisaical reality in the present. It is around this theme of search that the movement of the passage is generated, the axis of which is the ambiguously phrased question, "It is a world like Puvis'?" . Specifically, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes was a nineteenth century painter of religiously inspired mythological allegories that ultimately appeared contrived, failing to capture the power of the gods and thus to facilitate spiritual elevation in the onlooker. The inclusion of this reference here suggests that Pound is questioning his own aptitude in this regard, implying that in "such a beastly and cantankerous age", the poet has lost contact with real spiritual feeling, with "the first light", and as such lacks the linguistic range to approach the subject with honesty. One of the central quests in the poem is the quest after a newly revitalized language capable of accommodating the richness of this ancient and lost experience, merging it with the realities of the present.

The figure of Puvis is thus presented as being emblematic of how, in the nineteenth century, the spiritual realm was seen by artists as essentially divorced from contemporary experience. This divorce was emphasised by the consistent failure of artists to present the spiritual, the celestial light, as being a part of the contemporary milieu. Pound therefore, in 'Three Cantos I', is

attempting to recapture the essence of this spiritual light in the present, to re-integrate the realm of the gods with the realm of twentieth century man. This is achieved by once again employing an example from the past to prove the validity of the aim;

"It is not gone." Metastasio
Is right--we have that world about us,
And the clouds bow above the lake, and there are folks upon
 them
Going their windy ways, moving by Riva,
By the western shore, far as Lonato,
And the water is full of silver almond-white swimmers,
The silver water glazes the up-turned nipple.
[118-119]

Here, Pound calls upon Metastasio, an Arcadian poet to the Viennese Court, responding to his earthy treatment of mythology. The passage carefully recreates the Arcadian mode, evoking a decidedly rustic scene, and employing a lyrical but simple register of language to emphasise the synthesis of past and present, facilitating the contemporary vision with a complementary and timeless realism. Metastasio is thus celebrated as he is seen to represent that which has come to be denied by contemporary aesthetic experience; that there is a place for a mythology of the gods in an art-form that is not merely concerned with sentimental nostalgia for a lost age.

As if to give emphasis to this desire for a realistic form of aesthetic spiritual renewal, Pound directs the canto towards at least a tentative conclusion by providing the reader with what must be seen as a catalogue of divine perception, focusing upon the intrinsic unity that can be identified as having existed between the ancients, their culture, and their gods. This method of presenting a catalogue of thematically linked vignettes clearly came to be of great

importance in later cantos, where it allowed for the assertion of a given idea with the minimum amount of superfluous explanatory matter. Here, seen in a state of infancy, the catalogue is used in an attempt to locate, in the present, a valid way of giving the "gods" a relevant aesthetic shape. Significantly, the effect achieved is not one of assertion, as in later examples, but of crisis, a crisis which is identified following an analysis of the ways in which Pound's predecessors have similarly struggled with the problem of translating visionary experience into aesthetic form. This is expressed by Pound at the end of the canto through the technique of posing a series of questions that demonstrate indecision;

What have I of this life,
Or even of Guido?
Sweet lie!--Was I there truly?
Did I know Or San Michele?
Let's believe it?
Believe the tomb he leapt was Julia Laeta's?
[120]

These fragments of half grasped spiritual awareness take the form of a series of epiphanies which imply the presence of the gods rather than celebrate their actual manifestation. This is again emphasised by the persistent use of a questioning mode, displaying that at the end, as at the beginning, there is no certainty to be found. The dominant suggestion is once more of quest, of the potential that as yet cannot be realized. The narrator, identifiably Pound himself, creates, within this mood of uncertainty, a deep sense of the paradoxical, employing such formalized techniques as oxymoron, for example "Sweet lie!", combined with the direct conflict that "lie!" creates with "truly?" at the end of the line. At this point in the canto, it is highly pertinent to note that Pound fluctuates effectively between affirmation and

gods", the epic muse, and "phantastikon", the blind alley of poetic self-deception. The passage rather serves the purpose of emphasising that this duality exists. This is embodied in the contrast created between the aforementioned Botticelli, celebrated as one who can communicate the eternal spiritual presence, and, later in this canto, Casella, finally condemned as one who inevitably fails.

The intention behind this reference to Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus', in the context in which it is presented, is quite a complex one, and one that successfully encapsulates one of the central aims of the canto. Pound is not simply acknowledging the aesthetic achievement of the work, he is attempting to assimilate the process of creativity that underlies it. It is here that the reference to Simonetta, the assumed model for Venus, becomes so important, ironically and characteristically placed in parenthesis, not to display her subordination but to emphasis her centrality to the analysis. In a sense, Simonetta, the bride of Giuliano dei Medici, shares a similar relationship with Botticelli as does Lady Maent of Montaignac with Bertran de Born, whose ambiguous association serves as the subject of Pound's early poems 'Na Audiart' (1908) and 'Near Perigord' (1915). She is the earthly muse who inspires, from a distance, lasting spiritual elevation. However, Pound's use of the question mark compells the reader to consider whether or not she is as godly as the image she inspires. Indeed, this is one of the key concerns of 'Na Audiart', whereby the persona of Bertran de Born considers the Pythagorean concept of the transmigration of souls, implying that the condition of one's soul in the present life will be externally manifest in the next, as the following lines identify;

Thy loveliness is here writ tall,
Audiart,
Oh, till thou come again.
And being bent and wrinkled, in a form
That hath no perfect limning, when the warm
Youth dew is cold

[SP:1948:371]

The issue in question here is that Lady Audiart's inspirational external beauty belies the reality of her soul, her character, again focusing attention on the division that exists between surface and deeper reality. This analysis is given a renewed clarity in 'Three Cantos I', as Pound follows the presentation of the Venus/Simonetta image with a detailed explication of the role of the artist as translator of experience;

Oh, we have worlds enough, and brave decors,
And from these like we guess the soul of man
And build him full of aery populations.

[1211]

The validity of Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus' is that the work does not simply attempt to transmit "brave decors", but embodies a deeper earthly reality that has its basis in the honesty and lack of artificiality associated with the depiction of Venus herself.

Further, it is a desire for the rejection of artificiality that leads to the negative contrast developed at the end between the figure of Casella and Botticelli. Specifically, Casella was the musician of 'Purgatorio II' of Divina Commedia who not only set Dante's poems to music, giving them a false shape, but who also enticed Dante with a performance of one of them, thus corrupting Dante's vision by the display of a misleading lyricism. Consequently, Dante's task, like Pound's, was to transcend an artificial lyricism that to an extent

had been forced upon him. In this context, musicality, or the common practice of writing to rhythm and metre, is seen to be an aesthetic dead end, a corrupting influence upon the development of poetry, and one that must be overcome, as Pound indicates in the final lines of 'Three cantos I';

Barred lights, great flares, new form, Picasso or Lewis.
If for a year man write to paint, and not to music-
O Casella!

[121]

Clearly, the concept of seeing writing as painting represents the ethos behind Imagism, as given poetic form in works such as 'L'Art 1910', published initially in BLAST Number One (1915), where the poet attempts to paint a visually arresting abstract picture, employing only a minimum of words;

Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth,
Crushed strawberries! Come, let us feast our eyes.
[SP:1948:117]

In such statements, the lyrical musicality is jettisoned, along with all the linguistic superficialities and explanatory matter characteristic of verse shaped by the artificial demands of metronomic rhythm and metre, bringing to it a more direct and immediate quality. This method is suggested as being representative of a positive direction in 'Three Cantos I', therefore, where the corrupting influence of music upon poetry, as signified by the figure of Casella, is contrasted with the lessons implicit in the tradition of visual artists that includes not only Botticelli but also Picasso and Wyndham Lewis. As such, the closing argument of the canto is that the future of poetry lies in the visual crystallization of language and in a poetic structure that is not

tied to, or restricted by, the artificial strain of the obsolete lyre. As such, at the end of this canto, it is evident that the aesthetic tradition that Pound is seeking alignment with is not the poetic but the visual.

This location of a new direction, combined with the manner in which this first canto ends, on a positive note of affirmation in the condemnation of Casella, provides the reader with a strong sense of Pound's progressive achievement as we approach 'Three Cantos II', that a forward momentum is emerging from the intense dialectic struggle enacted earlier. It soon becomes evident, however, that the positive impetus was merely transient, and that in 'Three Cantos II' itself Pound is still lost in the purgatorial crisis of uncertainty and doubt. There is a direct point of unity created between the two cantos, as the focus upon the figure of Casella is continued, sustaining a suggestion of progression, but the significant tonal change, from assured condemnation to almost bitter regret, weakens and undermines both the unity and the progression as the canto opens with the recording of dwindling recollections of former spiritual awareness;

Leave Casella.
Send out your thoughts upon the Mantuan palace-
Drear waste, great halls,
Silk tatters still in the frame, Gonzaga's splendor
Alight with phantoms! What have we of them,
Or much of little?

[180]

This transition from the positive to what is essentially the negative effectively sets the mood for the debate that is to follow, one dominated by the concept of "Drear waste", of the progressive decline of not only the aesthetic sphere, but of all spheres of human endeavour

within western civilization. This decline is effectively emphasised by the accumulative layering and juxtaposition of a vital past, signified by "Gonzaga's splendor", with the empty and corrupt present, as detailed in the "Silk tatters still in the frame". It is further significant that the empty present anticipates the vital past, placing the emphasis not upon a sentimental celebration of what is lost, but upon a realistic evaluation of what is left behind, showing that the concern of the cantos is with a rejuvenation of the present rather than a futile recreation of the past.

The structural transition that is initiated with the opening passages of 'Three Cantos II' further highlights the crisis associated with the struggle to locate a suitable epic form, as any implied coherence with the previous canto is immediately undermined. Specifically, there is a dramatic shift away from the unifying reliance upon a single first person narrator, as adopted throughout 'Three Cantos I', this being replaced by a poetic structure defined by the use of a series of paratactically arranged vignettes, similar in their accumulative effect to the biographical sections of 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley'. To a degree, this can be seen effectively to represent the fragmentation and decline of the unified visionary consciousness amid the all corrupting "Drear waste" of the milieu of western civilization. As such, the gods, once transiently evident in the present, now form only partially remembered tatters of a lost experience and a lost existence;

Where do we come upon the ancient poeple?
"All that I know is that a certain star"-
All that I know of one, Joios, Tolosan,

Is that in middle May, going along
A scarce discerned path, turning aside,
In level poplar lands, he found a flower, and wept.
[180]

Images of spiritual loss, of the frailty of memory, and of the abandonment of the paths of rightness, being symptomatic of a wider moral malaise, combine to detail the total rejection of spirituality in the present. The tone that Pound creates is one of apparent irreconcilable regret, with fragments of half remembered quotations giving emphasis to the crisis of the inner being. This crisis is given further contemporary relevance when followed by the interjection of what appears to be the memory of an instance of personal neglect;

There's the one stave, and all the rest forgotten.
I've lost the copy I had of it in Paris,
Out of the blue and gilded manuscript
Decked out with Couci's rabbits

[180]

Here, Pound refers to a missing manuscript of music as representing an example of a lost cultural artifact, where all but one line is gone. This clearly refers back to the previous passage, where only one line of verse can be recalled, rendering its message valueless. In both, the frailty of memory is compounded by a lack of concern for the aesthetic heritage that is seen to be the cornerstone of civilization.

In direct contrast to Pound's vocal desire to free verse from the ethereal influence of music as proposed at the close of 'Three Cantos I', there is much reference made in this canto to the more positive and beneficial aspects of this art-form. Following on from a personal vision of loss, the focus now is upon the purity of music and the desire to recapture, in the present, the uncorrupted tonality of

Renaissance music. Ambiguously in this context, Pound can now be seen to celebrate that quality in poetry which earlier he had so voiciferously condemned:

Or there's En Arnaut's score of songs, two tunes;
The rose-leaf casts her dew on the ringing glass,
Dolmetsch will build our age in witching music.
Viols da Gamba, tabors, tympanons

[180-181]

This statement, however, does not represent the contradiction that it appears to on first reading. The figures of the aforementioned Casella and the now celebrated Arnaut Daniel are adopted to signify two divergent strands of poetic development. Whereas Casella's influence on the poetry of Dante was reductive, through the artificial imposition of a false musicality, En Arnaut's influence is positive, being, as Pound notes in 'I Gather The Limbs Of Osiris' (1911-1912), honoured in both Dante's 'Treatise on the Common Speech' and Divina Commedia. Specifically, Pound notes the integral part that music plays in Arnaut's versification;

Thirdly, he [Arnaut] discerns what Plato had discerned some time before, that [poetry] is the union of words, rhythm, and music. . . . Intense hunger for a strict accord between these three has marked only the best lyric periods, and Arnaut felt this hunger more keenly and more precisely than his fellows or his forerunners.

[Selected Prose:27]

In 'Three Cantos II', this "union" is expressed through the juxtaposition of the praise of Arnaut's songs of love with an evocative presentation of the seductive timbre of Renaissance music. This combination serves to dramatize, to bring to life, the richness of the songs, where 'rime' and other acoustic effects are interwoven with the language, bringing to them an ambiguous subtlety of meaning. Pound, in

the second line of the passage, imitates Arnaut in an attempt to convey the brilliance of the imagery that this union creates. Whilst on one level, the specific meaning appears obscure, the vibrancy and vitality of imagery successfully communicates a certain ecstatic quality of feeling, capturing the vigorous and often sensuous celebration of love's joy. This combines with the manner in which there exists, below the calm surface of lyrical splendour, an ironic interplay of images, wherein emotions relating to obsession and plentitude form a malevolent undercurrent, giving the songs an honesty that elevates them above the sentimental.

This sense of lyrical splendour is further questioned as the narrative again takes a subtle shift in direction to focus upon the events surrounding the pollution of the sacred springs of affection, a pollution that is initiated through their misappropriation. In this setting, music is the bringer of forboding, the signifier of a deep spiritual vacuity, as Pound evokes the melancholy sound of the lute to convey tension and discord,

Out of the night comes troubling lute music,
And we cry out, asking the singer's name
[181]

In this passage, the "dew" of a spring dawn is superseded by the troubling darkness of an autumnal night, as the vitality and promise implicit in the songs of Arnaut Daniel is replaced by the corruption and emptiness inherent in the song of the lute girl, which signifies the loss of vitality and promise. Her song, also once one of love, has been transformed into one of sorrowful regret in the following lines;

" Many a one

Brought me rich presents; my hair was full of jade,
And my slashed skirts, drenched in expensive dyes,
Were dipped in crimson, sprinkled with rare wines.
I was well taught my arts at Ga-ma-río,
And then one year I faded out and married.'
The lute-bowl hid her face.

"We heard her weeping."

[181]

The song of the lute girl tells not of the sensuous joys of love, nor does it capture the emotional honesty of love. There is indeed an honesty in the statement, but this is now derived from an experience of how love has been cheapened by materialism, a drive that is shown to be the negative antithesis of love. This serves to exemplify how the sacred is devalued and corrupted by what is essentially an economic concern, forming an analysis that pre-empts the usury cantos XLV and LI. Art and exploitation become inseparable and the tone of the song enforces the message that such exploitation has led directly to the condition of "Drear waste" that characterizes the present.

This method of employing thematically linked, if not structurally unified, vignettes allows Pound to successfully layer historically disparate events that imply a common thread, suggesting a continuing process. In this context, the corrupting influence of misplaced economic concerns surfaces as a central theme. The timelessness of this process is displayed by the juxtaposition of contemporary and personal reflections with fragmented historical visions. The reference to the loss of the music manuscript, for example, merges with a medieval reference to Richard Coeur de Lion, without the facility of a pause or narrative break, creating the sense that the two epigrammatic observations flow into each other, giving emphasis to the underlying unity of the message that exists below the

surface; that relating to the loss of immediacy of aesthetic beauty, as Pound expresses through an interpretation of the actions of Richard the Lionheart:

He strayed in the field, wept for a flare of color,
When Coeur de Lion was before Chalus.

[180]

In this highly condensed statement, Pound makes specific reference to the story of how Richard Coeur de Lion journeyed to Chalus to gain possession of a mythical golden cup supposed to embody great wisdom and mystery. Coeur de Lion, however, was oblivious to this power, claiming the artifact purely for its base value as gold, a value desired in order to pursue war aims. As such, the passage represents a timeless example of misguided economic concerns corrupting and devaluing the aesthetic and the sacred, a theme developed to powerful effect later in the Cantos. In terms of the statement itself, Pound returns to the leit motif of the "flare of color" which forms an imagery thread that recalls the moments of epiphany expressed in 'Three Cantos I'. Here however, the image of the elevatory brightness of the moment of intense awareness is used to emphasize the pain and emptiness that its absence instills.

The accumulative nature of the vignettes effectively allows Pound to undergo a voyage into selective moments from the past, both actual and imagined, in an attempt to show how it is that the morass of history has taken shape. The canto creates the sense that the past can be directly and simultaneously integrated into the present within the unifying mind of the voyager, through the forging of links and connections that exist between events and situations separated by the abstract concept of time. As such, within the imaginative world

that is created, the whole of history becomes inter-related and interdependent, ultimately displaying the contemporaneous nature of history;

Procession on procession-
For that road was full of peoples,
Ancient in various days, long years between them.
Ply over ply of life still wraps the earth here.
[182]

Here, the image of a road is used to express the dual directional process of history that stretches both forward and behind the traveller. This analysis suggests a lateral development which is then transformed, via the concept of the "Ply over ply of life", to accommodate the perpendicular. The implication of this is that history surrounds one, and that one is part of a greater three dimensional living picture. This concept of the "Ply over ply", which Pound returns to in canto IV, can be seen to represent the process of layering of events that is occurring in the narrative structure, facilitating a merger between form and content. The overall effect of the passage, however, is to display the way in which history is an intellectual discipline which demands that the student, implicitly both the poet and the reader, take an active part in the reconstruction of relevant events. Specifically, the lessons of history are not to be seen as being frozen in the past, but as being an integral part of a living and continuing process, a process that is only valid when it is an active force in the present.

In this sense, the manner in which Pound gives shape to the historical material is almost as informative as the material itself, with the initially unconnected vignettes building to display an essentially random and spontaneous order in which all things are

separate but yet are one. Within this process, the fragments generate an accumulative power that implies the existence of a universal truth that runs through the whole of history. Such a discovery is evident, for example in Pound's analysis of the primitive foundations of modern ritual, specifically the St. Johns Day fair. The depiction of this event is evidently derived from personal experience, with the contemporary narrator once more emerging from the morass of history, but one which is interwoven with personal recollection. There is a strong sense of ages and eons meeting, as Pound locates a point where past and present become one;

Like a thin spire,
Blue night's pulled down around it
Like tent flaps, or sails close hauled. When I was there,
La noche de San Juan, a score of players
Were walking about the streets in masquerade,
With pikes and paper helmets, and the booths,
Were scattered align, the rag ends of the fair.
[184]

In a real sense, the masquerade itself serves as a direct link between the glorious past and the empty present. The mock celebration is an affirmation of these glories, an attempt to relive and reinterpret them in a time of loss, and, during the celebrations, there is a real sense of a return. Significantly, Pound again focuses upon the beneficent qualities of music as it once was, the spontaneous creation of strolling players, free from the artificial tonal constraints imposed by the western tonal tradition. The overriding impression presented by the passage is one of valued chaos, of the natural order that the fair inspires and transiently perpetuates. This mood is further emphasized in the verse movement, as the narrative races, capturing the verve and life experienced by those involved, in an attempt to convey the totality

of that experience. This is achieved through the development of what could be seen to be a staccato form that, whilst mirroring the vitality of the event, also suggests the joyous nature of the music which acts as an accompaniment.

In the passage, Pound does not attempt to romanticize the masquerade, rather he determines to display and even elevate the flaws, the "paper helmets" and "rag ends of the fair", which brings to the statement a note of realism. As such, there can be no question that the concern lies in an escape to a lost past, but in an enriched present. Throughout, the focus of attention is firmly upon the present, and the crisis facing western civilization that thematically unifies the whole poem. In these terms, the purpose of this intensive layering of divergent historical periods is to investigate the process behind the present condition characterized by the concept of "Drear waste", to place this decline in its context, giving emphasis to the awareness that it is the role of the creative individual to rise above the confines of time and overcome the crisis of existence. This is successfully detailed in the cameo portrayal of El Cid which follows, as Pound represents not simply a figure of light amid the darkness of time, but a man of action who determines to pursue the right course against all the odds;

My cid rode up to Burgos,
Up to the studded gate between two towers,
Beat with his lance butt.

[184]

Here, Pound graphically dramatizes the disparity in size between the figure of the Cid and the opposing force of evil, metaphorically

represented by the imposing and unyielding gates of Burgos. This makes the magnitude of his actions all the more impressive. Added to this is the image of the lance, complete with overtly masculine and phallic implications, which is employed to display the virility of man as set against the negative and corrupting impotence of a socially sanctioned evil that has come to control civilization.

From this analysis, it becomes evident that the Cid emerges as a hero-model in the canto, christened by Pound as "My cid", which suggests that the myth is being re-invented. The Cid can thus be seen as an ideal-type who embodies characteristics drawn from the tradition of herioc figures such as Samson, who selflessly destroyed the temple of the Philistines, and David, who against all odds slew Goliath, both of whose actions are implicit in those of Pound's hero. Similarly, the Cid can be seen to represent an equivalent from the European Middle Ages of Homer's Odysseus, a figure who embodies the positive characteristics of diligence, determination, and resourcefulness, as Pound emphasizes in his portrayal of the character;

Came riding with his company up the great hill-
"Afe Minaya!"-
 to Burgos in the spring,
And thence to fighting, to down-throw of Moors,
And to Valencia rode he, by the beard!-
Muy velida.

[185]

The use of active transitive verbs, combined with explicit anaphora, creates a sense of aggressive forward momentum in this tightly condensed passage. This is indeed a re-enactment of the potential of man as evident in the glories of the past. It is, however, significant that this celebration is followed by a vision of battle as instigator of

decay and not of advance;

Of onrush of lances,
Of splintered staves, riven and broken casques,
Dismantled castles, of painted shields split up,
Blazons hacked off, piled men and bloody rivers
[185]

Here, the imagery associated with war continues, but the language of valour is replaced by that of horror. Lances are no longer portrayed as being symbols of masculine potency but as icons of destruction. The implication is that this evil, associated with misguided action, is that which must be overcome if such a vision is not to become a reality in the present. The gulf which separates the actions of the Cid from those now being depicted lies in the realm of motivation, the fine line that divides the hero from the villain, and rather than diminishing the potential of the former, the presentation of this negative, in the form of a revelation of "drear waste", serves to strengthen its value.

The crucial reason behind the Cid's prominence in 'Three Cantos II' lies in his assumed ability to overcome the restraints imposed by an unjust and corrupt society. At the end of this canto, the existence of this ability in the present is questioned as Pound turns his attention to the figure of the contemporary artist at odds with, and being suffocated by, a society whose powers of repression have become more effective in the intervening period following the Middle Ages. Significantly, the tone also shifts away from the aggressive to the urbane, which, as Pound suggests, gives emphasis to the recognition that the struggles are, if not less important, less prominent;

And when I knew him,
Back once again, in the middle Indiana,

[188]

[188]

-48-

consistently undermined. There is, of course, a serious note of doubt placed over Pound's own achievements in this direction with the ambiguous end to the canto. In demanding "Take my Sordello!", it could be argued that he is recommending that other artists follow his example as presented in the poem, or it can also be seen that he too is merely "dreaming his renaissance", stating that the sense of crisis associated with the struggle to begin his epic is still a prevalent concern.

It is important to note that the harshly critical tone that this closing passage initiates is not directed towards the figure of the artist but towards those who perpetuate his suffering, that is those who shape, and have shaped, the corrupting nature of western civilization. Throughout, the passage effectively communicates a subtle duality of intent, with the mood of the verse modulating from anger to regret, as the focus of the canto as a whole emerges as being not the numerous figures whose fragmented histories have combined to create a greater picture, but the world in which they live, a world that is often antithetical to their advancement. As such, it is evident that, if 'Three Cantos I' was concerned more with the internal crisis of the poet on the verge of a major transition than with "such a beastly and cantankerous age" (115), the latter has now taken prominence in this second canto, with the closing fragment to a degree unifying the two concerns as the figure of the artist struggles to locate a valid aesthetic form in an age that is seen to reject progress.

If we accept that, in 'Three Cantos I', Pound was attempting to extend and develop the epic tradition by returning to the most recent example of the genre in the form of a debate with Browning's

Sordello, a debate that ultimately served to display the failure of the endeavour, then, in 'Three Cantos III', it is evident that the opposite approach is being tested, as the Eleventh Book of Homer's Odyssey becomes the focus of attention, being analysed as a means of reinterpreting the origins of the epic form. The canto begins, in a sense to establish a note of unity with 'Three Cantos II' however, with a character study of John Heydon who, being implicit in the "Drear waste" of civilization, shares a similar fate to that previously attributed to William Brooke Smith:

Another's a half-cracked fellow-John Heydon,
Worker of miracles, dealer in levitation,
In thoughts upon pure form, in alchemy,
Seer of pretty visions ("servant of God and secretary of
nature")
Full of plaintive charms, like Botticelli's,
With half-transparent forms, lacking the vigour of gods.
[248]

Heydon's "half-transparent forms" are clearly intended to form a contrast to the "mastery / Spoke with the law's voice"[250] of Homer's timeless epic presented later. There is direct irony and humour in the definition of this new figure who, like Casella, fails to match the spiritual potency of Botticelli, but who can apparently combine miracles, levitation and alchemy. Specifically, Heydon is seen to be a charlatan, a sinister product of a decaying society, and the lightness and humour that surrounds him serves not to lessen but to heighten this recognition. He represents another stage in the process of decline, therefore, whereby the artist is not simply ignored by society, encouraged to waste his or her talent, but becomes an agent of decline, no longer the corrupted but one of the corruptors.

In the light of these manifestations of aesthetic

and spiritual evil, Pound thus determines to counteract them with a fragmented vision of eternal light as represented by the 'Nekuia', or 'Book of the Dead', from the Odyssey. The implication of this is that a re-invention of the glorious past, as glimpsed in both of the two previous cantos, has the potential to balance the crisis of contemporary experience. It is, however, pertinent to note that Pound does not simply provide an English translation direct from the Greek of Homer. Rather, Pound's 'Nekuia' takes the form of an abbreviated adaption of Andreas Divus' Renaissance Latin translation, thus displaying the cultural transfusion of an eternal truth. Indeed, before the text itself is approached, this process is analysed to great effect by Pound;

More Greeks than one! Doughty's "divine Homeros"
Came before sophistry. Justinopolitan
Uncatalogued Andreas Divus,
Gave him in Latin, 1538 in my edition, the rest uncertain,
Caught up his cadence, word and syllable:

[250]

The reference to "sophistry", here, is significant, the term being derived from the sophistes, the Ancient-Greek paid teachers of philosophy and rhetoric whose message was fallacious and captious. There exists, therefore, a poignant irony in Pound's recognition that 'Doughty's "divine Homeros"/Came before sophistry', the evil of sophism having its origins in the age of Homer's celebrated epic. This, however, is not as contradictory a statement as it initially appears, as the passage effectively expresses the awareness that the glorious past and the empty present are inextricably linked.

The ability to capture the "cadence" of another's work, to give it new life and a renewed relevance clearly plays an

important role in Pound's poetic process, from the carefully constructed early masks of Personae (1908) and Exultations (1909) to the complex extended poetic analysis presented in 'Homage To Sextus Propertius' (1917), written whilst Pound was struggling with the opening of the epic. The concern is clearly associated with locating a balance between the preservation of linguistic accuracy and the extension of inner meaning during the delicate task of translation. Pound displays that the art of translation is not simply one of linguistic replication but also of cultural transmission. As Pound indicates in 'Three Cantos III', the translator must ultimately make a choice relating to accuracy of structure or meaning;

I've strained my ear for -ensa, -ombra, and -ensa
And cracked my wit on delicate canzonì--
Here' but rough meaning:

[251]

Here, the first two lines relate the scholarly, academic and, by implication, cold and sterile aspects of the art of translation, the superficial and essentially fruitless pondering over the anomalies and inconsistencies of language. This air of stuffy intellectualism, however, is effectively undercut by the third line, as Pound recognises that, beyond all else, it is the spirit of the text that must be translated, the element of universal truth that in 'Three Cantos I' was seen to be "inside this discourse" [113].

In this canto, Pound again determines to introduce, at key moments, the clearly visible poetic self as immersed in the present. This successfully allows the narrator to merge elements of the heroic past, as represented by the 'Nekuia', with the struggles of

contemporary experience, bringing divergent ages together in a sharp and dramatic juxtaposition. This juxtaposition is not merely one concerned with creating a clash between two time-periods, however, as the figure and achievements of Andreas Divus are introduced to suggest the continuous flow of history. Earlier, Pound had praised Divus for his abilities in translating Homer, using his focus upon "cadence" as a guide to the new interpretation. Following the 'Nekuia' as Pound envisages it, Divus is again reassessed, this time in the way that Browning was in 'Three Cantos I';

Lie quiet, Divus.

In officina Wechli, Paris,
M. D. three X's, Eight, with Aldus on the Frogs,
And a certain Cretan's

Hymni Decurum

[254]

The harsh colloquial tone of "Hang it all . . . !" (113) is again adopted in order to give emphasis to the desire to progress beyond the achievements of his predecessors. Significantly in this respect, Pound follows this outburst by making direct reference to Divus' Homeri Odyssea of 1538 in an attempt to show that, whilst the Homeri had its relevance to the Renaissance, there is need for a re-evaluation of the epic in the modern age, a re-evaluation that must begin with a renewed regard for the epic tradition.

In this sense, the importance of the 'Nekuia' to the overall structure of the Cantos as a whole cannot be overemphasised, as it comes to represent, at various significant points of crisis in the work, a locus for rebirth and new beginnings, a feature that is clearly inherent in the 'Nekuia' itself through the drama of the blood sacrifice

that Odysseus makes to Tiresias. As such, in relation to these 'Three Poetry Cantos', it is evident that, following the struggles re-enacted in the previous sections, Pound has to a degree overcome the problem associated with where to begin, as Sordello has been replaced by Odysseus, and Browning by Homer, creating the impression that, at the end of 'Three Cantos III', a new epic direction is being initiated. It can be argued, however, that the struggle pertaining to the location of a suitable poetic voice still persists. This factor is highlighted by the manner in which, following the publication of these cantos, Pound tampered with their form, successively cutting them down, performing an editorial function similar to that undertaken on Eliot's 'The Waste Land'. This process is detailed in R. Bush's The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos (1976), where it is shown that, by the second publication of these cantos, under the new title of 'Three Cantos of a Poem of Some Length' in the American edition of Lustra (October 1917), significant syntactic alterations had been made to reduce the pervasive tone of uncertainty that dominated much of the 'Three Poetry Cantos'. This process also added to the elliptical nature of the work, making it more obscure and closer in structure to the Cantos as they appear today.

This process was greatly accelerated by the next airing of the work in the magazine Future in February-April 1918, where the narrative was stripped down to the bare bones. These cantos were intentionally published as fragments of a once larger whole, with the titles 'Passages from the Opening Address in a Long Poem' replacing 'Three Cantos I', 'Images from the Second Canto of a Long Poem' replacing 'Three Cantos II', and 'An Interpolation taken from Third Canto of a Long Poem', all suggesting the aggressive process of

reduction that gave them life. In this regard, the third canto is particularly enlightening as all of the narrative concerned with the corruption of John Heydon, that acts as a preamble to the 'Nekuia', is abandoned, and Pound begins with the previously quoted vision of his struggles with the art of translation after which the reader is launched directly into the 'Nekuia' itself, serving to sharpen the impact of the voyage that is being undertaken;

"And then went down to the ship, set keel to
breakers,
Forth on the godly sea,
We set up mast and sail on the swart ship,
Sheep bore we aboard her, and our bodies also,
Heavy with weeping; and winds from sternward
Bore us out onward with bellying canvas,
Circe's this craft, the trim-coifed goddess'

This passage differs only slightly from the one originally presented in 'Three Cantos III', with these differences being largely grammatical in nature, but the effect that the alterations make is quite marked in an accumulative sense, serving to quicken the pace and shift the emphasis, bringing to the statement a renewed intensity and immediacy. The stark and rapid juxtaposition of present-day aesthetic struggles with the epic trials of the Odysseus myth create a distinct sense of the mock heroic which, as the poem unfolds later, is superceded by an awareness that there is a compatibility between the two ages and the two crises.

An analysis of these early attempts at epic form provides the reader with a valuable insight into the poetic process that underlies the Cantos as a whole. Many of the themes and concerns that later came to dominate the poem are visible here in an embryonic stage of evolution with real sense of coherence being exhibited. Further,

'R. Bush: The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos: 1976: 306

many of the key passages find their way, generally in greatly fragmented form, into the Cantos, displaying that the crises met and the lessons learned were of value to the growth of the poem, informing and shaping later developments. Added to this is the awareness that, through the location of the 'Nekuia', Pound had located what would become the natural opening to the new epic, a natural starting point from which to re-interpret the tradition to which Homer, Browning, and Pound all contribute. As such, there is evidence that the crisis of where to begin had been overcome. As is the nature of the Cantos, however, the resolution of one crisis leads inevitably towards the suggestion of further crises that bring to the poem an eternal sense of vitality and momentum. Though the prominence of the 'Nekuia' had not yet been fully established, a real mood of achievement surrounds the parred down statement as it is presented in Future.

CHAPTER TWO

CANTOS I-VII OF 'DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS'

And then went down to the ship,
Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea
[I:3]

As the process of continual revision of the 'Three Poetry Cantos' suggests, it is clear that Pound was not wholly satisfied with the way in which his epic was taking shape at this crucial stage. Given the recognition of the need to locate his modern addition to the genre within the tradition as defined by the past masters, it can be seen, from a comparison between the two openings, that this in itself was proving problematical, in fact presenting Pound with his first significant poetic crisis. Whilst Browning was the most immediate predecessor, the debate with his ghost in 'Three Cantos I', although successful in showing an advancement of form in linear terms, does not succeed in casting Pound's poem directly within the greater epic framework. Rather, it merely serves to place the Cantos as a modern appendage to the glorious past. Canto I itself therefore displays a reversal of method as Pound, instead of looking to the nearest epic example, chose to go back to what is acknowledged as being the beginning of the epic discourse; book XI of Homer's Odyssey. This new direction served not only to locate the poem firmly within the epic tradition from the outset, but also to suggest that Pound's task was concerned with the revitalization and re-interpretation of the totality of that tradition.

In this sense, it is evident that the powerfully direct statement made in canto I results from the underlying tensions that it embodies, tensions which further fuel the whole work.

Canto I, serving in many ways as a point of resolution of the inherent initial crises and tensions, begins with yet another revised version of the second half of 'Three Cantos III'; the one concerned with Pound's translation, from the Latin, of the 'Nekuia', emphasising a direct link between this canto and those it replaced, whilst highlighting the significance of the 'Nekuia' to the structure of the poem as a whole. The revisions made here are highly significant in that the references to the art of translation, which originally served as a preamble, are now placed nine lines from the end, elevating the myth above the method. Up to this point, the authorial presence which characterized the initial 'Poetry' canto, is effectively submerged behind the persona of Odysseus, as Pound stays true to Divus' adaption of the Greek, whilst framing it in a refreshingly modern idiom. This relegation of the self, the subjectivity, indicates a direction that is to dominate the Cantos, with Pound openly striving to bring the modernist demand for objectivity to the epic form. The eventual brief introduction of the creative self, however, through the reference to his search for a suitable translation, is effective in that it allows Pound to re-invent myth at this crucial stage, as he proceeds to subvert the order of events as defined by Homer in Book XII of the Odyssey, affirming the controlling power of the contemporary renewer;

Lie quiet Divus. I mean, that is Andreas Divus,
In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer.
And he sailed, by the Sirens and thence outward and away

In Book XII of the Odyssey, Odysseus encounters the Sirens after his reunion with the ambiguous Circe, which suggests the accumulative danger associated with his voyage, as he journeys from one destructive situation to the next. However, Pound's deliberate reversal, in this context, ironically implies the search for a less hazardous path through the epic world, a desire that is to be an ideal rather than a reality. The reference to Divus itself contradicts this, emphasising the paradoxical nature of the role of the poetic self in the Cantos as, whilst Pound from here on determines to remain on the outside of the narrative, he overtly operates as a constant visible presence in the ordering of the diverse material used. Indeed, it is never in doubt that the concerns expressed in the narrative are the personal concerns of Pound himself; a feature which, as the epic grows, and the concerns become more socially relevant and pressing, is made all the more evident. The initial mythically charged cantos, therefore, show Pound to be struggling with a new crisis, one associated with the identification of a way in which to present the self as an objective unifying presence in a poem where it is no longer sufficient to hide behind an animated mask, thus displaying the awareness that the epic journey can never be an easy one.

As if to give emphasis to this recognition, canto II opens with a dramatically reduced evocation of what was the opening of 'Three Cantos I', with Pound seemingly rejecting Browning's 'Sordello' as a suitable starting point for the twentieth century epic. However, whereas in the earlier version this rejection was incomplete, with Pound

continuing the debate with Browning, the new statement is more final and more assertive. In the following passage, Pound can be seen to effectively cast aside the mask of Browning and emerge anew into uncharted areas of perception;

HANG it all, Robert Browning,
there can be but the one "Sordello."
But Sordello, and my Sordello?
Lo Sordels si fo di Mantovana.
So-shu churned in the sea.

[II:6]

Whilst the rejection is final, there is still evidence, in the third line, of doubt and uncertainty, as Pound appears to have second thoughts of abandoning the known in favour of the unknown, as represented by the image of the churning sea in the fifth line. Having regretfully abandoned Browning's "Sordello", however, the fourth line implies Pound's desire to sustain the influence of Sordello himself, as he quotes a line from the Provencal 'Life of Sordello'. Thus, Sordello is interpreted here in a manner similar to that used for Odysseus in canto I, with Pound channelling the original through an intermediary, injecting the persona with historical and epic relevance.

If we consider the 'Three Poetry Cantos' to represent the process of transition from a shorter to an epic form, it is evident that, beyond the fact that in canto I an effective beginning was located, this process is not yet complete in structural terms. Indeed, this continuing poetic evolution is given voice in canto II, as Pound introduces the major theme of metamorphosis in the form of three myths which mirror the poetic quest inherent in the narrative. The first myth continues the Homeric background, forming a link with canto

I, as a fragment from Book III of the Illiad is adopted to explore how unwillingness to accept change brings destruction. Significantly, this fragment serves as a comment on the desire to find an easy path ironically suggested in the previous canto. In this sense, Pound appears to be attempting to forge an explicit unity between canto II and the opening of canto I, as he displays in the following passage through the reference to the return "to the ship" (3);

"Let her go back to the ships,
Back among Grecian faces, lest evil come on our own
Evil and further evil, and a curse cursed on our children,
Moves, yes she moves like a goddess
And has the face of a god
 and the voice of Schoeney's daughters,
And doom goes with her in walking,
Let her go back to the ships,
 back among Grecian voices.

[II:6]

In this fragment, Pound creates an effective verse symmetry, with the first and last lines being repeated but in reverse order. Indeed, throughout the passage, there are many repetitions in and between lines which gives the statement a strong sense of ebb and flow, representing in structural terms the image of the sea that is used to unify the three myths in the canto as a whole. The passage refers to the ambiguous beauty of Helen of Troy who, like Circe in canto I, embodies the power to inspire and to destroy. The quotation echoes the voices of the Trojan elders who warn of the danger she represents. The verse movement is effective in emphasizing the uncertainty of the Trojan elders, an uncertainty that is based in the fear of change. Helen, though recognised as having divine potential, is rejected by the elders in favour of stasis, and it is this, not Helen, which ironically initiates the destruction of Troy. The implication of this myth to the modern

epic renewer is inescapable. Pound is stating from the outset the need for continual positive aesthetic transition if civilization, signified by the reference to Troy, is to be saved; art being the cornerstone of civilization.

The second myth establishes an even closer link with canto I, as Pound again takes as his source Book XI of the Odyssey, focusing upon queen Tyro, loved by Poseidon, the sea-god. Here, the unifying medium of the sea is highlighted and the concept of metamorphosis is made more explicit as the two are merged in the vital, swirling power of the sea. The image of the unity is mythically charged, emphasising Pound's desire to locate a means of bringing coherence to the increasingly disparate elements being introduced into the Cantos. The passage takes the form of a poetic vortex, with the verse generating an intensity that is exhilarating and self-renewing, as the momentum carries the narrative towards a sensory whirlpool, as the vitality of Pound's verse form displays;

And by the beach-run, Tyro,
Twisted arms of the sea-god,
Lithe sinews of water, gripping her, cross-hold,
And the blue-grey glass of the wave tents them,
Gold azure of water, cold-welter, close cover.
[II:6]

Here, at differing points in each line, Pound employs an artificial compound word to create a sense of the random flow of the movement of the Thessalian river, the metamorphosed incarnation of Poseidon. The verse form is effective in displaying a carefully controlled unity of form and content, which is made all the more powerful when off-set by the internal conflict that this tight control creates with the

spontaneous chaos being evoked within the narrative. This brief but highly concentrated poetic statement, in these terms, shows Pound's ability to renew and re-animate myth, to give it a contemporary voice and relevance without detracting from the spirit of the original.

The investigation of the myth of the metamorphosis of Poseidon is thematically pertinent, in the context of this canto, in that it gives an elevated poetic framework to the central concern being expressed; that positive change is essential in the pursuit of a valid goal. In narrative terms, this goal is Poseidon's pursuit of queen Tyro, but on a more significant level, it represents Pound's pursuit of an epic form relevant to the modern experience. As such, the canto serves warning upon the reader that this new epic will be unlike all others, that it will not follow a linear path but will change direction and form to accommodate a given goal, and when approaching it one must forego all a priori expectations, and be open to the "sea-surge" of the active poetic creation that the Cantos represent.

If the myth of Poseidon is used to emphasise the need for positive change, then the following myth, taken from Book III of Ovid's Metamorphosis, returns to the theme of metamorphosis as punitive action, as introduced in the first myth. Here, Pound focuses upon the god Dionysus, to become a central personage in the cantos, to retell the story of how the drunken deity is mistaken and kidnapped by avaricious sailors. Only the captain Acoetes, the narrator of the passage, recognises the god and protests their stupidity, thus avoiding the fate of being transformed into fish. Clearly, this fragment has many associations which reverberate throughout the poem, being used to

introduce themes and concerns that serve to link the disparate narrative structures together, such as the rejection of vital spiritual power, the corrupting influence of a usurious economic system, and a loss of contact with the rhythms of nature being paramount. This section, which is the most fully developed in terms of narrative exposition, again displays the effective way in which Pound brings new life and relevance to myth that potentially could suffer the fate of becoming lost in time;

The ship landed in Scios,
men wanting spring-water,
And by the rock-pool a young boy loggy with vine-must,
"To Naxos? Yes, we'll take you to Naxos,
Cum' along lad." "Not that way!"
"Aye, that way is Naxos."
And I said: "It's a straight ship."
[II:7]

Here, the contrasting use of different registers of language serves to give the verse an animated vital quality, bringing the myth to life in the contemporary idiom, whilst introducing a note of warmth to the seriousness of the concerns being expressed. The earthy, honest sincerity that exudes from Acoetes' words captures the humanism that sets him apart from his corrupt and avaricious colleagues, thus giving the epic, at this important formative stage, a humanistic focus. Indeed, it could be argued that, throughout, Pound's primary concern remains with the future of humanity in a world that, as in the picture of the world defined by Acoetes' ship, is moving towards a destruction instigated by its own weakness and greed. In this context, the ship can be seen to act as a microcosm of the corrupt contemporary civilization. This recognition highlights another key crisis, the crisis facing western civilization that lies at the heart of the poem.

The subsequent return to the myth of Poseidon and

Tyro, towards the end of this canto, secures a re-evaluation of the theme of positive goal orientated transformation. Significantly, this refrain serves as a concrete example of the process of vital metamorphosis that is expressed in the narrative, as subtly generated internal textual modifications and reversals create a sense of progress from Pound's previous analysis of the story and its contemporary reverberations. The new, highly condensed and imagistic statement brings to the myth an urgency, a linguistic intensification, that heightens the quest for change and advancement, both in terms of art and in all spheres of human endeavour, as is emphasized in Pound's vision of the flux and flow of water;

Lithe turning of water,
 sinews of Poseidon,
Black azure and hyaline,
 glass wave over Tyro,
Close cover, unstillness,
 bright welter of wave-cords
Then quiet water,

[II:9-10]

The theme of metamorphosis is not only given voice in the narrative but also in the structure, as the lines replicate the movement of the water. As such, it is evident that, within a single canto, Pound re-invents ancient myth not once but twice in an attempt to give the knowledge contained therein a self-renewing potency and unity.

With the initial switch from the mythical to the modern world that is instigated in the opening of canto III, Pound can be seen to enact a reversal of the process dramatized in the earlier longer poem 'Near Perigord' (1915), wherein the need to "End fact. Try fiction " (Selected Poems: 1948: 145) was recognized. Here, in canto

III, it would appear that epic or mythical fiction is being replaced by autobiographical fact relating to the economic alienation experienced during the trip to Venice in 1907. As such, the new vision begins with another fragment salvaged from 'Three Cantos I' but, by placing it in its new context amid the analysis of the rejuvenative power of myth, Pound employs the sense of isolation inherent in the narrative to emphasize the reductiveness of experience that has occurred in the separation of myth from fact;

I sat on the Dogona's steps
For the gondolas cost too much, that year,
And there were not "those girls", there was one face,
And the Buccentoro twenty yards off, howling "Stretti",
And the lit cross-beams, that year, in the Morosini,
And peacocks in Kore's house, or there may have been.
[III:11]

By including an implicit parody of Book III of Browning's 'Sordello', suggesting that Pound has not yet rid himself of the influence of his predecessor, he creates a complex interweaving of differing time structures that portrays an awareness of the pervasive sense of decline and decay. Through the careful paralleling of his experience with that of Browning, a conflict of poetic vision is implied that displays not simply alienation but, beyond that, a greater dissociation of sensibility. Further, when seen in terms of the mythical quests that have gone before, the dissociation appears complete.

Significantly, Browning's vision, as it appeared in 'Sordello', was one charged with a romantic wonder that, given the sense of alienation felt by the twentieth century poet, would be out of place in a realistic and honest contemporary narrative. In this sense, the deceptively innocuous transformation of "those girls" into "one face"

underscores a far more intense process not simply defined to convey the reductiveness of experience but also to emphasize the sharpening of consciousness. In Pound's interpretation of the scene, the lone girl merely surfaces as an appendage to the more intrinsic focus upon the moment of epiphany; whereas in Browning, as the passage below displays, the overly romanticized concentration upon the girls, detailed in parenthesis, serves ultimately to detract from, and distract the reader from, the real spiritual wonder;

I breathe? Let stay those girls (e'en her disguised
--Jewels in the locks that love no crownnet like
Their native field-buds and the green wheat spike,
So fair!--Who left this end of June's turmoil,
Shook off, as might a lily its gold soil,
Pomp, save a foolish jem or two, and free
Came join the peasants o'er the kissing sea.)'

Here, Browning's vision appears cumbersome, tangential and superficial due to the paraphrastic language and formalized structure of the romantic narrative form. In contrast to this, through the creation of a sharpened and condensed form, Pound is able to direct the attention directly from the moment of alienation, as instilled by an awareness of the contemporary conditions of existence, to the moment of transcendence as inspired by the revelation of the timelessness of inner spiritual vision that is central to the following vision;

Gods float in the azure air,
Bright gods and Tuscan, back before dew was shed.
Light; and the first light, before ever dew was fallen.
Panisks, and from the oak, dryas,
And from the apple, maelid,
Through all the wood, and the leaves are full of voices
[III:11]

Here, Pound enacts a rapid transition from the external to the internal,

'R. Browning: Poems and Plays: Vol. 1: 1919: 1970: 272

from the earthly to the imaginative within one line to display how the two states are not separate but are directly inter-related. Whilst alienation is the pervasive condition of the modern world, Pound shows the ability to maintain a sense of spiritual unity within the self, implying from the outset the awareness that the renewal desired from canto I must first be sought from within the self, a position which shifts as the poem develops and the concern with economics, introduced for the first time in this canto, comes to dominate.

Indeed, one of the central themes of this canto is the corrupting and constraining influence that a false system of economics exerts upon the creative individual, initially seen in contemporary terms through the alienation of the artist from what is a paradisaal unity with the "Bright gods and Tuscan" of the previously quoted passage. Significantly, the vision captures a moment beyond time, evoking a pagan existence where an awareness of the gods and the nymphs was integral to daily life. As such, implicit in the narrative is the concept of a fall, a fall from innocence or grace that is not yet complete but is a part of the continuing reductiveness of experience. For the contemporary visionary, one possible route to this lost existence is through reverie or through reminiscences adopted from those closer to the source, as is suggested by Pound's resurrection of elusive figures from the past in this canto;

And in the water, the almond-white swimmers,
The silvery water glazes the upturned nipple,
As Poggio has remarked.

[III:11]

Here, Pound adopts an image drawn from the letters of the Renaissance

Italian humanist Gian Francesco Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), who was noted for the rediscovery of many of the lost Latin classics, to ambiguously suggest both the transience and the permanence of such a vision. The decadent existence of the swimmers is as fragile as the water which sustains them, but the endurance of Poggio's image invests this fragility with its sense of permanence, being frozen forever in time. By reviving the vision of Poggio, the implication is that one possible option in the quest for unity with the realm of poetic truth is through an appreciation of the words of others more closely aligned with this state.

In terms of the canto as a whole, this presentation of what must be seen to represent a state of earthly paradise acts as a bridge between two principle sections; the statement of economic alienation and resultant inertia in the present, and the ability to overcome such alienation as evident in the past, as embodied in the figure of El Cid, the true inheritor of the Odyssean quest for the middle ages. Again, in this canto, Pound draws upon material previously included in the 'Three Poetry Cantos', with the passage quoted below originating from one that is in virtually the same form in 'Three Cantos II'. Clearly, with the reintroduction of the Cid character, Pound is drawing an intentional parallel between his current persona, that of the twentieth century poetic self, employed to open the canto, and the eleventh century equivalent. Whereas the poetic self is shown to be constrained by the prevailing economic conditions, remaining inert, unwilling and unable to overcome his alienation, the Cid is celebrated as being a man of action; he represents the once inherent ability to overcome injustice. The parallels between the inertia of the former and

the action of the latter are directly emphasized in the narrative, as the explicitly negative passivity of "I sat on the Dogana's steps" is transformed into the equally positive activity of Pound's hero;

My Cid rode up to Burgos,
Up to the studded gate between two towers,
Beat with his lance butt, and the child came out,
Una nina de nueve anos,
To the little gallery over the gate, between the towers,
Reading the writ, voce tinnula:
That no man speak to, feed, help Ruy Diaz,
On pain to have his heart out, set on a pike spike
[III:11]

In both passages, Pound emphasizes the existence of concrete, physical barriers that inspire the sense of alienation. For the twentieth century poet this is the Grand Canal which separates the vital visionary past from the empty present. For the Cid, this is "the studded gate" that represents and enforces his exile. Whereas Pound is content to sit placidly, the Cid defies the oppressiveness symbolized, in the text, by the "two towers" to enforce his moral right. Beyond this, the former passage is given an almost mock heroic air, as Pound's economic grumblings pale into insignificance in the face of Diaz's epic quest to regain what is justly his.

The central concept that is being stressed in the canto is associated with an awareness of the need for a reinvigoration of man's resourcefulness and diligence in the face of crisis, be it the exaggerated epic crisis of myth or the real crisis facing western civilization. Clearly, in canto III, Pound presents the reader with two opposing fragments which are successfully played off against each other to show how, for the present, the man of action has been superceded by the man of stupefaction. In this sense, therefore, the implication of

the mock heroic is undermined, as the struggles of contemporary man are seen to be of a different nature but of equal import to those that are the stuff of epic. This realization is made clear at the end of the canto as historically linked images of destruction, that have occurred following the middle ages as represented by El Cid, are accumulated in an attempt to detail the persistent process of cultural decline and decay that is the central focus of the poem as a whole;

Ignez da Castro murdered, and a wall
Here stripped, here made to stand.
Drear waste, the pigment flakes from the stone,
Or plaster flakes, Mantegna painted the wall.
Silk tatters, "Nec Spe Nec Metu."

[III:12]

Here, in a greatly condensed passage adopted from 'Three Cantos II', Pound returns to the theme of the "Drear waste" of history, analysing the manner in which the glories of the Renaissance have been debased by successive ages of destruction and neglect. In the passage, Pound alludes to Ignez da Castro, secretly married to Pedro, who was the son and heir of Alphonso IV of Portugal, stabbed whilst begging for clemency from Alphonso in 1355. The murder of Ignez is equated with the ongoing desecration of our cultural heritage. Significantly, when Pedro succeeded to the throne, he had her body exhumed in homage to her memory, placing her next to him on a double throne and, as Pound notes in 'Spirit of Romance' (1910), "A picture of the scene hangs in the new gallery at Madrid, in the series of canvasses which commemorate the splendid horrors of the Spanish past"'. The image is pertinent in that it suggests the discrepancy or duality that exists between inner perception and outer reality, between the perfect image as held frozen

¹E. Pound: Spirit of Romance: 1910: 218.

in the mind and the rotting corpse that is the actuality. This further implies a new insight into the concept of "Drear waste" as, inherent in the reference, it can be seen that Pound recognizes the impulse to sentimentalize the past. It could be argued, however, that, in the Cantos, this impulse is consistently avoided as the frozen image of the idealized past is always dramatically juxtaposed with the rotting corpse that is the crisis of contemporary civilization.

Canto III closes with Pound's adoption of a motto taken from the ducal palace at Mantua, which translates as 'neither by hope nor by fear', and serves as a refrain to the story of the heroism of El Cid, implying the need to act in a positive way in order to achieve a given goal. In a broader sense however, the motto also refers to the contemporary poet who, as was evident in the opening of this canto, is compelled to remain inert, bemoaning his fate but lacking the resources, or resourcefulness, to overcome the injustices of his situation. As such, in this canto, it can be seen that Pound, through autobiography and myth, is attempting to come to terms with the crisis of his own position as a poet amid a civilization that has corrupted and debased the process of aesthetic creativity, a debasement that is clearly reflected in the "plaster flakes" and "silk tatters" which represents all that remains of the once great heritage left by the Renaissance.

In canto IV, the process of fragmentation, evident in cantos I-III, is seen to continue as the focus shifts rapidly from Mantua and the Renaissance back to the smouldering ruins of Troy as visualized previously in canto II. Pound uses as his source for this

new vision Book II of Virgil's Aeneid, lines 291-324, thus initiating an overall shift within the poem from Greek to Roman mythology. Whilst there is an evident narrative and historical discontinuity generated between canto III and canto IV however, it is equally clear that in terms of theme and indeed imagery, the two visions are directly linked, as the crumbling vestiges of one age anticipate and reflect the destruction of another. Pound creates, at the opening of canto IV, an image of a palace vaguely seen through "smoky light" that has a timeless quality. The ambiguous nature of the image suggests that it could be 'Your "palace step"?/My stone seat was the Dogana's curb' of 'Three Cantos I' (116), echoed at the opening of canto III, or the ducal palace at Mantua that recurs from the close of canto III, or the palace of the archetypal city of Troy that anticipates the theme of decay inherent in canto IV;

Palace in smoky light,
Troy but a heap of smouldering boundary stones,
ANAXIFORMINGES! Aurunculeia!
Hear me. Cadmus of Golden Prows!

[IV: 13]

As with the previous canto, this new interpretation of decay begins with the disembodied narrator surveying a city landscape. In canto IV, the contemporary is replaced by myth, as the unrealized potential of Venice, celebrated in canto III as a source of renewal, is replaced by a visualization of Troy, once a model city but now a victim of violence and barbarism. The result of both visions are similar in their effect upon the narrator, however, as both cities are lost to him. All that remains, as before, is an escape into reverie;

The silver mirrors catch the bright stones and flare,

Dawn, to our waking, drifts in the green cool light;
Dew-haze blurs, in the grass, pale ankles moving.
Beat, beat, whirr, thud, in the soft turf
 under the apple trees,
Choros nympharum, goat-foot, with pale foot alternate;
Crescent of blue-shot waters, green-gold in the shallows,
A black cock crows in the sea-foam

[IV:13]

Here, as in canto III, Pound follows the description of the lost city with a vision of pre-history, again adopting light imagery to express the awakening or elevation of the intellect. There is evidence of a marked departure from the sustained tone of the previous canto as the passage unfolds. A dark and sinister note is introduced in the twin forms of the "goat-foot" and the "black cock". These two elements serve to cast a shadow over the innocent pagan and paradisaical vision, in effect shattering the illusion of spiritual tranquility.

In many ways, Pound's ethereal visions in these early cantos can be seen to be comparable in their power and intensity to those of Blake in 'Songs of Innocence'. They strive to capture a sense of the uncorrupted that was only possible in the dawn of life, and a clarity and delicacy of form gives emphasis to this recognition. As with Blake, purity of thought is expressed through purity of image. However, in this canto, it is possible to argue that, as we progress through the accumulative corruption of our sensibility, for Pound the lessons and the darkness of experience begin to encroach upon the domain of innocent reverie. For the contemporary poet, innocence and experience can no longer be separated but begin to merge in disturbing and disorientating ways. In a sense, this process lies behind the integral concept of "Ply over ply", introduced in 'Three Cantos II' and expanded upon here in canto IV;

Thus the light rains, thus pours, e lo soleills plovil
 The liquid and rushing crystal
 beneath the knees of the gods.
 Ply over ply, thin glitter of water;
 Brook film bearing white petals.
 The pine at Takasago
 grows with the pine of Ise!
 The water whirls up the bright pale sand in the spring's mouth
 "Behold the Tree of the Visages!
 Forked branch-tips, flaming as if with lotus.
 Ply over ply
 The shallow eddying fluid,
 beneath the knees of the gods.

[IV:15]

Here, the passage evokes a direct sense of a fluidity of motion, of the merging of experience, echoing in a more tranquil manner the implications of "So-shu churned in the sea ..." of canto II. Inherent in the narrative is the renewed concern with metamorphosis, suggested by the reference to the recurring image of the flow of water that sustains the "Tree of Visages", an image drawn from the work that was undertaken on Fenollosa's translations of the Noh plays'. The tree, a representation of the tree of life, offers the gift of knowledge but ultimately the gift is valueless, as it is acquired without understanding. In this sense, it is evident that, for the contemporary poet, the bitter/sweet transition from innocence to experience is not simply a process of loss and gain, but one simply of loss, of the loss of visionary potential.

As Wendy Flory has pointed out, Pound, in such passages of heightened clarity and lyricism, is attempting to maintain "the vision of intellectual perfection intact in a sordid present"², or more precisely, in the sordid reality of a decaying civilization.

¹E. Pound: The Classic Noh Theatre of Japan: 1916

²W.S. Flory: Ezra Pound and the Cantos: A Record of Struggle: 1980: 115

Images or glimpses of an idealized past are adopted to emphasize the extent of the decay, but as is also made explicit, for example in the vision of the destruction of Troy earlier in this canto, that this past was not free from barbarism and corruption, be it tangible or spiritual and intellectual. One such example of spiritual and intellectual barbarism is provided in the following vision of the city of Ecbatan, the hideous fortress city of the Medes, built by King Deioces in the sixth century B.C., and seen here and in the following canto as an unnatural and unjust place devoid of spiritual life;

The camel drivers sit in the turn of the stairs,
Look down on Ecbatan of plotted streets,
"Danae! Danae!
What wind is the king's ?"
Smoke hangs on the stream,
The peach-trees shed bright leaves in the water,
Sound drifts in the evening haze,
The bark scrapes at the ford,
Gilt rafters above black water,
Three steps in an open field,
Gray stone-posts leading...

[IV: 16]

Ecbatan is a place of artificial order that is seen to be in conflict with nature, as reflected in the image of the peach trees shedding their still lush leaves into the black polluted waters that run through the grid of streets. The scene serves as a point of transition into the next canto, emphasizing Pound's desire to create unity not just within but also between cantos. The new city, the replacement for Venice and Troy, is surveyed by the condemnatory camel drivers, who exude a kind of natural, honest wisdom that undermines the blindness of the King. The king, as the head of state, represents the way in which, throughout history and up to the present, a corrupt system of government is seen to infect all spheres of social life, which in the passage is emphasized

through the image of the foul wind engulfing the purity of nature. Clearly, this observation comes to inform many of the critical passages of the Cantos, for example in cantos XXX, XLV, LI, and the 'Pisan Cantos'. The duality that is inferred between the lowly camel drivers, as wise peasants, and the king, as the ignorant and corrupt overseer, is effectively portrayed by Pound, as it is the former who, like the narrator at the opening of the canto, looks down upon the decaying scene that has been perpetrated by the latter. Here and throughout, natural wisdom and understanding is seen to be of greater value than artificial knowledge, refering back to the example of the "Tree of Visages" introduced earlier in the canto, reiterating the message, crucial to the process of rigorous narrative quest inherent in the poem, that knowledge without understanding creates a dangerous and ultimately destructive imbalance.

At the end of canto IV, the reader is left with a disturbing sense of stillness, of stasis and sterility, that threatens to drain all spontaneity from life, bringing to mind Eliot's vision in the fifth section of The Waste Land, 'What the Thunder said', as images of sexual impotence are combined with images of the aridity in a geographical sense. The vision ultimately comes to resemble, as did Eliot's, a tense and ambiguous collage, a "thin film of images" [IV:16], that communicate as much through their juxtaposition as through their surface meaning;

It is Cabestan's heart in the dish,
Vidal, or Ecbatan, upon the gilded tower in Ecbatan
Lay the god's bride, lay ever, waiting the golden rain.
By Garonne. "Saave!"
The Garonne is thick like paint,

Procession, --"Et sa'ave, sa'ave, sa'ave Regina!"--
Moves like a worm, in the crowd.

[IV:16

Geronne is the river in Provence that undoubtedly Pound would have encountered during a walking tour in 1919, and is here recalled to suggest the corruption of an example of earthly paradise. As in The Waste Land, water comes to serve as a central metaphor for vitality, whilst the lack of water suggests the sterility inherent in the contemporary human condition. The water here is not fresh and free flowing, as was seen for example in canto II, but is thick and viscous "like paint", implying stagnation. As water represents not only the basis for physical life but also the sustenance of the spiritual being, its corruption symbolizes the total debasement of all levels of existence.

As previously noted, the vision of the plotted streets of Ecbatan act as a direct point of unity between cantos IV and V as, in the latter, Pound reconstructs the scene once more, echoing but subverting the narrative to create a hypnotic and disorientating tapestry of elaborated detail. Specifically, in reading the new analysis of the unjust and unnatural city, one achieves a real sense of the fading and merging of divergent eras, locations, and experiences. One can almost capture, in the present, the cadences of the Median Empire of the sixth century B.C. as one assumes the shrouded vision of the wise camel drivers:

Great bulk, huge mass, theasurus;
Ecbatan, the clock ticks and fades out
The bride awaiting the god's touch; Ecbatan,
City of patterned streets; again the vision:

Down in the vae stradae, toga'd the crowd, and arm'd,
 Rushing on populous business,
 and from parapet looked down
 and North was Egypt,
 the celestial Nile, blue deep,
 cutting low barren land,
 Old men and camels
 working the water-wheels;
 Measureless seas and stars

{ V:17 }

As tenses shift from present to past, the reader is successfully transported through time to experience the sense of loss and regret felt by those who are located in one moment of crisis in the degeneration of history. Indeed, as in the previous two cantos, the narrative begins by capturing what Daniel D. Pearlman calls "his [Pound's] composite vision of an evil, unnatural city", which is then reversed, via a reflection upon the "Measureless seas and stars", to inspire a sense of paradisaal existence that serves as an opposite, or potential state; a way out of or through the crisis. Significantly, however, the implication suggested by the successive return to this illusive paradisaal vision is that, as yet, the potential for renewal inherent in this vision remains unfulfilled, an implication made explicit by Pound later in the narrative;

Topaz I manage, and three sorts of blue;
 but on the barb of time.
 The fire? always, and the vision always,
 Bar dull, perhaps, with the vision, flitting
 And fading at will. Weaving with points of gold

{ V:17 }

Here, the permanence of topaz, and the precision of "three sorts of blue", is immediately qualified by the accumulative dulling, flitting and fading of the paradisaal perception. The corruption that is

¹D.D. Pearlman: The Barb of Time: On The Unity of Ezra Pound's Cantos: 1967: 57

associated with the the reality of Ecbatan is infringing upon the visionary capabilities of the narrator.

Throughout this canto there is a strong emphasis placed upon the presence and absence of light, of images being illuminated and fading. In the narrative, this is linked to a concern with the validity of Neoplatonic theories of light, wherein it was seen that the element of light denoted oneness, forming a link with the concept of "Ply over ply" from the previous canto. This implies that the duality, or plurality, of experience ultimately can be traced to a single point of origin. Thus, it is suggested that the downward momentum that is clearly defined from the outset can only be reversed if the precise point of decline is located, as Pound suggests in the following passage;

Iamblichus' light
the soul ascending
Sparks like a partridge covey,
Like the "ciocco", brand struck in the game.
"Et omniformis": Air, fire, the pale soft light.
[V:17]

The theories of Iamblichus, the fourth century A.D. Greek Neoplatonic light philosopher, are merged with a vision, drawn from Dante's 'Paradiso', of the potency of the transcendent mind, "the soul ascending." The implication of this is that, through the powers of the intellect, man has the capability to reverse the accumulative trend towards inertia and decay, represented here by the downward momentum of the narrative. This mirrors the desired impetus inherent in the poem as a whole towards positive concrete change. The cantos are not simply a poem about the decline of western civilization, they are intended to awaken the reader's sensibilities in an attempt to instigate a return to what could be described as a pre-crisis state of paradisaal order where,

in Neoplatonic terms, there was evidence of the oneness of being.

In these initial cantos, it is evident that Pound is attempting to awaken the reader's attention to the progressive state of decline inherent in western culture; what George Dekker has termed as the "history of mimesis from Homer to Flaubert". This is primarily the concern of canto VII, as the narrative serves to include, at an instant, the whole of epic time from Homer through to the twentieth century, drawing on rapidly juxtaposed fragments from the Iliad, the Aeneid, the Provencal poets of the earlier shorter verse, Liu Ch'e, Dante, Flaubert's 'Un Coeur Simple', and Henry James. In this sense, the canto can be seen act as a summary of what has gone before in the poem; a drawing together, however ambiguously, of loose ends prior to the first shift in narrative technique that occurs with the following group of cantos, the 'Malatesta Cantos'. Specifically, canto VII begins with the forging of a direct link with canto II, as Pound echoes the image of the blinded Homer in an attempt to align his own vision with that of the decaying past:

poor old Homer blind,
blind as a bat,
Ear, ear for the sea-surge;
 rattle of old men's voices.
And the phantom Rome,
 marble narrow for seats
"Si pulvis nullus" said Ovid,
"Erit, nullum tamen excute."

[VII:24]

The imagery of the passage focuses on many levels upon the pervasive condition of emptiness that underpins all the fragments. The diction

'G. Dekker: The Cantos of Ezra Pound: A Critical Study: 1963: 16

consistently stresses the negative, creating, through the choice of words such as "rattle", "phantom", "nullus", and "nullum", a sense of the void. This vision is further compounded by the repetition of "old", in this context employed to signify physical decay, the loss of basic human faculties.

In this canto, Pound introduces a technique that is developed as the poem progresses, one that metaphorically captures this sense of loss and emptiness by creating a parallel between the product of an aesthetic age and its moral and cultural wealth . In this instance, the age being evoked is that associated with the Edwardian high society of Henry James' London. The image created is emphatically one of decadence, of corruption, and of sterility; and the pervasive result of the linking of James with this stifling environment is to discredit him, as was previously achieved with Browning, as a worthy guide through what is developing as an epic waste land. Pound evokes an image of an old country house, inhabited by James and his entourage, that is stylized and oppressive, and one that replicates the false grandeur of James' literary approach:

The old men's voices, beneath the columns of false marble,
The modish and darkish walls,
Discreeter gilding, and the panelled wood
Suggested, for the leasehold is
Touched with an imprecision... about three squares;
The house too thick, the paintings
a shade too oiled.

[VII:24]

Here, in a vision that anticipates cantos XLV and LI, Pound observes the moral decline of an age as being encapsulated in the tastlessness of the decor, of the art, and of the architecture. Specifically, he places

himself in an environment frequently encountered in James' work, conveying with startling precision the sense of oppression and claustrophobia that emanates from the room. The structural tensions inherent in the verse form accurately depict the visual inconsistencies of the scene, combining to create a subtly elegaic tone, a tone that is further enhanced by the recognition that the environment is not merely one drawn from an imagined past, but rather is one characteristic of the present.

At this stage in the evolution of the poem, when it is clear that Pound is still drawing together the strands out of which to weave the tapestry, the agent of moral decline is not directly identified, although there are clues in the reference to "the leasehold" and the "imprecision" of architectural design that he has already made the link between economic forces and cultural decline. This vision naturally anticipates the triumph of canto XLV, not simply in theme but also in tone and cadence, as canto VII foreshadows the clarity and precision of meaning that Pound later reveals in his unmasking of the evil of "usura";

With usura hath no man a house of good stone
each block cut smooth and well fitting
that design might cover their face,
with usura
hath no man a painted paradise on his church wall
[XLV:229]

Indeed, in many ways, this later canto emerges as a point of intersection, or more specifically of fusion of the ideas that are being incubated from the outset. Through a close comparison of the two cantos, the reader can explore the pattern that is emerging, with the

poem's overall structure representing, not the traditional linear epic narrative, but more a kind of spider's web where thematic image threads are created, tentatively explored and then seemingly abandoned, only to be picked up again later to carry enhanced poetic meaning.

As such, with regard to the place of canto VII within the developing heterogeneous structure of the Cantos, it emerges as being of key importance to an understanding of the aims of the poem as a whole. With a time scale that spans from Homer to Pound's own experiences of London and Paris, weaving in many of the themes and concepts previously focused upon in the initial cantos, it is clear that a significant stage in the evolution of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' had been reached. Whilst being highly evocative, the narrative resists being confined to a single interpretation, existing instead both as a point of summation of what has gone before, and as a taste of the multi-dimensional concerns yet to be fully developed. What endures is the emotionally charged elegiac tone that is sustained throughout, giving, not only this canto, but the whole of the poem up to this point, a kind of subtle and underlying unity; a unity based upon emotion and conviction rather than upon structural coherence. In these terms, canto VII is a significant poetic achievement in the way in which it combines a vast thematic and temporal movement with an inherent sense of timelessness and stillness, as Pound implies in the following passage;

And the tall indifference moves,
 a more living shell,
Drift in the air of fate, dry phantom, but intact.
O Alessandro, chief and thrice warned, watcher,
 Eternal warcher of things,
Of things, of men, of passions.
 Eyes floating in dry, dark air,

E biondo, with glass-grey iris, with an even side-fall of hair
The stiff, still features.

[VII:27]

Here, in a reference back to canto V, and the murder of Alessandro de Medici, the tyrannical duke of Florence, Pound dramatizes a scene drawn from Dante's 'Inferno'. Alessandro is seen as a passive sinner, a voyeur whose inertia denies him even a place in the circles of hell. As such, inactivity is identified as a primary evil, with Alessandro emerging to represent the festering paralysis of western civilisation in the twentieth century.

What emerges from the contradictions and tensions inherent in this canto, as defined by the opposing impulses towards movement and stillness, as well as the pervasive sense of social and cultural decay that underlies the whole of the statement, is a recognition of the arrival at a point of crisis in the poem; a point at which a new approach must be located, a new way of viewing the central concepts that thus far have been identified must be found. In this sense, it is evident that, in terms of the structure, Pound is generating a form that expresses a type of organic unity; a unity that is directly achieved through the accumulation of fragmented units, the fragments exhibiting unity in that each successive unit arises out of the wreckage of the preceeding one, thus ensuring that the essential ingredients, the central concerns and themes, remain implicit.

CHAPTER THREE

CANTOS VIII-XI OF 'A DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS'

And he began building the TEMPIO,
and Polixena, his second wife, died.
And the Venetians sent down an ambassabor
And said "speak humanely,
But tell him it's no time for raising his pay."
[IX: 35]

At this stage in the development of the Cantos, it is clear that Pound was still relatively optimistic of the didactic success of the poem and, as such, the next fragmentary unit, the 'Malatesta Cantos' VIII-XI, begin by introducing a note of hope into the narrative in the guise of Sigismundo Malatesta, a figure who, as the antithesis of Alessandro, is defined as a man of action, imbued with constructive energy and a positive will. Significantly, canto VIII opens with a direct reference back to VII, again highlighting the passivity of Alessandro through a reference to the fact that he was once a Moorish slave. This technique of opening one canto with a direct reference back to a previous one allows Pound to create a sense of unity within the poem, whilst also emphasizing progression, with the new canto serving as an antithesis of the one that it follows. The defiant tone that Pound adopts at the opening of the canto intensifies a sense of determination to forego the inertia that consumed Alessandro, an intention that is both Sigismundo's and Pound's,

These fragments you have shelved (shored)

"Slut!" "Bitch!" Truth and Calliope
Slanging each other sous les lauriers:
That Alessandro was negroid. And Malatesta
Sigismund:

Frater tamquam
Et compater carissime: tergo

[VIII:28]

Through the technique of direct juxtaposition, Pound clearly contrasts Sigismundo with Alessandro in this passage. There is evident irony in his use of medieval Latin to identify them as 'Brother and most dear companion' as, as Pound details in cantos VIII-XI, Sigismundo is the hero figure that Alessandro was not. This initial ironic portrayal of the division between these two characters informs all that follows in the group, allowing Pound to inflate the stature of Sigismundo, elevating him to the level of mythical being. As such, it is clear that Pound's Sigismundo, as he emerges here, is not portrayed accurately in historical terms, but selectively and figuratively.

Throughout the previous cantos, Pound has attempted to communicate a fragmented vision of epic history. This was achieved initially by switching from Browning to Homer, with the transition from the 'Three Poetry Cantos' to canto I, only to follow this by enacting a rapid journey through epic and historical time with little regard for continuity or lineality, and finally by drawing the continuum of time together in a single statement, in canto VII, that exists essentially beyond conventional time, in a moment of stillness where all history is one and where the failings of the present can be assessed in terms of their origins. Stillness now is rejected, as the tone of inertia and passivity, that dominated the close of VII, is supplanted by one of anger, one of violence and, from this, of determination in VIII. The

diction similarly is harsh, vitriolic, and emphatically colloquial. This dramatic shift in style, coming at the beginning of this new fragmentary unit, underlines the recognition that the poem has arrived at yet another point of transition and evolution.

It is revealing, in these terms, that the new canto opens with a line adapted from Eliot's draft of The Waste Land¹, then being edited by Pound at the time of the writing of the Malatesta sequence. In both, a pervasive theme emerges, associated with a recognition of the need to inspire an awakening from a state of stifling inertia that threatens the spiritual, aesthetic and cultural life of western civilization. Whereas Eliot's answer remains ethereal, ambiguous and uncertain, with the emphasis being upon the quest rather than the acquisition, Pound seeks to identify, in direct and graphic detail, the route to reawakening or rebirth. It is to this purpose that he introduces the character of Sigismundo Malatesta and the details of his life and struggles, in a sense to provide the reader with a 'how to proceed guide' to the right path to a creative, productive and beneficent life. On the surface, what these four cantos provide is a fragmented, elliptical and selective dramatization of the interlinked actions and will of a factual personality drawn from history. It is, however, the episodic and apparently incoherent narrative form that brings to the verse a heightened meaning and communicative power. Events are not transmitted as dry historical facts locked in the past, but rather unfold spontaneously as if being encountered in the present,

¹The line beginning "These fragments you have shelved (shored)" echoes the line "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" from the closing passage of 'What The Thunder Said' of 'The Waste Land' (T.S. Eliot: Collected Poems 1909-1962: 1963: 79).

tone and cadence. Indeed, the reader is given the impression that the break which separates the two cantos is merely arbitrary, an impression that is highlighted by the momentum that is sustained and intensified in the transition of the cantos. This technique implies encroaching confusion which mirrors the chaos that is consuming Sigismundo's existence. Now, it seems that Pound is intentionally attempting to display a desire to achieve coherence and unity, and it is pertinent that this unity is forged from a coherent depiction of the confusion that surrounds his new hero figure, as Pound emphasizes with the opening of canto IX:

One year floods rose,
One year they fought in the snows,
One year hail fell, breaking the trees and walls.
Down here in the marsh they trapped him
 in one year,
And he stood in the water up to his neck
 to keep the hounds off him,
And he floundered about on the marsh
 and came in after three days

[IX:34]

Again, as in canto VIII, an indeterminate length of time is compressed into a moment, with conventional time becoming suspended, as the accumulation of the trials and struggles experienced by Sigismundo acquire an elevated emotive power. The strong sense of unity evident within the 'Malatesta Cantos' is expressed largely through Pound's adopted narrative technique, in that he consistently presents himself from the perspective of an involved party, adopting the persona of a close confidant of the subject, effectively reporting on a life lived to the full, documenting the significant events not in a cold objective manner but as one who shares in the experiences first hand. The cantos, therefore display a unity of voice, as Pound successfully places himself

inside the narrative, with carefully chosen phrases such as "Down here", taking the reader with him, serving to bring his hero's hardships to life in the present. This is an awareness that Pound first voiced in 'Three Cantos I', where he referred to "the truth", or the enduring meaning of history, as being "inside this discourse" (113). This method of historical revitalization is one that lies at the centre of Pound's extensive use of the past in the Cantos, as history is presented not as a collection of artifacts from a lost age, but as a vital and continuing process sharing a direct relationship with the present. The narrative thus demands that both poet and reader play an active part in the reconstruction of events, being active participants rather than isolated observers.

The combination of a degree of narrative coherence and the intensely emotive nature of the verse makes canto IX stand out as a peak of achievement in the poem thus far. The initial sequence focuses upon the numerous personal and political setbacks suffered by Sigismundo in his role of Captain of the Venetians. To complement the episodic nature of the structure, the verse is deliberately impressionistic, with wider historical detail and explanation being jettisoned in favour of the accumulative impact of images. As such, the canto builds into a catalogue of failure initiated by a series of unfortunate circumstances and adverse political intrigues which serve to give shape and dimension to Sigismundo's character, inspiring empathy and conveying realism, as Pound alludes to in the episodic portrayal of Sigismundo's conflicts;

And he, Sigismundo, was Captain for the Venetians.
And he had sold off small castles

and built the great Rocco to his plan,
And fought like ten devils at Monteluro
and got nothing but the victory
And old Sforza bitched us at Pesaro

[IX:34]

Here, Pound refers to a significant chain of actual events, but abandons any attempt to elaborate upon the circumstances that surround them. The tone shifts from brief triumph to enduring failure, with the latter being emphasised by the colloquial diction of "old Sforza bitched us", drawing Pound and the reader, as "us", directly into the action. Thus, although the events have an historical accuracy, portraying Sigismundo's determination to construct a monument to his existence, initially in the form of "the great Rocco", it is the underlying sense of the individual vitality of the character that emerges from the narrative, ultimately implying that the factual validity of the episode is secondary to the aesthetic potential inherent within the event. Sigismundo's struggles become elevated almost to the level of fable, with the life transcending the locus.

In this manner, something new and universally relevant is generated from an episode drawn from the past, suggesting Pound's belief that the past is not something lost in time, separate from contemporary experience, but rather a living part of a continuum in which past and present share in the creative process that gives shape to the future. This is made more explicit in the next sequence of canto IX, where Pound turns his attention to the period leading up to what will be the most significant event in the Cantos thus far, the building of the Tempio, the construction of which parallels the heightened political conflicts reported in cantos X-XI. What emerges from this

process, in canto IX, is the way in which the chain of events that combine to create the past directly conspire to shape the future, as Pound stresses in the detailing of Sigismundo's dealings with the state;

And the King o' Regona, 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 change-over(*haec traditio*)
As old bladder said "*rem eorum saluavit*"
Saved the Florentine state; and that, maybe, was something.
[IX:35]

The reference here to Alphonso of Aragon, King of Naples, is significant in shaping Pound's vision of Sigismundo, as his relationship with the King can be seen to highlight the complexity of his character. The historical background that Pound glosses over is that in 1447 Sigismundo was engaged by Alphonso to enforce his claim on Milan, at an agreed fee of 32,400 ducats. After having received 25,000 ducats, the Florentines persuaded him to abandon Alphonso and take-up service with them, thus earning the hatred of the King. Given this betrayal, the directly conversational, light-hearted and humorous tone of this passage plays a dual ironic role, by simultaneously increasing the readers involvement in the events whilst disguising the real significance of Sigismundo's treachery, which contradicts the hero like status that Pound is developing for Sigismundo. Thus, we find ourselves becoming complicit in his activities, drawn in by the vivid earthiness of Pound's diction, as fifteenth century Italy is transposed effectively into the twentieth century idiom. This subtle manipulation of time also allows Pound to lessen the impact of his hero's misdeeds, most explicitly in his contrived mistranslation of "*traditio*", whereby he supplants the Medieval Latin meaning of treachery with that of conventional Latin,

thus arriving at the reduced charge of "change-over", ironically implying simple manipulation on the part of Sigismundo rather than the direct duplicity confirmed by orthodox historical sources. In addition to this, and as becomes more evident as Pound's narrative unfolds, Sigismundo's financial treachery is based in a need to generate funds for his project to build a monument to creativity, thus raising the question as to whether Sigismundo's actions are ultimately justified. Pound's actions too, in this sense, have a similarity with those of the character he is defining, presenting "...a sheep as a lamb" in building Sigismundo as an epic hero to succeed Odysseus.

What Pound displays in this canto is the strength of determination shown by Sigismundo in the face of adversity. It is the single-minded self-belief that raises the profile of the new hero-figure above those that have gone before. What endures is the sense that, through crisis and adversity, the individual is able to grow and to create, and the pinnacle of this creativity is the Tempio itself. As such, the Tempio becomes a symbol and a metaphor for the power of the individual to conquer the external limitations of being. Thus the Tempio emerges as a monument to Sigismundo's positive attributes. It achieves in a concrete sense what Pound is attempting in these cantos, which is to preserve and intensify all that is transcendent in the character, whilst relegating to the insignificant all the duplicity that falls into the background,

And he began building the TEMPIO,
and Polixena, his second wife, died.
And the Venetians sent down an Ambassador
And said "speak humanely,
But tell him it's no time for raising his pay."
[IX:35]

The canto develops a sense of an accumulation of defeat, demoralisation and chaos. However, the Tempio is presented as having the potential to bring order and purpose to this chaos, to give shape and direction to the vigour that previously has been seen to move in a destructive and treacherous manner. As such, the third sequence of canto IX, which merges into canto X, is composed out of a sea of half completed letters, contracts, architectural plans, receipts of purchase and other such documents that form the complex and chaotic background against which the Tempio is being created;

"First: Ten slabs best red, seven by 15, by one third,
"Eight ditto, good red, 15 by three by one,
"Six of same, 15 by one by one.
"Eight columns 15 by three and one third
etc... with carriage, danars 151

[IX:38]

The accumulative effect of this process is to graphically display the desire of the creative will to unify the diversities of experience, to bring the heterogeneous strands together, and to find order amongst the chaos. Pound includes the minutiae of the building of the Tempio in an attempt to display that, out of the practicalities of the project, emerges the beauty of the result. In this sense, the process being dramatized in this section of the poem mirrors the struggle that surrounds the work as a whole, as Pound's and Sigismundo Malatesta's aims converge. Like Sigismundo and the building of the Tempio, Pound too is constructing the Cantos from the foundations of epic history, drawing upon a myriad of diverse sources with the aim of unifying them within the whole.

Canto X catalogues the rise of opposing forces that

threaten Sigismundo's downfall. The tone here is one of grim inevitability, continuing the recognition implicit in Sigismundo's relationship with Alphonso, King of Naples, identified in canto IX as "the next nail in our coffin" (IX:35). The Tempio, and the spiritual power that it symbolizes, is overshadowed by an intensification of the political struggle against which it is being built. At this stage in the development of the narrative, the symmetry that is being implied between Pound, as the poet trying to shape a new epic form out of the chaos of past and present experience, and Sigismundo Malatesta, as condottiere attempting to create something positive and lasting out of a life of treachery, becomes alarmingly prophetic;

So they burnt our brother in effigy
A rare magnificent effigy costing 8 florins 48 bol
(i.e. for the pair, as the first one wasn't a good enough likeness)
And Borso said the time was ill-suited
to *tanta novita*, such doings or innovations,
God's enemy and man's enemy, *stuprum, raptum*
I. N. R. I. Sigismund Imperator, Rex Proditorum.
[X:45-46]

The charges against Sigismundo are publicly read as being against God and man, of committing debauchery and rape, and, in direct opposition to Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, of being General Sigismundo, King of Traitors; no small irony given Pound's own later conviction for treason. Still, amid this moment of failure for his hero, Pound injects a strong note of humour, displaying the farcical superficiality of Sigismundo's persecutors and their inability to capture neither him nor his likeness.

What follows from here, however, is a collage of personal and political humiliation that sees the once vigorous leader

reduced to the role of tragic hero, whose major fatal flaw was possibly his inconsistency. The utterances attributable to Sigismundo now present a figure broken by the struggle, falling back on superstition and misguided optimism. The initial tone of defiance is superseded by one of emptiness and loss, not simply for the man but for the way of perceiving reality that he inevitably represented in the episodic and elliptical world of the Cantos. Pound introduces a resonant note of despair into canto X, which invests Sigismundo with a new level of humility and poignancy;

And they came at us with their ecclesiastical legates
Until the eagle lit in his tent pole.
And he said: The Roman's would have called that an augury
E gradment li antichi cavalier 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.

[X:47]

Significantly, at this moment of despair, Sigismundo emerges as a more human character than at any previous point in the section. Pound, retaining the persona of close confidant, discloses a character who has shed the facade of infallibility to reveal that, behind the legend lies the reality of the man. Here, Sigismundo shares a similar position to that of Antony in Shakespeare's Antony And Cleopatra as he faces the might of the Roman army, with his world in tatters and his fate sealed. Like Antony, he miraculously wins the battle only to lose the war, at which point the focus of attention shifts to highlight the true spirit of the man;

In the gloom, the gold gathers the light against it.

And one day he said: Henry, you can have it,

On condition, you can have it: for four months
You'll stand any reasonable joke that I play on you,
And you can joke back
 provided you don't get too ornry.
And they put it all down in writing:
For a green cloak with silver brocade
Actum in Castro Sigismundo, presente Roberto de Valturibus
...sponte et ex certa scienta... to Enricho de Aquabello.
[XI:51-52]

Through the vigorous strength of spirit, Sigismundo is able to transcend defeat and humiliation by presenting an image of stoical humour and generosity, by offering to loan his steward his green and silver cloak, just prior to his execution in 1468. In this sense, his spirit shines like a light amid the gloom of ensuing history. The evocative and memorable line, "In the gloom, the gold gathers the light against it," thus stands as a testament to both Sigismundo and the Tempio, displaying the recognition that out of the series of failed struggles in the life of the hero, the positive light of creativity endures, the light encapsulated throughout history within the Tempio.

That the Tempio remained unfinished at the time of Sigismundo's death makes it an even more poignant locus for the development of the Cantos thus far, as Pound is presenting a concept rather than an actual artifact. The value that the Tempio acquires within the imaginative world of the poem is not merely associated with its aesthetic worth, adorned as it is with the images of pagan gods and goddesses, but with the creative will that was invested in it, the determination to render something positive out of the chaos of the age. It is in this sense that the Tempio can be seen to represent Pound's aims for the poem itself, as the Cantos themselves acquire value for their attempt to give shape to the chaos of history up to the present.

Further to this, it is prophetic that, just as Sigismundo's Tempio remained unfinished at his death, the Cantos themselves were never given a satisfactory point of conclusion but, as the Tempio gains poignancy from its very incompleteness, so too do the Cantos. As the section ends with the failure and death of the most suitable hero-figure, the true successor to Sordello and to Odysseus, signalling a further narrative split, it would be easy to identify the arrival of yet another point of crisis. However, it is evident from the celebratory and humorous tone employed at the end of canto XI that the poem has arrived at a vital climax of a movement that has shaped a new level of coherence within the narrative. As such, the 'Malatesta Cantos' stand as a moment of poetic achievement, where the fragments of the past are finally unified in a concentrated vision of clarity and unity.

CHAPTER FOUR

CANTOS XII-XIII OF 'A DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS'

Baldy's interest
Was in money business.

"No interest in any other kind uv bisnus,"
Said Baldy.

[XII:53]

In the wake of Sigismundo Malatesta, the idealised hero figure and fellow seeker after spiritual and creative truth amid the chaos of existence, Pound can be seen to be searching once more for a new direction. Following the triumph, and the loss, dramatized in cantos VIII-XI, the unifying presence that Sigismundo symbolised is emphasised all the more strongly by the marked absence of such a force in the following cantos, as the light that pierced the gloom at the end of XI is extinguished. As such, in the next loose grouping, cantos XII-XVI, the poet and the reader descend again into the darkness of uncertainty, and the technique of fragmentation and narrative disorder replaces the comfort and security of recognizable epic development. Whilst the 'Malatesta Cantos' continue the elliptical structure introduced from the outset, in 'Three cantos I', they develop a new level of coherence and unity over a sequence of cantos. This is largely achieved through the unifying presence of Sigismundo, and the positive model that he represents. Pound, however, does not simply glorify Sigismundo; he also highlights his weaknesses and failings, creating a rounded and thus realistic picture of the hero. Following on from this,

the overt unity that Sigismundo emphasizes is abandoned in XII, as the hero is replaced by the villain.

With canto XII, Pound effects a break with the vigorous historicism of the previous cantos, moving on from the past to focus upon a representative contemporary milieu. The decline in the moral and intellectual condition of civilization is highlighted all the more intensely by this sharp juxtaposition of contrasting ages, as the prevailing tone of vigour and creativity, celebrated in cantos VIII-XI, is transmuted into one of seedy corruption and spiritual emptiness. Significantly, the humour that was a central feature of the 'Malatesta Cantos' is intensified, but this too is transformed from the witty into the grotesque and the vulgar. Pound enacts a subtle shift in narrative voice from canto XI to canto XII as, in the former, the narrator appears as an admiring servant of Sigismundo, reporting on the action with respect, sincerity and warmth. In the latter, conversely, there is a tone of detached coldness about the narrative, as if Pound wished to distance himself from the events. The canto opens with Pound analysing the motivations of the absurdly named Baldy Bacon, a farcically defined caricature of the American businessman, whose adulation of money leads him into the depths of degradation and exploitation;

Baldy's interest
Was in money business.
"No interest in any other kind uv bisnis,"
Said Baldy.
Sleeping with two buck niggers chained to him,
Guardia regia, chained to his waist
To keep 'em from slipping off in the night
(XII:53)

This is not the first time that Pound has considered the corrupting

influence of money upon the individual. In the 'Malatesta Cantos', Sigismundo's duplicity, and his downfall, was implicitly linked to his desire to acquire riches, explored in canto IX in his treachery against Alphonso, King of Naples. However, in the case of Sigismundo, his quest for wealth was not seen to be selfishly motivated; his need to raise capital was linked, by Pound, directly to the building of the Tempio. With the character of Baldy Bacon, the anti-hero of canto XII, there is no such selflessness, and no desire for achievement or creativity. Rather, Baldy's drive is destructive, bringing squalor and darkness; his corruption is totally self perpetuating.

Pound derives humour from the use of a colloquial tone that mirrors the intellectual, moral and spiritual limitations of the character. This is a technique that is employed throughout the poem, often, as in this case, to create a sense of conflict between the comic and the tragic implications of man's inherent weaknesses. Here, the emphasis is placed upon the evils of a corrupt economic vision, a theme that, by 'The Fifth Decad of Cantos XLII-LI' (1937), had come to dominate both Pound's thinking and his work. For now, he confines his scope to one which analyses the way in which the desire and obsession for money leads individuals into a moral vacuum. The sardonic humour that is evident in the initial lines of the passage is further heightened by the overt pun on "interest", suggesting both a personal preoccupation and, in a wider and more sinister sense, as a "charge for the use of purchasing power, levied without regard to production; often without regard to the possibilities of production" (XLV:230) or, more directly, "Usura", the evil that is later identified by Pound to lie at the heart of the Cantos. This duality of the personal and the general

that is embodied in the character of Baldy Bacon generates a disturbing undercurrent that is dramatically revealed as the initial comic tone is shattered and the reality of Baldy's evil is exposed. In the tradition of the mock heroic, Baldy is ironically referred to as being regal, and his attendants, his slaves, as 'a Royal guard', but the picture that is defined is intentionally one of crudity and moral depravity.

Baldy Bacon thus emerges as an alter ego to the positive actions of Sigismundo Malatesta and Odysseus, with whom he is most directly compared in the line "*Pollon d'anthropon iden.*" Clearly, there is dark irony here also, as Odysseus' quest for knowledge is corrupted into Baldy's blind search for financial wealth. What Baldy comes to know is the means to gain personal advantage at the expense and suffering of others, which Pound ironically elevates to the level of a dark art, investing the character with a supernatural ability to anticipate and exploit misfortune and tragedy, as is emphasized in the following passage,

Knew which shipping companies were most careless;
 where a man was most likely
To lose a leg in bad hoisting machinery;
Also fire, as when passing a whore-house,
Arrived, miraculous Hermes, by accident,
Two minutes after the proprietor's *angelos*
Had been sent for him.

[XII:54]

Whereas Sigismundo and Odysseus were celebrated for their significant acts of positive creativity, Baldy Bacon emerges as a parody and an opposite of this. His ability is derived from his skill in anticipating acts of destruction. In this sense, he is equated with the ambiguous

"And of many men he saw (the cities, and their minds he came to know)"
taken from Book I, Verse 3 of Homer's Odyssey.

figure of Hermes, the herald of the gods, patron of merchants and thieves as well as the bringer of luck and wealth. Whereas Hermes brought good fortune to others, Baldy merely seeks to bring wealth to himself, at the misfortune of others. His input is wholly negative, and in a civilisation defined by brothels and slavery, such moral and spiritual corruption is seen as being endemic. The reversal from creativity to depravity is made complete in Baldy, but it is equally evident that a vision such as his is suggestive of a wider social malaise.

The reference to whores and to brothels here also implies a form of sexual corruption. The humorous suggestion is that Baldy's passing the whore-house was no accident; that, rather than being transported there as if on the wings of Hermes, he was in fact indulging his own non-creative perversions. This theme is further expanded in the following vignette, as Pound relates a tale reputedly told by the American lawyer and patron of modern art John Quinn (1870-1924) to a collection of banking friends during a moment of boredom; boredom itself being representative of the condition of modern man. The episode begins with a depiction of the inherent corruption of Quinn's audience;

Bored with their properties,
as they sat, the ranked presbyterians,
Directors, dealers through holding companies,
Deacons in churches, owning slum properties,
Alias userers in excelsis,
the quintessential essence of userers
[XII:55]

This is the first canto in which usury is directly identified, and it is significant that, from the very outset, Pound equates this economic evil with moral and spiritual decline. Quinn's bankers are effectively

devoid of all vitality, as decay surrounds them; even their money is seen to be invested in dilapidated properties. They are essentially more respectable versions of Baldy Bacon, existing without his drive but with far more influence and thus responsibility. The choice of the phrase "ranked presbyterians" is particularly apt in this context, suggesting multiple associations. In one sense, it implies their status as elders, inferring a degree of pseudo-religious pomp to their assembly. On another level, however, it is far more suggestive of the underlying corruption that underpins the scene, the word "ranked" itself implying a strong tone of vileness. The vignette is thus both comic and simultaneously serious, approaching the realms of satire.

The comic high point of the canto, and indeed the poem so far, is the tale of the "pore honest sailor" (56) which Quinn tells the bankers in an attempt to shock some life into them. It is primarily a story of emptiness and debauchery that, in the canto, is transformed by a recognition of the demands of personal responsibility. On this level alone, the tale relates directly to the futility of the lives of the bankers who, in contrast to the lowly sailor, fail to respond to the call for rejuvenation. Pound makes it clear that the explicit and grotesque corruption initially displayed by the sailor merely serves to highlight the more intense corruption festering within the audience as, whereas the sailor is "honest" in his sins, the bankers conceal theirs behind a veneer of respectability;

Said Jim X... :
There once was a pore honest sailor, a heavy drinker,
A hell of a cuss, a rowster, a boozier, and
The drink finally sent him to hospital,
And they operated, and there was a poor whore in
The woman's ward had a kid, while
They were fixing the sailor, and they brought him the kid
When he came to, and said:

"Here! this is what we took out of you."
[XII:56]

The narrative style is representative of the typically English bawdy Music Hall monologue, undoubtedly encountered whilst Pound was resident in England between 1908 and 1920. The language is rich in the colloquial dialect of the East End, as Pound accurately adopts the resonance of the idiom, a technique that he employs to capture differing aspects of the vernacular throughout the Cantos. The repeated reference to whores in this passage links the sordid atmosphere of this colourful slice of modern life directly to that previously associated with Baldy Bacon, further highlighting the widespread moral corruption of contemporary western civilisation, forcing a comparison with the relative moral and cultural prosperity of the age of Sigismundo Malatesta detailed in cantos VIII-XI.

Whilst the tone of the monologue is overtly humorous, with the sailor accepting blindly his responsibility for the whore's child, there lies beneath the surface a deeper meaning that relates directly to the bankers and their activities as "the quintessential essence of userers." The implied, though never directly stated, theme of the passage is concerned with the issue of sodomy, which Pound employs in order to explore further the thread of sexual corruption introduced in the Baldy Bacon section. In a sense, the revelation of the sailor's indulgence in the act of sodomy serves as the implied punch line, resolving the comic aspects evident throughout satisfactorily. Beyond this, it also serves to unify the two halves of the canto, revealing the underlying implications relating to the inherent bankruptcy of contemporary experience. As a counterpoint to the

bankers who are listening to the story of the sailor, Pound reveals that the abuser is a Turkish businessman, unifying the underlying theme that usury, as a financial evil, corrupts all other aspects of existence;

"That's it, boy, you said it.
"You called me your father, and I ain't.
"I ain't your dad, no,
"I am not your fader but your moder," quod he,
"Your fader was a rich merchant in Stambouli."

[XII:56-57]

The climax to the narrative reveals that the sailor accepts the prostitute's claims as he was sodomized by a rich merchant in Stamboul, the oldest part of Istanbul, thus adding a note of pathos to the humour as the sailor genuinely believes that the responsibility for the child is his. The point that Pound is seeking to relay is that sodomy is a form of sexual usury, that it is "CONTRA NATURAM" (XLV:230), against nature's increase, and that it is further evidence of the pervasive bankruptcy of western civilisation. Usury, in its numerous forms is, in these terms, a dominant force in shaping the direction of society, a recognition that prepares the ground for the intense poetic statements of cantos XLV and LI.

Although the canto sustains the humour, the identification of the evil of usury, an evil that comes to consume the poem later, suggests that, after the positive vision of the 'Malatesta Cantos', the poem is approaching another crisis, a crisis that builds during the following section. Significantly, canto XII, the first usury canto, is followed by a canto devoted to the philosophy of Confucius, just as the central usury cantos XLV and LI are followed by a sustained evaluation of Chinese philosophy and history suggesting the cyclical nature of the unity that Pound is seeking to create within the Cantos as

a whole. Thus, in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', as in 'The Fifth Decad of Cantos XLII-LI' (1937), Pound follows the revelation of the artificiality and corruption the usury instigates with an essentially opposite vision of spiritual and moral order and creativity.

In these terms, canto XIII focuses upon the issue of natural order, and as such can be seen to serve as a representation of the spontaneous and organic structure of the poem as a whole. Significantly, this theme of spontaneous and natural order will be returned to by Pound towards the end of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', as he dramatizes the building of the Cathedral of Ferrara in canto XXVII. Here, however, Pound makes explicit the distinction between the artificial organizing principles that dominate western civilization, based upon usurious economic and social concepts, and those of what Daniel D. Pearlman saw as being of a pre-Christian nature', where the centre of moral virtue lies within the self. As if to give emphasis to this, it is clear that the ironically humorous and episodic structure of canto XII now gives way to a verse form that is coherent and measured, displaying a lyrical quality that is rich and evocative yet direct and uncluttered. This quality is mirrored, in the canto, by Pound's determination to access the once evident element of natural creativity inherent within humanity from birth;

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

[XIII:59]

'Daniel D. Pearlman: The Barb of Time: 1969: 97

Here, Pound adopts one of many the quotations from Kung Fu-tse, introduced throughout the canto, to acknowledge the natural potential innate within the individual, and the need to respect the wonder of creation as symbolized by the figure of the child. The child in this canto represents innocence and hope, the potential yet to be realized. This is in direct opposition to the child of canto XII, which was seen as the hopeless result of a squalid union. However, in canto XIII the suggestion is that, as the child is imbued with natural potential, the adult must gain respect through action and deed, implicitly seen through the manner in which he brings order to existence,

If a man have not order within him
He can not spread order about him;
And if a man have not order within him
His family will not act with due order:
And if the prince have not order within him
He can not put order in his dominions.

[XIII:59]

In this passage, adapted from Ta Hsio's The Great Digest¹, Pound introduces what is, and has been from the outset, a central ruling principle of the poem, both in terms of the meaning and the structure; the concept of "order within" which relates to the awareness that order must follow the demands of the situation, and not be imposed from without. In this sense "order within" is an apt description of the structuring principle of the Cantos themselves, whereby the form of the poem, identified as early as 'Three Cantos I' as "a rag-bag to stuff all

¹E. Pound: Confucius: 1928/1969: 29-30. "The men of old wanting to clarify and diffuse throughout the empire that light which comes from looking straight into the heart and then acting, first set up good government in their own states; wanting good government in their states, they first established order in their own families; wanting order in the home, they first disciplined themselves; desiring self-discipline, they rectified their own hearts..."

its thought in" (113), must adapt and evolve in order to accommodate the shifting themes. As such, Pound's reference to The Great Digest is of reverberating significance in the present, as it characterizes the decline of the very mechanism of social order within western civilization. The West, like its art, has become dependent upon an external order, as made manifest earlier in the development of the poem in "Ecbatan, City of patterned streets" (V:17). In canto XIII, Pound is transporting the reader back, presenting, through the vividness and richness of the language and imagery, a real experience of a civilization which defined unity not in an artificial manner, but in spontaneous and evolving ways; a civilization that is not explicitly returned to until canto XLIX, but which is to remain in the memory as an example of beneficial order.

It can not be doubted that, in making specific reference to the Confucian texts, Pound intended to direct the reader towards a consideration of the wisdom therein, a wisdom that spreads beyond that which is incorporated into canto XIII. In this sense, an important burden of meaning in the passage quoted above is carried by what is not said, by what is omitted. As with many of the cantos based around textual sources, the quotations that Pound includes serve as a means of condensing vital information that exists elsewhere in the text, and whilst these cantos have meaning in themselves, this meaning is greatly enhanced by following Pound's trail through the divergent literary and historical material that he draws upon. Of great relevance here, for example, is the line from The Great Digest that makes reference to the desire of the wise elders "to clarify and diffuse ... that light which comes from looking straight into the heart and then

acting". Although absent from canto XIII, the message that this source material enforces relates to the need for moral self examination prior to acting which clearly underpins much of what is implicit in this canto, and informing the vision that is expressed when the poem enters the 'Pisan' section (LXXIV-LXXXIV: 1948). In these terms, the poem can be seen as the dramatization of the battle that is being fought in the modern age between the heart, the moral and spiritual centre, and the head, where the intellect seeks to achieve dominion. Within the imaginative world of the Cantos, the Confucian age represents a time of equilibrium, when the intellect and the moral sensibility were in balance. External structural order was thus generated from the light within.

It is this element of light that the Cantos seek to relocate in the present, and the images of poetic intensity, poetic light, that canto XIII adopts at the close, serve as linguistic representations of this aim. Pound makes the link between strength of character and creative potential as he depicts Kung instructing a disciple on methods of improving musical ability, not through practice on the instrument but upon the development of the inner self. This lesson is then merged with a poignant and lyrically charged vision of the paradoxical fragility of nature. Specifically, the canto ends with a vision of the endurance of nature that is both ethereal and yet concrete, capturing the delicate balance that sustains creation, a balance that, through the ages has been lost;

And Kung said, "Without character you will
be unable to play on that instrument
Or to execute the music fit for the Odes.
The blossoms of the apricot
blow from the east to the west,

And I have tried to keep them from falling."

[XIII:60]

The image evokes a sense of tranquility and calm, but the blossoms of the apricot that threaten to fall in the wind symbolize the encroaching destruction of this delicate balance, implying transience and loss. At the end of the canto, one that glimpses the existence of an earthly paradise, Pound anticipated the dissolution of the vision and the reality. Whilst the Confucian age was one characterized by the abundance of nature, Kung himself is trying to protect the balance. The use of the past tense here is particularly effective as it adds a note of defeat, or resignation, to the image. It is as if the closing statement is to be seen not simply as Kung's, depicting a pre-Christian past, but also Pound's, as he identifies the crisis of the present. Ultimately, canto XIII, coming as it does before the 'Hell Mouth' cantos, dramatizes both paradise and the fall, with the inevitable dropping of the blossoms at the end acting as a metaphor for the decline into the inferno that is the basis for the next unified group of cantos, XIV- XV.

CHAPTER FIVE

CANTOS XIV-XVI OF 'A DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS'

And before the hell mouth; dry plain
 and two mountains;
On the one mountain, a running form,
 and another
In the turn of the hill; in hard steel
The road like a slow screw's thread
[XVI:68]

With canto XIV, the tone of the poem is radically altered, suggesting that the narrative has once more arrived at a point of crisis. In terms of unity, this new sequence picks up on threads abandoned with canto XII, developing and amplifying the bawdy comic undercurrent of the earlier example into an explicit and graphic discourse on human corruption, degradation and perversion. Once again, the impact of this insight is intensified through the juxtaposition of the chaos and malignancy detailed in cantos XIV-XVI with the wisdom and order of creativity attained in XIII, as a clear pattern of structural conflict and antithesis is generated. In this sense, narrative fragmentation is being consciously employed in an attempt to locate and emphasize poetic meaning. The initial lack of coherence is, in these terms, an essential part of the exposition of meaning and not, as has often been stated, a representation of a failure to achieve order. Form, characterized by waves of cohesion and dissolution, mirrors in a realistic and effective manner, the chaos and confusion that threatens the unity and order of western civilization; a chaos that is explicitly

lyricism is, in the vision of the epic present, replaced by the harsh crudity that defines the age. The image created is both grotesquely humorous and startlingly vulgar, implying at the end of the passage the misappropriation of language for corrupt political purposes. Pound thus moves the narrative swiftly from the vision of "that light which comes from looking straight into the heart and then acting"¹ implicit in the narrative of canto XIII, where light shines on the balance of nature, to an absence of light, where nature is debased by the perverted and corrupt acts of humanity. As the politicians are dehumanised by their vulgarity, Pound suggests that the populus is similarly dehumanised, as is made explicit in the following passage:

Addressing the multitudes in the ooze,
 newts, water-slugs, water-maggots,
And with them.....r

[XIV:61]

Here, humanity is aligned to amphibious creatures dragging themselves through the mud and slime, being devoid of any dignity and existing in the dark. This serves as a graphic image of a tormented living hell, a clear example of a negative progression from Dante's "place mute of all light". The withholding of the names of those most guilty adds a sense of ambiguity and universality to the condition, but it also adds to the impression of failing language, a theme which acts as a unifying thread in this canto, and at key points in the poem as a whole.

In a direct sense, cantos XIV and XV can be read as a preparation for the famous 'usury cantos' XLV and LI, as the underlying concept of the negative effects of a tangible evil presence

¹E. Pound: Confucius: 1928/1965: 29

upon society unify the two visions. Similarly, both share an intensity of language and imagery that heightens the awareness of the centrality of the statements to the Cantos as a whole, facilitating a recognition of the arrival at a moment of poetic intensity. The harsh and prosaic nature of the diction, the forceful and challenging rhythms, and the didactic thrust combine to emphasise the accumulative achievement of the narrative thus far, as it shifts, evolves and transforms itself, finally resolving to display that all the opposing directions previously taken were in actuality leading to the same point, the point where western civilization is displayed as lacking any clarity or direction. As a locus for this recognition, Pound like Eliot in 'The Waste Land' focuses upon London as venue for this decline into the inferno;

Above the hell-rot
the great arse-hole,
 broken with piles,
hanging stalactites,
 greasy as sky over Westminster,
the invisible, many English,
 the place lacking in interest,
last squalor, utter decrepitude

[XIV:62]

Here, Pound evokes Eliot's vision of the "Unreal City"¹, again conveying a tone of Dantean suffering. However, whereas Dante's environment of punishment exists only in the abstract, in the after-life, Pound locates his in the present, in the concrete reality of experience. The method employed is to filter this vision of a London defined by decay, squalor and emptiness through the Modernist aesthetic based upon a combination

¹T.S. Eliot: 'The Waste Land': Collected Poems 1909-1962: 1963: 65
Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.

of fragmentation and direct representation, thus giving it a form of objective validity, so that the unreal, the "invisible", becomes the real, and the visible.

Implicit within the narrative of canto XLV is a concern with a loss of creative potential, as those who control power, such as the politicians who inhabit Westminster, are seen to abuse that power, using it to destructive ends. From this, the emphasis of canto XLV, as is apparent in the initial sequence of LI later in the poem, is upon a negative, an absence of creative potential, a darkness that engulfs all evidence of light. The essence of this negative comes to be identified in canto XV as the abstract force of "Usura", the culmination of the evil that is evident in the Cantos thus far. This evil is both a pervasive economic corruption, and a deeper malaise of which economic sin is merely a symptom, investing "Usura" with a multiplicity of meanings that gives it the power to transcend time and space, as Pound makes explicit in the unified vision that is canto XLV;

Usura is a murrain, usura
blunteth the needle in the maid's hand
and stoppeth the spinner's cunning. Pietro Lombardo
came not by usura
Duccio came not by usura
nor Pier della Francesca; Zuan Bellin' not by usura
nor was 'La Calunnia' painted.

[XLV:230]

Here, Pound makes reference to a time in aesthetic history when creativity was untainted by the darkness of "Usura", resulting in a clarity of form. In the poem as a whole, Art in all its varied manifestations is used to emphasise the health and balance within the moral and spiritual life of humanity. Enduring works of Art, of

architecture and sculpture, have their origins in moral clarity. The past is thus employed to illuminate the darkness of the present as, in the present, there is no equivalent, for example, of Botticelli's 'La Calunnia'. Specifically, the present that is implied in XLV through the awareness of loss, is that which is graphically defined in XIV, where "Usura", later elevated to the level of mythical evil, is presented with scatological directness as the outward manifestation of human corruption, stupidity and ignorance;

The slough of unamiable liars,
 bog of stupidities,
malevolent stupidities, and stupidities,
the soil of living pus, full of vermin,
dead maggots begetting live maggots,
 slum owners,
usurers squeezing crab-lice, pandars to authority,
pets-de-loup, sitting on piles of stone books,
obscuring the texts with philology

[XIV:63]

Usury, not yet transmuted into the more connotative "USURA" of canto XV (64) and canto XLV (229), is seen to form the basis of this loss of creative potential. Even at this early stage in the conceptual evolution of the poem, Pound identifies the centrality of usury as an agent of moral and social corruption and decay, a malignant "philosophy" that paradoxically obscures rather than illuminates. As in XLV however, usury is not simply a term representative of an economic philosophy, but is also seen as an abstract pervasive force of universal destruction. In the later canto, Pound makes reference to the recognition that usura is a "sin against nature" (229), that it engenders impotence and infertility. In XIV similarly, there is repeated allusion to the debasement of the earth, the prevalence of vermin and parasites, the "slow rot" (op. cit) that highlights usury as not simply a threat to aesthetic and intellectual life, but to the root of existence itself.

Thus, whilst usury is presented in abstract terms, Pound is intent upon displaying the tangible effects on society as a whole, an intention that creates a direct link between the two separate areas of the poem, in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' and 'The Fifth Decad of Cantos XLII-LI', emphasising a strong sense of thematic and narrative unity.

As is evident from this point in the evolution of the poem as a whole, Pound exploits the concept of usury as a non-specific and ultimately all encompassing term. This point is made evident in canto XIV, as usury modulates between being defined as a form of economic activity whilst simultaneously serving as the defining force in a scatological poetic vision of a corrupt and polluted landscape. This is a vision that recurs throughout the canto, but is one that is made most strongly at the end, as Pound brings the analysis to a conclusion with a passage that combines intense and emotive imagery with an identification of the source of the problem in the present;

And Invidia,
the corruptio, foetor, fungus,
liquid animals, melted ossifications,
slow rot, foetid combustion,
 chewed cigar-butts, without dignity, without tragedy,
 m Episcopus, waving a condom full of black-beetles,
monopolists, obstructors of knowledge,
 obstructors of distributiun.

[XIV:63]

In this single unified statement, Pound identifies both the cause, the "monopolists", with the effect, the "foetid combustion" that pollutes the landscape. Clearly, the poetic scatology of the verse is combined with the dry language of economics, through the references to the "obstructors of distribution", intensifying the weight of meaning implied by the term usury. Pound also restates the theme implicit in

the 'Malatesta Cantos' VIII-XI, and one that will become central to the discussion of the repression of passion in canto XXIX, of the relationship that he saw to exist between the institutions of the church, personified here in the form of ".....m Episcopus", and the agents of moral, spiritual and cultural decay in the guise of the aforementioned "monopolists". Specifically, Pound saw that the church, in both the Catholic and Protestant denominations, engendered a complex form of usury that was manifested in both the conventional financial sense and in a more pervasive spiritual sense. Further, this deployment of usury as a constant but ever shifting influence in the Cantos thus creates an effective unifying element within the fragmented structure of the poem as a whole. In this sense, there is the implication of irony here in that, whilst usury comes to be presented as the key agent of destruction, disorder and social disintegration in thematic terms, it increasingly occupies the role of unifier in structural terms.

The sense that the 'Hell-mouth Cantos' represent a significant point of crisis in the poem is not simply displayed through the manner in which disparate themes previously identified by Pound appear to cohere around the concept of "Usura". The very tone of these cantos asserts their centrality to 'A Draft of XXX Cantos'. Specifically, the rage and ferocity with which XIV-XV are delivered ensures that the reader cannot ignore their message and their aim, which is to take us down into the "middan" that is contemporary experience. As such, as the journey deeper into the underworld progresses, so the scatology, the explicitly vulgar and violent detail, increases correspondingly

From this, it is evident that there is a sense of

progression being instigated in this new sub-group of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos.' In the narrative, there is an intensification of the presentation of imagery associated directly with the decline and fragmentation of western civilization, focusing upon a broken, eroded and squalid landscape inspired and propagated by the evil "Usura". As such, XV continues directly from where XIV ended, with the tone and intensity of the language and imagery becoming even more scatological than was evident previously. Pound now employs this stance in order to analyse the paradoxical reversal that has occurred in the relationship that exists between courage and cowardice. In the 'Malatesta Cantos' for example, courage, valour and determination were celebrated as qualities that allowed the individual to achieve victory over adversity. In this new canto, however, this natural link between courage and positive achievement is undermined, as courageous action is seen to be self-destructive, with cowardice perverting the natural order of experience;

the courageous violent
 slashing themselves with knives,
 the cowardly inciters to violence
 n and. h eaten by weevils,
 ll like a swollen foetus,
 the beast with a hundred legs, USURA
 [XV:64]

Clearly, Pound identifies that cowardice is merely another manifestation of the evil "USURA", and what was previously celebrated as being virtuous, the courageous impulse towards self-glorification, as represented for example by the construction of the Tempio that illuminates VIII-XI, is debased and corrupted into a form of self-mutilation. As such the impulses towards heroicism, celebrated from canto I, and its opposite manifestation of cowardice are seen to merge in canto XV, as the distinction between the two is destroyed. This

destruction of the demarcation of what is conventionally good and evil is linked directly by Pound to "USURA", now personified as "the beast with a hundred legs" that anticipates both the image of "Geryon twin with usura" presented in canto LI (251) and "The serpent, evil against Nature's increase" defined in 'Addendum for C' (812). This sustained reference to, and development of, the concept of "usura" as a tangible evil force is thus employed to suggested unity throughout the whole of the Cantos.

Further, within the confines of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', the 'Hell-mouth Cantos' emerge as a group in which the disparate and often apparently contradictory arguments previously stated in the poem are brought together in a coherent statement of recognition. Whilst these cantos focus textually upon the theme of increased fragmentation within contemporary civilization, they serve to display a level of localized unity that mirrors that previously exhibited in the 'Malatesta Cantos VIII-XI'. As such, the content of the cantos emphasise the decline into chaos that is the condition representative of modern experience, whereas the form suggests unity, thus highlighting the paradoxical conflict evident throughout the Cantos between the opposing impulses towards order and disorder. In this sense, the poem as a whole can be seen as the dramatisation of the Modernist quest to locate order in an increasingly disordered environment. The 'Hell-mouth Cantos' serve as an attempt to bring a degree of coherence to the chaos of this condition.

Throughout cantos XIV-XV Pound creates the sense of encroaching darkness to accompany the decline into chaos that is at the centre of the analysis. The tone is set by the opening line of XIV,

discussed above, where light is seen to be mute rather than devoid. Thus, from the outset of the 'Hell Mouth Cantos', there is the implication of the corruption of light. The vitality that is implicit in light as an image of creativity has been deadened by the evil "usura" that now dominates civilization. Pound begins with the powerful suggestion of "luce muto" (XIV:61), and the forceful momentum generated by the subsequent lines creates an awareness that, throughout the narrative, this essential element is being systematically extinguished by the negative actions of humanity, an awareness that is heightened by the increased squalor evident in canto XV. Indeed, in the second half of canto XV, Pound populates this environment of intensifying darkness with imaginative and yet realistic nightmares that take the reader into the realm of deepest night;

Andiamo!

One's feet sunk,
the welsh of mud gripped one, no hand-rail,
the bog-suck like a whirl-pool,
and he said:

Close the pores of your feet!

[XV:66]

Here, the image is one of a futile struggle for escape from the quagmire of contemporary squalor. The reference to the mud and the "bog-suck" displays that there is an absence of light, as mud characteristically swamps all light, and indeed all life. As such, the environment, the nightmare dreamscape, is now one where light cannot exist. Just as humanity is being suffocated by the mud, so too light is suffocated, ultimately suggesting that light itself is the vanquished hero of the passage. The vision appears totally negative, with the possibility of escape, as suggested by the hand-rail, being tactically removed. However, just as this avenue is closed, a new potential is introduced in

the form of the anonymous voice of salvation, stressing the paradoxical nature of these cantos. The voice is implicitly that from within the self, the enduring intelligence that is able to transcend the "whirlpool". Pound is thus attempting to present the idea that, even in the depths of darkness, the light of consciousness can break through to indicate, or illuminate, the path of 'right action'.

It is quickly revealed that this voice, stored in the consciousness, is aligned to that of Plotinus(c.205-270), the most significant of the Neoplatonic light philosophers, who is accredited as being the originator of the theory of "Iamblicus' light". It is significant that, at the heart of this theory is the concept that light denotes the oneness of creation, the single principal from which the plurality of all things is derived. Thus, at this point of complete darkness, light is heralded as the source of spiritual and creative energy, the vital force that can lead the hero of the canto, in effect representing humanity as a whole, out of the hell that was entered textually in XIV. Towards the end of XV therefore, Pound evokes Plotinus as a potential guide out of this nightmare of a living hell:

And my eyes clung to the horizon,
oil mixing with suit;
and again Plotinus:
To the door,
Keep your eyes on the mirror.

[XV:66]

Thus, Plotinus serves as a voice of reason, of 'right action', that enters the dark realm of the nightmare hell as a positive force able to potentially reawaken the hero, to return humanity to the light. The "door" which Pound refers to here, in this sense, could be seen to be

that which separates the consciousness, or the light, from the unconscious, or the darkness. Plotinus urges the hero of the canto to seek this "door" just as Pound is urging civilization to seek the light, emphasising once more the didactic intention of the Cantos as guide to renewal. Thus, the downward momentum generated in the 'Hell-mouth cantos' shifts direction at this point, as implicitly positive images associated with renewed vision threaten to replace the dark and scatological ones that previously dominated these cantos. Pound, in depicting eyes clinging "to the horizon", suggests the desire to see beyond the immediate and the transitory, implied to be the current condition of modern man. The need is now to locate the permanent which directs the reader back to the message of Kung, analysed and celebrated in XIII as "order within" (58). It is significant, in this context, that Pound adopts the now unusual use of the first person, "my eyes", largely absent since the rejected 'Three Poetry Cantos', implying both the importance of this statement to narrative as a whole, and its personal validity. Pound assumes the role of participant in the inferno in order to give weight to the recognised need to emerge from the "bog-suck" into some form of purgatory where recompense can be made.

This potential re-emergence is finally implied at the close of canto XV, as Pound advances the nightmare narrative to the point of reawakening. The narrative arrives at the threshold that separates dream from reality, what could be interpreted as the purgatorial stage in what is clearly developing into a Dantean structure. Again Plotinus is evoked, and once more there is considerable ambiguity in the passage, suggesting a potential conflict or paradox in the direction that the poem will take:

Oblivion,
forget how long,
sleep, fainting nausea.
"Whether in Naishapur or Babylon"
I heard in the dream.
Plotinus gone,
And the shield tied under me, woke;
The gate swung on its hinges;
Panting like a sick dog, staggered,
Bathed in alkali, and in acid.
'Ἡελίov γ' Ἡελίov
blind with the sunlight,
Swollen-eyed, rested,
lids sinking, darkness unconscious.
[XV:66-67]

Pound, here, evokes a vision of the realm between nightmare and awakening. He captures the moment when dream is overtaken by reality, and the question that the passage raises is which of the two states is the most unbearable. Sleep, as in Eliot's 'The Waste Land', represents "oblivion", but now it is allied to suffering rather than the empty 'warmth' of winter, as expressed in 'The Burial of the Dead'. Therefore, the implication is that, in dreams, the horror of reality is replicated. This awareness is further emphasised by the way in which the two realms appear to merge one into the other, with both the sleep and the wakening state heralding the pain of existence, creating a dark surrealism that anticipates Samuel Beckett's 'Malone Dies' and 'The Unnamable' where there is no escape from the enduring perception of reality, no "oblivion". Added to this is the ambiguous recognition of "Plotinus gone", implying ironically that the guide to Iamblicus' light, the light of positive action, exists only in dream; that it is in the everyday reality that such light has been extinguished, again giving emphasis to the suggestion that the horror of nightmare reality is only surpassed by the actual.

The closing lines of this passage bring further

weight to the air of ambiguity that has been carefully generated by Pound throughout canto XV. The Homeric "'Ἡελιον τ' Ἡελιον", meaning "The sun, the sun", explicitly anticipates an emergence out of the darkness that has dominated cantos XIV and XV up to this point and into the light, and hence being suggestive of the victory of the positive over the negative. However, this implied victory is significantly qualified by the paradox created by the juxtaposition of the sunlight with blindness. The sun here does not inspire an awakening but rather intensifies the darkness, finally deepening the state of "darkness unconscious" that envelops the first-person narrator. Thus, at this mid-point of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', Pound introduces into the fragmented analysis of critical moments in the history of civilization, a personal and immediate imaginative vision of the reality of the present, one that highlights a spiritual and cultural loss of direction.

This ambiguity expressed at the close of canto XV leads directly into canto XVI, as here the narrator appears to emerge from the darkness of unconsciousness into a purgatorial landscape, momentarily implying that the sunlight previously encountered did indeed inspire a rejuvenation, an awakening out of the nightmare of existence. Allusions to Dante are here made explicit as Pound evokes the moment when Dante and Virgil, after reaching the depths of hell at the centre of the earth, begin their difficult ascent back, finally attaining the mouth of Hell on Easter Sunday, the day of resurrection. The vision that Dante and Virgil witness in 'Purgatorio' is of "the beautiful things that heaven bears...", echoed by Pound to darkly ironic effect at the opening of the canto:

And before hell mouth; dry plain

and two mountains;
On the one mountain, a running form,
and another
In the turn of the hill; in hard steel
The road like a slow screw's thread,
The angle almost imperceptible,
so that the circuit seemed hardly to rise;
And the running form, naked, Blake,
Shouting, whirling his arms, the swift limbs,
Howling against the evil

[XVI:68]

Clear parallels arise at this point between Dante's journey into hell and Pound's as defined in cantos XIV-XVI. In both epics, the poet experiences a vision of the inferno that on one level is nightmarish and otherworldly, and on another level is closely aligned to the social and political reality of the time. Both Dante and Pound adopted the epic structure, and the scope that such a form allows, to make strong criticisms of the corruption of civilization. However, whereas Dante emerges from the torments of the inferno to look upon a vista of paradisaical splendour and vitality, Pound visualizes a barren scene devoid of moisture and thus life, peopled by naked individuals trapped and tormented into insanity. Pound's vision is of a natural environment, with mountains and hills echoing Dante, but the description of aridity immediately transforms the purgatorial into an extension of the infernal. Images of imperceptibility and of "circuit" add to the sense of entrapment that sets the tone of the opening of XVI. The reference to Blake in this context is initially bemusing given his visionary and spiritual status. However, it could be that Blake is evoked to represent the enlightened spirit who struggles heroically against the forces of corruption and evil of his time, suggesting that he too has undertaken the journey that Dante followed and that Pound is presently undertaking. Blake, like Pound in the Cantos, used poetry as a medium

through which to explore the relationship that was seen to exist between the abstract and the otherworldly concept of hell, and the reality of the hell as a representation of contemporary experience. This recognition recalls Pound's analysis of the "hen-yard in a printing house" (61) in canto XIV that adapts Blake's vision of "a Printing house in Hell" from 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell' that Pound evokes at the close of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos'.

Whilst the reference to Dante's "hell mouth" implies an emerging, a rising above the torment of the infernal nightmare of existence, there is a contrary motion being suggested in the initial passages of canto XVI. As the eyes turn from the "steel mountain" (68) to focus upon the "blue lakes of acid" (ibid), the emphasis is clearly placed upon submerging, of being drawn down into the vortex, thus intensifying the tone of suffering and loss that Pound is attempting to convey in these cantos, as is clearly stated in the following passage,

Palux Laerna,
the lake of bodies, aqua morta,
of limbs fluid, and mingled, like fish heaped in a bin,
and here an arm upward, clutching a fragment of marble,
And the embryos, in flux,
new inflow, submerging,
Here an arm upward, trout, submerged by the eels;
and from the bank, the stiff herbage
the dry nobbled path, saw many known, and unknown,
for an instant;
submerging,
The face gone, generation.

[XVI:69]

The passage opens with a reference to the swamp of Lerna, where Hercules killed the Hydra, and immediately enforces images of death and decay. The bodies now are not those of the tormented souls, whirling their arms

'J. Bronowski (ed.): The Penguin Poets: William Blake: 1958: 101

and "Howling against the evil", as were seen at the opening of the canto. Rather, the bodies are lifeless; the only motion is an artificial one, generated by the flux of the "aqua morta". The image created by this passage is of a further nightmare landscape filled with the disembodied limbs of a myriad of lost souls, but there is also the strong implication that Pound is actually presenting a deeply personal vision of the trenches of the First World War. In this context, the "arm upward, clutching a fragment of marble" refers to the sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska who, immediately prior to his death at Neuville St. Vaast in 1915, had completed the 'Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound' (1914) in marble. The arm raised symbolizes the defiant spirit of the creative individual attempting to transcend the suffocating mire of contemporary evil, the marble itself symbolizing an enduring beauty that man-made destructiveness cannot debase. Thus again, the nightmare landscape is not divorced from, but is integral to contemporary reality. This implication is emphasised at the close of this passage with Pound's reference to the "face gone, generation", what he termed in Gaudier-Brzeska : A Memoir as "the war waste", the generation of artists and thinkers who were sacrificed to the pointless and, to Pound, usurious events of the 1914-1918 war, as is displayed later in canto XVI.

As an effective juxtaposition, in the next passage of the canto, Pound appears to locate a degree of tranquility amid what

¹Gaudier-Brzeska : A Memoir; 1970; 17. "It is part of the war waste. Among many good artists, among other young men of promise there was this one sculptor already great in achievement at the age of twenty-three, incalculably great in promise and in the hopes of his friends." In this short passage, Pound captures the loss of hope that was felt by the scale of death in the First World War, a loss that is present throughout the Cantos.

is a traditional pastoral scene. From the pain of loss, the pastoral represents a place of refuge, but the tone is consistent with that of the previous statement. Here, as at "Palux Laerna", there is the pervasive air of sadness and resignation, suggesting that whilst there is a juxtaposition of images and scenes, there is also coherence and unity. The passage depicts a transcendence of the "aqua morta" as the subjective first person narrator, present as a unifying voice from XV, ascends to the top of a purgatorial mountain to seek rest within a paradise populated by the heroic voices of Sigismundo and Domenico Malatesta, residually active in the memory from cantos VIII-XI. Again, Pound takes his cue from Dante, this time rendering an impressionistic echo of the 'Earthly Paradise' sequence from 'Purgatorio';

Then light air, under saplings,
the blue banded lake under æther,
an oasis, the stones, the calm field,
the grass quiet,
and passing the tree of the bough
The grey stone posts,
and the stair of gray stone,
the passage clean-squared in granite:
descending,
and I through this, and into the earth,
patet terra,
entered the quiet air

[XVI:69]

The vision commences seductively, as the landscape calms and subdues the narrator with its romantically charged perfection. However, the reality is soon made explicit as an undercurrent of coldness and hardness materialises through the sustained reference to the greyness of the granite stairs. Significantly, the stone steps lead not upwards towards paradise but rather downwards, drawing the narrator back into the inferno. As such, the vision ultimately emerges as being deceptive, a transient illusion that offers escape rather than renewal, anticipating the vision of "Ligur' acide", the Siren's song, that is rejected as a

signifier of false perception at the opening of canto XX.

The canto can be read as an attempt by Pound to make sense of the complexities and contradictions inherent in civilization through a merging of history and myth. Thus, the images themselves often appear contradictory as they shift from the positive to the negative and back again. The next passage once more sees the narrator placed within a pastoral scene that appears as a continuation of the previous vision, dulled into reverie by the calm and tranquility, only to have the mood shattered in the most violent and destructive manner:

Prone in that grass, in sleep;
et j'entendis des voix: . . . wall . . . Strasbourg
Galliffet led that tripple charge. . . Prussians
and he said [Plarr's narrartion]
it was for the honour of the army.
[XVI:70]

The voices that awaken the narrator are no longer those of distant myth and history but of a war of the recent past. The mythical undertone pervades however, as the opening line of this passage once more evokes Dante's 'Purgatorio', reinforcing the ever-present link between epic history and the present. Specifically, the line refers to the moment when Dante faints upon the grass after having his sins revealed to him by Beatrice. When he awakens, he finds himself up to his head in a river. The voice he hears upon awakening is that of salvation in the form of Matilda, the Lady of the Garden, who directs him on his way to "the blessed shore" [Purgatorio 31: 85-108]. The implication is that the water serves as a medium within which Dante is able to purge his sins. This epic narrative is clearly exploited by Pound to display how, in the modern age, there is no voice of salvation but rather the

disembodied voices of war and destruction. The war that Pound evokes is a merging of a history of recent conflicts, with the Franco-Prussian and the First World Wars woven together into one continuous state of destruction. As such, as the narrative progresses, these voices are identified as the aforementioned Henri Gaudier-Brzeska and the Humanist philosopher T.E. Hulme, both of whom are evoked by Pound as the lost voices of the future.

It becomes clear at this point in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' that the first person narrator, largely absent since the 'Three Poetry Cantos', is not to be seen specifically as Pound, or indeed as any recognisable individual, but rather as a universal personification of civilization, and the horrors that the 'I' of these cantos witnesses are those perpetrated against society by the similarly personified evil force of "usura" identified in canto XV. Further, in the passage quoted above, Pound makes the link between the enduring force of usury and the recent cataclysmic wars that have deprived civilization of figures such as Gaudier-Brzeska and T.E. Hulme, figures who Pound recognised as representing the replenishment of aesthetic and cultural existence. Specifically, in canto XVI, Pound brings this recognition to life through the realistic depiction of events. He does not simply report upon the situation lost in the past, but rather allows events to unfold as if they were a part of the present reality, dissolving the boundaries of time and space by apparently placing himself and the reader at the scene, giving history validity in the present. This again illustrates the ambiguity surrounding the use of the 'I' in canto XVI, with the first person narrator being objectified as a universal perception, whilst simultaneously being personalized through the sharing in the experience unfolding in the narrative. Pound therefore can be seen to

be employing the technique of manipulating history imaginatively that has been evident since Pound's dialogue with Browning's Sordello in 'Three Cantos I', and one that formed the basis of the analysis of Sigismundo Malatesta in cantos VIII-XI.

Through the allusion to Gaudier-Brzeska and T.E. Hulme, the voices that the narrator hears from this point on in the canto are those of a succession of recent wars, previously identified as being from the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, to World War One, and, as the canto progresses, on to the Russian Revolution. Significantly, these voices all tell of the same thing; death and decay. Pound thus identifies the existence of a strand of meaning, captured within the voices, that unifies these events, defining them once again not as separate occurrences but as episodes in a negative continuum, a single ongoing catastrophe or crisis threatening the stability of western civilization. Further, it is clearly evident from the thematic unity of this group of cantos that this strand is aligned to the destructive force of usury. The form that canto XVI takes here is equally significant in highlighting this recognition. The voices surface within the consciousness of the narrator as snatches of fragmented dialogue, disembodied commands that emphasize the despair and desperation of battle, and stories of brutality and corruption. These voices merge to create a collage of human suffering out of which emerges a sense of loss that is both universal and personal,

They put Adlington on Hill 70, in a trench
dug through corpses
With a lot of kids of sixteen,
Howling and crying for their mamas,
And he sent a chit back to his major:
I can hold out for ten minutes
With my sergeant and a machine-gun.

And they rebuked him for levity.
And Henri Gaudier went to it,
and they killed him,
And killed a good deal of sculpture,
And ole T.E.H. he went to it,
With a lot of books from the library,
London Library, and a shell burned 'em in a dug-out,
And the Library expressed its annoyance.

[XVI:71]

Pound here makes reference to his colleagues in the artistic community of London who suffered and died in World War One, whilst also recognising the anonymous masses that shared a similar fate, highlighting the immense waste in human terms; the loss of a generation. Combined with this is the associated loss of their potential creativity. This creativity is expressed in a twofold manner in the passage, as Pound alludes to the "kids of sixteen", the youth whose potential has not yet been realized, and ironically are underage for enlisting, and the artist whose potential is evident but not fully developed. He states in explicit terms the importance of creativity to the endurance of civilization, thus the reference to Gaudier-Brzeska and T.E. Hulme not simply as individuals but as contributors to the cultural wealth of society. With their deaths died their potential. The point that Pound is making here is that what endures and revitalizes civilization is Art, and if that Art is stifled or destroyed, it is the totality of civilization that is debased. The irony that is identified at the end of this passage, with the reference to the London Library, is that the custodians of this aesthetic tradition are blind to this reality, failing to recognise that the real loss was not the books but the creative individual, and thus their contribution to the advancement of the literary heritage. The suggestion is that the influence of "USURA", as a force of moral decay, is not restricted to the battlefield but is evident throughout society.

In a broader sense, canto XVI serves to bring the strand of historical analysis up to date. At the end of the canto, the presentation of the hell of war arrives at the present, with an analysis of the Russian Revolution and its legacy, emphasizing that the destruction and waste of war continues. Indeed, Pound brings this pivotal group of cantos to a close by extending the vision into the future, anticipating the detailed examination of the Revolution expressed in canto XIX. In canto XVI, however, Pound confines the analysis to the initial stages of the conflict, but there is always the implicit suggestion that further and potentially greater destruction is imminent,

So we used to hear it at the opera,
That they wouldn't be under Haig;
and that the advance was beginning;
That it was going to begin in a week.

[XVI:75]

Here, the canto ends by looking forward to a bleak inevitability, with the Russian refusal to obey the armistice secured by Marshall Haig at the close of the 1914-1918 war. Pound again focuses upon the debasement of creativity and Art in the Twentieth Century with the reference to the opera. Art is no longer recognised as a celebration of human creativity but has become associated with the instigation of human destruction. The image of the opera that Pound evokes captures directly the ambience of the scene, with snatches of conversation arising above the background created by the music. The audience is oblivious to the beauty of the opera, they are consumed by the gossip of intrigue and insurrection. The irony is that the music is reduced to background noise, debased of all transcendental value. Art, through this association, has been corrupted and consequently its potential to rejuvenate society has been

lost. The accompanying tone of the passage is one of coldness, of an absence of emotion. There is no anger here, as there was at the end of XIV, which implies a degree of resignation at this point. The tone suggests that all vitality of emotion has been drained from the scene, leaving a void that recalls Eliot's 'The Love Song Of J. Alfred Prufrock' (1917), where "In the room the women come and go/ Talking of Michelangelo".

When 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' is viewed as a whole, it is evident that cantos XIV-XVI forms both the geographical and the critical centre of the group, the negative antithesis to the positive achievements expressed in the 'Malatesta Cantos'. Indeed, this centrality strongly suggests that Pound did have a concept of order for the poem; an order that, at least at this stage, is relatively explicit. Following on from the indecision of the 'Three Poetry Cantos', Pound began the narrative with Odysseus' descent into Hades, a critical moment in epic mythology. Subsequent cantos relate a selective and fragmented vision of the potentials and failures of the past, both historically and mythically, in an attempt to display how civilization has, in essence, followed the path of Odysseus into Hell. Cantos XIV-XVI serve as a point of recapitulation, as the disparate and fragmented elements employed thus far are brought together, and order and unity is achieved out of the chaos of history. This order is emphasised by the isolation of the negative force of "USURA" that has directed the decline of civilization. Further, cantos XIV-XVI mirror the opening of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', as Pound replaces the mythical descent into Hell with an

'T.S. Eliot: Collected Poems 1909-1962: 1963: 13.



actual descent, as represented by the events of World War One and the moral and spiritual vacuum that has ensued. In this context, canto XVI, with its personal and universal depiction of loss in the present, acts as a point of finality, a drawing to a close the narrative development generated from the outset. In these terms, it can be seen that, whilst there have been coherent sub-groups such as the 'Malatesta Cantos', cantos I-XVI come to form a unified whole. When taken together, the separate and initially diverse cantos do generate narrative and thematic progression that is both logical and reflective of the condition of decline that Pound is presenting. Further, this was clearly a point recognized by Pound himself when, in 1924, he came to publish the group under the title 'A Draft of XVI Cantos' that anticipated the final structure of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' in 1930.

CHAPTER SIX

CANTOS XVII-XIX OF 'A DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS'

No gull-cry, no sound of porpoise,
Sand as of malachite, and no cold there,
the light not of the sun.

[XVII:77]

As if to emphasise the unity that exists within 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', Pound begins canto XVII, the opening of what could be called the second phase of this initial sequence of the poem, by returning to the ambiguities left unanswered in canto I. Specifically, canto I ended with the inconclusive phrase "so that" [I:5], implying that Odysseus' fate at the hands of Aphrodite was unresolved, and would at some point be re-examined. This ambiguity set the tone of the opening of the poem, leaving behind a significant and enduring question as to the potential conclusion of this statement. This in turn suggested a pervasive mood of failure in the following cantos, a failure to communicate and make sense of reality, a key theme of the poem as Pound enters the chaos of contemporary experience. Canto XVII appears to attempt to answer this question, as this new statement finally takes up the narrative from where canto I broke off. This in turn suggests a new approach by Pound, an approach that is continued throughout the Cantos, that of returning to threads that appear to have been abandoned and forgotten. These threads of meaning serve in themselves to provide a loose framework around which a sense of unity and coherence can be

built. In this sense, in canto XVII, Pound sees his hero figure, implicitly Odysseus as identified through the link with canto I, immersed in a vision that approximates an earthly paradise,;

So that the vines burst from my fingers
And the bees weighted with pollen
Move heavily in the vine-shoots:
chirr--chirr--chir-rikk--a purring sound,
And the birds sleepily in the branches.

[XVII:76]

Here, the reader sees a return to the first person narrator who was swamped by the fragmented voices half way through canto XVI. However, the whole mood, tone, and setting of the vision is subtly different from that of the previous fresco. Whilst canto XVI defined elements of pastoral paradise, as defined by the "light air, under saplings" (69), there was always the accompanying tone of regret and impending decay, as indicated by the "patet terra" (ibid). There, the paradise was detailed to provide a counterpoint to the corruption and horror of contemporary existence. Now the mood is different; the vision of earthly paradise has a freshness and vitality that infuses it with an independence and a validity of its own. The vision of paradise defined in the opening of canto XVII has a timeless quality, transcendent of the corrupting forces of mundane existence. The vision is one of opulence and fertility, an ideal and an escape from the horrors of canto XVI where order is established within the unity of natural forces that recalls the wisdom of Kung in canto XIII.

A detailed reading of canto XVII sheds some light on the use of the first person narrator in this and the previous cantos. Given that the "my fingers" implies personal involvement in the vision,

there is a subtle but significant variation on the introduction of the self in the narrative than that generated for example in 'Three Cantos I'. The first person narrator as presented in that canto was clearly representative of the poet struggling to find an epic direction; the self projected into the character of Browning's Sordello. Thus Pound was following Browning's technique of employing a mask in an attempt to universalize the personal. Here, the "my fingers" implies the personal but, in reality Pound is creating a protagonist, a character who, as this second phase of the 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' progresses will adopt many guises. The result is the opposite of the earlier position, as Pound can now be seen to be striving to personalize the universal.

Having forged a link between canto XVII and canto I in the opening line, Pound continues by drawing upon material initially introduced in canto II. Specifically, in canto XVII Pound clarifies one of the ambiguities implicit in the opening line by naming his new protagonist as "ZAGREUS", a lesser known name for Dionysus, the god of wine, and not Odysseus as was initially suggested through the reference to the first canto. In canto II, Dionysus appeared under the name of Lyaeus, and this shifting identity is itself significant in that it expresses both the universality of the god, and his enduring importance within the imaginative world of the Cantos. The link, therefore, is not simply that the same god is evoked in both cantos, but that in both Pound invests him with greater meaning than his traditional role in mythology implies. In both cantos, the imagery that defines Dionysus is related to the vine and the power it possesses. For example, in Canto II Pound notes;

And Lyaeus: "From now, Acoetes, my alters,

Fearing no bondage,
fearing no cat of the wood,
Safe with my lynxes,
feeding grapes to my leopards,
Olibanum is my incense,
the vine grows in my homage."

[II:8-9]

The vine, as a "homage", is used as a symbol for the fertility and strength that Dionysus represents, the qualities of rejuvenation and change that Pound is seeking in this point in the evolution of the poem. This vine is implicitly that which "burst from my fingers" at the opening of canto XVII. As such, Dionysus, as a character, becomes imbued with a power to generate spiritual enlightenment and to identify moral purity, a state that accommodates liberation from the "bondage" of the forces of corruption highlighted throughout cantos I-XVI. A condensed version of this passage recurs in canto XVII, with Pound making the explicit connection between Dionysus/Lyaeus/Zagreus and the heightened states of spiritual perception closely aligned with the possibility of identifying the existence of an earthly paradise, as is glimpsed, for example, in the following passage;

Zagreus, feeding his panthers,
the turf clear as on hills under light.
And under the almond-trees, gods,
with them, *chorus nympharum*. Gods,
Hermes and Athene,
As shaft of compass,
Between them, trembled --
To the left is the place of fauns,
sylva nympharum

[XVII:77]

Here, the relationship between Dionysus and light is significant. The light that emanates from the scene has previously been identified by Pound in this canto as "the light not of the sun" (XVII:77), the Neoplatonic, primal divine light that permits access to the enduring

reality of the world of myth. This light is clearly presented as being subtly different to that of the sun, the light of the mundane and impermanent reality of contemporary existence, as defined by the destruction experienced in canto XVI. Specifically, in canto XVI, the light "as after a sun-set" (69) was seen to be transcient, impermanent, receding from the perception. In canto XVII, there is clear evidence of the desire to seek an escape from this vision into the light that endures, a recognition of the need to progress beyond the brutality and waste of modern civilization, to relocate the timeless truths expressed in myth and to give them validity in the present, thus the timeless nature of the tone of this canto.

At the close of this first canto of the second phase of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', Pound turns his attention to Venice, the city celebrated for its permanence in 'Three Cantos I' and canto III. Once again, Pound employs material and settings from the early cantos of the first phase of the poem in an attempt at recapitulation, emphasising the desire for a new beginning. Like the idealized vision of earthly paradise evoked throughout canto XVII, Venice emerges as a place of escape from the conflict and crisis of existence, and the concept of the seeking of a refuge comes to dominate the narrative at this stage. The implication of the cityscape that Pound defines is one drawn from the memory, where the imagination has transformed a reality into a myth. Venice now is populated by personages who inhabit the imaginative world of the Cantos and who recur throughout, identifying Venice as a haven from reality;

And the white forest of marble, bent bough over bough,
The pleached arbour of stone,

Thither Borsò, when they shot the barbed arrow at him,
And Carmagnola, between the two columns,
Sigismundo, after the wreck of Dalmatia.
Sunset like the grasshopper flying.

[XVII:79]

The three characters mentioned here, Borso d'Este, patron of the arts and seeker of peace who narrowly escaped assassination on the Grand Canal, and who is alluded to in cantos XX and XXI, Francesco da Carmagnola, Italian militarist executed between the two columns of St. Marco for treason, and Sigismundo Malatesta, the hero figure of cantos VIII-XI, all recognise Venice as being a place of spiritual sanctuary at times of personal crisis. The implication of this is that Pound can now be seen to be aligning himself with these historical figures, as he identifies the recuperative powers that are evident within this location. The suggestion is that, at times of crisis, one can resurrect such a place in the mind as a way of rejuvenating the resources required to continue the struggle. In this sense, canto XVII emerges as a turning inwards into the consciousness following extended struggle with the reality of the external realm dramatized in canto XIV-XVI. Pound displays, in a manner similar to that of the 'Pisan Cantos LXXIV-LXXXIV' (1948) that, whilst civilization is destroying itself beyond repair, paradise can be located on an individual level within the mind. Thus, Pound recalls, with a reinvigorated poetic intensity, the splendour of the architecture and sculpture of Venice, infusing the concrete, the marble and the stone, with a transcendent and vital quality drawn from the creative will of figures such as Sigismundo Malatesta, who Pound now merges with this location where "Gods float in the azure air" (III:11).

The close of canto XVII is structured around the

repetition of "And" as a means of creating a sense of the accumulative power of the paradisaical vision, implying that each strand of perception intensifies the transcendent value of the meditation. This technique also serves to allow the fragmented sweep of the consciousness to be unified within the mind of the perceiver, forging a coherent narrative out of the disparate elements employed. This coherence appears to continue into the following canto, XVIII, as the repetition of "And" is sustained, suggesting a structural unity between the two and implying that the vision located in canto XVII will be maintained,

And of Kublai:

"I have told you of that emperor's city in detail

And will tell you of the coining in Cambaluc

that hyght the secret of alchemy:

They take bast of the mulberry-tree,

That is the skin between the wood and the bark,

And of this they make paper, and mark it

Half a tornesel, a tornesel, or a half-groat of silver..."

[XVIII:80]

However, whilst there is the suggestion of structural continuity, there is once again a dramatic thematic shift in the narrative as the meditation on earthly paradise is juxtaposed with an analysis of the origins of money. The "And" acts as the pivot upon which this juxtaposition balances, allowing the divide that exists between the two cantos to be bridged swiftly and smoothly. By its grammatical function as a conjunction "And" implies not a new start but a continuation. However, Pound manipulates the reader's expectations by promising one thing, the extension of the voyage within paradise, and delivering the opposite, a journey back to a point in the origins of contemporary hell. In this instance, this point is when Marco Polo discovers Kublai Khan's system for issuing and controlling currency and reports it in 'IL Milione' (1296). There is sustained irony in the passage as Pound

continues the theme of the fruitfulness of nature central to canto XVII, as embodied now in the image of the "Mulberry-tree", and subverts it in an attempt to display how usurious finance corrupts and defiles nature. There is also an implicitly ironic reference back to the moral acts of Kung as celebrated in canto XIII, where Pound stated,

And Kung said, and wrote on the bo leaves:
 If a man have not order within him
He can not spread order about him;
And if a man have not order within him
His family will not act with due order

[XIII:59]

In this earlier canto, Kung uses paper taken from the abundance of nature to transmit morally just messages of order and stability. In canto XVIII however, Pound identifies a metamorphosis in this use of nature's abundance, as Khan uses paper for the tyrannical control of credit, an action that threatens order and stability.

In canto XVIII, Pound plays upon the concept of alchemy, being the pursuit of transforming baser materials into gold. The irony here is that Khan's actions in locating a short-cut that bypasses the scientific limitations of alchemy results not in an enhancement of nature but a debasement of it. The paper formed from the abundance of nature, whilst it acquires an increased superficial value, is ultimately defaced by the "mark" placed upon it. This is set in opposition to the way in which the "bo leaves" are elevated by Kung's inscription in canto XIII. Beyond this, the whole concept of alchemy is questioned in the canto, with alchemy coming to symbolize the creation of wealth out of nothing, a process inspired by greed and the desire for power. Pound thus identifies money as being the link between alchemy

and tyranny, as is directly stated in the following passage,

And they are written on by officials,
And smeared by with the great Khan's seal in Vermillion;
And the forgers are punished with death.
And all this costs the Khan nothing,
And so he is rich in the world.

[XVIII:80]

Pound employs an adaptation of Marco Polo's document here to bring an intensity and immediacy to the past event. The present tense is selected in an attempt to bring this past to life in the present, to display the relevance of the past to the present and to suggest how this point of origin has influence over contemporary actions, such as the modern tyranny detailed in canto XVI. Once again "And" is used, this time to quicken the pace of the narrative, to infuse it with vigour and vitality, and to introduce a degree of urgency.

In *Il Milione* Marco Polo tells of the paradise that Kublai Khan sought to build out of this pragmatic alchemy, which Pound alludes to with reference to the "mulberry-tree". This suggestion links Khan's desire with that of canto XVII. The emphasis now, however, is placed upon how Khan's paradise is undermined and destroyed by the tyranny that ensues. The paradise is seen to fail because it is grounded upon unsound moral and financial principles, principles based on greed and usury. Thus, the opening of the canto, with the references to punishment "with death" details the process by which this paradise is corrupted by the evil force that is evidently the same as that identified in canto XV as "USURA", the metaphysical malady that infects those who seek monetary control. Kublai Khan is held up as a prime example of this insidious process; one who begins by seeking paradise

but who ends by creating hell.

Canto XVIII continues with Pound identifying the existence of a direct link between Khan's system of financial control and the contemporary hell previously defined in canto XVI. The two eras, separated by over six hundred years, are seamlessly woven into one, displaying not simply the continuum but the homogeneity of the historical process. Pound determines to make explicit the link that he sees to exist between a system of financial control based upon usury, and war. The unavoidable conclusion that is reached in this canto is that, to Pound, war is a direct result of the unsound financial system that has a point of origin in the vision exemplified by Kublai Khan. The contemporary result of Khan's system is the recognition of the profitability of manufacturing armaments, and thus the notion that this factor serves as an incentive to war. This recognition is made explicit by Pound as he serves to personify this greed in the character of the unscrupulous "Mr. Giddings";

"Peace! Pieyce!!" said Mr. Giddings,
"Uni-ver-sal? Not while yew got tew billions ov money,"
Said Mr. Giddings, "invest in the man-u-facture
"Of war machinery. Haow I sold it to Russia--"

[XVIII:81]

As with "Baldy Bacon" in canto XII, Pound creates a caricature of the treacherous businessman who embodies the corruption of industrial civilization, using hyperbolic vernacular to create an exaggerated character, who is to be seen more as a representative type than as an actual person. The observation is both amusing and alarming as "Giddings" is ridiculed, primarily for his linguistic limitations, and reviled as an instigator of the type of waste and destruction that the

Cantos are aimed against. The passage succinctly defines one of the central arguments of the poem as a whole; that money dominates and controls the destiny of civilization in the modern world and, further, that this control is deleterious, a recognition emphasized to great effect later in the 'Usury Cantos' XLV and LI.

The subsequent passages of canto XVIII present a series of fragmentary anecdotes that re-emphasize the link between economics and war. Pound visualizes a series of grotesque characters, both real and imaginary, whose combined actions in the industrial and financial realms contribute to the perpetuation of pointless and meaningless hostility. In this sense, the canto ultimately displays the senselessness of the conflicts described in canto XVI, as the wars analysed are seen to have no moral purpose. These anecdotes are recounted with Pound's characteristic irony and humour, a now familiar technique that serves to highlight a degree of pathos, and a strong element of futility. The sum of these fragments is the awareness of the inevitability of the corruption and destruction of humanity in the face of greed and avarice, a recognition that Pound makes explicit at the close of the canto;

War, one war after another,
Men start 'em who couldn't put up a good hen-roost.

Also sabotage...

[XVIII:83]

At the end of the canto, Pound makes the observation that if wars are not generated, almost as a bi-product of the industrial process, then they must be created, identifying an evil that can be traced back to the

type of system of control of money invented by Kublai Khan at the opening of canto XVIII. The irony expressed is that those who have the ability to manufacture destruction have not aptitude for positive creativity, as symbolized by the image of the "hen-roost". Thus the canto, whilst initially appearing fragmented, through its shifts in time and characterization, exhibits an internal unity and coherence through the thematic progression that traces the contemporary condition back to its source in the development of monetary control.

This unity is explicitly continued into canto XIX, as Pound once more begins the new canto from where the previous one ended, with a reference to the act of "sabotage", stressing the desire to make explicit the thematic coherence that exists in cantos XVIII and XIX. Similarly, the anecdotal style remains to enforce the structural unity that Pound is striving for. However, the setting of the new canto initiates a shift from an emphasis upon war to peace time, and the "sabotage" is explicitly that of an industrial rather than military nature. The identity of the character that Pound alludes to at the opening of canto XIX, as at the end of canto XVIII, is not made clear; indeed, this anonymity serves to heighten the pervasive universality of the economic corruption that the unknown figure experiences. On this occasion, the character that Pound animates is not the corrupt "Mr. Giddings", the manufacturer and thus the controller of finance, but the small inventor seeking backing for his creation,

SABOTAGE? Yes, he took it up to Manhattan,
To the big company, and they said: Impossible.
And he said: I gawt ten thousand dollars tew mak 'em,
And I am a goin' tew mak 'em, and you'll damn well
Have to install 'em, awl over the place.

[XIX:84]

The vernacular is again employed, as in the case of the presentation of Giddings, but now it is used to evoke the determination of the creative individual as he struggles to gain recognition for his product in a marketplace that, as was displayed in canto XVIII, is dominated by the manufacture of arms. The inventor represents the force of creativity in the modern world, essentially aligning him with the figure of the artist. In this sense, this individual is projected as a complement, for example, to Sigismundo Malatesta in cantos VIII-XI, who was seen to struggle against all odds to find the finance necessary to build the Tempio. "SABOTAGE" occurs as the corporation has the power to suppress an invention that threatens profits, and thus Pound details another circumstance where creativity is thwarted by usurous financial control,

And they said: Oh, we can't have it.
So he settled for one-half of one million.
And he has a very nice place on the Hudson,
And that invention, patent, is still in their desk.
[XIX:84]

The invention, being controlled by patent, represents a potential unfulfilled, symbolizing the way in which civilization is being forced to stagnate under the influence of corrupt economic principles. Further, the inventor, the equivalent of the artist in the industrial realm, is himself ultimately corrupted, as he settles for the "one-half of one million", implying the pervasive influence that "usura" exerts in the present. Pound, in cantos XVIII and XIX, attempts to analyse the differing levels upon which society is dominated and directed by unsound financial practices, from the futility of war to the debasement of peace.

In the remainder of the canto, Pound returns to the

theme and situation introduced at the close of canto XVI, that of the Russian Revolution and the ambiguous motivations that sustained it. The actual basis for Pound's anecdotes at this stage is unclear as the passages are presented in highly condensed and unelaborated form, the narrative momentum being sustained through a series of reported conversations that imply a debate at a political conference. As in canto XVI, snatches of conversation and argument surface to create a collage of voices that combine to emphasize again the futility and tyranny of war. The tone that dominates is one of sadness and resignation at what has been lost, combined with the awareness that nothing new has been gained in replacement. The mood is explicitly of nostalgia for what has been destroyed in the present, as Pound states in the following scene where the old ambassadors are seen to be unable to make sense out of contemporary reality;

Das thust du nicht, Albert?
That was in the old days, all sitting around in arm-chairs,
And that's gone, like the cake shops in the Nevsky.
"No use telling 'em anything, revolutionaries,
Till they're at the end,
Oh, absolutely, AT the end of their tether..."

[XIX:86]

The implication presented is that blind revolutionary fervour is self-perpetuating and inherently destructive. The irony that Pound identifies here is that, in the contemporary situation, conventions such as the one dramatized are of no value; control of the political realm has been lost and a brutal form of anarchy reigns. Those who traditionally held the power, those who discuss the past, have allowed events to overtake them. The point that is being made is that these people have been rendered impotent by their concern with petty profiteering and self-aggrandisement. Pound once more expresses a sense

of the inevitability of cultural and social decay, as represented by "the cake shops in the Nevsky", a sophisticated avenue in St. Petersburg similarly referred to at the close of canto XVI (75), whose cultural life was decimated by the Revolution.

It is clear, in this canto, that Pound recognizes the arrival of another significant point of crisis in the development of the narrative. This time however, it can be seen that this crisis does not relate to the form or structure that the poem is taking but rather the approach that the poet is increasingly adopting. Pound, and thus 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' as a whole, appears to be becoming increasingly swamped in what could be described as cold and dry economic analysis, an analysis that is leaning towards repetition and stagnation, a state of affairs that Pound is criticizing in others. The explicit investigation and presentation of unsound economic practice, begun explicitly with canto XII and proceeded through cantos XIV, XV, XVI, XVIII, and XIX, with only the transient vision of an earthly paradise of cantos XIII and XVII providing poetic relief. Whilst these cantos are valuable in emphasizing Pound's theory that economic evil, in the form of usury, has lead to a more pervasive condition of cultural and spiritual decline and decay, it is evident that Pound himself saw the limitations of such a sustained approach, as stated in the anecdote dramatizing Pound's meeting with Arthur Griffiths, leader of Irish Sinn Fein, in canto XIX;

So we sat there, with the old kindly professor,
And the stubby little man was up-stairs.
And there was the slick guy in the other
corner reading The Tatler,
Not upside down, but never turning the pages,
And then I went up to the bed-room, and he said,
The stubby fellow: Perfectly true,

"But it's a question of feeling,
"Can't move 'em with a cold thing, like economics."
[XIX:84-85]

Griffiths, "the stubby little man," identifies a truth that lies at the centre of the possible flaw in the didactic intention of Pound's epic, that economic debate does not inspire the "feeling" that precipitates mass action and thus initiate the desired change in perception. This very statement, "Can't move 'em with a cold thing, like economics", is repeated in Pound's summary of the achievements and failures of the poem, in LXXVIII of the 'Pisan Cantos' (495) suggesting his central dilemma; the need to identify and report the source of corruption and evil in society whilst achieving an aesthetically valid poetic form that is aligned to the epic tradition as defined by Homer, Dante, and Browning. It is pertinent to note that the above three, all represented in the Cantos, similarly endeavoured to weave social, political and economic comment and criticism into their respected epics. Pound's compulsion to do the same merely serves as further evidence of his intention to locate his own epic within the established tradition.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CANTOS XX-XXIV OF 'A DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS'

Confusion, source of renewals;
Yellow wing, pale in the moon shaft,
Green wing, pale in the moon shaft,
Pomegranate, pale in the moon shaft,
White horn, pale in the moon shaft, and Titania
By the drinking hole,
 steps, cut in the basalt.

[XXI:100]

One of the central difficulties that can be identified in Pound's struggle with the form of the Cantos at this stage in the progression of the poem is the achievement of a balance between the didactic, the socio-economic impetus, and the poetic, the aesthetic essence of the whole. In the previous two cantos, Pound has been concerned with the particular, the painful reality of the present. In canto XX, however, Pound shifts his attention back to the transcendent, as made manifest in the enduring visions of Provence, Renaissance Italy, and the Lotus Eaters of Homer's Odyssey, a source that recurs throughout the narrative at times of crisis. Thus, this new canto emphasizes Pound's method of layering the particular present, the specific dark and decaying world between the two wars in which his attention is drawn to the prosaic, the economic cause and effect, with moments of past creative intensity, the poetically illuminated realm of myth and creative vitality. It should not be seen, however, that Pound, at these moments of crisis, is seeking escape from the negative realities of the

present into an idealized vision of past glories. Rather, he is attempting to highlight the futility and waste of the present through a juxtaposition with the wealth generated in the past, a wealth that, through the medium of Art, endures into and potentially effects the present. The implication that arises from the dialectic generated between cantos XIX and XX is that the present represents a state of impermanence when viewed with an understanding of the permanent qualities drawn from specific episodes of history and myth. Thus, the present condition of impermanence can be rectified through a return to the principals under which the examples of past achievements were originated. Through this process, Pound manages to make the poetic, the transcendental, as concrete as the factual, the gritty realism depicted in cantos XVIII and XIX.

Pound, as if to give emphasis to the inherently poetic nature of canto XX, begins with a universal appraisal of love, drawing upon variety of sources and languages from Latin, Greek, Provencal, and Italian. The resulting passage is a form of sound collage, where rhythm and tone are used to communicate directly on a level that surpasses the meaning of the individual words. Sound itself is a central theme, with the resonance of the diction expressing the way that beauty and unity of effect can be communicated through a divergent range of languages. The raw material, a combination of quotations drawn from Catullus, Homer, Cavalcanti and Propertius, exhibits no direct connection. However, Pound weaves them together to create an evocative and moving observation on the beauty of love that is free from sentimentality;

Sound slender, quasi tinnula,

Ligur' acide: Si no'us vei, Donna don plus mi cal
Negus vezer mon bel pensar no val."
Between the two almond trees flowering,
The viel held close to his side;
And another: s'adora".
"Possum ego naturae
non meminsse tuae!" Qui son Properzio ed Ovidio.
[XX:89]

The sonorous quality of the verse is further emphasized by the language itself, from the 'as if ringing' of "quasi tinnula" and the Siren's 'sweet, clear song' of "Ligur acide", to the reference to the viel, the lutelike instrument, suggesting the harmony of sound and diction. The effect of this lush unity of tone and meaning is the creation of a Hedonistic and passionate vision that is both sensual and seductive. The poet weaves a universal song of love that is reminiscent of the Sirens' song from the Odyssey, misleading unsuspecting sailors to their deaths. Thus, whilst the passage is clearly a poetic achievement, it also serves a cautionary purpose of warning against the impulse towards escapism at times of crisis. Pound lures the reader as the Sirens lured the sailors, exploiting beauty and tranquility to mask danger. The extracts that Pound borrows here are those that he admired as a young student of Romance and classical literature. His compulsion to revisit them, following the struggles embodied in cantos XVIII and XIX, suggest his succumbing to a form of intellectual hedonism as a means of escaping the horrors of contemporary corruption and decay. Rather, the juxtaposition of the lines from Catullus, Cavalcanti and Propertius, defining a passionate ideal, with those from Homer, identifying the danger of such an ideal in the Sirens' song, imply that Pound is aware of the potentially destructive consequences of such an approach, an awareness that is developed later in canto XX, as he focuses upon the fate of Parisina and Ugo, themselves destroyed by hedonistic passion.

Parisina was the daughter of Carlo Malatesta and cousin of Sigismundo Malatesta, the hero of cantos VII-XI. Her relevance to the canto is centred upon her marriage to Niccolo d'Este, Lord of Ferrara, in 1418 when she was fourteen and he thirty-four. In 1425, Niccolo discovered her adultery with his favoured son, Ugo Aldobrandino, and had them both beheaded in a fit of rage, an event that Pound returns to in canto XXIV. The emphasis in canto XX is placed upon the effect that this hedonistic act has on the mental stability of Niccolo, whilst also suggesting that the passionate abandon of the lovers served as a trigger to the destruction of the community of Ferrara that followed. Niccolo is thrown into a state of confusion and delirium following his act of brutal revenge. This leads him into a reverie on the parallel that exists between his own situation and that of the heroes of the classical and Romance literature seen at the opening of the canto. In this manner, Pound captures the timeless tragedy that follows abandonment to passion without regard for the consequences:

He was playing there at the palla.
Parisina -- two doves for an alter -- at the window,
"E'l Marchese
Stava per divenir pazzo
after it all." And that was when Troy was down
And they came here and cut holes in rock,
Down Rome way, and put up timbers;
And came here, condit Atesten...

[XX:90-91]

Pound here compares Parisina to Helen of Troy, and identifies the ensuing fall of the house of Este with that of the fall of Troy. Niccolo becomes so delirious with grief at the consequences of Parisina's hedonism that he loses himself in the world of morbid poetic fantasy, neglecting responsibility and sanity and allowing his empire to

crumble.

Given Pound's awareness of the 'coldness' of economics, as stated by Arthur Griffith in canto XIX, the passion and hedonism associated with Niccolo's narrative dramatizes once more the poet's struggle to locate the right poetic path, returning to the crisis of the 'Three Poetry Cantos' out of which the poem was born. Specifically, at the opening of canto XX, the temptation for the poet is one of escape into the seductive comfort of the Romance and classical literature. Pound then provides an historical equivalent of this impulse in the guise of Niccolo, highlighting the dangers of such an approach. As Niccolo abandons his responsibility to the present, submerging himself rather in a world of unreality, the temptation for the poet in the present is to follow a similar path into escapism. The story of Niccolo and Parisina can thus be seen to provide an historical correlative to Pound's own sense of indecision at this stage in the narrative, an indecision that manifests itself in the confusion of nature later in the canto:

Jungle:
Glaze green and red feathers, jungle,
Basis of renewal, renewals;
Rising over the soul, green virid, of the jungle,
Lozenge of the pavement, clear shapes,
Broken, disrupted, body eternal,
Wilderness of renewals, confusion
Basis of renewals, substance...

[XX:91-92]

Confusion is vividly enacted through the reference to jungle imagery and the "Glaze" of the reds and greens, colours that overpower in their intensity. These are the colours of energetic passion that blinds the viewer to reason, suggesting the negative consequences of dwelling in

this setting. However, there is also the implication that out of such confusion comes the "basis for renewal", a positive process that mirrors the progression of the poem as a whole. Narrative conflict, inherent in the vital tensions of the Cantos, whilst implying confusion, also provide the momentum for renewal. Pound clearly does not wish his epic to become dulled by the coldness of economics, whilst recognizing that financial corruption has blighted contemporary civilization and as such must be a central theme. Similarly, he has stated from the outset the need to include the rich variety of the epic and poetic tradition whilst being aware of the danger of seeking escape in the past in order to avoid the trials of the present. It is with this paradox in mind that Pound introduces the example of the lotophagoi, the lotus-eaters of Book IX of the Odyssey.

From canto I, Pound has adopted the pattern of re-introducing the Odyssey at key moments in the narrative, moments that have been identified as representing points of crisis. The inclusion of the lotophagoi in this canto clearly underlines this process. As W.S. Flory notes, Pound does not take his visualization of the lotus-eaters directly from Homer, choosing instead to model his description on Blake's engraving 'The Circle of the Lustful: Francesca da Rimini.' This method is similar to that adopted in canto I, where Pound took as his source for Odysseus' descent into the underworld Andreas Divus' Renaissance Latin translation of the *Nekuia*, capturing the enduring life and vitality of Homer's original as it develops through time. Here, Pound maintains the spirit of the original whilst replacing Homer's sense of torment in the lotophagoi with Blake's suggestion of

'Flory, W.S.; Ezra Pound and The Cantos: A Record of Struggle; 1980; 134

languid joy, developing further the concept of the hedonistic quest for escapism that dominates canto XX. The escapism that Pound identifies here, however, is generated artificially. The paradise that is aquired is hallucinatory, the product of the drugged state that the lotus-eaters indulge in:

Wrapped, floating; and the blue-pale smoke of the incense
Swift to rise, then lazily in the wind
 as Aeolus over bean-field,
As hay in the sun, the olibanum, saffron,
As myrrh without styrax;
Each man in his cloth, as on raft, on
 The high invisible current;
On toward the fall of water

[XX:92]

The language that Pound uses captures precisely the heady, intoxicating atmosphere of the scene that exudes tranquility. The reference to the gentleness of the lazy wind, the "hay in the sun", and the "fall of water" relates back to the poet's pastoral vision of nature at the opening of the canto, with the "two almond trees flowing" (ibid:89), the lush meadows, and the olive trees and cedars. In the above passage, however, this idyll is infused with the exotic, with frankincense, saffron, and myrrh, suggesting a degree of decadence and abandonment. There is a strong note of sensuality in the verse that threatens to distract and to entrap in the manner of the "Ligur' aoidé", the song of the Sirens again evoked at the opening of canto XX. The paradox enacted here, therefore, is that faced by the poet. The choice is escape into the paradisaal landscape characterized by visions of the dream experienced in the past, an environment increasingly associated with artificiality and decadence, or to accept reality and attempt to inspire a transcendence from within, the aim that Pound has elected to explore in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' thus far.

The resolution to this paradox could be seen to be revealed in the reference to the character of Elpenor resurrected later in canto XX. Elpenor was Odysseus' companion who, like the lotophagoi, seeks oblivion in artificial anaesthetics, in this case alcohol. The consequence of this act is not escape but death, as he falls from a ladder in a drunken stupor and breaks his neck. His body remains unburied, and thus his soul is confined to Hades. Elpenor's notoriety is derived from the fact that his name was recorded by Odysseus, but it is eternally associated with his stupidity and failure rather than heroicism. This is then contrasted with a vision of the heroic companions of Odysseus who died without recognition, as Pound notes in the following passage;

"Their names are not written in bronze
"Nor their rowing sticks set with Elpenor's;
"Nor have they mound by sea-board.
"That saw never the olives under Spartha
With the leaves green and then not green,
"The click of light in their branches..."
[XX:94]

Unlike the rest of Odysseus' crew, who all perished together off the isle Ogygia at the hands of Calypso, daughter of Atlas, Elpenor's name endures. His oar remains as a testament to, and symbol of, the tragedy of his wasted potential, his squandered heroic destiny that was precipitated by his desire for an artificial escape into paradise. Whilst the names of the others remain lost, the irony is that it is his that is immortalized in bronze. Again, in this context, Calypso, like the Sirens at the opening of canto XX, emerges as a figure who exploits her beauty and promise of paradise, the "click of light", to corrupt and destroy;

"Nor had they meats of Kalupso

"Or her silk skirts brushing their thighs.

"Give! What were they given?"

Ear-wax.

[XX:94]

The overtly sensual image of the brush or the silk skirt displays Calypso's determined exploitation of beauty to corrupt Odysseus. He was ensnared on Ogygia for seven years as she tempted him from his quest with offers of false immortality. On the eighth year Calypso accepted defeat and set Odysseus free bound to a raft. This narrative, condensed into a short passage by Pound, emphasizes the central theme of the canto; the need to avoid the temptation of succumbing to shallow aestheticism. In this sense, Odysseus emerges as a true hero in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', justifying Pound's decision at the outset to replace Browning's Sordello as the central personage with which to open the new epic. Like Pound, Odysseus is aware of the futility of the escapism sought by Elpenor, acknowledging the transience of the hedonistic pleasures offered by Calypso. Pound, in this sense, uses the image of sensual and sexual seduction to analyse the disparity that exists between illusion and reality, the illusion that the skirts of silk suggest and the reality of the "Ear-wax", used by Odysseus' crew to silence the haunting but fatal song of the Sirens.

The closing passage of canto XX refers back to the "Ligur' aside" of the opening whilst continuing the hallucinatory tone of the central lotophagoi section. Here, Pound creates a sense of movement within the verse from the initially claustrophobic to the conclusively sinister, as he charts the fate that awaits the hedonist obsessed with literature of the past, a figure whose obsessions were identified at the start of the canto, giving it a cyclical structure.

The emphasis at the end is upon heaviness, upon the dulled senses of sleep as the somnambulist replaces the intoxicant;

Plain, as the plain of Somnus,
the heavy cars, as a triumph,
Gilded, heavy on wheel,
and the panthers chained to the cars,
Over suave turf, the form wrapped,
Rose, crimson, deep crimson,
And, in the blue dusk, a colour as of rust in the sunlight,
Out of the white cloud, moving over the plain,
Head in arm's curve, reclining

[XX:94-95]

The reference here is to Somnus, the Roman god of sleep from Ovid's Metamorphosis, which emphasizes the gradual progression towards unconsciousness that dominates the canto. The imagery, though rich and seductive, stresses entrapment. The movement expressed in the narrative is laboured and torturous, and the use of colour "as of rust" implies decline and decay. Finally the reclining figure, almost a stature or sculpture, lacks life or vitality. It successfully communicates torment and suffering in its very absence of motion, whilst embodying resignation and defeat in the visual relationship between head and arm. The curve is downward, indicating despair, a direction amplified at the end of canto XX;

And at last, between gilded barocco,
Two columns coiled and fluted,
Vanoka, leaning half naked,
waste hall there behind her.
"Peace!
Borso..., Borso!"

[XX:95]

The pervasive implication of decadence, of waste and emptiness, emphasizes a sense of void, the void that awaits the hedonist who is enchanted by the literature of the past. The language is again rich and

seductive, evoking the baroque in the haunting rhythms and ornamented imagery adopted by Pound. This is the very mood that threatens to distract the poet from his task of writing about the reality of his own times, of including the actual into the contemporary epic. Thus, whilst the canto is one of great poetic beauty, from the opening affirmations of elevated love to the dream-like sequences which follow, canto XX ultimately stands as a validiction of the realism evident in cantos XVIII and XIX. Pound, like Odysseus, determines to remain true to his task, to reject the temptation of the Siren's song of the past and maintain a focus on the harsh reality of the present and the inferred future. As such, the closing lines, refering back to the narrative of Niccolo d' Este, suggest more a recognition of desperation than affirmation. Borso, the third son of Niccolo, was initially introduced in canto XVII as a maker of peace. As the ruler of the small state of Ferrara, south of Venice and Milan, Niccolo realized that Ferrara lacked the resources to sustain war and thus needed to continue its semi-colonial status in relation to Venice. In order to retain control, Niccolo desperately sought to quell stirrings of independence. Peace, therefore, was enforced not to liberate but to contain. This was a condition that was pertinent to the contemporary situation between the two World Wars, as a tenuous enforced peace hung over Europe that was a direct correlative of that imposed by Niccolo and obeyed by Borso. In the present as defined by 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', this state of uncertainty was threatened by the advent of the Russian Revolution central to cantos XVIII and XIX and implicit in the following canto XXI. Thus as Pound advances the narrative into canto XXI, the sense of reverie and escape that dominates canto XX is replaced by a return to the economic and political intrigues that unify the reality of history

as expressed not just in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', but in the poem as a whole.

In a direct way, canto XX serves as a means for Pound to relegate the influence of the Romance literature that has recurred from the beginning of his poetic career with Personae in 1909. In these terms, canto XX represents a form of purging of the past, and these initial cantos of XVII-XXX see Pound again searching for a new way forward in the manner of the 'Three Poetry Cantos'. Canto XXI continues this search from where canto XX left off, with the refrain of Niccolo's entreaty to "Keep the peace, Borso!" (96), enforcing a recognition of unity between the two cantos. This refrain could further be seen as to be representative of the political trend of appeasement, where the delicate peace is maintained at all costs, regardless of the threat of revolution in Russia. However, as the new canto unfolds, it becomes clear that Pound has shifted themes and eras. The desperation and disorder that threatened to follow the hedonism in canto XX is finally realized not in the horrors of the Russian Revolution but in a vignette that tells of the fall of the Medici family, in many ways the founders of the modern banking system that Pound demonizes throughout the Cantos. Indeed, to Pound, this analysis of a Renaissance reality serves as a parallel to the power struggles and economic upheavals spreading through Europe following World War One and, as stated in canto XVI, underlying the chaos and corruption in Russia.

Unity is created at the opening of canto XXI through the thematic link that clearly exists between Niccolo's refrain to his son Borso and the words of Giovanni de Medici to his son Cosimo.

Both fathers call upon the sons to protect and advance their achievements, to secure stability in the future. What the canto displays is that, rather than sustaining order, Cosimo was forced to enter into usurious and corrupt dealings with governments in a futile attempt to retain the family's power and wealth. Pound shows how Cosimo's desperation leads him to commit acts that destroy the potential greatness that Giovanni had generated;

"Keep on with the business,
That's made me,
"And the res publica didn't.
"When I was broke, and a poor kid,
"They all knew me, all of these *cittadini*,
"And they all of them cut me dead, della gloria."
Intestate 1429, leaving 178,221 florins *di sugello*,
As is said in Cosimo's red leather note book. Di sugello.
And "with his credit emptied Venice of money"--
That was Cosimo--
"And Naples, and made them accept his peace."

[XXI:96]

The underlying suggestion here is that the Medici family derived its power from the control of finance and not from gaining political office. Thus, in order to increase that power, it became necessary to exert financial control upon governments, an endeavour that, in the Cantos, Pound identifies as being the cause of wars throughout history. From this position, Cosimo is trapped in a situation of escalating intrigue that leads inevitably to violence, disorder and decline. The peace that Cosimo enforces is illusory, being grounded in financial malpractice rather than political solution. This in turn leads to conflict between the oppressed, the elder statesmen and aristocrats, and the oppressors, in this case the Medici themselves,

Nic Uzano saw us coming. Against it, honest,
And warned 'em. They'd have murdered him,

And would Cosimo, but he bribed 'em;
And they did in Giuliano. E difficile,
A Firenze difficile viver ricco
Senza aver lo stato.

[XXI:97]

In this passage, Pound refers to Niccolo da Uzzano, the Florentine statesman and one of the leaders of the aristocracy party that was opposed to the growth of Medici power. This party was formed from an alliance between Niccolo and the Albizzi clan, who identified the Medici as a serious threat to their own power base. It was Niccolo that prevented the Albizzi from moving against Cosimo, thus facilitating a form of peace. However, upon the death of Niccolo in 1432, the Albizzi were unrestrained and, lead by the young Rinaldo degli Albizzi, they captured and imprisoned Cosimo and murdered Giuliano de Medici. The irony of this intrigue is that Cosimo, to a degree the villain of the piece, managed to bribe the judge into having his death sentence commuted to ten years banishment to Padua. Upon the death of Ronaldo in 1434, Cosimo was able to return to Florence and revive the power of the Medici. Giuliano, conversely the innocent of the Medici, the representation of good in the corrupt system that the family devised, was destroyed. The vignette displays how, from the origins of the modern European banking system based upon the control of credit, tyranny and disorder resulted. Pound, as he did in canto XIX with the analysis of Kublai Khan, enforces the direct link that he sees to exist between money and cultural disintegration. The difference between the tyranny of Kublai and that of the Medici is that the former employed money in order to strengthen the power of the state, whereas the latter used it to increase the power of private individuals, thereby giving them undue influence over the state, a situation that, as the above passage

indicates, results in the proliferation of social and cultural disorder. The relevance of this to the poem as a whole is that, from this point of origin, civilization has followed the same path as the Medici and the Albizzi, constantly waging futile war in an attempt to maintain control of finance in an illusory period of peace.

Whilst the portrait of Cosimo is damning, Pound does not depict the Medici as being totally corrupt. There is reference, primarily through the inclusion of Lorenzo de Medici, to their role as patron of the arts and learning. This undercurrent provides a strand of unity with the next section of canto XXI, where the location of the narrative shifts from Renaissance Italy to revolutionary America. To achieve this transition, Pound introduces an extract from the letters of Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the USA. The letter depicts Jefferson as a patron of the arts, aligning him not only with Lorenzo but also with Sigismundo Malatesta, one of the central personages of the poem as a whole. This, in itself, suggests the existence of a thematic unity between the two asymmetrical halves of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', with Jefferson emerging, in this new phase, as the natural successor to Sigismundo. One of the central aspects of Jefferson's endeavour in this respect is his struggle to achieve his aim to initiate a cultural renewal. Jefferson is constantly limited in the options that are available, a situation that Pound exploits in an attempt to display that, through the passage of time from the Italian Renaissance to turn of the nineteenth century America, the potential for creative growth has dwindled. From the grand scale of Sigismundo's vision, Jefferson's limited steps to revitalize cultural life initially appear inconsequential and futile,

"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.

[XXI:97]

The passage, adapted from The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (Vol. IV, 41), sees Jefferson writing to Burgundy, where "music is cultivated and/ practiced by every class of men" (op. cit), in the hope of importing music into an America where the art had largely died. The extract clearly emphasizes the creative void that had developed within American culture, a void that again is shown to have its root in the dominant economic condition. The fact that Jefferson's vision appears inconsequential when balanced against that of Sigismundo is, as Pound is determined to suggest, not his but America's failing. Cultural life is shown to be so weak that his exploits are in vain. However, Jefferson's value is derived from his embodiment of the concept of frugality, which is juxtaposed with the excessive luxury of the Medici. The former's genuine desire to inspire a practical equilibrium between aesthetic creativity and economics acts as a positive counterpoint to the usurous and exploitative tyranny of the latter.

Jefferson's letter, and his vision, fade once more into the luxury of the Medici, as Pound shifts the attention back to the extravagant actions of Lorenzo, initially depicted favourably as a patron of the arts. Pound now depicts this patronage more critically in the light of Jefferson's frugality. Lorenzo's motivation is questioned as his generosity is aligned to the acquisition of power and personal

advancement rather than the extension of creative potential. Pound returns to the use of the first person narrative here in an attempt to display Lorenzo's awareness of his duplicity, aligning him more with Cosimo than Sigismundo and Jefferson,

And in July I went up to Milan for Duke Galeaz
To sponsor his infant in baptism,
Albeit were others more worthy,
And took his wife a gold collar holding a diamond
that cost about 3000 ducats, on which account
That signor Galeaz Sforza Visconti has wished me
To stand sponsor to all of his children.

Another war without glory, and another peace without quiet.
[XXI:98]

Pound refers to an event in 1469 when Lorenzo journeyed to Milan to attend the baptism of the son of Galeazzo Sforza, the fifth Duke of Milan. Lorenzo's gifts on this occasion were magnificent in the extreme, and he in return was rewarded with an allegiance that strengthened the position of the Medici, highlighting the corruption that follows economic manipulation. The passage introduces the concept of worth and worthiness, the former reflecting economic concerns, the latter implying moral considerations. The example of Lorenzo displays that these two forces are not compatible. Lorenzo's concentration on worth returns the narrative to the position in which it began, at the end of canto XX and the opening of canto XXI, with Niccolo d'Este's plea for his son Borso to sustain the transient and illusory peace, the peace that is now "without quiet".

The comparison between Jefferson and the Medici is thus made complete. Whilst Jefferson's limited attempts at cultural renewal appear insignificant when placed in parallel with the

extravagance of the Renaissance, his honesty and moral integrity elevate him above the constraints of his time. Similarly, the usurious practices of the Medici serve to tarnish the achievements of the Renaissance and instigate their own downfall. Whereas Jefferson's ambitions illuminate a cultural dark age, the actions of the Medici darken an age of illumination. At the end of canto XXI, Pound displays this recognition in a lyrical evaluation of the confusion that develops from the failure of the Medici,

And the palazzo, baseless, hangs there in the dawn
With low mist over the tide-mark;
And floats there nel tramonto
With gold mist over the tide-mark.
The tesserae of the floor, and the patterns.
Fools making new shambles;
 night over green ocean,
And the dry black of the night.

[XXI:98]

As the emphasis returns to Venice, the location of spiritual vitality celebrated in 'Three Cantos I', and cantos III and XVII, the passage captures, with lyrical intensity, a vision of the palazzo Ducale in Venice, the building of which is to become central to canto XXV. The lyricism evokes sadness and regret, but it is devoid of the sentimentality that implies hedonism. The regret is not for the fall of the Medici but at the debasement of cultural wealth that their tyranny brings. Pound views the palace in both misty dawn and at sunset, "nel tramonto." On both occasions, the perception of the grand architecture, to be celebrated later as a concrete representation of creativity, is obscured, evoking "in luogo d'ogni luce muto" (a place mute of all light) [61] of canto XIV. It is seen to be "baseless", lacking stability and context, as if hanging in mid air, devoid of foundations. The implication is that these foundations, in a cultural sense, have

been metaphorically eroded by the corrupting influence of economic self-interest as personified in this canto by the Medici, the "Fools making new shambles." Finally, the mist that obscures is replaced by the darkness that, when aligned with dryness, suggests sterility and the loss of all potential for illumination, recalling the vision of the "hell mouth; dry plain" (68) that opened canto XVI.

From this position of darkness, a darkness born of and perpetuating confusion, Pound returns firstly to myth, the myth of Dionysus, Pan and inescapably Odysseus, and then to the quest for renewal that recurs as an echo of canto XX. As in that canto, Pound recognizes the link that exists between confusion, that which destroys, and renewal, that which regenerates. In canto XX, Pound dealt with the destruction that follows hedonism, an abandonment to the passions and desires that drive the individual towards self-destruction. Canto XXI deals with what could be seen to be economic hedonism, an abandonment to the corrupting forces that create tyranny and war. The result in both cases is the same, the confusion that brings darkness and despair. As canto XX saw the potential for renewal in the depths of confusion, so too canto XXI offers the same possibility, emphasizing the didactic aim of the poem at this moment in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos'. This is stated directly by Pound in the following passage,

Confusion, source of renewals;
Yellow wing, pale in the moon shaft,
Green wing, pale in the moon shaft,
Pomegranate, pale in the moon shaft,
White horn, pale in the moon shaft, and Titania
By the drinking hole,
 steps, cut in the basalt.

[XXI:100]

The repetition of the lyrical representation of the moonlight, seen

as a shaft of light amid the darkness of night, combined with the colour transition from yellow to green to pomegranite, suggesting orange and red, implies that out of the previous dryness and sterility of the blackness comes new vitality. This implication is further emphasized through the reference to the drinking hole that sustains Titania, an epithet for Circe, the witch-goddess of the Odyssey associated with sexual regeneration. The image also implies Shakespeare's Titania from A Midsummer Night's Dream who, as the Fairy Queen, is enchanted into the role of vapid lover, bringing confusion to the human realm that, at the conclusion of the play, is transformed into renewal and increased stability. Specifically, this renewal of the human realm is what Pound is seeking in his epic.

The canto ends with a non-specific reference to the figure of an old man who continues his arduous work, apparently oblivious to the horrendous rape of Persephone by Dis, the Greek god of the underworld, that unfolds in the background. The passage is interesting in the manner in which Pound creates the horror in the background but retains the focus on the solitary and apparently insignificant figure in the foreground, so that the rape, in mythical terms the basis of the Eleusinian mystery rites, is merely a part of the tableau against which man is set,

And the old man went on there
beating his mule with an asphodel.

[XXI:100]

The image of the old man beating his mule with an asphodel flower is a contradictory one. Clearly, the violence of the old man's action replicates that of Dis. However, the chosen weapon for this violence

initially appears incongruous. In Greek mythology, the asphodel is the immortal flower of Elysium, the place of ideal happiness or the blessed after death. The image of the flower, therefore, suggests the paradisaical Elysian fields, the progression towards a state of regeneration. The juxtaposition of violent action and the flower could be seen to reinterpret the concept that out of confusion comes renewal, with Pound employing the often used method of restatement in an attempt to enforce the message.

The figure of the man absorbed in arduous work bridges the divide between cantos XXI and XXII, with Pound extending the technique of allowing one canto to apparently flow into the next that has been evident since the progression from cantos II to III with "And..." (II:10) merging into "I sat on the Dogana's steps" (III:11). However, as is universally evident, it soon becomes clear that Pound has initiated a shift in time, as the bridge becomes misleading. The old man of Greek mythology is metamorphosized into one of recent American history, as canto XXII opens with a vision of a railway builder attempting to forge a rail link without bringing devastation to those who lie in the way. The clear implication is that this figure is Thaddeus Coleman Pound (1832-1914), Pound's paternal grandfather who made a brief appearance in canto XXI as "'that man (who) sweated blood to put through that railway'" (97). In canto XXIII, Pound depicts Thaddeus Pound struggling to build railroads less for personal gain than for public good. His commitment to his task is celebrated in a manner similar to that of Sigismundo Malatesta in the building of the Tempio. Similarly, he is compared to the sequence of patrons of the arts and learning that culminated, in canto XXI, with the inclusion of Jefferson,

An' that man sweat blood
to put through that railway,
And what he ever got out of it?
And he said one thing: As it costs,
As in any Indian war it costs the government
20,000 dollars per head
To kill off the red warriors, it might be more humane
And even cheaper, to educate.

[XXII:101]

Here, in a statement that extends the earlier recognition of selflessness introduced briefly in canto XXI, Thaddeus Pound emerges as an idealist who is responding to the moral rather than purely economic demands of the time. He is shown to be seeking alignment with the natural forces, which brings his quest into conflict with the financial realm, a condition that Pound has identified throughout the poem as a whole, with a succession of hero figures struggling against the confines of orthodox perception. The argument that is presented in support of Thaddeus' ideas is essentially an economic one, but it is worded in such a way as to highlight the futility and impotence of counting all aspects of human existence in financial terms. This recognition sets Thaddeus in direct opposition to the contrary figure of Warenhauser, a thinly disguised pseudonym for Frederick Weyerhaeuser (1834-1914), an American capitalist who in 1900 purchased around one million acres of timberland from the Northern Pacific Railroad. As Pound displays in this passage, Warenhauser's activities are the antithesis of his grandfather's,

And there was the other type, Warenhauser,
That beat him, and broke up his business,
Tale of the American Curia that gave him,
Warenhauser permission to build the Northwestern railway
And to take the timber he cut in the process;
So he cut a road through the forest,
Two miles wide, an' perfectly legal.
Who wuz agoin' to stop him!

[XXII:101]

The passage identifies the disparity that exists between legal and moral right. Warenhauser wins because he is able to manipulate the legal system, but this victory is seen to be at the expense of what is morally just and good. The extract shows Warenhauser destroying and devastating nature in his bid to achieve financial power, a total reversal of Thaddeus Pound's approach. It can be no accident that Pound adapts Wayerhaeuser's name to emphasize the War in his character as, in a similar way to Cosimo de' Medici in canto XXI, he exploits his personal wealth to inflict financial pressure on the government, an activity that, in the previous canto, was seen to be at the root of war. Pound clearly mourns the failure of his grandfather's enterprise, and is angry at the senate for sanctioning Warenhauser's destructive methods, but the implication is that the story is employed as further evidence of the moral and cultural decline of civilization.

Whilst this failure has personal significance, possibly being one of the reasons for Pound's rejection of America prior to his commencement of the embryonic stages of the Cantos, the narrative is presented in a similar way to the other historical material in the poem, where Pound does not merely report past events but tries to bring them to life in the present, involving the reader in the process. Thus, the language is given vitality through the attempt to capture the very cadence of the scene being dramatized. As such, in the final lines of the verse, the reader sees Thaddeus emerging from the confusion of the past, infusing the present with the reality of his struggles and defeats. This is achieved largely through the deployment of the vernacular, where the diction of the character evokes the emotion, the essence, of their being. Pound's interpretation of his grandfather's

words conveys both affection and regret, communicating his honesty and integrity without sentimentality.

Both cantos XXI and XXII detail, for the first time, an attempt to incorporate into the Cantos the reality of American history. There is an implied unity between Thaddeus Pound and Thomas Jefferson. Both men are seen to be seeking to initiate cultural renewal out of the confusion wrought by the inevitable progression to economic complexity, Thaddeus with his desire to educate rather than decimate the Indian community, and Jefferson with his quest to reawaken creativity through music. The reality that Pound emphasizes is that their diverse attempts are destroyed by the corrupt system that can be seen to have its origins in the activities of the Medici in Renaissance times. In this group of cantos, therefore, Pound captures the living force of the historical process, with events which are divided by centuries having a direct influence upon the present. In a sense, this is the process that the Cantos, with its apparently fragmented and incoherent structure, seeks to embody. One of the lessons that the poem offers the reader is that there can be unity and coherence without conventional uniformity and lineality, as the reality of existence confirms.

The confluence of history forms the basis of the next two cantos as, in the light of the previous cantos, Pound appears to suggest that history, as a study of the past, is not an exact science; that, in a similar way to literature, the events of the historical process are open to infinite interpretation. Increasingly, the impetus of the poem is to view history as both science and myth, with fact and supposition becoming indivisible. Pound displays that

history as a series of facts is dry and lifeless. It is the relation of these facts to universal poetic truths that brings history to life. Thus, in cantos XXIII-XXIV, Pound merges elements from cantos XX-XXII with other key moments in the development of the Cantos, creating a composite picture of history as myth, and myth as history. Canto XXIII, in particular, expresses the complexity, diversity and richness of past experience, creating a form in which history and myth become one. The canto weaves together a myriad of allusions to Odysseus' journey into the underworld, the evacuation of Troy, the delirium of Niccolo d'Este, with references to Greek Platonic and Byzantine Neoplatonic philosophers and renowned scientists such as Marie and Pierre Curie, the founders of radiology. The complexity of the canto, which anticipates the method of the later cantos, serves to emphasize the concept of the quest after knowledge, and the courage that such a quest demands. The example of Pierre Curie emphasizes this recognition that the courage to experiment is a crucial ingredient in the creation of new potentials,

How dissolve Irol in sugar...Houille blanche,
 Auto-chenille, destroy all bacteria in the kidney,
 Invention-d'entites-plus-ou-moins-abstraites-
 en-nombre-egal-aux-choses-a-expliquer...

La Science ne peut pas y consister. "J'ai
 Obtenu une brulure" M. Curie, or some other scientist
 "Qui m'a coute six mois de guerison."

and continued his experiments.

Tropismes! "We believe the attraction is chemical."

[XXIII:107]

Pound alludes to the documented courage of Pierre Curie whereby, in an attempt to prove his theory on the action of radium in respect of human tissue, he exposed his arm to radiation for several hours without prior knowledge of the potential dangers involved. The result of this trial was a lesion that resembled a burn and which required six months to

heal. Pound focuses upon this specific historical moment as it highlights experimentation for a practical purpose. The scientist, like the poet and the epic hero, ventures into the unknown with a pragmatic rather than an abstract goal. As such, in the poetic realm of the Cantos, Pierre Curie is elevated to the level of epic hero. His quest for truth is juxtaposed with, and forms a correlative of, the mythical quest of Odysseus evoked in the passages of Greek which follow. In this sense, the divergent and apparently unrelated references and extracts that comprise this canto, and indeed many of the later ones, are in effect directly related through their shared expression of the heroic quest for knowledge. Whilst the characters, the location, and the age is dramatically different, the underlying core message gives unity to the whole.

The unifying of science and myth in canto XXIII, through the poetic comparison that Pound achieves between the scientist and the epic hero, implies that the scientist as much as the poet is the contemporary inheritor of the epic quest for knowledge. Thus, Pierre Curie can be added to the growing list of central personages, such as Sordello, Odysseus, Sigismundo Malatesta, and Thomas Jefferson, that embody the elevated qualities of moral integrity and spiritual insight. At this initial stage in the development of the poem, it appears that, with each canto, Pound is compiling a catalogue of heroes, the aforementioned, and villains, primarily the financiers such as Kublai Khan, the Medici, Baldy Bacon, and Warehhauser, that represent the dual impulse towards good or evil. In the above extract, Pound makes reference to "Tropismes", in scientific terminology the instinctive responses to external stimuli, that suggests that Pound is exploring the

idea that this impulse may be determined by the dominant economic and social climate of the age. The defining feature of the individuals that Pound has elevated to the status of hero figure in the poem, in this context, are those who display the ability to break free of this defining impulse, to transcend the constraining influences of existence and to illuminate the path to new creative potentials.

This awareness can also be seen later in canto XXIII, as Pound returns to the delirium of Niccolo d'Este that, in canto XX, served as an example of hedonism, of the surrender to the destructive passions of the emotion. In the earlier canto, Pound presented this delirium almost as an instinctive response to betrayal, a tropism that was devoid of intellectualization. In canto XXIII however, Niccolo's delirium is viewed from a different perspective, emphasizing Pound's determination to analyse situations from more than one single position, displaying that, in the Cantos, perception is not fixed but always shifting to permit progression. The delirium that earlier was seen to foster violence and confusion now brings a new clarity and poetic insight. Niccolo displays the ability, previously absent, to penetrate the surface of existence and to access the rejuvenating vitality that lies beneath,

And the rose grown while I slept,
And the strings shaken with music,
Capriped, the loose twigs under foot;
We here on the hill, with the olives
Where a man might carry his oar up,
And the boat there in the inlet;
As we had lain there in the autumn
Under the arras, or wall painted like arras,
And above with a garden of rose-trees,
Sound coming up from the cross-street.

[XXIII:108]

Niccolo experiences a paradisaal vision that is liberating, freeing him from the violent madness that previously consumed him. Pound emphasizes the sensuousness of the experience, the sights and sounds and even the smells evocative of a paradisaal vision are made explicit in the richness and beauty of the language. The passage presents Niccolo as being transformed by the encounter with the world of permanence, the realm of timeless truth. The canto implies that whilst the delirium of canto XX consumed him, the tranquility of canto XXIII acts as the stimulus that permits access to this deeper reality, again reinterpreting the concept central to cantos XX-XXIV that confusion is the source of renewal.

As in canto XX, Niccolo's situation is compared to that of Trojan war, as his vision of the world of satyrs flows into an account of the departure of Aeneas and Anchises from burning Troy. Pound visualizes father and son looking back over the confusion of the destroyed city as they begin the journey that ultimately takes them to the founding of Rome. This again emphasizes the recognition that out of confusion comes renewal. At this point however, Pound concentrates upon a frozen moment in time, with the two of them appearing as if suspended in limbo, separate from their past that is Troy and unaware of the future that is Rome. As a parallel with Niccolo, the tranquility of the verse belies the turmoil of reality, as Pound evokes a scene that stresses detachment and objectivity;

And that was when Troy was down, all right,
 superbo Ilion...
And they were sailing along
Sitting in the stern-sheets,
Under the lee of an island
And the wind drifted off from the island.
"Tet, Tet..."

what is it?" said Anchises.
"Tethneke," said the helmsman, "I think they
"Are howling because Adonis died virgin."
Huh! tet..." said Anchises,
"well, they've made a bloody mess of that city."
[XXIII:109]

The peace of the scene on board the ship is contrasted with the violence and confusion on land, as Pound alludes to the calmness of the wind and the sea in contrast to the "bloody mess" of Troy. The parallel between Anchises and Niccolo is then enforced through the reference to the death of Adonis, a youth loved by Aeneas' mother, Aphrodite. Both Anchises and Niccolo suffer sexual betrayal, and both betrayals culminate in destruction. The echoes that reverberate through the two narratives are unavoidable, as Pound clearly contrasts Aeneas and Anchises with Borso and Niccolo d'Este. However, whereas in canto XX Niccolo surrenders to the hedonism of delirium, leaving Borso to struggle to maintain order in Ferrara, Anchises remains in control, exploiting the confusion to initiate renewal.

Canto XXIII concludes with a vision of the power of the sea. Throughout the poem, Pound has exploited images of the sea to imply the duality of confusion and renewal. Specifically, the sea is presented as an environment where this duality can be unified, where contradictions can be fused within the flow of energy. Indeed, canto I opens with an affirmation of the potentials held in the vastness of the ocean, as Odysseus sets "forth on the godly sea" (I:3). In this context, the sea is used to symbolize the quest for knowledge, the rejection of the known and the embracing of the unknown. The sea is a majestic and spiritual entity, imbued with the potential to transform, as identified with the myth of Poseidon in canto II. At the end of

canto XXIII, Pound intensifies this image, depicting the sea as an ambiguous medium where the calm and tranquility of the above passage is dramatically replaced by threatening vitality that could either revitalize or destroy;

and saw then, as of waves taking form,
As the sea, hard, a glitter of crystal,
And the waves rising but formed, holding their form.
No light reaching through them.

[XXIII:109]

The image of the sea here is one of contradiction, as the fluidity of the waves on the surface is contrasted with the hardness and impenetrability of that which lies below. It is unwelcoming and yet inviting. Similarly, the darkness of the mass, which permits no light, is held in conflict with the "glitter" of the "waves taking form". The water is both solid and fluid, forming and formless as, on every level, it symbolizes the constant process of flux, of change that is both spontaneous and inevitable. As such, on one level, the image of the sea could be seen to represent the test of the courage of the individual to abandon the mundane and to attempt rejuvenation or advancement, as in the case of Pierre Curie. The sea is the symbolic realm of the unknown that every voyager after knowledge must enter. Beyond this, the sea serves as a metaphor for the creative process itself, symbolizing the structure and direction of the poem as a whole. In the poem, as in Pound's vision of the sea, diverse elements are drawn into the fluidity, forced to clash, fragment and merge, and from this process a new reality and a new unity is formed.

To continue this theme, that of the sea voyage as a metaphor for the quest for knowledge, Pound returns to the narrative of

Niccolo d'Este in canto XXIV, focusing upon the journals of his voyage to the Holy Land in 1413. The events that are catalogued in this canto are historically accurate, being closer to fact than the increasingly mythical treatment of the previous 'Niccolo' cantos. However, the very accuracy of this new material serves to intensify the process of the mythologising of history that Pound has been involved in since canto XX. Whilst Pound makes detailed reference to the journals, he uses these references to construct a tableau of the journey as a parallel to that of Odysseus in canto I, thus suggesting the cyclical nature of the historical process, a process that again mirrors the cyclical nature of the structure of the Cantos. Early in canto XXIV, Pound makes this cyclical unity explicit through his direct comparison between the journeys of Niccolo and Odysseus;

And he in his young youth, in the wake of Odysseus
 To Cithera (a.d. 1413) "drove fu Elena rapta da Paris"
 Dinners in orange groves, prows attended of dolphins,
 Vestige of Rome at Pola, fair wind as far as Naxos
 Ora Vela, ora a remi, sino ad ora di vespero
 Or with the sail tight hauled, by the crook'd land's arm
 Zefalonia.

[XXIV:111]

Here, Pound depicts Niccolo replicating Odysseus' quest in every detail. There is systematic reference to shared geographical locations, with the epic significance of each highlighted for emphasis. The reference to "the sail tight hauled" is clearly employed to evoke the urgency of "with stretched sail" of Canto I (3). Niccolo embodies Odysseus' youth and vitality, his determination and his exuberance. The poetic descriptions of the "orange groves", of the "prows attended of dolphins", and of the "fair winds" all serve to heighten the mythical stature of Niccolo's Renaissance voyage, elevating history to the level

of epic. The marriage of the two events, one factual and one mythical, allows Pound to create an epic intensity out of a factual event, elevating history to the level of myth and thus investing it with heightened significance within the structure of the poem. Niccolo, as Odysseus, is seen to be on a quest for truth, a quest that is inherent within the Cantos. In Niccolo's journey, as in that of Odysseus, there are many diversions and interruptions, all of which enhance rather than diminish the revelation of truth. Similarly, Pound's journey in the Cantos displays the same features of disruption and resumption, with the structure of the poem evoking the epic sea voyage of his predecessors.

From Niccolo's journey to the Holy Land, Pound returns to the events of his delirium and the resulting execution of his wife Parisina and son Ugo, treated poetically in canto XX. In this sense, canto XXIV follows a more linear, chronologically accurate path than the elliptical one adopted in canto XX. In canto XXIV, Pound analyses the tragedy in a more factual manner, presenting the realities of the situation for those who surrounded the Este's. The concentration upon the hedonism of Niccolo is replaced by a report of the human consequences of his madness, a madness that spreads outwards from the centre to infect and corrupt on a myriad of levels,

Was beheaded Aldovrandino (1425, vent'uno Maggio)
Who was cause of this evil, and after
The Marchese asked was Ugo beheaded. And the Captain:
"Signor...si." and il Marchese began crying
"Fa me hora tagliar la testa
"dapoi cosi presto hai decapitato il mio Ugo."
[XXIV:112]

Aldovrandino di Rangoni da Modena was a friend of Parisina and Ugo d'Este who was executed with them in 1425, as he was suspected of being

complicit in their adultery. Further, in an attempt to excuse the guilt of his wife and son, Niccolo identified Aldovrandino as being the instigator of their infidelity. Sustaining the chronology, the narrative then progresses to the period directly following the executions, as Pound focuses upon an exchange that occurs between Niccolo, "il Marchese", and the executioner, "the Captain", as he reports the genuine grief that Niccolo experiences, again penetrating the moment to bring history to life in the present. Pound retains the original Italian in an attempt to evoke the actual atmosphere and ambience of the age, but the essential meaning and emotion of Niccolo's words transcend the language barrier as he calls for his own death, having instigated that of his own son.

The canto suggests that, following his quest for truth, a quest that was aligned to that of Odysseus, the truth that Niccolo acquired was of betrayal and corruption, and the rest of canto XXIV deals with a succession of such cases, the punishment of which is directly attributable to the actions of Niccolo in response to Ugo and Parisina. This catalogue is defined realistically, concentrating upon documented prosecutions that came before the courts of Ferrara in the years following 1425. Pound alludes to the cases of Madonna Laodamia delli Romei, the wife of one of the judges, who was similarly beheaded for infidelity, and Agnesina, a matron of Modena, who was beheaded for committing adultery and poisoning her husband. These prosecutions are seen as being a direct result of Niccolo's grief at the loss of his own wife, and his vow that Parisina should not be the only one to suffer punishment for betrayal. However, as the prosecutions appear to be becoming endemic, Pound shifts to 1431 when Niccolo married Monna

Ricarda. The event is introduced as a turning point in the narrative, as if it initiated a dramatic reversal or renewal in the life of the community of Ferrara,

And in Modena, a madonna Agnesina
Who had poisoned her husband,
"All women known as adulterous,
"That his should not suffer alone."
Then the writ ran no further.
And in '31 married Monna Ricarda.

[XXIV:113]

Pound translates fragmented extracts from Niccolo's writ, pronouncing that all women implicit in adultery should share the fate of Parisina. From this, the selective nature of Pound's translation suggests that all women have the potential to betray; that they share the instincts of the Sirens of the Odyssey, again implying a link between Niccolo and Odysseus that has been developing since canto XX. Further, Pound's selective and fragmented translation communicates the depth of the sense of anguish felt by Niccolo, hinting at the delirium focused upon earlier in this sequence, as he appears to apply the the deeds of the few to the totality, an action symptomatic of one whose judgement and control has been eroded. From this point however, where fanaticism threatens chaos and disorder, the introduction of Niccolo's marriage to Ricciarda di Sallusto marks the point of renewal that is made concrete in the vision of the birth of their son Ercole;

And in '32 came the Marchese Saluzzo
To visit them, his son in law and his daughter,
And to see Hercules his grandson, piccolo e putino.
XXIV:113]

Ercole, the "piccolo e putino", the small and boyish child, is immediately compared to the Greek mythical hero Hercules, celebrated for

his strength and courage. Pound exploits the disparity that exists between Ercole's diminutive physical stature and his Herculean potential to display the inner strength of the character. Introduced only briefly in the canto, Ercole comes to represent the physical embodiment of renewal. He is a factual equivalent of the mythically implied progression from confusion to renewal stated earlier in this sequence. Ercole emerges from the confusion of Niccolo's anguish to bring stability to the community as, when he became the second ruler of Ferrara after Niccolo, he adopted the challenge of advancing the arts, music, and the welfare of the people. In this sense, he shares with Jefferson the desire to inspire a cultural rejuvenation of civilization through a celebration of the importance of art and learning.

The canto thus concludes with a factual and historically accurate analysis of the recognition that has been at the centre of cantos XX-XXIV, that through a study of history, as through a study of myth, one can access the essential truths of existence that can then be used, in effect, as parables to inform the right actions of the present and future. It is this process that, in the Cantos, allows Pound to bridge the gap between history and myth, and between the past and the present, bringing to the poem a timeless quality. Whilst the Cantos are unarguably about history, they show history not as something lost in the past, but as something relevant and vital in the present. The sense is ever present that, even when Pound is portraying a key event from history, he is employing it to make a point about the condition of civilization in the present.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CANTOS XXV-XXVI OF 'A DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS'

And I came here in my youth
 and lay there under the crocodile
By the column, looking East on the Friday,
And I said: Tomorrow I will lie on the south side
And the day after, south west.

[XXVI:121]

Cantos XXV and XXVI both share, at their centre, a celebration of the permanence of Venice, the importance of which can be recognised through the way in which Pound returns to the city throughout 'A Draft of XXX Cantos'. Indeed, Venice emerges as a city stored in the epic memory centre of the poem, a place that can be revisited at will when rejuvenation or renewal is required. In these two cantos, Pound adopts differing methods of assessing and communicating the regenerative powers of the location. Canto XXV expands upon the reference to the building of the Palazzo Ducale introduced in canto XXI, employing, in a manner similar to that adopted in canto XXIV, factual evidence drawn from actual sources of documentation. This method brings to the canto a sense of historical accuracy, with Pound again using history to intensify a myth. Canto XXVI, conversely, employs the method first seen in 'Three Cantos One' and then echoed in cantos III and XVII, where Venice is invested with a magical intensity, illuminating it as a place where "Gods float in the azure air" (III:11). In canto XXVI, as in canto III, Pound uses as his initial source the subjective and

poetically charged memories of his stay in Venice in 1907-1908, which he then merges with objective information drawn from the city annals through the centuries. This combination of the subjective and the objective transmits a sense of the multiplicity of the location as it has developed through time. Thus, in these two cantos, Pound attempts to present the totality of Venice as a potential paradisal city, setting it in the context of time, both past and present, but also recognising it as a place of timeless poetic significance, where the individual can regain contact with the essential poetic truths of existence that lie at the heart of the epic quest.

Canto XXV serves as a good example of the way in which Pound takes dry historical facts drawn from obscure historical documents and transforms them into a vital and poetically relevant unity, performing, as Philip Furia notes, "his own alchemy" that elevates civic history to the level of mythical and mystical evocation. Specifically, the first two and a half pages, and the concluding page, are adapted from various decrees and accounts that chart the increasingly complex and bureaucratic process that accompanied the construction of the palace of Doges. Pound thus equates the transcendent mastery of the architecture, as a concrete equivalent of poetic permanence elevated to the level of myth, with the mundane petty squabbles of the reality that underlies that myth. This apparent paradox is made explicit from the very opening of the canto, as Pound's reference to the council records display,

THE BOOK OF THE COUNCIL MAJOR
1255 be it enacted:

¹P. Furia: Pound's Cantos Declassified: 1984: 35

That they mustn't shoot crap in the hall
of the council, nor in the small court under
pain of 20 danari, be it enacted:
1266 no square of Venice to throw dice
anywhere in the palace or
in the loggia of the Rialto under pain of ten soldi
or half that for kids, and if they wont pay
they are to be chucked in the water.

[XXV:115]

Here, Pound adopts a tone that parodies the official prosaic language of the Council Major, which is in direct contrast to the poetic and evocative language previously associated with the mystery of Venice in Cantos III and XVII. The expression is intentionally flat, being devoid of any lyricism or elaboration, and the verse form similarly abandons poetic convention, such as rhythm or metre, in order to convey the triviality and officiousness of the document. However, within this parody, Pound introduces contemporary references to shooting "crap", to "kids", and to being "chucked" into water, all of which are more suggestive of twentieth century American vernacular than thirteenth century Renaissance authority. On one level, this could be to bring to the passage a contemporary idiom, giving it a universality that allows the statement to transcend time. On another related level, Pound could also be seen to be attempting to display the universality of petty bureaucracy, employing historical evidence to show how, in the realm of authority, little has changed through the passage of time.

The Council Major, or the Great Council, was a body of 480 elected members formed in 1173 to control and oversee the actions of the Doge of Venice. Initially the Council was seen to be needed as the Doge was a nonhereditary officer elected for life by the people, and safeguards against his domination of civic affairs were welcomed. As time progressed, however, the power of the Council itself became

suspect, with vast fluctuations of membership, changes in the democratic process of election, and the power to control increasingly falling into the hands of the ruling few. As Pound charts in the canto, this movement away from democracy intensified both the squabbles within the Council and the conflict between them and the Doge. It is against this backdrop of tension that the splendor of the Palace emerges, as each civic crisis instigates an alteration to the architecture of the building,

1335. 3 lire 15 groats to stone for making a lion.

1340. Council of the lord noble, Marc Erizio

Nic. Speranzo, Tomasso Gradonico:

that the hall
be new built over the room of the night watch
and over the columns towards the canal where the walk is...

[XXV:117]

Pound provides the dates of each alteration drawn from the council records, providing the minutiae of detail regarding the cost of stone and plans for each new addition. As such, the Palace of the Doges emerges as an architectural echo of Malatesta's Tempio, the construction of which was celebrated in cantos VIII-XI. Each new layer of the palace, comprising the Byzantine, Gothic and Renaissance styles dominant at the time of alteration, charts the growth of the structure, transforming it from mere stone into a living representation of the struggles of the ages, as it embodies the tensions and trials of history. In this sense, the palace can be seen to mirror the process inherent in the creation of the Cantos themselves, as Pound weaves together the tensions of history with his own struggles to make the poem representative and coherent.

In the above passage, drawn from the 1340 alteration plan, Pound illuminates a significant stage in the metamorphosis of the

palace. The development that this document alludes to is the construction of the great Hall that overlooks the Grand Canal. Due to the great expense of this project, the work was not completed until 1404, but it is highlighted here as a symbol of the visionary potential of humanity. The resultant building is defined as being a recognisable indicator of the potentials of civilization even though, as Pound states, the circumstances of its origins are far from grand,

...because of the stink of the dungeons. 1344.
1409...since the most serene Doge can scarce
stand upright in his bedroom...
 vadit pars, two gross lire
stone stair, 1415, for pulchritude of the palace.
 [XXV:117]

The paradox that Pound identifies is that each relatively insignificant crisis in the civic realm gives rise to the enhancement of the beauty, the "pulchritude", of the palace itself, suggesting that out of struggle comes creativity. It is therefore significant that it is with the discussion of the construction and decoration of the great Hall, the Palazzo Ducale alluded to in canto XXI, that Pound introduces into the prosaic narrative a note of lyricism that elevates the beauty that palace is acquiring,

Which is to say: they built out over the arches
and the palace hangs there in the dawn, the mist,
in that dimness,
or as one rows in from past the murazzi
the barge slow after the moon-rise
and the voice sounding under the sail.
Mist gone.

[XXV:117]

Here, Pound initiates a subtle and emotive shift from the mundane to the intensely poetic, as he returns to the tone of the previous discussions of Venice in cantos III and XVII. The juxtaposition of the mundane with

the poetic clearly serves to parallel the transcendent beauty of the palace with the petty motivations of the council that sanctioned its erection. The passage emphasizes the timeless quality that Pound is aiming for in canto XXV. There is the sense that the vision is autobiographical, relating to Pound's earlier stay in the city, but it could equally be an evocation of an imagined canal trip of the fifteenth century. The implication is that the shared experience of two travellers separated by the centuries would be the same, with the palace coming to signify permanence and stability in a world of change. This change is suggested through the lyrical references to the shifting periods of the day, as the dawn merges with the dusk. Within this inevitable process, the Palazzo Ducale embodies continuum, a fixed point amid the flux of time. Pound highlights the palace as a source of creative light against the "dimness" of existence, which echoes the "dry black of night" (98) associated with the Palazzo in canto XXI. Its illuminated beauty gives form to the shapeless mist that is the confusion of civilization, again implying the theme central to cantos XX-XXIV that out of confusion comes renewal.

The passage clearly suggests that the building of the Palazzo Ducale brings order to the chaos of the civic affairs of Venice, a chaos that has its origins in the intensifying disputes within the Council Major, and between the Council and the Doge. This order is emphasized through the new clarity of vision that emerges in the poem in the form of a heightened lyricism. The sense of timelessness that surrounds the palace provides an awakening of the poetic perception, which allows Pound to merge the mystical image of the Palace with a lyrical presentation of the Roman poet Sulpicia's love for Cerinthus.

The theme of this vignette is passion, but theirs is a passion different from that presented in canto XX. The destructive hedonism that consumed Niccolo d'Este and Parisina is now replaced by a vision of love as creator of form, of order, in the way that the palace brought order to the confusion surrounding its construction,

And Sulpicia
green shoot now, and the wood
white under new cortex
"as the sculptor sees the form in the air
before he sets hand to mallet,
"and as he sees the in, and the through,
the four sides
"not the one face of the painter
As ivory uncorrupted:
"Pone metum Cerinthe."
[XXV:117]

The love of Sulpicia for Cerinthus here evokes images of fertility and purity through the reference to the green shoots and white flesh of the tree at the beginning of the passage, and the "uncorrupted" ivory at the end. The tree imagery further implies that their love is seen as being both strong and enduring, and, as with the Palazzo Ducale, transcendent of the destructive forces of time. Love is thus seen as a creative force, equated to the actions of the sculptor as he visualizes form before he makes it concrete in art. Specifically, the love that Pound identifies in canto XXV is one that is both creative, or imaginative, and intellectual; it is a love that transcends the mundane, being elevated almost to the level of myth, thus the call of Sulpicia for Cerinthus to "Pone mentum", to put aside fear. The emphasis is upon the regenerative possibilities of such a union, and the way in which it inspires coherence and clarity, as Pound notes later in the canto,

Forms, forms and renewal, gods held in the air,
Forms seen, and the clearness,

Bright void, without image, Nepishtim,
Casting his gods back into the *vous*.

[XXV:119]

The progression is evident in the canto, as Pound enacts a development from the concrete, the aesthetic form as defined by the sculptor, to the spiritual, the universal world of the gods, represented here by Nepishtim. Nepishtim, Pound's translation of Utnapishtim, is a character drawn from the Babylonian epic Gilgamesh, who is granted immortality by the gods after surviving the universal flood. He is the holder of hidden knowledge concerning the secrets of eternal youth and, as such, can be seen in the canto as a symbol for regeneration and renewal. With this metamorphosis from the concrete to the abstract, here identified as the transient world of the gods, the love of Sulpicia, in this context, can be seen to undergo a transition from the physical, that which gives form to the tangible world, to the spiritual, that which gives order to the higher intellectual realm, the realm of "*vous*", the Neoplatonic word for intelligence as the active principle, or the deity, in the universe.

This experience of "gods held in the air" can clearly be seen to recall Pound's own experience of the "Gods (that) float in the azure air" of canto III (11), returning the discourse to its point of origin in Venice. This gives emphasis to the sense of cyclical progression evident in canto XXV, with the closing narrative returning to documentary style employed in the initial pages of the canto. This creates the impression that the Roman vision was a form of reverie inspired by the transcendent beauty of the Palazzo, a reverie that revealed an intense recognition of an enduring poetic truth. As

if to emphasize the unity that exists within this canto, Pound maintains the aesthetic theme of the Sulpicia vignette as, in the closing passage, he concentrates upon documents that attest to the relationship that existed between the painter Titian and the Council Major in the early part of the sixteenth century. Specifically, Titian was employed, in 1513, to paint a mural for the Hall of the Council, and Pound focuses upon the petty squabbles that defined their association,

...side toward the piazza, worst side of the room
that no one has been willing to tackle,
and do it as cheap or much cheaper...

(signed) Tician, 31 May 1513

{XXV:119}

Just as the relationship within the Council, and between the Council and the Doge, is marked by trivial conflict, the relationship between the artist and the Council is marked by a similar struggle. The difference is, however, that in the former case the tension gave rise to the majesty of the Palazzo, whereas in the latter case art is seen to be debased. Pound notes that there is little difference between Titian and the Council; both are concerned not with art but with money, as Titian's initial bid quoted above displays. In this canto, Titian is charged with initiating the decay of the arts, both in his mercantile approach and in his work, which is characterised by the departure from the clarity of early Renaissance art, as Furia notes in Pound's Cantos Declassified (op. cit.:37). This vision of Titian as an artist consumed not by the force of creativity that drives the sculptor in the Sulpicia narrative, but by the evil of avarice, anticipates the 'Usury Canto', which clearly advances the ideas implicit in canto XXV,

with usura
hath no man a painted paradise on his church wall

harpes et luz
or where virgin receiveth message
and halo projects from incision,
with usura
seeth no man Gonzaga his heirs and his concubines
no picture is made to endure nor to live with
but is made to sell and sell quickly.

[XLV:229]

The "painted paradise" absent from the church wall of the later canto can be seen to be a direct reference to Titian's abortive mural which, as canto XXV displays, was still unforthcoming in 1537, the date at which the canto closes. Specifically, a comparison between cantos XXV and XLV shows that Titian's desire to produce art that was "cheap or much cheaper" (XXV:119), being "made to sell and sell quickly" (XLV:229), was to Pound a key point, a moment of crisis, in the aesthetic realm that, as the voice of canto XLV argues strongly, initiated a decline and decay not just in the sphere of the arts but in civilization as a whole. In this sense, canto XXV stands in retrospect as a crucial point in the development of the poem as a whole, as Pound identifies, in historical terms and employing documented evidence, a source of the creative fragmentation that is at the heart of the Cantos. Further, Titian can be seen to be a late Renaissance equivalent of the inventor alluded to in canto XIX, whose invention was never produced due to the financial wranglings of the "big company" (84).

In canto XXV, Pound initiates a structural and thematic movement from the documentary, the concrete as represented by the palace of the Doges, to the lyrical, initially seen in celebration of the physical through the narrative of Sulpicia, and ultimately to the spiritual and intellectual with the epic of Napishtim, and finally back to the documentary, focusing upon the projected mural of Titian. This

movement is one of shifting poetic perception, as Pound adopts essentially opposing narrative approaches in an attempt to locate the reality that lies behind the historical process. Having experimented with this shift from the documentary, to the lyrical, and back to the documentary, with canto XXV, in canto XXVI Pound reverses the process, beginning with the lyrical and then juxtaposing it with the factual. When looked at as a unit, therefore, these two cantos together dramatize, in a structural and thematic sense, an ongoing continuum of flux; implying an evolution of perception as Pound inevitably shifts between the two impulses. Even at this stage in the development of the poem, this could be seen as being suggestive of Pound's continuing struggle to locate a suitable poetic form for the modern epic, a "rag-bag to stuff all its thought in" ('Three Cantos I':113). However, whereas Pound has in a sense used the early cantos of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' to experiment with and ultimately reject several divergent poetic methods, such as the deployment of the mask and the evocation of Romance literature, this process of the juxtaposition of the factual with the lyrical is one that endures throughout the Cantos as a whole, suggesting that Pound saw this method as a valid one in the quest for the revelation of poetic truth.

When analysed individually, canto XXVI emerges as an effective example of how this revelation occurs. The canto opens with a reference back to the mood and setting of canto III, as Pound returns to his memories of his stay in Venice in 1907-8. This progressive returning to a given event or location, at differing points in the poem, is in itself significant in that it illuminates these moments as being central to the formulation of a poetic vision, one that underlies the

development of the narrative. Canto III provided an initial insight into one such pivotal moment, capturing Pound's sense of inner turmoil as he compares his own sense of failure, possibly the failure to locate a valid poetic voice as dramatized in 'Three Cantos I', with the splendor of the permanence of Venice. Canto XXVI redefines this moment, and this emotion, as he considers his position as an exile both from his native world, and from the world of art and literature. The mood, as in canto III, is again one of resignation, but now the memory is charged with a heightened lyricism, implying that the memory transforms reality, bringing to it a new intensity,

And I came here in my young youth
 and lay there under the crocodile
 By the column, looking East on the Friday,
 And I said: Tomorrow I will lie on the South side
 And the day after, south west.
 And at night they sang in the gondolas
 And in the barche with lanthorns;
 The prows rose silver on silver
 taking light in the darkness. "Relaxetur!"
[XXVI: 121]

The memory of "young youth", which in canto III revealed a sense of alienation and despondency, is now charged with the vision of experience. More time has elapsed, and the impulse to self-pity, implicit in the earlier remembrance, has given way to illuminated perception, evident in the dominant reference to "light in the darkness". The memory, once painful, now allows the poet access to a state of heightened perception. Further, the alliteration of "young youth" recalls the passage from canto XXIV, where Pound compares the journey of the young Niccolo d'Este to the Holy Land with the quest of Odysseus, as "he in his young youth, in the wake of Odysseus..." (XXIV:111). In canto XXIV, Pound identifies the coherence between

Niccolo's voyage and Odysseus', with the latter's heroic endeavours elevating the former's actions to the level of the epic. In canto XXVI, Pound's twentieth century vision is elevated through the sharing of experience with the Renaissance vision of Niccolo d'Este, which in turn was similarly elevated through the unity of his experience with that of Greek mythology. This process of the echoing of imagery between cantos that, on the surface at least, appear unrelated, is an effective way for Pound to emphasize the sense of the permanence of the heightened aesthetic perception that, in the poem as a whole, he is attempting to relocate. Specifically, Pound is attempting to release the dormant impulse to creativity that is inherent in humanity; to reverse the condition of apathy enforced by the evils of "the beast with a hundred legs, USURA" (64) as defined by canto XV. Thus, in canto XXVI, Pound makes the plea of "Relaxetur !", the Latin for 'let him be released', in the hope that civilization can transcend the corrupting influence of usurious economic principals that destroy creativity. In this way, Pound is able to forge a unity between the cantos that deal with the squalor of contemporary economic failure, and those which celebrate the past realm of lyrical intensity.

From this explicitly autobiographical vision of the creative individual seeking release from the constraining influence of the age, Pound then returns to the annals of Venetian history, initially to a document that records the imprisonment, in 1461, of the artist Matteo di Pasti, and his ensuing battle for freedom. Pound thus equates his personal quest for aesthetic liberation with Pasti's literal struggle for justice. However, as the vignette makes clear, both the fifteenth century artist and his twentieth century equivalent suffer at

the will of what is essentially the same force; social and political corruption engendered by financial rather than moral considerations,

11th. December 1461: that Pasti be let out
with a caveat
"caveat ire ad Turchum, that he stay out of
Constantinople
"if he hold dear our government's pleasure.
"The book will be retained by the council
(the book being Valturio's "Re Militari").
[XXVI:121]

Here, Pound makes reference to the fact that, when Pasti was arrested by the Venetians, he had in his possession a copy of *De Re Militaria*, a book about military explosives by Roberto Valturio, for which Pasti had added the illustrations. The background, to which Pound alludes in the reference to "caveat ire ad Turchum", beware of going to Turkey, is that Pasti, a Veronese sculptor and medalist, was sent by Sigismundo Malatesta to Candia to paint a portrait of Mohammed II, the emperor of Turkey. Sigismundo had sent along Valturio's *Militaria* as a testament of Pasti's ability, but the Venetians interpreted the book as being evidence that Pasti was in league with the Turks against them. Pound employs the document, which refers to the strict conditions of "Relaxetur", of Pasti's release, as another instance of the oppressiveness and pettiness of the Council Major, as previously attested to in canto XXV. The demand that he "stay out of Constantinople" is a direct representation of the way in which socio-political concerns dictate the freedom of expression of the artist. Further, it is implicit in the narrative that these socio-political concerns have more to do with the desire, on the part of the Council, to maintain and expand their wealth and power rather than to protect the community.

Senato Secreto, 28th of October,
Came Messire Hanibal from Cesena :
"Cd. they hoist the flag of St. Mark
"And have Fortinbras and our army?"
"They cd. not... but on the quiet, secretissime,
"Two grand... Sic ; He may have
"Two thousand ducats; himself to hire the men
"From our army."

[XXVI:122]

Here, the document attests to the fact that, whilst the Venetians could not afford to openly support Sigismundo in his battle with Pius II, they were prepared to give Hanibal "Two grand..." to hire Venetian soldiers and their commander, Fortinbras, thus strengthening Sigismundo's forces in a covert manner. The complexity of this arrangement meant that the Venetians could not lose whatever the outcome. They, in effect, paid themselves to enter the affray anonymously, allowing them to reap the benefits of the spoils of victory, and freeing them from the burdens of defeat that depleted the coffers of other cities less devious than themselves.

Pound, in canto XXVI, allows the documents to flow together, to create a composite picture of the activities of the "Senato Secteto", with each separate fragment adding to the accumulation of the evidence that convicts the Council of corruption at every level. The individual documents, relating to divergent spheres of community life, are woven into one, to create a unified and damning picture of civic immorality. The conclusion of this catalogue of Venetian corruption is marked, in the narrative, by the fall of Constantinople to Islam forces in 1453. In this instance, Pound quotes from a document that reveals the Venetians signing of a cynical trade treaty with the conquering Moslems,

link canto XXVI with canto III, highlights the problem of the role of patronage in the realm of the arts, and the way in which finance and the world of business, identified throughout 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' and beyond as being a corrupting influence, infringes upon the creative freedom of the artist. Pound, as he appears in both canto III and canto XXVI, is the young poet searching for an aesthetic direction. Having arrived in Venice, a place of inspiration and enlightenment, being infused with the ghosts of the Renaissance, his struggles to find a poetic voice are intensified by his lack of money and the absence of a willing patron. From this, he compares his own case with that of Matteo de Pasti, who is forced to provide illustrations for tracts on explosives in order to survive. The implication of this is that the system of patronage is destructive to the creativity of the artist. Either the artist acquiesces to the wishes of the market, resulting in the dilution of aesthetic vision, or he accepts destitution, as is stated in canto III with Pound's inability to afford a trip on a gondola, "For the gondolas cost too much, that year" (III:11). The significance of the gondola here is that it symbolizes the means of forging a union with the eternal poetic truth that Pound is seeking, the "Bright gods and Tuscan, back before the dew was shed" (ibid). His depleted finances bar him from making this connection, with the gondola serving as a concrete means of transportation into this realm of truth. As such, in the canto, he remains alienated from the source of this poetic truth.

As canto XXVI is drawn to a close, Pound returns to this theme, again employing documentary evidence to emphasize his argument. At this point, Venice is allowed to fade into the background,

as the mire of the political squalor of the Council major is superceded by the usurious relationship that has developed between the patron and the artist, returning the canto to the point at which it began. Specifically, Pound alludes to fragments of letters from three oppressed artists to their patrons, displaying with increasing pathos the degrees to which the artist is forced to humble himself before his master. The first of these letters is from the Veronese painter and medalist Pisanello to Alessandro Sforza. Sforza, identified as being corrupt in canto IX through his dealings with Sigismundo¹, has sent Pisanello to Bologna to buy horses, and Pisanello writes for permission to be released from his duty,

Please Y. L. to answer quickly
As I want to take myself out of here,
And if you want me to buy them
Send the cash by Mr. Pitro the farrier
And have him tell me by mouth or letter
What yr. ld^o wants me to buy.

[XXVI:125-126]

The tone of the letter shows how Pisanello must prostrate himself before Sforza with flattery and subservience before he can be freed from his role as errand boy, a situation that is intensified in the second letter that Pound refers to, which sees the Venetian painter Vittore Carpaccio begging for payment for a painting aquired by Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantova, through an unknown agent,

To the Marquis of Mantova, Fran^{co} Gonzaga
Illustrious my lord, during the past few days
An unknown man was brought to me by some others
To see a Jerusalem I have made, and as soon as he
saw it he insisted that i sell it him, saying it
gave him the gtst. content and satisfac^{on}

¹ "...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"
And this cut us off from our south half
and finished our game, thus, in the beginning...

[IX:35]

Finally the deal was made and he took it away,
Without paying and hasn't since then appeared.

[XXVI:127]

It is pertinent to note the manner in which the two artists sign their letters. Pisanello signs himself as "Servant of yr. Illustrious Lordship" (XXVI:126), which highlights the way in which he recognises that he must flatter the ego of Sforza, whilst demeaning his own stature. Carpaccio, as if to intensify this recognition, signs himself as "The humble svt. of yr. Sublimity" (XXVI:127), which emphasizes a progression from flattery to grovelling. Carpaccio's tone is a saddening indictment of the debasement of the artist before the corrupting force of greed, as the patron exploits the painter without conscience.

The decline in the relationship that existed between the artist and the patron is presented, by Pound in this canto, as an evolving one. In this instance, Pound uses lineation to identify the progress of this decline through time. Chronologically, Pisanello (1395?-1455) directly precedes Carpaccio (1455?-1525?), and the layering of their experience gives emphasis to Pound's argument that the position of the artist in society has become an increasingly marginal and fragile one with the passage of time. Further, a clear parallel can be seen to be emerging between this decline and the rise of the usurious economic practices detailed, for example, in canto XXI. Specifically, through a comparison between the information provided by the cantos that focus upon economics and those that contain aesthetic material, one can see a clear and coherent picture of the unified decay of all aspects of western civilization. This point is expanded upon in canto XXVI as

Pound advances the narrative from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, with a letter from Mozart to the Archbishop of Salzburg, demanding that his patron allow him freedom to leave the city. This time, however, Pound does not present the letter itself, but rather attempts to read between the lines "(inter lineas)" in order to ascertain Mozart's true feelings for the Archbishop,

To the supreme pig, the archbishop of Salzburg:
Lasting filth and perdition.
Since your exalted pustulence is too stingy
to give me a decent income...
I ask you for the fourth time
To behave with more decency, and this time
Permit my departure.

[XXVI:128]

The tone here is the complete antithesis of the humble subservience expressed earlier by Pisanello and Carpaccio, but the reality is that this is not the letter that Mozart actually sent. His letter would have contained similar sentiments to those of his predecessors, but the invective that exists between the lines emerges to portray the actual nature of the relationship of artist to patron. As Pound's dramatization of Mozart accurately and emotively displays, whilst secretly he is able to rebel, the reality is that the artist has become an economic slave to the patron, who keeps him captive both geographically and creatively. This again implies a return to the opening of the canto, with Mozart echoing Pound's earlier cry of "Relaxetur!" (121), or let him be set free.

The artists included in canto XXVI all imply the honest endeavour of the creative individual to produce, or, as Carpaccio would say, to 'make' their art in spite of the pervasive economic and social climate. Indeed, the closing lines of the canto celebrate

Mozart's achievement in this regard, as Pound quotes from a further letter from the composer. This time, the letter is to his father, telling of the completion of a new sonata, and the tone of the fragment is in marked contrast to that of his previous implicit communication with the Archbishop,

"As is the sonata, so is little Cannabich."

[XXVI:128]

The simplicity and delicacy of this utterance, comparing the beauty of his new sonata with that of his pupil Rosa Cannabich, elevates Mozart beyond the mundanity of the actions of the archbishop. He is seen to succeed inspite of rather than because of the patronage system, but the suggestion is that if he and the other artists included here were free of the constraining influence that this system enforces, then their art would be of even greater value.

When taken as a coherent unit, cantos XXV-XXVI display how, in an increasingly corrupt world, the artist figure is able to transcend the constraining influences at large in society through the rejuvenating power of creativity. The technique of employing actual documentary evidence allows Pound to place this achievement in a historical context. As the documents are allowed to accumulate, they combine to form a unified image of the existence of a marked division between the permanent, the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, the sonatas of Mozart and so on, with the impermanent, the petty squabbles of the Council Major and the attempts to cheapen art engendered by Titian and the patrons. The underlying implication that this pair of cantos presents is that the permanent, for example the Venice that endures

beyond time at the opening of canto XXV, belongs to the vision of an earthly paradise that Pound has been seeking to locate since 'Three Cantos I', where paradise is not sentimentalized or romanticized but is seen as a reflection of the inherent potentials within humanity. This recognition mirrors that of canto XVII, where the consciousness and intellect of the mind of the perceiver permits access to "the light not of the sun" (XVII:77), the Neoplatonic light of primal experience. In cantos XXV-XXVI, Pound contrasts this with the infernal vision of the casual, the pettiness and selfishness that, for example in cantos XVIII-XIX, was seen to extinguish this light, where the debasement of earthly paradise is aligned to the origins of the control and issue of money. Thus, cantos XXV-XXVI serve as a unified expression of the divergent ideas that Pound has been grappling with throughout 'A Draft of XXX Cantos'. He draws strands of meaning from previous cantos together with a new level of clarity, giving emphasis to the awareness that this initial stage in the development of the overall pattern of the poem is moving towards a close, an awareness that is made explicit in cantos XXVII-XXX.

CHAPTER NINE

CANTOS XXVII-XXX OF 'A DRAFT OF XXX CANTOS'

Pity causeth the forests to fail,
Pity slayeth my nymphs,
Pity spareth so many an evil thing.
Pity befouleth April,
Pity is the root and the spring.

[XXX:147]

The remainder of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' continues the process of restatement that is evident in cantos XXV-XXVI. However, cantos XXVII-XXX can be seen to lack the coherence of their direct predecessors. To begin this sequence, rather than employing the unifying method of borrowing from localized historical documents, Pound returns to the more explicitly fragmentary and anecdotal style that, for example, is characteristic of cantos XII and XVIII. Cantos XXVII and XXVIII focus primarily upon contemporary matters, analysing the universal stupidity of the twentieth century. In these cantos, Pound advances the discussion of the casual, the petty greed of humanity as previously embodied by the Renaissance Council Major in cantos XXV and XXVI, bringing the catalogue of the cultural decline of civilization up to date. In the new vision, however, there is no Palazzo Ducale to offset the cultural waste of the age. Rather, Pound sees contemporary civilization as being blind to the aesthetic achievements of the past, whilst lacking the creative perception to add to the tradition in the present. From this position of resignation, Pound returns to the

metaphysical in cantos XXIX and XXX, as he seeks to present an alternate vision of the permanent, implying that, even in the present, where the casual and the mundane dominate, an earthly paradise can be located, if not physically, then from within the mind of man. As if to anticipate the methods of the 'Pisan Cantos LXXIV-LXXXIV' (1948), Pound evokes with illuminating brevity and clarity moments of significance from the evolution of the poem, from Sordello, from Dante, from Arnaut Daniel, from the Renaissance, and from his own past before the commencement of the Cantos, seamlessly woven together in an attempt to forge an all inclusive statement. At this point, the poem appears to acquire a renewed sense of urgency, as the process of condensing information, of abandoning all that is superfluous, is intensified.

Canto XXVII opens with a sequence of fragments and anecdotes that reveal defining aspects of the early decades of the twentieth century. Pound begins with the horror of World War One, identifying the centrality of this event to the defining of his vision of reality. The stupidity and the waste of the war is highlighted in a statement that echoes and condenses the discussion introduced in canto XVI. The initial focus is placed upon the lot of the ordinary foot soldier, the cannon fodder, and, as in canto XVI, these unfortunates are seen to be viewed by the officers as an expendable resource,

FORMANDO di disio nuova persona
One man is dead, and another has rotted his end off
Et quant au troisieme
Il est tombe dans le
De sa femme, on ne le reverra
Pas, oth fugol othbaer:
"Observed that the paint was
Three quaters of an inch thick and concluded,
As they were rammed through, the age of that

Here, Pound dramatizes, without pathos or sentimentality, a scene that presents those dead and dying in the trenches. These forgotten individuals are introduced by a line taken from Guido Cavalcanti's 'Ballata XII' which translates as "Fashioning a new person from desire." This evocative image of renewal is immediately merged with a realistic vision of trench warfare. The juxtaposition is made without explanation, but the implication is that Pound is referring to the way in which, as one soldier dies, he is immediately replaced by one more just like him, as humanity is reduced to the level of "Drear waste" (Three Cantos II:180) recalling, in a different setting, a vision that Pound has been developing from the very beginning of the Cantos. In this sense, the concept of renewal, the "confusion/ Basis of renewals" (XX:92) is subverted in canto XXVII, so that renewal comes merely to fuel further destruction.

The thematic complexity of the opening passage of the canto is further increased as Pound's narrative rapidly shifts from the juxtaposition of Cavalcanti's Italian with the course and direct diction of the soldiers of World War One to a rendering of a French street song, 'La Spagnuola', popular at the turn of the century. The lines that Pound quotes refer to the fate of an inebriated reveller who falls into the arms of his wife, never to be seen again. Whilst these lines initially appear obscure in their relation to those which have gone before, they ultimately serve to intensify, in an absurd manner, the recognition of the corruption of humanity that Pound is developing here. This song is then immediately merged with a brief phrase taken

from the anonymous Old English poem 'The Wanderer', which Pound identifies in the essay 'The Constant Preaching To The Mob' (1916) as being "like to this, a broken man speaking". The extract that Pound borrows translates as "until a bird bore out", suggesting the desire for freedom, for escape from the condition of chaos that World War One aptly represents. The image of the bird seeking liberation is one that, when juxtaposed with that of the fate of the soldiers and the drunken Frenchman, implies the theme of metamorphosis, of change from one state into another in order to facilitate a transcendence. This desire echoes canto II, where several examples of mythically charged metamorphoses were enacted within the medium of water. In canto XXVII, Pound accelerates the process dramatized in the earlier canto, achieving the transformation in the brief pause that exists between lines. As such, in this canto, Pound exemplifies the definition of metamorphosis that he presented in the essay 'Arnold Dolmetsch' (1918);

Our only measure of truth is, however, our own perception of truth. The undeniable tradition of metamorphosis teaches us that things do not remain always the same. They become other things by swift and unanalysable process².

The "unanalysable process" that dominated canto II is now completed in an instant, highlighting the degree of poetic intensification and condensation that Pound is seeking at this point in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos'. There is no analysis or explanation as one image flows into another in a tightly compacted statement that acquires meaning through association and accumulation.

The vision of the horror and the human waste of the

¹T.S. Eliot (ed.): Literary Essays of Ezra Pound: 1954: 64

²T.S. Eliot (ed.): Literary Essays of Ezra Pound: 1954: 431

trenches is succeeded by a recognition of the work done by scientists at the turn of the century in an attempt to combat illness and disease. In this section of canto XXVII, Pound returns to the analysis introduced in canto XXIII, where he focused upon the courage displayed by Pierre and Marie Curie in the pursuit of knowledge. In canto XXIII, Pierre Curie was elevated to the level of hero, and again, in Canto XXVII, Pound recalls this celebration in a condensed form, merging Curie with other voyagers after beneficent scientific knowledge;

Ten million germs in his face,
"That is part of the risk and happens
"About twice a year in tubercular research, Dr. Spahlinger..."
J'ai obtenu" said M. Curie, or some other scientist
"A burn that cost me six months in curing",
And continued his experiments.

[XXVII:129]

Here, Pound merges Pierre and Marie Curie into one as, in canto XXIII, it was seen that it was Pierre not "M. Curie" who exposed his arm to the untested effects of radium. This suggests that Pound is interested in the idea that the fact implies, rather than the fact itself. This idea, associated with the selflessness of the research scientist, following directly from a vision of the waste of human potential engendered by World War One, contrasts two opposing forces at work in the initial decades of the twentieth century. The first, the reductive and destructive war perpetuated by the businessmen, identified in cantos XVIII and XIX, who seek to debase humanity en masse, whilst the second, the doctors and physicists of cantos XXIII and XXVII, who struggle to combat and cure natural ailments. In this way, through the juxtaposition of these two irreconcilable forces, Pound creates a vision of a society that has lost all sense of direction. Scientists are seen to be struggling courageously to save lives only so that they can be wasted in the trenches and on the battlefields.

This awareness of the chaos and the madness that grips society in the twentieth century brings Pound to a realization of the condition of crisis facing civilization. At this point in a canto that, through the merging of obscure references and languages, has implied a progression towards heightened complexity, there is a moment of clarity as the sense of loss of contact with the cultural and intellectual past, a theme evident from the opening of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', is made explicit. Pound identifies the void that engulfs civilization, making the link, evident since canto XVI, that exists between World War One and the Russian Revolution, implying that, just as the former created a pointless waste of life and of potential, so to will the latter;

England off there in black darkness,
Russia off there in black darkness,
The last crumbs of civilization...
And they elected a Prince des Penseurs
Because there was so damn many princes,
And they elected a Monsieur Brisset
Who held that man is descended from frogs.

[XXVII:129]

Repetition consigns both England and Russia to the creative void as their energies are depleted by the "black darkness" that is war, an observation that is developed further in canto XXVII, where Pound considers "the labours of tovarisch" (131). That civilization is in decline is emphasized in the above passage through the humorous reference to "Monsieur Brisset" as a "Prince des Penseurs", a 'prince of thinkers'. Specifically, Jean-Pierre Brisset was a French philologist who was celebrated as a prince of thinkers by the French intelligencia on the strength of two works, La Science de Dieu: ou, La creation de l'homme (1900) and Les Origines Humaines (1913), which propose and seek to prove the thoery that man is descended from the frog. Clearly, as a

sham scientist, Brisset's fantasy is contrasted with the courageous research of Dr. Spahlinger and Pierre Curie, but Pound's real criticism is not of Brisset himself but of those who give credence to his pseudo-scientific hypotheses. This Pound identifies as evidence of intellectual "black darkness".

Following on from this identification of the contemporary void, Pound enact a shift in time back to the middle ages and to the building of the Cathedral of Ferrara. Ferrara was initially seen, in canto XX, as the location for Niccolo d'Este's delirium and the subsequent execution of his wife Parisina and his son Ugo. Here, however, it is celebrated as a place of creative unity. Further, unlike the celebration of the Palazzo Ducale at the centre of canto XXV, it is not the cathedral itself that is the focus but the process of its construction. Whereas the Palazzo Ducale achieved magnificence despite the pettiness of the Council Major, the Cathedral of Ferrara is invested with splendor through the cooperation and unity of the community. Coherence of structure is achieved through coherence of vision and action, as Pound presents the cathedral as a representative statement of the moral and intellectual health of civilization in a past age,

Sed et universus quoque ecclesie populus,
All rushed out and built the duomo,
Went as one man without leaders
And the perfect measure took form;
"Glielmo ciptadin" says the stone, "the author,
"And Nicolao was the carver"
Whatever the meaning may be.

[XXVII:130]

Pound's language here captures the spontaneity and enthusiasm of the community of Ferrara as they begin the process of building the "duomo", whilst the Latin, which translates as 'and the whole population of the

church, too', suggests reverence aligned to belief. The reference to the solidarity and singlemindedness of the people, who have abandoned concerns of hierarchy, is clearly evoked to imply the theory behind the Russian Revolution. Pound presents a vivid picture of the community of Ferrara working "as one man without leaders", a situation that could potentially lead to chaos and anarchy. However, this equality is seen to forge and strengthen a sense of coherence in the past. This celebration of past organic unity is then set in opposition to the disunity of the present as, as Pound will show later in a closing interpretation of the Russian Revolution, the lack of coherent leadership merely results in inactivity in the present. Thus paradoxically, in contrast to the people of Ferrara, the communities of present day Russia are seen to fail to respond to the potentials for creativity that their supposed freedom offers.

As canto XXVII progresses, Pound allows the vision of the communal creativity associated with the building of the Cathedral at Ferrara to merge into the stagnation of the present, as the middle-ages evolve, without historical transition, into the Russian Revolution, focusing upon the figure of "tovarisch", or comrade. Rather than fulfilling the call to creativity, which Pound makes manifest in the form of the "Xarites", or graces, tovarisch is depicted as a destroyer of buildings. The vigorous activity attributed to the people of Ferrara is tellingly transformed into one of sleep, as Pound returns to the theme of the "black darkness", the void that is seen to engulf both England and Russia earlier in the canto. Now, Pound personifies this void, giving it human form in tovarisch;

So that the Xarites bent over tovarisch.

And these are the labours of tovarisch,
That tovarisch lay on the earth,
And rose, and wrecked the house of the tyrants,
And that tovarisch then lay in the earth
And the Xarites bent over tovarisch.

[XVII:131]

The repetition, at the beginning and at the end of the passage, of the "Xarites", the Greek form of the Charites or Graces, ironically adds a sense of myth to the statement as Pound parodies the epic structures that he has previously woven into 'A Draft of XXX Cantos'. The irony and the suggestion of the mock heroic is continued with the reference to "the labours of tovarisch". In this line, Pound clearly alludes to the labours of Hercules, and the irony is that tovarish's labours are, after the wrecking of building, to lie initially "on " and then finally "in the earth". The "labours of tovarisch" are thus associated with mindless destruction and stagnation. Even as the Graces bend over tovarisch in a humbling attempt to awaken the creative potential that the Revolution has offered, prompting him to rebuild the civilization that was earlier seen to be approaching "The last crumbs" (XXVII:129), he is consumed with impotence. In this sense, Pound does not condemn the Revolution, rather he presents it as an opportunity ignored, implying that, in the present, humanity is blind or asleep to the moral and cultural revitalization that is required.

The equation of the Russian Revolution with events drawn from Greek mythology is brought to a climax at the close of canto XXVII as Pound compares tovarisch with Cadmus, Odysseus' companion, celebrated anonymously in canto XX as one of those who perished off the isle of Ogygia and whose "names are not written in bronze" (XX:94). In canto XXVII, Pound celebrates Cadmus not for the courage of his death

but for the achievements of his life, primarily in regard to his creation of Thebes, a magical city whose walls were built to the sound of communal ritual of dance and song, aligning the construction of Thebes to that of the Cathedral of Ferrara but setting it in opposition to the mindless actions of tovarisch. Thus, in canto XXVII, Cadmus emerges as the antithesis of tovarisch, the ideal that humanity in the present has failed to mirror, as Pound emphasizes with clarity and poignancy in the following passage,

That he came with the gold ships, Cadmus,
That he fought with the wisdom,
Cadmus, of the gilded prows. Nothing I build
And I reap
Nothing; with the thirtieth autumn
I sleep, I sleep not, I rot
And I build no wall.

[XXVII:132]

The reference here to "Cadmus, of the gilded prows" echoes the "Cadmus of Golden Prows!" (IV:13) of canto IV, implying the underlying cyclical nature of the poem as a whole, as the concluding cantos of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' evoke the opening ones in an apparently spontaneous yet inevitable way. This repetition, through several areas of the poem, further elevates Cadmus, emphasizing the centrality of his "wisdom" and creativity. Unlike tovarisch, Cadmus comes to symbolize order, and it is from this order that valid creativity is seen to derive.

In these terms, canto XXVII focuses upon the quest for order, not in a superficial or artificial way, but as a product of the natural and spontaneous unity that Pound identifies in mythology and in the Renaissance. The canto employs examples of natural and spontaneously ordered creativity, such as the Renaissance Cathedral of

Ferrara and the mythically charged city of Thebes, in an attempt to display that this order is absent in the present, as represented by the chaos, destruction, and creative impotence generated by tovarisch and the Russian Revolution. Pound's interest in the Revolution marks a shift from that displayed, for example, in canto XVI where he was primarily concerned with the causation of war, which was linked historically to the economic systems developed by Kublai Khan, analysed in canto XVIII, and the Medici, documented in canto XXI. In canto XXVII Pound transcends the inevitability of the economic pressures that initiated the Revolution, focusing instead upon the opportunity that it offered tovarisch, as an archetype of the common man. As such, Pound implies the existence of a similarity between post-Revolutionary Russia and the middle ages. In both situations, conventional order is absent and thus there was seen to exist, within the community, the potential to create their own natural order. Pound suggests that this challenge was met in the Renaissance, with the Cathedral of Ferrara existing as a monument to this achievement. In the present, however, Pound indicates that this potential as was not recognized, as the tovarisch was "But in sleep" (XXVII:131). Rather than building a testament to creativity, the common man was involved in wrecking "the houses of the tyrants" (ibid). This recognition implies another means that Pound adopts in an attempt to bring unity to the Cantos, which is the use of architecture as symbols that recur throughout the poem to highlight the condition of civilization. Examples of this method can be seen in Malatesta's Tempio, in the Palazzo Ducale, in the ancient cities of mythology, and in the duomo of Ferrara.

This awareness is translated in canto XXVIII, as

Pound presents a humorous vision of the stupidity and ignorance of the American abroad. The impression that is created is of the tourist who is blind to the cultural heritage of the buildings and places visited, evoking in theme T.S. Eliot's early satirical poem 'Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar' (1919). Both poems make reference to Venice, celebrated in cantos III, XVII, and XXV-XXVI as an approximation of earthly paradise. In canto XXVIII, in contrast, Venice is presented as a place where the traveller fails to make contact with the cultural majesty that elsewhere has been seen to enrich the present. Whereas Eliot's poem is specific in its reference, remaining within the framework set by the two grotesque characters, Pound's canto is more universal, shifting from one scene to another without explanation or evaluation. In canto XXVIII, Pound adopts Venice not as a timeless place where "Gods float in the azure air" (III:11), but as the bizarre backdrop to a surgical operation;

Aso iqua me. All Esimo Dottor Walluschnig
Who with the force of his intellect
With art and assiduous care
Has snatched from death by a most perilous operation
The classical Caesarean cut
Marotti, Virginia, in Senni of San Giorgio
At the same time saving her son.
May there move to his laud the applause of all men
And the gratitude of the family.
S. Giorgio, 23d May. A.D. 1925.
(XXVIII:133)

The operation, the life threatening emergency delivery of a child by Caesarian section, is clearly used to echo the birth of Julius Caesar, and the reference to the "Classical Caesarean cut" adds emphasis to this implication, with the word "cut" itself intensifying the sense of brutality and butchery that exudes from the scene. The passage, like Shakespeare's portrayal of Caesar, is ambiguous. As Shakespeare

presents Caesar as both a valuable leader and an arrogant tyrant, Pound defines the "Dottor" as both a hero and a vain self publicist. This is evident in the opening line, 'This is me here', where the suggestion is that the doctor is being self-congratulatory. The "intellect", "art", and "assiduous care" displayed by Walluschnig refers back to the courage shown by the scientists in cantos XXIII and XXVII, but there is a strong sense of irony in the passage that 'undercuts' the skill of the surgeon. Specifically Pound generates a tone of the unsavoury in the description that is confirmed at the close, where he is referred to as "his laud". The Doctor, presumably German or Austrian, is seen to exploit his ability for selfish personal gain, separating him from the selflessness displayed by Pierre Curie in canto XXIII, and aligning him more with the usurers such as "Baldy Bacon" in canto XII, Kublai Khan in canto XVIII, the Medici in canto XXI, and "Warenhauser" in canto XXII.

Indeed, usury is implicit throughout canto XXVIII as Pound introduces a series of absurd characters who travel in order to take rather than give, or even integrate with their new surroundings. Whilst the opening of the canto comprises of a listing of such individuals, they all combine to provide a composite picture of Pound's interpretation of the architypal American abroad. Their usury is presented as being cultural, as symbolized by "Mr Lourpee" who, though not strictly American, remains true to Emerson, "the Sage of Concord" (134), moral, as indicated by the daughter of "Mrs Kreffle", the "best paid" New York drama critic who "was lodged in a bordello" (ibid), and social, with "Clara Leonora", who gained prestige on the basis of a fleeting acquaintance with "il Gran Maestro / Mr Liszt" (135). However, Pound states that financial usury is also strongly evident in the

contemporary American sensibility, as he includes a cameo of "Mrs Kreffle" herself;

And Mrs Kreffle's mind was made up,
Perhaps by the pressure of circumstances,
She described her splendid apartment
In Paris and left without paying her bill
And in fact she wrote later from Sevilla
And requested a shawl, and received it
From the Senora at 300 pesetas cost to the latter.
[XXVIII:134]

The telling line here is that "Mrs Kreffle's mind was made up", her perceptions were fixed. She defines Paris in terms of the inside of her apartment, avoiding the challenges of new experience offered by the external world. Pound criticizes Mrs Keffle's failure to meet her responsibilities, translated into the financial context of her inability or unwillingness to pay her bill. This is then compounded by her exploitation of the "Senora". In this sense, in a subtle manner, Pound presents Mrs Keffle as the architypal usurer as seen in the Cantos. She is willing to take with no regard to the giver, and is ignorant of the consequences of her actions, both to herself and to others. Thus, the fact that her "mind was made up" relates not just to her perception but also her moral and cultural integrity.

In 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', it is evident that, broadly speaking, Pound is defining two types of being, the creator and the usurer, and the two are mutually exclusive. The creator, primarily represented by the artist, is he or she who works for the pleasure of giving, and the usurer, primarily the businessman, is he or she who works for the pleasure of taking. Throughout 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', Pound has provided numerous examples of each category, often setting

them in opposition to each other. One such example of this conflict was defined in canto XXII, where Pound analysed the construction of the Northwestern railway. Here, he compared the methods of railway construction adopted by his paternal grandfather, Thaddeus Coleman Pound, who sought to build the railway in conjunction with the demands of man and nature, with those of Frederick Weyerhaeuser, satirized as "Warenhauser" in the text, who disregarded all concerns other than profit. In that canto, Pound showed how his grandfather, who was building the railway not simply for personal profit, was ultimately defeated by the corrupt allegiance of Warenhauser and the Senate, implying that most frequently when such a conflict occurs it is sadly the usurers that gain victory. In canto XXVIII, Pound returns to this narrative, initiating a thematic shift from a concern with travellers to modes of transportation, this time to display how the allegiance of "Warenhauser" and the Senate was defeated by the honest cooperation of the common man, previously celebrated in the presentation of community of Ferrara in canto XXVII;

And that man sweat blood to put through that railway,
And what he ever got out of it?
And one day he drove down to the whorehouse
Cause all the farmers had consented
 and granted the right of way,
But the pornoboskos wdn't. have it at any price
And said he'd shoot the surveyors,
But he didn't shoot ole pop in the buckboard,
He giv him right of way.

[XXVIII:138]

The opening line of this passage repeats almost exactly the opening line of canto XXII, with the man who "sweat blood" being Pound's grandfather. In both cantos, Pound makes it explicit that Thaddeus was not concerned with personal gain through the use of a similarly shared repetition of

the rhetorical question "And what he ever got out of it?". Within the cyclical structure of the Cantos, this selfless act of creativity aligns him with the artist creators such as Sigismundo Malatesta in cantos VIII-XI, who built the Tempio at Rimini against all the odds, and Matteo de Pasti, Vittorio Carpaccio, and Mozart in canto XXVI, all of whom were seen to be persecuted by usurers for their dedication to their art. The irony of this passage from canto XXVIII is that it is the "pornoboskos", the brothelkeeper, who, along with Thaddeus Pound, displays the integrity to reject economic greed in favour of what, in canto XXII, was established as moral right, and what is here identified as being the "right of way".

As the canto draws to a close, Pound turns his attention from the struggles of building the railways in the usurious age of the nineteenth century to the struggles of aviators to develop their technology in the usurious age of the early twentieth century. Specifically the field of aviation is identified, in canto XXVIII, as one of the few fields of human endeavour that allows man to abandon the known and to take up the quest for the unknown, paralleling the quest of Odysseus that was given pride of place at the beginning of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos'. The aviator is therefore invested with the potential hero status that was afforded to Odysseus, and has been inherited by a succession of other figures as the poem has evolved. The point that Pound makes in this canto is that this quest, aligned to those of mythology, is largely ignored in the present, that humanity has become blind to the challenges being offered by the creative vision of the few;

And lest it pass with the day's news
Thrown out with the daily paper,

Neither official pet
Nor Levine with the lucky button
Went on into the darkness,
Saw naught above but close dark,
Weight of ice on the fuselage
Borne into the tempest, black cloud wrapping their wings,
The night hollow beneath them.

[XXVIII:139]

Here, Pound alludes to the heroic race to cross the Atlantic by aeroplane undertaken by Charles Levine and Charles Lindbergh, the "official pet" in 1927. Levine hoped to be the first to make the crossing but, due to unforeseen problems with the aircraft, Lindbergh flew to Paris ahead of him. The reference to the darkness in the passage intensifies this recognition that the aviators, the searchers after new realms of achievement, were entering area of the unknown, with the reference to the "tempest" emphasizing the heroic danger implicit in this quest. Indeed, throughout the evocation of the imagined flight, Pound employs a lyrical intensity of language that stresses the heroic and the epic that in some ways mirrors W.B. Yeats' poem 'An Irish Airman Foresees His Death'. In contrast to this, the disposable nature of contemporary society is highlighted, as symbolized by the discarded newspaper. The image does not simply refer to the object being disposed of, the newspaper, but also to the knowledge, and the potential, that is contained within. The sense that is created is that, whilst Levine and Lindbergh are breaking new barriers, the populous has become blind to the epic quest, the search for new truths, that the early pilots were undertaking. The suggestion explicit in the passage is that they are alone in their adventure both physically, with "naught above but close dark", and also spiritually as their journey is ignored and unrecognised by civilization.

Pound brings canto XXVIII to a close by continuing

the aviation theme, this time by displaying how even this heroic frontier has been corrupted and debased by emotional and sexual usury. As such, the vision of Levine's and Lindberg's epic struggle to be the first to cross the Atlantic is juxtaposed with the scandalous liason that took place between the English actress Elsie Mackay and the war hero Captain Walter Hinchcliffe, who was hired by Levine as a pilot. The details are left out of the narrative by Pound, but the implication of what lies between the lines "(inter lineas)" [XXVI:128] is clear enough;

Or one eyed Hinchcliffe and Elsie
Blackeyed bitch that married dear Dennis,
That flew out into nothingness
And her father was the son of one too
That got the annulment.

[XXVIII:140]

The event that Pound alludes to here is that, on the morning of March 13, 1928, Hinchcliffe departed from Lincolnshire in the aeroplane 'Endeavour' with the aim of flying back to America, but he never made the crossing, presumably crashing into the ocean. The scandal is derived from the fact that, on that morning, Elsie Mackay, the wife of fellow actor Dennis Wyndham, boarded Hinchcliffe's plane disguised as Captain Gordon Sinclair, this action in itself confirming their liason. The reference to her father, Viscount and later Earl of Inchcape, as "the son of one (a "Blackeyed bitch") too" is possibly inspired by the fact that he was chairman of various steam navigation companies as well as the director of two banks, making him, within the boundaries defined in the Cantos, as a primary usurer. The significance of this illicit liason to Pound's narrative is that, whilst Levine and Lindberg's just and courageous quest was seen to be ignored by the masses, the

female is seen as being as one with the dynamic "drift" of the water. This awareness is intensified by the association of the feminine with chaos, not in a destructive sense, but rather as a spontaneous and evolving force that forces man to seek order and stability. In these terms, Pound can clearly be seen to be aligning woman to the natural elements, and the natural "biological" processes that dominate existence.

The fact that Pound makes specific reference to the words of Martin Luther implies the spiritual dimension to the quest for revitalizing passion that is being sought in this canto. Specifically, Luther is evoked as a reformationist character, as one who sought purity and morality of thought and who did not reject the positive force of sexual passion and desire. The suggestion is that, just as Luther was determined to transform spiritual perception in the sixteenth century, Pound is identifying a similar need in the present. The paradox that is generated in canto XXIX, however, is that the spiritual perception that is most clearly criticized is that of the protestant faith, the religious doctrine that has its origins in the vision of Martin Luther himself. This Pound emphasizes through a vignette that juxtaposes the natural "biological process" detailed above with the dry sterility of the clergy;

Past the house of the three retired clergymen
Who were too cultured to keep their jobs.
Langour has cried unto langour
 about the marshmallow-roast
(Let us speak of the osmosis of persons)
The wail of the phonograph has penetrated their marrow
(Let us...
The wail of the pornograph....)
 The cicadas continue uninterrupted.

[XXIX:143]

Here, Pound highlights what is the central theme of the canto; the protestant repression of the natural and essential force that is generated through "the osmosis of persons", the celebration of the sexual union that symbolizes the basis of all unity, physical, spiritual, and poetic. As such, the protestant faith, represented by the figures of the "three retired clergymen" is seen to inspire disorder, as their repression disrupts what is seen by Pound to be the most natural and fundamental of all unifying processes. It is significant that the clergymen are "retired", redundant in their impotence and "languor", their want of energy or interest.

This condition of "languor" is, as Pound approaches the conclusion of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', representative of the condition that has been seen to be pervasive throughout the poem thus far. In a sense, it is the fundamental condition inherent within contemporary civilization; the lethargy that tarnishes art, architecture, morality and spirituality, and indeed all spheres of physical and intellectual creativity. Beyond this, it is the weakness that, as was emphasized in canto XV, has allowed the evil "Usura" to gain dominance in all aspects of existence. In contrast to this debilitating condition however, Pound emphasizes the vitality of passion, the strength of desire, as he visualizes the "wail of the pornograph", here juxtaposing the Greek reference to the energy of the harlots with the previously mentioned "phonograph" that "penetrated their marrow", adding to the overtly sexual implication of the vision. From within this conflict between "languor" and passion, the two opposing forces that are presented as doing battle in this canto, Pound briefly returns to the city of Troy, last visited in canto XX as a

comparison to the consequences of the deluded actions of Niccolo d'Este as he executed his wife Parisina and son Ugo for adultery. In this instance, Pound evokes the incessant mutterings of the "cicadas", the voices of the old men of Troy who, in cantos II (p.6) and VII (p.24), were seen to complain of the potentially destructive influence of Helen, in the Cantos a mythical representation of woman as the embodiment of creative potential. Their rejection of Helen is ultimately a rejection of passion, and of life itself, thus the reference to "cicadas", the dried out shells of locusts. The voices of the "cicadas" thus serve to complement those of the "three retired clergymen" at the beginning of the passage, echoing the theme of the destruction of passion evident in canto VII and aligned in canto XXIX to the enduring condition of "linguor".

As if to complement the theme of the centrality of a rejuvenating passion in canto XXIX, from the outset Pound focuses upon the element of light that recalls Iamblichus, the Neo-Platonic philosopher alluded to in canto V. In canto V, Pound employed Iamblichus as a symbol for oneness, with light serving as a single principle from which the duality and plurality of all things is derived. In canto XXIX this concept is given a clearly sexual dimension, as Pound uses light imagery to emphasize the dominant theme of passion. Indeed, the canto opens with Pound dramatizing, in conventional lyrical terms, the power of the sunlight to dispell the mists of repression as evident in the perception of the "retired clergymen";

PEARL, great sphere, and hollow,
Mist over lake, full of sunlight,
Pernella concubina
The sleeve green and shot gold over her hand.

[XXIX:141]

There is clear sympathy of cadency created between "PEARL", the jewel metamorphosed within water out of friction and flux, and "Pernella", the concubine whose union is natural rather than legally sanctioned. Further, "PEARL" implies purity and strength, the "great sphere" that symbolizes the endurance of passion as a rejuvenating force. In this sense, "PEARL"/"Pernella" are the elements of the physical and the sexual that form the "biological process" that is unified in the "drift..." (144). Thus, the evocative nature of the verse, being connotative rather than denotative, with the sunlight giving order and illumination to this process of unification, is used to imply the spiritual source of passion, an implication that is strengthened later in canto XXIX through the reference to the words of Martin Luther quoted earlier.

A similar, if metamorphosised vision of the illuminating power of passion, as symbolized by the sunlight, recurs towards the end of canto XXIX, as Pound transforms the image of the single pearl into that of the tower of ivory. The phallic connotations of this image are more than obvious as the power of the sun is seen to solidify further the already rigid structure, expressing once more the strengthening and unifying potential of passion as a rejuvenating force,

Let us consider the osmosis of persons
nondum orto jubare;
The tower, ivory, the clear sky
Ivory rigid in sunlight
And the pale clear of the heaven
Phoibos of narrow thighs,
The cut cool of the air,
Blossom cut of the wind, by Helios...

[XXIX:145]

Here, Pound develops the sexual aspect of Iamblichus' theory of the

plurality of existence as originated from the oneness of light, evoked as a comprehensive symbol of passion. Specifically, the female, as celebrated earlier in the canto through the reference to "Wein, Weib, TAN AOIDAN" (144), is juxtaposed with the male, graphically represented by the explicitly phallic ivory tower. In this passage, as the shaft of early morning sunlight breaks through the sky, the elements of the male and female are unified giving rise to the "Blossom cut of the wind". Significantly, this blossom evokes "The blossoms of the apricot/ (that) blow from the east to the west" (60) last experienced at the close of canto XIII, where Kung was seen to be struggling to preserve nature's increase. Again, in canto XXIX, this fruit of the union of the male and the female is seen to be fragile, with "Blossom" implying potential rather than actual increase. However, the image of the blossom also promises the harvest, a harvest that was previously associated with the earthly paradise in canto XVII, where "vines burst from my fingers" (76) in celebration of renewed fertility and spiritual prosperity.

In this sense, at the close of canto XXIX, Pound introduces a note of ambiguity that intensifies this image of fragility, of the potential rather than the actual, again drawing upon the metamorphic qualities of water evident since "So-shu churned in the sea" (6) in canto II. At this point, Pound dramatizes a merging of light and water which creates a paradoxical state of clarity and obscurity of perception. Indeed, in a image that recalls "The eyes turn topaz" at the climax of the 'Medallion' section of Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, Pound

¹E. Pound: Selected Poems: 1948: 187.

specifically alludes to the dulling of sight that represents the decline of the creative potential, suggesting that, at the close of the canto, the combined repressive force of the voices of the "three retired clergymen" and the "cicadas" have stifled the creative passion that has been welcomed throughout the canto up to this moment;

Eyes brown topaz,
Brookwater over brown sand,
The white hounds on the slope,
Glide of water, lights and the prone,
Silver beaks out of night,
Stone, bough over bough,
 lamps fluid in water,
Pine by the black trunk of its shadow
And on hill black trunks of the shadow
The trees melt in air.

[XXIX:146]

The image is suggestive of the moment of physical death, and it is at this moment that a degree of unity between the physical and the spiritual realm is achieved, as "The trees melt in air." The passage, as elsewhere in canto XXIX, is intensely lyrical, being suggestive rather than explicit in its meanings. The water that has previously been seen to be in a state of constant flux is now seen to "Glide", implying in one sense a loss of vitality but in another an arrival at a point of calmness in this penultimate canto of 'A Draft of Cantos XXX'. Indeed, at the close of the previous canto XXVIII, the scandalous liason that was conducted between Elsie Mackay and Captain Hinchcliffe was seen to lead to death, as the two flew into "nothingness" (140), with death there also being enacted as a merger conducted in the sea. Death is thus developed as a unifying theme at the close of this initial section of the poem, as canto XXX amplifies this preoccupation, with murder being presented as a consequence of the spiritual disorder that, for example was seen to be generated by the protestant clergy in canto XXIX.

As such, canto XXIX, through the quest for rejuvenating passion as expressed in the merger of the male and the female in the sexual union, can be seen to be attempting to define the natural balance of existence, a balance that would lead to renewal, as symbolized in the "Blossoms cut on the wind". The antithesis to this balance is represented by the spiritual and creative "languor" seen to emanate from the protestant church, itself ironically forged from the positive reformist actions of Martin Luther. The canto thus presents the conflict that Pound sees to exist between the ideal, as depicted by the description of the elemental female as "a chaos", with the present reality of repression as "The cicadas continue uninterrupted". Canto XXX develops the narrative from the position of this reality, where civilization is dominated by what is implicitly a spiritually usurious doctrine that espouses stagnation rather than increase.

In many ways, Canto XXX serves the dual purpose of providing a comprehensive and concentrated statement of what has gone before in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' (1930), whilst also anticipating what is to come in 'Eleven New Cantos XXXI-XLI' (1934) and 'The Fifth Decad of Cantos XLII-LI' (1937). In this sense, the canto is concerned largely with an explication and exposition of the evil that is prevalent within civilization, again seeking to set this position in an historical context by evoking various key moments in the historical process. As such, and in a direct way, Canto XXX anticipates the 'Usury Cantos' XLV and LI that are at the centre not only of 'The Fifth Decad' but of the Cantos as a whole. As with canto XLV, at this key moment in the development of the poem, Pound can be seen to be attempting to present to the reader the force of evil that is responsible for the

spiritual cultural and intellectual decline that he has been analysing from the beginning of the 'Three Poetry Cantos' and even earlier. Canto XXX shares with canto XLV not simply a similarity of theme but also a similarity of structure as, in the later canto, Pound was clearly seeking to echo the intense poetic impact that this earlier canto generates.

Whereas the evil that Pound finally identifies as the defining force behind the general decline of civilization in cantos XLV and LI is "the beast with a hundred legs, USURA" (64) initially uncovered in canto XV, in canto XXX this evil force is initially named as pity which, as the canto unfolds, it becomes clear is a form of emotional usury. The canto opens with Pound identifying the evil force through an allusion to Chaucer's early poem 'Complaint Unto Pity', which dramatizes self pity as the result of the death of love. The complaint was a conventional poetic expression of personal dissatisfaction common in the middle ages, where a first-person narrator describes his sorrow and its causes. The theme was frequently associated with unrequited love or betrayal, giving rise to a pervasive sense of personal grief. In canto XXX, Pound clearly exploits this convention, adopting both Chaucer's clarity of language and his method of personifying pity, an approach that directly anticipates the technique employed in canto XLV,

COMPLEYNT, compleynt I heard upon a day,
Artemis singing, Artemis, Artemis
Agaynst Pity lifted her wail:
Pity causeth the forests to fail,
Pity slayeth my nymphs,
Pity spareth so many an evil thing.
Pity befouleth April,
Pity is the root and the spring.

[XXX:147]

In a parody of Chaucerian language, Pound begins the canto with

sustained repetition, investing the conventionally mournful complaint with a strong note of urgency. At the outset, the goddess Artemis, the Greek name for Diana, is invoked to represent the vitality of untamed nature as evident in the mythical past. This association was made explicit by Pound as early as canto IV where he celebrated "the body of nymphs, of nymphs, and Diana,/ Nymphs, white-gathered about her, and the air, air..." (IV:14). In this early image Diana/Artemis symbolizes the regenerative powers of renewal as made manifest in nature. In canto XXX, however, this power is shown by Pound to be depleted in the present, as the forests fail, and the nymphs, transported from canto IV, are slain. The perpetrator of this transformation is the personified force of "Pity", and it becomes evident that the "compleynt" is that of Artemis herself as she "lifted her wail" against its all pervasive negative influence. It is significant in this context that Artemis' "wail", that expresses her desire for rejuvenation, echoes that of the "wail of the pornograph" (143) of canto XXIX, that represents the enlivening sound of desire.

Artemis is significant as a character and as a symbol in that she performs the role of maintaining the balance within nature that was generated in canto XXIX through the union of the male and female. In canto XXIX it was implied that this balance was threatened by intellectual, and thus physical repression engendered by institutions such as the church. In canto XXX Pound visualizes a situation where this threat has become a reality, and where intellectual languor "befouleth" (XXX:147) nature's increase. In this sense, whereas the evil expresses in canto XLV, and indeed in XV, as "usura" or usury, is a social one based upon a corrupt economic practice and thus can only

be rectified through a mass change of direction from within civilization as a whole, the evil expressed here, as an intellectual one, can be more easily rectified from within the mind of the individual. Pity is thus defined as a form of emotional excess that in the middle-ages led the individual into a self tormenting state of gloom but in the present is seen to lead to a total disruption of natural order that materializes as a violation of nature. The implication of Pound's narrative here, therefore, is that there is a need for a renewed clarity of thought that abandons sentimentalism in favour of objectivity, a recognition that was evident in the Cantos since Pound's rejection of Browning's 'Sordello' in 'Three Canto I'.

In canto XXIX Pound alludes to the universally renewing cycle of copulation, represented by "the osmosis of persons" (143 and 145), birth, symbolized by the "Blossom cut on the wind" (145), and death, as implied by the image of "Eyes brown topaz" (145). In canto XXX, this essential cycle is destroyed, as death occurs without the complementary sources of rejuvenation. The vision that Artemis has is of a holistic pagan perception of existence, similar to Pound's vision of a Venice "back before dew was shed" (III:11). Artemis represents a pre-historical time when nature was imbued with divine forces, and was wholly in accord with the needs of humanity. In the present, where pity generates usurious self-interest, divinity is drained from nature, and the unity of the spiritual and the physical is lost. It is from within this framework of imbalance that Pound introduces the myth of Aphrodite and Mars, the first narrative to dramatize the malignancy of pity even in ancient times,

In Paphos, on a day

I also heard:
...goeth not with young Mars to playe
But she hath pity on a doddering fool,
She tendeth his fyre,
she keepeth his embers warm.

[XXX:147]

In this brief vignette, Pound alludes to the story of the rejuvenating passion shared by Aphrodite, the goddess of love who in Roman mythology is recognised as Venus, and Mars, the Roman god of war. The positive qualities of their union are expressed here through the suggestion of purity in their "playe". However, out of the destructive emotion of pity, Pound alludes to Aphrodite's ultimate rejection of Mars, representing vitality and potency, the "Ivory rigid in sunlight" (145) of canto XXIX, in favour of her aging husband, Hesphestos (Vulcan), the smith to the gods and the "doddering fool". The presence of death is evident in this action as Aphrodite "keepeth his embers warm", sustaining an empty and lifeless union that refers back to Artemis' "compleynt" at the opening of canto XXX, whilst anticipating Pound's own complaint against "usura" in canto XLV;

Usura slayeth the child in the womb
It slayeth the young man's courting
It hath brought palsey to bed, lyeth
between the young bride and her bridegroom
CONTRA NATURAM
They have brought whores for Eleusis
Corpses are set to banquet
at behest of usura.

[XLV:230]

The relationship that is described as being against nature in canto XLV is clearly the relationship that Aphrodite has with her impotent husband in canto XXX. Further, the implication is that Hesphestos is the corpse "set to banquet", maintained through the false emotion of pity displayed by Aphrodite that keeps her from her natural unity with Mars.

In this sense, Pound employs the earlier canto to inform on the theme of the latter one, allowing him to forego explanation in canto XLV, concentrating the intense poetic message into a direct and focused statement.

The thwarted positive relationship of Aphrodite and Mars is then given a counterpoint in the fourteenth century, as Pound returns to the narrative of Ignez da Castro, analysed previously in some detail in canto III. Specifically, as Pound states in The Spirit of Romance (1910), Pedro was the son and heir to Alphonso IV of Portugal. Following the death of his wife Constance, Pedro secretly married Ignez but this union was the source of political jealousy and conspiracy. Finally, Ignez was stabbed to death whilst begging clemency from Alphonso. However, when Pedro succeeded to the throne, he had her body exhumed in respect of their love and placed on a throne next to him. In this sense, as Pedro exhumed Ignez's body in honour of their passion, Pound exhumes their narrative as it symbolizes an example of passion destroyed by political jealousy. With this narrative Pound then serves to align the evil of pity with time, suggesting the presence of not one but several interlinked forces of evil within civilization;

Time is evil. Evil.
 A day, and a day
Walked the young Pedro baffled,
 a day and a day
After Ignez was murdered,

Came the Lords of Lisboa
 a day, and a day
In homage. Seated there
 dead eyes,
Dead hair under the crown,
The King still young there beside her.

[XXX: 147-148]

Ignez is here employed as a symbol of the untimely destruction of passion, a destruction that, as with Mars in the previous vignette, leaves the lover "baffled". Further, as in canto III, Pound uses the tragic image of the corpse seated on the throne to suggest the discrepancy that exists between the vision held in the consciousness and the actuality. For Pedro, the murder of his wife destroys time, as "a day and a day" passes. The exhumation of her body, her physical self, allows Pedro to return to a time before her loss and, at least mentally, to freeze time at the point. The reality of the "dead eyes" and the "Dead hair", however, give lie to this vision, as the inevitable progression of actual time destroys the frozen image, thus the awareness that "Time is evil." This morbid attachment of Pedro's to the corpse of his dead wife implies a unity between "Time is evil" in this passage and pity as evil in the previous one. Just as pity implies a submission to sentimentality, then Pedro's morbidity in his desire to escape time is a form of sentimentality which prevents renewal through the visualization of decay.

As Pearlman notes in The Barb of Time, time in the Cantos is representative of "any destructive process originating in the disordered will of man that violates the natural order" ¹. In this sense, time and pity, as is "usura", are all differing faces of the same problem, man's increasing alienation from the divinity of nature, as expressed by Artemis, that sustains the balance and ensures nature's increase. As such, Pound is implying a division between the mechanical and the organic, in terms of time symbolized by the clock versus the cycles of nature as analysed in the vision of "Ecbatan, the clock ticks

¹D.D. Pearlman: The Barb of Time: 1969: 120.

itself, as "matter", is directly undercut by the analysis that follows, as Pound presents her in her bridal gown standing before the altar. The allusion to the "price of the candles" refers to the fact that Lucrezia paid for the dress, the ceremony and indeed the groom, with the Este family refusing to sanction the marriage unless a large dowry was forthcoming. This scepticism was justly based upon the dubious reputation of the Borgias, who had Lucrezia's previous husband assassinated.

The first two lines of the above passage appear to elevate Lucrezia, with the reference to "the light of the altar" echoing the light imagery developed in canto XXIX. However, in canto XXX, this light is aligned to the church that in cantos XV and XXIX has been reviled as usurious and destructive. Thus, rather than equating Lucrezia with the "uncut forest", aligning her with Artemis, the goddess of untamed nature and renewal, the image of her before the altar depicts Lucrezia as that which "causeth the forest to fail", associating her with the evil of pity and setting her in opposition to Artemis. In this sense Pound can be seen to be punning on the word "matter". Whilst "matter" suggests the "principle of being" as stated in 'Mang Tsze', it also implies rotting timber, decaying refuse. As such, as Pearlman notes in The Barb of Time, Lucrezia is transformed into the rotting corpse of Ignez da Castro. Thus, the marriage ceremony, as one that anticipates renewal, is in reality one that perpetuates impotence. This is further made explicit in the response of Alfonso as, in the closing lines of the passage, he travels in secret to Ferrara to see his bride-to-be. After looking at her, he is shown to depart without uttering even an ambiguous "O". Whilst Lucrezia ultimately emerges as a

parasite, preying upon the political power of others in order to extend the control of the Borgia family, Alfonso is portrayed as being too inactive to protest. His "O" suggests the failure of language, as Alfonso lacks the creativity to express his opinion. Pound's vision of passivity here defines Alfonso as the antithesis of the virile and playful Mars.

In this sense, the apparently unconnected vignettes that Pound introduces in canto XXX, shifting from pre-history to the Renaissance, all serve to highlight the identification of evil that Pound is attempting to reveal at the close 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', an evil that has been implicit from the opening of the poem. One of the central ways in which Pound has investigated the influence of this evil in civilization is through its effect on art. Again, this concern anticipates the vision of canto XLV, but it also recalls canto XXVI, where Pound first documented, through the adoption of the official papers of the Council Major, the mistreatment of Matteo de Pasti as an artist suspected of treason, and then employed a similar archivist method to detail the struggles of Pisanellus, Vittore Carpaccio, and Mozart within the restrictive system of patronage. At the close of this canto, and indeed this initial section of the evolution of the Cantos, Pound directly returns to this method, including a letter from the Jewish painter Hieronymous Soncino to his patron Cesare Borgia, the illegitimate son of Pope Alexander VI and brother of the aforementioned Lucrezia. The letter tells of how, at the behest of Cesare, Soncino has assembled the first mechanical printing press that would lead to the decline of this craft based artform,

Whence have we carved it in metal
Here working in Caesar's fane:

To the Prince Cesare Borgia
Duke of Valent and Aemelia
...and here have I brought cutters of letters
and printers not vile and vulgar
(in Fano Caesaris).

[XXX:148]

Whilst Pound does not condemn Soncino, seeing him rather as an innovator, his practices, as demanded by his patron, led to a uniformity in printing, "not vile and vulgar", that divides the creator from the creation. There is a clear distinction made between the traditional wood-cut that transforms nature, the "matter" of the forest, into art, and metal that is devoid of this contact with the natural forces previously embodied, for example, in the figure of Artemis at the opening of canto XXX. Whereas wood is the material of what could be seen as a pre-usurious age, where creativity was aligned to nature's increase, metal is the material of industrialization and the printing press is visualized as the hell that is derived from this process. This evokes Blake's vision of the printing house in 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell', where it was seen that;

In the fourth chamber were lions of flaming fire, raging
around & melting the metals into living fluids.

In the fifth chamber were Unnam'd forms, which cast the
metals into the expanse.'

In this process, the "Unnam'd forms" who were once artists are reduced to operators of infernal machines. They have lost all creative input into the craft of printing, and as such are condemned to a condition of living hell. The emphasis, as in canto XXX, is placed on the act of casting the metal, as opposed to "carving" as in wood-cut printing.

'J. Bronowski: The Penguin Poets: William Blake: 1958: 101.

Pound's evocation of the horrors that were derived from the invention of the printing press are largely implicit in canto XXX as he previously focused on the negative and usurious elements of this process in the first of the 'Hell Cantos', XIV. Specifically, in this earlier canto, Pound presents a reworking of Blake's vision of the printing house as a replication of a living hell, employing the scatological language that characterizes the whole of the statement in an attempt to intensify the impact of his vision. However, where Blake concentrates upon the magnitude of the environment, Pound, in canto XIV focuses upon the squalor and deprivation that the scene suggests,

howling, as of a hen-yard in a printing-house,
the clatter of presses,
the blowing of dry dust and stray paper,
foetor, sweat, the stench of stale oranges,
dung, last cess-pool of the universe,
mysterium, acid of sulphur,
the pusillanimous, raging;
plunging jewels in the mud...

[XIV:61-62]

In this earlier canto, Pound presents a situation that is a part of the industrial present and then, as he arrives at the conclusion of this group, traces it back to its historical source, identified in canto XXX as the innovations of Soncino working under the demands of his patron Cesare Borgia. This is representative of the organic rather than linear coherence that the poem exhibits, as unity is ultimately achieved through the relocation of image strands that had apparently been abandoned or rejected. Thus, in the Cantos, there is always the impression that, from within the cyclical nature of the development of the narrative, all images and situations included in the fragmented structure of the poem have a relevance and place in the unity of the whole.

Whereas canto I opened ambiguously in the middle of the action, with the evocative line "And then went down to the ship" (3), which serves to suggest the continuum of history and myth, canto XXX ends with a direct statement of finality, as Pound alludes to the suspicious death of Pope Alexander VI, who is supposed to have died from drinking wine that he himself had poisoned with the aim of despatching his rival, Cardinal Andriano Castellsì of Corneto. Whilst Pound has clearly identified the Borgia's as villains in this narrative, there is a note of pathos in the closing statement that implies the ambiguity out of which the poem initially grew;

And in August that year died Pope Alessandro Borgia
Il Papa morì.

Explicit canto
XXX

[XXX:149]

The mood of regret that pervades this ending is associated not so much with sadness at the demise of Borgia himself but rather from an identification of Borgia's death with the decline of the Renaissance, celebrated throughout as a time of clarity of thought and action. Significantly, in this canto, the demise of Renaissance clarity is directly associated with the Borgia's and their patronage of the printing press, which replaced artistry with technology. Further, from an awareness of the analysis of Blake's vision of the printing house as presented in canto XIV, this historical occurrence is directly linked to the vision of the present industrial hell that forms the basis of the cantos XII, XIV and XV, and is seen as a corrupter of art in canto XLV, where art is not "made to endure nor to live with/ but it is made to sell and sell quickly" (229). As such, in the Cantos, Pound can be seen

to effectively use the essentially fragmented structure of the poem as a form of short hand, allowing him to condense his material whilst still achieving coherence and cyclical unity. In canto XXX, therefore, Pound does not need to directly relate the actions of the Borgia's to the present hell as he has already made the link previously; all he needs to do, in order to enforce the link, is to imply a situation examined in an earlier canto.

In one sense, in 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', Pound has taken the reader on a journey from the beginning of epic time, with Homer and Odysseus, through to the decline of the Renaissance, with the death of Pope Alexander VI, "Il Papa mori". However, from within this elliptical chronology, Pound has also woven into the scheme antithetical visions of the recent history of decay and decline. Thus, Pound generates the technique of interspersing visions of achievement, such as Sigismundo's building of the Tempio in cantos XIII-XI, with conflicting visions of depravity, as represented for example by the figure of Baldy Bacon in canto XII. The scatological study of Baldy Bacon, following directly from the celebration of Sigismundo Malatesta, illuminates Pound's technique of avoiding long passages of linear explanation by simply layering diverse but related historical periods together simultaneously. This is evident not just between but also within cantos, as in canto XXI where he juxtaposes the activities of the Medici in attempting to gain control of the state through the manipulation of finance in the fifteenth century, with the attempts of Thomas Jefferson to inspire a minor cultural rebirth in the eighteenth century. Through this method, Pound is able to suggest how, within the imaginative world of the Cantos, one event is ultimately aligned with the other, stressing

not linear but spontaneous unity, as unity can be emphasised immediately. The great irony is that this unity is achieved through the process of fragmentation, as fragments of history are woven together in such a way as to dissolve the boundaries that are created by a concern with linear time. Pound, through the process of narrative fragmentation, is thus able to transcend conventional time, as identified by the ticking clock of Ecbatan in canto V that seeks to impose artificial order on the natural rhythms of existence, arriving at an approximation of Kung's concept of "order within" (59) as identified in canto XIII.

The order that the Cantos generate, in this sense, as is made explicit from the opening of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos', is the order that exists within the mind of the perceiver. Pound has developed a poetic form where the events of history, of the past and the present, can coexist simultaneously. The argument as to the presence or absence of structural unity is made redundant as the aim never was to shape another epic in the mold of Homer, or Dante, or Browning, where the expanse of time was unified by a conventional plot or narrative. From the outset, as stated in 'Three Cantos I', Pound embarked upon a twofold quest to find both a suitable poetic voice and a new epic form that was relevant to the complexity of the twentieth century, and the initial sequence of the poem, as detailed in the 'Three Poetry Cantos' serves as a dramatization of this quest. Indeed, the opening lines of 'Three Cantos I', culminating in the observation that "the modern world/ Needs such a rag-bag to stuff all its thoughts in" (113), make this aim explicit. With the publication of 'A Draft of XVI Cantos' in 1924, the point at which the new opening of the poem was finalised as what is now

canto I, it is clear that to a large extent this quest had been resolved, and the form, the fragmented structure of the poem had been located, based upon the layering and juxtaposition of history and myth. The quest for Pound can then be seen to be one associated with the struggle for coherence and unity within this elastic form, a struggle that, at the end of the Cantos, Pound himself acknowledges to have lost, as he states in canto CXVI;

But the beauty is not the madness
Tho' my errors and wrecks lie about me.
And I am not a demigod,
I cannot make it cohere.

[CXVI:809-810]

However, on the evidence of 'A Draft of XXX Cantos' it is clear that the poem does cohere, but that it demands a new approach to its reading, one where the reader is open to the challenge of following Pound on his journey towards the unravelling of the truth of existence. Pound, in the Cantos, identifies the existence of an important distinction between unity and continuity. The poem ultimately displays that unity can be achieved through the use of a fragmentary form, and that coherence can be located from within the chaos of contemporary civilization even if, as became evident in the 'Pisan Cantos' with the isolation of "the mind indestructible" (LXXIV:456), this is ultimately only possible from within the mind of man. In this sense, Pound can be seen to illustrate T.E. Hulme's observation in the essay 'Humanism and the Religious Attitude' that the destruction of continuity was a necessity of art in the twentieth century as, only through this destruction could art truly approximate the reality of consciousness in the present. As such, the structure of the Cantos is a valid and essential part of the poem. It is integral to Pound's analysis of the contemporary situation, as

important in transmitting meaning as are the images and vignettes out of which the narrative is woven.

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