# Making Simplicity: Expressive Force and the Roots of Open Form

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English
and the Designated Emphasis
in Critical Theory

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Spring 2018

Abstract

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The poets of Donald Allen's era-defining postwar anthology *The New American Poetry* developed practices of open-form composition out of formal principles that Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams had first transposed into literary art from abstract painting at the turn of the century. My dissertation, *Making Simplicity: Expressive Force and the Roots of Open Form*, argues that this lineage of artists, from Picasso through Robert Duncan, is defined by their use of non-representational techniques of composition to access an elusive but profound mode of perceptual intellection that I call expressive force. The avant-garde's discovery both of expressive force and of the means to access this mode of experience through cultural production, I claim, resulted largely from artists' contact with non-European ritual objects. The term 'expressive force' addresses a phenomenological mode common to both art and ritual, elucidating modernists' well-known fascination with ritual objects while shifting analysis away from more reductive "primitivist" narratives. Offering a phenomenology of how perceived objects emerge relative to the body's habit of giving shape to experience, expressive force defines perceptual qualities' manner of self-display, their appearance as dynamic events rather than static attributes of substance. By concretizing other cultures' own claims for the 'numinous powers' made publically accessible through ritual practices, force both extends the concept of modernist expressivism well beyond mere art-appreciation and establishes coherent grounds for treating aesthetic composition as a generative agency for new epistemologies, worldviews and ways of life.

My first chapter distinguishes force from both signification and private affect through a reading of the interplay between diegetic and rhetorical registers in *The Ambassadors*. I argue for the centrality of force in Henry James' late work by showing how the Jamesian sentence, in organizing dramatic import using hair's-breadth tonal distinctions that supplant editorializing commentary, occupies another register irreducible to either rhetoric or diegesis. To grasp this register, I examine the methodological divergences shaping Johan Gottfried Herder's and G.W.F. Hegel's respective understandings of *Kraft* (literally "force"). Like Herder, Hegel regarded the perceptual discernment of force as a mode of knowing based in the senses, though his own rigorous dialectical treatment undermined Herder's ambitions to base metaphysical claims on this mode, conceptually dissolving *Kraft* into a complex dance of logical determinations. More recently, Charles Taylor has argued for the ongoing pertinence of Herder's earlier model of reason as *besonnenheit* or "taking awareness" to contemporary debates in the fields of psychology, cognitive science and philosophy of mind. I argue that the phenomenological discernment

of force both Herder and Taylor see as constitutive of human linguistic competence also proves essential to appreciating modernists' efforts to transform culture. The interaction between lyric and discursive modes William Carlos Williams stages in *Spring and All*, for example, shows how the conceptual mind's incommensurability with force necessitated newly participatory educational methods more congruent with force's "transposition of the faculties."

Taking William Rubin's controversial 1984 MoMA exhibition *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art* as its point of departure, my second chapter seeks to explain how the fine arts became the repository of expressive force. Whereas Rubin treats ritual objects as artworks, I suggest that a deeper affinity between artwork and ritual object lies in their practical capacity to change how the body structures experience. Diverging from the cognitive approach of Levi Strauss' structuralist analysis of ritual, I instead claim that the correspondences between the Durkheimian school and Bergson's and Merleau-Ponty's theories of motor intentionality provide a model of autotelic action in which ritual functions as a method for rerouting habitual circuits of action and perception. Ethnographic studies of ritual then allow us to track the fine arts' historical emergence from a longer line of shared practices of cultural production grounded in expressive force. Recurrent ethnographic topoi such as *mana* and *hau*, which find a Kantian counterpart in the notion of purposiveness, provide empirical instances of how expressive force's non-conceptual and proto-objective character can situate its distinctive quality of sensuous involvement as the basis of a new sociality.

My third chapter begins by establishing how Picasso's famous encounter with the Fang masks and reliquary figures at the *Musee du Trocadero* in 1906 transformed his sense of the painterly vocation. The objects' influence on Picasso came to fruition first in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and later in analytic cubism's self-confounding coordination of multiple illusionistic devices to lure and cancel visibility simultaneously, releasing visual perceptions from their fixation within schematized images. The crucial modernist concept of "form" thereby comes to refer to the point of integration—experienced precisely *as* force—at which determinate images give way to an expressive capacity in appearance as such, beyond mimesis. I then turn to Pound's early experiments during his collaboration with the London Vorticist group, exploring the two technical resources that correlate with Picasso's deployment illusionistic devices: the verbal 'image' and the temporal interval. Linking these formal resources to Spinoza's principle of "intellectual love," Pound retained the social critique in T.E. Hulme's opposition between humanism and the religious attitude while jettisoning the anti-affective cast of Hulme's dichotomy of vital and geometric art.

My fourth chapter follows Pound's efforts after the first war to transpose avant-garde 'form sense' into an extra-aesthetic basis for culture. Pound's renewed work on *The Cantos* in the 1920s reconceived the work as a template for a new culture, transcending the circumscribed status of literature. Drawing equally from medieval theology, Provençal verse forms and Confucian ethics, Pound sought resources with which to ground cultural process in a synthesis of the experiential intelligence receptive to expressive force, on the one hand, with knowledge proper, on the other. *The Cantos* extended its incorporation of source materials into wide-ranging and, at times, incompatible areas such as history and economics in an effort to elide the gap between artwork and world. Of course, this effort proved disastrous when Pound's ideogrammic method, in applying this non-cognitive intelligence to a disparate range of extra-literary phenomena, came to motivate both his involvement with Italian Fascism and his increasingly obsessive, anti-Semitic economic conspiracy theories. Despite his immense errors, I argue that Pound based his notion of *paideuma*, derived from Leo Frobenius's work, on an enabling insight about how knowledge is always dependent on

the oft-unacknowledged background of a pre-cognitive sensibility or "*anschauung*." Only *as* expressive force could culture thus make knowledge's background conditions visible.

Chapter five traces the Black Mountain poets' efforts to salvage from the Poundian project the resources for an American counterculture grounded in the experiential intelligence responsive to expressive force. Making open-form poetics the basis of their broader efforts at educational reform, Charles Olson, Robert Duncan and Robert Creeley initiated the 'mimeo revolution,' a proliferation of small press journals, and developed exploratory new arts-based curricula. Olson's Black Mountain seminar, published as *A Special View of History*, re-envisioned Creeley's concept of a "single intelligence" instantiated in poetic form as prefiguring a post-literate historical condition, recasting force as a matter of lived situations rather than objects. The new culture would develop around this production of situations, expanding the educational reform movement of the 50s into the 1960s' diverse array of experimental forms such as Duncan's cultural poetics of participation in *The H.D. Book*, Fluxus 'happenings' and McLuhanite media ecology's claim of a return to acoustic space. This expansion of expressive force from poetics into the counterculture at large freed the *paideumic* sensibility from the 'totalitarian' facet of Pound's legacy while extending its basic premise of a cultural renaissance achieved through new conditions of intelligibility.

"Making Simplicity" is designed to revise not only our understanding of the modernist artwork, but also of modernists' encounter with non-European ritual traditions, often reduced to mere "primitivism." Far from signaling a simple desire to produce exoticized representations of non-European cultures, artists' interest in the implements of ritual practice originated in the way these objects reframed the act and problem of composition itself. The avant-garde's challenge to art-as-such thus followed from artists' realization that even Western categories of "art" had derived historically from the ritual practices that produced the objects found at the Louvre, the British Museum and, later, the Metropolitan Museum. At their most basic level, artistic composition and ritual both change the way action structures experience by yoking together means and ends into a single autotelic act. Theoretical concepts of the Durkheimian school concerning the pragmatics of elementary religious life, such as the profane and the sacred, Mauss' *techniques du corps* and Levy-Bruhl's "participation" therefore offer models of activities that affect the way the world shows up in the first place. These anthropological accounts give historical substance to Bergson and Merleau-Ponty's fine-grained theories of motor intentionality's decisive influence in shaping first-person experience. This strange relationship between action and perception, originating historically in ritual contexts, would come to characterize what became known among European groups as 'aesthetic' experience. In the end, I suggest, understanding how expressive force gets accessed within both ritual and artistic contexts can renovate our conception of the category of "form" that developed out of non-representational art. As the principle of integration through which force is brought forth within an artwork, "form" links cubism's short-circuiting of illusionism to Ezra Pound's Vorticist ideal of 'primary form' to Charles Olson, Robert Creeley and Robert Duncan's projectivist principles of composition by field, and beyond.

**Acknowledgements**

I would first like to thank my dissertation committee chair, mentor and friend Charles Altieri for being probably my single greatest intellectual influence, for showing me a language, for ongoing various generosities and for giving me permission to continue entertaining old superstitions about the imagination. Thanks to C.D. Blanton for pushing me to examine my rhetoric, for making palpable reason's demands, and for all manner of practical advice and support. Thanks to Eric Falci for a keen eye and ear to readings and for pointing a way through the thicket. Thanks to Suzanne Guerlac for seeing how the sacred factored in. It has been an honor to work with each of you. Other friends have provided support, insight and inspiration for which I am deeply indebted: Bryan Newman, Ryan McWilliams, Gabriel Mehlman, Lionel Lints, Gabriel Monroe, Gerry Prindiville, Zack Beer, Sara Rojo, Alexis Larsson, Robert Offner, Jack deTar, Shireen Patell, Gilad Yakir, Jane Gregory, Katie O'Sullivan and Amanda Nadelberg. Lastly, thanks to my parents and sister for dealing with me. This work is dedicated to Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche.

# Making Simplicity

*Expressive Force and the Roots of Open Form*

**Chapter 1: On Method**

Throw away the lights, the definitions
And say of what you see in the dark

That it is this or that it is that
But do not use the rotted names.

How should you walk in that space
And know nothing of the madness of space,

Nothing of its jocular procreations?
Throw the lights away. Nothing must stand

Between you and the shapes you take
When the crust of shape has been destroyed.

-Wallace Stevens ("The Man With the Blue Guitar" *Collected Poetry and Prose* 150)

Reason, or the ratio of all that we have already known. is not the same that it shall be when we know more.

– William Blake ("There is No Natural Religion" *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* 2)

We can start very naïvely by saying that force means what it sounds like: when a person describes a work as "powerful," they are not always speaking figuratively. The ease with which we depart from the basic obviousness of these kinds of statements and responses in the rush to understand all too often has the effect of changing the object of our understanding. The notion of expressive force as an operative principle in aesthetic experience aims to draw our attention back to the dynamic and interactive quality investing the act of reading with varying degrees of acuity, on the one hand, and to locate this principle neither exclusively in the work's so-called formal features, nor in the audience's cognitive or affective responses but in the process through which these components come together. An early provisional sketch of force would include, first, a sense of agreement amongst the various properties and transactions making up the reader's field of experience in the present tense of reception, including both the "outer" aspects of work's linguistic features and the reader's "inner" array of subjective modes of intercepting the work (what Whitehead might call "prehensions"), including but not limited to intention, attention, affect, and cognition.

The experience of expressive force refers to how the sense of agreement among areas of experience, such as intentional stance, emotional valence and perceptual or cognitive attribute, both brings about and takes place in a distinctive phenomenological environment or milieu. This milieu acts in the way a primer or solution acts upon chemical ingredients by potentiating them: to speak of the qualities of the experience or situation is to refer to the situation or contextual space of reading as a kind of activity. "Agreement" here describes an unforced affinity and co-ordination that brings with it a sense of the experience's being imbued with a persuasive integrity radiating from its features, appearing as a kind of excess

element without one's quite being able to detach it. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, force is not only something we experience reading literature but is something we also experience in a wide variety of other everyday situations, though perhaps without being self-consciously aware of this fact. I will have much more to say about the non-specialized and not-exclusively-aesthetic nature of the experience of force, but before attempting to develop this definition in any greater detail an example might help to provide orientation.

"Nothing is more easy," writes Henry James in his Preface, with an irony bordering on the sublime, "than to state the subject of *The Ambassadors*"(33). James goes on to explain that the germ of his late novel is contained in a "charming admonition" made by the main character, Lambert Strether, "on a Sunday afternoon in Gloriani's garden." The pith of that admonition is as follows: "Live all you can; it's a mistake not to." Between the bumper-sticker-ready banality of Strether's statement taken at first glance and the bravado in James' assurance to his readers of the superlative approachability of his novel's lofty subject-matter lies both the brilliant irony of his statement and the real substance of *The Ambassadors*. Could "the master," known for the near-impenetrable subtlety and nuance of thought and feeling in his late style, really be informing us that the profound philosophical dilemma embodied in Strether and enacted through his journey to Paris to retrieve Chad Newsome from a morally dissolute life really reduces to such a flat imperative? What, then, really *is* the "subject" of *The Ambassadors*? Thinking about this question meaningfully might begin by first taking seriously James' explanation and then noticing how this creates a model of the work in which the entire narrative effectively circles around a relatively content-less, but exemplary, scene of Strether's admonition in the garden. James here distinctly makes no reference to Strether's introduction to Chad's mistress Madame de Vionnet in the same scene, which, narratologically speaking, would seem to constitute a much more significant or pivotal event. Instead we get an imperative to "live," a non-action both without a stated determinate content and without an easily definable alternative.

Strether's statement's conspicuous lack of determinate content invests the novel's melodrama and narrative with a provisional and subordinate status. In other words, James' designation in the preface tells us that the more explicit dimensions of the novel such as characters and events are materials gathered in order to invest Strether's imperative with import, rather than the inverse conception in which the imperative should be "cashed in" to characters and melodrama as referents. This is in fact implied in the title of the novel, with its invocation of ambassadors on diplomatic missions in foreign lands delegated to instantiate the splendor of regal authority for a new and perhaps strange audience. Like those ambassadors to the king, the characters of James' novel are brought forth not so much to represent a cultural concept, as an allegorical figure might, but to manifest in their own presentation to others, which is none other than their own person, those qualities befitting not only a nation, a culture, a set of values or a history, but also a dimension of life itself.

As an ambassador, the envoy is a conduit, neither arbitrarily selected as a mere functionary and therefore ultimately dispensable, nor purely self-sufficient or self-referential. The right qualities become manifest because the ambassador was well-selected, and the ambassador was selected because she had the potential to bring forth these qualities. But the king and the kingdom are not themselves these qualities that show forth in the person of the ambassador, though the former would cease to exist as soon as the qualities, upon which their perennially contested claim to legitimacy rested, stopped showing forth. Insofar as they *do* show forth, however, they act and make worlds. The crucial question regarding the real subject of *The Ambassadors* then becomes how we might take notice of the qualities that invest people and situations *in* the novel and *as they are presented by* the novel. Without

noticing this, we might develop all kinds of readings of the novel that stop short of taking into account the "subject" that establishes the entire range of stakes and the import of what takes place.

Strether's first encounter with Chad Newsome is delayed several times over in the novel, a crucial aspect of how the unfolding of events informs this first encounter because it allows the world of Paris, which has become Chad's world or which Chad has become a part of, to begin working on Strether. We get an intimation of how the Parisian world acts on Strether in an early scene in which Strether observes Chad's house from an adjacent balcony:

> Many things came over him here, and one of them was that he should doubtless presently know whether he had been shallow or sharp. Another was that the balcony in question didn't somehow show as a convenience easy to surrender. Poor Strether had at this very moment to recognize the truth that wherever one paused in Paris the imagination reacted before one could stop it. This perpetual reaction put a price, if one would, on pauses; but it piled up consequences till there was scarce room to pick one's steps among them. What call had he, at such a juncture, for example, to like Chad's very house? High broad clear – he was expert enough to make out in a moment that it was admirably built – it fairly embarrassed our friend by a quality that, as he would have said, it 'sprang' on him. He had struck off the fancy that it might, as a preliminary, be of service to him to be seen, by a happy accident, from the third-story windows, which took all the March sun, but of what service was it to find himself making out after a moment that the quality 'sprung,' the quality produced by measure and balance, the fine relation of part to part and space to space, was probably – aided by the presence of an ornament as positive as it was discreet, and by the complexion of the stone, a cold fair grey, warmed and polished a little by life – neither more not less than a case of distinction, such a case as he could only feel unexpectedly as a sort of delivered challenge? (88-89)

This scene, itself a kind of pause, expands outwardly within the broader context of Strether's teleologically-conceived mission to retrieve Chad and bring him back to Woolett, Massachusetts. So we have to take the sense of Strether's dawning ambivalence toward his own undertaking in Paris under the auspices of Mrs. Newsome as one condition shaping his experience on the balcony. And this same dawning ambivalence toward a reflectively articulated practical and moral purpose emerges out of a series of moments, such as this one, in which Strether's experience opens out and dilates in sympathy with how the world around him is arranged. This response seems to impinge upon him from without, causing him to take it in part as undermining the constancy of his preconceived purpose in fulfilling his mission. Hence the awkwardness Strether feels at his own susceptibility to the charm of what he happens upon, which is of no "service" to his mission. What interests me in this passage is first how ambient the particular quality Strether associates with Chad's house seems as it dawns on him surreptitiously in the almost litotic understatement, "didn't somehow show as a convenience easy to surrender," cropping up modestly at first within the stream of Strether's own ruminations about his mission, as though this character of the situation had been an undercurrent waiting to be acknowledged all along. Further, acknowledgement or observance appears in this same line first not as a positive attribution of a nameable aspect of the scene or house but as the removal of any positive attribution.

That is, the character of the setting fails, with "somehow" reserving a minimal degree of agency, to show up within Strether's apprehension as a "convenience easy to surrender."

This "somehow" then inverts, now localized in the character of Chad's house, into the indefinite positive "a quality" that can only be characterized, with scare-quotes marking an idiomatic expression, with the verb "to spring." The scare-quotes serve to qualify this sense of action in the quality as approximately designated and virtual, while at the same time marking the term itself as possessing an accuracy reserved solely for *le mot juste*. There is thus a layering involved in the presentation of that which compels Strether at this moment: not the house itself, but a quality showing in the features of the house that, in a manner of speaking, "springs" or *happens to* or *leaps out at* Strether in at least partial relation to how his broader orientation to the scene is being modified at this moment. While the quality, characterized by "spring" as a kind of event or activity, is itself rendered in the singular, setting it apart as distinct and unified, it inheres in a composition of relationships: "measure and balance, the fine relation of part to part." Factually, the house reduces to a set of static and isolatable components, and even the relationships between the features Strether is able to apperceive with an "expert" judgment as "admirably built." But neither of these dimensions seems to contain the activity of the quality presented in the arrangement, an activity that seems to implicate and develop (in an almost photographic sense) those details of the scene that it draws into its field, unfolding and deepening their inherent vividness: "the complexion of the stone, a cold fair grey, polished and warmed a little by life." It is this added element, which seems to summon one to name it with a verb despite its own invisibility, that proves the "unexpected" and the "challenge" that begins to dissolve Strether's stringency of purpose. It is also, I would add, an example of the subject of *The Ambassadors*. Paris seems full of such sights.

Without noticing how James develops the same kinds of quality that Strether finds, not only in the façade of Chad's house, but pervading all of Paris as well, through his own high-wire act of tonal weaving in sentence construction, we have no means of orienting ourselves to the melodrama of the story. The latter derives all of its stakes from the value Strether (and the reader) comes to acknowledge as decisive in such moments. What we come to appreciate as dawning on Strether as he stares from the balcony at the façade of Chad's house *within* the narrated world of the novel, we also come to appreciate as dawning on ourselves in a homologous manner as James' piling up of subordinate clauses modulates at once the diegetic pace and flow, and the accumulated tonal relations between nouns, verbs and adjectival terms. Appreciation of these tonal relationships is precisely a matter of reading with equipoise between attentiveness and light-handedness because the attempt to fix their values determinately collapses the set of conditions in which they become visible as active. The sense of homology between what dawns on Strether in the novel's diegetic world and the compositional arrangement of James' sentences cannot quite be encapsulated in terms of mimetic representation insofar as the latter remains within the register of reference. Reference provides only one of the several conditions necessary for the line to be read and in-itself offers no sufficient access to what emerges in the scene in the form of the quality's "springing." Semantically, "live all you can; it's a mistake not to" is a bumper sticker.

The active qualities serve as a kind of invisible interpretive key, a fact that the novel seems to allegorize through the narrative drama of the second round of ambassadors sent from Woollet, whose ability to see as Strether sees hangs in the balance throughout the later portions of the story. It is misleading to designate these active qualities as themselves primarily semantic. They themselves don't *mean* anything, they merely act or show forth as

the scene unfolds and thereby steep events and situations with whatever sense of import (or "consequence," as the narrator puts it in the previous quote) they come to assume. Crucially, the quality of Chad's house has no meaning for Strether and in fact undermines his semantic orientation to the situation, insofar as his mission to retrieve Chad provides such an orientation. Meaning emerges from, or in relation to, the qualities, not the other way around. Thus Strether can experience this instant as part of a process of having his intention reoriented, and along with it his sense of the significance of each of his experiences.

James' late style is unique, as well as proto-modernist, in the skill with which he redistributes the ratio between effect and import in narration and description. Editorializations and plot summaries that another novelist (say, George Eliot) might deliver through an omniscient narrator James inserts into scenes of dialogue between characters such as those between Strether and Maria Gostrey, scenes themselves so fraught with innuendo and implication that summary is often more a patina cast by the fitness of a given rhetorical inflection than any constative statement delivering a semantic content. As the case of Strether and the other characters in the novel shows, receptivity to the charge and appeal of the qualities arising in relationship is highly contingent on both individual disposition and environmental influence. While Strether's conversion story occupies much of the drama of the novel, we also get characters such as the Americans Waymarsh and Sarah Pocock, who remain impervious to the appeal of Paris. The entire dramatic substance of the novel can be thought of as developing out of the struggle for, the stakes, and the consequences of seeing or not seeing the qualities radiating from people, things and situations. To reduce this more subtle romance of qualities, of the phenomenon of "a fact carrying with it an implication" as the narrator puts it, to the range of moral, cultural or historical conditions forming the context within which it takes place is precisely to lose track of, or even miss entirely, the challenge presented in the qualities (120).

What difference, then, does thinking of the reading experience in terms of what I am calling force make here? The first and perhaps primary difference is descriptive and definitional. We are not trying to provide a new set of analytic terms or concepts so much as to generate a space within which something that is already available and apparent within literary experience, and experience more broadly, can be seen and addressed accurately. There will be a longer and more elaborate story to tell about why the notion of force is important to how we understand modernism and the literatures we've inherited from it, but without at first keeping close to what the term designates, and thus to our own experience, it would be easy to get lost in concepts and speculation. And I think force matters precisely because we so easily get lost in concepts nowadays. Literature helps us locate what makes our lives worth living, and if it does not do this, it's a waste of our time. Secondly, having a different descriptive model of readerly experience opens onto several broader issues concerning the ways in which our aesthetic investments are embedded within and contingent upon our life situation as a whole and the ways in which we cope or relate with that total context.

To begin with descriptive matters, it is significant that Strether feels compelled to say that the quality produced by the arrangement of Chad's house "sprang" on him, and also to indicate that this designation is merely a manner of expression. We are dealing here, at least at the diegetic level though perhaps also at the level of language itself, with what we would call "qualia" in philosophical language, or what we might less technically call sensations, percepts or sense-data. Saying that the quality springs on Lambert tells us that the passage is dealing with how perceptions take shape in a phenomenological sense. But in bringing in phenomenology, or philosophy in general, it seems necessary to be cautious regarding the

ways in which we coordinate philosophical discourse with literary works. It matters that Henry James was definitively *not* a philosopher but a novelist, and was therefore not engaged in the practice of developing truth-bearing statements to be submitted to the normative space of reasons and tested against consensus-based models of objectivity. Criticism and theory might have many possible purposes but it would seem that one of them would necessarily be to articulate the functioning of composed works of imaginative writing by differentiating this usage of language from other modes of communication and utterance. So if the qualities in which *The Ambassadors* traffics bear family resemblances to notions found elsewhere in philosophical discourse it is crucial that an account of these analogical relationships not recontextualize what James' work produces as examples or instances of principles described in philosophy.

What we find in the rendering of Lambert Strether's experience in James's passage is that the manner in which the world presents itself as appearance to a perceiving consciousness can at times assume the aspect of an event where we might otherwise expect to speak in terms of an object with primary and secondary qualities. This is not the same as saying that objects appearing to us *undergo* or *perform* actions in relation to other objects, such as a rock landing on the ground. Nor, though a reader may likely hear echoes, is the foregoing merely a lead up to a broadly speculative and redescriptive statement about the nature of objectivity such as a Bruno Latour's "actants," Alfred North Whitehead's "actual entities," Jane Bennett's "thing power," or various treatments of the radically "withdrawn" nature of objects. The key point of the focus on literary critical method here is to avoid, as much as possible, any such reductions in advance of the reader's own experience, literary or otherwise, to a concept or set of concepts developed by a previous thinker. The house is just what James makes it and only that.

Strether feels compelled to say that the arrangement of features presented in the façade of Chad's house generates within his experience a quality that seems *more than* the sum of those features, and this *more than* has the aspect of an event of "springing." Simultaneously, because the quality is *no other* than the features themselves, for instance the "high broad clear" spatial dimensions, present in concert, the characterization of the qualities as events remains idiomatic rather than literal or referential. Thus we get the scare quotes. James' care in sentence composition not only affords the kinds of distinction that evade or sidestep collapses into extremes of predication, such as thing or quality or event, that propositional language would entail, it also generates as its own rhetorically charged medium the event-qualities that are ultimately identical in kind to those we are invited to imagine as impinging on Strether in the rendered scene. I want to return at the end of this chapter to the question of how we might characterize the relationship between the qualities of the house and the qualities of James' language. First, though, a brief consideration of Hegel's treatment of "Force and the Understanding" can serve to clarify the character of the kind of experience we see presented in James' passage.

Hegel's account is useful here because, while his dialectical method is set resolutely against the kinds of naïve appeal to experience with which this chapter has flirted shamelessly, his methodological use of negation in the *Phenomenology*'s articulation of first-person experience into logical moments somewhat paradoxically affords a degree of descriptive rigor that gets smoothed over in many of the neo-vitalisms previously mentioned. We need not adopt Hegel's global conception of Absolute Spirit to appreciate the kinds of clarity that tarrying with the negative affords. Force in Hegel's treatment provides a hinge moment in the *Bildung* of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, precipitating the transition from the phenomenological and epistemic unfolding of first-person, "immediate" consciousness dealt

with in "Consciousness," to the historical and intersubjective dialectics of self-consciousness that the Lord and Bondsman inaugurate in "Reason." The moment of force arrives at the culmination of the dialectic passing from sense-certainty through perception of the Thing. Consciousness, that of the "we" of the *Phenomenology*, has sought again and again to gain access to the immediate particularity of sense data in the manner championed by empiricism, and has found itself accompanied at every turn by the mediating presence of the universal. "Force and the Understanding" occurs in the *Phenomenology* after the dialectic of being-for-self and being-for-another within the Thing of perception has yielded the relatively stable synthesis of the Thing as unconditioned universal, and therefore a first implicit appearance of the Notion that is not as yet grasped in its notional character by consciousness.

As unconditioned universal, the object for consciousness is the synthetic unity of two distinct moments: the object as universal medium or "Also" in which the diverse properties or "matters" of the object subsist, and the object as a self-identical "One" or unity reflected into self that negates the "for another" of the aforementioned moment of diverse matters. A cube of salt is a multiplicity of properties such as rectangular, hard, salty, etc. all simultaneously present to the consciousness experiencing the salt, and these properties all exist "in" the object, which, in this sense, has the character of a medium or "place" where they reside. At the same time, insofar as the salt cube is a singular object or thing, it is not *merely* the simultaneity of these diverse properties indifferently present to one another but is also the unity exclusive of these properties. This latter moment is what allows the properties to be seen as subsisting *within* the object as medium, rather than being negatively determined solely in relation to one another. The treatment of Force begins by taking these two moments as a *dynamic* unity or "movement" inherent in the Thing:

> This sublation in its turn, this reduction of the diversity to a pure *being-for-self,* is nothing other than the medium itself, and this is the *independence* of the different 'matters.' In other words, the 'matters' posited as independent pass over into their unity, and their unity directly unfolds its diversity, and this once again reduces itself to unity. But this movement is called *Force.* (81)

No sooner has Hegel identified this unity of moments in the object for perception as constituted by, or synonymous with, the movement of force than he proceeds to split this movement itself into two moments:

> One of its moments, the dispersal of the independent 'matters' in their [immediate] being, is the *expression* of Force; but Force, taken as that in which they have disappeared, is Force *proper*, Force which has been *driven back* into itself from its expression. First, however, the Force which is driven back into itself *must* express itself; and, secondly, it is still Force remaining *within itself* in the expression, just as much as it is expression in this self-containedness. (81)

As with sense-certainty, Hegel's characterization of the movement of force effectively establishes a pre-objective activity, associated for him with the universal, within the constitution of empirical objectivity for consciousness. The object as a qualitative manifold, for instance a stone with its color, texture, mass, solidity, weight, etc., is regarded as an expression of some prior agentive principle that constitutes the object's self-identity. But this principle cannot itself be taken as substance or hypostatized because it can only be retroactively posited by consciousness after its expression and therefore subsists only insofar

as it *is* expressed through the object's emergence into the diversity of phenomenal object-hood. The principle derived from the manifold properties of the object when these properties are taken as expressive, in turn, is nothing other than the "reduction of the diversity to a pure *being-for-self*" or unity (81). Itself neither here nor there, force is nevertheless perceived by consciousness as the restless, self-superseding transition between diversity and unity within the object of perception that makes possible a here and there. Hegel refers to this interaction between that which expresses and that which is expressed within the object as the self-diremption of Force into "soliciting" and "solicited" forces. Force is therefore for Hegel a hinge between the object's appearance and its ontological status: it is "appearance *qua* appearance" (83). This is part of the reason this moment in the *Bildung* of the *Phenomenology* precipitates the emergence of self-consciousness on the scene out of consciousness' attempt to solidify its cognitive grasp (implied in the etymology of *Begriff*) on appearance in the form of stable laws.

Hegel's methodological task as philosopher to produce logically necessary, truth-bearing statements both affords the distinctions that would be blurred the minute we tried to make a statement like "the house *has* power," or even "the house *is* powerful." The distinction that articulates force as a non-objective supplement to what is objectively present within the object, Hegel clarifies, is the understanding's distinction alone:

> Force, as *actual*, exists simply and solely in its expression, which at the same time is nothing other than the supersession of itself. This *actual* Force, when thought of as free from its expression and as being for itself, is Force driven back into itself; but in fact this determinateness, as we have found, is itself only a moment of Force's expression. Thus the truth of Force remains only the *thought* of it. (86)

The expression of Force, or Force qua expression in the diverse properties of the object, solicits the understanding's grasp of Force's being-for-self as a principle isolated from this same expression in appearance. But any such determination remains an artificial distinction because Force is nothing other than the expressive properties of appearance. And yet, the temptation to establish such a determination is precisely what grasps the properties *in* their expressive dimension. For the "us" of the *Phenomenology*, the struggle to reconcile this predication of the in-itself of force that immediately collapses into tautology compels the transition from mere "understanding" to a more properly dialectical "reason" that can only be actualized through consciousness' traversal of the developing forms of intersubjective, historical self-consciousness. For present purposes, what matters from Hegel's account of force is how it shows the interaction between the cognitive and the expressive dimensions of experience in the emergence of the object. Force is not a capacity *in* or *possessed by* objects of perception in any additional sense but rather a character one feels compelled to attribute to the manner in which they display themselves when one relates with them in such a way that one is receptive to their expressive presence. Further, the receptivity that allows this expressive presence to become visible is a matter of how one's intention or practical orientation influences the cognitive function of subsuming a perceptual object under a conceptual schema. "Force and the Understanding" is framed through and through by the orientation provided by the dialectical *Bildung* of the *Phenomenology*.

This latter point brings attention back to the question of method, which is precisely the category and form of activity wherein matters of attention and orientation can become issues of concern and reflection. Force in Hegel's account achieves visibility, while also

being ultimately sacrificed to the movement of the *Begriff*, because, as the Preface to the *Phenomenology* explains in detail, dialectical thinking necessitates a reciprocally defining relationship between method and object, Spirit's for-itself and in-itself. This means that it is meaningless to talk about force as a property of objects, whether art objects or otherwise, in any unqualified sense. This, I think, is where much of the conversation on objects and "thing power" gets lost. The danger of the speculative turn in recent theory is to assume that speculative endeavors can offer us an unconditioned view of things provided we acknowledge our mediations emphatically enough. But the inverse is also true: to talk about force is to begin to learn a method of relating with things. One might even say, "learning a style." The *Phenomenology*'s concern is first and foremost with the development and articulation of a science of knowledge, but ours need not be. Such a methodological orientation determines the thesis/negation opposition that conditions what becomes intelligible through speech. While Hegel's concern is ultimately with the possibility of the final adequation of the concept and its object, it is worth bearing in mind that this is a fundamentally epistemic project to which not everyone is beholden. We might even take a cue from Lambert Strether and allow the compelling properties of what we experience to reroute our orientation entirely.

The key point of the two preceding examples, disparate though they may be, is that experience when attended to closely tempts one to attribute to it the presence of what we might call an additional ingredient, a sense of a persistent "something" that seems woven into the fabric of this experience. This dimension occasions a lot of attempts at naming but, for reasons that will become clearer, remains categorically distinct from the field of reference. Hopefully, the examples from James and Hegel serve as at least a promissory note ensuring the reader that the notion of an additional element within experiential qualities entails something very concrete and specific. At the same time, this additional element can in no way be treated in isolation from one's own entanglement with the various dimensions of the experience (readerly or otherwise) taken as a whole, and for that reason can only be spoken of idiomatically, as something one is "tempted to say." And the consequence of this contingency is that one can always reduce this element, or find it already reduced to the components of the object when one seeks to isolate it. Put simply, the object of this speech is extremely sensitive to the way in which one talks about it. There is nothing mystifying about the observation that certain forms of phenomena are only ascertainable within particular sets of conditions, as anyone who has ever used a telescope can attest. What matters for criticism is to stay close to these conditions of visibility so as to keep the conversation from drifting into efforts at explanation that alter those conditions. This is the risk of the attempt to move from description to explanation. We need not only appreciate and understand *what claim is being made* at any given instant, but also and just as essentially to understand the experiential position *from which* one is speaking and attempt to dial our attentions to that position.

The import, social or otherwise, of those dimensions of experience that concern us here lies in how the effort to maintain and cultivate their appreciation might influence our overall relationship toward experience. In that respect, if one prefers to regard this study as an attempt at a kind of practical ethics rather than a historical cultural analysis or theoretical model, that is all well and good. Admittedly, certain genres seem more germane than others to the kind of visibility of active qualities that interests us here. Late-Jamesian prose achieves a subtlety of rhetorical articulation and a mastery of the scene as a structural principle that makes narratological approaches, for example, seem rather beside the point. Similarly, lyric poetry in the 20th century places so much of the burden of the work on non-semantic

dimensions such as cadence and *melos* that to speak of a reading "experience" feels like a matter of course. These non-representational tendencies mark these genres as sharing in the more general characteristics of the modernist avant-garde. I will attempt in what follows to convince the reader why these instances prove to be the rule of literary experience, rather than its exception. At stake is our conception of the work we take literary studies to be doing, which nowadays is framed virtually across the board in terms of a relationship to knowledge production and dissemination.

To dial our attentions in this way toward the unfolding eventfulness of our perceptual experience would not necessarily entail withdrawing solipsistically from Hegel's conclusion that pursuit of the notional character of force propels consciousness beyond the realm of appearances into the historical movement towards reason and absolute knowledge. Rather, it involves framing that same historical development in a slightly different way, and this in turn requires that we grasp Hegel's own effort to develop the fully cognized notional character of the object of perception within the section "Force and the Understanding" within the wider debates of German Idealism. While Hegel's major scientific intertext for his use of the term *Kraft* or "force" is Newtonian physics, his primary philosophical interlocutor in this section can be found in the expressivist metaphysics of Johann Gottfried Herder. The conception of *kraft* that Herder elaborates throughout his rhetorically exuberant, deliberately unsystematic philosophical writings developed out of his critique of Scholastic faculty psychology and his ensuing efforts to synthesize the traditional Aristotelian categories of potentiality and actuality with the experimental scientific findings of his day. Charles Taylor's book on Hegel first elaborated Herder's influence on the Hegelian project, which he framed as working to reconcile what is at base a Herderian expressivist model of the mind's unity with nature and the self-legislating rationality of Kantian critical philosophy. In the Hegelian synthesis, self-legislating rationality is what finally provides the capstone bringing to completion the expressive unity of part and whole that we find in Absolute Spirit's historical development.

Hegel's comments in *The Encyclopedia Logic* (1830) make explicit Herder's influence on "Force and the Understanding." Hegel frames the logical shape of the dialectic as fulfilling the expressive identity of essence and appearance while claiming that dialectical logic alone is capable of overcoming the analogical reasoning that hobbles Herder's own metaphysics. Following Spinoza's pantheistic model of substance and modes, Herder had framed God as a kind of Ur-Force subtending the diverse *krafte* visible within nature. But the basis of this assertion had for Herder to remain an analogical inference because, as we saw in Hegel's treatment of soliciting and solicited moments, as expressions of underlying *krafte* the human cognitive faculties remained irreducibly tied to sensuousness (in ways that will become important in what follows) and so remained distinct from those underlying *krafte* in-themselves. If reasoning analogically from the forces visible in nature and the human psyche back to God as *Urkraft* served on the one hand to establish what Alex Englander has called a "'feedback loop' connecting ontology to epistemology" (917), a loop essential to the development of Hegel's own claims about absolute knowledge, it also meant that the attendant philosophy had as a consequence to "disavow any knowledge of reality in itself" (918). This facet of Herder's thought, as scholars like Michael Forster have argued, would prove a major influence on the subsequent hermeneutic tradition extending from Schleiermacher to Heidegger. While Englander similarly sees the hermeneutic circle, with its "epistemic humility, open-ness to new data, and acknowledgment of the contingent circumstances of our cognitive activities" (920) as one possible virtue of Herder's analogical

claims for God as *Urkraft*, Hegel treats the tautology this reasoning courts as a fundamental impediment to any properly rational cognition of force-in-itself:

> Thus, what is supposed to remain unknown is in fact nothing but the empty form of inward reflection, which is all that makes the force distinct from its utterance [expression], and this form is likewise something quite well known. It adds nothing at all to that content and the law, of which we are supposed to be cognizant just from the appearance alone. (*The Encyclopedia Logic* 206)

Only in the post-Kantian critical "cognition of the totality of utterance [expression] grasped as law is the cognition of the force itself," and for Hegel this meant reducing the dynamic play of force within appearance to its "simple element" in the concept of negation as "*law*, which is the *stable* image of unstable appearance" (*The Encyclopedia Logic* 207). Only as law could force-in-itself be grasped in its objective necessity.

So much for force-in-itself, but I would like to go back to Hegel's starting point in his treatment of force and the understanding, which he defines as the "awareness of this completely developed object, which presents itself to consciousness as something that immediately *is*, [such] that consciousness first becomes explicitly a consciousness that comprehends its object" (80). Hegel here is echoing Herder's account of the mind's emergence to linguistic awareness in his seminal 1772 *Treatise on the Origin of Language*. The claims that Herder levies against both empiricist and theological accounts of the origin of language are particularly significant in light of their relevance to contemporary discussions about human linguistic capacity and rationality occurring at the intersection of philosophy, historical anthropology and sociology, cognitive science and developmental psychology. Situating the preceding Herderian-cum-Hegelian line of thought around force within this larger conversation yields crucial historical insights, to which I will come shortly, about a central strain of modernist art both as a range of aesthetic techniques that developed roughly around 1907 and as signaling a broader transition within Western culture. To get to that broader range of application, we have first to look at Herder's claims in the essay and their relevance to what has already been said about the phenomenon of force.

When read in light of the aforementioned contemporary discussions, Herder's argument against empiricist explanations of the origins of language place the question of force on slightly different footing than we find it in the *bildung* of the *Phenomenology*. Charles Taylor's *The Language Animal* (2016) has recently elaborated on the enduring relevance of Herder's critique of empiricist theories of language acquisition for post-'linguistic turn' debates within Anglo-American analytic philosophy. Taylor bolsters Herder's application to contemporary linguistically-oriented philosophies of mind by situating his theory within a recent set of interdisciplinary studies on the historical emergence of what we would now recognize as human rationality in the cognitive revolutions Karl Jaspers famously called the "Axial age." Robert Bellah's *Religion in Human Evolution* (2011), a work that Taylor himself takes up in the conclusion to *The Language Animal*, has spearheaded many of these discussions by coordinating an historical and sociological understanding of the developments in human cognitive capacity during the axial period with recent empirical and theoretical findings in the field of evolutionary biology.

Indeed, while the Paleolithic and archaic ages may seem far afield from, say, Paris of the 1920s, London in 1914 or North Carolina in 1952, key transitional points in the development of open form that this work will pursue, framing those particular milieux within the planetary and evolutionary scale of what Wai-Chee Dimock (2006) has called

"deep time" proves a necessary contextualization if we are to appreciate the wider background of Hegel's critique of Herder. Bellah's work has left major conceptual footholds—in evolutionary cognitive science, ontogenetic psychology, theories of practice and comparative historical analysis of the development religious and philosophical traditions—that can allow us to appreciate modernist aesthetics in light of Dimock's assertion that

> Some historical phenomena need large-scale analysis. They need hundreds, even thousands, or even billions of years to be recognized for what they are: phenomena constituted by their temporal extension, with a genealogy much longer than the lifespan of any biological individual, and interesting for just that reason. A shorter time frame would have cut them off in midstream, would have obscured the fact of their accumulation. (5)

Dimock's interest in the unique role of American literature—where the open forms that I trace back to the prewar European vanguard would eventually settle and flourish—in the deep-temporal development of a possible global civil society only reinforces the premise that these forms require the planetary scale that both Bellah and Herder envision in their respective discussions of the origins of human reason in acts of signification. Put simply, as a world historical phenomenon, the modernist avant-garde sought to restore the fine arts to a central position within the wider sphere of culture as a fundamental feature of human life on this planet. So to ask questions about "art"'s development in the moment of the avant-garde is to ask questions about the function and origin of culture *per se*.

Herder, and Taylor following him, needs similarly to turn to the historical origins of language usage in order to make visible the phenomenology of what transpires in any actual instance of language usage against the characterization of linguistic action found in Condillac's empiricist, or what Taylor calls "designative," accounts of language usage. Hegel's initial characterization of the understanding and its object quoted above resembles what Taylor calls Herder's "constitutive" account of linguistic consciousness in the treatise. The basic oversight of empiricist or designative accounts of linguistic competence, where language use originates in the deictic or referential act and then is built up piecemeal into a repertoire of similar acts, is that any use of language presupposes a holistic context. On one level, this is the same ground of Hegel's critique of empiricism in "Sense-Certainty," and the premise should likewise be familiar to students of structuralist and post-structuralist thought. Linguistic competence cannot be built up from many individual instances of labeling objects constatively because each one of those instances presupposes the totality of language as already in place, as what Wittgenstein called a 'form of life,' in order to function at all. Taylor characterizes linguistic competence for this reason as a matter of inhabiting a "linguistic dimension" (19). For a word to function at all it requires that the entire background of language as a social institution already be in place. So holism and the methodological appeal to origins mutually implicate one another for reasons analogous to ontogeny's recapitulation of phylogeny: accurate characterization implies certain genetic principles visible in the form of the characterized phenomenon.

In fact, *accurate characterization* goes to the heart of the issue for both Herder and for Taylor, because this holism (and this is where their particular understanding departs from structuralist models) entails an act that goes beyond mere designation of an object with a sign. Herder playfully illustrates the distinction in his thought experiment envisioning the first human use of a word in the example of someone naming a bleating lamb. Part of the

way the example works is to distinguish that lamb's bleat from the human's word. Both the lamb and the person share in the capacity to make expressive utterances, to cry out, and in one version of a designative reconstruction of the origin of language use (say, a Humean one) the word would be merely the person's expressive utterance affixed to the lamb through association and habit. But in Herder's account the person's act of *naming* the lamb does more than just utter sound in response to a stimulus. The person's orientation in the act of naming addresses not the mere ontic facticity of the object, nor the object as bearing desirable or repulsive properties that correspond to the person's practical pursuits, but the object recognized as something unique and singular in itself:

> As soon as he develops a need to become acquainted with the sheep, no instinct disturbs him, no sense tears him too close to the sheep or away from it; it stands there exactly as it expresses itself to his senses. White, soft, woolly – his soul, operating with awareness, seeks a characteristic mark – *the sheep bleats!* – his soul has found a characteristic mark. The inner sense takes effect. This bleating, which makes the strongest impression on the soul, which tore itself away from all the other properties of viewing and feeling, jumped forth, penetrated most deeply, remains for the soul. The sheep comes again. White, soft, woolly – the soul sees, feels, takes awareness, seeks a characteristic mark – it bleats, and now the soul recognizes it again! "Aha! You are the bleating one!" the soul feels inwardly. The soul has recognized it in a human way, for it recognizes and names it distinctly, that is, with a characteristic mark. (88)

In Herder's account, the "characteristic mark" is *the* fundamental object of signification, which we previously saw Hegel describe as consciousness' "awareness of this completely developed object." While it is the bleat Herder's example singles out as the characteristic mark, in part to illustrate the counterpoint between the human's bleat and the lamb's bleat, the catalogue of secondary qualities ("white, soft, woolly") frame that bleat as a kind of emblematic signature of the ensemble of those qualities, just as Force identified the dialectic of "also" and "one" in the object (or, for James, how "the quality produced by measure and balance, the fine relation of part to part and space to space, was probably…neither more nor less than a case of distinction"). Indeed, we could say that the characteristic mark "leaps out" at the human in this example. The example further reinforces the characteristic mark's distinctness from those sensuous secondary qualities in the fact that it is the "soul" and not merely the senses that recognizes and eventually "takes awareness."

This term, *Besonnenheit*, or "taking awareness" defines for Herder the essential intellective process necessary for any act of naming. In the *Treatise*, *Besonnenheit* is cognate with reason itself. Taylor's recent work draws out Herderian *Besonnenheit*'s implications, for broader theories of linguistic activity, of this deeply normative dimension within taking awareness. Naming is not merely a matter of labeling something but also a matter of what Taylor calls the "intrinsic rightness" of that act of naming, and *Besonnenheit* is the coming to cognizance of that intrinsic rightness in the realization of the characteristic mark (7). To use a name is implicitly to take up the stance that it *is* the appropriate name. More than stimulus response, coming to cognizance is therefore a matter of "a more focused awareness of this object" that "involves a kind of gathering of attention" on the object's basic quiddity (9). Naming in human speech is the inherently normative characterization accompanying this focused awareness, and the holism of language consists in this normative appeal to a shared mode of life, in the taking up of a position within the linguistic dimension.

To be clear, the normative dimension is not a matter of second-order reflection but is innate to the act or usage itself, it *makes the act what it is* as part and parcel of the holism of speech. Taylor focuses on recent experimental findings supporting the distinction between animal stimulus-response and human sensitivity to intrinsic rightness, but I'd like to linger a bit more on Herder's own description of the gathering of attention involved in *Besonnenheit*. Two related aspects of Herder's critique of faculty psychology in his treatment of *Besonnenheit* are worth singling out here that are pertinent to understanding how Robert Bellah's work fits into the picture we are developing. First, taking awareness of characteristic marks arises as a concomitant of the user's practical bearing. Second, characteristic marks entail a fusion of sensuousness and intelligibility. To get to why this is the case, let's go back to the question of why the lamb's bleat and the human's cry are different in kind. How do we get from bleat to name?

For Herder, what separates the lamb from the human in this regard is the human's basic unfitness for survival in the wild. Offering a description of the state of nature to rival Hobbes at his most bleak, Herder writes, "considered as a naked, instinctless animal, the human being is the most miserable of beings" (127). Clifford Geertz in his seminal *The Interpretation of Culture* (1973) makes fundamentally the same point when he argues for the human dependence on culture for basic survival, for the *incompletion* of the human organism as a purely biological creature (46). Herder hypothesizes that *Besonnenheit* arose, somewhat counterintuitively, as a consequence of human beings' comparative sensuous and instinctual poverty. As we saw in the example of the lamb, the soul distinguishes the characteristic mark from amidst the ensemble of sensuous properties of the lamb as "as these express themselves to the senses" of the human as another living being. Observing the relationship between various species' behavior and their practical capacities, Herder formulates a kind of inverse ratio between acuity and range of application within the sense faculties of living beings:

> And hence I may assume the proposition: "*The sensitivity, abilities, and drives to art of the animals increase in strength and intensity in inverse proportion to the size and diversity of their circle of efficacy.*" But now–
> The human being has no such uniform and narrow sphere where only a single sort of work awaits him; a world of occupations and destinies surrounds him.
> His senses and organization are not sharpened for a single thing; he has senses for everything and hence naturally for each particular thing weaker and duller senses.
> His forces of soul are distributed over the world; [there is] no direction of his representations on a single thing; hence *no drive to art, no skill for art* – and, one thing which is more especially relevant here, *no animal language*. (italics in original, 79)

In effect, human language is a matter of the human turning its adaptive weakness into advantage (or virtue), because taking-awareness depends on a harmonization or equilibrium of the sense modalities that is impossible for animals with more highly developed stimulus response systems: "to be sure, the dog can recognize the bodily gesture which has hit him, and the fox can flee the unsafe place where he was ambushed, but neither of them can illuminate for itself a *general reflection* concerning how it could ever escape this blow-threatening bodily gesture or this hunters' ruse for good" (italics in original, 129-30).

In fact, Michael Tomasello's (2014) recent findings suggest a greater capacity for complex inference among non-human species than that with which Herder credits dogs and foxes here, but the salient point (to which Tomasello's theory also corresponds) is that this taking awareness is different in kind from mere inference (4). It is a modality of cognizance, at once more generalized and more unified than the affordances of the situation would prompt for the practically absorbed animal, arising from the disposition of the whole sensorium that humans enjoy by virtue of their relatively unspecialized sense faculties: "his main center of gravity, the main direction of his soul's efficacies, fell as much on his *understanding*, on *human awareness* [*Besonnenheit*], as with the bee it falls on merely sucking and building" (128). Foxes' and dogs' specialized senses, in other words, both bind them more strongly to the exigencies of particular situations and, as a consequence, generate particular distributions among and deployments of their several sense faculties that preclude the kind of reflective distance we see in the human's relation to the lamb. For a human, by contrast with other species' specialized senses a "merely obscurely feeling oyster," as Herder puts it, the 'free use of the forces of his soul" occurs because the "mid-point of their use falls on awareness." The human's ability to take awareness through coordinating sense modalities in order to realize distinctive marks in the genesis of words, therefore, develops out of an inherent need to find new ways of coping with lived exigencies that can make up for the shortfall in specialized senses.

In this account of the conditions of possibility underlying the first word, Herder makes clear why his philosophy repeatedly treats cognition and sensibility as unified faculties. Intrinsic rightness is a matter of equilibrium between senses in which the particular practical affordances of an object recede in salience, allowing a sense of what is characteristic of that object *over and above* its practically desirable or repellant qualities to emerge. So "meaning" in its nominal foundations is a matter of how sensuousness is arrayed. This fusion of cognition and sensuousness is developed at greater length in 1778's "On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul," but the mutual implication is already apparent in Herder's ontogenetic account in "Treatise on the Origin of Language." The coordination of the senses, the psyche or 'soul"s arrival at a normative sense of intrinsic rightness in its focused attention on an object, and realization of a characteristic mark from the ensemble of sensuous properties in its act of naming constitute a *single* event or process. Such an event defines what we might call the expressive complex, for which Taylor provides the basic formula: "expression makes possible its content; the language opens us out to the domain of meaning it encodes" (39). Again, it is force that we are talking about here, per Hegel's treatment: Herder's characteristic mark corresponds to Hegel's force-in-itself as something retroactively posited by the understanding as it comes to terms with the object's ensemble of sensuous properties in their expressive array. In an important sense, this qualifies Herder, in addition to his status as parent of anthropology in the cultural relativism that follows from his treatment of language, as also a media theorist *avant la lettre*. What the expressive complex describes is in effect the basic mode of mediation. Herder's applicability to media theory has already been (albeit indirectly) a topic of debate among scholars, particularly in Michael Forster's qualification of Herder's doctrine as "sophisticated narrow expressivism" against Taylor's more expansive "broad expressivism" in the book on Hegel (Forster 31). In both species of expressivism, thought is bounded by the user's capacity for sensuous expression, its perceptual medium, but whereas broad expressivism affords semantic content to non-linguistic aesthetic expressions, narrow expressivism limits this semantic capacity to linguistic media.[i]

At this point I want to leave the question of Herder's position on this subject to the specialists and turn more broadly to the applicability of the expressive complex across media by framing the question historically. Viewing Herder's and Taylor's claims in light of Robert Bellah's ambitious and profoundly enabling exploration of the role of religious practice in human evolutionary development serves to alter the terms of Hegel's dispute with Herder. Bellah's work takes up the developmental schema advanced by Merlin Donald in *Origins of the Modern Mind* (1991) in order to understand the Axial revolutions between the 8th through 3rd centuries BCE from an evolutionary perspective of human cognitive development. Bellah relies on Donald's three stages of cultural and cognitive development: mimetic, mythic, and theoretic. To these three phases Bellah assigns three corresponding stages of human prehistory and early history: mimetic culture predominates among Paleolithic human societies, primarily in the form of ritualized modes of human action; among tribal and archaic human societies we see the emergence of narrativized forms of mythic representations in which the more purely mimetic ritualized forms of behavior come to be supplemented with (though not supplanted by) a distinctly semantic content; lastly, the Axial transformations accompany the development of theoretic culture, where radically new forms of human conceptual thought, subjectivity and sociality come onto the scene.

Bellah and Taylor tend to emphasize slightly different facets of the transformation to theoretic culture, though their interrelationship is my point of interest with respect to Herder and Hegel's debate on force and to the question of how 20th century art fits into this picture. The Axial transformation in Bellah's account consists in the disembedding of conceptual reflection proper from what he calls "enactive representations." At its most basic level, an enactive representation is "the bodily acting out of religious meaning, as in bowing, kneeling, eating, dancing" (14). In other words, an enactive representation is a representation accompanied by some practical mode of conduct essential to its communicative function. Prior to the Axial shift, enactive representations are predominant in human culture because of their role within the religious institution, which occupies a place at the center these societies. Following Emile Durkheim's definition of religious life as based in the distinction between the sacred and profane, Bellah defines religious practice terms of the interaction between two different practically-situated cognitive modes that he identifies with psychologist Abraham Maslow's categories of "Being" or B-cognition and "Deficiency" or D-cognition (*Towards a Psychology of Being* 1998). While the two modes could be seen to describe privileged or "peak" experiences and everyday quotidian life, respectively, the difference is at base between a phenomenological register governed by mean-ends relationships and one that is not:

> D-cognition is motivated by a fundamental anxiety that propels us toward practical and pragmatic action in the world of working. When we are controlled by Deficiency motives, we operate under the means/ends schema, we have a clear sense of difference between subject and object, and our attitude toward objects (even human objects) is manipulative. (5)

Conversely, "the B-cognition is an end in itself, not a means to anything else, and it tends to transcend our ordinary experience of time and space" (5). Enactive represention predominate in pre-Axial religious life in part because they help facilitate pragmatic transitions between a means/ends bearing towards the world and the "felt whole" of what Bellah calls "unitive" experiences of B-cognition. The latter term is significant insofar as it points to the breakdown in subject-object governed phenomenologies during B-cognitive

experiences released from the schematisms of an instrumentalized relationship toward a world of objects. It is this paradox of unitive representations ("that is, representations that attempt to point to the unitive event or experience," Bellah's "null category" for religious representations (13)) which proves essential to the function of enactive representations, wherein an accompanying performative dimension supplements the element of a unitive representation exceeding and therefore precluding the minimal distance of representability. At its most basic level, the Axial breakthrough consists in the decoupling of enactive and properly conceptual representations.

Taylor takes a more ethological approach in his analysis of the Axial transformation, and I want to briefly touch on the parameters he outlines before returning to Bellah to begin to connect the dots to Herder and force a bit more explicitly. The Axial disembedding in Taylor's account yields a "new standpoint" in human mindedness, and this consists in four aspects. First, the new standpoint entails a radical soteriological break with the goals of human flourishing and an accompanying idea of psychological transformation and transcendence. Second, this transformation comes to be seen as the highest possible goal of human life. Third, this vocational aspect stems from the conviction that the transformation places one in accord with reality or truth. Lastly, this accord is a matter of the new standpoint's being seen as "unitary, harmonious and inwardly consistent" with the fundamental aims of human life (*The Axial Age and its Consequences* 37). For Bellah likewise the ethos that most clearly emblematizes the Axial period is that of the "renunciate," as opposed to the "king-priest" social type most prominent in the preceding archaic period. The former, visible in the social types of the Socratic philosopher, the Buddhist arhat, the Confucian gentleman or the Hebrew prophets, experiences a more radical individuation that accompanies a greater antagonism between the distinct modes of cognition and representation. Prior to the shift (to paint massive historical changes in broad strokes here), king-priest and society, D- and B-cognitive modes, and enactive-semantic representations would comprise a seamless continuity. Afterwards, the individual, the concept and transcendence emerge as categories set aside from the corresponding categories of society, medium and everyday life.

To approach my argument about the significance of that particular transformation for understanding modernism, it is first necessary to see that what links Bellah's sociological history of religion to the models of human evolutionary cognitive development is the same principle of "play" aligning his account with Herder's treatise on the origin of language. Taylor takes up some of the implications of this relationship between Herder's theory and Bellah's focus on play in his conclusion to *The Language Animal*. As Bellah's category of enactive representations suggests, we arrive at the narrativized mythic representations that the Axial shift will eventually supplant by way of the mimetic activity in which human culture originates during the Paleolithic period. Like Herder, Bellah sees human communicative action as originating in expressive behaviors common to both humans and animals, particularly forms of play that stem from acts of parental care among mammals and birds. The essential function of animal play, which prefigures ritualized mimetic activity among humans, is its production of what Bellah, following Gordon Burghardt, calls a "relaxed field" of experience in which survival behaviors are suspended (77).

Now a lot could be said about this aspect of play, but it will suffice for now to point out the striking correspondence between this model and Herder's description of the origins of *Besonnenheit*. Ritualized action historically derives from human mimetic behavior, which in turn derives from animal play once the latter has been perpetuated into a broader habitus for the species because of its particular adaptive advantages. Anticipating somewhat the next

chapter's argument about Emile Durkheim's theory of collective representations, I would at this point like to suggest that Herder, Taylor and Bellah's models all converge around the historical hypothesis that human linguistic capacity originates in the relationship between ritualized mimetic acts and the suspension of perceptual schematization in the organism's production of a relaxed experiential field. In other words, and to be more direct here, the mode of experience we find in Hegel's treatment of force models the very same phenomenological dynamic through which humans first became language wielding creatures.

Before getting into the implications this hypothesis holds for the question of Herder's applicability to media in general and therefore to the development of the arts in the 20th century, it is worth citing two other recent theories in this field that would seem to support it. The first, which I mention in passing, is Jurgen Habermas' recent reassertion of a claim he makes in *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981) that human grammatical language originates historically in what, following Durkheim, he calls the archaic "the sacred complex" of ritualized action and experience.[ii] The other is the "joint intentionality" hypothesis that Michael Tomasello develops within his account of psychological ontogenesis in *A Natural History of Human Thinking*. This is another work to which Taylor has traced parallels with the Herderian tradition in *The Language Animal*. Tomasello's empirical findings suggest that what distinguishes human children from higher primates in the process of language acquisition is the capacity to enter into "joint attentional frames" (22). This account is important for understanding why language shows the normative holism we have already examined. Tomasello argues that in their development of nascent cultural activities

> Early humans 'cooperativized' great ape individual intentionality into human joint intentionality involving new forms of cognitive representation (perspectival, symbolic), inference (socially recursive), and self-monitoring (regulating one's actions from the perspective of a cooperative partner), which, when put to use in solving concrete problems of social coordination, constituted a radically new form of thinking. (33)

The novelty of the thought process described here lies in the intersubjective unity of multiple attentional frames, such that the attention itself crosses into a qualitatively new state unthinkable at the individual level. Ever the devout Catholic, Taylor proffers the term "communion" for this form of intersubjective, 'cooperativized' intentionality. A child's ability to acquire linguistic capacity depends initially on her ability to "grasp the communicative intent behind a word, and imitate the communicative act of the parent" (55). The crucial point here is that competence depends not on the object or act of reference *per se* but on aligning her own attitude toward the object with that of the other, and the use of the word first reflects having successfully seen it as they see it. Tomasello's theory of joint attentional frames therefore allows us to anatomize (relative to my present purposes, Tomasello's work obviously goes into much greater detail) the habitation of the linguistic dimension in which the signifying act consists. To wit: a child must simultaneously discern and performatively reproduce a perceptual inflection (the word sounds this way when used), a form of practical participation within a human community (when *you* say it that way, as one with whom I am engaged), her own active mimetic comportment (*I say* it the way you say it), and most importantly the perception accompanying the other's comportment (I *see* that *you see* it that way when you say it that way).

In other words, to return to the question of Herder's broad or narrow expressivism, what anatomizing the communicative act in this way suggests is that, irrespective of Herder's

own position on this question, human language as a medium only gradually distinguished itself from other shared forms of media because at base what is happening in the intellective process is the modulation of the senses around shared objects. The relationship is implicit in Bellah's claim about enactive representations, which, as the ontogenetic example suggests, find their historical basis in shared forms of seeing that arise from the species' development of mimetic comportment through play. Intrinsic rightness reflects the phenomenological experience, the coming to awareness of a characteristic mark, in which the linguistic dimension was historically forged in ritual contexts. Part of what is important, and difficult, to recognize here is that signifying or communicative action originates as a matter of inhabiting an environment that *encompasses* the participants as much as it is the manipulation of instruments, the delegation of functions to an external prosthesis, or the designation of objects. What we see in Herder, Taylor and Tomasello's examples and models of particular instances of language use are reproductions in microcosm, with ontogeny recapitulating historical phylogeny, of the initial intersubjective situation in which attentions became focused and converged on the particular phenomenological mode of a shared object. This is simply an elaborate way of explaining the oft-remarked holism of language, but its implications are difficult to appreciate because we come to reflective self-consciousness *within* the environment produced by the linguistic dimension. Such an environment can only be apprehended obliquely and with a good deal of care.

Behind all of the foregoing analysis is the question of the models of knowledge and reason that both Hegel and we ourselves have inherited from that Axial disembedding. We simply cannot assess the emergent forms of aesthetic practice in the 20th century without first coming to terms with this question. My claim at its most basic here is that the earliest forms of conceptual reflection and discursive rationality were not different *in kind* from the earlier enactive modes we have been exploring but were *part and parcel redoublings of the expressive complex* from within a dispensation in which an earlier enactive form of language had already achieved widespread ubiquity. This is essentially a version of Eric Havelock's influential claim in *Preface to Plato* (1963) that Socratic culture constituted a transition from the primary oral culture of Homeric Greece to a literate culture.[iii] In Havelock's account, Socratic culture signals the shift from the Homeric *paideia*'s reliance on exemplary models held in the memory to "reasoned calculation" in the discovery of the Socratic dialectic, a discovery that "might be described as the discovery of intellection" itself (201). Plato's "self-imposed task, building on the work of predecessors, [was] to establish two main postulates: that of the personality which thinks and knows, and that of the body of knowledge which is thought about and known. To do this he had to destroy the immemorial habit of self-identification with the oral tradition" (201). I want to focus on Havelock's model of how conceptual reasoning supplants mimetic self-identification with exemplary speech at this moment.

Let's pause and notice a couple of things first. We have been tracing a genetic account of human signifying capacity. Naming, we said, originates as an intersubjective perceptual modality focused on the unity of an object's various presentational qualities, the characteristic mark in which one discerns the unity subtending the sheep's softness, wooliness, and so on in its intrinsic rightness. Naming thus flows from and extends a particular situated distribution of the senses, and this reading would seem to be in accord with Robert Bellah's claim about the predominance of enactive representations within pre-Axial societies. Representation in the beginning 'works' because it is wedded to action, and action modulates my sense of the world. What I utter accords with what I perceive, and that accord or intrinsic rightness (the child using the phrase correctly) is a matter of my bearing

and how it opens me to the object. To anatomize again: *qua* intrinsic rightness, intellection consists here entirely *in* the bearing and the sensible distribution, which means that it is *embedded in* that sensuousness. Now, this only describes the initial act of naming. If I have shared this bearing and sensible distribution with others it becomes normatively shared memory, recording, and can function citationally without my needing necessarily to reproduce the initial experience. But as we also know from studies of involuntary memory, such citation may well serve to trigger a re-experiencing of that initial experience. The important thing is that the name is now commutable once established as a communicative norm, and of course the invention of the phonetic alphabet and forms of writing will dramatically contribute to this commutability. This is the state of language Havelock hypothesizes in the Homeric *paideia*, which constitutes the media environment in place when Socrates enters the picture.

The commutability of the sign primarily now acts as a kind of delegation of the initial intellective process that went into the first act of naming. Such a delegation of intellective functions to an external prosthesis is a major achievement of the production of culture, one on which all further gains depend. Remarking that "biologically, we are the same creatures as the people who lived during the Axial period," Merlin Donald points out that following the initial cultural advancements, human evolutionary developments are not a matter of "evolution of basic mental capacity, in the biological sense" (Joas and Bellah 48) but of "brain-culture coevolution" (50). That sense in which, biologically speaking, we are fundamentally the same creatures that we were in the transition to theoretic culture is essential to the picture I am trying to develop here. In the transition from mythic to theoretical culture, advance relies on "memory mechanisms, representational tools and the new possibilities these create in the public arena" (48). Rather than renaming the thing each time, I can now simply rely on a preexisting word. This is part of the efficacy of Bellah's enactive representations, which now serve as instruments facilitating shifts across phenomenological or cognitive registers, from instrumentally-oriented practical experiences to modes of ritualized or "relaxed field" affective experience.

But this also means that use can become rote or un-/semi-conscious, such that my own use no longer entails my achieving *Besonnenheit*, its enactive mimetic function not requiring anything like a unitive experience. It is the rote character of mimetic identification rather than its mere functioning that motivates the Socratic turn towards reflection and the production of subject and object of knowledge as fixed, discrete poles. Havelock appears to read the distinction in the same way when he cites passages from Book Three of the *Republic*: "'making yourself like somebody else' is now disclosed with compelling force to be a 'surrender' of one's self, a 'following-along' while we 'identify' with the emotions of others; it is a manipulation of our *ethe*" (207). The key term here is "manipulation," which signals, per Bellah's account, that we are in the realm of instrumental D-cognitive motives. If mimesis functioned as "a kind of hypnotic trance" it was not because of the sensuous basis of the expressive complex *per se* but because the transmissibility of linguistic media that this complex had historically produced allowed one to delegate the intellective process to the medium itself. If the use of linguistic media did *not* delegate the process in this way, if each instance of use required the same process of acquisition that first time users must undergo in order to enter into a linguistic community, then the manipulation of the ethos would not be possible because the user's own faculties would be taken up in the process of coming to awareness.

And along with this delegation of functions comes the background status with which oral cultural-linguistic space is now imbued. Speech by this point constitutes a crucial part of

the schematizing conditions of everyday D-cognitive life, what Heidegger would call "world" as distinct from "earth," which injects a film of human meanings and reference points into the lived sensory fabric of humans' practical transactions with reality. Donald describes this principle in terms of a "cascade, or cumulative model: previous adaptations are preserved, following the principle of conservation of gains" (Joas and Bellah 54). Havelock's mimetic absorption involves a kind of code-switching between D- and B-cognitive modes through the enactive representations of oral language: poetry, song, storytelling, and other shared mythic communicative practices which constitute the "dominant or governing representations" of the period (Donald 54). But insofar as oral culture now dominates or governs social life in this way, oral-mythic speech has become part of the larger distribution of the sensible: the world as it appears is shot through with mythic meanings. Obvious reference points for this idea would be Pierre Bourdieu's theory of *habitus*, Durkheim's collective representations, Cassirer's symbolic forms, and Descola's schematisms of practice. Mythic culture's environmental character therefore inflects and in some sense constitutes the status of categories such as "thought" and "perception" such as they show up in the Platonic dialogues.

I want to approach the achievement of Platonic *theoria* in light of these qualifications, because so much of the western episteme, including Hegel's critique of Herder's inability to cognize force-in-itself, derives historically from the Axial disembedding that we find in Platonic philosophy. Platonism's counterpart to its new conception of the psyche or self as independent thinker, in Havelock's account, is the characterization of the object of knowledge as a thing-in-itself. That mutual implication of the epistemological and ethological aspects of Platonic philosophy needs to be borne in mind in order to accurately appreciate the Socratic dialectic as a situated practice. The object under analysis

> must be somehow isolated from its setting in the great story and set 'itself by itself' and identified 'per se'. It must be 'abstracted' in the literal sense of the word. The Greek for this object, thus achieved by an effort of isolation, is 'the (thing) in itself' precisely the equivalent of the Latin *per se*. And so the Platonic pages are filled with the demand that we concentrate not on the things of the city but on the city itself, not on a just or unjust act but on justice itself by itself, not on noble actions but on nobility, not on the beds and table of the heroes but on the idea of the bed *per se*. (217)

Such a procedure of deriving the object *per se* "becomes possible only when the spell of the poetic tradition has been already broken" and one can "start to extrapolate such topics and principles out of the narrative flux" (218). Now, the ostensible subject matter of many of the Platonic dialogues—say *Thaetetus*' discussion of Protagoras' formula, "man is the measure of all things"—would suggest that this is a matter of separating the intelligible from the sensible, cognition from perception, essence from appearance, knowledge from feeling or *doxa*. But this separation is first achieved in logical, dialectical, philosophical *practice*, so we need to ask what the phenomenology of this practice is in its genetic instance.

The procedure is the same as that through which naming is constituted as the basic linguistic act, but here we are trying to characterize what we might call "cognition proper" as an act of extrapolating and abstracting the thing *per se*. It's worth noticing first that the ethological dimension of this kind of activity invests it with an inherently ritualized character. There is a body of scholarship devoted to exploring the various implications of *philosophia* as lived practice, from Pierre Hadot's *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995) to Andrea Nightingale

Wilson's examination in *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy* (2004) of *theoria*'s migration from a cultural religious observance into a philosophical term for intellectual contemplation. I offer just one minor illustrative example from the Platonic dialogues in Diotima's remark to Socrates just prior to her exegesis on the intellectual contemplation of the form of the beautiful in *Symposium*:

> Well now, my dear Socrates, I have no doubt that even you might be initiated into these, the more elementary mysteries of Love. But I don't know whether you could apprehend the final revelation, for so far, you know, we are only at the bottom of the true scale of perfection.
>
> Nevermind, she went on, I will do all I can to help you understand, and you must strain every nerve to follow what I'm saying. (561)

Diotima's exhortation to Socrates to "strain every nerve" in order to arrive at the truth brings into relief the situated character of inquiry. In the background of Diotima's remarks we can hear Taylor's claims about the soteriological grounding of the new models of individual personhood that appear around this time. The abstractive rational procedure Havelock describes is part and parcel of a soteriological project that the philosopher undertakes, turning towards a proper grasp of the true and real as a means of overcoming what Bellah calls the "trouble at the heart of narrative" (36). This is also obviously a trouble at the heart of the city, society and the world more broadly.

We find this same blend of soteriological and ethological appeals, in fact, in Hegel's own exhortation to overcome the understanding's imperfect cognition of force-in-itself in *The Encyclopedia Logic*. Here the Axial renunciatory turn is yet again redoubled, now in the context of the post-Reformation Enlightenment's uneasy mixture of rejecting and retaining Church authority (in whose constitution Platonism played a crucial role) on epistemological matters:

> [From] the standpoint of materialism, and of the modern Enlightenment, … knowledge … reduces to the fact *that* [God] is and disclaims all knowledge of *what* he is. So, in the polemic of which we are speaking, the church and religious consciousness must be said to have been right, inasmuch as finite forms of the understanding certainly do not suffice for the cognition either of nature or of the configurations of the spiritual world in their truth. All the same, we should not overlook the formal justification of the empirical sciences by the Enlightenment. This justification consists generally in reclaiming the content of this present world in all its determinacy for our thinking cognition—instead of letting the matter end simply with the abstract faith that God created and governs the world. When our religious consciousness, supported by the authority of the church, teaches us that it is God who created the world by his almighty will, and that it is he who guides the start in their courses, and grants all creatures subsistence and well-being, the question "why?" remains to be answered, and the answering of this question is just what constitutes the common task of science, both empirical and philosophical. Insofar as religious consciousness does not recognize this task and the right contained in it, but appeals to the impossibility of inquiry into the divine decrees, it adopts the above standpoint of the Enlightenment itself, and does not go beyond mere understanding. But any such appeal

> must be regarded as arbitrary assurance, not of Christian humility at all, but of courtly and fanatical self-debasement, since it contradicts the express command of the Christian religion that we should recognize God in spirit and truth [John 4:24]. (scriptural citation in original, 208)

The imperative to true cognition Hegel describes here is explicitly a form of practical religious observance. I offer Hegel's indictment of Deism primarily to illustrate the persistence of Socratic dialectic's ritual prehistory in the normative demands of reason, which remain an inextricable dimension of rationality well after the Axial turn. The imperative latent in Kantian "law" and "autonomy," which reflects an ethical stance Taylor traces through the modernization process exponentially hastened by the Reformation, is the soil in which knowledge production as a practice historically grows. In the *Theses on Feuerbach* (1888) we find one of its more recent iterations.

So the disembedding of thought in the new mode of cognition Havelock describes as developing from the Socratic dialectic is itself embedded in an ethical and soteriological project informing each practical communicative context, and the new form of intellection is more a mode of experience than a form of detached information processing. Or I should rather say that the mode of intellection both precedes and makes possible the common distinction between 'absorbed' experience and 'detached' reflection. Let's look again at Havelock's description:

> You can take similar instances and situations which are scattered through different narrative contexts but which use many of the same words and you can proceed to correlate them and group them and seek for common factors shared by all of them. Navigation and its rules do not constitute the first book of the *Iliad*. But the four different narrative contexts in which embarkation and landing are in question do in effect provide a paradigm of rules. This can be seen if the pluralized instances are unified, if the 'many' can become a 'one.' So another way of putting the mental act of isolation and abstraction is to say it is an act of integration. … The single acts and events must somehow give way and dissolve into a single identity. In short 'the thing *per se*' is also a 'one.' (218)

What Havelock describes is a process of doing: "tak(ing)", "us(ing)", "correlate(ing)", in order to perfect a unitary "mental act" from the multiple "single acts and events." Moreover, especially in a culture that is still largely oral and for whom writing is a relatively new invention, using linguistic tools in this way is going to be experienced as something more akin to pushing around waves of energy than moving pieces on a chessboard. Sophist rhetoric is so dangerous because "power of persuasion" literally, viscerally takes hold of audience, placing them in thrall to its influence. Take the example of the magnetic lodestone Socrates describes in *Ion*, which "does not simply attract the iron rings, just by themselves; it also imparts to the rings a force enabling them to do the same thing as the stone itself, that is, to attract another ring, so that sometimes a chain is formed, quite a long one, of iron rings, suspended from one another" (220). Nothing supernatural is involved in Socrates' assertion that "just so the Muse" inspires the rhapsodists, so that they are able to transmit its almost physical charge across chains of audience members through the power of their speech, if we remember that in Herder's treatment of *Besonnenheit* word usage consists at base in normative and inter-subjective inflections of the perceptual field.

Breaking the spell of mimesis therefore does not in the first instance consist in a shift from affective to cognitive such as would tend to think of it from the vantage point of our own contemporary, urbanized subjectivities. Rather, it is the production of what Marshall McLuhan would describe as a 'counter-environment' within the preexisting schematized speech environment through the *act* of dialectic. We find versions of this model both in McLuhan's own later writings, where he describes an idea as "instant awareness of a total situation" (*Verbi-Voci-Visual Explorations* 3) and in Taylor's work with Hubert Dreyfus in *Retrieving Realism* (2015), where they cite Platonic *theoria* as an example of direct contact with the intelligible real (Dreyfus and Taylor 17). Havelock describes the 'de-phenomenalization' of the thing *per se* as follows:

> Finally this abstracted object, divorced from its concrete situation, no longer needs to be visualized; in fact it cannot be. For visual experience is of colour and shape which occur only as they are pluralized and made specific and so concretely visible in their sharp differentiations from their neighbors. We see the ship, and the men and cargo, and the sea over which they sail, the sail bellying in the wind, the wave breaking foamy and white, even as we hear the wind whistling and the wave hissing. These effects are all there in the saga language—they have to be in order to enlist the direct aid of mental vision and so reinforce the acoustic resources of the ear. But as the specific sensual nuances of this situation dissolve into a treatise on navigation, the visible becomes invisible, the sensual becomes dissolved into an idea. So the abstracted object of knowledge has to lose not only the plurality of action in time but also colour and visibility. It becomes 'the unseen.' (219)

The passage truly requires close reading. First, "this abstracted object" refers to an object of consciousness *to which speech refers*. "Divorced from its concrete situation," though, refers to a narrated or represented situation *within* speech, hence it "no longer needs to be visualized' by the audience. So the "concrete situation" is now a mental situation called up in memory as the semantic counterpart of the sensuous medium of speech, which is in the process of abstracting an object of contemplation. The next sentence, though, offers a summary statement describing the schematized nature of articulated visual experience *in general*, a state of affairs that has developed in part through the invention of language and collective representations as a cultural technology. So what it describes as the pure sensuality of visual experience is an admixture of the senses with the mediations of shared *habitus*, something more like apperception. And then in the next two sentences the description turns back to address the *reproduction in speech* of articulated sensory experience as a catalogue of "effects… there in the saga language." We therefore see the split between represent*ed* sensuousness and the sensuousness of the represent*ing* linguistic medium in the distinction between "mental vision" and the "acoustic resources of the ear." If the "sensual nuances of the situation dissolve into [the] treatise" at the level of represent*ed* effects, this is only achieved through the success of the treatise itself as both act and sensuous medium. Moreover, *qua* speech effects, those sensual nuances are as much mental as they are perceptual. The "unseen" here refers only to that which emerges as unlike what one had previously been habituated to describe as seen.

From this sleight of hand, undoubtedly its own kind of intense unitive experience for those early Platonists, western epistemology will inherit the distinction Hegel relies on between properly cognizable mental states and blind sensory intuitions. But what has

happened is actually second-order *Besonnenheit*. What naming produced in coming to focus on the intrinsic rightness of the object's characteristic mark, thus bringing language into existence as a medium of communication, dialectic now produces in the form of rational thought's unification of the object of cognition *per se* from the plurality of examples within the communicative medium. But just as the name thus produced becomes a commutable tool, reason in turn does not retain the status of Platonic *theoria* following this genetic instance. Once in existence, a tool can serve various ends. But the salient point is to accurately characterize what these things are in their inception and then to understand how the implications of that characterization have real consequences for the way we carve up the world. To be clear, Axial soteriology and rationalist disenchantment are *not* interchangeable equivalents. At issue is rather what mode of intelligence rationality required historically in order to come into existence. The capacity for complex inference would not seem to be enough. A more inclusive awareness capable of comprehending the situation as a whole was needed. What Hegel designates as force, where "consciousness becomes explicitly a consciousness that it comprehends its object" through the discernment of unity as subtending the sensuous manifold, whether a perceptual object or communicative media, proves generative of these paradigm shifts across levels of cognitive capacity. We have so far followed the cascade effects of these shifts from mimetic or gestural signification to the normatively grounded grammatical language of the name, and from the mythic oral regime of that grammatical language to conceptual and theoretical rationality.

As it turns out, the registers of attention with which I am endeavoring to align this discourse frequently turn out to bear strong family resemblances to those that literary artists of the 20th century profess to be essential to their work in their own writings. So how do we get from Plato to Picasso? Obviously that kind of historical narrative is well beyond the scope of the present chapter. A few comments can nevertheless help orient us to the story of 20th century art and culture that the rest of this work will develop. We have been tracing the process through which, as an historical development in human cognitive capacity, the Axial disembedding established a normative split between essence and appearance, cognition and perception that subsequent forms of shared knowledge would inherit. Wilfred Sellars in 1963 asks whether the "manifest image" of man, under which we have now come to group much of what gets labeled 'folk psychology,' can be rationally reduced to the theoretical object he calls the "scientific image" of man, and finds this hard to accomplish unequivocally while still remaining faithful to the normative space of reasons. Another inheritance from western epistemology's division of thought and experience can be found in the particular inflection given to the categories of "art" and "aesthetic experience" starting around the 17th century in works by thinkers such as Leibniz, Christian Wolff, Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, Jean-Baptiste Du Bos and Joseph Addison.

It is a fairly uncontroversial view that the members of those early artistic vanguards—Apollinaire, Picasso and Braque, Matisse, Derain, the Delaunays, Kandinsky, Marc, Klee, Marinetti—were "lovers of beauty," holdovers in a sense from 19th century *aestheticisme* whose ideas about the function of art had been forged largely in the context of Symbolism's concern with "effects." Aestheticism could only emerge once "appearance" or "phenomena" had been singled out as a discrete category; that is, once humans had historically introduced a pragmatic distinction between sensing and knowing into their uses of media. My next chapter will show how twentieth century artists' encounter with cultures for whom the category of art had no meaning introduced a further involution to the evolutionary process we've been tracing from naming, to cognition, to art and knowledge as distinct fields, shattering the earlier practical separation between art and culture. But as

we've seen, expressive force as a modality of intelligence had been the generative principle at work in all these previous phases, and indeed this was no less true in the avant-garde. In its cascade effects, expressive force introduces a qualitatively new mode of cognitive capacity into human affairs by generating kind of practical fold within the previous cultural dispensation, producing the name from ritual mimesis, the concept from mythic speech, and aesthetic semblance from the cognitive episteme. Around 1907, a fold within the category of aesthetic semblance yielded the discernment of "form" as a category distinct from representation. This work attempts to trace the fate of this development as it came to shape the cultures of the 20th century. That fate is largely a question of how we read.

For artists at the turn of the century, the new conception of 'form' itself signaled a qualitatively new dispensation within human mentality. Take a work like William Carlos Williams' *Spring and All* (1923). There are all sorts of ways one can see this as illustrating a particular sensibility of its moment: as a manifesto, as Williams' *riposte* to Eliot's *Wasteland*, as dadaesque or, conversely, as quintessentially American. The question is whether any of these perfectly valid observations will get us any closer to Williams' relationship to the imagination, which proves to be the avowed focal point of the work as a whole. The question might be asked more precisely if formulated as follows: is there any genuinely significant relationship between a statement like "Williams' conception of the imagination in *Spring and All* has X, Y, and Z facets to it" and the principle of imagination that we can justifiably presume Williams took his poems to be placing in evidence in *Spring and All*? A version of the hypothetical statement in quotations could paraphrase or quote from the blocks of prose Williams intersperses between his verse forms in the volume and through this process relatively unproblematically relay a sense of what Williams' major themes are. But then the question becomes how one coordinates those prose blocks with the verse forms. If the former prove easier to talk about in the declarative statements of critical prose, it is in part because they by and large share in the same declarative grammatical structure with which a critic's own prose addresses itself to the reader: e.g. "There is a constant barrier between the reader and his consciousness of immediate contact with the world" (117). And as declarative statements, they refer to and attempt to characterize the imagination as an objective force in the world whose activity pertains to the aforementioned contact between the mind and that world. To wit,

> …the imagination is an actual force comparable to electricity or steam, it is not a plaything but a power that has been used from the first to raise the understanding of—it is, not necessary to resort to mysticism—In fact it is this which has kept back the knowledge I seek—
>
> The value of the imagination to the writer consists in its ability to make words. Its unique power is to give created forms reality, actual existence (207)

So far, so good, but Williams goes on to start the next paragraph "This separates" with the unpunctuated, declarative breaking off mid-thought as the statements frequently do throughout the various sections. Paradoxically, the separation alluded to here has to do with the contact with the world that attends the imagination's objectivity as force in that same world. This is evident in the thematic shift that follows in Williams' prose, where he takes up the theme of creative process in order to draw a distinction between the writing of poetry and "a conscious recording of the day's experience" (207). The latter process is problematic

for Williams because it "makes nature an accessory to the particular theory he is following, it blinds him to his world" (207). So the objective status Williams claims for the imagination in his prose sections correlates directly with the antithesis of his verse forms to referential recordings of experience, and this has to do with the independence of the animating principle for which the poems provide evidence. Because a poem as work of imagination is a freestanding thing as much as nature is a freestanding thing and the imagination as a condition of the world is a freestanding thing, a poem does not have the relationship of dependence that a referential orientation toward experience would invest it with.

As was the case with James' sentence composition and Strether's experience of Paris, the relationship between poem and world in *Spring and All* is one of homology or univocity rather than reference. The latter term was used by John Duns Scotus in a very different context (later taken up by Deleuze) to describe the legitimate human understanding of the relationship between God and the created world without the impieties of either presuming a direct apprehension of God's attributes or postulating a radical split between God and his creation. In brief, the notion designates two distinct beings whose qualities we speak about in fundamentally identical ways without ever collapsing their relationship into one of direct derivation. The relationship Williams articulates in *Spring and All* between the imagination as a force active in the world and the imagination as instantiated in a poem can be appreciated on these terms. Composition makes materials 'do' what force in the world does, because the act of composition shares in the same principle of force that inheres in states of affairs removed from a literary context. What this means in the present context is that we can't approach the verse forms in *Spring and All* through the terms available to us if we're treating them as meaningful referential statements. The reason for this has to do with how we ourselves are positioned when we meet the language of the poem with the expectation that it has a semantic function that it is our job to decode. How then to take them? At the most basic level the answer would be that we encounter the poems in the same way we encounter any other experience of the world in which we can speak of the force of imagination as being the active principle in generating the character of the circumstances. I quote Williams again:

> Fruitless for the academic tapeworm to hoard its excrementa in books.
> The cage—
>
> The most of all writing has not even begun in the province from which alone it can draw sustenance.
>
> There is not life in the stuff because it tries to be "like" life.
>
> First must come the transposition of the faculties to the only world of reality that men know: the world of the imagination, wholly our own. From this world alone does the work gain power, its soil the only one whose chemistry is perfect to the purpose. (215)

In one respect, this is an enormous challenge to literary studies because it would seem to debar any methodological standardization we might wish to develop in order to make access to the works reproducible. Most of our methods of producing knowledge may be quite alien to the "transposition of the faculties" Williams speaks of here because those methods are limited to the modeling of determinate relationships either among facts themselves or

between facts and the statements corresponding to those facts. Such a process of modeling, in other words, occupies the faculties in specific way that is distinct from the "transposition" to which Williams here refers by concerning those faculties with matters of likeness. The cop-out response to this issue is that the province of literary criticism is somewhere entirely other than the experiential dimension of the works, in sociohistorical reconstructions based on available archival materials which, contrary to artists' works themselves, often *do* respond gaily to our scholarly demands. But this response betrays the basic principles on which the discipline of literary studies has been developed: that there is a distinct form of human practice called literature and that it warrants its own particular academic discipline and appropriate methodologies. As Williams puts it, "life becomes actual only when it is identified with ourselves" (202). Citing the historicity of these works as something beyond our immediate experience does nothing to dispel the validity of this statement. Perhaps Walter Benjamin understood better than anyone else that even when our scholarly task is to understand a historical moment or situation removed from our own, we cut the vital functions of one of the requisite conditions for such an undertaking when we fail to take into account the way our own present experience conditions our process of understanding. The unfinished project of the *Passagenwerk* was an effort to transpose these principles into a specific method of historiography.

An example of the difference between a poem taken as what Williams calls a "created form," which stands in univocal or homologous relationship to the world, and a poem as what he calls a "recording of life," which stands in a referential relationship to the world, will perhaps helps to bring out the matter more starkly. The second lyric poem in *Spring and All* could be considered a kind of verbal still life at first glance:

> Pink confused with white
> Flowers and flowers reversed
> Take and spill the shaded flame
> Darting it back
> Into the lamp's horn
>
> Petals aslant darkened with mauve
>
> Red where in whorls
> Petal lays its glow upon petal
> Round flamegreen throats
>
> Petals radiant with transpiercing light
> Contending
> Above
>
> The leaves
> Reaching up their modest green
> From the pot's rim
>
> And there, wholly dark, the pot
> Gay with rough moss. (184)

We have to deal here with two occasions and their relationship to one another: a perception of potted flowers and a poem. This is tricky because the latter gives us a kind of access to the former without actually functioning as a description or representation of the former. It is even trickier because we now have my own interference to contend with. What is the register in which the flowers in the pot are an expression of force, and what is the register in which the words on the page are an expression of force?

What matter are the dynamic contrasts among multiple intersecting coordinates brought into tension through the encompassing circumstance of attentive encounter—color, space, noun, action, light, position, pace, verb, shape, syntax, line, sensation, emphasis—and how the friction of these contrasts 'transposes' the standard hierarchies of experienced relationships. A flower usually "has" secondary qualities like colors. "Pink" we expect to be modifying "flowers" as its predicate, but the syntactical inversion of "confused with" displaces the noun into the prosodic moment of the following line, at which point the enunciative emphasis of "pink" has been hijacked by its collision with "white." The confusion of the two colors afforded both by syntactical placement and prosodic momentum now forms a unit in which "pink" and "white" become capable of vying for grammatical status as nouns against the flowers, which want to pull the colors into adjectival status. "Flowers," though, is pulled forward by its placement in the second line into its own confusion, this time numerical, with the second iteration of "flowers," which makes its nomination of the plural wobble between a more discrete multiple and an indefinite proliferation even as the acuteness of the action in "reversed" gathers and focuses the riot of substances and qualities into a single event.

The gathering in "reversed" seems to invest the axis of verbs and events with a new responsibility in governing what transpires at the level of objects, as the accumulation of verbs and the shift to present tense in "take and spill" modulates the passivity of the flowers as described objects toward a sense of agency that is only ambiguously in control of itself (is the spill an accident or is it intentional?). And as if in resonance with this modulation from stasis to process we see the colors, which were previously self-subsistent percepts, reframed as semitransparent apertures for the flame of light passing through and animating them. Meanwhile, the words themselves are being converted from semantic to sonorous objects at the moment when the shift to active present tense at "take" sets up a patterning of vowel sounds at "sh*a*ded fl*a*me," "b*a*ck" and "l*a*mp," which seems to cup it all in its horn. The language does justice to its ostensible object by turning in on itself and becoming its own object, and in the justice of this turning neither the flowers nor the poem are actually a mere object at all. Each appears by virtue of this transposition as a nexus of poised correspondences confirming a dynamic principle that refuses predication because it is the place from which predication comes.

Williams writes, "nature is the hint to composition not because it is familiar to us and therefore the terms we apply to it have at least a common denominator quality which gives them currency—but because it possesses the quality of independent existence, of reality which we feel in ourselves. It is not opposed to art but apposed to it" (207-208). Insofar as meaning is a relationship of intentionality towards a referent, a relation that inheres in the act of usage, it can be thought of in the abstract as being a kind of trajectory or momentum investing a word or a relationship between words. This is what Bakhtin explored in its sociological dimensions in his notion of heteroglossia. The quality of independent existence Williams here describes both nature and composition as sharing is presented in the way these innate trajectories, active in the linguistic components as semantic values, form alliances with and resistances to one another according to their own capacities rather than to how their

activity is made to adapt itself descriptively to an external referent. The field of these interactions is what assumes the quality of independent existence in composition.

The non-semantic dimension provides a useful analog for how this takes place. Cadence and sonorous qualities of vowel and consonantal patternings are predisposed to be interactive. A single pulse or beat in isolation has no discernible quality but assumes a character depending on how it is differentially positioned within an arrangement of other pulses. We could call such a character "tensile" because it is simultaneously relational and dynamic. The semantic field of a word is a kind of potential reserve of values that are actualized in a given context of usage. When our reading experience is disposed to leave this actualization open because of how the composition of a work invites our sympathetic attention to remain unresolved into a cognitive act of identification, the components of the semantic dimension of the work assume a similarly tensile quality. But this all depends on what we bring to the reading.

In Williams' poem we can see an example of this semantic elasticity in the repetition of the noun "petals" across the various stanzas. The noun appearing in the second stanza receives the relay from the focalizing activity of the verbs in the previous stanza, which have brought the blossoming confusion of qualities and substances in the first two lines of the poem to the singular point of the light's "shaded flame" as it is cupped by the curvature of the lamp's horn. "Petals" receives this funneling and condensation of the previous stanza's profuse clamor in the acuity both of its quality as a synecdochal detail and in the sharpness of its consonants, an acuteness that is carried and sustained in the spatial precision of "aslant" and specificity of "mauve" as it plays off against the relative generality of the colors in the first stanza. The maintenance and confirmation of "petals"' inflection towards sharpness that the rest of the line carries out has the effect of retroactively investing the noun with the quasi-authoritative status of having a kind of axial function. This both makes the noun heavier than when it first strikes us as it follows off of the first stanza, which we see the next stanza developing in both the tactility and stratification of "petal lays its glow upon petal," and in the noun's new function as a structural organizer of the stanzas, which we see in the anaphoric repetitions.

Perhaps this is why "Petals" opens and seems to authorize the fifth stanza's pitch of near-editorialization and summary in "Petals radiant with transpiercing light / contending / above," where the high diction of "radiant" and "transpiercing" and the conspicuousness of the maker's hand in the dropped line of "contending / above" seems to leave the poem nowhere else to go but to fall with relief into the darkness of "modest" green and the unworked fecundity of "rough" moss. The shifting semantic values with which the same word is invested as it moves through the poem are not the discrete and stable resting points that my own cataloging might seem to imply but are themselves fleeting tonalities arising from how my senses and mind are positioned relative to a moving vanishing point around which, at any given moment, the composition of the work arranges itself. We could compare the words on the page to the three superimposed two-dimensional pictures and my present moment of experience to the 3-D glasses. The combination of the two factors coming together actuates the capacity for depth perception that is latent in the three superimposed images. That capacity is what was present in the context of the poem's production. The work's composition acts like a rubbing, as an isomorphic recording or remnant bearing the imprint of the prior occasion.

The comparisons are imprecise because the rubbing and 3D image afford access without requiring any significant modification of the viewer's sensibilities, whereas the point here is precisely that the interaction with the composition as created form brings about a

reorientation in the reader's sensibility which is the point, so to speak, of the work. Williams goes on to say, "the exaltation men feel before a work of art is the feeling of reality they draw from it. It sets them up, places a value upon experience—(said that half a dozen times already)" (215). Accordingly, Williams understood and discusses in *Spring and All* the potential, suggested by the distinction between the work as meaningful reference and the work as created form, for processes of education.[iv] One is dealing here not with an object of knowledge or even with a way of knowing but with the total experiential context that conditions both of these things.

Critical methods have hitherto fallen into the hypnosis of the discipline that results in the attempt to make this dimension of experience into an object of knowledge or a systematically applied technique of producing knowledge. New Critics sought to make close-reading a science and mistook force for truth. Structuralists and Post-structuralists armed with social scientific methods and philosophy sought to expose the mechanisms facilitating or undoing meaning. Historicists sought knowledge of culture's other half in privileged hindsight. In the challenge posed by the search for an alternative to these examples and their contributions lies the still-unrealized promise of what literary education has to offer institutions of knowledge in general. Responding to the challenge starts in the present case by taking the attitude that attempting to bring literary experience within the field of knowledge will never work, but that the opposite may still be possible: our relationship to knowledge might be contained within a larger experiential context that we have cultivated in part through our reading of literature.

The distinctions I have suggested in this introduction are intended to provide an orientation for the reader toward the readings of artists' works in the 20th century that will follow. The orientation is at least as important as where it leads. The notion of force I have invoked here and will continue to invoke is not intended as an analytical category that we might apply in various readings as a tool with which to understand a given work but defines an orientation and relationship within which we might encounter a work. A conceptual argument might more profitably be pursued based on the distinction I have suggested here between the relationship between work and world as one of reference, and the relationship as one of homology. In order to understand how a poem might stand in a homologous relationship to the world, a relationship which implies both parallelism and common derivation, the framing requires some historical contextualization. In the following chapter I attempt to provide such a contextualization by situating the domain of the fine arts as we find them at the turn of the 20th century within a broader historical formation of human practices.

**Chapter 2: How Natives Think**

> The masks weren't like other kinds of sculpture. Not at all. They were magical things. And why weren't the Egyptian or the Chaldean pieces? We hadn't realized it. Those were primitive, not magical things. The Negroes' sculptures were intercessors, I've known the French word ever since. Against everything; against unknown, threatening spirits. I kept looking at the fetishes. I understood: I too am against everything. I too think that everything is unknown, is the enemy! Everything! Not just the details – women, children, animals, tobacco, playing – but everything! I understood what the purpose of the sculpture was for the Negroes. Why sculpt like that and not some other way? After all, they weren't Cubists! Since Cubism didn't exist. Clearly some fellows had invented the models and others had imitated them, that's what we call tradition, isn't it? But all the fetishes were used for the same thing. They were weapons. To help people stop being dominated by spirits, to become independent. Tools. If we give form to the spirits, we become independent of them. The spirits, the unconscious (which wasn't yet much spoken of then), emotion, it's the same thing. I understood why I was a painter. All alone in that awful museum, the masks, the Red Indian dolls, the dusty mannequins. *Les Damoiselles d'Avignon* must have come to me that day, but not at all because of the forms: but because it was my first canvas of exorcism—yes, absolutely!
> -Pablo Picasso (Flam 33)

> I am a native in this world
> And think in it as a native thinks.
> -Wallace Stevens ("The Man with the Blue Guitar" *Collected Poetry and Prose* 147)

*i. "Primitivism" and its Discontents*

One can imagine a certain Eliotic reading of William Rubin's 1984 MoMA exhibition, *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art*, that goes something like this: in the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered; when we look at our current environment and view the institutions, practices and the efforts at understanding housed within them, we are constantly struck by evidence of the degree to which such a dissociation constitutes the very basis of their existence. Enshrined in Manhattan's precincts of high culture, the Rubin exhibition's pairings of avant-garde artworks and non-European ritual objects mutely intoned their incomprehensible affinities to one another like the orphaned and dislocated voices shelved in the five sections of *The Waste Land*. *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art* was, among other things, a monument to the trans-historical, pan-cultural universality of what is effectively a 19th century European conception of creative genius, an outlandish phenomenon to be appearing in the high post-modernity of the 1980's. It was also a kind of mineshaft canary (the counterpart to Petronius' Cumaean Sibyl?), indexing the passage from one era's revelation, to the next era's *idée fixe*, and lastly to its fully-fledged canonical status, where it passes into the hinterlands of cliché and marketing device. In this respect, the historical fate of the figure of "the primitive" in early 20th century experience and thought presents in microcosm the regrettable efficiency human activity shows in its ability to forge conceptual categories and institutions

into palatable, denatured units and protocols from out of the swarming web of patterned events.

As categories go, "Art" gives us a pretty good hold on a set of noticeable qualities and practices that might otherwise outstrip our cognitive grasp. Answering to the charge that many of the "tribal sculptures" featured in *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art* originated within collectivities for whom the exhibition's guiding category of art-as-such did not exist, Rubin remained unphased, countering:

> …even if [the claim that said cultures do not recognize art as a category] could be proven true… it would not contradict my contention insofar as the finding of artistic solutions is ultimately an intuitive process rather than an intellectual activity. The art-making process everywhere has certain common denominators… The "art-ness" of the best tribal objects alone demonstrates that great artists were at work and that a variety of aesthetic solutions were arrived at, however little the artists themselves might have agreed with our description of the process. ("Introduction" 28)

The question-begging circularity of "art-ness" as a heuristic proves understandable here if we consider what the category allows us to isolate in a consideration of the objects in question. Like the works by Picasso, Giacometti, Brancusi, et al. for whom they provide a kind of call-and-response, the masks and fetishes from Africa, Oceania, North America and elsewhere present a distinctive manner of intelligence in the striking care with which their assemblages of integrated features have been fashioned. Having noticed this intelligence, it only made sense to account for it by locating it within the discourse and identificatory regime that Europe and North America have, at least since the Enlightenment, dedicated to that sort of thing.

From other quarters, voices were grumbling. Writing in *The New Criterion*, Hilton Kramer lambasted *"Primitivism"* for its de-politicization of the modernist avant-garde's commitment to the so-called primitivist ethos, an ethos that for Kramer constituted "an outright attack on the conventions and assumptions of Western cultural life as they had come to be seen in the established values of advanced industrial societies" (6). In Kramer's view, this de-politicizing impulse accounted for *"Primitivism"*'s conspicuous omission of the German Expressionists, whose "ideal of the primitive" was most explicitly linked to an oppositional social programme, from its pantheon of vanguard artists. Kramer's position thus fell more in tune than Rubin's with the academic sentiments of the era, among critics for whom the vexed question of modernism's penchant for things "primitive" was first and foremost a matter of political allegiances, whether conscious or otherwise, and of variable tendencies. Stating things more pointedly while taking a slightly different tack, James Knapp argued that Rubin's appeal to a universalizing notion of humanity as bearing the fund of creative genius drawn upon by European and non-European "artists" served to shore up the ideological interests of the exhibition's corporate sponsor, Philip Morris. Knapp quoted from a two-page advertisement for *"Primitivism"* sponsored by Morris which ran in *Time* magazine, wherein the text asserts, "In our business as in yours, we must constantly ask ourselves new questions, and be prepared for answers quite different from those we expect—from the endless resources of our individual imagination, individual creativity and individual innovativeness" (375). Driving the point home, Knapp opined, "teaching us to see primitive art as the spiritual achievement of an unchanging humanity is thus far more than a corporate tax break: it is a founding gesture for this discourse, an exemplary instance

of the corporate constitution of the subject" (376). As the chorus of responses to the MoMA exhibition redoubled upon itself, the charges against *"Primitivism"* shifted from ridicule of the exhibition's fundamental naïvete to indictments of something far more pernicious at work.

Against the universalizing impulse of the Rubin exhibition, an impulse whose awkwardness is crystalized in the semi-ironic quasi-designation that the scare quotes of the title register, critics like Knapp advocated the possibilities of exploring the primitivism phenomenon as an opportunity to "question the role of the marginal in cultural and linguistic practice" (378). Here the substitution of "cultural and linguistic practice" for, say, "human creativity" registers that era's own methodological commitment to suturing those products of human activity that the Rubin exhibition had sought to single out as justifying special attitudes of reception back into a reconstructed socio-historical context, or, conversely, laying bare the ways in which such a context had been obscured. James Clifford devoted a good third of *The Predicament of Culture* (1988) to the cultural identity-politics and ideological mechanisms of inclusion, exclusion, and appropriation that attend practices of curation exemplified not only in *"Primitivism,"* but in the ethnographic enterprise as such. In approaches like the one developed by Clifford, Rubin's master-concept of "aesthetic value" is treated solely as an effect of processes of collective valorization, one arising from the essentially uniform functioning of semiological systems that serve primarily to allocate claims for prestige and authenticity to various social groups. One is tempted to say, given this fact, that while the formalist art-historical reception of the primitivism phenomenon blurs important distinctions between particular human collectives, the cultural studies reception blurs distinctions between particular productions *of* those collectives.

If *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art* is an easy target, it is also a useful point of departure insofar as its reception history stages so conspicuously a host of issues that surround the question of the European avant-garde's relation to that era's particular moment of encounter with non-European collectives. And this encounter is crucially significant as a site for understanding the nature of those practices and experiences whose existence has come to justify the notion of the art's distinctness as a category and its relationship to the broader rubric of culture. The exhibition stands out as one of the most recent instances in a long line of discourses devoted to this question, from the art-historical analyses of Robert Goldwater's *Primitivism in Modern Art* (1938) and Ernst Gombrich's *The Preference for the Primitive* (2002) to the philosophical engagements with the relationship of the so-called primitive and the modern seen in Ernst Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1923-1929) and Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944). In the case of the Rubin exhibition's reception, we see at least three institutions—art history, anthropology, cultural theory—intersecting in an ongoing attempt to come to terms with an intimated relationship, each bringing its own particular methodological frame and presuppositions to bear on the question. Accordingly, the terms "primitive" or "primitivism" denote a nebulous cluster of events and activities at which we dimly peer through a palimpsest of specialized discourses. Each different way of framing the question has yielded implications ranging from the utopian (a universal master-key to human cultures throughout history) to the atrocious (positivistic and ethnocentric hubris underwriting ongoing colonizations of the world, whether through physical violence or otherwise). The degree to which the meme of "the primitive" has proven capable of continuously drawing thinkers from a disparate range of intellectual backgrounds into its orbit attests to the charismatic appeal and to the persistently, at times threateningly, enigmatical character that the figure of the premodern human has presented to enlightened thought.

At base, then, what the example of the Rubin exhibition brings into focus is the endurance beyond its particular historical moment at the turn of the century of the sense surrounding those paired objects—a painting and a mask in adjacent panels on the cover of the accompanying two-volume coffee-table book, for instance—of correspondence, or what commentators in the two volumes of *"Primitivism"* call an "affinity." It also provides an example of the resistance this correspondence shows to attempts to reduce it to a set of determinate relationships. Clifford devotes much of his analysis of the Rubin exhibition to outlining the incoherence and ideological subtexts of the use of "affinity" as an organizing concept, favoring instead the more anti-essentialist term "allegory." Nevertheless, as my opening epigram from Picasso suggests, many artists of the avant-garde were convinced that such an affinity existed between what they were doing and the activities of the makers of those objects they were encountering in the British Museum, the *Musee d'Ethnographie du Trocadero*, or, for a young Eliot, an exhibition on the North American "savage" at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Eliot would write fifteen years later, after the mania for things primitive had ballooned into a full blown fad among cultured elites, "the artist is… the most competent to understand both civilized and primitive" ("War Paint and Feathers" in Flam 122). The claim for artists' self-conscious identification with at least a concept of non-European experience should be uncontroversial to readers with any familiarity with modernist figures from Lawrence to Breton.

The thing is, neither the fetish objects nor the paintings and sculptures featured in the Rubin exhibition sit very easily with the category of art. After all, many of these works were the products of the age of dada and signed urinals, a period's formation of activities and practices that would set the stage for many of the conceptual- and performance-based "anti-arts" that largely define our own current landscape. Jacques Ranciere's characterization of what he calls the "aesthetic regime" of art proves germane here:

> Art exists in the very difference between the common form of life that it was for those who made the works and the object of free contemplation and free appreciation that it is for us. It exists for us in the divide between the power of art and the power of beauty, between the rules of its production and the modes of its sensible appreciation, between the figures that regulate it and the ones it produces. (19)

Ranciere's major claim is that "art proper" exists[v] in the constitutive tension both dividing its own mode of appearance from extant forms of social life and rendering that mode of appearance fundamentally indistinguishable from the sensible world within which 'extra-aesthetic' social life goes on. The modes of sensible appreciation that an aesthetic composition produces are negatively defined against the rules of its production, while the latter constitute the broader framing devices that dictate the mores of a work's reception. An artwork is always straining against the matrix of conventions that constitutes its own condition of production. This tension is the lifeblood of those code-shattering transgressive gestures that define artistic vanguards. When Picasso's *demoiselles* appear in jagged, compressed two-dimensional space, going beyond previous post-impressionist experiments with three-dimensional perspective by collapsing figure and background into one another, the act constituting this novel appearance fulfills the *sine qua non* of art-as-such precisely through its essential gaucherie *as* an aesthetic gesture. The properly "artistic" act, the act that comes to achieve public visibility as truly aesthetic, is paradoxically the one that punctures the membrane dividing prior habits of apperceiving and appreciating the sphere of culture

designated "art" from whatever domain of life would surround it. Such a dynamic is implicit in German Idealism's isolation of aesthetic judgments as distinct from determinate cognitive judgments, but becomes most fully realized in practice in the modernist avant-garde's separating out of form as a value capable of subsisting and flourishing outside of its mimetic husk.

So it seems crucial that the art-historical moment coinciding with the so-called primitivism phenomenon is also the moment in which the notion of form truly comes into its own as *the* main principle orienting artistic practice, in relative autonomy from previously existing templates for artistic practice (e.g. figural representation in painting, allegory in poetry or diegesis in prose). Form itself becomes at this period, with the advent of non-representational art following post-impressionism, what is produced anew in each genuine work. Prior to the modernist avant-garde, even in Romantic notions of organic form, the ratio between theme and effect remains weighted towards the former. In the previous dispensation, form serves primarily to augment and vitalize mimetic qualities of a pictorial image, for instance, or to instantiate values made explicit in the semantic frameworks provided by allegory and rhetorical performance. Increasingly, as theme comes more and more transparently to resemble a mere alibi or pretext for the production of formal effects, a term designating those self-evident demonstrations of a distinctive mode of sensate cognizance, form itself gradually emerges into relief as that which authorizes and guides the work undertaken.[vi]

The notion of form that emerges in this period provides the basis of Rubin's appeal to "aesthetic solutions" as much as it renders permeable the walls of the MoMA as a precinct of culture and fine arts that is defined in relation to the larger division of public institutions. It therefore becomes necessary to see both the focus on form in non-representational art and the increasing porosity of art as a cultural sphere as corollary developments. These are broad strokes, of course, but they will suffice if they at least provisionally establish a sense of the salience with which the concept of form emerges in the prewar period, along with the paradoxical implications this concept has for the category of art-as-such. The general picture will suit present purposes well enough if the crucial years around 1900-1914 stand out as a pivot in the development of the concept of art itself, where the concept's central kernel reaches a kind of maximum density before spilling over into the world at large. Art's lost self-evidence, which Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* (1970) takes as its point of departure, will become the major preoccupation of vanguard movements in the aftermath. For the artists themselves, the Janus-faced role they played with respect to the tradition and the culture at large was a matter of reflective awareness.

And what about the relationship between "art-as-such" and those "tribal artworks" in the opposite panel on the cover of the *"Primitivism"* book? Understanding the relationship of vanguard artists to the masks, statues, and implements displayed in places like the *Musee d'Ethnographie du Trocadero*, where Picasso encountered them in 1906, almost a full century before and certainly an historical universe away from the moment when the Museum of Modern Art placed them in a reframing relationship with the productions of the European avant-garde, cannot be done solely at the level of art-historical discourse. It does not suffice to approach these objects only in terms of the status conferred upon them after aesthetes and collectors have rebranded them as artworks. Nor, for that matter, does it suffice to leave the question of the character of these objects at the level of its being merely an effect of the relativistic play of different kinds of labeling and identification according to the demands of various social groups. Rather, it requires a closer look at the anthropological discourse of the period. Such a change in perspective entails, even if problematically,

developing a sense of what role these objects had within the cultural matrices and ritual contexts in which they were produced and from which the ethnographic enterprise, an appendage of the broader colonial projects of European imperial powers still in full swing at the beginning of the century, extracted them.

Ranciere's periodization of the historical trajectory of art, through the various regimes conditioning its public visibility as a category, works to reframe Eliot's literary-historical claim about the dissociation of sensibility. In other words, if "art" as a category can be viewed as having always been a barometer of how that very dissociation both registers and motivates the division of labor (physical, sensuous, cognitive) within modernity, it is precisely the categorical awkwardness in the Rubin exhibition's yoking together of culturally heterogeneous objects that functions as a privileged site for understanding the implications of this principle. In short, to understand the phenomenon of "modernist primitivism," we need to comprehend the fine arts' historical derivation from the broader modes of ritual action that the non-European objects displayed in the Rubin exhibition serve to index. This chapter will unpack some of the ways that the broader phenomenological, epistemological and sociological implications of this historical derivation help us to understand the developments of art and literature in the 20th century. To do so, I will read the anthropological theories of Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss and Claude Levi-Strauss in tandem with the theories of embodied action in works by Henri Bergson and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Coordinating anthropology with philosophy in this way proves necessary to the present inquiry for the same reason that the categorical misreadings of the Rubin exhibition demonstrated the necessity of a turn through anthropological theory: each alternative methodological frame offers an insight that has been occluded by the demands native to the other. This is largely a matter of non-reductively allowing both history and experience to inform analysis. Just as the art historians seeking to understand ritual masks as works of sculpture downplayed the ritual character of these objects, anthropologists seeking to understand the social efficacy of ritual acts reduced these acts' embodied, experiential character to their social significance. Coordinating these broader historical and theoretical models as a corrective will then allow us in turn to revisit the Kantian model of reflective judgments upon which the modern discourse of aesthetics has largely been built. Framing in this way the concept of reflective judgment, through which the category of art-as-such has historically been justified on philosophical grounds, fundamentally alters standard readings of Kantian concepts of 'disinterestedness' by locating the basis of reflective judgment not in hypostatized transcendental faculties but in the non-instrumental intentional disposition afforded by the practical contexts of which ritual is the exemplary historical mode. The efficacy of ritual action is thereby seen not primarily in terms of its social function but in the way its autotelic character transforms perception. At the same time, the Kantian frame affords an approach to ritual that is distinct from previous anthropological models in that Kant's treatment distinguishes the fundamentally non-conceptual—though no less coherently intelligent—character of the forms of intellection associated with such practices.

I will develop these coordinated readings in order to advance a set of basic claims that will frame my later readings of 20th century painting and poetry by opening our receptivity of these works beyond the mores of reception prescribed by "the arts" as a cultural domain. First, consideration of its ritual origins shows that art as a category historically emerges neither first and foremost as a leisured sphere of consumption, nor as a set of representational conventions, but as a practical domain devoted to modifications in the sensorium through the cultivation of non-instrumental practical dispositions within

particular contexts of action. This framing allows us to shift our focus away from preoccupations with representation in art. Chapter Three's discussion of the vocational insight that accompanied Picasso's encounter with the Fang masks and reliquary figures in the *Musee du Trocadero* will discuss in greater depth the thesis that the advent of non-representational art in modernism constitutes a restoration of this practical function to art following its occlusion in representation's prominence as art's primary condition of public visibility. Second, through its modifications of our tendency to schematize experience in accordance with habitual practical dispositions, ritual action makes manifest a non-conceptual, embodied or perceptual intelligence. This non-conceptual intelligence functions as the guiding principle within ritualized activity and, later, constitutes the basis for both Rubin's misleading evocation of "artistic solutions" and Ranciere's reference to modes of sensible appreciation. It is this mode of intelligence that becomes requisitioned for the fine arts within Kant's formulation of reflective judgment in the third *Critique*, but which I claim the Durkheimian School describes as evenly distributed throughout non-European collectivities as *mana* or proto-conceptual "force."

On the basis of this practical and historical framing of reflective judgment as an expression of non-cognitive embodied intelligence, I will claim that Levi-Strauss' influential structuralist reading mischaracterizes the relationship between the *pensee sauvage* and scientific thought, even as his epistemic model of ritual provides important inroads to understanding the relationship between conceptual and non-conceptual intelligence. I argue that viewing the role played by reflective judgments (as categorically distinct from determinate cognitive judgments) in the constitution of what Durkheim calls collective representations, provides the basis for approaching both ritual and art as engaging a mode of intelligence that is different in kind from conceptual thought. Ethnographic accounts of ritualized societies, for whom the division of labor has not partitioned culture into domains that strictly separate the conceptual from non-conceptual, reveal the socially transformative capacities of this intelligence. Later chapters will explore the variable tendencies of these historical transformations, from irrational forms of fascist governance to democratic movements for educational reform.

*ii. The Sacred and the Profane: Ritual Action and "Mana" in the Anthropological Theories of the Durkheimian School*

The primary concern for the second generation of anthropologists, ethnographers, folklorists, comparative religionists and sociologists at the turn of the twentieth century was with developing explanations of their findings that would prove capable of establishing lines of continuity between cultural forms and practices obtaining in "undeveloped" societies and cultural forms, predominantly forms associated with ideals of human rationality, existing in post-industrial societies. For a period in which the foundations of metaphysics seemed to have been effaced in the rise of naturalism as the predominant worldview, a development hastened by the tremendous technological advancements of the physical sciences, the strong concept of culture inherited from Romantic thinkers like Herder provided a means of reconstituting the bases for understanding the development of human rationality in the absence of transcendental assurances. Simultaneously, the methodological approaches developed in Comtean positivism and the social evolutionism popularized by Herbert Spencer appeared to offer a means of unifying the natural and human sciences into a seamless spectrum of knowledge-producing practices ranging from the "hard" sciences such as astronomy, mathematics and physics to natural philosophy, sociology and anthropology.

So for many of the key figures of this period—Smith, Tylor, Frazer, Durkheim, Mauss—the primary imperative was to locate in their ethnographic objects that which they could claim as the manifest bases of rational thought, or at the very least its rudiments.

The character of early 20th century anthropology and its positioning within a larger formation of intellectual culture has several important implications for trying to understand the so-called primitivism phenomenon. First, the institution of anthropology and its sister disciplines at this period (e.g. the comparative science of religion, sociology, studies of folklore and myth, etc.) are still asking general questions about human thought *tout court* and its bases in forms of culture. So what is emerging in ethnographic data during this period is seen as potentially having a range of application beyond the idiosyncrasies of one social group's particular articulation. This trend would carry the discipline through to Claude Levi-Strauss and the epistemological ambitions of the structuralist paradigm of the mid-century. Despite early outliers such as Franz Boas, whose claims for the irreducibility and relativity of particular cultural differences would gain ascendance in the later half of the century, the influence of teleological and evolutionary notions of historical development, as well as the prestige enjoyed by macroanalytic methods such as statistics, appeared to justify broad, pan-cultural claims about human experience based on the findings of ethnographic data.

The tendency to collapse important distinctions in the mad rush for universalizing claims would of course eventually make the "comparative method" a deeply unpopular analytical technique. Indeed, the very notion of "the primitive" can itself be seen as a fictive effect of knowledge-producing practices of comparative ethnography.[vii] But the comparative method of ethnography itself furnished a mass of empirical data about practices across cultures that was at times suggestive of a degree of ubiquity and diffusion among particular styles of human activity that, though certainly the basis for the pejorative terms like "armchairish," nevertheless allowed for the possibility for certain recurrent patterns undetectable at the level of local fieldwork to become visible.[viii] The compulsion to account for ethnographic findings in terms of rational or cognitive processes, whether individual or social, proved hugely influential of the ways in which anthropologists and ethnographers came to observe and construe practices. This in turn influenced the theories they produced. The disciplines of the human sciences at the turn of the century were thus both uniquely positioned to explore philosophical questions about the relationship between historically-specific regimes of action and behavior, modes of thought and experience, and the physical formations constituting sites of imbrication or coalescence between these two domains. At the same time, these questions were posed within and conditioned by a broader intellectual milieu that placed the contingency of various categories presupposed by authors (e.g. nature, thought, culture, etc.) out of view.

Much anthropology during this generation falls broadly into two lineages taking up and/or challenging the work Edward Tylor and Robertson Smith had done in the 19th century.[ix] The split between the two thinkers' approaches can be generally distinguished according to what we might call individual versus social, or epistemically- vs. ethically-oriented, understandings of the significance and function of "primitive" forms of thought and action. Tylor's two-volume 1871 work *Primitive Culture* advanced a social evolutionary theory of the bases of animism in non-European cultures that characterized animistic worldviews as arising from nascent but insufficiently developed individual efforts at providing rational explanations for physical processes comprising the world. Tylor's view was that the animistic idea is at root an early, flawed attempt on the part of individuals to attribute causal relations to natural phenomena, where the notion of the "soul" as a kind of ur-concept for a principle of animacy motivating natural processes was used by members of

these societies to construct quasi-theoretical explanations of natural phenomena such as weather patterns. Influenced by Tylor's theory of animism, Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) would eventually develop his notion of "sympathetic relationships" of similarity and contiguity (with which readers of Saussure and Jakobson should be somewhat familiar) in order to formulate a theory of magic as a kind of aberrant logic of causation. Opposed to Tylor's epistemically-framed construal of non-European practices and activities was Robertson Smith's notion of the ethical bases of religion, as developed in 1894's *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*. Whereas Tylor viewed forms of religion as developing out of animism's proto-theoretical constructions, Smith argued that religion is fundamentally a practical social act whose observance serves to cement bonds of solidarity, or "communion" in his idiom, out of which the social fabric is woven.

Smith's relevant contribution to the present discussion is twofold: to anchor forms of ritual and religious observance in *action* rather than in *cognition*, and to link the work facilitated by such performances to the formation of society as a third party. Out of Robertson Smith's approach developed the social functionalist school of anthropology and sociology, whose adherents range from Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss in the early century to Mary Douglas' work in the 1960s. As we shall see, the influence this approach was to have on the development of structuralism would lead it eventually to exert immense pressure on intellectual life in the 20th century. The intellectualist and social functionalist schools that developed in England and France, respectively, were in part attempts to come to terms at a theoretical level with the challenges posed by the findings of ethnography, which often presented accounts of human practice at times difficult to reconcile with any extant model of purposive, instrumental or meaningful behavior, to the reigning narrative of history as rational progress.

How, for instance, to account for the apparent belief, observed within certain societies, that the mere recitation of a particular sequence of words could have physical effects in the world, or that manipulation of an object physically remote from, but mentally associated with, a being or situation would bring about changes in that being or situation? How, moreover, to explain the fact that such embarrassing behavior had been documented not only in one or two isolated cultures but in various cultures on multiple continents throughout a wide range of historical periods. Patterns of ritual practice and magic could be made ultimately to square with valorized Western practices such as empirical observation in a controlled environment and syllogistic deduction from valid axioms in one of two ways. One possibility was that magic, construed as being based on proto-logical conceptual principles, could be placed at the far end of an imaginary ramp leading up to the historical vantage point from which the anthropologist issued pronouncements, at which point trial-and-error or hard-won insight had purified it of anything short of logical coherence to principles of causation. Alternatively, the theorist could show that its true import lay not in an imputed character as the faulty attempt at producing knowledge but in its efficacy in positioning individuals in binding intersubjective relationships.

The social functionalist explanation had the most potential both to meet the demands of rationality and to mitigate the more culturally- and racially-biased implications that wafted from the intellectualist accounts of Tylor and Frazer. The intellectual and political satisfactions it affords are, I think, why it has endured so long among non-relativistic accounts of culture. Playing loose with the term "logic," other cultures' ritual observances could be shown to obey a "cultural logic" essentially no different from those which govern the present-day mores of industrialized societies. One was then only a few steps away from making the fairly straightforward case for how these normative codes

facilitate the formation of those bonds of solidarity that allow us to continue hanging out with one another in an increasingly fragmentary and alienated society. The quotient of "teleological overcoming of savagery," in other words, is significantly lower in this account than in the intellectualist reading. The seminal text of this school is of course Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912).

Durkheim's work in *Elementary Forms* can moreover be seen as a development of the social functionalist thesis, one that creates a bridge between the epistemic and ethical approaches to ritual and religious practice. Durkheim does this by routing the epistemological function through the ethical function in his Kantian-inflected theory of collective representations. Ritual and religious practices *do* serve a knowledge-producing function in this account, but only subsequently to and as a consequence of how their primary socio-pragmatic role has been performed for the social group. The basic cognitive categories Kant defines in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Durkheim's theory argues, are neither transcendental per Kant's own thesis, nor merely subjectively constituted habits per Hume and the associationists. Rather, the moral authority of society as a reality *sui generis* was sufficient to ensure the production of normatively grounded categories of mental representation for which the accumulated experiences of an individual psyche would always prove inadequate. Not only did Durkheim's thesis provide a means of understanding the origins of worldview in non-European societies that would allow for both a qualitative difference from and a continuity with those of "developed" societies, the influence in this account of social solidarity on the development of rational functions of thought also served to reinforce Durkheim's ongoing political struggle against the tradition of utilitarian thought in England.

The Durkheimian school of sociology provides one major node of ideas that are crucial for what I see as being at work, and at stake, in the phenomenon of the modernist avant-garde's relationship to non-European cultural productions, so it's worth lingering on the claims Durkheim advances in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Durkheim begins, against Tylor's animism and Max Müller's pantheistic definition of religion, by defining religion according to the socially observed distinction between sacred and profane orders of life. This definition fundamentally reorients the discussion of ritual observances away from the reference points provided by Tylor's and Müller's models, which present the issue of religious life as a matter of humans' speculative attempts to *understand* the world. In Durkheim's postulation of the sacred and profane as foundational and qualitatively distinct orders structuring religious and non-religious life, the question of the character of religious phenomena becomes a matter of *how individuals comport themselves towards other beings, objects or situations*. Granted, belief plays an essential role in Durkheim's account, and this has consequences for the ultimate significance and success of *Elementary Forms'* thesis that I will want to return to, but it is essential to Durkheim's argument that "particular modes of action" play a decisive role in a way that intellectualist theories do not take into account (34). Rite and belief are, in Durkheim's account, inextricably intertwined in practice, even if the rite is ultimately explicable for the theoretician through a reconstruction of the belief:

> The rites can be distinguished from other human practices—for example, moral practices—only by the special nature of their object. Like a rite, a moral rule prescribes ways of behaving to us, but those ways of behaving address objects of a different kind. It is the object of the rite that must be characterized, in order to characterize the rite itself. The special nature of

> that object is expressed in the belief. Therefore, only after having defined the belief can we define the rite. (34)

Durkheim's ultimate goal in *Elementary Forms* will thus be to "define the belief," over and above the heads of the participants in the rites, and in a manner that accords with his own culture's *weltanschauung.* Nevertheless, it is useful here to tease out strands of his argument, without rushing to see these particular aspects as forming a seamless whole with his final thesis, as previous commentators have done. Doing so involves seeing the work as endeavoring to reconcile and respond to certain pressures—the empirical pressure to observe distinctiveness and the theoretical pressure to make explicable—that at times tend in antithetical directions. And on the empirical or ethnographic side of his approach, what stands out is the degree to which the rites constitute distinct modes of human practice defined by their relation to the "special object" they address.

It is worth noting that the "special object" of the rites that Durkheim refers to in the previous quotation in some sense takes precedent over the belief, which Durkheim describes in affective terms as serving merely to "express" the former. The "special object" to which Durkheim refers here as distinguishing religious rites defined according to their affiliation with the domain of the sacred from moral practices and other socially shared observances is distinctly *not* first and foremost a particular numen or deity in which the agent believes. Rather, ritual observance becomes a means through which agents orient themselves to an order of being that is qualitatively distinct from that order of being within which profane activities associated generally with quotidian, instrumental behavior take place:

> The division of the world into two domains, one containing all that is sacred and the other all that is profane—such is the distinctive trait of religious thought. Beliefs, myths, dogmas, and legends are either representations or systems of representations that express the nature of sacred things, the virtues and powers attributed to them, their history, and their relationships with one another as well as with profane things. Sacred things are not simply those personal beings that are called gods or spirits. A rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in a word anything, can be sacred. A rite can have sacredness; indeed there is no rite that does not have it to some degree. (34-35)

Particular instantiations of the domain of the sacred, in other words, are of secondary importance to the domain itself. The "personal beings" here become objects of special veneration by virtue of their place in the distinctive order of being to which the rite affords access, rather than the other way around (i.e. the personal being or object of belief confers sacredness).

Durkheim's case study in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* is the totemic religion of indigenous societies in Australia. In line with his Comtean methodological roots, and explicitly endorsing a teleological and unilinear conception of historical development, Durkheim will make his empirical object stand in for the "elementary" developmental states of human society as such. This fact is significant here less for its problematical aspects than for the prestige with which it will continue to invest totemism, a focal point in the discourse since the 19th century, as a central intellectual topos in subsequent discourse on the development and conditions of human rationality. Levi-Strauss' *Totemism* (1962), whose thesis is that the homologous structural relations of metaphoric similarity that the totem

registers between natural and cultural series make the totemic institution's cognitive sorting mechanism "good to think with," will prove essential to that thinker's theory about unconscious structures governing thought.[x] In contradistinction to Levi-Strauss' interpretation of totemism, though, the focus in *Elementary Forms* is not on the institution's role as an instrument of cognition but on the efficacy of practices connected to observance of the totemic institution in modifying the affective states of members of the social group. Levi-Strauss takes this focus on the non-conceptual dimensions of totemic activities takes to indicate Durkheim's insufficient conceptual penetration of the subject. Durkheim's attention to the interrelation between the affective, pragmatic and signifying dimensions of these practices, however, illustrates more accurately than Levi-Strauss' cognitive model the way in which modifications of action in ritual solicit categorically distinct mental states from those of conceptual thought.

One of Durkheim's examples of the role the totemic object plays in facilitating this process serves to demonstrate this linkage between behavior, affective state and emergent qualities of the world in negotiations between the profane and sacred, as well as the counterintuitive manner in which such affective states manifest in these contexts. In his chapter reconstructing the principle totemic beliefs of the social group, Durkheim describes a set of observances among the Arunta, Loritja, Kaitish, Unmatjera and Ilpirra tribes of central Australia surrounding a ritual instrument, generally a piece of wood or stone inscribed with a design associated with the totem of the group, called a *churinga*. The name *churinga* itself, Durkheim describes, is both a noun and adjective translating roughly as "sacred" (118). Durkheim also notes that the groups under analysis use the word "churinga" to designate all ritual acts (119). He then goes on to offer the following descriptive passage assembled from various ethnographic reports:

> The churingas are piously kept in a special place the Arunta call the *ertnatulunga*—a sort of small cave hidden in a deserted place. The entrance is carefully closed with rocks placed so skillfully that a passing stranger never suspects that the religious treasury of the clan is nearby. Such is the churingas' sacredness that it is passed on to the place where they are deposited; women and the uninitiated may not come near it. Young men may do so only when their initiation is completely over, and even then, some are judged to merit that privilege only after several years of trial. The religiousness of the place radiates beyond and is suffused into all that surrounds it: Everything participates in the same quality and is for that reason insulated from profane contact. Is a man chased by another? He is safe if he reaches the ertnatulunga; he cannot be captured there. Even a wounded animal that takes refuge there must be respected. Quarrels are prohibited. … The churinga's virtues are manifested not only by the way it keeps the profane at a distance. It is isolated in this way because it is a thing of great religious value, and its loss would tragically injure the group and the individuals. The churinga has all sorts of miraculous qualities. By its touch, wounds are healed, especially those resulting from circumcision; it is similarly effective against illness; it makes the beard grow; it conveys important powers over totemic species, whose normal reproduction it ensures; it gives men strength, courage and perseverance, while depressing and weakening their enemies. ...Thus, no ritual instruments have more important place in religious ceremonies. (119-120)

Undoubtedly, Durkheim's high-flown rhetoric in the passage—the timeless present tense, the montage effect of shuffling examples, the use of free-indirect discourse—is calculated to produce effects. Nevertheless, the relevant perspective it affords can be seen in the way the language toggles between descriptions of behavior and intentional orientation toward the churinga, on the one hand, and its phenomenological and social qualities on the other.

The passage begins with a description both of the circumspection and care, the simultaneity of a particularized attitude accompanying a physical action, shown in treatments of and interactions with the churinga as it is "piously kept in a special place," and the prohibitions placed on certain kinds of activity in relation to the churinga. We then move rather quickly to the ambient qualities with which the sacred aspect of the churinga suffuses the environment within which it has been placed, as though the character that seems to originate in the manner of action and the intention of the human agents with their circumspect and attentive treatment of the object comes to seep out of the confines of their enclosed subjectivities and circulate in the world itself. Finally, this sacred character finds itself reflected in the "virtues" and "miraculous qualities" of the object itself. So the passage characterizes the way the rites in question establish a relationship of permeability and reciprocal influence among agent, environment and object. Durkheim's rhetoric aside, the descriptive reconstruction of a lived ritual context from ethnographic reportage, as distinct from the more abstract modeling of the ritual institution as a set of skeletal synchronic relationships, brings to light important dimensions of the pragmatic "embedded-ness" of the agents involved. As narrativity and speculation are unavoidable dimensions of any descriptive endeavor, whether ethnographic, historiographical or otherwise (including denunciatory and skeptical unmaskings), the mediations they entail do not merely transpose their object to some degree, but they also make it available to consideration in the first place.

The phenomenon that the passage describes is what is known in the discourse of the period as "contagion," which can be defined as the tendency for qualities associated with the domain of the sacred to be transmitted either through contact and contiguity or through mere mental association from one object, individual, place or situation to another. This idea, which plays a central role in the analyses developed in *Elementary Forms*, would be critiqued as vague and incoherent by later thinkers like Levi-Strauss. Durkheim writes that ethnographic findings suggest that "feelings evoked by a person or a thing spread contagiously, from the idea of that thing or person to the representations associated with it, and from there to the objects with which those representations become associated. The respect we have for a sacred being is thereby communicated to all that touches this being and to all that resembles it or calls it to mind" (326). The phenomenon of contagion, which Durkheim notes has previously been documented in the studies of Smith, Frazer and others, proves crucial both to Durkheim's definition of religious ritual practice as characterized by the split between sacred and profane orders and to his development of the group solidarity thesis as explanatory of his ethnographic data. Contagion will also prove to be the greatest impediment to rationalist explanations of ritual because as a particular modality of phenomena it cannot be brought within the compass of any determinate cognitive models of a causal relationship.

It is precisely because the dimension of experience Durkheim designates through the category of the sacred shows the modality of contagiousness among these groups that ritual practices and ritualized forms of behavior develop in order to manage this dimension by establishing a division between orders of life and action. In principle, negative rites such as taboos that regulate boundary lines dividing the sacred from the profane serve to ensure that

properties associated with the sacred continue to run in channels conducive to the maintenance of the collective. We see the efflorescence of sacred contagion most pronounced in Durkheim's now-famous accounts of the large-scale rites periodically observed by the clan as a whole in which the amplification of sacred qualities is described as causing the identities of the group members to become temporarily dissolved into a state of group-consciousness Durkheim calls "collective effervescence." For the account Durkheim levies against the intellectualist tradition, the phenomenon of contagion provides essential counterevidence that the sacred domain expresses itself through specific modalities that confound attempts to characterize in terms of representation the relationship between, for instance, a totemic object and a natural species that animist or pantheistic accounts would view as the direct object of worship. It is by virtue of contagion that totemic emblems and objects themselves achieve sacred status, rather than merely serving as representational intermediaries.

Accounting for the presence among the groups under analysis of a diffuse and non-localized quality, property, or potency, whose principle appears to influence shared life without being explicable in terms of causality presented the primary theoretical challenge for Durkheim's project. Taking the lead from the prior work of Codrington, Mauss and Hubert, Durkheim selects the Melanesian term "mana" from among a range of other cognate terms (e.g. "wakan" among the Sioux, "orenda" among Iroquois groups, "manitou" among Algonquins, "mauala" among Kwakiutl, etc.) as a kind of nonce-word designating the principle of force that in his view constitutes the primary totemic principle. *Mana*, Durkheim asserts, "has no definite location and is everywhere. All forms of life, and all the active potencies of men, living things, or mere minerals are ascribed to its influence" (197). The modality of contagion thus proves to be, understandably, a stumbling block for Durkheim. In considering this manner of activity, he writes,

> When a force or property seems to us to be an integral part, a constituent element, of whatever it inhabits, we do not easily imagine it as capable of detaching itself and going elsewhere. A body is defined by its mass and atomic composition; we do not imagine either that it can pass on any of these distinguishing properties by mere contact. On the other hand, if the force has entered the body from outside, the idea that it should be able to escape from that body is in no way unimaginable, for nothing attaches it there. Thus, the heat or electricity that any object has received from outside can be transmitted to the surrounding milieu, and the mind readily accepts the possibility of that transmission. If religious forces are generally conceived of as external to the beings in which they reside, then there is no surprise in the extreme ease with which religious forces radiate and diffuse. This is precisely what the theory I have put forward implies. (326-7)

The theory that resolves the question of contagion for Durkheim is of course his formula equating the sacred with society, where the latter term is conceived as a unit qualitatively distinct from the sum of its parts. By giving the social group a primacy and thus an efficacy different in kind from that which is conceivable as being within the range of capacities for individuals, Durkheim is able to maintain the externality of *mana* to which ethnography attests, to account for contagion as being essentially an associative effect of collective (i.e. totemic) representations in their necessary relation with the moral authority of the collective, and most importantly to maintain the compatibility of this explanatory thesis with a broader

immanent, naturalistic worldview. Mary Douglas describes Durkheim's conception in terms of the "fictive, abstract nature of religious entities" which are "merely ideas awakened by the experience of society… so they have no fixed material point of reference… therefore they are ultimately rootless, fluid, liable to become unfocussed and to flow into other experiences" (*Purity and Danger* 26-7). *Mana*, in other words, is not localized because moral authority, like business ethics or a sense of humor, is not localized. The efficacy of *mana* and similar principles can thus be reduced to affective associations derived from concrete situations of group solidarity, in the way that an individual's sense of conscience could be characterized as intervening in her course of action "from outside," even in instances of physical isolation.

There is a bit of circularity in Durkheim's argument that is redolent of Thomas Hobbes' formulation about the social covenant that delivers humanity from the state of nature in the *Leviathan*, and that seems to accompany most if not all attempts to comprehend the 'baptismal moment' of the transition from nature to culture. In Hobbes' work, one wonders how the fearsome authority of the State, which both ensures observance of the social covenant and itself exists by virtue of the social covenant, can ever come into existence in the first place. Similarly, Durkheim's reduction of the sacred to the moral authority of society raises a similar question: if in the final account the moral authority of society produced the rites that manifest that authority, why did those particular rites need to be developed at all when the moral efficacy they merely reflect was already in place in the form of the social group? And if the rites truly have the *functional* role of manifesting that authority, as the theory claims, it becomes difficult to attribute the kind of causal efficacy Durkheim does to the same moral authority that he claims to be the man behind the curtain of experiences of the sacred. The social fact of group consciousness, in a strictly functionalist view, becomes merely a tautological re-description of the aggregate efficacy of the rites.[xi]

Eliot, in his 1918 review of the recent English translation of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* for the *Monist*, would applaud Durkheim's work for hewing more closely to description than that of his predecessors. Eliot remarks that Durkheim, "is most convincing when he sticks closest to the facts… when he is showing us what the phenomena of primitive religion do *not* mean… M. Durkheim's theory is best because it is the nearest thing to being no theory at all" (Menand and Shwartz 312). Indeed, one is struck by the disproportion between the richness of Durkheim's analyses of ethnographic examples and the poverty of his thesis. What Eliot professes to admire both in the *Monist* review, and in his review of *Elementary Forms* published in a 1916 edition of the *Westminster Gazette* under the nom-de-plume η, is precisely Durkheim's focus on the pragmatic dimension of "primitive" religious life. In the *Westminster Gazette* review, Eliot writes, "M. Durkheim does not attribute the origin of religion to wonder and speculation, and sees in mythology only the attempt of the savage to rationalize and justify his own religious practices, in regard to the true origin of which he is as much in the dark as the scientific investigator" (313). While we know Eliot's personal predilections against the naturalistic and humanistic frame implicit in Durkheim's thesis may have predisposed him to favor the descriptive over the explanatory in Durkheim's work, I have tried to suggest reasons why the broader disciplinary, intellectual and political conditions of the moment may have tipped the balance of Durkheim's account in favor of a capping thesis motivated in part by a desire to reconcile the essential strangeness of his ethnographic material with a naturalistic worldview.[xii]

Quoting from Durkheim's concluding comments in his *Westminster Gazette* review, Eliot makes note of Durkheim's language in the latter's reference to the "'hours of creative effervescence, in the course of which new ideas arise and new formulas are found which serve for a while as a guide to humanity,'" and speculates, "there is a hint of Bergsonism in these last words, although Durkheim is not in accord with the detailed views of Bergson" (314-315). Eliot's penultimate statement in the review seems innocuous and off-the-cuff enough, appearing as it does immediately before the review's author rattles off some summary closing remarks on the limitations of brevity in the review format and the sufficiency of the reviewer's work if he is able to generate public interest in such a fascinating and significant recent contribution to the field. Eliot's intuition of certain Bergsonian echoes in *Elementary Forms* is more than fortuitous, though. Whether deliberately or not, it points to the pertinence of the ideas of that philosopher of action and of the immediate data of consciousness to the model of ritual practice developed in the contemporaneous work of the Durkheimian school.

The challenge that contagion presents to theoretical analysis, visible in the circularity undermining Durkheim's functionalist explanation, thus necessitates an approach to ritual efficacy through multiple coordinated methodological frames. Fortunately, a latent complementarity already exists between the sociological theories of Durkheim's school and what we might call the Bergsonian strain of philosophies of embodiment. The latter tradition runs in the 20th century from Bergson through Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze up to contemporary continental theories of affect and models of non-representational, embodied intelligence encountered in the work of Anglo-American thinkers operating close to the field of cognitive science such as Hubert Dreyfus and Alva Nöe, Francesco Varela, and Evan Thompson. A more sustained look into this complementarity will help to elucidate the particular ways that the interaction between the social life of practice and the affective life of the subject mutually implicate one another within ritual modes of action, with the result that the contagious force of *mana* becomes discernible to us as an expression of this non-cognitive intelligence. This non-cognitive character categorically distinguishes ritual action from the instrumental and theoretical rationality subtending scientific practices so often correlated with ritual in efforts to theorize the latter. This distinction in turn will serve to frame the developments in art that would attend the so-called primitivist moment at the turn of the century because it is only in terms of a fully developed model of the body's mediating relationship between action and perception that the historical derivation of the fine arts from ritual practice becomes clear.

*iii. Action and the Body – Bergsonian Motor Schematism as a Corrective to the Social Functionalist Thesis*

The strange correspondence between Durkheim's and Bergson's approaches to these questions has in fact already been noted by Levi-Strauss in *Totemism.* In that work, Levi-Strauss observes a kind of chiastic reversal in the two thinkers' disciplinary styles as they approach the question of totemism. Bergson the philosopher of affect and qualitative experience is led to develop a sociological thesis in his claim in *On the Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932) that totemism functions as an instinctually motivated mechanism for ensuring exogamy through an affirmation of social distinctions. Durkheim the sociologist is led to attribute decisive importance to affective experience in his own account of collective representations and classification systems. Summarizing this symmetry, Levi-Strauss writes,

> Now it is precisely to the degree that Bergson intends the opposite of the sociologist, in the Durkheimian sense of the word, that he is able to make the category of class and the notion of opposition into the immediate data of the understanding, which are utilized by the social order in its formation. And it is when Durkheim claims to derive categories and abstract ideas from the social order that, in trying to explain this order, he finds at his disposal no more than sentiments, affective values, or vague ideas such as contagion or contamination. His thought thus remains torn between two contradictory claims. This explains the paradox, well illustrated by the history of the totemic issue, that Bergson is in a better position than Durkheim to lay the foundations of a genuine sociological logic, and that Durkheim's psychology, as much as Bergson's but in the opposite direction, has to call upon the inarticulate (*Totemism* 97).

As for Levi-Strauss' own thesis about the deep-cognitive structures which subtend the differential homologies of totemic representations, Philippe Descola (2013) has pointed to instances in the ethnographic accounts of linguist Carl Georg Von Brandenstein and Francesca Merlan that pose significant challenges to the Levi-Straussian thesis. In Brandenstein's findings, totemic relationships between human groups and natural species were founded not on clear-cut taxonomic oppositions between natural and cultural series, but between "aggregates of common attributes" imputed at both a physical and a moral level "common to both humans and nonhumans within classes designated by abstract terms" (Descola 158).[xiii] Among the Mangarrayi and Yangman studied by Merlan, on the other hand, the segmentation of semimoieties associated with a particular totemic lineage does not follow any formal hierarchization into a discontinuous taxonomic tree at the level of the nonhuman entities (162). All of which is merely to suggest that the structuralist model of totemism that Levi-Strauss mobilized against both Durkheim's and Bergson's approaches, rationally satisfying in its tidiness though it is, does not hold up against the facts of ethnography for which it is meant to account. Levi-Strauss' critique of both Durkheim and Bergson expresses more fundamental philosophical and ideological divisions with regard to these matters, however, which I will address in greater detail later on in this chapter. These divisions stem from Levi-Stauss' conflation, in the preceding passage, of non-conceptual experience with the 'inarticulate.' It is precisely with respect to this conflation that a closer analysis of the strain of thought inaugurated by Bergson proves indispensible, because Bergson's work makes apparent the highly articulated nature of mentality that operates independently from conceptual determinations.

The points at which the Durkheimian sociological school's treatment of non-European ritual and religions institutions and the Bergsonian strain of affect- and action-oriented philosophy dovetail are in fact more enduring and run deeper than merely their explicit attempts to explain totemism. The main point of correspondence, with respect to the present discussion, between these two disciplines and traditions can be located most vividly in Marcel Mauss' 1934 essay, "Techniques of the Body." In this essay, which would become the basis for the notion of *habitus* developed by Pierre Bourdieu and others, Mauss says that the germ of his notion of body techniques developed initially around 1898, while he was working on his theory of magic and his work on primitive classification with Durkheim. During this time, Mauss tells us, the "historical and ethnographic interest" of the question of body techniques was initially presented to him by "someone whose initials I know, but

whose name I have been too lazy to look up" over the example of education and training in the practice of swimming (456).

Citing formulae for both hunting and running in an indigenous Australian context, Mauss remarks in the essay upon the heuristic value of his notion of "traditional and effective" body techniques in considering the "magical and religious effectiveness of certain actions" (460). Observing that in such instances, "technical action, physical action and magicoreligious action are confused for the actor," Mauss in the end does little to develop the correlations he hints towards as pertaining to ritual contexts (461). Instead, he devotes the essay's latter portion to a somewhat ponderous taxonomy of various body techniques such as walking, sleeping, child-rearing, running, jumping, swimming, dancing and eating. The primary theoretical claims of the essay amount to the relatively spare definition of body techniques as learned modes of behavior synchronizing the physiological, the psychological and the sociological that are transmitted through the imitation of prestigious models. The essay's value in illustrating a set of concerns surreptitiously operative in the Durkheimian school, concerns which appear to have taken the backburner in the push to advance the thesis of group consciousness and collective representations, is nevertheless noteworthy for what it implies about alternative readings of the ethnographic data under analysis.

Bergson's perspective matters here because, more than any other early 20th century philosopher, his work was presciently dedicated to thinking through the centrality of the body in matters of cognition without being beholden (unlike, say, Freud) to a dogmatically naturalistic conception of the body. The irony of this fact is that Bergson's revisionary account of objectivity was motivated by his attempt to contextualize the information he was deriving from scientific contexts (e.g. experimental studies of aphasia, observed behavioral patterns of insects, etc.), rather than through a more idealistic putting-into-question of the status of the scientific perspective. The difficulty of Bergson's descriptive language, for instance his idiosyncratic usage of seemingly familiar terms like "image" or "memory," stems from his attempt to build up an account of the world that both included qualitative experience as a basic feature and refused to bracket scientific explanations in the manner of the phenomenological *epoché*. While social scientists like Durkheim and Frazer were busying themselves with establishing the cultural origins of rationality within a naturalistic worldview, which led to a bias in their work towards cognitively-oriented interpretations of ethnographic findings, Bergson was pointing out the ways in which the physico-pragmatic underpinnings of perceptual experience served to condition the productions of thought, including thought's depictions of nature itself.

As Bergson puts this formula, "habits formed in action find their way up into the sphere of speculation" (10). Bergson's main point of intervention toward this end was, from early on, his account of the transposition of lived temporal experience into extended space in his notion of the *durée*. For present purposes, though, I am less interested in his detailed accounts of memory and duration, or his explicit engagements with the question of totemism in *On the Two Sources of Religion and Morality*, than in his accounts of the role of action in the constitution of articulated experience. As is the case with Durkheim, Bergson's more seemingly peripheral supporting claims, where analysis is not immediately toeing the line for global (and less easily defensible) claims about the non-localized nature of memory or the *élan vital*, can be of more value in providing lines of approach than his central theses. In their reorientation in approach away from Durkheim's reduction of experiences of the sacred to the diffuse moral authority of the social aggregate, claims of the Bergsonian strain serve to provide an important corrective to the Durkheimian school's theories of ritual practice.

Among these claims, the essential starting point for questions pertaining to ritual practices would be the correlation Bergson develops between action and perceptual articulation. This argument appears most prominently in *Matter and Memory* (1896) and *Creative Evolution* (1907) and runs roughly as follows: the experience of objects in the world as discrete and static units is a corollary of the body's motor bearing, because perception is first and foremost a matter of activity rather than of speculation. Almost one hundred years before the "enactivist" school of cognitive science would argue for a model of consciousness as the reciprocal coupling of an organism with its environment, Bergson opened his major work by arguing that the study of sensitive reactions to stimulus in the nervous systems of basic organisms suggests to us that the model of perception as mental representation of external objects obscures the fact that the body's perceptual processes are primarily a matter of direct, dynamic contact and interaction with facets of the environment. These facets, what Bergson calls "images" and what we would idiomatically refer to merely as "things" or "objects," show up as discrete within the perceptual field insofar as they reflect back the relevance they have to the particular motor project with which a being is engaged. Perceptions, in this account, are relations of movement between entities in direct contact rather than recordings or "mental imprints" from sense impressions. Furthermore, the enhancement and vividness of the qualitative properties of perceptual experiences that emerges at the more refined perceptual level of what Bergson calls attentive recognition are also the direct corollaries of modifications in the body's manner of being disposed toward the performance of actions.

Bergson's linkage of perceptual acuity to motor intentionality in *Matter and Memory*, rightly appreciated, obviates or at least significantly reframes the role of the social group that is given such explanatory authority in the social functionalist theory of ritual advanced by the Durkheimian school. Put differently, the influence of action on structures of experience in the theories of Bergson and his heirs restores the efficacy of ritual to the act itself, rather than to a social group operating behind the scenes.[xiv] In Bergson's account of attentive recognition, we gain a new purchase on the autotelic nature of purportedly symbolic ritual actions in the dynamic he lays out between the suspension or deployment of a motor project or "attitude" and fluctuations in the texture of experience. The difference between attention and inattention in this account is first and foremost a matter of practical disposition rather than what we would call self-conscious mental effort. It is, as Bergson puts it, "an adaptation of the body rather than of the mind" and "an attitude of consciousness [that is] mainly the consciousness of an attitude" (100). Bodily attitude in this sense has the function of a kind of reducing valve regulating the influx of recollections that come to suffuse and fill out the dimensions and properties of the perceived object. Bergson argues that in most contexts these recollections are held at bay by the immediate demands of the agent's instrumental plan of action. Here I think it is possible to bracket Bergson's overarching speculative claim about the non-localized nature of memory and focus on the correlation he outlines between motor projects and fluctuations of attention, with their attendant influence on the qualitative dimensions of experience. This correlation locates the very "stuff" of our sense experience within the total context of our lived relation to a dynamic environment, rather than in the empiricist model of the impress of objects on the sense organs taken in isolation from that subject's spontaneous engagement. Drawing from the existential phenomenological tradition of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, Hubert Dreyfus' term for the activity that characterizes this pre-cognitive lived-situation is "coping," which he places in strict distinction from mental representations of the external world.

Without going any further, for the moment, down the road of Bergson's thought, we might ask what the broader conditions are within which such a modification of practical attitude becomes possible. Bergson's own examples of attentive recognition in *Matter and Memory* are a host of instances of psychic blindness and the difference between a native-speaker's comprehension of a spoken language as opposed to someone who is unfamiliar with the language. Outside of these somewhat anomalous cases such as particular pathologies and cross-cultural negotiations, the willed suspension of an instrumental bearing is difficult to imagine. Bergson's description of the process is useful here:

> The phenomena of inhibition are merely a preparation for the actual movements of voluntary attention. Suppose for a moment that attention, as we have already suggested, implies a backward movement of the mind which thus gives up the pursuit of the useful effect of a present perception: there will indeed be, first, an inhibition of movement, an arresting action. But, upon this general attitude, more subtle movements will soon graft themselves… all of which combine to retrace the outlines of the object perceived. With these movements the positive, no longer merely negative, work of attention begins. (101)

The inhibition of movement that Bergson describes here sounds more straightforward as an idea than it actually is in his thought. "Movement" in Bergson's usage does not simply refer to coarse physical motions like waving one's hand or walking but rather to the entire perceptual apparatus of the organism, which is in dynamic and perpetual contact with its environment. Movement refers to the world-interactions of which an organism is composed, which are identical in his account with perception itself. The examples Bergson uses to illustrate this point are the responses of protozoa to environmental factors, where self-defensive or self-enhancing actions are identical with sensitive response to stimuli. The difference between the simple nervous system of such life forms and the more complex nervous systems in, say, mammals, affords a wider spectrum of possibility, which Bergson calls "zones of indetermination," for movements accompanying voluntary attention. Thus we can understand Bergson's distinction here between "general attitude" and "more subtle movements," which refers to the difference between a being's background orientation toward a given situations and the minute attunements and nuances of sensory receptivity to environmental cues that unfold within this broader context. That contextualization aside, we can return to the question of the conditions under which one is able to "give up the pursuit of a useful effect."

There's a joke the comedian Mitch Hedberg tells about a brother and sister who are fighting. The sister (feel free to imagine the gender roles reversed) says, "I don't have to do anything," and the brother says "yes you do," then the sister says "what's that?" and the brother replies "you have to keep taking up space." The logic of a motor project is similar here. Even the apparent inertia of "taking up space" is irreducibly an activity taken up and engaged in rather than a static state, which is something Bergson's own temporal preoccupations help us to discern. The reader could try this on for size by trying to suspend all activity and seeing how it goes. The irreducibility of motor activity in Bergson's account accords with Merleau-Ponty's thesis in *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), which takes methodological cues from Bergson's own coordination of first-personal description with experimental findings drawn from studies of aphasic pathologies, where the Bergsonian motor project is synthesized with Husserl's model of intentionality in the notion of "motor

intentionality." Merleau-Ponty in that work attributes to motor intentionality effectively the same constitutive function in conscious experience that Kant locates in the transcendental faculty of original apperception. One would indeed be hard pressed, in light of these models, to find an adequate response to the imperative to "stop doing something."

Anthropologists modeling ritual efficacy rushed past the internal dynamics of the ritual modification of motor orientation and performance in an effort to situate these actions within a social order to which they are said to lend cohesion through their signifying function. In part this is a by-product of the third-personal frame of ethnography and its defining character of description from outside, though the cultural imperatives of the discipline that I have attempted to outline made this oversight all but inevitable. The "magical thinking" supposedly disclosed in ritual actions became the foil to enlightened thought, on the one hand, while on the other hand more culturally-sensitive apologists of "primitive" culture endeavored (if backhandedly) to redeem ritual activities as bearers of a kind of "slant rationality" in their socially-defined efficacy. This bias in favor of the cognitive is itself symptomatic, for reasons I will address shortly, of these thinkers' own historically contingent conditions of experience. Read in light of Bergsonian notions such as the distinction between automatic and attentive recognition, as well as his comparative accounts of intelligence and intuition and his model of the cinematographic mode of thought in *Creative Evolution* a different picture of ritual action emerges.[xv] In this treatment, ritual at its most basic level is a means of short-circuiting the reducing function of the body's character as a lens focusing the world into manageable dimensions. The collapse of means and ends in the autotelic, or what Geza Roheim once called "autoplastic" as opposed to "alloplastic," character of ritual action works to beat action at its own game, so to speak, by turning the act against itself.

Perhaps the best characterization of the particularity of ritualized action in this respect would be 'meta-instrumental'; its efficacy is to operate on the efficacy of action itself in the latter's schematization of the world. This inverts certain defining relationships typically invoked to support cognitively-oriented accounts of ritual, particularly affective relationships. In a cognitive account, the relationship between belief and affect is one of pathos. A certain traditional belief is imputed to the agent of the ritual act that is then said causally to produce an affective state such as awe or reverence or even terror as a passive response. Thus the door is opened to all kinds of claims about false consciousness. In this account, the relationship between affect and belief is one of ethos in the Spinozan sense: affects, conceived as the interactivity of the body (which includes the dynamic relationships between the senses and their objects) with its environment, provide the vehicle with which an intelligent alignment with the appropriate qualitative dimensions of experience is negotiated. "Belief," if the term is still necessary at all, thus comes to have a practical rather than theoretical significance for the ritual agent, being thus a term designating the concepts and attitudes that provide provisional instruction in the appropriate course of action to initiates.

Douglas argues for something very similar to this view in her account of ritual in *Purity and Danger* (1966), where she treats ritual observances as intervening in the practical schematization of experience. In her discussion of the relationship between categorization and notions of purity and defilement, she observes,

> It is generally agreed that all our impressions are schematically determined from the start. As perceivers, we select from all the stimuli falling on our senses only those which interest us, and our interests are governed by a

> pattern-making tendency, sometimes called a *schema*. In a chaos of shifting impressions, each of us constructs a stable world in which objects have recognizable shapes, are located in depth, and have permanence. In perceiving we are building, taking some cues and rejecting others. The most acceptable cues are those which fit most easily into the pattern that is being built up. Ambiguous ones tend to be treated as if they harmonized with the rest of the pattern. Discordant ones tend to be rejected. If they are accepted, the structure of assumptions has to be modified. As learning proceeds, objects are named. Their names then affect the way they are perceived next time: once labeled they are more speedily slotted into the pigeon-holes in the future. (45)

While Douglas acknowledges ritual's function as having to do essentially with the concomitance of actions and perceptions, with how ways of doing things work to orient the world at its most basic level, her Durkheimian sociological thesis that this function ultimately serves to regulate shared categories of order and disorder ("ambiguity" in her account) shifts her attention away from the nuances of the action-perception relationship. Her account in the previous quote thus shows an ambiguity between passivity and activity, between the reception and the construction of percepts, in the process of schematization that stems from the implicitly empiricist language she uses in phrases like "shifting impressions," and in the split this language implies between sensation and reflection. How, if "all our impressions are schematically determined *from the start*" (my emphasis), can we conceive of the process whereby "we select from all the stimuli falling on our senses only those which interest us"? The empiricist language here reduces the concept of the schema, to which Kant's model originally attributed a genuinely constructive capacity by virtue of its transcendental basis in the *a priori* categories, to mere selective reflection. And this notion of selective labeling risks falling into behaviorism once we follow the notion of "impressions" to its logical end. Douglas has to conceive of the body as a mirror of the world because her focus on the *merely* sociological efficacy of ritual regards the practice in advance as a signifying form superimposed on inert material being. Accordingly, even as she defends the dignity of non-European practices against charges of primitive superstition, she still needs to conjure away informants' claims of the real-world effects of ritual actions by reducing these avowals to figures of speech.

We might profitably contrast Douglas' "mirror" model of the ritual body, with the "lens" model developed in Merleau-Ponty's later work in order to understand the distinction being made. Ritual in this view does not "impose order on" inchoate experience, it transforms experience. The verb "develop" here is itself instructive in its scopic and photographic senses, as Merleau-Ponty compares the constitution of three-dimensional depth-perception through the passage from individual monocular "drafts" of a percept to the actualized state of their full phenomenal being in binocular vision to the "development" of the world itself (his word is "*révélateur*," which refers to photographic developer fluid) (*The Visible and the Invisible* 7-10, 27). This ontological passage is effected through changes in the body schema. The thick descriptions that Merleau-Ponty develops out of his inherited Bergsonian insight into the intimacy of the action-perception relationship thus provide an important corrective to anthropological accounts of ritual focusing on socially symbolic efficacy and belief. And we can understand why careful attention to what emerges in these perceptual interactions would lead Merleau-Ponty, as much as it did Bergson, to develop alternative ontological models to frame his observations, even if such speculative ambitions

are not particularly necessary or even fruitful in the present context. What matters to an understanding of the kinds of ritual contexts being investigated in the early 20th century by anthropologists and artists alike is the twofold view that, at their most basic experiential level, perceptual qualities effectively *are* a being's embeddedness in a context of interactivity with the world. Correspondingly, we are mislead by the persistent division between "blind" sense impression and "intelligent" reflection presupposed by many treatments of ritual that view it in terms of the enactment of culturally sanctioned beliefs

Merleau-Ponty's work has been a touchstone for many participants in these debates, most prominently Dreyfus, because of the implications for intelligent action that he derives from the correlations his theory proposes between motor intentionality and the dimensions of first-personal experience. Indeed, the very anteriority that Merleau-Ponty's analysis claims for the body schema as a principle preceding any possible analysis on the basis of standards of objectivity in fact necessitates an active engagement with the non-representational intelligence that is only apprehensible *in situ*. As Merleau-Ponty puts it, "if, then… the body is not a transparent object, and is not presented to us in virtue of the law of its constitution, as the circle is to the geometer, if it is an expressive unity which we can learn to know only by actively taking it up, this structure will be passed on to the sensible world" (*The Phenomenology of Perception* 239). That the structure of the body schema is passed on to the sensible world, a relation Merleau-Ponty illustrates most straightforwardly in the example of the figure/ground character of visual perception, means that we can conceive of an action intelligently performed, not through cognitive deliberation according to pre-existent and self-consciously held beliefs, norms or concepts, but through attention to its ways of bringing into focus qualities of experience to which (or perhaps "with which") the agent is drawn. It is to a definition and model of what such non-conceptual intelligence would look like that we must now turn in order to understand the emergence of the arts from their ritual prehistories.

*iv. Non-Instrumentality and Reflective Judgment*

Dreyfus' own real-world examples of this kind of non-deliberative intelligence tend to be drawn from life situations of the instrumental sort, such as expert performance in sporting events, which fundamentally differ from the autotelic ritual actions I have described as being defined according to their rerouting of instrumental aims.[xvi] The experiential character of the situations that his accounts address are therefore shaped by their reference to the preexisting aims of the performer and will not suffice to illustrate the kinds of qualitative dimensions we might expect to guide ritual action. There is, however, a philosophical account offered up in a different context that will suit the present context very well indeed. It is in Kant's account of reflective judgments of taste (1790) that we find a minutely articulated description of a non-cognitive (or at least, for Kant, not determinately cognitive) experiential structure defined by its stark distinction from instrumental contexts, but which nevertheless enables conscious discernment capable of guiding actions.

The selection here is anything but arbitrary, for reasons I hope will become clear. My wager is that the dynamic equilibrium between intuitions (in the Kantian sense) and the understanding in Kant's account of reflective judgments, the suspension or relaxation of the understanding's subsumption of the array of intuited sensory particulars under a determinate concept, can be framed according to the relationships developed in the Bergsonian and phenomenological models of motor activity. All this requires is the understanding, which becomes the explicit preoccupation of a wide range of post-Kantian philosophers, that

cognition takes place within a particular context of action that provides a broader, encompassing set of conditions influencing conceptual processes. Kant's own critical methodology, which presents conditions of experience in atemporal and ahistorical cross-section, would seem to resist any such contextualization within practice, though his sometimes-hilarious examples (e.g. admiring a castle, a beautiful landscape, a socially adroit act) all suggest an animating context for instances of reflective judgment (something critics have been quick to point out). At the same time, the role of reflective judgments both within Kant's critique of knowledge and within the history of the arts as an institution make the connection essential to understanding how intelligent discernment is capable of functioning in independence from conceptual thought, solely through how the embodied mind is disposed as it negotiates practical contexts. Appreciating this mode of intelligence can then help us understand what the pairing of objects in the "primitivist" phenomenon reveals about the character of artistic production in its making vivid of the historical contingency of art as a sequestered domain of culture.

The essential aspect of Kant's characterization of reflective judgments in the third *Critique* for what follows is what he refers to as their innate discernment, in the purposiveness of intuited phenomena, of a "lawfulness of the contingent as such" (First Introduction XX 217.28). What we see in the notion of purposiveness without purpose, which as Kant tells us is also describable in terms of the singularity and incomparability of the manner of presentation of a sensory intuition, is the principle of a binding coherence discernible within a display of particulars, the "subjective universality" of which can be postulated solely according to the subject's consequent affective experience of "delight" (which, it should be noted, has different connotation than the notion of "pleasure"). A judgment of taste discerns appropriateness in the way sensory intuitions are arranged in the absence of any concept for what might constitute the ordering principle behind the way details are arranged. And crucially, for Kant, the absence of a concept is identical with the absence of any immediate moral and rational principle or appetitive interest in what one is experiencing.

That Kant's account insistently locates this experience in the faculties, independently of any reference to the existence of the object, is no deterrent to the present discussion if we consider the degree to which Kant is compelled to make this claim primarily due to his effort to single out reflective judgments as distinct from determinate judgments. Determinate conceptual judgments of course *are* defined by their dependence on the existence of the object, this being what's at stake in Kant's epistemological agon with Hume. And if we consider the ways in which questions of the existence of the object in Bergson's and Merleau-Ponty's accounts are intimately tied up with the subject's practical bearing, we can see in Kant's notion of the purposiveness of an intuition corresponding to the free play of the subject's faculties (which after all are Kant's main preoccupation in the *Critique*) not the functioning of *a priori* and transcendental faculties that are historically absolute but as indexing a practical disposition. The famous disinterest of reflective judgments does not take place in a vacuum, but in a practical context that solicits that particular manner of responsiveness.

The point here is definitely *not* that ritual actions are guided by the experience of beauty in any culturally determined sense. The point is that Kant's definition of reflective judgment, which would come largely to define ideas of formal beauty that became the basis within the Western philosophical tradition for the institutionalization of art-as-such, articulates a way of experiencing in which the qualitative dimensions of the experience alone suffice to provide the basis for intelligent practical orientation, without the intervention of

mental representations, in a non-instrumental context. By "practical orientation" here I mean conduct arising from the discernment of particular qualitative dimensions of experience, a discernment that arises by virtue of a kind of harmonic interval between thought and sensation (understanding and imagination in Kant's terminology). Skillfully executed composition that fulfills the tendency building within a work-in-progress toward a given effect would be one example of conduct here; assent to (or for that matter dissent from) a judgment of taste would be another.

Part of what has become so misleading about the third *Critique* is that Kant starts from the position of analyzing the basic coordinates of reflective judgment while at the same time approaching these judgments under the aegis of the overdetermined term "beauty," which itself presupposes a set of cultural contexts (e.g. leisure, spectatorship) within which such experiences become recognizable. The confusion arises when subsequent discussions then import these cultural associations with contingent standards of "beauty" in the colloquial sense into the discussion. If we take the concept of reflective judgment outside of the frame of one particular regime of production and consumption, not with the aim of demystifying it in the manner of Bourdieu but, on the contrary, with the aim of treating it as a genuine discovery within the Kantian system of a manifestation of the intelligence that is distinct from conceptually mediated intelligence, the defining predicate of disinterest actually lends itself to a reading of the concept in coordination with the theories of embodied action I have outlined.

In back of how the faculties are disposed in Kant's account, then, we would read situations, ways of relating with the demands of a given milieu. A determinate judgment in which an individual subsumes a set of sensory particulars under universal concepts always unfolds in relation to some exigency: I desperately need coffee (which is both agreeable and good); I locate the beans within the array of objects on the shelf. Conversely, let's imagine that I am orienting myself toward some action that is an end in itself, which I am not performing with the ultimate aim of caffeinating myself or for any other reason. As my intentional bearing toward the present context loses a determinate aim beyond the immediate experience, the ways in which my perceptions have displayed themselves in accordance with my prior aims begin to subside. In Kantian terms we would say that the ratio between my intuitions and my understanding shifts. The assemblage of color tones and rectilinear shapes that my will to sit-and-type previously oriented under the unifying rubric of "table," for example, no longer assumes this identity in accordance with my need. Instead, other relationships begin to insinuate themselves among the facets of what I'm looking at, or touching, or hearing, or smelling. These relationships or coherences do not refer to any usage I might have planned and, for that reason, do not offer themselves up to any available conceptual label I might attribute to them. And precisely because the way these dimensions of experience unfold and relate to one another cannot be contained within or stabilized by an attributable label, I experience in them a kind of innate dynamism or capacity.

Such a situation assumes a delicate equipoise in my orientation between relating with the close familiarity that instrumental action always involves and relating with complete distraction or bewilderment. In Kantian terms, I must attend to the experience in such a way that I discern lawfulness in the arrangement of features, but without allowing this intimated sense of purposive form to pass into "the pathological ground of agreeableness nor…the intellectual ground of the represented good" (53). Such a situational context can be difficult to imagine from outside. It becomes easier to imagine how one can *sustain* such an orientation and the modes of experience that arise from it if we imagine it as being aided by an external reference point. In the case of institutionalized art we can see both a layering

and an interplay between conditions of reception (not just form or history, but history plus mores of spectatorship plus compositional structure of the work plus attitude of the viewer, etc.) as what sustains the equilibrium in which qualities of experience open beyond the terms we habitually impose on them.

*v. Total Services, the Division of Labor, and Art-as-Such*

Here, after this rather lengthy but necessary detour, I need to return to the ideas of the Durkheimian school and, in particular, the notion of what Mauss in his *Essay on the Gift* called "total services" (3). Levi-Strauss viewed this idea as Mauss' major contribution to the field of knowledge, and based upon it his wager for Mauss' status as structuralist *avant la lettre*. The concept of structure that Levi-Strauss derives from Mauss' concept of total services, however, makes assumptions about the practical substrate of forms of human intelligence that have dramatic consequences for how we come to understand the efficacy of ritual practices and their relationship to the category of art. The example that Mauss provides of total services is the practice of gift exchange in Melanesian societies, which bears a family resemblance to the festivals known as "potlatch" observed by indigenous groups in the pacific-northwest of North America and elsewhere. Mauss observed that gift exchange in these societies was a form of social organization integrating institutions and practices made disparate by the division of labor in industrialized societies. Mauss writes that, "in these 'total' social phenomena, as we propose calling them, all kinds of institutions are given expression at one and the same time – religious, juridical, and moral, which relate to both politics and the family; likewise economic ones, which suppose special forms of production and consumption, or rather, of performing total services and of distribution" (3). The concept of total services is essential here to understanding the nature of those masks and "sculptures" in the Rubin exhibition, because it is within such an integrated context that these objects were fabricated and in which they circulated.

What total services help us to understand is that, despite (or along with) Durkheim's assertion of a strict division between profane and sacred registers of life, ritualized conduct pervades mores and attitudes across institutional divisions that we would tend to regard as distinct in industrialized societies. Mauss remarks that in total services, "everything – clans, marriages, initiations, Shamanist séances and meetings for the worship of the great gods, the totems or the collective or individual ancestors of the clan – is woven into an inextricable network of rites" (6). Take the example Mauss provides of the forms of social integration associated with matrilineally inherited goods known as *tonga* within Maori societies in New Zealand and elsewhere in the Pacific. Mauss describes this form of organization as follows:

> In Maori, Tahitian, Tongan and Mangarevan (Gambier), [*tonga*] connotes everything that may properly be termed possessions, everything that makes one rich, powerful, and influential, and everything that can be exchanged, and used as an object for compensating others. These are exclusively the precious articles, talismans, emblems, mats and sacred idols, sometimes even the traditions, cults and magic rituals. Here we link up with that notion of property-as-talisman, which we are sure is general throughout the Malaysian and Polynesian world, and even throughout the Pacific as a whole. (10)

What governs both legal and economic codes of exchange surrounding the *taonga* is its "*hau*," which for Mauss is equivalent to the notion of *mana*. The *hau* refers to the "spirit of the

thing," which constitutes both the object's own unique individuality and its inalienable tie to its original possessor (11). The exchange of *taonga* between individuals generates bonds of solidarity that govern cooperative practice in accordance with a calculus of the way *hau* is apportioned and distributed among those with whom the object comes into contact. Moral, legal and economic obligations determining the course of the exchange and use of resources thus arise in observance of the principle of *hau.* As Mauss elaborates, the object's *hau* attaches not only to the object, its original possessor and its recipient, but also to the milieu as a whole, the "forest, its native heath and soil"(12). In the quoted testimony Mauss offers from informants, it is this encompassing sense of a kind of appeal latent in the milieu itself that constitutes the basis for the observance of obligatory exchange relations.[xvii]

I offer these examples to illustrate two points that the concept of total services make apparent, and which pertain to the question of the relationship between the two kinds of artifacts featured in the Rubin exhibition. The first follows from the at-this-point obvious fact that the category of art is a misnomer for objects produced and "consumed" in the context of total services, where the institutional partitions that generate the domain of the fine arts don't hold up. It involves the question of how we ought to think about the production of talismanic objects, totems and fetishes such as those featured in the Rubin exhibition. I am speaking here about what Picasso is referring to in his quote when he speaks of "the fellows [who] invented the models," suspending for the moment questions of how traditional models influence subsequent ways of making. It would be overly hasty, however, to disregard entirely those qualities in the ritual objects that compelled Rubin to speak of "art-ness" in his defense of the exhibition.

From what has preceded, we can conceive of two patterns of organization observed in the societies Mauss and Durkheim describe. On the one hand, there is what we might call a "vertical" differentiation between sacred and profane orders of being. On the other hand, there is a "horizontal" integration of institutions. To begin with, then, Durkheim's account suggests that objects of ritual use are produced with a view to their relationship with the domain of the sacred. The sacred, lest we forget, refers in this account primarily to a way of experiencing that arises from the observance of a pragmatic distinction that brings about a shift in one's embodied disposition. In brief, it entails an appeal to the cultivation of an attitude of particular care and solicitude in the treatment of the action, situation, person or object, to which corresponds a particular inflection of perceptual experience that orients the conduct of individuals. The notion of contagion described earlier as a hallmark of the sacred presupposes that the way an object is produced for ritual usage, which obviously determines the way it ends up appearing in its completed form, will necessarily be in accord with its fitness for usage in these contexts because things associated with the sacred participate in the quality of sacredness and therefore demand appropriate modes of conduct.

In other words, the form of composition of ritual objects is anything but arbitrary: it is highly appropriate to the occasion. There is certainly a sense of what we might be tempted to call "artistry" governing the production such objects, which includes a care to the arrangement and composition of their component features that we typically associate with artistic production. But the conception of care here is markedly different from the kind of care we would expect to accompany the composition of an artwork, with its view to "effects" in a specific context of reception. Benjamin trod on similar ground in his distinction between the "cultic" value and "exhibition" value of the artwork. The difference made visible by Mauss' account of total services is that the production and usage of ritual objects does not entail the same strict distinction between the instrumental and the non-instrumental in terms of the *external consequences* of usage that formal or aesthetic effects

presuppose, even if it *does* entail the same autotelic character at the level of intention and bearing in the maker or user. A *taonga*, in other words, is by definition *not* a mere instrument or object of use. For a product of the fine arts to function, on the other hand, at least within the context of "art-as-such," its effects have to be circumscribed from the practical sphere. A fetish or talisman, on the contrary, is expected precisely to influence filial relations, marriages, economic exchanges, moral obligations, legal rights, etc. by virtue of its special qualities.

This is not to say that we should imagine there being no differentiation between practical and ritual actions in the context of total services, only that there is a spectrum between ritualized and non-ritualized actions rather than the binary opposition that frequently defines art in contradistinction to non-art. At one end of the spectrum we can imagine instances of "ritual-proper" such as sacrifices or festive gatherings like potlatch ceremonies and at the other end is the minutiae of every day practicalities of household and communal life. But a ritual character or subtext pervades even these latter activities, albeit in varying degrees of intensity, as in Mauss' example of the conflation of "technical, physical and magicoreligious" functions in the body techniques associated with hunting. And yet, what does it mean to say, as I am saying here, that Kant's notion of reflective judgment can be identified *in both accounts* with the particular modality of experience in question, and that the concept allows us to understand how an intelligent course of action is discernible for the individual producing the ritual object or using such an object in the accomplishment of a ritual act?

It means, to begin with, that we should regard the *hau* or *mana* described by informants as referring to a way of experiencing persons, objects, actions and situations that can become intelligible to us in terms of the discernment of relations of internal coherence, singularity or uniqueness, and purposiveness or capacity that Kant outlines as defining reflective judgments of taste. In other words, reflective judgment has a prehistory locatable in these ritual contexts that can help remove impediments to understanding the implications of the concept of aesthetic judgments, impediments that have been produced by the division of labor that Kant presupposed in placing these judgments under the rubric of beauty and taste in their attachment to the fine arts. The historical derivation of art from ritual and magic is a well-known thesis, but it is unclear whether we have followed up its implications completely. But the question now remains of how it is possible to conceive of supposedly "disinterested" modes of judgment being engaged in the context of ends-oriented activities like hunting or gift exchange. And why do informants repeatedly affirm that *mana* is "out there" in the world, while Kant repeatedly asserts that aesthetic judgments are "in here" in the free play of the faculties?

At this point it becomes useful to approach this question historically. The ghost of Eliot stalks these pages again in the basic drift, if not necessarily the details, of his thesis about the dissociation of sensibility. A family resemblance to Eliot's idea can be found in the thesis advanced by Charles Taylor in *A Secular Age* (2007), which is indebted to the work of Max Weber, that the duration of western societies in historical time has brought about a shift from what he calls "porous" to "buffered" subjectivities. By "porous" subjectivity, Taylor means that, in their basic default experience of the world, individuals living in medieval Europe, for instance, experienced mental and physical events as permeable. Black bile does not *cause* melancholy, it *is* melancholy. The relics that the Canterbury pilgrims encountered actually had the power to heal them "whan that they were seeke." Moral values like good and evil were experienced as actually circulating in the world itself.

Yet again, the difference between the two subjectivities for Taylor is a matter of a relationship to the body. Taylor argues that a buffered subjectivity in western societies initially developed as a consequence of the disciplinary measures, originating in part in the neo-Stoicist philosophy of Justus Lipsius, that were instituted and disseminated by elites during the Reformation in an effort to narrow the gap in the standards of religious practice and piety between the clergy and the laity. An emergent ethos associated with ideals of civility, discipline and self-fashioning led subjects to develop a disengaged, instrumentalized stance toward both the external world and their own affective experience in which a clear boundary was increasingly drawn between the mind and an impersonal external world. This model of subjectivity or background understanding of being-in-the-world facilitated the transition over the course of several epochs from a hierarchical society, understood to be grounded in a transcendent cosmic and temporal order, to a wholly immanent, disenchanted, "horizontal, direct-access" understanding of society (209). This social imaginary was based on instrumental rationality and on a contractual model of economic relations, guided by the pursuit of self-interest but purportedly tempered by the "blind hand" of market forces that would prove conducive to mutual benefit of the whole.

The emergence Taylor describes of a "disciplined, disengaged" agent (one thinks here of the Weberian 'Protestant ethic') can be regarded in terms of the principle of *habitus* that thinkers like Bourdieu derived from Mauss' essay on body techniques. As Taylor puts it, "not only is there a firm inner/outer boundary in a world which has been disenchanted, but further barriers are raised against strong physical desires and the fascination with the body. The barriers are raised by and in the name of the central identity as agent of disengaged discipline, keeping distance from this zone of abandon" (142). That there is a historical dimension to an individual or group's embodied disposition should be no more surprising than that there are different ways of acting, customs, ecosystems or social arrangements in different times and locations. It might not be flattering to think that the average denizen of a modern city has a somewhat dramatically reduced relationship to her senses, but it does help to elucidate the relative compatibility between actions with an autotelic character and practical social life in the context of the total services Mauss describes in *The Gift*. To individuals for whom the background historical condition of experience is more porous than buffered, where the formation of social processes does not administer to a cultivated disengagement from embodied experience (to say nothing of the other environmental factors of the sort Benjamin explored in his essay on Baudelaire and urban life), the equilibrium between sense experience and concepts that I have read in relation to both Bergson's concept of motor projects and Kant's concept of reflective judgment would be much more of a pervasive constant of everyday life. It wouldn't depend upon a leisured sphere of culture in which practical activities were suspended in order to become visible in the same way that it would for social groups hard-wired to master their experience conceptually.

The reason I insist here on reflective judgments as the best model for thinking in these terms about *mana*, rather than staying with the Bergsonian model of attentive recognition, is that Kant's concept brings out two essential aspects through which we can read the idea of *mana* that Bergson's and Merleau-Ponty's models do not make possible in the same way. The first is the framing of aesthetic judgments as experiences of force implicit in the principle of purposiveness. Purposiveness in Kant's definition involves the necessary causal efficacy through which concepts and objects relate to each other. Kant's starting models for purposiveness are tools, where the sensuous properties of the object are formed in accordance with their eventual performance of an action, the end that defines the concept

of the object. Kant then, for descriptive purposes, reads this quality back into objects of perception that do not have a recognizable function to which their properties refer. Purposiveness is thus a way of talking about the properties of objects of experience in terms of actual or intimated ends, and in this respect it treats of these properties in dynamic or 'event-like' terms because the formal presentation of an object of perception is viewed with reference to an action. In other words, speaking *as if in reference to the accomplishment of an action* allows one to approximate the qualitative dimensions in question.

What force-*qua*-purposiveness in the presentation of a sensory intuition brings out is that informants' descriptions of *mana* need not be interpreted in terms of some vague idea of an energy *supplementary to* things but can be read as referring to a *dimension immanent to* experiences. Ernst Cassirer in his account of the expressive mode of perception, which was influenced by the anthropological work of the Durkheimian school, comes very close to this characterization. *Mana* need not be substantialized if it is simply the dimension in which things come together. This dimension immanent to experience is what stands in for concepts and guides actions in instances of reflective judgment. At the same time, purposiveness brings out the character of this dimension as a capacity of things, people, and situations. This aspect of purposiveness corresponds with Mauss' description of *mana* in terms of "*automatic* efficacy" (*A General Theory of Magic* 144). Substantialization is the risk taken by all vitalisms and ontological revisionists, but the temptation is understandable given the difficulty, perhaps impossibility in discursive contexts, of thinking *mana* without relying on imputations of substance. Such is the trap of reference. The second aspect of *mana* and its contexts that reflective judgment makes intelligible is the principle of discerned relationships irreducible to extant models of causal necessity. "Without purpose" means that reflective judgments by definition do not grasp any conceptually-intelligible relationship within an arrangement of particulars, even if they do by definition discern relationships that are *not* conceptually-intelligible. Behind these two aspects lie all the stakes of my attempt at integrating discourses in what has preceded. In order to unpack the full implications of this second aspect, however, I need to return to the second of my two points about Mauss' model of total services.

*vi. Participation, Collective Representations, Norms and Media*

If the artworks and non-European objects in the Rubin exhibition share in their reference to the mode of experience designated in Kant's model of aesthetic judgments without at the same time sharing in the socially conferred status of artworks, we can approach this common denominator by way of the more encompassing category of "media," which applies equally to both forms of objects. To understand this second point, we need to recall Durkheim's main philosophical claim about the Kantian categories in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. As previously stated, Durkheim in that work synthesizes the epistemic and the ethical approaches to ritual practice associated with the intellectualist and social functionalist schools in his model of the categories. These categories, which form the basic conditions for rational thought such as notions of space, time, sequence, causation, etc. derive from what Durkheim calls collective representations. Collective representations,

> are the product of an immense cooperation that extends not only through space but also through time; to make them, a multitude of different minds have associated, inter-mixed, and combined their ideas and feelings; long generations have accumulated their experience and knowledge. A very

> special intellectuality that is infinitely richer and more complex than that of the individual is distilled in them. That being the case, we understand how reason has gained the power to go beyond the range of empirical cognition. (15)

Among these collective representations, Durkheim gives *mana* pride of place as the primary totemic principle. *Mana* in Durkheim's account becomes the proto-concept *par excellence*. The basic idea is that the signs mediating our experience of the world and that allow us to use concepts and language, what Cassirer would come to call "symbolic forms," have been historically derived from religious symbols which gain their transindividual signifying status from ritually-based collective experiences of the sacred. The philosophical problem behind Durkheim's thesis is the epistemological question of how knowledge can become objective if it is produced from the finite vantage point of individual subjects' irreducibly partial experience. Hume's skeptical answer was that that "knowledge" is just a habitual way of speaking. Kant thought to have resolved the question through his deduction of the *a priori* nature of the faculties. In the place of the noumenal in Kant's system, Durkheim located society. The categories were not the product of individuals, but of the group consciousness, a mentality exceeding the capacities of the finite consciousness. Behind the epistemological question of objectivity, then, is the question of normativity. What makes a statement about the world normatively binding? Whence do we derive the rules governing signifying operations? For Durkheim, the answer would be a reified notion of Society with a capital S, which could explain the origin of norms by virtue of its essential status as *ding-an-sich*.

I have already attempted to suggest that Durkheim's thesis about society and group consciousness creates problems of circularity in trying to understand the relationship between the group and the rites. Society as reality *sui generis* can only explain the existence of the rites at the cost of removing any need for their existence. And it is the existence of the rites and the products of ritualized practices themselves that provides the empirical basis for Durkheim's notion of collective representations. As with the "God equals Society" thesis, the error is primarily a matter of misplaced focus. Regarding those collective representations, the mimetic connotations of the notion of "representation" prove misleading and, I would say, anachronistic. Here we could stop and ask ourselves, "under what conditions can one thing represent another thing?" Good readers of Saussure or Zukofsky might break the relationship down into basic constituents: a graphic mark of two oblique vertical lines bisected by a horizontal slash ("A") bearing a relationship to a phoneme ("ah" or "ay") to which tradition has attached rules of usage that allow one to enunciate felicitiously or infelicitiously in a given context. Before any of these functions are possible, though, that mark or sound must be capable of assuming the status of media. By "media" here, I mean that an object of perception, for instance the appearance of the visual image of the letter or the "acoustic image" of the sound, must be capable of being taken as mediating in its own mode of appearance a relation to something else. The root condition of normative usage is thus the fixation, for more than one person, of the status of media that has been conferred on an object of perception. This fixation sets the precedent for my treating the letter "A" as not being merely those three lines but as being something else, namely the unity of the manifold that will allow me to recognize the letter "A." The appearance of those three lines, in other words, must admit of a purposiveness that allows for the gestalt of the letter to emerge above the sum of the lines.

The reader might argue here that representation *does* begin mimetically in terms of perceptual resemblances, but the principle of schematization previously discussed in the

work of Douglas and Merleau-Ponty alike suggests that these resemblances are learned rather than innate, and that such a capacity for recognition is coemergent with representational practices. Merleau-Ponty's extensive case studies of patients suffering from aphasia in *The Phenomenology of Perception* suggest that percipients only register properties that they have been trained to see. Let us therefore imagine the status of a totemic object of the kind Durkheim describes as providing the basis for normatively grounded signifying acts within a given collective, including in an understanding of this status the qualification that such an object first must function as a medium. What was at first a stone or piece of wood comes over time to "stand for" something important to members of the group first because the properties of the object come to be regarded as capable of acting as conveyances. If we are not going to say, with Durkheim, that this special status conferred on the object can be traced back to the memory of the awe-inspiring power experienced in moments of close-proximity with the group, or at least to attribute this sense of efficacy to the mere physical presence of the group, it becomes necessary to consider other conditions at work.

At this point it should be possible to conceive of the object's emergence to *mana*-imbued, socially-significant status without reducing this status to the group's influence over its members. A fetish or totem becomes a sign for the group first because it makes *mana* visible, and in this sense it "has" or "confers" *mana*. Through this, it comes to "stand for" *mana*. The visibility of *mana* is a way of speaking about the unique qualities of experience—of singularity, integrity and capacity—that become manifest through the dilation of the sense fields arising from a shift in bearing in a ritualized context of action. This relationship between practical orientation and visibility of *mana* is what Mauss seems to capture when he describes the way "force and milieu are inseparable, coinciding in an absolute sense" and describes "ritual forms" as "those dispositions aimed at creating magical forces, [which] are also the same as those which create the milieu and circumscribe it" (*A General Theory of Magic* 132). If we leave out Mauss' substantialization of *mana* in the phrasing implied by the notion that ritual "creates" magical forces but instead see those forces as phenomenological dimensions of perceived qualities, the principle is the same.

It is these qualities or dimensions that confer the status of media on an object because the appearance of the object comes to manifest more than its mere ontic being. Through this manifestation experienced in the encounter with the object, the object is conferred a special status, an import and range of privileged associations. Insofar as such a context is often shared by members of the group in communal practice, is indeed communicable directly between members for reasons to be explained, this experience will become associated with the same reference points in the form of identical or similar objects, situations and persons, in other words with objects embedded in or redolent of the same pragmatic context. And because, as Mauss' depiction of total services in *The Gift* makes clear, social life forms a spectrum in the form of overlapping institutions whereby a sacralized dimension seeps into the commerce of everyday life, the reference points provided by these objects and contexts will have the function of guiding social interactions and practical endeavors. Over time, these relations will congeal into traditional mores by virtue of repeated usage. Accordingly, at a certain point the reference provided by objects, images and marks will no longer depend upon the same experiential context in order to function. These forms of media can now, as it were, "walk on their own two legs." In short, norms enabling signifying systems to function are the product of two primary causes and conditions: shared experiences of the sacred, and history. No less of a staunch rationalist than Jurgen Habermas reached the same conclusion in his theory of the origins of communicative action.[xviii]

This implies, among other things, that the ability to experience and, more importantly, to *discern* in terms of the mode that Kant reserves for aesthetic judgments is prior to, and indeed constitutive of, the ability to manipulate normatively grounded concepts. It is therefore more accurate to speak of "collective media" before speaking of "collective representations." In their capacity as media, totemic objects "present" the dimension of the sacred before they can "represent" it, a point that Durkheim's focus on the emblematic nature of the totem against Tylor's mimetic conception works to support. Logical operations governed by normative conditions of language usage serve to hash out terms of validity in signification according to norms that they take as ready-made, while those norms themselves have been generated in historical contexts whose basic coordinates I have attempted to describe here. Logic, or rationality, is the paring down of functions possessed by signifying media, the production of semantic clarity, through the friction (the "ratio") produced when preexisting norms of language usage are redoubled upon themselves. Socratic culture begins when Socrates asks his interlocutors to test their statements against themselves, sifting them with the mesh of normative language rules to prove their fitness. Accordingly, the tribunal of objectivity begins *post festum*, on this, the profane, side of the sacred. But while logic can work with terms already established, it is incapable on its own of establishing the terms that it employs. It is the norm, or the non-conceptual intellection of perceptual objects as forms of media, that provides the basis upon which logical operations can only subsequently be built.

*viii. Models of Intelligence: The Structuralist Thesis Reconsidered*

Understanding the influence that these ritually-constituted normative foundations have on the shared signifying practices they enable puts us in a better position to engage the model of the "*pensee sauvage*" that Levi-Strauss develops in his work. Levi-Strauss' misreading of the character of what he calls 'savage thought' in this work lies in his collapsing important distinctions between the different manners of language and sign usage respective to "magical" and "scientific" thought. In Levi-Strauss' model, identical forms of cognition are at work in both forms of thought, with the result that "savage" or magical thought is implicitly defined according to the mechanisms through which scientific thought functions. Levi-Strauss is unequivocal on this matter when he writes, "both science and magic…require the same sort of mental operations and they differ not so much in kind as in the different types of phenomena to which they are applied" (*The Savage Mind* 13). The hidden interlocutor behind this remark is almost undoubtedly Lucien Levy-Bruhl, the scion of the Durkheimian school whose theory of "mystic participation" in the usage of collective representations as emblematic of "primitive mentality" would make him an intellectual whipping boy for several decades. But while Levy-Bruhl factors significantly into this discussion, there is another more immediate interlocutor stalking the background of Levi-Strauss' *Savage Mind*.

The dedication of *Le Pensee Sauvage* reads "To the Memory of Maurice Merleau-Ponty," who had passed away a year prior to the book's publication. Levi Strauss remarks in his preface, "those who were close to Merleau-Ponty and myself during recent years know some of the reasons why it was natural that this point which develops freely certain themes of my lectures at the *College de France* should be dedicated to him" (xi). This remark is noteworthy in particular for the context it provides for Levi-Strauss' concluding remarks defining the nature of ritual in the book's opening chapter. In that section, Levi-Strauss depicts the logic of ritual in structuralist terms as a "favored instance of a game," before

offering the curiously freighted example of a funerary ritual. The passage is worth quoting in full:

> All games are defined by a set of rules which in practice allow the playing of any number of matches. Ritual, which is also 'played', is on the other hand, like a favoured instance of a game, remembered from among the possible ones because it is the only one which results in a particular type of equilibrium between the two sides. The transposition is readily seen in the case of the Gahuku-Gama of New Guinea who have learnt football but who will play, several days running, as many matches as are necessary for both sides to reach the same score. This is treating a game as a ritual.
>
> The same can be said of the games which took place among the Fox Indians during adoption ceremonies. Their purpose was to replace a dead relative by a living one and so to allow the final departure of the soul of the deceased. The main aim of funeral rites among the Fox seems indeed to be to get rid of the dead and to prevent them from avenging on the living their bitterness and their regret that they are no longer among them. For native philosophy resolutely sides with the living: 'Death is a hard thing. Sorrow is especially hard'.
>
> Death originated in the destruction by supernatural powers of the younger of two mythical brothers who are cultural heroes among all the Algonkin. But it was not yet final. It was made so by the elder brother when, in spite of his sorrow, he rejected the ghost's request to be allowed to return to his place among the living. Men must follow this example and be firm with the dead. The living must make them understand that they have lost nothing by dying since they regularly receive offerings of tobacco and food. In return they are expected to compensate the living for the reality of death which they recall to them and for the sorrow their demise causes them by guaranteeing them long life, clothes and something to eat. 'It is the dead who make food increase', a native informant explains. 'They (the Indians) must coax them that way.' (21)

The "particular type of equilibrium between two sides" that the passage describes the ritual as achieving, and whose underlying mechanisms the passage goes on purportedly to lay bare, gathers around it a set of stakes that the chapter as a whole has been building upon throughout: namely, those pertaining to the relationship between the eponymous "savage mind" and scientific thought. The passage is particularly potent in its resonance with Levi-Strauss' claim throughout the chapter that the scientific and savage minds constitute two equal but differently applied forms of thought. That savage mind is for Levi-Strauss not limited to the instances of ethnographic subjects found in non-European field sites but finds adherents in certain contemporary contexts as well. This aspect of Levi-Strauss' approach has the virtue of decoupling the epistemic and ethical treatments of primitive mentality from the evolutionary or teleological presuppositions found within many prior models by treating the savage and scientific mentalities not as developmentally linked but as divergent and parallel tendencies of human consciousness.

One such contemporary adherent of the savage mind, Levi-Strauss remarks in *Totemism*, which forms a kind of concise companion piece to *Le Pensee Sauvage*, is Henri Bergson. Levi-Strauss would later write in a memorial essay on Merleau-Ponty, in which the

author also reflects on the affinities between himself and his contemporary, who shared the same birthdate, that the "pre-objective or savage being" that formed the analytical object of the latter's final writings "is simultaneously the same as and entirely other than what I was to call the savage mind." Stating plainly the basic differences dividing their two models of thought, Levi-Strauss goes on to say, "I am seeking the logic of that meaning which for him is prior to all logic. What, for Merleau-Ponty, explains, for me ultimately only sets forth the givens of the problem and delimits the phenomenal level from which it will be possible—and this will be the issue—to explain" (183). This background context frames Levi-Strauss' account of the relationship between savage and scientific thought not as a culturally or historically delimited relationship between geographically distinct social groups' respective modes of thinking but as pertaining above and beyond such concerns to the more foundational question of what constitutes the basic terms of explanation within an expression of mentality, i.e. of thought itself. It remains to be seen in what ways Merleau-Ponty's philosophical project differs significantly from what I am attempting to make visible here as going on in the question of ritualized activities, but the common denominator of both is the sense that qualitative experience must of necessity be included in both the explanans and the explanandum. The difference, on the other hand, pertains to what one is aware of as transpiring in the use of the word "explain."

Perhaps as a consequence of *Le Pensee Sauvage*'s background context of "seeking a particular kind of equilibrium between the two sides," Levi-Strauss' approach to magical thought is a mixture of conciliatory and ventriloquizing (30). Like partisans of the social functionalist school, Levi-Strauss clearly has the aim of defending non-European social groups against charges of benighted superstition. But his defense of their professed attitudes toward the workings of the world remains couched in the terms of scientific thought, redescribing the efficacy of these attitudes on their own behalf from a presumably more reflective vantage point. Savage thought is, therefore, for the anthropologist, "founded on the demand for order" in an equal degree to scientific thought, a point illustrated vividly for Levi-Strauss in the ethnographic examples of other cultures' extensive taxonomies of their environments. However, savage thought, unlike scientific thought, attempts to systematize relationships cognitively by employing the terms of sensory experience, whereas scientific thought (and one hears echoes of Kant's definition of *aufklarung* in back of Levi-Strauss' formulation) transcends this compulsory reference back to percepts:

> The principle value [of myth and rites] is to preserve… the remains of methods of observation and reflection… precisely adapted to discoveries authorized from the starting point of speculative organization and exploitation of the sensible world in sensible terms. (16)

The result, in Levi-Strauss' view, of this distinction between scientific and savage thought is that while the former is capable of building in a strict sense upon its system of concepts, the products of savage thought can only ever result in a rearrangement of preexisting conceptual structures because the end results of these mental operations will always constitute a compromise between the mental "instruments" employed and the observed phenomenon.

What is striking in this description is the characterization of the "savage" mental event in the phrase "speculative observation and exploitation of the sensible world." Again, primitive thought is framed as operating according to the model of theoretical reason and technological instrumentality. As Jack Goody has pointed out, however, Levi-Strauss' dichotomous approach neglects the mediating influence of "material concomitants,"

particularly the advent and dissemination of communication technologies such as literacy and print, to the gradual domestication of the savage mind to its modern, scientific form (9). Levi-Strauss' use of post-literate categories of thought in order to characterize and thereby explain the workings of non-literate, oral cultures in *Le Pensee Sauvage* is shown most prominently in the taxonomic catalogs that he advances in order to demonstrate the theoretical character of savage thought in the opening of the text. Media theorists from Marshall McLuhan to Eric Havelock, Walter Ong and Goody himself have argued persuasively that the particular mechanisms on which Levi-Strauss' own characterization of savage thought depends are developments of thought within what Ong calls "chirographic" cultures where writing and literacy have reached a degree of ubiquity for the social group. In these accounts, writing technologies and literacy introduce into societies that adopt them the possibility for fixing and standardizing the content of mental states in ways that make possible the syllogistic logical operations or taxonomic forms of categorization that are then internalized by members of those cultures.[xix]

The notion that a post-Aristotelian concept of taxonomy can be applied to forms of intellection within primary oral cultures rests on the presupposition that those forms of intellection operate in the same systematized manner as forms of thought characteristic of cultures habituated to the technological fixation of language in writing. The concepts of structure and of cultural logic depend on this implicit assumption that forms of mentality more characteristic of literate cultures apply equally to primary oral cultures as well. And this importation of post-literate categorical assumptions about the fixity and systematization of signification into his account of cognition gives a particular inflection to Levi-Strauss' version of what Dreyfus and Taylor call the "meditational" picture (*Retrieving Realism* 2015). Not only is the representationalist split assumed between mind and body, the "cognitive" and "pathological" for which "society" functions in Levi-Strauss' psychoanalytically-influenced account as both barrier and intermediary, but the nature of that mediation between the cognitive and pathological is represented according to the model of logical operations whose historical condition of possibility is the material presence of writing technologies within society.

From the perspective that all thought is subject to the same laws governing literate thought, only thought that is capable of dialectically negating its own manifest character and thereby removing the constitutive blindness identical with the particular content of its own contingent "about-ness" can plunder the riches of objectivity housed in the deep, unconscious structures conditioning that "about-ness." But this is to assume a certain model of how intelligence operates; namely, as being located "in" the "about-ness" itself, conceived as the semantic effects arising from relations between signifying units, whether in graphic material form or reproduced in mental space in a manner analogous to that written form. Because those units are defined according to structured relationships, if the effects of their combination can accurately reproduce the underlying mechanics governing those relations, i.e. the structure, then the background conditions determining "about-ness" could be brought within the compass of "about-ness." And such an act would inevitably place the manifest content of thought in the dependent status of a contingent effect. Anything less would be to remain enclosed within self-imposed immaturity.

Several such implicitly "graphocentric" assumptions in Levi-Strauss' depiction of savage thought warrant further consideration. The first is that valid relationships are only accessible to consciousness at the level of reference. The implied relationship between "world" and "terms" in the phrase "speculative observation and exploitation of the sensible world on sensible terms" frames the referential activity of those "sensible terms" as being

analogous to the act of pointing with one's finger. We could then illustrate, if imperfectly, the difference between savage and scientific thought by saying that the former is like trying to paint the color blue using a brush already stained with the color yellow, where the superimposition of one color on the other that one is trying to present creates a blend of green rather than unalloyed blue, while the latter is like presenting blue with transparent glass, where the latter imports no preexisting content into what it presents. The second and corresponding assumption is that savage thought's "science of the concrete" actually does assume such a primarily a speculative and/or instrumental interest in experience.

This is actually how we as literate post-Cartesians think about thinking most of the time. I identify, label and comprehend things so that I can use or avoid them. Those things are over there and my thoughts try to "reach" them. I reflect on the world. Formulating sign-usage in terms of the relationship between media and norms requires that the reader examine the exclusivity of reference as a signifying function. The use of a signifying object is conceived here not in terms of the literacy-bias that reference implies but instead as the contextual knotting together of a set of conditions and terms that originate on both "this side" and "that side" of the experiencer, so to speak. In this knotting, both sides are changed. Let's say I am relating with an object, an anthropomorphic stone figure, for instance, and in relating I receive its sensible qualities in such a way that, one would say, I am "struck" by the way that they come to appear under the aspect of events. In appearing under this aspect, the object has become a medium because its primary mode of appearance is not the "mere-ness" of inert materiality but instead attains to the semi-transparency of acting as a conduit for the object's own activity of self-presentation within the field of experience.

Already, intelligence is operative here, because this aspect is not something "reflection" (in the Lockean sense) has superimposed on brute "sensation." Rather, the vividness of the event-like qualities expresses a kind of slowing down or dilation of the phenomenal emergence of that object into its final status as a reified sensation. In that emergence the intelligence is present as that which develops and unfolds the phenomenal qualities. The slowing down is made possible by virtue of a modification in my total manner of placing myself in the situation, where the pitch of my default habit of leaning into whatever experience I meet is lowered. From the resultant event of my "being struck," the object and I will henceforth have a relationship that will persist through my later experiences. We might think here of the relationship Monsieur Swann develops with the little phrase from the sonata by Vinteuil that he hears Odette play. Indeed the principle of a motif is illustrative here more generally. There will then be subsequent occasions on which the arrangement of circumstances in which I find myself might solicit my invocation of the object that previously affected me with its qualities, because features of the present situation will correspond in some way to the character of my prior experience with that object. Any one of us has done something similar when we quote a song lyric or line of poetry that seems particularly *a propos*. And the invocation of the object will both be included in the features of the current situation *and* modify their total complexion by virtue of its inclusion.[xx]

Between the event of modification brought about in the situation and my attunement to the new complexion that results from that event we can see, respectively, the principle of force-as-purposiveness and the principle of intelligent discernment previously singled out within Kant's model of reflective judgment. This modification touches simultaneously the invoked object, which is now redolent of both its prior context and current contexts, the present state of affairs in which I am invoking the object, and myself as the middle term between these two. I am struck again, though differently. My discernment of the changing

complexion of the situation, on the other hand, is continuous with the modification itself. Now imagine that in the preceding description I employed a sound or graphic mark instead of the stone figure I started with.

We are trying to get a sense of the different phenomenology of communicative action in such contexts. "Reference" cannot be the accurate term here because reference implies a constitutive gap that thought must attempt to leap over in order to get at the relevant state of affairs. In a referential account, the sign I employ is over here on this side and, if I'm lucky, corresponds in some way to the state of affairs on that side. In the sign-usage described here, the sign as medium is part of the state of affairs through and through. Levi-Strauss speaks in the same chapter about the "concern for what one might call 'micro-adjustment'" in usages of primitive thought that in his view are a matter of "exhaustive observation and cataloguing of relations and connections" (10). The example he provides of this phenomenon of micro-adjustment is the ceremony of the Hawo among the Pawnee:

> The invocation which accompanies the crossing of a stream of water is divided into several parts, which correspond, respectively, to the moment when the travelers put their feet in the water, the moment when they move them, and the moment when the water completely covers their feet. The invocation to the wind separates the moments when only the wet parts of the body feel cool: 'Now, we are ready to move forward in safety'. As the informant explains, 'We must address with song every object we meet, because Tira'wa (the supreme spirit) is in all things, everything we come to as we travel can give us help…' (10)

This example is so incongruous compared to the other examples Levi-Strauss provides because, while the anthropologist employs it as further evidence of the rage for order that he characterizes in terms of systems of reference dividing the world into conceptually distinct taxonomies, what it foregrounds so clearly is the degree to which language-usage is included in the direct bodily and sensory act of going in concert with the world. The micro-adjustment the passage presents is not that of tweaking the shutter speed and f-stop on a camera to produce a clearer reproduction of the external world on the surface of the film. It is more like adding spices to soup. The sign that is contributed into the arrangement of features in the situation becomes an active ingredient in that total arrangement, rather than assuming a purely negative relation of commenting on that arrangement, as it were, from the outside.

In their direct perception of a purposive cohesion in the arrangement of circumstances as they come to include the added ingredient of the sign either felicitously or infelicitously, agents come to discern relationships inhering in the act of speaking, thinking etc. as this act takes place in relation to its broader context. For instance, the act of speaking might bring about a micro-adjustment in the motor bearing of the agents, with the result that new facets of the external state of affairs start to become visible. Repeat occurences of episodes like the one just described would invest sounds, objects, marks, images, in short, forms of media, previously incorporated into relational contexts with a kind of historical backlog reflected for members of the group in the very sensory properties of the media themselves. Such a backlog thus constitutes the normative core investing a word, image, etc. with a relatively stable and transindividual use-value, or, put differently, a fringe of potential qualities and contexts wreathed around and inhering in it. As this normative use-value

becomes more and more standardized through repeat usage, it becomes possible merely to call it the word's "meaning."

This model is not far, in fact, from what Lucien Levy-Bruhl himself described though his notion of primitive mentality in the hilariously titled *How Natives Think* (1910) (the even more unfortunate French title of the work is "*Les Fonctiones Mentales Dans Les Societies Inferieures"*). Levy-Bruhl was bound to be unpopular with several generations of anthropologists for whom the goal of the discipline was to show how natives thought coherently, i.e. similarly to us. His primary mistakes were to group his insights under the vague and misleading rubric of "mystic participation," to essentialize the separation between mental functions as endemic to groups in particular geographic regions, cultures and historical contexts, to treat the use of prelogical mentality within those social groups as uniform, and to posit or at least imply a mutual exclusivity between coherent intelligence and the 'merely' affective relationality that defined logical and prelogical mentalities. That said, Levi-Bruhl was unique among anthropologists of his moment in his insight, which accords in basic fundamentals with what I have described up until this point, that,

> By this state of mental activity in primitives we mean to understand something which is not a purely or almost purely intellectual or cognitive phenomenon, but a more complex one, in which what is really "representation" to us is found blended with other elements of an emotional or motor character, colored and imbued by them, and therefore implying a different attitude with regard to the objects represented. (36)

The distinction is key provided one can leave aside Levy-Bruhl's collapse of "intellectual" into "cognitive" phenomena. Levy-Bruhl's contribution to the Durkheimian model of collective representations was the understanding, which may have been latent in Durkheim's own account from beginning, that these representations (what I have called "media") function not according to reference but by acting as points of convergence, and this is at base what Levy-Bruhl seems to be aiming at in his notion of participation, between the activities of the senses and those of the world. Moreover, Levy-Bruhl grasped that the mode of activity through which a collective representation functions extends from "the same law of participation which governs [their] formation" (90).

The formula Levy-Bruhl offers here, in other words, is fundamentally that same as the notion that the same manner of intelligence which allows for the composition of shared forms of media also facilitates their usage, with the obvious distinction that Levy-Bruhl includes in his final explanation the reduction to the Durkheimian sociological thesis about collective consciousness. In these respects, Levy-Bruhl's work contained the kernel of a more radical challenge to Western rationalism's post-enlightenment standards of what constitutes intelligent mentality than even proponents of cultural relativism developed at the level of different cognitive functions. The difference here is not quite cognitive relativism proper, such as we see in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which merely amounts to the idea of different ways in which concepts can be put to use while maintaining their same basically referential orientation, but a distinction between cognition, conceived as a dualistic conceptual relationship of reference between subjects and objects, and participation as a mentality characterized in terms of the interactivity of subject and object. His oversight was not to attribute intelligence, the capacity to make coherent and non-arbitrary conscious distinctions, equally to both cognition proper and participation. It was Evans-Pritchard, one of Levy-Bruhl's few early apologists, who contributed the qualification, which follows from

Levy-Bruhl's own claim about the formation of collective representations, that the so-called mystical thought of primitive mentality is a function of particular situations rather than constituting the exclusive mental state of members of these groups.[xxi] In offering this important qualification, Evans-Pritchard brushed up against the missing thread capable of clearing the fog associated with the near-meaningless term "mystic" away from Levy-Bruhl's notion of participation. Media ecologists such as Ong and Goody, on the other hand, further clarified Levy-Bruhl's mystifying essentialization of the prelogical and rational thought by reframing the two modes of mentality as arising from the different pragmatic contexts attending what Goody calls the "mechanics of communicative acts" such as writing, literary and print technologies (12).

What to make at this point of Levi-Strauss' funeral ritual? Certainly no contention is being voiced here against his proposition that "all games are defined by a set of rules," but what may remain in question is the mode of being that characterizes those "rules." For Levi-Stauss, those rules stand in analogous relationship to the necessarily unconscious formal structure that determines in advance the outcome of ritual. This structure is by definition unconscious because it is seen as rooted in the way that the social impinges on the physiological life of an individual, a life that from a representationalist perspective is separate from the domain of discerning intelligence, and thereby structures *a priori* the conscious intelligence that begins at the level of mental representations. But this is to look at the matter through a glass, darkly. The negation employed in Levi-Strauss' very account, i.e. in the act of postulating a split dividing the event of thought into an anterior unconscious structure and a symptomatic but conscious mental representation, *is* the activity of the norm itself as conditioned according to the habits of thought governing literate societies. And the norm is nothing other than the inherent, enabling solidarity with a speech community that spontaneously accompanies the knotting together of the senses and the world in the usage of a medium of communication.

The distinction between norm and structure is most visible in Levi-Strauss' reading of Mauss in his *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss* (1950). Levi-Strauss' reading betrays the representationalist bias of his model as much as it illustrates precisely that which in Mauss' work supports the claim I have been making about force as the historical foundation of norms of language usage. "Why," asks Levi-Strauss, "did Mauss halt at the edge of those immense possibilities, like Moses conducting his people all the way to a promised land whose splendor he would never behold?" (45). Why would Mauss, in other words, stop short of arriving at that other shore of card-carrying structuralist status that Levi-Strauss wants to claim for him, when the latter-day anthropologist discerns so many prefigurations of structuralism in the former's notion of total services? What prevents the common denominator of exchange, which links together all the disparate areas of social life described in total services, from being exposed in Mauss' own account as the foundational structural principle that it truly is? Mauss' mistake, in Levi-Strauss' view, was to "take discrete operations for the basic phenomenon" and to construct the whole from the operations of the parts, rather than reduce those parts to effects of the whole (47). What allows Mauss to treat the discrete operations as self-sufficient is his inclusion in the account of "a source of energy which can synthesize them," "a property which forces the gifts to circulate, to be given and returned," or as Levi-Stauss puts it, "an additional quantity which gives him the illusion of squaring his account" (46-47). And that quantity? "This quantity is *hau*" (47).

Levi-Strauss' concession to Mauss' commentary on *hau* in the former's notion of linguistic surplus makes apparent that even the most codified of normative signifying relationships depend for their very operation on an encompassing context of energetic

transactions taking place between the senses, media and world. The concept of structure rests on the premise that one can divide transaction (parole) and context (langue) and thereby treat the latter as a formalized unit, such as Levi-Strauss notion of "mythemes" as "bundles of relations" subtending the transformations of various iterations of a given myth, whose explication will serve to explain the function of the transactions (*Structural Anthropology* 211). What Derrida singled out as the "structurality of structure" in "Structure, Sign and Play" makes visible the fact that structure can only be treated as a formalized unit from within the field of such transactions, what Derrida called "freeplay" and what Levi-Strauss himself acknowledges as the effect of linguistic surplus. Such transactions or "discrete operations" designate the same principle of media that previous thinkers have attempted to articulate, albeit for radically different purposes, in terms of how the so-called "materiality of the text" influences a text's signifying function. Notions such as "materiality," however, overdetermine the principle of media, as the experienced/perceived support for communication, by smuggling in the same empiricist split between sensation and reflection that we saw in the case of Douglas' account of ritual schematization.

Levi-Strauss views the "magical and affective notions" that Mauss retains in his account of *hau* in *The Essay on the Gift* as "purely residual," though Levi-Strauss' own effort at a solution in the attempt to dispel these notions by reducing *mana* to the linguistic trickery of "signifier-surfeit" would prove to be a liability for structuralism when post-structuralists proved eager to point to the irreducibility of that signifier's "free play." This is an important point in that it indicates the wall that Levi-Strauss ran up against in his effort to consolidate his claim for the determinism of structural relations, though the implicit representationalist frame that the Saussurean heritage places on post-structuralist accounts of the free-play of the signifier makes the idea ill-suited to bring out the kind of relations I am after here. What these accounts can only characterize in semantic terms through the language of "indeterminacy" has a degree of precision, and indeed power, within the context of direct experience that simply slips the net of semiotic models. Mauss had his own reasons for retaining those affective notions, which had to do with the differences between his methodology and that of Levi-Strauss. Mauss writes,

> We have looked at societies in their dynamic or physiological state. We have not studied them as if they were motionless, in a static state, or as if they were corpses. Even less have we decomposed and dissected them, producing rules of law, myths, values and prices. It is by considering the whole entity that we could perceive what is essential, the way everything moves, the living aspect, the fleeting moment when society, or men, become sentimentally aware of themselves and of their situation in relation to others. In this concrete observation of social life lies the means of discovering new facts, which we are only dimly beginning to perceive. In our opinion, nothing is more urgent or more fruitful than this study of total social facts. … In societies one grasps more than ideas or rules, one takes in men, groups, and their different forms of behavior. One sees them moving, as one does masses and systems in mechanics, or as in the sea we notice the octopuses and the anemones. We perceive numbers of men, forces in motion, who are in movement in their environment and in their feelings. (*The Gift* 79-80)

Mauss' restraint in not reducing *hau* to the fixed exchange relation that for Levi-Strauss would remove the concept as an impediment to converting total services into structure is, I

would suggest, tied up in the methodological insight he expresses here that concepts need to be grasped in their relation to the physical, experiential and environmental transactions with which they are moving. We could see gift exchange as governed by rules, and surely it is. But the nature of that rule is lost when it is abstracted from the web of vectors out of which its appeal to the participant is composed. To perform such an abstraction is to apply the same 'decontextualization' of knowledge afforded by the technical achievements of literate societies to oral and preliterate groups for whom pragmatic context cannot be formalized in the same way as structure.[xxii] An informant experiences a normative pressure to return an object he has been given in the form of its *hau*, which is a kind of perceived density in the ligature of contexts whereby he is engaged with the giver, the forest, the community. The rule is nothing other than this *hau* that radiates from the object, and accordingly the informant in being receptive to the *hau* of his *taonga* has complete consciousness of what he is doing. There is no machinery behind the scenes.

In the case of those funerary rites, the rules that Levi-Strauss sets up as necessary structural mechanisms out of which the event of equilibrium between the two sides of the match is produced refer essentially to a mode of deferential behavior shown in reverence to the departed. This is why the Fox elect to perform the requisite number of matches to reach an even score. Such a form of behavior is selected as appropriate to the occasion, just as Levi-Strauss' selection of this particular example produces a contextual resonance with respect to the memory of the departed with which his own work opens, a resonance that comes to animate the content of what takes place within the example, making it a manifestation of more than what is merely being stated. The norms of the rite meet the felt pressures of the present context in a complementary way. That the formal qualities of those norms repeat prior enactments of funerary rites does not mean that they constitute blind mechanisms "postulat(ing) in advance" the outcome of the performance (32). Indeed, their status as formal reenactments invests them precisely with those special qualities that condense a sense of tradition and solidarity with the experiences of past generations, qualities that enter into composition with the contingencies of the present situation, which include both the indefinite number of matches and the experiential states of the players throughout the duration of matches. Rather than saying, as Levi-Strauss does, that the event of equilibrium between the two sides achieved by the rite is "preordained" by the formal structure of the norms taken up, one would say that the formal 'structure' provides one thread of experience being woven in with the other threads brought together. The event accompanies the normative structure of the rite, just as exchange accompanies *hau* or the song accompanies the crossing of the river.

*ix. Techniques of Coincidence: On Reflective Judgment, Causality and Locality*

Appreciating this premise of accompaniment or non-causal connectivity between events and phenomena illustrates what is ultimately at stake in seeing how the "primitivist" moment in modernism can broaden our sense of the efficacy of compositional practices beyond what is available to us within our inherited conceptions of the role of the "fine arts." I have been saying that in addition to forms of representational intelligence that establish cognitive relations between normatively grounded concepts, i.e. what we would usually call knowledge-proper, it is necessary also to acknowledge a capacity for intelligent discernment that apprehends binding, non-arbitrary contextual relationships within sensory appearances without employing concepts. It is this mode of intelligence, which functions in accord with the way in which particular affective and motor orientations influence how one schematizes

perceptual experience, that forms the condition of possibility for relating with particular mental or perceptual objects as media. The "how" in "how one schematizes perceptual experience" is what, following Hegel, Mauss and Durkheim in their different accounts, I am calling force. I have tried to provide evidence to support this postulation both in the form of theoretical models developed in the philosophical systems of Kant, Bergson and Merleau-Ponty, and in the ethnographic form of empirical observation of socially observed practices within non-European collectives. Bearing these claims in mind, along with Durkheim's thesis about the construction in practice of the basic cognitive categories in the form of "collective representations," we can approach Mauss' formulation in *A General Theory of Magic* that magical representations constitute "a gigantic variation on the theme of the principle of causality" (78).

The efficient causality that ethnographers and anthropologists read into non-European understandings of their own ritual and magical practices was caught up in the same bias towards projecting cognitive relationships towards experience onto informants that we saw in ritual theorists' models of ritual as representing belief. Magic was thus framed as a deluded effort at technical and instrumental control of the natural world, as the Freudian conception of primitive thought as analogous to infantile fantasies of omnipotence presents most vividly. The distinction to be made here is that this reading on the part of European and American intellectuals is a consequence of the spatializing character of rational thought, a central thesis of Bergson's thought, which necessarily sees coherent relationships between phenomena in sequential, causal terms. If the character of mentality in a ritual context is not primarily rational, not primarily oriented towards deriving determinations between normative usages of forms of media, but instead engages those forms of media in an affective-motor register that is nevertheless imbued with intelligence, then it becomes necessary to look elsewhere than efficient causality in order to understand the principle through which these actions and contexts relate with other states of affairs. Here both the notions of contagion and of participation described earlier can help to mark the difference. Rather than say that the interaction with this object in this particular way *causes*, for instance, a thunderstorm, a fruitful marriage, a successful hunting expedition, it is more appropriate to say, in the strict sense, such an interaction *goes with* these things. To discern how the fortunate states of affairs might take place, it helps to start by first appreciating the nature of the ritual interaction between an individual or group and an object.

Imagine at one pole a standard instrumental action. I apprehend my cup of coffee in its determinate shape sitting across the table from me within the three spatial dimensions of the room in which I sit, its qualities reduced to those which correspond to my need, its handle as I see at a slight angle where my hand can reach out and grab it. I know what it is, and I know how to use it to satisfy my craving. From the account I've developed so far, we would say that from a first-personal perspective, the entire set of coordinates I've just laid out—the coffee's identity, its position relative to me and to the space within which my action relative to it is possible, etc.—arise as a kind of schematization of my field of experience. If I smell the coffee, for instance, or tap on the mug to hear the sound it makes, these sense-experiences will in turn be integrated into the same motor schema and coordinated with the way my other sense-experiences are disposed. That is how I'll know that the smell corresponds to the liquid in the cup, etc. It is essential to bear in mind that in this case my own subject position as forming the center, as it were, of this articulated field of experience is itself a result of this schematization. The body that I perceive as sitting behind the table and relating to the cup, a body which Blake once called "a ratio of the five senses," is a product of the motor project that is shaped both by my microcosmic context of action

and by the macrocosmic context of historical time that has furnished the normative categories out of which my schema is composed. So the dualistic relationship through which I reach across the table to grab and move the cup occurs within this medium. Accordingly, the division that produces the possibility of my causal, instrumental interaction with the object is afforded by the spatialization of experience that serves to localize both the object and myself.

Now, it would be exceedingly challenging, possibly maddening, for most of us to imagine a scenario in which I was aware of and attentive to the whole previously described set of conditions affording my sip of coffee. It all necessarily forms the background to my immediate aim. In a context in which I *was* able to develop awareness of the schematic conditions of my action, though, my identification with my subject position over and against the object with which I was engaged would of necessity be displaced into the unfolding of the action itself. In fact, insofar as I am not identical with the version of myself that I experience within my constructed perceptual field, the illusion lies in the misidentification of myself as being on "this side" of my experience. The idea that the "me on this side," which as Rimbaud pointed out is already an other, picks up the coffee and drinks it is a convenient fiction allowing actions to be performed efficiently. The unfolding of the action itself, where I *am* located ultimately, insofar as it is anterior to the entire set up, is nowhere in the scene that I can describe. What we might call a "delocation" of the agent would appear to be characteristic of ritual contexts in which the aim of an action was the action itself. Accordingly, in the absence of an identification of myself with the man on the screen who picks up the cup and drinks, the notion of myself as the efficient cause of the event of drinking disappears. The cup, the man on the screen, and the other percepts (sounds, smells, etc.) all participate, to use Levy-Bruhl's term, in the charged milieu of the ritual event. What is more, because articulated space is itself a schematic effect of the context of action, the source of the action cannot be located anywhere.

So the difference I am driving at between an instrumental and ritual context in first-personal terms is one between localization in space and non-locality, and this is a matter of what side of media (or "collective representations" in Durkheimian) one finds oneself. The capacity for such a milieu to develop, however, is significantly more detailed than the cursory version I have supplied here to illustrate a distinction. For one thing, the ability for a participant in a rite to genuinely release her fixation on instrumental aims and enter into the ritualized milieu depends upon her having cultivated the appropriate embodied and intentional disposition over a long duration of applied practice. Confucius in the *Analects* asks, "What can a man have to do with the rites who is not benevolent?" (Waley 94). Benevolence in this quote refers not to a set of self-consciously held moral precepts but instead to a *habitus* or default bearing developed through body techniques generally grouped under the category of "rites" (*Li,* which refers both to customary rules of propriety and to ceremonial observances), as *jen* or benevolence is primarily a matter of appropriate practical know-how, circumspection, and a disposition to will the good.

The Confucian tradition, which drew upon ritual traditions inherited from the pre-Confucian folk traditions that are anthologized and formalized, for instance, in the *Classic of Poetry* and the King Wen sequence of hexagrams comprising the *Classic of Changes*, also helps to articulate the relationship between ritual milieu/event and those other fortunate states of affairs. The genuinely benevolent individual who is suited to the performance of ritual is said in Confucian doctrine to be aligned with the "mandate of heaven," which places his acts in a basic accord with events taking place in the broader world. Confucian cosmology conceives of the principle of heaven (*Tian*) as being an exact counterpart to the principle of

"earth" (*Di*), which we might think of in terms of Wittgenstein's definition of the world as everything that is the case. Like the nonlocal nature of the agent in the ritual context previously described, the principle of heaven in Confucian thought serves to order events on earth while being categorically distinct from earth as a domain. Ritual was thus thought to regulate harmonious relations among the ten thousand things of earth by virtue of its basic concordance with the principle of heaven, and not because it intervened directly into any of the states of affairs among those ten thousand things.

Framing Kant's notion of reflective judgment in the practical and historical terms that the category mistakes of the Rubin exhibition invite us to do illustrates why such a relationship cannot be reduced even to a model of formal causality. Reflective judgments serve such an important role in suggesting a possible bridge between the domains of theoretical and practical reason, of nature and freedom, in the Kantian system because Kant felt that it was on the basis of reflective judgments of nature that a teleological principle could be postulated as operative in the ordered lawfulness of natural processes. On the basis of such a teleological understanding of nature, the domain of appearance could be thought as ultimately merging with the supersensible. By relying on reflective judgments, reason could prescribe, as a merely regulative hypothesis, the principle of what Kant calls a "technic" of nature operating alongside the "mechanism" of causal necessity that formed a proper object of knowledge for the understanding. With this notion of a technic of nature, Kant refers primarily to the mode of organization manifest in the intrinsic purposiveness of organisms, which have the character of "natural ends" (198).

In natural ends such as organisms, Kant felt that the efficient causality of nature *qua* mechanism could not account for specific relations of internal organization that products of nature displayed in their own constitution. Because an organism stands in intrinsic relation to itself as reciprocally means and ends, its formal organization taken as an effect appeared to presuppose as its cause and organizing principle an idea of reason. This meant that one had to look for the cause of the organism in the totality of its parts grasped as a whole, rather than in an aggregation of those parts taken as discrete causes. Accordingly, in looking to the form of an organism as a whole, one had also to retain as essential the contingency of the form of the organism in relation to the necessary laws of mechanical causality that the understanding had determined to govern the behavior of its component parts. Kant uses the example of someone discovering the figure of a hexagon drawn in the sand on the beach, with all of the necessary purposive relations such a geometrical figure expresses, and attempting to derive the existence of this figure from the array of other environmental factors in the scene (sea, wind, etc.). Kant writes, "the contingency of coincidence with a concept like this, which is only possible in reason, would appear to him so infinitely great that there might as well be no law of nature at all in the case" (198).

At first glance, this looks like a fairly run-of-the-mill intelligent design thesis, even more dismissible for its pre-Darwinian context. Natural products such as the purposively integrated components of organisms seem to be organized according to a superordinate idea that forms the *telos* of their constitution. For Kant, the primary model that we have available to characterize such a technic of organization visible in certain natural phenomena is the artwork. Now, I have previously suggested that Kant's conception of art treats as static and historically invariant what a host of thinkers have argued to be temporally dynamic, and remembering this fact in light of Kant's arguments about reflective judgments with respect to their teleological usages helps to shed light on this component of his argument. The teleological argument Kant makes remains a regulative hypothesis or "maxim" of reason that affords the discernment of certain possible relationships in reflective judgments of natural

phenomena, because the truth of such relationships would be impossible to ratify according to determinate judgments as this would subsume the particularity of an intuited form under a universal concept, immediately handing over that intuition to the domain of determinate laws and the causal mechanism of nature whose existence is a necessary part of the architecture of concepts.

At the same time, because the necessary relationship of conformity between universals and particulars is identical with purposiveness, the same purposiveness discerned in products of nature, Kant felt that it was the rational constitution of the understanding itself that impelled the postulation of teleological organization as a maxim guiding judgments of the natural world. Because the constitution of human understanding and the teleology hypothesized in nature, as well as the constraints placed on its realization, were so intimately correlated, Kant argued that this relationship necessarily implies the possibility of "finding a certain element of contingency in our own understanding, so as to note it as a peculiarity of our own in contradistinction to other possible kinds of understanding" (234). At this point in his text, Kant invokes the notion, discussed in the first *Critique*, of an intellectual intuition (*anschauung*), here defined as "intuitive understanding," as a possible faculty of knowledge unencumbered by the aforementioned contingency specific to discursive understanding, upon which epistemic certainty of the teleological organization of beings could be grounded. For such an understanding, the contingency that our discursive understanding necessarily comprehends in the synthesis of parts of an integrated form, each of which is governed by and thus reducible in principle to particular laws, would not be unavoidable because it could comprehend "the whole as a whole" rather than moving synthetically from parts to wholes in the manner of discursive understanding (235).

I am less interested here in Kant's speculation about the possibility of an intellectual intuition than in what drives him to make this speculation, which is his claim about the constitution of discursive understanding being such that "it is impossible… *for any understanding* to form a representation of such a unity in the conjunction of a manifold without also making the idea of this unity its producing cause, that is, without representing the production as designed" (237). This is significant because it shows that the model of artworks through which Kant represents the technic of nature, as well as the notion of ends as final causes, both serve primarily as heuristic devices furnished to make the discerned relationships visible in natural phenomena that Kant describes adequate to the demands of rationality.

A few points need to be drawn out of this aspect of Kant's argument. The first is the basic point that we see in the third *Critique* the degree to which reflective judgments removed from the sphere of leisured contemplation of the fine arts begin to discern ordering relationships manifest in the phenomenal world that run aground when one tries to attribute the principle of efficient causality to their appearance. Kant maintains throughout the "Critique of Teleological Judgment" the need to employ reflective judgments in order to make these relationships discernible in the first place. Second, we can see the whole line of argumentation about teleology, final causes and artworks as templates for representing natural ends as Kant's endeavor to make these relationships square with the causal principles native to the rational determinations comprising his own philosophical system.[xxiii] By Kant's own admission, one postulates a final end governing the integration of parts of an organism in a manner analogous to that of an artwork because that is how we can make cognitively explicable the relationships we discern in the arrangement of features making up that organism. An attempt is being made to provide the concept for what the intelligence is

already discerning experientially but which resists the determinations the understanding is capable of establishing.

Accordingly, the artwork as model for this form of organization serves two purposes for Kant: it affords a concept for a kind of causal relationship (i.e. a teleology of final causes) governing the formal organization of organisms *qua* natural ends, and it provides an example of or precedent for the kind of intelligent experience in which the relationships discerned in the formal organization of natural ends become manifest. Without this model of the artwork to explain how natural phenomena display their organization in this manner, one is left with *coincidence* as the governing principle. This, however, is in fact exactly what we are asked to do in taking the category of art in its historically dynamic sense, as entangled in and derived from a wider set of practices, including ritual practices. In this view, the artwork serves Kant's purpose in this instance because it is his historically contemporaneous placeholder for the mode of experience in which the relevant intelligence is active. Treating an artwork as an end, insofar as it assumes notions of genius tied up in Kant's account of the fine arts, is the most historically contingent aspect of Kant's use of this model. The model of the artwork as organizing end imports associations with proprietary relationships between maker and made, associations that also serve to reinforce theological implications pertinent to Kant himself but not absolutely necessary to all possible understandings of the mode of organization of particular natural phenomena.

In removing or situating contextually the late 18th century product of the fine arts as the privileged model invoked by Kant, we remove the principle of ends as the primary explanatory principle of the phenomena in question while retaining what Kant calls the "clearly manifest nexus of things" discerned in reflective judgments of natural processes, as well as the useful example of such a manifest nexus in the instance provided by contemplation of the fine arts (216). In other words, Kant's critique of teleological reason shows how, in our experiences of reflective judgment, whether in the contexts of the fine arts or otherwise, we become conscious of a kind of order inhering in the world that is not explicable in terms of the principle of efficient causality available to discursive understanding but to which one is tempted to attribute causal efficacy because of its apparent ordering of natural phenomena. It is in the nature of reflective judgments to discern these kinds of relationships in which parts enter into lawful composition in a manner irreducible to any cognitively determinable laws.

All of which is to attempt to provide at least a semblance of rigor to the formulation that those ritual practices evincing what has been previously referred to as "magical thinking" are what we might call a technique of coincidence and not a misconceived and misapplied causal mechanism. Put differently, these practices are ways of entering into compositional relationship with the world itself, rather than attempting to influence or manipulate the world. Because that relationship depends on the suspension of instrumentalizing volition and willed causation of events, it has to be conceived in terms of contingency rather than necessity. This is my strong claim regarding the practical implications of cultivating an attunement to the principle I have been referring to as force in its expression in the arts, which have become the receptacle for these modes of experience within post-industrial secularized societies. Holding this view in mind might require the reader to stretch their imagination a bit, but it is necessary to my account insofar as it makes visible the full scope and stakes of the relationship between the paired items in the Rubin exhibition that the foregoing genealogy of reflective judgment in the anthropological discourse on *mana* has attempted to disclose.

Consequently, appreciating the ritualized modes of activity of non-Europeans in this way helps to reveal to the fullest extent the possibilities that might be opened up in our shared understandings of social and practical life through the study of artistic practices. It also helps to explain the distinction between the so-called "savage thought" that Levi-Strauss leveled against Bergson and Merleau-Ponty and the study of compositional practice that I am ultimately advocating here. What Kant's analysis in the third *Critique* shows is that the discernment of the relations manifest in phenomena, such as Kant's example of organisms viewed as natural ends, depends upon a fundamentally different expression of intelligence than is within the range of functions available to determinate cognition. Furthermore, reading this mode of experience in coordination with theories of embodiment, which the emphasis on ritual as action invites us to do, shows from a different angle why these questions cannot be sorted out solely at the level of dualistic, referential, conceptual thought. As previously stated, the ways in which we are invited to engage with reflective judgments require an attention to our total experiential, dispositional, and practical relationship toward immediate experience, something akin to what Wittgenstein called "forms of life," and do not become visible when thought is taken in abstraction from the situations within which it is embedded.

Once one has developed accuracy in discerning the kinds of non-causal ordered relationships manifest through the use of reflective judgments, action can be organized that develops a harmonious accord with the tendencies of those relationships. Our immediate example for this, as previously mentioned, is the skillful composition of an artwork. The hundreds-to-thousands of years of practical application behind many of the traditions in which such forms of activity have been applied to a range of circumstances beyond leisured contexts would seem to warrant the premise that not all of the millions of practitioners over that vast span of time were credulous idiots. Traditions marked by concern for what the popular imagination frequently regards as superstition—omens, portents, cosmological correspondences, etc—emerged and solidified as the residual inheritance of practical know-how derived from ritualized modes of activity. What marks these traditions, as Douglas and Evans-Pritchard both point out, is a heightened attention to contingent situations precisely in their contingency, singularity and *quidditas*, a focus on *this* particular event occurring in *this* particular conjunction of circumstances, rather than on their regularity.[xxiv]

What the previous description of the difference between an instrumentalized action and an autotelic ritual action attempted to show is the change in phenomenological orientations towards spatial schematization that accompanies the shift in how a way of acting and perceiving engages the media that produce those schematizations. This is not an outlandish proposal, anthropologically speaking, but has already been made by Mauss when he describes "the confusion between actor, rite and object" to be "a fundamental feature of magic" (*The General Theory of Magic* 134). A basic characterization of the distinction between sacred and profane domains presents itself at this point: the sacred refers to that which is, or is associated with that which is, non-local while the profane refers to that which is localized in extension through a practical schematization of experience in instrumental action. The rite and the fortunate state of affairs, in other words, are linked through a relationship similar to what physicists refer to as entanglement. Such a formulation puts us in a better position to understand the modality of contagion that proved so strange in Durkheim's treatment in the *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Observant members of the group experience qualities associated with the sacred as transferable non-causally across time and space because those qualities can ultimately be characterized as the transparency of extension to its non-local substrate.

*x. Regimes of Media Usage*

How appropriate, then, that the revolution of non-representational art so curiously tied up with those avant-garde artists' encounter with ritual objects would be directed initially towards conventions of spatial representation in visual art. There is a long and storied history separating the comparable Western context of total services that we might see as operative, for instance, in classical Greek culture, where ritualized and cultic forms of practice were threaded through legal, familial, political and 'artistic' cultural spheres, from the 20th century context of artistic vanguards. A few points nevertheless need to be made about how we might sketch the shift from total services to the division of labor as we find it in the 20th century context. This will help to frame our understanding of how the development of abstract art fits into the larger story I have been telling. These points will be limited to what the previous commentary on the relationship between media and norms can offer to thinking about the division of labor through which art-as-such comes into its own as a sphere of culture.

First, the fact/value split frequently cited as a defining characteristic of modernity can be framed in terms of the sundering, through a confluence of historical processes, of the relational and participatory media functions within what Durkheim calls collective representations. Iconoclasm, the Reformation, the emergence to power of mercantile classes and overthrow of the hereditary aristocracies, the development of the scientific method, the proliferation of print media and the changing habituations to language usage accompanying the democratization of literacy, etc. all work in various ways to create a dispensation in which it becomes possible to use signifying media with exclusive attention to the relational determinations of semantic value, on the one hand, or with exclusive attention to the capacity of objects of sense-perception to manifest force, on the other. It is key to remember here that all of these diverse operations within the larger rubric of media usage depend upon a background set of pragmatic conditions for both individuals and groups. A reading from a mass spectrometer, for instance, depends for its legibility on the competence of the reader, which in the case of relational media entails that the individual subordinate the sign systems at work to the states of affairs to which they afford access. The sign's modality in its media function of empirical measurement is one of reference, so the sign's own appearance is of secondary importance, but that function depends upon the user's practical competence.

On the other hand, it is also possible to foreground those pragmatic, perceptual conditions in the usage of a medium so that its phenomenal appearance becomes the salient feature. This is at base how something like pictorial representation works. Take the example of the "duck-rabbit" image. The representational status of the image shifts between a duck or a rabbit depending on how the viewer orients herself toward the media effects of the ink on the page. Both reference and representation are different articulations of a more primitive capacity, as it were, for the experienced object to act as a medium. The question at this point is whether the usage of media to derive determinate functions, apply those functions instrumentally in practice, and integrate the results of that practice into models of objectivity, can ever detach itself unequivocally from any dependence on an experienced context of normative consensus regarding the validity of such operations. This is the question Wilfred Sellars takes up in his inquiry into the possibility of placing the manifest image within the scientific image of man where he defers authority to the normative space of reasons, which he does not find to be reducible in the final account to the scientific image.

Viewed in terms of the history of media, what Weber called disenchantment can be seen as the reduction of the contextualization of immediate experience that we call 'the world' to a pure function (e.g. efficient causality as "law" or "necessity"). Such a reduction historically arises when the archive of knowledge supporting that contextualization is produced solely through the relational usage of media. Knowledge is now defined in terms of its purported independence from experience, even as it continues to depend in practice on a coordination of observation, by means of schematized experience, with concepts. Both schema and concept are, by this account, products of the usages to which inherited forms of media are put. The investment of the relational usage of media with the authority to frame and orient all other usages becomes more and more absolute as the division of labor in industrial societies works to institutionalize particular knowledge-producing practices. Participatory uses of media come to have no relationship to knowledge proper, and relational usages of media must increasingly disavow any connection they might have to participatory modes of experience. Two categories become increasingly useful in mitigating the contradictions involved in this dispensation: namely, representation and belief.

Representation and belief refer to ways in which usages of media are subordinated to one another. Let's say I have within my visual field a perceived image of a tree, and, next to that perceived image, I have a canvas on which is painted an image that according to conventions of mimesis bears an accurate resemblance to the tree at which I am looking. The schemata through which my experience of the image is developed are identical in both cases, but the way each schema is linked to an institution and regime of media-using practices is different. The tree that is not on the canvas I coordinate with a set of concepts drawn from the archives of the physical sciences, the tree that is on the canvas I coordinate with concepts drawn from the history of the fine arts. The current dispensation creates a hierarchy in which I place the latter tree 'inside' the former, and this subordination is what we call representation. We're dealing here with a relationship between what McLuhan would call two different media environments. It is according to this shifting differentiation and coordination of media-using practices that we can understand the arts' changing status, from Horace's dictum that art should "delight and instruct," to mimesis and verisimilitude, to Romantic expressivism.

Vanguard artists making form into the *raison d'etre* of art were thus placing all their bets on a principle that had lost epistemic authority in the society at large precisely in order to make a play for cultural influence. In modernism, art's alliance with representation is precisely inverted so that participation might become a new kind of evidence that it was incapable of becoming so long as it was taken as an appendage of knowledge. Romantic notions of form such as Coleridgean organicism or Hegelian semblance (*Schein*) designated the unique activity of media practices grouped under the institution of the fine arts in the broader context of a culture increasingly dominated by the principle of representation. This is made abundantly clear in Hegel's own subordination of the arts to philosophy, as part of the larger triumph of reflective culture that he celebrates, in his lectures on aesthetics. In this respect, form in its incarnation in Romantic organicism is conceived primarily as a modality of representation. *Schein* is both art's beauty, its unique capacity *as* art, and its phenomenal character, framed in terms of mimetic semblance. This is why participation, as the practice of perceptual and embodied engagement with force, is now primarily afforded by those relationships that constitute what we would call a work's composition.
Form in artistic composition is a category that is conditioned by this larger dispensation. The production of form in an artwork is in fact analogous to what I previously called the "meta-instrumentality" of autotelic action in ritual practice, where action undoes its

schematizing reduction of experience by making itself its own end, which is to say that it uses the momentum behind an automatism to undo that automatism. Composition is to normative relations among media what autotelism in action is to the motor schema. And insofar as relational usages of media are subspecies of the larger genus of action in general, it is more precise to say the activity is in some sense identical, even if this risks blurring important distinctions.

Form as what composition produces is a matter of relationship, but it is relational according to non-causal and non-instrumental discernments of the intelligence arising from its participation in the milieu of compositional activity, what Stevens called the "radiant and productive atmosphere." It is the ghost of normative usage refunctioned and renovated so as to release the materials employed from representation, thereby making visible again their status as media. Thus there is a strange irony in the inversion with which we discern force in the formal integrity in an artwork: what seems like more is actually less. It was Cassirer who said of the expressive mode of perception, a notion influenced by the work of his friend Levy-Bruhl, that in it there is a collapse of the opposition between essence and appearance. Force refers to the way the intelligence discerns that which in appearance is most primitive.

This is hard to appreciate because the tenacity of our schemata, which are the bases for our self-conscious cognitive orientation toward our own experience, indeed for our sense of self, make representation seem to be the more elemental activity. It is because of this prejudice, which is aided by the residual associations of subjectivism from Romantic doctrine, that we take modernist experiments in formal composition to be merely a matter of perspectival attitudes run wild. The occulted history of the senses that lurks behind the affinity of paired objects in the Rubin exhibition helps us to understand the mirror world within which we habitually view the relationships between those experiences we characterize as aesthetic and those that we characterize as non-aesthetic. McLuhan's equation "the medium is the message" served to define in pithy, aphoristic form the relationship between a given usage of a form of media and the sensory environment, which quickly becomes an invisible background condition, that such a usage introduces into collective life once it reaches a point of maximum saturation. In this formula, he was expressing the same insight that animated Durkheim's thesis about collective representations, thought Durkheim's model remained under the influence of the mediational picture that gives representation its prestige.

Learning to discern force clearly, which is what these works invite us to do, means learning to inhabit a world that we already live in. Such, at any rate, are the larger contours as I see them of an adequate picture of modernist art, both on its own and in its relationship to those other shelved fragments in the museum. But as Whitehead pointed out, a large, speculatively-informed picture is only as good as its ability to illuminate the fine details. It remains to be shown to what degree the foregoing account can help us to appreciate both the works and the explicit statements of the artists associated with the vanguard of non-representational art at the turn of the last century. My next chapter will be devoted to exploring the origins of open-form poetics within the broader context of the European avant-garde's experimentation with practices of media usage.

**Chapter 3: Making Simplicity**

One desires the most intense, for certain forms of expression *are* "more intense" than others. They are more dynamic. I do not mean that they are more emphatic, or that they are yelled louder. – Ezra Pound (*Gaudier Brzeska – A Memoir* 90)

To start with what I trust and hope is a fairly common experience, think of returning to a piece of writing that you have read a million times before. The linguistic medium is not essential here, actually; a sound or a smell or a flavor or a visual image or any variety of other objects of perception we might encounter could work equally well. A proverbial statement, mannerism or weather pattern could stand in quite nicely. Obviously there will be distinctions in each case. What is important is that in this experience you notice, for the first time, that you really *enjoy* the object in question even though, and this is key, it is not the first time you have encountered it. Perhaps "enjoy" overdetermines the experience. Rather, you notice that, as we would say, there *is something about it* that is now apparent to you for the first time. Now let us say that, due to the fact that you have encountered this piece of writing (to stick with that example for clarity's sake) on numerous previous occasions, you know all about it. You know about the author's life, you know about the historical period in which she lived, maybe you know about other pieces of writing, events, traditions, or contexts that are in some way conditioning the existence of this bit of writing. And you have known all of that stuff for a while now, but you've never noticed *this thing* about the piece of writing that you are struck by this time around.

I can try to be less vague about the distinction in question. Suppose it's a poem, even a quotation, whose significance or meaning you were previously more than capable of explicating for the benefit of others. You could even talk about its structure and point to the ways that this structure inflected its meaning in a particular way. But maybe you never really thought it was that great before. I'm going to risk the complications "enjoy" might bring in because I think enjoyment gets at something essential. It is the enjoyment, a sense of unexpected affirmation or delight, even if slight or ephemeral, that refers, one might say 'affords access,' to the difference that was not there previously when you were nevertheless perfectly equipped to tell me all about the poem. I won't belabor the point. My question is: what has changed for us in this instance? It is the shift itself that we are concerned with here. What is different about the object? From one perspective, nothing is. Even if we say that I gained some new understanding about how the work fits in to a particular animating context and that this changed the way I saw the work, it is not sufficient to say that this new understanding brought about my sudden appreciation in the sense that that latter reduces to the former. Such a causal explanation won't suffice because in this hypothetical situation any amount of contextualization may have happened before; I might previously have learned more about the work or its context without having ever found anything particularly great about it. "Learning about the work" might have gone on forever without this distinct change ever taking place in which it occurs to me that this is something made or done in a truly worthwhile way. If the way I experience the object on this occasion was causally determined by my understanding, we would never find such instances in which I am surprised to discover that I am moved by such-and-such a thing. At best we would have to say the development in understanding provided one condition but was not itself the efficient cause of the difference in how I experience the object in question.

Such experiences happen to one. Not that this observation especially matters other than that it allows me to get some raw material out on the table for purposes of basic orientation. It is difficult to imagine that the person reading this will search their memory in vain for an instance in which they did not like something at first and then later developed an appreciation for it after they already had some familiarity with it. Sometimes it even happens with respect to other people. Undoubtedly, such experiences (I'll flirt with ponderous overtones and go as far as to call them "conversions") are contextual through and through. Otherwise there would be no possibility for the shift ever to take place. But it remains to be seen in what way this contextuality works, what its dimensions are and how these dimensions embrace the object. Something is different in the arrangement of circumstances through which we receive the piece of writing such that it is now vividly relevant to us, personally, whereas before, even if we could describe or explain it in depth, it simply was not. There may have been interest before, but there was no sense of personal stakes for us in our taking interest. Relevance, aptness, vividness, these terms are stabs at approximation. I don't think they necessarily correspond to expert judgment. They might at times be inimical to it. What is more, most of the time we feel that our new appreciation has removed our impediments to encountering the object "as it really is," rather than having added some new interpretive layer to our apprehension. When describing the experience to a friend we say something like, "I finally got what's so great about it."

Several features of this kind of common experience seem to me crucial for the way we think about literary education. They all have to do with the distinction between our ability to have a conceptual understanding of the object in question, even an incredibly nuanced and sophisticated or insightful understanding, and this dawning sense of aptness or relevance that sometimes changes fundamentally our sense of the object's status. I am not trying to valorize one at the expense of the other here, merely to suggest that they are different and, if possible, to stay with and contemplate what it is in the latter that warrants the distinction. From the distinction it follows that we could have in place all of the concepts applicable to this experience without actually having the experience, like Mallarme's line about language being an eroded coin that passes back and forth between users who don't see what's imprinted on it. Correlatively, we could confuse concepts of the experience for the experience itself. This in turn might influence how we conceptualize and discuss the status of experience as such, for instance with respect to the matter of perception. The reader might think of the preceding as championing some naïve idea of immediate sense experience against concepts, and in one sense I do think it's important to stay close to the senses if possible. But the senses seem to be working perfectly fine in terms either of delivering information about an external state of affairs or displaying for my sensorium an array of qualitative sensations on all those days when I walk past that particular stairwell on the way to work and, unlike today, am *not* struck by its charm. In other words, sensuousness has a range of valences and we should accordingly exercise care in distinguishing between these different valences.

This is why, when we want to convey to others the difference, we have to use that ridiculous emphasis, a kind of flailing verbal gesticulation pitched at indicating the code-switching that has taken place in our usage of the perceptual verbs "see" or "hear" (or the rarer "I really *smelled* those pine needles today"). I'm willing to risk sounding mystical here because too much or too premature a lucidity will lose touch with the slipperiness, which is itself the concreteness, of the experience in question. The difference has consequences not only for contemporary debates about the purported turn to surface and affect in thinking about aesthetic and literary experience, but also for the way we think about the idea of form

as it emerged in the consciousness of artists working Europe and England in the years immediately leading up to and following the outbreak of the first World War in 1914. I hope to show in this chapter that the concept and value of form at this moment is the counterpart to a dimension of experience, to which form by definition points, that is almost constantly vanishing into counterfeit substitutes for itself. The precarity of form's counterpart in experience and the liability this slippage produces toward confusing or mistaking near-matches for what I'll hazard to call (by what possible standard?) "authentic" versions informs the practices, theories, rhetorics and theatrics of the major 20th century avant-gardes of Cubism, Expressionism, Futurism and Vorticism.

To return briefly to the example of what I've been calling the shift in register in how we experience something, particularly something with which we have prior familiarity, it seems to me that there are two relevant ways that the example suggests such a shift may occur. One follows from the premise that repeat encounters with and habituation to an object of experience neither tend in one direction, nor do they necessarily preclude one's orientation toward an experience with which one has been habituated from being refocused or redirected. This is meant in part as a response to possible protests, based on the idea that repetition necessarily means inurement, against the previous chapter's claims regarding ritual efficacy. On the contrary, what we find throughout a variety of ritual contexts is that reception of the experiential dimension informing the signifying aspects of the ritual practice depends upon the building up of a particular affective and ethico-practical disposition through, among other things, repeat encounter. You return to the same lines you've been reading for years to find that all of a sudden you 'get' what they're talking about (often it's only at these moments that I realize that I didn't really get it beforehand). Strangely enough, what they're talking about is completely up to date. So one version of contextuality is what we might call ambient and has to do with a range of more broadly encompassing and enduring life conditions. In general this has to do with the concept of tradition, particularly in its relationship to lifeworld. We could call tradition one locus of contextuality.

The other locus is not ambient but acute and exists within or as the object itself. In this view, adapting to the very opacity of how the object's appearance has been articulated is what brings about the shift in ones bearing and refocusing of the fields of experience. This locus could be called 'esoteric' because it tends to require a shift in experiential register as a baseline condition for any understanding of the object in question. 'Understanding' here simply means inhabiting the vantage point from which the compositional integrity of the object, which had from the prior vantage point seemed opaque, comes to resonate sympathetically with ones own comportment in her receptive activity. The distinction I'm making here is of course provisional. Clearly, these two loci are not strictly speaking separate but mutually condition one another through a complex set or series of determinations, whether dialectical or otherwise. In general, the acute locus seems to develop historically in inverse proportion to the ambient locus, and examples associated with this process tend to get grouped under the heading of disenchantment. The provisional distinction is worth making at the outset because of what it illustrates, particularly when we juxtapose two examples from each locus, about the qualities of the experience accompanying the shift in register, and because of how this helps us understand the nature of objects that occasion such a shift. Take an aphorism you've grown up hearing repeated *ad nauseum* and an abstract painting. Outwardly, the two objects are worlds apart. One is transparent to the point of inanity while the other is impenetrable. Under the right conditions, however, both might suddenly accompany the shift in experiential register to the same person on the same day. In either case what matters for present purposes is that, at the object-pole of this shift,

perceived properties both stay the same and are at the same time radically different. There is nothing more to either object than was there previously, and yet there is. So it is not what is superficially distinct about the painting as opposed to the aphorism that accounts for whatever special status we might wish to claim for it. In other words, that to which 'form' refers is not what is perceptible to us in the object and confusion starts arising when we mistake the perceptible for form. Rather, the perceptible is a condition for form. This, generally speaking, was what abstraction had to show.

This chapter follows the premise that it's no use trying to understand the developments of art in the 20th century, in this case the open-form poetics of the Pound and Williams school that would come largely to define the contributions of the 'new American poetry,' lacking a clear sense of what is meant by 'form.' In order to develop a clearer sense, it is necessary to look at the compositional practices of vanguard artists of the pre-war period in order to grasp how the work they were doing in the visual media of painting and sculpture was influencing the ways poets were thinking about their own practices. While it might seem unnecessarily complicated to try to understand the development of one genre or medium through the developments of others, the comparison actually gets at something essential to the mutation in the development of the arts at the turn of the last century that accompanied the increasing prominence of the idea of form. As Walter Pater's quasi-Hegelian dictum "all arts aspire constantly toward the condition of music" illustrates, form always has to do with the limits of a medium as such and, accordingly, the idea innately tends toward the dissolution of boundaries separating media even as it seeks out the technical capacities most indigenous to each particular medium. The distillation of form at the modernist moment fulfilled the innate tendency of each medium by pushing that medium to the point of its non-differentiation from the totality of life beyond itself. In those instances where art passed beyond this vanishing point, whether in practice or in theory, the visibility of form was lost and replaced with something else. Behind the experiments in composition lay a sense of the historical contingency of ones vocation as artist as being inseparable from that which in art is most resistant to being explained away as thwarted history.

What stands out, for instance, in Picasso's retrospective statements about the African masks to Andre Malraux is that the former's revelation at the *Musee du Trocadero* in 1907 had to do with a new understanding of his vocation as an artist, one arising from a sense of the function of the masks within their own traditions and not, or not first and foremost, from an interest in how one might appropriate whatever specific compositional techniques went into giving them their distinctive style. "The Negroes sculptures were intercessors…against everything… I understood what the purpose of the sculpture was for the Negroes… I understood why I was a painter" (Flam 33). And again, this time years later and to Francois Gilot: "painting isn't an esthetic operation. It's a form of magic designed as a mediator between this strange, hostile world and us, a way of seizing the power by giving form to our terrors as well as our desires." (Anderson 63). In both characterizations, "giving form" attends the setting up of a boundary which serves both as an interface with the world and as a division within it. The emphasis is not on the object or "mediator"'s adequation to the world, nor on its own sensuous qualities *per se* but precisely the effect of this constitutive act of redoubling the dualism of subject and object, which is now both reinforced through the boundary the mediator establishes between maker and world and collapsed into one block ("everything") against which the object itself is set. The properties of the object come to bear witness to the character of this act. Kahnweiler refers to "the first upsurge, a desperate titanic clash with all of the problems at once":

> These problems were the basic task of painting: to represent three dimensions and color on a flat surface, and to comprehend them in the unity of that surface. "Representation," however, and "comprehension" in the strictest and highest sense. Not the simulation of form by chiaroscuro, but the depiction of the three dimensional through drawing on a flat surface. No pleasant "composition" but uncompromising, organically articulated structure. (7)

Not "depiction *in* three dimensions," mind you, but "depiction *of the three dimensional*." *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, in other words, undertakes to elide the opposition between container and contained that affords pictorial representation the minimal distance within which illusionistic appearance becomes possible. Hence the difference: in the clash with all of the problems of the tradition of painting at once, the act of making takes as the object of its efforts its own history, its own conditions of possibility, both those of the maker (what, after all, is the relationship between the 'everything' and those *demoiselles*?) and those of the practice. This is a fairly Greenbergian formulation, of course. Modernism has for a long time been characterized by the incorporation and thematization of the procedures of aesthetic production as the "subject matter" of the work. From this characterization the main debates about the nature of Cubism arise, primarily the debate surrounding Greenberg's influential "opticality" thesis, the semiotic models of Rosalind Krauss and Yves Alain Bois, and T.J. Clark's eloquently melancholic account of the collapse of analytic cubism into synthetic cubism.[xxv] These debates primarily hinge upon the question of Cubism's relationship, or lack thereof, to the object-world. As these readings pertain to the question of Cubism's purported subject matter, whether mimetic or otherwise, my hope is that lingering for a bit longer on the matter of vocation might let in a bit of a breeze.

To what degree can we take at face value Picasso's comments about the masks and 'sculptures'? I think there are unacknowledged allowances involved in answering this question as well as prohibitions that need to be respected. Seeing the modes of activity associated with painting and those associated with the production and usage of the masks as identical in kind, if not necessarily in degree, has the virtue of breaking the spell of stylistic appropriation, the view that the primary interest in non-European ritual objects for Picasso was what they looked like. We find one influential version of this thesis, originally developed by Kahnweiler and invoked by Bois in his readings of cubism, in the distinction between the two moments of interest, associated with the instance of the ethnography museum in 1907 and with Picasso's discovery of the Grebo mask in 1912, respectively, as characterized by a 'morphological' or 'expressionist' interest and a 'structural' interest (Bois 55). Picasso famously described his interest in the African objects as "*raisonnable,"* which critics of various stripes have been happy to translate as the theory-friendly adjective "conceptual," a term that lends itself equally to formalist and sociopolitical readings (Leighten 623). Trickier still has been Picasso's offhand comment to a journalist that the masks and statues lying around his studio served more as witnesses than as examples (Bois 55).

The masks and "sculptures" to which Picasso refers have been identified by art historians as the *ngil* masks and the *bieri* reliquary guardian figures of the Fang who have resided in Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.[xxvi] Speaking very broadly, the masks and anthropomorphic carved figures would have been used in late-19th century contexts, when they were appropriated by French missionaries, colonists and ethnographers, as part of the ritual practices of the *bieri* ancestor

cult. These practices are seen as invoking numinous forces utilized for various functions which contribute to the well-being of the social group by establishing bonds of solidarity with the domain of ancestral intelligences whose alliances with and intervention in the lives of the community invest group members with the requisite capacity to perform certain necessary tasks. The masks, for instance, are used both in initiatory rites for younger members of the group and as part of juridical activities associated with the prosecution of individuals accused of sorcery. The reliquary figures serve to guard vessels containing the physical remains of ancestors, thereby sustaining alliances between the living members of the group and the extramundane world associated with the ancestors. Picasso would have had little to no knowledge of these details. At the same time, without getting too deeply entangled in trying to understand the complex and historically dynamic cosmological and mythological perspectives informing the practical contexts within which these objects have been produced and used, we could nevertheless say that Picasso's characterization of these objects as mediators facilitating transferences of power is basically accurate as far as practitioners of these traditions are concerned.[xxvii]

I have already discussed at some length what I see as the basic dynamics linking modes of action to particular ranges of phenomenological experience in ritual practice, as well as the larger historical trajectories that position the domain of the fine arts as the inheritor within secularized societies of such practices and experiential relationships. The biggest impediments to seeing Picasso's characterization as revealing something essential to both his own creative practice and those practices associated with the masks is that we are habituated to see art, on the one hand, as defined in terms of mimetic representation, and ritual, on the other hand, as defined in terms of belief. But *mimesis* for Aristotle was *mimesis praxeos*: the semblance of action, not the representation of objects. And likewise for Aristotle the purpose of those tragedies to which he applied the influential concept of *mimesis* was the production of the effect of *catharsis*, itself a transformation and purification of the affects. I have suggested that the notion of media provides both a more flexible and a more accurate conceptual model for the activity associated with objects used in creative and ritual practice. I have also tried to show that representation, both at the cognitive level of the sign and at the perceptual level of the image, is itself a particular regimentation of media activity. Lastly, what engender these particular regimentations are norms, which could be defined as intersubjectively shared habits of apperception developed in practical contexts and solidified through historical usage.

So an axiom is just as much a norm as the pictorial convention of three-dimensional illusionism. When Picasso speaks of his painting and the masks as sharing alike in the function of "intercessors" or "mediators," we ought to hear this statement as speaking to a dawning awareness of the capacity of his compositional materials to solicit and display media activity, an awareness that his own avowals suggest was catalyzed in part by his insight into the basic function of ritual objects viewed in the *Musee du Trocadero*. *Pace* a certain semiotic cultural relativism that sees the ritual objects as invested with a function solely in relation to a given system of determinate values and concepts or "cultural logic," I would suggest that serious consideration of these traditions involves entertaining the possibility that their efficacy and function can be appreciated, in fundamentals if not necessarily in details, even by receptive individuals uninitiated into the larger ideological frameworks informing their production and usage. By way of analogy, one can see that a car is a vehicle without knowing how an engine functions.

Receptivity is a funny thing, often operating independently of our second-order, self-conscious identifications. It unfolds within a spectrum of degree and not according to

binary logic of present and/or absent. We pick up on honesty just as we sense resentment seething beneath affability, even if we self-consciously choose to ignore these things. The sense of exposure to these impingements can feel extremely threatening, so we often develop a variety of self-protective strategies in order to cope. The effect certain things, places and situations have on us is similar. I quote Picasso to Malraux again: "When I went to the Trocadero it was disgusting. The flea market. The smell. I was all alone. I wanted to get away. But I didn't leave. I stayed. I understood something very important: something was happening to me, wasn't it?" (Flam 33). The range of ways in which we might choose to read these statements in bad faith is virtually limitless. Surely, any sense of power Picasso might have seen in the objects could only have been a projection on his part, a (literal) fetishization of the otherworldly and exotic. But that things remain redolent of their former contexts is a fact to which we constantly bear witness in our behavior. Otherwise, we would never honor promises. As I tried to show in the previous chapter, it is of the nature of sacred things to possess a unique status relative to the instrumentalized field of spatiotemporal extension, which could not historically have come into being without the points of orientation they have provided. The hypothesis that, because Picasso encountered these objects in a cosmopolitan European context whereas the view that the objects actually produce or transfer power belongs to a pre-industrial worldview of non-European tribal cultures and, for that reason, there is an absolute separation between the two occasions that excludes the possibility of influence or interrelationship is acceptable only as long as one is willing to accept the consequences of this position.

The masks and reliquary figures are after all products of human labor, bearing the imprint of a particular practical context and mode of intentionality of which they are the expression. As Marx understood, this imprint or residue of practice reaches deep into both the ontic and the ontological status of its products. What I have been describing as force refers to the dimension of the experienced world that becomes manifest in a particular conjunction of mind and world, when the mind's epistemic orientation towards the object as substance and its affective receptivity to the object as expressive appearance collapse into one another within a particular milieu of practice and the dispositions it invokes. The production of sacred objects by definition takes place either within or with reference to this practical milieu. This focus on milieu means that, properly speaking, force is pre-objective, residing neither "in" the thing nor "in" the perceiver.

From this perspective, the idea that when a thing leaves one milieu and enters into another, it makes a 'clean break,' as it were, and pristinely continues in its new context untainted by any trace of its past, wholly recontextualized by its incorporation into a new cultural frame, entails a strict separation of existence from conditions of existence that logically presupposes a creation *ex nihilo*. It means that the object possesses some abiding essence that is not context dependent. This consequence is significant because it in turn entails that such an essence could never have come into being and cannot be delineated by any finite dimensions. But at this point any attempt to speak meaningfully of a thing as existing begins to fall apart. This cannot be any less true of the so-called "materiality" of the object so frequently invoked as that which exists independently of and exceeds all semiotic determinations. To say that this substance or materiality "exists" is necessarily to say that it categorically cannot be indifferent to context. The converse of a view that reifies substance is that even the ontic presence of the object itself necessarily integrates the two contexts, that it is impossible for the two milieux not to interact in some way by virtue of the persistence of the object in space and time. If it is too much to ask of the reader to entertain the possibility that Picasso's conception of intercessors was inspired by some direct experience

of power occasioned by the objects, a power not to be conflated with either a contemporaneous standard of aesthetic value or with a conception of the cultural character of the individuals or groups who produced these objects, it will suffice to observe at least that his own comments suggest we are mislead in our attempts to understand the influence of African masks and reliquary figures on Picasso's work by preoccupations either with style or with explicit sociopolitical connotations.

On the other hand, Picasso's notion of intercessors may provide a useful point of entry into understanding the first stirrings of new form that began sometime around 1907 and reached a pitch of sorts in the transition from analytic to synthetic cubism. At its most basic level, what the notion of intercessors implies is that the function of the visible or perceptible is to serve as support and conveyance for the non-perceptible. Each of these terms, "perceptible" and "non-perceptible," are perhaps best thought of as moments within experience rather than as static categories. In other words, they cannot be thought in isolation from experience's temporal nature. It is in this respect that attention to the relationship between Picasso's work and the African masks *as* ritual objects provides a useful counterpoint to the debates about analytic cubism. This in turn provides an indispensible key to the question about how artists in various media were thinking about form in the *avant guerre*. Debates about analytic cubism have primarily focused on the ways in which cubism did or did not break with illusionism, but here the question is what "depiction of the three dimensional" does to depiction itself. Under consideration is what exactly the experimentation with the means of illusionism yielded and how Picasso's comments on vocation, viewed in light of the masks and reliquary figures, can refocus a response to this question.

The answer provided by critics like Greenberg and Edward Fry, and to some degree by Kahnweiler, is that cubism was an extension of the post-Enlightenment critical project inaugurated by thinkers like Kant in an attempt to delineate and lay bare consciousness' own conditions of possibility. So the basic function of cubism's making conspicuous of those methods of generating volumetric properties within illusionistic space was, in this view, to reveal the constitutive capacity of mental faculties in the production of worldly appearances. For semiotic critics of Cubism, on the other hand, the import lay not in making the spectator aware of her own constructive agency but on the contrary of revealing the irreducibly mediated nature of visual apperceptions, the status of percepts as arbitrary signs whose function as signs was maintained solely through the differential play of mutual citation and indexation within a synchronic structure. I don't think either of these perspectives is entirely wrong, but I would suggest that each confuses means and ends. In other words, both views remain within the perspective that Picasso's cubism was at the end of the day still a matter of spectatorship and of the perception (or conceptualization) of visual phenomena, of what we *do* see, and that its techniques served primarily to complicate or finesse an understanding of the nature of spectatorship through a foregrounding of visibility's conditions.

This attitude would have been understandable even without Kahnweiler's influence on subsequent readings of cubism by, among other interpretive actions on his part, giving the paintings titles that made explicit the recognizable mimetic objects contained within them. Painting had always been a matter of producing visual images, after all. More profoundly, perceptions are what there is to talk about, so it is inevitable that discussion would tend towards making the perceptible the main event in cubism. But an alternative view of cubism is that, at least in its analytic stages, the experimentation with the techniques of illusionistic representation was geared towards redirecting the conditioning factors within visuality away from the production of determinate images, not towards some other way of

seeing or self-critical reflexivity in the act of seeing but in order to suspend the compulsion always to see some *thing*. The point what was this would release. If what was on the other side of seeing were easy to talk about, cubism and its heirs would never have been necessary.

Composition entailed a fission of the normative structures frozen within habits of seeing in order to restore the simplicity of open transparency to that which is seen. The visible thus becomes a window, conveying an unimpededness in percepts that shows up within visual experience as a kind of invisible excess. In other words, if a variety of inherited illusionistic means could be made to interact with one another in such a way that their standard functioning as conventions of representation would hover just short of their fulfillment in visibility proper, the capacities innate to visual experience might be released from their fixation in various habitual schematisms of vision. And those capacities? Nothing other than how the experienced world gets expressed when unencumbered, paradoxically through an idiosyncratic compound of determinations, by the habitual fixations of determinate experience. To give form was to produce what had always been the case. Vocation proves the crucial category here because painting now becomes virtually unrecognizable in terms of what it had been to the extent that now, one is tempted to say, it brings into the world that which it makes rather than copying the world. If one is too preoccupied with the paintings *as* paintings, as objects normatively coded to engender a determinate visual experience, one will only see the visible as visible.

Obviously this is territory in which to tread lightly and with care. Any lapse into extremes will lose contact with what was being made. Illusionism in cubism had increasingly to walk a razor's edge between deployment and fulfillment. This involved pitting what I previously referred to as the two loci of contextuality against one another. The crux at which the encompassing world and the work's own articulation met became the site where the fold within tradition that produced, on the one hand, a broader set of habits of perceiving painterly materials as substance and, on the other, a more specific set of conventions affording the illusion of spatial dimensionality within the media activity of those materials would buckle, allowing these habits to collide and disarticulate one another. No wonder at all the subsequent rage for simultaneity in the Delaunays and others. Semiotic critics of cubism, particularly cubist collage, were right to focus on the role of normative conventions (the 'differential play' of synchronic relationships in structuralism, which gave the arbitrariness of the sign the semblance of reference) as being of equal importance to what the eye could engender. But they hypostatized these conventions, treating their mere ludic exposure as the primary end of cubism, and therefore stopping short of seeing what animated them, how they were refunctioned and transformed in the act of making.

Greenberg, on the other hand, largely captured it in the "Collage" essay: "Painting had to spell out, rather than deny, the physical fact that it was flat, even though it had to overcome this proclaimed flatness as an aesthetic fact and continue to report nature" (*Art and Culture* 71). If one side or the other won out, if physicality or illusionism predominated, then that innate capacity would be recaptured and placed in service of one perceptual schema or the other. Where my account diverges from Greenberg is in his preceding comment that "there is no question but that Braque and Picasso were concerned, in their Cubism, with holding on to painting as an art of representation and illusion" (70-71). The focus on opticality, on cubism's main import as being reducible to a virtuosic performance aimed at displaying mastery over the illusionistic tradition's bag of tricks in order to expose the constitutive agency of the viewer, works to domesticate the painters' accomplishments by placing them back in the service of the western tradition and institution of painterly representation.

The risk of such a framing is to lose the thread of what was being made manifest in these works through an overreliance on available means of articulating what it was. Again, we find the slipperiness with which the object evades description. We can approach the main event of cubism by way of visual structure, but lose it if we reduce it to visual structure. Critics have used the means at their disposal, art history and linguistics in the present case, for making what emerges through compositional structure explicit, but this in turn raises the question of whether these means transpose their object into another register. The reason I insist on Picasso's avowed experience at the *Musee du Trocadero* as having significance primarily with respect to his own understanding of painterly vocation, rather than style, is that our receptivity to that to which the notion of form refers is constantly getting swallowed up in the institutional ways of speaking aimed at integrating it. Force as I have been trying to animate the term provides what I see as the nearest approximation to the appropriate register, though of course I run the same risk of losing the thread as anyone else. Conversely, art history takes as its object the artwork *qua* object invested with a set of historical prerogatives that the advent of abstraction in cubism demands that we scrutinize more carefully. Thus when Greenberg resolves his own previously quoted description with proclamations of aesthetic fact and reportage of nature, hallmarks of art as situated within the art historical institution, that which shows forth in the works has already been enlisted in the cause of leisured pleasure and mimetic representation.[xxviii]

Lest this discussion get too far ahead itself, both in terms of conflating different phases of cubism and in terms of overloading itself with programmatic statements unsupported by particulars, I would like to go back to those *demoiselles* of 1907. Kahnweiler's claim that the painting was unfinished actually provides a useful point of entry to thinking about the foregoing claims. What Picasso seems to have hit upon in this work, and this would prove to be a primary resource in what would follow, was the effect yielded by the non-fulfillment of a given illusionistic measure through the counterpoint of another, seemingly incompatible or incommensurable, device or range of devices. This was a matter of placing co-ordinated relationships among emergent spatial dimensions in a leading position to guide the way sculptural properties would take shape in represented objects, rather than fitting those dimensions to the volumetric properties accompanying an interpellated visual perspective, even the kinds of multiple perspectives Cezanne had previously developed. For example, the faces of the two central female figures do find a kind of fulfillment as probably the most recognizable images in the painting, ironically through the instantly recognizable (and for that very reason, non-realistic) iconicity of the eyes, thereby providing one point of anchorage for both the attention and its intimations of a fixed representational content. The eyes, themselves two-dimensional ellipsoids, summon to visibility the other flattened facial features of the two figures, primarily the angular noses and almost non-existent horizontal lines barely designating mouths.

The interaction between the simultaneous half-mimetic-half-iconic visibility and the spatial flattening that arises in the faces in turn generates a basic, dynamic tension between sculptural effect and a more abstract planarity that reverberates outwardly from the faces into the larger field of relations making up the painting as a whole. This, perhaps, is why the centering vertical of the first figure and face, with its upwardly extended and bent arms, is echoed almost verbatim in the left figure, as though representational anchorage is itself only a retroactive effect of tensions vibrating in the activity of discernment. The quasi-realistic cohesion in the facial features of the human figures pulls back against the pure spatiality of the polygonal shapes into which the outermost figures shatter, almost promising to orient those shapes into illusionistic functioning, while the facial features are at the same time being

drawn out into the inhuman clatter of raw geometry and the brute presence of painterly materials seen in the conspicuous brushwork and strong (if muted) color tones. It is a tension registered in the oblique pull warping the faces themselves, where those eyes, their expression at once fawnlike astonishment, sibylline gaze and predatory leer, threaten almost to drift apart from one another, drawn into the field of tensions, a virtual movement at once diagonally across the flat surface of the picture plane and into the depth of three-dimensional relief.

An insistent sense of formative activity within the confluence of two (or more) simultaneous yet mutually exclusive dimensions seems to be the crucial accomplishment of what I've referred to as non-fulfillment. Falling into relief can be, at one and the same instant, lateral movement across a plane. To be clear: the qualities I am attempting to convey are not things one "sees" in the painting, they are forces immanent to seeing. An effect is strictly speaking nowhere, and yet recognizable locations arise according to effects. The point seems not to be that the viewer reflexively assembles a coherent visibility out of the rudiments of illusionism, but rather that those rudiments become enough of a lure to vision to appropriate and alchemize its motivating energies. Take that uncanny, hieratic face on the bottom right figure. There is a kind of momentum to the face arising from the relationships conditioning its appearance, a momentum that defines the features themselves as constituting a face. One nexus of those relationships is, perhaps appropriately, in the groin region of the central figure (itself the center of the painting), to which the eye is drawn downward from the central figure's face, aided by the tilt the flattened, semi-circular breasts of the center-left figure.

Against the flatness of the breasts on the center-left figure we get one of the painting's only flirtations with chiaroscuro (the other being the foot of leftmost figure) in the diaphanous white, suggesting cloth, that half-covers the diagonal line seeming to designate hip, upper thigh and lower abdomen of the central figure. The lighter suggestion of a garment or perhaps bed sheet in the semi-transparency of the white is set off against the deliberate clumsiness of blunt lines marking the fingers of center-left figure's left hand, which grasps the assemblage of crude lines into marking the folds of cloth. But that clutch in turn conjoins, on the one hand, a making explicit of the raw materials of the painting with, on the other, a range of devices refocusing its mimetic content. The gripping hand promises to reattach the floating hand in the top left of the painting to the body of the center-left figure at the same time as the oddly brittle folds of fabric drawn together by the fingers resonate with the jagged vertical tear of folded blue that seems to erupt through the picture plane, severing the two figures on the far right from the others. The hieratic face, horizontally aligned with the groin region of the central figure, thus swings outwardly from the tear of blue, the centrifugal movement outward from the picture plane motivating the curvature of the nose and chin, that *is* the nose and chin, where the bottom line of the latter forms a continuity with the white marking the lower edge of the largest central fold of blue. The face—alien and interrogative—stares back, its glance itself a congealment of the tensions propelling it.

Essentially, the conjunctive tensions that those fingers manifest as they clutch the folds of white fabric occur within the habits of apperception, which are as much a part of the world as a pattern of encountered occasions (an object, an artwork, an image) as they are of the intentional subjectivity of a mind encountering a world. It therefore becomes impossible to separate mimetic image from object within the dynamics of experience manifest by virtue of the work's structure, even as the two poles are constantly animated by their mutual resistance. In this sense, cubism's strain against object-status, which would take

until the sculptural objects such as the cardboard guitar of 1912 and the collages of synthetic cubism to reach the fruition of actually motivating the gross physical properties of the art-object, is already latent in *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*. Further, while description, as an always-limited effort to transcribe some range of the effects accompanying the work's composition, inevitably treats those effects as discrete and sequential, the nature of composition itself solicits a simultaneous reception of multiple possible dimensions latent within a given effect. Such receptivity is the province of the mode of intelligence whose operations I tried to show in the previous chapter.

An absurd amount has been written about Picasso's exposure, via Esprit Jouffret by way of Maurice Princet, to the now-famous notion of the 4th dimension and the non-Euclidian geometries explored in the work of Henri Poincaré.[xxix] It is exceedingly difficult to tease out any kernel of significance to the properly geometric idea of the 4th dimension from the nebulously charismatic metaphorical appeal the phrase had in the minds of artists at the time, many of whom read the term as much in its various theosophical and occultist senses as they did in Poincaré's. Here we should at all costs avoid the interpretation that would tell us that Picasso was attempting to 'represent the 4th dimension' in the development of analytic cubism, regardless of how much Metzinger's and Gleizes' writings might tempt us to do so. Apollinaire's own obvious verbal liberties make this reading easier to skirt in his case. The phrase 'the 4th dimension' in Poincaré's usage primarily serves to designate a thought experiment showing the Euclidian axioms to be conventions, or what he calls 'apparent hypotheses,' rather than either synthetic *a priori* cognitions or experimental truths. Because the thought experiments (e.g. 2-dimensional beings existing on a spherical surface, etc) in the work of Nicholaus Lobatschewsky and Bernhard Reimann admitted of theorems which did not obey the three main axioms of Euclidian geometry, theorems whose logical non-contradiction nevertheless invested them with mathematically veridical status, Poincaré argued that those Euclidian axioms could not possibly have an *a priori* basis. Otherwise it would have been impossible to think the theorems of Lobatschewsky and Reimann. On the other hand, an experimental basis for ideal geometric figures would rule out the possibility that geometry could be an exact science because geometry by definition has an ideal basis. Empirical verification would mean that geometry was open to continual modification, undermining the very necessitous relationships upon which its axioms stood. The upshot, for Poincaré, was that geometric axioms were "only definitions in disguise" (Poincare 59).

The reason this distinction matters is that speculations on 4th dimensionality in Poincaré's work strike me as not first and foremost about the postulation of some 4th spatial dimension but a means through which to apprehend the nature of 3-dimensional Euclidian space. And of that nature we would have to say, 'not ultimately true but reliably effective.' Poincaré writes,

> What, then, are we to think of the question: Is Euclidean geometry true? It has no meaning. We might as well ask if the metric system is true, and if the old weights and measures are false; if Cartesian co-ordinates are true and polar co-ordinates false. One geometry cannot be more true than another; it can only be more convenient. Now, Euclidean geometry is, and will remain, the most convenient: 1st, because it is the simplest, and it is not so only because of our mental habits or because of the kind of direct intuition that we have of Euclidean space; it is the simplest in itself, just as a polynomial of the first degree is simpler than a polynomial of the second degree; 2nd,

> because it sufficiently agrees with the properties of natural solids, those bodies which we can compare and measure by means of our senses. (59)

4th dimensionality was an elaborate means of demonstrating this meta-discursive claim clarifying the veridical status of Euclidian geometry. We cannot exhaustively know how Princet might have presented *Science and Hypothesis* in conversation, or how Picasso might have read Jouffret, but it is difficult to imagine that Poincaré's central thesis regarding the conventional status of Euclidian geometrical axioms would have been left out. It seems fair to assume that Picasso was reflective enough about the character of his creative practice to conceive of the act of representation as being innately tied to the mode of truth and epistemology, to claims about how the world is. Certainly phrases like "We all know that art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least truth that is given us to understand" would suggest as much ("Picasso Speaks" 270).

So making the cubist accomplishment apparent again turns on an understanding of vocation, on the character of the act. The difference between mimesis and media activity is therefore one between truth and efficacy, where the former comes to depend upon the latter. If we are trying to think through the question of influence, we would have to say that for Picasso to have appreciated Poincaré's claim that Euclidian axioms are conventionally valid could not but have influenced his sense of the nature of the three-dimensional representational act that Kahnweiler described as "the basic task of painting." If 'the fourth dimension' in Poincaré effectively means 'the nature of the three-dimensional exemplified," I would suggest that it does so no less in analytic cubism. Here "exemplified" explicitly does not mean "described" or "represented" because, insofar as both description and representation *are* that nature pressed into service, i.e. are efficacy accomplishing epistemology, they preclude the visibility of that nature just as a finger cannot point at its own act of pointing. Accordingly, simultaneity refers not to the superimposition of a sequence of representational images or perspectives, a kind of cinematographic cross section, but to latencies within an emergent percept that when cashed in to the mimetic properties they afford do so in a plurality of mutually exclusive ways.

It is in line with the preceding thread of analysis regarding receptivity that I must respectfully, perhaps ill-advisedly, engage T.J. Clark's brilliant, searching study of analytic cubism in *Farewell to an Idea.* My own discussion cannot hope by a long shot to vie with Clark for comprehensive grasp, not only of cubism as a movement and Picasso as a painter, but also of the larger art- and world-historical landscape, nor for overall critical acumen. Nevertheless, the focus and insight of his analysis provides me with an opportunity to proffer a distinction that is important for understanding the larger question of form. The central node of Clark's argument that seems particularly pertinent to these matters is the following statement:

> Modernism's metaphors are always directed essentially (tragically) to technique; because only technique seems to offer a ground, or a refuge, in a merely material world. I did say "seems to." (179)

For Clark this is so because the high cubist work as a technical performance is ultimately an aggregation of "little local acts of illusionistic description" volleyed at a certain 'elsewhere,' another possible world, or at least bluffing as much (179). Before attempting to respond to Clark's larger framing of analytic cubism, the claim in the quoted passage that warrants further attention is the characterization of the multiplicity of local acts as constituting a

series: "How is a complex sequence of illusions—imitations of some sort—supposed to generate a non-imitative whole?" (180).

That the local acts are essentially appropriating the devices of the illusionistic tradition is not in question here, though the question could be raised of whether that tradition, viewed in long enough duration, can unequivocally be said to have been a matter of illusionism. First, though, the components of Clark's reading that seem to me exactly right. That what Picasso found in African "art" was an insight pertaining to the basic "mechanics of illusionism" (leaving aside the question of the aptness of the metaphor of mechanics) (194). That the fundamental equation (again the metaphor) of illusionism, exemplified for Clark in the reversible cube of *Woman With Pears*, reduces to the equivalence 'salience is presence.' As for Clark's narrative about the summer at Cadaqués in 1911 constituting a turning point for Picasso at which the pursuits of analytic cubism, viz. to "cancel out… the equation PRESENCE = SALIENCE" and produce a new system of representation based on an alternative equation, ran aground and were succeeded by paintings that feigned to have accomplished such a task, I cannot hope to match this account point for point with an an alternative set of thick descriptions (202). So I have to double back on the questions of technique's relation to metaphor and of the illusionistic equation, because both of these characterizations in Clark's account hone in on exactly the key points in the question of "form" as an idea and as a referent in modernism.

For Clark the equation "salience is presence" is itself the basic metaphor of illusionism, insofar as illusionistic depiction is essentially metaphorical. The metaphoricity of painting Clark derives from Paul de Man's characterization of phenomenality's relationship to ontology, of the crossing entailed in consciousness' reconstruction-at-one-remove of the external world. This is best illustrated for Clark in the phenomenon, painterly and otherwise, of light, which is "painting's great paradox, no doubt, but it is always already a paradox of experience, of the senses established in a world" (220). The paradox of light manifests in the ambiguity of whether light is the property of the physical world or of consciousness, and the dangers, for Clark as well as for de Man, of mistaking one for the other. Compositional salience's becoming illusionistic presence is therefore both technique and metaphor: a device of crossing that facilitates (or seems to) a switching in orders from the material to the phenomenal, from paint to image, and then perhaps from image to world. Clark thus sees analytic cubism's endeavor as the inevitably futile attempt to cancel that metaphorical structure by establishing a new model of illusionistic presence, operating on a principle other than dichotomous salience and ambience, which would then open onto another world.

The first general distinction to be made is that modernism's metaphors seem to me to be directed essentially toward effect and not primarily toward technique. If it is easy to take the latter for the former, the reason is that effect is strictly speaking imperceptible. What then is the relationship between technique and effect? What one would expect is a causal relationship: technique produces effects, the device makes the illusion, hence the 'mechanics' of illusionism. I should be clear here about what I mean by 'effect' (although everything written up until this point has been an elaborate attempt to share with the reader my sense of what 'effect' is), which is neither separable from nor reducible to mimetic illusion. The term effect, in this usage, serves to discern the coming-to-stand of a given qualitative property from that property taken as something established, in the sense that we would say a law or policy has "taken effect" or is "in effect." The view that technique *causes* effect seems to me deeply inaccurate with respect to the compositional act itself. That act, as many people who have made attempts at creating art would I think agree, *responds* to a sense

that something is needed, or is right, or 'works' with respect to the work in progress. Clark's own reading of the changes Picasso made to the stoppered triangle in *The Poet* bears witness to this characterization of production: "it seems, does it not, as if that shape (so powerfully there in the black and white photo) struck its maker as finally too detached from the surrounding play of forms" (173).

In this respect, the relationship begins to look inverted, counterintuitively so: technique 'responds to' and 'releases' effects that do not yet exist but need to be brought forth through the interposition of a perceptible quality through which they may be expressed. Additionally, insofar as effect is a matter of relationships, of the way any given quality's emergence as such might be prolonged or inflected through its positioning within a field of differential relations, the local acts are only local in the sense that a nodal or axial point is local. That is, insofar as the local acts, the decisions, are responses to an immanent tendency that can only be apprehended in terms of how the components of the work interact with one another, or perhaps 'how interaction motivates the components,' each act can only be the right one to the extent that the discreteness of its volition is self-effacing. In the previous chapter, I suggested that Kant's discussion in the "Critique of Teleological Reason" of the role of reflective judgments in the discernment of a "technic of nature" allows one to think the possibility of a non-arbitrary principle of conjunctive relationships, a "lawfulness of the contingent as such" irreducible to relationships of efficient causation, operative in the world. Entire cultures and worldviews, in *this* world, have developed around the conscious engagement with such patterns of contingency. It is based on such a premise that the principle guiding the local acts of illusionistic description in the maker's relationship to the made can be thought. Our conception of the compositional process, the confluence of those acts, and how this informs one's understanding of the status of the relationship between the work's components, is crucial, as Clark's analysis shows, because it comes to inform both how the status of the work and how the audience's receptive experience get framed.

If Picasso was attempting in analytic cubism to intervene precisely at the point of illusionism's basic operation, it is misleading to characterize the aim of this intervention as being the reconstruction of illusionistic principles on terms other than the equation of salience with presence. Seeing the cubist experiment as attempting to supplant one version of illusionism with another over-exaggerates what was being done, it sees non-fulfillment as being a play for fulfillment of another sort. This exaggeration is part and parcel of the construal of the receptive experience that would frame it as a sequence, analogous to the sequence of painterly decisions, of "readings" of those component features of the work. Taken as a discrete series, each of those acts do begin to resemble completed illusionistic gestures, and one falls into a game of either/or. The inexorability of 'salience is presence' as the core principle of the compositional act rests on this binary. This characterization is most conspicuous in the deconstructive vocabulary, previously implied in the language of illusionism as "metaphor," with which Clark describes those features and the process of reception, for instance in his invocation of the "ironies [cubism] lived by" and the "aporia and undecideables of illusionism" (173, 203).

Here de Manian rhetorical "undecideability," which refers to the reader's loss of criteria with which to choose between literal and figurative, or between multiple possible figurative readings of the semantic value of a phrase, is mapped on to the viewer's sense of possible sculptural values that, for instance, an assemblage of planes, angles or shadings might take on. Based on this characterization, using this fundamentally epistemic language, one could indeed say that cubism was trying to short circuit one kind of illusionism in order

to replace it with another. But, as before, this I think is to confuse means and ends. Mimetic description did not need to be supplanted, only allowed to be shown as what it actually was. Illusionism was the means, its efficacy deployed against itself, while effect, released from its compulsory dependence on a determinate mimetic illusion, was the end. In other words, the end was form, *tout court*. And form is discerned in the act of seeing, without the need for interpretive analysis or readings, the strange cohesion that precedes, for as long as a given work endures, a final reckoning in terms of all those undecideable readings. To return to the question of modernism's metaphors being addressed to technique, one can see cubism's many intimated sound holes, parallel lines suggesting taut strings and curvilinear head stocks as figuring, in the suggestion of musical instruments, some notion of virtuosic performance. But a performance is only as good as its song. The equivalence is indeed strange. A painting is silent, but neither does one hear a song "in" the salient notes that comprise it.

That leftward crook, for instance, almost a perfect right angle, just slightly off center in 1911's "The Accordionist," which seems at the mimetic level to be the main reflective surface in the painting if not its source of light: how is it that its angularity rings out the way it does? The angle is itself a kind of striking, where the pitch of brightness in its upper right hand corner, at which the vertical and diagonal planes meet, serves primarily to register and confirm some anterior punctual event. When a vessel breaks, its contents pour out. Being askew becomes here a vector and impetus, the way the nearly horizontal diagonal plane widening outwardly from the crook of that bright angle cuts through and breaks the hypotenuse of the tall central triangle with its dark cluster of circles near the top margin of the painting. The unmoored top half of the broken hypotenuse, slightly askew, sliding downward and to the left along the top edge of the diagonal plane, makes the texture of light and shade inside the central triangle tighten and shore itself into a finer grain against the more diffuse shimmer of tones in the brushwork outside the triangle's edge. Within that glistening surface or solution to the top left outside of the triangle, feebler suggestions of rectangular shapes hover in near formation, or perhaps dissolve, dissipated by the beams emanating from within the central triangle. The center of density in the painting, on the other hand, is just below that beacon-like bright leftward crook, which never quite becomes either a joint in relief or the corner of a flat plane, in the impacted inward folding of acute angles that seem to nest within one another. Deposited at its center are three tiny vertically placed dots, cradled by the v-shaped joint of planes below, around which is coiled a set of spiraling translucent rectangular panels. The outer circumference of the spiral of panels comes in turn to align with the horizontal beam of the crook, so that there is simultaneously a loosening outward of the spiral, motivated in part by the previously mentioned downward slide to the left of the top half of the central triangle, and a tightening inward toward the minuteness of the three vertical dots at the center.

Light, namely that bright flash on the corner of the leftward crook, follows from and conspires with this play of activity, these effects that one does not actually see but cannot help picking up on, as though it was emitted from the compounded pressure of those folded angles below it, angles which are at the same time transparent. Not crossing, then, but passage and conveyance: a qualitative property, or illusionistic device to continue in the art-historical idiom, does not point to or reconstruct an empirical referent, real or unreal, from which it is radically separated by some ontological chasm. Rather, its very capacity to be perceived as illusionistic, a capacity discernible here in the confounding of illusion itself, flows seamlessly from and makes manifest its nature, of which it is the exact inverse. One is not dealing with phenomenality over here and ontology over there, trying somehow to get

the one to adhere to the other. If the two could ever have been unstuck, like divorcing the inside of a container from its outside, the very notion of the "aboutness" of reference and representation would never have arisen in the first place. The senses and the world have never been established, and that is why they appear.

At the risk of reinstating a great man theory of modernism, which can become as much of an unreflective dogma as the most intransigently antihumanist social determinism can, the accomplishments of analytic cubism do strike one as a watershed moment of sorts. As Clark puts it, in analytic cubism, "modernism focused on its means and purposes with a special vengeance" (175). I have lingered as long as I have on Picasso's work in a chapter that is ultimately aimed at understanding the origins of open-form poetics because crucial aspects of those poetics developed within a creative and intellectual milieu that is inconceivable in the absence of analytic cubism. Without understanding the accomplishments in the other arts, we will be ill-equipped to approach the poetics that grew out of the broader context within the arts that arose as a result. That milieu was an admixture of both practice and theory, as all such milieux or traditions are. While W.J.T. Mitchell's view that modernism as an (in some sense posthumous) institution came to depend on the supplementary presence of critical theories aimed at supplementing it with models of intelligibility provided by a larger conceptual armature seems to me basically, if regrettably, right, it is not at all clear to me that its practices always anticipated or depended on such discourses.[xxx] In many ways, modernism the institution was a defense against the broader culture's having to catch up with modernism the practices, an event that may not ever have occurred.

Moreover, theories advanced by practitioners and those advanced by critics responded to different pressures, pursued different aspirations, and enjoyed different liberties. What separates the 20th century avant-garde from modernism the art- and literary-historical specimen could be divided along the lines of whose discourses have been embedding the practices. Clearly, neither academics nor artists have escaped the collusion, explored by Lawrence Rainey and other critics, between the public sphere and the market. But I think that some critics of the historical bent have been overeager to downplay both the genuine inspiration and, as my own feeble attempts at verbal approximation have shown, the challenge that the compositional practices of artists presented, to individuals in the formation of creative alliances and communities, to gain a reflective sense of what they were making and why it mattered. The formulations of various avant-garde movements regarding their own work were at least as motivated by the difficulties of furnishing descriptive language with which to articulate what they were seeing and making as they were by the performative pressures to entice audiences and patrons. The varied ways in which artists responded to those difficulties have led to entrenched ideas within the historical legacy of modernism that have at times generated gross mischaracterizations of what artists' attitudes toward their own work were.

An obvious case in point is Kandinsky's zeitgeist-defining *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1912). For Kandinsky, as for many other avant-gardists, theosophy promised the requisite worldview with which to make the work's efficacy explicit. Theosophy, the great awkward attempt at a compromise between western epistemic culture and non-European wisdom traditions, seemed to afford a larger discursive framework, perhaps second only to that intimated in the work of Nietzsche, capable of resolving the problem of description articulated by Kandinsky when he writes, "that which has no material existence cannot be subjected to material classification" (12). The problem was that what this framework afforded in explicative potential it also demanded in broader and more portentous

metaphysical commitments. These were the very same commitments that had caused Romantic subjectivism to collapse under its own weight. At the core of *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* is Kandinsky's theory of 'appeal' and 'inner need,' laid out in the section entitled "The Language of Color and Form." As its inclusion in the first issue of Wyndham Lewis's *Blast* as well as Ezra Pound's comments in his essay on vorticism suggest, *avant guerre* artists found Kandinsky's explication of the particular modality of conscious experience to which the new art addressed itself tremendously enabling. At the same time, in order to develop such an account of the particular experience in question, Kandinsky had to frame it in a language of occultism that threatened to wholly occlude that which was being pointed to in the descriptions. So in order to say what appeal was, Kandinsky the synaesthete found the nearest approximation in saying that it was that in the work which produced a "corresponding vibration in the human soul" (26). Amid all of Kandinsky's talk of evolutionary pyramids and vibrations, it is easy to lose track of the descriptive value, indeed accuracy provided one can bracket the larger metaphysical frame, of his analysis of inner need. It is therefore worth looking closer at what he does say.

That Kandinsky's primary aim in his analysis of inner need is descriptively to aid the viewer in cultivating a receptivity to the works in question and not first and foremost in claiming a vatic privilege for the artist, however much all the surrounding manifesto-style world-historical framing might suggest the reverse, is evident in Part II of the work. Kandinsky's first move is to distinguish between the physical impression of perceptions and what he called "their psychic effect" (24). This distinction between merely sensorial impression and psychic effect, illustrated most often by Kandinsky in synaesthetic terms such as the 'warmth' of colors, is the basis of everything else that Kandinsky asserts regarding art throughout the rest of the text. The distinction itself proves extremely precarious, however, which is why Kandinsky imports the language of theosophy to bolster his point. An opening passage is worth quoting at length:

> On the average man only the impressions caused by very familiar objects, will be purely superficial. A first encounter with any new phenomenon exercises immediately an impression on the soul. This is the experience of the child discovering the world, to whom every object is new. He sees light, wishes to take hold of it, burns his finger and feels henceforward a proper respect for the flame. But later he learns that light has a friendly as well as an unfriendly side, that it drives away the darkness, makes the day longer, is essential to warmth, cooking, play acting. From the mass of these discoveries is composed a knowledge of light, which is indelibly fixed in his mind. The strong, intensive interest disappears and the various properties of flame are balanced against each other. In this way the whole world becomes gradually disenchanted. It is realized that trees give shade, that horses run fast and motor-cars still faster, that dogs bite, that the figure seen in the mirror is not a real human being (23-24).

Kandinsky constructs here a kind of *bildung* of the sensorium, one that may sound familiar to readers of Wordsworth's "Intimations" ode. The crypto-lapsarian melodrama lurking under the description follows a similar pattern to that which we have seen played out at the historical level in the theories of Charles Taylor and Walter Benjamin. As the senses calibrate themselves to a practical mastery of the world, perceptions gradually come to reflect, in what we might call the physiognomy of their qualities, the demands of a

perceiver's will-to-action. This latter is what we perceive in the physical impression of sense perceptions, while the "strong, intensive interest" synonymous with Kandinsky's "psychic effect" is gradually phased out. What follows in the text is motivated by the attempt to stabilize this basic distinction and get it to stick.

Kandinsky primarily employs the language of the soul both to make the notion of psychic effect noticeably distinct from the notion of sensation and to prevent the former from being swallowed up by associationist explanations. What Kandinsky calls psychic effects, the latter explanation runs, are reducible in the final account to mnemonic associations that habit has grouped together with a given sensation. So red has a "warm" effect because it reminds one of fire, or, to use Kandinsky's example, "one might say that keen lemon looks sour, because it recalls the taste of a lemon" (24). To respond to this, Kandinsky takes a similar tack to that which we have seen in Bergson and Merleau-Ponty, by citing experimental case studies of individuals, mostly "highly sensitive people" such as other synaesthetes, whose reported experiences seem inexplicable according to a model of association. Regardless of whether one finds this kind of evidence convincing or not, the key point in the present discussion is that Kandinsky's broader metaphysical theory about the soul's sensitivity to sense impressions is appended to his descriptive account of inner need in order to single out inner need as a specific dimension of phenomenological experience irreducible to its accompanying sensory conditions. This is perhaps clearest in the piano metaphor Kandinsky invokes throughout the essay:

> No more sufficient, in the psychic sphere, is the theory of association. Generally speaking, colour is a power which directly influences the soul. Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul. (25)

The soul and its vibrations here serve as the necessary third term in an analogy employed to partition the different 'moments,' in an almost Hegelian sense, within a single sense impression. The descriptive challenge is to make qualia, "a power which directly influences the soul," visible neither as an attribute of substance nor, once one has invoked the notion of power to counter such an interpretation, a determinate relationship existing between substances.

The soul and its vibratory activity function in the text like a wedge driven between terms which continually threaten to merge in description: the crucial point of interest is neither in the object (the keyboard), nor my sensations (the hammers), nor in my mnemonic associations. Vibration here refers to the sense of remainder once one has attempted and failed satisfactorily to locate in its grosser constituents the total phenomenological import of a perceptual experience. The distinction is crucial insofar as it overcomes the conflation of psychic effect with merely subjective appreciation of the sort that the notion of affect so frequently risks falling into. Subjective components of the work are what Kandinsky refers to as "periodic characteristics," which are comprised of "elements of style and personality" (34). Conversely, inner need refers to "the inevitable desire for outward expression of the OBJECTIVE element" (34). This is easy to lose sight of because of Kandinsky's terminology. "Inner" in "inner need" means inner relative to the conspicuousness of qualitative properties as their outer-ness. If "inner" referred merely to subjective interest, distinguishing psychic effect from association would not be the pressing concern that we see it become in the text. The very difficulty of localizing these effects itself motivates the turn

towards the transcendental framework that the third term provides. The obvious problem is that the effectiveness of the third term in distinguishing this remainder now causes it to develop into a hypostatized metaphysical category and concept that will in turn impose itself on subsequent viewings by individuals looking to have their souls vibrated by the paintings. In other words, what begins descriptively as something that may be experientially shared by anyone with the openness and the patience to look for herself and see now solidifies into belief, doctrine and ideology that must either be defended or attacked.

Kandinsky then develops a poetics of the new art based on the premise that "inner need" or "appeal" is the founding principle of which the activity he has attempted to describe in the notion of psychic effect and vibration is the expression. The partition that Kandinsky has made within perception between physical sensation and psychic effect he now is able to carry over into a corresponding model of the artwork. Like perception, form is comprised of an outer and an inner aspect: form "in the narrow sense" which "is nothing but the separating line between surfaces of color" and the inner meaning of which the former sense of form is the "outward expression" (29). To explain what this inner meaning refers to, Kandinsky uses his prior distinction between sensation and vibratory power, again citing the piano analogy. This inner meaning or inner need continually refers to (in the sense of "addresses itself to," which is brought out by the term "appeal," i.e. both to 'be appealing' and to 'make an appeal') what Kandinsky has called the vibrations of the soul and serves to guide the composition of the artwork. Kandinsky takes pains to make this latter point explicit: "the choice of object (i.e. of one of the elements in the harmony of form) must be decided only by a corresponding vibration in the human soul" (32). Conversely, art reception becomes a matter of training in or "exercise" of ones capacity to notice appeal in the work. What Picasso thus achieves in practice through the confounding of illusionism, which Kandinsky refers to explicitly in the text as "the destruction of [the] theory of one single surface," where singleness of surface is cognate with physical sensation, Kandinsky himself attempts theoretically to articulate by furnishing a kind of provisional metaphysics underlying his descriptions of appeal and inner need (44). In both cases, one kind of context is developed in order to hold another, more habitual, familiar and imposing context, at bay. That there are profound differences between the two artist's practices goes without saying. At the same time, pointing to these points of convergence can be useful in clarifying the phenomenal vanishing point that oriented the arrangement of perceptible aspects of their work.

Its own conceptual and descriptive merits aside, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* is both valuable and instructive in making vivid the animating tensions between theory and practice in the *avant guerre*, the feverish sense of trying to get down on paper the terms adequate to a rapprochement between what was being produced in the new art and extant ways of describing the world. Driving many of these tensions was the motor of disenchantment, conceived here in terms of the relationship between what I have called the ambient and acute loci of experiential context. The increasing performative weight borne by the artwork's formal articulation as an acute experiential context was driven by empiricism and secularization's erosion of any encompassing context of shared tradition within which an available epistemology might harmonize with or support the experiential dimensions arising in practice. The privileging of aesthetic practice as a vocation emerges in part from the perceived discrepancy between that which was being realized in practice and the culture's ways of speaking about what objectivity could be. Kandinsky writes, "from the nature of modern harmony, it results that there has never been a time when it was more difficult than it is today to formulate a complete theory, or to lay down a firm artistic basis" (46). If

compositional practice made discernible something for which no descriptive language existed, then artists felt invested with the responsibility of furnishing conditions within which such an impasse might be overcome. Obviously this sense of self-imposed responsibility strikes our ear as portentous, though I want to defer getting into matter of the specific and varying social import of these questions for a little longer because I think the field of literary studies has developed a strong habit of reading them into works without first giving ourselves a chance actually to experience works. One unforeseen side effect of the privilege afforded to the artistic vocation, on the other hand, was that the category of art itself became further hypostatized, resulting in the institutionalization of modernist doctrine and, as we have seen, the kind of confusions underlying the *"Primitivism"* exhibit. This is clearly in evidence in Kandinsky's treatment of art and the artist in his theory, where the artist is treated as both a transhistorical constant while the new art is treated as unprecedented.

I hope the descriptive gloss on both the broadly contemporaneous work and the ideas it occasioned is at this point sufficiently thick to look at some of Pound's early experiments in open-form poetics with a sense of the creative atmosphere in which they were participating. The poems I am thinking of in particular are inconceivable without the background that vorticism as a pseudo-movement provided. At the same time, my sense is that the vorticist influence on Pound was mostly indirect, more a matter of particular purposes and sensibilities developing out of a sharing of ideas and sympathies than of any uniform set aesthetic principles directly applied. Picasso's and Kandinsky's influence on the poet were also mostly indirect, despite the explicit genealogies he develops in his prose writings from the period in which the two figure prominently. But it is no less true that these two artists' works generated a cultural context within which notions of form derived from their practices, notions that were tremendously influential on the members of vorticist group whose interactions with Pound did have a direct influence on the development of his poetics, had entered into circulation. Before saying any more, I would like to look at the poem "A Song of the Degrees":

I

Rest with me Chinese colors,
For I think the glass is evil.

II

The wind moves above the wheat—
With a silver crashing,
A thin war of metal.

I have known the golden disc,
I have seen it melting above me.
I have known the stone-bright place,
The hall of clear colors.

III

O glass subtly evil, O confusion of colors!

O light bound and bent in, O soul of the captive,
Why am I warned? Why am I sent away?
Why is your glitter full of curious mistrust?
O glass subtle and cunning, O powdery gold!
O filaments of amber, two-faced iridescence! (95-96)

Pound usually seems to give us every reason to go running to our various archives in search of the legend that will allow us to decipher his allusive shorthand, but this rarely takes us much farther than assertions about what he was reading at the time. Discussion of how this poem might relate to alchemy or sinology or whatever else its author might have had an interest in seems for this reason rather beside the point, at least for now. Fact-checking for references only ever gets one a third of the way there, at most. We might ask instead, what is the relationship between the poem's three sections, and between the colors and the glass?

To start with the latter question, the relationship between color and glass has something to do with the way the speaker is positioned in relation to an object. The imperative, "rest with me," softened to plaintiveness or perhaps to supplication by both the content of the verb 'rest' and the smoothness of consonants, is made truly strange by the inanimate and impersonal object to which it is addressed. This strangeness is compounded by the abstract nominative of "Chinese colors" (surely if Pound wanted the effect of a proper name he could have selected something other than "colors") which is at the same time particularized in the predication "Chinese," where the fricative consonants' percussion within the line stands out in stark relief against the ease of the line's first half. That strangeness seems to be to the point, to explain or account for the plea by making the qualities of the verbal utterance that enunciates the object of the imperative itself coincide with the piquancy that the line grammatically attributes to the colors. The charge that "Chinese colors" thus receives in its delivery seems to become the basis for the rest that is entreated, as though the repose, which belongs at once to the speaker and to the colors, is itself paradoxically afforded by the sonorous and semantic insistence of the colors themselves. The paradox is itself registered in the tensions that "rest" draws together in its imperative to an active assumption of passivity. The glass, whether transparency or reflective surface, corresponds, in its status relative to the colors, to the ambivalence of the speaker's proximity to and distance from its object. "For" thus initiates at once a second clause and second line that both completes the grammatical momentum of the first line and inverts the semantic or rhetorical drift accumulating around that momentum by qualifying the earlier statement's plea for rest and union with the newly self-assertive "I"'s declaration of aversion. At the same time, this shift into antagonism, which approaches something absolute in the adjective "evil," retroactively serves to reinforce the sense of gentleness in the first line, upon which it depends.

The ambivalence we see defining the polarized activity of colors and glass, speaker and object (though these two paired terms are not meant to be equivalent), provides a key to the prior question of structure. If the opening stanza and section are programmatic for what follows, they are so in staging a dual movement of attraction and aversion that the composition of words seems motivated as much to overcome as it is to sustain. Thus in the second section we get two stanzas in the place of the first section's single stanza, each weighted towards one pole of the subject/object dialectic or the other. The first stanza, devoted wholly to a seemingly subjectless interaction among elemental processes, endeavors to sustain an ephemeral moment of friction, presented at first in the juxtaposition of the wind's movement above the stationary wheat, by transposing it across the next two lines to a

synaesthetic perceptual ("silver crashing") and then to a wholly abstract quasi-metaphorical register. 'Metaphorical' cannot be the accurate term here because the nouns and adjectives have no solidly established next-order referent, or "tenor" to use I.A. Richards' term, to which they are referring. Rather, the moment of friction comes to be inseparable from the conjunction of the words' sedimented histories, to which the category of diction refers as much as the more properly semantic field of associated terms that each word condenses, and their usage here in the line. On its own, "war of metal" might settle into designating or connoting a clear referent, but that possibility is immediately undercut by "thin"'s modification of the abstract noun "war" through its inflection toward the qualitative and sensory. With no way for the terms to be integrated into a meaningful referential statement, the diffuse associative range the words have accumulated through a history of usage gains its orienting intentionality solely through the emergent context of usage that the poem's composition itself provides. Meaning, which has always referred to the normative regimentation of the usage of linguistic media for purposes of communication, here becomes again discernible in its status as media activity, as a transaction in which the sensuous and cognizant facets of an experienced object become indistinguishable. In other words, "a thin war of metal," positioned in the center of the poem, is the meeting point at which the parallel semantic and ennunciative lines of momentum that have been accruing throughout the poem merge. Meaning thus repurposed by the compositional act becomes sheer insistence.

And yet meaning collapsed into its sensuous substrate and inhering there in the phonemic qualities of the language is not without intelligence, as the mind can discern the aptness of the terms in their usage, which in turn is nothing other than those qualities themselves. This discernment seems to motivate the speaker's ironic assertion, "I have known the golden disc," where the past-perfect tense threatens to lose, or already has lost, that golden disc, which has become the placeholder for the previous stanza's presentation, in the mere abstract recognition of knowing. The next two lines toggle between "knowing" and "seeing," as the iterations of the golden disc across the three lines, in its process of fading away or "melting" from the speaker's vision, paradoxically reinforces the import of the image. Thus when we get to the final line, though we are still in the retrospective distance of the past-perfect tense and the disc has presumably all but melted away, it also seems that this same disappearance is a diffusion into the total environment, the "stone-bright place, / the hall of clear colors." By the final section this ambivalence has widened further outward so that each line is structured as a pairing of parallel clauses that stage a series of exasperated, echoing rhetorical questions and apostrophes to the janus-faced color/glass, at once vivid and cunning. Each clause in this section presents a loosened and more broadly scaled refraction, at the level of rhetorical thrust, of the polarities orienting the speaker and object, which in turn structures the object's duplicitous status as glass and color. These were the same polarities whose friction had previously empowered the previous section's condensation into the sheer insistence of its first stanza.

The widening and thickening into rhetoric proper that we see in the poem's final section illustrates a key point about the nature of what I have described as force. Namely, that an inverse ratio of efficacy defines the relationship between force and the various schematic determinations into which it can be converted, whether we speak of those in terms of meanings, affects, perceptions, actions, etc. As I argued was the case with the kind of nascent or proto-images that were stock in trade for analytic cubism, the fixation of illusionistic devices held *in potentia* by the compositional arrangement constitutes a kind of 'cashing in' of that potentiality once their status as illusionistic devices becomes fixed. Such

a conversion to determinacy is inherently a diminishment of the very capacity that afforded this making-stable, a capacity-to-appear without which one would have no basis for deriving a stable mimetic image. The inverse ratio can be thought of in terms of the relationship of simplicity to complexity as well as that of insubstantiality to substantiality. "A Song of the Degrees'" third section's expansion into various explicit rhetorical stances and enactments is authorized, as it were, by the thin-ness of the second section's third line presenting the war of metal, but it is at the same time an exhaustion of that line's insistence in its restoration of stable semantic content.

In other words, the complex is a diminishment of the simple. The relationship perhaps becomes clearer if we understand that at base the notion of 'energy' is a way of talking about the determinations obtaining between and within composite things, while simplicity refers to the non-composite. The simple and the composite as they are being discussed here are ways in which, one might say 'degrees at which,' the world can emerge within first-personal experience, prior to epistemic questions of objectivity and subjectivity. Speaking in more empirical terms, the same inverse ratio gets expressed within a third-personal, sociohistorical frame in the previous chapter's claim that the ritualized action providing the historical basis for compositional practice was autotelic action that did not expend itself on the accomplishment of instrumental aims. On the basis of this inverse ratio, one can approach the easily misunderstood question of the vorticist group's relationship to physical force and why the compositional force I have been exploring is strictly speaking the exact opposite of physical force, even if the two are constantly risking conflation.

Wilhelm Worringer makes a point germane to the question of compositional force's relationship to physicality in his first work (and major influence on both Kandinsky and T.E. Hulme), *Abstraction and Empathy* (1908), when he remarks that what he, following Alois Reigl, calls the urge to abstraction developed out of a desire to divest objects apprehended in three-dimensional space of their phenomenal contingency. Worringer writes, "suppression of the representation of space was dictated by the urge to abstraction through the mere fact that it is precisely space which links things to one another, which imparts to them their relativity in the world-picture, and because space is the one thing which it is impossible to individualize" (22). The so-called 'primitive' ideal of abstraction that Worringer in that work pits against Theodor Lipps' model of aesthetic experience as empathic self-enjoyment serves to distinguish two radically distinct pragmatic and existential orders of being at which the artwork can be apprehended. Lipps' model as Worringer frames it basically leaves intact the apperceptive relationship between a subject and an object apprehended in stable phenomenal dimensions; indeed, it effectively *is* this relationship gratified through the production of various appearances. Conversely, the impulse to abstraction strives precisely to reverse or undo this apperceptive relationship. Despite the fact that his retention of the principle of representation within abstract aesthetic form sits uneasily with the distinction, Worringer attempts to articulate in Kantian language the division between these two orders when he remarks, "to employ an audacious comparison: it is as though the instinct for the 'thing-in-itself' were most powerful in primitive man" (18). This de-phenomenalization of the object that characterizes the urge to abstraction thus creates a sharp distinction between force as a mode of determination among physical objects and compositional force.

Worringer's view of abstraction as an attempt absolutely to individuate the object ends up itself conflating the two orders he endeavors to make distinct because it stops short of acknowledging that an object divested of its conditions of dependence, its complexity or composite status, passes beyond the category of individuality itself. It is here that descriptive

language breaks down. In this respect, Worringer's own theory illustrates the liability towards problematic conflations that attends descriptive theorizations of abstraction. Had he followed the consequences of his own theory, he would have been led to the view that the "closed individuality of the object," at which his abstractive volition aims, itself vanishes into indescribable simplicity as that object is divested of its enabling conditions of possibility, leading to the kinds of distinctions Kandinsky makes between the outer and inner aspect of the object as fissures within phenomenal substance itself. Nevertheless, Worringer's model is instructive to the extent that it does distinguish between phenomenality and its other, however conceived, as the respective provinces of representational and abstract artistic aims, as well as the larger worldviews that these different approaches reinforce.

Hulme's reading of Worringer brings out many of these broader consequences implicit within Worringer's binary between empathic and abstract artworks, which Hulme recontexualizes, first in Bergsonian terms as a difference between 'vital' and 'geometric' art, and later, perhaps under the influence of his interest in the far right political group Action Francaise, between 'humanism' and the 'religious attitude.' Hulme grasped, in his critique of satisfaction, the principle informing the ambiguous status of artistic vocation that I have suggested is essential to attend to in order to understand adequately what was happening in the turn to abstraction: namely, that what the new art facilitated was more suited to something along the lines of a soteriological analysis than to what he calls the 'canons of satisfaction,' the extant frames of relativistic value comprising secular, bourgeois society. The previous chapter's distinction between the anthropological categories of sacred and profane refers to this same radical separation between orders of experience. Rather than reduce Hulme's conception of the religious attitude to his reactionary political sympathies and derive the former from the latter, as some critics have tended to do, I think it is a more productive approach to see the anti-humanism of modernists like Hulme and Eliot, and the political tendencies this view at times engendered, as motivated by a broader existential sense that the immanent frame of naturalism and the liberal democratic market society productive of this frame were fundamentally incapable of locating values unmotivated by appetitive self-interest, even in outward valorizations of social solidarity.

The problem was that the version of aesthetic enjoyment wedded to the reproduction of the immanent frame and its models of objectivity was always placed in service, whether consciously or not, of the hedonism that seemed the sole arbiter of value in modern societies. For Hulme, the canons of satisfaction endemic to humanism and their attempts to supplant the absolute standards of value formerly provided by religion led, when combined with the epistemological models developed by the natural sciences, to the nihilistic determinism of what he calls the mechanistic view of the world and, when combined with the sphere of ethics, to relativism and base self-interest. Conversely, Hulme remarks that the "subject" of the critique of satisfaction "always… is the *vanity of desire*" (italics in original), for which reason he placed the religious attitude in opposition to the vital models of art for which Lipps' empathy was the characteristic mode of reception. The existing public institution of art threatened to incorporate the new compositional practices into the extant canons of satisfaction by framing their efficacy in terms akin to Lipps' empathic self-enjoyment, itself part and parcel of those humanist canons of satisfaction. For Hulme, such attitudes also informed the question of what the culture's reframing of non-European ritual objects as artworks meant for the category of art itself:

> A change in sensibility which has enabled us to regard Egyptian, Polynesian and Negro work, *as* art and not as archaeology has had a double effect. It

> has made us realise that what we took to be the necessary principles of aesthetic, constitute in reality only a psychology of Renaissance and Classical Art. At the same time, it has made us realise the essential unity of these latter arts. For we see that they both rest on certain common pre-suppositions, of which we only become conscious when we see them denied by other arts. (*Speculations* 12)

Rather than explicitly troubling the category of art itself here, Hulme both expands and delimits it, though the result is much the same. What conventionally gets grouped under the category of art, Hulme decenters and relegates to the subordinate category of "Renaissance and Classical Art," while he expands the general category of art to include non-European objects whose functions are not defined solely in terms of humanist canons of satisfaction that characterize those of Renaissance and Classical art. But it is unclear whether the category of art-as-such can itself subsist independently of those canons of satisfaction or whether it then gets incorporated into surrounding cultural domains (e.g. religious iconography, craft, civic planning and architecture, etc.). Hulme's own stopping short here of troubling the category of art stems in part from his reliance on the art-historical discourse of Worringer and Reigl ("(Cf. the work of Reigl on Byzantine art)") as the basis for his critique of vital art (12).

Hulme's essay "Modern Art and its Philosophy" explores, via Worringer's distinction between empathic and abstract art, the possibility that the emergence of the new art in then recent post-impressionist painting bearing affinities with non-European 'art' might presage a shift from the humanist canons of satisfaction to a new "general outlook on the world" more closely resembling the obsolescent religious attitude (*Speculations* 109). In this forecast, Hulme was merely following upon the implications of Worringer's model of the abstractive impulse in seeing that responsiveness to abstraction entailed a transformation of a historical regime of consciousness, the humanist subject, through a modality of appearance rather than the symptomatic reinforcement of that regime that one found in the empathic model. However, the same tendency toward conflation again crops up in Hulme's own treatment of the difference between vital and geometric art. While he remarks upon the "the geometrical character [as] endeavoring to express a certain intensity," he also, like Worringer, frequently lapses into essentially mimetic characterizations of this intensity, despite his assertions regarding geometric art's opposition to "the mere imitation of nature," when he speaks of geometric art's forms as "stiff" and "lifeless," and elsewhere "durable" and other similar synonyms (81, 85, 86). Failing to distinguish between the perceptible as a condition for the intensity that he argues it is the aim of geometric art to express and that intensity itself, as Kandinsky by contrast is able to only with the support of transcendentalizing language, Hulme repeatedly slips into descriptive language that frames that intensity solely in terms of inanimate and inorganic physical qualities that are nevertheless essentially mimetic. This confusion then comes to influence the broader theoretical import he develops. Rather than framing the abstract as radically distinct from the phenomenal flux that vital art reproduces, Hulme's descriptions frame it as being identical with equally relativistic inorganic qualities within that same phenomenal flux. This slippage undermines his larger claim about the differences between the arts as affording a way out of humanist canons of satisfaction by attempting to pass off what are at base equally relative, if reactionary, anti-vitalist values as absolute values originating outside of the flux of nature. What Hulme hopes will supersede the humanist canons of satisfaction, based on what are the right inferences about the import of the modes of experience associated with the new art, ends up reduced to a contrarian

asceticism on fundamentally the same plane as those canons. For Hulme's characterizing the opposition between mimetic and geometric art to perform the function he claims, his descriptions would have needed to intervene not at the level of the particular qualities a work might possess or exude, such as austerity or durability, but at the level of the work's transformation of the status of 'quality' as such.

Despite the influence on Pound's thinking evident in criticism such as the February 1914 *Egoist* essay, "The New Sculpture," Hulme's severity ran basically counter to Pound's native temperament, which as many critics including Wyndham Lewis himself have noted had been drawn to what some might see as more effete and epicurean literary and philosophical models. The discrepancy might help explain Pound's outsider's fascination with the varying personal intensities of Hulme, Lewis and, perhaps most of all, Gaudier-Brzeska. An essay Pound wrote a couple of years before the *Egoist* essay on the new sculpture, which latter opens with an anecdote about Hulme's public lecture on the new art, provides a useful illustration of the contrasts between Pound's and Hulme's respective views of art. "Psychology and Troubadours" (1912) shows the character of Pound's thinking about the function of the artwork as he was beginning to be exposed to what would become the vorticist group. In the essay, a "divagation from questions of technique" (87), Pound explains in some detail the relationship he perceived as existing between the compositional practices he associates with the *trobar clus* method of the troubadours and the how the resultant aesthetic experience fit into the broader context of an individual's psychological development (87). In contrast to the ascetic model of composition and reception that we have seen in Hulme's theories, what Pound calls the "chivalric" mode of experience, informing the ethical code of courtly love, steers a middle course of sorts between the poles that defined the Hulmean binaries of vital and geometric art. The love cult underlying the aristocratic medieval ethical code turns out in his view to motivate the "interpretative function" he claims for *trobar clus* and its offshoots (87). The interpretative function refers to the language's capacity, through maximum expressive precision and "exactness of presentation," to make articulable "the shades and degrees of the ineffable" (87). In other words, interpretation here defines a word's ability to 'interpret,' in the sense of making intelligible, an object of speech for which no extant term exists, solely through skill in usage.

Behind this particular practical aim, in Pound's view, lay the troubadours' encompassing project of religious transformation, not through ascetic world-rejection as in Hulme's model of the religious attitude, but rather through the "purgation of the soul through a refinement of, and lordship over, the senses" (90). Simultaneously aristocratic and heretically anti-authoritarian in connotation, the political metaphors Pound uses in the essay to illustrate the interpretative function and its broader psychological consequences are more or less in tune with his individualist anarchist leanings at the time. At the same time, my sense is that reading unequivocal political valences into them too precipitately will confuse rather than elucidate an understanding of what Pound was aiming at in the kind of theory he develops in the essay. The model of perceptual refinement Pound attributes to the cult of love that he claims was the broader context of the troubadours' poetic composition itself rests upon an understanding of intelligence as being mediated through the disposition of the senses. Pound writes,

> Some mystic or other speaks of the intellect as standing in the same relation to the soul as the senses do to the mind; and beyond a certain border, surely we come to this place where the ecstasy is not a whirl or madness of the senses, but a glow arising from the exact nature of the perception. We find a

> similar thought in Spinoza where he says that "the intellectual love of a thing consists in the understanding of its perfections." (91)

The comparison with the thought of Spinoza warrants further consideration, as Pound elsewhere cites the Spinozan ethico-affective project as a model for the function of the artwork. The Spinozan model of intellectual love is based on what he called the "third kind of knowledge," which in turn rests upon Spinoza's distinction between "adequate" and "inadequate" ideas. Because, in Spinoza's system of dual-aspectual substance monism, the term "idea" is synonymous with the image (what we would tend to call a "perception" or unit of qualia) that a body spontaneously forms of its own affections or ways of being affected by things outside itself, ideas are accurate or inaccurate in accordance with the degree to which second-order reflection attributes causes to these affections that do or do not accord with their actual nature. What we conventionally refer to as "ideas" or concepts are for Spinoza these second-order ideas-of-ideas, where a retained image of a previous affection is brought into comparative relation with an image-qua-perception of a present affection. These ideas fail to provide adequate knowledge to the extent that they are solely based on the retention of other ideas of prior affections, i.e. of concepts held in memory. For this reason, Spinoza argues in the *Ethics* that our knowledge of both our own bodies and of external bodies based on memory ("fortuitous encounters with things" (*Ethics* 52)) is always inadequate.

Pound's pithy "An Object," included in his volume *Ripostes*, illustrates in a condensed manner the workings of this bias. The short poem riffs on the distinction between, and implications of, schematized apperception and affective contact:

> This thing that hath a code and not a core
> Hath placed acquaintance where might be affections
> And nothing now
> Disturbeth his reflections. (*Personae* 60)

Just as the line break at "disturbeth" serves to mark out prosody as the point of intervention at which the pre-cognitive "core" of absorbed coping might impinge on the 'encoded' world of conceptually mediated object-relations, the solipsistic character 'reflecting' on the objects of his mere acquaintance corresponds to Spinoza's inadequate ideas, the film of retained mnemonic associations projected on the field of present experience. Adequate ideas, conversely, are for Spinoza those ideas whose formation is not biased according to second-order images formed through merely fortuitous encounters with external objects but which are instead based on the common ground shared by both the affecting and the affected, namely, Nature/God or substance. The difference is one between ideas that are formed solely according to the modes or affections of substance (i.e. interactions among determinate beings) and those that apprehend the underlying infinite and atemporal attributes of substance expressed in those same modes or affections. Spinoza calls this "intuitive" knowledge the "third-kind" of knowledge, observing "this kind of knowing proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things" (57). It is essential here to remember that "idea" for Spinoza means any image, any phenomenal appearance, spontaneously accompanying a body's interaction with other individual things. We might think of the example of a perception, say of a rock, which because it is unimpeded by the impositions of conceptual labels the perceiver has accumulated through her particular history, directly apprehends that

rock as expressive of the infinite and eternal essence of the totality. While the capacity to arrive at adequate ideas for Spinoza depends upon the philosophical system he puts forth in the *Ethics*, this system itself depends upon the would-be philosopher's practical application of the ethical project of cultivating the state of blessedness that the system advocates.

In the third kind of knowledge one is not "seeing as God sees," rather one is, in a very concrete sense, "seeing *as God*." Perception consists in the cognizant attribute innate to substance experiencing itself as instantiated in the finite experience of an individual being's encounter with another individual being. Intellectual love based in the cultivation of the third kind of knowledge is the ethical project in which the *Ethics* as a system culminates. It consists in the decoupling of the affections from their habituation to inadequate ideas of objects, habituations of which the non-advantageous affects known as "passions" consist (e.g. the addict who thinks personal happiness resides in whatever object of compulsive desire), through the transformation of all experienced affects into the third kind of knowledge. Spinoza observes, "the mind can bring it about that all the body's affections, or images of things, are related to the idea of God" (*Ethics* 168), though we should hear in the term "God" something akin to the Deleuzian field of pure immanence.[xxxi] Moreover, because the particular adventitious and partial associations that the individual's memory might project onto its present encounter do not encumber those affections occuring through the third kind of knowledge, intellectual love turns out to be synonymous with the heightened precision of sensory experience.

The expressive ontology of Spinoza's system adds one further dimension to the character of intellectual love that warrants comment. In Spinoza's pantheism, the expressive nature of the principle of determination, from which derives the interactions out of which finite beings emerge, means that the latter can always be articulated in terms of a power differential. This power differential lies behind Spinoza's famous dictum, "we do not know what a body can do": to be a body-qua-thing, or "mode" in Spinoza's terminology, is to be an expression of nature's power of existing. The "perfection" to which Pound refers in the quoted passage from "Psychology and Troubadours" refers to the metric in Spinoza's system with which he defines this triumvirate of being, expression and capacity (i.e. capacity-to-be). Perfection means a thing's capacity to be itself, where the mode of this capacity is synonymous with its own self-expressivity. In beings such as humans, Spinoza calls this expressive capacity *conatus*, and it is the engine driving our affective investments, our desire to persist in our being. In an object, the expressive capacity is characterized in terms of its perfections, the singularity and *quidditas* through which its basic capacity to be what it is become manifest. Intellectual love is the cognizant attribute of nature self-reflected in the felicitous union of an object's perfections apprehended through the enhanced perceptual acuity that attends a subject's heightened and refined affective investments. Such at any rate is the aim of the project, and it is worth hearing some of the philosophical context behind Pound's neo-pagan musings and armchair historicism in his earlier essays. So when Pound writes in the essay "The Wisdom of Poetry" in a 1912 issue of *Forum*, "borrowing the terminology from Spinoza, we might say: the function of art is to free the intellect from the tyranny of the affects or, leaning on terms, neither technical nor metaphysical: the function of art is to strengthen the perceptive faculties and free them from encumbrance," we have a clearer sense of what he means by this (*Selected Prose 1909-1965* 360).

Pound's early work of criticism on late antique period Romance literature, *The Spirit of Romance* (1910), suggests that some version of these theoretical sensibilities and attitudes was more or less intact prior to his arrival in London, even if his practice was at this point still largely a pastiche of the *trobar clus* and *dolce stil novo* styles he had gleaned from his years of

Romance philology at the University of Pennsylvania. Indeed reference to the medieval and Mediterranean poetic models remains a constant throughout Pound's career, up through the later *Cantos*. That Pound's view of the function of art was fundamentally in line with the kind of attitude we see Picasso expressing in the quotes regarding his experiences at the *Musee du Trocadero* (where, incidentally, Worringer claimed to have stumbled upon the germ of the ideas he developed in *Abstraction and Empathy*) is evident in Pound's own comments in the troubadours essay, as well as in the earlier *Spirit of Romance*. Pound observes in "Psychology and Troubadours" that the *trobar clus* method, of which his model Arnaut Daniel was the exemplar, "is a ritual. It must be conceived and approached as a ritual. It has its purpose and effect. These are different from those of simple song" (89). The purpose and effect of this ritual, Pound continues, is bound up with the status of the body "as pure mechanism.":

> Our kinship to the ox we have constantly thrust upon us; but beneath this is our kinship to the vital universe, to the tree and the living rock, and, because this is less obvious—and possibly more interesting—we forget it. We have about us the universe of fluid force, and below us the germinal universe of wood alive, of stone alive. Man is—the sensitive part of him—a mechanism, for the purpose of further discussion a mechanism rather like an electric appliance, switches, wires, etc. Chemically speaking, he is *ut credo*, a few buckets of water, tied up in a complicated sort of fig leaf. (92)

The commonality with the Picasso quote is worth stressing to dispel certain misconceptions about Pound's relationship to medieval art and how his encounter with the vorticist group modified, which is not to say supplanted, that relationship. What Pound was drawn to in the medieval models of aesthetic practice was precisely this view of the artwork as a means of transforming one's own structures of experience, which precede any epistemic questions of objectivity, through the art object's function as a mediator enabling one to modify the dispositions of the senses and thereby place oneself in contact with certain elemental forces operative in the phenomenal world, forces that Pound, following Dante, tended to group under the category of *amor* or "love." Such an attitude toward the artwork was itself characteristic of the fundamentally ritualistic character of medieval culture, its distance (though I doubt Pound would have formulated the relationship in quite these terms) from the canons of satisfaction that would come in modernity to regiment the institution of the fine arts as a sphere of leisured consumption. This, and not the desire to cultivate some obscure coterie interest in the exotic and arcane, was what drew Pound to these models.

What the encounter with the vorticist group afforded was the opportunity to transpose these same basic principles into a new practical register in which the kinds of misreading that would miss entirely the point of these principles in taking the medievalisms for some effete posture would be harder to arrive at or maintain. Years later, Pound would refer to the vorticist project as "a renewal of the sense of construction" ("The Art of Poetry"). Abstraction was a matter of efficacy. Once again, an example will prove more instructive than generalizing commentary:

> *Gentildonna*
>
> She passed and left no quiver in the veins, who now
> Moving among the trees, and clinging

In the air she severed,
Fanning the grass she walked on then, endures:

Gray olive leaves beneath a rain-cold sky. (*Personae* 93)

Pound here takes the Provencal convention of the figure of the beloved, who he remarks "serves as a sort of *mantram*" ("Psychology and Troubadours" 97), and transposes the figure into a newly condensed form in which rhetorical elaboration is dramatically curtailed in order to foreground how the sonorous properties and the diffuse associative residues of the linguistic media serve to mutually articulate one another. In this sketch, much like Picasso's exercises during the "African period" following the production of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, we can see Pound tinkering with the inherited métier of the practice. Much of the novel effects in the poem derive from how Pound toys with the pentameter line, which acts here as the metrical template and norm that the verse can play against in order to generate certain open-ended tensile relations in the cadence of delivery. The solicitations to and modifications of the reader's stream of attention that attend these relations come to assume the status of phenomenal supports expressive of the unmanifest character of the beloved. The ambiguity of this making-manifest grammatically informs the unsettled temporal sense, at once aorist and imperfect, of the first iamb "she passed," which the pentameter-breaking extra foot at "who now" takes up in its enjambment into the trochaic forward momentum and the participial verbs' sustaining of a sense of present tense irresolution in the second line. That quality of sustained irresolution, opened in the first line's shift from pentameter to alexandrine, in turn affords the rhythmic involution that the enjambment from the second to the shortened third line performs in its more staccato echoing of the trochee "clinging." This diversifying echo effect in the third line is accompanied by a corresponding semantic inversion, in which the passivity of "clinging" is retroactively reframed by the decisive, albeit retrospective, agency of "severed." Invisible and yet ever present, the *gentildonna* is shadowed by the very ripples of appearance, like eddies in an air current, in which she leaves her imprint. "Rhythm," Pound would formulate it years later in the *ABC of Reading*, "is a form cut into TIME" (198).

The single-line second stanza approaches this exercise in constructive renewal through Pound's other main axis of media effect, that of the image-producing or "phanopoeic" capacities of the linguistic medium. What possible relation between the first and second stanzas can the colon signify? I think we need to take the colon in a similar sense to that of the *Cantos'* iterated "so that-," as designating the accomplishment attendant upon the contextual atmosphere generated through appropriately skilled action. We could call the final line, using the terms I suggested at the opening of the chapter, a nested acute contextual locus. Where the rhythmic tensions woven through the first stanza served to gear the reader's attentive sympathies toward a specific pitch of receptivity, the final line now delivers a strikingly static image within the encompassing conditions that the sonorous qualities of the first stanza has produced. Enunciation is a primer, hence Pound's insistence on catching the import of the work as it unfolds in time. Approaching the activity of the line itself demands the same care in avoiding extremes that was necessary with Picasso, as semantic function in Pound's usage is being transformed in a ways very similar to how Picasso was transforming illusionism (after all, Pound referred in painterly terms to the image as the poet's "pigment"). It will be difficult to have a clear sense of what Pound is doing here without some reference to Ernest Fenollosa's sheaf of notes on Chinese ideography, which in one of those historical coincidences one is tempted to call near-

miraculous found its way into Pound's hands in 1913, when his exposure via Hulme, Brzeska, Lewis, et al. to the principles of the new art had generated the felicitous conditions for it to assume the *ars poetica* status that Hugh Kenner would later claim it had for Pound. As Pound would write in his introduction to the essay, "the later [i.e. post-1908] movements in art have corroborated [Fenollosa's] theories" (*The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* 41). While Pound would claim that Fenollosa's essay was primarily about verbs, the relevant claims at present are those Fenollosa makes about how both verb and noun status as we understand them are equally foreign to Chinese ideography.

What Fenollosa and Pound both value in Chinese ideograms are not verbs *per se* but "this concrete *verb* quality" (italics in original) of the nouns as such, wherein things themselves are seen "only (as) terminal points, or rather meeting points of actions, cross-sections cut through actions, snap shots" (46). But even here, Fenollosa's own native descriptive language falls short by threatening to reify the notion of process as a primary value in its very effort to distinguish between the static quality of English nouns and the concrete verb *quality* of ideograms. What Fenollosa attempts to approximate in his descriptions is this third quality, neither "true noun" nor "a pure verb, an abstract motion," that he sees as defining the media activity of ideograms (46). This is why both the copula and intransitive verbs receive particular scrutiny in Fenollosa's essay and, for that matter, why Pound's elision of verbs in the line "Gray olive leaves beneath a rain-cold sky" can be said to refunction the status of the nouns. Here apposition does much of the work that verbs would be expected to perform, indeed could be said to become the second stanza's container for the activity associated with the beloved that the first stanza displayed primarily through rhythmic tensions, as the colon linking the two stanzas would seem to suggest. Apposition generates the same kind of reciprocally particularizing interdependency of values at the semantic level that rhythm facilitated sonically in the first stanza. The key question is what this refunctioning does to the overall status of the utterance. The language can neither be said to have a purely mimetic function, nor a purely non-referential or 'solipsistic' function. To a much greater degree than "thin war of metal," "gray olive leaves beneath a rain-cold sky" wants to throw a particular natural image across the visual imagination, as Pound would say. At the same time, so much of what has proceeded seems to have invested the linguistic medium with its own self-sufficiency.

I think an answer lies in the interactive relationship between two different descriptive terms I have previously used: non-fulfillment and homology. In other words, the relationship between leaves in the world and "leaves" in speech is, as I suggested was the case with Williams' flowers in *Spring and All*, one of homology and not one of reference. This homology is itself the product of the non-fulfillment of the words' strictly referential or constative function that the enunciative act accomplishes. The force inhering in the leaves as 'referent' is here conveyed, rather than designated or denoted, in the act of speech. In this acute context, the leaves, in the sharpness of their outline and infinitely minute diversity of monochrome "gray," embraced with near-tactility "beneath" a sky suffusing the damp frigidity of rain in its own spaciousness, express the very same beloved who bids the poet speak. This conveyance comes not through constative precision but through the very excess the words themselves take on as expressive media, both in their sonic qualities and their unexpected distinctness at this moment in the poem, by virtue of delivery. This is something one discerns rather than understands. In a footnote to the Fenollosa essay, Pound claims that Gaudier-Brzeska was able to read Chinese radicals at first glance, with no prior knowledge of the language. Whether the anecdote is true or not, it serves to illustrate the difference. There will be much to say about the difficult relationship between this kind of

discernment and conceptual knowledge, particularly with respect to the *Cantos*, but unless we first arrive at the vantage point from which there is in fact a valid distinction to be made between the two modes of conscious experience, I think there is very little hope for our adequately comprehending modernism.

Lewis and cohort did not do themselves any favors in getting across the distinction between the physical force that is an object of the understanding and compositional force by adopting the same polemical, *agent provocateur* postures of Marinetti and the Futurists, whose own failure to distinguish between physical dynamism and compositional force was the basis for the vorticists' charges that futurism was merely an 'accelerated impressionism.' It is with respect to these postures, to which Pound was certainly no stranger, that a reading of the development of the avant-garde in terms of its complicated relationship to the market and the public sphere such as those undertaken by Lawrence Rainey and Rebecca Beasley has much to offer our understanding of modernism. But I think the temptation to collapse the practices themselves into the methods employed for purposes of distribution and publicity is in general a misleading approach, even if it seems almost certainly to be the case that Lewis, Pound and others found themselves at times unable to tell what was a self-consciously, indeed ironically polemical posture aimed in part at carving out a niche distinct from that of, say, Roger Fry, and what was a sincere expression of intent. When Pound writes in "The New Sculpture," "the artist has been at peace with his oppressors for long enough, he has dabbled in democracy and is done with that folly" (8), I think we are meant to hear in these kinds of statements a deliberate provocation, one that is, even if half-consciously, aping the rhetoric of the Futurist manifestos.

A self-conscious irony motivating this stance is deliberately betrayed in such statements as, "the public will do well to resent these "new" kinds of art" ("The New Sculpture" 8). Likewise, a quote from Pound's *Egoist* essay on Lewis, that the "struggle of Voltaire, of Stendhal and of Flaubert" consisted in the "struggle of driving the shaft of intelligence into the dull mass of mankind," certainly gives an impression that is somewhat different from what it might give when coupled with other quotable lines from the same essay, such as the assertion, "I have also read in some respectable journal that one shouldn't use irony in England, because it wouldn't be understood" ("Wyndham Lewis" 14). At the risk of falling into an infinite regress of trying to judge motives, I think the ironic postures were themselves intended as sorting mechanisms. That Pound entertained anti-democratic sentiments throughout his life is beyond dispute. That he learned a public stance of provocation and irascibility from Lewis, whose own mercurial intentions are not easily sorted, ought to be borne in mind when trying to understand the work that came out of the period of their collaboration. These postures made for some of Pound's worst poetry when he tried to carry them over into actual compositional practice, as in his contributions to the first issue of *Blast*. Conversely, what in these public assertions and self-evaluations I take to be worth approaching at face value, as opposed to mere marketing and self-promotion, for instance Pound's genealogy of vorticism in cubism and expressionism, corresponds to what the work itself puts in evidence.

At the very least, reading *Blast* and the journalistic writings surrounding it as unqualified aesthetic valorizations of energy and dynamism *qua* physical processes in the world is quite simply a confused perspective. Like the ambiguity regarding the seductions of one's own posture, there are moments when the position (to the degree that one can speak of a stable position amid the neo-Nietzschean clatter) put forth in the two issues of *Blast* begins to resemble that of Hulme in his conflation of the relatively austere with the non-phenomenal absolute. But there are also moments, even in Lewis's diatribes, maintaining

the distinction I have been trying to show is key to the question of form, such as the less frequently noted "Feng Shui and Contemporary Form." In that section, Lewis observes that compositional skill depends upon the maker's ability to discern non-perceptible values whose appeal resembles an intrinsic necessity, within the perceptible properties of things:

> Sensitiveness to volume, to the life and passion of lines, meaning of water, hurried conversation of the sky, or silence, impossible propinquity of endless clay nothing will right, a mountain that is a genius (good or evil) or a bore, makes the artist; and the volume, quality, or luminosity of a star at birth of Astrologers is also a clairvoyance within the painters gift.
>
> In a painting certain forms MUST be SO; in the same meticulous, profound manner that your pen or a book must lie on the table at a certain angle, your clothes at night be arranged in a set personal symmetry, certain birds be avoided, a set of railings tapped as you pass, without missing one.
>
> Personal ticks and ceremonies of this description are casual examples of the same senses' activity. (*Blast 1* 138)

These are not velocities and weights Lewis that is pointing to. Gaudier-Brzeska called this sensitiveness to volume "sculptural feeling," defining it as "the appreciation of masses in relation" (*Gaudier Brzeska* 99). The focus on relation is central to Brzeska's formulation because it is the gearing of relationship, between sculptural masses and (which amounts to the same thing) a perceiver to that relation of masses, to a specific frequency that affects how the masses themselves come to be schematized as substance. It is because, in the discernment of these non-perceptible necessities, intelligence cannot be separated from phenomenal quality that the language of energy, situated as it is between "idea" and "thing," becomes the most likely candidate for a successful descriptive approximation. Pound's own formula for the vortex as the "point of maximum energy" risks missing the mark and adding to the confusion because this point can be read equally as referring to a determinate relationship obtaining between objects taken as established in the world, or to the point within the phenomenal world's emergence to consciousness marking the passage from substance to phenomenon and from phenomenon to absolutely simple being, beyond predication. Like *mana* and Hegelian force, one is dealing with a question of the integrity of appearance itself, with what appearance is (or is not) made out of. When the ability to discern is lost, the integrity is lost as well.

Open-form poetics emerged out of this effort to make lyric composition operate according to the same basic principles of what Brzeska calls sculptural feeling, and what elsewhere Pound calls (following Kandinsky) the "language of form and color." (*Gaudier Brzeska* 107). The inversion of the expected order of primacy (i.e. "the form and color of language"), given the linguistic medium, is absolutely essential to note here. The main challenge in the translation of these principles into linguistic media was of course to transpose the non-perceptible integrities, i.e. the points of conjunction at which schematized appearances would open out beyond fixation, that painting and sculptural practices had discerned according to a spatial frame into the temporal register of verbal utterance. The question, which Pound's term 'absolute rhythm' gets at, is how the same transforming intervention into the basic (i.e. the relative) character of the phenomenal could be performed through the ways sound gets distributed and articulated in time. While a more detailed

response to this question will require at least another chapter, including an examination of the development of the *Cantos*, I can offer the rudiments of an outline here. While Pound was kicking around the idea of absolute rhythm as early as his introduction to his translations of Guido Cavalcanti in 1910, it was the refraction of this concept through the vorticist collaboration, in which the concept became wedded to the abstraction-based, inter-media notion of "primary form," that would bring it into the focus in which it crystalizes in the early *Cantos*.

With vorticism, the concept of absolute rhythm gets rearticulated in terms of the Bergsonian-cum-Hulmean category of "intensive art," to which Pound in the vorticism essay applies the analogy of analytic geometry in an effort to clarify his sense of intensive relations (*Gaudier Brzeska: A Memoir* 106). The point of the analogy is that in the movement from arithmetic to algebra to analytical geometry the equations used express relative numerical values with greater degrees of condensation or "intensity"; one moves from the facticity of integers to purely relational algebraic values and coordinate systems. In other words, while one could plug the same units of data into each of the equations, the principles governing fact gain in clarity as one moves down the line. Like the analogies aimed at furnishing descriptive equivalents to practice, seeking too close of a correspondence in the work to professed vorticist principles can be misleading. Indeed, Pound's most overtly 'vorticist' poem, "A Game of Chess," feels heavy-handed and stilted in comparison with his other work from the period. Nevertheless, there is an undeniable change from the pre-*Ripostes* imitations of Dante, Yeats and Browning to the early *Cantos*, while the developments within the *Cantos* seem much more of an ongoing elaboration and refinement of basic principles that fall into place between the years of 1912 and 1916.

In developing a poetics of open-form, composition had to facilitate twice over, so to speak, the kinds of transformations through which painting was putting visual images. Words had to be deployed and refunctioned with respect to their production of media effects in confounding semantic value as much as composition had to locate these effects temporally in the distributive ratios of sound. Moreover, the former had to follow from the latter, because semantics were second-order norms and only by allowing the deeper pragmatic embeddedness of sound perception a leading position could the semantic function be pulled out of its fixed position so that it would become transparent to enunciative delivery. With painting, conversely, you get a schema and a perception at more or less the same time. Pound's commentary in his introduction to the translations of Cavalcanti highlights the orienting function he saw cadence as possessing with respect to other sonic values:

> Rhythm is perhaps the most primal of all things known to us. It is basic in poetry and music mutually, their melodies depending on a variation of tone quality and pitch, respectively, as is commonly said; but if we look more closely, we will see that music is, by further analysis, pure rhythm; rhythm and nothing else, for the variation of pitch is the variation in rhythms of individual notes, and harmony the blending of these various rhythms. (Anderson *Pound's Cavalcanti* 18)

Pound's conception of rhythm as the underlying Ur-principle governing qualities of sound turns out to be a similar equation to that for which Clark provides, with respect to illusionism, the formula 'salience is presence,' though I should be clear that the despite the indirect influence through the vorticist group, the comparison with cubism at present is

primarily heuristic. As Pound would make more explicit, years after the first war in his 1927 "Treatise on Harmony," basic sonic values such as pitch and timbre can in this view be reduced to the principle of time intervals. As I previously remarked, in analytic cubism Picasso's composition sought to suspend the fulfillment of salience in what we might call an incompatible integration of possible visible features, so that visual apperception would catch, so to speak, around the point at which illusionistic presence collapsed. Form refers specifically to this catching point. But unlike the way nascent illusionistic features were held integrally suspended within cubist composition, the integration of temporal intervals to which the model of absolute rhythm refers does have to be thought in sequential terms. Just as the illusionistic device was deployed against itself in cubism, however, in the model of absolute rhythm a given temporal interval is integrated within a series in a self-involving manner, according to emergent rather than fixed distributive ratios that the act itself establishes. In other words, the self-generative status of temporal measure becomes the autotelic means of transforming habits governing the properties of auditory experience. Because measure is self-generative, the transformation effected, which *is* this generative emergence itself, acts upon and fundamentally alters the very discreteness of those units in series.

Pound's characterization of absolute rhythm as the perfect adequation of form in cadence to the specific emotional valence of the compositional act helps to frame the significance of this self-involving prosody from a different angle. From one perspective, the previous characterization of absolute rhythm threatens to tip the conception of composition into a pure automatism of the medium itself, cut off from any subjective or mimetic inputs. It is at this point that the previous chapter's claims regarding art's inheritances from ritual become particularly useful. We saw previously that autotelic action in ritual entailed the performance of non-arbitrary actions independently of deliberative mental processes, actions whose appropriateness was guided by how ones total placement in an unfolding practical context fulfilled cues one discerned in the array of qualitative properties comprising that context. Such cues, moreover, because of how mentality or intelligence is disposed, to which Kant's basic formal parameters of reflective judgment provided a theoretical model, appear as insistent contingencies in the arrangement of circumstances rather than as conceptually recognizable structures or patterns. Lastly, the continued, seemingly lawful (as Kant remarks) insistence of this nonetheless contingent ordering of the total experienced situation itself depends upon the actor's own continued practical responsiveness. The more one responds, the more shows up. That which shows up, conversely, invites a response. It is this open-ended practical receptivity, upon which discernment depends, to which Pound's language in *Blast* of emotions present to the vivid consciousness refers. What this interactivity itself depends upon is the acute context produced by interposition of the composed object, which serves, in Picasso's term, as a mediator. In this instance the mediator in question would be the composition of words. This is why Pound in his later essay on Cavalcanti speaks of the *virtu* as an "interactive force" (*Literary Essays* 152). Emotion or affect, as we have seen in Spinoza as well as in Kant's discussion of delight (the middle term between appetitive pleasure and moral approval in his critique) as the basis of reflective judgments, becomes the channel, so to speak, in which the negotiations between the intelligence and its experienced context unfold.

Backing up these theoretical claims with evidence in the poems would require a close analysis of the work in the *Cantos* to truly proceed in earnest, which is beyond the scope of the present chapter. Nevertheless, another example from the pre-war work is necessary and

I can think of no better early example of Pound attempting to realize these principles in practice than "The Return":

> See, they return; ah, see the tentative
> Movements, and the slow feet,
> The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
> Wavering!
>
> See, they return, one, and by one,
> With fear, as half-awakened;
> As if the snow should hesitate
> And murmur in the wind,
> And half turn back;
> These were the "Wing'd with Awe,"
> Inviolable,
>
> Gods of the wingèd shoe!
> With them the silver hounds,
> Sniffing the trace of air!
>
> Haie! Haie!
> These were the swift to harry;
> These keen-scented;
> These were the souls of blood.
>
> Slow on the leash,
> Pallid the leash men! (*Personae* 69)

What does one 'see' in a poem devoted to listening? And what is it that returns? Seeing and that with returns turn out to be corollaries: in this context, one 'sees' precisely that which returns. This perhaps explains the distinction between seeing and listening. One listens *for* that which returns, but the return itself we must say that one 'sees' *in* ones listening. To say that one hears or listens to the return is to confuse form for the perceptible. The semantic shift into olfactory figures of scent in the second half of the poem only serves to reinforce this distinction. What, then, of the return itself? The definite article in the title signals at the outset that there is only one single return, and yet it is a multiplicity, a "they" and a "these" that returns. Scanning the lines and stanzas for a prosodic map will perhaps furnish one with an inventory of the "these," these movements of breath and tone, these moments of emphasis, but one may still not see the return.

We could put it this way: where exactly does one locate a return? The point of the question is not to solicit an answer but to invite a leaning in and listening. Is it the repetition of the rhythmic motif of one strong upbeat and anapest, retarded by a caesura, in "see, they return, one, and by one"'s echoing of the opening clause? Is a repetition a return? But we need also to include how the recurrence of this motif at this moment in the second stanza is taking up and resolving, as in a kind of exhalation, the accumulated phrasal tension that seems to bunch together around "wavering"'s dactylic falter. And this build-up itself is nothing other than the fruition, at a more inclusive scale of interval, of how the staccato dental consonants of "tentative" enjamb into the release at the caesuric pause of

"movements, and the slow feet," a release which hints at settling into the familiar regularity of the third line's near-pentameter before it is unsettled by "uncertain"'s weakly-stressed extra half foot. If one cannot locate the return, it is because one would expect to locate it at a moment at which the intensive dimensions cast like a living atmosphere around the syllabic intervals resolve themselves into some kind of equilibrium. But here the moving self-referentiality of measure, which determines how those intervals gain in intensive qualities, makes the situation such that there is always a more inclusive, or more minute, scale at which what might appear to be a resolution could further resolve itself. As one is unable to place what is unfolding within a fixed schematic frame, the deepening resolution becomes the catching point. The phrase puts it, "they return," in punctual, iterative and timeless present tense. The recurrence of the rhythmic motif at the opening of the second stanza thus turns out to be merely a new emphatic point of departure, and yet it is not other than the return. "One, and by one," a single integrity in unresolved accumulation, this tentativeness moving "with fear, as half-awakened" at the same time resonates more profoundly for its very hesitance.

That hesitation, initially put into circulation by the caesura separating the single stress in "see" from "they return"'s anapest, is a key ingredient because of the counterpose it casts against the gathering of phrasal emphasis that the repeated motifs produce. We see this in the way the pauses in the second stanza seem to afford the variations on phrasal patterning, each of which serves to generate some new productive tension in the more minute intervals it teases out between the adjacent phrases. So the iamb of "with fear," takes up the iambic suggestion latent in the previous line's anapests, as though this divergence was afforded by the pregnant pause at the line break, and the following clause plays on what the previous clause has afforded in its faltering two-iambs-into-trochee. The fourth line continues the trend towards settling into iambic regularity in its two out of three iambic feet. All of these variations are then integrated by the new sense of scale that emerges with the poem's other major repeated motif: the trimeter phrase, comprised of a trochee and two iambs, that is repeated in "These were the "Wing'd with Awe"," "Gods of the Winged shoe! / With them the silver hounds, / Sniffing the trace of air!" and "These were the souls of blood." But the repetition of this motif that seems to such a degree to be the poem's crescendo would be nothing without its quality of playing against all of the prior faltering and hesitation, the light and close-carved phrasal variations in the first two stanzas that the caesuric pauses afforded. This dynamic is perhaps clearest in the effect created by how "inviolable" both divides and deepens the broad rhythmic consonance produced in the first repetition of the trimeter motif through "inviolable"'s more compact inflection. That sense of deepened consonance produced by "inviolable"'s half-disruptive contribution is in turn what motivates the continued repetitions of the motif in "with them the silver hounds / sniffing the trace of air!" that give the lines their sense of crescendo, a sense confirmed at the semantic level by the exclamation. What follows is a diminuendo in the penultimate stanza's anaphoric variations on the motif that give way suddenly to the rather muted and clipped half-motifs in final two lines.

Of course, this is also a poem about the return of those gods of the winged shoe. "What is a god?" The question is posed in Pound's catechism "Religio or, The Child's Guide to Knowledge," to which the reply comes "a god is an eternal state of mind." "When is a god manifest?" the question then frames it, to which the reply comes, "when the states of mind take form" (*Selected Prose* 47). The point is that the numen has always been first and foremost a way of making discussable the ways in which states of mind, which cannot be distinguished from states of the world, take form. Realization of this principle solely at the

level of composition, unlike the various myths and systems Romanticism relied upon, is perhaps modernism's one essential gift to us. The return to which the title and the semantic dimension of "The Return" refers can only be seen at the level of what composition presents and nowhere else. Pound's simultaneously sacramental and compositional senses of return help to make clearer what was ultimately at stake in these practices. Religion becomes dogma because those forms of knowledge necessary to make historically transmissible the modes of experience accessible through practice, which generally fall under the category of 'doctrine,' shed their pragmatic function and assume a reified epistemic veneer. As previously stated, this historical process can be thought as being a matter of how functions of media come to vary over time.

When iconography ceases in its media activity to present, to make manifest, and begins only to represent, a process of misrecognition has been set in motion that can only end in iconoclasm and demystification. In that process of demystification or disenchantment, a knowledge archive developed solely through dialectic and technological-experimental verification destroys the religious tradition that enlightened knowledge takes, and that at times mistakes itself, for a rival archive of knowledge. But as the misrecognized religious tradition recedes from its former saturation of social life, the ambient contexts are lost that had formerly sustained at the practical level a shared attention to how states of mind take form. This process has immense consequences. What the psyche gains in a reflective capacity for determinate cognition it tends to lose in the capacity for non-cognitive discerning intelligence that is dependent upon the ongoing cultivation of a receptivity and embodied disposition through practical observance. As critical conceptuality comes to seem more and more self-sufficient, receptivity to how states of mind take form atrophies. Those unacknowledged states of mind themselves persist as emotional states, motivations, and compulsions that influence conceptuality's official pronouncements from a semi- or unconscious location. Illustrations of the kind of world this creates, its mixtures of desperation and cunning, can be seen in *The Waste Land*, in Joyce's Dublin, and in Ford's 'saddest story' in *The Good Soldier*. Beckett's universe is perhaps its nadir.

I think we have to see the clarity with which artists' discerned and committed themselves to bringing forth form that was modernism's essential accomplishment in these kinds of broad world-historical terms. What emerges in practices like Picasso's, in the descriptive insights informing Kandinsky's theory of inner need, and in the poetics of open-form, is the possibility of decoupling enlightenment and disenchantment through the practical realization of a mode of experience, for the first time in history available without strict reliance on a single culture's inherited traditional context, that resembles the great Kantian will-o-wisp of the intellectual *anschauung*. The concept of force put forth here, of which the discernment of form in modernist compositional practice is an expression, entails the intelligence's direct, non-cognitive apprehension of potentially universal integrities or coherences within sensory intuitions. The secularization process out of which art-as-such emerges as a category freed culture from unreflective dependence on the epistemic authority of traditional contexts, while making art the placeholder for the residues of religious experience. In art's dissolution of the principle of representation as a requisite condition for practice, the modes of experience formerly housed within the religious institution now gain public visibility in a radically autonomous context.

One version of the aftermath of early modernism's practical breakthrough obviously leads towards irrationality and fascism in the cooptation of these principles, or some semblance of them, for certain political projects. We saw this trajectory intimated in some of Hulme's work. Another version leads to Theodor Adorno's basing his uncompleted final

work on the premise that the historical dialectic of enlightenment, through which rationality reifies itself as instrumental reason and regresses to the state of myth, might be overcome through the synthesis of modernist practice with enlightened discourse in a yet-to-be-realized 'aesthetic theory.' At the same time, the Frankfurt School's strict opposition between regressive irrationality and enlightened rationality was, frankly, Eurocentric and biased by its own Hegelian faith in a final triumph of reflective culture, despite all its negative dialectical provisos to the contrary. The legacy of this attitude within academic institutions has been theory's enduring hegemony, which has come to permeate virtually all aspects of pedagogy in the humanities. We have not yet adequately explored the possibility that theory might never be able to overcome its own tendency to sacrifice the sensuous particular to the cognitive universal, that systematic thought can never become discerning intelligence, and that the only way of moving past this impasse is to refrain from placing theorization in a dominant position relative to practice. This is less a matter of whether or not one should theorize than of theory's own self-reflective status as a methodology. The feared irrationality of those non-European cultures whose productions inspired certain avant-garde artists is itself largely a matter of the leading position in which practice—ethical, ritual, compositional, etc.—is placed relative to shared archives of knowledge.

One should obviously not underestimate what the first war did to preclude all of the possibilities circulating in the *avant guerre* moment. Nor should the accomplishments of the avant-garde be taken as enduring unaltered past their particular historical moment at the turn of the century. The difference in pre- and post-war existential conditions is too immense even to attempt to summarize here. With respect to the present matter of poets' development of the practices of open-form composition, we could at the least say that the war made urgent, among its many other consequences, the need to develop monumental forms capable of reconciling the acute contexts that the new kinds of formal articulation had made unprecedentedly available with the encompassing social and historical states of affairs that had left the ambient context a particularly pressing open question. But the 'poem including history' is also part of a more fundamental tendency within the broader emergence of form in abstract art. Because that conspicuousness or clarity of what could be called 'form as such' (Pound quotes Epstein as advocating "form, not the *form of some thing*" (*Gaudier Brzeska* 98)) depended on the removal of representation's minimal distance from the empirical world as a precondition of art, the status of form was, categorically, already something potentially objective. For all of their differences, *The Waste Land, The Cantos*, *Patterson, "A,"* etc. all take as foundational the premise that the modes of experience accompanying the discernment of form could not only be justified as capable of orienting social and historical life as much as conceptual knowledge could, but that they were already, if unwittingly, doing so. In many ways, the epic impulse followed from what the so-called primitivist vantage point seemed to imply about the conditions under which social life might flourish historically.

In other words, the epic impulse following the war was in some sense latent in the principle of form that comes to public consciousness prior to the war and this was due to abstraction's removal of the minimal distance between aesthetic and 'extra-aesthetic' life that representation had previously held in place. The particularly 'epic' inflection in the impulse toward producing a tradition is perhaps the special contribution of the post-war state of affairs. But behind the epic projects of late modernism is the more profound question of what the historical destiny of art will be, which is itself a contingent version of the question of what the historical destiny will be of the kinds of experience to which art has provided access. And this is our question, or needs to be, perennially. We already have some sense of

how late modernism's epic project worked out. In sifting that wreckage, there is still a living and recuperable question: how are we to build forms capable of accommodating what we know and can know while still maintaining a practical relationship with those dimensions of intelligent experience that will always exceed our ability to know? The next chapter will explore some of the vicissitudes of this question.

## Chapter 4: The City in Ruins

"Men of talents and virtue can be familiar with others and yet respect them; can stand in awe of others and yet love them. They love others and yet acknowledge the evil that is in them."
-from the Confucian *Li Ki* or *Book of Rites* (Legge 62)

"The modality of such a statement has an effect on the 'literal meaning.'"
-Ezra Pound – "Date Line" 1934 (*Literary Essays* 85)

"Ideas are colored by what they are dipped in."
-Ezra Pound - Rome Radio broadcasts, July 3, 1943 ("*Ezra Pound Speaking"* 181)

*Of Historical Fate and its Inputs*

It is by now common lore that Pound dated the end of the Christian era "at midnight of Oct 29-30" of 1921, the night Joyce finished writing (with the conclusion of the "Ithaca"'s composition) what Pound saw as the apogee of the realist novel, thus inaugurating year 1, "p.s. U." (*post scriptum Ulysses*). It has furthermore been remarked that this inaugural year of the "Feast of Zagreus," the new pagan golden age, would soon thereafter become identical in its chronologist's mind with year 1 of the *era Fascista*, coinciding with the end of the March on Rome on the 29th of the same month, only a year later in 1922. In many ways, "the dream" of the Italian Fascist state came to embody for Pound, as he saw it, the synthesis that the world of *Ulysses* could not or would not enact. And it enacted such a synthesis, or was in the process of doing so, or would have done so, Pound thought, provided time, counsel and a different turn of fate, precisely in the terms Ralph Waldo Emerson described of a transformation of genius into practical power. Pound's version of fascism was always idiosyncratic: an imagined appendage to and means of implementing his ever-shifting economic prescriptions, a form of social organization he saw as uniquely suited to the time and place of 1930's and 40's Italy and not suited for international export. The very idiosyncrasy of his reading of Italian fascism was part of the reason for his continued myopia and refusal to acknowledge fully or condemn that political regime's perpetration of and complicity in some of the greatest atrocities in world history. Accordingly, Pound's life's work in *The Cantos* will always, unavoidably bear the mark of his own complicity in those historical events. It will never be possible to dispel the influential reading, advanced by Massimo Bacigalupo, that the *Cantos* ought ultimately to be regarded as the "sacred poem of the Nazi-Fascist millenium, which thankfully never eventuated," nor should it be (Bacigalupo x).

If such is the case, it might be useful to ask the following question: why bother to continue reading or studying *The Cantos* at all? Though there are several possible answers to this question (one of which of course being, "one shouldn't"), I can only offer my own answer. First, and more superficially, there is the fact that 20th (and 21st) century poetry as it came to exist is wholly unthinkable without the contribution made by *The Cantos*. Without the work done by Pound in *The Cantos*, it is impossible to have an adequate appreciation of the work of William Carlos Williams, Basil Bunting, Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley, Robin Blaser, Denise Levertov, Jack Spicer, John Weiners, Louis Zukofsky, George Oppen, Lorine Niedecker, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Amiri Baraka, J.H. Prynne, Anne Waldman, Nathaniel Mackey and many, many others. The tradition of poetry in America, both as recorded history and as a living thing that informs people's lives, is involved in this

question, and the *Cantos* are a main artery of that tradition, for better or worse. As the work's ambivalent relationship to Joyce's encyclopedic project in *Ulysses* further suggests, *The Cantos* provide a crucial hinge between the prewar experiments in form that helped forge a template for modernist compositional practice, the various works of high modernism, and the legacies of the modernist project running through mid-century poetry and continuing into the present. So, on the one hand, it is a question of our knowledge of the significance of modernism, and more specifically of the question of the degree to which a poetics or compositional practice, in this case "open-form," might be said to be generative. But this is an effect rather than a cause, even if it expresses a more fundamental principle at work.

To get closer to the core issue, which necessarily entails an appeal to experience, I feel I have to offer a somewhat baldly naïve and (even if not especially original) audacious assertion: that for all the filler, at times vileness, that one also finds littered throughout, *The Cantos* include the best poetry written in the 20th century. By "best," I mean "incomparably better as poetry than what the vast majority of contemporaneous writers were capable of producing." I mean "unprecedentedly good." *The Cantos*' reception history among later 20th century poets would appear to bear out such a reading. This reception history is not itself the product of any one person's or group of persons' deliberate process of selection and exclusion but something that developed organically over time as individual poets read various works and came to value particular poets whose work came in their minds to constitute a standard of what poetry and poetics could accomplish, based on their own personal experiences of those works. Such a construal of the process of *The Cantos*' unlikely canonization, given the issues vexing its production, seems particularly valid if one considers that the tradition of post-war American poetry that developed out of the Pound and Williams school was largely the product of local alliances developing between minor groups who operated outside of major academic institutions and their associated critical publishing industries. In *The Cantos*, Pound invented and mastered a technique of poetics that unquestionably defines one of the major lineages of American letters.[xxxii] If we are going to assess that lineage, we cannot avoid looking closely at *The Cantos*.

But my assertion gives rise to a second question: does the *quality* of one's writing justify the special attention that the culture devotes to it? And just to be perverse by adding an extra turn of the screw to the context and stakes informing this question, I would further qualify it by agreeing with the general interpretive thrust of critics such as Peter Nicholls, Lawrence Rainey, and Robert Casillo that, contrary to some readings of *The Cantos* that see style and politics as separable, it is precisely that which makes Pound's poetry superlatively good that eventually led him to hold the often reprehensible political views he adopted. In order to go any further down this road, we need first to pause and ask, "what would qualify Pound's poetry in *The Cantos* as good?" More precisely, *in what would the quality of his writing consist*? The question admits of many possible answers but is nevertheless worth taking seriously. Criticism of *The Cantos* has at times bypassed this question, which condenses more far-reaching questions about the criteria of literary analysis, leaving its answer a background assumption that informs the way arguments are structured and evidence gets adduced. In many accounts, there is an implicit hypothesis that literature is primarily an act of representation. Thus in one commonly assumed answer to this question, the goodness of *The Cantos*, whether valid or dangerously invalid, would lie in its accurately representing a particular ideal of culture for which it attempts to provide historical evidence in the form of documentary materials culled from a variety of world traditions. We could call this the "semantic reading" of *The Cantos*. If this reading is accurate, many consequent readings will follow. If it is not, there is the possibility that these consequent readings may proceed from

distorted premises that inform those readings as a whole and that such readings therefore require revision.

Effectively any critical treatment that relies primarily upon the category of "meaning" as the appropriate term for what the language of *The Cantos* produces falls within this strain of criticism. A primary assumption behind the semantic reading of *The Cantos* is that readers of the work respond, whether affirmatively (as in Mussolini's famous, equivocal, "ma questo / e divertente!" (*The Cantos* 202)) or negatively, to a specific concept or architecture of concepts corresponding either accurately or inaccurately to a set of imputed empirical referents. Undoubtedly, there are 'ideas' in *The Cantos*, but we need to ask whether such categories—ideas, meanings, concepts, representations—are sufficient to deal with all the material, even at the level of basic readerly comprehension. A more nuanced version of the semantic reading can be seen in what we might call the "textual" approach explored variously by Marjorie Perloff, Richard Sieburth, David Antin, Christopher Nealon, Charles Bernstein and others. In this account, *poesis* is as much a matter of foregrounding the material substrate or "textual matter" of language as it is the cognitive event of representation. Pound is seen in this reading to apply a collage technique of juxtaposition to the textual material of language. But even in these accounts, the fundamentally cognitive cast of signification remains unchallenged, even if the textual mediations and consequent "indeterminacy" to which these critics point serve to trouble meaning's smooth functioning. Put simply, my position is that the semantic approach, in all of its incarnations, is a misleading way to read much of *The Cantos*, and that without seeing why this way of reading is inadequate one will misconstrue the way Pound was engaging the question of history. And it *is* a question of *seeing*, not just one of *knowing*. Coming to see why this way of reading is inadequate involves entering into the question of the relationship between knowledge and experience. I have no interest in defending Pound's interpretation of history, which seems to me immensely, dangerously flawed. I nevertheless feel that Pound's misconceptions cannot be adequately assessed from the position of false premises. Put differently, we can only approach questions of truth or knowledge or ideology with respect to the *Cantos* from a clear assessment of what we take them to be doing.

*"Civilization": Looking at an Ideogram*

The best place to begin exploring Pound's poetry in *The Cantos* is to consider the import of one of his most frequently used words, from the vorticist days up through the D.T.C. and St. Elizabeth's: civilization. The term is a kind of knotting point that draws together the disparate fields informing Pound's work in the *Cantos*. Accordingly, civilization in Pound's thinking is essentially a question of the relationship between experience and knowledge and of the shared practical conditions conducive to a balanced and integrative relationship between the two, but this definition is at this point insufficient. We have to be able to see "civilization" in particular examples in order to maintain contact with what the term conveys, because a range of phenomena participate in the question of civilization for Pound without, I would suggest, the term's being reducible to any of them. Consequently, like most of the important points regarding these questions, Poundian "civilization" is better shown than programmatically defined. As we will see, *what* "civilization" is to Pound and *how* we come to understand it cannot be separated. I offer two examples, which in their complementarity draw out different aspects of the other. The first is the "Listening to Incense" example he offers first in his 1914 introduction to Fenollosa's *Noh: or Accomplishment*, and again in 1938's *Guide to Kulchur*. I cite the latter here:

> To define [civilization] ideogrammatically we may start with the "Listening to Incense." In the Imperial Court of Nippon the companions burnt incense, they burnt now one perfume, now another, or a mixture of perfumes, and the accomplishment was both to recognize what had gone materially into the perfume and to cite the apposite poems.
>
> The interest is in the blend of perception and of association.
>
> It is a pastime neither for clods nor for illiterates. (80)

All the Poundian signatures are there: concision to the point of inscrutability, a taste for both the exquisite and the pragmatic, an oppressively arrogant disdain for imputed philistines. But we shouldn't stop there, and before commenting on this example I would like first to juxtapose it with another example, also culled from Asian culture, this time Chinese. At the opening of *The Pound Era*, Hugh Kenner parses the Chinese ideogram for *Ling* [image], as being comprised of four coordinated radicals pictographically rendering, in Kenner's account, right action; the sleeves of a shaman(ess) in ritual dance; rain falling from clouds; mouths of spirits (Kenner 14). Pound employs this ideogram at the opening of and throughout the *Rock-Drill* cantos of the 1950's. As in the previous example, the interest is in the blend of perception and of association.

At first glance, the "listening to incense" example might seem like a fairly straightforward case. We could say that the "idea" being conveyed is that of a confluence of political power, a rigidly hierarchical one at that, with an extreme degree of rarefied aesthetic refinement among the ruling class. If we go along with this reading, we can easily subsume this particular example under a category that fits into a given narrative or structure of concepts, say as illustrating Walter Benjamin's definition of fascism as the aestheticization of politics, that we wish to employ to orient ourselves toward our experience of the *Cantos*. The anecdote then fits neatly within our structure of concepts, it has become transparent and manageable. This way of subsuming the example affords certain readings of history, and there is much to recommend it in terms of the forms of rational coherence it enables. It is extremely efficient when one wants to produce an argument. But we also need to see that the sense of the example we derive thereby is the product of an operation through which we ourselves have put the example *prior to* its becoming available to placement in explicative relationships with other examples, whether comparable texts or recorded historical events. The reading does not come forth ready-made, and the example is not transparently similar or germane to other ideas or forms of evidence prior to the reading. Furthermore, coordinating this particular with a group of other, similar instances of empirical data or to theoretical constructs that seem to provide controls to our reading in no way reduces the receptive procedure through which we put the first example, because each of these controls needs to be put through the very same procedure in order for it to operate as such. It is a heightened self-consciousness about just this process that motivated the notion of "ideogrammic definition" Pound invokes before presenting this example. Previous treatments of Pound's purportedly "denotative" poetics and thinking have at times ignored the fact that it is precisely the status of the operation of denotation that is in question and have instead assumed that 'precise definition' is synonymous with mere and unqualified denotation, a kind of deixis of the empirical. In the age of instant access to information and the quantitization of everything under the sun, the distinction being made is perhaps becoming more difficult to see. The signifying act of denotation is itself under scrutiny here and is not something unreflectively championed as a value.

According to the ideogrammic method Pound is here applying to the Japanese historical formation he offers up as exemplary of civilization, the example is at once a documented piece of social history insofar as it is an empirical artifact upon which Pound stumbled in his studies and, to the perspicuous reader, so the story goes, the crystallization in microcosm of an elemental principle operative in the phenomenal world. The latter facet is not seen as a concept superimposed on the former, but rather as an experiential condition of the former's becoming intelligible to the reader. No example yields its intelligibility in a manner indifferent to the recipient's own process of coming to inhabit and participate, if only provisionally, in the very principle the example manifests. The process of reception necessarily includes the recipient's own practical and experiential milieu as an animating condition, rather than treating one's present experience as a neutral background indifferent to the concepts employed to ascertain relationships between mind and its objects. This is an essential part of the import of this appeal to exemplary documents. Accordingly, that intelligibility coincides with the audience's fluid condition of responsiveness, rather than defining the function of a sign or concept that "refers," sequentially and subordinately, to an empirical object. In this coincidence of response and intelligibility, one's own sense of the appositeness of the example becomes vivid. Such vivid apposition in turn facilitates the passage from example as presentation, in the facticity of its merely having been there, to the framing of the example as illustrative, which in turn fulfills its dual status as a documentation precisely of the relationship between historical empiria and the exemplified principle.

Of course, I am again talking around a relationship that bears fundamental commonalities, particularly in the interdependence of intelligibility and practical or experiential receptivity, with the principle that I have previously called "force." We could say that responsiveness to expressive force is the readerly principle that frames the example's relationship to the broader context that it animates as being one initially of apposition and only secondarily of denotative verification. The primary difference between Poundian ideogrammics and the instantiations of force previously explored lies in the fact that, in this case, verification in fact *is* the final aim of the example. Much of what follows will be concerned with understanding how and to what end Pound would develop this circuitous method of verification, as well as to assessing its risks. I have deferred using the term "force" up until now in order to avoid conveying the sense that what this discussion amounts to is our being able to recognize and label, "force," thereby confusing the reader's understanding of what the term is meant to clarify in demanding a manner of responsiveness that retains the exactness of recognition while remaining categorically distinct from determinate cognition. Compositional force is obviously neither identical with nor limited to the Poundian ideogram. At the same time, through having become receptive to what the term force is meant to clarify in reorienting the event of reading, we can gain a less distortive sense of what Pound is trying to show in his discussion and practice of ideogrammic thinking, both in *The Cantos* and elsewhere. Ideogrammic thinking in Pound's later work was at base an expansion of the purview of his earlier poetics, whose movement towards the trans-semantic I argued in the last chapter requires the concept of force to be adequately described. I will return later in this chapter to a more extended analysis of the ideogrammic principle in Pound's later work, but for the moment it is more worthwhile simply to study the particular examples with an aim to understanding how they might convey "civilization" for Pound.

To what, for instance, does "the interest" in the previous quote, "here the interest lies in the blend of perception and association," refer? Where do we locate the interest in the example? Does the interest belong to the companions and audience watching the event

in the Imperial Court of Nippon, to the participants in the ceremony who rely on the interest as a basis for citing the apposite poems, is it Pound's interest, or is it our own as solicited? Is the object of "blend of perception and association" that which motivates the sequence of perfumes (i.e. "now one, now another"), that which connects the olfactory perception to the recognition of natural properties drawn upon in the production of the incense, that which allows the participant to discern and select the poem whose overall character is apposite to the context of the present moment of the incense ceremony, is it a blend between knowledge of those natural properties and the perception of the qualitative effects of poetic style manifest in the apposite poem, or does "perception and association" perhaps refer to the social fact that such perceptual exercise was shared practice (i.e. 'associated' as in Pound's economic 'increment of association') within this particular historical formation? To choose just one of these possible valences of the phrase for the sake of either reference or indexicality is to foreclose the event of blending wherein the interest lies. The placing of the example itself allows "interest" to radiate these multidimensional valences, which bring knowledge, experience and practice into an animated conjunction.[xxxiii] At the same time, the interest (the state of being interested and maintaining interest), which Pound tells us is the essential constituent of civilization in this example, is neither imposed on anyone, nor is anyone excluded from opening to it as it appears in this example. In principle at least, anyone who wants to can take the time to learn how to read this way (Pound's "clods and illiterates" notwithstanding).

Taking the example of the compound ideogram *Ling* as itself apposite to the present analysis serves to draw out further dimensions latent within the previous example of Poundian civilization. The comparison will help us see why the multiple valences of the previous example do not merely proliferate into a diffuse plurality of possible readings. In this example, we need to try to see two very different scales of relevance simultaneously, without losing track entirely of what we've already examined in the "listening to incense" example. On the one hand, we have to see the 'represented' event traceable in the pictographic images that each radical affords. With respect to this event, I would refer the reader back to Chapter Two's discussion of techniques of coincidence within ritual practice in order to have some context for appreciating possible backgrounds for those pictographic images. On the other hand, and in line with the previous comment about how Pound's ideogrammic thinking puts into question the status of denotation as a signifying event, we need to see that the ideogram as a distinct form of media inhabits a liminal position between pictographic image and what we would more conventionally think of as a signifier. It is reducible to neither extreme. The distinction here becomes clear if the reader will refer to the more lengthy explications in both Chapter Two's discussion of media activity and norms, and Chapter Three's discussion of non-fulfillment within Picasso's analytic cubist work. So to start with the first scale of relevance, the coordinated radicals (to wit: ethical conduct, ritual performance, rain clouds, three mouths of spirits) present a kind of tableau rendering an event whose efficacy consists in the harmonious integration of human, environmental, and transmundane planes of phenomena. In other words, the radicals convey a discernible conjunctive relationship between forms of human activity (conduct), natural process (rain), and numinous principle (spirits).

With respect to the second scale of relevance, the same tableau I have previously described as included within the first scale of relevance, the confluence of those possible pictographic images, itself constitutes but one possible array of media activities latent and discernible within *Ling* as a particular graphic mark. The other scale would be the ideogram's more purely graphic aspect, the vividness of its gestural mode of appearance as

sign, in which one also locates its normative and historical dimension as an artifact. Similarly to what we saw was the case with analytic cubism, it is not accurate to say that we derive possible pictographic values and exhaust the ideogram into its semantic field, as 'meaning x,y, and z', thereby converting the simplicity of the ideogram's graphic appearance into the complexity of a compound semantic field. This would be to trade its activity for ideas. In reading the ideogram as sharing in the principle of *poesis,* which is Fenollosa's central thesis in a nutshell, the character of the compositional act is to reverse precisely that movement, as was that case in Picasso's painting. The possible semantic field *goes into* the media activity of the ideogram in its graphic dimension. The ideogram thus condenses a range of phenomena in its activity, and this condensation is precisely what coordinates those discrete radicals into a field.[xxxiv] The challenge for Pound criticism is thus to develop an accurate descriptive language for this "going into." On the one hand, the coordination of ethical, thaumaturgical and ecological dimensions implied in the event 'represented' through the pictographic tableau of *Ling* helps us to understand why Pound in *Guide to Kulchur*'s extended reading of the *Nicomachean Ethics* focuses with such intensity on the Socratic and pre-Socratic etymological roots of Aristotelian *eudaimonia*, as suggesting that the essence of the socially harmonious "good life" is to remain in the good graces of one's *daimon* through excellence in conduct. On the other hand, in its condensation of these pictographic values into the sheer insistence of media activity, manifest as force in the graphic appearance of the ideogram to the reader who is willing to stay with the challenge, we can understand why Pound in *Rock-Drill* translates *Ling* simply as "sensibility" (*The Cantos* 563).

In just this sense, then, civilization for Pound is primarily a matter of sensibility. The term fits to the extent that it includes both the sense of ethos, as rooted in conduct, and the mental and perceptual receptivity we have seen conveyed in the previous two examples, making visible a dimension of conscious experience that draws upon each of these facets of being-in-the-world without being wholly reducible to any one in particular. The media activity we see in the ideogram registers a sensibility made apparent in certain artifacts, events, and institutions, and to which particular sociohistorical formations appear to have proven supportive. Pound in a passage of *Guide to Kulchur* immediately preceding the ideogrammic definition of civilization in the "Listening to Incense" example writes of this sensibility, "it is a root, the centre of steadily out-circling causations of immediate order to a whole series of harmonies and good conducts" (79-80). Two points are worth reinforcing here. First, as Pound's transformation of the denotative act inherently suggests, the sensibility (Pound also frequently uses the Kantian term *anschauung*) is not identical with those artifacts, events and institutions but is thought to be accessible through them. This relationship of non-identity is not unique to these two relatively late examples from Pound's work, but can be found articulated as early as *The Spirit of Romance*, even though the postwar context brings the term "civilization" into the foreground of Pound's thought as a placeholder for his enduring concerns about the impact modes of perceptually acute experience have on collective life.[xxxv]

To put it at its most schematic level, both examples show that particulars can be coordinated in such a manner that their integration forms a conduit in which the interferences between mind and world are reduced. That coordination depends, for reasons to be described shortly, on a certain degree of self-cultivation in ethical conduct, which premise informs Pound's enduring dedication to understanding Confucian thought. The term 'force' as I have being using it can be applied descriptively to the experienced or perceived modality of that integration. The question of the relationship between experience and knowledge is itself a matter of these interference patterns. For instance, a strictly

conceptual form of recognition that would take *Ling* for semantic denotation, for connotation, or perhaps for material facticity, misperceives these dimensions of apposition (i.e. of the sign's efficacy in manifesting force through its relational integrities) because this mentality gets blocked at the practical level as a fixed habit of reception that superimposes its own familiar terms upon one's immediate perceptual experience.[xxxvi] Behind the ideogrammic method employed in the previous examples is an effort, based on Pound's view of sensibility, at constructing a means of producing knowledge that circumvents just this process.

Secondly, Pound saw this sensibility as efficacious in the sense that it by implication lends itself, when taken as a precondition for active life, to harmonious, non-dominative social relationships both in human interactions and in interactions between humans and the nonhuman environment. The pictographic tableau latent within *Ling* serves to diagram this kind of spontaneous integration. The premise is that when such a sensibility is diffused throughout a social formation, as a condition of intelligibility linked to a shared disposition, it spontaneously gives rise to just social relations and that, conversely, when such a sensibility wanes, human relations atrophy into manipulative forms of domination, into fraud and tyranny. An example of the latter tendency would include ostensibly progressive social movements devolving into mere postures of moral grandstanding which serve as an outward facade to mask self-interested cliquishness and social climbing. I hesitate to offer one-off quotations from *The Cantos* to support these points (e.g. "when the equities are gathered together / as birds alighting / it springeth up vital" (551)) because, as will become clear, this all-too-common way of adducing evidence in criticism serves to reinforce the style of misreading that has obscured many of the key issues at play here. This manner of quotation presupposes that language in Pound's work can be read merely semantically, that lines can be taken unproblematically as statements and used to illustrate a broader claim about the work without any distortion. In order to understand, in a way that avoids such distortions, how Pound's notion of civilization-as-sensibility comes over the arc of his life and work to be focused on extra-literary as much as on literary concerns, seen here in the historical dimension of these late examples from Pound's work, we need to examine some of the details informing the pivotal transition in Pound's composition of the early *Cantos* as it unfolded in 1920's Paris. Without seeing how the *Cantos'* so-called "lyric" and "documentary" poles come mutually to implicate one another, it will be impossible to see accurately both how Pound's project was one of eliding the opposition between knowledge and experience and why the semantic reading of *The Cantos* accordingly misleads.

*Translucence and the Negative in 1920's Paris*

If one were to select a moment at which the notion of civilization becomes inextricably wedded, in Pound's mind, to the view that the modes of intelligence native to the compositional act might be released from their sequestration within the sphere of the fine arts, the best candidate for such a time period would most likely be that of Pound's involvement with the Parisian avant-garde in 1921 through his trip to Italy in 1922. This period, during which Pound attempted his abortive *Bel Esprit* project and immediately prior to his drafting of the Malatesta cantos in 1922, is significant in constituting the phase in which Pound began in earnest his efforts to transpose the modes of intelligence native to the act of verse composition (already conceived in pan-media terms) into a method of extra-literary sociohistorical knowledge production. Pound himself cites a particular moment from this period, along with a quotation from a participant in that moment, Francis Picabia, as

especially salient with respect to the question of the fate of civilization. The quote is Picabia's quasi-statement, "Europe exhausted by the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine" (*Selected Prose* 287). The moment, as Pound cites it in the 1938 essay "For a New Paideuma," is the Parisian Dada group's mock trial of the reactionary novelist Maurice Barres, organized by Andre Breton on May 13, 1921. Pound recounts the event as follows:

> It was a show, as I remember it, in a smallish hall near the Boulevard 'Mich.' M. Aragon in legal robes as prosecutor, Barres a wax barber's dummy, and Aragon talked too long. He wore out the audience. That isn't essential. The drama existed when, I think it was, Eluard (it may have been Crevel) came on in a gas mask. That was the antithesis, the dead rhetoric *vs.* the cannon fodder. A system of clichés had broken down. A bit of stale gas had been left in the mask and the protagonist at a certain point nearly suffocated, could stand it no longer, and tore off the mask. One very red faced real youth sputtering in the stage set. (*Selected Prose* 287-288)

Appreciating this anecdote requires being aware of both the original context of the performance and the context of Pound's recollection in the essay. Pound's immediate purpose in offering this anecdote of what he calls "a definite intellectual act" in the "Paideuma" essay is to take the Surrealists, who splintered off from the Dada group after this event, to task for what he sees as their regressively "chicken-headed" and doctrinaire adherence to "red propaganda" (287). But in the event the quote recounts, it is precisely that mentality or "system of clichés" underlying *any* strict doctrinal adherence, rather than a particular doctrine, that is the object of critique, as both the reactionary Barres and (respecting Pound's intent in recounting this event in 1938) the communist Aragon appear equally targeted in the Dadaist "antithesis [of] dead rhetoric [and] cannon fodder" whose enactment Pound here affirms.[xxxvii] What Pound in the "Paideuma" essay celebrates in the Dada performance piece is the mentality instantiated in an act that non-discursively performs the same function of a logical "antithesis," thereby rendering intelligible the negation capable of internally dividing and framing extant systems of thought as being equally "dead rhetoric" and "canon fodder," or intellectual resources. It is a matter of the critique of knowledge, in other words, only a critique that is enacted rather than discursively formulated.

Similarly, it is the multi-level irony of Picabia's statement that draws Pound's praise of the man whose uptake was supposedly seconded only by the Duce himself. In the anecdote as well as in Picabia's quote, the content being communicated cannot be received in isolation from the manner of presentation. Beyond the more immediate ironic inversion the quasi-statement stages, in reframing a successful act of military conquest as entailing the exhaustion, rather than expansion, of what we would more conventionally call a civilization, Pound's primary interest in this locution lies in its formal redistribution of the hierarchies structuring the relationship between an aggregation or whole ("Europe") and a local transaction ("conquest of Alcase-Lorainne"). Richard Sieburth points out the numerous moments in the later cantos in which Pound repeats Picabia's locution with additional syntactical inversions, frequently pairing it with the phrase, attributed to Maurice Vlaminck and itself subject to similar reshuffling by Pound, "Art is local" (Sieburth 55). Indeed, we see a similar inversion of the global and local in Pound's anecdote about the trial of Barres in the "Paideuma" essay of 1938, where the whole import of the narrative, its function as antithesis of dead rhetoric and cannon fodder, becomes focalized through perceptual detail of the semi-anonymous "very red faced real youth" tearing off the gas mask.

Such textual acrobatics as we see in Pound's Picabian syntactical play would seem to lend themselves to common post-modernist appropriations of Pound as a kind of unwitting Language poet *avant la lettre*, in which the documentary poetics of the Malatesta cantos have to do primarily with the influence that the material substrate and opacity of language has on its signifying capacities. This reading informs the influential poetics-as-collage construal of the *Cantos,* which in my view confuses means and ends. A more profound relationship becomes visible, however, in Pound's fascination with Picabia's usage of the medium of conceptual thought when we view Pound's fascination with Picabia in juxtaposition with other contemporaneous usages to which he was putting linguistic media. In the distinction from post-modernist readings of Pound that it affords lies the whole question of the stakes of adequately assessing the project of Pound's later poetics, their bearing on the historical relationship between experience and knowledge, because this distinction affords access to the kinds of intelligibility Pound was pursuing throughout the 1920's and into the 30's.

To begin by gaining a broader sense of the broader intellectual context informing Pound's brief exposure to Dada, the source of the quote from Picabia is a piece called "Fumigations," printed in the Autumn 1921 "Brancusi Number" of *The Little Review*, just a few months after the mock trial of Barres. Pound's review of Brancusi's work in that same issue, I would suggest, is essential to take into account if one is to understand how both the continuity between Pound's work with the vorticist group and his exposure to Dada inform the subsequent development of the *Cantos*. The review is significant for Pound's pairing of Gaudier-Brzeska and Brancusi, with Pound citing Gaudier's dicta about sculptural feeling and his own formulations regarding primary form as heuristics for approaching Brancusi's work in sculpture.[xxxviii] The most straightforward definition we find in that essay of what Pound calls "the best summary of our contemporary aesthetics," extending both to Brancusi's work and implicatively to his own, he offers a few lines earlier in T.J. Everetts' phrase "A work of art has in it no idea which is separable from the form" (*Literary Essays* 441). Pound goes on to characterize Brancusi as "continu(ing) the process of purgation" of dead rhetoric that the younger Gaudier had initiated, going beyond the latter in his "revolt against the monumental" (442). Citing Brancusi's work as an example, the work completely purged of rhetoric, Pound tells us, is one in which "every one of a thousand angles of approach …ought to be interesting" (443). This formulation is essential in that it implies that part of the work done by composition is to unground any fixed and privileged vantage point for orienting a viewing of the work, even as the work is soliciting an integrated experience in the formal cohesion that orients and makes interesting those thousand angles.

Crucially, Pound cites both Dante's notion of a "melody which most in-centers the soul" and his own concept of "absolute rhythm" as compositional principles apposite to the formal perfection, directing itself towards an integration Pound describes as "infinite," to which Brancusi's sculpture aspires (442). The connection Pound develops here, between the multidimensional integration around which Brancusi's work's formal vanishing point draws the coarse material properties of sculptural mass and texture, and the melopoeic principle which, in Pound's own account, seeks seamless integration with the coextensive phanopoeic (image-oriented) and logopoeic (intellectual/discursive) principles, provides a key analogical device for framing the poetics Pound was developing at this moment in the *Cantos*' development. But in order to see how this poetics dovetails with Pound's interest in Picabia's cast of thought, in the emergent sense of a civilized sensibility that *The Cantos* take it upon themselves to bring into existence, we need first to look more closely at how Pound was deploying these poetics in practice.

Shortly after late 1921's commencement of the Feast of Zagreus, in May 1922, Pound would publish Canto VIII in the *Dial*. The dating of this Canto's composition is unclear, as Pound had never mentioned the composition of the canto prior to its publication. On December 13, 1919, Pound wrote to his father informing him that he had written cantos V, VI, and VII, "each more incomprehensible than the one preceding it," before lapsing into a hiatus of about two years (Slatin 8). Myles Slatin remarks that the appearance of Canto VIII "signaled the beginning of another period of intensive work on the long poem"(8). Ronald Bush remarks that the appearance of Canto VIII marks "a change in the poem's decorum," and that its "use of irony proceeded to open the way to the civilized urbanity of the Malatesta group and to the sarcasm of the 'Hell' Cantos" (Bush 242). Indeed, the poem's eventual reassignment to the position of Canto II, supplanting the original sequence of the 1915 'Ur-Cantos,' would suggest a fundamental reorientation, or at least renovation, of the project of the *Cantos*.

While Bush focuses on Canto VIII/II's use of irony as most indicative of the change in decorum that will mark the new cantos, his remarks elsewhere about Pound's enthusiastic response to Joyce's recent achievement, in the draft of "Circe" that Pound had received one month prior to the trial of Barres, are in my view more useful for a reading of Canto VIII/II. "Circe"'s transgeneric, 'hallucinatory' form can be read as exemplifying in many ways the 'contemporary aesthetics' Pound has in mind when referring to Everett's formulation, "no idea which is separable from the form," in the Brancusi essay that Fall (Bush 233). It is that episode's eruption into the 'three dimensional' relief of porous transpersonal psychodrama, its accompanying formal strain toward the status of event and action, of narration become performance and *mise-en-scene*, that offers a macrocosmic display of Stephen Daedalus' own programmatic aesthetic vision, declared at the episode's opening, of a form rendered "so that gesture, not music, not odours, would be a universal language, the gift of tongues rendering visible not the lay sense but the first entelechy, the structural rhythm" (p.#). One can reasonably postulate that Pound would have had "Circe" (from whom after all Odysseus receives his 'craft') in his mind a couple of months later at the trial of Barrés. And we can hear in Daedalus' "so that" (the phrase itself one of the *Cantos*' recurrent leitmotifs, associated with the mode Pound uses in this canto) the intimations of a trans-semantic "gestural language" that can best orient our reading of the mode of poetics exemplified in Dionysus' own hierophanic manifestation in Canto VIII/II.

Just as we saw with the 'visual' interpretation of analytic cubism, we will miss the main event if we read Canto II semantically. And just as Brancusi's work demands a 'sculptural feeling,' an attunement to how the coarse outward properties of the work act as conveyances of an imperceptible integrity motivating the mutual inflections of their various visible qualities, so here we need to see sound, image and dramatic significance as gestures 'rendering visible not the lay sense,' but an emergent state in which the qualitative properties of the world come to reveal themselves as saturated with a capacious, animating intelligence. The canto's central passage, in which Dionysus reveals himself to a ship of greedy slave traders and their captain Acoetes, is worth quoting at length:

> Aye, I, Acoetes, stood there
> And the god stood by me,
> Water cutting under the keel,
> Sea-break from stern forrards,
> Wake running off from the bow,
> And where was gunwale, there now was vine-trunk,

And tenthril where cordage had been,
        Grape-leaves on the rowlocks,
Heavy vine on the oarshafts,
And, out of nothing, a breathing,
        Hot breath on my ankles,
Beasts like shadows in glass,
        A furred tail upon nothingness.
Lynx-purr, and heathery smell of beasts,
        Where tar smell had been,
Sniff and pad-foot of beasts,
        Eye-glitter out of black air.
The sky overshot, dry, with no tempest,
Sniff and pad-foot of beasts,
        Fur brushing my knee-skin,
Rustle of airy sheaths,
        Dry forms in the *aether*.
And the ship like a keel in ship-yard,
        Slung like an ox in smith's sling,
Ribs stuck fast in the ways,
        Grape-cluster over pin-rack,
        Void air taking pelt. (7-8)

The crucial point here is the kind of reading this work requires us to engage in, which is most apparent in the import of the passage's failure, if we look closely, at securing a stable representational content. At best, reading the language as descriptive yields a vague sense of a kind of metamorphosis overtaking the ship and its crew, which attends the god's emergence to perceptibility. But a more interesting concomitance happens in how the lines' descriptive failure to produce something semantically 'visible' appears to correspond precisely with non-semantic, 'invisible' features of the language as a medium. The event of metamorphosis here is essentially something to be discerned as force becoming manifest in the phenomenal appearance of language as utterance, as language becoming visible in its status, not as a mere substrate for cognition, but as perceptually expressive media ingressing into non-cognitively intelligible formation. This, in other words, should *not* be confused with the statement that the passage is a linguistic *representation of* force becoming manifest in appearance. The difference, upon which so much else depends, is in the particulars.

The first five lines establish an austere four-part semantic counterpoise between the Acoetes' position as witness, Zagreus' emergent presence, the strange fixity of their respective positions ("stood there / and the god stood by me"), and the consequent proprioceptive reorientation of the ship's passage through water, where now the wake itself falls off from the stationary ship rather than marking a fixed point in the water through which the keel has passed. Acoetes' testimonial declaration gestures toward a diegetic foundation that is instantly and sharply reduced, asking us to share in this witness while pulling the rug out from under our feet as the nearly unreadable kenning and archaism of "sea-break from stern forrards," flanked by the suspended cataracts of the ship's wake, compress description and narration to what seems at once a point in space and a single action. And simultaneously, the conspicuous sonic effect of long vowels in "Aye, I, Acoetes," which gathers the momentum of the previous lines' high and long vowels ("*Ivy* upon the oars, King Pentheus, / grapes with no seed but sea-foam, / *Ivy* in scupper-hole"),

shifts sound into an orienting position, moving it into the foreground, so to speak, as narration and description recede to the background. Offering a kind of gestural confirmation of these reorientations in the act of reading itself, the substitutions of "where was gunwale, there now was vine-trunk, / and tenthril where cordage had been" see a virtual substitution of prosodically isomorphic nouns associated with Dionysus' domain in the position of the ship's more profane components, which are nevertheless permitted mention so that both domains hover with mutual exclusion in a kind of shared non-space. Transitive verbs quickly drop out of what one would expect to be the most eventful portion of the passage in favor of the oddly charged yet static spatial relations accomplished by the salience that prepositions assume. The individual nouns themselves work to a similar effect in the branching quality, most obviously in the kenning-like "vine-trunk" or the unified multiplicity of "cordage," which splits nomination itself into a set of relationships.

To call this merely parataxis misses the point: here the laying flat of hierarchical syntactical relationships, which are essentially epistemological mechanisms, serves to register a more fundamental reorientation of the relationship between the epistemic dimension of language use and the emergence, by virtue of the shift the act of speech performs in withdrawing those mechanisms from their normative leading position, of a mode of intelligibility which is not itself wholly dependent upon such epistemic relationships, but which is in fact capable of supplementing the deliberate shortfalls of those epistemic relations with which it moves in concert. I would go so far as to say that this statement contains the pith of a criterion for what constitutes a primary standard of quality in poetry itself, this capacity for deliberate lapses in meaning to coincide with and be supplemented by intelligible patterns of non-cognitive experience, but we should look again at the poem. The main event of the middle portion of the passage would seem to lie in the achieved translucency of semantic content, both in terms of individual image and of narrated drama, to how the dynamic interplay of long vowels, aspirated and fricative consonants, and the lurching cadence of accumulating spondaic and trochaic lunges (e.g. "and, out of nothing, a breathing, / hot breath on my ankles, / beasts like shadows in glass, / a furred tail upon nothingness") work to oversaturate the act of speech with a practical context that eclipses it. Force just *is* this making-translucent of the semantic field by virtue of the integration of non-semantic features in an emergent context that overtakes those non-semantic features as well.

In other words, these non-semantic features are themselves subject to the informing intelligence as it permeates and casts them into continuously self-implicating and enfolding patterns that serve to convey its presence in their binding integrity. That integrity is something that only becomes noticeable in the present tense of reading. For instance, listen to how the arrangement of vowels and consonants manages a charged poise in its balance of repetition and variation. The breathy and yawning sonorous pattern of "*h*eavy v*i*ne on the oar*sha*ft" and "a *brea*thing" is both iterated and redistributed a moment later in "*h*ot *br*eath on my ankles, / b*ea*sts l*i*ke *sha*dows in gl*a*ss," drawing the attention toward one kind of pattern recognition while at the same time using this very same draw toward a recognizable regularity as a provisional anchorage point against which it can throw a countering tension through the harmonic variations of sonic near-matches in "n*o*thing" against "h*o*t" and "br*ea*th" against "br*ea*thing." The patterning of sound and sense is unpredictably contingent, yet coherently ordered, like the flight of birds, which one of Pound's favorite theologians Richard of St. Victor tells us we should watch to understand how spiritual things move. Assonance would not take on this kind of leading position without the thinning of reference, and the thinning of reference would not be capable of sustaining itself over so long a passage and taking on a kind of trans-semantic import without the lifting accomplished by the

integration of non-semantic features. Thinning and fullness become concomitants, as do variation and regularity. At the same time, even as reference is thinned out as a realized mimetic or dramatic structure, as a dimension in speech it must continue to find apposite correspondences with what that speech is in the process of articulating. This dynamic informs many of the images, so that "beasts like shadows in glass" dematerializes the mimetic status of beasts into an apparitional presence (shadows) showing spectrally forth within coarser forms of media (glass), laying it bare as "nothing," "*aether*" and "void air," even as the numinous presence of those same beasts, now an unlocalizable atmosphere associated with Zagreus' retinue, presses in on the reader in the "breath" of articulated, empowered speech.

Yet, for all its power, we nevertheless cannot attribute the agency of this speech solely to Pound the writer and self-consciousness, for reasons that will become clearer shortly. The dramatic significance of Acoetes' helplessness, which is itself expressive of the broader mimetic paralysis that marks the passage as a whole, bears witness to this principle, as the successful fulfillment of the compositional act which in this case yields Dionysus' emergence to presence depends upon the second-order self-consciousness' or authorial will's becoming a vehicle for an embodied practical intelligence which is in continuous, open-ended and inseparable relationship with an encompassing experiential context that it does not itself control. Pound in his writings on *poesis* reiterates this point that the "passionate moment" is something that *happens to* the poet. Pound's introduction to his translations of the sonnets of Cavalcanti speaks for instance of "that stranger state when the feeling by its intensity surpasses our powers of bearing and we seem to stand aside and watch it surging across some thing or being with whom we are no longer identified." (Anderson *Pound's Cavalcanti* 12). The shift in the leading position of speech is not other than the shift to autotelism from instrumentality previously described as the basis for receptivity to force in ritual settings, because the sonic patterning previously described depends on the poet's becoming and remaining open, as a total field of awareness inclusive of senses, emotions and cognitions, to possibilities of correspondence and integration that are neither predetermined by the intention's schematizing its present experience into known categories, nor arbitrary in the sense that they fail to achieve a kind of binding appositeness and coherence. One must 'know' what will serve to remove impediments to force in the conjunction of particulars, and the 'knowing' of the sensibility capable of helping speech cohere in this way paradoxically comes from the suspension of the concept-wielding, second-order self-consciousness' imposition of its intention on the compositional present.

The effulgence of Dionysus' presence in the qualities of speech in Canto II feels so palpable that it is difficult to imagine the reader not 'catching the scent,' so to speak, and dialing their attentions to the register in which the verse asks to be read. But the mode of Canto II obviously cannot account for much of what one finds elsewhere in the *Cantos*. At the same time, the transformations of speech in evidence in Canto II cannot be overlooked as they inject into the *Cantos* as a whole a particular expression of intelligence that proves inextricable from all other modes one might locate elsewhere in the *Cantos*. The bottom line, which is worth repeating before trying to address the *Cantos*' other means and methods, is that the intelligibility we experience in Canto II is emphatically not one of representation, and that calling it representation is fundamentally a mischaracterization. Rather, it is a non-representational intelligence that refunctions the preexisting semantic functions of linguistic media so that they become transparent to this intelligence in the act of speech, rather than superimposing the opacities of fixed semantic values on the particulars of present experience.

In the reception of such intelligence, one becomes aware of the possibility as such of a mode of non-discursive or non-syllogistic knowledge because the reception itself implies the discerning acknowledgment that composition has accomplished something. Some kind of successful integration, between what hasn't been directly said and how it hasn't been said, so to speak, has been reached. Such an acknowledgment, what elsewhere would be called a 'judgment,' constitutes the basis for our saying "this poem is good," or "this poem accomplishes something," which we simply have to see as different from our saying, "this poem says things with which I agree." Furthermore, we also need to see it as distinct from saying "this poem has a formal structure that occasions a lot of interesting thoughts," because such a construal leaves out entirely the integrated quality that constitutes the basis for our saying the poem does something *well*. This, I think, should be our point of entry for understanding the impact of Picabia and the Dada group on Pound's thinking during this period. In Dada's negation of the category of art as the foundational act of its aesthetic practice, it establishes, in the principle that the concept might itself become the medium of an 'aesthetic' practice, the corollary premise that thought itself might be capable of becoming integrated with the same non-conceptual intelligence that both produces a poem like this and allows us to say "this poem is good."

Thus in its role as the seminal performance and conceptual 'anti-art' movement, Dada somewhat paradoxically established the possibility for Pound of applying the operation through which Canto II puts linguistic media at one further remove by using knowledge itself as the medium. What Pound finds within Picabia's mind, taken in concert with the minds of other artists from the period (Joyce, Brancusi), is an intelligence he feels is capable of reconstituting culture beyond the negations of Dada, which "corrosive(ly)" sweep away the old cast of thought. At the same time, the significance of Dada's negation of art is that it ends art's exclusivity as the province of this intelligence. Pound would write, "the wave that had Picasso as foam rose at least into 1922. And the intellect inside it was Picabia whose mental activities cannot be ignored in any serious chronicle of the decade 1914-1924" (*Guide to Kulchur*). The constructive principle implicit in the achieved translucence of language to the non-semantic intelligence that we see in Canto II made it conceivable that one might alternatively project what was for Picabia a negative insight, that of using concepts themselves as the medium of the compositional act, into a constructive, organizing endeavor. So the impact of Dada lies not so much in its impact upon Pound's poetics *per se*, such as syntactical play, but in its influence in positioning of those poetics in a novel relationship to the field of social practice as a whole through the contextual import of its selection of the concept as object and medium of a practice that formerly would have been, but now could only ambiguously be called 'aesthetic.'

The idea is that mind not only can behold itself stepping outside of its own native cast, per Dada's negation of art as a conceptual category and the vorticist inheritances of Canto II's making diaphanous of the semantic in their different approaches to this transformation, but also can reconstitute that cast from its external position. Such is the synthesis from which "Ithaca" refrains in keeping Bloom and Daedalus to parallel courses. In short, what this means is that the intelligence that organized aesthetic form so that formal integration would dissolve all traces of rhetoric, supplanting representation with the expressive force visible by virtue of that integration, might be harnessed to organize the particulars constituting fields of knowledge as well. As Pound's comment implies, in its description of the Botticellian wave on which Picasso-as-Venus was poised, the passage of this intelligence beyond the field of the arts into extra-literary culture at large, implicitly performed by Dada's destruction of the category of art in its inception of conceptual "anti-

art," was a consequence of the radical consolidation of art's resources in the prewar discovery of "form as such." It is that same conception of form, of the object's integrity as an acute locus occasioning receptivity to force in appearance, rather than framing the object's function as a mimetic device, that we see invoked in Pound's writings on Brancusi and in Stephen Daedalus' armchair aesthetic theorizations in "Circe" of the gift of tongues rendering visible the first entelechy. The very act of using the resources of that cultural sphere against the inherited norms regimenting that sphere and placing those resources in the service of mimesis could be generative of a new way of comprehending the world non-conceptually because such a new comprehension was latent in the audience's own dawning receptivity to an integrity of relations beyond those of any cognitively fixed and graspable categories. One finds none of the expected protocols of art in an artwork, and yet one 'gets it.'

The reception of this form-without-an-object as force rather than the recognition of an object, in other words, precisely because of this lack of a normatively prescribed object, implied a sensibility not limited to one circumscribed sphere of culture but something unmoored from any set context that might be made to circulate throughout those other spheres of culture whose lack of its informing presence had seemed the source of so many other problems. Pound's concept of civilization addresses that very circulation. Ironically, then, "civilization" in Pound's mind is in many ways identical with what the art historical idea of so-called "primitivism" misses in its categorical error insofar as the latter term stems largely from Picasso's vocational insight at the *Musee du Trocadero*. Rightly understood, the significance of the avant-garde's encounter with 'primitive' cultures, upon which Picasso's understanding of his vocation turned and out of which "form as such" consequently emerged, is a matter of how the cultural productions of non-Europeans brought artists to a deeper awareness of fundamental character of the compositional act that had been paradoxically obscured by the same division of labor keeping Daedalus and Bloom to their parallel courses and making art always a matter of leisured spectatorship.

For the *Cantos*' subsequent development, beginning with the Malatesta cantos, the two most obvious fields of knowledge to which Pound applied this principle were history and economics. Pound's eventual endorsement of fascism and the at times virulent anti-Semitism that developed out of his economic conspiracy theories cannot be understood in isolation from how this exact project came to shape Pound's thinking in the 1920's, 30s, and beyond. Yes, Pound wanted a system of patronage for artists, but his thinking about the corporate state as an instrument of policy capable of enacting economic reform, which was the main incentive for his involvement with Italian Fascism, was a much more abiding concern. This concern in turn arose from the epistemic practices that were part and parcel of his larger project of reconstituting civilization, which a reading of the *Cantos* as being preoccupied with monumental order and heroic culture largely obscures. Such readings obscure in this way, I would suggest, because they fail to distinguish between modes of intelligence and the corresponding way in which the *topos* of civilization, which informs Pound's readings of both history and economics, becomes a site for Pound's (often deeply flawed) attempt at working out the matter of how a social formation might integrate these modes. Ironically, the very same 'epistemocentric' bias we see in the *Cantos*' semantic readers constitutes the negative motivating factor that Pound again and again explains in his endorsements of, for example, Major Douglas and Mussolini.

If the vorticist poetics most fully realized in Canto II showed that language, as the medium of thought, could be made qualitative while still supporting the intelligence, Pound felt that it was also true that knowledge itself could be made qualitative as well. In short, this

is what the notions of *paideuma* and ideogrammic thinking attempt to do. Pound was variously drawn to Douglas, Mussolini and Gesell, from whose ideas he borrowed eclectically and at times incoherently, because he felt that their ideas in different ways acknowledged the irreducible status of the qualitative whereas other revolutionary social movements such as historical materialism, for instance, did not. Behind Pound's various political and economic ideas one always finds always an appeal to the ways that acknowledgement of the qualitative reveals certain blind spots in previous ways of approaching broader systemic questions. This is why the primary locus of Pound's constructive intervention into those systemic questions in his later work was the principle of definition, which turns on the discernment of qualitative distinctions. But before exploring further how Pound's writings in the 30's, both literary and non-literary, can help us better to understand this project, its essential shortcomings, it is worth looking more closely at some of the metaphysical premises on which his commitment to the inclusion of the qualitative as an irreducible feature within an understanding of the world rests. This will help us understand Pound's focus on definition.

*Ontology of Volition / Efficacy of Definition.*

We need to move first through some of the metaphysical ideas Pound found germane to his reading both of the Confucian tradition and of medieval Provencal and Tuscan aesthetic theory and practice because having a clearer sense of Pound's understanding of the relationship between volition and intelligence, which such a consideration will afford, serves to clarify other essential features of his thinking about the inputs to knowledge and about how such inputs shape models of objectivity more broadly. This will help us in turn to make and retain important distinctions with respect to particular subfields of Pound's thought, for instance between the models of value informing Pound's own economic ideas and those of the 18th century Physiocrats, or between vague occultist appropriations of neo-Platonism and Pound's own sense of the usefulness of particular formulations within that philosophical tradition. So much depends upon the way particulars within the Poundian ideogram are weighed and how this relative weighing informs how terms take on particular dimensions in our reading, sharpening their definition. Indeed, the function of minute distinction itself is the key issue informing Pound's attempted intervention into fields of knowledge as a whole, and with it the question of whether we will reduce and blur certain distinctions in order to make a case fit our general structures of knowledge or whether we can allow the distinction to persist so that it enters into epistemic questions. To begin with, the method of composition exemplified in Canto II instantiates a broader view of the relationship between how one's pragmatic orientation within an act of language usage, made manifest in that poem's integration of non-semantic features, uniquely disposes the consciousness or intelligence in relation to those objects that serve as its support and counterpart, for instance in the particular ratio of salience between the semantic and the non-semantic in Canto II. On the basis of this condition of being practically disposed in a manner specific to the emergent present-tense of the speech act, the basic capacity to make fine distinctions within the grain of how one's experience becomes imbued with qualitative textures is both foregrounded and divested of its habitual tendency to reduce those qualities to static states or objects.

The term "force" as I have been using it defines the specific manner in which experienced qualities become manifest according to the disposition of consciousness in practice when the latter is augmented within a context of action so as to suspend

instrumentalizing orientations toward experience. Pound's own longstanding precedent for maintaining a similar correlation between compositional method and how the mind is invested with the capacity to distinguish particulars was the tradition of medieval lyric poetry running from the French troubadour poets through Dante. Perhaps the greatest exemplar of this tradition for Pound was Guido Cavalcanti's canzone "Donne Mi Pregha," addressed in depth in the undated essay alternatively titled "Cavalcanti" and "Medievalism." While that essay is a somewhat freewheeling hodgepodge of at times unrelated speculations on Cavalcanti's work, two key points nevertheless can reliably be extracted from it. First, the main discovery that interests Pound lies in the notion of the "precise interpretive metaphor," of which Pound sees Cavalcanti to be the master surpassing Dante himself, and its relationship to the method he calls natural demonstration.[xxxix] Second, Pound's recurrent attribution of an influence (or at least correlation) between Cavalcanti's use of interpretive metaphor and the 12th century Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Grosseteste's treatise *De Luce*, or *On Light*, served to frame a model of volition that would profoundly inform Pound's thinking about poetry, language, thought, economics, history and politics.

Writing within the Aristotelian tradition of the "hylomorphic" theory of the physical world, Grosseteste's treatise elaborates a monistic ontological and cosmological model in which light serves as the first principle of all "corporeity" or extended matter. Grosseteste's thesis in the treatise is that the Aristotelian principle of form, or *morphe*, which serves to actualize the pure potentiality of matter, or *hyle*, into the corporeal state of three-dimensional extension in which one encounters it, is best identified with light. Grosseteste's argues that the inherent capacities light was thought to possess made it logically the best candidate for the formative principle to which he attributes it. In particular, light's capacity of "multiplying and diffusing itself instantaneously and in all directions" provided for Grosseteste a solution to the problem of how the Aristotelian principles of form and matter came to be associated with one another in the actual determinate being of three-dimensional extension (Grosseteste 10). Insofar as form and matter are simples that mutually depend upon and presuppose one another in the observation and analysis of actual corporeal objects, taken individually they are for Grosseteste incapable of multiplying themselves into the multiple dimensions upon which extended objects depend. It was because light was seen to have this unique capacity that Grosseteste felt it could not arise subsequently to the establishment of corporeity by some ontologically prior principle but rather was identical with corporeity itself as the principle through which individual things are constituted. So Grosseteste nominates light as the principle of actualization that brings material things into phenomenal existence by unifying form and matter through its diffusive capacity.

The point to be clear on is that light in this conception is not a phenomenon or thing, such as a wave or a particle, but designates that modality of being which articulates indeterminate being into discrete phenomena and things. Both Grosseteste's thesis and the character of his philosophy, its hybrid of a nascent experimental physical science and speculative theology, were for Pound essentially supportive of the view he advances in the Cavalcanti essay that the canzone "Donna Mi Pregha" enacts a method of intellection best identified as "*natural demonstration* and proof by experience or experiment" (*Literary Essays* 158). In other words, natural demonstration, whether one is identifying it with Grosseteste's tractate or Cavalcanti's canzone, shares with the empiricist methods it would prefigure the eminently "modern" principle that direct observation, rather than dogmatic appeal to scriptural authority, is the most legitimate means of developing knowledge claims. Grosseteste's argument implicitly places a high premium on appeals to direct experience as epistemically generative, over and against reasoning derived from doctrinal axioms, because

only within direct experience does one locate as an innate structuring principle the same volitional intelligence that was part and parcel of the encompassing principle of actualization upon which all objectivity rested.

Grosseteste's account of light's identity with both intelligence and materiality provided Pound with the philosophical justification for this view, while at the same time including volition as a crucial conditioning factor within both perception and cognition in a way that later empiricisms would not. Moreover, according to Pound's view of natural demonstration, the relationship between volitional bearing and intellection invested poetics as a method with an epistemically generative capacity because lyric composition was first and foremost a matter of how the will came to imbue its materials. That worldview and method are inseparable in *De Luce* is implicit in Grosseteste's model, where light constitutes the active principle upon which is established the spectrum ranging from the incorporeal ideal or mental to the material and physical, thereby including conscious experience and intellectual endeavor within light's own sphere of activity. And the common ground Grosseteste's model shares with other more recent monistic and vitalist ontologies (Bergson, Whitehead and the Deleuze of *The Fold* come to mind) in framing activity as ontologically prior to substance can perhaps allow one to entertain the general plausibility of his insight regarding actualization despite the essentially Ptolemaic cosmology that informs *De Luce*, and the obvious divergences of his understanding of light from contemporary scientific orthodoxy. More pertinent to present purposes is the degree to which Grosseteste's essay helps us to read Pound's ideas of mind, volition and objectivity as these come to inform both his poetics and his prose writings.

For Pound, actualization, volition and light in this specific Grossetestian sense are essentially cognate terms having a direct bearing on the status of objectivity. Human volition for Pound is but one expression of the more encompassing light-principle of actualization that is generative of determinate corporeal objects, including living beings. When "light" shows up in the *Cantos*, this precise Grossetestian sense (as opposed to, say, sunlight making crops grow) can help to elucidate the term as illustrating the principle of the unity of human consciousness and nature, neither a metaphor for something purely mental nor identical with what we would nowadays think of as physical light. Mind and nature in this account are unified in their shared participation in the principle of actualization, which is cognate with light's activity. A particular mind or consciousness is but a local instance of actualization as an event whereas nature is the actual as product. Furthermore, this model of light clarifies Pound's understanding of definition as an inherently poetic or constructive act, because definition for Pound is a microcosmic instance of the activity of light bringing about the individuation of a corporeal object.

Definitions inhere in corporeal media by virtue of the informing volition that individuates those forms of media, and definitions are correspondingly discerned in the audience's own state of volitional sympathy because, just as definition is the activity that the properties of linguistic media both register and exude, rather than a functional correspondence between terms and referents which remain indifferent to one another, one's intellection of a definition is a matter of one's practical involvement affording receptive competence rather than of rote and detached recognition. Definition is therefore a matter of the innate fitness of a term, *qua* corporeal object, to exude the media activity of vivid expressivity, and this fitness was determined first by the volition that went into it and only consequently by its adherence to referents, the latter function being contingent upon the first. Thus Pound recurrently uses the term "verbal manifestation" to characterize language usage (as opposed to "reference" or "denotation"). Definition thus provided the avenue

through which the trans-semantic intelligence of a Brancusi could be made to enter the field of conceptual knowledge. The following passage from Pound's translation of "Donna Mi Pregha" in canto XXXVI exemplifies this principle:

> Wherefore I speak to the present knowers
> Having no hope that low-hearted
>
> Can bring sight to such reason
> Be there not natural demonstration
> I have no will to try proof-bringing
> Or say where it hath birth
> What is its virtu and power
> Its being and every moving
> Or delight whereby 'tis called "to love"
> Or if man can show it to sight. (177)

The canzone as a whole is in fact an effort at "natural demonstration," a kind of "proof-bringing" of the intelligence-*cum*-intention variously called "love," "*virtu*" and "light." The feature for readers to notice is how, in this act of definition, explanandum stands *behind* the explanans, so to speak, rather than *in front of* it. The terms do not refer to something vague and mystical or occult. Rather, the whole point lies in the labor Pound is undergoing to make this principle of light, which is an ontological principle with direct implications for how one thinks about the relationship between will and cognition, as concretely apparent as possible. Demonstration here depends upon the will's maintaining such a degree of fluid self-presence, of ongoing fidelity to the more encompassing mode of being informing it, as a discrete microcosm of that modality, that the articulated and relational qualities of speech issuing from that volitional bearing will draw the semantic field of each word into its continuously inflected persistence within the immediate moment. In other words, it's a question of meaning (only) what one says. Pound writes in *Guide to Kulchur*: "technique is a test of the writer's sincerity" (89). As before, listening proves essential.

Accordingly, "bring sight to such reason" draws upwardly, both tonally in the high vowel sounds of "s*i*ght to such r*ea*son" as they play against the accumulated low vowels of "kn*o*wers," "h*o*pe" and "l*o*w-hearted," and prosodically in the quasi-dropped line's phrasal and grammatical completion of the previous line's clause, even as the feminine ending of "reason" begins threading a new sonic knot that will be looped in the next's line's slant rhyme with "demonstration." The salient feature of the line is thus its relational qualities as an act within an unfolding context of activity, rather than whatever information we would conventionally expect it to deliver. These patterned sonic transitions, for instance those discernible at a broad level in the repetitions of "ee" and "eye" sounds in "reason," "be," "I," "try," "being," "delight whereby" and "sight," serve to guide the quasi-argumentative transitions in the poem's excursus on love. So the three tidy, almost iambic upswings of "Or say where it hath birth" establish a kind of local habitation for love in the phrasal template of three strong beats that the next three lines take up, then inflecting them into the feminine endings of "virtu," "power," "being," and "moving," as their repetitions simultaneously establish a parallel, at the semantic level, in which these rhythmic variations become expressive of those same accidents or qualities or modalities of love that the lines enumerate. And this same varied repetition across three lines draws around itself a more inclusive scale of rhythmic integration, so that the momentum of the lines' cataloging of love's accidents

seems to authorize the appearance of the ambiguous noun-verb "delight," which, the line tells us, constitutes the justification ("whereby 'tis called") for the aptly defined verb in the present case as being "to love." This affective verb itself ardently extends the prosodic frame of the line to include an expressive extra beat. Then, as if again confirming, at the non-semantic level, the very same semantic verification that we saw in delight's authorization of the speaker's selection of the verb "to love," the final line returns to the sonic motif of "eye" vowels in the neat, end-stopped internal rhyme of "show it to *sight*." We are a long way here from mere representation or textual collage.

This model of volitional intelligence, and the kind of receptivity it both entails and affords, informs not only Pound's thought on Confucian philosophy and his views on language, but comes to shape his readings of history and economics as well. It is worth noting, in part as a guidepost to further readings, that a purely semantic reading of "Donna Mi Pregha" will quickly go astray into the apparent non-sequiturs that occur solely at the level of reference, as lines break off or transition suddenly and without any apparent reason if one is only reading for semantic content. Such an approach, to return to a previous metaphor, is to see the referent (i.e. "Love") as being positioned in front of the signifying medium rather than behind it. The intelligible object of speech is to be received in the integrated qualities of speech, as the "name sensate" that the speaker of "Donna Mi Pregha" intones, and it is only through becoming receptive to the dynamic interplay of those qualities that one is able to distinguish what is being 'talked about.' Thus the speaker of "Donna Mi Pregha" addresses "present knowers," those attuned to the emergent present of speech. Pound would write in a July 1922 letter to Felix Schelling in which he detailed his primary interests shortly after he had begun drafting the Malatesta cantos, "Provencal 'poetry romantic.' That doesn't so much interest me. The fact that Arnaut and Guido were psychological, almost physiological, diagnosticians does interest me" (*Letters* 248).

The focus on poetics for Pound was always a question of composition as an instrument of the intelligence, as something generative of a kind of situated understanding distinct from discursive understanding, and not merely a vehicle for disseminating particular values or an object of pleasure. Conversely, at no point is Pound attracted merely to authority or rigid order or to *virtu* as simply a kind of personal charisma and gravitas. Rather, he is pursuing a pragmatic way of making the world intelligible which includes the life of the senses and emotions (rather than exchanging a form of intelligibility for that life as in the categorical subsumption of particulars), a life that depends upon how and what a person intends as she relates with the world. This is a profound and subtle understanding of the influence of the total life of the person on their mentality, both what they can see and what they can think.

The gamble of Pound's work throughout the 30's is to follow this principle of 'intellection through perspicuous discernment of qualities by virtue of one's volitional fitness' into the fields of history and economics, where the normative guiding principles are the gathering of empirical particulars and their organization according to abstract laws and axioms. The justification for such a manoeuver lay for Pound in the historical relationship he saw between volition and definition and in the consequent effect this relationship had upon the forms of shared knowledge arising from language usage. In order for knowledge to arise in the form of conclusions that follow from premises, or for empirical data to be selected and amassed as relevant to the project of modeling knowledge claims, language must first be invested with the power to establish definitions in practice, whether these definitions happen to be axiomatic or simply denotative. Pound's premise in *ABC of Reading* is that the decline of medieval scholasticism's preoccupation with questions of terminology

in the rise of experimental science had the unexpected effect of enervating the definitional capacity of signs that had formerly been maintained only through the kind of ongoing scrutiny provided by these institutional contexts.

Again, this understanding of definition involves the question of language's performance as an expressive medium, just as Grosseteste defines light according to its capacity to act. And just as with Grosseteste, the question of the proper functioning of linguistic media hinges on the pre-cognitive volition that is brought to bear on terms and statements. When it does not involve this question, one is merely falling back on pre-established usages and trusting or assuming that one understands what one's terms mean, as when most non-specialists speak of "atoms" and "molecules." If one examines Pound's own explanations for his endorsement of Mussolini's conception of the state, for his attraction to Douglasite economics, or to Gesell's conception of money against that of Marx, or to Confucian ethical principles, or to Jeffersonian ideas of governance, one consistently finds that the reasoning is based in a particular definitional issue pertaining to the qualitative distinctions that one kind of definition affords over another. Undoubtedly this led to a dangerously idiosyncratic way of reading the world. But even at his most myopic or deluded, in none of these instances is Pound merely a doctrinaire ideologue.

*A Handful of Small Objects Quickly Shown: The New Method in Practice*

As we've seen to be the case in how Pound's use of Grosseteste's model of light as actualization informs his method of natural demonstration, a new mode of knowing is seen to become possible when one's practical and volitional engagement with linguistic media serves to push their functional status from the properly semantic toward the qualitative by virtue of the particular context or milieu that engagement yields. I would like briefly to look at a canto from the 1934 sequence of "Eleven New Cantos," once Pound had his new method of composition up and running, the sequence which also includes Pound's translation of "Donna Mi Pregha."[xl] Part of the reason critics have tended to fall back either on the generalizations of the representational version of the semantic reading, or on its textual collage counterpart, is that tracing all the micro-events of a given canto and entering into the question of how these little local events build a larger constellation of import is often incredibly daunting. In his reading of canto II's dense first 20 lines, Jerome McGann takes pains to make the passage accessible to critical analysis when he writes, "we do not have to translate or register all the allusions and wordplays in this dense passage to recognize its antithetical structure" (7). Schematization of the *Cantos* to a set of general themes that appear throughout—Amor and Usura, the Temple, Paganism, Social Credit—affords a degree of interpretive accessibility without which the work would be difficult to approach at all. But it is worth asking what we might miss or leave out in our effort to sift those particulars for a discussable semantic structure. Pound in an essay entitled "Gold and Work," written during the Salo republic, offers through the convention of a dream vision a description of his utopian society (which, incidentally, was noticeably distinct from, though not antithetical or opposed to, both Salo and the previous Fascist state). In this utopian thought experiment, he describes a process of education wherein children are educated through a method in which the adults briefly reveal to them a handful of small, diverse objects and then ask them to recount what they have seen after the objects have again been hidden from sight (*Selected Prose* 336). The point of the vignette is that the children learn over time to retain the particulars in their particularity through the concision of the exercise. Pound does not, conversely, describe the children as learning to derive a thematic common

denominator from the objects. Turning to Canto XXXVIII, we can see the difference this retention of particularity might make to a reading:

> An' that year Metevsky went over to America del Sud
> (and the Pope's manners were so like Mr Joyce's,
> got that way in the Vatican, weren't like that before)
> Marconi knelt in the ancient manner
> Like Jimmy Walker sayin' his prayers.
> His Holiness expressed a polite curiosity
> As to how His Excellency had chased those
> Electric shakes through the a'mosphere.
> Lucrezia
> Wanted a rabbit's foot,
> And he, Metevsky said to the other side
> (three children, five abortions and died of the last)
> he said: the other boys got more munitions
> (thus cigar-makers whose work is highly repetitive
> can perform the necessary operations almost automatically
> and at the same time listen to readers who are hired
> for the purpose of providing mental entertainment while they
> work; Dexter Kimball 1929). (187)

It is essential to be clear here about *how* juxtaposition inflects the import of a given statement and what this does to the semantic dimension once a sense of meaning starts to emerge at the aggregate level. We are dealing with a slightly different approach from that of "Donna Mi Pregha," though the underlying principle is at base the same.

First, each fragment needs to be read primarily for the *tone* it conveys as an anecdote. Tone implies something rather different than what synecdoche or metonymy would capture because one is not seeking to plug a part into the whole that would be provided by an absent master code. The whole point of the ideogrammic method as Pound describes it is that there be no code, no one set of static and abstract protocols determining in advance what is fit for inclusion, how a particular gets included, or what kind of work its inclusion performs.[xli] The efficacy of tone, by contrast, depends on the fluid atmosphere created by how the diverse threads of discursive momentum shape an unstable present tense into a uniquely intensive formation of thoughts, a formation lacking one central unifying rubric but instead equally distributing the organizational function throughout each local instance. Attempting to explain the function of language here with reference to synecdochal relationships is like attempting to capture the nature of a joke, for instance, its capacity to make us laugh, by explicating piece by piece the implicit ironies orienting its terms by referring them to the master code of 'irony.' As with a joke, the fluidity of context, which we refer to in the notion of "delivery," is an indispensible condition that informs how the constituent terms function. Method is thus what preserves this ingressive context as something open-ended. Examples are selected with respect to how their particularity conveys something relevant to a context that is itself emerging in the amassment of other examples, the way a person will sometimes enumerate minute aspects (personal tics, conspicuous omissions, etc.) of their previous exchanges with another person in order to make palpable an extremely subtle but recurrent interpersonal dynamic which nevertheless lacks an obvious label. Indeed, Pound frequently makes reference (as we shall see in canto

XXXVIII's reference to 'conversation') to repartee between peers who share commensurate interpretive horizons as a model for ideal communication. Juxtaposition within such an open field of particulars makes tone multidimensional whereas that same multidimensionality of tone or import makes a given juxtaposition intelligible, only then giving it an epistemic heft. It is a late development of *le mot juste* wherein the latter is made to do unprecedentedly heavy lifting.

The reappearance of Zenos Metevsky, Pound's pseudonym for the arms dealer Sir Basil Zaharoff who first appears in canto XVIII, tips us off to the recurrent thematic thread of war profiteering, while the opening phrase "an' that year" frames this theme in terms of the broader question of historical process (in this case, the lead up to the first World War) and its informing conditions. The following two parenthetical lines then immediately position the anecdote of Metevsky within a frame that itself quickly proliferates into a dense mesh of thematic correspondences. First, the anecdote of Pound's encounter with Pope Pius XI seems to point in two ways simultaneously: toward the corruption in particular of the Papal authority, seen locally in the disingenuous micro-cultural environment of the Vatican that the Pope's affected "manners" make (even more locally) apparent, and the broader question, which links back at least two cantos prior to "Donna Mi Pregha," of the historical relationship between cultivation of individual character, as a kind of ethos or volitional disposition travestied in the Pope's disingenuous mannerisms, and the influence of ethos on the psyche and on cultural authority at large. We see this historical dimension inhering in the matter of ethos through the next line's paronomasia at "ancient manner," where the living quality of disposition has been transposed to now convey the stilted archaism of custom, incongruously juxtaposed and thereby made salient in how it ironically colors the line's presentation of Guglielmo Marconi's more functional act of kneeling as he goes to work inventing radio telegraphy. That invention, in turn, points in multiple dimensions simultaneously: toward the decline of Church doctrine as an epistemic authority in the emergence of the experimental method of the physical sciences, and toward the theme of the transmission of information, which bears on the stanza's own linguistic enactment (an enactment that cannot be taken in isolation from "Donna Mi Pregha"'s display of natural demonstration) and on Metevsky's profitable duplicities toward his various clients ("the other boys got more munitions").

To return to a previous point, we ourselves are implicated in what each local event seems to register as it is multiply configured with each other event insofar as we cannot name directly what it all adds up to, even as the stanza's configurations solicit such a naming. And, in fact, the metaphor of "adding up" is infelicitous here because the coordination of terms seems aimed precisely towards holding at bay the tendency to subsume the particulars within a summative class or category. This approach is almost diametrically opposed to "Ithaca"'s ironically lucid but divisive interrogative mode, its drive to take stock of the totality. Here we are made to see more than we can say, continuously. Lucrezia Borgia, daughter of Pope Alexander VI, wanted a rabbit's foot. That has been historically documented, but what is its import to us here as it turns up in the center of the stanza? That she wanted it as a talisman to ward off further pregnancy and avoid the abortion from which she eventually died points to both the libidinal and biopolitical dynamics informing the disturbing *realpolitical* intrigues of Renaissance Italy, at the moment of secular humanist modernity's historical advent, and at the same time to the superstition, the inverted adequation of knowledge and experience, inherent in Lucrezia's talismanic use of the particularly curio-like "rabbit's foot."

These multiple senses resonate with the other details as they build around themselves a kind of argument *manqué* whose moving parts would include the terms such as custom, ethos, desire, knowledge, information, illusion, culture, power, life, death. But we would be hard pressed to say what kind of order of primacy these terms have, just as we would be hard pressed to say whether the import of Metevsky's ploy to the one side is significant primarily for its guile and shrewdness, its dishonesty, its illustration of a geopolitical and economic context, an epistemological context, or something else. Establishing such a fixed order of primacy would in fact remove the conditions allowing these particulars to be illuminatingly configured. Perhaps this accounts for the uncanny appositeness in the quote from Dexter Kimball about the dissociated sensibilities of the workers, which seems in its strange correspondence with the preceding montage of disjunctively rhyming local events to make the whole stanza into what has been called an 'allegory of reading.' But here it is not a question of allegory, because even as the terms of Kimball's observation resonate with the experience of reading they do not do so in a way that detracts anything from their first-order primacy as particulars in registering an empirical fact about the historical conditions of experience around the time of the stock market crash in 1929.

Conversely, "ambiguity" is not a term that I believe applies here, because I think what the stanza is after is a greater, not a lesser, precision than one stable meaning affords. And that precision accumulates at the level of how tonal correspondences are knit idiosyncratically together, rather than opening out, per the indeterminacy reading, into a diffuse plurality of possible "meanings." If this canto is a negative counterpart to "Donna Mi Pregha"s pellucid name sensate, it is so according to the same volitional intelligence that draws the discursive dimension of the language within that canto in the wake of its sonorous patternings, just as the divine *virtu* that dispenses justice in the form of the agonized predicaments endured by the reprobate characters encountered in the *Inferno* is the very same that makes the empyrean spheres rotate in the *Paradiso*. Therefore, neither can it be said that what a stanza like this does is to represent, to offer statements, or to connote an idea, as the stanza reduces neither to one set of terms, nor to several. What it does is configure particulars. And it does so according to the same encompassing conditions of discernment that organize non-semantic particulars of speech in the *Cantos*' more properly lyric passages so that the integration of those non-semantic dimensions of linguistic media will cause them to oversaturate the semantic dimension, making the latter into a conduit through which those intelligible non-semantic relationships, primarily sonorous but also graphic, are retroactively traced before the conceptual mind as it follows behind what the pre-cognitive intelligence is discerning in advance.

The difference is that the primary objects the language is organizing here are ideas rather than percepts. Someone could probably make a case for the melopoeia of these lines, but that hardly seems to be the point in this case. And yet, if the focus has shifted in terms of the facets of media to be arranged, the principle of arrangement has not shifted. Form, as we recall, was never identical with the perceptible media through and in which it became manifest, so here force, or the same conjunctive principle that yields force in how a coordination of perceptible features transforms appearance, motivates something akin to knowing. A few stanzas on in the canto, this relationship becomes more explicit:

> And Schlossmann
> Suggested that I stay there in Vienna
> As stool-pigeon against the Anschluss
> Because the Ausstrians needed a Buddha

(Seay, brother, I leev et tuh yew!)
The white man who made the tempest in Baluba
Der im Baluba das Gewitter gemacht hat…
        They spell words with a drum beat,
"The country is overbrained" said the hungarian nobleman
in 1923. Kosouth (Ku'shoot) used, I understand
to sit in a café—all done by conversation—
it was all done by conversation,
        possibly because one repeats the point when conversing:
"Vienna contains a mixture of races."
        Wd. I stay and be a Bhudd-ha?
"They are accustomed to having an Emperor. They must have
something to worship. (1927)"
But their humour about losing the Tyrol?
Their humour is not quite so broad.
The ragged arab spoke with Frobenius and told him
The names of 3000 plants.
        Bruhl found some languages full of detail
Words that half mimic action; but
Generalization is beyond them, a white dog is
Not, let us say, a dog like a black dog.
Do not happen, Romeo and Juliet…unhappily
I have lost the cutting but apparently
Such things do still happen, he
Suicided outside her door while
The family was preparing her body for burial,
And she knew that this was the case. (189-190)

One could say that these lines deal with the fate of nations, particularly Austria during Germany's annexation, and with what informs that fate. Beneath that fate and its range of real historical consequences is the misleadingly 'superstructural' question of sensibility, seen for example in what the passage implies about the sociopolitical efficacy of Hungary's right wing Independence party leader Ferenc Kossuth's "conversation." Similarly, the anecdote of Schlossman's joke to Pound about the Austrian character needing something to worship is marshaled, which the paronomasia of "humour" (both disposition or character and sense of humor, though possibly 'compliance' as well) a few lines later shows to have been included precisely with regard to its tonal status as a joke, to convey something profoundly serious about the influence of such 'immaterial' factors on the unfolding of historical events.

The apparent racialization of the question of sensibility in this passage is for the most part misleading, even if the question of prejudice, racial or otherwise, is unavoidable when thinking about the implications of Pound's method. I will attempt to address this question, which is a version of the question concerning ideology, later on. It is impossible to approach the question of prejudice or ideology, however, without first having a clear sense of the aims of Pound's method in a passage like this. Toward that end, the inclusion in this passage of both Leo Frobenius' ethnographic findings based on his experiences conducting fieldwork in Africa, which would lead him to develop his notion of *paideuma*, and of Lucien Levy-Bruhl's discussion of the participatory mentality in non-European social groups, both point toward the crux of the matter in thinking about the kind of epistemic work Pound is attempting to

accomplish in the later *Cantos*' synthesis of concept and volitional intelligence. As we saw in Chapter 2, Bruhl's maligned insight regarding participation lay in his assertion that the Durkheimian collective representations of certain non-European groups operate according to conditions of intelligibility that are rooted in affective orientations arising from practical motility, rather than being the more strictly cognitive structures that the Kantian rationalist background of Durkheim's model might suggest.

In focusing on the tone of a statement as distinct from its mere denotation, I am aiming at a similar distinction, which an older strain of deconstruction concerned with 'rhetoricity' at once gestured towards in the concept of 'undecidability.' The fact is that we experience tonal effects constantly, as concrete factors orienting our reception of a situation, in as much as we can also meaningfully speak of the effects of "body language" in communication, for instance. It is at the level of tone that words thus "half mimic action," just as the mere mention of the names "Romeo and Juliet" in the quoted stanza will carry a kind of charge for the average reader, in advance of any further description, that conveys a diffuse sense of tragic endings. In the case of Romeo and Juliet, one could argue that this associative charge is explicable solely in terms of synecdochal relationships, but this is precisely the explanation that the allusion to Bruhl's observation about lack of generalization in other cultures serves to contest, by documenting instances in which language effects similarly "mimic action" in this way without a generalizing universal whose occulted presence behind the particular (e.g. "Romeo and Juliet" brings to mind the category of tragedy, thus reducing its tone to an abstract cognitive association with that universal) would explain its tonal efficacy. The charge of "Romeo and Juliet" is of course a matter of shared traditional associations, but what remains in question are the underlying conditions that allow for these associations to accumulate around terms. The premise here is that such associative capacity is built into signifying forms as part of the basic condition of their performance as media. Tone in this sense is but one instance of the general principle of media activity, which is itself but a species to force's genus, the latter term designating the broader dimension of experience in which percepts take on the modality of action, thus allowing a perceived object to function as a conveyance.

In Bruhl's participatory model, as was the case in Kandinsky's appeal, the language effects are directly "in" the reception of the linguistic media, just as the drum telegraph of the African group in the example from Frobenius that spells out the message "the white man who made the tempest in Baluba" presumably does not need to be translated in the manner of Morse code. Rather, it is immediately intelligible at the sensory level to those who share in the same cultural competence. If we are preoccupied with the admittedly very real possibilities for exclusion inherent in "cultural competence" we will miss the more important issue of the kind of intelligibility being indicated here. It is important to distinguish between the particular shape that intelligibility is given by a given culture's transmission of a shared condition of competence, and the mental capacity itself, without which the specific shape it takes would be impossible. Another example from Frobenius' work will help to illustrate the same point. Frobenius offers the following distinction from one of his informants regarding two notions of narrative—*mukanda* and *tushimuni*—after inquiring whether European folk tales function the same way as their Baluba counterparts:

> In the *tushimuni* everything is alive—*gabuluku* (small antelopes), *ngulu* (wild boar), *kashiama* (leopard). When the tale is told, you can hear them all speak. But the *mukanda* only tells you what happened to them once upon a time.

> *Tushimuni* can happen today, tomorrow and yesterday; *mukanda* are things that happened once and for all, dead things. (*Symposium of the Whole* 40)

Frobenius includes the observation, in the same passage in which he offers the preceding quote, that the practice of sharing *tushimuni* is dependent for its effects upon a host of informing conditions, both ambient conditions such as the time of day during which particular stories were told (e.g. animal fables only told during the daytime, other stories told in the evening) and more acute informing factors, such as the use of gesture and intonation. Of the latter, Frobenius remarks,

> Gesture and intonation were even more important than the text itself, and the best storytellers laid great weight on "atmosphere." I realized this one day when I repeated a story I had just heard and the narrator denied that he had said any such thing. After much discussion it was explained to me that the gestures, intonation and so forth carried a separate and quite different meaning than the words themselves. (*Symposium of the Whole* 39)

Of course, "meaning" is precisely the misleading term for which one reaches in the effort to describe this kind of intelligibility because meaning implies the very same second-order instrumental dependence of the expressive medium on its object that renders the terms of the *mukanda* dead things.

Force, as the preceding discussion has attempted to invest this term with a distinct sense, more accurately characterizes the bases of intelligibility, as residing in how qualitative properties become dynamically and integrally present in relation to a fluid state of conscious receptivity, that Frobenius sketches here in the living qualities that make gesture, tone and time of day all speak in equal proportion to (and in concert with) the words themselves. What the concept of *paideuma* purports to document, and what draws Pound's interest, is the historical evidence of such dimensions of experience as providing sufficient epistemic and practical basis for the shared orientation of social endeavors. Frobenius' notion of *paideuma*, which Pound would eventually adopt and champion, was an attempt to develop descriptive language for this elusive sense of shared knowledge *in situ*. Pound would write in his essay on Frobenius, "when I said I wanted a new civilization, I think I cd. have used Frobenius' term" (*Symposium of the Whole* 42). Thus we come to the crux of the matter: all of Pound's thought in his later work, and certainly all of the difficulty in his poetry, is aimed at the goal of reconstituting such atmospheric knowledge conditions in the historical context of their withering.

It is essential that we see these broader implications to Pound's later thought because they form a major portion of the stakes involved in adequately assessing the import of open-form poetics. The efficacy of composition in open-form, in other words, is inseparable from the mentality solicited, and the mentality solicited is inseparable from the social implications because its essential character is practical embeddedness. These implications are of course variable, though they all pertain to the possibility of social interaction conducted on the basis of non-cognitive communication. The bases of this efficacy, I have been trying to show, are pragmatic, rather than essential to the materials assembled. In many ways the variability of social implications behind the notion of *paideumic* sensibility hinges on the question of whether participants will essentialize the relationship between assembled materials and effects (i.e. this sensibility is innate to this culture) or whether the focus with frame the relationship as purely pragmatic (i.e. these cultural practices yield this sensibility in a way that

is conditional and contingent but nevertheless functions reliably). Similarly, the interest for Pound in Frobenius' work, which he is careful to qualify repeatedly, is less in the at-times-problematic conclusions at which the latter arrives in his attempts to diagnose specific instances of *Kulturmorphologie*, than in the underlying notion *per se* of an ambient dimension of knowledge or intelligence that is diffused throughout a given social formation and which informs, in this diffusion, the activities of the social group.

On the one hand, it is easy to hear the *volksgeist* undertones in Frobenius' theory and follow the temptation to dismiss the notion of *paideuma* as merely a dangerous ideological justification for the reactionary nationalistic beliefs championed by both the Italian Fascists and German National Socialists alike. Certainly the idea cannot be dealt with in isolation from such implications, though my sense is that the *volksgeist* version of cultural sensibility stems from the failure (or willful refusal) to distinguish between the latter as an effect of practical conditions and the latter as an innate property of those conditions. On the other hand, the relevance of the idea of *paideuma* to our present world-historical context, particularly in Pound's pairing of the notion with his concept of ideogrammic method, lies in the recuperable central premise that the function of culture resides in its cultivation and activation of porous mental capacities that extend beyond the limited determinations and the divisive, innately reductive character of conceptual reason. The importance for our post-high-theoretical, info-obsessed and ecologically imperiled moment lies in what the idea remains capable of showing with respect to what the theoretical mind is incapable of seeing, and the consequences of this blindness.

Against Bob Perelman's reading of the ideogram, that the latter "is true for Pound because it is made up of particulars, which are true because they are not abstract" and that "such a circular method grants complete authority to the ideogram's fashioner, who is backed up by the irrefutable singularity of the particulars," I would argue that a proper understanding of *paideuma* shows this to misread the entire aim and import of the ideogrammic method because it does not acknowledge the transformations the ideogrammic configuration effects in mode of particularity itself (44). Such a reading is an example *par excellence* of the semantic reading of *The Cantos* because it does not question the way in which method intervenes into the basic functioning of the signifying act and how the act of arrangement augments the status of those particulars *as* particulars. On the contrary, the ideogram is effective because its conjunction of particulars refunctions their usual operation, as proceeding according to preexistent hierarchies of signification (e.g. synechdochal, part-whole relations), which constitutes their presumptive denotative "truth" according to Perelman's reading, and thereby restores to them the salience and primacy of their tonal effects once they are freed up to enter into irreducibly idiosyncratic relationships with the tonal effects of other particulars.

This mesh of correspondences in turn, because of its lack of a recognizable epistemic structure or hierarchy, solicits the mind's shift out of its habitual frame for registering signifying relationships, which would read particulars in purely constative terms, into the kind of atmospheric knowing Frobenius describes in his notion of *paideuma*. And the accomplishment of generating such a mesh of correspondences itself depends just as much on the maker's own self-abdication as a central cognitive authority, without which the discovery of those possible correspondences in the experiment of composition would be impossible. If this process was reducible to reference and semantic production in their ordinary senses, neologisms would never have been necessary to description.

The concept of experiment rests on the premise that a method might yield a novel result for which no term yet exists. Tradition deals with the preservation of methods and perspectives against the entropic effects of historical time. Pound's project in his later work, porously both literary and extraliterary, was paradoxically to undertake the latter endeavor on the basis of the former means. What was to be preserved was civilization, in the sense previously described. One upshot of this approach for its subsequent critical assessments has been that one is constantly in danger of losing track of the respective definitions and mutual determinations of these two principles, experiment and tradition, in the encounter with the remains of this project, primarily because there the inarticulable remains housed within the articulated. So one lays hold of what has been articulated as something self-sufficient and fails to perceive the unarticulated to which the former affords access. There are myriad examples of this process in the critical tradition of Pound scholarship. Critics have been eager to point out the fact that Pound's modernist slogan "make it new" was inherited from Ch'eng T'ang, while at times refraining from going any further into the question of what the imperative might convey, either in its former context, in Pound's usage, or in the deliberate confluence of these multiple instances.

The glut of other slogans (e.g. "literature is news that stays news," "dichten=condensare") fashioned in order to crystalize in verbal manifestation a fleeting insight poised at the fulcrum of cognition and direct experience become, in the amassing documents of the "Pound industry," a kind of shorthand, like portable set pieces one can cite in a proverbial manner to illustrate some point whose meaning is assumed in advance. "Civilization" comes to mean to the critical imagination merely the cultural forms of the Mediterranean region, *tout court*. Pound's idiosyncratic use of "totalitarian" (as in "the Confucian sense is totalitarian") comes to mean merely totalitarian in sense in which political theorists use the term. That which is experienced congeals into that which is merely known, to the detriment of the latter, and historical process repeats itself. What is more, Pound himself was subject to the very process that has beleaguered his critics. Indeed, he was in many respects the progenitor of this process, allowing his own insights to congeal into dogma and in turn becoming the dupe of his own unintended dogmas as they came to inform his subsequent inquiries in a kind of feedback loop, thereby making it virtually impossible for subsequent readers to see his project as anything other than a heap of incoherent dogmas. William Blake's famous slogan "I must create a system or be enslaved by another man's" does not directly address the possibility that one might be enslaved by one's own creations.

I have deferred addressing the specifics of what is deeply and dangerously problematic in Pound's work—his anti-Semitism, his enthusiastic endorsement of Mussolini and apologetics for Hitler in private correspondence even after learning of the genocidal efforts during the Second World War, his willingness to downplay or overlook entirely the violent repressions, human rights and civil liberties violations, and inherently warmongering ideology of the Fascist state—because many previous treatments of *The Cantos* aimed at placing these immense lapses of judgment at the front and center of Pound's project have made his contributions to 20th century culture, which in my view are prodigious, difficult to see or assess in the first place. Moreover, many of these approaches both blur distinctions between different errors in Pound's thinking, say his anti-Semitism as opposed to his endorsement of Mussolini as a statesman as opposed to his support for the corporate model of the state, and treat instances of bias and misplaced focus in Pound's thought as deliberate

programs or fundamental ideological features of his thought. Obviously, from one very influential point of view Pound's project is a massively misguided ideological delusion that his incarceration would verify as a complete disaster. This is largely the reading of academics, rather than that of the poets who would continue to find resources both in Pound's poetics and in his ideas in the decades after the Second World War. The continued influence of Pound's work on the postwar generation would suggest that a recuperation of his contributions without a wholesale endorsement of his ideas *en masse* is not only possible but actually took place. Both Pound's errors and the misconceptions they have generated among his later critics need to be addressed before turning to the *Pisan* sequence, upon which *The Cantos* greatest claim to poetic influence most likely rests, if one is to amend the common reading of that sequence as merely an elegy for the Fascist state without ignoring the obvious presence of Pound's lament of the Italian defeat throughout the *Pisan* sequence. Fortunately both sides share a common denominator: misrecognition produced through bias.

At the core of this sort of blindness we can identify a single process or activity. A form of experimental inquiry or composition aimed at suspending the habitual functioning of a particular schema of recognition that has come to limit or distort human experience necessarily must attempt to resist or overcome preexisting schemata by generating a countervailing formation through which it can gain leverage against habit. That countervailing formation has a solely pragmatic function in that it works both within and against a set of preexisting conditions that render its status purely relational. Thus Picasso employed the resources of illusionism in order to go beyond the habits of seeing of which the tradition of illusionism owned the franchise. What then happens is that, in the reliance on the countering terms over multiple iterations of usage, their status comes unwittingly to shift from something provisional and relational to something ostensibly self-sufficient and reified. What begins as a *way of speaking* becomes a static object *about which one speaks*.

One particular example stands out as particularly illustrative with respect to how both Pound and his critics of various stripes have become subject to this process. Pound's phrase "an epic is a poem including history" is frequently held aloft as a means of characterizing and explaining *The Cantos*, but rarely do critics exert that same zeal in situating this formulation contextually that they profess in upholding contextual situation as a model of scholarly rigor. The phrase has been invoked so many times in studies of *The Cantos* that one automatically assumes it will prove an unproblematic means of accessing the work's import. What one finds in revisiting the essay "Date Line" from which the formulation originates is that the phrase "an epic is a poem including history" crops up in the middle of Pound's sustained reflection on the import of concepts of *paideuma* and ideogrammic thinking with respect to what constitutes knowledge (*Literary Essays* 86). The question of knowledge turns, in Pound's account, not (as the formulation might suggest) on the capacity of such inclusive reach to accommodate all the particulars comprising what Lukacs in his discussion of epic and novel calls "the extensive totality of life," but rather on the difference, within a circumscribed field, between "what is known and what is merely faked or surmised" (85). In examining Pound's argument about knowledge in that essay more closely, we can discover at once Pound's recuperable insights into knowledge production, and the liabilities that profoundly misled Pound, but which it also becomes difficult to say many subsequent treatments of the *Cantos* have themselves evaded.

The known, in Pound's commentary in "Date Line," is something intimately and intensively engaged by the sensibility rather than something with which someone has a passing, abstract acquaintance. Liabilities toward confusion, misrepresentation and bias

begin when one no longer distinguishes between these two things. What is the difference, in other words, between speaking about something in a way that does justice to the specifics of what that thing is, and using that same thing as a ventriloquist dummy for a structure of ideas that stand quite aloof from that same thing? The reading of "a poem including history" to indicate Pound's that project in *The Cantos* was aiming at an exhaustive grasp of the total field of particulars in their extension, a totalizing impulse such as we see satirized in "Ithaca"'s encyclopedic cataloging, is especially incongruous within the overall context of this section of the essay, given Pound's remark that "the more limited the field, the more detailed can the demarcation become" (85). In fact, the formulation, "an epic is a poem including history" is actually a relatively peripheral claim within the essay. The phrase is presented at the opening of a paragraph as a premise, as one might say "suppose I owe you $5…," in support of the more salient claim, "I don't see that anyone save a sap-head can now think he knows any history until he understands economics" (86). The example of economics, as an object of intensive understanding through which to gain accurate knowledge of history, though warranting its own consideration, is the third in a series of examples, and the first two examples are worth exploring in greater depth.

The first example is that of the historiographical import of the Platonist tradition within Western philosophy. Pound's point in invoking Platonism at this point in the essay is that one finds evidence in the basic empirical fact of this tradition's historical existence that certain highly subtle modes of experiencing the world, and of coming to frame an understanding of the world based on those modes of experience, can be shown to have been both socially communicable and historically transmissible as objectively valid at certain historical junctures. Pound remarks, "it is perfectly ascertainable that a number of men in succeeding epochs have managed to be intelligible to each other concerning a gamut of perceptions which other bodies of men wholly deny" (86). Pound would repeatedly identify these modes of experience with the form of mentality Richard St. Victor calls "contemplation." Insofar as history is the record of the persistence of collective human endeavor in time, the assessment of the social fact of Platonism brings the historicity of the modes of experience discussed in, say, the *Enneads*, to bear on the enterprise of historiography itself. Here 'historicity' means not that history produced this experience as its symptom, but that this experience helped shape historical process.

That such modes of experience are relatively subtle and uncommon is as much an historical fact as that their documented communicability renders them social phenomena, motivating factors in social processes that are categorically distinct from strictly "private" and "inward" experiences. A purely 'inward' experience (the adjective, lest we forget, is metaphorical) would be wholly incommunicable, whereas Pound here suggests that the historical documentation of certain religious and philosophical social phenomena inherently implies the communicability of such experiences. In other words, historical knowledge depends in this instance on the question of whether the historical record will include the documented fact of shared commerce in a specific mode of experience, where that experience is treated as a motivating condition rather than a sublimate of motivating conditions, and this inclusion in turn depends on the degree to which the historiographer herself understands what is being shared among these social groups. It is a simple question of accuracy: it is bad historiography to mischaracterize an event or historical phenomenon because one has failed to understand it. Not only must one strive to have all the facts, one must also strive to know what those facts are.

For Pound, the question of understanding Platonism as an historical phenomenon has to be a matter of the inclusion of the qualitative dimension of the Platonists' experience

within the archive of historical knowledge because the fitness of the latter is determined, at least in part, by the degree to which it affords access to consciousness of the former. In other words, experience here distinguishes knowledge from non-knowledge. Again, this hinges on the efficacy of language:

> The desire of the candidate, or of the 'mystic' if one can still employ that much abused term, is to get something into his consciousness, as distinct from getting it into the vain locus of verbal exchanges.
> If knowledge first gets into the vain locus of verbal exchanges, it is damnably and almost insuperably difficult to get it thence into the consciousness.
> Years afterwards one 'sees what the sentence means.' (*Selected Prose* 57)

Note that Pound's interest in Platonism here is as a school of thought arising from an embodied mode of experience, a *modus vivendi*, and not primarily as a doctrine regarding the primacy of ideas or mental states. The difference between taking Platonism as a mode of experience or an abstract doctrine is a matter of the efficient functioning of language, and this in turn will influence how Platonism comes to be included as a social phenomenon within systems of knowledge dealing with historical process. Now, conventional ways of speaking about qualitative experience often treat it as something limited and finite, as distinct from the totality of physical extension that includes and infinitely exceeds it. This treatment of qualitative experience as being limited-in-principle constitutes the basis for characterizations of first-personal experience as solipsistic, in the weak sense of the term, as against the inclusiveness of third-personal quantitative extension where "real" history is said to take place. Indeed, we say that experience is 'limited by' or 'limited to' its location within extended space and time whereas the latter coordinates and the objects situated accordingly are not similarly limited in principle. But turning to Pound's second example in "Date Line" regarding the distinction between knowledge and non-knowledge, the Confucian *Ta Hio*, we confront the possibility that this sense of the limitation-in-principle of qualitative experience may itself be a misunderstanding created by the clumsy use of language (86).

The inclusion of Pound's avowal, "I believe the *Ta Hio*," in response to Eliot's query "what does Mr. Pound believe?" in the latter's review of *Personae*, which constitutes the second example he uses to illustrate the distinction between knowledge and non-knowledge in "Date Line," highlights the fundamentally epistemic thrust of Pound's interest in Confucian thought (*Ezra Pound: The Contemporary Reviews* 128). Approaches to Pound's Confucianism that focus on its hierarchical social modeling, or the metaphysical doctrine one might presume to derive from Pound's syncretic pairing of Confucian ideas with those of Catholic theologians and Neoplatonic philosophers, work to obscure the fact that Pound's championing of Confucian thought treats the latter primarily as a means of transmitting a particular mode of qualitative intelligibility, rather than as a system of ideas or code of conduct. As was the case with Pound's point about how the assessment of Platonism shapes the question of history itself, the mode of intelligibility that Confucianism represents is a matter of qualitative understanding and its impact on knowledge as such. This is clear from Pound's remark regarding the *Ta Hio* that he does not have personal acquaintance with a dozen people who he is convinced understand that work. The reason for this assertion becomes clear on an examination of Pound's own translation of the *Ta Hio*, where the opening catalog of terminological definitions in the form of Chinese compound ideograms paired with English prose translations serve in many ways as the focal point of the translation as a whole. The import of this maneuver is to render one's reception of those

ideograms the central point of the text: the second-order commentary (i.e. the bulk of the text) serves not to elaborate and extend a set of central claims, but rather to enrich the learning process whose degree of development is registered in one's own reception of ideogrammic terms comprising the terminology. The quotation from Ch'ieng Lung included in the Pound translation's preface makes this dynamic explicit:

> Some may object… that the text cannot be understood without the commentary. My answer is that it would be far better to let the text explain itself than to explain it by means of the commentary. If a student concentrates and uses his mind, he will discover the process (*tao*) between the lines. (*The Great Digest and the Unwobbling Pivot* 15)

Understanding what this "process" refers to and how study discovers it in the perspicuous discernment of terms is essential to an understanding of what Pound saw Confucianism as having to offer the west.

The central formulation of the Confucian principle as a whole can by found, by Pound's own admission, in the opening passage of the *Ta Hio*, which reads as follows in Pound's translation:

> 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 own states, they first established order in their own families; wanting order in their homes, they first disciplined themselves; desiring self-discipline, they first rectified their hearts; and wanting to rectify their hearts, they sought precise verbal definitions of their inarticulate thoughts [the tones given off by the heart]; wishing to attain precise verbal definitions, they set to extend their knowledge to the utmost. This completion of knowledge is rooted in sorting things into organic categories. (brackets in Pound's original translation 30-31)

Leaving aside the matter of whether this notion of good government is merely an allegory for the Fascist state or whether the latter for Pound was raw material for a future Confucian state, as well as the possible hypocrisy of Pound's valorization of Confucian ideals of filial piety given his own family life, the most interesting feature, for Pound as well as us, lies in the latter portion of the chain of events described here. The "completion of knowledge" here consists in the attainment of precise verbal definition, both for the producer and the audience, and this can only be described as an intensive, qualitative reception of linguistic media. This is clear from the pride of place the ideograms receive in the "terminology" section of Pound's *Ta Hio*, and the previously discussed liminal status of the ideogram as a form of signifying media. Verbal definition is not static, a label successfully pinned on an object like the tail on the donkey, but a quality radiating from terms, a degree of resolution, if you will, that is received in accordance with the pitch of one's own volitional bearing (i.e. the 'rectification of the heart'). The distinction here is extremely subtle and difficult to indicate through statements, but becomes clearer if we focus on the strangeness of terms remaining the same even as one's own sense of their status as significant changes. Knowledge in this instance is thus the 'frequency' or 'depth' at which one receives a statement, rather than how the status conferred on that statement by its syntagmatic positioning in relation to other

statements allows one to attach it constatively to external objects, just as tone in the previous analysis is not reducible to metaphor or metonymy.

To speak idiomatically, it is a meaning one 'sees.' Verbally identical statements might yield different understandings to two individuals who receive them at different pitches according to their respective *ethoi* or dispositions.[xlii] In this respect, Confucian definition, embodied in the form of the ideogram, fulfills the synthesis Pound had sought between the non-cognitive, receptive discernment of force in appearance and the epistemically-generative linguistic constituents of conceptual knowledge. The specific dynamics of the relationship between ethos and reception can be delineated according to Chapter 2's discussion of how an autotelic bearing in action, described here as "self-discipline," serves to dilate the emergence of qualitative properties so that they take on the modality of force in appearance, and of the influence of this relationship on uses of media. What the Confucian conception of the real as process or *tao* contributes to this account is first the clarification that this relationship between degrees of resolution in verbal definitions and the knowledge they yield can be grasped as determined according to its own kind of scale or measure, rendering this particular register of knowledge as constituting a field unto itself, just as extensive, quantitative knowledge derived from differential relations constitutes a field. It is a field of qualitative knowledge distributed according to a scale that can be grasped in terms of the degrees of definitional precision inhering in terms. One can speak of understanding the definitions of the *Ta Hio* to a greater or lesser degree as much as one can speak of having a more or less complete and extensive knowledge of the objects studied in astrophysics. Here, though, the terms stay the same while one's discernment of their precision moves 'up and down' the scale.

Secondly, and importantly, this field is as unlimited in principle as the field of extension. The notion of *tao* as process rather than substance indicates that there is no fixed *telos* at which the clarity of terms, or the corresponding degree of subtlety in ones volitional bearing and self-discipline that render one receptive to distinct shades of definition, reaches a fixed point of maximum saturation. Rather, it "extends without bound"; therefore, "there is no end to its action" (*The Great Digest and the Unwobbling Pivot* 183, 187). Pound is clear elsewhere on this point, unfortunately imputing to Mussolini (based on the speeches of the latter) the insight that a given culture's achieved standards of quality "are not ineluctable limits" on the dimension of quality itself, which has no limits. (*Selected Prose* 262). Lastly, the Confucian focus on definition as a social product, definition *by* someone and *for* someone else, attaches the infinite scale of qualitative understanding to intersubjective historical reality. That perspectives are multiple goes without saying, the interesting point is that degrees of quality within two different perspectives can be shared and coordinated. The understanding of definition Pound finds in Confucian thought thereby makes possible the notion of a kind of metric allowing intersubjective forms of knowledge to be developed so as to include in a publicly discussible way those degrees of acuity capable of establishing the fidelity of those forms to the limitless scale of qualitative experience. And on the other side of this dimension of publicly available qualitative intelligibility is the indispensible practice of ethical or volitional cultivation, the 'rectification of the heart' in the development of *jen* (benevolence or goodness) as the practical disposition through which one becomes more and more acutely receptive to those tones of the heart discernible in precise definition. From this perspective, qualitative experience can be said no more to be a finite phenomenon delimited by the field of extension than it can be said to be a purely 'private,' 'inward' phenomenon that is inaccessible or irrelevant to the sociohistorical real. So if the treatment of Platonism as an historical fact in "Date Line" presents a challenge, namely the non-

distortive inclusion of qualitative experience within the shared forms of knowledge exemplified in the notion of history, Confucianism seemed to offer the rudiments of a way forward. Hence, Pound's insistence that, as a way of thinking, Confucianism had something vitally important to offer the West.

Lastly, based on the preceding considerations, we return to that third example Pound uses in "Date Line" to illustrate his point about knowledge in the discussion from which the frequently quoted statement "an epic is a poem including history" originates. This example perhaps constitutes the real test of Pound's development of *paideumic* and ideogrammic knowledge and is certainly its most controversial and problematic field of application: economics. A reading of *ABC of Economics*, from its opening dissociation of property from capital, makes clear that Pound truly felt that economics as a discipline could be conducted almost entirely on the basis of definitional precision. Furthermore, Pound's thinking in economics was as eclectic and syncretic as his thought in all other areas of interest. Accordingly, my view is that it is best approached as constituting an essential facet of his broader project of knowledge reform, which undoubtedly crossed over into efforts at active intervention into social life. This point is frequently overlooked in treatments of Pound's economic thought that frame him as merely an ideologue for C.H. Douglas' Social Credit system.

An adequate treatment of Pound's thought about economics is obviously far beyond the scope of the present chapter.[xliii] Nevertheless some amount of commentary is necessary to frame an understanding of Pound's political views and how these inform *The Cantos*. What I intend to do here is simply to gesture toward some of the ways that the preceding discussion about how Pound's project from the mid-1920's on (for which *The Cantos* are the primary document), of placing those mental capacities rooted in experiential receptivity (upon which much modernist compositional practice was based) in service of the project of knowledge production, can help us see how this project came to inform the economic thought that constituted, along with historiography, one of its central branches. This unification of experience and knowledge constituted Pound's effort at generating the grounds for the emergence of a shared sensibility upon which the social condition he calls civilization had historically rested. I have been saying that the nature of this project, the unification of knowledge and experience, has made it difficult to understand and that this, combined with Pound's egregious lapses in judgment, has contributed to gross critical misunderstandings of *The Cantos* that have consequences for our broader understanding of poetry and art in the 20th century.

We could start with the following question: why, given Pound's contempt for finance capital and his commitment to socioeconomic justice, as well as to understanding the economic principles informing historical process, did he reject Marxism as a doctrine? The question is worth considering given Tim Redman's claim, based in part on a careful examination of the guild socialist roots in which Pound's economic thinking originated during his time in the *New Age* offices under A.R. Orage during the First World War, that only A. James Gregor's description of Italian Fascism as a "Marxist heresy" provides any useful insight into the economic bases for Pound's endorsement of Fascism (Redman 3). The clearest statement on Pound's part that I have found in response to this question concludes 1933's *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*:

> The fascist revolution was FOR the preservation of certain liberties and FOR the maintenance of a certain level of culture, certain standards of living, it was NOT a refusal to come down to a certain level of riches or poverty, but

> a refusal to surrender certain immaterial prerogatives, a refusal to surrender a great slice of the cultural heritage.
>
> The "cultural heritage" as a fountain of value in Douglas' economics is in the process of superseding labor as the fountain of values, which it WAS in the time of Marx, or at any rate was in overwhelming proportion. (127)

Pound's linkage here of the Douglasite notion of 'cultural heritage' to the Fascist conception of the corporate state points both towards the key definitional issues behind his thinking about economic value and towards the connection he felt he could make between the corporatist model of the relations of production and his economic prescriptions. We need also to recall that at the moment Pound is writing this, actually existing socialism consists of that other "one party system," that of Stalinist Russia (whose head of state Pound also megalomaniacally hoped to council into wise and just statecraft). Pound's reading of Douglas's notion of cultural heritage serves to elucidate, more so than Douglas' dubious A+B theorem, both why Pound felt that the structural inequities of the capitalist mode of production could be eliminated through a combination of technical alterations to the system of distribution and cultural enrichment of the system of governance, without radically altering the relations of production by abolishing the private ownership of the means of production. It also serves in part to frame Pound's fiat theory of economic value. Furthermore, it shows how Pound's endorsement of Douglas' model of cultural heritage was essentially bound up in the definition-oriented cast of thought characteristic of his ideogrammic approach.

Douglas' basic notion is that the production of value is increasingly the result of technical innovations that precede the extant productive forces of the present generation. A new invention contributes exponentially to the productive capacity of future generations and thus to the shared stock of value. The novelty of that invention depends on qualitative notions like ingenuity. Cultural heritage thus includes not only such technical innovations as machinery but also other such "immaterial prerogatives" as mores, as well as ethical, religious and aesthetic values. Douglas views this store of value as communally shared by all members of the collectivity and as thereby constituting the democratic basis of credit and monetary value. This conception of the basis of monetary value as residing in the effective sociality inherent within invention is starkly different from the commodity theory of monetary value described as exchange value in *Capital*, where the relations of production (i.e. private producers operating independently) generate exchange value as the ratio of the labor time necessary to produce one commodity against that of all others and the basis of monetary value resides thus in the total system of commodity exchange. It is easy to see how the concept of cultural heritage would dovetail in Pound's mind with Frobenius' model of *paideuma* or distributed ambient knowledge, given the focus on the latter on the real historical effects of the immaterial dimension of sensibility on collective life, and how these concepts would seem to resonate sympathetically with Mussolini's placing of the Italian national character in the position of revolutionary subject over and against the class-based Marxian proletariat. In short, the essential Marxian concepts of social antagonism and class conflict do not enter into this definition of monetary value as the primary determinant, which is not to say that social antagonisms were not matters of concern to Douglas.

But the real difference between the Marxian conception of value and that which Pound developed in part through his relation to Douglas lies in the ontological distinction implied in the previous discussion of Grosseteste's influence on Pound's thought. The Marxian labor theory of value treats the latter as the product first of relations obtaining

within different portions of material processes, and then of abstractions deriving from the mediations of exchange. The concept of volition that Pound developed in his reading of Grosseteste, Dante, Confucius and others treats the principle of actualization, identified variously with light, with Confucian process or *tao*, and with the individual volition as microcosm, as anterior to matter *qua* substance, which latter the Epicurean and Democratean roots of Marxian thought treat as primordial. Pound's conception of monetary value is thus "volitionist," in contradistinction to Marx's rigorously rational dialectical approach in which money is an all-sided mediation.

From these different conceptions of the order of ontological primacy arise differences in the understanding of how economic value emerges as a social product; namely, monetary value as based fundamentally on fiat and monetary value as based in exchange. The difference is one between conceiving monetary value as qualitatively rooted in collective *ethos* as the expression of the latter as opposed to monetary value being quantitatively rooted in the mediations (i.e. socially necessary labor time) transpiring within the measure of a physical process (i.e. labor). The Douglasite conception of cultural heritage was germane to Pound's overall thinking because it postulates a communal basis of economic value that is not purely an effect of determinations between material forms. Thus when Pound writes that economic value is rooted in the abundance of nature and the shared responsibility of the people, this is not quite the agrarian, physiocratic formulation that it sounds like, because to Pound's Grossetestian and Confucian thinking the abundance of nature and shared responsibility are not two separate things but two aspects of a single principle. Rather, it is a definition of economic value *as itself a kind of* definition, in the strict sense previously explored.

Pound's eventual endorsement of the ideas of Silvio Gesell and his efforts at a synthesis of Gesell's stamp scrip with Douglas's notion of state control of credit and a universal disbursement of a national dividend to make up for the shortfall in collective purchasing power due to the interest fees on capital inputs to the production process, Pound's infamous "Usura," similarly arose from a definitional dispute with Marx over the nature of money. The other facet of Pound's enthusiasm for Gesell's ideas was the precedent for practicability he saw as established in the mayor of Woergl's implementation of the Gesellian idea of "free money" when he circulated a local, perishing currency with relative success in 1932. Gesell's critique in *The Natural Economic Order* of Marx's conception of surplus value argues that, whereas Marx sees the latter as explicable solely through the simultaneous sale and consumption of labor power as a commodity, which thus produces new value in the form of newly produced commodities even as it remains within the circuit of the zero-sum-game of commodity exchange, surplus value is instead the product of the differences in durability between goods and money and the temporal constraints on use these differences generated between perishable goods and money as a more enduring medium of exchange.

Money in this account has power over goods because, unlike the perishable goods that must of necessity enter into exchange in a timely manner, money as a facilitator of exchange retains its basic prerogatives even during longer periods of storage. Pound ideogrammically reads into Gesell's temporally determined conception of surplus-value a similarly ethical or volitionist conception of money first as a "title," or claim to the practice of exchange by virtue of the civic responsibility inherent in one's participation within the observant social formation, and secondly as a measure of that exchange in the form of price, because in Gesell's account what money retains throughout the duration that it holds over goods is precisely this sanction of the exchange relationship. And that sanction Pound

identifies, with the Douglasite 'increment of association,' as being equally grounded in *ethos*, conceived here as the social dimension of will, that which constitutes one's responsibility towards others. In other words, central to the conception of money that Pound derives from his reading of Gesell is a qualitative distinction entering into the definition of what money is at base, prior to its quantitative value. This definition became the starting point from which Pound felt practical consequences should be drawn.

Ownership and control of the money supply by a private financial sector thus constituted a displacement of the civic responsibility that the form of money by definition served to instantiate, and which Pound felt ought properly to be located in the public institution of the state. We can accordingly understand Pound's comment in "The Individual in His Milieu" that "you cannot make a good economics out of a bad ethics" (*Selected Prose* 282). This reading of economic value follows from essentially the same 'ethico-epistemic' principles as what we saw to be the case in the Confucian model of definition, insofar as the comprehension of the nature of money itself extends from the kind of attunement to definition that in turn depends upon the modes of intelligibility whose condition of possibility is not relational determinations graspable through concepts but how the intention is disposed. Money in its essential nature is an organon of virtue and social responsibility. Of course, the implementation of these principles entailed putting a tremendous amount of trust in the benevolence of the state as an authentic expression of the public will, rather than the apparatus of a group of equally rapacious private interests cynically manipulating idealist rhetoric to mask their unchecked and unilateral domination of political process. The comparison with the dialectically-informed Marxian economic models is thus useful in illustrating the divergent bases of mentality upon which Pound developed his economic ideas. The non-correspondence of Pound's political principles with political realities can be viewed either as a rational failure to grasp a systemic problem, or as a failure to realize in shared practice a trans-rational principle.

The key point is that here as well individual ethical responsibility as practice preceding and facilitating rational thought constituted the link yoking together experience and knowledge, without which the definitional fitness upon which forms of epistemic accuracy depended would be lost. The comparison with the rationalist bent of Marxian thought also serves to illustrate divergent conceptions of the nature of the problem of injustice as expressed in, say, the violence of war and the suffering unemployed individuals endured during the Great Depression. In both instances, social justice as a problem hinged on the question of knowledge in its social implications as a basis for or impediment to practice. Individual ethical responsibility was secondary in the Marxian treatment to the primary rational, systemic problem of how ideology and false consciousness obfuscated a proper, historically-situated and up-to-date understanding of the antagonisms constituting society's predicament. False consciousness in turn arose automatically as the symptomatic reflection of the structure of material social arrangements and could consequently be removed only through the revolutionary transformation of those arrangements. With the systemic transformation of the material relations, both false consciousness and the contradictions expressed at the individual level would be resolved. In Pound's understanding, the ethical problem went to the heart of both the knowledge question and the consequent problem of justice in social relations. Without the practical cultivation of benevolence, a pre-cognitive experience of spontaneously willing the well-being of others, at an individual level, knowledge would be degraded by lost qualitative distinctions at the level of definitional premises and social relationships would become unworkable as a result of the

consequent breakdown in communication.[xliv] Rationality, in other words, was according to this view an insufficient (which is not to say 'dispensable') basis for praxis.

This sense of the ethical core of Pound's thought throughout the 1930's is essential to assessing the matter of Pound's relationship to Italian Fascism. Pound's enduring faith in Mussolini, his willingness to downplay the ruthlessness and violence that attended Mussolini's rise to power and accompanied its duration (e.g. "Mussolini as intelligent man is more interesting than Mussolini as the Big Stick. The Duce's aphorisms can be studied apart from his means of getting them into action") stemmed on the one hand from his belief in the Confucian premise that innate human goodness could be brought out through proper acculturation and on the other from his focus on what he saw as the proportionally more harmful danger of pervasive corruption in the influence of private financial interests on geopolitics and national legislation (*Selected Prose* 261). Similarly, his conception of the corporate state as a form of guild organization envisions the corresponding social relations not in terms of the repressive domination of all spheres of production by a single oligarchic party but as a federation of sub-collectives of producers each co-operatively united by the shared cultural horizon and ethos native to their craft or practice and collectively unified under the banner of a state-facilitated council. In principle, individual producers would in this formation be allowed to retain local control over, and responsibility for, their particular enterprises and the practical knowledge appropriate to those enterprises without the state dictating the particulars of their *modus operandi* and without their enterprises becoming cripplingly beholden to the financial pressures of private investors. Historical hindsight reveals these to be clearly naïve readings that put tremendous and unwarranted trust in the ultimate benevolence of the political regime.

On the converse side of these 'positive' misplacements of focus there is the increasingly pervasive 'negative' misplacement of focus in the form of the increasing insinuations of anti-Semitism into Pound's thinking about economic questions. These anti-Semitic biases were, admittedly, bound up with the tendency in Pound's thinking toward positing or assuming necessary relationships between ethnicity and cultural character, despite his ambivalence on these matters (e.g. "race prejudice is a red herring") though he was certainly not unique in thinking of cultural character in terms of race and biology (*Guide to Kulchur* 242). Their increasing virulence, however, was a complex product of Pound's idiosyncrasies in study and the *idée fixe* of his indignation at the negative influence of financial interests within political process, combined with his preexisting if significantly milder anti-Semitic prejudice. Both Redman and Surette are agreed in their reading, based on careful study of both Pound's public writings and his private correspondence, that the drift into obsessive anti-Semitic sentiments was the direct consequence of his paranoid belief in a deliberate conspiracy against the public well-being on the part of the banks and financial institutions. Thus, though race, class and ethics merged at times in Pound's mind, they never did so unequivocally or as a matter of clearly defined principles.

This drift into conspiratorial thinking would appear to be a primary negative consequence of the ideogrammic method invoked in Pound's assertion that only a "sap-head" can presume to understand history without an understanding of economics. Throughout Pound's research into the economic ideas of individuals like Gesell and Douglas in the 1920's and 30's, he was reading economic theories in tandem with his readings of historical events such as Thomas Jefferson's and John Adams' presidency, the establishment of the Bank of Siena, and centuries of Chinese history. The proliferation of empirical particulars within such a distended scope inevitably lead Pound to reify working hypotheses and practical definitional distinctions into more reductive framing devices for his data.

These framing devices would become a kind of self-perpetuating feedback loop and eventually turn toxic. Despite Pound's assertion in "Date Line" that the study of the demarcation between true knowledge and superficial acquaintance would be most successful in the limitation to a few subject areas, his omnivorous interests would lead him down a blind alley when the demands to honor the extensive particulars of each subject area would outstrip his scope. It seems inevitable that stereotypes would begin to present themselves in the form of intelligible patterns. What was not inevitable was the length to which Pound would stubbornly persist in, even escalate, his insistence on his readings of situations against the exhortations of those close to him. Therein lies his deepest personal error.

Therein also lies what I see as the real flaw of Pound's attempt at implementing his new form of knowledge: a myopia regarding the way definition needed to be equally informed by, open to, and tested against, the extent and variety of particulars. This relationship is clearest in Pound's largest oversight in the 1940's: the systemic genocidal projects that, largely unbeknownst to Pound at the time, were being enacted by same Axis powers that Pound saw as fighting a war against the domination of private economic interests over the public weal. Here, though, one needs to distinguish between errors in principle and errors in application. That Pound made grievous errors in the application of his ideas is beyond question. It is less clear whether those gross errors in application obviate many of the basic insights and principles upon which his ideas rested, or whether they have merely made it more difficult for those basic insights to be given a fair hearing. That the import of specific facts might be modified by a more extensive knowledge of the range of the facts, even a range that is by necessity practically unrealizable, does not mean that the same import of a given fact can be arrived at solely through reference to the range of the facts. For instance, Sampson and Zhiqun offer data supporting the interpretation of the phonetic etymological roots of the ideogram *ming*, thus contradicting Pound's reading, in which it defines the "total light process" in its pictographic conveyance of the sun's light propagating itself in the moon's reflection, even as these authors generally support Pound's underlying premise that certain compound ideograms do function in a way that accords with Pound's reading (*The Great Digest and the Unwobbling Pivot* 20). Their endorsement of the traditional account of compound ideograms, on the other hand, supports Pound's general insight about the nature of Confucian definition.

Neither is it clear that ratiocination of any kind is capable on its own of establishing axiomatic premises independently of what Pound points to in his emphasis on definition. Most economic analyses of Douglas' A+B theorem have shown it to be an erroneous or unworkable idea, either in its application of double-entry bookkeeping of a single factory to the industrial sector as a whole or in the logical consequences one might derive from it as an algebraic formula. Similarly, Surette has pointed to the ways many of Pound's specific prescriptions for economic reform, which are often based on Douglas' principles, lead to absurd consequences (usually with respect to inflation) in practice. At the same time, it remains unclear whether the basic insights regarding the nature of money that Pound developed on the basis of his thinking about definition, and the possibilities these insights entail for changes in distribution, are based wholly on mistaken premises. In the post-2008 age of austerity, where as recently as 2011 David Graeber has argued against the exchange-oriented historical accounts of the origin of money, many of Pound's diagnoses at least seem prescient. While the concerns are certainly not a dead issue, I cannot pretend to have the competence in economic analysis necessary to assess the validity of any of Pound's ideas and do not wish to challenge the general consensus that many if not most of them were erroneous. At the same time, one of the major stumbling blocks to understanding those

ideas is that they are couched through and through in Pound's broader cast of thought, which demands the same readerly orientation as his poetry. One cannot simply read Douglas or Gesell and thereby understand Pound's views on economics without also understanding Pound's *way* of reading. The "how" in Pound's *How to Read* needs to be heard as implying something about the quality of one's orientation to the event of reading as much as it designates merely the efficient know-how of practical knowledge. And in the end, this entire exploration of Pound's intellectual project in late-modernism, both within *The Cantos* and beyond, amounts to the very real impact that ways of reading can have on our shared lives.

*To Build the City*

That there are stakes in how we read is evident in the notion of a social formation being grounded in a sensibility that a poetics might serve to solicit and catalyze. We are looking here at *open* form; we have at no point departed from considering *open* form but have been exploring the range and scale of what that designator implies. The history of *The Cantos*' reception shows this relationship to be significantly more nuanced than any idea such as "fascist poetics" can adequately address, as the next chapter's examination of these poetics' late 20th century reception will show. To repeat a previous formulation, the ideas of ideogrammic method and *paideuma* whose range of attempted application the last section explored were at their core an expansion of the purview of the poetics Pound developed in the prewar context. If the preceding discussion has accurately explained those ideas, it should lead us back to the poetry, which was generative of, and remains the clearest verbal manifestation of, these principles. Turning to the *Pisan* sequence, we can see the difference this sort of attention to what takes place in the reading experience might make to the inevitable larger construal of Pound's relationship to the question of the struggle between political systems in the Second World War. Again, no amount of contextual information is sufficient to tell us, for example, how to read the "how" in *How to Read*. That co-ordinations of the primary text with Pound's personal correspondence, for instance, or even with his propagandistic contributions to the fascist cause during the war, might lead us to modify a given reading in no way relieves us of the fact that we are each responsible for our own readings, both of the poems and of those intertexts. Even Lawrence Rainey's ingenious use of material markers to group source texts according to particular historical periods of composition only goes as far as to arrange a grouping of texts to be read, it will not do the reading for us.

The *Pisan Cantos* are in many ways the perfect site for exploring this question of the stakes of reading. The context of their composition in the DTC prison camp at Pisa forced Pound back on his own resources as an individual and poet, limiting his source materials to his memory and immediate experience in the absence of the voluminous archival sources marshaled for the composition of the *China* and *Adams Cantos*. That same context has also made the reception of the sequence, whose thorniness has only been amplified by the work's having been awarded the Bollingen Prize, a potential minefield for critics hoping either to absolve a recondite Pound of his fascist allegiances or condemn him as unregenerate. The mythologized image of Mussolini's corpse as "crucified" sacrificial bull that greets the reader of canto LXXIV's first 11 lines has, to offer just one more famous example, made the former approach seem an almost superhuman feat of bad faith. But that Pound sees the defeat of Italian fascism as lamentable, however, does not necessarily entail that what the sequence as a whole laments is the death of Mussolini and the defeat of Italian fascism *per se*,

nor that what it affirms is the hope that "the dream" embodied partially in the fascist state as a temporal power might achieve some future *renascence*. At the risk of being glib, what the *Pisan* sequence can more accurately be said to be concerned with is the fate of civilization, and as before an understanding of how civilization ought to be defined and discerned in its definition hinges on how we read the sequence. An example will convey more here than any further commentary:

A lizard upheld me
the wild birds wd not eat the white bread
from Mt Taishan to the sunset
from Carrara stone to the tower
and this day the air was made open
for Kuanon of all delights,
Linus, Cletus, Clement
Whose prayers,
The great scarab is bowed at the altar
The green light gleams in his shell
Plowed in the sacred field and unwound the silk worms early
In tensile
In the light of the light is the *virtu*
"sunt lumina" said Erigena Scotus
as of Shun on Mt Taishan
and in the hall of the forebears
as from the beginning of wonders
the paraclete that was present in Yao, the precision
in Shun the compassionate
in Yu the guider of waters

4 giants at the 4 corners
three young men at the door
and they digged a ditch round about me
lest the damp gnaw thru my bones
to redeem Zion with justice
sd/Isaiah. Not out on interest said David rex
the prime s.o.b.
Light tensile immaculata
The sun's cord unspotted
"sunt lumina" said the Oirishman to King Carolus,
"OMNIA,
all things that are are lights"
and they dug him up out of the sepulture
soi disantly looking for Manicheans.
Les Albigeois, a problem of history,
And the fleet at Salamis made with money lent by the state to the
Shipwrights
Tempus tacendi, tempus loquendi.
Never inside the country to raise the standard of living
But always abroad to increase the profits of usurers,

dixit Lenin,
and gun sales lead to more gun sales
they do not clutter the market for gunnery
there is no saturation
Pisa, in the 23rd year of the effort in sight of the tower
and Till was hung yesterday
for murder and rape with trimmings plus Cholkis
plus mythology, thought he was Zeus ram or another one
Hey Snag wots in the bibl'?
wot are the books of the bible?
Name 'em, don't bullshit ME. (448-450)

Perhaps as a fortuitous consequence, the limitation of Pound's resources in the DTC engendered the mode that would largely characterize that of the remaining cantos, though many of the *Pisan Cantos'* more conspicuously autobiographical or confessional moments would be significantly curtailed in *Rock-Drill* and *Thrones*. No longer are the lyric and the documentary modes the distinct poles that a juxtaposition of canto II with canto XXXVIII would suggest, as the tissue of quotations comprising the virtuosic musicality of this verse shows. Here, the former canto's tendency to lead with sound and the latter canto's more logopoeic arrangement of idiosyncratically corresponding particulars become virtually inseparable. It is worth noting as well for the sake of our approach to reading these lines that Pound's other efforts while in confinement went towards finishing his Confucian translations, of which the fusion of semantic meaning with perceptual acuity in one's discernment, in the opening "terminology" section, of the foundational ideograms' definitional integrity was the primary aim.

"The meaning of the text" leaves us woefully unprepared to approach these lines primarily because it affords us no access to the dimensions of media activity taking shape in the sonorous and graphic qualities of the language and the way these dimensions orient and draw the referential semantics of the speech into those fluid formations without which their import *as* semantic gets lost or misperceived. Somewhat paradoxically, then, meaning as a category will impede us at the anterior dimension of the poem to that which we must direct our attentions if we are to grasp the poem's semantic dimensions as well. Let us say instead that the lines semantically containing the perceptual details "a lizard upheld me / the wild birds wd not eat the white bread" also initiate a sonorous motif in the consonant "l" and long "i" sound that will thread through the formation of lines that follow, tracing a pattern in air that will subtend and permeate each phrase that follows. Those lines themselves semantically trace a kind of sympathetic correspondence between nature and second-nature, as the attention of the human "me" is focused and vitalized by the lizard while the undomesticated "wild birds" show their refined taste in refusing to eat the industrially produced "white bread."

This is not a correspondence superimposed on two discrete things—speaker, world; nature, culture; experience, knowledge; sense, sound; reader, poem—but one movement of correspondence in which certain nodes arise interactively and integrally. Thus we see the chiastic reversal of the "I"'s perspectival topography moving into the unnamed dispersion of nonhuman phenomena, a spatialized line of vision following the path from a Pisan mountain renamed "Taishan" into "the sunset," against the inverse temporal movement of named raw materials into human artifice, "from Carrara stone to the tower." The event of that reversal "from" and "to" is itself an inflection expressively mirroring the lines' persistent exchanges

of sound and sense, which in turn mirror the continuous interactive movement toward integration at the level of sound alone, as the prosodic near-parallelism of these two chiastic lines centripetally gathers an inward pull against the previous line's lengthening outward. This tension is then released into the next two lines, "and this day the air was made open / for Kuanon of all delights," actualizing its reserves in the restoration to the present field of experience of its own unelaborated, accommodating self-existence. Accordingly, "was made open" both implies and effaces deliberate agency, just as "Kuanon," the Chinese bodhisattva of compassion, seems to form spontaneously out of this very openness, inseparable from the "delight" that restores the "l" and "i" motif.

The appearance of Kuanon provides a useful occasion to examine the question of what critics typically call "mythology" in the *Pisan* sequence and in Pound's poetry more broadly. It is crucial to distinguish between these possible implications that, if unexamined, lead to more extensive misreadings. One understanding of myth is that it is basically cognate with the terms allegory and metaphor. According to this inherently semantic approach, myth, allegory and metaphor can all be reduced to a basic linguistic mechanism of substitution whereby one term, say "Kuanon," comes to stand in for an abstract concept such as "compassion." One presumably more immediate meaning becomes a stand-in for another presumably more remote meaning. Based on this understanding, one is lead into readings of these cantos in which Pound "idealizes" the "real world" by superimposing mythological types on the gritty, raw, material, historical realities around him. My view is that this is a profoundly impoverished way of understanding the facet of the work that critics group under "myth." We can approach the question differently if we substitute the term "mythology" for the term "iconography." Traditionally, iconography addresses those classes of objects within a given cultural tradition that function as devices facilitating the viewer's contemplation of certain qualities that she wishes to make palpable within her own immediate experience for purposes of psychological transformation.

Icons (the term comes from the Greek "*eikon*" or image) are facilitators of ritual or religious contemplative practice prior to either their quasi-theoretical status as either literal referents or allegorical figures within belief systems or to the question of their aesthetic value within a context of art appreciation. This practical history, the efficacious form meant to facilitate the mind's attunement within a present-tense practical context, is imprinted within icons as what Erwin Panowsky called their "expressional qualities," which his schema locates at the primary level of their status as icons (5). Panowsky is writing within a tradition of analysis that traces back, by way of Ernst Cassirer's "expressive mode of perception," to Levy-Bruhl's thesis about participation. An icon is thus a primary form of media, like those collective representations that Levy-Bruhl had argued serve not to provide the determinate cognitive mind with second-order representations of empirical referents but instead depended for their functioning on the prelogical participatory mentality wherein the intelligence moved through its affective and perceptual shadings as these were occasioned by an encounter with a particular object. An icon thus makes manifest a given quality, rather than representing it. Pound clearly has something similar in mind when he remarks "tradition inheres in the images of the gods, and gets lost in dogmatic definitions"(*Selected Prose* 322). Pound's frequent quotations in the original language, like his use of obscure synonyms for mythic figures (e.g. "Cythera" for "Aphrodite"), act not as indexical markers but rather stem from the view that language is an inherited form of media whose graphic and acoustic contours remain imbued with the efficacy of its prior usage, of which "meaning" is but a fossilized remainder.

The practical efficacy of iconography is but one more instance of the mentality running through concepts like ideogram, *paideuma*, precise definition, as well as Kandinskian "appeal," Picasso's mediators, and, indeed, media and force. Practical suspension of the instrumentalizing will in a moment of encounter redistributes the intelligence *within* or *into* phenomenal qualities by relaxing the habit of rote recognition and thereby allowing those qualities to effloresce. Such efflorescence is the activity that allows a hand gesture on a painted image or statue, say, to manifest in its very appearance particular qualitative values that, we wish to say, are "more than" that appearance itself, thus investing that appearance with its status as a form of media. This "more than" *is itself* a kind of intellection, even as it is inseparable from the perceptual experience. The iconographic hand gesture provides the practical occasion for such dispositional transformation, as well as itself being the appearance whose qualities this transformation serves to dilate. Turning back to the quoted passage, we find Pound's first proper ideogram in the *Pisan* sequence appearing in these lines as well (see about including visual image of *hsien* next to the quoted text). The ideogram *hsien*, which appears next to the lines "in tensile / in the light of light is the *virtu* / "sunt lumina" said Erigena Scotus," possesses a semantic field including the terms "display," "manifest," "be clear" (Legge) and "be illustrious" (Mathews) (citations in Kenner 458). It is comprised of a pictographic field featuring two radicals of the sun above threads of silk on the left against a radical featuring an anthropomorphic head on the right. As an ideogram, *hsien* does not function as a mere substitution for another term, an exotic archaism where one might as well just say "manifest." Neither, in its coordination of radicals, is it merely a picture. Rather, its liminal status as an ideogram arrests the automatic functioning of linguistic recognition that might proceed unabated if we read the words on the page according to our usual habits of reading. Its graphic appearance is meant to be semantically opaque to us because that opacity causes a shift in our own bearing as readers whereby its phenomenal appearance as a graphic mark becomes more salient and vivid. *Hsien* does not "represent" the idea "to manifest"; as a conjunctive gesture, it manifests.

What about the lines contiguous on the page to *hsien*? We should avoid reading them as "commentary on" or "translations of" *hsien*. In order to do so, it is necessary to go back a few lines to the moment at which "delights," associated with Kuanon's iconographic appearance, picks up and continues the sonic motif of "l" and long "i" sounds we have been following. This motif is emphatically reasserted in the next line's trochaic heave with "*Li*nus," the first in a sequence of first century Roman Bishops (e.g. "Cletus, Clement"), an emphasis whose articulate patterning is made both melodic by the consonant and vowel sounds and prosodic in the waves of falling trochaic beats that the other Bishops continue. Semantically, the lines imply generational transmission of a kind of experiential sensibility while non-semantically they relay nodal points in a pattern emerging to the reader's ear. That pattern is comprised of cadence and melos as these establish persistent intervallic tonalities both within their own registers and, consequently, in the interplay between these two registers. So when the motif of "l" and "i" reappears in "the green *li*ght gleams in his she*ll*," it has been muted and has almost receded into the background, the high and clear "i" glinting briefly as it is flanked by the temporally longer and more piercing "ee" sounds of "green" and "gleam," which in turn ring out against he dominant "ay" and "ow" sounds of "prayers," "great," "sacred," "bowed," "plowed" and "unwound." Meanwhile, the phrase "green light gleams," which coincides with this condensation of sound into intensive formation, semantically offers a close focus on the visual detail of the iconographic image of the bowing scarab, continuous thematically with both the Christian devotional practice of the Bishops and with the speaker's own perceptual experience of the lizard.

The punctual quality of the light as it flashes musically and visually in the scarab's shell becomes another kind of conditional reserve that the subsequent lines then release, as the labial restraint of "she*ll*" gives way to plosive pivot that then opens outward into the expansive vowels of "plowed" and "unwound" in the next line. Beyond "plowed"'s traditional western associations from as early as Hesiod with the act of *poesis*, Carroll Terrell also indicates the line's documentary dimension in its allusion to the Chinese ritual tradition of having the imperial Son of Heaven plow a field with his own hands at the kairotic "first conjunction of the sun and the moon in spring" (Terrell 367). This release outward at the sonic pivot established at "plowed" moves like a wave across the remainder of the stanza, so that the momentum of the previous line invests "in tensile" with the status of an enjambment or dropped line. Notice then how "tensile" itself presents the principle whereby intensive relationships brought to a pitch of cohesion effect qualitative transformations across registers habitually held to be discrete in the way the "l," "i" motif gets inflected here. The motif is carrying a sonically privileged status by virtue of its iteration throughout these lines, so the ear expects it to be dominant and emphatic. But rhythmically, the emphasis falls on the first syllable, "*ten*sile." At the same time, the effect of the interplay between cadence and melos creates a kind of inversion in which the dominant rhythmic emphasis of the first syllable actually causes the second syllable, the one containing the higher melodic tone of the motif, to temporally lengthen and stretch outward, like the arc of a projectile propelled by the punctual impact of a weight hitting the opposite end of a see-saw, so that the temporal dilation of the vowel causes it to chime with "plowed" and "unwound" even as it falls on a weak beat. And this dilation in turn motivates the delicate staccato stitching of the sonic motif, now reasserted and explicitly linked to the Poundian metatopos of "light," in the following line: "in the *li*ght of the *li*ght is the *virtu*." We need to hear the minute anapestic accentuations of this line, which serves as thematic knot for the stanza as a whole, with and against the oddly inflected elongation of "tensile" in the previous line; cumulatively forming, as the leading edge of the stanza's ingression, a kind of single architecture of sound in air that the mind sees within and beyond what the ear hears. This is the counterpart, for the aural sense modality, to the graphic signature of *hsien* that Pound has placed alongside it. In each case, the perceptible object is the gestural insignia of the qualities that radiate from it.

"All things that are are lights," "sunt lumina," Pound quotes from the medieval Neoplatonic philosopher Johanes Erigena Scotus, whose ideas Pound frequently groups with those of Grosseteste. Objects are seen here as static, cross-sectioned snapshots of the transpersonal intelligence of actualization, whose movement is endless. Such "things" include words, congealed intermediaries of our entanglement in the world. The ontology of light is here a practical guide to a readerly orientation, not a homegrown metaphysical doctrine we ought to pluck from the poetry. To say that language is media means, first, that we move by way of semantics toward the material substrate, not the other way around (as is habitual), and, second, that we move through and beyond that material substrate to the emergent point of contact at which the authorial volition merges with its informing moment of composition, which saturates everything it has touched. This point of contact yields "the quality / of the affection— / …--that has carved a trace in the mind," as the formula cropping up throughout these cantos puts it (477). We lose the import of these statements by taking them merely to be statements. Like the icon, semantics are a provisional means of guiding the attention towards the event of its own reception and the way this event frames the status of its object. Pound felt that there was something to be shown about that status, though it is not propositionally formulated in the poetry, despite the fact that we habitually

expect language to function declaratively. From this manner of placing in evidence, about which the reader must first be clear, Pound builds certain premises regarding civilization as a sensibility informing sociohistorical formations. The conjunction of *hsien* and the quotations from Erigena offers in its documentary dimension an implicit knowledge claim about civilization as a condition for historical flourishing, which the remaining lines in the stanza develop in their thematic elaboration of the "paraclete" or spirit present as the sensibility embodied and transmitted by the semi-legendary early Chinese emperors Yao, Shun, and Yu.

Continuing through the rest of the quoted passage in the kind of fine-toothed thick-descriptional mode I have been undertaking will undoubtedly wear on the reader, but it has been necessary in order to supply a full sense of the linguistic poles whose equal appreciation is required to approach *The Cantos* without falling into mischaracterization. What tends largely to be missing from critical treatments is description that makes clear this dimension at which the language modulates into a pure media function, and a sense of how indispensable an accurate sense of this dimension is to understanding Pound's work. Without it, we may understand that the circular ditch dug around Pound in the following stanza corresponds, as an act of compassion and redemptive justice that chimes with the previous thread linking Kuanon to the benevolence of Shun, and looks ahead to the approving quotation of Isaiah's prophecy about redeeming Zion, is a luminous detail within Pound's present-tense confinement evidencing the persistence of a civilized sensibility. We will almost certainly notice the anti-Semitic swipe against "David rex / the prime s.o.b." But we will not see the dimension wherein, as an act in which the will is repurposed outwardly to respond without deliberation to the exigencies of present circumstances rather than serving the desires of the self, the digging corresponds to the same practical disposition in which the concept-wielding self-consciousness recedes as the main principle of agency, allowing the compositional intelligence to guide the execution of an act. This is what happens when we hold the door open for someone else without needing to think about it. First one must see what Pound in *Rock-Drill* calls the "*hsien* form," as force and not meaning, then it becomes conceivable (though by no means guaranteed) that one might see prior instances of the same principle in historical records, as the principle whereby examples such as the Confucian social mores known as *li* or rites, for instance the plowing of the field at an auspicious seasonal conjunction, become intelligible as forms of autotelic conduct that bring particular ambient qualities into experiential focus just as an arrangement of syllables might produce a certain effect.

The order of primacy I am describing is in fact thematized in the remaining stanzas of the quoted passage, first in the inversion of the "digging" subject rhyme that links plowing of the sacred field to the ditch dug for Pound's benefit by the DTC soldiers at "and they dug him out of the sepulture / soi disantly looking for Manicheans / Les Albigeois, the problem of history / and the fleet at Salamis was made by money lent by the state to the /shipwrights." The irony here is that Pound's indictment cuts both ways, though "soi disantly" ("supposedly") suggests he is not completely oblivious to this fact. The charge is that the body of Johannes Scottus Eriugena was exhumed by Catholic crusaders against the Albigensian heresy who had misread his ideas and taken them for a form of Manicheanism. Western Christendom's ignorance of Eriugena's ideas thus gave rise to broader historical consequences in the fate of the Catholic Church, which are still registered in the relative historical obsolescence of those ideas following the Reformation and process of secularization. Peter Makin points out that this apocryphal story supports Pound's larger historical hypothesis that Erigena spent time in Provence prior to the Albigensian crusade as a particular luminous detail (Makin 64). Unfortunately, the story would appear to be

factually inaccurate, as Richard Sieburth clarifies that it was Eriugena's disciple, Amaury de Bene, whose remains were "dug up and scattered" in the 13th century (*Pisan Cantos* 122). But Pound also invokes the story of Erigena's persecution for heresy in his appended lines to "Donna Mi Pregha," in lines remarking, in wry commentary on the speaker's esoteric address to the present knowers, that "Erigena was not understood in his time." The dual temporal senses that "in his time" implies in that context, the present imperfect of reading and the past perfect of history, characterize for Pound the underlying "problem of history" staged in canto LXXIV. In other words, the problem of readerly orientation enters into the problem of historiographical framing, as the status of the object modulates in accordance with the reader's orientation, so that *hsien*, for instance, comes simply to 'mean' "display" within the larger historical account that is then built around this reading.

Pound takes this premise one step further in the following line, where the failure to address the problem of history makes us unable to see the use of state-based credit in the production of the fleet that fought in the battle of Salamis as prime example of the practicability of social credit principles. The elision of other possible informing factors here is breathtaking, and we see quite clearly how it can lead to gross overgeneralizations, or outright inaccuracies, that infect the broader historical account. Tellingly, Pound remarks in an essay that Mussolini's speeches resemble a Brancusian sculpture in that every angle of approach to his statements yields a different, irreproachable insight, which obviously overlooks the possibility that those statements might appear wholly different if seen against a background of, say, his regime's actions as perceived by others. This constitutes an indictment against the particular application of Pound's method, but does it also constitute a refutation of his own indictment? Makin goes on to explore the alternative Eriugena's thought presented, as Pound read him, to the hegemony of both syllogistic reasoning (embodied for Pound in the work of Descartes) and dogmatic authority. Eriugena's alternative lay in the practice of cultivating mental states of contemplation, which Pound comes to associate with a *techne* of reading fundamentally the same as that which renders one receptive to definitional precision, as a supplement to ratiocination (Makin 70). The factual inaccuracy of his anecdote does not invalidate the claim about the principles of historical knowledge that the anecdote is meant to illustrate, nor the general basis in historical facts for seeing these principles as having practical social consequences, it merely shows the method to require more care than Pound here has shown. I have attempted, in my own readings, to give some texture to a sense of what a Poundian *techne* following from Eriugena's thought might look like, as well as to suggest the influence that this approach might have on the more encompassing models and accounts that might ensue as a consequence of one's readerly approach. As a work that builds and shows the possible range of application for such a *techne*, *The Cantos* are unprecedented and unparalleled in 20th century literature.

Conceivable, though by no means guaranteed that seeing might become knowing. The ambiguity lies in the experimental half of Pound's equation, where compositional force levied as the instantiation of a new norm capable of guiding the construction of a body of knowledge invests the poetic act with a temporal logic akin to the future perfect: "it will have been the case." One thus cannot be sure whether "it will" is projectively descriptive or arbitrarily assertive. The possibility that Pound's readings concerning the problem of history might hold up under further scrutiny rests in part on a *techne* of reading that endeavors to build a tradition where none yet exists through the sheer tenacity of ones faith that such a reading, by nature idiosyncratic insofar as it extends from a perspicuity afforded solely by one's own ethos, will not lead one astray. But a tradition that exists in a vacuum is an oxymoron, and Pound, taken with his own method, ignored the fact that the relationship of

teacher to student in a wisdom tradition like Confucianism implies constant checks against willful or unwitting misreading by virtue of the fact that the one who imparts knowledge and transmits the tradition was always first the one whose own legitimacy has been thoroughly tested. In this respect, *The Cantos* oscillate between heresy and orthodoxy, enjoying the liberties and prerogatives of each category at the cost of suffering their respective failings: illegitimacy and doctrinaire blindness. Williams put it quite plainly in his review of *Guide to Kulchur,* "Penny Wise, Pound Foolish":

> And his conclusion from all this is totalitarianism! The failure of this book is that by its rests Mussolini is a great man; and Pound's failure, that he thinks him so. This book should be read for its style, its wide view of learning, its enlightenment as to the causes of many of our present ills. The rest can be forgiven as the misfortune of a brave man who took the risk of making a bloody fool of himself and lost. (*Contemporary Reviews* 259)

The causes of present ills pile up with nearly syllogistic order and assurance in the final stanza of the quoted passage before arriving at a thoroughly ambiguous present-tense diagnosis of and solution to those ills. Lenin's quote about the deleterious consequences of high finance is marshaled as exhibition A, while the thesis about the arms industry functioning as a caustic outlet for the constitutional imbalances of the production and distribution cycle wrought by finance capital's domination of industry is exhibition B. But when we arrive at the experiential present, the third term "in the 23rd year of the effort in sight of the tower" all that assurance evaporates into the hedging of the verb "effort" that now anachronistically defines, rather than "dream," the 23 years of fascist rule whose historical fate has been sealed and whose consequent possibility of alignment, as a practical program, with *The Cantos'* civic vision is now irrevocably in doubt.

Pound had written as a concluding statement to one of his final publications before capture by the Allies, "the fortune of war depends on the honesty of the regime," and it is equally a feat of bad faith for readers to suppose that he would have failed to take seriously the degree to which, according to the standards of own method, the turn of events had handed in a verdict against the Italian state and its leaders (*Selected Prose* 351). This is one way of reading "what you depart from is not the way." At the same time, for Pound to disavow that method itself, which had yielded the reading of the Confucian category of *jen* or uprightness as an ideographic configuration of a man standing by his word, would have been an act of self-abnegation tantamount in its dishonesty to the very fraudulence that he had seen the corporate state as capable in part of overcoming. So the contrition whose presence in the *Pisan* sequence critics have debated for the last several decades, particularly in the "vanity" passage of canto LVXXXIV, depended for its very sincerity on a continued affirmation of the principle of civilization that had become so entangled in Pound's image of Mussolini and his regime. For that reason, my sense is that critics searching for either unequivocal disavowal or unequivocal affirmation in the *Pisan* cantos are going to be led into distortive readings. What we do find, as the final portion of the quoted passage shows, are moments of acknowledged uncertainty.

While fellow DTC prisoner Louis Till is a subject rhyme, he is not a metaphor, not incorporated into a fixed structure of ideas and neutralized as a unique particular. The non-totalization of Till's unique fate persists as the semantic non-integration that surrounds the stanza's inclusion of his punishment, seen in the multidimensional values of the event of his death and the second-order thematization of these values as open possibilities of the acts of

writing and reading. That Till might be a stand-in here alternatively for the crucified Mussolini or for Pound himself, as the latter faces similar capital punishment on charges of treason, places the status of his correspondence ambiguously between an unalterable past and an open future. Either party might accordingly be framed, along with Till, alternatively as martyr or criminal, though the lines go one step further to frame the former possibility as equivalent to rendering Till not an icon but a myth, his real empirical status obfuscated by ornamental "trimmings." The former *imagiste*'s deliberately vague, additive redundancy in the following lines, "plus Cholkis / plus mythology, thought he was Zeus ram or the other one," the vortex unraveling into a sloughed off dross of sterile metaphors cast aside into the indefinite designation of "the other one," refrains from drawing Till and his possible figural counterparts into an affirmed configuration. Instead, the passage turns back to the sounds of conversation occurring in the present, back to the voices of the living discussing the open question of knowledge: "Hey Snag, wots in the bibl'? / wot are the books in the bible? / Name em, don't bullshit ME."

It would seem to be the one enduring legacy of *The Cantos* that the facets of the work to which its audience cannot reconcile themselves one way or the other cause the work's open status to persist in its later assessments, generatively and vexingly, as something one can neither simply embrace nor simply have done with. One can focus the internal tension of this dynamic by means of the generic question, which is a version of the dynamic informing *The Cantos*' attempted construction of tradition by means of experiment. Seen from this angle, *The Cantos* are a great oxymoron: the avant-garde epic, the completed cultural document of a sensibility that has actualized itself in a social reality that no longer recognizes the strict partitions according to which a culture produces completed documents of that kind. Like the fascist state itself, *The Cantos* are generically an uneasy synthesis of incommensurable temporalities. In other words, the method that produced *The Cantos* wanted to produce more than a book, more indeed than any object or set of objects. Pound felt that he was approaching the method whereby the fissures shot through modernity might be resolved, and he knew that it was only through soliciting the collaboration of sympathetic minds that his approach would gain any traction. The problem was that the monomania with which he attempted to both communicate what he had discovered and put its principles into action alienated those who might have been genuine allies, attracted others who exacerbated his distorted perspectives, and misled him into projecting common cause where none existed out of a sheer need to maintain faith that the civilization he was struggling to preserve would not be completely effaced.

The effort to carry implication through to the actual was precipitate, both with respect to Pound's intellectual judgments and to his practical alliances, but it did not succeed entirely in obscuring his basic insight. At the height of his involvement with the Italian regime, Pound's primary efforts were dedicated (perhaps quixotically) to developing an educational program for the fascist state, based in Confucian thought, in which the sensibility that he sought to transmit through the poetics might be cultivated at a broader social level. These efforts prefigure the perspectives of Pound's later audiences, who would inherit both the poetics and the implication latent in those poetics that cultural transformation was possible through the cultivation of forms of intelligence associated with particular modes of experience. Accordingly, these later audiences—most obviously Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley, but also others as diverse as George Maciunas, Jerome Rothenberg and Marshall McLuhan—conducted their work in a postwar milieu in which the project of aesthetic composition proved inseparable from, on the one hand, educational reform and, on the other, practical social intervention. This subsequent

generation of poets, artists and thinkers collectively produced in the later half of the century what in many ways Pound in *The Cantos* had rather hubristically hoped to produce single-handedly: the foundations for a new paideuma. This paideuma, however, was shorn of its essentializing assumptions of uniform *kulturmorphologie* and grounded squarely in pragmatics, from Black Mountain's Deweyian pedagogical inheritances, to Fluxus' shift from an object-based to an event-based construction of "happenings," to *Alcheringa*'s ethnopoetic techniques. All of these movements bear in one way or another the mark of Pound's contribution in *The Cantos*, even as they each in their own way struggle to retrieve what the Poundian method made available while divorcing those possibilities from the more extreme conclusions at which Pound had arrived.

Following the emergence of open-form poetics in the 20th century has involved the category of force as a descriptive tool. This category has from the beginning required, in order to be adequately grasped, that we not separate what we can come to know from how we experience our life as a whole. I have been suggesting that such a perspective informed the non-European collectives many of whose ritual practices developed in accord with a cultivated receptivity to how modes of action make intelligible by way of experience certain dimensions of the world; it informed the non-representational artists of the prewar European avant-garde whose encounter with the productions of those non-European collectives occasioned a revolutionary vocational insight about the character of the compositional act that radically recontextualized the former models of what aesthetic production and reception consists in; it informed the emergent poetics that took the non-representational integrities of composition that the European avant-garde had developed as a model for temporal measure and melodic cohesion within lyric form; and it informed late-modernism's porously incorporative insight that such a means of intelligible organization might allow the work to include the world's materials and allow the world's materials to be informed by what the work had to show. At each link in this chain, the guiding principle had been the intelligence that relies on close attention to the variable insistence or vividness of diverse qualities of experience, the degrees of force in appearance, in the execution of an organizing action. For a brief period of several decades during the last century, it became possible to imagine that our shared ways of surviving might be reoriented according to this kind of intelligence. Continuing in our own effort to understand the efficacy of open-form poetics demands that we persist in imagining this possibility.

**Chapter 5: The Single Intelligence**

"The problem now is not so much what things are as it is what happens BETWEEN things" – Charles Olson, "The Gate and Center" (*Collected Prose* 169)

"The message is: Widen the area of consciousness" – Allen Ginsberg (*Kaddish and Other Poems 1958-1960* 100)

A re-expatriated Pound would clarify in a 1962 interview with Donald Hall for *The Paris Review* that the "coherent idea" of *The Cantos*, "around which my muddles accumulated," was "probably the idea that European culture ought to survive, that the best qualities of it ought to survive along with whatever other cultures, in whatever universality." Such, at any rate, was how the matter appeared to him at that moment, or at least how he saw fit to communicate it. Pound's Europe, as many have pointed out, was at least in part his invention. The charge to the effect that Pound was romanticizing, projecting an idealized image of Europe that he derived from his own wayward studies, just as he may be accused of having projected an idealized image of an agrarian Jeffersonian America onto his reading of American history, obscures a picture that is both more interesting and more pertinent to the changes in American literary culture following the war. Henry James had spent his entire oeuvre, after all, in mapping the *terra incognita* discovered in the encounter between the remnants of pre-mercantile Europe and what Charles Olson would call the world's "last 'first' people." To James, the possibilities latent in such an encounter were bound up in the historical discontinuities shaping the differences in experience between the two cultures, the very same discontinuities shaping Pound's idiosyncrasies as a reader of European history and culture. James' insight, that the neophyte sensibility sprung up in the New World was the unlikely heir of a properly historical culture, was at base an application of the same principle behind Pound's assertion that the Confucian tradition mattered most as a corrective to the infirmity of our age whereby "we do not see when we look" (*Selected Prose* 81). The novice, as everyone knows, has by default a kind of access denied the expert. History is one arena where this plays out.

To return again to Lambert Strether's admonishment in Gloriani's garden, the pith of European culture for James and Pound both was not so much a determinate assemblage of artifacts, ideas, attitudes or modes of action as it was a way of seeing. This way of seeing has proven to be intimately bound up in the habitual disposition, both that of the collective and that of the individual. If in James' novels the outsider is at times better attuned to the world of the insiders than they are themselves, it is largely because of the uninured disposition the outsider brings to bear on her new circumstances. As Pound put it, James' "emotional center is in being sensitive to the feel of the place or to the tonality of the person," which the latter employed in the labor "to create means of communication" in order to "make two continents understand each other" (*Literary Essays* 306, 298, 296). James' effort to "bring in America on the side of civilization," in other words, revolved around this emotional center's status as the proper locus of a possible shared seeing, and it did so no less for Pound (295). *Paideuma* was the name that Pound eventually settled on for the ubiquitous fringe radiating from such a center, an intelligibility innate to circumstance, like a song's aptness to a particular shift in the seasons. But even if all the inevitable complications James' novels show to arise from the encounter between worlds didn't present enough of an obstacle to the marriage of true minds, James' initial perception also, as Pound put it, "came 30 years before Armageddon" (297). The first war put an end to James'

particular version of mutual understanding. Nevertheless, before the first war it was still possible to imagine that America might be saved from crass commercialism and utilitarianism through its encounter with the psychic residue of pre-capitalist society. Such intimations of a 'civilized America' seem fatefully to infuse Adam Verver's early Keatsian vision of his daughter's marriage to the Prince.

While Pound's coherent idea seemed to many a dead letter, or worse, by the time of his incarceration in St. Elizabeth's in the late 1940's, the principle of encounter from which the idea arose, of culture *as* encounter, was in another sense just gaining traction. In the last chapter I argued that what *The Cantos* work most essentially to locate and transmit is a mode of intelligibility, a sensibility or *anschauung*. Within European culture, Pound identifies this mode of intelligibility variously with Richard of St. Victor's category of *contemplatio*, with the Dantescan hermeneutic category of the "anagogic," and with what Pound in his essays on Guido Cavalcanti calls "natural demonstration." We could define this sensibility as "qualitative knowledge," a capacity to discern intelligently the appropriate distinctions within a range of phenomena in advance of concepts. Of course, "sensate cognition" is a definition of aesthetic judgment at least as old as Baumgarten's 18th century aesthetic theories. What made *The Cantos* avant-garde, though, and what the work inherits from the epochal shift that first produced Cubism and, later, dada, surrealism and eventually the post-modern crisis of art, was its effort to step out of the so-called 'aesthetic' frame altogether. *The Cantos* seek to become not an artwork but a repository of *kulchur*, which Pound tells us is distinct from knowledge in that it begins when one has "forgotten what book" (*Guide to Kulchur* 134). This view informs Pound's quasi-dialectical account in *Guide to Kulchur* of the three "moments" of the modernist renovation of culture: "the nineteen teens… and the next phase, the 1920's, the sorting out, the *rappel a l'ordre,* and thirdly the new synthesis, the totalitarian" (95). This "synthesis" obviously contains two tendencies, call them the experimental and the recuperative, that sit in an uneasy relationship with one another.

As in the split between the Dada group and the Surrealists that Pound's anecdote of the 1921 trial of Barres recounts, the avant-gardist breaking of the frame of art (i.e. Cubism to Dada) in turn motivated the view that the social order might be made over according to what had first appeared as semblance (*Schein*) in the artwork (i.e. 1920's movements variously toward surrealism, neoclassicism, constructivism, etc). Out of this shift from form to culture comes Pound's "totalitarian" premise that "the aim of technique is that it establish the totality of the whole. The total significance of the whole" (90). "Whole" now means social life rather than the whole of the artwork *qua* object of leisured consumption. Technique was to "*establish the total significance*" of a mode of life that the technique anticipated, rather than *representing* that life. The shape of that whole, of course, varies, as we see for instance in the political divergences between Breton and Cocteau. Nevertheless, the essential kernel, for present purposes, remains the principle whereby Pound in 1938 would adduce the following "localizations of sensibility": "vide *Blast*. Vide the 1917 productions of "dada," vide the publications by Picabia from N.York of that time or about that time. Form sense of 1910 to 1914" (134). Even if, for Pound in 1938, one culmination of that form sense could be seen in the fact that "15 or so years later Lewis discovered Hitler," the modernist vanguard equation [form>dada/culture>totality] remained a trajectory with uncertain final destinations (134).

Starting around 1948, one can trace the efflorescence of a sensibility within American culture that accords with Pound's formulation of the relationship between technique and whole, even as it follows a rather different trajectory from its European counterpart. Here my aim is to present as accurately as possible my sense of what that

transformation was, rather than exhaustively account for its historical implications. The challenge to accuracy lies in the fact that the "content" of the sensibility whose expression I wish to follow is neither determinate nor indeterminate but is a distinct mode of intelligibility within a distinct mode of experience. This intelligibility involves a kind of precision that acts in advance of either determination or systematization, and with which one loses contact the moment one tries to bring it within the ambit of system and determination. It can be located and communicated through technique, but cannot be defined, which was why it necessitated new forms of shared life within which it might flourish. So to say that open-form poetic technique or alternative educational curricula or intermedia art all became occasions within which to encounter this content or sensibility in postwar America is not to say that what I am aiming to present here is an account of the postwar countercultural landscape, though that is in part what this chapter concerns itself with. And to say that the concept of expressive force can provide literary study with a heuristic precept with which to attend to how a given analytic object's manner of appearance provides the conditions of visibility for this content is emphatically not the same as saying that expressive force is what this content "is."

In the interest of avoiding any such essentializing, this chapter will treat this content as both dispersed throughout a diverse array of occasions and as a principle that is active by virtue of this very dispersion. Hence the failure of attempts to fix it in concepts, which slide off of it like water from a duck's back. So rather than treat Charles Olson's "Projective Verse" as the fixed document of postwar inheritances from the Pound and Williams line for which it has canonically come to be regarded, I will instead disperse the insights of "Projective Verse" back into the epistolary exchanges between Olson and Robert Creeley. Following the exchanges out of which the final "tenets" of projective poetics emerged, I aim to recover and convey something of the dawning sense of a possible relationship to life that was beginning to circulate between them. Similarly, I will treat the emergence of what would come to be known as the "mimeo revolution" in the productions of Cid Corman's seminal literary magazine *Origin* and the efforts at educational reform seen in the final phase of Black Mountain College as corollary expressions of the same process of cultural production developing within Olson and Creeley's exchanges. Lastly, I will explore the correspondences between Robert Duncan's formal use the Neoplatonic myth of Cupid and Psyche in the context of his larger exploration of a poetics of participation in *The H.D. Book*, the development of intermedia art and happenings, and the significance of Marshall McLuhan's overarching thesis that the postwar development of the new society of electronic media signaled an historical return to "acoustic space," as facets of a broader historical constellation that becomes intelligible as part of this same movement from form to collectivity. The aim in examining each of these instances will be to make visible the relationship between the compositional act as technique and the conditions of intelligibility that characterize the emergent sensibility, the plasticity or commutable character of technique, and the corresponding usefulness, capacity and adaptability of these modes of practice in orienting social life. The sequence for each of the following sections is poetics, education, and culture.

*The Base Pattern*

The point seems to be that form was made the important thing for the so-called Black Mountain poets because only thereby could it be made completely unimportant in favor of something else, something we simply have no other means of approaching concretely. Form, in other words, is categorically useful as a counterpart to technique, but

technique opens beyond the aesthetic domain to encompass a broader *modus vivendi* and that *modus* in turn realizes a world. That Olson saw this potential is shown primarily in his grasp of the historical significance of the preceding generation's achievements—not only those of Pound and Williams, but also of Lawrence and others—as signaling a shift in the practical concomitants of knowledge, rather than merely the content of knowledge or the character of art. Marjorie Perloff in 1973 sought "to reconsider, as objectively as possible, the nature of the argument presented in "Projective Verse" (286-287) and found in its "doctrine" merely a hoard of prior ideas and sentiments siphoned off from Pound and Williams. Indeed, Williams had presented his lecture, "A Poem as a Field of Action," itself arguably a reworking of essentially Poundian tenets within a more self-consciously American idiom, in 1948, two years prior to both the first publication of "Projective Verse" (which Williams would generously if ambiguously include in his own autobiography) in *New York Poetry* and to the beginning of Olson's correspondence with Creeley. Much of "Projective Verse" could easily be regarded as a rehash of Williams' ideas in that lecture, whose central claim essentially boils down to the principle of variable or relative measure within the poetic 'foot' as being commensurate with a broader episteme (e.g. physical objectivity redefined following general relativity) of relative measure. When Williams writes, "the clearness we must have is the first clarity of knowing what we are doing—what we may do: Make Anew—a reexamination of the means—on a fresh—basis," the statement seems as much to point back to the early imagist manifestos as it anticipates the seemingly exact same points laid out in "Projective Verse."

When asked about the "doctrine" of projective poetics in a 1995 interview, however, Creeley off-handedly averred that such a premise was beside the point:

> [Interviewer]: Just to loop back a second to the notion of poetics and prescription. When I read Olson's essay on projective verse, it seems to me that he's primarily trying to work things out for himself and not to be prescriptive to others. Although of course it had a terrific influence…
>
> Creeley: Oh, but that was not his intent, literally.
>
> [I]: There was an interview I read later on, where Olson is looking back and saying 'You know, there was never any "poetics" – "prescriptive poetics" – if you look at Creeley, if you look at Dorn, if you look at me, Olson, there's no similarity in terms of technique'
>
> Creeley: There's no similarity. No, we're not a team. The 'I' was not autobiographical. It was not an attempt to enclose. I remember Irving Layton, actually, when he and Charles finally met, he apparently said to Charles, 'Well, I didn't think that what you were doing had much to do with projective verse.' And Charles said, 'I wrote that one day, Irving, and the next day I wrote something else!' Come on, you know…[xlv]

Olson himself qualifies his ironic declaration "So, there we are, fast, there's the dogma" with the "excuse" of "its usableness, in practice," a distinction left out at times from both anthologists' placement of "Projective Verse" in a central position in the postwar canon and latter revisionist efforts at unseating its privileged position (*Collected Prose* 240-41). Perloff usefully demonstrated that reading "Projective Verse" for an original doctrine of poetics will

only leave one disappointed. What interests me here, though, is the premise that this very *lack* of new doctrine might itself indicate Olson's perception of a shift within culture that *is* distinctly new, a shift whose very novelty makes it that much more difficult to see if one relies on the terms of the old cultural regime where doctrine is itself a central component.

What is different about "Projective Verse" in other words, is that its lack of difference at the level of conceptual content indexes, whether deliberately or not, an historical difference in the status of content as such. "New content" of the kind "Projective Verse" does not provide—a determinate structure of ideas and precepts—is the demand of a cultural regime whose end Olson is primarily concerned with. The shift seen in "Projective Verse"'s redundancy as doctrine provides us with a primary motivation *not* to treat Olson's work (whether in verse, prose, lecture or conversation) as theory, though the atheoretical nature of Olson's thought and work is inseparable from the repositioning of knowledge relative to experience that is most radical within it. As much as Olson may have admired and learned from, say, Alfred North Whitehead, his own verbal acts depended on a basic categorical difference from the speculative workings of Whitehead's system. Olson's insight was to have recognized that the primary significance of the first half of the century, both in terms of the developments within the field of art and in terms of the geopolitical situation, was its break with the rational thought-habits shaped by centuries of literacy, and to have begun developing a method specifically addressed to a non-information-based intelligence. This is not at all the same as saying that Olson's work seeks to *represent* or *performatively express* affective or non-conceptual experience. The most significant challenge to assessing Olson's work resides in finding the conditions of receptivity that its non-rational register requires, though adequate preliminary attention to the Poundian tradition that constitutes Olson's main precedent goes a long way toward laying that groundwork. Taking his lead from Pound, though modifying Pound's project in significant ways, ideas for Olson became means to gain traction toward modes of 'seeing' rather than labels through which to structure the world taxonomically or to cognitively map the world. This seeing occurs in a continuous present tense, as opposed to the static, 'replayable' temporal frame that semanticized concepts both afford and depend on. The distinction here is slippery, and is brought out best with examples. Accordingly, this chapter will make methodological efforts to grasp these ideas in as close to real time as possible.

Creeley had been the first to tell Olson, by way of Vincent Ferrini, that he lacked a language of his own. Responding to this slight in the first letter to Creeley, Olson wrote: "I says, creeley, you're / off your trolley: a man / god damn well has to come up with his own lang., syntax and song both, / but also each poem under hand has its own language, which is a variant of / same (THIS IS THE BATTLE: i wish very much, creeley, I had now to / send you what PNY publishes summer issue, PROjective Verse / vs. the NON-projective, the argument pitches here / (I've / dubbed the alternative to composing by inherited forms / "composition by field – it needs more examination than I give / it, in that kick-off piece))" (*Letters* 19). The crucial moment, for us, in this reply is "*each* poem *under hand* has its own language, *which is variant of same*." "Each… under hand" invites us to dial our attentions toward the emergent first-personal present tense in which the reception of speech takes place, what William James might call the 'specious present,' (though the second half of the phrase ("its own language") immediately warns us away from the attempt to establish any such equivalence between terms). This signaling has two consequences. First, the emergent present tense of "each under hand" is something we should concern ourselves with primarily insofar as it pertains to the activity of the language in question. In other words, we are not interested in universalizing "each under hand" into a determinate and commutable

theoretical concept beyond speech's own immediate operation. That is the method of the old regime. The point here is simply to be with each under hand. Second, attempts to take this language out of its condition "under hand," say by establishing equivalences between the language under hand and other philosophical systems that *aren't* in the mode under hand, interrupt the experiential register in which the language has its appropriate ("its own") mode of activity. This point needs to be borne in mind once one attempts to sort out the relationship between Olson's own work and his many 'reading lists.' Lastly, just as the enjambment at "which is a variant of / same" at once disrupts the unfolding of statement while enunciatively charging "same" with an idiosyncrasy that incorporates that word's particular mode of significance into the single field informing "each" and "own," the compositional principle that brings speech out of the register of reference or exposition and into the condition of its own continuous 'under hand-ness' serves to locate the possibility of an intersubjectively 'common' recognition within that very same idiosyncratic condition by establishing inclusivity as an essential attribute of that condition.

The language of Creeley's response to Olson three days later suggests just such a common recognition: "Dear Olsen (sic), Have your poems *at hand*. These are too much—unlike what I had seen; forgive, etc." (italics added, 20). Tracking that recognition as it moves through details like shared idiomatic usages is my central interest here, because its iterations would come to provide the fabric for a broader sociocultural formation that would continue to develop over the next two decades. The poems to which Creeley refers are those of *y & x*, which Olson had sent along with the previously quoted letter; the primary object of Creeley's praise is "La Préface," the first in the series:

> The dead in via
>
> In vita nuova
>
> In the way
>
> You shall lament who know they are as tender as the horse is.
>
> You, do not speak who do not know. (*Collected Poetry* 46)

Ralph Maud has explored the profound impact on Olson, both generally and in the specific composition of this accompanying poem, of Corrado Cagli's drawings, made at Buchenwald while accompanying the Allied forces (Maud 79). While Creeley may not have been cognizant of all of Olson's historical allusions at the time of his letter, he nevertheless appreciated the central facet of the poem's engagement with the question of life and death. That engagement hinges in part on the way the punning of "via" becomes the semantic counterpart to the lines' repurposing of sense into something 'under hand,' i.e. 'via' meaning 'by means of,' and the historical heft that this repurposing takes on. "Via," echoed again in the gestural and deictic communication the speaker recalls sharing with the Italian, monoglot Cagli—"he talked, via stones a stick sea rock a hand of earth"—serves as a pivot around which two different historical regimes turn. What we might call the 'historical condition proper,' the time of the extant historical archive, lies "in the way" of any possible present life, even as it also resides "in the way" people are habituated to live. The "dead," both the actual casualties of war, the full scope of whose presence Cagli's Buchenwald drawings can only vaguely intimate, and the living dead trapped within an ossified culture, show both why this broader historical condition must be thought of as death and why this condition necessitates the poem's own call for a paradigm shift.

Obviously, these are portentous ideas, but I want merely to note the historical scope behind what Olson is attempting in "La Préface" for the moment without getting stuck on

it. Creeley's response is not first and foremost to the poem's *ideas* but to the *mode of intelligibility* it enacts:

> What can I say: I take you to put down here movement beyond what the Dr., Stevens, etc., have made for us. Wonderful things.
>
> Have taken the liberty of making a short note on these things for the magazine; together with one on Crews who is dead, somewhat, in the head, but no matter. It's yourself I'm concerned with. Because of space, etc., not much chance to say more than LOOK AT THIS, but that's part of it. For the note: quote some of La Preface & The Green Man. Now, I wd take parts of The Moebius Strip to be it, but again I take La Preface to show something the deadheads never thought of, and/or, the 'simple' condensation of WHAT'S HAPPENED. And/or 'not only "comment" but container.' The compression, without DISTORTION, in this thing: too much. And through all of this, you make your own rhythms, language, always the POEM. With all the deadwood around, & all the would-be 'form,' etc., I take these things as coming head-on.
>
> Thinking of Stevens, who slipped into PR, with this: 'Poetic form in its proper sense is a question of what appears within the poem itself… By appearance within the poem itself one means the things created and existing there…' Basic. Like they won't see it, that it cannot be a box or a bag or what you will. (*Letters* 22)

Creeley's cribbing the definition of form from Stevens, rather than Pound or Williams, is instructive: form is not a question of superficial differences in lineation or stanzaic patterning but of what appears *within* and *by virtue of* the enactment of technique in the moment of production or reception. Thus the real substance of the letters between Olson and Creeley pertains to their mutual acknowledgment of "what appears" and its importance, as well as the obstacles to its communicability.

That "what appears" is non-perceptible and accordingly not amenable to direct description, though the communication between Creeley and Olson here shows its communicability by indirect means. For this reason, Creeley's comments on form in Olson's poems turn almost seamlessly toward the question of education:

> A suggestion. We plan an open forum on American Universities, etc. To be, in point of fact, on *methods* of blocking what few IDEAS this country possesses, etc. False representation: beginning with when the prof said, no that is not so, etc. etc. You must SEE it THUS, etc. etc. A matter of life *in* death, if you will. (22)

Education quickly and inevitably comes to the forefront of the conversation precisely because it is the conditions of intelligibility, and not primarily the beliefs or attitudes or concepts deployed against the background of those conditions, that are finally in question. This distinction, between pith (condition) and window dressing (resultant function), becomes the decisive matter informing both the process of education and the forms of culture arising from the different conditions of intelligibility. Education seen in this way is

simply the development of the ability to locate and inhabit the conditions of intelligibility that will allow one to distinguish between what is actually showing up in any given situation and what is merely a readymade category that one is superimposing on the circumstance. The exchange is itself already an educational process insofar as Creeley, far from performing a public self to anyone, is actively engaged in these letters in a developing intersubjective acknowledgment of the importance of this way of seeing. When Olson responds from Black Mountain, North Carolina about 10 days later, writing, "it did startle me, you speak of education, & plan to speak up: nothing could be truer, when poets are the only pedagogues," the final quotable clause should not be seen as placing primary emphasis on the cultural identity or sociological prestige of the poets but on the relationship between technique and education thus redefined (23). This is why Olson follows up with the assertion, "USE, it is the use they make of us" (23).

As we've seen from Olson's presentation of the 'dogma' of projective verse, the notion of 'use' becomes a kind of watchword across many of these exchanges, from Olson's opening referral from Williams ("my dear robert creeley: / so Bill W too sez, write creeley, he / has ideas and wants to USE 'em") in his first letter to Creeley. Appreciating this foregrounding of use in the particular sense with which the term comes to circulate proves crucial to recognizing the relationship between the intelligibility whose counterpart is form and the claims for a paradigmatic shift in culture that will develop out of the work of individuals at Black Mountain. "Use" signals, not merely the act of writing poems in a certain style, but the functional interdependency of linguistic media with their practical situation in finding the means to "push meaning into such as are so used" (2.15). Use, in other words, frames meaning as it occurs in the character of expressive force, as intelligibility defined as the aptness to purpose of a mode of appearance. As is usually the case, Creeley provides the clearest formulation. In his review of *y & x*, he writes: "the line is used to make the ground logic beyond the single senses of the words. The poem can't be understood, lacking a comprehension of the work the line is doing here. What it means to do, then, is give the base pattern which pulls the poem's juxtaposition of act and thing to a common center where the reader can get to bedrock" (*Collected Essays* 98).

The particular semantic sense of "use" itself, then, depends on one's having actually perceived "the work the line is doing" to invest the semantic dimension of particular words with a context-dependent valence within an emergent event. This informing milieu thereby provides one with the encountered instance of 'use' in just this precise sense, as distinct from use as simply the writing of irregularly lineated "free-verse" poems. Conversely, one could ostensibly be "using" the ideas of Williams or Pound in the latter sense of writing unsuccessful poems that only superficially resemble either poet's manner of lineation, without at the same time successfully 'using' technique, as Creeley variously puts it, to "make a ground logic" or "give the base pattern" that will "pull… the poem… to a common center." The distinction in question is therefore outside of any semantic and semiotic register one might attempt to apply to it as a hermeneutic because it depends on one's having already seen directly the relational integrity that idiosyncratically invests the semantic dimension of words. Without this non-conceptual seeing, one will fundamentally lack the competence to assess the senses of terms like "use." And yet, as is clear from Creeley and Olson's circulation of the term "use" in this specific sense, it is intersubjectively intelligible and can therefore be 'taught' and communicated. A telephone can be *functioning* as a paperweight, but I properly *use* it when I pick it up and speak through it to another person.

Conversely, though it was in a critical sense Pound who first located the technique in use, in another important sense Pound's ideas were not being taken up and put to use.

When he is not an explicit object of discussion, Pound is a constant background presence to many of Creeley and Olson's early exchanges. Creeley had been engaged in an ongoing correspondence with Pound after having initially solicited him for contributions to a literary magazine, while Olson's visitations to St. Elizabeth's from 1944 to 1946 had ended with partial disillusionment, some of which Olson expressed by deliberately allowing Pound to persist in the false belief that he (Olson), though Swedish, was of Semitic descent. The response to one of Pound's letters that Creeley relays to Olson is illustrative:

> Abt programs, etc: wd take yr notes as basic, etc. BUT wd not have my own attitude confused with the alternative— 2. The point: what good is a declaration of policy: if that policy is no more than a declaration, etc. Given: a 'policy' is what wd determine the selection of material: if no material can be taken as an instance of the policy other than in a most oblique way: of what USE is the policy, etc., but to prove us duds and sloganeers. I have noted the difficulty (extreme) of finding material to concur with the limited program you suggest: that difficulty is still the same, and I see no immediate chance of its getting 'solved,' etc. (33)

The distinction between policy and program here is in many ways a version of the distinction between doctrine and use that informs the status of "Projective Verse." Pound's various solicitations and exhortations, from St. Elizabeth's, to groups and individuals ranging from John Kasper to Langston Hughes, are a notorious if thorny episode of his history. What remains relatively uncontroversial is the zeal with which Pound continued to pursue his efforts at cultural renovation, whose major phase began in 1920s Paris, however one conceives of that effort. Creeley rejects the policy advanced by Pound because of the irrelevance or non-pertinence of 'policy,' *qua* statement, to the method on which any such program had been regarded as basing itself.

Pound's prior advice to Creeley about starting a magazine consists in a reading list (Confucius, Aristotle, Agassiz, Del Mar), a series of anecdotes (e.g. Orage's willingness to publish Pound's screeds in the *New Age* but resistance to any constructive work), and general precepts (e.g. necessity of willingness to accept financial loss on productions of any substance, "COIN is the antithesis BOTH of NUMISMATIC NUM and moneta," etc.). Pound makes the initial distinction between program and policy in his advocacy for the latter, in contradistinction to program defined as itinerary, catalogue of events or schedule:

> taking program in different senses
> program, programmatic, declaration of policy. 1.
> program, as concert program, itemized. 2.
>
> as 1. You have a program as soon as you state.
>
> We resent the falsification of history.
> We do not want any contributors who do not resent it.
> …
> …a program (sense 1.) is a core about which/not a box inside which every item.[xlvi]

Creeley's counter to Pound's sense of program as policy depends on his understanding of use, as he trims Pound's initial statements to their discernible pith:

> Take it this way:
>
> 1. We resent the falsification of history.
>    We resent the misrepresentation of thought.
>    We resent the misuse of ideas.
>
> 2. We do not want any contributors who do nor resent it.
>    We do not want any contributors who do not resent it.
>    We do not want any contributors who do not resent it.
>
> I.e., it can certainly be said: better. (*Letters* 33)

The point, as the redundancy of the repeated second declarations of policy show, is that Pound is being verbally wasteful, inconsistent with his own principles of economy. Taking Pound on his own terms, Creeley then cites, by way of contrast, Pound's precepts from the 1912 imagist manifesto; he argues that, by contrast, the nature of those statements had been

> Exact, pointed, no fuzz, applicable. I take it: what a program should hit: NOT somebody else's 'method' (*the falsification of history:* real: but that which must be got to by way of a counter-method); not a prescription that those not sympathizing will not be tolerated (this wd follow like the night the day, etc.): BUT a statement of direction, of concern (BEYOND resentment), of method; which can attack, by its nature, this falsification; and which can get beyond it to something to [be] made USE of, directly. (34)

Creeley is out-Pounding Pound in this response, but his critique goes beyond anything *ad hominem*, or even ideological to the extent that it concerns what *precedes* thought's status as such, to become at once an act of fidelity to a broader cultural project within modernist practice and a repudiation of its distortion through misapplication. The primary form of misapplication, as we have seen, is the division of statement from use, in which the means of approach becomes policy when a hypostatized abstract declaration begins to determine the selection of materials irrespectively of whether or not they rightly pertain the particular exigencies of a given situation. As Creeley would put it in a letter to Olson, "EP: wants a union before those involved have centered themselves. & this is dangerous. I can't go with it" (64).

Pound's final definition of program in the quoted passage, on the other hand, carries two important implications for the American reception of his work among the postwar poets and audiences. First, "a core about which/ not a box within which" articulates the basis of culture at large according to the same principle of intelligibility that motivates the formal composition of an aesthetic object. This is another way of unpacking the significance of *paideuma*. 'Program,' whether 'policy' or not, explicitly refers to the renovation of "American culture" as a whole, where culture refers to what we might call the underlying pre-epistemic conditions of an historically specific social group. Second, even though both Creeley and Olson distance their understanding of program from Pound's notion of policy, Creeley's own critique of policy is fundamentally in accord with Pound's final definition of

program insofar as the 'selection of material,' both within a journal and within a poem, which Creeley cites as decisive in his rejection of policy, is motivated in all cases according to the principle Pound characterizes as a 'core about which.' Olson, for instance, writes back to Creeley on May 16th, regarding the editorial selection of the magazine, "Also, that you put a core in and shoot at it / Also, "nothing a final block." / Also, no long range view (this leads to world saving)" (28). This figure of the core or center also frequently turns up in reference to the act of composition, for instance Creeley:

> We have so fucked up the sense of 'form' that all that comes into it suffers as well/ or in this case the above two words [i.e. "INformal" and "FORMal"]. And since things are what they are, etc. for the time, take it: form is the outline of the imagination/ on what it takes to hand. I don't know that I can take it: as Informal/ or take that, rather, as the basis for an effort/ in poetry, etc. You know enough about what I wd say: to judge that this has nothing to do with an approval of your own insistence/ or the Projective Verse. The 'formal' has killed what the head: might get into: in that it has only put into menial/ enclosed work/ what it sd have been determining, ONLY, as an extension of its center: in any given work. (63)

Note Creeley's appeal to Olson's ability to discern his position ("you know enough about what I wd say") in the absence of any determinate propositions (i.e. "this has nothing do to with an approval...") but based rather on the former's adequate reception of the latter's sensibility from prior correspondence and sharing of work. This appeal, then, follows from the same principle of core or center the extension of which Creeley here claims a poem effectively is.

Before saying anything else about that center, it would be helpful to look at a couple of poems in order to provide more concrete examples that will help flesh out a sense of what is being talked about in these letters. The first is the title poem from Creeley's first volume, *Le Fou:*

> Who plots, then, the lines
> Talking, taking, always the beat from
> The breath
> (moving slowly at first
> the breath
> which is slow—
> I mean, graces come slowly,
> It is that way.
>
> So slowly (they are waving
> We are moving
> Away from (the trees
> The usual (go by
> Which is slower than this, is
> (we are moving!
> goodbye (*For Love* 17)

The poem's opening phrase, "who plots, then," both rhetorically and prosodically displaces semantic or conceptual agency from the self-consciousness of the speaker in a manner similar to the opening of Cavalcanti's "Donna Mi Pregha," in which the speaker, prompted by the lady's inquiry into the nature of Love, finds himself speaking "in season" with the arrangement of circumstance she has initiated. In terms of its grammatical function, the caesural "then" retroactively implies both a prior prompt to which the thought that initiates the poem finds itself responding, and an act of discernment *within* that anterior prompt that motivates the shape of speech issuing in the locution "who plots" (i.e. 'such and such being the case, who then plots?'). What this initial displacement of enunciative authority does at the most basic level is to throw into question the status of reference, such that we see the lines' perpetuation or dilation of the emergence of semantic sense in the punning duplicity of terms throughout the poem. The meaning of "then," for instance, is quasi-syllogistic but temporal (i.e. 'at that point'); "lines" describes spatial locations (of the trees, for instance) but also kinetic vectors of movement and lines of verse. Similarly, "the breath" indexes the formulation that Olson (to whom the poem is dedicated) advances in "Projective Verse," "the HEART, by way of the BREATH, to the LINE," thus attributing the source of breath to the physiology of the poet or speaker, even as the use of the definite article ("the") rather than a possessive pronoun indexes the afflatus of Love expressed in Dante's lines, "I am one who, when Love breathes / in me, takes note; what he, within, dictates, / I, in that way, without, would speak and shape." (495).

Enunciatively, though, "then" also pulls the attention into present tense insofar as its temporal punning coincides with, and is informed by, the first of many caesural pauses in the poem that work to inflect the tensions and momentum of cadence. This present tense alters the status of what might otherwise be thought of as ambiguity, uncertainty, or rhetorical indeterminacy toward the singular and unequivocal, just as the plotting of the lines comes to 'take' a singular "*the* beat" from the singular "*the* breath" in the second line. The fourth line then trades on the reference that has not yet been semantically established but has been configured or invoked according to how the attention is disposed, as what Creeley in his review of *y & x* called a "base pattern," in the line "(moving slowly at first," which draws its sense of reference (i.e. *what* is moving?) from the retardant effect of the accumulating caesurae on the prosodic "beat." The open parenthesis, a fixture of Olson's poetry, had been used in "*La Préface*" in part as an historical marker signaling the paradigm shift between historical regimes ("read it thus (  )1910(  ") (*Collected Poetry* 47). In that poem, the open parenthesis signaled a break with the closed-parenthesis condition of post-socratic civilization, in which "the dead bury the dead / and it is not very interesting." Here, similarly, the open parentheticals function to mark a kind of aside that in turn signals a modulation in communicative registers corresponding to what must ultimately be thought of as paradigms of consciousness. The open parenthesis, in other words, marks out a space of use radically distinct from the space of doctrine and policy. More concretely, the purported object of the reference to a slow development in "moving slowly at first" hovers between the actual sonorous movement of the poem and the movement of that which becomes discernible by means of, but beyond merely, that sonority. This is why we get the shuffling of the referents of movement played upon in the next few lines: first, the already ambiguous "the breath," then "graces," and finally the singular "It." Enunciation comes to locate a situation for the intelligence in which the adverbial and denotative can momentarily coincide, so that "It is that way" 'means' (and 'is') at once "it is like that" and "that is what it is."

This knotting of the adverbial and the denotative at the grammatical level, in the line "it is that way," seems also to coincide with a shift from that line's foregrounding of the

semantic in relation to the intoned, as "way," which predicates an object, in turn initiates the sonic patterning of the final lines that we see in "waving" and "away." Moving in consonance with the torque of this shift from meaning to sound at "way," the kinetic significances of "waving" and "away" come to register expressively the effects of the referential gap that the final lines straddle both between represented subject ("we") and object ("the trees") and between the grammatical subject of speed and slowness. Velocity, then, becomes a figural measure of the impact of use on the emergence of the semantic. The disjuncture between and continuous reframing of mimetic objects both shapes and registers the simultaneous presence and mutual exclusivity of speed and slowness in the lines that follow. "(*they* are waving" wants to follow grammatically from "*graces* come slowly," but is re-qualified as "(the *trees*," just as "away from" wants to attach itself syntactically to those trees even as this sense is usurped by "the usual." The movement *of* reading the lines and the movement read mimetically *in* the lines have disjunctive velocities, one is "slower than" the other, but the very friction of these two temporalities *is itself* a third kind of movement. One would be tempted, in that case, to say "this" refers to just that third kind of movement, just as one would be tempted to identify "this" with "it" in the central line of the poem, if we did not also see that the "usual"—what we can cognitively name and recognize—from which we are moving away, is "slower than this."

The open-endedness of the poem's initial uncertainty as to the agent of composition and the discrepancies of speed with which the final lines conclude work equally to describe what we might think of as different points on the circumference surrounding the core or center with which Creeley and Olson's letters are concerned. The difference between circumference and center, of which force acts as the metric, could then be formulated as the distance between where one *thinks* one is at any given moment and where one *actually is*. Olson's early "antey-dantey" production, "In Cold Hell, In Thicket," frames this center and periphery relationship as being decisive of nothing less than the celestial and infernal cosmologies once mapped by *il Maestro*:

> ya selva oscura, but hell now
> is not exterior, is not to be got out of, is
> the cost of your own self, the beasts
> emblazoned on you. And who
> can turn this total thing, invert
> and let the ragged sleeves be seen
> by any bitch or common character? Who
> can endure where it is, where the beasts are met
> where yourslf is, your beloved is, where she
> who is separate from you, is not separate, is not
> goddess, is, as your core, is
> the making of one hell
>
> where she moves off, where she is
> no longer arch
>
> (*Collected Poems* 155)

However much issue one might take with Olson's use of gendered figures to illustrate the the relationship between center and periphery here, and there is plenty of issue one might take, the 'cost of your own self' in whose discovery the pacing of these lines invite us to participate necessarily precedes any question of extant cultural norms (of gender or

otherwise) for the same reason that the "usual" moved "slower than this" in "Le Fou." Just as hell is not exterior, the 'self' that these lines might seem to essentialize as a (male-gendered) 'core' does not reside in a fixed place from which it issues pronouncements. Rather, the figure of center illustrates that the self cannot be thought in isolation from its ongoing process of grappling with the event of its own localization.

Thus the punning near-rhyme of "*selva* oscura," Dante's dark forest of the *Inferno* as existential condition of reprobate selfhood, with "your own *self*, the beasts / emblazoned on you" points to a 'position' within the finding of one's own phenomenological bearings at any given moment ("where it is") as the only possible site at which any question of the world in which one lives can be hammered out. Here as elsewhere, the pauses effected by Olson's lineation work like a kind of reset button, continuously collapsing the ventures of thought back into the square one of their practical point of departure. Notice for instance how the enjambments work to break the pacing of lines particularly around interrogative pronouns and adverbs ("who / can," "met / where yourslf is," "where she / who is separate") so that figurations of place and personae continuously fall into the present event as inflections giving distinct tonality to the cognitive act as it takes shape. This present-event builds across the stanza, dissolving what begin as gendered figurations into inflection, and then from inflection into event, so that "she / who is separate from you, is not separate, is not / goddess, is, as your core, is / …" The muse-figure loses 'her' objectified figural status as the accumulating momentum of event, foregrounded through the tightening effect of the three caesural pauses in the penultimate line, affords an approach to the literal-ness of the copulative "is" at the location shared with the gender-neutral "your core." With that final "is," though, the movement necessarily must give way to further change, in which "she moves off," because the "where" at which 'you' and 'she' might meet exists prior to any place one might take up as an object of reference.

Giving descriptive shape to a poem's modalities is one thing, but both of these works additionally highlight what in the heuristic of a 'center' proved such a necessary corrective to American culture for both Creeley and Olson. The *sine qua non* of each poem is the discovery that one *can* in fact plot the lines and find one's bearings in hell. Put differently, what one discovers in finding a way to access such a center is a condition of the mind that sees totally and instantaneously what the cognitive self-consciousness can, of necessity, only grasp and treat fragmentarily and sequentially. This is what Creeley alludes to when he describes the way in which conceptions of form aid or hinder "what the head: can get into" (63). In order for the line to be perpetuated in such a way that its enunciative positioning will be in accord with the movement towards integrity for which the concept of form serves as a placeholder, and in order that the semantics of the line will continue to act as supports for the second-order conceptual discernment of this movement toward integrity, without at the same time supplanting the leading position in which speech (as use) finds itself relative to statement, the mind must see the *whole* of that integrity at any given moment of second-order decision even though it is not yet actually present to the self-consciousness.

The center is the principle of integrity organizing the poem as a whole, but such a principle cannot be the result of any ratiocinative calculation because calculation can only move *from* premises *to* results. Premises are by definition anterior conceptual positions held in the memory, the fixation of which, for purposes of mental reasoning, practically removes one from the volitional present in which the integrity of relations can be discerned. Just as "who plots, then," is *already* both result (as discernment) and premise (as act), each subsequent moment of the poem equally fulfills, if it is successful, the prompts arising from a compositional act that has no other model for what it does than what it is doing at that

moment. Those prompts are experienced as propensities of force. And the propensities of force, moreover, can be thought of as the phenomenological counterpart of the ratio between habit and experiential present in the activity of living, as the becoming-transparent of one's own schematization of lived experience *to* that same lived experience. In Creeley's pneumatic figure, as in Dante's, the prompts are "the breath" from which talking takes the beat. In what has preceded, I have suggested numerous precedents for this kind of activity: Kant's account of reflective judgment's discernment of the 'clearly manifest nexus of things' in teleological judgments, the micro-adjustment of speech in the river-crossing of the Pawnee, Picasso's juxtaposition of mutually activating and cancelling illusionistic devices in analytic Cubism, and the relationship between volitional bearing and the pitch of definition in the ideogrammic media of Pound's translation of the Confucian *Ta Hio*.

The final precedent warrants a brief further comment before returning to Creeley and Olson's letters. 20th century Neo-Confucian philosopher Mou Zongsan distinguished in his 1978 lectures between what he called "analytic" and "non-analytic discourse." By 'analytic,' Zongsan refers to the term *fenbio shuo*, "differentiating, discriminating, or discursive discourse," which he identifies with the tradition of discursive rationality extending from Plato through then-contemporaneous Anglo-American analytic philosophers (*Nineteen Lectures* 360). Analytic discourse, for Zongsan, also includes all properly metaphysical thought, both Asian and European, so the distinction between analytic and non-analytic thought does not necessarily fall out according to any straightforward binaries of historical formation (premodern/modern), region (Asia/Europe) or between traditional and critical thought. Zongsan, for instance, identifies analytic thought with both Kantian critical philosophy and large sections of Confucian and Buddhist thought. Non-analytic thought, in Zongsan's account a "concept which has not been considered by the West," is frequently underdeveloped in Western contexts where it is placed under the rubric of "mysticism" and left there to languish (360). Conversely, even though Daoism at times engages with questions of practical know-how rather than with epistemological "what" questions, in these instances as well, Zongsan claims, it is still employing analytic discourse. As Zongsan puts it, "whenever a doctrine is enunciated, analytic discourse is used" (372). One example of non-analytic discourse that Zongsan puts forth in order to clarify the difference is that of Lu Xiangshan who, despite being generally a Confucian, which is itself an analytic discourse, nevertheless engaged in the non-analytic mode in his engagement with the thought of Mencius.

Zongsan locates Xiangshan's deployment of the non-analytic mode in his use of Mencius' thought in order to "turn around Zhu Zi's branching off" (376) from the central thread of Mencian thought (376). This branching off—the term derives from the Chinese *zhili*, which etymologically suggests "departure from a trunk" (376)—Zongsan characterizes as "setting up another kitchen" (378). Zongsan remarks that, whereas ordinarily the notion of continuing another individual's thought entails continuing it in the analytic mode, developing or expanding upon it, the problem with *zhili* is not its innovation but its redundancy. Redundancy in this sense refers to the character of the new discourse that lacks a firm basis in the fundamentals of its presumed topic, the tradition out of which it develops. In establishing a new interpretation on misrecognized grounds, it becomes "merely tongue chewing, superfluous" (377). The difference between Zhu Zi's branching off and the proper reception of Mencius consisted for Xiangshan in the matter of '"Seeing Dao' [or not] 'Seeing Dao"' (375). Zhu Zi, though "eloquent and… abstruse… failed to see Dao" in Zongsan's account because even though he was skilled in subtleties of analytic argument, he lacked a first-hand understanding of the autonomy of will that proved central to grasping the

Mencian doctrines of "original mind" and the goodness of human nature (376-377). Such an understanding, Zongsan claims, cannot be approached by discursive means but only through the "moral practice" or "cultivation of, and discipline in, simplicity" (378). For this reason, Xianshan would frequently take the non-analytic approach in his debates with Zhu Zi, relying on a style of "peremptory rebuke" similar to a "sudden whack on the head" which lead Zhu Zi to accuse him of practicing Chan (Zen), in order to "turn around the orientation of Master Zhu's thought" (379). Because the right understanding of Mencius depended on seeing Dao, and because seeing Dao was a matter of the disposition of will rather than reasoning,

> Master Zhu's annotations were completely beside the point. Those annotations had to be relinquished. We had to bring ourselves back to our own mind and nature and talk about the *Analects* and *Mencius* existentially. Then we would naturally see Dao. (380)

It is perhaps worth noting here that the title of Lao Tzu's famous work *Tao Te Ching* translates as 'the book of the way (Dao) and its force (Te).' Examples of this kind are perhaps difficult for us to read with a straight face because we're buried under decades of Orientalist cultural stereotyping that have served to trivialize anything that strikes our ear as being remotely akin to new age 'eastern thought.' Nevertheless, the example serves both to illustrate the distinction between modes and conditions of intelligibility, and to suggest that the extreme disproportion of one particular mode (Zongsan's analytic discourse) within contemporary intellectual life in America is less a matter of the inevitable triumph of epistemic culture than it is of historically and socially contingent habits of action and will. These habits, moreover, are the very substance of culture.

Pound saw in Confucianism precisely this corrective to the analytic drift towards the predominance of calculation in western culture, which is why Confucius and Mencius were as important to his efforts at reform as state-ownership of the credit supply. The computational models of consciousness that increasingly shape our information-based society operate from the internalization of analytic discourse and the subsequent assumption that mind operates solely according to the functions of calculative thought. Olson and Creeley's correspondence is motivated by the insight that poetry itself constitutes a kind of pedagogy because in the process of producing, exchanging, and reading each other's poems, and of discussing their formulations of the operation of poetry, they were distinguishing the operation of what Zongsan would have called a non-analytic modality of mind. Creeley's term for this, to which Olson quickly caught on and incorporated into his revisions of "Projective Verse," is "the single intelligence." Creeley's first use of the term occurs in his discussion of prose in a letter written to Olson on May 28, 1950. In that letter, Creeley writes, "Ez was not looking for the main thing in prose: or reach, centered in ONE intelligence/ which can dominate, by grip & a weird sort of vicarious living, an ENTIRE area right down to the little weeds in the garden" (56). Creeley's own experiments with "ever deeper/firmer grips on content" in prose fiction during this time, of which his Guggenheim application probably stands as the fullest exposition, consisted mostly in his efforts to make the diegesis of the story wholly transparent (the "weird sort of vicarious living" he describes in his letter) to a newly conspicuous temporal present of the narrating consciousness (59).

This present-tense of narration, of the narrat*ing* consciousness as opposed to a reified narrat*or*, is the site of what Creeley calls "grip on content." The crucial point is that "grip,"

paradoxically, consists in self-consciousness' capacity to get out of the way of whatever is taking place in the present tense. As previously described, this self-elision is effected through the autotelism that one's engagement with the medium affords. "Singleness," in this sense, refers not to circumscribed identity but to unbroken continuity: parts do not 'follow from,' as do parts of an argument, but correspond, in the sense of 'extending directly from' or 'adhering to,' participating in the single intelligence through a weird sort of vicarious living. Olson in his letter of response makes explicit the connection between Creeley's prose efforts and the form of pedagogy thus afforded through poetics: "when poets are / once more moralists and pedagogues from which they will inevitably, / become narrators ) // Offered up, to you, who seek, "ways," in prose: the SINGLE INTELLIGENCE is, the documentor, now?" (60). Inevitable, because narration, pedagogy and morality here are not first and foremost social roles of individuals tasked with expositing doctrine, nor functions of discourse, but rather activities arising spontaneously from the disposition of the single intelligence accessed in practice. Lu Xiangshan's pedagogy of Zhu Zi consists merely in the *reorientation* of thought, relative to will, in which seeing Dao consists, and the operation Olson implies here is fundamentally identical.

The single intelligence, if it is not already obvious, is the "content" of Creeley's famous formulation "form is never more than the extension of content," the first instance of which turns up in a letter shortly following Creeley's coinage of the term single intelligence. The difficulty of understanding the object of Creeley's idiosyncratic use of the term "content" and the ease with which the term can be misread to mean what we usually mean by content in relation to form, i.e. semantic or referential content, necessitate extreme care in distinguishing accurate from inaccurate use of terms. The important thing to remember is that this whole tradition stems from the avant-gardist break with mimetic representation, so "content" in the traditional sense of ideas, statements, drama or diegesis is in some sense off the table. "Content" in Creeley's fiction is *the position from which* the narrator enunciates and not *what* s/he describes. Olson in "Projective Verse" famously hazards the formulation that the single intelligence is born from the union of the syllable and the line:

> Let me put it badly. The two halves are:
> the HEAD, by way of the EAR, to the SYLLABLE
> the HEART, by way of the BREATH, to the LINE (*Collected Prose* 242)

As is the case with much of "Projective Verse," this formula easy to take the wrong way if read in isolation from the broader context of exchanges about the practice of composition that I have been trying to reconstruct. The easiest misreading would take it as a formula for the poem as a kind of Romantic expressivist object, where the poet gives voice to his thoughts and emotions through the formal gestures of the poem. Certainly the image of the heart flowing into the breath and shaping the line would tempt such a reading. But the directionality implied by the grammar here formulates *use* in composition; it does not describe what the poem does in terms of audience reception. The vectors "by way of" and "to the line" work similarly to Creeley's "what the head: can get into" to articulate the way "in" to the compositional act, not the way "out" from the psyche to the poem as product. That compositional act is a non-analytic method for reorienting thought's relation to will rather than thought's descriptive or discursive act. The impetus behind Olson's formulation, to put it differently, is not "what is the recipe for making a poem," but rather "what are the preliminary conditions that will prove conducive to the mode of seeing out of which a poem

results." So mediation here is not a problem; in fact, it's the whole point: the question is what manner of mediation will reorient thought's relation to will.

Composition becomes necessary as practice because, as self-consciousness, one is always starting out from a place of mediation. Thus "the HEAD, by way of the EAR, to the SYLLABLE" models the process by which what we call the 'higher-level' mental functions of conceptual mind can be brought into accord with the anterior forms of preconceptual intentionality. Olson claims that the syllable effects this reorientation because of the proximity, indeed near identity, of reception and schematic construction within sound perception: "I say the syllable, king, and that it is spontaneous, this way: the ear, the ear which has collected, which has listened, the ear, which is so close to the mind that it is the mind's, that it has the mind's speed… / it is close, another way: the mind is the brother to this sister and is, because it is so close, is the drying force, the incest, the sharpener…" (242). Olson's incest metaphor, of a perverse union which proves transgressive in bringing together things which should not be brought together because of their already sharing a common source, figures schematization's usurpation of sense experience in reinscribing that experience within a preexisting habit of response. An aural perception is already this incestuous union of mind and senses insofar as it is schematized, it is the product of mind's 'drying force,' but it is just this closeness or adhesion of mind to sense that makes the syllable, as something articulated to the intellect but situated within the present tense, a possible site for thought's reorientation. On other hand, this reorientation cannot occur without the additional influence of breath as that which impinges on and inverts the order of primacy within the state of affairs already characterized by the ear's incestuous, schematizing relationship with the mind. As we saw in Olson's use of line breaks in "In Cold Hell, In Thicket" to continuously reset the movement of semantics away from its position within the present-tense of enunciation, breath in this sense makes visible both the constitutive function of the will with respect to possible experience and, consequently, the will's irreducible contact with the present-tense of the real.

Olson's statement that the single intelligence is "born" of syllable and line ("And together, these two, the syllable *and* the line, they make a poem, they make that thing, the—what shall we call it, the Boss of all, the "Single Intelligence"" (242). ought similarly to be read as a phenomenological description of composition rather than a poetics of sub-genre or a means of framing for the audience the proper reception of the poet's expressive voicings. By the poet's placing herself in relation to the dual situation of syllable and line, the continuity of seeing automatically arises from the reorientation such placement effects. Olson's hedging and qualification around just this term should give us pause as well: "they make a poem, they make that thing, the—what shall we call it." Moments like these, to return to the question of Olson's novelty, are the marks of a sensibility apprehending 'something' that the forms of reference and analysis characteristic of the literate mind, in its advance through the production of new doctrine, cannot access. The forms of systematized exposition that produce new conceptual structures depend, in other words, upon one's division from present-tense condition of intelligibility in which "that thing, the—what shall we call it" is made clear. Another early poem of Creeley's might help to illustrate this:

THE RIDDLE

What it is, the literal size
incorporates.
The question

is a mute question.  One is
too lonely, one wants
to stop there, at the edge of

conception.  The woman

imperative, the man
lost in stern
thought:

Give it form certainly,
The name and titles.  (*For Love* 21)

The Socratic method usually begins with some version of the question "what is… (justice, love, etc.)?"  Any possible answer is necessarily a speech act insofar as the query has interpellated it as such.  So the act of speaking must elaborate, and here definition takes place in time, as the internal slant rhyme with "is" at "literal s*ize*" reinforces the prosodic echo of "whát it ís" with which "líteral síze" rhythmically suggests a unitary substrate as object for "it." But just as the extra-syllable in "literal" temporally expands upon the size of that substrate, with the long vowel of "s*i*ze" effecting a similar expansion from "*i*s," the echo generates the grounds for identity claims only by introducing a new practical state of affairs into the ongoing project of seeking those claims.  The temporal dimension of this elaboration of "what it is" inverts the frame in which definition operates even as it provides the verbal substance of definition.  "Incorporates," in other words, shows how the literalness of size includes, as from an outside, what it is, even as it embodies it with the perceived corporeal shape that would provide any basis for its identity.  Because "size" serves in part to figure a temporal prosodic relationship, that outside is the 'other' instant against which each moment of thought articulates itself.  So at any point of arrival, one is only at the rim of "it."  Accordingly, the verb "incorporates" completes the grammatical sense of "the literal size," which the pause at the line break in the first line had left suspended proleptically as a parallel appositional clause refining the definition of "what it is," by repurposing that sense so that it now takes "what it is" as its direct object.

Much of the literal size of effect in the poem comes from the way the staggered pacing of caesura and enjambment continuously displace thought's presumed orientation, the sense of import that contours the environment in which thought has a particular semantic shape.  That environment constitutes the "question" to which any thought is the answer, and this question accordingly cannot itself be thought because thought is always its negative image.  It shows up instead as the force of inflection motivating thought.  The thought, "the question / which is a mute question," extends from the situation  (the *mute* question) that the verb "incorporates" introduced into thought's ongoing venture, which is why "the question" is at once apposite to "it" in the first clause and, as the ambivalence of the dropped line suggests, a separate thought responding to the question prior to the first clause's answer, "what it is" (i.e. the question "what is it?").  As though responding to the objection that the question must be one of these two things, the presumed orientation of "one" in "one is / too lonely" is numerical, following on the singular "it" in whose question we have been entangled.  Again, this orientation is an effect of the way "one" is made to attach both phrasally and syntactically to the redoubled "mute question" in the first clause of the same line, pausing there before it grammatically fulfills its sense at "too lonely."  But with

"too lonely" we again experience a reorientation similar to "incorporates," as the sonic pun of "*too*" and etymological pun of "*lonely*" transforms the numeric value defining the ontological singularity of thought's object into a condition of the subject, so that "one" becomes "someone" or "I." The condition of willing and desiring motivates the question of what it is, and one "wants / to stop there, at the edge of / conception" from and at which one might hold both what one holds and one's own act of holding, the "what" of thought's object and the question motivating the thought, as though this was a single place around which the movements of thought continuously circled.

A place but also a moment: the precise moment at which orientation enters into thought so that use becomes meaning or "conception," the same moment at which "incorporates" makes the "literal size" take a direct object and at which "one" shifts from number to person. But to say "a moment" deictically, as if what is unbrokenly continuous were discrete, is as figurative as calling a moment a place, so "conception" again shifts into a new mode of figuration, anticipating the inseminative conceit that "the woman / imperative" takes up. The woman figure, "imperative" in that she is both (physiologically) crucial to the event of conception and in that she is (figuratively) the import of which thought is the expression, remains separate from the man who is "lost in stern / thought" for the same reason that the question remains mute. The actual thought when it happens is belated, and one would need to have known that the woman is imperative *before* the line break in order for the man not to be already "lost in stern / thought," wide of the edge of conception. And yet that thought also extends speech-as-use in its very occurrence, so that it can be said to "give it form certainly." Noticing the distinction between the proper nomination of the singular "name" and the relative superfluity of various "titles," one might then wonder, "what, then, *is it* that is given form?" One's only recourse then would be to reread the poem from the beginning, just as the Sphinx's riddle compelled Oedipus to reconsider his origins, in the hopes of coming to see it given form, certainly.

For Olson and Creeley to have issued explicit programmatic statements of a 'new poetics' would not have been an advancement into novelty but a regression from what was genuinely new at their moment. Obviously, from one perspective "Projective Verse" is just such a programmatic statement, but such a reading is primarily a retroactive reframing of the essay as a result of the text's subsequent canonization within anthologies, the archives of literary and liter*ate* culture. I have been suggesting here that "Projective Verse" functions as a document, not of a new body of thought, but of a new placement of thought according to the mind's discernment of force within the arrangement of circumstance. Getting that distinction to stick, rather than simply reading "new placement" as synonymous with "new corpus," or perhaps "new corpus that says 'new placement'," is the real challenge to critical methodology, because the distinction remains *behind* statements and not *in* them. My aim in this chapter is in part to make that distinction vivid by showing what flowed from it. Olson and Creeley were, each in his own way, among of the first of a new generation of artists who accurately *saw* the new world to which a primary strain of modernism, from Picasso and Kandinsky through Duchamp and Tzara to Pound and Williams, had broken through. They were among the first to begin building a culture within that world, rather than setting up a new kitchen of "whats" on the rubble of the old world.

The new world, in other words, was a culture arising out of the "content" of the non-representational single intelligence, rather than the discursive, representational, conceptual content of the analytic culture whose dominant model of subject-object relations had been shaped through and through by the communication technologies on which its claims and modes of understanding depended. The difference between these two orders

simply cannot be approached through sociological means, but only becomes concretely visible in accordance with one's own capacity to be receptive to that to which technique gives form, because the very tools of sociological analysis are inherently situated in the modus of the analytic culture that produced them. Creeley and Olson's pragmatics of use, seen both in the poems themselves and in the distinct register in which perspectives come to be communicated in their letters, anticipated a culture in the modes of sociality that their process of perpetuating the coincidence of plural vantage points worked to effect. If two people, in other words, can develop means of arriving at congruent ways of seeing, then, at least in principle, two million can as well. This is but a different way of saying "poets are the only pedagogues." The project, as the 50's progressed, was simply to continue the extension that was already underway in the letters. Its two primary branches were *Origin* and Black Mountain College.

*Centering*

Thought is always finding itself in the midst of a situation, as we saw in "The Riddle." This was also John Dewey's claim in his 1930 essay, "Qualitative Thought." Dewey defined a situation as being "the fact that the subject-matter ultimately referred to in existential propositions is a complex existence that is held together, in spite of its internal complexity, by the fact that it is dominated and characterized throughout by a single quality" (180). The discrete objects on which logic goes to work are selected from the complex whole of which they are a part with specific respect to their relation to this situation "which is constituted by a pervasive and internally integrating quality" (180). Dewey's notion of pervasive quality is similar to what Alfred North Whitehead in *Modes of Thought* calls "importance." [Indeed it is not far from what I have been calling 'force.'] Though "felt," it is not properly speaking a feeling, because, as Dewey points out, "the existence of unifying qualitativeness in the subject matter defines the meaning of "feeling" (182), and not the other way around. In other words, the pervasive quality of a situation precedes and enables the distribution of functions that would constitute it as affect or feeling. Dewey felt that situation's impact on thought made philosophy's coming to grasp this qualitative whole an indispensible task.

Dewey offers the example of predication to illustrate situation's impact on the basic operations of thought. Taken merely in its propositional form, predication threatens to devolve into either tautology or the arbitrariness of opinion. If sweetness only serves to qualify the substance sugar, the statement "sugar is sweet" merely analytically re-describes sugar, adding nothing thereby to our understanding. If the statement is not conceived analytically, predication lacks any logically necessary grounds and becomes subjective opinion. On the other hand, if one takes into account the background of situation with its qualitative unity, predication can be explained as being simply reflection's articulation of the unarticulated whole that precedes cognition. Taken in this way, the relation of subject to predicate works to break up the qualitative whole of situation into component parts, which then have determinate relations according to their position within that whole. The copula, "is," then has the logical force of "something like a division of labor, and… marks the function or work done by the structures that exhibit the division of labor" (188). Dewey offers similar examples of the influence that pervasive quality has on processes of association and assimilation, arguing consequently that it acts as the "regulative principle of all thinking" (198).

If situation's anteriority to thought placed it outside of thought's purview, Dewey argued, one could nonetheless find models of practice exemplary of "the control of selection of detail and of mode of relation, or integration, by a qualitative whole" (186). One such instance is the context of aesthetic composition. Dewey argues that, in composition, "the underlying quality demands certain distinctions, and the degree in which the demand is met confers upon the work of art that necessary or inevitable character which is its mark" (186). Science and mathematics likewise provided similar instances in which "the more formal [the work] becomes, the more it is controlled by sensitiveness to a special kind of qualitative consideration" (187). By Dewey's own admission, though, these examples only served only as prompts soliciting one's direct, practical access to circumstances in which the qualitative pervasion would be directly perceived as a decisive factor in the execution of an action:

> The foregoing remarks are intended to suggest the significance to be attached to the term "qualitative thought." But as statements they are propositions and hence symbolic. Their meaning can be apprehended only by going beyond them, by using them as clues to call up qualitative situations. When an experience of the latter is had and they are relived, the realities corresponding to the propositions laid down may be had. (187)

Education for Dewey had to become situational because problems in knowledge stemmed from the insufficient appreciation of the relationship between means and knowing that is patent in the interdependence of situation and thought. The appearance/reality split, for instance, that posed such a challenge to the vexed question of how the deliverances of science could be made to square with the ends of human value, occurred only if the epistemic object of the sciences was not adequately seen to be the "function of inquiry" (*Experience and Nature* 139) that it was in actual practices of knowledge production.

This observation that the split between appearance and essence followed from the impact of inquiry shifted the rivalry between *objects* of knowledge to that between two different *orders of knowing* arising from practice: "one sensible, the other rational" (*Experience and Nature* 139). But that rivalry between the two worldviews was itself a product of the same conflation of modern and traditional methodological framings that informed each worldview individually: one method proceeding by way of hypothesis and induced experimental verification and another relying upon extant, static models for its object. Both idealism and realism, in other words, are unwitting syntheses of traditional thought's hypostatization of a fixed object of contemplation with experimental thought's instrumental inquiry into process. Dewey felt that to grasp this relationship adequately, and thereby avoid such a splitting of worldviews, was to redefine thought as "existentially an adjective (or better an adverb), not a noun… [but a] disposition of activity" (*Experience and Nature* 158). Educational process had then to become a matter, not of retaining facts and procedures, but of placement within those dynamic situations that would provide the "sum total of conditions which are concerned in the activity characteristic of the living being" (*Education and Democracy* 22).

Dewey had chaired a conference on liberal arts curricula at Rollins College in 1931, two years before John Andrew Rice, who attended the conference as observing faculty, was dismissed from Rollins in the events that would precipitate the founding of Black Mountain College in Asheland, North Carolina. Dewey would eventually make three visits to Black Mountain, the first in the winter of 1935, and serve for a time as an advisory board member.[xlvii] At the risk of implying a homogeneity of pedagogical approaches in the early

years of Black Mountain, it is difficult to overstate the influence of Dewey's ideas on the educational philosophy that Rice, Ted Dreier and others sought to implement in the founding of the college in the 1930s. Dewey's influence probably matched only by the classroom techniques that Josef and Anni Albers brought over from the Bauhaus. This was the tradition that Olson explained he saw himself as recapturing when he wrote to Martin Duberman in 1967, declaring that the Black Mountain starting under his rectorship in 1951 constituted a return to the "core of the old apple… what Rice said, in the 1st catalog, was to be her aim—that the arts shall share the center of the curriculum with the more usual studies" (334).[xlviii] It is important to hear the resonance in Olson's post-Poundian "*core* of the old apple" and "*center* of the curriculum" with the Deweyan-cum-Ricean heritage of pedagogical situations. The pedagogical program that grew out of Creeley and Olson's poetics of use shared with the Deweyan pragmatism that in large part underwrote Rice's founding of Black Mountain the view that knowledge atrophies when the intelligence is divorced from its practical interaction with the world.

Even though Duberman demurred from a more straightforwardly ringing endorsement of Olson's characterization—though his response seems motivated as much by the observed discrepancies in historical fact as it does in his need to resist Olson's rather Ricean overbearing charisma—he would nevertheless offer a kind of endorsement of Olson's equation of the school's initial and final phases: "Yes, sort of" (334). Duberman's initial caution in his recounting of the final years of Black Mountain arose, by his own admission, less from a skepticism that there was in fact a coherent narrative to be developed than from his sense that the method of the "Narrative-Analytic Historian… doesn't suit the mood or tone of the 'new' (the LAST) Black Mountain" (335). Narrative continuity of the kind Olson's formulation suggests obscured for Duberman a different kind of relation. Though Rice and Olson were similar in respective approaches to the organization of the college around the educational principle of individual contact with dynamic situations, "Rice didn't want to build [an institution]; Olson, inheriting one, dismantled it, sold it off in bits so that something else, not 'it,' might live" (334). For Duberman this meant that while the 'new' Black Mountain's dismantling of the inherited structure of the school "struck… at some of the cohesion that came from common experience," it also lead to a greater diversity of individualized approaches and productions as a result (335). Whether this diversity undermined Olson's aspiration to the development of a "program" or whether it freed that program from the tendency, which Duberman's account shows to have arisen again and again in the power struggles and personality clashes defining the college from the beginning, to consolidate the usefulness of program into the uniformity of a late-Poundian 'policy,' is probably more than one individual or group can determine.

Just as the significance of "Projective Verse" comes into much fuller relief when read in tandem with the circulation of principles explored in Creeley's and Olson's letters, the cultural project that Olson would pursue across *The Maximus Poems* and however many essays, discussions, lectures, bibliographies and other verbal manifestations he produced throughout the 1950s took as its animating context and condition the dynamic situation. In fact, the project itself could be said to be simply the redefinition of knowledge as the production of a set of materials that properly place one, to an ever greater degree, in a direct encounter with the situation of one's own life, rather than a set of materials designed to administer to one's manipulation of her life situation at a remove. The *paideumic* idea was a major precedent for Olson's undertaking, because in Pound's somewhat Confucian version of Frobenius's *paideuma*, a culture's entire materials are reoriented around the same mode of intellection that had, at an earlier historical moment, discerned expressive force in the

formally articulated appearance of an art object. The hinge of learning, *paideuma* or pedagogy, was this distinctive mode of intellection, taken as the discernment of force within the conjunction of particulars by means of one's volitional bearing. But whereas Pound's *paideuma* sought directly to implement a variety of political and social instruments—the 'guild structure' of corporatism, the national dividend, self-depreciating currency, Confucian ethical cultivation and linguistic practices—to produce a just social order, Olson's project began with his departure from direct political engagement. Robert Von Hallberg argued persuasively in his seminal study of Olson that the project starting in the 1950's was "not just political or economic but above all cultural" (21). And while *The Cantos*' sought to preserve and transmit a civilization (whether European, revolutionary American, or Confucian Chinese) that was historical by definition, Olson's project deployed the techniques of Pound and Williams within what he saw as a radically new, and discontinuous, historical dispensation that had developed in part through the interventions of Pound's generation.

The historical rupture that Olson felt defined the time of his activity is absolutely crucial to framing the status of his work, because that work always addresses itself to the historically discontinuous condition of life that Olson saw as following from the first half of the century. 'Historical discontinuity' here means that one is living in a kind of continuous present and that one's phenomenological placement within this present shapes the modality of thought. Allen Ginsberg remarked to Tom Clark in a 1966 interview, "Olson was saying 'I am one with my skin." It seemed to me at the time… that everybody had been precipitated back into their bodies at the same time. It seemed that that's what Creeley had been talking about all along. The place—the terminology he used—the place we are. Meaning this place, here. And trying to like be real in the real place…to be aware of the place where he is" (*Spontaneous Mind* 49). This implies less an ahistorical 'presentism' than a historicity of the present beyond any particular social group's monolithic historical duration, a sense of time that Walter Benjamin once called 'messianic.' Access to that temporal present is what the work is about, the self-consciousness of the producer serving as a conduit *to* that present rather than a subject-position located *at* that present. As we shall see, redefining history itself as the moment in which one finds oneself constituted a major facet of Olson's undertaking.

At the most basic level, this means that Olson's works always presuppose that this present-tense temporality is shared with their audience. So recordings of lectures ask to be read (or heard) as just that: lectures-*qua*-events, and seminars ask to be taken as dynamic pedagogical situations that shape the presentation of ideas occurring within that context. In short, just as Pound's *paideuma* followed from what his 1923 review of Brancusi described as the principle of 'no ideas that are separable from the form,' Olson's *paideuma* enacted the principle, 'no ideas that are separable from the situation.' Attaching the fitness of one's discernment of force as the principle of intelligibility to her placement within a situation, rather than her membership in a *volk*, became the means of decoupling the *paideumic* idea from the dangerously racializing and nationalizing essentialism found in Frobenius' notion of *kulchurmorphologie* and Pound's own idiosyncratic account of European civilization. This is why Olson is never trying to produce theory: because here the concept leverages one's access to the situation, in which the utterance itself is included, rather than the inverse where utterance serves as a means to provide the concept that in turn provides leverage (whether practical or speculative) on the situation. When Michael Kindellan, for instance, argues, "to read a poem, as Olson makes clear at the outset of his Beloit lectures, is to *tell* a kind of truth (communicate information)," the conflation that occurs between the parenthetical and non-parenthetical portions of the statement (i.e. a conflation of pedagogical speech with the

conveyance of *information*) risks missing entirely what is at work, and at stake, in Olson's methodology (89).

Take Olson's essay "The Gate and the Center." The ideas of this essay are animated in part by the situation of their initial appearance in the first issue of *Origin* in April, 1951, a few months prior to his return, from Lerma, to Black Mountain that summer, after which time he would begin his post as rector of the college. Duberman characterizes Olson during this time as constantly talking "against anything that wasn't 'for use, *now!*" (*Black Mountain: An Experiment in Community* 335). So, then, we can frame the essay's opening gambit: "What I am kicking around is the notion: that KNOWLEDGE either goes for the CENTER or it's inevitably a State Whore—which American and Western education generally is, has been, since it's beginning. (I am flatly taking Socrates as the progenitor, his methodology still the RULE: "I'll stick my logic up, and classify, boy, classify you right out of existence" (*Collected Prose* 168). That "kicking around" is as key as the hypothesis that follows because it implies the open-ended, experimental context within which the ideas are presented (the phrasing was in fact directly lifted from a previous letter to Creeley).

At the time of "The Gate and Center"'s publication in *Origin*, the magazine, as Alan Golding put it, "had virtually no competition as a durable little magazine receptive to experimental work" (692). The publication of *Origin* itself was regarded as a being a part of the inauguration of an essentially new culture within American letters. So *Origin*'s publication, Olson's move to Black Mountain that summer, and the content of "The Gate and the Center" all move as individual plots on a single itinerary of this push of knowledge towards the center. Understanding the 'meaning' of the phrase "push of knowledge towards the center," in other words, requires taking all these facets in concert. In one respect, we've already gotten some handle on what is meant by 'center' from the poems and the letters; in another respect, it is with this move in 1951 that the full import of the term's use comes to the forefront. The "idea" Olson had been kicking around was that western history from Socrates until the 20th century constituted the long hiatus of another order of historical experience based on situated intelligence. This idea was presented, in conversation with an audience of peers (Corman, Ferrini to whom a letter is addressed in the same issue, Creeley, etc.), as a kind of meta-historical frame for the method around which their conversations about poetics had already been developing. So there was already some precedent, informing the use of the term, for what "center" meant in this context that had developed first through the experience of producing and sharing poems.

The notion that the register of *Origin* is conversational rather than didactic might strike one as a paradigmatic case of "preaching to the converted," of the sloganeering of an in-crowd. But such an interpretation again rests on the assumption that the purpose of such a public action is to convey information. Propaganda specifically is information disseminated in order to influence opinion and mobilize collective action. In its basic premise, though, the push of knowledge towards the center moves specifically away from the regime in which knowledge gets coded as information and towards a pragmatics of knowledge as being at base a mode of relating directly with the event preceding one's emergence to self-consciousness. With this reorientation, the conditions of intelligibility shift fundamentally away from knowledge as semantic or semiotic. Olson could for this reason compliment Corman on his editorial acumen, disparaged at first by Creeley, in shifting *Origin*'s typography from standard to varitype as being "*better* (in the sense of the *speed* of it" and therefore exemplary of the very "insight /into… medium" that *Origin* professed as its aim (*The Gist of Origin* xxi-xxii). The point here is that the informational content of the journal would have been the same irrespective of type. Expressive effects of

the kind this detail provides, in other words, not in any psychological sense but in a Spinozan sense, act as the primary register for the communicability not of a body of information but of a sensibility or way of seeing. Taken in this way, the publication of *Origin* is *ipso facto* a situational thread in the shift of knowledge toward the center.

These are the kinds of distinctions that serve to frame Olson's rather wild speculative hypothesis according to which, broadly speaking, knowledge pre-Socrates had been oriented around a "will to cohere" to which the contemporary historical moment, having broken with Socratic culture, might return. Taking varitype as expressive in the manner of Olson and Corman involves a coincidence of present-tense perceptual experience with second-order intellection. In this context, 'doing it this way' works to 'get something across.' This coincidence of perception and intellection *is itself* the movement to center emblematic of the will to cohere. What "The Gate and the Center" kicks around is the notion that this kind of intelligibility explains a great deal of history prior to the development of logic and literacy and that this history, in turn, intimates a great deal of what might be possible in learning "the METHODOLOGY of its use by men from the man who is capable precisely of this, and only this kind of intent and attention" (8).

Taking the present tense as a preliminary condition, it then becomes possible to frame the other statements. Olson's historical hypothesis is that what gets lost in the turn to literacy and the logical regimentation of thought around the time of Plato is a certain practice of what we might call 'self-magnification' that extends from the principle of the single intelligence. This practice, Olson claims, provided the historical basis for the typology of the 'hero' around which past mythologies developed. We need to be clear about what is meant here, though, because this easily sounds like Olson is merely advocating a kind of megalomania. In fact, the exact opposite is the case, as the previous focus on the single intelligence can make clear, because ego-*qua*-thought in this case accomplishes this magnification through its own subordination to the present-tense of the given experiential situation. Miriam Nichols describes this principle at some length in her study *Radical Affections* (2010) in terms of what she calls the "poetics of the outside": a poetics oriented toward that which exceeds the self-consciousness but by which the self-consciousness is constituted in affective contact. Olson's sense of the will to cohere that in his view constituted the basis of pre-Socratic civilization can therefore be understood as hypothesizing an historical extension of Creeley's single intelligence beyond the frame of lyric or aesthetic form. The identity Olson saw between the two terms is explicit in their correspondence from as early as 1950. In a letter from which much of "The Gate and the Center" derives, Olson inquired:

> Wld you write me just how you understand yr phrase THE SINGLE INTELLIGENCE, as fully & precisely as you care to?
>
> I ask that, because I am interested to know how it bears on this concept of THE SINGLE CENTER which is developing underhand.
>
> I am led on to imagine that the turn of the flow of man's energy (I take it the turn came c. 1917 or thereabouts) is only the SECOND TIME it has ever happened—and thus all our measures had better be tossed overboard, if we are to participate & to project. (*Letters* 92)

The definitions Creeley offers in response—the principle of coherence within a plurality of particulars, "the 'is' of process," "the ability to cohere with a man, any," "the usable content of a man"—though primarily pertaining to how the single intelligence motivates the

compositional act, all accord with Olson's historical premise that the capacity to become transparent to the encompassing situation in which one finds oneself at any given moment constitutes the principle of integrity out of which the type of the hero and its attendant expressions within premodern mythologies and forms of social organization developed (99). Of course, just as Dewey says that the statements of "Qualitative Thought" would prove illegible without their being deployed in calling up directly experienced qualitative situations, we need first to have a clear *experiential* sense of what "form" in a poem means in order to project any frame for Creeley's definitions here. Heroism thus understood is simply the event of being with that which is developing underhand; the magnification towards the heroic just *is* anyone's own process of locating of the integrated continuity of mind within the single intelligence. Emphasizing Olson's inflection of this idea toward historical periodization in framing the single intelligence as a cultural center, Ralph Maud calls this premise the "archaic postmodern."

The major extant document of Olson's efforts while at Black Mountain to develop, not merely an arts-based curriculum, but a new form of qualitative knowledge that would prove congruent with the move to center, is the recording of Olson's seminar contained in the book *A Special View of History*. I will take Olson's attempt in this seminar to reconstitute history as a field of knowledge as an exemplary instance of his broader efforts at knowledge reform during the mid-50's. Miriam Nichols has done important work in establishing the correspondences between Olson's thought and the continental philosophical tradition of immanent monism stretching from Spinoza to Whitehead and, later, Deleuze. This treatment does much to recuperate Olson's thought in light of more recent continental theory. What I have been suggesting is equally needed for an accurate contemporary assessment of Olson's work, though, is a closer methodological attention to the specific temporal pragmatics with which he situates the activity of thought, and to the possible divergences that such an attention may introduce between what we might call 'theoretical discourse proper' and what Olson would eventually call *muthologos*. To attend to this distinction is to attend to what Olson means by *muthos*, which I will try on my part to follow by remembering that *A Special View of History* was never a uniform tract or systematic exposition of ideas but was reconstructed from his notes to a diverse "series of lectures, readings and discussions at Black Mountain in the spring and summer of 1956" (12). In other words, the contents that *A Special View of History* somewhat misleadingly presents as a unified corpus of ideas were always initially presented within an interactive, event-based context.

The relationship between Olson's understanding of *muthos* and his presentation of the term within a series of events at Black Mountain can be approached first by means of Olson's etymological reconstruction of *muthos* as translating to "mouth," "things said" or "things uttered by the mouth." This frames *muthos* in more or less diametrically opposed terms to Levi-Strauss' structuralist account of myth as a synchronic "bundle of relations" present within the *langue* ("The Structural Study of Myth" 431). Much closer is Benjamin's treatment of storytelling as a form of "experience that is passed on from mouth to mouth" (*Illuminations* 362). In his seminar, Olson draws upon Jane Harrison's account of myth in *Themis*, in which she defines myth as the counterpart to the ritualized *dromenon* or "things done": "it is the spoken correlative of the acted rite, the thing done; it is *to legomenonx* as contrasted with or rather related to *to dromenon*" (22). Saying-with-the-mouth provides the spoken counterpart to the milieu produced by ritualized forms of action. This distinction needs to be signaled because it frames *muthos*, unlike the literate modes of thought Olson calls "discourse," as entailing a receptive competence that is contingent on the "form of

human experience" (20) to which one gains access only through use or doing. Content needs to remain "in the mouth," so to speak, as part of the situation that Olson, quoting Aristotle, calls "the arrangement of incidents," to be intelligible at all (23).[xlix] That basic principle of use, the situatedness of *muthos*, Olson refers to as Harrison's "poetic" or "aesthetic" (23) of myth, but his seminar notes go on to claim that what is equally needed is a "syntax of [the] metaphysic" involved in this poetic of *muthos* as a mode of experience (23). Such a syntax, or anatomy of constituent parts, he sees as provided by Harrison's description of the 'blending' myth effects between the "natural" or historical and the "daimonic." Having introduced these two new terms into his cursory formulation of a syntax of *muthos*, Olson then concludes the lesson for the day by assigning to the seminarians for next time Paul Tillich's essay "The Demonic, A Contribution to the Interpretation of History" and Benjamin Whorf's "An American Indian Model of the Universe."

A student turning to her homework that evening might have noticed at that point how the connection between Olson's comments earlier in lecture and the content of the two assigned articles has to do with the way Tillich's "demonic" and Whorf's characterization of the Hopi experience of time serve to flesh out the terms comprising Olson's 'syntax of the metaphysic.' Tillich's and Whorf's articles respectively delineate, albeit in a dispersed form, myth's blending of the daimonic and the natural. First, Tillich's onto-theological and phenomenological concept of the demonic draws upon examples of what he characterizes as a kind of form-cancelling excess, visible within the artifacts documented by ethnographic studies of non-European cultures, in order to define this excess as the principle of the "pure existentiality of things" (Tillich 83).[l] Tillich describes the demonic as a "foundation and… suggestion by things of 'another thing,' which is still no other thing, but a depth in the things." This suggestion for Tillich "is not… discoverable by a rational process, but [is] a quality of things which reveals—or conceals—a view into its depths" (83). The demonic for Tillich defines an existential category of determinate objects, distinguishing an "inexhaustibility of being" that can be isolated in terms of its relative, and only relative, autonomy from the morphological "form of being" (84). For Tillich (and perhaps for Olson as well) the demonic's depth or inexhaustibility appears, when in its properly informing state of union with the morphology of beings, in the character of grace. When separated from this union with the form of being, as in Olson's reading of Ahab in *Call Me Ishmael*, the existential depth of being becomes properly demonic, or, when this separation is raised to the level of abstract determination, Satanic. The natural or historical in Whorf's account of the Hopi experience of time, on the other hand, pertains to that which "eventuates" or "manifests" as extant within the field of experience (Whorf 29). Whorf's central, contested claim is that the Hopi do not represent time according to a linear schema of past, present and future, but instead in terms of the interaction between two distinct fields: a virtual or futural field that impinges on the present by way of subjective intention and an actual and resultant field to which one is tied by means of sense experience. Objectivity, in Whorf's account of the Hopi *weltanschauung*, is the edge, or what he calls the "inceptive" dimension (which corresponds to a particular verb tense in Hopi language) where these two fields of the eventuat*ing* and eventuat*ed* meet one another.

One does not need to get lost in debates over existential theology or linguistic relativism to see that Olson's point in offering these two source texts as frames for the syntax of *muthos* is to articulate the two constituent facets of the milieu of mythic speech. On the one hand, *muthos* affords access to an encounter with the radical existential openness common to the basic situation informing both the utterance itself and the documented events with which that utterance deals; on the other, this access is the counterpart to the way

*muthos* makes salient the inceptive edge at which the potential and actual meet as objectivity, "nature," or "history." Olson probably admired Whorf's account of Hopi experience in part because of its resemblance to the Whiteheadian model of nature as the organ of novelty, which Olson's notes comprising *A Special View of History* break down according to Whitehead's terms the "Consequent as the relative of relatives" and the "Primordial –the absolute [or] prospective" (*A Special View of History* 16). However, we should not be misled by the intertexts here into regarding Olson's effort as being a theoretical exposition analogous to Whitehead's own speculative system. Olson's point of defining *muthos* in this way is not to describe an object but to point out a possible mode of experience, his pedagogy not exclusively concerned with history as the content of knowledge but with a way of seeing that acts as a precondition for knowledge thus reframed. As history, this seeing can then accommodate (at least in principle) as much of the whole field of antecedent events as one chooses to direct ones attention towards.[li] The syntax of *muthos* so defined is not a referent that is 'out there' but rather, as the section heading tells us, its "stance" (19). Simultaneously, though, *muthos* as stance *is* history itself, defined by Olson as "the practice of space in time" (27). That redefinition, such that stance and its object cease to be estranged from one another, is the basic epistemic labor undertaken in the seminar at Black Mountain. Only within the particular milieu of experience *muthos* affords is one in conscious contact with the occasion that Olson, following Whitehead, calls "the way the absolute energy asserts itself." (27):

> And my proposition is, that so far as man is concerned there is no continuum which exactly defines this fact of continuum except the concept word and experience, HISTORY. One could put it this way; history is the continuum which man is, and if a man does not live in the thought that he is a history, he is not capable of himself. He is missing as surely as nature would be if she didn't exercise herself in that which is the most apparent thing about her – that she is the motive of space-time and has her own depth, mass and infinitude by being the motive of the context of space-time itself. (28)

Because the model of history we have inherited as part and parcel of our way of thinking is defined precisely by its strict alterity to the first-personal experience of which we are composed as subjects, Olson's claim here might sound either incoherent or insane. A close look at "Letter 23" of *The Maximus Poems* may therefore help to further concretize Olson's efforts.

Drafted in late 1953 during the early phases of Olson's "New Sciences of Man" seminar at Black Mountain, Olson would later remark to Ann Charters that "Letter 23 Maximus broke" (11) the seminar from which *A Special View of History* eventually developed. Within the wider sequence of *The Maximus Poems*, "Letter 23" serves as a pivot back to the broader history of western settlement and colonization and away from the previous section's etiology of contemporary Gloucester's slide away from socially preservative modes of situated intellection under the corrosive effects of monopoly capitalism Olson calls 'pejorocracy.' The letter therefore serves to extend the continuum of acts of which Olson-as-Maximus is part from a contemporary present into broader historical time. *Muthos* in "Letter 23" consists in the dynamic effect of the poem's formal placement of historical documents contained in Frances Rose-Troup's 1930 account of the founding of the Cape Ann settlement between 1623 and 1624 with Olson's personal anecdote of writing to the

historian Frederick Merk in 1953 and quotations from Pindar and Plato culled from J.A.K. Thomson's 1935 work, *The Art of the Logos*. Folding Rose-Troup's account of the founding of Gloucester into Thomson's methodological reflections on the origins of western historiography, Olson generates an historical perspective answerable to fact without in the process submitting the historiographer to the epistemic determinism that discourse would claim as necessity. As a result, the status and content of history and of the historiographical method itself become mutually implicative, in consonance with the principle that history names the larger continuum or totality that any individual effectively is. Understanding how the reworking of empirical research Olson calls *'istorin* or 'finding out for oneself' comes to depend on *muthos* as a modality requires that we grasp the fundamental homology between the questions "what is 'Letter 23' doing?" and "What does 'Letter 23' discover the Cape Ann settlers to have been doing in 1623?" The stance that "Letter 23" occasions, a stance "at once commemorative, magical and prospective" (22), proves capable of disposing the documentary materials of Rose-Troup's account into an animated constellation through which their properly historical content becomes accessible to both the poet and the reader.

Even at the outset of "Letter 23," the homology is visible in the euphemistic salience taken on by particular terms within the documentary materials comprising Rose-Troup's account of the Cape Ann settlement. The letter offers up Rose-Troup's documents with the framing phrase "The facts are:," thus introducing as one facet of the historical locus proper what Olson in *A Special View of History* calls "the dimension of fact as the place of the cluster of belief" (21). The sequence of *The Maximus Poems* has already exerted a great deal of effort, however, in generating its own set of conditions for the reception of fact. Whereas within an earlier literary paradigm these conditions of reception would be thought of in terms of categories such as the artwork's "formal unity," Olson's long poem presupposes a subtle shift in the status of literary work itself, pithily summarized by Edward Dorn in his mimeographed 1960 pamphlet *What I See in the Maximus Poems* when he writes "it is the matrix which interests me rather than the metrics" (17). Behind Dorn's preference of matrix over metric is a categorical distinction between the work's integrity as consisting of a discrete formal structure or of an open-ended situation, a point Olson would reinforce in his letters, writing in 1957, "the advantages of a long poem, is like a *pot au feu*, it creates its own juice […] Or put it formally: the long poem creates its own situation" ("Notes and uncollected *Maximus* Materials" 61). Technique, in other words, addresses itself here not to the hermetically sealed closure of the monadic art-object but instead exemplifies a broader sensibility or mode of living that overflows the parameters of the artwork, illustrating the underlying practical conditions whereby the work is imbricated in a broader range of lived circumstances. This understanding of technique as oriented not towards the production of a singular "aesthetic" experience but addressed to mental faculties whose functioning is practically or 'dispositionally' mediated within the broader life situation can serve to account for the often-remarked (and misinterpreted) prosaic qualities of Olson's work.

The reader has therefore been initiated into the ways of seeing that attend the readerly situation of *Maximus* as a whole, the acknowledgement that song is not only a question of how "chant" parses the moment's coming into being but can also "lie in the thing itself," such that when we turn to Rose-Troup's documentary materials we can discern a daimonic additional element informing their terms:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st season | 1623/4 | one ship, the *Fellowship* 35 tons<br>with Edward Cribbe as master (? –cf.<br>below, 3rd season) |

left 14 men Cape Ann:

> John Tilly to oversee the fishing,
> Thomas Gardner the "planting" (meaning,
> the establishment, however much a bean row,
> and some Indian corn; much more salt,
> was the business.) The two of them
> "bosses", for a year (*The Maximus Poems* 103)

The ledger book style typography here imitating Rose-Troup's own use of primary documents sourced from public records, Olson injects a qualitative dimension into this spread of facts by troubling the document's basic terms. A wider set of qualitative distinctions lurks in the task of "planting" delegated to Gardner, here latent in the terminology of the public record, collapsing the poles of global ("establishment") and local ("however much a bean row") into their common root in practical know-how. It is this sense of delegated responsibilities within a common endeavor, and not primarily the legal and economic status of ownership, that qualifies Tilly and Gardner as "'bosses', for a year."

The different possible characterizations of historical events, and their ensuing forms of comprehension, signaled here in Olson's troubling of the nominative function of source documents, opens out from this initial instability of terms into what proves to be the central drama of "Letter 23." This drama concerns the 1624 confrontation between members of the Dorchester Company and the Plymouth Settlers over the rights, conferred on both parties by mutually exclusive patents issued by different agencies, to the use of a fishing stage at Cape Ann. Cary Grieve-Carlson has commented on Olson's understanding of the broader significance of this episode in terms of the historical struggle between independent production and trade, instantiated in the Dorchester Company's co-operative venture, and what Von Hallberg calls "parasitic absentee ownership" of the Plymouth group (60). Grieve-Carlson writes, "for most historians, the fight for the fishing stage is a very minor footnote in the history of New England; the real history happens in Plymouth and Boston… for Olson, both the fight and historians' dismissal of its significance are extremely important" (188). As Grieve-Carlson points out, the schism that forms episode's content and the episode's own contested historical status are mutually significant.

Beneath the physical altercation between the two parties are the discrepant accounts of the setting up of the fishing stage at Cape Ann that one finds in Rose-Troup's work, a discrepancy between ways of viewing events that has already been intimated in the instability of terms comprising the public record. Prior to "History is the Memory of Time"'s account of the actual confrontation at Stage Head, then, is "Letter 23"'s question of the method whereby historical events are established as such. As Miriam Nichols aptly puts it, "fact implies act" ("Myth and Document in Charles Olson's *Maximus Poems*" in Herd, ed. *Contemporary Olson* 29), and "Letter 23" seeks to retrieve an accurate view to the acts subtending historical fact. Both Nichols and Grieve-Carlson have analyzed the significance of "Letter 23" in terms of how Olson's methodological grasp of the stage head skirmish impacts the extant historical record of New England's settlement. Grieve-Carlson rightly argues that the Dorchester Company's engagement with the Plymouth settlers over stage head in 1625 "is a metonym within a larger struggle" between Edward Coke's "fight in Parliament against the mercantilist thinking that resulted in the granting of monopolistic royal patents" and the "tradition of 'individual adventurers' investing in the voyages of particular fishing boats, and 'the worker[s] of each boat receiving a 'share' of its profits'" (191).

But while Grieve-Carlson and Nichols both devote attention to Olson's fairly straightforward conviction that a reflexive methodology proves essential to an accurate grasp of the significance of these historical events, each emphasizes a different facet of Olson's methodology. Grieve-Carlson's reading is that '*istorin* or "finding out for oneself" is a matter of idiosyncratic perspective, arguing that Olsonian history is best thought of as the "act of inquiry" (190) seen in Olson's own autodidactic research into and relative weighing of lesser known historical accounts and documents, his refusal to accept at face value any monolithic account of historical process. Nichols primarily focuses on the interdependence of fact and myth in Olson's understanding of history, arguing that the historical record one receives always "segues into myth" by virtue of its irreducibly narrative framing. Nichols defines myth as "a picture of historical pictures, [that] records the desirousness of human enterprise, its affective engagements with nature and its common imaginaries" (31). Though each is accurate in its own way, the risk of both of these characterizations is in dissolving *muthos*' categorical distinctness from discourse, thereby reframing *muthos* as different from discourse merely in degree rather than in kind.

*Muthos*' distinctness from discourse stands or falls on the possibility of our apprehending its characteristic activity or function in the moment of its occurence without in the process assuming that its purpose is to advance an alternative *account* or *record* of history, however unique or particularized. This apprehension therefore rests on the clarity of the audience's reception of *muthos* as both a situated act and a phenomenological event. Having established the Plymouth Company's usurping presence aboard the *Charitie* as the "first surprise" to be found in the account of the Dorchester Company's settlement, "Letter 23" then shifts from the events of the narrative back to the event of its telling:

> What we have here—and literally in my own front yard, as I sd to Merk,
> asking him what delving, into "fishermans ffield" recent historians…
> not telling him it was a poem I was interested in, aware I'd scare him
> off, *muthologos* has lost such ground since Pindar
>
> > The odish man sd: "Poesy
> > steals away men's judgment
> > by her *muthoi*" (taking this crack
> > At Homer's sweet-versing)
> >
> > "and a blind heart
> > is most men's portion." Plato
> >
> > allowed this divisive
> > thought to stand, agreeing
> >
> > that *muthos*
> > is false. *Logos*
> > isn't—was facts. Thus
> > Thucydides (104)

"Here" in "what we have here" collapses at least three different spatiotemporal frames, in the process modulating speech's function of away from the discursivity of reference, narrative and description. "Here," at once the stage head as site of the struggle between the

Plymouth and Dorchester Companies as microcosm of a broader historical tendency and the Stage Fort Fisherman's Field landmark in then-contemporary Gloucester of 1953 during Olson's consultation with the historical Frederick Merk in his composition of "Letter 23," is also the phenomenological "ffield" of the experiential present shared alike by Olson, in the act of 'composition by field,' and the reader who hears its speech in the field of her own embodied present. Despite the idiomatic expression, "my own front yard" is indeed as "literal" as possible, reorienting the audience's attention from a chain of events occurring both "out there" in an objective spatiotemporal distance and "in" a subjectively reconstructed narrative space towards the phenomenological field that bears witness to both of these poles as they come into being. The "finding out for oneself" of Olson's Herodotean *'istorin* is therefore less a matter of choosing from among a possible array of empirical facts those one intuits to be most accurate in terms the idiosyncrasies of one's personal biography than of the basic character of intellection attending one's shift in attention from (conceptual) elsewhere to (perceptual) here.

"Letter 23"'s source text for the more conspicuously versified lines following the mention of Pindar is Thomson's *The Art of the Logos*. Thomson's basic claim is that Herodotus' *Histories* ought properly to be located within a broader tradition of oral storytelling. By situating Herodotus in this way, the "logos or traditional story of the ancient Greeks" can be seen to rely on different criteria of competence than the models of empirical accuracy or logical coherence that would eventually supersede the Herodotean paradigm of historiography in the figure of Thucydides. A competent *logopoios*, in Thomson's account, relies on her or his ability to "aptly direct" the "vividness" of the story so that it is "concentrated at the telling points," because "if this were not done, the attention would not be concentrated there either, but would be spread equally over all the details and so dissipated or at least diluted" (Thomson 187). In other words, the fluid exigencies of the present situation of telling provide the regulative principle orienting the emplotment of events.

Quoting Longinus' citation of Herodotus' geographical description of Egypt in his treatise *On the Sublime*, Thomson remarks, "in [Longinus'] powerful phrase the writer crystallizes what I have been trying to say about the vividness of Herodotus. *He makes hearing sight*" (186). Etymologically reconstructing the semantic field of "logos" to include not only "reason" but also "story," Thomson's claims about Herodotus provided Olson with a crucial link for his effort at recentering academic disciplines according to the modality of mind that, at an earlier moment of his development, he and Creeley had described as the single intelligence. By virtue of Thomson's insight into Herodotean method, Olson discovered a key figure at the presocratic inception of western historiography to be basing his practice on fundamentally the same mode of intellection through which, in a different historical formation, the compositional integrity of an artwork gets worked out. Resembling what Heidegger and Aristotle would have called "techne" or "phronesis," Herodotean method based itself on a situated, non-deliberative discernment of appropriate patterns of coherence within the particulars comprising both historical process and its telling.

Olson's notes from the "New Sciences of Man" seminar at Black Mountain contained in the document "The Chiasma" are essential in deepening and focusing a sense of stakes in Olson's use of Thomson's Herodotus. Whereas Thomson's claim regarding vividness as the technical criterion orienting Herodotus' practice of logos might at first seem to square with Nichols' characterization of myth as a "picture [that] records the desirousness of human enterprise," we also need to hear the strongly non-mimetic, non-representational inflection that Olson gives to story and myth (31). In juxtaposition with Thomson's claims

about Herodotus, Olson in "The Chiasma" then cites the following quote from Bronislaw Malinowski that Karl Kerenyi includes in an introduction to his work on mythology:

> The myth in a primitive society, i.e., in its original living form, is not a mere tale told but a reality lived. It is not in the nature of an invention such as we read in our novels today, but living reality, believed to have occurred in primordial times and to be influencing ever afterwards the world and the destinies of men … these stories are not kept alive by vain curiosity, neither as tales that have been invented nor again as tales that are true. For the natives on the contrary they are the assertion of an original, greater and more important reality through which the present life, fate, and work of mankind are governed, and the knowledge of which provides men on the one hand with motives for ritual and moral acts, on the other with directions for performance. ("Myth in Primitive Psychology" as quoted in Kerenyi 6)

Kerenyi is quick to point out that Malinowski's characterization rejects both symbolical and etiological models of myth. Myth in Malinowski's view is neither a *representation* of events, nor "an explanation put forth to satisfy scientific curiosity," but a constitutive act (7). Olson likewise hones in on just this constitutive character of myth in his lectures, coordinating Malinowski's enactive and participatory characterization of myth with Herodotus' model of historiography as *'istorin*. Locating the grounds for agency and efficacy in the encompassing situation or milieu rather than the actor, Olson writes,

> These are real services Malinowski is offering. For his emphasis upon the story as presently taken to be so alive as it ever was strikes away the idea that a story is symbolical (that is stands for something, instead of *being that something*); and at the same time that it is meant to *explain* anything.
>
> The myth, he says, is not an explanation put forward to satisfy scientific curiosity; it is the re-arising of a primordial reality in narrative form. In fact, you can put his meaning more dynamically: it is the same reality asserting itself as it ever did by way of figures & events, of its self—that exactly that narrative itself is the reality which is original, greater & more important *now*.
>
> Malinowski is asserting the primary truth that the human fact is that there is *no* desire to explain—there is solely the desire to experience: that this what is meant by *knowing*: to know is to experience, & vice versa, to experience is to know (*histor*). That is, *to tell about it*, and *to tell about it as others have told it*, is *one* act, simply, that the reality itself is one, now and then. (italics in original, 64)

If myth in this sense is neither explanation nor representation but a re-experiencing "by way of figures and events," this re-experiencing cannot to be said to be afforded merely through the story's appeal to rationally undisciplined affective states. Competence in telling arises according to this view not from the deliberative will of the actor but from the encompassing experiential condition itself (Dewey's 'situation' as Malinowski's 'living reality') from which the actor derives "motives for ritual and moral acts" and "directions for performance." As Olson puts it, and this is what is at stake in his 'more dynamic' rephrasing of Kerenyi when

he attributes agency to the reality's own self-assertion, "the original and greater reality still governs the present," thereby providing the grounds for "use" from within that present (64).

"Letter 23"'s shift from the prose block to the lineated stanzas occurs as Olson turns to re-constitute a genealogy of the branching and eventual antagonism of *muthos* and *logos* (in the latter's inherited sense as logic) within Thomson's account. What Thomson's account places in prose, however, and thereby distributes his audience's attention evenly throughout, Olson recasts in verse so as to articulate vividly the underlying practical and affective investments relative to the greater reality and situation of the present. The branching of *muthos* and *logos* stems first from Pindar's *agon* with Homer, Thomson's first recorded instance of the discrepant meanings of "logos," wherein the lyric poet accuses the epic poet of taking advantage of the "blind heart" of his audience by virtue of the persuasive capacity of his 'sweet-versing.' This is effectively the same view that will be repeated throughout virtually all subsequent critiques of participatory mentality, from *The Republic* through 20th century critical theory: participation undermines critical agency by dissolving the reflective distance of the audience or interlocutors, rendering them passive, porous receptacles of the orator's (in all likelihood nefarious) influence. What this account leaves out is the possibility that participation itself depends on its own specific conditions of competence that, though distinct from the competencies of logic or dialectic, are inherently intelligent, rather than "blind." That these competencies require giving up the buffered, skeptical stance of a disputant in no way entails that they are thereby qualified as passive. Intelligence in these lines consists in the weighing of the relative values of terms comprising the statement "*poesy* steals away men's hearts by her *muthoi* and a blind heart is most men's portions" that, as propositions, would be evenly distributed across the two quasi-syllogistic premises: 1). The *muthoi* in poetry steals away men's hearts and 2). a blind heart is most men's portion.

Just as the third term of the syllogism ("thus: Thucydides") appears only after it has been qualified by the intervening lines, intelligence enters into the use of terms as an involution of values conditioning those terms according to the continually deepening inflection of the speech event. It is that involution that exerts a critical counter-pressure on the second claim: that a blind heart is most men's portion. In a proposition, grammar and syntax would be the basic semantic operators, such that what Thomson calls 'vividness' or intelligibility would be primarily a matter of the mechanics of the sentence taken equally in sum while the terms themselves would be of secondary importance. Against this register, the lines put sonic and figural values of individual terms in tensile relationship, so that vividness gets concentrated at telling points, such as the pronounced archaism of "poesy." The salience of "poesy" then allows for the foregrounding of the value judgment latent in the metaphorics of "steals," by virtue of the assonance of the high "ee" vowels in the enjambment from "poes*y*" to "st*ea*ls." Binding the figural with the sonic in this way, the lines as speech event thereby dispose us to hear the simultaneously punning and cacophonous onomatopoeic "crack," as Pindar splits culture down the middle, dividing the conclusions of a nascent logic from the mellifluousness of "*muthoi*" and "*Ho*m*er's sw*eet *v*er*s*ing."

Suturing back together that splitting of *logos* and *muthos*, Olson's lines ironically invert the hierarchy of speech functions implicit in Pindar's own statement while at the same time showing the mutual dependence of hierarchized functions of speech and the emergent sense of linear history. The lines illustrate this dependence primarily by means of the implicit analogy between the three units of the quasi-syllogism developed from Pindar's statement (theft of judgment > blind heart > Thucydides) and figures of what Deleuze would call "conceptual personae" (Pindar/Poesy > Plato/Logos > Thucydides/History). The middle

term, in both cases, arrives in the second lineated stanza, at which point it appears saturated in the speech milieu that has preceded it, where the salience of "crack" has undermined the implicit uniformity of a categorical statement in Pindar's ostensibly sober assertion, "Poesy steals away men's judgment." Reconstructing the partiality of value judgments underlying Pindar's categorical statement, vividness accordingly gets concentrated across the next stanza at the telling points of enjambed terms: "heart," "portion," "Plato," "divisive," "stand," "agreeing." The effect of this concentration is to foreground the claim's status, *qua* thought, as an event of speech rather than a transparent conduit to semantic content, an event whose status can be shored up or bolstered as a categorical statement (and thereby made to function discursively, as in Plato's agreement) only insofar as a participatory process has already parsed its value.

As the line break makes clear in Olson's enunciation, "I would be an historian as Herodotus was, looking / for evidence of what is said," by focusing the attention on the act of looking before supplying it with a grammatical object, evidence of what is said gains a distinctive modality here by virtue of the manner of looking that intercepts it. By the lectures of *A Special View of History*, Olson will have framed the modality of that "evidence" in terms of *muthos*' fusing of "daimonic" open-endedness and "inceptive" natural eventfulness. Here, in "Letter 23," the line segues into a quote from Rose-Troup: "Altham says / Winslow / was at Cape Ann in April, / 1624." The line is worth quoting in its original context in Rose-Troup's book:

> James Sherley, agent for the Plymouth Plantation, resident in London, wrote on 25th January, 1623/4, that the Plymouth Adventurers had raised a new stock "for the setting forth of the ship called the *Charitie* with men and necessaries for the plantation." This ship, after a voyage of *about* five weeks, reached Plymouth. She brought Winslow, the Sheffield Patent, Lyford and cattle. Altham says Winslow was at Cape Ann in April 1624, so she would have sailed most probably from London, the nearest port to the agent's residence, about the middle of February 1623/4. She "came on fishing, a thing fatal to this plantation." (italics in original, 70)

Rose-Troup goes on to speculate on the broader significance of discrepant accounts of the events of 1624 that hinges on Altham's testimony:

> It must be quite evident that the *Charitie*, which served the Plymouth Plantation, cannot be identified with the *Fellowship*, the first ship sent out by the Dorchester Company; this cuts away the entire foundation upon which has been built the legend that the settlers at Cape Ann were allowed to establish a colony by permission of the Plymouth Colonists, and with it goes the suggestion that this independent company showed ingratitude to their Plymouth benefactors. (70)

Olson's contribution to Rose-Troup's reading is similar to Pound's tendency to read the ideogrammic significance of economic or historical source materials, such that he could derive the 'volitionist' principle of monetary 'title,' of money's status as an instrument of policy rather than a medium of exchange, from Gesell's temporal theory of the origins of surplus value. The contrast between Sherley's written record and Altham's oral account is less a literal distinction between speech and writing as communication technologies than a

way of making visible the varying orders of intellection informing, but blended within, Rose-Troup's historiographical efforts. In this respect, "Letter 23" has shifted back from the premise that song lies in chanting to the premise that it can also lie in the thing itself, here Altham's testimony as it proves necessary to Rose-Troup's narrative construction of the events surrounding the two groups of settlers. Altham's testimony therefore proves decisive to an understanding of both the broader historical tendency, insofar as the conflict between the two groups of settlers emblematizes "the whole engagement… against all sliding statism, ownership getting in to, the community as, Chambers of Commerce, or theocracy; or City Manager" (105) and the status of history itself vis-à-vis the individual consciousness. Striking the same core from a different point on the circumference, Olson elaborates in "The Chiasm," "and before your minds throw this away as some sort of literary trick—or, a trick to make all things literary—don't be too quick to forget… how much of our reporting of what we do, say, hear, see, feel *is* the *action* of our love and life, at least is that act of it so far as we can get it anywhere where we can deal with it as a thing in existence and experienced" (italics in original, 64). Speech-as-act forms a basic infrastructural feature of the world such that any knowledge claims, historical or otherwise, necessarily have to reckon with the evidence of what is said.

*A Special View of History* allows us to gain a better handle on Olson's claim about the distinct conditions of intelligibility pertaining to speech as an act than Thomson's category of vividness can provide on its own, in the process helping to frame Olson's reading of Thomsonian vividness. This occurs by way of Olson's substitution of Keats' principle of 'negative capability' in the place of Hegelian negation as the pivotal middle term of a mental act. To approach the significance of this substitution, it is first necessary to see Olson's frequently cited Heraclitean aphorism "Man is estranged from that with which he is most familiar" for the formula of mediation that it is in Olson's thinking. Olson remarks, "when Heraclitus said, man is estranged from that with which he is most familiar, he completed a sentence. In just those words he was saying man is estranged from himself as man" (32). The linguistic focus here is not accidental, as Olson goes on to make clear in his discussion of Hegel that an understanding of the status of thought, whether as science of logic or otherwise, necessarily concerns the linguistic act: "*To take thought* is a sentence. A sentence is a complete thought" (45).

Olson is in agreement with Hegel that understanding (*verstand*) or picture-thinking such as we find in basic propositional statements is a mode of cognition that inherently alienates or 'estranges' self-consciousness from its object, that with which is it 'most familiar.' Where Olson diverges from Hegel, and sees Keats' statements as capable of providing a viable alternative, is in his understanding of the means whereby this estrangement can be overcome. Keats' statements on negative capability allow Olson, through his consideration of will, or what he calls the dimension of the "actual," to frame the sublation or *aufhebung* that resides for Hegel in the negation of negation as only one possible disposition of the will within the event of intellection. Whereas contradiction for Hegel expresses the estrangement undermining the understanding's positive identity claims, dialectic takes this expression a step further by treating the negative as a positive result, in turn affording the third moment of speculative reason's synthetic claim. Olson's move is to identify Hegel's moment of "result," whereby the negation redoubles as sublation and enables the 'positive' claim of speculative reason, with Keats' "irritable reaching after fact and reason" (43).

While this formulation may at first sound glib, what Olson is attempting to do here is model the relationship between thought and situation as that relation is shaped through the

will or intentionality (as a name for a living being's basic existential bearing at any given moment). Accordingly, Olson offers both existential and grammatical definitions of will, as "the innate voluntarism of to live" and "the infinitive of being." Negation is but one expression of situation's impingement on thought, and for Olson negation's particular way of inflecting that impingement is a matter of how the will gets disposed within the mental act. Olson characterizes this inflection in grammatical terms as the relationship between noun and verb, where the understanding's propositional claim has the status of noun, negation as the dynamic principle of thought functions as verb, and the dialectical movement of sublation corresponds to the "recognition that you need both to make what the third, in short, or the 'speculative,' is, a sentence." Properly dialectical thought consists, then, in just this completion of the sentence that negation-as-verb-form affords, and Olson sees this movement towards completion of the sentence (whose result is knowledge or doctrine), a movement conceived here as "the actionable, or, the very act of the sentence," as being "the dynamic which matters" to his discussion in the seminar (45). Completion of the sentence expresses the disposition of will that Olson, drawing on Keats, calls "a will of power," because the effort to reconcile understanding with negation at the level of speculative reason involves "the… collapse back to the subjective understanding [in which the will] tries to assert itself as character" (45). If we recall Hegel's *bildung* of consciousness in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, the transition to "Reason"'s historical forms of intersubjective self-consciousness from the first personal mode of "Understanding" occurs through just this inability to grasp *Kraft* as Notion (*begriff*) that compels the movement from consciousness to self-consciousness. In this sense, Olson would regard the dialectic of lord and bondsman with which "Reason" commences as the genesis of the will of power.

What Hegel in the *Phenomenology* treats as spirit's accomplishment, in consciousness' movement beyond an incomplete conceptual grasp of its object by restaging the understanding's problem of cognition at the next register of self-consciousness' historical progression towards reason, Olson sees as a lapse of a certain kind of willing. To frame the paradoxical dynamic behind this view, implicit in the second term of Keats' phrase negative *capability*, Olson offers the following, rather awkward or oxymoronic formulation of an alternative "will of achievement" that he retrieves from Keats' comments: "the second [will] makes it *by non-asserting the self as self*" (45, italics added). In part because these distinct dispositions of will get worked out through the act of speech, Olson then offers the example of the grammatical infinitive of mood and power to illustrate this modality: "I *can* do, I *may* laugh, I *will* let you make a fool of yourself, I *dare* cry, I *make*" (45). Infinitives of mood and power give expression to what Olson calls an "obeying" function of will, in which self-consciousness acknowledges that "the actionable is *larger* than the individual," that runs counter to the (positive and/or negative) assertoric function that one finds within contradiction. The disposition of will that Olson here calls "obedience" corresponds to his concept of stance, "this double coincidence [of thought and situation] at any serial point (or incident moment act "experience")… a principle of happening" (36).

Olson's colleague at Black Mountain, Mary Caroline or "M.C." Richards, by whose invitation Olson's rectorship began in the early fifties, similarly makes this paradoxical principle of willed obedience the subject of her book-length work on pedagogy at Black Mountain and beyond, *Centering in Pottery, Poetry and Person* (1964). Applying the principle of what she calls "centering" to a diverse array of practical circumstances, most notably ceramics, education and writing, Richards repeatedly characterizes what Olson calls the capability of 'non-asserting the self as self' in terms of the "capacity to yield":

> To yield means both to lose and to gain. See how the paradox is wisely caught in the words we use. I yield, and my being increases and takes form by having been given up in this way. Love becomes easier and more natural and steadier as over and over again I practice this act of yielding, from the secret inner center, the quiet will. As I open myself to the presence that faces me, it enters. It is a union. It is communion.
>
> Freedom is presence, not absence. Centering is an act of bringing in, not of leaving out. (35)

Admittedly, there is at work in Richards' notion of yielding, as in Olson's obedience, a surrendering or abdication of a certain enlightenment paradigm of both knowledge and, with it, reflective culture. On the one hand, a mode of intellection gets retained, indeed actualized, in the transaction of staying in the condition (or "penetralium" as Olson, following Keats, puts it) without converting it to a result. Richards' emphasis on the paradoxical semantic field of "yield," its implication of actively refraining or activity by means of restraint, captures the sense that yielding or obedience here is not merely passivity or withdrawal but is itself a kind of action. Accordingly, Olson's comments make clear that the intelligibility attending the man of achievement corresponds both to Thomson's category of vividness and to the figure of speed explored in Creeley's early poems and Olson's comments to Cid Corman on the use of varitype in the printing of *Origin*: "It is only thus that the familiar can be dealt with so that you or I or anyone can –the degree that anyone can—not be estranged. Indeed it all comes down to a matter of speed. Or what, in this range of "life" unquote, dubbed human, is called vivid" (34). What is surrendered, in the shift from the will of power to the will of achievement is the larger project of submitting that mode of intellection to the tribunal of reason and conceptual determination. The yielding that relinquishes the negative moment's conversion into a cognitively positive result effectively abandons the larger project that Charles Taylor describes as the view that a synthesis between "the rational, self-legislating freedom of the Kantian subject" and the "expressive unity within man and nature" could be "realize[d] in fully rational form" (*Hegel* 539).

If this new condition fails to produce the result demanded by one specific historical regime's epistemic imperatives, Olson cannot be faulted for regarding those imperatives as irrelevant to, or at least no longer the exclusive norms of, his own historical moment. The question, then, is whether he can be faulted for having regarded that moment as a reality in its own right. Put differently, the question is whether Olson's project at Black Mountain ought properly to be regarded as a regression from the rational or as its supercession in a radically new form of social life. *Can* the archaic truly be said to be the *post*-modern? To begin to answer this question, we can start by looking at some cultural phenomena of the decade or so following the closing of Black Mountain in 1957. The legitimacy of education's move to center rested in the final account on whether this move could be further extended into more pervasively shared forms of common life and sustained so as to offer a more enduringly viable alternative paradigm to that of Socratic culture. This effort, which became the central task of the American avant-garde in the following years, became a matter of decoupling the single intelligence from its dependence on discrete objects.

*The Special View of History*'s title page includes the propaedeutic subtitle, "an attempt to state a view of reality which yields a stance nexal to the practice of verse, narrative and theater now" (13). "Nexal" is a typical Whiteheadian coinage, an adjective form of "nexus," which is Whitehead's term indicating the way actual occasions (Whitehead's term for objects) exist or "concresce" in dynamic relation to one another, but it is that final term that is worth lingering on. Theater, like "use" in the previous discussion of so-called 'projective' poetics, indexes a much broader range of practice and experience than may be apparent at first glance. At the time of Olson's New Sciences of Man seminar in 1953, theater had become a catchall for a range of thought circling around certain recent tendencies in art that were largely associated with John Cage's projects at Black Mountain. The most famous of these, the 1952 event later entitled *Theater Piece No. 1*, featured performances or installations in various media by Olson and Richards (poetry), Merce Cunningham (dance), Robert Rauschenberg (painting), David Tudor (music), and Cage himself in the function of orator. Significantly, Cage singles out poetry as a privileged mode in his reminiscences of the event: "as I look back, I realize that a concern with poetry was early with me…when M.C. Richards asked me why I didn't one day give a conventional informative lecture, adding that that would be the most shocking thing I could do, I said, 'I don't give these lectures to surprise people, but out of a need for poetry" (x). Cage perceived this generic commutability in poetry, such that he can speak of his lectures and various presentations as developing out of a "need" for poetry, because poetry's mode of formalization "allow(s) musical elements (time, sound) to be introduced into the world of words" (x).

The question of *Theater Piece No. 1*'s originality is of less importance for present purposes (a more extensive genealogy might cite precedents such as the 1948 *Ruse of Medusa* performance featuring Buckminster Fuller, or earlier instances such as the dada group's Trial of Barres) than its status as a kind of node giving newly focused expression to a range of tendencies and helping to orient their subsequent development. Central to both the content and inception of *Theater Piece No. 1* was Antonin Artaud's *The Theater and its Double*, to which Pierre Boulez had recently directed Cage, and which Cage subsequently introduced to its first English translator, M.C. Richards. Cage had read directly from *The Theater and its Double* during *Theater Piece No. 1*, later remarking to Martin Duberman in 1967 that the combination of Artaud's work and Huang Po's doctrine of original mind "all fused together into the possibility of making a theatrical event in which the things that took place were not causally related to one another–but in which there is a penetration, anything that happened after that happened in the observer himself" (*Black Mountain: An Experiment in Community* 350). There will be more to say about Cage's engagement with Asian wisdom traditions, perhaps most influentially in Cage's use of the *I Ching* in his development of chance-based compositional methods, but the affordances of *The Theater and its Double* warrant consideration before turning to Olson's engagement with Cagean method.

Artaud's principal move in *The Theater and its Double* is to invert the order of primacy between the appurtenances of theater and its narrative or dramatic forms. If one were to describe Artaud's notion of theater in terms of the traditional Aristotelian categories from the *Poetics*, then, we would say he envisions a theater in which plot (*muthos*), character (*ethos*), and thought (*dianoia*) are displaced from the central functional position in favor of secondary characteristics of diction (*lexis*), spectacle (*opsis*), and melody (*melos*). These latter categories all pertain to what Artaud calls *mise-en-scene,* which "consists of everything that occupies the stage, everything that can be manifested and expressed materially on a stage and that is

addressed first of all to the senses instead of being addressed to the mind as is the language of words" (38). Put differently, *mise-en-scene* consists of all that is strictly dramaturgical and as such is irreducible to other generic forms in theatrical composition, for which reason Olson frequently uses the term "theater of theater" in his writings from the period as shorthand for Artaudian thought and practice. Olson's tautology here is crucial because it illustrates the broader stakes behind Artaud's transposition of theater's status from a dramatic spectacle to what he calls a pure "function" (92). The theatrical milieu now works to locate and make visible modes of intellection whose functioning categorical thought typically obscures, which is why the efficacy stems from the use of generic categories against themselves.

Artaud's primary interest in the Balinese ritual theater that first inspired his concept of the theater of cruelty lies in what he calls the "intense liberation of signs." The theater generates milieu that discloses the non-linguistic mode of intelligibility Artaud describes as a "physics of absolute gesture… which transforms the mind's conceptions into events perceptible through the labyrinths and fibrous interlacings of matter" (62). In Balinese ritual theater, the expressive function of iconic gesture or "mudra" provided the precedent for this non-linguistic or "liberated" semiosis. Just as the first sense of "theater" in Olson's phrase posits an object of apperception while the predication "of theater" tautologically removes that object through the mimetic implication in "of" (i.e. "of" as that which theater represents), the principle of gestural language designates a means of communication by collapsing the boundary between intelligence and perceptual substrate usually seen as constitutive of communication. Artaud himself is explicit that this *positive though implicit* communicative function is the counterpart to the theater of cruelty's decoupling of the art-occasion from its prescribed objects and procedures:

> To raise the question of the intellectual efficacity (*sic*) of expression by means of objective forms, of the intellectual efficacity of a language which would use only shapes, or noise, or gesture, is to raise the question of the intellectual efficacity of art. (69)

By "intellectual efficacity," Artaud means at once the expressive modality of gestural speech itself, of "automatic efficacy" (which Mauss claimed as a hallmark of *mana* in his study of magic) as a mode of mental intelligibility, and the work's status or purpose as described in etic or sociological terms. In other words, the "visual and plastic materialization of speech" (69) and "recov(ery) …of a kind of unique language half-way between gesture and thought" (89) is the special prerogative and corollary of a 'theater of theater' in which the centrality of *mise-en-scene* has effectively removed any determinate object from compositional practice.

The principle of autotelism at work here is of course similar to the modernist formula seen in Picasso's use of illusionistic devices and Pound's notion of absolute rhythm, with the crucial difference that now, as Olson himself observes, it is aesthetic spectatorship itself, as the "social fact of theater"(48), that is the redoubled convention. That direct relation between objectless or "environmental" practice and its resultant condition of intelligibility is the necessary ground from which to consider Olson's exchanges with Cage during this period. One of Cage's major published statements from this period, the essay "Experimental Music: Doctrine," first published in a British magazine in 1955 and eventually included in 1961's *Silence*, in many ways prefigures the proceduralism that would come to define one highly influential concept of post-modern art in the latter portion of the century. With *The Theater and its Double* and *Theater Piece No. 1* in the essay's background, Cage ventures his now-canonical definition of "experimental" art:

> where… attention moves towards the observation and audition of many things at once, including those that are environmental—becomes, that is, inclusive rather than exclusive—no question of making, in the sense of forming understandable structures, can arise (one is tourist), and here the word 'experimental' is apt, providing it is understood not as descriptive of an act to be later judged in terms of success and failure, but simply as of an act the outcome of which cannot be known in advance. (13)

Cage's famous definition of 'experimental' art as an act the outcome of which cannot be known in advance eventually motivated a much broader paradigm of aleatory and process-based approaches to poetry and other arts, but I want to highlight two aspects of his thinking in this essay that at times get ignored in later versions of proceduralism. First, despite the predominantly anti-subjectivist uses for which Cage's model gets mobilized once his methods become cross fertilized with the more 'aporetic' post-structuralist inflections of indeterminacy, Cage, like Artaud, is aiming these statements at the realization of a *positive* non-representational order of intellection.

Cage distinctly does not envisage a constructivist artwork in which the viewer plays an active role in arriving at her own idiosyncratic and irreducibly provisional interpretation of the work's meaning. His thick description of the so-called indeterminate event at which the procedure is aimed, in this case sound freed from dichotomies of "intention and non-intention," "subject-object," "art-life," is strikingly Olsonian (even Poundian-Confucian) in this respect:

> *Urgent, unique, uninformed about history and theory, beyond the imagination, central to a sphere without surface, its becoming is unimpeded, energetically broadcast. There is no escape from its action. It does not exist as one of a series of discrete steps, but as a transmission in all directions from the field's center. It is inextricably synchronous with all other sounds, non-sounds, which latter, received by other sets than the ear, operate in the same manner.* (italics in original 14)

Lest "received by other sets than the ear," which refers to compositional process rather than reception, mislead us, Cage characterizes this energetically broadcast event in phenomenological terms as one of "inclusive attention" in which "an identification has been made with the materials" (14). So the difference between Cage's version of proceduralism and later constructivist versions is in this notion of inclusive identification with the materials through which the boundary between self and event is experientially dissolved. [more here?]

Secondly, this phenomenological aim for experimental "action [that] is theatrical… inclusive and intentionally purposeless" (14) primarily motivates the perhaps more familiar anti-authorial tendency within Cage's thought, evident in his claim that "no question of making, in the sense of forming understandable structures, can arise (one is tourist)" (13). Cage's model of anti-subjective art is therefore strikingly distinct from more recent sociologically-inflected versions of the constructivist work, where procedure models a kind of democratic personhood through its radical openness to diverse and irreducibly plural interpretations. Only by seeing that Cage's own proceduralism is oriented in this way towards positive states of inclusive attention rather than negative or privative forms of cognitive indeterminacy can one appreciate both Olson's serious engagement with Cage's thinking and the variable large-scale cultural tendencies the would flow from the notion of

theater at Black Mountain in the early 50s. In accord with Artaud's claim about the intellectual 'efficacity' of theater, Olson's response to Cage is twofold, directed both at the question of compositional process and that of art's status as a social institution. As it turns out, these are two different ramifications of the relationship between means and ends in the event of inclusive attention.

Around the time of *Theater Piece No 1*., Olson advances the principle of "methodology," which he breaks down etymologically to its Greek roots "*meta*" ("with" or "plus") and "*hodos*" ("road," "way" or "*tao*") ("A Note on Methodology" 43). Implicitly countering Cage's denial of authorial responsibility for understandable structures in the figure of the maker as "tourist," Olson proposes the compositional principle wherein "one travels, but there is something on which one travels that is distinct from the Traveller" (43). Crucially, though, Olson's statement ought not to be taken as a prescription of mimetic content, such that the "traveller" in question is taken to be the subjectivity of maker as represented in the fictive semantic content of the work, most obviously because for Olson as much as for Cage the context of this exchange pertains to the compositional process of both the mimetic and non-mimetic arts. As a compositional principle, Olson's concept of methodology attempts in part to provide a corrective to those tendencies in Cagean procedural "experiment" that ultimately threaten to undermine the work's efficacy. The primary form this enervating tendency takes within proceduralism is what Olson refers to as "sensationalism," the collapse of indeterminacy as inclusive attention into "the theater of nonsense… the ultimate ennui…that nothing really matters" ("Theater Institute Lecture on Language" 52). As though sensing the long-term effects that process-based composition might have on the arts decades before it became a wider trend, Olson grasped in his engagement with Cage the implicit trajectory within procedural approaches towards the evacuation of any and all intrinsic criteria of relevance. Methodology therefore maintains a provisional distinction between agent and act in order to preserve the primacy of act against its being swallowed up in a prescribed procedure that would in turn nullify whatever content (in Creeley's sense) that act might lay hold of in the heat of the moment.

Olson remained deeply invested, however, in preserving the advances made possible by that other ramification of Artaudian notions of art's efficacy: the premise of the "total work" (resembling Mauss' 'total social fact') transcending boundaries of both genre and media. Taking up Artaud's concept of the theater as "function" in a 1952 typescript written to members of the Black Mountain community, Olson remarks,

> The methodology is the form … which—because form is the act of art—the idea to be perfect—instantly makes any art now a function and—because they each assert themselves by way of human sensibilities—positively restores *the* arts to prime position in human society. ("The Necessary Propositions" 44)

Olson goes on to affirm, "you see, I not only don't believe that there is any other goal but this one—that sort of total creation, art's and no other—but I also don't think it allows of analogy" (45). In the comment about analogy, Olson appears to be taking issue with Artaud's analogical use of the alchemical figure to characterize the function of the theater of cruelty, its positing of a metaphysical "double" to which the theater provides a counterpart. At stake in this question of analogy is the status of metaphysics as an epistemic meta-category in relation to practice. While Olson advances methodology as a practical alternative to the obsolete cultural authority of metaphysics, Artaud could be accused of vacillating on

this key point throughout *The Theater and its Double*, at once referring to the efficacy of *mise-en-scene* as one of "*metaphysics-in-action*" while elsewhere invoking the metaphysical as a separate category from (or analogical "double" of) the theater itself (44). In his typescript notes, Olson goes on to quote from his earlier essay "Human Universe," where he argues that "the error of all other metaphysic is descriptive" before citing Heisenberg's uncertainty principle as an example of description's tendency to hypostatize a static object of reference when the act and content of speech are taken separately (*Collected Prose* 162). The argument is effectively identical with Dewey's claim that oppositions between idealism and realism arise as a result of the unwitting synthesis between traditional thought's contemplative relationship to a fixed object and experimental thought's inquiry into process. It is an issue that returns in inverted form in post-Cagean practice as what undermines the efficacy of experimental practice, causing it to devolve into mere sensationalism (which, by 1962, Olson will forcefully if perhaps ungenerously refer to as "the greatest present danger / the area of pseudo-sensibility" (*Collected Prose* 186)).

The point is most salient in Cage's "Experimental Music: Doctrine," where a dialogical format of question and answer frames the essay's exegesis of experimental method in its concluding section. Cage's immediate model for this format is Huang Po's *On the Transmission of Mind*, which similarly employs the dialogical structure throughout, and from whose doctrine of original mind Cage borrowed the appended term "doctrine" in the title of his own essay. Cage's appropriation strikingly illustrates the fundamentally traditional underpinnings of procedural method. The procedure of anti-authorial, structural constraint transposes into the register of composition certain external or "heteronomous" guidelines for making whose historical precedent is the relationship between an initiate and a tradition into which she is being initiated. The significant point here is that the dialogue does not model an exchange between two individuals but between an individual and an impersonal tradition or doctrine. Huang Po's dialogue, for instance, is itself modeled on monastic systems of debate expressed most purely in the exchange between teacher and student, where the teacher's status is that of a placeholder for the tradition itself as both a mode of experience and an institution. That the teacher is an instantiation of the tradition itself is an inverse way of framing Olson's point in the essay "Against Wisdom as Such," where he remarks that "wisdom, like style, is the man—… it is not extricable in any sort of statement of itself… only sectaries can deal with wisdom as separable" (*Collected Prose* 261). Even the contingency-based *I Ching* system of divination presupposes a more extensive archive of traditional doctrine that the adept is expected to have mastered in order to engage properly with the method, for which reason Confucius himself is reported to have said that he wished he had 50 spare years to devote to studying the *I Ching*. The experimental method's delegating the compositional act to an external procedure borrows from an historical dispensation in which one can reliably entrust oneself to the authority and systemic integrity of an orthodox tradition, and accordingly the efficacy of this method assumes the ongoing integrity of such a tradition. In the absence of such an historical dispensation, proceduralism remains perpetually threatened by the specter of pseudo-sensibility.

For Olson, the cultural task then became a matter of obedience to a stance capable of holding in place both "the recognition that function turns everything into instruments, even ourselves" and an understanding of the "necessity that a methodology be the issue of (one)self" ("The Necessary Propositions" 45). Following Black Mountain's closure in 1957, the avant-garde's further development in the 1960s depended on finding a balance between the poles of function and methodology, between the total work's reach in dissolving the boundary separating the art object from social life and the retention of an experiential center

within the compositional process, against the encroachments of automated procedure. This latter criterion amounted to the retention of expressive force as the mode of intelligibility through which the practice became organized and disposed, because only insofar as the act remained the issue of oneself would one remain in continuous contact with the single intelligence. My claim in the concluding section of this chapter is that such a tenuous balance was in fact achieved for a period in the 1960's, that this heritage forms the coherent intellectual backbone of the American counterculture's late 20th century efflorescence, and that it remains to be seen whether present digital culture has entirely come to terms with the implications of the cultural revolution that took place as a result. When Black Mountain closed its doors forever in 1957, Cage and Olson each took up temporary pedagogical residence in the two primary American countercultural hubs: New York and San Francisco, respectively. In tandem with the "Poetry as Magic" workshop undertaken by the San Francisco poets affiliated with Robert Duncan and Jack Spicer, Olson gave a series of lectures developed out of the *A Special View of History* seminar. In 1958-1959, Cage taught a class on compositional method at the New School for Social Research to members of what would become the Fluxus group, including Dick Higgins, Allan Kaprow, Alison Knowles, Jackson Mac Low and c. Taken together, these parallel developments constitute two divergent branches of a shared sensibility that one can trace back to the final phase of Black Mountain under Olson's rectorship. A closer examination of the affinities between the practices of the Fluxus group and Duncan's open-form poetics, crystalized in 1960's *The Opening of the Field*, gives concrete shape to the emergent cultural paradigm best captured in Marshall McLuhan's epochal diagnosis of a return to acoustic space.

No stranger to theater himself, Duncan's contribution to Black Mountain College during its final years consisted in a workshop on theater that he co-taught with Wesley Huss, held in the morning hours opposite Olson's late night seminars, in a workshop on form, and in his production of the plays *Medea at Colchis* and *The Origins of Old Son*. While *Medea at Colchis* cannot be said to follow the dictates laid out in *The Theater and its Double*, relying as it does on a degree of allegorical narrative surrounding the figures of Medea and Jason, Artaud's influence is nonetheless palpable in the play's original 1956 preface, where Duncan's remarks,

> We would like to account for the profound anxiety. But it is a weather—a saturated air of the summer—that obstructs all account. Fear, desire, accusation, tenderness, joy, despair are all caught up, unreleased in the storm head. Tomorrow, the sky with be blue; yet all is unrelieved. The sun too is of the obstruction. A violent electricity charges such weather. Even the flashes of lightning in the heat do not release the rain but portend greater devastations of agony.
>
> Where rain will not come, sorcery flourishes. O, sure, it rains, but sorcery flourishes. The swamp land, more terrible than the waste land. No innocent rain.
>
> Uninformed, we must use the stage as it is. Without knowledge, dance our damned rain dance as we can. (*Collected Early Poems and Plays* 593)

Seemingly in reference to the oppressive humidity of North Carolina in late August when the play was performed, Duncan's words also echo Artaud's ekphrastic remarks on Lucas Van Den Leyden's painting "Lot and his Daughters" in the opening of "Metaphysics and the *Mise-en-Scene*," when he reflects on the "drama of high intellectual importance … massed

there like a sudden gathering of clouds which the wind or some much more direct fatality has impelled together to measure their thunderbolts … the sky of the picture … black and swollen; but even before we can tell that the drama was born in the sky, was happening in the sky, the peculiar lighting of the canvas, the jumble of shapes, the impression the whole gives at a distance … betokens a kind of drama of nature for which I defy any painter of the Great Periods to give us an equivalent" (*The Theater and its Double* 34). The turgid atmosphere that Duncan invokes at the outset of his own performance Artaud sees as a hallmark of the "concrete efficacity" (36) within the painting, making it "what the theater should be, if it knew how to speak the language that belongs to it" (37). Such "concrete language," Artaud goes on to clarify, "is intended for the senses independent of speech, has first to satisfy the senses… [and] is truly theatrical only to the degree that the thoughts it expresses are beyond the reach of spoken language" (37).

That the theater of cruelty was in the air on both coasts in 1956 and '57 is also apparent in Jack Spicer's comment to the students of his Poetry as Magic workshop that the class is a "group exploration of the practices of the new magical school of poetry which is best represented in the work of Lorca, Artaud, Charles Olson and Robert Duncan" (Spicer 165). Lisa Jarnot's biography of Duncan records that Duncan's return to the west coast after his time at Black Mountain, where he would participate in the events of 1957, was punctuated by a visit to the Stony Brook Colony in New York, an artists community established by former Black Mountain faculty, where he spent time with Richards and John Cage, "whom I like very much—he inspires what shreds of art I have left for such climates" (157). To be sure, Cage's class at the New School for Social Research and Duncan and Olson's broadly contemporaneous work in San Francisco, whether at the Poetry as Magic workshop, Olson's Whitehead and *A Special View of History* lectures, or Duncan's productions of *Medea at Kolchis* with Black Mountain Theater, pursued distinct and at times divergent investments. But their respective inheritances from the developments of 1952-3, for which *The Theater and its Double* provides an essential source text, constitute a backdrop against which the subsequent developments in both cultural centers and the influence they would have on the shape of culture in the early 1960s become transparent. Without taking into account this backdrop, we are ill-equipped to appreciate the opening lines of the volume in which Duncan's work in verse during these years culminated:

> as if it were a scene made-up by the mind,
> which is not mine, but is a made place,
>
> that is mine, it is so near to the heart,
> an eternal pasture folded in all thought
> so that there is a hall therein
>
> that is a made place, created by light
> wherefrom the shadows that are forms fall. (*The Opening of the Field* 7)

"Often I am Permitted to Return to a Meadow"'s programmatic status within *The Opening of the Field* is visible in the interaction between dramaturgical figure at "scene made-up by the mind" and the seriality motivating the passage between the poem's recursive title to its first line. As practiced at the time of the work's publication in 1960, "theater" relieves the serial implications in the title/line "often I am permitted to return" of the burden of incompletion that would haunt a literary monument insofar as it signals the eclipse of the discrete literary

object in a new milieu and cultural dispensation from which the work now draws its activity. The porous blending of the title and the first line generates an ambivalence of reference, where the "it" in "as if it were a scene" seems to harken back to the "meadow" in the poem's title, which in turn hearkens back to the overdetermined term "field" in the volume's title, with its equally overdetermined "opening," an expression at once of inauguration and expansion. Such itinerant reference is not loss, though, but return, as "scene" now attaches the made place not to the well-wrought urn of the literary object but to the broader *mise-en-scene* of lived social space.

Both singular and serial, open-form now comes into its own, in its full oxymoronic status, as its figures attach to non-referential grounds in what Olson called 'the double-coincidence at any serial point' of act and experience. We see this in the figural interplay between locality and non-locality: "scene made-up by the mind" is emphatically immaterial in its performative connotations, but this same abstractness is what affords the pivot towards definition in the following line. "Not mine" at once reads with and against the non-localized abstraction of the 'scene' in the previous lines, as unreal and therefore apposite to "made-up," and as objective or impersonal and therefore counter to the definite article of "*the* mind" (i.e. "the mind which is not mine"). This pivot around what we might call the 'non-site' produced by the abstraction then allows for the paronomastic turn of "made" in the second clause, as what had been fantasy is now recognized as grammatical and melic construction, the line pausing to rest in the assonance of sharp "a" vowels which play against the "i""s. Just as the sonic construction continues as "m*i*ne" in the next line both follows from the previous stanza's formation of sounds and initiates the new sonic pattern around the fricatives ("*h*eart," "*f*olded," "*th*ought," "so *th*at *th*ere is a *h*all *th*erein"), the figuration of place that began with "scene" now also expands further.

We have seen similar poetic effects before, and Duncan is the first to self-identify as a "derivative" poet; what has changed is the background against which these local acts unfold, a change intimated in the inclusivity of the stanza's middle line, "an eternal pasture folded in *all thought*." Whereas "place" in an earlier modernist moment would have figured the site of formal integrity produced by the work as a circumscribed object, the "made place" now figures an encompassing mode of life that both underwrites all of these formal articulation and opens beyond all margins. "Wherefrom fall all architectures I am," as the first line of the next stanza biographically puts it, thereby reframing the claim that the made place is "mine." In terms of the volume as a whole, this means that the passage from the volume's title, to the poem's title, to the first line of the poem, to the figurations of form around the trope of "place" that organize the interactive phrasal variations, proves the "law" of the work (the latter term itself one of the volume's leitmotifs). Form, though singular insofar as it subtends and unifies the plural particulars of the work at any given moment, is now a question of life *per se* rather than the art object.

Duncan understood the transition that Olson had effected between Pound's and Williams' generation and his own, citing in *The H.D. Book*, underway at the time of the publication of *The Opening of the Field*, the overlap between Williams' 1948 lecture "The Poem as a Field of Action" and Olson's "Projective Verse." Duncan quotes Williams' claim that while the "*subject matter* of the poem… is always phantasy—what is wished for" its "structure confronts something else," before going on to note how the essay anticipates Olson's notion of composition by field in its claim that "the only reality we can know… is *measure*" (188). At his 1965 Berkeley Poetry Conference lecture "A Sense of Measure," though, Creeley observes that "the sense of measure that [Williams] was involved with" was distinct from that of his own generation, distinguishing between Williams' understanding of measure as

that which might "direct the steps or the feet of the line" and his own sense of it as "the actual ground of where it is that one is moving." Creeley goes on to relate Williams' consternation at the development in the principle of form that Olson had brought about:

> I think I was almost smug in the fifties… then to my confusion and delight Williams took his hand in a curious way and just said 'this has no necessity' and it really was a wild gesture. … In other words, if we're now confronted by a silence in the case of Ezra Pound, it's a silence of a whole organism, it's the silence when they come to that point in their own activity.[lii]

What *The Cantos* had anticipated in their own (perhaps unintentional or unplanned) shift from epic poem to gradually taking on the status of repository for a new *paideuma*, Olson had extended in the pedagogical pragmatics of the Black Mountain years, to the point that it became virtually unrecognizable to Williams. Having cleared the ground in this way Creeley then asks, "what have we got to now? What *do* I mean by measure?" Duncan at this point chimes in, "Williams certainly never made it clear… he felt that measure had suddenly been emptied of everything that had academically had been given it … I was saying, "what does he mean? Everything has measure" and he was saying "there is no measure"… he was saying the young don't have any measure was a thing that he flung out… he couldn't get your measure, he couldn't get Olson's measure." Taking this up, Creeley elaborates, "both men equally had an absolutely intense and shared respect for one another… Williams was one of the first to apprehend what Charles was up to and I think he was one of the first to apprehend that it was distinct from either *The Cantos* or *Paterson*, that something else was now being engaged."

Understanding the serial structure of *The Opening of the Field* requires seeing it as the product of a dispensation wherein poetry as such is now what Creeley calls "an activity intrinsically evident in its own structure" rather than a genre through which classes of cultural products get sorted. In his essay "Ideas of the Meaning of Form," which Jarnot informs us shares its title with Duncan's Black Mountain seminar, Duncan interprets "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower"'s final lines about the "odor" that has "begun again to penetrate / into all crevices / of my world" as being precisely a matter of stepping outside of generic or art-historical frames altogether: "the end of masterpieces … the beginning of testimony" (90). Lines, stanzas, poems and eventually entire volumes from *Roots and Branches* and *Bending the Bow* to the *Groundwork* series become episodes in an ongoing testimonial to poetry as an activity inseparable from the life process as a whole. In *The Opening of the Field,* the tendency is most obvious in series such as the prose poems "The Structure of Rime" whose first episode appears in *The Opening if the Field* before continuing throughout *Roots and Branches*, *Bending the Bow* and *Groundwork*:

> I ask the unyielding Sentence that shows Itself forth in the language as I make it,
> Speak! For I name myself your master, who come to serve.
> Writing is first a search in obedience. (*The Opening of the Field* 12)

In these opening lines Duncan takes up two essential figures from Olson's *A Special View of History*—the sentence and obedience—, repurposing them as motifs illustrating the series' governing principles. The sentence had been both Olson's basic cognitive unit, the closure of which provided the point of demarcation between thought and experience, but as a corollary act it also worked as an instrument of stance or will. Duncan characteristically

reworks "sentence" into a paronomastic figure, punning on its simultaneously grammatical and juridical senses to link formal "law" not to the generic unit of a poem or volume but to the act of writing as itself participating in a larger network of acts. "Obedience" in Olson's lecture had signaled the shift in the disposition of will through which the sentence, left open, allows a modulation from a Keatsian will of power to a will of achievement. In Duncan's usage of the term, which achieves a precarious balance between Cagean procedure and Olsonian methodology, the informing principle warrants a more detailed consideration.

The most exemplary enactment of obedience in *The Opening of the Field*, Duncan's variation on the Neoplatonic myth of Eros or Cupid and Psyche in "A Poem Beginning with a Line by Pindar" provides a knotting point for the principles informing the volume as a whole. The myth's major literary precedent is Apuleius' nested story in his late antique picaresque *The Golden Ass*, whose "scurrilous, bejeweled prose" Pound singled out in the opening of *The Spirit of Romance* as a primary forerunner of that work's eponymous medieval sensibility (10). The myth *par excellence* of "platonic love" as a practice directing vital or libidinal energies toward the cultivation of trans-cognitive modes of intellection, Eric Mottram (whose regular correspondence with Duncan during the late 60s and 1970s directed him towards key sources in his research) wrote in a 1972 essay of the myth's pertinence to Taoist yogic practice within Olson's and Pound's thought.[liii] Mottram's view to the myth's practical import among poets of the era is key to approaching the figural value of Psyche's marriage to Cupid in the myth, as well as the lovers' subsequent estrangement and Psyche's final trials.[liv] In "A Poem Beginning with a Line from Pindar," the myth's applicability turns on the way sense modalities attach to the variable connotative values within Duncan's many allusions to the story, beginning with the "line" in question:

> *A light foot hears you and the brightness begins*
> god-step at the margins of thought,
> quick adulterous tread at the heart.
> Who is it that goes there?
> Where I see your quick face
> Notes of an old music pace the air,
> Torso-reverberations of the Grecian lyre. (*The Opening of the Field* 62)

In "The Truth and Life of Myth," Duncan remarks that the poem began with his misreading of the puns contained in each of the terms comprising the third line of Wade-Gery and Bowra's translation of Pindar's first Pythian Ode, here included as the italicized first line (*Fictive Certainties* 17). Like seriality, puns in Duncan's work often provide practical hinges between the figural and the literal. "Light foot" fuses the line's staccato prosodic and melic effects with Duncan's queered theophany, framing the speaker as Psyche to the unidentified other's Eros and thereby recalling the etymology of "obedience" in "obey"'s Latin root *oboedire*: literally, "hear in the direction of."

The condition of Psyche's marriage to the daimon—that she not gaze directly on him but only encounter him in darkness—gets mapped onto the visual and acoustic registers of the poem through figures that jointly embody the compositional interplay between semantics and expressive effect. Put simply, if reductively, this means that Eros is a figure of form, which as an "activity intrinsically evident in its own structure" remains irreducible to any local or isolatable instance or plane of signification even as it now exceeds the margins of the work *qua* discrete object. But such an attempt to formulate discursively the poem's activity is bound to prove inadequate insofar as it attempts to bring within the constraint of

reference a mode of intellection that apprehends in simultaneous integration, what Cage called "inclusive" and Creeley called "single," multiple intelligible dimensions that cognition must perforce treat sequentially. In part, the conceit itself makes precisely this case. We see this in the affective compounding that attends the lines' ekphrasis of Psyche's transgression at the moment she turns to view Eros directly in Goya's painting, most prominently in the erotics of wounding:

> In Goya's canvas Cupid and Psyche
> have a hurt voluptuous grace
> bruised by redemption. The copper light
> falling upon the brown boy's slight body
> is carnal fate that sends the soul wailing
> up from blind innocence, ensnared
> by dimness
> into the deprivations of desiring sight.
>
> But the eyes in Goya's painting are soft,
> Diffuse with rapture absorb the flame.
> Their bodies yield out of strength.
> Waves of visual pleasure
> Wrap them in a sorrow previous to their impatience. (62)

Desire and loss constitute a single affective spectrum corresponding to the layering of time and space, sound and vision, as these sense modalities are inflected through the respective media of verse and paint. At stake is the "carnal fate" of Psyche's contact with the daimon, itself a chiasmus of light and flesh in which the self-consciousness touches that which extends just beyond its purview. Just as Psyche's transgression in turning to view Eros directly banishes him at the instant of its realization, we are given sight of the daimon, the *eidos*, as filtered through the physical substrate of Goya's "canvas" as this bears the imprint of history in the strictures of its artistry. In the painting, Psyche's and Cupid's bearings seem asymmetrically synchronized, inverse recoils or reversals that the painter has fixed in time: we see her gaze soften as she turns toward him, ourselves anticipating her corresponding grief in the instant that follows the painting's depiction, while Cupid seems to pause in his rush towards her, whether to embrace her or prevent her gaze is uncertain. Semantically, the lines link Psyche's spectatorship to that of the painting's viewer in the ambiguity as to whether "the deprivations of desiring sight" or "the eyes in Goya's painting" peer into or gaze out from the painting. Psyche's act of beholding, her loss and her desire then figurally map the tension between visual disclosure and the import or effect of value or that we ourselves find in the painting's manifest content, a tension that dialectically conceived is that same historical imprint shaping Goya's craft.

But that moment of loss and alienation also gets refolded into the sonic effects of the lines, where the weaving of sharp "i" and "a" vowels in "Psyche," "grace," "slight," "fate," "wailing," "blind," "deprivations," "desiring sight," "eyes," "painting" "flame," "strength," "waves" and "impatience," in threading a single pattern of sound through the affective terms attached to the visual field, simultaneously crosscuts the dramatic moment of loss taking place in the visual and semantic register, temporally reconstituting it in the aural register as a figure of meaning's relation to sonorous integrity. At this register, to which the volta of "but" pivots our attention, "their bodies yield" not out of incapacity or the

recognition of error but "out of strength." What was recoil in the painting here becomes obedience, generating a recursive relationship between the privation and the theophanic contact that we see in the following line, "waves of visual pleasure wrap them in a sorrow previous to their impatience," where the "sorrow" or yearning that before had followed the fatal moment of disclosure now precedes the "impatience" motivating that same moment. "Waves" seems an odd term to describe painterly effects, and accordingly here the semantics of the line reorient themselves around sonic effects, the lines modulating out of ekphrasis, as yearning and seeing now become simultaneous rather than sequential acts in one of Duncan's most explicitly homoerotic stanzas:

> A bronze of yearning, a rose that burns
> The tips of their bodies, lips,
> Ends of fingers, nipples. He is not wingd
> His thighs are flesh, are clouds
> Lit by the sun in its going down,
> Hot luminescence at the loins of the visible.
>
> But they are not in a landscape.
> They exist in an obscurity. (62)

That we are now in the register of *The Opening of the Field* is made clear in the serial motif of the sun lighting clouds at the moment of its descent, which bookends the volume as it appears in "Often I am Permitted to Return to a Meadow" and the concluding poem "Food for Fire, Food for Thought." The appearance of the motif here transposes Goya's art-historical and Apuleius' allegorical drama of Psyche's loss of Eros into the space of Duncan's own historical milieu. Just as "opening" is paronomastically both a continuance and a beginning, the motif of the setting sun illuminating the clouds infuses the drama of loss, becoming the daimon's own flesh as beheld by Psyche. The pun on burning links Psyche's wounding of that flesh as she accidentally spills lamp oil on Eros in the myth, to the wound of her own yearning at the loss of the daimon through her transgression, to the sun's light as both a trope of visibility and figuration of meaning's belated status relative to sound, in a kind of Gordian knot.

Hence they are no longer in the pictorial space of "a landscape" but in an "obscurity," the non-visual 'darkness' of acoustic space. And yet "they exist" there insofar as this obscurity is unknowing only within the particular regime of the visible. It is for this reason that Duncan's lines then broaden outward into the other events of the plot, taking up both the Olsonian notions of *muthos* or story and obedience or service:

> The dark serves them.
> The oil scalding his shoulder serves them,
> Serves their story. Fate, spinning,
> Knots the threads for Love. (63)

In *The H.D. Book*, underway at the time this poem's publication, Duncan remarks, "reoccurences are rhymes or knots in the web of reality. Suddenly, at the knot of it, we *realize* what is going on" (114). While that statement's wider context is the palimpsestic reading of history Duncan derives from H.D.'s work, here Duncan threads the story of Psyche's trials after her transgression through Olsonian *'istorin*. Having passed in the second

section of the poem through the "passionate dispersion" and "continual ravage" of historical discontinuity pathetically rendered as a travesty on divine afflatus in Eisenhower's 1957 stroke, the third section then returns to the figure of Psyche's obedience, this time in the myth's episode addressing her acts of repentance.

*The H.D. Book* again helps elucidate a broader sense of the poem's latter half, where in "Rites of Participation" Duncan diagnoses that "the drama of our time is the coming of all men into one fate, 'the dream of everyone, everywhere'" (*The H.D. Book* 154). Duncan's depiction of his historical present in that work again deploys the figure of psyche's obedience, itself both a Neoplatonic trope of the lover's ascent and a recurrence of Olson's will of achievement, as a way of coming to terms with the later 20th century's epochal shift from 19th century imperial expansion to a decolonized technological global society:

> The inspiration of Marx bringing economies into comparison and imagining a world commune, of Darwin bringing species into comparison and imagining a world family of the living in evolution, of Frazer in bringing magic, rituals and gods, into comparison and imagining a world cult—these inspirations toward a larger community of Man belong to the nineteenth century of imperialist expansions. In Time, this has meant our "when" involves and is involved in an empire that extends into the past and future beyond times and eras, beyond the demarcations of history. Not only the boundaries of states or civilizations but also the boundaries of historical periods are inadequate to define the vital figure in which we are involved. "For the intense yearning which each of them has towards the other," so the witch Diotima tells Socrates in Plato's *Symposium*, "does not appear to be the desire of lover's intercourse, but of something else which the soul of either evidently desires and cannot tell, and of which she has only a dark and doubtful presentiment." (*The H.D. Book* 154)

Diotima's speech to Socrates from *Symposium* we know as the *locus classicus* for the tradition in which Eros acts as a *daimonic* intermediary between the soul or psyche and the forms. This framing gets systematically developed in Plotinus' doctrine of beauty, where perceptual intentionality facilitates consciousness' purification from its initial impulsion towards corporeal objects towards its final ascent to the intelligible.

Duncan reorients the Platonic and Neoplatonic hierarchy along a horizontal axis in accordance with the "dissolving of boundaries" he views as the mark of his own historical moment:

> The intense yearning, the desire for something else, of which we have only a dark and doubtful presentiment, remains, but our *arête*, our ideal of vital being, rises not in our identification with a paradigm in a hierarchy of higher forms but in our identification with the process of design beyond our own figure. To compose such a symposium of the whole, such a totality, all the old excluded orders must be included. The female, the lumpen-proletariat, the foreign; the criminal and failure—all that has been outcast and vagabond in our consideration of the figure of Man—must return to be admitted in the creation of what we are. (*The H.D. Book* 154)

Citing Sartre's and Aime Cesaire's statements about the historical relation between poetry, knowledge and crisis in specific reference to Olson's work of educational reform, Ammiel Alcalay has recently argued that "poetry as a form of knowledge has played a crucial role" (*a little history* 12) among both subaltern groups in their struggle for decolonization and marginal groups within residually hegemonic nation-states during the postwar period. Two corollary facets mark out the identification Duncan imagines in this passage, where poetry acts as a form of knowledge unique to his global contemporaneity. As previously illustrated in his exchange with Creeley over the changing status of measure, Duncan's understanding of a symposium of the whole envisions poetics playing a central role (as opposed to the peripheral status of luxury and consumption) within both the life of the individual and to culture, thereby severing the poetry's traditional dependence on genre. Such a framing shows what gets left out from both the model of his poetics as textual collage and from the attitude that would see Duncan's theosophical family background to account for his worldview as a kind of proto-new age syncretism. In effect, textual collage and metaphysical syncretism both leave out from the explanation what each offers the other by dividing compositional process from life process. By treating them as mere formal effects, textual collage isolates Duncan's allusive combinations from what he call the "transformation of the ground," the resolutely avant-gardist effort to conceive of composition as an act of psychological and social transformation exceeding mere craft (*The H.D. Book* 79). Conversely, syncretism imagines the fusion of heterogeneous systems as itself yielding a new *system* of knowledge or belief, without acknowledging that the basic mode of this combinatory operation is composition itself, the fluid act of "identification with the process of design beyond our own figure," that fundamentally inverts symbolic systems' constitutive subordination of experience to cognition.

Psyche's obedience to Eros, then, instantiates not only a mode of intellection but also a discernible historical condition. Taking up this implication, the poem's third section reiterates the motifs of yielding and historical senescence, which had previously connected the sun's descent to the American scene of an ailing Eisenhower, in the figure of the Old Man at Pisa, upheld by a lizard. Here Psyche's penitent sorting of grains forms a subject rhyme with Pound's ideogrammics as both a methodology and an historical episode:

> In the story the ants help. The old man at Pisa
> mixd in whose mind
> (to draw the sorts) are all seeds
> *as a lone ant from a broken ant-hill*
> had part restored by an insect, was
> upheld by a lizard
>
> (to draw the sorts)
> *the wind is part of the process*
> defines a nation of the wind—
> father of many notions,
>
> Who?
> Let the light into the dark? began
> The many movements of the passion?
>
> West

from east men push.
The islands of the blessd
(cursed) that swim below the sun,

*man upon whom the sun has gone down!* (65-66)

The *Pisan Cantos* double as a document of historical catastrophe and a recuperative blueprint. But the metaphorical relationships are themselves mixed, overdetermined: Pound is at once the "lone ant" helping Psyche and abject Psyche herself, "restored by an insect." Pound is at once anti-hero, one of the "idiots fumbling at the bride's door" in his equivalence as "old man" with the earlier list of presidents, and progenitor, "father of many notions." The impossibility of arriving at a final squaring of these historical subject rhymes in terms of fixed equivalence itself motivates the figures of counter-rotation that recur throughout the poem. In lines like, "I see always the under side turning," where the under side refers in part to the "great scars of wrong" that mark American history and Whitman's "glorious mistake" in underwriting such a national legacy, as well as in the volume's serial figure of children playing ring around the rosy "to the right" and "to the left," this counter-rotation itself extends the recoiling motion of the bodies in Goya's painting.

As before, though, and this is in part what the recoiling movement shows, the figure ultimately only allegorizes its own effect: the sun lighting its own descent, like the tautology of a theater of theater or the notion of a gestural language whose expressive value is simply itself. Obedience makes intelligible that unnamed remainder or additional element that enters into the space left open by the concept, around which the conceptual medium of language gathers emulatively. Paronomasia best exemplifies the intelligibility within Duncan's serial form because it collapses the literal and figural by tethering a polysemy that is not itself dependent on strict equivalence or substitution to sonic identity. "To draw the sorts" crosses both a visual reading, referring to the ideogram's use of pictorial values to yield irreducibly precise definitions (i.e. "the sorts of things" as their categories), with a sonic reading in which "drawing" figures the pull, like drawing water from a well, of prosodic measure verbally "sorting" emergence into rhythmic ratios. Semantically the word always points to something else, but phenomenologically that something else is just *that*:

that foot informd
by the weight of all things
that can be elusive
no more than a nearness to the mind
Of a single image

Oh yes! This
most dear
the catalyst force that renders clear
the days of life from the surrounding medium! (67)

At each serial moment one is "informd" by a confluence of "all things," just as the near-iambics of the final two lines flow out of the tension gathered around the interaction between the superlative exclamation and the caesura and enjambment at "oh yes! this / most dear," which in turn follows upon the previous stanza's rhythmic hesitations. And along with this gestative sense of "informd," the moment doubles as "the information [that]

flows / that is yearning," as one of the poem's concluding lines puts it. The image of intellection that this stanza gives in its final lines is that of a force working catalytically to bring into focus or relief the content of a lived condition, "the days of life" that include both the individual and a larger collectivity.

Taking up this model of knowledge as clear discernment through figures of visual focus, the art critical quasi-footnote Duncan appends in prose just prior to the poem's last three stanzas analogizes the cumulative effect of the poem's own recursive figuration to the "mosaic" structure of Pindar's own art. Another prose document, circulated the same year as *The Opening of the Field* and read enthusiastically by his friends M.C. Richards and John Cage, makes a similar appeal to mosaic design as the basis of a new methodology. By the time Marshall McLuhan's report on the project in understanding new media, prepared for the Office of Education at the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, was reworked to become *Understanding Media* in 1964, the methodological concerns on which the report dwells at some length had receded in favor of advancing several of McLuhan's now-famous formula to a popular audience. McLuhan's methodological reflections in the report, though, and the solution at which he had arrived by the time of *Understanding Media*'s later publication, prove indispensible to understanding that work's more quotable phrases and terms, such as "the medium is the message" or "hot" and "cool" media.

McLuhan's appeal to the mosaic approach begins with the initial question: "Why have the effects of media, whether speech, writing, photography or radio, been overlooked by social observers through the past 3500 years of the western world?" (*Report on Project in Understanding New Media* 1). The answer proposed is that the difficulty of assessing the effects of media resides in "the power of media themselves to impose their own assumptions on our modes of perception" (1). The problem, as he explains it, is that "media testing has been done within the parameters of older media—especially speech and print" (2) with the result that previous analysis was conducted within the same frameworks that "anaesthetize those very modes of awareness in which they are most operative"(4). It has become fairly common practice to cite McLuhan's indebtedness to modernist formulae of the form/content relationship in developing his "medium is the message" dictum.[lv] While it is certainly true that he was influenced by Kenner, Lewis and Pound, all of whom he worked with, the full epistemological implications of McLuhan's applying a modernist formal insight to cultural technologies' historical schematization of phenomenological experience has not as often been exhaustively explored. In part, this is because, by his own admission, culture has not yet developed the instruments with which to register the obsolescence of its own instruments.

Olson had critiqued Artaud for relying on analogy to characterizing the function and effect of object-less art, and we can see a similar dilemma motivating McLuhan's appeal to a mosaic method in the sociohistorical analysis of electronic media's development and widespread dissemination. The term "mosaic" itself McLuhan takes from Georg von Bekesy's comparative analysis of two- and three-dimentional painting as a basis for mosaic methods of acoustical research in *Experiments in Hearing*. Mosaic provides a useful model because it generates multi-dimensional visual effects while itself remaining two-dimensional, and so provides a useful precedent for studying the effects of auditory phenomena that (as we've known since *The Birth of Tragedy*) dissolve the fixed perspectival vantage point of visual phenomena. As information by the late 1950s had become instantly transmittable across the globe through both visual and auditory channels through the development of audio recording technologies, discursive avenues corresponding to the single perspective of three-dimensional painting were no longer adequate to the task of analysis:

> When information moves to and from all directions and locations at the same moment, we return to a mode of experience that is structured as an auditory field of simultaneous relations. Even our visual experience is now a mosaic of items assembled from every part of the globe, moment-by-moment. Lineal perspective and pictorial organization cannot cope with this situation. (3)

The "mode of experience" that concerns McLuhan is the "effect" rather than the "impression" (in the sense of impingement) (1) of non-print media on the social consciousness. As we saw in the case of Picasso, effects designate referential 'objects' that are elusive by definition because their presence is registered 'outside,' so to speak, of the referential frame of qualia or sense data. McLuhan's penchant for the gnomic formulation over systematic exposition has at times been regarded as an indicator of a lack of intellectual rigor or of his collusion with the advertising industry. While McLuhan's alliances were certainly diverse and often academically unorthodox, his oblique approach to communicating his ideas developed out of his recognizing the basic incommensurability between his analytic "objects" and the residual epistemic tools of reflective culture. Translated back into the terms and metrics of reflective culture and reconstituted there as doctrine, which amounts to collapsing their mosaic structure into single perspective uniformity, McLuhan's pronouncements do appear to add up to the technocratic determinism of which his detractors have accused him. But the media technologies themselves may be somewhat of a red herring in understanding the real import of McLuhan's ideas, otherwise how are we to read statements like "oral means *total* primarily, *spoken* accidentally" (*Veri-Voco-Visual Explorations* 3). That McLuhan was as much concerned with transformations of human sensibility, which are impossible to measure empirically because they constitute the conditions of possibility for empirical measurement itself rather than its object or content, is apparent in his initial appeal to the mosaic method.

In light of McLuhan's reflections on the methodological conundrum his project presented at its inception, his subsequently diminished emphasis on the mosaic approach, and the proposed solution at which he arrived in publishing *Understanding Media* for a popular audience, remain almost as instructive as his explicit formulae for media effects. Among the several practical proposals the report on media offers up, McLuhan suggests that secondary schools are ideal sites at which to conduct research into the effect of electronic media because students both "had not in their own lives become aware of any vested interest in acquired knowledge" and "have very great experience of media, but no habits of observation or critical awareness" (*Report on Project in Understanding New Media* 4). School children served as more accurate and instructive test subjects in studying the effects of electronic media because their sensoria remained relatively unconditioned by either print media or by institutional and ideological investments attached to print-based epistemologies. McLuhan makes a similar point in his preface to the third edition of *Understanding Media*, though his test subjects have shifted slightly:

> The slang term "cool" conveys a good deal besides the old idea of "hot." It indicates a kind of commitment and participation in situations that involves all of one's faculties. In that sense, one can say that automation is cool, whereas the older mechanical kinds of specialist or fragmented "jobs" are

> "square." The "square" person and situation are not "cool" because they manifest little of the habit of depth involvement of our faculties. … The section on "media hot and cool" confused many reviewers of *Understanding Media* who were unable to recognize the very large structural changes in human outlook that are occurring today. Slang offers an immediate index to changing perception. Slang is based not on theories but on immediate experience. The student of media will not only value slang as a guide to changing perception, but he will also study media as bringing about new perceptual habits. (*Understanding Media* v-vi)

Mosaic structure had been a response to the paradox of representational intelligence and affective-motor contact that Duncan's use of the myth of Psyche and Cupid had taken up as its formal problem. Children had proven to be the best informants when investigating the intellective modalities of motor contact because they did not rely compulsively on discursive formulations that alienate those effects from their native environment in the sensorium, in the process distorting them in the very attempt to make them available to representation. By the third printing of *Understanding Media*, "youth" had shifted status from a psycho-biological to a sociological category, though the rationale remained the same. But this shift from psychological to sociological framings of youth also entailed the reframing of McLuhan's 'mode of experience' from first-person phenomenological terms to third-person socio-historical terms, as an indicator of a culturally diffuse sensibility rather than simply private experience. Of course, this kind of epochal claim had already been present in the report of 1960, but lacking a proper societal locus it had to construct its total image piecemeal from an assemblage of discrete and non-totalized partial observations. In the counterculture, McLuhan was able for the first time to attach his thesis to a single historical "object."

The slang term "cool" that indexes a wider range of commitments within the culture doubles as the term for what McLuhan's calls "low-definition" media in the initial report. High and low definition media, redubbed "hot" and "cool" in *Understanding Media*, differ in terms of their respective ratios of content to audience participation; the former, in supplying a higher degree of articulated sensory content, solicit a lower degree of affective (or what McLuhan calls 'tactile') involvement on the part of their audience. Conversely, low definition or 'cool' media reduce impression and thereby heighten effect. McLuhan formalizes this relationship according to the principle of structural impact versus subjective completion. The relationship here is fundamentally the same as the principle we have explored variously in Olson's "obedience," M.C. Richards' "yielding" and most extensively in "Poem Beginning with a Line by Pindar"'s trials and marriage of Cupid and Psyche: leaving the nerve set open allows for a relative de-schematization of the perceptual fields as the habitual order of primacy between senses (e.g. the visual perspective with its cognitive bias vs. acoustic and tactile simultaneity) and their respective intelligibilities become reoriented.

These modernist parallels provide part of the rationale for McLuhan's claim that the slang usage of the word "cool" similarly "indicates a kind of commitment and participation in situations that involve all of one's faculties" (v). One particular set of situations had garnered enough attention and cache to serve as a reliable object of McLuhan's reference here. By 1964, "happenings" had shifted from an emergent set of shared cultural practices to become emblematic of a distinct cultural formation and ethos. For this same reason, Duncan could deploy the term in the late 60s, characterizing the Keatsian modality as "the truth…not of What Is, but of What is Happening," later elaborating this intellection in terms

of Pound's Confucian ideogram for Sincerity or "bringing to focus" as "what is happening in the composition itself: the work of art [as] itself the field we would render the truth of" (*Fictive Certainties* 48). To understand how the category of "happening" could expand from art practice to reach the level of diffusion that McLuhan invokes under the aegis of 'youth culture' in *Understanding Media*, it helps to go back to Cage's course at the New School in 1958.

As was the case with *Theater Piece No. 1*, the Happenings movement that directly followed Cage's course on experimental composition had precedents. In what he claimed was the first public usage of the term, Allan Kaprow cited Pollock's action painting as a precursor to "bold creators" of the future who will use "paint, chairs, food, electric and neon lights, smoke, water, old socks, a dog" to "disclose entirely unheard-of happenings and events, found in garbage cans, police files, hotel lobbies" (Kaprow 9). More recently, Jenny Sorkin has drawn attention to M.C. Richards' own 1958 event, *Clay Things to Touch, to Plant in, to Hang up, to Cook in, to Look at, to Put Ashes in, to Wear, and for Celebration*, as an important precedent not only for the ideas developed at length in *Centering* but for instructional character that would define many documents of the Happenings movement and the Fluxus group that would follow.[lvi] But Cage's class, like the theater piece, brought key personalities and tendencies together in common cause for the first time, putting Kaprow, Dick Higgins, Al Hansen, Alison Knowles, George Brecht, La Monte Young, Yoko Ono and others all in one place.

Cage's 1956 course description for "Composition," later revised to "Experimental Composition" in 1958, proposes "a course in musical composition with technological, musicological and philosophical aspects, open to those with or without previous training." Despite its ostensible focus on musical composition, Al Hansen recalls informing a delighted Cage of his complete lack of musical training on the first day in class, explaining in response to Cage's inquiry that his interest in the class stemmed from a quote by "Eisenstein that all the art forms meet in the film frame and if I was going to make experimental films I wanted to know more about music and the most experimental composers. This seemed to pacify him beautifully. Everyone else seemed to think that it was a good idea too" (Hansen 94). The exchange illustrates the heuristic value of treating Cage's class as itself a privileged instance in the development of happenings and intermedia art, especially in the context of total art's relationship to open-form poetry: whereas Kaprow claimed action painting as the basis for objectless art, and Richards' template was ceramics, and Cage's own exempla were poetry, music and Zen, and the gamut of critics and artists would cite Dada, Surrealism, Wagner's *gesamkunstwerk* and any other number of typological precursors, the significance of the 1960s developments lay in the *other thing* that passed through the intersection of specialized and exclusive media and genres.

What afforded that passage was the situation or environment, making the class itself as useful a genealogical marker as any possible generic precedent for total art. Kaprow's remarks in a 1958 essay on total art reinforce this sense that Happenings are distinguished by the fact that the event or scenario provides the regulative principle of its own development:

> For instance, if we join a literal space with a painted space, and these two spaces to a sound, we achieve the "right" relationship by considering each component a quantity and quality on an imaginary scale. So much of such and such color is juxtaposed to so much of this or that type of sound. The "balance" (if one wants to call it that) is primarily an environmental one.

> Whether it is art depends on how deeply involved we become with the elements of the whole and how fresh these elements are (as though they were "natural," like the sudden fluttering of a butterfly) when they occur next to each other. (11)

To the extent that the governing principle of composition was participation in the environment, "Black Mountain" as a shared circumstance rather than an institution could be said to be the main precursor to Cage's class, a point lost neither on Cage nor his students. The mobile university had been floated around as an idea in the institution's final days, with Olson recalling in a late 60's interview that he had even been approached about a Black Mountain radio program. Sorkin cites Richards' letter to Olson in 1957, around the time she and Cage were living together with Cunningham and others at Stony Brook, where she expresses interest in starting a "weekend Black Mountain" (197). Such dot connecting obviously runs against the basic tenor of Cage's interest in the event's unpredictability, which helps explain Hansen's remarks when he writes "to a great extent, and probably to John Cage's disgust, the class became a little version of Black Mountain College. (It is on the basis of that season, with both Dick Higgins and myself in full glory, that Cage is said to have vowed that he would never again accept students whose last name began with an "H.")" (Hansen 95). But while naming "Black Mountain" itself as the major significant precedent for the developments of Cage's course at the New School risks imposing too prefabricated of a template on what took place, like a mesostic with too many of the same consonant, such a perspective has the virtue of lending a greater internal contour to collaborative basis of intermedia art.

This in turn preserves the radical character of Happenings because the interest remains the unnamable coherence at the intersection of things, like McLuhan's sum of mosaic effects, rather than a diverse set of explicable procedures. Kaprow, for instance, refers to this situational basis of Happenings' novelty with the ever-problematic term "context, the place of conception and enactment" in an early-60's essay on the practice, explaining that this context or "'habitat,' gives to [the event] not only a space, a set of relationships to the various things around it, and a range of values, but an overall atmosphere as well, which penetrates it and whoever experiences it" (18). Substituting context in the place of a generic genealogy in this way also has the effect, however, of constituting the identity of the 'object' in question on the hairs' breadth limit of its own disappearance, a dilemma Olson accused Artaud of shirking responsibility towards by relying on analogy for descriptive purposes. Kaprow seems aware of just this issue when he qualifies his own uneasiness with this definition, writing,

> Habitats have always had this effect, but it is especially marvelous now, when our advanced art approaches a fragile but marvelous life, one that maintains itself by a mere thread, melting the surroundings, the artist, the work, and everyone who comes to it into an elusive, changeable configuration. (18)

That "mere thread" on which Happenings distinguished themselves from the world was woven from what Creeley, writing in the same year as Kaprow's remark, called "the hair-edge of feeling *qua* sensation and feeling *qua* effect" (*Collected Essays* 172). We should be unsurprised, then, by Hansen's anecdote, during his account of the New York City Audio-Visual Group that he, Higgins and other members of Cage's course began organizing in the late-50s and early 60s, that "there was a backwash in New York of poets from the 1957-58

San Francisco poetry-literature revolution" who were subsequently integrated into their community (Hansen 104). Object-less art and open-form poetry were more than analogically linked but shared a common 'object' in the single intelligence. Writing in his essay "The New World" of three new poets from that San Francisco scene (Snyder, McClure and Whalen), Creeley describes the challenge of contemporary open-form in fundamentally the same terms as Kaprow's precarious definition of Happenings: "When the imagination projects for itself a world more real than that which it literally experiences, this is hell, a forfeit, as Dante said, of the goods of the intellect. Because such goods are relational, *joiners*, describe a method of being-with, otherwise impossible" (172). Whereas in poetry, Creeley's Dantescan 'hell' was to split reference from the event of utterance, projecting a world more real than the literal experience of speech, in Happenings it was the failure to join configured events within a single habitat. In either case, the failure consisted in splitting life and art into separate spheres and success, to the extent that one could speak of it, consisted in their fusion.

Citing the same term that Olson in 1953 had claimed would threaten a proceduralism failing to get a handle on its own methodology, Creeley identifies this forfeiture of the goods of the intellect as "*sensationalism,* i.e. the repetition of a known sensation" (172). In other words, sensationalism is the reproduction of feeling-qua-sensation, the mere-ness of sense data, rather than construction on the basis of feeling-qua-effect; or, as Creeley puts it, "[sensationalism] is what happens when all qualification exists as a method of feeling rather than as a posited consequence of actions" (172). Chance, which Kaprow calls "the most problematical quality found in Happenings" had in this sense functioned apotropaically, as a kind of internal defense against method's devolving into sensationalism through self-conscious deliberation, making it a "method that becomes manifestly unmethodical if one considers the pudding more proof than the recipe" (19). Chance would therefore prove unproblematic provided one could relinquish its fixed status as procedure as one entered into the exigencies of the situation, where it would ensure continued qualification in the consequences of actions (what Kaprow characterizes as the 'freshness' of elements or feeling-qua-effect). The danger lay in the fact that, by delegating responsibility to the 'recipe' in this way, one risked making the latter into the prime actor, forfeiting both the "pudding" and the goods of the intellect by making chance itself into a fixed method of feeling. As a consequence, the Happenings movement as a whole comes to be seen merely as, at best, the sociological critique of art institutions for which it has at times been mistaken. At worst it becomes mere randomness. In 1961, Kaprow could both acknowledge this danger and brush it aside:

> If artists grasp the import of that word *chance* and accept it (no easy achievement in our culture), then its methods needn't invariably cause their work to reduce to either chaos or a bland indifference, lacking in concreteness and intensity, as in a table of numbers. On the contrary, the identities of those artists who employ such techniques are very clear. It is odd that when artists give up certain hitherto privileged aspects of self, so that they cannot always "correct" something according to their taste, the work and artist frequently come out on top. And when they come out on bottom, it is a very concrete bottom! (20)

After over four decades of conceptual and performance art projects, that bottom has perhaps become less concrete in the public mind. As was the case with the double-

functioning of McLuhan's "cool" as a technical term for low-definition media and a second-order indexical term of participation in a speech community, that hairs-breadth difference between "a fragile but marvelous life" and "pseudo-sensibility" was a matter of grasping the import, the use, of the word "chance" so that it would not be debased into a method of feeling, yielding work that amounted to a table of numbers or random grouping of known sensations. As a practice, Happenings had therefore to anticipate the cultural formation and shared sensibility that would complete it.

This tendency becomes even more pronounced, and more precarious, when we turn from Happenings as discrete, if unrepeatable, events to Fluxus as a set of practices oriented around the direct engagement with the structure of experience as such. An emblematic Fluxus invention, the Fluxkit, consists not of an event but of an object designed to solicit non-determinate modifications in the qualitative texture of experience among users willing to participate. Designed by various artists and distributed through mail order by George Maciunas beginning around 1964, Fluxkits such as George Brecht's *Games and Puzzles*, Alison Knowles *Bean Rolls* and Ay-O's *Fingerboxes* only superficially resemble Duchampian readymades. Whereas readymades operated indexically by repurposing found objects as artworks, indirectly inviting the viewer's critical reflexivity about the art institution, Fluxkits functioned as lures and prompts for direct "audience" interaction, constituting the experiential field itself as the "medium" of the work. Hannah Higgins characterizes this "experiential dynamic" of Fluxus practice in terms of the "interpenetration of human consciousness and the world of things" (31). Higgins regards as the "ultimate goal of Fluxus" this engagement with what David Michael Levin, invoking the Merleau-Pontian strain of embodied phenomenology, calls "ontological thought," in modes of relationship that "form multiple pathways… towards … the expansion of 'the setting of human experience'" (37).

Moreover, unlike Duchamp's ironic "R. Mutt" riffing on creative genius and authorial agency, Fluxkits staged these pathways within the context of social networks featuring a plurality of inputs and outputs, from the assemblage character of the Fluxkits' incorporation of work by various practitioners, to Maciunas' use of mail order distribution, to their mock-business structure of cost and exchange value. Again, Creeley's remarks in "The New World" prove germane, when he describes contemporary poetry as ideally suited to

> our time in which relationships, rather than the hierarchies to which these refer, are dominant. What is meant by politics, marriage, education, religion, or love itself, become modalities, terms between, people, the *you* and *me* of the subjective universe. If it is not *my* hat, then possibly it is *yours*; or if not yours, *his* –or *theirs*, a collective enterprise, yet one *possessional* insistence. The hat itself is an occasion (170).

Insofar as it was "basically relational," Creeley continues, poetry was the linguistic mode best adapted to "reflect this sense of emphasis" and "succeed in forcing a passage between individual sensibility and shared commitments" (170). While Fluxkits could actually yield the experience of everyday objects like hats as occasions of possessional insistence, poetry could make non-propositionally intelligible within linguistic media what George Brecht in the Fluxus newsletter announcing Fluxkits could only famously describe as "something unnameable in common" around which the group had "simply naturally coalesced to publish and perform their work" (Brecht "Something About Fluxus." Quoted in Higgins 70).

Brecht's frequently quoted remark serves to illustrate the poles of total liberation and total collapse that mark this phase of the avant-garde's development, with the indeterminate status of reference in "something unnameable" at once promising radical, unprecedented novelty and threatening a complete lack of common purpose. In making the object rather than the event or environment into the locus of activity, Fluxkits further expanded or deterritorialized the domain of practice by making the distinction between feeling-qua-sensation and feeling-qua-effect even more fine and tenuous. Happenings made experience into the medium at the cost of fixing that medium within localized sites and scenarios, whereas Fluxkits implied a new mobility and diffusion to the experiential medium because, as objects, they were mobile, while their object-status was itself only an occasion. But without the appropriate mode of participation to meet them nothing could distinguish Fluxkits from mere objects, even practical jokes, rather than occasions. And, one might ask, occasions of what? As practices, Fluxkits could not ensure that mode of participation without either formally soliciting it, thereby reattaching the object to the conventions of a single genre and medium, or dictating it communicatively and explicitly, which again would amount to the repetition of a known sensation.

Dick Higgins explores some of these dynamics in the first issues of the *Something Else Newsletter*, the initial publication of Something Else Press, when he discusses what he calls the "arc of invitingness" that all objects occasion. Invitingness is Higgins' way of talking about the space of implication around the quiddity of any object:

> The apparent unassumingness of emptiness is what gives it its charm. Yet this charm is very fragile. Put something in an empty room and it is no longer empty.
> Perhaps we can conceive then of an absolute nothingness, rather than of some absolute. Of a table just waiting for something to be on it, of a mind just waiting to think about supper. We might call this somethingness. Or anythingness (a very dangerous thought). Or maybe invitingness. The last term is the one I will use. It is clumsy but clear. ("Games of Art" 1)

The 'arc' of invitingness refers specifically to the way that same space of implication necessarily exists on a relative spectrum whose poles range from the complete openness of indeterminate being, what Higgins identifies here with the phenomenon of the empty room's fragile charm, to determinate being as defined through functionality, as in a thing's use value, or mere apperceptive identification. Compositional choices in single media works, Higgins points out, are a matter of engagement with this arc: "every time an artist makes a choice, this choice is implicitly projected onto this arc in different ways" (1). In the third chapter, we saw this to be the case with Picasso's redeployment of illusionistic conventions and Kandinsky's idea of "appeal." Intermedia singles out and abstracts this arc as both the primary object of composition and the primary compositional problem:

> But suppose we conceive next of an intermedium between this arc and the arts, which consists in the artist being extremely conscious about the projection of his artistic choices onto this arc of invitingness, perhaps even to the point that this concern becomes primary. We then reach a point where the rules become paramount. If we are clear where we are, there is no problem. If we are not, there is. (2)

Rules became a way of ensuring the visibility of the arc of invitingness without re-embedding it in a media-specific composition, making rules in effect a substitution for either a generically-coded object or a site and event. In this sense, Fluxkit's object-status merely provides an occasion with which to establish a set of rules, giving relief to an arc of invitingness within the fabric of appearance generated through or against that particular object's discernable range of properties and uses, but extending beyond the object itself insofar as its particular practical context had dislocated the object from any strict use value. As the substitution perhaps suggests, this solution in a sense only kicks the can further down the road, which is why Higgins in the third essay in *The Something Else Newsletter* series makes the starkly un-Cagean assertion that "the specificity of the artist's intentions has to be passed along if the work is to suggest anything to think about, which is normally a prerequisite for comprehensibility and impact, whether visual or sensuous or emotional" (3). Higgins concedes that intention gives even the systemic or rule-based character of intermedia works the requisite 'specificity' to distinguish between a practical scenario in which "one is told what to do and one asks, why?" and one in which "one gets the picture and joins the fun," though he hedges on his final definition of specificity as being "whatever most efficiently defines the artist's intentions in as many ways as possible" (4).

But as Del Close and John Brent make abundantly clear on their audio recording "Basic Hip" from the LP *How to Speak Hip*, there was in fact already a word in circulation perfectly suited to reconciling the antinomy between medium-independence and compositional allurement: the verb "to dig." I am no more being facetious as I write this than Olson was being facetious, in spite of his inebriation, when at the 1965 Berkeley Poetry Conference he told the audience, "a poet, when he's alive, whether he talks or reads you his poems it's the same thing, dig that!"[lvii] McLuhan's claim entailed its own kind of incitement to total participation, like the *vita nuova* of Duncan's lived poetics, which probably explains why it was lost on some. The truth in Close's wry commentary when his square reporter explains in an aside, "ladies and gentlemen, now you begin to see some of our problems with the hip language: each hip word or phrase carries with it an implication of the speaker's background and his involvement in hip society," is protected by the irony implicit in any etic attempt to explicate sensibility:

> Square Ethnographer: In other words the phrase, "I dig" means not only "I understand" but "I am a special sort of person who understands in a very special way."
>
> Geets Romo: Yeah, that's exactly what I said!
>
> Square Ethnographer: In other words, I am saying, "I am hip!"
>
> Geets Romo: Dig yourself, baby! You got a way to go![lviii]

To dig, per Higgins' paradoxical requirement, defines the user's intention in as many ways as possible. Seeing how this is the case means coming to terms with the real import of the culture that emerged in the two or three decades after the second World War, and understanding the role played by the artists whose work we have been examining in building that culture. Close and Brent's joke just serves to illustrate Higgins' point that within the so-called Games of Art "these rules establish a community of participants who are... conscious of behaving in similar ways." At the same time, its tongue-in-cheek quality gives negative

expression to the genuine profundity of the life into which such modes of participation introduced one. McLuhan's epochal claim gives some intimation of that profundity, even as it was almost inevitable that it would be misunderstood. McLuhan found common cause with the counterculture, evident in Something Else Press's publication of *Verbi-Voco-Visual Explorations*, McLuhan's other significant work after *Understanding Media*, because each in a sense completed the other in making explicit (a graphocentric practice if ever there was one) the turn culture had taken in the 20th century, like the square ethnographer and his hipster informant Geets Romo.

Obviously, the concept of "cool" originates first in African American culture before migrating for various reasons into the general public imaginary, and this chapter has refrained from taking into account many other significant threads taking place contemporaneously. From the late-40's on, the Beat movement played a crucial role in shaping both the ethos and the popular representations of countercultural sensibility, and a fuller picture would require a much more extensive consideration of both the Beats' contributions to and their appropriations from the wider cultural formations. But such more easily clichéd features of postwar "bohemianism" are potentially the most misleading aspects of the counterculture's development because, as its most easily identifiable signifiers, they threaten to reduce the idea as a whole to merely a set of manipulable postures. Caricatures notwithstanding, McLuhan's thesis that, by around 1960 or so, culture had returned to acoustic space, his technical term for the kind of total involvement we have been tracing, named the aggregate effect of the local practices this chapter has attempted to make conceptually concrete. Those practitioners in turn provided McLuhan with the social aggregate and group subjectivity that his ideas required in the absence of available post-literate epistemic tools in the academic institution with which to grasp the developments of the historical present.

Of course, I am trying in part to lend greater respectability to the whole premise of counterculture in claiming that its irradiation from avant-garde practice in the postwar ought to be seen as the emergence of a trans-conceptual epistemic paradigm, of shared conditions of intelligibility within the body politic that not only made possible or conceivable but in local instances actualized a collective re-integration of knowledge and experience, opening onto what can only be defined as new realizations of objectivity itself. But beyond that particular aim, I have been trying to show the stakes of what modernist open-form made possible: the direct recognition that each person literally *is* the world, that scale is a mystification and trap of reference, and that we ultimately have no choice but to make that world anew, continuously. "Remembering such cases," Duncan writes, "we may see the poet's defense in a new light" (*The H.D. Book* 56). For the statements that matter to be properly heard, like the following from Creeley's introduction to Tom Clark's biography, we need to hear them in the proper space:

> Like so much of that initiating edge of the American place, Olson was self-invented, made his world both with and of his mind insistently. One recalls W.C. Williams writing, "a new world / is only a new mind. / And the mind and the poem / are all a piece." Olson valued immensely what he spoke of as "mindedness." I would take his sense of one's "second birth," that coming into the world as fact of oneself, to be the possibility inherent, "that we are only / as we find out we are." Just so the emphasis upon "the use," that which one makes of oneself and by oneself, the complement to the

social body, the "polis," he kept equally primary (*Charles Olson: The Poet's Life* i).

To enter that space without its being swallowed up in the world of discourse and reference, against the domination of which Olson's whole life was effectively dedicated, one needs to see the effects of what was done. Only with an adequate view to such effects can we have productive conversations about the further implications, consequences and results of what was done.

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**Chapter One**
**Chapter One**

[i] In sophisticated narrow expressivism, as Englander helpfully explains, "the thoughts expressed by non-linguistic art derive from the artist's capacity for linguistic expression" (904).

[ii] Jurgen Habermas. "Myth and Ritual." *YouTube*, uploaded by Berkley Center, August 14, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA4iw3V0o1c

[iii] I mention in passing that a fruitful line of inquiry would explore, as Bellah does in his work, the relationship of the Hebrew prophets to the broader archive of the Abrahamic tradition, the relationship of the Confucian anthologies to the pre-Confucian oral tradition contained for instances in the *Book of Songs* and the relationship of the Buddhist *Tripitaka* to the Brahminical tradition.

[iv] Cf. "The whole field of education is affected—There is no end of detail that is without significance. Education would begin by placing in the mind of the student the nature of knowledge—in the dead state and the nature of the force which may energize it. This would clarify his field at once—He would then see the use of data" (224).

**Chapter Two**

[v] Which is to say, for Ranciere, since Romanticism reframed the historical conditions of art's visibility from those oriented towards mimesis to the specific mode of sensible being given determinate conceptual shape in the discourse of sensate cognition known as aesthetics.

[vi] Think, for instance, of the transition in poetry afforded by the influence of Poe's "Philosophy of Composition," itself a satire of Romantic organicist notions, on a generation of Symbolist poets who would take their lead from Baudelaire in his endorsement of Poe's tenets in that essay. Closer to the visual artists of the period we have the example of the role played by the *"petite sensation*" in Cezanne's work, or, later on, Kandinsky's concept of "appeal" and "inner necessity." Such an emergently constructivist view of form and effect can be seen as a reduction of artistic practice to its bare essentials insofar as artists begin to cut out the middle man of representation and start attempting to distill the beautiful in its most technical sense, now frequently brought under the heading of "intensity" or some

other term. It is a reduction that cuts both ways, though, because form becomes isolable only in contradistinction to the materials and conventions, which as Ranciere points out are essentially the same normative features through which "Art" burrows its niche in the larger distribution of social activities, that provide it with a kind of infrastructure. The degree of concentration that form achieves in this period, in other words, is necessarily ephemeral insofar as it effaces its own historical conditions of possibility through its standardization as a model for future creative practice.

[vii] See, for instance, James Clifford's discussion of the semi-fictive construction of the ethnographic other as a necessary counterpart in the development of the ethnographer as a specialized cultural authority between the years of 1900-1950 in his chapter "On Ethnographic Authority" (*The Predicament of Culture* 21-55).

[viii] Interestingly, contemporary interest in macroanalysis of literature suggested by recent approaches such as Franco Moretti's "distant reading" and Wai Chee Dimock's notion of "deep time" suggest a renewed (and, frankly, surprising) sympathy to broadly-scaled comparative analyses in the context of literary studies.

[ix] For a more extensive reconstruction of the development of anthropological and ethnographic disciplines in the 19th and 20th century, see Catherine Bell *Ritual: Perspectives* (1992) and Mary Douglas "chapter title" in *Purity and Danger* (1966).

[x] Levi-Strauss' formulations will then become the objects of scorn for Deleuze and Guattari in the saturnalia of becoming and nomadic thought that is *Mille Plateaux*. See Deleuze and Guattari, "Becoming Intense, Becoming Animal, Becoming Imperceptible" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 232-310).

[xi] Furthermore, as Douglas points out, Durkheim's thesis leaves him apparently at a loss to account for the existence of non-institutionalized magical rituals, which at times fall outside the margins of those domains of life collectively recognized as sacred. Durkheim's way of resolving this discrepancy in *Elementary Forms* has a similar circularity. He argues that the non-collective and asocial character of magical practice can be explained if, contrary to claims made for magic's anteriority to religion by Frazer and others, magic only exists subsequently to the institution of religious observance within those social groups out of which individual practices of magic developed. Those engaging in forms of magical ritual would all need to have internalized the religious attitudes of those orthodoxies from which they were diverging in practice. Robbing Peter to pay Paul, Durkheim concludes his discussion of the relationship between magical and religious ritual practice by citing as supporting evidence[xi] the studies undertaken by his nephew Marcel Mauss in *A General Theory of Magic*, which Mauss had written using essentially Durkheimian methods and premises 10 years prior to *Elementary Forms*, just a year before he published *Primitive Classification* with his uncle.

[xii] I am aware that Durkheim has been accused of being a metaphysician for his doctrine of group consciousness. I remain convinced that the doctrine of "social facts" he develops is

best conceived as an attempt to position religious phenomena outside of the sphere of the transcendental and within a wholly immanent, naturalist frame.

[xiii] Descola's argument mapping the way schematisms of practice among different social collectives serve to differentially constitute ontological statuses and relations between the human and the nonhuman that Western collectives have tended to group uniformly under a nature/culture dichotomy is very much in line with my sentiments in this chapter. At the same time, Descola is a social scientist devoted to systematically cataloguing these practices and their effects. Where my approach diverges is in questioning the possibility of the kind of ontological revisionism much recent anthropology proposes in the absence of a corresponding revision of our methods of apprehending the world as knowable. It is to Bruno Latour's credit, as one of the lead actors in this recent intellectual trend of ontological revisionism, that his work devotes an equal amount of attention to the ways our speech habits or 'modes of veridiction' influence the constitution of our object of inquiry. One of my guiding premises in this work is that the arts in general and the literary arts in particular are the main sphere of culture for post-Enlightenment societies in which the modes of experience and intelligence required for the kind of enduring ontological revision many see as needed in order to meet present world-historical challenges have been preserved. Our current impasse stems from the fact that we try to understand the arts rather than developing our capacity to understand *with* the arts.

[xiv] Most functionalist treatments of ritual, even those emphasizing the importance of ritual actions in modifying affective and perceptual states, turn in the final account to the notion of social cohesion as the ultimate end of the ritual act. In this respect they place the act within a semiotic frame by treating the actions themselves has having the efficacy merely to instantiate various traditional attitudes and values. We see one version of this treatment, for example, in Mary Douglas' Marxo-Durkheimian account of the ritual foundations of normative conceptions of order and disorder among social groups attempting to establish equilibrium amidst internal contradictions.

A more flexible treatment with the same basic bias can be found in Catherine Bell's (1992) rejection of "ritual" as a static category in favor of a more processually conceived and post-structuralist inflected notion of "ritualization," which she defines as a set of situational strategies capable of "reproducing or reconfiguring a vision of order or power in the world" (83), where "power" refers to relations of prestige and authority among members of the social group. Both Douglas and Bell rightly see in ritual actions an attempt among agents and groups to participate in patterns of order in the world by manipulating ways of framing experience, but both accounts are forced to reduce this process to cognitive negotiations of symbolic categories that serve to distribute shared cultural authority because their analyses stop short of following to the end the degree to which those agents are embedded in the "objective" world. These accounts are not wrong in seeing ritual as forms of socially symbolic action, but they confuse causes with results by attempting to locate the origins of ritual action in the semiotics of the group. A much different picture emerges if we explore what Bergson's model contributes to an understanding of ritual as an autotelic or non-instrumental action.

[xv] Though Bergson's framing of the relationship between thought and action at a more cosmic evolutionary scale in *Creative Evolution* is certainly suggestive with respect to these topics, the grandiosity of the claims developed therein and its more mystically-inflected appeal to the special faculty of intuition place it beyond the scope of the present chapter.

[xvi] See Hubert Dreyfus' *Skillful Coping: Essays on the Phenomenology of Everyday Perception and Action* (2014).

[xvii] An informant Mauss quotes remarks, "it would not be fair… on my part to keep these *taonga* for myself, whether they were desirable… or undesirable. I must give them to you because they are a *hau* of the *taonga* you gave me. If I kept this other *taonga* for myself, serious harm might befall me, even death. This is the nature of the *hau*, the *hau* of personal property, the *hau* of the *taonga*, the *hau* of the forest" and "I must return to you what is in reality the effect of the *hau* of your *taonga*" (*The Gift* 11).

[xviii] See Jurgen Habermas, "The Authority of the Sacred and the Normative Background of Communicative Action" and "The Rational Structure of the Linguistification of the Sacred" (*The Theory of Communcative Action Vol. II* 43-114).

[xix] See especially Goody and Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy." *Comparative Studies in Science and History* 5.3 (1963): 304-345, Eric Havelock *Preface to Plato* (1982), Walter Ong *Orality and Literacy* (1982).

[xx] For one recent ethnographic account that corresponds to this characterization of language usage, see Timothy Thurston, "An Introduction to Tibetan *Sa bstod* Speeches in Amdo" *Asian Ethnology* 71.1 (2012): 49-73. Thurston argues that the recitation of auspicious places in *Sa bstod* speech-acts within Tibetan nomadic groups it seen as "allow(ing) the verbalization of auspicious places to actually create the auspiciousness in that place… and thereby to combat an inherently capricious environment" (52). The sense of "auspiciousness" Thurston discusses is elaborated through the folk-religious concept of *rten 'brel*, which Thurston translates as "economy of fortune," defining the term as a "contingent perceptual field" that "can be created, lost or transacted, and is constantly in flux" (51).

[xxi] Evans-Pritchard "Levy-Bruhl's Theory of Primitive Mentality" (1970).

[xxii] See Jack Goody, *Domestication of the Savage Mind* (14).

[xxiii] Bergson would of course develop his theory of the *elan vital* in an attempt to overcome the opposition between *both* mechanical causation and teleology, or what he calls "finalism," though I think the motive remains similar.

[xxiv] The inclusion of contingency as a condition of explanation in ritualistic cultures helps to explain the function of myth and story as modes of communication through which knowledge is transmitted. See for example Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller" (*Illuminations* 83-110).

**Chapter Three**

[xxv] For a concise reconstruction of these debates see Lisa Florman, "Different Facets of Analytical Cubism" *nonsite.org* 5 (March 2012).

[xxvi] Cite relevant chapters in *"Primitivism"* book

[xxvii] For analysis of the changing status and function of Fang reliquaries arising, among other factors, from the emergent market for African "art" attendant upon the 20th century avant-garde's mania for the "primitive," see Jessica Levin Martinez, "Ephemeral Fang Reliquaries: A Post-History" (*Spring* 2010).

[xxviii] At the same time, Picasso could just as easily say that this work was in the strict line of painting to the extent that he could claim to see in the masks merely what painting had been all along. It is not the case to say that if in painting Picasso was engaging in fundamentally the same practical activity that the makers of the masks had been engaged in that he was suddenly doing something *different* than painters had been doing for hundreds of years. He could therefore say in 1923:

> Cubism has kept itself within the limits and limitations of painting, never pretending to go beyond it. Drawing, design and colour are understood and practised in cubism in the spirit and manner in which they are understood and practised in all other schools. Our subjects might be different, as we have introduced into painting objects and forms that were formerly ignored. We have kept our eyes open to our surroundings, and also our brains. ("Picasso Speaks")

[xxix] The most recent and well-known of these studies being Arthur I. Miller's *Einstein, Picasso: Space, Time and the Beauty That Causes Havoc* (2001) and Linda Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidian Geometry in Modern Art* (1983).

[xxx] See W.J.T. Mitchell, "Ut Pictura Theoria": Abstract Painting and the Repression of Language" (1989).

[xxxi] Cf. Deleuze's characterization of Spinozan substance as the plane of immanence: "a pure stream of a-subjective consciousness, a pre-reflexive impersonal consciousness, a qualitative duration without a self" (*Pure Immanence* 25).

[xxxii] The New York School being the other, which is beyond the present scope. In this respect, Marjorie Perloff's famous genealogy of 20th century American poetics as stemming primarily from Pound and Stevens seems to me basically sound. See "Pound/Stevens: Whose Era?"

[xxxiii] This multidimensionality is distinct from the more post-modern notion of indeterminacy, in ways I will try to make clearer in my reading of John Cage's concept of inclusive attention.

[xxxiv] For recent scholarship in the field of Chinese linguistics that supports Xu Shen's traditional account of compound ideographs against what the authors call a tradition of "script phonocentrism" among Western scholars, see Gregory Sampson and Chen Zhiqun, "The Reality of Compound Ideographs" (2013). While this recent research implies at least the continued plausibility of certain essentials of Pound's and Fenollosa's models, despite their numerous errors at the level of particulars, the verification of these models is not required in order to advance the literary critical claim being made here that the previous comments accurately describe Pound's own practice of ideography as a method of poetics, irrespective of the relationship between this method and the Chinese language.

[xxxv] In his introduction to *The Spirit of Romance*, for example, Pound famously describes "Art" as "a fluid moving above or over the minds of men" (xii.). That work's titular "spirit" is in many ways an early expression of what Pound would later term "civilization."

[xxxvi] See Chapter 3's discussion of Spinoza's distinction between "adequate" and "inadequate" ideas, the 3rd kind of knowledge, and intellectual love in relation to Pound's poetics for further discussion of this relationship.

[xxxvii] Indeed, Sieburth points out that Picabia in fact left the proceedings in disgust at the Dada group's setting itself up, under Breton's leadership, as an arbiter of truth even in the ironic semblance of a mock trial. See Sieburth, "Dada Pound" (59).

[xxxviii] See Chapter 3's discussion of vorticism for further commentary.

[xxxix] See Chapter 3's discussion of Provencal lyric poetry in relationship to Spinoza's model of adequate ideas for further commentary on the interpretive metaphor.

[xl] Much has been written about the importance of the Malatesta Cantos in crystalizing Pound's new method, both of historiography as a form of knowledge production and of poetics. Indeed, it is that particular sequence that initiates the process whereby these two modes of practice would become inseparable within the broader project of the *Cantos*, a process that would eventually place Pound on the road to the DTC in Pisa. From Malatesta on, effectively all of Pound's writings, literary or otherwise, develop a newly explicit degree of porosity to one another and to events of the day. Furthermore, the formal experimentation in that sub-sequence of the *Draft of XXX Cantos*, its inclusion of (ostensibly) extra-literary documentary and archival source materials within its poetic fabric, possesses an undeniably germinal quality that makes it a major influence on many other later 20th century works (*Paterson, The Maximus Poems, "A," The Iovis Trilogy*, and Susan Howe's work come to mind). At the same time, my sense is that the Malatesta sequence is misleading as a guide to much of the rest of the *Cantos*, whether one's thinking about them is primarily focused politically or aesthetically, to the extent that it allows seductive conflations of aspects of

Pound's thought and work that obscure a more nuanced and more accurate picture of what that work was trying to achieve.

As late as 1938, after Pound had endorsed Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in private correspondence, thereby contradicting his own professed motivations for seeking economic reform, we find Pound in *Guide to Kulchur* framing "Malatesta and the other condotierre's" negatively as bellicose warmongers salivating over new military designs fresh from Roberto Valturio. While Pound certainly valorizes Malatesta throughout the composition of the *Cantos*, indeed often as the very embodiment of the Renaissance sensibility, it seems overly hasty to dismiss any claims for the ambivalent status of that historical figure within the *Cantos*, or to rush to easy conflations. So even if our main interest is in going after *The Cantos* for Pound's support for Mussolini and the Fascist regime in Italy, it is not clear to me that the figure of Malatesta alone is a sufficient ground for such an undertaking. Critics have latched onto it in part because it seems to afford the clearest examples of the tendencies or qualities they wish to critique or celebrate: Sigismundo the ruthless mercenary is Pound's prototype for the historical agency that would later be exemplified by Mussolini (or, conversely, "Malatesta"'s tissue of documentary sources exemplifies Pound's poetics of indeterminate textual collage). In part, this is a matter of convenience. If we can boil Pound's politics down to the heroic ethos embodied in the patron-dictator, then we don't need to try to make sense of the prodigious litter of prose writings he scattered in his wake as he tried to sort out his views on history, economics and politics. And in part because the Malatesta sequence has been the site of turf wars for so long, I will not be attempting to offer readings of that sequence here, despite the fact that I agree with the general consensus that the Malatesta sequence initiates the new mode of poetics that begins making more and more explicit knowledge claims about the world.

[xli] A reading of the discussion of ideogrammics in *ABC of Reading* will bear out this claim, particularly in Pound's discussion of the ideogramic method in contradistinction to the subsumption of the color "red" first within the category of colors, then of colors within the category of light, then within the category of wavelengths of energy, and so forth.

[xlii] Pound in "A Visiting Card" offers the formula, "the more responsibilities you have the more you will understand the meaning" (*Selected Essays* 333).

[xliii] The best and to my knowledge only extensive treatment of Pound's economic thought at present is Leon Surrette's *Pound in Purgatory: From Economic Radicalism to Anti-Semitism* (1999). Surette is a much more competent and skilled reader of both economic thought and the historical context of modernism than I am. At the same time, Surette's treatment, though careful, detailed, and sympathetic where appropriate, does not always devote the kind of attention to how Pound's thinking about the ideogrammic method and the influence of definition on knowledge systems comes to inform the kinds of claims he makes with respect to economic principles from which a treatment of Pound's economic thought might benefit.

[xliv] Cf. "Marx and Hegel break down when their ideas come to be worked out in conduct" (*Selected Essays* 87).

**Chapter Five**

[xlv] "Robert Creeley in Conversation with Alan Riach" http://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/creeley/interview.html

[xlvi] Pound, Ezra, "Selections from Ezra Pound's Letters to Robert Creeley: March 1950 to May 1952," *WUSTL Digital Gateway Image Collections & Exhibitions*, accessed April 4, 2017, http://omeka.wustl.edu/omeka/items/show/9833.

[xlvii] For a more complete account of Dewey's relationship with Rice and with Black Mountain College generally, see Katherine C. Reynolds, "Progressive Ideas and Higher Experimental Education: The Example of John Dewey and Black Mountain College" (1997)

[xlviii] Olson restated his debt to Rice two years later in a 1969 interview with MIT student Andrew Leinoff for the latter's master's thesis on Black Mountain, stating "I would stress the pedagogy simply because my interest in Black Mountain really comes form John Rice's founding of it; and certainly, I think, if you examine Rise you see he was himself a superbly trained classicist and an excellent mind and his agitation was really pedagogy." (*Olson* Journal 8, 1977, 67)

[xlix] These latter terms I regard less in their somewhat able-ist literal senses than in the pragmatic register or modality they signal. "Doing" here connotes not simply physical actions but the qualitative present-tense of encounter.

[l] "Form" here is being used in the Aristotelian sense of *morphe* as distinct from *hyle*.

[li] "There is no limit to what you can know. Or there is only in the sense that you don't find out or you don't seek to know. There is no truth at all, of course, in the modern velleity (the lowest degree of desire) that you can't know everything. It is literally true that you *have* to know everything. And for the simplest reason; that you do, by being alive." (*A Special View of History* 29)

[lii] "A Sense of Measure" at the Berkeley Poetry Conference, 1965. From the MICA Mades Audio Cassette Collection https://archive.org/details/mma036-01_201610. Web. May 2017.

[liii] "Part of the process [of the *Cantos* and *Maximus Poems*] is directed towards the discovery of what forces, unexplored or to be recovered or renewed, the body may hold as the field of Psyche and Eros" (53). From "Pound, Olson and *The Secret of the Golden Flower*" in Richard Parker ed. *News from Afar: Ezra Pound and Some Contemporary British Poetries*. Shearsman 2014.

[liv] For brevity's sake, I will assume the reader has a working familiarity with the myth.

[lv] See Goble *Beautiful Circuits*, Pooley "How to Become a Famous Media Scholar: The Case of Marshall McLuhan" *LARB*

[lvi] "The Pottery Happening: M.C. Richards' *Clay Things to Touch*… (1958)" *Getty Research Journal* 5 (2013): 97-2

[lvii] "Poetry Reading" at Berkeley Poetry Conference, 1965. From the MICA Mades Audio Cassette Collection. https://archive.org/details/mma020-01_201610

[lviii] Close, Del and John Brent. "Basic Hip" from *How to Speak Hip*. Mercury Records, 1959

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