***Literature and Data***

*Presentation Preparation Example*

Charles Altieri, “The New Realism in Modernism” (Parts II, III)

Argument

Ezra Pound's chief goal expressed in his criticism and poetry was to modernize verse. For Pound, modernization meant not only stylistic differentiation from the previous generation but the incorporation of an emerging understanding of subjectivity as articulated by Henri Bergson and contemporary psychologists. In practice, Pound developed his poetic theory under the influence of Ernest Fenollosa's interpretation of Chinese language and poetry, however he leveraged Fenollosa in order to engage with questions Bergson had raised. The result of this theorization was Pound's set of Imagist poems, which seek to capture "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" in part by presenting “luminous details” that transmit powerful insights to the reader.

Structure

Altieri supports his claim by identifying the aspects of Fenollosa's writing to which Pound responded most directly and tracing their practice in several poems from that era. Altieri then looks at Pound's critical work in order to translate his terms of discussion from those of psychology to literary theory.

Themes & Other Problems Raised

Role of poetry in society

Poetry as the production of knowledge

Sound vs. Sense in poetry

Questions

What characterized the writing of the generation previous to Pound’s?

What was Bergson’s understanding of subjectivity?

How had Fenollosa interpreted Chinese writing and language?

What is a “luminous detail” and how does it operate in the poem? Give an example.