Review of a Critical Article – You will select a scholarly article from a list on the Canvas site and write a 1,000-word review. You should briefly summarize the article’s central argument and explain how the author puts the argument into context and what strategies the author uses to make the argument persuasive. You should also assess the persuasiveness of the argument.

Nathaniel, Steve. “Engineering the Ideal: Applied Modern Poetics as Applied Science.” European Journal of English Studies, vol. 23, no. 3, 2018, pp. 302-16. Taylor and Francis, doi.org/10.1080/13825577.2018.1513721

“I examine certain applied scientific (or engineering) processes which early twentieth-century European and American audiences did know and praise, and their imitation by poets who professed applied science as an inspiration. I draw on the testimony of engineer and theorist Frederick W. Taylor to define the processes of optimisation and systematisation, and to study the expression of these processes in the poetic tradition that extends from Imagism, exemplified by H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), to the Objectivist poets, exemplified by Charles Reznikoff” (302-303).

“Perhaps the foremost scientific ideal of the early twentieth century, efficiency, began as a strictly industrial method of creating more products with less material…” (303).

Nathaniel posits that H.D.’s poetic tradition of imagism is an inspired expression of early twentieth century applied scientific processes (302-303). Of these processes, he claims that the “industrial method of creating more products with less material”

Efficiency vs brevity

Nathaniel’s position on Imagism as an optimisation of poetic images in comparison to engineers optimising mechanisms serves as a helpful metaphor, however, I find that this comparison serves little more purpose. For, Imagism certainly strives to be an efficient expression of poetry, Nathaniel’s remarks on H.D.’s own shortcomings in this vein because of repetition demonstrates that there is something more to H.D.’s poetry than mechanical efficiency.