

= Ezra Pound =

Ezra Weston Loomis Pound (30 October 1885 ? 1 November 1972) was an expatriate American poet and critic , and a major figure in the early modernist movement . His contribution to poetry began with his development of Imagism , a movement derived from classical Chinese and Japanese poetry , stressing clarity , precision and economy of language . His best @-@ known works include *Ripostes* (1912) , *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920) and the unfinished 120 @-@ section epic , *The Cantos* (1917 ? 69) .

Working in London in the early 20th century as foreign editor of several American literary magazines , Pound helped discover and shape the work of American and Irish contemporaries such as T. S. Eliot , James Joyce , Robert Frost , and Ernest Hemingway . He arranged for the 1915 publication of Eliot 's " *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* " and the serialization from 1918 of Joyce 's *Ulysses* . Hemingway wrote of him in 1925 : " He defends [his friends] when they are attacked , he gets them into magazines and out of jail He introduces them to wealthy women . He gets publishers to take their books . He sits up all night with them when they claim to be dying ... he advances them hospital expenses and dissuades them from suicide . "

Outraged by the carnage of World War I , Pound lost faith in England and blamed the war on usury and international capitalism . He moved to Italy in 1924 . Through the 1930s and 1940s he embraced Benito Mussolini 's Italian Fascism , expressed support for Adolf Hitler , and wrote for publications owned by British fascist Oswald Mosley . During World War II , he was paid by the Italian government to make hundreds of radio broadcasts criticizing the United States , Franklin D. Roosevelt , and Jews . As a result , he was arrested by American forces in Italy in 1945 on charges of treason , and was kept for months in detention in a U.S. military camp in Pisa . He was held for three weeks in a six @-@ by @-@ six @-@ foot outdoor steel cage , which he said triggered a mental breakdown , " when the raft broke and the waters went over me . " Deemed unfit to stand trial , Pound was incarcerated in St. Elizabeths psychiatric hospital in Washington , D.C. , for over 12 years .

While in custody in Italy , Pound had begun work on sections of *The Cantos* . These were published as *The Pisan Cantos* (1948) , for which he was awarded the Bollingen Prize in 1949 by the Library of Congress , triggering enormous controversy .

Largely due to a campaign by his fellow writers , he was released from St. Elizabeths in 1958 , and returned to live in Italy until his death . His political views ensure that his work remains as controversial now as it was during his lifetime ; in 1933 *Time* magazine called him " a cat that walks by himself , tenaciously unhousebroken and very unsafe for children . " Hemingway wrote : " The best of Pound 's writing ? and it is in the *Cantos* ? will last as long as there is any literature . "

= = Early life (1885 ? 1908) = =

= = = Background = = =

Pound was born in a small , two @-@ story house in Hailey , Idaho Territory , the only child of Homer Loomis Pound (1858 ? 1942) and Isabel Weston (1860 ? 1948) . His father had worked in Hailey since 1883 as registrar of the General Land Office .

Both parents ' ancestors had emigrated from England to North America in the 17th century . On his mother 's side , Pound was descended from William Wadsworth (1594 ? 1675) , a Puritan who emigrated from England to Boston on the *Lion* in 1632 . The Wadsworths married into the Westons of New York . Harding Weston and Mary Parker were the parents of Isabel Weston , Ezra 's mother . Harding apparently spent most of his life without work , so his brother , Ezra Weston and his wife , Frances , looked after Mary and Isabel 's needs .

On his father 's side , the immigrant ancestor was John Pound , a Quaker who arrived from England around 1650 . Ezra 's grandfather , Thaddeus Coleman Pound (1832 ? 1914) , was a Republican Congressman from northwest Wisconsin who had made and lost a fortune in the lumber business .

Thaddeus 's son Homer , Pound 's father , worked for Thaddeus in the lumber business , until Thaddeus secured him the appointment as registrar of the Hailey land office .

Homer and Isabel married the following year , and Homer built for her a home in Hailey . Isabel was unhappy in Hailey and took Ezra with her to New York in 1887 when he was 18 months old . Homer followed and in 1889 found a job as an assayer at the Philadelphia Mint . The family moved to Jenkintown , Pennsylvania and in 1893 bought a six @-@ bedroom house in Wyncote .

= = = Education = = =

Pound 's education began in a series of dame schools , some of them run by Quakers : Miss Elliott 's school in Jenkintown in 1892 , the Heathcock family 's Cheltenham Hills School in Wyncote in 1893 , and the Florence Ridpath school from 1894 , also in Wyncote . His first published poem (" by E. L. Pound , Wyncote , aged 11 years ") was a limerick in the Jenkintown Times @-@ Chronicle about William Jennings Bryan , who had just lost the 1896 presidential election : " There was a young man from the West , / He did what he could for what he thought best ; / But election came round , / He found himself drowned , / And the papers will tell you the rest . "

Between 1897 and 1900 Pound attended Cheltenham Military Academy , sometimes as a boarder , where he specialized in Latin . The boys wore Civil War @-@ style uniforms and studied English , history , and arithmetic , as well as marksmanship , military drilling , and the importance of submitting to authority . Pound made his first trip overseas in the summer of 1898 when he was 13 , a three @-@ month tour of Europe with his mother and Frances Weston (Aunt Frank) ; they went to England , Belgium , Germany , Switzerland and Italy . After the academy he may have attended Cheltenham Township High School for one year . In 1901 at the age of 15 , he was admitted to the University of Pennsylvania 's College of Liberal Arts .

Pound wrote in 1913 , in " How I Began " :

I resolved that at thirty I would know more about poetry than any man living ... that I would know what was accounted poetry everywhere , what part of poetry was ' indestructible ' , what part could not be lost by translation and ? scarcely less important ? what effects were obtainable in one language only and were utterly incapable of being translated .

In this search I learned more or less of nine foreign languages , I read Oriental stuff in translations , I fought every University regulation and every professor who tried to make me learn anything except this , or who bothered me with " requirements for degrees " .

While at the university he met Hilda Doolittle , the daughter of the professor of astronomy . She developed as the poet known as H.D. She followed him to Europe in 1908 , leaving her family , friends and country , and worked with Pound in developing the Imagism movement in London . He sought her hand and in February that year asked her father , the astronomy professor Charles Doolittle , for his permission to marry . Doolittle was a curt man , described as " donnish " and intimidating . He was aware of Pound 's reputation as a ladies ' man , and unimpressed by his career as a poet , and constant moving . Doolittle 's response was dismissive , he replied , " What ! ? Why you 're nothing but a nomad ! " Pound asked Hilda to marry him in the summer of 1907 , and though rejected , wrote several poems for her between 1905 and 1907 . He hand @-@ bound 25 of these , calling them Hilda 's Book . He was seeing two other women at the same time ? Viola Baxter and Mary Moore ? later dedicating a book of poetry , *Personae* (1909) , to the latter . He asked Mary to marry him that summer too , but she turned him down .

His parents and Frances Weston took Pound on another three @-@ month European tour in 1902 , after which he transferred , in 1903 , to Hamilton College in Clinton , New York , possibly because of poor grades . Signed up for the Latin ? Scientific course , he studied the Provençal dialect with William Pierce Shephard and Old English with Joseph D. Ibbotson ; with Shephard he read Dante . From this study he began thinking of an idea for a long poem in three parts ? of emotion , instruction and contemplation ? planting the seeds for *The Cantos* . He graduated in 1905 with a PhD .

Pound returned to the University of Pennsylvania for graduate work , studying Romance languages under Hugo A. Rennert , and obtained an MA in the spring of 1906 . He registered to write a PhD thesis on the jesters in Lope de Vega 's plays . A Harrison fellowship covered his tuition fees and

gave him a grant of \$ 500 , which he used to return to Europe .

Pound spent three weeks in Madrid in various libraries , including one in the royal palace . He happened to be standing outside the palace on 31 May 1906 during the attempted assassination by anarchists of King Alfonso , and left the country for fear he would be identified with them . After Spain he spent two weeks in Paris attending lectures at the Sorbonne , followed by a week in London . In July he returned to the United States . In September 1906 his first essay , " Raphaelite Latin " , was published in Book News Monthly .

He took courses in the English department at Penn in 1907 , where he annoyed Felix Schelling , the department head , with silly remarks during lectures . One day he said that George Bernard Shaw was better than Shakespeare , and wound an enormous tin watch very slowly while Schelling spoke . As a result , his fellowship was not renewed at the end of the year . Schelling told Pound that he was wasting his own time and that of the institution . Pound left without finishing his doctorate .

= = = Teaching = = =

From the fall of 1907 Pound taught Romance languages at Wabash College in Crawfordsville , Indiana , a conservative town that he called the sixth circle of hell . The equally conservative college dismissed him after he deliberately provoked the college authorities . Smoking was forbidden , but he would smoke cigarillos in his office down the corridor from the president 's . He annoyed his landlords by entertaining friends , including women , and was forced out of one house after two " stewdents found me sharing my meagre repast with the lady ? gent impersonator in my privut apartments , " as he told a friend . He was eventually caught in flagrante , although the details remain unclear and he denied any wrongdoing . The incident involved a stranded chorus girl to whom he offered tea and his bed for the night when she was caught in a snowstorm ; when she was discovered the next morning by the landladies , his insistence that he had slept on the floor was met with disbelief and he was asked to leave the college . Glad to be free of the place , he left for Europe soon after , sailing from New York in March 1908 .

= = London (1908 ? 20) = =

= = = Introduction to the literary scene = = =

Pound arrived in Gibraltar on 23 March 1908 , where for a few weeks he earned \$ 15 a day working as a guide to American tourists . By the end of April he was in Venice , living over a bakery near the San Vio bridge . In July he self @-@ published his first book of poetry , *A Lume Spento* (*With Tapers Spent*) . The London Evening Standard called it " wild and haunting stuff , absolutely poetic , original , imaginative , passionate , and spiritual . " The title was from the third canto of Dante 's *Purgatorio* , which alluded to the death of Manfred , King of Sicily . The book was dedicated to his friend , the Philadelphia artist William Brooke Smith , who had recently died of tuberculosis .

In August he moved to London , where he lived almost continuously for the next 12 years ; he told his university friend William Carlos Williams : " London , deah old Lundon , is the place for poesy . " English poets such as Maurice Hewlett , Rudyard Kipling and Alfred Lord Tennyson had made a particular kind of Victorian verse ? stirring , pompous and propagandistic ? popular with the public . According to modernist scholar James Knapp , Pound rejected the idea of poetry as " versified moral essay " ; he wanted to focus on the individual experience ; the concrete rather than the abstract .

Arriving in the city with just ? 3 , he moved into lodgings at 48 Langham Street , near Great Titchfield Street , a penny bus @-@ ride from the British Museum . The house sat across an alley from the Yorkshire Grey pub , which he referred to indirectly in the *Pisan Cantos* , " concerning the landlady 's doings / with a lodger unnamed / az waz near Gt Titchfield St. next door to the pub " . He spent his mornings in the British Museum Reading Room , and lunched at the Vienna Café on

Oxford Street . He persuaded the bookseller Elkin Mathews to display *A Lume Spento* , and in October 1908 caught the attention of the literati . That December he published a second collection , *A Quinzaine for This Yule* . After the death of a lecturer at the Regent Street Polytechnic , he took a position lecturing in the evenings on " The Development of Literature in Southern Europe " .

Ford Madox Ford described Pound ? somewhat tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek ? as " approach [ing] with the step of a dancer , making passes with a cane at an imaginary opponent . Pound was a flamboyant dresser at this stage , and had trousers made of green billiard cloth , a pink coat , a blue shirt , a tie hand @-@ painted by a Japanese friend and an immense sombrero . All this was accompanied by a flaming beard cut to a point and a single , large blue earring . "

= = = Meeting Dorothy Shakespear , *Personae* = = =

At a literary salon in January 1909 , Pound met the novelist Olivia Shakespear ? Yeats ' former lover ? and was introduced to her daughter Dorothy . They married several years later in 1914 . Through Olivia Shakespear he was introduced to W. B. Yeats ? the greatest living poet in Pound 's view ? and they became close friends , although Yeats was older by 20 years . Pound had sent Yeats a copy of *A Lume Spento* the previous year , before he left for Venice . Yeats had apparently found it charming .

Pound was also introduced to sculptor Henri Gaudier @-@ Brzeska , painter Wyndham Lewis , and to the cream of London 's literary circle , including the poet T. E. Hulme . The American heiress Margaret Lanier Cravens (1881 ? 1912) became a patron ; after knowing him a short time she offered a large annual sum to allow him to focus on his work . Cravens committed suicide in 1912 . Walter Rummel , a pianist and friend of Pounds , had long been a love but married someone else . She may also have been discouraged by Pound 's engagement to Dorothy .

In June 1909 the *Personae* collection was the first of Pound 's works to have any commercial success . It was favorably reviewed ; one review said it was " full of human passion and natural magic " . Rupert Brooke was unimpressed , complaining that Pound had fallen under the influence of Walt Whitman , writing in " unmetrical sprawling lengths " . In September he published 27 poems as *Exultations* . Around the same time Pound moved into new rooms at Church Walk , off Kensington High Street , where he lived most of the time until 1914 .

In June 1910 Pound returned to the United States for eight months ; his arrival coincided with the publication of his first book of literary criticism , *The Spirit of Romance* , based on his lecture notes at the polytechnic . His essays on America were written during this period . They were compiled as *Patria Mia* and not published until 1950 . He loved New York but felt the city was threatened by commercialism and vulgarity , and he no longer felt at home there . He found the New York Public Library , then being built , especially offensive . According to Paul L. Montgomery , Pound visited the architects ' offices almost every day to shout at them .

Pound persuaded his parents to finance his passage back to Europe . It was nearly 30 years before he visited the United States again . On 22 February 1911 he sailed from New York on the R.M.S. *Mauretania* , arriving in Southampton six days later . After only a few days in London he went to Paris , where he worked on a new collection of poetry , *Canzoni* (1911) , panned by the *Westminster Gazette* as a " medley of pretension " . When he returned to London in August 1911 , A. R. Orage , editor of the socialist journal *The New Age* , hired him to write a weekly column , giving him a steady income .

= = = Imagism = = =

Hilda Doolittle arrived in London from Philadelphia in May 1911 with the poet Frances Gregg and Gregg 's mother ; when they returned in September , Doolittle decided to stay on . Pound introduced her to his friends , including the poet Richard Aldington , whom she would marry in 1913 . Before that the three of them lived in Church Walk , Kensington ? Pound at no . 10 , Doolittle at no . 6 , and Aldington at no . 8 ? and worked daily in the British Museum Reading Room .

At the museum Pound met regularly with the curator and poet Laurence Binyon , who introduced

him to the East Asian artistic and literary concepts that inspired the imagery and technique of his later poetry . The museum 's visitors ' books show that Pound was often found during 1912 and 1913 in the Print Room examining Japanese ukiyo @-@ e , some inscribed with Japanese waka verse , a genre of poetry whose economy and strict conventions likely contributed to Imagist techniques of composition . He was working at the time on the poems that became *Ripostes* (1912) , trying to move away from his earlier work ; he wrote that the " stilted language " of Canzoni had reduced Ford Madox Ford to rolling on the floor with laughter . He realized with his translation work that the problem lay not in his knowledge of the other languages , but in his use of English :

What obfuscated me was not the Italian but the crust of dead English , the sediment present in my own available vocabulary ... You can 't go round this sort of thing . It takes six or eight years to get educated in one 's art , and another ten to get rid of that education .

Neither can anyone learn English , one can only learn a series of Englishes . Rossetti made his own language . I hadn 't in 1910 made a language , I don 't mean a language to use , but even a language to think in .

While living at Church Walk in 1912 , Pound , Aldington and Doolittle started working on ideas about language . While in the British Museum tearoom one afternoon , they decided to begin a ' movement ' in poetry , called Imagism . Imagisme , Pound would write in *Riposte* , is " concerned solely with language and presentation " . The aim was clarity : a fight against abstraction , romanticism , rhetoric , inversion of word order , and over @-@ use of adjectives . They agreed in the spring or early summer of 1912 on three principles :

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

Superfluous words , particularly adjectives , should be avoided , as well as expressions like " dim lands of peace " , which Pound thought dulled the image by mixing the abstract with the concrete . He wrote that the natural object was always the " adequate symbol " . Poets should " go in fear of abstractions " , and should not re @-@ tell in mediocre verse what has already been told in good prose .

A typical example is Pound 's " In a Station of the Metro " (1913) , inspired by an experience on the Paris Underground , about which he wrote , " I got out of a train at , I think , La Concorde , and in the jostle I saw a beautiful face , and then , turning suddenly , another and another , and then a beautiful child 's face , and then another beautiful face . All that day I tried to find words for what this made me feel . " He worked on the poem for a year , reducing it to its essence in the style of a Japanese haiku . Like other modernist artists of the period , Pound was inspired by Japanese art , but the aim was to re @-@ make ? or as Pound said , " make it new " ? and blend cultural styles instead of copying directly or slavishly . He may have been inspired by a Suzuki Harunobu print he almost certainly saw in the British Library (Richard Aldington mentions the specific prints he matched to verse) , and probably attempted to write haiku @-@ like verse during this period .

= = = *Ripostes* and translations = = =

Ripostes , published in October 1912 , begins Pound 's shift toward minimalist language . Michael Alexander describes the poems as showing a greater concentration of meaning and economy of rhythm than his earlier work . It was published when Pound had just begun his move toward Imagism ; his first use of the word Imagiste appears in his prefatory note to the volume . The collection includes five poems by Hulme and a translation of the 8th @-@ century Old English poem *The Seafarer* ? although not a literal translation . It upset scholars , as would Pound 's other translations from Latin , Italian , French and Chinese , either because of errors or because he lacked familiarity with the cultural context . Alexander writes that in some circles , Pound 's translations made him more unpopular than the treason charge , and the reaction to *The Seafarer* was a rehearsal for the negative response to *Homage to Sextus Propertius* in 1919 . His translation from the Italian of *Sonnets and ballate* of Guido Cavalcanti was also published in 1912 .

Pound was fascinated by the translations of Japanese poetry and Noh plays which he discovered in the papers of Ernest Fenollosa , an American professor who had taught in Japan . Fenollosa had studied Chinese poetry under Japanese scholars ; in 1913 his widow , Mary McNeil Fenollosa , decided to give his unpublished notes to Pound after seeing his work ; she was looking for someone who cared about poetry rather than philology . Pound edited and published Fenollosa 's *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* in 1918 .

The title page of the collection *Cathay* (1915) , refers to the poet " Rihaku " , the pronunciation in Japanese of the Tang dynasty Chinese poet , Li Bai , whose poems were much beloved in China and Japan for their technical mastery and much translated in the West because of their seeming simplicity . Alexander thinks this is the most attractive of Pound 's work . Chinese critic Wai @-@ lim Yip writes of it : " One can easily excommunicate Pound from the Forbidden City of Chinese studies , but it seems clear that in his dealings with *Cathay* , even when he is given only the barest details , he is able to get into the central concerns of the original author by what we may perhaps call a kind of clairvoyance . "

Pound could understand Chinese himself . Some specialist critics see his work as among the best English translations of Chinese poetry , but others have complained that it contains many mistakes . *Cathay* was the first of many translations Pound would make from the Chinese . Pound used Fenollosa 's work as a starting point for what he called the ideogrammic method , which proceeded on Fenollosa 's entirely mistaken but fruitful idea that each character represented an image or pictograph , based on sight rather than sound . Robert Graves recalled " I once asked Arthur Waley how much Chinese Pound knew ; Waley shook his head despondently . " Steven Yao , scholar of American and Asian literature , sees *Cathay* as a " major feat " ; a work where Pound shows that translation is possible without a thorough knowledge of the source language . Yao does not view Pound 's lack of Chinese as an obstacle , and states that the poet 's trawl through centuries of scholarly interpretations resulted in a genuine understanding of the original poem .

= = = Marriage , Blast = = =

In August 1912 Harriet Monroe hired Pound as a regular contributor to *Poetry* . He submitted his own poems , as well as poems by James Joyce , Robert Frost , D. H. Lawrence , Yeats , H.D. and Aldington , and collected material for a 64 @-@ page anthology , *Des Imagistes* (1914) . The Imagist movement began to attract attention from critics . In November 1913 Yeats , whose eyesight was failing , invited Pound to stay with him as his secretary in Stone Cottage , Sussex , where Yeats had rented rooms . They stayed there for 10 weeks , reading and writing , walking in the woods and fencing . It was the first of three winters they spent together at Stone Cottage ; two included Dorothy after she and Pound married on 20 April 1914 .

The marriage had proceeded despite opposition from her parents , who worried about his meager income earned from contributions to literary magazines ; it probably was less than £ 300 a year . Dorothy 's annual income was £ 50 , aided by £ 150 from her family . Her parents eventually consented , perhaps out of fear that she was getting older with no other suitor in sight . Pound 's concession to marry in church helped convince them . Afterward he and Dorothy moved into an apartment with no bathroom at 5 Holland Place Chambers , near Church Walk , with the newly wed Hilda (H.D.) and Richard Aldington living next door .

Pound wrote for Wyndham Lewis ' literary magazine *Blast* , although only two issues were published . An advertisement in *The Egoist* promised it would cover " Cubism , Futurism , Imagisme and all Vital Forms of Modern Art " . Pound took the opportunity to extend the definition of Imagisme to art , naming it Vorticism : " The image is a radiant node or cluster ; it is ... a VORTEX , from which , and through which , and into which , ideas are constantly rushing . " Reacting to the magazine , the poet Lascelles Abercrombie called for the rejection of Imagism and a return to the traditionalism of William Wordsworth ; Pound challenged him to a duel on the basis that " Stupidity carried beyond a certain point becomes a public menace " . Abercrombie suggested their choice of weapon be unsold copies of their own books . The publication of *Blast* was celebrated at a dinner attended by New England poet Amy Lowell , then in London to meet the Imagists . But Hilda and Richard were

already beginning to go in a different direction than Pound 's understanding of the movement , as he aligned more with Wyndham Lewis 's ideas . When Lowell agreed to finance an anthology of Imagist poets , Pound 's work was not included . Upset at Lowell , he began to call Imagisme " Amygism " , and in July 1914 declared it dead , asking only that the term be preserved , although Lowell eventually Anglicized it .

= = = World War I , disillusionment = = =

Between 1914 and 1916 Pound assisted in the serialisation of James Joyce 's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man in The Egoist , then helped to have it published in book form . In 1915 he persuaded Poetry to publish T. S. Eliot 's " The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock " . Eliot had sent " Prufrock " to almost every editor in England , but was rejected . He eventually sent it to Pound , who instantly saw it as a work of genius and submitted it to Poetry . " [Eliot] has actually trained himself AND modernized himself ON HIS OWN " , Pound wrote to Monroe in October 1914 . " The rest of the promising young have done one or the other but never both . Most of the swine have done neither . "

After the publication in 1915 of Cathay , Pound mentioned he was working on a long poem , casting about for the correct form . He told a friend in August : " It is a huge , I was going to say , gamble , but shan 't , " and in September described it as a " cryselephantine poem of immeasurable length which will occupy me for the next four decades unless it becomes a bore . " About a year later , in January 1917 , he had the first three trial cantos , distilled to one , as Canto I published in Poetry . He was now a regular contributor to three literary magazines . From 1917 he wrote music reviews for The New Age under the pen name William Atheling , and weekly pieces for The Egoist and The Little Review ? many of the latter directed against provincialism and ignorance . However the volume of writing exhausted him and he feared he was wasting his time writing outside poetry , exclaiming that he " MUST stop writing so much prose " .

Pound was deeply affected by the war . He was devastated when Gaudier @-@ Brzeska , from whom he had commissioned a sculpture two years earlier , was killed in the trenches in 1915 . He published Gaudier @-@ Brzeska : A Memoir the following year , in reaction to what he saw as an unnecessary loss . In the autumn of 1917 his depression worsened . He blamed American provincialism for the seizure of the October issue of The Little Review . The New York Society for the Suppression of Vice applied the Comstock Laws against an article Lewis wrote , describing it as lewd and indecent . Around the same time , Hulme was killed by shell @-@ fire in Flanders , and Yeats married Georgie Hyde @-@ Lees . In 1918 , after a bout of illness which was presumably the Spanish influenza , Pound decided to quit writing for The Little Review , mostly because of the volume of work . He asked the publisher for a raise to hire 23 @-@ year @-@ old Iseult Gonne as a typist ? causing rumors Pound was having an affair with her ? but was turned down .

In 1919 he published a collection of his essays for The Little Review as Instigations , and in the March 1919 issue Poetry , he published Poems from the Propertius Series , which appeared to be a translation of the Latin Poet Sextus Propertius . When he included this in his next poetry collection in 1921 , he had renamed it Homage to Sextus Propertius in response to criticism of his translation skills . " Propertius " is not a strict translation ; biographer David Moody describes it as " the refraction of an ancient poet through a modern intelligence " . Harriet Monroe , editor of Poetry , published a letter from a professor of Latin , W. G. Hale , saying that Pound was " incredibly ignorant " of the language , and alluded to " about three @-@ score errors " in Homage . Monroe did not publish Pound 's response , which began " Cat @-@ piss and porcupines ! ! " and continued , " The thing is no more a translation than my ' Altaforte ' is a translation , or than Fitzgerald 's Omar is a translation " . But she interpreted his silence after that as his resignation as foreign editor .

= = = Hugh Selwyn Mauberley = = =

His poem Hugh Selwyn Mauberley consists of 18 short parts , and describes a poet whose life , like his own , has become sterile and meaningless . Published in June 1920 , it marked his farewell to

London . He had become disgusted by the massive loss of life during the war and was unable to reconcile to it . Stephen Adams writes that , just as Eliot denied he was Prufrock , so Pound denied he was Mauberley , but the work can nevertheless be read as autobiographical . It begins with a satirical analysis of the London literary scene , before turning to social criticism , economics , and an attack on the causes of the war ; here the word usury appears in his work for the first time . The critic F. R. Leavis saw this poem to be Pound 's major achievement .

The war had shattered Pound 's belief in modern western civilization . He saw the Vorticist movement as finished and doubted his own future as a poet . He had only the New Age to write for ; his relationship with Poetry was finished , The Egoist was quickly running out of money because of censorship problems caused by the serialization of Joyce 's Ulysses , and the funds for The Little Review had dried up . Other magazines ignored his submissions or refused to review his work . Toward the end of 1920 he and Dorothy decided their time in London was over , and resolved to move to Paris .

Orage wrote in the January 1921 issue of The New Age : " Mr. Pound has been an exhilarating influence for culture in England ; he has left his mark upon more than one of the arts , upon literature , music , poetry and sculpture , and quite a number of men and movements owe their initiation to his self @-@ sacrificing stimulus . "

= = Paris (1921 ? 24) = =

The Pounds settled in Paris in January 1921 in an inexpensive apartment at 70 bis , rue Notre Dame des Champs . He became friendly with Marcel Duchamp , Tristan Tzara , Fernand Léger and others of the Dada and Surrealist movements , as well as Basil Bunting , Ernest Hemingway and his wife Hadley . He spent most of his time building furniture for his apartment and bookshelves for the bookstore Shakespeare and Company , and in 1921 the volume Poems 1918 ? 1921 was published . In 1922 Eliot sent him the manuscript of The Waste Land , then arrived in Paris to edit it with Pound , who blue @-@ inked the manuscript with comments like " make up yr. mind ... " and " georgian " . Eliot wrote : " I should like to think that the manuscript , with the suppressed passages , had disappeared irrecoverably ; yet , on the other hand , I should wish the blue pencilling on it to be preserved as irrefutable evidence of Pound 's critical genius . "

In 1924 Pound secured funding for Ford Madox Ford 's The Transatlantic Review from American attorney John Quinn . The Review published works by Pound , Ernest Hemingway and Gertrude Stein , as well as extracts from Joyce 's Finnegans Wake , before the money ran out in 1925 . It also published several Pound music reviews , later collected into Anthelil and the Treatise on Harmony .

Hemingway asked Pound to blue @-@ ink his short stories . Although Hemingway was 14 years younger , the two forged what would become a lifelong relationship of mutual respect and friendship , living on the same street for a time , and touring Italy together in 1923 . " They liked each other personally , shared the same aesthetic aims , and admired each other 's work " , writes Hemingway biographer Jeffrey Meyers , with Hemingway assuming the status of pupil to Pound 's teaching . Pound introduced Hemingway to Lewis , Ford , and Joyce , while Hemingway in turn tried to teach Pound to box , but as he told Sherwood Anderson , " [Ezra] habitually leads with his chin and has the general grace of a crayfish or crawfish " .

Pound was 36 when he met the 26 @-@ year @-@ old American violinist Olga Rudge in Paris in the fall of 1922 , beginning a love affair that lasted 50 years . Biographer John Tytell believes Pound had always felt that his creativity and ability to seduce women were linked , something Dorothy turned a blind eye to over the years . He complained shortly after arriving in Paris that he had been there for three months without having managed to find a mistress . He was introduced to Olga at a musical salon hosted by American heiress Natalie Barney in her home at 20 Rue Jacob , near the Boulevard Saint @-@ Germain . The two moved in different social circles : Olga was the daughter of a wealthy Youngstown , Ohio , steel family , living in her mother 's Parisian apartment on the Right Bank , socializing with aristocrats , while his friends were mostly impoverished writers of the Left Bank . The two spent the following summer in the south of France , where he worked with George Anthelil to apply the concept of Vorticism to music , and managed to write two operas , including Le

Testament de Villon . He wrote pieces for solo violin , which Olga performed .

= = Italy (1924 ? 45) = =

= = = Birth of the children = = =

The Pounds were unhappy in Paris ; Dorothy complained about the winters and Ezra 's health was poor . At a dinner a guest had randomly tried to stab him , and to Pound it underlined that their time in France was over . Hemingway observed that Pound " indulged in a small nervous breakdown " , leading to two days in an American hospital . They decided to move to a quieter place , and chose Rapallo , Italy , a town with a population of 15 @ , @ 000 . " Italy is my place for starting things " , he told a friend . During this period they lived on Dorothy 's income , supplemented by dividends from stock she had invested in .

Olga Rudge , pregnant with Pound 's child , followed them to Italy . She showed little interest in raising a child , but may have felt that having one would maintain her connection to him . In July 1925 she gave birth to a daughter , Mary . She placed her with a German @ - @ speaking peasant woman whose own child had died , and who agreed to raise Mary for 200 lire a month .

When Pound told Dorothy about the birth , she separated from him for much of that year and the next . In December 1925 , she left on an extended trip to Egypt . On her return in March , Pound realized that his wife was pregnant . In June , she and Pound left Rapallo for Paris for the premiere of *Le Testament de Villon* , without mentioning the pregnancy to his friends or parents . In September , Hemingway drove Dorothy to the American Hospital of Paris for the birth of a son , Omar Pound . In a letter to his parents in October Pound wrote , " next generation (male) arrived . Both D & it appear to be doing well " . Dorothy gave the baby son to her mother , Olivia , who raised him in London until he was old enough to go to boarding school . When Dorothy went to England each summer to see Omar , Pound would spend the time with Olga , whose father had bought her a house in Venice . The arrangement meant his children were raised very differently . Mary had a single pair of shoes , and books about Jesus and the saints , while Omar was raised in Kensington as an English gentleman by his sophisticated grandmother .

In 1925 the literary magazine *This Quarter* dedicated its first issue to Pound , including tributes from Hemingway and Joyce . Pound published *Cantos XVII ? XIX* in the winter editions . In March 1927 he launched his own literary magazine , *The Exile* , but only four issues were published . It did well in the first year , with contributions from Hemingway , E. E. Cummings , Basil Bunting , Yeats , William Carlos Williams and Robert McAlmon ; some of the poorest work in the magazine were Pound 's rambling editorials on Confucianism and or in praise of Lenin , according to biographer J. J. Wilhelm . He continued to work on *Fenollosa 's* manuscripts , and in 1928 won *The Dial 's* poetry award for his translation of the Confucian classic *Great Learning* (*Dà Xué* , transliterated as *Ta Hio*) . That year his parents Homer and Isabel visited him in Rapallo , seeing him for the first time since 1914 . By then Homer had retired , so they decided to move to Rapallo themselves . They took a small house , *Villa Raggio* , on a hill above the town .

Pound began work on *The Cantos* in earnest after relocating to Italy . The poems concern good and evil , a descent into hell followed by redemption and paradise . Its hundreds of characters fall into three groupings : those who enjoy hell and stay there ; those who experience a metamorphosis and want to leave ; and a few who lead the rest to paradiso terrestre . Its composition was difficult and involved several false starts , and he abandoned most of his earlier drafts , beginning again in 1922 . The first three appear in *Poetry* in June ? August 1917 . The *Malatesta Cantos* appeared in *The Criterion* in July 1923 , and two further cantos were published in *The Transatlantic Review* in January 1924 . Pound published 90 copies in Paris in 1925 of *A Draft of XVI . Cantos of Ezra Pound for the Beginning of a Poem of some Length now first made into a Book* .

= = = Turn to fascism , World War II = = =

Pound came to believe that the cause of World War I was finance capitalism , which he called " usury " , that the solution lay in C.H. Douglas 's idea of social credit , and that fascism was the vehicle for reform ; he had met Douglas in the New Age offices and had been impressed by his ideas . He gave a series of lectures on economics , and made contact with politicians in the United States on matters including education , interstate commerce and international affairs . Although Hemingway advised against it , on 30 January 1933 Pound met Benito Mussolini . Olga Rudge played for Mussolini and told him about Pound , who had earlier sent him a copy of Cantos XXX . During the meeting Pound tried to present Mussolini with a digest of his economic ideas , but Mussolini brushed them aside , though he called the Cantos " divertente " (entertaining) . The meeting was recorded in Canto XLI : " ' Ma questo ' / said the boss , ' è divertente . ' " Pound said he had " never met anyone who seemed to GET my ideas so quickly as the boss " .

When Olivia Shakespear died in October 1938 in London , Dorothy asked Pound to organize the funeral , where he saw their 12 @-@ year @-@ old son Omar for the first time in eight years . He visited Eliot and Wyndham Lewis , who produced a now @-@ famous portrait of Pound reclining . In April 1939 he sailed for New York , believing he could stop America 's involvement in World War II , happy to answer reporters ' questions about Mussolini while he lounged on the deck of the ship in a tweed jacket . He traveled to Washington , D.C. where he met senators and congressmen . His daughter , Mary , said that he had acted out of a sense of responsibility , rather than megalomania ; he was offered no encouragement , and was left feeling depressed and frustrated .

In June 1939 he received an honorary doctorate from Hamilton College , and a week later returned to Italy from the States and began writing antisemitic material for Italian newspapers . He wrote to James Laughlin that Roosevelt represented Jewry , and signed the letter with " Heil Hitler " . He started writing for Action , a newspaper owned by the British fascist Sir Oswald Mosley , arguing that the Third Reich was the " natural civilizer of Russia " . After war broke out in September that year , he began a furious letter @-@ writing campaign to the politicians he had petitioned six months earlier , arguing that the war was the result of an international banking conspiracy and that the United States should keep out of it .

= = = Radio broadcasts = = =

Tytell writes that by the 1940s no American or English poet had been so active politically since William Blake . Pound wrote over a thousand letters a year during the 1930s and presented his ideas in hundreds of articles , as well as in The Cantos . Pound 's greatest fear was an economic structure dependent on the armaments industry , where the profit motive would govern war and peace . He read George Santayana and The Law of Civilization and Decay by Brooks Adams , finding confirmation of the danger of the capitalist and usurer becoming dominant . He wrote in The Japan Times that " Democracy is now currently defined in Europe as a ' country run by Jews , ' " and told Oswald Mosley 's newspaper that the English were a slave race governed since Waterloo by the Rothschilds .

Pound broadcast over Rome Radio , though the Italian government was at first reluctant , concerned that he might be a double agent . He told a friend : " It took me , I think it was , TWO years , insistence and wrangling etc . , to GET HOLD of their microphone . " He recorded over a hundred broadcasts criticizing the United States , Roosevelt , Roosevelt 's family , and the Jews , and rambling about his poetry , economics , and Chinese philosophy . The first was in January 1935 , and by February 1940 he was broadcasting regularly ; he traveled to Rome one week a month to pre @-@ record the 10 @-@ minute broadcasts , for which he was paid around \$ 17 , and they were broadcast every three days . The broadcasts required the Italian government 's approval , though he often changed the text in the studio . Tytell wrote that Pound 's voice had assumed a " rasping , buzzing quality like the sound of a hornet stuck in a jar " . The politics apart , Pound needed the money ; his father 's pension payments had stopped ? his father died in February 1942 ? and Pound had his mother and Dorothy to look after .

The broadcasts were monitored by the United States Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service listening station at Princeton University , and Pound was indicted in absentia for treason in July

1943 . He answered the charge by writing a letter to Attorney General Francis Biddle , which Tytell describes as " long , reasoned , and temperate " , defending his right to free speech . He continued to broadcast and write under pseudonyms until April 1945 , shortly before his arrest .

= = = Arrest for treason = = =

The war years threw Pound 's domestic arrangements into disarray . Olga lost possession of her house in Venice and took a small house with Mary above Rapallo at Sant ' Ambrogio . In 1943 Pound and Dorothy were evacuated from their apartment in Rapallo . His mother Isabel 's apartment was too small , and the couple moved in with Olga . Mary , then 19 and finished with convent school , was quickly sent back to Gais in Switzerland , leaving Pound , as she would later write , " pent up with two women who loved him , whom he loved , and who coldly hated each other . "

Pound was in Rome early in September when Italy surrendered . He borrowed a pair of hiking boots and a knapsack and left the city , having finally decided to tell Mary about his wife and son . He walked 450 miles north , spending a night in an air raid shelter in Bologna , then took a train to Verona and walked the rest of the way . Mary almost failed to recognize him when he arrived , he was so dirty and tired . He told her everything about his other family ; she later admitted she felt more pity than anger .

He returned home to Rapallo , where on 3 May 1945 , four days after Mussolini was shot , armed partisans arrived at the house to find Pound alone . He stuffed a copy of Confucius and a Chinese dictionary in his pocket before he was taken to their headquarters in Chiavari . He was released shortly afterwards ; then with Olga gave himself up to an American military post in the nearby town of Lavagna .

Pound was transferred to U.S. Counter Intelligence Corps headquarters in Genoa , where he was interrogated by Frank L. Amprin , an FBI agent assigned by J. Edgar Hoover . Pound asked to send a cable to President Truman to offer to help negotiate peace with Japan . He also asked to be allowed a final broadcast , a script called " Ashes of Europe Calling " , in which he recommended peace with Japan , American management of Italy , the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine , and leniency toward Germany . His requests were denied and the script was forwarded to Hoover .

On 8 May , the day Germany surrendered , Pound told an American reporter , Ed Johnston , that Hitler was " a Jeanne d 'Arc , a saint " , and that Mussolini was an " imperfect character who lost his head " . On 24 May he was transferred to the United States Army Disciplinary Training Center north of Pisa , where he was placed in one of the camp 's " death cells " , a series of six @-@ by @-@ six @-@ foot outdoor steel cages lit up at night by floodlights ; engineers reinforced his cage with heavier steel for fear the fascists would try to break him out . He spent three weeks in isolation in the heat , sleeping on the concrete , denied exercise and communication , except for conversations with the chaplain . After two and a half weeks he began to break down under the strain . Richard Sieburth wrote that Pound recorded it in Canto LXXX , where Odysseus is saved from drowning by Leucothea : " hast 'ou swum in a sea of air strip / through an aeon of nothingness , / when the raft broke and the waters went over me . " Medical staff moved him out of the cage the following week . On 14 and 15 June he was examined by psychiatrists , one of whom found symptoms of a mental breakdown , after which he was transferred to his own tent and allowed reading material . He began to write , drafting what became known as The Pisan Cantos . The existence of a few sheets of toilet paper showing the beginning of Canto LXXXIV suggests he started it while in the cage .

= = United States (1945 ? 58) = =

= = = St Elizabeths Hospital = = =

On 15 November 1945 Pound was transferred to the United States . An escorting officer 's impression was that " he is an intellectual ' crackpot ' who imagined that he could correct all the

economic ills of the world and who resented the fact that ordinary mortals were not sufficiently intelligent to understand his aims and motives . " He was arraigned in Washington D.C. on charges of treason on the 25th of that month . The charges included broadcasting for the enemy , attempting to persuade American citizens to undermine government support of the war , and strengthening morale in Italy against the United States .

He was admitted to St. Elizabeths Hospital and in June the following year Dorothy was declared his legal guardian . He was held for a time in the hospital 's prison ward ? Howard 's Hall , known as the " hell @-@ hole " ? a building without windows in a room with a thick steel door , and nine peepholes to allow the psychiatrists to observe him as they tried to agree on a diagnosis . Visitors were admitted for only 15 minutes at a time , while patients wandered around screaming and frothing at the mouth .

Pound 's lawyer , Julien Cornell , whose efforts to have him declared insane are credited with having saved him from life imprisonment , requested his release at a bail hearing in January 1947 . The hospital 's superintendent , Winfred Overholser , agreed instead to move him to the more pleasant surroundings of Chestnut Ward , close to Overholser 's private quarters , which is where he spent the next 12 years . The historian Stanley Kutler was given access in the 1980s to military intelligence and other government documents about Pound , including his hospital records , and wrote that the psychiatrists believed Pound had a narcissistic personality , but they considered him sane . Kutler believes that Overholser protected Pound from the criminal justice system because he was fascinated by him .

Tytell writes that Pound was in his element in Chestnut Ward . He was at last provided for , and was allowed to read , write , and receive visitors , including Dorothy for several hours a day . He took over a small alcove with wicker chairs just outside his room , and turned it into his private living room , where he entertained his friends and important literary figures . He began work on his translation of Sophocles 's Women of Trachis and Electra , and continued work on The Cantos . It reached the point where he refused to discuss any attempt to have him released . Olga Rudge visited him twice , once in 1952 and again in 1955 , and was unable to convince him to be more assertive about his release . She wrote to a friend : " E.P. has ? as he had before ? bats in the belfry but it strikes me that he has fewer not more than before his incarceration . "

Pound 's contemporaries did all they could to get him out of confinement . Robert Frost obtained legal advocacy and successfully campaigned to get Pound out of St. Elizabeths . In 1955 , Hemingway said ? . . . Whatever he did has been punished greatly and I believe he should be freed to go and write poems in Italy where he is loved and understood . ?

= = = The Pisan Cantos , Bollingen Prize = = =

James Laughlin had " Cantos LXXIV ? LXXXIV " ready for publication in 1946 under the title The Pisan Cantos , and gave Pound an advance copy , but he held back , waiting for an appropriate time to publish . A group of Pound 's friends ? Eliot , Cummings , W. H. Auden , Allen Tate , and Julien Cornell ? met Laughlin to discuss how to get him released . They planned to have Pound awarded the first Bollingen Prize , a new national poetry award by the Library of Congress , with \$ 1 @, @ 000 prize money donated by the Mellon family .

The awards committee consisted of 15 fellows of the Library of Congress , including several of Pound 's supporters , such as Eliot , Tate , Conrad Aiken , Amy Lowell , Katherine Anne Porter and Theodore Spencer . The idea was that the Justice Department would be placed in an untenable position if Pound won a major award and was not released .

Laughlin published The Pisan Cantos on 30 July 1948 , and the following year the prize went to Pound . There were two dissenting voices , Francis Biddle 's wife , Katherine Garrison Chapin , and Karl Shapiro , who said that he could not vote for an antisemite because he was Jewish himself . Pound responded to the award by saying , " No comment from the bughouse . "

There was uproar . The Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette quoted critics who said " poetry [cannot] convert words into maggots that eat at human dignity and still be good poetry . " Robert Hillyer , a Pulitzer Prize winner and president of the Poetry Society of America , attacked the committee in The

Saturday Review of Literature , telling journalists that he " never saw anything to admire in Pound , not one line " . Congressman Jacob K. Javits demanded an investigation into the awards committee . It was the last time the prize was administered by the Library of Congress .

= = = Release = = =

Although Pound repudiated his antisemitism in public , he maintained his views in private . He refused to talk to psychiatrists with Jewish @-@ sounding names , dismissed people he disliked as " Jews " , and urged visitors to read the Protocols of the Elders of Zion (1903) , a forgery claiming to represent a Jewish plan for world domination . He struck up a friendship with the conspiracy theorist and antisemite Eustace Mullins , believed to be associated with the Aryan League of America , and author of the 1961 biography This Difficult Individual , Ezra Pound .

Even more damaging was his friendship with John Kasper , a far @-@ right activist and Ku Klux Klan member . Kasper had come to admire Pound during literature classes at university , and after he wrote to Pound in 1950 the two had become friends . Kasper opened a bookstore in Greenwich Village in 1953 called " Make it New " , reflecting his commitment to Pound 's ideas ; the store specialized in far @-@ right material , including Nazi literature , and Pound 's poetry and translations were displayed on the window front . Kasper and another follower of Pound 's , David Horton , set up a publishing imprint , Square Dollar Series , which Pound used as a vehicle for his tracts about economic reform .

Wilhelm writes that there were a lot of conventional people visiting Pound too , such as the classicist J.P. Sullivan and the writer Guy Davenport , but it was the association with Mullins and Kasper that stood out . The relationships delayed his release from St Elizabeths . In an interview for the Paris Review in 1958 , when asked by interviewer George Plimpton about Pound 's relationship with Kasper , Hemingway replied that Pound should be released and Kasper jailed . Kasper was eventually jailed for the 1957 bombing of the Hattie Cotton School in Nashville , targeted because a black girl had registered as a student .

Pound 's friends continued to try to get him out . Shortly after Hemingway won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954 , he told Time magazine that " this would be a good year to release poets " . The poet Archibald MacLeish asked him in June 1957 to write a letter on Pound 's behalf ; Hemingway believed Pound was unable to abstain from awkward political statements or from friendships with people like Kasper , but he signed a letter of support anyway , and pledged \$ 1 @, @ 500 to be given to Pound when he was released . In 1957 several publications began campaigning for his release . Le Figaro published an appeal entitled " The Lunatic at St Elizabeths " . The New Republic , Esquire and The Nation followed suit ; The Nation argued that Pound was a sick and vicious old man , but that he had rights . In 1958 MacLeish hired Thurman Arnold , a prestigious lawyer who ended up charging no fee , to file a motion to dismiss the 1945 indictment . Overholser , the hospital 's superintendent , supported the application with an affidavit saying Pound was permanently and incurably insane , and that confinement served no therapeutic purpose . The motion was heard on 18 April that year by the same judge who had committed Pound to St Elizabeths . The Department of Justice did not oppose the motion , and Pound was free .

= = Italy (1958 ? 72) = =

Pound arrived in Naples in July , where he was photographed giving a fascist salute to the waiting press . When asked when he had been released from the mental hospital , he replied : " I never was . When I left the hospital I was still in America , and all America is an insane asylum . " He and Dorothy went to live with Mary at Castle Brunnenburg near Merano in the Province of South Tyrol ? where he met his grandson , Walter , and his granddaughter , Patrizia , for the first time ? then returned to Rapallo , where Olga Rudge was waiting to join them .

They were accompanied by a teacher Pound had met in hospital , Marcella Spann , 40 years his junior , ostensibly acting as his secretary and collecting poems for an anthology . The four women soon fell out , vying for control over him ; Canto CXIII : alluded to it : " Pride , jealousy and

possessiveness / 3 pains of hell . " Pound was in love with Marcella , seeing in her his last chance for love and youth . He wrote about her in Canto CXIII : " The long flank , the firm breast / and to know beauty and death and despair / And to think that what has been shall be , / flowing , ever unstill . " Dorothy had usually ignored his affairs , but she used her legal power over his royalties to make sure Marcella was seen off , sent back to America .

By December 1959 he was mired in depression . He saw his work as worthless and The Cantos botched . In a 1960 interview given in Rome to Donald Hall for Paris Review , he said : " You ? find me ? in fragments . " Hall wrote that he seemed in an " abject despair , accidie , meaninglessness , abulia , waste " . He paced up and down during the three days it took to complete the interview , never finishing a sentence , bursting with energy one minute , then suddenly sagging , and at one point seemed about to collapse . Hall said it was clear that he " doubted the value of everything he had done in his life . "

Those close to him thought he was suffering from dementia , and in the summer of 1960 Mary placed him in a clinic near Merano when his weight dropped . He picked up again , but by the spring of 1961 he had a urinary infection . Dorothy felt unable to look after him , so he went that summer to live with Olga in Rapallo , then Venice ; Dorothy mostly stayed in London after that with Omar . Pound attended a neo @-@ Fascist May Day parade in 1962 , but his health continued to decline . The following year he told an interviewer , Grazia Levi : " I spoil everything I touch . I have always blundered ... All my life I believed I knew nothing , yes , knew nothing . And so words became devoid of meaning . "

William Carlos Williams died in 1963 , followed by Eliot in 1965 . Pound went to Eliot 's funeral in London and on to Dublin to visit Yeats 's widow . Two years later he went to New York where he attended the opening of an exhibition featuring his blue @-@ inked version of Eliot 's The Waste Land . He went on to Hamilton College where he received a standing ovation . Shortly before his death in 1972 it was proposed he be awarded the Emerson @-@ Thoreau Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences , but after a storm of protest the academy 's council opposed it by 13 to 9 ; the sociologist Daniel Bell , who was on the committee , argued that it was important to distinguish between those who explore hate and those who approve it . Two weeks before he died , Pound read for a gathering of friends at a café : " re USURY / I was out of focus , taking a symptom for a cause . / The cause is AVARICE . "

On his 87th birthday , 30 October 1972 , he was too weak to leave his bedroom . The next night he was admitted to the Civil Hospital of Venice , where he died in his sleep of an intestinal blockage on 1 November , with Olga at his side . Dorothy was unable to travel to the funeral . Four gondoliers dressed in black rowed the body to the island cemetery , Isola di San Michele , where he was buried near Diaghilev and Stravinsky . Dorothy died in England the following year . Olga died in 1996 and was buried next to Pound .

= = Style = =

Critics generally agree that Pound was a strong yet subtle lyricist , particularly in his early work , such as " The River Merchant 's Wife " . According to Witmeyer a modern style is evident as early as Ripostes , and Nadel sees evidence of modernism even before he began The Cantos , writing that Pound wanted his poetry to represent an " objective presentation of material which he believed could stand on its own " without use of symbolism or romanticism .

Drawing on literature from a variety of disciplines , Pound intentionally layered often confusing juxtapositions , yet led the reader to an intended conclusion , believing the " thoughtful man " would apply a sense of organization and uncover the underlying symbolism and structure . Ignoring Victorian and Edwardian grammar and structure , he created a unique form of speech , employing odd and strange words , jargon , avoiding verbs , and using rhetorical devices such as parataxis .

Pound 's relationship to music is essential to his poetry . Although he was tone deaf and his speaking voice is described as " raucous , nasal , scratchy " , Michael Ingam writes that Pound is on a short list of poets possessed of a sense of sound , an " ear " for words , imbuing his poetry with melopoeia . His study of troubadour poetry ? words written to be sung (motz et son) ? led him to

think modern poetry should be written similarly . He wrote that rhythm is " the hardest quality of a man 's style to counterfeit " . Ingham compares the form of *The Cantos* to a fugue ; without adhering strictly to the traditions of the form , nevertheless multiple themes are explored simultaneously . He goes on to write that Pound 's use of counterpoint is integral to the structure and cohesion of *The Cantos* , which show multi @-@ voiced counterpoint and , with the juxtaposition of images , non @-@ linear themes . The pieces are presented in fragments " which taken together , can be seen to unfold in time as music does " .

= = = Imagism and Vorticism = = =

Opinion varies about the nature of Pound 's writing style . Nadel writes that imagism was to change Pound 's poetry . Like Wyndham Lewis , Pound reacted against decorative flourishes found in Edwardian writing , saying poetry required a precise and economic use of language and that the poet should always use the " exact " word , stripping the writing down to the " barest essence " . According to Nadel , " Imagism evolved as a reaction against abstraction ... replacing Victorian generalities with the clarity in Japanese haiku and ancient Greek lyrics . " Daniel Albright writes that Pound tried to condense and eliminate " all but the hardest kernel " from a poem , such as in the two @-@ line poem " *In a Station of the Metro* " . However , Pound learned that Imagism did not lend itself well to the writing of an epic , so he turned to the more dynamic structure of Vorticism for *The Cantos* .

= = = Translations = = =

Pound 's translations represent a substantial part of his work . He began his career with translations of Occitan ballads and ended with translations of Egyptian poetry . Yao says the body of translations by modernist poets in general , much of which Pound started , consists of some the most " significant modernist achievements in English " . Pound was the first English language poet since John Dryden , some three centuries earlier , to give primacy to translations in English literature . The fullness of the achievement for the modernists is that they renewed interest in multiculturalism , multilingualism , and , perhaps of greater importance , they treated translations not in a strict sense of the word but instead saw a translation as the creation of an original work .

Michael Alexander writes that , as a translator , Pound was a pioneer with a great gift of language and an incisive intelligence . He helped popularize major poets such as Guido Cavalcanti and Du Fu , and brought Provençal and Chinese poetry to English @-@ speaking audiences . He revived interest in the Confucian classics and introduced the west to classical Japanese poetry and drama . He translated and championed Greek , Latin and Anglo @-@ Saxon classics , and helped keep them alive at a time when poets no longer considered translations central to their craft .

In Pound 's *Fenollosa* translations , unlike previous American translators of Chinese poetry , which tended to work with strict metrical and stanzaic patterns , Pound created free verse translations . Whether the poems are valuable as translations continues to be a source of controversy . Hugh Kenner contends that *Cathay* should be read primarily as a work about World War I , not as an attempt at accurately translating ancient Eastern poems . The real achievement of the book , Kenner argues , is in how it combines meditations on violence and friendship with an effort to " rethink the nature of an English poem " . These ostensible translations of ancient Eastern texts , Kenner argues , are actually experiments in English poetics and compelling elegies for a warring West . Pound scholar Ming Xie explains that Pound 's use of language in his translation of " *The Seafarer* " is deliberate , in that he avoids merely " trying to assimilate the original into contemporary language " .

= = = The Cantos = = =

The Cantos is difficult to decipher . In the epic poem , Pound disregards literary genres , mixing satire , hymns , elegies , essays and memoirs . Pound scholar Rebecca Beasley believes it amounts

to a rejection of the 19th @-@ century nationalistic approach in favor of early @-@ 20th @-@ century comparative literature . Pound reaches across cultures and time periods , assembling and juxtaposing " themes and history " from Homer to Ovid and Dante , from Thomas Jefferson and John Adams , and many others . The work presents a multitude of protagonists as " travellers between nations " . The nature of The Cantos , she says , is to compare and measure among historical periods and cultures and against " a Poundian standard " of modernism . Pound layered ideas , cultures , and historical periods , juxtaposing modern vernacular , Classical languages , and underlying truths , often represented with Chinese ideograms and as many as 15 different languages .

Ira Nadel says The Cantos is an epic , that is " a poem including history " , and that the " historical figures lend referentiality to the text " . It functions as a contemporary memoir , in which " personal history [and] lyrical retrospection mingle " ? most clearly represented in the Pisan Cantos . Michael Ingham sees in The Cantos an American tradition of experimental literature writing about it , " These works include everything but the kitchen sink , and then add the kitchen sink " . In the 1960s William O 'Connor described The Cantos as filled with " cryptic and gnomic utterances , dirty jokes , obscenities of various sorts " .

Allen Tate believes the poem is not about anything and is without beginning , middle or end . He argues that Pound was incapable of sustained thought and " at the mercy of random flights of ' angelic insight , ' an Icarian self @-@ indulgence of prejudice which is not checked by a total view to which it could be subordinated " . This perceived lack of logical consistency or form is a common criticism of The Cantos . Pound himself felt this absence of form was his great failure , and regretted that he could not " make it cohere " .

= = = Literary criticism and economic theory = = =

Pound 's literary criticism and essays are , according to Massimo Bacigalupo , a " form of intellectual journal " . In early works , such as The Spirit of Romance and " I Gather the Limbs of Osiris " , Pound paid attention to medieval troubadour poets ? Arnaut Daniel and François Villon . The former piece was to " remain one of Pound 's principal sourcebooks for his poetry " ; in the latter he introduces the concept of " luminous details " . The leitmotifs in Pound 's literary criticism are recurrent patterns found in historical events , which , he believed , through the use of judicious juxtapositions illuminate truth ; and in them he reveals forgotten writers and cultures .

Pound wrote intensively about economic theory with the ABC of Economics and Jefferson and / or Mussolini , published in the mid @-@ 1930s right after he was introduced to Mussolini . These were followed by The Guide to Kulchur ? covering 2500 years of history ? which Tim Redman describes as the " most complete synthesis of Pound 's political and economic thought " . Pound thought writing the cantos meant writing an epic about history and economics , and he wove his economic theories throughout ; neither can be understood without the other . In these pamphlets and in The ABC of Reading , he sought to emphasize the value of art and to " aestheticize the political " ? written forcefully , according to Nadel , and in a " determined voice " . In form his criticism and essays are direct , repetitive and reductionist , his rhetoric minimalist , filled with " strident impatience " , according to Pound scholar Jason Coats , and frequently failing to make a coherent claim . He rejected traditional rhetoric and created his own , although not very successfully , in Coats 's view .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

In 1922 the literary critic Edmund Wilson reviewed Pound 's latest published volume of poetry , Poems 1918 ? 21 , and took the opportunity to provide an overview of his estimation of Pound as poet . In his essay on Pound , titled " Ezra Pound 's Patchwork " , Wilson wrote :

Ezra Pound is really at heart a very boyish fellow and an incurable provincial . It is true that he was driven to Europe by a thirst for romance and color that he could scarcely have satisfied in America , but he took to Europe the simple faith and pure enthusiasm of his native Idaho His sophistication is still juvenile , his ironies are still clumsy and obvious , he ridicules Americans in Europe not very much simpler than himself ...

According to Wilson , the lines in Pound 's poems stood isolated , with fragmentary wording contributing to poems that " do not hang together " . Citing Pound 's first seven cantos , Wilson dubbed the writing " unsatisfactory " . He found The Cantos disjointed and its contents reflecting a too @-@ obvious reliance on the literary works of other authors , and an awkward use of Latin and Chinese translations as a device inserted among reminiscences of Pound 's own life .

The rise of New Criticism during the 1950s , in which author is separated from text , secured Pound 's poetic reputation . Nadel writes that the publication of T.S. Eliot 's Literary Essays in 1954 " initiated the recuperation of Ezra Pound " . Eliot 's essays coincided with the work of Hugh Kenner , who visited Pound extensively at St. Elizabeths . Kenner wrote that there was no great contemporary writer less read than Pound , adding that there is also no one to appeal more through " sheer beauty of language " . Along with Donald Davie , Kenner brought a new appreciation to Pound 's work in the 1960s and 1970s . Donald Gallup 's Pound bibliography was published in 1963 and Kenner 's The Pound Era in 1971 . In the 1970s a literary journal dedicated to Pound studies (Paideuma) was established , and Ronald Bush published the first dedicated critical study of The Cantos , to be followed by a number of research editions of The Cantos .

Following Mullins ' biography , described by Nadel as " partisan " and " melodramatic " , was Noel Stock 's factual 1970 Life of Ezra Pound ? although the material included was subject to Dorothy 's approval . The 1980s saw three significant biographies : John Tytell 's " neutral " account in 1987 , followed by Wilhelm 's multi @-@ volume biography . Humphrey Carpenter 's sprawling narrative , a " complete life " , built on what Stock began ; unlike Stock , Carpenter had the benefit of working without intervention from Pound 's relatives . In 2007 David Moody published the first of his multi @-@ volume biography , combining narrative with literary criticism , the first work to link the two .

In the 1980s Mary de Rachewiltz released the first dual @-@ language edition of The Cantos , including " Canto LXXII " and " Canto LXXIII " . These cantos had originally been published in fascist magazines , and are characterized by 21st @-@ century literary scholars as no more than war @-@ time propaganda . In 1991 a complete facsimile edition of Pound 's prose and poetry was published , now considered a " fundamental research tool " , according to Nadel . Scholarship in the 1990s turned toward in @-@ depth investigations of his antisemitism and Rome years . Tim Redman writes about Pound 's fascism and his relationship with Mussolini , and Leon Surrutte about Pound 's economic theories , especially during the Italian period , investigating how Pound the poet became Pound the fascist . In 1999 Surrutte wrote about the state of Pound criticism , that " the effort to uncover coherence in a ... crazy quilt of verse styles , critical principles , crankish economic theories and distasteful political affiliations has made it difficult to perceive the genesis and development of any of these components . " He emphasized that Pound 's " economic and political opinions have not been properly dated , nor has the suddenness of his radicalization been appreciated . "

Nadel 's 2010 Pound in Context is a contextual literary approach to Pound scholarship . Pound 's life , " the social , political , historical , and literary developments of his period " , is fully investigated , which , according to Nadel is " the grid for reading Pound 's poetry . " In 2012 Matthew Feldman wrote that the more than 1 @, @ 500 documents in the " Pound files " held by the FBI have been ignored by scholars , and almost certainly contain evidence that " Pound was politically cannier , was more bureaucratically involved with Italian Fascism , and was more involved with Mussolini 's regime than has been posited " .

= = = Legacy = = =

Pound helped advance the careers of some of the best @-@ known modernist writers of the early 20th century . In addition to Eliot , Joyce , Lewis , Frost , Williams , Hemingway and Conrad Aiken , he befriended and helped Marianne Moore , Louis Zukofsky , Jacob Epstein , Basil Bunting , E.E.

Cummings , Margaret Anderson , George Oppen , and Charles Olson . Hugh Witemeyer argues that the Imagist movement was the most important in 20th @-@ century English @-@ language poetry because it affected all the leading poets of Pound 's generation and the two generations after him . In 1917 Carl Sandburg wrote in Poetry : " All talk on modern poetry , by people who know , ends with dragging in Ezra Pound somewhere . He may be named only to be cursed as wanton and mocker , poseur , trifler and vagrant . Or he may be classed as filling a niche today like that of Keats in a preceding epoch . The point is , he will be mentioned . "

The outrage after Pound 's wartime collaboration with Mussolini 's regime was so deep that the imagined method of his execution dominated the discussion . Arthur Miller considered him worse than Hitler : " In his wildest moments of human vilification Hitler never approached our Ezra ... he knew all America 's weaknesses and he played them as expertly as Goebbels ever did . " The response went so far as to denounce all modernists as fascists , and it was only in the 1980s that critics began a re @-@ evaluation . Macha Rosenthal wrote that it was " as if all the beautiful vitality and all the brilliant rottenness of our heritage in its luxuriant variety were both at once made manifest " in Ezra Pound .

Pound 's antisemitism has soured evaluation of his poetry . Pound scholar Wendy Stallard Flory writes that separating the poetry from the antisemitism is perceived as apologetic . She believes the positioning of Pound as " National Monster " and " designated fascist intellectual " made him a stand @-@ in for the silent majority in Germany , occupied France and Belgium , as well as Britain and the United States , who , she argues , made the Holocaust possible by aiding or standing by .

Later in his life , Pound analyzed what he judged to be his own failings as a writer attributable to his adherence to ideological fallacies . Allen Ginsberg states that , in a private conversation in 1967 , Pound told the young poet , " my poems don 't make sense . " He went on to supposedly call himself a " moron " , to characterize his writing as " stupid and ignorant " , " a mess " . Ginsberg reassured Pound that he " had shown us the way " , but Pound refused to be mollified :

'Any good I 've done has been spoiled by bad intentions ? the preoccupation with irrelevant and stupid things , ' [he] replied . Then very slowly , with emphasis , surely conscious of Ginsberg 's being Jewish : ' But the worst mistake I made was that stupid , suburban prejudice of anti @-@ semitism.'

= = Works = =