

THE
CARRELL



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Bak Toum and I Tam

by *Ronald Perry*

Although Bak Toum thought himself a true sorcerer, he was really only a very minor devil. In his day, the old arts were mostly forgotten. Only a pale shadow of the original spectacular evil still lingered on in the world. And so Bak Toum and his wife, I Tam, were obliged to live in greatly reduced circumstances, in a palm-thatched hut on the outskirts of a dirty provincial village, where they furtively attempted to practice an inferior and much debased species of magic.

As everyone knows, love is a disagreeable and foreign word to warlocks and demons. For such creatures, happiness springs only from the delight in evil accomplished; and darkness is their true habitat. Unfortunately for Bak Toum and I Tam, each passing year brought with it an increasingly diminished regard for their ancient profession and its prerogatives, and, as a result, a steady lessening of their powers. In fact, things had come to such a pass of late that, even in such a sleepy backwater as the village where they were now forced to live, they were actually jeered and laughed at, treated as figures of fun rather than objects of terror. Because of this, they were, quite naturally, extremely frustrated and unhappy.

Lacking others on whom to exercise their waning talents, Bak Toum and I Tam turned inwards, upon themselves, and vented all the long years' accumulation of unhappiness and spite on each other, and spent most of their time bickering and quarrelling. Each thought the other altogether hideous and revolting, and longed for divorce; but as each was at the same time still thoroughly frightened of the other, neither dared to make the first move in this direction. And so, as the days went by, their disputes grew progressively worse in ferocity and bitterness; until finally the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that their neighbors were frequently forced to intervene between them, to keep them from further violence.

At this time, in a great walled city some distance away from the village, there lived a king who was exceedingly young and handsome. Tales of his grace and ability were told throughout the country, and

word of his extraordinary beauty was on every lip and tongue. In her loathing for her husband, I Tam repeated these tales to herself frequently and in secret; and conjured up the king's face in dreams; and imagined herself sitting in splendor on a jeweled peacock throne beside him, or, perfumed and nested in flowers, waiting in a great golden bed for his coming.

One day, word came to the village that the young king had now chosen a bride; and that this princess, who was the daughter of a great king from a neighboring country, and reputedly as beautiful as the king was handsome, was even now encamped with her train outside the gates of the city, waiting for the most propitious moment to make her entry.

At this news, I Tam was furious. As the smoke rose stinking from her cooking fire, and the scrawny chickens picked and scabbled in the dirt floor of the hut around her, she saw her dreams suddenly collapsing. All the long years of the future stretched out before her, as barren and bleak as a desert; and she saw herself endlessly wrinkling and shrinking, imprisoned for life in the same windless dry cage as the husband she detested.

That night, after an especially bitter quarrel with Bak Toum, I Tam lay in her bed like a stone, unable to sleep. Her head spun dizzily with elaborate schemes and speculations; and through her closed eyelids gold glinted and beckoned. Finally, near midnight, she could stand it no longer. Without making a sound, she arose from her bed and crept out of the hut into the breathing silence of the forest. And then, by her arts, she passed swiftly and invisibly through rain-thicket and across river, down gully and over and under hill, until she came in the small hours to the camp of the princess before the gates of the great city.

Moving unseen between the sentries and the pitched tents of the princess's attendants and swordsmen, I Tam made her witch's way into the silk pavilion where the young bride-to-be lay sleeping; and bent over her; and breathed her black breath into her face; and made in the air above her a curious ritual gesture she had almost forgotten. Then she took up the princess's silver mirror and, holding it in front of the sleeping girl, pronounced some words in an unknown tongue. As she did so, the princess's image in the mirror began to cloud and darken; and suddenly she vanished; and the mirror was empty; and darkness lay in her bed like a collapsed and empty garment.

When the princess had disappeared, I Tam turned the mirror to her own wrinkled and ugly witch's face, and looked deeply into it, murmuring an incantation and crossing her toes and her fingers. As she looked, the image began to change. One by one, the wrinkles fell



away like the dead scales of a snake's skin, and in a very short time I Tam was transformed into a beautiful young girl, identical in every respect to the vanished princess.

The next morning, I Tam arose from the princess's bed, and arrayed herself in rich brocade and jeweled stuffs and fine linen, in preparation for her triumphal entry into the king's city. Then, when the astrologers announced that the most favorable moment was at hand, she sat back languidly among the silk cushions in the princess's sedan-chair, and bowed graciously in all directions to the cheering crowds as the procession moved through the gates of the city and up the royal way to the palace.

After the marriage had been celebrated, with great pomp and splendor, the king and his new queen, in accordance with the custom of the country, withdrew from the world and one another, into private chambers which had been prepared for them, to spend the prescribed seven days of solitary fasting and meditation.

Like all sorceresses, however, I Tam very soon tired of her own company, and grew very hungry and thirsty. By the evening of the second day, the thirst for blood was so strong upon her that she paced the floor of her room like a caged animal, writhing in inner torment, unable to stop her hands from shaking, or her mouth from continually opening and closing. Finally, towards midnight, she could contain herself no longer. With great stealth and cunning, she crept out of her chamber, and prowled like a hunting cat down the halls and passages of the palace, until she came eventually upon a guard who sat sleeping at his post, with his head back and his mouth wide open.

Now nearly beside herself with thirst and hunger, I Tam sprang upon the sleeping guard with all her claws unsheathed; and bit a great gaping hole in the soft part of his exposed throat; and avidly drank her fill of his rich, warm blood. And then, satiated, confident that she had gone unobserved, she ran back to her room and immediately fell into a deep sleep from which she did not awake until mid-morning.

Twice more, during the course of the succeeding four days, this process was repeated. On the fourth, and again on the sixth day, the fever mounted in I Tam until she could stand it no longer, but had to creep out, as before, and prowl the sleeping corridors of the palace until she found another guard upon whom she could slake her thirst.

Finally, on the morning of the eighth day, the ritual period of solitary meditation and fasting came to an end for the young king and his new queen. And the royal handmaidens came in to I Tam; and put on her the dress of a queen; and crowned her with gold and young leaves and flowers; and led her forth into the great hall of the palace. There, she was presented with all due ceremony to the king her husband; and



the end of their fast was celebrated in great splendor, amidst general festivity and rejoicing.

During the course of the banquet, the king, seated on his high throne with his beautiful queen beside him, saw that several of his chief ministers seemed greatly disturbed, despite the smile they put on for the benefit of the assembled company. As soon as the feast had ended, therefore, he called them to him, and asked them what was the matter, that they should be so sorely troubled at his wedding banquet.

Kneeling before the king and queen, the ministers said that, each night for the past six nights, while the king and his bride kept fast and meditated alone in their rooms, a ravening wild beast had somehow managed to penetrate the walls of the city, and even into the confines of the palace itself. With gray heads bowed, they told their lord and his lady how this beast, despite all their safeguards and precautions, had each night slain another of the palace guards; and this in the most terrible manner imaginable, ripping and tearing with claw and fang. But, worst of all, they said, was their fear that the beast was not a true or natural animal, but a sorcerer; for on each occasion one or more members of the household had observed a strange shadowy shape flitting or loping about the deserted halls in the middle of the night; and sometimes this apparition took a woman's shape, and sometimes a man's.

At this, both the king and the queen gasped, almost in unison, and turned pale. The ministers stepped politely back, and waited a moment before continuing their story. In any event, they said, how else could such a creature's presence be explained? Surely, no mere beast of the jungle could pass through solid walls and come unseen even into the innermost parts of the palace?

When the ministers finished their tale, they watched, somewhat bewildered, as the king and his wife, their faces the color of ashes, slowly turned to look at one another. And then the ministers fell back in utter confusion, hardly believing their eyes as the queen, rising to her feet, gave a great piercing cry, like that of a mortally wounded animal, and sprang at the king with her soft, white hands outstretched and curved like claws.

"Bak Toum!" she cried, "Bak Toum! Foul! Foul!"—whereupon the ministers, thinking that the queen had suddenly taken leave of her wits, leapt to the king's aid, only to fall back in even greater confusion as the king in his turn sprang to his feet and grappled with his beautiful bride, crying in a loud voice that rang throughout the hall, "I Tam! Sly toad! Snake! Slinker!"

And then, before their eyes, the king and queen, locked in one another's arms and biting and spitting and clawing like two wild beasts,



suddenly changed. Their beauty, which only a moment before had seemed so dazzling and spectacular, sagged and ran, dissolving all at once like dung in a heavy rain; and they were revealed as hideous and incredibly old, with gnarled and wrinkled skin and broken mouths.

The ministers were so astonished that they still stood, with mouths wide open and eyes popping, as the guards came running with drawn swords; and the sorcerer and his screeching harridan wife took to their witch's heels and fled from the palace and the city like a noisome wind.

When Bak Toum and I Tam returned to their village, still snarling and spitting at each other in their frustration and rage, all the villagers groaned in unison; for they had already congratulated themselves on being well-rid of the unpleasant pair. After a time, however, when the sorcerer and his wife were once again settled in their dirty palm-thatched hut on the outskirts of the village, and the noise of their perpetual bickering and quarrelling once again could be heard throughout the vicinity, the villagers shrugged their shoulders; and thought that life, after all, really had very few surprises to offer; and bent their backs once more to their ploughs.

Ronald Perry was born in Miami in 1932, but spent most of his childhood in Key Largo where his parents owned and operated a commercial fishing lodge. He studied at the University of Miami, which he left in 1954 having completed an M.A. in English Literature and History. After a brief stay at the University of Iowa, he began a period of travelling which eventually brought him to Vientiane, Laos, where he worked as secretary for an engineering firm in the uneasy years between the French withdrawal and the American occupation. Laos made a profound impression on Perry's imagination, inspiring many of his poems and a series of Laotian tales freely adapted into English, The City of the Sandalwood Forest. Several of these tales were printed in The Hudson Review. Bak Toum and I Tam, with original illustrations by Laurence Donovan, is printed here for the first time. In 1959 Perry published his first volume of poetry, Rock Harbor, also illustrated by Donovan, with Alan Swallow in Denver. Two chapbooks of poems, The Fire Nursery and The Pipe Smokers, were published in association with the University of Miami English Department, the latter illustrated by a University of Miami student, James Moffitt. Voyages from Troy, a mythological sequence of poems with illustrations by Donovan, was published by the Mariner Press, Miami, in 1962. In 1981, Denizens, selected for the National Poetry Series by Donald Justice, appeared under the Random House imprint. While preparing a new volume of poems, In the Smoke, Perry died in Nassau on July 13, 1982.

Prayer for the Night Commuter

by *Laurence Donovan*

Behold the crescent dark
That closes softly round
The dark far deeper,
Blood beneath the wound:
In this night station
Where the silent rails
Fade into the park
Whose enigmatic keeper
Has long since departed,
Hear the iron tales;
Choose, O empty-hearted,
Final destination.

Situated stilly
In a middle poise,
Leaving, then, or coming,
Listen to that dreaming
Far metallic sound
Beating on the silence,
Know between the days
Blood assuages violence,
Deepest wound will close,
And find around the bend
Underneath your star
Love, spectacular.

Ghost's man, keeper, teller
Of the telling tale
To each twice-told sleeper,
Driver of that rail-
riding ancient monster,
Come again this night
To stem human dolor
And pacify the weeper;
Fill the barren station
With speech, burning light,
Steam; administer
Journey's consolation.

Cicada's Faint Rattle

by *Eugenio Montale*

Cicada's faint rattle
lost on the wind,
scarcely touched and exhausted
in the exhaling torpor.

Deeper inside us
branches the secret
vein; our world
scarcely rules itself.

If you notice, the grey air
trembles with the corrupt
vestiges
that the world does not swallow.

The sign annuls itself,
each voice falls silent.
And a barren life
descends to its last exit.

(translated by John Paul Russo)

The Sunflower

by *Eugenio Montale*

Bring me the sunflower to transplant it where
the salt wind has burned the ground,
and all day before the sky's reflecting blues
may it show its anxious yellow face.

The darkest things incline to clarity,
and bodies wear down to flows of color,
colors to harmonies. This vanishing
contains the chance of chances.

Bring me the plant that will conduct me upward
to the fairest surging transparencies
where life as liquid essence dissipates.
Bring me the sunflower frenzied by the light.

(translated by John Paul Russo)

Night-flowering Jasmine

by *Giovanni Pascoli*

And the nocturnal flowers open
the hour I think of my dear ones,
the twilight butterflies hover
in the midst of viburnum.

For a time the cries are over,
only there a house whispers;
under wings sleep the nests,
like eyes under eyelids.

From the open chalices pours
the fragrance of strawberry.
A light shines in a room there.
Grass springs by the tombs.

A tardy bee murmurs, perhaps
the cells are already taken.
The hen struts in the blue yard¹
followed by a starry chirping.

Through the night there breathes
a fragrance passing on wind;
a light floats up the stairs,
burns on a floor, and goes out.

It's dawn, the petals close,
a little crumpled. There hides
in the soft and secret urn
I don't know what happiness.

¹hen: "rustic name for the Pleiades" (Pascoli)

(translated by John Paul Russo)

Last Dream

by Giovanni Pascoli

From a motionless rankling clangor
of iron wagons heading for the infinite,
amid piercing shock and savage roar
. . . a sudden silence. I was healed.

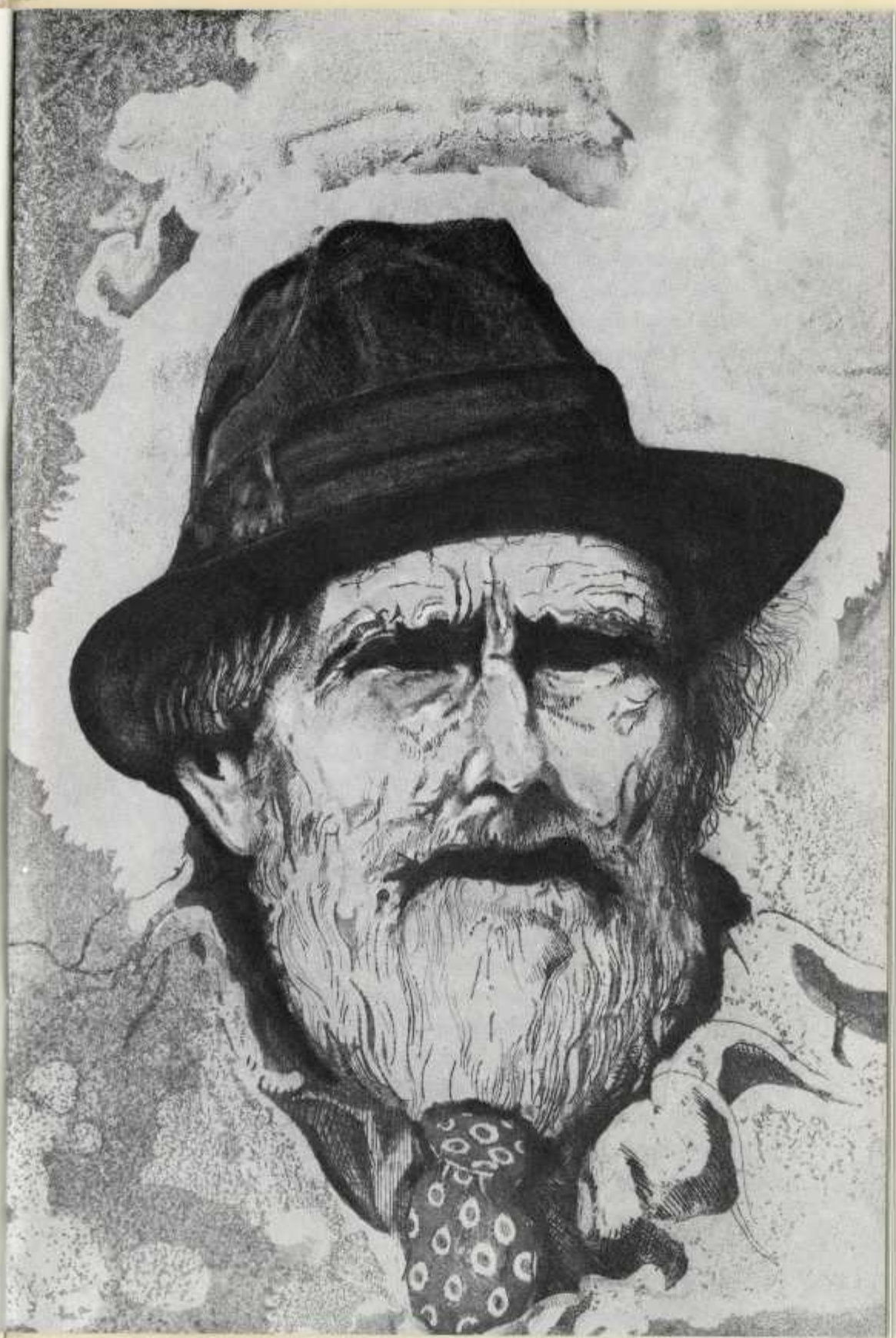
The stormcloud of illness was lifted
by a breath. A movement of eyelids,
and I saw my mother at my bedside.
I looked at her without surprise.

Free! . . . yes, and still, perhaps,
wishing to drop my hands from my chest,
and not wishing to. One heard a rustling,
thin, persistent, easy like cypresses,

even as a river in a prairie
thirsting for the sea's existlessness.
I listened to its hollow murmuring,
softly similar, always, farther, always.

(translated by John Paul Russo)

John Paul Russo is a professor and chairman of the English Department at the University of Miami. He is the editor of I. A. Richards' Complementaries: Uncollected Essays and an annotated bibliography of Richards' works. He is currently completing a critical biography of Richards.



St. Elizabeths

by Clark Emery

I remember Ezra Pound—those needle-eyes
That pierced my phoniness, pricked out the lies
He knew I knew I lived by, the tolerance
That kept his mouth shut. (There was a formal dance
Of angels with the devils on those needle-points.)
The quick hands, feeding squirrels and poets, the joints
Perhaps arthritic but working as the will
(That's where, said Epictetus, lies man's good or ill)
Demanded. *Directio voluntatis*—
His life's key-words. To know somehow which what is
Which and what which better, to make and take the choice
And run with it come hell, high water, Joyce
Or Eliot—or even Wyndham Lewis:
That was his gift. And that's why *Make It New* is
A spermy book. Yes, spermatozoa
Oozed out of every cranial pore. To know a
Man like Pound (or Frost) means suffering mental rape:
He peels you, sucks you seedless like a grape;
You're tender as an eyeball to a speck of grit.
He blunts your intellect, stifles your wit,
Muffles your self-hood. You become a thing
And not a person, a lost-voice, one-wing
Nightingale. Hang it all, Ezra Loomis Pound,
No one has ever made me feel so browned
Off with myself as you. I was a sound
If somewhat left-wing liberal, liked Jews,
Detested Fascists, had Rooseveltian views
About the war. You were (they said) insane,
A Fascist, anti-Jew, and, like Petain,
A traitor to the Fatherland. My God,
With me so right and you so wrong, how odd

That I was acting like the Wedding Guest
And you the Mariner. How can I best
Explain this? It was, first off, the whole-cloth dignity
(Despite the sandals, khaki shorts, and green eye-shade that he
Relaxed at ease in), the dignity of one
Who's seen it all, all hell break loose, himself undone.
At every seam, but has at last come through
Faith-whole—a veritable wandering Jew,
As obstinate as Ezra, tough as Moses,
Compelled, like them, to take what God disposes.
Then, honesty. (I think it can be said,
Pound was less often wrong in heart than head.)
He leveled with me all the way, no mask
(Persona, if you wish) to hide behind. Ask
What I would, I got a forthright answer—
No weaseling or putting off, the dancer
And the dance of intellect eurhythmic (Duncan
Second-best to him). Some frost-is-on-the-punkin
Hoosierism now and then, but just to tease
The pedant in me. Perhaps some loss of ease
When, brashly, I suggested that he meet
My good friend Bernie—New York Jew. A fleet-
ing side glance aimed at Dorothy, a gesture
Of acquiescence, then a chuckle. Lest you're
Suspicious, let me say they met and talked
With mutual esteem. Bernie was not balked
By Pound's polymathy. I was. How scanty
My knowledge was of troubadours and Dante
I would not care to say. Say that for Pound—
He taught the ignoramus that he found
That day in St. Elizabeths greenery
Much more than I had learned in any beanery.
No wonder I felt like the Wedding Guest—
At forty-odd a fledgling in the nest,
Whereas he'd shot and killed the Albatross,

Been treated like the bad thief on the cross
 But (who'd believe?) achieved his resurrection,
 Will's compass-needle showing no deflection.
 (That needle was his own unwobbling pivot.)
 He changed my life, persuading me to give it
 More than I thought I had. He didn't so much teach
 As make me tighten, lengthen, grasp and reach,
 Metamorphosing chicken into vulture,
 Who'd seize not cult-yure nor Kultür but Kulchur.
 I later learned he had a cruel streak
 (Speaking of vultures); in a fit of pique
 He called the poems of a friend of mine
 Lavender-scented cat-piss. The fine wine
 Of our friendship (now *that* is cat-piss) turned
 To vinegar (*and* lavender-scented); I burned
 My bridges and went to work on Dylan Thomas
 (Then safely dead) to explicate his commas.
 Some come-down! (I think I'd bought that Sturm und Drang
 By saying, You've no ear for U.S. slang.)
 He had his blind-spots and his dark unreasons,
 But Jesus, who could care—he wrote the Pisans.
 He was the best of men, the worst of men,
 Like Wagner, Malatesta, Beethoven;
 The nearest thing in our day to John Milton
 (Though peanut-butter to the latter's Stilton:
 I mean, in the *American* grain a rebel—
 Less Satan or Diabolus than debbil).
 One can't in these days do the Milton thing—
 Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string,
 Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well—
 Pentameters are busted all to hell.
 He busted them. Even so, I'll raise a joyful sound
 For having met and learned from Ezra Pound,
 Regretting only that I missed La Martinelli,
 I have her nude self-portrait—what a belly!

Notes to *St. Elizabeths*

by Robert Casillo

Line 6: "quick hands, feeding squirrels and poets," During his confinement for insanity at St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington (1946-1958), Pound often fed the squirrels while relaxing on the hospital lawn. He remembers these squirrels in Canto 116, p. 796: "to be saved by squirrels and blue jays?" While at the hospital Pound also received abundant amounts of food from visitors, so much, in fact, that he frequently gave the food away to hungry and aspiring poets in his retinue. (All references to *The Cantos* in these notes are taken from the 1972 edition of *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* published by New Directions, New York.)

Lines 9-10: "Directio voluntatis—/ His life's key-words." Deriving from Dante, this favorite phrase of Pound's means "direction of the will" and receives a Confucian coloring in his works. As a voluntarist Pound believes as does Confucius that human evil traces not to original sin or the innate depravity of man but to "error," whose cause lies in the failure or corruption of the will. The proper remedy for a corrupted will is therefore not punishment but rather the direction of the will through education, the cultivation of right reason. For Pound the Christian doctrine of original sin is a false Hebraic engraftment upon the basically pagan optimism and naturalism of the West.

Line 14: "Make it New" The title of this book, published in 1934, is a favorite and famous Poundian slogan which appears in his works in a variety of contexts. In one sense this is an injunction to renovate cultural forms and models, to strike an ideal balance between artistic originality and tradition; a counter-Romantic, Pound never valued absolute originality or originality for its own sake. This phrase also implies the need for ritual as a means of casting off the detritus of the past and of harmonizing culture with the ever-renewing cycles of nature. In Canto 54, p. 265, the Chinese Emperor Tsching "prayed on the mountain and / wrote MAKE IT NEW / on his bath tub / Day by day make it new / cut underbrush, / pile the logs / keep it growing."

Lines 15-16: "A spermy book. Yes, spermatazoa / Oozed out of every cranial pore." In his Postscript to Remy de Gourmont's *Natural Philosophy of Love* (1922), Pound speculates that the (male) brain may consist of coagulated sperm originally transmitted to the skull via the spinal cord. He then goes on to speak of the "integration of the male in the phallus" and to suggest the interchangeability of sperm, light, and the creative artistic intelligence; saturated with light and language as with sperm and thought, the artist's brain has the power of "exteriorising forms" as does a spermatazoa. These speculations

are in part inspired by Pound's sensation of "driving" himself like a phallus into the "passive vulva of London" in an attempt to shape the "female chaos" of English civilization. They may also be the basis for Gaudier-Brzeska's famous head of Pound in the form of a marble phallus. Put simply, Pound thinks of great literature and art as foci and transmitters of vital and even sexual energy. Their "spermatic *logoi* [words]" radiate seminal light and so fecundate other minds. See Pound, *Pavannes and Divagations* (New York: New Directions, 1958), pp. 209-210; *Guide to Kulchur* (New York: New Directions, 1970), p. 128; Charles Norman, *Ezra Pound* (New York: MacMillan, 1960), p. 136.

Line 23: "Hang it all, Ezra Loomis Pound," Pound's Canto 2 opens by raising the question of the historical authenticity of Browning's treatment of the eponymous hero of his poem *Sordello*: "Hang it all, Robert Browning, / there can be but the one "Sordello." / But Sordello, and my Sordello?" (Canto 2, p. 6) Loomis is the name of Pound's paternal grandmother's family, which derived from upper New York State. An old lady from the region once told Pound that the Loomises were fine people, but horse thieves—a story which Pound was fond of repeating. See Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (New York: Avon, 1970), pp. 20-21.

Lines 27-28: "Rooseveltian views / About the war." Where Roosevelt and the Allies believed that World War II had to be fought in order to stop the spread of Fascist aggression against the Western democracies, Pound believed that the Fascist nations had had no choice but to join in war against what Hitler termed "Liebkapital" (Loan Capital), an international conspiracy of finance capital centered in England and America. According to Pound in the radio broadcasts and elsewhere, not only had the usurocracy fomented World War II (in order to reap vast profits from the interest on debts), but it had gained political control over London and Washington. Although Pound does not consider this conspiracy to be composed exclusively of Jews, he is certain that they hold a prominent and essential place within it. England has become an outpost of "Judea," while Roosevelt's Brain Trust speaks "almost Yiddish," and Roosevelt himself is the architect of the "new Jew Roosevelt oosalem." See Pound, *"Ezra Pound Speaking": Radio Speeches of World War II*, ed. Leonard W. Doob (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978), pp. 59, 148, 228.

Lines 28-29: "You were (they said) insane, / A Fascist, anti-Jew," "They" probably refers to the liberal press and the American public, which generally condemned Pound's poetry and politics and offered them as evidence of his insanity. E. Fuller Torrey, a psychiatrist at St.

Elizabets, has recently shown that Pound was almost certainly not insane (and that he was therefore fit to stand trial for treason); the questionable diagnosis of insanity was maintained by Dr. Winfred Overholser, superintendent of St. Elizabeths, who loved literature and wished to protect Pound. Meantime, the question of Pound's anti-Semitism is extremely complicated and has not yet received satisfactory treatment. Critics often argue that Pound was anti-Semitic in neither the racial (biological) nor the cultural sense, and that he confined his hatred to a number of vicious usurers who just happened to be Jewish. This argument by no means explains Pound's attacks on "Jewry" in the broadcasts or his enthusiastic endorsement of Nazi eugenic policies; if anything Pound's prose reveals an increasingly transparent hatred towards not just Jews but the entire Semitic world. As for his Fascism, during his trial Pound jumped up and shouted "I am not a Fascist." On other occasions Pound showed his inveterate suspicion of abstraction by implying that the general concept "Fascist" was inadequate to define the ideology of an individual as unique as himself. Pound critics have also pointed out that, though Pound supported Mussolini's "corporate state" in *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* (1935), in that work he views Fascism as foreign to American and Anglo-Saxon traditions, and therefore does not advocate it for "export" to the United States. Even so, by the 'forties broadcasts Pound's commitment to the Italian Fascist ideology is stronger than ever, and indeed he tells the United States that its only hope is a "corporate solution" in the sense then current in Europe. See Torrey, "The Protection of Ezra Pound," *Psychology Today* (Nov., 1981); Frederick Wertham, "Road to Rapallo: A Psychiatric Study," *The American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 3 (1949), 585-600; Leon Surette, *A Light from Eleusis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 5; Christine Brooke-Rose, *A ZBC of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 250; Pound, *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* (New York: Liveright, 1935), p. 98; "Ezra Pound Speaking" pp. 310, 131-132, 155, 140, 22; Julian Cornell, *The Trial of Ezra Pound* (New York: John Day, 1966), p. 192.

Line 30: "traitor to the Fatherland." Having made hundreds of pro-Fascist broadcasts over Rome radio between 1941 and 1945, in the spring of 1945 Pound was captured by the Allies, charged with treason by the U.S., and confined for several months to the U.S. Army Disciplinary Training Center at Pisa, where he wrote the *Pisan Cantos* and suffered a severe mental and physical collapse. In February, 1946 Pound escaped trial for treason in Washington by successfully entering a plea of insanity and, after thirteen years of confinement at St. Elizabeths, in April, 1958 he was finally released and left the United

States without ever having stood trial. Although recent research has raised serious doubts about Pound's insanity, under these circumstances there is no legal justification for referring to Pound as a traitor to the United States. Some critics, Emery among them, believe that the Federal government would have had extreme difficulty in convicting Pound of treason, since conviction would have required proof of intent, and Pound had frequently expressed his loyalty to American principles in his radio broadcasts. On Pound's imprisonment at Pisa and his St. Elizabeths years, see Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound*, pp. 516-574. See also E. Fuller Torrey, "The Mad Days of Ezra Pound," *Esquire* (August, 1983), 86-92.

Lines 44-45: "no mask / (Persona, if you wish) to hide behind." An allusion to Pound's tendency in his early poetry to write not in his own lyric voice but rather to adopt the persona or mask of another, to speak in a voice other than his own; his 1909 volume of poems, as well as his early collected poems, are entitled *Personae*. Pound's career reveals the gradual thinning out of these personae and his assumption of his own voice throughout most of *The Cantos*.

Lines 48-49: "dance of intellect eurhythmic (Duncan / Second-best to him)." Presumably an allusion to Isadora Duncan, the American pioneer in modern dance. By implication Pound becomes the greatest American "dancer."

Lines 49-50: "Some frost-is-on-the-punkin / Hoosierisms now and then," This alludes to Pound's anti-pedantic affectation of a Midwestern crackerbarrel style of speech, one of the many regional accents which Pound adopted in his radio broadcasts in an attempt to appeal to native American listeners (and also to conceal his essential cosmopolitanism). Noel Stock suggests that in his early youth Pound was familiar with and fond of the colloquial and regional manner of the Indiana or "Hoosier" poet James Whitcomb Riley; the poem which Stock attributes to Pound contains references to Thanksgiving, turkey, and Jack Frost. Riley's influence can also be felt in Pound's translations of some of the folksongs in his version of the Chinese Book of Odes (the *Confucian Odes*). See Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound*, pp. 72, 37; Norman, *Ezra Pound*, p. 387.

Line 59: "of troubadours and Dante" A passionate admirer of Dante and the troubadours from the very beginning of his career, Pound is one of the major modern interpreters of these poets to the Anglo-Saxon world. Their influence is constantly evident in Pound's poetry and prose. For a discussion of these poets, see Pound, *Literary Essays*, ed. T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), pp. 201-213; *The Spirit of Romance* (New York: New Directions, 1968), pp. 87-100, 118-185.

Line 63: "beanery." This is Pound's irreverent term for the American university and especially its graduate school. Having studied Romance literature briefly in the graduate school of the University of Pennsylvania, Pound became convinced over his career that the American universities were nests of pedantry, obfuscation, and intellectual and moral cowardice. The derivation of "beanery" is uncertain but may derive from the American colloquialism "bean," for head. For Pound's most sustained and eloquent attack on the dehumanizing effects of the "Germanic" or modern ideal of scholarship, see "Provincialism the Enemy," in *Selected Prose*, pp. 189-203.

Line 67: "Been treated like the bad thief on the cross" This perhaps alludes to the Pisan *Cantos*, written during Pound's confinement at the U.S. Army Disciplinary Center in Pisa, and in which Pound portrays himself as a sacrificial victim. In Canto 74, p. 427, Pound seems to identify himself with Barabbas, the thief who succeeded in escaping crucifixion at Calvary; but later in this canto Pound seems to dissociate himself from Barabbas and to invite a comparison between himself and Christ: "with Barabbas and his two thieves beside me" (Canto 74, p. 436).

Line 70: "unwobbling pivot." This alludes to the *Chung Yung* of Confucius, which Pound translated as *The Unwobbling Pivot*. According to Pound, this work contains the "Confucian metaphysics": "what exists plumb in the middle"—namely the unwobbling pivot—"is the just process of the universe and that which never wavers or wobbles is the calm principle operant in its mode of action." Emery implies, then, that Pound has aligned himself with the unchanging axis of the universe and its principle of justice. Pound's Italian translation of the *Chung Yung*, entitled *L'Asse che non Vacilla*, was confiscated after World War II by the Allies on the suspicion that the *asse* (axis) of the title had to do with Fascism. While Pound critics have sometimes chided the U.S. government for its ignorance of Confucius, in actuality Pound draws repeated parallels in *The Cantos* and in his critical prose between Fascist and Confucian order, and the play on *asse*-Axis is no doubt intentional. See Pound, *Confucius* (New York: New Directions, 1969), pp. 95, 97. On *L'Asse che non Vacilla*, see Wendy Flory, *Ezra Pound and The Cantos: The Record of a Struggle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 25; Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound*, p. 523; Massimo Bacigalupo, *The Formed Trace: The Later Poetry of Ezra Pound* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 184n.

Line 74: "Metamorphosing chicken into vulture," Probably an allusion to Pound's lasting interest in Ovid and especially metamorphosis. Apart from his frequent representation of moments of sudden

physical and mental transformation in his early poetry, Pound defines metamorphosis as one of the three most important themes or "subjects" of *The Cantos*: "'The magic moment' or moment of metamorphosis, bust thru from quotidian into 'divine or permanent world,' Gods, etc.'" The idea of metamorphosis may also underlie Pound's idea of the ideogram. See Pound, *The Letters of Ezra Pound*, ed. D.D. Paige (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1950), p. 210.

Line 75: "not cult-yure nor Kultúr but Kulchur." A series of Poundian discriminations among kinds of culture and education. Pound rejects the first two, endorses and promotes the third. As its affected pronunciation implies, "cult-yure" stands for the stuffily genteel high culture, characterized by social and aesthetic snobbery, fear and hatred of energy and innovation, and the worship of an embalmed tradition. The second is (for Pound at least) the cultural ideal of the centralized and imperialistic German state of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Deeply fearful of "Prussianism," Pound decries Germany's compartmentalization of disciplines in the state-controlled universities and the state's appropriation of German culture for purposes of political propaganda. Still more dangerous is Germany's use of military might to impose its culture or "Kultúr" on other European nations — a violation of Pound's cosmopolitan conception of European civilization. Pound's alternative to these conceptions of culture is the irreverently spelled "Kulchur." Far from being confined to elitist and high cultural manifestations in art and literature, "Kulchur" encompasses science and myth, folklore and ritual, indeed anything that is living, valuable, and useful in the cultural traditions of mankind. In *Guide to Kulchur* Pound virtually equates it with his idea of the "Paideuma," which consists of those often ignored but powerful "gristly roots of ideas" that continue to go into "action." See Pound, *Selected Prose*, pp. 189-203; *Guide to Kulchur*, *passim*.

Line 94: "One can't in these days do the Milton thing" Pound's *bete noir* among his poetic predecessors was John Milton, whom he disliked for his Latinate diction, rhetorical manner, unnatural grammatical inversions, and lack of concrete visual imagery. For Pound, Milton is much inferior to Dante, whom Pound offers as a lasting model for poetic clarity, distinctness, and precision. For Pound contra Milton and pro Dante, see *Literary Essays*, pp. 216, 217, 237-238, 7, 154, 201.

Lines 95-96: "Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string,/ Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well" See Milton, *Lycidas*, ll. 17, 15.

Line 97: "Pentameters are busted all to hell." Since Chaucer the norm of English metrics has been the iambic foot and the iambic pen-

tameter line (Marlowe, Shakespeare, Johnson, Dryden, Pope, Wordsworth, Tennyson, etc.). Like many modern poets, but with greater daring and more remarkable results, Pound believed the iambic pentameter to have become virtually exhausted for expressive purposes. As a poet one of Pound's greatest achievements is in having supplied a variety of metrical alternatives to the iambic norm through the combination of dactyls, trochees, spondees, and great number of metrical patterns derived from classical poetry. Pound at once states and demonstrates his metrical principles in *The Pisan Cantos*: "To break the pentameter, that was the first heave." See Canto 81, p. 518.

Line 100: "La Martinelli," E. Torrey has recently shown that Pound was granted extraordinary freedom at St. Elizabeths by the hospital's superintendent, Dr. Winfred Overholser, Sr. Sherri Martinelli was an American painter who became Pound's regular companion at St. Elizabeths until she was displaced in Pound's affections in 1957 by Marcella Spann. Described by Noel Stock as a "strange, rather scatterbrained young woman," in 1956 Martinelli or La Martinelli as she called herself published a booklet which contained reproductions of her paintings along with an introduction by Pound; her portrait of Pound is reproduced in his translation of Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*. She also appears in the *Rock-Drill Cantos* as "Undine" and is believed to have inspired Canto 90. See Torrey, "The Mad Days of Ezra Pound," 90, and Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound*, p. 567.

Letters of Ezra Pound to Clark Emery In the University of Miami Library

by Robert Casillo

The most sensational literary career of this century is surely that of Ezra Pound, one of the greatest modern American poets. A self-styled "exile" from America in 1908, Pound launched his career in London, where talent and ambition quickly made him one of the most familiar figures on the Edwardian literary scene. Thanks to his extension and purification of modern poetic diction, his daring experiments in rhythm and meter, and his revivifying translations of Greek, Italian, and Chinese classics, Pound won the title of "inventor" of modern poetry in our time. Yet Pound was no less important to modern letters in his permanent role of instigator, organizer, and publicist of innovative talent. Before World War I Pound was a central figure in the Imagist and Vorticist movements, and he promoted the work of James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, Robert Frost, and William Carlos Williams. After the war Pound continued to break new ground. Having abandoned London and Paris for the Italian seacoast town of Rapallo, Pound was already at work on his encyclopedic "modern epic," *The Cantos*. Left unfinished at Pound's death in 1972, this work combines myth and history, science and legend, lyric and anecdote, all in an attempt to encompass the whole range of human experience, the "undying constants" in human nature. *The Cantos* are among the best-known, least read, and most important books of the twentieth century.

Nonetheless, the poetic achievement of Ezra Pound has always been shadowed, at least in the public mind, by notoriety and even disgrace. His *Cantos* bear the heavy imprint of the economic obsession which Pound began to manifest in the 1920's and which persisted into his old age. Convinced that the West is under the control of a far-flung financial conspiracy in which Jews play a prominent role, Pound advocated monetary reform of various sorts as an antidote to international loan capital or "usury." By the 1930's Pound had come to support Italian Fascism, which he saw as the instrument of his economic and cultural values, and during the war years Pound delivered his pro-Axis broadcasts to the United States over Rome Radio. Along with Pound's familiar artistic and cultural themes, these broadcasts endorse anti-Semitism, Fascist corporatism, and Nazi eugenics. Because

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of these excesses, immediately after the war Pound was imprisoned in the U.S. Army Disciplinary Camp at Pisa, where he spent several agonized months in solitary confinement. These months also saw the writing of the Pisan *Cantos*, for many critics the summit of Pound's poetic achievement. Then, in November, 1945, Pound was transported to Washington to stand trial for treason. But apparently the U.S. government wanted to avoid the embarrassment of hanging one of the nation's greatest literary figures. Though Pound was almost certainly fit to stand trial, his insanity plea was successful. He was therefore confined in December, 1945 to St. Elizabeths Hospital, an insane asylum in Washington, D.C. Pound remained there until his release in 1958, after which, the charge of treason having been dropped, Pound departed for Italy and his son-in-law's castle in the Italian Tyrol.

A less indomitable person than Pound would have collapsed under so many years of mental strain and ignominy. Whatever one may think of Pound's politics, one can only admire the energy and resourcefulness with which he turned his St. Elizabeths years into some of the most brilliantly productive of his career. At St. Elizabeths Pound completed two major sections of *The Cantos* and some major translations of Chinese and Greek classics. He also continued his political propagandizing, often pseudonomously and in obscure extreme right-wing journals, while carrying on a typically voluminous, wide-ranging, and exhausting correspondence; its topics range from poetry to philosophy, economics to religion, anthropology to politics. All this is a testament to Pound's unflagging commitment to that activating knowledge which he termed "Kulchur." Nor did Pound pass these years apart from intelligent and supportive human contacts. During visiting hours at St. Elizabeths, Pound conducted a salon frequented by poets, artists, critics, and scholars. To be sure, some of his visitors were hangers-on and curiosity seekers, and some, such as John Kasper, were interested only in Pound's incendiary politics. But the majority no doubt came in search of Pound's wisdom in poetry, art, history, and numerous other things, the vast panoply of cultural knowledge which he revealed in his *Cantos*.

The Archives and Special Collections Department of the University of Miami Library is especially fortunate to have valuable materials from Pound's St. Elizabeths years: fifty-one letters and six postcards from Ezra Pound to Professor Clark Emery, a member of the University of Miami English Department from 1947 to 1975. In the early 1950's Professor Emery was working on a full-length study of *The Cantos*, which at that time were only beginning to receive serious scholarly examination, and whose main themes and devices were

largely a mystery. Emery began his correspondence with Pound by asking about the fine points of Pound's poetic "arcanum." But Pound, eager not simply to help Emery write his book but to draw an enthusiastic supporter into the Poundian fold, was soon enough calling Emery "Em" and instructing him in a great variety of pet subjects: the state of education and the curriculum especially, cultural activism, pedagogical methods, the poetic abilities of the younger generation (Emery's students, in fact), the political importance of the radio Nor was Emery spared Pound's reiteration of his economic and political creeds.

Beginning in September, 1951, and concluding in 1961, three years after Pound's departure for Italy, this correspondence is punctuated by such high points as the day (April 13, 1953) on which Pound gave Emery permission to visit him at St. Elizabeths; one can only imagine the emotional effect of such a summons. Emery visited Pound in Washington on a number of occasions, at least once with a busload of University of Miami students whom Pound entertained on the St. Elizabeths lawn, and he commemorated these visits in a poem published in this issue of *The Carrell*. Another high point for Emery must have been the day on which Pound congratulated him after having read his manuscript on *The Cantos*. He had shown, Pound said of Emery's work, "the most careful and thorough drive to correlate results of 50 years work." Pound's judgement was vindicated in 1958 when the University of Miami Press published Emery's *Ideas into Action: A Study of Ezra Pound's Cantos*. To this day the conclusions of this study hold after twenty-five years of unremitting research on Pound. Allen Ginsberg was right in observing in the Poundian journal *Paideuma* that *Ideas into Action* is perhaps the best introduction to *The Cantos* and particularly to their economic themes.

If Pound's letters to Emery sometimes seem obscure even to the informed reader, this is in large part because the University Library lacks Emery's letters to Pound, which would help to clarify the subjects under discussion; Emery's letters are part of the extensive Pound Collection at the Beinecke Library at Yale. As a further obstacle to understanding there is Pound's rapid, abrupt, and telegraphic style; in these letters as elsewhere Pound leaps repeatedly from subject to subject in sudden bursts of thought. When he was examined by U.S. Army psychiatrists after his harrowing stay at the prison camp in Pisa, they indicated as a sign of his mental unsoundness his "distractability," his inability to keep to a single subject. Actually, these discontinuities are typical of Pound's "ideogrammic" manner of thinking and reflect not only the scope of his intellect but his desire to find hitherto unsuspected relations among disparate things; at the same time they

reflect his emphasis on rapid communication, the mind as light "fighting for speed." This, however, does not often help the reader, to whom Pound leaves the task of leaping his hiatuses. In reading these letters one is no less conscious of what T. S. Eliot called Pound's "peculiar orthography"—colloquial and regional spellings, the use of capitals to emphasize words and phrases or vocal intonations. In the first instance these represent Pound's anti-pedantry, his desire to conceal his cosmopolitanism and project a native "murkn" mask. In the second they bespeak his concern to hierarchize the terms of discourse, to eliminate needless explanation, to present his "gists" and "piths" with maximum immediacy, force, and efficiency. Good writing, Pound believed, should be like "a ball of light in one's hand."

To read these letters is also to feel the irrepressible power of this charming, generous, humorous, irascible, and explosively violent personality. Famous for having helped and instigated writers throughout his career, Pound devotes two long letters to a detailed discussion of Emery's study of Pound's *Cantos*. In another letter he commiserates with Emery and "bucks up" his confidence after a publisher had rejected the manuscript. Pound's humor is evident when Emery asks whether, during Pound's brief period as William Butler Yeats' secretary, he had seen any supernatural visions (Yeats was interested in magic and the supernatural): "no entanglement wiff YeATS's spooks, leprechauns, hokum artists, etc." But as Pound's broadcasts and published correspondence reveal, he can also be violent and brutal in his language. Disgusted (as usual) with the Democratic party and especially with the New Deal, Pound links its members to the "power of evil" and declares that Wilson and F. D. R. deserve "the bottom of hell as a mild form of justice." Here is the poet who—to quote Eliot—fabricates Hells for "other people." Although Pound labels his violent language an "emotional reaction" rather than a "durable conviction," in the same letter his bile rises again and he wants the chance to kick Roosevelt "in the stomach."

It is well known that Pound's poetic career reveals a constant expansion of technical means and historical interest, but in many ways he is an obsessive and hence repetitious writer, and it is no surprise that these letters reiterate old themes. Of these, the best known is Pound's opposition to usury, which is the taking of interest at exorbitant rates, and which by around 1930 Pound came to view as the greatest of evils. Emery's correspondence with Pound in fact coincides with Pound's attainment of what he considered a satisfactory definition of usury. Appended to Canto 45, the first of three major *Cantos* devoted exclusively to the nature of usury, the definition reads: "A charge for the use of purchasing power, levied without regard to pro-

duction, often without regard to the possibilities of production (Hence the failure of the Medici bank)." Pound believes that history shapes up as a constant battle between honest "producers" and rapacious and exploitative usurers, who sabotage production by the manipulation of money and saddle future generations with debts. In order to eliminate usury, state governments should nationalize banking and regulate the money supply in order to promote production and consumption.

Here one sees why, in these letters and elsewhere, Pound insists that the American Constitution has been "betrayed." Roosevelt and the Democrats have ignored the central importance of "issue" or monetary policy, above all the constitutional power vested in Congress to place the banking system under national control. Thanks to these derelictions, and thanks too to their establishment of a quasi-socialistic welfare state, Roosevelt and company are a "slide greased with sewage," while America is "going to shit" and the "betrayal of the Constitution" is "fester in every vein." These statements echo the Pisan *Cantos*, where Pound speaks of usurious *veleno* (poison) in "all the veins of the commonweal."

Throughout his writing Pound asserts that evil stems not from sin, which is a false and Hebraic conception, but from man's failure of will or his "directio voluntatis." Indeed, he tells Emery that usury has its "root" in an "evil will." But for Pound the remedy for corrupt volition is not punishment but a Confucian appeal to the reason, a return to intellectual clarity. Usury, a failure to dissociate true from false production, is possible only where men, through bad education, are incapable of making correct intellectual and verbal discriminations. Pound insists that the honest writer has a moral obligation to marshal his facts and to present them with maximum clarity; the recognition of good and evil depends on the Confucian Cheng Ming, the calling of things by their right names. As Pound remarks to Emery, the "misunderstanding" of his own position "comes from ignorance/refusal to ascertain facts, and to use words with definite meaning."

Given Pound's insistence on accuracy in representation, one can understand his lifelong suspicion of symbolism, allegory, metaphor, or any form of expression which defines one thing in terms of something else. In 1918 Pound had observed that the "proper and perfect symbol is the natural object," and that "if a man use 'symbols' he must so use them that their symbolic function does not obtrude." Apparently Emery in one of his manuscript passages on *The Cantos* had momentarily forgotten this Poundian credo and thus earned the master's rebuke: "If you had never heard of SYMBology yr/mind

wd/be clearer. why buggar up a good blue jay, for example, by making it a SYMBOL of some bloody thing ELSE?"

Pound also hoped to revitalize American civilization through the restoration of the classics and a revision of the secondary school and college curricula. In his early poem "Cantico del Sole," Pound had said that his sleep had been "troubled" by the thought of what "America would be like" if the classics had a "wide circulation." The young Pound had been hoping to set off a true American Risorgimento or Renaissance, a cultural flowering that would "make the Italian Renaissance look like a tempest in a teapot." Sober-minded but by no means totally discouraged after his life-long struggle against Philistinism and commercialism, Pound in the 'fifties is circulating manifestoes among concerned critics and scholars in support of classical education in the universities. Unfortunately, he adds, education has declined "since fifty years ago, when colleges required 2 languages/and some sane mathematics." For Pound the Great Books course popularized by the University of Chicago is at once too bulky, too conventional, and too full of "trimmings"; he would put the essential curriculum on "½ sheet."

This urge to streamline the curriculum ("cast off paraphernalia," he advises in Canto 91) calls to mind Pound's experience in the British Museum in 1908, when he decided that there must be some way of making efficient use of that vast store of cultural knowledge; his solution was *The Cantos*, which are a sort of "portable British Museum," and in which Pound seeks to unearth and transmit his "Paideuma," those "gristly roots of ideas" that go into "action."

Another persistent feature of Pound's pedagogy is his desire to resurrect neglected texts and even to substitute them in the curriculum for more familiar classics. "It's good," says Pound, ever on the lookout for unexpected facts and revelations, "to read a few classic authors NOT recommended by the beaneries [universities]." He recommends to Emery not the enshrined Aquinas but the medieval philosopher Richard of St. Victor, who writes of the three gradations of intellectual awareness; not the rationalistic Stoic Marcus Aurelius but the pagan sage and thaumaturgist Apollonius of Tyana of the first century A. D., to whom the Greek Philostratus devoted a little known biography. These writers among many others form the "roots" of Pound's "Paideuma."

Nonetheless, Pound was aware that no cultural revival, no recovery of "clean" economic or social values, could take place solely within the library or study; for Pound an idea is "truncated" unless it goes "into action." His idea of the scholar and man of letters derives first of all from Confucian China, where the mandarin literati played

an indispensable role in politics, and secondarily from the Italian Renaissance, where Latin humanists enjoyed positions of political importance and influenced practical life. One sees here the inspiration for Pound's excursions into politics, his letters to cabinet ministers and politicians, his broadcasts, and his visit to Mussolini to advise him as a Renaissance courtier or humanist might have advised his prince. Still hoping in the 'fifties for a unified, engaged, and influential American "intelligentsia," Pound tells Emery that the time to act is "NOW." "The only REAL help is VIA CONTACTS," but the "god-damn intelligentsia do NOT make effort to contact those in control of country." Pound then issues this warning from the man who had sought a Philosopher-King: "even Plato sd/'penalty good men pay for indifference to gov't'/is to be governed by evil men."

By the 1920's Pound feared that his project of cultural renewal would be shipwrecked by omnipresent and insuperable obstacles. Repeating a deep grievance from his early days, Pound tells Emery of the breakup of the London artistic and cultural "vortex" at the hands of conservative editors and cowardly publishers. After Sir Alfred Mond had "sacked" Pound's colleague Ford Madox Ford "of the editorship of the *English Review*," thus committing a "crime against intelligence in England" and the "murder of English literature," the novelist Wyndham Lewis and Pound founded the avant-garde magazine *Blast* as a retaliation. However brilliant, *Blast* was aborted after two issues by the outbreak of World War I, and by 1920 Pound had been blackballed by the leading English literary journals and the "vortex" had dissipated. By the 1950's Pound's fear of his enemies had become even stronger and had reached even paranoid proportions. Pound is convinced that usurers control the U.S. government and that they in alliance with publishers conspire to impede the spread of essential knowledge of art, history, economics, and politics; their only purpose is to promote commercialism and vulgarity. As Pound tells Emery, the West has lived through "centuries of historic blackout," an effacement of the "historical record" and its "economic wisdom," so that "Adam Smiff" remains the last word in economics and hardly anyone has even heard of the money and credit theories of Major C. H. Douglas and Silvio Gesell. When Pound is slow in receiving word concerning a translation of Thaddeus Zielinski's work, in his eyes an elucidation of the cultural origins of modern scarcity economics, Pound suspects "interference by the post." When Emery's manuscript is rejected by a publisher, Pound tells him that he should consider the "OPPOSITION." Nothing can exceed Pound's "disbelief in the decency" of university presses, and it is up to Emery to break the "boycott."

While Pound is unquestionably a cultural elitist, he also believes that the ultimate aim of scholarship is "popularization" (without vulgarization and easy simplification), and he especially admires those periods in which there is little or no distinction between mass and high culture. But since America is "too squalid to print an information weekly" of any quality, Pound must content himself with the conscious formation of an informed cultural community on a small scale. There is no bulwark against confusion, he tells Emery, except the "correlated opinions of a hundred clean men"; as in the radio broadcasts, the West can be saved only by a "conspiracy" of intelligence. A rather short step towards these goals was Pound's idea of "In Circuit," consisting of letters circulating constantly among a select group of critics, scholars, and artists, each contributing his own information and questions: "failing conversation," Pound observes to Emery, "epistolary correspondence might revive." Generally, however, Pound prefers not communities of correspondence but even more tightly-knit cultural communities, the salons of the Enlightenment or the intimate circles of Jefferson and Adams, where extraordinary men of varied cultural attainments rule by "conversation." This is the kind of cultural community which Pound knew in his London period and which he sought to revive at St. Elizabeths, where he entertained a constant stream of poets, scholars, artists, critics, and curiosity seekers. For about twelve years a small corner of an insane asylum was perhaps the most vital spot, culturally speaking, in America.

Meanwhile, Pound's example was setting off a small vortex of cultural energy in Miami. Early in their correspondence Pound had told Emery that "ONLY by collaboration and exchange of information" could his generation "swim above the sea of SPEW." "There ought to be in Miami and EVERY town," remarked Pound, "a group of 4 to talk back and forth until the basic lines clarify. That WAS in London 40 years ago." Pound also warned Emery of the increasing fragmentation of university life as a result of specialization, so that professors "NEVER know" or even speak "to other members or faculty of different departments." It was necessary for Emery to seek contacts across the disciplines, especially in history. Whatever the result of Emery's forays outside the English department, he did succeed in forming a small but fervent community of Poundophiles among the university's youthful literati. One of its leading members was Emery's student, the late poet Ronald Perry, for whose early poems Pound had some kind words, and who was committed to the struggle for Pound's release from St. Elizabeths. Another was the poet and painter Laurence Donovan, a former student of Emery's.

who now teaches in the English department. Although the master found Donovan's youthful poems a bit too romantic ("lavender-scented" Pound called them), Donovan began his career as a Poundophile and has never wavered from that estimation. As for the Pulitzer-Prize winning poet Donald Justice, a student and teacher at the University of Miami in the 'fifties, he too came within Pound's and Emery's sphere of influence. Among the scholars there was Barbara Charlesworth, Emery's graduate student and the author of an M.A. thesis (1957) on Ezra Pound's religion. Her study of "The Tensile Light" remains a useful introduction to a most complicated subject.

Two other matters treated in much of this correspondence are especially disturbing and cannot go unmentioned: Fascism and anti-Semitism, which Pound espoused with varying intensity from the 1930's on. Although Pound was charged with treason for his wartime broadcasts over Rome Radio, he was never tried, and therefore his treason has never been legally proved. In these letters Pound acknowledges his attraction to Fascism but denies that the Fascist cause and ideology have been properly understood in America; this is the "misunderstanding" alluded to earlier. Far from following a policy of aggression against the Western democracies, the Fascist nations had allied only to defend themselves against usurocracy, the "enemy of all mankind." "The axis was made in London," Pound tells Emery, "the filth of the British punks [financiers] not an Italian choice of Germany." It turns out, then, that Fascism in its essence continues a millennial war against usury, the same evil as Brooks Adams had diagnosed in 1897 in *The Law of Civilization and Decay*; and Adams "can hardly have been writing Axis propaganda." Not only does Pound deny his treason in the broadcasts, he asserts that the real treason lay "in the White House," in short Roosevelt, who was no more than a pawn in the hands of financiers while paradoxically leading America toward "socialist rubbish." Roosevelt thus cuts a far less impressive figure in Pound's eyes than does Benito Mussolini, who initiated the career of Fascism with a "decent [political] minority" and with the best of intentions, namely the state control of banking and the implementation of a corporate state: "You people in this country," says Pound to Emery, "are so buggared by years of propaganda smear that Mussolini looks ten times his size." Unfortunately, says Pound, Mussolini's programme became corrupted when "sob's" entered his government. These statements consort with others in which Pound claims that Mussolini never got the chance to carry out his political ideals: Canto 74, the first of the Pisan *Cantos*, opens with an elegiac passage on the murdered Duce, the victim of Italian partisans and ultimately of usurers. As for the prospect of a corporate state in

America, Pound's apologists have asserted that Pound, as in his 1935 volume *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*, never recommended Fascism for export. This view is difficult to hold in view of Pound's radio broadcasts, where he favors a "corporate solution" for America, and also the following remark in a letter of Pound's to Emery. After expressing his admiration for Calvin Coolidge (in modern American politics Pound favors the Republicans), Pound remarks that "BOTH Teddy [Roosevelt] and Cal/C. moved toward real fascism. i.e. serious attempts to solve problems of labor organization." It may be that Pound alludes to an act which helped Coolidge become President, namely his putting down of the Boston Police Strike. In any case, by "real fascism" Pound means the Fascist corporate state, in which strikes are forbidden, labor is organized into state-regulated guilds, and political representation is established on the basis not of citizenship or geography but of profession. Pound advocates the last two reforms for America as late as 1960.

It is no less disturbing to discover the pervasiveness and virulence of Pound's anti-Semitism, which persists from his radio broadcasts and earlier. Like his apologists, who argue blindly that Pound confined his hatred to Jewish financiers, Pound offers mitigating arguments, for instance that he dedicated *Guide to Kulchur* to the poet Louis Zukofsky, his friend and a Jew. But Wagner too had Jews in his entourage, and yet that did not make him any less an anti-Semite. Nor does it count for much that Pound denies having "advocate[d] gas ovens"; even the most rabid anti-Semites generally deny the murderousness of their aims. Pound's anti-Semitism rests in large part on the rigid and historical distinctions put forth in Thaddeus Zielinski's *La Sibylle*, a work which Emery and a student attempted to translate at Pound's instigation, but which was finally published partially in another's translation in the Poundian magazine *Edge*.

Zielinski defines Greek and Roman paganism as the true religion of love, Nature, aesthetic beauty, fecundity, and sexual harmony; only the pagan pantheon reconciles the masculine and feminine forms of the divine. By contrast, the Near East represents (as in much Nazi writing) either demonic matriarchy or demonic patriarchy, typified by the cults of castrated Atys or brutal Jehovah; it stands for excess, repression, anti-Nature. Zielinski further adds against a great weight of historical evidence that true Christianity, by which this Mariolator means Catholicism, stems from paganism, and that the Judaic influences on Christianity are a false and poisonous engraftment. Pound's reliance on this dubious scheme is evident in his letters to Emery. "Somewhere in the 20's or 30's," he remarks, Zielinski's *Sibylle* had enabled him to "sort out" the "Hellenic" from the inauthentic

Hebraic elements in Christianity. Apart from his reference to the Near Eastern Atys, whose "sterilization" distinguishes him from the pagan Adonis, Pound mentions Thoreau's claim that "Hellenic mythology" is superior to the "filth of Mesopotamia." He also stipulates two culture centers, the "Med[iterranean]" and the "Middle Kingdom" of China, separated implicitly by the Near Eastern culture zone, a realm of darkness and confusion. While he acknowledged the possibility that Greek religion has a foreign source, Pound asserts that its origin must be in "[Aryan] India (as distinct from the Middle East)." This remark conceals an Aryan ideology which Pound was simultaneously encrypting in the later *Cantos*.

Fed by Zielinski and other anti-Semitic writers, Pound treats the Old Testament as an intellectual chaos, a "collection of everything," with no thought to save the few "clean bits." Given the supposed Semitic hatred of life and Nature, the Jews also play a major role in modern monopoly and scarcity economics (usury). America has become "Baruchistan," run by the financiers of "New Pork." This last phrase is almost certainly anti-Semitic in intent, for anti-Semites are known to associate the Jews contemptuously with their tabooed animal. Meantime, Pound's abhorrence of "psychoanalytic cat piss," much in vogue in the 1950's, stems from his perception that it is a Jewish science. In the 1930's Pound viciously satirizes the customs of Jewish "Mitteleuropa," while in the later *Cantos* Freud is a chief manifestation of the modern university, or "kikery." Like the Nazis, Pound also entertains (as in his broadcasts) the astonishingly absurd notion that Communism is no more than the tool and mask of Jewish financiers: "For the spew deal punks/any man is anti-Sem who won't sign on the dotted line for Marx and Rothschild simultaneously." Finally, as evidence that Pound kept up with anti-Semitic literature during his stay in the hospital, there is his reference to Mrs. Lesley Fry's *Waters Flowing Eastward*. This anti-Semitic work comes from the pen of one of the disseminators and popularizers of the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, to which Pound appeals in the radio broadcasts as proof of a Jewish world conspiracy.

E. R. Leavis once spoke of the intellectual "degeneration," the increasing crudity and brutality of thought and feeling, which Pound manifests in his letters. Pound's correspondence with Emery by no means justifies this extremely harsh judgement. Admittedly these letters contain much that is wearying and repellent—a paranoid political style, a dark ideology, a naive fascination with social and economic nostrums, a tendency to egotistical rant. But Pound at his best can never be numbered among those whom Burckhardt termed *les terribles simplificateurs*. Thanks to the freshness and originality of his

perception, Pound remains an often indispensable guide to culture, and indeed much of his cultural programme—the revival of the classics, greater emphasis on language, the coordination of academic knowledge, the reform of education, the cult of the fact, the insistence on accurate denominations—is not only unobjectionable but positively desirable. One is further struck by Pound's personal generosity and nobility, his fortitude and humor in the most trying circumstances, and his persistent impulse to ignite new energies in art and scholarship; no one in this century has done more to promote cultural excellence. In sum, these letters convey the combined squalor and splendor of the mind of Ezra Pound, one of the most extraordinary men of modern times.

Contributors & Acknowledgements

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