THE METHOD AND "LOGIC" OF EZRA
POUND'S CANTOS SUGGESTED IN
HIS EARLY MEDIEVALISM ·
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Pound in the *Cantos* invented his unique "Ideogramic" method and juxtaposed divergent images for conveying the meanings he intended to suggest. Although the poet himself indicated clearly his indebtedness to Ernest Fenollosa's essay on the Chinese character in 1934, [1] one important reason makes the present writer suspect that Fenollosa is the sole inspirer of Pound's invention. Because sense experiences infallibly are parallel to the formation of conceptions in the hieroglyphic writing, Fenollosa claims the excellence of the Chinese character as a medium of poetry. As Fenollosa believes, the Chinese sentence, 人見馬 (A man sees a horse), presents first an abbreviated image of a man (人), followed by the sign of an eye on the sign of legs (見), and finally by an abbreviated picture of a horse (馬). [2] Thus the live force included in man's act of observation is transferred into the reader's mind simultaneously with the conception of man's seeing a horse. On the contrary, in Western languages, logic necessary for conceptualization tends to annihilate a visual image. One can not obtain a conception of red without annihilating actual red objects such as cherries. [3] Fenollosa's suggestion certainly challenges the artificial limit Western logic has prescribed on Western languages. Nevertheless, does his method not very likely limit the intellectual scope of poetry if one follows it too faithfully ? To substitute a sequence of images for a logical proposition will necesarily make for ineffectual, non-rational communication. It is true that Pound in 1938 defines the ideogramic method presenting "one facet and another until at some point one gets off the dead desensitized surface of the reader's

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1. *A B C of Reading* (1934. Reprint. New York, 1960), pp. 22 ff.
2. Ernest Fenollosa, "An Esay on the Chinese Written Character by the Late Ernest Fenollosa edited by Ezra Pound," Pound, *Instigations* (New York, 1920), p. 363.
3. Ibid., p. 381.

mind...."[4] Despite this, one can not believe Pound used in the *Cantos* such a method as may dilute the intellectual content of his poetry. It was during Pound's "Vorticist" days that the *Cantos* were started. One must presume that Pound the Vorticist, who aimed to present his "vortex" as "the point of maximum energy,"[5] tried to charge his poetry "with meaning to the utmost possible degree"[6] even in its intellectual aspect.

An interesting fact is that Pound himself suggested that the *Cantos* is a kind of logic, despite Fenollosa's proposition that logic merely hinders the visual presentation of objects in images. For a reader of Fenollosa's essay it is easy to misunderstand that the *Cantos* are an anti-abstract, anti-logical poem which merely presents images inseparable from sense experiences. Naturally Yvor Winters in 1933 complained that Pound had altogether abandoned logic in the *Cantos*.[7] Pound's haughty answer to Winters, to the surprise of Fenollosa's reader, points out that there exists more than one kind of logic in his sense of the word, and not that logic is altogether subversive to poetry :

> ··· the nadir of solemn and elaborate imbecility is reached by Mr. Winters in an American publication where he deplores my 'abandonment of logic in the Cantos,' presumably because he has never read my prose criticism and has never heard of the ideographic method, and thinks logic is limited to a few 'forms of logic' which better minds were already finding inadequate to the mental needs of the XIII th century.[8]

Dogmatic and vague as Pound's passage may sound, the poet's answer insinuates at least two amazing facts to his students : that by presen-

4. *Guide to Kulchur* (Norfolk, Conn., [1938]), p. 51.
5. *Gaudier-Brzeska : A Memoir* (1916. Reprint. New York, 1960), p. 81.
6. Pound's celebrated definition of literature is "language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." *A B C of Reading*, p. 36.
7. Cf. Yvor Winters's review of T. Sturge Moore's *Poems*, *Hound and Horn*, VI (April-June, 1933), 535.
8. "Mr. Ezra Pound's 'Cantos,' " *New English Weekly*, III (May 11, 1933), 96. Quoted by Winters in *In Defense of Reason* (Denver, 1937), p. 57.

ting the sequence of images in the *Cantos,* the poet is actually engaged in an intellectual search through a kind of logic (for logic means nothing but tool for thinking and knowing) ; and that the "ideographic method"[9] has something to do with the intellectual milieu in thirteenth-century Europe.

If one finds, through a study of "the mental needs of the XIII th century," whatever Pound means by logic in his ideographic method, at least one knows where to begin. The name of Dante Alighieri, who began to write his *Vita Nuova* in 1295, flashes out of all possible names to which Pound in his erudition may have referred. Pound devoted the most sensitive years of his youth, between the age of twenty-one and twenty-five, to the comparative study of Medieval literature.[10] Anyone who perused the result of his study in *The Spirit of Romance* (1910) and in the three earliest publications of his poetry (*A Lume Spento* anb *A Quinzaine for This Yole,* 1908; *Personae,* 1909) can not miss the fact that Pound's study and interest have Dante for one explicit center. Pound's celebrated rhythm was first acquired while reading Dante in Wabash College, Indiana in 1907.[11] He studied Proven,cal poetry following Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentiâ* for his guidebook, emphasizing particularly the three poets Dante considered greatest —— Giraut of Bornelh, Bertran de Born and Arnaut Daniel.[12] Pound chose Arnaut, Dante's "il miglior

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9. The word "ideograph" is a term to differentiate Chinese hieroglyphic characters which represent ideas from Egyptian hieroglyphic letters which represent sounds. Pound used "ideograph" before he adopted the term "ideogram" in *A B C of Reading* (1934).

10. Pound received his Master of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania for his study of Romance language and literature in 1906. His study of Medieval literature was continued, however, and collected in 1910 in *The Spirit of Romance.* Cf. Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (London, 1970), pp. 21-88.

11. Cf. "Cavalcanti," *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound,* ed. T. S. Eliot (London, 1954), p. 169.

12. *The Spirit of Romance* (1910. Reprint. A New Directions Book ; New York, 1968), p. 44.

fabbro"[13] for his own master and took infinite pains to translate Arnaut's poem,[14] probably in 1909, the year before René Lavaud's famous "Les poésies d'Arnaut Daniel"[15] was published. When one learns that Pound in his answer to Yvor Winters vaguely connected the Ideogramic Method with the thirteenth century, one can safely guess that Dante and his troubadour predecessors are Pound's masters even in the method of the *Cantos*.

How were Dante and his troubadour masters engaged in an intellectual search in poetry? Pound had known that such a seemingly impossible activity was actually done. About 1916, when Pound gradually developed his plan of the early version of the *Cantos* publiched in 1917, he counted it Dante's highest achievement that the Tuscan poet raised the function of poetry to that of an interpreter of the universe.[16] In "Psycholgy and Troubadour" first published in *The Quest* and later collected in *The Spirit of Romance,* Pound discusses how

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13. *Purgatorio*, XXVI, 117. Pound titled the chapter about Arnaut Daniel "Il Miglior Fabbro" in *The Spirit of Romance*, and continued his study of Daniel until later. T. S. Eliot's dedication of "The Waste Land" to Pound, "Il Miglior Fabbro," is however mischievous, for it implies that Eliot himself, not Pound, should take the place of Dante, a more universal poet than Arnaut Daniel.

    Pound considered the "century whose center is the year 1200" left us "two perfect gifts : the church of San Zeno in Verona, and the canzoni of Arnaut Daniel." *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 22. Consequently we can say that both the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries influenced Pound most.

14. Pound's translation of Arnaut Daniel's poems in *The Spirit of Romance* shows that they were written without reading Lavaud's translation. Most likely he wrote it while he prepared in 1909 the series of lectures in London Politechnique Institue. These lectures were collected in *The Spirit of Romance* in 1910. Pound used the text and commentary by Ugo Angelo Canello, *La vita e le opere del trobatore Arnaldo Daniello*, 1883. He refers to Canello's numbering of Arnaut's works in *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 33.

15. *Annales du midi*, XXII (1910), 17-55, 162-179, 300-339, 446-466.

16. *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 87. Pound himself added a note that "this chapter was first pudlished in G. R. S. Mead's *The Quest*, about 1916." Ibid. Noel Stock, however, wrote that the essay was published "in the October 1912 issue of *The Quest*." Stock, p. 113. Probably Pound made a mistake in dating the essay.

Medieval poets could interpret the cosmos even as Medieval philosophers did :

> It is an ancient hypothesis that the little cosmos "corresponds" to the greater, that man has in him both "sun" and "moon." From this I should say that there are at least two paths ——I do not say that they lead to the same place——the one ascetic, the other for want of a better term "chivalric." In the first the monk or whoever he may be, develops, at infinite trouble and expense, the secondary pole within himself, produces his charged surface which registers the beauties, celestial or otherwise, by "contemplation." In the second, which I must say seems more in accord with "mens sana in corpore sano" the charged surface is produced between the predominant natural poles of two human mechanisms.

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> The problem, in so far as it concerns Provence, is simply this : Did this "chivalric love," this exotic, take on mediumistic properties ? Stimulated by the color or quality of emotion, did that "color" take on forms interpretive of the divine order ? Did it lead to an "exteriorization of the sensibility," and interpretation of the cosmos by feeling ? [17]

The enormous implications in these two paragraphs are worth examining. The "sun" and the "moon" possessed in the human mind are, of course, the mind's inherent ideas. Pound argues that the "monk or whoever he may be" established within himself through his inherent ideas a system of philosophical thinking, an intricate device for receiving the idea transcendent above human mind. His thought might be compared to an electric pole, provided that there exists the major pole which forever seeks to coalesce with the idea in man. The monk's method, which Pound called "the ascetic contemplatation" is actually the practice of Medieval mystics trying to see God. It was Pound's unique, perhaps idiosyncratic view of Dante's and the troubadours'

17. *The Spirit of Romance,* p. 94.

poetry that these poets invented the same kind of intricate device for coalescing with the idea above through the language of poetry. Hence Pound considers that the troubadours' poetry is identical in function with the Medieval mystics' search and calls it "chivalric contemplation," believing that in their poems courtly love takes the place of divine love in the Medieval mystics' contemplation.[18]

It will take some explanation for readers to understand how medieval mysticism influenced not merely Dante's thought but his poetry, let alone the abstruse works of the troubadours. Of the three Medieval mystics whose influence on Dante's *Commedia* is most remarkable ——St. Augustine, St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor[19]——Pound's letter to René Taupin in 1928[20] indicates that it was Richard of St. Victor that Pound almost certainly called "the monk or whoever he is," in the passage quoted above. The devotional and mystical practice called "contemplatio," which the Prior of St. Victor's Abbey[21] inherit-

18. Gervais Dumeige also believes that ascetics and courtly love poets all wrote in the same tradition, for ascetics were called "chevaliers célestiels." Cf. *Richard de Saint Victor et l' idée chrétienne de l'amour* (Paris, 1952), p. 4.
19. Cf. Edmund G. Gardner's study on the influence of Christian mysticism on Dante, *Dante and the Mystics* (London, 1913), pp. 42-43.
20. Cf. "Dans ma jeunesse j'avais peut-être quelqu'idée reçue du moyen âge. Dante, St. Victor, dieu sait qui ...." Vienne, May, 1928. *The Letters of Ezra Pound*, ed. D. D. Paige (Loadon, 1951), p. 294. Notice the similar phrases "whoever he is" in "Psychology and Troubadours" and "dieu sait qui" in the letter in 1928. They sound as if Pound never could believe that Richard was merely a human monk. Dante wrote in *Paradiso*, X, 132, " ... di Ricardo che a considerar fu più che viro" ("of Richard, who in contemplating was more than man"). *The Paradiso of Dante Alighieri* [tr. Philip H. Wicksteed and Hermann Oelsner] (London, 1899), p. 125.
21. Richard of St. Victor was a Scot by birth, who came to Paris in his early youth to be a student of St. Victor at St. Victor's Abbey. He was appointed Prior to the cloister in 1162, remained in the position till his death in 1173. Of the abbey and its relationship with French kings and Thomas à Becket in exile, [see Richard's life in Joseph Ebner, *Die Erkenntnislehre Richards von St. Viktor* (Muenster, 1917) and Dumeige, *Richard de Saint-Victor et l'idée chrétienne de l'amour* (Paris, 1952).

ed from the tradition of the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and brought to perfection, was first started as a method of Biblical study and completed as a peculiar mode of attaining every kind of knowledge from sense subjects to the highest objects of Plato's search, that is, the Divine Being itself. Whereas the Pseudo-Dionysius emphasized the inaccessibility of God since the soul must plunge into the darkness of complete renunciation of senses, body and mind before being unified with God,[22] Richard almost reversed this tradition of "the darkness of God" by emphasizing the accessibility of God through His manifestation in creatures.[23] Neither senses nor mind should be useless for the purpose of attaining the highest object of knowledge which stands above senses and reason. In *De Praeparatione Animi ad Contemplationem* or *Benjamin Minor*, which Pound called a "luminous treatise,"[24] Richard assumes three mental activities are necessary to attain knowledge——thinking, meditation and contemplation. Thinking is done with imagination, an empirical language which works with senses, skimming over the observation of objects either inside or outside of the mind. Meditation is carried on with reason proceeding from minor premises to major ones. Lastly in contemplation, intelligence as the highest faculty of the human mind to speculate on the divine, covers all other faculties of imagination and reason, shines out "a free and a clear glance of soul being intently upon subjects of perception to its highest limit."[25] One understands that Pound referred to this three-fold structure of mental activity in contemplation when he compared Medieval mysticism to an electric pole in a microcosm to receive the whole knowledge of the macrocosm.

22. Clare Kirchberger, "Introduction" to Richard of St. Victor, *Selected Writings on Contemplation*, tr. Kirchberger (London, 1957), p. 51. According to C. S. Lewis, this negative theology of the Areopagite is already rooted in Plato and Plotinus. Cf. *The Discarded Image : An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge, 1964), p. 70.
23. Kirchberger, p. 38.
24. *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 148.
25. "Benjamin Minor." *Selected Writings on Contemplation*, p. 138.

Seeing that sense, reason and intelligence all beautifully cooperate in Richard's contemplation, and knowing the admirable objectivity in Dante's description of spiritual experiences, one can trust Pound's insight into Dante's poetry and agrees that the Tuscan poet wrote the loveliest passages in *Paradiso* under the influence of the mystic. At the highest stage of contemplation, the soul is rapt up into the third heaven, as when Moses entered the cloud on the mountain of Sinai, but thence it comes down, unlike the Areopagite, to recognize what it sees even as Moses on returning ordered the ark of the covenant and the cherubim to be made in the forms wherein he saw them.[26] Richard himself could record his experience, which passage was unforgettable for Pound :

> On peut donc voir le soleil de justice si on est sur cette terre et si on est parvenu au second degré de l'amour. C'est la qu'on dit : *Le soleil ne sera plus ta lumière et la lune ne t'éclairera plus ; mais le Seigneur sera pour toi une lumière éternelle et ton Dieu sera ta gloire* [Is., x, 19]. Dans cet état on peut éprouver combien est vraie cette parole : *la lumière est douce, c'est une joie pour l'oeil de voir le soleil* [Eccle., xi, 7]. Dans cet état l'âme à qui l'expérience a servi de maître chante ce psaume: *Mieux vaut un jour dans vos parvis qui mille au loin* [Ps. lxxxiii, 2]. [27]

The young Pound must have been thrilled at the description of the very moment when the visible object, the sun and the moon, are completly transformed into the spiritual entity with all the loveliness of images and the ineffability of the ideal. Pound treasured the *Paradiso*

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26. "Benjamin Major," ibid., p. 177.
27. Richard of St. Victor, *De IV Gradibus Violentae Caritates*, ed. and tr. Gervais Dumeige, *Yves, Epître à Séverin sur la charité · Richard de Saint-Victor, Les quatre degrés de la violente charité* (Paris, 1955), p. 164. ' Pound remarks in "Psychology and Troubadours," "Richard St. Victor [*sic*] has left us one beautiful passage on the splendors of paradise. They are ineffable and innumerable and no man having beheld them can fittingly narrate them or even remember them exactly, "*The Spirit of Romance*, p. 96.

as Dante's record of contemplation in *The Spirit of Romance,* and discussing the *Paradiso,* he could not help claiming that here was the very image of the true being whose possibility to be visualized was so assertively denied in Plato's *Phaedrus.*[28]

The most important factor for successful contemplation is love. A contemplative soul first starts with the observation of exterior objects, and when his "attention is held in amazement,"[29] he is already initiated in contemplation with imagination only. In the second stage, reason begins to work to speculate over objects. In the third stage, reason, driven by the passionate love of God, attempts the impossible task of knowing objects far above human reason and human imagination, and produces a collaboration of imagination and reason called "rational imagination."[30] It is with this "rational imagination" that the soul can create what might be called the "picture of the invisible."[31] One will certainly question why reason and imagination must be motivated with passionate love in order to overcome their blindness towards the spiritual. The answer is found in the overwhelming influence of St. Augustine on Medieval Platonism. Plato in the *Republic* affirmed that man's cognition is achieved through the coherence of the inherent idea within and the transcendent idea above. Man must possess inherent knowledge of an object in order to recognize it, while there must be transcendent knowledge above individual minds so that the commonness of knowledge is possible. So far, Augustine believes that Plato and the Platonists were right in identifying *ratio* within as "the self-same God by whom all things were made."[32] Plato's mistake is that he ignored the function of will in

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28. *The Spirit of Romance,* p. 148.
29. "Benjamin Minor," *Selected Writings on Contemplation,* p. 142.
30. When imagination is tied to bodily senses only, Richard argues, that one believes literally in the flame of Gehenna, for imagination then cannot help considering spiritual things exist in a material way. "Benjamin Minor," *Selected Writings on Contemplation,* p. 95.
31. Cf. Ebner, p. 62.
32. *De Trinitate,* XII, 22, cited by Robert E. Cushman, "Faith and Reason," *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine,* ed. Roy W. Battenhouse (New York, 1955), p 292.

cognition, for with the will fallen through original sin, one's soul is closed to transcendent reason or the Word of God above, and can no longer illuminate with the eternal light reality eternal and temporal that the soul takes within.[33] Consequently Augustine infers that one must accept the Mediator and Saviour to purge one's will for restoring one's cognitive faculty.

The Augustinian epistemology taught Richard to love God passionately before anything else in order to acquire the visualization of the invisible. After this third stage, the soul climbs higher ladders of contemplation until in the seventh stage it produces intelligence by which "the depth of the mind is given expanse and immensity"[34] and illuminates all possible realms of the human mind with the reason above and within, before the soul plunges into an ecstatic unity with God.

The passionate language of the soul's love of God which Richard of St. Victor uses in *De IV Gradibus Violentae Caritates* (Of the Four Stages of Passionate Love) reveals why, in twelfth and thirteenth century literature, love plays such a spiritual role. Chrétien de Troyes, Perceval le Gallois and Marie de France all belonged to the *Zeitgeist* that fostered St. Bernard, Richard of St. Victor and Bernard de Clairvaux, for both in courtly love and in mystical vision love is the sole key to wisdom and the cognition of divine glory. The same tradition of seeing beatific visions through the collaboration of love and reason led Dante in his "Vita Nuova" to see numbers of dreams in which "the faithful counsel of reason"[35] goes with love, and finally to the vision of Beatrice in heaven at the end of the poem. The same tradition led Dante to glorify Beatrice as the very image of *caritas* through which the cognition of Divine love was possible for Dante. Reading the troubadours also with the background of mystic, contemplative literature, one understands why Pound called the Pro-

33. *De Civitas Dei* VIII, 7, cited by Cushman, ibid. See also Cushman, p. 301.
34. "Benjamin Major," *Selected Writings on Contemplation*, p. 137.
35. "The New Life," *Dante and His Circle with the Italian Poets Preceding Him*, tr. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (London, 1892), p. 32.

vençal poetry "chivalric contemplation," and considered it a secular equivalent of the ascetics' sacred vision. It is not impossible to find the same language and the same blissful visions in love in both Richard's and Arnaut Daniel's writings. The violent, cruel image in Arnaut's "Sestina" and the symbol of resurrection "Pois flori la seca verga"[36] remind one of Richard's description of a suffering soul in love — "Caritas vulnerat, carits ligat, caritas languidum facit, caritas defectum adducit"[37] which precedes the bliss of divine glory. Pound even believed that Arnaut Daniel's image in the canzo "Doutz brais e critz,"

> She made me a shield, extending over me her fair mantle
> of indigo, so that the slanderers might not see this[38]

is neither a conceit nor indecency but a vision such as abounds in "Vita Nuova."[39]

After having comprehended why Pound parallelled Dante's and Provençal poetry with ascetic contemplation, one must know how contemplative poetry interprets the cosmos as Pound claims. The answer is comparatively easy, for contemplation is after all a Platonic-Augustinian method of knowing in which three kinds of mental activities——the observation of visible objects through imagination, speculation through

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36. The phrase means "depuis que fleurit la verge sèche," according to René Lavaud's translation. *Anthologie des troubadours*, ed. Joseph Anglade (Paris, 1927), p. 87. As in the legend of Tannhäuser, the stick that blooms is the symbol of pardon and resurrection. The sestina describes the love in a secret chamber where a soul suffers extremely till this sign of resurrection appears. Pound's phrase in Canto IV, "'Ongla, oncle, saith Arnaut,'" is a refence to this poem whose rhyme words are "verga, oncle, intra, arma, cambra and ongla."

37. "La charité blesse, la charité tient attaché, la charité fait languir, la charité fait défaillir." *Yves, Epître à Sévrin sur la charité: Richard de Saint-Victor, Les quatre degrés de la violente charité*, ed. & tr. Gervais Dumeige, pp. 128-129.

38. Pound's translation from Arnaut Daniel's lines,
    E·m fetz escut de son bel mantel endi
    Que lanzengier fals, lenga de colobra,
    Non o visson ....
    The translation is seen in *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 89. The text in the original tongue is taken from "Les poésies d'Arnaut Daniel," p. 318.

39. *The Spirit of Romance*, pp. 89-90.

reason and the cognition of the ideal through "rational imagination"
——are carried out simultaneously. This threefold structure of mental
activity will theoretically enable a poet to create images while presen-
ting conceptual meanings and revealing the light of the invisible idea
simultaneously.

The greatest interest that this method of contemplative poetry
holds for a student of Pound is that the "picture of the invisible,"
created at the third stage of contemplation, curiously resembles
Pound's definition of Imagists' images. Richard takes the example
that a contemplator can create the image of the golden walls of the
New Jerusalem by combining the two common objects, a wall and
gold. Pound's definition of an image in his celebrated manifesto[40] pos-
sesses the same sensuous cognition of the ideal, if recalled together
with Richard's argument :

> An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emo-
> tional complex in an instant of time .... It is the presentation of
> such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden
> liberation ; that sense of freedom from time limits and space
> limits ; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the
> presence of the greatest works of art.[41]

One should note particularly the phrase : "that sense of freedom from
time limits and space limits." Fenollosa argues that the Chinese
ideograms juxtapose the images of things and sometimes through such
juxtaposition present abstract conceptions. For example the ideogram
of the sun (日) with the ideogram of the moon (月) makes the ab-
stract noun, brightness (明).[42] He did not suggest, however, that the
juxtaposition provides a sudden revelation of the unreality of the
ideal. And did Pound not inherit the very legacy of the troubadours
in his theme of the inexplicable ideal, though expressed in vivid
language ? It is very likely that Pound had learned already his tech-

40. "A Few Don'ts" for Imagistes was first printed in *Poetry*, I (March,
    1913).
41. "A Retrospect," *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 4.
42. *Instigations*, pp. 364 ff.

nique of juxtaposing images in poetry through Richard of St. Victor's *Benjamin Minor* in 1909,[43] before he received Fenollosa's manuscripts in 1913. [44]

"Poetry in its acme is contemplation"[45] says Pound in his note to "A Vision of Italy," collected in the first *Personae* (1909). If Pound's early poetry is rooted in Richard of St. Victor's tradition, his ideogramic method must have been acquired through the study of Dantean-Ricardian contemplation. Therefore, it will make an interesting hypothesis to presume that the *Cantos* was also primarily designed as a contemplative poem. One can even gather evidences that Pound's early poems, whose materials are mainly medieval, are mostly contemplative. Examining Pound's early poetry in the light of the Dantean-Ricardian tradition will clarify at the same time how Pound purged from the tradition what was foreign to him, that is, Christianity.

The primal experience from which Pound started writing his poetry is most likely a kind of Dionysian dream —— the sense of a whirling world in the midst of which suddenly the poet loses the distinction both of self and of the external world, subject and object. "La Fraisne," which Pound originally planned for a title poem[46] in his earliest book now called *A Lume Spento* (1908), was named after Marie de France's lay, but the content has scarcely anything to do with her. The monologue of a mad king bears a striking resemblance to Yeats's "The Madness of King Goll." Nevertheless, the underlying tone of fear seems to prove the poem was a record of Pound's personal crisis. The slow voice is extremely painful :

And now men call me mad because I have thrown

43. Pound first quoted from *Benjamin Minor* in *Personae*, 1909.
44. Mary Fenollosa handed some of her late husband's writings to Pound personally, and posted others to him in London towards the end of 1913. And in November 1915 she sent a further packet from Alabama. Cf Stock, p.148.
45. *Personae of Ezra Pound* (London, 1909). p. 581.
46. Cf. Thomas H. Jackson, *The Early Poetry of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), p. 41.

> All folly from me, putting it aside
> To leave the old barren ways of men,
> Because my bride
> Is a pool of the wood, and
> Though all men say I am mad
> It is only that I am glad,
> Very glad, for my bride hath toward me a great love....[47]

The numerous scholarly references Pound piled up in the "Notes Precedent to 'La Fraisne'" seem to reveal paradoxically the seriousness of the crisis. Pound suggests therein how a soul can be burnt down and, freed "of the weight of a soul 'capable of salvation and damnation,'"[48] becomes "the assembler of souls."[49]

Such fluid identity of self necessarily leads Pound away from the Christianity that constitutes an indispensable part of Medieval poetry. If a poet takes in an object, illuminates it with his Augustinian reason and hammers his images on it with language, he will have Gerard Manley Hopkins's "inscape" instead of Pound's "persona." Because of his peculiar non-identity or fluid identity of self, the moment of poetry for Pound is not Augustinian cognition of divine glory, but the cognition of truth through the poet's union with his object, for instance, a tree :

> I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
> Knowing the truth of things unseen before....[50]

Pound in Gaudier-Brzeska states clearly that such a metamorphic moment reveals the truth about the poet's own self, just as Richard of St. Victor decides the aim of contemplation as self-knowledge : [51]

> In the 'search for oneself,' in the search for 'sincere self-expression,' one grows, one finds some seeming verity .... I began this

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47. *A Lume Spento and Other Early Poems.* Reprint of *A Lume Spento,* 1908 and *A Quinzaine for This Yule,* 1908 (New York, 1965), pp. 15-16.
48. Ibid., p. 14.
49. Ibid.
50. *Personae: The Collected Poems of Ezra Pound* (New York, 1926), p. 3,
51. Cf. " Benjamin Minor," Kirchberger, pp. 109-110.

search for the real in a book called *Personae,* casting off as it were complete masks of the self in each poem.[52]

"Histrion," an early poem excluded from *Personae* of 1926, indicates explicitly that this very search for the self through his masks is Pound's own method of poetic contemplation :

No man hath dared to write this thing as yet,
And yet I know, how that the souls of all men great
At times pass through us,
And we are melted into them, and are not
Save reflexions of their souls.
Thus am I Dante for a space and am
One François Villon, ballad lord and thief,
Or am such holy ones I may not write
Lest blasphemy be writ against my name ;
This for an instant and the flame is gone,

'Tis as in midmost us there glows a sphere
Translucent, molten gold, that is the "I"
And into this some form projects itself :
Christus, or John, or eke the Florentine ;
And as the clear space is not if a form's
Imposed thereon,
So cease we from all being for the time,
And these, the Masters of the Soul, live on.[53]

"A sphere/Translucent, molten gold, that is the 'I'" is nothing but the universal, transcendent Self which is the very object of Plato's and Richard of St. Victor's search. The peculiarly Poundian characteristic of his contemplation is, however, that the poet's individual self is wiped away at the very moment of the cognition of the mystical real Being. Hence Pound had to reduce Richard's Christian contemplation whose aim is the salvation of the soul to its Platonic, pagan origin. Hence Pound united his poetic contemplation incessantly

52. *Gaudier-Brzeska,* p. 85.
53. *A Lume Spento and Other Early Poems,* p. 108.

with the theme of metamorphosis.

If Pound's contemplation needs metamorphosis, one must consider his pastiches not merely as the "criticism in a new composition" that Hugh Witemeyer claims,[54] but as an indispensable process of metamorphosis. In "Na Audiart," Pound imitates Bertran de Born's soft, harp music of the Provençal tongue, and caresses a metamorphic vision appearing,

> Where thy bodice laces start
> As ivy fingers clutching through
> Its crevices...[55]

wherein the lovely torso of Lady Audiart is blessed with the revelation of old sylvan deities. The moment in the dawn that the white stag, symbolic of a soul's innocence appears in Marie de France's "Guingemar,"

> Al matin vait en la forest,
> Kar cil deduiz forment li plest,
> A un grant cerf sunt aruté
> E li chien furent descuplé,[56]

is rewritten by Pound as a metamorphic moment when a white cloud shining in the morning sky is transformed into a hart :

> I ha' seen them 'mid the clouds on the heather.
> Lo ! they pause not for love nor for sorrow,
> Yet their eyes are as the eyes of a maid to her lover,
> When the white hart breaks his cover
> And the white wind breaks the morn.[57]

At the metamorphic moment, a visible object transforms itself, shed-

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54. Cf. "Tradition and Its Uses," *The Poetry of Ezra Pound : Forms and Renewal*, 1908-1920 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p. 12.
55. *Personae* (1926), p. 8.
56. *Les lais de Marie de France*, ed. Jean Rychner (Paris, 1966), p. 8. In the morning he goes in the forest, for this sport pleased him very much. They gathered together and chased after a great stag, and the dogs were set free. "Guingemar," ll. 79-82. The present writer's translation.
57. *Personae* (1926), p. 25. In the story of "Guingemar," the protagonist who was wounded when he shot the white stag is led to a castle where he suffers from love till his sin is purged. "The eyes of a maid" in Pound's poem must mean the eyes of Guingemar's lover whom he meets in the castle.

ding the light of its ideal essence, just as the momentary juxtaposition
of a white cloud and a white stag creates a sudden radiant vision of
the unknown. Was a metamorphic poem then not the third stage of
contemplation in which reason collaborates with imagination for a
"picture of the invisible" through visible objects, if one defines reason
here as a faculty to search for the spiritual?

The moment of metamorphosis is also the moment of love in
Pound's experience, as Dante defines love to be the uniting with love's
object in *Convivio*.[58] In Romance literature influenced by Medieval
mysticism, reason is always motivated by *Caritas* to seek the spiritual.
In Pound's early poetry either love takes a typically Platonic role
of a motive-power to pursue beauty or a love motive is jointly used
with a metamorphic motive. The former example is "In Durance"
of 1907, in which the poet translated the Greek word "τὸ καλόν"
(beauty) "calling to the soul" after S. T. Coleridge.[59] The latter is
most explicitly seen in a brief poem where Cupid the love hovers over
Psyche the soul, taking the form of night air,

All night, and as the wind lieth among
The cypress trees, he lay,
Nor held me save as air that brusheth by one
Close, and as the petals of flowers in falling
Waver and seem not drawn to earth, so he
Seemed over me to hover light as leaves
And closer me than air,
And music flowing through me seemed to open
Mine eyes upon new colours....[60]

58. "Love, truly taken and subtly considered, is nought else than spiritu-
    al union of the soul and of the thing loved ...." Quoted by Gardner,
    Dante and the Mystics, p. 13.
59. *Personae* (1926), p. 20.
60. "Speech for Psyche in the Golden Book of Apuleius," *Personae* (1926),
    p. 39. Apuleius was a Platonic philosopher of the second century.
    Besides the romance mentioned here he left the fullest and most vivid
    picture of magic in the ancient world. Cf. Lynn Thorndike, *A History
    of Magic and Experimental Science during the Thirteen Centuries of
    Our Era* (2 vols.; New York, 1929), I, 221.

The climax of contemplation is an ascent to heaven, and Pound's secularization of the Dantean-Ricardian tradition does not omit a Dantesque ascent, either. Pound's search for a Platonic origin of Christian mysticism naturally interested him in the obscure region in history where Neo-Platonic philosophy trickles into the forming of the Catholic Church. Taking the mask of Plotinus, the poet becomes a star circling, "alone/In chaos, while the waiting silence sings,"[61] for since Plato's *Timaeus* stars are spirits, the kind of the elementary beings whom Pound identified himself with as living beyond "the necessity of salvation and damnation" in "Notes Precedent to 'La Fraisne.' "[62] In defiance to Dantean-Augustinian piety that requires the purgation of sins before the soul's ascent to heaven, Pound seems to depend on Platonists' claim that since the soul is immortal, its ascent is merely a return.[63] In "Lucifer Caditurus," Pound reduces the word "Lucifer" to its Neo-Platonic meaning of the star of Venus, and monologues, under the mask of a star that climbs up heaven by natural law, of Lucifer the Archangel's arrogant fretfulness that he has to follow the law forever.[64]

Another evidence that supports the hypothesis that Pound tried contemplation in his early poetry is the fact that all his poems, however fragmentary, are related to each other and constitute one, in-

61. *"Plotinus,"* A Lume Spento and Other Early Poems, p. 56. As for Plato's description of planets as living souls, see *Timaeus*, tr. H. D. P. Lee (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 52-53. Plotinus believes that the intellectual processes of stars are far above the frailties of the human mind and nearer the omniscence of the world soul. Cf. *Ennead*, IV, iv, 6 and 8. Referred to by Thorndike, I, 303.

62. See p. 65 of this paper.

63. Chalcidius's commentary on Cicero's *In Insomnium Scipionis* is typical of such Platonic ascent to heaven well read in the medieval age. Scipio Africanus carries his son up to the highest celestial sphere, the *stellatum*, where the father tells his son to realize that since the soul is immortal, "therefore, you are a god," and that the soul's ascent to heaven is merely a return. Cf. C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, pp. 24-27.

64. Chalcidius, who Latinized Plato's *Timaeus* very freely, calls Venus either "Lucifer" or" Hesperus." *Platonis Timaeus Interprete Chalicido*, LXXIII, quoted by C. S. Lewis, ibid, p. 54.

divisible whole. "I fly on the wings of an unknown chord," wrote Pound in "Anima Sola."[65] The poet in 1909 must have known the height to which his Plotinus-like, contemplative mind soared, and from which central thought radiated, "as light from the sun it reaches out and in an infinite number of ways to things that are related to or dependent on it."[66] In the lighted place things shine out in their relationship to each other, so that Pound wrote in "A vision of Italy"

How all things are but symbols of all things. [67]

Since all things are dependent in an infinite number of ways, the poet actually found "no end or bourn to what things mean."[67]

Take for example, Pound's translation of the Anglo-Saxon poem, "The Seafarer," which seems least likely to be connected with Pound's study of Provençal poetry and Dante. The translation was first published in an article serialized with the title "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris."[68] A curious reader, who wonders why a translation of the Anglo-Saxon poem means gathering the torn limbs of the Egyptian god, should compare Pound's verse form in the translation with that of Arnaut Daniel's canzo, "En breu brisara,"

En breu brisara / l temps braus,

E·ill bisa busina / els brancs

Qui s'entreseignon / trastuich

De sobreclaus / rams de fuoilla....[69]

We notice that Arnaut's lines, though using alliterations and caesuras like Anglo-Saxon poetry, sound much more musical and mellower than

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65. *A Lume Spento and Other Early Poems*, p. 31.
66. Pound's explication of Richard of St. Victor's *Benjamin Minor*, "Notes" to "A Vision of Italy," *Personae* (1909), p. 58.
67. Ibid., p. 44.
68. Cf. Stock, p. 105. "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris" was published in twelve parts between 30 November 1911 and 22 February 1912 in *The New Age*.
69. "Arnaut Daniel" (1920), *Literary Essays*, p. 134. René Lavaud's translation for the passage quoted is "Sous peu éclatera la saison rude, et le bise siffle dans les branches qui toutes se marquent, par places, de rameaux entièrement dépourvus de feuilles." "Les poésies d'Arnaut Daniel," p. 397.

the Old English tongue. "...he [Arnaut] imitates, maybe, the rough
singing of the *jonglar engles,* from whom he learnt *Ac et no l'ac*,"
speculates Pound in 1920.[70] Pound had already noticed that Arnaut
introduced the rhythm of folk dance in his canzo, "Can chai la fueil-
la," which sounds like the strong beat of the "estampida,"[71] a Catalan
song of a very resounding rhythm. This genre of Provençal folk song,
whose old form Pound saw in "Regine Avrillouse"[72] retains very
vividly the traces of pagan rites that symbolically drive away the old
year and celebrate the new marriage of the Queen Earth. The
"Estampida" in Carl Appel's *Provenzalische Chrestomathie* which
Pound used indicates clearly the transition from May dance to trou-
badour-like adoration of ladies.[73] Consequently if Arnaut imitated the
Old English verse form as well as the beat of "Estampida," then he
combined the two prototypes of European poetry into one, Romanic
and Nordic, and refined it to utmost exquisiteness. Arnaut's practice
strikes Pound as the pursuit of the ideal form of poetry, just as
Osiris' worshippers searched the torn limbs for restoring the live god
again. Recalling that Dante sought after the ideal vulgar tongue
which exists nowhere but is perceptible in every Italian town "like
the simplest substance which is God,"[74] one understands why Pound

70. "Arnaut Daniel," *Literary Essays,* p. 109. Probably Pound guessed right,
    for Arnaut Daniel served in King Richard the Lion-Hearted's court.
71. *"Can chai la feuilla* is more like a sea song or an *estampida,* though
    the editors call it a canzone." Ibid., p. 112.
72. Cf. *The Spirit of Romance,* p. 39. Pound translated "Regine Avrillouse"
    and collected in *Hesternae Rosae* with Walter Morse Rummel's restora-
    tion of troubadours' music. Cf. *Hesternae Rosae : Serta II, Neuf chan-
    sons de troubadours des XIIième et XIIIième siècles pour une voix
    avec accompagnement de piano. Adaptation française par M. D. Calvo-
    coressi. Adaptation anglaise par Ezra Pound* (London, 1912).
73. Cf. *Provenzalische Chrestomathie,* ed. Carl Appel (Leipzig, 1907), p. 89.
    Pound in London asked his father to send a copy of the *Chrestomathie*
    there in 1909. Cf. Pound's letter to Homer L. Pound, London, 28 August
    1909. Yale University. 2079 TL to Mr. & Mrs. Homer L. Pound and
    Various Other Correspondents April 28, 1896 to December 3, 1947.
    Copies made by Dudley Paige in preparation of his edition of *The Let-
    ters of Ezra Pound* 1907-1941, No. 113.
74. Cf. *Dante's Treatise, "De Vulgari Eloquentiâ,"* tr. A. G. Ferrers Howell
    (London, 1980), p. 31.

was delighted to imagine that Arnaut, the most exquisite singer of the Provençal tongue, had some contact with English jongleurs. Possibly to imitate "il miglior fabbro," Pound liberates the rigid prosody of the "Seafarer" in Old English to evoke a softer, mellower music of language. In Pound's version the original places of alliteration are kept faithfully whenever possible, while the numbers and places of caesuras and strong beats are a little irregular :

Mæg ic bé mé / sylfum // soðgied / wrecan

sìþas / secgan // hu ic geswind/agum

earfoðhwile // oft prowade . . . .

May I // for my own self // song's truth reckon,

Journey's jargon, // how I in harsh day

Hardship // endured oft.[76]

The translation of an Old English poem, therefore, can be a search for the ideal perceptible behind all the objects seen by a contemplator.

In the bright world illumined through the contemplator's light or *ratio* above and within, every object can be transformed into a meaningful image or what Pound called, in "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris," "Luminous Detail."[77] All events in history are juxtaposed, while retaining their chronological order, giving to each other flashes of the revelation of Plato's real Being existing nowhere but perceptible everywhere. If one presumes that these luminous details constitute Pound's study of history, one understands why Pound believed that these "luminous details" will make a "New Method of Scholarship."[78]

75. *An Anglo-Saxon Book of Verse and Prose*, ed. W. T. Sedgefield (Manchester, 1928), p. 32.

76. "The Seafarer," *Personae* (1926), p. 64.

77. Cf. "When I bring into play what my late pastors and masters would term, in classic sweetness, my 'unmitigated gall,' and by virtue of it ventures to speak of a 'New Method of Scholarship,' I do not imagine that I am speaking of a method by me discovered. I mean merely a method not of common practice, a method not yet clearly or consciously formulated ... the method of Luminous Detail, a method most vigorously hostile to the prevailing mode of today ...." *The New Age*, 7 December, 1911. Quoted by Stock, p. 108.

78. Ibid.

Moreover, a contemplator's bright vision has one illuminating center in which the poet sees the very object of his soul's love to which his mind should return. Pound's Platonic imitation of Richard's contemplation, therefore, could give a perspective with a clear focus to his view of history. It is in this perspective that Pound's germ of the *Cantos* is already found, for throughout this long poem the figure of Odysseus in search of a home is seen at regular intervals intermingled with Pound's search through historical details. In the very beginning of his poetic career, Pound called by the name of a "little history" ("Histrion") his own particular type of contemplation in which his metamorphic unity with objects radiates forth the light of the Platonic idea. With such evidence at hand, one no longer can doubt that the *Cantos* are a work of contemplation.

A three-fold mental activity can be expected in the *Cantos* as a contemplative poem : the observation of objects, speculation through reason and the revelation of the Platonic idea through the juxtaposing of images. The first observation of objects is seen separately in the arid records of Sigismondo Malatesta in the "Malatesta Cantos" (Cantos VIII-XI), where Pound perhaps tried to make poetry of Richard's first stage of contemplation only. The faithful observation of objects by contemplators, however, necessarily leads to a higher stage of contemplation, so that the poet proceeds from the "Malatesta Cantos" through the ugliest reality in the "hell cantos" (Cantos XIV-XV), until in the Dionysian paradise of Canto XVII the "light, not of the sun"[79] shines out together with the revelation of Hellenic gods and goddesses.[80]

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79. Canto XVII : 76. *The Cantos* (*1-95*) (New York, 1956).
80. Pound was in his early days, and has been perhaps all his life, a worshipper of beauty of Hellenic deity. Cf. Pound's "Religio or the Child's Guide to Knowledge," *Pavannes and Divisions* (1918),

What is a god ?
A God is an eternal state of mind.

.   .   .   .

By what characteristic may we know the divine forms ?
By beauty.
Pavannes and Divisions (New York, 1918), p. 23.

Whether the second activity, speculation through reason, exists in the *Cantos* is a serious problem not really solved by any critic of Pound heretofore, for if one can trace any conceptual meanings from one canto to another, one will be able to write out the map on which the total of the whole meaning of the *Cantos* is revealed. For the present purpose, it will suffice to say that one can disentangle some threads of conceptual meanings through images. Odysseus, for example, is a Neo-Platonist's traditional symbol[81] who navigates through sea of space and time, and who searches the soul's home in the idea. In Pound's *A Draft of the First XXX Cantos,* the Platonic idea is above all symbolized in beauty, undergoing the metamorphoses in numerous figures from Cantos I-VI, such as Aphrodite (I), Helen of Troy (II), Koré (III), Artemis (IV), Eleanor d'Aquitaine and Cunizza da Romano (VI). Such a sequence of metamorphoses, however, is contrasted with the scene of a subdued, shabby street of modern Paris where no beauty is seen but a whispering voice is only heard, recalling the voice of the Trojan elders in Canto II, calling for the sending-back of Helen of Troy to the Achaian ships. The contrast, therefore, indicates that the absence of beauty or of the adoration of beauty is the primary cause in the decline of our civilization.

Mostly in *A Draft of the First XXX Cantos* one finds all the three activities working simultaneously. Take, for example, Canto III for its simple structure's sake. Pound juxtaposed two images : first the gorgeous beauty of a spring day in Venice which the poet described as "peacocks in Koré's house" and "Gods float in the azure air" (III : ll); second, the passage from *Mio Cid,* in which the hero was sentenced to banishment from his home town. "Una niña de nueve

81. All the symbols of William Blake's Arlington Court painting are familiar to Neo-Platonic scholars. There the voyage of Odysseus, his dangers, adventures and home-coming to Ithaca is the type and symbol of souls' descent and return between an eternal and temporal world. Apparently Blake painted it after reading Porphyry's treatise on Homer's *Cave of the Nymphs,* published in 1788 in the second volume of Taylor's translation of Proclus' *Mathematical Commentaries.* Cf. Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Tradition* (2 vols. ; London, 1968), I, 74-75.

años" (III : 12) reads out the writ of the King to Ruy Diaz in the dark street.[82] The reader can appreciate the two lovely scenes as well-written pieces of poetry while the poet observes them intently. A quick reader, however, will find that these two scenes are not juxtaposed without recalling any conceptual meanings. The gods floating in the azure air certainly include Koré, the goddess now resurrected for spring from the underworld. The poet sees beauty revealed first above, and then in the dark night he is ordered in the mask of Ruy Diaz by "una niña," another daughter (= Koré), to go further in his exploration. The Augustinian pattern of the Word of God above and the Word of God within undergoes a curious metamorphosis here, for "una niña" represents nothing but Koré when buried underneath in the dark. Moreover through the juxtaposition one is amazed to find that the poet succeeds in the revelation of the radiant source of human knowledge in the coalescence of the *ratio* above (Koré in the air) and the *ratio* within the dark psyche of man ("una niña" at night).

When one parallels Dante and Pound as two contemplative poets, one would like to know whether Pound designed the *Cantos* in a trilogical structure just as Dante travelled through three different conditions of the human mind in the *Inferno, Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. Pound's poem, of course, lacks the order in Dante's Catholic, Thomistic universe. One may possibly assume, however, that Pound intended his *Cantos* to be in a trilogical structure, too. One possible evidence is "Near Perigord" collected in *Lustra* (1916), a poem divided into three parts.

The life of Bertran de Born, a Provençal poet and friend to Prince Henry, "the young English king"[83] who was a son to King

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82. The second scene in Canto III is taken from the Castilian epic, *Poema del Cid.* Cf. Pound's prose paraphrase in *The Spirit of Romance,* p. 67.
83. Henry, brother to Richard the Lion-Hearted, was called "the young Egnlish king" in Bertran de Born's "Planh." Pound translated this planh in *Personae* (1909) with much simplified rhyme scheme.

Henry II of England, is recorded in the five "razos"[84] of Bertran's poems. The razo to Bertran's canzo, "Domna puois de me no us chal,"[85] tells the well-known story that Bertran was in love with a gentle lady, very much esteemed, having the name of "my lady Maeuz de Montanhac, wife of Lord Talairan."[86] Embarrassed because Bertran wrote a song for "domna Guisharda, de la molher del vescomte de Comborn,"[87] Maeuz or Maent (according to Pound in "Near Perigord") dismesses her troubadour servant. Bertran in sorrow wrote the canzo mentioned above, asking all the good ladies for one good form or trait for restoring the lady he lost. The result is a canzo so charming and witty that Pound not only wrote "Na Audiart" on one stanza thereof but also translated the whole in *Lustra* as "Dompna Pois de Me No·us Cal."

Stanislaw Stronski in 1914 published, however, *La légende amoureuse de Bertran de Born,* and compared all five razos attached to five of Bertran's canzos. He found two possibilities to identify Bertran's lady. First she might be "Madomna Elis de Monfort qu' era Moilher d'En Guillem de Gordon" in an ancient biography of Raimon de Saint-Amlonir. But Madomna Elis is actually the youngest daughter of Turenne married to Bernard de Casnac, so she cannot be a Monfort, nor a Montaignac.[88] Second, if Razo V, beginning with "Bertran de Born si era anatz veser una seror del rei Richart"[89] is true, Maent is a sister to King Richard of England as well as "ma domna Eleina,

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84. A "razo" is a kind of curtain call, a prose added before a Provençal "canso" explaining ususally the situation in which the "canzo" was written. Most of troubadours' biographies are taken from these razos.
85. Pound translated this canzo in *Lustra*. The title and the first line means, "Lady, since you care nothing for me." Cf. *Personae* (1926), p. 105.
86. "Bertrans de Born si era dutz d'una domna gentil e jove e fort prezada, et avia nom ma domna Maeuz de Montanhac, molher d'en Talairan ...." *Die Lieder Bertrans von Born*, ed. Carl Appel (Halle, 1932), p. 10. Razo I in Stronski's number.
87. Ibid., p. 6. Razo II, in Stronski's number.
88. Cf. *La légende amoureuse de Bertran de Born* (Paris, 1914), p. 48.
89. *Die Lieder Bertrans von Born*, p. 18. Razo V in Stronski's number.

que fo molher del duc de Sansonha."[90] But this hypothesis will nullify the evidence in all the four other razos. Tracing the obscure records of donations to local churches and monasteries, Stronski proves that neither Maent de Montaniac nor Guischarda existed except in the legends of troubadour biographies retained in razos.

One can be certain that Pound read Stronski, for the poet describes in "Near Perigord" Bertran making love to Aelis,[91] which name was not seen in any of the five razos but in Stronski's presumption that Maent might be Elis de Turenne. Challenged by the historian, the poet was forced to seek and re-identify the lady whom he loved once under the mask of Bertran de Born. Most likely Pound found in Bertran his favorite mask because Bertran, too, gathered the limbs of Osiris in order to restore his lost, ideal lady, gathering good forms of all the ladies he knew. The fragmented form of "Near Perigord" proves that Pound's world was torn by Stronski and shattered into a Dionysian whirlpool again.

Strangely enough, none but Richard of St. Victor and Dante came to Pound's rescue again in the search for the truth about Bertran de Born's lady. Richard in his "Prologue to *De Trinitate* describes three heavens one ascends respectively through faith, through love and through knowledge (*fides, caritas, cognitatio*). "Ad prium itaque coelum ascenditur actualiter, ad secundum virtualiter, ad tertium intellectualiter"[92] says Richard. These three steps are comparable to Dante's three worlds——the *Inferno, Purgatorio* and *Paradiso,* except that Dante descends first, instead of ascending. Dante first observed the hideous human evils, passing through the Inferno empirically (actualiter). Second, he climbed the Purgatorial ladder, practising the virtue of love (virtualiter); and third, he was rapt into the paradiso in his contemplation through intelligence, the fuculty to know

90. Ibid.
91. "Thinking of Aelis, whom he loved heart and soul ...." *Personae* (1926), p. 45.
92. *La trinité, Texte latin, introduction, traduction et notes de Gaston Salet* (Paris, 1959), p. 58.

God (intellectualiter).

In "Near Perigord," Pound tried this Dantean-Ricardian method, first by looking into facts in Bertran's life. Second, he takes up a fiction,[93] since the exercise of imagination is the sole virtuous act for a poet's existence. This Part II interests the reader especially because he juxtaposed scenes which totally contradict one another. On one hand, Bertran makes love to Aelis or Helis de Turenne, who cannot be a sister to King Richard. On the other hand, Pound offers a hypothesis that Bertran wrote the song in question just to cause a war. Among the audience to Bertran's song, a knight takes it for an intrigue against his party and sends words to King Richard. The song thus might have caused the war Bertran predicted in the sirvantes,[94] from which Pound took the title and epigraph,

A Perigord, pres del muralh

Tan que i puosch' om gitar ab malh ....[95]

The hypothesis, however, is at once discarded in the last scene. King Richard, after the death of Bertran, wonders with Arnaut Daniel and a poet called "Cino," probably Pound's own mask,[96] if Bertran loved King Richard's sister : "Say that he loved her, does it solve the riddle ?"[97] It does not, because Maent in Tairiran cannot be Richard's sister. The final image of Part II, Bertran in Dante's *Inferno* with

93. Cf. "End fact. Try fiction." "Near Perigord," *Personae* (1929), p. 154.
94. A "sirvantes" is different from a "canzo." In the latter a troubadour used his own original verse form, while in the former he imitated a form already known, and wrote usually a satire. Bertran's "Un sirvantes cui motz no falh" was translated by Pound in *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 45.
95. *Personae* (1926), p. 151. Pound translated the two lines as "At Perigord near to the wall,/Aye within a mace's throw of it." *The Spirit of Romance*, ibid.
96. Pound told T. E. Connolly that this is a fictional Cino and not Cino da Pistoia Pound used in "Cino." K. K. Ruthven indicated that "Cino" was Pound's pseudonym, for a couple of poems originally rejected from *A Quinzaine for This Yule* (1908) and published in *A Lume Spento and Other Poems* (1965) are signed "Cino." Cf. *A Guide to Ezra Pound's Personae* (1926) (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), p. 178.
97. *Personae* (1926), p. 156.

his headless trunk holding his own head as if it were Diogenes's useless lantern,[98] looms over the whole composition as a symbol of the ultimate failure of integration.

The last lyrical section, Part III, makes a sharp contrast vith the preceding part where the totally incompatible scenes are jumbled in a Browningesque structure.[99] The lady in the poet's vision ascends into the clear light of Provençal spring to the "final estrangement."[100] "Ed eran due in uno, ed uno in due,"[101] quotes Pound from Dante, suggesting that the two possible figures, Elis and King Richard's sister, can be unified only beyond the realm of images. Before he recapitulates the poem of incoherence with one image "A broken bundle of mirrors,"[102] Pound seems to substitute Richard's third stage of ascending heaven "intellectualiter," *viz.,* through contemplation, with a final reaching-over to the ideal.

A few more evidences can support the hypothesis that Pound very likely planned the *Cantos* in a trilogical structure, in addition to "Near Perigord" which makes an interesting preview for the *Cantos* with its fragmented images and its search for a lost ideal. It is quite possible also that Pound replaced Dante's and Richard's climbing to the second heaven through virtues with a poet's creative activity as Pound did in "Near Perigord." Pound as a worshipper of Hellenic gods of beauty did not likely practise the Christian virtues Dante listed in the *Purgatorio.* One can safely assume that *A Draft of the First XXX Cantos* was Pound's *Inferno* whatever he meant by it. Pound in 1927 clearly testified, while still writing the first unit of the *Cantos,* that "Live man goes down into world of Dead"[103] like

98. *Inferno.* XXVII, 127-135. Dante condemned Bertran de Born to hell, for he caused discord between King Henry II and his son, Prince Henry.
99. The influence of Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book* on "Near Perigord" is discussed by Donald Davie, *Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor* (New York, 1969), pp. 63-64.
100. *Personae* (1926), p. 157.
101. Ibid. *Inferno,* XXVIII, 125.
102. *Personae,* ibid.
103. Pound's letter addressed to Homer L. Pound, Rapallo, 11 April, 1927. *The Letters of Ezra Pound,* p. 285.

Dante's *Inferno* was one of his schemes. The middle section of the trilogy must be ended with *Cantos LII-LXXI,* because Pound himself wrote to George Santayana, "I have also got to the end of job or a part of job (money in history) and for personal ends have got to tackle philosophy or my 'paradise,'"[104] immediately after he finished *Cantos LII-LXXI.* Consequently, if Pound had continued his scheme undisturbed, he could have written his own paradiso from Canto LXXII on. As we all know, his scheme was fatally disturbed by the war, and then by his imprisonment after the war.

According to the present writer's analysis,[105] Pound seems to have tried a bold fiction in the *Eleven New Cantos,* assuming the spirit of American founding fathers to take the place of heaven, and the mistaken system of currency to take the place of hell. In *The Fifth Decad of the Cantos,* Pound-Odysseus navigates his own fictitious universe until he reaches in Canto XLIX what may be called the entrance of heaven, though the place is guarded from the knowledge of ordinary readers with a Japanese transliteration of a Chinese poem, beginning "KEI MEN RAN KEI...." The classical poem attributed to the legendary emperor, Shun (舜) actually means,

> Splendid are the clouds and bright
> All glow with various light !
> Grand the sun and moon move on ;
> Daily dawn succeeds to dawn,[106]

making a radiant scene proper to the ineffable place which Pound described as "the fourth ; the dimension of stillness" (XLIX : 39). We are warned by Pound that the "Chinese History Cantos" and "Adams

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104. Rapallo, 8 December, 1939. Ibid., p. 428. *Cantos LII-LXXI* was published in January, 1940 by Faber & Faber in London.
105. Cf. "A Thematic and Structural Unity in Ezra Pound's *Eleven New Cantos," Studies in American Literature,* Tenth Anniversary Extra Number (1971), 1-18.
106. "卿雲爛兮, 糺縵縵兮, 日月光華, 旦復旦兮," taken from Fuhsang's 尚書大伝 ("Introduction to the Shu-Ching"). The translation is James Legge's. Cf. *The Chinese Classics: With a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena and Copious Indexes* (7 vols.; Hongkong & London, 1861-72), IV, 14.

Cantos" (LII-LXXI), which begins with the ideogram of 耀 (radiance),
are written "to the catechumen alone" (LIII : 18). Pound means there-
by that only the initiated can comprehend the mystery. In comparison
with Dante's *Commedia* this unit, therefore, parallels Dante's mysti-
cal interpretation of history at the end of *Purgatorio.*

No one can infer at the present stage of Pound lore whether his
"Paradise" was written or not. His letter to George Santayana indicat-
es only that he planned it for the concluding section of the *Cantos.*
Very likely the poet, arrested after the war, chose to write down in
The Pisan Cantos his brief thrusts into the ideal in fragmentary
forms, being afraid that he had no time to write out his scheme. In-
terestingly, one fragment shows still the typical method of Poundian

access to the ideal that "Near Perigord" holds :

    I don't know how humanity stands it
        with a painted paradise at the end of it
        Without a painted paradise at the end of it
    the dwarf morning-glory twines round the grass blade
    magna NUX animae with Barabbas and 2 thieves besides me
                                      (LXXIV : 14).

The first two lines present facts. The second stage, "the dwarf morn-
ing-glory twines round the grass blade," is the presentation of an
image, which parallels Part II in "Near Perigord." The beauty and
frailty of life are shown in a flash of the extremely compact image.
Then the vision suddenly expands to a cosmic scale. The author's
identification of himself with Jesus on the cross, carrying a slight
irony in "NUX" (for the word suggests a "nut" also), illuminates the
tragic but glorious existence of a poet with three Latin words and
their Biblical allusion to the fruit of the tree of life. If "Near Perigord"
is Poundian version of poetic contemplation, the fact that the poet
retained its trilogical method from 1926 till he wrote *The Pisan
Cantos* (1945) certainly means that the three steps to thrust into
the ideal were now most natural for Pound.

In conclusion one can say that the *Cantos* is not an anti-abstract,
anti-logical poem which Fenollosa's essay on the Chinese character

might suggest Pound's ideogramic method to be, but a poem whose technique basically depends on the time-honoured method of contemplation, and therefore a mode of knowing. The method is rooted way back in Plato's dialogues, developed through the practices of Neo-Platonist mystics such as the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, completed by Dante as a method of poetry, and enjoyed by poets at least down to the age of Donne, who wrote the *Anniversaries* as the metaphysical school's contemplative poetry. Considering that mystics used this three-fold mental activity for their Biblical study, and that Dante could reach his paradise through it, one must admit that this too constitutes a method of acquiring knowledge or at least the knowledge that Plato strove to attain. It is not really a mystification that Pound suggested that his method in the *Cantos* was a kind of logic, because in contemplation one starts from the premise of facts and comes to the conclusion through reason and imagination, if not through fixed forms of reasoning only. When Pound read Fenollosa's essay on the Chinese character, he must have seen there that Richard of St. Victor's search for the transcendent truth through juxtaposition of images was carried out in a language utterly unknown to him. The more exotic Fenollosa's language was, the more teasing must have been the sense that he knew it already. "One · had the inside knowledge of Fenollosa's notes and the ignorance of a five year old child,"[107] says Pound to his interviewer in 1962.

(This aticle is enlarged from the paper read at the annual meeting of American Literature Society of Japan, 1971.)

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107. "Ezra Pound : An Interview" [with Donald Hall], *Paris Review*, XXVIII (Summer / Fall, 1962), 39.

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