

Lecture 9 Ezra Pound

It is true that the great artist always has a great audience, even in his lifetime; but it is not the vulgo [the people] but the spirits of irony and of destiny and of humor [the great authors of the past], sitting beside him.--Pound, *Poetry* 1914-15, replying to *Poetry's* motto, from Whitman: "to have great poetry there must be great audiences too"

There's no use in a strong impulse [in poetry] if it is nearly all lost in bungling transmission and technique. This obnoxious word that I'm always brandishing about [technique] means nothing but a transmission of the impulse intact.--Pound, 1914

An organization of forms expresses a confluence of forces. These forces may be the "love of God," the "life-force," emotions, passions, what you will. For example: if you clap a strong magnet beneath a plateful of iron filings, the energies of the magnet will proceed to organise form. It is only by applying a particular and suitable force that you can bring order and vitality and thence beauty into a plate of iron filings, which are otherwise as "ugly" as anything under heaven. The design in the magnetised iron filings expresses a confluence of energy. It is not "meaningless" or "inexpressive."--Pound, "Vorticism," 1915

I have begun an endless poem, of no known category. Phanopoeia or something or other, all about everything. . . I wonder what you will make of it.--Pound to James Joyce, writing about the beginning of *The Cantos* in 1915 ("phanopoeia" means image-making)

A. A. Live man goes down into world of Dead  
C. B. The 'repeat in history'  
B. C. The 'magic moment' or moment of metamorphosis, bust thru from quotidien into 'divine or permanent world.'  
---Pound to his father on the plot of *The Cantos*

There *is* a start, descent to the shades, metamorphoses, parallel . . . All of which is mere matter for little---rs Harvud instructors *unless* I pull it off as reading matter, singing matter, shouting matter, the tale of the tribe.---Pound on *The Cantos*

The ideogramic method consists of presenting one facet and then another until at some point one gets off the dead and desensitized surface of the reader's mind, onto a part that will register.--Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 1937

The oldest English    accented meter  
Of four, unfailing,    fairly audible  
Strongly struck    stresses seldom  
Attended to anything    other than

Definite downbeats: how many dim  
Unstressed upbeats in any line  
Mattered not much; motion was measured  
With low leaps of alliteration  
Handily harping on heavy accents  
--John Hollander, on Old English alliterative verse, in *Rhyme's Reason: A Guide to English Verse*