

## “Dead Catalogues”: Ezra Pound’s Guide to Kulchur & the Archival Consciousness of Modernism

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Like all men of the Library, I have journeyed in search of a book, perhaps of the catalogue of catalogues. (Borges)

Scholarship concerned primarily with the material status of the Pound corpus—landmark studies by Christine Froula, Lawrence Rainey, and Jerome McGann come to mind—has brought to light a once little-acknowledged yet far-reaching element of Ezra Pound’s cultural program: the exploitation of texts as physical embodiments of meaning. A keen awareness that textual errancy is integral to the epistemology of the *Cantos*, that Pound’s poetics necessarily reinscribe their own documentary methodologies, and that his work shares a role in the tradition of Pre-Raphaelite fine printing, has afforded scholars a better sense of Pound’s position in relation to what McGann has called, quite aptly, “the bibliographic imagination.”<sup>1</sup> Pound’s place in literary history, however, can be reconstructed not only through careful consideration of the material text in all its physicality, but also through an appreciation of its material context: that is, the archive that can be understood as the situated material practice of textual management, as a “discourse network” of real constitutive force, and as a dominant figure or trope of history, memory, power, bodies, and so on.<sup>2</sup> Although it is clear that the author of such extensive cultural appendices

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<sup>1</sup> See Christine Froula’s *To Write Paradise: Style and Error in Pound’s Cantos*, Lawrence Rainey’s *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos*, and Jerome McGann’s *The Textual Condition* and his *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism*.

<sup>2</sup> The term “discourse network” is taken from Friedrich Kittler’s monumental contribution to media studies, *Discourse Networks: 1800/1900*. For more on the vicissitudes of the term “archive” in contemporary cultural and critical theory see “Archiving ‘Archiving,’” my co-authored introduction to the *ESC* special issue on *The Event of the Archive*.

as the *Cantos* and *Guide to Kulchur* was intimately engaged with the textual archive on a global scale—and decades of invaluable source hunting and explication attest to this—scholars often neglect to account for Pound’s relationship to that archive as an entity in itself and, in turn, draw from the rich and varied socio-history of textual management such an accounting demands. During the course of this study, I intend to explore the possibilities such an approach offers by identifying some of the points of intersection between Pound’s writing and the management of material texts at the apex of the age of typography and at the dawn of what we now recognize as the age of information. The goal of this paper is to establish the historical and material grounds for what I will call *the archival consciousness of Modernism* as a central feature of that very extended literary moment. It will attempt to do so by way of an examination of Ezra Pound’s *Guide to Kulchur* in relationship to the history of encyclopedism, library architecture, and textual management in the form of book indexing and cataloguing.<sup>3</sup>

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Pound’s *Cantos* exemplifies what I refer to here as “text as index,” a central feature of the archival consciousness of high Modernist texts in particular. Indexical textuality is connected *both* to the burgeoning material archive that made itself known in the late nineteenth-century with a surplus of printed matter and the accompanying problems of archival management *and* the contemporary appraisal of textuality as an unbounded network of signs that refuses metacommentary and defers stable meaning. That is to say, text as index confounds the opposition work/text, initially set out by Roland Barthes, in that it exemplifies what I would like to call, with some sense of irony, the *textuality of the work*—the indexical text is not stable or closed, it does not pretend to an immediacy of the signified. On the contrary, it employs its status as a literary work, as an instance of material discourse caught up in the physicality of the archive, in order to insist on its own dynamic textual processes. Text as index is both a material em-

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<sup>3</sup> Scholarship devoted specifically to Pound’s *Guide to Kulchur* is relatively sparse. For two recent examples that nonetheless treat the text in a manner different from my own see Francis’ “‘Now for a Large-Mouthed Product’: Ezra Pound and the Poetics of Promotion” and Paul’s “Italian Fascist Exhibitions and Ezra Pound’s Move to the Imperial,” both published in 2005.

bodiment of the text and the erosion of the self-sufficiency of the work.

Although nascent moments of indexical textuality can be located as early as the troubled encyclopedic program of d'Alembert and Diderot—and in more fully developed instances across an eclectic tradition that includes Flaubert, Mallarmé, Joyce, Kafka, and Borges—my contention is that text as index finds its most acute expression in the twentieth-century long poem. Unlike their more traditional epic models, works such as Williams' *Paterson*, Zukofsky's *A*, and Olson's *The Maximus Poems* do not displace but, rather, engage the archive: in employing systems of reference rather than meaning, the indexical attempts to navigate and exploit the intertextual in an overtly graphic, particular, and concrete manner. Such texts are, then, necessarily self-reflexive and foreground their status as artifacts that threaten the very space of bounded discourse and the very borders of its physical embodiments.

The kind of socio-historic forces that gave rise to indexical textuality are exemplified by one particular moment in the reading room of the British Museum Library recorded by Pound in 1938, more than thirty years after the fact. In his *Guide to Kulchur*, the author recalls what might be best characterized as the primal scene of his introduction to the tangled complex of the European archive and a startling encounter with the sheer materiality of discourse:

About thirty years ago, seated on one of the very hard, very slippery, thoroughly uncomfortable chairs of the British Museum main reading room, with a pile of large books at my right hand and a pile of somewhat smaller ones at my left hand, I lifted my eyes to the tiers of volumes and false doors covered with imitation bookbacks which surround that focus of learning. Calculating the eye-strain and the number of pages per day that a man could read, with deduction for say at least 5% of one man's time for reflection, I decided against it. There must be some other way for a human being to make use of that vast cultural heritage. (GK 53)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> It is possible this moment took place as early as 1906, during one of the young Pound's first visits to the European continent. Pound's daughter, Mary de Rachewiltz, dates the event as such in her essay "Ezra Pound's Library: What Remains" in a collection of papers from the 1989 Bi-Annual Pound Conference titled *Ezra Pound and Europe*. However, she does not offer any corroborating documentation, and I have yet to locate any reference to this moment in the BML

Undoubtedly, Pound would have been both fascinated and intimidated by the textual possibilities one could take in, at a single glance, from that centre of Anglo culture, science, and history—the radiantly structured and vastly domed reading room of the BML—but the intriguing possibility remains that this account is entirely fictitious. Whether or not this is no more than Pound’s fanciful reconstruction of his literary gestation, the purpose of the recollection is clear: the event promises effectively to rebind the tattered edges of Pound’s corpus with a consistent sense of creative purpose the elder Pound imparts to the younger. *Guide to Kulchur* is, among many other things, an attempt by Pound to reinscribe his entire literary output under the self-effacing sign of the ideogrammic method. That Pound conceived that now famous formal structure almost two decades after that moment in the BML has been well documented.<sup>5</sup> The ideogrammic method not only assumes its own distinct role in the European philosophy of signs, but it is also closely tied to Pound’s exploitation of material textuality, and to the institutional history of archival management that he offers here as an intriguing intertext.

Whatever this moment in the BML may be—autobiography or clever narrative—it is revealing in its possibilities. Both its central textual locus in *Guide to Kulchur*—Pound’s prescriptive catalogue to reading and writing—and its chronological locus on the threshold of what was to be a uniquely formative phase in Pound’s poetic career—the founding of the Imagist and Vorticist movements, the gift of the Fenollosa manuscripts—suggest a nascent moment in Pound’s lifelong project of reconfiguring traditional lineages of intellectual thought and providing a methodology for dealing with “that vast cultural heritage.” In other words, what may well be at hand here is one of many sites of reading, or scenes of writing, from which we can observe the larger scope of Pound’s textual program. The image of the library contains a number of significant intersecting elements. The first is Pound’s decided unease with his seat in the BML. The hard, slippery, uncomfortable chair in which he finds himself may well be synecdochic for the larger unease he feels between and beneath the daunting, circular stacks of the reading room—capable at this point in its history of accommodating over a million volumes, a collection second only to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Pound’s response to this unease is the rage to order manifest in the tidy stacking of

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in any of Pound’s published prose or correspondence. Subsequent references to Pound’s *Guide to Kulchur* will be abbreviated “GK.”

<sup>5</sup> See Ronald Bush’s *The Genesis of Ezra Pound’s Cantos* (10-14).

books into large and small piles and the calculating mind that reckons days, minutes, and percentages into his prospective plan of study.

Yet Pound also seems to recognize an insidious risk that his conjecture presents. He takes note of “the false doors” and “imitation bookbacks” that promise either to mislead the reader or to derail any strategic approach to the volumes surrounding the reading room. The sense of a threatening errancy invoked by the notion of hidden passages and deceptive texts suggests a labyrinthine vision of the library that either anticipates Borges’ “Library of Babel”<sup>6</sup> or, to avoid such a tempting anachronism, takes form in the space opened up by Flaubertian texts such as *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* or *Bouvard and Pécuchet* with its wayward bibliophiles, the very figures who usher modernism into the archive. Juxtaposed with Pound’s invectives against “the sticky, molasses-covered filth of current print” (GK 96) and the printing-house howls and “clatter of presses” that announce the Hell Cantos (14/61), this moment in the BML begins to take on even more ominous and significant dimensions.<sup>7</sup> Pound, here, with eyes raised to witness the encounter of modernism with its own history, reminds one of Freud’s Wolf Man, looking up from his childish height to see his parents in the act, *coitus a tergo*, an event of such traumatic insistence that it can only be repressed and destined to return from the future, in an instance of Freudian *nachträglichkeit*. It is that return of the repressed, that return from the future, that is of particular interest to me here as it takes shape in *Guide to Kulchur*.<sup>8</sup>

Pound’s description of this moment in the BML does not of course stand alone in literary history. One might recall a number of other such accounts. Virginia Woolf, to take an obvious example, reminds of us the gendered politics of the archive and the all-

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<sup>6</sup> Borges’ construction of infinite series of interconnected hexagonal stack rooms is both a limitless and periodic institution of textuality. His universal archive is a “febrile library, whose hazardous volumes run the constant risk of being changed into others and in which everything is affirmed, denied, and confused as by a divinity in delirium” (*Ficciones* 86).

<sup>7</sup> See also Pound’s early poem “The Eyes”:

Free us, for we perish  
In this ever-flowing monotony  
Of ugly print-marks, black  
Upon white parchment. (*Personae* 34)

<sup>8</sup> For an engaging treatment of Freud’s concept of “deferred action” see Hal Foster’s *The Return of the Real* (29-32). For Freud’s analysis of the Wolf Man, see “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis” *Standard Edition* Vol. XVII: 3-122.

important question of access in *A Room of One's Own*. But she also responds to the weight of this cultural inheritance represented by the Reading Room in much the same manner as Pound. Presupposing, in her words, that “If truth is not to be found, on the shelves of the British Museum, where, I asked myself, picking up a notebook and a pencil, is truth?” she sets off to better understand the state of women in contemporary society:

The swing-doors swung open; and there one stood under the vast dome, as if one were a thought in the huge bald fore head which is so splendidly encircled by a band of famous names. One went to the counter; one took a slip of paper; one opened a volume of the catalogue . . . . and the five dots here indicate five separate minutes of stupefaction, wonder and bewilderment. Have you any notion of how many books are written about women in the course of one year? Have you any notion how many are written by men? Are you aware that you are, perhaps, the most discussed animal in the universe? Here had I come with a notebook and a pencil proposing to spend a morning reading, supposing that at the end of the morning I should have transferred the truth to my notebook. But I should need to be a herd of elephants, I thought, and a wilderness of spiders, desperately referring to the animals that are reputed longest lived and most multitudinously eyed, to cope with all this. I should need claws of steel and beak of brass even to penetrate the husk. How shall I ever find the grains of truth embedded in all this mass of paper? I asked myself, and in despair began running my eye up and down the long list of titles. (35-36)

I've offered here a transcription of one of the original 492 copies of Woolf's text, published in 1929 by Hogarth Press, because I'm intrigued by the fact that at the very moment that Woolf describes this encounter with the overwhelming burden of print culture she also directs the reader's attention to the material text in hand, to the “five dots” that signify her bewilderment and the elapsed time of “stupefaction.” That typographic flourish and moment of self-reflexive textuality is obscured in a number of subsequent editions of Woolf's text, but what the reference to the five dots, and their typographic impediment, emphasizes is that an attention to the fact of the archive, to that burden of printed volumes, can only provoke an overwhelmingly graphic recognition of the materiality of culture.

Conversely, the poet Louis MacNeice, one year following the publication of Pound's *Guide to Kulchur*, paints what seems at first a much more hospitable picture of the title subject of his poem "The British Museum Reading Room," a space that, in his estimation, serves its clients as a refuge. Here, the "Under the hive-like dome the stooping and haunted readers / Go up and down the alleys, tap the cells of knowledge," in part "because they hope these walls of books will deaden / The drumming of the demon in their ears." As MacNeice tells us, these "Cranks, hacks, poverty-stricken scholars" also hang "like bats in a world of inverted values, / Folded up in themselves in a world that is safe and silent." What the BML's zoomorphic scholars take refuge from, however, is the agoraphobic and xenophobic terrors of the world outside:

Out on the steps in the sun the pigeons are courting.  
Puffing their ruffs and sweeping their tails or taking  
A sun-bath at their ease  
And under the totem poles—the ancient terror—  
Between the enormous fluted Ionic columns  
There seeps from heavily jowled or hawk-like foreign faces  
The guttural sorrow of the refugees. (160-61)

Here the safe and silent BML Reading Room becomes either a space of abundant and flowing sweetness that deadens the drumming of demons (I can only think here of a kind of sexual release), or a nightmarish bat-cave inhabited by stooped and haunted creatures of inversion. Really, one need not work too hard to read the libidinal economy of the archive in this passage. Indeed, MacNeice's cathected archive serves here—as it does in so many of these examples—as a kind of fetish that at once both marks and displaces the very obsessions for which it stands in. Furthermore, one might between these two examples—Woolf and MacNeice—together describe the entire sexual economy of privilege and the logic of exclusion that governs the archive. The monstrous Woolf—remember, she has described herself as a nightmarish beast that is a composite of elephants and spiders with terrifyingly powerful claws and beaks—is one of the ancient terrors that MacNeice imagines outside amongst the markers of the animal and the alien. Certainly the pigeons she actually mentions elsewhere in her own account of the BML—and for that matter the Swiss and Italian refugee families that people Bloomsbury at this point and for whom Woolf also expresses real empathy—return here to disturb MacNeice's depiction of the Museum's environs, but, then

again, are simply a reflection of the alien creatures—the bees and the bats—already within.

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Antonio Panizzi's 1852 sketch of the BML reading room—a unified stacking area divided only by vertical and horizontal iron members—signals a radical revisioning of the cultural space of the imagination. The work of architect Sydney Smirke, based on that sketch by the BML's "Keeper of Printed Books," and the contemporaneous efforts of Henri Labrouste in Paris and E.G. Lind in Baltimore, all enfold the entire cultural and textual history of the West into a single spatio-temporal framework.<sup>9</sup> This is, to borrow a term from Foucault's *The Order of Things*, the "heterotopic" space of the modern archive: a conjunction of unshored fragments that multiplies and so challenges textual relations and taxonomies. In other words, the BML reading room provides us with an architectural figure for the overwhelming burden of printed texts that was the twentieth-century's inheritance. Such a legacy ensures that, henceforth, writers have no choice but to respond to the heterotopia of the archive and the uniquely modern convolutions of the printed sign. Either one must escape the archive, burn it down, or learn to write from within it.

The late nineteenth-century re-imagining of the cultural space of the library is historically linked to the development of contemporaneous cataloguing systems and professional indexing societies. Melvil Dewey's classification system was first conceived in the 1870's—the same decade that saw the founding of the British "Index Society," the founding of the American Library Association, and the unprecedented growth of an entire industry devoted to fervently charting textual archives. The activities of book cataloguing and book indexing are in this sense historically convergent practices that follow closely on the heels of the reconfiguration of archival space. Indeed, both undergo a fundamental shift in their functional roles; indexing and cataloguing become recognized as essential responses to problems of location reference rather than as taxonomic systems by which bibliophiles mimic

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<sup>9</sup> Labrouste is the architect of the Bibliothèque National built in 1865-68 and Lind of the Peabody Institute Library built in 1857. Both boast reading rooms similar in structure to that of the British Museum Library. Lawrence Rainey, in his *Ezra Pound: A Monument to Culture*, draws attention to the relevance of this space in connection with the poet's work on the *Malatesta Cantos*. In turn, his source is Nikolaus Pevsner's *A History of Building Types*.

the orders of nature. Given that both are systems of (inter)textual management predicated on the actions of listing and pointing, they are effectively analogous pursuits.

Such technologies of information retrieval are certainly not unique to recent history—clay envelopes used to abstract Mesopotamian cuneiform documents in the early second millennium B.C. and early paratextual devices such as chapter headings and marginal summaries are as much methods of textual management as modern day indexes and concordances—yet the kind of “book consciousness” displayed by the proliferation of these latter forms suggests a dramatic shift in our understanding of the printed word within the last two centuries. Of course, it is not until the codex form is adopted that indexing becomes possible, and even then the variability between copied manuscripts made any kind of standardized pagination virtually impossible. In *From Memory to Written Record*, M.T. Clanchy draws on the example of an (approximately) alphabetic index made for a large lawbook in the 1290s:

In practice, however, this index fails to work consistently. Although it sometimes refers to the correct folio number in Roman numerals, the Arabic ones and the letters have no equivalents throughout the text. The index was evidently made not for this particular manuscript but for another one of similar contents. (Note to Plate XIX)

Clanchy suggests that the index served more as an object of beauty than utility, and that the entire notion of alphabetic indexing had no place in the hierarchical structures of Medieval thought (181). Along similar lines, Mary J. Carruthers suggests in *The Book of Memory* that extant indexes of the period are pedagogic devices used to develop mnemonic skills rather than the tools of textual management (107–21). In other words, the scattered examples of Medieval indexical systems that remain are the product of an episteme decidedly at odds with that of typographic culture and the awareness of material textuality that becomes increasingly apparent following the advent of movable type.

It is not until the eighteenth century that we see the emergence of what appears to be an actual profession of indexing; such indexers, however, were regarded as Grub Street hacks of little consequence and were what G. Norman Knight calls “the Cinderella of the British publishing world” (“Book Indexing” 10). That century also saw an increase in the number of analytical indexes, due in part to the prac-

tice of reading the index in place of the entire text, a practice that comes under fire in Pope's *Dunciad* on the grounds that "Index-learning turns no student pale, / Yet holds the eel of science by the tail" (I:279-80). Despite its devaluation of the practice, the eighteenth century saw a number of key indexing projects, including Alexander Cruden's concordance to the Bible and Samuel Richardson's index to the third edition of *Clarissa* (Knight 11).

Along with a proliferation of printed texts in the nineteenth-century, the methodology and standardization of indexing becomes a matter of increasing concern. At mid-century, the First Baron Campbell "proposed to bring a Bill into Parliament to deprive an author who publishes a book without an Index of the privilege of copyright: and moreover to subject him for his offence to a pecuniary penalty" (Knight 11). Such concerns prompted the publication of the first text devoted solely to the subject of indexing: Henry Benjamin Wheatley's *What is an Index?*. Wheatley—the founder of both the British Library Association in 1877 and the Index Society—set out to supply indexes for any important works that were without and provide the profession with both a history and a set of standardized methods.

By the time Pound was to write his *Guide to Kulchur*, the problems of textual management had become even more acute. In *The Organization of Knowledge in Libraries*, published in the same year as Pound's *Guide*, Henry Bliss, an eminent theorist of library science, writes:

Floods of print, theories, news, and propaganda, archives and documents, towering collections and overflowing storage, crowded and cumbersome catalogs, confused and inefficient classifications. . . our book stacks are crowded with dead books and those soon to die. Our catalogs are encumbered with their cards in complicated arrangements. In a few decades much of this material will be in decay; much of it will be useless. Yet most of it should be stored somewhere. Some of it may be precious some day. (viii)

One year later, William Carlos Williams began work on his long poem *Paterson*, the title figure of which by Book Three finds himself in a beautifully hellish library of elemental storms in which "Texts mount and complicate them- / selves, lead to further texts and those / to synopses, digests, and emendations" (130). Eventually, Paterson is forced to abandon the now burning library for the sanctity of the pastoral. Such poetic visions are the motive behind the institutional—

and literary—mappings of the compelling yet disturbing realm of intertextuality.

Paterson's retreat invites the question as to whether or not high-modernist exploitations of the intertextual offer successful models for negotiating the archive, particularly in light of the equally anxious textuality of Flaubert and Pound. Yet success, as one might measure the efficacy of an index by the user's ability to retrieve information, is really of little concern here. Literary indexicality may have its roots in the problematics of archival management, but it employs the tools of such management in an opportunistic fashion. Regardless, the height of print culture presents a challenge to modernist polymaths in that the era is distinguished not only by new psychic, textual, and architectural spaces—correlates of the accompanying technologies of print and archival management—but also by methods of textual management that effectively restructure the topoi of the mind and of the text—the places, or loci, of our thought and its categorization—and shift our critical emphasis from the intellectual contents of texts to the actual codes they employ. That is to say, the sheer quantity of physical texts with which the writer must engage lends itself to the emergence of a language of self-reflexivity and a reification of the codes employed in textual production. With this we see the rise of the disciplines of linguistics and philology in which the signifier is no longer transparent and truth no longer unmediated. Language erects itself as a barrier between humanity and the world. It is this barrier—"Damn the partition!" Pound writes in Canto VII, "Paper, dark brown and stretched, / Flimsy and damned partition" (7/25)—to which the modern indexical text responds.

According to Foucault, the heterotopic is a state of disorder in which "things are 'laid', 'placed', 'arranged' in sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a place of residence for them, to define a *common locus* beneath them all" (emphasis Foucault's xvii-xviii). In contrast, the juxtaposition of the incongruous can only take place in the non-site of language, the utopia—as opposed to heterotopia—of signification in which the disparate things of the world can share the same ground. The archival, the heterotopic, and the indexical all function under the operative metaphor of *place*. Indeed, Walter Ong has suggested that the bibliographic index derives historically and etymologically from the practice of listing rhetorical forms exploited in a given text as the "index locorum communium" or the "index of commonplaces." The commonplaces are the standard tropes of the rhetorical tradition, in this case listed and referenced not as intellectual loci but as actual loci in the physical text (Ong 125). At

the same time, the index is a function of an emerging print culture in which the visual space of the page is paramount and the standardized retrieval of textual information is possible.

The development of the purely bibliographic entity we call the index was made *possible* by print technology and a standardization of texts unavailable to manuscript cultures, and is a function of the shift from an aural to a visual conception of textuality and the growing recognition of the text as a material object. In typographic cultures, texts are not recordings of utterances, but the containers of information. In typographic cultures, texts are things. More importantly for this study, however, the index and the catalogue became *necessary* tools in the management of material texts. Histories of print technology often demonstrate how textual forms such as indexes came to be, but very rarely express why. My contention is that the index is a product of the kind of overwhelming burden of material textuality Pound experienced in the British Museum Library—the same kind of burden that prompted late nineteenth-century bibliophiles to find ways of making texts and the information they contained more accessible and retrievable—to create an index of commonplaces, a utopia—to set against the heterotopia of the modern archive.

The hallmarks of the index, then, are the drive to create a utopian non-site of language and the recognition of texts not just as transmitters of meaning, but as the material embodiments of those transmissions.<sup>10</sup> Text as index in its most heightened form is the province of Modernism, and the culmination of a paradigmatic shift in our conceptualization of textuality as the failed immediacy of the sign. The material text opens up a space between signified and signifier, and the futile task of textual production and management becomes the closing of this gap. This revised understanding of the relationship between language and its referents is the motive behind text as index, which, bearing a kind of nostalgia for a pre-linguistic encounter with the world, invokes, I would maintain, the primal trope of gesture and its master figure: the pointing finger.

In an effort to define his own cultural commonplaces Pound wields the pointing finger—the index—as the central gesture of his entire critical practice: from his early pronouncements on the “method of Luminous Details” in “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris” to the mute juxtaposition of particulars in the more mature—although maybe less coherent—*ABC of Reading*; from his valorization of the em-

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<sup>10</sup> I'm borrowing this subtle distinction from Jerome McGann's *The Textual Condition*.

pirical methodologies of anthropologist Leo Frobenius to his translation and emulation of Remy de Gourmont, cataloguer of biological minutia. In each instance, Pound recognizes the pedagogical—not to mention the rhetorical—import of what he himself calls “indications”: the presentation of a series of exempla without commentary.<sup>11</sup>

Such an approach to matters of textuality and signification are Pound’s Flaubertian inheritance. The reconfiguration of the imaginative space of the library is contemporary with the composition of *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, serves as the background to the futile bibliographic endeavours of Flaubert’s clerks, and, as Foucault has suggested in his discussion of *The Temptation* in his essay “The Fantasia of the Library,” marks the inaugural moment of Modernism:

Dreams are no longer summoned with closed eyes, but in reading; and a true image is now a product of learning: it derives from words spoken in the past, exact recensions, the amassing of minute facts, monuments reduced to infinitesimal fragments, and the reproductions of reproductions. . . . The imaginary is not formed in opposition to reality as its denial or compensation; it grows among signs, from book to book, in the interstice of repetitions and commentaries; it is born and takes shape in the interval between books. It is a phenomenon of the library. (90-91)

The reduction of textual monuments to innumerable fragments, reading as the genesis of imagination, the repetition of massed particulars, the image cultivated between signs—Foucault’s description of *The Temptation* could be equally a description of the *Cantos*: both works exist within the “fantasia of the library” and, in Pound’s case, as in Flaubert’s, “the library is opened, catalogued, sectioned, repeated, rearranged in a new space” (105).

Pound’s relationship to Flaubert has been well documented in such pioneering works as Hugh Kenner’s *The Poetry of Ezra Pound* and further pursued by critics such as Bush, Nagy, Read, and Sieburth.<sup>12</sup> By and large, these studies tend to focus on Pound’s inher-

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<sup>11</sup> “I am not offering proof, because full proof will not go onto ten pages. I am offering indications, which the reader can follow for himself, but which will I think lead to perception” (“The Jefferson-Adams Letters as Shrine and a Monument” *Selected Prose* 156).

<sup>12</sup> See Ronald Bush, *The Genesis of Ezra Pound’s Cantos*; N. Christoph de Nagy, *Ezra Pound’s Poetics and Literary Tradition*; Forrest Read, “Pound, Joyce, and Flaubert: The

itance—by way of Ford Madox Ford—of the Flaubertian credo of *le mot juste* and the expectation that spare and meticulous diction promises equivalence between word and thing. That is, Flaubert’s “presentative method” offers Pound a starting point for what he calls “the prose tradition in verse” and a kind of poetic stringency that “means the constataion of fact. It presents. It does not comment.”<sup>13</sup> This inheritance, however, is treated critically as an issue of pure poetics, distinct from its relationship to the historical moment of Modernism and its relationship to the modern understanding of the material text.<sup>14</sup> The result has been a tradition of scholarly enquiry that seeks to find in Pound’s approximation of the Flaubertian method a system of intratextual coherence rather than a way of exploiting the intertextual. In one sense, then, the critical industry that makes much work of Pound’s achievements has assisted in making his indexical methodology as self-effacing as the author would have it.

One significant exception to this trend, however, is the work of Richard Sieburth. Sieburth suggests that Pound’s use of quotation “is simply the doctrine of constataion or presentation carried to its purest extreme. To indict one need only cite: the evidence will speak for itself” (121). In other words, Pound extends Flaubert’s referential understanding of signification to the world of books as much as to the world of things—or at least makes no distinction between the two. Given an indexical mindset in which texts are actual material documents locatable in time and space, the incorporation of textual fragments into the *Cantos* functions as an attempt to re-present the original documents through the gesture of pointing. The fragments imply the whole. In the indexical text of modernism—as in its painterly counterparts—the source texts of transposed fragments assume the status of real-world referents that boast a kind of synecdochic plentitude.

Pound himself recognized Flaubert as what he would call a

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Odysseans” in *New Approaches to Ezra Pound*; and Richard Sieburth, *Instigations: Ezra Pound and Remy de Gourmont*.

<sup>13</sup> “The Prose Tradition in Verse” *Literary Essays* 371-77. For Pound’s comments on the “constataion of fact” see “The Approach to Paris, V.” *New Age*. (October 1913): 662.

<sup>14</sup> Leon Surette who, in the fifth chapter of his *A Light From Eleusis*, makes note—in passing—of the relationship between Pound’s *Cantos* and Flaubert’s *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, provides somewhat of an exception to this. Assuming that Pound’s motive is simply to avoid the fate of Flaubert’s clerks, Surette does not exploit this relationship but, rather, moves on to a discussion of Pound’s use of history without accounting for the *textuality* of that history.

“donative” author and *Bouvard and Pécuchet* as a text unique, at the time of its publication, in literary history. In “James Joyce et Pécuchet,” a 1922 review of Joyce’s *Ulysses* published in the *Mercure de France*, Pound marked the Flaubertian tale of the two copy clerks as the precursor to Joyce’s masterwork:

*Bouvard et Pécuchet* continue la pensée et l’art flaubertian, mais ne continue pas cette tradition du roman ou du conte. On peut regarder “l’Encyclopédie en farce” quit porte en sous-titre: “Défaut de méthode dan les sciences”, comme l’inauguration d’une forme nouvelle, une forme qui n’avait pas son précédent. Ni *Gargantua*, ni *Don Quijote*, ni le *Tristram Shandy* de Sterne n’en avaient donné l’archetype. (*Pound/Joyce* 201)

Although in other reviews of Joyce’s work, Pound makes the same comparison—“that Joyce has taken up the art of writing where Flaubert left it” (*Literary Essays* 403)—the basis of that comparison remains always somewhat implicit.<sup>15</sup> Although it is clear that Pound considered the scrupulous Joyce to be as much a practitioner of *le mot juste* as Flaubert, what he also suggests, and what is often overlooked, is that the two also offered ironic analyses of the same *moeurs contemporaines*. Flaubert’s “encyclopédie en farce” offers a critique of the modern mind paralysed by the moraine of superabundant textuality in which it is swamped—as does Joyce’s *Ulysses*, a work Pound called “an epoch-making report on the state of the human mind in the twentieth century” (LE 408).

If the epic parodies of Flaubert and Joyce identify the sickness at the centre of modern consciousness as a kind of inert encyclopedism, Pound’s critical and aesthetic program is designed to provide the cure. For Pound, prose offers analysis of modern society in an ironic, negative mode—only poetry can provide its antithesis:

Most good prose arises, perhaps, from an instinct of negation; is the detailed, convincing analysis of something detestable; of something which one wants to eliminate. Poetry is the assertion of a positive, i.e. of desire, and endures for a longer period. (LE 324)

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<sup>15</sup> Pound’s *Literary Essays* is hereafter abbreviated as “LE.”

The *Cantos*, then, function in the same mode as *Bouvard and Pécuchet*, with the proviso that the former serve as cure to the latter's sickness. Given Pound's contention that "Flaubert is diagnosis" (LE 45) he writes,

As there are in medicine the art of diagnosis and the art of cure, so in the arts, so in the particular arts of poetry and of literature, there is the art of diagnosis and there is the art of cure. They call one the cult of ugliness and the other the cult of beauty. (LE 45)

Pound's *Cantos*, then, are as much a response to the encyclopedic mindset of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries as Flaubert's *Bouvard and Pécuchet*—the latter's precursor could well be considered Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*—but his intentions are radically at odds with Flaubert's social critique. Richard Sieburth says, revealingly enough, that the *Cantos* "represent a radically different mode of encyclopedism" (126) and are "encyclopedic in scope but not in method" (127), but fails to identify what the alternative method is in terms of an adequate bibliographic metaphor. That alternative method—that metaphor—is text as index.

Not surprisingly, Pound read Flaubert's *Bouvard and Pécuchet* in 1918 and returned to it again in 1922. Not only was this interval marked by his most intensive work on the *Ulysses* project—during those four years he read Joyce's work chapter by chapter—but it was towards the end of this period that Pound researched the material for the Malatesta *Cantos* and worked out the form the "post-bag" would contain. The figures of Calliope and Truth that announce the Malatesta sequence are emblematic of a tension between the encyclopedic and the indexical: the muse of epic poetry (who bears the burden of the encyclopedic impulse and the overwhelming weight of accumulated knowledge) struggles with the muse of fact or unformed data (who offers a directive cure and provides the ideal of the indexical method).<sup>16</sup> The struggle, of course, is juxtaposed with an obvious reference to Eliot's *The Waste Land*—"These fragments you have shelved (shored)"—yet another modern, curative indexical text that

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<sup>16</sup> This is a variation on Forrest Read's suggestion that "Pound's struggle of 1915-19 to accommodate the muse of epic, Calliope, who is providing the forms which arise in the modern poet's mind, and Truth, the muse of fact, who supplies unformed historical data, whether they be fragments from the past previously unformed or the modern poet's own life" (141).

arrived on Pound's doorstep in manuscript form only months before the composition of the Malatesta *Cantos* began. The documentary evidence Pound musters to describe his Renaissance factive hero is not only the result of intensive archival work, but its fragmentary assemblage heralds the most clearly indexical moment in the *Cantos* up to that point and mimics the library as a scene of what Jerome McGann calls "radial reading."<sup>17</sup> Pound intentionally preserves the traces of documentary research in a manner that was to become increasingly overt as the *Cantos* progressed. In other words, Pound makes manifest in the Malatesta *Cantos* an indexical movement that directs the reader outside of the principal text (to encyclopedias, dictionaries, and documentary sources) in a manner that refutes the borders of a stable material textuality. From then on, Pound would repeatedly return to the purely indexical: in the Siena *Cantos*, the Jefferson *Cantos*, the Chinese and Adams *Cantos*—and beyond.

What I am suggesting here is that Pound, in developing what he calls "the prose tradition in verse," is responding to literature's intensifying engagement with the problematic of the archive, and that his description of that moment in the BML Reading Room is an emblematic instance of the "archival consciousness" of modernism. By "archival consciousness" I'm indicating something roughly analogous to what Jerome McGann has called the "book consciousness" of the same period. By "book consciousness" McGann is referring to an attentiveness to the bibliographic coding of literary publications—an awareness and an attempt to control their paratexts, typography, lineation, etc.—by literary authors who are responding in part to the material conditions of textual production that are so much a part of their historical moment. "Archival consciousness" is similarly situated in that the texts of high modernism are an effect of the recent history of textual management (as I've discussed, those dramatic innovations in library architecture, cataloguing systems, and indexing standards) in which the author deliberately writes from within the archive of culture. "Archival consciousness," then, signals both an awareness of the archive as a force of history and memory and a paradigmatic movement towards a kind of intertextual mindset that is evident in both

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<sup>17</sup> See McGann's "The Theory of Texts": "Radial reading involves decoding one or more of the contexts that interpenetrate the scripted and physical text. It necessitates some kind of abstraction from what appears most immediately. The person who temporarily stops 'reading' to look up the meaning of a word is properly an emblem of radial reading because that kind of 'radial' operation is repeatedly taking place even while one remains absorbed with a text."

the formal and thematic properties of much twentieth century literature.

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Other than in his major long poem—which is itself, indeed, an extensive index to world culture and history—Pound’s exploitation of the indexical is nowhere made more apparent than in his *Guide to Kulchur*. With its scope of reference and its explication of a broad spectrum of Poundian principles, the *Guide* might well be considered itself a random index to the *Cantos*; that is, the catalogue of catalogues dreamt of by the blind Argentinean librarian whose words serve as an epigraph to this discussion. Despite the similarity of function here between text and pretext—and the priority of one over the other is certainly debatable—the *Guide* proceeds in a manner decidedly at odds with the *Cantos*, and in that sense makes overt the duplicity of indexical structures in general.

*Guide to Kulchur* is a uniquely fascinating text in that Pound attempts to write his way through a far-reaching cultural archive—one that traverses the ground between Confucius and Aristotle, anthropology and musical theory—without recourse to physical texts. Unlike the author of the *Cantos*, a work that relies on the transposition of actual documents, the Pound of *Guide to Kulchur* seeks to draw on only what he remembers of his vast reading program and thereby provide his reader with no more than the textual traces of a lifetime spent between the stacks of Europe’s libraries. Insisting that “Knowledge is NOT culture. The domain of culture begins when one has forgotten-what-book” (GK 134), Pound attempts to transcend the material archive by drawing only on what he calls the “residuum” of his own intellectual explorations and his own mature “understanding” of that archive.

Pound hierarchizes the terms “understanding” and “knowing” in a manner that not only embroils him in the abstractions of philosophical discourse he so abhors, but also provides a theoretical backdrop to the insufficiencies of a textual program that seeks to delimit the centrifugal force of the material archive. In *Guide to Kulchur*, knowledge gives way to understanding, a synthetic activity in its own right that attempts to slough off the material markers of knowledge—the physical texts themselves—and thereby establish a kind of extra-linguistic mastery over the material sign. Unfortunately for Pound, however, the material text remains a persistent foil to his efforts. Pound’s dis-

distinction between understanding and knowing provides an analogue of sorts to this failure.

“Knowledge is or may be,” Pound writes, “necessary to understanding, but it weighs as nothing against understanding, and there is not the least use or need of retaining it in the form of dead catalogues once you understand process” (GK 53). For Pound, “Kulchur” is the province of the understanding subject, and the “Library” of the knowing subject. Throughout *Guide to Kulchur*, however, Pound is unable to maintain this heuristic dichotomy—the binary repeatedly collapses in a manner that belies the instability of his project as a whole. Such dead catalogues insist on living, and repeatedly rise up out of the grave to assert their textual vitality.

Claiming that he is “trying to get a bracket for one kind of ideas” (GK 29), Pound sets out a distinction between what he calls “real knowledge” and what we might consider everyday “knowledge”; the former is the equivalent of what Pound will come to call “understanding” as his argument progresses—an odd slippage of terminology that is itself revealing. Drawing heavily on Leo Frobenius to make this distinction, Pound maintains that the anthropologist he so admires “has in especial seen and marked out a kind of knowing, the difference between knowledge that has to be acquired by particular effort and knowing that is in people, ‘in the air’” (GK 57). Such knowings and understandings are not only decidedly interdependent, but the terms themselves cannot be strictly delimited. “It may or may not matter that the first knowledge is direct,” Pound writes, “it remains effortlessly as residuum, as part of my total disposition, it affects every perception of form-colour phenomena subsequent to its acquisition” (GK 28). The effects of knowledge linger well beyond its excision; although a kind of waste, knowledge nonetheless remains.

Furthermore, the chronology of the learning process inherent in the notion that culture has remained after one has “forgotten-what-book,” is itself confused. Understanding, for Pound, is both pre- and post-reflective. On the one hand, understanding follows on the heels of encounters with material texts:

“Culture: what is left after a man has forgotten all he set out to learn”?

Cf. Gourmont’s ‘instinct’ as result of countless acts of intellection, something after and not before reason.

All the aphorist can do is to attempt to establish axes of reference. (GK 195)

Gourmont's oddly named "instinct" is the product only of a diligent and arduous kind of intellectual pursuit, at the end of which the cultured amnesiac can only help others by developing adequate systems of reference—as opposed to self-evident systems of meaning—as a kind of pedagogic structure. Yet knowledge in the form of lists and catalogues remains the necessary measure of future encounters between the already cultured or understanding mind and the material text. As if to argue for the uniformity of his principles and exemplar, Pound writes, "I have not deflected a hair's breadth from my lists of beautiful objects, made in my own head and held before I ever thought of usura as a murrain and a marasmus" (GK 109). This is the tautology of the index: Pound balks at supplying lists and dead catalogues to "men who have not been able to afford an university education" (GK 6), but he does, nonetheless, want to supply his intended reader with a set of principles for negotiating the textual archive; his method of articulating such principles, however, is to supply a list of illustrative works.

Whether he wills it or no, Pound's "kulchur" bears the very burden of the knowledge acquired to achieve understanding. The instinctive aphorist works by structured principles of reference: the index remains functional and intact despite the dis-integration of the texts referred to. Given Pound's insistence that the list of books he provides must be forgotten, text as index functions as a prescription for its own self-effacement—the forgetting of the catalogue, list, index, and originary gesture of language itself. Pound privileges text as index because, in his understanding of it as a self-effacing signifier, it promises unmediated access to its cultural referent. However, the self-effacing qualities of the indexical text are matched by its multiplicity and fecundity. As the indexical disintegrates, a plethora of referents rush in.

Unable to maintain the integrity of this tenuous process, Pound employs the textual index in the form of lists and catalogues throughout the *Guide* while at the same time attempting to rid his pedagogical program of any such unwieldy forms. Thus, Pound's repression of material textuality bears the trace of just what it seeks to exclude. Maintaining that he is "trying to provide the average reader with a few tools for dealing with the heteroclitic mass of undigested information hurled at him daily and monthly and set to entangle his feet in volumes of reference" (GK 23), Pound repeatedly draws on a set of lists, catalogues, various exempla, and ideographically juxtaposed fragments that include great art, architecture, factive heroes, other guides to culture, and of course literature, all designed to tame such

multiplicity and homogenize cultural difference within the space of either one text or one authorized series of texts.

To this end, no sooner has Pound evoked a list of some sort, than he attempts to counter its disseminative energies by denouncing the entire notion of cataloguing or indexicality: not only are “dead catalogues” unnecessary to understanding, but Pound notes the “dangers inherent in attempting such utility” (GK 6) and of providing lists as a “provisory scaffold, hat rack or something to work from” (GK 260). Ultimately, lists and catalogues are to be discarded, pedagogical refuse abandoned on the way to Pound’s vision of what he calls a “totalitarian literature.”<sup>18</sup> This same ambivalent relationship to the indexical and to knowledge in general is mirrored in Pound’s commentaries on Aristotle, whom he both disparages and praises as “a competent precursor to,” of all things, “the card-index.”

Pound sets his own text against Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* in an effort to critique the latter as the byproduct of a declining age of usury, “an indication of where the Western mind or one Western mind had got to by, say, B.C. 330” (GK 344). The *Nicomachean Ethics* fails as a guide to young scholars in his estimation, but Pound does admit that “here at least we have a summary of Paideuma, as built up by gk. civilization to the year 300 and whatever ante Christum. Wide enough to serve as a card index for the essentials of the good life” (GK 305). In other words, Aristotle’s text provides Pound with an indexical counterpart by which to measure his own work. The suggestion is that “Harry Stotle,” as Pound calls him, was a regrettable, although necessary, figure in a history of thought that Pound rewrites as moving beyond mere lists of accumulated knowledge to the telos of understanding.

Despite Pound’s best efforts, such lists persist in the margins of his text: refusing any form of erasure. “I may, even yet,” Pound writes,

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<sup>18</sup> For more on the relationship between Poundian poetics of the Malatesta *Cantos*, the figure of the archivist, and Pound’s fascination with Mussolini and Italian fascism see my article “Ezra Pound’s *Cantos*: A Memorial to Archivists and Librarians.” My argument therein that the “semiotic of Pound’s indexical poem . . . is what brings the *Cantos* within the scope of fascism” (173) is in keeping with the general assumptions about Pound’s anti-democratic sentiments examined in recent publications such as Beasley’s *Theorists of Modernist Poetry* and Potter’s *Modernism and Democracy*. That Pound’s falsely strategic assumptions about self-effacing qualities of the indexical sign are undone by the textual weight of his own *Guide to Kulchur* does not diminish the conviction with which he welded together his poetics and his politics, however unwarranted that may have been.

“be driven to a chronological catalogue of greek ideas, roman ideas, medieval ideas in the occident. There is a perfectly good LIST of those ideas thirty feet from where I sit typing” (GK 29). *Guide to Kulchur* is haunted by its own indexical methodology; such lists remain always within reach—and out of hand. As if to assert their indomitable presence, not to mention their instability, they re-occur in different forms—with shifting contents, structures, and logics—throughout the text: from the “Pentagram of Literary Culture” at the mid-point of the *Guide*, to the addendum titled “As Sextant” (a device for surveying and mapping), to most remarkably, the index to the *Guide* Pound himself provides under the heading “To Recapitulate.”

Typical of these lists is the catalogue of great art that Pound almost inadvertently enters into (the text moves always by way of association) after advising his reader on European cuisine and modes of travelling:

Perugia, the gallery of the Palazzo Pubblico, Bonfigli and co.  
in a dozen churches. Siena, likewise the gallery, newly set.  
Cortona, Fra Angelico, in six or eight churches. (GK 113)

Pound continues for nearly a full page to cite everything from the mosaics at Ravenna, to Hellenic monuments, to Egyptian sculpture in the British Museum. Having completed his “ideogram of what’s what in Europe” Pound adds, as a clear afterthought: “Goya, yes Goya. The best one I know is in New York” (GK 114). His list, it would seem, is neither contained (by geographical or any other bounds) nor necessarily complete. Rather, Pound’s indexical catalogues are always supplementable and revisable. Take, for example, the “solid pentagon”<sup>19</sup> entitled “POLLON D’ANTHRÔPON IDEN” or “and of many men he saw”:

The Odes  
The Homeric Epos  
*Metamorphoses*  
*Divina Commedia*  
The Plays

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<sup>19</sup> Pound refers to this as both a “pentagon” and a “pentagram,” suggesting it is both image and writing. This, of course, is characteristic of Pound’s textual practice as a whole. The ideogram, for example, is both a kind of imagistic writing and an image of writing.

Despite the pentagon's "solidity," it retains neither its structure nor its shape. Pound goes on to write:

And to the Odes collected by Kung, add the *Ta Hio*, *The Unwavering in the Middle*, the *Analects*. . . . I cannot believe that a list like the preceding in any way circumscribes one's curiosity. The mere act of such isolation (or compression) at once causes the mind to leap out with "and Montaigne? and etc. etc. etc.?" (GK 236)

Pound here seems to recognize the supplementability of his lists and his inability to contain their radial momentum. The catalogue not only exceeds its own geometric structure, but it also provokes the reader, as Pound admits, to go beyond its circumscriptions. Pound cannot, literally, "write around" the cultural archive he explores and attempts to chart—his position within that archive make his task an impossible one. But even his admission to the failings of the indexical method, sparks further kinds of play that are emblematic of the very forces of dissemination he is attempting to contain: "By Plays, I mean (and I trust even the lowest reader will not fail to gather the meaning) those of Shakespeare (Shxper, Jacquespère with no regard to spelling)" (GK 236).

Only to compound further this kind of unwieldy play of signification and intertextuality, the editors of later editions of Pound's *Guide to Kulchur* include in the 1952 American edition of the text yet another catalogue titled "As Sextant," believing it to be intended as a "postscript to *Kulchur*, found among Mr. Pound's papers" (GK 352). Pound's metaphorical guide to navigating the cultural archive includes a list of seven star clusters that somewhat shadows its predecessors but is supplementable from both within and without:

- I. The Four Books (Confucius and Mencius).
- II. Homer:Odyssey:intelligence set above brute force.
- III. The Greek Tragedians: rise of the sense of civic responsibility.
- IV. Divina Commedia: life of the spirit.
- V. Frobenius: Erlebte Erdteile: without which a man cannot place any book or work of art in relation to the rest.
- VI. Brooks Adams: Law of Civilization and Decay: most recent summary of 'where in a manner of speaking' we had got to half a century ago. Second half of Beard's intro-

duction indicates the essential omission from Adams' thought.

- VII. The English Charters, the essential parts of Blackstone, that is those dealing with history and philosophy of law. The American Constitution.

Not only has Pound's "solid pentagon" undergone further changes—both metaphorically and in terms of its content—but this supplementary list (this pre-scriptive post-script) only serves to describe an even more tortuous play of intertexts. A number of the works here cited are in need of supplementation from within: Beard's introduction to Adams is necessary to complete Adams' thought; the constitutional material requires the critical rounding of Blackstone. Others declare a kind of unavoidable radiance: Frobenius' work provides a sign-post on the way to other texts, while the very complexity, not to mention historical context and foreign language content, of many of the remaining components of the list demand further supplementary reading.<sup>20</sup>

These indexical paratexts are intended as navigational tools to guide one through the archive of culture; however, they insist on exceeding their own scope of reference in a manner that challenges the very unity of Pound's *Guide* in its own right. One way of containing this centrifugal impetus is through a kind of intratextual management that serves as a restrictive gesture. This is the purpose behind Pound's indexical section "To Recapitulate." Having repeatedly rejected the idea of lists and catalogues throughout the *Guide*, Pound ironically provides his reader with this index (to the *Guide*-as-index to the *Cantos*-as-index) in the closing moments of his treatise. However, not only does his recapitulation point us to a series of intertexts that then inevitably radiate outwards, but it is founded on a rather bizarre taxonomy of culture that includes:

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| DIGEST OF THE ANALECTS | 15 |
| GAUDIER'S VORTEX       | 63 |

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<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Pound himself prescribed a further, unpublished, supplement to "As Sextant." In recounting her visits with Pound at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. during the summer of 1952, Angela Palandri makes note of a typewritten list titled "Addition to 'As Sextant'" Pound gave to her. It included Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, the Adams-Jefferson letters, naturalist Louis Agassiz, economic historian Alex Del Mar, as well as classical occidental and oriental plays. ("Homage to a Confucian Poet" 306).

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Ideogram of philosophers                      | 97-8        |
| Pentagram of literary culture                 | 236         |
| Ideogram of architecture and of painting      | 108         |
| Nicomachean Ethics                            | 304         |
| Summary as to philosophers (three)            | 118-9       |
| Food  | 111         |
| German component                              | 203,219,230 |
| Poems outside the classical line or geography | 209         |
| ARISTOTLE'S 5                                 | 327         |

Pound's *Guide to Kulchur* functions ideally as the *index locorum communitium*, as the commonplace, for an extremely uncommon array of thoughts, thinkers, and things that can find no congruence outside of a text such as this. On those grounds, what intrigues me the most about this particular fragment is its similarity to Foucault's exemplary figure of the heterotopic, a Borgesian encyclopedia structured around a series of equally bizarre taxonomies in which animals are divided into:

(a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.<sup>21</sup>

Foucault cites the reading of this passage by way of introducing his archeology of the discursive positivisms that shape a kind of impossible order in the human sciences. Pound's own humanist "science" of cultural management is certainly not exempt from such impossible possibilities. It is indexical structures such as Borges' and Pound's taxonomic lists, in their most extreme form, that shatter systems of reference and "break up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things" (xv). And it is such broken surfaces and planes—the metaphorical coordinates of spatialized culture—that provide the building blocks of the archive.

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<sup>21</sup> The English translation of the original Spanish text can be found in the Borges short story "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins" *Other Inquisitions*, 101-05. Variations between this version and the translation from the French in Foucault's *The Order of Things* are slight.

As indexes, these paratextual elements in both Pound and Borges divest themselves of all supposedly “rational” user devices: alphabetization, sequential pagination, thematic linkages, taxonomic logic, encyclopedic classification, and chronology, are all eschewed. Heterotopias, Foucault tells us,

... are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy ‘syntax’ in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and opposite one another) to ‘hold together.’ (xviii)

Despite Pound’s attempts to enforce a “restitution of names,” the “Cheng Ming” of Confucian doctrine, he relies on a mode of signification and a form of textuality that, rather than providing a place of ordered naming or pointing, resists containment. Such indexes ultimately point outward, beyond the text in hand, beyond the impossibly utopia of language, to a plurality of sites that can be only momentarily juxtaposed in the non-site of the indexical text. In this form, text as index resists a permanent inclusiveness by asserting its centrifugal power.

Nonetheless, the Modernist activation of the intertextual in the form of text as index provides an enabling strategy for Pound: ideally the index functions as a kind of self-effacing signifier or a graphic representation of textual documents that dissolves before the reader’s very eyes, giving way to a utopian space of cohesive fragments unmarked by difference. In this sense, the indexical retains a bid for a kind of mastery that can only be the product of its close ties to the institutions of textual management—at a moment in the history of letters when all who sat uncomfortably in the hard chairs of scholarly study and gazed upward at the cold walls of their own textual archives, dreamt of finding a way outward to the light of understanding. Yet the indexical strategy is itself symptomatic of the very conditions of language the poet seeks to repress: the fecundity of the material text, the destabilization of meaning. The “dead catalogues” and lists themselves—with their instability, their encouragement of the process of “radial reading,” their emphatic dependence on the supplement, and their persistent presence in the margins of texts like *Guide to Kulchur*—refuse any such dissolution. Text as index, designed

to lead the reader out of the archive, instead leads the reader further inward to its fatal core.

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