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Archives & Networks of Modernism

Eds.

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Global Review: A Biannual Special Topics Journal

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Introduction

James Gifford, James M. Clawson, & Fiona Tomkinson

Modernism as a movement and period has been defined by its networks and its archives. Perhaps even uniquely so, although Romanticism remains a disruptive precursor. Modernism exists for us only as an archive or window to the past: an ostensibly stable perspective through which we can understand and comment on its fragments and remainders. Under the spectre of authenticity, the archive dubiously attracts attention, yet foreclosing on the range of viable texts is equally suspect. Schools and networks exist in a similar tension, uncovering while also generating meaning. In actuality, these archives bespeak shifting networks, contexts, and politics, moving in parallax with interpretive agency and critical interventions. They offer a theoretical richness to challenge the bounds of intertextuality and question the limits of any text.

Archives & Networks of Modernism developed following a successful conference on Lawrence Durrell and the Archive held at the University of Victoria. This collection, however, developed without any single authorial focus to address or collapse the plurality of Modernist and Late Modernist networks and archives. The collection instead adopts an international perspective, in particular where each network or archive intersects or interrupts the other. In this, it draws from the established tropes of the New Modernist Studies, but often moving through somewhat less established locales, methods, figures, or paradigms.

Herbert Howarth, a poet-scholar who is himself considered in the following articles, casually suggested that several of the other modernist authors discussed here all “Snapped in a Library” (“Durrell” 71). By this he particularly meant the modernist stylistic trait of Durrell’s works that led Howarth to ready comparisons with Yeats, Pound, and Eliot. That is, the citational function of allusion and theft in an architectural and relational accretion of meaning over time. In all of Howarth’s major studies, the formal matters of allusion, citation, and theft mark out Modernism’s unique interests.
in origins, revisions, rejuvenations, and recontextualizations. In each instance, the enactment of such recuperations through poetic form is combined with problems of history, periodization, eras, ages, and generations. Indeed, prior to the New Modernist Studies this tension thrived between a Pound Era, Auden Generation, and an Age of Anxiety diverging from the formalism of Modern Poetry and the Tradition and “Spatial Form in Modern Literature.” Yet, this divergence between history and form is not total, as in Perloff’s The Poetics of Indeterminacy. That is, Howarth sees the modernist poet as a writer “of the historical consciousness, the interpreter not of individuals but peoples” (71-72).

The problematic of “peoples” (an ideologically imposed unification based on nation, race, faith, or other artificial signifiers) sits adjacent to the “historical consciousness” that we ascribe to human groups as a function of the nation, collective, or state. The ordering of history’s fragments, such as through citation and allusion, is one expression of or shaping of such a form of collective consciousness. The same conceptual apparatus can be seen at work in Howarth’s more famous work Notes on Some Figures Behind T.S. Eliot, which implicitly recognizes the coterie perspective necessary for a meaningful discussion of the poet, his poetics, and the formal structure of his works. The same tension between a historical consciousness and modernist form reaffirms its influence through Howarth’s exploration of Eliot’s youth through to the “years of fragments.” Rather than the language of influence, Howarth tellingly draws from the indexical epistemologies that Michael O’Driscoll considers to great effect through Pound in this volume—in The Waste Land, Eliot “organizes.” This historical and allusive structure can be understood as a way for “Eliot to reorganize himself for another eight years…; it helped younger men to organize for another thirty” (Notes 241). Least famous, however, is Howarth’s own “networked” connections and “archival consciousness” that made possible his co-authored translation work with Ibrahim Shukrallah, Images from the Arab World, a text that presents a specific ideological perspective or historical consciousness for others’ consumption. Its impact is likewise one of formal matters of organization, classification, and indexical epistemologies as they apply to collectives, eras, and ages. In relation to this problem, each contribution to this collection offers an analysis of the organizational epistemologies that define the capacities and influences of networks as well as the framing grave of the archive, a notion proposed by Milan Kundera.

We have, of course, since moved on after Howarth to various
definitional excursions in relation to Modernism, with scholarship in each instance shaped by its own networks of contextualized meaning and generational shifts between the New and by contrast “Old” of Modernist Studies. Susan Stanford Friedman famously reframed the definitional labour behind these competing projections to catalogue and index Modernism. Since her 2001 intervention, Friedman’s critique has enabled subsequent reconsiderations, ranging from Rebecca Beasley’s 2007 re-introduction of a paradigm very much akin to Howarth with a “modern consciousness” deriving from Stephen Kern (19), a materialist orientation to mediated experiences of modernity marvelously elucidated by Julian Murphet in 2009, and Michael Levenson’s recent proposition of a new Genealogy of Modernism in his rethought Modernism from 2011.

This last work’s persuasiveness lies in the organic unity of its narrative unfolding of a Modernism stretching from the 1880s through 1940s. His reconceptualization of the disruptive origins of Modernism returns to the atomized spectacles and audacious oppositions of proto-modernist culture such that they move from being individual events to a related series, which is itself again a rethinking of the “organization” mused by Howarth:

The decisive event was the emergence of an oppositional culture. It was only when singular disturbances... became connected to one another that modernity recognized modernism, and modernists became conscious of their historical possibility. (Levenson 8)

This seemingly obvious insight allows Levenson to rearticulate the relations among proto-modernist, high modernist, and late modernist literatures. In this regard, his work carries a potent polemical charge for those continuing in the New Modernist Studies. This oppositional culture was made possible through the networked alliances and affiliations of friendship emphasized in this collection by Celia Aijmer Rydsjö and AnnKatrin Jonsson, and its historicity relies profoundly on what Ross recognizes in O’Driscoll’s work as a utopian or heterotopian impulse in archival consciousness, itself standing in conflict with the “enormous common grave” that Kundera calls into vision as a defense against his fellow Parisians’ threatening critique génétique. Yet, O’Driscoll’s method would remind us that an indexical reading would recognize Kundera’s polemic aegis as an iteration, one of five English language variant works containing the same passage: “The archive’s ideal: the sweet
equality that reigns in an enormous common grave” (Kundera 97). In these five coexisting statements, the language is rich. The archive’s utopian break creates equality at the expense of life itself, wrongly implying that a hierarchy imposed by a single individual in a position of authority is the only way to preserve life (the passage follows on a celebration of the author’s sole ownership of every form of his or her text). This aristocratic and well-nigh fascist vision of the archival utopian break from history is reinforced by the fact that it “reigns,” it rules, over the atrocity of a mass grave, which Kundera casts as the telos of revolution. This language is suspect, but the reader may marvel at the antiauthoritarian role such an approach grants the archival scholar who takes up a spade to exhume the censored history and to enliven the remaining artifacts, placing them on equal footing as “speakers” or actants with the author or archivist who buried them, and retracing the outlines of missing fragments marked as a negative space by the recuperations around them. The revivification grants freedom to the reader from the tyranny of the author, as if the buried had a purpose of later discovery, to tell their own truths and to give their own evidence. The archive’s remainder is the parapraxis of the author’s censored contents.

Contrary to the irreducible multiplicity of variants, Kundera’s author is authoritative and controls the only conduit for a reader’s interpretive activities because “‘the work’ [l’oeuvre] is what the writer will approve in his own final assessment” (96). The archive, in contrast, shows the threatening stages of development, the parapraxes that the author might prefer to censor, since they demonstrate the mortal birth of his immortal creation, and hence its inevitable demise. All works are mortal—all texts are insufficient.

But what does this fragility say about theorizing the archive? Apart from established visions of the archive as the embodiment of state authority and law; as a fetish that acts as a substitutive gratification for the impossibility of “truth” as an “organized” index that materially contextualizes man’s consciousness; and as the censored contents of the unconscious speaking through a parapraxis, what other relationship need we explore? Modernist authors were prodigiously aware of the value and tax benefits to be found in their archives, as well as their individual “organizational” talent. An author’s claim of ownership is surely amiss since my own copy will
bear my name\(^1\) and is surely in my own possession—he or she may claim it as property, but I surely possess it as my own, very often beyond the author’s mortal failure or posthumous ownership. The author’s claim instead lies in the text that I construct as a reader from the material artifacts comprised of books and paper when I put them to use, that is, unless we take faith in the spectral existence of the text beyond the mortal frame of its various unopened books.

The ideal iteration of this archive is by necessity personal, and we as readers can only speak from the subject position of the first person. In my personal library, Jerome McGann’s *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* works in a double relationship with Immanuel Kant as well as “Jerry” McGann. Crucially, mine is the second printing in 1996 of the 1992 University of Virginia paperback edition of the book, not its original 1983 University of Chicago Press edition—or else *Black Riders* might seem more à propos. My own artifact of *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* is poorly printed, poorly bound, poorly proofed, and poorly edited—at some points, its poor printing is so blurred that I become dizzy looking at the error-filled page. The effect is delightful. In my clean copy of *Black Riders*, McGann asserts

In a culture that largely imagines print as a vehicle for linguistic meaning, the effect is to foreground textuality as such, turning words from means to ends-in-themselves. The text here is hard to read, is too thick with its own materialities. It resists any processing that would simply treat it as a set of referential signs pointing beyond themselves to semantic content. (74)

Unfortunately, *Black Riders* does not make me feel this way as a reader, not even its dialogically dueling McGanns. However, in my cheap paperback of *A Critique*, I cannot find the “semantic content” without struggling through the book’s “own materialities,” mainly the blurred type that make the final pages and notes almost utterly illegible. My bad edition reminds me of the process in which I am involved—I am using a suspicious object to construct a metaphysical notion. I lose the suspension of disbelief that typically renders the book invisible before the blinding light of the text, the

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\(^1\) We unapologetically speak from and recognize our individual and collective subjectivities in this editorial project, each position fostering the other.
semantic content I construct in reading. In my bad copy, the book remains opaque. Such a habit runs contrary to the epistemologies of the hermeneutic tradition upon which Modernism mediates our vision while at the same time enlivening the relational nature of meaning that the networked manifestation of Modernism as a movement exemplified.

Modernist print objects compel us to consider the archive not as a phantom of equality but as a relation of texts among texts, authors among others, and history amidst histories. Kundera opens The Unbearable Lightness of Being with allusion, demonstrating his text’s existence among others, despite his despise for the archive later in The Curtain. Lawrence Durrell’s novels obsessively return to their material instantiations in notebooks, variants, and correspondences. Emily Dickinson has become, par excellence, the author whose works cannot be reduced from the archive to typographical depictions. But what of Franz Kafka, Carl Jung’s Red Book, or even Malcolm Lowry’s Under the Volcano, which exists in multiple final “intentional objects”? The expansion of modernist interests in Sylvia Plath and Marianne Moore call attention to the same plurality, much as Murphet contends “the mutual and reciprocal determination that structure the systemic relations between old and new media” (14). If the economism of determinism is set aside, this still retains the relational accrual of meaning among a network of materials, and the works collected in this volume each call to this “organizational” and relational understanding of the artifacts of Modernism, two notions that have survived across the Old and New of Modernist Studies.

Indeed, we come to Modernism as an archive or window to the past, and the historical consciousness contextualized or organized by this frame aligns with the silhouette of the archons guiding our understanding. Archives & Networks of Modernism develops from this premise in a debate structure that encourages readers to actively contest or build forward from the “semantic content” between these boards of this suspicious object. We hope that readers find this structure an invitation to further response.

We hope, too, that the interconnected references stretching across the volume prove as insightful to the reader as they were delightful to us. For example, the final two contributions, by Christos Hadjiyiannis and by Sejal Sutaria, call into question traditional approaches to modernist networks in ways that resonate with the work by Celia Aijmer Rydström and AnnKatrin Jonsson and the response by Nicholas Beauchesne. Hadjiyiannis challenges tradi-
tional readings of Hulme’s “Lecture on Modern Poetry,” arguing for his study beyond the foundations of Imagism and signaling later inclinations in his work. In her response, Sutaria contextualizes the writing of Hulme beside that of his contemporaries: Pound, Eliot, Lawrence, and the Bloomsbury Group, among others. In doing so, Sutaria joins Hadjiyiannis in upsetting binaries to build a fuller image of the network of mutual influences otherwise overshadowed in much consideration of Hulme personally, Imagism specifically, and modernism in general. Aijmer Rydsgård and Jonsson likewise challenge traditional studies of little magazines, widening the sphere of influence over their networks as they look equally to creation of the word, creation of the printed object, and creation of the market. Little magazines depended as much on shared opportunity and circumstance as they depended on shared writers and editors. To these matters, Beauchesne adds spiritualist concerns, suggesting that the little magazines depended equally on shared beliefs.

Other contributions—by Michael O’Driscoll, by Stephen Ross, by Caroline Krzakowski, and by James Clawson—build their commentary on proximities: of books and documents in a physical archive, of ideas in a metaphysical topos. For O’Driscoll, poets like Pound constructed a utopian index of an archive of culture. This “archival consciousness” is informed by changes in the technology of libraries and standards in publication that lead modernist writers to intertextual gestures. Ross extends the Freudian construction of O’Driscoll’s “archival consciousness” by suggesting that it might rather be the archive-as-unconscious that informs the construction of the text-as-consciousness. In doing so, he suggests that the modernist long poem might in fact derive from an indexical desire for order in the face of the chaos of the archive. And for Krzakowski, too, the act of diplomacy itself is born of place—not just nearness of borders but also by the very nature of the archive. A state’s central archives serve to collect in one place all the treaties with other state actors, all the rules of networking that run in conflict with the ideologies recalled by Cohn and Gifford. It is difficult, too, to read Krzakowski’s argument without indexically recalling the prolix and generous intellect of Andrew John Miller and his work on sovereignty and, in his last presentations, the passport as a Modernist replacement of the letter of introduction amidst the confusions of territorial nationalism. Krzakowski’s discussion here is, then, itself a diplomou to other archives of scholarship and memories of colleagues in our expanding and sometimes narrowing personal networks. It is, hence, the job of the diplomat to navigate among these points,
since failure in diplomacy, as Clawson notes, leads to unexpected nodes in the network with unexpected “ripples,” borrow from Sutaria’s terminology. O’Driscoll establishes modernists as the first post-indexicalists—the first to write with the perspective of that distilled space of a text which inverts (and, in so doing, embeds) the shared space of a library. Krzakowski likewise offers the diplomat as among the first to operate from the distilled nowhere of all places and all states. Real spaces of the British Library infiltrate Pound’s archival consciousness, and real policies and archival necessities of the diplomat infiltrate Durrell’s writing, though in his work with a self-conscious infiltration into form of the unconscious forces Ross returns to our attention.

James Gifford and Jesse Cohn, finally, rely on the understanding of an idealized proximity for collaboration and confounding among writers and movements. For Gifford, the Personal Landscape poets constructed for themselves a defining style readapting surrealism to anarchist (rather than communist) ends while also incorporating Greek techniques of historical, literary, and geolocative allusion. Personal friendships, correspondence, and collaborations in publications helped to establish this network of exchange and cross-pollination. Cohn questions the extent to which we might accurately read into these networks an anarchic sensibility in the output of the writers. Just as for O’Driscoll and Krzakowski the use of archives and networks depends on a writer’s ability to actuate that virtual proximity, for Gifford and Cohn, too, the Cairo Poets’ capacity for carrying the baton passed by anarchists and surrealists depends in part on our ability to judge the quality of their closeness. And just as for Ajmer Rydsjö and Jonsson the workings and networkings of little magazines depended on more than just contributors, we see in Gifford and Cohn deep reliance on the material connections of the surrealist and anarchic networks of modernism.

The editors of this collection would first like to thank the contributors for patience and generosity during the protracted production process. Likewise, the respondents for each article have generously begun a dialogue with the authors as an invitation to readerly interventions, and their efforts have our deep appreciation. The inspiration for this structure derives from Stephen Ross’s edited collection Modernism and Theory, and his participation here was particularly welcome. Fairleigh Dickinson University, Vancouver, has funded the production of this issue, and its research stipends have sponsored discussions among the network of editors (from British
Columbia, Louisiana, and Turkey) in Kentucky and England. Thanks are also due for the several anonymous readers whose feedback was thorough and generous as well as extremely productive.

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

Michael O’Driscoll
University of Alberta

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.”1 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.2 Although it is clear that the author of such extensive cultural appendices

1 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.

2 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.

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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.¹

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¹ 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)"
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.1 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 Fennolosa 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

1 See Ronald Bush’s *The Genesis of Ezra Pound’s Cantos* (10-14).

in any of Pound’s published prose or correspondence. Subsequent references to Pound’s *Guide to Kulchur* will be abbreviated “GK.”
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 con-
jecture 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 pas-
sages and deceptive texts suggests a labyrinthine vision of the library
that either anticipates Borges’ “Library of Babel” or, to avoid such a
tempting anachronism, takes form in the space opened up by Flau-
bertian 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 (t.4/61), this moment in the BML begins to take on
even more ominous and significant dimensions.7 Pound, here, with
eyes raised to witness the encounter of modernism with its own his-
tory, 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 re-
turn from the future, in an instance of Freudian nachträglichkeit. It is
that return of the repressed, that return from the future, that is of par-
ticular interest to me here as it takes shape in Guide to Kulchur.8

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 us the gendered politics of the archive and the all-

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6 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).

7 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)

8 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 in-
trigued 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 “stupefac-
tion.” That typographic flourish and moment of self–reflexive textual-
ity is obscured in a number of subsequent editions of Woolf’s text,
but what the reference to the five dots, and their typographic imped-
iment, emphasizes is that an attention to the fact of the archive, to
that burden of printed volumes, can only provoke an overwhelm-
ingly 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 cathexed 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.9 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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9 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 a transmitters of meaning, but as the material embodiments of those transmissions. 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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10 I’m borrowing this subtle distinction from Jerome McGann’s *The Textual Condition*. 

12
pirical methodologies of anthropologist Leo Frobenius to his translation and emulation of Reny de Gourmont, cataloguer of biological minuita. 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. ¹¹

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. ¹² By and large, these studies tend to focus on Pound’s inher-

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¹¹ “I am not offering proof, because full proof will not go on to 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).

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 constatation of fact. It presents. It does not comment.” 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. 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 constatation 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 originary 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 plenitude.

Pound himself recognized Flaubert as what he would call a

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


14 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 Pécu-
chet,” 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 dans les sciences”, comme l’inauguration d’une forme nouvelle, une forme qui n’avait pas
son précédent. Ni Gargantua, ni Don Quijote, ni le Tristan
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 Flau-
bert left it” (Literary Essays 403)—the basis of that comparison remains
always somewhat implicit. 15 Although it is clear that Pound consid-
ered 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 contem-
poraines. 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, nega-
tive 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 asser-
tion of a positive, i.e. of desire, and endures for a longer peri-
od. (LE 324)

15 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). The struggle, of course, is juxtaposed with an obvious reference to Eliot’s *The Waste Land*—“These fragments you have shelled (shored)”—yet another modern, curative indexical text that

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16 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 Canto 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 Canto up to that point and mimics the library as a scene of what Jerome McGann calls “radial reading.” Pound intentionally preserves the traces of documentary research in a manner that was to become increasingly overt as the Canto progressed. In other words, Pound makes manifest in the Malatesta Canto 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 Canto, the Jefferson Canto, the Chinese and Adams Canto—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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17 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 more apparent than in his Guide to Kulchr. 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 Kulchr 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 Kulchr 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 Kulchr, 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-
tinction 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 heteroclite 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 ideogrammically juxtaposed fragments that include great art, architecture, factive heros, 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.” 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,
“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” entitled “POLLON D’ANTHRÓPON IDEN” or “and of many men he saw”:

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

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 significations 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 Erdeute: 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.20

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 indexal 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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20 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).
Pound’s Guide to Kulchur functions ideally as the index locorum communium, 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.\(^\text{21}\)

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.

\(^{21}\) 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 impossible 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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**Works Cited**


A Response to Michael O’Driscoll

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Michael O’Driscoll’s argument for a new understanding of the “text-as-index” as the key to Modernism’s “archival consciousness” is something of an index itself. Its rich intertextuality, both explicit and implicit, intended and unintended, indicates significant directions for further consideration. A full index of these indications is impossible here, so in what follows, I limit my discussion to some of the less obvious ones: contemporary ethical and political theory, cybernetics, posthumanism, psychoanalysis, and a deconstructive theory of the archive.

Though O’Driscoll restricts his discussion to Pound’s text-as-index method as a hallmark of Modernism’s archival consciousness, his identification of index with utopia opens numerous possible avenues of engagement. Most provocatively, it evokes the ethico-political logic of Giorgio Agamben’s *The Coming Community*. The connection between the two comes from recognizing that the index is a set analogous to mathematical sets: it groups together a range of terms under a common heading. The particular character of the terms in an index is their exemplarity. For Agamben, this means they constitute a “set of sets”: they constitute a set of terms whose commonality is that they are representative members of other, disparate, sets. By exemplifying their source sets, they simultaneously belong to and exceed them. They are united in the index not because they share any essence, but because they are at once identified with and separable from their original sets. Their commonality is not essential, but a direct function of their being grouped together in the index: “Being-called or being-in-language is the non-predicative property par excellence that belongs to each member of a class and at the same time makes its belonging an aporia” (73).

For Agamben, this aspect of set theory provides the basis for a correct understanding of being which, if embraced widely enough
will bring about his utopian vision of *The Coming Community*. Taking human beings not as independent individuals who relate to one another through common essences, but as singularities which rise forth in particular and fluid manners, Agamben posits a utopian community—a set of these singularities, an index—whose membership is the function of “no essence, no historical or spiritual vocation, no biological destiny” (43), but intermediation. Living in accord with this understanding constitutes the only ethical possibility for humans, and will—when it prevails widely enough—bring about the coming community (Agamben 43).

O’Driscoll’s connection of print culture’s techniques of textual management to “new psychic, textual and architectural spaces” as well as to restructured “topoi of the mind and of the text” (11) clarifies the link between his essay and Agamben’s theory. The ways in which the index, the text-as-index, and archival consciousness articulate new possibilities for the psyche and the mind feed into the set theory that undergirds Agamben’s ethico-political vision, and inextricably link them. O’Driscoll’s ascription of a utopian impulse behind the index begins to look like much more than simply an argument about Modernism’s archival consciousness. Instead, it suggests that Pound’s indexical method and concern to illuminate the conspiracy of intelligence that could save Western civilization fuse form and content into a powerful ethico-political intervention—one that no doubt lacked the terms for its full articulation during Pound’s lifetime—that makes of Pound a pioneering thinker of posthumanist being, ethics, and community.¹

O’Driscoll’s account of text-as-index further positions Pound as a key pioneer “at the dawn of what we now recognize as the age of information” (2), anticipating cybernetics, information systems theories, and posthumanism by seeking patterns in randomness rather than depth beneath surface. This placement counters the conventional understanding of Pound as searching for meaning in a world that has given way to “mere anarchy” (Yeats 4). Breaking with the surface/depth model of such an understanding, O’Driscoll suggests that text-as-index employs “systems of reference rather than meaning” (3), elevating pattern over message, and presaging the epochal shift from hermeneutics to poststructuralism, from hu-

¹ Of course, Pound’s commitment to his utopian vision lead him into profoundly unethical behaviour, and to condone what Agamben clearly identifies as Evil (31-2). This consequence reveals the perils of trying to realize utopia without its necessary attendant: a qualitative shift in human being.
manism to posthumanism. Moreover, its thrust is not simply inter-
textual, as O'Driscoll asserts, but in fact hypertextual. Consider the
following as a description not just of the index (as O'Driscoll in-
tends), but also of hypertext: “ideally [it] functions as a kind of self-
effacing signifier or a graphic re-presentation of textual documents
that dissolves before the reader’s very eyes, giving way to a utopian
space of cohesive fragments unmarked by difference” (27). How
does this passage not describe the experience of following a hyper-
link down the rabbit hole of the internet? In its effort to take a
reader directly from the present text to a referent, the text-as-index
articulates a wish for immediate delivery of the signified that is vir-
tually granted by today’s computational networks. It is not merely
inter textual, but nascently hypertextual. Picture a young Pound
setting out today to produce the online Cantos, with hyperlinks to
the full texts of the central documents in the conspiracy of intelli-
gence, carving a pattern of significance—not meaning—out of the
“overwhelming burden of printed texts that was the twentieth-
century’s inheritance” (8).

When given its full scope, O’Driscoll’s placement of Pound at the
brink of the information age, and as a pioneer of “reference rather
than meaning,” paves the way for reconsidering texts like The Waste
Land, Paterson, The Cantos, Spring and All, Ulysses, and Finnegans Wake
as precursors to cold-war information systems and cybernetics—not
to mention the conspiracy theories they seem to have encouraged. It
allows us to see Modernism anew, and to understand more fully
how it laid the groundwork for today’s textually-dense but appar-
tently meaning-poor world. Moreover, it clarifies the tendential
posthumanism of the indexical method’s utopianism (as fleshed out
by Agamben) as an inherent feature of the transition from meaning
to pattern, and from human beings as individuals to singularities as
patterns of information (see, e.g., N. Katherine Hayles).

There is, however, another vein of O’Driscoll’s essay that runs
counter to the utopian-cybernetic-posthumanist lines I’ve been
following so far: the archival unconscious. This line of discussion
relies upon the psychoanalytic notion of nachträglichkeit, introduced
by O’Driscoll in his discussion of the libidinal economics of
Woolf’s, MacNeice’s, and above all Pound’s and brings O’Driscoll
to posit that along with Virginia Woolf and Louis MacNeice,
Pound’s relationship with the archive is fraught, even traumatic:
facing the full weight of the British Museum Library’s holdings,
“Pound... 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” (5). Strangely, though O’Driscoll returns to the relationship between The Cantos and Guide to Kulchur, archival consciousness and text-as-index, later in his essay, he drops the Freudian register that provides the enabling metaphor of nachträglichkeit. It’s a strikingly odd disappearance. It is almost as though psychoanalysis appears unbidden here and is then banished from the remainder of the essay along with the libidinal concerns it would have made unavoidable. Only one further moment belongs to the same register: referring to Pound’s inability to escape lists in Guide to Kulchur, even when he explicitly disavows them, O’Driscoll writes, “Guide to Kulchur is haunted by its own indexical methodology; such lists… assert their indomitable presence, not to mention their instability[.] they re-occur in different forms—with shifting contents, structures, and logics—throughout the text” (22). O’Driscoll does everything but name the lists as what they patently are: symptoms. The language used, the dynamic outlined, the reference to haunting in the context of the previous mention of nachträglichkeit, all point to a return of the repressed and thus to a psychic mechanism demanding interpretation.

As such, I suggest that there is an unconscious in O’Driscoll’s essay that points to the possibility of an archival unconscious itself. One key to exploring this possibility concerns the relationship between the archive/heterotopia and the index/utopia. If the index is the product of a utopian urge to provide order to the archive, then the archive may equally be the heterotopian unconscious that constantly shatters the index:

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.’” (26)

Foucault could just as easily be describing the unconscious here as heterotopias, and indeed there is a certain continuity: the unconscious is a heterotopia, and heterotopias disrupt indexes just as the
unconscious disrupts consciousness. Every consciousness, like every index, “ultimately point[s] outward, beyond the text in hand, beyond the impossible utopia of language, to a plurality of sites that can be only momentarily juxtaposed in the non-site of the indexical text [or, I suggest, unconscious]. In this form, text[consciousness] as index resists a permanent inclusiveness by asserting its centrifugal power” (26). As O’Driscoll makes clear, Pound’s texts as indexes always already have unconsiences that permanently disrupt cohesion. The utopia is permanently ruptured by the archive’s heterotopic energies; every attempt to contain them only generates new eruptions.

As with all symptoms, this one points to an absent cause: Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression. Triangulating already upon the archive and Freud, O’Driscoll’s text solicits Derrida’s book as both its third term and a key to thinking through the link between Pound’s poetics and his politics. As O’Driscoll establishes, though the archive in the abstract is heterotopian, specific archives are often closely restricted. They are sites of “privilege and the logic of exclusion” (7). As such, they expose the archive’s nomological and prescriptive origins: “archive’ refers to the arkhe in the nomological sense, to the arkhe of the commandment” (Derrida 2). Derrida clarifies by describing the archons who produce these commandments:

The archons are first of all the documents’ guardians. They do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and of the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives. Entrusted to such archons, these documents in effect speak the law: they recall the law and call on or impose the law. (2)

For all their heterotopic energies in the abstract, archives in the particular are dense sites not only of privilege and exclusion, but also of interpretation, authority, the law, competence, and power. In this respect, it is clear further that Pound regards himself as the über-archon of kulchur, dictating to all who will listen not just what to read but how to read, and how to proceed after having read. He figures himself as the guardian of the documents that comprise the conspiracy of intelligence, their chief interpreter, arbiter of readerly competence, legislator and top cop.

O’Driscoll points out that Pound’s program of indexing the archive is notionally totalitarian: “Ultimately, lists and catalogues are to be discarded… on the way to… what [Pound] calls a ‘totalitarian
literature” (21). Indexes must go in favour of an archive whose lessons must be absorbed and their sources (along with the index) forgotten in the attainment of true understanding. Knowledge is a dialectical way station on the path to full understanding, which will cancel and preserve it in a qualitative expansion of consciousness. In this sense, Pound’s program is utopian in its celebration of understanding over mere erudition. Of course, the benchmark for true understanding in is none other than Pound himself, and the archive upon which we must draw in our effort to achieve full understanding is that of which Pound is the archon. He is the walking index to the authoritative archive of culture; he embodies the indexical’s “bid for a kind of mastery” (O’Driscoll 27). The primacy of his archive depends upon his declaration of its primacy and of his ability to convince others of it. It replicates the totalitarian politics of the charismatic leader where authority trumps rationality in service of an idiosyncratic but magnetic worldview. Derrida’s revelation of the depths to which dynamics of power, prestige, and privilege are embedded in the very notion of the archive thus helps expose the link between Pound’s archival consciousness and his politics. At the same time, it places the utopian and the totalitarian into unwonted proximity, and urges us to explore more carefully Modernism’s archival impulse in relation to its variegated politics.

The final indication I want to elucidate here concerns the location of the archive. O’Driscoll ends his essay thus: “Text as index, designed to lead the reader out of the archive, instead leads the reader further inward to its fatal core” (27). The topoi of in/out here belie the real complexity of O’Driscoll’s contribution. In what sense can text-as-index be said to be trying to lead the reader “out” of the archive, particularly if, as in Pound’s case, it patently wants us to explore the archive more fully? In what sense can an archive be said to have a core, and why should it be the innermost point? Wouldn’t it make equal sense to think of the archive’s “core” as its limit? Moreover, given the intense ambiguities and ambivalences that attend any archivalist enterprise (is this document worth saving? how accessible should it be? what impression does it carry/leave/record?) how can we think the archive/index matrix in terms of the utopian/heterotopian matrix? And what of that other term, suppressed so long now, dystopian? How do we—or can we—incorporate Milan Kundera’s distasteful metaphor and how archive its multiple iterations: “The archive’s ideal [is] the sweet equality that reigns in an enormous common grave” (97). In terms of its relevance for Modernism, the question comes full circle: is
the hallmark of Modernism archival consciousness, as O’Driscoll suggests, or is it only the method of text-as-index? Are the two inseparable, or is their peculiar fusion in the twentieth-century long poem what makes Modernism special?

O’Driscoll’s essay raises many more questions than I can even ask here. Allow me to close, then, by juxtaposing two images from the modernist archive. Ultimately, O’Driscoll teaches us that the significance of each item in the archive, and of the archive itself, lies in its capacity to function as what Pound called a “luminous detail”: a fact which is “not merely ‘significant’ nor ‘symptomatic’ in the manner of most facts, but capable of giving one ‘a sudden insight into circumjacent conditions, into their causes, their effects, into sequence, and law’” (Pound 21–2). The result, O’Driscoll has made inescapably clear, is that we must seek their significance in the very heart of darkness—Modernism, the archive—knowing that it will be found “not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that, sometimes, are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine” (Conrad 45).

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Works Cited


“Published by Us, Written by Us, Read by Us”:
Little Magazine Networks

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During the interwar years a number of expatriate Anglo-American little magazines were published in European cities, particularly in Paris. These publications include *Secession* (1922-24); 1 *Transition* (1927-38); 2 *Broom* (1921-24); 3 *Exile* (1927-28); *Gargoyle* (1921-22); *Transatlantic Review* (1924); *This Quarter* (1925-32); and *Tambour* (1929-30). Less well known are *Echanges* (1929-32); the *New Review* (1931-32); *Booster*, later *Delta* (1937-39); *Epilogue* (1935-37); and *Canavel* (1934-36). 4 As evidenced in numerous memoirs of the pe-

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1 *Secession*’s final issue (no 7) was published in New York. There is also a number 8, but this was printed before number 7 (Munson 174).
2 There were three so called American numbers of *Transition*, nos 24, 25, 26, published in 1936 and 1937 (with the associate editor James Johnson Sweeney), while Elsa worked with the French News Service Havas, New York. The final issue, no 27, was edited and printed in Paris.
3 The five final issues of *Broom* were published in New York, Aug. 1923 (vol 5, no 1) to Jan. 1924 (vol 6, no 1).
4 The *Little Review* can also be included although it most likely never was an exile publication, apart from its final issue. According to Hoffman, Ulrich and Allen, as well as numerous followers, it was printed in Paris between 1922 and 1929, and its last issue was also edited there. However, consulted originals of nos 2, 3 and 4, vol IX (Winter 1922, Spring 1923, Autumn-Winter 1923-1924) state that they were printed by the Elsinger Press, New York. The original of no 1, vol XII (Spring 1926) states that it was printed by Carey Craft Press, New York & Phila (64). Consulted originals of nos 1, 2, vol X (Spring 1924, Autumn-Winter 1924-1925), and 1, 2, vol XI (Spring 1925, and Winter 1926) bear no printer’s imprint. The final issue states “Printed in France Imprimerie Darantiere Dijon” (May 1929). After having consulted Margaret Anderson’s *My Thirty Years War: An Autobiography* and the letters between Jane Heap and Florence Reynolds in *Dear Tiny Heart*, it appears that the magazine was edited by Jane Heap in New York throughout the 20s, although she spent much time in France during this period. These findings are also in line with facts posted on the webpage, “Little Magazines and Modernism: A Select Bibliography,”
period, they were part of a dynamic public culture and had considerable influence. For example, in Back to Montparnasse (1931) the British journalist and writer Sisley Huddleston gives a personal account of his life on the left bank of the Seine, in which he notes the importance of the local little magazine publications. Reminiscing over the pleasure of receiving a new issue of This Quarter, Huddleston observes how it “means supremely much to feel, when one is resident abroad, that there is a magazine which is at once local and universal” (99). The passage continues:

This Quarter is ours, we almost persuade ourselves that it is published by us as well as written by us and read by us. We know most of its contributors; we are among the contributors; we see those contributors sitting on café terraces and we swap ideas with them. It is our parish magazine…. This is what our colony can do; and it is not to be despised. Many of the names on the cover are now celebrated, but before they were celebrated they appeared on the cover of our local magazines. Indeed we sometimes think that our local magazines made them celebrated. (99-100)

The literary celebrities referred to in this passage include now iconic writers such as Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein and James Joyce, and Huddleston’s comment on the role of little magazines, publishing celebrated modernist writers before they were established, is in line with the scholarly assessment of their significance. According to the pioneering study of little magazines by Hoffman, Ulrich and Allen, the relevance of these small-scale publications springs from the courage of their editors in defying the commercial interests of larger presses: “A little magazine is a magazine designed to print artistic work which for reasons of commercial expediency is not acceptable to the money-minded periodicals or presses” (2). Little magazines “are willing to lose money, to court ridicule, to ignore public taste, willing to do almost anything—steal, beg, or undress in public—rather than sacrifice their right to print good

maintained by Suzanne Churchill. Other expatriate publications during the 20s and 30s include Story, the Trilingual Morada, Manikin, Close-Up, and Verve, but these are not included in the discussion here.

Well-known examples include Malcolm Cowley’s Exile’s Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920’s, Ernest Hemingway’s A Moveable Feast, Harold Loeb’s The Way it Was, and Matthew Josephson’s Life among the Surrealists.
material” (2). Described as avant-garde and elitist, the little magazines are seen as products of the idealism of their idiosyncratic editors. Taken as a whole, however, Huddleston’s portrayal is on quite a different note, stressing a collective process and the pride of the local community that the magazines were felt to be “published,” “written,” and read by “us.”

Picking up on some of the features in Huddleston’s description of the Anglo-American expatriate little magazines, this article argues the importance of the local and international networks that underlay their production and distribution. What is notable when studying the magazines is the blend of writers and artists that goes into each issue, a mixture that gives the impression of effort and international networking rather than individual work at the very frontline of the Arts. In particular, we address the “swapping of ideas” on a local and international level, the reliance on money and a market, the importance of writing as a profession, and the relevance of group identity. By revealing the practical webs of interaction that are part of the creative process, the little magazines point to how modernist ideas about art, literature, and language, often analysed within a theoretical or aesthetic framework, can be seen as intentional action—praxis. Our focus is thus not on individual contributions and editorials in the magazines, but on the practical work and material circumstances that made these publications possible. Little magazines developed extensive networks consisting of editor(s), contributors, translators, distributors, readers, rival little magazines and sponsors. Although each little magazine was limited in its scope and distribution, seen as a collective the little magazine networks form an exciting cultural map of modernism, spreading out across European borders and overseas. Our argument is thus in line with recent criticism on little magazines, which stresses the “collective effort involved in the production, organization, and dissemination of little magazines, as well as the social, political, and economic influences that shaped those collective efforts” (Churchill & McKible 14). However, our ambition is rather to expand the meaning of “collective effort” beyond certain cliques or between a few editors, as recent studies of little magazines remain focused on particular publications, the exchanges of ideas between a few little magazines, or the relationship between small-scale non-commercial publications and a larger, abstract pub-
lic sphere. The collective effort of each little magazine form part of an extensive and sprawling network, involving many types of interdependencies on different levels, such as the exchange of values, visions, ideas, financial circumstances, friendships, kinship, and sexual relationships. These interdependencies and exchanges, in turn, are dependent on meeting and exchange points. From this perspective, it is important to consider the European setting, not least as the condition of voluntary exile provides a background to exploring national and international themes, language experiments, translations, and debates on tourism and democracy. The transatlantic little magazines are particularly interesting from this point of view, as they reflect a time in which thoughts about the local and global were renegotiated. By examining the concrete social spaces in which the little magazines were produced, it is thus possible to learn more about the mechanisms of modernist networking and its effects, and in extension about modernism per se.

In what follows we show the need to recognize the making of little magazines as an expansive social practice, inspired by the attractions of the European continent and exciting personal interchanges. The expatriate little magazines point to an essential part of modernism, one that indicates how international interconnectedness becomes praxis, as ideas, work and practices literally cross question borders. We will see how the expatriate little magazines dealt with fraught issues such as the relationships between internationalism and nationalism, convention and aspiration to modernist newness, finances and non-commercialism, work and art, tourism and exile.

**Local Networks**

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7 As Melba Cuddy-Keane points out, the end of the nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century is often regarded as a starting point for the modern globalization process. She refers to phenomena such as the increase in global communications, the entry of non-European societies into "international" society, the diffusion and implementation of ideas at the international level (the ecumenical movement, the Olympics, the Nobel Prizes, the Gregorian calendar, and the League of Nations) (539-540).
The story is familiar—during the 1920s and 30s Paris became the gathering place for artists, writers and intellectuals, offering an attractive setting for social exchange between creative individuals with diverging national backgrounds. Even if editors, writers, and artists chose a different location for their editorial office or residence—Vienna, Berlin, Rome, Monte-Carlo, Milano, Deja, Alicante, Rapallo—Paris remained the natural meeting and exchange point.

The city of light and culture stood as a model of modernity and a beacon of economic hope in the aftermath of the First World War, but the city was also a haven of free thought for those forced into exile or for artists who wished to break with tradition. In the context of expatriate little magazines, it is particularly noteworthy how these publications could use the international setting to bestow avant-garde credibility on their publications, while they were simultaneously dependent on local American networks. Indeed, the majority of contributors to the expatriate little magazines were American and a conspicuous number of editorials and articles deal with America and the American, including culture, democracy and the modern city. *Boom*, subtitled “An International Magazine of The Arts Published by Americans in Italy,” exemplifies this tension between the local and the international particularly well, as it discussed America and the American most eagerly of all the expatriate little magazines. Another example is *Transition*. The editors of this little magazine, Jolas and Paul, indicate a similar split already in their first editorial, in which they express how the appeal of art and literature with a national “coloring and texture” is becoming “distinctly international” (“Introduction” 136-138).

So why was Paris a location in which national and international interests came to the forefront, inspiring the little magazine editors to partake in the “invention” of modernism? The fact that the French capital was regarded as a particularly stimulating milieu

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8 Concerning the influx of Americans to Paris, see for example Hugh Ford, *Published in Paris: American and British Writers, Printers, and Publishers in Paris, 1920-1939*, and Noel Riley Fitch, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation: A History of Literary Paris in the Twenties and Thirties*. Ronald Weber, in *News of Paris: American Journalists in the City of Light Between the Wars*, writes that the permanent colony of Americans in Paris in the early 20s numbered 6000, and that by the mid-20s the figure was “30,000 and rising.” At this time, there were 60,000 Americans in France (5).
should be attributed to its reputation as a gathering place for creative individuals, actively unsettling tradition and historical meaning. As Noel Riley Fitch points out, “the literary community was in Paris” (163), including publishers, little reviews, the bookshop and library Shakespeare and Company, and literary salons. For the avant-garde writer, this meant being close to potential readers. In the first number of the Transatlantic Review, the editor Ford Madox Ford speaks of Paris as “the hub of a great wheel of communications” (“Chromiques I” 78). A more mystical vision of the inclusiveness of Paris life is offered by Henry Miller, co-editor (with Alfred Perlès and Lawrence Durrell) of Booster/Delta. He describes the French capital as “one big globule swimming in the blood of the great animal called MAN.... The globule will stretch and expand, permit the utmost freedom of movement, the most fantastic movements, but it will not break. The globule is always stronger than a man’s back, stronger than the man himself, stronger than ten million men all pushing at once and in the same spot” (71). This image of Paris as a human, womb-like enclosure catches the unification of individual freedom and communal inclusion that seems to have provided such a creative environment. The combination of perceived individual freedom and community also seems to have inspired the little magazines, which were uniquely fertilized by their geographical location. Most of the contributors and editors had rich opportunities to meet in person, and knew each other well. Many names appear and reappear as contributors in the magazines, as well as on the mastheads of the magazines. One is Ezra Pound’s, whose connections with little magazines in Europe and the United States indicate the importance that modernists themselves ascribed to these magazines, as he took care to be part of the networks surrounding the little magazines, as co-editor, contributor, promoter, reviewer, or rival editor. His numerous contributions to little magazines show to what extent he followed the development among them.⁹

Unsurprisingly, Huddleston in the quotation above mentions Parisian café terraces as the meeting-place par excellence for the little magazine circles. Depictions of writers in café settings abound, and

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⁹ Numerous little magazines include contributions by Ezra Pound, or have his name on the masthead. Other than as contributor, Pound appeared on the masthead of or was involved with magazines such as the Little Review, Poetry, the Dial, the New Freewoman, the Egoist, Blast, the Transatlantic Review, Pagany, the New Review, and of course his own Exile.
the image of an intellectual by a table in one of the famous Parisian cafés is a tired cliché. In fact, the expatriate/tourist café-goers were frequently satirized and criticized even in the press of the day, two well-known examples being Hemingway’s “American Bohemians in Paris,” in the Toronto Star Weekly in March 1922 (23-25), and Sinclair Lewis’s “Self-Conscious America,” in the October 1925 number of the American Mercury (112-140). Lewis had already in September 1921 shared his opinion of the American intellectual in Paris in two drawings, “Observation,” reproduced in Gargoyle with the text “An American realist studying la vie intellectuelle dans Paris.” The drawings depict a man in bed snoring heavily and a man at a café with an enormous wine glass in front of him (20).

Nevertheless, the café scene still bore weight as an international meeting point for struggling artists and bohemian characters. For example, Florence Gilliam, the theatre critic who founded Gargoyle with her husband Arthur Moss, later claimed that this publication was a natural outgrowth of their “immersion in this multinational exchange of ideas and tastes” that the couple had experienced in the cafés (32). Indeed, the editorial of Gargoyle’s opening number (1921), takes up the significance of the Latin Quarter cafés in the formation of the artist:

Potential artists are born in all countries, in all ranks of society, they arrive at adolescence with a hundred different prejudices, which they must shred before the spirit is free to receive direct impressions of life. The Paris café is a melting-pot where these prejudices can be discarded; where provincial creeds and financial achievements must be set against universal standards, and where bearings can be taken before

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10 There are several links between the modernist/avant-garde 1920s and Bohemian Paris, and one of them is undoubtedly the cafés and cabarets, which became places for escape, meetings, and forming of artistic and literary relationships, at least since the eighteen-forties and fifties—the era of Murger’s bohemian. The Café Comus was the popular haunt for the Bohemian circle of Murger and his friends in the 1840s, among them Baudelaire (Seigel 38). The impressionists’ meetings at Café Guerbois or Nouvelle Athènes are a good example of a “substitute society.” Here they were able to reassure themselves of the quality of their work at a time when the public’s reaction to their painting was still hostile (Seigel 296-97).

11 The editor was Arthur H. Moss and co-editors were Florence Gilliam, Allan Ross McDougall, Wynn Holcomb, Lawrence Vail, Harrison Dowd, and Arthur C. Wyman.
relatively safe waters are left and the ocean journey begun. It is also, incidentally, a place where food, drink, light, and warmth cost little, and where the artist’s eye can be trained to see plastic and pictorial possibilities in everyday things. (“Editorial” 4-5) 

The cafés provided the expatriate artist coming to Paris with a natural place for initiating and maintaining relationships with other writers and artists. Matthew Josephson, associate editor of Broom and co-editor of Secession (and later contributing editor of Transition), portrays the café as “the home away from home,” and “the open forum where one encountered fellow beings without formality, or prior letter or telephone call, upon a neutral terrain” (Foreword xxii). Similarly, in the autobiography of Eugene Jolas, journalist and editor of Transition, we find numerous examples of meetings with members of Parisian literary circles who would come to contribute to the magazine (such as Philippe Soupalt, Hans Arp and Ernest Hemingway) in cafés, restaurants and bars. 

The cafés could also be a scene for spectacle surrounding little magazine publication. For example, the controversy and debate following upon the publication of the “Proclamation of the Revolution of the Word” in Transition 16/17, 1929, also resulted in a public protest against its content and implications. The revolution manifesto campaigned for aesthetic autonomy and linguistic and formal experiment. Provocative in its tone, announcing that “THE PLAIN READER BE DAMNED,” the Transition manifesto triggered the creation of “Direction.” This was a counter-manifesto, 

12 This editorial quoted from an article by “R.W.H.” in the London Nation, July 4 1921.
13 Another well-known meeting point for American and English writers and artists in Paris during the 20s and 30s was Sylvia Beach’s bookshop and lending library, Shakespeare and Company at 12 Rue de l’Odéon. This was also the place where the little magazines could be found on the sales rack, as Beach’s bookshop was the major distributor for several little magazines, American, English and expatriate. Among the expatriate magazines Shakespeare and Company carried were Booster/Delta, Broom, Gargoyle, the Transatlantic Review, Transition, Exile, the Little Review, the New Review, and This Quarter (Fitch 145, 185, 252, 313, 382). The bookshop was also an agent for aspiring writers as they could leave work to Beach, which she then would circulate among the editors of little magazines and publishers of little presses (Fitch 61). In several ways Sylvia Beach was the guide for the little known writer into literary and artistic Paris.
written in a café and distributed in cafés frequented by the Left Bank literati (Putnam 227). The signers were Samuel Putnam, Harold J. Salemson, and Richard Thoma, who would later publish the *New Review*. The “Direction” manifesto wanted a truce and a break in manifestos. In the words of Huddleston, “It was a manifesto to end manifestos” (116). The stated purpose was to allow time for reflection over the future of (American) literature. Discontent with the formalist direction that they felt Jolas was advancing for literature, Putnam, Salemson and Thoma desired a return to content and literary attention to present times: “The past decade has been one of pretenders, corpse-raisers, and cheap miracle men… We demand contemporaneity, not an antiquated modernity” (qtd. in Huddleston 116). What is peculiar, however, is that Salemson had actually signed “The Revolution of the Word” in June 1929 and, according to Jolas, he also joined the group consisting of Jolas, Sage, and Gilbert that defended “linguistic reformation” in a debate published by the *Modern Quarterly*, an American review edited by V. F. Calverton (Jolas, *Babel* 110). Moreover, Thoma contributed to *Transition* no. 19/20 in 1930, after the signing of “Direction.” As we see, alliances of the time were intermingled and confused, even anxious.

**Valuta**

Pragmatic pecuniary matters were also part of the allure of Paris and continental Europe after World War I. The influx of foreigners on European ground, especially Americans, to a great extent depended on cheaper transportation, notably the “Tourist Third” on the steamship lines that first appeared in 1924, and the advantageous exchange rate (Fitch 163). The beneficial economic circumstances, together with the fact that WWI had already brought many Americans to Europe, made a voyage to Europe conceivable for many U.S. citizens. While post-war Europe was a difficult and

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14 The contribution is the short story “Death Control,” in which a poet visits a doctor who is prepared to let him die temporarily using a “mechanism which held a formidable array of dials, knobs, volt recorders and magnetic needles” (333). The purpose of the experiment is to see whether death will make the eyes less indifferent to life. It is doubtful whether the story lives up to the realist aspiration of the “Direction” manifesto.

15 For a discussion of the “Manifesto Wars,” including “Direction” and the “Revolution of the Word,” see Mark Morrisson and Jack Selzer’s introductory chapter to the facsimile edition of *Tambour* (27-44).
costly time for most Europeans, the Americans could live cheaply in Europe for extended periods of time. References to economic matters repeatedly appear in the little magazines, as in Malcolm Cowley’s poem “Valuta,” first published in Broom:

Following the dollar O following the dollar I have learned three fashions of eating with the knife and ordered beer in four languages from a Hungarian waiter while following the dollar around the 48th degree of north latitude where it buys most there is the Fatherland (250)

The poem was written after Cowley’s trip around Europe in 1922 and published in November, of that same year. Cowley returns to the significance of money in Exile’s Return: “The exiles of 1921 came to Europe seeking one thing and found another. They came to recover the good life and the traditions of art, to free themselves from organized stupidity, to win their deserved place in the hierarchy of the intellect. Having come in search of values, they found valuta” (81). Whatever the expatriates wanted to escape or wished to find, they encountered a post-war Europe in financial chaos. For the American expatriate with a few dollars on his pocket, however, this economic disorder was easily turned to advantage; Europe became a wide-stretched land of possibilities, albeit with a bitter side-taste to its sweetness. As Harold Loeb, the editor of Broom, testifies on his way to set up an editorial office in Berlin, the possibilities offered by the chaotic post-war situation in Europe caused dual feelings: “The mark had just taken another tumble, and the dinner

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16 “The dollar, either Canadian or American, is the key to Paris…. a very effective key,” Hemingway wrote in the Toronto Star dispatch of February 1922 (“Living on $1,000 a Year in Paris” 88). See also Kenneth L. Roberts, Europe’s Morning After, where Roberts states that an American can live “most comfortably on $1,000 a year” (293). However, the New York Times article from January 3, 1920, “French Poor Feel Pinch of New Taxes” points out that the cost of living in France had risen 250 to 300 per cent since 1914, with the biggest increase in prices the last year. The exchange rate of the dollar to the French franc would continue to rise during the 20s, although in a very volatile manner. In 1924 it fluctuated between 18.16 and 26.9 (Blancheton 10), and July 21, 1926 it reached a transient high of 49 francs before it was stabilized at around 26 francs to a dollar (Eichengreen 183). The so-called Poincaré franc remained at this rate until 1934 when it stood at 15, 2 franc after the devaluation of the dollar. Between 1934 and 1938, the franc was sliding again; in December 1937 a dollar bought 29 franc and in 1939 as much as 40 franc (Johnston ix). The pre-war exchange rate had been 5 franc to the dollar (Eichengreen 183).
[for seven] cost $1.32. I felt guilty as well as encouraged” (Way 128).

While American and British modernists certainly had artistic or cosmopolitan aspirations, it is important to bear in mind that economic conditions played a crucial role in the pull towards continental Europe. Low printing costs attracted those with literary ambitions or ambitions to start a magazine, and the exchange rate made it possible for foreigners to set up small presses and become printers or publishers themselves. Thus, when looking into the practical endeavours of the little magazines, the economic situation of post-war Europe must be taken into account. In fact, many modernist little magazines were made possible by the advantageous exchange rate of the dollar to the franc, the lire, the mark, the kronen, and other currencies. Printing costs were low in France: Ford Madox Ford called them “ludicrously small,” as a copy cost between two and three cents to produce and could be sold to the public for fifty (Nightingale 297–98). Italy, Germany and Austria offered even lower prices, allowing the frugal publisher the opportunity to stay active for a longer time, as the monetary value had dropped even lower in these countries. The first editors of Broom, Harold Loeb, also the financer of the magazine, and Arthur Kreymborg, set up an editing office in Rome, Italy. The rent for the premises was 400 lire (around $16) a month (Way 68). Secession’s editor Gorham B. Munson chose to publish in Vienna. Here, the printing cost was even lower: “the printing of a 24-page magazine with cover would cost 140,000 kronen or only 20 dollars!” (Munson 163). At a later stage the printing of Broom and Secession moved to Berlin as the costs could be lowered even further in the

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17 In Published in Paris, Hugh Ford mentions twelve small presses run by Englishmen and Americans in France between the wars. Some of these were: Three Mountains Press, Contact Editions, Shakespeare & Company, Black Sun Press, Black Manikin Press, Obelisk Press (404-15).
18 “The Austrian crown and the French franc were equal before the war, their value in American money being 20 cents. Five Austrian crowns were equivalent to an American dollar in 1914. In February, 1920, as this is written, one American dollar is equivalent to 300 Austrian crowns. The crown is worth one third of a cent. In other words, the crown is worth one sixtieth of what it used to be worth, and an Austrian income that used to be worth $5,000 a year is now worth $83” (Roberts 71).
19 According to Malcolm Cowley 500 copies could be printed for $25 in Vienna in 1922 (Exile’s 132).
German capital. It was Matthew Josephson who urged Loeb to relocate to Germany, arguing that Berlin would be the centre of a rebirth of art and literature and that they would have access to exciting new material from Soviet Russia and Czechoslovakia. According to Loeb, however, the weightiest argument Josephson presented was financial:

The mark was sliding: a suit of clothes ordered for the equivalent of thirty dollars might cost two by the time it was delivered. If we could obtain a similar benefit for Broom, Jacobsen’s eighteen hundred dollars might last quite a while [Loeb’s brother-in-law’s repayment of a loan]. And we could live for next to nothing and drink Rhine wine besides. (Way 119)

In general, when reading about the little magazines it is noteworthy how rarely the financial underpinnings of the magazines are considered. While little magazines like Secession and Gargoyle had to rely on the limited funds and incomes of its editors and sponsors, many relied on capital from other sources, either to initiate publication or to finance the whole project. For example, Maria Jolas’s inheritance made the publication of her husband’s Transition possible. Strangely, neither Eugene Jolas, in his memoirs Man from Babel, nor Douglas McMillan, in his study of the magazine, Transition, 1927-38: The History of a Literary Era disclose or touch upon the financial background of Transition. Maria Jolas herself only reveals her contribution to the little magazine in passing in the ‘Dateline’ of her autobiography: “1924 Visiting in Louisville, where my father died of a stroke in June; left me financially independent (later made transition, then my school possible)” (2). 22

20 No 4 of Secession was printed in Berlin. Nos 5, 6 and 8 were printed in Florence under the direction of John Brooks Wheelwright. The no 8 issue was a misprint, and should rightly have been no 7 (Munson 171, 177).
21 In his memoirs, The Awakening Twenties, Gorham Munson describes how he sailed for Europe with his wife in the spring of 1921, planning to live for a year there on “savings from a year of school teaching and profiting by the advantageous exchange-rates for the dollar” (159). Gargoyle had a short life due to a lack of funds. The magazine was published between July 1921 and December 1922, but it never made any money and its editors supported themselves as freelance writers (Monk 60).
22 This was not Maria Jolas’s only contribution to the magazine, however: she was office manager, translator, and one time contributor, and, as McMillan
Allanah Harper, editor of *Echanges*, received financial support for the publication costs from wealthy friends and acquaintances, the Aga Khan, Pauline Duleep Singh Torry, and Princesse Edmond de Polignac (Harper 311); Harold Loeb had his own capital as well as Guggenheim relatives to finance *Broom*; Ford Madox Ford could start the *Transatlantic Review* because the New York-lawyer and art collector John Quinn finally agreed to contribute to the publication of the review, provided Ford contributed the same amount himself (Poli 21-23); Ethel Moorhead’s legacy after her friend and suffragette companion, Frances Mary Parker, made *This Quarter* possible (Moorhead, “And So On” 270). After the death of her co-editor Ernest Walsh, Moorhead handed the magazine over to collector and bookshop keeper Edward Titus, husband of the immensely rich cosmetic industrialist Helen Rubinstein (Ford, *Published* 117); Harold J. Salemson’s *Tambour* was financed through the legacy left to him by his father (Salemson).

The financial situation of the *Booster* diverged from that of the other little magazines, as it relied on the American Golf and Country Club’s goodwill and the editors’ offering of space for country-club news in each issue ("American Country Club News” 30). The *Booster* also included advertisements for food, billiard balls, teas, refrigerators, beer and other diverse items.

Some of the editors made their magazines into collector’s items

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23 Loeb had bought a share in the bookshop The Sunwise Turn and once he left it used his share of $9,000 to start *Broom* (*Way* 7). Moreover, he could count on some support from his family: his father, a stockbroker and his mother, daughter of Meyer Guggenheim. As the funds of *Broom* ran low in the beginning of 1923, Loeb had hopes of receiving funding from his Guggenheim uncles, but these hopes were shattered as the uncles felt that *Broom* was “essentially a magazine for a rich man with a hobby” (*Way* 155).

24 The beginnings of *Transatlantic Review* were uncertain. The initial backers set too strict rules for Ford to concur with; one of them being that James Joyce would not be published in the review. Whether this was the main reason why the backers pulled out is uncertain. However, John Quinn stepped in as sponsor. The amount that Quinn contributed is also uncertain, between $1,350 and $2,000. Ford put in the same amount with the financial help of his partner Stella Bowen (Poli 20-22; Mizener 328).

25 The goodwill did not extend beyond the first four issues however, and after that *Booster* had to change name to *Delta*. *Delta* carried on for three more issues.

26 The examples of advertisements are taken from vol 2, no 7, Sept. 1937.
by choice from the very start as whole or part of the editions were numbered (for example Echanges, Tambour, This Quarter), sometimes containing artwork (for example Gargoyle) and printed on fine paper (for example Gargoyle, Echanges, Broom, This Quarter). After World War I, not only modern art was bought by collectors and art dealers as part of a lucrative business, but also books and other publications. In the words of the writer Jules Bertaut, in his Parisian memories from 1935, “[t]he Edition de luxe lent itself to shrewd dealers just as the canvases did…. Sometimes prices rose to a fabulous level and collectors and speculators bought editions on vellum, rice paper, rag paper, numbered and signed by the author, and what not, just as they bought porcelain, pictures, and furniture” (282). It is remarkable to what extent the editors and buyers of the little magazines were conscious of the worth of these publications as collector’s items. Huddleston, for example, recounts securing the premier number of the Exile, with its eye-catching red cover, in his locked bookcase (107). And in This Quarter no 4, Ethel Moorhead markets signed back numbers of the magazine: “BACK NUMBERS ARE OF INCREASING VALUE…. THERE ARE STILL AVAILABLE… A DE LUXE COPY OF NUMBER ONE…. In perfect condition, signed at 100 Dol” (“This Quarter” n.pag.). Appraising the years editing Broom in Europe on its move to New York, Loeb writes that in order to attract readers, the magazine had to invent other methods, since “it lacked the means to attempt the usual publicity…. Owing to valuta, it was possible to provide an exotic luxury in make-up,” thus attracting “readers who otherwise would have failed to sing it out from the scores of literary periodicals” (“Broom: 1921–1923” 55).

Of course the period between the wars saw changing costs of living and exchange rates; the monetary values in most European countries were extremely volatile and the purchasing power of a dollar varied accordingly. The Wall Street crash in 1929 changed the prospects for Americans living in Europe considerably, however, and many returned home. But several stayed on, returned or came for the first time, as can be seen in the publications of little magazines that actually appeared after 1929.

Writing as a Practice

To place the little magazine editors among the cultural avant-garde is to overlook the fact that these publications were also journalistic products. One reason why this important aspect has been relatively
neglected may be that some publications wished to distance themselves from journalistic practices. For example, Ernest Walsh writes in the first number of This Quarter that the magazine existed “primarily to publish the artist’s work while it is still fresh. Without wishing to compete with certain literary magazines that have an almost journalistic zeal for the last word…” (259). Others, however, saw potential in journalism. For example, the “Editorial Statement” of the New Review (edited by Samuel Putnam, with associate editors Ezra Pound, Maxwell Bodenheim, and Richard Thoma) boldly states that the “purpose” of the magazine “is an international reportage for the arts, the higher journalism of ideas” (n. pag., emph. in orig.). Similarly, the Transition editor Eugene Jolas never polarized his passion for multilingual art and experiment with his own journalistic practice; the roles of the poet, the editor and the journalist are allowed to co-exist. Dedicated to language experiment in Transition, Jolas still acknowledges that it was newspaper work that raised his consciousness of the “malady of language” and encouraged him to find ways in which to facilitate the journalist’s task by giving him the possibility of “using a more precise, richer and more fluid speech” (Babel 108-109). The editor’s admiration of the literary avant-garde is not distanced from issues concerning the expression of mundane events communicated in daily papers.

Jolas was not the only journalist in little magazine circles. In fact, a large number of contributors were newspapermen and women, or later became journalists, a circumstance which strengthens the validity of examining the magazines as a cross-breed between journalism and the arts. As only a privileged few could make a living out of creative writing or editing, many aspiring writers found their income through work at one of the English language newspapers in Paris: the Continental Daily Mail, an offspring of the London Daily Mail; the afternoon paper Paris Times; the Paris Herald, the European edition of the New York Herald; and

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27 One of the implicit targets of this editorial is most likely the Little Review, which to a great extent reflected Margaret Anderson’s personal enthusiasm for movements such as feminism, anarchism, dadaism, and surrealism.

28 Ford’s Transatlantic Review is a case in point. Apart from its most famous newspaperman and writer, Ernest Hemingway, some of the journalist names that appear are: Jeanne Foster, Ring Lardner, Guy Hickock, Elisabeth Eyre de Lanux, Kate Buss, Evan Shipman, Sisley Huddleston, and William Bird.
the Paris Tribune, the European edition of the Chicago Tribune. The latter was the publication most dedicated to the artistic life of the Left Bank (Weber 75–76). Hugh Ford suggests that practically all of the Tribune staffers, whether regular or occasional contributors, were aspiring writers: they “intended to write something, some day” (Introduction 5). Gargoyle editor Florence Gilliam covered Parisian theatre in the Tribune Sunday Magazine (May 4–25, 1924). Henry Miller, later editor of Booster/Delta, worked as a proofreader for the Tribune while writing Tropic of Cancer. Kay Boyle, involved with This Quarter and Transition, was an occasional contributor to the Tribune, and Samuel Putnam, editor of the New Review, contributed intermittently (Ford, “Who’s Who” 317–320). Ford Madox Ford wrote a column called “Literary Causeries,” in the first numbers of the Tribune’s Sunday magazine, February 17 to May 11, 1924, after which Eugene Jolas took over.

At the Paris Tribune Jolas met Elliot Paul, his assistant editor during Transition’s first year, Robert Sage, who eventually became editorial assistant, Virgil Geddes, Bravig Imbs, Emily Holmes

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29 Whether it was possible to live on the salary paid by the newspapers is another question. The wages at the Chicago Tribune were especially scanty compared with that of other newspapers, about $15 a week in francs, for ordinary news staff and not much more for higher ranks (Frantz 309). The work at the Tribune thus paid just enough to live frugally in Paris. The poor pay meant that few stayed for long, but apparently there was never a problem to fill an empty space (Weber 96).

30 In Ronald Weber’s words, “If the Herald was the hometown paper of the established Right Bank American Colony, the Tribune filled the same role for the shifting Left bank expatriates” (76).

31 At one time, Gilliam is said to have been writing for all three American newspapers in Paris (Benstock, 382). She was also a theater critic for Erskine Gwinnie’s The Boulevardier, a Parisian take-off of the New Yorker edited by Arthur Moss, 1927–1932, and Paris correspondent for the New York publications the Theatre Magazine and Theatre Arts (Fitch 81).

32 In the words of the Tribune editor Roscoe Ashworth, the Sunday magazine was supposed to be “a combination . . . of an American-style Sunday supplement and English weekly review” dealing with “literary and artistic matters” (Weber 94).

33 The contributors to Ford’s Transatlantic Review were not primarily Tribune staffers, although remarkably many were or became newspapermen and women. In The Left Bank Revisited, Hugh Ford claims that the Transatlantic Review published work by Tribuners (Introduction 5), but if so they were not part of the more well-known or frequent staffers. Two familiar names that appear, however, are George Antheil and Harold Stearns.
Coleman, Waverly Root, and several others who were to contribute to Jolas’s little magazine (Weber 76-77; H. Ford, Published 314; H. Ford, Introduction 5). In the “Recollections” of his time at the Paris Tribune, Ralph Jules Frantz goes as far as to claim that Transition “was conceived and born in the offices of Chicatrib” (309).14

The column that Jolas took over from Ford was initially titled “Through Paris Bookland,” but this was soon changed to “Rambles through Literary Paris.” According to Jolas, it “achieved a certain vogue,” thereby opening doors to literary circles in the city (Babel 75). It was through his journalistic work that Jolas met and interviewed writers and artists that later would become contributors to Transition: Philippe Soupault, Léon-Paul Fargue, Tristan Tzara, Hans Arp, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, André Breton, Paul Eluard, Robert Desnos, Michel Leiris and many more.

Jolas’s column dealt with many topics that would later appear in the magazine. For example, Jolas writes about the relation between France and America: “What does modern France think of American letters?” (June 22, 1924); “It is strange what a romantic lure the immensity of America has for the Continental mind” (September 7, 1924); is America’s youth “worshipping false gods, as far as French literature is concerned?” (August 10, 1924). Here he started exploring the standing of America, its culture and language, which, as mentioned above, appears repeatedly in Transition, for example in Jolas’s belief that “the immigrant development of the new America” held the possibilities for a fundamental revolution of the word (“King’s English” 146). There was also a 280-page “America” number (no 14, fall 1928). Among many interesting contributions, this number included a survey: “Why do Americans Live in Europe?” answered by Gertrude Stein, Robert McAlmon, Kay Boyle, Harold J. Sal Emerson, and many others. Thus, in and through his work at the Tribune, Jolas not only started building the modernist network that would be an advantage to him as editor of the magazine Transition, but he also began exploring the issues that he later expounded in the magazine.

Transition also appeared several times in the pages of the Tribune, including two reviews of its first number. It was commended in one review by Robert Sage—“the advent of Transition in Paris is of exceptional interest both to writers and to readers, for the program

14 Frantz had a career at the Tribune as rewriteman, copy editor, news editor, and managing editor, 1925-1934 (Ford, Who’s Who 318).
of this new literary magazine is joyfully devoid of gags and shackles”—and criticized and belittled in another by Alex Small, entitled “A Transitional Phenomenon”—“Here is the most ambitious effort of the young, and, in the usual sense, most unsuccessful writers of the exiles” (Sage 245; Small 245). As the magazine ceased publication for two years in 1930, B. J. Kospoth wrote an article in the Tribune lamenting its passing, and once again stressing its connection with the newspaper: “As Jolas himself is fond of remembering, there is no little truth in the statement that Transition was in many respects ‘an offshoot of The Tribune’” (Kospoth 254).

**International Exchanges**

When examining the expatriate little magazines, modernism’s very real and practical concerns regarding internationalism emerge. The international aspirations are visible in a variety of ways, ranging from the inherent internationalism in a title such as the Exile, to the Transatlantic Review’s offer to prospective tourists: “the TRANSATLANTIC STAFF will give advice as to all kinds of shopping to intending visitors to Paris on receipt of a stamped and addressed envelope” (“Transatlantic Review: Paris Advertisement” i-ii). While most of the little magazines were in English, publications such as Echanges and Tambour were bilingual, publishing texts in English as well as French. The exotic had a particular allure. The first number of Broom contained an “interpretation” of an Otter-tail Indian chant by Lew Sarret (76–79), the September 1922 number contained reproductions of Chinese, South Indian and Javanese sculpture, and the January 1923 number featured an article on Maya art (Sacken 86–88). However, while the interest in international themes was occasionally global, it was mainly the contemporary relation between Europe and America that was in focus.

Although most contributors were American, the international setting in Paris proved an asset when it came to assembling material for a little magazine, as Florence Gilliam points out (32). Even if Gargoyle cannot boast of being the most international of the little magazines, the number of contributions from artists of nationalities other than American or British increased as the magazine continued and developed, and thus progressively lost part of its Greenwich Village stamp. Gargoyle could no longer be described as just “Greenwich Village in Montparnasse” (Cowley, Exile’s 275). Many of the international artists contributing their writing or artwork to Gargoyle were living in Paris at the time, and its editors seemed ex-
pecially attracted by the large group of Russian artists that came together in Paris in the 20s after the 1917 revolution, as illustrated by the following extract from Arthur Moss’s regular piece “Entr’acte”:

At the corner of Boulevard Montparnasse and rue Campagne-Première is a picturesque little café wherein groups of artists and writers gather nightly to discuss l’art et la vie. Beside the French groups there is an association of Russians called Palata Poetofo. In its ranks are many distinguished exponents of the Seven Arts including the poets Marc-Ludovic Taloff, Valentin Parmak whose portrait by Soudeikine appears in this issue, Georges Evangouloff, Serge Charchoun, and A. Guinguer; the critics Snosko-Borovsky, André Levinson, and Jean Chuzeville; and the painters Goudiapivili, and Serge Soudeikini. The walls of the café are always covered with the art of the various national groups. One realizes here, that geography and politics mean nothing in the world of art. (19)

_Gargoyle_ provides ample evidence of how the editors’ networks expanded from the Greenwich Village circle. Apart from the large group of Russian exiles, the artists and writers reproduced or published in _Gargoyle_ vol. 1, nos. 1-6, and vol. 2, nos. 1-4, included Spanish, Georgian, Swedish, British, Hungarian, Polish, Lithuanian, Japanese, and French contributors.

The little magazines were more or less successful in their endeavours to create an international or even transnational publication. Just as _Gargoyle_ set out to liberate Art from the restrictions of geography, Ford Madox Ford’s dream was a literary review that would promote Literature with a capital L: “no English, no French—for the matter of that, no Russian, Italian, Asiatic or Teutonic—Literatures: there will be only Literature” (qtd. in Poli 37).36

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35 Russian artists had always enjoyed and taken part of the artistic life of Paris, for example through the World Exhibitions in the nineteenth century and Serge Diaghilev’s _Saison Russes_ in Paris in 1907. (In the 20s Russian artists would contribute to Diaghilev’s famous _Ballet Russes._) However, after 1917 there was a much larger influx of Russians to European cities like Paris, Berlin, and Prague, and Paris, again, was the first choice. Hemingway noted this in an article for the _Toronto Daily Star_, February 25, 1922 in an article titled “Influx of Russians to All Parts of Paris” (98).

36 From the prospectus of the _Transatlantic Review_.

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As it turned out, however, even if Ford had wished to divide the space of the review “into equal portions devoted to French, English and American writing,” the review became more of an American organ, as “the preponderating share of its pages went to the Middle West” (Nightingale 315).

When considering the international aspect of the little magazines, the efforts of the editors of Transition are especially noteworthy. Contributions to this little magazine came from large parts of Europe, including exponents for the movements of expressionism (Doeblin, Benn, Grozs, Kafka, Edschmid, Stramm, Lasker-Schüler, Trakl, Schickele, Sternheim), dadaism (Ball, Huelsenbeck, Arp, Schwitters) and surrealism (Bréton, Aragon, Soupault, Desnos, Eluard, Gracq). Transition prided itself in presenting foreign artists and writers “in translation to the English-speaking world for the first time” (“Transition,” Advertisement, n.pag.). Even in the first issue one third of the contributions were translations, and over the years the contributors were, for example, French, Russian, German, Dutch, Bulgarian, Romanian, Czech, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish, and Peruvian. Several of the translations were made by the editors themselves, Eugene Jolas and Elliot Paul, or by the unofficial editor, Maria Jolas.37

Each issue of Transition can be seen as an example of the international modernist/avant-garde network that Eugene Jolas was creating and maintaining. This networking was never merely a matter of aesthetics, but was always wedded to the editor’s social and international/transnational concerns. Thus, during the first years of Transition, Jolas met with his expressionist German friends Carl Einstein and Hans Arp to discuss ways in which to combat the rise of German nationalism with what they call “a new expressionist ethos” (McMillan 53). The same belief informs the very last issue of Transition, no. 28. In this issue, Jolas collected “such intellectual and artistic forces of Europe and America as were not already enslaved by the shallow realism that had been introduced by the totalitarian” (E. Jolas, Babel 152).

The numerous translations only constitute one example of the very practical work involved in making Transition a successful promoter of the international avant-garde. Distribution of the publication, especially in the United States, was a special concern, and it is apparent that the promotion of the little magazines relied on the

37 See for example the Transition bibliography appended to no 22, February 1933.
efforts of a wide range of people. The promotion abroad was undertaken by bookshops (for example Frances Steloff’s Gotham Book Mart), associate editors abroad (Lola Ridge, American editor for Broom), and publishers (Thomas Seltzer for the Transatlantic Review). Steloff provided much practical aid in the U.S distribution of Transition,\(^{39}\) and the correspondence between the bookstore owner and Maria Jolas reveals their concerns regarding the U.S. customs’ confiscations of Transition and the need for new shipments and reprints.\(^{39}\) From the outset, Transition had a difficult time making it through the U.S. customs or postal authorities, as U.S. officials often deemed the contents of the little magazine obscene or in violation of the obscenity provisions of the U.S. Postal Code. The publication of James Joyce’s “Work in Progress” (that later became Finnegans Wake) was a problem as Ulysses had been banned in the U.S. since 1918. Presumably the presence of Joyce in the list of contents was enough to have U.S. officials scrutinize Transition.

Censorship was not the only distribution problem. Although printing costs in Europe were low, distribution of the publication was costly both in terms of effort and money. The Atlantic crossing was expensive for all the expatriate little magazines, but particularly for the magazines that had set up editorial office outside of Paris, like Broom and Secession. The first number of Broom was inexplicably held up in Naples and had to be delivered in person by Broom’s American representative Nathanael Shaw in Harold Loeb’s mother’s Pierce Arrow, with chauffeur and all (Loeb, Way 87). The September 1922 number was not only fraught with comical typographical errors, it also arrived in New York one month late and water-soaked; according to Loeb, “Broom never quite recovered from this disaster” (Way 139).

The Transatlantic Review also had distribution problems. Ford Madox Ford’s intention when launching the little magazine was that it should appear simultaneously in Paris, London, and New York. As it turned out, however, the New York numbers came

\(^{38}\) An ardent advocate of freedom of speech for writers, Steloff was among the first to recognize and promote authors such as James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Henry Miller, Kay Boyle and Andre Gide By advertising and selling avant-garde novels, poetry, and literary reviews, Gotham Book Mart attracted the attention of censors on several occasions, and on one such occasion, in 1928, the police confiscated more than 80 titles in the store (Gertzman 113).

out one month late due to shipping delays and rebinding of the copies.\textsuperscript{40} Ford even went as far as to question the honesty of the New York publisher, as the Transatlantic Review was faced with heavy debt charges when it ended its publication after only twelve issues (Nightingale 337).

Concluding Remarks

By describing modernist international networking, including the role of money, contacts and meeting places involved in the production of expatriate little magazines, we have aimed to contribute to a critical shift in modernist studies from a focus on individual writers and works to an analysis of the roles of people, the social spaces they inhabit, the networks that they create and the ideas they exchange. The sharing of texts across national borders should properly be seen as one key to the wide influence of the modernist movement, and it is important to recognize that the elevation of internationalism characteristic of the period was not merely an abstraction. The expatriate little magazines played a significant role in promoting new literature, international awareness and resistance to mass market publication, and this achievement required real effort, money, contacts and meeting places. The little magazines became centres for literary and artistic network; they gave new meaning to literature and artworks by providing a particular publishing format, by juxtaposing them in new contexts and placing them in dialogue with each other, as well as with ideas expressed in editorials and articles on social and political issues. Modernist masterpieces may be the products of individual genius, but they gain fuller meaning when the practical and collective process of their publication history is taken into account.

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\textsuperscript{40} The copies shipped to the U.S. were, according to Poli, rebound and from the May number (no 5) on they were marked with the date of the following month on the cover (93), which is why a December 1924 number in Paris is a January 1925 number in New York.
AnnKatrin Jonsson is assistant professor of English at the University College of Telemark, Norway. Her publications include Relations: Ethics and the Modernist Subject in James Joyce’s Ulysses, Virginia Woolf’s The Waves and Djuna Barnes’s Nightwood (2006). She is also the co-editor of a collection entitled Textual Ethos Studies—or Locating Ethics (2005). She is currently completing a book project together with Celia Aijmer Rydsjö on expatriate little magazines.

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“Retrograde” Religions and the “Kooky” Occult—Uncharted Territories in Cultural Maps of Modernism

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In “‘Published by Us, Written by Us, Read by Us’: Little Magazine Networks,” Celia Aijmer Rydsjö and AnnKatrin Jonsson re-examine expatriate American little magazines such as Exile, Transition, and Booster/Delta, this time with an eye to material circumstances and international networks. They contend that viewing little magazines in such a way shifts the focus of modernist studies from individuals to networks and spaces (61), reflecting the larger shift from the “Men of 1914” vision of the High Modernists to the broader perspective of the New Modernist Studies. Rather than taking an aesthetic or theoretical approach, Aijmer Rydsjö and Jonsson relocate their level of analysis to the streets, the cafés, and the basements of modernism, to the level of “intentional action and lived experience,” thus presenting to us an intriguing “cultural map of modernism” (41). Yet, this map, along with most other cultural maps of modernism, contains a nebulous territory that might well carry the warning that HERE BE DRAGONS. Within this void stew the marginal topics of spirituality and religion in general, or heterodoxy/occultism in particular.¹

¹ My conceptualization of the occult existing as a dangerous, even ridiculous, territory on Aijmer Rydsjö and Jonsson’s cultural map of modernism parallels Robert T. Tally Jr.’s consideration of utopia in literary cartography: a “bizarre, historical curiosity, a political dead-end or a false notion of social thought, like the powder of sympathy or bilious humors of medicine” (9). Yet, like Tally’s utopia in the face of a cynical postmodernism, the “bizarre, historical curiosity” of the occult is still all around us, providing imaginative alternatives in times or places where these alternatives would seem least likely. While utopia, as Tally sees it, can no longer be mapped in the real world (9), I attempt here to solidify the fantastical realm of heterodoxy and the occult in print culture as a recognized territory on a literary map. Still, my “new and better” (8) map is
My intention here is not to fault Aijmer Rydsjö and Jonsson’s cartography for leaving this particular territory uncharted—one essay can only do so much work!—but to illustrate how spiritual and religious concerns have been consistently exiled from most discussions of modernism, especially in relation to little magazines and other forms of material culture. Aijmer Rydsjö and Jonsson argue effectively for the “importance of the local and international networks that underlay [the] production and distribution” of little magazines (41); theirs is a premise of inclusion, so I will take this opportunity to further expand the networks under consideration and include some of their more unsavory or embarrassing characters and beliefs.

Aijmer Rydsjö and Jonsson focus on differing levels of interdependencies within these networks, giving specific attention to “the exchange of values, visions, ideas, financial circumstances, friendships, kinship, and sexual relationships” (42), all topics of interest in which most recent periodical histories routinely engage. To pursue another level of engagement, I would add “and spirituality” in the context of heterodox belief. If indeed “kinship” or “values” encompass this term, I maintain that the process of naming (and revealing) remains necessary, as it is in so much research on modernism.

As a case in point, consider Suzanne Churchill and Adam McKible’s 2005 article, “Little Magazines and Modernism: An Introduction.” Here, they mention how little magazines act as “open, heterogeneous social settings in which writers of various races, nationalities, and classes read and responded to each other’s work” (1). Again, this is a routine claim concerning the cultural work of little magazines. Churchill and McKible more specifically note that “aesthetic movements such as Futurism, Imagism, and Dada, or… political movements such as anarchism, socialism, and feminism” (4) all found a place for contemplation and debate within the pages of little magazines. They reiterate this claim in the introduction to their 2007 edited collection, Little Magazines and Modernism: New Approaches (6). Surprisingly, in both the short article and in the lengthier introduction to this important book, there is no sustained attention to spirituality or religion, forces that must surely connect

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2 See Brooker and Thacker’s The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazines as well as Brown and Tulsa Universities’ Modernist Journals Project for their valuable advancements of scholarship in these areas.
people and networks as much as, if not more than, the given aesthetic and political movements. In both of these texts, and in so many other periodical studies, discourses of spirituality, religion, the metaphysical, the paranormal, the heterodox, the occult, et cetera, are all too often obscured behind the veil of more fashionable radicalisms; very few scholars openly consider these discourses or recognize their importance through the explicit act of naming them. It seems to me that what Leon Surette and Demetres Tryphonopoulos have referred to as that “scholarly ailment that might be called ‘occultophobia’” (xiv) is still endemic within contemporary modernist studies. While Aijmer Rydsgård and Jonsson’s work is excellent in returning attention to the street-level and material modernism that still needs much recuperation, the persistence of “occultophobia” relegates many interesting connections to the abandoned and dusty séance rooms of history.

To expand the connections between material circumstance in relation to heterodoxy and little magazines, consider Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich’s classic definition of the little magazine, upon which Aijmer Rydsgård and Jonsson begin their discussion: “a little magazine is a magazine designed to print artistic work which for reasons of commercial expediency is not acceptable to the money-minded periodicals or presses” (qtd. in Aijmer Rydsgård and Jonsson

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3 Churchill and McKible repeatedly emphasize race, class, gender, aesthetics, and sexuality as important topics for analysis in recent periodical studies, but it is not until page sixteen of the introduction to Little Magazines and Modernism that they make any mention of spirituality; even then, it is only to reveal the title of Bruce Clarke’s chapter, “Suffragism, Imagism, and the ‘Cosmic Poet’: Scientism and Spirituality in The Freewoman and The Egoist.” When explaining the significance of this chapter, Churchill and McKible look only at how “Anglo-American modernism developed within a shifting political and aesthetic constellation and that little magazines were an essential crucible for this development” (16-17). As has become commonplace, the actual spiritual beliefs and practices held by modernist writers, and the great influence of these beliefs and practices on Transatlantic culture as a whole, are once again discounted in favor of political and aesthetic considerations so that the heterodox, the occult, the mystic, or, in this case, the “cosmic,” are again segregated from discussions of modernism as a larger movement. It is as though Churchill and McKible wash their hands of the matter and defer to Clarke, who ably handles the topic (although the loaded term “occult” is never used).

4 Surette and Tryphonopoulos allege that “literary scholarship has neglected—even suppressed—the important contribution of occult speculation to the theories and practices of the High Modernists” (xiii).
Little magazines “are willing to lose money, to court ridicule, to ignore public taste, willing to do almost anything—steal, beg, or undress in public—rather than sacrifice their right to print good material” (qtd. in Aijmer Rydsjö and Jonsson 41). Such an eye to spectacle brings the most notorious occultist of the twentieth century to mind: Aleister Crowley. As Mark Morrisson explains in his 2008 article, “The Periodical Culture of the Occult Revival: Esoteric Wisdom, Modernity and Counter-Public Spheres,” Crowley’s little magazine, *Equinox*, operated at a loss, subsidized from his personal fortune (16-17). Beautifully bound in white cloth and adorned with gold leaf (16), *Equinox* was a sacrifice on Crowley’s part. He willingly made it to further his spiritual, aesthetic, and political ends. Concerning the latter, Crowley was determined to embarrass the fragmenting Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn—whose adherents included William Butler Yeats, Algernon Blackwood, Florence Farr, and MacGregor Mathers—by publishing its secret rituals (17). Crowley’s deluxe magazine brings to mind Aijmer Rydsjö and Jonsson’s observation that some little magazines were “collector’s items by choice from the very start” (14); Crowley was certainly aware of the cultural *caché* afforded to the deluxe material object, and he capitalized on it to wage his personal war on his former colleagues.


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5 Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich’s canonical study of modernist little magazines, however thorough, is not complete. Churchill and McKible point out that “the contributions of African Americans, political radicals, and women are regularly neglected, belittled, or misunderstood” (9), as are, of course, heterodox beliefs and practices. The only mention of heterodox practices comes in Chapter 10, “Variations on the Psychoanalytic Theme,” in which they are presented as surrealist, irrationalist, and vertigralist, while their spiritual or occult associations are glossed over. For example, when considering *Transition* magazine, Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich refer to editor Eugene Jolas’s articulation of a “night mind” where the “wisdom of the ages” (qtd. in 178) reveals itself through “the dream, hypnosis, automatic writing, and in half-waking states” (178). Though stripped of their occult associations, such phenomena could be ripped straight from the pages of Yeats’s often misunderstood “occult” texts, *A Vision*, or “Per Amica Silenti Lunae.”

6 Morrisson’s article is rare for its thorough treatment of the occult connections to the material culture of modernism.
note of its “mixed politics, philosophy, and aesthetics with a socialist agenda inspired by the writings of Nietzsche” (408). Latham makes no mention of Orage’s “hardcore” occult beliefs, nor does he draw attention to the odd advertisements and reviews scattered among the pages of The New Age, even though he rightly argues that advertisements must be given due consideration in periodical studies rather than being dismissed as mere paratexts (412). He goes as far as to credit The New Age with playing a “key role in launching modernism in Britain and the larger English-speaking world” (410)—no small claim—but, as we see all too often, this “key role” is largely attributed to the political, never the spiritual, radicalism of this highly influential periodical. Latham’s great success in his

7 Martin Wallace notes in The New Age under Orage: Chapters in English Cultural History that Orage, a member of the Theosophical Society (286), became preoccupied with spiritualism after the Great War (285). Wallace describes Orage’s spiritualist phase as the “least successful… of the magazine’s history” (285). However, Orage’s heterodox beliefs eventually made great waves as they came to influence Ezra Pound. Leon Surette mentions in The Birth of Modernism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, and the Occult that Orage introduced Pound to a much “harder” brand of occultism than what he would have seen while working with Yeats and, of equal importance, introduced him to the “political and economic radicalism” (34) that would result in his infamous affinity with fascism. While The New Age is not an explicitly occult publication like Equinox or Lucifer, Orage’s interest in such phenomena manifests on a number of occasions. In the inaugural 2 May 1907 issue of The New Age under Orage’s editorship, there is an advertisement for Harold Monro’s argument for the survival of the soul after bodily death, entitled “The Evolution of the Soul.” In the 7 December 1907 issue, Frederick Richardson negatively reviews it for its lack of originality and style (112-113). Later in the publication’s history, the anonymous medical contributor “M.B. Oxon” writes a sincere essay on the psychological and psychical implications of prophecy in dreams (347); later still, Otto Weininger waxes metaphysical (341-343), and an anonymous reviewer (perhaps Orage) mocks an agnostic book on self-healing in that same issue (346). While many reviews of heterodox literature in The New Age pan their subjects, the very fact of their inclusion and acknowledgment in this publication is significant in itself.

8 Later, Latham discusses The Freewoman and its emphasis on suffragism and feminist politics (410), yet makes no mention of Dora Marsden’s fascination with “the cosmic,” nor does he mention the occult in reference to May Sinclair when discussing The Little Review (410-411). Sinclair, whose works of fiction were influenced by pre-Freudian psychologists J.F. Herbart and William James, contain occurrences of supernormal phenomena such as mediumship, telepathy, possession, and distance healing. George Johnson notes in Dynamic Psychology in Modernist British Fiction that Sinclair was an active member of the Society for Psychical Research, and he goes on to criticize previous Sinclair
work, like Aijmer Rydström and Jonsson’s essay, lies in its apt alignment of periodical studies with a less monolithic way of understanding modernism (as opposed to modernist book studies with its privileging of the almighty unitary “Author”). My intervention here is by way of expansion and not contradiction. I am simply trying to show that even when networks of little magazines are the subject of discussion, spiritual and/or religious networks are relegated to footnotes if they are mentioned at all. The occult is both a natural and necessary expansion in the project of recontextualizing the print history of modernism, for which Latham is a key voice, and to which Aijmer Rydström and Jonsson here make a vital contribution.

When we at last turn our attention directly back to those same networks considered by Aijmer Rydström and Jonsson, we will find that I have not been too arbitrary in dragging the discussion into the abyss of spirituality and religion vis-à-vis heterodoxy; interesting connections can be made here regarding *Booster/Delta*. In James Warne Monroe’s consideration of the occult and automatic writing in his 2007 article, “The Way We Believe Now: Modernity and the Occult,” he refers to the medium Hélène Smith’s alleged channeling of a disembodied Martian spirit, who told a room of stunned observers tales of its language, civilization, and history. The experiences of Smith, and other mediums like her, attracted much attention throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One such interested personality was the surrealist André Breton, who admired the raw creativity of Smith’s process. While Breton remained ambivalent about the aesthetic value of Smith’s creative products, he did publish her automatic scripts in his magazine *Le Minotaure* (Monroe 69). Breton’s lasting interest in automatic writing is evident in his essay, “The Automatic Message,” and his work was frequently translated by fellow surrealist, David Gascoyne. Both men contributed to *Booster/Delta*, the pages of which announce Gascoyne’s authorship of “a book on surrealism,” presumably *A Short Survey of Surrealism*. As we have seen several times now, treatments of avant-garde aesthetic movements (in this case, Surrealism) banish or forget outspoken occult figures like Smith yet praise and remember those like Breton and Gascoyne. This omis-

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Note: For the biographical information, see Booster 3 (November 1937): 49.
sion, like so many others, could be attributed in part to masculinist biases in modernist studies, but it is apparent here that “occultophobia” is another contributing factor. Monroe makes a similar connection when he states that “until the mid-1980s, historians of Europe generally associated ‘modernity’ with secularization, and hence have tended to perceive any social or cultural development indicating the continued health of religion in any form as retrograde or irrelevant” (70). He extends this observation to Smith directly, claiming that “cultural and intellectual historians have usually told the story of this period from the point of view of the avant-garde—they have paid close attention to Breton, while almost entirely ignoring Smith” (70).

There are still more pertinent connections between the occult, surrealism, Booster/Delta, and its editorial committee consisting of Alfred Perlès, Henry Miller, Anaïs Nin, Lawrence Durrell, Michael Fraenkel, and others. This ever-playful periodical cheekily features a “Department of Metaphysics and Metempsychosis,” edited by Fraenkel, and the Xmas 1938 issue contains an article on astrology by Conrad Moricand, entitled “Nijinksy Devant l’Astrologie,” that is written in Swiss French and accompanied by an esoteric diagram. There are no other submissions quite like this, but its strangeness suits Booster/Delta well. Moricand did, after all, perform astrological readings for most members of the editorial committee, and he even considered Miller an apprentice mage of sorts. Suddenly, the “mystical vision of the inclusiveness of Paris life” (44) that Aijmer Rydström and Jonsson attribute to Henry Miller takes on a deeper meaning.

In fact, a close reading of Aijmer Rydström and Jonsson’s essay reveals several instances in which an occulted spiritual language in their subject matter struggles to emerge. However, it does so only in the context of little magazines and not that of spirituality itself: Sisley Huddleston describes This Quarter as a “parish magazine” (40); the editors of Gargoyle speak of the prejudices that must be

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10 The Oxford English Dictionary defines metempsychosis as “transmigration of the soul, passage of the soul from one body to another; esp. (chiefly in Pythagoreanism and certain Eastern religions) the transmigration of the soul of a human being or animal at or after death into a new body of the same or a different species.”

11 In Perlès’s book, My Friend Henry Miller, Moricand is quoted describing Miller as “a man of great culture, [who] had recently begun to take an interest in occultism, astrology and magic” (123). Moricand apparently “lost count of the number of horoscopes” he charted for Miller and his friends (123).
discarded “before the spirit is free to receive direct impressions of life” (46); the manifesto-writing collaborators of The New Review decry a decade filled with “pretenders, corpse-raisers, and cheap miracle men” (47); and Eugene Jolas of Transition asks if American youth are “worshipping false gods, as far as French literature is concerned” (56). While this undead vocabulary of spirituality and religion lingers on, the conversation has shifted to other topics. These references reach us like the light of doomed stars beckoning to us from the void. We see the glare, but not the source.

It seems to me that a resurrection is in order; the spiritual dimensions of periodical culture deserve their worthy mention in mainstream discussions of modernism. Most critics speak only of aesthetic and political movements while devaluing the occult face of these same movements. They forget the outspoken occult practitioners, ignore the strange beliefs of the writers or the unorthodox techniques they use, and they focus only on the aesthetic products, and not the processes, of these writers and movements. Too often, researchers must go to specialized (and often marginalized) sources for frank discussions of the impact of spirituality and religion on modernist periodicals, sometimes running the risk of the popular rather than the peer-reviewed. These unfashionable topics warrant their own concrete territory on cultural maps of modernism, present and future. After all, this territory is a synecdoche for modernism itself, and within it fluctuates the same tensions that ripple throughout New Modernist Studies as a whole: high versus low, elite versus mass, individuality versus collectivism, science versus religion, radicalism versus conservatism, and private versus public (or esoteric versus exoteric, if you prefer). “Retrograde” religions and the “kooky” occult ought not to be exiled to the Land of Dragons. Rather, these things are modernism—just like little magazines.

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The Personal Landscape & New Apocalypse Networks: Philhellenic, Anarchist, & Surrealist Late Modernisms

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Beginning with Stephen Spender and ranging from Samuel Hynes through Bernard Bergonzi, the established reading of literature from the 1930s and 40s has been constructed through the critical lens of the Auden generation, running through Orwell and Graham Greene to the Angry Young Men and The Movement. Literature of the 30s grew increasingly toward communist and socialist interests, war-poetry failed to appear, anti-fascism rebelled against its Modernist forebears, and after the war creative networks ran across the Atlantic rather than to Europe, making New York and Greenwich Village the new Left Bank to the generation that emerged. Or so the story goes. Influential moves to discuss Late Modernism, in particular by Tyrus Miller and Jed Esty, have broadened this scope, but the New Modernist Studies is still in the process of engaging the other perspectives on and movements of the late 1930s and 40s. Established notions of Modernism and now Late Modernism have also long excluded Anarchism as a meaningful political philosophy in relation to the activist and aesthetic practices of authors from the 1910s through the 1940s. The literary voices responsible for the received histories of this period, largely those of the Auden generation writing of itself, often disregard anarchist voices or regard them in the same vein presented by Joseph Conrad in The Secret Agent: bomb-flinging misfits bent on meaningless destruction and impossible ideals. In response to Fabian views shared by the likes of George Bernard Shaw, Edward Car-

1 In particular, the excellent work begun by Damon Marcel DeCoste and the precocious work of James Keery. Otherwise, we must look back to Gillespie’s 1975 work “New Apocalypse for Old: Kermode’s Theory of Modernism” or dissertations from the 1970s.

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penter, and H.G. Wells, Modernism and Late Modernism offered a sharp political rebuttal. Although Carpenter and Shaw had links to Pound and Eliot through *The Egoist*, and Leonard and Virginia Woolf were both Fabians, the dominant political turn of Modernism was decidedly authoritarian. In critical contrast, David Weir’s *Anarchy and Culture*, David Kadlec’s *Mosaic Modernism*, and Allan Antliff’s *Anarchist Modernism* detail the strong though less acknowledged anti-authoritarian undercurrent in modernist works. Yet, for the core poetic figures of Modernism, politics make a sharp turn to the Right. Pound’s early ties to Anarchism are distinctly individualist, quasi-Libertarian, and subsequently lead to his Fascism, as detailed by Weir and again recently by Rebecca Beasley in *Ezra Pound and the Visual Culture of Modernism*. Eliot’s and Hulme’s anti-democratic views were far from anti-authoritarian, despite early ties to *The Egoist* (Beasley 47-61). By the time the High Modernists were succeeded by the younger generation of Late Modernists, Fabian socialist values were *passé* even while Socialism regained its appeal. Although condemnation of the fascist elements of Modernism spread rapidly among the next generation, as early as 1937, George Orwell’s *Road to Wigan Pier* derides the Fabians, and Carpenter perhaps most specifically, noting (with great color) the “prevalence of cranks wherever Socialists are gathered together. One sometimes gets the impression that the mere words ‘Socialism’ and ‘Communism’ draw towards them with magnetic force every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, ‘Nature Cure’ quack, pacifist, and feminist in England” (147).

I contend something different. Although hegemonic Modernism approved of the Auden generation, and Fabian artistic networks receded as the movement gained institutional authority, the underlying anarchist threads remained a vital part of poetic activity into the 30s and 40s, and beyond. A critical tension also exists in scholarship—Miller’s *Late Modernism* opens and closes with his quintessential instance of Late Modernism: Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* as described by George Orwell (7-8, 209-10). Yet, beyond naming there is no analysis or discussion. Tyrus Miller’s reference to Miller, which is followed by a palpable avoidance of Miller for the rest of the volume, contends “The earliest and still one of the best diagnoses of the new literary dispensation that emerged in the 1930s may be found in George Orwell’s 1935 review of Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer*.” Orwell’s seminal essay leads him to claim

Miller avoids the progressive commitments of the Edwardi-
ans and the communist enthusiasms of the Auden generation; neither, however, does he exhibit modernist-style, and faith in the power of carefully crafted, difficult art to redeem the squalid realities of this sub-proletarian existence…. Miller writes neither to praise collective idleness nor to ally himself rhetorically with the grave-diggers of a dying culture, signing on to a future utopia of labor and endeavoring to bury it. (7-8)

This is identical to Orwell’s reading, but both fail to examine Miller’s expressly anarchist discussion of alternatives, such as in his “An Open Letter to Surrealists Everywhere,” which he was distributing via Cyril Connolly early in 1937. In other words, Miller is surely avoiding the Fabian views of the Edwardians and Communism for the simple reason that both run contrary to his explicitly anti-authoritarian position.

These geographic and political distinctions from the established narrative of 30s and 40s writing, as well as their anarchist rather than socialist, communist, or capitalist focus, have fallen prey to the myopic image of Anarchism—they are seen as apolitical. Orwell, when reviewing the Villa Seurat’s periodical The Booster, called it “Back to the Twenties” (in other words, back to Modernism and its difficult tipping toward Fascism) and tied its “personalist” approach to “some gesture of supreme futility, something so unutterably meaningless and stupid…. a safe and feeble way of hitting back at Hitler, Stalin, Lord Rothmore, etc.” (30). This is a shift since Orwell praised Miller in 1935, went to Spain less than ten months earlier wearing Miller’s coat, and knew well of his staunchly anti-authoritarian Anarchism.² Orwell inadvertently hits on the real matter when he notes “The only definitely comic feature in

² Although this side of Miller is overlooked, it is substantial and clear, beginning with this correspondence with Emma Goldman and running through his influential 1937 “An Open Letter to Surrealists Everywhere,” in which he contends “millions are now ready to fight [in World War II] for something they have ignominiously surrendered for the greater part of their lives” (157). Miller then bluntly contradicts the Parisian Surrealists in a manner reminiscent of the Spanish Civil War: “I am against revolutions because they always involve a return to the status quo. I am against the status quo both before and after revolutions. I don’t want to wear a black shirt or a red shirt. I want to wear the shirt that suits my taste” (160). In accepting Surrealism as a technique while rejecting its politics, Miller fuelled similar revisions among those who admired it but could not accommodate its orthodoxy (Gifford, “Surrealism’s” 36-64).
the magazine is the advertisements…. The entire tribe of Paris-American snob-shops… seem to have been caught” (30). Three weeks later he recommended Hugh Gordon Porteus review the second issue. At any rate, Orwell softened and praised the same works in “Inside the Whale” in 1940, which Tyrus Miller marks as the core of his exploration of Late Modernism.

Behind these peculiarities is a broad and important series of literary movements, leading through to the Cairo Poets, on whom this paper focuses. Miller’s network of artists and authors centred on the Villa Seurat in Paris in the 1930s, and their anarchist redevlopment of Surrealism played a major role in the development, and redirection, of English Surrealism, a movement that did not die with the opening of World War II but instead translated itself to locations outside of the immediate literary sphere of London and New York. Hints and archived networks from this other legacy of Late Modernism remain, and we find the Villa Seurat’s legacy and anarchist influences appearing in Herbert Read’s anarchist writing, the New Apocalypse movement, New Romanticism, the anarchist Circle authors in Berkeley and Big Sur in the 1940s, some of the peculiarities of Greek Modernism after the War, and also in the philhellenic Cairo War Poets who were identified with their periodical, Personal Landscape. More than any of these other groups, the Cairo Poets embody the overlapping forms of Late Modernism, and though they self-identified as “exiles” and “refugees,” Cairo

3 This was also after Durrell’s letter in the same periodical advised Orwell to tend to his own flying aspidistras, a rebuke Orwell may have taken to heart (Durrell, “Booster” 78-9)—his 1936 novel Keep the Aspidistra Flying has striking parallels to Durrell’s 1935 Pied Piper of Lovers, and Durrell emphasized this by echoing Orwell’s echo in his 1937 Panic Spring (Gifford, “Preface” viii-ix). Porteus notably had ties to the English Surrealists and Villa Seurat, seen in his reviews of Miller’s Tropic of Cancer (1934), Lawrence Durrell’s The Black Book (1938), and his publication in Personal Landscape under Durrell’s co-editorship in Cairo during the War when he was transferred from London.

4 Personal Landscape in its anthologized form is subtitled “An Anthology of Exile,” the various poets in its pages self-identify frequently in their criticism using the terms refugee and exile. Jonathan Bolton summarizes the group by writing “The internationalism of the forties was not caused only by the influx of foreigners and the enthusiasms of the magazine editors, however. As the war dragged on, countless Englishmen found themselves in strange places and felt compelled to explore poetically new landscapes and new societies. The most important group of exiles gathered in Alexandria and produced the quarterly Personal Landscape which included work by Lawrence Durrell, Bernard Spencer, Robin Fedden (the three editors), Terence Tiller, Robert Liddell, Keith
and Alexandria were often central rather than peripheral. In the Cairo Poets, I see an integration of Greek Modernism’s notion of allusion and Seferis’ unique revision of “Mythistorema,” the Villa Seurat’s revised Surrealism, and the antiauthoritarian political sensibilities that led in tandem to the New Apocalypse in London. Unlike other groups, the Cairo Poets unified these three threads, both literally and stylistically—Cairo held key figures from each of these movements and afforded them an opportunity to pool their mutual influences from the past several years into a cohesive aesthetic sensibility that grew from their High Modernist forebears with key interventions into modernist sensibilities. In other words, they prove the exception to the established sentiment noted in my first two sentences of this article.

**Narrative History**

The Villa Seurat group and its construction of an anarchist English Surrealism was broader than current criticism acknowledges, and this revises our sense of activities of the 30s and 40s. Hints and archived networks from this other Late Modernism remain, and Orwell’s “Back to the Twenties” emphasizes its reliance on modernist predecessors rather than Auden, although the link to *The Egoist* is misleading since the Anarchism promulgated through the Villa Seurat was antiauthoritarian rather than purely individualist. To echo Kenneth Rexroth’s assessment in 1949, this network comprised a major artistic interlocutor in the dominant narrative of the Auden Generation through its Anarchism and strong sense of the High Modernists as forebears. Rexroth, an outspoken anarchist, argued in his influential anthology *The New British Poets*:

In 1937 a change of taste, a reaction, set in. It was inconspicuous at first, but with the onset of universal war, most of the poetry being written in England was of a new and different kind. At the least it was a new manner, at the best it was a new vision. Most of its adherents and practitioners call themselves Romantics.... To use Assietsky’s phrase, [Auden’s] voice sounded hollow across a frontier and ocean. (vii)

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Douglas, Olivia Manning, Hugh Gordon Porteus and translations of work by Elie Papdimitriou, George Seferis, Cavafy, and Rilke, among others” (Bolton 41).
Rexroth associates Miller, Read, and Durrell with an anarchist tradition that led this “new vision” in 1937. He writes of Miller, “No other person of his generation has had so great an influence on the young” (xxiv). Retracing the outline of this “new vision,” Rexroth adds “[Comfort], Woodcock, and Savage are the most remarkable of the young men who came first to prominence during the War, and it is significant that they are all anarchists” (xxviii), and each was tied to Read, Miller, and Durrell through correspondence and mutual publication. What Rexroth does not note in his focus on the trinity of Dylan Thomas, Miller’s ‘group,’ and the anarchist New Apocalypse, is how closely these figures were tied to each other via the Villa Seurat. This group constitutes a significant movement in Late Modernism, one hinted at in major critical works but never fully articulated, one that created the direction in which English Surrealism subsequently developed under different names and guises.5

Although he never visited Cairo or Alexandria, Henry Miller had a long shadow that reached the poets stationed there during World War II.6 Apart from those who visited the Villa Seurat and became clandestine owners of Miller’s banned works, the periodicals produced through the Villa Seurat had a significant influence before and during World War II.7 The Booster and Delta were

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5 I should note the closest is Erwin Weins’ discussion of Irving Layton’s literary criticism, which aligns the New Apocalypse with the subsequent anarchist movements in London as well as the Black Mountain poets (in part through Robert Duncan, whom I have already noted had direct ties to the Villa Seurat and was deeply impacted by it), though his focus is on subsequent poetic influences and Canadian poetry rather than those leading into the New Apocalypse.

6 While it is purely anecdotal (though corroborated by both), Durrell was first greeted on entering Egypt by a government official whose first question upon seeing his passport (as a refugee) was if he was associated with the Villa Seurat and had ties to the surrealist author Henry Miller: “I was not thinking then of security risks but of the chance to talk about a world which was far removed from Alex[andrian] docks. As the parties were made up and sent off to Cairo, Durrell and I conversed in a slit trench in a sandy transit camp through the night, while the Alexandria barrage sent up its innumerable tracers to chase the German raiders from the sky” (Braun xxvii).

7 Perhaps the most surprising instance comes from Madison, Wisconsin, through the periodical Diogenese, which was edited by Arthur Blair (no relation to Orwell) and Frank Jones. In 1940, they wrote to Durrell through the Institute of English Studies in Athens (a front for British anti-fascist propaganda) to say “Both of us are admirers of your other work that we have read in SEVEN,
short-lived and gave an anarchist perspective on modernist practices through a shifting form of English-language Surrealism that rejected Surrealism’s communist beliefs. Miller’s close friend, Lawrence Durrell, took over production of *Delta* and engaged assistance from David Gascoyne, one of the first English Surrealists, and Tambimuttu. Both later became dissenting voices in London publishing circles, and both promoted the Cairo Poets after Durrell, Bernard Spencer, and Robin Fedden co-founded the journal *Personal Landscape* in Egypt.

That both periodicals proclaimed in their first issues “We have no plans for reforming the world, no dogmas, no ideologies to defend” (n.pag) from 1937-9 speaks to a ‘politics of the unpolitical’ in Herbert Read’s sense, and the work produced reflects the same, ranging from Durrell’s individualist escape from the political world in *The Black Book* and *Panic Spring* (the title of which intimates the impending crisis, opening as it does with revolution),

Miller’s *Colossus of Maroussi* and *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* produced in wartime, and Nin’s *Winter of Artifice*, which was only republished in its original 1939 form in 2008. Their close ties to and demonstrable influence over Gascoyne, Thomas, and Robert Duncan also stand out.

DELTA, PARTISAN REVIEW, PURPOSE, and elsewhere, and should like to be able to present some of your work for the American public in DIogenes… Also, I should mention that we would be delighted to consider some of your translations from modern Greek poets. I have read your work in this field in SEVEN and THE NEW ENGLISH WEEKLY, and, should it be permissible, we would particularly like to re-print the first poem by George Seferis, ‘Message in a Bottle’, which appeared in SEVEN some while ago” (n.pag). In addition to the expected names from the Villa Seurat circle, the short-lived *Diogenes* became a minor vehicle for the American avant-garde.

8 Patrick von Richthofen took great care to explore this political context in his encyclopedic unpublished dissertation, *The Booster/Delta Nexus* (1987), which was supported by the Baroness von Richthofen. The strong family ties to Max Weber and D.H. Lawrence are also notable.

9 I have recently reconstructed the anarchist sympathies implicit and explicit in Durrell’s notion of the “Heraldic Universe,” which was lauded by Miller and published in *Personal Landscape* (1942), *Proems* by the Fortune Press (1938, same press that first published Thomas, Gascoyne, and Barker), and *A Private Country* (1943, Faber & Faber), as well as his letters to Henry Miller. Findings were first presented at l’Université Paris X during the conference of the International Lawrence Durrell Society in July 2008 before publication in 2010 (Gifford, “Anarchist” 57-71).

10 Duncan published all of them in his short-lived periodical *Experimental Review* and continued with publication schemes through the 1940s.
Meanwhile, English Surrealism first endorsed Bréton’s communism, as did Herbert Read in his work from the 1936 London International Surrealist Exhibition, though Miller and Durrell criticized him for failing to uphold an ‘unpolitical’ Surrealism. Critics still claim English Surrealism quietly died a short time later, but retracing the early English Surrealist writers shows that they shifted Surrealism’s communist politics to Anarchism while retaining its methods, and the movement continued through the forties, maintaining contact with other international groups. As this network broadened across the Mediterranean, England, and America, it sparked friendships and modes of artistic production that lasted into the 1990s.

In 1939, Miller traveled to Greece to visit Durrell and George Seferis, the Greek poet who rendered the most influential translations of T.S. Eliot into Greek, hence instantiating Greek Modernism, which was coloured by Greek politics and the extensive Greek literary contact with Parisian Surrealists. This period of intense artistic interaction is recorded in Miller’s travel narrative The Colossus of Maroussi, in which he adapts Greek modernist notions of place and allusion to displace modernist notions of Tradition. However, for a network, the story continues after Miller’s eleventh hour departure for the safety of the USA. Seferis knew Durrell through their mutual, dear friend, the poet and translator Theodore Stephanides. And, Seferis was a significant figure in the Greek government, which became the Greek Government in Exile after the Nazi invasion. Durrell, Stephanides, and Seferis were forced to

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11 Apart from this period, Read is known for his outspoken anarchism.
12 Miller’s “An Open Letter to Surrealists Everywhere” was also an open rebuttal of Read’s Surrealism. Miller’s response to Read and forwarding of Durrell’s letters express this more clearly (Gifford, “Surrealism’s” 36-64; Miller “Henry Miller’s Letters” 7-10, 14-22).
13 For further discussion of this tie to the Parisian Surrealists, see Kayalis (95-110).
14 Stephanides is now an overlooked author. His memoirs for the 1930s and 40s have just been published with his late poetry, his war-time memoirs were already published by Faber & Faber, he collaborated with nearly all of the ‘biggest’ figures in Greek literature on translation projects, he studied radiology under Marie Currie, he wrote the definitive study of flora and fauna of the Ionian Islands, and he mentored a swath of young authors and naturalists. He holds the distinction of having three biological species named for him, as well as a comet and a crater on the Moon. He also published several critical translations through University Presses, yet he has oddly vanished from criticism.
evacuate Greece via Crete, and Crete to Egypt, where they continued to produce political and artistic works. Although it does not feature in Miller’s account, Durrell was involved in anti-fascist propaganda in Athens and Kalamata and remained so in Egypt (Stephanides 51–3, 56) while translating and boosting highly political Greek poets. For a few years, this network continued in Cairo, and its aesthetic shape is recorded in the journal Personal Landscape. In the midst of the military campaign, the group’s “personalist” emphasis is notable, as is the poets’ tendency toward surrealist metaphor, individualism, and avoidance of political proselytizing, the opposite of latter two being the greatest problems Hynes aligns with the Auden generation’s works from the same time (206). Notably, their activism avoided the authoritarian impulse in both Socialism and Egoism–cum–Fascism—it walks an antiauthoritarian path around Fabian and Modernist influences. It integrated the Villa Seurat’s revision to Surrealism, which is not surprising given their intimate ties to Miller, and this revision then became central to the English New Apocalypse and New Romantic movements. It also responded to uniquely Greek notions of tradition and landscape, often drawing on Seferis’ view of Eliot and Constantine Cavafy.

Once in Egypt, several writers composed the Personal Landscape poets: Keith Douglas, G.S. Fraser, Bernard Spencer, Robin Fedden, Robert Liddell, Hamish Henderson, Elie Papadimitriou, and Olivia Manning, among others, including Seferis and Durrell themselves. But, this was not a random group tossed together by war—Fraser had already been highly active in English Surrealism networks and had published extensively on and in the New Apocalypse movement, which adopted the Villa Seurat’s anarchist revision of Surrealism with purposeful automatism: the “organic” element of the subsequent New Romantics. Fraser also published the periodical Orientations while in Egypt, which mainly included the Personal Landscape authors. Durrell was already published through the Villa Seurat, and recent research shows his deep influence on English Surrealists and the New Apocalypse, none of which has been noted in published criticism to date but is thoroughly acknowledged by the writers themselves in their papers. John

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15 The recurrence of “Personalist” in the New Apocalypse, expressly tied to Anarchism, is important as well.
16 This first came to light in the Henry Miller/Herbert Read correspondence in 2007. The Villa Seurat as a whole exercised an extensive influence on English
Waller was also a supporter, though he was more closely tied to the servicemen’s poetry journal in Cairo, *Salamander*, which was edited and published by Durrell’s old friend, the poet John Gawsworth, who had already edited surrealist materials in London. And, Waller had published through Oxford the little journal *Kingdom Come*, which included Herbert Read. He had also supported publication of *Seven*, the largely surrealist journal run by Nicholas Moore prior to the war, which mixed the Villa Seurat and those who would become the New Apocalypse poets with the mainstays of Hynes’ Auden generation. Moore went on to become a key figure in the New Apocalypse, but notably, the key inspiration for these London-based publications was the earlier creation of *The Booster* and *Delta* in Paris through the Villa Seurat. Likewise, the Cairo Poets not only included Seferis, Stephanides, and Papadimitriou, but also the Philhellenes Robert Liddell (the first biographer of Cavafy) and Hilary Corke, who were already lecturing at King Fuad University. Like Durrell, Liddell produced anti-fascist propaganda in Athens prior to the Nazi invasion, though this is only recorded in his unpublished correspondence in the Seferis Archive in the Gennadius Library. Hamish Henderson is also poorly remembered for his 1950 translation of Gramsci’s *Letters from Prison* (titled *Gramsci’s Prison Letters*), first published in part in 1957 and at greater length in 1974 in *The New Edinburgh Review*.

**Critical Contexts**

This long background to the Cairo Poets and New Apocalypse

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17 Durrell, Miller, Thomas, Gascoyne, Fraser, Symons, Terence Tiller, and Alex Comfort all figure prominently. Their early surrealist works are particularly significant, often receiving their first publication, as with Thomas’ “Adventure to a Work in Progress” and Durrell’s “Zero” and “Asylum in the Snow.”

18 This later became the University of Cairo, and D.J. Enright came to the University of Alexandria, then the Farouk University, in 1947 to teach and complete his dissertation. Among their students was Dr. Mursi Saad el-Din, who eventually became the editor-in-chief of *Egypt Today* and was an important translator of modern Egyptian literature into English. He was an important spokesman and advisor to the Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat at this time and was particularly important to him during the secret negotiation of the Camp David Accords in September 1978. He took Spencer’s criticism seminar before graduating in 1943.
suggests that they arrived carrying the political and aesthetic views of pre-existing late modernist antiauthoritarian movements, most of which began as anarchist revisions to Surrealism in the Villa Seurat, and in uniquely Greek adaptations of Modernism. Critics now regard the New Apocalypse and the Cairo Poets as unconnected, and the reason is simple—apart from unpublished correspondences and the trail of mutual publication in pre-war little magazines that receive no scholarly attention, there is little to connect them. However, when these difficult materials are accounted for (their mutual advertising, their mutual publication, and the transportation of Apocalyptic poets to North Africa), a different situation emerges.

The Cairo Poets and the New Apocalypse overlapped and corresponded during the war, and both derive from a revision to Surrealism via the Villa Seurat group. Moreover, this intervention in the dominant tropes of the period—the antiauthoritarian revision of Surrealism and individualist modernist aesthetics—garnered serious attention from the High Modernists themselves: Pound very favourably reviewed *Tropic of Cancer*, Eliot gave uncharacteristically effusive praise to Miller and Durrell and expressly described George Barker as the finest poet of the generation. Eliot also sustained correspondences to the Cairo Poets, even when they could not write back. Setting aside purely aesthetic sensibilities of poetic merit, this indicates where attention was directed in the mid 30s through 40s. In breadth of production, immediate influence on contemporaries, and subsequent influence on emerging international literary movements, this post-surrealist branch of English Surrealism was one of the strongest and most widespread movements in English letters between the Auden generation’s appearance in the early 30s and the Movement in the 50s.

However, both the Cairo Poets and the New Apocalypse never significantly entered critical studies of Modernism. The Cairo Poets briefly regained their fame after Durrell’s *The Alexandria Quartet* became a publishing sensation in the late 50s and 60s, but critical

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19 The natural contrast here would be Esty’s *A Shrinking Island* since Durrell was the most prominent of British authors who refused to shrink with the Empire in the 50s and 60s. His flight from Cyprus amidst fears of assassination shortly after the Suez Crisis marks both an end to the British Empire and as a direct result Durrell’s turn to the most cosmopolitan and successful period in his career. Yet, Durrell’s continued cosmopolitanism was Anthony Burgess’ primary criticism, for which he argued “[The Alexandria Quartet] might have seemed more original if it had been set in a British middle-class environment” (97). In the same breath, he praised Olivia Manning (also of the Cairo Poets,
responses never integrated into the New Modernist Studies nor the growing notion of Late Modernism. As Joseph Boone notes, they vanished from Modernist circles, even though this network in general has continued to generate a significant body of scholarship (dozens of monographs, a couple hundred dissertations, and thousands of articles). Boone recounts some of the thrill surrounding this circle:

It is hard to recapture the intense excitement that greeted the publication of Lawrence Durrell’s *Alexandria Quartet* in the late 1950s. My parents’ generation keenly awaited each successive volume with a sense of participating in the making of a masterpiece. The success of the *Quartet* could be measured not only in its popular reception and generally glowing reviews, but also, on an institutional level, in the literally hundreds of scholarly articles it spawned in the following decade: the Durrell entries in the MLA Bibliography for this period vie in number with those accorded long-time favorites like Lawrence, Joyce, and Faulkner. Simultaneously, the *Quartet* found its way onto Ivy League syllabi; while Albert J. Guerard sang Durrell’s praises at Harvard, Walton Litz made the *Quartet* a highlight of his modern fiction course at Princeton. This masterpiece, it seemed clear, was going to be around for a long while. Durrell’s critical stock, ironically, couldn’t be lower today. (Boone 73)

Much the same could be said of Miller. I suggest this discord reflects the critical predispositions of modernist readings of this period rather than any intrinsic sense of quality or a viable notion of their impact on literary history. An anarchist or at least personalist movement, even if widespread and influential, does not mesh easily with the assumed dominance of the Auden group and its notion of social-historical narrative—and, the Auden group, after all, wrote the history.

It is equally easy to forget that Lawrence Clark Powell, when

and who housed Durrell’s first wife during their divorce) based on the English focus of her Balkan trilogy, though again its foreign locale is Burgess’ main dislike. Burgess’ second wife, with whom he was having an affair at the time of these reviews, was the first Italian translator of the *Quartet*, which adds a curious complication to his uniformly negative reviews of the work as execrable, primarily due to its setting and resulting sadism.
building UCLA’s literary collections, placed Miller and Durrell at the top of his priorities for manuscript acquisitions, and that Harvard and Princeton were matched by Yale, which holds the most complete print collection of Durrell works in the world. This is due to Donald Gallup’s willingness to sell parts of Yale’s Joyce collection to purchase Villa Seurat material (Gallup 110). A stronger example is Gallup’s recounting of an episode in which he rapidly departed from the Gotham Book Mart amidst cries of “Stop, thief!” from Frances Steloff when he left with works marked “not for sale” that she’d intended for her own private collection: The Booster and Delta from the Villa Seurat (Gallup 110).

The same does not hold true for the networks that rose around them in distinction from the Auden generation: the New Apocalypse, the Personal Landscape Poets, the New Romantics, and the Berkeley Circle poets all languish. In America, the anarchosurrealist tendencies of the Beats and Robert Duncan have remained visible, but their close ties to the Villa Seurat are largely ignored. Duncan carried on an affair with Anaïs Nin, published Durrell and Miller, dedicated poetry to Durrell, and sought publication repeatedly and over a period of years for the surrealist materials generated by the Villa Seurat in the 1930s. All of this is easily documented in Duncan’s papers and publications history, but it does not receive significant discussion in critical studies of his works or the biographies, even with the excellent recent Collected Works and new biographies. Miller’s direct influence on the Beats is also widely acknowledge by the likes of Kerouac, Hart, Bukowski, and Burroughs, but it does not find its way into criticism.

Similarly, Spender openly disregards other movements (13, 85), and Bergonzzi only fleetingly notes the Cairo Poets in Wartime and Aftermath. His main concern is that Fraser, a Scottish poet stationed in Cairo during the war, makes a simplified distinction between the poets in London and those in Cairo. After this paragraph, he drops the topic from the book without discussing Tambimuttu or the New Apocalypse. Yet, this is illustrative. The work in question is Fraser’s “Recent Verse: London and Cairo” in Tambimuttu’s Poetry London, published in 1944 (215–219), but the critical perspective reveals Bergonzzi’s tendency to place London as

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20 The Villa Seurat, the New Apocalypse, the activities of anarchist poets, and the Cairo War Poets all remain unmentioned in Spender’s collection The Thirties and After, nor does Keith Douglas make the list, despite Spender’s discussion of war poetry.
centre with the Auden group as the “London poets.” Fraser had already published on this topic in *Personal Landscape* (Cairo) and in the London anthology *The White Horseman* in which he focuses on the New Apocalypse movement rather than the Auden group (“Apocalypse” 3-31). The New Apocalypse derived from the anarchist network growing out of the Villa Seurat and English Surrealism, in large part via the periodical *Seven*, which cooperated with and entered into mutual publications with Durrell and Miller, often including work by Fraser, who then found himself in Cairo publishing through *Personal Landscape*. Likewise, the Grey Walls Press, which published nearly all of this material, maintained the same stable of Surrealist authors prior, during, and after the war and up to the 1970s. Moreover, Tambimuttu, who published the 1944 article to which Bergonzi refers, also published the Cairo Poets extensively during and after the war, including a special issue of *Poetry London* dedicated to them in 1943. Tambi also frequently dedicated himself to war anthologies such as *Return to Oasis*. He was published in the Villa Seurat’s *Delta* prior to the war and published the anthologized version of *Personal Landscape* in his *Poetry London* imprint, the same one Bergonzi uses. It is then surprising that while Bergonzi allows for a simplified version of Fraser’s argument, he overlooks the rebuttal in the same issue that directly follows it from Tambimuttu, which points directly to the kinship between the two groups. It is even more surprising that since all these articles grant centrality to Durrell’s position in the Cairo group, as well as noting his inspiration for the New Apocalypse, which expended considerable energies publishing him, none note

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21 That *Seven*, The Grey Walls Press, the New Apocalypse anthologies, the New Romantics anthologies, Alex Comfort’s various periodicals, and most English Surrealist material from the late 1930s and 1940s were created through one small press should also be noted, especially since the two printers, Moore and Wrey Gardiner, were close to the Villa Seurat and identified with English Surrealism while also continuing to publish Durrell and Miller for decades. The exceptions are volumes published through Herbert Read at Routledge.  

22 The *Poetry London* imprint later drew largely on the network created around the Villa Seurat. Notable authors and books include Elizabeth Smart’s *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*, Durrell’s *Cefalu*, Miller’s *The Cosmological Eye* and *Sunday After the War*, Vladimir Nabokov’s *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, Keith Douglas’ *Alamein to Zem Zem*, and Cleanth Brooks’ *Modern Poetry and the Tradition*. Notably, Durrell introduced Elizabeth Smart to his longstanding friend George Barker, who was also David Gascoyne’s flatmate. The ensuing affair is recounted in Smart’s *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* and Barker’s *The Dead Seagull*. 
Durrell’s article in the same issue, on the same topic. Contrary to Bergonzi’s perspective, the London poets of Fraser’s article (the New Apocalypse) were very much on the geographic margin of a movement based in Paris (the Villa Seurat) and then North Africa (the Personal Landscape poets), rather than the converse. The direct references to Durrell cement the tie, showing the London poets evolving from a previous movement, and Tambimuttu (on the same page as Fraser) notes that the two movements have poets in common, though the senior of the group were sent to North Africa. Most importantly, these London poets were not of the Auden group, yet Bergonzi’s vision lives on: London as center and London as Auden.

Hence, the conceptual, political, and aesthetic background for the New Apocalypse grew directly from the Villa Seurat network’s influence on English Surrealism, and Henry Treece’s greatest frustration in the New Apocalypse was failing to secure support from Dylan Thomas, who had been closely tied to and influenced by the Villa Seurat (Gifford, “Delta” 19-23). It is also worth noting that biographies of Thomas and his published letters overlook or misdate materials that demonstrate this influence.

These London-based poets and writers, in Fraser’s not Bergonzi’s sense, focused their attention, not surprisingly, on London’s troubles and explicit political agitation: anarchist agitation, despite their strong military ties. This is made clear in the contributions of Alex Comfort and Herbert Read. Read’s Anarchism is famous, and Comfort was a major anarchist and notable poet prior to his fame from The Joy of Sex, and also published several anarchist novels in the 30s and 40s. He directly solicited materials from the Cairo Poets, despite the difficulty of sending mail, and published it at every opportunity (see his papers at University College London). His later creative works declined, but he remained active in anarchist activism. Comfort’s periodical New Road: New Directions in European Art & Letters included the same group already established by Booster and Delta, adding the poets associated with the New Apocalypse. Its first issue notably opens with Kathleen Raine referring to “The poets of the last generation—Auden, MacNeice, Empson, Michael Roberts, Day Lewis, Robert Graves” and also noting, though disliking, the new generation’s “turning away from the world…. One still hears the term Anarchist used… by poets who

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23 Tambimuttu’s rebuttal is uncharacteristically harsh and points to the commonalities between London and Cairo, without either being a centre.
learned the word… from the Surrealists” (Raine 15), which would be the New Apocalypse deriving from the Villa Seurat, not Breton and Éluard. Derek Stanford sees the same in a more positive light, which is not surprising given his later admiration for Comfort and Durrell: “For the young writer coming of pen-age in the ‘Thirties two schools or tendencies stood open for him: either he was free to take a leap… into the murky Surrealist whirlpool, or gather the dried sticks of statistics in the too, too solid wood of Socialist Realism,” which led him to derogate Mass Observation while praising the anarchist New Apocalypse (Stanford 8).

However, those in North Africa (sometimes even the same poets) expressed the same notions of anarchist revisions to surrealist metaphor in personal terms, as is indicated in the title: Personal Landscape. This lacks the explicit political turn, which was explicit in this group’s pre-war and post-war writings. During the war, it became implicit, whether out of a military sense of censure, which seems possible, or due to their unique circumstances in wartime near to a very real and very threatening front. Perhaps most surprisingly, the same networks repeat in George Woodcock’s anarchist London periodical NOW from 1940-1947. The parallel influence in the same terms is visible in the New Apocalypse’s arguments about a “Personalist” poetry. Henry Treece and Stefan Schimanksi’s introduction to Transformation (1943), “Towards a Personalist Attitude” (13-17), is reminiscent of Personal Landscape, which they both read. This piece was followed on the same page by Herbert Read’s anarchist essay “The Politics of the Unpolitical.” Treece later made his anarchist position overt by defining “Personalist” by quoting Read’s essay in “Towards a Personalist Literature” (217).

Yet, the anti-authoritarian impulse prevents the deification of the state over the fluctuating and uncertain individual, in contrast to what is to be found in the Auden poets of the period. Among the Personal Landscape poets, even the immediacy of the war front vanishes before poetry of the moment, a fleeting individual’s equally fleeting experience in which the conflicts of the state appear only obliquely. Hence, even while rejecting stable notions of selfhood, these authors privilege the individual’s interpretive capabilities distinct from the author or any other authority. For instance, Fedden describes the “Ideas About Poems” sections from each issue of Personal Landscape, claiming

*These notes on poetry do not represent a manifesto, and will often be found diametrically opposite in standpoint one to another. Per-*
sonal and private, they do not even present a series of individual manifestoes. An attitude is not a permanent belief, and these notes are the expressions of attitudes, which need not be more permanent than the mood from which an individual poem is born. (“Heraldic” 72)

Henry Miller makes similar comments in his “Open Letter to Surrealists Everywhere.” The New Apocalypse, Treece in particular, attempted a manifesto but rapidly abandoned it in the face of their plurality of interests and affinities. Even Duncan’s Experimental Review is akin. Durrell, whose “Ideas About Poetry” opened Personal Landscape with an anti-manifesto, makes his rejection of the Auden Generation clear as late as 1960 when he responded to Stephen Spender’s invitation to write in the Times Literary Supplement on the “The Writer’s Dilemma” and the “Limits of Control”:

One supposes that the Artist as a public Opinionator only grew up with the social conscience—with Dickens, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky…. [T]here come hundreds of letters asking him to take up public positions on every conceivable matter from the fate of Irish horses or homosexuals to the rights and wrongs of nuclear warfare and theosophy…. But it is very doubtful whether he has anything to say which could be more original than the other pronouncements by public figures, for apart from his art he is just an ordinary fellow like everyone else. (17)

Durrell only concludes with a question: “And can the artist offer no clue to living? Alas, no; his public does that for him” (24). In an anti-authoritarian gesture, he rejects the artist’s ‘Audenesque’ function, preferring to leave his audience with an interactionist view of the construction of meaning rather than meaning’s articulation by another person, “for apart from his art he is just an ordinary fel-

24 This parallels Miller’s refutation of the “Brotherhood of man…. [which] leads the masses to identify themselves with movie stars and megalomaniacs like Hitler and Mussolini” (“An Open” 152). Both are attempting to deflate the notion of gurus or leaders who distract the masses from their lives as individuals, most particularly artists as gurus or leaders. Both Durrell and Miller were notorious for turning away fans seeking enlightenment.

25 As odd as it seems, these were real letters Durrell collected in his unpublished The Price of Glory: Gleanings From a Writer’s In Tray, held in the Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.
low,” and by extension so are all writers of manifestos. The reader is led to a personal development of meaning with the text rather than receiving meaning from the artist, priest, or leader. This is to say, the reader actively grapples with the text and makes something of it rather than passively receives it, just as the Personal Landscape poets rejected the call for war poetry and instead privileged introspection in a charged (yet personal) landscape, even if the speaking subject remained obscure.

The Greek poets’ previous ties to the Villa Seurat and Surrealism are already established, but Greek Modernism also has a small nexus of critical work written in English. It points to its unique combination of allusion, tradition, place, and what Valentine Cunningham would call “surrealist metaphor.” This is where the term “Mythistorema,” comes into play. Seferis used the term in his most famous poem series, Mythistorema, and it moves beyond the conventional meaning of “novel” (or “Roman”) to combine Myth and History: the repetition of Myth in allusion and the repetition of history in the same place. For a Greek from Smyrna to allude to Homer’s wandering and homeless Odysseus after the 1922 displacement of the entire Greek population of Asia Minor, the birthplace of Homer, and to make that allusion in disputed territory is clearly a more political act than alluding to Chaucer during April rains, even though the device is the same. Unlike Eliot’s Mythic Method from his “Ulysses, Order and Myth,” Seferis’ “novel” sense of Mythistorema creates something more than “a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity” (Eliot, “Ulysses” 177)—it suggests a repetition of history that is only recognized via allusion, and that then grants tradition a new and politicized role. It is not, as per Eliot, “simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history” (177) but rather a recognition that this “immense panorama of futility” has occurred

26 For obvious reasons, Greek material has a limited circulation among modernist scholars. Tziovas’ and Layoun’s edited books are among the most overt collections, but Vasiliki Kolokotroni (under other spellings) and David Ricks have published suggestive work, and materials have also appeared in other text from the primary authors as well as in The Journal of Modern Greek Studies.

27 Published in 1935, this work was a major influence on Greek writing. As David Ricks comments, “[It] is perhaps the most influential single work of poetry in twentieth-century Greece, and certainly the most famously associated with Homeric myth” (135).
before, in the same place, and the poet can stand there personally living the same anarchy. More to the point, they have more in common with the High Modernists than did the Auden generation, and their interventions into poetic technique are based on adaptations of those commonalities.

But, how does all of this lead to a viable practice for reading the Cairo Poets in the context of their late modernist concerns? Can one use this to read their politics, post-Surrealism, modernist aesthetics, notions of tradition and allusion, their philhellenism, and their location on the Mediterranean in a way that adds to their work rather than rendering it programmatic? In his essay “Cavafy and Eliot—A Comparison,” Seferis suggests a fundamental distinction between the two poets’ senses of tradition, instantiating an alternative approach to artistic production in the Mediterranean. Reading Cavafy’s poem “Those Who Fought for the Achaean League,” Seferis appreciated that the poem was written in 1922, on the eve of the catastrophe in Asia Minor; and almost without thinking I reread these lines as:

Written in Alexandria by an Achaean,
The year that our race was destroyed. (127)

Seferis presents Cavafy with an intensely politicized sense of ethnicity and nationalism caught in a poem of exile—the affinity between past and present occurs in the same space and under related circumstance but separated by millennia. This is a striking difference from Eliot’s tradition, and Seferis uses this wedge to pry the two apart. Notably, the 1922 Asia Minor catastrophe, perhaps better known to Modernists through Hemingway’s “The Quay at Smyrna,” is alluded to repeatedly in the pages of Personal Landscape by nearly every poet, especially through its Homeric opportunities for allusions to war, refugees, and the journey to a war. Elie Papadimitriou, the outspoken Marxist poet, is the most overt in this sense, and Personal Landscape published a number of her own translations of her epic poem of the destruction of Smyrna, Anatolia. In Seferis’ view, Cavafy alludes to previous poets in the long tradition,

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28 I have discussed Lawrence Durrell’s adaptation of Seferis’ notion in his personal struggles with Eliot’s influence in Tatiani Rapatzikou’s Anglo-American Perceptions of Hellenism (82-97).

29 For more detail, see my “Hellenism/Modernism.”
hence granting meaning to the present from the past, but this places the poet with the same circumstances in the same place, which makes the allusion more than “traditional.” It has a contemporary politics, in this case protesting against the Greek loss of Asia Minor.

Nonetheless, Seferis’ reading of Cavafy is anachronistic, although a “strong” reading in Bloom’s sense. As a late modernist misprision, it exemplifies distinctly Greek and Philhellenic literary activities from the early 30s through World War II, and more importantly, it shows how Seferis wanted us to read a “new” kind of “Mythic method.” This view also reflects tensions among several late modernist authors active in the Hellenic world and the territories envisioned as a Greater Greece prior to their demise in 1922. Seferis’ intentions are perhaps better evidenced in his famous poem “The King of Asine,” which was first translated during his interactions with the Cairo Poets, and first published in English in Personal Landscape, along with three sections from Papadimitriou’s long poem Anatolia. Seferis’ poem shows a dense series of overlaps between modern travelers searching for the King of Asine and their ancient forebears. They overlap not only through allusion and an Eliotic sense of Tradition (with their individual ‘talents’) but also through their location in the same landscape in which they are experiencing the same tragedies and repetitions of history. Just as Seferis misreads Cavafy in order to construe a direct repetition between time present and time past, which heralds the allusion to the poetic Tradition, he creates in tandem a repetition in landscape and experience. This also side-steps the didacticism and propaganda poetry that plagued Bergonzi’s London.

For instance, if I say “April is the cruelest month, breeding / Lilies out of the dead land,” and this cruel time tellingly “mix[es] / Memory and desire, stirring / Dull roots with spring rain” (Eliot, “Waste” 23), my audience will quickly realize that a tradition has been invoked, because “Whan that april with his shoures soote / The droghte of march hath perced to the roote, / And bathed eve-

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30 Durrell translated the poem for the same issue of Poetry London to which I have already referred (1944), and he did so again in his Six Poems from the Greek of Sekilianos and Seferis (1946), and again in partnership with Bernard Spencer and Nanos Valioritis in 1948, with an Introduction by Rex Warner. Valioritis went on to become a major figure in Greek literature, and in 1954 he moved to Paris, joined Breton, and married a surrealist painter. For more information see Valioritis’ “Remembering the Poets: Translating Seferis with Durrell and Bernard Spencer” (46-56).
ry veyne in swich licour / Of which vertu engendred is the flour” (Chaucer 23). Eliot points to Chaucer just as Seferis points to Homer, yet Eliot is not standing in Canterbury experiencing Chaucer’s emotions as their political circumstances mark a present repetition of a past event: “Mythistorema.” Eliot might allude to Homer with no sense of nationalism, but for Seferis, it is also a recognition that the birthplace of Homer was no longer Greek. This is Seferis’ vision for Greek Modernism, and it was adopted by Durrell extensively. 

For the Cairo Poets, this is also a defining ‘trick,’ such that allusion marks a repetition in feeling, political strife (namely war), and location as the poet moves through it. This appears in many of the works in Personal Landscape, and it marks a significant political intervention into modernist poetics, one that these authors continued using for decades after the war.

Finally, the real judge of whether or not this is a viable approach is how well it works with the texts themselves, and for this I offer only a brief instance, though again, I contend it is viable and even essential for the majority of the works: the revision to Surrealism, Seferis’ Mythistorema notion that revises modernist allusion, and the personalist interpolation of contemporary politics and war. My example is the pair of poems published in Personal Landscape by Durrell and Bernard Spencer, “Delos” and “To Argos,” as well as Fedden’s “Egyptian Mythology.” Spencer’s poem shows his stylistic delight in enjambment and complex rhythm in free verse; however, the narrating subject remains elusive throughout and simply records the visions of the landscape of Delos, a landscape haunted by ghosts of history. The past tense of the opening line conjures this overlap immediately: “Wealth came by water to this nameless island” (6). The impression is of a past visible in the present and of an imperial growth without foundation—wealth was not made nor cultivated, it came by way of commerce to a place without production. Hence, it is no surprise that we find an echo to the present: “You could buy corn and oil or men and women,” which leads to “money and its worship.” In the same vein, this exercise of power in slavery is reflected in commerce and the state through “rich and poor, priests and their pennies,” which Spencer casts as a self-defeating progress “Till life here burst and was quiet.” This leads to the first four lines of his final stanza in which these materials combine—the political commentary on the rule of the economy

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31 Again, see my “Modernism/Hellenism” for details on Durrell’s subsequent adaptations of Seferis.
and authoritarian rule by the military melds with the rule of the priesthood brings the reader to stand, invoked, in the present marveling at the past that overlaps:

In the boulevards of these dead you will think of violence,
Holiness and violence, violence of sea that is bluer
Than blue eyes are; violence of sun and its worship;
Of money and its worship. (6)

Here the warfare at sea recalls the bombardment of the harbor in Alexandria, which Spencer witnessed, as well as the blue eye of Greece, the Mathi, which should ward off the evil eye. The combination recalls the anarchist notion of “no gods no masters,” and hence Spencer’s alignment of “the boulevards of these dead” and “violence” with holiness, sea war, worship, and imperial commerce.

Fedden takes a slightly different approach that relies on a kindred overlapping of past and present in the same space, showing a sense of allusion kindred to that articulated by Seferis and that operates in Spencer above. For Fedden, the modern desert war in North Africa leaves fragmented bodies in the sands running parallel to the dismembered Osiris:

Collected in the most unexpected places,
Cast up by the foolish sea,
Drawn painfully from the earth’s brown mould,
The limbs are all brought home. (13)

Yet, for Fedden, “Isis sleeps,” which leads the body to ask “What use in these disparate limbs” (13). The reconstitutive force is absent from the poems and the titular Egyptian Mythology lacks its binding force, even though its myth overlaps with the present experience of war for Fedden, with corpses “Cast up by the foolish sea, / Drawn painfully from the earth.” Osiris begins as our speaking subject, though he only appears in the first person in the opening of the second stanza, “I have netted eyes like wings.” He is also the doubled speaking voice of the war dead cast in the same sands as the ancient god. Nonetheless, the overlap develops further, such that this is someone like Fedden with “A forehead floating on a Cornish wave, / And a mouth I remember from my youth” (13). The poet, the war dead, and the ancient god become one by inhabiting the same space and experiencing a kindred trauma of
fragmentation. Yet, the pain of the poem is not simply the broken “disparate limbs.” The poet must ask “What use” are in these limbs for a sleeping Isis who cannot stitch the fragments together into a newly living whole. In the turn to her, the speaking subject in the first person becomes Isis as well, and the unifying task of the poet and his allusion becomes clear:

What use in these disparate limbs,…
Mere bones and promises and bones.
O how shall I gather you
From this complication of days,…
For Time passes and the heart lacks. (13)

The final line of the poem noting time and the lacking heart is itself an internal recurrence of the variant line in the poem “But still the heart lacks and Time passes.” The poet fills the lack through the allusive poem that remembers and re-members the various corpses in Egypt, hence creating unity from the parts.

Finally, Durrell’s “To Argos” enacts the same, marking the loss of the ties to the past in poetry and place as the trauma. Durrell’s poem opens by invoking the image of the encroachment of war, setting it at a point in time when the war had begun but Greece had repelled the first invasion, a moment of foreboding knowing the coming forces:

The roads lead southward, blue
Along a circumference of snow,
Identified now by the scholars
As a home for the Cyclops… (11)

For Durrell, as with Seferis, the Cyclops is a creature marking the war, the time of the Cyclops. Yet, this heritage is gone, for both the Greeks and the English, in the tide of wars both ancient and modern that recall Spencer’s imagery:

Our idols have been betrayed
Not by the measurement of the dead ones
Who are lying under these mountains,
As under England our own fastidious
Heroes lie awake but do not judge. (11)

This break in the tradition, in the writing and the poetry as well as
the mythology of the culture, is the trauma of war in Durrell’s vision here. The writing has fragmented, and this leaves the poet as well as his culture “alone,” which is the first sense of the trauma at the end of the second stanza that breaks the heart the first time:

Water limps on ice, or scribbles
On doors of sand its syllables,
All alone, in an empty land, alone,
This is what breaks the heart. (11)

The break in the tradition is the heartbreak, the break in the writing that can link the past and the present, redeeming them by unification. The poet, of course, is the agent of redemption, and this is found in the poetic voice:

We say that the blood of Virgil
Grew again in the scarlet pompion,
Ever afterwards reserving the old poet
Memorials in his air, his water: (12)

Although Virgil is known for his statist position as propagandist for Rome celebrating Augustus to mythologize his origins and legitimate the new Imperial centre, he is also a poet of Remembrance who binds the ancient past and ancient literatures to the present. Virgil’s Rome, though poetic invention, becomes the same as the greater city, Troy, of the Homeric tradition, and by invoking Virgil, Durrell binds his own present time of wars, waiting in Greece, to the ancient world twice over. This is the recuperative turn of the “personal.” However, the problem Durrell encounters at the end of the second stanza returns with more fragmented literature that breaks the ties between past and present: “Bones have no mouths to smile with.” The communion with the dead comes to its end, and this is the recurrence of the heart-breaking trauma in the poem that completes it:

The Modern girls pose on a tomb smiling;
Night watches us on the western horn;
The hyssop and the vinegar have lost their meaning,
And this is what breaks the heart. (12)

In the first instance, the fact of being “alone” is what breaks the heart, but in this recurrence, the loss of the mythological literary
tradition is the homing pain. The “modern” inhabitants of this location, or tourist visitors, have no understanding of where they are, its heritage, and its recurrence in their own lives, nor their own lives as a recurrence. The hyssop and vinegar offered to the crucified Christ no longer carry any meaning, apart from faith—they are no longer a part of a literary tradition that binds place and time. Their taking of comfort before their own impending destruction by the invading Nazis carries no unifying tie, and hence has lost its meaning. Modernity has forgotten, and on this spot in Argos, likely a striking tholos tomb, they can take photographs with no sense of their own pending entombment in this place marked by war. The poet’s inability to recuperate becomes the trauma itself, for the loss of poetic meaning “is what breaks the heart,” and the world of politics embodied in the war itself remains a vehement absence in all three poems that instead mourn the personal experience of the war’s breach between past, place, and tradition.

Conclusion

As is demonstrated in these brief poetic examples, the Personal Landscape poets draw together three threads in Late Modernist writing outside of the Auden generation and received histories: a reconceived Surrealism, anarchist notions of antiauthoritarian politics and poetics, and a Greek-derived function for allusion. This group had a broad influence and genealogy leading to three major interventions in Modernist methods and normative views of the late 1930s and 40s: anarchist and individualist political views that contrast against the recognized fascist and communist hegemonies; a new sense of allusion and tradition; and a revised use of automatism and surrealist techniques with a stronger sense of form and structure, which later coalesced under the title “organic.” As a whole, this offers a distinct critical narrative from the High Modernists across Late Modernism, with a stronger role for the literary histories buried in our archives and recorded in their networks of international influences.

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Surrealists and Anarchists, Affinities and Resistances: A Response to Gifford

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It would have been tempting, until recently, to see a certain arc of literary research as having reached its peak in 2000 with the publication of the late David Kadlec’s study, Mosaic Modernism: Anarchism, Pragmatism, Culture. As James Gifford reminds us, in the decade of modernist studies before the arrival of Kadlec’s book, a series of studies had undermined the simplistic division of modernist writers into a fascist Right and an anti-fascist Left by retrieving the memory of another radical politics of modernism: anarchism. These critics demonstrated that anarchism had been a primary, central influence on almost every phase of modernism, from Symbolism to Surrealism, from Picasso to Pound. Far more than the addition of a few footnotes, reinscribing anarchism within the history of culture has asked us to rethink concepts laid down by critics and theorists such as Christopher Caudwell, Georg Lukács, and Antonio Gramsci, particularly the opposition of “realist” to “abstract” art, of “mass” to “elite” culture, of the “public sphere” to the “private.” Anarchist-influenced forms of art often contest rigid distinctions between materialist realism and formalist abstraction (Antliff, Anarchist 57). To understand the relationships among writers constituted by anarchism, we have had to trace the histories of “counter-publics,” “coterie,” and “intimate circles,” neither public nor merely private (Ferguson; Shaw 83; Colson 109-112). Finally, rather than situating anarchist writers by political “commitments” or “alignments,” we have had to think in terms of “traditions,” “affinities,” and, in the word of Gifford’s title, “networks” (Löwy 14; Colson 333, 21; Day 9; Anderson 4, 233).

Gifford’s essay, then, forms part of a fresh wave of scholarship that is now carrying this historiography of anarchist modernism forward, across the imposing boundary formed by the Second World War, into that stretch of history where the “modern” starts to lose its meaning. In particular, new studies of the generation of American poets who came of age in the 1940s and 1950s are underlining their entanglements with anarch-
chism (e.g., Bertholf and Gelpi, Duncan and Levertov). But something else seems to be happening, too. The excitement of rediscovering modernism’s forgotten anarchist patrimony is giving way to a more cautious accounting of exactly what the various moments of modernism and anarchism owe to one another. Few such analyses are more fraught than those bearing on the relation between surrealism and anarchism, the terrain of Gifford’s explorations.

The primary embarrassment for studies of surrealist engagements with anarchism has not been the supposition of an apolitical formalism, as with so many other avant-gardes, but rather in the early and very public engagement of surrealism with the Communist Party. Notwithstanding some early signs of sympathy for anarchism (e.g., making anarchist assassin Germaine Berton into something like a surrealist saint), the surrealists were painfully slow in discovering anarchism, a process that only got under way after the end of World War II (e.g., in the series of “bulletins” penned by Breton, Péret, and others for the anarchist journal *Le Libertaire* between 1947 and 1953). This much is well known; the difficulty is not insuperable, particularly if, as Fernand Drijkoningen remarks, one regards anarchism as “a mindset,” “an attitude,” even “a mood,” which then can be retrospectively read into the historical record of surrealism, in spite of everything (42–43). The overtures of the Paris surrealists to *Le Libertaire* then appears only as the belated confirmation of what has been a true “affinity” from the beginning.

What has been less remarked upon is the ambivalence with which these overtures were received by anarchists. Surrealism is scarcely mentioned in anarchist journals, and often mentioned dismissively in the event—a mere mishmash of “Freudianism and a cloudy communisme,” according to Victor Méric, just the latest of the avant-garde “eccentricités du jour”; a form of “snobism” and a “waste of time,” for Henry Poulaille; evidence of a “poverty of thought,” according to Federica Montseny; “signs of the physical and moral degradation of the human species” in the eyes of Eugen Relgis (Méric 2075; Poulaille qtd. in Chapman 102; Montseny qtd. in Romero 26; Relgis 43; all trans. mine). These comments are published in loci of anarchist and syndicalist militancy: Sébastien Faure’s *Encyclopédie anarchiste* (1934); *Le Peuple*, the newspaper of the syn-

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1 Some have noted (e.g., Antliff, *Anarchy* 117–123, Cabri 53–55) that late modernists (or early postmoderns) of an anarchist tendency are themselves divided over surrealism. Julian Symons, Kenneth Rexroth, and Robert Duncan, for instance, all express considerable disdain toward surrealism—making a reference to “the anarcho-surrealist tendencies of the Beats and Robert Duncan” a little hasty (Symons 2; Duncan 62–67; Rosemont 131, 126).
dicalist CGT union (1924); L’En dehors, E. Armand’s individualist journal (1926); a pamphlet published in Marin Civera Martínez’s Cuadernos de Cultura series, aimed at young anarchists and working-class autodidacts (1933).

Why consult sources like these? Of course, it cannot be in hopes of discovering an “official” anarchist stance on surrealism or on anything else; no one anarchist organization or institution has that kind of exclusive and all-encompassing normative authority. The opinions of individual militants such as Méric, Poulaille, Montseny, and Relgis are only of any interest insofar as they are indicative of the opinions of other anarchists; in fact, they represent a fairly broad cross-section of the opinions we might find in the various milieus of the anarchist movement prior to World War II. They are of interest, that is, if we are concerned to ask, not only when and where and how surrealists were able to recognize their desires in “the black mirror of anarchism,” as Breton put it (Free Rein 265), but whether anarchists recognized theirs in surrealism. The reciprocity of these gazes is not a given, at least not if we are speaking of anarchism not only as an “attitude,” a “state of mind,” a “mood,” or even, in Gifford’s phrase, “a meaningful political philosophy,” but as a movement, however decentered, fragmented, or dispersed, with its own modes of organization and action.

The poetics of the anarchist movement as such—the kinds of poetry published by anarchist presses, recited at anarchist veladas, set to music and sung by anarchist hoboes, printed in anarchist newspapers, taught in anarchist schools, etc.—is generally meant to be heard and understood by working-class audiences. As “social poetry,” “popular poetry,” or “tendency poetry,” anarchist verse formed part of a culture of resistance, a project with revolutionary goals. In other words, it is far from identical with “Durrell’s individualist escape from the political world,” “a ‘politics of the unpolitical’ in Herbert Read’s sense,” or a “‘personalist’ emphasis,” in the words with which Gifford describes the ostensibly anarchist character of the Villa Seurat network and its publications. It is this difference which explains, in large part, the distrust exhibited toward surrealism by anarchist militiants, even those favorably inclined toward Breton’s postwar gestures, preoccupied as they are with questions of popular “accessibility,” a wariness of “extreme subjectivist tendencies,” and the need for “coordinated action” (Un groupe de militants, trans. mine).

Is the anarchism of the participants in the Villa Seurat network merely ostensible? Are we to distinguish between the works of avant-gardists, “anarchist in form,” and those of militiants, “anarchist in content,” and to attribute an authentic “anarchism” to the latter alone? The artist Josh MacPhee suggests that we can speak of a work as “anarchist” not only in terms of form or content, but insofar as it “enter[s] the world” in an anar-
chist manner—i.e., in its production and circulation, its authorship and audience—and/or insofar as it directly constitutes an anarchist act, contesting relations of domination and/or producing relations of mutuality and freedom (MacPhee xx). In a similar spirit, Vittorio Frigerio notes the existence of an entire spectrum of "anarchist" literature, ranging from "a literary practice of writing exercised by militants and published in anarchist newspapers" to "literature considered by non-anarchists to be 'anarchist,' regardless of the views of its author." At some point on this spectrum, we can locate "a literature near to the anarchists, i.e., written by authors who are considered to be or who at some point consider themselves to be anarchists, and published entirely or partly in libertarian newspapers or by libertarian publishers," as well as literary works which are "considered to be anarchist by militants regardless of the views of their author[s]" (Frigerio, n.pag, trans. mine). These broader considerations might allow us to make more nuanced and precise analyses of the role played by anarchism in the context of networks such as Miller's.

It is clear that the poets and other writers associated with this network collaborate with individual anarchists (e.g., Herbert Read) and anarchist journals (e.g., George Woodcock’s NOW), if not necessarily with anarchist organizations. It is equally clear that their productions are sometimes infused with expressions of anarchist ideas and desires (albeit as refracted through a particular, one-sided interpretation: e.g., pacifist rather than warlike, pluralist rather than monist, individualist rather than collectivist, etc.). It is less clear that their poetry has anarchist ends or effects, particularly if Gifford is correct in observing, elsewhere, that "[t]he circle of authors around the Villa Seurat all increasingly turned away from direct political action as their interactions [with one another] increased" ("Anarchist Transformations" 66, emphasis mine). It may be, however, that this apparent quietism is not only a reaction against what were, in the thirties and forties, very loud calls for "engagement" and "commitment" from spokespersons for the most dubious causes—fascism, Stalinism, and the Western powers that had sold out Spain to both of them. Rather than constituting a mere despairing retreat or mystical withdrawal from the world’s demands, what we may see in the "personalism" of the Villa Seurat network is one of the first experiments in a new form of anarchist resistance culture.

Anarchists have always required a culture of resistance—symbolic practices that allow us to perpetuate our values in the context of a world that is thoroughly hostile to them. What we find in the period of late modernism, however, is an anarchist movement in crisis: routed and dispersed by the long string of defeats running from the Palmer Raids to the fall of Barcelona. During the 1930s and 1940s, then, we find this move-
moment, scattered and shrunken in size, in the process of turning inward, as historian Andy Cornell remarks, and reformulating itself for “valley times” during which “the possibilities for wide-ranging social transformation do not seem especially propitious.” In this context, we can see the strategic value of the shift, between the generation of Spain and the generation of the Cold War, away from large-scale labor organizing or armed confrontation toward questions of lifestyle and sexuality and experimentation in the arts. Avant-garde writing à la Henry Miller, Anaïs Nin, or Lawrence Durrell, however seemingly apolitical, might then constitute not only a means of resistance to the war but also a continuation of the social war by other means.

In this light, Gifford’s proposition that the English Surrealists and their correspondents are engaged in making “anarchist revisions to Surrealism” is both significant and incompletely demonstrated. What are these revisions? Gifford suggests that one entails simply “accepting Surrealism as a technique while rejecting its politics”—i.e., abrogating the terms of the social contract signed by Breton and company in 1927 (entering the Communist Party) and amended in 1938 (with the issuing of “Toward an Independent Revolutionary Art” with Trotsky and Rivera). This might constitute a reappropriation, but it is not much of a “revision.” More substantially, Gifford alludes to “anarchist revisions to surrealist metaphor”—a modification, rather than merely an application, of the “technique.” It is not entirely clear how Gifford understands surrealist metaphor, but if we take Breton’s discussion of it in his first Manifesto as our starting point, the most salient features might be a) an intensification of the dimension of unlikeness between the two unlike things that are to be compared (and a corresponding weakening of the logical continuity or likening), and b) a rejection of the intentionality of the comparison (Manifestoes 35-36). If this is what Gifford has in mind, it becomes clearer how the addition of a “personalist” emphasis to surrealism, insisting on the integrity of the author’s creative will, would qualify the commitment to the non-intentional, automatist character of surrealist metaphor, which formed one of its conceptual links to Marxist historicism and economism, with their emphasis on blind, mechanical, supra-individual processes (Gifford 60).

Another area warranting further exploration, although it is unclear how closely Gifford intends to tie it into his discussion of the surrealist engagement with anarchism, lies in his analysis of another form of jarring juxtaposition that undercuts Marxist historicism: “Mythistorema,” “present repetition of a past event.” Insofar as anarchism is radically committed

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2 Cornell borrows the concepts of “mountain times” and “valley times” from Myles Horton.
to a metaphysics of becoming, for which constant transformation is fundamentally real and fixity an illusion, it would seem equally foreign to this concept of mythic repetition (and to Durrell’s even more irrationalist notion of the “Heraldic Universe,” replacing temporal cause-effect relations with spatialized, symbolic correspondences). However, Daniel Colson has argued that anarchism is also “a stranger to the linear conception of time,” and that, as such, it bears a strange kinship to certain Nietzschean conceptions of “repetition” for which the past indeed “becomes real again” and “ceases to be past”: “it can be lived for a second time, a third, an infinite number of times, therefore remade, modified,” so that what we experience is “a becoming in which everything is always to be resumed, repeated and revalued anew” (100, 104, 106, trans. mine). Could “Mythistorama” be an instrument for just such a subversive repetition? Here is an at least potentially illuminating intersection between a late modernist invention and a neglected, little examined aspect of the anarchist imaginary.


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Modern Diplomacy and Mountolive

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The four novels in Lawrence Durrell’s Alexandria Quartet engage the modern diplomat’s preoccupation with documents, the circulation of information, and the interpretation of that information. Mountolive, the third volume in the tetralogy, specifically represents the postwar “shrinking” of the British Empire as viewed from abroad. In many ways, Mountolive’s failure as a diplomat parallels the demise of empire. Moreover, Mountolive performs the exigencies of diplomacy by implicating the reader in the act of decoding. Just as diplomats use networks to record, interpret, and spread information, characters encode or decode the information that mixes with false impressions and disinformation in the Alexandria Quartet. By re-casting the same characters in each volume of the Quartet and by revising information from the previous tome in subsequent volumes, Durrell’s multi-volume novel asks the reader to share in the diplomat’s perplexity and his postwar loss of agency.

Historians have noted that the practice of diplomacy has, from its inception, been associated with texts and documents. This textuality of the diplomat’s work is embedded in the etymology of the word itself. In his study Diplomacy, Harold Nicolson explains that the term is derived from the Greek verb ‘diploûn’ meaning ‘to fold.’ In the days of the Roman Empire, all passports, passes along imperial roads and way-bills were stamped on double metal plates and folded and sewn together in a particular manner. These metal passes were called ‘diplomas.’ At a later date this word ‘diploma’ was extended to cover other and less metallic official documents conferring privileges or embodying arrangements with foreign communities and tribes. (Nicolson 11)

The diplomat’s movement from one country or state to another is
sanctioned by a document that allows for passage and confers on
the diplomat a special status and immunity. Unlike the warrior, the
diplomat travels to promote peace and stability between nations.
The “diploun” records and legitimates the diplomat’s movements
between states. It is in the diplomat’s interest to have his move-
ments recorded, since these set up a precedent for future diplo-
matic relationships. The records of the past are archived in order to
create the conditions for future negotiation.

Therefore, a concern with keeping archives and preserving
documents is conveyed in the etymology of “diplomacy.” A dealer
in treaties and secret communiqués, the diplomat acts on behalf of
his country. After recording information, he sends his papers to
central archives, where, theoretically, they serve the interests of the
state:

As these treaties accumulated, the imperial archives became
encumbered with innumerable little documents folded and
endorsed in a particular manner. It was found necessary to
employ trained clerks to index, decipher, and preserve these
documents. Hence the profession of archivist arose, and with
it the science of palaeography—the science, that is, of deci-
phering and verifying and ancient documents. The occupa-
tions were, until late in the seventeenth century, called “res
diplomatica” or “diplomatic business,” namely the business of
dealing with archives and diplomas. (Nicolson 11)

Continuity is central to diplomacy. Past agreements and documents
function as living memory; they establish precedents for future rela-
tions among states. By recording observations and recommending
courses of action, the diplomat functions as an intermediary be-
tween countries. As the diplomat-arbitrator replaced the diplo-
mat-orator in the seventeenth century, and as the original obligations of
the diplomat to write and report were forgotten, the preoccupation
with archiving nonetheless remained. Lawrence Durrell’s fore-
grounding of documents and archives in the Alexandria Quartet can
be traced to this tradition in the profession of diplomacy.

From the beginnings of diplomacy in the Byzantine period, the
diplomat was principally an informant charged with bringing news
from far corners of an empire or lands with whom a state main-
tained a commercial relationship. Garrett Mattingly notes that “one
of the chief functions of the resident ambassador came to be to
keep a continuous stream of foreign political news flowing to his
home government” (Mattingly 58). But gauging how much detail was sufficient proved difficult. In Renaissance dispatches from Italian ambassadors, many seemingly useless details and reports of idle gossip were included, but there was good reason for this overabundance of information. “By making the mesh fine,” Mattingly explains, “fewer items were likely to escape because the man on the spot missed a significance clear enough to a minister who had the run of dispatches from all over Italy” (Mattingly 97). Such reports assumed a passive role for the ambassador: although he reported information, he offered neither commentary nor opinion on the subjects related. Nonetheless, the diplomat’s very choice of points of information is indicative of editorial selection.

As observers, recorders, negotiators, and travelers, ambassadors occupy a liminal subject-position vis-à-vis political events. In The Evolution of Diplomatic Method, Nicolson points out that in the sixteenth century, “theorists saw diplomats as angels who traveled the space between heaven and earth” (Evolution 27). Mobility, rather than political agency, confers upon diplomats their power. Ambassadors use language for peacemaking rather than for warfare; their work promotes continuity rather than catastrophe. Nicolson cites Demosthenes, who argues that “‘ambassadors…have no battleships at their disposal, or heavy infantry, or fortresses; their weapons are words and opportunities’” (Evolution 13). Negotiation, one of the chief tasks of the ambassador, is a gradual, but continuous process. The ambassador’s neutrality is his strength. Because of his unaligned position, he arbitrates conflicts and preserves peace between nations. His efficacy derives from objectivity in exercising his powers of observation. In his essay, “A Trait of Certain Ambassadors,” Michel de Montaigne remarks that the ambassador should deliver a faithful account of events while retaining as much neutrality as possible: “It seems to me that the function of the servant is to represent things faithfully in their entirety just as they happened, leaving to his master the liberty to arrange, judge, and choose” (Frame 51). According to Montaigne, the ambassador has the right neither to omit nor to embellish, for to do so would constitute an abuse of power.

If the diplomat is the vehicle for the information that he transmits, then the living envoy is also a sensory apparatus for the nation he represents. The ambassador’s role rests in his ability to choose which fragments of information to transmit to his superiors. His opinion influences policy. As Montaigne observes, though they must be neutral and honest, “ambassadors have freer commission,
which in many areas depends in the last resort on their judgment; they do not simply carry out, but also by their counsel form and direct their master's will” (Frame 51). He cites several examples of ambassadors whose effectiveness was even compromised by a too close adherence to orders. The envoy’s understanding of the circumstances and context surrounding the information that he has heard is indissociable from the information itself. That the diplomat’s status confers neutrality does not mean that he is without his opinions. Nicolson echoes Montaigne in his insistence that “an ambassador in a foreign capital must always be the main source of information, above all the interpreter, regarding political conditions, trends and opinions in the country in which he resides” (Evolution 82). In his reports, the diplomat communicates information that will potentially be used in policy-making. The diplomat is thus both a collector and an interpreter of information. Diplomacy requires interpretive skills. In Ancient Greece, Hermes was thought to be the ruling deity of diplomats. In other guises, Hermes served as the patron of writers and governed commercial transactions, including the circulation of money and information. The word “hermeneutics,” derived from Hermes’ name, connects the faculty of interpretation with the circulation of information. Etymologically then, the diplomat can be thought of as a traveler engaged in the hermeneutic enterprise of interpreting and circulating information for future use. The diplomat collects, interprets and archives information knowing that the task of interpretation is never conclusive.

Therefore, Durrell’s preoccupation with documents, diplomatic networks, and archives in the Alexandria Quartet is informed by his career with the Foreign Office and the British Council. From 1942 to 1945, he worked as Public Information Officer in Cairo, Alexandria, and Rhodes where he oversaw the publication of three newspapers whose goal was to ensure that the Greek population of those cities and islands remained loyal to the Allied forces. After the war, in 1947, Durrell was sent to Argentina by the British Council, where he taught at the Asociación Argentina de Cultura Británica. From 1950-1956 he again served as Information Officer, this time in Belgrade and in Cyprus. His diplomatic career made him a member of an international network of information-gatherers that he represents in his postwar novels. These diplomatic networks maintained relations with former protectorates and created a global presence for British culture in the postwar period.

The British Foreign Office only recognized the importance of
cultural ambassadorship to its diplomatic relations between countries as Britain began to lose international power in the 1930s. The British Council, a body concerned with such cultural relations, was created by the Ministry of Information and the Foreign Office in 1934. Although precursors to the British Council had existed from the turn of the century in the form of British Institutes for the promotion of the English language, and had been well established throughout Europe and South America, the Council coordinated the activities of such Institutes through centralized planning committees. According to its charter, the British Council was charged with the “promotion of a wider knowledge of this country and of the English language abroad... [as well as] with the development of closer cultural relations between this and other countries” (NA: PRO BW/43).¹

The Council’s creation coincided with the feeling that Britain needed to encourage the participation of cultural ambassadors in diplomatic missions concerned with building political and economic ties with Continental Europe. Early on, however, the Foreign office and the British Council disagreed about the focus of the Council’s activities. While the Foreign office hoped to increase cultural relations with countries of economic and commercial importance, the British Council preferred to increase British influence in countries they believed to be of political importance. As Frances Donaldson points out, Germany and France had recognized the benefits of cultural propaganda abroad and had been sending cultural attaches with diplomatic missions since the eighteenth century. During the 1920s evidence grew of the damage done to British interests by the increasingly hostile propaganda of other countries as well as of the size of the budget devoted elsewhere to cultural propaganda. Britain’s reluctance to set up cultural-diplomatic missions is attributable to a national aversion to all types of self-display: “If foreigners failed to appreciate, or even to notice, our gifts of invention or our splendid adaptability, then there was nothing that we could do to mitigate their obtuseness. The genius of England, unlike that of lesser countries, spoke for itself” (Donaldson 2). Rex Leeper, chairman of the British Council during the Second World War, explained that “The British would not... embark on any

¹ The following short forms will be used for brevity: The National Archives: TNA. Public Records Office PRO. Although the British Council planning documents are now housed at the National Archives, these are still included under the heading PRO.
programme of this sort until they were convinced that it was materially damaging to their interests not to do so” (Donaldson 12). Thus, paradoxically, the creation of the British Council coincides with the beginning of what Jed Esty has called the “shrinking” of British influence on world affairs. Even as Britain’s political influence waned in the aftermath of the Second World War, cultural diplomacy as conducted by the British Council and the Foreign Office tried to maintain Britain’s international cultural prestige.

Archival sources suggest that one of the key debates to surface in the first meetings of the Planning Committee for Foreign Lectures was the question of reciprocity; that is, whether or not the British Council should engage in “facilitating the making known of other cultures in the U.K” (TNA: PRO BW 1/43). Lord Tyrell, the first chairman of the Council, wrote to his committee that “neither objective (cultural propaganda and political influence) can be properly attained, the Council feels, unless we show real interest, both here and abroad, in the culture, history and ways of life of the other peoples” (TNA: PRO BW 1/43). Durrell’s work with the British Council in Argentina and as Press Officer in Egypt sensitized him to the need for establishing a dialogue between the British and the Egyptians, Cypriots, and Yugoslavs if peace was to be maintained. In Cyprus, Durrell’s ability to create such a dialogue was tested.

Durrell’s *Alexandria Quartet* and *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus* draw on his experience in Foreign Service, where he collected and interpreted information for the British Government. Informed by the aftermath of the Second World War and the Suez Crisis, and both published in 1957, *Justine* and *Bitter Lemons* offer a belated representation of the preoccupations of British diplomats. In both these texts, Durrell moves away from Nicolson’s optimistic view of the diplomat: he presents himself and his characters as powerless to change the course of political events. Both texts are self-consciously fraught with documents, information, and communication. Whereas in *Mountolive* Durrell represents the political situation in the 1930s novelistically, in *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*, he addresses the contraction of British influence in a first-person report. In this travelogue of the three years he spent on the island (1953–1956), Durrell narrates his own first hand experience of the Enosis crisis from his dual position as an inhabitant of the island and as a representative of the British government. I will build on Richard Pine’s and Petra Tournay’s identification of *Bitter Lemons* as a “prime example of colonial discourse” (Tournay 159) to shed light on the ways in
which Durrell uses his diplomatic mobility to promote British culture to a Greek Cypriot audience in the *Cyprus Review*.

Together with *Prospero’s Cell* (1945), Durrell’s book about Corfu, and *Reflections on a Marine Venus* (1953), a book about Rhodes, *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus* forms Durrell’s “island trilogy.” Generically similar to the previous two books, *Bitter Lemons* chronicles the Enosis crisis and examines failing attempts by the British to maintain their influence in the Mediterranean. Durrell’s narrative authority rests on his first-hand experience of Cyprus and his status as an outsider. A liminal figure, he straddles linguistic and cultural boundaries. Durrell’s power results in his mobility within and between different networks. Speaking “indifferent but comprehensible Greek” (*Bitter* 23) and living in a small village, he does not consider himself a member of the British expatriate community in Cyprus, but understands their way of life. He observes that the rituals and beliefs of the British abroad remain unchanged by their location.

On Cyprus, Durrell recounts,

> the British Colony lived what appeared to be a life of blameless monotony, rolling about in small cars, drinking at the yacht club, sailing a bit, going to church, and suffering apprehensions at the thought of not being invited to Government House on the Queen’s Birthday. (*Bitter* 24)

In contrast, Durrell represents himself as a member of the local community. Living in a small house near Bellapaix Abbey, away from the British, he believes himself transformed by his proximity to local Cypriots of all classes, languages, and political convictions. “By electing to live in my own village rather than in the capital… I retained a link with the rural community” (*Bitter* 126). He counts among his friends the builders of his house, fellow teachers, and networks of Greek and Cypriot writers. He understands Cypriot culture from within, or so he intimates. Inhabiting this interstitial cultural space, Durrell believes, rewards him with impartiality, knowledge, and a hermeneutic advantage. In agreement with Durrell’s assessment of himself, Nicolson, in his review of *Bitter Lemons*, also identifies Durrell’s cultural mobility as the basis for his diplomatic authority:

> Mr. Durrell possesses exceptional qualifications. He speaks Greek fluently; he has a wide knowledge of modern Greek history, politics and literature: he has lived in continental
Greece and has spent many years in the Greek islands... he was enabled to observe the Cyprus scene from... different angles. (Nicolson 10)

Durrell, at once serving the empire and constructing himself as belonging nowhere, observes and records the particularities of all the inhabitant of Cyprus. Durrell’s correspondence, however, reveals that he thought of himself as helping the British Government. In a letter to Alan Thomas, he writes: “Trying to save Cyprus for the British as this late stage after so many years of total neglect is really a hard nut to crack...” (nd MSL, c.1954. LD Papers, British Library). Nevertheless, Durrell’s perceived liminality confirms him as the British Colonial Government’s main choice for negotiating a sharing of Cypriot territory among three cultures in the pages of the Cyprus Review.

Needing money for home restorations, Durrell first takes a post teaching English language and literature at the Pan Cyprian Gymnasium in Nicosia. As a teacher, he purveys English culture abroad. When he is offered the position of Director of Public Relations for the Colonial Office, it is precisely because of his knowledge of both Greek and British culture:

I met the Colonial Secretary of the island at Austen Harrison’s lunch-table, where he proposed that I should apply for the post of Press Adviser, then about to fall vacant. There was much that needed doing in the field of public relations and it was felt that someone knowing Greek and having a stake in the island’s affairs might do better than a routine official. (143)

This position, especially the editorship of the Cyprus Review, tested Durrell’s friendships and his skills as a cultural negotiator. As Barbara Papastavrou-Koroniotaki points out, despite his philhellenism, Durrell “would now risk tarnishing his Hellenic image by working for the British colonial government at a critical post” (22). Founded in 1941, the magazine, published in English and Greek and circulated in Cyprus, throughout the Middle East, in Greece and in the UK, aimed to bridge British and Cypriot culture. Durrell’s experience in cultural relations—as Information Officer in Cairo and Alexandria during the Second World War, as Information Officer in Rhodes in 1945, and as director of a British Council office in Argentina in 1947—prepared him to conduct diplomacy through cul-
tural means in the pages of the *Cyprus Review*. In the December 1954 issue, Durrell wrote in his editorial note:

Cyprus is something more than a vital communication center in the Eastern Levant; it is a point of confluence for three cultures, British, Greek, and Turkish, which gives it both a certain incongruity of styles in living and also a delightful variety. We want to represent the island’s way of living and not only emphasize the pictorial side of its magnificent landscape and climate—the tourist aspect. But we would also like to build a journal which, apart from its notes on folklore, customs, and archaeology and art carries authoritative articles covering the contemporary Middle Eastern scene. Is this too ambitious a hope? Time, contributors, and a public are the factors upon which an answer to such a question depends. (*Cyprus Dec. 1954*)

Before Durrell’s editorship began in October 1954, the *Review* focused on events of British politics and pageantry: visits of the Governor of Cyprus, British social events. The *Review* took for granted the universal appeal of British culture. Durrell’s strategy was different. Informed by his work for the British Council, Durrell emphasized reciprocity and considered the perception of British Culture from a Cypriot perspective. To align British and Cypriot interests, Durrell featured articles about the visit of British Governors, Commissioners, and Excellencies alongside articles about felt-making, the festival of the Epiphany, as well as portraits of contemporary Greek Cypriot artists such as Eve Macrides, and of European artists who were living on Cyprus, such as Sigmund Pollitzer. Travelers’ personal reminiscences of Istanbul or of Cyprus before the First World War, as well as portraits of historical figures who all lived for a time in Cyprus—such as Alexander the Great, Becaico, and Rimbaud—constructed a *lingua franca* and a common past for all current Cypriots. Durrell’s friendships with local Cypriots and British officials helped him to tailor the message of the *Cyprus Review* to the tastes of his readership and to the political ends of the British government, whereas his network of friends and fellow travelers such as Freya Stark, Rose Macaulay, and Patrick Leigh Fermor reported their perceptions of Cyprus from abroad. Through the medium of the magazine, Durrell was to forge a textual alliance, however disingenuous, of British and Cypriot culture. Although he had many Greek friends, Durrell was employed by
the British Government to keep Cyprus in the empire and used his information to this end. As Lewis Hyde points out, “Hermes is an amoral connecting deity...the moral tone of an exchange does not concern him.... When he’s the messenger of the gods he’s like the post office: he’ll carry love letters, hate letters, stupid letters, or smart letters” (Hyde 324).

Durrell does not only gather information; he also foregrounds it in his recounting of the three years he spent in Cyprus. Durrell’s experience of Cyprus is textually mediated: chapters in *Bitter Lemons* are introduced with epigraphs from Cypriot proverbs, Colonial reports, and excerpts from Hepworth-Dixon’s 1888 assessment of Cyprus when it was first a British suzerainty. Durrell imagines Rimbaud building the Governor’s summer lodge in the Troodos mountains at the end of the nineteenth century, and follows Mrs. Lewis’s travels as she recounts them in her 1893 *A Lady’s Impressions of Cyprus*. He recalls Samuel Brown’s prophetic description of violence on the island in the sixteenth century and the hanging and flaying of the soldier Bragadino and recalls that “in Cyprus I stumbled upon many more such echoes from forgotten moments of history with which to illuminate the present” (20). The diplomat’s authority rests in his knowledge of history of the documents that have described a location and a passage before his own. In *Bitter Lemons*, Durrell creates an archive of the passages of other travelers and empires: the text stitches together different types of documents: novels, travelogues, histories. *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus* is aware of its status as a postwar document. Implicit in Durrell’s account is the fact that all interpretations are only ever provisional: he creates an archive for which a conclusive interpretation is deferred.

Durrell’s historical understanding also makes him aware that the British will not hold onto the island forever. His interest in historical accounts about Cyprus and his sense of the continuity between past and present make him cognizant of the impermanence of political power and the violence the island has witnessed. He recounts that “walking about at dusk in the iron parallelogram of Famagusta, these thoughts became absurdly mixed with evocations of past history, no less cruel and turbulent than the times in which we lived” (162). Even as he defends the empire through his work as Press Officer, Durrell’s sense of history is palimpsestic: he recalls that the Ottoman empire and the Venetians ruled over Cyprus long before the British, and that the island has seen other rulers “like Haroud Al Rashid, Alexander, Coeur de Lion: women like Catherine Coronaro and Helena Palaeologus” (20). He sees the ruins of past cen-
turies and wonders, in conversation with his friend Rose Macaulay, how to interpret the ruins of a fortress. He asks, quoting Macaulay,

how it is that the utilitarian objects of one period become objects of aesthetic value to succeeding ones? This thing was constructed purely to keep armies at bay, to shatter men and horses, to guard a pass. How do we find it more beautiful than the Maginot line? Does time itself confer something on relics and ruins which isn’t inherent in the design of the builder? Will we ever visit the Maginot line with such awe at its natural beauty? (Bitter 94)

Interpreting monuments as aesthetic objects, Durrell suggests, defies history. In an television interview for the BBC’s “Midday Dialogue” with Marius Goring, Durrell echoed this sentiment: “the past shouldn’t be a funk hole or an escape, but that it should be… just as informative as it is seducing.” Looking at the ruins of a town built by Caesar’s legions in Provence, Durrell explains that history is a compilation of information:

The remains of those monuments are not simply remains. They contain… information that is not just archaeological— or what Byron called “Antiquarian Twaddle”…. They contain a great deal of contemporary information…. In fact you become more contemporary the more you look at these old stones. (Durrell Scripts 10-11, BBC Written Archives, Caversham)

A postwar text, Bitter Lemons asks how the late modernist writer should reconfigure the fragments of the past. In particular, Durrell, by reinvesting ruins with meaning, moves away from the high modernist transformation of the fragment into an aestheticized object.

In his postwar serial novels, Durrell also draws on his experience in the Foreign Service and re-imagines his novels in light of the discourse of diplomacy. As such, Mountolive performs the praxis of diplomacy by implicating the reader in the act of decoding and in the creation of meaning from information. Like diplomats, characters in the Quartet record and interpret information. Unlike its “siblings” in the Quartet, Mountolive employs the discourse of a diplomatic report. It reads like a file on David Mountolive that interpolates the reader into self-conscious attention to the nature of
communication itself. A seemingly realist and objective novel, *Mountolive* it is deceitful, and defers full disclosure of the situation. The reader, like the diplomat, is forced to withhold judgment until more information is brought to light. But *Clea*, the fourth volume of the *Quartet*, adds to but also does not complete the archive of David Mountolive.

While Durrell's Preface to *Balthazar*, the second volume of the *Quartet*, announces that the novels are "an investigation of modern love," the series frustrates all attempts at uncomplicated human communication: Justine, whom Darley believes to be in love with him, is revealed to be merely using their affair to divert the attention of the British away from Nessim's plot, and also to find information about another of his lovers, Melissa Artemis. Similarly, in *Mountolive*, Leila Hosnani's husband suggests that she take Mountolive as a lover in order to blind him to Nessim's machinations. The narrative gradually reveals that characters use their lovers to satisfy their desires for information, spying, gossip, betrayal, and *realpolitik*. Mountolive is duped by Leila; Darley by Justine. Justine's affairs do not fulfill her personal desires; they mask her political allegiances. In the end, the narrative rewards those characters who can decode relationships in terms of ulterior motives.

Documents frustrate and outlive their users and producers. Justine's diary, found after her disappearance, is intercepted, read, and interpreted by Jacob Aronauti, who publishes a *roman-à-clef* based on it. Documents also frustrate those who seek information from them; they mystify more than they clarify. Darley searches through the pages of the diary for clues to the identity and motives of his lover, only to be further mystified. In *Clea*, Justine confesses to Darley that she and Nessim's favorite postwar after-dinner pastime at their estate in Karm Abu Gerg is to read aloud Mountolive's love letters to Leila. Yet documents also function as problematic inheritances for those who find them. After his suicide, Pursewarden's last letter to Mountolive forces the latter to act on the information that the letter reveals about Nessim. In other instances, written documents are revealed to be unreliable. *Balthazar*, the second volume of the *Quartet*, revises and corrects *Justine*. In what Darley calls Balthazar's Interlinear, his friend supplies a revision of Darley's erroneous beliefs about his Alexandrian friends. In turn, the second novel in the series, *Balthazar*, is Darley's narration of Baltahzar's Interlinear and his own revision of Justine. What seemed like an archive on Justine Hosnani in the first volume is therefore revealed to be disinformation, and the series expands as it revises previous
volumes. Durrell’s Alexandrian archive is incomplete and inconclusive.

David Mountolive, like a diligent “student of manners” documents and records his observations (Mountolive 30). His acceptance among the Hosnasis is made possible by a letter of introduction—another document—which he carries with him upon his arrival: “He blessed the chanced letter of introduction which brought him to the Hosnani lands, to the rambling old-fashioned house built upon a network of lakes and embankments near Alexandria” (11). A “junior of exceptional promise” (11), Mountolive goes to Egypt to perfect his Arabic and thus to advance his career. The Hosnasis respond to his interest in them, since “never had a stranger shown any desire to study and assess them, their language, religion, and habits” (24). A newcomer in a foreign culture, Mountolive at first finds that “it was hateful to be young, to be maladroit, to feel carried out of one’s depths” (19). As he becomes immersed in the life of the Hosnasis, however, Mountolive loses his sense of Englishness gladly.

Mountolive learns what he knows of Egypt by reading the foreign service primer on Egypt, Edward William Lane’s Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians. But Mountolive is not satisfied with Lane’s antiquated and armchair view of Egypt. Not even Edward Lane’s book can be a substitute for keen attention and swift judgment. Lane can provide him with basic knowledge of the country, the geography, and customs. But for the rest, he must have sources of information on the ground. To this end, the Hosnasis teach Mountolive how to read and decode the Egyptian landscape and the culture. Like an anthropologist, he also immerses himself in “the field” that constitutes his object of study. He keeps a notebook in which he records his impressions of the country and valuable lessons in reading and decoding:

Sunday. Riding through a poor fly-blown village my companion points to marks like cuneiform scratched on the walls of houses and asks if I can read them. Like a fool I say no, but perhaps they are Amharic? Laughter. Explanation is that a venerable pedlar who travels through here every six months carries a special henna from Medina...People are mostly too poor to pay, so he extends his credit, but lest they forget, marks his tally on the clay wall. (29)

The marks on the wall form a public archive, which provide the
recollected and recorded a transaction. Although the signs of culture and commerce are legible, Mountolive cannot read them. In effect, the narrative satirizes his hubristic and illusory belief that he can read and understand the Hosnani and Egypt.

His affair with Leila Hosnani is also conducted through documents. Mountolive uses correspondence to keep alive his relationship with Leila, who uses him as her own emissary:

“You say you will be in Zagreb next month. Please visit and describe to me…” she would write, or “How lucky you will be in passing through Amsterdam; there is a retrospective Klee which has received tremendous notices in the French press. Please pay a visit and describe your impressions honestly to me, even if unfavourable. I have never seen an original myself.” This was Leila’s parody of love… (47)

Private letters, like diplomatic reports and novels, require decoding. Just like diplomatic discourse, the letters perform their genre—the love letter—by following protocol. Letters do not demand correspondents’ sincerity. The letters liberate lovers from the pain of separation and simultaneously mask each lover from the other. Nonetheless, the correspondence delivers the message Leila intends, since by maintaining an intimacy with Mountolive she distracts him from paying attention to Nessim’s plans, and Mountolive does not decode her message.

Mountolive’s father, also a decoder, is an example of the kind of envoy who becomes, according to diplomatic theory, overly implicated in foreign cultures. Mountolive’s father is a skilled decoder who has abandoned the family to live his remaining years in a monastery in India where he translates and interprets Buddhist texts: “At first he had been simply a judge in the service, but within a few years he had become pre-eminent in Indian scholarship, and editor and interpreter of rare and neglected texts” (87). Mountolive senior forgets his allegiance to England. Similarly, David shows signs of having inherited his father’s tendency for deceleration. Even the Mountolive’s family’s residence speaks of their absence, a “pleasant house… furnished with trophies, books, and pictures… had something of the air of a museum… because it had been deserted by its real author” (87). Durrell imagines Postwar English houses as like archives that have lost their significance and bespeak a national fatigue.

Moreover, the behaviour of networks of British diplomats
abroad provides the subject of Durrell’s satirical pieces collected in Esprit de Corps (1957), Stiff Upper Lip, and Sauve Qui Peut (1966). The illustrated “Sketches from Diplomatic Life” illuminate the gaffes, machinations, and banalities of the daily lives of diplomats. An unnamed first-person narrator, a young writer with some experience in the Foreign Office records conversations had over lunch with a certain “Antrobus,” a senior diplomat and an habitué of diplomatic life. The narrator collects these anecdotes in an “Antrobus file,” as he calls it, and re-circulates the stories in new contexts. These texts provide a key to the seemingly opaque world of diplomatic life. The “Antrobus” stories construct and idea of Britishness while unveiling its mode of operation. The anecdotes masquerade as light satire—they are revealed in casual conversation—but in Antrobus’s stories of small problems at official functions, more is revealed about the British than their cookery methods. Antrobus teaches his interlocutor that “in Diplomacy, quite small things can be one’s undoing” and that “foreigners are apt to be preternaturally touchy about small things” (Antrobus 35). The accounts given of the foreign emissaries focus on the gaffes and eccentricities of a certain ambassador Polk-Mowbray. In “Where the Bee Sucks,” he develops odd interests:

One week for example it would be Sailors’ Knots. It was all right so long as he only sat at his desk playing with string but this was not all. He grew reckless, ambitious, carried away by all this new knowledge. He took to demonstrating his powers at children’s parties, charity bazaars, cocktails—everywhere...One day I walked into his office and found him clad for the most part in a bee-keeper’s veil... “Antrobus,” he said, “I have the answer to the monotony of this post. The murmur of innumerable bees, dear boy. A pastoral hobby, suitable for diplomats.” (Antrobus 47)

Tedium, a necessary strategy in diplomacy, wears down the diplomat as it wears down foreign resistance during negotiations. The diplomat understands that the information he finds is not conclusive. Durrell pokes fun at the ineffectiveness of the diplomats, who were often stationed far away from any supervision. The “Antrobus” stories also call attention to their own status as stories: It is significant that the reader receives this archive of anecdotes third-hand, in full awareness that they have been heard and edited from
the narrator’s notes. Interpretations of the Antrobus stories proliferate and defy conclusiveness.

Hence, diplomatic transactions, encoded in protocol, can seem to the untrained onlooker as shallow spectacle. Durrell’s *Quartet*, like his satires about diplomats, demonstrate that the reader—like the junior diplomat in the Antrobus stories—must pay close attention to details in order to distinguish between those euphemisms used to make a serious matter more palatable and those used simply as surface lightness. Durrell’s attitude to the English in the “Antrobus” stories is ambivalent. He both mocks the diplomats who try to preserve their Englishness abroad and celebrates those eccentricities that demarcate the English diplomat from his foreign environment. The performance of “rituals of Englishness” among diplomats in Durrell’s stories has still another purpose: by over-acting, the diplomats can pretend that England still possesses its strength and presence on the international scene. At the same time, Durrell casts himself as a decoder who provides a “key” to the codes of Englishness.

“Codes of manners” are likewise the central trope of *Mountolive* much as the codes of the novel are central to the telling of the *Quartet*. Mountolive’s friendship with Nessim Hosnani is founded on his recognition of Nessim as one “whose life was a code” (*Mountolive* 24). Their understanding of their mutual hypocrisies continues until Nessim’s betrayal of Mountolive. For those who live by codes, committing a gaffe is an inexcusable error; to commit a gaffe is to lose control of one’s exterior or possibly to disclose secret information. In his early visit to the Hosnani’s, Mountolive provokes an argument by forgetting that the Hosnani’s are Copts: he “unwittingly provided an opening by committing one of those gaffes which diplomats, more than any other tribe, fear and dread; the memory of which can keep them awake at nights for years” (36). Mountolive’s mistake makes clear that he has little concern for the role that the British have played in the worsening of the relationship between Copts and Muslims in Egypt. Although Mountolive and Nessim are outwardly good friends, Nessim nonetheless lies to him openly. This break in truthfulness foretells the beginning of Mountolive’s crisis in Egypt. Visiting a cabaret on a visit to Berlin, Mountolive unexpectedly sees Nessim “seated at a table among a group of elderly men in evening-dress” and sends over a card. Nessim tells Mountolive that he is there “trying to market tungsten.” Mountolive thinks nothing of it. His host, however, is more observant:
“Is your friend in armaments?” asked the Chargé d’Affaires as they were leaving. Mountolive shook his head. “He’s a banker. Unless tungsten plays a role in armaments—I really don’t know.” “It isn’t important. Just idle curiosity. You see, the people at his table are from Krupps, and so I wondered. That was all.” (75)

Mountolive misses clear signs that Nessim is planning a coup that will require armaments. Even when his Charge d’Affaires see this, and reports it to him, still he refuses to draw the connections. In Mountolive, Durrell satirizes the diplomat’s inability to read signs, while also showing sympathy for the monotony of diplomatic life.

David Mountolive is not a skilled decoder and reader of signs. He fails to see Leila’s purpose in writing him love-letters; he does not read the significance of Nessim’s meeting with people from Krupps, the German steelworks and armament factory. He manages to rise through the ranks of the Foreign Office through a scrupulous adherence to protocol rather than because he is an effective listener and negotiator.

In this third volume of the series, which Durrell called the clou of the Alexandria Quartet, David Mountolive makes an error in his response to learning of the Hosnani’s plot to overthrow the British in Egypt. Rather than maintain his allegiance to his government, of which he is the envoy, he protects his friendship with the Hosnani by hiding the memo he receives from Brigadier Maskelyne about the Hosnani’s plot. Mountolive is the kind of diplomat Nicolson warns against. He is neither neutral nor distant, nor is he even truthful in reporting information to the Foreign Office. Mountolive succeeds, however, in hiding his error by making Narouz, Nessim’s brother, into a scapegoat and having him killed to dissipate mounting concern. Mountolive charts David Mountolive’s failure to act as a public figure. His knowledge of Arabic does not help him to decode the political situation and the Hosnani’s motives.

Bored “diplomatic types” abound in Mountolive. While Errol and Maskelyne battle one another for power in Egypt, and Kenilworth thinks of his advancement, Sir Louis, Mountolive’s mentor,

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2 In a letter to Patricia Rodda, Durrell writes: “In a way Mountolive is the clou to the whole set” (u.d MsL, LD Collection, HRC). To Alan Thomas, Durrell echoes: “I am curious to see how Mountolive takes—it is the fulcrum of the Quartet, the clou” (29 September 1958, LD Papers, ADD MS 73114, British Library).
anxiously awaits his retirement. Pombal and Pursewarden look forward to their daily shave and gossip at Mnemijian’s barber and their after-work arak at Cafè al-Aktar. Sir Louis has, after a lifetime of service,

formed the habit of uttering a low continuous humming noise at receptions which had earned him a rather questionable notoriety… he was in the habit of humming, over and over again, in basso profundo, a passage from the Dead March in Saul. It summed up, appropriately enough, a lifetime of acute boredom spent in the company of friendless officials and empty dignitaries. (Mountolive 71)

Sir Louis’ humming indicates not only fatigue at the diplomat’s work of communicating, but a deliberate thwarting of language. He does not repeat a word, but simply makes a sound, as though he had renounced language altogether. Sir Louis also gives Mountolive advice to temper his excitement at finally being posted to Egypt: “I bet your first reaction to the news was: now I’m free to act, eh?” The final delusion.” (69) For the seasoned, fatigued ambassador, the diplomat, as a mere envoy, has no political power: “In diplomacy one can only propose, never dispose” (Mountolive 79). Durrell also disliked the lack of freedom imposed upon him by the duty to follow protocol. Protocol annihilates personality. As Frank Kersznowski points out, “Mountolive must achieve [the F.O’s] acceptance of protocol, of inertia, if he is to continue to be of use to diplomacy” (Kersznowski 59). Unlike Sir Louis and Mountolive, Gaston Pombal, “a minor consular official,” is realistic about the diplomat’s obligations, since “[f]or him the tiresome treadmill of protocol and entertainment—so like a surrealist nightmare—is full of exotic charm… He indulges himself with it but never allows it to engulf what remains of his intellect” (Mountolive 23). Pombal maintains a distance relative to his work and dreams of returning home to Normandy.

As a result of his disappointment with the Hosnaris, Mountolive sees that he has been following codes for most of his career: “In time his annoyance gave place to resignation. His profession which valued only judgment, coolness, and reserve, taught him… never to utter the pejorative thought aloud” (50). For the sake of neutrality, the diplomat sacrifices his personality to his profession. As Nicholson remarks, the diplomat “often becomes denationalised, internationalised, and therefore dehydrated, an elegant empty husk”
Evolution 79). As David Mountolive rises through the ranks of the diplomatic service, he loses access to his private opinions. His ability to follow protocol, which made him successful in the foreign service, finally impedes his ability to act in a time of crisis. In the debacle following the revelation of Nessim’s plot to transports armament to Palestine, Mountolive perfects his diplomatic persona. He experiences

a disenchancing sense of his own professional inadequacy, his powerlessness to act now save as an instrument... he thought back bitterly and often to the casually spoken words of Sir Louis as he was combing his hair in the mirror. “The illusion that you are free to act!” (242).

As Mountolive’s lover, Grishkin, tells him, “you are only a diplomat. You have no politics and no religion!” (49). In Durrell’s mind, writing, like diplomacy, creates a double loneliness because it “involve[es] a flight not only from one’s culture, but also from the self: ‘je suis un refugé de moi-même’... the extraterritorial writer is one for whom both ‘home’ and ‘language’ are difficult” (Pine 8).

In Durrell’s Alexandria Quartet, communication and interpretation are complicated by the vestiges of colonial rule. Against this background, Durrell’s diplomat figures develop an expertise in hermeneutic decoding and in revising the significance of the information which they gather. Diplomats and their networks of informants belong to a class onto themselves: they are an international society of emissary-arbitrators with special privileges who belong nowhere and whose public personas can erode their private convictions. They are observers because they are outsiders. This gives them greater mobility of the implicit indifference of information; its origins and its ends exist irrespective of its content. David Mountolive’s failure, inertia, and inability to act are emblematic of the fatigue of the postwar period and of the end of British imperial dominance. Durrell’s novel looks back to a period of transition in the late 1930s when Egypt was granted increasing independence from Britain and relations between the two countries required a different diplomatic approach. Mountolive, a postwar and post-Suez novel, rewrites the 1930s as the beginning of Britain’s loss of power in Egypt and in the Middle East.

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Subjective Diplomacy and Durrell: Response to Caroline Krzakowski

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Caroline Krzakowski presents a useful simultaneous reading of *Bitter Lemons*, *Mountolive*, and Durrell’s diplomatic experience. As *Bitter Lemons* was published only a year before *Mountolive*, it should be inevitable that we read their diplomatic aims into each other—but little scholarship has demonstrated such work.

Especially compelling are Krzakowski’s explorations of the original archival duties of the diplomat, evolving from a clerk or librarian of diplomats to a disseminator of ideas and champion of national interests. Krzakowski illustrates the power of a diplomat as emerging from “his ability to choose which fragments of information to transmit to his superiors”—the successful diplomat must also be a successful archivist, interpreter, and communicator. And it is tempting to go farther where she finds *Mountolive* representative of “the postwar ‘shrinking’ of the British Empire,” asserting that “Mountolive’s failure as a diplomat parallels the demise of empire” (115). In the context of Durrell’s entire body of work, Mountolive’s failures of understanding are those of Everyman, underscoring a motif in Durrell’s work: the modern world’s frustration by subjective limitations. In this sense, perhaps, Lawrence Durrell shapes all of his matured protagonists from archivists of collected histories into networkers of fragmented understandings.

In his critical text *Key to Modern Poetry*, written 1947–1948, Durrell describes the problem of subjectivity:

> Man is simply a box labeled personality. He peers out of the box through five slits, the senses. […] Only in his imagination can he inhabit the whole—a reality which is beyond the reach of intellectual qualification: […] we must accept it, and be content with our provisional truths, our short-range raids on this greater territory (*Key 5*)
Delivered as they are so soon after World War II and by a colonial-born British subject after the fall of empire, Durrell’s words resonate: “we must accept it.” Mountolive’s attitude to these “provisional truths” represent in part his failure. Since Mountolive does not recognize his limitations, he cannot accept them.

Krzakowski writes of Durrell’s diplomats that they are “a class onto themselves” because they “develop an expertise in hermeneutic decoding and in revising the significance of the information which they gather. [...] they are an international society of emissary-arbitrators with special privileges who belong nowhere and whose public personas can erode their private convictions” (113). But Durrell’s diplomat is not unique in these regards. The figure of the diplomat may help galvanize an idea, but the necessity of navigating, decoding, revising, nowhere-belonging, and disconnecting—Durrell suggests elsewhere—are requirements of us all. Darley, never a diplomat, might demonstrate these abilities most acutely. Through and throughout the Quartet’s four books, Darley navigates to decode, eventually understanding the world and finding his art only after distancing his private recollection from what he comes to understand as a public truth. In fact, the problem of understanding an uninhabitable whole is one Durrell explored his entire career. Mountolive feels joyed by (mistakenly) thinking that the reality of Egypt lives up to his Orientalist expectations (414). Likewise in Black Book, Lawrence Lucifer believes a diary is all he needs to understand Death Gregory—a tradition Darley takes up when he reads Justine in her diary in The Alexandria Quartet. In Tunc and Nunquam, Charlock too late discovers the error of his reducing the essence of people to the sounds they produce. Uniquely, in The Avignon Quintet the “whole” of reality shows itself bigger than imagined by outgrowing the pages of the work in a few places, most overtly on the last pages of the first and last books. Each of these four works hinges on difficulties of understanding the world. In each of these works, the protagonist plays the fool who bungles by believing things to be as simple as they appear. (In The Avignon Quintet, the reader is the protagonist fool, taken in by the text’s twists.) Thus, the failure of British diplomacy in Egypt isn’t the fault of Mountolive so much as an indicator of the faulty questions we can’t help asking ourselves: “can the empire survive?” or

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1 At an address in Pennsylvania in 1986, he describes his life work as one of trying to “restore the broken context” (Begnal 17), suggesting perhaps that it was an unwillingness to accept the provisional that moved him to write.
“can my constructed understanding of the world survive unchanging in the kind of world that does nothing but change?”

Outside of his novels, too, the novelist upends these constructions; the diplomat may function as an “in between,” but Durrell creates that space for himself inconsistently in *Bitter Lemons*. A foreign diplomat with native language skills, he initially positions himself between the British and the Cypriots in a way that befits the liminal persona of a diplomat: Cypriots are unable to find humor in ridiculous British customs, and the British see Cypriots in one dimension (*Bitter Lemons* 36). But Durrell also disrupts this construction when he articulates one more position. Rather than defining his place as a liminal one of mediation between the British and the Cypriot causes, he instead points out distinctions between Greek and Cypriot cultures (40, 114–115), and he increasingly identifies himself with Britain—which he situates between Greece and Cyprus: “You’d be surprised how much we are beloved,” he writes to an Athenian, “we” being the British whom he suggests are beloved by the Cypriots (118).

In *Bitter Lemons*, Durrell largely establishes his diplomacy, his in-between-ness, by driving wedges—creating and occupying middle grounds. And even as he does so, he gestures toward the importance of interpretation and indeterminacy, the nature of reality as comprised of the “selected fictions” Pursewarden is fond of in *The Alexandria Quartet* (210). In a sense, then, the successful diplomat shifts from an archivist of diploms to a networker of fragments. Witness, for example, Piers, Sylvie, Bruce, and Toby setting off from Alexandria for Macabru, traveling through relics at the desert’s edge (*Quintet* 91–99). While Toby is unable to navigate satisfyingly through the artifacts—he is troubled by the fragments of history, thinking they might be mirages, symptoms of the troubled perspective through which an individual sees the world—Piers is able to make his way. As the sole character truly to feel a connection with the religious events at the oasis, he is also more sensitive than his companions. Piers acts here as a networker of fragments, a true diplomat who both *sees* and *sees beyond* the “outer furnishings of this world” (95). He represents the diplomat-as-networker who exists within the world of diplomacy, rather than the diplomat-as-archivist who suffers himself to keep the artificial bounds of an artificial creation. Piers is, of course, not an international diplomat, but he represents the extent to which all of Durrell’s matured protagonists are individual diplomats, responsible for
negotiating among interests in order to fathom the kind of world that resists understanding.

When it comes to Durrell and diplomacy, of course, we cannot let the selection of the fictional obscure the implications of the actual. Durrell’s publication in 1957 of a British account of the diplomatic crisis of Enosis was followed closely by two Cypriot accounts: in English, *The Age of Bronze* by Rodis Roufos in 1960; in Greek, *Closed Doors* by Costas Montis in 1964. Despite Durrell’s note in the Preface that *Bitter Lemons* was no “political book” (ix), Roufos attributed to Durrell (cast as Maurice Ferrell, author of *Sour Grapes*) a book which is “not only very British—[…] it is Tory British” (138). And the narrator of Montis’s work might easily be speaking to an Irish proxy of Durrell when he asks, reasserting the politics of the personal, “how could you have come to kill us?” (116). The successful diplomat in Durrell’s writing is one who learns to understand the archive of diplomats to navigate among the fragments of a fractured reality. Beyond his world of fiction, the enormity of the world’s archive withheld such a tidy narrative arc from his diplomacy.

More than wanting to comment upon Mountolive’s failure as ambassador or even Britain’s failure as a colonial power, Durrell uses these figures as symbols of a greater common truth. Krzakowski makes a gesture in this direction when she cites Durrell’s consideration of monuments as makers of contemporaneity: in *Bitter Lemons*, she argues Durrell “asks how the late modernist writer should reconfigure the fragments of the past” (125). In the *Avignon Quintet*, these fragments of the past are not reconfigured but presented precisely as fragments of the past. Obscured by no interpretation, they instead emphasize the contemporaneity of the moment, which comes at the end of so many other moments. In doing so, at least in Durrell’s later work, the fragment is once again an aestheticized object, but in a way that is neither Eliotian nor Wordsworthian but something newer. History becomes an archive of fragmentary moments, the connected and networked accumulation of which reminds us when we are. *Now* is that time which could come only after we have experienced many *thens*. Likewise, our understanding of reality requires us to imagine networked connections among “our provisional truths, our short-range raids” of it (Durrell, *Key 5*).

This lesson is common to Durrell’s corpus, from *The Black Book* through the *Avignon Quintet*, from Lawrence Lucifer through Darley, Charlock, Piers, and Durrell himself in *Bitter Lemons*. Mountol-
ive’s failure as a diplomat, Britain’s failure in Egypt, and the Foreign Office’s failure in the hearts and minds of Cypriots—each of these failures offers for Durrell a diplomatic symbol pointing to the problem of subjectivity he explored for nearly fifty years.

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**Works Cited**


T.E. Hulme and the Beginnings of Imagism

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Introduction

T.E. Hulme’s name has for long been associated with the Imagists, the network of poets who, during the early years of the twentieth century, actively sought to re-define the standards of poetry. Hulme is understood to have played an important part in shaping early twentieth-century modernist poetics as a leading figure among the constellation of poets who gathered at the “Tour d’Eiffel” restaurant in Soho between 1909 and 1912. This group has been described as advocating proto-Imagist ideas (Carr 134); it is Hulme’s contribution to the beginnings of Imagism, a movement widely credited as a starting point for modernist poetry that, for many, warrants his significance as an influence on literary modernism. Specifically reading his “A Lecture on Modern Poetry” (1908) as the first and fullest exposition of the Imagist doctrine of poetry, it has been common for critics to cite this lecture as evidence that Hulme was an Imagist avant la lettre.

Although the connections between Hulme’s poetics and the Imagist doctrine (formally launched by Ezra Pound and F.S. Flint in 1913) cannot be disputed, to understand “A Lecture” as simply an early manifesto for Imagism is to risk ignoring the complexity of the argument presented in it by Hulme—and its far reaching implications for Imagist (and modernist) poetics. For Hulme’s contribution to Imagism can only be clarified through examining his lecture face-on, irrespective of imposed or anachronistic interpretations.

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1 Eliot famously described Imagism as the “point de repère . . . of modern poetry” (162).
2 See, for example, King 851; Harmer 30; Jones 35; Coffman 68; Martin 7-38; McCormick 116-18; Ferguson 63; McGuinness, ed. x; and Carr 376.

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“A Lecture on Modern Poetry” was delivered to the Poets’ Club in London towards the end of 1908. In it, Hulme advocates the introduction of a new verse form in poetry designed to be in tune with the “modern spirit” (52). “Each age must have its own special form of expression,” Hulme states, and “any period that deliberately goes out of it is an age of insincerity” (51). Because “modern” times challenged the idea that there is an “absolute truth” (an idea on which, in Hulme’s view, poetry had been based for many centuries), it was necessary for the “tendency” of poetry to change accordingly: instead of towards an absolute truth, modern poetry ought to strive “towards the production of a general effect”; this, in turn, “takes away the predominance of metre and a regular number of syllables” (53). The subject matter and tone of poetry had also to change; poetry would no longer deal with “heroic action” but with the “expression and communication of momentary phrases in the poet’s mind” (53). All things considered, Hulme concludes that modern poetry is akin to artistic Impressionism; should be written in “free verse”; and its “method” should be that of “recording impressions by visual images in distinct lines” (52).

Hulme’s insistence on replacing the “old” and “stagnant” with the “new” or “modern” shows that, as with others in his circle—Edward Storer, F.S. Flint and Ezra Pound—he was dissatisfied at
the state of poetry as it was being written in the early years of the twentieth century. However, in advocating for the introduction in poetry of a new form, Hulme was also implicitly rejecting certain philosophical and ideological positions, while his poetics is best read as a transposition into poetry of the “anti-intellectualist” view of language he advanced elsewhere in his work. Moreover, and equally importantly for understanding the development of his thought, many of the ideas presented in “A Lecture” also anticipate the “anti-romanticism” of “Romanticism and Classicism” (1911-12). Thus, not only must his argument in the lecture be approached independently of the Imagisms of Storer, Flint and Pound, but the fact that there is continuity between his writings shows that he is a much more coherent and consistent thinker than critics often allow. Ultimately, recognizing that Hulme developed his own brand of Imagism testifies to the plurality of Imagisms (and modernisms). It also enlightens our understanding of the workings of the Imagist network by highlighting the complex circulation, and intricate interconnections, of ideas that combined to form the poetics of Imagism.

The “modern spirit”

Hulme opens his lecture with a jeer directed against Henry Simpson, the Scottish banker who acted as the President of the Poets’ Club and who “told us last week that poetry was akin to religion” (49). He then moves on to berate the anonymous critic in the Saturday Review (venue for writers such as Anthony Trollope, George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells) for holding that poetry is “the means by which the soul soared into higher regions, and… a means of expression by which it became merged into a higher kind of reality” (49). Hulme is here referring to an unsigned article in the Saturday Review from November 1908, which described Storer’s poetry as “slag,” the anonymous critic claiming that Storer’s poems are “a spiritual equivalent to the sucking of chocolate” (“Versicolor” 612).7 What the anonymous critic of the Saturday Review,

5 Critics who have separated Hulme’s career into distinct periods or phases include Roberts 139-40; Levenson 83ff; and Csengeri, “The Chronology” 109.
6 On the importance of recognizing the plurality of modernisms within “modernism”, see Nicholls vii, 1-3 and Friedman 493-513.
7 Hulme’s reference to the article in the Saturday Review has been identified by Schuchard in Last Minstrels 258.
Simpson, and William Watson, the author of *Wordsworth’s Grave* (1890) and *Lachrymae Musarum* (1892) who is described later on in the lecture as more of “a political orator than a poet” (53), have in common, is their harbouring of “out-dated” ideas regarding poetry, its function and its method of composition. As Hulme puts it, they all make “mysterious passes and mumble of the infinite and the human heart”; this is in reality a “bluff,” which can be compared to “the way medieval scientists spoke of God. When entirely ignorant of the cause of anything they said God did it” (49).

Distancing himself from these critics, Hulme claims to be one among a “number of modern people” (50), using an adjective that, as Hobsbawm has noted, has from the late nineteenth century onwards been used by various artists seeking to dissociate themselves from the establishment (226-27). Hulme was certainly not alone in turning against established notions of poetry and in demanding a distinctly “modern” poetry. Storer, Flint and, to a lesser extent at this stage, Pound, were all registering their dissatisfaction with existing poetry. In “An Essay,” appended to his collection of poems *The Mirrors of Illusion* (1908), Storer argued that “at the hands of her priests and disciples poetry has suffered the most” (78). It was time, Storer suggested, for poetry to break from those “restrictions” of the past that “run counter to the current of life” (81). Flint shared Storer’s views on poetry. Reviewing *Mirrors of Illusion*, Flint praised Storer’s rejection of old techniques. Although he did not find Storer’s poems especially successful, as Storer, Flint insisted on “the need for revaluation of all poetical values” (“Book of the Week, Recent Verse” 26 Nov. 1908: 95). Pound, too, was determined to modernize poetry. Writing to William Carlos Williams on 21 October 1908, he rallied against the “materia poetica & metrica... of Milton’s or Miss Austin’s [sic] day” and the “didactism [sic]” of the past (8, 11). Stock, Kenner, Tytell and, most recently, Moody, have separately shown how Pound devoted the best part of his early career in opposing the dominant conceptions of poetry and criticism. As the unnamed figure in the opening of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, Storer, Flint and Pound all felt “out of key” and “out of date” with the poetry of their time (lines 1, 6); they were determined to change it.

In “A Lecture,” Hulme bases his argument about the necessity of change in poetry on two related ideas: that poetry had reached

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8 See Stock 29-41; Kenner 121-44; Tytell 35-111; and Moody 68-126.
In 1908 a state of stagnation and that only the introduction of a new verse could rejuvenate poetic activity; and that poetry had a duty to change, in order to accommodate the modern spirit that was so distinctly different from that of the nineteenth century. In the first case, despite his rejection in the lecture of all poetry “more than twenty years old” (50-51) and in contrast to the swagger and blast of Flint’s and Pound’s Imagist and Vorticist manifestos, Hulme presents his argument for change from a fairly dispassionate standpoint. He is keen on showing that his reasoning is based on elaborate empirical and historical observations concerning the nature of poetry. In the second instance, he criticizes the “nineteenth century” on what are mainly ideological grounds.

“The principle on which I rely in this paper,” Hulme announces early on in the lecture, “is that there is an intimate connection between the verse form and the state of poetry at any period” (50). The introduction of a new poetic form, in other words, is a necessary prerequisite for the production of new and original poetry: for “arts like poetry… must find a new technique each generation” (51). Indeed, poetic activity, Hulme argues, cannot be explained by external factors; rather, empirical and historical evidence suggests that poetic activity flourishes only when a new form of poetry is introduced: for “[t]o the artist the introduction of a new art form is… like a new dress to a girl; he wants to see himself in it. It is a new toy” (50). The logic described here, according to which the introduction of new verse forms and the composition of new and original poetry are coextensive, is a fairly established position within literary history. It forms part, for example, of Kirby-Smith’s analysis of the development of modern verse (44). More importantly, it helps us understand why Hulme and his fellow poets were so eager to welcome a modern form of poetry in 1908.

As explained in “A Lecture,” the introduction by Wordsworth of the “Modern lyrical impulse… in good set terms as a new method” accounts for the great amount of original poems written by the British Romantics in the nineteenth century. This was also the lesson to be learnt from developments in France in the late nineteenth century, where Gustave Kahn’s new technique of vers libre resulted in “the appearance of a band of poets perhaps unequalled at any one time in the history of French poetry” (52). In

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9 Cf. Hulme’s claim in “Romanticism and Classicism” that the “blank verse” introduced in the Elizabethan rimes was “new and so it was easy to play tunes on it” (63).
his essay on vers libre, published as the “Préface” to Premiers Poèmes in 1897, Kahn suggests that only the introduction of a new form of poetry could accommodate the “plus complexe” and “plus difficile” modern thought; more crucially for Hulme, Kahn revealed to him that only a new verse form could truly reinvigorate poetry. Repeating Kahn’s argument almost in verbatim, Hulme uses it in his lecture in support of his claim that it is necessary to replace old verse forms:

It must be admitted that verse forms like manners and like individuals develop and die. They evolve from their initial freedom to decay and finally to virtuosity. They disappear before the new man, burdened with the thought more complex and more difficult to express by the old name. After being too much used their primitive effect is lost. All possible tunes have been played on the instrument. What possibility is there in that for the new men, or what attraction? (50)

Detecting in the poetry of the early twentieth century a similar decay and lack of virtuosity as the one described by Kahn’s in his “Préface,” Hulme concludes that the introduction of a new form of poetry is necessary if poetry were to exit the state of stagnation in which it had fallen.

At the same time, Hulme bases his argument in support of change on the idea that poetry had always to be in line with “the spirit of our times” (53). This is another idea that can be understood through Kahn. As Kahn, who advocated vers libre on the grounds that it was better suited to express the “pensée plus complexe” [more complex thought] of modern times (23), Hulme maintains that twentieth-century English poetry has to adapt to the “trend of the modern spirit” (52). He explains what he means by “spirit” in his review of Tancrède de Visan’s L’Attitude du lyrisme contemporain (1878), published in the New Age in August 1911:

It starts out from this thesis. That there is in each generation… a ‘temperature morale’ [a moral “temperature”], which is to be found at the same epoch in all the different orders of mental activity, and which constitutes l’état gé-

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10 Cf. Kahn 23. For further discussion of Hulme’s appropriation of the ideas of Kahn in “A Lecture,” see Csengeri, “T.E. Hulme’s Borrowings from the French” 16-27.
néral de l’esprit de moeurs environnantes’ [the general spirit of the moral standards of the external environment]. (57)

This view, that poetry and art more broadly are inextricably linked with the general worldview or attitude of the time in which they are produced, stayed with Hulme throughout his career. It is a central part of the critique of the romantic “critical attitude” in “Romanticism and Classicism,” dismissed in this later lecture as a trend that “outlasted the thing from which it was formed” (65). It also features prominently in Hulme’s defence of abstract art in “Modern Art and Its Philosophy” from 1914, where the geometric art of Epstein is offered as evidence of “the break up [sic] of the Renaissance humanistic attitude” (269).

What was the specific nature of this “modern” or “new” spirit, then? And how did it differ from the spirit of previous times? According to the argument presented in “A Lecture,” a dramatic change in the way humans perceived the world occurred in the modern era and, as a result of this change, the moderns have ceased to believe in absolute truth. They instead now “acknowledge the relative”:

As the French philosopher Guyau put it, the great poems of ancient times resembled pyramids built for eternity where people loved to inscribe their history in symbolic characters. They believed they could realise an adjustment of idea and words that nothing could destroy.

Now the whole trend of the modern spirit is away from that, philosophers no longer believe in absolute truth. We no longer believe in perfection, either in verse or in thought, we frankly acknowledge the relative. We shall no longer strive to attain the absolutely perfect form in poetry. (52–53)

In a discussion about the future of poetry in Les Problèmes de l’esthétique contemporaine (1884), Jean-Marie Guyau described how his contemporary “naturalistes” prose writers chose prose over poetry as their preferred art medium. Guyau found that prose represented “ce qu’il y a de plus relatif et des plus mobile dans le langage [that which is most relative and most flexible in the language]”: as the most “relative [relative]” and most “mobile [flexible]” medium, prose was best suited for modern ideas. Unlike poems of the past that “ressemblent à ces pyramides dressées pour l’éternité, où les
vieux peuples aimaient à inscrire leur histoire en caractères merveilleux et symboliques [ressemble pyramids erected for eternity, on which the ancients loved to inscribe their history by producing fantastic and symbolic characters], modern prose dealt with ideas that “succèdent si vite pour nos cerveaux fatigués que nous avons à peine le temps de les transcrire à la hâte [succeed one another so quickly for our tired minds that we only have time to translate them in haste]” (176). More intriguingly, in L’Art au point de vue sociologique (1889), Guyau stated that “[l]’art moderne doit être fondé sur la notion de l’imparfait, comme la métaphysique moderne sur celle du relative [Modern art ought to be based upon the idea of the imperfect, in the same way as modern metaphysics proceeds on the idea of the relative]” (86). This obviously chimes with Hulme’s remark that the defining characteristic of the moderns was that they acknowledged the “relative” (53). However tempting it may be to conclude that Hulme was “borrowing” his ideas from Guyau, though, Csengeri is right to point out that Guyau’s statement in L’Art au point de vue sociologique features as part of an argument demonstrably different to the one put forward by Hulme. For in this work the Frenchman was specifically discussing the modern realistic novel, suggesting that the modern author should avoid presenting characters that were “perfect,” as that produced unrealistic and, therefore, ineffective art (“Hulme’s Borrowings” 25).

In distinguishing between the ancients who “believe in perfection” and the moderns who “frankly acknowledge the relative,” Hulme is almost certainly harking back to ideas expressed in the set of rudimentary notes published as “Cinders” (begun in 1906–7), where he presents two antithetical views of the world. On one side stand those who try to impose an artificial unity on the flux of experience and whom Hulme derides as “counter” philosophers (8). On the other, there are those who endorse a view of the world as “cinders.” As in “A Lecture,” in “Cinders” Hulme sides against the idea that there is an absolute truth, unity or beauty in the world (8–10). Instead of reducing the world to “theories of the world, which satisfy [us]” (14), as one entry puts it, we must recognize, it is claimed in another, that “The world is a plurality” (9). Likewise, rather than postulate philosophical views that are “flattering to our sense of power over the world” (11), it is more accurate to recognize that the world is “essentially imperfect, chaotic, and cinder-like” (9), and thus accept the view that there is “No average or real truth” (13). The modern poet in “A Lecture” who does not be-
lieve in absolute truth recalls the Hulme of “Cinders,” who happily acknowledges that the only reality is the experiential “flux.”

Hulme further elaborates on this view—that there is no “absolute” truth and that the world is imperfect—in the *New Age* essays he wrote between 1909-11. In “The New Philosophy,” he argues that the tendency to seek “perfection” in philosophy begins with the ancient Greeks, specifically Plato, for whom “reality consisted of ‘essences’ or ideas” (86; cf. 111). This tendency can also be seen at work in neo–Hegelian philosophers such as J.B.S. Haldane, whose philosophy is based on “order and organisation” (93); it can also be seen in the theories of positivist philosophers in general, who vouch to rationalize reality through scientific methods (101).

For Hulme, two philosophers who satisfactorily rejected the “ancient” view of the world as “perfect,” moving away from constructions of “perfect” systems, are Jules de Gaultier and Henri Bergson. Gaultier demonstrates that philosophy is in reality “a means of expressing certain attitudes to the cosmos” and that, moreover, thinking the opposite implies “humbly groping after the truth” (99-100). The lesson from Gaultier is that the struggle of science for “certitude” and for “systematic structure” is misguided, as “[a]ll philosophy is bound to be untrue, for it is the art of representing the cosmos in words, which is just as much a necessary distortion as the art of painting, which represents solidarity in a plane of two dimensions” (103). Metaphysics should instead resemble art: it must combine “freedom and chance,” “bold speculation,” “light-heartedness” and “idiosyncrasy.” It must be seen, as Hulme puts it otherwise, as “an elaborate means for the expression of quite personal and human emotions” (101). Similarly to Gaultier, Hulme praises Bergson for offering an alternative approach to metaphysics. By understanding the world in terms of experiential “flux” and not as a unity of laws, Hulme maintains in “Notes on the Bologna Congress” that Bergson provides a more accurate and more sincere view of reality, which is attuned to the modern spirit. Citing Bergson in support of his argument, Hulme rejects the belief that “Somewhere at a great distance, Truth is hidden” and that “She is always waiting to be discovered” (105).

There is thus an obvious link between Hulme’s description of the modern poet in “A Lecture” and his discussion of Gaultier and Bergson in the *New Age* articles. Just as Gaultier and Bergson understand the world without imposing any “artificial” unities over it (87; 101), so the modern poet in “A Lecture” rejects all notions of “perfection” (cf. 52). In arguing in the lecture that the moderns
“acknowledge the relative” (cf. 53), Hulme seems to be referring to view expressed in “Cinders,” and which in his articles for the New Age he attributes to the philosophical methods of Gautier and, especially, Bergson.

There is, finally, another aspect to Hulme’s claim that the moderns “acknowledge the relative,” which is less immediately apparent. The lecture’s opposition to notions of “perfection” and to the tendency of creating God-like structures and inventing theories of “absolute” truth (52) anticipates Hulme’s critique of romanticism, defined in “Romanticism and Classicism” in 1911-12 as the belief that “man is a god” (62). It is also in line with Hulme’s criticism in this lecture of Ruskin, who “wants to deduce his opinion like his master, Coleridge, from a fixed principle of the cosmos” (62). Both the modern poet in “A Lecture” and his “classic” counterpart in “Romanticism and Classicism” recognize that it is not the job of poetry to make claims to an “absolute truth” (cf. 49, 52, 62, 66). This is not to say that the arguments in the two lectures are identical: in “Romanticism and Classicism”, Hulme directs his critique primarily at the romantic weltanschaung as he detects it not only in literature but also in politics. Despite the crucial change in terminology and focus, however, the poetry that Hulme criticizes in “Romanticism and Classicism” is the same as the poetry he opposes in his early lecture. This is evident from the way that in both these lectures, Hulme directs his criticism towards the same poets. Thus in “A Lecture” he lists Tennyson, Shelley, Keats and prominent members of the Edwardian literary establishment, such as Simpson and Watson, as examples of poets guilty of chasing “perfection” and of using empty rhetoric, while in “Romanticism and Classicism,” even though he adds Lamartine, Hugo, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Swinburne on his list of poets whose poetry he dislikes, Hulme also includes Tennyson, Shelley, Keats and the critic who “takes up the thing at least a couple of notes in pitch” (cf. 62-63).

The New Form of Poetry: Impressionism & Free Verse

Halfway through the lecture, Hulme describes the difference between old and modern attitudes in poetry by pointing to “anal-
gous” developments in painting. He finds that there is an “analogous change in painting, where the old endeavoured to tell a story, the modern attempts to fix an impression” and suggests that “[w]hat has found expression in painting as Impressionism will soon find expression in poetry in free verse” (53). There are two things to note here, both of which merit further scrutiny. The first relates to the role played by Impressionist painting in Hulme’s formulation of modern poetry; the second to the form that modern poetry would take.

As Carr points out, “before Roger Fry’s first Post-Impressionist exhibition [in late 1910], Impressionism still represented all that was most modern in art” (198). This was certainly the impression of Storer, who wrote in 1908 that “[t]o argue for or against Impressionism at this time of the day would be as foolish as to write a treatise proving the circulation of blood” (“An Essay” 101). Understood in its broadest definition, as the art practised by Monet, Renoir, Pissarro and Sisley, as well as Cézanne, Degas, Manet and Whistler, Impressionism challenges many nineteenth-century conceptions of art, thereby acting as a source of inspiration and influence for twentieth-century writers.12 However, rather than offering Impressionism as a blueprint for modernist literature (in the manner of Ford’s “On Impressionism,” for example), it is more accurate to claim that Hulme is here using developments in art in support of his diagnosis that a distinctly modern spirit was making itself evident in all cultural spheres: he felt the same about developments in music (54). What Hulme seems to be valuing specifically in Impressionism is Impressionism’s choice of subject matter and its creative method. Thus, in the passage cited above, Impressionism is described as art that is not interested in presenting a story or a narrative—this is what Hulme means when he says that Impressionism avoids “epic subjects”—but that is, rather, only interested in the momentary presentations of the artist’s inward feelings. As he puts it earlier in the lecture, the aim of Impressionism is “the maximum of individual and personal expression” (53). In this sense, Impressionism constitutes a transformation into art of the idea that Hulme professes in his article on Galtier, according to which modern philosophy should be “simply an elaborate means for the expression of quite personal and human emotions” (101). More crucially, Hulme seems attracted to the way Impressionism avoids presenting

12 See Adam Parkes’s recent study of Impressionism and modernist literature.
ideas of “absolute truth,” looking instead for inspiration in material reality (53). This is evident from the way he juxtaposes the Impressionist method of representing feelings induced by “the vision of a London street at midnight” or the “the flat spaces and wide horizons” of the Canadian prairies with the “lyrical impulse” of Tennyson, Shelley and Keats (53). This regard for material reality, which both Compton and Eitner identify as a central component of Impressionist art, can also be seen in his early notebooks “Notes on Language and Style” (c. 1907), where in one entry it is stated that “[a]ll emotion depends on real solid vision or sound” (24), and in another that “[t]he art of literature consists exactly in this passage from the Eye to the Voice” (31; emphasis in original).13 It can also be seen in “Romanticism and Classicism,” where Hulme argues that a poem should always be built around “an actually realized visual object” (71).

Hulme concludes his discussion of Impressionism by saying that, just as the “modern spirit” found its expression in art as Impressionism, the “modern spirit” in poetry will find its expression as “free verse.” For many critics, Hulme’s demand for “free verse” is the central requirement that he bestows on modern poetry.14 Yet the obvious problem with describing Hulme’s definition of modern poetry as “free verse” is that, as various scholars have showed, “free verse” is an often misused term that, unless it is defined each time it is used, runs the risk of being a misnomer.15 Indeed, in neglecting to explain what they mean by “free verse,” critics from Taupin and Read, through to Rodway and Wacior have failed to add to our understanding of Hulme’s position regarding the form of modern poetry in “A Lecture.” For this reason, it is necessary to consider in some detail Hulme’s argument in favour of “free verse” or vers libre, two terms that are used interchangeably in his lecture. As I argue here, Flint’s suggestion in “History of Imagism” that Hulme proposed “pure vers libre” needs substantial qualification (70).

Hulme’s first mention of either term occurs early in the lecture:

I came to the subject of verse from the inside rather than the outside. There were certain impressions which I wanted to fix. I read verse to find models but I could not find any that seemed exactly suitable to express that kind of impression …

13 See Compton n.pag. and Eitner 338.
14 See, for example, Taupin 245; Read 129; Rodway 96; and Wacior 26.
15 See Hough 87; Pratt 39; Duffell 187; Malof 146; and Hartman 44.
until I came to read the French vers-libre, which seemed to exactly fit the case. (50)

He soon returns to the subject of vers libre, now elaborating on what he means by it:

The new technique was first definitely stated by Kahn. It consisted in a denial of a regular number of syllables as the basis of versification. The length of the line is long and short, oscillating with the images used by the poet; it follows the contours of his thoughts and is free rather than regular... it is clothes made to order, rather than ready-made clothes. This is a very bald statement of it and I am not concerned here so much with French poetry as with English. The kind of verse I advocate is not the same as vers-libre, I merely use the French as an example of the extraordinary effect that an emancipation of verse can have on poetic activity. (52)

Hulme’s definition of vers libre is, in its essence, a summary of the argument presented by Kahn in his “Préface” to Premiers Poèmes. According to Kahn, vers libre allows the poet to “écrire son rythme propre et individuel au lieu d’endosser un uniforme taillé d’avance et qui le réduit à n’être que l’élève de tel glorieux prédécesseur” [write his own individual rhythm, rather than follow pre-fabricated restrictions, and thus reduce himself to being simply a follower of so-called glorious masters]” (28). Yet, however, despite his reliance on Kahn, Hulme quickly makes it clear that he does not want to offer French vers libre as the principal form of modern poetry. What are we to make of this?

Tempting as it may be to conclude that Hulme is guilty of contradicting himself, another explanation seems fairer. Hulme is simply making the point (which is also a point Storer, Flint and Pound also made) that what makes vers libre primarily a modern form of poetry is that it does not follow any prescribed rules.16 This is the

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16 See Flint, “Book of the Week: Recent Verses” 212-13 and “Contemporary French Poetry” 358; and Storer 102, 107. Pound’s principle of melopoeia, according to which form has “truly to bear the trace of emotion which the poem... is intended to communicate” (“The Serious Artist” 244), certainly shares something with the type of verse advocated by Flint and Storer. See Pound, “The Tradition” 93; “The Approach to Paris” 340; and “How I Began” 213-14. In a letter to Alice Henderson from 1913, Pound writes: “Vers libre is various
only definition of *vers libre* that can be got out of “A Lecture” and it is, in fact, the only satisfactory definition that can be given to the terms “*vers libre*” and “free verse” as they are used in English poetry. For Hough, “free verse” as adopted by English poets in the early twentieth century is more correctly understood as *vers libéré*, not *vers libre* whereas *vers libre* refers to verse that is “born free,” *vers libéré* denotes verse that “has been liberated from some pre-existing chains” (87). Kirby-Smith makes a similar point to Hough, suggesting that the only common characteristic of “free verse” poems in English is that “they escape or deviate from traditional meters” and that they thus “run counter to expectations of various sorts” (43, 47).

That Hulme favours a verse form that is not prescriptive but only abandons strict conventions is made evident from his poetry, which is an example of what Malof calls “fragmented free verse,” or, in Kirby-Smith’s terms, “vers-libristic” form, “a loosening up of poetic structure into lines of irregular length” but which retains, as Kirby-Smith explains, “a certain regularity of syllabification and use of rhyming endings” (44). Consider, for example, “The Embankment”:

> Once, in finesses of fiddles found I ecstasy,  
> In a flash of gold heels on the hard pavement.  
> Now see I  
> That warmth’s the very stuff of poesy.  
> Oh, God, make small  
> The old star–eaten blanket of the sky,  
> That I may fold it round me and in comfort lie. (3)

A rhyming structure persists: “ecstasy” with “poesy”; “I” with “sky” and “lie.” In “Above the Dock,” the iambic pentameter ensures that the rhythmic structure is much more fluid:

> Above the quiet dock in mid night,  
> Tangled in the tall mast’s corded height,  
> Hangs the moon. What seemed so far away  
> Is but a child’s balloon, forgotten after play. (3)

Consider also his unpublished poem “Sunset,” with the primary

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 things. there’s ‘Vers Libre’. And ‘our vers libre’ and ‘their vers libre’ [sic]” (4).
metrical stress marked on its original manuscript:

I love not the Sunset
That spread like a scarlet sore
O’er half a sick sky,
Or flaunts a trailed red globe
Along the fretted edge of the city’s roofs
About the time of homeward going crows
Calling aloud for all to gape
At its beauty
Like a wanton. (n.pag)

“Autumn” is similarly unrhymed, but written in a much freer form:

A touch of cold in the Autumn night—
I walked abroad,
And saw the ruddy moon lean over a hedge
Like a red-faced farmer.
I did not stop to speak, but nodded,
And round about were the wistful stars
With white faces like town children. (3)

Here, the conventions of rhyme and metre are loosened as the modern poet is left free to express himself. Instead of trying to achieve a “perfect” representation, in “Autumn” Hulme simply presents a series of impressions. He does not speak, but nods; in the terminology of “A Lecture,” he possesses a “tentative and half-shy manner of looking at things” (53–54).

In a fluid, “imperfect” form that allows the poet to express himself without giving the impression that an absolute beauty or truth exists, Hulme found the possibility for poetic rejuvenation. Ultimately, however, and above everything else, what concerned him the most in “A Lecture” was not so much that modern poetry should be composed in “free verse,” but that it is “visual.” What he means by “visual” is examined in the next and final part of this essay.

The Use of Images and “Visual” Poetry

Hulme explains the aims and method of composition of modern poetry through the following example:
Say the poet is moved by a certain landscape, he selects from that certain images which put into juxtaposition in separate lines serve to suggest and to evoke the state he feels… Two visual images form what one may call a visual chord. They unite to suggest an image which is different to both. (54)

He then moves on to describe modern verse as “read and not chanted,” adding that its effect depends on “arresting the attention, so much so that the succession of visual images should exhaust one” (54). And, returning toward the end of the lecture to elaborate on how exactly modern verse can be said to be “read,” Hulme states:

This new verse… appeals to the eye rather than to the ear. It has to mould images, a kind of spiritual clay, into definite shapes. This material… is images and not sound. It builds up a plastic image which it hands over to the reader, whereas the old [chanted] art endeavoured to influence him physically by the hypnotic effect of rhythm. (56)

For both Carr and Kirby-Smith, the emphasis on the “eye” not the “ear” anticipates (at least in its spirit) the typographic experimentations of e. e. cummings, Apollinaire and the Dadaists (Carr 179; Kirby-Smith 46-47). For Schuchard, Hulme’s definition of modern poetry as “visual” distances his brand of Imagism from the popular chanted verse of the time, but also from the Imagisms of those around him, who were attracted to chanted verse. Indeed, Hulme’s description of the “old art” of chanting in “A Lecture” (which he found so ineffective) fits perfectly the profile of the chanted verse popularised by W.B. Yeats and Florence Farr in the early 1900s. Farr’s “cantilating” captured the imaginations of many poets in the early twentieth century, including leading members of the Poet’s Club, and Hulme’s distinction can be read as a reaction to the art of Yeats and Farr.17 Here, I want to focus on another way of understanding Hulme’s “visual” and “read” poetry, through Théodule Ribot’s “logique des images.”18

17 See Schuchard 256-83. An idea of the kind of chanted verse that Yeats and Farr were promoting can be found in Farr’s The Music of Speech 19-26.
18 Martin identified Ribot as a possible “source” for Hulme’s poetic theory as early as 1970. See “The Sources of the Imagist Aesthetic” 198-204. Years later,
The single most important feature of Hulme’s modern poetry is its method of presentation of different images in distinct lines. As many critics have recognized, Hulme owes this method to Bergson, specifically Bergson’s key suggestion in An Introduction to Metaphysics that many diverse images can lead us “to the precise point where there is certain intuition to be seized” (28). In a well-known passage in this essay (which Hulme translated for publication in 1912), Bergson explains that, although it is very difficult to “reproduce” the “inner life” or duration despite the fact that, as he puts it, “no image can replace the intuition of duration” (27), different succinct images may succeed in triggering our attention towards intuition, which is the means through which we can access duration. An important requirement for intuition, however, is that it requires an effort on the part of the individual: “consciousness must at least consent to make the effort” (28). The idea is that, precisely because intuition (which can lead us to duration) requires effort from our consciousness, it cannot be given to us, but only be suggested to us.

Bergson was not, of course, referring to poetry here. But read through his suggestion in An Introduction to Metaphysics, the juxtaposition of images in modern poetry that Hulme proposes in “A Lecture” appears to be designed to facilitate the process of intuition. The modern poet presents a series of brief and distinct images or metaphors designed to lead the reader to an intuitive moment. This logic is enacted in Hulme’s poetry, where metaphors are presented successively, with no image privileged over another, and where, as suggested by Hulme in “A Lecture,” the reader is encouraged to make out of them as he wants and to unify them into a new image (54). In “Above the Dock,” for example, the image of the hanging moon is followed by that of a balloon held by a child; the two images carry equal weight and

in “Hulme’s French Sources,” Rae suggested that Ribot provided Hulme with a basis on which to develop his model of art, according to which the purpose of poetry is that of “presenting some reality directly rather than attempting to explain it to the intellect with the ‘chiffres’ [tokens] of highly abstract language: a reality that, transcendental or otherwise, forever resists explication in such terms” (81). Rae’s emphasis is not on Hulme’s account of language or poetics, but on the way that, read via Ribot’s scepticism about the existence of a transcendental realm, Hulme’s “classical” poetry can be interpreted in terms of “the aesthetics of Pragmatism” (97). Rae elaborates on this view in Practical Muse. See 12, 47-64.
unify into an image of the moon floating like a balloon held by the child. Likewise, “A Sunset” begins with the image of the sunset “spread like a scarlet sore,” but the poem then moves rapidly through the images of the “half a sick sky,” a “trailed red globe,” “the city’s roofs,” and the “hómeward going crows.” Finally, in “Autumn” Hulme associates the “ruddy moon” with a “red-faced farmer” and “wistful stars” with the “white faces” of “town children,” as the mind of the reader shifts suddenly from one image to the next, the two images fusing and uniting into new ones. In the terminology of *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Hulme invites the reader to make the effort required by intuition; he must suspend any “particular and clearly-defined disposition” (28) he may have.

Hulme expresses a similar idea in his 1914 lecture on “Bergson’s Theory of Art,” where he explains that the poet must always aim to invent original metaphors—“because language will not carry over the exact thing you want to say,” Hulme claims here, “you are compelled simply in order to be accurate to invent original ways of stating things” (200)—only to then stress that the presentation of metaphors and epithets alone does not suffice. What matters most in poetry is not so much “the accidental fact that imagery conveys over an actually felt visual sensation, but the actual character of that communication, the fact that it hands you over the sensation as directly as possible” (201). The presentation of images in poetry is not enough; images, rather, must serve to generate communication between the poet and the reader. Making the point that poetry has to consist in “fresh metaphors and epithets,” Hulme stresses that the most important quality of verse is this direct method of communication. Importantly, he clarifies that this “same quality is exhibited in the other parts of verse, in the rhythm and metre” (198). This is an important qualifier, for it offers one explanation as to why Hulme did not abandon such conventions as rhythm or rhyme in his poetry: for as long as these “conventions” aid communication, then they have a part to play in modern poetry.

Although Bergson’s suggestion in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* provides a useful lens through which to read Hulme’s method of composition, Bergsonian philosophy does not immediately explain how modern poetry “appeals to the eye rather than to the ear” or that, moreover, “It has to mould images, a kind of spiritual clay, into definite shapes” (56). The requirements that Hulme postulates here for modern poetry can be understood through Ribot’s theory
of imagination, specifically through Ribot’s discussion in *Essay on the Creative Imagination* (1900).

According to Ribot, there are two main types of reasoning involved in the processing of “abstract” and “general” ideas: reasoning from particular to particular, and reasoning by analogy. Both are needed to pass from the known to the unknown. The difference is that, whereas in the first case the mental progress is of the simplest form (as the mind simply passes from the immediately given to that suggested by experiential association), reasoning by analogy is of a far higher order: it presupposes mental construction. Ribot shows that analogical reasoning, which is a spectrum ranging from valueless likeness to cognitive resemblance, leads to different kinds of creative imagination. In cases where analogies are valueless, the operation involved is “difficult imagination.” As Ribot explains, this process consists of “vaguely-outlined, indistinct images… evoked and joined according to the least rigorous modes of association” (195). When analogies approach cognition, however, they give rise to what Ribot terms “plastic imagination.” This “plastic imagination,” Ribot explains, “has for its special characters clearness and precision of form,” adding that its “material [sic] are clear images, approaching perception, giving the impression of reality” (184).

In various entries in “Notes on Language and Style,” Hulme writes that “poetry” (or “direct” language, as opposed to “prose” that is “indirect”) must be made up of “analogies,” in a way that invites comparison with Ribot’s definition of plastic imagination as the process of “reasoning by analogies.” In one fragment in “Notes,” for example, we read that “the poet is forced to use new analogies, and especially to construct a plaster model of a thing to express his emotion at the sight of the vision he sees, his wonder and ecstasy” (24; cf. 22, 25, 26, 30, 31, 42). Elsewhere, in a fragment entitled “Example of Plastic Imagination,” Hulme writes:

The two tarts walking along Piccadilly on tiptoe, going home, with hat on back of head. Worry until could find the exact model analogy that will reproduce the extraordinary effect they produce.

Could be done at once by an artist in a blur. (28)

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19 On Hulme’s distinction between “prose” and “poetry,” see his entries in “Notes on Language and Style” 24-27.
In Ribot’s terms, the logic in both these fragments is that, through cognitive analogies, it becomes possible for the poet to present accurately that which he has in his mind: to give an impression of reality. The idea that the success of a poem depends on the ability of the poet to use “exact” analogies features also in “Romanticism and Classicism,” where a similar example to the entry in “Notes”—of someone “walking behind a woman in the street... the skirt rebounds from her heels” (70-71)—is used to explain the creative process involved in “classic” poetry. To represent the emotion produced by the movement of the woman, Hulme maintains in “Romanticism and Classicism,” it is necessary that the poet have in his mind an “actually realised visual object.” More importantly, the analogy used by the poet must be “every bit necessary for accurate description... sincere in the accurate sense” (71). The same idea can be found in “A Lecture.” For in explaining in “A Lecture” that, unlike chanted verse, modern poetry “mould[s] images... into definite shapes” and “builds up a plastic image which it hands over to the reader” (36), Hulme is essentially stating the case he was later to make in “Romanticism and Classicism”: that the poet must aim to capture the feeling he wants to express through clear and accurate analogies.

In Essay on the Creative Imagination, Ribot locates the process of diffluent imagination in the “art of the ‘symbolists’,” by which he means art that “despises the clear and exact representation of the outer world [and] replaces it by a sort of music that aspires to express the fleeting inwardness of the human soul” (202). By contrast, “plastic imagination” is involved in those arts that present images in a precise and detailed way, for example the literature of Hugo, in whose works we find “a stream of glittering images” (188). Quoting Mabilleau and Gautier, both of whom discussed Hugo’s art, in approval, Ribot claims that Hugo “wants to see the words”; because for Hugo “a book is made to be read, not to be spoken aloud,” Ribot continues, “Hugo never spoke his verses but wrote them out... as if he needed to fixate the image... to find the appropriate word” (189; emphasis in original). As well as explaining Hulme’s emphasis on the use of accurate analogies, therefore, Ribot’s theory of creative imagination provides a different way of understanding Hulme’s distinction between “chanted” and “visual” art. Despite Hulme’s dismissal of Hugo as a “Romantic” later on in “Romanticism and Classicism,” the modern poet in “A Lecture” resembles Ribot’s Hugo: they both aim at creating visual, not aural, analogies.
because, as explained above, they hold visual images to be the only means of approaching perception.

Conclusion

A close and independent analysis of Hulme’s “A Lecture on Modern Poetry” shows that, as with the poets in his circle—notably Storer, Flint and Pound—Hulme was dissatisfied at the existing state of poetry in 1908. Although there are clear continuities between his poetics and the Imagist doctrine—the emphasis on poetry free from restrictions, the use of “direct” language, and the juxtaposition of distinct images—Hulme’s demands on modern poetry are more accurately understood when examined independently of the poetics of other Imagists. This is not to devalue the merit of studying Imagism as a unified poetic doctrine, but to highlight the advantages of paying attention to the individual ideas and personalities that form intricate networks.

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Ripples in Modernist Waters: The Poetics, Ethics, & Politics of T.E. Hulme's Vision of Anti-Humanist Democracy

Sejal Sutaria
Earlham College

Christos Hadjyiannnis’s beautiful reading of T.E. Hulme’s “Lecture on Modern Poetry” in conjunction with early twentieth century philosophical and social thought is exciting and timely given recent debates about how modernism ought to integrate the philosophical, literary, and cultural production of previously unheard voices within pre-existing networks. His nuanced and textured re-envisioning of Hulme’s aesthetics invites an inquiry into the philosophy, literary practices, ethics, and politics that inspired them. Conversely, an inquiry into how Hulme critiques liberalism inflected ideology and literature through his aesthetics reveals how his urgency to reconstruct the social order was driven by his vision of ethics. To respond to this invitation in the space such a piece permits, I explore Hulme’s connections with his contemporaries, Pound and Eliot, as well as less frequently considered dissonances with D.H. Lawrence and members of the Bloomsbury Group, to illustrate how discourse about the crisis of language and representation is inherently linked with ideological clashes around aesthetics, art, and politics that foreshadow the emergence of fascism and Nazi Germany.

Critics and scholars of modernism often focus, understandably, on what the French symbolists, and later Hulme, Yeats, Pound, and Eliot among others at the turn of the century termed the crisis of language in representing reality.1 As Rebecca Beasley explains, Hulme sought to reconcile the opposition between immediate experience and organizing concepts. Citing Hulme, Beasley writes,

1 For compelling discussions of the connections between Hulme and the symbolists, see The Cambridge Introduction to Modernist Poetry by Peter Howarth and Theorists of Modern Poetry by Rebecca Beasley.
“For Hulme, poetry could compensate for the gap between experience and understanding, because poetry’s ‘direct language’ of images ‘arrests your mind all the time with a picture’” (Beasley 12). Beasley goes on to explain:

In other words, poetry constantly brings us up short and forces us to attend to the process of perception by which we are making sense of the world. In doing so, it makes us look more closely at the world itself, instead of relying on the clichés and lazy habits of thought that make up our everyday use of language. (Beasley 12)

Beasley incisively articulates Hulme’s view of poetry’s potential to challenge us to “attend to the process of perception by which we are making sense of the world” and speaks meaningfully to the subtle yet vital distinctions Hadjiyiannis notes between Hulme’s call to promote fresh, new forms that allow for a “sincere” expression of their age from the more prescriptive adaptation dictated by Imagist poetics. Her account of Hulme’s development also corroborates Hadjiyiannis’s view that Hulme was more consistent in his thinking than he is credited for by some of his critics. In their introduction to T.E. Hulme and the Question of Modernism, Edward Comentale and Andrzej Gasiorek explain this in greater detail:

Hulme is thought to have been swept up in a faddish Bergsonism before returning to the dogmatism of his later years. A closer look, however, shows that much of what Hulme admired in Bergson’s thought was already present in his own: the emptiness of rational thought, the impossibility of pure vision, the intensive structures of the material world; both thinkers condemned the ideological closure of a rational world and sought release in a more dynamic interplay of self and other. More importantly, perhaps, Hulme’s writings on

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2 Each of the critics I cite draw from Karen Csengeri’s seminal Collected Works of T.E. Hulme. I’ve quoted from the critics’ excerpts of Hulme throughout my response rather than from Csengeri to preserve the contexts used by the critics I cite.

3 This consistency does not preclude changes in the means by which Hulme felt the ideal social order could be achieved and he writes candidly about these in his later work. It is the worldview underpinned by his commitment to classicism and religion that remains steady.
Bergson actually draw out the phenomenological unity of the latter’s work and thus clarify its broad appeal to modernists of the left and the right; conversely, these writings expose Hulme’s early emphasis on relativism and discontinuity, features that also underpin his later, apparently more conservative, positions. (Comentale and Gasiorek 5)

Hulme’s commitment to the late-nineteenth early-twentieth century notion of classicism, then, predates his interest in and eventual move away from Bergsonian thought. In his essay, “Romanticism and Classicism,” Hulme rejects romanticism’s view that laws thwart innate human goodness in favor of the idea that “man is a limited being who requires organization and restraint in order to achieve anything of any value” (Hume 61, quoted in Beasley 48). Hulme’s urgency to address modernism’s crisis of language while maintaining a commitment to classicism as the end to resolving it remain consistent and form the heart of his anti-democratic politics.

His definitions of the terms classicism and romanticism would eventually intersect with some of the ideology of the French writer Charles Maurras who founded the right-wing anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, and nationalist Action Francaise movement (Beasley 41; Thacker 53). Maurras sought to unite France by overthrowing the democratic, romantic values of the French Revolution that broke what he saw as the core Western tradition, classical, passed down from Greece and Rome to the Latin church, by restoring the monarchy. When writing “Romanticism and Classicism” in 1911-1912, Hulme sought to balance the classicism Maurras advocated with the Bergsonian philosophies denounced by Pierre Lassere as tools used by French left wing progressives. Eventually, however, he moved away from Bergsonian thought and felt that the British Tory Party ought to follow the example of drawing conservative French intellectuals as Action Francaise had done (Beasley 41; Matz 116-18).

Recent critical attention to the political views of early twentieth century modernists leads to an opening for more integrated readings of the aesthetic choices of writers and the socio-political ideolo-

4 In “Hulme’s Compromise and the New Psychologism,” Jesse Matz offers an incisive analysis of Hulme’s partial correction to misreadings of Bergson’s theories that led progressives to adopt, and from Hulme’s perspective, misapply them. Although my response doesn’t address theories of temporality in great detail here, Matz gives a finely nuanced interpretation of the contributions and limits of Hulme’s efforts to understand Bergson rightly.
logies that shaped their thought and work. Hulme’s poetics and politics establish how a literary practice that emphasized a more visual poetry reliant on a concrete language of words as objects emerges out of the political debates between Hulme and his peers about how to build a more stable social order through anti-democratic politics and classicist aesthetics as an urgent response to extreme, rapid change. Despite Hulme’s unquestionably reactionary politics, however, Lee Garver explores how Hulme’s earlier work, particularly his 1909 essays in the *New Age* reflects some unexpected “collusions” with socialism and progressivism when read in socio-political context:

>[T]he *New Age* reveals that late Edwardian English politics facilitated surprising rhetorical collusions and alliances. Hulme was particularly intrigued by the possibilities of aligning himself with and addressing a large, radicalized working-class readership. In his 1909 essays, he employed rhetoric similar to that of a now forgotten socialist agitator named Victor Grayson, whose brief tenure as co-editor of the *New Age* had given the publication a huge boost in readership and a powerful influence among rank-and-file laborers. In addition, Hulme showed a remarkable readiness to employ language and imagery associated with radical feminists and opponents of British military authority, who were understood by many in the magazine to be natural allies of Grayson in his fight against Liberal parliamentary corruption. (Garver 134)

Although Hulme’s views were never fully progressive and would grow increasingly reactionary over time, his initial “collusion” with labor, anti-militarism, and feminist rhetoric are all the more striking given his trenchant denouncement of Bloomsbury pacifism during the war and his ongoing anti-feminist rhetoric. Although he retained some commitment to socialism, the Great War would,ironically, lead him to a pro-military and pro-democracy position, albeit an anti-humanist one.

Andrew Thacker, drawing from Alan Robinson’s analysis explains that for Hulme, “Continued suffragette action, the first Labour members of Parliament in 1906, waves of industrial strikes throughout 1911-12, and the prospect of mass enfranchisement threatened by the Liberal party posed a threat to the aristocratic old regime” in which Hulme’s classicism was grounded (Thacker 50).

He continues by citing Perry Anderson, who maintains that
Hulme’s turn to classic aesthetics marks a reaction to commodification (which troubled all modernist factions) just as much as to the threats liberal reforms posed to aristocratic privilege (Thacker 50). Read in this light, the insistence upon holding fast to a language that can bridge what Hulme felt to be disruptive, inevitable gaps between understanding and experience becomes not just urgent, but imperative in conveying meaning through art that serves as potent commentary upon the very questions of how to institute the order he and his supporters believed to be profoundly lacking in modern society. World War I marked a shift in Hulme’s antidemocratic views and he sought a version of democracy that would combine the notions of liberty held by syndicalists and anarchists with the classicist aesthetics associated with English aristocracy. Such a system would provide the order and discipline needed for man who, by Hulme’s account, was limited, depraved, and marred by original sin. By extension, art that could capture aspects of reality previously unseen (in this case, a realm of absolute religious value accessible only through the supernatural), marked a way to replace humanist secularism with his vision of an intellect-driven religious classicism that would sustain a responsible democracy.

Andrzej Gasiorek incisively articulates the connection between Hulme’s ideology and poetics:

Hulme was influenced by the syndicalist Sorel and the anarchist Proudhon, for both men (despite the key differences between them) scorned the belief in human perfectibility and sought to articulate theories of social justice based on the conviction that human beings were fundamentally flawed. This aspect of Sorel’s and Proudhon’s thought dovetailed with Hulme’s uncompromising theology. The result was a series of complex arguments to the effect that certain forms of geometric art were presaging a major transformation in thought (broadly speaking, from a secular humanism to a religious anti-humanism); that this transformation entailed the subordination of the individual to a non-organic and absolute realm of value; and that acceptance of human beings’ radical imperfectability could lead to an emancipatory theory of democracy. (Gasiorek 158)

Hulme’s view that art is not autonomous from its social or political context and is connected with human activity explains his insistence that as he sees it, certain forms of geometric art instigate
“transformations” of thought and move people closer to his own world view in which man’s weakness and disorderedness can be managed through a religious anti-humanism that is undergirded by a realm of absolute value. In urging us to consider Hulme’s larger work more broadly as it connects to modernism, Hadjiyiannis opens pathways for looking at how Hulme’s influences on Imagism, real and misconstrued, are linked to ways of mind and a worldview that was one potent view among many colliding positions with respect to debates that pervaded the consciousness of modernist intellectuals in the 1900s and 1910s and becomes inextricably linked with popular thought about government, religion, gender rights, sexual freedom, politics, and war.

Many modernist artists were responding to these debates through their own work; some responded directly through dialogue with Hulme’s writing. T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound shared many of the same concerns as Hulme, yet each opted for a different set of solutions to the situation as they understood it. For example, T.S. Eliot certainly draws on classicist aesthetics through his use of religious epigraphs, allusions to antiquity, and aspects of experimental verse, musicality, and imagery in “The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock” and in The Waste Land. Yet in the years following Hulme’s death in 1917, he increasingly turned toward rural agrarianism as a way to return to “absolute values which differed significantly from Hulmean practice.”

Similarly, Pound also shared concerns about language and the representations of reality with Hulme, Eliot, and their philosopher mentors Bradley and Bergson, despite their sometimes differing views. He also drew significantly, though not fully, from Hulmean aesthetics to form Imagism. Accordingly, the distinction between how Hulme defines the image, in its conventional meaning as a visual sign, and Pound who defines the image as the intuition or the poem as a series of images combined to transmit an intuition is significant (Beasley 38). Pound’s political move from Imagism to Vorticism, his decidedly anti-religious views and his movement into futurism, anarchism and eventually fascism dictated his aesthetic choices and invites us to compare how varied understandings of

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5 For further discussion of the differences between Hulme, Eliot, and Pound see Rebecca Beasley’s Theorists of Modern Poetry. For compelling discussions of Eliot and Pound individually, see Modernisms: A Literary Guide by Peter Nichols, The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism by Pericles Lewis, and Modernism by Peter Childs.
reality and chosen ideologies infiltrate art designed to capture them in new ways with how artistic representation of these previously unseen perspectives dictate modernism’s understandings of reality and by extension, of ideology. For figures such as Hulme, Bergson, Bradley, Eliot, and Pound, aesthetic practices and political ideologies sometimes comingled, inevitably influenced one another, and ultimately collided before diverging from one another. That said, attending to the multi-textured, abundant exchanges between these particular men is poignant for any study of modernism, not solely due to their engagement with long standing debates about what constitutes reality or how art can or cannot represent it but rather, the question of why these debates about what is real or how to represent it were so significant and contentious in these years leading up to and during the war.

I would like to turn now to a few names who are less frequently connected directly with Hulme studies: namely, D.H. Lawrence and members of the Bloomsbury Group, with particular focus upon Clive Bell, E.M. Forster and Virginia Woolf. Of these figures, Lawrence is the only one who shared some of Hulme’s right-wing politics, was critical of democracy (though Hulme eventually did come to support a democracy inflected by classicism, syndicalism, and anarchism), and directed many of his early novels to examining the effects of and antidotes to mechanization and industrialism on English society. Unlike Hulme, however, Lawrence proposes primitivism and a return to connections with the natural world to generate a connection with sensuality and vitalism to recover from the alienation caused by industrialization as well as what he saw as Christianity’s damaging insistence upon a split between spirit and flesh (Lewis 78). This is best illustrated through the relationships of the experiences and encounters of the four main characters in Women in Love. Although this novel was published in 1920, it was written during the years of World War I, when Lawrence was unable to publish it due to its exceptionally bleak outlook given the already rough wartime conditions. I raise this example not simply because Lawrence’s views conflict with Hulme’s; rather, I suggest that Lawrence’s support of primitivism coupled with his right-wing

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6 In his Cambridge Introduction to Modern Poetry, Peter Howarth poignantly illustrates that the idea of art as a means by which to recover a deeply fragmented society first occurs Friedrich Schiller’s Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man of 1795, maintaining that this idea had great stakes for modernist poetry.
politics demonstrates the existence of a spectrum of thinking in response to questions of how to respond to the rapid changes in society that we loosely refer to as the conditions of modernity. While Lawrence’s political views partly intersect with those expressed by Hulme, Eliot, and Pound, their strikingly opposing ideological and aesthetic responses to these conditions demonstrates the web of intellectual thought that constitutes modernism, even though its creators may not appear to be in direct dialogue with one another.

The most significant opposition to Hulme’s radical Tory politics, religious dogmatism, and commitments to concrete language and realms of absolute value lies in the liberalism of the Bloomsbury Group whose political and aesthetic practices were underpinned by commitments to the goodness and pleasure of human relationships, exchanges about aesthetics, pacifism, and what may appear an unexpected rejection of humanism that promotes notions of a universal subject. In his brilliant essay “Above Life: Hulme, Bloomsbury, and Two Trajectories of Anti-Humanism,” Todd Avery examines how these two diametrically opposed philosophies both have roots in G.E. Moore’s *Principia Ethica* and both, in very distinct ways, espouse an Anti-Humanism inspired by drawing upon distinct segments of Moore’s work. Avery details how Hulme adopts Moore’s view that there is something objective in ethics, which in turn leads him to call for “the development of a specifically scientific understanding of ethics as a corrective to the ‘uncritically humanist’ ‘canons of satisfaction’” (Avery 170). In other words, Hulme experiences a shift in thought; moving away from Bergsonian vitalism, he begins to consider scientific exploration of ethics as a means to bringing about the radical transformation of society into one ordered by religion, discipline, and a democracy based upon Justice rather than emotion that can meet the needs of man as limited and depraved beings. For Bloomsbury writers like E.M. Forster or Virginia Woolf, however, fiction was a place in which the writer might try out the politics of empathy, press upon traditional relationship structures or sexual mores, and examine what Forster labeled the emotionally under-developed English heart and how it might be remedied through human exchange with more emotional cultures (Forster 5).

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7 Virginia Woolf considers questions of gender and sexuality through almost all of her works, most notably in *A Room of One’s Own* and *Orlando*.

8 Forster’s essay “Notes on an English Character” responds to charges that the
The contrast between Hulme’s ideas and Bloomsbury’s Moore inspired belief in the pleasure in human relationships and the discussions of aesthetics as good are unquestionable, and this makes the connection of each to Moore especially striking. Avery and other critics of Hulme often refer to his worldview as one that is incommensurable with those held by his critics. Yet in the context of conversations about networks and modernist exchange, attention to Hulme’s perceptions of the socio-political conditions, and how modernist production should represent or respond to realities (whose very nature was so contentious), remains vital to envisioning the relationship between the incommensurable views that comprise the modernist landscape.

Hulme’s disagreement with Bloomsbury Group members about pacifism and involvement in the Great War exemplify this perfectly. In response to Clive Bell’s critique of “the ethically pernicious ‘doctrine that a few rich and elderly men have the right to compel the young and poor to die for any cause in which their elders believe’” (Avery 175), Hulme critiques Bell and fellow pacifists for their naivety, their inability to comprehend the threat Germany poses to liberty in Europe (Avery 175). Hulme, in his 1916 installment of “War Notes,” goes on to challenge Bell’s assertion that any war that impoverishes “art or thought” regardless of the consequences, threatens “barbarism” and “disaster” for humans and that there must be those who will “serve interests higher and wider than the interests of any state or confederacy” by again asserting that such statements come from those who are too rich to know how money is made” and too utopian and weak to act heroically in the interest of England’s security (Avery 175–76). Hulme himself would die in 1917, having celebrated artists who sacrificed themselves in the war, holding them up as the kind of heroic figures central to the transformed society he envisioned. Many of Blooms-

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9 Avery takes this passage from Bell’s 1915 pamphlet, Peace at Once, published by the National Labour Press. See Avery, 175, for further details on the origins and contents of Bell’s work.

10 Bell’s quotation comes from his article “Art and War” published in the International Journal of Ethics in October 1915, shortly after the burning of his pamphlet ordered by the Lord Mayor of London along with others published by The National Labour Press.
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Works Cited


