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Pound's Progress: The Vortextual Evolution of Imagism and Its Poetic Image

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POUND'S PROGRESS:
THE VORTEXTUAL EVOLUTION OF IMAGISM AND ITS POETIC IMAGE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Justin Robert Kishbaugh

August 2014

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Justin Robert Kishbaugh

2014

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Approved June 16, 2014

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ABSTRACT

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By

Justin Kishbaugh

August 2014

Dissertation supervised by Linda A. Kinnahan, Ph. D.

Although previous Imagist scholarship considers its subject from chronological, technical, and historical viewpoints, rarely does it combine two—let alone all three—of those perspectives. Undoubtedly, each of those critical lenses contributes to the overall understanding of Imagism. Yet, by not weaving the technique and theory of Imagism into a linear account of its development, those studies tend to view those aspects of Imagism as if they were discrete and stable entities. To counteract that trend, this dissertation argues that Pound's Imagist program—due to the ambiguity and developing definitions of several of its key terms—allowed the Imagist poets to produce a richly diverse form of Imagism that coexisted with, but was not necessarily contained by, Pound's evolving concept of that program and its poetic Image. Specifically, by offering a chronological

critical history of the technical and theoretical components of Pound's concept of Imagism as they developed, this project highlights the transitive process wherein Pound's Imagism both resulted from and created a poetic Vortex. Moreover, a close reading of the first Imagist anthology, *Des Imagistes*, illustrates how Pound's super-positioned editorial arrangement of that collection allows it to function as an Imagist presentation of the varied origins, influences, and types of imagery existent within the Imagist movement. Ultimately, then, this dissertation concludes that, due to the complex interaction between the individual interpretations of the Image made by the poets featured in *Des Imagistes* and the writers and literary traditions that influenced them, the anthological structure of that collection offers the most accurate presentation of the admixture of poetic fecundity and editorial pruning that defines Imagism.

DEDICATION

For Phyllis K. Martz and Kelly Golat

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Introduction

In March 1913, Ezra Pound saw to it that two articles addressing the specifics of “Imagisme” found their way into that month’s issue of *Poetry* magazine.¹ The first article, largely written by Pound, purports to relay the information gathered from an interview with an Imagiste. Pound was, of course, the Imagiste in question, but, in order to imbue the interview with a perceivable sense of authorial distance, he had fellow poet and critic F. S. Flint append his name to it. Among other bits of information, that essay, entitled “Imagisme,” recounts the “few rules” of Imagist poetry:

1. Direct treatment of the “thing,” whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in the sequence of the metronome. (199)

Following those tenets, the article continues by stating that the Imagists “held also a certain ‘Doctrine of the Image,’ which they had not committed to writing; they said that it did not concern the public and would provoke useless discussion” (199). From the information provided—or not provided—in that article, one gathers that the three Imagist rules and the undefined Doctrine of the Image represent the two shaping forces of Imagist poetry: sculpted formal precision and a content consisting primarily of “things.”

In the second article, directly attributed to Pound and entitled, “A Few Don’ts by and Imagiste,” Pound offers his, now famous, definition of an “Image” as “that which

¹ When Pound first began publicizing Imagism, he spelled it with a concluding “e” to approximate the titles of the then-prolific French schools of poetry. Eventually critics and the other poets laying claim to the title Anglicized the term to Imagism. Some scholars use Pound’s initial spelling—which he, too, eventually stopped using—as a means for distinguishing Poundian Imagism from its later manifestations. For purposes of continuity and avoiding unnecessary confusion, I will use the Anglicized version of the term when referring to all stages of Imagism unless I am referring to or quoting from a specific article in which Pound was still referring to his “school” of poetry by its quasi-French spelling.

presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time” (200).² Following that definition, Pound includes an almost five-page list of technical proscriptions that elaborate on the poetic practices introduced in the previous essay. Although both articles claim to offer direct reports on the practices and product of Imagism, the three most important pieces of information relayed in those articles—the rules, the doctrine, and the definition of an Image—either consist of or rely heavily upon abstractions for their meaning. Thus, the very core of the poetic program that preaches the avoidance of rhetoric in favor of presenting things, ironically, rests upon open-ended terminology that requires additional information and concrete examples to attain definable significance.

Further complicating one’s understanding of the specific techniques and product of Imagist poetry is that the man behind the creation and initial publicizing of the movement—Ezra Pound—continued to update and adjust his understanding of Imagism as he synthesized his theories and practices with those of his many influences. Moreover, Pound also chose to include within his Imagist movement a group of poets who were either entirely unfamiliar with, or could claim only a partial understanding of, his Imagist agenda and its constituent elements. Therefore, in order to come to any complete understanding of the root constituents and practices of Imagism, one must not only attempt to define those abstract terms that lie at the heart of the primary Imagist manifestoes, but also account for the developing nature and varied interpretations of those terms by Pound and his Imagist enclave.

² Although, as this project will show, Pound’s concept of the Image relied upon standard forms of imagery, it functions more as an overall poetic complex that consciously utilizes each of its formal elements to concretize its content and produce meaning. Therefore, throughout this work, the capital “I” Image refers to the overall poetic structure the Imagists aimed to produce, while the lower case “i” image refers to the perceivable objects poets include in their poems.

The central argument of this dissertation, then, is that Pound's Imagist program—due to the ambiguity and developing definitions of several of its key terms—allowed his fellow Imagists to produce a richly diverse form of Imagism that coexisted with, but was not necessarily contained by, his evolving concept of that program and its poetic Image. In particular, Pound's decision or inability to define the Doctrine of the Image led to a great variety of interpretation regarding the nature, purpose, and design of the poetic Image. As was his nature, though, Pound continually attempted to prune the prolific results of his Imagist program through various forms of editorial control—an exercise for which he was particularly well suited poetically, if not personally. This dissertation, then, finally concludes that, due to its anthological structure, *Des Imagistes* offers the most accurate presentation of the admixture of poetic fecundity and editorial pruning that best defines Imagism.

By offering a chronological critical history of the technical and theoretical components of Pound's concept of Imagism as they developed, this dissertation highlights the transitive process wherein Pound's Imagism both resulted from and created a poetic Vortex. Additionally, that chronological history illustrates how Pound's editorial method ultimately coalesced his Imagist rules with the Doctrine of the Image to create the super-positioned form of the Image-as-Vortex that prioritized material imagery as the most efficient means to produce poetic meaning. Furthermore, by focusing upon the first Imagist anthology, *Des Imagistes*, this dissertation also examines how Pound's super-positioned editorial arrangement of that collection allows it to function as an Imagist presentation of the varied origins, influences, and types of imagery existent within the Imagist movement.

Although previous Imagist scholarship considers its subject from chronological, technical, and theoretical viewpoints, rarely does it combine two—let alone all three—of those perspectives. Undoubtedly, each of those critical lenses contributes to the overall understanding of Imagism, but, without weaving the technique and theory of Imagism into a linear account of its development, those studies tend to view those aspects of Imagism as if they were discrete and stable entities. By not accounting for the developmental nature of Pound's Imagism, these critical works dismantle his Imagist rules and Doctrine of the Image without reassembling them into the composite entity of his poetic Image. In the few studies that do reconstruct the evolution of Imagism, though, the effort and space required to account for the many influences, shifting allegiances, and evolutions of thought that occurred within that movement, demands that their authors simply identify individual Imagist theories and techniques without analyzing how they merge and proliferate within that movement.

When these chronologies come in biographies of Pound or studies of his poetic career, however, they paradoxically prioritize his theory and product over that of his fellow Imagists while also minimizing Imagism as simply a developmental step in his poetic progress toward *The Cantos*. When those chronologies occur in studies on other Imagists, such as H.D. or Amy Lowell, though, their authors work so hard to counter Poundian biases and demonstrate that these poets did more than simply follow Pound's edicts, that they, too, spend little time identifying and explaining the particular Imagist techniques utilized by those poets. Due to the fact, then, that the majority of Imagist scholarship focuses on either establishing a reliable timeline of Imagist occurrences or isolating aspects of its poetry or the poets who made it, no significant studies of *Des*

Imagistes or any of the Imagist Anthologies exist. What one finds in this existing scholarship, therefore, is a bevy of authors who, in choosing between breadth or focus in their analysis, rarely identify the ways that Imagism could fuse its various technical and theoretical components and present them as an anthology.

Within Imagist scholarship, a few books—such as John Gage’s *In the Arresting Eye: The Rhetoric of Imagism* and Herbert Schneidau’s *Ezra Pound: The Image and the Real*—work to isolate the specific attributes of Imagist poetry and the influences that created them. Dividing its chapters according to the “Theories,” “Rhetorics,” “Textures,” “Structures,” and “Attitudes” of Imagism, Gage’s work usefully locates and explains the functional elements of an Imagist poem. In a similar manner, Schneidau identifies a few of the major influences upon the theory and technique of Imagism in chapters like, “Imagism as Discipline: Hueffer and the Prose Tradition,” “Hulme vs. Fenollosa: Image and Reality,” and “Tradition, Myth, and Imagist Poetics.” While each of these books and chapters focuses on individual elements that create and funnel meaning into an Imagist poem and, thereby, illustrate the functional components of Imagism and their origins, they do so outside of a chronological context. Lacking that timeline, these studies—despite the intricacy of their analysis—present their subjects as if they occurred simultaneously and with equal weight and significance. Moreover, by not locating their subjects temporally, books of this sort can potentially evidence any theory or claim with any quote or poem regardless of the temporal legitimacy of that comparison.³ Thus,

³ One example of this type of non-linear argumentation and evidence occurs at the beginning of Schneidau’s third chapter, “Textures.” Under the title of “Hulme’s Test,” Schneidau asserts, “For the imagists, understanding images was the culmination of a simple chain of events: An ‘object,’ said T. E. Hulme, ‘must cause the emotion before [the] poem can be written.’ What the poet writes, the image, according John Gould Fletcher, ‘is an analogy drawn between something external in nature and the feeling that arises within the observer.’ The final step, in the words of Ford Madox Ford, results because the poem ‘consists in so rendering concrete objects that the emotions produced by the objects shall arise in the reader’ (57).”

despite their ability to examine the theories and techniques that engender Imagist poetry, these non-linear studies often negate the progressive development of the Imagist movement and Pound's understanding of the Image and, in turn, misrepresent certain subtleties of the Imagist process and product.

While neglecting the chronology of Imagism can lead to a homogenization of its poetics, a detailed reconstruction of that chronology involves stitching together so many narrative threads that it often leaves little room to consider the poetic results of their confluence. For example, Helen Carr's 982-page Imagist tome, *The Verse Revolutionaries: Ezra Pound, H.D., and the Imagists*, uses dual biographies of Pound and H.D. as vehicles to address and answer: "Where [imagism] came from, whose ideas it represented, what indeed imagism meant, [and] who was or was not an imagist" (1). Unquestionably, the linearity of Carr's investigation does much to particularize and assess the importance of the numerous influences, theories, and practitioners of Imagism, but the complexity of such an undertaking prohibits her from devoting much prolonged analysis to how those varied elements shaped the technical aspects of Imagist poetry. Thus, although Carr's book offers the critical background necessary to provide an in-depth categorization and explication of the various textual forms of Imagism, that type of

Without discussing the accuracy of that statement, Schneidau's joining of three quotes from three different figures associated with Imagism subtly devalues the variety of theory and product housed within that movement as well as the varied roles and periods of these figures' connections to Imagism. First, Hulme's theories on the Image influenced Pound, but were relatively unknown to, or unacknowledged by, both Ford and Fletcher. Ford, in fact, influenced Pound's concept of Imagism in a very different manner than Hulme, and Pound often acknowledged Ford as the real force behind his Imagist work. For his part, Fletcher refused involvement in Pound's Imagism and only contributed to the latter anthologies to gain favor with Lowell. He often denied being an Imagist and certainly had little interaction with either Hulme or Ford or their literary theories. While each of these persons contributed to Imagism in their own unique way, to bring together three out-of-context statements they made on the Imagist process not only tacitly claims that each contributed to and understood Imagism in the same manner, but also negates the progressive development and variety that are so vital to a complete understanding of Imagism.

formal analysis falls outside of the immediate critical focus and, presumably, page limitations of her book.

Apart from works, like Carr's, that take Imagism as their primary subject, chronologies of that movement also often appear in biographies and studies on Pound and his poetry. Using the controversial poet as the sole lens through which they perceive Imagism, however, those texts frequently offer limited portrayals of Imagism by both minimizing the roles of the other Imagist poets and favoring *The Cantos* over Pound's Imagist verse. To find instances of these scholarly perspectives, one need only look to Hugh Kenner's prototypical study of Pound, *The Pound Era*. In that book, Kenner dismisses much of the Imagist verse written by poets not named Pound, while simultaneously downplaying Pound's own Imagist achievements. Even though the first of those critical stances may seem commonplace in a work on Pound, the second certainly does not. Yet, by reading between the lines, one can decipher how Kenner's disregard for the work of the Imagist poets not named "Pound" led him to devalue the role of imagery within Imagism and, thereby, much of the variety and poetic achievements of Imagism as a whole.

Despite remaining relatively positive regarding the poems by H.D. and Aldington of which Pound also approved, Kenner does not offer many favorable accounts of the other Imagist poets or their poetry. In fact, he claims that, by the time of *Des Imagistes'* publication in 1914, "H. D. was repeating herself, Aldington was indulging in his talent for pastiche, others were going their own ways or dropping out of sight," and Imagism "had come to mean very little more than a way of designating short *vers libre* poems in English" (178). Kenner then demonstrates a bit more of his Poundian bias by

characterizing the majority of the Imagists—Fletcher, Flint, Aldington, and Lowell—as “dim and petulant people” (191). Importantly, in that quote one can identify Kenner’s criticism shifting from technical matters to personal ones, but, when he later perpetuates previous attacks on Lowell’s physical demeanor by introducing her as “the ‘hippopoetess’” and “‘a big blue wave’” (291), he definitely appears to allow his personal opinions affect his literary judgments. In Kenner’s defense, the other Imagists, undoubtedly, did not understand and seldom practiced the same Imagism as Pound. Moreover, Kenner is justified in prioritizing Pound’s version of Imagism simply because Pound created the movement and defined its theoretical and formal characteristics. By allowing his Poundian bias to overshadow and diminish the actual poetic accomplishments of the other Imagist poets, however, Kenner unfairly restricts the definition of Imagist poetics and, thereby, does a great disservice to a movement that—by Pound’s own design—included more poets than just himself.

Along with devaluing the work of the other Imagists, Kenner’s partiality for Pound also leads him to assess Imagism as merely a detour from Pound’s poetic progression toward *The Cantos*. In his chapter on “Imagism,” Kenner begins by referring to the movement as “a divagation” and a “distracting turbulence” from the focus of “Part One” of his book that traces the evolution of Pound’s poetry “Toward the Vortex.” In Pound’s work both before and after his Imagist ventures, Kenner discerns “a steady preoccupation with persistently patterned energies” (173). In Pound’s Imagist verse, though, he finds a poetry that consists of the—primarily visual—details of a “moment seized simply for the moment’s sake” (182). In other words, Kenner favors Pound’s non-Imagist poetry over the Imagist because it presents “not the transcript of one encounter

but the Gestalt of many” (186). Kenner bases his opinion on the fact that Imagist poetry does not effectively combine its technical attributes with a “[p]sychic criteria” shared by the Imagists (179). He claims, “[a]ll the confusion about Imagism stems from the fact that its specifications for technical hygiene are one thing, and Pound’s Doctrine of the Image is another. The former, which can be followed by any talented person, help you write what may be a trivial poem. The latter is not applicable to triviality” (186). Kenner then identifies for his readers that Pound named “Imagism” after a “component of the poem” (179), and that component—imagery—combines with the three Imagist rules to establish the criteria of “technical hygiene” that “present an image directly, with no unnecessary word, to the rhythm of the musical phrase (186). Despite his recognition that the title “Imagism” denotes the prevalent use of imagery, Kenner chooses to conflate Pound’s definition of the Image with the undefined Doctrine of the Image. Before making that connection, however, he outlines how “[t]he most famous of all Imagist poems” (183-84), “In a Station of the Metro,”

draw[s] on Gauguin and on Japan, on ghosts and on Persphone, on the Underworld and on the Underground, the Metro of Mallarmé’s capital and a phrase that names a station of the Metro as it might a station of the Cross,” and, in doing so, “concentrates far more than it need ever specify, and indicates the means of delivering post-Symbolist [read “Imagist”] poetry from its pictorialist impasse. (185)

Following that quote, Kenner repeats Pound’s definition of the Image as “that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time,” and tells his readers “that [definition] is the elusive Doctrine of the Image” (185). According to Kenner, only

Pound remained conscious of that second dimension of Imagist practice. Furthermore, even though he qualifies “In a Station of the Metro” as an Imagist poem, Kenner believes that what distinguishes Imagist from Vorticist poetry is that the latter effectively combines the rules of technical hygiene with the Doctrine’s ability to compress meaning into poetic complexes whereas the former utilizes only technical hygiene. Through that distinction, then, Kenner allows himself to dismiss the entire body of Imagist poetry because it simply consists of technical practices that breed “trivial” poems. Yet, at the same time, by acknowledging that Imagism and Vorticism consist of the same functional components, but only Vorticism adequately employs those components simultaneously, Kenner also reclaims Pound’s Imagist work as functionally Vorticist, and, in so doing, distinguishes Pound’s Imagist work from that of the other Imagists and places it back on a trajectory toward *The Cantos*. Such a tactic conveniently allows Kenner to elide the developmental aspect of Pound’s concept of the Image so he can place it above that of the other Imagists. In doing so, however, he also negates the complexity and variety of ways the assembled Imagists interpreted the Doctrine of the Image and used it in conjunction with the Imagist tenets.

An additional outcome of Kenner transposing Pound’s definition of the Image with the Doctrine of the Image is the overall devaluation of imagery within Imagist poetry. In differentiating Pound from the other Imagists, Kenner identifies Pound’s individual poetic aptitude as the trait that sets his work apart. In order to legitimize that characteristic within an Imagist context, Kenner associates it with the undefined Doctrine of the Image. Kenner’s decision to align one’s ability to discern, select, and arrange the content of a poem with the Doctrine of the Image, however, disregards not only the

Hulme-ian origins of Pound's use of the word "image," but also the primary role of imagery in Imagism. Kenner's understanding of the Doctrine of the Image immediately seems a bit odd considering that he also recognizes that Pound "'made the word—on a Hulme basis' [...] because Hulme used to tell his 1909 associates that images were essential, not decorative" (178). Also, despite his acknowledgment that Pound created the title "Imagism" based on the "essential" role of imagery in a poem, Kenner chooses to equate the Imagists' use of imagery with a "pictorial discipline, eas[y] to comprehend and much easier to do" (183). Such a distinction certainly suggests that at least a portion of Kenner's dismissiveness towards imagery derives from the work produced by the poets who continued to publish as Imagists after dissolving their literary relationships with Pound. Granted, once those poets removed Pound from his role as editor, they did tend to use the Imagist tenets as a basis for experimentation. Yet, despite claims to the contrary, the practice of those subsequent Imagists did expand the Poundian model of Imagism and create more poetic possibilities even if it did remove much of the efficiency and concentration of meaning contained in Pound's version. Therefore, by dismissing imagery's power to harness and generate both specific and associative meaning in favor of a rather subjective appraisal of poetic acumen, Kenner establishes a version of Imagism that functions less as an approach to poetry than it does as a rationale for his Poundian bias.

The larger problem, though, is that while other scholars may not share Kenner's critical and, seemingly, personal aversion to the other Imagists, they do share his disregard for imagery's role in an Imagist poem. Herbert Schneidau, for instance, defends Imagism from Kenner's charges that it only functions as a distraction from Pound's

poetic development, but concedes that Kenner's assessment "is a laudable attempt to clear Amy Lowell and other large obstacles out of the way of Pound criticism" (3). In light of this, rather, demeaning characterization of Lowell, one should not be surprised that Schneidau also argues, "we must face the fact that no visualization requirement nor theory of the Image is listed among the points agreed upon by Pound, H.D., and Aldington" (8). Even Helen Carr, who seemingly demonstrates no particular favoritism, paraphrases Schneidau by asserting that the first Imagist tenet—"direct treatment of 'the thing'"—solely "refers to these poems' freedom from moral comment, explanatory context or narrative elaboration, and has nothing to do with an attempt at visual exactitude or pictorial clarity, which the name 'imagism' could suggest" (539). On the surface, these comments by Schneidau and Carr are completely correct; Imagism did not require visual imagery. Yet, by working to disassociate Imagism from a strict adherence to visual imagery, these scholars overlook not only the primary role of imagery in an Imagist poem, but also the numerous types of both visual and non-visual images employed by the Imagists. Moreover, if—per Kenner's suggestion—the Doctrine of the Image does not equate, in any way, to a "pictorial discipline," and—according to Carr—either does the first Imagist tenet, then, paradoxically, none of the formal elements of the movement named "Imagism" actually suggest or prioritize, let alone require, the use of imagery. Those in-depth studies of Imagism, therefore, have—whether intentionally or non-intentionally—taken the image out of Imagism.

Other book-length studies and biographies of Imagist poets other than Pound—such as Barbara Guest's *Herself Defined: H.D. and her World*, and S. Foster Damon's *Amy Lowell: A Chronicle*—also provide useful chronological examinations of Imagism.

Although these texts do not focus entirely on Pound, they still struggle to stand outside the shadow he casts over Imagism. Due to the overwhelming Poundian bias described above, these other studies spend much of their time battling the characterizations of their subjects offered in those texts on Pound. For instance, the first sentence of Guest's book reads, "'He drags me out of the shadows,' wrote H.D. of Ezra Pound" (1). H.D.'s birth, on the other hand, only enters the text at in chapter two. While Guest does provide an obligatory chapter on "H.D. Imagiste," the majority of her book—much like those by Susan Stanford Friedman on the subject—works to deconstruct the limiting perception of H.D. as the perfect Imagist. Pound "named" H.D. and presented her as an "Imagiste." Once she rejected his editorial control, though, he characterized her as having "let loose dilutions and repetitions, so that she has spoiled the 'few but perfect' position she might have held on to" (*Selected Letters* 114). Through their predominant Poundian lenses, Imagist scholars generally support those views of H.D.'s poetry and, therefore, concentrate their attention primarily on her few Pound-approved poems. Reacting to that one-sided (if not near-sighted) view of H.D.'s poetry, Guest (and other H.D. scholars) tends to minimize H.D.'s Imagist work in favor of highlighting her full poetic career. This type of reappropriation certainly benefits H.D. and Modernist scholarship, but, unfortunately, does not do the same for the study of Imagism. Rather than reassessing how H.D.'s version of Imagism differs from Pound's, these scholars either gloss over the issue entirely or—as in the case of Cyrena Pondrom and her essay, "H.D. and the origins of Imagism"—attempt to isolate H.D. as the source of many of Pound's Imagist theories. Thus, despite drawing attention to the variety of H.D.'s poetics, these studies do little to identify the diversity of Imagist poetry.

Similar to Guest's study of H.D., Damon's book on Amy Lowell also attempts to counterbalance the Poundian overtones of Imagist scholarship. Unlike H.D., though, Lowell labored to identify herself with Imagism. Her desire to be included among the Imagists led her to fight for a democratic presentation of Imagism that would remove Pound from his roles as editor and chief theorist of the movement. When Pound, not surprisingly, reacted with anger and accusations, Lowell redoubled her efforts to associate herself with Imagism by contracting a series of Imagist anthologies with Houghton Mifflin and going on a lecture tour. Pound, of course, believed her efforts created a superficial and popularized form of Imagist poetics that worked against his original intentions for the movement. Again, due to the rather Pound-centric state of most Imagist scholarship, Pound's perception of, and vitriol for, Lowell has led to a rather generalized account of her as a fame-hungry usurper that may have helped popularize Imagism, but did so while also diminishing the quality of its product. Faced with these portraits of Lowell, Foster—like Guest—sacrifices the type of close reading of Lowell's work that would identify her original literary contributions to Imagism, to, instead, justify her aggressive demeanor and quest to become a literary celebrity. Rather than explicating Lowell's poetry, then, these works feel the need to explain her physical appearance and personality. Amy Bradshaw's 2011 study, *Amy Lowell: Diva Poet*, for instance, confronts the popular (mis)conceptions of Lowell with chapters such as, "The Fat Woman in the Attic: Cultural Memory and the Construction of Persona;" "The Demon Saleswoman: Selling Avant-Garde Poetics to an American Public;" and "The Last of the Barons: Americanism and Gender Ambivalence in Wartime." While this type of scholarship does much to vindicate Lowell and validate her efforts on behalf of Imagism, it also

perpetuates the critical tendency to address her as person rather than a poet. Granted, Lowell's efforts to popularize Imagism have much to do with its continued presence in Modernist scholarship, but she—along with the other Imagists—made very specific textual contributions to Imagism that also deserve recognition and academic interest.

With the majority of Imagist scholarship focusing on either the technical attributes of Imagism or the work and life of one or two of the poets associated with it, the Imagist anthologies have received almost no critical attention. One can piece together aspects of the publication histories and critical reception of those collections by reading through the existing scholarship, but no one has provided an extended explication of the works chosen for those anthologies—let alone a detailed study of the arrangement of those poems, their authors, and what they reveal about Imagism. Layeh Aronson Bock's 1980 dissertation, *The Birth of Modernism: "Des Imagistes" and the Psychology of William James*, does provide an annotated version of *Des Imagistes* along with a publication history of the poems contained therein. Yet, despite her attention to that anthology, she does not consider the ramifications of such a group presentation upon the commonly accepted definitions and theories of Imagism and its poetic Image.

Historically speaking, Pound created Imagism as a literary movement, and, even though he and some of the more well-known poets associated with it have had their poetry and Imagist affiliations analyzed, several other poets contributed work to those Imagist anthologies as well. Poets such as F. S. Flint, Allen Upward, and John Cournos may exist as footnotes in the larger context of Modern poetry, but, as Imagists, they did much to shape the aesthetics of that movement. In fact, largely due to the anthologies, the amount of Imagist poetry far outweighs the theory behind it. Moreover, the combination

of the progressive development of those theories and the poets' varying levels of familiarity with and understanding of them means that the Imagist poetry does not always accurately exemplify the theories behind it. To truly understand or define Imagism, then, one must account for the assembled Imagists' differing concepts and practices of Imagism. Such a task, however, requires a careful consideration of the poems, poets, and their arrangement in the Imagist anthologies. Unfortunately, though, that analysis does not currently exist.

In order to provide a chronologically accurate definition of Pound's developing concept of Imagism, while also identifying the diversity of Imagist product generated by it, this dissertation offers three progressively interrelated chapters and a conclusion. Chapter I, "Out of the Vortex: Pound's Early Imagism and its Two Vortices," offers a working definition of Pound's inchoate Imagism by outlining the Vortextual origins of its two functional components: the Imagist tenets and the Doctrine of the Image. While creating Imagism, Pound funneled many of his literary influences into a set of manipulable guidelines that attempted to codify poetic craft. He devised those guidelines according to what he believed constituted the most efficient methods for producing poetic meaning and then divided them into his technical tenets and publically undefined Doctrine of the Image. Like that early brand of Imagism, Chapter I also consists of two sections: Section I, "The Vortex of Technique" and Section II, "The Vortex of the Image." By identifying the primary influences that shaped those two aspects of Imagist practice, this chapter not only questions the traditional view of Vorticism as both postdating and advancing upon Imagism, but it also establishes a baseline definition of

Pound's early Imagism against which one can recognize and assess the many variations that followed.

Chapter II, "Getting to the 'Whirlpoint': H.D., Upward, and Pound's Evolution of the Image" continues the chronology of Chapter I by describing how Pound came to employ the Imagist tenets in such a way that they coalesced with his Doctrine of the Image to produce complexes of meaning. Whereas Pound's original concept of Imagism attempted to utilize both the form, sound, and content of a poem to present a poem's subject objectively, his later version prioritized efficiency to the extent that the hygienic policies of the Imagist tenets intrinsically revealed and accentuated the imagery of a poem. Rather than solely understanding an Image as a poem wherein each element contributes to the presentation of its subject, Pound came to think of the Image as a Vortex of meaning that featured the hyper-concise juxtaposition of imagery he called a "super-position." Having never defined his Doctrine of the Image or explicitly outlined the relationship between imagery and an Image, Pound easily included this new element within Imagism as though it had always had been there.

To illustrate how that subtle transformation occurred, Section I, "H.D. and Upward: Two Poles of Imagist Precedent," examines the ways those two poets influenced Pound's concept of the Image. By locating the evolution of Pound's Imagist theories in two sets of articles that Pound wrote, this section identifies how H.D. and Upward provided Pound with poetic models for his developing concept of the poetic Image. Section II, "Presenting, Positioning, Objective Realities, and the Image-as-Vortex," builds from Section I by using two poems by Pound to exemplify the differences between his early and later Image and the types of imagery they utilize and produce. In discussing

the origins and mechanics of those two types of Images, this chapter further establishes the Vortextual nature of Pound's Imagist program and distinguishes between the generalized version of it that he initially disseminated and that which he cultivated in his own poetry. Recognizing the difference between those types of Imagism allows one to understand why Pound later conflated Imagism with Vorticism and refused to abdicate his role as editor of the Imagist anthologies in favor of a democratized committee.

Chapter III, "Collection as Collage: Des Imagistes and the Arrangement of Imagism," attempts to provide a final and inclusive definition of Imagism that not only accounts for Pound's chronologically developmental understanding of it, but also the diverse practices of the other Imagist poets. Even though Pound acted as the main creator, theorist, and publicist of Imagism, he shaped that movement by bringing his poetic influences and theories together with a hand-selected group of poets. To find those poets, Pound enlisted his friends and mentors as well as other poets whose work he felt exhibited qualities of his Imagist agenda. Due to that method of selection and the fact that Pound never defined his Doctrine of the Image, however, the majority of those poets were familiar only with the Imagist tenets and were left to surmise the connection between imagery and an Image. The rest simply had no idea what it meant to be an Imagist. Thus, the bulk of actual Imagist product consists of poems employing technical hygiene in connection with new and creative forms of imagery.

Despite that variety of practice, Pound remained anxious to publicize Imagism as a unified and autonomous movement and, therefore, grouped together the poems he believed best exhibited Imagist characteristics and published them as an anthology. As editor of that anthology, Pound seems to have recognized—even enjoyed—the differing

levels of comprehension and employment of the Imagist techniques among the assembled Imagists, and, as such, understood his role as editor as essential to presenting Imagism as a unified approach to poetry. Section I, “(Re)Views from the Edge: The Publication History and Critical Reception of *Des Imagistes*,” therefore, recounts the events that led to the printing of *Des Imagistes* and investigates the critical interpretations of that anthology. Section II, “Editorial Images: *Des Imagistes* and Pound’s Presentation of Imagism,” further explicates Pound’s selection and arrangement of the front matter, authors, and poetry of *Des Imagistes* to illustrate how that collection operates as an Imagist presentation of the vortextual origins and practices of Imagism itself. By recognizing how the anthological structure of *Des Imagistes* presents Pound’s concept of Imagism alongside extremely diverse poetic interpretations of it, this chapter illustrates how, under Pound’s direction, a Vortex begets an Image, and, in turn, how an Image begets a Vortex. Moreover, by distinguishing how that anthology simultaneously presents both the predetermined and indeterminate aspects of Imagism, this chapter argues that *Des Imagistes*, as a collection of Imagist poetry, provides, and functions as, the only complete Image of Imagism and the Imagist movement.

Finally, the “Conclusion” provides an overview of the personal and aesthetic conflicts that occurred between Pound and his fellow Imagists and which led to series of three subsequent Imagist anthologies that Pound neither participated in nor sanctioned. Among the points of discussion, this section identifies some of the major differences between Pound’s theoretical explanations of Imagism and those written by the *Some Imagist Poets*. Additionally, this conclusion also details some of the more significant poetic developments upon and deviations from Pound’s Imagist model made by those

latter Imagists. In documenting the differences between Pound's Imagist theory and product and that of the *Some Imagist Poets*, this section again highlights how Pound's concept worked toward discipline and efficiency while the other Imagists understood it as the basis for poetic experimentation and proliferation. By, again, calling attention to the variant strains of Imagism that coexisted with but differed from each other, this concluding section also reiterates the centrality of *Des Imagistes* as an Imagist text based on the way it contains and synthesizes but does not diminish the variety of Imagist practice and present it as the definition of Imagism.

The purpose of this dissertation is to recast previous interpretations of Imagism and to offer an alternative perspective as to how it and the poetic Image developed over the course of time. This study will dismantle several popular theories regarding the purpose, function, and components of the poetic Image in order to offer a complete definition that accounts for its chronological development, variations, and reliance on imagery. To provide that definition, this dissertation also offers an inclusive and evolutionary model of Imagism that bridges it more directly with Pound's early and later poetics. In some ways, this work valorizes and values Pound's Imagism over the brands that succeeded it. In other ways, this project also opens the door for critical appreciation of those subsequent interpretations of Imagism by illustrating how they built upon Pound's model and worked to popularize several of its key attributes among a wider audience. Through Imagism, Pound consolidated his study of poetics into a set of manipulable criteria that allowed one to utilize every element of a poem to create meaning. Yet, even when not employed in accordance with Pound's standard of efficiency and discipline, those criteria still provided a definitive basis for poetic craft and

the means to create poetic meaning. To consider only one factor of this Imagist equation is to diminish the complexity and importance of Imagism as a poetic movement and to provide incomplete, and often biased, versions of its attributes and purpose. Rather than focusing on a single poet or sacrificing chronology for technique, then, this dissertation attempts to define Imagism by tracing the origins and applications of and the Image that lies at the heart of Imagism.

Chapter I: “Out of the Vortex: Pound’s Early Imagism and its Two Vortices”

Introduction:

Just as it is sometimes easier to finish a maze by beginning at the end and working back to the beginning, so is it with Pound’s Imagism. The most interesting—and puzzling—aspect of Pound’s Imagist program and its development though, is that if one begins at the end—the Vortex—and traces it back to its origins, one finds the Image. If one, however, continues by tracing the Image back to its origins, one finds it as the concentrated product of multiple Vortices; the process and product interchange; the beginning is the end is the beginning—a literary Ouroboros of sorts. Thus, even though Imagism predates Vorticism, the Vortex both precedes and succeeds the Image. The reason for this seemingly trans-temporal nature of Pound’s Image is that it developed in stages, and the history of that development is one of harnessing and channeling several currents of energy toward the same purpose; of finding the most efficient route for that energy; and of making certain that energy remains active and does not dissipate.

To create Imagism, Pound selected what he believed constituted the best poetic practices and distilled them into two complementary products: the Imagist tenets and the Doctrine of the Image. Initially, the tenets and doctrine complimented each other, but did not coalesce entirely; this is Pound’s early Imagism. Once put into practice, though, Pound continued to refine his Imagist recipe by adjusting the quantities of some of his ingredients, combining them, and distilling them once more; this is Pound’s later Imagism. Similar to producing whisky, then, Pound attempted to purify and concentrate the power of poetry by repeatedly distilling its technique and meaning-producing agents.

His first batch yielded a good blended whiskey, but his second batch produced a fine and complexly layered single-malt: the Image-as-Vortex.

Due to the vortex-like process by which Pound channeled, distilled, and merged his poetic influences into the two functional elements of Imagism, one must first unweave and understand the specific attributes of those individual influences before comprehending either the complex composition of Pound's Imagism or the variations that proliferated from it. Despite Pound's propensity for citing and acknowledging his poetic influences and sources, however, he frequently identified them haphazardly and, in doing so, often failed to offer clear definitions of the particular technique or theory he chose to identify and validate. Moreover, Pound neither discovered nor added each of those elements into his Imagist agenda simultaneously. Rather, he utilized Imagism as a repository of proper poetic techniques that shifted and adapted as he came upon new influences or refined his understanding and use of the techniques he previously included within it. Therefore, in order to gain a precise understanding of the nature of those influences and their role in Pound's development of Imagism, one must look to the prose pieces Pound devoted to the articulation of his Imagist agenda. For in those articles one finds Pound identifying some of the specific influences on his concept of Imagism, alluding to others, and offering contextual clues as to his understanding and application of the techniques and theories he discovered in those sources.

By locating and examining the shaping forces behind Pound's Imagist tenets and Doctrine of the Image, this chapter offers a somewhat stable definition of the ways in which Pound understood the functionality of those foundational aspects of Imagism at the time of their original publication in 1913. To discuss each of those elements accurately,

this chapter consists of two sections. The first, “The Vortex of Technique” locates the origins of the technical components Pound incorporated into Imagism and explains how they functioned within that poetic program. The second, “The Vortex of the Image,” then identifies the theoretical origins of the Doctrine of the Image and discusses how they coalesced to prioritize imagery’s capability to locate multiple levels of meaning in a poem. In offering a definition of Pound’s early Imagist agenda, this chapter not only illustrates the vortextual sources of Imagism and its dependence on imagery, but also establishes a standard from which to assess the ways Pound and the other Imagists’ interpreted and evolved their Imagist poetics from that early standard.

Section I: “The Vortex of Technique”

With the publication of the articles “Imagisme” and “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste,” Ezra Pound outlined some of the specific attributes of his Imagist program and its product, the poetic Image. Through the Imagist tenets, Pound provided technical guidelines for the writing of a specific type of poetry, and with the Doctrine of the Image he alluded to the theory that underlined those technical practices. Despite the simple wording and presentation of those Imagist principles, Pound attempted to concentrate within them the conclusions he reached after years of investigating poetic craft. In the aptly titled retrospective essay, “How I Began,” Pound explains:

I knew at fifteen pretty much what I wanted to do. I believed that the “Impulse” is with the gods; that the technique is a man’s own responsibility. [...] I resolved that at thirty I would know more about poetry than any man living, that I would know the dynamic content from

the shell, that I would know what was accounted poetry everywhere, what part of poetry was ‘indestructible,’ what part could *not be lost* by translation, and—scarcely less important what effects were obtainable in *one* language only and were utterly incapable of being translated. (212-23)

Through Imagism, then, Pound endeavored to merge proper poetic technique with a means to produce energized content while also supplying guidelines to help others do the same.

Notably, in the above account of his beginnings as a poet, Pound clearly delineates between the poetic “impulse” or creative imagination and the proper techniques for writing poetry. That separation would continue into his early Imagist program as well. In that same essay, Pound also asserts, “no amount of scholarship will help a man to write poetry; it may even be regarded as a great burden and hindrance, but it does help him to destroy a certain percentage of his failures. It keeps him discontented with mediocrity” (213). Thus, when Pound localized in Imagism all he had learned regarding poetry, he distinguished between his Doctrine of the Image, which applied itself to the “energized content of poetry,” and the three Imagist tenets, which could aid a poet to produce, or aspire to produce, something more than mediocre poetry. In other words, the Doctrine seems to apply itself to the production of meaning, whereas the tenets focus on the most efficient methods for presenting that meaning. More than the tenets, though, Pound’s understanding of the Doctrine of the Image developed over time. Pound chose not to elaborate on the specifics of that doctrine probably due to that progressive development, and, instead, focused on the Imagist tenets.

Like the poems that Pound meant for them to engender, the Imagist tenets' linguistic economy belies the concentration of their meaning. Simply reading,

1. Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome. (Flint "Imagisme" 199)

those "few rules" not only encapsulate the defining characteristics of Imagist poetry, but also enact their own directives; they treat the thing directly and use no excess language. Encompassing only thirty-eight words, the Imagist tenets distill the essence of Pound's poetic influences but mask their origins. Pound made certain, however, that the readers of the "Imagisme" article—in which the tenets were published—also knew that Imagism was "not a revolutionary school; their only endeavor was to write in accordance with the best tradition, as they found it in the best writers of all time,—in Sappho, Catullus, Villon" (199). In what seems a paradoxical maneuver, then, Pound introduces his Modern poetry movement by identifying its Classical origins. Through that simple maneuver, though, Pound aligns the practices of his movement with the entire history of effectively written poetry. Moreover, with that statement, Pound sheds light on the particular attributes of Imagist poetry because each of those poets he mentions wrote what one might consider "very spare" poetry (Kenner 177).

Despite the obvious similarities of style that Sappho, Catullus, and Villon share, and how the recognition of that spare aesthetic offers information regarding Imagist poetics, not all of Pound's references and allusions to the writers and literary movements that influenced his Imagist guidelines are so easily recognized or neatly grouped. In fact,

over the course of the two articles in which he introduced the foundational elements of Imagism—“Imagisme” and “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste”—Pound mentions or alludes to several other writers, texts, and literary movements. An informal list includes the Post Impressionists, the Futurists, the psychologist Bernard Hart, Ford Madox Hueffer,⁴ Saxon charms, Hebridean Folk Songs, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Charles Vildrac and Georges Duhamel, Milton, Heine, Gautier, and Chaucer. Not only do those names not constitute a complete list of the influences—some positive and some negative—upon Pound’s Imagism, but also, when he mentions them, Pound frequently neglects to specify the exact trait or traits he took from those influences and included within Imagism. Thus, in order to explain the functionality of the Imagist tenets and the particular influences that shaped them, the remainder of this section will work backward from each of the Imagist tenets to isolate their primary origins before then illustrating how that those tenets function within Pound’s early brand of Imagism.

Through locating the sources and operational qualities of the Imagist tenets, this section also posits that those tenets participate in the creation of an Imagist poem’s meaning. Hugh Kenner has persuasively—and representatively—argued that the Imagist tenets simply function as “specifications for technical hygiene” and the Doctrine of the Image is solely responsible for the “intellectual and emotional complexes” that define a poetic Image (186). He then continues by citing that distinction as the differentiating factor between Imagism and Vorticism by arguing that in the poetry of the latter those two elements finally unite. Yet, Pound formulated the Imagist tenets as means to consider and utilize every formal element of a poem and direct them toward the production of a

⁴ Born Ford Hermann Hueffer, Ford changed his name by deed poll to Ford Madox Hueffer in 1900 and then to Ford Madox Ford in 1919 (Saunders 1). For convenience, I will refer to him as Ford for the remainder of this dissertation except when quoting a specific reference to him as Ford Madox Hueffer.

shared meaning. Thus, by identifying the primary influences and tactics that Pound used as the basis for those tenets, this section reveals how Pound utilized the Imagist tenets in such a way that poetic form merged with its content to produce those complexes of meaning.

Pound's Imagist tenets are difficult to discuss individually or in a linear manner because of their interpenetration with each other and the chronology of their development. Each of the tenets addresses a certain formal aspect of a poem, but they also combine to work together in the organism of the poem. Although each of the tenets primarily addresses itself to matters of technique, they also affect the content and meaning of the poem—especially when a poet uses all them in conjunction with each other. Hence, explicating those tenets becomes a tricky matter because one must address them separately while also relying on the others to explain its context and purpose. Interestingly, Pound's numbering of the Imagist tenets approximates a reverse chronological order of his likely development of them. Therefore, the following examination of those tenets begins with the third and works its way back to the first.

On its surface, the third Imagist tenet—"As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome"—appears to champion the use of free verse over metrical forms. At the turn of the Twentieth Century, writing poems in meter still existed as the standard in English poetry. In fact, the main distinguishing factor between prose and poetry at that time was that the latter adhered to strict accentual or syllabic quantities or a particular rhyme scheme. Robert Frost—possibly in reaction to Pound's experiments—even likened writing free verse to "play[ing] tennis with the net down" (*Collected Prose* 168). Even though Pound's

recommendation of writing in accordance with the “musical phrase” led to a rather widespread adoption of free verse among the Imagist poets, he did not dismiss formal patterns simply to rid poetry of its discipline. Rather, he understood the musical phrase as a means to more accurately capture and present the emotional content of a poem.

As a matter of technical hygiene, the third tenet addresses itself to the issue of poets adding extra words or grammatical inversions to their poems in order to adhere to specific metrical constraints. To Pound, such a practice ate away at the authenticity and creativity of a poetic work. Where meter had once attested to a poet’s knowledge of craft and skill, Pound came to view it as a refuge for poor poets that allowed them to simply pour their words into prefabricated molds and call it poetry. Herbert Schneidau understands the third Imagist tenet in exactly that manner, writing that, as a trait of Imagist poetics, the third tenet works specifically to counteract “the flabby practice of filling up rhythmic spaces with empty words” (7). In the article, “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste,” Pound also makes some assertions that certainly lend credence to Schneidau’s assessment. Specifically, Pound states, “It is not necessary that a poem should rely on its music, but if it does rely on its music that music must be such as will delight the expert” (203). He also advises, “Naturally, your rhythmic structure should not destroy the shape of your words, or their natural sound, or their meaning. It is improbable that, at the start, you will be able to get rhythm-structure strong enough to affect them very much, though you may fall victim to all sorts of false stopping due to line ends and caesurae” (204). Obviously, then, Pound understood the third tenet as a means to rectify some of the sloppy habits into which he believed many practitioners of metrical poetry had fallen. Yet, his intentions for the third tenet did not work against patterned language. Instead,

Pound conceived of the musical phrase as a method for deliberately making the rhythmic structure of a poem isomorphic with its content.

One of the primary and earliest influences on Pound's concept of the musical phrase was the intricate prosody of troubadour poetry. Pound first studied the Provençal language and its literature with his professor William Pierce Shepard at Hamilton College. Even though Pound wrote that he shared a "temperamental sympathy" with the troubadours (*Spirit* 22), he also appreciated their creation of original and non-repetitive rhythm patterns. Under the tutelage of Shepard, Pound translated the work of the Troubadour poets into English verse that, according to Helen Carr, "replicated" or, "if it did not replicate, echoed" the original's complex rhythmic structures and rhyme schemes (33).

Noting how Pound applied those qualities in his own work, W. B. Yeats wrote in a December 10, 1909 letter to Lady Gregory:

This queer creature Ezra Pound, who has become a really great authority on the troubadours, has I think got closer to the right sort of music for poetry than Mrs. Emory [Florence Farr]—it is more definitely music with strongly marked time and yet it is effective speech. However he can't sing as he has no voice. It is like something on a very bad phonograph. (*Letters* 543).

Putting aside his assessment of Pound's voice, Yeats' comments on Pound's adaptation of troubadour-style rhythmic structures illustrates the influence the troubadours had on Pound as well as the area in which they most affected his poetry. Through his study and translation of the troubadours, Pound discovered a form of versification that accentuated

the music of its wording without sacrificing either the naturalness or effectiveness of its language.

Along with crafting the rhythms of one's poetry to match their subjects and the patterns of natural speech, Pound also came to appreciate many of the more sophisticated, yet understated, elements of troubadour prosody. For instance, Pound, like the troubadours, came to recognize that words carry both meaning and sound in poetry. Unlike music where individual notes blend into seamless musical phrases, in a poem—at least, a troubadour or Imagist poem—each word needs to do work; it must “contribute to the presentation” through either or, preferably, both sound and sense. By linking words through assonance, consonance, alliteration, and rhyme, Pound discovered that he could unobtrusively link individual words, groups of words, or an entire poem through repetitions of like sounds. More natural and less overt than most standard meters, this organic and, seemingly, naturalized arrangement of sonic patterns allowed him to rhyme concepts as well as sounds. Thus, when words rhyme, or pair according to sound, they draw attention to their relationship. If the concepts or content of those words also match along with their sound, then the poet charges those words with the energy of additional meaning and purpose.

In *The Pound Era*, Hugh Kenner discusses the subtle micro-patterns of sound and content the troubadours use to make their poems cohere without or within an overt macro-pattern. He describes them as:

A binding, a having-to-do-with, that joins in likeness, in difference and in modulation all the poem's materials, through which interactive web the syntactic meaning flows, abandoning nothing: this is the deepest, the most

persistent Provençal intuition. This intricate patterning within the explicit pattern offered a way of holding short poems together without recourse to fulfillment of a metrical contract. (84)

Those subtle practices of prosody both shape a poem and allow it to cohere without forcing it into a larger pre-fabricated metrical pattern. In fact, those prosodic arrangements based on the sound qualities of the individual word require great attention to one's word choice because the words must unite in both sound and meaning and must do so without an external form giving them shape. Such a practice is like prosody without a safety net; the poem's sound modulates to simultaneously create and enforce meaning. Similar to the aesthetics of threading beads for a necklace, the poet must carefully select and arrange each word so that it augments those around it.

Again, Kenner comments on the discipline and attention to detail required by the troubadours' prosody by writing:

One notes the monosyllables, and notes next that a Provençal poem when it interests Pound is a parataxis of sound. The language seems to welcome separations. Its words clip, bounding the clear distinct syllables modern French has slurred with terminal consonants modern French omits. [...] To make English words new meant to make them once more separately audible: *Pallid the leash-men as against immemorial elms* and against a taste "all legato ... Elizabethan sonority blunted" that slurred and fused the separate words and syllables. (85)

Of course, if one constructs a poem as one does a house or wall—word-by-word or brick-by-brick—the sound will grow into larger patterns and phrases until it reaches its

completion. By selecting each word based on its sound and meaning, though, one not only avoids “the flabby practice of filling up rhythmic spaces with empty words,” but also creates a poem wherein each word, each line, each stanza, each pair of stanzas, etc., contain meaning and contribute to the poem’s overall meaning. The poem, therefore, becomes more than a variant on a pattern; it becomes a living organism genetically designed to accomplish its purpose: the presentation of meaning through both sound and sense. Moreover, by relying primarily upon short, monosyllabic words, troubadour poetry draws attention to its individual units of sound and, thereby, brings the reader’s attention back to the words themselves. Like the Buddhist concept of the “diamond net of Indra” in which each point “contains a multifaceted diamond which reflects every other diamond, and as such, essentially ‘contains’ every other diamond in the net” (Loori 25),⁵ the troubadours taught Pound how to weave the net of his Imagist prosody so tightly that it could cohere without an external form.

Pound never abandoned his interest in the troubadours, but in 1912, F. S. Flint introduced him to a new, more contemporary style of versification that shared much with the troubadours: French *vers libre*. Flint and Pound became acquainted through their mutual attendance and participation in T. E. Hulme’s literary salons at the Tour Eiffel restaurant in London, and the two became rather close. For a special issue of Harold Monro’s *Poetry Review* in August 1912, Flint wrote an introduction to, and overview of, avant-garde French poetry. In that article, entitled “Contemporary French Poetry,” Flint discusses several of the different schools of poetry then active in France and outlines the attributes of *vers libre*. The existence and names of those French schools certainly played

⁵ The diamond net of Indra is a Buddhist metaphor in which “all existence is seen as a vast net of gems that extends throughout the universe, not only in the three dimensions of space but in the fourth dimension of time as well” (Loori 25).

a major role in Pound's formation of "Imagisme," but their consistent championing of *vers libre* offered another method for patterning the sound and rhythms of an Imagist poem "to bring it nearer to pure music" (89).

In his article on French poetry, Flint also makes a point of emphasizing that the title "*vers libre*" is a bit of a misnomer because it is "by no means free;" it "must follow rigorously the interior law of the poet's emotion and the idea which has given it birth" (89). Carr expands on that description by adding, "French *vers libre* does not mean 'free verse.' *Un vers* is a line, not a verse, and *vers libre* meant in the first instance getting away from a fixed line length" (195). By doing away with standardized meter, *vers libre* made the individual line the unit of composition. In such a poetic scenario, the line itself must do work within the poem other than simply contain the appropriate rhyme or amount of stresses or syllables; it must sonically evoke its content. Far from denoting a freedom from any type of rhythmic patterning, then, *vers libre*, instead, requires a more subtle discipline of its poets: the discipline of matching word and line to their content.

Much like the poetry of the troubadours, in *vers libre* Pound identified a style of poetics that not only emphasized the creation of formal structures to match one's subject, but also the employment of more subtle sonic elements than just meter and rhyme. Following Flint's article, Pound decided to publish his own series on contemporary French poetry. Appearing only months after "Imagisme" and "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," Pound used his articles, entitled "The Approach to Paris," to highlight and argue for many of the aural elements he found in *vers libre* and transitioned into Imagism. He writes:

I am aware that there are resolutions of sound less obvious than rhyme. It requires more pains and intelligence both to make and to hear them. To demand rhyme is almost like saying that only one note out of ten need be in melody, it is not quite the same. No one would deny the final sound of the line is important. No intelligent person would deny that all the accented sounds are important. I cannot bring myself to believe that even the unstressed syllables should be wholly neglected.

I cannot believe that one can test the musical qualities of a passage of verse merely by counting the number of syllables, or even stressed syllables, in each line, and by thereafter examining the terminal sounds.

(186)

In that excerpt, Pound obviously promotes the rarefied and sophisticated sound patterns found in vers libre and implies they are consistent with a poetic approach—such as his “musical phrase”—that considers all the sonic possibilities of language rather than just the most obvious ones. By recommending the utilization of sounds “less obvious than rhyme” and “stressed syllables,” Pound also illustrates that neither vers libre nor Imagism simply employ conventional formal templates in unique ways. Rather, each of those poetic approaches considers and make uses of the musical properties of each word in a poem.

Through his careful study of troubadour prosody and vers libre, Pound discovered a method for giving audible shape to the content of a poem. In naming that concept the “musical phrase” and including it as one of his Imagist tenets, he also merged two strains of influence—one historical and one contemporary—into a single technical directive that

required one to not only consciously employ a poem's overall sound in service of its subject, but also each constituent aspect of that sound. Pound did not object, however, to all formal patterns simply on principle. Rather, he believed that to imbue poetry with a sense of vitality, poets must pair their poems' sound and shape with meaning—even if that means choosing preexistent forms, as long as the poets do so deliberately.

Pound's adoption of the musical phrase as an Imagist paradigm set the standard for the auditory characteristics of Imagist poetry, but it also affected the functionality and poetic effects of the other two Imagist tenets. In particular, the second tenet—"to use absolutely no word that d[oes] not contribute to the presentation"—obviously addresses itself to the concept of poets selecting their language so that each word participates in the production of its poem's meaning. Certainly, the sound of a poem "contributes to [its] presentation," but the third tenet accounts for the ways in which prosody should generate meaning in an Imagist poem. What the third tenet does not account for, however, are the factors by which poets should select and arrange their verbiage based on its signified meaning in a vers-libre system. For a solution to that situation, Pound looked to Ford Madox Ford and his recommendations for translating prose techniques into verse.

May Sinclair introduced Pound to Ford in 1909 because, as Ford recalls, "she wanted to introduce the greatest poet to the greatest editor in the world" (*Return* 357). Having, by that time, published over twenty books and established his own literary journal, the *English Review*, Ford had already established himself as a member of London's literary milieu (Carr 118-20). After spending a significant amount of time discussing literature with Ford, Pound declared in the January 1, 1913 issue of *Poetry*—which also featured three poems by the then-unknown poet, "H.D. imagiste"—that he

“would rather talk about poetry with Ford Madox Hueffer than with any man in London.” He then states, “Mr. Hueffer believes in an exact rendering of things. He would strip words of all “association” for the sake of getting a precise meaning. He professes to prefer prose to verse. You would find his origins in Gautier or Flaubert. He is objective” (“Status Rerum” 125). In fact, Pound admired those traits of Ford’s prose to such an extent, that he attempted to translate them into verse through Imagism. To achieve that task, Pound modelled much of the second Imagist tenet upon Ford’s techniques for composing in accordance with the diction and word order of naturalized speech.

In a two-part article that appeared in August and September 1913 entitled, “Impressionism—Some Speculations,” Ford offers his reading public some of the opinions and advice that he had, for years, been offering Pound. Specifically, he focuses on how the formality of English verse divorces itself from its contemporary environment. He states, “[T]his is England, this is Campden Hill and we have a literary jargon in which we must write” (“Impressionism” 178). The problem, he states, “is somewhat a matter of diction. In France, upon the whole, a poet—even a quite literary poet—can write in a language that, roughly speaking, any hatter can use. In Germany, the poet writes exactly as he speaks. And these facts do so much towards influencing the poet’s mind” (179). Recognizing, therefore, that, unlike those other countries, the formal language of English poetry breeds antiquated and conventional subject matter, Ford rhetorically asks:

Is there something in the mere framing of verse, the mere sound of it in the ear, that it must at once throw its practitioners or its devotee into an artificial frame of mind? Verse presumably quickens the perceptions of its writer as does hashish or ether. But must it necessarily quicken them to the

perception only of the sentimental, the false, the hackneyed aspects of life? Must it make us, because we live in cities, babble incessantly of green fields; or because we live in the twentieth century must we deem nothing poetically good that did not take place before the year 1603? (186)

According to Ford, then, the prescribed vocabulary and formal arrangement of English poetry prevented poets from speaking accurately about their world and their condition in it. As a solution, he recommends arranging one's language in the manner that one actually speaks it.

By recommending natural diction as a means to combat derivative subject matter, though, Ford also rendered superfluous much of the vocabulary and word order that often accompanies traditional poetic forms. In the second installment of his "Impressionism—Some Speculations" article, Ford describes the experiences with poetry that he and his friends had in their childhood and teenage years. He recalls:

"[T]he attempt to read Tennyson, Swinburne and Browning and Pope—in our teens—gave me and my friends . . . a settled dislike for poetry that we never since quite got over. We seemed to get from them the idea that all poets must of necessity write affectedly, at great length, with many superfluous words—that poetry, of necessity, was something boring and pretentious. (217)

Having come to so associate artificiality and excess with the characteristics of poetry, Ford and his were friends were so shocked by the "exact, formal and austere phrases" of Christina Rossetti's poetry that they "regarded her as being far more a prose writer than a poet at all" (218, 217-18). Thus, in urging other poets to adopt the same direct and

precise language he found in Rossetti, Ford essentially attempted to install prose attributes as the standard for poetic form. Through simply replacing meter with naturalized sentence structures, Ford believed poetic language could operate both more accurately and more precisely.

Even though Pound still held that poets should arrange their words so their sounds participate in their poems' production of meaning, he also understood the benefits of and promoted Ford's desire to implement prose phrasings in poetry. In a short review of Ford's *Collected Poems*, plainly titled "Ford Madox Hueffer," Pound directly associates Ford with prose. He writes:

Mr. Hueffer has preached "Prose" in this island ever since I can remember. He has cried with a high and solitary voice and with all the fervors of a new convert. "Prose" is his own importation. There is no one with whom one can discuss it. ... He can and sometimes, does write prose. I mean Prose with a very big capital letter. Prose that really delights one by its limpidity. (251)

Following that introduction, Pound then discusses the relationship between Ford's prose and poetry and suggests that other poets could benefit from following Ford's example. He opines:

From a technical point of view the first poems in the book are worthy of serious study. Because of his long prose training Mr. Hueffer has brought into English verse certain qualities which younger writers would do well to consider. I say younger writers for the old ones are mostly past hope. ...

In “The Starling” the naturalness of the language and suavity with which the rhyme-sounds lose themselves in the flow of the reading, are worthy of emulation.

Naturalness of speech can of course be learned from Francis Jammes and other French writers, but it is new and refreshing in contemporary English. (251)

In that quote, Pound recognizes the music of Ford’s verse, but also highlights how, in using the “naturalness of speech” to create that music, Ford establishes sound patterns that do not rely on fixed metrical patterns or archaic phrasings. Moreover, Pound does not simply call attention to those auditory aspects of Ford’s poetry, he credits them as “mark[ing] a phase in the change which is—or at least which one hopes is coming over English verse” and which other poets should emulate (251).

Ford offered Pound that same advice years earlier, and it led to such significant changes in his work that Pound based his second Imagist tenet on it. In his obituary for Ford, Pound recalled:

For ten years before I got to England there would seem to have been no one but Ford who held that French clarity and simplicity in the writing of English verse and prose were of immense importance, as in contrast to the use of a stilted traditional dialect, a “language of verse” unused in the actual talk of the people, even of “the best people,” for the expression of reality and emotion. ...

And he felt the errors of contemporary style [in 1911] to the point of rolling ... on the floor ... when my third volume [*Canzoni*] displayed

me trapped, fly-papered, gummed and strapped down in a jejune provincial effort to learn, *mehercule*, the stilted language that then passed for “good English”. . . .

And that roll saved me at least two years, perhaps more. It sent me back to my own effort, namely, toward using the living tongue. (“Ford Madox (Hueffer) Ford” 171-72)

Through Ford’s mocking, then, Pound came to understand that by replacing the “stilted” language of English verse with a simplified and direct version of the language as actually spoken his poetry could express “reality and emotion” more precisely and efficiently.

Even though Pound’s second Imagist tenet—“to use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation”—partially reiterates the same information of the third tenet, it more specifically applies itself to the prose qualities Pound learned from Ford and incorporated into Imagism. Pound believed that blind adherence to inherited forms frequently dulled the sound of one’s poem so that it did not participate in the production of the poem’s meaning. As a remedy, he recommended composing according to the musical phrase; that was the third tenet. He also believed, however, that poetic forms frequently force poets to affect poeticized language and phraseology in order to satisfy the schematic dictates of those forms. To remedy that situation, Pound replaced traditional poetic forms with sentence structures that approximate common diction, and, through that transference, allowed poets to select and arrange their words so they could contribute to either or both the sound and sense of their poems without also requiring affected vocabulary or phrasing.

While Pound's application of prose characteristics to verse allowed him to eliminate unnatural diction from Imagist poetry, it also required Imagist poets to remain precise within those prose structures and to use them effectively to create meaning. To achieve those standards, the Imagist poet needed to account for and utilize basic grammar in their poems. Even though one could still break those rules to approximate the rhythms of an emotional utterance or a particular accent, grammar still needed to serve as the basis for acceptable poetic phrasing in a vers-libre system. Moreover, an Imagist poem should build from that base by further purging the linguistic excesses from its lines and by charging its language with meaning through its diction, syntax, and line breaks. Pound did not want to replace common verse forms with prose arrangements to allow poets more freedom in the construction of their lines. Rather, he understood such a change as increasing the discipline and craft of poetic composition. When reading the second Imagist tenet, therefore, one should recognize that "no word that does not contribute" does not concern itself only with the arrangement of one's poetic diction, but also the linguistic efficiency of that diction.

The second Imagist tenet, however, does more, than simply require poets to remove any "word that does not contribute;" it requires poets to remove any "word that does not contribute to the presentation." In the context of this tenet, and Imagist poetry in general, then, the definition of Pound's concept of "presentation" becomes of the utmost importance. Along with the second tenet, Pound also uses the word "presentation" or "presents" in his definition of the Image and in a few of the points he makes in "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste." Putting aside, for now, Pound's definition of an "Image" because

he only uses “presents” to shed light on the meaning of an “Image,” in “A Few Don’ts” he reminds his readers:

Don’t be descriptive; remember that the painter can describe a landscape much better than you can, and that he has to know a deal more about it.

When Shakespeare talks of the ‘Dawn in russet mantle clad’ he presents something which the painter does not present. There is in this line of his nothing that one can call description; he presents” (203).

From that advice, one can determine that for Pound “presentation” does not concern itself with a secondary representation of one’s subject matter. Rather, he believes that Imagists must consciously employ each operative element of their poems to embody their subjects poetically. Imagists, therefore, should not describe, they should not discuss, nor should they re-present their subjects; they should present their subjects by using the materials of their poems to give them a perceivable shape.

In terms of the precision of that presentation, Pound also writes in “A Few Don’ts” that poets should “[c]onsider the definiteness of Dante’s presentation, as compared to Milton’s rhetoric” (205). With that statement, Pound, essentially, positions rhetoric as a—if not the—counter current to “presentation.” By making that distinction, Pound allows the second tenet to refer not only to the removal of all language that does not participate meaningfully in the rhythm or prose structures of one’s poem, but also all language that clouds the presentation of its poem’s subject by rhetorically directing the reader’s perception of it. Thus, the second tenet—like each of the tenets—provides an overall standard of “technical hygiene” for an Imagist poem while also applying itself to

one of the formal elements that Imagists can and should use to materialize the subjects of their poems.

With the second and third Imagist tenets, Pound outlines the ways Imagists should use the sound and prose structures of their poems to shape meaning without adding any superfluous or inactive language. His concept of “presenting,” however, requires that all the formal elements of a poem work to embody their content in a sensorially perceivable manner. Having already accounted for the ways one should arrange their poetic language, Pound uses his first Imagist tenet to address the type of words Imagists should use to present their subjects. To understand that first tenet—“Direct treatment of the ‘thing’ whether subjective or objective”—one must, again, return to Ford Madox Ford and the influence his theories on the application of prose traits to poetry had upon Pound and his Imagist agenda.

In the first of his two essays entitled, “Impressionism—Some Speculations,” Ford acknowledges, “[F]or a quarter of a century, I have kept before me one unflinching aim—to register my own times in terms of my own time, and still more to urge those who are better poets and better prose-writers than myself to have the same aim” (179). Ford does suggest adopting naturalized speech cadences as a means towards accomplishing that task, but he also admits, “The actual language, the vernacular employed is a secondary matter” (224). More important to him is that poets avoid sentimentality by using their contemporary environment as subject matter. He argues, “[T]he putting of . . . one thing in juxtaposition with the other, that seems to me to be much more the business of the poet of today than setting down on paper what he thinks about the fate of Brangaene,⁶ not because any particular lesson may be learned, but because the juxtapositions suggest

⁶ Brangaene serves as Isolde’s handmaiden and confidant in *Tristan and Isolde*.

emotions” (185). In that quote, Ford, basically, provides the connective thread between Pound’s first and second Imagist tenets. Ford believes that traditional poetic subjects, removed as they are from the contemporary world of the poet, lead to sentimentalism and rhetoric rather than an honest portrayal of one’s immediate surroundings and circumstances. Similarly, Pound also uses the hygienic policies of his second tenet to remove sentimentality and rhetoric from poetry, and, through that process, prepares the Imagist poem to offer a “[d]irect treatment of the thing.”

Pound most appreciated Ford’s Impressionism because, unlike Symbolism, it dealt honestly and directly with its subjects and their relationships rather than employing them as verbal conduits to other topics. To Pound, symbols were an ineffective and imprecise use of language; they offered an “indirect” treatment of the thing. Contrastingly, Ford’s Impressionism simply relayed the sources of one’s emotions and did not elaborate upon them. In fact, Ford discusses this exact aspect of his literary Impressionism when he writes:

[T]he business of poetry is not sentimentalism so much as the putting of certain realities in certain aspects. ... [J]udged by these standards ... the ash-bucket at dawn is a symbol of poor humanity, of its aspirations, its romance, its ageing and its death. The ashes represent the sociable fires, the god of the hearth of the slumbering dawn populations; the orange peels with their bright colors represent all that is left of a little party the night before, when an alliance between families may have failed to be cemented or, being accomplished, may prove a disillusionment or a temporary

paradise. The empty tin of infant's food stands for birth; the torn scrap of a doctor's prescription for death. (183).

Although Ford extrapolates, in that quote, on the possible interpretations of the images in his described scene, he suggests that poets should render the realities of their world and not indulge in sentimental or theoretical considerations of them. Rather, Ford insists, "It is the duty of the poet to reflect his own day as it appears to him, as it has impressed itself upon him," and that "[t]he main thing is the genuine love and the faithful rendering of the received impression" ("Impressionism II" 222, 224). In Ford's Impressionism, then, Pound identified a type of poetry that strove for objectivity by attempting to rid itself of sentiment and moralizing.

Despite the literary precedent that Ford's Impressionism offered him, Pound believed he could intensify its virtues through Imagism. Specifically, Ford urged poets to offer "faithful rendering[s]" of their impressions of the world around them, but he did not articulate how to do so with efficiency and precision. By campaigning for the removal of any form of pontification from poetry, Ford offered Pound a model of "direct treatment." Yet, Pound wanted to translate Ford's concept of "faithful rendering" into a deliberate poetic technique and he did that by insisting upon a "direct treatment of the thing." In his "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," Pound clarifies his definition of a poetic "thing" and sets Imagism apart from literary Impressionism by making an example of Ford's use of a generalized noun in his poem, "On a Marsh Road: (Winter Nightfall)." In that essay, Pound writes, "Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands *of peace*'. It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realizing that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol" (201). With that advice, Pound, essentially,

correlates the “thing” of his second tenet with concrete nouns. He states that Ford’s phrase, “dim lands of peace,” attempts to convey the emotional impression the material world made upon its speaker, but, in doing so, partly explains its significance by mixing a concrete noun with an abstract interpretation of it. As an alternative, Pound suggests that poets rely on concrete nouns for their imagery and arrange them so they radiate with their own significance. Thus, when Pound writes, “the natural object is always the adequate symbol,” what he leaves out but seems to imply is that, for an Imagist, “the natural object is always the adequate symbol” for itself.

Pound’s first Imagist tenet did not solely attempt to improve upon Ford’s Impressionism by prioritizing the use of concrete nouns; it also endeavored to utilize all the formal attributes of a poem to treat its subjects directly. Granted, Pound believed that the most overt way for poets to identify and focus upon their subject matter was to locate it in concrete nouns and the relationships between them. He also believed, however, that Impressionism’s reliance upon visual imagery often led to one-dimensional representations of its content that bordered on description. In a March 1912 review of Ford’s *High Germany*, Pound contends:

[Ford’s] “flaw is the flaw of impressionism, impressionism that is, carried out of its due medium. Impressionism belongs in paint, it is of the eye. The cinematograph records, for instance, the “impression” of any given action or place, far more exactly than the finest writing, it transmits the impression to its “audience” with less work on their part. A ball of gold and a gilded ball give the same “impression” to the painter. Poetry is

in some odd way concerned with the specific gravity of things, with their nature.

Their nature *and* show, if you like; with the relation between them, but not with show alone.

The *conception* of poetry is a process more intense than the *reception* of an impression. And no impression, however carefully articulated, can, recorded, convey that feeling of sudden light which works of art should and must convey. Poetry is not much a matter of explications. (“Book of the Month” 133)

In that quote, Pound clearly argues that, by relying solely on standard forms of imagery, Impressionism tends to linger on surface details and, as such, simply describes its subjects and their significance. For Pound, such an approach is both passive and imprecise. He states that poets should not simply receive and record their Impressions of external objects; they should conceive of poetic forms that utilize all of their attributes to embody their subjects poetically and objectively. Again, like each of the other Imagist tenets, “Direct treatment of the thing,” concerns both a broad-scale concept of poetic hygiene and a particular poetic element. Broadly, it emphasizes the avoidance of rhetoric and “explication.” Specifically, it addresses the type of words poets should use to locate their subjects, and, for that purpose, it suggests concrete nouns.

By identifying the main sources of and influences upon Pound’s Imagist tenets, one can note how those tenets not only work individually and in concert, but also how they generate both reductive and productive results. On a hygienic level, the tenets work to rid poems of non-essential verbiage. The third tenet removes the empty language

needed to fulfill the requirements of a standard form; the second employs a prose grammar to eliminate all words that do not produce meaning in a vers-libre system; and the third purges rhetoric, sentiment, and other abstractions from a poem. Along with those reductions in language, though, the Imagist tenets also provide poets with methods for utilizing each of the formal elements of their poems to produce meaning. The third tenet requires poets to shape their poem's music according to its subject matter; the second instructs poets to arrange their phraseology so that it generates the maximum meaning to a maximum audience; and the first locates the type of words that offer the greatest amount of objective meaning. In a sense, the Imagist tenets do away with the liberties afforded by poetic license in order to maximize the craft and means by which a poem can create meaning. Through promoting the use of rhythms that enact their content audibly, Imagist poems default to prose grammar as the standard for linguistic efficiency. That grammatical efficiency then both devalues abstractions in favor of concrete nouns while also emphasizing those nouns through the basic structure of its sentences. Far from solely preserving poetic health and cleanliness, then, the Imagist tenets work to cultivate crafted poetic language and form.

Section II: "The Vortex of the Image"

Essentially, Pound's early Imagist program consisted of directing each element of one's poem toward the concretization of its subject. Part of that program, though, involved relying on imagery—specifically concrete nouns—to evoke a poem's meaning rather than commenting on or explaining it for the reader. Recognizing the ability of imagery to locate both specific and associational meaning, Pound made certain to

acknowledge its role in Imagism by referencing an undefined “Doctrine of the Image” as a functional counterpart to the Imagist tenets. Despite this seemingly theoretical prioritization of imagery, however, Pound’s incipient Imagist agenda simply employed imagery as another component in the production of objective meaning—its degree of usage remained on par with the tenets. Thus, even though Pound conceived of a poetic Image as a poem in which every formal element worked to embody its subject matter as efficiently and precisely as possible, his lack of specificity concerning that point allowed his fellow Imagists to employ or emphasize those individual aspects of Imagism as they saw fit. This accentuating of different Imagist techniques among the assembled Imagists, then, led to the proliferation of many different brands of Imagism.

Pound’s decision not to define the Doctrine of the Image also contributed to the variety of product created under the Imagist banner. By not clearly explaining the difference between a poetic Image and imagery or the role imagery plays in the creation of an Image, Pound left one of the major elements of the Imagist process open to interpretation. He did not just leave one of the major elements open to interpretation, however, he left the one element that generates the most meaning in an Imagist poem, the one element that all the tenets work to accentuate, and the one element that provided the name for both his movement and its product open to interpretation. That lack of definition led to a general inconsistency among the Imagists as to how they should employ imagery, what type of imagery they should employ, and how that imagery should cooperate with the Imagist tenets to produce a poetic Image. While those differences in understanding and practice precipitated a great amount of misunderstanding and disagreements among the Imagists, reviewers, and scholars, they also led to a diversity of

Imagist practice whose existence and influence has been largely unrecognized and undervalued.

One cannot be certain of the origins and specifics of Pound's Doctrine of the Image because he never actually defined it. It remains debatable, then, whether he chose to leave that doctrine undefined because it might add an air of mystery to his burgeoning poetic movement or because he was not certain of its specific attributes. Based on Pound's acknowledgements and early statements of the nature of poetics, one can assume that he—at least—assembled some type of theory that specifically recognized and made use of imagery's ability to produce objective meaning in a poem. Like his Imagist tenets, the probable origins of and influences on Pound's Doctrine of the Image were many. Also like his Imagist tenets, that doctrine resulted from a vortextual process that purged those source materials of everything save their most active elements before merging them into a single theory or, in this case, doctrine. Primary among those presumable threads of influence were the philosopher and literary theorist, T.E. Hulme, Symbolism, and the psychologist, Bernard Hart. By examining those origins, this section will supply a working definition of the Doctrine of the Image that explains how imagery can locate multiple levels of meaning within a poem. Moreover, that definition will also reveal how Pound's understanding and application of that doctrine isolated the one poetic element whose traits set the standard for every other formal element of an Imagist poem and how, when unified with those other elements, created the large-scale "intellectual and emotional complex" that constitute a poetic Image.

An investigation of the origins of Pound's Doctrine of the Image begins with T.E. Hulme and his own developmental theories regarding the role of imagery in poetics. In

his *A Genealogy of Modernism*, Michael Levenson asserts that the “leading figures [of English Modernism from 1908-14] – Hulme, Pound, Lewis, Ford – have been regarded as inconsistent, even incoherent. The idea here is that coherence has been unnecessarily lost, and this through one particular lapse: the neglect of any temporal or historical dimension, the tendency to regard the period as a simultaneous critical moment” (37). In order to reconstruct the temporal dimension of that period, Levenson traces the development of Hulme’s philosophical theories and literary criticism. He notes that Hulme’s concepts regarding the proper characteristics of poetry were evolving almost constantly during his affiliation with literary Modernism. Specifically, Levenson follows Hulme’s progression from an Anti-Romantic position that favored free verse and the avoidance of epic themes to a Neo-Classicist stance, and, eventually, to his championing of Literary Abstraction (37-47, 80-102). According to Levenson’s timeline, Hulme left England for Germany in late 1912, and, with that move, no longer sought to apply his philosophical theories to literature (94). Conveniently, 1912 was also the same year that Pound began publicizing his Imagist movement. In attempting to gauge the specific theories of Hulme’s that would have influenced Pound’s development of his Doctrine of the Image, therefore, one need only account for Hulme’s adoption and then rejection of a Bergsonian poetics between 1908 and 1912—even though it is interesting to note the similar progressions in Hulme and Pound’s relationships to poetry following that period.

Pound himself established the link between Hulme and Imagism in his first published mentioning of Imagism by referring to “Les Imagistes” as the “descendants” of Hulme’s 1909 “School of Images.” That reference appeared in the “prefatory note” to “The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme” that Pound appended to his volume of

poetry, *Ripostes* (58-59). Pound would then later confirm Hulme as a direct ancestor of Imagism when, in a 1917 letter to Margaret Anderson, he admitted, “I made the word [Imagism] = on a Hulme basis” (*Pound/The Little Review* 155). While it is possible that Pound first encountered Hulme at a meeting of the Poet’s Club, a group to which Hulme belonged and whose meetings Pound attended on occasion, he certainly gained more exposure to Hulme and his philosophical and literary theories by attending the literary salons Hulme organized at London’s Café Tour d’Eiffel (Harmer 18-22). Even though one cannot be certain how much Hulme discussed his theories at those meetings, especially on the occasions when Pound did attend, Pound’s crediting of Hulme with origins of the term “Imagism” means that Pound must have, at least, gained some information or interest in imagery as result of Hulme’s influence.

Hulme’s theories owe a great deal to the philosopher Henri Bergson. Briefly, Bergson and, subsequently, Hulme believed that human perception commonly functions according to a process of abstraction based on the potential use value of particular objects. Typically, when looking at a vehicle, the common person does not see, for example, a black 1998 Jeep Cherokee Classic, but, simply, a car. Additionally, language also contributes to this process by circulating meaning according to the generalized characteristics of objects so that it might convey its message to largest number of people. Thus, Bergson and Hulme hold that once aware of the abstracting nature of perception and language, artists must, first, recognize the individuality of objects, and, second, manipulate language away from abstraction and toward revealing the individuality of any given object.

Once artists cultivate unique insights regarding the individuality of an object, Bergson and Hulme also agree that those artists can best reveal their insights by using an analogy that associates that object with another concrete item. Both men believe in the analogy's ability to communicate the individual perception of the artist because it relies primarily on objects to convey its meaning. Those objective sensory images urge the reader not to read past the word as part of the abstract process of communication, but to investigate those things as if they were the actual objects. Of course, in the standard analogy, the focus remains on the original object whereas the secondary object only works to clarify the first. If done effectively, however, the reader will still experience those objects as unique items and will experience their individuality in the same manner as the artist's perception of them. On that topic, Bergson writes in his 1903 essay *Introduction to Metaphysics*, that "the image has at least this advantage, that it keeps us in the concrete. No image can replace the intuition of duration, but many diverse images, borrowed from very different orders of things, may, by the convergence of their action, direct consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to be seized" (27-28). In that quote, one can note that, although Bergson and Hulme do not necessarily advocate for the exact juxtaposition of objects that Pound would later refer to as a "superposition" and associate with Imagism, they do stress the importance of arranging imagery in particular patterns to generate objective meaning.

Unlike Bergson, however, Hulme also believed in the analogy's ability to shock the reader into new understandings through unusual comparisons. Like the material appeal of imagery, which urges the reader to perceive the individuality of the analogy's constituent items, a unique and original comparison also shatters the abstracting

tendencies of language by presenting known items in a new or previously unthought-of context. Hulme even goes so far as to suggest that the effort one puts forth to create an analogy is precisely what makes the subject of that analogy an appropriate artistic subject. In his “Notes on Language and Style,” Hulme writes:

The effort of the literary man to find subtle analogies for the ordinary street feelings he experiences leads to the differentiation and importance of those feelings. What would be unnoticed by others, and is nothing when not labeled, becomes an important emotion. A transitory artificial impression is deliberately cultivated into an emotion, *e.g.* standing at street corners. Hence the sudden joy these produce in the reader when he remembers a half-forgotten impression, “How true! (39)

Thus, despite his preferred method of shocking readers into breaking their habits of perception, Hulme did not believe one should also search for extraordinary subject matter. Rather, he recommended the unusual or striking analogy as means to bring attention to the intrinsic individuality of any given moment or object.

Up until this point, Bergson and Hulme agree on the ability of the image and analogy to break the generalizing tendencies of human perception and communication. They came to disagree, however, on the purpose and nature of the information communicated by those literary tools. Specifically, Hulme began to take issue with Bergson’s theories as to whether the artist, after breaking out of the common modes of perception, can apprehend reality. For his part, Bergson distinguishes intellect, which applies knowledge to action, from intuition, which serves to help one comprehend and experience life through the senses and among images. He maintains that artists, through

intuition, can sympathize with, and, in turn, intimately understand the actual nature or “reality” of objects that exist independently of those artists. Having turned to Bergson and his theories of the image as an alternative to the “large-scale philosophic vision, emotional effusion, [and] the declamatory impulse” of Romantic poetry (Levenson 46), Hulme, by 1912, saw Bergson’s theory of the intuition, which utilized images as a means of personal expression, as an extension of that Romantic mindset. In reaction to his new understanding of Bergson, Hulme advocated a return to Classicism. He argues that, “Verse to [a Romantic] always means a bringing in of some of the emotions that are grouped round the word infinite” (*Speculations* 127), whereas a Classicist writes a “dry, hard” verse in which the artist “remembers always that he is mixed up with earth. He may jump, but he always returns back; he never flies away into the circumambient gas” (133, 120). With that shift in view, Hulme—in a manner quite similar to Pound’s Imagism—managed to merge his originally individualist preference for poetic imagery and free verse with a Classicist’s appreciation for precision, efficiency, and a set of “certain rules which one must obey” (“A Tory Philosophy” 235).

While it remains certain that Hulme did, in some way, influence Pound’s Imagist program, scholars remain uncertain as to the degree of that influence. Stanley Coffman broaches that topic in his book, *Imagism: A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry*, and maintains:

It is not inevitable that Pound should have absorbed Imagist doctrine from Hulme’s theorizing at the 1909 club or the Frith Street evenings, even though both undoubtedly owed a large measure of their success to Hulme’s powers as a conversationalist. In the first place, Pound has said

that the conversations about poetry were conducted on the philosophical level which interested Hulme rather than on the level of the practicing poet, who found it necessary to supplement them with discussions of poetry carried on elsewhere. Further, Hulme did not in any sense preside over the meetings, holding the floor for himself; the talk was never guided by one person, nor was there any attempt to address the gathering as a whole—one did not attend simply to hear Hulme discourse upon art and poetry (6-7).

Coffman's description of the probable scenarios in which Pound interacted with Hulme and his philosophic and literary theories makes sense. Pound definitively linked Imagism to Hulme, but, as Coffman points out, Pound also recognized that Hulme focused on philosophy more than poetry and when he did apply his theories to that medium he did so as an amateur. Pound's comment, then, that one found "it necessary to supplement [Hulme's theories] with discussions of poetry carried on elsewhere" seemingly reveals much about Imagism's vortextual origins. From Hulme, Pound gained a concept of the image that, when combined with other poetic applications of imagery, provided him with a Doctrine of the Image. Aware that the Hulmean basis of that Doctrine existed primarily on a theoretical level, though, Pound also chose to consolidate his years of study and many literary influences into a list of Imagist tenets that would complement that theoretical doctrine by serving as a basis for proper literary technique.

Glenn Hughes also notes that, even though the basis of many of Pound's ideas of the Image may have originated with Hulme or at his meetings, Hulme's theories

remained scattered and unpublished until well after Imagism had established itself as an independent force in poetry. He states:

Hulme wrote a great deal, but most of his writing was in the form of notes, intended solely for his own reference. In only a few instances were the notes expanded into fairly complete essays. After his death this mass of material was turned over to Herbert Read” who “succeeded in editing the bulk of these notes,” which then “appeared in a single volume in 1924, with the title, *Speculations* (10, 13).”

Due to the progressive development and publication of Hulme’s theories one cannot accurately project just how familiar Pound was with them or how much they affected his concept of the Image. That Pound would have been exposed to only fragments of Hulme’s theories as they evolved could also explain his use of the term “Image” to refer to both the poetic element best suited to produce objective meaning in a poem and the complete poetic structure that utilizes each of its formal elements to produce meaning. Imagist scholar, J.B. Harmer seems to offer the most accurate assessment of the impact Hulme’s theories had on Pound’s Imagism, therefore, when he asserts, “While Hulme may have had little direct effect on Pound’s theories, it could be that his impact on Pound’s imagination was far greater than the American could allow himself to realize” (35).

To claim that Hulme offered no technical application of his poetic theories would not be entirely fair. A more accurate statement would be that Hulme offered only very limited examples of his theories at work. The fact is that Hulme’s poetic oeuvre consisted of only five poems. Moreover, Pound was not only familiar with those poems, but also

believed they were good enough to merit inclusion in his own collection, *Ripostes*. Under the title of “The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme,” Pound offered a small “Prefatory Note” and the full text of Hulme’s five poems. In those pieces, one can identify several of the techniques Pound would also promote through Imagism. Specifically, Hulme relies heavily on concrete nouns and analogies for his content while also employing—for the most—the diction of common speech. Additionally, Hulme employs rhythmic patterns that, despite being inconsistent in their effects, come close to approximating Pound’s concept of the “musical phrase.” Take, for instance, the rhythms of “The Embankment”:

(The fantasia of a fallen gentleman on a cold, bitter night.)

Once, in finesse of fiddles found I ecstasy,
In the 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. (63)

Notably, Hulme refrains from following any standardized metrical form, preferring, instead, to utilize alliteration and a rather content-specific end rhyme that emphasizes the final analogy around which the poem revolves. Hulme obviously subverts portions of his diction to rhythmic effects, and his musical sequence does not embody its subjects as much as draw the reader’s attention to them. Still, one can see why Pound would want to publish and associate his work and nascent Imagist program with these poems based on their use concrete nouns, common diction, and individualized rhythms.

Despite the similarities between Hulme’s poems and Pound’s Imagist agenda and Pound’s acknowledgment of Hulme as an “original or pre-” Imagist (*Selected Letters*

213), Pound generally deemphasized the literary philosopher's role as a progenitor of Imagism. Some of that backlash, however, may have been spurred by Flint's 1915 article, "The History of Imagism." Flint wrote that article after Pound disassociated himself from the group of poets then publishing as Imagists, and, in that article, Flint deliberately devalues Pound's role in the creation of Imagism by, instead, recognizing Hulme and the little-known poet, Edward Storer" as its originators (70-71).⁷

Concerning his own work and the Imagist movement, Pound had always prioritized the work and influence of Ford over that of Hulme. Following Flint's article, though, Pound began to minimize Hulme's place in the Imagist pantheon with greater vehemence. In a 1937 letter to Michael Roberts, Pound clearly outlines who he believes initiated his movement toward Imagism:

Dear R: What I am trying to get into yr. head is the *proportion* of ole T.E.H. to London 1908 to 1910, '12, '14.

Hulme wasn't hated and loathed by the ole bastards, because they didn't know he was there. The man who did the *work* for English writing was Ford Madox Hueffer (now Ford). The old crusted lice and advocates of corpse language knew that *The English Review* existed. You ought for the sake of perspective to read through the whole of *The Eng. Rev.* files for the first two years. I mean for as long as Ford had it. Until you have done that, you will be prey to superstition. You won't know what *was*, and you

⁷ In a letter to Amy Lowell dated January 24, 1915, Flint makes clear his intentions for his "History of Imagism" when he writes:

There is nothing new in Imagisme: and if I write its history it will be seen that Ezra's part in it was very little more than the – very American – one of advertising agent: and he has done his work so badly, that everyone here takes the thing as a silly joke. If I do write this article I will send it you to print in some review or other [in America]. (*Imagist Dialogues* 44)

will consider that Hulme or *any* of the chaps of my generation invented the moon and preceded Galileo's use of the telescope. (*Selected Letters* 296)

Even though Pound wrote that letter twenty-five years after his first public reference to Imagism, it suggests that he always valued the technical components that he gleaned from Ford more than the mysteriously undefined and, seemingly, perpetually evolving Doctrine of the Image that originated in Hulme's theories. Certainly, in practice, Pound's early Imagism, which attempted to utilize each formal element of a poem to give shape to its subject, depended upon the Imagist tenets at least as much as imagery because, in such a poetic scenario, the image—while being the most effective producer of complex meaning—is just one of several elements working toward that end. Thus, what Pound essentially seems to have gathered from Hulme is that poetic imagery fights abstraction while also generating meaning. Pound would then emphasize imagery in that name of his movement for those reasons, but his early concept of the poetic Image—circa 1912-1913—worked to apply imagery's poetic attributes to every formal element of a poem and accomplished much of that through the application of the Imagist tenets.

In addition to influencing the Imagist concept of the musical phrase, Symbolism also seems gestured toward in Pound's comments regarding the origins and functionality of the Doctrine of the Image. In a letter to René Taupin in which he outlines several of the influences in the genealogy of Imagism, Pound begins by awkwardly admitting, “Symbole?? Je n'ai jamais lu ‘les idées des symbolists’ sur ce subject [“Symbol?? I've never read ‘the symbolists’ ideas’ on this subject”].” Yet, later in that same letter, Pound acknowledges, “Mais ‘vouï’: l'idée de l'image doit ‘quelque chose’ aux symbolists

français via T. E. Hulme, via Yeats [sic] < Symons < Mallarmé. Comme le pain doit quelque chose au vanneur de blé, etc. [But “yes”: the idea of the image owes ‘something’ to the french symbolists via T.E. Hulme, via Yeats [sic] < Symons < Mallarmé. In the same way bread owes something to winnower of wheat, etc.]” (*Selected Letters* 218). In that quote, Pound again identifies Hulme not only as an influence on Imagism, but also as conduit for other influences, and, in doing so, draws attention to the Vortextual origins of both the Doctrine and Imagism. More importantly, though, Pound also identifies Yeats’ particular version of Symbolism as an influence on Imagism.

Interestingly, in the same article where Pound touts Ford as the person in England with whom he would most like to discuss poetry, he also finds “Yeats the only poet worthy of serious study.” Following that statement, Pound describes Yeats’ Symbolist tendencies. He writes, “Mr. Yeats has been subjective; believes in the glamour and associations which hang near the words. ‘Works of art beget works of art.’ He has much in common with the French symbolists (“Status Rerum” 123). Recall that when Pound discussed Ford, he aligned him with literary objectivity. In identifying Yeats’ work as subjective, then, Pound provides the source of the second type of “thing” that the first Imagist tenet urges one to treat directly. Moreover, by correlating Symbolism with subjectivity via Yeats, Pound also indirectly identifies how an Imagist’s images can remain direct and objective while also radiating with associational meaning.

In making the things—the imagery—of their poems into symbols, Symbolists essentially substitute the literal meaning or material referent of a word with an associational meaning or thing. Hugh Kenner elaborates on this aspect of Symbolist poetics nicely, when he explains:

A language is simply an assortment of words, and a set of rules for combining them. Mallarmé and Valéry [...] felt words as part of that echoing intricacy, Language, which permeates our minds and obeys not the laws of *things* but its own laws, which has an organism's power to mutate and adapt and survive, and exacts obligations from us because no heritage is more precious. The things against which its words brush are virtually extraneous to its integrity. (*The Pound Era* 123)

Pound did not care for that Symbolist form of indirect representation, however, believing that it used language both inefficiently and imprecisely. Instead, he sought to employ a type of imagery that offered a direct presentation of a thing while also accessing and utilizing its associational contexts. Through such a system—or doctrine—the Imagists could maximize the meaning-producing potential of their words by simultaneously accessing the denotative and connotative properties of their words, which, then, also allows their poems to produce meaning for readers even if they do not know, understand, or misinterpret any of those words.

In his 1914 essay, “Vorticism,” Pound speaks directly to the difference between Imagist and the Symbolist use of images by writing:

Imagisme is not Symbolism. The symbolists dealt in “association,” that is, in a sort of allusion, almost of allegory. They degraded the symbol to the status of the word. They made it a form of metonymy. One can be grossly “symbolic,” for example, by using the term “cross” to mean “trial.” The symbolist's *symbols* have a fixed value, like numbers in arithmetic, like 1,

2, and 7. The imagiste's images have a variable significance, like the signs a , b , and x in algebra. (281)

Pound's Image, therefore, as opposed to the symbol, opens its self to variable levels of significance; it presents definitive meaning while also attracting associational meaning. Pound's eventual prioritization of those dual-natured images would lead him to transition Imagism into Vorticism and declare, "The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, ideas are constantly rushing" (289). In his early Imagist program, however, Pound wanted to combine equal portions of imagery, diction, and rhythm to produce "complexes" of meaning.

In "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," Pound defines an Image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." Much like his use of the word "presentation," which appears in both that definition and the second Imagist tenet, Pound places great importance on the word "complex" but does not define it. Also like his use of "presentation," though, Pound does offer context clues as to its meaning. Following his definition of an Image, Pound acknowledges, "I use the term "complex" rather in the technical sense employed by the newer psychologists, such as Hart, though we might not agree absolutely in our application" (200). Scholars, such as Helen Carr, have taken up that lead and discovered that Bernard Hart first discussed his concept of the psychological "complex" in an article written for the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* in 1907 (541). In that article, Hart describes the subconscious mind as filled with thoughts and emotions upon which the conscious mind hovers. Those unconscious thoughts and emotions can merge into more powerful complexes that carry potential and

kinetic energies and attach themselves to specific concepts and perceptions within one's conscious mind. Consequently, any singular thought or image existing within one's mind may carry with it a multitude of unconscious mental and emotional associations—or complexes ("The Conception" 129-30).

Through his rhetoric-free employment of the formal attributes of a poem to materialize its subject matter, Pound attempted to create poems in which every element not only functioned as a complex by containing both potential and kinetic energies, but also unified to create a larger complex or poetic Image. In such a poetic configuration, the rhythms, diction, and imagery each manifest the objective meaning of the Ford's Impressionism as well as the subjective meanings of Yeats' Symbolism. Moreover, by relating those individual elements, the poetic Image allows them to reverberate against each other and, thereby, interlocks and amplifies its individual complexes into a sort of grand-unified poetic Image. To produce that type of Image, poets must first recognize the power of imagery to fight abstraction and locate primary and secondary meanings. Second, poets need to possess the technical sophistication to make each formal element of a poem function as an image before then arranging them so they interact with each other's production of meaning. Put another way, to create an Image, the Imagist poet needs to merge the Doctrine of the Image with the Imagist tenets.

Herbert Schneidau discusses Pound's concept of the Image as a complex, but, rather than relying on scientific terminology, offers a more "worldly" view that clearly points to its unique ability to both accumulate and maintain specific associations. Specifically, Schneidau equates the complex to "a businessman talk[ing] about his company's image, or a politician about his own" (27-28). From that perspective, Pound's

Image operates as an amalgamation of the intellectual and emotional associations connected with any given entity or the items that construct it. Further, those associations exist within the past and the present because they accumulate and evolve over time. Yet, the connotations and denotations of an Image or any of its constituent parts also interact with each other to imbue that Image with both a historical and trans-temporal relevance; they exist both within and across time. The presence of those intellectual and emotional complexes allows an Image to produce consistently relevant meaning. Moreover, the presence of those complexes breathes life into great works of art; they create, what Pound refers to as “that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art” (“A Few Don’ts” 200).

By filtering and combining his technical and theoretical influences into the Imagist tenets and Doctrine of the Image, Pound essentially created a vortex of—what he believed constituted—the most efficient methods for creating meaning in a poem. In merging those two elements, which already served as consolidated warehouses of poetic technique, into a single poetic structure or “Image,” Pound generated the multiple and simultaneous levels of direct and associational meaning that he referred to as “complexes.” Through his method of “presentation” in which each of a poem’s formal elements operate as an image by providing a sensorially perceivable embodiment of their subject, Pound also made certain that the complex of meaning produced by the interaction of those images focuses on a single instant or instance of time. Thus, even though the subject of a poetic Image remains static, the intellectual and emotional complex it presents applies to its specific timeframe as well as any other associational

context in which a reader might place it. That particular relationship between objective “thing” and “subjective” interpretation, then, is the basis of Pound’s famous declaration that “An ‘Image’ is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time” (200).

By neither specifying the degree of influence Hulme had upon his Doctrine of the Image nor offering any definition of that doctrine, Pound left a significant portion of his Imagist agenda open to interpretation. That he uses the term “image” to refer to both standard imagery and a specific poetic arrangement also adds to the considerable range of understandings and explanations of that Image. Yet, Pound’s application of the word “image” to both a poetic element and a type of poem could imply that he wanted to apply the features of that element to the entire formal structure of a poem. In such a poetic scenario, each formal element of the poem would work in unison to materialize a common subject. Certainly, the functionality of the Imagist tenets, the characteristics of the influences on which Pound does comment, and his elaborations on Imagist practice in “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste” all support that understanding of his early Imagist program. By neither outlining the specifics of that particular poetic program nor defining his Doctrine of the Image, however, his Imagist program appears to consist of only a set of tenets designed to enact “technical hygiene” and a mysterious Doctrine of the Image that somehow prioritizes the role of imagery in a poem.

In retrospect, there are many reasons why Pound would choose to leave those aspects of Imagism open-ended. One of those reasons could be that it would allow him to develop his own understanding of the Image without contradicting himself. Another reason could be that it would mean that only he understood how an Image truly operated

and, therefore, would assure he maintained his role as leader of the Imagist movement. Yet another reason could be that it would add an air of mystery to Imagism that might pique the interest of the reading public. Regardless of whatever reason or reasons Pound had for not explaining every aspect of his Imagist movement and its poetic Image, the most far-reaching effect of that decision is the sheer variety of image types produced by the assembled Imagists as they attempted comprehend the functionality of both the Imagist tenets and the Doctrine of the Image.

Without fully understanding the Doctrine of the Image or how it merges with the Imagist tenets to create a poetic Image, the Imagists simply began experimenting with different ways of employing rhythm, diction, and imagery to concretize the subjects of their poetry. Through that experimentation, the Imagists produced a variety of images types than those accounted for in Pound's concept of Imagism. Yet, due to the Poundian focus of most Imagist scholarship and the general lack of historical context given to the progressive development of Imagism, scholars continue to promote Imagism as a historically stable method for producing a linguistically spare free-verse poetry that features visual imagery despite the lack of poems that actually meet that criteria. By, instead, acknowledging and delineating those diverse images types produced under the title of Imagism, the remainder of this dissertation will work to illustrate how Imagism—despite Pound's original intentions—actually functioned as a very elastic set of guidelines for achieving a type of poetic efficiency and craft that poets utilized in a, hitherto unrecognized, myriad of fashions.

Chapter II: “Getting to the ‘Whirlpoint’: H.D., Upward, and Pound’s Evolution of the Image”

Introduction:

Pound’s quest to “know more about poetry than any man living” by his thirtieth birthday led him through a series of literary sources and influences. By the time his first reference to “Les Imagistes” appeared at the end of his *Ripostes* in October 1912, Pound had already studied the theories and techniques of Ford Madox Ford, T. E. Hulme, W. B. Yeats, the troubadours, and the Symbolists, to name a few. In a series of essays, entitled “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris,” featured in the *New Age* from November 30, 1911 to February 15, 1912, Pound discusses several concepts that he gathered from those sources and would assimilate into the basis of his new poetic movement, Imagism. Yet, even with the seeds of Imagism present in those articles, Pound would not officially consolidate and publish them as the Imagist tenets and Doctrine of the Image until over a year later in March 1913. Over the course of that year, though, H.D. would also show Pound a few of her poems, and that interaction seems to have influenced Pound’s idea of Imagism and how its principles might coalesce and function in actual poems.

Following his meeting with H.D., Pound would take almost another full year to collect, edit, and then publish the first Imagist anthology, *Des Imagistes*, in February 1914. During that time, he authored another series of articles for *The New Freewoman* that appeared from October 15 to November 15, 1913 under the title of “The Serious Artist.” In those articles, Pound updates his theories from the “Osiris” essays by impressing the shape of his evolving concept of Imagism upon them. Concurrent with his writing of those articles, Pound also came under the influence of Allen Upward and his

affinity for Asian poetry. Through his own subsequent study and experiments with Asian poetics, Pound began to alter his concept of the poetic Image. Rather than a poem that avoids rhetoric and utilizes concrete nouns along with its other formal features to give shape to its subject, Pound's later version of the Image not only prioritizes the roll of concrete nouns in the presentation of its subject, but also depends upon the relationship between those nouns to generate meaning.

In tracing Pound's evolving concept of the Image through the additional influences of H.D. and Upward, this first section of this chapter identifies the role those authors played in the vortextual origins of Imagism and Pound's early and later versions of its poetic Image. By locating the early Image in Pound's poem "The Return" and the later Image in "A Fan-Piece for Her Imperial Lord," the second section then outlines the differences between those two types of Image while also delineating the types of imagery they engendered within Imagism. Through that analysis, this chapter also recognizes how Pound's decision to not define the Doctrine of the Image allowed him to redefine the Image as a Vortex without altering his original statements regarding the elements of Imagist practice. Finally, then, by acknowledging how Pound used his Imagist program to create two Image types, this chapter establishes that, despite any claims to the contrary, Imagism functioned as an amalgamation of influences and forms of imagery that coalesced in a variety of manners depending on the individual poet's familiarity with and relationship to the foundational elements of Imagist practice.

Section I: “H.D. and Upward: Two Poles of Imagist Precedent”

In his “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris” essays, Pound introduces, defines, and arranges his articles and their content according to the method of the “Luminous Detail.” Yet, rather than beginning that series by defining that method or specifically describing how it functions, Pound isolates how it differs from other trends in scholarship by participating in a tradition comprised of the best and most enduring of scholarly and artistic methods. Not one to be self-effacing without a purpose, Pound admits:

“When I [...] speak of a ‘New Method in Scholarship’, I do not imagine that I am speaking of a method by me discovered. I mean, merely, a method not of common practice, a method not yet clearly or consciously formulated, a method which has been intermittently used by all good scholars since the beginning of scholarship, the method of the Luminous Detail, a method most vigorously hostile to the prevailing mode of today – that is, the method of multitudinous detail, and to the method of yesterday, the method of sentiment and generalization. (21)

Even though Pound does not identify the Impressionists as responsible for the “method of multitudinous detail,” or the Romantics and Symbolists for “the method of sentiment and generalization” as he would in his later Imagist statements, those characterizations are specific enough that they leave little question as to whom they refer. More significantly, though, that rhetorical approach of definition-by-contrast allows Pound to differentiate his aesthetic beliefs and practices from those of his contemporaries while also simultaneously claiming a legitimacy for his own methods based on their adherence to a consistent historical standard. That Pound would use almost the exact same technique,

and make almost the exact same comparisons between Imagism and those other poetic movements, clearly positions the method of the Luminous Detail as a direct ancestor of Imagism.

After establishing the scholarly and historical context of the method of the Luminous Detail, Pound explains the attributes of the Luminous Detail itself. Over the course of the “Osiris” articles, Pound describes the Luminous Detail in a variety of ways, but one of the more interesting and telling, because it identifies the defining characteristics of the Luminous Detail while also alluding to the theory of language behind it, is when he references it as a fact. In existing as a fact, the Luminous Detail is an actuality; it is a confirmable thing, event, or occurrence. Yet, while the Luminous Detail exists within the realm of facts, it also distinguishes itself, in that:

Any fact may be ‘symptomatic’, but certain facts [i.e. Luminous Details] give one a sudden insight into circumjacent conditions, into their causes, their effects, into sequence, and law. [...] A few dozen facts of this nature give us intelligence of a period – a kind of intelligence not to be gathered from a great array of facts of the other sort. These facts are hard to find. They are swift and easy of transmission. They govern knowledge as the switchboard governs an electric circuit. (22-23)

Hugh Kenner succinctly paraphrases Pound’s further elaborations on the differences between the Luminous Detail and other facts by stating, “History is full of facts that tell us nothing we did not already know: in the year — a revolt against — was led by with the result that —. With perfect indifference these blanks will accommodate Egyptian, Greek, Roman, American names, telling us in no case anything arresting about

Egypt or Greece or Rome or America” (152). As opposed to the majority of facts that simply offer repetitive information regarding events and occurrences that unfold accord to similar patterns, then, the Luminous Detail marks a break in the pattern; it evidences a discovery. Rather than political history (at least at this point in his career), Pound focuses his interest on the arts, and the importance of the Luminous Detail in the arts lies in its capacity to provide directly illuminating information about the nature of man. Thus, like his later Image, Pound states that the poet “seeks out the Luminous Detail and presents it. He does not comment.” Exact and unalterable, the Luminous Detail “remains the permanent basis of psychology and metaphysics” because it presents a discovery and radiates with the significance of that discovery (23). It needs no explanation.

Interestingly, in the same way that the Luminous Detail seems to presage Pound’s poetic Image, the way Pound chooses to exemplify the method of the Luminous Details in his “Osiris” articles also appears to foreshadow his future anthological presentation of Imagism. For the material of the “Osiris” essays, Pound included his translations of “The Seafarer,” Guido Cavalcanti, and the troubadour poet Arnaut Daniel along with prose essays that discuss the attributes of Luminous Details. To explain his arrangement of those texts, Pound refers to them as pictures in an exhibit. He writes, “I have, if you will, hung my gallery, a gallery of photographs, of perhaps not very good photographs, but the best I can lay hold of” (23-24). In an article entitled, “The Luminous Details of a New Poetics,” Ellen Stauder expounds on Pound’s gallery metaphor by claiming, “[T]he series presents the reader with luminous details through the translations themselves but also through the arrangement of the whole and the relationship of its parts (23). She then writes:

Notably, the series is not made for single-point viewing; rather, Pound presents his readers with a view of contiguous poetic surfaces that display the activity of poetic making, creating the possibility of evaluation, transmission, and new creation. At this large-scale level of design, the “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris” series anticipates future major work, including *Gaudier-Brzeska* (1916) and *The Cantos* both of which are constructed from juxtaposed fragments of literary and other materials that display and test the activity of the poet-maker through their arrangement.

(24-25)

In her analysis of the “Osiris” articles, Stauder cleverly recognizes not only how Pound’s individual translations act as Luminous Details, but also how, when thoughtfully and deliberately arranged together, they enact the method of the Luminous Detail. Stauder also observes how that type of arrangement “anticipates” Pound’s more-significant later work. Significantly, though, before producing those later works, Pound would first translate his concept and employment of the Luminous Detail into his Imagist movement. In Imagism, each poem also acts as an individual poetic Image, but, when Pound purposefully arranges them in the poetic gallery of *Des Imagistes*, they come together to define a literary movement that consists of variant image types arranged to create complex and variable meaning.

Pound chose the title “I Gather the Limbs of Osiris” for his essays because, as Kenner explains:

[W]e may learn from the *Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, it was Osiris, “the male productive principle in nature,” who became when

his scattered limbs had been regathered the god of the dead (of Homer, the Seafarer poet, of Arnaut Daniel), but also “the source . . . of renewed life. The Greeks identified him with Dionysius.” The limbs’ reunited energies assert themselves; Pound’s [articles], by a young man at the threshold of great renovations, [were] about patterned energies.” (150)

Based simply on their title, then, the “Osiris” articles illustrate that Pound was attempting to establish a “New Method in Scholarship” that consisted for merging several influential sources into a single complex source of information. That he felt the need to insert prose essays as connective sinews between those literary precedents, though, suggests that he did not yet fully trust his abilities to arrange those texts so that their importance and relationships would be self-evident. Thus, in the Luminous Details of the “Osiris” series and Pound’s arrangement of them, one finds the nascent origins of both the poetic Image and the foundational principles of Imagist practice before they crystalized as such.

Whereas Ford, Yeats, Hulme, the troubadours, and the Symbolists, all played a role in the development of Pound’s Imagist program, one could characterize them as pre-Imagist influences. Furthermore, due to Pound’s changing perspectives and lack of specificity regarding such matters, one cannot be certain as to the degree of influence any of those sources had upon his formation of Imagism or exactly how he melded them into the basis of that poetic program. Therefore, even though she enters the narrative after Pound had already begun referring to the “Imagistes,” another person frequently cited as a formative influence upon him and Imagism is Hilda Doolittle or the poet, “H.D.”

As the story goes, Pound met H.D. in 1901 at a Halloween party in Philadelphia. The two developed a friendship that eventually turned amatory and they were engaged by

the winter of 1907. That engagement did not last long, however, as Pound moved to Europe in March 1908. H.D. would join Pound in London in 1911, and, although they always shared an intimate connection, they would not become lovers again. H.D. did embark on her own literary career, though, and began seriously writing poetry. Pound soon introduced her to another young poet, Richard Aldington, and the three met weekly to discuss literature. At one of those meetings in September or October 1912, H.D. showed Pound one of her poems. In the memoir of her relationship with Pound—entitled *End to Torment*—she recalls that he read over that poem and remarked, ““But Dryad...this is poetry.”” He then made some edits with his pencil, told her ““Hermes of the Ways’ is a good title. I’ll send this to Harriet Monroe at *Poetry*,”” and signed it “H.D., ‘Imagiste’” (18). He then mailed that poem along with two others by H.D. to Monroe in October 1912 and they appeared in her January 1913 issue.

In those poems that Pound sent to Monroe, H.D. employs several techniques that successfully implement many of the literary strategies outlined by the Imagist tenets and Doctrine of the Image. For example, the first two stanzas of “Hermes of the Ways,” read:

The hard sand breaks,
And the grains of it
Are clear as wine.

Far off over the leagues of it,
The wind,
Playing on the wide shore,
Piles little ridges,
And the great waves
Break over it. (118)

In those lines, H.D. not only presents her subjects directly, but also uses only the words necessary to achieve that end. She does not paint an intricate portrait of her speaker walking along a shoreline, nor does she comment upon or interpret that scene. Rather, she

provides only the concrete particulars of the experience and arranges them into clearly progressive sentences. Additionally, her choice of words and the rhythm created by her line breaks also evoke the poem's subject. The predominant single-syllable words in the first stanza maintain their solidarity but also join to form something larger like the sand grains on the beach of which she writes. Those single-syllable words then start to give way to two-syllable words in the second stanza just as the wind piles those individual sand grains into ridges while waves break over them. Cyrena Pondrom also argues that the words of those two stanzas "match sound to scene almost to the point of being onomatopoeic. She writes, "Consider: it/ wine/ it/ wind/ wide/ piles/ little/ ridges/ it: the i's squeak like sand under foot; the single syllable words keep time like footsteps" (87). Thus, by utilizing concrete nouns, as well as an economic use of language, phrasings that approximate natural speech, and rhythms that embody their subjects, H.D.'s early poems exemplified many of Pound's early or pre-Imagist theories at work.

The extent to which H.D.'s early poems influenced Pound and his Imagist tenets is a point of controversy among scholars. On the one hand, scholars such as Hugh Kenner suggest that H.D. "wrote 'Hermes of the Ways' as if she understood" Pound's Imagism innately, and, in doing so, implicitly deny that H.D. may have played a role in Pound's formation of that poetic movement (185). Scholars like Pondrom, on the other hand, argue that H.D.'s poems entirely predated Pound's concept of Imagist practice and acted as "models which enabled the precepts of Imagism to be defined" (74). A third group, consisting of scholars such as Helen Carr, however, seem to meet Kenner and Pondrom in the middle, and, in doing so, provide the most even-handed interpretation of the

relationship between H.D.'s poems and Pound's theories by acknowledging how those two poets collaborated to make H.D.'s poems embody Imagist principles.

Specifically, Carr draws attention to the way Pound's editing of H.D.'s early poems helped her find the proper poetic form for her natural poetic faculties. Carr notes that in H.D.'s then-unpublished 1955 memoir,⁸ "Compassionate Friendship," she retells the story of Pound editing her poems. Carr quotes H.D. explaining that "'Hermes of the Ways' was 'a rough transcription of a short poem from the Greek Anthology', which Pound 'pruned ... into *vers libre*'. 'It was one of those early poems that Ezra scrutinized and with a flourish of a large lead pencil, in the British Museum tea-room, deleted and trimmed or pruned or chiseled into the then unfamiliar free verse.'" Carr then asserts, "[H]er diary for that summer shows that H.D. was already writing with the immediacy and intensity that characterised her poetry, though without yet being able to find a form. Pound's 'Cut this out, shorten this line' showed her what she needed." Carr also notes that while Pound could not have invented Imagism after looking at H.D.'s poems because he had used the term in print prior to that occasion, the product that emerged from his collaboration with her did precipitate many specifics of his Imagist program (491).

Based on Carr's understanding of the relationship between H.D.'s poems and Pound's Imagism, one can see that although Pound had already envisioned pioneering a new poetic movement entitled "Imagisme" and had accumulated many of the principles he would base it upon, H.D.'s work provided examples of how one could apply those principles in actual poems. Moreover, with aid of Pound's edits, the objectivity, concrete nouns, and naturalized diction of H.D.'s poetry also gained vers-libre rhythms that

⁸ While still unpublished at the time Carr's book, *The Verse Revolutionaries*, was published in 2009, "Compassionate Friendship" was grouped with H.D.'s "Magic Mirror," and "Thorn Thicket" in a small volume and published ELS Editions in January 2012.

accentuated her laconicism and engaged the music of her words to evoke the poem's meaning. By merging all those elements together, then, H.D.'s poems enacted Pound's concept of "presentation" and set a precedent for Imagist poetry.

In discussing the differences between H.D.'s first Imagist poems and those Pound and Aldington wrote at the same time, though, Pondrom points out that, whereas Pound and Aldington's poems frequently allow abstractions to precede their images, in H.D.'s work "the image, whether object or act, precedes any statement of mood and gives rise to the reader's apprehension of it." Pondrom comments on the importance of that distinction, stating:

Because the meaning of the event or image is not constrained by prior abstractions, the poem's interpretations are multiple and paradoxical. In some ways the poem's images and actions are much like a non-literary event about which we have similar amounts of information. Our experience of the poem is intensified because we identify the emotion by a reflective awareness of our response to our own imaginative enactment of the scene." (86)

Pondrom's description of H.D.'s reliance on images over abstractions reads similarly to Pound's recommendation in "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" to not mix abstractions with the concrete. That similarity suggests H.D.'s original three poems may have not only illustrated many of Pound's theories in action, but also equipped him with a method to make Imagism more direct and objective than Ford's Impressionism. Pondrom's assessment of H.D.'s early poems also intimates that H.D.'s use of imagery in those poems allowed her images to generate a complex meaning out of their own specific

materiality. Thus, along with exhibiting many of the technical components that Pound would channel into or base his Imagist agenda upon, H.D.'s poems may have also offered him illustrations of his early concept of the "Doctrine of the Image" at work.

When Pound wrote to Harriet Monroe about H.D., he described her poetry as "Objective – no slither; direct – no excessive use of adjectives, no metaphors that won't permit examination" (*Selected Letters* 11). The specific wording of that description is important because, as Carr observes, "objective" was one of Ford's "watchwords" and "direct" was one of T. E. Hulme's (492). Obviously, Ford served as the major influence upon Pound's Imagist tenets, but Hulme was responsible for the understanding of the Image that led Pound to title Imagism after it and reference the Doctrine of the Image as one of its major components. One can reasonably assume that, having already referenced Imagism in print and associated it with Hulme, Pound already had a concept of Imagism in mind before reading H.D.'s poems, and that it relied heavily on imagery. Hence, with some minor changes to the chronology and details, one can accept Michael Levenson's assessment that "Pound saw some work of H.D., coined the name "*Imagiste*" and proceeded to formulate a doctrine to justify what she had written by instinct. But it would be a mistake to see this large body of [Imagist] material as simply *ex post facto* rationalization" (153).

Rather than viewing H.D. as the sole source of Pound's Imagist program, then, one should instead recognize that Pound had been long at work identifying the active elements in poetry and devising methods to employ them. Even though he may have named the movement before he clearly outlined which of those practices would define it, Pound had begun the process of consolidating the results of his poetic studies with the

techniques he gleaned from his literary influences to create a poetic program. It seems that what H.D.'s poems did for the formation of Imagism, then, was anticipate several of Pound's theories and show him how they could function in poetry. Therefore, when Levenson also claims that "English Modernism divided between Fordian and Hulmean principles" and "when Ford converged with Hulme, they converged upon [Pound]" (104-05), he not only identifies the sources behind Pound's Imagist tenets and Doctrine of the Image, but also the two elements that merged in H.D.'s poetry to furnish Pound's inchoate movement with a functional poetic precedent.

Following Pound's interaction with H.D. and her Imagist poems, he began working on another series of essays that would update his theories on poetry. Whereas the "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris" series offers Pound's understanding of poetry prior to Imagism, his new series, "The Serious Artist," illustrates how his concept of poetry evolved after the publication of "Imagisme" and "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" in March 1913. More importantly, though, "The Serious Artist" articles represent the last stages of Pound's early Image before it shifted completely into his later Image or the Image-as-Vortex. Specifically, in "The Serious Artist," Pound continues to argue that through proper technique one can present literary objects in such a way that readers can experience them directly. Additionally, though, Pound also begins to discuss in those articles the structure of the collapsed metaphor that he would refer to as super-positioning and correlate with the Image-as-Vortex. Thus, in "The Serious Artist," one finds Pound at the precise moment when he began to comprehend and articulate the method for transitioning his Image from a rhetoric-free employment of the formal attributes of a

poem to a more hyper-concise version of that original Image that prioritizes the role of and relationship between its linguistic or “signifying imagery.”

In “The Serious Artist,” Pound still argues for a poetry that relies on the presentation and arrangement of poetic objects to create meaning. Rather than just urging poets to seek out and present Luminous Details, however, he now offers specific techniques for accomplishing that task. In fact, Pound now believes so completely in his definition of good art as that which “bears true witness” and “is most precise” (44), that he considers it the basis of ethics. He reasons, “It is obvious that ethics are based on the nature of man,” and that “we must know what sort of animal man is, before we can contrive his maximum happiness, or before we can decide what percentage of that happiness he can have without causing too great a percentage of unhappiness to those about him (41). Thus, in being precise and bearing “true witness,” the arts function as “a science, just as chemistry is a science. Their subject is man, mankind and the individual,” and, as such, provide “a great percentage of the lasting and unassailable data regarding the nature of man, or immaterial man, of man considered as a thinking and sentient creature” (42). Based on that logic, Pound further concludes that bad art, which he defines as “inaccurate” and that which “makes false reports,” is immoral. He claims:

If an artist falsifies his report as to the nature of man, as to his own nature, as the nature of his ideal of the perfect, as to the nature of his ideal of this, that or the other, [...] then that artist lies. If he lies out of a deliberate will to lie, if he lies out of carelessness, out of laziness, out of cowardice, out of any sort of negligence whatsoever, he nevertheless lies and he should be punished or despised in proportion to his offence. (43-44)

Using the elements of one's poem to present specific objects in a precise manner, therefore, not only provides the basis of good poetry (and all art for that matter), but it also allows the artist to act morally by providing accurate and factual information regarding the nature of mankind.

To continue his comparison of art to science, Pound again turns to the direct presentation of specific objects as the means for combating the immorality of bad art. He states that, just as in medicine, "in the arts of poetry and literature, there is the art of diagnosis and the art of cure. They call one the cult of ugliness and the other the cult of beauty" (45). While he does not offer many details about the cult of ugliness, he does list such artists as Villon, Baudelaire, Corbière, Beardsley and Flaubert as belonging to it. What he does expound upon, however, is that "[t]he cult of beauty is the hygiene," and that hygiene consists of presenting specifically locatable objects that radiate significance without explanation or commentary. Pound argues:

Beauty in art reminds one what is worth while. I am not now speaking of shams. I mean beauty, not slither, not sentimentalizing about beauty, not telling people that beauty is the proper and respectable thing. I mean beauty. You don't argue about an April wind, you feel bucked up when you meet it. You feel bucked up when you come on a swift moving thought in Plato or a fine line in a statue. (45)

Despite substituting "beauty" for "Image," Pound's language in that quote echoes his Imagist tenets and several of their sources: The no "slither," no "sentimentalizing" point immediately to H.D. and Ford, and the statement that one does not "argue about an April wind" is just an elaborate and case-specific version of "direct treatment of the 'thing.'"

By equating beauty with both hygiene and the bare objects that hygiene emphasizes, however, Pound does establish that even though the Imagist tenets and Doctrine of the Image exist as separate entities within the Imagist program, they must unite within Imagist practice to create an Image.

Following his alignment of poetic hygiene with beauty, Pound further justifies his reliance on the presentation of objects by explaining their role within a language whose words originally worked in a pattern of direct signification. For Pound, language evolved along with the human species. He posits:

In the beginning simple words were enough: Food; water; fire. Both prose and poetry are but an extension of language. Man desires to communicate with his fellows. He desires an ever increasingly complicated communication. Gesture serves up to a point. Symbols may serve. When you desire something not present to the eye or when you desire to communicate ideas, you must have recourse to speech. Gradually you wish to communicate something less bare and ambiguous than ideas. You wish to communicate an idea and its modifications, an idea and a crowd of its effects, atmospheres, contradictions. You wish to question whether a certain formula works in every case, or in what per cent of cases, etc. (50-51)

Pound believes, then, that in the basic or earliest form of language words still hovered close to their immediately intended meaning. Man acted and interacted upon a limited amount of knowledge and, therefore, topics of conversation remained limited as well. If one said or wrote “fire,” the meaning of that word was obvious to anyone who read or

heard it. Words did not yet contain symbolic or multiple levels of associative meaning. As such, words operated according to a rather direct process of signification; they remained close to their denotative meaning. As education and knowledge grew, though, ideas became more complex, and language struggled to contain those thoughts. Eventually, words contained such a diverse and multilayered amount of possible meaning and ideas became so complex that one began to use abstractions as a means to capture and convey the vast amount of possible meanings and things that composed an idea. Thus, to combat language's natural progression toward abstraction, Pound proposes that poets identify, select, and arrange their words so they contain their original specificity as concrete nouns while also acknowledging the contexts and associational meanings they accumulate over time.

Much like his development of the Imagist tenets, Pound begins his discussion of the techniques needed for joining poetic form and content by focusing on the rhythm or music of one's words. Before actually discussing it as a poetic technique, though, Pound describes the original transitive relationship that occurs within the spoken word wherein its sound and emotional content unite to produce a shared meaning. He writes:

You wish to communicate an idea and its concomitant emotions, or an emotion and its concomitant ideas, or a sensation and its derivative emotions, or an impression that is emotive, etc., etc., etc. You begin with the yeowl and the bark, and you develop into the dance and into music, and into music with words, and finally into words with music, and finally into words with a vague adumbration of music, words suggestive of music, words measured, or words in a rhythm that preserves some

accurate trait of the emotive impression, or of the sheer character of the fostering or parental emotion. (51)

After outlining the process by which sound breeds content so that content can then breed sound, Pound directly translates it into a poetic technique by stating:

When this rhythm, or when the vowel and consonantal melody or sequence seems truly to bear the trace of emotion which the poem (for we have at last come to the poem) is intended to communicate, we say that this part of the work is good. And 'this part of the work' is by now 'technique'. That 'dry, dull, pedantic' technique, that all bad artists rail against. It is only a part of technique, it is rhythm, cadence, and the arrangement of sounds. (51)

For Pound, then, one of the primary means for poets to utilize their poems' form so that it deliberately participates in and gives shape to its content, is by selecting and arranging words so their sound values resonate with their progenitive emotions.

Having gestured toward the theory behind the Imagist principle of the "musical phrase," Pound next provides a succinct overview of the prose techniques that underlie the remaining two Imagist tenets of "us[ing] no word that does not contribute to the presentation" and "[d]irect treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective" when he contends:

Also the 'prose', the words and their sense must be such as fit the emotion. Or, from the other side, ideas, or fragments of ideas, the emotion and concomitant emotions of this 'Intellectual and Emotional Complex' (for we have come to the intellectual and emotional complex) must be in

harmony, they must form an organism, they must be an oak sprung from an acorn. (51)

In that quote, Pound does not explicitly name the practice of using a poem's diction and imagery—along with its rhythms—to provide poetically material manifestations of their subjects as Imagism. Nor does he refer to its product as an Image. Yet, his statement that “the words [of a poem] and their sense must be such as fit the emotion” and his reference to the “Intellectual and Emotional Complex” make it obvious that his comments simply restate and expand upon the techniques he consolidated within the Imagist tenets.

Moreover, in highlighting that the elements of an Image must function in “harmony” and that, in doing so, create “an oak sprung from an acorn,” Pound also subtly, but clearly, delineates that, in operating as the sum of its parts, his concept of the Image works to concentrate multiple levels of meaning into a spare poetic structure.

Despite not linking “The Serious Artist” to Imagism directly, the similarities between the techniques and theories he espouses in those articles and those of his Imagist agenda are obvious. Further, while Pound continues to prioritize and elucidate the attributes and functionality of his original concept of the Image in those essays, he does shed some light on the poetic structure that would distinguish his later Image from his earlier one. As he is prone to do, Pound places that poetic technique within a well-established poetic tradition. Specifically, he cites Aristotle as the authority who “will tell you that ‘The apt use of metaphor, being as it is, the swift perception of relations, is the true hall-mark of genius’. That abundance, that readiness of the figure is indeed one of the surest proofs that the mind is upborne upon the emotional surge” (52). Within the context of the entire series of “The Serious Artist,” one could overlook that recognition

by Pound that the metaphor and its “swift perception of relations” stand as “the true hallmark of genius.” One could also overlook that, in qualifying the metaphor as “one of the surest proofs that the mind is upborne upon the emotional surge, Pound essentially equates it to the other Imagist techniques that work to materialize the intellectual and emotional content of their poems as well. Thus, based on those essays’ temporal proximity to Imagism and Pound’s, fairly obvious, restatements of its principles within them, Pound’s comment regarding the metaphor demonstrates that, even if he had not yet formally included it as a poetic technique operating within the Imagist system, it certainly was acting as a satellite to by late 1913.

After quoting Aristotle, however, Pound immediately qualifies the philosopher’s statement on metaphors by explaining, “By ‘apt use’, I should say it were well to understand, a swiftness, almost a violence, and certainly a vividness. This does not mean elaboration and complication” (52). Pound, therefore, neither champions all types of metaphor nor places them within a recognizable distance to Imagism. Instead, he recommends only a hyper-concise juxtaposition of poetic objects that resists commentary and exploration. Notably, once he fully transitioned his concept of the early Image into the Image-as-Vortex, he cited a similar type of metaphor to the one he recommends in “The Serious Artist” as the basic structure of that later Image. Specifically, in an essay published in *The Fortnightly Review* on September 1, 1914 entitled, “Vorticism,” Pound declares, “The ‘one image poem’ is a form of super-position, that is to say, it is one idea on top of another” (286). To explain that poetic form, he compares it to a specific “*hokku*-like” poem to which he parenthetically adds the words “are like” to second line to illustrate how the poem operates as a metaphor or a collapsed simile with the “like” or

“as” removed. He then also offers his own poem, “In a Station of the Metro,” as an example. By providing that definition and those examples, Pound evolves his concept of the Image from one that employs all the formal elements of a poem in equal measure, to one that emphasizes the role of concrete nouns as well as the relationships between them. That Pound refers to that same metaphorical style and places it in obliquely Imagist context in “The Serious Artist” almost a year earlier, though, suggests that, even before he consciously associated super-positioning with the Image, his correlation of poetic beauty with technical hygiene tended to yield swift, almost violent metaphors.

Pound’s subtle or even inadvertent decision to align collapsed metaphors with Imagism in “The Serious Artist” series may have a lot to do with the fact that he also came under the influence of Allen Upward while composing those articles. In his book, *Ezra Pound: Poet: I: The Young Genius 1885-1920*, A. David Moody offers a concise but informative account of Upward’s life:

Allen Upward (1863-1926), English barrister, writer, scholar; political activist while practicing in Cardiff 1890-96; 1897 volunteer soldier in Greek army when it invaded Turkey; 1901 appointed Resident administering two provinces in Nigeria—back in England by 1908. Contributed to *New Age* and *New Freewoman*; wrote plays, romantic novels, poems; his two serious and original contributions to thinking about the origins and developments of religions and cultures, *The New Word* (1907), and *The Divine Mystery* (1913), went unnoticed by the institutions of scholarship. Took up school-teaching, Head Master of Inverness College 1916. Committed suicide 1926. (238)

From that description alone, one can understand why Pound might find himself drawn to such an enigmatic, peripatetic, and non-traditional thinker. To Upward's biography, though, Helen Carr adds, "In about 1900, [Upward] met the poet Lancelot Carrmer Byng, who introduced him to Chinese poetry and philosophy, which became one of his main passions; together they established a printing house which they called the Orient Press and launched a series of translations from the Chinese called 'The Wisdom of the East'" (603). Thus, along with being a world traveler, prolific writer, and philosopher, Upward was also an early convert to and promoter of Asian thought and aesthetics.

Upward's series of short poems titled, "Scented Leaves from a Chinese Jar" appeared in *Poetry* in September 1913 and immediately caught Pound's attention.⁹ In a letter to Dorothy Shakespear dated September 17, Pound tells her that he has already completed "two articles on the nature of poesy for the *Freewoman*" and that Upward's "Chinese things in 'Poetry' are worth the price of admission" (*Ezra Pound and Dorothy* 256). Apparently, Pound felt those poems were worth more than the price of admission, because on October 2 he wrote again to Dorothy to tell her that he had already returned from paying Upward a visit in person. During that visit, Upward acquainted Pound with Herbert Giles' *History of Chinese Literature*, and, immediately seizing upon it, Pound returned home and began writing his own adaptations of the more literal translations of the Chinese poems contained in that anthology. In fact, by October 7, Pound sent another missive to Dorothy in which he states, "There is *no* long poem in Chinese. They hold if a

⁹ In *Ezra Pound and the Appropriation of Chinese Poetry*, Ming Xie outlines that "Pound's earliest encounter with Chinese and Japanese Poetry seemed to be in early spring 1909, when he first met Laurence Binyon and attended his lectures on "Art & Thought in East & West" in March 1909. Xie also states, however, "It was not until 1913 that [Pound's] attention was drawn to Chinese poetry as it was translated in English. Allen Upward's 'Scented Leaves—From a Chinese Jar,' [...] w[as] among the first results of the Imagists' attempt to enlist the support and affirmation of Chinese poetry" (8-9).

man can't say what he wants to in 12 lines, he'd better leave it unsaid. THE period was 4th cent. B.C.-Chu Yüan, Imagiste - - did I tell you that before???" (267). Then, on November 21, Pound wrote Dorothy once more to notify her that he had already completed the "Chineze" poems he would include in *Des Imagistes* (276).¹⁰ According to the dates of and information relayed in those letters, it appears that Pound first noticed and became excited about the trait that Chinese poetry shared with and prioritized even more than his early Imagist program: concision. Moreover, Pound began composing "The Serious Artist" before meeting Upward, yet finished it after familiarizing himself with the poems in Giles' anthology but before finalizing his own versions of them. Such a sequence of events could explain, then, why Pound mentions those swift, almost violent metaphors in the penultimate section of "The Serious Artist" even though he still does not definitively align them with Imagist practice.

Along with offering Pound a concise poetic arrangement that emphasized concrete nouns and the relationships between them, Upward also seems to have provided him with a model methodology for synthesizing meaning out of the direct experience of concrete particulars. After returning from his visit to Upward, Pound also read the poet-philosopher's then-recent publication, *The Divine Mystery*. Notably, but not altogether coincidentally, Pound's review of that book appeared in the November 15, 1913 issue of *The New Freewoman*, which also happened to feature the last installment of "The Serious

¹⁰ Although Pound mentions meeting Mary Fenollosa in the same October 2, 1913 letter that he informs Dorothy he had visited Allen Upward (*Ezra Pound and Dorothy* 264), Fenollosa's work would not influence Pound's rewriting of Giles' translations. In the November 21, 1913 letter to Dorothy, Pound confirms that he had finished "Them Chineze [poems]" (276). He did not report having received any of Fenollosa's work, however, until, in a December 19, 1913 letter to William Carlos Williams, he states, "I've all old Fenollosa's treasures in mss" (*Selected Letters* 27). Yet, once Pound received Fenollosa's work, he began by translating the late professor's work on Japanese Noh drama. Not until a November 14, 1914 letter to his parents (almost a full year after he finished the Chinese poems that would appear in *Des Imagistes*, and nine months after the publication of that anthology) did Pound finally acknowledge that he had "busted in Fenollosa's chinese notes - (not Japanese) & found some fine stuff" (qtd. in Carpenter 265).

Artist.” After quoting the opening three paragraphs of that book in his review, Pound raves:

So begins the most fascinating book on folk-lore that I have ever opened. I can scarcely call it a book on “folk-lore,” it is a consummation. It is a history of the development of human intelligence. It is not a mass of theories, it is this history told in a series of vivid and precise illustrations....It is not a philosophy, yet it manages to be an almost complete expression of philosophy. Mr. Upward has “resident” in Nigeria; he has had much at first hand, and in all his interpretation of documents he has never for an instant forgotten that documents are but the shadow of the fact. He has never forgotten the very real man inside the event of the history. (207)

In recognizing Upward’s ability to eschew abstract theory in favor of a “history told in a series of vivid and precise illustrations” that “manages to be an almost complete expression of philosophy,” Pound isolates and praise the qualities of Upward’s system that mimic his own development of Imagism and the poetic Image. Like Upward, Pound also began with the belief that certain facts—i.e. Luminous Details—“give one a sudden insight into circumjacent conditions, into their causes, their effects, into sequence, and law” and, thereby, “govern knowledge as the switchboard governs an electric circuit (“Osiris” 22, 23). Also like Upward, Pound wanted to present those facts “in a series of vivid and precise illustrations.”

Later in the review, Pound identifies the same trait in Upward as that which he would use to distinguish the Image-as-Vortex from the early Image. Specifically, Pound

writes of Upward, “This author is a focus, that is to say he has a sense of major relations. The enlightenments of our era have come to him. He has seen how the things “put together” (208). By attributing to Upward the ability to perceive the relations between things, Pound, essentially, aligns him with the definition of genius that he attributed to Aristotle in the installment of “The Serious Artist” featured in the previous issue of *The New Freewoman*. Through that implicit comparison, though, Pound also seems to point toward the relationship between Upward, Imagism, and metaphors.

A few paragraphs later, however, Pound also compares himself with Upward as someone capable of recognizing the similarities between disparate objects or facts. He maintains, “I do not write this as a specialist; but judging by those points where Mr. Upward’s *specialité* coincides with my own, I should say that he was[sic] led a scholarship not only wide but precise. He shows remarkable powers of synthesis” (208). By then correlating himself with Upward and his “powers of synthesis,” Pound signals his own growing awareness that both Imagism and its Images rely on the associative threads one establishes between their formative elements as much as they do on those elements themselves. Yet, in focusing his comparison on the “powers of synthesis” rather than on the synthesized materials themselves, Pound appears to recognize the necessity of instituting a central consciousness to make those disparate materials cohere on a larger level. For Pound, the accomplishment of *The Divine Mystery* lays not so much in its content, as much as it does in Upward’s ability to merge that content into “an almost complete expression of philosophy.”

Upward did not just provide Pound with both large and small-scale models for presenting complex meaning through the arrangement of discrete entities, he also seems

to have provided an image for that process. Along with “Scented Leaves from a Chinese Jar” and *The Divine Mystery*, Pound also read and widely recommended Upward’s first book, *The New Word*. In that book, Upward again demonstrates an innate sympathy with Pound’s Imagist agenda by making comments such as, “When is the good not the good? When it is an abstract noun” (174), and “The idea is not the appearance of a thing already there, but rather the imagination of a thing not yet there. It is not the look of a thing, it is a looking forward to a thing” (57). Building from those concepts, Upward discusses the complex relationship between the intention and reception of ideas located in things in terms of a whirling “waterspout.” He writes:

A cloud is whirling downwards, and thrusting out its whirlpoint towards the sea, like a sucking mouth. The sea below whirls upwards, thrusting out its whirlpoint towards the cloud. The two ends meet, and the water swept up in the sea-whirl passes on into the cloud-whirl, and swirls up through it, as it were gain-saying it....

In the ideal waterspout, not only does the water swirl upwards through the cloud-whirl, but the cloud swirls downwards through the sea-whirl. To make their passage through each other easier for the trained mind to follow, let us change the water into air, and the cloud into ether.

The ideal waterspout is not yet complete. The upper half must unfold like a fan, only it unfolds all around like a flower-cup; and it does not leave the cup empty, so that this flower is like a chrysanthemum. At the same time the lower half has unfolded in the same way, till there are two chrysanthemums back to back. In one the air is whirling inward, and

the ether swirling outward; in the other it is the ether that whirls, and the air the swirls.

It is the pure Shape, reached by the same road by which the mathematician reaches his flats and lines....

It is strength turning inside out. Such is the true beat of strength, the first beat, the one from which all other part, the beat which we feel in all things that come within our measure, in ourselves, and in our starry world, the beat that is called Action and Reaction. (197-98)

From that description, one can easily see how Pound could equate Upward's waterspout to his own concept of the Imagist program and its poetic Image. Pound's development of Imagism centered upon his ability to consolidate several threads of influence so he could then disseminate them to others and create a poetic movement. In that scenario, Pound acts as the "whirlpoint." In the Image itself, both its entire poetic structure and the images it features also act as storehouses of concentrated meaning that radiate contextually relevant levels of significance. In that scenario, the Image serves as a complex whirlpoint that consists of other smaller image-based whirlpoints.

After considering, and experimenting with, those "whirlspout" characteristics of Imagism and its Images for almost another year, Pound would rename and redefine his poetic movement and its product for them. In the article named after that new understanding, "Vorticism," he explains in very Upwardian terms:

The Image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing. In decency one can only call it a

VORTEX. And from this necessity came the name “vorticism.” *Nomina sunt consequentia rerum*, and never was that statement of Aquinas more true than in the case of the vorticist movement. (289)

Even though ideas rush “from,” “through,” and “into” the Vortex, Pound’s positioning of himself as the “whirlpoint” of the initial Imagist vortex allowed him to select and control the influences and techniques that entered into and defined that movement. Further, due to the open-ended terminology he originally used to define Imagism, an Image, and their constituent elements, Pound could include new members in his movement while also adding elements and evolving his concept of the Image without altering any of his previous statements on those items. That open-ended terminology, however, also allowed for those other Imagists to interpret Imagist practice and the characteristics of an Image in their own ways.

At the same time Pound was writing “The Serious Artist” and becoming familiar with Upward and Asian poetry, he also began working on *Des Imagistes*. As stated above, Pound told Dorothy in a September 1913 letter that he had completed the first two installments of “The Serious Artist.” According to Amy Lowell’s biographer, Foster Damon, Lowell began collecting and preserving her correspondences that same month, and one of the first letters she included in her collection was an undated note from Pound asking her if he could include her “In a Garden” in the Imagist anthology he was putting together. In another letter dated September 7, 1913, John Gould Fletcher urges Lowell not to allow any of her poetry to appear in that anthology (215). That Pound assumed the role of editor for *Des Imagistes* while reading Upward’s *The Divine Mystery* could have added to the attention and praise he bestows upon Upward’s “powers of synthesis” in his

review of that book. More importantly, though, that Pound's work on *Des Imagistes* coincided with the period when he was transitioning his understanding of the Image from its early to later version means that in that collection one finds Pound offering a presentation of Imagism at its most liminal—which is to say, its most exemplary—state. In fact, *Des Imagistes* maintains its consistency as an Imagist anthology precisely because Pound divides his own poems according to his two stages of Imagism and places them at the virtual center of that anthology. Through their differences, then, those poems act as the whirlpoint out from which the other poets' variations of the Image spiral.

Section II: “Presenting, Positioning, Objective Realities, and the Image-as-Vortex”

Pound conceived of Imagism as a precisely written poetics that employs concrete nouns, individualized rhythms, and the diction of common speech to offer corporeal presentations of its subjects. Generally recognized for, and associated with, its use of concrete nouns, Pound's Imagism—both early and late—also utilized the sound and order of its words to create alternate and often overlooked types of images. An Image, therefore, cannot consist of only concrete nouns or “signifying imagery,” it must also contain “sonic imagery.” In fact, according to Pound's initial standard, one creates an Image by merging “signifying” and “sonic” images in equal parts. As he continued to develop his understanding of Imagism and its operational elements, however, his concept of an Image also evolved from a rather static, yet multidimensional, presentation of objects to a hyper-concise arrangement of imagery that focuses as much on the relationships between its constituent objects as it does on the objects themselves.

By illustrating how Pound uses both “signifying” and “sonic” images in his poems “The Return” and “A Fan-Piece for Her Imperial Lord,” this section not only identifies how Imagists objectify the content of their poems, but also how Pound’s hyper-concise arrangement of those images created the swift and almost violent figurative relationships that distinguish his early Image from the Image-as-Vortex. Moreover, in analyzing the types of imagery Pound uses to create his larger poetic Images, this section further establishes how the combination of the Imagists’ concrete nouns and methods for notating their rhythms on the page also yields certain visual presentations or “text images” that approximate the physical appearance of, or spatial relationships between, their poems’ signified content. That examination of the different types of images and Images that Pound used in his own Imagist practice then provides a somewhat stable definition of the vortexual core of the larger Imagist movement that allowed it to both produce and account for a variety of other image types and interpretations of the Image.

Of all Pound’s poems, “The Return,” offers the clearest example of his early concept of the Image. In his 1914 article, “Vorticism,” Pound refers to that poem as an important step in his development of Imagism because it functions as “an objective reality” (282). By “objective reality,” Helen Carr opines that Pound means, “it is a poem that centres on the description of a scene, rather than on the psychological state or consciousness of the speaker” (436). According to both Pound and Carr, then, “The Return” exemplifies the Imagist impulse by consisting of a scene and characters external to its speaker rather than offering an abstract expression of that speaker’s thoughts and emotions. Carr’s evaluation that the poem “describes” rather than “presents” is also both accurate and significant because, in “The Return,” Pound frequently attaches interpretive

adjectives to his verbs such as the “tentative movements” and “uncertain wavering” he attributes to that poem’s actors. Pound does not attach those adjectives to his nouns, however. Instead, he prefers to present the actors in that poem and their attributes through pronouns that enact the poem’s content and imagery-based titles. Specifically, “The Return” takes as its subject the revivification of old gods no longer relevant in the modern world and, for the first nine of that poem’s twenty lines, Pound only refers to them as “they” to evoke their current lack of recognition. In line ten, though, Pound presents the identity of those Gods by attributing to them the title, “Wing’d-with-Awe,” and then, in the following lines, “Gods of the winged shoe,” “swift to harry,” keen-scented” and “souls of blood.” Hence, through his use of those titles, Pound does not describe the actors in his poem, but presents them as sensorially perceivable concrete nouns—or “signifying images.”

Whereas Carr isolates Pound’s use of concrete nouns as the salient Imagist trait of “The Return,” Hugh Kenner distinguishes Pound’s rhythmic pattern and diction as the main purveyors of meaning in that poem. In fact, he explicitly argues, “[I]n Pound’s “The Return” (1912), in which every line has a strongly marked expressive rhythm but no two lines are alike, it is actually the rhythm that defines the meaning” (189). He then acknowledges the ways in which the technical hygiene of the Imagist tenets work with its sonic imagery to present that poem’s subject. He writes:

The sentences of which the poem is made are syntactically very simple—
“See, they return”; “These were the souls of blood”—while no syntax
specifies the coherence of the whole poem. The fragmentary effect (“as if
he were translating at sight from an unknown Greek masterpiece,” thought

Yeats, who never understood *vers libre*) corresponds to a feeling we may have that a statement of some length has been made but that important syntactic members of this statement have dropped out, as they have dropped through the rents on the ruined papyri of Sappho. And yet nothing has dropped out. We have, thanks to the rhythmic definition, every necessary element, held in place in the poem's continuum so exactly that alterations of tense will specify everything. (*Pound Era* 189, 191)

Despite Kenner's recognition of the way that Pound's syntax and laconic phrasing allude to Sappho and Greek poetry in general, he does not comment on the way Pound uses his punctuation and line breaks as a form of musical notation that permits his rhythms to embody their subject sonically. Take, for instance, the first stanza of "The Return," which reads:

See, they return; ah, see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
Wavering! (*Des Imagistes* 42)

In those lines, Pound's commas and, especially, his line breaks create pauses in the rhythm that audibly enact the returning gods' "tentative movements," "slow feet," and "uncertain wavering." Thus, far from solely calling forth their poetic lineage, the rhythmic patterns initiated by Pound's punctuation and line breaks also function as sonic images that invest that poem's *vers libre* with the discipline of purpose.

Even though Carr and Kenner each provide a careful and enlightening analysis of the way one image type functions in "The Return," Pound's concept of the early Image relied upon an equal measure of both signifying and sonic images. By combining concrete nouns with content-based rhythms, Pound attempted to use the materiality of a

poem not to describe or discuss its subject, but to offer that subject directly as the poem itself. Through combining those two types of Images, though, Pound and the other Imagists create large-scale poetic Images as well as visually concrete “text images.” While neither Pound nor any of the other Imagists seem to have employed them consciously, “text images” add another layer of materiality to a poem or Image by using their physical appearance on the page to present their subject.

One of the earliest and best examples of a text image being produced by Pound’s simultaneous employment of common diction, concrete nouns, and vers-libre rhythms in “The Return” comes in line five: “See, they return, one, and by one[.]” Specifically, in the section of that line that reads, “one, and by one,” Pound utilizes a phrase-structure that not only approximates speech patterns, but, in doing so, also draws attention to its nouns by placing them at the beginning, middle, and end of that line. Additionally, Pound obviously inserts a comma after his first use of the noun “one” in order to slow down the pacing of the line and emphasize the singularity of that word. Through that maneuver, though, Pound visually sets that word apart from the other words on the page; that comma literally separates the “one” returning god from the other “ones.” Furthermore, Pound’s selection of four single-syllable words for the end of this line also rhythmically stresses the individuality and solitude of the gods returning. That each of those words, except “by,” is a three-letter word creates a visual unity between them that further materializes the individuality of those gods whom Pound separates on the page with both a comma and the two-letter word “by.” This type of visual arrangement constitutes what I refer to as a “spatial text image” because it utilizes the spacing and arrangement of the

words on the page to further materialize the content of the poem and, thereby, offer its readers a presentation of the physical relationship between those objects.

The other text image worth pointing out in “The Return” functions more as “action text image” despite also displaying qualities of a spatial one. An “action text image” uses the materiality of the word-as-sign to present a visual manifestation of its subject’s movement. This particular “action text image” occurs in line nine, but depends on lines seven and eight for context:

As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind
and half turn back; (42)

In those lines, Pound draws on the signifying nature of his words to present his readers with a mental—or “signifying image”—of snow caught in the wind. By indenting line nine, though, Pound aligns the action of “half turn back” directly under “the wind” of the previous line. Thus, through the positioning of those lines on the page, Pound visually enacts the process of the snow caught and then half turning back in the wind.

As an “objective reality,” then, “The Return” offers the clearest example of Pound’s early Imagism because in that poem he simultaneously integrates signifying and rhythmic images to offer a material presentation of his subject. In attempting to utilize every formal element of a poem to provide an objective presentation of its subject, though, Pound innately isolated and combined the poetic elements that would also allow his verbal images to function as page-based textual images. That he probably did not create those original text images consciously, however, seems rather irrelevant if, even in retrospect, one can note the emerging presence of such imagery in his work. In fact, E. E. Cummings—the poet probably most closely associated with the use and development of

text images—credited Pound as the “innovator” of that technique and associated it with “The Return.”¹¹ Moreover, the existence of those text images in one of Pound’s earliest attempts to create a poetic Image further proves that Imagism did not even begin as a static entity, but, rather, existed as a group of poetic techniques whose attributes and effects continuously evolved as Pound and the Imagists experimented with them.

After composing “The Return,” Pound continued to develop his understanding of the Image and its active components. During that time, he read H.D.’s first Imagist poems and Allen Upward’s “Scented Leaves from a Chinese Jar.” Impressed by the Asian aesthetics of Upward’s poems, Pound paid a visit to their author who then introduced him to Herbert Giles’ *History of Chinese Literature*. Once at home, Pound familiarized himself with the works contained in that collection and decided to rework some of them according to his own poetic standards. That Giles was a sinologist rather than a poet made his translations particularly amenable to Pound’s rewrites. As Carr notes:

Giles *History* consists to a large extent of translations, some as prose and some as poetry, produced largely for the scholarly reader rather than the lover of poetry, but, although they have a slight *fin-de-siècle* archaism, they are free of the heavy imposition of Victorian forms and diction in the earlier translations of Far Eastern verse. (605)

¹¹ In his book *E. E. Cummings: The Magic-Maker*, Charles Norman discusses Cumming’s use of “structural elements on the page which act as doors and passageways to ultimate effects,” and notes “how [Cumming’s] lines and divisions of lines help establish meaning and accent as well as movement” before concluding that “[i]n this respect, [Cumming] is an innovator” (160). After reading that assessment of his techniques, Cummings wrote to Norman, “let me make something onceforall clear:from my standpoint, not EEC but EP is the authentic ‘innovator’;the true trailblazer of an epoch;‘this selfstyled world’s greatest and most generous figure’ – nor shall I ever forget the thrill I experienced in first reading “The Return” (*Selected Letters* 254).

Thus, despite the appearance of Pound's Asian poems, they were not translations. They were, instead, the result of Pound applying his Imagist aesthetic to a non-poet's translations of foreign verse into English prose and poetic forms.

One of the first texts from Giles' collection that Pound worked on was this ten-line translation of Lady Pan's "Song of Regret":¹²

O Fair white silk, fresh from the weaver's loom,
Clear as frost, bright as the winter's snow—
See! Friendship fashions out of thee a fan,
Round as the round moon shines in heaven above,
At home, abroad, a close companion thou,
Stirring at every move the grateful gale.
And yet I fear, ah me! That autumn chills
Cooling the dying summer's torrid rage,
Will see thee laid neglected on the shelf,
All thoughts of bygone days, like them bygone. (101)

By applying his Imagist techniques to that piece, Pound—with virtually no knowledge of the Chinese language or its literature—converted Giles' translation into the three-line poem, "Fan-Piece for her Imperial Lord":

O fan of white silk,
clear as frost on the grass-blade,
You also are laid aside. (*Des Imagistes* 45)

To create that version, Pound stripped Giles' text of its archaic diction, rhetoric, and abstractions, and then excised all the remaining ornamental and repetitive imagery and figuration. After that initial process, he concentrated the language of that poem so that every word played an active role in the production of meaning and their punctuation and line breaks created a rhythm that sonically materialized the poem's content. Through those poetic maneuvers, Pound attempted to convert Giles' translation into a poetic Image, but, in doing so, also evolved that Image into a Vortex.

¹² Giles' does not offer a title for this poem. Other sources, such as Burton Watson's *Chinese Lyricism: Shih Poetry from the Second to the Twelfth Century*, do refer to it, however, as "Song of Regret" (94).

Prior to his work with Giles' translations, Pound's Imagist agenda focused primarily on avoiding archaic and ornamental language in favor of presenting signifying and rhythmic images. After applying that same process to those Asian texts, though, he found poems rife with material imagery. To remake the "Song of Regret" in an Imagist mode, Pound probably first removed all the archaic diction of "thee" and "thou," and then all the rhetorical and abstract discussions of that poem's subject. Such editing might result in the following lines:

O white silk from the weaver's loom,
Clear as frost, bright as the winter's snow—
fashions a fan
Round as the round moon shines
Stirring at the gale.
autumn chills
Cool the summer,
[and] see you laid on the shelf.

In looking over the words removed, one can note how they all function as modifying adjectives, descriptions, or abstractions, and are, therefore, unnecessary for an Imagist presentation: "Fair;" "fresh;" "See! Friendship;" "out of thee;" "in heaven above;" "At home, abroad, a close companion thou;" "every move;" "grateful;" "And yet I fear, ah me!;" "dying;" "torrid rage;" "Will see thee;" "neglected;" and "All thoughts of bygone days, like them bygone." One can also note that, after Pound removed those words, the remaining seven lines contain eight concrete nouns and one personal pronoun: "silk," "loom," "frost," "snow," "fan," "moon," "gale," "shelf," and "you." More than simply offering an abundance of concrete nouns, though, Pound's editing excavated those nouns from a terrain of inactive language and unnecessary conjunctions to place them within close enough proximity to each other that they approximate super-positioned arrangements. That some of those images merely reiterate already implied information or

attempt to fill out the scene through material description, however, prevented that first rendition from presenting the shock of sudden awareness that defines the Image-as-Vortex. Seemingly aware that his poem could be more efficient, Pound made additional edits that allow his poem to present meaning through concrete nouns as well as through those nouns' relationships with one another.

In returning to the approximation of how Giles' poem might appear after Pound's first edits, one can note how, in his further edits, Pound began to distinguish between the objective material imagery of the early Image and the "radiant node or cluster" of the Vortex:

O white silk from the weaver's loom,
Clear as frost, bright as the winter's snow—
fashions a fan
Round as the round moon shines
Stirring at the gale.
autumn chills
Cool the summer,
[and] see you laid on the shelf.

The first line of that version begins as an apostrophic address to the "white silk" that is "fresh from the weaver's loom." With his keen editorial eye, Pound appears to have recognized that the active element or object in that poem is not silk, but the fan that it becomes. Pound, therefore, readjusted the subject of that line so that, in his version, it presents a "fan of white silk" rather than just "white silk." Through that simple change, Pound rendered the descriptive clause "fresh from the weaver's loom" superfluous and removed it. That removal did more than simply add to the technical hygiene of the piece, though, it also began the consolidation of meaning that distinguishes the early Image from the Image-as-Vortex.

Having combined the silk and fan into a single entity, Pound needed to decide which of the nouns and figures of speech that followed created meaning and which repeated information or acted as ornament. “Clear as frost” and “bright as the winter’s snow” both add an element of winter to the poem, but, together, they only accentuate or distinguish another physical attribute of the fan; only one is necessary. Additionally, the next four lines simply provide another physical description of the fan and then introduce the implied comparison between the Imperial Lord’s waning interest in the speaker and the summer giving way to winter. Noticing that the “frost” from the initial simile could refer back to the silk fan while also achieving the same effect as the “autumn” that “[c]ools the summer,” Pound chose to present the abstract noun “summer” through the concrete noun “grass blade,” and, thereby, collapsed two similes and one metaphor into a single simile consisting of two concrete nouns. That locating of complex meaning in sensorially perceivable imagery exemplifies Pound’s early Imagist program. The amount of meaning concentrated within the single phrase, “clear as frost on the grass-blade,” however, also evidences the transitioning of Pound’s early Image into a hyper-concise Vortex of meaning.

For the title of his poem, Pound again consolidated a large quantity of information into a single phrase centered upon a concrete noun. In his *History of Chinese Literature*, Giles does not include a title for his translation, but he does offer this gloss:

The Lady Pan was for a long time chief favourite of the Emperor who ruled China B.C. 32-6. [...] She was ultimately supplanted by a younger and more beautiful rival, whereupon she forwarded to the Emperor one of those fans, round or octagonal frames of bamboo with silk stretched over

them, which in this country are called “fire-screens,” inscribed with the following [poem’s text]. (101)

With the seasonal reference of “frost on a grass-blade” already conveying the Emperor’s cooling interest in the poem’s speaker, the only information from that gloss necessary to the poem is the identity of the speaker’s lover, the nature of their relationship, and that the text of the poem appeared on a fan. Therefore, in naming his version “Fan-Piece for her Imperial Lord,” Pound establishes that the text of the poem appeared on a fan that the poem’s female speaker gave to her Lord. Through establishing that context, Pound—without providing any explanation or description—increased the overall significance of his poem while also making the “O” that signals that the work is an apostrophe and the “also” that subtly equates the Emperor’s negligence of the fan with his negligence of the speaker not just important, but essential to the poem’s meaning.

To complete his version of Lady Pan’s poem, Pound also compressed Giles’ original final two lines that consist of a total sixteen words to a single five-word line. Yet, by following the already proposed series of edits, Pound would have removed Giles’ concluding line of “All thoughts of bygone days, like them bygone,” and the “Will see thee” and “neglected” from the penultimate line, leaving his final line to read, “[and] see you laid on the shelf.” To that line, Pound further excised Giles’ image-based description of the fan “on the shelf,” because, with the addition of the word “also,” that the Emperor laid the fan aside in the same manner as the poem’s speaker is all that matters. In fact, by removing “on the shelf” from his line, Pound makes the comparison between the speaker and the shelf more literal. That reduction of language, then, demonstrates how the hygienic policies of the Imagist tenets combine with the material presentations suggested

by the Doctrine of the Image to reduce verbiage while also increasing the complexity and directness of the poem's meaning. Moreover, by collapsing the poem so that it presents a swift, almost violent juxtaposition of the relationship between the speaker and the fan, Pound also effectively created his first Vortextual Image in which the meaning produced is almost inversely proportional to the amount of verbiage used.

In his efforts to prune Giles' text so that each word contributes to the presentation, Pound also saturated the form and sound of his "Fan-Piece for her Imperial Lord" with meaning. Although the poem takes the form of a complex sentence, Pound's lineation separates the two halves of that sentence's independent clause and its adjectival clause from one another. The grammar of the sentence, then, already justifies Pound's line breaks. Yet, in dividing his lines according to that sentence's three distinct phrases, Pound includes a noun or pronoun in each of those lines that also adds to its perceivable materiality. Additionally, by dividing his lines into phrases, Pound also creates a rhythm that approximates not only common diction, but also the strained and deliberate speech of its speaker admitting that her lover no longer cares for her; and with each pause, the heartbreak becomes more palpable. Moreover, the three-line arrangement of that poem bears a striking visual resemblance to a Japanese haiku. Despite Pound's unfamiliarity with Chinese poetry, he was—by late 1913—aware of the haiku as a poetic form.¹³ That the five, seven, seven syllable count of Pound's lines also roughly approximates the five, seven, five syllable count of a traditional haiku, further suggests that Pound—despite using a Japanese form for a Chinese poem—attempted to give his piece both the sound and look of Asian poetry. Again, using the form and sounds of a poem to create images

¹³ Approximately six months before the November 21, 1913 letter wherein Pound tells Dorothy Shakespear that he completed his first "Chineze" poems, he wrote a letter to Harriet Monroe in which he refers to his "'Metro' poem as a 'hokku.'" The date on that letter is March 30, 1913 (*Selected Letters* 17).

that present meaning was one of the central components of Pound's early Image. The concentrating of those multiple layers of meaning in a one-sentence-long, three-line, sixteen-word poem, however, marks the difference between that early Image and the Image-as-Vortex.

In applying his Imagist techniques to Giles' texts, Pound stripped away all of their unnecessary and ornamental language. Through that process, he also appears to have realized that the essential and defining aspect of Imagism did not lie in the direct presentation of things, as much as it did in the relationships between those things. Specifically, by removing all non-essential language from his versions of those Chinese poems, Pound also removed the connective sinews that explain or describe the relationship between those poems' concrete nouns. As opposed to standard similes that establish a hierarchical relationship between their constituent items wherein one only works to explain the other, the super-position leaves the material images that serve as the poles of its comparative structure to illuminate each other. Rather than a direct current of meaning that passes through several circuits before reaching its endpoint, the super-position functions more like an unimpeded alternating current that presents a constellation of interactive and synergistic meanings. Thus, although still creating an Image, the technique of super-positioning allowed Pound to present intellectual and emotional complexes in a more efficient manner. After applying that technique in *Des Imagistes*, then, to present a large-scale Image of Imagism as both a poetic method and movement, Pound would go on to isolate super-positioning as the new basis of an Image, but he would readjust his vocabulary and refer to it as a Vortex.

Chapter III: “Collection as Collage: *Des Imagistes* and the Presentation of Imagism”

Introduction:

In an essay on Henry James, Pound posits, “Artists are the antennae of the race” (“Henry James” 297), by which he seems to mean that artists possess a more finely tuned set of sense perceptions than most people; they discern subtle frequencies that others do not notice. Yet Pound did not just rely on his antennae-like ability to identify certain elements that actively and effectively create meaning; he also worked to arrange them into patterns or associative webs that allowed them to augment and magnify each other’s import. Through that process, Pound created both Imagism and its poetic Image. It was also through that process, however, that he turned Imagism into the Imagist movement.

In his autobiography, *Life for Life’s Sake*, Richard Aldington writes, “My own belief is that the name [Imagisme] took Ezra’s fancy, and that he kept it *in petto* for the right occasion. If there were no Imagists, obviously they would have to be invented. . . . Whenever Ezra has launched a new movement . . . he has never had any difficulty about finding members. He just called on his friends (135). True to form, then, Pound found his first two Imagists in his friends Aldington and H.D. and, by simply notifying them they were Imagists, established Imagism as a burgeoning poetic movement. To fill out the ranks of that movement so that he might further evidence and publicize its existence, though, Pound called on more of his friends and literary associates. Many of those people, however, had no idea what Imagism was, and those that did, had no idea what Pound meant by the Doctrine of the Image because he had never defined it. Rather than creating a poetic movement wherein each member deliberately shared in and worked toward a common purpose and goal, then, Pound simply discerned elements of Imagism

in the work of others, informed them they were Imagists, and asked if he could include their work in his anthology.

Due to the method by which Pound selected the members of his Imagist movement and chose which of their poems he would use for its first anthology, this chapter examines the literary and publication history of *Des Imagistes* before then explicating the arrangement and contents of that anthology. In discussing Pound's impetus for creating an Imagist anthology and the process that book went through in order to be published, this chapter attempts to explain why Pound felt the need to establish Imagism as poetic movement and why he seemed to abandon it for Vorticism almost immediately thereafter. Additionally, this chapter also examines a few reviewers' opinions of *Des Imagistes* to illustrate how Pound's own developing concept of the Image led to a rather generalized and superficial understanding of Imagism among both the Imagist poets and their reading public. Finally, this chapter argues that by including and arranging so many diverse forms of Imagism in *Des Imagistes*, Pound uses that anthology to offer the most accurate presentation of not only Imagist poetry, but also the Vortextual method that both created, and was created by, Pound's concept of Imagism.

Section I: “(Re)Views from the Edge: The Publication History and Critical Reception of *Des Imagistes*”

In February of 1914, Alfred Kreyborg's American literary magazine, *The Glebe*, dedicated its entire monthly issue to Ezra Pound's Imagist anthology, *Des Imagistes*. Shortly after that initial appearance, that collection also found publication as a book in the United States and England. The brothers Alfred and Charles Boni published

the U.S. version in March 1914, and Harold Monro published the English version the following April. Appearing when it did, *Des Imagistes* represented the first effort to organize the work of the “Imagistes” and present it as a unified and representative body of their work.

In general, scholarship on Imagism tends to overlook the significance of *Des Imagistes* and only references it as a footnote in the history of Imagism. When scholars do draw attention to it, though, more often than not, it is in connection to the differences between Pound and Amy Lowell that led to her assuming control over the subsequent anthologies and becoming the foremost spokesperson for the movement. In fact, in their respective books on Imagism, Glenn Hughes, Stanley Coffman, and J.B. Harmer only reference *Des Imagistes* eighteen times in their cumulative 669 pages. Helen Carr pays a bit more attention to it with twenty-five references in her 880 pages—though her actual discussion of the anthology only accounts for two of those pages. Thus, no major study has been dedicated to explicating the Imagist characteristics of the poetry included in *Des Imagistes* or its anthological arrangement—which is an odd fact considering that collection represents the first attempt at offering a complete presentation of Imagism as both a poetic style and organized literary movement.

Interestingly, one of the few aspects of *Des Imagistes* that seems to concern scholars is its connection to Georgian anthology. Carr claims that some of Pound’s impetus for publishing *Des Imagistes* may have come as a reaction to the *Georgian Poetry 1911-1912* anthology that Harold Monro published in December of 1912. The Georgians, as Carr describes, were a group of young poets, who, like the Imagists, wanted to distinguish themselves from the Victorians and Edwardians by practicing a

poetics based in short lyrics that attempted to eschew rhetoric and didacticism in favor of the diction of common speech (534). Initially, the Georgians viewed their work as an effort toward modernization. In comparison to other contemporary avant-garde literary movements, however, their aims and techniques remained rather conservative. Carr does recognize that Pound probably noted the success of the Georgian anthology and assembled *Des Imagistes* to gain some of that attention for his movement, but she also cautions that one should not assume that he created Imagism solely as a countercurrent to Georgian poetry. She writes, “In December 1912, neither Pound nor anyone else saw [the Georgians] as taking any distinctive or separate trajectory” (533). It appears, then, that Pound was simply interested in manipulating the Georgian’s method of presentation as a means to garner attention for his budding Imagist movement.

Along with the relationship between *Des Imagistes* and the Georgian anthology, scholars also tend to recognize Alfred Kreymborg’s difficulties in publishing that Imagist anthology as the fifth installment of his journal, *The Glebe*. Much of that story’s importance probably arises out of the cross section it creates between the Imagists and other recognizable Modernists such as Man Ray, Charles Demuth, and Kreymborg. Along with that commingling of recognizable artists, though, Kreymborg’s story offers some interesting details regarding the publication of *Des Imagistes*. Among those details, Kreymborg recalls that when the manuscript of *Des Imagistes* reached him, he found a letter from Pound written “in large confident scrawl” that warned, ““unless you’re another American ass, you’ll set this up just as it stands!”” (*Troubadour* 204). That Pound would write such a note certainly suggests that he arranged the contents of *Des Imagistes* in a particular manner and believed that any alteration to that structure would affect the

quality of the anthology. Kreymborg's decision to mention that note and not state that he chose to disregard it also indicates that *Des Imagistes* appeared exactly as Pound intended.

Kreymborg further describes the delay in publication that he and Man Ray caused when, after the deliverers brought their new printing press “from downtown Manhattan, across the Fulton Street ferry, up the Jersey banks of the Hudson, over the Palisades [...] without mishap,” they dropped it on the ground and broke it (205). Without their own press, Kreymborg and Man Ray sought alternative options for printing their literary magazine. Eventually, they struck a deal with Albert and Charles Boni to publish both *The Glebe* and *Des Imagistes*. That delay in publication, however, may partly explain the perceived rapidity with which Pound transitioned his Imagist agenda into Vorticism. Pound had understood Vorticism as the natural evolution of his Imagist agenda and intended to include the Image within the folds of that larger movement, but with the publication of the Vorticist journal *Blast* in July 1914 coming only months after the appearance of *Des Imagistes* it appeared he had abandoned Imagism. Some of the Imagists, then, took offense that Pound would transfer his allegiance to a new artistic movement so shortly after they had joined his previous one.

In his book *Ezra Pound*, Charles Norman discusses the publication of *Des Imagistes*. He writes, “*The Glebe*, Volume I, No. 5, created more of a stir than its predecessors in the series, and the Bonis announced it would be issued as a book, at one dollar. It appeared in April 1914, in blue cloth covers, without *The Glebe* designation. Four hundred and eighty copies had been ordered in advance” (115). Norman then contrasts that relative success for *Des Imagistes* in the United States with its reception in

England by adding that Harold Monro also published *Des Imagistes* in London, but “[i]t fell dead there. Some purchasers charged down Devonshire Street with the book in their hands and demanded their money back” (115). Interestingly, that information points toward readers in the United States having a greater interest in, and willingness to accept, the avant-garde poetics of Imagism. Lowell would also recognize the United States’ greater acceptance of Imagism, and, by aligning its use of free verse with Democracy, would develop a marketing strategy tailor-made to that audience.

While that background information provides an interesting and useful context for understanding the publication history of *Des Imagistes*, most scholars overlook the explicative potentials inherent in Pound’s decision to gather and present a unified and representative body of Imagist work with that anthology. Reasons for that lack of critical attention, however, do exist. For instance, *Des Imagistes* actually contains very little original material; thirty of its thirty-five poems appeared in print prior to their publication in *Des Imagistes*¹⁴. Further, of the eleven poets that Pound included in that anthology, only four would continue to be associated with the Imagism by having their work published in the *Some Imagist Poets* collections that followed *Des Imagistes*.¹⁵ That latter issue actually concerned Glenn Hughes to the point that when he wrote the first book-length study of Imagism, *Imagism and the Imagists: A Study in Modern Poetry*, he chose

¹⁴ The five poems initially published in *Des Imagistes* are: Aldington’s “Bromios,” and Pound’s “After Ch’u Yuan,” “Liu Ch’e,” “Fan-Piece for Her Imperial Lord,” and “Ts’ai Chi’h.” I do not consider the three pieces appended to the end of *Des Imagistes* within these numbers because they are listed as “Documents” and, therefore, remain separate from the presentation of Imagism offered by that anthology. Moreover, the “Documents” take the form of parodies with the second and third displaying a veiled back and forth between Aldington and Hueffer. In fact, Glenn Hughes refers to the “Documents” as “three frivolous poetic travesties” (33). For more information on, and analysis of, these poems, see Charles Norman’s, *Ezra Pound*, pages 114–5, and volume I of A. David Moody’s, *Ezra Pound: Poet*, page 231.

¹⁵ These four poets were Aldington, H.D., Lowell, and Flint. Those poets asked Ford to contribute to their first anthology, but, when its publisher refused to print his poem, “On Heaven,” because it was blasphemous (Carr 708), Ford refused to offer any other poems to that anthology or any of its successors.

to limit his discussion to Ezra Pound and the six poets featured in the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies. Since that initial effort, though, scholarship on Imagism has continued to view *Des Imagistes* as a collection of known or insignificant material that one can overlook in favor of works that either focus on the historical and theoretical development of Imagism or provide in-depth studies of the individual authors most associated with that poetic program.

Unlike their more recent counterparts, the critics that reviewed *Des Imagistes* at the time of its publication did acknowledge the numerous sources of, and influences on, the Imagist aesthetic as well as that anthology's presentation of those techniques. Similar to recent critics, though, those earlier reviewers—even when associated with, or sympathetic to, the aims of Imagism—failed to recognize how the imagery hinted at by Pound's Doctrine of the Image worked with the Imagist tenets to create poetic meaning. Those critics generally tended to base their opinions of *Des Imagistes* almost entirely on their relative understanding and acceptance of the Imagist tenets. Thus, the reviews of that anthology illustrate that, even though the majority of Imagist poets combined the Imagist tenets with some form of imagery, only Pound seems to have recognized the relationship between a poem's images as an essential aspect of Imagism.

In his review of *Des Imagistes* for *The Little Review*, Charles Ashleigh begins by welcoming the anthology as a “new and well born recruit [...] added to the ranks of the Insurgents,” and describes it as “a book of portent” (15). Notably, Ashleigh then outlines and discusses the tenets of Imagist practice but cites Aldington rather than Pound. Aldington's version of the Imagist tenets, which appeared in his June 1, 1914 article “Modern Poetry and the Imagists,” expands—or dilutes—Pound's original three tenets

into a list of five. Tellingly, Aldington identifies the first tenet as “Direct treatment of the subject” instead of “Direct treatment of the thing” (202). Seemingly just a minor difference in terminology, Aldington’s substitution of “subject” for “thing” actually removes the only word from the Imagist tenets that indicates how they utilize concrete nouns to present their subjects in an objective manner. That one of the original members of Pound’s Imagist movement would overlook such a distinction, whether consciously or not, again illustrates that even the Imagists themselves did not necessarily understand Pound’s Doctrine of the Image or the way it combined with the Imagist tenets to create a poetic Image. Without the word “thing” to emphasize the materiality of an Image, the Imagist tenets, effectively, turn into a series of technical considerations that have little to do with the active creation of meaning in a poem. In relying on Aldington’s rendition of the Imagist tenets, then, Ashleigh overlooked one of the central components of Pound’s Imagist program and, as such, wrote and published a review that contributed to the popular misunderstanding of Imagism and its poetic Image.

After quoting Aldington’s tenets, Ashleigh proceeds to recognize the representative quality of Pound’s anthology by writing, “The book, *Des Imagistes*, is an anthology, presumably of Imagist [...] poetry” (15). Despite his acknowledgment that the poems in that collection are Imagist in nature, Ashleigh’s use of the term “probably” points toward his uncertainty regarding the attributes of an Imagist poem. That hesitancy does not stop him, however, from expressing his opinions on the Imagist approach to writing poetry. In basing his opinions of Imagist technique on Aldington’s list, though, Ashleigh—as one might expect—finds fault with the Imagist’s adherence to such superficial restrictions. He suggests:

The Imagists believe in the direct presentation of emotion, preferably in terms of objectivity. They abhor an excess of adjectives, and, after a satiety of the pompous Victorian stuff, I am much inclined to sympathize with that tenet of their faith....

If the expression of a certain thought, vision, or what not, requires twenty adjectives, then let us have them. If it be better expressed without adjectives, then let us abjure them temporarily. (16)

With that assessment, Ashleigh unwittingly, but understandably, further removes Imagism's first tenet from Pound's original concept of it by substituting "emotion" for Aldington's "subject." Like a game of "Chinese Whispers," then, Ashleigh's interpretation of Aldington's interpretation further blurs Pound's original concept of the Image by making it less material and even more abstract. Additionally, Ashleigh's vindication of adjectives in poetry points toward his overall lack of familiarity with the intentions behind Pound's Imagist program.

Based on his source material and subsequent deviation from that material, Ashleigh views the Imagists as a group of poets committed to certain technical practices that function solely as correctives to superficial excess in poetry. He concludes his review by condemning the Imagists as separatists but applauding them as avant-garde poets. He writes, "[A]s a restricted and doctrinaire school, 'a bas les Imagistes!' But, as an envigored company of the grand army of poets, 'Vivent les Imagistes!' (17). Without definitively recognizing the role of imagery in Imagist poetry, Ashleigh cannot discern how the Imagist techniques work to isolate concrete nouns while also making certain that every word is essential to its poem's production of meaning. Instead, Ashleigh only

argues that some styles and some techniques work better for certain expressions. Yet, Pound's Imagism only concerns itself with the direct and immediate presentation of Luminous Details. For Pound, Imagism aspires only to create great works of art, and he defines great works of art as those that merge "discovery" with a "maximum efficiency of expression" or, in other words, those that combine specifically chosen imagery with a strict adherence to technique. One cannot blame Ashleigh for failing to recognize the purpose and aspirations of Pound's Imagism being that Pound continued to develop his own understanding of it. If nothing else, though, Ashleigh's review does help one to understand how the Imagists could produce such a variety of product and how scholars, critics, and the reading public have continued to misunderstand the core elements of Imagism and the ways they function.

Harold Monro, the London publisher of the Georgian anthologies and *Des Imagistes*, also wrote a review of the Imagist anthology for the literary journal, *Poetry and Drama*. Conveniently, Monro includes his review of that anthology among reviews of five other books and notes that those six total books "divide themselves naturally into two groups."¹⁶ He explains:

Three of them may be loosely classed together under the arbitrary term "Georgian"; that is they belong to the tradition of English poetry, continuing in spirit and form the natural sequence of its development. [...]

The other three are actually of less importance, if potentially of greater

¹⁶ The three books Monro places in the "Georgian" camp are, *New Numbers* by Lascelles Abercrombie, John Drinkwater, Rupert Brooke, and Wilfred Wilson Gibson; *The Sea is Kind* by T. Sturge Moore; and *Two Blind Countries* by Rose Macaulay. The three books grouped together as "emanate[ing] from rebels" are, *Des Imagistes*; *Creation: Post-Impressionist Poems* by Horace Holley; and *Cubist Poems* by Max Weber (177-8).

significance, for the fact that they emanate from rebels and are wilfully [sic], precociously, provocatively outside the tradition. (177-78)

According to Monro, *Des Imagistes* belongs to the group of books that “emanate from rebels.” That he published the Georgian anthologies as well *Des Imagistes* means that Monro was certainly well aware of those two literary schools. While, as their publisher, Monro certainly had a stake in both of their commercial success, he was also the critic best suited to distinguish between them.

In his review, Monro finds the quantity of verbiage as biggest factor separating the work of the Georgians and the Imagists. When discussing Lascelles Abercrombie’s verse play, “The End of the World,” Monro writes:

One wishes that the Imagistes might permit themselves to be more natural, might trim their thought down less; one desires Mr [sic] Abercrombie, on the other hand, to expand his less, to convey his emotions by hint of atmosphere as often, at least, as by complicated detail. (178)

To Monro, the Imagists produce poems stilted and pruned too far by their adherence to a specific set of techniques, whereas the Georgians overburden their lines with too much description and detail. To transition from his review of the Georgian works to his thoughts on *Des Imagistes*, Monro clarifies, “While the poets of *New Numbers* are enlarging the scope of English poetic language, the Imagistes are at present narrowing it” (178). Thus, despite also setting up comparisons between Abercrombie’s blank verse and the Imagists’ “free rhythms” as well as between the details that “brim over” the Georgian’s lines and Aldington and H.D.’s “few words” that “enmesh images” (179),

Monro finds the crafted laconicism of the Imagists as that which most separates their work from their contemporaries.

Similar to Ashleigh, Monro notes the variety of influences on the Imagist aesthetic. He explains, “Their inspiration, with a few exceptions, is Greek, Roman, Japanese, Chinese, French, German, anything but English” (178). With his specification of “anything but English,” Monro again parallels the Imagists, whose technique and subject matter evidence a multicultural background, with the Georgians, whom, he established earlier, “belong to the tradition of English poetry.” Monro believes, therefore, that the rebelliousness of the Imagists does not lie as much in their technique or content as it does in the origins of their technique and content. Also like Ashleigh, then, Monro’s lack of specific attention to the Imagists’ reliance on imagery precludes him from recognizing the importance and variations of their imagery or the differences between their Images. Even though he does not hone in on the Vortex itself, Monro’s recognition of the Imagists’ eclectic sources does point toward the vortextual origins of the Imagist program. By emphasizing the non-Englishness of the Imagists’ origins, he also demonstrates a slight apprehension of the manner in which the Imagists attempt to further the English poetic tradition by working outside of it. He does not go far enough, however, to recognize that, through that process, both Imagism and its poetic Images operate as Vortexes that create new meaning while also accessing established understandings.

In his comments on the anthology, Monro again finds the Imagists’ technique as the most salient attribute of their poetry. He tells his readers that Imagist poetry “is for students of technique; the general public is only admitted by favour.” He then writes, “At present the Imagistes are accomplishing more in theory and precept than in practice.

Technically their volume is of immense interest and importance, aesthetically of great delight” (178). Despite his belief that the Imagists’ adherence to technique limits their poetry and makes it accessible to only a select few, Monroe still finds the Imagists’ technique more significant than their actual poems. In fact, while he seems to recognize that *Des Imagistes* attempts to define Imagism through a presentation of poems written by Imagists, he does not seem certain as to what trait, other than their consistent exhibition of technical hygiene, designates those poems as Imagist. He writes:

As a representative compilation of the work of the group ... it is gravely deficient. Some of the best poems of Ford Madox Hueffer, Ezra Pound, and W. C. Williams are, however, I presume, purposely excluded that the volume may more strictly represent the theories of its compilers. (178)

Without observing how Imagist practice revolves around the Imagist tenets working in conjunction with various forms of imagery to produce poetic Images, Monroe is of the opinion that Pound could have chosen better poems for inclusion in *Des Imagistes*. Monroe does concede, however, that the poems were probably selected based on their fidelity to Imagist technique and then concludes his review by describing the work in *Des Imagistes* as coming from one of the “newest and most forward movements in English poetry” (180).

Along with Ashleigh and Monroe, Ford Madox Ford also reviewed *Des Imagistes*. Pound frequently cited Ford as a major influence upon his development of Imagism, and, as such, chose to include one of his poems in *Des Imagistes*. Similar to Monroe, Ford’s relationship to Imagism and *Des Imagistes* make his opinions of that anthology particularly interesting. Also like Monroe, Ford begins his review by describing the

Imagist as literary rebels deliberately working outside of English poetic tradition. He notes:

[The Imagists] look odd; they talk violently and perfectly incomprehensibly; they label themselves with names for which they would die. (They label me too, for the matter of that!) And not one of them could write an article that the *Times Literary Supplement* would print... Think how refreshing that is! Almost anyone else can do it. (151)

Using the *Times Literary Supplement* as a symbol of typical English literature,¹⁷ Ford points out just how different the Imagists seem when compared to the status quo. Yet, along with praising the Imagists for forging a new trail in English poetry, Ford champions them for making a virtue of their difference, for labelling themselves and their movement in an effort to highlight their counterculture status. Ford even seems a bit flattered by his inclusion among the ranks of such revolutionaries.

Following his description of the Imagists and their approach to poetry, Ford continues by acknowledging that, despite his familiarity with the Imagists and presence in their anthology, he does not understand nor can he identify the defining characteristics

¹⁷ In *South Lodge: Reminiscences of Violet Hunt, Ford Madox Ford and the English Review*, Douglas Goldring describes how Ford and Pound would often “discuss *vers libre*, the prosody of Arnaut Daniel, and, as Ford records, ‘the villainy of contributors to the front page of *The Times Literary Supplement*’ (47). Pound would also begin his poem “Salutation the Third” by writing:

Let us deride the smugness of “The Times”:
Guffaw!
 So much the gagged reviewers,
It will pay them when the worms are wriggling in their vitals;
These were they who objected to newness,
Here are their TOMB-STONES.
 They supported the gag and the ring:
A little black BOX contains them.
 SO shall you be also,
You slut-bellied obstructionist,
 You sworn foe to free speech and good letters,
You fungus, you continuous gangrene. (45)

of Imagist poetry. He admits, “Why the particular group whom today we are considering should label themselves – and myself – Imagistes, I do not know. I do not, for the purpose of this article, know what Imagisme is” (151). With that confession, Ford reveals that even the poets Pound designated as Imagist were not necessarily aware of Imagism’s key elements or what traits made their poems Imagistic. Pound’s decisions to not define the Doctrine of the Image and include poets in *Des Imagistes* whose poems did not consciously abide by all the Imagist tenets meant that his anthology would inevitably contain varying interpretations of Imagist practice and the poetic Image. That Pound would consciously incorporate those poets and their poems into his anthology, though, suggests that he understood that Imagism, as a group movement, functioned as a constantly evolving entity whose meaning depended on the arrangement and context of its constituent elements.

Like the other reviewers, Ford also draws attention to the numerous sources of, and influences upon, Imagist content and technique. Unlike those other reviewers, though, Ford also recognizes the way *Des Imagistes* compartmentalizes and presents those influences. He explains:

Well, one end of this volume is Hellenic, the other extremely Sinetic, if that be the proper term for things which show a Chinese influence. The middle regions contain the very beautiful poems of Mr. Flint, which are upon the whole most what I want, since they are about [London]. (151)

Even though he overlooks a few of the more subtle literary styles employed in *Des Imagistes*, Ford’s identification of those two main aesthetic approaches reemphasizes the Imagists’ attempts to work outside of the dominant English literary tradition. Moreover,

in noting that *Des Imagistes* begins with a section of “Hellenic” poems and ends with a series of “Sinetic” poems, Ford acknowledges the way Pound groups the poems of that anthology according to their thematic and technical engagements with his Imagist program.

Having established some of the origins of Imagist content and technique, Ford attempts to provide representative examples of Imagist poetry. That he already admitted he did not know what Imagism meant makes that decision seem odd. Yet, he claims, “[T]he most memorable of this very beautiful collection is Mr. Flint’s poem about a swan – and that is also the truest piece of Imagisme, at any rate in this volume” (151). He then immediately offers the full text of Pound’s poem, “Liu Ch’e,” and concludes, “This poem however by Mr Ezra Pound is more valuable as an example of what Imagisme really is” (151). To distinguish between those poems, Ford appears to base his opinions upon the aspects of Imagism that he influenced rather than upon the full complement of its aggregated sources. Thus, he prefers Flint’s poem, which uses common diction and sentence structures to present a contemporary scene, to Pound’s piece, which features Asian imagery and the super-positioned arrangement of his later Image-as-Vortex. Furthermore, by contrasting those poems while also promoting each as quintessentially Imagist, Ford, again, accentuates how Pound’s incomplete explanation of the Doctrine of the Image and its relationship to the Imagist tenets led to the variety of product that actually defines Imagist practice.

Due to his direct influence on Imagism, Ford, more than any other critic, identifies the presence and technical purposes of its primary formal features. For instance, in commenting on the Imagists’ use of free verse, he explains:

The poems however of these young men are almost invariably short. The effect then of their unrhymedness is to give to swallow-flights an appreciable weight, a certain dignity, a certain length. [...] They would tell you – if you could understand what they say, which is more than I mostly can – that rhyme and metre are shackles. And so indeed they are.

Reasoning the matter out with myself, I seem to find that the justification for *vers libre* is this: it allows a freer play for self-expression than even narrative prose; at the same time it calls for an even greater precision in that self-expression. (153)

In those remarks, Ford accurately assesses how the “sequence of the musical phrase” enacts a form of technical hygiene that removes the excess language and unnatural diction often necessitated by standard metrical forms. He even hints at the way the Imagists use the lineation and rhythms of their free verse to create sonic presentations of their subjects. Additionally, while he does acknowledge that free verse provides a poet with more liberties than formal poetry or prose, he also establishes that, when utilized purposefully, free verse can require more discipline than other literary form. From a technical perspective, then, Ford clearly grasps how the Imagists use free verse to make their language more efficient and precise.

After describing how the Imagists utilize free verse on a formal level, Ford continues his review by attempting to explain how they use free verse to create meaning in their poems. Specifically, he believes that poetic form should reveal the personality of its author. He claims:

All that I am trying to say is that verse which is cut to a pattern must sacrifice a certain amount – not necessarily very much, but still a certain amount – of the personality of the writer. And inasmuch as the personality of the writer is still the chief thing in a work of art, any form that will lead to the more perfect expression of personality is a form of the utmost value.

(158)

Thus, Ford argues that, by allowing poets to design their line lengths and rhythms according to their speech patterns, free verse renders the personality of its author more accurately than other literary forms. According to Pound's Imagist agenda, however, free verse not only removes excess language and allows for normal speech patterns, but also creates audibly perceivable embodiments of its subject matter. Those sonic images, though, exist for their own sake; they do not gesture towards anything other than themselves. Imagists present, they do not represent, and free verse just adds to the concretization of their Images' content.

Like his discussion of free verse, Ford similarly recognizes the way Imagists use imagery to locate complex meaning in their poems. Also like his discussion of free verse, though, Ford believes the purpose of that imagery is to manifest its author's personality.

On that topic, he writes:

The fact is that any clear and defined rendering of any material object has power to convey to the beholder or to the reader a sort of quivering of very definite emotions. In its very clearness and in its very hardness it seems to point the moral of the impermanence of matter, of human life, or if you will, of the flight of birds. You can get indeed more emotion out of the

exact rendering of the light reflected in the bonnet of an automobile than out of the lamentation of fifty thousand preachers. The point is, I suppose, that just as very vivid and perfectly disproportionate emotions are aroused in you by meeting certain persons, so equally vivid emotions will be aroused if you come into contact with their manifestations, with their records, with their art. And the justification of any method of art, the measure of its success, will be just the measure of its suitability for rendering the personality of the artist. (156-57)

Again, Ford notes the way imagery combats rhetoric, explanation, and elaboration by presenting both objective and associational meaning. Yet, rather than understanding that an Imagist's images radiate with their own significance, Ford wants to interpret them as manifestations of their author's personality. Recall, however, that Pound deliberately states in his "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" that poets should not use an image to reference anything other than itself. In fact, to make that point, he criticizes a phrase from Ford's poem "On a Marsh Road: (Winter Nightfall)." Specifically, Pound writes, "Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands of *peace*'. It dulls the image. It mixes an abstraction with the concrete. It comes from the writer's not realizing that the natural object is always the *adequate* symbol" (201). Through those comments, then, Pound makes it clear that, unlike Ford's Impressionism or Yeats' Symbolism, Imagism employs its images because they objective, self-referential, and directly illuminating.

By failing to recognize imagery's power to harness and create meaning in itself, Ford misses a crucial aspect of both Imagism and its poetic Image. He views Imagism, therefore, as an abstract art that employs its images and free-verse rhythms for technical

purposes, but not for any immediate significance. He writes, “[T]his tiny anthology of the Imagistes contains an infinite amount of pure beauty – of abstract beauty. That is my simple opinion. It is the beauty of music – that is to say, of music without much meaning, but of very great power to stir the emotions” (154). In misunderstanding the Imagists’ precise and direct treatment of their subjects through free verse and concrete nouns as a means to convey their author’s personality rather than as a process meant to locate direct and objective meaning, Ford perceives Imagism as a technically sophisticated and musical poetry with abstract content. Therefore, even Ford—who was one of the main influences on Imagism, as well as a poet included in *Des Imagistes*, and the critic with the most insightful review of that anthology—did not fully understand how Imagism employed its functional elements to create an Image.

In an interview he gave to publicize *Des Imagistes*, Pound claims that all the poets collected in that anthology agreed that “the cake icing on top of poetry [...] should be avoided” (qtd. in *Ezra Pound and Dorothy* 325). With that comment, Pound seems to acknowledge that not all the authors included in *Des Imagistes* were necessarily aware of his concept of the Imagist process. Pound knew that he deliberately chose not to not define the Doctrine of the Image, and, as such, could not expect each of the poets in his collection to be familiar with the unique way he believed imagery should function in an Imagist poem or the way it coalesces with the Imagist tenets to produce an a poetic Image. Consequently, in his statements on *Des Imagistes*, Pound chose to emphasize the assembled Imagists’ employment of the superficial aspects of the Imagist tenets through their laconicism, concrete nouns, natural diction, and individualized rhythms. Thus, rather than attempting to offer a collection of Imagist poets or poetic Images, Pound,

more likely, decided to offer a representative collection of Imagist traits. Like an exploded diagram of Imagism, then, *Des Imagistes* includes each element of the Imagist vortex and uses their relationships to present an Image of Imagist practice and the Imagist movement.

Section II: Editorial Images: *Des Imagistes* and Pound's Presentation of Imagism

Despite the apparent stability of the Imagist tenets and Doctrine of the Image, Pound's concept of Imagism was not the deliberately strategic approach to writing poetry that it seemed. Instead, it functioned more as a consistently evolving methodology for achieving efficiency and precision in poetry. Even though the hygienic aspects of the Imagist tenets were, for the most part, straightforward, Pound never elaborated on the specifics of his Doctrine of the Image and, therefore, never explicitly stated how it worked with the tenets to create an Image. Judging by his poetry and essays, Pound conceived of Imagist practice as using all the formal elements of a poem and only the words necessary to present sensorially perceivable manifestations of their content. To produce poetic Images, then, poets must employ all the Imagist tenets and must do so knowing that, along with restricting the language of the poem, those tenets utilize common dictions, concrete nouns, and individualized rhythms as forms of imagery. Without being privy to that information, though, many of the poets Pound included in both the Imagist movement and anthology rarely feature the full complement of Imagist attributes in their poetry.¹⁸ Thus, Imagist poetry exhibits a variety of interpretations and

¹⁸ In a 1940 lecture entitled, "The Appreciation of Poetry," Flint recalls the attributes of Imagist practice and states:

We had our principles and our precepts. We did not like the tumpy-tum of hurdy-gurdy verses; and we said so. We wanted free verse, which is a mistranslation of the French

aspects of Pound's Imagist program more often than the concentration of complex meaning that Pound envisioned as the Image itself.

To discuss how Pound accounted for that array of Imagist style and product in *Des Imagistes*, this section will explicate the deliberate manner with which he selected and arranged the contents of *Des Imagistes* to create an accurate presentation of Imagism itself. Unlike his "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris" articles wherein he inserted interpretive prose sections between his poetic "photographs" to explain their importance and relationships, Pound's developing understanding of the Image allowed him to remove the connective sinews between the pictures or Luminous Details of his Imagist anthology so they could radiate with their individual and amalgamated significance. In using the front matter and poems as the individual images contained within the larger poetic Image of *Des Imagistes*, Pound did not explain Imagism; he offered a seemingly unified presentation of the various influences, themes, and styles that came together to form the Imagist movement. Moreover, by dividing his contributions to that anthology according to his early and late concepts of the Image, Pound not only positioned himself and his poetry as the core of the Imagist Vortex around which all other Imagist practice revolved, but also established that the main stabilizing force in Imagism was his own evolving understanding of it.

Pound's attempt to present the many facets of Imagism in *Des Imagistes* begins with his title for that collection. That he chose to name his anthology "*Des Imagistes*"

phrase, *vers libre*. We did not like rhyme; we thought it an intrusion into the expression of poetry. And we had a doctrine of the image, which none of us knew anything about. (qtd in Harmer 17).

With Flint being one of the earliest members of Pound's Imagist movement, his comments illustrate the assembled Imagists' general confusion over the elements of Pound's Imagist program and its poetic Image. In fact, based on those statements, Flint seems to think Imagism consists solely of free verse and an indefinite or non-existent Doctrine of the Image.

rather than “*Les Imagistes*” seems significant. With “les” being a definite article in French, “*Les Imagistes*” would have meant that book included all the Imagist poets. “Des,” on the other hand, can signify possession over some implied noun or, contrary to “les,” act as an indefinite article that suggests the anthology offers only an in-complete collection of Imagist poets. For his part, Richard Aldington noted Pound’s odd choice of title and chose to read “des” as referring to possession. He wrote, “What Ezra thought [*Des Imagistes*] meant remains a mystery, unless the word “Anthologie” was assumed to precede it” (*Life for Life’s Sake* 137). Although Aldington’s interpretation of that title makes perfect sense, one might also consider that Pound could have chosen “des” because he wanted to recognize the traditional efficacy of Imagist technique. In his staged interview with Flint that *Poetry* published under the title, “Imagisme,” Pound makes a point of stating the Imagists’ “only endeavor was to write in accordance with the best tradition, as they found it in the best writers of all time” (199). Thus, rather than simply acting as an incomplete title, “*Des Imagistes*” might, from the very outset, work to present the variety of influences and techniques that Pound channeled into and consolidated as his Imagist program.

Along with its implications regarding the anthology’s contents and contributors, the French title *Des Imagistes* also subtly aligns Imagism with French Symbolism and the subsequent poetic movements that grew out of it. In his 1912 article, “Contemporary French Poetry” Flint discusses the Symbolists as “attempt[ing] to evoke the subconscious element of life, to set vibrating the infinity within us, by the exquisite juxtaposition of images” (86). He also mentions their creation of vers libre due to an “interior necessity to rid their art of the grossness of the sleep that had fallen upon it – to bring it nearer to pure

music (88-89). After locating the Symbolists as the forerunners of contemporary image-based and vers-libre poetics, Flint then introduces several of the poetic schools that developed out of the Symbolist impulse. Among those he mentions are Néo-Mallarmisme, Néo Paganisme, Unanimisme (also known as Whitmanisme), Impulsionisme, Futurisme, and Paroxysme. After reading those articles and noticing those techniques and names, Pound decided that he, too, would lead a poetic movement and that it would also be an “isme.” In his book, *The Imagist Poets*, Andrew Thacker comments on Pound’s adaptation of the names of those French schools, but also notes that, in England, the French title alone might have generated interest in “Imagisme.” He writes, “Calling this diverse bunch of poets Imagists marked them as a distinct product, the initial use of the French “imagiste” form being the equivalent of gilding your new soap with an ‘exotic’ foreign name to catch the eye of the public” (16). Thus, by appropriating his own “ism” and spelling it as though it were also French, Pound subtly acknowledges an affinity between Imagism and the assorted French “ismes” in such a way that he might procure some of the interest given to those French schools for his own movement while also allowing it to maintain its independence and integrity of design.

The association between the French groups and Imagism that Pound wanted to develop, though, was complex and consisted of contrasting the two schools as much as did comparing them. In a letter to Margaret Anderson, Pound states that he “made the word [Imagisme]—on a Hulme basis—and carefully made a name that was not and never had been used in France...specifically to distinguish ‘us’ from any of the French groups catalogued by Flint in the Poetry Review” (*Letters to Margaret Anderson* 155). He would also later claim, “[O]ne does not want to be called a symbolist, because symbolism has

usually been associated with mushy technique” (“Vorticism” 282), but he obviously derived the name for his poetic movement and anthology from Symbolism and those other French poetic schools. In naming his anthology, *Des Imagistes*, then, Pound cleverly alluded to the French poetic programs that he used as both positive and negative models for his own Imagist campaign.

Continuing to define Imagism through the materiality of his anthology, Pound also includes a Greek epigraph on the back of its first title page. The epigraph, taken from the “Lament for Bion,” appears in its original Greek and an English translation. Notably, for the English version, Pound chose Richard Aldington’s translation titled “The Mourning for Bion,”¹⁹ which reads:

And she also was of Sikilia and was gay in
the valleys of Ætna, and knew the Doric
singing. (2)

Even though this quotation, when read in the context of the entire poem, concerns the speaker’s desire “to continue, in a new song, a vital inheritance,” and, thereby, obliquely introduces the aims of Imagist practice, it also initiates the alignment of Imagism with Greek poetics (Bock 160) and, in particular, the poet Bion prior to offering any actual Imagist poetry.

In beginning his anthology with a quotation concerning the Greek poet, Bion of Smyrna, Pound also appears to clarify the Imagists’ use of “the musical phrase.” In “A Visiting Card,” Pound states, “no one can become an expert [on metre] without knowing Bion” and “[t]he study of metre will require an odd half-hour or so with [him]” (*Selected Prose* 323, 328). To include an epigraph that refers to that same poet at the start of an

¹⁹ Aldington’s “The Mourning for Bion” first appeared in the September 15, 1913 issue of *The New Freewoman*.

anthology that features poets experimenting with free verse, therefore, seems a coincidence or contradiction on Pound's behalf. Pound also does not quote directly from the work of Bion, but takes the epigraph from a work "on Bion" that focuses on the death of that poet. Based on Pound's association of Bion with meter, one might conclude that Pound uses that quotation to comment on the death of metrical forms in modern poetry, or—and more appropriately—one might view that reference as Pound making an argument for the proper method by which a poet should come to use free verse.

In his 1917 essay, "Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry," T. S. Eliot asserts, "There are not, as a matter of fact, two kinds of verse, the strict and the free; there is only a mastery which comes of being so well trained that form is an instinct and can be adapted to the particular purpose in hand" (172). He also determines that "Pound's *vers libre* is such as is only possible for a poet who has worked tirelessly with rigid forms and different systems of metric" (167-68). Pound adds legitimacy to that opinion of himself, when, in a discussion "Re Vers Libre," he states that "progress lies rather in an attempt to approximate classical quantitative metres (NOT to copy them) than in carelessness regarding such things" ("A Retrospect" 13). With that background in and belief regarding meter, Pound's inclusion of an epigraph at the beginning of *Des Imagistes* that alludes to Bion—the poet he would later claim as an expert on meter—seems to reinforce the argument that Pound constructed *Des Imagistes* to present the origins and attributes of Imagist practice rather than theorize them. In the case of the opening epigraph, Pound seems to highlight that the Imagists studied and understood poetic tradition, and their use of free verse did not break from it as much as reestablish the best of its practices by building from and merging them with more modern approaches.

Following that epigraph, Pound continues his effort to provide a definitional presentation of Imagism through the implicit associations created by his arrangement of the poems and poets in *Des Imagistes*. In his 2006 article, “Ezra Pound’s Poetic Anthologies and the Architecture of Reading,” John G. Nichols broaches that topic by stating, “*Des Imagistes* juxtaposes poems that thematize the clashing of poetic traditions [. . .] or exhibit new styles. In effect, the anthology foregrounds the processes by which new poetry emerges from prior literary traditions, specifically poetry that demands new reading habits.” To support his point, Nichols discusses the Imagists’ prevalent use of Greek themes and Pound’s “imitations of Chinese poetry” (177). Despite that excellent assessment of Pound’s movement from Greek to Asian subjects, though, one might better describe Nichols’ “clash” of traditions or an “exhibition of new styles” as an amalgamation of poetic approaches, ancient and modern.

To illustrate that clash of traditions, Nichols cites the anthology’s first poem, Richard Aldington’s “Choricos,” as “boldly announc[ing] a break with the past with the opening line, ‘The ancient songs / Pass deathward mournfully’” (177). Rather than reveling in or glorifying a contemporary approach to poetry that leaves classical modes on the brink of extinction, though, Aldington’s poem seems to mourn the loss of the ancient traditions that have fallen into desuetude. In fact, in an apparent act of solidarity, Aldington uses his punctuation in “Choricos” to transform that poem from a comment on the loss of “the ancient songs” into one of those ancient songs itself. This transition occurs in the fifth full stanza and reads:

And of all the ancient songs
Passing to the swallow blue halls
By the dark streams of Persephone,
This only remains:

That we turn to thee,
Death,
That we turn to thee, singing
One last song. (8)

By including a colon after the first four lines of this stanza, which begins with “of all ancient songs” and ends with “This only remains,” Aldington changes his poem from a consideration of the mortality of ancient songs into a mimetic embodiment of its subject, wherein its speaker joins the chorus and the poem becomes the last of their songs. With that transition of perspective and purpose, Aldington creates a space within his poem that allows his speaker to step outside of common temporal restrictions and present the poem’s subject from both a modern and ancient point of reference. Far from representing a clash of traditions, then, this poem demonstrates a merging of perspectives and technique based on a similarity of design and intent.

Following the first two poems, “Choricos,” and “To a Greek Marble,” which instantly align Imagism with Greek poetics, Aldington’s third piece, “Au Vieux Jardin,” takes a French title like the anthology, and, in mentioning “water lilies” and the color “rose” (11), might also allude to Baudelaire and his *Fleurs du Mal*. By including and placing Aldington’s “Au Vieux Jardin,” where he does, Pound quickly and adeptly reestablishes the hint of association between Symbolism and Imagism before Aldington returns to his Greek themes and H.D. reinforces them. Thus, in moving back and forth between French and Greek references in the opening materials of *Des Imagistes*, Pound illustrates that Imagism is neither a Modern nor a Classical approach to poetry, but, instead, emerges out the confluence of several threads of influence.

Even though his poems in *Des Imagistes* may not consistently be as technically precise or image-based as the work of some of the other Imagists, Aldington often comes

up with the most inventive types of images. Take, for instance, the large-scale text image he presents in “To Atthis (*After the Manuscript of Sappho now in Berlin*).” Working from J. M. Edmonds’ “restoration” of the same piece, Aldington arranges his version into terse and epigrammatic stanzas that mimic the fragmentary remains of Sappho’s poetry:

Atthis, far from me and dear Mnasidika,
Dwells in Sardis;
Many times she was near us
So that we lived life well
Like the far-famed goddess
Whom above all things music delighted.

And now she is first among the Lydian women
As the mighty sun, the rose-fingered moon,
Beside the great stars.

And the light fades from the bitter sea
And in like manner from the rich-blossoming earth;
And the dew is shed upon the flowers,
Rose and soft meadow-sweet
And many-coloured melilote.

Many things told are remembered of sterile Atthis.

I yearn to behold thy delicate soul
To satiate my desire. . . .
. (19)

Comparatively, Edmond’s version reads:

Atthis, our loved Mnasidica dwells at far-off Sardis, but she often sends her thoughts hither, thinking how once we used to live in the days when she thought thee like a glorious goddess, and loved thy song best. And now she shines among the dames of Lydia as after sunset the rosy-fingered moon beside the stars that are about her, when she spreads her light o’er flowery field, while the good dew lies on the ground and the roses revive and the dainty anthrisc and the honey-lotus with all its

blooms. And oftentime when our beloved, wandering abroad, calls to mind her gentle Atthis, the pain devours her tender breast with the pain of longing; and she cries aloud to us to come thither; and what she says we know full well, thou and I, for Night, the many-eared, calls it to us across the dividing sea. (“Three Fragments of Sappho” 102)

In looking over the differences between Aldington and Edmond’s versions of this poem, one can note how Aldington employs the Imagist tenets and Doctrine of the Image to create an Image. Through his concision and free-verse rhythms, Aldington strips Edmond’s text of practically everything save its imagery, and, by arranging what remains and into free verse, the poem takes on the visual form of Sappho’s partially disintegrated papyrus. In describing the physical state of Sappho’s original poem, Kenner explains that the parchment consists of “a torn beginning, a torn ending, and in between them five stanzas entire” (56). In his own version, therefore, Aldington sacrifices the “torn beginning” and signifies the “torn ending” with an elaborate series of ellipses so he may simply offer the “five stanzas entire.” Through that attempt to physically replicate, or imbue his poem with the fragmentary and fissured appearance of Sappho’s parchment, then, Aldington offers his readers a poem that presents the intellectual and emotional content, as well as the physical materiality, of Sappho’s original piece.

Coming after Aldington’s work, H.D.’s poems not only reassert the Greek influence on Imagism, but also present a unique type of poetic Image: the negative Image. Whereas Pound’s concept of Imagist practice utilizes the formal attributes of a poem to present sensorially perceivable manifestations of their subject matter, H.D.’s poems actually emphasize the non-presence of her subjects. In *Des Imagistes*, five of

H.D.'s six poems take proper names as their titles and four of those titles name specific gods. Eileen Gregory contends that poems of this sort operate in a "theophanic" tradition wherein they attempt to summon gods and then materialize their presence through imagery (84-85). Yet, the titular figures of H.D.'s poems do not physically appear; they exist in the silences between and affect the presentation of the material entities that do populate those poems. Therefore, even though Priapus does not substantially inhabit the poem that H.D. named after him, the imagery of that poem actually presents his absence. Note how the apostrophic address and list of offerings in the final two stanzas of that poem immaterially incorporate Priapus as the subject of that poem:

O rough-hewn
God of the orchard,
I bring thee an offering;
Do thou, alone unbeautiful
(Son of god),
Spar us from loveliness.

The fallen hazel-nuts,
Stripped late of their green sheaths,
The grapes, red-purple,
Their berries
Dripping with wine,
Pomegranates already broken,
And shrunken fig,
And quinces untouched,
I bring thee as offering. (25)

By addressing Priapus rather than materially presenting him, H.D.'s poem makes not Priapus, but its speaker's petition to him its focus. Moreover, as one reads down the list of offerings that the end the poem, each additional item magnifies both the speaker's desire to communicate with that god and his failure to either appear or respond.

Therefore, while H.D.'s poems in *Des Imagistes* consist of things, they are actually about,

and gain their strength from, the non-present negative images that have no form and speak only through silence.

F. S. Flint's section follows H.D.'s Greek-themed poetry and begins with a poem that returns the readers of *Des Imagistes* to contemporary London. In fact, Flint's entire poetic contribution features modernized content and stylistic considerations.

Thematically, Flint's poems focus on the struggles of the lower class in an increasingly industrialized city. Stylistically, however, Flint employs free-verse rhythms and, unlike any other poet in the anthology, chooses to capitalize only the words that begin sentences instead of those at the beginning of each line. Appearing where they do in that collection, Flint's poems, with their Modern affects, counter the still slightly archaic language and Classical themes of Aldington and H.D. By creating a geographic, temporal, and stylistic shift in poetic progression of *Des Imagistes*, Flint's work, again, stresses Imagism's ability to assimilate traits from disparate historical periods and traditions.

In addition to his Modern themes and styles, Flint's poem "The Swan," which concludes his work in the anthology, reasserts the connection between Imagism and Symbolism while also illustrating their differences. Having written extensively on Symbolism and contemporary French poetry, Flint must have known that both Baudelaire's "Le Cygne" and Mallarmé's "Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui" also use a swan as their subject and central symbol. By also choosing a swan for the subject of his poem, Flint not only recognizes and alludes to his Symbolist predecessors, but also uses his technique to strengthen their association with Imagism by initially presenting his swan through the "laconic speech of the Imagistes" (Pound *Selected Letters* 11):

Over the green cold leaves
and the rippled silver

and the tarnished copper
of its neck and beak,
toward the deep black water
beneath the arches,
the swan floats slowly.

And then as an ephemeral symbol:

Into the dark of the arch the swan floats
and into the black depth of my sorrow
it bears a white rose of flame. (35)

One might view this confluence of poetic approaches as diluting the Imagist integrity of the piece. Yet, if one accepts Pound's articulation of the "one-image poem" as "one idea set on top of another" ("Vorticism" 286), then it is possible to view Flint as creating something akin to a "super-position" by layering his Imagist presentation of that swan "on top" of his personal and Symbolist interpretation of it. By deciding to include this work in *Des Imagistes* and use it as the last of Flint's offerings, Pound directly speaks to the degree of influence that Symbolism had on Imagist practice and how much Imagism might benefit from that correlation. Moreover, by creating an Image that includes a symbol within its structural makeup, Flint offers a poetic sequence that does literally enact the process of Imagism growing out of Symbolist technique.

Following Flint, Pound includes three poems by three different authors—Skipwith Cannell, Amy Lowell, and William Carlos Williams—that, with their use of free verse and direct presentation of their subjects, demonstrate strength in or reinforce at least two aspects of Pound's Imagist program. Cannell's use of free-verse rhythms inspired by the Bible (Fletcher 57-60), for instance, create a sound quality in his "Nocturnes" that many of *Des Imagistes'* readers probably would have found as the most natural or familiar of the free verse in *Des Imagistes*. Lowell also employs free verse, but the real

accomplishment of her “In a Garden” is the way its imagery appeals to senses other than sight. With lines such as, “Damp smell the ferns in tunnels of stone, / Where trickle and splash the fountains” and “It falls, the water; / And the air is throbbing with it,” that poem allows its readers to smell, hear, and feel its subjects. Williams, then, features free verse in “Postlude” as well, but uses the sound quality and length of his lines to hinge consecutive images together:

Now that I have cooled to you
Let there be gold of tarnished masonry,
Temples soothed by the sun to ruin
That sleep utterly.
Give me hand for the dances,
Ripples at Philae, in and out,
And lips, my Lesbian,
Wall flowers that once were flame. (39)

By containing assonance and alliteration along with a syllabic pattern of 7, 10, 9, 5, 7, 8, 6, and 7, Williams creates a regulatory line length of seven syllables in that stanza that sonically links his images together as the other lines surge away from and back to that standard. Even though none of these poets or poems presents a fully functional Image, they do use the attributes of Imagism in new and inventive ways that do rely on imagery as a means to materialize their content.

Prior to that grouping, Pound arranged his anthology so the work of Imagism’s main practitioners would identify the origins and principles of that poetic practice. With Cannéll, Lowell, and Williams, however, he displays the effects that Imagism can have upon the work of writers less notably associated with Imagism and/or still in the early stages of their career. Each of these writers had already come under his sphere of influence in one way or another. By including their work in *Des Imagistes*, therefore, Pound could help accelerate their careers while also broadening his Imagist net to

present works that did not bear the traces of the influences upon Imagism as much as highlight the consolidated influence of Imagism itself.

Even though Pound incorporates James Joyce's "I Hear an Army" as the next poem in *Des Imagistes* to also help Joyce's literary career, the presence of that work makes another implicit argument regarding the Imagists' use of free verse. In his poem, Joyce, like the other Imagists, treats his subjects directly. Unlike those other Imagists, though, he also writes his poem according to a complex metrical form.²⁰ Thus, much like his earlier allusion to Bion, Pound uses Joyce's poem to demonstrate that Imagism does not require its poets to use of free verse as much as it challenges them to identify and utilize the form that best expresses the subject of their poem, whether it be free verse or not. Moreover, by shaping the formal pattern of his poem according to its content rather than fitting that content into a pre-established form, Joyce reinforces that Imagist free verse does not equate to metrical abandon but, instead, grows out of French concept of *vers libre* by using the poem's lines as individual units of composition.

Interestingly, political considerations seem to have weighed as heavily as poetic technique in Pound's decisions on which poets he included in *Des Imagistes*. Widely regarded as a tireless promoter of other writers as well as a literary impresario, Pound frequently helped those whose work he admired to find publication. As a self-appointed arbiter of taste, however, Pound endorsed who tended to share, or demonstrate sympathies with, his own aesthetic predispositions. Hence, and as Robert Frost took pains

²⁰ Layeh Bock states that Joyce's poem "is cast in a complex pattern of alternating duple and triple feet, and follows patterns of rhyme and assonance" (231).

to acknowledge,²¹ much of the effort Pound expended on others solidified his literary position and beliefs as well. Nowhere is this dual-purposed agenda of Pound's more prevalent in *Des Imagistes* than with that group of poets that begins with Cannéll and ends with Joyce. Pound had a specific reason to include each of these writers beyond the merit of their poetry: Cannéll was also an American poet experimenting with free verse who came to England by way of Philadelphia; Lowell had already committed herself to becoming an Imagist, and her wealth and social background could assist a fledgling poetic movement; Williams was a friend and artistic confidant of Pound's since their time together at the University of Pennsylvania; and Joyce had been recommended by Pound's most notable literary connection, William Butler Yeats. To think that Pound chose these or any of the other writers to appear in *Des Imagistes* based solely on personal or political reasons, though, would probably be a mistake. Rather, Pound seems to have selected authors whose work contained elements of his concept of Imagism, whether it represented the past, present, or burgeoning future of the movement. That he maintained personal relationships with many of the contributors to his anthology only suggests that they had the opportunity to influence, or be influenced by, his concept of Imagism and, therefore, merited inclusion in an anthology that attempted to present the policies, product, and development of the Imagist movement.

By both preceding Pound's work and providing different interpretations of Imagist practice, the poems of Cannéll, Lowell, Williams, and Joyce also function as

²¹ In *The Verse Revolutionaries*, Helen Carr characterizes Robert Frost as "the most bitter and resentful recipient of [Pound's] assistance" (595). Additionally, Lawrence Thompson, in his three-volume biography of the New England poet, includes a poem that Frost wrote and sent to F. S. Flint in which Frost suggests that Pound only helped him in order to improve his own literary standing (*The Early Years* 421-3). Thompson additionally quotes Frost as later referring to Pound's efforts to help poets, such as Frost, as "selfish generosity" (*The Later Years* 223).

something of a palate cleanser before the main course of Pound. While having his section come after those four poems draws attention to his poetry, it also allows Pound to reassert the core attributes of Imagism before offering more variations from it. Thus, Pound returns to Greek themes and his early concept of the Image with his first two poems, “Doria” and “The Return,” before then including four Asian-styled poems he wrote according to his later formulation of the Image-as-Vortex. Through that arrangement, Pound reestablishes the Greek influence on Imagism that began the anthology and introduces the Asian aesthetic that will appear again nearer to the end of the collection. Moreover, by dividing his poems according to his earlier and later versions of the Image and placing them in the anthology where he does, Pound literally places his poems at the center of the Imagist Vortex and uses them to illustrate the progressive and variable nature of his Imagist program.

After his own work, Pound inserts a poem by his literary mentor, Ford Madox Ford, that is the single longest piece in *Des Imagistes*. Despite that neither Pound nor Ford ever considered Ford an “Imagist,” they both understood the influential role he played in shaping the practices of that school. Pound frequently credited Ford with helping him uncover and apply many of the techniques he would channel into his Imagist program. Ford expresses a similar view of himself in the foreword to the *Imagist Anthology 1930* when he writes that he would “like to think that [his] ceaseless hammerings [. . .] had their effect on the promoters of [Imagism],” and that he “considered” the Imagists as “writers perfectly calculated to carry on the work that [he] had, not so much begun, as tried to foster in others” (“Those” 18). Therefore, even though Pound would often define Imagism by contrasting it to Ford’s Impressionism, his

decision to include Ford in an Imagist anthology, once again, marks his willingness to recognize and define Imagism through the presence of its influences.

With its three-and-a-half pages of uneven and often obvious end rhyme and alliteration, Ford's poem, "In the Little Old Market Place (To the Memory of A. V.), does not exactly feature the finely crafted rhythms that Pound wanted to associate with Imagist poetry. Even with its faults, though, Ford's end rhyme allows him string multiple images together in a seemingly naturalized manner. The first stanza of his poem reads:

It rains, it rains,
From gutters and drains
And gargoyles and gables:
It drips from the tables
That tell us the tolls upon grains,
Oxen, asses, sheep, turkeys and fowls
Set into the rain-soaked wall
Of the old Town Hall. (47)

Like a more formal pattern, Ford's end rhyme requires the addition of non-essential language in order to fulfill its audible expectations. If it were not for the rhyme scheme, the repetition of "it rains" in the first line would be unnecessary, as would many of the other objects listed in those lines. In his "I Gather the Limbs of Osiris" articles, Pound specifically identifies how rhyme can work against precision and poetic craft by writing:

I have no special interest in rhyme. It tends to draw away the artist's attention from forty to ninety per cent. of his syllables and concentrate it on the admittedly more prominent remainder. It tends to draw him draw him into prolixity and pull him away from the thing. (370)

While Ford's end rhyme does "draw him into prolixity," it does not necessarily "pull him away from thing." Rather, Ford uses series of images to fill the extra syllabic spaces

dictated by his rhythmic patterns and, in doing so, makes the abundance of Images in his poem seem unforced even if his rhymes are a bit affected.

To reestablish the terse precision of Imagism, while also reasserting its connection to Asian literature, Pound included Allen Upward's poetic series, "Scented Leaves from a Chinese Jar," after Ford's poem. Even though Upward's piece sparked Pound's interest in Chinese literature, Pound placed it after his own poems in *Des Imagistes*. While that arrangement certainly allows Pound to introduce the Asian aesthetic into that anthology and, thereby, subtly creates the impression that his familiarity and use of that style both precedes and supersedes that of Upward's, it also draws attention to way Pound and his poetry serve as the focus or main whirlpoint of the Imagist vortex. Even though the number of poems prior to Pound's section in *Des Imagistes* far outweighs the number of those that follow it, the themes and styles of that earlier section are predominantly Greek and French whereas the later section repeats only one earlier theme: the Asian aesthetic in Pound's poems. Therefore, despite not being the numerical center of the anthology, Pound's poems, in exhibiting Imagist traits while also shifting from Greek to Asian themes, establish the true center of Imagist practice, the Imagist anthology, and the Vortex in which they both participate.

Upward's poems do not just magnify the Asian aesthetic introduced by Pound's poems, though, they also offer exquisite examples of the "musical phrase's" ability to create non-overt "sonic images." Specifically, in "Scented Leaves from a Chinese Jar," Upward employs the cadences and speech-patterns that he associates with traditional Chinese poetry and philosophical maxims. Take, for instance, "The Sea Shell," which is a single poem within that series: "To the passionate lover, whose sighs come back to him

on every breeze, all the world is like a murmuring sea shell” (52). Notably, Upward admitted to Pound that his poems had no definitive sources. In a September 1913 letter to Harriet Monroe, Pound writes, “Upward is a very interesting chap. He says, by the way, that the Chinese stuff is not a paraphrase, but that he made it up out of his head, using a certain amount of Chinese reminiscence” (*Selected Letters* 22-23). Thus, rather than working from a specific source and attempting to replicate their original rhythms in his own work, Upward chose to write his poems according to the sound structures that his memory had fused with Chinese poetics. The rhythm of those poems, then, do not represent Asian poetry as much as carry the tone and phrasing that he believed presented their mood, emotional content, and subjects in the most accurate manner.

Upward even takes the musical phrases’ ability to participate in the materialization of a poem’s subject matter a step further in “The Intoxicated Poet” section of his “Scented Leaves from a Chinese Jar.” In that individual poem, Upward’s speaker is not “The Intoxicated poet,” but someone quoting that figure. The section reads:

A poet, having taken the bridle off his tongue, spoke thus: “More fragrant than the heliotrope, which blooms all the year round, better than vermilion letters on tablets of sandal, are thy kisses, thou shy one!” (51)

As opposed to writing a dramatic monologue or persona poem that approximates or acts as the speech of the “Intoxicated Poet,” Upward chooses to quote that poet and, in doing so, presents his readers with the exact subject of the poem. Through that process, the speech act becomes a fact; it is the thing itself and functions as a material image. Neither Upward nor his speaker filters the words of the Intoxicated Poet before they reach the audience. Instead, Upward permits his readers to experience those words and, therefore,

the subject of his poem directly. By using his free-verse rhythms to capture and present the speech patterns of his poem's speakers, Upward creates "sonic images" that audibly present the subject matter and content of his poems.

While Upward's series supports the presentation of Imagism as a poetic movement aligned with, and containing traits of, Asian poetics, Cournos's poem demonstrates that Imagism not only adopts the best practices from the best traditions, but also improves upon those texts by reapplying its hybridized poetic method back upon them. In "The Rose," Cournos, in a manner similar to that of Aldington, H.D., and Pound, rewrites a poem originally composed in a foreign language—in this case, Polish—to highlight and emphasize its own intrinsic Imagist traits. Even though the appearance of Cournos' poem in *Des Imagistes* may have something to do with Cournos' connection to Alfred Kreymborg who became that anthology's initial publisher, the fact that Pound would use it as the final poem in his collection definitely speaks to its quality as an Imagist work.

As an emigrant of Russian-Jewish descent, Cournos offers *Des Imagistes* yet another cultural influence to include within its fold. More significantly, however, Cournos's piece adapts a poem by K. Tetmaier according to Imagist principles and, in doing so, demonstrates how one can reapply the amalgamated technical principles of Imagism back upon one of its sources in order to reinvent it. In fact, Cournos' version of "The Rose" contains approximately 200 fewer words than W. Zalevski's literal translation of Tetmaier's poem (Bock 256). For his version, Cournos's immediately removes the original's vague description of a "tranquil, sunny sea under the noonday sun," and rewrites the following imprecise description of a "huge sun full of fire" as the

more image-based, “the great, burning disc of the sun” (256). Cournos then thins out Tetmaier’s depiction of his speaker throwing a rose into the water and the waves returning the petals, from ten lines into a three, which read:

I threw the rose into the sea, and watched it, caught in the wave,
receding, red on the snow-white foam, paler on the emerald wave.
And the sea continued to return it to me, again and again, at last no
longer a flower, but strewn petals on restless water.
So with the heart, and with all proud things. In the end nothing
remains but a handful of petals of what was once a proud flower...(*Des Imagistes* 54)

With his more concise rendering of Tetmaier’s poem, Cournos not only demonstrates the Imagist tenet of “direct treatment of the thing,” but he also exhibits the two “devices” listed in “Imagisme” by which the Imagists “persuaded approaching poetasters to attend their instruction: 1. They showed him his own thought already splendidly expressed in some classic. 2. They rewrote his verses before his eyes, using about ten words to his fifty (199-200).” Granted, Cournos neither showed Tetmaier his own verse expressed in “some classic,” nor did he “rewrite” Tetmaier’s poem “before his eyes,” but he did use it as the exemplary classic that “splendidly expressed” an oft-felt poetic emotion, and he employed the technical principles of Imagism to present that emotion in an even more direct and concise manner. Through that transference of technique, Cournos—like the other more recognized Imagists—illustrates that Imagism exists not as a poetic method built upon the clashing of varied traditions, but as one that utilizes a symbiotic relationship with its influences to produce original works neither derivative nor without literary precedent.

Ultimately, one finds that, as editor of *Des Imagistes*, Pound manipulates the order, arrangement, and allusive potentials of both the poets and poetry in that anthology

to offer an Image of Imagism itself. Much like his later concept of super-positioning, which places ideas directly on top of another and uses their relationships to generate complex meaning, Pound organizes the poems and poets in *Des Imagistes* so that their similarities and differences simultaneously reveal and reinforce the defining aspects of his Imagist program as well as its ancient and modern origins. That Pound began experimenting with super-positioning in his Asian poems but did not specifically refer to it as a poetic technique until after the publication of *Des Imagistes* also suggests that his editorial work on that anthology may have helped him clarify his understanding of the Image-as-Vortex. In fact, by allowing his anthology to present those aspects of Imagism rather than declare them in a preface, Pound not only reveals the variety of Imagist practice, but also his role as the gravitational center of that Imagist system that keeps it in orbit and provides it with a coherent shape. Most importantly, though, Pound uses the anthological arrangement of *Des Imagistes* to demonstrate that, as a poetic program, Imagism attempts to meld its various influences, themes, and formal attributes into a single, direct, and precise poetic effort—or that, even prior to Pound’s recognition of it as such, Imagism existed and operated as a “Vortex.”

Conclusion

Following the publication of *Des Imagistes* in February and March, the first issue of the Vorticist journal *BLAST* appeared on July 2, 1914. That journal, which described itself as, “A Review of the Great English Vortex” (Lewis 1), included Pound’s first article on Vorticism entitled, “Vortex. Pound.” For Pound, who had previously organized and popularized Imagism, this article marked something of a public shift in his artistic affiliations. As the article makes clear, though, Pound did not want to switch his allegiance from Imagism to Vorticism as much as he wanted to consolidate them under a single banner. Unlike Imagism, which applied itself only to poetry, Vorticism encompassed a wide range of artistic mediums including sculpture and painting as well as poetry. In fact, in “Vortex. Pound.,” Pound explains Vorticism as if he was simply adapting his Imagist process to other art forms so they might, too, practice the same efficiency and produce the same highly energized product as the poetic Image. In such a context, the term “Image” becomes synonymous with the poetic “Vortex.” To illustrate that point, Pound—using language very similar to his earlier statements on the Image—explains:

The vortex is the point of maximum energy.

It represents, in mechanics, the greatest efficiency.

We use the words “greatest efficiency” in the precise sense—as they would be used in a text book of MECHANICS.

You may think of man as that toward which perception moves. You may think of him as the TOY of circumstance, as the plastic substance RECEIVING impressions.

OR you may think him as DIRECTING a certain fluid force against circumstance, as CONCEIVING instead of merely observing and reflecting (153).

Obviously, “the point of maximum energy” defines the Image as well as the Vortex. Moreover, the distinction Pound makes between “RECEIVING” and “CONCEIVING” echoes his earlier criticisms of Ford’s Impressionism where he wrote, “the *conception* of poetry is a process more intense than the *reception* of an impression. And no impression, however carefully articulated, can, recorded, convey that feeling of sudden light which the work of art should and must convey” (“Book of the Month” 133). By contrasting Vorticism to Impressionism in the same manner that he contrasted Imagism to Impressionism, Pound directly acknowledges that Imagism and Vorticism are of the same root or, maybe more accurately, that Imagism had matured into the bloom of Vorticism.

To leave absolutely no question as to the relationship between Imagism and Vorticism, Pound ends his article by writing:

The vorticist will use only the primary media of his art.

The primary pigment of poetry is the Image.

The vorticist will not allow the primary expression of any concept or emotion to drag itself out into mimicry.

In painting Kandinski, Picasso.

In poetry this by, “H.D.”

Whirl up sea -----
Whirl your pointed pines,
Splash your great pines
On our rocks,
Hurl your green over us,
Cover us with your pools of fir. (154)

With those comments, Pound immediately establishes Imagism as the poetic precedent to the Vorticist approach to art. In using H.D.'s poem, "Oread," as an example of the Image, though, Pound does not affiliate Vorticism with the entire breadth of Imagist poetry as evidenced in *Des Imagistes*, but, instead, associates it with his later super-positioned concept of the Image-as-Vortex. The speaker of H.D.'s poem is an Oread or wood nymph who can only comprehend the materiality of the sea in relation to her knowledge of the forest. The entire content of that poem, therefore, acts as a slightly elaborated super-position that presents sea imagery in terms of trees. Thus, Pound, once more, finds H.D.'s poetry anticipating or applying his concepts of the Image, but Pound now promotes H.D.'s work as a quintessential example of the Image-as-Vortex.

Even though Imagism chronologically preceded Vorticism as a definable artistic movement, Pound developed his concept of the Imagist process and its poetic Image by allowing multiple vortices of influence, technique, and meaning to converge and crystalize. The Vortex simply renames that process and its product according to Pound's later understandings of them and transforms Imagism into a larger, pan-artistic movement. It makes sense, then, that Pound—after discovering the super-position and using it to present an Image of Imagism in *Des Imagistes*—would recognize that his Imagist theories had reached another plateau and validate that process by renaming it and applying it to different art forms. Yet, what seemed a natural transition for Pound, and one that he believed the other Imagists would willingly accept, initiated a chain of events that created such confusion over that nature of Imagism, the Image, and their relationship to Vorticism that it continues to baffles scholars today.

While Pound's developmental understanding of Imagist practice and the attributes of the Image precluded him from defining the Doctrine of the Image and explaining how it worked with the Imagist tenets to create an Image, that lack of definition led to such a variety of Imagist practice that *Des Imagistes* offers the only accurate presentation of Imagism as poetic movement. Much of the perceivable unity of that anthology and its presentation of Imagism, however, rely on Pound's ability to place himself and his poetry at its center. Despite the evolving methods by which Pound created an Image, the basic theory remained stable; the Image stood as the product of a poet's deliberate attempt to employ every formal element of a poem in the production of a shared and objective meaning. That almost none of the Imagists understood that concept or produced anything similar to it means that, in the same way Imagist practice functions as a Vortex of influence and technique, and the Image a Vortex of meaning, Pound and his poetry acted as the Vortex of the Imagist movement. Pound's Imagist poems contain and employ simultaneously all the Imagist elements utilized by the other Imagist poets, and Pound, as editor of *Des Imagistes*, arranges all their poems so they create patterns with each other that seem to enforce aspects of his understanding of the Image.

Recognizing those Imagist Vortices and his role within them, Pound aligned the Image with the Vortex and tried to establish Imagism as the poetic standard for the Vorticist movement. By not understanding Pound's concept of the Vortex or how it produced Imagism and the Image while also providing a sense of unity to the Imagist movement, though, the poets that were actively attempting to write Imagist poetry balked at Pound's attempt to merge Imagism into Vorticism and his presumptive role as the editor and organizer of their poetry. In discussing a few of the events that led Aldington,

H.D., Flint, and Lowell to break away from Pound and establish their own series of Imagist anthologies, this conclusion explains how, by removing Pound, those poets also removed the Vortextual attributes from their poetry. A further analysis of the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies then illustrates that, rather than producing a specific type of poetry with definitive characteristics, the Imagism of those later anthologies functioned as a group of individual techniques that allowed those Imagists to exploit the formal characteristics of their poetry to create meaning. Finally, this conclusion proposes that, even though Imagism lost much of its concentration and coherence without Pound, those later Imagists' formal experiments made the technical attributes of Imagism accessible to a much larger audience and, as such, widened Imagism's overall impact on Modernist poetics.

In an interesting bit of historical coincidence, the London *Standard* reported Amy Lowell's arrival at the Berkeley Hotel in London on July 3, 1914—exactly one day after the release of *Blast*. Lowell, accompanied by her companion, Ada Russell, and chauffeur, made the trip with the express intent of reconnecting with the Imagists (Carr 665). Once in London, though, Lowell discovered that Pound was supporting a different movement and, apparently, taking Imagism and the Imagists with him.²² Pound had actually organized a dinner on July 15 to celebrate the publication of *Blast* and he invited Lowell to join. Lowell quickly decided, however, that if *Blast* deserved a dinner, then *Des Imagistes* should also receive the same honor. She then immediately scheduled an Imagist dinner at the same restaurant two nights after the Vorticist event.

²² Along with Pound, Aldington added his signature to the Vorticist "Manifesto" that appeared in the first issue of *Blast* (43), and wrote in a review of that journal for the July 1, 1914 issue of the *Egoist* that "this is the most amazing, energized, stimulating production that I have ever seen (248).

Despite the variations that exist in the narratives of what happened at that dinner, the night certainly featured a power play between Pound and Lowell that would ultimately define the future of Imagism. John Cournos and John Gould Fletcher, both guests at the dinner, describe the event in their respective autobiographies, but each tells a different version. According to Fletcher, who felt that “Amy had definitely flung down a challenge to Ezra” by scheduling that event, Pound left the table after the meal and came back “flushed and disheveled, bearing upon his head a large tin bathtub.” Pound then placed the tub on the floor and announced that “there would be a new school, no longer called the “imagiste,” but the “nageiste,” school,” and the bathtub would be “their symbol.” As Fletcher explains, Pound’s bathtub and use of the term “nageiste” refer to Lowell’s poem in *Des Imagistes*, “In a Garden,” that ends with the line, “Night and the water, and you in your whiteness, bathing!” Fletcher adds that everyone laughed at Pound’s antics, but they did not disturb Lowell in the least. In fact, Fletcher writes that Lowell responded by telling him that Pound “must have his little joke, [...] and for her part, she was sure that, whether as ‘imagiste’ or as Ezra’s newly discovered ‘nageiste,’ the new movement in poetry would go on.” Fletcher then concludes by surmising that “Ezra’s squib had fizzled out,” and rather than embarrassing Lowell, those in attendance felt they “now owed homage to the gallant spirit of this woman who had brought us together, and who had maintained her position with unruffled dignity under the most difficult circumstances” (151).

Unlike Fletcher, who had fallen out with Pound and pledged his allegiance to Lowell prior to the dinner, Cournos thought of Pound as “one of kindest men that ever lived,” and felt immediately estranged from Lowell, believing that she “had taken a

dislike to [him] at first sight” (*Autobiography* 235, 271). He describes her as “excessively overbearing and aggressive, using her wealth and position to win prominence her limited talents would scarcely have secured otherwise,” and states that he “felt an undercurrent of hostility, then condescension, toward the hostess.” Also different from Fletcher’s version, Cournos recalls Allen Upward, not Pound, as the guest who made a speech referring to Lowell’s poem by “picture[ing] the poet bathing in the moonlight [...] in such a way as to perturb and vex her puritanic soul.” Like Fletcher, he states that the tale made everyone laugh, but that “one could not help feeling for Miss Lowell, who was the butt of the excruciatingly witty if cruel jest” (271)²³.

With her background and social standing, Lowell could not have been used to such rude treatment, nor was she likely to accept it silently. Although the perpetrator of the jest that occurred at her expense differs between the two stories, one can easily understand why Lowell might begin to conceive of a different program for Imagism that would increase her position within it while also decreasing Pound’s role. In terms of understanding the definitional properties of Imagism at that historical moment, though, the most relevant aspect of that dinner occurred in the after-dinner speeches that did not specifically focus on Lowell or her poem.

Cournos does not mention those other speeches in his version, but Fletcher recounts that while the guests enjoyed coffee after their meal, Lowell asked Ford Madox Ford to say a few words regarding his understanding of Imagism. Fletcher suggests Lowell made such a request to embarrass Ford, but that he, being aware of her challenge, defiantly accepted it. Fletcher writes:

²³ Lowell’s biographer, Foster Damon, mentions, “Pound was sufficiently elated to improvise some kind of juggling with one of the waiter’s trays” (233), but says nothing of Pound and his bathtub, or of Upward making a witty speech at Lowell’s expense.

[Ford] began by informing us that he did not know in the least what an imagist poet was. Ezra had assured him that he was an imagist poet, but if so, he had been one long before he heard of imagism. His poems, which Ezra had insisted should appear in *Poetry* as examples of imagistic poetry, were all derived from Heine and Browning. He personally doubted whether Miss Lowell was an imagist poet, or for that matter, whether Ezra himself was, though he knew him to be interested in imagist poetry. The only imagists he saw present at the table were Aldington and H. D., whose imagism seemed to him entirely devoid of foreign admixture. (149)

When he finished, Ford sat “amidst an embarrassed silence,” though Pound seemed “to be hugely enjoying himself.”

Next, as if to counter Lowell, or to extend the pleasure he derived from listening to others attempt to define Imagism, Pound invited Upward to address the guests. Again, Fletcher’s recalls:

Upward stated that, in common with Mr. Hueffer, he did not really know what an imagist poet was. For his own part, he was neither poet nor imagist. He had merely written, years before, some imitations of old Chinese poems which Ezra, with his uncanny flair for the unusual, had ferreted out, dubbed imagistic, and insisted on printing in his anthology. He thought, for his part, that Miss Lowell too, on occasion, might be as good an imagist as he was, provided Ezra found it in his heart to say so publicly. Apparently, only one person in the world knew anything at all about imagist poetry, and that was Ezra Pound. (150)

With the common thread of those speeches pointing toward Pound as the sole arbiter of Imagism, Lowell countered by requesting that Aldington say a few words regarding his understanding of Imagism and its attributes. Unlike the previous two speakers, Aldington confidently declared that “[t]o him, the essence of imagism resided in the restoration of the Hellenic view of life, the worship of concrete, sensuous, pagan beauty.” He also stated that because of his views, he believed that some of those in attendance could not claim themselves as Imagists, and singled out the sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska as fitting that description. Gaudier-Brzeska attempted to defend his aesthetics and the two began two began an argument concerning the merits of Greek art that lasted until Pound returned with his bathtub (150-51).

While that narrative highlights the burgeoning power struggle for directorial control of Imagism between Pound and Lowell, it also illustrates that the majority of contributors to *Des Imagistes* either did not know of the Vortextual origins and attributes of Imagism, or only recognized and employed single threads of that complex approach to poetry. In his speech, Ford admits his ignorance regarding the definable traits of Imagism and states that he modeled his poems on the works of the German Romantic poet, Christian Johann Heinrich Heine and the English Victorian poet, Robert Browning. Upward, likewise, claims not to know exactly what constitutes Imagist poetics, but, in contrast to Ford, cites Asian poetry as the source of his aesthetic. Aldington then asserts that Imagism originates directly from the Greek poetics and feels so strongly about it that he would remove those in attendance whose work did not live up to that standard. Those three poets certainly do not speak for all the poets included in *Des Imagistes*, but their

views on Imagism do intimate that even the Imagists were unaware of what influence, technique, or person allowed their work to cohere as poetic movement.

Amid that confusion, Pound derived great pleasure in those poets' inability to articulate a holistic definition of Imagism. By that dinner, Pound must have recognized that, by not understanding his Doctrine of the Image, none of the other Imagists knew exactly what an Image was or how it operated as a Vortex—even if H.D. did consistently produce them. As far as Pound was concerned, the more the Imagists disagreed over Imagism the better; the conflict over its origins and style would not only ensure it continued to develop as a Vortex, but also that his editorial skills would be essential to its continued existence. Pound had already begun thinking of the Image as a Vortex, and his behavior at that dinner suggests that he had also started to recognize his roles as the Vortex of the Imagist movement.

Lowell definitely wanted to continue her association with the Imagists, but the events at that dinner must have made her increasingly aware of Pound's central role in both the Imagist and Vorticist movements. As a result, she began to devise a plan that would enable her to take a more active role within Imagism while also ensuring a more democratic method for the production and publication of its poetry. She believed that additional anthologies would increase the readership for Imagism and was more than willing to use her connections and monetary resources to secure a more high-profile publisher for those anthologies than those used for *Des Imagistes*. In order to contribute in those ways, however, she maintained one stipulation; she wanted her work included in numbers equal to those of Aldington, H.D., Flint, and Pound. To set her plan in motion, she met with Aldington, H.D., and Flint before approaching Pound.

In her meetings with those Imagists, Lowell found them also weary of Pound's imperious control over Imagism. Noting their like desire to gain an equal share in the development of that movement, Lowell transformed her wishes for equality into a uniformly democratic process wherein the anthologies would list their contributors alphabetically and offer them each ten to fifteen pages for their poetry. The poets would select which of their works would appear on those pages, but the others retained the right to veto any piece if they so decided. Even though that system of arrangement allowed those poets to involve themselves more actively and publically with the Imagist movement, it meant their collection could not possibly offer the same Vortextual presentation of Imagism that Pound's editing created in *Des Imagistes*. Without a central organizing consciousness, those latter anthologies still contain a variety of interpretations and applications of the Imagist tenets, but they do not cohere or augment each other in any deliberate or unified manner.

Along with those changes to their anthologies' organizational structure, those Imagists also altered their list of contributors. They asked Pound to join them, but he, of course, refused to abdicate his editorial role, preferring to, instead, disassociate himself from those collections. After many accusations and disagreements with Pound, Lowell then procured a publisher and chose to title her anthologies, *Some Imagist Poets*. Lowell and company also asked Ford to continue his association with Imagism and he initially agreed. Yet, when Lowell's publisher refused to print his poem, "On Heaven," because it was blasphemous, he, like Pound, chose to have no further dealings with those anthologies (Damon 239). Without Pound and Ford, the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies already lost much of the flavor of Pound's collection, but those four Imagists chose to

differentiate themselves even more by not asking Cannéll, Williams, Joyce, Upward or Cournos to contribute. With less than one-third of the poets from *Des Imagistes* involved with her version of Imagism, Lowell filled out her anthologies with two other poets whose work she admired and with whom she had developed friendships during her time in London.

The first of those two newly conferred Imagists was John Gould Fletcher, who actually met Lowell through the auspices of Pound. Fletcher, who suffered from extreme bouts of moodiness and depression, disliked, what he characterized as, Pound's propensity toward self-aggrandizement and his participation in poetic cliques. Those reasons, along with his not wanting to pigeonhole his work, led him to refuse Pound's invitation to contribute to *Des Imagistes*. Whereas Pound annoyed Fletcher, Lowell's charm, determination, literary connections, and wealth, won him over and he willingly took on the title of Imagist to support their literary endeavors and careers.

By the time he formally became an Imagist, Fletcher had already self-published five books of poetry. For the material for those books, he gathered all the poems he had previously written and, rather than selecting the best of those works, grouped them into five manuscripts based on their themes. Ben Johnson, author of *Fierce Solitude: A Life of John Gould Fletcher*, writes that while *The Book of Nature* "consisted of landscape poems in the Romantic mode," *Fire and Wine* "concerned itself with love and art." Both *Visions of the Evening* and *The Dominant City*, then, "mirrored Fletcher's growing absorption with French Symbolism," whereas *Fool's Gold* "was filled with verse which apparently did not fit into the schemes binding the other volumes and is largely the type of epigrammatic observations sown throughout Fletcher's notebooks." Based on those

works, Johnson concludes that, even though “Fletcher read and imitated the Symbolists, [...] his technique and his goals identified him as an Impressionist” (47-48). Thus, had Fletcher contributed to *Des Imagistes*, his Symbolist and Impressionist tendencies could have paired nicely with Flint and Ford’s work to attest to the influence of those styles on Imagism. With the democratic arrangement of the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies, though, Fletcher’s poems blur the definition of Imagism by transforming it from a specific to a generalized approach to poetry that features free verse and image-based content.

Along with Fletcher, Lowell also included the promising young poet and novelist, D. H. Lawrence. Like Fletcher, Lawrence published a significant amount of work prior to contributing to the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies. His first novel, *The White Peacock* came out in 1911, and *The Trespasser* followed in 1912, as did *Sons and Lovers* in 1913. As is still the case, Lawrence was, at that time, more recognized for his novels than his poetry. His first published works, however, were two poems that Ford Madox Ford, as editor of *The English Review*, selected for his magazine in 1908. Lawrence published his first volume of poetry, *Love Poems and others*, in 1913, but, far from displaying Imagist tendencies, it exhibited a Victorian influence. In fact, Lawrence’s poetry, even in the Imagist anthologies, tends to feature abstract expressions of thoughts and feelings and often employs archaic terminology and phrasings, repetition, and end rhyme to do so. It should not come as a surprise, then, that poems by Lawrence appear in the 1911-12 and 1913-15 Georgian anthologies as well as in their 1918-19 and 1920-22 collections. Lawrence, therefore, participated in four Georgian anthologies while only contributing to three Imagist collections, and he affiliated himself and his poetry with the Georgians both

before and after his dalliances with Imagism. Such information certainly suggests that Lawrence was an Imagist in name only.

Lowell's biographer, Foster Damon, writes that even Lawrence did not consider himself an Imagist. Damon contends that Lowell had to convince Lawrence that his work contained Imagist elements and needed to quote specific sections from his poems to do so. Lawrence had been relatively disinterested in Imagism up until that point and viewed it as nothing more than an "advertising scheme" (246). Glenn Hughes also claims in *Imagism and the Imagists* that "one of the Imagists" told him that Lawrence "was included in the anthologies for the simple reason that in 1914 he was looked upon as writer of genius who would certainly achieve fame and would therefore shed glory on the whole Imagist movement" (170). Based on that evidence, one has to wonder whether Lowell invited Lawrence to contribute to her anthologies based on his work's sympathies with Imagism, or because her Imagist agenda did, in part, function as an advertising scheme and the presence of Lawrence could help her gain recognition for the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies and her poetry contained therein. Hughes is also of the opinion that "there was no radical change in Lawrence's poetry as a result of his association with the imagists," and "[e]ven the poems by which he is represented in the anthologies are only occasionally imagistic—accidentally so, one would say" (170). Thus, Lowell's inclusion of Lawrence in her anthologies again evidences that, without Pound's editorial acumen and focused concept of the Image, the poetry of the latter Imagist anthologies does not offer a unified presentation of the origins and techniques of Imagism as much as it functions as a collection of poems that happen to feature imagery and free-verse rhythms.

With their contributors list finalized, the remaining Imagists produced the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies annually in 1915, '16, and '17. In addition to, or likely because of, their new policies of arrangement, the *Some Imagist Poets* collections of 1915 and '16 contain explanatory Prefaces. For the 1915 anthology, Aldington wrote an explanation of Imagist practice that expands Pound's three Imagist tenets into a list of six.²⁴ Aldington's list reads:

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the *exact* word, not the nearly-exact, nor the merely decorative word.
2. To create new rhythms – as the expression of new moods – and not to copy old rhythms, which merely echo old moods. We do not insist on “free-verse” as the only method of writing poetry. We fight for it as for a principle of liberty. We believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free-verse than in conventional forms. In poetry, a new cadence means a new idea.
3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject. It is not good art to write badly about aeroplanes and automobiles; nor is it necessarily bad art to write well about the past. We believe passionately in the artistic value of modern life, but we wish to point out that there is nothing so uninspiring nor so old-fashioned as an aeroplane of the year 1911.

²⁴ Stanley Coffman posits, “For a time after Miss Lowell suddenly assumed the sponsorship for the movement, she tactfully relied on Aldington for her understanding of its aims. H.D. was no theorist, and Lawrence and Fletcher had not been associated with Pound's original program; Flint could have helped her and without doubt did to some extent, but it was on Aldington that she chiefly depended” (163). On that topic, Glenn Hughes also writes, “To the 1915 anthology was attached a preface, unsigned, and purporting to express the principles of the group. This preface was written by Mr. Aldington, and was slightly revised by Miss Lowell (39).

4. To present an image (hence the name: “Imagist”). We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous. It is for this reason that we oppose the cosmic poet, who seems to us to shirk the real difficulties of art.
5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite.
6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is of the very essence of poetry. (Preface vi, viii)

In his book, *The Imagist Poets*, Andrew Thacker claims that the very presence of such material contradicts the “present, don’t tell” rhetoric of Pound, but also “help[s] mark out post-Poundian Imagism (48). Obviously, those later Imagists’ decision to list their practices and justify them at the outset of their anthology differs from Pound’s strategy in *Des Imagistes*. That list does not just work against Pound’s concept of presentation, though; it also conflicts with the laconicism Pound promoted in both Imagist poetry and his statements on it. Thus, whereas Pound did not define his Doctrine of the Image and offered only three concise and integrated Imagist tenets, the “second-wave” Imagists chose to guide their readers’ experience and understanding of Imagism by clarifying its theory and techniques at the very beginning of their first anthology.

Apart from their verbal and numerical length, the new Imagist principles also differ from Pound’s Imagist tenets by directly affiliating themselves with free verse. Certainly, “To create new rhythms – as the expression of new moods” functions similarly to Pound’s “sequence of the musical phrase” (Imagisme” 199). Yet, Pound never specifically correlated free verse with his musical phrase because he believed that poets

could create or utilize metrical forms as well as free-verse rhythms to materialize their poems' subjects in an audible manner. While the Imagists of the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies do not necessarily "insist upon 'free-verse,'" they do "fight for it" and (Aldington Preface vi), as such, prioritize free-verse rhythms as the standard for their poetry. Moreover, they "believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free-verse than in conventional forms" (vi-vii). Therefore, while the intention behind Pound's musical phrase was to make the rhythm of a poem isomorphic with its content, the later Imagists viewed free verse as expressing its author and not its subject matter.

Another, and possibly greater, difference between the *Some Imagist Poets'* principles and Pound's tenets is that the former distinguishes between a poem's subject and its imagery. Pound's first Imagist tenet reads, "Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective," and, with that phrasing, aligns a poem's subject matter with its imagery. Unlike Pound, the Imagists of the later anthologies divide their discussion of subjects and images into two separate principles. The third item on their list states, "To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject," and the fourth advises, "To present an image" because the Imagists "are not a school of painters, but [they] believe that poetry should render particulars exactly" (vii). By dealing with those two elements separately, those poets seem to imply that an Imagist poem need not focus on things, but, when it does, they should appear as visual images. Even though the dividing of those topics suggests they remain separate elements in Imagist poems, it also further establishes that the later Imagists were unaware of Pound's concept of the Image that directs every formal element of a poem toward the production of a shared and objective meaning.

Without Pound, the centrality and cohesiveness of the poetic Image is lost. The remaining Imagists, instead, approach a poem's sound, imagery, and subject matter as separate elements that may coexist, but do not need to be consciously integrated to make the poem function as precise, efficient, and focused complex of meaning.

In the 1916 edition of the *Some Imagist Poets* anthology, the collected poets again begin with an explanatory Preface. Rather than relying on Aldington, however, Lowell and Fletcher composed the introduction to that volume (Marek 161). To begin, they contend that the "brevity" of their previous four-page Preface with its six Imagist principles "has led to a great deal of misunderstanding" (v). Notably, the first misunderstanding they address is, "Imagism does not mean merely the presentation of pictures. 'Imagism' refers to the manner of presentation, not the subject" (v). With that explanation, Lowell and Fletcher offer a more accurate account of the way the formal elements of an Imagist poem should participate in the presentation of its subjects. Yet, in making that point, they also further divorce imagery as formal element from imagery as poetic subject. For Pound, the image-as-subject and the image-as-element are synonymous because imagery serves as a material embodiment of an Imagist poem's subject. To the later Imagists, the formal considerations of a poem and its subject remain separate.

To further explain the dictates of their Imagism, those two poets write, "The 'exact word does not mean the word which exactly describes the object in itself, it means the 'exact' word which brings the effect of that object before the reader as it presented itself to the poet's mind at the writing of the poem" (vi). With that statement, though, Lowell and Fletcher do not just distinguish imagery from subject matter, but they also

blend Imagism with Impressionism. Like Pound's concept of the Image, the two Imagists promote shaping the formal elements of one's poem so that it presents its content. Unlike Pound, however, they do not present Luminous Details that, by their very nature, reveal meaning. Instead, they record the Impressions made on them by those objects. While that difference is, admittedly, a subtle one, it is also the factor that most distinguishes Imagism from Impressionism or Symbolism; Imagists present objects that radiate with their own significance, whereas Impressionists record the effects objects make on them, and Symbolists use objects to represent other subjects. Through their attempts to explain their Imagist process, the second-wave Imagists keep untangling the knot of Pound's Imagist Vortex until it begins to fray into its individual elements.

Following those brief explanations, Lowell and Fletcher spend their Preface's final six pages defending their use of free verse. They argue, "It is not what Imagists write about which makes them hard of comprehension; it is the way they write it" (viii). While that comment seemingly prioritizes free verse as the most salient Imagist element, their definition removes free verse so completely from its original Imagist role of embodying its subject matter that it makes the poetry of *The Some Imagist Poets* anthologies seem almost entirely based upon self-justifying rhythmic experimentation:

The definition of *vers libre* is – a verse-form based upon cadence. Now cadence in music is one thing, cadence in poetry quite another, since we are not dealing with tone but with rhythm. It is the sense of perfect balance of flow and rhythm. Not only must the syllables so fall as to increase and continue the movement, but also the whole poem must be as rounded and recurring as the circular swing of a balanced pendulum. It can be fast or

slow, it may even jerk, but this perfect swing it must have, even its jerks must follow the central movement....The unit is the strophe which may be the whole poem, or may be only part. Each strophe is a complete circle....Of course the circle need not be the same size, nor need the times allowed to negotiate it be always the same. There is room for an infinite number of variations. Also, circles can be added to circles, movement upon movement, to the poem, provided each movement completes itself, and ramifies naturally into the next. (ix-x)

Based on that quote, the poetic rhythms of the later Imagist have nothing to do with evoking or embodying their subject matter. Rather, those rhythms simply work to fulfill the expectations of their own pattern. One might employ numerous variations, but those patterns and not the actual content of the poem dictate their rhythmic progression.

To complete both their Preface and discussion of free verse, Lowell and Fletcher consider the similarities and differences between prose and free-verse poetry. They ask, “But, in fact, what is prose and what is poetry? Is it merely a matter of typographical arrangement? Must everything which is printed in equal lines, with rhymes at the ends, be called poetry, and everything which is printed in a block be called prose?” They also conclude, “The fact is, that there is no hard and fast dividing line between prose and poetry” and quote the French poet, Paul Fort, as stating, “Prose and poetry are but one instrument, graduated” (xii). Similar to Pound’s Ford Madox Ford-inspired theory of the “prose tradition in verse,” Lowell and Fletcher posit that the techniques and aesthetics of prose and poetry can inform each other. Yet, whereas Pound applied prose techniques to poetry to provide discipline to free verse, Lowell and Fletcher compare prose and poetry

to justify their own rhythmic experimentations. They argue that a poem's rhythm justifies its pattern, and, even if that pattern happens to take the form of "shredded prose" or a paragraph, the expression of the individualized rhythm is what matters. That such a stance misrepresents Aldington, H.D., and Flint's use of free verse, suggests that Lowell and Fletcher were attempting to legitimize their use of "polyphonic prose" rather than accurately explain any sort of established or agreed upon Imagist method. That they also chose to quote Fort—the poet whom Lowell credits in *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* as inspiring her use of polyphonic prose (Preface xii)—further confirms that assessment.

Interestingly, Fletcher invented the term "polyphonic prose" to describe Lowell's Fortian experiments with poetic rhythm (Hughes 145), but credited her with the development of that form and his employment of it. In the Preface to her 1918 poetry collection, *Can Grande's Castle*, Lowell writes, "'Polyphonic prose' is the freest, the most elastic, of all forms, for it follows at will any, and all, of the rules which guide other forms....Its only touchstone is the taste and feeling of its author" (x-xi). While she would also add, "Yet, like all other artistic forms, it has certain fundamental principles, and the chief of these is an insistence on the absolute adequacy of the manner of a passage to the thought it embodies. Taste is therefore the determining factor; taste and a rhythmic ear" (xi), thoughts and taste are neither imagery nor subject matter. Despite hinting that the formal considerations behind polyphonic prose work to embody content, that form still values rhythm for the sake of rhythm and the subjects it materializes are not the discrete objects that create Pound's poetic Image. Much of the difference between Pound and Lowell's concept of Imagist practice can be attributed to Pound's decision not to define his Doctrine of the Image, but, even so, Lowell and Fletcher's emphasis on rhythm upsets

the formal focus of Pound's Imagism to, instead, to prioritize a single formal technique over all the rest.

Lowell's poem, "Spring Day," which appears in the 1916 *Some Imagist Poets* anthology, is an exemplary piece of polyphonic prose. The fourth section of that work, "Midday and Afternoon," reads:

Swirl of crowded streets. Shock and recoil of traffic. The stock-still brick façade of an old church, against which the waves of people lurch and withdraw. Flare of sunshine down side-streets. Eddies of light in the windows of chemists' shops, with their blue, gold, purple jars, darting colours far into the crowd. Loud bangs and tremors, murmurings out of high windows, whirling of machine belts, blurring of horses and motors. A quick spin and shudder of brakes on an electric car, and the jar of a church knocking against the metal blue of the sky. I am a piece of the town, a bit of blown dust, thrust along with the crowd. Proud to feel the pavement under me, reeling with feet. Feet tripping, skipping, lagging, dragging, plodding doggedly, or springing up and advancing on firm elastic insteps. A boy is selling papers, I smell them clean and new from the press. They are fresh like the air, and pungent as tulips and narcissus.

The blue sky pales to lemon, and great tongues of gold blind the shop-windows putting out their contents in a flood of flame. (84-85)

In that section, Lowell uses her rhythmic patterns to create large-scale sonic images that present the sound and movement of a city. Commenting on the sound patterns of that passage, Andrew Thacker explains, "The irregular rhymes of the opening lines

(Shock/stock; traffic/brick; church/lurch) add to what Lowell terms the ‘tonal colour’ of the aural picture of the city. Arguably, a regular rhyme scheme cannot represent the haphazard sounds, the “loud bangs and tremors’ that one encounters when walking the streets of the city.” He also claims, “Freed from the constraints of the metrical line we see how the switching between long and short sentences apes the crabby progress of the traffic and pedestrians in the city, shifting forward only to stop and “recoil” a moment later. Even in the childlike rhyming of the line “Feet tripping, skipping, lagging, dragging, plodding doggedly” it is the physical patterns of movement in the modern city that Lowell is trying to present” (“Unrelated” 110). Thacker’s reading of the poem, then, clearly illustrates how polyphonic prose and Lowell’s use of it create a more sophisticated and prevalent type of sonic imagery than previously featured in Imagist poetry. Thus, even though neither she nor Fletcher accurately describes the way her sound patterns embody their subjects, Lowell’s polyphonic prose does effectively present the city that serves as her subject. By expanding the poetic line to accentuate rhythmic effects such as rhyme, alliteration, and repetition, however, polyphonic prose utilizes one of Imagism’s formal elements to such an extent that it conflicts with the efficiency and precision that served as original basis of Imagist technique. To create its aural effects, therefore, polyphonic prose not only fails to create the type of formally integrated Image that Pound promoted, but it also ignores the principle of concentration that the Preface to the 1915 *Some Imagist Poets* anthology describes as “the very essence of poetry” (vii).

Only Lowell and Fletcher contributed polyphonic prose to the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies, but most of the poets in those collections experiment with verbal and rhythmic expansion as well. As the first poem in the first *Some Imagist Poets* anthology,

Aldington's "Childhood" both introduces and typifies the Imagist movement away from poetic concentration and efficiency. Aldington wrote "Childhood" as a long poem that features many adjectives and abstractions. The first line, for example, reads, "The bitterness, the misery, the wretchedness of childhood," which, apart from its articles, consists of three adjectives and one abstraction (3). Obviously, such a line does not conform to the Imagist method of presentation or Pound's advice, "Go in fear of abstractions" ("A Few Don'ts" 201). Despite its nine-page length and highly abstract content, though, the lineation of Aldington's free verse allows his poem to provide a materialized shape to its speaker's thoughts. As "thought images," then, lines, such as, "I hate that town; / I hate that town I lived in when I was little; / I hate to think of it (4)," offer their readers a direct presentation of their speaker's thought patterns by functioning as a type of abstract imagery. Like Lowell's polyphonic prose, Aldington's expansion of his lines to include abstract material allows him to contribute new and original elements to Imagist poetics but, in doing so, he also weakens the overall Imagist integrity of his piece.

Of all the poets included in the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies, H.D. is, not surprisingly, the one who continually practices concentration and efficiency by simultaneously integrating all the components of the original Imagist tenets. Even when she experiments with a formal dramatic monologue as she does in "Orion Dead," she perfectly matches the laconicism of her lines with their subject matter and emotional content. Beginning with the dialogue marker "[Artemis speaks], the remainder of that poem consists of Artemis addressing her deceased lover, Orion. In the middle of that

piece, H.D. italicizes her words to signify their status as a song of mourning. That song reads:

*I once pierced the flesh
of the wild-deer,
now am I afraid to touch
the blue and the gold-veined hyacinths?*

*I will tear the full flowers
And the little heads
of the grape-hyacinths.
I will strip the life from the bulb
until the ivory layers
lie like narcissus petals
on the black earth.*

*Arise,
lest I bend an ash-tree
into a taut bow
and slay — and tear
all the roots from the earth. (29)*

In *H.D. and Hellenism*, Eileen Gregory argues that H.D.'s poem "is about the impotence of the gesture of speech, which only in its brokenness can signal the power of the grief compelling it" (155). By using the rhythm and line breaks of her free verse along to present that "brokenness" of Artemis' speech, H.D. creates sonic images, but does not need to add abstractions or superfluous language to do so.

Following the publication of the 1916 anthology, the aesthetic differences between the Imagists became so egregious that even the poets could no longer look past them. In a letter to Fletcher dated September 25, 1916, Lowell writes:

I don't, personally, think there is any real getting together between you and me and the other members of the group. I don't count Lawrence, because he never was Imagist, and never cared a snap about the tenets. H.D. is, you say, excessively narrow....

There is, to my mind, a chance that Richard may grow. You say he is already altered. But I don't believe there is any hope of H.D.'s changing materially in any way, and I am quite sure that Flint is absolutely done. I am just as sick of being bound up in a group as you are. I still think that Imagism, as you and I interpret it, is a splendid movement, but narrowed, as H.D. would have us narrow it, I think means death. It does to me, anyhow. We should go ahead with this "Anthology," however, as if it were all right, because I have already hinted to Richard and Hilda that I thought its usefulness was over, and as they have not taken the hint, I feel we had better finish up brown. Of course there is no question of there ever being another after this. (qtd. in de Chasca 125)

In that letter, Lowell acknowledges that the contributors to the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies understand Imagism in very different ways and they divide according the length of their association with Imagism. Aldington, H.D., and Flint were central members of both Pound and Lowell's Imagist groups and they formed one group. Fletcher and Lowell participated little in Pound's Imagism and they formed the second group. No one claimed Lawrence; not even Lowell, who had previously convinced him he was an Imagist. Notably, Lowell dismisses Lawrence because she believes he never followed the Imagist tenets. Yet, when discussing H.D., Lowell concludes that the poet who, arguably, most understood and utilized the Imagist tenets, was too strict and precise in her work. Lowell, then, ultimately seems to position her and Fletcher's poetry somewhere between Lawrence's non-Imagism and H.D.'s crystalized Images. Through that recognition, Lowell illustrates that where Pound and H.D. view the Imagist tenets as

integrative techniques designed to produce complex meaning efficiently and precisely, she and Fletcher consider those tenets as individual methods for exploiting the formal meaning-producing agents of a poem. Expressed in different manner, Pound and H.D. wanted to create highly integrated poetic Vortices, whereas Lowell and Fletcher tested the boundaries of those formal elements—particularly free-verse rhythms.

The 1917 edition of *Some Imagist Poets* was the last in that series. Thirteen years later, Aldington would take it upon himself to collect and publish the *Imagist Anthology 1930*. By that time, though, Lowell had passed away and Pound still refused to contribute. The collection brought back almost all the other poets associated with Imagism in the past by including Ford, Aldington, Cournos, H.D., Fletcher, Flint, Joyce, Lawrence, and Williams. Its prefatory “Note” states:

To prevent any possible misunderstanding the announcement is here made that this volume is not intended as an attempt to revive Imagism as an *avant-garde* movement. In 1912 certain young and almost unknown authors, who felt friendly to each other, published their poems in the “Imagist” anthology. They have developed along varying lines, but still feel friendly. The present anthology is intended to give specimens of their recent work. (Aldington 9)

The thirteen to fourteen years between those authors’ last contributions to an Imagist anthology certainly had an effect on the quality of their work. In applying their Imagist tendencies to larger projects, the poets in that anthology lost much of the concentration and efficiency of their work. Aldington, for instance, begins the anthology with three poems that cover thirty-nine pages; while he was rarely concise, these poems and their

length are far from direct. Cournos then follows Aldington with nine-page play that further illustrates the 1930 anthology functions more as “where are they now” collection of Imagists than as an anthology of Imagist poetry.

Essentially, Pound’s decision not to define the Doctrine of the Image or explain how it works with the Imagist tenets to create a poetic Image ended up dividing Imagist practice into two different camps. On the one hand, Imagism consists of poets like Pound and H.D. who attempt to use each of their poems’ formal elements in as efficient and precise a manner as possible so they might offer fully integrated and materialized presentations of their subjects. On the other, Imagism also consists of poets, like Lowell and Fletcher, who, without recognizing how an Image integrates all its formal aspects to substantively present its subjects, use its tenets as guidelines and starting points for poetic experimentation. Therefore, while Pound’s Vortextual Imagism directly influenced such subsequent poetic movements as Objectivism and Charles Olson’s Projective Verse,²⁵ one can find traces of its more generalized form in a wide variety of poetic genres not often associated with Imagism. For example, one could easily employ Imagism’s musical phrase to create confessional poetry in the manner of Allen Ginsberg and the Beats, or conversational poetry such as Frank O’Hara’s *Lunch Poems*, or to produce the type of

²⁵ The *Poetry Foundation* glosses the “Objectivist Poets” as:

A loosely affiliated group of American poets writing in the 1930s and ’40s. Harriet Monroe famously solicited an edition of Objectivist work for *Poetry*, guest-edited by Louis Zukofsky, which featured work by many of the poets later associated with the movement. The Objectivist poets, as described by Zukofsky, were influenced by the writing of Ezra Pound and took many cues from the earlier Imagists: both groups wrote poetry that featured highly concentrated language and imagery and terse vers libre. The Objectivists, however, focused on everyday life and language, treating the poem as an object itself and emphasizing sincerity and the poet’s clear vision of the world. Core Objectivist poets include Zukofsky, George Oppen, Carl Rakosi, Lorine Niedecker, Charles Reznikoff, and the British poet Basil Bunting.

Also, when Charles Olson outlines the three principles of his Projective Verse in his essay of the same title, he refers to Pound’s “musical phrase” as the basis of “Field Composition,” and seems to paraphrase Pound’s tenets when he quotes Robert Creeley as stating, “FORM IS NEVER MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF CONTENT” (240).

text images commonly referred to as concrete poetry. Moreover, Lowell and Fletcher's polyphonic prose might even lead one to create "spoken-word" poems. In practice, then, the Imagism applies itself to both specific and generalized results; it either creates Images or serves as a figurative introductory course on poetic craft.

The fact is that, to Pound, Imagism concentrated different poetic techniques so, together, they could present complex meaning. Although his Imagist methods progressed, the purpose remained the same. Without defining the Doctrine of the Image, though, Pound left the other Imagists to interpret Imagism as they saw fit. As the central Imagist figure, however, Pound was still able to harness the other Imagists' poems and arrange them as individual poetic Images whose relationship presented the complex nature of Imagism itself. The importance of *Des Imagistes*, then, is that it presents Imagism as it approached the event horizon of the Vortex that would eventually destroy its core and lead to the diffusion and dissemination of its practices. Ironically, though, the fragmentation of Imagism that grew out of Pound's Imagist Vortex may have allowed it reach a greater audience, have greater poetic applications, and may be the reason it still claims the attention and generates the interest that it does today.

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