The Poetic Image in the 20th Century: Ezra Pound, Robert Bly, Don McKay

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ABSTRACT

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The concept of the poetic image originated in the Seventeenth Century, and has risen in status, especially through the Romantic period, to become perhaps *the* dominant poetic element of this century. Much of the recent popularity of the image may be credited to Ezra Pound, who claimed that "the IMAGE is the primary pigment of poetry," and who promoted the image through the brief but important Imagiste movement, Vorticism, and in his ideogrammic method used in *The Cantos*. Of the generation of poets following Pound, Robert Bly has been the most polemical and prolific theorist focusing on the image. Bly's "deep image" has its roots in the imaginative and sometimes surreal poetry of mainly Spanish and Latin American poets, as well as in the psychological theories of Freud and Jung. Bly maintains that the true image possesses psychic energy which can be transmitted to the reader, evoking a profound and sometimes unconscious response. The third poet studied, Don McKay, follows in this tradition of poets through his acute use of metaphor, a literary trope which, I will argue, is essentially imagistic. Metaphor, for McKay, plays an important role in his nature poetry as a vehicle providing the reader access to an aesthetic space McKay calls wilderness. This thesis studies the way each of these poets uses the image as a rhetorical element. Their theories and techniques are compared for the purpose of outlining the development of the image as a poetic element in the Twentieth Century.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to Dorottya Ogonovsky

In honour of her sacrifices, efforts, and assistance

Écrire bien, avoir du style . . . c'est peindre

Remy de Gourmont

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INTRODUCTION

There can be little doubt that the poetic image has become a major element in the poetry of this century. Speaking in 1946 at the Clark Lectures, C. Day Lewis proclaimed that "novelty, audacity, fertility of image are the strong-point, the presiding demon, of contemporary verse," and that, "the very word 'image' has taken on, during the last fifty years or so, a mystical potency" (17). More recently, Paul de Man concluded his essay on the Romantic image in dramatic fashion by claiming that oscillation in the status of the image is linked to the current threat of poetry's extinction, yet the image also harbours the greatest hope for its resurgence ("Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image" 16–7). Many of the major aesthetic movements of this century—Imagism, Surrealism, Dada and Objectivism—all rely heavily upon the image. Indeed, it may be argued that the image is *the* dominant element of Modernism.

This thesis is an attempt in part to examine the rise in prominence of the image by tracing its use through the work of three modern poets: Ezra Pound, Robert Bly, and Don McKay. Pound was the leading theorist and promoter of Imagisme (1912–14), later becoming involved with the Vorticist group before going on to write *The Cantos* Likewise, Bly was the leading member and polemicist of the Deep Image group, whose work has close associations with Surrealism and Depth Psychology. Finally, Don McKay, a major figure in Canadian poetry and winner of the 1990 Governor General's Literary Award for poetry, has presented in a recently published essay the theoretical foundation of Nature Poetry, a derivative of Romanticism with key differences. All three poets use the image as a principal element in their writing; I have grouped them together in this study for this reason. But before moving on to consider how each of these writers uses the image in his poetry,

it seems necessary first to outline briefly the historical roots of the concept of the poetic image.

History of the Image

Ray Frazer has provided an excellent paper highlighting the history of the image through the English Tradition. In "Origin of the Term 'Image,'" Frazer explains that the term came into critical prominence "to fill the vacuum" left in the wake of a general reaction against rhetoric:

> The curiously urgent demand for "perspicuity" after 1660, whether the result of the French classical influence on the court of Charles II, the new science, philosophic empiricism, the reaction against religious enthusiasm (or all of these together), expressed itself chiefly in a hostility towards rhetoric, towards figures, and particularly towards metaphor. (150)

This hostility resulted in the proscription of a past critical vocabulary based on rhetoric, and the image was one of the terms which came into fashion to take its place. Suspicion of figurative language only heightened after the Restoration when, as Frazer puts it, "in almost paranoiac irritation, writer after writer accused his medium of an inherent duplicity" (150). As the Royal Society tried to tighten its grip on an unruly language, the image became the critical term denoting the poet's figurative speech.

Connected to this upsurge in the term's popularity was the proliferation of Thomas Hobbes' theory of the creative process. In the opening chapters of *Leviathan*, Hobbes sets down an epistemology which would carry tremendous philosophical and critical import through the late Seventeenth Century, the Restoration period and beyond. In a way, Hobbes may be seen as a forebear of Modernism, since he was one of the earliest thinkers to prioritize sense-perception over thought. "There is no conception in a mans mind,

which hath not at first, totally, or by parts, been begotten upon the organs of Sense," Hobbes writes in the opening of his study (85), over two hundred and fifty years before William Carlos Williams would coin the expression, "No ideas but in things." For Hobbes, the image was the link between sense-perception and thought. He claimed that objects press themselves upon the senses, leaving an impression, or image, of the original in the imagination:

> After the object is removed, or the eye shut, wee still retain an image of the thing seen, though more obscure than when we see it. . . . IMAGINATION therefore is nothing but *decaying sense;* and is found in men, and many other living Creatures, as well sleeping, as waking. (88)

An image, therefore, was for Hobbes an imperfect replica of an original sense-perception, and could be recalled from the imagination as thought; it enabled experience to be retained over a period of time, thus originating the acquisition of knowledge. It should be noted that a vestige of Hobbes' original meaning of the term can still be seen in present-day definitions. The *OED,* for example, gives as its first definition, "An artificial imitation or representation of the external form of any object," and the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* defines the image as a "reproduction in the mind of a sensation produced by a physical perception."

Hobbes also believed that the imagination is made up of two parts which he called *Simple Imagination* and *Compounded Imagination.* Simple imagination is the ability to retrieve from memory an image in its entirety of something previously seen, but compounded imagination is the capacity to unite two or more images together, "as when from the sight of a man at one time, and of a horse at another, we conceive in our mind a Centaure" (89). Hobbes rightly refers to compounded imagination as "fiction of the mind,"

the creative faculty of the imagination. Although the terms *simple* and *compounded* did not take hold, the basis of Hobbes' theory remained popular throughout the Eighteenth Century: the imagination is the centre of creativity, and the poet draws and associates images in constructing her poem. The image, then, Frazer concludes, retains in the present day associations with Hobbes' sensationalist theories: "Modern use of the term in this sense is relatively unambiguous, but one occasionally comes across the phrase 'sensuous imagery,' as though there were other kinds" (160).

The failing of Frazer's essay is its conspicuous avoidance of the important Romantic image, which enters via Coleridge from Kant and the German Romantics. In fact, this conceptual branch of the image may also be traced back to Hobbes, whose ideas and language are evident in Kant's writings. The development from Hobbes' theory of the imagination to Kant's is really only a shift from a passive perceiver to one who is active: Hobbes believed that objects of the external world press themselves upon the organs of sense, thus implanting images into the imagination, but in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant argued that the perceiver actively structures and organizes in the imagination information received through the senses. The imagination unconsciously, or pre-consciously, synthesizes the many disparate impressions of experience into a unified structure , making possible our intuitive *understanding* of the world. Hence, Kant raised the status of the imagination from that of a passive receiver, to an active (albeit unconscious) productive and creative faculty of the mind.

In *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant further elevates the status of the imagination. More than just subservient to the understanding, the imagination, Kant now purports, also structures works of art: "The imagination (as a productive faculty of cognition) is a powerful agent for

creating, as it were, a second nature out of the material supplied to it by actual nature. It affords us entertainment where experience proves too commonplace" (37).[1] He continues by stating that, since the artist is free from structuring his work according to analogy, or logic, it is possible for works of art to surpass nature in beauty. Great art, therefore, is not mimetic, as Plato had asserted, but autonomous; through the "free employment of imagination" the artist is able to evoke that which is beyond nature, beyond understanding, and beyond reason. This he called "the aesthetic idea":

> The aesthetic idea is a representation of the imagination, annexed to a given concept, with which, in the free employment of imagination, such a multiplicity of partial representations are bound up, that no expression indicating a definite concept can be found for it—one which on that account allows a concept to be supplemented in thought by much that is indefinable in words, and the feeling of which quickens the cognitive faculties, and with language, as a mere thing of the letter, binds up the spirit (soul) also. (39)

Here we have the Romantic image in embryo. By combining the imagination and a concept in one "representation," the poet could produce a sense of the sublime; such a representation "induces much thought" which cannot be captured in a single exercise of mind, and which language "can never quite get on level terms with or render completely intelligible" (37).

German Romantic theorists, led by the Schlegel brothers, were responsible for translating Kant's epistemology into a literary aesthetic. While they were sympathetic with much of Kant's thought, the Schlegel brothers disagreed with Kant on the importance of the imagination. To be sure, they tended to focus on *The Critique of Pure Reason* to pitch their attacks, arguing

that the imagination was not a "blind" or unconscious productive faculty, for if this were the case, it could be argued that bees also employ imagination in creating their hive, or beavers in constructing their lodges. (*German Romantic Literary Theory* 81). More importantly, the Schlegels claimed that the imagination was not subservient, nor even linked, to the understanding, but was an autonomous, independent, and intimately personal faculty of the mind. Even in producing the aesthetic idea, it is true, Kant claimed that the imagination is in "a happy relation" with the understanding, a relationship which the Schlegels and German Romantics in general felt debased the importance of the imagination in creating works of art. When Friedrich Schlegel speaks of the imagination and the world as in a poetic relationship through a dialectic of kindred spirits (*GR* 78), we see the imagination approaching the spiritual status which it characteristically was granted by the Romantics.

In his Berlin lectures of 1801–2, A. W. Schlegel does address *The Critique of Judgment*, arguing that Kant's theory of creation is too divisive in its separation of the beautiful from the sublime, the understanding from genius (although Kant actually doesn't make this division), and the rational from the intuitive. For A. W. Schlegel, art is the product of the union between these faculties and parts of the mind, when the self is whole and one with all. To describe this moment, he relies upon the traditional body/soul analogy:

> Transcendental intuition teaches us that body and soul are not originally opposed but one; from this point of view, we consider bodily organization as a radiation of the spirit. When in an artistic work body and spirit merge in perfect harmony, the merely animalistic disappears as well as the merely rational, and

> the ideal, the truly human, the divine, or whatever expression one wishes to use emerges. (cited in *GR*, 80)

The harmony between creative faculties, the indivisibility of spirit and form, and the ideal—wonderfully expressed much later in Yeats' image of the dancer and the dance—are the essential characteristics of the Romantic image, and are what separate it from the simple reproductive image of Hobbes and the Kantian representation. Perhaps it would be helpful to view the disagreements between Kant and the Schlegels merely as differences of perspective between Kant's analysis of the mind, and the Schlegels' desire to formulate a theory of poetry; for Kant, who was interested in examining the processes that occur in the mind during aesthetic judgment, it was not enough to say that the body, mind and spirit are united during the highest moments of aesthetic reception. At any rate, what is clear is that the transition from Kantian psychology to German Romantic literary theory involves, among other things, an elevation in the status of the imagination from a sensory and cognitive faculty of the mind, to the means through which poets intuit and articulate the ideal.

Coleridge borrows from both camps in constructing his theory of the imagination. In the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge states:

> The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all Human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. (452)

Essentially, this is a restatement of Kant's theory of the imagination as described in *The Critique of Pure Reason*: the faculty of perception by which we create in the mind a subjective world. But by drawing the divine analogy, Coleridge is clearly adopting the German Romantic value placed on the

imagination. It is Primary because it is fundamental; yet it is divine in its likeness to the eternal act of creation. Similarly, the Secondary Imagination is an assimilation of Kantian psychology and Romantic values:

> The Secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will . . . It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. (452)

Here we can see Coleridge paraphrasing from *The Critique of Judgment* the Kantian notion of the imagination as a "productive faculty of cognition" behind the conscious act of artistic creation; the goal of unity and the ideal, however, is Romantic.

The task at hand for the poet in creating the Romantic image resides in successfully bridging the world of perception and that of artistic creation. The poet as *visionary* becomes a repeated theme throughout the Romantic period, from the childhood visions of Blake, to the proclamation by Rimbaud that he is becoming a visionary, that the poet must be a visionary, through a long, prodigious, and rational disordering of all the senses.[2] As we will see, many of the early Imagiste poems, including the most famous of them, Pound's "In a Station of the Metro," center on the perceptual moment. In this strain of poetry, creation occurs *away* from the desk, often during the banal and ordinary events of daily life; it is *at* the desk that the poet's "terrific struggle with words" takes place, as Pound was to word it, the task of translating aesthetic vision into language, and one way poets tried to make this translation is through the use of the poetic image. For Pound, the image was of prime importance throughout his career, although it was to take several different forms as Pound's interests changed from Imagisme, to Vorticism,

and finally to *The Cantos*. I will attempt to show, however, that there remains a continuity in theory and practice through each of these phases—from Image, to Vortex, to ideogram—and that despite the seemingly-radical stylistic differences between these periods, the image remained for Pound "the primary pigment of poetry."

The progression from the modernism of Pound to the poetry of Robert Bly involves a shift in emphasis from craft to inspiration, indicated throughout the criticism and theory of Bly. One way to view this shift is to set it in the context of theories of composition: the development from Pound to Bly is analogous with a step from Aristotelian *techné* to Platonic enthusiasm, or, in other words, from Classicism to Romanticism. Consequently, the image for Bly profoundly comes from the passions and the imagination, and is often characterized by a surreal or highly-imaginative quality. At the heart of Bly's poetry is the belief that the image is able to by-pass consciousness and affect the subconscious of the reader, just as the vivid imagery of fairy tales is said to be able to reach the subconscious of the child, or the images involved in creative dreamwork can have a subliminal effect on participants. The deep image, as it has come to be called, clearly has links to the Depth Psychology of Freud and particularly Jung. Like Pound, Bly's career is marked by radical stylistic shifts, apparent immediately upon perusing his *Selected Poems*. I will attempt in the second chapter to trace the development of Bly's use of the image through these phases, indicating the points of similarity and difference between Bly's image and Pound's.

The third chapter deals less specifically with image than with metaphor, the term applicable to McKay's poetry. I will, therefore, argue in this chapter that metaphor is imagistic, and that McKay follows in the tradition of Pound and Bly in writing a poetry weighted in image. For McKay,

metaphor possesses significance as a poetic element capable of disarranging the order of language, a quality especially important in his nature poetry. Nature poetry is not necessarily pastoral or based on nature per se, but, as a more fundamental condition, involves "some extra-linguistic condition as the poem's input, output, or both" (McKay, "Baler Twine" 134). As most theorists of metaphor argue, the meaning generated by metaphor is often extra-linguistic, or mind-independent, and is not reducible to analogy. Metaphor, then, often acts in McKay's poetry precisely as a vehicle intended to articulate some aspect of a transcendental realm McKay calls "wilderness." In this sense, we might say, McKay falls within the mimetic tradition, although there is implicit in McKay's poetic an acknowledgment that wilderness can never be accurately represented, but only glimpsed. These concepts and the nature poetry aesthetic in general will be more fully discussed in the third chapter, focusing on how metaphor is operating in some of McKay's poems as a rhetorical element aimed at expressing something beyond the conceptual categories of language and thought.

A study of this kind is fraught with inherent difficulties which need to be mentioned here. One such difficulty involves the subject matter of the poetic image, which, by definition, is ideal, and as Kant claimed, "indefinable in words." Often during the course of writing this thesis I found myself struggling to express in a critical discourse what is only intimated in an artistic medium. Pound's concept of *forma*, Bly's subconscious, and McKay's wilderness all refer to areas of human experience which reside beyond consciousness and, hence, language. One of the difficulties in writing this thesis was trying to set down in language that which, paradoxically, resides beyond language. But as Eliot's Sweeney says in his vulgar dialect, "I've gotta use words when I talk to you," and never has that statement made more

sense to me than in writing this thesis. Another problem involves the desire to isolate for examination the image, which is possible in theory but not in practice. The image cannot successfully be isolated from a poem for examination, but always involves other poetic elements such as the prosody of the poem, rhythm, or sound. In "What the Image Can Do," for instance, the essay in which Bly discusses the rhetorical potential of the image, Bly begins by mapping out the six principal elements of poetry as he sees them, only one of which is the image, and states that the image has been given too much significance recently. I have tried to indicate periodically, perhaps not enough, the role that other poetic elements play in the rhetorical effect of the image.

Finally, I hope that the reader will be sympathetic to some of the subtle semantic shades between terms such as image, imagery, imagism, imagistic, metaphor, simile, analogy, picture etc. In matters such as this, it is always best to study the context in particular, and not rely on a definitive generality. I have tried to be as rigorous as possible, without bogging down the discussion with unnecessary critical jargon or verbal gymnastics. Perhaps Northrop Frye said it best when he wrote, in the introduction to his final book, "So while my critical approach has been said to be deficient in rigor, this does not matter to me as long as it is also deficient in rigor mortis." At any rate, if the theoretical aspect of my argument is not entirely clear at times, I hope the practical or technical explanation is clear enough to offer the reader a better understanding of how the poems examined work.

CHAPTER 1

Ezra Pound: the Realist Image

> *. . . a presented image . . . the perfectly adequate expression or exposition of* any *urge, whatsoever its nature.*
>
> Polite Essays

In his "The History of Imagism," F. S. Flint recounts how, in a Soho restaurant on March 25, 1909, the first meeting of the Imagiste group took place. In attendance were T. E. Hulme, Edward Storer, F. W. Tancred, Joseph Campbell, Florence Farr and, aside from one or two other "vaguements of memory," Flint himself. Flint states:

> I think that what brought the real nucleus of this group together was a dissatisfaction with English poetry as it was then (and is still, alas!) being written. We proposed at various times to replace it by pure *vers libre;* by the Japanese *tanka* and *haikai*. . . . There was also a lot of talk and practice among us, Storer leading it chiefly, of what we called the Image. We were very much influenced by modern French symbolist poetry. (71)

Flint continues by stating that almost one month later, on April 22, 1909, Ezra Pound joined the group:

> He was very full of his *troubadours;* but I do not remember that he did more than attempt to illustrate (or refute) our theories occasionally with their example. (71)

Flint's first-hand account of the origin of the Imagiste group provides us with, among other things, an insight into Pound's poetic naïveté at the beginning of his literary career. (Pound's second book, *Personæ*, was published the same

week as his introduction to the group.) Prior to meeting Hulme and Flint, his poetry was mainly influenced by the Medieval Provençal troubadours, on whom he had written his Master's thesis, published later as *The Spirit of Romance*. In a rejected section of "The History of Imagisme" manuscript, Flint writes: "Mr. Pound came and listened to all we had to say on the theory and practice of verse. . . . But he added nothing of any value to the discussion . . . but he took very much" ("Documents on Imagism from the Papers of F. S. Flint" 39–40; cited by Waldrop in "A Reason for Images" 74). While Pound has often credited Ford Madox Ford with the modernization of his poetic technique, the process certainly was aided, if not initiated, by his introduction to Japanese and French poetry via the early Imagiste members.[3] Among these new sources was the French poet and theorist Remy de Gourmont, whose literary theory greatly influenced Pound's developing theory and understanding of the poetic image.

At the heart of de Gourmont's aesthetic is an epistemology founded on the essentially Hobbesian maxim that sensation is the beginning of all intelligence.[4] In *Le Problème du Style*, de Gourmont writes that "the senses are the unique doorway through which enters all that lives in the mind, the very notion of consciousness, and the very feeling of personality. . . . Sensation is the basis of everything, of the moral and intellectual life as well as the physical life"[5] (122–3). According to de Gourmont, the intelligence is a circulatory movement by which sensations are transformed into word-images (*mots-images*); these in turn into word-ideas (*mots-idées*); and finally these into word-feelings (*mots-sentiments*). All feeling circulates and either returns to the senses, or passes into action; disturbances in the circulation of images/ideas/feelings produce "all literature, all art, all play, all civilization" (123). The circulation of aesthetic intelligence de Gourmont claims resembles

the circulation of the blood, an analogy we honour each time we affirm that good art comes from the heart, and not the mind.

Despite the obvious failings and imprecision of de Gourmont's epistemology, it was important nonetheless in drawing a close relationship between sensation, images, thought and feelings. The task at hand for the artist as well as the writer was to return to the realm of the senses, the stuff from which all thought and feeling is constructed. The writer, however, is forced to work within the medium of language, and cannot, as T. E. Hulme wanted, "hand over sensations bodily." The genius of literature then, was the ability to render sensations effectively in language. In another essay, de Gourmont puts it this way:

> The serious, new method of a theory of style would be an attempt to show how those two separate worlds—the world of sensations and the world of words—manage to interpenetrate. There is the great mystery, since those two worlds lie infinitely far apart, that is to say, parallel. (95)

The answer, according to de Gourmont, lay in images. Since the primary sense among humans is the visual, it follows that the image is the vehicle which can bring the reader closest to the sensorial realm. Through word-images the writer was able to reverse the circulatory process, so to speak, and stir sensations in the reader, which in turn produced feelings and thoughts: "the first step is the image and the last is the abstraction. A good analysis of the natural processes of style would begin with the sensation and end with the pure idea" (95).

T. E. Hulme, the "ringleader" of the early Imagiste group, as Flint called him, had certainly read and been influenced by de Gourmont, and his initiative to develop a School of Images was the first attempt to transport

modern French literary theory to England. Consequently, "Hulme is on the road to mythological glory," as Pound was to put it later, as the founder of Imagisme and father of modern English verse, despite the inconsistencies in and naïve idealism of his thought.[6] In his most famous essay, "Romanticism and Classicism," Hulme argued for a poetry comprised exclusively of images as opposed to "abstract counters," a term which, we must deduce, refers to conceptual language and abstractions: "A poet says a ship 'coursed the seas' to get a physical image, instead of the counter word 'sailed'" (135). Following de Gourmont, Hulme emphasized the importance of the visual element of poetry and the role of the image in this process, but following as well Bergson, another major influence on his thought, he couched his discussion in a vague and idealistic philosophy of intuition and subjective metaphysics, for as Bergson argued, we can be sure only of subjective states, and never objective truth. For Hulme, this translated into a theory of poetry in which the whole enterprise of writing was aimed at expressing the unique essence of things sensed intuitively through visual perception. In a well-known example, Hulme focuses on the particular way the hem of a woman's skirt rebounds off the back of her ankles as she walks; through the image, the poet was to capture this phenomenon which was representative of some essence existent behind the surface of things. Hulme's difficulty, and the poet's in general, was working within an imperfect medium that stood as a barrier between subjective truth and its expression. (We are reminded of Shelley's "Defense" and the problems inherent in articulating the Poem.) As Herbert Schneidau has argued, Hulme's aesthetic results in a "deep distrust of words" and reveals that he is more an ideologue than a practicing poet.[7] For Hulme as well as Pound it was clear that the image was the key to the creation of a

truly modern poetry; Pound, however, could not tolerate Hulme's religious trappings and imprecise ideas regarding poetry or the image.

It is difficult to glean an accurate understanding of the Poundian image (often spelled Image) from 1912–14, when Pound was leader of Imagisme proper. Much of the Imagiste theory published during this time was vague and often cryptic, which could well have been an intentional manœuvre to gain the group critical attention. In the most straight-forward account of their intentions and what has become known as the "Imagiste Manifesto," the issue of the Image is suspiciously (and elegantly) avoided. Writing in the third-person past tense, Flint states:

> They [The Imagistes] 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. ("Imagisme" 199)

Looking back now eighty years, we may never be completely sure what was agreed upon by Aldington, Flint, H. D. and Pound regarding the Image. The only clear statements committed to by the group concerned meter (musical rhythms instead of metronome), diction (economy of words) and narrative style (presentation instead of explication). Yet, for what it is worth, we do have Pound's celebrated definition and discussion of the Image in "A Few Don'ts":

> An "Image" is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. 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. It is the presentation of such a "complex" instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from

> time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art. (200–1)

There are two important points to be gleaned from this passage. First, the term "complex" indicates that Pound was using the Image in the interests of its psychological import. Bernard Hart, MD., Schneidau tells us, "was a pioneer in London psychiatry who described himself as under the influence of Freud, Jung, and Krafft-Ebing. Hart's meaning for 'complex' appears to have been popularized in such phrases as 'inferiority complex'; he defined them as systems of 'emotionally toned ideas,' operating unobserved in the mind, which caused random trains of thought to return continually to one object or feeling" (33). The Image of Imagisme, then, seems to have been one of the first attempts to put the ideas of Freud and Jung into a literary practice—an application, we will see in the next chapter, that would be pursued more fully in the next generation of poets including Robert Bly. The other significant point made here concerns "the sense of freedom from time limits and space limits" which the Image is said to effect. In a later essay, Pound makes a similar point in pursuing an analogy between poetry and mathematics. Analytical geometry, Pound suggested, was the equivalent in mathematics to intensive art:

> Thus we learn that the equation $(x-a)^2 + (y-b)^2 = r^2$ governs the circle. It is the circle. It is not a particular circle, it is any circle and all circles. It is nothing that is not a circle. It is the circle free of space and time limits. It is the universal, existing in perfection, in freedom from space and time. . . . The difference between art and analytical geometry is the difference of subject-matter only. (*GB* 91)

In making this analogy, it is clear Pound thought not only of the Image as formulaic, but also of poetry as governed by a body of knowledge dealing in universal principles. We might say, to clarify Pound's analogy, that the geometric equation is to mathematics as the Image is to poetry. When we combine these two points—the Image as poetry's universal equation, and the interest in psychology—we begin to see what might have been the mysterious "Doctrine of the Image" that would have provoked useless discussion among the public.

But it is not clear in Pound's definition above, or anywhere else in his theoretical writings, how these two fields precisely were combined. As usually is the case, we can get a better idea of Pound's ideas from examining his poetry than studying his poetics. Let us look, then, at the most well-known Imagiste poem, Pound's two-line *hokku*:

> **In a Station of the Metro**
>
> The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
> Petals on a wet, black bough. (*P* 109)

Pound has referred to this poem as a one-image poem, and a form of "super-position," a term which he explains refers to "one idea set on top of another" (*GB* 89). Perhaps the most apparent characteristic of "Metro" is the complete absence of verbs; in effect, the colon acts as a verb, signaling predication across the line-break. Indeed, the reader is asked to form a relationship between the two parts (or "ideas") of the poem. Another immediate observation is the disparity between these constituent parts, the first line being conceptual in nature, and the second, sensory. We might say that "the apparition of these faces in the crowd" is the poem's *cognitive* component, and "petals on a wet, black bough," its *sensory* component. The meaning generated by "Metro" resides in the relationship drawn by the reader between these respective parts,

between the intellectual and emotional moment of perception when Pound stepped out of La Concorde metro station in Paris. In "Metro," then, we see the working out of Pound's statement, "the Image is an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant in time." In effect, the poem attempts to present the reader with an Image of the moment that resides between the reception of some aspect of the physical world through the senses and when that aspect establishes, or imprints, itself upon the mind, or as Pound said later, "when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective" (*GB* 89).

Earl Miner has argued that Pound's early use of the image, as in "Metro," derives from his misunderstanding of the Japanese *haiku*. In "Pound, *Haiku* and the Image," Miner attempts to show that Pound's theory of super-position stems from his misreading of Japanese poetry, in which the unexpected and delightful change of images in the poem carries metaphysical and spiritual connotations of the changing seasons, and life's transience and constant metamorphoses. Miner contends that Pound, not having a thorough understanding of the Japanese language and culture, missed the deeper Buddhist meanings and was simply attracted to the condensation and suggestive play of images in the *haiku* (572). I find convincing Miner's argument that Pound read and was influenced by Japanese poetry, but how well (or poorly) Pound understood these poems is unclear. Perhaps Pound was uninterested in the Buddhist meanings and simply saw in Japanese poetry the evocative use of the image which he had only read about in the theoretical writings of de Gourmont but had not witnessed in Symboliste literature. At any rate, in many of Pound's Imagiste poems, there is a typically Japanese folious or floral image that provides the sensual element of the super-pository Image:

Alba

As cool as the pale wet leaves
of lily-of-the-valley
She lay beside me in the dawn. (*P* 109)

Gentildonna

She passed and left no quiver in the veins, who now
Moving among the trees, and clinging
in the air she severed,
Fanning the grass she walked on then, endures:

Grey olive leaves beneath a rain-cold sky. (*P* 92)

While "Alba" is quite similar in structure and technique to "Metro," there exists in "Gentildonna" referential ambiguity throughout the poem which comes to focus on the final image. John Childs has noticed that much of the imagistic description in the poem may refer to the "she" introduced in the first line (presumably Gentildonna) or the "grey olive leaves" of the closing image: both the woman and the leaves "mov(e) among the trees," perhaps also "cling . . . in the air"; Childs also informs us that olive trees are renowned for their "endur(ance)" (40). This ambiguity between the leaves and the passing woman is emphasized by the constant shifting in verb tense between past and present in which we are not sure whether the actions occurring in the poem refer to a remembered moment (of the passing woman) or the present moment of perception. Furthermore, Childs continues, a similar ambiguity exists in the phrase "quiver in the veins," which can refer both to the implied speaker (or at least perceiver) of the poem and the olive leaves (41). Hence, through intentional semiotic ambiguity, Pound is able to extend the cognitive component across several lines of verse, bringing it to focus on the poem's final image and sensory component which, as in "Metro," is set in apposition by the colon preceding it. The complex

referential play results, as Childs has noted, in a highly condensed and charged closure. It should be noted that while Pound's ingenious play of reference in the cognitive component of "Gentildonna" adds to the poem, the success or failure of the Image here, as in other Imagiste work, depends on the delicate sensory component. The Imagistes felt that the Image, if it was "right," could convey the entire emotion of a particular moment; nothing more was needed. Thus, Pound wrote that "the point of Imagisme is that it does not use images *as ornaments*. The image is itself the speech. The image is the word beyond formulated language" (*GB* 88; at this point, Pound is writing Image using a lower-case "i").

In January of 1914, Pound obtained as literary executor the notes of Ernest Fenollosa, in which he immediately saw the theoretical validation of what he had been advocating in his earlier Imagiste writing, as well as a structuring principle on which a long Imagiste or Vorticist poem could be written.[8] In an interview near the end of his life, Pound said that coming upon the manuscripts was like a "windfall," and that it was like having "the inside knowledge of Fenollosa's notes and the ignorance of a five-year-old child" (*PW* 148). In the notes which Pound compiled into *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, Ernest Fenollosa claimed that the Chinese language derives from patterns and processes in nature. He maintained that the Chinese language, being pictorial, remains close to its roots as a visual representation of the external, physical world, unlike modern languages which are becoming increasingly abstract. At the heart of his essay is the assertion that many Chinese characters are not simply arbitrary signs which refer only through convention, but are pictorial representations of things interacting. For instance, Fenollosa alleges that the character for "ripple" is made up of the respective characters for "water" and "boat" put

together. Similarly, in a better known example, he professes that the pictogram for "East" is comprised of the character for "tree" overlaid (or super-imposed) on the character for "sun," hence, "sun entangled in the branches of a tree," or "East" (10, 33).

The Chinese language therefore is a language of reality and natural phenomenon because it parallels the structure of nature. There is no grammar in nature, Fenollosa reminds us:

> A true noun, an isolated thing, does not exist in nature. Things are only the terminal points, or rather the meeting points, of actions, cross-sections cut through actions, snap-shots. Neither can a pure verb, an abstract motion, be possible in nature. The eye sees noun and verb as one: things in motion, motion in things. (10)

Likewise, he continues, abstractions do not exist in nature. To communicate an abstraction, a Chinese might juxtapose several things which share a common characteristic, such as "cherry," "rose," "iron-rust" and "flamingo" for the concept of "red," or "redness" (26). Herein lies the essence of the ideogrammic method which would become the structuring principle of Pound's later poetry. In *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound states that the ideogrammic method "consists of presenting one facet and then another until at some point one gets off the dead and desensitized surface of the reader's mind, onto a part that will register. . . . The writer's aim, at least this writer's aim being revelation" (51). By juxtaposing things, then, the reader was asked, as in "Metro," to find a relationship between the poem's parts. In complex forms of the Ideogram, however, this process becomes a subtle and delicate skill involving resonance and assimilation, requiring a heightened sensitivity to sensual detail, such as in William Carlos Williams' "Nantucket":

Flowers through the window
lavender and yellow

changed by white curtains—
Smell of cleanliness—

Sunshine of late afternoon—
On the glass tray

a glass pitcher, the tumbler
turned down, by which

a key is lying—and the
immaculate white bed

Ernest Fenollosa's essay has been attacked on a number of fronts, mostly by modern sinologists, many of whom argue that to the Chinese the ideograph is conventional and has lost its visual aspect (as most words in western languages have for the layperson lost their etymological heritage). In "Decentering the Image: The 'Project' of 'American' Poetics?" Joseph Riddell also rightly problematizes Fenollosa's claim for a natural and authoritative 'grammar' of objectivity (referred to above as patterns and processes in nature) which the Chinese language, being primordial, comes closer to mapping than modernized western languages. One Poundian critic has even argued that Pound mis-read the Fenollosa manuscript and thereby constructed his ideogrammic method on false principles (Brooke-Rose, *ZBC* 93–118). What is important, nonetheless, is not the accuracy of Fenollosa's claims, nor of Pound's understanding of them, but how they influenced and informed Pound's developing literary theory. Pound has been credited with the ability to find what is useful to him among much that is not; in this regard, Fenollosa's notes provided insight to the theoretical basis of a poetics based not on arbitrary convention, but a structural representation of "reality." I have put the term reality here in quotations to indicate that, for Pound if not

for Fenollosa, the only reality the poet could hope to articulate is one which derives from language.[9] Schneidau explains this best when he writes, "Fenollosa's solution yields a world not of static objects with meaning imposed on them but a drama of meanings unfolding from actions and processes" (68). Antony Easthope says much the same thing in reference to the modernism of Eliot and Pound when he writes that "signifier stands prior to signified and words create experience instead of experience being 'communicated' through words" (136). In short, modern poetry is non-mimetic. This, finally, was what Pound meant by direct presentation, the first and most fundamental tenet of the Imagiste doctrine—no mediator, no narrator guiding the reader through a narrative which is supposed to parallel a prior meaning. In a poetry of reality, the narrative is constructed *by* the reader; meaning is read onto the poem, as meaning is read into experience.[10]

One final but important point needs to be mentioned regarding Fenollosa's essay, one which is largely overlooked by critics. In the closing pages of his discussion, Fenollosa suggests that one of the pleasures in reading poetry, as in experiencing all art, is recognizing the "harmony of overtones" across compositional parts. In writing poetry, "the poet selects for juxtaposition those words whose overtones blend into a delicate and lucid harmony. All arts follow the same law . . . In music the whole possibility and theory of harmony are based on the overtones" (32). To illustrate this point, Fenollosa offers a line of Chinese:

Sun Rises (in the) East

The sun, the shining, on one side, on the other the sign of the east, which is the sun entangled in the branches of a tree. And in

> the middle sign, the verb 'rise,' we have further homology; the sun is above the horizon, but beyond that the single upright line is like the growing trunk-line of the tree sign.

One of the skills in writing poetry in Chinese was in choosing characters in which "a single dominant overtone colors every plane of meaning." For Fenollosa, it was not enough to place simply any two objects in juxtaposition and demand from the reader predication; the objects were chosen because they share an essential relationship. For Pound, this meant selecting things that share an essential physical (or metaphysical) relationship, as illustrated in the pine-tree/Japanese armour analogy:

> The pine-tree in mist upon the far hill looks like a fragment of Japanese armour.
>
> The beauty of this pine-tree in the mist is not caused by its resemblance to the plates of the armour.
>
> The armour, if it be beautiful at all, is not beautiful *because* of its resemblance to the pine in the mist.
>
> In either case the beauty, in so far as it is beauty of form, is the result of "planes in relation."
>
> The tree and the armour are beautiful because their diverse planes overlie in a certain manner. (*GB* 121)

The careful and deliberate practice of selecting items to appear together sharing essential relationships is the key difference between Symbolisme and Imagisme. The Symboliste technique involved associating disparate and often dissimilar symbols to create an effect of dream or fantasy, whereas Imagisme was precise, pointed, and directed toward expressing formal relationships.[11] As Fenollosa had argued using Chinese pictograms, "two things added together do not produce a third thing but suggest some fundamental relation between them" (10). The beauty expressed in an Imagiste poem resides in these relationships, the places where the poem's objects' "diverse planes

overlie." Synthesis, therefore, has wrongly been identified as the main compositional technique of Imagisme; rather, Pound's Imagiste Image is better understood as a product of *lamination*, a formal technique which extends into and finds its highest expression in the "ply over ply" technique and motif of *The Cantos*.[12]

Oddly enough, perhaps the best example of Imagiste practice is a poem written not by Pound but H. D., often quoted by Pound as exemplary of good poetry in his Imagiste as well as Vorticist propaganda:[13]

Oread

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. (*Selected* 26)

Here we can clearly see the subtle shifting and overlapping of metaphor in which "a single dominant overtone colors every plane of meaning." Metaphors for the sea range from "pointed pines," to "great pines," "green" and finally "pools of fir"; similarly, there is a verbal shifting through the poem as the action of the sea is expressed as "whirl," "splash," "hurl" and "cover." The important quality of "Oread" and what makes it quintessentially Imagiste is that the poem is not "about" anything. It does not proclaim or state, it *presents* a perceptual moment in which sea and coniferous forest become intermingled and indistinguishable in one Image. The pleasure derived from reading "Oread" stems from recognizing the aesthetic relationship between breaking waves and pine trees, and the full sensuality and beauty of both things being thrown into relief through this process of lamination.

Vorticism is not a departure from Imagisme but an extension of it, the progression being from the static Image of Imagisme to the moving image or Vortex of Vorticism:

> The defect of earlier imagist propaganda was not in misstatement but in incomplete statement. The diluters took the handiest and easiest meaning, and thought only of the STATIONARY image. If you can't think of imagism or phanopoeia as including the moving image, you will have to make a really needless division of fixed image and praxis or action. (*ABC* 52)

In another definition of the Vortex, Pound further emphasizes its kinetic quality:

> The [moving] 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. (*GB* 92)

In one of several formal paradoxes of modern theory (Eliot's constantly-changing but ever-complete paradigm of Tradition comes to mind) the Vortex is both fluid, comprised of ideas constantly rushing into, through, and out of it, and also focused at a single point of intensity, illustrated by the graphic of the cone with the line drawn through its centre that adorned the pages of the Vorticist publication *BLAST*. Like Imagisme, Vorticism was intensive, focused and pointed; but unlike its predecessor, Vorticism celebrated multiplicity. The Imagistes attempted to capture in a single Image the entire emotion of a perceptual moment; Vorticists strove to express the multitude of ideas which might rush through one's mind at a similar moment of perception.

We can see this multiplicity in the Vorticist poem "L'Art, 1910" (initially entitled just "L'Art"), a poem which Donald Davie has curiously dismissed as an "idle squib or lampoon" (*PS* 60):

> Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth,
> Crushed strawberries! Come let us feast our eyes. (*P* 49)

This poem appears at first to be another example of a super-pository Image in its structural similarity to "In a Station of the Metro," but there is in "L'Art, 1910," a semiotic play and density which we do not find in the earlier Imagist poem. "L'Art, 1910" is structured along two lines of semantic association: the description of artwork (indicated by the title) made in both violent and culinary terms. The most conspicuous indicator of violence is of course the reference to arsenic, but the verbs "smeared" and "crushed" also carry violent connotations. In this context, it may be argued that the violent aspect of the final verb "feast" also becomes foregrounded. The culinary associations are more obvious, in diction such as "egg," "strawberries" and "feast." These syntagmatic chains become intertwined in images at once both violent and culinary, such as the ingestion of arsenic (as a common poison) and the crushing of strawberries. In a particularly loaded phrase, the "egg-white" of the painter's cloth is the colour of egg-shell, and the internal white of egg which is often "beaten" before eating.[14] Indeed, among this interweaving of violence and eating, the expression "Come let us feast our eyes" takes on an unusually macabre association. The wealth of ideas generated by this two-line poem focuses on its title, an allusion to the Post-Impressionist and Abstract art emerging in Paris at the time, and a subject which, appropriate to the Vorticist aesthetic, is inherently perceptual.

Pound's Vorticist poetry, however, was generally unsuccessful, and has been looked upon (by the few critics who feel it worthy of an in-depth study)

as a formative period of Pound's career in which he was searching for a way to structure the long poem which had begun to occupy his mind and aspirations. One critic has written: "Pound in these years was rehearsing modes of writing poems rather than really writing them" (Dasenbrock 90). Certainly when we consider "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" or "Homage to Sextus Propertius" this comment seems unfair, if not inaccurate, although these accomplished poems may be considered only tangentially Vorticist, exhibiting qualities which, in the former, look back to Eliot's "Prufrock," and in the latter, forward to *The Cantos*. Indeed, we may consider Imagisme as well as Vorticism as a formative period leading up to Pound's long poem. Pound has stated that he began thinking of *The Cantos* as early as 1904 or 1905 (*PW* 38) and began writing them around 1915 (Bush 3). Seen in this light, Imagisme may be regarded as the period in which Pound strove to modernize his technique; Vorticism, furthermore, was the period in which he began to shape a coherent poetic incorporating his political, economic, and aesthetic ideas in a single form which would carry him the distance of his planned great epic. It is *The Cantos* for which Pound hoped he would be remembered, and to which I will therefore devote the remainder of this chapter, using the particularly imagistic Canto 2 as the basis of my discussion.[15]

To reiterate, the stationary Image of Imagisme developed into the moving image or Vortex of Vorticism. In *The Cantos*, this lineage extends from Vortex to Ideogram, with minor modifications. We can see the Vorticist roots of the Ideogram in the following example, taken from the beginning of Canto 2:

> So-shu churned in the sea.
> Seal sports in the spray-whited circles of cliff-wash,
> Sleek head, daughter of Lir,
> eyes of Picasso
> Under black fur-hood, lithe daughter of Ocean. (lines 5–9)

Like a vortex, multiplicity through semiotic play is the primary characteristic of Pound's ideogram here. The passage is structured around what appear to be three main "characters" who "compete" for reference of surrounding material: the mysterious So-shu, a seal (or seals), and "daughter of Lir" or sea nymph. Partial syntagmatic chains can be formed, but the fragmentation of the passage prevents an authoritative reading. Does "sleek head" refer to the seal of the previous line, the sea nymph, or perhaps even So-shu? Likewise, the phrase "black fur hood" may refer to "lithe daughter of Ocean" which appears on the same line, a reading which is strengthened by the feminine associations of fur coats (and hoods), but it may also refer back to the seal three lines earlier via "eyes of Picasso," a weaker reading but one which, nonetheless, is conjured by the similarity in shape and texture of fur hoods and seals' heads, and Picasso's eyes which may (or may not) appear to the reader as seal-like.[16] My objective here is not to argue for or against a particular reading of the ideogram, but merely to point out the multiplicity inherent in interpretation.[17] The semiotic complexity and play of this ideogram effects a reading that reminds us of the Vortex, "from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing."

Our ideogram is also like a vortex in that it is structured around a common point of focus, namely, what László Géfin has referred to as the "parallel construction" of the opening two lines (193). Regardless of whether we read the verbs "churned" and "sports" as transitive or intransitive (or even the term "sports" as a noun), certainly there is a resonance established across the juxtaposed ideas of something churning in the sea, and something sporting in "spray-whited circles of cliff-wash." Taking a clue from Géfin, we may safely say that the opening two lines of this ideogram constitute a form of

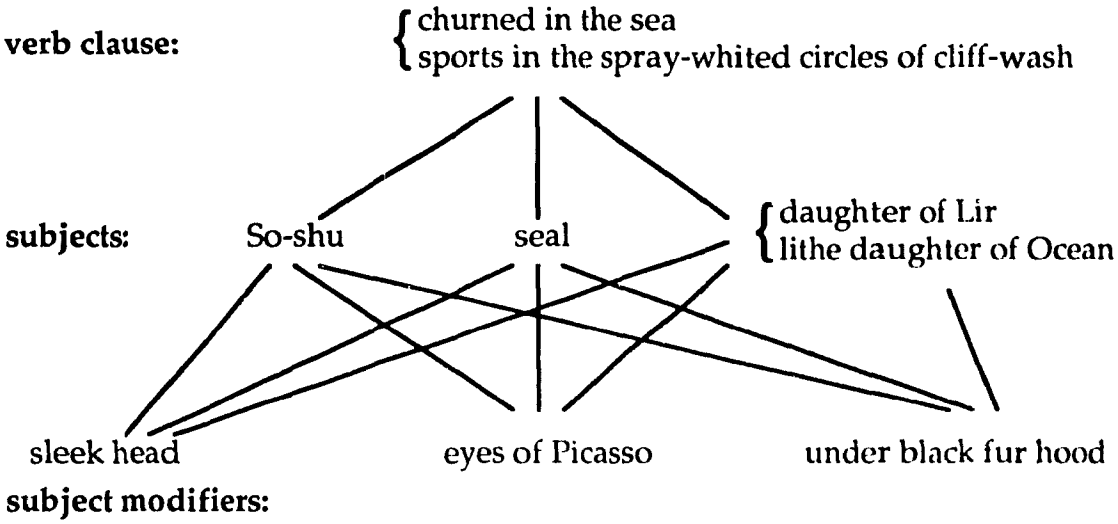
parallelism. Robert Alter has suggested that the operative feature in parallelism is not similarity, as one might expect, but difference:

> Literature, let me suggest, from the simplest folktale to the most sophisticated poetry and fiction and drama, thrives on parallelism, both stylistic and structural, on small scale and large, and could not give its creations satisfying shape without it. But it is equally important to recognize that literary expression abhors complete parallelism, just as language resists true synonymity, usage always introducing small wedges of difference between closely akin terms. (10)

Drawing upon Viktor Shklovsky's essay "Art as Technique," Alter argues in *The Art of Biblical Poetry* that "semantic modifications" across parallel versets in biblical poetry are the basis of forms of intensification and narration. In the case of the parallel construction opening our ideogram, Alter can remind us that forms of parallelism foreground difference, or that similarity, in a sense, highlights dissimilarity. With this in mind, the opening lines may be read as parallel phrases in which the most striking difference is the change of subject from the So-shu character of the first line to the seal in the following line. The two lines serve to foreground change of subject through a common backdrop of sea-action.

Following these lines are five qualifying fragments (lines 7–9) that complete the ideogram. Conspicuously, there are no verbs in any of these fragments; their main purpose is to provide descriptive detail of the preceding lines, as well as introduce a third possible subject, "daughter of Lir," thus accentuating the ambiguity surrounding subject. As I have mentioned above, the phrases "sleek head," "eyes of Picasso," and "under black fur hood" may refer to any or all of the possible subjects, the result being a passage which is

unusually laden with subjective reference—multiple subjects, possessing multiple modifying images—focused on a common act and setting. Structurally, then, we could map the ideogram in the following way:



The ideogram is a mass of subjective material hinging on the opening parallel actions. The effect is a conflation of subjects through a series of possible verb "pivots," the subjects So-shu, seal, and daughter of Lir becoming interchangeable within the mind of the reader. This is just one way that Pound is able to interweave many strands of myth, fact, and fiction in a poetic form which celebrates multiplicity while remaining "unified" as one Image. Unification, in this instance, is however problematized by the continued semiotic and semantic flux of reading, an issue I will return to below.

At this point a problem arises concerning terminology, since Pound, by the time of his Vorticist theoretical writings, was referring to formal structures in his poetry (like the Vortex and Ideogram) as images, yet clearly, at least in many ideograms appearing in *The Cantos*, these structures are often *comprised* of what has traditionally been referred to as images, that is, perceptions or visual representations in language. This problem will be

compounded when we begin to discuss the possibility of an entire poem cohering as one image, as Pound once referred to Dante's *Commedia Divina* as "the most wonderful *image*" (*GB* 86). Childs mentions this difficulty when he writes that "curiously, Pound never really makes clear whether an Image is equivalent to the poem-as-a-whole, whether it is an element of a poem, or whether it occupies both roles" (161). I concur with Childs in concluding that "it seems arguable, however, that the last is the case," and therefore, in the interests of clarity, I will refer to unified structures, including the Ideogram and the poem entire, as Images, and individual perceptions presented in verse, as images.

A different type of ideogram is used to present an Image of the rape of Tyro by Poseidon:

> And by the beach-run, Tyro,
> Twisted arms of the sea-god,
> Lithe sinews of water, gripping her, cross-hold,
> And the blue-gray glass of the wave tents them,
> Glare azure of water, cold-welter, close cover. (23–7)

This ideogram is structured sequentially in a chronological order to represent an event in time. We are given images first of Tyro by the beach, then the arms of Poseidon which, in the next line, are gripping her, then the glass wave that Poseidon makes to conceal them, and finally the violent act summarily articulated by "cold-welter, close cover." Unlike the So-shu ideogram, verbs are scattered throughout this ideogram (elliptically, "is" in 23; "gripping" in 25; "tents" in 26; also possibly "welter," "close" and "cover" in 27) to portray a series of acts. Moreover, there is not the same degree of referential ambiguity here as we found in the So-shu ideogram, the only significant difficulty occurring with the phrase "twisted arms of the sea-god" that elaborates into "lithe sinews of water, gripping her . . ." at which point we recognize that the arms are Poseidon's, and not Tyro's. (This momentary

confusion may in fact aid in our visualisation of the two intertwined in struggle.) I would also like to mention that the syntax of this ideogram reinforces the temporal order of its structure. The arms of Poseidon, described in one instant as "lithe sinews of water" are, in the next, gripping their victim, the two images separated only by a comma, thus surprising the reader as Tyro is supposedly surprised. Rhythm also supports this reading by its sense of finality and completion in the final line, "Glare azure of water, cold-welter, close cover."

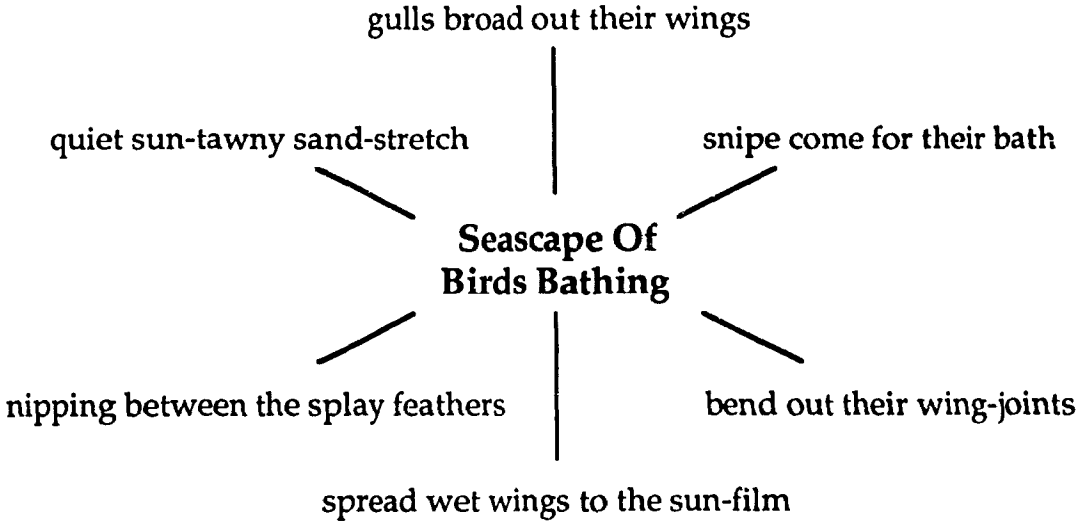
The revelation produced by this type of ideogram stems from its chronological ordering of images. During the process of reading, each image visualized by the reader is replaced in turn by another slightly advanced in time, thus creating an effect of temporal progression and action through a process analogous to the dynamics of cinematography, where a series of slightly differing still photographs projected in rapid succession produces an illusion of movement.[18] The mythical scene of Poseidon's rape of Tyro is, as it were, "played" upon the screen of the reader's imagination. This type of ideogram resembles conventional forms of simple narrative that are also structured chronologically; however, the lack of connectives and articles through this passage, as well as the exclusive use of the present tense, produce a style of narrative reminiscent of Imagiste technique in which the narrator has receded. We have the sense when reading the ideogram not of a narrator recounting to us an event, but rather of our being privy to witness first hand the event taking place. In Canto 2, this technique is used extensively in the long stretch of images (64–94; 102–18) pertaining to Ovid's tale of Acoetes' encounter with Dionysus, in which we in effect see through the eyes of Acoetes the bizarre events taking place aboard his ship at sea.[19] The successive presentation of chronological images fuses into a coherent running vision, or,

what may loosely be described as a moving Image, a term which is not outrageous when we consider that only a few years ago a cinematic film was commonly referred to as a picture show.

A third type of ideogram follows the scene of Poseidon's rape of Tyro:

> Quiet sun-tawny sand-stretch,
> The gulls broad out their wings,
> nipping between the splay feathers;
> Snipe come for their bath,
> bend out their wing-joints,
> Spread wet wings to the sun-film. (28–32)

This ideogram consists of six slightly differing images, but unlike the previous ideogram, the images here do not differ on a temporal basis but depict varying perspectives on a common subject in an instant in time. All six images depict birds in the act of bathing (or, in one case, coming for a bath), the synonymity of the images strongest with the parallel verb constructions "broad out their wings," "bend out their wing-joints," and "spread wet wings to the sun-film." To continue the analogy with cinema, if the former ideogram of Tyro and Poseidon is akin to the process of cinematography, then the technique employed here by Pound resembles that of traditional montage, in which a series of stills depicting fragments of a common scene are rapidly presented: a spilt drink, a smoking gun, an open window, a fallen body—we know a murder has been committed. Pound's series of images showing birds stretching and bending out their wings in the sun, sea and sand unite as a general Image of seascape. We therefore might illustrate the structure of this ideogram in the following way:



It should be noted that, as with the So-shu ideogram, the juxtaposition of images results in a conflation of certain elements, in this case, sea and sun approaching synonymity within a shared context of bathing. The conflation of water and light extends throughout *The Cantos* as a central motif and binding element across the many individual cantos. In this instance, we might say that sea and sun are superimposed in an Image of seascape in order to foreground their metaphysical relationship. In any event, as with the other ideograms examined, Pound's technique is to juxtapose several individual images with the intent of their unification and coherence during the act of reading. The possibility of a true unification, however, is problematized by the logistics of reading and reference, an issue to which I alluded earlier and now turn in discussing spatial poetics.

In an influential essay published in 1945, Joseph Frank offered the hypothesis that modern literature operates according to a space-logic, rather than a time-logic, narrative structure:

> Esthetic form in modern poetry, then, is based on a space-logic that demands a complete re-orientation in the reader's attitude towards language. Since the primary reference of any word-

> group is to something inside the poem itself, language in modern poetry is really reflexive: the meaning-relationship is completed only by the simultaneous perception in space of word groups which, when read consecutively in time, have no comprehensible relation to each other. (229)

There are really two related issues at stake here in Frank's comment: spatial versus temporal narrative structure, and reflexive as opposed to external reference. Leaving aside for the moment the issue of reference, let us first consider Frank's claim that Pound's and other Modernist writing is structured according to a space-logic. It may be helpful to view the spatial-poetic narrative not as an abandonment of time in the text, but as the adoption of conceptions of time other than conventional linear time. Childs writes:

> The Modernists often remind us (here I might mention Yeats's gyres, Joyce's reading of Vico, or Brecht's of Marx) that there are many species of time. Pound's much-repeated remarks about the Schifanoia fresco demonstrate that he assumed a tripartite time: mythic or divine time, historic time, and personal time. In effect, only one of these is sequential, historic time, but even history is badly misread if it is only read linearly. (73)

Much of the contention against the idea of spatial poetics centers on the devaluation of history that spatial poetry appears to assume.[20] Paul de Man, for one, reminds us in his critique of spatial-criticism that time as a poetic element cannot be erased, and that the poem as a historical fragment must eventually be viewed as part of time if it is to have any meaning to us as beings *in* time ("Spacecritics: J. Hillis Miller and Joseph Frank"). But to anyone who has opened a copy of *The Cantos*, it should be abundantly clear that history plays a significant if not major role in Pound's poetic form.

Heidegger argued in *Being and Time* that time was not an endless stream of "nows," as his predecessors had maintained, but three *ekstases* of consciousness which contain for us significance: past, present, and future.[21] The past, according to Heidegger, is significant to us only as a function of remembering and forgetting; it is everything that I have been, or was (*ich bin gewesen*); the present is the realm in which I find myself in situations and act accordingly; and the future, the most significant *ekstasis* to us, according to Heidegger, is that towards which I direct myself, and in which I invest hopes and expectations. From this view of time, Heidegger develops his sense of history, not as a linear record of objective fact, but a way in which I reckon an understanding of my own being historically. Michael Gelven writes in his lucid *Commentary on Heidegger's* Being and Time, that to Heidegger, "history is a story, and the story gives meaning to the events . . . and not the other way around" (201). I have ventured into Heideggarian philosophy because it seems clear enough to me that Heidegger's theory of time and history provides us with an alternate way of thinking of time inhabiting a text which is not opposed to space. Time and history are *not* metaphysical entities—massive rivers, so to speak, in which poet, poem and reader are caught up; rather, they are essential elements of being and consciousness, and as such may be invested throughout a poem without imposing compositional order. It is only because we have traditionally viewed time as linear that we have written (and expected our narratives to be written) in a linear structure. When we begin to conceive of time as expansive, that is, existential, our poems and other narratives become liberated from strict linearity, and may take on any number of structural shapes.

The Poundian Image, whether in super-pository, vorticist, ideogrammic, or any other formal structure, displaces linearity as the

dominant characteristic of time in the poem. Riddell writes that Pound's Image "displaces time linearity (and succession) into a figural space (a 'moment in time'), producing a formal mirage (a *sens*). The unconscious has no time, nor any object. It is displaced as time, as consciousness, and thus as a movement of images" (341). I have argued above that many of Pound's ideograms in *The Cantos* are constructed from individual images, and that these ideograms are effectual because these juxtaposed images fuse into coherent units when read. In other words, to return to the issue of reference, we could say that images in an ideogram signify collectively, rather than individually. As Frank states, "modern poetry asks its readers to suspend the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity" (230). But as Frank himself as well as his critics attest, the reading of modern poetry therefore includes the paradoxical assumption that while the process of reading is necessarily a temporal activity (words being read successively in time) the reader is asked to suspend signification somehow until the entire poem is read. Indeed, the problem is not only pertinent to Pound's ideograms in *The Cantos*, but can also be traced back to Pound's early Imagiste poetry. In a poem as simple as "In a Station of the Metro," how does the reader suspend reference even across one line-break in order to apprehend the poem's Image in an instant in time?

There are several ways to approach a solution to this dilemma, the most simple of which begins with the reminder that, as Frank has indicated, modern writers intended their works to be read and reread (and reread). Joyce, for example, was quite clear that he expected the critic to spend a lifetime studying his work. The rationale is that through familiarity with the text the reader will be able to recall larger and larger sections at once, until finally the entire poem may be held and unified in the mind. This does not demand a

superhuman feat of memory. Northrop Frye has often described the reading process of conventional narratives in similar terms:

> The act of reading, or its equivalent, consists of two operations that succeed one another in time. We first follow the narrative, from the first page or line to the last: once this pursuit of narrative through time is complete, we make a second act of response, a kind of *Gestalt* of simultaneous understanding, where we try to take in the entire significance of what we have read or listened to. (*WP* 69)

In a poem as short as "Metro," this act is relatively easy; similarly, ideograms are not very difficult to apprehend in their entirety. The reader of Pound's verse encounters considerable difficulty, however, in unifying an entire canto, not to mention the entire text of *The Cantos*. But as Frye indicates in qualifying his earlier statement, while the ideal is to understand an entire text, the process of understanding during reading is a cumulative affair:

> This conception of a two-stage response may strike many readers as both crude and false to their own experience. . . . What has to be emphasized is that while it may be theoretically useful to distinguish two stages, in practice they have to be assimilated as quickly as possible. Roland Barthes remarks that all serious reading is rereading: this does not necessarily mean second reading, but reading in the perspective of the total structure, a perspective that turns a wandering through a maze of words into a directed quest. (*ibid* 74–5)

Frye's remarks are equally valid for the reader of Pound's poetry, although we might have to add an intermediate step of internal reference and unification to bring his theory to bear on modern poetry. Signification, then, is not

suspended at all during the reading of Pound's verse, but is constantly occurring on many levels in a complex and rapid mental process in which meaning accumulates from word to image, ideogram and increasingly-larger structures ending with *The Cantos*.

The argument which I have been developing proposes that resonance occurs between ideograms and other formal structures in a canto in a similar way that images resonate and relate within an ideogram. To return to Canto 2 as our sample canto, this in fact turns out to be the case. If we examine Canto 2 on the level of ideogram, parallels abound, perhaps the most noticeable being the rape (or threat of rape) of both Tyro and Daphne. (Aside from this similarity, they are both sea-nymphs.) Another parallel exists on the theme of abduction between the myths of Dionysus and Helen of Troy (alluded to in the Homeric section of dialogue, lines 10–22); both Dionysus and Helen are abducted, taken aboard ships, where they consequently cause "doom" to fall upon their abductors. There is, as well, a resonance between the acts of rape and abduction, and it is possible to merge these two themes into a more general theme of aggressor/victim. This is supported by several links between the two themes: Helen is pursued and abducted for her beauty, and Pound adapts the Daphne and Apollo myth to create a parallel between Daphne's metamorphosis into *coral*, and Dionysus' metamorphosis of his abductor's ship into *stone*, a relationship which is strengthened still through mutual red and wine-coloured imagery (cf. 36–8 and 120–2). Without doubt there are other, subtler relationships between the different themes which the sensitive reader will notice in a careful reading, but I will not tax my reader's patience in arguing such minutia. Whether or not one agrees with this particular reading that I am suggesting, it seems evident that similarities exist between the main themes in the Canto, and that Pound chose these particular myths

to appear together in order to highlight their common properties, or as Fenollosa might say, in order that a "single dominant overtone colours every plane of meaning." The individual themes on the level of ideogram, therefore, operate toward some kind of unification on the level of canto.

This unification is aided by semiotic links: the "sharing" of certain terms by different ideograms and contexts. For example, the word "sinews," used twice to modify Poseidon (25, 133) is also used amid the Acoetes section in an image of one of Dionysus' cats: "Lifeless air become sinewed, / feline leisure of panthers" (89, 90). Similarly, "lithe" modifies both "daughter of Ocean" (9) and Poseidon (25, 132) (in the latter instance, 132, it is ambiguous whether "lithe" refers to Poseidon or the water which So-shu is churning, or both). These semiotic links, dropped by Pound periodically through the canto, facilitate the process of inter-connection, assimilation, and eventual unification of disparate elements of the canto. Above all other connectives, though, is the continual presence of water and sea found in every section of the poem. Repeated images of waves, algae, fish and sunlight serve as the canto's main cohering element.

All these elements of Canto 2 come together to form an intricate statement of metamorphosis, form, the sea and creation which Peter Makin aptly summarizes as, "sea, creator of forms, ever changing" (131). In one of the final stanzas of the canto (130–46), images taken from each of the poem's main sections are inter-spliced to form a continuum of ever-changing characters and contexts. In this microcosm of the Canto entire, the reader has the sense of fluidity, metamorphosis, the sea and myth in a poetic in which form mirrors content, and content reflects form: many of the myths from which Pound has created the canto involve metamorphosis, yet the form in which these myths appear dramatizes this concept. Indeed, the traditional

content/form duality does not pertain to Pound's Image here, that is to say, the Image is not ornamental but "is itself the speech. The [I]mage is the word beyond formulated language." Perhaps we could say, reiterating Pater, that Pound's Image approaches the conditions of music. Therein lies one of the main difficulties in critically discussing the Poundian Image: it is a phenomenon inherent to the medium and process in which it appears, and any attempt to translate its nature into a critical discourse inevitably fails. Thus Pound continued to proclaim throughout his career that if you want to understand his poetry, read it!

As with the reading of *The Cantos*, criticism and exegesis of the material is an expansive, on-going process. This study ends on the level of canto, although I have argued that a complete reading of *The Cantos* would take into consideration relationships between and across the one hundred and twenty cantos which comprise the entire poem. Although it may seem nearly impossible to conceive, *The Cantos* do work toward complete unification in one Image, the only question being in what form and shape the poem imparts. Are *The Cantos*, as Marjorie Perloff has argued, two-dimensional, in which juxtaposed fields jostle and collide in a formal collage, or are they three-dimensional, comprised of planes in relation, according with Donald Davie's analogy to sculpture? Other possible paradigms have been suggested: filmic montage, a tapestry of inter-woven textual threads, and of course the many musical metaphors which come to mind. To attempt to answer this question, it seems to me, is to try to answer the wrong sort of question, for to translate the Poundian Image from the realm of aesthetic imagining to physical space necessarily makes the Image something else, an endeavor which, in the end, parallels Pound's attempt to make a *paradiso terrestre*.

CHAPTER 2

Robert Bly: the Deep Image

The crow, the crow, the spider-colored crow,
The crow shall find new mud to walk upon.

"Where We Must Look For Help"

In an essay published in 1961, Robert Kelly coined the term "deep image" in reference to a new movement in American poetry. Ironically, the term grew in popularity despite the critical disapproval of it by the group's leading theorist and spokesperson, Robert Bly. Speaking with Ekbert Faas in 1974, Bly explains that the term deep image "suggests a geographical location in the psyche," rather than, as Bly prefers, a notion of the poetic image which involves psychic energy and movement (*TM* 259).[22] In a later interview, Bly states:

> Let's imagine a poem as if it were an animal. When animals run, they have considerable flowing rhythms. Also they have bodies. An image is simply a body where psychic energy is free to move around. Psychic energy can't move well in a non-image statement. (180)

Such vague and metaphorical theoretical statements are characteristic of Bly, who seems reluctant to speak about technique in conventional terms. Although the group's poetry is based on the image, nowhere has Bly set down a clear definition of the image or anything resembling a manifesto of technique. Unlike other "upstart" groups writing in the shadow of Pound and Eliot, the deep image poets—including Bly, Louis Simpson, William Stafford, and James Wright—lacked the equivalent of the Black Mountain group's "Projective Verse," or even, as in the Beats' "Howl," a central important poem which critics could use as a common point of reference. The group's

theoretical voice came mainly in the form of polemical essays written by Bly under the pseudonym "Crank," in a journal founded and co-edited by Bly called *The Fifties* (subsequently *The Sixties* and *The Seventies*).

On the inside of the front cover of the first issue of *The Fifties* was written: "All the poetry published in America today is too old-fashioned." Bly argues that after Pound and Eliot, American poetry slipped back into the English tradition of the iamb, a shift which Bly claims means that the conscious mind (as opposed to the unconscious) is leading, or advancing, in the poetry. Bly suggests instead a more passionate, irrational style of writing modeled after the Spanish poets Neruda, Lorca, Vallejo and Machado; in Germany, the work of Hölderin, Rilke, Göethe, Trakl; and in France, Rimbaud and Baudelaire primarily. This loose distinction between American and European poetry is best stated and argued in the essay "A Wrong-Turning in American Poetry," in which Bly effectively vanquishes his anxiety of writing in the shadow of Pound and Eliot—what Freudians would call resolving his Oedipal complex. A typical passage from this essay compares the passion of Lorca with the craftsmanship of Eliot:

> Lorca conveys his emotion not by any "formula" but by means which do not occur to Eliot—by passion. The phrase "objective correlative" is astoundingly passionless. For Lorca there is no time to think of a cunning set of circumstances that would carry the emotion in a dehydrated form to which the reader need only add water. (19)

The essay continues by juxtaposing passages from both camps of poetry for comparison, admittedly particularly bad examples from the English Tradition against the best of European and ancient poetry. Perhaps the distinction to be made need not be defined geographically; the examples provided by Bly in

this essay show a distinction between conventional narrative verse, and a daring imagistic style. Bly would agree with Pound that poetry is not prose chopped into line lengths. Like Pound, Bly was interested in turning poetry away from a narrative style to one in which the image evokes a striking and profound effect in the reader.

The image, however, for Bly, is not the image of Imagisme, and in the same essay he openly criticized the poetry of Pound's Imagiste movement:

> The only movement in American poetry which concentrated on the image was Imagism, in 1911-13. But "Imagism" was largely "Picturism." An image and a picture differ in that the image, being the natural speech of the imagination, can not be drawn from or inserted back into the real world. It is an animal native to the imagination. Like Bonnefoy's "interior sea lighted by turning eagles," it cannot be seen in real life. A picture, on the other hand, is drawn from the objective "real" world. "Petals on a wet black bough" can actually be seen. (26)

Clearly, Bly is over-simplifying the technique of Eliot and Pound in order to be polemical, but there is nevertheless a shift in emphasis between the subjective manipulation of objective materials in the Modernism of Pound and Eliot, and, as Dennis Haskell has described the Deep Image technique, the "rational manipulation of irrational materials" (142). The irrational materials, according to Bly, are donated to the poem by the imagination, which in his aesthetic becomes synonymous with the unconscious:

> The Romantic view of composition, which derives from the English and the German Romantics, means that the poet asks the unconscious, or the hidden man, or the hidden woman, or

the latent intelligence, to enter the poem and contribute a few images that we may not fully understand" (*TP* 9).

The rational element in Bly's poetry distinguishes it from the complete irrationality and automated writing of the Surrealists. Unlike the poetry of André Breton and the French Surrealists, Bly's poetry is not an all-out assault on consciousness; rather, it operates through both the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind in what Bly has referred to as "psychic leaps": "In many ancient works of art we notice a long floating leap from the conscious to the unconscious and back again, a leap from the known part of the mind to the unknown part and back to the known" (*LP* 1). These leaps of association, motivated by emotion and not reason, are precisely what Bly admires and emulates in Spanish poetry.

In "Driving Toward the Lac Qui Parle River," the leap occurs in the final stanza:

I
I am driving; it is dusk; Minnesota.
The stubble field catches the last growth of sun.
The soybeans are breathing on all sides.
Old men are sitting before their houses on car seats
In the small towns. I am happy,
The moon rising above the turkey sheds.

II
The small world of the car
Plunges through the deep fields of the night,
On the road from Willmar to Milan.
This solitude covered with iron
Moves through the fields of night
Penetrated by the noise of crickets.

III
Nearly to Milan, suddenly a small bridge,
And water kneeling in the moonlight.
In small towns the houses are built right on the ground;
The lamplight falls on all fours on the grass.
When I reach the river, the full moon covers it.
A few people are talking, low, in a boat. (*SP* 45)[23]

This poem has a very private, pensive mood, expressed mainly through tone and imagery. Although description of landscape plays a key role in the poem, the images which comprise this description do not aim at accuracy to objective detail. Instead, images such as "The soybeans are breathing on all sides," and "The small world of the car / Plunges through the deep fields of the night," reveal the speaker's emotional state, that is to say, the speaker's mood permeates the description of surrounding environment. This is essentially Pathetic Fallacy with a surrealist twist. Even those images which are comparatively traditional seem highly selective, such as the references to old men sitting on car seats, and the moon above turkey sheds. We might say that in "Driving," subjectivity is welcomed into the poem and its narrative; in one instance, the subjective element enlarges to a degree at which description lapses into declaration: "I am happy." In contrast to the invisible narrator of Pound's style, the presence of the narrator in this poem is overt. The images become progressively laden with emotional weight through the first two stanzas, from the stark recounting of fact in the opening line, to the image presented in the final three lines of the second stanza, which Toshikazu Niikura has described as "the inner landscape of [the speaker's] mind" (126).

In the final stanza, we receive the speaker's mystical vision, signaled by the adverb "suddenly." These are the deep images which Donald Hall has cited in 1961 as exhibiting a new kind of imagination in American poetry (24). In these images, considerable effort is made to remove the divider separating objectivity and subjectivity. Ekbert Faas, tracing the roots of Bly's poetic theory through French Surrealism, Zen Buddhism, Jungian Psychology, and Olson's theory of Objectism, argues that there exists similarly in Bly's poetry an attempt to transcend consciousness:

> It is only beyond this stage that all dichotomies of good and evil, past and future, inward and outward, and, above all, the duality of subject and object cease to be seen as opposites—not, however, by an extinction of the mind but by its tranquilization. (722)

For Bly as well as other Deep Image poets, solitude plays an important role in this tranquilization. In "Driving," this solitude is explicit; it enables the speaker to descend slowly into a meditative state of mind in which ordinary things suddenly become defamiliarized and perceived in a new and unusual fashion: water kneels, lamplight falls on all fours, moonlight covers, and an overheard conversation takes on peculiar significance.

But how is Bly's deep image here different from Pound's imagiste image, which also strives to articulate the space between objectivity and subjectivity? For one, Pound's Image, we have seen, is composite, made up of two or more individual images, or ideas, which express collectively through their relating. Bly's deep image, in contrast, is singular in its attempt to express a vision of the speaker. In Pound's image, faces in a crowd are related with petals on a bough, but in Bly's, lamplight simply falls on all fours. It is interesting to consider that while both Pound and Bly studied *haiku*, they took from the Japanese form radically different aspects: Pound admired and adopted the formal quality of *haiku* to juxtapose resonant images in an attempt to capture and condense the entire emotion of a given moment, whereas Bly was interested in the sense of spiritual insight which is suggested by the interplay of speaker and nature in many Japanese poems. In discussing Bly's relationship with *haiku*, Toshikazu Niikura has written: "Whereas our early modernists were chiefly concerned with the technical aspects of haiku, Bly's emphasis lies with the inner vision" (125). This vision comes to be expressed in "Driving" as physical proximity to the earth: the images in this

final stanza are all conspicuously descriptive of being low or low places—water *kneeling*, houses *built right on the ground*, lamplight *fall[ing] on all fours*, the sound of people talking *low* in a boat, and even the moon is depicted not in the sky, but covering the river. For Bly, lowness and being low are obviously expressive of union with the earth, a state in which aesthetic vision is possible. Many of the images in "Driving," therefore, intermingle elements of both speaker and world to express a spiritual union intimated beautifully in the "Lac Qui Parle" of the title. We have the sense that the deep images of the final stanza are in the voice of both speaker *and* nature, a voice which is foreign but comprehensible.[24]

In the political poetry of *The Light Around the Body* and *The Teeth Mother Naked at Last*, Bly adopts a radically different voice. Bly's poetry in these volumes is motivated by a growing awareness of the social and psychological ills of American society brought to light by the Vietnam war. In his essay "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man," Carl Jung discusses the growing interest in psychology in the western world. Jung's hypothesis, taken from his experience with individuals and applied on a communal scale, is that an imbalance of attention directed to the objective world, found in materialism, science, and technology, creates a blockage of psychic energy that wells to dangerous proportions. In extreme cases, this imbalance eventually finds release in hostile and destructive ways, forcing one to confront the psychic problems at the root of this destruction. Applying this theory to modern man, Jung writes:

> An intimation of the law that governs blind contingency, which Heraclitus called the rule of *enantiodromia* (conversion into the opposite), now steals upon the modern man through the by-ways of his mind, chilling him with fear and paralysing his faith

> in the lasting effectiveness of social and political measures in the face of these monstrous forces. If he turns away from the terrifying prospect of a blind world in which building and destroying successively tip the scale, and if he then turns his gaze inward upon the recesses of his own mind, he will discover a chaos and a darkness there which he would gladly ignore. (204-5)

The political poems of Bly attempt to turn the reader's gaze inward to the dark recesses of America's "national psyche." The image is used to probe the unconscious of the reader in a confrontational manner by exposing the dark side of American culture, both domestic and abroad. While Bly's poetry often attacks the American government and persons in positions of power, Bly at heart believes in the democratic process, and maintains that a government and its actions are representative of the collective population. We could say, in Jungian terms, that Bly writes in his political poetry of the American shadow.

In "Driving Through Minnesota During the Hanoi Bombings," Bly writes:

> Our own gaiety
> Will end up
> In Asia, and you will look down in your cup
> And see
> Black Starfighters.
> Our own cities were the ones we wanted to bomb! (*SP* 74)

The image here attempts to bring the responsibilities of the Vietnam war into the kitchens of the American people. The image of jet fighters in a coffee cup directly connects the war with the individual reader, implying a relationship, initially suggested in the title of the poem, between the gaiety of Americans and their capacity for destruction. Jungians often speak of "projection," the phenomenon of unknowingly externalizing inner psychological elements

onto an outer object, and Bly with this image is trying to reveal the fear and self-hatred fueling America's aggression against North Vietnam, a dynamic in which blind American patriotism translates into unsubstantiated fear of Communists bordering on mass neurosis. In actuality, Bly believes, Americans hate and want to destroy parts of their own culture, and in this sense he writes, "Our own cities were the ones we wanted to bomb!" The image, then, is used here symbolically to depict a causal relationship between the domesticity of the reader's life and the atrocities occurring simultaneously overseas.

In another poem, Bly suggests that projection occurs in a domestic context as well as in international politics. "Hatred of Men With Black Hair" attempts to expose the psychology of American racism against Native American Indians. The final stanza of this poem contains a powerful image:

> Underneath all the cement of the Pentagon
> There is a drop of Indian blood preserved in snow:
> Preserved from a trail of blood that once led away
> From the stockade, over the snow, the trail now lost. (*SP* 75)

This image, influenced by Lorca's "Beneath all the statistics / there is a drop of duck's blood" ("New York"), gains its rhetorical force through the use of symbolism. The image loses much of its energy when stripped of its symbols:

> Underneath all the weaponry of the Pentagon
> There is a drop of fear preserved in the unconscious.

I have removed some of the symbolism from the original. A still more literal translation might be: "Beneath all the denial of the conscious mind / There is a part of ourselves we fear." The image in its original form attempts to reach beyond consciousness to a deeper area of the reader's psyche through the use of what Jungians would call archetypal symbols. Jung has argued that the symbol possesses extraordinary power:

> A symbol does not define or explain; it points beyond itself to a meaning that is darkly divined yet still beyond our grasp, and cannot be adequately expressed in the familiar words of our language. (*CW* 336)

The deep image, in this case, *does* refer to a geographical location in the psyche. This is an important difference between Pound's and Bly's images. Pound repeatedly claimed that bad poetry used words in a way that relied upon a predetermined or prescribed meaning, and he criticized the French Symbolists' symbols for having a "fixed value, like numbers in arithmetic" (*GB* 84). Bly, by contrast, employed the vague but far-reaching meaning associated with certain symbols such as blood and snow.[25] He exploited what he thought were the "deeper" meanings behind certain symbols in much the same way that dreams and fairy tales often use symbols in a form of discourse aimed beyond consciousness.

The significance that Bly grants to the symbol in his image-making is made apparent in his essay "What the Image Can Do," perhaps the clearest presentation of Bly's ideas on the image. In this essay, he argues that the image is essentially metaphorical in that its primary function is to connect. Bly asserts that like metaphor, the image brings together two items in order to express a relationship, a statement that rings of Fenollosa's *Essay* and Pound's super-position technique. The difference, however, is that for Bly the true image reiterates a forgotten archetypal relationship that has remained dormant in cultural memory through recent history; it reaches out beyond consciousness and connects the human and nonhuman worlds through its symbolism:

> The Middle Ages were aware of a relationship between a woman's body and a tree, and Jung reproduces in one of his

> books an old plate showing a woman taking a baby from a tree trunk. That would be an example of a forgotten relationship recently retrieved; and Greek myths, when studied, turn up others. . . . Whenever a poet through imagination discovers a true analogy, he or she is bringing up into consciousness a relationship that has been forgotten for centuries. (42–3)

The image, then, for Bly as well as Pound and Fenollosa, is relational; it sets two or more things side by side in order to point out a relationship. But in Bly we find a greater disparity between the composite parts than with Pound. It is this disparity which gains the deep image its surreal quality and rhetorical force, while at the same time running the risk of alienating the reader; many of Bly's deep images, unfortunately, seem no more than amusing.

The images in "Counting Small-Boned Bodies" also contain symbols, but the effect they produce does not rely heavily on symbolic meaning. This poem, which pertains to the daily body counts advertised in the media during the war, contains three images that show the human body progressively diminished in size:

> Let's count the bodies over again.
>
> If we could only make the bodies smaller,
> the size of skulls,
> we could make a whole plain white with skulls in the
> moonlight.
>
> If we could only make the bodies smaller,
> maybe we could fit
> a whole year's kill in front of us on a desk.
>
> If we could only make the bodies smaller,
> we could fit
> a body into a finger ring, for a keepsake forever. (*SP* 73)

The poem makes a statement against the censored, sanitized account of war by the media, where the enemy is objectified and death becomes a statistic. Corpses are depicted increasingly as tidy manageable items as the human body is rendered smaller by some unexplained method, until the corpse becomes, at an extreme, something pleasing and aesthetic in the form of jewelry. The eerie images are designed to re-sensitize the reader to the horror of mass death through the modest proposal, posed in a satiric, sardonic tone, of participating in acts of such gross insensitivity. "Counting Small-Boned Bodies" stands out from other anti-war poetry by its depiction of violence not in vivid, grotesque imagery, but in disturbingly inhuman terms.

In passages of *The Teeth Mother Naked at Last,* Bly adopts the opposite approach, providing accurate, uncensored images of war:

> Artillery shells explode. Napalm canisters roll end over end.
> Eight hundred steel pellets fly through the vegetable walls.
> The six-hour-old infant puts his fists instinctively to his eyes to keep out the light.
> But the room explodes.
> The children explode.
> Blood leaps on the vegetable walls. (*SP* 77)

Here the image is used to provide graphic description in a kind of eyewitness account of war, similar to Denise Levertov's war poetry which, figuratively speaking, drags the reader through Vietnam villages and jungle. In all of Bly's political poetry, images are used chiefly to shock the reader and precipitate change. The distinctive mark of Bly's political poems is that they are directed at the psychology of the reader, and not any intellectual political argument. Fitting with the Jungian context in which the images are presented, Bly believes that social and political change originates with psychological change, an approach that addresses the source of the problem and not its symptoms.

The graphic images of *The Teeth Mother* signal the beginning of a gradual movement away from the surreal, deep image of Bly's early poetry to

a less surreal, descriptive image in Bly's prose poems and the later poetry of *The Man in the Black Coat Turns* and *Loving a Woman in Two Worlds*. The prose poems of *The Morning Glory* indicate a turning away from public back to the personal matters that concerned Bly in his first book. Like *Silence in the Snowy Fields*, these poems express an intimacy between speaker and nature which for Bly is nothing less than spiritual. But the outward movement from self to nature that we saw in "Driving" does not occur in these poems in a single, large leap. In developing his theory of leaping poetry, Bly writes that there may be in a poem several shorter leaps of association (*LP* 4). The object poems which comprise the bulk of *The Morning Glory* associate images as a way of accomplishing this leaping. In the object poem, the poet meditates upon a particular object, allowing the plenum of sensual detail to stimulate the imagination and produce a series a playful associative leaps, often leading to some sort of discovery or revelation. Many of Bly's object poems turn spiritual and surreal near their close:

The Mushroom

This white mushroom comes up through the duffy lith on a granite cliff, in a crack that ice has widened. The most delicate light tan, it has the texture of a rubber ball left in the sun too long. To the fingers it feels a little like the tough heel of a foot.

One split has gone deep into it, dividing it into two half-spheres, and through the cut one can peek inside, where the flesh is white and gently naïve.

The mushroom has a traveller's face. We know there are men and women in Old People's Homes whose souls prepare now for a trip, which will also be a marriage. There must be travellers all around us supporting us whom we do not recognize. This granite cliff also travels. Do we know more about our wife's journey or our dearest friends' than the journey of this rock? Can we be sure which traveller will arrive first, or when the wedding will be? Everything is passing away except the day of this wedding. (*TP* 52)

Part of the enjoyment in reading an object poem comes from tracing the movement of the poet's mind as it associates from one image to the next. The poet's endeavor in writing in this form lies in the delicacy of the leaps, enabling the reader to follow on this journey; if there are any jarring shifts or gaps in the trail, we lose our way, the poem becomes words, and we are left unfulfilled. In "The Mushroom," we are led from the sight of a mushroom growing up from a crack in a mountain, to a highly imaginative spiritual concept at its close.[26] The poem turns inward with the image "The mushroom has a traveller's face," which hinges between the physicality of the object and what it comes to represent for Bly. Howard Nelson has argued that "Bly wants in the image a conjunction of the physical and the unknown, the sensory impression and the inner reverberation" (81). The term "sensory impression" reminds us of Pound's Image in "Metro," but instead of setting the sense impression alongside an intellectual or conceptual component, Bly allows the imaginative irrational associations of the object to surface in the latter half of the poem. In this way the object and the image may be seen as convenient vehicles for entering the playful and poetic space of the imagination. In Freudian terms, the image here enables both poet and reader to by-pass the ego and enter a more imaginative mode of thought in which knowledge is unrestricted by reason. Such a discourse naturally turns either inward or universal, which in Bly's thinking are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

This technique of association reminds us of the Symbolist style of associating in highly imaginative ways for surreal or dream-like effect, and indeed Bly has acknowledged an indebtedness to Gérard de Nerval, Lautréamont, Aloysius Bertrand, Baudelaire, Mallarmé and others for their work in "exploring these paths of association" (*LP* 15). "Thought of in terms

of language," Bly concludes, "leaping is the ability to associate fast." In Bly's object poems, we find a slow, meditative quality of time in which the associations are facile and the leaps are short, but in the prose poems of *This Body is Made of Camphor and Gopherwood*, Bly's associating is wild and rapid, creating chasms in the text that demand the reader make large, imaginative leaps. Here is the first paragraph of "We Love This Body," from that collection:

> My friend, this body is made of energy compacted and whirling. It is the wind that carries the henhouse down the road dancing, and an instant later lifts all four walls apart. It is the horny thumbnail of the retired railway baron, over which his children skate on Sunday; and the forehead bone that does not rot, the woman priest's hair still fresh among Shang ritual things. . . .

So while Pound was disgusted with the "flabby," imprecise meaning derived from the Symbolist technique, Bly appreciated its high degree of imagination and poetic energy, and used it mid-career in his prose poems as a way to get the quality of leaping that he desired into his poetry.

The prose poems of *Morning Glory* and *This Body* have also been characterized by critics as incorporating a more personal voice than Bly's prior work.[27] In "Poetry, Personality and Death," Galway Kinnell criticizes Bly's early poetry for its lack of authenticity. Kinnell argues that Bly employs throughout this poetry a *persona* in order to avoid revealing his true self:

> In his first two books Bly avoids specific autobiographical detail almost entirely. Though he speaks in the first person about intimate feelings, the self has somehow been erased. The "I" is not any particular person, a man like the rest of us, who has sweated, cursed, loathed himself, hated, envied, been cold-hearted, mean, frightened, unforgiving, ambitious, and so on. Rather it is a person of total mental health, an ideal "I" who has

> more in common with ancient Chinese poets than with anyone alive in the United States today. (204)

In an article published one year later, Bly as much as admits to these charges:

> Time after time in my twenties, after typing up a group of poems hopefully, I would notice an absence. The poems seemed well written, and yet a psychic weight was missing, something imponderable, that I seemed not in control of. I think this weight . . . comes from opening the body to grief, turning your face to your own life, absorbing the failures your parents and your country have suffered, handling what alchemy calls "lead." ("What the Image Can Do" 39)

Ironically, despite Bly's expressionist aesthetic, his early poetry often lacks a sense of profound expression—a sincerity and kind of reckless honesty in the writing process which Don McKay alludes to when he calls the blank page "that dreadful place . . . that pool full of wonderful risk" ("Night Field").

The movement toward a more personal and honest speaker in Bly's prose poems comes to fruition in *The Man in the Black Coat Turns*. In this collection we find a more consistent voice than previously as Bly turns his poetic expression inward to face the grief of his own life. The image and Bly's style as a whole in these poems is more conventional and less gimmicky or theory-motivated. Notice the change of voice in the following poem from this collection:

> **Fifty Males Sitting Together**
>
> After a long walk in the woods clear cut for lumber,
> lit up by a few young pines,
> I turn home,
> drawn to water. A coffinlike band
> softens half the lake,
> draws the shadow

down from westward hills.
It is a massive
masculine shadow,
fifty males sitting together
in hall or crowded room,
lifting something indistinct up into the resonating night.

Sunlight kindles the water still free of shadow,
kindles it till it glows with the high
pink of wounds.
Reeds stand about in groups
unevenly as if they might
finally ascend
to the sky all together!
Reeds protect
the band near shore.
Each reed has its own thin
thread of darkness inside;
it is relaxed and rooted in the black
mud and snail shells under the sand.

The woman stays in the kitchen, and does not want
to waste fuel by lighting a lamp,
as she waits
for the drunk husband to come home.
Then she serves him
food in silence.
What does the son do?
He turns away,
loses courage,
goes outdoors to feed with wild
things, lives among dens
and huts, eats distance and silence;
he grows long wings, enters the spiral, ascends.

How far he is from working men when he is done!
From all men! The males singing
chant far out
on the water grounded in downward shadow.
He cannot go there because
he has not grieved
as humans grieve. If someone's
head was cut
off, whose was it?
The father's? Or the mother's? Or his?
The dark comes down slowly, the way
snow falls, or herds pass a cave mouth.

I look up at the other shore; it is night. (*SP* 145)

This poem accumulates much of its meaning through a consistent inter-play of light and dark images. In the opening image, for example, we are presented the clear-cut wasteland *lit up* by a few young pines. This image not only articulates a light/dark duality, but suggests as well young/old and innocent/mature dualities which resonate with the many allusions to personal psychology later in the poem. Another image contributing to this theme is the reference to the woman who, instead of lighting a lamp, waits in the dark for her husband to return. But the dominant images are the lake half-covered in shadow and the approach of night, from which are drawn many other images of light and dark presented throughout the poem. Clearly, of the two, darkness dominates in the poem, establishing a somber, perhaps gloomy mood. Dark images include references to both literal and archetypal shadow, a coffin, the interior "thread of darkness" of reeds, black mud, a dark kitchen and night.

As with many of Bly's poems, description of landscape occupies the opening stanzas, then the poem turns inward, marked by a change of voice. The change of voice in this poem not surprisingly is a distancing from the first person narration to third person in the third stanza and most of the fourth. Again, this is typical of Bly; there is a tendency to pull back and speak about intimate matters from the perspective of a disinterested party. The discussion in this case concerns the difficulty involved in growing up in a dysfunctional family dominated by an alcoholic father, and the effect the father's sickness has upon the son. Expressed in characteristically Jungian terminology and thought, the boy becomes a *puer aeternus*, or eternal youth.[28] The speaker admits that he cannot join the company of other men because he has not grieved, and the rhetorical question asking whose head

was cut off effectively symbolizes in its separation of body and mind the son's estrangement not only from other men but also from his own feelings and emotions. He has "ascended" up into the idealistic world of the mind: "What does the son do? / He turns away, loses courage, / . . . /grows long wings, enters the spiral, ascends." The second half of the poem, therefore, is the speaker's remembrance of childhood pain, and his musing over the psychological effects in the present day of this difficult history.

By structuring the poem in halves, Bly seems to be asking the reader to make connections between the symbolic description of landscape and the psychology of the speaker. Many of the images of the poem support this reading through their symbolic allusions to psychology, most notably the concept of shadow. In the central image of the poem, from which it takes its title, the massive shadow that darkens half the lake is described specifically as masculine. The other, light side of the lake, "glows with the high / pink of wounds," which may be interpreted literally as physical wounds, but in the context of the poem, a figurative meaning of psychological wounds is apparent. Perhaps the most noticeable connection to be made is between the image of the reeds that appear "as if they might / finally ascend / to the sky all together," and the boy in the following stanza who figuratively does ascend. The description of the reeds continues: "Each reed has its own thin / thread of darkness inside; / it is relaxed and rooted in the black / mud and snail shells under the sand." Again, a psychological reading of this image may easily be coaxed from the symbolism here: the reeds, having internalized the shadow instead of projecting it outward, are now relaxed and "grounded" in the dark earth.

What we have in "Fifty Males" then, is an excellent example of what was referred to above as reflexive reference; images in the poem refer

internally to other elements within the poem. This is not to say that they don't also refer externally to landscape. In fact, they do both. Through a skillful rendering of double entendre, images in "Fifty Males" function both literally as description of landscape, and symbolically as depiction of the speaker's psychology and personal history. This is not Pathetic Fallacy, in which description of landscape is symbolic of the narrator's *emotions*, but a style in which the images possess associations with the speaker's *psychology*. Having become versed in the principles, methodology and terminology of Jungian theory, it is to be expected that Bly's expression of personal psychology would take the form of symbolization of natural landscape. The images of light and dark carry for Bly associations that position the speaker within the realm of light, idealism, ascension, and innocence. The task at hand for the speaker, the poem seems to suggest, is to grieve "as humans grieve," to descend from the world of light to the world of shadow imaged in the poem by the approach of night. In the poem's closing lines, the narration slips back into the first person as night arrives: "The dark comes down slowly, the way / snow falls, or herds pass a cave mouth. / I look up at the other shore; it is night." I want to emphasize, however, that while familiarity with Jungian psychology provides for the reader access to the obvious, symbolic associations of the images, the poem is not dependent on this familiarity. Bly here is not speaking through symbols, but attempting to evoke an imaginative and emotional response from the reader through the interplay and resonance of vivid images of the natural world, as he has done throughout his literary career. While the images of this poem may carry a deeper value that points to a particular system of psychology, they remain first and foremost elements of perception and imagination. As Pound indicated: "the author must use his

image because he sees it or feels it, *not* because he thinks he can use it to back up some creed or some system" (*GB* 86).

One poem which underscores this point is the most famous from *The Man in the Black Coat Turns,* and from which the volume takes its title:

Snowbanks North of the House

Those great sweeps of snow that stop suddenly six feet from the house . . .
Thoughts that go so far.
The boy gets out of high school and reads no more books;
the son stops calling home.
The mother puts down her rolling pin and makes no more bread.
And the wife looks at her husband one night at a party and loves him no more.
The energy leaves the wine, and the minister falls leaving the church.
It will not come closer—
the one inside moves back, and the hands touch nothing, and are safe.

And the father grieves for his son, and will not leave the room where the coffin stands;
he turns away from his wife, and she sleeps alone.

And the sea lifts and falls all night; the moon goes on through the unattached heavens alone.
And the toe of the shoe pivots
in the dust. . . .
The man in the black coat turns, and goes back down the hill.
No one knows why he came, or why he turned away, and did not climb the hill. (*SP* 148)

This poem opens with its central image of snowbanks stopping abruptly just a few feet from the house. This is immediately followed by a statement indicating the significance of this image for Bly: "Thoughts that go so far." Had the poem ended after this line, it would very much have resembled Pound's "Metro" in possessing the conceptual statement and the perceptual image. But the poem continues, presenting a list of unexplained acts of

incompletion that echo the opening image. These statements play an important role in the poem by supplying the associations to be related to the image, rather than either relying heavily upon symbolic meaning or leaving the image in isolation, as does Pound. We are given the image, the general statement, and the particulars, all of which are summarily grouped in the phrase: "It will not come closer." Then in one of Bly's characteristically curious moves, we are presented with the mourning scene of the second stanza which Bly has indicated refers to Abraham Lincoln.[29] Why the mourning Lincoln enters the poem at this point is unclear, but the small, unusual stanza, inserted between the two main passages, contributes little to the poem. The final stanza is the poem's tour de force. Bly first turns our attention outward to the sea and the cosmos, then focuses it intensely on "the toe of the shoe pivot[ing] / in the dust," the instant in which "the man in the black coat turns" and the act of climbing the hill is left incomplete.

Who is this mysterious dark figure on whom the poem comes to focus at its close? Bly is too complex a poet for it to be, as William Davis has claimed, merely a father figure.[30] Davis reads this poem as introducing the theme of father-son relationship dealt with at length in the volume, and as representing one stage of the recovery of the shadow which Bly discusses in *A Little Book on the Human Shadow* (*Understanding RB* 135). I find both these interpretations inaccurate. For one, aside from the dubious reference to Bly's father suggested by Davis, and the curious middle stanza of the poem, father-son relationship does not enter the poem. But Davis' second point is more interesting, that the poem expresses an initial stage of shadow recognition and recovery in Jungian psychological work. This reading would entail that the speaker recognizes during the course of the poem some rejected, suppressed element of himself, and that there would be a positive sense of discovery or

accomplishment at the poem's close. This does not turn out to be the case; in actuality, the poem leaves the reader with a profound sense of disappointment and mystery. Davis is correct, however, to identify the mysterious dark man as a shadow figure. What needs to be reinforced is that this shadow figure is grouped with the other characters peopling the poem whose acts are abruptly discontinued for reasons not provided by the speaker. The poem is especially haunting because the questions introduced concerning motive beg to be answered, which is precisely the effect desired by the poet. The reader is left grasping for answers which "will not come closer." Like the snowbanks which do not reach the house, there are "thoughts that go so far" but will not surface. Bly seems to be suggesting in "Snowbanks" that despite our desires, there are thoughts that continually remain just out of reach, and he associates this phenomenon with the concept of the Jungian shadow. "Snowbanks," therefore, is not about shadow recognition and retrieval, as Davis has claimed, but our *inability* to discern the deeper, hidden motives of many of our acts and "decisions."

Again, in this poem, Bly's image corresponds with an interior, subjective element or elements. If there is one consistency in Bly's work, it is a predominant concern with the interior world of imagination, unconscious, spirituality and psychology. Even in Bly's political poems in which he turns his attention outward to the public, the focus is on the interior of a national psyche. Bly attacked Pound, Eliot and Williams for remaining outward and objective in their poetry, but certainly Bly's distrust and almost complete rejection of the objective world is a similar failing. The difficulty with a poetry that remains inward-seeking is that it demands a universality of subjectivity. Many of Bly's images never leave the interior atmosphere of the poet's imagination; ironically, although Bly's poetry is rhetorical and audience-

oriented, it is the audience which is forced to approach the poet, and not the poet reaching out to a common ground. This style is particularly problematical in Bly's case because the poet's interior world is inconsistent and fraught with bizarre spiritual notions. In a scathing review of Bly's technique, Robert Rehder touches upon this point:

> Going back to Boehme or to the later work of Jung, as Bly does, is a refusal to confront the notion of the unconscious, a denial of reality, like his references to indeterminate forces and spirit horses. Poetically, this homemade religion is Confederate money, so much snake oil, impossible to believe in because we know too much about ourselves—and the earth—and because we are never completely convinced that Bly believes in it. The rhetoric is too apparent. (281)

The approach translates into a fundamental flaw in the logistics of Bly's theory: the reliance on the deep image as a device designed to affect the reader's unconscious within a medium which necessarily operates on the level of consciousness. There is no way around the gap separating the intelligibility of language and Bly's desire for a poetry of the unconscious. The deep image attempts to vault this gap, although one has the impression that the attempt often falls short.

Deep image poetry, however, is not without merit, and has contributed to the advancement of American poetry in several key ways. It is the first attempt in American poetry to incorporate fully the theories of Freud, Jung and other depth psychologists into the poet's expression, although as I have argued, its over-reliance on these theories is its failing. In addition, Bly's unwavering dedication to breaking down old systems of thought and poetic technique, as Pound was ground-breaking in his own generation, has resulted

in a greater freedom for intimate and confessional expression in poetry, a style which Pound had dismissed as "the mere registering of a bellyache and the mere dumping of the ashcan" (*PW* 42). In posterity, deep image poetry may be regarded as a counterbalancing force to the technique-oriented craftsmanship of Pound and Eliot, and later the Black Mountain Group. In this regard, Bly helped open the door to an era in which the imagination is more readily accepted as one of many forces shaping and contributing to the poem, a shift that carries prime importance for future poets working with the image.

CHAPTER 3

Don McKay: "Metaphorical Stretch"

Who understands this? No one
in his right mind. No one who
resists, who rides his delicate shell
safely through its craziness.

"High Water on the Goulais"

In his review of *Night Field*, Don Coles praises McKay's "gift for metaphor," and asks, "Who do you know who has half this poet's gift for metaphor?" (42). Indeed, one characteristic of McKay's poetry that makes it especially enjoyable to read is the poet's striking use of metaphor, providing the reader with insights into "essential similarities" between things, to quote Aristotle. It should be evident by now that the poetic image often involves metaphor, or is metaphoric in structure. Pound's super-positioning, the overlaying of one thing on another, is essentially metaphoric in that it brings two things into proximity in order to point out their similarity or formal relationship. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Pound's pine tree/Japanese armour analogy, through which Pound argued tha. "the artist . . . may cast on the reader's mind a more vivid image of either the armour or the pine by mentioning them close together or by using some device of simile or metaphor" (*GB* 121), which Hugh Kenner has interpreted as a practice designed "to seek ways of penetrating the particularity of the object under scrutiny, rather than divagating into that object's likeness to some other" (74). Frank Kermode has called metaphor "the rhetorical vehicle of the Image" (157), and Pound was fond of quoting Aristotle's dictum in chapter 22 of *Poetics* that the genius of a skillful poet is the ability to make metaphor. Bly, we have seen, has also indicated that the image is metaphoric in that it brings

together two things in retrieving a forgotten archetypal relationship. Metaphor in its broadest sense, then—as a verbal relation—is imagistic, just as the image is essentially metaphoric in its frequent dependence on relation as an aesthetic tool. In short, both metaphor and the image operate through relation. Even Pound's ideogrammic method, the attempt at a "language beyond metaphor," may be seen as the logical extension of the metaphoric process; rather than juxtapose two items, the poet groups together several, and the primary mode of discourse stems from resonance and recognition of relationships between ideogrammic components. McKay's predominant use of metaphor, therefore, is not new to contemporary poetry, but is situated within a tradition that foregrounds metaphor, often under the name of image. One question this chapter attempts to address then is: How is McKay's use of metaphor different from Pound's and Bly's use of the image?

Looking at theories of metaphor, what are immediately noticeable are terms such as transcendence, mind-independence, extra-linguistic, extra-conceptual and intuitive—concepts that are red flags for the poststructuralist, who maintains that nothing exists outside language and, hence, thought. The problem is a semantic one: does meaning reside in the word or in the world? Poststructuralism generally argues the former; current theories of metaphor, however, maintain the latter.[31] Of course, these two fields are not as distinct as I have suggested here, and it is at the points of intersection where we may find a resolution to our paradox. In "Meaning and Sense," Emmanuel Levinas draws our attention to the literal sense of the word meta-phor: what carries away or over something. Levinas writes:

> The reality given to receptivity and the meaning it can take on seem distinguishable. For it seems as though experience first gave contents—forms, solidity, roughness, color, sound, savor,

> odor, heat, heaviness, etc.—and then all these contents were animated with meta-phors, receiving an overloading through which they are borne *beyond* the given. (*CP* 75)

According to Levinas here, meaning is conferred upon our experience of the world. "Experience is a reading," he asserts, "the understanding of meaning an exegesis, a hermeneutics, and not an intuition" (78). And referring specifically to metaphor, he states: "*This taken qua that*—meaning is not a modification that affects a content existing outside of all language. Everything remains in a language or in a world, for the structure of the world resembles the order of language, with possibilities no dictionary can arrest" (79). This sounds very much like poststructuralist thinking but without the limitation of meaning to the signifier. Meaning, Levinas seems to be suggesting, generates from relationships, both in the world (experience) and in language (metaphor).

In this sense we begin to see a notion of transcendence emerging in language. The statement "Man is a wolf," to borrow Max Black's renowned example, conveys a meaning that transcends the dictionary definitions of both "man" and "wolf." And as most theories of metaphor maintain, the full meaning conveyed through metaphor cannot be articulated literally. To say that Man is ferocious, voracious, predatory, etc., is to say something quite different and, arguably, less, than to say that "Man is a wolf." One way of looking at metaphor, then, is to see it as an attempt to break free from language and thought, to enter a realm of meaning that is extra-linguistic and extra-conceptual. As Karsten Harries states: "God knows neither transcendence nor metaphor—nor would man, if he were truly godlike" (82). This transcendental quality of metaphor, and here I come to the crux of the matter, carries for McKay as a nature poet associations not with Romantic or

Neo-Platonic inspiration, but with notions of "home," "wilderness," and "Being" within an existentialist aesthetic of poetry. If we adopt Levinas' suggestion of the world and language as co-existent, metaphor may be seen as one way to transcend, or, more accurately, expand, the parameter of language to provide a more accurate articulation of experience than "normal" descriptive speech allows. For McKay, in short, metaphor is often used as a rhetorical vehicle that stretches language in an attempt to express some aspect of an extra-linguistic realm he refers to as "wilderness." How this compares with Pound's and Bly's use of the image will be brought to light through examining a few of McKay's evocative metaphors.

The opening of "At the Long Sault Parkway" from the long poem *Long Sault* will serve as our point of departure:

> *The noise, the continual motion, and magnitude*
> *of the contending waves, render the Longue*
> *Sault, at once an object of terror and delight;*
> *these burst upon each other, and tossing aloft*
> *their broken spray, cover the stream with a white*
> *and troubled surface, as far as the eye can extend.*
>
> And now you're nostalgia, you're a bowl of mushroom soup
> tepid and tumid,
> teeming with fat carp who feed on your reedy bottom.
> But everything's so tasteful, isn't it, so
> nice, really, the way they fixed things up with beaches and
> everything, and the picnic areas.
> No sutures, no Frankenstein bolts through the neck, only
> the dam at the end of the lake, a white wink
> like a distant TV set
> betrays the operation. (130)

The poem opens with the epigram by George Heriot from his historical account of the pre-dam Long Sault rapids, which acts as rhetorical contrast to the imagery in the first stanza, emphasized by the conjunction "And" that heads the stanza. Tone and energy gathered by the epigram are rapidly deflated with the short, poignant phrase, "And now you're nostalgia," which

leads into the descriptive imagery of the dam-made lake that occupies the majority of the poem and establishes its primary theme of loss. The river is depicted in its adulterated state as a perversion of nature: the modern Frankenstein, the manufactured lake with its manicured beaches and park land that serve as substitutes for wilderness. The moral considerations of such an act of human power are intimated throughout the poem by tone and style, but especially here in the opening stanza, where grotesque imagery combines with the conspicuous rhetoric of phrases such as, "But everything's so tasteful, isn't it, so / nice, really, the way they fixed things up with beaches and / everything," which reveals a sense of mock denial and deception.

It is fitting that McKay chose the dam itself as the metaphoric image of this deception, the "white wink" that "betrays the operation." This metaphor works primarily through comparison, drawing to our attention the visual similarity of a dam and a wink: a giant concrete eyelid, frozen at the moment of closure.[32] The gigantic proportion of the eyelid symbolizes on one level of reading the dimension of the operation, the dam's awesome magnificence and, by extension, the huge ecological change to surrounding landscape. We can also say that this metaphor operates interactively, placing the focus (the dam) into the frame of winking, to borrow Black's terms.[33] As interactive theories of metaphor claim, metaphor gains its meaning from the interaction between contextual thoughts. The dam, of course, carries connotations of technology, industry, and power (human, natural, hydroelectric), which we are asked to associate with the act of winking. When we try to associate these items, we recognize that we require more information in order to decide which qualities of winking are to be rendered significant. Winking can be a whimsical, playful, sexual, proud, mischievous, or surreptitious gesture, and we need to know which of these connotations resembles in some way

technology, industry, or power. We therefore must go to the poem and contextualize these concepts in order to "see" what specifically about winking is significant in the metaphor. The poem seems to suggest primarily a sense of illusion, deception, and secrecy entailed in the process of dam-making: "No sutures, no Frankenstein bolts through the neck, only / the dam at the end of the lake . . . / . . . / betrays the operation." This is supported, as I have mentioned above, by the rhetoric immediately preceding the metaphor, the tone, and the idea of manufactured beaches and picnic areas offered as "gifts" to a duped public. The reader then maps this information onto the contextual frame of winking, and the wink as a surreptitious gesture communicating secret, private knowledge is thrown into relief.

In outlining the process of metaphor in this way, I have implied that metaphoric apprehension involves undergoing a series of distinct, semiotic steps leading to a sort of semantic apocalypse. This implication derives from my attempt to translate the process from the imaginative act of reading to the cognitive discussion of literary analysis. But as phenomenological theories of metaphor maintain, no stages as such are involved in reading.[34] Contextual signification and the interaction of focus and frame are not to be regarded as individual concatenated steps, nor as a unified, instantaneous moment of revelation; rather, semiotic association, both inter- and extra-textual, is continuously happening during reading in what Barthes refers to as production of text, the complex and rapid mental process of reading which I touched on above in discussing spatial poetics. The same applies to the reading of metaphor, which also exhibits a type of reflexive referencing. As Northrop Frye has pointed out, in metaphor A is A, but A is also B, which is illogical.[35] The reading of metaphor demands a heightened state of thought in reconciling this illogicality; that is, the reader must maintain and assimilate

references to multiple signifieds from a single signifier. To use Black's example, we are asked to read "Man" as both "mankind" and "wolf." With McKay's metaphor, "dam" is read as both "dam" and "wink."

But the demands in reading metaphor do not stop on the level of word; contextual associations surrounding both signifieds must also be balanced and assimilated, thus producing a style which is especially dense, unfolding meaning on a variety of levels. This is to say that metaphor does more than merely "depict themes in the poem that occasions it," as Phillip Stambovsky has argued (109). Such a view reduces metaphor to a sort of visual summary, or symbol, of a theme which other poetic elements have developed, a style condemned by Pound as using the image as ornament. McKay's metaphor here is "the speech itself," generating meaning with such vigor that McKay has often referred to poetic language as anthropomorphic. His use of metaphor here demands a heightened state of attention and imagination that stretches language beyond the merely descriptive. Elsewhere he has written: "I suspect that the quality of attention surrounding a poem is more important to me than poetry" ("Some Remarks On Poetry and Poetic Attention" 207). Perhaps we can summarize thus far by saying that metaphor for McKay helps charge the poem with attention.

A different kind of metaphor exists in the following poem:

The Great Blue Heron

What I remember
about the Great Blue Heron that rose
like its name over the marsh
is touching and holding that small
manyveined
wrist
upon the gunwale, to signal silently—
look
The Great Blue Heron
(the birdboned wrist). (*BD* 32)[36]

What is most apparent in this poem is the conventional syntax that produces a style of narrative very close to colloquial speech. There is something oddly non-poetic in this *discours*, a sense effected by the sentence structure ("What I remember. . .") which gives the impression that the speaker is telling instead of showing. The poem, however, is essentially metaphorical for a number of reasons. John Searle asserts that all metaphors entail a difference between the speaker's *utterance meaning*, and *sentence*, or *word meaning*. Other theorists have referred to this characteristic of metaphor as being simply the difference between figurative and literal signification (Levin, Saddock, Black), or as semantic deviance (Richards, Ricoeur, Stambovsky, Frye). "The Great Blue Heron" is metaphorical in that its literal meaning differs from its figurative or metaphorical meaning. If this were not the case, we would be inclined to believe that, indeed, all the speaker remembers of the heron-sighting is touching and holding the wrist upon the gunwale. Surely this is not what is intended in the poem. The utterance, or figurative meaning of the speaker's statement clearly goes beyond its literal sense to imply something about a similarity between the bird and the (birdboned) wrist.

Apart from semantics, the poem is also metaphorical in that its principal operative is comparison. Comparison of the images of the bird and the wrist is subtly suggested in the phrase "that small / manyveined / wrist," and more overtly through the parallelism of the last two lines that structurally set the great blue heron and the birdboned wrist in proximity on the page, underscored by the lines' similar metrics and sound. In fact, as with Pound's So-shu ideogram, the strong parallelism across lines foregrounds difference--in this case, the parentheses of the final line. Placed in parentheses, it appears almost as an after-thought, and indeed, perhaps this is the effect desired: the speaker, regarding the bird, is *reminded* of the wrist

upon the gunwale. The poem, therefore, is essentially imagistic in that the reader is asked to sense resemblance between metaphoric units, similar to Pound's "Metro" poem in which faces in a crowd are to be sensed as petals on a wet, black bough. This resemblance is, figuratively speaking, what the speaker remembers about the incident. At the risk of killing the poem through over-reading, I would like to suggest that the poem also extends beyond sensory resemblance to include contextual resonance in a way that says something about the ontological relationship of humankind and wildlife. In this reading, physical similarity extends into physiology, genetics, ecology, and that much-feared word in lyrical poetry, politics. In "The Great Blue Heron" a relationship is pronounced between species that spills meaning on each of these levels as an expression of love and respect for the natural world—a way of Being without the urge to appropriate what is other. One of the pleasures of "The Great Blue Heron" is its subtlety. While these ideological ramifications are not the impetus of the poem, they are, however, included in our experience of reading, suggested by the speaker's gentle urge for us to "look." In this instance, metaphor is the vehicle which places the poem in a space that is both sensory and cognitive, enabling it in its own, subtle way, to both please and instruct.

"The Great Blue Heron" is what I would like to refer to as a singular metaphoric poem. By this I mean that, unlike the "white wink" metaphor of "At the Long Sault Parkway," which is one element within a larger poetic construction, "The Great Blue Heron" centers on a principal metaphor on which it comes to focus at its close. A similar but not identical construction may be found in the poem "Fridge Nocturne," which gathers its images under a single, central metaphor:

When it is late, and sleep,
off somewhere tinkering with his motorcycle, leaves you
locked in your iron birdhouse,
listen to your fridge, the old
armless weeping willow of the kitchen.

Humble murmur, it works its way
like the river you're far from, the Saugeen, the Goulais
the Raisin
muddily gathers itself in pools to drop things in
and fish things from,
the goodwill mission in the city of dreadful night. (*BD* 37)

As suggested by the title, the poem centers on the image, "your fridge, the old / armless weeping willow of the kitchen." This metaphor is remarkable in itself, and warrants closer examination. Theorists speak of *tension* between the two objects of metaphoric comparison, or between focus and frame. When the similarity between the two items may readily be apprehended the tension is said to be low; the transition from sentence meaning to speaker's utterance meaning is facile. New metaphors lose their tension through use, gradually becoming easier to apprehend as they approach cliché, until their tension becomes close to non-existent, as in the phrase "Sam is a pig," in which "pig" nears the status of symbol.[37] What makes McKay's metaphor striking is its high degree of tension: the disparity between its metaphoric units. In what way is a fridge like a weeping willow?

I do not want to attempt to translate this metaphor into its so-called literal equivalent; similarity in this case exists on a much more visceral level than to speak about your wilted celery or how wind murmurs through the willow's vines. One has the intuitive sense that not only is this sort of criticism silly, but also that the tension of the metaphor—the element that gives the metaphor its energy—would somehow be in jeopardy if such a literal exegesis were possible. Here I am following phenomenological theorists in believing that the apprehension of this sort of metaphor relies on

lyrical and emotional intuition, the sort of talent to see essential similarities which Aristotle states is the mark of poetic genius, and I would add, of readers as well as writers. The metaphor is, however, informed by context, and we can gain insight into its nuance through studying the poem in which it appears. "Fridge Nocturne" is a mock ode in its wry honouring of a central object, namely, in this case, the common fridge. The poem extends beyond the ode in mood as it shifts away from objective expressiveness to include the speaker's state of mind and feeling, which pools from the nocturnal setting. In addition to the rhetoric of the closing line, the poem's imagery seems to express a sense of anxiety and disquietude. The speaker is metaphorically locked in an *iron* birdhouse; the fridge somehow reminds him of rivers he is *far from*, partly by its *murmuring* sound, an onomatopoetic description that reminds us of Wordsworth's "Yew Trees," "Tintern Abbey," Archibald Lampman's "The City of the End of Things," and in general the literary motif of the consoling river in nature.

This reading is strengthened by the allusion in the final line to James Thomson's poem "The City of Dreadful Night," and on a more immediate level by the rhetoric of this closing phrase that helps tie up the loose nocturnal and natural images dropped into the poem apparently at random. The rhetorical emphasis of course comes from the adjective "dreadful" that modifies night and, indirectly, city. We receive a slight exhilaration upon reading "dreadful" because dread is precisely the feeling that has existed on the periphery of the poem, despite McKay's playful use of imagery and the poem's whimsical tone. It seems improbable that McKay's use of this particular term is coincidental in its existential connotation. Summarizing Heideggerian thinking on dread, Michael Gelven explains:

> Within the experience of most reflective and serious people can be found instances of a weird and uncanny feeling, in which the whole familiar world seems to lose its normal significance. In such instances those things that usually affect us with familiar and intimate significance seem to take on the property of oddness and unfamiliarity. Our room, for example, suddenly seems to be a room in a strange land or even on another planet. Our mind tells us that it is the same room in which we have always felt quite at home. Yet in an uncanny way, the very logic that assures us of our familiarity with the room seems in such circumstances to emphasize our alienation with it. . . . Plucked out of the stream of our daily concerns, we seem forced to reflect upon our existence as if it were a totally new revelation. We observe ourselves, suspended from the concerns that occupy our consciousness, almost as if we were strangers to ourselves. Perhaps we even become aware of ourselves as something independent of our daily concerns. (115)

I have quoted Gelven at length because this peculiar *angst* he is describing seems to be the feeling suggested by the poem's images and nocturnal setting—the feeling of dread that has occasioned the poem and, therefore, spawned its central metaphor.

Before returning to the poem, we need first to consider the importance of feeling on imagination and metaphor. In his essay entitled "The Metaphorical Process," Paul Ricoeur argues that imagination and feeling function semantically in the metaphorical equation. We have already concluded that the imagination is an integral part in the creation and apprehension of metaphor; Ricoeur's essay is of particular interest here for its

discussion of the specific role that feeling plays in the metaphorical process. Following Stephan Strasser, Ricoeur argues that feeling is the internalization of thought:

> To *feel*, in the emotional sense of the word, is to make *ours* what has been put at a distance by thought in its objectifying phase. . . . Its function is to abolish the distance between knower and known without canceling the cognitive structure of thought and the intentional distance which it implies. Feeling is not contrary to thought. It is thought made ours. (154)

The transition from objective thought to subjective feeling finds its literary significance in the establishment of mood in poetry. Here, Ricoeur relies on Northrop Frye's argument that poetic language creates mood: "Each poem, he [Frye] says, structures a mood which is *this* unique mood generated by *this* unique string of words," and quoting Frye, Ricoeur agrees that, "'the unity of a poem is the unity of a mood,' and 'this mood is the poem and nothing else behind it'" (155). Mood, Ricoeur seems to suggest, is effected by our ability to feel what we are thinking, or imagining, while reading poetry; it is, to use his terminology, *"the iconic as felt"* (155).

How does feeling, then, figure in our reading of "Fridge Nocturne," and specifically in our understanding of its central elusive metaphor? Ricoeur's discussion is directed toward the reading of metaphor; however, his insights into the relationships between feeling, mood, and metaphor can equally apply to the creation of metaphor, the perceptual moment in which one thing is seen as another. This requires us to reverse, so to speak, the metaphorical process: instead of examining how metaphors effect mood, we must consider how mood effects perception. To be more precise, we can gain insight into how a fridge is seen as a weeping willow by coming at it from the

angle of mood influencing perception. The question becomes not in what way is a tree like a fridge, but rather how does the feeling of dread simultaneously bring to mind both willow and fridge. Returning again to Gelven's description of dread, it seems that the weeping willow stands out for the speaker for its constancy, longevity and, perhaps, suggestion of immortality. Like Wordsworth's yew tree, McKay's old, weeping willow comes to mind as "a living thing / produced too slowly ever to decay; / Of form and aspect too magnificent / To be destroyed." Following this line of thought, the fridge therefore is likened to the willow for its similar qualities—its constant, reliable murmuring, its (armless) solidity, and most of all its fixity as the centre-point of kitchen and household. And added to the image of the fridge as willow tree is the extended metaphor of the fridge as river, another symbol of continuance and immortality which often finds expression in Wordsworth's existential and spiritual meditations. But of course these associations are tinged with humour through the somewhat ridiculous comparison of a willow tree and a household refrigerator. Humour, it appears, is one way McKay approaches the absurdity of life, or at least the disturbing moments when one's daily concerns, indeed one's existence, seems to lose significance.

To sum up, then, the principal metaphor of the poem gathers its rhetorical force from the poem as a whole, funneling mood through a sort of linguistic venturi to produce startling lyrical results. Metaphor in this example is informed by its surrounding imagery, without which we might not be able to recognize the relationship suggested between willow and fridge because of the high degree of metaphoric tension. Yet despite the dissimilarity between metaphoric units, McKay's metaphor is not surreal like Bly's deep image. Although the metaphor here compares things from radically different

contexts, there is an intuitive logic behind this comparison. Once apprehended, McKay's fridge/willow metaphor makes perfect sense, even if this understanding cannot be explained or even fully discerned rationally. This is both the beauty and genius of good metaphor: the ability to bring to light an intuitive "truth" behind the rational knowledge of the intellectual mind. Another way of envisioning metaphor and meaning is to think of metaphor as venturing into undiscovered areas of meaning, a view in which knowledge is not something to be possessed but noticed for the moment. Quoting Heidegger, McKay writes that this type of knowledge involves "tarrying alongside whatever it is we're 'knowing,'" and reverberates with notions of both visiting and distance ("Some Remarks" 207). One has the impression through considering these remarks that McKay's notion of knowledge and its relationship to poetry also differ from the sort of knowledge embodied in *The Cantos*. When you're knowing, according to McKay, "you swim awhile with a fellow creature of time" (*ibid* 207).

Until now I have avoided addressing the problem of reference in metaphor. My use of the term "problem" is mildly facetious because metaphor only presents referential difficulty when we consider it as a form of descriptive language. But of course it is not; as we saw in studying McKay's metaphor of dam as "white wink," metaphor falls within the domain of poetic language (Jakobson's term), or the imaginative idiom (Frye's term), and as such behaves referentially in ways unlike conventional descriptive language. Roman Jakobson pointed out that poetry suppresses the referential function of language, that is, it draws attention to itself through its poetic features in a sort of self-reflexive referencing that differs from the aim of descriptive language to refer to an assumed, external reality. Frye sees poetic language as requiring the suspension of judgment, an idiom in which the

boundary between the emotional and the intellectual dissolves (*Words With Power* 22–24). In both cases, what is emphasized is poetry's characteristic to present fantasy, or an imaginary world, which is different from our normal, empirical view of how things are. This quality of metaphor possesses important ontological significance in McKay's poetry. On a primary level, the metaphor of the fridge as "the old / armless weeping willow of the kitchen" demands that the reader view the fridge in an extraordinary way that breaches the decorum of common sense. But it does much more: when emotion and intellect converge in imaginative reading, such a metaphor transports the reader to nothing less than a *Lebenswelt* (a life-world), to use Husserl's term, in a type of *Gestalt* at the moment of metaphoric apprehension. It is important to note that only in our conventional sense of the world is such a world defined as "fantasy." In Heideggarian thinking, the "world" is constituted by what can be found within the parameter of consciousness, an alternate view of worldhood in which fantasy is no less "real" than the tangible, concrete world of our daily living. Heidegger, it has been said, destroys the Cartesian duality of subject/object underlying our notions of fantasy and reality (Barrett 217).

I have risked misleading the reader here in stating that the world as defined by Heidegger is reduced to consciousness. In fact, existential phenomenology has often been referred to as anti-Platonic in its reversal of the Platonic paradigm of the world, indicated in Husserl's famous slogan, "Back to the things themselves!" Reality, according to phenomenologists, is not an intellectual entity existing beyond the sensible world of things, but stems from immediate experience. Levinas writes:

> There does not exist any *meaning in itself* which a thought would have been able to reach by jumping over the deforming

> or faithful, but sensory, reflections which lead to it. . . . For phenomenologists as for Bergsonians, a meaning cannot be separated from the access leading to it. *The access is part of the meaning itself.* The scaffolding is never taken down; the ladder is never pulled up. (83–5)

The phenomenological world, therefore, is a world founded on the surety of consciousness, but it is also a world in which the sensible and the felt have ontological bearing. Transcendence according to this paradigm does not imply transportation to an alternate, alien realm, but rather to new, *hidden* meaning that exists within our immediate world. We need to get past the view of "reality" as a concrete, objectified entity, to understand that metaphor such as McKay's uncovers, or, more accurately, *discovers* the world by leading the reader into new areas of experience and knowing. McKay's term for this domain is "wilderness":

> By "wilderness" I want to mean, not just a set of endangered spaces, but the capacity of all things to elude the mind's appropriations. . . . the sudden angle of perception, the phenomenal surprise which constitutes the sharpened moments of *haiku* and imagism . . . [when] we encounter the momentary circumvention of the mind's categories to glimpse some thing's autonomy—its rawness, its *duende*, its alien being. ("BT" 131)

Metaphor acts for McKay as a springboard into wilderness, which is never really entered but only glimpsed. In "Fridge Nocturne" the metaphor of fridge as willow attempts to defamiliarize both fridge and willow in order to apprehend some aspect of their alien, and essential, beings. In this instance, metaphor helps us circumvent the mind's categories, to see past the surface significance of things to a level which is extra-conceptual.

I do not have the space here to delve at length into Poundian metaphysics, but a comparison needs to be made, nonetheless, between the ontology which I am granting to McKay's use of metaphor, and the metaphysical implications of the ideogrammic method. Hugh Kenner has argued cogently that the ideogram derives not from Chinese thinking but from Aristotle, and specifically, from Aristotle's theory of metaphor.[38] When Aristotle stated that "the ability to construct good metaphors implies the ability to see essential similarities" he ascribed to things an essence. Metaphoric perception involves recognizing when two things' essences are similar, when, as Pound worded it, their "diverse planes overlie in a certain manner"; although surface appearances may be diverse, similarity exists on a deeper (or lower) level. When we apply this idea to Pound's theory of knowledge--the formulation of generalities from a sufficient sample of particulars—we can conclude that metaphysical knowledge can be extracted from a sample of carefully-chosen items sharing some metaphysical property. This, precisely, was one way the ideogram was used by Pound: as a way of expressing metaphysical knowledge, as well as political, ethical and economic knowledge. Adapting Pound's definition of the ideogrammic method, we could say that metaphor for McKay helps the reader to 'get off the dead and desensitized surface of things to a deeper level'—a method, like Pound's, aimed at revelation. I should add that McKay's notion of wilderness is similar to Pound's concept of *forma*: the structuring agent behind the surface of things. In *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound defines *forma* as "the immortal *concetto*, the concept, the dynamic form which is like the rose pattern driven into the dead iron-filings by the magnet, not by material contact with the magnet itself, but separate from the magnet. Cut off by the layer of glass, the dust and filings

rise and spring into order" (152).[39] Kenner refers to this aspect of Pound's poetry as the Logos: "the creative Word, the focus of all intelligibility" (77).

For Bly, this world behind the immediate world is the inward world of sixteenth-century mystic Jacob Boehme, whom Bly read after leaving college, and whose dualistic theology of the inward world and the outward world profoundly affected Bly's spirituality. In *Dialogues on the Supersensual Life,* Boehme proclaims that "the visible World is a manifestation of the inward spiritual World, come out of the Eternal Light, and out of the Eternal Darkness . . . and is also an Image or Figure of Eternity" (100). Bly found in Boehme's dualism a metaphysical system sympathetic with Eastern and Romantic thought in which the natural world is invested with spiritual as well as physical properties. In Bly's aesthetic, however, Boehme's paradigm is inserted into a more current psychological matrix by which Bly attempts to validate Boehme's mysticism; the inward/outward duality translates into unconscious/consciousness, subject/object, or spirit/matter. At any rate, my intention in suggesting these comparisons is to show that for all three poets the image is used chiefly as a way in to a metaphysical realm both hidden and foreign from ordinary awareness, whether this other realm is *forma,* the unconscious, or wilderness. As McKay asserts, "there really is a world outside language, which, creatures of language ourselves, we translate with difficulty" ("Local Wilderness" 6). The image, as a sensory element, is often employed in an attempt to bring the reader to the brink of the intelligible world, where a glimpse of what is other may be possible. Again and again, not just in the poetry of these writers but many other contemporary poets, the aim seems to be to "get beyond (or below, or outside of) consciousness," and one explanation for the recent popularity of the image is the belief that, used imaginatively, perhaps ingeniously, it can achieve that goal.

The desire to experience what lies beyond consciousness is the main interest in the following poem by McKay:

Walking at the Mouth of the Willow River

> Sleep, my favourite flannel shirt, wears thin, and shreds, and birdsong happens in the holes. In thirty seconds the naming of species will begin. As it folds into the stewed latin of afterdream each song makes a tiny whirlpool. One of them, zoozeezoozoozee, seems to be making fun of sleep with snores stolen from comic books. Another hangs its teardrop high in the mind, and melts: it was, after all, only narrowed air, although it punctuated something unheard, perfectly. And what sort of noise would the mind make, if it could, here at the brink? Scritch, scritch. A claw, a nib, a beak, worrying its surface. As though, for one second, it could let the world leak back to the world. Weep. (*NF* 3)

The poem takes place during the ephemeral moment of waking, in the space between sleep and consciousness. By drastically decelerating time in the poem, McKay is able to stretch this fleeting moment into an experience rich with imaginative detail, fitting to the semi-conscious state of the speaker. Very little of the poem refers directly to the external world; the natural setting is depicted in a highly metaphoric idiom that underscores subjectivity as it attempts to express the sensorial and cognitive processes of the self receiving an ever-encroaching world. The effect is a glimpse into the mind of the speaker freed from the dominance of a totalitarian consciousness—an interior monologue of a mind "here at the brink."

The poem gains its high degree of poeticism primarily from McKay's distinctive use of metaphor. Consider, for example, the opening line: "Sleep, my favourite flannel shirt, wears thin, and shreds, and birdsong happens in the holes." Recalling Shakespeare's "Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleave of care" (*Macbeth*, II, ii, 36), McKay's sentence is remarkable in that its syntax plays against the sentence's highly metaphoric nature; the syntax unfolds in a

seemingly descriptive, rather than figurative manner, each word apparently referring to a corresponding referent in the objective world, and the reader only belatedly comes to see the intended metaphoric meaning. In other words, McKay does not overtly disclose through the sentence's syntax the fact that he is employing metaphor. Metaphor is concealed, rather than "set up," a style which harkens back to the Imagistes' practice of *presentation*, not *ornamentation*. But unlike Pound's style, there is in "Waking" clearly a speaker who guides the reader through the poem. One of the difficulties with Pound's Realism, in which the speaker is invisible, is that the reader is alone in piecing together the disparate fragments, a task which leaves many readers feeling abandoned, if not alienated. Pound's *Cantos* therefore have the critical distinction of being the most perversely difficult of poems in the English language, an honour which has granted Pound a reputation in some circles as an elitist. In this sense, it may be argued that McKay has taken from his precursors the best elements of their techniques: following Pound, he presents, using metaphor and the image directly as the speech itself, but like Bly, he retains the use of a speaker. The speaker of "Waking" speaks in a metaphoric idiom that is at once striking and appealing, rhetorical, yet readerly. The rhetorical force, stemming from McKay's immediate metaphors, is directed toward the reader in a form of discourse which is uncharacteristically modern in its underlying emphasis on the poem as a form of communication from one person to another. The speaker, in effect, is an intermediary between poet and reader, or more accurately, wilderness and reader. We might summarize by saying that in "Waking" wilderness is presented to the reader via a speaker.

The demands involved in reading McKay's verse are placed on the imagination, requiring the reader, as in the prose poems of Bly, to associate

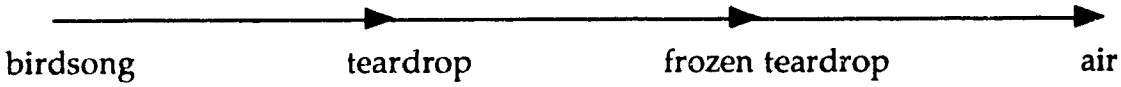
fast. But unlike Bly, the movement of McKay's poem resembles not leaping but stretching, "a slight deformation of human categories, an extra metaphorical stretch and silliness of language as it moves toward the other, dreaming its body" (McKay, "BT" 137). Metaphor disturbs, disrupts the order of language and thought; the reader is asked to welcome this craziness and let go of intellectual rational control on a white-water ride through wilderness. In "Waking," this play involves the sort of lyrical and emotional associating not unlike that demanded in reading the central metaphor of "Fridge Nocturne"; however, the technique is extended in the opening sentence in a sequence of metaphors requiring prolonged suspension of descriptive referential judgment. To put it perhaps a better way, the reader of "Waking" does not merely grasp a single, albeit difficult metaphor, but figuratively speaking, "steps into" the imaginative space of the poem.

This process, it should be noted, is aided by the sound, prosody, and rhythm of the prose poem form; the reader is helped into the speaker's mind-space by the music of spoken language. The predominance of sibilants and fricatives in the opening sentence combine with the poem's rocking rhythm and regular meter to effect a soothing line reflecting the speaker's sleepiness. This mood gives way to the terse, matter-of-fact tone of, "In thirty seconds the naming of species will begin," which is either spoken by a different speaker, or enters the monologue from a different part of the psyche. Assonance and alliteration in the remainder of the poem likewise work to hold the reader's attention through the demands placed upon imagination. The prose poet must be rigorously attuned to the sound quality of language, or, as Bly says regarding this matter, "the intelligences lose interest, and the game of art collapses. The cat cannot get the mouse to play any more, and either leaves it or eats it" ("The Prose Poem as an Evolving Form" 203).

To return to the issue of metaphor, I would like to examine some of the key metaphors in the poem that attempt to express the various birdsongs entering the speaker's hazy consciousness. One song is first described onomatopoetically by "zoozeezoozoozee," and then this description is used to form the metaphor, "seems to be making fun of sleep with snores stolen from comic books." In an ingenious and playful maneuver, McKay uses the physicality of the written word to establish one of the metaphoric units, thus turning the sound of the particular song into a visual unit of literary metaphor. The result is not only a foregrounding of the literalness of thought and poetry, but also a humourous connection between the natural wonder of birdsong and the triviality of comic strips. It is no wonder that McKay's sense of humour is often an integral part of his poetry. Discussing poetic language, McKay quotes Levinas in saying "the inverse of language is like a laughter that seeks to destroy language, a laughter infinitely reverberated" ("BT" 137). Metaphor is often humourous in that, like the punch line of a good joke, the connection is both obvious and unexpected. For a moment, we are pleasantly surprised by the relationship made between natural beauty and pop culture, by the "slight deformation of human categories" that occurs upon apprehension of this metaphor.

Another birdsong described in the poem literally undergoes physical deformations: "another hangs its teardrop high in the mind, and melts: it was, after all, only narrowed air . . ." There is a metamorphosis here of molecular states as this birdsong is first described metaphorically as a liquid teardrop, but upon . rther reading we discover it was, in fact, frozen. This information requires us to return, so to speak, and modify the initial image, which becomes further complicated when we are told that, "it was, after all, only narrowed air." The reader, therefore, is asked to juggle multiple images

of the same sound as the sentence unfolds during reading in a sequence of metaphors, similar to the opening sentence of the poem. Structurally, one unit of the metaphoric description remains constant—the birdsong—but the corresponding unit changes twice as the sentence continues. One might map McKay's metaphor sequence in the following way:



The irony behind this metaphor is that, having accomplished the imaginative gymnastics required to follow the sentence, the reader discovers that the particular birdsong, in the end, "punctuated something unheard, perfectly," and thus needs to be associated once more, this time to something unheard, and undefined. We therefore actually have four associations to the birdsong—all in the course of one, highly imaginative sentence. This imaginative quality of McKay's style, gained largely by his use of metaphor, stretches language to its extreme in approaching wilderness. "Language, in [its] poetic mode," McKay writes, "compromises its nature, dismantling itself in a gesture toward wilderness. . . . Poets are supremely interested in what language can't do; in order to gesture outside, they use language in a way that flirts with its destruction" ("BT" 137–8). Metaphor, in its violent capacity to disorder language, is the perfect tool for this purpose.

Following these metaphors, the poem turns inward with the change of voice at, "And what sort of noise would the mind make, if it could, here at the brink?" The shift here is to more direct speech as the speaker asks a somewhat rhetorical question (there is a tone of sincerity, although the question cannot be answered) pertaining to a central issue in the poem as a whole: the processes of the mind, and specifically, its relationship with what

is other. The question presents an alternate perspective of the mind—not as passive receiver, as it has been through the poem thus far—but as an extensive, affective thing, "worrying its surface." This alternate view of the mind is important because it resonates with the outward gesture of McKay's sense of home, the ontological place of the self. "Home makes possible the possession of the world," McKay argues, "the rendering of the other as one's interior," but it is also "the site of our appreciation of the material world, where we lavish attention on its details, where we collaborate with it" ("BT" 132). An important feature of home-making for McKay is this dual movement, both inward and outward, the gathering from environment in constructing the self, and the gift-giving gesture toward what is other. "Waking at the Mouth of the Willow River" comes to focus at this theoretical point of contact between mind and other, the place where home meets wilderness, and wilderness, home—in short, in its linguistic form, poetry. Perhaps this is why the poem opens the volume *Night Field* and is set off from the body of the text as a sort of overture. What sort of noise *does* the mind make at the brink of itself? —Poetry.

In conclusion, the relationships between McKay's use of metaphor and Pound's and Bly's use of the image are many and complex. A basic similarity involves the stylistic quality as set down in the first Imagiste tenet: direct presentation of the thing. McKay does not use metaphor as ornament but "as the speech itself." There is *not* a more fundamental and guiding level of meaning beneath the discourse of metaphor; McKay's poetry operates *on* the level of metaphor in coordination with other poetic elements such as sound, rhythm, meter and diction. Like Bly's leaping poetry, McKay often uses a series of metaphors that require the reader to associate quickly from one image to the next in a highly imaginative idiom intended to stretch both

language and thought from the known to the unknown. Metaphor for McKay, therefore, like the image for Pound and Bly, is a vehicle often employed in an attempt to provide insight into a nether region metaphysically and psychologically foreign from human awareness. There also appears to be, at least in theory, a similarity between the relationship of image to Imagisme and metaphor to nature poetry. At the height of Imagisme, image became virtually synonymous with poem; not only do some of McKay's poems seem to be built around one central metaphor, but nature poetry is also truly metaphoric in its frequent attempt to articulate something extra-linguistic through the interaction of words and contextual thoughts.

Differences, on the other hand, between the three poets' styles reside primarily on the level of presentation—McKay often employing a speaker who utters metaphor toward a supposed reader, unlike Pound's Realist technique, in which the narrator is invisible, or rather, absent. This produces a sharp distinction between the seemingly-random, difficult, collage-like structure of Pound's *Cantos*, and the very readerly style of McKay's poetry. Ironically, it was Pound, following the Confucian principle that the health of a society is founded on the clarity of its language, who aspired for a clear, hard language, whereas McKay has stated that poetic language for him gravitates toward disorder and deformation, a style which, one would think, produces confusing and convoluted poetry. Another difference, this time between McKay and Bly, is that there is very little surrealism in McKay's metaphor; indeed, often based on physical and visual similarity and not mystical vision or archetypal relationship, McKay's metaphors tend to effect an immediate intuitive recognition in the reader. Perhaps one could say that one is more cognizant in reading McKay's metaphors than many of Bly's deep images, a distinction Bly might welcome in his belief that poetry, or at least the image,

should be passionate and irrational before being intelligible. But it is, in the end, inaccurate to generalize even to this degree. Each poet exhibits a stylistic range and inconstancy throughout his career so that at a given moment he may appear at odds with the generalizations I am setting down here. Certainly Bly, in the late collection *The Man in the Black Coat Turns*, is doing something quite different from the deep image technique of *Silence in the Snowy Fields*, not to mention the political poetry of *The Light Around the Body*. Pound's *Cantos*, as well, incorporating perhaps the widest variety of styles of any work this century, cannot but avoid criticism's urge to categorize. But perhaps we should give the last word to McKay, who reminds us that the categories of the intellectual mind are always temporary, a perspective in which thought is a consequence of poetry and language:

> There are
> birds no one has ever seen
> uncaged in any book unguessed
> by metaphor.

CONCLUSION

This study began by considering the rise in popularity of the poetic image in this century. Although I have discussed and compared the ways in which the three chosen poets have used the image, it seems desirable to try to set down a few observations regarding the image itself as a poetic element in the Twentieth Century. These statements, however, need to be qualified at outset as suggestions and not arguments; the purpose of this study was not to present a comprehensive argument towards a theory of the image—an enterprise which would span the fields of literature, linguistics, psychology, philosophy and perhaps even physics and religion. My intention here is simply to reiterate a few of the key similarities in the theories and techniques of these poets, emphasizing the role of the image and how this differs from most of the poetry written prior to the Imagiste movement.

The basic question which needs to be addressed is: What is the difference between how the image has been used in the past and how it is being used in this century? I think the crux of this difference can be traced to Pound's statement in the *Gaudier-Brzeska* memoir that "the point of Imagisme is that it does not use images *as ornaments*. The image is itself the speech. The image is the word beyond formulated language" (88). This statement essentially means that in Imagisme the image did not take a subservient role to a more fundamental and authoritative meaning developed by other words in the poem. Meaning, in Imagisme and after, derives primarily from relationships between words, and not through convention. Again, in the important "Vorticism" essay of the *Gaudier-Brzeska* collection, Pound wrote: "Any mind that is worth calling a mind must have needs beyond the existing categories of language, just as a painter must have pigments or shades more numerous than the existing names of

the colours" (88). The poet, working with the image—the "primary pigment of poetry"—mixes words as the painter mixes colours to get the exact shade of meaning desired, rather than relying on dictionary definitions. This procedure, we have seen, is identical to metaphor, which also mixes words to evoke a meaning beyond the conventional connotations attached to its composite parts. The image and metaphor *create* meaning; they do not merely transport it.

It may be argued then that the image as used in this century helped precipitate an era of the poem's autonomy. The use of the image involves more than merely "putting" more sensuality into the poem, as if one could fill up a poem with sensuality by stuffing it with images. The creative quality of the image resulted in a fundamental shift in composition. Poets began to recognize that they could "communicate" more effectively if they spoke to the reader's senses instead of the reader's mind: the reader was asked to imagine and relate things, rather than merely making that cognitive "click" in retrieving the concept signified by each word, a style which used words as "abstract counters" or with a pre-fixed, attached significance. "Almost anyone can realize that to use a symbol *with an ascribed or intended meaning* is, usually, to produce very bad art" (Pound, *GB* 86). Perhaps this shift in composition derived from the massive proliferation of literature brought on by large-scale publishing in recent times. In the time of Wordsworth or Dryden, poetry was read and circulated among an elite, where one could be fairly sure what type of person would be reading his or her poem. All that is required, Wordsworth tells us in his "Preface," is to write clearly and simply, in the language of the common man, in order to get our intended meaning across. Pound, however, knew that he could not depend on consistency of interpretation, that the reader "cannot always be the same reader" (*GK* 51).

This view of language and poetry is at the heart of the shift from explication to presentation in Imagisme and later poetry.

Related to this phenomenon is the popularization of what we have called in each poet's work reflexive reference, and in general the tendency for poetry to refer not to an assumed external reality, but to its own "reality." Bly is most apt when he states that "the image . . . can not be drawn from or inserted back into the real world. It is an animal native to the imagination. ("Wrong Turning" 26). Although Bly made this comment in arguing for his surreal image, the statement is equally applicable to the image of Pound and McKay. All three poets render through their poetry a *Lebenswelt*—a world of the mind—which is as valid a part of the world as the concrete and the physical. Pound, like Heidegger, turns his back on trying to represent or even affirm an authoritative "reality": "I don't much care whether [the poet] is representative or non-representative. He should *depend*, of course, on the creative" (*GB* 86). In fact, the discussion of "world" is not entirely relevant here. The emphasis, it seems, is placed on experience, whether this is in daily living or the realm of the imagination.

Finally, I will venture to suggest that the world and experience created by these poems does carry special significance for each writer beyond what we might call "fantasy." In keeping with the tradition of the Romantic image, which each of these poets continues in his own way, the image does express some ideal or "truth" perceived at its conception. Pound abhorred throughout his literary career any style which was "flabby" or imprecise; his entire poetic was aimed at articulating some thing other than dream or fantasy, or any of the other infinite number of possibilities involved in the random inter-relating of words. For Pound, as well as Bly and McKay, there exists, in the end, a belief in some existence beyond the here and now, guiding each poet's

respective use of the image, whether this is, as in Pound, the "beauty of form" shared by the pine tree and the fragment of Japanese armour, or in Bly, the "Eternal light" animating the visible world, or McKay's faith in "a world beyond language." The image, being primarily sensory, is the porthole (or knothole!) through which we glimpse this other realm. At this point all argument fails, for there can never be any evidence for the existence of this other realm beyond our own feelings and intuitions when reading an especially apt image. To dismiss even the possibility of its existence results in a nihilism which seeks to destroy all meaning and purpose behind art and life. Wherever there are human beings, there will be images; it seems to be a part of our make-up, or perhaps a characteristic of a larger system of which we are a part. In a sense, as participants in history, we are all contributors to the construction of the one, all-encompassing image, which Joyce's Mr. Deasy called "the manifestation of God."

NOTES

Introduction

[1] I prefer to use the translation from *The Modern Tradition.*

[2] I am paraphrasing the translation by Louise Varèse. See the opening chapter of Frank Kermode's *Romantic Image* for an excellent discussion of the visionary poet in Romantic literature.

Chapter 1

[3] Earl Miner argues in "Pound, *Haiku* and the Image" that Hulme and Flint introduced Pound to Japanese poetry. See René Taupin, *L'Influence du symbolisme français sur la poésie américaine,* for an argument that he similarly was introduced to French Symbolism through the School of Images' members.

[4] De Gourmont's proximity to Hobbes is shown most clearly when he writes, "an idea is only a faded sensation, an effaced image" (122).

[5] I am using the translation by Glenn S. Burne; the reader may consult the original, published in Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1907.

[6] The entire Pound quote reads: "Mr Hulme is on the road to mythological glory; but the Hulme notes, printed after his death, had little or nothing to do with what went on in 1910, 1911 or 1912" (*PE* 9). The Pound texts will be referred to when necessary using the following abbreviations: *ABC of Reading: ABC; Gaudier-Brzeska: GB; Guide to Kulchur: GK; Personæ: P; Polite Essays: PE; Poets at Work: PW.*

[7] Actually, the phrase "deep distrust of words" is from Sam Hynes, a contemporary critic of Hulme whom Schneidau cites in his argument. See the chapter entitled "Hulme vs. Fenollosa" in *The Image and the Real* for a strong argument that Pound's poetic stems not from Hulme but Fenollosa. I am indebted to this argument for my conclusions regarding the differences between Hulme's image and Pound's.

[8] I am following Schneidau in maintaining that Pound saw in the Fenollosa notes a *retrospective* validation and theoretical argument of Imagiste practice. Since he did not have the notes until 1914, his initial understanding of the Image must have come from other sources.

[9] See Riddell's essay on this point, in which he concludes: "although Pound repeats Fenollosa in attributing to nature the genesis of [graphic] play, he does not assume

that nature governs the system of language it presumably sets in play. . . . Thus graphic or image play is the primary language of this productive dynamic, but the images are not natural" (344).

[10] See Marjorie Perloff's *The Poetics of Indeterminacy* for the most comprehensive discussion of this characteristic of modern poetry.

[11] Another important distinction to be made between Symbolisme and Imagisme involves signification. The Symbolistes welcomed the plenum of associations surrounding a particular word; the Imagistes, influenced by Ford Madox Hueffer via Pound, did not use words in a way that relied upon a pre-fixed conventional meaning. In 1913, Pound wrote: "Mr Yeats has been subjective; believes in the glamour and associations which hang near the words. . . . He has much in common with the French symbolists. Mr. Hueffer believes in an exact rendering of things. He would strip words of all 'association' for the sake of getting a precise meaning" ("Status Rerum" 125).

[12] See Hugh Witemeyer, "Pound & The Cantos 'Ply Over Ply,'" for a discussion on how the super-pository technique employed in "Metro" and other Imagiste poems extends into *The Cantos* as "discernible particulars layered 'ply over ply' in intelligible combinations."

[13] It should be remembered that the name Imagisme was coined and the "movement" conceived by Pound one day while reading H. D.'s poems. René Taupin recounts: "During the autumn of 1911, H. D., Pound, and Aldington were meeting often for tea. Soon Flint joined them. . . . They were feeling their way forward: H. D. in particular was discontented with her poems, and frequently destroyed them. When, one day, she came to Pound with a new group of verses, he saw the realization of what he and Hulme had been searching for; he christened this genre "Imagistes," and the group around Hulme, which had been greatly interested in French poetry, gave up its name to another group which owed nothing to the French; but still, the French influence on the whole group continued" (86).

[14] At the risk of confusing the reader, I would also like to mention that egg-tempera is a common painting technique.

[15] For convenience, Canto 2 appears in full in the appendix.

[16] Christine Froula claims in her *Guide to Ezra Pound's Selected Poems* that Pound thought Picasso's eyes resembled seals' (134).

[17] See László Géfin, "So-shu and Picasso: Semiotic/Semantic Aspects of the Poundian Ideogram," for a more extensive analysis of this passage.

[18] I am borrowing Robert Alter's particularly apt wording in describing the principles of cinematography. Alter refers to the cinematic process in discussing Biblical parallelism in *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. I would also like to make clear that my reference to the cinematic process here and in what follows is a descriptive analogy. I am not suggesting that Pound *derived* his poetic form from the medium of cinema.

[19] Childs explains that this technique is accomplished through a near absence of finite verbs, resulting in a highly fragmented narrative exhibiting heavy nominalization. See *Modernist Form* 46–9; 57–70.

[20] For further reading on the spatial-poetics debate, see *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977), which was exclusively devoted to this topic: also *Spatial Form in Narrative*; Paul de Man's essay, "Spacecritics: J. Hillis Miller and Joseph Frank"; Childs 71–89, 158–71.

[21] See Section 65 of *Being and Time*; also William Barrett's description of Heideggarian time and history in *Irrational Man* 227-9.

Chapter 2

[22] Bly's texts will be referred to using the following abbreviations: *The Morning Glory: MG; Leaping Poetry: LP; Selected Poems: SP; Talking All Morning: TM; Ten Poems of Francis Ponge . . .: TP.*

[23] Since Bly is continually revising his poems, whenever possible poems cited will be from his most recent *Selected Poems*.

[24] Rehder interprets the title similarly (271).

[25] See Gitzen, in which he traces the associations surrounding some of Bly's commonly-used symbols, such as darkness, water, snow, moonlight, fire and light.

[26] Other critics who have noticed the journey motif in Bly's poetry include Stitt and Nelson 82.

[27] In addition to Kinnell, whom I quote, see the anonymous review of *This Tree Will Be Here*, reprinted in *Critical Essays* 65; also Sugg in the same collection in which he writes: "An interesting feature of "The Point Reyes Poems" [middle section of *MG*] is Bly's increasing ease with his speaking 'I.' Several of the poems have a flavor of the diary, with a personal narrator telling anecdotes about, or just making reference to, his intimate life" (227).

[28] Jung's theory of *puer aeternus* maintains that an imbalance in identification with the mother results for most men in a certain "ascension" into idealism, narcissism, passive-agressive behaviour, and generally a sense of estrangement from other men.

[29] Mentioned in *A Gathering of Men*.

[30] Davis writes: "References to "the man in the black coat," the father, and the snow parallel Bly's memory of "My father wearing a large black coat . . . holding a baby up over the snow . . . my brother or myself" (135; Bly's quotation from "Being a Lutheran Boy-God in Minnesota").

Chapter 3

[31] For a thorough presentation of the major theories of metaphor, see Stambovsky 10–44; Hausman 22–45.

[32] As the name implies, comparative theories of metaphor are based on comparison, maintaining that metaphoric meaning is generated by a resemblance or similarity between metaphoric units.

[33] Interactive theories of metaphor purport that metaphoric meaning is generated through the interaction of differing contextual thoughts in which both similarity and difference play a part. In *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, I. A. Richards argues that metaphor is not merely "a shifting and displacement of words," but rather, "fundamentally it is a borrowing between and intercourse of *thoughts*, a transaction between contexts" (94).

[34] Phenomenological theories of metaphor take into consideration the difference between "*our awareness, apprehension, or use of metaphor* from *our interpretive inferences to the meaning or intent of the metaphor*" (Yoos 81). Essentially, phenomenological theories of metaphor consider the metaphoric equation not as a semiotic or linguistic process, but as an imaginative and intuitive phenomenon which cannot be defined analytically.

[35] In Frye's discussion of metaphor in *The Great Code*, he writes: "The Bible is full of explicit metaphors, of the this-is-that, or *A*-is-*B* type. Such metaphors are profoundly illogical, if not anti-logical: they assert that two things are the same thing while remaining two different things, which is absurd" (54).

[36]McKay's works will be referred to as: "Baler Twine: thoughts on ravens, home, and nature poetry": "BT"; *Birding, or desire: BD; Night Field: NF.*

[37] For an overview of tension theories of metaphor, see Hester 16-18.

[38] See Kenner 76–94.

[39] See Donald Davie's essay "The Poet as Sculptor" for a more thorough discussion of Pound's concept of *forma*.

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APPENDIX

Canto 2

Hang it all, Robert Browning,
there can be but the one "Sordello."
But Sordello, and my Sordello?
Lo Sordels si fo di Mantovana.
So-shu churned in the sea.
Seal sports in the spray-whited circles of cliff-wash,
Sleek head, daughter of Lir,
        eyes of Picasso
Under black fur-hood, lithe daughter of Ocean;
And the wave runs in the beach-groove:
"Eleanor, ἐλέναυς and ἐλέπτολις!"
        And poor old Homer blind, blind, as a bat,
Ear, ear for the sea-surge, murmur of old men's voices:
"Let her go back to the ships,
Back among Grecian faces, lest evil come on our own,
Evil and further evil, and a curse cursed on our children,
Moves, yes she moves like a goddess
And has the face of a god
        and the voice of Schoeney's daughters,
And doom goes with her in walking,
Let her go back to the ships,
        back among Grecian voices."
And by the beach-run, Tyro,
        Twisted arms of the sea-god,
Lithe sinews of water, gripping her, cross-hold,
And the blue-gray glass of the wave tents them,
Glare azure of water, cold-welter, close cover.
Quiet sun-tawny sand-stretch,
The gulls broad out their wings,
        nipping between the splay feathers;
Snipe come for their bath,
        bend out their wing-joints,
Spread wet wings to the sun-film,
And by Scios,
        to the left of the Naxos passage,
Naviform rock overgrown,
        algæ cling to its edge,
There is a wine-red glow in the shallows,
        a tin flash in the sun-dazzle.

The ship landed in Scios,
        men wanting spring-water,

And by the rock-pool a young boy loggy with vine-must,
"To Naxos? Yes, we'll take you to Naxos,
Cum' along lad." "Not that way!"
"Aye, that way is Naxos."
And I said: "It's a straight ship."
And an ex-convict out of Italy
knocked me into the fore-stays,
(He was wanted for manslaughter in Tuscany)
And the whole twenty against me,
Mad for a little slave money.
And they took her out of Scios
And off her course...
And the boy came to, again, with the racket,
And looked out over the bows,
and to eastward, and to the Naxos passage.
God-sleight then, god-sleight:
Ship stock fast in sea-swirl,
Ivy upon the oars, King Pentheus,
grapes with no seed but sea-foam,
Ivy in scupper-hole.
Aye, I, Acœtes, stood there,
and the god stood by me,
Water cutting under the keel,
Sea-break from stern forrards,
wake running off from the bow,
And where was gunwale, there now was vine-trunk,
And tenthril where cordage had been,
grape-leaves on the rowlocks,
Heavy vine on the oarshafts,
And, out of nothing, a breathing,
hot breath on my ankles,
Beasts like shadows in glass,
a furred tail upon nothingness.
Lynx-purr, and heathery smell of beasts,
where tar smell had been,
Sniff and pad-foot of beasts,
eye-glitter out of black air.
The sky overshot, dry, with no tempest,
Sniff and pad-foot of beasts,
fur brushing my knee-skin,
Rustle of airy sheaths,
dry forms in the *æther*.
And the ship like a keel in ship-yard,
slung like an ox in smith's sling,
Ribs stuck fast in the ways,
grape-cluster over pin-rack,
void air taking pelt.

Lifeless air become sinewed,
feline leisure of panthers,
Leopards sniffing the grape shoots by scupper-hole,
Crouched panthers by fore-hatch,
And the sea blue-deep about us,
green-ruddy in shadows,
And Lyæus: "From now, Accœtes, my altars,
Fearing no bondage,
fearing no cat of the wood,
Safe with my lynxes,
feeding grapes to my leopards,
Olibanum is my incense,
the vines grow in my homage."

The back-swell now smooth in the rudder-chains,
Black snout of a porpoise
where Lycabs had been,
Fish-scales on the oarsmen.
And I worship.
I have seen what I have seen.
When they brought the boy I said:
"He has a god in him,
though I do not know which god."
And they kicked me into the fore-stays.
I have seen what I have seen:
Medon's face like the face of a dory,
Arms shrunk into fins. And you, Pentheus,
Had as well listen to Tiresias, and to Cadmus,
or your luck will go out of you.
Fish-scales over groin muscles,
lynx-purr amid sea...
And of a later year,
pale in the wine-red algæ,
If you will lean over the rock,
the coral face under wave-tinge,
Rose-paleness under water-shift,
Ileuthyeria, fair Dafne of sea-bords,
The swimmer's arms turned to branches,
Who will say in what year,
fleeing what band of tritons,
The smooth brows, seen, and half seen,
now ivory stillness.

And So-shu churned in the sea, So-shu also,
using the long moon for a churn-stick...
Lithe turning of water,
sinews of Poseidon,

Black azure and hyaline,
        glass wave over Tyro,
Close cover, unstillness,
        bright welter of wave-cords,
Then quiet water,
        quiet in the buff sands,
Sea-fowl stretching wing-joints,
        splashing in rock-hollows and sand-hollows
In the wave-runs by the half-dune;
Glass-glint of wave in the tide-rips against sunlight,
        pallor of Hesperus,
Grey peak of the wave,
        wave, colour of grape's pulp,

Olive grey in the near,
        far, smoke grey of the rock-slide,
Salmon-pink wings of the fish-hawk
        cast grey shadows in water,
The tower like a one-eyed great goose
        cranes up out of the olive-grove,

And we have heard the fauns chiding Proteus
        in the smell of hay under the olive-trees,
And the frogs singing against the fauns
        in the half-light.
And...