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## Aesthetic and Methodologic Resources of Ezra Pound's Poetry

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**Abstract**

The study of *The Cantos*, one of the most complex and difficult works belonging to literary modernism makes possible, precisely due to this observation, the exploration of a series of characteristics and dimensions of Pound's work that have either remained in a programmatic stage or should be revisited more closely in order for their meanings to be discerned. 'Analyticity' and 'scientism' can be considered relevant characteristics of Pound's work, with both aesthetic and methodologic meanings. The present study aims at investigating these two dimensions of Pound's poetry as they appear in the second and the fourth decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In conclusion the question is whether Pound's analyticity and scientism could still be considered valuable from an aesthetic or methodologic point of view.

**Keywords:** Ezra Pound, analyticity, scientism, aesthetics, methodology, imagism, referentiality, modernism, vorticism

**Introduction**

The present study starts out from a series of interrogations of the possibility of reviving certain aesthetic resources in Pound's writings, taking into account both the explicit suggestions contained in the works of a writer who, in his poetics (understood in the broadest sense of the term coined by Aristotle to designate artistic production), laid the foundations of the theory of modernity. It also points out the inherent ambiguities caused by reception difficulties, the complexity of his work and, equally important, by the author's esotericism. My article focuses on the question of whether one can analyse the aesthetic and methodologic legacy of his work in relation to the future of poetry (as far as the analytic and scientist

dimensions are concerned), apart from a series of other considerations that could also be highlighted in his work: this means that the present working hypothesis excludes the assessment of Pound's aesthetics and methodology through the lens of his pro-fascist political orientation, his antisemitism, his literary criticism, his economic conception, and so on. Nowadays, one can find a significant number of works linking his aesthetics and method to his political, economic, social, and cultural views; what I will attempt to do is to separate aesthetic and methodologic considerations from those of any other kind; my approach does not argue in favour of "pure aesthetics," but rather tries to discover whether one could still write analytic and scientist poetry after Pound, either in his spirit or against it.

In what follows, Pound's aesthetic resources are reassessed from the perspective of revisiting the theory of modernity; although my article is not an explicit comment or an interpretation of the theory of modernity according to Pound, it is based on the widely accepted critical assumption that Ezra Pound should be considered rather a critic of literary and aesthetic premodernity and a groundbreaker or advocate of modernity from this perspective; if one adopts political modernity as an assessment criterion, then Pound should be regarded as its critic, in the sense that he was an ideological enemy of liberal democracy and capitalist economy. Consequently, a comprehensive theory of modernity would not be possible in his case, because his views on literary and aesthetic modernity did not coincide – at least from a temporal perspective – with his views on political modernity. Fundamentally, imagism is the aesthetic theory of modernity according to Pound, and this new aesthetic dimension inaugurated a movement that T. S. Eliot named, from Pound onwards, "the starting point of modern poetry" (1978: 58). Ezra Pound's new aesthetic option aimed at breaking the barriers of established literary canons (including here symbolism, realism or romanticism) to move towards a theory of modernity; at any rate, there were many influences that brought about Pound's original orientation which will be discussed throughout the present paper. The attempt to establish precisely which part of his poetry and which part of his essays contributed to laying the foundations of modernism is also a difficult one; nevertheless, I can

identify two crucial moments in the configuration of the aesthetics and the methodology of modernity in Pound's work: the first is primarily linked to the programmatic essays written in his youth, between 1910 and 1915; the second one – richer and more comprehensive, as Pound clarified his earlier options – is marked by the essays he wrote in the 1930s. By and large, the first moment includes *The Spirit of Romance* (1910), *Ripostes* (1912), *A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste* (1913), *Vorticism* (1914). Pound's later essays, in which the aesthetic direction of modernity was much more clearly outlined, started with *How to Read* (1931), *ABC of Reading* (1934), or *Guide to Kulchur* (1938), to mention only those that are of particular relevance to the present study. I will primarily discuss here his aesthetic manifesto, *Vorticism* and the essay entitled *ABC of Reading*, in an attempt to illustrate with examples two essential components of his aesthetic and methodologic thought: analyticity and scientism.

At this point, I would like to make an important observation: I have chosen these two dimensions of his aesthetic thought based on two reasons. First, I believe that both the analytic and the scientist poetry have not been sufficiently explored in Pound's work, although the American theorist of modernism provided many suggestions for further approaches of poetry in the two directions mentioned above. This is precisely the reason why there is an insufficiently developed aesthetic and methodologic capital of analyticity and scientism for future poetry. The next two sections of the present article will explain the meanings of analyticity and scientism as aesthetic and methodologic concepts. On the other hand, there is a significant degree of uncertainty and decisive ambiguity as far as the understanding of these two concepts put forward by Ezra Pound is concerned: I will discuss in more detail the ambiguities regarding the meaning of analyticity and scientism in the concluding section of the present study, in an attempt to establish whether their clarification could contribute to a precise determination of the way in which one could write analytic or scientist poetry. Anyway, one should draw attention to the fact that, for instance, *The Ezra Pound Encyclopaedia* mentions the presence of scientific-like language in Pound's work without mentioning the analytic stance. What this means is, I believe, that there still is considerable ground for assessing Pound's

aesthetics and method that could be derived from overcoming the ambiguities raised by one of the most difficult literary works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Finally, the fact that there are aesthetic and methodologic resources still to be explored in Pound's work can be explained as follows: especially after 1950, one can speak about Ezra Pound's legacy after the publication of several studies analysing his work. The first important such study, written by Hugh Kenner, was published in 1951, followed by the groundbreaking edition of *Literary Essays* edited by T. S. Eliot in 1954; ever since, one has witnessed the emergence of a professional field of thought focused on Ezra Pound's entire work (Ruthven 19; Nadel 13-14).

### The Meanings of Analyticity in Ezra Pound

Discussing the meaning of analyticity in Ezra Pound's work implies, first of all, a clarification of his analytical method rather than the revealing of the American poet's explicit meanings on the possibilities of analytic poetry as such. Actually, a close examination of Pound's analytical method raises the question of whether analytic poetry as such could be written based on the elements of this method. Certainly, this goal should be accomplished by poets themselves; the present study is a mere invitation to reflect on this possibility starting from examining Pound's analytical method.

For Pound, the analytical method is a guide or a technique for becoming initiated in the act of poetry; that is why I would like to put forward, first of all, a distinction between analyticity as method and analyticity as his aesthetic attitude. The choice of viewing analyticity as method to the detriment of its aesthetic connotations derives from Pound's general attitude of suspicion towards aesthetic theory in general and towards the critical and philological exercise most often found in traditional literary theory. Nevertheless, Pound's goals are, on the other hand, aesthetic, in the sense that his analytical method aims at the reader's autonomy, at rejecting the poet's guiding role and at transparency realism; the same aesthetic attitude makes Pound denounce the aesthetic direction

of the psychological and intellectualist novel (Sherry 47-48). Consequently, if one should accept the above-mentioned distinction between methodologic and aesthetic analyticity, then the latter is a programmatic manifesto rather than a vision; if one should consider, for instance, the collection of Pound's cantos, the possibility of clarifying their meaning would lie from the understanding of their significance as translating his aesthetic message into practice, while at the same time applying the analytical method as such. From an aesthetic perspective, Ezra Pound refuses the uncontrolled lyrical and emotional flow of statements, images and thoughts and seems to be in favour of breaking down the cantos into smaller parts and of analysing the interactions among them; this program would require a critical intelligence different from traditional literary criticism (Moody 470). As far as the analytical method as such is concerned, in *Canto XCIX*, Pound explicitly states that "precise terminology is the first implement" and that "let him [the poet] analyse the trick programs and fake foundations." But what does it mean to denounce terminological imprecision and fake foundations according to Pound? The answer to this question seems to clarify the aesthetic meaning of analyticity in Pound as distinct from philosophical analyticity. One speaks here about the expression of a general attitude on the part of modernist poets to rethink the aesthetic status of literature; for instance, Hulme was strongly influenced by a metaphysical direction in philosophy at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Similarly to the representatives of French symbolist poetry, Hulme tried to use the concept of French philosopher Henri Bergson, who was less interested in correspondences between the realities of outer world and the inner flow of conscience and more concerned with his attempt to break down reality in elements that would later be organised through the vortex-like activity of the intellect (Beasley 35). This direction became evident in the volumes of essays Pound published in his youth, such as *Ripostes* (1912), where Pound spoke about Hulme's influence in the foundation of his own imagism. Another important modernist poet, T. S. Eliot, although initially persuaded by Bradley's idealism, was strongly influenced after 1914 by Russell's theory of knowledge, based on the analysis of facts, scientific methodology and the importance of empirical facts (Beasley 46).

However, Pound refused this atomist vision on the correspondence between language and reality in order to formulate his own ideogrammic theory in an attempt to delineate his aesthetic theory both from the analytical and philosophical direction of Frege and Russell and from Saussure's and Pierce's semiotics (Wolfe 186-190).

The truth of a statement, in other words, depends not only on its correspondence with a set of rules and facts, but mainly on the self's capacity to internalise something other than purely social or linguistic laws. You can be *right* without knowing it, we might say, but you cannot *be* right without knowing it. Verbal conduct, as Pound puts it, is not only an issue of 'good guesses', 'intuitions', and 'logic'. (Wolfe 194)

Consequently, I would like to put forward a distinction between Pound's aesthetic analyticity and his methodological analyticity in keeping with the distinction between his imagistic theory and the issues of language and referentiality, and the refusal of narrativism and holism, the latter two being components of his methodological analyticity. I will now explain in turn the three meanings of analyticity in Pound's work.

The imagistic theory is, therefore, the definitive component of his aesthetic analyticity. Imagism appears programmatically explained in his aesthetic manifesto entitled *Vorticism*, published in 1914. This manifesto defines imagism both through what it is and what it is not; imagism is not a critical avant-garde movement like futurism that should rather be considered the final version of impressionism ("accelerated impressionism"); imagism is not rhetoric, in the sense that it refuses the useless narrative elements of a poem and unnecessary stylistic ornaments; imagism is not symbolism, as it refuses to accept associations, allusions and analogies; imagism cannot be assimilated to philosophical language, because the image is not an idea according to Pound, while the philosophical language does not create images. But then, what are imagism and images? In the first note of his programmatic manifesto *Vorticism*, Pound accepts the definition of image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (471). However, Pound arrives at this definition through essentialising his aesthetic view on the ideogrammic theory under the overwhelming influence of the Orientalist researcher Ernest Fenollosa. From an analytic

perspective, imagism is a creation, not a critical manifesto; it is an analytical examination of truth in an attempt to establish a prose-like poetry; it is a controlled attitude aimed at capturing the objective reality beyond linguistic categories; it is an examination of poetic form. In an analytic sense, the tenets of the Imagiste faith were published in March, 1913, as follows:

- I. Direct treatment of the 'thing', whether subjective or objective.
- II. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
- III. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome. (Pound 1914: 462)

Before conceiving his aesthetic manifesto, as early as 1911, Ezra Pound anticipated his ideogrammic method by what he called "the method of luminous detail" which started from his intuition regarding the possibility of encompassing in an image the correspondence between a word and its meaning in the real world (Beasley 6). In Pound's work, the image would thus become the essential and living atomistic component mediating between the real world and subjective experience. In the aesthetic stage of his analytics, Pound preferred image to the detriment of language, as poetic language may falsify experience. The necessity of transforming the language in an image with a significant impact upon the reader of poetry derives from this idea, together with the necessity of reducing poetic language to concrete details. In another volume of essays entitled *Poetry* and published in 1913, Pound announced three fundamental principles of imagism: economy, precision and the absence of stylistic ornaments; however, images should have been concrete, not abstract, which excluded the possibility of interpreting them from the perspective of meta-language. Finally, in 1914, Pound's imagism became synthetically expressed through vorticism: "...vorticism, which is, roughly speaking, expressionism, neo-cubism, and imagism gathered together in one camp and futurism in the other" (467). Eliot (10) insisted that Pound's aesthetic vision should be disconnected from an avant-garde theory like futurism: instead of assimilating Pound's aesthetic vision to an avant-garde movement, one should rather appreciate his insistence on discipline and formal approach in poetry. One should also mention that, around 1912,

Ezra Pound was under the influence of the French symbolist Remy de Guermont's analytical method: he insisted upon an immediate correspondence between image and text or for the clarity of names and words used; Pound's essay *The New Sculpture* seemed to discuss the possibility of a symbolist realism – an ambiguous label that could be clarified as follows: the aesthetics of symbolism should be analytically separated in turn from its ideological option, in the sense that, for instance, symbolists supported poetic musicality from an aesthetic perspective and the “directness of perception and exactness of presentation” from an ideological one (Sherry 54). Pound's very own analytical method was influenced by the symbolists' double aesthetic and ideological vision.

Pound's methodological analyticity is less visible in the essays he published in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; this will be clearly outlined in his writings published during the fourth decade, the most important of them being *ABC of Reading*, published in 1934. As I have already mentioned, Pound's analytical methodology implies two fundamental dimensions: on the one hand, meaning, referentiality and language, and the criticism of narrativism and holism on the other. Since his youth, Pound had tried to establish poetry in which myth, history, politics and comparative literature intertwine, this aim being inextricably linked to his practice of analysing linguistic etymologies (Beasley 13). But Fenollosa's influence in configuring Pound's analytical method was once more decisive; Pound took over the manuscripts of the Orientalist scholar after his death in 1908 and was surprised by Fenollosa's view on the importance both of the truth of statements in poetic language and the question of the true meaning of language in poetry. In his brief methodological manifesto entitled *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, Fenollosa drew attention to two errors of poetic language: “I fancy the professional grammarians have given but a lame response to this inquiry. Their definitions fall into two types: one, that a sentence expresses a ‘complete thought’; the other, that in it we bring about a union of subject and predicate” (6). Succinctly, saving the truth and the meaning of poetic language implies stipulating an isomorphism between language and reality essential for the ideogrammatic method of

the Chinese language, in the sense that this language does not involve a formal distinction between language and reality. This methodological option influenced Pound in many different respects: first, between 1931 and 1933, Pound undertook a series of radio experiments in an attempt to overcome his on-the-spot youthful vision and to adopt a new conception by which emotion was separable from meaning in his theory on drama. For Pound, melodrama was the expression of a sentimentalist-realist version of creation (i.e., musical sentimentalism in the etymological sense of *melos* is distinct from events and actions in the etymological sense of the Greek term *drama*) (Fisher 24-26). The same view dominated Pound's attempt to carry out an analytics of neo-classicist drama by trying to separate philosophical truth from dramatised events and moral examples (Fisher 28). Pound's analytical methodology applied to the issue of the meaning of referentiality and language is fully visible in *ABC of Reading*: i) language description should be done by using decomposition (17-18); ii) correspondence between words and facts is not possible in the absence of precise referentiality; even general statements should have a reference in order to be true (25-26); iii) meaning or reference is "dichten" (concentration) (36); iv) the need to find "objective categories" for words in keeping with Dante's efforts (37); v) there are three basic rules for charging language with meaning<sup>1</sup>; vi) the structure of the sentence can be a barrier to meaning (73).

Finally, Pound's analytical method is, in a somewhat complementary manner, synonymous with the refusal of narratives and a certain static view on history. In Hulme's case, modernism for Pound needed to counter traditional poetry by breaking down the meanings of the poetic act into atomist images; this had a direct implication on the objectification of the poetic act by refusing subjective narratives (Beasley 13). Rejecting narrativism, some modernist poets – Pound included – denied history its implacable dynamic; moreover, the poetic act, like prose writing, should eliminate what Pound termed "second-rate narrative" (1961: 76). Ezra Pound seemed inclined to reject all the traditional theories of history (i.e., historicism, holism, narrativism) in favour of adopting a view on history as a composite entity made up of distinct fragments, so that our knowledge was not meaningful in the guise of

historical determinism, of formulating a speculative story of historical events, or of introducing explicative narrative sequences making up history. Alternatively, Pound appeared to put forward a static model of history, in which its relevant fragments could be reconfigured in a game of permanence and repetitiveness, as the meaning of historical facts to our knowledge required (North 153-154). The fragmentation of history in significant episodes expressed Pound's view in the essays *Guide to Kulchur* and *The Spirit of Romance* (North 140, 148).

### Scientism in Ezra Pound's Poetry

The question of scientism in Pound's poetry is as controversial as is the issue of aesthetic and methodologic analyticity in his works; this is so because the scientific arguments are implicit within a broader theory of modern poetry rather than explained as such throughout his entire work. However, one should mention that Pound is not a critic of modern science in the sense encountered throughout the recent history of modern literature. Ezra Pound is influenced by a conception according to which modern poetry cannot overlook the progress of sciences and the resulting technological innovations. Precise arguments in support of a so-called scientist program in Pound's work can be derived from the repeated references that the American poet made to a series of concepts and procedures in the fields of science and technology. Nevertheless, some scholars have restricted the assumption of scientism in Pound's work to a mere preference of the poet for the language of science, disputing the fact that a scientific method proper was employed in his work, in the sense that standard scientific methods, such as induction or empirical investigation are missing from his so-called scientist project. What appears in Pound as an appropriation of scientific language can be rather attributed to his preference for emphasising the immediacy and clarity of subjective experience, something which would bring Pound closer to a type of mysticism: such a characterisation would make Pound part of the same methodological approach in the field of humanities methodology (see, for instance, the case of Wilhelm Dilthey) that equates scientific endeavour

with a re-living of experience through empathy (North 135-137).

However, there are some arguments supporting the assumption of a quasi-scientific program in Pound's work: for instance, the later Pound was deeply interested in promoting and implementing scientific models of communication in poetry; in his view, modernity would imply a series of clear connections between poetry and knowledge, so that poetry or literature can borrow science-based metaphors (Armstrong 77). Another argument derives from Pound's work itself: the American poet named some of his essays *Helmholtz*, using a vocabulary including scientific terms or expressions such as energy, precision, economy, diagnosis, antiseptis (Armstrong 78).

However, vorticism may well represent most accurately Pound's scientist vision; notwithstanding, there are some controversies concerning this point. Some critics consider vorticism as a program meant to lay the theoretical foundations of a system of energies that stands in contrast to the predominant feature of the age – the dynamism of modern technologies (Nadel 3); according to a different interpretation, the revolution of modern physics is an attempt to theorize the fundamental elements of the system (i.e., vortices) in the same manner as the theory of atoms in quantum physics; anyway, the term “vortex” has a double origin in Pound's work: a pre-Socratic one and another one derived from Helmholtz's hydrodynamics (Armstrong 83). In one of his earlier essays written in 1910, *Machine Art*, vorticism appeared as a complement of mechanical function and of what the ancient Greeks called *techne* (a skill denoting both technical and artistic abilities) (Nadel 2007: 87).

In any case, Pound's allusions to science in his poetry and prose belong to a certain mode of using language: on many occasions, Pound insisted upon the efficiency of a poem, for eliminating subjectivity in the act of writing and for adopting the cold manner of a scientist; this observation points to considering Pound's work as quasi-scientific objectivism aiming at repressing romantic, symbolist and expressive impulses. Pound's idea of using poetic language in the most efficient way and of measuring the value of language represent, according to certain critics, less a scientific impulse and more an authoritarian attitude on the part of the poet, reflecting his political and ideological views (Beach 4-6).

In *ABC of Reading*, Pound spoke about the efficiency of language in terms of accuracy and clarity as means of eliminating any kind of rhetoricism (32), of using simple forms in the act of literary creation (75), and of renouncing any useless words and expressions (78).

Scientist considerations can also be highlighted based on Pound's analogies with the language used in natural sciences, in addition to the language of exact sciences like mathematics and physics: vitalism, for instance, is a suggestion appearing in Pound's work as a result of the influence of scientific Darwinism; the poem seems to be a flow of energies or a field whose components form organic and dynamic relationships; there is an interesting analogy Pound makes with the biological in almost Darwinist terms: "A graver issue needs biological analogy: artists are the antennae; an animal that neglects the warnings of its perceptions needs very great powers of resistance if it is to survive" (1961: 82). Elsewhere, he states that the method of literature needs to have the same scientific dimension as methods used in biology: examination and comparison would thus become necessary preconditions for the study of poetry (1961: 17).

Technological and scientific innovations brought about new perspectives on the act of communication in late modernity; Ezra Pound had an original intuition concerning language as a means of communication, for instance, insisting upon the role of radio transmissions in undistorted communication. His belief was that it was possible to transmit communication directly, thus minimising ambiguity or the act of interpretation. Essentially, technological innovations, adopting the vocabulary of exact sciences or the pictographic language, were likely to have a decisive influence on the de-subjectification of language. If one should consider the way in which scientific methods can be applied in poetry and prose, this would be a viable alternative to what Pound termed "the method of abstraction": the method of science calls upon "pictures of things," while the method of abstraction calls upon general, ambiguous ideas that fall short of expressing the immediate meaning of language (1961: 20). Other interpretations of Pound's scientism take into consideration the way in which the American poet used direct empirical observation, the antisentimentalism of scientific

rhetoric or the clarity of using poetic language under the influence of neo-empirical and pragmatic postulates (Cadel 264-266).

Ezra Pound's scientist orientation can be ultimately defined by two sets of oppositions: first, the scientific method stands in contrast to the philologism at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, equating poetry with mathematics rather than with abstract expressivism (Nadel 2007: 40); a second understanding of this method is a critique of the logic of language, such as grammar; in this latter case, the influence of Ernest Fenollosa is also undisputed (Nadel 2007: 87).

### Conclusions

The present investigation of two directions in Pound's poetry started out from an implicit interrogation on what could be revived from the work of a man who was one of the main founders of literary modernism. In response to this interrogation, I did not set out to demonstrate whether and how one can still write analytic or scientist poetry today, starting from the aesthetical and methodological suggestions made by Ezra Pound. There is also an additional reason why I have chosen the dimensions of analyticity and scientism as opening up new horizons in prose, poetry and essay writing: this has to do with the fact that both dimensions are undeniable characteristics of late modernity, and it is very likely that their resources have not been completely explored. This being the case, instead of asking whether and how one can write analytic and scientist poetry, I believe it is more appropriate to reflect on what the aesthetic and methodological limits of the two dimensions are.

As far as analyticity is concerned, I put forward a distinction between a concept of aesthetic analyticity and another of methodological analyticity in an attempt to establish their limits. If the distinction between the aesthetic and methodological dimensions from an analytic perspective has been highlighted in the section dedicated to the meanings of analyticity in Pound's work, I would like to add yet another clarification concerning the affinities between the analytic suggestions of Pound's program and two directions in analytic philosophy at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>

century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>. Thus, Pound's methodologic analyticity (regarding his conception on the referentiality of language and his critique on the inconsistencies of language in relation to reality), albeit not assumed by Pound as such, deals with the issues of the meaning of language with a focus on its strict referentiality, in terms of the atomist conception of language underlying the analytic philosophical realism present in Frege and Russell's works; the atomist conception and the issue of reference represented the theoretical guidelines used by the first analytic philosophers to denounce the imprecision of the idealist metaphysical language. On the other hand, Pound's aesthetic analyticity recalls similarities with the analytic philosophy program put forward by the young Wittgenstein (especially in the work *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*), according to which the description of reality through language is relevant on condition that the elements of language should mirror elements of reality in terms of correspondence (i.e., linguistic expressions as *pictures* of reality). If imagism as the fundamental expression of Pound's aesthetic analyticity eventually turned into a certain mysticism pertaining to the pictographic correspondence between language and reality, especially due to the overwhelming influence of Confucianism on his work, Pound's methodological analyticity, especially applied to the concept of referentiality, is more clearly developed, although it does not completely lack ambiguities. Some critics have observed that during World War I Pound's aesthetics underwent a decisive transformation, due to a complicated and ambiguous synthesis in his writings between the aesthetic, on the one hand, and the cultural, the political, and the economic, on the other (Beasley 6); as far as the methodological analyticity is concerned, Ezra Pound remained, until his later years, faithful to a critical conception that drew attention to the imperfection of languages. It is precisely this observation that created the premises for an analytics of poetic language questioning the theories of language transparency and expressivity, on the one hand, and Pound's reflection on the possibility of a trans-linguistic idiom of poetic meaning, on the other. It is not by accident that Pound did ample research in his youth on the subject of Romance languages and etymologies in order to discover originary meanings of language and a framework for transposing

language into images.

Pound's scientist orientation is, I believe, indestructibly linked to the issue of poetic innovation: Pound's assumption was that the creative poetic act should be in keeping with the innovations of modernity in order to be truthful and significant. This assumption could be understood as a new aesthetic direction, in the sense that Pound favours a cultural perspective on scientism according to which the evaluation of modern art needs to consider technological innovations and progress, reminding one of how Walter Benjamin, for instance, reconsidered the ontological dimension of artistic production in the context of its possibilities of reproduction by technological means. Consequently, Pound's scientism significantly differs from the program on sciences put forward by logical neo-positivism, which insisted upon the need to formalise statements in a mathematical and logical language. Another direction could categorize Pound's scientism as an essentialist view: Pound's attempt to link his imagistic theory to the ideogrammatic tenets of Fenollosa's writings on Chinese poetry brought its decisive contribution to the poet's shift from romanticism to modernism. Thus, Pound's imagistic theory became a quasi-scientific, fundamentalist, trans-historical and essentialist aesthetics, a genuine expression of modern technology (Wolfe 185-186). As far as the scientific method to be used in the act of poetic creation is concerned, Pound made disparate references to the working methods used in natural sciences (especially biology) or in exact sciences (especially mathematics or physics). As far as this aspect is concerned, Pound makes use of a suggestion borrowed from the positivist naturalist direction at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which conceived the use of experimental sciences language within theoretical sciences (or humanities, in the broadest sense, including here the language used in essays and poetry). However, a certain occultism infuses the way in which scientific methodology can become operational, both for the act of creation and understanding literature.

**Notes:**

<sup>i</sup> The three rules for charging language with meaning are: “I. Throwing the object (fixed or moving) on to the visual imagination; II. Inducing emotional correlations by the sound and rhythm of the speech; III. Inducing both of the effects by stimulating the associations (intellectual or emotional) that have remained in the receiver’s consciousness in relation to the actual words or word-groups employed” (63).

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