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CHAPTER 6

*Texts of The Cantos and Theories of Literature**Michael Kindellan***Textual Conditions**

The textual history of Pound's *Cantos* is among the most complex of any work commonly (or indeed uncommonly) associated with Anglo-American modernism.¹ Notwithstanding the intricate problems facing any scholar keen on tracing the development of Pound's poem through its stages of composition and revision, the record of published texts alone presents serious obstacles. As Lawrence Rainey notes, written over a period of almost fifty years, published discretely in more than twenty-five magazines and at least as many different collected volumes across seven countries, 'no reader other than Pound could ever have traced all the parts of *The Cantos*', nor even does any library in world contain copies of every published version.² For numerous reasons owing both to the poet's personal temperament and to the social nature of literary production, non-identical changes were made to different in-print versions. The moment a reader, for whatever reason, decides to consult any pre-1975 *Cantos* text, they will realize that to look at *earlier* versions is also usually to look at *different* versions. Such a protracted publication history of *The Cantos*, resulting in substantial internal discord, makes it impossible to speak of *the* text; we must speak of texts.³ In what follows, I do not attempt to delineate in detail the absolute textual mess that is Pound's *Cantos*, but to consider some implications arising therefrom.

Before I do, however, it behoves me to speak at least in outline about the range of textual confusions at hand. So, for example, by the time New Directions, Pound's American publisher, and Faber, his British one, brought out their first collected editions in 1948 and 1950 respectively, there were several hundred discrepant readings between these two editions alone.⁴ Furthermore, no matter which text one has to hand, one will most likely suspect orthographic, grammatical or factual errors therein. Eva Hesse, Pound's German translator and consultant editor for New Directions, found some eight hundred incidents of suspected error in

and an idealist suspicion of, the ontology of text. To my mind, a radical ambivalence over the nature of textuality is a principal feature of Pound's poetics. Ultimately an essentialist, whether it be politically or aesthetically, Pound was not in the end especially concerned by or interested in concrete experience, especially that of printed texts. Now, this is a bold claim that some readers might find contentious; others might find it downright mistaken. What about Pound's deluxe editions? What about the evident 'materiality' – meant in this ventriloquism to mean the printed word's anti-absorptive resistance to transparent signification – of *The Cantos*? What about Pound's careful attention to, and philological reconstitution of, the Cavalcanti manuscripts? By way of response to such eminently reasonable objections, I must stress that I am trying to describe a disposition, not an absolute condition. That said, Pound *is* on record as having claimed severally that he found the physical action of reading anathema to him, telling Michael Reck bluntly: 'I have always loathed reading'.¹² Here he repeats a point made some twenty years before: 'To read and be conscious of the act of reading is for some men (the writer among them) to suffer. I loathe the operation'.¹³

As it would for any poet, the way Pound understood and approached the act of reading bears intrinsically upon his ideas and attitudes towards writing and its reception. One particularly telling and frequently quoted moment of self-reflexive poetic rumination comes towards the end of Canto CXVI. Pound writes:

to "see again,"
the verb is "see," not "walk on"
i.e. it coheres all right
 even if my notes do not cohere.
Many errors,
 a little rightness,
to excuse his hell
 and my paradiso.
And as to why they go wrong,
 thinking of rightness
And as to who will copy this palimpsest? (C 816–17)

The subject of many numerous critical evaluations, this passage has not yet been read as a comment specifically on textual scholarship and materialist criticism. So, to add another (rather unsophisticated) reading to the pile: by 'it', Pound means the literary 'work' known as *The Cantos*, 'that forméd trace in his mind', or what Peter Shillingsburg named 'the imagined whole implied by all differing forms of a text that we conceive as representing

a single literary creation'.¹⁴ Conversely, the 'notes' that Pound finds 'do not cohere' comprise the texts of the numerous artefactual documents of *The Cantos*, or what Shillingsburg also calls 'the actual order of words and punctuation contained in any one physical form'.¹⁵ Such a reading might come across as reductive, especially in comparison to, say, Jean-Michel Rabaté's more exuberant detection of indeterminacy in the reference implied by the pronoun 'it': 'the world? the dream? the thing? logos? language? the revelation of truth? love?'¹⁶ The passage's question about 'this palimpsest' for me renders its subject matter much less inexactly, suggesting Pound here conceives of his 'notes' as bearing the residues of older, now effaced writing events, but events whose traces still can be gleaned despite their erasure.

Lines like these situate *The Cantos* within a set of concerns central to post-war Anglo-American textual criticism, explicitly promulgating what James Thorpe once called a theory of literature in which 'the reality of the work of art is independent of its written or printed form'.¹⁷ Though 'see again' probably does not mean 're-vise' in the editorial sense, nor would typographical mistakes, backwards ideograms or missing Greek diacritics rank highly among the 'many errors' admitted to (and dismissed) here, Pound does imply his poem goes wrong textually because, for him, its principal achievement lay in the basic rightness of its moral precepts. In other words, and in ways remarkably consistent with G. Thomas Tanselle's theories of textuality, Pound is distinguishing between the 'work' itself and its physical instantiation. For Tanselle, 'the verbal statement is not coequal with its oral or written presentation';¹⁸ 'the medium of literature is the words' of any given language, the arrangement of which 'can exist in the mind, whether or not they are reported by voice or writing'.¹⁹ The underlying rationale here is a separation between what Tanselle calls those arts 'that use solids as media', such as painting or sculpture, and those others, like poetry and music, he believes 'sequential'.²⁰ Pound thought so too: 'the poet cuts his design in TIME' (*ABCR* 199). In solid media, the work is identical with an historic object: 'the pieces are at once art and artefact'. However a poem, although it can be performed, remains fundamentally intangible. More impressively, verbal works, being immaterial, 'can never be damaged physically'.²¹ Essence is divorced from contingency.²²

Pound's placing of poetry in an ideational category cuts against both the particularist, anti-subjective thrust of much modernist ideology, that of the 'no ideas but in things' variety, and against the materialist hermeneutics that have emerged as an influential mode of critical reception. As

D. C. Greetham put it, for essentialist textual theorists like Tanselle (as for essentialist writers like Pound often is in *The Cantos*), the ontology of literary work is ‘never assuredly present in historical, particularized text, for it can be achieved only at the unattainable level of *nous* rather than *phenomenon*’.²³ The same goes for ideogrammic writing, whose *telos* is always the larger or more general idea extrapolated from the arranged particulars. Greetham goes on to note a peculiar irony in Tanselle’s position, ‘a theorist whose writings on the concrete features of text, on the technical aspects of analytical and descriptive bibliography, have made him one of the leading authorities on the intractably physical’.²⁴ The same irony pervades Pound’s writing in *The Cantos*. When our attention is not being drawn to the accurate portrayal of textual records such as in Canto LIV (‘and the books were incised in stone / 46 tablets set up at the door of the college / inscribed in 5 sorts of character’ (C 281)) or to the correct pronunciation or spelling of words or names as in Canto CIV (‘Wolff Henry (double ff)’ (C 758)) its self-reflexive intertextuality nevertheless reminds us that we are dealing with written text of a most peculiar kind.

Pound’s Exceptional ‘Materialism’

Thus textuality and the transmission of text constitute not just the subjects of the poem, but also the realities it attempts to transcend. The translated crib of Greek text that opens the poem’s first canto breaks off towards the end with a well-known apostrophe to Andreas Divus, one that shows the poet actively working with, and acting in opposition to, his source text: ‘Lie quiet Divus. I mean, that is Andreas Divus, / In officina Wecheli, 1538, out of Homer’ (C 5). This aside acknowledges the specificity of its source while simultaneously asserting an authority over it. That Pound recognized the philological unsoundness of Divus’s translation is evident from Tiresias’s remarks to the poem’s speaker: ‘A second time? why? man of ill star’ (C 5).²⁵ While Pound clearly revelled in exploiting scholarly mistakes – such as his boastful ejaculation in Canto LXXXV regarding an outlandish etymographic character analysis of the (withheld) sinograph *chueh* 厥: ‘no, that is *not* philological’ (C 564); or his rather spoilsport goading of Jules Nicole in Canto XCVI: ‘rather nice use of *aveu*, Professor, though you were looking at *čveu* (C 687) – his departures from textual conventions mainly express a core belief that, as he told W. H. D. Rouse in 1935, ‘Tain’t what a man sez, but wot he means that the traducer has got to bring over’ (SL 271). Pound made a similar claim to Michael Reck some twenty years later: ‘don’t bother about the WORDS, translate the MEANING’.²⁶ It was

always Pound's prerogative to behave as though the 'real work', that is to say, the poem's 'real statement', were 'hovering somehow behind the physical text'.²⁷ When James Laughlin of New Directions suggested in 1956 that Pound work with various scholars to agree revisions for a 'definitive cantares', Pound balked at the proposal. Since the present text allowed the reader to 'git the ideaHHHHH', they could leave the 'canto text as printed'.²⁸ That same year he told Norman Holmes Pearson, a professor of modern literature at Yale who was keeping tabs on potential corrections, that the text of *The Cantos* was 'as accurate as the natr of the goodam [*sic*] author permits. wotterELL, CIV/N aint a one man chop'.²⁹

While Pound would undoubtedly agree that although 'every verbal text, spoken or written down, is an attempt to convey a work', he seems also of the opinion that the work (or, his own work at least) is also more a question of authorial intention than authorial action.³⁰ Or: 'nothing matters but the quality / of the affection – in the end – that has carved the trace in the mind' (C 477). But in the realm of literary production, such author-centric thinking reveals a deep – perhaps irreconcilable – disjunction between the kind of writing exhibited in *The Cantos* and the kind of reading imposed by it. From a hermeneutical standpoint, a writer who believes that authorial intention ('wot he means') not authorial action ('what a man sez') should be key to a reader's comprehension will naturally expect a reader to identify and accept (which is not to say endorse or believe) the poet's ideas, assumptions, viewpoints and prejudices. But Canto I enacts a rather different model of reading.³¹ It shows, I believe, Pound's commitment as a writer to what Walter Benn Michaels has called 'the materiality of the signifier'. For Michaels, someone committed to this ideology will identify 'the idea of the text's meaning (and the project of interpreting that meaning) with the idea of the reader's experience'.³² In other words, either we read *with* full reference to the maker's purpose – this is how Pound wants and expects us to read his poem – or we read *without* such reference, and so construe a text's meaning mainly along subjective lines – this is how Pound reads in order to write.

Responding in 1951 to Eva Hesse, after she had queried the philological accuracy of his opening canto, Pound said he was 'NOT taking Canto 1, back to Homer. but looking at it for wot is there on the page'.³³ Not going 'back to Homer' means *not* searching for either Homer's intentions or for texts more faithful to them (a dubious plausibility at best); instead, looking at 'wot is there on the page' makes close attention to the material scene of reading a kind of cover for the imposition his own ideas: what is there *for Pound*. Which is fine;

no one is suggesting that Pound was more of a scholar than a poet, nor contesting the license afforded to writers of that kind. This sort of *misreading*, upsetting to so many proper scholars at the time, is a function of Pound's genius. But the point is, as Michaels goes on to argue, 'if you find yourself committed to the materiality of text', you also, because of that commitment, find yourself committed to the 'subject position of the reader'; and if you find yourself committed to the subject position of the reader, then a question about *what is there on the page* will always really be a question about 'what's there to you, a question about what you see'.³⁴ So, despite all the apparent objectivity of *The Cantos*, its presentation of myriad facts and figures divorced from lyric argument, no line can be discerned according to a schedule other than 'what does this mean to Pound'? *The Cantos*, in other words, is a work that fits Lyn Hejinian's definition of a 'closed text', 'one in which all the elements of the works are directed towards a single reading of it'. Such a text does not 'invite interpretation' insofar as it endorses the 'the authority of the writer over the reader and thus, by analogy, the authority implicit in other (social, economic, cultural) hierarchies'.³⁵

Nowhere is Pound's brand of readerly 'materialism' more apparent than in his engagement with Chinese texts. When Thomas Grieve, in his pioneering 'Annotations to the Chinese in *Section: Rock-Drill*', described 'Pound's non-philological breakdown' of characters, he identified a reading practice wherein, to put it ungenerously but also unequivocally, the reader (in this case Pound) decides willy-nilly what the text means by purposefully ignoring philological convention.³⁶ Indeed, Pound decided early on that looking at Chinese on his own terms, without much apparent training, was not only more expedient, but afforded him clearer ethical and aesthetic insights than were available to someone blinkered by their own expertise. The anecdote in *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* about the inspired amateur's innate ability to read primitive Chinese serves to conceal an otherwise pretty sweeping suggestion that the only true understanding belongs to a handful of specially qualified artists (*GB* 46).³⁷ Such faith in the perceptual acuity of certain readers with the right sensibility, like himself, persisted through his career. Even in the 1950s, Pound was still staunchly refusing to accept Achilles Fang's corrective definitions of ideograms central to his political and poetic thinking. Pound much preferred his own fanciful readings to Fang's more measured ones, keeping faith in his own interpretations.³⁸

Although ideogrammic writing is basically a form of transhistorical imagination, one that chafes against a wide array material limitation,³⁹ it

is also prosodically energetic, intellectually impatient, rhythmically idiosyncratic and personally determined. Such writing produces a textuality that tends to foreground its material ‘quiddity’ – Pound’s *Cantos* is so conspicuously a written artefact in this respect. But it does so contingently. Meanings inhere *despite* not *because* of the flagrantly material aspect of this writing. Pound’s highly abbreviated style has the opposite effect of minimizing the impositions of the written word. This simple and obvious truth is that Pound’s suppression of the ligatures of logical sense throughout *The Cantos* – a.k.a. the ideogrammic method – does not save his readers either the time or the trouble of having to traverse them: on the contrary, much of the labour of reading involves painstaking restoration of at least some of the missing contextual information.⁴⁰

Jerome J. McGann has argued that ‘one of Pound’s greatest contributions to poetry lies concealed in his attentiveness to the smallest details of his texts’ bibliographic codes’.⁴¹ This is a persuasive claim. (It is, however, no accident that McGann tends to draw his examples from earlier instalments of *Cantos*, especially those of its ‘deluxe’ period. Up until about 1930, Pound was quite concerned with the material format of his books.⁴²) The unspoken assumption operating throughout McGann’s writing on bibliographic codes is that they always add, enforce, enrich or somehow complement a work’s meanings. This is because for McGann, a ‘work’ is coterminous with its material representation: ‘textuality cannot be understood except as a phenomenal event’; ‘reading itself can only be understood when it has assumed specific material conditions’.⁴³ In Canto XXVIII, Pound satirized such ‘thick’ materiality:

“Buk!” said the Second Baronet, “eh . . .
 “Thass a funny lookin’ buk” said the Baronet
 Looking at Bayle, folio, 4 vols. in gilt leather, “Ah . . .
 “Wu . . . Wu . . . wot you goin’ eh to do with ah . . .
 “ . . . ah read-it?”

Sic loquitur eques. (C 139)

This sceptical attitude might be made most explicit towards the conclusion of Canto XCIX – a deeply intertextual canto that, despite its intense ‘written-ness’, aspires to an orality exempt from such documentary transmission – when Pound writes as an aside: ‘no, that is not textual’ (C 732), by which he means to convey the fact that though he is commenting on and at times incorporating others’ texts into his poem, he does not seem particularly interested in specific marks on specific pages, or in the ways these have been received hitherto.⁴⁴

Critical Effects

And just as the way in which Pound read texts had a measurable impact upon the kinds of texts he wrote, so too does the way he produced his texts impact upon our reception of them. This is probably true for every text in existence, but it is particularly true of modernist writing like Pound's, where 'its subject is often the act and process of writing itself'.⁴⁵ The 'processual' nature of Pound's poetic is commonly understood as a function of his enthusiasm for the direct treatment of the 'thing', where by 'direct' is meant something like *im*-mediate. Over and against the settled finality of gilt leather folios, the notational prosody of *The Cantos* points to its author's deep-seated ambivalence about inscription *tout court*. Formally, the poem appears conjectural, quite literally thrown together, or what George Santayana described as a 'mental grab-bag' in need of 'latent classification' in order to avoid 'utter miscellaneousness'.⁴⁶ Certainly readers will observe the preponderance of the word 'draft' in numerous titles of *Cantos* groupings: *A Draft of XVI. Cantos*, *A Draft of the Cantos 17-27*, *A Draft of XXX Cantos*, *A Draft of Cantos XXXI-XLI*, and of course *Drafts & Fragments*. That many of these 'drafts' were first published deluxe or semi-deluxe editions indicates an on-going contradiction in Pound's work between the permanent and the transitory.⁴⁷ 'Drafts' is not a metaphorical assignation; it is an instance of right naming: many *Cantos* look like drafts because they quite literally *are* drafts.⁴⁸ This renders them susceptible to subsequent revisions that left such a complicated textual history. But it points, I would suggest, to something deeper, namely an abiding respect the absolute authenticity and authority of the original writing event.

Mary de Rachewiltz recently reported that, were it possible, her father would have preferred to publish facsimiles of his notebooks rather than submit his writing to the more intrusive processes of mediation also known as print publication.⁴⁹ Pound put this preference into action with his 1932 edition of *Guido Cavalcanti Rime*, insofar as it includes numerous photo-reduplications of actual archival material: the idea being that a poet's original manuscripts are the closest any reader can get to an editorially uninterpolated (which is to say unsocialized) presentation of authorial intentions. And since Pound's aim *is* to bring readers into as close an agreement with his intentions as possible, publishing drafts has a sort of logic behind it. His 1937 essay 'Totalitarian Scholarship and the New Paideuma' makes his position clear. Calling for a primitive kind of facsimile edition of Vivaldi, Pound declares:

By all means let us have editors: let our . . . lyric and predatory Nachez lay open, interpret, rewrite and renew [*sic*] this treasure. . . . BUT let us also have, and for a reasonable price, the verification, the ten inch strip of photographic print which will enable us to distinguish . . . Vivaldi from the great Johann Sebastian where Bach has put new foundations under the swift-writing, inspired Venetian.⁵⁰

An idea mooted here – one widely shared by textual scholars – is that there is no act of textual transmission that is not also an act of textual corruption. Notwithstanding a certain fetishization of the original compositional scene, Pound's ideal but impossible solution seems to be, I suppose, to get rid of textual transmission altogether – that is, to have a work that coheres *without* being degraded by the notes that don't. He aspires instead to create work that need not be read in order to be understood; understanding should, however logistically improbable, precede interpretation, if not rescue us from that obligation entirely. Failing this unrealizable ideal, we are left, inevitably, with a situation far more problematic, because if every writing event is provisional, then the grounds upon which we base our critical evaluations are neither as solid nor as significant as we might imagine them to be.

Notes

1. Much of this history has been told by the indispensable work of a handful of scholars. See Barbara Eastman, *Ezra Pound's Cantos: The Story of the Text* (Orono: National Poetry Foundation, 1979); Christine Froula, *To Write Paradise: Style and Error in Pound's Cantos* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Ronald Bush, *The Genesis of Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Lawrence Rainey, *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture: Text, History and the Malatesta Cantos* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Peter Stoicheff, *The Hall of Mirrors: Drafts & Fragments and the End of Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995); Lawrence Rainey, ed., *A Poem Containing History: Textual Studies in The Cantos* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), especially Richard Taylor's essay 'The History and State of the Texts', 235–65; and Richard Taylor, 'The Texts of *The Cantos*', *The Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*, ed. Ira B. Nadel (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 161–87. For a recent overview of the state of Pound's texts generally, not just those of *The Cantos*, see Mark Byron, 'Textual Criticism', in *Ezra Pound in Context*, ed. Ira B. Nadel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 136–47.
2. Rainey, *Poem Containing History*, 3.

3. Peter Stoicheff begins *Hall of Mirrors* with an anecdote about the nature and the extent of textual discrepancies across different editions of *Cantos*. *Hall of Mirrors*, 1–3. Froula recounts the particularly complex, but not atypical, genetic history of the texts of ‘Canto 4’ in her *To Write Paradise*, 53–136. For a demonstration of the deep complexity involved in rationalizing ‘merely’ the different published versions of Pound’s early *Cantos* texts (i.e., excluding manuscripts and other prepublication material), see *Variorum Edition of ‘Three Cantos’ by Ezra Pound: A Prototype*, ed. Richard Taylor (Bayreuth: Boomerang Press / Norbert Aas, 1991).
4. Guy Davenport counted 248 variants. See ‘A Collation of Two Texts of *The Cantos*’, *The Pound Newsletter* 4 (April 1955): 5–13. In *Ezra Pound’s Cantos*, Eastman tracks and compares these as manifest in subsequent editions.
5. Hesse marked these in triplicate and sent them to New Directions for a proposed revised edition, which never materialized. She was using Faber’s texts because both she and Laughlin recognized its superiority; eventually Laughlin was forced to abandon plans to adopt Faber’s British text on account of the fact that US copyright law required books be not just bound but physically typeset domestically in order to be afforded legal protection. In subsequent reviews of *Cantos* not included in this edition (i.e., *Rock-Drill* 1955, *Thrones* 1959 and *Drafts & Fragments* 1969), Hesse found and noted scores more suspect readings.
6. Achilles Fang, ‘Materials for the Study of Ezra Pound’s “Cantos”’, PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1958.
7. Ronald Bush and David Ten Eyck, ‘A Critical Edition of Ezra Pound’s *Pisan Cantos*: Problems and Solutions’, *Textual Cultures* 8.2 (2013), 122.
8. Ezra Pound, Letter to James Laughlin, March 1949, New Directions Publishing Corp. Records, circa 1932–97 (MS Am 2077), Item #1371, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
9. Pound, Letter to Mary de Rachewiltz, 11 January 1955, Ezra Pound Papers, YCAL MSS 43, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Box 62, Folder 2739; Pound, Letter to Norman Holmes Pearson, 9 February 1955, Norman Holmes Pearson Papers, YCAL MSS 899, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Box 78.
10. See chapter 1 of Michael Kindellan, *The Late Cantos of Ezra Pound: Composition, Revision, Publication* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 1–51.
11. Rainey, *Monument of Culture*, 69.
12. Michael Reck, *Ezra Pound: A Close-Up* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 99.
13. Pound, *Guide to Kulchur*, 55. Pound goes on, advocating instead a non-material, absorptive model of reading – one made effortless by a text’s quasi-magical revelatory powers: ‘Man reading shd. / be man intensely alive. The book shd. be a ball of light in one’s hand’.
14. Peter L. Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age: Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 42.

15. Shillingsburg, *Scholarly Editing*, 43.
16. Jean-Michel Rabaté, *Language, Sexuality and Ideology in Ezra Pound's Cantos* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1986), 27.
17. James Thorpe, *The Principles of Textual Criticism* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1972), 6.
18. Thomas G. Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 15.
19. Tanselle, *Rationale*, 17.
20. This line of Tanselle's thinking is, some might say, decidedly old-fashioned, taking its cue from a set of presumed commonsense truths popularized in 1766 by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in his *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*. I take Pound's implicit agreement with such thinking as a part of his adversarial modernity – make it new and so on.
21. Tanselle, *Rationale*, 30.
22. See D. G. Greetham, *Textual Transgressions: Essays Towards the Construction of a Bibliography* (London: Routledge, 2011).
23. D. C. Greetham, *Theories of the Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 40.
24. Greetham, *Theories of the Text*, 40.
25. Divus translates the word *διγῶνος*, meaning twice-born, where most modern scholarly texts invariably give *διογενής*, meaning sprung from Zeus. Here, a character *in* the text is expressing surprise about the state *of* the text.
26. Reck, *Ezra Pound: A Close-Up*, 99. The reader might object that these remarks pertain properly to translation only, but I find this attitude pervasive throughout Pound poetic writing. And as Steven G. Yao has rightly shown, Pound 'bestow[ed] upon translation, over and above so-called original composition, an explicitly primary and generative, rather than a derivative or supplementary, role in the process of literary culture formation', in 'Translation', *Ezra Pound in Context*, ed. Ira B. Nadel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 34.
27. Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism*, 15. Tanselle does concede, as Pound would also, that though unreliable, the text is also an indispensable guide to the work as such.
28. Pound, Letter to James Laughlin, 17 May 1956, New Directions Publishing Corp. Records, circa 1932–97 (MS Am 2077) Houghton Library, Harvard University, Item 1371. Pound's dismissal is pretty rich given the that fact, according to a 20 December 1953 letter from Hugh Kenner, efforts to realize a fully revised text were begun at Pound's own behest. Suffice it to say that Pound's thinking about textual matters was thoroughly inconsistent. My suggestion is that this indicates his deeper or more fundamental concerns lay elsewhere. If given a choice between a correct but delayed text and a corrupt but published one, he always opted for the latter. Getting the word right was important, but not as important as getting the word out.
29. Pound, Letter to Norman Holmes Pearson, 15 February 1956, Pearson Papers, Box 78.

30. Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism*, 68, 78.
31. Cf. Stoicheff's remark: 'The always unstable, or only vaguely demarcated, boundary between reader and writer has persisted through *The Cantos* from its first poem, where Pound's translation of the *Nekuia* is both a reading and a writing of it'. *Hall of Mirrors*, 155.
32. Michaels, *Shape of the Signifier*, 13. Michaels means 'materiality' in a rather different manner than the one I briefly summarized earlier.
33. Pound, Letter to Eva Hesse, 20 June 1951, Eva Hesse Archiv, Munich.
34. Michaels, *Shape of the Signifier*, 11.
35. Lyn Hejinian, 'The Rejection of Closure', in *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
36. Thomas Grieve, 'Annotations to the Chinese in *Section: Rock-Drill*', *Paideuma* 4.2/3 (Fall and Winter 1974), 398.
37. For a later, slightly altered version of this anecdote, see *CWC*, 59.
38. Ezra Pound and Achilles Fang, in *Ezra Pound's Chinese Friends*, ed. Zhaoming Qian (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 81ff.
39. Charles Olson put this most succinctly when he described *The Cantos* as material driven through by 'the beak of [Pound's] ego', in *Mayan Letters*, ed. Robert Creeley (London: Jonathan Cape, 1968), 27.
40. There's a poignant irony in the fact that a text in many ways written against philology ends up creating so many more philologists.
41. Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 137.
42. For an extended discussion of this aspect of both McGann's preferences and Pound's shifting attitudes, see Miranda B. Hickman, "'To Facilitate the Traffic'" (Or, "Damn Deluxe Edtns"): Ezra Pound's Turn from the Deluxe', *Paideuma* 28.2/3 (1999), 173–92.
43. McGann, *Textual Condition*, 11. Cf. Greetham's comments on Tanselle, cited previously.
44. By 'that' Pound refers to his gloss of another *withheld* ideogram, and by 'textual' Pound means philologically justifiable or empirically based.
45. Jerome J. McGann, 'Ulysses as a Post-Modern Text: The Gabler Edition', *Criticism* 27 (1985), 182.
46. George Santayana, Letter to Ezra Pound, 20 January 1940, quoted in Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (New York: Penguin, 1974), 477. It is tempting to redeem *The Cantos* on the grounds that it is ideologically closed but formally open, as though the latter undermines the former. I am suggesting there is less of a contradiction here than there seems.
47. For more detailed discussions of Pound's deluxe outputs, see, in addition to the work by Hickman and McGann noted previously, Olga Nikolova, 'Ezra Pound: *Cantos Deluxe*', *Modernism/Modernity* 15.1 (January 2008), 155–77; and Michael Kindellan, 'Ownership and Interpretation: on Ezra Pound's Deluxe First Editions', in *Reconnecting Aestheticism and Modernism: Continuities, Revisions, Speculations*, ed. Bénédicte Coste, Catherine Delyfer and Christine Reynier (London: Routledge, 2017), 187–201.

48. Cf. Pound's offhand 1918 remark: 'It has been complained, with some justice, that I dump my note-books on the public' (*LE* 9). It must be stated that *Rock-Drill* and *Thrones* are the most textually stable of *Cantos*.
49. Mary de Rachewiltz, in discussion with the author, 5 April 2014. Glenn Horowitz Bookseller's stunning, uncannily lifelike publication *Drafts & Fragments: Facsimile Notebooks* (2010) might therefore in some senses fulfil one of Pound's artistic ambitions.
50. Ezra Pound, 'Totalitarian Scholarship and the New Paideuma', ed. Douglas Fox, *Germany and You* 7.4/5 (25 April 1947), 123-4.

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