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Feeding the Cats

Yeats and Pound at Rapallo, 1928

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*The prowl, our prowl,
Of gentlemen cats
With paws like spats*

*Who weep the nights
Till the nights are gone—
—And r-r-run—the Sun!¹*

Louis Zukofsky's 'Poem Beginning "The"' was published in the spring 1928 issue of Ezra Pound's magazine, *The Exile*, along with W. B. Yeats's 'Sailing to Byzantium' and 'Blood and the Moon' and Pound's 'Part of Canto XXIII'. When Dorothy Pound—Ezra's wife and the daughter of Yeats's first lover, Olivia Shakespear—read Zukofsky's submission, she sketched three cats, figuring Yeats alongside herself and Ezra. In addition to the private echoes in Zukofsky's poem, his imagery resonates with other work that Pound selected for the issue, forming what Pound called 'subject rhymes' of repeating ideas. These rhymes are essential to understanding the unity that underpins Pound's project.

While Yeats and Pound preferred to regard one another as different as night and day, their writing for *The Exile* illustrates how much they had in common. At Rapallo, where Yeats and his wife George lived intermittently from 1928–34, and where the Pounds retreated in self-imposed exile from 1924, the poets basked on their terraces, strolled along the waterfront, and reflected on the crises that each perceived in his own country of birth. Their very different contributions to *The Exile* in 1928 reflect their similar ideas about patronage, education, the nature of the state, and the place of the poet in government. Disappointments in the present drove them both to take refuge in the Italian past, and in each other they found rejuvenation.

By July 1922, Ezra Pound was finished with Paris: 'Chien de métier, / Hopelessness of writing an epic / Chien de métier / Hopelessness of building a

¹ Louis Zukofsky, 'Poem Beginning "The"', *The Exile*, 3 (Spring 1928), 7–27, ll. 156–61.

temple.² The city seemed exhausted, its writers part of an industry rather than an avant-garde. Inspired by a letter to him from the American sculptor Nancy Cox McCormack, who was working on a bust of Benito Mussolini, Pound imagined,

It would be quite easy to make Italy the intellectual centre of Europe; and that by gathering ten or fifteen of the best writers and artists . . . I shouldn't trust anyone's selections save my own. There is no use going into details until one knows if there is or could be any serious interest in the idea; that is to say, if the dictator *wants a corte letteraria* [. . .] I know, in a general way, the fascio includes literature and the arts in its programme; that is very different from being ready to take specific action. You have to avoid official personages; the deadwood of academies, purely pedagogical figures. The life of the arts is always concentrated in a very few individuals; they invent, and the rest follow, or adapt, or exploit. Italy has an opportunity *now*. . . Germany is busted, England is too stupid, France is too tired to offer serious opposition; America is too far from civilization. . .³

Pound's vision of Italy as a place of potential was fuelled by his reading of Edward Hutton's novel *Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini*, which was dedicated to the symbolist poet and member of W. B. Yeats's Rhymers' Club, Arthur Symons.⁴ In Hutton's sympathetic representation, Sigismondo combined the qualities of military leadership, creativity, and patronage that Pound believed were essential to the resurrection of civilization. This was exemplified in Sigismondo's commissioning the reconstruction of the church of San Francesco at Rimini, reviving its importance as the first Italian Renaissance church to incorporate the Roman arch.⁵ Pound believed that here was an historical model for Il Duce, if he should wish to follow it.⁶

With characteristic hubris, Pound also saw in Sigismondo the kind of patronage that he might achieve himself. In January 1923 the Pounds spent five weeks at Rapallo, a little town on the Ligurian coast, 'sheltered by mountains' with a curving beach that was 'fringed with oleanders and palms', fashionable but still accessible for those on 'literary incomes'.⁷ During their stay they toured Sigismondo's battlefields in Tuscany. The proximity of history, the potential to recreate civilization under the unifying 'intellect and will' of Mussolini's Italy, and the possibilities that Pound imagined for himself led him to abandon Paris for Rapallo in 1924.⁸ The dog's business was behind him.

² A. David Moody, *Ezra Pound: Poet*, ii (Oxford, 2014), 44–5.

³ Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. ii and 55.

⁴ Lawrence S. Rainey, *Ezra Pound and the Monument of Culture: Text, History, and the Malatesta Cantos* (Chicago, 1991), 181; Edward Hutton, *Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini: A Study of a XV Century Italian Despot* (London, 1906).

⁵ Chris Chapman, '“Do you want any more of this archaic information on folks, up to 1745?” Rethinking Pound's Italian Renaissance', *Textual Practice*, 25/3 (2011), 545.

⁶ Pound's linking of Mussolini and Sigismondo anticipates Antonio Beltramelli's biography of Mussolini, *The New Man* (Milan, 1923), in which Beltramelli provides Il Duce with a 'cultural genealogy' through the Malatesta family. Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (Yale, 1998), 118.

⁷ R. F. Foster, *W. B. Yeats: A Life*, ii: *The Arch-Poet 1915–1939* (Oxford, 2003), 356.

⁸ In Augusto de Marsanich's 1922 essay for *Critica Fascista*, he wrote, 'when reality forces us to pass from the heroic and religious period to the political and critical, this unity collapses and *our party is*

At the same time that Pound was trying to position himself as a literary patron, Yeats published his collection of essays, *The Trembling of the Veil*, in which he declared himself, Lady Gregory, and J. M. Synge to be the ‘cultural founding fathers of the new Ireland’.⁹ As Roy Foster asserts, ‘For all WBY’s doubts and reservations, by historicizing the work of his literary generation he had prepared his place in the new dispensation, and he was going to occupy it.’¹⁰ However, those doubts and reservations quickly resurfaced amid the disappointments of the Irish Free State. The ‘official personages’ and ‘purely pedagogical figures’ that Pound believed were detrimental to the resurrection of civilization were also controlling the new Irish government and contravening Yeats’s positions on education, the arts, and the liberty of the individual that he advocated from his seat in the Seanad.

Frustrated by his practically powerless role as poet-statesman, worn down by endless battles in government and by the mundanity of theatre business, and weakened by age, Yeats fell ill. Influenza followed by a haemorrhage in November 1927 prompted George to take him from Ireland to Spain, where she hoped he could recuperate in the warmer climate. In search of a hospitable environment, they travelled in quick succession from Gibraltar to Algeciras to Seville, where she was alarmed by her husband’s sudden ‘mental confusion’.¹¹ By late November, they had settled at Cannes, where Yeats began to recover.

There, Yeats read Wyndham Lewis’s *Time and Western Man*. The structure and aesthetics of the book corroborated Yeats’s lifelong pursuit of a theoretical framework that would map historical change and artistic creation. The treatise also inflected Yeats’s thinking about Italy and Pound. Lewis attacked the ‘time cult’ of Henri Bergson, which he thought produced degenerate art concerned with the masses; time was the preoccupation of ‘dynamical’ personalities of which Mussolini was just one exemplar. Polarized against this was the aesthetic of space, rooted in classicism and concerned with the individual. The ‘time cult’ was obsessed with action, whereas space was focused on contemplation. The dialectical formation was made explicit in Lewis’s quotation of Nietzsche: ‘action is impossible without an opposite— “it takes two to make a quarrel”’.¹² This echoed Yeats’s thoughts in ‘Anima Hominus’ from *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (1918), ‘We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry.’¹³

Yet, in the winter of 1927–8, Yeats was too depleted for vigorous interior debate. He required an actual, external opposite, and Pound seemed to embody that ideal. In *Time and Western Man* Lewis denounced Pound as a ‘revolutionary simpleton’ who had persistently heralded the new, yet ‘There was never anything “new” about Ezra’.¹⁴ (According to Lewis, there was nothing new about Joyce or Stein, either.) Lewis argued that since the Great War, Pound had succeeded only in ‘pastiche’, in

revealed as a mosaic. Today only the intellect and will of Mussolini can still control and direct us.’ Quoted in John Whittam, *Fascist Italy* (Manchester, 1995), 2.

⁹ ‘The Tragic Generation’ from *The Trembling of the Veil* (London, 1922); Foster, *Yeats*, ii, 202; for Pound’s *Bel Esprit* project, see Rainey, *Pound and the Monument of Culture*, 70.

¹⁰ Foster, *Yeats*, ii, 204.

¹¹ Foster, *Yeats*, ii, 354.

¹² Lewis, *Time and Western Man*, 21.

¹³ W. B. Yeats, *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (New York, 1918), 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

‘archaism, not in new creation’.¹⁵ From 1913 to 1916 Yeats and Pound had spent three formative winters together at Stone Cottage in Sussex, where their collaborations and mutual critiques were the genesis of Yeats’s Noh drama and Pound’s imagist aesthetics.¹⁶ However, Yeats agreed with Lewis that, in the years since, Pound seemed to have given himself over to economic theories and didactic prose, forsaking the truly revolutionary artistic temperament.

The Yeatses had intended to visit Rapallo before illness struck, and now Italy seemed all the more necessary. Despite warnings from his physician that Yeats ‘need never expect to regain his original health and vigour’, he was filled with a new resolve.¹⁷ As Foster writes,

From now on he knew that time could not be wasted; he was more fiercely impatient with any impediments, obstructions, evasions which might come between his work and what he wanted to say; and he would pursue that lost vigour with a single-minded commitment, determined to demonstrate that he could recapture the force of youth in his life as well as in his work.¹⁸

Pound was the man of ‘action’ against whom Yeats could position himself, pursue contemplation, and usher in a new phase.¹⁹

At Rapallo, Pound was busy with *The Exile*, the little magazine through which he hoped to recover the success of *Blast*, his former venture with Lewis. Pound sought principally a platform for his prose and social critiques, but the magazine was also an exercise in patronage. Through it, he hoped to promote the work of his fellow moderns who faced an uncertain future after the death of Ernest Walsh, editor of *This Quarter* which published H.D., Hemingway, Joyce, Williams, and Cummings, among others. These apparently conflicting aims were in fact part of a unified vision, as Pound’s writing and Yeats’s poetry illustrate.

In his editorial for the first issue of *The Exile*, published in spring 1927, Pound attempted to elevate middle America to the world stage, equating ‘Both Fascio and the Russian revolution’ with the Herrin Massacre in Illinois of June 1922 and the 1926 textile strike in Passaic, New Jersey. He used these local industrial disputes to indict the ‘capitalist imperialist state’, which Pound believed should not be measured against ‘unrealized utopias’ but against ‘past forms of the state’.²⁰ Pound believed that the purest idea of the republic, ‘the res publica means, or ought to mean “the public convenience”’. The highest forms of that convenience were the ‘permanent goods’ of ‘scientific discoveries’, ‘works of art’, and the ‘classics’.²¹ These were distinct from the ‘transient’ goods among which he included ‘fresh vegetables’, ‘jerry-built houses’, ‘fake art, pseudo books’, and ‘battleships’.²²

¹⁵ Lewis, *Time and Western Man*, 38.

¹⁶ James Logenbach, *Stone Cottage: Pound, Yeats, and Modernism* (Oxford, 1988).

¹⁷ George Yeats to Thomas MacGreevy (19 Feb. 1928), quoted in Foster, *Yeats*, n 7, 355.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 356.

¹⁹ Lewis declared, ‘It is a *disturbance* that Pound requires; that is the form his parasitism takes. He is never happy if he is not sniffing the dust and glitter of *action* kicked up by other, more natively “active” men’; from *Time and Western Man*, 39.

²⁰ E. Pound, editorial in *The Exile*, 1 (Spring 1927), 89.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 90–1. ²² *Ibid.*, 90.

works'. The substance of the poem is Pound's idea of 'permanent' goods: the 'classics' of western civilization.

The image of the lozenge in 'Part of Canto XX' refers to the diamond shape that was frequently used in Renaissance architecture for ashlars, the stones that were set to protrude from the external walls of a building. The image is one of Pound's subject rhymes, resonating with the walls that appear elsewhere in the canto, as in the walls of Troy. Furthermore, the subtle reference to the Renaissance in Canto XX relates to the theme of Pound's editorial, though it is important to note that the Renaissance was a complex symbol for Pound, as it was for many modern poets. In her study of Yeats, Eliot, and Auden, Lucy McDiarmid discusses their disillusionment with the period, which these poets saw as the moment where 'every beautiful, interesting, or important achievement [was severed] from its shared communal foundation'.²⁸ The Middle Ages, by contrast, provided a historical metaphor for the vernacular and the corporate. Pound's vision of the Renaissance as representing both individual and corporate ideals may be informed by the wider context of the Italian Fascist regime. For the regime and its collaborators, there was a slippage in the periodization of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, which were conflated in the term *Medioevo*. (This was to avoid reference to the *Rinascimento* that had been used to support the Risorgimento of King Vittorio Emanuele II.²⁹) The concept of *Medioevo* enabled Italian Fascists to emphasize both the 'communal spirit of the Middle Ages' and 'the intellectual rigor and heroic individualism of the Renaissance'.³⁰ Pound's representation of the Italian past is not of a heroic past that is to be resurrected; rather, it is of a potential that may be fulfilled under the right sort of leadership.

The Renaissance, the permanent, and the individual poetic genius were key preoccupations for Yeats in 1927–8. On 23 February, just a week after he arrived at Rapallo, he wrote to Olivia Shakespear: 'Once out of Irish bitterness I can find some measure of sweetness, and of light, as befits old age—already new poems are floating in my head, bird songs of an old man.'³¹ These 'bird songs' evoke a central image in Yeats's 'Sailing to Byzantium', which had been published in his collection *The Tower* on 14 February 1928 and would be reprinted in *The Exile* in the spring alongside his new poem, 'Blood and the Moon'.³² Yeats had hoped that Macmillan might delay publication of *The Tower* in order to incorporate this 'new Tower series'. Instead, *The Exile* would provide the continuity that Yeats envisaged for the poems. Their unity is underscored by Pound's advertisement in *The Exile* of autumn

²⁸ Lucy McDiarmid, *Saving Civilization: Yeats, Eliot, and Auden between the Wars* (Cambridge, 1984), 46; also see Chris Chapman's reading of the conclusion of Canto XXX in 'Rethinking Pound's Italian Renaissance', 546–7.

²⁹ The idea of an Italian Renaissance was fundamental to creating a unifying national identity in the nineteenth century, but the Fascists were eager to distance themselves from the royal family so avoided the term; see Albert Moime, *The Art of the Macchie and the Risorgimento: Representing Culture and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago, 1993) and D. Medina Lasansky, *The Renaissance Perfected: Architecture, Spectacle, and Tourism in Fascist Italy* (University Park PA, 2004), 22.

³⁰ Lasansky, *Renaissance Perfected*, 23.

³¹ Quoted in Foster, *Yeats*, ii, 359.

³² 'Blood and the Moon' was completed in August 1927 and incorporated in *The Winding Stair*; see David R. Clark, ed., *The Winding Stair (1929) Manuscript Materials* (London, 1995), xix.

1927 that ‘eight poems’ by W. B. Yeats would be included in the next issue. In fact, both poems consist of four movements, and Pound placed ‘Sailing to Byzantium’ and ‘Blood and the Moon’ consecutively at the beginning of the third issue.

‘Sailing to Byzantium’ begins, famously, ‘That is no country for old men’ and describes in its first movement a fecund landscape of ‘sensual music’. In the second movement, the hollow body of the ‘aged man’ is animated by his singing soul, ‘And there’s no singing school but studying / Monuments of its own magnificence.’ Just fourteen lines in, this is the second time that ‘monuments’ occurs, already having appeared at the end of the first movement, where ‘all neglect / Monuments of unaging intellect’. The usage is similar in both places, as Yeats renders a physically imposing historic commemoration as a metaphysical structure. Despite the differences in tone and register, this is the same idea of the ‘permanent’ that Pound articulated in his editorial of the previous year. Similarly, Yeats addresses the uselessness of academies (‘there’s no singing school’) since song—or poetry—is only learned from deep individual contemplation. The poem turns at the conclusion of the second movement with the poet’s declaration, ‘And therefore have I sailed the seas and come / To the holy city of Byzantium.’³³

The change of location marks the moment from which the intensity of the poem escalates. The third movement is one of powerful transition, with the poet beckoning the eternal sages, ‘Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre / And be the singing masters of my soul.’ ‘Gyre’ here refers to the system of interlocking cones that Yeats uses to represent historical cycles in *A Vision*, but ‘perne’ is equally important. Its etymology is rooted in the life of the Renaissance scholar Andrew Perne, Master of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, who changed his politics frequently and astutely during the Tudor regimes.³⁴ The basic sense of the lines is the same as the ‘turning and turning in a widening gyre’ of ‘The Second Coming’ from *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921). However, here the image is enriched by a verb that evokes the Renaissance directly in its intimation of the transience of history, forming a contrast with the ‘artifice of eternity’ into which the poet wishes to be gathered. Several notable scholars have read this ‘artifice’ negatively: William Empson goes so far as to jibe, ‘what Yeats is saying is “I tell you what I’ll do; I’ll turn myself into one of those clockwork dicky-birds, in a gilt cage”.’³⁵ These readings ignore Yeats’s very clear views on the immortality of the soul, the eternal nature of the true work of art, and the ideal role of the poet in the government of the state, that is ‘to sing / To lords and ladies of Byzantium / Of what is past or passing or to come’.

The tower in Yeats’s 1928 volume is a metaphor for the power of the imagination to construct, whereas the tower in ‘Blood and the Moon’ is an emblem of the imagination’s failure.³⁶ On its own, ‘Blood and the Moon’ may be read as a reversal

³³ In *The Tower*, the line reads ‘I have’.

³⁴ ‘Perne, v’. OED Third Edition December 2005. Oxford University Press. [http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/Entry/141252?redirectedFrom=perne&](http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liv.ac.uk/view/Entry/141252?redirectedFrom=perne&,), accessed 25 Feb. 2015.

³⁵ Quoted in Stanley M. Holberg, ‘“Sailing to Byzantium”: A New Source and a New Reading’, *English Language Notes* (Dec. 1974), 114.

³⁶ W. B. Yeats, *The Poems*, ed. Daniel Albright (London, 1994), 699–700.

of Yeats's belief in the symbol, but, placed directly after 'Sailing to Byzantium', the poems take on a dialectical structure. 'Blood and the Moon' reinforces Yeats's idea of the immortality of the poetic imagination and its capacity to govern. Yet, as the poet's enumeration of his imagined ancestors makes clear, poetic power is limited during an individual's lifetime, 'For wisdom is the property of the dead'.³⁷ The poem opens with an ironic beatitude, 'Blessed be this place, / More blessed still this tower', evoking Pound's first *Exile* editorial in which he declared, 'Blessed are they who pick the right artists and makers'.³⁸ The two stanzas that comprise the first movement of 'Blood and the Moon' indict the 'bloody arrogant power' that 'Rose out of the race... from these / Storm-beaten cottages'. The enjambement has the effect of diffusing the charge, but 'the race' nonetheless carries with it Yeats's scathing opinions about the Irish majority and sets the tone for the disintegration of civilization that is the theme of the second movement.

Similarly to Pound's ruins in 'Part of Canto XX', Yeats begins the second movement of 'Blood and the Moon' with images of Alexandria and Babylon, two ruins which exemplify scholarship and astrology respectively ('Babylon's... log book of the sun's journey and the moon's'), before he leaps to Shelley's tower, which for Yeats symbolized 'the mind looking outward upon men and things'.³⁹ In Yeats's characterization of each of his eighteenth-century predecessors, the poet-visionary is set against the temporal. Swift's 'sybylline frenzy' is 'blind' prophecy because his heart 'dragged him down into mankind'. Goldsmith is described as 'deliberately sipping at the honey pot of his mind', suggesting temptation by the physical. 'Honey pot' may also be an allusion to Goldsmith's literary magazine, *The Bee*, the November 1759 issue of which included essays 'On Education', 'On the Instability of Worldly Grandeur', and 'Some Account of the Academies of Italy'—all topics on Yeats's mind in late summer 1927.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Yeats had invoked Burke's analogy of the state as a tree in his 1925 Seanad speech on education; in 'Blood and the Moon', Yeats describes the modern state as an 'unconquerable labyrinth of the birds' that 'century after century / Casts but dead leaves to mathematical equality'. These images evoke the temporal world of the first stanza of 'Sailing to Byzantium', while the wry phrase 'mathematical equality' gives a hollowness to the democratic idea when it is severed from its historical root. The aggressive tone increases with 'God-appointed Berkeley' set against the positives of the 'pragmatical preposterous pig of a world'. A line from Swift's epitaph follows: '*Saeva Indignatio*' is coupled with 'the labourer's hire.' Together, these strengthen 'our blood and state'.

In the third movement, the 'blood-saturated ground' outside the tower is contrasted with the purity of 'the ancestral stair'. This blood has been shed by an implied 'they', who were motivated by 'daily pittance or in blind fear / or out of

³⁷ W. B. Yeats, 'Blood and the Moon', *The Exile*, 3 (Spring 1928), 3–6.

³⁸ Pound, *Exile* editorial, 1, p. 91.

³⁹ W. B. Yeats, 'The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry' in Richard J. Finneran and George Bornstein, eds., *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats*, iv: *Early Essays* (New York, 2007), 51–72; for the persistence of Shelley's image in Yeats's work, see Warwick Gould, 'The Mask before *The Mask*', *Yeats Annual*, 19 (2013), 3–47, 43.

⁴⁰ Peter Cunningham, ed., *The World of Oliver Goldsmith*, iii (London, 1854).

abstract hatred', opposed to the 'we that have shed none'. The poet's place in the historical cycle is made clear. The poem then shifts into phantasmagoria in its fourth and final movement: 'Upon the... windows cling / ... upon the moonlit skies, / Tortoiseshell butterflies, peacock butterflies / A couple of night moths are on the wing.' The enclosed rhyme ('skies' and 'butterflies') encapsulates the image, which has a very specific connotation: the tortoiseshell butterfly is *Aglais urticae*, which comes from the Latin *urere*, 'to burn', and the peacock butterfly is *Aglais io*, which evokes the mythological Greek priestess who was associated with the moon. Yeats's precise naming brings together the consuming fire and the lunar imagery that are essential to 'Sailing to Byzantium' and 'Blood and the Moon'. The lunar reference is more explicit in the 'couple of night moths'; these may be read as other insects, but it is important to take Yeats's punctuation into account: there is no comma before the line break. Therefore, it seems plausible that the 'night moths' are the poet's nocturnal incarnation of the diurnal butterflies.

These lunar images are related to Yeats's reading of the works of the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce in the late summer of 1927. As he was finishing 'Blood and the Moon', Yeats wrote to his friend the poet Thomas Sturge Moore to say that he had read Croce's *Philosophy of the Practical*, all of his *Aesthetics* [*sic*] except the historical chapters, which I shall return to, and am half through the *Logic*.⁴¹ In his study of Yeats and Croce, Torchiana notes that Yeats's marginalia in the chapter of the *Logic* on 'Philosophy and History' strongly evokes 'Sailing to Byzantium'. On the pages where Croce discusses the change that philosophy undergoes through the reader's reception of the text in a particular historical moment, Yeats annotates:

'experience' which 'consumes itself away' not being anti-thetical. The representative ephemeral in event is immortal being a wish. It confers its immortality on what enters it. Revelation because it meets desire is not consumed away—desire of life not of proof.⁴²

In Yeats's system, which he would continue to refine and publish again as *A Vision* (1937), he imagines two opposing forces, the 'antithetical' and the 'primary'. The 'antithetical' works according to a 'poetic logic', while the primary is governed by "abstract" universals.⁴³ Torchiana sums up the marginalia by writing "Thus a roundabout defence of poetry over philosophy in terms of one of Yeats's greatest poems", but there is more to it than that.⁴⁴ Yeats associates the antithetical with the lunar phase, which is characterized by individuation, the subjective, and the 'will'. Its opposite, the primary, is associated with the solar: the collective, the objective, and the 'creative mind'.⁴⁵ In preparing the first permutation of *A Vision* (1925),

⁴¹ Quoted in Donald T. Torchiana, 'Yeats and Croce', *Yeats Annual*, 4 (1986), 3–11. Yeats read Croce in Douglas Ainslie's translations.

⁴² Benedetto Croce, *Logic as the Science of the Pure Concept*, trans. Douglas Ainslie (London, 1917), 316; Torchiana, 'Yeats and Croce', 9.

⁴³ Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux, 'Yeats's Vision', review of Hazard Adams, *The Book of Yeats's Vision: Romantic Modernism and Antithetical Tradition*, in *English Literature in Transition*, 40/3 (Jan 1997), 341–5.

⁴⁴ Torchiana, 'Yeats and Croce', 9.

⁴⁵ George Mills Harper, *The Making of Yeats's 'A Vision': A Study of the Automatic Script*, ii (Carbondale and Edwardsville IL, 1987), 27.

Yeats noted, ‘lunar high numbers approaching democracy gives intellectual aristocracy because the ♀ in objective phases tightens—though contracts—yes—♀ in low numbers gives social intellect—in high aristocratic.’⁴⁶ With George as his medium, the communicators informed Yeats that he belonged to a phase ‘in which the Creative Genius is gentle’: a lunar ‘aristocratic’ phase.⁴⁷ One of the spirit communicators, Michael Robartes, said ‘that men such as Pound, “by the frenzy of their attack increase more & more the power of the vehicle, & so bring the creative power to its death... Their genius... gives to them their capacity for emotional philosophy and violent criticism.”’⁴⁸

The communicators’ opinions fuelled Yeats’s emphatic vision of Pound as an opposite. In April 1928, as the third issue of *The Exile* was appearing, he wrote a scathing letter to Lady Gregory in which he described Pound as having

most of Maud Gonne’s opinions (political & economic) about the world in general... The chief difference is that he hates Palgraves ‘Golden Treasury’ as she does the Free State Government, & thinks even worse of its editor than she does of President Cosgrave. He has even her passion for cats & large numbers wait him every night at a certain street corner knowing that his pocket is full of meat bones or chicken bones. They belong to the oppressed races.⁴⁹

In Yeats’s opinion, Gonne and Pound were passionate revolutionaries in the worst sense: the individual genius in habitual service to a feral population. At the root of the unlikely comparison is his profound sense of an intimacy betrayed. Both Gonne and Pound represented an intense friendship that was essential to his creative energy but that never regained its initial spark. With age, sympathy had hardened into antipathy.

While Yeats insisted on his difference to Pound, Pound was just as eager to define Yeats as his aesthetic opposite. In the spring 1928 issue of *The Exile*, he included ‘Part of Canto XXIII’, which stands as a kind of antithesis to ‘Sailing to Byzantium’ and ‘Blood and the Moon’. Pound justifies his selection by stating that the beginning of ‘this canto is too obscure to be printed apart from the main context of the poem’.⁵⁰ While that may indeed be the case, he begins with the lines, ‘Precisely, the selv’ oscura, / And in the morning’, thereby brushing aside Dante’s ‘dark forest’ and the journey to the underworld and beginning instead with images of light as the sailors set out from Phrygia. Pound’s characters are sailing *from* Byzantium, rather than *to* it. Similarly, in contrast to Yeats’s lunar imagery, Pound has chosen for *The Exile* lines in which solar imagery is prominent, as in the reference to ‘Mount Ségur’ or Montsegur, which was not only a ‘symbol of Provençal glory’ but also the location of an Apollonian temple.⁵¹ Throughout ‘Part of Canto XXIII’, there are references to the *Odyssey*’s wine-dark sea, but Pound’s sailors are in a world of light, on their way to found Rome. Where Yeats’s characters move out of history into eternity, Pound’s travel out of the mythological past into the historical present.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* ⁴⁷ Harper, n 44, 29. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Foster, *Yeats*, ii, 358. ⁵⁰ Pound, ‘Part of Canto XXIII’, *Exile*, 3, 28.

⁵¹ Terrell, *Companion to the Cantos*, 94 n. 25.

Yeats's and Pound's codified and overt attempts to exaggerate their differences also illuminate their many similarities. They developed unique taxonomies, but both sought to classify and explain history and the place of the poet in it. They looked to their respective national pasts, but both also turned to the eighteenth century and attempted to reinvent it as a model for their nations. Yeats focused increasingly on Swift, while for Pound, Thomas Jefferson came to embody the democratic ideal and to stand as a model to which Mussolini might aspire. Yeats and Pound would each be involved, to varying degrees, in national fascist organizations and produce propaganda for them, although Yeats's involvement would be tempered by his distaste for actual violence. They shared fundamental ideas about patronage and the role of the poet in the state. These correspondences did not spring up in isolation but were the result of communal reading cultures and long conversations on their terraces and across the dining tables in their apartments on the Via Americhe.⁵² Yeats and Pound had spectacular and well-documented disagreements, but they also required one another; as Yeats wrote to Olivia Shakespear in November 1928, 'I am tired, I want nothing but the sea-shore & the palms & Ezra to quarrel with, & the Rapallo cats to feed after night fall.'⁵³

⁵² For discussion of another period in which Yeats and Pound lived in 'close proximity', see Lucy McDiarmid, *Poets and the Peacock Dinner: the Literary History of a Meal* (Oxford, 2014).

⁵³ Quoted in Foster, *Yeats*, ii, 378.