chapter 6 – philosophies that meet outside philosophy

of On Solid Ground: Ezra Pound's Metaphor of Knowledge – The Confucian Context

positioning Pound's contributions to theory – aesthetic organicism

There are two principal strands of integrative thought that a researcher will be able to follow when assessing Pound's work on philosophical terms. The first is delineated by the sheer number of philosophers and thinkers included into Pound's discussions, the unsystematic treatment of the works he handles, and the often-unorthodox purposes for which they are brought forward. A chronology springs to mind as the most straight-forward way to manage such variegated influx of information. However, as will be seen later, and despite the attraction that 'hopping over centuries and cultures' may occasionally awake in our mind, this type of endeavour runs the risk of conferring precedence to aspects of philosophical discourse over others while unavoidably succumbing to the poet's wilful unpredictability. Such an approach will be found to inevitably surrender its coherence (a historical succession of events and philosophical trends) to the uneven mixture of Pound's kaleidoscopic presentation of ideas, allowing for little objectivity and even less fidelity to the potential validity of his intellectual input.

Pound nurtures a prying notion of importance that hinges on himself and confounds linear history. It is not dissimilar in its spiralling effects to that created by a funnel (vortex) and unmistakably brands the scope of his erudition, knowhow, and exegeses borrowing all types of theories that he is not shy to then shout out – the funnel turning into a megaphone – in his inimitable eclectic manner. Thought and personality in Pound are not dissociated, nor can his reader separate the two; one cannot exist without the other. A truism perhaps, yet one that is utterly recognisable and distinguishing of Pound's output.

Within the field of philosophy, Pound selected the instances of intellectual activity that he perceived to take precedence, with their novel formulations, before those of other authors who had perhaps contributed larger and more comprehensive systems of thought to the field yet were not considered by him to have emphasised the importance of issues (*lacunae*) Pound

thought to be essential within a historical and/or a contemporary debate on artistic, political, and economic issues.

Because the poet chose to concentrate his efforts on what he considered to be most and least salient (obscured) points of philosophical discovery and not on a systematic categorisation of thought trends or knowledge accretion, because he elected to provide pointers and brief outlines conducive to suggestion rather than demonstration, it will be far simpler – though perhaps not easier – to suggest a second approach to characterising Pound's philosophical stance.

Such an alternative process may be defined by the ultimately aesthetic design underlying all of Pound's work. I have already provided some evidence as to Pound's appropriative approach to fields of learning and authors in history, philosophy, and art that the poet chose to investigate. The emphasis so far has been on underscoring a scheme of basic principles to facilitate an evaluation of the extent of the poet's allegiance to Confucianism as well as the precise interpretation and relevance that distinct philosophical source had for him.

Of the two approaches outlined above, a chronology provides ample room for detail, enumeration of encounters and biographical data, and is evidently helpful in the final analysis of Pound's career both as an artist and as a political person. However, the second approach is preferred here as being more aligned with my present, speculative model of discussion for two important reasons.

On the one hand, Pound undertook the study of multiple spheres of human knowledge basing his attempts on the specialist knowledge of literature and, more particularly, of poetry. He evolved a series of arguments and theories of the arts, economics, and politics, and critiques of religion and society that, though never comprehensive, claimed to attach due importance to 'pivotal' details in the evolution of culture across centuries and civilisations. Since, as previously seen, [1] his approach was not that of the anthropologist but that of the 'communicator/raconteur/story-teller', his claims could never have been based on a thorough

[1] See Chapter 5 'Musical Rehearsals and Confucian Harmony'

study of ethnological and historical data but, instead, on the use of significant points of creative activity that would at once summarise and facilitate a realignment of conceptions within 'modernity' as was being lived and experienced by himself and his contemporaries.

Pound's basic drive in such realignment or 'renaissance' was fuelled by what he considered to be a global and timeless 'artistic reality', into which he only attempted to incorporate extra-artistic phenomena when the links to aesthetic understanding – many a time obscure – could be retrieved from among the theoretical samples he excavated in his studies. Pound continued to consider himself and his fellow artists the 'antennae of the race', and that presupposed the possession of a special, if not superior, sensibility as well as a developed intelligence. It is for this reason that, to do justice to his necessarily limited review of philosophy, the scope of the present analysis will be restricted to spaces defined by 'aestheticism' as a world view.

Furthermore, the main import of all the theories and material – whether philosophical, sociological, or economic – that Pound was to enlist in his research, in his activism, and in the production of *The Cantos*, retained a thoroughly anthropomorphic stimulus. Overall, the sources Pound ends up quoting to develop his models of understanding denote a strong attachment to anthropomorphic solutions that simultaneously carry a decidedly intellectualist bias which, in combination and in his view, allowed for a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of artistic phenomena.

Therefore, in the final analysis of most of his discussions on matters philosophical, political, and economic, Pound made use of historical figures who had entered into a direct relationship with artistic activity or who, within the boundaries marked by the tenets of their own philosophical stances, allowed enough room for art as a shaping, if not essential element of human development. [2]

[2] Although Pound's conclusions and techniques were questionable, the fact that he considered artistic production – and the study of artistic evolution – pre-eminent among the cultural artefacts humans inherit from their ancestors is not controversial in the least. Such is the reality that anthropologists have learned to exploit with rewarding results. The largest source of information about the origins of surviving ancient cultures is that offered by the artisanal and artistic remnants of their peoples over the centuries, and it is those remnants, and not just the day-to-day tools used in basic human activities, that provide the fullest records of social, historical, archaeological, and economic evidence across time.

Going forward, a continuous data line of chronological influences that could be understood to have made Pound act in such and such a way or posit such and such a theory will *not* be attempted; instead, a scheme of *authors*, *themes,* and *possible conclusions* that might be interpreted as interacting hypotheses reconstructing what Pound's philosophical stance may have been – if indeed there was a single, clearly defined one he ever upheld – will be put forward.

I assume, in line with Pound's Dantean *motto* of '*directio voluntatis*', that the American poet would have been able to find different sources to qualify and support his own private theorising and that, allowing for certain minor changes in expression and in the tenor of his affiliations, the main intent of his philosophical propositions would have remained the same had his responsibilities kept him home in America instead of allowing him to turn to Europe for inspiration. In so far as his thirst for knowledge was never completely slaked, and since he invariably found a way to redirect his learning in fields such as history, politics, philosophy, and economics towards America and American issues, he may be said to have cherished a belief in origins and cultural genealogies that prevailed over any other temporary belief or fashionable allegiance he may have espoused during his career.

The mainstay of my study this far has been to discuss such lines of inquiry as the artist's American bonds [3], his stance as a public figure of the Modernist movement, and his *penchant* for scientific enquiry, [4] always within the perspective of aesthetics. Additionally, I have researched two key standards of Pound's aesthetic disposition founded on the disciplines of music and painting to further substantiate and qualify the claim to his appropriation of Confucian philosophy [5]. There remains to explain Pound's philosophical contributions in terms of his susceptibility to the object of his appropriation, this being a factor inherent in the process itself.

[3] See Chapter 2 'An American Abroad'

[4] See Chapter 3 'Ezra Pound's Modernism'

[5] See Chapters 4 and 5 'Character Etymologies, Painting and Pound's Aesthetics' and 'Musical Rehearsals and Confucian Harmony'.

Appropriation requires some understanding of the reality being appropriated. Simultaneously, the appropriative activity entails an exchange which, in most cases, and certainly in that of Pound, makes it extremely difficult to disentangle what influenced a certain behaviour or creation from what came under influence in the developments described. Therefore, going forward, some of these arguments will be called and elaborated upon to facilitate a deeper understanding of Pound's fruitful dealings with parts of the Chinese cultural legacy.

My position here is tenable if the 'aesthetic understanding' from which point of view Pound's writings are being analysed is seen as double in nature. Firstly, the experiencing and understanding of the 'beautiful' *per se*, both in its creative and critical aspects (this includes the artist as a *producer* and the admirer as *connoisseur*). Secondly, the awareness that such 'experiencing and understanding' of art engenders in societal terms. [6] This injunction may be best portrayed as the public position the artist, the art critic, and the *connoisseur* occupy in society, but ultimately needs to be understood to correspond with an enlarged awareness akin to that enjoyed by the actor facing an audience or a teacher before his class. [7] The idea of the artist as performer – as occupying a position on the world stage – is not a new conception; individual artists such as Voltaire, Byron or Wilde come easily within its scope and Pound should certainly be included in this category. For its part, the association with the didactic (master/disciple) model coincides with Confucius' own way of life and Pound's rhetoric towards the world at large.

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[6] This argument has created an enormous rift between critics when the contributions of Ezra Pound are weighed against his depressing record as an apologist of fascism and of racial prejudice. R. Moran points out such controversy in the following excerpt and also sees the need to put an end to it. The matters a discussion on this issue unveils are complex and vital to our understanding of Pound's personality, but they also effectively cause us to define our own stance with regard to what, during World War II, was a matter of life and death. Moran writes in his article 'Fascist poet mocks arts and minds': "... he [Pound] also possessed one of modernism's most morally vile and hateful minds. Of all the aspects to the scandal surrounding Pound and his fascist beliefs before, during and after World War II, there are two that might hold important lessons for the future. The first is to do with literary intellectuals, then and now, who would build a New World after their own image, one based on doctrinal insights denied the common herd of humanity. In particular, it is a lesson about the consequences of such intellectuals attaining political power or influence. The other aspect concerns the reaction of leading writers and their acolytes to the news that the US Government had indicted Pound in his absence for treason as a result of his pro-Nazi and fascist activities." Moran's indignation tells us much about his own attitude and, though his objections to both Pound and those who helped him are well-founded, his words seem to approach dangerously those of whom, because unable to abstain from pronouncing a judgment, would have Pound charged and executed for his alleged crimes. The proposition that intellectuals should not take part in politics both confuses and renders ineffectual the works of both the politician and the intellectual who are, at certain levels, one and the same person.

[7] Developments in the research on museums, the activities of curators and the work of art as a focus for interaction and shared creativity are good examples of the increasingly important societal orientation of artistic activity at all stages of its process further confirmed by the impact of the internet on intellectual and artistic circles as well as the enormous growth in social media activity.

Starting here, I will investigate three additional Poundian themes. America, China, and the formative ancient Greek and medieval historical phases of what would eventually become Europe will be highlighted in my research with China occupying the central position not only as the source of the Confucian model of behaviour and society Pound embraced in his adult life, but also as the point from which the analysis about possible interpretations of Pound's work originates.

These three geographical settings will in turn provide space for an exploration of hierarchy, medievalism, and politics in the thought life and works of the poet.

But a general philosophical outline or model for the explanation of the basic epistemological problems unveiled by Pound's statements and allegiances is required to determine the extent and effectiveness of Pound's eclecticism and to draw sufficient insight and illustration that may be conducive to a ‘plainer’ assessment of the poet’s professional trajectory in line with Confucian thinking.

Aesthetics, as I have just argued, is perhaps the sole unifying tendency evident in Pound's thought throughout his career. Clearly, the term 'aesthetics' provides only a very imprecise approximation to what was indeed a specialist formulation of human interaction and hierarchy in Pound's conception of social and spiritual life. Therefore, another term is needed to modify it, both to complement it and to closely define the boundaries within which a defence of Pound's philosophical contributions may be attempted. The chosen concept here is 'organicism'. Therefore, the compound philosophical structure that will be referred to and for which substantiation will be sought throughout the remainder of this study is termed 'aesthetic organicism'.

'Aesthetic organicism' is a developed system of correspondences that have at their base an anthropomorphic conception of social activity that is derived from the ‘tuning’ of human sensibility to certain aesthetic principles which, in turn, guide human behaviour and impel it to remain constructive and nurturing of the organic whole.

This system may be envisioned as a step between the fully developed humanist model fostered during the Renaissance and brought to its limits by the Enlightenment movement, and the forms of 'holism' that have been defined more recently as theoretical constructs reconciled to the necessities (environmental and otherwise) of twentieth and twenty first-century societies.

Human behaviour channelled in this way finds its most particularised intellectual expression in the aesthetic apprehension of phenomena that enables creative activity (whether that be biological, artistic, or scientific). Furthermore, since it is art that, in Pound's estimation, gathers the most representative fruits of human achievement, aesthetic organicism can therefore be made to include all life-forms and human knowledge derived from them, the conscious attempts at enlarging and perpetuating that knowledge through education and experimental activities, as well as any possible connection to metaphysical phenomena that may pre-form or pre-exist the organic whole.

I make no claim here to the formulation of a new system of philosophical understanding as it is obvious that arguments in previous chapters have drawn on various thinkers and critics who already described to a large extent the characteristics of this philosophical tendency. The present analysis elicits the declension of philosophical theories and ideas that aligned Pound with such a conception of the universe in the manner just explained.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that a concern for specifically aesthetic matters in philosophy has, over the centuries, gathered strength and become a major principle of philosophical research and debate. If we tie to these new conceptions the growing awareness of a global understanding about environmental matters and their necessarily organic presuppositions, then Jürgen Habermas's conclusion to his 'Remarks on Discourse Ethics' will be seen to provide due exemplification for our position. He writes:

> Human responsibility for plants and for the preservation of whole species cannot be derived from duties of interaction, and thus cannot be *morally* justified. Nevertheless, I am in accord with Patzig in believing that, aside from prudential considerations, there are good *ethical reasons* that speak in favor of the protection of plants and species, reasons that become

> apparent once we ask ourselves seriously how, as members of a civilized global society, we want to live on this planet and how as members of our own species, we want to treat other species. In certain respects, *aesthetic reasons* have here even greater force than the ethical, for in the aesthetic experience of nature things withdraw into an unapproachable autonomy and inaccessibility; they then exhibit their fragile integrity so clearly that they strike us as inviolable in their own right and not merely as desirable elements of a preferred form of life. [8]

Habermas works by elimination to obtain, as it were, the 'lowest common denominator' in the human apprehension of natural phenomena. The capacity inherent in humans, say, to be drawn to the 'fragile and inviolable integrity' of a plant, has been recognised by the philosopher as an aesthetic response underlying our value judgment about phenomena in the world around us. The position is not dissimilar from the corollary of Socrates' remarks in the *Phaedrus* when, after declining to authenticate the mythical tales of Boreas' abduction of Orithyia and thus remaining truthful to "the Delphian inscription" that "I must first know myself", he goes on to praise in the highest terms the resting spot Phaedrus has 'guided' him to in words that denote both an understanding of what Habermas calls 'inviolability of nature' as well as of nature's inherent power to "charm".

> By Here, a fair resting-place, full of summer sounds and scents, Here is this lofty and spreading plane-tree, and the agnus castus high and clustering, in the fullest blossom and the greatest fragrance; and the stream which flows beneath the plane-tree is deliciously cold to the feet. Judging from the ornaments and images, this must be a spot sacred to Achelous and the Nymphs. How delightful is the breeze: summerlike which makes answer to the chorus of the cicadae. But the greatest charm of all is the grass, like a pillow gently sloping to the head. [9]

Although a few pages later, Socrates goes as far as to say "Listen to me, then, in silence; for surely the place is holy; so that you must not wonder, if, as I proceed, I appear to be in a divine fury, for already I am getting into dithyrambics", perhaps only anecdotal value should be attached to these statements which, as happens so often with Socrates' utterances, offer a twin-edged perspective on reality by counteracting the rationalist thrust of his dialectic and

[8] (Habermas, 1993, p. 111)

[9] (Plato, Phaedrus, 1928, p. 267)

uniting irony with joviality to sweeten speech and, at times, successfully distract and even trick his peers into a debate. However, the fact that such an awareness of nature's latent power is there and that it is, in essence, communicable, and accessible to all human beings in their daily lives, provides sufficient evidence to suggest that, from varying perspectives and at different and perhaps unequal levels, the presence of readily available proof in nature for an aesthetic understanding of the world has been acknowledged throughout the centuries by philosophers of all cultures. This much – not excepting the notion of organic harmony which both pre-empts and facilitates such understanding – will be proposed at first as the strictly philosophical foundation on which to build the discussion within the remaining chapters.

Chapter 5, 'Musical rehearsals and Confucian Harmony' ended with a reference to possible explicative connections of this kind of aesthetic understanding of reality based on the biological theory of morphogenetic and motor fields by Rupert Sheldrake and the writings attributed to Confucius. Here, starting from the above-mentioned philosophical premise that an aesthetic apprehension of reality might be at the base of theories of organicism, an attempt will be made at illustrating how this is consistent with Pound's ongoing philosophical affiliations and with the model of biological development first proposed by Sheldrake in his book *A New Science of Life*.

My aim is not to achieve an overall demonstration, nor is it to create definitive terms in an unequivocal way; I am interested in providing a further model for the understanding of Pound's philosophical associations that might throw light on his achievements as an interpreter of Confucius and bring him close to contemporary developments in philosophical research.

In the ancient world, the way of virtue was one to which the aspirant should devote not only his words but also his actions. In this ultimate philosophical and moral aim, Eastern philosophies and their Western counterparts were not isolated from each other. Pound also sought that self-same ideal and both his political and artistic stances were attuned to that pursuit. It is therefore necessary that, in explaining and illustrating through speculative analysis the record of his appropriation of Confucius, a philosophical point of departure be designated

that might offer at its inception the possibility of a harmonious coexistence between thought and action. Aesthetic organicism appears to provide the necessary elementary trappings for such a venture.

Emerson, Pound, and the aim of language

In chapter 2, 'An American Abroad', a controversial point was made to qualify the inclusion of Pound's work within the American tradition that appears to flow unhindered from Ralph Waldo Emerson, through Walt Whitman to the latter T. S. Eliot. If the similarities that have been shown to exist can at all be substantiated, this needs to be done at a further remove from the tradition Pound himself wanted to leave behind, and from the influences of the likes of Fenollosa who had been steeped in Emersonian philosophy. There are, doubtless, an array of propositions that the early Emerson might share with Pound on subjects like the nature of language, and their terms can at times come close to suggest a perfect match, as in the following excerpt:

> The same symbols are found to make the original elements of all languages. It has moreover been observed, that the idioms of all languages approach each other in passages of the greatest eloquence and power. And as this is the first language, so is it the last. This immediate dependence of language upon nature, this conversion of an outward phenomenon into a type of somewhat in human life, never loses its power to affect us. It is this which gives that piquancy to the conversation of a strong-natured farmer or back-woodsman which all men relish. [10]

There is much in this paragraph that may be directly connected to Pound's ideogramic method and to Fenollosa's conception of language. However, whereas Emerson goes on, within his discourse on language and within his entire discourse on nature, to link such descriptions of phenomena with the ultimate agency of God and to make his explanations proofs of such metaphysical union, Pound appears to be concerned solely about the nature of language and the consequences that an understanding of this nature might afford the poet. The need for a metaphysical explanation does not arise in Pound, so that his philosophical position and that of Emerson are somewhat opposed. Let us hear Emerson once more:

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[10] (Emerson, 1983, p. 22)

> But wise men pierce this rotten diction and fasten words again to things; so that picturesque language is at once a commanding certificate that he who employs it, is a man in alliance with truth and God. The moment our discourse rises above the ground line of familiar facts, and is inflamed with passion or exalted by thought, it clothes itself in images. A man conversing in earnest, if he watch his intellectual processes, will find that a material image, more or less luminous, arises in the mind, contemporaneous with every thought which furnishes the vestment of the thought. Hence, good writing and brilliant discourse are perpetual allegories. This imagery is spontaneous. It is the blending of experience with the present action of the mind. It is proper creation. It is the working of the Original Cause through the instruments he has already made. [11]

It might be thought that, with a few variations (i.e., 'emotion' for "thought" and 'gods' for "God") and a quickening in the style as well as the omission of the last sentence, Pound could have expressed himself in much the same words. The rhetoric appears to be the same; both Pound and Emerson will 'certify' the quality of any writing that remains faithful to natural symbols; both will 'blend experience and present action' in the search for the 'luminous' detail.

Yet, while the two writers suggest a direct relation between language and natural phenomena, they part company when language itself is put to use. For Pound is, in this respect, an utilitarian, someone who will not only utilise perceptions from nature but who will work at perfecting them in the service of communication, that is, in the service of a transference of meaning; while Emerson remains uplifted by such perceptions and roams into realms that the reader finds difficult to characterise due to their overwhelming descriptive temperament, something Harold Bloom has accurately conveyed in his own impressionistic sketch:

> Emerson is appalling and peculiar – at first. Then he is – simply – ourselves, perhaps for worse. [12]

But a more useful distinction may be derived from considering Walt Whitman [13] – the indubitable partner of Emerson's poetic philosophy – in contrast to Pound. Emerson overflowed with confidence, as did Whitman and Pound, and that is perhaps the most

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[11] Emerson, p. 23.

[12] (Bloom, 1976, p. 46)

[13] Pound speaks of Whitman in terms that are not dissimilar from those Bloom uses in describing Emerson. In 'What I feel about Walt Whitman' Pound writes: "He *is* America. His crudity is an exceeding stench, but it *is* America. He is the hollow place in the rock that echoes with his time. He does 'chant the crucial stage' and he is the 'voice triumphant'. He is disgusting. He is an exceedingly nauseating pill, but he accomplishes his mission."

characteristic trait of what has come to stand as the American tradition in literature. One cannot help thinking that, overall, the concepts underlying such tradition-building exercises are based on ethical and not aesthetic considerations; that is, considerations which play the double role of tradition and nation building; something in which the United States is not alone. For, as enquiries into the detail of both biography and literary considerations are made, the differences outnumber the similarities, and much is lost in trying to draw a coherent picture that may not resemble a *collage*.

In the case of Whitman and Pound, we find powerful analogies within their individual conceptions of nature and, more importantly, in the universalising tendency of some national traits whose most important line of descent might be traced to Emerson. However, as has been explained by Bloom, there are two distinct strains to Emersonian thought, the latter of which is characterised by the transformation of an earlier strong and perfecting determinism into one that would accommodate imperfective modes of existence. This late breach in Emerson's thought – roughly traceable to the death of his young son Waldo, points to an area of research he could only comprehend in terms of future development and progress. David Robinson explains:

> The 'general ideas' defended by the realists are an important reminder that a sense of worth can be preserved when discrete human actions fail to offer any support for that faith. 'A man is only a relative and representative nature ... a hint of the truth,' suggestive to us of general principles but never embodying the truth completely'. These questions were directly rooted in Emerson's personal situation in the middle 1840s, a time when he was attempting to beat back the demands from his friends for commitment to political projects of various sorts, while he simultaneously approached on his own terms the most appropriate methods of achieving the 'practical power' he had advocated in 'Experience.' In one sense, 'Nominalist and Realist' is a complicated attempt to answer this double bind, warning against the potential loss of judgment that too narrow a sense of political commitment can bring, while also insisting that particular facts are the only measure of general truths. [14]

Though Emerson's overall perception of phenomena as interrelated and ultimately unitarian, might be said to coincide with that of Pound, the latter will find it necessary to disclaim such a

[14] (Robinson, 1993 , pp. 72-3) See also (Jacobson, 1993)

traditional outlook in order to get started on a detailed scientific scrutiny of literary processes that, while casting away an uncalled-for romanticism, might nevertheless bring the poet close to an understanding of communication, that is, the process of development and preservation of what until then had been assumed to be the manifest unity of human and natural endeavour. Therefore, Pound belongs with Emerson and Whitman in so far as he is able to contradict them in their assumed understanding of universal forms only to work towards their intuited notion from the base up, through an experimental approach.

Emerson's arguments flow on from an assumed understanding of unity and a visionary conception of the processes of nature. In his words:

> And if one shall read the future of the race hinted in the organic effort of Nature to mount and meliorate, and the corresponding impulse to the Better in the human being, we shall dare affirm that there is nothing he will not overcome and convert, until at last culture shall absorb the chaos and Gehenna. [15]

Such accommodations for evil in society, for disillusionment or for elements that do not strictly fit a perfect pattern, had been part of Pound's early personal findings and an integral part of his college life and his life in Europe with all the difficulties that self-imposed exile created for him.

Pound leaves behind Whitman and the Emersonian legacy. [16] An urgency other than that of exploring spiritual realities also confronted by the young Eliot, a need to find concrete links between social and personal needs in the new European environment – something Pound had a glimpse of within the writings of Henry James, but which, even there, remained picturesque and only accessible at an intellectual level – in sum, the youthful urge to experience and expound on the results of all experience, are the mark of what Roy Harvey Pearce has defined as Pound's "means of defining himself through his understanding of the

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15 (Emerson, 1983, pp. 1033-34)

16 In this respect, Pound is not unlike the residents of colonial communities who, after having been exposed to the culture and influence of imperialist nations, see fit to make their 'return' to the father/mother land and, for good or for evil, force onto the old imperial consciousness the awareness of its 'children abroad'. Such a pattern has been repeated constantly since the onset of colonialism, and Europe, with its old dynastic legacies of discoverers and conquerors, is still living its consequences. North and Central-African migration to France and Italy, Indian, Pakistani, West-Indian and Chinese migration to England, and Latin-American migration to Spain (among others), are the most superficial yet noticeable consequences of five hundred years of intra-continental colonial activity.

creations and creative modes of others." Such is the turning-point signalling a shift, if not a rift, in the tradition; a rift that may be explained away but which holds out a significant clue to the long-lasting differences that, to this day, permeate criticisms for and against the figure of Pound.

Pound chooses to transport the viewpoint of the American pioneer back to Europe and perhaps unwittingly, yet to a deeper extent than any American writer before him, immerses himself in the spirit and the practice of foreign cultures and languages, something Emerson himself had envisaged with words such as: "[w]e need not fear excessive influence. A more generous trust is permitted. Serve the great. Stick at no humiliation. Grudge no office thou canst render. Be the limb of their body, the breath of their mouth." [17] Pearce points precisely to the area where this breach in tradition occurs and, though his general work is devoted to the task of reinforcing the American cultural genealogy, his argument gives credibility to our presentation. Commenting on *Mauberley* and accurately juxtaposing Whitman and Pound, he forms a notion of the basic "counter-current" Pound was to encourage with his literary activities.

> As the style in which Whitman worked demanded of the poet no less than that at some point he renounce the world in favor of himself, the style in which Pound would work demanded no less than at some point (Eliot was to call it a "still, turning point") the poet renounce himself in favor of the world. [18]

Pearce's argument is also a very old one; it is one for which much popular sympathy has been summoned over the centuries. The lines that Milton borrowed from the *Protagoras*: "So charming left his voice, that I the while / Thought him still speaking; still stood fixed to ear" (*Paradise Lost* Book VIII) are but the preamble for Socrates' criticism of a form of speech that Pound would also criticise in writers among whom Emerson and (paradoxically) Milton are two leading examples. Socrates addresses Protagoras after the latter's long speech:

> If a man were to go and consult Pericles or any of our great speakers about these matters, he might perhaps hear a fine discourse; but then when one has a question to ask of any of them, like books, they can neither answer nor ask; and if any one challenges the least

[17] (Emerson, 1983, p. 629).
[18] (Pearce, 1961, p. 295)

> particular of their speech, they go ringing on in a long harangue, like brazen pots, which when they are struck continue to sound unless some one puts his hand upon them: whereas our friend Protagoras cannot only make a good speech , as he has already shown, but when he asks he will wait and hear the answer; and this is a very rare gift. Now I, Protagoras, want to ask you a little question, which if you will only answer, I shall be quite satisfied. [19]

These criticisms appear explicit enough and, however individualistic the style of Emerson might be, they can certainly be applied to his writings. The fact remains that the main import of Emerson's private philosophy and of his methodology were opposed to those of Pound. The renunciation of the world Pearce attributes to Whitman (and which here is extended to encompass Emerson) is sought through a style that may lay no claim as a tool for instruction. Emerson's prose in his lectures, essays and addresses is infused with an unstoppable, romantic, and narcissistic dialectic that offers little access to analysis or even quotation. Arguments are used by Emerson irrespective of their comparative rational weight, that is, they appear to be inbuilt in the fabric of the prose and to follow a highly subjective mode of expression that indulges the devices of enumeration and concatenation of phenomena the author seems to consider philosophically equivalent.

Accordingly, Emerson will entertain parallel arguments that cannot be clearly defined or differentiated against each other yet rely fully on his unswerving optimism and belief to evoke their common ultimate and infinite origin. [20] His arguments are like the shafts of sunlight piercing through the clouds and appearing in our eyes as singular and independent

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19 (Plato '. T., 1928, p. 217)

20 One of the most extreme of these argumentative lines can be found in Emerson's essay 'The Poet'. We quote an excerpt from pp. (Emerson, 1983, pp. 462-63): “The poets are thus liberating gods. The ancient British bards had for the title of their order, 'Those who are free throughout the world.' They are free, and they make free. An imaginative book renders us much more service at first, by stimulating us through its tropes, than afterward, when we arrive at the precise sense of the author. I think nothing is of any value in books, excepting the transcendental and extraordinary. If a man is inflamed and carried away by his thought, to that degree that he forgets the authors and the public, and heeds only this one dream, which holds him like an insanity, let me read his paper, and you may have all the arguments and histories and criticism. All the value which attaches to Pythagoras, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa, Cardan, Kepler, Swedenborg, Schelling, Oken, or any other who introduces questionable facts into his cosmogony, as angels, devils, magic, astrology, palmistry, mesmerism, and so on, is the certificate we have of departure from routine, and that here is new witness. That also is the best success in conversation, the magic of liberty, which puts the world, like a ball, in our hands. How cheap even the liberty then seems; how mean to study, when an emotion communicates to the intellect the power to sap and upheave nature: how great the perspective! nations, times, systems, enter and disappear, like threads in tapestry of large figure and many colors; dream delivers us to dream, and while the drunkenness lasts, we will sell our bed, our philosophy, our religion, in our opulence.”

expressions of the same reality. Stylistically speaking, Emerson's achievement is great, yet his approach is descriptive and offers little scope for direct discussion.

Perhaps George Santayana's remarks might help the reader position Emerson within the history of American thought. Santayana writes:

> If we ask ourselves what was Emerson's relation to the scientific and religious movements of his time, and what place he may claim in the history of opinion, we must answer that he belonged very little to the past, very little to the present, and almost wholly to that abstract sphere into which mystical or philosophic aspiration has carried a few men in all ages. The religious tradition in which he was reared was that of Puritanism, but of a Puritanism which, retaining its moral intensity and metaphysical abstraction, had minimized its doctrinal expression and become Unitarian. Emerson was indeed the Psyche of Puritanism, "the latest-born and fairest vision far" of all that "faded hierarchy." A Puritan whose religion was all poetry, a poet whose only pleasure was thought, he showed in his life and personality the meagreness, the constraint, the frigid and conscious consecration which belonged to his clerical ancestors, while his inmost impersonal spirit ranged abroad over the fields of history and Nature, gathering what ideas it might, and singing its little snatches of inspired song. [21]

Pound's prose, on the contrary, reveals a search for direct expression of opinion and a concern for utter plainness of speech which at times impinges on the crude. His own 'renouncing in favor of the world', as Pearce would have it, is the measure of an ultimate belief in the communicability of experience and the necessity for science as a means, to provide accurate descriptions of reality. Consequently, Pound's arguments are eminently quotable and may be used within a syllabus of studies without much need for re-arrangement. Pound's prose pays constant attention to reason and to what is reasonable in the form of *minutiae* and in his effort to establish arguments at a common level of understanding.

Arguably, Emerson's complexity and philosophical wealth is based on his assumed or experienced (as the case may be) notion of identity between the writer and his argument, while Pound's contribution to thought in the twentieth century relied on a conscious, structured movement away from style as the mark of an individual author and towards style as "the mode

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[21] (Santayana, 1957, p. 231)

of writing which implies a very considerable basis of agreement between writer and reader, between writer and an order of existence, together with comparatively low percentage of difference." [22]

Twenty-nine years later, he will summon Frobenius to make the point once more: "Writing, which is communication service, should be held distinct from the production of merchandise for the book trade." [23] And that measure of communication was defined by Leo Frobenius and quoted by Pound within his 'Immediate need of Confucius': "It is not what a man says but the part of it which his auditor considers important that determines the amount of the communication."

Even though Pound's approach has been described here as scientific and set against the romantic displays of Emerson and Whitman, such a claim is controversial and in need of explanation. For science, as Sheldrake has written, "can deal only with regularities, with things that are repeatable", [24] and Pound appears to be dealing mainly with the particular. Nevertheless, in order for him to uncover the 'pivotal' elements in the history and practice of literature and the other arts, an acquaintance with much that is not salient or pivotal was necessary, so that, in spite of the unorthodoxy of Pound's scientific approach – more in line with the *modus operandi* of the inventor (who achieves through trial, error, and accident) than that of theoretician or science historian – his analyses may still be gathered under that label without upsetting the basic tenets of scientific learning. And it is in this context that philosophical considerations about communication and Pound's study of words and language may be entered into.

Pound wrote in 'Mang Tsze': "That things can be known a hundred generations distant, implied no supernatural powers, it did imply the durability of natural process which alone gives a possibility for science." [25]

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[22] (Pound E. , Date Line, 1934, p. 78) (Pound E. , Immediate need of Confucius, pp. 89-90)

[23] (Pound E. , Immediate need of Confucius, pp. 89-90)

[24] (Sheldrake, Morphogenetic fields: Nature's Habits, 1986, p. 93)

[25] (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951, p. 100)

Sheldrake has written:

> Time after time when atoms come into existence electrons fill the same orbitals around the nuclei; atoms repeatedly combine to give the same molecular forms; again and again molecules crystallize into the same spatial patterns; seeds of a given species give rise year after year to plants of the same appearance; generation after generation, spiders spin the same types of web. Forms come into being repeatedly, and each time each form is more or less the same. On this fact depends our ability to recognize, identify and name things. [26]

On the grounds of this succession of observable phenomena, the correspondence between actualities in nature and names in language which Emerson largely assumes and inevitably links to extra-scientific considerations, veers, in Pound's work, towards an understanding that, though not deprived of the benefit of straight correspondence, provides enough leeway for scientific argumentation.

Because Emerson somewhat allows himself the literary privilege of equating the abilities of 'children and savages' with those of 'wise men' in their dealings with language, reducing the apprehension of language to a form of intuition, and because, in his exploration of learning and discipline, [27] a reader might come away with no practical clue as to how to start up the line of his own inquiries but instead receives a dose of formal optimism that delights him as would the sweetness of honey, Emerson's approach is far from scientific or modern. It becomes difficult to refute its truthfulness since the inbuilt 'essentialism' that characterises it leaves no room for questioning.

Emerson writes in revelatory fashion, a privileged methodology that seldom leads to communication other than what the poetic stimulus (some would argue, a purely romantic one at that) allows. After first immersion in the flow of Emmerson’s writing, the reader emerges stirred by the sheer force of the homiletic discourse, while his/her intellect appears to have momentarily arrested in its work and been drawn to the mode of contemplation.

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[26] (Sheldrake, Morphogenetic fields: Nature's Habits, 1986, p. 92)

[27] (Emerson, 1983, pp. 26-31)

Whatever the merits and nature of this fluxing style, they are surely not characteristics that can be attributed to Poundian or Confucian writing. A similar set of anthropological correspondences may be said to belong to all three types of discourse, yet only Pound and Confucius can be tied to a solely organicist conception of the universe they describe where causation relates exclusively to the organic pattern of relationships developed and maintained by the organisms perpetuating existence and, especially, by the human species in its understanding and control over aesthetics.

Ultimately, Emersonian dualism remains distant from the comprehensive monistic approach of Confucius and the evolving Poundian ethic of effective communication through education.

Here, I hasten to make a point of precision regarding some of Pound's statements that could be interpreted as dualist philosophical assertions. In 'Axiomata', meant as 'his "intellectual will and testament" on leaving England', Pound writes with enviable soundness and clarity:

> (I1) The intimate essence of the universe is not of the same nature as our own consciousness. (I2) Our own consciousness is incapable of having produced the universe. (I3) God, therefore, exists. That is to say, there is no reason for not applying the term God, Theos, to the intimate essence .... (III2) The theos may affect and may have affected the consciousness of individuals, but the consciousness is incapable of knowing why this occurs, or even in what manner it occurs, or whether it be the theos; though the consciousness may experience pleasant and possibly unpleasant sensations, or sensations partaking neither of pleasure or its opposite. Hence mysticism. ... The effects remain, so far as the consciousness is concerned, in the domain of experience, not differing intellectually from the taste of a lemon, or the fragrance of violets or the aroma of dunghills, or the feel of a stone or of tree-bark, or any other direct perception. As the consciousness observes the results of the senses, it observes also the mirage of the senses, or what may be a mirage of the senses, or an affect from the theos, the non-comprehensible.

The poet shows in this the depth of his perception and sincerity. Moreover, he shows his willingness to discern between knowledge and belief, experience, and imagination through what is a philosophically coherent and an essentially scientific approach. Pound writes in section V11:

> We do not quite know how we have come by these concepts of common decency, but one supposes it is our heritage from superior individuals of the past; that it is the treasure of

> tradition. Savages and professed believers in religion do not possess this concept of common decency. They usually wish to interfere with us, and to get us to believe something "for our own good." [28]

With Pound, and with Confucius (to the poet's reckoning: a clear exponent of 'superior individuals of the past'), language may be analysed from the bottom up, never shifting perspective or introducing the *deus ex machina* principle but constantly developing what could be labelled 'a logic of communication'.

Pound is certain that, to achieve this, due attention needs be given not only to the origin of language (its etymologies) – something Emerson was also fond of – but to the processes underlying communication itself. Such processes originate in daily usage and are not restricted to the realm of a pre-twentieth-century notion of literature. As Louis Zukofsky has written of Pound's endeavour:

> - intent upon 'language not petrifying on his hands, preparing for new advances along the lines of true metaphor, that is, interpretative metaphor, or image, as opposed to the ornamental.' 'Artists are the antennae of the race,' words to him are principals of a line of action, a store, a purpose, a retaining of speech and manner, a constant reinterpreting of processes becoming in himself one continuous process, essentially simplification.
>
> He has treated the arts as a science so that their morality and immorality become a matter of accuracy and inaccuracy. [29]

Although I have mentioned previously the importance that accuracy in the use of language had for Pound, and the Confucian doctrine of *zheng ming* 正名 has also been introduced in Chapter 4 of this study, it will be necessary to expand on this topic here and to provide some historical background that may qualify the extent to which the doctrine itself may be considered a genuine Confucian philosophical principle.

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[28] (Pound E. , Axiomata, 1921, pp. 125-26) and (Pound E. , Ezra Pound's Poetry and Prose, 1991, pp. 134-35) Therefore, as early as 1921, Pound appears to have adopted a personal credo that has much to do with an open understanding of reality and, more generally and in what respects social behaviour, with Eastern traditional master-disciple relationships. His acknowledging of the existence of an "intimate essence" and a "human consciousness" (dualistic as they may appear) does not however prevent him from considering, even in this early example of his 'philosophy', the simultaneous and operable existence of an 'order of experience' that emerges from the combination of individual means of perception, communication, and the generation-to-generation transmission by way of 'aesthetically enlightened education'.

[29] (Zukofsky, 1972 (first published in 1967), p. 102)

The characters *zheng ming* 正名 are found only once in the *Analects* and therefore do not stand the test of quantitative comparison with terms such as *li* 禮 or *ren* 仁 that have achieved a similar standing within Confucian literature and are often repeated therein.

As John Makeham has shown, [30] signalling an 'excessive broadening of what Confucius meant by *zheng ming*', the scarcity of direct or indirect references to this term within the Confucian classics remains bewildering in the light of the commentary such doctrine has engendered from students of Confucianism. Makeham points out however, that although we might not call *zheng ming* a doctrine about language – a conception which Pound and most Western sinologists have embraced – there exist sufficient textual examples in the Classics denoting a Confucian preoccupation about the 'ordering of names' and its prominence as a necessary government policy to substantiate, within the evolving forms of Confucianism in early China, a legitimate need for linguistic precision. In fact, Makeham relegates the concerns expressed by the term *zheng ming* to the area of what he calls "rank/titles/stations" and gives ample historical illustration of the events which gave way to its only occurrence in the *Analects*. Makeham goes on to trace the development of the notion and offers three possible reasons for its 'application to a broad range of entities'. Of these reasons, the one that should be fully acknowledged and that has qualified not only Pound's but the whole of Western Sinology up to this day, is that which gives credit to the wealth of philosophical debate while eliciting a tendency towards abstraction and re-interpretation characteristic of philosophical endeavours in ancient China. Makeham writes:

> The sophisticated philosophical developments of the third century B.C. where *ming* [名] was abstracted and contrasted with *shi* [事], "actuality," gradually resulted in *ming* developing a very broad semantic field. Moreover, the arguments posed by skeptical Daoist and School of Names polemicists which challenged both traditional and common sense notions about the relationship between language and reality, as well as the difficulties of orthographic and lexical standardization that confronted the centralized governments of the Qin and Han empires, meant that the term *ming* and its inherent connotations came to be

[30] (Makeham, Rectifying Confucius' Zheng Ming, 1988) and (Makeham, Names, Actualities, and the Emergence of Essentialist Theories of Naming in Classical Chinese Thought, 1991)

> associated with a far broader spectrum of problems and issues than had been the case in Confucius' time.[31]

Within this extremely active period (500 B.C. to 150 B.C.) of philosophical debate in China, Makeham has also identified "the emergence of essentialist theories of naming". We will use Makeham's arguments and distinctions to further clarify the difference between Emersonian thought and Poundian thought and thus open the debate to other sources of philosophical influence in the life and work of the modern American poet.

Makeham distinguishes two strands of thought within the essentialist theories of naming developed by the late third century B.C. in China. On the one hand, he notes the work by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 in the second century B.C. and qualifies its essentialism by expounding on his theory of naming.

> Each entity, upon its creation, has certain identifiable characteristics which are an expression of that entity's unique actuality. The subsequent image a sage forms of these characteristics provides the basis for naming that entity. Thus the notion that things carry their own name should not be construed too literally. What it means rather is that each entity is sufficiently unique to be able to be given a name that truly represents the qualities of that entity. Ultimately, however, it is Heaven which determines what that name will be: '*Each affair accords with its name and each name accords with Heaven'.* [32]

This stance is very close to the Emersonian conception of language as seen above. It differs from Pound's however, in that it finds the ultimate cause for the act of naming in a privileged metaphysical (*tian yi* 天意 or Heaven's will) image and not in the play and interaction of natural phenomena.

Makeham's second strand in ancient essentialist theories of naming is headed by the *Guanzi* 管子. This text has traditionally been included together with other texts of *Huang Lao* 黃老 [33]

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[31] (Makeham, Rectifying Confucius' Zheng Ming, 1988, p. 16)

[32] (Makeham, Names, Actualities, and the Emergence of Essentialist Theories of Naming in Classical Chinese Thought, 1991, p. 353) Dong Zhongshu's *Chun Qiu Fan Lu Yi Zheng*, 10. 4a. It is also interesting to note that even in the theocratic conception of the Judeo-Christian creation of the world, the task of naming as expressed in the book of Genesis (1st book of the Bible), remains the responsibility of humans: “19 Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.”

[33] The following introductory note by R. P. Peerenboom will clarify the philosophical origins of this ancient Chinese school of thought. “Prior to the Mawangdui [馬王堆 Han Tomb number 3] discovery [December 1973], sinologists were more confused than clear about the school of thought known as Huang-Lao. In the absence of extant texts, knowledge of the school, gleaned from a

provenance though there has been much debate about their relative degree of closeness after the 1973 discoveries of the only extant texts of the Huang Lao school in Hunan 湖南 province. It is in the *Guanzi* that Pound's understanding of the act of naming and the natural and social relations identified through the use of language find their best ancient model. Makeham writes:

> In *Guan zi*, that which makes a name appropriate to a particular entity is the bond it has with that entity's actuality. There is no notion of names being born of actualities; rather names and actualities are like two sides of the same coin with neither having ontological precedence over the other. [34]

Confucian philosophy and Pound's tradition

The same might be said of early Confucianism and of the conclusions at which Pound arrived through his translations of the Confucian classics. The philosophical origins of the *Guanzi* bring us close to Daoism, yet their decidedly political slant may be seen to complement and, many a time, gather support from Confucian principles. [35] This is what has been labelled by sinologists as syncretic philosophy. Such philosophical activity not only provides us with an idea about the malleability of interpretations of early Chinese thought but suggests a genuine point of origin where common preoccupations might have given birth to alternate yet highly compatible ways of dealing with the world.

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handful of citations in historical records and other classical works, was fragmented and contradictory. One knew that Huang (黃) refers to Huang Di, the mythical Yellow Emperor; the Lao (老) to Lao Zi, the alleged founder of Daoism. One knew that Huang-Lao doctrines dominated both the worlds of politics and thought in the early Han ... With the discovery of the Mawangdui Silk Manuscripts of Huang-Lao, the world of Sinology has gained one of the key pieces to the classical puzzle ... Contrary to the picture painted in the late Han, Huang-Lao thought is first and foremost a sophisticated political philosophy that, on a most general level, represents a synbook of classical Daoism and Legalism." (Peerenboom, 1993, pp. 1-2)

34 (Makeham, Names, Actualities, and the Emergence of Essentialist Theories of Naming in Classical Chinese Thought, 1991, p. 353)

35 I quote here from the Introduction to the translation of the Guanzi by W. Allyn Rickett: "The Guanzi 管子{Book of Master Guan}, which bears the name of a famous seventh-century B.C. minister of the state of Qi 齊, Guan Zhong 管仲 (d. 645 B.C.), has been described by Gustav Haloun as an 'amorphous and vast repository of ancient literature.' ... the Guanzi also contains a great deal of other material, including military theory, sociological information, as well as a particularly rich store of early historical romance literature and Daoist, Naturalist, and Huang Lao 黃老 writings. The political writings are usually described as Legalist, but 'Realist' might be a better description. For the most part they tend to present a point of view much closer to that of the realistic Confucian, Xunzi 荀子(c. 298-238 B.C.), than either the highly idealistic Confucianism of Mencius 孟子(371-298 B.C.) or the Draconian Legalism advocated by Shang Yang 商鞅 (fl. 359-338 B.C.) and his followers and supposedly implemented in the state of Qin 秦, especially under the First Emperor. In (Guan, 1985, p. 3) Xunzi was also one of the few early Chinese philosophers to directly treat the problem of naming in a chapter appropriately called 'Zheng Ming'. Within that chapter, however, there exist no references to Confucius' own use of the term.

Both Confucianism and Daoism, in the process of their development as ethical systems, have put forward radical philosophical lines, yet both remain at their root, the expression of a desire for harmonious coexistence. When the Confucian does not find favour at court, he retires and leads what might amount to a Daoist way of life, awaiting the right moment to take action.

More essentially, both Confucianism and Daoism are concerned with human activity, with the interpretation and use of time as the arbiter between one's goal and one's movements towards such a goal. While the Confucian follows the rules of propriety to effect harmony within a ritualised order of existence, as it were, setting a clock to his day – a ritual dependent on a hierarchy of personal relationships established with the family, the state, and the members of society, the Daoist develops an awareness of 'right timing' (something which must perforce take into consideration the activities of others) within the context of his/her daily actions.

Therefore, although interpretations, commentaries, and discussions have brought the basic differences between these two philosophies to weigh heavily on the historical consciousness of the Chinese through political and intellectual strife, legitimate approximations may be drawn between the two sets of values without impinging on what either Laozi or Confucius (the figures thought to be at the origin of these deliberations) left behind for our investigation.

Neither Laozi can, strictly speaking, be called a Daoist, nor can Confucius be called a Confucian.

The first wrote about the immateriality of the *dao* 道(way) with the aim to sharpen human sensibility, a virtue that needs refining to facilitate the act of ‘riding the wave’ of existential change and the perennial flux inherent to the natural processes of increase and decay. [36]

[36] Another early Han 漢朝 dynasty syncretic text, the Wenzi 文子 - one that is of more exalted Daoist provenance - draws on various philosophical schools and attributes Laozi (the Master answering questions in the text) with sayings which evidence many Confucian resonances. In Chapter 74 Wenzi asks about Virtue; Laozi replies: "Develop it, nurture it, foster it, mature it. Universal benefit without discrimination is one with heaven and earth; this is called virtue." In (Lao, 1991, p. 65)

The second established judgments on specific situations (political and otherwise) which were meant to guide individual interlocutors or to suggest a way of action that, with due understanding, might be seen to embody virtuous (or harmonious) human activity. [37]

Both are philosophies of harmonisation as against philosophies of revolution, both require a great amount of discipline if the candidate wishes to understand and live out such principles as *dao ke dao fei chang dao* 道可道，非常道 “the dao that can be told is not the eternal Dao” (Lao-zi's *Dao De Jing* 道德經 or 德道經) or *da xue zhi dao zai ming ming de* 大學之道，在明明德 “What the Great Learning teaches, is to illustrate illustrious virtue” (Confucius' *DaXue* 大學).

Furthermore, the two philosophies are set on the moving platform of 'an existential process' that remains the only acknowledgeable and trustworthy basis for human experience. In the case of Daoism, the process is assumed (or experienced individually) and examples of its workings are drawn mainly from comparisons and allusions to the natural world or from a focus on ‘Zen-like’ contradictory facets of a single reality being observed. In Confucianism, the process is that of a continual striving towards perfect knowledge where examples are furnished by the results, successful or failed, provided by applied human behaviour.

This implies that, in both cases, the point of understanding or recognition of reality appears to be fixed on the stability that the harmonising action or experience itself offers and not only on the claims that reason might have over a certain perceived reality.

Both Confucianism and Daoism remain philosophies that encourage meditation and mediation, that recognise the roles of reflection and action as basic principles of human activity. Finally, both are philosophies which cross the barrier of pure analytic thought and endeavour to return

[37] It will be interesting to note another foundational representative of Daoism, Zhuanzi, and his comments about Confucius and those who, like Confucius, were, occasionally, given societal respect and rank by rulers and the political establishment of their time. In the (Qiu Shui) 秋水 - The Floods of Autumn, the Spirit Lord of the Northern Sea (Beihai Ruo 北海若), answers the Earl of He’s (HeBo 河伯) question about self-importance and knowledge after he (HeBo) has realised the limitations of his own understanding: “Men occupy all the nine provinces; but of all whose life is maintained by grain-food, wherever boats and carriages reach, men form only one portion. Thus compared with the myriads of things, they are not equal to a single fine hair on the body of a horse. Within this range are comprehended all (the territories) which the five Dis received in succession from one another; all which the royal founders of the three dynasties contended for; all which excited the anxiety of Benevolent men; and all which men in office have toiled for. Bo-yi was accounted famous for declining (to share in its government), and Zhongni [Confucius] was accounted great because of the lessons which he addressed to it. They acted as they did, making much of themselves - therein like you who a little time ago did so of yourself because of your (volume of) water!’” (Zhuangzi)

the discoveries made in meditation to a holistic conception of an organismic universe. They are thus totalitarian in Pound's sense of the word. [38]

As Julia Ching has said:

> "We may call these [Chinese philosophical traditions] the 'religions of harmony' because of the known Chinese effort in directing attention to harmony between the human and the cosmic as well as harmony within society and within the self." [39]

And it is in this context that the regulation, ordering or rectification of names (and language) may be seen to make its greatest claim to validity. For although Pound blames European modernity for the loss of an understanding or appreciation of the contemplative life – "The Occident regards the contemplative as a do-nothing" – he does not contrive to make the discourse that benefits from an act of contemplation a purely descriptive mechanism for observation, but instead, a regulator of human activity that, in his view, has an edge over Western formulations of ethical propositions. His attitude in this respect finds no clearer representation than that offered in the article 'On the Degrees of Honesty in Various Occidental Religions' published in *Aryan Path* in October 1939. There, Pound concludes his comparative study of religions by stating his considered position (not his belief) [40] on the standing of Confucianism *vis-à-vis* Christianity.

> In praise of the Christian religion, despite its manifest incompetence to maintain decency or even any strong tendency toward economic justice in any Occidental country, I can at least say this. In favourable circumstances Christianity or several of its ideals could and should conduce to a deeper understanding of the cult of the Chinese literati than is prevalent among half-educated Chinese. Both Confucianism and Christianity propose a state of sincerity which is almost unattainable, but the Christian proposals are mixed with all sorts of disorder, whereas a Confucian progress offers chance for a steady rise, and

[38] See Chapter 5 'Musical Rehearsals and Confucian Harmony'.

[39] (Ching, 1993, p. 4)

[40] In 1921 he had written: "Belief is a cramp, a paralysis, an atrophy of the mind in certain positions." However unavoidable the fact that, as Kurt Hübner has said, belief is essential to humans, Pound's distinction is acceptable if we choose to delimit the scope of the term "belief" to encompass religion alone. In fact, if we extricate ourselves from the preponderant process imposed by institutionalised religion upon humans of all beliefs and cultures, it will be seen that many of the figures at the origins of such cults evidenced behaviours that drew them away from and were in fact opposed to the stultification of belief through organised religion.

> defects either in conduct or in theory are in plain violation of its simple and central doctrine. [41]

What Pound signals as the superiority of Confucian doctrine over Christianity is of a textual nature. That is, Pound believes that allowing for a compatibility of doctrinal tenets between the two teachings, [42] the classics of the Confucian lore remain ordered and explicit and are of greater help to a person inclined to ethical development than are Christian texts. This is, in fact, a strong argument against the Christian textual tradition; an argument supported by growing Western interest in Eastern religions and other less known cosmological systems.

Confucianism formulates the conceptual and practical approaches to spiritual development by constantly referring to examples of everyday life within its writings. Simultaneously, it is firmly set within the master/disciple paradigm and offers innumerable sources of didactic, dialogic material that directly addresses problems of human co-existence, political strategy, ethical principles, and justice. It utilises rational and psychological techniques to facilitate the student's understanding and practice of its ethical and doctrinal content.

Although Christianity also offers within the Bible large numbers of examples of ethical and righteous behaviour, the emphasis remains largely on factual accounts of events without, for the most part, direct reference to methods or to a step-by-step order of progression towards its ultimate ethical goal (the use of parables by Jesus in the New Testament is proof to this assertion); its emphasis being guided overtly towards the proclamation of faith.

Confucian texts are, by and large, sophisticated systems of psycho-ethical formulations that easily stand philosophical analysis, encourage critical thinking, and remain coherent and unified in the process. We are not claiming that such analysis cannot be carried out on the Bible with similar results, but that an exercise of this sort on Christian scriptures will force us

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41 (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951, pp. 68-9)

42 In the same article Pound asserts: "As I see it, the literate Christian found nothing in Confucius to object to; there was nothing that the most sincere missionary could wish to remove from Confucius' teaching." (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951, p. 67)

to extrapolate from its writings the conceptual and ethical categories that are explicitly shown in Confucian writings. [43]

Therefore, Pound's bias is for a doctrine that conforms to a didactic scheme and from which tangible, behavioural results may be expected.

> The Nordic will, I think, always want to know from the Indian: how far is religion effective? One of the widest gulfs between East and West might be bridged if some sort of survey and mensuration were set up to take this dimension.
>
> From what history I have been able to learn, it appears to me that Confucius has in his dimension a pre-eminence over other founders of ethical systems; while yielding nothing to any of them in other domains. [44]

The element of practicability within a given philosophical text or, at least, the practical predisposition in the philosophers under scrutiny, is what Pound seeks as the most important characteristic in a thinker. Therefore, he follows a tradition which confers pre-eminence to ideas that, because acquired through experience, may then be passed on and communicated effectively. Thinkers and philosophers summoned by Pound adhere to such an essentially practical or utilitarian attitude and are concerned with making available the tools for the preservation and development of civilized activity.

Pound's conception of the word 'tradition' must be understood in an expanded context that accommodates not only trans-cultural phenomena but, more importantly, the markedly aesthetic and utilitarian concerns evidenced in communicating such phenomena. These concerns are deemed utilitarian because they allow and even foster a conscious improvement

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[43] I am not speaking here of the quality of religious cults, nor am I hinting at an inferiority of Christianity from the point of view of theology. In fact, we may argue with Hans-Georg Gadamer that the approach to religiosity provided by Christianity, what he calls "*proclamation*", is indeed challenging and totally opposed in philosophical terms to previous attempts even within the Judaic tradition. Gadamer suggests that the emphasis on religiosity in the Middle East – and consequently in the West – shifted from "Obedience and law" to "message and faith" coterminous with the message of the Old and New testaments, thus bringing into play a freedom of action which appears the most attractive element of the Christian faith. Gadamer writes: “Of course, a promise is something binding, but it is not like the law, which is binding in the sense that everyone has to obey it. The new covenant is not simply the contractual faithfulness between two parties, either. It is not simply that the one who promises enters into a relationship. It is not simply the one who promises who is free in this sense, for all promising is essentially oriented towards freedom. Not only is it impossible to enforce its fulfilment by legal means, as we could in the case of a contract, it only becomes a promise at all if and when it is accepted.” In (Gadamer H.-G. , Aesthetic and Religious Experience, 1986, p. 148)

[44] (Pound E. , Pound, Ezra. Selected Prose: 1909-1965, 1951, p. 68)

on the condition of humanity (an aesthetic quality in its own right), whether this be spiritual or material.

Therefore, Pound emphasises and favours contributions by thinkers and philosophical movements that, as well as providing their students with striking perceptions on the underlying organic nature of human artistic activity and its inherently aesthetic qualities, must concurrently provide a scheme of didactic continuity within which such perceptions are essentially transferable and learnable.