"BIRDS OF PROTEAN PEDIGREE":

IRRADIATIONS OF IMAGISM IN GERMAN AND SLAVIC

LITERATURES

(Spine title: Irradiations of Imagism in German and Slavic Literatures)

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Abstract

This thesis considers Imagism, the first modernist movement in Anglo-American literature, and the movement's repercussions in German literature and the Slavic literatures. Although critics have suggested that certain literary trends (Russian Acmeism and Imaginism, Spanish Ultraismo, German Expressionism, to name a few) have much in common with Imagism, studies of Imagism rarely cross the borders of the countries, in which the movement was launched. As a result, no solid research on the international impact of Imagism is presently available, and this dissertation aims at filling the lacuna. Focusing on German Expressionism, Russian Imaginism, as well as the Ukrainian Imagist poet Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, and relying on the notions of the Zeitgeist and Weltanschauung developed by Johann Gottfried Herder, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Wilhelm Dilthey, Hans Robert Jauss, and Meyer Abrams, the research examines connections between the movements and determines similarities, as well as differences, in Imagist praxis.

In contrast to previous studies, this dissertation analyzes Imagism not as a writing technique, but as a Weltanschauung. It is determined that the Imagist Weltanschauung consists of three main elements: semi-realism, aesthetic individualism, and provocatism. Each of these elements is described, and it is argued they are necessarily present in all the international reverberations of Imagism. Generally, this project is directed towards

building a new international Imagist paradigm that should help to better understand the intellectual situation at the outset of the twentieth century.

Irradiation: The spread of a nervous impulse

beyond the usual path of conduction

(*The American Heritage Stedman's Medical Dictionary*)

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Note on Translations and Transliteration

All translations cited in German, Russian, and Ukrainian are my own, unless otherwise indicated. When citing Russian and Ukrainian sources, I have used the Library of Congress transliteration system with the diacritical marks omitted. Only when a particular spelling of a Russian or Ukrainian proper name is widely known, that spelling is used (e.g., Turgenev, Moscow).

Abbreviations

DI   *Des Imagistes: An Anthology.* New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1914.

GB   Pound, Ezra. *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir.* New York: New Directions, 1970.

PI   *Poety-imazhinisty.* Ed. E. Shneiderman. Sankt Peterburg: Peterburgskii pisatel',

    1997.

PSS   Esenin, Sergei Aleksandrovich. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh.* Ed. I.

    Prokushev. Moskow: "Nauka"-"Golos," 1995. 7 vols.

T   Antonych, Bohdan-Ihor. *Tvory.* Kyiv: Dnipro, 1998.

Introduction

Imagism as an International Literary Phenomenon

> Good poetry is always the same.
>
> (Ezra Pound, "Webster Ford")
>
> Many labels are sometimes created
>
> for one and the same movement.
>
> (Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, "Crisis in Contemporary Literature")

From the first days of its coinage almost a century ago, the term "Imagism" has firmly and relatively easily entered mainstream literary critical discourse. Until now, however, the word has neither acquired precise meaning, nor secured a significant place for itself in world literature history. In contemporary scholarly jargon, the term "Imagism" is devoid of any stable denotations, vacillating between different, at times contradictory, referents. In fact, even in spelling, there is no consistency, with variants ranging from "imagisme" and "Imagisme" to "imagism" and "Imagism."

The commonly accepted definition of Imagism as "a school of poetry which flourished in England and America between 1912 and 1914 and emphasized the virtues of clarity, compression, and precision" (*The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* 574) does not reflect the complexity of the movement in a sufficient degree to be considered all-embracing. Debates around the movement's history and principles, which were already underway in the early articles of the Chicago-based periodical *Poetry: A*

Magazine of Verse, have not only not led to any clarification, but, instead, further multiplied the existing confusion. As a result, although Imagism attracted much scholarly and public attention, the questions related to the origins of the movement, its philosophy, poetics, and practices remain nowadays as difficult to answer as they were a hundred years ago.

This dissertation attempts to elucidate certain controversies pertaining to Imagism and, in the course of the introduction, three main objectives are sought:

1) to evince that from its inception to the present date, Imagism has remained a difficult-to-define literary trend and that, to a certain extent, its intangibility constitutes one of the defining attributes of the movement;

2) to demonstrate that the principles underlying Imagist poetics and practices have not been confined exclusively to the Anglo-American literary realm, but progressively flourished in other national literatures, turning the movement into an international phenomenon;

3) to offer an outline for the entire dissertation, summarize each section, and encapsulate the main arguments for each chapter.

Presently available critical studies of Imagism provide us with a different framework for understanding the school. In the wealth of available literature, however, the general agreement applies only to the history of the movement, while its well-known triad of theoretical premises (although frequently quoted and heatedly discussed) is still, paradoxically, little understood. The movement methodically escapes definition and

already the first readers were puzzled by this fact. Thus, in 1915, one of the *T.P.'s Weekly* subscribers asked the editors:

> Sir: May I beg for a clear definition of the word "Imagisme," as well as information as to whether it be in French, American, or Colonial language? If it were in English, would there be the "-e" at the end? I do not think that Ezra Pound can be an American, as he does not shun the "subjunctive mood." (qtd. in *Imagist Poetry* 13)

Contemporary readers (literary critics included) likewise encounter similar or equally difficult problems, and nowadays practically every serious work on Imagism begins with a caveat that despite the availability of original materials, a concrete definition of the movement cannot be satisfactorily given. Stanley Coffman, for example, overtly declares that "Imagism is not easy to define" (3) and ascribes the difficulties primarily to the very general nature of the Imagist principles. Glenn Hughes notes that "there is no absolute standard by which one may determine whether or not a poet is an imagist" (viii) and, apprehensive of opening up "a limitless field" in case he examines everybody who "happened to write imagistically" (viii), he confines himself to the study of poetic dicta articulated by six poets (Richard Aldington, H.D. John Gould Fletcher, F.S. Flint, D.H. Lawrence, Amy Lowell, and Ezra Pound). Hughes is acutely aware of the subjective nature of his approach, recognizes its limits, but perceives such arbitrariness as a necessary and unavoidable evil. In a way similar to Coffman's, J.B. Harmer also states that "in terms of theory it is difficult to define the Imagist poem" (45) and that "critics

are still undecided about the value of Imagism" (1). While speaking of Imagism, William

Pratt similarly maintains:

> Though it is possible to speak with some justice of an "Imagist form," any history
>
> of the movement makes it clear that this form was never fixed. The whole force
>
> of Imagism was in the direction of variety, irregularity, and individuality [...] and
>
> it continually sought new models to imitate and transform, never settling
>
> permanently on any one of them. (*The Imagist Poem* 24)

In his *John Gould Fletcher and Imagism*, Edmund de Chasca approvingly quotes Mary

Aldis ("As for a definite understanding of the term *Imagism*, God help the man he [sic]

thinks he can explain to another its meaning") and adds: "Imagism is hard to define

because the word was a catchall, used by both friends and enemies of the movement to

mean different things. Today it remains one of the most abused designations in the

critical vocabulary" (141). John Gage's *In the Arresting Eye: The Rhetoric of Imagism*,

which appears to be the most extensive study of Imagist poetics, also begins by noticing

inadequacies among Imagist theories and practices, and he attempts to reconcile those

differences based on what is believed to be Imagism and what is experienced as an

Imagist poem. Although Gage's analysis has brought many new insights, there is still no

complete picture of Imagism as a literary phenomenon.

In 1915, Conrad Aiken, whom Hughes dubs "one of the most impetuous

assailants [of Imagism]" (49), published a "Ballade of Worshippers of the Image," where

he called the Imagist poets "birds of protean pedigree" (qtd. in Hughes 50). "Proteanism"

is indeed a precise characteristic and it proves that sometimes adversaries can very well grasp the essence of things. By comparing the Imagists to the ancient Greek sea deity Proteus, Aiken captured not only their elusive and mutable nature, but also (most likely without intending to do so) pointed out several of their other characteristics. First, like Proteus (whose name means "first" or "primordial"), the Imagists pioneered Modernism in English literature. Second, like Proteus who always avoided telling the truth to anybody, the Imagists preferred to keep silence about their principles. For example, in his article "Imagisme," F.S. Flint noted:

> They [the Imagistes] had a few rules, drawn up for their own satisfaction only, and they had not published them [...] They held also a certain 'Doctrine of the Image,' which they had not committed to writing; they said that it did not concern the public, and would provoke useless discussion. (199)

Third, neither Proteus, nor the Imagistes were original in their corresponding areas – as in the case of the other gods who could also change their form at will, there were many poetic traditions that employed the principles which later became known as part of the Imagist movement. It is interesting to note that even the figure of Proteus (or an equally mutable mythological deity – Mercury) often enters, directly or indirectly, the works of the Imagist circle's authors.[1] Additionally, as a majority of his critics readily recognize, Pound, the founder of the movement, also frequently manifested protean qualities.

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[1] See, for example, Chapter 3 in Joyce's *Ulysses* featuring Proteus or H.D.'s "Hermes of the Ways," where there is a mention of Hermes (Mercury).

Proteanism, therefore, can appropriately (however paradoxical it may sound) be regarded as one of the earmarks of the Imagist doctrine.

Indeed, as it stands, the term "Imagism" does not satisfy a single Aristotelian requirement for a good denotative definition. Irving Copi and Carl Cohen summarize those requirements as follows:

1) A definition should state the essential attributes of the species;

2) A definition must not be circular;

3) A definition must be neither too broad nor too narrow;

4) A definition must not be expressed in ambiguous, obscure, or figurative language;

5) A definition should not be negative where it can be affirmative. (151-155)

The Imagist tenets, in fact, reflected only accidental properties of the movement and the Imagists' "only endeavor [...] to write in accordance with the best tradition, as they found it in the best writers of all time" (Flint, "Imagisme" 198) was a rather ambiguous declaration. Even at the time of its emergence, the chief purpose of Imagism, as well as its innermost essence, was not plainly articulated and it was uncertain, whether Imagism stood for a stylistic school or a critical movement.

In their theoretical discussions, the Imagist poets often resorted to metaphorical language and Pound himself recognized the impossibility of an objective position with regard to Imagism: "If I am to give a psychological or philosophical definition [...], I can only do so autobiographically. The precise statement of such a matter must be based on

one's own experience" (*GB* 85). Strictly speaking, however, the Imagists produced only

a few "precise statements," while the vast majority of their pronouncements remained

rambling and too all-encompassing. Yet, it was the last Aristotelian rule characterizing a

good definition, namely, the avoidance of negative statements, that was abused the most.

The Imagists claimed that "Imagisme is not symbolism" (Pound, *GB* 82) and "Imagisme

is not Impressionism" (Pound, *GB* 83) and even published "A Few Don'ts by an

Imagiste." The movement, therefore, was virtually indefinable from the very beginning.

The confusion about Imagism is increased by the movement's inner

contradictions. Regardless of all its demands for precision, it demonstrated multi-

vectored propensities that significantly contributed to the creation of an atmosphere of

ambiguity. In fact, the Imagists themselves did not agree upon a common basis for what

an Imagist poem should be. If one examines Imagist anthologies, one might be

astonished to discover the contributors' sundry attitudes towards each other and towards

the school they represented.

Even though it was certainly not for the first time in the history of literature that a

wide array of different authors was drawn together under the umbrella of one brand

name, the level of disagreements among the Imagist school members seems to have been

unique. The Imagists not only openly argued with one another, but also frequently

vehemently denied any affiliations to the school. Allen Upward and James Joyce, for

example, were surprised to learn that they belonged to the Imagist movement. In "The

Discarded Imagist," Upward humorously recounts how he accidentally became an

Imagist, trying to follow Chinese examples:

> My soul kissed the soul of immemorial China [...]
>
> I sat to work and wrote little poems [...]
>
> Thereupon Ezra Pound the generous rose up and called me an
>
> Imagist. (I had no idea what he meant.)
>
> And he included me in an anthology of Imagists.
>
> This was a very great honour. (98)

Having read about the Imagist principles in Flint's "The History of Imagism," Upward

agreed with Pound's label and even asked the "unborn literary historian" to consider him

"an imitator of Po Li [sic] and Shakespeare / As well as of Edward Storer and T.E.

Hulme" (98). In a similar way, Joyce also gave his consent for publication "I Hear an

Army"[2] without knowing much of the anthology that Pound was compiling.

Although featured in all the *Some Imagist Poets* anthologies, D.H. Lawrence not

only did not identify himself as an Imagist, but also was not regarded as such by some of

his colleagues.[3] Likewise, both Frank Stuart Flint and John Gould Fletcher, despite their

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[2] The poem was written in 1907, i.e. six years before Pound founded Imagism.

[3] Pound, for example, once noted that "Lawrence was never an Imagist" (*The Letters of Ezra Pound* 212). At the same time, in 1913, he characterized Lawrence's poems in Imagist terms (for him, "the 'Imagisme' of 1912 to '14 set out 'to bring poetry up to the level of prose'" [*GB* 83]): "Mr. Lawrence has attempted realism and attained it. He has brought contemporary verse up to the level of contemporary prose, and that is no mean

appearance in collections of Imagist works, frankly admitted that they had very little

understanding of the principles governing Imagism. Meanwhile, it seems that having

published "The History of Imagism," Flint should have known more than others about

the movement.[4] While Pound circuitously recognized Flint's sciolism, accusing him of

the inability to distinguish Imagism from Impressionism,[5] Ford Madox Ford (Hueffer), a

literatus very closely associated with the Imagists, considered Flint (and H.D.) the only

poets deserving "the rather proud title of Imagist" ("A Jubilee" 46).

Ford's own position with respect to Imagism equally strikes one as ambiguous. In

the beginning, he denied his affiliations with Imagism, but later proclaimed himself the

movement's godfather:

I do not suppose that I have led a movement, though I dare say I have. There

isn't, you know, any knowing in these matters. Supposing that I should say that

---

achievement" (Rev. of *Love Poems and Others* 151). Additionally, regarding some of the
poems from above-mentioned Lawrence's book, Sandra Gilbert notes: "The three short
stanzas on the moon ["Aware," "A Pang of Reminiscence," and "A White Blossom"],
though they may not have been consciously Imagist in intention, are certainly Imagist in
mood" (35). For more on Lawrence's Imagism, see Kim A. Herzinger, *D.H. Lawrence in
His Time: 1908-1915* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP; London: Associated UP, 1982), pp.140-
57.

[4] In fact, Flint later admitted that he had merely signed the article, originally composed
by Pound. For more information, see H. Carpenter 196.

[5] For more information, see Pound's letter to Flint from July 7, 1915, fragments of which
were published in Harmer's *Victory in Limbo: Imagism 1908-1917*, p. 59.

my young friends the Imagistes were children of my teaching, I expect that, with

one accord, they would get up and say that they had never heard of me. The

world is like that. But still, unceasingly, in season and out, for a quarter of a

century I have preached the doctrine that my young friends now inscribe on the

banner of their movement. ("A Jubilee" 46)

Ford pointed out only one "particular" that separated him from the rest of the Imagists –

he was an Imagist in prose while others "dismiss[ed] 'prose' with a sniff" ("A Jubilee"

47). Even though they denied Ford's Imagism, some critics nonetheless did define him

along similar lines: "The Grand-father of the movement is Mr Ford Madox Hueffer. He

is an Impressionist. [...] Mr Hueffer is not an Imagiste, but he had done some pioneer

work for which they [the Imagists] are grateful" (qtd. in Harmer 84).

Amy Lowell, who shortly after her first appearance on the pages of the *Des

Imagistes* assumed leadership over Imagism, did not know much about the movement's

principles (at least according to Aldington and Pound). Thus, Aldington initially

vehemently protested against including her in the first Imagist anthology (ironically

enough, he later became one of her staunchest supporters) while Pound accused her of

misunderstanding the basics and labeled the movement she led "Nagism" or

"Amygism."[6]

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[6] For more on the origins and the nature of conflict between Pound and Lowell, see
Richard Aldington's *Life for Life's Sake: A Book of Reminiscences* (New York: The
Viking P, 1941).

Williams Carlos Williams was skeptical of Imagism; John Cournos was "dragged in [by Pound], as it were, by the heels" (Cournos, *Autobiography* 270); and Skipwith Cannell seems to have never clearly expressed his position with respect to the movement. Critics also often questioned those authors' belonging to Imagism. The only poets whose affiliation with the trend has been virtually never doubted are Aldington, H.D., and Pound. Aldington crossed out from the list of the Imagistes Cournos, Upward, Hueffer, Joyce, and Cannell, but, at the same time, he did not articulate any particular grounds for choosing certain poets over others and did not explain his own vision of the movement. H.D., whom Aldington called "the Imagist," was also not a theorist and she never expressed much interest in Imagism. She did not like being called an Imagist and, in one of her letters to Harriet Monroe, she pointedly asked the editor to cut "out the affectation of 'Imagiste'" (qtd. in Harmer 62). In fact, as a result of her demand, the signature "H.D., 'Imagiste'" appeared in press only once and all her subsequent publications were signed plainly "H.D."

Finally, although numerous, Pound's own postulates regarding Imagism are traditionally viewed as contradictory and confusing, and despite the fact that essentially all the Imagist tenets are based on his ideas, those ideas are only partially accepted. While agreeing with all of Pound's early statements on the movement, critics generally tend to ignore his later asseverations. Harmer's cursory remark that "for Pound words meant what he wanted them to mean" (62) overall reflects a common critical attitude but, at the same time, does little justice to the poet. Critics, in effect, had much involvement

in constructing the general perception of the movement. Having followed only certain ideas and theoretical threads within the multidimensional vibrations of the school, literary scholars frequently provide their own understanding of Imagist poetics and practice, without taking into account the intrinsic complexity of the phenomenon.[7]

A brief overview of the existing approaches to Imagism will be useful for further discussion. At different times, critics meant various things under the term "Imagism": the School of Image, Hellenism, Pound's Imagisme, vers libre, Amy Lowell's Imagism or "Amygism," etc. In discussing Imagism, one can distinguish two definitions – historical and critical (or stylistic). Generally, the historical definition does not cause much disagreement; according to this definition, Imagism is characterized as an umbrella term covering several poetic groups succeeding one another. These groups are the following: 1) the School of Images; 2) Imagisme; 3) Imagism. Although the groups were etymologically and genetically connected, they manifested different aspirations, had their own raison d'être, and used dissimilar methods.

Given that the histories of each of the constituent Imagist schools are readily available, it will be enough to recapitulate only certain moments. Of the first school, which "may or may not have existed" (Pound, *Poems and Translations* 1273) very little is known. The alleged leader of the group was the philosopher and poet Thomas Ernest Hulme and, in theory, his writings, incorporating many of Bergson's and Dilthey's ideas,

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[7] Jacob Isaacs is absolutely right when he indicates that the history of Imagism "has been misrepresented by interested parties" (29).

serve as a basis for our familiarity with the school's hypothetical program. Practically, however, it is rather difficult to distill either Bergsonian or Diltheyan speculations from the poetry of the Imagists.

According to Flint's "The History of Imagism," the School of Images (or "the Secession Club," as Hulme referred to it) appeared on March 25, 1909 and existed until the winter of 1910. Unfortunately, the scarcity of the materials makes it impossible to reconstruct the discussions held by the members of this group. Retrospectively, the participants could not recall well the substance of their conversations. Thus, in 1915 (i.e. only five had years passed since the School of Image had ceased to exist), Pound noted: "My own impression of 1909 is that there was very little agreement. I seem to remember Hulme vainly trying to convince people of something" (qtd. in Harmer 34). In 1921, in a letter to Flint, he somewhat specified that "something": "Hulme's talk, of which I remember d-d little, save he talked about Image" (qtd. in Harmer 35). Nowadays, therefore, only tentative conjectures can be made with regard to the activities of Hulme's group.

In discussing Hulme's ideas and their relevance to Imagist theories, Stanley Coffman notes:

> While he [Hulme] cannot be considered a prominent critic and theorist of the years 1908-17, neither can he be dismissed as a thinker of no significance for the artists of the period; and although his poetic theory had only a limited circulation, it is hardly possible that at least two of the Imagists, Flint and Pound, should have

failed to become familiar with it. Imagism could have had its source in Hulme.

(51)

Indeed, the term "image," which became part of the school's name, could have been launched by Hulme, who based his understanding of the concept on Bergson's philosophy. In Hulme's view, the images stood for striking analogies that allowed the poet to express an otherwise inexpressible reality. "Never, never a simple statement, – he insisted, – it has no effect. Always must have analogies, which make another world through-the-glass effect, which is what I want" (285-286). His call for visual effects ("Each word must be an image seen, not a counter" [274]) draws him equally close to the later Imagists. Yet, despite exhorting these ideas (as well as others, which were equally original and important for further poetic development), Hulme's entire school would have disappeared "without the world being much the wiser" (Pound, *Letters of Ezra Pound* 220), had not Pound brought it back to the attention of the general public in his *Ripostes*.

The second Imagist group, organized by Pound in August of 1912, included a few former members of the School of Images as well as several new poets, the most prominent of whom were Aldington and H.D. The "little gang" (as Pound dubbed it on one occasion) met regularly at the Kensington home of Brigit Patmore and entered the history of literature under the name "the Imagistes." Unlike its precursor, the new conglomerate did not merely surreptitiously discuss various poetic matters, but rather vigorously pushed their own agenda, propagandizing their poetics in a number of

periodicals (chiefly, in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* issued in Chicago and the London-based *The Egoist: An Individualist Review*). Additionally, the Imagistes published an anthology of their poetry *Des Imagistes*, a volume that circulated equally in Europe and North America.[8]

At first, Pound defined the Imagistes as "a group of ardent Hellenists who [were] pursuing interesting experiments in vers libre, trying to attain in English certain subtleties of cadence of the kind which Mallarmé and his followers [had] studied in French" ("Notes and Announcements" 65). However, after the publication of the anthology, "Hellenism" was replaced with absolute freedom in the choice of subject matter; the Imagiste principles were partially clarified; and the Imagiste circle was formally settled. Although the tenets of the previously entirely obscure movement became known, there still remained the mysterious "Doctrine of Image," which was "not committed to writing [and was not supposed to] concern the public" (Flint, "Imagisme" 199), and thus the sense of intrigue was preserved. The number of Imagiste poets increased from two to twelve, as several new names were added to the Imagistes known so far. The latter were Richard Aldington and H.D. while the new ones were Ezra Pound, F. S. [Frank Stuart] Flint, James Joyce, William Carlos Williams, Ford Madox Hueffer, Allen Upward, Amy Lowell, Skipwith Cannell, and John Cournos. It was also during the

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[8] Over a time span of less than half a year, *Des Imagistes: An Anthology* appeared thrice: at first as an issue of *The Glebe* in New York (*The Glebe* 1.5 [February 1914]: 1-63), then as book versions printed by A. & C. Boni (New York) and by the Poetry Bookshop (London) and dated by March 2, 1914 and April 1914 respectively.

Imagiste stage in the development of the trend that the majority of the classic Imagist poems appeared.

However, soon after the *Des Imagistes* was published, the Imagiste movement underwent substantial perturbations, which resulted in a "schism" and changes in leadership positions. Lowell took Pound's place; the word "Imagisme" lost its terminal "e," being Anglicized into Imagism; two poets (John Gould Fletcher and D.H. Lawrence) and several more principles were added; and the movement (whose main achievement became the publication of three anthologies of *Some Imagist Poets*) ultimately turned into a mere publishing vehicle. Meanwhile, dethroned, bereft of his invention, and acrimoniously dissatisfied with such a turn of events, Pound mockingly baptized Lowell's Imagism "Amygism" and attempted to preserve the principles, which he had once articulated, in a new movement – Vorticism. Thus, Imagisme begot twins: Imagism ("Amygism") and Vorticism.

Because Lowell's venture inherited the brand name (and recruited most of the poets who had earlier appeared in the first Imagist anthology), literary scholars, in their disquisitions of Imagism as a whole, tend to follow that very line of inheritance under Lowell. Seen under such an angle, Imagism is presented as a sequence of three schools, namely, the School of Images, Imagisme, and Imagism. In this scheme, Vorticism, which became the subject of Pound's jurisdiction, is not generally treated as a blood relative of Imagisme. Critics, therefore, readily give primacy to Lowell and often portray Pound as almost a traitor of the movement. To an extent, Coffman describes the common feeling:

Almost immediately after the publication of *Des Imagistes* in 1914, Pound's

interest in the Imagist poets began to waver and he turned his energy to another

movement, this time not in poetry but in painting [...] Pound threw his energy

and organizational abilities into the movement, and Vorticism assumed a

responsibility for poetry as well as for the other arts. (18-19)

Although Coffman further rightly adds that "Pound did not completely lose his interest

in Imagism [...] Imagism lost interest in him" (20-21), the idea that it was Pound who

deflected from the "original" course of Imagism still prevails.

Meanwhile, the connections between Vorticism and Imagisme are in fact greater

than they might appear on first glance. Pound clearly regarded Vorticism as an extension

of the Imagiste school.[9] Thus, he prominently paralleled the terms "image" and "vortex":

The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must

perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas

are constantly rushing. In decency one can only call it a VORTEX. And from this

necessity came the name "vorticism." (*GB* 92)

Pound's literary Vorticist canon included poems that had previously been dubbed

Imagist (for example, he considered H.D.'s "Oread," originally published in *Some*

Imagist Poets 1915, an exemplary Vorticist poem). In an interview, Pound additionally

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[9] Apropos to this, Fletcher concurred: "What the vorticist principles implied, I never

completely discovered. According to Pound, they were an extension of the old principle

of imagism developed to embrace all the arts" (*The Autobiography of John Gould*

Fletcher 137).

emphasized the connection between Imagism and Vorticism by proclaiming: "We are 'Vorticists,' and in poetry we are 'Imagists'" (Vengerova, "Appendix" 143), and he merely changed the title of his article on Imagism in order to make it Vorticist. With regard to the latter, an interesting remark can be found in Pound's letter to Harriet Monroe: "My article on Imagisme has been stoked into the Fortnightly Review, under an altered title. Vorticism being the generic term now used on all branches of the new art, sculpture, painting, poetry" (qtd. in Harmer 178).

In a way, Pound made strenuous attempts to convince his audience in the common Imagiste-Vorticist lineage, but nobody seemed to have been interested. Critics continued to construct a public understanding for the movements, and they used Pound's new ideas only as long as these notions did not contradict their own visions of the literary schools. Irritated by critical comments, Pound once observed:

> When I see in the Press statements to the effect that Gaudier was not a vorticist, or that I am not a vorticist, I am compelled to think that the writers of such statements must have read into the term "vorticism" some meaning which is not warranted by our meanings and our definitions. (*GB* 25)

This remark can be equally applied to his status as an Imagist. In other words, Pound felt that the term was misused and misunderstood and he steadfastly vied for the Imagiste legacy. His explanations, however, have not prevented the movement that he launched from becoming firmly attached to Lowell's literary enterprise.

The present dissertation emanates from the premises that Pound's view of Imagism should constitute an important part of Imagist studies and his ideas concerning the movement's development should not be only partially accepted, as it is traditionally done, but in their entirety. In this case, not only the history of the movement takes on a different shape, but also its theory undergoes great changes. Indeed, if one considers the Poundian tradition, the history of Imagism should look as a succession of three literary groups – the School of Images, Imagisme, and Vorticism, where each subsequent group (while remaining essentially the same) empowers itself with each stage and represents a concretization of its corresponding precursor. It is not so much in "Amygism," but in Vorticism that the main tendencies of the School of Images and Imagisme received their further development. In effect, just as "English Modernism [that was] divided between Fordian and Hulmian principles" (Levenson 104), Anglo-American Imagism similarly vacillated between Poundian revolutionary Imagisme/Vorticism and Lowell's more moderate "Amygism." While Lowell transformed Imagisme into a superficial "tempered movement" (to use the term of Kirsten Painter), Vorticism continued attempts to radically alter the predominant poetics. Vorticism was an extension of the Imagiste principles, and it was created in order to embrace all the arts.

Since the term "image" can successfully be applied only to poetry, as well as the visual and plastic arts (but not to music, for example), a new more inclusive appellation had to be coined and "vortex" became such an appellation. Vortex truly evolved into the primary pigment, able to satisfy all the arts. Unlike the Imagiste *image*, the Vorticist

vortex strove not only for recognition and publicity, but it also appealed for universality. And Imagisme/Vorticism truly succeeded in transcending disciplinary and, as further analysis will demonstrate, national borders, and ultimately became one of the most influential intellectual undertakings of the twentieth century.

In terms of its theoretical implications, Imagism is as much a perplexing phenomenon as it is in terms of its history. According to Edmund de Chasca, the term "Imagism" may denote at least three things – a critical school, "hard" poetry, or the Doctrine of Image. Thus, because of its vociferous opposition to earlier Romantic tradition and its insistence on style deprived of any decorative elements typical of Victorian culture, Imagism is certainly a critical school. The Imagist aspiration to the status of "hard poetry" is also largely stipulated by the movement's anti-Romantic ideological position. Pound articulated that aspiration in the following manner:

> Poetry must be as well written as prose. Its language must be a fine language, departing in no way from speech save by a heightened intensity (i.e. simplicity). There must be no book words, no periphrases, no inversions. It must be as simple as De Maupassant's best prose, and as hard as Stendhal's. There must be no interjections. No words flying off to nothing. [...] Objectivity and again objectivity, and expression: no hindside-beforeness, no straddled adjectives (as "added mosses dank"), no Tennysonianness of speech; nothing – nothing that you couldn't, in some circumstance, in the stress of some emotion, actually say. (*The Letters of Ezra Pound* 48-49)

Later on, similar principles were frequently repeated by other Imagists, so that hardness

or simplicity became one of the hallmarks of the movement. While the first two

connotations, pertaining to the understanding of Imagism as a critical school or "hard

poetry," are relatively straightforward and easily comprehensible, the Doctrine of Image

has always remained the most enigmatic and elusive concept. Scholars have expressed a

range of opinions, often contradictory ones, as to what the Imagist image stands for.[10]

As its name suggests, Imagism deals with the image, "one of the most common –

and ambiguous – terms in modern literary criticism" (Frazer 149). Indeed the term

"image" was and remains a highly controversial designation. Given that "the ideas of

sight are more distinct and lively than those of other senses" (Kames 325), the emphasis

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[10] Biographers of Hilda Doolitle, for example, tend to associate the Doctrine of Image
exclusively with the peculiarities of her poetry. Thus, Janice Robinson asserts: "The
secret 'doctrine of the image' refers to the hidden dimension of H.D.'s poems. Such
'professional' acts on behalf of Imagism as Pound's promotion of this doctrine were, it is
true, building interest in the movement in the poetic world, but they were also secretly
binding H.D. to Pound, professionally and physically, for only he and H.D. knew what
he meant. The other members of the Imagist circle perceived the doctrine as merely one
more piece of meaningless propaganda designated by Pound to interest readers in the
new poetry and the movement. To H.D., however, the doctrine was clearly a reference to
the hidden personal dimension of the poems" (62). In their studies, Susan Friedman and
L.S. Dembo expressed a similar opinion. See Susan Stanford Friedman, *Penelope's Web:
Gender, Modernity, H.D.'s Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) and L.S. Dembo,
"H.D. *Imagiste* and Her Octopus Intelligence," in *H.D.: Woman and Poet*. Ed. Michael
King (Orono: U of Maine P, 1986).

on the visual came naturally. The early Romantic poets considered the image and the metaphor as synonyms and often used the words interchangeably. Later Romantics and Symbolists juxtaposed the two terms, and symbol became a synonym for image. Enhancing Freudian ideas of the unconscious, Herbert Read interpreted images as the "symbols given by the unconsciousness," and metaphors as the "additions of the conscious mind" (107). Both the Romantic and Symbolist movements favored synaesthetic imagery, i.e., that which appeals to different senses simultaneously. As a result, their poetry "dissolved the description of objects into description of the qualities of objects, and qualities more affective than perceptual" (Ward 452).

In contrast to previous tradition, the Imagists differentiated between symbol and image, aiming at the substitution of Symbolist synesthesia with precise non-mixed images. Apart from discarding sensory amalgamation, the Imagists attempted to replace the transcendent and awe-inspiring symbol with the mundane and plain-spoken image. Furthermore, unlike the Symbolists who celebrated music, the Imagist poets manifestly preferred the plastic arts. With regard to this, Pound comments:

> The "age demanded" chiefly a mould in plaster,
>
> Made with no loss of time,
>
> A prose kinema, not, not assuredly, alabaster
>
> Or the "sculpture" of rhyme.
>
> (*Poems and Translations* 550)

Imagistic theoretical principles and methods of writing appealed to many literati, and it is no wonder that those principles found their way into different countries.

Conrad Aiken, whose accurate observation on Imagist proteanism was quoted earlier, makes one more interesting remark in one of his articles: "The Imagist movement was from the outset international in character, and remained so" (216). Whether by "international" he meant exclusively the USA and Great Britain or he applied the term more broadly, with regard to more nations, it is hard to determine. Notwithstanding, his observation appears to be accurate in both senses. The internationalism of the movement, however, is a rarely examined topic in Imagist studies. As a result of this neglect, Imagism's international impact (or even Imagism's impact on English literature) remains completely underestimated. Although Reed Way Dasenbrock appropriately claims that "interesting but also [...] elusive is the unconscious or implicit literary Vorticism [and Imagism]: so much of the twentieth-century literature seems Vorticist [Imagist] without quite realizing" (27), many scholars seem to follow Hughes, who avoided the international aspect, afraid of opening up "a limitless field." The present dissertation aims at bringing that very missing international perspective to the movement thereby filling the lacuna in Imagist studies.

In his "Hugh Sewlyn Mauberly," Pound asserts:

The age demanded an image

Of its accelerated grimace,

Something for the modern age,

Not at any rate, an Attic grace.

(*Poems and Translations* 549)

Indeed, during the fin de siècle years, European and American thinkers often discussed issues similar to those raised by the Imagists, and discourse around images and imagery was particularly popular. In France, for instance, Henri Bergson, Remy de Gourmont, and Jean Philippe wrote extensively on imagery. In Germany, Wilhelm Dilthey, elaborating Husserlian ideas, presented his well-known tractate entitled "The Imagination of the Poet: Elements for a Poetics," while Hans Lietzmann and Paul Wendland discussed the role of imagery in Greco-Roman culture in their *Des Bilderanhungs* (1912). In the United States John Dewey published *Studies in Logical Theory* (1903) where one of the articles was entitled "Image and Idea in Logic." In Eastern Europe the discussion on imagery was inspired by Alexander Potebnia's linguistic theory that introduced the notion of poetic image as "sviazuiushchee mezhdu vneshnei formoi i znacheniem ("the connector between external form [of the word] and [its] meaning"; 310).

Creative writing also actively contributed to the debates over imagery. Richard Le Gallienne and Robert MacKay published *The Worshipper of Image* (1900); Claude Debussy composed *Images* (1905); Rainer Maria Rilke – *Das Buch der Bilder* (1902-1906); Isaac Leib Peretz (whom Imagist Cournos translated into English) wrote a story called "The Image" (1906); Carl Spitteler became known for his *Imago* (1906); Charles Vildrac issued *Images and Mirages* (1908); and Lady Gregory published a play entitled

Image (1910). These authors regarded the image either in terms of psychology or as something ideal and difficult to create, and the notion of image was comparatively frequently presented in the form of a mask or sculpture. To a great extent Imagism as an international movement arose as a result of the above-mentioned philosophical and literary discourse.

As of today, Imagism has de facto become an international movement. René Taupin, for instance, examined the movement's connections with French Symbolism. His book *L'Influence du symbolisme francais sur la poésie américaine (1910-1920)* was favorably perceived by Imagists many of whom acknowledged the accuracy of Taupin's observations. In Germany, Fränze Vortriede noticed that Imagism shared certain principles with French Unanimism, Italian Futurism, and German Expressionism. The Unanimists, whom the Imagist poets knew well, advocated

> die unmittelbare Poesie des direkten Ausdrucks. [...] Ihr Ziel dagegen [war] anders als das imagistische: sie [wollten] nicht impressionistische Beobachtung geben, sondern das Pathos des Daseins und grosse menschliche Konflikte zeigen. (Vortriede 86)

> the immediate poetry of direct expression. [...] Their aspirations, however, differed from those of the Imagists – they did not aim at providing impressionistic observations but wanted to show the pathos of being and enormous human conflicts.

The Unanimists' call for a return to Classicist poetics and their emphasis on clarity and precision also resembled the Imagist dicta.

Although the Imagist authors dubbed Futurism "accelerated Impressionism," they, nevertheless, echoed a number of Futurist postulates. Even a cursory look at Marinetti's later manifesto, published in the September 1913 issue of *Drama and Poetry*, will confirm the associations:

> [Images] constitute the very life-blood of poetry. Poetry must be an uninterrupted sequence of new images... [Poetry should] reproduce telegraphically the analogical basis of life with the same economical rapidity that the telegraph imposes on the superficial narratives of reporters and war correspondents. (322-323)

The title of Marinetti's article, "Wireless Imagination and Words at Liberty," also suggests parallels with the Imagist doctrines.

Theodor Däubler's, Kasimir Edschmid's, and Georg Heym's Expressionist theoretical-critical writings contained many formulas comparable to the Imagist program. In Spanish and Argentinean literatures, it was Ultraismo that resembled Imagism in many ways. Like its English counterpart, this literary trend, whose best known representative was the young Jorge Luis Borges, "demanded condensation, the suppression of ornament, modifiers, all terms of transition; it opposed exhortation and vagueness flourish: it praised impersonality, and regarded poetry as made of metaphors in close, suggestive combinations" (Gass 8). Slovak critic Mykola Neverli observed

Imagist qualities in the poetry of Czech Poetism, and Peter Drews paralleled some views of the Imagists and Polish poets of the Skamander group. Elaine Rusinko compared Russian Acmeism and Anglo-American Imagism, finding a number of similarities. Russian *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia* (Short Literary Encyclopedia) adds Imaginism to the list of the Imagist movements: "V Rossii otdelnye idei imazhizma razdeliali poety-imazhinisty ("In Russia, the Imaginist poets shared the ideas of Imagism"; Gilenson 107).

Traces of Imagism have also been found in the works of individual poets. While reviewing the twentieth-century French literary "beau monde," Pound noted: "M. André Spire is something very like an Imagiste" ("Paris" 27). And in one of his letters to Dorothy Shakespear, he analogously described the Chinese poet Chu Yuan (Qu Yuan) (*Ezra Pound and Dorothy Shakespear* 267). Taupin dubbed Jean de Bosschère "French virtual Imagist" (94) and other French critics made a similar suggestion regarding Pierre Reverdy. A Singaporean scholar Wong Yoon Wah convincingly proved that Chinese modernist author Hu Shi not only studied Imagist manifestos, but also used them as a basis for his own literary program. In Japanese literature, Katue Kitasono, a long-time friend of Pound, "had been familiar with Imagist poetry [,] and its traces can be found [in his poems]" (Pound, *Ezra Pound and Japan* 26). In Spanish and Puerto Rican literatures, Imagist qualities can be found in the poetry of Juan Ramón Jiménez who also personally knew Pound. In Nicaragua, Imagism greatly influenced Ernesto Cardenal's poetry. In Hebrew literature, the works of Gabriel Preil carried Imagistic attributes. Manfred

Durzak noted that the German poet Günther Eich's "Kurzgedichte nehmen Anregungen

des Japanischen Haiku auf, mitunter auch des amerikanischen Imagismus von Pound und

W.C. Williams" ("Short poems are influenced by Japanese haiku as well as the

American Imagistic poems of Pound and W.C. Williams"; 310). Other German scholars

have detected Imagist traits in the poems of Klabund (pseud. Alfred Henschke) and Karl

Krolow. The Danish poet Gustaf Munch Petersen and Fenno-Swedish author Elmer

Diktonius have also been connected to the Imagist tradition. In Canadian literature, the

works of Louis Dudek, Raymond Knister, and William Wrighton Eustace Ross carry the

characteristics of the movement. Explicating the entry "Imagism," an authoritative

Ukrainian *Literaturoznavchyi slovnyk-dovidnyk* (Dictionary of Literary Terms) states: "V

ukraiins'kii literaturi tvorchist' B.-I. Antonycha mala pevni oznaky imazhyzmu" ("In

Ukrainian poetry, the works of B.-I. Antonych possess some qualities of Imagism";

"Imazhyzm" 307). Finally, J.B. Harmer, who wrote one of the most thorough studies of

the movement's history, asserts that some of Boris Pasternak's poems were rooted in the

Imagist tradition.

Although the above-mentioned emanations of Imagism might not have shared all

the features of the original model in their entirety, they do nonetheless have many

elements in common – they are historically intertwined, expertly noted (at least

perfunctory), and immanently endowed with a number of comparable characteristics.

Relations between them might be best described by the theory of family resemblance,

first articulated by Dugalt Steward and then developed by Ludwig Wittgenstein and, to a

certain extent, Alastair Fowler. According to Wittgenstein, who used Steward's idea to explain analogies between different types of games, there is

a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail. [And one] can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than 'family resemblances'; for the various resemblances between members of a family: built features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc., etc., overlap in the same way. (32[e])

The members of the Imagist family appear to have kindred resemblances and, therefore, Wittgenstein's method can be fruitfully applied in the case of transnational Imagism. It is interesting to note that, just like Pound, Wittgenstein invites his reader to make a careful observation of a particular phenomenon, an observation that must precede any theoretical generalizations. "If you look at [different games]," he maintains, "you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look!" (31[e]). Following the philosopher's suggestion, the present investigation often resorts to close readings as a technique that should help us to discern "resemblances between members of [the Imagist] family."

Considering a range of international presence, it certainly comes as a surprise that studies of Imagism so rarely surpass the borders of the countries where the movement was launched. In effect, no solid research on the international impact of Imagism is currently available. Kirsten Painter's recently published *Flint on a Bright Stone: A Revolution of Precision and Restraint in American, Russian, and German Modernism* is

perhaps the most comprehensive exploration of the topic. In her well-written and thought-provoking – although somewhat unhistorical – examination, Painter proceeds from defining Imagism as "Tempered Modernism," i.e. the type of Modernism that underlines "the precise, the subtle, and the subdued" (1). According to Painter, the term "refers to their [the representatives'] tempered, moderate, approach towards imagery, form, and the depiction of reality and the poetic self" (2). In applying this modus operandi the author considers primarily the works of H.D., Williams, Akhmatova, and Rilke, and simultaneously excludes from her analysis the more radical Poundian wing of Imagism. The inclusion of Rilke also seems to be slightly problematic. Whereas Natan Zach, Wolfgang Müller, and Nancy Willard have also indicated Rilke's affinity to Imagism, the German poet stands closer to Symbolism and differs from the Imagists in spirit.

Apart from Painter's book, other reflections of Imagism are only cursorily addressed. Given, however, that the encyclopedic study of the international impact of Imagism would require the combined efforts of many scholars, this dissertation confines itself to a narrower scope – it closely examines the reverberations of the movement in the German and Slavic (Russian and Ukrainian) modernist literary traditions. The study analyzes the fin-de-siècle cultural environment, explores the ramification of the Imagist theoretical ideas in Central and Eastern Europe, and elucidates the personal contacts between Imagist poets. In other words, it considers both "typological analogies" and

"genetic relations," to use the terms of Dionýz Durišin's comparatist theory.[11]

Structurally, the dissertation consists of four chapters and a "Conclusion" section. The first chapter "Towards Defining the Imagist Weltanschauung" argues for a new possible definition of Imagism, that is, Imagism as a specific Weltanschauung. When it crossed geographical and language borders, the movement influenced foreign authors not so much with its stylistic principles (which were, in effect, fairly trite and commonplace), but primarily with its peculiar world-attitude, as well as with its ideological position. In order to determine that position, the present dissertation proposes to differentiate between two modes, the Zeitgeist and the Weltanschauung, and applies these modes to mapping the movement in literary history. Based upon the philosophical ideas of Johann Gottfried Herder, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Wilhelm Dilthey, and Hans Robert Jauss, and defined as "a certain spirit or some general tendency common to

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[11] Elaborating on Victor Zhirmunsky's and Alexander Veselovsky' critical insights, Durišin systematizes comparative literature methodological strategies for study of different types of literary relations. He distinguishes between similarities stipulated by "genetic" (i.e., contact) relations and similarities determined by "typological" (i.e., historically analogous) affinities. According to Durišin, "genetic relations" comprise several types of factually proven contacts ("external" [e.g., response], "internal" ["integral" – reminiscences, filiations, adaptations, inspirations, etc. and "differential" – polemics, parody, satire, etc.], "direct" [e.g., meetings, correspondence, etc.], and "indirect" [e.g., lecture, translation, etc.]), while "typological analogies" may include affinities of social, literary (e.g., genre, style, movement, etc), or psychological order. For more information, see Dionýz Durišin's *Vergleichende Literaturforschung: Versuch eines methodisch-theoretischen Grundrisses* (Berlin: Akademie, 1976).

the entire epoch," the concept of the Zeitgeist helps to detect those common characteristics that bring various artistic phenomena together under the umbrella of one literary epoch (Renaissance, Romanticism, Modernism, etc). In contrast, the term "Weltanschauung" allows one to discern particular characteristics and ideological attitudes displayed by this or that literary movement. Thus, the Zeitgeist of the Modernist epoch might encompass such general characteristics as fragmentation, focus on language, or anti-moral attitudes, while Weltanschauung indicates the differentiae, which separate one Modernist phenomenon from another.

In connection with the Imagist Weltanschauung, the dissertation examines "Documents," one of the most neglected parts of the first Imagist anthology. Carrying little (if any) critical tradition, this part has been the least misinterpreted "by interested parties" and, therefore, still largely preserves the original intentions of the editor. Additionally, in contradistinction to other Imagist verses, the poems of the "Documents" section reflect the Imagist epoch, as well as the Imagists' activities, in the most immediate way.

The close reading of the works that constitute the bulk of the "Documents" (i.e., Ezra Pound's "To Hulme (T.E.) and Fitzgerald," Richard Aldington's "Vates, the Social Reformer," and Ford Madox Hueffer's "Fragments Addressed by Clearchus H. to Aldi") makes it possible to distinguish three main components of the Imagist Weltanschauung. It is concluded that, in its relation to the universe, Imagism manifested an attitude, which might be dubbed "semi-realism"; in its relation to the artist – aesthetic individualism;

and, finally, in its relation to the audience – provocatism. All these attitudes are examined in some detail and they construct the basis for the study of the international repercussions of the movement, which is undertaken in the subsequent chapters.

The second chapter "Expressionism: Imagism German Style" opens with the analysis of the phenomenon of the international Imagism and considers the German reverberations of the movement. Although there are more than a few German poets who might be potentially compared to the Imagists, the dissertation focuses solely upon connections between Imagism and Expressionism, i.e., the connections drawn from both Pound's remarks and his critics' comments. In particular, the American poet acknowledged his affinities with Wassily Kandinsky, a Russian-German Expressionist artist whose theories greatly influenced not only his fellow artists, but also many Expressionist authors.

After discussing the similarities between Pound's and Kandinsky's premises, the chapter proceeds to the examination of works by two German Expressionist poets – Georg Trakl and Gottfried Benn. A close reading of Trakl's "Peace and Silence" and Benn's cycle "Morgue" from *Morgue and Other Poems* demonstrates that the poems indeed display propensities analogous to those of the Imagists', i.e., semi-realism, aesthetic individualism, and provocatism. It is also discerned that those propensities are differently emphasized and achieved by different individual technique (for example, while Trakl shocks the reader primarily with his style, Benn provokes his readers both with style and choice of topics).

The next chapter "Russian Imaginism: A Kin in Name and Spirit" considers

parallels between Anglo-American Imagism and Russian Imaginism. It is determined

that for most of the twentieth century, Soviet critics totally ignored (moreover, virtually

ostracized) Pound, the Imagists, and their poetry. The only exceptions were Ivan

Kashkin's "Tvorchestvo amerikanskikh poetov-imazhistov" ("Creative Works of

American Poets-Imagists"), Aleksei Zverev's "Ezra Paund: Literaturnaia teoria, poeziia,

sud'ba" ("Ezra Pound: Literary Theory, Poetry, Fate"), short encyclopedia entries, and

ideologically biased histories of American literature. The content of these publications

explains the neglect – the founder of the movement, Pound, was sharply criticized for his

collaboration with Mussolini's Fascist Italian government during World War II. And

only in the 1990s did the situation begin to change as the first anthologies of the Imagists

were published. A similar unfortunate fate was met by the Russian Imaginist poets –

having been condemned by the Soviet Communist party leaders, they disappeared from

the literary scene for more than half a century and were only recently re-discovered.

This Russian school emerged as a result of an interview with Pound, in which he

discussed peculiarities of the Vorticist and Imagist movements. Along with an analysis

of the interview, the dissertation examines other possible ways in which Imagist ideas

were imported to Russia. Although it appears that the Russian Imaginists did not directly

borrow the stylistic principles of their Anglo-American precursors, they nonetheless

were influenced by the same world-attitudes. As in the case of the Imagists, the theories

and works of three major figures of Russian Imaginism (Vadim Shershenevich, Anatolii

Mariengof, and Sergei Esenin) are highly individualized. Despite the fact that they are united under the same literary label, the Imaginist authors employed dissimilar technical devices in order to ultimately create poems with a similar Weltanschauung. In comparison to their Anglo-American counterparts, however, the Russian poets were more radical in their experiments, paying less attention to poetic form and concentrating more on linguistic innovation and provocative images.

The last chapter "'The Only Ukrainian Imagist': Bohdan-Ihor Antonych and Imagism" examines the Ukrainian poet's affinities with the Imagist tradition. As in the case with Russian scholars, Ukrainian scholars also rarely address Imagism. First articles on Imagist poetry in Ukrainian journals (those by Lada Kolomiiets', Oleh Lysheha, Solomiia Pavlychko, to name a few) appeared only in the 1990s. Given this lack of relevant discourse, both "Imaginism" and "Imagism" are loosely defined, and scholars who sporadically do mention the terms often use them interchangeably. Therefore, with regard to Ukrainian corollaries of Imagism, the existing materials are still very cursory. Since currently absolutely no works are available on the Imaginist group that existed in Aleksandria and its leader Leonid Chernov,[12] it is Antonych who is regarded to be the only Ukrainian Imagist.

The chapter firstly analyzes the references to Pound and Imagism available to Antonych in the 1910-1930s. Here, several plausible options for acquiring information

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[12] Given the twentieth-century chaotic political situation in Ukraine, it is even difficult to locate the archives where such materials can be found.

on Imagist ideas are examined – directly from English sources, from publications in Polish, and through the mediation of Russian literature and criticism. Then, the chapter explores the theoretical ideas of the Ukrainian poet and their comparability with the Imagist pronouncements. Lastly, the analysis of "Wedding," one of Antonych's poems, proves that his poetry manifests an attitude towards the universe, the artist, and the audience similar to those of the Imagists.

Finally, "Conclusion" brings all the materials discussed together, dwells upon the significance of the Imagist ideas in each of the countries, and maps the possible directions for further studies on the topic. Given that currently Imagism lacks both international scope and attention from German and Slavic scholars, the present dissertation aims at providing the missing perspective and, simultaneously, at reviving a discussion of Imagism in German, Russian, and Ukrainian literary studies. Generally, this research grows out of the conviction that the comparative analysis of different national theories and practices of Imagism may help to build a new Imagist paradigm and to better understand the intellectual situation at the outset of the twentieth century.

Chapter 1

Towards Defining the Imagist Weltanschauung

> Some is incarnate awareness,
>
> [...] some remains spiritus.
>
> (Ezra Pound, "Canto 98")

In 1913, a young incipient poet John Gould Fletcher fulminated against Imagism in a letter to the publisher of *Poetry* Harriet Monroe:

> With Mr. Pound's "school" of "Imagisme," I am in even greater disagreement. "Imagisme" is an attitude towards technique, pure and simple. I am unable, and I wish that everyone else were unable, to impose upon myself the pedantic yoke of any particular technique. I agree with schools only in the French sense, that a "school" represents a certain attitude towards life held in common by a certain group. I don't agree that a poem must be written according to certain fixed rules before it is permitted to be poetry. (*Selected Letters of John Gould Fletcher* 2)

Although the letter apparently evinces much spirit of juvenile protest, Fletcher's comments deserve attention, for he attempted to apprehend Imagism not only formally, as the vast majority of literary pundits did, but also ideologically. Firmly refusing to accept any mechanical prescriptions that Pound vigorously (and often too aggressively) promulgated, Fletcher allegedly strove, although unsuccessfully, to discern the metaphysical dimensions of Imagism.

In that endeavor, Fletcher was not the only one to fail. Having approached the issue, many of his contemporaries, as well as later literary critics, encountered similar difficulties. Thus, an anonymous reviewer of *The Los Angeles Times* essentially echoed the poet: "They [the Imagists] are more concerned with saying something in an odd way than in saying something worthwhile" (qtd. in Hughes 53). In *The Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, Stanley Coffman consonantly points to the Imagist "concern with technique and its restriction of meaning," as well as to the Imagist "rejection of 'message,' as an integral part of the poem" (377-8). And a more recent study on modern poetry by Donald Stanford likewise animadverts on "a kind of freeze set [of the Imagist] techniques" (24). Imagism, therefore, is recurrently fathomed unilaterally, without taking into account its substantive agenda.

The matter, meanwhile, requires particularly close examination, since the relationship between extraneous aspects connected to form and structure, and intrinsic qualities associated with a certain worldview, constitutes one of the major stumbling blocks in the epistemological evaluation of the Imagist movement. Being in one instance merely "the manner of presentation" (*Some Imagist Poets 1916* v) and in another instance "ardent [Hellenism]" ("Notes and Announcements" 65), Imagism shifted now and then from one methodological paradigm to another, causing much confusion among the reading public and, as was earlier indicated, the Imagists themselves. Even though Pound clearly distinguished between the "technique of content" and the "technique of manner," considering them equally important ("I Gather the Limbs of Osiris..." 58),

given the disparity in bolstering those to a large extend adversarial attitudes, the movement has gradually become more associated with a technique rather than with a comprehensive view of the world, and the quotations above noticeably attest that even at its early stages the Imagist Weltanschauung largely remained on the periphery of general consciousness. The question then becomes whether Imagism might be regarded a poetic trend "in the French sense," i.e., whether the movement altogether displayed "a certain attitude towards life," and, if this is the case, how that attitude can be described.

In effect, a number of scholars have attempted (in passing, however) to tackle this perplexing issue. In his 1919 book *The New Era in American Poetry*, Louis Untermeyer hypothesized that "the chief trouble with the Imagists was not their attitude toward literature but toward life" (293). Upon analyzing the Imagist credo, Untermeyer rightly concluded that "it does not seem possible that this set of honest and almost platitudinous principles could have evoked the storm of argument, fury and downright vilification [that it did]" (292). When addressing the Imagist life attitudes, however, he remained rather laconic, only briefly assigning "absolute freedom in the choice of subject," emancipation from any aesthetic or social restrains, and cosmopolitism responsible for public aversion to the movement.

Following Untermeyer, future generations of critics voiced similar opinions. Coffman went so far as to proclaim the Imagist perspective on literature and culture the quintessence of the literary group, the lowest common denominator that consolidated its members:

There is a sense in which Imagism may be defined satisfactorily and inclusively, for it was not just a matter of technique. It was also an attitude toward the nature and function of poetry, an attitude whose significance extends beyond its use in explaining the formal qualities of a special kind of verse. What held these poets together was less a way of writing than feeling, seldom clearly articulated, about what poetry should be and do in our culture. (3-4)

Coffman adroitly treated the subject "in its historical context" but, at the same time, he narrowed his focus to only one aspect of the Imagist mindset, namely "the experimental attitude toward art" (225). Having approached Imagism from such an angle, Coffman mapped the movement in literary history, leaving simultaneously many hiatuses related to the Imagist sensibilities not considered.

Another theorist, John Gage, inspected the question from a reader-response theoretical standpoint. Although his book *In the Arresting Eye: The Rhetoric of Imagism* includes an entire chapter entitled "Attitudes," he essentially examines just "an objective attitude" toward the poetic subject, that is "the imagists' use of an objective speaker [and] their focus on external objects to present reality to the reader without any 'veil'" (131-2). Nonetheless, even while discussing the "objective attitude," Gage could not entirely disengage himself from the formal views of Imagism.

Even from this sketchy outline, one can detect that despite recognizing both the presence and importance of a specific worldview in Imagist practices, literary scholars

have generally failed to present a detailed account of that worldview, and the subject calls for more study.

The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy defines the word "attitude" as "an evaluative response, usually contrasted with simple belief by its more direct connection with motivation and behavior" ("Attitude" 28). To put it another way, an attitude is a determinant that actuates and establishes the manner in which individuals or social entities operate. This determinant, which might be also labeled a disposition, conditions virtually all human activity and, since activity is one of the essential attributes of human existence, a certain attitude is presumably behind every undertaking. Seen from a historical perspective (Imagism, after all, is a literary historical phenomenon), all the possible ranges of attitudes must fall within the category frequently referred to as the Zeitgeist or the Time-Spirit. Indeed, if the "Zeitgeist" is "the prevailing mood or attitude of a given period" ("Zeitgeist" 243), then it should subsist, in one way or another, in all the manifestations of the integral attitudes during that period. Hence, each literary venture encompasses at least two modes: a) a certain spirit or some general tendency common to the entire literary epoch, and b) its own spirit or a predisposition towards a certain worldview constructed within the confines of the first mode. In the discussion that follows, I will term the first mode as the "Zeitgeist" and the second as the "Weltanschauung."

Despite its more than two hundred year history, the concept of the Zeitgeist does not enjoy a widespread popularity. German satirical writer Christian Adolph Klotz

appears to be the first to introduce the word (in its Latin form – "genius saeculi") to literary circles, but it is his countryman, Johann Gottfried Herder who is generally credited with having developed the idea. By the mere act of translating the expression "genius saeculi" into German, Herder charged the term, most likely unintentionally, with unsettling characteristics: while "genius" means "tutelary guardian spirit," "Geist" is literally rendered as "a frightening being." In Herder's philosophy, the Zeitgeist represents "die Summe der Gedanken, Gesinnungen, Unstrebungen, Triebe und lebendigen Kräfte, die in einem bestimmten Fortlauf der Dinge mit gegebnen Ursachen und Wirkungen sich äußern" (*Herders sämtliche Werke* 80) ("The sum of thoughts, dispositions, strivings, and living forces which express themselves in a particular progression of things with given causes and effects"; *Philosophical Writings* 361). Serving as a causal instrument that shapes the ideas within a certain time period, the spirit of the age embodies the work of eternal Time and delineates the confines of historical possibility. If an individual acts in synergy with the temper of the times, the Zeitgeist assists by providing an opportunity, and anybody who does not consider the forces of the Zeitgeist becomes the victim of an unavoidable fate. Thus, the spirit of an age may serve or rule but can never be ruled. It is interesting to note that Pound was familiar with and discernibly countenanced such a fatalistic notion of the time-spirit.[1] In his "Canto 50," he approvingly quotes Napoleon:

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[1] In the sheer bulk of his writings, however, Pound avoids the word, preferring the term "Paideuma," which he defines as "the tangle or complex of the inrooted ideas of any

"Not"

said Napoleon "because of that league of lice

but for opposing the Zeitgeist! That was my ruin,

That I ran against my own time, turning backward"

OBIT, aetatis 57, five hundred years after D. Alighieri. (*The Cantos of Ezra*

Pound 249)

All further major elaborations of the concept, those of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel,

Wilhelm Dilthey, and Hans Robert Jauss, are largely based on Herder's ideas.

While generally accepting the existence of *a priori* categories, articulated by

Kant, Hegel added a historical dimension to the Kantian philosophy. For him, "der Geist

der Zeit als Geist sich denkend [ist] der Begriff seiner ganzen Gestallt, das Bewußtsein

und das geistige Wesen des ganzen Zustandes" (*Werke* 20: 483) ("the spirit of the age as

the spirit present and aware of itself in thought [constitutes] the entire shape of history,

the consciousness and the spiritual essence of the whole situation"; *Introduction to the*

Lectures on the History of Philosophy 25). A work of art, therefore, is always embedded

in a certain historical and social context. In another place, Hegel articulates this thought

even more directly: "Aus welcher Zeit nun aber ein Kunstwerk sei, es trägt immer

Partikularitäten an sich, die es von den Eigentümlichkeiten anderer Völker und

Jahrhunderte abscheiden" (*Werke* 13: 342) ("To whatever age a work of art belongs, it is

always marked by particularities which separate it from what is proper to other peoples

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period" (*Guide to Kulchur* 57).

and other centuries"; *Aesthetics* 264). At the same time, he seems to suggest that we can

perceive those particulars, which construct the Zeitgeist, only in retrospect: "Die Eule

der Minerva beginnt erst mit der einbrechenden Dämmerung den Flug" (*Werke* 2:28)

("The owl of Minerva begins its flight when dusk is falling"; *The Philosophy of Hegel*

227). Historicity is thus behind all human activities. But it is a disrupted historicity – the

knowledge and understanding of other ages are not immediately available to us, and only

by actively educating ourselves can we achieve the necessary knowledge. Partly to assist

his readers in this educational process, the philosopher discerns different Zeitgeists from

history and classifies them into the following "spiritual empires": the Oriental World, the

Greek World, the Roman World, and the Germanic World. Each of these Worlds

comprises various particularities of social, economic, political, intellectual, and cultural

order that form and inform the epoch.

> While Hegel's concern is all-embracing philosophy with aesthetics being merely

its integral element, Dilthey is more interested in the very historicity of the work of art.

In his *Poetics*, he states:

> Poetic form arises only through a transformation of representations of life into
>
> aesthetic constituents and relations. It is thus already conditioned by the
>
> coordination of the realities of life and their representations, which constitute the
>
> character of an age. The selection and exclusion, and overall connection are
>
> historically conditioned. The way in which a period understands the world

determines both which representations of life are elicited by feeling and the direction in which it develops them into poetic constituents and relations. (164-5)

Like Hegel, but with a focus on the modern period, Dilthey proposes to distinguish several "main epochs of art in human history as a sequence of artistic attitudes towards reality" (203). In the development of modern aesthetics, he detects three epochs: 1) the epoch of the natural system of aesthetic laws, which was dominant in the seventeenth century and celebrated the perspective of the critic; 2) the epoch of the analysis of aesthetic impressions, prevailing in the eighteenth century and highlighting the perspective of the public; 3) the epoch of the historical method, a nineteenth-century phenomenon that chiefly concentrated on the perspective of the artist. Each epoch consisting of "a multiplicity of particular facts" forms the spirit of an age. However, unlike Hegel, for whom all the facts were the emanations of one Absolute Spirit and thus interdependent and causally interconnected, Dilthey sees the particulars of an epoch as standing "next to one another indifferently and [they] cannot be traced back to one another" (161).

Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, the concept of the Zeitgeist had a solid reputation. It was widely recognized, frequently addressed, and heatedly discussed by different intellectuals. In the twentieth century, however, when positivism and new scientifically defensible methods were introduced to literary studies, the idea, given its definitional vagueness, lost its appeal. To elucidate the consequences of that loss, I turn to the work of Hans Robert Jauss.

Unlike previous theorists who conceived the Zeitgeist as an objective transcendent idea, Jauss subjectifies the concept, by placing it in the realm of audience response. In his attempt to achieve a compromise between a formalism that tends to ignore history, and social theories (Marxism in particular) that often ignore text, he introduces an aesthetically-oriented and yet historically-rooted notion of the "horizon of expectations," i.e., the "system of expectations that arises for each work in the historical moment of its appearance, from a pre-understanding of the genre, from the form and themes of already familiar works, and from the opposition between poetic and practical language" (*Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* 22). Since exceeding the horizon of expectations leads to a shift in literary historical stages, the time-spirit becomes dependent on this very subjective "system of expectations." In such a way, the paradigmatic turn from the work of art to the audience proved to be fatal for the Zeitgeist. Indeed, according to Jauss:

> The reconstruction of the horizon of expectations, in the face of which a work was created and received in the past [...] corrects the mostly unrecognized norms of a classicist or modernizing understanding of art, and avoids the circular recourse to a general "spirit of the age." ("Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" 23)

Metaphorically speaking, with the death of God proclaimed by Nietzsche, the Zeitgeist has also passed away. It ceased to "rule," having fallen prey to various Modernist movements, whose representatives, for the first time in human history, had a real

opportunity to not only reflect upon the world around them, but also to change it ad libitum.

It is notable that while examining "the name and nature of Modernism," Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane indicate whimsicalness as a particular quality of the Modernist epoch. Relying upon theoretical models developed by Alfred North Whitehead and Wylie Sypher, they argue that the style of an age can be characterized in two ways: either as a "general form of the forms of thoughts" that is "so translucent [...] that only by extreme effort can we become aware of it" (qtd. in Bradbury and McFarlane 24) or

> a conscious mannerism [...] which expresses a prevailing, dominant, or authentically contemporary view of the world by those artists who have most successfully intuited the quality of the human experience peculiar to their day and who are able to phrase this experience in a form deeply congenial to the thought, science, and technology which are part of that experience. (qtd. in Bradbury and McFarlane 24)

According to Bradbury and McFarlane, Modernism, with its apparent highly abstract and conscious character, falls (with some reservations) into the second category.

Thus, that "conscious mannerism" gradually repressed the feeling of the Zeitgeist. And yet, although the Time-Spirit lost its mysterious aura, the "inexplicable," formerly attributed to the Zeitgeist, did not entirely disappear, but rather migrated to other domains. Conquering the outer world resulted in surrendering the inner balance.

Suddenly the very existence of the individual, the mental picture of his or her world, up to that time so firm and clear, emerged as blurred. Largely for this reason, the protagonists of the Modernist texts suffer from fragmentation and personal uncertainty, constantly searching for some center, either inside them or in the outside world, and trying to find adequate language to deal with those problems. For them, it was easier to explain their age, "with its accelerated grimace" (Pound, *Poems and Translations* 569), than to comprehend their own ontology. The Weltanschauung, a particular mindset that in the past was rather uncomplicated, evolved into a problem. The Modernist worldview turned into that very "general form of thought" that Bradbury and McFarlane discerned. While previous generations' Zeitgeist was the subject for reconstruction through synthesis of the multiplicity of the Weltanschauungen, in the twentieth century, the Zeitgeist needs to be deconstructed in order to reconstruct the Weltanschauung. Thus, deductive methods replaced induction, and the general became more explicable than the particular.

Turning to the question of Imagism, we can see that the movement, as "a product and impulse of the time" (qtd. in Zach 229), obviously displays general features of the Modernist epoch – certain artificiality, anti-mimetic attitudes, and, in particular, the emphasis on language. Ultimately, all the announced Imagist principles dealt in one way or another with language. As a result, Bradbury and McFarlane's definition of Modernism as "conscious mannerism" would equally suit Imagism, or, to be more specific – a traditional notion of Imagism. What remained unarticulated is the

Weltanschauung of the movement or that "general form of the forms of thought" that is

"so translucent [...] that only by extreme effort can we become aware of it" (Bradbury

and McFarlane 24).

Given the time that passed and the absence of "critical tradition" for which,

according to Hugh Kenner, "there is no substitution" (415), the Imagist Weltanschauung

can only be tentatively recreated. Nowadays many important issues, which were

perceived as self-evident in the beginning of the twentieth century, are seen differently.

What was quotidian and not worthy of attention for the Imagists might be revealing for

the contemporary generation. The Imagists understood their world through a veil of

certain attitudes and acted according to the best of their knowledge and their beliefs

which were related to all the aspects of poetry and not only to its formal qualities.

Indeed, their numerous remarks indirectly attest to the fact that Imagism was more than

just a preoccupation with the form of expression – it was rather a quest for common

spiritual affiliation. According to Aldington, the Imagists were supposed "to publish

quietly and modestly as a little group of friends with similar tendencies" (qtd. in Chasca

63). On another occasion, in a letter to Fletcher, he writes:

> We don't ask you that your poems should be entirely like ours. Ezra tells me that
>
> you have recently written some very fine vers libre poems. Why can't you let one
>
> of them stand as your contribution to our anthology [*Des Imagistes*]? You can
>
> pick out whatever one of them you like, and we will make no objection. (qtd. in
>
> Chasca 33)

It is obvious that although Pound had earlier asked for "The Blue Symphonie," the Imagists would have not minded receiving a different poem. What really mattered was not so much a form, but a specific tendency, a particular mindset. It seems that any poet, without any reference to place but having similar life attitudes as those of the Imagists, could have joined the group comparatively easily.

In our time, we tend to look at Imagism diachronically, viewing it against the background of the contemporary literary situation. As a result, even though we might incontestably perceive the aesthetics of Imagist poetry, its original intention, i.e., the message that the Imagist poems carried, remains by and large voiceless. Rediscovering that hidden communicative message becomes important for the better understanding of the period's intellectual atmosphere. In many cases, disclosing a specific worldview helps us to comprehend the peculiar nature of a work of art – its substantive agenda that only contemporaries could entirely understand. In addition to finding a correct analytical and methodological procedure, such a disclosure becomes one of the scholar's tasks.

In literary studies, any text always exists in an aesthetic multidimensional universe – a net of relations with various aspects of the material and an ideal order. To properly find the coordinates of a given work in this universe, one needs to ascertain the background against which the work can be placed. At this point, Meyer H. Abrams' critical theory might be fruitful. In fact, the problem faced by Abrams with respect to Romanticism is similar to the problem we are facing in connection to Imagism: "Historians have recently been instructed to speak only of 'romanticisms,' in the plural,

but from our point of vantage there turns out to be distinctively romantic criticism, although this remains a unity amid variety" (7). In his critically acclaimed work *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, Abrams proposed to put the work of art in the framework of the artist, the universe, and the audience. This easy and, as Abrams himself admitted, not flawless principle resulted in creating "a frame of reference simple enough to be readily manageable, yet flexible enough so that [...] it will translate as many sets as possible onto a single plane of discourse" (5). Indeed, Abrams' methodological frame can be easily applied to any artistic phenomenon, Imagism included.

With respect to Imagist texts, the real challenge becomes to find the common ground – those unifying messages that would allow us to enter "a single plane of discourse." Everything seems to be so thoroughly studied that there should be no place for discoveries. Yet, a closer look reveals that literary scholars tend to repeatedly interpret the anthologized poems and rarely turn their sights to the poems not widely bespoken; even when they do (as Gage, for example, did), they are severely criticized for such attempts.[2] Meanwhile, the little studied works, carrying modest critical tradition attached to them, have the potential for opening new dimensions in Imagist studies.

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[2] In his review of Gage's book *In the Arresting Eyes: The Rhetoric of Imagism* for *The Review of English Studies*, Alan Robinson notes: "I must [...] express frustration that considerable sections of the book are devoted to the analysis of artistically worthless poems by peripheral members of the Imagist circle, such as Cannell and Upward, whose works was dismissed as non-Imagist at the time by both Aldington and Flint. To

Among the primary sources available on the Imagist movement, there is one that has attracted surprisingly little scholarly attention. I am referring here to the final section of the *Des Imagistes*, "Documents," which consists of three poems and a bibliography. While the bibliography, given its enumerative character and overtly advertising functions, has naturally escaped critical inquires, disregard for the poems, which stand side by side with the best Imagist works, appears to be somewhat unfounded. The poems in question are Ezra Pound's "To Hulme (T.E.) and Fitzgerald," Richard Aldington's "Vates, the Social Reformer," and Ford Madox Hueffer's "Fragments Addressed by Clearchus H. to Aldi." Since the poems hardly feature any principles or formal qualities traditionally ascribed to Imagism, most scholars would conceivably not consider them Imagist. Thus, Charles Norman calls them "some curious verses" (114) and Norman Gates refers to them as "poems" in quotation marks (25). At the same time, the fact that such works are included in the first Imagist anthology cannot be easily ignored. Why was it for Pound so important to incorporate such strikingly different poems into his anthology? And if the Imagist qualities are non-palpable, what makes the above mentioned poems Imagist?

Conventional approaches to the studies of Imagist poetry, with their tendency towards emphasizing formal and external qualities, cannot provide us with an answer to these questions. Different criteria, therefore, should be applied. I would argue that these

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explicate is not to justify and Dr Gage's talents would have been better employed elsewhere" (267).

poems perform not only purely aesthetic functions, but they also serve as documentary evidence pertaining to the history of Imagism. They are simultaneously works of art and historical documents. In rapport with Jauss's theories, such a situation is absolutely possible. Indeed, according to the German scholar:

> Literary works differs from purely historical documents precisely because they do more than simply document a particular time, and remain "speaking" to the extent that they attempt to solve problems of form and content, and so extend far beyond the silent relicts of the past. (*Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* 69)

Jauss further asserts that in any historical stage, the work of art comprises contemporaneous characteristics reflecting a given time period, and non-contemporaneous characteristics associated with permanent aesthetic value. In a similar way, the *Des Imagistes* "annex" (to use Flint's term) displays both features. Given that the verses carry little critical tradition that would possibly mislead us, and, considering that their aesthetic functions are suppressed by the communicative ones, they are well-suited for the analysis of the Weltanschauung.

Pound apparently attached much significance to the "Documents." Believing in the idea of the "book as a whole" (*Pound/Joyce* 285), he clearly considered three final poems as Imagist. He insisted on their inclusion since in his opinion they would balance the rest of the book. Although in 1911 he excluded "To Hulme (T.E.) and Fitzgerald (A Certain)" from *Canzoni*, he came to regret his decision later. In his letter to Arnold Mathews, Pound noted:

Do try to think of the book as a whole, not of individual words in it. Even certain

smaller poems, unimportant in themselves have a function in the book-as-a

whole. This shaping up a book is very important. It is almost as important as the

construction of a play or a novel. I neglected it in "Canzoni" and the book has

never had the same measure of success as the others. It is not so good as the

others. I was affected by hyper-aesthesia or over-squeamishness and cut out the

rougher poems. I don't know that I regret it in that case for the poems weren't

good enough, but even so the book would have been better if they had been left

in or if something like them had been put in their place. (qtd. in *Pound/Joyce*

285)

And in 1913, while preparing *Des Imagistes* for publication, he did not want to repeat the

mistake and calculatingly included the "curious verses" into the anthology.

The first two poems, "To Hulme (T.E.) and Fitzgerald" and "Vates, the Social

Reformer," are addressed to the forerunners of Imagism – Thomas Ernest Hulme,

Thomas Desmond Fitzgerald, and Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford). The last poem,

"Fragments Addressed by Clearchus H. to Aldi," is a teacher's prelection to his

followers. Thus, the works represent a dialogue between generations of artists. Their

parodistic nature, which immediately catches the eye, also tacks onto the discussion, and

it is possible to point out that the first work mainly imitates speech, the second – subject

matter, and the third – pathos. Collectively, all of them contribute to creating a specific

aura that surrounded the Imagist movement.

Pound's poem, written around 1911, enacts an imaginary conversation between the naïve poet (i.e., Pound himself) and pragmatic intellectuals (i.e., Hulme and FitzGerald). Being a hilarious parody of the very popular Scottish song "A Man's a Man for A' That" (also known as "Is There for Honest Poverty") by Robert Burns, the verse largely repeats the structure of the original. Pound's poem consists of five stanzas written in iambic tetrameter, where the octosyllable lines are used in turn with the septenary ones. The strophe organization reminds us of the huitain, the type of French verse widely used by François Villon whose poetry Pound greatly admired and considered close to the Imagistic tradition.[3] Unlike most Imagist works, "To Hulme (T.E) and FitzGerald" is rhymed, featuring exclusively masculine end- (bard-yard, novelette-get, etc) and internal (dine-wine, breeks-weeks, wear-tear, trade-made, verse-hearse, etc) rhymes. The rhythmic patterns are additionally underlined by a number of assonances (hired-I, am I-stamp) and alliterations (e.g. "a*l*though my *l*inen sti*ll* is c*l*ean"). All the above-mentioned qualities, i.e., form, simple rhyme structure, assonances, and alliterations, along with the refrain "for a' that and a' that," reinforce the poem's clearly discernable satirical content.

The title requires certain explanations. While scholars have extensively examined Hulme's biography and his philosophic ideas, the name of the second mentioned person, FitzGerald, as well as his role in the Imagist movement, remains completely unknown. From Pound's correspondence, one can learn that in 1910-1913, Desmond FitzGerald

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[3] "Imagistes seek the qualities that make Sappho, Catullus, Villon, the French Symbolists […] great" (Aldington, "The Imagistes" 70).

"journalize[d] and poetitize[d] somewhat" (*Selected Letters of Ezra Pound* 114), and

later became an influential Irish politician. According to Fergus FitzGerald, it was

FitzGerald and Florence Farr who introduced Pound to the members of the "School of

Images" (FitzGerald 9). On one occasion Pound admitted that he appreciated

FitzGerald's poetic talent more than that of Storer or Flint (qtd. in Carpenter 116) and he

even honored FitzGerald with at least two references in his *Cantos* ("Canto 92" 618;

"Canto 95" 644), placing him in the same line with such "serious characters" as

Malatesta, Mussolini, Lenin, or Stalin:

> And damn it there were men even in my time
>
> Nicoletti, Ramperti, Desmond Fitzgerald
>
> (the one alive in 1919). ("Canto 95" 644)

Although the poem imitates Burns, the addressees are also partly "responsible" for the

diction of the poem. Directed towards mockery and parody, the verse contains many

words from the Scots and Northlands dialects (feckless, breeks, birkie, ca'ed, maun, etc)

– idioms close to those spoken by Hulme and FitzGerald.

The plot equally intends to provoke a comic effect. Ultimately, the poem presents

a conversation between the lyric and the practical selves, where the practical self either

pities the poet ("Is there for feckless poverty / That grins at ye for a' that" [*DI* 57]) or

ridicules him:

> Ye see this birkie ca'ed a bard,
>
> Wi' cryptic eyes and a' that,

Aesthetic phrases by the yard:

It's but E. P. for a' that. (*DI* 57)

Because the poet refuses to serve anybody's interests, his fate is unenviable: he is

"under-fed," poorly dressed, and the object of derision for those with power and

influence. Even in comparison to his colleagues – prose writers – the poet's lot is

miserable, for his craft is looked down at; he cannot earn a living with his pen; and

publishers often reject his work. Although the lyricist suffers from loneliness, he laughs

at his hardheaded associates' manners, ideas, and discourse but speaks cheerfully of

himself. The poet, therefore, acts despite the inauspicious circumstances, and the

repletion of such contrasting conjunctions as "although," "for a' that," and "but"

highlights the antagonistic relations between the poet and his surrounding to a higher

degree. Yet, the bard strongly believes in his divine mission: "I know my trade and God

has made / Some men to rhyme and a' that" and is determined to carry the ungrateful

duty until the last breath, "with verse to verse until the hearse carts off [him] wame" (*DI*

58).

The "cryptic eyes" of the poet give a promise of mystery. In spite of his shabby

appearances and apparent worthlessness, the bard can see something that other people

are not able to perceive, and he trusts his ability to communicate the visions to his

contemporaries. He is, consequently, a link between the world of the real and the ideal.

His function is to channel information from divine sources. To emphasize this function,

Pound enacts the dialogue in an imaginary environment – one where facts are mixed

with speculations, the tragic with the comic, and the divine with the mundane.

The second poem, Aldington's "Vates, the Social Reformer," written in free and

loose blank verse, deals with a satirical representation of Aldington's mentor and

Imagiste colleague, Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford). Commenting on the pique nature of the

poem, Norman indicates: "Aldington, who had forgotten all about it, told me that it was

meant to spoof Ford Madox Hueffer" (114). Gates similarly notes that "'Vates, the

Social Reformer' appears to chaff Hueffer" and adds: "A great many of the topical

allusions are lost and with them much of the fun of the poem" (25).[4] Even though the

above seems to be true and there is indeed a scarcity of available primary materials, an

attempt should be made to clarify the situation and to explain those allusions.

As in the previous work, even the title is intended as a mockery, this time aiming

to ridicule Ford. Because in the *High Germany* Ford often comments on the "new Celtic

bards" (*Collected Poems* 120), Aldington assigns to him a role taken from Celtic

mythology, namely, that of *vates*. According to ancient beliefs, the *vates* were prophets

and soothsayers who performed human sacrifices under the supervision of bards and

druids. Diodorus Siculus, with whose works Aldington was undeniably familiar,

describes the *vates* thus:

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[4] Possibly based on the fact that the poem features frequent references to God, Gates
mistakenly suggests that Aldington wrote the poem after reading *On Heaven* (1913). In
fact, many allusions point to the other source – the collection *High Germany* (1911), one
poem of which, "In the Little Old Market-Place," found its way to the *Des Imagistes*.

Prophets likewise they have, whom they highly honour, who foretell future

events by viewing the entrails of the sacrifices, and to these soothsayers all the

people generally are very observant. When they are to consult on some great and

weightily matter, they observe a most strange and incredible custom; for they

sacrifice a man, striking him with a sword near the diaphragm, cross over his

breast, who being thus slain, and falling down, they judge of the event from the

manner of his fall, the convulsion of his members, and the flux of blood; and this

has gained among them (by long and ancient usage) a firm credit and belief.

(316)

Along with alluding to Ford's treatment of young authors, the word "vates" additionally

brings a visual association with the German noun "Vater" (i.e., father), by usage of

which Aldington banters both Ford's origin and his parental supervision.[5]

The second part of the title, "the Social Reformer," is another riposte. Unlike the

Apostle Paul (who, on having seen the temple dedicated to an Unknown God, began to

proselytize for the new religion and, as a result, radically altered Greece with his

message), in his "Süssmund Address to an Unknown God," Ford portrays himself not in

the least as a reformer:

Did I, dear God, ever attempt to shine

As such a friend of Progress? God, did I

---

[5] Ford often referred to his younger friends as "les jeunes" and called the Imagists "the

children of [his] teaching" ("A Jubilee" 46).

Ever ambitiously raise up my voice

To outshout these eminent preachers?

Suck up importance from a pauper's wrongs

I never did! (*Collected Poems* 122-23)

Nonetheless, contrary to Ford's attempt to be as conservative as possible,[6] he was seen as a radical. With regard to one of Ford's novel from that time, *The Good Soldier*, Robert Green notes: "Ford's preoccupation with the limits of omniscient narrative [...] precludes the possibility of *The Good Soldier* being employed as a revolutionary, or even a reformist vehicle" (102). Aldington obviously sees "Fordie" also as a politically active "social Reformer."

As stated above, in terms of its content, the poem is a parody of Ford's 1911 collection *High Germany*. The entire mood and the poem's refrain – "Dear God" – are borrowed from "Süssmund Address to an Unknown God," a work which also contains references to the "Celtic bard," "Jail Reform," and the "Reformer." In his parody, Aldington quotes many other places from the collection:

- "it's odd how one changes" and "starlings" from "The Starling" (Ford, *Collected Poems* 87);

---

[6] Ford even "wanted to launch a movement deeply rooted in the past, in a tradition" (qtd. in Mizener 334).

- "High Germany" and its variant "That's High Germany" from "To All the

  Dead" (Ford, *Collected Poems* 95-108) and "Rhyming" (Ford, *Collected*

  Poems 109-10);

- "a Chinese Queen" and additional allusions to the "Social Reformer" (cf. "He

  calls me Radical! Red Socialist" in Ford, *Collected Poems* 107) from "To All

  the Dead" (Ford, *Collected Poems* 95-108).

The theme of Ford's "pretending to sanity, Modernity" also comes from "To All the

Dead" where Ford says:

When my mind's all reeling with Modern Movements

And my eyes are weary, my head at its sorest

And the best of beer has lost its zest,

I go up there to get a rest

And think of the dead. (*Collected Poems* 101)

In Aldington's presentation, Ford possesses many admirable traits and qualities, such as

the knowledge of languages, the capacity to produce "jets of wit," the ability to influence

the young ("I contemplated him and marveled"), and "the stupendous quantity of mind /

And the amazing quality thereof" (*DI* 60). Yet, Ford's competence edges on dictatorship,

which irritates Aldington very much. Under the influence of Ford, Aldington has lost his

critical capacity, and because of that he is angry, calling himself "a mutton-headed

poetaster." Adlington dubs his mentor the "sage social reformer," as well as "this cock-

o'-hoop," and "rotten beggar," implying that Ford behaves like a vates performing

sacrifices on poor young poets:

> This "vates" here, this sage social reformer
>
> (Yes, God, you rotten Roman Catholic)
>
> To put his hypocritical conceptions
>
> Of what a poor young poetaster would think
>
> Into his own damned shape, and then to attack it
>
> To his own great contemplative satisfaction. (*DI* 61)

Similarly to Pound's satire, the poem contains references to God. Structured as a prayer,

that is the connective link between the divine and the terrestrial; it carries certain mystic

overtones which, however, are overshadowed with the lightness of the tone. Resorting to

conditional sentences and the subjunctive mood ("I should have hove my sporting air-

gun up / And blazed away") underlines the unreality of the situation and, as a result, as in

Pound's poem, the self of Aldington's work is positioned between two words – the ideal

and the material.

Finally, the last "document" entitled "Fragments Addressed by Clearchus H. to

Aldi," satirically presents Aldington. Referring to the history of the poem's creation,

Aldington recalled:

> For the first *Imagist Anthology*, I wrote a parody of one of Ford's poems and he
>
> wrote a parody of me. I still remember how he chuckled when Ezra and I showed

him my parody and how quickly and wittily he hit back. We chaffed him a lot in

those days. (qtd. in "Homage to Ford Madox Ford" 457)

The poem plays an important role since it not only creates the frame for the entire

anthology, enclosing all other poems between the texts written in the Greek script, but

also indicates an uneven character of the *Des Imagistes*. It is not by accident that *The*

Evening Standard took the title of the poem as a description of the entire anthology:

"Affectation is the note of this book from the title to F.M.H.'s poem in Greek characters

at the end" (qtd. in Gates 25).

The name "Clearchus" in the title of Ford's poem points at Aldington's

"Choricos," a much praised and frequently quoted work whose subject matter is arguably

drawn from Euripides's *Hippolytus*. Ford, however, suggests another source –

Xenophon's *Anabasis* where the Greek historian depicts a retreat of the Spartan army,

known as the Ten Thousand, from Persia in the year 401 BC. Under the command of

Clearchus, the mercenaries slowly headed through the hostile territory northward to the

Black Sea. By associating himself with the Greek general, Ford reminds Aldington that it

is time to "return home," to leave the ancient "Cyprian's breasts" (Aldington, *The Poems*

of Richard Aldington 4) and to arrive finally at the contemporary "quiet level lands"

(Aldington, *The Poems of Richard Aldington* 3) of England.

The subtitle of the "Fragments…" reads "Πωετριε: Πριχε φιφτεευ κενζ"

("Poetry: Prize fifteen cents") and features "π. 43" ("p. 43") in place of the epigraph.

This information may serve as a clue for deciphering many hidden references. Page

forty-three of the 1912 issue of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* featured Aldington's

Imagist poem "Au Vieux Jardin," and the editorial section of the magazine informed the

readers about a recent poetic contest in which fifteen hundred dollars was the prize for

the best poem. Having changed the amount by ten thousand times, Ford wanted to

challenge Aldington and mock the value of his poem.

Ford mocks the pathos of Aldington's poems. In his description, he replaces

Aldington's garden with an armchair and turns the Greek deity Potnia, whom Aldington

invokes in his "To a Greek Marble," into Putney, one of the London districts. Since all

the original members of the Imagist circle lived in Kensington, they often took the bus

towards Putney to reach the Central London. Hence, "πύτνηβυς, πύτνηβυς" ("putneybus,

putneybus") instead of "Πότνια, πότνια" ("Potnia, potnia") of the original. In his satiric

campaign against "θε κιδ υιθ θε δαρκ áιρ" ("the kid with the dark hair"), Ford makes

even Sappho and Socrates his allies. He renders Sappho's poem "Ήράμαν μέν έγώ

σέθεν, Άτθι, πάλαι πότα" (102) ("I loved you, Atthis, once long ago"; 103)[7] as "ήράμαν

μέν έγώ σέθεν, Άλδί, πάλαι πότα," that is "I loved you, Aldi, once long ago" (*DI* 62) and

he substitutes for Socrates' famous "Ώ άνδρες Άθηναίοι" ("O people of Athens")

Samuels Butler's "O God! O Montreal!"

---

[7] By parodying Sappho's fragment, Ford alludes to Aldington's verse "To Atthis (After
the Manuscript of Sapho now in Berlin)" published in the *Des Imagistes*.

In the latter poem, a Montreal museum guard explains to a visitor that a sculpture

of Discobolus is not on display because it appears vulgar to the tastes of contemporary

public:

"The Discobolus is put here because he is vulgar—

He has neither vest nor pants with which to cover his limbs;

I, Sir, am a person of most respectable connections

My brother-in-law is haberdasher to Mr. Spurgeon."

O God! O Montreal! (389)

Genuinely overwhelmed with such an answer, the visitor expresses pity for the simple-

heartedness of the museum employee and continues asking in astonishment:

"Preferrest thou the gospel of Montreal to the gospel of Hellas,

The gospel of thy connection with Mr. Spurgeon's haberdashery to the gospel of

the Discobolus?"

Yet none the less blasphemed the beauty saying, "The Discobolus hath no gospel,

But my brother-in-law is haberdasher to Mr. Spurgeon."

O God! O Montreal! (389)

In the "Fragments Addressed by Clearchus H. to Aldi," Ford plays the devil's advocate,

taking the side of the museum guard, and, in doing so, he seems to suggest that artists

should not shy from modern subjects (even if these subjects seem to be plain) and should

not seek escape in the safe "gospel of Hellas."

Ford clearly juxtaposes himself to his colleagues. Because they ignore his main literary principle of registering his "own time in terms of [his] own time" (*Collected Poems* 327), he criticizes their own tenets, tearing them "λικε ά γρεεν ματτεδ μεσς" ("like a green matted mess"; *DI* 62). Although Ford admits that he "γρεατλιε δελιγτεδ" (greatly delighted) the company of "les jeunes," he feels that they resort too extensively to "θε κλασσικαλ ρυθμ όφ θε ραρε σπεεχες, Ω θε ύνσπωκεν σπεεχες ΄Ελλενικ" ("the classical rhythm of the rare speeches or the unspoken speeches Hellenic"; *DI* 62) and, as a result, they, living in the twentieth century, merely play the ancient Greeks. By using the Greek alphabet to transcribe English words and by including a number of phrases from the classical sources, Ford additionally underlines the irony of the situation.

Combining the Greek and modern English sentiments, Ford creates a specific setting which is not easy to define. The setting would have been realistic if only it did not hold the spirit of ancient Greece. Constantly switching between modes, a reader finds himself as if between the worlds of fictional reality and social fact, memory and perception, fantasy and truth.

A close examination of the "Documents" section reveals that its poems display conspicuously similar attitudes towards the universe, the artist, and the audience. The last element of the Abrams' triplet – concern for the audience – appears to dominate over all other Imagist propensities. With Pound proclaiming that "beauty [lies] in the eyes of the beholder" (qtd. in H. Carpenter 129) and public-oriented manifestos, the Imagists demonstrated keen interest in their readers. They appealed to their audience

simultaneously through their poetry and poetics and, as a result, the Imagist theoretical

premises became firmly attached to Imagist practice. Without prior knowledge of the

postulates, one would hardly be able to properly classify (or accurately interpret) Imagist

verse. By accentuating and promoting their doctrine, the Imagists made their poetic

intentions known to the readers, and, ultimately, directed the readers to a particular

hermeneutic strategy. While Imagist poetry aimed for the defamiliarization effect,

Imagist poetics solicited innovative approaches for perceiving a given work of art.

Russian journalist Zinaida Vengerova, who described the Imagist objective in that very

way, was approvingly quoted by Pound: "I see you wish to give people new eyes, not to

make them see some new particular thing" (*GB* 85).

Viewed in terms of reception aesthetics, Imagism appears to be a literary

movement that exceeded the "horizon of expectations" for both readers (who were used

to traditional poetry) and critics (who hoped for more discernible guiding principles).

Along with its quest for a new poetics, Imagism aimed at provoking discussion. In fact,

from the very beginning the movement exhibited somewhat incongruous characteristics.

Its adventurous origins, the aggressive pursuit of its grand ambitions, and vaguely

articulated principles were perceived as a mockery of serious literature. Angry readers

returned copies of *Des Imagistes* to bookstores, critics castigated the anthology, and an

overwhelming number of parodies appeared on the pages of different magazines. That

kind of reaction, however, seems to have been the response that the Imagists had counted

on. In their cultural offensive against prevailing public penchants and susceptibilities,

they attempted to not simply *épater le bourgeois* but, first and foremost, *épater l'intelligent* and, in doing so, to stir the artistic atmosphere of their time. In a letter to Harriet Monroe, Pound noted: "In fact, good art thrives in an atmosphere of parody. Parody is, I suppose, the best criticism – it sifts the durable from the apparent" (qtd. in *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts* 288). Thus, the tendency which might be termed "provocatism" underlines the Imagists' relations with the public.

This combative propensity was reinforced by a particular societal role prescribed for the artist. He was simultaneously a romantic hero, quixotically focused on his own ideas, emotions, thoughts, and actions, as well as on the original ways of expressing thereabove, and a supercilious *enfant terrible*, who scorns all socially cherished ideals and accepted norms. Michael Levenson defines such a position as "aesthetic individualism" and describes the phenomenon as a blend of cultural elitism with a sense of the individual artist's "antagonist relation to the social whole" (76). The Imagists indeed emphasized individual perspectives and sensibilities to the highest degree, constantly defining themselves against others, and in their ethics, they were, in the words of Stella Ford, "people, who, on the whole, had replaced all their moral prejudices with aesthetic ones" (qtd. in Mizener 333).

Throughout the *Des Imagistes*, the author's self dominates. The first-person pronouns ("I" and, occasionally, "we") make the poems emphatically personal. In most cases, the lyrical self is a dispassionate observer who stands aloof from the scenes that he (usually the self is a masculine figure) describes. Such is, for example, the portrayal of

the self in Flint's verse:

> The grass is beneath my head;
>
> and I gaze
>
> at the thronging stars
>
> in the night. (*DI* 34)

However, despite his observer's position, the Imagist poet does not remain silent. On the contrary, he wants to communicate the things he descried to his listeners. He selects primarily the existential moments to convey (love, death, departure, mourn, etc). His voice is either romantically longing or desperately nostalgic. The Imagist self, therefore, is a loner who has chosen to be one, and he is proud of his "strong loneliness" (*DI* 41), for it allows him to see "the shadowy flowers of Orcus" (*DI* 41) and to know "the truth of things unseen before" (Pound, *Poems and Translations* 14).

The Imagist self's double social role results in a dual perception of the universe: on the one hand, he castigates the world where he lives and seeks escape into aesthetic spheres, but on the other hand, he does not want entirely to lose touch with his own time. Because of this, the Imagists are often seen as literary Doppelgänger – they stand not only between literary epochs, but also between philosophical oppositions, namely, between realism and idealism. Despite their Realist aspirations, the Imagist poets still were descendants of the French Symbolists, and their poetry retained palpable Romantic qualities. According to Pound's own confession, he spent his days in London seeing "[Symbolist] Yeats in the evenings and [Realist] Ford in the afternoons" ("The Art of

Poetry" 15). Perhaps it is because of these contradictory influences that a semi-realist doctrine emerged. The Imagists gave up verbal ornaments, removed effusive decorations, and aimed at Realist precision and clarity. However, while employing these Realist tools, the Imagist poets left intact Romantic curiosity, the longing for exotic locales, and the search for beauty and perfection. That is why many literary scholars find it comparatively easy to associate "Imagism" with different, often opposite, literary doctrines.

In fact, even the term "Image" carries these double characteristics. Thinking about the image is a constant ricochet process where thought is rebounding between real and symbolic worlds. The image is located between *realia* and *realiora*; it is a threshold that separates real and symbolic worlds. Examining the nature of the image, French literary scholar Maurice Blanchot observes:

> The image, present behind each thing, and which is like the dissolution, also has
>
> behind it that heavy sleep of death in which dreams threaten. The image can,
>
> when it awakens or when we waken it, represent the object to us in a luminous
>
> formal aura; but it is nonetheless with substance that the image is allied – with
>
> the fundamental materiality, the still undetermined absence of form, the world
>
> oscillating between adjective and substantive before foundering in the formless
>
> prolixity of indetermination. (255)

The images prevailing in the *Des Imagistes* are repeatedly related to memory. Hence, the allusions to the ancient cultures of China and Greece (Aldington's, H.D.'s, Pound's, and

Upward's poems), recollections of nature (Lowell, Flint) and the city (Flint, Ford), or reminiscences of events from private lives (Williams, Cournos). Dealing with the things that have already "passed away," memory presents, metaphorically speaking, existence after death. To a certain degree, reading the anthology reminds one of walking through an ancient cemetery where one can contemplatively move from tomb to tomb, deciphering the inscriptions. In view of this feeling, it does not come as a surprise that many poems are written "after" ("After the Manuscript of Sappho now in Berlin," "After Joannes Baptista Amaltheus," "After the Greek," "After Ch'u Yuan," "After K. Tetmaier") or "to the memory of" (Ford's "In the Little Old Market-Place" has a note: "To the Memory of A.V"). Moreover, even the entire collection opens with an epitaph: "And she was also of Sikilia and was gay in the valleys of Ætna, and knew the Doric singing." Although all the evoked images have long disappeared in the past and become unreal, memory brings them back and makes them feel real. This mix of the real and the unreal creates a specific type of world perspective which I would characterize as "semi-realism."

These three aspects, i.e., provocatism, aesthetic individualism, and semi-realism, largely constitute the Imagist Weltanschauung and define the spirit of Imagist poetry within the Modernist Zeitgeist. Although separately these aspects can be found in many literary phenomena, there are only a few related movements that combine all the features, and in my next chapters, I will examine these literary streams across the cultures that display the same attitudes as Imagism does.

Chapter 2

Expressionism: Imagism German Style

> O Germany, fatherland and motherland,
>
> with your hundreds of leagues and associations,
>
> you are the mummy among nations.
>
> (Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time*)

Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" is perhaps the most famous, the most frequently anthologized, and the most analyzed Imagist poem – so much so that the two-line hokku-like verse has become Imagism par excellence. The history of the poem, which is no less eminent than the poem itself, calls attention to a pithy remark that divulges an intriguing foreign parallel. Pound's anecdotal account opens with the following attempt to define the Image:

> The image is the poet's pigment; with that in mind you can go ahead and apply Kandinsky, you can transpose his chapter on the language of form and colour and apply it to the writing of verse. As I cannot rely on your having read Kandinsky's *Ueber das Geistige in der Kunst*, I must go on with my autobiography. Three years ago in Paris... (*GB* 86)

Pound continues by recounting the famous episode in the La Concorde metro station and then, several paragraphs later, circles back to the book he mentioned earlier: "And so, when I came to read Kandinsky's chapter on the language of form and colour, I found

little that was new to me. I only felt that some one else understood what I understood, and had written it out very clearly" (*GB* 87). Certainly, the reference to Kandinsky's work was not accidental – the poet markedly sensed the analogies between his creative dicta and those of the artist, regarding Kandinsky's ideas as an apposite vehicle for explaining Imagist poetry.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the writings of Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), a German Expressionist artist of Russian origin, were not only known in Great Britain, but also played a significant part in shaping the artistic climate of the time.[1] For example, the entire Vorticist enterprise (viewed by Pound as slightly augmented Imagism) was formed under the spell of Kandinsky's theories. In his "Vortex," Pound explicitly declared that "Picasso, Kandinski [were] father and mother, classicism and romanticism of the movement" ("Vortex" 154). According to the poet, it was mainly Kandinsky's conclusions that assisted the Vorticists in establishing connections between art and literature, between the visual and the textual:

> Whistler and Kandinsky and some cubists were set to getting extraneous matter
>
> out of their art; they were ousting literary values. The Flaubertians talk a good

---

[1] Considering that in 1915 Pound admitted that he did "not see [...] enough of Kandinsky's work" ("Affirmations... II. Vorticism" 277-8) (at that time, he worked as an art critic for *The New Age*!), it is obvious that in Great Britain, Kandinsky gained popularity not so much through his paintings but, first and foremost, through his writings, in particular through *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (Concerning the Spiritual in Art).

deal about "constatation." "The nineties" saw a movement against rhetoric. I think all these things move together, though they do not, of course, move in step. (*GB* 85)

Attempting to render the fin de siècle fragmented state of consciousness and realizing that traditional mimetic art is incapable thereof, Kandinsky and Whistler, as well as other abstractionist artists, started to experiment with form and color, the most essential elements of any visual representation. Ergo, form and color, instead of being merely superfluous ingredients of representation, became the self-sufficient fundamentals capable of communicating feelings on their own. Thus, "extraneous matter," i.e., naturalistic objects, was replaced by a very "direct treatment of the 'thing', whether subjective or objective" (Flint, "Imagisme" 199).

Given that in his medium Pound sought similar primary pigment to equate emotion with its verbal expression, it does not come as a surprise that while reading Kandinsky, he "felt that some one else understood what [he] understood, and had written it out very clearly" (*GB* 87). Indeed, as Michael Faherty rightly suggests, "it is clear that Kandinsky not only helped Pound refine his thinking on the subject but had a significant influence on Pound's ideas concerning the conceptual nature of modernism and the importance of the role emotions plays in creating a work of art" (71). Kandinsky, therefore, serves as one of the most important links between English and German

intellectual circles and, since he was an Expressionist, between Imagism and Expressionism.[2]

In fact, literary scholars have long noticed a degree of kinship between Kandinsky's paintings and Pound's poems. Will Grohmann, for instance, suggested that

> Kandinsky's paintings have a great deal in common with poetry and music. It would be quite possible to put them besides certain poems by Pound and certain compositions by Schönberg in such a way that the three art forms would elucidate one another. (152)

In particular, he found salient synesthetic correspondences linking Pound's poem "Itys" to Kandinsky's *Painting with White Forms*. Another critic, Edward Brandabur, after having compared Pound's and Kandinsky's theories of art, convincingly demonstrated a good concordance between the two. In his article "Ezra Pound and Wassily Kandinsky: A Language in Form and Color," Brandabur maintained that "there is a similarity between Pound's understanding of the tenets of imagism with respect to poetry and the

---

[2] Kandinsky is not the only German intellectual who had some influence upon Imagism. While referring to Wilhelm Worringer, Thomas Ernest Hulme, the founder of the "School of Images," admitted that all his ideas related to art are "practically an abstract of Worringer's views" (82). More information on Worringer's significance for Hulme's philosophy can be found in Miranda B. Hickman's *The Geometry of Modernism: The Vorticist Idiom in Lewis, Pound, H.D., and Yeats* (Austin: U of Texas P, 2005). Wilhelm Dilthey and Max Scheler can be additionally listed among earlier German influences on Hulme (see J. Kamerbeek, Jr. "T.E. Hulme and German Philosophy: Dilthey and Scheller," in *Comparative Literature* 21.3 (Summer 1969): 193-212).

tenets of Kandinsky with respect to painting" (97), and, inter alia, he discerned a strong

parallelism in the artists' treatment of objective reality, as well as a similitude in their

attitudes towards expressive and cognitive functions of art. He additionally elaborated on

Wyndham Lewis' thought that "[Pound] described the Vortex as the radiant node or

cluster which constitutes an image, allied it to Kandinsky's 'inner necessity'" (Michel

71) and came to fully agree with the creator of *Timon of Athens*.

Indeed, even perfunctory examination reveals that the artists shared many of the

same ideals and values related to musical tastes (both admired Scriabin and

Mussorgsky), attitudes towards spiritualism (both were interested in occultism and,

particularly, in Blavatsky's doctrine), functions of criticism (both, for example,

repudiated Tolstoy's critical stance[3]), and, what is the most important, views on art. In

---

[3] Kandinsky expressed disagreement with Tolstoy's *What Is Art?* (Wassily Kandisky,

"Kritika kritikov," in *Novosti dnia* (Moscow) Apr. 17-19, 1901, trans. as "Critique of

Critics," Kandinsky *Complete Writings on Art* 1:36). Although Pound once confessed

that he "never read the Rooshians" (Hemingway 134), this statement is in fact a

manifestation of the poet's idiosyncracy to which Yeats referred to as "antithetical self"

(qtd. in Aldington, *Life for Life's Sake* 104). Pound's critical writings contain several

mainly cursory but usually negative references to Tolstoy. "Tolstoi, Russian therefore a

mess," he wrote in one of the letters (qtd. in H. Carpenter 43). Pound discarded

"Tolstoyan mysticism" ("The Drama as a Means of Education" 520) and idealism. It is

likely, however, that Pound's knowledge of Tolstoy comes only from secondary sources.

His wife Dorothy read Tolstoy during the spring of 1912 and was disappointed with the

Russian writer's ideas. In one of her letters to Pound, she called Tolstoy a "silly old

white bearded prophet" (Pound, *Ezra and Dorothy Pound* 98). Charles Grennel, a Boston

Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, published two years before *Des Imagistes*,

one can find many ideas similar to those of Pound. Thus, while discussing the

"psychological effect" of colors, Kandinsky noted:

> A psychological tremor generates a corresponding one through association. For
>
> example, red may cause a sensation analogous to that caused by flame, because
>
> red is the color of flame. A warm red will prove exciting, another shade of red
>
> will cause pain or disgust through association with running blood. In this cases
>
> color awakens a corresponding physical sensation, which undoubtedly works
>
> poignantly upon the soul. (44)

Pound articulated an analogous "form of super-position, that is [...] one idea set on top

of another" (*GB* 89) through his ideogrammic method which he explained in his *ABC of*

Reading thus:

> [A Chinese person] is to define red. How can he do it in a picture that isn't
>
> painted in red paint? He puts (or his ancestor put) together the abbreviated
>
> pictures of

---

lawyer and pastor, who visited Russia in 1911, might be Pound's other source. In a letter

to his mother from February 21, 1912, Pound noted: "Old Grinnel is back from Russia

and disenclined to agree with Tolstoi and the general squalor and pessimism of the

advertised Russian literati" (*Ezra and Dorothy Pound* 98-99). Finally, he was familiar

with Tolstoy through Andrew White's *Biography* where the American diplomat included

his observations on Tolstoy's religious beliefs, alms-giving, etc (Pound, *Letters: Ezra*

Pound, John Theobald 52).

ROSE	CHERRY
IRON RUST	FLAMINGO

The Chinese "word" or ideogram for red is based on something everyone knows.

(22)

Such combinations of quotidian objects, according to Pound, should evoke certain perceptional associations and create "an equation [...], having something to do with mood" (*GB* 92).

Both Kandinsky and Pound believed in the universal language of arts – a medium that was common for poetry, music, and the plastic arts. Similarly to Pound, who regarded the Imagist method suitable for other arts, Kandinsky pointed to a possibility of applying his theories to other aesthetic spheres (particularly to literary texts): "In this direction lie great possibilities for the literature of future" (*Concerning the Spiritual in Art* 34). They searched for the lowest denominator, "a primary pigment" (as Pound referred to it), which was common for all the arts and which made altogether possible the artistic expression of beauty.

Kandinsky's perception of the artist as "a prophet" or "invisible Moses" (*Concerning the Spiritual in Art* 29), as well as his views on the artist's mission, fundamentally symphonized with those of Pound. The German visual artist also echoed Pound in considering a work of art a product of a certain time-period. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* in effect opens with a eulogy to the Zeitgeist: "Every work of art is the child of its time; often it is the mother of our emotions. It follows that each period of

culture produces an art of its own, which cannot be repeated" (23). Thereupon,

Kandinsky's and Pound's searches for the core essentials at the root of their respective

crafts were fundamentally analogous, but Kandinsky found these key elements in the

arrangement of colors while Pound in the arrangement of poetic images.

At the time when Kandinsky wrote his book, he was associated with the German

Expressionist movement. Moreover, he was one of the movement's principal figures and

expressed the views that were to become preeminently Expressionist.[4] A number of

comments made by his contemporaries evinced Kandinsky's paramount role among the

Expressionists. Thus, when in 1913 the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* published a scathing

attack on the painter, many prominent poets, writers, and visual artists responded with

howls of protest on the pages of *Der Sturm*. Amongst the literati who signed the letter in

support of Kandinsky were Albert Ehrenstein and Paul Zech, German Expressionist

poets; Alfred Döblin, an Expressionist novelist; Hans Arp, a future Dadaist poet; Nikolai

Minsky, a Russian symbolist poet living in Paris; the founder of Futurism, F.T.

Marinetti; a young French poet Guillaume Apollinaire; and Michael Ernest Sadler, a

British writer and historian ("Für Kandinsky" 279). Poet Hugo Ball characterized

Kandinsky as one of "the creators of new worlds and new paradises" (7) and regarded

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[4] In his *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*, Hugo Ball notes: "When I first met
Kandinsky, he had just published *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* [*Concerning the
Spiritual in Art*] and also *Der Blaue Reiter* [*The Blue Rider*] in cooperation with Franz
Marc. It was with these two programmatic works that he founded expressionism, which
later was so debased" (8).

him as "an artist who, by his mere presence, [placed] this city [Munich] far above all other German cities in its modernity" (8). Given that Kandinsky (who, as indicated earlier, articulated many ideas on painting similar to those of Pound with regard to poetry) voiced the Expressionist ideological and programmatic dispositions, it would be reasonable to draw parallels between the two movements.

Expressionism appears to be as elusive and difficult-to-define as its Anglo-American counterpart, and numerous attempts to define the term have long created an immense stir in the scholarly community. In his book *Form in the Menschheitsdämmerung*, Robert Newton succinctly summarizes many of such unsuccessful attempts, ranging from Karl Scheffler's characterization of Expressionism as an "abschreckend dummer Name" ("dauntingly silly name"; qtd. in Newton 56) to Karl August Horst's observation that "der Begriff Expressionismus verliert mit wachsendem Abstand immer mehr definitorischer Bedeutung" ("as time goes by, the term 'Expressionism' loses more and more in its definitional meaning"; qtd. in Newton 57). Newton additionally classifies approaches to explicating Expressionism into four types, namely: a) definition by motif; b) definition by style characterization; c) definition by representative poets; d) definition by historical period.[5] Newton underlines the

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[5] If one were to apply this classification to Imagism, one would notice that the Anglo-American movement has been predominantly interpreted as a historical phenomenon (Coffman, Harmer, etc), sometimes as a group consisting of selected representative poets (works on H. D., Lowell, Pound, Aldington), rarely as a style (Gage, for example), and almost never as a school with a particular worldview, which motivated the

significance of the *Menschheitsdämmerung* (Twilight of the Humanity) for setting up

and welding the poetry of Expressionism.

Indeed, very much like *Des Imagistes* (1914) in Anglo-American literature, the

Menschheitsdämmerung (1920) brought together diverse poets, uniting them under the

umbrella of one collective name. Gottfried Benn called the anthology "die erste und

einzige Sammlung" ("the first and the only collection") of the Expressionist lyric (*Lyrik*

des expressionistischen Jahrzehnts 19), and, in recapitulating the argument, Newton

maintains: "It seems entirely likely that this anthology owes a good deal of its

prominence to the fact that [...] it helped to create the vivid image of a SCHOOL of

poetry which it was later held to so admirably reflect" (71). Apart from these external

similarities, the movements shared a number of intrinsic features.

Having strong comparative literature traditions, German scholars were among the

first to notice the international dimension of the movement. Thus, as early as 1935, in her

doctoral dissertation entitled *Der Jmagismus: Sein Wesen und seine Bedeutung*, Fränze

Vortriede drew parallels between Imagism and German Expressionism. According to

her, the Expressionists, like their Imagist colleagues, emphasized the role of the visual:

"The whole perceptual space of the Expressionist artist becomes vision" (qtd. in Roy

60). They believed in directness and clarity of expression, with regard to which, Rudolf

Pannwitz noted: "Der aber spricht vollendet, der einfach, schlicht, ohne Konvention,

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representatives to join their forces toward a common goal (this dissertation largely aims

at such a definition).

ohne Pose ruhig sagt, was er sagen kann" ("One [shall] speak skillfully, simply, [and]

say quietly, in a plain way, without convention, or pose what one can say"; qtd. in

Vortriede 91). Another Expressionist poet, Theodor Däubler, vigorously concurred,

inferring that "der Expressionist schält die Wesenheit seines Objektes haarschaf und mit

Temperament aus [...] er entscheidet sich für Klarheit-Simultaneität" ("with utmost

precision and temperament, the Expressionist reveals the essence of his objects [...] he

yearns for clarity and simultaneity"; qtd. in Vortriede 91). Generally, the emphasis on a

concentrated style, recourse to unconventional imagery, the search for the absolute

metaphor, and the use of the montage technique draw the Expressionists close to

Imagism.

In his "Vorticism: Expressionism English Style," Ulrich Weisstein further traced

the relations between the movements. He pointed toward philosophical roots common

for Expressionism and Vorticism, namely Wihelm Worringer's and Henry Bergson's

ideas on art which were known to the Imagists through Hulme.[6] For the purpose of this

research, it is also important to mention one more aspect of Expressionism, namely:

unlike traditional Imagist studies that aim at finding stylistic similarities, Expressionist

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[6] On the influence that Worringer's and Bergson's ideas had on Kandinsky's writings,
see Grohmann 84-85. On parallels between T.E. Hulme and these philosophers, see
Levenson 94-97, Coffman 47-73, Joseph A. Buttigieg's "Worringer among Modernists,"
in *boundary 2* 8.1 (Autumn 1979): 359-66, and J. Kamerbeek's "T.E. Hulme and
German Philosophy: Dilthey and Scheler," in *Comparative Literature* 21.3 (Summer
1969): 193-212.

critics, after unsuccessful attempts to discern a common denominator pertaining to technique, generally agreed to regard Expressionism as a Weltanschauung rather than a stylistically coherent movement. Commenting on this, Max Krell argued: "Expressionism – a collective term for a complex of feelings and ideas (Gefühls- und Anschauungskomplex) [... It] is not a program" (11).

Taking into consideration the existence of so many common characteristics, it is not surprising that certain poets from the *Des Imagistes* are occasionally classified as Expressionists. Robert Green, for example, described Ford as an Expressionist (228) and Herbert Read assigned the same role to D.H. Lawrence ("Lawrence as a Painter" 63).[7] In Germany, therefore, it was Expressionism that shared similarities with Imagism, and the relations between the movements should provide us with a promising ground for further examination.

Given that *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* chronologically preceded the Imagist precepts, one can logically assume that it is Kandinsky's ideas that had a certain impact on the Anglo-American poets and not vice versa.[8] The presence of the Imagists in German literature and Pound's influence on German poets indeed appear to be insignificant. Generally, Central European reflections of Imagism are only cursorily

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[7] For more discussion on D.H. Lawrence's Expressionism, see also Jack F. Stewart, "Expressionism in 'The Rainbow'," in *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 13.3 (Spring 1980): 296-315.

[8] It is not accidental that Weisstein refers to Vorticism as "that Anglo-Saxon offshoot of Expressionism" (28).

addressed and, until now, only sporadic attempts to study Imagism or Pound's impact on German literature have been undertaken. A number of scholars (Hans Hennecke, Hans Holthusen, Rudolf Hagelstange, Gerd Schmidt, Frans Link, Eva Hesse, and Leslie Mac Ewen, to name a few) have published general overviews of the Imagist principles, thereby contributing to the academic promotion of the movement. Additionally, despite the fact that Divers asserts that Imagism "has no pronounced corollary in German verse of the twentieth century" (38), many literary critics have compared several German poets to Pound. Manfred Durzak, for example, notes Günther Eich's "Kurzgedichte nehmen Anregungen des Japanischen Haiku auf, mitunter auch des amerikanischen Imagismus von Pound und W.C. Williams" ("short poems reminiscent of Japanese haiku as well as the American Imagistic poems of Pound and W.C. Williams"; 310). Hans Hiebel in his recent *Das Spektrum der modernen Poesie* points out at Imagist features in Klabund's and Karl Krolow's poetry. Hennecke and Holthusen briefly discuss the similarities between Pound's and Borcherdt's respective poetics. Natan Zach, Wolfgang Müller, Nancy Willard, and Kirsten Painter indicate Rilke's affinity to Imagism. Rainer M. Gerhardt, who corresponded with Pound, perhaps borrowed certain Poundian principles for writing his own poetry (Olson 2: 118; Olson 3: 153). Finally, Gregory Divers sees the Imagist technique in Rolf Dieter Brinkmann's "Westwärts" and in Dieter Leisegang's poetry (55, 161).

Labeling all those poets as Imagists would be precarious, for such an approach focuses too much on extraneous and often casual grounds. Thus, mainly because of his

interest in Chinese, Pound was compared to Eich, because of his translations to

Borcherdt, and because the *New Poems* resembled some of H.D.'s works, Rilke became

linked to the Imagists, etc. Even though such comparisons can be justified, they are not

intrinsically inclusive. Therefore, another basis should be found – one that would be

consistent with spiritual affiliation rather than with the apparitional one.

However, to move from theoretical reasoning to the actual poetry is somewhat

difficult. Referring to this intricacy, Brandabur notes: "Kandinsky's influence is clearer

in Pound's doctrine than in his poetry" (101). Expressionist and Imagist theories indeed

sounded similar while there was noticeably less coherence in the ways these theories

were put into practice. In effect, in German literature only the Expressionist Gottfried

Benn considered his artistic technique as having been partially indebted to Pound. In the

"Probleme der Lyrik" (Problems of Lyric Poetry), he perspicuously appraised the

contribution of Anglo-American literati to creating the new poetics: "Mit Eliot, Auden,

Henry Miler, Ezra Pound tritt der neue Stil in den anglo-atlantischen Raum, und ich

möchte gleich erwähnen, daß in USA eine große lyrische Bewegung im Gange ist"

("With Eliot, Auden, Henry Miller, Ezra Pound, the new style enters the Anglo-Atlantic

world, and I would also like to remind that, in the US, a great lyric movement is under

way"; *Gesammelte Werke* 497-8). Benn scholars have reasonably foreseen the possibility

of the poets' comparative examination. Hence, in his *Benn: The Unreconstructed*

Expressionist, James Ritchie suggests that "he [Benn] is after all a reflective poet like

Eliot, Pound and Yeats and […] his works like theirs constantly force the reader to

confront the problem of ideology to art" (36). A similar idea is supported by Edgar

Lohner who notes: "His [Benn's] work is open to comparison with that of such Anglo-

American lyric-reflective writers as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W.H. Auden, and Wallace

Stevens" (39). Although the latter statement appears to be too all-encompassing and the

comparison is made primarily on the basis of the writers' eminence, two of the authors

evoked (Pound and Stevens) were the Imagists and T.S. Eliot was closely associated

with the movement. Consequently, taking into account Benn's Expressionism, his

fellow-feelings towards Pound, and the above-mentioned scholarly observations, I would

argue that Benn presents a convincing case for the present comparative study.

Georg Trakl is another poet whose works bear conceptual similitude to those of

the Imagists. In fact, Trakl described his style in very Imagist terms: "Meine bildhafte

Manier, die in vier Strophenzeilen vier einzelne Bildteile zu einem einzigen Eindruck

zusammenschmiedet" ("my pictorial manner which forges together four separate image-

parts in four lines of a stanza into a single impression"; *Dichtungen und Briefe* 1: 478).

Although because of his secluded life style, Trakl's literary contacts were scarce and he

never used the word "Expressionist" in his writings, he nevertheless is often classified as

such and can be equated to the Imagists on the basis of his affinity to Kandinsky's art.[9]

Delving into this affinity, Walter Sokel states:

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[9] Since Kandinsky also wrote poetry by "merely [changing] his instrument" (Grohmann

100), it is also possible to compare Kandinsky's and Pound's poetic works. Kandinsky,

however, is not popular as a poet, and the influence of his poetry on Expressionism

seems to be insignificant.

The Austrian poet Georg Trakl represents in Expressionist poetry an equivalent

to Kandinsky's role in Expressionist painting. Just as Kandinsky creates pure

compositions of colors and lines, so Trakl creates pure compositions of

autonomous metaphors. Trakl's mature poetry consists almost exclusively of

metaphoric disguises. Each metaphor has a more-or-less definite emotional

tonality and combines with the other metaphors of which the poem consists not in

a conceptually coherent sequence of thoughts, but in an incoherent stream of

images. The syntactical subordination of sentences or phrase, which represents

logical thought in language, is omitted. Trakl's poetry is not a system of

communication of ideas, but a flight of images, or autonomous metaphors,

resembling an incoherent dream. (49)

Trakl, therefore, might be characterized as a poet of the "Kandinsky's tradition" while

Benn illustrates a closely related "Pound's tradition." In what follows, I will proceed

from Sokel's suggestion and from Benn's pronounced proximity to Imagism, examining

their several representative poems. I would like to argue that despite differences in style,

the poets are spiritually affiliated to the Imagists and to one another, and that their poems

are marked with a similar Weltanschauung.

One of Trakl's poems included in the *Menschenheitsdämmerung* (and thus

consensually Expressionist) is a twelve-line poem entitled "Ruh und Schweigen" ("Peace

and Silence"). It was written between March and September 1913 and published in 1914

in *Sebastian im Traum*. It opens a cycle consisting of fourteen works and entitled

"Siebengesang des Todes" ("Seven Songs of Death"). The peculiar character of the poem immediately catches the eye, for, in the words of Maire Jaanus Kurrik, "one must have a special experience with language here; one must forget that words are signs pointing to an exterior reality [...] the poem plunges us into the mere semblance of linguistic reality" (25). Balancing between the subjective and the objective, "Ruh und Schweigen" merges the two worlds, so that one cannot be certain whether the poem describes the lyric self in terms of nature or nature in terms of the lyric self. These two poles, nature and the self, are virtually inseparable and for this reason they should be analyzed together.[10]

In view of Sokel's proposition, it is fruitful to mention Kandinsky's theory for interpreting the poem. According to the Russian-German painter, in order to transmit the spiritual, the artist "requires nothing but the subject to be painted (human being or whatever it may be) and means that belong to painting alone, color and form" (*Concerning the Spiritual in Art* 36). All these elements can be readily found in Trakl's poem. The title communicates the subject – "rest and silence," i.e., abstract notions of motionlessness and soundlessness that the author renders by means of combining

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[10] A discussion on objective and subjective types of Imagism can be found in Pound's *Gaudier-Brzeska*, where the poet inter alia notes: "I made poems like 'The Return,' which is an objective reality and has a complicated sort of significance [...] I have written 'Heather,' which represents a state of consciousness, or 'implies,' or 'implicates' it. [...] These two latter sorts of poems are impersonal, and that fact brings us back to what I said about absolute metaphor. They are Imagisme" (85).

concrete objects. Even on its own terms, the subject conveys the ideas of individuality

and social aloofness, and these notions further contribute to creating the situation that

Krell refers to as "Lösung" (i.e., detachment, liberation, emancipation). According to

Krell, this situation constitutes an earmark of Expressionism and is stipulated by the fact

that Expressionist poets and writers did not have a particular literary program. The

Lösung results in "spiritual loneliness. [And] this loneliness gives birth to the work of

art" (11).

In order to render such conceptual detachment of the artist, Trakl resorts to the

following quotidian images: "sun," "forest," "pond," "moon," "stars," "blue flowers,"

"silence," etc. It is the amalgamation of these objects that generates the desired abstract

notions. All the chosen natural phenomena (perhaps, with the exception of the pond and

the forest) are not connaturally able to produce sounds or sharp movements. "Die

begrabene Sonne" ("the buried sun") and "in härenem Netz den Mond" ("the moon in a

net of hair") evoke the feeling of a desert evening. "Der frierende Weiher" ("the freezing

pond") and "der kahle Wald" ("the naked forest") point at autumn, a melancholic season

which is additionally unambiguously adverted to in the last line. The atmosphere of an

autumn evening creates the impression of adagio pensiveness and rumination. The

people mentioned in the poem (shepherds, fisherman, the one who gazes), strongly

conjuring up biblical imagery, belong to the contemplative type and are also normally

associated with tranquility and remoteness.

Virtually all the images are either synonymically compared or antonymically

contrasted. Thus, the poem parallels "peace" and "silence," "shepherds" and "fisherman," "the moon" and "the pale man," "the freezing pond" and "a blue crystal," "a radiant youth" and "the sister". Or it juxtaposes "the naked forest" and "a net of hair." In the process of reading, images constantly metamorphose into each other, and one can never be certain where the borders between the objects lie. In fact, many of Trakl's texts manifest such ambiguity, and this brings him close to H.D. who used similar technique in "Oread," the poem that Pound considered a paragon of Imagism:

> Whirl up, sea –
>
> whirl your pointed pines,
>
> splash your great pines
>
> on our rocks,
>
> hurl your green over us
>
> cover us with your pools of fir. (81)

Here, as in Trakl's poem, the subject matter continually transmutes so that it is impossible to pinpoint a moment where the forest turns into the sea and vice versa.

Similarly to other verses by Trakl, "Ruh und Schweigen" contains a number of intertextual references to both the poet's own works and works by others. Thus, the title immediately calls to mind Goethe's famous "Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh'" ("Above all hilltops / There is peace") but even more Friedrich Hölderlin's "Auf den Tod eines Kindes" ("On the Death of a Child"):

> Die Schönheit ist den Kindern eigen,

> Ist Gottes Ebenbild vielleicht, –
>
> Ihr Eigentum ist Ruh und Schweigen,
>
> Das Engeln auch zum Lob gereicht. (Hölderlin 439)
>
> The beauty is innate in children,
>
> It is God's image perchance, –
>
> Its qualities are peace and silence,
>
> Something we also praise in angels.

Trakl coequally links the images of peace and silence to the idea of death. The death feeling in effect spreads throughout the entire poem and is considerably amplified by other images. Thus, "schwarze Verwesung" ("black decay") that appears again in "Grodek" is synonymous with death; "purpurner Schlaf" ("purple slumber"), an image once more encountered in "Nachtseele" ("Night Soul"), is, according to Lord Byron, "the sister of death" (Byron 1: 46); and "der schwarze Flug der Vögel" ("the black flight of birds"), one of the Trakl's most frequent tropes, symbolizes, in Angelika Zawodny's opinion, "böses Omen" ("evil omen") (219).

The poem also contains several autobiographical references to the poet's sick sister Grete. Trakl presents her as a child about to die and it is characteristic that towards the end of the poem she "erscheint" ("appears"). Hugh Kenner asserts that, despite being rooted in an everyday situation, the "apparition" refers to the world of others. Analyzing the line "The apparition of these faces in the crowd" from Pound's "In a Station of the Metro," he indicates:

This is not any crowd, moreover, but a crowd seen underground, as Odysseus and Orpheus and Korè saw crowds in Hades. And carrying forward the suggestion of wraiths, the word "apparition" detaches these faces from all the crowded faces, and presides over the image that conveys the quality of their separation. (184-185)

The sister's ghostly appearance is intensified by the usage of the word combination "blaue Blumen" ("blue flowers") which, from the time of Novalis' Romantic novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, has come to symbolize metaphysical longing for the infinite and the unattainable.

Apart from verbal tropes, the poet resorts to the means "that belong to painting alone, [that is] color." It is interesting to examine how his diction corresponds to Kandinsky's explications. "Ruh und Schweigen" contains various chromatic references: two to blue ("blauer Kristall" ["blue crystal"], "blaue Blumen" ["blue flowers"]), two to black ("der schwarze Flug" ["the black flight"], "schwarze Verwesung" ["black decay"]), one to purple ("purpurner Schlaf" ["purple slumber"]), and one to white ("der bleiche Mensch" ["the pale man"]). According to Kandinsky, "blue is the typical heavenly color; the ultimate feeling it creates is one of rest. When it sinks almost to black, it echoes a grief that is hardly human. It becomes an infinite engrossment in solemn moods" (*Concerning the Spiritual in Art* 58-59). Blue, therefore, helps to further emphasize the feeling of peace.

Other colors contribute to rendering silence. In *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*,

white is

> ...often considered as no color [...], is a symbol of world from which all colors
>
> as material attributes have disappeared. This world is too far above us for its
>
> structure to touch our souls. There comes a great silence which materially
>
> represented is like a cold, indestructible wall going on into the infinite [...] White
>
> has appeal to nothingness that is before birth. (59-60)

Black also signifies silence but "with no possibilities" (Kandinsky, *Concerning the*

Spiritual in Art 60). It is "something motionless like a corpse. The silence of black is the

silence of death" (Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* 60). Finally, purple, which

essentially represents a combination of red and blue, "has a morbid, extinct quality [...]

In music it is [...] the deep notes of woodwinds" (Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual*

in Art 63). Hence, white, black, and purple are evoked not merely to translate the idea of

silence, but to indicate its deathly nature and to reinforce already existing poetic images

associated with Thanatos.

In the poem, therefore, rest and silence are thrice enunciated: in the subject

matter, by the images involved, and by color coordination. Trakl sets forth a semi-real

world, a world that balances between the sensible and the imaginary, and where the artist

abides in solitude, contemplating his own mortality. Trakl's lyric self is a visionary who

can perceive things inaccessible to others, and he is a prophet who foresees upcoming

losses. His language also retains oracular qualities, being obscure and arcane. Such dense

poetry constitutes a permanent challenge for the reader, who habitually attempts to crack

the code and decipher a poet's message. Apropos of this challenge, Kurrik notes:

> Reading the poems [...] can make one feel as if Trakl personally discovered the
> arbitrary character of linguistic signs, as if Wittgenstein's philosophic insight had
> been his: that outside of a conventionally established system of signs, words are
> entirely free and lawless, since they do not look like the things they designate
> anyway. We are stunned and confused by what appears to be entirely willful use
> of language; we are tempted to pass Trakl's poems off as mere play with words
> [...], or to question [...], whether Trakl's poetry is not "Kitsch." (19)

By resorting to unusual imagery, Trakl overwhelms and astonishes the reader. Although, in comparison to other Expressionists, such provocation is perceivably subtler (as in the case of Imagism), it nonetheless presents a huge dare for the audience.

For the analysis of Benn's poetry, I will look at his first collection *Morgue und andere Gedichte* (Morgue and Other Poems) (1912) which is almost contemporaneous with the *Des Imagistes* and which became Benn's first Expressionist pronouncement. The collection opens with a cycle of five poems entitled "Morgue," and the *Menschenheitsdämmerung* features the first of these poems, "Kleine Aster" ("Little Aster"). All the verses of the cycle are essentially brief reports on different cases from Benn's own medical practice. The cases are simple – planting a flower, encountering mice, taking out a dental filling, observing a couple of young people, witnessing emergence of a new entity – and only the setting, the operations carried out, and the manner of narrative make the subject appalling.

The actions take place in a morgue and are performed on or with human corpses. Thus, the flower is taken from the mouth of a dead man and planted into his opened chest; mice are found in the body of a half-decayed woman and immediately exterminated; a golden filling migrates from the tooth of a deceased prostitute to a morgue attendant's mouth; the throat of a young woman is slashed to perform an act of figurative deflowering, so that she might be perceived as a newly-wed bride meant for a black man lying on the same autopsy table; the bodies are dismembered and mutilated, and, out of the separated limbs and organs, a new human-like entity emerges.

The poems are set in a place which by itself already strikes the reader as being dreadful and terrifying. Benn, however, jolts his audience further by giving a precise and nuanced account of the morgue employees' manners. They behave in an overtly cynical way – in the "Kleine Aster," a pathologist addresses the flower, inserted in the chest cavity, with the following words:

> Trinke dich satt in deiner Vase!
>
> Ruhe sanft,
>
> Kleine Aster! (*Sämtliche Gedichte* 11)
>
> Drink yourself full in your vase!
>
> Rest softly,
>
> little aster! (*Primal Vision* 213)

In "Schöne Jugend" (Lovely Childhood), after beholding how the mice were thrown into water, the observer sardonically and somewhat sadistically remarks: "Ach, wie die

kleinen Schnauzen quietschten!" (*Sämtliche Gedichte* 11) ("Oh, how the little muzzles squeaked!"; *Primal Vision* 215). Likewise, in "Kreislauf" (Cycle), a morgue worker, having removed an auric dental filling from the dead female's mouth, caustically explains: "Nur Erde solle zur Erde werden" (*Sämtliche Gedichte* 12) ("Earth alone should return to earth"; *Primal Vision* 217). Cutting a girl's throat ("Negerbraut" ["Nigger Bride"]) and comparing an organ dissection to a child's birth ("Requiem") are equally appalling acts which are primarily designed to produce a shock effect.

Benn's poems, however, do not merely generate one shock after another; they rather mount one shock on the top of another. The poet lays provocations on different levels. On the level of subject matter, he astounds the reader with the dense death imagery. Although death belongs to one of the "eternal" literary themes and "the death [...] of a beautiful woman," as Edgar Allan Poe pointed out, constitutes "unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world" (19), Benn's cold-blooded and unembellished treatment disconcerts. The matter-of-fact language and staccato diction notably singularize his poems among other works on the subject. Even Charles Baudelaire, who in terms of his subject-matter comes closest to Benn, lacks the expressive power of the medically precise and pragmatic speech of the German poet. Given their unusual juxtapositions of the natural and the unnatural, the living and the dead, the Romantic and the quotidian, Benn's images deeply penetrate the reader's imagination and presumably become ingrained in memory for a long time.

Intertextually, many of those images are rooted in the folk tradition, as well as the German classic, Romantic, and modern traditions, and were clearly intended to mock them. Walther Killy, for example, indicates that "Schöne Jugend" parodies a popular folksong with the same title. Bernhard Blume and Theo Meyer draw parallels between Benn's poems of the "Morgue" cycle and certain works of Shakespeare, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Heym. The plot structure of the "Kreislauf" alludes simultaneously to Nietzsche's idea of the Eternal Return and to Schnitzler's *Reigen*. Given the above-mentioned features of Benn's work, it does not come as a surprise that the poems became an enormous cause célèbre of the time. With regard to the blatantly provocative character of the poems, A. R. Meyer, the publisher of the *Morgue und andere Gedichte*, noted: "Wohl nie in Deutschland hat die Presse in so expressiver, explodierender Weise auf Lyrik reagiert wie damals bei Benn" ("At that time, towards no other poetry has the press in Germany reacted in so expressive, explosive way as towards Benn's"; qtd. in Henniger 156).

The atmosphere of Benn's morgue, along with references to death, produces a chilling surreal condition. In this morgue, a person comes into contact with the otherworld, the world where terrestrial laws are no longer applicable. Because of their tendency towards describing semi-real worlds, such dedication to the hereafter sphere becomes typical of the Imagist poets. In his *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound*, Daniel Tiffany claims that Imagist aesthetics is closely linked to death imagery. Referring to Pound's poetry, he notes: "More than a third of the

poems in his [Pound's] first six books of poetry treat the subject of death in some fashion (76 of 214 poems)" (115). Although in comparison to Pound's poetry, Benn's poems communicate the enigma of death more directly, they nonetheless reveal the same thanatophilic propensities. The mere presence of corpses, as the representatives of the otherworld, causes the realms of the real and the dreamlike to clash. The readers find themselves on the borderline, one moment submerging into the fantastic, and the next – surfacing back to reality.

Timelessness is also an attribute of Benn's dreary semi-real world that associates it with the hereafter. While the poems always contain indications of places, they have absolutely no indications of time, and the only time reference "lange" ("long") is deprived of any specificity. Unlike time, for which there is no need in the eternal realm, location in space still continues to be important. An autopsy table, body parts, the reeds (where the prostitute was found) are but a few locus objects. The professions, which are either explicitly articulated (a morgue attendant, a prostitute, a truck driver) or implied (a black worker on a farm) designate a person's place in the social hierarchy. And the morgue serves as the place that connects everything and constructs the scene where everything happens.

In Benn's semi-real world, profound loneliness clearly features as one of the most terrifying feelings. Contrary to expectations, the poet does not pacify his readers while leading them through the murky rooms of the morgue. Instead, he intimidates even more with his cynical comments. In fact, not only the reader but also the artist suffers

from the sense of solitude. While inviting his audience to enter and to understand his

realm, the poet resorts to different means of expressing that solitude. Formally, the idea

of loneliness is repeatedly evoked through metaphors of emptiness and hollowness,

which contain references to cavities: "die Brusthöhle" ("the cavity of the chest"), "die

aufgebrochene Brust" ("the chest cut open"), "die löcherige Speiseröhre" ("the gullet full

of holes"), "eine Laube unter dem Zwerchfell" ("a cavity below the diaphragm"), "die

ausgegangenen Plomben" ("the decamped dental fillings"), "die Augen" ("eyes"), "die

Ohren" ("ears"), "die Näpfe" ("basins"), "die Särge" ("coffins"), "der Mutterleib"

("womb"), etc. The longing for expression is rendered by various images involving the

presence of such parts of the human body as head or mouth, i.e., the parts that are

"responsible" for expression.[11] As a result, in Benn's poems, we encounter "die Zähne"

("teeth"), "der Mund eines Mädchens" ("the mouth of a girl"), "die queitschenden

kleinen Schnauzen" ("the squeaking little muzzles"), "der einsame Backzahn" ("the

solitary molar"), "die weiße Kehle" ("the white throat"), "die Schädel" ("the heads") and

other alike images.

The only two foreign words, "morgue" (instead of German "Leichenschauhaus")

and "requiem" (instead of "Seelenmesse" or "Totenmesse"), by their etymology suggest

to the reader how one should behave, i.e., "to look solemnly" and "to rest, to be quiet."

The lyric self also behaves that way – in most scenes, the self is not an active

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[11] Edvard Munch's well-known *The Scream*, where similar desire is produced by
drawing attention to mouth, functions in the same way.

protagonist, but an impartial observer. Only in the first and the last poems, as if before the entrance and at the exit, the self performs an action. In other situations, the passive voice predominates, and he remains standing aside, only solemnly observing the morgue routine. Notwithstanding the apparent passivity, the lyric self occupies a more privileged position with respect to the dead whom he describes (he is alive) and with regard to the society where he lives (he has access to such an arcane place as the morgue and has the nerves to accurately register everything).

Despite their dreary atmosphere, the poems include optimistic tonalities – the stoic idea of the circularity of life, which is rendered through the content and the form. Benn's representations of the life circle involve different elements: floral, faunal, and mineral kingdoms, and the spiritual sphere, where love resides. The short narratives provide us with different close-ups: planting a flower is followed by drowning mice, preserving a piece of gold by deflowering the beauty, and the latter act leads to new life. Hence, there is constant interaction between pro-life and anti-life forces. The entire cycle ends in the word "der Mutterleib" (the womb) that gives the promise of a revival.

The idea of the Eternal Return is additionally elaborated on the formal level. Thus, the cycle starts and ends with the poems featuring the rhyme – "Kleine Aster" with "gestemmt-geklemmt," "herausschnitt-glitt," "Brusthöhle-Holzwolle" and "Requiem" with "Weiber-Leiber," "Qual-Mal," etc. The appearance of the lyric self in the first and the last verses and the increase in the alteration of masculine and feminine rhymes

towards the end of the cycle amplify the circular structure and add to constructing a frame.

Despite seeming differences, Trakl's and Benn's Expressionist poems have much in common. Commenting on the nature of similarities and differences between the poets, Marion Adams notes:

> He [Trakl] is [...] caught in flesh, like Benn in his *Morgue* and *Fleisch*. But whereas Benn reacted aggressively, Trakl's tendency was towards self-extinction [...]. In Trakl's works, as in Benn's, there is a pull of material substance as flesh, which is experienced tragically, and is not countered with an equally strong or stronger transcendental. (142)

As the present analysis has demonstrated, their poetry also comprises all the attributes of the Imagist Weltanschauung (provocatism, semi-realism, and aesthetic individualism). Even though, unlike the Anglo-American Imagists, the German Expressionist poets did not even attempt to launch a single coherent literary movement, their individualistic stances and attitudinal agendas were close to those of the Imagists. Like the Imagists, the Expressionists were brought together not so much by a common writing technique, but by a common worldview.

Chapter 3

Russian Imaginism: A Kin in Name and in Spirit

> Where are you, the Great Russian Empire,
>
> With lingering lips suckling Europe and Asia,
>
> As if they were two white soft teats?
>
> (Anatolii Mariengof, "A Table-Talk")

Michael Reck, one of Pound's biographers, attributes the poet saying: "People quite often think me crazy when I make a jump instead of a step, just as if jumps were unsound and never carried one anywhere" (189). This nomenclatural distinction between "a step" and "a jump" may fruitfully be applied to comparative literary studies where "a jump" has to be sometimes performed in order to better understand this or that artistic phenomenon. Given the relative geographical and cultural propinquity of Great Britain and Germany, as well as the ready availability of communication links between the Imagists and the Expressionists, the analysis undertaken in the previous chapter might be called "a step." In contradistinction to that, the present and subsequent chapters, dealing with Russian and Ukrainian repercussions of Imagism respectively, will certainly appear to be "a jump."

The Anglo-American movement seems to be so remote from the Slavic countries that the mere idea of its presence in Moscow or Kyiv strikes one as unusual. Although even a cursory glance at literary encyclopedias would reveal that "v Rossii otdel'nye idei

imazhizma razdeliali poety-imazhinisty" ("in Russia, the Imaginist poets shared certain ideas of Imagism"; Gilenson 142), an attempt to learn more about the Imagism-Imaginism relationships would be doomed to failure. Despite the fact that the Imagist scholars do occasionally bridge the movements, they rarely examine the relations in depth, and the scarcity of materials creates the impression that in reality there was little if anything in common between the Anglo-American and Slavic literary trends. I argue, meanwhile, that it is not the lack of connections between the movements, but rather the lack of study of such connections that prevents us from bringing them together. "A jump," therefore, is needed to clarify the question.

In February 1915, the Petrograd literary journal *Strelets* (The Archer) featured an interview with Pound entitled "Angliiskie futuristy" ("The English Futurists") published by a well-known Russian critic and translator Zinaida Vengerova. In the interview, Pound claims: "My 'vortitsisty,' a v poezii my 'imazhisty'" ("Angliiskie futuristy" 93) ("We are 'Vorticists,' and in poetry we are 'Imagists'"; "Appendix" 143). To explain the movement, however, he does not enumerate the famous triad of the Imagist principles or the Imagist "don'ts." Instead, he declares: "My – 'novye egos,' i nasha zadacha [...] sozdat' novye otvlechennosti, stolknut' novye massy, vyiavit' iz sebia novuiu real'nost'" ("Angliiskie futuristy" 94) ("We are the 'new egos,' and our goal is [... to create] new abstractions [,] to collide with new masses, to reveal our new reality"; "Appendix" 144).[1]

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[1] This pronouncement may additionally strengthen the propensities of Imagism extracted in Chapter 1. Indeed, "the new egos" may stand for "aesthetic individualism," "collision

Following the interview, Vengerova continues her article by describing the "blasts" and "blessings" of the *Blast*, citing several Imagist poems (Pound's "Before Sleep" and H.D.'s "Oread"), and expressing her own thoughts. She concludes thus:

> Pozhalui pravy oblichaemye Ezroi Poundom vragi ego: on slishkom mnogo vzial na sebia, vozvestiv o narozhdenii "novykh egos." V Anglii, po krainei mere, oni eshche ne narodilis'. [...] Poeziia imazhistov nichego iarkago ne dala – kak ne dali nichego novago ikh prokliatiia i blagoslovleniia. No teoriia "vikhria v prostranstve" i neobkhodimosti sozdat' novye otvlechennosti sama po sebe plodotvornaia. Gde zhe i kogda ona voplotitsia v tvorchestve, perestav byt' tol'ko teoriei i mechtoi? ("Angliiskie futuristy" 103-4)

> Apparently, Pound's foes, whom he blasts, are right: he did take too much upon himself by announcing the coming of the "new egos"! In England, at least they have not yet arrived. [...] The poetry of the Imagists has not produced anything of brightness and brilliance; nothing has been accomplished by their blasts and blessings. The theory of the "vortex in space" and the necessity of creating new abstractions, however, is in and of itself productive. Where and when will it cease to be merely a theory and daydream? Where and when will it be implemented in creative practice? ("Appendix" 151)

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with the new masses" for "provocatism," and "the new abstractions" and "the new reality" for "semi-realism."

Given the subsequent developments in literary history, it appears that in Russia

Vengerova's rhetorical question was heard, for her article resulted in the emergence of

the poetic movement that became known as Imaginism.

Three Moscow poets, namely Vadim Shershenevich, Anatolii Mariengof, and

Sergei Esenin, stood at the core of the newly created school. In January 1919, they

published the Imaginist "Declaration" in the Voronezh newspaper *Sirena* (Siren) and, ten

days later, the same article appeared in a Moscow periodical called *Sovetskaia strana*

(The Soviet Land). Apart from the trio, the artists Boris Erdman and Georgii Iakulov, as

well as the poet Riurik Ivnev, signed the "Declaration."[2] During the next five years, the

group virtually dominated the literary life of Russia. It managed to open four publishing

houses and two bookstores, published a periodical, issued a number of anthologies, and

established branches in other cities. For some time, the Imaginists even were successful

in garnering support from the state, intentionally or unintentionally deluding the

authorities. However, as soon as those in power realized that they had been hoodwinked,

the movement began to be castigated. With Lenin proclaiming the Imaginists to be

"mal'chiki bol'nye epokhoi" ("youngsters sick with the times"; qtd. in "U S.A.

Esenina"), Anatolii Lunacharsky's negative comments, Vladimir Friche's philippics,

plus interpersonal problems among the members, Imaginism gradually declined and

eventually disappeared from the literary scene by 1924.

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[2] Later, several other poets (Aleksandr Kusikov is perhaps the most well-known) joined
the movement.

Since the time of its emergence, the Russian school has been regarded by many as an offshoot of Anglo-American Imagism. Thus, having cited an excerpt on Imagism from Pound's interview, Vasilii L'vov-Rogachevskii inferred: "Eti slova natolknuli moloduiu gruppu russkikh poetov [...] priniat' imia 'imazhinistov' ili 'imazhistov'" ("These words led a young group of Russian poets [...] to adopt the name 'Imaginists' or 'Imagists'"; 9). Here, the conjunction "ili" (or) suggests the interchangeability of the words "Imaginism" and "Imagism" and indicates that L'vov-Rogachevskii saw the schools as being on par. Another critic, Ippolit Sokolov, even insisted that the Imaginists should have called themselves the "Imagists."[3] Severyn Pollak similarly maintained that the Russian movement was "first built on the principles of the English Imagists E. Pound and W. Lewis" (qtd. in Markov, *Russian Imagism* 2).

Paradoxically, and yet predictably, the Imaginists themselves were not in agreement with the literary scholars. Their programmatic documents or poems contain

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[3] Sokolov, an Expressionist poet closely associated with the Imaginists, knew about the Anglo-American Imagists not only from Vengerova's article. He titled one of his books *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Complete Poetic Works), thus, echoing Pound's publication of Hulme's "Complete Poetic Works" in the end of the *Ripostes*. At times, the Imaginist verses also remarkably echo the works of the Anglo-American Imagists. For example, Mariengof's poem "Piatnyshko, kak ot razdavlennoi kliukvy" ("a speck, like from a crushed cranberry"; *PI* 197) is strikingly reminiscent of Pound's "L'Art, 1910" which starts with the line "Green arsenic smeared on an egg-white cloth, / Crushed strawberries!" (*Poems and Translations* 291).

no mention of Pound or other Imagists. Moreover, as if following Ford's premonition,[4] they vehemently denied the existence of any connections between them and the Anglo-American Imagist poets. In fact, instead of clarifying the matter, their comments brought even more confusion. Boris Sokolov claimed to have heard Shershenevich irritably saying, "We have nothing in common with those pathetic imitators who stole our name" (qtd. in Markov, *Russian Imagism* 1). Esenin, however, was not so uncompromising when in a letter to Ivanov-Razumnik he wrote: "Delo ne v imazhizme, kotoroe pritianula k nam Z. Vengerova v sbornike 'Strelets' 1915 g., a my vziali da nemnogo ego izmenili" ("The point is not Imagism which Z. Vengerova forced upon us in *Strelets* of 1915, and which we took and slightly changed"; *PSS* 6: 126). And only Matvei Roizman, a treasurer of the Imaginist publishing enterprise and an Imaginist poet himself, admitted that

> Shershenevich, vladeiushchii inostrannymi iazykami, znal, chto eshche do pervoi mirovoi voiny v angliiskoi i amerikanskoi poezii sushchestvoval 'imazhizm' (ot slova 'imge'[sic!] – obraz) […] Mnogie tezisi imazhizma mozhno obnaruzhit' v broshiure V. Shershenevicha '2 x 2 = 5'.
>
> Shershenevich, who was versed in foreign languages, knew that before World War I, there was Imagism (from the word 'imge' [sic!]) – 'image') in English and

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[4] See Ford's comment on pages 9-10 of the present dissertation or in "A Jubilee" 46.

American poetry. [...] One can find many Imagist tenets in Shershenevich's

booklet *2 x 2 = 5*. (129-30)[5]

Of all the Imaginists, Shershenevich veritably appears to be the person who could have

potentially known of Imagism. While Esenin did not speak any foreign languages and

Mariengof had command of only French and German, Shershenevich was fluent in

several languages. In his memoirs *Velikolepnyi ochevidets* (The Great Witness), the poet

describes an interview he granted in the beginning of his career in the following manner:

> Oni [dva literatora] priekhali [...] My zaveli dlinnyi spor o literature, i moi
>
> posetiteli byli skonfuzheny tem, chto futurist znaet russkuiu literaturu ne khuzhe
>
> ikh, a poeziiu russkuiu i osobenno frantsuzkuiu – mnogo luchshe, chem oni, chto
>
> futurist, kandidat v sumashedshii dom, svobodno tsitiruet po-ital'ianski Danta i
>
> Marinetti, po angliiski Bairona i Uitmena, a frantszov i nemtsev voobshche
>
> chitaet pachkami. (*Moi vek, moi druz'ia, moi podrugi* 474)
>
> They [two literary critics] arrived [...] We had a long discussion on literature and
>
> my visitors were surprised to see that the Futurist's knowledge of Russian
>
> literature was not inferior to their own, but his knowledge of Russian (and

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[5] In his *Russian Imagism*, Markov also cites this passage, but claims that Roizman "took his information from the second volume of the Russian *Short Literary Encyclopedia*, published in 1966" (1). In the footnotes, however, he admits that "Rojzman [...] was a real insider of Imagism, and the value of his book cannot be overestimated" (87). In fact, the first edition of Roizman's memoirs entitled *To, o chem pomniu* was published in 1926 and, thus, Roizman could not use the subsequently issued *Short Literary Encyclopedia*.

especially French) poetry was even better than theirs. They were surprised that

the Futurist, a potential patient for the nut-house, widely quotes Dante and

Marinetti in Italian, Byron and Whitman in English, and that he simply devours

French and German poets.

In 1918, Shershenevich worked for a newspaper entitled *Mir* (The World) and one of his

responsibilities was to write reviews of recently published English books. He also

translated into Russian two of Shakespeare's plays ("Romeo and Juliet" and

"Cymbeline"). His English language proficiency, therefore, was sufficient to read the

Imagists in the original.

Nowadays, literary scholars differ as to whether Imaginism and Imagism can be

considered kindred movements. While many (Nils Nilson, Jan Jiša, Boris Gillenson,

Severyn Pollak, and Julia Trubikhina, to name just a few) regard the schools as similar,

there are a number of critics who tend to disagree. Vladimir Markov, for example,

indicates that "if one sees a certain likeness in both groups' views of the relationship

between image and language, the similarity appears to be quite accidental and

superficial" (*Russian Imagism* 3). Similarly, in her recently published *Flint on a Bright*

Stone: A Revolution of Precision and Restraint in American, Russian, and German

Modernism, Kirsten Painter asserts that "Imaginism was very different from Pound's

Imagism [...] in both spirit and practice" (221). Both researchers address the topic rather

perfunctorily, dismissing any affiliations straight away. Their position, however, stems

from their particular perspective on Imagism, for they focus exclusively on Lowell's

version of the school. They perceive Imagism as a temperate movement deprived of revolutionary propensities, thus entirely ignoring a radical Poundian wing. While Markov refrains from analyzing the matter in any depth, Painter studies Imagism in connection with Acmeism, rather than with Imaginism. Markov likewise views Acmeism as a movement close to Imagism, noting that "if any Russian poet can be said to be an English type of Imagist, the closest approximation would be Anna Akhmatova [an Acmeist poet] – had she written in free verse. From the English point of view, however, Akhmatova 'sings too much'" (*Russian Imagism* 3).

The critics of both camps seem to miss the point, for they essentially discuss whether there was any direct influence of Imagism on the Russians or not. Meanwhile, if we espouse a different perspective and adopt a different approach, the controversy of Imagism-Imaginism relations might be more fruitfully resolved. Although the available texts, the Imaginists' pronouncements, and Imaginist critics' comments do not suggest anything with regard to direct influence, all of the above-mentioned materials do prove that the Imaginists were *aware* of the Anglo-American School and that the Imagist ideas played a certain role at least in establishing the Russian trend. One should, therefore, consider not so much the *influence* of the Anglo-American movement upon Russian Imaginism, but rather the *presence* of Imagist ideas in the writings of the Russian Imaginist poets. To what extent were Imagist tenets known in Russia? What might have been the points of contact between the movements? These are but a few questions that have to be answered before we proceed.

Even adherents of similarity between the movements appear to have been hampered by the fact that they could not find the sources from which the Russian poets could have learned about Imagism. Indeed, apart from the above-cited publication by Vengerova, who served as a "literary ambassador between the East and the West" (Neginsky i), little is known of the relations between the Russian and English literati in the beginning of the twentieth century and between the two Imagist groups in particular. Meanwhile, such relations certainly existed.

During his London years, Pound met many Russian expatriates. In November 1914, he attempted to organize The College of Arts as an alternative to the traditional continental schools. "Artists of established position, creative minds, men for the most part who have already suffered in the cause of their art" (Pound, "Preliminary Announcement of the College of Arts" 414) were the founders of The College. It is interesting to look at the Faculty of Letters that consisted of four people: Ezra Pound, Ivan Korshune (John Cournos), Zinaida Vengerova ("Vangerowa" in Pound's article), and Cecil Inslee-Dorrian. Pound featured as a professor of "Comparative Poetry," Ivan Korshune – "Russian novelists," Zinaida Vengerova – "Russian Contemporary Thought," and Inslee-Dorrian – "Dramatic Criticism." The announcement described Vengerova as the author of "seven volumes of essays in Russian [and a] contributor to 'The Fortnightly Review'" (414). This document clearly testifies to the fact that the occasion of Vengerova's interview with Pound was not the only time they had met.

Vengerova contributed to *The Fortnightly Review* and, since Pound also had numerous publications in that periodical, he was certainly familiar with her articles. It is not known exactly how they became acquainted, but the available documentary evidence points to several possible ways. The Russian journalist could have met Pound either through her friend Constance Garnett, closely associated with Aldington's and Ford's respective families; or through her distant relative Henry Slominsky, who was Pound's classmate at the University of Pennsylvania; or through John Cournos, a member of the Imagist group.

The latter, being one of the most mysterious figures in the Imagist movement, represents a crucial link between the Imagists and Slavic countries. In the above-quoted "Preliminary Announcement of the College of Arts," Pound provided a short biographical entry on Cournos. From the entry, we may gauge Pound's own perspective on Russian literature: "[Cournos is a] translator of various tales by Gogol, Korolenko, Dostoyevsky, Gorky, Turgenev, Chekov, Andreyev, Sologub, Remizov, etc. (World's Masterpiece series), Contributor to 'The Forum,' 'Lippincott's,' 'The Mask,' etc" (414). But aside from Cournos' often cited characterization of Pound as "one of the kindest men that ever lived" (*Autobiography* 235), his relations with the American author, Imagism, or Russian literati remain uncharted and only Cournos' *Autobiography*, H.D.'s fictional *Bid Me to Live*, Alfred Satterthwaite's "John Cournos and 'H.D.'," and perfunctory notes scattered through Pound's and Aldington's private correspondence make it possible to partially reconstruct the chronology of Cournos' literary career.

Born in 1881 in Zhytomyr, Ukraine, Cournos (his real name was Ivan Korshoon), following his family, immigrated to the United States in 1892. Upon finishing secondary school and several years of apprenticeship, he started to work as a journalist for *The Philadelphia Record*, "one of the best and most widely circulated newspapers in the United States" ("Success of the Philadelphia Record" 8). Although both Cournos and Pound were Philadelphians and lived not far from one another, they met for the first time in London. According to Cournos' memoirs, the meeting took place in 1913 at a Committee of the School of the Theatre gathering organized by Gordon Craig. The first encounter with Cournos evidently made an impression on Pound, for the latter later recalled it on several occasions.

Since they had many interests in common (both were equally interested in literature, music, painting, and publishing matters), they immediately became friends and already on December 19, 1913, Pound wrote to Williams: "He [Brzeska] is the only person with whom I can really be 'Altaforte.' Cournos I like also" (*Pound/Williams* 22). Generally, Pound's correspondence demonstrates that, in 1913-1915, he saw Cournos regularly and appreciated him a great deal (he even planned to have Cournos write articles on Russian literature for *The Dial*).[6] Despite the fact that "Cournos [... wasn't]

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[6] There are a number of other facts that attest to close friendly relations between Pound and Cournos. Thus, while visiting America, Cournos visited Pound's parents and stayed for a day at their house. There he was shown Pound's early childhood writings (including letters to Santa Claus), which convinced Cournos that Pound's "early writing differed in no way from that of other boys" (*Autobiography* 264). Also after Pound

exactly modern"[7] (Pound, *Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn* 23), Pound praised

Cournos' prose style "to the extent of admitting that [Cournos] had a better sense of

prose rhythm than he, adding that if [Cournos] kept it up [he] had a chance of occupying

the place that Arthur Symons once occupied in criticism" (qtd. in Cournos,

Autobiography 248). Pound additionally encouraged Cournos to try his hand at poetry,

and this encouragement resulted in the publication of a small collection of verses entitled

In Exile (1923).[8]

    Their friendship was mutually beneficial. Through Pound, Cournos met Yeats,

Ford, Aldington, H.D., Amy Lowell, and other prominent figures of that time. But it was

through Cournos that Pound became acquainted with Henry Gaudier-Brzeska. Pound's

knowledge of Russian culture and literature appears to have been gained mostly via

Cournos who in 1913-1914 extensively translated from the Russian language.[9] It was

also principally because of Cournos that the *Des Imagistes* appeared.

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married and moved to live together with Dorothy Shakespear, it was Cournos who
inherited his apartment on 10 Church Walk Street (later, another of Pound's friends,
Michio Itow, lived in that apartment).

[7] Indeed, unlike Pound and Pound's many friends, Cournos seems to have never aspired
to be modern. In his *Autobiography*, he even noted: "I am hopelessly old-fashioned"
(186).

[8] The collection, which comprises twenty-eight poems and four translations from the
Russian, does not contain "The Rose," a work published in the *Des Imagistes*.

[9] Pound's works contain several Russian words that he most likely borrowed from
Cournos' novel *The Mask*. In his radio speeches, for example, Pound uses several times

Although Cournos "was [...] poor and obscure [...], he quickly made friends" (Gerald Cumberland, qtd. in Cournos, *Autobiography* 228) and, as a journalist, he had many connections in the world of publishing. According to his *Autobiography*, Alfred Kreymborg, the editor of *The Glebe*, wrote to him asking if he would be interested in publishing a short book with Boni & Boni publisher. Since at the time of this request Cournos did not have a book of his own, he forwarded the offer to Pound and "thus the first Imagist anthology came to be published" (Cournos, *Autobiography* 270). Cournos' only contribution to the *Des Imagistes*, a poem "The Rose," "was wholly due to Ezra, who dragged [him] in, as it were, by the heels" (Cournos, *Autobiography* 270).

Cournos kept in touch with many literati in Eastern Europe and it is highly probable that via his connections the English literary movements in question, as well as Pound's name, became better known in Russia.[10] The Pound-Cournos friendship came to

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the word "nichevo" (nothing) (*"Ezra Pound Speaking"* 157, 313) (Cf. Cournos, *The Mask* 106, 111, 114). Furthermore, in his articles and *Cantos*, Pound repeatedly (at least six times) quoted the phrase "The heart of another is a dark forest" from Turgenev's *A Nest of Gentlefolk*. However, given the fact that he called the quotation a Russian proverb (Turgenev's novel does not suggest this), he must have known something about the expression from other sources. *The Mask* might have been one of such sources, for in the "Overture" to the novel Cournos notes: "Such is the heart of man, which as the Russians say, is a dark forest" (xi).

[10] In 1917, during his visit to Russia, Cournos additionally met a number of Russian literary celebrities and even managed to publish several of articles on contemporary English literature in *Apollo* and *Neva*, the fashionable literature magazines of that time.

an end in 1915 on the account of their disagreements over Gaudier-Brzeska's posthumous heritage. Yet, even the conflict did not make Pound change his attitude towards Cournos' artistic talents. On August 9, 1915, in a letter to Alice Henderson, he wrote: "I am very much displeased with Richard, more displeased with Flint, and within the last week I have found it necessary to eliminate Cournos <also> from my list of acquaintance (re/ Brzeska's death, not on a point of style or literary activity)" (*The Letters of Ezra Pound to Alice Corbin Henderson* 119). He later continued to praise Cournos and quoted him extensively in the *Guide to Kulchur*, the very title of which might have also been suggested by Cournos' writings.[11]

In the beginning of the twentieth century, many Russian literati visited London or knew Pound. Although evidence remains somewhat uncertain, Nikolai Gumilev, the ideologue of the Acmeists, might have been personally acquainted with the Imagists: in any case, he was certainly well aware of their doctrines. In the 1910s, he visited England several times and met many prominent English literary figures. During one of those visits, Gumilev granted an interview to *The New Age* and, as Serge Fauchereau suggests, Gumilev might have met Pound.[12] Given that Pound worked for that magazine as a music and art critic, such a meeting was indeed very plausible.

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[11] The word "kulchur" for the title of Pound's *Guide to Kulchur* might have had its origins in *The Mask*, where Cournos uses the same spelling (see Cournos, *The Mask* 284-290).

[12] For more information, see Serge Fauchereau, "Où Pound et Eliot rencontrent Goumilev, Mandelstam et Akhmatova," in *Europe* (Paris) 57.601 (May 1979), pp. 57-73.

Sergei Makovskii, the editor of the St. Petersburg literary magazine *Apollo*, was also acquainted with Pound. According to the American poet, the legend of Pound's Jewishness originated from a comment by the Russian editor: "The editor of 'APOLLO' (the russian affair), was being impressed by a british official, when he came to the photo in Lustra he asked sotto voce 'Il est Semite?' He was forcibly informed to the contrary" (*Pound/the Little Review* 85). The story became one of Pound's "luminous details" and he repeated it on several occasions.[13]

Furthermore, Pound met Konstantin Balmont, a Russian symbolist poet closely associated with the Moscow Imaginist group.[14] The actual details of the meetings are unknown but one may assume that, since such a rendezvous took place, Balmont should have known at least something about the person he was planning to meet.

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[13] The picture discussed is Eugene Paul Ullman's "Portrait of Ezra Pound." Pound told the same story but without details to Quinn (*The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn* 160).

[14] On April 27, 1921, Pound wrote in a letter to *The Dial*: "This p.m. I am seeing Balmost [sic], the Russian poet on whom Savitzky was to have done an article; don't know whether he does crit. You might let me know (in fact, do let me know) whether I am to try to get him to do an article on contemporary Russia" (*Pound, Thayer, Watson, and the Dial: A Story in Letters* 220). At that time, Balmont had made several contributions to Imaginist anthologies (for example, a poetry collection *My* [We], published by "Chikhi-Pikhi," contains his poems along with works of such prominent Imaginists as Shershenevich, Mariengof, and Kusikov).

The Russian intelligentsia were certainly informed of Pound's activities long before his poems were translated into Russian. Proof of that can be found, for example, in Cummings' diary of trip to Russia, *Eimi*, where he recalls a conversation, held in a Moscow bookstore on May 16, 1931: "Comrade Joyce's Ulysses I presently discovered for myself – in the original. I then make bold to ask cadaverous if he knows of comrade Pound, and cadaverous allows as how he's heard of that comrade… 'tell them to read cantos' soandso at the Régence" (83). Although Cummings' novel does not mention the Russian Imaginists, his writings indirectly suggest that he was familiar with Imaginist works. Apropos of this, Eva Hesse observes: "Cummings Titel *is 5* geht mit Sicherheit zurück auf den Titel eines Gedichtbandes des russischen imaginistischen Dichters Vadim Šeršenevič: *2 x 2=5*" ("It is certain that Cummings' title *is 5* goes back to the title of a collection by the Russian Imaginist poet Vadim Shershenevich: *2 x 2=5*"; 164).

It appears that not only Cummings, but also the Anglo-American Imagists were familiar with Russian contemporary poetry and with works of their Russian counterparts. Aside from Vengerova's and Cournos' contacts, they could have learned about the Imaginists from a number of other sources. Hence, in 1922, Isidor Schneider published a review of Babette Deutsch's and Avrahm Yarmolinsky's book entitled *Modern Russian Poetry: An Anthology* in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, a periodical where Pound once worked as a foreign editor and where the first Imagist manifestos were published. The review praised the new Russian poets:

The book's area of interest begins with Valery Brusov, although stray poems before him paint the desert. Ivanov, Blok, Byely, Klyuev, Esenin, Oreshin, and Mariengof – these shouting, a bit strident, a bit knowing, but independent and conscious young poets are the poets of Russia. The buzzing Pushkin, the crooning Lermontov, the ballyhooing Konstantin Balmont, are the bad starts of Russian poetry. These young men write as original poets are writing in England, France, and America. (230-31)

Moreover, Schneider additionally drew a parallel between Mariengof and Pound: "Mariengof might almost be a Russian visit of Ezra Pound" (231). It is also characteristic that the *Modern Russian Poetry* volume explicitly introduced Esenin and Mariengof as the representatives of "a group which has come into being during the revolution and which calls itself 'imazhinisty' (imagists) [sic]" (164).[15]

Curiously enough, the publication of the anthology coincided with Esenin's trip to Europe and the United States. As Isadora Duncan's husband, he attracted nearly as much attention as his famous wife. Thus, on their arrival to America, *The New York Times* informed its readers: "Drawing her husband's curly head down on her shoulder, Miss Duncan said that he was a young 'imaginist' poet, who had already written many

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[15] The editor of the anthology, Babette Deutsch may serve as an example of an intellectual, perfectly familiar with all the variations of Imagism that are considered in present dissertation. She wrote reviews on Pound's works (*Lustra* in *Reedy's Mirror*, for example), translated Benn's *Morgue and Other Poems*, and several of Esenin's poems (the latter in collaboration with her husband Avrahm Yarmolinsky).

poems […] He is called the greatest poet since Pushkin" ("Isadora Duncan and Poet

Husband Detained on Liner" 3). Other leading newspapers, both American and British,

also extensively commented on Esenin's voyage.[16]

Esenin's poems started to appear regularly in Western European and American

periodicals. Thus, in 1925, *Poetry* published a fragment of his "Preobrazhenie"

(Transfiguration), and in 1930 the second issue of a Dutch literary magazine *Variétés*

revue mensuelle illustrée de l'esprit contemporain featured several works by such Soviet

poets as Esenin, Isaac Babel, Ilya Erenburg, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and Boris Pasternak.

The magazine prominently caught Pound's attention, and he perceived the publication as

a challenge to English literati. In a letter to Cummings, Pound declared: "Competition of

soviet number Varietes [demands] all poss patriotic zeal" (*Pound/Cummings* 19). He

wrote similar letters to Zukofsky, William Carlos Williams, and Robert McAlmon.[17]

On the pages of another periodical, the *Front*, Pound entered into polemics with

Sergei Tretiakov, a poet who during the 1920s published five collections of verses with

the Imaginists. One of the founders of Imaginism, Shershenevich, considered Tretiakov

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[16] For more information, see Gordon McVay "Sergey Esenin in America," in *Oxford Slavonic Papers* 6 (1973): 82-91. The North American audience may also know of Esenin from at least two films based on Isadora Duncan's biography: *Isadora Duncan: The Biggest Dancer in the World* (1966; director – Ken Russel) and Isadora (1968; director – Karel Reisz). Before her departure for the Soviet Union, Duncan had a brief affair with Walter Morse Rummel, Pound's close friend and, in the 1920s, she met Pound at the Paris salon of Natalie Clifford Barney.

[17] See, for example, *Pound/Williams* 103.

akin to the Imaginists: "Okolo nas [...] Sergei Tretiakov" ("Sergei Tretiakov is near us";

"Iskusstvo i gosudarstvo" 5). In December 1930, Tretiakov reported that he had decided

to join a collective farm (kolkhoz) since Soviet agriculture lacked specialists. As a

response, in his "Open Letter to Tretyakow, Kolkhoznik," Pound noted: "It seems to me

that if I were in Russia I might follow Tretjakow's example" (125). Pound, however,

simultaneously indicated that there were essential differences between Russia and

Europe, and what might be good for Russia would not work in Europe:

> I do not think that the more intelligent American and European authors have
>
> advocated anti-bolchevik activities in Russia. I think there is a great deal of doubt
>
> as to whether anything like the Russian revolution is possible, advisable or
>
> necessary for either the U.S.A. or for Western Europe. (125)

The above-mentioned evidence unmistakably indicates that Pound kept an eye on Russia,

and given his habit of studying everything in depth,[18] there is a good chance that he

learned about Tretiakov's affiliation with the Russian Imaginists.

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[18] Although with regard to Pound's study habits, one can find a number of contradictory
testimonials, David Gordon's memoirs provide us an interesting window into the mind
of the poet: "Pound went to some length to verify his information, sometimes more
thoroughly than others. For example, he asked me to track down the name of a snake he
had seen. I spent the afternoon at the Library of Congress filling out about family
Colubrianae, sub-family, Aylyphorous, genus natrix, blue coloration, markings, habitat,
feeding habits, etc., etc. In Canto 90 it appears, 'the blue serpent / glides from the rock
pool'" (Gordon 16-17).

In order to have a complete picture of the relationships between the Russian and Anglo-American movements, one has to consider German Expressionism which had its Russian equivalent with the same name. The Russian Expressionists, however, had very strong connections with the Imaginists. In fact, many critics (Valentin Belentschikow, Endre Bojtár, and J. von Guenther, to name a few) regard Russian Expressionism and Imaginism not only as similar, but essentially as the same things. Indeed, Sokolov, one of the leaders of the Expressionist movement in Russia, attempted to join the Imaginist group. Sokolov even published a eulogistic book *Imazhinistika* (Imaginistics), but as a result of Esenin's opposition (the latter considered him an imitator of Shershenevich), he never became an Imaginist. Representatives of German Expressionism were also affiliated with the Russian Imaginists. Kandinsky, for example, upon his return to Russia, worked with Shershenevich on an encyclopedia of theatre, and traces of his style can be found in the paintings of the Imaginist artist Iakulov.

Apart from the one-syllable difference in their names and the above-mentioned "genetic relations" (to use Dionýz Durišin's term), Russian Imaginism and Anglo-American Imagism/Vorticism shared similar theoretical underpinnings. Their manifestos contain a number of similarities that can hardly be accidental, and, interestingly enough, even their respective wording is at times identical.[19] Given that Nilson and Trubikhina

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[19] Their methods of argumentation were also often similar. Both schools, for example, resorted to mathematical formulas and Chinese language to support their ideas.

have discussed in some details many of the similarities, I reiterate only several

arguments which are important for the present.

Both Vorticist and Imaginist manifestoes proclaimed the death of Futurism,

declared the Image as the main constituent element of poetry and an end in itself, and

demanded precision and clarity of expression. Vorticism stated that "Marinetti – trup'"

(Vengerova, "Angliiskie futuristy" 93) ("Marinetti is a corpse"; Vengerova, "Appendix"

143) and Imaginism concurred: "Skonchalsia mladenets, gorlastyi paren' desiati let ot

rodu (rodilsia 1909 – umer 1919). Izdokh futurism" ("A ten years old loud-mouthed

infant has passed away (born in 1909 – died in 1919). Futurism has dropped dead"; *PI*

7). A year before the publication of the Imaginist "Declaration," Shershenevich, in his

"U kraia 'prelestnoi bezdny'" ("At the Edge of a 'Marvelous Abyss'"), blasted and

blessed Futurism in a manner akin to that of the Vorticists:

> Futurizm umer! Da budet emu zemlia klounadoi! On dolzhen byt' *proklinaem* za
>
> odno to chto u posteli svoei driakhlosti byl poniat vsegda neiskrennim Belym,
>
> spekuliantom razuma Briusovym, dazhe ptichkoi na tropinke bedstvii –
>
> Bal'montom. On dolzhen byt' *blagoslovliaem* uzhe za to, chto nes v sebe
>
> imazhionizm. (367)
>
> Futurism has died! Let the ground be its buffoonery! It should be *blasted* only for
>
> the fact that at the bed of its senility, it was understood by the ever insincere
>
> Belyi, by the speculator of intellect Bryusov, and even by the bird on the path of

calamities Balmont. It must be *blessed* only for the fact that it carried Imaginism within itself.[20]

Whereas Pound regarded the Image as "pervozdannaia stikhiia poezii, ee pigment" (Vengerova, "Angliiskie futuristy" 93) ("the primary element of poetry, its pigment"; Vengerova, "Appendix" 143) and defined it as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" ("A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" 202), Shershenevich saw in the Image "sushchnost' poezii" ("the essence of poetry"; *Listy imazhinista* 367) and Mariengof described the term as "kratchaishee rasstoianie s naibol'shei skorost'iu" ("the shortest distance at the highest speed"; *PI* 35).

Both schools equally emphasized the necessity of *vers libre* for the form and objectivity for the content. The Russian poets, however, associated *vers libre* not so much with rhythmic and metric freedom, as, first and foremost, with the liberation of metaphor – a process that would result in "chrezvychainoi rezkost'iu obraznykh perekhodov" ("extreme abruptness of image shifts"; *PI* 37). They heavily favored a type of metaphor where tenor and vehicle represented concrete objects. Similarly to Pound, who ridiculed the expression "dim lands of peace" ("A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste"

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[20] The words "proklinaem" ("cursed," "blasted") and "blagoslovliaem" ("blessed") are underlined in the original and they interestingly coincide with the idioms that Pound used in his interview with Vengerova (see "Angliiskie futuristy" 93-104). This fact additionally proves that Shershenevich was familiar with the article.

202),[21] the Imaginists criticized the Symbolist tendency to mix the concrete with the abstract.

All of the above-said clearly demonstrates that there were undeniably points of contact between the Imagists and their Russian counterparts. In what follows, I analyze three representative Imaginist poems ("Transfiguration" by Sergei Esenin, "Arms like a Necktie Tied around the Neck" by Anatolii Mariengof, and "Dynamics of the Static" by Vadim Shershenevich) with respect to the propensities of the Imagist movement discussed in the present dissertation.

Soviet critics traditionally interpreted Esenin's long poem "Preobrazhenie" ("Transfiguration") as a glorification of the Bolshevik Revolution. Thus, V.F. Zemski asserts: "Poema iavliaetsia otklikom na sobytiia Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii" ("The poem is a response to the Great October Socialist Revolution"; qtd. in Esenin, *Sobranie sochinenii* 2: 260). However, Esenin himself attributes an entirely different meaning to this poem. In the already-quoted letter to Ivanov-Razumnik from May 1921, he wrote: "Delo ne v imazhizme, kotoroe pritianula k nam Z. Vengerova v sbornike 'Strelets' 1915 g., a my vziali da nemnogo ego izmenili. Delo v moem osoznanii, preobrazhenii mira posredstvom [...] obrazov. Vspomnite..." ("The point is not Imagism which Z. Vengerova forced upon us in the *Strelets* collection of 1915, and which we slightly changed. The point is my understanding of the world, transfiguration

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[21] Pound took the expression from Ford Madox Ford's poem "On a March Road (Winter Nightfall)" published in his poetry collection entitled *The Face of the Night* (1904). See Ford's *Collected Poems* 199.

of it by means of [...] images. Recall [...]"; *PSS* 6: 126-7) and he continues by quoting a part of his "Transfiguration." In such a way, the poet links transfiguration, which was described in the text, not so much to political, but rather to poetic reality, i.e., to the realm of the Word. It is, therefore, Imaginism that brings forth the transfiguration of actuality. In a way, Esenin, similarly to Pound, considers the movement as the beginning of the literary Risorgimento.

Further in the letter, the poet defines Imaginism as "misticheskoe izografstvo" ("mystical izographism"; *PSS* 6: 126), as a literary style begotten by the "epokha dvoinogo zreniia" ("epoch of double vision"; *PSS* 6: 126). According to him, authentic Imaginist art should always contain a mystery so that the reader be permanently engaged in deciphering the meaning of the artifacts:

Ne liubliu ia skifov, ne umeiushchhikh vladet' lukom i zagadkami ikh iazyka.

Kogda oni posylali svoim vragam ptits, myshei, liagushek i strely, Dariiu nuzhen

byl tselyi sinedrion tolkovatelei. Iskusstvo dolzhno byt' v nekotoroi stepeni tozhe

takim. Ia ego khorosho izuchil i potomu tak spokoino i radostno nazyvaiu sebia i

moikh tovarishchei "imazhinistami." (*PSS* 6: 126)

I don't like the Scythians who don't know how to use the bow and arrow and the

riddles of their language. When they sent birds, mice, frogs, and arrows at their

enemies, Darius needed a whole synedrion of soothsayers. To a certain extent, art

should also be like that. I have learned it well and that is why so humbly and so

cheerfully I call myself and my friends "Imaginists."

Consequently, the actual meaning of the Imaginist poem is always hidden, and strenuous

efforts need to be made in order to discern that meaning. Keeping this in mind and

remembering that Esenin saw his "Transfiguration" as an embodiment of Imaginist art, I

shall proceed to the textual analysis of the poem.

Esenin's "Transfiguration" consists of five parts, each of which (with the

exception of the fourth) has five stanzas. Structurally, the poem is reminiscent of a

prophecy. In the first part, the poet fervently prays to God with the remarkable words:

"Gospodi, otelis'!" ("Calve, God!"), "Zvezdami spelenai Telitsu-Rus'" ("Swaddle the

Heifer-Rus with stars"), and "Nebesnogo moloka dazhd' mne dnes'" ("Give me this day

your celestial milk"). Hence, the lyrical self understands the divine in terms of everyday

country life, and, in combining images from the two realms, the discursive instance

lowers the divine, while simultaneously elevating the mundane. Because the phrasing

cardinally differs from familiar expressions, it produces an effect of passionate sincerity

but concurrently singles out the poet, making him a chosen but lonely clairvoyant. On

the meta-level, Esenin implies that Jegudiel, the archangel apparently identified with

Imaginism, should destroy the "new Sodom" of Symbolist and Futurist poetry. Since

Jegudiel (Jehudiel) is considered a patron of kings or leaders and a "ruler of the

movements of the celestial spheres" (Davidson 158), the Imaginists' introjections of this

spiritual being betokens their claims to leadership. And as once the total destruction

resulted in humble Lot's elevation, so too the Imaginists hoped to bring out a new

poetics by demolishing dormant (though dominant) literary currents. In a letter to

Ivanov-Razumnik, a critic to whom Esenin devoted his "Transfiguration," the poet

wrote: "Do togo nakureno u nas seichas v literature, chto prosto dyshat' nechem" ("Now

it is so smoky in our literature that one cannot breathe"; *PSS* 6: 132). Imaginism appears

to have conceived its principal task in such a ventilation and aeration of poetry.

In the second part, God, having taken the form of animal beings (a cricket and a

titmouse), answers the prayer and confirms that the transfiguration will indeed take place

soon:

"O verui, nebo vspenitsia,

Kak lai, sverknet volna.

Nad roshchei oshchetenitsia

Zlatym shchenkom luna [...]

I vypolzet iz kolosa,

Kak roi, pshenichnyi zlak,

Chtoby pchelinym golosom

Ozlatonivit' mrak..." (*PSS* 2: 53-4)

"Oh, believe that the sky will foam,

A wave will sparkle like a bark,

The moon will bristle above the grove

Like a golden puppy [...]

And out of an ear of wheat

Grains will emerge like a swarm,

> To plow the fields of gloom
>
> With their apian voice..."[22]

Since it is the earth that is to be subjected to transfiguration, the imagery becomes earthy

and has no more religiously-colored allusions. However, although everything refers to

the ordinary objects of quotidian peasant life (cow, calf, etc) or to objects frequently

encountered in the Russian folk tradition (sky, dawn, moon, etc), God's language

remains intricate and difficult to understand. Apparently, only the poet can attend to the

heavenly message, but even he cannot fully comprehend it. At least, according to Petr

Oreshin's memoirs, Esenin himself did not have a clear grasp of what his poem might

mean: "Ty ponimaesh': gospodi, otelis'! Da net, ty poimi khoroshen'ko: go-spo-di, o-te-

lis'!.. Ponial? [...] Ia, vot ubei menia Bog, nichego tut ne ponimaiu" ("Do you

understand: calve, God! Well, no, try to understand: calve, God!.. Got it? I myself, may

God strike me down, do not understand any of this here"; *S.A. Esenin v vospominaniiakh*

sovremennikov 1: 265-8). The bard, therefore, acts as Moses on the mountain, as a

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[22] At first glance, the language seems to be more symbolist than imagist. However, given
the existing parallels between Imagism and Symbolism (see, for example, René Taupin's
The Influence of French Symbolism on Modern American Poetry [New York: AMS P,
1985]), it is not surprising that much of the Imagist poetry retains certain features of its
Symbolist precursor. In Pound's *Cantos*, which are regarded by many as an Imagist work
(see Lewis 113-31), one can find a number of similar places. For instance, "So that the
vines burst from my fingers / And the bees weighted with pollen / Move heavily in the
vine-shoots: / chirr – chirr – chir-rikk – a purring sound, / And the birds sleepily in the
branches. / ZAGREUS IO ZAGREUS!" (*The Cantos of Ezra Pound* 76).

prophet who communicates a cryptic heavenly message to his people.[23] In the conversation with the divine, two realities, the celestial and the terrestrial, converge, and the poet occupies a central position, being equally distant from both poles. Thus, he is always an outsider, doomed by his extraordinary visionary abilities to live among his people, to lead them, and yet remain permanently lonely.

On having heard God's promise, the poet goes to profess the truth, and the third part of the poem covers his fervid revelations. He enthusiastically praises his compatriots, naming them "lovtsy vselennoi, nevodom zari zacherpnuvshie nebo" (*PSS* 2: 54) ("fowlers of the universe [...] who trailed heaven with the net of dawn"; *Modern Russian Poetry* 168) and urges them to welcome the advent of a "novyi seiatel'" ("a new sower") who plants the seeds of new knowledge that will eventually transform reality. Riding a mare, the "visitor" quickly approaches and one can already feel his presence. It seems that Esenin associates the Imaginist poets with the sower and considers the mare a vehicle for bringing a new poetics. Therefore, the extraordinary nature of the moment is presented in an extraordinary way.

The fourth part continues the theme of prophecies and expands it by depicting the first signs of the coming transfiguration. The sky finally rains milk, the word swells with wisdom, the dawn is ready to greet the birth of the new, and even "solntse, kak koshka, [...] Lapkoiu zolotoiu / Trogaet [poeta] volosa" ("the sun, like a cat, touches [the poet's]

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[23] It is interesting to note that Esenin's first "mature" poem (written after he left his native village in the Riazan district for Moscow) was entitled "Prorok" ("Prophet").

hair with its golden paw"; *PSS* 2: 55). This part is the shortest, and its lines are reminiscent of the linings of an artist's brush on a parti-colored picture.

Finally, the last segment presents the ultimate stage of the transfiguration. The honored guest, having accomplished his mission, returns to "his gardens." However, before he leaves, he presents a new Word as a gift:

Kak iaitso, nam brosit slovo

S proklevavshimsia ptentsom. (*PSS* 2: 56)

[He] will throw the word to us

Like an egg chipped through by a nestling.

The word of the prophet will give rise to a new verbal paradigm and, thus, transfiguration will ultimately lead to the emergence of new expressive means. That, according to Esenin, appears to be the objective of the entire Imaginist enterprise.

The style of the poem noticeably aims at shaking the reader's dreamy mood, making the reader think, wonder, grow angry, but, first and foremost, see the world anew. For example, Esenin turns the clichéd image of dawn, for centuries associated with the mysteries of birth, into a cow, and, what is more, not the respected sacred cow of Hinduism or any other religious or philosophical system, but an ordinary cow with a tail lifted in answer to the call of nature. In such a way, the image becomes anti-poetic, anti-aesthetic, and very provocative.[24] While the Imaginists themselves praised this

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[24] It is interesting to note that the image of a domestic animal with a lifted tail was always popular among the Imaginists. For example, Shershenevich's *Loshad' kak*

verbal figure for it perfectly illustrated "soedinenie chistogo s nechistym" ("the combination of the pure and the impure"; *PI* 34), one of their main Imaginist principles, it does not come as a surprise that the same image elicited numerous harsh critical comments. A. Voronskii, for instance, noted: "Obraz zari, zadravshei khvost, kak korova, bezobrázen i bezóbrazen v itoge" ("the image of the dawn with a lifted tail, as if it were a cow, is ugly and ultimately imageless"; qtd. in Esenin II 330).[25] Generally, all of Esenin's hooliganism and scandalism were directed towards similar provocative (and, consequently, enlivening) goals.

Similarly to Esenin, another Imaginist poet Anatolii Mariengof, who, in the words of Shershenevich, "rodilsia vmeste s imazhinizmom" ("was born together with Imaginism"; *Komu ia zhmu ruku* 7), also widely resorts to provocative devices and statements. He is challenging not only in the choice of his themes, but also in his manner of their representation. His remarkable word combinations, as well as unusual ways of expressing feelings, shock and attract us at the same time.

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loshad' (A Horse as a Horse), opens with a similar image of a horse with a lifted tail and, in his collection, the image is also associated with poetic activity. The image of the horse also frequently appeared in the works of the German Expressionist artists, whose one of the most influential groups was even called "Der Blaue Reiter" ("The Blue Rider").

[25] In the Russian original, there is a pun: the word "bezobrázen" (with an emphasis on the third syllable) means "ugly," while its homograph "bezóbrazen" (with an emphasis on the second syllable) means "imageless."

Indeed, in terms of its architectonics, Mariengof's "Ruki galstukom" ("Arms like a Necktie Tied around the Neck"), one of his best known long Imaginist poems, is fairly simple. Overshadowed by unusual imagery, the poem does not feature any particularly new metric or rhythmic structures. Its rhymes are predominantly inexact: "shei-obriuzgshie," "paneliami-v kel'i," "segodnia-skhodni," "seichas zhe-priezzhaiushchikh." Thematically, the poem is also not complicated – the poet asks his beloved to embrace him. As the nature of this gesture would suggest, most of the poem's images refer to different parts of the human body:

- primarily to the face: "podborodki" ("chins"), "ukho" ("ear"), "glaza" ("eyes"), "zrachki" ("pupils"), "resnitsy" ("eyelashes"), "guby" ("lips");

- sometimes to the hands: "golubye ladoni podnebes'ia" ("blue palms of the sky's hands"), "ruki serebriannymi paneliami opushchu vniz" ("I will lower my hands like silver panels");

- rarely to the feet: "liagu prospektom u nog" ("I will lie down like an avenue at [her] feet") , "zheltaia noga" ("a yellow foot").

Perhaps, one of the most interesting architectonic characteristics of the poem is the correspondence between its theme and structure. Mariengof starts with the words "obviazhite, skorei obviazhite vkrug shei / Belye ruki galstukom" ("tie, please be quick and tie around my neck / Your white arms like a necktie"), and ends in analogous begging – "obviazhite vkrug shei galstukom belye ruki" ("tie your white arms like a

necktie around my neck"). Hence, as the arms of the beloved lie around the poet's neck, so too similar lines are embracing the poem.

With regard to "Arms like a Necktie Tied around the Neck," Shershenevich once noted: "Mariengof prinadlezhit k shkole imazhinizma i nam kazhet'sia edinstvenno pravil'nym podkhodom k ego stikham – eto otsenka obrazov poemy. [...] Ritm obrazov, a ne ritm strok otobrazhaet dinamiku" ("Mariengof belongs to the school of Imaginism and it seems to us the only correct approach to his poetry – is the evaluation of the images of the poem. [...] It is the rhythm of images and not the rhythm of lines that reflect the dynamics"; qtd. in *PI* 500). Indeed, it is not so much the structure of the work, it is rather its imagery that makes the poem unique and, for this reason, the analysis of image arrangements should be more fruitful than the examination of the architectonics.

In the process of creating his images, Mariengof most often resorts to two stylistic devices, namely, objectification and anthropomorphism. Thus, in "Arms like a Necktie Tied around the Neck," he compares female arms with a necktie, and, in doing so, objectifies a part of the human body. In other places, he anthropomorphizes body parts:

>Glaza vliublennykh umeiut
>
>Na tishine vyshivat'
>
>Uzory nemykh besed. (*PI* 227)
>
>The eyes of those in love
>
>Know how to embroider on silence

The figures of soundless conversations.

Vecher-shveitsar

V goluboi livree – podaval Peterburgu

Ognennoe pal'to zari. (*PI* 228)

The evening like a doorman in a blue livery

Held out to Petersburg

Dawn's fiery coat.

Moroz poliroval l'dom

Asfal'tov serye nogti. (*PI* 228)

The frost polished with ice

The grey nails of the asphalt.

Solntse miakot' snega gryzlo zolotoi kirkoi. (*PI* 228)

The sun gnawed on the pulp of the snow with its golden mattock.

The above-quoted lines do not present body parts as symbols (i.e., the eyes do not stand for the soul, the sun for God, etc); they rather animate them. Consequently, the sun, for example, still remains the sun, but, all of a sudden, it starts to function in an entirely unfamiliar way by transforming into a miner while its rays turn into a mattock. In fact, all the Imaginists widely employed a similar principle of anthropomorphism and it is hardly accidental that Shershenevich's *Loshad' kak loshad'* (A Horse as a Horse) opens

with a poem entitled "Printsip basni" ("The Principle of a Fable"), for fables, deeply

rooted in the folk tradition,[26] frequently feature anthropomorphized animals or objects.

At the level of content, one can observe the lyric self addressing his beloved,

indulging himself in digressions, and, at least at one moment, reflecting upon himself.

Thus, there is a combination of attitudes towards the reader, the universe, and the author.

The lyric self repeatedly calls his beloved, the embodiment of the reader, to actions:

"obviazhite skorei" ("tie quickly"), "seichas zhe izvlekite koren' kvadratnyi" ("calculate

the square root without delay"), or "proroite zubami transhei" ("dig trenches with your

teeth"). He noticeably shows enthusiasm and impatience and, having assumed a leading

role, all the time hustles the reader to act immediately.

Despite the fact that practically everything is anthropomorphized,[27] the universe

appears somewhat tragically colored. Because other of Mariengof's poems also bear

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[26] Anglo-American Imagism also has roots in folk tradition. Flint's "History of Imagism," for example, mentions the nursery rhyme "This is the House that Jack Built" as a "perfect model" for an Imagist poem (see F.S. Flint, "History of Imagism," in *The Egoist* 2.15 (May 1, 1915): 70)

[27] The frequent use of anthropomorphization practiced by the Imaginists might be explained by their desire to describe objective reality in terms of human experience. In times of economic, political, and societal change, when reality preceded language, new verbal devices had to be found to cope with the rapture of onthology and linguistics. In such a situation, anthropomorhization was fruitfully employed as "a means of taking hold of things which suddenly [appeared] startlingly uncontrollable and independent" (Webster 10-11).

similar grim modulations, critics sometimes characterized his poetry as "obychnaia

mrach'" ("the usual gloominess"; qtd. in *PI* 500). Similarly to Esenin, Mariengof

frequently utilizes Christian symbols, mingling them with images from nature or

folklore: "ikona neba" ("icon of the sky"), "molchaniia khorosho sobirat' v kelii" ("it is

good to collect silence in a monk's cell"), and "vremia perebiralo chetki" ("time fingered

its rosary"). He also recurrently employs nocturnal imagery: "ne gorbilsia vecher"

("evening did not stoop its shoulders"), "ne kachalas' noch'" ("the night did not swing"),

"sapog nochi" ("the night's boot"), "vytekli sumerki" ("twilight leaked away"), "vecher-

shveitsar" ("evening like a doorman"), "luna shevelila ukhom" ("the moon moved its

ear"), "maiachkami zazhzhennye luny" ("the moons ignited like beacon lights"), etc. All

these semi-religious, semi-mythological, and semi-natural images create a blurry semi-

real atmosphere.

In this murky world, the overenthusiastic lyric self displays his readiness to

sacrifice himself for others: "prikazhet – i liagu prospektom u nog" ("if she orders, I will

lie down like an avenue at her feet"). Thus, even though he leads, he is simultaneously

ready to serve. Apparently, it is the desire for company that makes him ready to submit

his ego to another person. The lyric self does not simply miss his party ("ne bylo vas i ne

bylo sumerek" ["you were not there and neither was the twilight"]), he tangibly suffers

from his loneliness ("k pristaniam bezumiia i vchera i segodnia mysli brosali chalok

mechty" ["yesterday and today my thoughts cast the rope slings of the dream in the

harbors of insanity"]). In such a way, the author seeks to move from the condition of

loneliness to the condition of gregariousness, but it is obvious that the former modus is more familiar to him.

The lyric character of the third patriarch of Imaginism, Vadim Shershenevich, also finds himself in a similar position. In the "Dinamas statiki" ("Dynamics of the Static"), he is portrayed standing alone at the outskirts of a city, at the border of a metropolis and nature, observing simultaneously the urban and the pristine. Yet the poem presents not casual leisurely contemplation – it is rather an active act of imagination, inner mental agitation disguised by abeyance in outer appearance.

In fact, "The Dynamics of the Static" contributes to the Imaginist polemics with futurism and serves as an illustration of one of the key Imaginist principles to which Shershenevich referred as "poetic dynamism." In his *2 x 2= 5*, the poet maintained:

> Futurizm krasotu bystroty podmenil krasivost'iu suety. Dinamizm ne v
>
> suetlivosti, a v staticheskom vzaimodeistvii materialov. [...] Dinamizm
>
> vul'garnyi – v nagromozhdenii idei. Dinamizm poeticheskii – v smeshenii
>
> materialov. Ne dinamichen laborant, begaiushchii vokrug kolby, no dinamichna
>
> tarelka s vodoi, kogda v nee broshen karbid. (*PI* 27-28)
>
> Futurism substituted the beauty of speed with the beauty of bustling. Dynamism
>
> is found not in bustling, but in the static interaction of materials. [...] Vulgar
>
> dynamism is in the piling up of ideas. Poetic dynamism consists in the blending
>
> of materials. A laboratory assistant who runs around a retort cannot be called
>
> dynamic, but a plate, containing water and carbide, is dynamic.

Written in Sokolniki, a district of Moscow famous for its park, the poem presents this very type of "poetic dynamism." Despite the recreational surroundings, the poet is psychologically active, producing thousands of images in his churning mind. The imagination undeniably gives him a distinctive way of perceiving the outer world and, as a result, he is superior to other people.

The outward appearance of the verse, its form, and its traditional anapestic meter and alternating rhyme (ABAB) also correspond to the quiet environment depicted. It is, thus, not the prosody but semantics that makes the verse modernistic. The author achieves the effect of uniqueness not so much by coalescing ideas into a single theory, but rather by combining different materials. The lyric self observes a forest, a meadow, air, and sky; he listens to the far echoes of cars in the city. These two processes – the visual and the auditory – are mixed in such a manner that the visual provides continuation to the auditory and vice versa. The thought boils among the unusual metaphors, jumping from one image to another. One constantly has to substitute poetic images with familiar objects.

Each line contains a provocative element, an unexpected statement, or a linguistic surprise. Such quest for originality is one of the particularities of Shershenevich's style and, as was mentioned earlier, of the entire Imaginist movement. Apropos this, Shershenevich maintained:

Esli my kriticheski obratimsia k liubomu poeticheskomu proizvedeniiu i k tomu

vpechatleniiu, kotoroe ono proizvodit na nas, my uvidim, chto tol'ko novoe i

original'noe sposobno nas vzvolnovat', vrezat'sia v kuchu nashikh myslei, nashikh vpechatlenii, podobno tomu, kak avtomobil' vryvaetsia v kuchu prazdnykh zevak i, umchavshis', ostavliaet ranennago. Etot okrovavlennyi, sudorozhno korchashchiisia polumertvets i budet tem vpechatleniem, kotoroe ostaetsia v nashem soznanii posle prochteniia istinnogo proizvedeniia iskusstva. (*Futurizm bez maski* 8)

If we consider any poetic work critically and the impression it produces, we will see that only the new and the original can move us, burn itself into our thoughts, our impressions. It is like an auto that runs into a crowd of idle gapers and races away, leaving behind a wounded person. This bleeding, convulsing near dead person will be precisely the impression that is left in our consciousness after we have read a genuine work of art.

A juxtaposition of recognizable reality with an unusual, almost magical description does not only defamiliarize the quotidian experiences (to use the term of the Russian Formalists), thus creating the effect of novelty, but also produces the sense of double vision. The impression of duality is additionally reinforced by such stylistic devices as anthropomorphism and zoomorphism, since, similarly for Esenin and Mariengof, Shershenevich frequently employs both devices:

- "u vozdukha vesnushki moshkary" ("the air has freckles made of gnats");

- "shmel' – pestryi pochtal'on tsvetochnyi" ("a bumblebee is [like] a motley floral postman");

- "avto sverlit u poldnia zub" ("an auto is drilling the noon's tooth");

- "polden' zaprokinulsia" ("the noon has fallen over");

- "spit solnechnyi karas'" ("a sunny crucian carp is sleeping");

- "myslei murav'i" ("ants of thoughts").

Such an eidological organization of the poem creates a whirlpool of images that is similar to Pound's vortex. It indeed appears that the poet intended not so much to make the reader see things anew, but to give the reader new eyes, so that the latter be able to see the elements of the real in the magic as well as the magic in the real.

Thus, Russian Imaginism evidently emphasized a triad consisting of aesthetic individualism, provocatism, and the semi-reality of the world. Positioning themselves as a "declassed social category," the Imaginists attempted to create an "army of art warriors," an army that would fight in the front lines of the poetic avant-garde. Apart from warriors, they often compared themselves to prophets and sages, and had great ambitions for leadership.

Provocatism is also frequently reiterated by the Imaginists. Having borrowed the Futurist publicity methods, the poets acted in a scandalous manner, writing revolutionary slogans on monastery walls and renaming Moscow streets after themselves. "V to vremia bylo modno epatirovat'" ("It was fashionable to startle at that time"; *Moi vek, moi druz'ia, moi podrugi* 460), Shersenevich recalled in his memoirs. The Imaginists produced shocking images, used shocking language, and performed shocking actions. In effect, practically all their poems contain elements that might easily be viewed as

offensive or insulting. They challenged the most sacred traditional values, such as God, peace, and aesthetics; and simultaneously they glorified revolution, destruction, and anarchy.

While individualist and provocative features can be relatively easily discerned from Imaginist poetry, its semi-realism is not so obvious and usually escapes critical inquiry. Yet, even Imaginist manifestoes put forth a dual world picture. For example, in his *Buian-ostrov: Imazhinizm* (The Island of Buian: Imaginism), Mariengof notes:

> Telesnost', oshchutimost', bytologicheskaia blizost' nashei poezii govoriat o realisticheskom fundamente imazhinisticheskoi poezii. Opuskanie zhe iakorei mysli v glubochaishie propasti chelovecheskogo i planetnogo dukha – o ee mistitsizme. [...] My sovershaem oba puti, nimalo ne somnevaias' v ikh pravil'nosti. Ibo v konechnom schete vsiakii mistitsizm (esli eto ne chisteishee sharlatanstvo) – realen i vsiakii realizm (esli eto ne poshleishii naturalizm) – mistichen. (*PI* 42)

> Corporality, palpability, and the mundaneness of our poetry point to the realistic basis of Imaginist poetry. And casting the anchors of thought into the deepest abysses of the human spirit, as well as that of the world, indicates its mysticism. [...] We take both roads and have no doubts that we are right. After all, any mysticism (if it is only not charlatanism) is real and any realism (if it is only not the tritest form of naturalism) has mystical qualities.

Despite the fact that the Imaginists themselves did not reckon with their subject matter,[28] their poetry did contain certain images that were more widespread than others. Evoking certain parallels with Baudelaire's artistic universe, corpses, night, and moon are but a few such images. Like the objects they represent, these eidos imbue the familiar world with mysterious metaphysical existence and, similarly to the Imagist or Expressionist ones, they are often linked in one way or another to death.

In this regard, it is not surprising that the first Imaginist declaration starts with a reference to the dead: "Izdokh futurizm" ("Futurism is dead"; *PI* 7). And later, while developing the theoretical premises of the new literary trend, Mariengof reemphasized: "Iskusstvo neset smert' [...] Voinstvo iskusstva – mertvoe voinstvo [...] Ot odnogo prikosnoveniia poetichesko obraza stynet krov' veshchi i chuvstva" ("Art brings death [...] The army of art is the army of the dead [...] The blood of things and feelings grows cold from the mere touch of a poetic image"; *PI* 32).

The thanatomorphic image of the corpse, often in combination with the things of daily life, is richly represented in Imagist poetry. Ivnev, for instance, mixes together representations of a corpse and a candle and the following lines present a result of such a mixture:

Zamolkla panikhida.

Dymiatsia trupy svech, kak budto iantari. (*PI* 296)

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[28] For the Russian Imaginists, "tema, soderzhanie – [...] slepaia kishka iskusstva" ("theme and content [were] the blind intestine of art"; *PI* 8).

The requiem ceremony has ended

Like amber stones, the corpse-like candles are giving off smoke.

In several poems, Shershenevich evokes corpses to associate a poet with

"bronzoveiushchii trup" ("a corpse that turns into bronze"; *PI* 69) and a poet's brain with

a morgue (*PI* 72). In his "Itak itog" ("Thus to Conclude"), summing up the essence of his

life, he comes to a rather pessimistic conclusion:

Itak itog: khodiachii trup

So stikhotvornoiu viazankoi! (*PI* 113)

Thus to conclude – a walking corpse

With a bundle of poems!

Similarly to Shershenevich, Mariengof tends to associate the corpse with the results of

poetic creativity:

Buria poet, molnii nadev stikhar'.

Nikakimi ptitsami ne vykliuiutsia

Mertvye glaza stikhov. (*PI* 224)

The storm sings, dressed in the alb of lighting

No birds will peck away

The dead eyes of poems.

While in Shershenevich's and Mariengof's cases there is self-reflection, Esenin uses the

image of the corpse for describing nature:

Pereviazana v snopy soloma,

Kazhdyi snop lezhit, kak zheltyi trup. (*PI* 156)

Straw is bound into sheaves,

Every sheaf lies like a yellow corpse.

Or urban pictures:

Posmotri: mezh skeletov domov,

Slovno mel'nik neset kolokol'nia

Mednye meshki kolokolov. (*PI* 157)

Look – among the skeletons of houses,

A belfry carries copper bags of bells

Like a miller.

Another image, which can be associated with Thanatos, is darkness or night. The association is both very ancient and widespread. In Hesiodic *Theogony*, it is the goddess of the night, Nyx, who gives birth to Thanatos, the embodiment of death. Nocturnal darkness can generally be defined as the other world's day. In this regard, it is interesting to note that Ernst Reimbold, who in his *Die Nacht im Mythos, Kultus, Volksglauben und in der transpersonalen Erfahrung* (Night in Myths, Cults, Folk Beliefs, and in Transpersonal Experience) distinguishes three types of night (i.e., primordial [die Urnacht], terrestrial [die irdische Nacht], and the night of Hades or the night of the dead [die Nacht des Hades, die Nacht der Toten]), in one way or another, connects all these types to the idea of death.

Poetry of the Imaginists contains numerous references to night, which ultimately allude to mortality or transcendental realities. Mariengof associates night not only with death, but also with its attributes – despair and crying:

Noch', kak sleza, vytekla iz ogromnogo glaza

I na kryshy spolzla po resnitsam. (*PI* 196)

Night, like a tear, trickled out a huge eye

And crawled along the eyelashes down to the roofs.

For Shershenevich, all human life appears to be dark and night-like:

I pravliu ia vo t'me vechernei

Korabl' k maiaku vdali... (*PI* 53)

And in the darkness I navigate my ship

Towards a lighthouse in the distance...

Generally, Imaginist images of the night often imply the idea of death or, in Reimbold's words, represent "the night of the dead," which "in its broadest sense, [...] is mainly based on three components: on the burials practiced in the gloomy darkness of the graves from time immemorial, on the nearness of sleep and death as well as on the widespread belief that the dead persons wander during nighttime; the night is the realm of the dead" (136). And just as the night or death dissociates people from the real, simultaneously bringing them into closer contact with the mystical, poetic images of the night or death do something similar, thus contributing to creating a semi-real ambience.

Chapter 4

"The Only Ukrainian Imagist": Bohdan-Ihor Antonych and Imagism

> Europezation is impossible without adopting
>
> the European world outlook,
>
> without understanding ideas that shake Europe.
>
> (Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, "Primitive Europezation")

Ezra Pound's *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir* includes several letters by the sculptor Gaudier-Brzeska written from the front lines of battle during World War I. In one of the correspondences (the letter to Edward Wadsworth dated by November 18, 1914), Gaudier-Brzeska told his friend that he had been reading on primitive art in an old (and the only available to him) issue of *La Revue des Deux Mondes*. The sculptor says that he is "greedy to see much vorticism," and, immediately after that, notes: "In the place we are in to-day [...] there's one small statue of a seated Christ, Polish work I believe, very primitive with a great emotion, it is carved in a log of oak" (*GB* 72). Thus, in a curious way, Gaudier-Brzeska fuses the Polish sculpture of a seated Christ with Vorticist ideas, evidently perceiving the sculpture as a Vorticist artifact.

Although it is not known precisely which carving Gaudier-Brzeska saw or how the Polish work appeared in a French village, one can be fairly certain as to the ethnographic origin of the relic. Woodcut figures of the seated Christ, known as *Christ the Sorrowful*, are especially popular in south-eastern Poland – a part of the country

commonly referred to as Lesser Poland at the beginning of the twentieth century. Lesser Poland comprised the territories of the contemporary Polish and Ukrainian Carpathians, as well as the Galicia region, which is also presently divided between Poland and Ukraine. The rich folk traditions of the region produced a number of images linked to the seated Christ, and for the local people, the figure symbolizes God grieving over the sins of humankind. The sculptures of *Christ the Sorrowful* can be frequently encountered everywhere in the provinces either as monuments at graveyards (for example, in the Old Cemetery in Zakopane, Poland) or as monuments on a cathedral cupola (for example, in the Chapel of the Boims in Lviv, Ukraine).

As an aside, it is interesting to note that in Pound's *Cantos* the only reference to Ukraine also alludes to that region. In the "Adams Cantos," Pound writes:

> Who after Lolme need to write of regal republics?
>
> recent instance
>
> > the Ukraine insurrection
>
> only in Neuchâtel
>
> > ἄρχειυ καὶ ἄρχεσθαι
>
> as in ancient Rhodes, probably in three branches...
>
> (*The Cantos of Ezra Pound* 394)

The above-cited passage is almost an exact quotation of a sentence from John Adams' essay "A Defense of the Constitutions of the Government of the United States of America," in which the president notes:

We have a recent instance, in the insurrection in the Ukraine, which was only

occasioned by the vexations of those among us who had there purchased lands.

We despised the courage of the poor inhabitants of that country; they found a

resource in despair; and nothing is more terrible than the despair of those who

have no courage. (372-3)

For this passage, John Adams himself borrows a reference to Ukraine from a book

entitled *Oeuvres du Philosophe Bienfaisant* (Works of the Beneficial Philosopher) by the

Polish King Stanislaw I, who discusses a peasant uprising dubbed the

"Haidamachchyna." This uprising broke out in the spring of 1734 and soon spread

through the Ukrainian-populated provinces of Podolia and Galicia. In the Ukrainian

areas of the Carpathian Mountains the rebellion was called the "Opryshko" movement.

Given the parallel drawn by Gaudier-Brzeska between Vorticism and the Galician

woodcut, it would be appropriate to take a closer look at the region, for the culture that

once produced a Vorticist-like statue might have also spawned more instances of

Vorticism or Imagism in literature and other arts. Indeed, even a perfunctory reading of

Ukrainian and Polish encyclopedias will provide the reader with the facts attesting to the

local presence of ideas similar to Imagist ones. Thus, while explicating the entry

"Imagism," the authoritative Ukrainian *Literaturoznavchyi slovnyk-dovidnyk* (Dictionary

of Literary Terms) apprises: "Tvorchist' B.-I. Antonycha mala pevni oznaky

imazhyzmu" ("The creative work of B.-I. [Bohdan-Ihor] Antonych had certain qualities

of Imagism"; 307). The Polish *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku* (Dictionary of the

Twentieth-Century Polish Literature) notes: "Poeta z Łemkowszczyzny B.I. Antonycz [...], ukrainski imazhzynista, który inspirował się zarówno poezją polską Skamadra i innich polskich ugrupowań literackich, jak mitologią i demonologią Łemków" ("The poet from Lemkivshchina B.I. Antonych [...], a Ukrainian Imagist, who was equally inspired by Polish poetry of the Skamander group, other Polish literary trends, and Lemko mythology and demonology"; 1149). Finally, the English-language *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, published by the University of Toronto Press, similarly links Imagism and Bohdan-Ihor Antonych: "His [Antonych's] lyrical poetry deals with a wide range of philosophical themes and combines the principles of imagism with a unique form of pantheism rooted in Lemko folklore" (86). Surprisingly enough, although Antonych's affiliations with Imagism have entered numerous encyclopedias, a detailed elaboration of the topic is non-existent, and it is for the most part these brief notes that invite further examination.

Bohdan-Ihor Antonych was born on October 5, 1909, in the Carpathian village of Novytsia (Nowica) located in one of Lesser Poland's historic ethnographic regions commonly referred to as Lemkivshchyna.[1] Upon finishing the Sanok gymnasium in 1928, Antonych entered the University of Lviv from which he graduated in 1933. While at the university, he studied Slavic philology, developed a particular interest in prosody,

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[1] Although the territory of contemporary Lemkivshchyna is divided between Poland, Ukraine, and the Slovak Republic, its population constitutes a single Lemko ethnic group. Now Nowica is located in Poland.

and began to write poetry. His early verses were written in Polish, but later he switched

completely to the Ukrainian language. During his short life (he died when he was

twenty-eight), Antonych published four collections of poems, several short stories, a

libretto, and a number of critical articles. Those publications made him widely known, so

that he eventually became one of the most influential Ukrainian authors of the twentieth

century. Notwithstanding the aesthetic value of his poetry, he was banned during Soviet

times and, as a result of that ban, his works and even his biography remained outside the

purview of scholarly examinations.

Although nowadays the silence that surrounded Antonych's name is broken, there

are still numerous aspects related to his life and work remaining to be elucidated. His

affiliation with Imagism, as was earlier mentioned, constitutes one of the lacunae. In

effect, given the State veto against Modernism in Soviet literary studies, everything

associated with Imagism, its founders, or its representatives is very little known and

needs to be thoroughly explored. Although the term "Imagism" (or the Russian

equivalent, "Imaginism") occasionally occurs in Ukrainian literary discourse, Ukrainian

scholars have generally not developed adequate terminological means for dealing with

it.[2]

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[2] Currently, there are only a few articles on the history of Imagism and Imaginism
available in Ukrainian (see, for example, my "Desiat' rokiv, iaki skolykhnuly svit:
Rozdil z istorii modernizmu," in *Problemy suchasnoho literaturoznavstva* 11 (2002): 72-
88). Given this lack of studies on the movement, Slavic literati often use the terms
interchangeably, without particular distinction between Anglo-American and Russian

However, Antonych's works have been frequently described as Imagist or Imaginist. For example, in his article "Chetvertyi persten'" ("The Fourth Ring"), Mykola Il'nyts'kyi notes:

> Nasychena metaforyka ukrains'koho poeta, za pryntsypom pobudovy obrazu deshcho skhozha z iesenins'koiu, dala pidstavu deiakym doslidnykam zarakhuvaty ioho do imazhynistiv i navit' oholosyty iedynym predstavnykom tsiiei literaturnoi techii v ukrains'kii poezii. (*Vesny rozspivanoi kniaz'* 134-5) The Ukrainian poet's rich system of metaphors, which resembles to a certain degree Esenin's, was the reason that some literary critics put him on the list of Imaginists; moreover, they proclaimed him as the only representative of that literary trend in Ukrainian poetry.

When referring to "some literary critics," Il'nyts'kyi means, first and foremost, the Slovak scholar Mykola Neverli who wrote in the introduction to *Persteni molodosti* (The Rings of Youth), the first post-war edition of Antonych's works, the following: "Eruptyvna i nevhomonna syla shchedroi obraznosti [...] stanovyt' osnovnu rysu ioho [Atonycha] poetychnoho styliu. Til'ky ii i mozhemo zavdiachuvaty, shcho v ukrains'kii moderni buv zastuplenyi takozh imazhynizm" ("The eruptive and unstoppable power of rich imagery [...] constitutes the main feature of his [Antonych's] poetic style. Only

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schools. Florian Nieuważny appears to be the only scholar who makes the distinction (see page 155 of the present dissertation).

because of it may we say that Imaginism has also found its representation in Ukrainian modernism; Antonych, *Persteni molodosti* 135).

In the article "Sertse poeta" ("The Heart of the Poet"), another critic, Hryhorii Maifet, also briefly touches upon Antonych's Imagism: "Vlastyvist' sonetiv – ikhnia kharakterna imazhynatyvna kompozytsiia: poet ne til'ky shchedro zhburliaie oryhinal'ni, sokovyti obrazy, ale i rozkryvaie naprykintsi ikhnii sens, tak by movyty, stavliachy krapky nad 'i'" ("Typical Imagist composition is the peculiarity of his sonnets: the poet does not only overwhelms with rich, original images, but also discloses their meanings at the end and, in this way, dots the 'i's' and crosses the 't's'"; *Vesny rozspivanoi kniaz'* 112). Analogously, writing on the poet, Bohdan Rubchak, one of the key figures in Ukrainian Diaspora intellectual circles, remarks: "The literary origins of the visually oriented images in the work [...] may be sought [...] in the Imaginist tradition" (129-30). Further, he lists several typical features of Antonych's style: "Immediacy of effect, reduction of the lyrical self to an impersonal instrument of 'observation', a certain faithfulness to the actual [...], the present time, the use of strong colour, the reduction of linguistic effects, the centrality of the image in the work," and adds that these features allow "us to regard [Antonych's] works as an offshoot of the Imaginist tradition" (130).[3]

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[3] Indeed, in this characteristic, "the centrality of the image in the work" may correspond to Pound's understanding of the image as a pigment of poetry; "immediacy of effect" and "certain faithfulness to the actual" to the first tenet of Imagism: "Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective" (Flint, "Imagisme" 199); and "the reduction

Many other critics, such as Florian Nieuważny, Mykhailo Roman, and Vitalii Ablitsov, have also directly pointed out Imagism/Imaginism as a source for Antonych's poetic technique, while there are several (Dmytro Pavlychko, for example) who have done that indirectly. The latter drew parallels between Antonych and the Russian poet Sergei Esenin, but simultaneously, being constrained by the parameters imposed from above by the Soviet system, kept silent about the school of Imaginism.

The above-quoted comments generally constitute a synopsis of the materials available on Antonych's Imagism. The perfunctory nature of those comments clearly shows that, although literary critics have often dubbed Antonych as an Imagist, they have in fact never examined the influence of the Imagist/Imaginist ideas on Antonych in any depth, and their references to Imagism/Imaginism in the Ukrainian poet's works are mainly contextual. In addition to (or rather as a result of) the virtual absence of critical discourse on Ukrainian Imagism, the question that seems puzzling is how Antonych could have learned about Imagism or Imaginism and whether that was possible at all.

Indeed, contemporary criticism portrays Russian Imaginism as a temporary, very local literary phenomenon and an insignificant movement. Apart from Esenin (who is still rarely defined as an Imaginist), no other Imaginists have been published in Ukrainian. Similar reticence surrounds Pound's name and the English Imagists. It is traditionally believed that the first Ukrainian translation of Pound appeared in 1960,

of linguistic effects" to the second principle: "To use absolutely no words that does not contribute to the presentation" (Flint, "Imagisme" 199).

when Eaghor Kostetzky published *Vybranyi Ezra Pavnd* (Selected Ezra Pound) in his

Munich printing house "Na hori" ("On the Mountain"). Among other Imagists, only

Aldington and Lawrence are well known in Ukraine, but, at the same time, their names

are usually not associated with Imagism. Generally, reception of the Imagist or Imaginist

movements in Ukraine still remains a *terra incognita* and, consequently, the impression

is created that Antonych did not know anything either of Anglo-American Imagism or

Russian Imaginism.

Antonych's own frequently-quoted statement, "Khochu i maiu vidvahu ity

samitno i buty soboiu. Ia ne mandolinist niiakiho hurtka" ("I want and I have courage to

go alone and be myself. I am not a mandolin player for any group"; *T* 515), may tempt us

to see Antonych as a solitary poet who created his works in complete isolation. However,

such an image does not do justice to the poet (or to any person). The available

documents clearly demonstrate that Antonych looked enthusiastically into the literary

tendencies of his time and was thoroughly familiar with European literary movements.

With regard to Imagism, a very interesting detail may be found in one of Florian

Nieuważny's interviews, where this Polish specialist in Ukrainian literature notes: "U

nas Antonych spryimaiet'sia v osnovnomu iak svoieridnyi vidblysk imazhyzmu. Ne

imazhynizmu, a imazhyzmu. Do rechi, vin vyvchav tsiu techiiu v ievropeis'kii

literaturi" ("We [Polish readers] perceive Antonych principally as a kind of reflection of

Imagism. Not Imaginism but Imagism. By the way, he studied that trend in European

literature"; *Vesny rozspivanoi kniaz'* 229). Although the sources of the Polish scholar are

unknown, and the Lviv Stefanyk library, where Antonych's archives are housed, does

not have materials that would confirm Nieuważny's statement, the chances that

Antonych studied Imagism are positively high. Thus, I would argue that although

Antonych's works do not directly refer to Pound, the English Imagists, or Russian

Imaginists, he was likely aware of them and could have been potentially acquainted with

their ideas and writings.

Antonych could have learned of Imagism in a variety of ways. Linguistically, he

was very competent and had a good command of English. Referring to his proficiency in

foreign languages, Il'nyts'kyi notes:

> Perekladaiuchy sonnet ches'koho poeta Iaroslava Vrchlits'koho "More,"
>
> Antonych shukav vidpovidnykh fraz ta idiom u pol's'kii movi, studiiuiuchy
>
> slovnyky, zapysuvav rosiis'ki slova, chytav tvory rosiis'kykh pys'mennykiv, iaki
>
> piznishe tsytuvav u svoikh stattiach. Znav dobre nimets'ku ta anhliis'ku movy, z
>
> iakykh perekladav, ta, ochevydno, frantsuz'ku – na dzherela tsiieiu movoiu ne raz
>
> posylavsia, ne rakhuiuchy hrets'koi ta latyns'koi: vchyvsia zh u klasychnii
>
> himnazii. (M. Il'nyts'kyi, *Bohdan-Ihor Antonych* 23)
>
> While translating the sonnet "The Sea" by the Czech poet Jaroslav Vrchlicky,
>
> Antonych looked for Polish equivalents; while browsing through the dictionaries,
>
> he jotted Russian words, read Russian authors and later quoted them in his
>
> articles. He knew German and English well, the languages from which he
>
> translated, and, most likely, he also knew French, for he often referred to sources

in that language. Furthermore, he mastered Greek and Latin – he had studied after all in a classical gymnasium.[4]

Antonych indeed translated John Masefield's "A Wanderer's Song" from the English language, wrote articles on John Galsworthy and D.H. Lawrence, and even considered Walt Whitman his mentor, calling America "the republic of poets": "Tobi khvala, syvocholyi ministre respubliky poetiv, Uote Vitmene, shcho navchyv Ty mene molytys' steblynam travy" ("All honor to you, the grey-haired minister of the republic of poets, Walt Whitman, for it was you who taught me to pray to the leaves of grass"; *T* 514).

Additionally, Mykhailo Kudlyk, a classmate of Antonych at the Sanok gymnasium, recalls that the future poet "iakos' rozpoviv [...], shcho perechytav usi tvory, iaki oderzhaly nahorodu Nobelia" ("once told [him] that he had read all the works that were nominated for the Nobel Prize"; *Vesny rozspivanoi kniaz'* 323). Given that Kudlyk's recollections go back to 1922-1925, it is possible to determine that, among

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[4] It is interesting to note that Pound also took interest in Vrchlicky's works which he knew from *Modern Bohemian Poetry*, a book compiled by his acquaintance Paul Selver. On September 23, 1912, Pound wrote to Dorothy Shakespear: "The great bohemian poet Vrchlicky is morto. I don't know that it will much affect you. Had I seen Selver's anthology of "Modern Bohemian Poetry" before you departed – Good stuff done into very bad english??" (*Ezra Pound and Dorothy Shakespear* 161).

other English Nobel Prize winners, Antonych was familiar with the works of William

Butler Yeats, who received the Nobel Prize in 1923.[5]

Of the Imagists per se, Antonych mentions only D.H. Lawrence. Although the

latter cannot serve a paragon of Imagism, it was nonetheless possible to acquire some

information on Imagist ideas from Lawrence's biography, and it is beyond doubt that

Lawrence's poetry contains elements pertaining to Imagism. Antonych's publication

"Mystets' prystrasti" ("The Artist of Passion") in the periodical *Dazhboh* in 1933

provides evidence that he thoroughly knew Lawrence's works. In the article, the

Ukrainian poet mentions the anthologies of Lawrence's poems that "prodavaly 'na

chornii vydavnychii birzhi' [...] po neimovirno vysokykh tsinakh. Til'ky vybrantsi

mohly ikh chytaty" ("were sold on the printer's black market [...] for unbelievably high

prices. Only a few lucky ones could read them"; *T* 486). While characterizing

Lawrence's style, Antonych notes:

> Tse dyvnyi mystets', povnyi superechnostei i protylezhnykh nastroiv. Suvorist' i
>
> polumiana zmyslovist'. Mistychni naholosy i vital'ne zakhoplennia zhyttiam.
>
> Khrystyians'kyi zryv do vysochyn i pohans'kyi kul't dochasnoho. Hirkyi
>
> pessymizm i dionisiis'ka zhyttieradisnist'. Pokhmuryi purytanizm i pokhvala
>
> pervisnykh syl pryrody. (*T* 486)

---

[5] And most likely later Antonych had a chance to read Henry Bergson, whose philosophy
was important for the foundations of the Imagist ideas and who received the Nobel Prize
in Literature in 1927.

He is a strange artist, full of contradictions and antithetical moods: austerity and

fervent sensibility; mystical intonations and stirring passion for life; Christian

longing for great heights and a heathenish celebration of the present; bitter

pessimism and the Dionysian love of life; depressing Puritanism and the praise of

the primordial elements of Nature.

In the description, one can relatively easily find some aspects of Imagist poetics, such as

its contrasting features, plainness, vacillation between realism and symbolism, and return

to primitive (and thus the most essential) forms.

In view of the fact that until 1939 Western Ukraine (being culturally bound to

both Poland and Eastern Ukraine) was legally part of the Polish Republic, any

considerations pertaining to Galician literati should involve the analysis of the general

literary atmosphere in Poland. However, here the situation with Pound and the Imagists

seems fairly confusing. Polish literati certainly contributed (perhaps without knowing it)

to the Anglo-American Imagist movement, for Cournos' poem "Rose" included in the

Des Imagistes has a note to the title – "After K. Tetmaier." Unfortunately, nowadays it is

impossible to determine the nature of relations between Cournos and Kazimierz

Przerwa-Tetmajer, a leading poet of the Młoda Polska (Young Poland) literary group, or

whether Tetmajer knew of Cournos' adaptation. At any rate, the mere fact that "The

Rose" was included in the first Imagist anthology unmistakably shows that Pound

perceived it as an Imagist poem.

However, generally speaking, the presence of Pound's ideas (the Imagist ones included) in Polish literature remains a controversial issue. Although Leszek Engelking, the most authoritative Polish expert of Pound, asserts that "before the Second World War Pound was rather unknown in our country [and] it is most probable that none of his poetry was translated into Polish before the War, and Polish literary periodicals didn't inform their readers about Pound's achievements" (105),[6] he himself provides enough evidence demonstrating that Polish authors were well aware of Pound and even absorbed some influence from him. Thus, Jalu Kurek recalled: "We [the poets of Cracovian group] had known [...] Pound's name – after all he is a distinguished poet" (qtd. in Engelking

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[6] In his article "Pound in Poland," Engelking quotes several contradictory testimonies by different Polish poets. Julian Przybos, for example, admitted that "neither Peiper [one of the leading figures of the Cracow Avant-garde] nor [he knew] Pound and Eliot at that time [before the Second World War]" (qtd. in Engelking 106). At the same time, Przyboś pointed out striking similarities between Tadeusz Peiper's literary ideas and the Imagist theories. With regard to another Polish literary group, Skamander, German literary scholar Peter Drews, inter alia notes: "Das Programm ist nicht neu – es hat seine Parallelen bei Whitman, aber auch bei anderen modernen Strömungen. Die Hinwendung zur Klassik findet sich im Akmeismus ebenso wie etwa bei Pound und den englischen Imaginisten" ("The program is not new; it has its parallels with Whitman and with some others modern trends. The appeal to the classics is found in Acmeism as well as in the works of Pound and English Imagists for example"; 64). In this situation, one should probably agree with Stanislaw Czycz, who "thinks that Pound's influence is great, although often unconscious, because indirect [and] without Pound (and Eliot) contemporary poetry, Polish poetry included, would be different" (qtd. in Engelking 115).

106). It seems also that despite Przyboś' denial, Peiper, whose "poetical theory [had]

some similarities [to] the American imagists' theory" (qtd. in Engelking 106), was

nevertheless familiar with Pound's aesthetic views. Traveling around Europe, he studied

different modernist movements and was strongly influenced by the philosophical ideas

of de Gourmont and the Spanish Ultraists. Similarly to Pound, Peiper emphasized the

role of metaphor and rhythm, considering them the most essential constituents of poetry.

According to him, only the "blizzard of metaphors" can adequately and with unerring

precision reflect the epoch. Closely associated with Peiper, the literary magazine *Blok*

defined the desiderata of the time as follows: "Instead of inspiration, aesthetic

contemplation – a conscious formative will requiring clarity and precision of forms. The

requirements of contemporary life put the problem of economy in the forefront" (qtd. in

B. Carpenter 88). With regard to the rhythm, Peiper, like Pound before him, refused to

create in accordance with the traditional metrical rendition, but suggested using rhythmic

structure that would help to indicate the centers where images crystallize. Additionally,

many of Peiper's poems were ambiguous and could refer to several objects

simultaneously – a feature (as it was earlier indicated) typical of Imagist poetry.

Peiper's programmatic documents greatly interested Antonych since they allowed

him to build his own aesthetic platform. With regard to this, Lidiia Stefanovs'ka notes:

Antonych chytav virshi Paipera ta Pshybosia [...], uvazhno stezhyv za

teoretychnoiu dumkoiu "KA" [Karakivs'koho Avangardu]. Kharakter zviazkiv

Antonycha z avangardnymy poetykamy vyplyvaie z ioho vlasnoi potreby

teoretychnoho osmyslennia mystets'kykh pytan'. Adzhe na tsei chas vin buv

iedynym poetom na Zakhidnii Ukraini, iakyi svoi teoretychni pohliady na

mystesvo vyslovliuvav bil'sh-mensh systematychno u formi retsenzii abo statei.

(79)

Antonych read the poems of Peiper and Przybos [...], maintained keen interest in

the theories of the "CA" [Cracow Avant-garde]. The nature of his relations to the

Avant-garde poetics was stipulated by his need to form his own views on art. At

that time, after all, he was the only Western Ukrainian poet who, in his articles

and reviews, more or less systematically expressed his aesthetic ideas.

Even though the first documented Polish translation of Pound appeared only in 1939,

i.e., two years after Antonych's death, in Stanislaw Helsztynski's book *Od Szekspira do*

Joyce'a (From Shakespeare to Joyce), Antonych could have read Pound in Russian

rendition by Grigorii Petnikov, a Ukrainian-born Russian-speaking futurist poet. In 1930,

this poet, whom Vladimir Markov appropriately characterizes as "a poet [...]

undeservedly little known" (*Russian Futurism* 253), published a translation of Pound's

"In a Station of the Metro" in the Kharkiv-based literary magazine *Krasnoe Slovo* (The

Red Word). This periodical was readily accessible in libraries.

The theoretical basis of Russian Imaginism was also known at that time. For

instance, the Ukrainian poet Pavlo Tychyna in his early autobiography wrote in 1919:

"Ni do iakoi shkoly ne mozhu sebe zarakhuvaty. V meni ie i symvolizm, i impresionizm,

i navit' futuryzm ta v deiakii miri imazhynizm" ("I do not belong to any literary school.

In my works there are Symbolism, and Impressionism, and Futurism, and to a certain

degree even Imaginism"; 9). Another literatus, the Ukrainian-born Russian prose writer

of Polish origin Sigizmund Krzyzanowski, who later became a regular contributor to the

Imaginist magazine *Gostinnitsa dlia puteshestvuiushchikh v prekrasnom* (The Inn for

Travelers in the Realm of the Beautiful) and whose novels are marked with Imaginist

qualities, also learned of Imaginism while in Ukraine.[7] In the article "Glazami druga"

("Through Friend's Eyes"), his wife Anna Bovshek, testifies that in Krzyzanowski's

Kyiv period, i.e. before 1923, he "osobenno volnovali imazhinisty" ("was particularly

interested in the Imaginists"; 498).

Such information should not come as a surprise. The Russian Imaginist

movement had strong links to Ukraine. Thus, Vladimir Narbut, the editor of *Sirena* (The

Siren) where the first Imaginist declaration was published, moved in the 1920s to

Kharkiv where he worked at various literary magazines. The Imaginists wrote on

Ukraine (Shershenevich's *Itak itog* contains a poem entitled "Ukraina" ["Ukraine"]), had

family connections to Ukraine (Mariengof's wife was from Poltava and his son was born

in Odessa), and frequently traveled to Ukraine. According to Shershenevich's memoirs

Velikolepnyi ochevidets: Poeticheskie vospominaniia 1910-1920 gg. (A Great Witness:

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[7] For more information on Krzizhanovkii's Imaginism, see Eduard Meksh, "Traditsii
imazhinizma v novelle Sigizmunda Krzhizhanovskogo 'Kvadrat Pegasa,'" in *Russkii
imazhinizm: istoriia, teoriia, praktika*. Eds. V.A. Drozdkov, A.N. Zakharov, T.K.
Savchenko (Moscow: IMLI RAN, 2005), pp. 338-49.

Poetic Recollections of 1910-1925), in 1919 he and Mariengof caused much havoc in

Kyiv by plastering large, eye-catching posters with the words "Attack on Kyiv" ("by

Imaginists" was added in fine print) throughout the streets of the Ukrainian capital.

Taking into consideration the on-going battles of the First World War, such provocative

posters indeed might have had a huge resonance. In the 1920s, the Imaginists visited

Kyiv several more times with lectures on Imaginism. Regarding those visits,

Shershenevich notes:

> Cherez neskol'ko let, kogda imazhinizm uzhe stal spokoinym techeniem, ia
>
> vynuzhden byl trizhdy povtoriat' v Kieve lektsiiu, tak velik byl spros. A ved'
>
> nezadolgo do moego priezda s takim zhe uspekhom zdes' proshli lektsii
>
> Mariengofa i A.B. Nikritinoi. (*Moi vek, moi druz'ia, moi podrugi* 617)
>
> In several years, when Imaginism became a well established movement, the
>
> demand [for Imaginism] was so great that I had to give my lecture in Kyiv three
>
> times. And that was after Mariengof and A.B. Nikritina had recently given here
>
> their lectures with the same success.

In the 1920s, therefore, Imaginism enjoyed immense popularity, even though nowadays

even literary historians are not informed of any Ukrainian reverberations of the

movement.

Furthermore, in the autumn of 1922, the Ukrainian poet Leonid Chernov (real

name – Maloshyichenko) organized an Imaginist group in Alexandria in the Kherson

region. Apart from him, the group included the artist Viktoria Belakovskaia, the poet

Sergei Goncharov, the prose writer Iosif Krichevskii, and the actor Georgii Filianskii.

Unfortunately, no documents pertaining to the activities of the Alexandrian Imaginists

are currently available. It is known only that Chernov had extensive contacts with both

Moscow and Peterburg Imaginist poets. And although "vidimykh sledov deiatel'nosti

gruppa [...] ne ostavila" ("the group [...] did not leave any visible traces of its work"; *PI*

438), it certainly contributed to the dissemination of the Imaginist ideas. Several poems

of the Western Ukrainian poet Edvard Strikha, for example, can be regarded as his

creative responses to the Imaginist anthologies. Thus, his "Avtoportret" ("Self-Portrait")

contains direct references to Shershenevich's collection *Loshad' kak loshad'* (A Horse as

a Horse):

> "Kobyla iak kobyla" –
>
> Lezhyt'
>
> Nache
>
> Mist. (Lavrinenko 15)
>
> "A Horse as a Horse" –
>
> Lies
>
> Like
>
> A bridge.

Another poem "Pliuitesia raiduhamy v dach" ("Spit in Rainbows onto the Roof") almost

certainly alludes to Mariengof's "Bogu pliuem zazorno" ("We Disgracefully Spit in

God's Face").

Literary criticism (although harsh as a rule) also added to the popularity of Imaginist theories. For example, in his series of works, such as "Literaturnoe odichanie" ("Literary Degeneration"), "Literaturnye ocherki: Pora otmezhyvat'sia!" ("Literary Essays: It's High Time to Repudiate!"), as well as other articles, Russian socialist critic Vladimir Friche sharply criticized the Russian group of Imaginist poets. Yet, even notorious fame is fame and, against his will, Friche ended up popularizing the scandalous movement. Antonych's archives include several excerpts of Friche's *Narysy iz sotsiial'noi istorii mystetstva* (Essays on the Social History of Art) noted by the Ukrainian poet. And although the marked passages do not directly refer to Imaginism, it is highly probable that Antonych was familiar with Friche's other works and, thus, could have read about the Russian trend.

In any event, when Antonych's second collection of poetry *Try persteni* (Three Rings) was published, critics immediately noted certain features of Imaginism in it. For instance, in his article "Slovo zhyve i mertve" ("The Living and Dead Word"), the poet Iurii Klen wrote: "Khochet'sia viryty, shcho vin [Antonnych] obmyne nebezpechni prirvy imazhynizmu, shcho ponad samym kraiem ikh vede ioho muza" ("I would like to believe that he will avoid the dangerous abysses of Imaginism to whose very edge the Muse leads him"; 906). Following "testamentary rustic discourse" (to use the term of Volodymyr Ieshkiliev) traditions of Ukrainian literature, Klen perceived Imaginism as an undesirable influence, for the movement was a purely artistic phenomenon and not a

social artistic one and therefore contributed little to the political processes in Ukraine. The same was true of any other art-for-art-sake Modernist trends.

Before proceeding to an examination of the Imaginist features in Antonych's works, I shall briefly discuss Pound's perception of Ukraine. As opposed to the situation with the Russian Imaginists, Pound was hardly aware of his Ukrainian followers. Generally, his knowledge of matters Ukrainian seems to have been rather limited although not entirely non-existent. Apart from the above-quoted passage in *Cantos* and several cursory geographic allusions, he refers to Ukraine on several other occasions. In his later article "The Depression Has Just Begun," Pound summarizes the facts that were known to the average American about Eastern Europe: "They know vaguely of a place called Tiflis and another called Kharkov. We have a few comic stories about pore Ukraaaainians and a couple of classic allusions to the transcauscasus" (4). But what did he know about the Slavs? In 1913, Pound admitted his ignorance of the literary situation in Kyiv: "My contention was that Paris is rather better off for poets than London is […] This is perhaps a rash statement. I have no intimate acquaintance with the state of literary affairs in Tibet, or in Kiev […] It is possible that London is not second or third, but ninth" ("The Approach to Paris... VII" 728). As a music reviewer for *The New Age*, he attended many concerts where Ukrainian instrumentalists and singers performed. He listened to Ukrainian composer Sergii Bortkiewicz among others, and attended the performance of the Ukrainian National Choir. With regard to the latter, Pound wrote:

The Ukrainian National Choir gave us the best part-singing I have heard in London. It is like a huge organ with human pipes, and upon it Alexander Koshitz plays with incomparable skill. Technically there seems nothing it cannot perform, and perform with all the subtleties of graduation and of approach and recession [...] No praise is too high for their actual singing. ("Music. By William Atheling" 268)[8]

Pound could have additionally obtained information on Ukrainian musical culture from Florence Randal Livesay's book *The Ukraine and Its Songs*, the review of which was published in *Poetry* in 1919. In his essays and available letters, Pound never mentioned any Ukrainian authors and, only in his later years did he correspond with the Ukrainian translator of his works Eaghor Kostetzky[9].

Although primary evidence does not allow us to conclude that Antonych was under direct influence of the Imagist or Imaginist schools, his theoretical views, as well as stylistic peculiarities of his poems, nonetheless do indicate certain affinities. Despite the fact that Antonych's theoretical heritage consists of only several articles and a few reviews, those materials reveal many similarities in the attitudes towards image construction that the Ukrainian poet shared with the Imagists. Thus, like the Imagists,

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[8] Later on, he referred to the choir again on several occasions. See, for example, his "Music. By William Atheling," in *New Age* 27.25 (21 Oct. 1920): 356; or "Music in Ca' Rezzonico," in *Delphian Quarterly* 20.1 (Jan. 1937): 2-4, 11.

[9] For more information on this correspondence, see "Letters from Ezra Pound to Kostetzky," in *Kwartalnik neofilologiczny* 20 (1973): 59-65.

Antonych considered image the fundamental constituent element of poetry. In his

"Natkhnennia i remeslo" ("Inspiration and Craft"), he noted: "Materialom, iakym

oruduie pys'mennyk, ne ie, iak zvychaino dumaiut', slovo, ale uiavlennia [...] Otzhe,

pershym zavdanniam tvortsia ie kompozytsiia uiavlen'" ("The material that the author

uses is not words, as many would think, but images [...] Therefore, the writer's first task

is to compose images"; T 459). Similarly to Pound, in order to further explain his idea,

he brings in a parallel from the visual arts, comparing images to colors. Later on, in

1933, in "Natsional'ne mystetsvo" ("National Art"), Antonych reiterates the same

thought, considerably elaborating on it. According to him, the creative process comprises

several sequential stages. An impulse (which might be of internal or external nature) that

the poet receives initiates the creative act. Then the impulse begets an impression that in

turn produces an image. Impressions and images are "khaotychni, bezladni,

nevporiadkovani" ("chaotic, jumbled, disorganized"; T 471) and the mission of the poet

becomes to arrange them, materialize them, and ultimately bring them to the reader.

Antonych refers to the poets as "tesli strof, honchari poem, riz'bari sonetiv, tkachi

povistei, budivnychi dram" ("carpenters of lines, molders of poems, woodcarvers of

sonnets, weavers of novellas, builders of dramas"; T 515) suggesting that hard refining

work has to be performed for creating a masterpiece. In this regard, he reminds us of

Pound who insisted upon constant work on language and who frequently resorted to

abridging his own poems, as well as those of others. Analogously to Pound who evoked

psychological theories (those of Bernard Hart, for example[10]) in order to explain the

nature of Imagism, Antonych also relates art and psychology. For him, "mystetsvo – [...]

iavyshche psykhichne" ("art is [...] a psychological phenomenon"; *T* 470), and he lists

human needs for art in one category with the needs for religion and science. Because

"khudozhni zakony vsikh chasiv do sebe podibni" ("artistic rules of all times are

similar"; *T* 474), Antonych did not consider his poetry original. With Pound calling

Sappho and Villon "Imagists" and with Shershenevich describing Solomon as an

"Imaginist," Antonych obviously shared a common vision of what constituted good

poetry. In terms of practices similar to the Imaginist ones, attention should be drawn to

Antonych's article "Kryza suchasnoi literatury" ("The Crisis of Contemporary

Literature"). Through its form (that of a trial), the article reminds us of the scandalous

Imaginist "Sud nad imazhistami" ("Trial of the Imaginists") and "Sud imazhinistov nad

literaturoi" ("The Imaginist Trial of Literature") – staged performances organized by the

Imaginists in Moscow on November 4 and November 17, 1920, respectively.[11]

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[10] In "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," Pound defines the Image in the following way:
"An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of
time. I use the term 'complex' rather in the technical sense employed by the newer
psychologists, such as Hart, though we might not agree absolutely in our application"
(200). For more information, see Martin Kayman's "A Context for Hart's Complex: A
Contribution to a Study of Pound and Science," in *Paideuma: A Journal Devoted to Ezra
Pound Scholarship* 12.2-3 (Fall-Winter 1983): 223-35.

[11] For details, see Roizman 102-111.

Everyone who reviewed Antonych's poetry admitted its profundity satiated with

unexpected metaphorical images. Antonych's poetic technique has something in

common with painting – each line is like the touch of an artist's brush. The images are

original and striking. They evoke the imagination, and, at the same time, they are

perceived as very natural. His metaphors always introduce a visual effect, and the reader

can see the vivid image of a thing described. Antonych created a new specific "lisova

mova" ("sylvan language"; *T* 110), which might be described as a unique combination of

pantheism with ancient folkloric traditions. In his poetry, as a result of the penchant for

primeval cultural elements, ornamentation and decorativeness of images become a

function of minor importance. Those peculiarities also indicate a similarity between

Antonych and the Anglo-American Imagists.

Antonych's Imagism has manifested itself predominantly in his second poetic

collection *Try perstni* (Three Rings), which is considered to be his best. The collection

was published in 1934, the year when Pound departed from the movement that he had

once launched and turned into "the poet economist."[12] Compositionally, the anthology is

reminiscent of an academic lecture. Antonych opens with "Avtoportret" ("Auto-

Portrait"), in which he allegorically introduces himself. Then, in "Try persteni" ("Three

Rings"), he makes a general statement about the main threefold subject-matter of the

anthology, i.e., song, youth, and night. Afterwards, he focuses on origins and distinctive

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[12] See Gino Saviotti, "Il Poeta Economista: Colloquio con Ezra Pound," in *Gazzetta del Popolo* (15 Aug., 1934).

features of each of the elements in particular. Immediately after that, the poet describes

the processes of poetic creation in "Vesillia" ("The Wedding"). Then he proceeds to the

core of the collection that consists of forty-one poems and, finally, closes with

"Kinchaiuchy" ("Concluding"). Such a structure was deliberate since the available dates

of certain poems prove that the order of the poems was not chronological, but apparently

the result of a conscious choice.

In what follows, the present dissertation will examine "The Wedding," which, I

would argue, constitutes one of Antonych's key works. Although comparing to other

Antonych's Imagist verses the poem might lack in terms of its richness in images, it

addresses the author's worldview in a more explicit manner. Written in late 1933 or early

1934, "The Wedding" manifests all the Imagist attitudes discussed in the dissertation,

reveals secrets of the poet's craft, and reflects on Antonych's unique vision of the

modernist artist. In effect, the poem may help to understand Antonych's process of

creation which, according to Paul Valéry, is one of the fundamentals of poetry.[13] Even

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[13] In 1937, Paul Valéry noted in his "Discours sur l'Esthétique": "What in effect is
Poetics or rather Poietics? You shall be told. It is everything that concerns the creation of
works, of which the language is at once the substance and the means. This consists, on
the one hand, of the study of invention and composition, the role of chance, that of
reflection, that of imitation, that [those] of culture and the environment; and, on the
other, the examination and analysis of techniques, processes, instruments, materials,
means and agents of action" (qtd. in Pommier 7-8).

though there are several studies of Antonych's creative impulses,[14] the topic often

escapes the scholars' close attention.

Prosodically, "The Wedding" is composed in iambic tetrameter and mostly exact

rhyme ("zadzvenilo" – "horilo," "vam by" – "iamby," "vohni" – "pisni," "hamarni" –

"drukarni," etc) with alternating masculine and feminine rhymes. Structurally, the lyric

consists of twelve lines (six sentences) that are grouped into three stanzas. The rhyme

scheme is

ABCB

ABAB

ABBA

Considering that Slavic literary tradition widely employs the iambic tetrameter in elegies

and songs of mourning, this meter gives the verse a noticeable philosophical mood.

The analysis of the content provides us with an understanding of the creative

process, which is three-fold. At first, the poet totally relaxes his mind by intoxication.

Then he liberates his heart (the unconscious). Finally, the material result – the songs –

influences the poet again. Therefore, there is a cycle that can be represented in the

following scheme:

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[14] See, for example, Dmytro Kozii's "Troiake dzherelo tvorchoho natkhnennia Bohdana-

Ihoria Antonycha," in *Slovo: Zbirnyk*. Edmonton: Obiednannia ukrains'kykh

pys'mennykiv "Slovo" v Kanadi, 1970.

Poet's Mind

↗   ↖

Heart   ⇨   Song
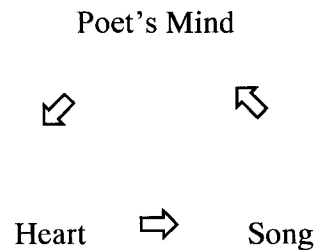
Here, the lyric self is divided into two entities, namely the poet's mind and the poet's

heart. The role of the mind, that symbolizes the conscious processes, seems to be

insignificant. Antonych clearly differentiates between creating and thinking, and it

becomes obvious that his lyric self cannot perform these two operations simultaneously.

They are, in fact, opposites. The poet, who lives in contact with transcendental reality, is

not able to transmit that reality by means of his mind; only his heart can function as a

transmitter. Therefore, in order to set his heart free, the author has to hinder his mind.

For this very reason, the poet intoxicates himself with his own songs ("upyvsia ia vid

pershykh vlasnykh strof pokhmillia" ["I became drunk with my own strophes of

intoxication"]).

Having inebriated the mind, Antonych allows his heart to speak. By indicating

the point when he could not express himself anymore ("iak stalo's te, iak zadzvenilo/

skaza't ne vmiv otsioho vam by" ["how that happened, how it began to ring with me/ I

would not have been able to tell you"]), he defines the moment of losing control over his

conscious self. His mind has no power over the creative process, and the poet would not

be able to say anything at all, "koly b tak sertse ne horilo" ("had not [his] heart burned so

much"). Only because his heart burns can the poet express himself, and it is the very

flame in his heart that makes him speak. The metaphor of the flaming heart is significant

not only because it evokes the image of the sacred heart of Christ – given that fire has the

ability to destroy itself along with the material that supports the fire's combustion,

Antonych points to his own impermanence. Since the poet burns himself in order to let

the iambs be born, he could have used the slogan of ancient Roman writers: "Allis

inservendo ipse consumor" ("By giving light to others I am burning myself").

Antonych provides the following description of the iambs he produces:

Slova ne tesani v hamarni

Slova osribleni v vohni. (*T* 100)

Words not chiseled in a smeltery

The words turned silver in the fire.

In the description, metaphor of the "smeltery" appears to stand for the mind, the

conscious, and the "fire" – for the heart, the unconscious. By saying that words are not

"chiseled in a smeltery," Antonych suggests that the words were not tempered by the

brain. Instead, they were covered in silver (i.e., refined, improved) by the heart. These

words themselves "compose cheerful songs in the flower printing shop of spring." Here,

the image of a printing shop points at the simple physical ability of the poet to put those

words on paper. Consequently, the work of the poet is rather mechanical and his physical

self functions merely as a printing shop – he receives ideas, material from the

transcendental, and makes those ideas available to a larger audience. The precedence of

the poet is thus underlined – he is very different from his surroundings, and yet, standing as he does above his fellow citizens, his mission is to serve them.

For this reason, the lyric self in the poem is often overshadowed by the impersonal form of the verbs and passive voice. The predominance of such verbal forms as "pochalos'" ("it began"), "stalos'" ("it happened"), "zadzvenilo" ("it began to ring"), "tesani" ("are chiseled"), "osribleni" ("are covered in silver"), "zakvitchanii" ("flowered") places the poet in a passive position – the position of involuntary servitude. Many things are done without him having any control over them. He feels derelict, but, at the same time, because of the call of the creative spirit within him, he cannot remain a mere passive observer. In this way, the poet becomes parted not only from the people around him, but also from his inner self who is stronger than him. The reflexive verbs (i.e. the verbs that refer to an action affecting the subject) such as "upyvsia" ("I became drunk"), "narodylys'" ("were born") reinforce the effect of the poet's estrangement.

With regard to Antonych's poetic world, Lidia Stefanowska defines it as situated "between vision and construction" (Stefanowska i). It indeed stems from two main sources, namely, fantasy and actuality. Like that of other Imagists, Antonych's world is semi-real. On the one hand, the poem appears to be a simple narrative on creative forces that govern the author's work. On the other hand, however, the verse contains certain textual details (related primarily to time markers) as well as numerous images that point beyond concrete reality.

Thus, the prevalence of the past tense ("pochalos'" ["it began"], "buv" ["was"], "zadzvenilo" ["it began to ring"])[15] indicates the author's preoccupation with the idealized past. The poet looks back at an earlier period to find clues for his future. Obsessed with time on a syntactical level, Antonych meanwhile shows little concern for it on a semantic level. In fact, time is indefinite in his poem, i.e., one can not tell where the starting point is – somewhere in the indefinite past. This reminds us of Eastern philosophy (Indian in particular), where the cyclical character of life makes it impossible to determine the beginning or the end. However, since the poet comprehends his existence, he realizes that he is in the middle of the cycle and approaching the end. Trying to be retrospective, the author apparently attempts to escape that inevitable end. For him, the unique, the ideal, the unrepeatable have remained in an earlier period for which he longs. This longing explains Antonych's emphasis on initiation through the use of the numeral "pershyi" (the first) and prefixes of initiation ("za-" – "zadzvenilo" ["it rang"]) or verbs indicating the state of beginning ("pochalos'" ["it began"]).

While being unconcerned with semantic time markers, Antonych (in a way similar to that of Gottfried Benn in German literature), is very careful about defining space. Thus, the transformation occurs for him when he is "at [the] wedding with a song," his words pass by "the smeltery" and undergo "fire," and his songs emerge from "the flower printing shop of spring." Therefore, unlike time, the place for creation is very specific and definite.

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[15] In the poem, only the last sentence is written in the present tense.

The appearance of the moon as a witness adds to the unreality of the world, for the image reinforces the notion of death. In accordance with folkloric beliefs, the moon is a symbol of eternal death and rebirth. For example, Edwin Krupp, explaining the moon's cyclical recurrence, remarks: "We say the moon dies, but it is not the moon that dies. We die. We tell stories about it because we die, and we describe the moon in terms that are familiar to us, using it to symbolize what matters most to us" (78). Slavic mythology regards the moon as a planet on the way to hell. Additionally, among the ancient Slavs, "there was a wide-spread conviction that the luminary of night was the abode of the souls of the departed; and later she came to be regarded as the dwelling-place of sinful souls which had been transported thither by way of punishment" (Gray 273).

The moon generally plays a significant role in Antonych's poetry. Apropos thereof, Ihor Kachurovs'kyi remarks: "Z-pomizh ukrains'kykh poetiv naizavziatishym 'misiatsepoklontsem' buv Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, chyiei tvorchosti my vzahali ne mohly b uiavyty, iakby z nei vyluchyty misiachni motyvy i misiachnu obraznist'" ("Among Ukrainian poets, Bohdan-Ihor Antonych was the most devoted 'worshiper of the moon' and we can hardly imagine his poetry if we take out lunar motifs and images from his works"; 28). For the poet, the moon is the planet opposite to the sun and, in one place, he even calls the moon "sontse nochi" ("the sun of the night"; *T* 101). Given the long tradition of associating night with death, the moon is also the sun of the other world. Simultaneously, the moon stimulates the process of creativity, since it is a source of

inspiration. The literary critic Oleh Il'nyts'kyi, for example, explains the connections

between the moon, creativity, and death as follows:

> Mystetstvo (uosoblene v 'slovi' chy 'nochi') tse akt hrikha, tse te kushtuvannia
>
> plodu dereva znan', shcho prynosyt' dukhovnu smert'. Os' chomu obrazy,
>
> poviazani z aktom tvorchosti, ie vodnochas obrazamy smerti i kholodu. (7)
>
> Art (embodied in the 'word' or 'night') is an act of sin; it is like eating the
>
> forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge. Such eating results in spiritual death.
>
> That's why images connected with creativity are simultaneously images of death
>
> and cold.

In his other lyrics, Antonych often describes the process of creativity as the murder of

the author. Poems are born in pain and suffering; each poem takes a part of the poet's

energy and a fraction of the poet's essence. Therefore, with every creation of a new

verse, a part of the author dies. Meanwhile, the moon observes both the formation of new

poems and the death of the author. Paraphrasing Mircea Eliade, one may say that the

moon's destiny consists of helping the poet to reabsorb forms and to recreate them. In

this process of transformation, the artist functions as a filter between the past and the

present, between the ideal and the real. This function reminds us of the role that the

moon played in Ancient Greece, where Orphic and Pythagorean sects believed that the

souls of the just were purified in the moon. Thus, the moon's status can be comparable to

that of the poet, who is doomed to deal with those who have passed away.

Although mentioned only cursorily, the image of spring is also related to the metaphysical world, since it indicates seasonality, cyclical characteristics, and also underlines the temporality of the poet's existence. In the spring, a poet produces the "bitter wine of poetry" that he and other poets must drink, intoxicating themselves and producing new songs. Here is the end of the cycle and the starting point of the next one.

Poetry, as Antonych sees it, can be compared to an Amazon who recreates herself through the poet and then kills him. Antonych metaphorically calls the process of intoxication "wedding with a song," that is a union with the immaterial, the eternal, that will eventually bring immortality to the poet. At first, however, the poet's material self must cease to exist. As a result, for Antonych, *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) turns into *creo ergo morio* (I create, therefore I die). The marriage to the song means death. William Butler Yeats expressed a similar idea of the author's self-destruction in his well-known "Two Songs from a Play":

Love's pleasure drives his love away,

The painter's brush consumes his dreams. (213)

The song attracts the poet, enchants him, intoxicates him with its beauty, and then makes the poet lose control. On the periphery of his mind, however, the poet feels the trap that the Amazon-song prepared for him, but his brain is already weakened and he refuses to think of the danger. The poet enjoys the moment of being with the song. His heart burns, his ability to express himself consciously gradually decreases. The poet stops to think and, therefore, to exist physically.

The provocative nature of Antonych's poem can be seen primarily on the level of form and style. As in the case of Western European countries, Ukrainian readers, as well as critics, did not equally appreciate all literary forms. In the beginning of the twentieth century, many considered difficulty of form or language as an unnecessary distraction that prevented one from the direct apprehension of the content. The reader demanded "realist" poetry, without any formal or stylistic aberrations. Even though in a sense Antonych's Imagist verses can be classified as realistic, it was not the type of Realism the mass audience expected – the "hoi polloi" primarily looked for socially engaging literature that would assist in building the State. Because the poet composed highly metaphorical and stylistically challenging lyrics, his writings were often criticized. For example, one of his readers angrily asked Antonych's publisher: "Ta iak vy mozhete drukuvaty taki rechi? 'Antonych buv khrushchem...' Nu skazhit' meni, shcho tse znachyt'? iak tse maie buty poeziia?" ("How can you publish these kinds of poems? 'Antonych was a beetle...'[16] It is crazy... Well, just tell me what it means. How can this be called poetry?"; *T* 515). Critics additionally accused the poet of "Parnassianism," i.e., writing poetry that did not immediately concern the political problems that Ukraine faced at that time. Thus, while analyzing Antonych's verses, Marxist critic Oleksandr Havrylyuk notes that the poet belongs to "tykh 'apolitychnykh parnasystiv,' chyia tvorchist' vykonuie tsilkom politychnu robotu, vidvertaiuchy pohliady chytachiv vid spravzhn'oi diisnosti" ("those 'apolitical Parnassians' whose creative work functions in a

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[16] The first line from Antonych poem "Vyshni" ("Cherries"). See *T* 181.

very political way, distracting the thoughts of readers from reality"; qtd. in M.

Il'nyts'kyi, "Neznyshchennist' poezii" 6).

Paradoxically enough, melancholy constitutes one more aspect of Antonych's

provocatism. Unlike the majority of Ukrainian writers of his time, who produced

optimistic texts that would celebrate young cheerful people able to dominate their

surroundings, Antonych wrote a pessimistically toned poetry that contradicted the

accepted ideology. Indeed, the vast majority of his poems manifest a certain melancholy

or even grief, and, as in the works by other Imagists, that melancholy is linked to death[17].

With regard to Antonych's pessimistic attitudes, Romanian literary scholar Magdalena

Laszlo-Kutsiuk noted:

> Dumka pro smert' zaimala Antonycha postiyno, vona skhovana navit' v ioho
>
> naibilsh zhyttieradisnykh virshakh, i vona prydaie im krasu i trahichnist',
>
> poiednannia liuds'koi teploty i filosofs'koi hlybyny, bez iakoi nemyslyma velyka
>
> poeziia. (3)

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[17] Vasyl Niniows'kyj, for example, sees apparent death symbolism in "Try persteni" ("Three Rings"), the pivotal poem of the collection with the same name. Explicating one of the most obscure passages of the verse, he notes: "In Antonych's inaccessible and intricate epithets and metaphors an image is hidden, describing a coffin arranged and equipped according to Ukrainian folkloric and traditional burial rights. Te coffin embellished with flowers (kvitchasta skrynia), and in it a dead poet (spivnyi korin') adorned with aromatic herbs (p'ianke zillia), a candel (visk) and seeds (nasinnia)" (22).

Antonych always dealt with the thought of death; it is hidden even in his most joyful verses and it gives them beauty and tragedy. It unites human kindness and philosophical profundity, and great poetry can not be without these features).

Another critic, Iulian Red'ko, makes a similar observation:

Ia napysav retsenziiu na tsiu zbirku [*Pryvitannia zhyttia*]. Ne pamiataiu uzhe dokladno, shcho same ia pysav, ale iak nedolik vidznachyv iakus' dyvnu kholodnist', bezprystrasnist' molodoho poeta. Koly ia prochytav knyzhku Antonycha, meni zdavalosia, shcho poet stoiit' ostoron' vid zhyttia. Sam ne bere v n'omu uchasti, a til'ky sposterihaie okremi predmety i iavyshcha zovnishn'oho svitu. (111)

Once I wrote a review of that collection [*Greeting to Life*].[18] I do not remember exactly what I wrote, but I do remember that I noticed a certain 'coldness,' alienation, and pessimism of the young poet. When I read his poems, I had the feeling that the poet stands aloof from life and does not participate in it, only observing the things and phenomena of the external world.

Indeed, despite their titles and manifested vividness, one can scarcely define Antonych's poems as optimistic. His poems almost always carry the thought of death, anticipation of decline, or prediction of decay. These qualities are especially true of Antonych's later lyrical poetry. However, even in his early poems, which are considered by many as the most optimistic, this melancholy is often noticeable. Thus, the seemingly joyfully

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[18] The title of Antonych's first book.

entitled collection *Greeting to Life* begins with "The Song of Eternal Youth." The poem's final line is: "Pereidemo usi perepony, zdobudemo zhyttia final" ("We'll overcome all the obstacles, and we'll reach our lives' finish line"; *T* 19). Similarly, "The Hymn to Life" from the same collection ends as follows: "I zaspivaiesh himn zhyttiu movchanniam ust" ("And you will sing the hymn to life by your lips' silence"; *T* 47). In fact, the joy of life can be observed in the examples, but that joy resembles the gladiators' salute: "Ave, Vita! Moriturus te salutat!" ("Hail Life! Those who are about to die salute you!").

To sum up, as with the poetry of other Imagists, Antoncyh's poetry demonstrates such tendencies as aesthetic individualism, rooted in the belief that the poet occupies a unique position in society, namely, that of a spiritual leader; semi-realistic settings, manifested through the artist's vacillation between the real and the ideal (the latter frequently associated with the afterworld); and provocatism declared through challenging the reader with new poetic forms, unusual metaphors, or a nonconformist world outlook.

Conclusion

International Imagism: Significance and Implications

Ideas live like the microbes in the air.

If there are too many of them, the epidemic begins.

(Vadim Shershenevich, *The Great Witness*)

In his *Victory in Limbo: Imagism 1908-1917*, while summarizing the aesthetic

results of the entire Imagist venture, J.B. Harmer accurately observes:

The Imagist movement died of its own contradictions, in particular of the

tensions and rivalries among the members of the Imagiste circle. What survived

was a new and changed attitude, an attitude that became the reagent of further

developments in the poetic evolution of the decades that followed. (43)

Critical statements by the Imagists indeed provide us with definite proof to buttress this

conclusion. Ezra Pound, for example, once noted: "The difference between the new art

and the old was not a difference in degree but a difference in kind; a difference in

intention" ("The New Sculpture" 68). As further development of literary history has

demonstrated, it was not thanks to its principles related to "technical hygiene" (to

employ Hugh Kenner's expression) that Imagism gained popularity, exerted enormous

influence, and ultimately crossed linguistic borders. Rather it was a new vision of the

world, a new mindset, a new feeling of the rapidly changing epoch, and the new manner

of interaction with the environment that allowed the movement to become such an

attractive and influential cultural event. In the end, it was a new attitude towards poetic

representations of the world that caused the literary revolution.

While the long-standing technical principles for writing good poetry have for

centuries remained virtually unchanged, these principles have been employed differently

by each literary epoch and have always been adjusted in accordance with the

requirements of the Zeitgeist. After all, "every revolution in poetry," according to T.S.

Eliot's famous definition, "is apt to be, and sometimes to announce itself as, a return to

common speech [i.e. the idiolect of the epoch]" (16). Imagism, therefore, was a

movement that managed to express its time period in a more successful manner than

other literary trends (symbolism, for example) which were once progressive and popular

but lost their appeal as time went on. Imagism was not an epigonic imitation of the best

ancient, medieval, or symbolist examples; it was rather a creative rethinking of old

techniques and their application to a new historic era. The Imagist Weltanschauung, the

main features of which are addressed in this dissertation, epitomizes those core elements

that constitute the basis for the Modernist Zeitgeist, and it is largely because of the

Weltanschauung that the movement "over-lived" itself.

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of Imagism for the future

development of literary history. Virtually the entire body of contemporary poetry has

evolved from tendencies first advertised by the Imagist poets. With regard to this,

William Pratt points out: "In time almost every important poet tried his hand at

something like the Imagist poem" (*The Imagist Poem* 12). It is also not accidental that

Ezra Pound, the founder of the movement, has been honored by some critics as the

"Prime Minister of Poetry," while the twentieth century has been dubbed the "Pound

Era."

A closer look at Anglophone literature indeed reveals the palpable and ubiquitous

presence of Pound and his Imagism. Given that, during his long life, the poet established

contacts with practically all the major intellectuals of his time, considerably helped many

incipient writers, and attracted many followers, his influence on contemporary poetry is

undeniably momentous. His impact, in effect, reaches far beyond the borders of the

Anglophone world, and he can truly be considered one of the godfathers of Modernism.

William Butler Yeats, Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Ernest

Hemingway, E.E. Cummings, Allen Ginsberg, Rabindranath Tagore, Juan Ramon

Jimenez, and Ruben Dario are but a few literati, who acknowledged Pound for his

inspiration, criticism, and/or support. However, Pound's anti-Semitism and unfortunate

political views (although often grossly misinterpreted and misunderstood) stain his true

literary historic significance.[1] Mostly because of his political opinions and affiliations, he

has become eclipsed by his followers and turned into a celebrity literary scapegoat.

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[1] Although Pound's early poetry has little (if anything) to do with politics, the general

public remembers and perceives him predominantly as an insane and anti-Semitic pro-

Fascist poet and traitor. Several years of collaboration with Mussolini's government

considerably and for a long time destroyed Pound's literary reputation. That was

especially true for the countries of the Eastern Blok. Thus, commenting on the decision

of the Bollinger Prize committee to award the 1949 Prize to Pound, Radio Moscow,

In terms of its significance for twentieth century German poetry, the Expressionist movement had an impact comparable to that of Imagism in the Anglophone countries. With regard to its principles, Expressionism – just like Imagism – remains a loosely defined literary venture, and only analogous attitudes, expressed by individual authors, permit one to perceive Expressionism as a distinctly coherent movement. In the last century practically all the prominent German poets were in one way or another influenced by Expressionism. Along with Georg Trakl, whose poems until now enchant us with their unorthodox imagery, and Gottfried Benn, who is considered the greatest German lyricist of the twentieth century, many other eminent poets were affiliated with the movement (Georg Heym, Else Lasker-Schüler, Ernst Stadler, August Stramm, to name but a few). Franz Kafka and Alfred Döblin are frequently regarded the Expressionists in prose; Ernst Toller, Franz Wedekind, Georg Kaiser, Oskar Kokoschka, and Reinhard Sorge in drama; Robert Wiene, Fritz Lang, and F.W. Murnau in film; and Arnold Schoenberg and Anton Webern are often viewed as Expressionists in music.

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announcing the official Soviet point of view, stated: "One is prompted to ask how low and miserable must be the quality of modern bourgeois poetry in America if even the insane and verified ravings of a confessed madman could win a literary prize?" (qtd. in Heymann 221). While starting from the 1970s there has been a revival of interest in Pound, a complete picture of his political views is still lacking. For more on Pound's Fascist affiliations, see Leon Surette, *Pound in Purgatory: From Economic Radicalism to Anti-Semitism* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1999) and Tim Redman, *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge UP, 1991).

Launched in Germany, the movement soon attained international magnitude. In this connection, Walter Sokel observes:

> Its [Expressionist] principles transcended national boundaries and form an integral part of modern literature and art. Expressionist principles inform O'Neill's *The Great God Brown*; Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth*; the Nighttown episode in James Joyce's *Ulysses*; Elmer Rice's The *Adding Machine*; and a number of works by Sean O'Casey, Tennessee Williams, Samuel Beckett, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, and others. (1)

In 1972, the International Comparative Literature Association sponsored the publication of a volume entitled *Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon* (ed. Ulrich Weisstein) which became the most thorough study of the international significance of the movement. Consisting of twenty-one essays, the book addresses among many different topics Expressionism in Scandinavia, Belgium, Holland, Yugoslavia, Romania, Hungary, Poland, and Russia. The editor additionally makes references to the works on French and Chinese Expressionist authors. Expressionism, therefore, has already an established reputation of an international literary trend while Anglo-American Imagism still awaits such recognition.

In Russia, as has been indicated earlier, traces of Imagism can be found in two movements – Acmeism and Imaginism. The first was in fact only partial Imagism, for its tempered nature stood closer to "Amygism" and it did not possess the radicalism and provocatism of the Poundian branch. In contrast, Imaginism exhibited an ideology,

similar to that of the Imagists. Although slightly differently emphasized, Imaginism had all the features of the typical Imagist Weltanschauung, i.e., semi-realist settings, elitist and prophetic attitudes towards the audience, and revolutionary intentions.

Just as in the case of Imagism, the significance of Imaginism is undeservedly underrated. Until recently, literary scholars did not study the movement. Even though these days the situation has changed, many critics still continue mechanically to think of Imaginism as an inconsequential literary phenomenon. Meanwhile, literary history shows that the Imaginists were indeed talented poets who greatly contributed to the interwar literary atmosphere in Russia, and whose influence remained ostensible even after the Imaginist Order ceased to exist. Being in constant contact with the prominent Russian Futurist and Symbolist poets, the Imaginists created an environment where poetic discussion became possible.

Although Vadim Shershenevich is now largely forgotten, many considered him one of the most gifted poets and Russian émigré writers particularly carefully studied his poetic eidology. Despite the fact that recent publications shed some light on Shershenevich's life and works, there are still many aspects to be researched (his interest in English literature can be one). Shershenevich's unique images considerably inspired his fellow Imaginists to write anew. For instance, Sergei Esenin's notes, taken from Shershenevich's *Loshad' kak loshad'* (A Horse as a Horse), are well-known, but no study exists on how Esenin incorporated his friend's metaphors in his own writings.

Of all the Imaginists, only Esenin has enjoyed immense popularity regardless of political circumstances. He was the only Imaginist whose poetry was widely published and systematically examined during the Soviet era, and the only poet-Imaginist, whose genius has never been doubted. However, Esenin's affiliation with Imaginism was for a long time regarded as an error and only early critics at least partially approved the movement, presenting it as a school of poetic craft for Esenin. Thus, while in the 1920s Sergei Gorodetskii dubbed Imaginism "Esenin's university," in 1966 Leonid Farber denied even that:

> Imazhinizm ne byl dlia Esenina dazhe shkoloi kakogo-libo "formal'nogo masterstva". Imazhinizm ne prines poetu nikakoi pol'zy. Odin vred, ibo uvodil ot Rusi, ot "voprosov", ot podlinnogo obraza, uvodil v izuvechennyi, iskoverkannyi, urodlivyi mir iskusstvenno pridumannykh metaphor. (164)
>
> For Esenin, Imaginism was not even a school of any kind of "formal craft." Imaginism was of no use to the poet. It only spoiled his poetry, for it distracted him from Russia, from "the big questions," from true images. It led him to the distorted, corrupted, and noxious world of artificially created metaphors.

Given that the Ministry of Education of the USSR recommended the use of Farber's book as a textbook for university students, his position undoubtedly reflects the official Soviet viewpoint. And only have recently Russian scholars re-examined Esenin's Imaginism without any ideological predispositions which heavily informed previous works on the poet.

Imaginism exercised considerable influence on the Russian Expressionists (primarily Ippolit Sokolov), the Nichevoki (Boris Zemenkov, Susanna Mar, Riurik Rok, etc), and the Constructivists (Eduard Bagritskii, Vera Inber, Boris Agapov, and others). In fact, the first two groups emerged largely as a continuation of Imaginism. The Nichevoki called Shershenevich "velikii poet, gigant i titan, poslednii borets iz byvshei armii slavnykh" ("the great poet, giant and titan, the last fighter of the glorious army"; "Manifest ot nichevokov") and the Expressionists considered that "klassiki imazhizma Maiakovskii, Shershenevich, Bol'shakov i Tretiakov dostigli takoi vysoty, chto posle 1915 mozhno tol'ko im podrazhat', no nel'zia ikh prodolzhat'" ("the classics of Imagism [sic] Maiakovskii [sic], Shershenevich, Bolshakov, and Tretiakov reached such a high level, that after 1915 [sic] it is possible only to imitate them, but it is impossible to continue developing the trend"; "Khartiia ekspressionista"). Yet, despite declaring the impossibility of further development, the Expressionists were clearly the followers of the Imaginists.

Apart from the three above-mentioned groups, there are a number of Russian authors whose works bear visible traces of Imaginism. Thus, Viacheslav Zavalishin sees Imaginist elements in the poetry of Bella Akhmadulina and Iunna Morits; in his *Literatura nashikh dnei* (Literature of Our Time), Georgii Ustinov calls Boris Pilniak, Vsevolod Ivanov, Mikhail Zoshchenko and several other writers "continuers of Imaginism in prose" (82); and Iurii Ivask refers to the entire post-war period in Russian émigré poetry as Imaginist ("Poeziia staroi emigratsii" 68).

Even late in the twentieth century, there were attempts to bring Imaginism back to mainstream literature. Thus, in 1967, a group of young poets (Leonid Gubanov, Vladimir Shlenskii, Valerii Konovalov, Iurii Parkaev, Boris Taigin, Sergei Shapovalov, and several others) who regularly met at Riurik Ivnev's apartment, prepared for publication (but did not manage to publish) the fifth issue of the Imaginist magazine *Gostinnitsa dlia puteshestvuiushchikh v prekrasnom* (The Inn for Travelers into the Realm of the Beautiful). Finally, in the 1990s, another group of poets, the Meloimaginists, appeared. Its main representatives (Irina Novitskaia, Anatolii Kudriavitskii, Liudmila Vagurina, Sergei Neshcheretov, etc) have brought many Imaginist ideas and experiments back to life.

In Ukrainian literature, the works of Bohdan-Ihor Antonych have also had a great impact on many authors. The aesthetic value of Antonych's poetry has been repeatedly validated by both Ukrainian and foreign literary scholars. Thus, Iryna Vil'de, a Ukrainian writer and a contemporary of the poet, notes in a letter to Antonych: "Vashymy poeziiamy vpyvaius', iak muzykoiu i ne mozhe meni v holovu vmistytys', iak khtos' mozhe ikh ne rozumity" ("Your poetry intoxicates me like music and I do not comprehend people who are not able to appreciate your poems"; qtd. in Antonych, *Persteni Molodosti* 343). Magdalena Laszlo-Kutiuk, a Romanian literary critic, claims that "Bohdan-Ihor Antonych imovirno naibil'shyi ukrains'kyi poet 20-go stolittia" ("Bohdan-Ihor Antonych is apparently the greatest Ukrainian poet of the 20th century";

Laszlo-Kutiuk 3). And Florian Nieuważny, a Polish literatus, indicates the importance of

Antonych for Polish literature:

> Polacy mają szczególnie dużo powodów, aby poznać twórczość poety, który żył
>
> między nami, lecz za swego życia interesował tylko małą garstkę czytelników,
>
> umiejących wznieść się ponad przesądy narodowe, ponad skostnienie tradycji
>
> nie pozwalającej dostrzegać wśród ościennych kultur rzeczy autentycznych,
>
> urzekających.
>
> Poles in particular have many reasons to become familiar with the work of the
>
> poet who lived among us but who during his life had only a narrow circle of
>
> Polish readers who were interested in his works and who were able to overcome
>
> their national bias and petrified tradition which had concealed the authentic and
>
> marvelous values of the neighbor culture. (Antonycz 14-15)[2]

The recent cultural national revival in Ukraine has essentially started from the

publication of Antonych's poems. Virtually all contemporary poets and writers have

acknowledged importance of Antonych for their writings. Iurii Andrukhovych, for

example, not only composed a novel entitled *Dvanadtsiat' obruchiv* (Twelve Rings)

extensively dealing with materials from Antonych's biography, but also defended a

dissertation on the poet. Similarly, Vasyl' Makhno, a former member of the literary

group "Zakhidnyi viter" ("Western Wind"), who now lives in the United States, also

completed his Ph.D. degree with a thesis on *Khudozhnii svit Bohdana-Ihoria Antonycha*

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[2] Translated by Lidia Stefanowska.

(The Artistic World of Bohdan-Ihor Antonych) and, later, published several poems,

elaborating on Antonych's subject-matter. A number of other prominent poets (Pavlo

Vol'vach, Viktor Neborak, Ihor Kalynets', to name but a few) have also frequently

referred to the poet. Antonych has additionally been important for Ukrainian cultural

figures abroad, e.g., Bohdan Rubchak, Iurii Tarnavs'kyi, Danylo Struk, and Michael

Naydan have either translated his works or published articles on him. Currently, in

Ukraine, one of the most prestigious literary awards also bears the name of Antonych.

As was mentioned earlier, the Anglo-American Imagists themselves never

regarded the movement as an exclusively English or American national cultural

phenomenon. On the contrary, they recognized the existence of kindred authors along

synchronic and diachronic temporal lines. For instance, by pointing out the Imagistic

qualities in the poetry of the French poet André Spire, Pound indicated the possibility of

considering the movement in international terms. He also defined many Classical,

Medieval, and Renaissance poets (for example, Sappho, Catullus, François Villon, or

Heinrich Heine) as Imagists. Similarly, the ideologue of Russian Imaginism,

Shershenevich, thought of the biblical Solomon as the first Imaginist.[3] Generally, all the

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[3] In his "Pesnia pesnei" ("The Song of Songs"), Shershenevich writes: "Solomonu –
pervomu imazhinistu / Odevshemu liubov' Pesnei pesnei pestro, – / Ot menia" ("To
Solomon, the first Imaginist / Who glamorously dressed Love with The Song of Songs, /
From me") (*Listy imazhinista* 277). In fact, scholars have different approaches to
interpreting "The Song of Songs" and, as of nowadays, its authorship constitutes a
controversial point.

Imagist schools unanimously called for poetry that would combine feelings of contemporary anima mundi with the best examples of the world's poetic tradition.

Even though the amount of work on Imagism grows continuously, there are still many remaining hiatuses and numerous possibilities for further studies. The Imagist Weltanschauung, analyzed on the pages of the present document, brings a broader perspective and allows one to see the movement in the context of world literature. As has been demonstrated, semi-realism, provocatism, and aesthetic individualism constitute the principal attitudinal components of the Imagist mindset – components that are always present (sometimes differently emphasized, however) in all the international irradiations of Imagism. Many poets (whether Anglo-American or foreign), whose works manifest Imagist qualities, frequently come to Imagism unconsciously, without specifically studying the school. Imagist attitudinal elements were not so much learned, as they were intuitively perceived from the cultural vibrations that the school radiated. Although the Imagist movements in different countries had certainly points of contact, the extent of actual tangencies was in most cases quite limited, but sufficient to provide inspiration or an impulse allowing the further elaboration of the main tendencies, based on peculiarities of this or that national literature.

As it has been pointed out, while clarifying some of the issues related to Imagism, the present document simultaneously indicates plenty of possibilities for further examinations. Thus, the description of the Imagist Weltanschauung, presented in this dissertation, can undoubtedly be expanded. It would be interesting, for example, to

undertake detailed research on the numerous Imagist poem parodies, frequently appearing in different periodicals in parallel with the originals. Arguably, such parodies were a calculated reaction, for they greatly contributed to the popularization of the movement. While in the case of German Expressionism or Russian Imaginism, provocation, because of its thematic component, lies on the surface, the challenge presented by the Anglo-American or Ukrainian Imagists is less palpable. Yet, even with different means, the Imagist authors achieved much the same effect – they startled the reading public and managed to provoke heated discussion around issues of poetics.

The role of "secondary" Imagistes, such as Skipwith Cannell, Allen Upward, and John Cournos, is another neglected area. Undeservedly forgotten nowadays, these poets nonetheless were much respected by their fellow-Imagists and apparently played an important role in the overall shaping of the movement. Cournos' connections with Slavic intellectuals (Russian, Polish, and possibly Ukrainian[4]) hold a particular fascination. He might be regarded as a mediator between the Anglo-American Imagists and their Eastern European counterparts; it is largely through him that Pound, as well as Aldington and partially Yeats, acquired their knowledge of Eastern Europe. The examination of Cournos' works, both literary and critical, is an equally promising field of inquiry. As a

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[4] Born in Zhytomyr, Ukraine, Cournos was undoubtedly familiar with Ukrainian culture and literature. Thus, his *Autobiography* contains descriptions of his mother singing "sad Ukrainian songs" (45) and his poetry collection *In Exile* features "Testament," a poem strikingly reminiscent of one of the most famous verses with the same title by Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko.

gifted writer, appreciated by many in the Modernist circles, Cournos still awaits his scholar.

In Germany, not only has Expressionism been examined in great detail, but also several studies on the reception of Imagism have been already undertaken. The possibilities for the continuation of this research might be in the direction of further exploring the influence of Imagism on the works of several poets who are sometimes viewed as lyricists in the Imagist vein – Günter Eich, Karl Krolow, Klabund (pseud. of Alfred Henschke), and Rudolf Borchardt. The examination of German subject-matter in Pound's writings would present another fascinating area. The lack of such study has been in particular noted by Gregory Divers who attributes this fact to Pound's "controversial position during the Second World War" (30).

Generally, everything concerning Pound's relations with Central and Eastern Europe may constitute a field of great promise, because thus far, practically nothing has been done on the topic. The neglect is due to many extra-literary factors – Pound's dubious political views, the Cold War, the impossibility of gaining access to Soviet archives, and the complete disregard of any modernist works in the Soviet Union. Thus, even though it is cursorily mentioned in various critical sources, the impact of Imagism on Slavic and Germanic literatures has been little investigated. Despite the intense cultural contacts that linked English, German, and Slavic literatures at the beginning of the twentieth century, literary scholars have largely overlooked these contacts. As a result, currently, there is no research on relations between the Imagists and Constance

Garnet (a pioneering translator from the Russian who introduced numerous works of Russian literature to the English-speaking world); the founders of Imagism and John Cournos (a Ukrainian-born Imagist poet of Jewish origin); the Imagists and Zinaida Vengerova (a Russian journalist); the Imagists and Henry Slonimsky (a Byelorussian-born Russian-speaking philosopher and Pound's classmate at the Pennsylvania University).

Pound's epistolary heritage additionally reveals many interesting facts regarding his meetings with Konstantin Balmont and the editor of the Acmeist journal *The Apollo* Sergei Makovski. We learn about Pound's collaboration with Joyce's French translator, Russian-born Ludmila Blokh-Savitzky, his correspondence with Russian translators Gregory Zilboorg and Samuel Koteliansky, his polemics with the Russian Futurist poet Sergei Tretiakov, his friendship with the Polish literary scholars Jerzy Niemojowski and Stanislaw Jankowski, as well as his contacts with the Ukrainian translator Eaghor Kostetsky and German translator Eva Hesse. It has also been indicated that the ideas of many German and Slavic thinkers, e.g., Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Scheller, and Wassily Kandinsky, were at the origin of Hulme's and Pound's Imagist doctrines. The nature of all these relations, the literati's influence on each other, and on the Imagist movement in general has not been sufficiently explored yet.

As in the case of Russian poets, the study of Ukrainian Imagists/Imaginists contains many gaps. For example, Leonid Chernov (pseud. of Maloshyichenko), who organized a short-lived group of Imaginists in Alexandria, Kherson region, remains an

enigmatic figure. Despite his considerable impact on the Ukrainian futurist writers,

neither his poems, nor his biography is currently available. The palpable traces of

Imaginism in Pavlo Tychyna's, Edvard Strikha's, and Oleksa Babii's works (in

Tychyna's case, self-acknowledged) can also constitute an appealing object for further

analysis.

Given that in Russia and Ukraine many previously sealed archival documents

have recently become open, it is beyond doubt that the scholarly community will be soon

presented with numerous new fascinating findings pertaining to the Modernist

movements in these countries. Spread internationally, Imagism, as well as its various

avatars, provide us not only with valuable lessons, but also contain many future surprises

which might considerably alter our present understanding of the movement. This

dissertation is a step in the direction of rethinking the phenomenon and it should serve as

a basis for further studies.

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Appendix 1: Chronology of the Imagist Movement

March 25, 1909	T.E. Hulme (1883-1917) organizes the School of Images ("the Secession Club")
April 1909	Ezra Pound (1885-1972) joins the School of Images
Winter 1910	The School of Images ceases to exist
August 18, 1912	In a letter to Harriet Monroe, Pound mentions for the first time "an over-elaborate post-Browning 'Imagiste' affair"
Autumn 1912	Pound publishes his *Ripostes* with an appendix "The Complete Poetical Works of T.E. Hulme," where he mentions *Les Imagistes*
November 1912	*Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* publishes "Χορικος," "To a Greek Marble," and "Au vieux jardin" by Richard Aldington (1892-1962), who is called "one of the 'Imagistes,' a group of ardent Hellenists"
January 1913	*Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* publishes "Hermes of the Ways," "Priapus," and "Epigram" by H.D. (1886-1961). The last poem is signed by "H.D., 'Imagiste'"
March 1913	*Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* publishes "Imagisme" by F.S. Flint and "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" by Pound
July 1913	Amy Lowell (1874-1925) arrives in London
Summer 1913	Pound submits the manuscript of *Des Imagistes: An Anthology* to Alfred Kreymborg, the editor of *The Glebe*
December 19, 1913	In a letter to William Carlos Williams, Pound mentions the term "Vortex" for the first time
February 1914	*The Glebe* 1.5 publishes *Des Imagistes: An Anthology*
March 2, 1914	A. & C. Boni (New York) prints a book version of *Imagistes: An Anthology*
April 1914	Poetry Bookshop (London) prints a book version of *Imagistes: An Anthology*
June 20, 1914	The Vorticists publish the first issue of *Blast*, where Pound' article "Vortex" appears
July 1914	"Boston Tea party for Ezra." The first mention of the "Nagistes."
July 30, 1914	The first meeting of the "Amygists"

September 1, 1914	Pound publishes his article "Vorticism" (originally entitled "Imagisme") in the *Fortnightly Review*
1915	Publication of *Some Imagist Poets 1915: An Anthology*
July 1915	Publication of second issue of *Blast*
November 1915	Pound edits and publishes *Catholic Anthology* as a response to Amy Lowell's *Some Imagist Poets 1915: An Anthology*
1916	*Some Imagist Poets 1916: An Anthology*
1917	*Some Imagist Poets 1917: An Anthology*
1930	*Imagist Anthology 1930: New Poetry by the Imagists*

Appendix 2: Irradiations of Imagism in German and Slavic Literatures

Germany	Russia	Ukraine
1910 – Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) finishes his *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (Concerning the Spiritual in Art); **Spring 1911** – the term "Expressionism" is for the first time mentioned to describe the works of the Fauvists and Cubists (Pablo Picasso including); **March 1912** – Gottfried Benn (1886-1956) publishes his *Morgue und andere Gedichte* (Morgue and Other Poems); **May 1912** – *Der Kondor* (ed. Kurt Hiller), the first anthology of Expressionist poetry; **1912** – Kandinsky publishes his *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*; **1912** – publication of the almanac *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider); **May 1913** – Georg Trakl (1887-1914) publishes his *Gedichte* (Poems); **December 1917** – Kasimir Edschmid (Eduard Schmid; 1890-1966) delivers his lecture on "Expressionismus in der Dichtung" ("Expressionism in Poetry"); **1919** – publication of	**February 1915** – Zinaida Vengerova (1867-1941) publishes an interview with Pound in *Strelets* (Archer); **Winter 1915** – Vadim Shershenevich (1893-1942) describes himself as "imazhionist" in his *Zelenaia ulitsa* (Green Street); **30 January 1919** – newspaper *Sirena* (Siren) publishes the Imaginist Manifesto; **10 February 1919** – newspaper *Sovetskaia strana* (Soviet Land) republishes the manifesto; **1919** – *Krematorii: Poema imazhinista* (Crematory: A Poem of an Imaginist) by Shershenevich; *Konditerskaia solnts: Poema* (Pastry Shop of the Suns), and *Anatolegrad* by Anatolii Mariengof (1897-1962); *Kobyl'i korabli* (Ships of Mares) by Sergei Esenin (1895-1925); **1920** – *Loshad kak loshad: Tretia kniga liriki* (A Horse as a Horse: The Third Book of Poetry) and *2x2=5: Listy Imazhinista* (2x2=5: The Leaves by an Imaginist) by Shershenevich; *Ruki*	**Autumn 1922** – Leonid Chernov (Maloshyichenko) (1899-1933) organizes an Imaginist group in Oleksanriia; **1923** – *Profsoiuz sumasshedshikh* (The Guild of Madmen) by Chernov; **1930** – Kharkiv journal *Krasnoe slovo* (The Red Word) publishes translation of Pound's "In a Station of the Metro"; **1931** – Bohdan-Ihor Antonych (1909-1937) publishes *Pryvitannia zhyttia: Knyzhka poezii* (Greetings to Life: A Book of Poetry); **1934** – Antonych publishes *Try persteni: Poemy i liryka* (Three Rings: Poems and Lyrics), his most Imagist book; **1936** – *Knyha Leva* (The Lion's Book) by Antonych; **1938** – *Zelena ievanheliia* (Green Gospel) and *Rotatsii* (Rotations) by Antonych.

Menschheitsdämmerung: Symphonie jüngster Dichtung (Twilight of the Humanity: Symphony of Young Poetry) (ed. Kurt Pinthus); **1921** – *Die neue Welt: Eine Anthologie jüngster Amerikanischer Lyrik* (The New World: An Anthology of Young American Poetry) includes translations of Pound's "A Girl" and "The Garret"; **1955** – Benn edits *Lyrik des expressionisteschen Jahrzehnts* (Lyrics of the Expressionist Decade).	*galstukom* (Arms like a Necktie Tied around the Neck) and *Buian-ostrov* (The Island of Buyan) by Mariengof; *Kliuchi Marii* (The Keys of Maria) by Esenin; **1921** – *Preobrazhenie* (Transfiguration) and *Ispoved' khuligana* (A Hooligan's Confession) by Esenin; **1922-1924** – four numbers of *Gostinnitsa dlia puteshestvuiushchikh v prekrasnom* (The Inn for Travelers in the Realm of the Beautiful); **31 August 1924** – Esenin leaves the Imaginist group; **1926** – *Itak itog* (Thus to Conclude) by Shershenevich.	

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