

# The Instigations of Ezra Pound by Ernest Fenollosa I: The Chinese Written Character, Atlantic Crossings, Texts Mislaidd, and the Machinations of a Divinely-Inspired Char Woman

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'The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry' (hereafter CWC) first was published in four instalments of three to eight pages 'by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound' in Margaret Anderson's monthly *Little Review*, September to December 1919. The essay was 'not a bare philosophical discussion but a study of the fundamentals of all aesthetics', Pound wrote in his brief introduction to the first instalment. The publication was at Pound's behest. He was 'foreign editor' of *Little Review*, and as is well known he had not met his 'co-author'. Fenollosa died in London in September 1908, thirty-eight days after Pound, 'knowing no one', arrived in the city with £3 in his pocket ('How I Began' 707). Eleven years later, when the first CWC instalment appeared in *Little Review*, Pound had established a name for himself, and for several others, and Anderson's little magazine had achieved notoriety in European and American avant-garde circles, in large part because of its foreign editor. It also had achieved notoriety with the United States Postal Service and the New York Society for the Prevention of Vice. The October 1917 issue had been confiscated for obscenity and burnt by postal authorities in response to publication, at Pound's behest, of Wyndham Lewis's 'Cantle-

man's Spring Mate', and its serialization of *Ulysses* had begun, also at Pound's behest, in March 1918, leading to confiscation and burning also of the January and May 1919 and January 1920 issues. This was followed by an obscenity trial which the *Little Review*, represented by John Quinn, lost. But in the winter of 1919, despite the attention the magazine had received, the odd little essay which appeared in it in instalments from September to December went largely unnoticed. Only one period review, by Israel Solon in the mainly-confiscated and burnt January 1920 *Little Review* itself, so much as mentioned CWC. But for what Pound wrote about it no one thought to place it as central to the skirmishes over English poetry which characterized the time, nearly all of which had been set in motion at Pound's behest.

This did not change appreciably following the essay's republication in the *Instigations of Ezra Pound* in 1920, which on its title page, below and in smaller type than the title, notes that Pound's *Instigations* are printed 'Together with an Essay on the Chinese Written Character by Ernest Fenollosa'. Fenollosa's name is set in type larger than the title of his essay but not as large as the *Instigations of Ezra Pound* itself, a middling which foreshadows things to come. CWC appears at the end of *Instigations*, as it had appeared at the end of each of the *Little Review* issues. The *Instigations* table of contents has it 'An essay on THE CHINESE WRITTEN CHARACTER by the late ERNEST FENOLLOSA, edited by Ezra Pound'. An author and editor now, not two authors together or the co-authors of *Little Review*.

This sort of confusion has followed all the work Pound edited and published from Fenollosa's notebooks. These include at least seventeen periodical publications between May 1914 and the last *Little Review* instalment of CWC in December 1919, and four books, *Cathay* in 1915, *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* in 1916, 'Noh' or *Accomplishment* in 1917—this reissued with emendations as *The Classic Noh Theatre of Japan* in 1959—and finally CWC

itself, first published as a book in 1936. In 1917, T. S. Eliot placed *Cathay* ‘among Mr. Pound’s original work’ and his work with the Noh to be ranked ‘among his translations’ (*Ezra Pound* 14). No mention of Fenollosa in the assessment. In his Introduction to Pound’s *Translations* in 1953 Hugh Kenner, channelling Eliot without saying so, ‘sense[d] ... something exotic’ in ‘the *Noh* sequence’ which ‘just prevents [it] from standing, as *Cathay* does, with [Pound’s] finest original work’ (13–14). One passing mention of Fenollosa in Kenner’s Introduction, and but for Pound’s own references to Fenollosa in work Kenner collects in *Translations*, including *Cathay* and ‘The *Noh* sequence’, Fenollosa is not otherwise noted. Thus the weightiest of Pound commentators in early work which contains Pound commentary. Even Pound himself vacillated about how to frame the material. He asked Harriet Monroe to leave his name off the first publication from Fenollosa’s notebooks, May 1914, *Nishikigi*, in *Poetry*—‘we will not mention who did the extracting’ (*LEP* 31)—but by the second publication of *Noh* plays five months later they were ‘edited from Ernest Fenollosa’s manuscripts by Ezra Pound’ (‘Classical Drama’ 450). By January 1917 when ‘*Noh*’, or *Accomplishment* appeared from Macmillan, collecting the earlier *Noh* work, the title page had it ‘by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound’. The list could be continued. The four books which resulted from Pound’s work with Fenollosa’s manuscripts each have a different permutation, three have further variations in reprint editions, and the periodical publications offer more than a dozen variations in stated authorial or editorial provenance.

CWC in this regard is a special case among special cases. It has appeared on title pages and book covers ‘by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound’, by Fenollosa ‘together with’ Ezra Pound, by Fenollosa ‘edited by Ezra Pound’, by Fenollosa ‘with a foreword by Ezra Pound’, by Fenollosa ‘with a foreword and notes by Ezra Pound’, and by Fenollosa alone. In the 1982 Japanese transla-

tion Fenollosa and Pound are co-authors, but this is marked in highly-unorthodox typography, ‘アーネスト・フェノロサ = エズラ・パウンド’, ‘Ernest Fenollosa = Ezra Pound’. This is as odd in Japanese as it appears to be in English. In Pound scholarship CWC not uncommonly is addressed as if it were by Pound alone, scant or occasionally no mention of Fenollosa. In an endnote to ‘Fenollosa Compounded: A Discrimination’, the sharp introduction to the recent *Critical Edition* of CWC edited by Haun Saussy, Jonathan Stalling, and Lucas Klein, Saussy notes the longstanding ‘confusion of Fenollosa’s and Pound’s roles in producing the essay’, and cites specifically the treatment of CWC in a recent Penguin Classics edition of Pound’s *Early Writings*, which ‘merges the essay into a selection of Pound’s literary essays without mention of its separate authorship and in notes describes it as “an influential statement of Poundian aesthetics”’ (178–79n16; *Early Writings* 399–400).

This is fair, but to be fair also to Ira Nadel, editor of the Penguin *Early Writings*, a note in the volume does record that CWC was ‘written by the American Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa and “amended” by Pound’ (399), and the slighting of Fenollosa in *Early Writings* simply follows precedent in treatment of CWC in Pound scholarship, or, for that matter, of Fenollosa in general. With few exceptions he has been an afterthought, a necessary series of footnotes or clauses or the occasional stray paragraph. The fullest biographical treatment of Fenollosa even now is from 1982, in Japanese, two-volumes by Seiichi Yamaguchi, in need of an update. The fullest study of Fenollosa in English is Lawrence Chisolm’s of 1963, written and published before the archives which contain the most centrally important Fenollosa papers were open to researchers. Fenollosa has been slighted, certainly. But fully to get to ‘Fenollosa Compounded’ in CWC, even in the terms in which Saussy frames the issue, requires necessarily beginning again with Pound. “To “place” the es-

say rightly, it will be necessary to retrace its publication and reception history', Saussy writes (2), and while Saussy's introduction itself provides an extraordinarily good outline of this history and reception, by far the best yet, the story nonetheless involves more than has been told.

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In July 1919 Pound was worried that Margaret Anderson would not get the CWC typescript already in her possession to Boni and 'Liverlight', i.e., Horace Liveright, Albert Boni's partner at the Manhattan publishing firm, in time for its inclusion in *Instigations* (EP/P 443–44). By then Pound had a history of his work with Fenollosa's manuscripts having been mislaid by editors or going missing in the mail, and also a history of not retaining a copy of the manuscripts he had edited and sent to editors to be mislaid or to go missing in the mail. Two of Pound's most important accounts of his understanding of the significance of Fenollosa's Noh, for example, in 1919 already were missing and would remain so for most of the twentieth century. This has led to serious misunderstandings about the importance of Noh to *The Cantos*. 'Affirmations VI: The "Image" and the Japanese Classical Stage', which Pound intended as part of his extended 'Affirmations' series in A. R. Orage's London-based *New Age* in 1915, somehow became switched with another 'Affirmations VI' and went missing. The essay is central to Pound's understanding of the ways the 'form of perception' and 'succession of images' in Noh opened the way for 'a long imagiste poem' ('Vorticism' 471, 'Classical Stage' 224, 'Affirmations VI' 17), but today we would not know it had existed had it not been among Pound-Fenollosa papers donated anonymously to the Princeton University Library in 1991, seventy-six years after Pound sent it to Orage, presumably, and it went wherever it went other than into the pages of the February 15 *New Age*.

Likewise later in 1915. A seven-page typescript of Pound's version of

*Takasago* was among the papers donated to Princeton. But also in July 1915, after Pound had begun work on his 'long poem' or 'poem which will resemble the Divina Commedia in length but in no other matter' or 'cryselephantine poem of unmeasurable length' or 'big long endless poem', the terms of May to December 1915 in which he described *The Cantos* in his earliest unmistakable references to the work (*EP/P* 347, *EP/ACH* 120, qtd. in Stock 184, *EP/P* 360), he had sent an introduction and his edited version of *Takasago* to Alice Corbin Henderson for consideration at *Poetry*. The 'flawless structure', 'perfect construction', and 'sense of past time in the present' of *Takasago* made it 'the very core of the "Noh"', Pound wrote (*EP/ACH* 110). He subsequently wrote to Harriet Monroe that *Takasago* would provide 'roughly the theme' of his long poem by then underway (qtd. in Slatin 186). But neither Pound's introduction nor the Pound-Fenollosa *Takasago* itself appeared in print anywhere during Pound's lifetime. These too are central to his understanding of Fenollosa's *Noh*, and to the birth of *The Cantos*. But Monroe apparently rejected the work, Henderson apparently mislaid it, Pound himself apparently had not retained a copy, and the introduction and play were unknown to scholarship for seventy-eight years, until Nadel, looking for something else, discovered them among the Pound-Henderson papers at the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas and published them with important commentary in his 1993 edition of the Pound-Henderson letters (xxii-xxiii, 110-17).

Likewise Pound's own *Plays Modelled on the Noh* of 1916. Pound intended one of them, probably *Tristan*, to be performed along with Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* in its famous first productions of April 1916 (*EP/P* 362). In a related talk on '[Alfred] De Musset's "A Supper at the House of Mademoiselle Rachel"' Pound wrote that the reconstruction of the past in Fenollosa's *Nishikigi* 'gives me the closest parallel to my thought' (*Plays* 23). This was concur-

rent with the composition of the earliest Cantos. But the plays themselves and Pound's discussion of the 'Japanese emotion' which had allowed him to proceed with them, and with the earliest Cantos, were unknown to scholarship until Donald Gallup found them in the Pound archive at Yale and published them in 1987. Other Pound manuscripts from Fenollosa's notebooks are missing still, all of those published as 'The Classical Stage of Japan' in the May 1915 *Drama*, for example, which constitute about half of 'Noh' or *Accomplishment*. But for several lucky turns a similar fate might have befallen CWC.

At first there were two typescripts of Pound's edited version which finally found print in *Little Review*. At least twice before the *Little Review* publication both were out of Pound's control. Let's call them CWC-a and CWC-b. Taken together they crossed the Atlantic seven times before CWC-b landed in Anderson's Greenwich Village office and then in the pages of *Little Review*. Several have noted the difficulty Pound had in seeing CWC through to publication. Saussy in 'Fenollosa Compounded' alludes to the point in noting that CWC 'certainly needed a great deal of artificial support from its advocate, Ezra Pound, and his network of acolytes and safe houses to see the light of day at all' (4). But the acolytes often were absent-minded and their houses were not as safe as today they may seem to have been. 'Fenollosa Compounded', yes, well put, an important corrective, but also Pound compounded, and CWC itself, its meaning determined, re-determined, over-determined, by a series of contexts and receptions which span now fully a century. The text is the text, two really, the first the one Fenollosa wrote, 'The Chinese Written Language as a Medium for Poetry', importantly restored and contextualised in Saussy, Stalling, and Klein (75–104). But even after Fenollosa's essay was in Pound's hands and he had made his emendations it has passed through five distinct stages of meaning before the Saussy, Stalling, and Klein *Critical Edition* in effect returns it to itself. The remainder of this essay will address the

first of these stages, the 'Atlantics crossings' of the title.

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The first CWC crossing of the Atlantic after Pound's emendations was early in January 1915, following the earliest mention of CWC in Pound's published correspondence. Of his work with the Fenollosa manuscripts none yet had appeared in a book. *Nishikigi* minus Pound's name had appeared in *Poetry*, May 1914, followed by 'The Classical Drama of Japan' 'edited ... by Ezra Pound' in the October 1914 *Quarterly Review*. *Cathay* would have been at press with Elkin Mathews. *Certain Noble Plays* was twenty-one months out, 'Noh' or *Accomplishment* twenty-four. *At the Hawk's Well* and the 'ideogramic method' had not yet been dreamt of, or if they had we have no textual record either of the dreams or their fitfulness.

'I send herewith Fenollosa's essay on the Chinese Character', Pound wrote from Stone Cottage to Alice Corbin Henderson at *Poetry* that January of 1915, during his second of three winters with Yeats at Stone Cottage. 'I could have sent it to the *Dial*, but I've forgotten the name of the new asst. edtr. And have left his address in London'. Along with the manuscript, CWC-a, Pound offered Henderson and *Poetry* 'American serial rights' to the 'Chinese essay' (EP/ACH 92-93). In May Henderson replied that she found the essay 'fine' and would 'do all [she could] to get it published', but also that 'you know the situation over here', and so she wondered about possibilities of publication in England (EP/ACH 99).

In the meantime, in a little-remembered essay of February 1915, Pound declared CWC of central importance to his Imagiste aesthetic. Specifically in reference to CWC he wrote that what 'we' have been doing is 's[ee]king' the force of Chinese ideographs *without knowing it* (italics Pound's), and 'English, being the ... least inflected of the European languages, is precisely the one ... best suited to render the force and concision of the uninflected



Chinese' ('Imagisme and England' 185). In May Pound replied to Henderson that he had sent the 'very important essay' to Lucian Cary at the *Dial*, still in 1915 based in Chicago, and wondered if Henderson knew '[w]hat has become of it'. He has 'had no word' from Cary and fears the manuscript has been 'mislaidd in his departure from the *Dial*'. 'Please ask him to return it' (*EP/ACH* 102).

This version at the *Dial* would have been CWC-b, representing a second trans-Atlantic passage, both typescripts now in Chicago. The following month, June 1915, Pound wrote to Felix Schelling that 'Fenollosa has left a most enlightening essay on the written character (a whole basis of aesthetics, in reality), but the adamantine stupidity of all magazine editors delays its appearance' (*LEP* 61). In July Pound wrote again to Henderson to inquire about CWC-b. Lucian Cary was not answering letters. Pound supposed that if Cary had been 'sacked' from the *Dial*, as indeed he had been, 'I dare say they ate it in the office, out of pure rage'. In this letter Pound again requests Henderson to try to retrieve the manuscript and this time asks that if she is able to do so that she send it to the *Yale Review*. 'If they dont want it'—and they didn't, and seven months later Pound was accusing someone there also of having 'ate it'—'please send it back and I will try it on the "Hibbert"' (*EP/ACH* 109–10), i.e., *The Hibbert Journal*, a 'Quarterly Review of Religion, Theology, and Philosophy', as the subtitle had it, edited by L. P. Jacks and Dawes Hicks in London.

A letter from Pound to Henderson eight months later, February 1916, reveals that she, or someone, had managed to track CWC-b and to have made arrangements for it to have gone from whoever had it at the *Dial* for consideration at the *Yale Review*, but '[t]o return to an ancient affair', Pound writes, he has heard from the *Yale Review* that 'they hadn't received Fenollosa's "Chinese Written Character"' and he 'suppose [s] they've ate it [or] hid it'. '[I]f you haven't placed it, please don't bother any more, and please return it, as the

*Quarterly* [Review] has at last forgave me for being concerned with BLAST and there may be some chance of my placing it with them' (EP/ACH 129). For those keeping track, that's CWC-a still with Henderson in Chicago, which Pound wants returned, a third Atlantic crossing, so that he may submit it to *Quarterly Review* in London, and CWC-b having been found at the *Dial* and either on its way to, lost, hidden, or eaten in New Haven. No further mention of *The Hibbert Journal*.

In a June 1916 letter to Iris Barry Pound offers the earliest description in his correspondence of the contents of CWC. '[Y]ou should have a look at Fenollosa's big essay on verbs, mostly on verbs,' he wrote, although '[h]eaven knows when I shall get it printed'. Fenollosa

inveighs against "is," wants transitive verbs [Pound continues]. "Become" is as weak as "is." Let the grime *do* something to the leaves. "All nouns come from verbs." To primitive man, a thing is only what it *does*. That is Fenollosa, but I think the theory is a very good one for poets to go by. (LEP 82)

Later that month, 22 June 1916, Pound wrote to Henderson again with concerns that new wartime postal regulations would prevent him from sending printed matter across the Atlantic, and also that 'that wretched Chinese Character essay has *not* arrived' (EP/ACH 154). This would have been the CWC-a which in February he had asked Henderson to return. A month later, 22 July 1916, Pound wrote to Henderson that the manuscript had arrived and thanked her for having posted it (EP/ACH 156). Third Atlantic voyage complete.

'I was ... *stupid* about the Chinese article', Henderson soon had written to Pound, in August 1916, presumably referring to something which had taken place with CWC-b at the *Dial* or *Yale Review* or both, both of which had rejected the essay by then, but Henderson nonetheless 'want[ed] to make ...

suggestions' about where Pound might send it for consideration: *Quarterly Review* or *Fortnightly Review*, both based in London, 'and also *Open Court*' (EP/ACH 159). *Open Court* must have seemed a good idea at the time. Along with *The Monist* it was edited in La Salle, Illinois by the scholar of comparative religion Paul Carus, long-time associate of D. T. Suzuki and author of many books on Buddhism. Carus seems never to have met Fenollosa, but they were of the same generation, born in July 1852 and February 1853, respectively. By way of Buddhist connections they had many friends in common. Today they often are noted together as instrumental figures in the introduction of Buddhism to the United States, although as Saussy, Stalling, and Klein demonstrate, Pound had edited out every trace of central Buddhist elements in Fenollosa's version of the essay. In any case, Henderson's suggestion that Pound send Carus CWC did not have a happy outcome. More on that in a moment.

Pound at least briefly in the summer of 1916, encouraged by Macmillan's acceptance of '*Noh*' or *Accomplishment*, decided that CWC would see print more quickly and profitably in a book than in a journal. 'My next job is "Chinese Poetry" by E. Fenollosa and E. Pound ready in 1918 unless hindered by circumstance', Pound wrote to Henderson on 30 August. He added, in obvious despair at Macmillan getting the thing put together even within a year-and-a-half, 'I suppose it won't be ready in 1918' (EP/ACH 167). The following day, 31 August, he wrote to John Quinn that he had in mind a new 'Chinese' work from Macmillan, to appear in both British and American editions, which would include the 'profound' CWC 'by Fenollosa and me' along with the poems he had reworked from the Fenollosa manuscripts which had appeared in *Cathay*, and also 'new Chinese translations' and 'essays by me on chief Chinese poets before "Sung"' (EP/JQ 86). Pound in exultant mode. But such a book or even further reference to it in Pound's correspondence did

not eventuate.

By 10 January 1917, fully two years after Pound first had sent CWC-a to *Poetry*, he was thinking journals again, *Seven Arts*, edited by James Oppenheim and Waldo Frank in Greenwich Village. 'I have just sealed up Fenollosa's essay on the Chinese Written Character, to send to them', Pound wrote to Quinn. CWC 'is one of the most important essays of our time', but 'they will probably reject it on the ground of its being exotic'. Fenollosa in CWC, Pound wrote, 'saw and anticipated a good deal of what has happened in art (painting and poetry) during the last ten years'. Pound believed the essay to be 'basic for all aesthetics'. Still, he doubted that it would 'cut much ice' with Oppenheim and Frank (*EP/JQ* 93), about which he was right.

More than a year later yet Pound wrote to Margaret Anderson that the other CWC typescript, CWC-b back to Pound finally from *Yale Review* or wherever it had come, was by February 1917 'or some such time' in La Salle, Illinois, where it had been accepted by Carus either for *Open Court* or *The Monist* (*EP/MA* 206). Pound's letters say one in some cases and the other in others. But in that letter to Anderson Pound misremembers the date of Carus's acceptance. He wrote to Quinn in May 1917 that he had 'got back the Fenollosa big essay from Seven Arts long ago' and it 'has been accepted by the English editor of the *Monist*, but I have not heard whether it has passed the Chicago editor' (*EP/JQ* 114), by which he means the La Salle editor, Carus. And so Carus's acceptance of the manuscript for publication in either *Open Court* or *The Monist*, which in 1918 Pound wrote to Anderson was in February 1917 or 'some such time', if indeed Carus ever accepted the manuscript for publication at all, was at 'some such time' after Pound's 17 May 1917 letter to Quinn.

The permutations of CWC-b making its way to Carus and his 'acceptance' of it for either *Open Court* or *The Monist* are convoluted but explainable. But

first, for those keeping track, the events of January to May 1917 represent trans-Atlantic crossings four, five, six, and seven for the CWC typescripts. One had travelled east back to Pound in Kensington, crossing four, presumably from *Yale Review*, assuming that anyone there ever had received it, but in any case back to Pound from wherever it had been, and so for a brief time late in 1916 and early 1917, CWC-a back in Pound's control from Henderson, both CWC-a and CWC-b were with Pound in London for the first time in two years. But not for long. By January 1917 both once again were on their way west across the Atlantic, crossings five and six, one to Oppenheim and Frank at *Seven Arts* and the other to Carus in La Salle. Crossing seven was back to Pound from *Seven Arts*. They 'wanted it *cut*, made light and airy, I suppose', Pound wrote to Quinn in May. 'I haven't answered them' (*EP/JQ* 114), Whatever else may be said, though, at least Oppenheim and Frank at *Seven Arts* had not taken much time in deciding that CWC did not cut much ice before returning it. The same is not true of Carus.

Carus's name first enters the story in the August 1916 letter from Henderson to Pound noted above, in which she apologizes for having been 'stupid about the Chinese article' and recommends submission to *Quarterly* or *Fortnightly* in London or *Open Court* in La Salle. Saussy, Stalling, and Klein speculate in a note that the 'suggestion to publish in *The Monist* may have come from Mary ... Fenollosa' (207n3), which certainly is plausible. But whatever the case about whoever it was who called Carus to Pound's attention, Pound did not send CWC directly to Carus in La Salle but instead to Carus's London-based co-editor of *The Monist* P. E. B. Jourdain. Pound would write to Margaret Anderson in 1918 that Jourdain had solicited CWC from him (*EP/MA* 207), and so either Pound upon Henderson's recommendation and perhaps also Mary Fenollosa's had approached or written to Jourdain in London, or maybe Henderson or Mary Fenollosa had written to

Carus who had written to Jourdain who had solicited the manuscript from Pound. In either case Jourdain liked CWC well enough that he either sent it to Carus or encouraged Pound do so, Atlantic crossing six. According to Pound's letter to Quinn of May 1917 the 'English editor' of *The Monist*, Jourdain, had accepted CWC, but not yet Carus, and according to his letter to Anderson of 8 March 1918 Carus also had accepted CWC for publication. But from Carus in La Salle a silence ensued which delayed publication of CWC anywhere at all for the better part of two years, and in his correspondence set Pound off on a sustained rant as full of invective as any to be found in that famously invective-filled body of work.

'A swine on the *Open Court*, or some such rag has the Fenollosa essay on Chinese character, promised to print, but damn slow', Pound wrote to his mother early in November 1917 (*EP/P* 408), nine months beyond the date he recalled later to Anderson that Carus had accepted CWC, and even accounting for his misremembrance of the date nearly six months after he had written to Quinn that Carus was in possession of CWC-b. Where CWC-a has gone at this point is not clear, but it is missing, last known whereabouts back with Pound from *Seven Arts* in May 1917. Perhaps it had been hidden by someone at *Quarterly*, *Fortnightly*, 'the "Hibbert"', or Macmillan, or maybe it was among the manuscripts of 'all' of Pound's works 'destroyed' by an "over-zealous" (and possibly divinely inspired) char woman' about whom he would write to Margaret Anderson early in 1919 (*EP/MA* 259). Whatever the case, though, Pound does not to have CWC-a to send to Henderson nine months after its return to him from *Seven Arts* and CWC-b has been 'stolen'.

Twice during this period Pound was in such despair at the fate of the CWC typescripts that he wrote to Anderson that if necessary he could have a new copy made from his marked-up version of Fenollosa's manuscript. This would 'be rather a job, but still ...', he wrote on 27 March, and three months

later, 7 July, that he could 'have the damn pencil scribble recopied' if it came to it (*EP/MA* 206, 239).

Nearly four months after Pound had written to his mother of the 'swine' in possession of CWC-b in La Salle, in other words at the least nine months after Carus had the manuscript in hand sometime between February and May 1917, Pound wrote to Anderson on 27 February 1918 that he had employed the lawyer Quinn to intervene with Carus to threaten legal action if CWC-b were not forwarded to her (*EP/MA* 198), and a month later that 'The next thing to do IS DEFINITELY to see about that big Fenollosa essay on the Chinese Written Character. It is extremely important' (*EP/MA* 206).

Along with Quinn and Anderson, Pound in his efforts to regain control of CWC-b from Carus eventually sought the help of Jourdain in London in the form of at least two letters to Carus (*EP/MA* 207); also the 'stalwart' Chicago poet Max Michelson in the form of a phone call to Carus apprising him of 'the terrors of the approaching physical arm, let alone the legal and spiritual' (*EP/JQ* 156); also Carus's wife in La Salle, in a letter Pound at least claimed to have written urging her to intervene 'to avert severe domestic tragedy IF I should ever see Paul' (*EP/JQ* 156); also Pound's father, Homer—'A skunk named P. Carus edtr. of a damn thing called the "Monist" & "the Open Court" has stolen a Fenollosa mss. ... If you can get anyone to knife him – do so' (*EP/P* 419); and also even the 'townfolk' of La Salle, to whom Pound wrote a 'WANTED' letter sent by way of Anderson in July, which called for a 'lynch law for manuscript thieves' and offered a reward of \$10 'to be given to any one providing me with adequate means of recovering a manuscript entitled "The Chinese Written Character, by Ernest Fenollosa, edited and annotated by E. P."' Pound hoped by then that Carus was 'dead or hung', decried the 'dirt-meanness' of such 'branded sequestrators and detainers' of manuscripts, and requested 'correspondence from La Salle containing information about

Dr. Carus' so that he may be 'made a sort of caput lupinum; not in the full sense' that he 'need, or may, be killed on sight by any good citizen, but that any honest member of the public should be at liberty at all times and in all places to administer a sound and vigorous coup-de-pied to the buttocks ... of out and out thieves of mss.' (EP/MA 244–45).

'DO let me know if the Chinese mss. has arrived' Pound wrote to Anderson on 18 June (EP/MA 233), and then the WANTED letter of July, and then, finally, to Quinn on 10 August 1918: 'Thank you or "thank Gawd", that Fenollosa mss. has reached the L.R.' (EP/JQ 156), and to Anderson on 20 August 'Thank GOD the Chinese essay has come in' (EP/MA 248), and again to Anderson on 3 September 'Thank God the Chinese essay has come in. (i.e. to you)' (EP/MA 253). Carus had held CWC-b at least nineteen months.

But before CWC-b was printed in *Little Review* and the *Instigations of Ezra Pound* it had one further setback. By New Year's Day 1919 Pound believed he had negotiated publication of *Instigations* including the appended CWC with Alfred Knopf in New York, and after all that had happened he wrote to Anderson that he would like her to 'please let [Knopf] have the mss.', as he 'will presumably want to begin printing ... and the mss ... will be better for his printer than an uncorrected L.R.' Pound saw 'no need to print the Chinese essay in the L.R. at all, if it doesn't suit the general condition' (EP/MA 258). But Knopf, too, in the end, rejected CWC and the larger project in which Pound proposed to publish it, and Pound would end up worrying to his mother that Anderson might not get the manuscript to Liverlight in time for it to be included in the secondly-imagined incarnation of *Instigations*—'Dad might cast an eye on the matter; at least make sure that L.R. has mss. Or has forwarded it, or is ready to forward it when Liverlight is ready for it' (EP/P 443–44). Anderson managed, with or without Homer's eye on the matter.

And so the *Instigations of Ezra Pound* with its appended essay on the Chi-



nese Written Character by the late Ernest Fenollosa appeared from Boni and Liveright in April 1920, sixty-eight months after Pound first sent CWC-a to Alice Corbin Henderson. The 'enlightening' 'extremely important' and 'profound' work which was a 'whole basis of aesthetics' and 'one of the most important essays of our time' had been rejected by *Poetry*, *The Dial*, *Yale Review*, *Seven Arts*, either *The Open Court* or *The Monist* or in effect both, Knopf, Macmillan, probably *Quarterly Review* and possibly *Fortnightly Review* and the *Hibbert Journal*. One or the other of Pound's typescripts had been 'stolen', 'misaid', 'hid', 'lost', 'delayed', 'detained', 'extracted', 'hindered', 'rejected', 'destroyed', suspected (twice) to have been 'ate', and possibly burnt by a divinely-inspired char woman.

And yet ... . After all that *Instigations* instigated the usual reviews in the usual journals by the usual suspects, but of these only Padraic Colum took special note of the appended CWC. Pound was 'a notable editor' who with the inclusion of this 'notable essay that has the effect of being a review and a criticism of Western culture' has 'added genius to his editorial efforts to make current the discoveries of Ernest Fenollosa', Colum wrote, and that was it in the press. The issues of *Little Review* in which CWC appeared had included work by Pound's friends and enemies and other frequent reviewers, Margaret Anderson, Sherwood Anderson, Djuna Barnes, Maxwell Bodenheim, Witter Bynner, Emanuel Carnevali, Aldous Huxley, James Joyce, Harold Monroe, John Rodker, and William Carlos Williams, among others, and so we know that CWC had been *seen*. Pound's last letter of the period to mention CWC was dated 31 October 1919, just after the second instalment had appeared in *Little Review*, printed in a cranky exchange with T. S. Eliot which took place in the pages of *The Athenaeum*, in which Pound declared himself 'most decidedly indebted ... to Ernest Fenollosa's profound insight into the Chinese Written Character as a poetic medium'. 'The debt is so great', Pound wrote,

‘that I would not have it lightly forgotten’ (qtd. in Eliot, *Letters*, 414). But it was forgotten but by Pound, lightly, for years. Even after *Instigations* CWC had a cheering section of only one, and the trouble only had just begun.

## Notes

This is the first of a series of essays which trace the history and reception of Ezra Pound’s version of Ernest Fenollosa’s ‘The Chinese Written Language as a Medium for Poetry’, better known under the title Pound gave it, ‘The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry’. An earlier version of the essay was presented at the 26th International Ezra Pound Conference at Brunnenburg Castle, Dorf Tirol, Italy, 7–11 July 2015. Part II of the study, ‘Larceny: Ezra Pound, the Telluric Mass of Miss Lowell, and the Pilfering of “The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry”, 1914–1921’, appeared in 『英米文学評論』 / *Essays and Studies in British & American Literature* (Tokyo Woman’s Christian University) 61 (March 2015). An version of part III, ‘Intertextuality, the Invention of China, and the Scholarship of Eliation: Ezra Pound and a Chap Named Waley’, was presented at the 2nd Conference of the Australian Modernist Studies Network at the University of Sydney, 15–16 December 2014, and will be in print soon.

## Abbreviations used in this essay are:

EP/ACH: *The Letters of Ezra Pound to Alice Corbin Henderson*

EP/JQ: *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound to John Quinn*

EP/MA: *Pound/The Little Review: The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson*

EP/P: *Ezra Pound to his Parents: Letters 1885–1929*

LEP: *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907–1941*

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## Keywords

Ezra Pound, Ernest Fenollosa, Modernist Literature, East-West Literary Studies, East-West Cultural History

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