

12.II.'70 Euhemeristic Analysis of Myth: Pound, Olson, Duncan, Jerome Rothenberg.

Most difficult area: how do you handle the way human beings make gods? (The relationship between the human being, the earth, and the sky)

B First, the ways Pound & Olson use Brooks Adams. Pound refers to Adams in "A Visiting Card" (Impact, p. 45). "The first to formulate the idea of Kulturmorphologie in America." The relevant book is The Law of Civilization & Decay, 1896. (earlier than Spengler) From Preface: "The value of history lies not in the multitude of facts collected, but in their relationship to each other; and in this respect an author can have no larger responsibility than any other scientific observer. If the sequence of events seems to indicate the existence of a law governing social development, such a law may be suggested. But to approve or disapprove of it would be as futile as to discuss the moral bearing of gravitation." This is a contraversial attempt to suggest that through a Kulturmorphologie, a lining up of the facts as an anthropologist would see them, you can arrive at an amoral description which can be called a "law". Brooks then sets out to relate ecclesiastical, military, & commercial systems with the products of imagination, with coinage; what he is looking for is a way of describing the process of energy in history and finding its laws. (Which brother Henry was also attempting) "The theory proposed is based upon the accepted scientific principle that law of force and energy is of universal application in nature, and that animal life is one of the outlets through which solar energy is dissipated." This is application of 2nd law of thermodynamics (see also Pynchon, Wiener); universe a single structure of energy, & can therefor come under single law. A relationship established between Naturmorphologie & Kultur-morphologie (cf. Goethe). "Thought is one manifestation, says Brooks, fear & greed are early phases of thought; fear stimulating belief in the invisible world & inventing priesthood; greed stimulating war & trade. "Probably, the velocity of the social movement of any community is proportionate to its energy & mass." (This at the same time as Einstein! This is an area Koestler is interested in: simultaneity of invention in different fields.) ". . . and its centralization is proportionate to its velocity. Therefore, as human movement is accelerated, society is centralized. (Buckminster Fuller in "Human Geography", B.F.Reader, relates transport methods, mapping methods, & centralization of cities.) In the earlier stages of concentration, Fear seems to be the channel through which energy finds its readiest outlet. Accordingly, in primitive & scattered communities, the imagination is vivid; and the mental types produced are religious, military, & artistic. As consolidation advances, fear yields to greed, & the economic organism tends to supercede the emotional & martial. Whenever a race is richly endowed with energetic material which it does not expend in the struggle for life, the surplus may be stored in the form of wealth. This stock of stored energy may be transferred from community to community, either by

conquest or by superiority in economic competition." This is an area Pound is concerned with: once you start playing games with money, it is a perversion of human energy. "However large may be the store of ~~XXXXX~~ energy accumulated by conquest, a race (nation) must sooner or later reach the limit of its martial energy, & must enter on the phase of economic competition. But as the economic organism radically differs from the emotional & martial, the effect of economic competition has been, perhaps invariably, to dissipate the energy amassed by war." (B. Fuller talks about the concentration of energy in WWI&II, & its rapid dissipation by Comm. & cap. rather than turning it back to human uses.) "When surplus energy is accumulated in such bulk as to preponderate over productive energy, it becomes the controlling social force. Thenceforth capital is autocratic and energy vents itself through these organisms best fitted to give expression to the power of capital. In this last stage of consolidation, economic and perhaps scientific intellect is propagated, while the imagination fades & the emotional, martial & artistic types of men will decay." The book which follows reports on the investigations which made the ~~xxxx~~ preface possible. The preface ends: "The evidence, however, seems to point to the conclusion that when highly centralized society disintegrates under the pressure of economic competition, it is because the energy of the race has been exhausted. Consequently the survivors of such a community lack the power necessary to renew concentration, & must probably remain inert unless provided with fresh energetic material by the infusion of barbarian blood." The latter is ludicrous, but it energized Pound, Spengler, Henry Adams, Shaw, Bergson, Eliot, Yeats, & is still around. Resembles "fortune's wheel". But Brooks, at least, does not line this up with Carlylian nonsense about "vital essence" concentrated in Friedrich der Grosse, English captains of industry, etc. These ideas are important in history of American synthesis, but by (say) 1930, it would be very difficult to determine whether they were coming from Spengler, Nietzsche, or Brooks Adams, but they could be used to explain Hitler, Mussolini, or whoever.

Pound is not concerned with "inexorable law", as were Adams etc., but rather with "equity" & "justice". Pound seems to have entertained laws of entropy & decay as checks to his optimism. B For gist of Spengler, see The Modern Tradition, ed. by Richard Ellman & Charles Feidelson, 1965 (basic texts from 19th & 20th C).

Spengler, Decline of the West: "The morphology of world-history becomes inevitably a universal symbolism." This is law-making synthesis, like Adams. ^{id #15}

Pound contradicts Adams' definition of money: "Brooks Adams' cyclic vision of the West shows us a consecutive struggle against four great rackets, namely the exploitation of the fear of the unknown (black magic, etc.), the exploitation of violence, the exploitation or monopolization of cultivable land, and the exploitation of money. . . . He distinguishes between the swindle of the users & that of the monopolists, but he slides into the concept, shared by Mill & Marx, of money as an accumulator of energy." When Adams notes that "money alone is capable of being

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transmuted into any form of activity," Pound smells fetishism & metaphysics, & comments, "This is the idiom of the black myth!" "Money does not contain energy." High finance usury is not using money as energy, but as a means of power control. But he respects Brooks for drawing economics into general culture in 20th C. Pound is concerned about fact that intellectuals know nothing about economics.

CULTURE-MORPHOLOGY

Charles Olson: Definition of History. Problem for Olson is frequently that of notation. He uses page as idiogrammatic structure, an extension of Pound's technique, as in Canto XCIV. Olson is concerned with overlap between definitions of history and Theogony (Hesiod), one of earliest Greek books about evolution of cosmos & making of gods out of basic energy. See Proprioception & Bibliography on America for Ed Dorn.¹⁹⁶⁵ Once you have the idea of simultaneity of information, how do you notate it? Robert Creeley: "Olson's own procedure for the recognition of such history as men in complement with place & time make actual." Fenelosa "helps us to move from the old discourse to the new". (Prop., p.7) From 18th C rationalizing of Locke & Descartes & from 19th C Marx. Creeley: "Aim is secularization which not only loses nothing of the divine by seeing process in reality, redeems all idealism from theocracy or mobocracy, whether it is rational or superstitious, whether it is democratic or socialism." He produced "a complex & densely articulated sequence of poems & critical notes". These are compact & use a shorthand of reference like Pound's; they suggest a quickness of mind & a rapidity of juxtaposition of events. Finally, he does away with sentences altogether & you get diagrammatic juxtapositions. (Like Cage's happenings). (For description of "A Work" see Prop. p. 16.) This method of total placement is partly derived from Brooks Adams (mentioned in Bibl. for Ed Dorn). "Quantity as a principle". Totally displacing hierarchies of taste or quality. 2. Process as the most interesting fact of facts." Placement as historical study based "not on how much one knows, but in what field of context it is retained & used. How as yourself as an individual you are acquiring & using the same in acts of form." Not, when you have acquired it what is the use of it? His ~~xxx~~ words are millenia (the whole range of civilizations in time) & quantity (the information in space); person (self) & process (acquired info.) Their interaction shown in Bibl., p. 4. Simultaneity--continuously structuring your information in terms of direction (Pound). Olson rejects history as time (linear) & the false antithesis of individual vs. society. These are the "old axes". Olson cites Walter Prescott Webb, Great FRANKLIN (Bibl., p.5). Webb discusses the genesis of this book in a preface: how previous works had ignored the invention of the six-shooter, barbed wire, windmills. "The method adopted was to follow in turn each of the cultural complexes: weapons, tools, law, & literature," from the woodlands into the plain, and to observe whether they were modified in transition, and if so, where & how. The enquiry broadened to include the whole

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round of plains life, from geology to literature." That is precisely the range that Olson is involved in when he talks about Gloucester: by the time you've read the Maximus Poems, you know exactly what the geology is like, the area under peoples' bodies, what the soil is, what the environmental centers are. From this he moves out into the area of myths, which describe the ways we have attitudes towards these. . . Webb's work was environmental study; he recognized it was a pioneering work & hoped it would be "a principle of wide applicability". "The failure to recognize the fact that the plains destroyed the old formula of living and demanded a new one, led the settlers into disaster and the law-makers into error, and leads all who will not see into confusion."

Next ~~source~~ source: Carl O. Sauer, an American geologist famous for his studies of local environments: Environment & Culture During the Last Deglaciation, 1948. Paperback selection, Land & Life, 1967. Most important theoretical section: "The Morphology of Landscape", Sauer's principles of field study. "All science may be regarded as phenomenology; that is, the organized process of acquiring knowledge." His primary references are German; e.g. Count Keyserling, Prolegomena for Naturphilosophie; which takes us back to Agassiz. (& Goethe & von Humboldt) Later in the essay he refers to Erdkunde (science of the earth in general) & Länderkunde (synthetic areal knowledge).

Myth. Olson's ref. in Bibl to D.H. Lawrence, Preface to Fantasia. Olson goes on to talk about maps (Bibl, p. 6), migrations, Herodotus (cf. B. Fuller, on ocean, earth, sky navigation), Frobenius. Lawrence: old pagan world as unified science of life. Olson concerned with geographical origins of historical human life. Glacial period--first big migrations. What remained of old pagan unifications; half-forgotten symbolic forms, ritual, gesture, myth? All this is still available because human beings still live on the surface of the earth. So study of this area cuts across study of evolution, as progressive natural selection of the strongest. Get down to what is a constant value in terms of mythic description of man's relationship to the earth & sky. Lawrence (like Agassiz) says, "I do not believe in evolution, but in a change of ever-renewed creative civilizations." Both Lawrence & Olson are concerned with the moment when a synthesis is required of your experience, the experience of other people, & the experience of the past. "Some gradually developing & gradually withering vision, some dynamic idea."

Next, Brooks Adams, The New Empire, 1902. "The space of the facts & the maps as roots."

P. 14: Olson concerned with relationship between morphology & topology (scientific study of a particular locality).

Kinds of facts he wants from New Empire are if chronological tables in appendix: sense of topology & morphology of history in terms of trade movements, technological inventions, (e.g. compass, change from wooden to stone buildings, etc.) ~~in~~

"In civilization nothing is at rest, the movement is trade, the necessity is metals, and the consequent centralization of power also moves." Human Universe, p. 135. (See rest of quotation, marked in book.)

This links up with Canto XXXVIII of Pound: connection between usury & civilizations. Connection with Pound, Frobenius, Paedeuma, is apparent in intro to New Empire: "The theory on which the modern university system rests is fallacious. The work of the university lies not in the number of units taught, but in the coordination of parts and intensive effort." Both Adams & ^{Olson} ~~Pound~~ interested in bases of laws: "to go beyond all concepts of laws, to get as graphic as the earth is". "Among the inventions which have stimulated movement & consequently centralization, none is equal to smelting of metals." NE, p. 3. Olson: "Atomic power then is the ultimate act of smiths, but as such of like import to a like series of impulses reaching back to and coming forward from: (see list in Hum Un, p.135) You can't understand what Pound calls your "address" of yourself in history unless you understand this kind of coordination.

(For McLuhan's connection with all this, look at Harold
B Innis, The Bias of Communication, 1951. Get 1964 edition with
McCluhan's intro. Behind McLuhan is his teacher, Innis;
Innis' teacher Robert Park, one of first ecologists. These were
members of a Chicago group which included in the '20's Thorstein
Veblen, George Herbert Mead, John Dewey, Max Weber, & Emile
Durkheim. Primary study of sociology & ecology together. These
are also the people that C. Wright Mills studied & dealt with
B in The Sociological Imagination. And changes for more socialistic
purpose.)

What this program of ideas in "things" (WC Williams sense) & possibility of their synthesis can be, appears in Maximus IV-VI, poem called Bk ii chapter 37 (no. 52, my system). (Note: this part of poem not in collection; appears in Yugen no. 8, 1962. I have transcribed in Maximus collection.) You move from "place as term in the order of creation" ~~to~~ & as equation (not something with solutions) to description of cosmos beyond philosophies, religions, & moral systems of rule, to relationships as parts of the body. You find ways in which you can make your instances decant total experience: histology & story.

"Story" in Duncan's "history" includes a passional area; i.e., to do with elemental feelings which are basically erotic. This takes us back to a very important element of Paideuma in Pound, as follows:

B Pound, The Spirit of Romance, 1910. (Pound was 25). Here he first extends his ideas of philology into morphology. Begins with quotation from Ovid ("urbane, sceptical, a Roman of the city"): Convenit esse deos et ergo esse credemus: "It is convenient to have gods, and therefore we believe ~~that~~ they exist." Ovid's mind: "Trained to the system of empire, it demands the definite." What interests Pound in Ovid is the structure of Metamorphoses. Energy in Ovid is continuously fluid and taking different forms under

different circumstances; and it is always located in geographical place. When Apollo chases Daphne who turns into tree, this is an example of energy transference, which concerns Ovid very much: the relationship between the human, the earth structure, & the spirit structure of gods (& men). The M contain the dramatic embodiments of energy. It is that method, & the stories, which the 11th & 12th C writers in Provence made use of. This Pound deals with in Chap. 5: "Psychology & troubadors". (~~XXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~) (amended in 1916 ed. to its present form)

This chapter concerns the love code in the romanticism of Provençal literature. Pound is concerned with the inheritance of the rites & language of Eros, as it moved through the Mediterranean (from eastern Med.) into Italy & Provence (& into Dante, Chaucer, & ~~Shakespeare~~ Shakespeare. See Chaucer's "merciless beauty"; S. uses Ovid continuously). Pound: "Provençal song is never wholly disjunct from the pagan rites of May. Provence was less disturbed than the rest of Europe by the invasion from the north" in the Dark Ages. If Paganism were to survive anywhere, it would be in the Languedoc & Province. "Compared with the Greek Anthology poets, the troubadors have in some way lost the names of the gods & remembered the names of lovers." Inside the naming of the gods is the idea of erotic exchange of energy; e.g., Persephone. The reason why Choere (spring goddess) becomes Persephone (goddess of darkness) is the point in question. Human beings are describing the ways in which energy is ambivalent, ambiguous. Pound connects the "lady" with the Philosopher's Stone. Understanding euhemeristic analysis of myth depends on: erotic stories of lovers; invention of gods; their relationship to the seasonal cycles; and alchemical transformations. From

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Ovid to alchemy. This is primary in the cantos: Pound is concerned with ways in which human beings have transformed themselves, & the environment in the process. This is of primary importance & cuts through ideologies of every kind. Not involution, but transformation & metamorphosis. (Which Marxists & Freudians hate.) Pound mentions poem, Balatta, by Cavalcanti, who sees issuing from his lady's lips "a subtle body, from that a subtler body, from that a star, & from that a voice, proclaiming the ascent from Virtù." From body energy to spirit of virtue. This is essence of power of Eros in these poets.

What Pound asks is whether it evolved from the half-memories of Hellenistic mysteries, or whether it was locally there.

It is a cult which is "stricter or more subtle than that of the celibate ascetics, a cult for the purgation of the soul by the refinement of the senses. Beyond a certain border, surely, we come to a place where this ecstasy is not a whirl or a madness, but a glow arising from the exact nature of perception." That is the connection with morphology: by contemplating the thing, it transforms itself.

Pound argues that some persons in Provence developed an unofficial mysticism. "Visions which the servants of amour saw quite as well as the servants of the Roman ecclesiastical hierarchy, but without the dark night of the soul." He points to the music of the love cults & religious cults, which are the

same, one reason being that the troubadours were taught in the monasteries; note that the monks' songs about religion are frequently erotic-- it's all about the same energy, Eros. (cf. Song of Songs) If you put together orthodox church cults & love cults as versions of energy transformation, & know about the visions of the early fathers, & about Mariolatry; and then notice that Beatrice in Dante is the female energy center (which he addresses in the masculine!); you are then ready for the fact that the center of many of these cults, particularly the alchemical cults, is the hermaphrodite; i.e., the combined energy form which cuts through sexual differentiation. (This is why the Knights Templars were accused of homosexuality: they were.) Pound: "There is the final evolution of amour by Dante & Guido: a new & paganish god, neither eros nor an angel of the Talmud." This is where Robert Duncan starts: what is their relationship? (One must know how spirit transformations are talked about in the Talmud & the Caballa.) In Pound you find the symbol of the "sun & moon together". Alchemical symbols are frequently androgynous. Pound is trying to draw the myth & the psychology together (not "isolate the unconscious", which is of no use to anybody! It doesn't include the environment.)

P. 92: "I believe in a sort of permanent basis in humanity. That is to say, I believe that Greek myth arose when someone, having passed through delightful psychic experience, tried to communicate it to others, and found it necessary to screen himself from persecution. Speaking aesthetically, the myths are explications of mood. You may stop there, or you may probe deeper. Certain it is that these myths are only intelligible in a vivid & glittering sense to those people to whom they occur. I know I mean one man who understands Persephone & Demeter, & one who understands the laurel, & another who has, I should say, met Artemis. These things are, for them, real." The permanent basis in humanity is the communication of psychic experience. I.e., myths are descriptions. The origin of mythos & the relationship between man & creation or cosmos lies inside the human body as some kind of mechanism.

The point where Olson, Pound, & D.H. Lawrence meet is this process of energy transformation into the myth; i.e. from the experience into the description of the experience. Whenever a human being does this, it is immediately available to all of us at all times, wherever you are. (See Jerome Rotherberg, Technicians of the Sacred.) (Reich-D.H. Lawrence: sense of whole; flowing. Continuous energy source.)

P. 93: "When we do get into the contemplation of the flowing, we find sex, & some correspondence to it: positive-negative, north-south, sun-moon. Whatever terms or signs you prefer to substitute. Energy can be exemplified as either light or electricity. Reich: these polarities describe our relationship to cosmic energy. (Cf. "correspondences" in metaphysical poetry.) Pound: "Sex has a double function & purpose: reproductive & educational;" or as we see in the realm of fluid force, one sort of vibration produces, at different intensities, heat & light."

This is what he means by "the mediumistic properties of Eros".

Then he goes on to describe how this has been corrupted by ideological structures, "and particularly that form of religion in which someone, having to keep a troublesome rabble in order, invents & scares him with a disagreeable boggy called God." The other kind of religion is the "sacred", "ecstatic" religion, which rests on the fact that "this is all one life" (Coleridge). We live in a single space: not emptiness, but energy exchange.

"The general object seems to be to stimulate a sort of confidence in the life force." (Bee B. Fuller) (Mailer: White Negro) You can trace a continuity from the Eleusinian Mysteries to Normal Mailer! What human beings have got, that is like the universe, is Eros. Mailer's "Man who Studied Yoga" deals with sexual regeneration. Tantric & yogic forms have to do with connecting up your energy sources with universal energy sources.

Pound, however, takes an aristocratic stance: "Their teaching is variously & constantly a sort of working hypothesis acceptable to people of a certain range of temperament. It suits a particular constitution of nerves & intellect, & in accord with which the people of this temperament can live at greatest peace with the order of man & nature. The old cults were sane in their careful inquisition or novitiate, which served to determine whether the candidates were or were not of such temper & composition. One must consider that the types that joined these cults . . ."

Robert Duncan: This is central material to what Duncan is putting together for The H.D. Book. He takes this Pound chapter we have been considering & traces it forward & back, so that there is a morphological description of the ways that energy is transformed in Mediterranean culture. In Passages (& H.D. Book) he is making an epic structure about forms of energy. (Pound's first, unpublished book is called Hilda's Book, 1905-7, & contains his earliest poems about "the lady". She is present throughout the Cantos as Daphne, Venus, etc. See also Pynchon, V...! Her destructive side is Helen, Isolde, Circe, & Lucretia Borgia, & Sir Basil Zaharoff's mistress, also Lucretia, who links these cults to Usury.

B Much of this material contained in New Approaches to Ezra Pound, ed. Eva Hesse, 1969. See essays by Guy Davenport & Boris de Rachewiltz. Emerson: "The etymologist finds the deadest word to have been once a brilliant picture." "Language is fossil poetry." This is why Duncan & Olson are using language analysis continually in their structures. Comparative philology becomes descriptions of human gesture.

Pound: "Make it New" (a phrase of Confucius). The point of "Walden" was preparation for a new life. Bathing was not symbolic or metaphorical, but action, praxis.

Letter from Pound to his father, 1927: (no. 224 of collected letters) defines theme of Cantos along these lines. "A. Live man goes down into the world of the dead. B. The Repeat in

history. C. The magic moment or moment of metamorphosis, Bust through from the quotidian into divine or permanent world, gods etc." Transformation of a man during his own lifetime into a god, by epicising himself. Descent into the underworld is central; may be descent into one's own body. Alchemists, Jung are important. Finding the Philosopher's Stone is finding the unifying principle of energy, in yourself & outside yourself. Poet can help by being the "antennae of the race" (Pound). Directional radar. But unlike Dante, Pound has no "Aquilian Map".

In Pound, the crystal is the form of possible paradise. "Paradisal energy can be obtained & used against the tyranny of hell." The latter is (according to another letter, 1954) "subjugation & perversion; the powers of hell are always ready to pervert in order to subjugate". Anarchist principles: any form of subjugation is hell.

In Pound, Robert Kelly, Duncan, Olson: the image of what they are doing is "the work", with all its alchemical overtones of endless lifetime transformation of energy. Cantos are "a work" in this sense. Canto 116: "I have brought the great ball of crystal. Who can lift it?" He offers the reading of the book for use.

Robert Duncan, in Tri-Quarterly no. 12, Spring 1968: "Two Chapters from H.D." "The work, the ground, & Eros lie at the heart of our study here. The work itself is the transformation of the ground. In this ground the soul and the world are one, in a third hidden thing, in which the imagination of the work arises. It is the work of creation, then, it is poetry, the making. It is also the opus alchemicum of hermetic & Rosicrucian alchemy. The rimes of this poetry are correspondences, workings of figures and patterns of figures, in which we apprehend the whole we do not see. The path that poetry creates between reality & the soul is such a work. Our path here must often come close to the path of depth psychology and theosophical teachings, but we are tracing the path of psyche & Eros as workers of a fiction in the art of poetry, projecting not a cure of souls, or an illumination of souls, except as the secret of fictions cures or illumines, but the inner work of the poetic opus. Our work is to arouse, in a contemporary consciousness, reverberations of old myth, to prepare the ground, so that when we return to read, we will see our modern texts charged with a plot that had already begun before the first signs & signatures we have found worked upon the walls of Altamira or PESHMAEZ[©]. Mythos Aristotle defined as the plot of the story. The plot we are to follow, the great myth or work, is the fiction of what man is." (see Wallace Stevens, Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction, Aesthetique du Mal.)