

We are in the year 1912, about the time Pound first used the term 'imagiste'. This was Imagism: first principle, 'direct treatment of "the thing"'. Pound goes on to explain what he means by an 'Image'—it is 'that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'. This, he argues, 'instantaneously . . . gives that sense of sudden liberation . . . of freedom from time and space limits . . . which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art'. It's worth noticing that Pound does not pretend to offer a brand-new system for producing a brand-new kind of art. He is describing, in his own terms, a process by which 'the greatest works of art' have already been achieved, and by implication, the way towards all new achievement in art. *And* he is deducing theory from art, not art from theory; the right way round, as it seems to me.

Pound's rules may sound a bit obvious and truistic to some of us, now. It was the prevailing taste, in the poetry and criticism of the time, that made them *new*, and challenging. In 1912, Hopkins was almost unknown—Bridges's edition of the poems appeared in 1918—otherwise his theory of inscape and instress might have been seen to anticipate Pound's insistence on 'the thing' and his demand for the 'image' presented in an 'instant of time'. Grierson's famous anthology of the metaphysical poets had barely appeared. Yet, as things stood at the time, it was Pound who set things going—'out of key with his time', as he put it in 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberly', he tried 'to resuscitate the dead art/of poetry'.

Forty years later, in 1950, Charles Olson announced the arrival of projective verse, and took up what the lawyers call an 'adversary situation' towards what he calls The Non-Projective. Beneath the title he printed three ingeniously-chosen etymological siblings of the word 'projective': spaced out across the page, each with an unclosed parenthesis mark, we read the words 'projectile', 'percussive', 'prospective'. *Projectile*—it goes off like a shell or a rocket—Okay, citizen? *Percussive*—it beats and it strikes. *Prospective*—it looks ahead, it's the poetry of the future.

Opposed to all this—so to speak, in the enemy camp—was the Non-Projective. This was of course where T. S. Eliot remained, and the cause of what Olson judged to be his failure as a dramatist. About the Non-Projective we are told three things:

First, it is 'what a French critic calls "closed" verse'.

Second, it is 'that verse which print bred' (which means, I take it, something that happened after the invention of movable printing type in the fifteenth century, or the emergence of a printed book audience for poetry in the sixteenth century.)