

Third, it is 'pretty much what we have had, in English and American, and have still got, despite the work of Pound and Williams'.

From the start, it's clear that we are in for something more radical than Pound ever dreamt of; we are in another world, if not another planet, from Pound. Pound, whatever we choose to make of his political aberrations, took poetry with an immense and, for his time, extraordinary *seriousness*. He was, I believe, humble before it and its history. I'm not sure that he didn't say the last word—in English anyway, and if there can be a last word—on the subject of *vers libre*, and a few other problems of diction and versification which have confronted poets in our century. He affirmed his belief that poets should try to know, and learn from, *all* poetry, of all possible ages and languages, and to master *all* systems of metre. A poet could not have too many masters or too many languages. Whatever Pound was, he was not, and here's the contrast I wish to point out, a poetic Messiah, whose mission and message was to correct the errors of centuries past. The errors which concerned him were 'modern' errors. His 'modernism' was grounded on a profound sense of tradition, not merely classical and Renaissance, but more recent and Romantic. Not many of us may be able to follow Pound's advice, for instance, 'to dissect the lyrics of Goethe coldly into their component sound values', but it is within anybody's means to 'read as much of Wordsworth as does not seem too unutterably dull'. In all this, Pound seems to me to be in a true line of descent from the great innovators and reformers of poetry; in contrast to the kind of extravagant syncretist and philosophical dilettante whom I find addressing me in Olson's 'Projective Verse' essay.

More specifically, one or two examples of the kind of thing I mean. I read about COMPOSITION BY FIELD—Olson's FIELD is much talked about: often by people who, I suspect, understand it no better than I do. It is something 'opposed to inherited line, stanza, over-all form, what is the "old" base of the non-projective'. Yes, we can see what it is *opposed to*; and it looks very much like the old (and exhausted) debate between *vers libre* and regular verse, between 'imagism' and what Pound called 'perdamnable rhetoric' in English poetry. There is, besides, a whole paragraph of Olson which—effectively and poetically—contains nothing more than Eliot's last paragraphs in 'Tradition and the Individual Talent': for Eliot's word 'emotion' you only have to read Olson's word 'energy'; and you can, if you like, prefer a pseudo-scientific and quantitative metaphor to an old-style psychological one: but whether you do or not, the Olson version contains nothing new whatsoever.