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# COMING DOWN OUT OF THE TREE: EXPLORING MEMORY AND IDENTITY IN H.D.'S *END TO TORMENT*

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COMING DOWN OUT OF THE TREE:  
EXPLORING MEMORY AND IDENTITY IN H.D.'s *END TO TORMENT*

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
The Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Masters of Fine Arts  
English

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by  
Natalie Smith Mahaffey  
December 2010

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Accepted by  
Dr. Catherine Paul, Committee Chair  
Dr. Wayne K. Chapman  
Dr. Jillian Weise

## ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the text *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound* by H.D., as well as the small collection of poetry entitled “Hilda’s Book” by Ezra Pound, which appears in the back of the memoir. My exploration into these texts consists of the reliability of memory, the role memory plays on identity, and the significance of identity as defined by non-fiction, creative writing. For *End to Torment*, I focus specifically on H.D.’s approach to memory as defined by her work with Dr. Sigmund Freud, as well as the impact this approach has on the presentation of Pound’s identity in the memoir. For “Hilda’s Book,” I focus specifically on Pound’s representation of the female, particularly with regard to nature, and explore how this representation helps to define the identity of H.D. The combination of these explorations provides insight into the identity of H.D. and Pound throughout their adult lives, and encourages the reader to re-examine *End to Torment* as a text that is more than just the retelling of a long-lasting relationship.

## DEDICATION

To my daughter, Madelyn Anne, who made me realize I could create so much more.

To my daughter, Evie Marie, who reminds me daily to laugh and be silly.

And to my husband, Jonathan—“Questo amore è silente.”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Catherine Paul, my committee chair, who first introduced me to *End to Torment* and began this strange obsession, Dr. Wayne Chapman, who showed me how much more interesting a text is when seen in the author's handwriting, and Dr. Jillian Weise, who also wonders what H.D. and Ezra were wearing at the costume party that started it all. Without their patience and demands for exceptional work, this thesis would still be floundering in the muck.

I would also like to thank Camille Cooper, who copied and mailed articles to me when I was at my wit's end.

Finally, I would like to thank Stephen Leech, Margaret McGill, and Melissa Turner, my fellow graduate students, who listened when I gnashed my teeth, suggested when I hit a wall, and celebrated when I made substantial progress. Without them, I, too, may have learned what the cage does to a person.

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## INTRODUCTION

*The book is not addressed to those who have arrived at full knowledge of the subject without knowing the facts.*

--Ezra Pound in *ABC of Reading*

With regard to *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound* by H.D., the facts are imperative. The biographical history of the relationship they shared with each other, and with others, must be in the forefront of the reader's mind in order to fully grasp what the memoir and the small collection of poetry, "Hilda's Book," reveal about H.D and Pound. We must know how their friendship started, when their romance bloomed, how they came to marry other people, and why their relationship survived through wars, imprisonment, questions of sexuality, and, ultimately, death. But perhaps the most important fact we, as readers, need to understand and accept is that the relationship shared by Hilda Doolittle and Ezra Pound was not remarkable. The only difference between them and millions of other couples who have endured the same fate is that they were writers, and, therefore, their relationship outlived them, which makes the relationship they shared seem to possess some sort of mystical aspect that most relationships do not have. If nothing else, their relationship confirms the importance of their careers, for it is only through the written word, the precise stringing of verbs, nouns, adverbs, and adjectives together, that their scholars and readers have been tricked into believing their personal relationship is something to be studied and professionally

discussed. It is in that regard that I feel I must explain the facts of this most unremarkable relationship if readers are to understand anything in the following chapters.<sup>1</sup>

But, before I begin explaining their relationship, I want to be clear about one thing. While I have said that, together, they are unremarkable, as individuals, they are quite extraordinary. The circumstances that surround Pound's political dealings, the relationship and influence he had on his colleagues, and his commanding, unabashed presence in the modern literary movement inarguably make him one of the most noteworthy members of learned society. While I believe H.D. to be just as important as Pound, I also admit that she is quite often overlooked, and, in some instances, disregarded almost completely.<sup>2</sup> However, her contributions to epic poetry penned by female writers, the exploration into the psyche she took with Sigmund Freud, and the imagist voice she gives to world war solidify her place among men like Pound, Eliot, Williams, and Joyce. Each tiny facet of their individual careers is worthy of study, and perhaps it is because of this that their relationship with each other, which is held with regard to their work, seems so important in particular scholarly circles.

I explain this, not because I think the reader too ignorant to understand it on his or her own, but because when I first read *End to Torment* and "Hilda's Book," I became quickly fascinated with the personal relationship these writers shared. I ignored their

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<sup>1</sup> I have learned the facts of this relationship by reading multiple sources, all of which can be found on the Works Consulted page of this thesis. Jacob Korg's *Winter Love*, H.D.'s *End to Torment*, John Tytell's *Ezra Pound: The Solitary Volcano*, and Raffaella Baccolini's "Pound's Tribute to H.D., 1961" are perhaps the most important.

<sup>2</sup> I refer here to the opinion of Lawrence S. Rainey, who asks, "whether she was really a poet of permanent and genuine stature...or whether she is merely a poet whose particular interests have fortuitously dovetailed with the intellectual preoccupations and modes of the present" (108). In short, Rainey asks if H.D. is considered important today because of the strides in the feminist and sexual movements or because she is actually worthy of being important?

canons as a whole. I rejected the possibility that Pound and H.D.'s story was not the ultimate love story of their time. And I refused to accept that they existed personally and professionally absent of each other. In short, I fell for the words. It was not until nearly eighteen months of obsessing over every personal and professional detail of H.D. and Pound as a single entity that I realized how very ordinary their relationship to one another was. And yet *End to Torment* and "Hilda's Book" remain my favorite works by these two authors. However, my love for the works has shifted over time, and what began as an unhealthy fascination for their love affair, has now turned into a significant appreciation for the misplaced and misguided emotions the memoir and poetry have helped me uncover. Having said that, the background of their relationship is still vital to understanding the texts, and so, I will explain.

Pound and H.D. met as teenagers at a costume party in October of 1901. The couple of years that followed are of no importance. It was not until 1905 that their relationship shifted from that of platonic friendship to heated love. For those who knew them personally, the love they shared seemed to burn bright and fast, and it was not long before people began to disapprove of the relationship, particularly H.D.'s parents (Doolittle 12-13). Perhaps their dislike of Pound and his connection to their daughter stemmed from the fact that "Ezra dominated Hilda as her guide and teacher...helping and controlling her at once" (Korg 6). In fact, it has been argued that the young, "controlling" love Pound had for H.D. served as a hint of what was to come in their lifelong relationship.

By the fall of 1905, H.D. and Pound were engaged, although the engagement was odd and short-lived. I say odd because even H.D. was unsure of how to explain it. In one of the journal entries of *End to Torment*, she writes, “‘It [the engagement] was understood but my parents were unhappy about it and I was shy and frightened” (15). The feelings Pound had for H.D. during this time are perhaps best documented in “Hilda’s Book,” which he wrote surrounding the time of their engagement. Very early in the collection, Pound writes, “I strove a little book to make for her,” explaining, rather blatantly, that the book was written entirely for H.D. (69). While the poetry is not singularly about her, it does almost exclusively discuss the importance of the female existence through sex, power, love, and failure, which may serve as an illustration to how Pound was thinking with regard to his relationship with H.D. If nothing else, the sheer existence of the book gives voice to Pound’s feelings for H.D., and the importance she held in his life. However, regardless of the affection shown in “Hilda’s Book,” it was not long before H.D. began to hear rumors of Pound being engaged to other women. And just as easily as it had begun, “the engagement [between H.D. and Pound], such as it was, was shattered like a Venetian glass goblet, flung on the floor” (15).

In 1908, Pound left for Europe. Three years later, H.D. did the same. But by then, any chance of a romance was over. During the time she was parted by the sea from Pound, H.D. formed a friendship with a woman named Francis Gregg, who would later be understood to be the first woman with whom H.D. had a lesbian relationship. When Pound was home from Europe during this time period, H.D. found herself in a tug-of-war with Gregg for the affections of Pound. And Pound, either enjoying the attention he was

receiving or blind to the trouble he was causing, encouraged each woman separately and differently, oftentimes using their individual writing as a way to their hearts, for he spent hours “helping” them strengthen their writing by offering suggestions and praise. When he left again for Europe in early 1911, both women were devastated, but rather than continue the competition Pound had forced between them, they turned to each other and sought comfort.

Later in the year 1911, while H.D. was touring Europe, she was reunited with Pound. When the rest of her family went back home to America, she stayed, and, while she did not know it at the time, she would never consider America her home again, as neither would Pound. Their friendship appears to have been rather easy going in Europe, at least to the passing eye. Later, through her letters, novels, poetry, and therapy, H.D. would confirm her jealousy and broken heart with regard to Pound during this time. However, even as she suffered, she found herself surrounded by possibilities that would only broaden the potential for growth in her personal and professional life. Pound introduced her to the lifestyle he had been living for the few years he had been there, and she settled into the circle of friends and acquaintances he provided. She also began the first of her serious writing, possibly due to having found herself right in the middle of somewhat of a literary revolution. The benchmark of the beginning of H.D.’s career as a writer is best documented by the change of her professional name, from “Hilda Doolittle” to “H.D.,” a name Pound created when he literally signed for her on the bottom of one of her poems (Doolittle 18). During this time, she got to know many of the big names of the

modernist movement and helped form the Imagist branch of modern poetry. She also formed a relationship with fellow imagist Richard Aldington, and in 1913, they married.

Pound remained a significant presence in H.D.'s life, even throughout her marriage to Aldington. In 1914, Pound also got married, to Dorothy Shakespear, the daughter of writer Olivia Shakespear. In *End to Torment*, H.D. recalls opening the door of the flat she and Aldington shared to find Pound standing in the doorway of the unit just across the hall. It was the day before his marriage was to take place. She explains, “‘What—what are you doing?’ I asked. He said he was looking for a place where he could fence with Yeats. I was rather taken aback when they [he and his wife] moved in. It was so near” (5). Pound, it seemed, knew no boundaries when it came to personal relationships. Or perhaps H.D. overdramatized the insignificant. Any discomfort H.D. may have felt due to having the Pounds across the hall was short-lived, though, as Aldington and H.D. moved out of the flat not long after Pound and Shakespear moved in.

From this point on, the relationship between H.D. and Pound shifted to what can loosely be termed as “life-long friends.” Land and controversy would separate them for most of the remainder of their lives. In 1920, the Pounds moved to Paris, and then to Italy four years later. Pound visited the United States only once during his time in Italy, just before World War II. He would not return again until after being arrested for a series of radio broadcasts in Italy during WWII—broadcasts that many believed to be “deliberate attempts to undermine the country of his birth through enemy propaganda” (Tietjens 39). After being arrested, he was imprisoned at Pisa, and then brought back to the United States to face charges of treason for his involvement with fascist Italian leader Benito

Mussolini. Once in the U.S., he was deemed mentally unfit to stand trial for treason and sent to St. Elizabeths Hospital in Washington, D.C. He remained imprisoned in St. Elizabeths until 1958, the same year H.D. wrote *End to Torment*.

H.D. told Pound of her journal entries, those that would become *End to Torment*, and sent him a copy, requesting he comment on the work. To her surprise, for she must have feared he would be harsh and disapproving of her account of their story, he replied, “there is a great deal of beauty.” In the few years after this, they corresponded often, commenting on each other’s work, making suggestions and offering praises. Then, in September of 1961, H.D. died after suffering a stroke some months earlier.

Pound received word of H.D.’s death via letter. His daughter, Mary de Rachewiltz, recalls that moment, explaining that he went to his room and began hastily translating H.D.’s poem “Regents of the Night” into Italian because he wanted to introduce her to the Italian people.<sup>3</sup> However, “it [was] not, though, hastiness due to carelessness or lack of feeling or engagement; it [was], rather, hastiness that proves the urgency of the undertaking and the strength of emotion Pound still had for H.D.” (Baccolini 436). Pound would also later explain the difficulty he had in attempting to write of H.D.’s death because, even in her passing, he did not consider her dead. The quick translation he attempted clarifies his understanding of dead-but-not-dead, for he greatly understood the lasting power of a writer’s work.

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<sup>3</sup> This poem was not chosen randomly. Lines from it were included in the letter telling Pound of H.D.’s death (Baccolini 435). The facsimile is published in the article “Pound’s Tribute to H.D., 1961” by Raffaella Baccolini.

Pound lived another decade after H.D., and *End to Torment*, with “Hilda’s Book,” was not published for another seven years after his death. By then, most people mentioned in the memoir were dead, as well. Unfortunately for those people, many of whom were remarkable in their own right, their lives are now supporting material for what has become the epic romance of Pound and H.D., a romance that really only lasted a few short years before it dissolved just as so many other romances do.

Of course, I realize the summary of the relationship I have just given is heavily skewed to show more of the happenings in H.D.’s life, than in Pound’s. I do this because *End to Torment* is solely written by H.D. Since the memoir is the basis for the chapters to come, I chose also to ground the telling of the relationship more from H.D.’s side, than from Pound’s. I admit that I have only touched on those things I think most important to know for the purpose of the following chapters. I want to urge readers to do as Pound says in *ABC of Reading*: to seek out the full facts of the personal and professional lives of both writers. Only in knowing the full truth behind H.D. and Pound will *End to Torment* and “Hilda’s Book” be useful. Without the truth, it would be wise to heed H.D.’s warning at the beginning of the memoir: “Now, no one will understand this” (4).

In the following chapters, I approach the memoir and poetry in a number of different ways. Chapter 1, “‘We Have Gone Through Some Hell Together, Separately’: The Technical Flaws in *End to Torment* and ‘Hilda’s Book,’” explores the complications I believe exist in publishing work that was meant to be kept private. I focus specifically on the erratic representation of age, particularly that of Ezra Pound, the misunderstanding that arises when reading a text that was originally written for personal use, and the

problematic coupling of texts that, essentially, do not relate to one another. In Chapter 2, “The Consequences of Memory in *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound*, I focus on the role that memory plays in H.D.’s recollection of her time spent with and waiting for Pound. To fully explore this idea of memory, I incorporate the revelations H.D. makes in *Tribute to Freud*, a text that outlines her time with Sigmund Freud and the work they did together regarding the multiple dimensions of the mind that must be explored in order to fully understand memory. In Chapter 3, “*Sancta Patrona/Domina Caelae*: Exploring The Female Identity in “Hilda’s Book,” I shift away from the memoir, and instead focus on the poetry written by Pound to H.D. I believe the poetry must be considered because it serves two purposes that are significant to the preceding chapters of this thesis. First, it gives a voice to the young Pound that H.D. frequently regards in the memoir. This voice is particularly important because I believe it has the power to reframe the assumptions the reader may make about Pound when reading the memoir. Second, the poetry is representative of Pound’s feelings and understanding of H.D., which is especially significant when considering how these things may have directly affected the shaping of young H.D.’s identity. But more so, the poems give readers an idea of the woman that reveals much about Pound, but little about herself in *End to Torment*. In many ways, Pound’s poetry acts as a window by which the reader can catch small glimpses of who H.D. was as a young woman in love.

By focusing on these aspects of the texts, I hope to encourage the reader to re-evaluate the way he or she approaches *End to Torment* and “Hilda’s Book.” As with any text, multiple layers of memory, identity, and relationship exist within the pages and

words written by these writers. However, I believe that each of these layers must be considered together in order for the reader to understand the depth and breadth of the relationship that existed between H.D. and Ezra Pound.

## CHAPTER 1

### “WE HAVE GONE THROUGH SOME HELL TOGETHER, SEPARATELY”: THE TECHNICAL FLAWS IN *END TO TORMENT* AND “HILDA’S BOOK”

In the back of *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound* rests “Hilda’s Book,” a short collection of poetry penned by Pound during his young romance with H.D. in the early 1900s. The poetry is lackluster, to say the least, with almost no semblance to such later, more mature works of Pound’s as “Portrait d’une Femme” and “The River Merchant’s Wife: A Letter,” or even to his controversial epic masterpiece, *The Cantos*, perhaps the most easily recognizable work of Pound. The poems in “Hilda’s Book” are prosaic and overly romantic, a clear product of a young, infatuated boy’s mind. Yet the importance of the work is monumental when considered with the memoir that precedes it. In order to fully understand the relationship H.D. has with Pound as described in her memoir, we must first understand a younger Pound and the relationship he had with a younger H.D., a relationship that I argue is a defining component to H.D.’s personal and professional identity. However, I now believe the inverse of this statement to be true, as well. While Pound influences H.D. in multiple, important ways, she just as well influences him, as I believe to be recognizable in “Hilda’s Book.” Through the small collection of poetry, we are introduced to a youthful Pound who is openly attempting to make sense of his relationship, feelings, and encounters with a youthful H.D.

However, for this particular exploration into these texts, I do not intend to focus specifically on what these works tell us about the relationship between H.D. and Pound. Instead, I find it necessary to understand the technical aspects of the two texts

individually before attempting to explore the emotional aspects of the writers. Because of this, I will focus primarily on three components associated with “Hilda’s Book” and *End to Torment*: the purpose of publishing the memoir and the poetry together in a single book, the confusion of time and age represented in each text, and the predicaments caused by the publication of works that were meant for private enjoyment or use. In first approaching the texts in this matter, I hope to put to rest complicated reactions readers may have to the flaws of the texts in order to later examine the importance of both the memoir and the poetry in creating the personal and professional identities of both H.D. and Ezra Pound.

#### The Purpose of Publication

In order to fully explore the importance of “Hilda’s Book,” readers must first understand why the short collection is published in the back of *End to Torment*. Upon initial consideration, it seems that the works appear together to produce pure romantic connotations from opposition. When reading the reflections of Michael King, the editor of the memoir, in his article “Go, Little Book: Ezra Pound, Hilda Doolittle, and ‘Hilda’s Book,’” the romantic link between memoir and poetry seem reasonable. He describes the poetry as “unified in theme, a garland given by a suitor to his beloved” (King 348). King also explains how the poetry is Pound’s attempt to cement the relationship between man and woman, to explore the greatness and complications of such a relationship (353). This explanation ties nicely into the memoir because it can be argued that the purpose of H.D.’s journal entries are to enlighten the reader on the relationship she had with Pound,

to make sense of them, and to cement them in the reader's mind. In a sense, they complement each other because they are both attempting to do the same thing for the reader, but from two different viewpoints. Of course, there is also the bit of controversy surrounding the poetry, which only adds to the romance of the two works being published together. Since H.D. mentions "the 'Hilda Book'" in her memoir and explains how the introduction of it to the public without her knowledge was suspect, giving the reader access to the poetry seems to make sense (29).

The actual reasoning behind the publication of "Hilda's Book" with *End to Torment* is not romantic. The collection of poetry was once thought to be lost, as H.D. explains in the memoir, because she had given it to her friend Francis Gregg, who died during the Plymouth Blitz (29).<sup>4</sup> Once Gregg was gone, H.D. assumed the small book was lost as well. Yet, as King explains in the forward of the memoir, which is not nearly as romantic as his statements above and which were published in an article he wrote three years after *End to Torment* was published, the Houghton Library of Harvard University purchased the hand-bound book from Pound's friend, poet Peter Russell, who appears to have innocently enough come into possession of the collection. King further suspends the romantic notions of publishing the works together when he explains, "This publication is a project sponsored by the Center for the Study of Ezra Pound and His Contemporaries, in the Beinecke Library of Yale University" (xii). Based on these concise statements and explanations, it can be assumed that the publication of "Hilda's Book" with *End to Torment* simply occurred, first, because it had not been published in its entirety before (a

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<sup>4</sup> Interestingly enough, H.D. never explains how or why "Hilda's Book" came to be in the possession of Francis Gregg, only that it did.

few poems were published singularly), second, because it fit well with parts of the memoir written by H.D., and, third, because it gave Pound scholars yet another text to consider in the canon of Pound's work.

However, while the circumstances surrounding the publication were not all that interesting, King's remarks require attention. He claims that *End to Torment* and "Hilda's Book" are "a project sponsored by the Center of the Study of Ezra Pound and His Contemporaries" (xii). Perhaps he mentions the Center because it most likely funded the publication of the memoir and the poetry. Yet, by focusing the project on the study of Pound, King enhances an understanding of the memoir and the poetry as a whole—in other words, the two are not meant to reveal anything particularly interesting about H.D. Even though she is the author of the memoir and the driving force behind the poetry, she only represents the medium in which King communicates Pound to the world. The "project" reveals the psychological nature of Pound with regard to his encounter and understanding with the female sex. King acknowledges, perhaps unknowingly, that this publication is not for the benefit of H.D. scholars, but for Pound scholars.

#### Combining the Past and the Present: The Timeline

In light of this understanding, a chronology of writing needs to be established because, without one, the true nature of these works cannot be fully understood, particularly with respects to Pound. The first journal entry of *End to Torment* bears the heading "[Küsnacht]/ Friday/ March 7, 1958" (3). H.D. was then 72. She completed the journal entries that would become the memoir in just over four months. The woman who

is writing of Pound, who is explaining their years together as lovers, as friends, and as professionals, is burdened with a maturity that cannot be found in youth. (I realize “burdened” may not seem like the appropriate word, but I chose it rather than “blessed,” or something similar, because I believe the memoir itself explains the difficulty H.D. experienced in retelling the story of her relationship with Pound.) H.D. is, as an older woman, revealing memories of Pound and herself over multiple parts of their lives, memories that are not particularly flattering for either of them. She does not do so in chronological order, and in not doing so, she can, and perhaps does, cause the reader to forget the time line in which these events took place. The instances she recalls, in oftentimes vivid detail, represent Pound in a range of ages between 19 to 73. Yet through her descriptions, almost no change in age, maturity, or life experience seems to exist. The Pound of the memoir never progresses or regresses in age. Instead, he seems frozen in time, experiencing and causing these encounters and situations in a rather ageless way. We can easily forget that the man whom H.D. encountered in Capri-Naples on what she says he describes as their “unofficial honeymoon” (shown on page 5) is not the same middle-aged man who was arrested for treason ( shown on page 31) or the same man who claimed his only regret of H.D. giving birth to her daughter, Perdita, was “that this is not my child” (shown on page 41).<sup>5</sup> Presenting Pound in this way, with an absence of aging, reiterates H.D.’s feelings that, “it seems we have all been bound with him, bound up with him and his fate” (37). She is unable to have him progress because, as she admits, she is unable to progress while he is in captivity. Psychologically, it seems easier for her to

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<sup>5</sup> I have deviated from the general rules of MLA in order to insure there is no confusion here between age and page number.

imagine Pound as ageless because then the time factor she seems to be struggling with is not as overwhelming.

The three particular instances mentioned above point out the progression of H.D.'s journal entries—the order in which she is telling the story—so that the page numbers can be referenced with the years these instances occurred. The “unofficial honeymoon” occurred in 1913 when Pound was 28. He was arrested for treason in 1945, at the age of 60. And Pound uttered his words of regret over Perdita's birth in 1919, when he was 34. Pound, as a man, spanned many years that H.D. glosses over with the nature of her storytelling. And she writes from a viewpoint of a woman who has had time to reflect on the nature of her relationship with Pound. We can be certain that she includes *and ignores* defining moments in their relationship in the memoir because she, as a 72-year-old woman, makes a conscious effort maturely to reflect on only those things she feels absolutely necessary for these journal entries.

In “Hilda's Book,” age and time do not play the same role with regard to the relationship between H.D. and Pound as they do in the memoir. The entire collection was originally composed from 1905-1907, when Pound was between the ages of 20 and 22. Their relationship was new and naively young, particularly when considering the nearly 60 years to come. The lack of maturity found in almost anyone in his early 20s is blatantly evident throughout the poetry of “Hilda's Book.” While there are no dates given for the individual poems in the collection, that Pound was in his early 20s when writing the poetry accounts for the showy, immature approach to love and to relationships.

The issues in the span of age arise, not when considering the memoir on its own, or “Hilda’s Book” on its own. The challenge of age is only overwhelming when considering the two works together, as they are published. H.D. focuses an entire lifetime of Pound into 59 pages, and through that hurried collection of encounters, we form an opinion of Pound based on some of the most condemning actions and reactions of his life. He is egotistical and arrogant. She makes it difficult to like, or even understand, him. And yet, flipping through the poetry in the back of the book, we discover a young man who is desperately trying to broach the subject of the mysterious female and the complications of love that oftentimes come with her. He is both arrogant and naive. But the madness that we encounter in the memoir peaks through the lines of poetry, helping us realize that the ego that seems to exist in the memoir may actually only be eccentricities of which we were not aware. And for those scholars who know anything of Pound’s later works, particularly *The Cantos*, the eccentricities of Pound are perhaps the most important revelations in *End to Torment* and “Hilda’s Book.” These revelations are easily overlooked simply in the way the timeline works.

#### The Result of Publishing the Personal

Of course, it would hardly be fair for us to fault the time-line of events, or the age of the writers, for the confusion that exists over Pound in these texts. Instead, responsibility needs to be placed on those who felt it necessary to publish *End to Torment* or “Hilda’s Book,” at all. While the works are both interesting and revealing of the two modern writers, they are also open to misinterpretation because of the reader’s ability to

take them out of context. Neither work was originally written for publication. Instead, they were highly personal revelations written about, to, and for each other. In a sense, the memoir is a form of therapy for H.D. This is, of course, obvious when considering *End to Torment*, as H.D. quickly explains that she is told, “you must write about him” by Erich Heydt (4). Heydt was a psychoanalyst who became a dear friend of H.D.’s while she was in Switzerland, and who she claims helped her delve deeply into the repressed feelings she held for Pound (Stanford Friedman 20). These journal entries were not for scholars to pore over, but instead for H.D. to better understand and accept her relationship with Pound. In revealing what his absence in her life meant up to the time she penned the memoir, the unorganized, unrefined, and ill-explained encounters that exist in the memoir are understandable. Writing for personal use, when one knows the full story, the entire background, the intimate details of that which they are writing, gives way for the flaws in the text. In taking this flawed text and publishing it nearly 20 years after H.D. died, Michael King and his band of helpers from Yale and Harvard, did nothing more than add to the confusion of an already mind-boggling relationship, as well as portray Pound in such a way that is nearly unrecoverable in the minds of the readers who are not Pound scholars.

The last statement is bold, and requires explaining. Should a reader study *End to Torment* by only paying attention to the memoir portion, rather than incorporating the poetry by Pound into their reading, sweeping generalizations about Pound and sympathy for H.D. for the way Pound treated her may overwhelm the reading, resulting in a misguided understanding of the text. The memoir suggests, at times, that Pound was the

villain in the relationship. He is a man who took advantage of a young woman, made her think she depended on him to be worth anything, and then left her in order to explore the bigger and better things outside of Pennsylvania. H.D.'s journal entries can be read to resonate the voice of a wounded woman who was hurt both professionally and personally by Pound. In many ways, she seems to suffer from some form of “abused woman syndrome” because, regardless of what Pound was guilty of, she still held an affection for him that was impossible to shake. Reading such things as “*Ezra’s end to torment*—that is all that matters” (48), or “I was separated from my friends, my family, even from America, by Ezra” (35), may cause the reader to become furious at the idea that anyone should put that much stock in the pompous Ezra Pound, particularly if they have bought into the misguided readings the memoir may invoke.

For the reader to even begin to understand the complicated relationship illustrated in *End to Torment*, he would be wise to study other texts within the writers’ canons that consider the same themes that seem to be present in *End to Torment*, and, subsequently, “Hilda’s Book,” works such as *HERmoine* (an “autobiographical” work of fiction by H.D.), *The Cantos*, and essays by both Pound and H.D. By reading and studying these texts, the reader is more than likely to come to the conclusion that the representation of Pound based on the publication of Michael King’s “project” can be misunderstood and misinterpreted. Approaching the memoir and the poetry with the understanding that, through publication, they were misrepresented, saves the reader from the possibility of harboring a lot of pent up aggression towards Pound and a lot of overly exaggerated sympathy for H.D. In the absence of this negative reaction, the reader may also find

himself more open to “Hilda’s Book,” which, with regard to understanding the nature of Pound, is essential to the text as a whole.

Just as *End to Torment* is a personal exploration of psychological importance to H.D., “Hilda’s Book” is a personal experiment in poetry for Pound, one he writes for and dedicates to H.D. as he attempts to make sense of his feelings for her, his understanding of the female sex, and his insecurities in his relationships with them. Pound not only wrote the poetry personally for H.D., he hand-bound the small collection “sewn in vellum, of 57 leaves (first leaf handwritten on vellum), with vellum closures” (67). This is highly believed to be the only sense of “publication” Pound ever intended for the book, as is backed up by H.D. in the memoir when, upon hearing of the book’s resurfacing after presumed to be lost, she wonders, “Is this a forgery or is it the *Is-hilda* set of poems that Ezra bound together in a parchment and gave to me?” (28). She goes on to explain that no copies of the poetry were ever made, revealing that the collection was simply a personal gift to H.D. from Pound.

Perhaps in publishing “Hilda’s Book,” King believed he was doing a service to Pound scholars. In his article, “Go, Little Book,” he spends the majority of his time studying the poetry as any Pound scholar would, breaking down the lines, the meanings behind the words, and the importance of the work to the literary community. He explains the parallels between Pound and Dante, as represented through the poetry, as well as the similarities between H.D. and Beatrice (349). King further explains in the article that Pound “is trying valiantly to give his emotional experience a mythic (or ‘mystic’)

embodiment” (352). In many ways, King approached “Hilda’s Book” just as any Pound scholar might, with Pound as the central subject of study.

King may have also believed he was honoring Pound by publishing what he explained to be a “token of affection” for H.D. “in honor of their [Pound and H.D.’s] friendship” (King 347). While he does focus on the scholarly aspects of the poetry, he also fully ties the poetry to the personal, emotional relationship Pound and H.D. were having at the time the collection was written. However, in ignoring this “token of affection” for what it really is, and concentrating so significantly on the literary importance he deemed representative in the poetry, King failed to consider the basic misrepresentation he was causing not only to the works themselves, but also to the authors. For those readers reading the book because it is written by H.D., Pound can and may be drastically and permanently misunderstood. For those reading for Pound, the significant importance Pound played in H.D.’s life can and may be easily overlooked or lost beneath the presence of Pound in the text. Had these texts been published entirely separately from one another, perhaps these problems would not have occurred. However, I contend that the invasion of privacy perpetrated by Michael King, the Houghton Library of Harvard University, and the Center for the Study of Ezra Pound and His Contemporaries in the Beinecke Library of Yale University has subjected these two works to unfair consequence with regard to the rest of the individual canons.

### Understanding the Unintended Reader

The claims against Michael King listed above are hyper-critical and damning in many ways. However, the heedlessness of King does not conclusively lie with the publication of these private works. Instead, it also lies with the treatment of the works in the introductions and notes he makes regarding the texts written by H.D. and Pound. For the well-rounded, learned scholar of Pound and H.D., *End to Torment* and “Hilda’s Book” may not stir up mixed emotions and controversy in how the relationship is viewed. But that is only because this scholar has the substantial background to understand that surface implications the memoir makes about Pound are not necessarily as factual as they may seem. The Pound/H.D. scholar understands the rakish attitude Pound was known to possess, and the complicated web of relationships in which H.D. was involved. For this scholar, the brief introduction King gives to the memoir and then again to the poetry is sufficient in explanation. However, for a more naïve scholar, one who has just come to know and study H.D. or Pound’s work, *End to Torment* can create mass confusion with regard to the multilayered relationship H.D. and Pound had, particularly if the scholar has yet to read any substantial portion of either writer’s canon.

It is for this reason that publishing these works and mass-producing them for anyone to read is unhealthy to the study of H.D. and Pound. While there are many examples of posthumous publications in the literary canon, *End to Torment* should not be one of them, particularly since it interlocks the memoir and poetry. Each of these works was written at very different times in the writers’ lives, as well as for very different reasons. “Hilda’s Book” was penned during a time that precedes Pound’s involvement

with Modernism. In fact, no representation of the Pound scholars have come to know through his canon exists within the poetry he gifted to H.D. This is, of course, because at this time, Pound was exploring form and theme as it had historically been done. It wasn't until a number of years later that he started to carve out the literary movement that became Modernism. But writing technique aside, the personal revelations that Pound makes about himself, about his views of women, and about H.D. in particular, are best left to the seasoned scholar who understands the value of exploring unpublished works that exist in a writer's estate. The level of interest, dedication, and knowledge the seasoned scholar holds for a writer insures the scholar has the wherewithal to approach the texts cautiously and with an open mind.

While this is also true for the memoir portion of *End to Torment*, a slightly different reasoning needs to be considered as to why the text should not have been generally published. H.D. writes *End to Torment* as journal entries because she is undergoing a form of therapy that she has frequently used throughout her lifetime. By recalling memories and putting them to paper, she attempts to relieve the mental anguish Pound's incarceration has caused her. He is her friend, one whom she believes is misunderstood and criminalized both in the literary and political world. Her journal entries are her effort to restructure Pound in her own mind in order to survive his absence in the literary world, a world that is perhaps one of the most important parts of H.D.'s life. By publishing a work such as this, a work that is not only revealing a person's most private, prized possession, the mind, but also a work done with a figure meant to be trustworthy and confidential, a therapist, the editor fails to recognize the importance of

personal aspects of the project. Instead, he makes it possible for the unintended reader to stumble onto the text and misinterpret the significance of the work.

### The Things To Come

Only in acknowledging the restrictions of the texts as they are published, as well as written, are we able to consider the implications of identity and memory each text presents. Having explored the flaws and now worked through them, we focus on the themes that resonate through each work. Identity in *End to Torment* focuses not only on H.D., but also on Pound, or more importantly on how H.D. presents him. In order to make the separation between Pound's real identity and the one H.D. presents us with, it is necessary to examine H.D.'s mindset. Her approaches to memory are specifically important to the Pound whom readers meet in *End to Torment*. By using *Tribute to Freud* and the revelations H.D. makes about memory in it to help explain the reasoning and importance behind the writing of the memoir, readers may more adequately approach H.D.'s outlook on recalling memory, and her faith in therapy.

In "Hilda's Book," the female identity presented through nature by Pound offers fleeting glimpses of Pound's interpretation of H.D.'s identity. This exploration reveals Pound's mindset with regard to H.D., particularly during their young romance. While the speaker of the poems is not necessarily Pound, just as the female of the poems is not necessarily H.D., the poems can still be depended on to reveal important characteristics of the relationship between the two writers. To explore these revelations, focus can be placed primarily on three poems from "Hilda's Book": "Domina," "Shadow," and

“Sancta Patrona/Domina Caelae.” While these three poems make up a very small percentage of the collection, they are, perhaps, the best examples of what the rest of the poetry tells us of H.D. and Pound. They each expose different aspects of Pound’s understanding of the female identity, and through those aspects, we, as readers, are able to piece together how Pound viewed H.D. during the time “Hilda’s Book” was written. The identity he forms of her in the collection plays well with the identity she presents of herself in *End to Torment*, which ties these two texts together in a more concrete way for readers.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF MEMORY IN *END TO TORMENT: A MEMOIR OF EZRA POUND*

*There was something beating in my brain; I do not say my heart—my brain. I wanted it to be let out. I wanted to free myself of repetitive thoughts and experiences—my own and those of many of my contemporaries.*

--H.D. in *Tribute to Freud*

In 1933, H.D. began psychoanalysis sessions with well-known psychiatrist Sigmund Freud. While these sessions were not the first or last such therapies she underwent in her lifetime, they were, perhaps, the most important with regard to helping her explore her personal psyche. During the time she spent under Freud's care, she solidified her understanding of memory and the importance it plays in understanding the past, as well as the present. In *Tribute to Freud*, she states, "Thoughts were things, to be collected, collated, analyzed, shelved, or resolved" (14). In essence, H.D. is suggesting the necessity to put aside the personal implications of memory in order to get to the root of it. It becomes clear when looking at H.D.'s canon of work that she took this approach to memory quite seriously throughout her professional life. Much of her prose is autobiographical fiction or non-fiction, with topics ranging from her Moravian heritage (*The Gift*) to her relationships with Ezra Pound, Frances Gregg, and longtime lover, Bryher (*HERmione*). However, perhaps the most notable examples of H.D.'s work with memory exist in *Tribute to Freud* and *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound*. Both of these works showcase H.D.'s habit of journal entries as a means of remembrance, with *Tribute to Freud* relying heavily on her memory of journal entries she wrote during her

time with Freud, and *End to Torment* consisting of actual journal entries written at the encouragement of her friend Norman Pearson and during a series of psychoanalysis sessions with Dr. Erich Heydt. In both circumstances, she attempts to study her memory of the past in order to understand the impact it has made on the present.

When considering *End to Torment*, we, as readers, approach the memoir in much the same way, studying the past of which H.D. is writing in order to understand the present circumstances surrounding her need to write the memoir in the first place. While H.D. claims “*Ezra’s end to torment—that is all that matters,*” we find ourselves following H.D.’s torment rather than Pound’s (48). In fact, H.D. makes it nearly impossible for the reader to sympathize with Pound because she portrays him as an almost completely unlikeable person. Through her memories, we are introduced to a pompous, self-indulged, egotistical man who disregards the feelings of others and who arrogantly interjects himself into circumstances that are neither about him nor benefit from his help. H.D.’s memories help us form fast, concrete opinions of Pound that are rather damning, and in doing so, they also force us into considering her identity through her relationship with Pound, for she represents herself as excessively forgiving of Pound’s ridiculous actions. However, if we consider H.D.’s work with Freud and the way it influences how she approaches memory, and acknowledge the natural, biased flaws that exist in her narrative, we are able to reconsider the identities of both her and Pound. It is only through these reconsidered identities, that we are able to truly understand the purpose of *End to Torment*.

## The “Writing on the Wall”

*Tribute to Freud* cements the idea that memory plays a central role in H.D.’s relationship with Freud, both in her sessions with him and in her tribute to him. As she explains in the tribute, she spent a year in the 1930s lying on Freud’s famous couch, working through multiple facets of her past in an attempt to understand the present state of her life in Europe. Much of the early sessions focused primarily on her relationship with her family, specifically the relationship with her mother and father. During the documenting of these sessions, H.D. chose to explain her understanding of memory—its function, reliability, and worth. While she understands the importance of memory the psychological role it plays in a person’s life, she also fully admits its unreliable nature.

Perhaps the most significant observation she makes in *Tribute to Freud* is that memory is fluid. In order to fully explain this idea, she relies on the reader’s understanding of different dimensions. She acknowledges that there are three primary dimensions—past, present, and future—but she also reveals the importance of a fourth dimension, although she is not able to give a straightforward definition of it. Instead, she makes an analogy in order to make her point. H.D. explains,

[The fourth dimension] is as simple and inevitable in the building of the time sequence as the fourth wall to a room. If we alter our course around this very room...and start with the wall to my left, against which the couch is placed, and go counter-clockwise, we may number the Professor’s wall with the exit door 2, the wall with the entrance door...3, and the wall opposite the couch 4....The room beyond may appear very dark or there may be broken light or shadow. (23)

In explaining the numbering of the walls, H.D. inadvertently explains that someone else might number the walls of a room differently than she does. Thus is her understanding of memory. While wall 1 represents her memory, an entirely different wall may represent someone else's memory of the same event. The memories connect but may be represented differently depending on the person having the memory, therefore shifting the function and worth of the past, present, and future. The "room beyond" that she speaks of would be the convoluted gathering of memories not quite explored. These memories can only be understood once the "walls" of a memory are brought together and explained fully. Only then can a person focus on the outlying importance of an event in a person's life.

In this sense, H.D. confirms that it is nearly impossible to nail down a concrete version of a memory, for each event differs for the people experiencing it, and the importance it plays in each person's life may alter how a memory is recalled. The natural progression of this idea is that memories of specific events can only be truly realized and understood if everyone who participated in the event gives an account of the memory, or at least their most informed account, thus making the memory fluid and four dimensional. However, this is quite impossible in most circumstances, particularly when therapy is concerned. H.D. is not ignorant to this impossibility and offers a compromising solution, one that helps to make memories, accounted for by a single person, as concrete as possible. She explains that "a good copy of a rare object is not without value, but we must distinguish between a faithful copy and a spurious imitation" (35). She suggests that a memory needs to be fully studied by a person in order to make sure the memory is as

accurate as possible. To produce this sort of accuracy, H.D. turns to in-depth therapy. She relies on the help of a doctor in order to keep herself honest in terms of her memory. Without this help, she explains, “I over-stressed or over compensated; I purposely and painfully dwelt on certain events in the past about which I was none too happy” (30). With this statement, she admits to a biased thought process, one that keeps her from understanding a memory clearly, when she attempts to remember without the help of a professional therapist. Yet, even with the benefits in-depth therapy provides, and the realizations it offers with regard to memory, H.D. understands the flaws that exist when a memory is regarded without considering the fourth dimension. She explains, “there are priceless broken fragments that are meaningless until we find the other broken bits to match them” (35). Only in bringing together the “broken fragments,” or the “room beyond,” can a true memory be recalled and then properly studied. Until then, any progress made in studying a memory, or any interpretation made as to why a particular memory has stayed with a person, is incomplete and, perhaps, invalid.

#### An Execution of H.D.’s Thought on Memory

Obviously, H.D. spent vast amounts of time considering the process of recalling memories, and through her work, she makes a valid argument about the flaws involved when a person attempts to recall a memory alone, absent of help from a doctor, but more importantly absent of help from those who also share viewpoints of the event being remembered. By explaining this process to her readers, H.D. inadvertently undermines her own writing. H.D.’s prose consists almost entirely of real-life events and focuses on a

cast of real-life characters, yet multiple viewpoints of the events are not provided. Readers, are left to trust H.D.'s recollection of a memory, her interpretation of its significance, and her representation of the other people involved. While this may seem reasonable for her fictional prose, such *HERmione*, it is not in her non-fiction writing.

Fictional prose allows room for an unreliable narrator, as can be seen in many works of literature spanning centuries. When reading *HERmione*, we expect a level of unreliability because the representations of H.D., Pound, Gregg, and Bryher are simply that: representations. Their names are changed, many of the actual circumstances of events have been altered, and Her Gart (the H.D. character) is forgiven for her biased, emotional, and, at times, overly selfish outlook on the relationships she has with the other characters because she is, after all, only a fictional character herself. However, when approaching H.D.'s non-fiction prose, even when that prose may recall some of the same events that occurred in *HERmione*, we expect more reliability. Perhaps this is because the words "non-fiction" automatically suggest that the narrator/author is reliable because they are assumed to have extended knowledge on the subject of their writing.

This is especially the case in *End to Torment*. In more than seventy-five journal entries, H.D. explains the complicated and fascinating relationship she had with fellow modern writer, Ezra Pound. This relationship is fairly well known in modern scholarly circles, as multiple people have examined it over the past few decades. However, the memoir adds to what is already known of the relationship because it provides an emotional, personal view from H.D. She is recalling important parts of her past with Pound, but is also attempting to explain why his imprisonment has had such a

monumental impact on her, as well as her contemporaries. In order to do this, she relives particular moments with Pound on paper, and, in doing so, she creates an emotional identity for herself and an egotistical identity for Pound.

Perhaps the most significant example of Pound's sense of self and H.D.'s emotional reaction to him occurs in the memoir when H.D. explains the events surrounding the birth of her daughter, Perdita. H.D. first mentions this birth in journal entry number three, dated March 9. She explains,

He hurtles himself into the decorous St. Faith's Nursing Home, in Ealing, near London. Beard, black soft hat, ebony stick—something unbelievably operatic—directoire overcoat, Verdi. He stalked and stamped the length of the room. He coughed and choked or laughed....“But,” he said, “my only real criticism is that this is not my child.” (7-8)

H.D.'s verb choices for this short explanation, as well as the way in which she describes Pound's appearance, help to cast herself as somewhat of a victim in this circumstance, with Pound as the villain. The verbs are harsh, blunt words that sound menacing when rolling off the tongue. *Hurtles*. *Stalked*. *Stamped*. *Choked*. By explaining Pound's actions in this way, H.D. confirms his presence as solid, overbearing, and intimidating. To add to this, she describes what he is wearing—an ensemble that hides his face behind a beard and hat, that covers his body with a dark cloak, and provides a weapon through an ebony stick. The illustration is dark, threatening, and powerful, giving Pound the advantage over a weaker H.D. This depiction could, of course, been exaggerated by H.D. in order to help

her cope with Pound's overwhelming presence during such a transitional time in her life. But it certainly grounds the image of Pound as he is seen throughout the memoir.

In order to fully represent herself as weak and vulnerable in this situation, H.D. first reveals that she previously lost a child in childbirth in 1915. While the emotional grief she felt over this loss is not fully explained in this passage, the reader expects it. The mention of the loss helps the reader to understand the emotional and physical importance surrounding the birth of this new baby. H.D. also explains that Pound is visiting her in St. Faith's Nursing Home, a sterile, "white" institution. The fact that she is the patient, which implies she is lying in a hospital bed, puts her at a disadvantage to an upright, fully functional Pound. She expounds on this disadvantage when she divulges Pound's reaction to the upcoming birth of the baby. The importance of this time in H.D.'s life, and the fear she must have been feeling, is completely undermined when Pound remarks, "My only real criticism is that this is not my child" (8). With this statement, Pound strongly disregards H.D.'s feelings, focusing only on himself and his disappointment in her. H.D. comments briefly on the audacity of Pound's statement by wondering "who had let him in. I did not know he was coming. From me, screams were inhibited, prohibitive. Did I want to scream?" (8). While there is an underlying anger that exists in these words, H.D. never concretely explains the effect Pound's words had on her.

Considering this event the way H.D. approached memory, as she explains in *Tribute to Freud*, there is, of course, a substantial flaw, one that overshadows the entire memoir. H.D. gives the reader her recollection of the event, but Pound's viewpoint is not presented. However, H.D. does reveal the importance of the event and Pound's words to

her about the baby by repeatedly bringing up the event throughout the duration of the memoir. H.D. quotes Pound three times in all, making this particular event the only one in the memoir to be recalled multiple times.<sup>6</sup> After the initial explanation leading up to Pound's criticism, H.D. recalls the words again when she and Erich Heydt have a conversation about the number of Pound's engagements. During this recollection, she states, "But just now, before you [Heydt] came in, when I felt dazed and dizzy, some of my own lines came to me and laid the ghost, as it were. I had developed along another line, in another dimension—only the opposites could meet in the end" (30). Heydt quickly leads her through a line of questioning that requires her, once again, to explain the exact words Pound used to address to the pregnancy. By recalling the memory again and using the help of a doctor, H.D. is insuring that the function of memory is a "faithful copy" and not a "spurious imitation" (*Tribute to Freud* 35).

The third time she recalls Pound's exact words is in a journal entry that appears to have almost nothing to do with the birth of her daughter. In fact, the only connection seems to be that Perdita is present during an event that H.D. is recalling. The journal entry focuses on multiple people and revolves around Pound's imprisonment and his connections with fascism. When H.D. addresses Pound's bizarre and egotistical behavior by saying, "There is no *reason* to accept, to condone, to forgive, to forget what Ezra has done," readers assume right away she is referring to the treason charges for which he is imprisoned (34). However, by opening the journal entry with, "'But,' he said, 'my only real criticism is that this is not my child,'" H.D. is also revealing that she understands the

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<sup>6</sup> These repetitive quotations can be found in journal entries dated March 9, March 26, and April 5 (8, 30, and 33).

sheer audacity of Pound's treatment of her during this important time in her life (33). She admits the absurdity in accepting what Pound says, condoning his actions in any way, and forgiving and forgetting his callous manner. But she also admits to doing all these things regardless of its being absurd, and she implies that she is not the only person who allows Pound to get away with such things. Instead, she explains that for Pound, "There is no argument, pro or con" (34). She alludes to the idea that she has the power to neither accept, nor deny Pound. He is a force of nature unlike any other, and her reaction to him is entirely involuntary.

When considering the three journal entries mentioned above, readers can very clearly see H.D.'s approach to memory, and the therapeutic journey she embarks on when she considers her memories through in-depth therapy. Each journal entry, read separately, casts Pound in a negative light, and H.D. in a weakened role; but in following H.D.'s train of thought over multiple considerations of the same event, we are aware of her strength not only in having to deal with Pound's eccentricities, but also in her clear understanding of Pound's personality as a force of nature. Her identity shifts away from being that of an abused weakness to being an extremely patient, understanding strength. She accepts Pound's ridiculous behavior because she understands that beneath the absurdity is a man who is both ignorant and wise. In the situation of the birth of her daughter, it becomes clear that Pound is showcasing an ignorance in bedside manner. He does not necessarily mean any harm; he just does not possess the common sense to see how what he says may be taken as harmful. By clearly working through the memory, H.D. is able to make this lack of common sense apparent to her and to her readers.

This revelation allows readers to approach the memoir in a new light, one that focuses on Pound's understandable weaknesses. While a first reading of *End to Torment* may push a reader to dislike Pound because of his egotistical mannerisms, a second reading may be more beneficial, particularly if the reader is aware of H.D.'s approach to memory and therapy. Considering Pound's lack of common sense, or bedside manner, allows readers to be more open and accepting of the times in the memoir where Pound is so overwhelmingly difficult. We are able to view him as if he has a social disability, one who is off-putting to those who do not truly understand his nature.

A second reading also helps the reader to reconsider H.D. because it allows a shift in the reader's mindset the purpose of the memoir. While a first reading of the text may lead reader's to believe H.D. is pining over Pound, both because he is incarcerated and because he has lived a life separate from her, professionally and personally, a second reading reveals that H.D. is exploring the memories of her past with Pound in order to reveal his weaknesses and the difficulty these weaknesses have caused not only in her life but, most importantly, in his life. In a sense, she is attempting to provide an excuse for his actions, particularly those that have caused his imprisonment. She reveals frequently that he is incapable of filtering his thoughts and words. Because of this, she inadvertently suggests that the actions that have found him imprisoned should not be taken so seriously because they are a product of his handicap. Of course, in order to reveal these traits of Pound, she sacrifices herself in her own work. She examines instances in her life that are not flattering. In fact, most of the events she puts to paper show her as weak and impressionable. However, this sacrifice proves H.D. to be a woman of great strength and

character. She openly admits to her faults, particularly with regard to Pound, but she also reveals her absolute loyalty to those who matter most in her life. She is willing to sacrifice her public image in order to help explain away the damning actions of Pound.

### Giving a Voice to Pound

While H.D. is willing to be the voice of reason on Pound, she also understands the consequence of the absence of Pound's voice in the memoir. It was, of course, impossible for her to get Pound to comment first-hand on the memories being explored in *End to Torment*. However, H.D. does attempt to bring forth his in order to excuse her own biased explanations and to give a clear example of Pound's state of mind during his captivity. In order to do this, she relies on an article written by David Rattray entitled "Weekend with Ezra Pound." The article is mentioned frequently throughout the memoir, with the last handful of journal entries being almost solely about it. However, the details of the article are rather sketchy, to say the least. So it is important for readers to familiarize themselves with the article in order to fully understand what H.D. is attempting to do with it.

In "Weekend with Ezra Pound," Rattray gives a first-hand account of time spent with Pound inside the walls of St. Elizabeths Hospital. He describes Pound's surroundings, the shabbiness of his living quarters, as well as his want of simple things, such as teacups and a cupboard. At times, the narration is rather surreal, as if we are not reading of an actual encounter that took place between a scholar and a poet, but instead are reading about warped fictional characters who are pretending to live some semblance

of normalcy in a world gone mad. Most of the encounter occurs over tea, with Pound as the head of a motley court, while his wife Dorothy, novelist Jean Marie Châtel, and painter Sheri Martinelli are his attendants. The sporadic madness of the scenes illustrated by Rattray can, perhaps, bring the Mad Hatter's tea party from *Alice in Wonderland* to mind.

Each person plays a role in the article. Dorothy Pound is subdued and elegant, posing in a shaded corner of the room while Martinelli paints her picture. She randomly interjects in the conversation as a voice of reason, often as an attempt to change the subject away from an unfortunate rant of Pound's. Martinelli is a perched bird, who at times seems so fickle that Rattray mistakes her for a patient of St. Elizabeths. She takes time out from painting Dorothy Pound in order to make grand prophecies about the future because she fancies herself some sort of psychic. Châtel is wonderfully undermined by Pound almost immediately when he is made to sit in the corner for sulking, thus surrendering his chair to Rattray. Châtel is the most perplexing character in the narration. Rattray describes him as a "fanatic disciple of the 'Maestro'; he apes his every like and dislike, even imitates his nervous tics and manner of speaking, and way of jumping up and stalking" (345-346). Châtel somewhat assumes the role Pound plays when Rattray leaves the hospital the first day by offering Rattray a place to stay and supplying him with supper given to the group by Pound before they departed his company.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The food Pound gives them comes from tins under his bed. This explanation, as well as Rattray's discovery that Châtel and Martinelli's food is almost completely supplied by Pound, which they take with them at the end of the day and eat in the freedom of their home, adds to the sheer surreality of the scene being depicted in the article (345).

However, of all the characters in Rattray's narrative, Pound is, of course, the most interesting. There are clear examples of the egotistical man we see in H.D.'s memoir represented in Rattray's story, helping to support H.D.'s depiction of Pound in her journal entries. Perhaps the most entertaining example of Pound's ego occurs when Rattray informs Pound that he will be visiting Dalmatia, located in Croatia, in order to study medieval frescos. The two go back and forth for a while on where the best place to study frescoes is and who could possibly help Rattray in his endeavors. When it becomes apparent that nothing Pound says is going to sway his young interviewer, Pound shifts the conversation a little, explaining,

You'll probably walk that country a lot, and see those castles...the ones they *hocked*....That would be some *useful* research, what you told your reader, your reader could put to use...you could find out for yourself, and tell your reader what happens when you hock your castles to the Jews. (344)

Pound, obviously, gets a little nasty with this statement, implying that the things Rattray is doing at the moment, the things he is studying and writing on, are not useful in any way to any readers. It is a Pound the readers of *End to Torment* know well, for we are used to him being blunt and offensive. Those living at the time of this publication also recognize the Pound to which they have been exposed through the details of his arrest for treason. It is this previous exposure to Pound that helps Rattray's reaction to him resemble that of H.D.'s reaction in the memoir. She almost never comments personally on how Pound makes her feel with the things he says, and, in this article, Rattray never once alludes to his own personal reaction to Pound. Instead, he writes what seems to be

an almost completely unbiased, straightforward account of his weekend with Pound, leaving his readers to make their own decisions, much as H.D. does.

However, Rattray exposes another facet of Pound's state of mind through the words above. While Pound may be insulting Rattray in the most basic sense, he is also alluding to the idea that he does not consider himself or his story to be of any use to Rattray's readers, for in discouraging Rattray's current studies, he is being self-deprecating, as he *is* currently Rattray's focus. This is certainly a change from the Pound who existed before his incarceration, the Pound who frequented the airwaves with radio talks meant to persuade the audience into action regarding the war, the Pound who went so far as to write instruction on how to do the most basic things, like read passages of literature. In suggesting that Rattray should do some "useful" work, Pound is clearly admitting that he is no longer useful to the outside world.

Because of these sorts of revelations in the Rattray article, H.D. uses the article in order to support her own thoughts and revelations about Pound. During the time the article was written, Pound was considered to be a monster of sorts, one who was colluding with the enemy. People did not see him as a human being. Instead, they focused only on the things of which he was considered guilty. H.D. explains that "this 'Weekend with Ezra Pound' by Rattray seems to me the first human personal presentation of Ezra that I have seen" since his imprisonment (*End to Torment* 19). She realizes how important the personal presentation of Pound is, particularly by someone who is not necessarily a close, personal friend of Pound, because through this presentation, Rattray presents a humanized depiction of Pound, one that focuses not on the reasons for his

incarceration but, instead, on ways in which the incarceration is affecting him. Rattray provides a voice for Pound that H.D. could not in her memoir. Readers expect her to be biased towards Pound because of the history they share. Therefore, H.D. is less reliable. However, readers expect a fair representation of Pound from Rattray because there is no lingering history between the scholar and the poet. Instead, Rattray is able to present Pound in an unbiased way, one that H.D. cannot offer.

H.D. uses “Weekend with Ezra Pound” in her journal entries for one specific purpose. Rattray’s article gives her the first and only real connection she’s had to Pound since his incarceration. For all the time he is in St. Elizabeths, she does not see him. Instead, she “[waits] for letters with the intense apprehension with which [she] waited almost 50 years ago, when Ezra left finally for Europe” (35). The article provides her with news of Pound, news that helps to make him tangible in her mind. This tangibility helps her to recall memories of Pound, memories that are used in the memoir to help validate her recollection of him.

“What I write, they don’t like.”

It is unclear when reading the last of H.D.’s journal entries in *End to Torment* if she was satisfied with her work in recalling the memories of her past with Pound in order to understand the present state in which she and Pound have found themselves. She almost completely ceases to express her emotional state Pound’s being released from St. Elizabeths. And then, for her last entry, she relies on the words of Norman Pearson to explain the whereabouts and mental state of Pound, while completely ignoring herself

altogether. For those expecting a dramatic finish to a fascinating story, disappointment is all that awaits. However, if readers do not dwell on the “story” of H.D. and Pound, and instead focus on the revelations H.D. makes in *End to Torment*, we find satisfaction that is not offered in other texts that outline the history of these two writers.

In writing *End to Torment*, H.D. forces her readers to consider Pound in ways they perhaps never have. Yet the memoir does not necessarily serve the same purpose it did when first written. While H.D. used the journal entries as a way to work through her emotions and the impact Pound’s imprisonment had on her life, it also represented a side of Pound that others had either turned their back on, or had not known about in the first place. Early in the memoir, she writes, “They swarm out of their burrows, ‘But you must write about him.’ But what I write, they don’t like” (4). She goes on to explain that the “they” are the “ants” that decided to attack Pound’s character based on the accusations of treason. They do not like what she writes because she does not follow in their footsteps. She chooses not to focus singularly on the treasonous actions leading to Pound’s conviction but, instead, to focus on the emotional turmoil that imprisonment has had on those who know Pound best. She also brilliantly gives a peek into the emotional state of Pound and the effects his imprisonment has had on him. In doing this, she humanizes Pound in ways that make the critics who have damned Pound’s character uncomfortable. While they view Pound literally as an animal in a cage, she understands and explains that he is just a man who oftentimes allows his thoughts to go unfiltered, and because of this, he finds himself in more trouble than he should have.

In today's literary world, *End to Torment* allows Pound scholars to explore a personal account of the impact the great poet had on those who knew him best. H.D. makes it quite clear that she, and others, were stagnant during the twelve years he was imprisoned in St. Elizabeths. She explains, "Consciously, or unconsciously, it seems we have been bound with him, bound up with him and his fate" (37). While the importance of Pound's relationship with other writers, particularly the guidance he gave to others in their own writing, has been widely documented, the emotional impact on the personal lives of his friends and family is perhaps most overlooked. For most writers, this separation of the personal and the professional seems expected. Yet Pound lived in a way that suggests that the personal and the professional for him were one and the same. So in order to fully understand him, people have to understand both aspects of him. Studying only his professional works paints an incomplete picture of who Pound really was. *End to Torment* is H.D.'s realization of this. While the rest of the world focused on what Pound was doing wrong in terms of Fascism and bigotry, H.D. focused on the man she knew as a lover, friend, and mentor. In writing these things down, she "[puts] up all [her] defenses against [the impropriety]" being done to Pound (46). She makes her case for why "*Ezra's end to torment...is all that matters*" (48).

### CHAPTER 3

#### *SANCTA PATRONA/DOMINA CAELAE:* EXPLORING THE FEMALE IDENTITY IN “HILDA’S BOOK”

*There is no great art without great lovers.*

--H.D. in *Notes on Thought and Vision*

*A woman should soften but not weaken a man.*

--Sigmund Freud

During his youthful, romantic relationship with H.D., Ezra Pound penned a small collection of poetry, titled “Hilda’s Book,” and presented it to her as a gift. It now appears in print in the back of *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound*. Editor Michael King perhaps meant for the poetry in “Hilda’s Book” to complement the memoir preceding it. After all, the poems were written during the relationship on which H.D. so frequently comments in the memoir. However, I believe the poems to be much more than just a complement to H.D.’s work. While her memoir gives us insight into how she viewed Pound during those early days, and the lasting impressions his friendship left on her, it does not fulfill the reader’s need to know how Pound felt about her. Instead, the reader must turn to the small collection of poetry to catch glimpses of the love he clearly had for H.D. However, Pound does not approach his expression of love as many who write romantic poetry do. While he does choose to focus a few of his poems directly on H.D., he fills the majority of the collection with poetry about the female in general,

specifically how he views the female in terms of his own life. Through his explorations into the female identity, and his obvious fascination with how the female enriches the lives of the males around her, Pound reveals his feelings of love, respect, and wonderment towards H.D.

### Women and Nature

In “Hilda’s Book,” Pound most notably compares women to nature. Repeatedly in the collection, the reader encounters illustrations of earth, wind, and the celestial. In fact, of the many poems in “Hilda’s Book,” eighteen of them focus on, or at least mention, the natural, elemental aspects of a woman’s physical appearance or emotional influence. This utilization of nature is certainly intentional. Pound uses it to his benefit because he is conscious of the difficulty that lies in attempting to illustrate abstract emotion through words. He is aware, in Debeliak’s words, that “poetry differs from other forms of literature because it speaks of states of mind and body whose very intensity makes their articulation difficult: pain, suffering, happiness, loneliness, love” (Debeljak 516). By using earthy, concrete descriptions to describe a woman and her influence over the male, Pound makes the female tangible, something many have done before. Yet, by Pound invoking this tangibility, he allows the reader to fully grasp his intentions in this particular collection of poetry.

Of the “natural” poetry in “Hilda’s Book,” “Domina” is perhaps the most significant in showcasing the comparison between the female and nature. While other poems use nature to describe a woman’s characteristics—as in “Ver Novum” where

Pound explains, “Thou that art sweeter than all orchards’ breath”—“Domina” literally transfigures the female into a tree (71). The poem begins: “My Lady is tall and fair to see / She swayeth as a poplar tree / When the wind bloweth merrily” (73). On the surface, this description is flattering for the female. In points of fact, the poplar tree is a tall, strong, lean, and useful tree. Its bark is smooth and oftentimes light. Its wood is dense and strong, making it useful for a number of things, even in the art world as canvas material.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps most interesting is the poplar’s use as ornamentation in landscaping because of its quick, tall growth. In describing the female this way, Pound is commenting on the solid, useful, and beautiful quality the female possesses.

He also uses the poplar reference to explain the masculine mindset of the female. As long as she “swayeth” “merrily,” he has no reason to be alarmed or unhappy. Yet, the second she alters her natural presence in nature, he becomes concerned, worrying for her and for the effect her mood is having on him. While the start of the poem explains, “Her eyes are grey as the grey of the sea / Not clouded much to trouble me,” it shifts as Pound goes on, explaining, “My Lady’s smile is changed of late / Tho the wind bloweth merrily / Some new soul in her eyes I see” (73). Once this shift occurs, the poem’s mood shifts as well. While it began as what seems to be an ode to the strength of the female, it becomes a lament for the despair the troubled female is causing the male. In a way, the poem puts into words the age-old struggle the male has over the female: he does not know what she is thinking, does not know what has caused this change in her mood, and cannot find a way to interpret what he does not know or understand. Instead, he does the only thing he

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<sup>8</sup> The *Mona Lisa* is painted on a poplar tree canvas (Musée du Louvre).

can, which is pray to the one thing he *knows* has an effect on the poplar, the wind. Pound writes, “I bow with a murmured prayer / For the wind that bloweth merrily / With my lady far, the days be long / For her homing I’d clasp the song” (74). This prayer constitutes a relinquishing of power on the part of the male. He has left his fate, as well as the woman’s, in the hands of nature because he understands the sheer power nature possesses and man’s inability to defy that power.

This revelation shows Pound’s intentions with this poem. He admits an ignorance where women are concerned, particularly in the female’s shift in mood and in the hidden recesses of the female mind. But in acknowledging this ignorance, Pound reveals an important strength needed in the relationship between the male and the female. For the relationship to work, the male needs to be willing to forgo his power over the female. He needs to understand his inability to control the female mindset, therefore allowing her the space to shift into who she needs to be in order to survive. In a sense, Pound encourages the male to take a step back, to separate himself from the identity of the female, for she exists apart from him and, therefore, must be allowed to expand and contract without his influence. Only through this partition can the relationship between the male and the female survive in a healthy manner. When Pound writes, “To my Lady needs I send the best / Only the wind’s song serves that behest. / For the wind bloweth merrily,” he is acknowledging the natural progression of a woman’s identity, absent of the male identity, and is offering his encouragement and understanding.

Of course, as with all texts, there are multiple ways of reading “Domina.” In this instance, the reading focuses on women, so it is necessary to define the ideas of reading

women fairly, or unfairly, as the case may be. In the above explanation, Pound approaches women in a way that does not box them into that which he expects. He allows the female her own sense of authority and flexibility. Through his ability to step back from the female, thus relinquishing any influence he may unknowingly or unwillingly have on her, he presents her in a fair, flattering way. Because of this, readers are able to approach the text with an open mind because the fairness he allows women through his description of her helps to solidify his positive understanding of women. However, while the above explanation encourages a fair reading of the poem with regard to women, there are also significant examples in “Domina” that suggest an unfair reading of the poem is just as possible. On the surface, the transfiguration of the female into a poplar tree seems flattering. However, Pound does not entirely focus on the poplar’s strength. Instead, he chooses to focus on how easily manipulated the tree is by the natural occurrence of wind. In fact, by presenting the female as the poplar, Pound puts her entirely at the wind’s disposal. She sways only when the wind allows, whether that swaying be “merrily” or not, and when the male finds himself unable to interpret or help the poplar, he calls on the wind to use its influence over the female in order to return her to the former, merry state, a state with which the male is comfortable.

Interestingly, the unfair reading of “Domina” produces nearly the same message from Pound that the fair reading does. While the male’s intentions may be different in the less flattering reading, he still admits to a weakness with regard to the female. He understands that he does not have the power to sway her, as the wind does. Her emotional identity is entirely separate from him, and only through an influence outside of him does

he believe she is able to grow, as she must. He relinquishes his power to the wind in hopes that the wind can give him back the woman he wants.

“Domina” is the only poem in “Hilda’s Book” that shifts the female into a more earthy, natural form. For the most part, Pound chooses to use nature in ways that describe the masculine interpretation of a woman or the emotional reaction to a woman. For instance, in “The Wings,” he describes love as a “whirring” of wings (70). In “Per Saecula,” he describes emotion as “[Love’s] breath as roses blown” (75). It isn’t until the reader gets to “Shadow,” that nature takes on a more ominous tone. While Pound spends the majority of “Hilda’s Book” focusing on the sweetness and purity of nature, he shifts to the darkness of nature in “Shadow,” albeit in a very melodramatic way.

The female is almost completely non-existent in the lexicon of “Shadow.” In fact, of the thirty-one lines making up the poem, only seven make any mention of her. However, her absence helps to fully illustrate the intent of the poem, for the poem is meant to invoke in the reader the pain and suffering her absence is causing the male. The masculine speaker explains his emotional turmoil by describing the encroaching darkness that has taken over his life:

Darkness hath descended upon the earth

And there are no stars

The sun from zenith to nadir is fallen

And the thick air stiflenth me.

Sodden go the hours

Yea the minutes are molten lead, stinging and heavy (75)

With this dramatic opening, Pound puts the reader in the depressed, moody mindset needed to understand the rest of the poem. The absence of light entirely, even that produced at night by the stars and moon, helps the reader to recognize the vacuum in which the speaker is living. The female's absence creates a black hole of sorts, where time is questionable. The opening lines of the poem suggest that time has slowed to the point that it seems endless. Therefore, nature does not exist in this slowed time because it has no way of sustaining itself. Only the female's return can re-establish nature.

This explanation of the female vis-à-vis to nature is, perhaps, the most powerful in the collection of "Hilda's Book." While the rest of the poems focus on the impact the female makes in her existence, "Shadow" proves how very damaging the female can be were she not to exist, or at least not existing as the male needs her to exist. She pulls the light from the world of the speaker, sending him into an endless limbo, where he is left to wallow in the silence around him. While wallowing, he is unable to address anything other than her absence, going so far as to demand that "Peace" leave him to his grief.

Of course, the use of the word "Peace" is both interesting and obnoxious, depending on how the reader wants to approach it. If we consider the positive connotations of the word, as it is used in the poem, we, as readers, understand that the speaker is inflicting a self-imposed torment on himself. He is explaining that Peace cannot exist for him while the female is absent. He turns his back on Peace altogether when he demands, "Peace! trouble me no more. / Yes I know your eyes clear pools / Holding the summer sky in their depth / But trouble me not," and again when he declares, "Peace! your hair is spun gold fine wrought and wondrous / But trouble me not" (76).

With these words, he casts Peace away from him, refusing to indulge in the delights it offers. This reading of Peace is rather sweet and loving. The male is expressing a real pain in his life that even Peace cannot abate.

However, a negative reading of the word “Peace” opens the poem up in ways that make the reader question the speaker’s true understanding of the female, particularly *his* feelings toward her. On the surface, “Shadow” reveals a great pain and suffering on the part of the male when his female is absent. He is vulnerable and weak without her. However, by using the word “Peace” in the way he does, he suggests that a calm quiet has only occurred in the absence of the female. He admits to what Peace is offering him—a bright summer sky lit by golden hues—yet claims not to want such things. By rejecting Peace, the speaker is suggesting he would rather be in torment than live in a tranquil, beautiful state, with torment being the sole product of the female. This is a rather clichéd illustration of the relationship between males and females. But it does allow the male to maintain a level of strength with regard to the relationship. He is explaining that he would suffer, which takes great power on his part, rather than give in to the calmness Peace is offering. In a sense, he is telling the female, “Look what I have to endure for your sake, in order to survive your absence.” This revelation on the part of the male requires the female to act in order to save him. She must be willing to give herself over to him, to fill his life with her, for him to survive. While “Shadow” does not reveal the outcome of this relationship, it does greatly comment on the unbalanced nature between male and female.

With poems like “Shadow” and “Domina,” readers are able to see the turmoil that exists in the complicated relationship between male and female. Pound gives us alternating views of the female in hopes of explaining alternating reactions from the male. He admits a passion for the female regardless of what circumstances may surround her. But he also confirms an utter loss of understanding on the part of the male, particularly when the female mood shifts. His honesty is refreshing, but also irritating. While he is able to recognize his own weakness, he does not offer a solution that requires the male to bend in the relationship. Instead, he places that responsibility solely on the shoulders of the female. By doing this, he suggests that the female shift in mood and mentality is a weakness the female needs to address in herself, rather than a compromise that needs to take place between both the male and the female.

#### Glimpses of H.D.

“Domina” and “Shadow” are poems that show Pound’s mindset on women. Each poem is both flattering and infuriating, depending on the sort of reading the reader chooses to follow. But regardless of a negative or positive reading, the poems suggest that Pound is attempting to decipher the female identity in order to help him, and perhaps others, understand women. Because of the relationship he had with H.D. during the time “Hilda’s Book” was written, as well as the fact that the poems were collected and given directly to her as a gift, readers need to consider the important role H.D. plays in the poetry. While she certainly is not the female in each poem, she is the inspiration behind the poetry, and, therefore, small representations of her may be found in the lines.

There are, however, two poems in the collection in which Pound chooses to speak to or about H.D. specifically. The first occurs early on and only mentions H.D. briefly. The untitled poem begins, “I strove a little book to make for her,” and then goes on to clarify why he wrote the poetry in “Hilda’s Book.” He explains “that all my dearest words of her should” rest in the lines of the collection. Yet, rather than describe H.D. to the reader in this short poem, he focuses on the spiritual reaction she creates inside of him. He accepts her as “mystic wings that whirr / Above me when in my soul do stir/ Strange holy longings.” This “holy [longing]” beautifies his life, even when he is unable to fully explain it, or perhaps accept it. He even goes so far as to admit his defeat, or weakness, but “[prays she loves] these wildered words” he has penned for her, to her, and about her (69).

With this start to the collection, the reader almost expects H.D. to be a constant presence in the poetry. While she does, perhaps, float around in the individual messages of each poem, she is not definitively referred to again until the next-to-last poem in the collection, entitled “Sancta Patrona/ Domina Caelae.” However, this mentioning of H.D. is not like the first. While H.D.’s identity is only implied in the first poem through the simple use of the pronoun “her” in the first line, she is directly addressed by Pound in “Sancta Patrona” when he begs her to intercede on his behalf.

In “Sancta Patrona/Domina Caelae,” Pound assigns the role of Saint to H.D., and prays to her for a blessing. The title of “Saint” is not to be taken lightly by the reader, for it reveals a great deal about Pound’s understanding of H.D. during the time he wrote “Hilda’s Book.” By referring to her as “Saint Hilda,” he forces her to play the role of

“special intercessor...in heaven” for him (“Patron Saint”). In doing this, he assigns H.D. great power, one generally associated with martyrdom. However, there are other qualities of a saint that must be considered when interpreting the poem. First and foremost, a saint is a person “who is leading or has led a life of heroic virtue” (Kieckhefer and Bond 3). Pound represents H.D.’s virtue in a motherly, protective sense. He begs her to intercede for him in hopes that she will fulfill her “natural,” feminine role of protector and nurturer. While this is stereotypical with regard to the role of the female, it does imply a great trust on Pound’s part, one that could, argumentatively, reveal his respect for H.D.’s femininity. But Pound’s acknowledgement of H.D.’s sainthood also suggests that he believes she has the ear of the heavens at her disposal, which implies that she has either suffered a spiritual or physical death. Through her good deeds as a woman on earth, she has transcended the normal role of the female and is now incorporating a more spiritual role. This spiritual role appeals to Pound because he is aware that he needs saving. He suffers through his weakness in hopes that she may be able to bear the burden of that judgment from God for him, therefore insuring a forgiveness sent down from Heaven. He believes she is capable of maintaining the role of sainthood, so much so that he is willing to place his soul on the line. He also places her on a pedestal unlike those poems that deal solely with nature. Perhaps he does this on purpose because, while the poems before were only about the female nature, this poem is about his lady love. This, of course, seems flattering towards H.D. However, in considering the positive assumptions associated with sainthood, we must also consider the restrictions sainthood brings.

The most damning restrictions can be seen in the title of the poem. “Sancta Patrona/Domina Caelae” is Latin for “Holy Patroness/Lady Celibate.” Placing these two descriptions side by side in this manner requires H.D. to maintain her sainthood by being a wholesome, pure woman, as is described in the first lines of the poem when Pound begs, “Out of thy purity/ Saint Hilda pray for me” (83).<sup>9</sup> Pound expounds on the importance of her purity by steadily repeating the opening lines throughout the poem, making the poem take on the life of a religious chant. In fact, while the poem is twelve lines long, it is actually only four lines repeated in various ways, which is a crude play on the villanelle poetic form.<sup>10</sup> This is most likely no mistake on the part of the poet, as the villanelle has a history of being a pious song of praise (Kane 433). By repeating key lines of the poem over and over, Pound is acknowledging H.D.’s purity, power, and prowess. Yet the title of his praise makes it impossible for readers to escape the importance of H.D.’s purity, a celibate role that Pound requires her to maintain.<sup>11</sup>

Normally, celibacy is a voluntary lifestyle, one that consists of a person choosing to remain sexually abstinent in order to keep themselves pure. While there are many reasons people choose to be celibate, the most common revolves around the religious benefits that come from leading a pure, celibate life. This particular representation of

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<sup>9</sup> I realize not every reader will believe the speaker in “Sancta Patrona/Domina Caelae” to be Ezra Pound. However, I believe the personal aspects of this poem, and the direct addressing of H.D., suggests that the speaker is Pound. Based on this belief, I have analyzed the poem as described above. I suspect the poem can be analyzed in a much different way if the speaker is considered not to be Pound.

<sup>10</sup> The classic form of the villanelle is as follows: A1 b A2/ a b A1/ a b A2/ a b A1/ a b A2/ a b A1 A2.

<sup>11</sup> Of course, this is only one way to read this particular poem. The reader must also consider the possibility that it is not Pound’s requirement that encourages H.D. to remain pure, but H.D.’s insistence on her own purity. In this case, Pound is doing one of two things in this poem: either he is submitting himself to her wishes and offering his support of them, or he is devilishly making a point to point out what he believes is absurdity on the part of H.D.

celibacy supports Pound's intentions for H.D.; however, he does not allow her to make the choice voluntarily. Instead, he begs it of her in order to save himself from the impurity in him. By begging, he offers her a rather complicated decision. If she accepts his pleas, she becomes a savior to him, but abandons her own freedom in the process. If she refuses, she will be held responsible for both of their souls, a burden that Pound seems certain she does not want.

Of course, the poem does not tell us what "Saint Hilda" decides to do. Instead, it ends with only a prayer, yet again, from Pound: "*Virgo caelicola/ Ora pro nobis*" or "Maiden Celibate/ Pray for us" (84). However, for those who have read the memoir preceding "Hilda's Book," H.D.'s choice is clear. "Saint Hilda" fulfills Pound's prayers by focusing only on him and his "end to torment" during a time when his soul was considered to be the most tarnished (48). She sacrifices herself for Pound when she claims, "Ezra's end to torment...that is all that matters" (48). This revelation lends itself to the reasons Michael King originally had for publishing the memoir and the collection of poetry together. While the poetry introduces us to an early sketch of the relationship between H.D. and Pound, the memoir helps us to complete the full illustration, so much so that many of the questions left open in the poetry, such as H.D.'s choice to choose individualism over sacrifice, are brought full circle and answered in the memoir.

"I pray thee love these wildered words of mine"

Pound's exploration into female identity in "Hilda's Book" helps to reveal significant details about his mindset in his early twenties, particularly on women. He

clearly has a fascination with the nature of the female. But more so, his fascination lies in how he is affected by the female sex. In order to study his reactions to women fully, he explores the presence and absence of them, and the purity he expects from them. In doing so, he reveals his weakness for the female sex, as well as his dependence on her for light in his life. This exploration offers a glimpse into the mind of a young Pound, one who is not yet burdened with the accusations of treason and the restrictions of imprisonment.

More importantly, though, the poetry in “Hilda’s Book” frames Pound’s feelings for H.D. While the two were not lovers for long, it is obvious through this rather love-sick poetry, that she affected him in ways no other woman had up to that point in his life. He clearly illustrates the strength he believed H.D. to possess, and through this illustration, he reveals an utter respect for the power her femininity has over him. By exploring the bewitching characteristics he believed the female to possess, and then placing H.D. on a pedestal above them in “Sancta Patrona/Domina Caelae,” he declares his affection and appreciation for her above all others.

Yet perhaps the most important role of the poetry exists when considering it with the memoir that precedes it. The memoir and the poetic collection offer a full-circle viewpoint of the relationship between H.D. and Pound. But that is entirely the point of this work as a whole. Numerous books have been written explaining the ins and outs of these poets separately. The canon of either poet will turn up explications on their poetry, their prose, their dealings with war and controversy. But this grouping, the memoir and the collection working together, offers brief glimpses into the personal lives of these poets, lives that are both fascinating and complicated. The memoir and the poetry do not

necessarily answer all the questions that can be posed for these poets, but they certainly lead people down a less traveled path with regard to H.D. and Pound.

## COMING DOWN OUT OF THE TREE: A CONCLUSION

When asked how I came to study *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound*, I tell people my fascination started because of a love affair. I first became enamored with the idea that Ezra Pound and Hilda Doolittle were star-crossed lovers. In fact, I was so charmed by the idea of their love that I initially read the memoir in order to solidify my romantic feelings for the couple. But what I found in the pages of the memoir changed my understanding of who H.D. and Pound were. I found myself angry with Pound, for I believed him to be an egotistical, controlling maniac. Because of my naivety of Pound, I began constructing an argument for H.D.'s identity, both as a woman and as a writer. The H.D. I created in my mind existed personally for Pound out of love, but relied professionally on Pound out of need. *End to Torment* became my idea of H.D. dealing with Pound's control over her identity and finally taking that identity back from him. This approach to the text was my way of forcing an extreme feminist message onto H.D.'s life. I believed this reading worked because I believed H.D. needed saving. It was not until I began to read H.D.'s other works that I realized how very wrong I was about her and Pound.

However, even after discovering Pound and H.D. in other texts, I kept coming back to *End to Torment*. I knew there was something extremely important in the pages of the memoir, although I was not quite sure what. Even when starting this thesis, I was not entirely sure of the importance of what I was writing. But the longer I study this text, and the more I read it, and then re-read it, I find myself realizing that the significance in the pages of the memoir does not lie in the romance H.D. and Pound shared, but in the

shaping of young poets who would one day help to start a movement that would shift literature in an entirely new direction.

H.D. does not (unknowingly) show us her memories of Pound in order to entertain us with their relationship. Instead, she shows us a Pound we have not been aware existed. He is young and carefree in the entries that discuss their days writing poetry and kissing in a tree. He is romantic and charming in the poetry he wrote for H.D. in “Hilda’s Book.” He is liberal and scandalous in a time when conservatism was thought to be the backbone of society. He is diligent and demanding when Modernism was in the forefront of art and literature, and Imagism was rapidly being carved from it. Yet, with all this energy and power, Pound is also remembered for his treasonous behavior during World War II, and his dilapidated image upon being released from St. Elizabeths Hospital, both moments that make up only a small percentage of Pound’s very full life. H.D. realized the injustice in how the public viewed Pound during this time period, and must have feared that this unfair view of him would overshadow the significant contributions he made to literature. She wrote journal entries that were initially intended to be her personal reminder of the importance of Pound, as well as to help her cope with the reality that Pound was gone. She focused on events that she deemed significant in her own relationship with Pound in order to explore the attraction and power Pound possessed. And she also held on to the memories she had of Pound during a time when she, and other contemporaries, believed their “Maestro” was gone.

While the purpose of the memoir was important to H.D., its importance rose significantly once it was released to the public. It casts a new light on the relationship

H.D. and Pound shared. The memoir reveals Pound's presence in normal, everyday occurrences. It does not focus so much on his questionable tendencies with respect to Fascism and Anti-Semitism, but instead provides the reader with brief glimpses of Pound as he became one of the Fathers of Modernism. While the journal entries are not always flattering for Pound, they reveal his presence in others' lives, his demanding personality, as well as his quirky behavior when any form of art is concerned. By revealing this Pound to us, H.D. gives readers a starting point for our research on Pound. She presents him to us at his youngest, most energetic time. And the inclusion of "Hilda's Book" in the back of the memoir only helps to solidify H.D.'s depiction of Pound. While the poetry is melodramatic, it is important because it shows the early work of Pound, work that must be studied with the rest of his canon in order to fully grasp the breadth of his career. That, combined with H.D.'s portrayal of Pound, helps scholars to fulfill Pound's demands when he declares that only in knowing all the facts can a person have full knowledge of a subject (*ABC of Reading* 10).

I will admit, though, that I do not feel that the current edition of *End to Torment* is appropriate. While the text is important in the roles it serves, I believe the inclusion of other vital texts would strengthen its purpose. With the additions, the text would give a more panoramic viewpoint of the contents H.D. writes about in her journal entries and Pound points out in his poetry. For instance, including the letters between H.D. and Pound, particularly those written after his release from St. Elizabeths, would help to bring the text of *End to Torment* full circle: I will also admit that I would especially like to see the letters they wrote to one another as young lovers and friends, but sadly H.D.'s father

burnt those letters. I also believe that the addition of facsimiles would be beneficial, particularly those of “Hilda’s Book.”<sup>12</sup> The printing of the poetry in *End to Torment* serves its purpose of getting the poetry out to the public, but studying the manuscript as Pound typed and hand-wrote it presents it in a new way because each poem has its own separate page, and the handwritten strikethroughs and margin notes offer an insight into Pound’s thought process when trying to produce poetry that was to be a gift for and about H.D. Through these handwritings, readers are able to see the care he took in order to produce poetry that he thought fitting for his lover. Other facsimiles that would be beneficial are H.D.’s journal entries that make up *End to Torment* and perhaps the quick translation Pound did of H.D.’s poem “Regents of the Night.”<sup>13</sup> The inclusion of the works listed above would move *End to Torment* away from being a brief glimpse into the complicated relationship between Ezra Pound and H.D., and into a more substantial, fully documented scholarly work that highlights their “real-life” story-line. I believe this storyline is much more significant than what *End to Torment* currently accomplishes. While I started my research just looking at the text alone, I quickly found that I *had* to incorporate all of these other documents, as well as texts that specifically discuss the Pound/H.D. relationship, and H.D.’s memory process, in order to fully understand the breadth of what the journal entries and poetry tell literary scholars. My fear is that, without studying these other texts, readers may misinterpret the text (as I believe I did on initial readings) or disregard the text as romantic ramblings.

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<sup>12</sup> These can be seen at Yale University’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

<sup>13</sup> This can be seen in Raffaella Baccolini’s article “Pound’s Tribute to H.D., 1961,” which is listed on the Works Consulted page of this thesis.

Of course, the “real-life” story-line that exists in *End to Torment* and “Hilda’s Book” is only one small piece of what the texts are doing with respects to the overall work of both H.D. and Pound. While approaching Pound and H.D. as characters in their own story is fascinating, it is equally important to consider the implications of the texts in the literary canon. In order to truly “[know] all the facts,” we must consider the progression the memoir illustrates in H.D.’s career. H.D.’s canon holds dozens of examples of life turned into art. Yet she does not solely rely on her life’s story in order to produce text. While the story may be the backbone of her writing, she relies on her ability as an artist—an Imagist—to create texts that fascinate the literary world, while also educating those in that world who are interested in the scholarly aspects of her work. Through her ability as an artist, she is able to string words together in order to give the female writer’s view of serious subjects, subjects that are not necessarily considered “appropriate” for women during her time. *End to Torment* is almost expected because it is the story of her love for a man; but more than that, it is a woman’s love for a man’s work. However, if the reader looks back over her canon, to the things that came before the memoir, he or she will find *Trilogy*, the female voice in a war-riddled England, or *HERmione*, the exploration of a woman confused and then liberated by her sexuality. These texts do not fall into the frivolous ideas of the female and her love story. Instead, they help cement H.D. as a serious writer, a serious voice for the female, during a time when women were considered trivial when compared to their male peers. From the role H.D. carved out for herself early on in her career, we are able to view *End to Torment*, not as example of a woman pining after a man, but as her reflection on yet another

serious subject that needed a female voice in order for the literary world to put together the full depth and breadth of Ezra Pound.

While the memoir serves as yet another example in H.D.'s canon that works to solidify her importance in the literary world, it works somewhat in opposition to Pound's canon. Before *End to Torment* and "Hilda's Book," Pound's work shows maturation from start to finish. While it can be argued that his earlier poetry, that which came before the *Cantos*, is more approachable, at least by those who are not as comfortable with Pound as others may be, than the poetry of the *Cantos* and after, there still seems to be a natural progression in his ability as a writer. There are definitive signs of Pound's increasing knowledge in the world, his play with words and languages, his fascination with religions and mythology. However, his canon also leads to an unraveling of the mind. His late work shows a poet stretched to the mental maximum. Yet, after all of that progression and destruction, the publishing of *End to Torment* and its companion, "Hilda's Book," returns Pound back to his days as a young, love-sick boy, which may be troubling for the reader who has just spent time moving with Pound and H.D. through the journal entries. While the poetry is more approachable after some time has passed after reading the journal entries, I believe it to be an important with regard to its ability to reframe Pound for the reader. The Pound of the *Cantos* is overwhelming and rather unapproachable. "Hilda's Book" works to remind the literary community that Pound was not quite the "Maestro" he became known as, nor was he singularly the caged poet. Instead, the poetry in the back of the memoir serves to humanize Pound again for the literary world because it reminds the reader of the sheer naivety that exists in a twenty-something-year-old poet

who has found himself lovesick. In a sense, *End to Torment* and “Hilda’s Book” bring Pound full circle for readers, which helps to put in perspective the madness apparent in the *Cantos* and make Pound approachable once again.

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