AN EVALUATION OF FENOLLOSA'S "ARS POETICA"

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It was a stroke of luck that Mrs. Fenollosa selected Ezra Pound as the executor of Ernest Fenollosa's manuscripts in late 1913.[1] Pound knew neither Chinese nor Japanese at that time to warrant her choice. But the decision turned out to be a wise one. Without Pound, Fenollosa's essay, *The Chinese Written Character As a Medium for Poetry,* might never have been published, and had it been published by some one else, most probably it would not have gained such vehement propagation and in turn so much critical attention. Through the discovery of Fenollosa's writing, Pound all of a sudden realized that he and his associates had "sought the force of Chinese ideographs *without knowing it.*" And he seized every opportunity to introduce Fenollosa's ideas. In his letter to his former professor, Dr. Schelling, in 1913, he wrote, "Fenollosa has left a most enlightening essay on the [Chinese] written character (a whole basis of aesthetic in reality)." And in 1934 he emphasized again, "The first definite assertion of the applicability of scientific method to literary criticism is found in Ernest Fenollosa's *Essay on the Chinese Written Character.*"[2]

As a result of Pound's championing of Fenollosa, the critics have come to learn about him, but through Pound's mediation. Most of the studies which discuss Fenollosa's *Chinese Character* treat it as Pound's source alone: it is considered important only for its impact on Pound rather than for its own substance. The studies usually contain a page or two on Fenollosa as a passage to Pound, but they are not concerned, as a rule, with the value of the essay itself. As a result, so far there has been no comprehensive criticism of Fenollosa's *Chinese Character.*

Donald Davie is the only critic who has approached the essay on its own terms, but his treatment is limited to Fenollosa's theory of syntax, one of many points in the essay. His praise of the treatise is generous:

> [pound] subtitles the essay, "An ars Poetica;" and the claim is no presumptuous one. In its massive conciseness, Fenollosa's little treatise is perhaps the only English document of our time fit to rank with Sidney's *Apologie,* the *Preface to Lyrical Ballads,* and Shelly's *Defence,* the great poetic manifestos of the past.[3]

Davie emphasizes that Fenollosa's essay has not only historical importance but intrinsic values as well. In sharp contrast are J. Paulhan, who wrote *La preuve par l'etymologie,* and George Kennedy, who calls the essay "a small mass of confusion."[4] In the middle are most critics who, not equipped to evaluate Fenollosa's claims, feel that the essay, whatever its merits may be, has produced positive impact, and that is what counts. Lawrence Chisolm's position is representative:

> Sinologists have opposed Fenollosa's sweeping assertions, insisting, properly, that most Chinese characters are phonetic, not pictographic; that educated Chinese readers pay no more attention to etymology than English readers; and that Chinese is not "grammarless." But despite Fenollosa's misleading linguistics, his essay remains a seminal work in aesthetics, an ars poetica.[5] (My emphasis)

This is a rather weak defense. Similar excuses have been made for Pound, whose mishandling of Chinese has generally been excused on the ground that Pound is a poet, not a linguist. Fenollosa, on the other hand, is not a poet. If he is to be considered a thinker and a linguist, which he is, he must be judged accordingly. His observation of the Chinese language and poetics, from which his aesthetic theory is derived, must be valid. To say that he is useful albeit wrong-headed in his linguistics is condescending and not paying the scholar due respect.

The key question here is, What is the theory contained in Fenollosa's "ars poetica," which wielded a life-long impact on Pound? As indicated by the title of his essay, Fenollosa discovered in the Chinese written character all the essential qualities he considered desirable in poetry, namely, concreteness, dynamism created by strong verbs, apt use of metaphor, fluid parts of speech, and the most poetic sentence pattern—the transitive sentence.

With the following example he illustrated the visual, concrete quality of Chinese writing.

人 見 馬

Man sees horse.

. . . the Chinese method follows natural suggestion. First stands the man on his two legs. Second his eye moves through space: a bold figure represented by running legs under an eye, a modified picture of running legs, but unforgettable once you have seen it.* Third stands the horse on his four legs. The thought-picture is not only called up by these signs as well as by words, but far more vividly and concretely. Legs belong to all three characters: they are alive. The group holds something of the quality of a continuous moving picture (p. 8).

How accurate is Fenollosa's observation? To put Fenollosa's observation in proper perspective, it is helpful here to mention the six graphic categories of Chinese characters. The first is Hsiang-Hsing 象形 , literally "imitating the form," or "pictogram." Examples are (𝔇) for "moon" (月 in modern form); (羊) for "lamb" (羊 in modern form), and (力) for "man" (人 modern form). The second category is Chih-shih (指事), literally "pointing at the matter," meaning characters which do not imitate the shape of concrete objects but represent abstract concepts. For instance, the numerals one, two, three, are written 一 , 二 , 三 , which correspond with the abstract notion of the numbers. The third, Huei-yi (會意), literally "understanding the idea," is the kind Fenollosa and Pound really talked about. These characters are composed of two or more elements, the interaction of which gives rise to a new meaning. One examples shall suffice: "man" (人) plus his "word" (言) means "reliability" or "sincerity" (信). Hsieh-sheng (諧聲), or "corresponding to the sound," describes the fourth group. Characters in this category are composed of essentially two elements; one signifying the "sense," the other indicating the "sound." Take 湖 for instance. The left side is the water symbol 氵 , which tells a person, in case he is not familiar with the character, that this character is associated with water, and the sign on the right is a phonetic, usually pronounced "hu," which gives the clue how one pronounces the composite. And the word 湖 , indeed, means "the lake" and is pronounced "hu." The last two

* "unforgettable . . ." added by Pound, Yale manuscript.[6]

#It is interesting to note the parallel in the Roman numerals. "Ten" is X in Roman and + in Chinese.

groups, Chuang-chu (轉注) and chia-chieh (假借), as James Liu observed, are actually not graphic principles as are the first four, but the extended use of words such as synonyms and the loaning of homophones; therefore they are of no concern in present discussion.[7]

This background knowledge paves the way for clarifying some basic misconceptions of Chinese writing. First of all, Pound, as well as many of his critics, have taken the word "ideogram" to mean just every Chinese written character. This is a misnomer. As the six graphic categories show, only the second and third contain characters that may be termed "ideograms," that is, "idea-grams," because they represent concepts. Yet these two categories cover less than half of the total number of characters. By no means are all Chinese characters "ideograms"; the Chinese brain would have long been burnt out had that been the case. Secondly, many Western linguists and philosophers, Pound, Fenollosa and earlier, Leibnitz, all included, were so impressed by the concrete pictograms that the fact these pictograms comprise only a small percentage of the written language easily escaped their attention. A third common misconception about the Chinese writing is the notion that it is not a phonetic language. It is, because that majority of the Chinese characters belong to the fourth category above. A character in this category usually has a "signific" and a "phonetic" indicating the sense and sound respectively. There are exceptions, of course, just like one can not pronounce "dough" the way he does "tough." But the Chinese writing does have its own phonetic system. There is one common feature to these three misconceptions: the error lies, not in falseness, but in incompleteness; in other words, parts have been taken for the whole, but the parts are correctly conceived. Fenollosa's mistakes are exactly of this nature.

Convinced that every character is a concrete picture, Fenollosa refused to believe that many components of a character have lost their original shape—compare the word for "short-tailed bird" in its ancient form  with its modern version 佳—and that very often a sign has only a phonetic value with no meaning attached. As a result, he tried to make sense out of even the most abstract and arbitrary symbols. The character for plum tree, Mei (梅), for instance, is composed of the tree symbol (木) on the left, which indicates the sense, and the phonetic symbol mei (每) on the right, which has no meaning but indicates the sound. This phonetic element, under Fenollosa's "sense" analysis, turns out to mean "crooked female breast." Pound, of course, followed suit. Puzzling over the abstract symbol for "sound" or "voice," sheng (聲), Pound decided it looked like a "scholar over something like a corpse"; therefore, "a wounded corpse." In reality, this symbol is an inseparable unit by itself.

Besides concreteness, verbalism is another of Fenollosa's discoveries in Chinese writing. He observed that action, conveyed by verbs, permeates the Chinese language, beginning with the smallest unit, the single character. To use his own examples:

The sun (日) underlying the bursting forth of plants
(夫) = spring (春).
The sun (日) tangled in the branches of the tree sign
(木) = east (東).
Rice-field" (田) plus "struggle" (力) = male (男).

The "bursting forth," the "entangling," and the "struggling" are the force behind the seemingly static nouns of "spring," "east," and "male." This intimate connection between verb and noun, between action and object, coincides with and confirms Fenollosa's belief that verb is the basis of language because action, or process, is the basis of nature. "A true noun, an isolated thing," he said, "does not exist in nature":

> Things are only the terminal points, or rather the meeting points, of actions, cross-sections cut through actions, snapshots. Neither can a pure verb, an abstract motion, be possible in nature. The eye sees noun and verb as one: things in motion, motion in things, and so the Chinese conception tends to represent them (p. 10).

What Fenollosa expounded here is actually what Wittgenstein came to realize in his later thought contained in *The Blue and Brown Books* where he corrected his earlier "picture theory" of language. To understand a noun, Wittgenstein says, is to understand not merely what the noun pictures, as he used to believe, but what it *does*. For instance, the word "slab" is not accurately perceived if it is simply defined as "rectangular piece of wood or a white tile"; it must be also understood in terms of its functions.[8] "Fancy picking up a man," Fenollosa said, "and telling him he is a noun, a dead thing rather than a bundle of functions." A noun is that which does something, that which performs the verbal action. Thus the "moon" comes from the root "ma," and means, "the measurer" and the "sun" means that which "begets" (p. 19).

Fenollosa's insistence on the verb, or action, as the basis of the noun actually goes beyond the realm of prescribed grammar. It touches the issue of the origin of language. How does a name, a noun, come into being? Herder's explanation of the process of naming offers an enlightening backdrop:

> Suppose a certain animal, say a lamb, to pass before the eyes of a human being: what image, what view of it will present itself to him? . . . [the lamb] stands before him just as it meets his senses. White, gentle, woolly—his mind in its conscious exercise seeks a characteristic for it—the lamb bleats! He has found the differential. His inner sense is activated. This bleating, which has made the liveliest impression on his mind, that freed itself from all other properties of sight and touch, stood forth, and entered most deeply into his experience—"Ah! You are the bleating one!"—remains with him; . . . . The sound of bleating, thus apprehended by a human bing as the character of the sheep, became, through the medium of reflection, the name of the sheep, even though his tongue had never attempted to utter it.[9]

Verbalism is also the basis of metaphor-making in Chinese writing. "Metaphor," Fenollosa defined it, "is the use of material images to suggest immaterial relations" (p.22). Every Chinese ideogram is a metaphor in which action takes place:

> In reading Chinese we do not seem to be juggling mental counters, but to be watching things work out their own fate. . . . For example, the ideograph meaning "to speak" is a mouth with two words and a flame coming out of it (言). the sign meaning "to grow up with difficulty" is grass with twisted root (毓). But this concrete verb quality, both in nature and in the Chinese signs, becomes far more striking and poetic when we pass from such simple, original pictures to compounds. In this process of two things added together do not produce a third thing but suggest some fundamental relation between them. For example, the ideograph for a "messmate" (伙) is a man (人) and a fire (火). (pp. 9-10)

The character "messmate" (伙) is a powerful metaphor because "man" (人) and "fire" (火) are not mechanically or arbitrarily juxtaposed but form an organic relationship the man does something with or to the fire, the fire in turn goes through a transformation. Through the verbal interaction, a new meaning is created. Fenollosa further described the organic principle of the universe:

> The forces which produce the branch-angles of an oak lay potent in the acorn. Similar lines of resistance, half-curbing the out-pressing vitalities govern the branching of rivers and of nations. Thus a nerve, a wire, a roadway, and a clearing-house are only varying channels which communication forces for itself. This is more than analogy, it is identity of structure (p. 22).

To Fenollosa nature is an organic One, of which all parts and parcels are not only inseparable from, but also isomorphic with, one another. Here the New England Transcendentalist overtone is unmistakable. Thoreau's meditation on the thawing clay may be recalled. In the flowing mass of thawing clay, the poet at Warden Pond saw in its multi-color pattern coral, leopards' paws, birds' feet, human brains and lungs, bowels, "excrement of all kinds." He identified the latent force in the thawing with that of vegetation and human birth. "You find in the very sands an anticipation of the vegetable leaf," and, "what is man but a mass of thawing clay?"[10] In strikingly similar terms Fenollosa wrote, "The function of human muscle is not isolated from the function of the nerves or from an earthquake in the moon . . . . Human character grows with the same stresses and knots as mountain pines" (the analogy was left out in Pound's editing).The Chinese character appeared to him the ideal medium for poetry because it was constructed exactly on this metaphorical understanding of nature, which bridges the gap between the concrete and the abstract, the seen and the unseen, the material and the spiritual.

Fenollosa not only saw the verb as the basis of making single characters and metaphors, but also observed that it underlies all parts of speech in Chinese. Nouns, adjectives, and even prepositions can often be used as verbs, and transitive and intransitive verbs are often interchangeable. Following is an often-quoted example by Fenollosa:

> The Chinese have one word, ming or mei. Its ideograph is the sign of the sun together with the sign of the moon. It serves as verb, noun, adjective. Thus you write literally "the sun and moon of the cup" for "the cup's brightness." Placed as a verb, you write "the cup sun-and-moons," actually "cup sun-and-moon," or in a weakened thought "is like sun," i.e. shines. "Sun-and-moon cup" is naturally a bright cup. There is no possible confusion of the real meaning, though a stupid scholar may spend a week trying to decide what "part of speech" he should use in translating a very simple and direct thought from Chinese to English. (p. 18)

Fenollosa's most dogmatic assertion is his insistence on the transitive sentence being the most natural form of expression, a contention that has caused much debate. Since nature is nothing but a constant flow of energy from one point to another, he believed, the sentence, which was impressed on man's mind by nature, is a "reflection of the temporal order in causation" representing the transference of power from one agent to another, the action being the substance and the "agent" and the "object" only

the limiting terms. This process is presented by him as such:

term	transference	term
from	of	to
which	force	which

Or:

agent	act	object

Therefore in sentence form:

subject	verb	object

The transitive sentence corresponds to the operation of the universe and best represents reality. Inflected languages such as Japanese and German rely on tags to designate subject and object. English and Chinese depend mostly on the word order, and if this order, he argued, were not the order of nature, the sentence would not have been understood. In this connection he attacked the ubiquitous presence of the copula in English. "We do not say a tree 'greens' itself, but 'the tree is green.' Not that 'monkeys bring forth live young,' but that 'the monkey is a mammal.' This is an ultimate weakness of language." (p. 15) Whatever is conveyed by the copula is perforce static and assertive, while nature is fluid and neither negates nor asserts.

To sum up Fenollosa's theories: he believes potry should be concrete and dynamic, its language corresponding nature's operation. In Chinese written characters he is able to find this very concreteness which constantly impresses the eye, and a verbal element which underlies each single character, metaphor, parts of speech, and syntax. The Chinese written language is therefore inherently poetic.

Fenollosa's faulty understanding of the graphic principles of the Chinese characters has been explained. This linguistic misconception, however, also distorted his reading of the Chinese poetry, as evidenced in his interpretation of the "overtone." The belief that each character is a powerhouse of meaning and metaphor naturally led him to the impression that diction in a Chinese poem is determined by the poet's consideration of the etymology of a word rather than its musicality or its denotative and connotative meanings. This misconception is clearly revealed in his analysis of "overtone" in Chinese poetry:

> Here also the Chinese ideography has its advantage, in even a simple line; for example, "The sun rises in the east."
>
> The overtones vibrate against the eye . . . .
>
> 日 昇 東
>
> sun rises (in the) east
>
> The sun, the shining, on one side, on the other the sign of the east, which is the sun entangled in the branches of a tree. And in the middle sign, the verb "rise," we have further homology; the sun is above the horizon, but beyond that the single upright line is like the flowing trunk-line of the tree sign (36).

This interpretation may be romantic, but it is not how overtone functions in Chinese. A Chinese poet selects his diction exactly the way an English poet would; besides metric considerations, he takes into account musicality, denotation, connotation, possible association or allusion, and fine nuances of a word, not the physical

shape of its components. Fenollosa's approach is no different from looking for the elephant's toe in a jigsaw puzzle. An example of how a Chinese poet selects his words should be helpful. The Sung poet, Wang An-shih (1021-1086 A.D.), wrote a famed line, "Spring breeze again greens Yangtze's southern shore." The choice of "greens," which in Chinese can be noun, adjective, verb—transitive or intransitive at pleasure—is arrived at with some pain (We may recall here that Fenollosa, while advocating profuse use of verbs in English, also used "green" to illustrate his point):

> A literati family in Wu preserved his manuscript. At first the line reads, "again reaches Yangtze's southern shore." He circled off "reaches" with a note "no good," and changed it into"crosses." He again circled it off and changed it to "enters,' and again to "fills." He went on like this for ten-odd words; only then did he decide upon "greens."[11]

The noun-turned-verb "greens" is a richer word than all the others because, besides conveying the arrival of spring breeze which all the other verbs do as well, "green" produces a sensory impression and aptly connotes new life, associated with spring; the color is the "overtone" which brings the spring breeze, the southern-ness, the flowing river and a green shore into a harmonic whole. The physical parts that make up the word "green" do not at all come into consideration.

This type of mistake was also inherited by Pound. In his annotation of the poem quoted by Fenollosa:

> 日耀如晴雪　梅花似照星
> 可憐金鏡轉　庭上玉芳馨
> The moon's snow falls on the plum tree;
> Its boughs are full of bright stars,
> We can admire the bright turning disc;
> The garden high above there, casts its pearls
> to our weeds (Translation by Pound).[12]

Pound remarked, "A poem of moonlight: the sun element is contained five times; once in three lines, and twice in the second." (p. 36) He did not seem to be bothered by the apparent unrelatedness of "moonlight" and the "sun element" here. This sort of analysis is as pointless as to observe in Gray's line,

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day;

that there are four "e's" and four 't's," claim they are "overtones," and proceed to analyze their significance.

Pound and Fenollosa were not alone in playing this "jigsaw" game of Chinese. Its popularity can be attested by what Amy Lowell, Pound's some time co-imagist, said about her discovery in 1918:

> I have made a discovery which I have never before seen mentioned in any Occidental book on Chinese poetry, but which, I think, must be well known in in Chinese literature; namely, that the roots of the characters are the things which give the poetry its overtones, taking the place of adjectives and imaginary writing with us. . . . It is necessary in every case to go to the root of a character, and that will give the key to why that particular word is used and not some other which means the same thing when exactly translated. Mrs. Ayscough quite agrees with me in this. This is the key to the situation, and it is the hunting of the roots that she is now doing (Emphasis mine).[13]

Perhaps this misunderstanding is by now a thing of the past? Hardly so, even as

prudent a scholar as Hugh Kenner resorts to the same misconceived method when explaining Pound's ideogrammic method. Here is how he explicates a line by Li Po:

簫 簫 班 馬 鳴
hsiao hsiao parting horse neigh

> The first two words are simply onomatopoeic . . . . And the third looks like a parting (its central dividing stroke is a knife), and the fourth, the horse with his left denoting bird-talk, but in juxtaposition as here with horse, horse-talk. Horse plus bird-talk denotes a clear neigh; for caucous neighing the character would be different (My emphasis).[14]

First of all, a corrective note is needed here. The first two characters are erroneous. Instead of the character 蕭, the sound of wind blowing, leaves rustling, or horse neighing, Kenner has put down a look-alike 簫, which is a different character and means "a bamboo flute." The character "horse" (馬) with its "four legs" does create a visual effect, for it is a pictogram of a horse, but the poet used the word not because of its "look," but because of its "meaning" in the context. The word "ming" (鳴) is used not because it eye-rhymes "horse," but because it sound-rhymes a previous line. This graphic reading actually treats a Chinese poem as a flattened spacial art, such as a one-dimensional primitive painting.

Fenollosa's insistence on the transitive sentence pattern is also objectionable. If, as he said, "nature knows no grammar" and the operation of nature knows no completion, what is the point in dictating the transitive form and that form alone, which, as all other sentences, stops at a period while the "transference of power" in nature rushes onward? One may as well argue for the opposite, that the intransitive sentence can better capture the flow of nature. For instance:

> The moon sets, a crow caws, frost fills the sky.

The "un-natural" part is rather the last, "frost fills the sky"; with the object furnished, it indicates an action accomplished, completed, or consummated, while in reality the sky will soon darken, and the frost will soon evaporate in the morning sun. The two intransitive sentences, on the contrary, convey a temporariness, a sense of suspension in mid-air and unsettledness; one seems to expect things to continue happening. This manner of arguing is no less convincing than Fenollosa's promotion of the transitive. Moreover, not all transitive verbs are as dynamic as Fenollosa assumed they should be. In Marvell's lines:

> But at my back I always hear
> Time's winged chariot hurrying near.

The transitive verb "hear" in fact involves less action than the intransitive verb "hurrying," serving here as present participle.

The above examples show that the grammatic division of transitive and intransitive verbs is no valid criterion to measure the intensity of dynamism in a sentence; besides syntax, there is semantics, just to name one, to be considered.

To recapitulate, Fenollosa's main fault is his failure to realize that a Chinese character, exactly like an English word, has its definite meaning, surrounded by and embedded in feelings and associations from, in Pound's words, "the power of tradition" and "centuries of race consciousness." A character is a symbol of an object or idea, not

the object itself.

Does this criticism, however, discredit Fenollosa's observation that the Chinese language is a concrete language because the character bears its etymology on its face? Let's examine the way he compared Chinese with the phonetic languages:

> There is little or nothing in a phonetic word to exhibit the embryonic stages of its growth. It does not bear its metaphor on its face. We forget that personality once meant, not the soul, but the soul's mask. This is the sort of thing one can not possibly forget in using the Chinese symbols. (p. 25)

This assertion has been much objected to. From George Kennedy on, sinologists have repeatedly demonstrated that a Chinese reader is as unaware of etymology in his language as an English speaker is in English, because the radicals, or roots, have been so stylized in time that they no longer resemble actual objects. This by now has become the prevailing judgment on Fenollosa. Other critics, while accepting this verdict, try to qualify it:

> . . . it has been objected that a modern Chinese would not see or feel the juxtaposed elements in an ideogram as "alive" . . . any more than we "feel" the original etymologies in most of our words. This objection is simply not valid here. For one thing people very enormously. I cannot vouch for the Chinese, but many of us are aware of the original meanings of, say, psycho-somatic or hydroelectric, or that silly once meant blessed (selig) or that to be came from bhu, to grow, . . . And writers tend, in their own dotty way, to be almost as interested in these things as their pet abominations the philologists.[15]

My position is that Chinese etymology, exactly as Fenollosa claimed, is like a "blood-stained battle-flag to an old campaigner," present in most characters and recognizable to most educated reader. The etymological root of a character may no longer resemble a natural object, but the awareness of the existence of the root, and the understanding of its meaning, are not thus diminished.

It is a proof of Fenollosa's keenness that he noticed how the Chinese mind breathes and pulses with the etymology of its own language. The sages use it to teach philosophy: the reliability of a man is judged by his words, for illustration, the character "sincerity" (信) consists of "man" (人) and "word" (言)—this is also one of Pound's favorite words to teach "sinciritas" throughout his *Cantos*. The sinologists accuse Fenollosa for playing word games, while the Chinese themselves have never stopped playing that game. Etymological deduction works the way the Greek oracles did. The blind road-side fortune tellers tell your fortune, not by Tarot cards, but by splitting up and analyzing some characters of your name or some random characters which happen to be recalled. They also may direct you to recover a lost item by what the roots of a character have to say under the rock or beneath the tree. When two strangers meet, instead of spelling out their names to each other, they tell the components that make up the characters of their names; "the ear plus east," "the mouth with the sky," or, "the tree and and the son." Precisely as Fenollosa had pointed, the Chinese fascination with etymology is revealed in "national philosophy and history," in the "annals of personal experience" and in "the moral character as the very core of principle." (p. 25) For philological as well as historical reasons, etymology is easily recognizable by the majority of the Chinese reading public.

often phonetic and abstract. Consequently, he adopted the "split-up" method, looking for "iron" in "irony" and "ham" in "hamlet," which astounded the sinologists. Beyond these, however, his observations are generally valid: that Chinese parts of speech have no rigid categorization, that transitive verbs abound in Chinese poetry, and that metaphor is the basic structural principle of Chinese ideograms. His contention that etymology is more alive in Chinese than in English has been discredited by sinologists who are followed unsuspectingly by critics; this contention is in fact correct. His outrageous "split-up" analysis of Chinese has induced a good many sinologists and critics to concentrate on his mistakes and to overlook his real contributions. Fenollosa, I believe, has not been given the credit that is due to him.

NOTES

1. For details of the meeting between Mary Fenollosa and Pound, see Charles Norman, *Ezra Pound* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969), pp. 99-100, and Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (London, 1970; rpt. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1974).
2. The quotations are from, respectively, *T.P.'s Weekly*, 20 Feb. 1915, in Stock, *Life*, p. 217; *Selected Letters*, p. 61; and *ABC*, p. 18.
3. *Articulate Energy*, p. 33.
4. Paulhan, Paris, 1953; Kennedy, p. 25.
5. Lawrence W. Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East and American Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1963), p. 227.
6. The Yale manuscript refers to Ernest Fenollosa, "The Chinese Written Language as a Medium Poetry," contained in a notebook in the Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Folder 32. This is the draft that Pound later edited.
7. For a brief explanation of the six script categories or principles, see James Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry* (The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 3-7.
8. *Preliminary Studies for the 'Philosophical Investigations' Generally Known as the Blue and Brown Books* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958, rpt, 1960, 1964), p. 77. C. A. Craddock is the first one to point out the ties among Pound, Fenollosa, and Wittgenstein, in his *Affinities: Mondrian, Pound, Wittgenstein* (Montreal: M.B.M. Monograph Series, Np. 2, 1978).
9. Quoted in Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, transl. Susanne Langer (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946), pp. 29-30.
10. *Walden*, ed. Sherman Paul (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957), pp. 209-210.
11. Quoted in Yu-Kung Kao and Tsu-Lin Mei, "Syntax, Diction, and Imagery in T'ang Poetry," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 31(1971)114.
12. Fenollosa's errors in copying the original poem and the origin of the poem are pointed out in Achilles Fang, "Fenollosa and Pound," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, XX (June 1957) 213-238.
13. *Florence Ayscough & Amy Lowell, Correspondence of a Friendship* (Chicago, 1945), p. 251.
14. *Pound Era*, pp. 160-161.
15. Brooke-Rose, *ZBC*, p. 103.

Ms. Brooke-Rose, well-versed in French, Old English, and some other Indo-European languages, knows that "embicile" used to mean "not supported by a stick." But such recognition is scarcely the case with most English speakers. Even an average college graduate in the United States has little or no knowledge of Old English, French, Latin and Greek, the major elements in the English language. To most English speakers today, the classical languages and French are strictly foreign tongues. It takes a fairly knowledgeable English speaker to know that "occidental" comes from the Latin prefix oc-meaning "toward" and the root cid-meaning "to fall" plus the suffix -ent, which is the same as the English -ing; thus "occident" means "that which is toward the falling (or setting) sun"; hence, "the West." Neither does an average American reader know that "melancholy" is composed of "melas" (black) and "chole" (bile). To know etymology in English one must make the special effort to learn some foreign languages. As Brooke-Rose says, writers and philologists in the West do pay attention to etymology, but they are definitely the elite minority.

Because of its uninterrupted and self-contained history, Chinese is its own classical source, its own Latin and Greek. The roots in the characters are not "foreign" imports but integral parts in the everyday usage. A simple, yet strong, proof of this is the obvious fact that nearly all Chinese dictionaries are etymological dictionaries. To give an example. To look up the word "chi'u" (愁), one is required to first know its root—hsin (心), "heart" in this case, and its component, "autumn," As a third-grader I was wildly thrilled to discover that placing "heart" by "autumn" creates a new word, "melancholy," and that "rain" and "field" brings out "thunder." A third-grader cannot even use the dictionary without knowing the root of the character in search. The roots are not Latin or Greek, but simply Chinese. Or, in other words, every lettered Chinese knows his Greek and Latin and Old English. The roots are ingrained in the Chiese writing as are the alphabets in Indo-European languages. They are forced upon the reader.

The philological explanation is that the phonetic language, its spelling depending on the pronunciation, changes its writing as the sound changes; thus "sorg" in Old English, and "sorrow" in Modern English; "hlaford" in *Beowulf* and "lord" in today's usage. As a result, the English-speaking scholars and poets, in Fenollosa's words, must "feel painfully back along the thread of our etymologies and piece together our diction as best they may, from forgotten fragments." The Chinese have an easier time. Their language, which is not "phonetic" in the Western sense, does not alter its writing as pronunciation changes; consequently, Chinese who speak different dialects which are not mutually intelligible, and the Japanese and the Koreans, can communicate with one another easily by writing Chinese characters. The language of the Confucian classics of the pre-Christian era remains perfectly intelligible today while *The Canterbury Tales* and *Hildebrandslied* present formidable difficulties to modern English and German readers. By comparison, the Chinese script has indeed retained much more of its "blood stains" for historical and philological reasons, none of which has been mentioned by any of Fenollosa's critics.

As an overall evaluation, how good is Fenollosa's understanding of the Chinese language and poetics? There is no denial that he has committed some serious mistakes. He assumed all Chinese characters are pictograms and concrete ideograms, while in reality the pictograms are only a small portion of the language and the ideograms are