

Erratic old Ezra ain't dead yet; study shows Pound not devalued

EZRA POUND: A CLOSE-UP by Michael Reck. McGraw-Hill Canada Ltd. 197 pp. \$7.50.

The author of the most spectacular poem written in the English language in the twentieth century dedicated "The Waste Land" to Ezra Pound, calling him *il miglior fabbro*, the better smith. Many Americans called him a traitor. Many critics and members of academe just don't know what to make of his work. Ezra Pound is easily the most interesting and controversial figure in English literature in the twentieth century. No person has done more for writers and the promotion of good literature than Ezra Pound. In this biography Michael Reck has attempted to capture a little of the glow that is Pound.

Reck first met Pound when Pound was imprisoned in St. Elizabeth's Hospital. For thirteen years the United States government held Pound in this mental asylum on the grounds that he was mentally unfit to stand trial for treason. There is strong speculation that Pound's actions in Italy during the war were not treasonable and the treatment of Pound in Pisa and his

confinement at St. Elizabeth's Hospital was an unconstitutional action on the part of that government. Reck visited Pound as regularly as possible and since Pound reminisced a great deal during these visits, Reck was able to gather enough material to write this interesting biography.

He continued his friendship with Pound after Pound was released and has been able to lightly fill in the last ten years of Pound's life (1958 to date). His last contact with Pound found the man in a poor state of health and not really communicative. Pound had stopped answering his correspondence and did not speak a great deal to those he had granted an audience.

This was a different Pound than the man that ruled poetry early in this century. Pound was responsible for the discovery and publishing of Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, and Robert Frost. He influenced other poets such as his friend from school, William Carlos Williams. The twenties and thirties was a heroic age of modern poetry and Pound was quite unquestionably the moving force behind this age. At twenty-three Pound left the United States and invaded the literary circles of Great Britain. He conquered them and became the controlling influence in the British literary scene.

Reck tries to answer the question "What does Mr. Pound believe?" later in the book. This question is one of the more complex in later English literature, for Pound was a very complex character with a fanatical and fantastic personality. The czar of modern poetry believed in Major Douglas' economic theories of Social Credit. These political and economic theories led him to defend the constitution of the United States during the war from Italy.

He broadcast speeches over Radio Rome that clarified his position on economics and the war. Pound was arrested during the American occupation and held at a military detention camp for six months without arraignment:

a violation of habeas corpus by the U.S. government. It was also remarkable that the sixty year old Pound survived the treatment he received at the camp.

A third section of the book deals with the poetry of Pound. In his earlier work Pound did not pose a problem in reference to his technique and material. In the later work such as "Hugh Selwyn Mauberly" and the incredible "Cantos" a problem does arise. One of the few prizes won by Pound was the Bollingen prize for the "Pisan Cantos". This section of the "Cantos" is one of the more interesting since it was written during his imprisonment in Pisa. Little outside material was allowed Pound with the "Pisan Cantos" evolving in a more biographical nature than the other cantos.

A great deal of criticism is fired at Pound for the methods of the "Cantos". They feel that the unknown quantity of Pound's material is not justifiable. Pound thought that the public knew all that he knew; the public's ignorance in the affairs of Pound led them to look for meaning in the "Cantos". They should realize that Pound did not hide his poetry in meaning; the "Cantos" present a reality created by Pound.

There are really too many critics looking for an easy way through the poetry. They avoid the music and rhythm of the verse and look for "meaning", never realizing that the music of the "Cantos" illustrates the magic of Pound and how he deserved the title *il miglior fabbro*. Mrs. Pound says the "Cantos" should be read aloud; all of Pound's poetry should be read aloud.

The book is a satisfactory introduction into the world of Ezra Pound. Reck has portrayed Pound as an unselfish, determined man who attempted to carry the standards of art to the point where he thought they should be. Reck questions the influence of Pound's economic beliefs, but can see Pound's approach and rationalization of those theories.

—John Makowichuk

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THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF HAROLD AND GEORGE

Harold and George, two typical students, were about to graduate, and each was seeking a career which he could follow through the remainder of his life.

"What kind of job do you want, Harold?" asked George.

"Well, something that I'll enjoy, with pleasant working conditions, and enough money to get by on."

"That's not for me," said George. "I want to make as much money as I can, and I don't care about the other aspects of the job."

"Money? What's money? Didn't university teach you that there are other values besides money?" asked Harold.

"Certainly not."

"Then why did you go to university?"

"Because," said George, "I wanted to have the qualifications for a job which would pay me enough to pay back my student loan."

* * *

We were growing a little concerned, not having heard from the Phantom of SUB in so many weeks (except for his regular instalments of his comic strip), but our fears have been allayed by the following letter: My Esteemed Friends,

I know you've been worried about me, but there is a reason for my not having communicated with you these many long days. You see, I'm in love.

Yes, in love—I have found the girl of my dreams. She is the Spectre of the Tory Building—a delicate creature, dressed in flowing white robes, with the most exquisitely ugly face in the whole of the university.

We met on St. Valentine's day in the heating tunnel that connects my building with hers; we both, in a fit of lonely despair, had taken sojourn there on the day which all lovers celebrate.

We are now mutually wandering the halls of St. Joseph's and St. Stephen's Colleges, attempting to find a kindly cleric who will wed us, so that we can pass the rest of our haunted days together.

Yours blissfully,

The Phantom of SUB

We know that this news will strike joy into the hearts of many of our readers, but alas, not so the following correspondent:

Dear Sir:

Please tell the Phantom that I love him, just from hearing about his deeds of valour through the Leftovers column. I feel like Desdemona, who fell in love with Othello when he told her about the marvelous things he had done.

Call me foolish if you like, but I can't help my consuming passion. The Phantom is the tall, dark, and handsome man I have been looking for throughout my life.

O Phantom, take me! I'm yours!

Yours hopefully,
Quincy Lefagot

ARTS CALENDAR

This Sunday evening the University Department of Music will present another string quartet concert at 8:30 p.m. in Convocation Hall, to begin a busy week of music on the campus. Sunday evening violinists Broderyck Olson and Kenneth Stromberg, violinist Ernest Kassian, and cellist Anne Bakker will perform Mozart's Quartet in D Major, K 575; Shubert's Quartet in A Minor, Op. 29; and Dvorak's Quartet in F Major, Op. 96. There is no charge for admission.

On Monday evening the University of Alberta Symphony Orchestra will give its spring concert in the SUB theatre. See page C-6 for details.

On Tuesday afternoon at 4:30 the Music Department will present violinist Martin Molzan in recital in Convocation Hall, and on Wednesday evening at 8:30 the Department will present pianist Ralph Peach and soprano Anne-Marie Swanson, accompanied by pianist Hugh Stacy, in recital, also in Con Hall. These recitals are free.

In the realm of theatre, "The Owl and the Pussycat" continues at the Citadel all next week. Phone 424-2828 for reservations.

"West Side Story" is at the Jubilee tonight and tomorrow. Also on these evenings, the Male Chorus is in the SUB theatre; see page C-7.