Chaplin and the Poets:
The Image as Knowledge, Method, and Theory

"I always knew I was a poet"
--Charlie Chaplin, interview with Garson Kanin

l. The Solution

Let me begin by admitting that the solution preceded the problem --or, at least, that the pedagogical solution, which seemed at first provisional, helped me to define the fuller ideological and structural problem. About three years ago I began to teach Charlie Chaplin films to punctuate my course in Modernist Poetics and Aesthetics, at MIT. The course, which I'd taught intermittently since the late l980s, had begun to wobble a bit, in my ideological understanding of Modernism as a cultural context. The students hadn't changed substantially, neither in their demographics nor in their reasons for wanting to study Modernist poems. They represent(ed) a reasonable cross-section of MIT undergraduates: insightful, overcaffeinated, poorly prepared in general, well-prepared for class, visually literate, analytical, comfortable with manipulation of abstractions within symbolic systems, a bit silly at times, lurchingly sentimental at the end of term. (Clearly, I had already been thinking of my students as personifying Chaplin-like qualities, before I'd asked why.) I had had a hunch that Chaplin films might be useful as a structure in the course. I followed the hunch. When I asked the new structure why it had worked, the answers invited a new configuration of my academic field (Modernist verbal arts), especially in the relations between verbal and visual forms and between high-culture and pop-culture energies, within that field.

I had been having trouble integrating, to my own satisfaction, several demands of the intermediate-and-advanced level classes on Modernism. The classes wanted to read poems (English-language texts, for Anglophone readers, with occasional Latin American examples in translation) that were linguistically difficult (deriving from late-Symbolist aesthetic assumptions) without full historical contextualization. Our method was formalist, with the attendant advantages and disadvantages. After having acquired with some difficulty a facility in reading these complex texts on their own terms, the students needed to distance themselves from the flattery of having accomplished that difficult task, in order to read the ideological paradoxes of the poems' aesthetic positions.

This pedagogical difficulty repeated my own reconceptual- ization of Modernism itself, which stands in an authoritative Oedipal relation to much of the rest of poetry in English in our century;[1] the challenge to the generations of the Fathers has increasingly becoming part of the received "story" of literary Modernism. In general terms, I needed a way to contextualize these literary texts as interventions into their historical contexts (hearing vaudeville in the music of Eliot's "The Waste Land", for instance, or hearing the influence of populist dissatisfaction with the conduct of W.W.I in Ezra Pound's translations of Chinese poems of absence). In practical terms, I needed a way to conceptualize the relation of text to cultural context in such a way as to make the students hear the echoes, the critique, and eventually the paradox of the Modernist poets' cultural conservatism embedded in avant-garde experimentation.

On a hunch, I tried showing some Chaplin films. I had hoped those films could allude to a popular cultural context, could open some discussion of the relation of image to cultural critique, and could take the place of
some theory-laden critical essays I'd been asking the students to read.

We started with Chaplin shorts, because of the historical convergence of their first appearance with the theories and poetics of the Imagist poets, ca. 1912-5. Eventually I decided that the convergence of critical ideas was stronger if we'd use Chaplin's <u>Modern</u> <u>Times</u>. The historical discontinuity was less a problem than I'd thought it might be; in fact, Chaplin's l936 use of the "older" form (the silent-comedy mode), like his adaptation of the vaudeville tradition from which he'd come, quickly seemed part of the argument, permitting discussion of the Modernists' own historicity (raising the question whether Modernist allusion is <u>ipso</u> <u>facto</u> historically conservative, for instance, or whether it anticipates a post-modern argument about collage and simultaneity.)

Showing Chaplin at the start of the term-long course on Modernist poetry seemed to honor the imaginative and critical talents of my MIT students: their visual acuity, their comfort with dialectical thinking, their silliness and whimsy, their sentimentality and their quickness, their ability to think abstractly within symbolic systems, their alertness to wit and to the absurd, their kindness. The experiment, that is, seemed to invite the students into the interpretative process and into the historical conversation. After that expansion of the audience into the critical dialogue, the course seemed to expand. The Chaplin films took the place of both historical (viz., based in social class) context and of the literary theory that formerly had entered the conversation through supplementary critical essays.

2. An Example

Here's an example (one of many, but I'll press it metonymically through this short essay): for a week, we considered the opening shots of <u>Modern</u> <u>Times</u>.

A clock with Roman numerals on its face gives the time during the opening credits. A placard, as for a silent film, reads:

'Modern Times.' A story
of industry, of individual
enterprise -- humanity
crusading in the pursuit
of happiness.

The music cuts from a Puccini-like flowing melody to horns in pizzicato, as if in a harsh parody of Gershwin. The first visual shot [Figure 1] after the placard of "enterprise and progess" is a shot of jostling sheep, herded stampedingly in a motion that flows diagonally from upper left to lower right. (One black sheep bumbles through the middle of the crowd.) The students laughed at the first irony.

The next shot [Figure 2] is a crowd of urban people, apparently at rush hour, moving on the same diagonal, at the same speed. They are climbing up the stairway ramp ("enterprise,"), but the overhead camera-angle repeats the visual rhythm of the "sheep" shot: the more the workers seem to process, the more they descend. (After this shot comes a shot of the workers crossing an asphalt lot toward a factory.) Both the "sheep" and the "subway" shots have a rapid, jerky motion, slightly quicker than "real time" motion; apparently shot "cranking" at l6 or l8 frames per second, toward a projection-rate of 24 frames/second, the shots move with comic quickness that borders on the manic, the stressed.[2]

Similar composition and similar visual rhythms easily establish a relation between the two shots, and so between the concepts the two images enact; the two visual movements overlap in a fade. The third element (the placard) has offered to lace the two shots together, but instead gives them an third term against which to test their convergence; first the words fight against hte "sheep" image, then that compromised image fights the ramifications of the "crowd" image.

The students laughed again. I stopped the film. We asked, what had just happened? We described to ourselves what we'd seen, in as full an experiential account as we could. Soon someone in the room adverted to the concept of film montage. Some further questioning, and some timely hand-outs, quickly sketched in some film history, through Serge Eisenstein's theories of editing, montage, and dialectic, at least enough for the students confidently to describe what they'd seen, in the progression of the two visual images (within the ironic context of the verbal frame).[3]

For the moment we set aside the verbal frame and, using Eisenstein, concentrated instead on seeing how in the opening gag-like shots of the film Chaplin locates the narrative eye of the film ideologically: both socially populist in its arguments (the workers) and yet elitist in its strategic vocabulary (the sheep), both personal, democratic, and present-tense (like Chaplin's choreography) and yet using a rhetoric of a slightly foreign, slightly nineteenth-century social diction (like the Little Tramp's meticulous manners and

his costume of seedy elegance, suggesting a decline in class), both understated and objective (or at least, quick) in local strategy and yet blunt and subjective, even melodramatic, in its implications. As the students read the terms of this quick cut, they had already begun to evolve terms to discuss some of the recurrent paradoxes of Chaplin's Charlot, his politics, his cultural positioning, his appeal, the rhythm of his jokes.

At the same time, the work of addressing the question of "dialectic," especially through Eisenstein's theoretical relation between stylistic dialectics and historical process, had prepared the students in the Modern Poetry class to read post-Victorian poems as systems of images. It's not as if the Imagist aesthetic were wholly novel, in terms of literary history[4], and yet in traditional literary-historical terms, the sudden, consolidated, confident emergence of the Imagist aesthetic comes as something of a shock. Of course Ezra Pound cultivated that "shock," to advertise himself, to épater le bourgeoise, and to advertise the experimental nature of the new work (by D. H. Lawrence, Richard Aldington, William Carlos Williams, Hilda Doolittle, and others in Pound's loosely-defined circle of "Imagists").[5] The "shock" was not merely performative and new; in his synthesis into new poems Pound did energetically fuse influences from R. W. Emerson's organicism, from Asian "pictorial" languages, from Henry James' commitment to "mute particulars" from the "presentation" of Joseph Conrad and Ford Maddox Hueffer [Ford], from T. E. Hulme's insistence on the "lucidity" and communicability of poetic metaphor. In a famous lecture in Paris in 1911 Henri Bergson had lectured on "The Image," mediating in consciousness between intuition and abstraction. (Hulme had attended those lectures and had subsequently presented Bergson's argument, in lectures Pound attended in 1912.)[6] Pound laid down rules, of course, as when he claims that in 1912 he and Lawrence and Aldington had agreed on some principles for the Imagist poem:[7]

      l. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.
      2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the
          presentation.
      3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.

Pound elaborated the terms of those agreements: "An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in a moment of time... It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation: that sense of freedom from time limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art."[8] Others elaborated Pound's strictures. Aldington for instance lists a few rules: "l. Direct treatment of the thing... 2. As few adjectives as possible... 3. A hardness, as of cut stone... 4. Individuality of rhythm... 5. A whole lot of don'ts... 6. The exact word..."[9]

Pound served as editor, apologist, theorist and anthologist for the movement, such as it was (W.B. Yeats confided to Lady Gregory that Pound probably had "more sound principles than taste").[10] Pound also

wrote the poems that became the keystones of the Imagist ethos. Here is the complete text of his poem "In a Station of the Metro":[11]

> The apparition of these faces in a crowd;
> Petals on a wet, black bough.

In the abutment of these two images, one can feel the tense ideology of early Modernist verbal aesthetics, in the insistence on the clean-lined and the cleanly-suggestive, in "classical" restraint instead of "Romantic" effusion. Of course one could follow the poem farther into a rewriting of clasical Greek myth [face : crowd :: petal : bough :: soul : Hades]. The story of Persephone lurks just under the surface, as people/petals emerge from a dark "underground." (That the images of the modern machine-world and the ancient vegetal-world reinforce one another, instead of contradicting one another, seems a Modernist/Futurist paradox of metaphorical transformation.) In Pound's formulation (metro and Hades) the middle term ("underground") suggests also a resistance to modern urban experience, or to modern mechanically-mediated experience. The qualities of delicacy and ephemerality of the petals transfers through metaphor onto the human faces, which seem in fact already in "apparitional" form, as if they were already in a kind of hell, made to re-appear only by apperception, by metaphor. The paradox that lies at the heart of this Modernist text is that its formal and cultural experimentation seemed to point it in anti-democratic directions; as with other Modernist texts, their populist ambitions work against their elitist procedures. In the course of their critique of modern mediated experience, including their arguments about the "breakdown" of a "cohesive" Western culture, Modernist poets like Pound often worked their way toward paradoxes like those which the students had recognized in the Chaplin montage. Enacted in the visual model, however, the theory --and its paradoxes-- seemed clearer. Eisenstein himself had written on the relation between montage and the spatialiation of the image in the "ideogram"; Pound makes the same connection independently in 1913.[12]

My students saw this metaphorical connection quickly. They read the equation [station : metro :: faces: crowd :: petals : bough] as a version of the ratio [workers : factory :: sheep : abattoir], in terms derived from their reading of the "progress" shots from Modern Times. (At this point alert students noticed the differences, as well. Chaplin's irony seems tendentious, related to a single point because the middle term seems fixed, politically determined, while Pound's point seems more polyvalent, more Symbolist. As we'll discuss later, the mediation of the third term in Chaplin's example is in fact rather complex, because it problematizes the relation of verbal text to visual images.) At this point in our discussion, however, there was a marked advantage in reaching these insights about Pound's verbal art by means of the visual paradigm: the cinematic model located the discussion in terms of vision, image, and juxtaposition ("montage," enjambment, spatial form). The method offered a necessary reason why these late-Georgian and early-Modernist poets moved toward the connotative Image. Traditional literary-historical accounts describe a pulling against iambic forms, against ideologically-freighted rhetorical systems ("The will doing

the work of the imagination," as Yeats had it), against even French-influenced interest in musical forms. The move <u>toward</u> the Image represented a move toward richer connotation and toward new spatial arrangements <u>on the page itself</u>, in a new self-consciousness of the medium <u>as</u> medium. (In Wallace Stevens' account, the imagination "makes the visible a little harder to see.") Saying less, but in new compositional rhythms, opened more suggestiveness and perceptual latitude; the reader has more work to do, but oddly the poet has a greater degree of control.

Pound makes this relation between film and the Imagist poem directly, in a short essay (1916) in which he describes the genesis of the "Metro" poem. He recalls that the central perceptual image of the Metro poem became "an equation...not in speech, but in little splotches of color." This equation is more closely related to film than to painting, however, he suggests, exactly because of the change and motion, the transformation, that cinematography by its very form enacts: "The state of mind of the impressionist tends to become cinematographical ....the cinematograph does away with the need of a lot of impressionist art."[13] (Pound moved beyond this "Imagist" stage within the next several years, in part because the "movement" had been coopted by the patronage of Amy Lowell. Pound remained interested in the illusion of continuity and metamorphosis, however; he called his "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" sequence of 1920 a 'prose kinema.'")

One more advantage eventuated quickly, from this use of the silent-film example to generate a critical vocabulary for talking about poetry. It allowed us in the class to consider irony as a structural principle, not only as an effect, an attitude, or a flavor. (Those are the terms in which my students tended to read irony; it strikes me as no coincidence that those are the terms in which early theorists describe the image and the influence of Chaplin.[14]

By contrast, watch how closely the framing-words work in the people/sheep sequence of <u>Modern Times</u>.[15] The two visual images are not simply juxtaposed; a verbal placard putatively laces the two shots together, albeit with positivistic cultural bombast, establishing a paradigm that eventually emphasizes the ironic disparity between the two visual images. "'Modern Times.' A story / of industry, of individual / enterprise -- humanity / crusading in the pursuit / of happiness." Language sets the paradigm, then undercuts the terms of similarity <u>of the images</u>, in effect undercutting its own veracity. This ironically-silent film begins by ironizing the possibility of connective language, because the bombastic rhetoric of the positivistic offical version is aligned with the official position of those who in the film's world control the technologies of speech.

The verbal description fits the "human" side of the equation, but not the "animal" side (the tenor but not the vehicle). Or does it? Does industrial progress in fact <u>require</u> the alienation of workers from the results, the destination or the surplus-value, of their labor? The simple abutment of the two shots of motion suggests an incompatibility of the two concepts of motion (cultural progress/animal locomotion), but the

third element--offered as a meditation or verbal integration, but in fact a false synthesis-- makes a more complex ironic synthesis that escapes the confines the first dialectically-derived synthesis of the visual images would seem to provoke. The framing-words fail to distribute signfication across the parallel-shots, thus confounding our high-rhetorical expectations, in a reverse-Podovkin effect.[16] Paradoxically, there is too much meaning in this system, and the superfluity of meaning, making impossible the direct equation of connotation and denotation, spills over into irony.

Alert readers --several students each term-- recognize, here, Linda Hutcheon's concept of irony as "surplus" meaning.[17] It's worth remembering, in fact, that Hutcheon makes that famous formulation in the context of describing how post-modernism works. One of the problems of literary study in an era of post-modern theory is that on close examination it often seems that Modernist writers had been experimenting with strategies that are now described as characteristically post-modern: tendentious allusion as structure, tonal and structural irony, deconstructive and general self-awareness of the medium, forms made of digression and assemblage and collage and disintegrations and fractal reassemblage, a resistance to totalizing structures and master myths and coherent bourgeois concepts of selfhood. These are the characteristics of one line of Anglo-American Modernism (Pound, Eliot, Stein, Williams, Olson, et.al.)[18] In this context, the Chaplin-paradigm also helped the Modern Poetry class by associating these high-culture experiments with popular-culture manifestations. Chaplin's example exacts that post-modern turn toward the popular and the commercial, beginning several generations earlier than more traditional literary-historical accounts do. Chaplin's example makes a clear sense of continuity, rather than an Oedipal rupture, in the traditional literary-historical story of the paradoxical critical narrative-of-ruptures that is the received account of Modernist aesthetics. Reading Modern Times in this way alerts us to the complexities of political positioning in an art that purports to be both populist and politically analytical: the same complexities that contemporary theorists of post-modernism repeatedly rediscover.

3. A Synthesis

Modern Times was released in l936; in the instance we're discussing, the film couldn't have been an "influence" on the Imagist movement of l9ll-15. The Chaplin model, however, did help the students in the Modernist poetry course to understand more clearly
          (A) the strategy of the image as a vehicle of simultaneous signification and withholding,
          (B) the function of dialectical argument within metaphor, and
          (C) the nature of irony both as a surplus of meaning and as a structurally organizing
principle (paradoxically in an early "post-modern" form).

Later in the term we read Modern Times more thoroughly--read it, that is, in terms of sound and image: watching who speaks and when, who has permission to speak and why, and how machines mediate

representation and power and language throughout the film. (In the context of critical readings of poems, in fact, opened new ways to talk about the film; the episodic structure, for instance, made sense in terms of lyrical "blocks" and structures like those of the Charlot's yric-epic experiements of the Modern poets.) The film's theme of "home" and of provisional domestications (when he feels content in jail, when he fantasizes with the Gamin about a pastoral home together) comes to seem part of the film's method of presentation: to be silenced is to lack an arena, a ground of speech. In the famous sequence in which the Charlot on the assembly-line is silently, accidentally, dragged into the machine and passes balletically through its giant gears, some students even saw an image of a celluloid film being threaded through a film-projector, to project an image. The Modernist self-awareness of the artifact here is literalized, in an equation between work, macine, personal autonomy, and image. On these terms, the self-allusive critique of the mechanical form of cinema comes full circle. That anti-mechanistic element of the first "progress" metaphors of Modern Times implicates the art-form that articulates those metaphors, because a film requires a machine to reproduce its images: the film-strip replicates the assembly-line itself, and Charlot's body tracks its motion.

At this point it would be possible to make a case for a purer historical influence or confluence than our discussion has acknowledged. One could see Chaplin, or at least the image of the Tramp in his earliest manifestations, as a visual influence, even a theme, in Modernist literature. That image (as James Joyce suggested) underlies the physical appearance of Leopold Bloom, the Everyman-hero of Joyce's Ulysses (pub. l922), which is the founding-text of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" (pub. l922), after Pound had edited out the tracks of Joyce and of Chaplin from the earliest draft of the poem and before Pound began his Cantos, a Modernist Odyssey.[19] In this account of the "influence" of Chaplin, he'd be seen in the democratic representativeness and the silence and the sentimentality of the iconic figure, The Little Tramp. In this guise he appears in Hart Crane's lovely meditation on acquiescence to fate and on the heart's resistance:[20]

> We make our meek adjustments,
> Contented with such random consolations
> As the wind deposits
> In slithered and too ample pockets....

>   ("Chaplinesque" [l926])

In the same year as Crane's poem, Carl Sandburg alludes to Chaplin's "large heart and contemplative mind," finding a similarity between the Tramp and Hamlet.[21] In contemporary terms, the influence of Chaplin as thematic image, as performative icon of performance, continues through, for instance, Wislawa Szymborska's whimsical meditation in "Komedyjki" ("Little Comedies" [l994]). The thematic genealogy of the Tramp extends through to the two tramps of Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot, as well.[22] I think it's

plausible to see Lucky's "intellectual" performance in Act 2 of <u>Godot</u>[23] as an homage to the "Titina-song" sequence in <u>Modern Times</u>, in which Charlot, forced to work as a "singing waiter," performs a song of pure connotation, without denotation, which also allusively, charmingly, spells out a consecutive narrative.

These associations <u>are</u> historical accurate accounts of causal influence, and critical accounts of them <u>have</u> been helpful and insightful. I have a more tendentious purpose in mind, however, and I'm willing achronologically to teach Chaplin's 1936 film in the context of earlier verbal texts, because a close reading of the visual text generates a sophisticated critical and theoretical set of terms (for which I'd earlier had to rely on supplementary and arbitrary critical readings) and because the l936 film self-consciously employs strategies that Chaplin had employed decades earlier. In fact, I resist taking the case in the direction of that historical/influence argument, for several reasons.

First, I'm interested to work the question of literary/filn influence "backwards." In my field, which tends to privilege literary history as the source of narrative, we're accustomed to accounts of the literary influence on film, even on the concept of montage as vehicle of transformation, mediated for instance through Eisenstein's observations about the literary roots (Dickens, Milton) of D. W. Griffith's "epic" techniques. I'm interested to reverse that assumption, somewhat, in the interest of historical accuracy; Chaplin's Tramp does precede Leopold Bloom (both in iconography and in the technique of simultaneity). As a teacher, I find also that the techniques of "close reading" derived from New Critical literary study open the students' encounters with visual texts; the attention to specifics that the literary method demands grounds the discussion in confidence and observation (through the "structural rhymes" --Jakobson's phrase-- of the Chaplin example, for instance).[24] Nor is the method anti-historical or blind to ideology. At MIT, my students' willingness to follow the argument into an ideological mode depends on their acceptance of grounded material evidence.

My second reason for supplementing the "literary-historical" account of this influence is related to the relation between the lyric poem and the narrative film. I think that the structural "influence" of Chaplin (by which I mean "Chaplin" as an icon of cinematic montage, and of self-conscious irony as a structural principle) is more important, at least for the Modernist verbal arts, than that history of the transmission of the thematic image of the Little Tramp. Teaching <u>Modern Times</u> helps me to recontextualize the "modernness" of Modern poetry, as a set of provisional structural experiments involving the relation of connotation to denotation --or of the image to the word. After a recent generation of resistance to Modernism as a set of literary tropes, and after a decade or so of revisionist, increasingly disappointed, critical readings of the politics of those writers and of their works[25], I've come to see many of these Modernist texts --Eliot's "The Waste Land" (l922), Williams' <u>Spring and All</u> (l923), Pound's <u>Cantos</u> (l925-69), Hart Crane's <u>The Bridge</u> (l930), HD's <u>Trilogy</u> (1944-46)-- as verbal experiments that work, with increasing desperation, to align their structural energies with a popular power like that of cinematic images.

These works aspire to film's combination of transparency, polarity, and dialectical process.[26] Instead of contextualizing these poems in the fields of literary history, linguistic philosophy, and anthropology, I'm relieved to try to relocate those texts in the cultural context in which they seem once more innovative -- Oedipal, energetic, raunchy, popular, provisional, provocative, as Chaplin himself originally was.[27] Not surprisingly, restoring these poems to the context in which they were intended to be interventions makes their moral failure sometimes seem even greater, because the border between "aesthetic" and "moral" vision, between high art and popular culture, is less a fire-wall against challenge; high-art aestheticism offers less protection to the Little Tramp than to Pound the high-art Fascist sympathizer.

As a teacher and theorist of Modernist aesthetics, it helps me to integrate popular narrative film with literary lyric forms that aspired to be similarly popular and provocative. Recontextualizing these Modernist poems with theory we've experientially derived from the Chaplin model, I find I return to the portrait of the audience-reception of Chaplin in James Agree's great book A Death in the Family (l941), which recalls a still earlier period of this century. I'm surprised and happy to remember how vulgar the Little Tramp seemed in l9l5, what an adjustment in family values he required, what a public-secret pleasure to share:[28]

> At supper that night, as many times before, his father said,
>   'Well, spose we go to the picture show.'
> 'Oh, Jay!' his mother said. 'That horrid litle man!'
> 'What's wrong with him?' his father asked, not because
>   he didn't know what she would say, but so she would
>   say it.
> 'He's so nasty!' she said, as she always did. 'So vulgar!
>   With his nasty litle cane, hooking up skirts and things,
>   and that nasty little walk!'

1. For a popular account of this movement, see Scott Heller, "New Life for Modernism," The Chronicle of Higher Education, Nov. 5, 1999, XLVI 11, A21-2.

2. See the archival material, including Chaplin's story-notes and some shooting scripts and transcripts, in chapter l5-l6 of the supplementary material (ed. David H. Sherard) on Modern Times / Laserdisc 3427-84 (Los Angeles: CBS/Fox, l992). In the course of these notes Chaplin calls the film's central character "Charlot"; it seems useful to have a name for him in this essay.

3. We found most useful Eisenstein's" A Dialectical Approach to Film Form" (1929) and "The Structure of the Film" (1939) from Film Form, trans. Jay Leyda (NY: HBJ, 1960). 45-63, 150-78. Less germane, because more thematic, is Eisenstein's "Charlie the Kid," trans. Herbert Marshall, reprinted in Sight and Sound: A Fiftieth Anniversary Selection, ed. David Wilson (London: Faber, 1972), 49ff.

4. Thematically, it followed and built on the grand meditative experiments of the mid-Victorian poets (e,g, Tennyson), the later crises of faith and of rhetoric (e.g., Arnold), the psychological arias in which Browning makes his characters unintentionally, ironically, reveal themselves. Formally, it came after the Georgian poets (ref., Owen, Sassoon, Gurney) had adapted slant-rhyme and impacted rhythms to distort traditional verities from within traditional poetic forms, after Hopkins' sprung rhythms, and in the midst of Hardy's impacted, imploding poems of wrenching memory. To this evolving Anglophone tradition, of course, Pound and Eliot brought the dynamics of French symbolism and of Asian "spatial" forms; William Carlos Williams later incorporated associative energies of the Spanish tradition, and Langston Hughes from the Caribbean-influenced energies of the Harlem Renaissance.

5. For Pound's description of the "shocking" --his word-- nature of the poems, and the "shock" of the public response, see Pound's correspondence with Malcolm Cowley, in Exile's Return (NY: Viking, 1956/1961), 122.

6. See Patricia Hutchins, in Ezra Pound's Kensington (Chicago: Henry Regnery, l965), 67-70; also John Tytell, Ezra Pound: The Solitary Volcano (Anchor: Doubleday, l987), 7l-4. Tyrell is helpful in his parsing of these influences and Pound's integration of them (chapter 3 of Part I, 35-l6l).

7. Pound, "A Few Don't for an Imagist," Poetry (March, 1913), repeated in Literary Essays of Ezra Pound, ed. T. S. Eliot (NY: New Directions, 1954), 3-4.

8. Pound also elaborated these "rules" with further rules. In his preface to the anthology Des Imagistes (l9l5), he added: "(l) To use the language of common speech, whether subjective or objective. (2) To ceate new rhythms. Free verse was encouraged but not required. (3) Absolute freedom in the choice of subject." As literary critics have pointed out, the terms of the presentation of the Image in Pound's account here anticipates a continuity between this

definition of the Image and the concept of the Vortex, Pound's next "-ism," and underlies the principle of juxtaposition as the building-block of the Cantos. See for instance Louis Simpson, Three on the Tower (NY: Morrow, 1975), chapter 2-3) and Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era (Berkeley: California, 1971), 164-223.

9. Richard Aldington, "Modern Poetry and the Imagists," The Egoist, I, June 1, 1914.

10. See Tytell, Volcano, 86; for Pound's account of the dates of composition and revision of "In a Station of the Metro," see also Tytell, 87ff. The anecdote Pound told about the composition of the poem --involving an initial perception, the drafting of a 30-line poem, then a shorter version, then finally the succinct "Japanese" final version-- has been often retold. See Humphrey Carpenter, Serious Character: The Life of Ezra Pound (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988,) 19-46.

11. Ezra Pound, Collected Shorter Poems [Personae], (New York: New Directions, 1971), 109. The poem was drafted in 1911, revised and sent to Harriet Monroe in the autumn of 1912, published in the "Contemporania" group in Poetry magazine in April of 1913. The dates are of interest because clearly at this point Pound couldn't have been influenced by Chaplin, whose first (Keystone) films appeared in 1914, with Chaplin directing his first film in April, 1914.

12. Eisenstein, "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram," reprinted as "Collision of Ideas" in Film: A Montage of Theories, ed., Richard Dyer MacCann (NY: HBJ, 1966), 36ff. The best discussion of Pound's use of Chinese written characters as "ideograms" remains Kenner's The Pound Era, 173-248.

13. Ezra Pound, "Vorticism" in Gautier-Brzeska, A Memoir (N.Y: New Directions, 1916/1960 reprint), 87-9. See also Simpson, pp. 30ff. Pound isn't always as welcoming to the influence of film, however; the issue tangles with his contempt of mass taste in America. See for instance Laurence Goldstein, The American Poet at the Movies: A Cultural History (Ann Arbor: Michigan, 1994), 21-4.

14. See Goldstein, 1-59. As early as 1915 the poet Vachel Lindsay published a study of the iconic nature of screen personalities; Hart Crane, among others, uses Chaplin as a model of the "Cinema of Angels," as a personification of emotional tenderness.)

15. I'm endebted in this discussion to Manuel DeLanda's essay "Wittgenstein at the Movies," for his discussion of Wittgenstein's "criterial relation" between signified and signifier, in contrast to Saussure's more psychological relation of "mutual entailment." See Cinema Histories, Cinema Practices, ed. Patricia Mellencamp and Philip Rosen (Los Angeles: American Film Institute, 1984), 108-20.

16. Vlesolod Pudovkin performed a cinematic experiment in editing, in which one framing-shot of a face was juxtaposed with several other shots (a dead baby, a plate of soup); audiences projected different emotions on the same framing-

shot, depending on the shot against which it was juxtaposed. Alfred Hitchcock discusses his "purely cinematic" effect in F. Truffaut's Hitchcock (NY: Simon and Schuster, [rev.] 1984), 214.

17. Linda Hutcheon, A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction (N.Y.: Routledge, 1990).

18. Complicating matters still farther for our syllabus, Latin American writers of the same period (Neruda, Vallejo, Huidobro, early Borges) had worked in similar veins but called their experiments post-modern (because their "Modernismo" had corresponded with what we would call "Symbolism."

19. T.S. Eliot, 'The Waste Land': Facsimile, ed. Valerie Eliot (N.Y.: HBJ), 1971.

20. Hart Crane, from White Buildings, in Complete Poems and Selected Letters and Prose, ed,. Bram Weber (NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1955), 11.

21. See Charles Maland, Chaplin and American Culture: The Evolution of a Star Image (Princeton: Princeton, 1989), 63-4; also Harry Geduld, ed., Authors on Film (Bloomington: Indiana, 1972), 263-66, and Goldstein, 39-59.

22. Gerald Mast sees Vladimir and Estragon as derived from Keaton and Chaplin. A Short History of the Movies (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977), 153. Beckett of course had been Joyce's private secretary.

23. "Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann of a personal God quaquaquaqua with white beard quaqauquaqua outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions..." Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot (NY: Grove, 1954), 28-31.

24. Our class did rely on some of Roman Jakobson's application of methods of formalist linguistic analysis to verbal texts. Jakobson grounds his analysis in the assumption of a "remarkable analogy between the role of grammar in poetry and painter's composition based on a latent or patent geometrical order or on a revulsion against geometrical arrangements." The phrase appears first in Jakobson's 1968 essay "Poetry of Grammar and the Grammar of Poetry," Lingua, 21ff; it's repeated in his 1970 essay "On the Verbal Art of WIlliam Blake and Other Poet-Painters."

25. See for instance Anthony Julius, T.S. Eliot: Anti-Semitism and Literary Form (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1996); also Carpenter on Pound's anti-Semitism, esp. 333-630.

26. Because this reading of Chaplin's structural influence derives from Eisenstein, it's worth remembering critiques of the potentially absolutist energy of Eisenstein's montage, and the challenge such authorial control represents to the "reality of space" in the film image. (This critique has been usefully made for instance by André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Language of

Cinema," in What is Cinema?, trans. Hugh Grey, 2 vols., (Berkeley: California, l967; 1971), I, 35-6.) This critique of the method echoes questions about Pound's method of the juxtaposed image, as well. Goldstein (72-4) summarizes Archibald MacLeish's connection between Pound's method of juxtaposition (in later poems, a method continuous with Imagism) and Pound's politics: "A violent disorder yearns for a violent order, and Pound's idiosyncratic method of composition, the furthest thing from public speech and rational organization, evoked constantly the ideal of a strongman who would exert single-minded control over the populace."

27. Of these Modernist writers, Hilda Doolittle (HD) was the one who subsequently consolidated her interests (psychic vision, Freudianism, verbalism, modernist aesthetics) into filmic work; she worked in film-writing, in acting and production jobs, and in writing for the journal   Close Up. See Close Up 1927-1933: Cinema and Modernism, ed. James Donald   (Princeton: Princeton) Part 3: The Contribution of HD.

28. James Agee, A Death in the Family (NY: Bantam l967 [1957]), 19.