

'The Betrayers of Language': Modernism and the Daily Mail

Matthew Kibble

The Eighteen Nineties were to no small extent the battle ground of these two types of culture – the one represented by *The Yellow Book*, the other by the Yellow Press. [...] In the great fight, the latter won.
Holbrook Jackson

Mr Yeats is right when he complains that newspapers have spoiled our sense of poetry; we expect poets to tell us some news, and indeed poetry has no news to tell anyone. Its object is simply to arouse an emotion, and no emotion is ever aroused in a person who skims through a piece of poetry as he skims through a journal.
Richard Aldington¹

These two quotations both set up a familiar kind of opposition between high culture and mass culture, in this case represented by mass circulation daily newspapers. On the one hand, Jackson sees the spirit of the 1890s as characterized by two highly innovative cultural forms: the brilliant, but short-lived small magazines of the Decadent aesthetic renaissance, and the populist, sensationalist and fervently patriotic *Daily Mail*, which was founded in 1896 and was still flourishing in 1913. Aldington seems to be setting himself and his fellow Imagists up as the heirs of the *Yellow Book*; writing in the *Little Review* in 1915, he identifies himself with that product of the 90s, W. B. Yeats, and takes up an aestheticist stance, defending the fragile realm of poetry against the encroachments of mass culture. For Aldington, newspapers represent both a utilitarian mode of reading which is antipathetic to poetry and a sphere of experience, that of current events, which poetry should have

nothing to do with. The quotation comes from a review of H.D.'s poetry in which Aldington defends H.D.'s anti-modernism. 'Just now the cry is all for "modernity",' Aldington writes, 'for lyrical outbursts in praise of machinery, of locomotion, and of violence'; although it may be 'contrary to current opinion' to praise such qualities, Aldington describes H.D. as 'brooding over – not locomotives and machinery – but little corners of gardens'.² In the face of the dominant modes of Futurism and Vorticism, Aldington praises H.D.'s unworldliness, her ability to evoke a sense of 'mystery', and cheerfully dismisses the complaints of a French reviewer that 'this author was not interested in aeroplanes and factory chimneys'.³

The aim of poetry, for Aldington, is not to *inform*, but to create a 'mood' in the reader, and this Symbolist aesthetic is something which is echoed in H.D.'s own writing from this time. Her 1916 review of Marianne Moore in the *Egoist*, for example, is equally dismissive of the landscape of modernity. She says of Moore that she is 'fighting in her country a battle against squalor and commercialism. We are all fighting the same battle.' This battle is a defence of

that serene palace of her own world of inspiration – frail, yet as all beautiful things are, absolutely hard – and destined to endure longer, far longer than the toppling sky-scrapers, and the world of shrapnel and machine-guns in which we live.⁴

In this review, H.D.'s first published piece of prose after taking over as assistant editor of the *Egoist*, she sets out her conception of poetry as an Aestheticist enclave, a 'serene palace'. The word 'palace' recalls Tennyson's 1832 poem 'The Palace of Art', with its female soul turning her back on the world to live in an artificial paradise, with the cry "'let the world have peace or wars," 'Tis one to me.'"⁵ Whereas Tennyson's poem can be seen as an allegory for the disastrous effects of retreating from the social sphere, however, H.D.'s appears to insist on just such a stance. In the middle of the Great War, then, H.D. and Aldington are establishing an aesthetic viewpoint which is vehemently opposed to the idea of poetry as didactic, realist or engaging with current events; this is modernism as, in Lukács's words, 'the negation of outward reality'.⁶

Ezra Pound, on the other hand, was later to claim that 'literature is news that STAYS news', surely an attempt to reconcile these two worlds: the public and the artistic, the large-scale and the small-scale.⁷ While H.D. sets up an opposition between the lasting values of the poetic, and the ephemeral 'toppling sky-scrapers' of the contemporary, Pound brings the two worlds together by including in the *Cantos* what he called 'whole slabs of the record', historical ephemera such as letters, official documents and statistics.⁸ He therefore aimed for his poetry, like Dante's, to be both topical and lasting, 'news that STAYS news'. Unlike other modernist writers, however, Pound never went so far as to incorporate the specific style or language of daily newspapers into his texts; on the contrary, he showed nothing but contempt for the

popular press. As a whole, the London modernists (specifically the Imagists Pound, H.D. and Aldington) shared this resistance to the daily newspaper and all it represented, as revealed through the series of references which I will go on to discuss to the emblematic figure of the *Daily Mail*, and its proprietor, Lord Northcliffe. In order to understand the significance of this resistance, it needs to be contextualised through a consideration of the role of the press in British political life around the time of the Great War.

The Sunday Morning Stool

Pound's engagement with history and current events were attested to by Ford Madox Ford: describing the heterogeneity of voices in the *Draft of XXX Cantos*, Ford wrote that the tones and rhythms of 'the Yellow Press and railway time-tables' could be heard in Pound's verse alongside those of Romance and Renaissance poets.⁹ He also claimed that 'glancing through the pages of [Pound's] "Collected Poems" is like taking a look through a newspaper', that the historical sweep of Pound's subject matter would furnish a 'visitor from Mars' with all the 'news' from the last two thousand years.¹⁰ However, even in those parts of the *Cantos* devoted to current or recent events, Pound does not noticeably make use of the language of the popular press in the way that Joyce or Dos Passos do. Such events are conveyed by snatches of colloquial dialogue, anecdotes or letters rather than, say, pastiches of journalese. In fact, the only place Pound can find for the newspapers is in the notorious 'Hell' Cantos, Cantos XIV and XV.

Following the model of Dante, these Cantos show the poet figure being led through Hell, where he observes contemporary public figures receiving their appropriate punishments. These tableaux amount to a vehement diagnosis of English society: as Pound wrote to his father in 1925, the 'Hell' Cantos were intended as 'an accurate portrait of the spiritual state of England in the years 1919 and following'.¹¹ As such, it is one of the most topical parts of the *Cantos*; whereas Dante's Hell contained only the dead, Pound's is a living Hell, perhaps even a Hell on earth, an imaginative transformation of post-War London in which the 'sky over Westminster' is metamorphosed into a 'great arse-hole/broken with piles'.¹² Ford, in the review quoted above, lamented the lapse in taste which Pound showed in devoting 'a whole canto of his inferno to human excrement', suggesting that this example of 'fourth form' humour was 'no doubt a relic of Americanism'.¹³ Pound responded angrily to this, defending his scatological view of Hell on the grounds that, firstly, it was based on orthodox Catholic doctrine, and secondly, that he was simply being realistic: English society is 'a mass of snot', he wrote, and 'The idea that Jum Douglas of the Sunday Morning Stool, and 99 percent of Brit publication STINKS ... has been eliminated from ang/shaxon imagination.' 'THAT IS THE STATE of ENGLISH MIND in 1919', he concluded, 'Get a photo of Beaverbrooks moog ef yew doant beeleev it.'¹⁴ In the early

1920s Pound saw vituperative satire as the moral duty of the poet: he wrote to Felix Schelling that '*Punch* and the rest of them have too long gone on treating the foetor of England as if it were something to be joked about', and so the responsibility of serious public comment fell to literary writers ('If the poets don't make certain horrors appear horrible who will?'). He decided that Joyce wasn't 'harsh enough', and the *Hell Cantos* more than compensate for this.¹⁵

Pound obscures the names of his damned souls with ellipses, leaving only the final letters, and he later dismissed attempts to match the number of dots to the names in question, responding that the individuals were '*not* worth recording as such' and in any case he 'had forgotten which rotters were there'.¹⁶ A few are easily identifiable, such as the politicians David Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson, and the newspaper proprietor Lord Northcliffe, but their names are obscured partly because Pound sees them as part of a de-humanized system. As the placard which reads 'THE PERSONNEL CHANGES' suggests, these people are more important for the roles they play than as individuals. While Dante's damned were given individual characterization, Pound's are reduced to types, representatives of their class; similarly, while Dante's were allowed to voice their suffering, Pound's seem oblivious to their surroundings, and carry on their earthly business regardless. Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson, for example, are clearly being punished for their misuse of language in war propaganda; since they were both famed for their oratorical skill, that is how Pound portrays them:

The stench of wet coal, politicians
..... e and n, their wrists bound to
 their ankles,
Standing bare bum,
Faces smeared on their rumps,
 wide eye on flat buttock,
Bush hanging for beard,
 Addressing crowds through their arse-holes,
Addressing the multitudes in the ooze (61)

As wartime Prime Minister, Lloyd George had grasped the need for mass opinion management far better than his predecessor Herbert Asquith; symbolic of this is the fact that, on being appointed Prime Minister, Lloyd George's first act on leaving Buckingham Palace was to have dinner, not with his political advisers, but with the proprietors of the *News of the World* and the *Daily Telegraph*.¹⁷ Woodrow Wilson's speeches had been hugely successful in bringing American sympathy behind the idea of entering the war; his declaration of the 'Fourteen Points' which the USA was fighting to defend showed that Wilson had learnt the power of brief arresting statements from recent developments in advertising.¹⁸ Harold Lasswell, in his 1927 book on

propaganda techniques, described Wilson as the ‘great generalissimo on the propaganda front’, and criticized his cynical use of the ‘monumental rhetoric’ of liberal ideals; Irene Cooper Willis, writing immediately after the war, described this rhetoric as part of the liberalism’s self-justificatory and self-deluding ‘Holy War’.¹⁹

The mass production of newsprint is associated by Pound with the spread of contagious diseases and the production of faeces, in the images of ‘flies carrying news’ (63) and the ‘continual bum-belch/distributing its productions’ (65). There is a clear association between the abject imagery of excrement and ‘ooze’ and the spheres of mass production and communication; so, alongside the ‘news owners’ in the ‘dung-flow’ we find war profiteers, vice-crusaders, Bishops and Fabians. Pound seems to want Northcliffe to be more readily identifiable than the other ‘rotters’, leaving the last three letters of his name visible:²⁰

a green bile-sweat, the news owners, s
 the anonymous
 ffe, broken
 his head shot like a cannon-ball toward the glass gate,
 peering through it an instant,
 falling back to the trunk, epileptic (65)

The ‘cannon-ball’ is an appropriate punishment for the man whose paper carried the slogan ‘THE PAPER THAT GOT THE SHELLS AND THE MEN’.²¹

Elsewhere Pound includes the ‘the cowardly inciters to violence/. . . . n and h eaten by weevils’ (64), the nearest equivalent to which in Dante would be the ‘makers of discord’, which includes Mohammed (in a passage which is closest to Pound in its gratuitous obscenity) and Bertran de Born, who, like Northcliffe, has been decapitated.²² If Northcliffe were not already clearly identified with the above passage, it would be tempting to read ‘. . . . n and h’ as Aitken and Harmsworth (i.e. Lords Beaverbrook and Northcliffe), respectively the Minister of Information and Director of Enemy Propaganda in the last year of the War.²³ The epithet would fit Northcliffe in particular, who had been using the *Daily Mail* to call for conscription since 1907, and had argued from the start of the War that propaganda could be one of Britain’s main weapons.²⁴ Northcliffe – known by German propagandists as ‘The Minister of Lying’²⁵ – also recognised the linguistic power of advertising, and part of his struggles with the Foreign Office was due to the fact that, as he saw it, he spoke a different language to that of the old political establishment: ‘Propaganda is advertising and diplomacy is no more likely to understand advertising than advertising is likely to understand diplomacy.’²⁶

What the occupants of Pound’s Hell have in common then, is a distinctly modern misuse of language, the exploitation of mass communication techniques to undermine liberal beliefs in rational, expressive language:

And the betrayers of language
 n and the press gang
And those who lied for hire;
the perverts, the perverters of language,
 the perverts, who have set money-lust
Before the pleasures of the senses (61)

The pun on ‘press gang’ effectively conflates conscription with newspaper production, as if this betrayal of language were peculiar to wartime. Elsewhere in Pound’s writings, however, peacetime newspapers are also associated with the perversion of language, although this may be largely due to the legacy of their involvement in propaganda. C. E. Montague and Arthur Ponsonby, both disillusioned Liberal MPs, saw as one of the main legacies of the war the fact that ex-combatants would lose faith in official pronouncements of any kind. As Montague put it, the huge disparity between the experience of combat and the version reported in the press meant that ‘several million ex-soldiers now read every solemn appeal of a government, each beautiful speech of a Premier or earnest assurance of a body of employers with that maxim on guard in his [*sic*] mind – “You can’t believe a word you read.”’²⁷ This widespread loss of faith is worth bearing in mind when reading Pound’s 1922 review of *Ulysses*, where he refers to Leopold Bloom as ‘the basis of democracy; he is the man in the street [...] the Daily Mail reader, the man who believes what he reads in the papers’.²⁸ Pound’s view of Bloom seems all the more damning given Montague’s comment, ascribing to Bloom a belief which would have appeared unusually gullible to a post-War reader. In Pound’s review, the language of newspapers is presented as empty, excessive, and with no basis in truth, and *Ulysses* is read as a ‘savage’ satire on ‘lofty’ newspaper rhetoric. He describes the ‘clichés’ of the execution scene in ‘Cyclops’ as ‘just what the public deserves, and just what the public gets every morning with its porridge, in the Daily Mail and in sentimento-rhetorical journalism’.²⁹

Pound constantly uses words like ‘slop’ and ‘slither’ to describe imprecise or uneconomical language, and the ‘porridge’ in this example is surely part of this discourse of abject, formless matter.³⁰ Newspapers are also strongly associated with bodily waste and abjection throughout *Ulysses*: Bloom carries his pork kidney wrapped in newspaper, for example, and this is echoed in the punning headline from the ‘Aeolus’ episode: ‘HOW A GREAT DAILY ORGAN IS TURNED OUT’ (98). Another headline reads ‘THE GRANDEUR THAT WAS ROME’ (108), perhaps another example of the kind of High Modernist satire Pound describes; a snippet of high culture (Poe’s ‘To Helen’) divorced from its poetic context and reduced to an eye-catching cliché. In addition, the paragraph which follows the headline contains Professor MacHugh discussing the ‘cloacal obsession’ of the Romans, whose civilization was founded on their sewage system. As in the ‘Hell’ Cantos, the ‘grandeur’ of a triumphant Imperial capital is satirically undermined by the return of its

repressed wastes; in Pound's case, post-War London is presented 'rumbling with imperialism', a 'pisswallow without a cloaca' (64), forced to wallow in its own disjecta.

There is a clear reason for this association between newspapers and waste, since newspapers are designed to be immediately consumed and disposed of, and to have no lasting value or interest (Bloom of course, reads *Titbits* on the toilet and uses it to wipe himself with; perhaps it this kind of reader response which Pound had in mind in his reference to the 'Sunday Morning Stool'). It is this attribute which allowed Siegfried Kracauer to use the newspaper as the image of a distinctively modern and urban erasure of memory and history: in the 'absolutely present-day' environment of a modern city like Berlin, he claimed, one's 'existence is not like a line but a series of points; it is new every day like the newspapers that are thrown away when they become old.'³¹ Kracauer is critical of the illusory excitement of this 'life from headline to headline', while Walter Benjamin uses the newspaper as an example of the explosive revolution of the word which might see the 'pretentious, universal gesture of the book' supplanted by ephemeral avant-garde forms such as placards, leaflets and newspaper articles.³² With reference to Joyce, Steven Connor describes the two different modes of reading at stake here: whereas literature conventionally produces 'free-standing works designed to elicit acts of exclusive attention', newspapers consist of arbitrary and incomplete scraps of information caught in the casual glance of the browser.³³

Unlike a literary work, a newspaper, with its headlines, news and features articles, leaders, advertisements and announcements, is a compound of styles, 'with no consistent author, purpose, or attitude'.³⁴ Connor, unlike Pound, argues that *Ulysses* sympathetically assimilates the form of the newspaper, opening up literary discourse to 'all its various discursive antagonists', even that the interior monologue mode, recording a character's arbitrary and fragmented impressions, is a borrowing of 'the mode of attention embodied in the newspaper'.³⁵ Whereas Pound read *Ulysses* as a High Modernist satire which shared his own contempt for 'democracy' and 'journalism', this reading accentuates the embrace of mass culture, and of the ephemera represented by newspapers, advertising and pulp fiction. Aldington showed his contempt for browsing as a 'mode of attention' in his reference to 'skim[ming] through a journal', a contempt which Pound clearly shared. For Pound, the fact that Joyce's newspaper style reduces Poe's 'To Helen' to an attention-grabbing headline would have been a sign of its degeneracy; the lack of hierarchy and differentiation between individual writers means that their individual quality is lost in an undifferentiated mass. The fact that, in *Canto XV*, the masses of 'british weeklies' breed by 'scission' – asexual reproduction – is relevant here; together with the references to perversion and unproductive sexual activity in these Cantos, this suggests that the democratic mass is sterile and chaotic, and precludes the sense of autonomous individuality on which the production of art depends.³⁶

Mobocracy

Why, though, is it the *Daily Mail*, and the figure of Northcliffe himself, that are singled out as representative of this degenerate mass? Through the *Daily Mail*, Northcliffe had pioneered populist tabloid journalism in Britain, and had introduced the American concept of targeting sections of the 'New Reading Public' through numerous Amalgamated Press titles, such as *Union Jack* and *Magnet* for boys, and *Home Chat* and *Women's Weekly* for women.³⁷ As Raymond Williams argues, the 'Northcliffe Revolution' consisted of a new economic basis – that of the large-scale capitalist corporation rather than the independent private enterprise – and a use of 'mass' advertising techniques to exploit a lower-middle-class market.³⁸ John Carey sees this deliberate appeal to women and to lower social classes as a progressive achievement on Northcliffe's part, and contrasts it with the misogyny and elitism of the modernists.³⁹ However, it is important to remember that Northcliffe used this new audience to conduct moral crusades: his papers had been instrumental in preparing the public's desire for war, by serialising a fictional account of German invaders and their atrocities as early as 1905, and after the War they were to turn their attention to the threat of the 'flapper vote', and the problem of Britain's 'two million superfluous women'.⁴⁰ Far from serving the interests of female and lower-class readers, Northcliffe campaigned for their conscription and disenfranchisement.

Almost from its inception, the *Mail* had been associated with war, from the Boer War jingoism described by Jackson onwards. Northcliffe and Beaverbrook also pioneered the involvement of privately-owned newspapers in official propaganda. The Edwardian period had seen a change in the political culture, as political parties became more organised bureaucracies, adopting mass marketing techniques, and exerting more control over the newspapers.⁴¹ This cultural shift was important enough for Harold Lasswell to describe propaganda as 'the new dynamic of society'.⁴² Northcliffe prided himself on having prophesied the War, and in 1915 the *Daily Mail* leader column carried the banner 'THE PAPER THAT PERSISTENTLY FOREWARNED THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE WAR'. When, in December 1914, the *Mail* accused the Liberal papers of having been 'pro-German' in their campaign for neutrality, A. G. Gardiner, editor of the Liberal *Daily News*, replied in an Open Letter that Northcliffe had done much more than forewarn: 'You say that we prophesied Peace. Yes, we not only prophesied Peace, but we worked for Peace, just as you prophesied War and worked for War. *We lost and you won.*'⁴³ Northcliffe also attacked the Liberal government as the 'Do-Nothing' Party, the 'Pro-German' or 'Hide-the-Truth' government, and ran campaigns for 'compulsion' (conscription) and increased manufacture of high-explosive shells.⁴⁴ As Gardiner saw it, the Northcliffe Press was coercing the government into a series of increasingly illiberal measures, the 'war upon opinion' being just another part of the

new spirit of 'German militarism' which was undermining British democratic and liberal traditions.⁴⁵

Northcliffe's campaign for conscription – which Asquith introduced despite assurances that he would not – was widely seen as motivated by Northcliffe's support for Lloyd George in his power struggles against Asquith and Kitchener.⁴⁶ He was seen as the mastermind of a pro-Lloyd George conspiracy which succeeded in bringing about both the fall of the (last ever) Liberal government in May 1915 and Asquith's subsequent resignation in December 1916.⁴⁷ During the December 1916 government crisis, the *Daily News* protested that 'the Government of this country shall not pass from Parliament and its constitutional executive to a mob of shrieking dervishes in the Press', and claimed that Asquith's resignation was not due to 'the will of the nation' but to 'a crusade in the Press engineered by Lord Northcliffe'.⁴⁸ As early as November 1914, Gardiner claimed that 'the democracy, whose bulwark is Parliament, has been unseated, and mobocracy, whose dictator is Lord Northcliffe, is in power'.⁴⁹

Parliamentarians were also alarmed by the improper power held by Northcliffe and Beaverbrook: in February 1918 Liberal MPs attacked Lloyd George's National Government in the Commons, complaining that the press barons were unaccountable, had no known job description, and that their private commercial interests were cheapening both government and the Liberal tradition of a free press.⁵⁰ A Commons debate on 7 Nov 1918 showed the extent of MPs' concern about the constitutional implications of their involvement in the running of government. John Dillon MP (Irish Nationalist) described Northcliffe as 'the Napoleon of journalism', who had exploited a period of 'absolute change' in power structure. The government had 'created a Frankenstein'; the House would increasingly be dictated to by mass desires, and whoever controlled the public would control the country.⁵¹ Pound was not the first to use the phrase 'press gang' in this context; it had already been coined to describe the handful of proprietors who 'ran the country', and who helped sustain Lloyd George's massive popularity.⁵² Northcliffe was seen as both the power behind Lloyd George's throne (Lord Bryce referred to him as a 'Kingmaker') and a dangerous force in his own right: specifically, the Foreign Office, and the Conservative Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour, were extremely resentful of Northcliffe's attempts to determine the course of British foreign policy in regard to the future of the Czech and Balkan states.⁵³ The fact that Northcliffe thought he had more power as a news magnate than he would as a politician supported these fears: when he wrote in 1921 that 'mine is a new kind of position in the world', Northcliffe was acknowledging that he had engineered a shift in the power base of British political life.⁵⁴ In addition to this disruption of the political process, the press was also held responsible, through its publication of false atrocity propaganda, for the severity of the peace terms, and for a cultural shift after the war: a 'debasement of the word', a 'decline of the prestige of the author' and 'a diminution of civilized values'.⁵⁵

These political responses to Northcliffe's innovations can be seen to overlap with those of the modernists in certain areas: the fear of a 'Prussian militarism', an impersonal, automatized collectivism, and the fear of this 'debasement of the word', a loss of linguistic precision and sincerity (Pound's 'betray[al] of language'). In political terms, modernism has been seen as part of a critique of the failure of liberalism to produce the individual freedom it promised; while for many modernist writers the solution seemed to lie on the anti-liberal Right, their critique had much in common with the equally anti-liberal Left.⁵⁶ The Great War became a focal point for this discontent, and modernist opinion was often very close to that of commentators like Willis and Ponsonby, who had both left the Liberal party for the Labour party. There is a strong link between these political reactions to the Yellow Press and descriptions of the experience of war itself. Eric Leed has described the loss of individualism experienced by many Great War combatants, as upper- and middle-class volunteers found themselves subjected to a rigid, technological, hierarchized system; instead of the release from codes of bourgeois life which war promised, they felt proletarianized.⁵⁷ This is expressed by combatants like Wyndham Lewis, who described the coming of war as the 'assassination of Democracy', and its impact on English culture as the 'extinction of self' in a new militaristic order, but also by non-combatant modernists like D. H. Lawrence and Dora Marsden.⁵⁸ Marsden also described militarism in terms of the 'extinction of self', but considered the constraints of armed service as the price which must be paid under the modern bureaucratic system for the chance of being able to fulfill the egoistic will to fight; similarly, Lawrence's 'England, My England' deals contemptuously with the 'mob-spirit of a democratic army' and the 'degradation' brought by 'modern war'.⁵⁹ Harold Lasswell similarly argued after the war that newspaper propaganda had produced a 'dehumanizing environment', the effect of which on civilians was directly analogous to the automatized discipline of military service: 'The civilian mind is standardized by news and not by drills.'⁶⁰

Richard Aldington's initial reaction to the War, in the September 1914 issue of *The Egoist*, is part of this modernist anti-collectivism. Aldington rejects the idea that patriotism – or any other social concern – was capable of inspiring artistic production, and argues that the War can only be damaging to the arts, since 'the arts are the expression of the individual' and 'a great war like the present tends towards the creation of type as opposed to the creation of individuals.'⁶¹ This is something we can also see in H.D.'s fictions of the Great War; in *Bid Me to Live*, for example: 'She and Bella were simply abstractions, were women of the period, were WOMAN of the period, the same one.'⁶² This levelling effect was an inevitable aspect of the mass marketing techniques adopted by the Yellow Press; war propaganda, in particular, cannot afford to recognise the individuality or heterogeneity of its audience; it must be 'catholic in its appeal', addressing all sectors of the community and uniting ethnic groups, classes, sexes and generations.⁶³ In

H.D.'s fiction, it is once again the *Daily Mail* which comes to represent this reduction of the individual to a type.

Journalese

Robert Graves reported that, to the soldier home on leave, it appeared that 'the civilians talked a foreign language; and it was newspaper language'.⁶⁴ In H.D.'s novel *Asphodel*, written in 1921, the central character, Hermione, is also confronted with this strange language, and finds it equally alienating. Her husband Jerrold is home on leave, and reacts to the news of his wife's pregnancy (by another man) by insisting that they get divorced. The alien legalistic language which he uses is interpreted by his wife Hermione as a form of newspaper language:

'Divorce *me*?' 'Of course. It's the only way to do it. I as a returned officer can prove your infidelity-' 'My infidelity?' 'Well, Louise and I – that will be overlooked. You are, aren't you, the offender?' 'Offender?' 'I mean – well you know what the law is in England? You can't divorce me as you have been unfaithful -' 'Unfaithful?' Words out of the *Daily Mail* meaning nothing. Where had he picked these words up? What did these words mean? Words out of the *Daily Mail* mean nothing. Unfaithful wife, returned officer husband, lover, baby ... words out of the *Daily Mail* meaning nothing.⁶⁵

Hermione's private sexual life has been invaded; rather than being able to determine her own identity and narrative, she is forced into the roles of 'offender', 'unfaithful wife'. Instead of being a self-creating individual, she is now reduced to an infinitely repeatable case, a type, part of the typology of a formulaic news story. During the War, the non-War-related news content of the *Daily Mail* was restricted to half a page of short items on page 3, mostly reports of court cases and thus full of the language Hermione refers to. For Peter Walsh in *Mrs Dalloway*, the fact that such newspaper stories have this formulaic, infinitely repeatable quality is exactly what gives them value; holding out a coin to buy a paper with, he reflects that 'he had held out that copper millions of times':

He could never help reading about cricket. He read the scores in the stop press first, then how it was a hot day; then about a murder case. Having done things millions of times enriched them, though it might be said to take the surface off.⁶⁶

The contents of the 'murder case' are as predictable as the cricket scores ('Surrey was all out once more'), which is a comfort for Walsh, but quite the reverse for Hermione. She is threatened with becoming part of one these stories, rather than a detached reader (or browser), and these stories are represented as being part of the discourse of moral conformity which the

War has imposed on the sexual freedoms of her generation. In her letters, H.D. described her real-life experience of the War years in terms of a similar melodramatic scenario: in keeping secret the father of her child, H.D. was forced to pretend to be the victimized wife, rather than an independent adulterous woman, a fiction which she was extremely uncomfortable with. She wrote to Bryher in 1919, 'I fear I shall be forced to shout the truth at everyone: I can't stand this virtuous and abused wife business. I really can't.'⁶⁷

In the same novel, however, H.D. seems to suggest that this 'newspaper language' is in fact the only possible language for expressing the lived experience of modern warfare. Hermione finds herself speaking this language as well, as if she too had become a '*Daily Mail* reader':

'Those beasts. Baby-killers.' Yes, that was true. How odd that the most blatant of journalese should be true, the most banal and obvious things were now true, the war had made things like that true. Hermione had never read, listened as little as she could until this became true. 'Baby-killers.' The most obvious and low level of horrors, O Gawd, and prose and poetry and the Mona Lisa and her eye lids are a little weary and sister my sister, O fleet sweet swallow were all smudged out as Pompeii and its marbles had been buried beneath obscene filth of lava, embers, smouldering ash and hideous smoke and poisonous gas. Was London still there? (117-18)

The phrase 'baby-killers' is spoken by 'we', the collective voice of a London crowd, including Hermione, who are marvelling at a 'flotilla' of German aeroplanes flying overhead; its origins lie in Winston Churchill's description of the German naval bombardment of the East coast of England in December 1914 as 'The Baby-Killers of Scarborough'.⁶⁸ The phrase was taken up by the press to refer to the Zeppelin raids which began in January 1915, the *Daily Mail* comparing Count Zeppelin to that other 'baby-killer', King Herod – and by March 1915 the phrase had clearly become tabloid shorthand for underhand German attacks on civilians (e.g. the headline 'BABY-KILLING RAID' for a report on a naval bombardment of Russian villages, and 'CHIEF BABY-KILLER' for the death of a German airship commander).⁶⁹ The *Daily Mail* were also clearly very fond of the alliterative phrase 'BABIES BAYONETED', which they repeatedly used as a headline in reportage of the Belgian atrocities.⁷⁰ The incidence of this phrase in H.D.'s text is thus a clear example of, in Graves's words, civilians talking 'newspaper language', but seen from the non-combatants' point of view; in H.D.'s case from the point of view of an aesthete poet who finds that this 'journalese' is the only available language.

Poisonous gas was also a focus of newspaper attacks on German atrocities in 1915, when this passage was set, so it functions here as an example of the linguistic representation of war, rather than the concrete reality. War is presented as an alien discourse which has buried the spirit of poetry and culture, represented metonymically by Walter Pater's famous description of the

Mona Lisa ('her eye lids are a little weary') and Swinburne's poem 'Itylus' ('sister my sister, O fleet sweet swallow').⁷¹ Hermione's resentment of the events and culture of the War are expressed through the by now familiar contrast of aesthetic styles: popular fiction and newspaper language become the displaced object of her frustration. The experience of having a stillbirth in a basement during an air-raid makes her feel that the War has converted her life into the events of a cheap novel, or a series of '*Daily Mail* atrocities': 'Novels were right. Even newspapers. She had had things happen in true journalese style, she Hermione who had drawn music from people' (116). Hermione objects to 'newspapers making all life on one level' (118); the formulaic predictability which Peter Walsh values, and the democratic embrace of 'browsing' which Connor sees in Joyce are both rejected in H.D.'s defence of an embattled high culture. Nevertheless, for H.D. the novelist, describing the collective experience of the War, it is necessary to adopt the collective discourse of the *Daily Mail* leader articles; despite Hermione's attempts to repudiate this language of modernity, she has been interpellated as a member of the 'mass reading public'.

Journal-ocracy

Richard Aldington also depicted newspaper language as a discourse which was opposed to high art, and attacked the 'cant' which allowed the *Daily Mail* to pose as the champion of culture:

Rheims and Louvain? Oh, 'ow the poor Dily Mile did feel 'urt at the bawberity of the 'Uns! Oh, 'ow they did luv Gorthic awkkitekture and the clessics! Oh, 'ow they did luv Awt! And if the war has destroyed much I need scarcely remind you that the peaceful arts of religion and commerce have destroyed more, much more.⁷²

Aldington is referring to two widely reported 'atrocities' from this early phase of the War. In late August 1914, as revenge for Belgian sniper action, the German army shot civilians and fired the town of Louvain, destroying the University Library. This provoked the first recorded English usage of the word 'Hun' to refer to the German Army (*The Times*, 29 August 1914), and a photo splash in the *Daily Mail* headlined 'THE TRAGEDY OF LOUVAIN: THE GREATEST CRIME OF THE WAR' (including a photograph of laughing German officers captioned 'The callous conquerors').⁷³ In the belief that it was being used as a French observation post, the German army shelled Rheims Cathedral on September 20th, 1914; the damage to the cathedral was reported by the *Mail* as a 'deliberate crime', 'the Kaiser's awfulest', but neither event can actually be seen as a war crime, a fact which Aldington's satirical relativism seems to acknowledge.⁷⁴ As Aldington suggests, reportage of these 'atrocities' was frequently accompanied by descriptions of the Germans as barbarians

(often as Nietzschean 'blonde beasts'), ironically contrasting this with German claims to 'the supreme position in European culture'.⁷⁵

In H.D.'s 'Murex' (1926), a character clearly based on Aldington also sees the War as a threat to culture. The War threatens to obliterate poetry, not only through the cheap aesthetics and 'journalese' which it fosters, but also by simply killing off the poets. Freddie tries to convince his wife Raymonde of this, with a sarcasm reminiscent of Aldington's 'Solemn Dialogue':

'I mean these very neat trenches with all modern conveniences are not con-
ducive to poetry.' 'Yes, Freddie. But – but – afterwards.' 'There ain't (ain't
I told you?) going to be no – afterwards.' 'Freddie. What rot. It's almost
now over.' 'Darling sweetly versed in Daily Mailishness, there never will
be.' 'Be what, Freddie?' 'Any – afterwards.' 'But Freddie – think – Greece –
Sparta. France even. It was after 1870 that they had the wonderous flower-
ing. You yourself always saying so. [...] Why Freddie, de Gourmont, de
Régnier, all, all, all of them – Pierre de Louys even – after 1870.'⁷⁶

Raymonde is here trying to retrieve a valid meaning from the War, by connecting her own period with past periods of 'decadence'. Elsewhere, she draws a parallel with Athens, again using this word 'flowering' ('decadent Athens. Decadent London. A city's finest artistic flowering comes usually in its decadence');⁷⁷ here it is the French Decadent movement, the immediate predecessor of the 'over-flowered 1890-s' which she identifies as her artistic roots. Freddie insists that this war is different, will wipe out all the poets (except one – Raymonde herself), but Raymonde, back in the present moment of narration (1926) continues to insist: 'There would be poets, there would be poets, there would be poets'. The fact that she is still hoping for this implies that there have not been any poets in the decade since the War, and that the artistic movement in which she began her career really was wiped out. The idea that the Great War was being fought for the defence of English culture is written off as an example of 'Daily Mailishness'; through the fictionalized voice of Aldington, the aspirations of H.D.'s aesthete poet are seen as nothing more than the opinions of a duped 'mass' reader of the Northcliffe press.

Ironically, Raymonde's hopes for a French-style Decadence in the wake of the War had also been expressed by Aldington in his September 1914 *Egoist* article, before the later disillusion had set in: 'By all the rules we should have a popular art of great sentimentality and among the artists a movement akin to that of the symbolist school in France.' This hope was already tinged with pessimism, however: 'Possibly there will be no art at all – very probably, I should think.'⁷⁸ By the end of the War this pessimism was widespread, an example being Pound's 1919 article for *The New Age*, in which he issues a 'caveat' about the post-War order, criticizing it for its intellectual emptiness. This critique is directed both against the political order ('the reign of President

Wilson') and the 'journal-ocracy', the fact the 'the "Daily Mail" has won the war'. He holds English Edwardian writers – 'the Shavo-Bennetian period' – responsible for the predominant tone of the age, a purposive, functional mode of writing which is distinctly anti-literary, and which seems to have much in common with the new techniques of advertising and Wilsonian oratory:

The newspaper criterion that 'an article must run straight through from start to finish' might be attributed to the tone of this period; the criterion is of excellent newspaper technique; it is almost pure kinesis designed not to make the reader think, but to make him accept a certain conclusion; literature and philosophy constantly diverge from this groovedness, constantly throw upon the perceptions new data, new images, which prevent the acceptance of an over facile conclusion.

In recognising that the 'Daily Mail' has won the war, one should also consider that it would in due time create an order of things in which there would be no art, no literature, no manners, no civilisation.⁷⁹

Pound's recognition that 'the "Daily Mail" has won the war' echoes A. G. Gardiner's Open Letter to Northcliffe; for Gardiner, Northcliffe's victory was the triumph of militarism over liberal, democratic and constitutional values. For Pound, it is clearly a cultural question; the *Daily Mail* here represents a linguistic form, an Edwardian prosaic functionalism. As in Holbrook Jackson's diagnosis of the 1890s, the *Daily Mail*, inextricably linked to militarism, is seen as representing the death of the arts. For Jackson, the early 1890s saw an aesthetic renaissance which 'f[ound] its Moscow at the Old Bailey, in 1895' (the Wilde trial), while in the late 1890s Harmsworth oversaw the 'orgy' of Imperialism culminating in the Boer War, in which 'the nation forgot art and letters'.⁸⁰ To some extent, the modernists see their own period as repeating this narrative, with a pre-war culture being replaced by both the linguistic 'groovedness' of 'newspaper language' and the political 'groovedness' of collectivism. While this demonization of the popular press can clearly be seen as part of the elitist, quasi-aristocratic resistance to democracy of which modernism is often accused, the terms of the debate also overlap in surprising ways with liberal and socialist fears about the exploitation of 'mobocracy' (democracy's uncanny double) by unaccountable capitalist interests. Characteristically, the focus of this modernist anxiety is linguistic: it is the abuse of language in propagandist prose which offers the most pernicious example, for them, of a modern collectivism which is antipathetic to the arts, and of which even the War itself is only a symptom.

Notes

1 Holbrook Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties: A Review of Art and Ideas at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: 1913; rpt., 1931), p. 52; Richard Aldington, 'A Young American Poet', *The Little Review*, 2:1 (Mar. 1915), 22–25.

- 2 Aldington, 'A Young American Poet', 22, 23.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 4 H.D., 'Marianne Moore', *Egoist*, 3:8 (August 1916), 118–19. 'Her country', America, was of course still neutral; while for English poets, the 'battle' was partly against the war, this is only part of a wider battle.
- 5 Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'The Palace of Art', in Christopher Ricks (ed.), *The Poems of Tennyson* (London, 1969), pp. 349–418.
- 6 Georg Lukács, *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* [1957], trans. by John and Necke Mander (London, 1963), p. 18.
- 7 Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (London, 1951), p. 29.
- 8 Ezra Pound, *Guide to Kulchur* (London, 1938), p. 30.
- 9 Ford Madox Ford, 'Mediterranean Reverie', *Week-End Review*, 8 (11 Nov. 1933): 495–96; reprinted in *Pound/Ford: The Story of a Literary Friendship*, ed. by Brita Lindberg-Seyersted, (London, 1982), pp. 131–33.
- 10 Ford Madox Ford, 'Ezra', *New York Herald Tribune Books*, 9 Jan. 1927; reprinted in *Pound/Ford*, 82–87 (86).
- 11 Ezra Pound, letter to father [May 1925], Beinecke Library, quoted in Carroll F. Terrell, *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), p. 65.
- 12 Ezra Pound, *The Cantos* (London, 1987), p. 62; hereafter cited in the text. H.D. also transforms post-War London into a Dantean Hell, describing Piccadilly Circus as 'the circle of Piccadilly'; *Asphodel* [written 1921, possibly revised in 1926–27], ed. by Robert Spoo (Durham, N. Carolina and London, 1992), p. 202.
- 13 Ford, in *Pound/Ford*, p. 133.
- 14 Pound, letter to Ford, 16 Nov. 1933, in *Pound/Ford*, p. 134. James Douglas, a journalist who had once written a scathing review of *Blast*, became editor of Beaverbrook's *Sunday Express* in 1920; *Pound/Ford*, p. 196 n.
- 15 Pound, letter to Felix Schelling, 8 July 1922; *The Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907–1941*, ed. by D. D. Paige (London, 1951), p. 180.
- 16 Pound, letter to John Lackay Brown, *Letters*, p. 293; quoted in Terrell, *Companion to The Cantos*, p. 65.
- 17 These were, respectively, Sir George Riddell and Lord Burnham; Gary S. Messinger, *British Propaganda and the State in the First World War* (Manchester, 1992), p. 49.
- 18 Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 22.
- 19 Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques in the World War* (London, 1927), p. 16; Irene Cooper Willis, *England's Holy War: A Study of English Liberal Idealism during the Great War* (NY, 1928), p. 172. This was originally published as three pamphlets in 1919–21. Willis was a former Liberal who converted to Labour during the War; Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain: II: The Twentieth Century* (London, 1984), p. 251n.
- 20 The 1933 edition, however, has 'e' rather than 'ffe', as do all subsequent Faber editions except the 1975 revised edition, which was based on the New Directions 1972 *Cantos*; Pound, *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (London, 1997; facsimile of 1933 edition), p. 68.
- 21 This slogan was above the *Mail's* leader in July 1916.
- 22 This is in the 9th Bolga, in Canto 28: Mohammed is ripped open from 'the chin to the part that breaks wind' revealing his entrails and 'the foul sack that makes excrement' (*che merda fa*); Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy: I: Inferno*, translated by John D. Sinclair (New York, 1939), p. 347. Northcliffe was dead when Pound wrote this, but was still alive in 1919; he was not 'epileptic', but died in delirium, probably caused by syphilis, in August 1922; Koss, *Rise and Fall*, p. 384.

23 Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 126; M. L. Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914–18* (London and Basingstoke, 1982), pp. 86–90.

24 Messinger, *British Propaganda*, pp. 149–50.

25 Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques*, p. 3.

26 Northcliffe, in a 1918 letter quoted in Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda, 1914–18*, p. 93.

27 C. E. Montague, *Disenchantment* (1922), quoted in Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 245. See also Charles Masterman's *Condition of England* (1909), which calls for a regeneration of the 'mob' for the sake of the national culture, giving as an example of their intellectual poverty the fact that 'They still believe that things are true because they see them in the newspapers.'; quoted in Messinger, *British Propaganda*, p. 32. Arthur Ponsonby claimed that 'None of the heroes prepared for suffering and sacrifice, none of the common herd ready for service and obedience, will be inclined to listen to the call of their country once they discover the polluted sources from whence that call proceeds and recognize the monstrous finger of falsehood which beckons them to the battlefield.' *Falsehood in War-Time: Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated Throughout the Nations During the Great War* (London, 1928), p. 29.

28 *The Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot (London, 1960; rpt., 1968), p. 403.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 407. Pound is presumably referring to passages such as 'The ceremony which went off with great *éclat* was characterised by the most affecting cordiality [...] The departing guest was the recipient of a hearty ovation, many of those who were present being visibly moved'; James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. by Hans Walter Gabler (Harmondsworth, 1986), pp. 280–81.

30 For example, the reference to a poetry which is 'free from emotional slither', Eliot (ed.), *Literary Essays*, p. 12.

31 Siegfried Kracauer, 'Repetition' (1932), quoted in David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 141.

32 Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, tr. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London, 1979), p. 45; Benjamin also holds capitalist-controlled newspapers responsible for the commodification of literature, but sees this in dialectical terms: 'The stage on which we see enacted the profoundest debasement of the printed word – that is, the newspaper – will be the site of its regeneration in a new society'; 'Diary from August 7, 1931, to the Day of my Death', tr. by Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings II: 1927–1934*, ed. by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MS and London, 1999), pp. 504–5.

33 Steven Connor, *James Joyce* (Plymouth, 1996), p. 54.

34 Connor, *James Joyce*, p. 61

35 Connor, *James Joyce*, pp. 51, 55.

36 Robert Casillo points out that the imagery used in this depiction of a monstrous 'female' chaos is the same as that used in Pound's anti-Semitic polemics, and is related to Remy de Gourmont's idea that parthenogenesis represented a 'debilitating undifferentiation and sterility within the species'; *The Genealogy of Demons: Anti-Semitism, Fascism, and the Myths of Ezra Pound* (Evanston, Ill., 1988), pp. 160–63.

37 Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The Long Week-End: A Social History of Great Britain, 1918–39* (Harmondsworth, 1971; first pub. London, 1940), p. 18.

38 Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1984), pp. 224–29.

39 John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice Among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880–1939* (London, 1992), p. 8. See also Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties*, p. 52.

40 Joseph McAleer, *Popular Reading and Publishing in Britain, 1914–50* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 8, 24; Billie Melman, *Women and the Popular Imagination in the Twenties: Flappers and Nymphs* (London, 1988), pp. 15–19.

41 Messinger, *British Propaganda*, pp. 11–12.

42 Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques*, p. 222.

43 *Daily News*, 5 Dec. 1914; quoted in Willis, *England's Holy War*, p. 172. Willis's point is that Gardiner should have realised that Northcliffe's aims had won, and they should therefore give up the hypocritical illusion that the war was in any way being fought for Liberal aims.

44 Willis, *England's Holy War*, pp. 218, 228.

45 Willis, *England's Holy War*, pp. 246. Nicholas Rance discusses similar constructions of German and English identity in 'British Newspapers in the Early Twentieth Century', in Clive Bloom (ed.), *Literature and Culture in Modern Britain: I: 1900–29* (London and New York, 1993), pp. 120–45.

46 Koss, *Rise and Fall*, p. 284.

47 *Ibid.*, pp. 280, 298–306.

48 Willis, *England's Holy War*, pp. 235–36.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

50 The MPs included A. F. Whyte and Leif Jones; Messinger, *British Propaganda*, pp. 133–36. See also Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques*, pp. 41–42.

51 Messinger, *British Propaganda*, pp. 158–59.

52 Anonymous writer in the *Saturday Review*, 2 March 1918, quoted in Koss, *Rise and Fall*, p. 314.

53 Koss, *Rise and Fall*, p. 314; Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda, 1914–18*, p. 93.

54 Quoted in Koss, *Rise and Fall*, p. 378.

55 Peter Buitenhuis also points to the dominance of satire as a literary mode in the 1920s as a result of this cultural shift, *The Great War of Words: British, American, and Canadian Propaganda and Fiction, 1914–33* (Vancouver, 1987), pp. 146, 180.

56 Michael North, *The Political Aesthetic of Yeats, Eliot, and Pound* (Cambridge, 1991).

57 Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War One* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 27, 75.

58 Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombadiering* [1937] (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 27–28

59 Dora Marsden, 'Quid Pro Quo', *Egoist*, 1:16 (15 August 1914), 301–303, p. 303; D. H. Lawrence, 'England, My England' [1922] in *Selected Short Stories*, ed. by Brian Finney (Harmondsworth), pp. 231–58, p. 253, 254.

60 Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques*, p. 11.

61 Richard Aldington, 'Notes on the Present Situation', *Egoist*, 1:17 (1 Sep. 1914), 326–27.

62 H.D., *Bid Me to Live* [1948–50] (London, 1984; first published New York, 1960), p. 103.

63 Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques*, p. 201.

64 Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* [1929] (Harmondsworth, 1960), p. 188; see also Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 110.

65 *Asphodel*, p. 199.

66 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (London, 1976), p. 144. This mode of reading is cited by Irene Cooper Willis as something which distinguishes the post-war newspaper reader; in 1914, she claims, leading articles 'were read with respect, if not reverence', whereas by 1928 'political indifference and scepticism' are so general people head straight for 'the serial story, the cross-word puzzle or the sporting news'; Willis, *England's Holy War*, p. xvii.

67 Letter to Bryher, 10 April 1919, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Gen MSS 97.

68 Willis, *England's Holy War*, p. 187.

69 James Morgan Read, *Atrocity Propaganda, 1914–19* (New Haven, 1941; rpt New York, 1972), p. 192; *Daily Mail*, 26 March 1915, 6, and 6 Oct 1916, 8.

70 For example, *Daily Mail*, 13 May 1915, 7, and 15 May 1913, 3.

71 Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* [1873], ed. by Adam Phillips (Oxford, 1986), p. 80; Algernon Charles Swinburne, ed. by Catherine Maxwell (London, 1997), p. 24. For further discussion of this passage, see my article 'The "Still-Born Generation": Decadence and the Great War in H.D.'s Fiction', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 44:3 (1998), 540–67.

72 Richard Aldington, 'A Solemn Dialogue', *Egoist*, 3:7 (July 1916), 105–106. The same sentiment is expressed by Clive Bell in 'Art and War' (October 1915), where he attacks the hypocrisy of those English philistines who 'pose as the champions of culture'; quoted in Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London, 1990), p. 86. As Hynes points out, the quasi-elitism of combatant writers, their assumption that only other combatants will understand their work, reproduces the familiar anti-bourgeois stance of the pre-war avant-garde artist (p. 159); Aldington, of course, was both.

73 *Daily Mail*, 8 Sept. 1914; the term 'Hun' was used by the Kaiser in his injunction to German troops in the Boxer Rising in 1900, then by German writers on British conduct in South Africa in 1902, and on Belgian conduct in August 1914; Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*, pp. 52, 58.

74 *Daily Mail*, 21 Sept. 1914, quoted in Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*, p. 71.

75 For example: 'The civilized world viewed the horrors of Louvain with a kind of shuddering wonder. How comes it, people asked, that this nation which lays claim to the supreme position in European culture can approve of a deed which none but criminal lunatics would commit? Does the explanation lie in the fact that the Kaiser imagines himself the long-expected Superman, and his war-lords the "herd of big blonde beasts," whose destiny it is to bind Europe to their chariot wheels?' *Daily Mail*, 16 Sept. 1914, 4.

76 H.D., *Palimpsest* (Paris, 1926), p. 191.

77 H.D., *Palimpsest*, p. 240.

78 Aldington, 'Notes', 236.

79 Pound, 'The Regional – XIV', *The New Age*, 23 Oct. 1919, 432. See also Michael Coyle, *Ezra Pound, Popular Genres, and the Discourse of Culture* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University, 1995), p. 75.

80 Jackson, *The Eighteen Nineties*, pp. 54, 53.

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